

THE ST. JIM'S INVENTOR



From the brain of Bernard Glyn, the schoolboy inventor of St. Jim's, have emanated many ingenious inventions—with amazing and amusing results. By special request some of those inventions are described in the accompanying article.

BERNARD GLYN is not the only inventor of which St. Jim's can boast; but there is one essential difference between his inventions and those of Herbert Skimpole. Glyn's work. Skimpole's never do.

The weedy genius of the Shell, with his massive brain full of impracticable ideas, has been responsible for many weird and wonderful contraptions; but as they all refused to perform any of the wonders which their inventor expected of them, it would be useless to describe them here.

The Line Machine.

THE end study in the Shell passage at St. Jim's is justly famous, for that celebrated apartment has been the birthplace of most of Glyn's inventions. And though his study-mates may ramp and rave at the unholy smells that accompany some of the Lancashire lad's labours, or at finding themselves shut out of their study when he is specially busy, they

grin and bear it; or, at least, they have to bear it, and they generally end by grinning as well.

They know that something does come out of all Glyn's work, and something worth while, too.

What schoolboy, for instance, would not have welcomed Glyn's line machine? A contrivance that made the getting of lines a matter of no importance was not likely to lie idle at St. Jim's, and it received a heartier welcome than all the rest of his inventions put together. All it wanted was one line of original writing, which it reproduced until further orders. The juniors made the most of it, and for a time lines fell as thick as the leaves in Vallambrosa. They cheerfully collected them in every possible way—lines by the score, the hundred, and the thousand, and had them doubled, trebled, and even quadrupled without a murmur. The expression on the faces of the masters and prefects when stack upon stack of irreproachable lines poured in from all sides was, according to Monty Lowther, worth a guinea a box.

But it was really too good to last. The machine fell into the hands of Gordon Gay & Co., the enterprising youths from Rylcombe Grammar School, and it was but a short time that the Shell and Fourth revelled in the knowledge that lines were no longer hard lines for them.

The Mechanical Bowler.

THEN there was the mechanical bowler, otherwise Glyn's Patent Automatic Magazine Bowling Machine. It was in the form of a tripod with the legs weighted down. From the top projected a disc with six arms, and there was a handle for winding and a lever for starting. A sloping board, narrowing to a slot, and containing a supply of cricket balls, was fixed to it in such a way that as fast as each arm reached the slot a ball was ready.

This dangerous-looking invention did not belie its appearance, and during his first experiments with it in his study Glyn smashed everything smashable. Later, seeking fresh fields and pastures new, the machine started suddenly and unexpectedly and wrought havoc with practically every window in the neighbourhood of the quadrangle. It went



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wrong again when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was bold enough to face it at the wicket, and cricket balls fairly rained upon the unfortunate Gussy. But these accidents were only due to minor defects, which, under Glyn's skilful hands, were soon overcome. The finished, tested, and guaranteed article, so to speak,

worked perfectly, even Arthur Augustus agreeing that it was "all wight," and as such an invention was obviously of value, Glyn had it patented.

Skimpole the Second—

BUT of all Glyn's inventions, perhaps the one in which he took the most pride was Skimpole the Second. It was a really wonderful piece of work—an exact reproduction of Herbert Skimpole that blinked its eyes and moved its mouth. It was sufficiently lifelike to take in Mr. Linton, at all events.

