

"A FORTUNE AT STAKE!" and "THE SCHOOL AT SEA!"
GRAND SCHOOL YARNS INSIDE.

The **GEM** 2[¢]



**WHAT
BAGGY
TRIMBLE
SAW
THROUGH
THE
KEYHOLE!—**

**—A dramatic
incident from
this week's
grand St. Jim's
yarn, "THE
SCHEMER OF
THE SIXTH!"**



Blake Answers Back!

"Red Head," of London, S.E.14, writes:
How many red and auburn headed monarchs has England had since the time of Alfred the Great? Bet you don't know.

ANSWER: I wasn't very old at the time, but I think Edward the Confessor had warm-tinted locks, and I well remember King William Rufus, the fellow who stopped an arrow in the New Forest, being called "Ginger Bill" by his chums. Then there was Queen Bess, though she and Mary Queen of Scots, another red-head, were never on good terms. Mary was the first Games Captain at Cliff House; you probably wouldn't remember. It's not true, by the way, that William the Conk had red hair. I well recall when Gussy came over with him—Herries and Dig and I were just getting Study No. 6 furnished then—William was getting a bit thin on top, and when he tripped up on Pevensy beach his juce was red, but not his hair. Deary me, I could go on for years and years like this. Let me know if I've missed anybody out, won't you? While we're waiting, can anybody tell me if Dr. W. G. Grace wore braces or a belt?

"A Ref," of Nottingham, writes:

When anyone enters for a test to become a referee, a question is: A penalty is being taken, the left-back bangs it, the ball bursts; the bladder goes in the goal, but the case goes over the cross-bar. Is it a goal? You tell me. Why not alter that title, Jack, and put: "Back Answers by Blake"? Tanks, palsey!

ANSWER: When this same incident actually occurred during a match between St. Jim's Junior XI and Rookwood, Kildare of the Sixth, who was refereeing, stopped the game, ordered a new ball to be placed on the spot, and the kick taken again. He ruled that the ball was dead at the moment it burst. I think Kildare was right—you tell ME! Your idea of altering the title sounds like putting the cart before the horse. But let's ask the readers. They may even know where the bladder and the case went. Thanks, pal!

"Worried," of Aldershot, Hants, writes:

My query is: Can I write about St. Jim's characters?

Another thing: What do you think of table tennis as a manly sport? My friends are against this, but I like it.

P.S.—Sorry no photo, can't find one anywhere.

ANSWER: Of course you can write about St. Jim's characters, providing that what you write

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Jack Blake's here to answer your letters and deal with your queries. Write to him c/o The GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Be as candid as you like—Jack Blake likes a plain speaker, being by nature a John Blunt himself! But keep your letter SHORT, and enclose if possible a photo of yourself for reproduction on this page. No photos can be returned and no replies given by post.

is not published. Are your friends against table tennis because you are too hot for them? They would soon find out how manly it is if they took it up.

Pearl H., of London, W.8, writes:

We all read the GEM—our favourite paper—and my faithful followers have suggested a game of tracking. I, as their leader, challenge you and your friends to join us, provided you accept our rules. What about it?

ANSWER: I presume you are Girl Guides? Or do I get you wrong? Naturally, most of the St. Jim's juniors are Scouts. Unfortunately we can't come to London without obtaining special permission—and if we cut classes one day, the beaks would soon be "scouting" after us!

Adolf Turkeltaub, of Yehuda Halevy Street, Tel-Aviv, Palestine, writes:

Seeing that you answer all sorts of questions from the pages of the GEM, "my gladfulness was great," as the Inky chap at Greyfriars would say. Here are some:

1. How much time do you share Study No. 6?
2. What was Gussy's age two years ago, and how old is he now?
3. What is the exact number of Gussy's toppers and love affairs?
4. Why doesn't Grundy come to Palestine? We want a new centre-forward in our team.

ANSWER: 1. Gussy, Herries, Dig, and I have shared Study No. 6 ever since we threw Mellish and Scrape out of it. They actually had the idea of occupying our exclusive sanctum! (But we "sanked" 'em!)

2. If Leap Year falls on Shrove Tuesday, and pancakes are being fried on the pavements—no, I'll wait till Gussy comes in and ask him. He's due back from his tailor's any week now.

3. Exact number of toppers at 1939 census was 25. This was made up of 17 wearable, 3 "emergency," and 5 for demonstrating shots at goal only. We've lost count of Gussy's love affairs.

4. Odd you should mention it, but Grundy has been pointing out for some time that what he needs is a chance at centre-forward. I've shown him your letter, and he wants to write to you. The snag is, I doubt if the postal authorities will know what to do with a letter addressed to TELAFIB, PALACE-TYNE.

EVERY W



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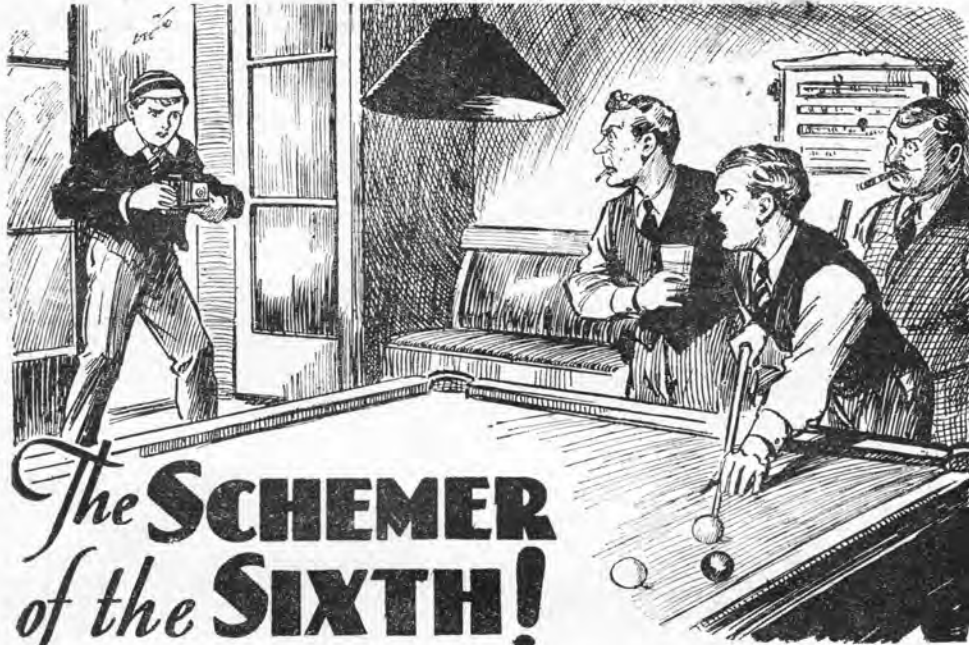
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POWERFUL LONG ST. JIM'S STORY OF A PREFECT'S PLOT TO GET HIMSELF OUT OF TROUBLE—BY LANDING AN INNOCENT FAG INTO TROUBLE!



The SCHEMER of the SIXTH!

Manners stepped boldly and silently into the billiards-room of the Green Man. Knox looked up suddenly. For a few seconds he stared in dumbfounded amazement, his eyes glued helplessly on the camera with Manners behind it. Click! Manners had a snap of the Sixth Form black sheep before the latter could move.

**CHAPTER 1.
Fag Wanted!**

"FAG!" The harsh voice of Knox of the Sixth echoed along the Sixth Form passage in the School House at St. Jim's. Several of the Sixth, Fifth, Shell, and Fourth Form fellows, on their way to the playing fields that afternoon, heard it and smiled.

And quite a number of Third Formers—members of the fag tribe for whose ears that call was intended—heard it; but though they heard, they heeded not. At least, they heeded only to the extent of giving the Sixth Form passage a very wide berth.

At no time did the young gentlemen of the Third pine for the honour of fagging for Knox, much less on a fine "half." And the face of Knox of the Sixth grew darker and darker as he scanned the last few stragglers hurrying past, in the vain hope of the belated appearance of an unfortunate Third Former.

Silence fell at last upon the now deserted Sixth Form passage, and the prefect was turning with a scowl to enter his study when he paused.

Farther along the door

of Kildare's study opened, and Walter Adolphus D'Arcy of the Third emerged and hurried down the passage.

Knox's face set grimly as he stepped out in the path of the fag.

"One moment, D'Arcy!"

Wally D'Arcy stopped, and his cheery face clouded.

"I say, Knox, I'm in rather a hurry!" he exclaimed. "I'm just off to Barchester on my bike."

"Quite a mistake—you're not!" said Knox blandly. "You're going to do a few jobs for me this afternoon, my young friend."

Wally's eyes gleamed.

"I say, that's a bit thick!" he said indignantly. "I'm not your fag. I've only just finished clearing up Kildare's study, and I'm jolly well going out now. Let me pass, Knox!"

And Wally made a sudden rush to slip past the senior, but apparently Knox had anticipated such an intention. His hand shot out, and Wally was pulled up with a jerk.

"Leggo, Knox, you brute!" he exclaimed. "If you think I'm going to spend the afternoon fagging for you, you're mistaken. Leggo!"

Desperately in need of ten pounds to silence a threatening bookmaker, Gerald Knox resorts to cunning and deceit to save himself—making Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his minor the victims of his scheme!

by

MARTIN CLIFFORD

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But Knox did not "leggo." Tightening his grip on the fag's shoulder, he hauled him, struggling, into the room, and, locking the door, placed the key in his pocket.

"Now, my infant," he remarked grimly, "we'll see if you're going to fag for me or not. First of all, tidy this room; then you'll light a fire and get tea ready for two, or I'll know the reason why!"

D'Arcy minor faced the prefect, angry and mutinous.

"I won't!" he said defiantly. "Kildare's let me off for the rest of the day, and you've no right to make me fag for you, Knox."

The prefect's eyes gleamed. He was well aware that he was risking a collision with Kildare by forcing his fag to work for him. But Knox was in a savage and reckless mood that afternoon.

Wally set his teeth as Knox reached for his ash-plant.

"If you strike me with that, Knox, I shall strike back!" said Wally, through his set lips.

"You—you'll strike back!" ejaculated Knox. "Do you know you're speaking to a prefect?"

"Prefect or no prefect, I won't be caned for nothing, Knox. You've a fag of your own."

"Never mind my own fag. Young Piggott hasn't turned up, and I'll settle with that young sweep later," he said, in a grinding voice. "Are you going to obey me, or not?"

"I'm not!" said Wally recklessly.

"Then hold out your hand, D'Arcy."

"I won't!"

"Won't you, by gad!" said Knox fiercely.

The enraged senior brought his cane into vigorous play.

Lash, lash, lash, lash!

Wally writhed helplessly in the prefect's grasp as the cane came swishing across his shoulders.

"Yarrah!"

Knox released the fag as the latter's shoe thudded on his shin. He staggered into a chair, rubbing his aching limb. Wally stood gasping and breathing heavily, his eyes gleaming.

"You—you young hound!" stammered Knox savagely. "I'll—I'll smash you—"

"Keep off!" warned Wally tensely. "Leave me alone, or—"

Wally's words ceased as the prefect gripped him furiously, and once again the cane was lashing on the junior's shoulders. It was the most severe licking the fag had ever had, and he collapsed limply into the nearest chair when Knox paused through sheer breathlessness.

"Now," he gasped, "will you obey me, or shall I give you some more?"

"I—I've had enough, Knox, you brute!" said Wally faintly. "I—I'll do your fagging. But—but I'll pay you back for this, you—you beastly bully!"

Knox laughed sneeringly as he flung down the cane, but there was little triumph in his laugh, for all that. Now he felt calmer he was none too easy in his mind as to the possible result, should Wally choose to mention the thrashing to Kildare—or even to Arthur Augustus, Wally's brother in the Fourth.

It would mean trouble, and Knox had quite enough trouble to contend with just then without more. But for all that, it was plainly not Wally that Knox was worrying about as he paced restlessly about the room, his brow knitted in thought.

Quite suddenly the prefect ceased his pacing, and without a word to the fag, who had com-

menced sullenly tidying the room, walked to the door, and, unlocking it, passed out, carefully locking it after him.

A moment later he was striding along towards the Fifth Form passage.

At the door of the study tenanted by Cutts of the Fifth he stopped, and, kicking open the door, entered.

CHAPTER 2.

The Sorrows of Knox!

CUTTS was seated at the table reading and smoking.

He did not even attempt to remove the cigarette from his mouth on the prefect's entrance. Possibly the fact that smoking was one of the prefect's pleasant little habits accounted for that.

"Hallo, Knox, old man!" he exclaimed. "You look pipped! What's up?"

Knox took a cigarette from the box Cutts pushed towards him and laughed lightly.

"Nothing much," he said carelessly. "Fact is, I'm in a bit of a hole—run of dashed bad luck on the gee-gees, you know. Nothing to worry about, of course. But I say, I dropped in to know if you'd care to come in for a cup of tea and a jaw later on?"

Cutts smiled slightly and shot a glance at his visitor. Cutts of the Fifth fancied he knew what the "jaw" would be about. It was fairly evident that Knox, having exhausted all other means of raising the wind, was about to "touch" Cutts in a last hope of getting himself out of the scrape.

Cutts of the Fifth mentally decided that the hope would not be realised.

"Thanks, I will," he said after a pause. "I'll drop in later on. But that reminds me—I saw that brute Banks last night."

Knox gave a start.

"Did you?" he exclaimed carelessly. "Did—did he mention me at all?"

"Did he? I should just say he did! He's fairly out for your gore. Said you promised him a tenner on account and— But here's a note he asked me to give you. Sorry I forgot it until now."

And, taking a dirty-looking piece of paper from his pocket, Cutts handed it to the prefect, who tore it open savagely, his brow darkening as he read it.

"The beastly swindler!" he said, with a nervous laugh. "It's only bluff. The blackguard knows better than to come up here!"

"I don't know," said Cutts seriously. "He's a vicious brute; he'd come up like a shot, I think. I'd go carefully with him if I were you, old man."

"Hang him!" said Knox bitterly. "I wish—"

The prefect broke off suddenly, and, crumpling the note into his pocket, rose to his feet, with a laugh.

"Anyhow, I'll settle with him shortly!" he said briskly. "I'll expect you in later on, then, Cutts?"

Cutts nodded, and directly the door had closed on his visitor he laughed softly. Cutts, who was more than a bit of a "merry blade" himself, had often been in a similar hole, and he knew perfectly well how Knox was feeling just then, despite his careless manner.

And indeed the prefect felt little like laughing as he strode moodily back to the study.

The note from Banks, of the Green Man, in Rylcombe, was not unexpected, and only put into

writing the verbal threats of "trouble" the sharper had made in his last few interviews with him.

And Knox knew that "trouble" with a rascally bookmaker meant a sudden end to his career at St. Jim's.

Wally D'Arcy looked up fiercely from the fireplace as the prefect re-entered the room a minute later.

"There's a letter on the floor there for you, Knox!" he exclaimed sullenly. "Toby brought it, and as he couldn't get in I told him to shove it under the door."

Knox grunted and picked up the letter from the carpet. He tore it open eagerly as his eyes scanned the writing on the envelope. It was from home; and as he had already overdrawn his allowance he clutched at the hope of a remittance as a drowning man clutches at a straw.

But his face fell as he drew out a single sheet of notepaper—and nothing else. Rapidly scanning the letter, he slipped it savagely into his pocket and threw himself gloomily into the easy-chair.

For some moments he sat staring dully before him; then his eyes lingered on Wally D'Arcy, busy lighting the fire, and his brow grew more thoughtful.

Then the prefect's face set grimly, and, as though having made up his mind, he jumped to his feet and passed out, locking the door after him again.

Without hesitation he strode along the passage and slipped into Kildare's study.

Inside, he pushed the door to and hesitated, his face white. What he was about to do was past the limit even for him. But the threats of Mr. Banks were still ringing in his ears, and the blackguard of the Sixth set his teeth determinedly.

There was not much danger really. Kildare, he knew, was out in the playing fields. But Knox's hands trembled a little as he picked up the captain's trousers, lying neatly folded on a chair, and hurriedly went through the pockets; then, with a bunch of keys in his hand, he went to Kildare's table. Opening a drawer, he took out a cashbox.

The box contained the football funds—thirteen-pounds-odd. Knox knew the amount, having seen Kildare checking the accounts only a couple of days ago. Taking out a ten-pound note, the prefect locked the box again in the table drawer, and replaced the keys in Kildare's pocket.

Then, slipping the "tenner" carefully in his letter from home, he left the study hastily—too hastily for Baggy Trimble, who happened to be kneeling outside the door with one eye glued to the keyhole.

There followed a sudden, alarmed gasp and a fiendish yell as the unfortunate Baggy toppled backwards, striking the linoleum with a bump. Next moment the prefect's heavy grasp fell upon the fat youth, and he was hauled roughly to his feet.

"You—you spying young toad!" breathed Knox savagely. "You were spying at the keyhole!"

"I didn't! I wasn't!" yelled Baggy in alarm.

"Oh, my ear! Leggo! Yow!"

"Shut up, you fat fool!" hissed Knox, glancing anxiously up and down the passage. "Shut your confounded row!"

"Then leggo my ear, Knox, you beast!" wailed Baggy. "I wasn't spying! I didn't see you take that banknote from Kildare's cash-box—in fact, I wasn't near the keyhole! I didn't spot you

sneaking into the study. And as for coming to see what you were up to—never even thought of it! I simply happened— Yaroooooh!"

Baggy Trimble roared as the prefect hurled him with furious rage across the passage. The fat youth dropped to the floor with a resounding bump and a yell.

The angry prefect was striding away when he stopped suddenly, as the full significance of Baggy's knowledge dawned upon him.

The thought that Baggy Trimble, the biggest spy and tattler in St. Jim's, had witnessed his action in Kildare's study filled him with sudden apprehension.

Certainly he had had no intention of actually stealing the note; only to "borrow" it for a short time. But Baggy did not know that, and the fellows to whom Baggy would spread the tale wouldn't, either; neither would they believe it if they were told.

It would take some explaining, and the senior realised that he would have to stop Baggy's prattling tongue at all costs—at least, until he had carried out the little scheme he had in mind, and could put the note back again.

There was quite an amused smile on Knox's face as he moved towards the fat youth and helped him to his feet.

"You silly young idiot!" he grinned, with just a trace of annoyance in his tone. "Don't make such a row, or you'll give the game away!"

Baggy almost forgot his injuries in his astonishment.

"The—the g-game away!" he stuttered. "Yes. You'll spoil the whole joke," said Knox smoothly. "Fact is, I'm playing a little practical joke on old Kildare, and naturally I don't want it to come out yet. Now, don't mention this business until I tell you. By the way, you like jam tarts, don't you?"

"Rather, Knox, old man!" smirked Baggy, with a curious grin on his fat face.

Knox winced a little at the "old man" as he passed a two-shilling piece into the eager hand of Baggy Trimble.

"There you are, then—get some!" said Knox. "But mum's the word! You understand?"

"Trust me!" said Baggy, with a knowing grin.

"Trust me! I won't say a word—not a word!"

"That's right!" said Knox; and, with an apparently genial smile, he strode away.

