

TRIUMPH 2^d
Every Tuesday

1940 MAD CAREW

**STORY
INSIDE**

THE TRIUMPH

2^d AND GEM



THEY WERE INVITED TO A PARTY—AND WALKED STRAIGHT INTO AN AMAZING ADVENTURE

The Boys of ST JIM'S

THIS WEEK :
THE SECRET OF THE TOWERS

NOT A HOUSE WARMING

THROUGH the dark evening sped a big car—as big almost as a small bus—containing a merry party of St. Jim's chaps.

There was a buzz of cheery conversation in the car, for the boys were on their way to a party at the invitation of a Captain Cleveland, a cousin of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The party, which was really in the nature of a house-warming, meant the St. Jim's fellows staying overnight at the big house which Captain Cleveland had recently taken in the neighbourhood of the school.

In the car were Tom Merry & Co., Figgins & Co., and Jack Blake and his chums—including, of course, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. D'Arcy's younger brother, Wally of the Third, and Harry Hammond of the Fourth Form completed the party.

They all knew Captain Cleveland and liked him. Before the war the captain had played in a cricket match at St. Jim's against an eleven raised by Tom Merry.

A good many things had happened since then. War had come again, and Captain Cleveland, leading a raid against a sector of the Siegfried Line, had been knocked over by a Nazi bullet.

The St. Jim's chaps were very keen to see him again. As someone who had been in action, he was an object of interest.

The Towers came in sight at last. It was an old building, only partly in repair, and, though it was called the Towers, there was only one tower remaining of the old place.

A gate was opened, and the car rolled up a wide drive through grounds that showed signs of neglect. A German had recently lived in it, but had departed suddenly when war had been declared in September, 1939, and the house had been empty since then, except for a few servants who had been kept on and paid by a butler who had been in the service of the late German tenant.

Tom Merry & Co. were a little surprised at Captain Cleveland having taken the place, as it was an extensive residence and the captain was unmarried. But, since he was giving a tremendous house-warming and had invited their noble selves to it, they were quite pleased about the matter.

At the front door a great many cars were already drawn up, and the car from St. Jim's slackened down to take its turn.

Arthur Augustus put his head out of the window.

"I don't see any sign of my cousin, deah boys," he remarked. "That fellow in the doorway is the butlah. What's his name? Ludy, I believe."

"Is he a German—like his employer?" asked Tom Merry.

"He says he's Swiss, but lots of Germans call themselves Swiss just now," answered Gussy. "I should weally wecommend the captain to sack him."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I suppose he has had to show his papers to the police, like all foreigners, and must have proved that he is a Swiss."

"Oh, in that case, pewwaps he is all wight!" agreed Arthur Augustus.

The car jerked forward, and the juniors arrived opposite the portico; they alighted and ascended the broad steps.

Ludy, the butler—a fat, imposing personage—showed the new arrivals into a large reception-room, which was already pretty full.

Captain Cleveland was not there, however, and the remarks that were being made by the assembled guests showed that they were somewhat surprised by the non-appearance of their host.

Arthur Augustus stopped the Swiss butler as he was returning to the hall.

"Where is my cousin, Judy?" he asked.

"Ludy, sir," corrected the Swiss.

"Pardon my mistake. Where is Captain Cleveland?"

"In his study, sir."

"And where is his study?"

"I will show you, sir."

"Pway do."

Arthur Augustus followed the fat butler. Ludy tapped at a door in a wide, oak-panelled passage. There was no reply from within. Ludy tapped again, but still there was no response.

"It's all wight—I'll go in," said Arthur Augustus.

The butler stepped respectfully aside, and Arthur Augustus opened the door, stepping inside and looking round.

"Bai Jove! There is nobody here, Judy!"

The butler looked in with an expression of astonishment on his plump face.

"But—but Captain Cleveland was here, sir," he said. "He gave me orders that he was not to be disturbed. That was two hours ago."

"This is vewy we remarkable! Please let the servants look for Captain Cleveland and find him, and tell him that his guests are here."

"Yes, Mr. D'Arcy."

Arthur Augustus returned to the reception-room.

"Can't find the boundah!" he exclaimed, in response to the inquiring looks of his chums.