One day, both busy with inventions, and too absorbed to bother about classes, Glyn and Skimpole were absent from the Form-room, and the master of the Shell went in search of them. The schoolboy inventor heard him coming and slipped into the cupboard in which he usually kept the figure. The irate master took Skimpole II. for the original Skimmy, and was amazed and wrathful when Skimpole apparently refused to reply to his angry questions. He started in with the cane, and the figure fell with a crash. Mr. Linton was aghast; he feared that he had done the harmless Skimmy some injury. The heart of the prostrate figure did not beat—Glyn's genius had stopped short at providing a heart—and the horrified master rushed off to tell the Head. Glyn saw to it that Skimpole II. had vanished by the time they returned, and scudded off to the Form-room. When Mr. Linton and Dr. Holmes made their appearance there a few minutes later the bewildered master of the Shell was astounded to see Skimpole, who had returned to the Form-room the moment after Mr. Linton had left it, calmly sitting in his place. His first thought was that Skimpole had played a trick on him, but when the rest of the Shell could prove the junior's alibi, he was dazed. Was it possible that it had all been a strange hallucination? he wondered. Glyn looked at the white-faced Form-master and felt that he could not keep back his share in the matter. Mr. Linton's relief at the confession was too great for him to feel angry, and to Glyn's surprise it did not earn him the terrific licking he had expected.

That was not the end of Skimpole II.

It was substituted for the real Skimpole, who had been sentenced to detention by Herr Schneider. The German master discovered the trick, however, and went off to fetch Dr. Holmes. Meanwhile, the figure was hurriedly hidden and Skimpole, despite his protests, was brought back in the Form-room and put in its place. The crusty old Herr returned with the Head, and to prove that what looked like Skimpole was really an inanimate and insensitive figure, stuck a pin in the junior's arm. Skimpole's shock was hardly as great as Herr Schneider's. The German master received a crack on the jaw which nearly sent his teeth through the back of his head, and for some time afterwards his vocabulary consisted of two words: "Mein gootness!"

Glyn's crowning achievement was to make the figure talk. This was done by means of a phonographic record which the schoolboy inventor obtained by imitating Skimpole's voice into a receiver. The record was arranged on a disc inside the head with a fixed needle. There was a spring to wind up the disc, and by simply touching a button at the back of the head the figure reeled off a speech that was quite worthy of the original. Glyn's latest improvement made Skimpole I. and II. so alike that it was almost impossible to tell them apart. And then, to make matters worse, Skimpole III. appeared on the scene.

—And the Third!

THE third Skimpole was not another invention, but George Francis Kerr, that past-master of impersonation. Figgins & Co. had been ignominiously routed in their attempt to capture Skimpole II. from their rivals of the School House, and they were determined to have their revenge. There was not much fear of detection; Kerr had care-



Herr Schneider stuck a pin in Skimpole's arm, and received a crack on the jaw which nearly sent his teeth through the back of his head.

fully studied the working of the figure, and he had rehearsed its speech till he could have said it backwards, if necessary. His disguise was so perfect that Glyn and the rest of the School House juniors were completely taken in. To them it seemed as if Skimpole II. had suddenly developed a will of its own, and in some uncanny way was able to talk without being started, walk down a flight of stairs, and turn round when and where it liked. Had the figure, like the Greek statue of old, been made so lifelike that it had come to life? Even when the automaton sent Glyn flying with a right-hander under the chin they had no suspicion of the real truth, and it was not until they had followed it to Tom Merry's study, just in time to see it raiding the cupboard, that it dawned upon them. There was a rush for the pseudo-Skimpole, and during the next few whirlwind minutes the stunning wheeze lost some of its first attractiveness for the japer of the New House. But Tom Merry & Co. had been dished, diddled and done, and it was a long time before they were allowed to forget the remarkable adventures of the three Skimpoles.

THE END



AROUND GREYFRIARS

FAMILIAR SCENES
TO EVERY BOY
IN THE SCHOOL.

The
MAIN
ENTRANCE



The SCHOOL
TUCKSHOP



The View from the
PLAYING FIELDS.



RUINS
of the
OLD PRIORY

BEHIND
the
SCHOOLHOUSE



The
HEAD'S
GARDEN



GREYFRIARS
from
the RIVER

Frank Richards, in his splendid stories, has described many scenes and places around Greyfriars. Here the "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" artist has brought his imagination—and his pen—to bear on a few of them for the benefit of readers.