CHAPTER 3. Wally Stokes Up!

"OH gad!" Gerald Knox made that ejaculation as he flung open the study door and stared into the room; for the place simply reeked with smoke, and through the haze young Wally D'Arcy—his cheerful face black and smudgy—could be discerned poking the fire vigorously.

"What the dickens— Here, you young sweep, what's all this dashed smoke mean?" roared Knox, coughing violently.

"The blessed smoke doesn't seem to be going up the chimney, somehow," said Wally.

Wally might have added that this was because he himself had closed the ventilator.

"Well, you'd better start making it go up the chimney, or there'll be trouble!" snapped Knox angrily. "And buck up with tea, you lazy little slacker! It ought to—"

He broke off as the door opened, and Cutts of the Fifth strolled in.

"Here we are, old man!" he began genially. "Hope I'm— My hat! Is the merry old home on fire?"

"That dashed fool of a fag!" exclaimed Knox, pointing to a chair. "It'll clear off when the fire burns up. Sit down, old man!"

Cutts sat down, and for some moments the two "blades" chatted and smoked—and so did the fire. Knox seemed in the best of spirits—a fact that struck Cutts as strange, considering everything.

"Seem merry and bright all at once, Knox, old man," he ventured casually, at length. "Anything turned up, you know?"

For answer Knox smiled, and drawing the letter from his pocket, extracted the banknote and threw it carelessly on the table.

"From home!" he said briefly. "Bit of dashed good luck—what?"

Cutts picked up the "tenner," his eyes opening wide.

"My hat, rather!" he exclaimed. "Fairly saved your— Hallo! Sorry!"

As Cutts was handing the note back, it slipped and fluttered slowly on to the hearthrug at Wally D'Arcy's feet.

Stooping, the fag picked it up, and handed it to the Sixth Former, who folded it and placed it—or, rather, seemed to—back into the envelope with the letter. At any rate, neither Cutts nor Wally D'Arcy had the slightest suspicion that the banknote was not in the envelope as the prefect carelessly slipped it behind a photo-frame on the mantelpiece.

"My hat, Knox, old man!" gasped Cutts, with a grin. "Do you always keep your banknotes on the mantelpiece?"

"Oh, it's safe enough there!" laughed Knox lightly. "In any case, it won't be mine long, worse dashed luck— Oh, hang!"

Knox jumped to his feet with a snort of anger as Wally poked the fire and a fresh billow of smoke poured into the room.

"What the deuce are you up to, you young fool?" he began.

Then he bent down and looked in the fireplace. "Why, the little sweep's got the ventilator down!" he roared.

Giving the fag a cuff that sent him spinning across the room, Knox snatched up the poker, and pushed the ventilator back with a vicious slam.

"If that isn't a bit thick!" he shouted, glaring at Wally, as that junior stood rubbing his ear ruefully. "I believe the young scoundrel closed that on purpose!"

"Shouldn't be surprised," grunted Cutts, coughing. "It certainly is a bit thick, if you mean this dashed smoke!"

"Oh, hang it!" gasped Knox, choking. "Let's go out for a stroll while it clears."

"Going to suggest that myself," said Cutts, rising from his chair in relief.

At the doorway Knox paused, and frowned darkly at young Wally.

"We're going out for about twenty minutes, you young slacker," he snapped grimly. "If this smoke isn't cleared and tea ready by the time we return, look out for squalls!"

There was a lurking grin on the face of Wally D'Arcy as the two seniors passed out. It was fairly plain that Knox was not far wrong in his

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belief that the fag had closed the ventilator purposely.

And strangely enough, there was a faint smile on Knox's face as he turned the key in the lock and strode along the passage with Cutts.

Knox, in fact, had been puzzling his brains for some feasible excuse to leave Wally alone in the study for a few minutes. And Wally's little trick with the ventilator had provided that excuse.

On the School House steps Knox stopped suddenly.

"Oh, gad!" he ejaculated, in well-assumed alarm. "Hanged if I haven't left my table-drawer unlocked. Dash it all, that young sweep'll be poking his nose into—"

"Things little boys shouldn't see—what!" finished Cutts, with a grin. "Better get back and lock it, old bean."

"My hat, yes! I won't be a sec!"

Leaving Cutts standing alone on the steps, Knox hurried back to the Sixth Form passage, but not to his own study. At Kildare's study door he paused, and, after a quick glance round, entered. After that Knox's actions were strange.

Taking the crumpled banknote from his jacket pocket, he folded it neatly and replaced it in the cashbox. Then, after locking this and the desk, he slipped the keys back into Kildare's pocket, and a moment later left the study.

There was a satisfied smile of relief on Knox's face as he rejoined Cutts of the Fifth in the quad. The most dangerous part of the scheme was now completed.

CHAPTER 4.

Fagging for Knox!

"NOW I'll start getting tea ready for Knox." Wally D'Arcy murmured these words to himself as the door closed on Knox of the Sixth and Cutts of the Fifth.

There was a cheeky grin on the face of Walter Adolphus. Though Wally did not like fagging for Knox, he was determined to go to no end of trouble over getting the prefect's tea ready.

With this kindly intention, Wally set about the task cheerfully, and after laying the tablecloth, he set it out neatly for two.

Then he took the teapot, and, having half-filled it with a liberal mixture of soot and ink, laid it in the fender until the kettle boiled.

He next took out the jam and thoroughly mixed it with a quantity of salt and pepper.

After which he emptied the mustard pot over the butter, and mixed this up well also, the butter being quite soft.

Then Wally emptied what was left of the salt and pepper into the milk-jug. These elaborate preparations being completed, he began to make toast.

By the time toast was made the kettle had boiled, and Wally filled the teapot, and "buttered" the toast. He had just finished when the door was kicked open, and Knox and Cutts entered.

Knox looked round with a satisfied smile. The smoke had cleared away, the fire burned brightly, and the kettle sang cheerfully on the hob. Everything seemed merry and bright.

Wally put the filled teapot and plate of hot toast on the table.

"Tea's ready, Knox," he announced meekly. "I say, can I go now?"

The prefect appeared to reflect as he drew a

chair to the table and signed to Cutts to do likewise. Wally edged a little nearer to the door; he had no desire to be at hand when Knox and Cutts commenced tea.

"Yes," said Knox, at length. "I think we can now dispense with your invaluable services, my young friend. Scat!"

"Thanks, Knox!" said Wally, more meekly still.

And Wally D'Arcy, with a curious grin on his cheeky face, "scuffed," and his footsteps died down along the passage.

Knox smiled when he had gone, and picked up the plate of toast.

a glance at it, he gulped it down to ease his burning throat.

"Groooch! Yaroooooh! Gurrerrrh!"

Cutts wisely jumped away as the prefect, his face working spasmodically, rushed to the fireplace, choking and spluttering.

"Grooogh! Filthy young beast!" he gasped at last. "I'll skin him! Ink and some other filthy stuff in the tea, too! Yow-ow! I've swallowed it! I—I'll—I'll——"

For quite a minute Knox spluttered and gasped and raved. Then gradually the effects of the mustard and the mixture he had swallowed wore off.



Knox and Cutts took simultaneous bites at the toast, and the next moment they were gasping and spluttering furiously. "Gurrerrrh!" yelled Knox. "Grooooch!" gasped Cutts. "Yow! It's mustard! That young sweep's put mustard on the toast!"

"Thanks!"

Cutts took a slice of the proffered toast, and Knox put the plate down and helped himself. They took simultaneous bites, and immediately jumped up from the table.

"Gurrerrrh!"

For quite a minute Knox and Cutts spluttered and gasped furiously.

"Groooch! Yow! It's mustard!" gasped Cutts, rubbing his burning lips with his handkerchief. "That young sweep's put mustard on the toast. Oh crumbs!"

Knox grabbed the teapot with a savage imprecation, and poured out a teacupful of the liquid Wally had so carefully concocted. Without

He returned to the table with gleaming eyes.

"The—the little brute!" he said, in a grinding voice. "I'll smash him for this! I'll make him wish he'd never been born! Oh, hang! Luckily, there's the bread-and-butter left and the jam. We'll have to make shift with that, Cutts, old man."

"Don't bother for me," said Cutts hastily. "I'm not touching that jam, or that bread-and-butter, until it's been analysed!"

Knox dipped a spoon into the jam, and tasted it cautiously; then he pulled a face and roared.

"Why, the young sweep's mucked up the whole feed!" he gasped angrily. "Dash it all! I'll—I'll—I'll——"

"Better come and take tea with me, after all," suggested Cutts dryly. "Come along!"

Knox took a sudden deep breath. The unexpected ending to his little tea-party quite upset his plan. He had intended, during the progress of the meal, to "remember" the tenner from "home," and to find it missing, with Cutts as witness. All his plans would be useless without the invaluable evidence of Cutts to back him up.

For a brief moment he hesitated, his brain working rapidly. And then, as Cutts strolled towards the door, the prefect's eyes gleamed as he thought of an idea—a simple means of strengthening the evidence.

"Thanks, Cutts—I will!" he assented slowly. "I'll be along presently, when I've cleared this muck away."

Cutts nodded, and departed. And next second Knox's actions were as swift as they were strange.

Snatching the envelope from behind the photo-frame on the mantelpiece, he dipped it into the fire, and allowed it to burn for a second; then, blowing out the flame, he rushed to the door, and excitedly called Cutts back.

Cutts had reached the end of the Sixth Form passage, but he hurried back at Knox's urgent call.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed, eyeing the prefect's grave face in astonishment. "What's the matter now?"

"Look at that!" said Knox grimly, handing Cutts the charred envelope. "I found it in the grate!"

Cutts gave a start as he took the envelope. "My hat!" he gasped in alarm. "It's—it's—you don't mean to say—"

"You saw me put my tenner in that envelope and shove it on the mantelpiece!" said Knox, in a grim tone. "And now I find the tenner gone, and the charred envelope in the grate. What do you make of it, Cutts?"

"Oh gad!" gasped the Fifth Former. "Looks to me as though that young scamp D'Arcy has pinched the blessed note, and tried to burn the envelope! My only hat!"

Knox shook his head decidedly.

"I don't know!" he said gravely. "He's a young sweep, but—no, looks to me as if he's destroyed it—burnt it in revenge for the licking! The silly young fool!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Cutts. "It's jolly serious! What are you going to do about it, Knox?"

"I'm hanged if I know what to do!" replied Knox, frowning thoughtfully. "As a prefect, it's my duty to report such a serious matter at once. At the same time, in justice to the young beggar, I feel I ought to see him about it first. Perhaps he's hidden it as a silly joke!"

Cutts shot a curious glance at the prefect; he knew Knox's special brand of justice.

"Well, it's your own business!" he remarked dryly. "Anyway, come along to my study now for tea. And—Hallo! There's young D'Arcy's brother. Why not send for the little sweep and tackle him about it? You can see him in my study."

"Good idea—I will!" said Knox carelessly. "Though I don't suppose for a moment the young rascal will turn up."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, resplendent, came along, his famous monocle glimmering in the dark passage.

He stopped and eyed the two coldly as Knox

signed to him. Gussy did not like Knox or Cutts; and he never troubled to hide his dislikes.

"Well, Knox?" he queried politely.

"I wish to see your brother, D'Arcy!" said Knox gravely. "Will you find him, and tell him it's about a very serious matter, and he's to come at once? Oh, and tell him he'll find me in Cutts' study!"

The swell of St. Jim's stared curiously at the two seniors. But the grave faces of the seniors, and the fact that it was his own brother who was wanted, decided him.

"Vewy well, Knox! I will twy to find my young bwothah, and send him to you!" he replied, with dignity.

And Arthur Augustus, with a very worried frown on his noble features, turned his steps to the Third Form quarters.

What the two shady seniors wanted with Wally he could not guess; but that it meant trouble for the reckless young rascal was pretty plain—even to Gussy.

But there were no signs of trouble on the cheerful face of Walter Adolphus as Arthur Augustus looked into the Third Form Room a little later. Wally, indeed, looked anything but worried as he stood surrounded by Curly Gibson, Jameson, Reggie Manners, Levison minor, and half a score of cheery Third Formers, to whom he was relating something—and something that made those young gentlemen laugh very much.

Wally, in fact, was just telling of the trouble he had taken to make Knox's tea-party a success.

"Hallo, Gussy! Wherefore that frown?" he grinned. "Want me, old top?"

"Yaas, you young scamp! I have a message for you, Wally!"

"Cough it up, then, Gussy!" said Wally.

"Knox wants to see you on a vewy important mattah," said Gussy, eyeing his brother severely.

"He wants to see you in Cutts' study at once!" Wally chuckled.

"Tell Knoxy to go and eat coke!" he remarked cheerfully. "Or coal, if he prefers that!"

"Wats!" said Gussy warmly. "What have you been doing, you young wascal?"

"Nothing, old top," grinned Wally—"at least, only getting Knox's tea ready!"

"Bai Jove! That is vewy stwange!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in surprise. "Knox appeals to be vewy upset about somethin'!"

"Perhaps that was because I put mustard on the toast!"

"Eh?"

"And ink and soot in the tea," added Wally thoughtfully.

"Wha-a-at?"

Wally nodded cheerfully.

"You young wascal!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "You—you've been waggin' a pwefect! Weally, Wally, you had bettah obey him! He—"

"Rats!" said Wally. "Catch me going to ask for a licking—not much! You buzz off and mind your own bisney, old top!"

"But, weally—"

"Buzz off!" said Wally. "Blessed if you don't get on my nerves with your solemn cackle, Gussy! Travel!"

"You—you cheeky young wascal!"

Several youthful hands grasped the noble Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and he was gently but firmly pushed out. The rest of his remarks were addressed to the empty passage.

"Bai Jove! The cheeky little scamps!" stuttered Gussy indignantly, turning the door-knob angrily.

But the door was locked, and with a snort of indignation Gussy gave it up and turned away.

But Arthur Augustus looked very worried as he made for Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage. He was really very concerned about Wally, and felt sure there was trouble in store for that cheery youth.

And he was right!

CHAPTER 5.

Gussy is Worried!

"THERE is somethin' wadically w'ong, deah boys!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that statement in grave tones as he sat down to tea in Study No. 6.

Tea was rather late that afternoon, owing to the belated appearance of Arthur Augustus. But as Gussy himself was stauding the spread, his studymates, Blake, Herries, and Digby, and Tom Merry & Co., who were guests of honour, had awaited his coming with stoical resignation.

"There is somethin' wadically w'ong, deah boys!" repeated Gussy gravely. "I am wovvied about my young bwothah Wally."

"Then worry no longer. Try these sardines," said Blake, with a chuckle. "If you start worrying about that young scamp you'll be kept busy." What's the silly young ass been up to now?"

Arthur Augustus explained. And there were many chuckles as Gussy related how Wally had got Knox's tea ready.

"Good old Wally!" chuckled Blake. "But that's nothing to worry about, Gussy, old top. He'll only get a licking, and it'll do the young rascal good!"

"That is quite twue, Blake!" exclaimed Gussy seriously. "But I feah, deah boys, that the mattah is far more sewious than a mere waggin'. With my knowledge of Knox's chawactah, I am sure he would have waged, and been vevy angwy indeed at bein' wagged. But—"

"My hat! And wasn't he?" gasped Tom Merry, with a stare.

"But, stwange to welate," proceeded Gussy. "Iwom his mannah he did not appeal to be angwy at all. He appealed to be more concerned than angwy. And the expessions on the faces of both Knox and Cutts were vevy gwave."

"Go hon!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Therefore," went on Gussy, turning his eye-glass frigidly on Lowther, "I have evvey weason to believe it was not the waggin' Knox wished to speak to Wally about, but that the young wascal had got himself into vevy sewious twouble—"

"Vevy gwave and vevy sewious twouble," corrected Lowther humorously.

D'Arcy's noble eye gleamed through his eye-glass. From the genial grins on the faces of the hearers, it was plain to Arthur Augustus that they were not treating the subject with due seriousness.

"Weally, I do wish you fellows would be sewious!" protested D'Arcy loftily. "I fail to see anythin' funny in the fact that my young bwothah is in sewious twouble. My judgment is wwarely at fault, and—"

"Then try these sardines; they're topping," grinned Blake. "Let's hear your judgment on them, Gussy!"

D'Arcy was frowning thoughtfully, and did not

appear to hear Blake's request to try the sardines. Then, as if he had made up his mind, he rose to his feet.

"Pwavy excuse me, deah boys!" he said graciously, but firmly. "The mattah is wowvy-in' me vevy much, and I cannot west until I have discovered the twuth. I am goin' to see Knox."

"But what about tea, ass?" roared Blake.

"I wefuse to think of tea in the circs!" said Gussy, almost tragically. "I am goin' to extwact the twuth fwom Knox. With my tact and judgment—"

Arthur Augustus paused as a tap sounded at the door, and Talbot of the Shell looked in.

"Gussy here? Hallo! There you are, Gussy! You're wanted in Knox's study, old top. What have you been up to—pinching Knox's fags?"

"Weally, Talbot—"

"Anyway, something's up, Gussy!" grinned Talbot. "Better look out! Knoxy looks no end queer!"

And, nodding cheerfully, Talbot withdrew.

D'Arcy's frown deepened, and the rest of the tea-party looked at each other.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "Looks as if something's up, after all. Better go, Gussy."

And Gussy, shaking his head gravely, went. His noble features wore a worried look as he tapped at Knox's door in the Sixth Form passage.

"Come in!"

D'Arcy entered as the prefect's deep voice sounded within the study. Gerald Knox was seated at his table. He looked up with a very grave expression as the junior entered and closed the door.

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"Ah, sit down, D'Arcy!" he began quietly, pointing to a chair.

Arthur Augustus ignored the chair, and faced the prefect stiffly.

"You wished to see me, Knox?" he exclaimed coldly.

Knox's eyes gleamed as he noted D'Arcy's studied politeness. But his tone was quite level and almost genial as he answered.

"Yes, I have rather a serious matter to discuss with you, D'Arcy," he said gravely. "It concerns your young brother Wally."

"Pway pwoiced, Knox! I twust my bwothah has done nothin' vewy w'ong."

Knox shook his head sadly.

"I am sorry to say that I have every reason to believe he has, D'Arcy. To be quite frank with you, the matter concerns a ten-pound note that is missing from my study."

Arthur Augustus gave a jump.

"A—a ten-pound note! Weally, Knox—"

"It is a very painful matter, D'Arcy. But I—"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Gussy. "Do you actually accuse my bwothah of stealin'—"

"I certainly do not accuse your brother of stealing, D'Arcy," replied Knox earnestly. "But the banknote is gone, and everything points to—"

"Bai Jove! That is enough, Knox!" gasped Gussy hotly. "I decline to considah for one moment the possibility that my bwothah had anythin' to do with your missin'—"

"One moment, D'Arcy! Perhaps I'd better give you the facts—"

"I weally think that would be advisahle, Knox," said Gussy, in a tone of icy dignity.

And in cool, serious tones the prefect gave the facts, as he wished them to be known. Of his visits to Kildare's study, of the real ownership of the "tenner" from "home," and of his sleight-of-hand trick with it before placing the envelope on the mantelpiece, he made no mention.