"It's vewy stwange. The butlah has not seen him for two hours, and the servants are goin' to search for him."

There was something like anxiety mixed with the general astonishment now. It was increased when Ludy came in looking very grave.

"Well, have you found Captain Cleveland?" asked Gussy.

Ludy shook his head.

"He is not in the house, sir."

"What?"

"The servants and I myself have looked everywhere," said Ludy. "Captain Cleveland must have gone out."

"Impossible!" said Gussy. "Something must have happened to him."

"I do not see what can have happened to



Captain Cleveland in his own residence," said one of the other guests.

"Looks as though something's wrong, anyway," said Harry Hammond of the Fourth. "Ludy!"

The butler turned his head.

"Yes, sir?" he asked, in a stately way.

"Haven't you seen Captain Cleveland since he was in his study?"

"No, sir."

"He gave orders not to be disturbed?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you've not see him go out?"

"No, sir."

"Nor have any of the other servants?"

"No, sir."

"I can't understand how he could go out without being seen," said Hammond, turning to his school chums, "what with the house full of servants and guests and such. Somethin's happened to him. Let's go and have a look in the study."

"But what could have happened?" asked Gussy.

"Had a fit and rolled under the table, perhaps," suggested Hammond. "Fellow I once knew was always havin' fits."

"Weally, Hammond—"

"May as well go and look," said Figgins.

"Yaas, all wight. If he doesn't turn up soon the guests will leave, and there won't be any house-warmin'."

Tom Merry & Co. proceeded to the study. There was a large table in the room, but Captain Cleveland certainly was not under it. The study was a large apartment on the second floor, with walls of panelled oak and a large, old-fashioned fireplace. The floor was polished, and two or three tiger-skins lay upon it. An electric reading-lamp was burning on the table.

"No sign of him heah, Hammond!"

"Hold on!" said Hammond quietly.

The Cockney schoolboy was on his knees close to the chair that stood by the table near the lamp. Someone had evidently been writing there, for an open blotter lay on the table, with a pen fallen across it.

The juniors gathered round Hammond as he pointed to a dark stain on the polished floor.

"Bai Jove! What's that?"

A single word dropped from Hammond's lips, but it was full of intensity:

"Blood!"

WHERE IS CAPTAIN CLEVELAND?

"IMPOSSIBLE!" "Look for yourselves," said Hammond quietly. "It's a drop of blood!" "Good heavens!" "There's been foul play here!" declared Hammond.

"But—" "What did you say, sir?" exclaimed Ludy, entering the study hastily. "What is it?"

He crossed to the desk. "Mein Gott!" he ejaculated. "Someone must have entered by the window, gentlemen! It would be quite easy to do so. Some burglar—"

He pulled open the window. It was a large casement, and outside was an iron balcony, with iron steps leading down into the garden. As the window was not fastened, it would certainly have been easy for anyone to enter and leave unseen.

"But where can the captain be?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Even if he was hurt, where can he be? He can't have been taken away." "He must have been," said Monty Lowther. "He isn't here, old chap."

"Kidnapped," said Blake doubtfully. "What the dooce should anybody want to kidnap him for?" muttered Kerr.

"Bai Jove! It's extraordinary!" Hammond was stooping, examining the polished floor for fresh signs, and suddenly he uttered an exclamation.

"There's been a struggle here," he said. "How do you know?" asked Dig.

"Look at this board! Look how the polish has been scraped off!" said Hammond. "Somebody was standing hard on this with his heel. There's where the heel scraped along—see?"

"Bai Jove! It looks like it!" "And here's another spot of blood!" "Good gracious!"

The juniors looked at one another, with pale faces. Ludy was the picture of distress.

"This is terrible!" he muttered. "Better telephone for the police at once," said Hammond. "There's a phone here."

"Better tell the guests what has happened, too," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas," said Arthur Augustus; and he returned to the reception-room to make his startling announcement.

There was a telephone on the study table, and Hammond unhooked the receiver. The Cockney schoolboy seemed to be taking the lead, but he was not to be gainsaid.

"Rylcombe Police Station," he said. Then, after a pause: "Is that Inspector Skeat? Good! You are wanted here, sir—the Towers; Captain Cleveland's place. Captain Cleveland has disappeared, and there are bloodstains. Can you come at once? Right! Good-bye!"