But he placed special stress on the fact that both Wally and Cutts had seen him place the banknote behind the photo-frame, and that Wally had been locked in the room alone until they returned to find only the charred envelope in the grate.

"It all amounts to this, D'Arcy. Either your brother has destroyed the note by accident, or he has wilfully destroyed it to get his own back for the thrashing I was obliged to administer for insubordination," said Knox.

"Bai Jove!"

"Unfortunately," said Knox, with a shake of the head, "the very fact that the youngster refused to come when sent for, inclines me to think that the latter view is the correct one. I—"

"Weally, Knox," exclaimed Gussy, in great distress. "I assuah you that he was reluctant to meet you because he expected a thwashin' for waggin' your—"

"I wish I could think so," said Knox kindly. "But the very fact that your brother vowed to get his own back, makes me feel certain that I am right."

"Bai Jove!"

"Mind you," went on Knox quietly, "neither Cutts nor myself believe for one moment that the silly young ass has stolen the money."

"Weally, Knox!"

"At the same time, if this wretched business

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came out there is no knowing that the fellows would think. You realise that, of course, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, that is vewy twue. But—"

"There would be a rotten scandal! And though possibly your brother would escape expulsion, he would certainly be flogged!"

"O-oh!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Now, I want to save the kid from that, because—well, after all, he's only a youngster," said Knox, with a smirk. "And that is why I propose not to report the matter—"

"That is vewy good of you, Knox," said Gussy, a little doubtfully.

"Not at all," said Knox. "Cutts has promised to keep the matter dark, and I see no reason why anyone save ourselves need know anything about the wretched affair. That's why I sent for you, D'Arcy, to see if we couldn't settle the matter between ourselves and without unnecessary publicity and scandal."

Knox paused and eyed Gussy somewhat anxiously.

He was well aware that Arthur Augustus was perhaps the only fellow in St. Jim's who was at all likely to be taken in by his hypocritical talk. And it was pretty plain from poor Gussy's distressed and agitated manner that, in the goodness of his heart, he was taken in.

"The only trouble, unfortunately, is the money," said Knox sadly. "Of course, I quite understand that your brother did not realise the seriousness of his action when he destroyed the note. Your people are wealthy, and the loss of a tenner meant no serious loss from his point of view."

"Bai Jove!"

"But to me it means a very serious loss indeed—in fact, it has put me in a beastly hole," said the prefect gloomily. "Mind you, I don't for one moment suggest that you yourself should make the money good—that would be beastly unfair to you. I merely mentioned the fact so that you can point out to your brother the gravity of his action, in the hope that it will be a severe lesson to him."

"Bai Jove! That is weally most awfully genewous of you, Knox," said Arthur Augustus warmly. "But I assuah you that I would nevah dweam of allowin' you to suffah from my bwothah's misdeeds—wilful or othahwise. West assuahed, deah boy, that the tennah will be wefunded to you. I will wite home to my patah at once."

Knox reflected a moment.

"I don't like it," he said, with a shake of the head. "I don't like the idea of upsetting your people with the wretched affair. If it could be managed without their knowing the truth, well and good. But—"

"Pway do not wowwy, Knox! I will merely mention that I want the money for a fwient in twouble, and I am quite suah my patah will turn up twumps. That will be quite all wight, deah boy!"

"Very well, D'Arcy," said Knox in a tone of deep resignation. "As you insist, of course, I will leave the matter of the cash entirely in your hands."

"But I wish you to undahstand cleahly, Knox," went on D'Arcy firmly, "that I do not believe that Wally has destroyed the note willingly for one moment, and I pwpose to heah what he has to say before doin' anythin' in the mattah. Pewwaps I—"

"I don't think I should," said Knox, frowning reflectively. "In fact, now I come to think, I

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

A Wayland judge is said to be a skilled amateur carpenter. Ah, he would be used to bench work!

"Negro Convicted for Extorting Money." Black male!

"Builder Walks Twenty Miles a Day to Work." How the poor chap must hate the site of it!

There are a lot of people you can see through at a glance, says a psychologist. Unfortunately I never seem to get one of them in front of me at the pictures!

Kangaroo says one of the most sociable men he knows is the village blacksmith in Rylcombe. The smith, a maty man is he!

"Trust Don Bradman To Keep His Head," runs a headline. Well, it certainly takes something to put him out!

Story: A Rylcombe man called for jury work asked to be excused. "We're very busy at the works, your worship," he said. "I ought to be there!" "So you're one of

those who think they are indispensable?" asked the judge. "You think the firm can't get on without you?" "No, your worship," protested the man; "I know very well they can, but I don't want them to find out!"

Bagpipes are not peculiar to Scotland, as some people think, says Kerr. No, they're just peculiar!

Moving the arms rapidly will prevent an attack by a bull, says a writer. If this fails, the good old-fashioned method of moving the legs rapidly should be tried.

News: On an average, says Fatty Wynn, the stout man lives longer than the thin man. The survival of the fattest?

Digby, who is interested in art, says the best place for many modern paintings is the fire. Yes, hanging is much too good for them!

"Do You Want a Crater in the Moon?" asks a newspaper. Well, Trimble might like to have it. He wants somewhere to hide till the exam is over.

"Always stick to the truth," advised Mr. Lathom, in a heart-to-heart talk with the Fourth. And then he grumbled when Buggy Trimble stuck to it so closely Mr. Lathom couldn't get it out of him!

The stupidity of some Hollywood producers often makes one reel, states a critic. Alas, it often makes several reels!

Yes, and it was Wilkins who thought he could read Grundy like a book, until he tried to shut him up!

By your "leave," follows—till next Wed.!

strongly advise you not to mention the affair to anyone—not even your brother, D'Arcy. You know what a reckless young rascal he is. If he has destroyed the tenner unintentionally he will naturally deny having touched the thing, and— and will kick up a fuss. And that is just what we are trying to avoid."

"Bai Jove! Weally, I nevah thought of that!" ejaculated Gussy, in dismay. "Howevah, I will think the mattah ovah; and thank you vevy much for your forgivin' spiwit, Knox. It is vevy kind and considewate of you!"

"Not at all!" murmured the prefect. And the prefect nodded quite genially as Arthur Augustus left the room, very distressed in mind, and with his noble brow dark with gloom.

CHAPTER 6.

Keeping It Dark!

"WHAT'S up with Gussy?" Tom Merry asked that question as he met Blake, Herries, and Digby in the Fourth Form passage immediately after dinner the following day.

It was a question that quite a number of fellows

had asked Blake that morning. But it was a question even D'Arcy's own studymates could not answer. No amount of argument or persuasion could induce the noble Gussy to unburden his soul.

"Blessed if I know!" grunted Blake moodily. "We've pleaded to hear the trouble with giddy tears in our eyes, but the obstinate chump won't say a word!"

"Think it's something to do with Knox and young Wally?" suggested Tom Merry. "The beggar sent for him last night, you know."

"I'm certain of it!" muttered Blake, with a frown. "And that's what we don't like about it. But don't you worry; we'll get it out of him. We're not letting the silly chump get mixed up in any shady business with that rotter!"

"Going to try gentle persuasion?" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Gentle or otherwise!" snapped Blake. "But this thumping secrecy's got to stop! If you chaps care to lend a hand—"

"What-ho!" grinned Tom Merry: "Lead on, old top! We're great on gentle persuasion!"

And, led by Blake, the juniors moved in a body towards Study No. 6.

Blake stopped at the door of the study and

turned the knob; then he gave a muttered ejaculation.

"My hat! The blessed door's locked!" he gasped. "What the thump—"

Blake paused as a distressed voice came from within the room.

"It is howwid—weally howwid! It is vewy difficult to know what to do!"

"Gussy!" murmured Tom Merry. "Who the dickens is he talking to?"

"Himself; he does sometimes!" grunted Blake, kicking angrily at the door. "Open this door, Gussy, you howling chump!"

For a moment there was silence within the study. Then came a worried voice, louder this time.

"Wats! Pway wun away, deah boys! I am vewy busy and vewy wowwid!"

"Busy be hanged!" roared Blake wrathfully. "Open this door, Gussy. We want to come in!"

"Do wun away, Jack Blake! I am busy thinkin'! I wish to be alone to concentwate my mind upon a vewy sewious pwoblem."

Blake drew a deep breath.

"Look here, Gussy, if you don't—" he began, when he stopped and chuckled. "I say, Dig, old man," he called out loudly, "just run up to the dorm and fetch a few of Gussy's hat-boxes down. They'll do nicely to sit on while we're waiting for Gussy to finish concentrating. Buck up!"

"Bai Jove!"

From within the study came that startled exclamation, followed immediately by a sudden scuffle. Next second the door-lock clicked and the door flew open, revealing D'Arcy's flushed and alarmed face.

"Bai Jove! Don't you dare to touch my toppahs, you wottahs!" he shrieked. "Dig, you—here—what—"

D'Arcy jumped back with a startled gasp as Blake, Herries, and Digby, with Tom Merry & Co. behind them, crowded, grinning, into the room.

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle firmly into position, and stared wrathfully at Blake as that youth locked the door and placed the key in his pocket.

"You—you spoofin' wottah, Blake!" he ejaculated. "I weally believe you did not intend Digby to fetch my hat-boxes at all. It was merely a wuse to make me open the door!"

"Right on the wicket!" smiled Blake grimly. "And now sit down, Gussy, old chap! I'm going to talk to you like a father!"

"I uttahly wefuse to sit down, and I uttahly wefuse to talk to you like a fathah—I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You couldn't, Gussy!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "Though you often do talk like a giddy grandmother!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Stop rotting now!" grunted Blake. "Look here, Gussy, we want to know, and we intend to know, what's in the wind. What's the trouble between you and that shady rotter Knox?"

D'Arcy's wrath vanished and his aristocratic features clouded.

"Weally, deah boys," he stammered slowly, "I wegwet I weally cannot confide in you. Knox has stwongly advised me to keep the mattah dark."

"All the more reason why you should tell us," said Tom Merry quietly.

"My hat, yes!"

"So it's a secret between yourself and Knox, is it?" exclaimed Blake, in a deadly voice.

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"Yaas, I am vewy sowwy—"

"And it all amounts to this, then—that you can trust your secrets to the biggest outsider in St. Jim's—"

"Bai Jove—"

"But your own bosom chums—the fellows who've stuck to you through thick and thin—you can't trust."

"Weally, Blake," murmured Arthur Augustus in great distress, "I nevah looked at the mattah fwom that point of view. Pewwaps I—I'd bettah tell you—"

D'Arcy paused doubtfully.

"I think you had jolly well better," said Blake warmly. "If that rotter Knox advised you to keep it dark, then you can bet he's got some jolly shady reason for it."

"I should jolly well think so," granted Herries.

"Blake is quite right," muttered Tom Merry quietly. "Knox is an unprincipled blackguard—you know that as well as we do, Gussy. Let's hear the trouble. You can rely on our advice, for what it's worth!"

"Vewy well, I will tell you, deah boys," said D'Arcy slowly. "But it is a vewy sewious mattah indeed! Knox charges young Wally with destwoyin' a ten-pound note belongin' to him. And—"

"What?"

"It is a weally howwid affair," said Arthur Augustus. "Fortunately, however, Knox has vewy kindly assuahed me that— But I will welaye the stowy fwom the beginnin', deah boys."

And amid many gasps of amazement, Gussy related the astonishing story of Knox's tenner as Knox had related it to him.

"Well, my word!" gasped Blake, when he had finished. "And do you actually mean to say, Gussy, you utter ass, that you swallowed that yarn? Why, you silly chump, I don't believe the rotter ever had a tenner at all. I believe the whole thing's a swindle from beginning to end!"

"It does sound jolly fishy!" muttered Tom Merry. "What proof have you, Gussy, that Knox really had a tenner?"

"Both Cutts and Wally saw it!" answered Arthur Augustus.

"How do you know?"

"Knox told me, deah boys."

"Kn-Knox t-told you!" stuttered Blake. "Oh, you—you born idiot! Do you mean to say you were going to believe that without question- ing young Wally?"

"Of course," said Gussy, in surprise. "Knox stwongly advised me—"

"That's enough!" snapped Blake in disgust. "You—you howling ass, Gussy! Can't you see, chump, that Knox would be the last fellow in St. Jim's to want to keep the thing dark if he really had lost a tenner? Why, it's plain enough—he never had one. The whole thing's a rotten swindle!"

"Looks jolly well like it!" said Tom Merry grimly. "My hat! We'd better send for young Wally. Look here—I'll go for him now! I'll tell him all about it—he'll come quickly enough then."

It was quite five minutes before Tom Merry returned. But with him came Wally D'Arcy, his face red and wrathful. Plainly Tom Merry had found it necessary to tell him about it.

"Look here, Gussy, you old ass," began Wally



"What were you thrashing Trimble for, Knox?" asked Kildare angrily. "He daren't tell you, Kildare—he jolly well daren't!" yelled Buggy. "He was whacking me because I spotted him pinch some money from your cash-box, Kildare!"

warmly. "what's all this about Knox's tenner?"

"Weally, Wally, you diswespectful—"

"What silly rot has that rotter been stuffing you up with?" roared Wally wrathfully. "Why, I've never seen the blessed tenner since Knox stuffed it on the mantelpiece."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Blake. "Then Knox really had a tenner?"

"Course he did!" snorted the fag. "I saw it—in fact, the careless ass dropped it and I picked it up for him. But if the rotten bully says I've touched it since, he's a thumping liar!"

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, more distressed than ever now Wally admitted having seen the note. "But are you sure you haven't destroyed the beastly note by accident, Wally?"

Wally snorted.

"Oh, do give your chin a rest, Gussy! How the thump could I destroy the rotten thing without knowing it, when the note was on the mantelpiece? 'Course I haven't, ass!"

"Bai Jove! Weally, it is howwid! I weally think, deah boys, that it will be best, aftah all, to w'ite to the patah for the money and—"

"That you jolly well won't!" snapped Blake. "The whole thing beats me, and I'm jolly sure there's some trickery in it somewhere."

"Hear, hear!"

"If you'll take my advice, Gussy," said Tom Merry quietly, "you'll go with your brother to Railton and tell him all about it. Have the whole business thrashed out openly and above board. If Wally speaks the truth, he'll have no need to fear the consequences!"

"I haven't touched Knox's banknote, and I am not afraid to go before Mr. Railton or the Head!" said Wally.

"That's the spirit!" grunted Blake. "And if Gussy had any sense he'd say the same. I'm hanged if I know what Knox's little game is in wanting the affair kept dark, but I'm jolly certain, if he has really lost a tenner, and it doesn't turn up, he'll kick up a dickens of a shine about it sooner or later. So it'll be all the better for Wally if he reports the business first."

Arthur Augustus nodded doubtfully, but even he could see the sense in Blake's words.

"Vewy well, then!" he exclaimed, after a pause. "I will take your advice, and I weally hope it will be for the best."

"Good!" said Blake, in relief. "I'm certain—Hallo! There goes the bell for classes. Better leave it till after lessons now, Gussy!"

"Vewy well, Blake! I will go with Wally to Mr. Waitton immediately aftah lessons."

And, feeling satisfied that D'Arcy was going to
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do the right thing at last, Tom Merry & Co. and Blake & Co. trooped after Wally to afternoon lessons.

CHAPTER 7.

Searching for Knox's Tenner!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS came out of Mr. Railton's study with a very concerned and agitated look on his face.

With Gussy was Wally, his brother, and for once that irrepressible young rascal also looked quite serious.

A few yards along the passage quite a crowd of fellows were waiting. Besides D'Arcy's chums of Study No. 6 and Tom Merry & Co., Wally's chums of the Third—Frank Levison, Curly Gibson, Jameson, and Reggie Manners—were there. And all were anxiously awaiting to hear the result of the interview with Mr. Railton concerning Knox's missing "tenner."

"Well," exclaimed Blake, as they surrounded the two, "how did you get on?"

"Wotten!" replied the swell of the Fourth gloomily. "Mr. Wailton has decided that the case is too serious for him to deal with, and the matter is to be taken before the Head. We have been ordered to hold ourselves in weadiness to be sent for at any moment."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I was afraid he would," growled Blake gloomily. "But you can depend upon it, old Railton already smells a rat. You're sure you told him every word—about Knox wanting you to keep it dark and all that, Gussy?"

"I feah I did not, Blake. At the moment I felt that would have been vewy ungwateful aftah Knox's genewosity. I merely told Mr. Wailton the facts about the missin' banknote."

"Well, you—you ass, Gussy!" snorted Blake. "Trust you to make a mess of—Hallo! Here's Knox now!"

"And Mr. Railton," murmured Herries. "My hat! Doesn't old Knox look ratty!"

Mr. Railton's study door opened, and the School House master came out, with a grave, thoughtful face. Knox's face was dark and lowering. Catching sight of the group of juniors, he shot a glance of concentrated fury at Arthur Augustus as he turned and followed the House-master towards the Head's study.

"Knox is a wottah!" said Gussy warmly. "I am vewy disappointed in Knox. In his study he appealed to be most kind and considerate. But now I feah he has come out in his true colours, for before Mr. Wailton he made the evidence as black as he could against young Wally."

"I'm not surprised," remarked Tom Merry. "Now the business has come out, and he knows he stands little chance of getting his tenner out of you, he'll make it as hot as he can for young Wally."

And that, indeed, was the opinion of others besides Tom Merry. They did not know what the shady prefect's little game was, but they felt certain, from Knox's furious face alone, that the bringing of the affair into the light of day had somewhat upset that little game.

The juniors were still discussing the affair when Cutts of the Fifth strode up from the direction of the Head's study.

"D'Arcy major and minor, you are both wanted at once in the Head's study," he said.

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with a curious, mocking glance at young Wally. "Better buck up, the pair of you!"

"Vewy well, Cutts!"

Arthur Augustus and Wally headed for Dr. Holmes' study, followed by the concerned glances of their chums. And a moment later Herries and Digby were following their leader towards Study No. 6 to get tea ready. Tom Merry & Co. wended their way towards the Shell passage for the same purpose, leaving Wally's chums to discuss the matter alone—which they did excitedly and volubly.

"Well," snorted Curly Gibson, "this is a nice go, and no mistake! What are we going to do about it? Those old fogies do nothing, but gas, and it's up to us to help old Wally out of the blessed hole."

"Blessed if I know what we can do, old scout!" muttered Jameson thoughtfully. "Unless—My hat!"

Jameson chuckled.

"We could search Knox's study for the merry old tenner—if there ever was one. I'll bet old Knox never troubled to search for it—what?"

"Oh crumbs! You mean—"

"I mean what you think I mean, Jameson. We owe the rotter one or two scores, and it's up to us to pay our debts. It's a bit risky, but—are you on?"

"Rather!"

"Then come on!" said Jameson, leading the way.

And the four young rascals of the Third trooped to Knox's study to carry out their kindly intentions of searching for the prefect's missing tenner.

"All serene!" murmured Jameson, with a cautious glance round the door. "Nobody here! I think I'll start on the pictures."

And Jameson started on the pictures by twisting the cords and leaving them hanging upside-down. But evidently he did not find a banknote behind them, for he went next to the bookshelves, and cheerfully tipped the books in a heap over the floor.

There was still nothing doing in the banknote line; but the fag, still enthusiastic, went to the mantelpiece and, finding nothing but the works inside the clock, filled the remaining space with a handful of cinders from the grate, and turned his attention to the vases.

There were two large vases, and the fag really felt hopeful about these, but again there was nothing doing. Save for a few unpaid bills, the vases were empty. Leaving these inside, he emptied a handful of soot into each, and filled them to the brim with water from the kettle.

Then, after turning the photos in the photo-frames upside-down, Jameson turned to help his chums, who were struggling to take the carpet up.

It was a difficult job, but they managed it between them, and after piling the chairs on the table, covered them over with the carpet and tablecloth.

"What about the table-drawer?" grinned Reggie Manners.

"Good egg! But I'll attend to that. You can be emptying this bottle of gum over the easy-chair while I'm searching the drawer, Reggie, old man."

And while Reggie obediently began to get busy with the gum, Jameson proceeded to search Knox's drawer. Fortunately, the drawer was unlocked. The young scamp jerked it out, and emptied the contents in a flood over the floor.

"Hallo! Here's a box of cigs!"

Detective Kerr Investigates

No. 35.

THE MYSTERY OF "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."



MONTY LOWTHER, the humorist of St. Jim's, was quite startled when Mr. Ratcliff, the master of the New House, called in at Study No. 10 and demanded to know what Lowther meant by writing a paragraph about him in the fun column in "Tom Merry's Weekly."

The offending paragraph read: "However funny I may try to be, the prize for humour must go to Mr. Ratcliff. Fellows say he is the most comical old fraud ever seen at St. Jim's."

Though it was there in print, Lowther indignantly disclaimed authorship. Mr. Ratcliff, refusing to believe the paragraph had been inserted unknown to Lowther, had already laid a complaint before the Head, when "Detective" Kerr began to investigate.

KERR: We know you write no end of rot in your feature, Lowther, but we can't believe you would be as enough to be deliberately insulting to Ratty.

LOWTHER: It's a funny business about my fun column. The paragraph must have been shoved in after I had finished my copy.

KERR: Who could have got at it?

LOWTHER: I wrote it Tuesday evening after prep, and then went down to the Junior Common-room with Tom Merry and Manners. The study must have been empty for half an hour, and anybody could have slipped in. I sent the copy away first thing next morning without looking at it again.

KERR: Is there anybody you suspect?

LOWTHER: Racke was saying the column was a wash-out the other day, but that's hardly evidence. I put in a snippet about Mellish, too, that made him snappy. Some chaps wear their funnybones in queer places.

KERR: I might speak to Racke for a start.

LOWTHER: Oh, here's Mellish. Did you find that Latin primer all right, Mellish?

MELLISH: Yes, thanks, Lowther. I put it back after classes.

KERR: What's all this about a Latin primer?

LOWTHER: Mellish wanted to borrow it, as he's lost his. I have a spare copy in my study.

KERR: When did he borrow it?

LOWTHER: Tuesday evening. He asked for it when I was going down to the Common-room, and I told him he would find it in the lower cupboard in the study.

KERR: I see. Well, now for Racke.

RACKE: Unutterable bilge, I call Lowther's fun column, Kerr. You asked for my opinion.

KERR: We can't all have the same sense of humour; I appreciate that, Racke. By the way, when you were in the Common-room on Tuesday evening, did you speak to Lowther?

RACKE: I wasn't in the Common-room at all on Tuesday evening. I stayed up here in my study after prep till bed-time.

KERR: Anybody with you?

RACKE: No, as it happened. If you want to know, I was writing out an impot for Mr. Linton.

LOWTHER: Yes, Kerr, I left the fun column on the table, with a sheet of blotting-paper lying over it. It was apparently untouched when I found it next morning and sent it off.

KERR: The fellow who tampered with it could easily have replaced the blotting-paper. What's in that lower cupboard?

LOWTHER: Only a few spare books. I rarely open it. Look—it's grown a few cobwebs inside—there's a nice spider's web spun from the door hinge to Hall and Knight's Algebra, Volume I.

KERR: Whose pencil is that on the floor?

LOWTHER: Hallo! It has Racke's name on it—out in the end. Oh, but Racke came into the study this morning to speak to Tom Merry. He might have dropped it then.

KERR: Well, Lowther, for my part I think the whole thing is clear now.

(Who inserted the insulting paragraph in Lowther's fun column? And can you see how the culprit is proved guilty? Kerr's solution is on page 35.)

"Shove 'em in the fire, Curly!"
"And here's a blessed racing-paper! My hat! It's got Knox's writing in the margin! I'll shove this on the fire, too!"

"Half a no! Let's have a squint at that paper!" said Jameson quickly.

Curly Gibson handed over the sporting paper, with a grin.

"Spot the notes in the margin!" he chuckled. "My hat! That would take some explaining to the Head—what?"

"We'll take charge of this," said Jameson grimly. "It may come in useful in case Knox wants to thank us for searching for his merry tenner. Anything else?"

"Only rubbish! Hallo! What's this? Oh crumbs!"

Curly Gibson gave a startled gasp and handed a dirty, crumpled slip of paper over to his chum.

"It's a blessed note from that swindling book-maker Banks," he muttered. "Threatening old Knox with exposure if he doesn't let him have ten pounds on account by the 17th—that's to-morrow. My hat! I oughtn't to have read it!"

Jameson hesitated. He was no keener to pry into Knox's private papers than Curly was. But he thought of Wally, and his cheery face set grimly.

"This looks jolly fishy!" he exclaimed, cramming the paper into his pocket. "We'll

show this to Wally, and see what he has to say about it."

"But it's Knox's private—"

"Can't help that—besides, we're only borrowing it. Strikes me it's going to be useful. And now we'd better be fading away. Half a mo', though. We'll leave Knuxy a note."

And, picking up pen and paper, the fag scribbled a few lines as follows:

"Dear Knox.—We have searched your study, but regret we have not found your tenner—only a few fags, and a copy of 'Racing Snips,' which we have decided to keep, in case you wish to thank us for our kindness in searching for your banknote."

Jameson refrained from signing this epistle—for obvious reasons. And, after handing it round for approval, he sealed the envelope, addressed it, and placed it in a conspicuous position on the mantelpiece.

Then, after thoughtfully filling the table-drawer with the contents of the coal-scuttle, the young rascals streamed from the room, having searched to their complete satisfaction—though they hadn't succeeded in finding the missing tenner.

CHAPTER 8.

Before the Beaks!

GERALD KNOX followed Mr. Railton to the Head's study with set lips and a fast-beating heart.

He had fondly imagined the gullible Gussy would have kept the business a close secret for his brother's sake. But now the affair was taking a serious turn.

It was pretty plain now that his little plan would have to be fought out to the bitter end. And the prefect realised that he would have to fight hard if he was to come through the affair safely.

But the Sixth Former's face showed nothing of his uneasiness as he stood by whilst Mr. Railton briefly related the story of the banknote, the Head listening in surprise and dismay.

"Kindly state the facts in detail, Knox," said Dr. Holmes quietly, when the Housemaster had finished.

The prefect explained in cool, level tones—now, strangely enough, with no desire or attempt to shield Wally D'Arcy. In fact, Knox frankly charged the fag with destroying the note. And Dr. Holmes' face set grimly as he listened.

"Why did you not report this matter yesterday, Knox?" he questioned sharply.

"Because I did not view the affair in a serious light then. I still had hopes that the note would turn up, sir."

"Have you questioned the junior?"

"No, sir. He refused to come when I sent for him. I then sent for D'Arcy major, hoping that he would persuade his brother to explain what he had done with it. My only desire was to save the youngster from trouble, if possible. That was why I delayed reporting the affair; though, of course, I fully intended doing so if the junior did not confess."

Dr. Holmes frowned.

"Very well, Knox. But I sincerely trust the matter is not so serious as you appear to imagine. Perhaps I had better see Cutts. Kindly ask him to step in here, Knox."

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When the prefect had gone, Mr. Railton and the Head looked at each other gravely.

"Well, Mr. Railton, what is your opinion of this wretched affair?" asked Dr. Holmes quietly.

"I hardly know what to think," said Mr. Railton, frowning. "If the facts are as Knox states, there seems little doubt that the boy has destroyed the note."

"Then you do not entertain the possibility that—the wretched boy has stolen the money?"

"Not for one moment, sir," said Mr. Railton emphatically. "The boy is well supplied with pocket-money, and that supposition is extremely unlikely. Nor do I believe he has destroyed it wilfully. He is mischievous, but is not of a revengeful nature; nor has he ever shown any disposition to base actions. I have always held a high opinion of him."

"That is greatly in the boy's favour, certainly," said Dr. Holmes. "But his threat to Knox, and the fact that he refused to visit Knox when sent for, inclines me to think that the boy has destroyed the note wilfully—possibly owing to sudden temptation. However—"

The Head broke off abruptly as a knock sounded at the door, and Knox and Cutts entered. Knox had already acquainted Cutts with the state of affairs, and a moment later the Fifth Former was answering the questions Dr. Holmes put to him without hesitation.

His evidence bore out in every detail Knox's own story. And, with the exception of one detail, was quite truthful; but it was a very important detail. It was to the effect that Cutts had actually seen the prefect replace the ten-pound note in the envelope.

As a matter of fact, Cutts had not; he had merely taken the action for granted.

Cutts was perhaps as big a rascal as Knox; but to do him justice, he honestly believed Knox had replaced the note, and he honestly believed Wally was guilty of the charge.

"Thank you! I think that will do, Cutts," said the Head grimly at length. "Will you please tell D'Arcy major and D'Arcy minor to come to me as you go out? Knox, you may leave this matter in my hands now."

And at the Head's nod of dismissal Knox departed also. There was a grim silence in the room when the two seniors had gone. Both master and Head were looking very grave now, and it was plain they had already formed their opinion as to Wally's guilt, whatever Wally's defence was likely to bring forth.

"Come in!"

Dr. Holmes bent his gaze scrutinisingly upon Wally as he followed his brother into the room a moment later. Mr. Railton motioned Arthur Augustus to wait by the door, to that worthy's indignation.

The fag met the Head's keen gaze stoutly enough.

"You are aware of my reason for sending for you?" began Dr. Holmes, not unkindly.

"Yes, sir."

"Knox of the Sixth has brought a serious charge against you, my boy. He declares that you have destroyed, or are otherwise responsible for the loss of a banknote for ten pounds from his study. Mr. Railton, however, tells me you deny the charge. Now, I wish you to give me a clear and detailed statement, omitting nothing of your movements yesterday afternoon."

Wally flushed, and hesitated a moment. Then he told his story of the affair. And, wisely enough, he omitted nothing.

And a faint smile appeared on the face of even the Head as Wally related how, with much energy, he had prepared Knox's tea.

But Dr. Holmes' brow was dark when Wally had finished. The junior's statement in the main bore out the statements of Cutts and Knox. And the fag apparently had only his good name as a defence.

"Then you admit having seen and handled the note?" asked the Head, after a pause.

"Yes, sir," answered Wally. "But since handing the note back to Knox I have neither seen nor touched it."

"You did not see Knox place it in the envelope, then?"

"Oh, yes, sir—at least, I remember seeing him place the envelope behind the photo-frame, and I supposed he had done so."

"Ah! And you admit, I suppose, saying you would pay Knox back for the punishment he gave you for insolence?"

"Ye-es, sir. But I did not mean anything serious."

"H'm! You persist in your statement that you did not destroy the note wilfully, and yet you are certain you did not destroy it by accident?"

"Yes, sir. I did not touch anything on the mantelpiece, I am positive of that."

The Head eyed the junior, with a worried frown. Somehow, Wally's statement rang true. And yet the evidence of Knox and Cutts was irrefutable.

He shot a glance at Mr. Railton, and their eyes met.

"Have you any question you wish to ask D'Arcy, Mr. Railton?" he asked.

"I'm afraid not, sir. But I would like to put forward a suggestion."

"Pray proceed, Mr. Railton."

"It is that the matter be held over for a day or two, in order to subject Knox's study and belongings to a thorough searching. According to Knox's own statement, this has not been done, and it is in view of this fact, and in strict justice to the junior, that I put forward the suggestion. Possibly in the interval something may turn up to throw light on the affair."

"Very well, Mr. Railton. I will defer my verdict. And I sincerely hope and trust that something will occur in the meantime to clear the matter up. But"—Dr. Holmes paused, and turned to Wally—"you heard Mr. Railton's suggestion, D'Arcy. I will defer the matter for forty-eight hours. My boy, if you have any confession to make, there is time, and I advise you to make it now."

"Bai Jova!"

"I have nothing to confess, sir," said Wally indignantly. "I have told you the truth."

The Head pursed his lips.

"Very well, then, D'Arcy. I will send for you when required. You may go!"

And Wally left the room without another word.

But Arthur Augustus did not follow him—not immediately. He stepped forward determinedly, his face pale and distressed.

"One moment, Dr. Holmes! Pway listen to me—"

"Ah! You may go, D'Arcy major! Your evidence will not be required, after all, my boy!" said the Head.

"Weally, sir!" stuttered Gussy indignantly. "I have vevy good weasons for—"

"That will do, D'Arcy. You may go!"

And Arthur Augustus gasped and went.

CHAPTER 9.

Painful for Gagy!

THERE was a gleam of triumph in Knox's eyes as he left the Head's study and strode towards the Sixth Form passage.

So far he had come through the business with flying colours. Whatever came to light during the examination of D'Arcy minor, he felt pretty certain what the result would be—the faces of both Dr. Holmes and Mr. Railton had told him that.

And if Wally D'Arcy was proved guilty, it could only mean one thing. Besides being severely punished, the fag would be obliged to make good the "missing tenner," and his little scheme would be a success, after all.

Knox laughed softly as he kicked open his study door. But the laugh died suddenly as he stared in amazement at the scene of havoc within. For the moment he could scarcely believe his own eyes.

Then he saw the envelope on the mantelpiece, and with a gasp of fury he crossed the room and tore it open savagely. His feelings too deep for words, he scanned the brief note. A moment later he was searching frantically among the heap of papers on the floor.

He arose at last empty-handed, grinding his teeth with helpless rage. His study—a prefect's study—had been ragged; presumably by fags. And he could do nothing—he was helpless. The hidden threat in the fag's note decided him upon that.

For quite five minutes Knox raged impotently. But realising at last that there was nothing else for it, if he wished to keep the thing a secret, he set to work putting the room in something like order, murmuring savagely to himself.

By the time he had finished, he was nothing less than furious. And he was pacing up and down

MORE PALS OVERSEAS WIN PRIZES!

Result of October "Footer-Stamps."

Prizes of TEN SHILLINGS EACH have been awarded to the following two competitors with the highest totals of "goals" scored;

Fong Ying Tuck, P.O. Box 82, Kuala Lumpur, Malaya.
R. Wood, 94, Queen Street, Port Elizabeth, S. Africa.

Prizes of FIVE SHILLINGS EACH have been awarded to the following twenty competitors whose totals of "goals" ranged from 157 down to 59:

Stan H. Beyers, P.O. Box 1132, Johannesburg, Transvaal, S. Africa; Bion Dury, 1, Jalan Iskandar, Greentown, Ipoh, Perak, F.M.S.; W. H. Hunneyburn, 473, Promie Road, University P.O., Raungon, Burma; Howard Hunter 146, De Villiers Street, Kenilworth, Johannesburg, S. Africa; A. W. Husband, P.O. Box 587, Salisbury, S. Rhodesia; M. M. Ibrahim, 18, Battery Road, Singapore, S.S.; David Khaw, c/o Soon Bee Chan, Batu Pahat, Johore, Malaya; Chew Kok Kheng, 64, Kelawei Road, Penang, S.S.; Tan Meng Kiat, 227G, Upp. Serangoon Road, Somapah Estate, Singapore, S.S.; L. D. Lerner, Woodlands Hotel, Main Road, Sea Point, Capetown, S. Africa; V. Moffat, c/o R. Moffat, Mail Branch, G.P.O., Brisbane, Queensland, Australia; Ralph Muller, 29, Madeline Road, Durban, S. Africa; Archie Rodwell, 24, Roos Street, Capetown, S. Africa; Walter Schulte, Church Street, Ladybrand, O.F.S., S. Africa; Teo Tong Seng, 137, Moulmein Road, Singapore, S.S.; Roy Shelton, P.O. Box 2092, Johannesburg, S. Africa; Victor S. Sherrin, 3, Reis Street, S. Brisbane, S.2, Queensland, Australia; Jose Thomas, 58-8th Street, N.T.S., Springs, Transvaal, S. Africa; W. T. Tolchard, P.O. Box 6, Witbank, Transvaal, S. Africa; Tan Yeow Wha, 269, Charlton Road, Singapore, S.S.

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the room, still in this state of mind, when Baggy Trimble looked in.

It was perhaps a most unfortunate time for Baggy to call. Knox was not in the mood for callers, for one thing, and he was already fed-up with Baggy for another.

He had, since the previous afternoon, made Baggy several small loans, and was getting just a little tired of being dunned for money by the fat junior.

Knox stopped his pacing, and eyed Baggy with a fierce scowl. Trimble, unfortunately, failed to see it. He was looking round the room with quite a disappointed look on his fat face.

"I say, Knox, old man," he grumbled, in a hurt tone, "isn't tea ready yet? I hope—I really hope you've not had tea without me."

Knox did not answer—in words. Without pausing, in his blind rage, to reflect on the possible consequences, he made one bound, and snatched his ashplant. A moment later, the sound of loud swishing, intermingled with howls of pain and wails of woe, were proceeding from Knox's study.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooooh! Murder!" shrieked Baggy, squirming frantically in the prefect's grip. "Ow! Ah! Stoppit! I'll tell everybody! Wooooop! Stoppit!"

But Knox did not stop it.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

Loud and long the unhappy Baggy's yells echoed, and the enraged prefect was still going strong when hurried footsteps sounded outside. Next moment the door was flung open as Kildare, with a crowd of fellows behind him, appeared in the doorway.

"Stop that, Knox!" said Kildare, stepping forward. "What on earth is the matter?"

The prefect dropped the cane with a breathless gasp.

"Nothing, Kildare!" he rapped out furiously. "Nothing that requires your interference, anyway!"

"Yes, it does!" yelled Baggy, with a vindictive glare at Knox. "I'm jolly well going to show him up, Kildare! He's—"

"Shut up, Trimble!" snapped Kildare angrily. "What were you thrashing Trimble for, Knox?"

"He daren't tell you, Kildare—he jolly well daren't!" yelled Baggy viciously. "He was whacking me because I spotted him pinch some money from your cashbox, Kildare!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I saw the blessed beast steal a banknote from your cashbox yesterday, Kildare!" gasped Baggy.

"You lying young sweep!" breathed Kildare, more amused than angry. "What do you mean by telling me such rot as—"

"Ask him!" panted Baggy wildly. "It's the truth, I tell you! I saw—"

"Shut up! And clear out, you young ass!" exclaimed Kildare. "I've a jolly good mind to thrash you myself for telling such thumping lies. Clear out!"

"Hold on!" said Knox quickly. "I'd rather you looked into this matter, Kildare!"

He had recovered his calmness, and met the captain's surprised look with a sneering smile. Baggy's statement, though it happened to be quite true, was so improbable that Knox had little fear of Kildare or anyone else believing it. But it was as well to remove all possible doubts, for all that.

"What rot!" said Kildare, with a smile. "You

surely don't imagine I place any credence in a yarn like that, Knox?"

"No; but all the fellows are not blessed with your common sense, Kildare!" said Knox, with a scarcely veiled sneer.

"Very well, Knox," said Kildare. "Come along with me, Trimble."

Knox grinned as Trimble rolled out after the captain. The rest of the fellows followed in a chortling crowd. They wanted to see what happened to Trimble when Kildare found he had had his trouble for nothing—as he very quickly did.

And Trimble gaped and looked dumbfounded as Kildare took from his cashbox a ten-pound note, and, after roughly counting the loose cash, replaced it, with a grim look. It was plain, even to Trimble's amazed eyes, that the captain found everything as it should be.



"You—you spoofing young rascal!" said Kildare. "If you hadn't already had one licking, I'd give you another for telling such senseless lies. As it is, you can do me five hundred lines—and now clear!"

"But—but I saw, Kildare—" spluttered Baggy frantically.

Kildare's hand strayed towards his cane, and Baggy did not finish his sentence. He rolled past the rows of grinning faces with feelings too deep for words. Only one fellow did not appear to be

grinning at Baggy's latest wonderful yarn; and that fellow, strangely enough, was Cardew.

Cardew was looking thoughtful as he lounged lazily after Trimble to that unhappy youth's study. A moment later he was listening to the tale from Baggy's own lips—a tale Baggy evidently told very well, for he managed to borrow half-a-crown on the strength of it from Cardew.



With one hefty shove Knox was sent rolling down the grassy slope, his arms and legs waving wildly. Splash! The prefect hit the river with a big splash and a loud howl. Tom Merry and Monty Lowther didn't stop to see what happened after that!

But Cardew's face wore a curious expression as he lounged along the Fourth Form passage. At Study No. 6 he paused and entered, to find Tom Merry & Co. with Blake & Co. The Terrible Three had apparently not been in long, for Monty Lowther was busily retailing Baggy's astounding yarn, amid many chuckles. Even the worried face of Arthur Augustus broke into a smile as he heard it.

"What's the joke, old beans?" asked Cardew quietly.

"Trimble is," said Lowther.
 "I heard Trimble's story," drawled Cardew, "but I didn't see any joke."

"Dash it all, you don't mean to say you believe that fat bouncer's rot?"

"Every dashed word!" said Cardew.

"My hat! Then you're a bigger ass than I thought you were, Cardew, and that's saying a lot!" grinned Lowther.

"Thanks!" said Cardew calmly. "By the way, Gussy, old top, I suppose it's quite true, that merry business of Knox and your brother Wally?"

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy, in dismay. "You've heard about the wotten affair, then?"

"All over the shop!" said Cardew, with a yawn. "That's why I believe our friend Baggy's yarn, old knut!"

"What on earth—Are you potty, Cardew?" asked Blake.

Cardew smiled and strode to the door. "I had quite a long chat with our friend Baggy," he observed casually. "Cute chap, Baggy! It appears he spotted friend Knox helpin' himself to a merry banknote yesterday afternoon out of Kildare's cashbox—a tenner it was, I understand—"

"But, you ass, didn't Kildare howl Trimble out?" said Lowther witheringly. "Didn't he find his blessed money in order, chump?"

"Yaas. That's why Knox's merry old tenner's missin'," yawned Cardew. "Think it over, old sports! Ta-ta!"

And Cardew departed.
 "The chump!" said Blake. "Why the thump doesn't he say straight out what he means?"

"Half a mo'!" said Tom Merry, in a startled tone. "I believe I've got it! Oh crumbs! He's right, too!"

"What the thump—"
 "Why, it's as plain as daylight!" gasped Tom excitedly. "He means that Knox's tenner was Kildare's all the time—that the rotter never had a tenner of his own. He simply borrowed it out of Kildare's cashbox, and returned it after letting young Wally and Cutts see the blessed thing! Trimble must have been spying round and spotted him take it!"

"Bai Jove!"
 The juniors exchanged startled glances.
 "But—but Wally saw him put it back in the envelope," muttered Herries.

"Wally only supposed he did. He says he didn't actually see him put it back," said Tom Merry quietly. "And I'm certain Cutts didn't, either. That rotter would say anything."

"Well, my word!" ejaculated Blake. "What a thumping, barefaced swindle!"

"Would you believe it?" said Tom Merry. "I felt certain there was trickery in the business somewhere, and now it's plain enough in view of Baggy's story. The whole thing's a daring scheme to swindle a tenner out of innocent old Gussy."

"What on earth are we to do about it? Go to the Head and tell him our suspicions—"

"What's the good of that?" said Tom Merry gloomily. "The Head would never believe a rascally thing like that about a prefect. And as for Baggy—well, he isn't likely to take Baggy's word before Knox's."

"But, dash it all, we can't let the thing go on! We've got to save young Wally somehow."

"That's right enough," replied Tom Merry. "But there's plenty of time, as Gussy says Wally's been granted forty-eight hours' grace. One of us will think of a better way to dish Knox before that time's up. Anyway, it's prep time now. We'd better scat!"

"Very well," said Blake, with a nod. "We'll sleep over it, at any rate. But if we haven't thought of a wheeze before Wally's time's up, then we'll jolly well risk it and go to the Head. Is that agreed?"

"Yaas, wathah!"
 And, having agreed upon that, Tom Merry & Co. departed to do their prep.

CHAPTER 10.
 Snapping Knox!

"TALK of angels—"
 Tom Merry & Co. were sauntering along the towpath by the shining Rhyt.
 It was a Saturday—a half-holiday, and quite a
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bright afternoon. But the Terrible Three were not looking very merry and bright, for all that.

Since the talk in No. 6 the previous evening the combined brains of both Co.'s had been engaged unceasingly on the problem of saving Wally. But no single flash of inspiration had so far rewarded their efforts.

And Tom Merry & Co. were even then discussing the astonishing affair of Knox's banknote, when Lowther made that remark as the tall figure of Knox himself came in sight along the river path.

"I'll snap him, I think!" grinned Manners, giving the camera he carried a tender pat. "The back entrance of the Green Man will make a jolly suitable background for Knoxy—what?"

"Don't be an ass!" muttered Tom. "The beggar'll pitch you and your blessed camera into the river if he does see—My hat!"

Tom Merry broke off with a startled exclamation. The prefect had just reached the little wicket-gate that gave admittance to the garden of the Green Man Inn, and, after a quick glance round, he passed through, and the gate swung to after him.

"Well, I'm blessed!" gasped Manners. "He's gone into the blessed pub, and in broad daylight, too! Charming conduct for a prefect of the Sixth—what?"

"I suppose he's going to spend the afternoon playing billiards!" muttered Tom Merry, in disgust.

The click of the ivory balls came to them clearly as they strolled past in the shadow of the high hedge fronting the garden.

Manners stopped suddenly, with a curious expression on his face.

"I say, you chaps," he exclaimed slowly, "I've got an idea!"

"Eh? What is it?"

Manners' eyes gleamed determinedly.

"I'm going to have a squint at old Knox playing billiards," he said coolly. "But—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"But possibly Knox may object to my seeing him," continued Manners. "He may even come chasing me. In that case I want you chaps to collar him at all costs. Pitch him into the river! Do anything with him, but don't let the beggar catch me—see?"

"Why, what the thump—here—"

Tom Merry broke off with a gasp of alarm and sprang forward. But Manners hadn't stayed to argue. Eluding his chum's detaining hand, he shot a swift glance up the garden path and slipped through the gate.

A moment later, hugging his camera, he was treading swiftly round the inside of the hedge. Tringing the lawn were trees and shrubs, and once through the gate it was a simple matter to approach the house unseen from the windows.

Manners was quite aware of the grave risk he was running—even of being seen on the premises of such a disreputable place. But Manners was not running such grave risks merely to watch Knox playing billiards.

And a second later the daring junior was peering cautiously into the open french window of the billiards-room. The balls had ceased to click, and at first Manners could only see the greasy-looking marker standing by the table with a cue in his hand.

Then he spotted Knox over in the corner talking to a flashy individual in shirtsleeves. It was Mr. Banks, cards harper and bookmaker.

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Manners gave a soft grunt and waited.

It seemed to the watching junior that Knox was giving Banks an explanation the bookie was reluctant to accept. But apparently the explanation—if it was that—was eventually accepted. When the two approached the table after a while, Banks was smiling quite agreeably. Knox's face, as he walked across the room and selected a cue, wore a worried expression.

Mr. Banks took the cue from the marker's hand.

"Undred up?" he queried genially.

"Yes," assented the prefect, lighting a cigarette carelessly.

Round the corner, outside the window, Manners began to fiddle with the camera. For some minutes after the ivory balls had been clicking, Manners watched and waited. Then his eyes gleamed.

Knox was standing over the table about to take a shot. Behind him stood the marker, a half-emptied glass in his hands. And a yard to the left stood Mr. Banks, puffing cheerfully at a fat cigar.

Manners set his teeth, and, with heart thumping a little, stepped boldly and silently into the billiards-room.

Knox looked up suddenly. For a few seconds he stared in dumbfounded amazement, his eyes glued helplessly on the camera with Manners behind it. Then:

Click!

And simultaneously with the click of the shutter, Knox awoke. With a roar like that of an angry bull, he made one frantic bound round the table. But he was not quite quick enough. Manners was already speeding like the wind down the garden-path.

"Come back!" yelled the prefect frantically, tearing in pursuit. "Come back, you young—whoop!"

A leg, that seemed to appear from nowhere, shot out as the furious senior reached the gate. Knox went sprawling, and rolled over and over on the towpath.

"At him!" came Tom Merry's voice sharply.

Knox had barely ceased rolling on the grass bordering the river-path when Lowther leaped like a panther at the prostrate senior. One hefty shove, and he was sent rolling again, with wildly waving limbs, down the grassy slope.

Splash!

Knox hit the river with a tremendous splash and a wild howl. And Tom Merry and Monty Lowther didn't stop to see what happened to him after that. In the distance Manners was still running. And, roaring with laughter, the two juniors pelted along the towpath after him, towards St. Jim's.

They hadn't the slightest idea what Manners' little game was, but they had a fairly clear idea what Knox's game would be if he caught them.

Twenty minutes later they reached the School House, breathless and panting. Tom Merry was looking grim as he led the way to Study No. 10. He had quite enjoyed the encounter with Knox; but he felt an explanation was required from Manners, for all that.

They met Talbot in the Shell passage.

"Seen that ass Manners come in, Talbot?" queried Tom Merry.

"Yes, old top! Saw him scudding up to the box-room a couple of minutes ago," said Talbot curiously. "What's up?"

Tom Merry gave a jump. Manners used one

of the box-rooms as a dark-room. In a flash the meaning of Manners' extraordinary actions dawned upon him.

"My hat! What a topping wheeze!" he exclaimed delightedly. "Good old Manners! Come on, Monty!"

And leaving Talbot staring after them in astonishment, they pelted up the staircase. At the door of the box-room Tom Merry stopped. From inside sounded a soft chuckle.

"Let us in, Manners, you boulder!" called Tom Merry.

"Can't be did, old top!" came the voice of Manners. "I'm busy developing films. Run away, and be getting tea ready! I'll be down in an hour."

Tom Merry grinned as he led the way down again. Monty Lowther looked more puzzled than ever as he followed his leader into Study No. 10.

"What on earth's the game, Tommy?" said Lowther irritably. "You don't think Manners had the nerve to take a snapshot of Knox in that pub?"

"What a brain!" murmured Tom Merry admiringly. "You've actually thought it out for yourself!"

"Rats! But what's the idea? Surely he doesn't propose showing the photograph to the Head? Why, it would get the begger sacked!"

"Without a doubt!" said Tom gravely. "But I don't fancy that's the merry idea. I fancy that photo's going to be useful. If Knox doesn't find his spoof tenner and clear young Wally when he knows we hold that trump-card over him, I'll— I'll play Grundy in the footer team!"

"My word! It's great!" gasped Lowther.

"It is—it are! Anyway, we'll soon know if that is Manners' giddy wheeze. And while we're waiting we'll get tea ready."

And Tom Merry and Lowther set about getting tea—their faces quite merry and bright. It really looked as though Manners had hit on a wheeze for dishing Knox at last.

CHAPTER 11.

The Knock-out for Knox!

WHEN Manners of the Shell came into Study No. 10, about an hour later, he found quite a crowd of fellows awaiting his coming with eager excitement.

Blake & Co., with Wally D'Arcy, had looked in to see if the Terrible Three had yet thought of an idea for dishing Knox. And to them Tom Merry related the afternoon's happenings, and especially Manners' idea—at least, what they suspected was Manners' idea.

Manners grinned as he met the questioning glances.

"You—you beggar!" said Tom Merry admiringly. "You actually had the nerve to go into that beastly pub and photograph Knox! Is that your little wheeze?"

"Goal first time!" assented Manners, with a chuckle. "You backed me up, jolly well, Tommy, I must say! Tea ready?"

"Kettle's almost on the boil; but never mind tea now!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "What's the giddy game, Manners?"

Manners looked surprised.

"It isn't a game—it's a serious business," he said. "I've been taking Knox's photograph—and it looks like turning out jolly good, too! You've no idea what a merry blade Knox looks

with a billiard cue in his hand. I'm going to offer him one to put on his study mantelpiece!"

"Knox will be pleased!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"I hope so! But it's really to help Wally that I'm doing it. My idea is to offer the photo as a reward, if he'll buck up and find his missing tenner. I'm inclined to think he'll go to no end of trouble to find it then—especially when I tell him I intend to present the photo to the Head if the tenner remains lost."

"I should jolly well think so!" roared Blake, in delight. "Why, you're a giddy genius, Manners! With that photo in our hands we've got Knox absolutely beaten! It's just the thumping wheeze! Hallo! What the dickens have you got there, Wally?"

Diving a hand suddenly into his pocket, Wally had produced a folded sporting paper and a slip of dirty, crumpled notepaper. It was the copy of "Racing Snips" and the threatening note from Banks, the bookmaker in Rylcombe—the articles the young rascals of the Third had "borrowed" the night before.

(Continued on the next page.)

HE GOT THIS TORCH FREE

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Wally handed the missives to Blake, with a chuckle.

"Just remembered 'em!" he grinned. "They'll do to back up the photograph, old tops!"

"My only hat!" gasped Blake, handing the articles round for inspection. "No wonder the rotter was desperate for money! That note explains the reason for the whole scheme. Where on earth did you get these things, Wally?"

"A pal gave them to me, old scout!" Arthur Augustus gave a jump.

"Bai Jove, I wathah fancy I know! Wally, you young wascal, I weally believe those wotten things were taken fwm Knox's study when your chums were waggin' it last night!"

"My hat, Gussy! How do you think things out?" murmured Wally admiringly.

"Weally, you—"
Gussy broke off with a jump as the door flew back and Gerald Knox strode into the study. The senior's face was pale, and his eyes were gleaming as they rested on Manners.

"Manners!"
"Hallo, Knox!" said Manners genially. "Want me?"

"You'll come to my room at once!" said Knox in a grinding voice.

"Not to-day, old top!"
"You—you won't come?" said Knox savagely.

"If it's about the photo," said Manners apologetically, "I'm sorry, but it's not ready yet. But I hope to have quite a few printed to-night."

The prefect fairly trembled with rage.
"You—you young scoundrel!" he gasped furiously. "You—you dared to photograph me! If you don't give me that film at once I—I'll—I'll thrash—"

"That's awful! Good of you, Knox!" smiled Manners pleasantly. "But I don't want you to give me anything for it, dear boy! Mind you, it isn't exactly a gift. It's like this, you know. I'm very concerned about that lost tenner of yours, Knox; and I really think that if you had a bit of encouragement you'd turn to and find it. So I propose to offer the photo as a reward."

"What?"
"Of course," said Manners, "if the tenner remains lost, then I'm afraid the reward's off. In that case I propose to make the Head a present of it."

"The—the H-Head!" stammered Knox.

"And I'll tel you what I'll do," went on Manners reflectively. "If the photo isn't a sufficient inducement I'll offer you something else as well. I happen to have a couple of articles that were found in a prefect's study yesterday. One is a copy of 'Racing Snips'—it's not a new one, by the way, for there are pencil notes in the margin—and the other is merely a note from a gentleman named Banks. Perhaps you know the chap who's lost the things, Knox?"

"You—you—you—"
"Mind you," warned Manners, with a shake of the head, "I'm only holding this splendid offer open for a brief period. In fact," he said, changing his tone suddenly, "to put it plainly, unless you go to the Head, and clear young Wally D'Arcy with regard to that banknote before seven o'clock to-night, then a photograph, with the copy of 'Racing Snips' and the note, goes to Dr. Holmes! Will that suit you?"

For quite half a minute the baffled senior stared speechlessly at Manners, his face working spasmodically. Then Blake broke the painful silence.

"The game's up, Knox, you rotter!" he said.

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with a curl of the lip. "We know all about your dirty swindle, and you may as well own up, and clear young Wally."

The prefect hesitated, his face white with suppressed rage. To be beaten by juniors—just when his plot looked like succeeding, too—maddened him beyond words. But he was beaten, and he knew it; the juniors' grim faces told him they were in deadly earnest.

"I—I'll go to the Head now!" he choked at last. And with a pale and furious face, Knox turned and left the study without another word. The juniors looked at each other.

"Think he'll do it?" asked Blake.

"I'm certain he will. There's nothing else for him to do," said Tom Merry.

And Tom Merry was right. Five minutes later Kildare looked in, with a smile.

"D'Arcy minor here? Ah, you're wanted in the Head's study, D'Arcy!" said Kildare.

Wally nodded, and followed the captain from the room. He was not away long. And when he reappeared his grinning face gave them the answer.

"All serene!" he chuckled. "Dismissed without a stain on my character. Quite a decent old bird, the Head!"

"Bai Jove!" gasped Gussy, in delight. "Then the wottah has actually confessed, Wally?"

"Not a bit of it, old top!" said Wally, with a sniff. "He's cleared me by telling thumping lies, of course. Said he'd found his merry old tenner in the pocket of another jacket. Anyway—"

"And didn't the Head ask to see it?" asked Blake.

"N-no. But he wasn't half waxy, and no mistake."

"It's been a nasty knock for Knox!" chuckled Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! But nevah mind that wascal, deah boys!" observed Arthur Augustus, with a beaming smile.

"I would like to remark that I feel vevy much obliged to you fellows for wallyn' wound Wally in his hour of twouble, and I wpose that such a weally happy endin' to the howwid affair should be celebrated by a weally wippin' feed! I still have three pound notes left out of my last wemittance—"

"Good old Gussy!" came the hearty chorus.

And ten minutes later quite a merry party assembled in Study No. 6. Besides Blake & Co. and Tom Merry & Co., Wally had been allowed for once to bring along his chums of the Third—Jameson, Frank Levison, Reggie Manners, and Curly Gibson.

It was a bit of a crush, but none the less enjoyable for all that. And the faces of host and guests were merry and bright as they celebrated the happy ending to the affair of Knox's missing tenner.

Knox of the Sixth lay very low for some days after that, and it was plain from his pale, harassed face that he was living in constant dread of the expected "trouble" from Banks, the book-maker.

But the days passed, and nothing happened. And it became clear that either the rascally prefect had found some means of satisfying the demands of the sharper, or that Banks was too cunning to kill the goose that laid his golden eggs.

Next Week: "GLYN'S HAIR-RAISING INVENTION!"



Faced with exposure, the bogus master of Cedar Creek School determines to remove the only one who is wise to his game—for there is—

A FORTUNE AT STAKE!

by Martin Clifford.

By Luck and Pluck!

"LOOK out!" exclaimed Vere Beauclerc. Frank Richards and his chums were riding on the trail to Cedar Creek School in the sunny morning. The three were about to turn out of the forest bridle-path into the broad Thompson trail when the sudden pounding of hoof-beats startled them.

Barely six yards ahead of them a horse dashed by at tearing speed, with head tossing wildly and reins flying loose. A girl was clinging to the saddle, and for a moment her white face was turned towards the chums as she flashed by.

"Molly Lawrence!" exclaimed Bob Lawless.

"After her!" shouted Frank Richards.

The runaway horse was thundering on towards Cedar Creek, and the three chums, as they rode in pursuit, expected every moment to see the girl tossed from the animal's back.

The three spurred on at desperate speed. Vere Beauclerc's splendid black horse drew rapidly ahead of his chums' ponies. Swiftly as the runaway was galloping, Beauclerc overhauled it fast. Frank and Bob were hopelessly behind.

Beauclerc, with his handsome face hard-set, was riding as if for his life. Closer and closer he drew to the runaway, till he drew gradually abreast. Molly Lawrence's terrified eyes were upon him. She tried to speak, but no words came.

Cedar Creek School was in sight now, far ahead, with a group of fellows standing at the gate. Towards the school the two horses thundered on.

"Hold on!" panted Beauclerc.

He rode close beside the runaway, and caught the flying reins. It was a difficult feat to perform, with both horses in violent motion, but Beauclerc's hand was quick and his eye was sure. His grip on the rein slackened down the runaway, but to stop him was impossible. Beauclerc rode on fast, keeping pace with the frantic animal, but gradually pulling him in.

The pace slackened at last. Within a few yards of the gates of Cedar Creek School Beauclerc succeeded in halting the runaway. The animal came to a stop, steaming and panting.

"Safe now, Miss Lawrence!" said Beauclerc breathlessly.

He slid to the ground, still holding the reins of the runaway. He changed his grasp to the bit.

"Oh!" panted Molly. "Mind he doesn't get loose again!"

"That's all right. He's quiet enough now."

Still keeping a grip on the bit, Beauclerc helped the girl down to the trail.

There was a pounding on the hard earth as Frank and Bob dashed up and jumped down.

"You've done it, Cherub!" exclaimed Bob.

"Yes, it's all O.K."

The girl looked back anxiously along the trail.

"My brother—"

Tom Lawrence came in sight. He rode up and dismounted, gasping for breath.

"Thank goodness you're all right, Moll!" he exclaimed. "I guess I thought you were a gone coon."

"I—I thought so, too," stammered Molly. "I should have been but for Beauclerc. He stopped my horse."

"Good old Cherub!" said Tom Lawrence gratefully. "As for that heathen, I'll skin him!"

"Yen Chin, do you mean?" asked Frank Richards.

"Yes; the young idiot scared the gee by letting off silly crackers on the trail!" growled Lawrence. "One of his blessed Chinese jokes. I'll choke him!"

"Look after Molly!" murmured Bob.

Poor Molly was white as a sheet and almost fainting. Her brother caught her by the arm, forgetting all about Yen Chin for the moment.

"Come on, Moll," he said. "Will you look after the hosses, you chaps?"

"You bet!"

Lawrence led his sister into the schoolhouse, leaning heavily on his arm.

The Cedar Creek fellows surrounded the chums. Eben Hacke clapped Beauclerc on the shoulder in great admiration.

"You can ride, some!" he said. "I guess I never saw anything neater."

"First-rate!" declared Chunky Todgers. "I guess I didn't think you had it in you, Cherub!"

"Thank you, Chunky!"

"Fathead!" said Bob Lawless. "The Cherub could ride anybody's head off here. I'll talk to that heathen when he comes in."

The chums put up the horses in the corral, and Tom Lawrence met them at the gates as they went into the schoolground. His face was grim.

"How's Molly?" asked Frank.

"Oh, Molly's all right now!" answered Lawrence. "She's sitting down in Miss Meadows' room; only a bit white. I've brought out a trail-ropo to talk to that heathen. Here he comes!"

Little Yen Chin, the Chinese, was trotting towards the school. As he jumped off his horse Tom Lawrence strode towards him. Yen Chin dodged round the horse. He did not like the look of the coiled trail-ropo in the Canadian schoolboy's hand.

"Whattée mattee?" he demanded.

"Come here, you heathen! I'm going to give you something for frightening Molly's horse!"

"Only little jokee!" pleaded Yen Chin.

"You young ass!" exclaimed Frank Richards. "Don't you know that Molly might have broken her neck?"

"Me velly solly."

"She jolly well would have if the Cherub hadn't been handy," said Hacke.

"No whackee!" roared Yen Chin, as Lawrence pursued him round the standing horse and grasped him by the collar. "Pool little Chinese solly."

"I guess I'll make you sorrier!" said Lawrence grimly.

Whack, whack, whack!

Yen Chin roared.

"You stoppee! No whackee! Huurtee pool little Chinese!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"That's enough, Lawrence," said Beauclerc, catching Tom's arm.

Lawrence gave him a grim look for a moment, and then he nodded and released the "Chow" of Cedar Creek. Yen Chin dodged away, howling. But as soon as he reached a safe distance he turned round, placed his thumb to his little nose, and extended his fingers.

"Lawrence great fool!" he called out. "You go choppee chippee. Yah!"

And with that defiance Yen Chin promptly disappeared into the lumber school and took refuge in the school-room. His horse was left on the trail, and Frank Richards took it into the corral.

The bell was ringing for lessons when the three chums came up to the schoolhouse. Molly Lawrence was in the porch, still looking a little pale.

"All right now, Molly?" asked Bob cheerily.

"Yes," faltered Molly. "I—I was a little frightened. Thank you so much, Beauclerc!"

"Not at all, Miss Lawrence!" said Beauclerc, with a smile. "It was lucky we came up the trail just then."

Bob Lawless gave his English chum a rather

droll look as they went into the school-room together. "Miss Lawrence" was rather a stately form of address for the lumber school, but the Cherub had his own little manners and customs.

Molly's eye dwelt for some moments on Beauclerc, and she smiled. Vere Beauclerc had always been much admired by the feminine element in the lumber school, and now he was a hero—in Molly's eyes, at least.

Strange News!

THERE was some buzzing and whispering in Miss Meadows' class in the log school-room that morning. Most of it was round Tom Lawrence and his sister. Frank Richards caught once or twice the name of Mr. Trevelyan, the new master at Cedar Creek. He wondered what the subject was. Frank Richards was a good deal interested in the new master, as were his chums.

Mr. Trevelyan had not yet taken up his duties in the school, being still indisposed owing to a fall from horseback; at all events, that was what the school was given to understand. But there were a good many fellows who grinned over Mr. Trevelyan's "indisposition," and opined that he was "soft," and laying up for nothing, or next to nothing.

When the school was dismissed, Frank Richards & Co. looked for Lawrence. It was evident that Tom and Molly knew something in the way of news regarding Mr. Trevelyan, and they were curious to know what it was. They found Lawrence and his sister in the centre of a little crowd in the playground.

"Waal, it beats the hull deck!" Eben Hacke was saying, as they came up.

"It beats everything, if it's true!" said Chunky Todgers. "But is it true, Lawrence?"

"You bet!" answered Lawrence.

"What's the news?" inquired Bob Lawless. "Something about Trevelyan?"

"Yes. I got it from my Uncle Henderson," said Lawrence. "It's true enough. Mr. Henderson is coming over here to see Mr. Trevelyan about it."

"But what is it?" exclaimed Frank Richards. Vere Beauclerc did not speak, but his face was very keen.

"Molly and I have been staying at uncle's," explained Lawrence. "This morning Uncle Henderson asked us about Mr. Trevelyan. Somebody had written to him, as sheriff of Thompson, you know. Mr. Trevelyan's being looked for, because he's come into a fortune in England."

"Great Scott!"

Frank Richards & Co. exchanged startled glances.

"He's come into a fortune!" exclaimed Beauclerc breathlessly.

"Yes; uncle said so," said Molly Lawrence. "He told us to tell Mr. Trevelyan that he was coming over to-day to see him about it. A relation of his has died in England, and Mr. Trevelyan has inherited a title and estates."

"My hat!"

"Well, that takes the cake!"

"I guess it does," said Dick Dawson. "And I reckon Trevelyan won't trouble us here much. He'll be off as soon as he gets well. Perhaps he'll get well now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here comes uncle!" exclaimed Lawrence.

Mr. Henderson, the sheriff of Thompson, a big, bluff Canadian, dismounted at the gates,

and came striding in. His niece and nephew ran to him at once.

The Cedar Creek fellows were left in a buzz of excitement. Tom led Mr. Henderson away to the new master's cabin, and some of the fellows had a glimpse of Mr. Trevelyan's tall figure and gleaming eyeglass as he admitted the sheriff.

"Come with me, you fellows," said Beauclerc, in a low voice to his chums. Beauclerc's face was very thoughtful.

Out of hearing of the schoolboys, he stopped and looked at Frank and Bob.

"What do you think of that?" he asked quietly.

"I guess it beats me," said Bob.

"You remember what I told you," said Beauclerc, in the same quiet tone. "I saw Mr. Trevelyan last week in the hands of 'Frisco Jo and his gang, and I told you I did not believe that the man here was the same man. I believed the real Mr. Trevelyan was kidnapped by those rustlers, and this man came here in his name. I know it seemed steep—my father thought so. It seemed so unlikely a man would play such a game to bag a teacher's salary at a frontier school. But now the cat's out of the bag."

"It does look like it, by Jove!" said Frank Richards. "There's the motive, anyway."

"I knew he must have some axe to grind, though I couldn't guess what it was," said Beauclerc. "Now it comes out that Philip Trevelyan is heir to a fortune in England. That makes it clear. I am sure—I was sure before—that the real man is being kept a prisoner somewhere in the woods by 'Frisco Jo, and that the man here is a swindler and impostor."

"Phew!"

"But your popper, Cherub," said Bob. "He saw Trevelyan the other day and talked with him. What did he think?"

Beauclerc's face clouded.

"I can't understand that," he confessed. "My father called on him specially to size him up, and he's never said a word about it. I asked him, and he would not tell me. He simply ordered me to let the matter drop."

"Well, by gum!" ejaculated Bob, in astonishment.

"But it's clear to me now," continued Beauclerc. "I shall speak to my father about it again, and then to the sheriff."

"I guess that's the proper caper," agreed Bob. "It does begin to look as if you were right, Cherub."

The chums looked for Mr. Henderson when he left the new master's cabin. The sheriff stopped to speak to them.

"My nephew's told me what you did this morning, Beauclerc," said the sheriff kindly. "You're a plucky lad, and no mistake! It isn't everybody who could stop a runaway horse as you did."

"It was nothing, sir," said Beauclerc.

"I guess it was a good deal to Molly, and to her people," said Mr. Henderson, with a smile.

"Is it true about Mr. Trevelyan, sir?" asked Frank Richards.

"Oh, you've heard young Tom talking, eh?" The sheriff laughed. "Yes, my boys, you've got a real live baronet in your school—heir to Sir Gwynne Trevelyan. I've had inquiries sent to me, and I've just broken the news to him."

"Rather a leg-up for the galoot, sir," said Bob.

"I guess so. You'll want a new master here before long," said the sheriff. "Mr. Trevelyan will be going back to England." And he nodded to the boys, and went out to his horse.

Vere Beauclerc compressed his lips.

"I knew the man was no teacher," he said. "He's been shamming ill to keep out of the school-room. I guessed that. But I fancy there will be a spoke put in his wheel."

Frank Richards & Co. had plenty of food for thought that afternoon, and they certainly were not thinking wholly of their lessons.

The Remittance Man's Resolve!

"H'ES quiet enough now, Molly."

"I'm not going to ride him."

"But I tell you he's all right."

"Stuff!" said Molly decidedly.

Frank Richards & Co. heard that argument proceeding as they led their horses from the corral for the ride home after lessons that day. Tom Lawrence was holding his horse and his sister's, but Molly declined to trust herself to the animal again.

"I'll hold him all the way," offered Lawrence.

"That would make him worse."

"Now look here, Molly—" urged Tom.

"I'm not going to ride!"

"How are you going to get home, then?" demanded her brother.

"You take the horses, and I'll go in the canoe," said Molly.

"Bet you you'll capsiz in the rapids if you do," grunted Tom Lawrence. "Girls can't manage canoes."

"Stuff!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Lawless. "Molly can manage a canoe all right, Tommy."

"The gee's quiet enough," growled Lawrence.

"It was only that Chinese imp letting off crackers under his nose that startled him."

"All the same, I'm not going to ride," said Molly, with feminine determination. "You hustle off, Tom, and I'll be home before you, anyway."

"Oh, all right!"

"Can we help you launch the canoe, Miss Lawrence?" asked Beauclerc.

Molly smiled.

"You can if you like," she replied graciously.

The three chums ran the little birch-bark canoe into the creek and saw Molly off. Despite Tom's brotherly misgivings, Molly handled the little craft with a masterly hand. She nodded to the schoolboys on the bank, and they raised their stetson hats politely as the canoe shot out into the creek, and Molly paddled away.

As they returned to their horses, Mr. Trevelyan came out of the gates. The tall, athletic-looking man was limping a little. He had limped ever since his fall, which had prevented him from entering upon the duties he had come to Cedar Creek to perform.

His eyeglass—the only eyeglass in the Thompson Valley—gleamed at the three schoolboys as he nodded affably to them.

"Ah, I was looking for you, Beauclerc!" he said, in a genial tone.

"Yes, sir?" said Beauclerc quietly.

"Your father called upon me the other day, Beauclerc," remarked Mr. Trevelyan. "I should

like to return his call, if you will show me the way to your home."

"Very well, sir."

"Is it too far to walk?"

"It's several miles, sir."

"Then I will borrow a horse. Please wait for me."

"Very well."

The chums exchanged glances as the new master went in at the gates. He came out again, mounted, and rode away down the trail with the three.

The schoolboys were silent during the ride. They could not help wondering whether Mr. Trevelyan's visit to the shack where the remittance man lived had anything to do with the news he had received from the sheriff that morning.

At the fork of the trail the chums parted as usual, Frank Richards and Bob trotting on towards the Lawless Ranch, while Beauclerc and the new master rode by the branch trail towards Cedar Camp.

Beauclerc did not speak, and Mr. Trevelyan was equally taciturn. The shack came in sight.

Mr. Beauclerc, the remittance man, was smoking on the bench outside his cabin as they came up. There was an expression of gloomy thought upon Lascelles Beauclerc's face, an expression Vere had often seen there during the past few days—since, in fact, the remittance man had called upon the new master at the school.

Mr. Beauclerc rose, starting a little at the sight of the master. Mr. Trevelyan saluted him politely.

"I have taken the freedom of returning your call, Mr. Beauclerc," he said. "I quite expected to see you at the school again after our pleasant chat."

The remittance man coloured and glanced uneasily at his son. Beauclerc went into the shack.

"Why have you come here, man?" muttered Mr. Beauclerc, as his son disappeared.

The new master looked at him sharply.

"Because I haven't heard from you," he answered, "I must have your decision now. Come a little way into the wood in case the boy should hear. He knows nothing?"

"I have told him nothing, of course."

"It seems to me that he is suspicious."

Mr. Beauclerc made no answer to that. He followed the new master as the latter led his horse down the trail. The two men stopped under a tree, far out of hearing from the shack. Trevelyan, resting one hand upon his saddle, stood looking at the remittance man, whose face was dark and moody.

Mr. Beauclerc raised his eyes.

"I've decided," he said.

"To go with me?"

"No."

Mr. Trevelyan drew a quick breath.

"Listen to me, Beauclerc," he said in a low, even tone. "News has come that Philip Trevelyan is wanted in England. The sheriff of Thompson brought me the news this morning. I told you it might come any day—and now it has come."

"Well?"

"Well," said the new master savagely, "you know how matters stand. I have been accepted as Philip Trevelyan here. No one doubts me. You are the only man in Canada who knows that I'm Gerard Goring, and that Philip Trevelyan

has been kidnapped. If you hold your tongue you stand in with me to share the fortune left by old Sir Gwynne. You must be mad if you think of refusing."

"It was a temptation," said the remittance man quietly. "But I've thought it out. For my son's sake—"

"For your son's sake you had better think it out again!" sneered Gerard Goring. "What is he now—a pauper's son? He will be a rich man's son if you are not blind to your own interests."

"I know. But—"

"Be sensible, man! Do you understand what you are losing?"

"I understand," said Mr. Beauclerc quietly.

"And I have decided. Vere, if he knew—"

"He need never know."

"I cannot do it, Goring. Perhaps if I were alone I might. But I will not make Vere the son of a criminal. I refuse your offer."

"And you want me to give up the game?"

"You must."

The new master gritted his teeth.

"Philip Trevelyan—wherever you are keeping him a prisoner—must be released," said the remittance man steadily. "I will not join in this plot against an innocent man, and sentence him to life-long imprisonment in the wilderness. You must release him, and let him claim his rights!"

"And I—"

"You can go your way."

"I am in your hands, Beauclerc," said Gerard Goring. "You have spoiled the best scheme of my life-time."

"You are lucky to get out of it without paying the penalty of crime," said Mr. Beauclerc, shrugging his shoulders.

"Perhaps so. Give me twenty-four hours, as you promised you would if you decided against me, and I will go."

"That is agreed. To-morrow evening I shall call upon the sheriff and tell him the facts. You have the interval to make your escape."

"That is enough for me," Goring's eyes glittered for a moment. "Not a word for twenty-four hours, even to your son."

"You have my word," said Mr. Beauclerc haughtily. "You were once my associate—I say it to my shame—and I will not betray you to punishment if you do the right thing. But after twenty-four hours your fate is in your own hands."

"Be it so."

The new master moved away down the trail, and the remittance man returned to the shack with slow footsteps. He had made the right choice, yet perhaps there was a trace of regret in his heart as he thought of what he had lost. But as he glanced at his son that lingering thought was dismissed from his mind.

Gerard Goring mounted his horse in the trail and rode away, with grimly knitted brows.

What Molly Heard!

"**R**ACE you to the school!" called out Tom Lawrence merrily.

The morning sun shone brightly on Cedar Creek, rippling and glistening in the cheerful light.

Molly Lawrence pushed out her canoe as her brother called to her from the bank.

"Stuff!" answered Molly. "I shall beat you in the canoe."



"Beauclerc is a fool," came a voice which sounded familiar to Molly, "but he must not be allowed to chatter his folly, Jo!" "Frisco Jo laughed softly. "Rely on me, senior!" Molly sat still in the canoe, fully realising what the words meant. Beauclerc's father was in danger!

"Bosh!" retorted Tom.

He trotted away on the trail, and Molly paddled down the creek. After her narrow escape of the day before, Molly was not inclined for riding to school, and the way was shorter and quicker by water. And the creek, shining in the sun, was a very pleasant route.

The active Canadian girl paddled away cheerily.

The creek rippled on through stretches of timber, shadowed here and there by giant trees that had been standing before the white man set his foot in Canada. Little islets, thickly wooded, dotted the stream, and round them the current raced, perilous enough to an inexperienced canoeer. But Molly Lawrence was quite at home in the birch-bark canoe.

Having plenty of time on her hands, Molly ceased to use the paddle after a time, and allowed the canoe to drift on the current, only paddling occasionally to keep to her course.

Suddenly, from a shadowy backwater under the trees, another canoe appeared on the creek ahead of her. A man sat in it, paddling—a swarthy, active fellow, with black hair and sharp black eyes. Molly caught her breath as she saw him. From his position as he paddled into the creek, she could see only part of his profile, but she recognised him at once. It was 'Frisco Jo, the rustler of Thompson—a rascal whom the sheriff had been looking for for some time.

Molly's face paled a little as she saw him. He had not seen her as his back was partly turned, and instantly the girl guided her drifting canoe into a mass of reeds that grew out of the stream. She did not want to catch the sight of the ruffian, who was quite capable of robbing her of the

canoe and leaving her to make her way on foot through the woods.

She stopped the canoe in the midst of the reeds, holding on to a hanging branch to keep it steady. Her breath was coming quickly as she listened for the sound of 'Frisco Jo's paddle. But to her alarm the sound of the paddle was closer at hand. Her heart throbbed with the fear that the ruffian had seen her, and was following her into the reeds. But the sound of paddling ceased a few yards distant.

The Mexican's canoe had stopped by the bank, but she could not see him, close as he was, owing to the impenetrable barrier of trees and thickets between. But she could hear the movements and the sounds he made as he tied a rope to a branch. Then she heard heavy steps plunging up the bank.

The girl remained quite silent, hardly daring to breathe. The footsteps had halted, still within hearing. On the fresh air there came to her the scent of a strong Mexican cigar.

'Frisco Jo had halted on the bank in the thick timber, and was smoking there—evidently while he waited. What the ruffian could be waiting for in that lonely spot was a mystery—unless it was for some associate with whom he was engaged upon one of his rascally enterprises.

After a while there came heavy footsteps in the underbush. The voice of the Mexican was heard.

"Muy bien! You are here, senior?"

"Yes. Have I kept you waiting, Jo?"

Molly started. She had heard that voice somewhere, though she could not recall where. It was not a voice she knew familiarly, but she was sure that she had heard it before.

"It is no matter, señor," said the Mexican. "What is the news? Euchre Dick brought me your message last night."

"Work to be done, my friend, this morning."

"The remittance man?"

"Exactly."

"It would be safer by night, señor."

"At night his son is at home, and that would mean two instead of one, Jo."

"True."

"Besides, the place is lonely—more than a mile from the camp. You will have no difficulty—"

"If he should resist—"

"He will not resist if you take him by surprise. Take Euchre Dick and Black Rube with you, and tackle him suddenly. Have the wagon on the trail road, and keep him under the sacks until you are out of the settlements."

"It is simple enough, señor," said the Mexican.

"But have you seen the man?"

"I saw him yesterday."

"And he refuses?"

"Yes."

"Ah! He is a fool!"

"Beauclerc is a fool, but he must not be allowed to chatter his folly, Jo."

"Frisco Jo laughed softly.

"You are right, señor."

"Lose no time. His son will have started for school by this time, and the sooner it is over the better. I have brought you a horse. Leave your canoe here, and ride at once to Cedar Camp and get Euchre Dick and Rube and the wagon. The sooner it is done, the better."

"Rely on me, señor."

There was a rustling in the wood as the two rascals moved away from the spot.

Molly Lawrence sat still in the canoe, hardly breathing. It seemed that she must have allowed her imagination to play a trick, as she sat there in the midst of the thickets.

The sounds died away. 'Frisco Jo and his confederate were gone.

Molly moved at last. With trembling hands she pushed the canoe out into the creek again. As she came out into the stream, she caught sight of the Mexican's canoe tied among the rushes. That was evidence enough of the reality of what she had heard, if she needed it.

The girl's brain was almost in a whirl. Beauclerc's father—the father of the boy who had saved her life only the previous day—was in danger. Even now the ruffians were on their way to the lonely shack by the creek. And Beauclerc? The remittance man's son was on the way to school with his chums, never dreaming of his father's peril.

Molly drove her paddle into the rippling water. She had only one thought now—to hurry to Cedar Creek School and warn Beauclerc of his father's danger—warn him in time.

There was a chance yet that the remittance man might be saved. Molly's paddle flashed like lightning as she drove the birch-bark canoe onward. The school came in sight at last.

Few of the fellows had arrived so early, but Harold Hopkins was on the bank, and he ran to help her in with the canoe. As he pulled it into the rushes, Molly sprang ashore, throwing down the paddle.

"Early this morning, miss," grinned Hopkins.

Molly did not answer. She ran breathlessly past the schoolboy, leaving him blinking after her in astonishment.

"My 'at!" murmured Hopkins.

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Molly ran on towards the school.

Mr. Slimmey, the assistant master, was standing in the gateway, looking out. In her agitation the girl caught him by the sleeve.

"Has Beauclerc come yet?" she panted.

"I think not," said Mr. Slimmey, in his deliberate way. "In fact, I am sure not."

Molly ran on up the trail without another word.

Too Late!

"HALLO!" "Something's up!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

Frank and Bob and Vere Beauclerc were riding up the trail to the school in the sunny morning when they caught sight of Molly Lawrence running towards them from the direction of the school.

The girl, panting, stopped and held up her hand, and the three schoolboys halted at once.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Bob, as they jumped down from their horses.

Molly could not speak. Her breath came almost in sobs.

"What is it?" exclaimed Vere Beauclerc.

"I—I—" Molly panted. "I—I came to warn you!"

"To warn me?" repeated Beauclerc, in amazement.

"Your father!" sobbed Molly.

"Get your breath, old girl!" said Bob Lawless encouragingly. "Has somebody been frightening you?"

"No, no! 'Frisco Jo—"

Molly tried to collect herself. She caught Beauclerc's arm.

"Your father!" she gasped.

"My father is all right," said Beauclerc, in wonder. "I left him at the shack as usual this morning, Miss Lawrence—not more than half an hour ago."

"They would be there by then; perhaps they even watched you leave!" panted the girl. "Your father is in danger."

"In danger! How?"

"'Frisco Jo—they are going to attack him—at the shack—"

"How do you know, Miss Lawrence?" asked Vere Beauclerc, very quietly.

Molly panted out her story. The chums of Cedar Creek listened with blank astonishment.

"'Frisco Jo!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

"That's the ruffian you saw in the wood. Beau—the man who was kidnapping—"

"Who was the man with him, Molly?" asked Bob Lawless eagerly.

The girl shook her head.

"I don't know. I didn't see him; I only heard his voice. I thought I had heard it before, but I wasn't sure. Beauclerc, your father—"

Vere Beauclerc was already springing on his horse. His face was pale. He did not need telling more. He guessed who 'Frisco Jo's unknown companion had been. Much that had puzzled him before was clear to him now. His father's silence after the visit to the new master at the school, and his troubled mood since, and Mr. Trevelyan's visit the previous day—it was all pieced together now.

The new master was the swindler and impostor the boy believed. And the remittance man knew it, and he was to be silenced. Beauclerc did not think it out. It came through his mind like a flash of lightning.

He leaped upon his horse. Without a look at his chums, without a word even to Molly, he

drove his black horse up the trail at a furious gallop.

"Cherub!" panted Bob.

Beauclerc did not look back. He had never used the whip on Demon before, but he was using it now. The black horse, startled, bounded forward like an arrow, and with a thunder of hoofs, disappeared up the trail.

Molly caught Frank Richards' arm.

"Go with him! He is going into danger! They may—"

"We're going!" said Bob.

The chums sprang upon their horses. There was no time to think of school or anything now. They galloped after their chum, and vanished from Molly's eyes through the timber.

Thud, thud, thud!

Vere Beauclerc was riding like the wind. The hard trail thundered back the crash of the hoofs as he rode.

His father! Only a short time ago he had left him, and Lascelles Beauclerc had called a cheery good-bye to his son. Vere remembered that even as he had left he had sighted a wagon in the distance on the prairie trail. Had the ruffians been waiting for his departure? It was only too probable.

Vere clenched his teeth and drove the horse madly on. Frank and Bob were riding hard, but they were left far behind. Never had Vere Beauclerc ridden as he was riding now. The splendid black horse was covering the ground with flashing speed. Over rough hillocks and gopher-holes, dodging hanging boughs by a hairsbreadth, the schoolboy rodé with white, set face and burning eyes.

Thud, thud, thud!

The shack came in sight at last, and his eyes searched it yet from the distance. He almost sobbed with relief as he saw that it lay quiet and undisturbed as he had left it. There was no sign of a commotion of any kind. Had the danger not yet fallen, or had the ruffians been there, and had they gone?

He dashed madly up to the shack and flung himself from his horse. The black horse stood panting, trembling in every limb.

Beauclerc rushed into the shack, calling:

"Father! Father!"

He stopped, frozen with horror. The shack was empty. But on every side there were signs of a struggle. The table was overturned, the rough, log stools lay in disorder about the room. Broken crockery lay about the floor. At Beauclerc's feet was the remittance man's pipe, with the stem broken.

A fierce struggle had taken place in the shack—fierce and furious—in the room now so silent and desolate. Beauclerc reeled in the doorway.

"Father!" he panted.

But there was no voice to answer that cry. Lascelles Beauclerc was gone.

Vere staggered from the shack.

With a clatter of hoofs, Frank Richards and Bob rode up and jumped from their horses. Frank caught Beauclerc by the arm.

"Your father—"

Beauclerc groaned.

"He is gone!"

"Gone?"

Beauclerc leaned heavily on the doorpost. His face was like chalk. Where was his father—where was he, and alive or dead?

Next Wednesday: "SAVED BY HIS SON!"



THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

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

HALLO, Chums! As I told you last week, I am expecting to receive soon the first story of Martin Clifford's great new series, but as yet it hasn't come to hand. Eager as I am to get the first yarn, so that I can let readers know when it will appear in the GEM, I am not rushing Mr. Clifford. I told him to take his time over it and turn out something super in the way of school stories. And as he has promised that the new series will be his best ever, and told me to tell the readers so, it is quite evident that he is taking great pains with the opening yarn—determined to keep his promise. So I must ask readers to be patient a little longer. Believe me, the coming new series will be well worth waiting for!

"GLYN'S HAIR-RAISING INVENTION!"

I have had numerous requests recently for a "Bernard Glyn" story, and as you see by the title of next Wednesday's St. Jim's yarn, I am complying with those requests. Glyn's inventions have always been a source of great amusement at St. Jim's—some of them being successful, the majority not being quite successful, though very clever. But Glyn's "latest" fairly takes the cake—it's a hair-restorer! Unfortunately for the schoolboy inventor, however, none of the fellows will sacrifice himself to the cause of science, and allow Glyn to experiment on him—until Baggy Trimble, for a consideration, offers himself. Glyn paints Baggy's upper lip with his hair-restorer, and the next morning the fat junior is seen with a black moustache! That starts the fun, for Glyn, flushed with success, experiments on Herr Schneider's bald head—which has hair-raising results of an unexpected sort for the German master!

"SAVED BY HIS SON!"

This is the title of the next Cedar Creek yarn, and it winds up the "Impostor" series on a thrilling note. Led by Vere Beauclerc, the chums of the backwoods school take matters into their own hands in dealing with the new master. Beauclerc is determined to find his father, for he feels certain that the bogus Mr. Trevelyan has kidnapped him to keep his mouth shut. So it is that Frank Richards & Co. spring a big surprise on Mr. Trevelyan, just when that gentleman is sitting pretty to inherit a title and twenty thousand a year! Read all about it in next week's gripping yarn.

"THE SEAMAN'S SECRET!"

With the good old Benbow now ploughing a passage across the Atlantic, the boys of the floating school have settled down to a life on the ocean wave. Tuckey Toodles, however, to escape lessons, pretends that he is still seasick. But much to his sorrow, the ship's doctor puts him on a starvation diet—which doesn't suit Tuckey at all.

Peg Staney, the one-eyed seaman, is also in the limelight in this yarn. A secret paper of his written in Spanish comes into the hands of Jack Drake, and Daubeny makes big efforts to get hold of it. For the buck of the Shell believes that the paper reveals where a buried treasure is hidden in South America!

All our other popular features will be up to their usual high standard, completing another ripping number.

Chin, chin!

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As Daubeny looked up he saw a single glinting eye squinting at him. It was Slaney, his acquaintance of the night before at the Lobster Pot! "You here!" exclaimed the junior.

The Last Night Ashore!

"T-O-MORROW!" said Jack Drake.
"At sea to-morrow!" said Rodney.
"It seems too jolly good to be true, doesn't it?"

The two chums of the Fourth were on the deck of the Benbow, leaning on the rail, and looking away towards the twinkling lights of Chadport.

The night was dark, only two or three stars glimmering in the black, velvety sky.

Most of the St. Winifred's fellows were below. There was a jollification going on in the Common-room, to celebrate the last night ashore. Drake and Rodney had come on deck to breathe the keen, salt air from the sea, and chat before going to their hammocks.

The Benbow was ready for sea, the crew and the passengers all aboard. In the morning the anchor was to be raised, not to sink again in English waters for many a long day. The chums of the Fourth were in a thoughtful mood as they gazed at the twinkling lights across the bay.

"Where's Toodles?" asked Drake suddenly.

Rodney laughed.

"Gone to bed. He's been overdoing it in the canteen. I'm sorry for him if the ship gets a roll on to-morrow."

"Hallo, there's a boat!"

From the black shadows on the water a boat loomed up dimly, without a light. The two juniors glanced down at it curiously as it edged closer to the side of the Benbow. A man stood up and waved his hand to the two faces looking down over the bulwark.

"Hallo! What do you want?" called out Drake.

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The SCHOOL At SEA!

By Owen Conquest.

"Shut up, will you?" came a fierce, whispering voice behind Drake; and he turned with a start.

Daubeny, Egan, and Torrence of the Shell loomed up in the shadows. It was Vernon Daubeny who had whispered.

"It's our boat," muttered Egan. "For goodness' sake, keep quiet, Drake! You'll give us away."

"But what's the game?" asked Drake, puzzled. "You're not going ashore at this time of night."

"That's our business," answered Daubeny sourly.

He leaned over and signalled to the boatman. The boat ranged close to the ship's side, the boatman standing up and fending it off with his hand.

"Here's the rope," muttered Daubeny. "You first, Egan, and don't make a row."

"Right-ho!"

Drake and Rodney stood aside, silent, as Egan

~~~~~  
*A life on the ocean wave! But the boys  
of the Benbow haven't much life when  
the school-ship puts to sea!*  
~~~~~

disappeared down the rope. They understood now. Daubeny & Co. evidently intended to pay a final visit to some shady haunt ashore before the Benbow sailed. It was their last opportunity.

Torrence slid down the rope, and Vernon Daubeny followed him. The boat glided away silently into the shadows.

"Silly asses!" commented Drake.

"And rotters!" said Rodney. "We'd better clear off, Drake. Somebody's coming, and we don't want to be asked questions."

The two juniors walked away quickly as a seaman came along the deck. They went below into the lighted Common-room, where most of the fellows were gathered. It was close on bedtime now. Tuckey Toodles had already turned in, but the rest of the school was still "keeping it up." Sawyer major was singing, and Estcourt accompanying him at the piano. Sawyer was under the impression that he possessed a voice

of a fine tenor quality—an impression which he had wholly to himself.

He was wailing on his top note as the chums of the Fourth came in.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Jack Drake. "Somebody being hurt."

Rodney chuckled.

"Bravo!" shouted Rawlings, when Sawyer major had laboured through his first instalment.

"Now then, Drake——"

"Hold on! There's another verse!" exclaimed Sawyer.

"Your mistake; there isn't."

"But there is."

"Not this time, anyhow. Hands up for Sawyer's second verse!" shouted Rawlings.

Not a hand went up. Sawyer major snuffed.

"Look here——"

"Let Drake give us 'Rolling Down to Rio.'" said Rawlings. "We're going to Rio. Run away and play, Sawyer!"

Sawyer major, with a still more emphatic sniff, retired from the limelight. Jack Drake was rushed to the piano.

"Go it, Drake!" sang out Conway. "We'll soon stop you if you make a row like Sawyer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly owl!" hooted Sawyer.

"Dry up, Sawyer! Go it, Drake!"

Drake laughed.

"I don't remember the words——"

"Never mind, put some in."

"Go it, Estcourt!"

Estcourt "went it" on the piano, and Jack Drake came in a couple of bars late. But as he did not remember half the original words, he turned out a new version applicable to present circumstances:

"I've never sailed the Orinoco,
In Venezuela's clime,
But we're going there on the Benbow
To have a jolly good time!
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" echoed the juniors, with great enthusiasm.

Mr. Packe looked in at the door, with a smile on his face.

"Bed-time, my boys," he said. And the merry gathering had to break up.

The voice of Tuckey Toodles was heard as Drake and Rodney came to their hammocks.

"I—I say, Drake——"

"Hallo, old top!"

"Is—is the ship rolling?" murmured Toodles.

"Ha, ha! No. Just swaying a bit at the anchors, perhaps," answered Drake.

"I—I feel as if it were rolling," murmured Tuckey Toodles. "I—I suppose it's the lobster."

"What lobster?"

"Or it may have been the tomatoes——"

"The tomatoes?"

"Yes. Or perhaps the cream," moaned Toodles. "Perhaps I overdid the cream a little, considering the lobster and the pork pies and the jelly and the——"

"Oh, my hat! If you've laid in provisions for the whole voyage at one sitting, you must expect trouble," chuckled Drake. "Possibly the lobster doesn't care for tomatoes. Go to sleep."

"I c-c-can't!"

The juniors turned in, and they were soon asleep, with the exception of Toodles. Possibly

the lobster did not care for tomatoes and pork pies, and it continued to give the unhappy Toodles severe trouble.

The Last Flutter!

"HERE we are again!" said Daubeny of the Shell, as the nose of the boat drove into the rushes of the Chadway. The lights of the Lobster Pot glimmered through the trees on the bank.

"It's jolly late!" remarked Torrence.

"What does that matter?"

"I mean, we shall be jolly late back if we stay long. It's a good pull down from here to Chadport."

"We shall go back with the current," said Daubeny. "Besides, who cares? It's our last night ashore, and we're going to make the most of it."

The three bucks of St. Winifred's stepped ashore, and followed the path to the back of the riverside inn. A few minutes later they were admitted at the veranda window of "Gentleman" Smith's room.

Mr. Smith greeted them effusively. The sharper had not been at all pleased to hear that the school on the Benbow was going to sea.

The loss of the acquaintance of Daubeny & Co. was rather a serious one to him—financially.

Mr. Smith had done very well by helping Daubeny & Co. to see "life."

He had been glad, however, that Daubeny had proposed to visit his old haunt for a last flutter before the school went to sea.

Mr. Smith was not alone when the bucks came in. A man in seafaring garb was seated by the fire, smoking a short black pipe, which he did not remove as he nodded to the juniors.

Daubeny & Co. glanced at him rather curiously.

He was not a prepossessing individual to look at. His face was swarthy, his hair black and curly, and his teeth almost as black as his hair, from the incessant use of tobacco.

He had but a single eye, but that eye was very keen and penetrating, though it was afflicted with a squint.

The squint was a very pronounced one. The seafaring man seemed to be staring at the fire, when Daubeny, with a start, found that the eye was, as a matter of fact, staring at him. Over his other eye was a thick black patch.

"Friend o' mine, young gents," said Mr. Smith affably. "Name of Slaney. Knowned your father, Master Daubeny."

"Indeed!" said Vernon Daubeny dryly.

It certainly did not seem probable that that rough, seafaring man could possibly have any acquaintance with Sir George Daubeny.

Slaney nodded his head to the buck of St. Winifred's.

"Ay, ay. I knowed your father, young gentleman, if you are Master Daubeny," he said. "And I can see you are—you're like him. Queer that I should run into this here port on this very night, and meet you, ain't it? Back from South America only last week, and goin' to sea again in the mornin'—that's me. I guess I'll be going, Smith."

"Oh, don't go yet," said Mr. Smith. "Maybe these young gentlemen would like you to take a hand."

"No objection," said Egan, closing one eye at Torrence, unseen by Mr. Smith and his friend.

The black sheep of St. Winifred's had met more

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than one queer character in their visits to Gentleman Smith's quarters at the Lobster Pot, and on such occasions they were not very particular as to the company they met.

The seafaring man drew his chair to the table as the bucks eat down. Gentleman Smith produced a pack of cards.

He passed round a box of cigarettes, and Daubeny & Co. began to smoke. Cards and cigarettes wore the "life" they had come to see. "Poker?" asked Mr. Smith, as he shuffled the cards.

"Any old thing," drawled Daubeny.

Daubeny was feeling a little uncertain—he hardly knew why—under the eye of the seafaring man. He felt himself under Slaney's observation all the time. Whenever he looked at the man the single squinting eye was fixed on him.

"You're back from South America, I think you said?" he remarked. "Did you know my father there? He was in Venezuela a good many years ago."

Slaney nodded.

"That's it—I knowed him on the banks of the Orinoco," he said. "If I wasn't going to sea to-morrow I'd look in on him and 'ave a talk about old times, so I would. P'raps I will when I come back from this here voyage. Maybe I'll have some dockments to show him he'll be pleased to see."

"Cut for deal," said Mr. Smith.

Daubeny looked hard at the seafaring man. Slaney was grinning, but in his grin there was, to Daubeny's mind, something curiously evil and menacing.

"We're going to sea to-morrow," remarked Torrence.

"You, sir? I reckoned you young gents was schoolboys," said the seafaring man, squinting at Torrence.

"So we are, but we're in a school that's going to sea," answered Torrence.

Slaney started.

"Not the Benbow?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, you've heard of it?"

"Ay, ay—down at Chadport," said Slaney, with a grin. "So you're going on the Benbow to South America? And you, too, Master Daubeny?"

"Yes," answered Daubeny curtly.

"Now, ain't that queer?" said Slaney, squinting curiously at the three juniors.

"I don't see anything queer in it," grunted Daubeny. "Your deal, Smith. Deal out the cards."

"What-ho!" said Mr. Smith.

Conversation ceased as the four began to play poker. But during the next hour Vernon Daubeny was conscious of the evil, glittering eye that was squinting at him incessantly.

At ten o'clock Mr. Slaney rose to his feet, declining a further "hand," and took his leave.

"I guess I've got to be on board my ship," he explained. "I'll see you again some day, Master Daubeny."

"You're not likely to see me again," answered Daubeny brusquely. "I'm off to South America to-morrow."

"Ay, ay—so am I," answered Slaney, with a grin.

"You're not likely to run across the Benbow out there," said Daubeny.

The seafaring man chuckled.

"Quiet sabe?" he said; and with that, and a

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nod to the company, he quitted the room, and his heavy steps were heard descending the stairs.

"What the dickens did he mean?" asked Egan. "Was that Spanish?"

"It means 'who knows?'" grunted Daubeny. "That's a queer fish, Smith. Where on earth did he blow from? I've never seen him here before."

"I've knowed him on and off for a good many years," said Mr. Smith. "He's away in foreign parts most times. Mixed up in a revolution in Venezuela, he was, and that's how he lost an eye. Your deal, Master Egan."

"But what is he?" asked Torrence.

"I fancy he's been a good many things. I believe he's a ship's cook now," answered Mr. Smith.

"Oh!"

Daubeny gave a grunt. It was not quite in accordance with the fitness of things for the son of Sir George Daubeny to play poker with a ship's cook. But Daub. dismissed the sea-cook from his mind and gave his whole attention to draw-poker.

The bucks of St. Winifred's were not having good luck. As a rule they lost more than they won in their little flutters at the Lobster Pot, but the judicious Mr. Smith sometimes gave them a run for their money.

On the present occasion, as they were going to sea on the morrow, Mr. Smith had no object in letting them off lightly—and he didn't. By eleven o'clock the three bucks were looking decidedly green. They had come to the Lobster Pot well provided with cash for that final flutter. Now they had had the flutter, and the cash reposed on Gentleman Smith's side of the table.

Daubeny's face was flushed and feverish as he ran his hands through his pockets in the hope of finding some overlooked currency note. But he found it not.

Mr. Smith smiled imperceptibly.

"Gettin' late, isn't it?" he remarked. "I wouldn't 'urry you young gents, but I dessay you ought to be on board your ship."

"I—I suppose we'd better go," murmured Torrence, rather dismally.

A couple of minutes more and the three bucks were tramping away through the shadowy garden to the river.

Mr. Smith winked at the stars as he closed the window after them. Probably Mr. Smith found a certain amount of humorous entertainment in the St. Winifred's bucks and their mode of "seeing life."

The Shell fellows sat in the boat and pulled their coats round them as the boatman pushed out into the river.

"Dashed idiots to come!" muttered Torrence. "Smith has screwed a fiver out of me."

"Same here," grumbled Egan.

"Oh, don't grouse!" growled Daubeny irritably, and he muffled himself against the wind and sat in angry silence.

The boat glided down the river with the current.

The Anchor's Weighed!

"TUMBLE up!"

Dawn was glimmering over Chadport, and the old Benbow was all astir. Tuckey Toodles yawned portentously as Drake shook his hammock.

"Lemme alone! 'Tain't rising-bell!"

"Turn out, Fatty!" said Drake, laughing.

"You've got to get on your sea-legs, you know. The tug's coming."

"Oh dear!"

Tuckey Toodles turned out dismally. There was a tramp of feet on the deck overhead, and a buzz of many voices. The Benbow was preparing for sea. In the distance, from above, the deep voice of Captain Topcastle could be heard booming orders.

Most of the juniors were cheerful and excited. "All hands on deck!" called out Drake; and he went up with Rodney.

"No lessons to-day, at any rate," said Tuckey Toodles, trying to cheer up. "I—I say, Rawlings, do you think she'll roll much?"

"Sure to," answered Rawlings, with a grin. "I've heard the skipper say she'll roll till her backstays dip."

"Ow!"

"Till the mainyard dips into the scuppers, old chap," continued Rawlings. "The deck will be at an angle of forty-five degrees most of the time, when it's not on beam-ends."

"I—I don't believe it."

"My dear chap, you'll see. Better not have any brokker, Toodles; it will be sheer waste. We shall be out on the merry old ocean in an hour's time. Don't waste good food."

"Beast!"

Tuckey Toodles was feeling very uneasy already, though the Benbow was hardly stirring. The lobster was avenging itself still. The fat junior crawled on deck at last, and blinked round dismally at the scene of busy animation there.

"Keep out of the way, Toodles!" called out Drake.

Tuckey stared round.

"Eh? What? Yaroop!"

A trailing rope across the deck caught Tuckey's feet as it was hauled, and the fat Fourth Former was suddenly up-ended. He sat down on the deck with a loud bump, and a louder yell.

"Yow-ow-ow! What the— Oh, who the— Yoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wriggle away, you ass!" exclaimed Drake, as five or six busy seamen came tramping across, right for the sprawling Tuckey.

"I—I— Ow!"

Tuckey Toodles maintained afterwards that he was trodden upon on purpose. Perhaps he was. He was feeling quite winded when Drake and Rodney clutched him and hauled him below, and planted him in the Common-room.

"Now you stay there, you duffer!" said Drake. "If you get in the way of the sailors you'll get jumped on."

"Ow, ow! I suppose I can go on deck if I like?" howled Toodles.

"Not if you get in the way. Stay here till we're out at sea. You won't want to move after that," chuckled Drake. "They're hitching on to the tug."

"Oh dear!"

The Benbow was in motion now. The last good-byes had been said the previous evening. The Benbow was going out with the first tide. But hands and handkerchiefs waved from the quay as the old ship moved, and the Benbow fellows waved back and shouted. In the wake of the snorting, sooty-looking tug the Benbow moved, slow and stately, down the estuary.

"We're really off at last!" exclaimed Rodney, his eyes gleaming. The sailor's son was quite at home on the waters; the salt breath of the

sea was like wine to him. "Hallo! Here's Packe! Good-morning, Mr. Packe!"

Mr. Packe glanced at him with a lack-lustre eye. The motion of the Benbow was very mild as yet, but apparently it was enough for Mr. Packe.

"G-good-morning, m-my boys!" murmured Mr. Packe. "A b-beautiful m-morning!"

And he disappeared below.

"My word! What will we be like when we're at sea?" grinned Rodney. "Do you feel anything yet, Drake?"

"No fear!"

"Hallo, here's Daub! He looks rather queer about the gills!"

Drake laughed. Vernon Daubeny certainly did not look his best that fresh and breezy morning. Late hours and too many smokes had told on him, and the gathering motion of the ship added to the effect. Egan and Torrence were still in their hammocks. All school rules were relaxed for the first day at sea. It was quite probable that the masters would not be in an efficient state for enforcing rules.

"Did you have a merry old time last night, Daub?" asked Drake cheerfully.

Daub's answer was a scowl.

The waters at the mouth of the estuary were rough, and the Benbow was "wallowing" a little. Daubeny found it rather difficult to keep his feet.

"She rolls more than a steamer," muttered Daubeny. "What the thump are we goin' to sea in a giddy sailer for, by gad? Ow! What are you rotters grinning at? Do you think I'm sick?"

"You look a bit green, old top!" grinned Drake.

"We cast off the tug at the point," said Rodney. "Can you hear what old Topcastle is bellowing? I know it's orders to set sail. What a voice!"

Captain Topcastle's bull voice could be heard from stem to stern of the Benbow. The active seamen ran out on the yards. Vernon Daubeny tottered away below, and joined Tuckey Toodles in the Common-room. Tuckey met him with a ghastly look.

"Is it—is it a fearful storm, Daubeny?" he spluttered.

"Idiot!" snapped Daubeny.

DETECTIVE KERR INVESTIGATES.

Solution :

KERR: Racke's lack of an alibi and the discovery of a pencil belonging to him in Study No. 10 were not in themselves conclusive clues. What proved the identity of the fellow who had tampered with Lowther's copy was the spider's web in the lower cupboard, stretching from the door hinge right across to the books inside. Nobody taking a book out could have avoided breaking the web—yet Mellish had taken out Lowther's Latin primer and replaced it, all without disturbing the web! The web had certainly not been spun recently—spiders spin their webs in the autumn! Mellish had thought to supply himself with a first-class reason for going into Lowther's study, but not really needing the primer, he had not bothered to take it. Thence came his downfall—and a severe caning, when he was forced to own up to Mr. Ratcliff!

"What's that awful hooting?"

"Only the tug, ass!"

The tug had cast off, and the Benbow, under main, fore and topsails, was ploughing the salt waters of the sea.

Tuckey Toodles lay back on a couch, with a weird complexion that was rapidly growing green. Daubeny was not feeling much better.

There was a call to breakfast, but a good many of the juniors did not heed it. Some thought it more judicious not to eat just then, while others could not have eaten to save their lives. Overhead it was a fine and sunny day. Drake and Rodney and some of the other fellows remained on deck, but there was quite a numerous gathering in the Common-room, looking in one another with pallid faces.

"Ooooooch!" suddenly came from Tuckey Toodles.

Clink, clink, clink!

The steward's mate came into the room, the bearer of a number of tin bowls, which he distributed. The sight of them made the juniors feel more seasick than they had felt before. Vernon Daubeny was sitting very still, breathing softly.

"Ere you are, sir!" said the steward's mate, banging a tin bowl at his feet.

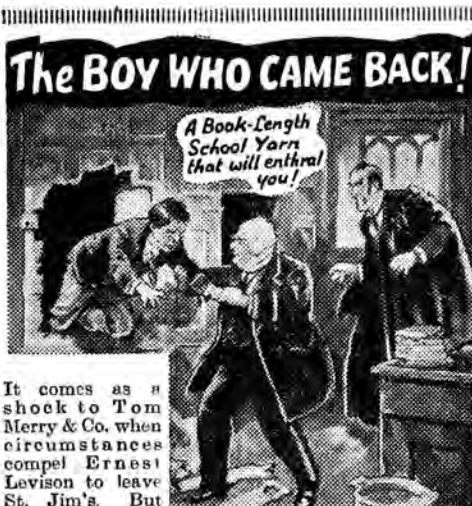
Daubeny started; the rough voice was familiar to him. In spite of his inward trouble he looked up quickly.

A single glinting eye squinted at him from a swarthy face. It was Slaney, his acquaintance of the night before at the Lobster Pot.

"You here!" exclaimed Daubeny.

The one-eyed seaman grinned, and touched his cap.

"Ay, ay, sir!"



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THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,622.

"What are you doing on board this ship?" exclaimed Daubeny.

"Steward's mate, sir, for the voyage," said Slaney. "I told you we'd meet again, sir."

"By gad!"

Slaney quitted the Common-room, Daubeny staring after him blankly. The sight of the swarthy face and the squinting eye had given him a strange thrill of fear. So the evil-eyed seafaring man of the Lobster Pot was to be his shipmate during the voyage of the Benbow to tropic climes!

But Daubeny was not able to give that matter much thought just then. A heave of the ship overcame him, and his head fell forward over the tin bowl. Tuckey Toodles was already gurgling piteously. On all sides there were sounds of woe and anguish, and it's best to draw a veil over the tragic scene!

At Sea!

ST. WINIFRED'S was at sea at last!

That day, under a sunny sky, the old ship thumped her way through the rough waters, and for most of the St. Winifred's fellows it was an enjoyable day.

They marvelled to see the crew so cheery and self-possessed. They were amazed to behold a man balance himself with his hand on a stay, and drink a pannikin of coffee. How a man could eat and drink with the ship rolling in rough waters was a deep mystery to the juniors.

But everything has an end, even seasickness. Most of the fellows got on their sea-legs at last and began to enjoy the sea breeze and the sunshine.

Tuckey Toodles was the severest sufferer and the last to recover. After school lessons had started for the others, Rupert de Vere Toodles was still in his hammock, an invalid. Even in his hammock he found little rest. More than once a loud howl from Toodles announced his fear that the ship was going down, when the Benbow gave an extra heavy plunge in the billows. And sometimes poor Tuckey almost wished that the ship would go down; it would at least have made an end of the weird and terrible revolutions inwardly to which he had become subject.

To be deprived of food was to Tuckey Toodles the greatest disaster that could befall him, and now he dared not eat. For days he ate little, though in the intervals of seasickness he was assailed by a terrific appetite. But the scourge always returned, and for the first time in his fat career Tuckey Toodles "went easy" on his rations.

It was on the fourth day that Drake and Rodney, coming to visit the sufferer, found him recovered.

Tuckey had turned out and dressed, and he met the chums of the Fourth with a cheery grin.

"All serene!" he said. "The old tub isn't rolling so much to-day, I think."

"You've got used to it," said Rodney, with a smile.

"Well, it doesn't seem so beastly. I say, I'm awfully hungry," said Tuckey. "I suppose it wouldn't be safe to eat very much, would it?"

"No fear—go easy at first."

"I feel as if I hadn't eaten anything for weeks," said Tuckey pathetically. "I could eat a horse, you know. But I know I ought to be careful."

(Continued on page 36.)



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THE SCHOOL AT SEA!

(Continued from page 34.)

"I'll go easy. I say, Drake, will you give me your arm into the canteen?"

"Can't you walk?"

"Yes, but I'd like you to help me. Besides, I shan't enjoy a feed unless you're there, old chap," said Toodles affectionately.

Drake laughed and gave the fat junior his aid. Tuckey kept hold of his arm as they went into the canteen, and did not let go of it again.

"You're an awfully good chap, dear old top!" murmured Tuckey. "I knew you were going to stand me a decent feed, after all I've been through. I'm ever so much obliged."

"But—"

"It's tea-time in half an hour, and the ship's tea is good," said Rodney.

Tuckey gave him a reproachful look.

"Do you think I can wait half an hour when I'm perishing of hunger?" he asked. "Besides, Drake wants to stand me a feed, and I'm not going to disappoint him."

"Oh, go ahead!" said Drake resignedly. "Most of Capps' shore stuff is gone by this time, and you may as well finish it."

"So I will, dear old boy."

And Tuckey Toodles did his best.

There was still a supply of "shore stuff" in the canteen—perishable food which the juniors were not likely to leave to perish. Tuckey Toodles made a gallant raid upon it. Heedless now of

the motion of the ship, Tuckey piled in with great energy, his usually terrific appetite rendered still more terrific by long abstinence and the keen sea air.

"Hadn't you better go easy, old chap?" murmured Drake at last. "I'll stand you all you can eat, but you'll get the collywobbles again."

"Oh, I'm all right! Still, I don't think I'll have any more, except that cake, and that bag of jam tarts, and a pineapple. Can't be too careful."

"Oh, my hat!"

Tuckey Toodles disposed of the cake, and the tarts and the pineapple. He added a few bananas and some apples, some nuts, and a jar of ginger. His companions watched him in alarm. Tuckey slumped down at last, and he seemed to sit very still.

"Finished?" asked Drake.

Tuckey turned a glassy eye upon him.

"I—I haven't overdone it," he murmured.

"Don't think that for a moment. I haven't! But—but—Groooooogh!"

And the hapless Tuckey had to be carried away.

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