Hammond put down the receiver.

"You bet Mr. Skeat won't be long in coming," he remarked. "He doesn't often get a case like this."

"There must have been more than one of them," said D'Arcy minor. "One man couldn't have handled the captain; he was a good handfoul even for two. Who can they be? And why have they done it?"

But no answer could be found to those questions. The whole thing was an utter mystery. The juniors could only remain in the study, waiting for the arrival of the police.

Most of the guests departed, puzzled and wondering. A dozen men remained, and they all collected in the study. The house-warming was very much off now. No one was thinking of it.

Car after car had rolled away, but at last there came the sound of one arriving.

"Here are the police," said Tom Merry.

A few minutes later Inspector Skeat, of Rylcombe, followed by a constable, was shown into the study by Ludy.

A few words acquainted the inspector with what was known, and he made an imperious gesture with his fat hand.

"Please leave the room to me!" he said.

The worthy inspector almost hustled the guests out, and remained alone in the study with the constable to pursue his investigations.

Tom Merry & Co. returned to the reception-room. They sat in a group, discussing the

amazing happening in low tones, and they soon had the place to themselves.

Ludy entered after the last of the other guests had gone.

"The car is ready, gentlemen," he said respectfully.

"The cah?" echoed Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, sir."

"But I ordered the chauffeur to return to Wayland, aftah delivewin' our bags," said Arthur Augustus, puzzled.

"Yes, sir. The car you came in has gone, but I have ordered my master's car to take you back to the school," explained the Swiss.

"But we are not goin' back."

The butler coughed.

"After what has happened, sir, I thought you would hardly care to remain."

"Wubbish!"

"Ahem! The police would prefer to be left in the house by themselves, I understand," the butler persisted, colouring. "And you must see, sir, that this is no place for people of your age, if I may say so, sir."

"That is not for you to decide, Judy," said Arthur Augustus icily. "I am weally afwaid that you have forgotten your place. Pway go and send the cah back to the gawage."

"Then—then you are not going, sir?"

"Certainly not!"

"But, sir—"

"Pway don't argue any longer! Go and do as I tell you!"

"Very good, sir!"

Ludy retired.

"Seems to me that Swiss chap is taking a lot on himself!" growled Wally.

"Yaas. You may rely on me to keep him in his place, howevah!"

A little later, the voice of the inspector was heard in the hall. He was speaking to the butler.

"Who is in authority here during Captain Cleveland's absence?" he was asking.

"The house is in my charge, sir," said Ludy's smooth voice.

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus jumped up and strode into the hall.

"Pway wemembah your place, Judy!" he exclaimed angrily. "Inspectah Skeat, I am Captain Cleveland's cousin."

Ludy bit his lip.

"I am Captain Cleveland's trusted servant, and am in charge of the house during his absence," he said. "You may address yourself to me, inspector. I understand that you do not wish a number of schoolboys to remain on the premises, under the circumstances?"

Inspector Skeat nodded emphatically.

"The police will remain in charge, of course," he said. "I shall leave a constable here. I am going to undertake a search for the missing man. It is quite plain that he has been removed from the room by way of the window and the balcony, and I have every hope of finding him shortly. Meanwhile, these boys had certainly better go back to school."

"We shall please ourselves about that," said Tom Merry curtly.

"Master Merry!" exclaimed the inspector, with his sternest look.

"We are goin' to remain heah," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "We have not the slightest intention of leavin'!"

"Rather not!" said Wally.

Inspector Skeat shrugged his shoulders.

"All right! You must please yourselves, then. I have given the constable strict orders that no one is to be allowed to enter Captain Cleveland's study."

And the inspector walked out with an air of great dignity.

HAMMOND IS SUSPICIOUS

THE evening to which Tom Merry & Co. had looked forward so keenly was one of the most wretched in their experience. They sat down to supper late, but even Fatty Wynn did not do it justice.

The Swiss butler had not worried Arthur Augustus any further; he waited on the juniors with unruffled urbanity, apparently reconciled to having them in the house.

Over supper the Co. were almost silent.

The baffling mystery of Captain Cleveland's disappearance worried them deeply. The

spots of blood found in the study seemed to point to a tragedy, and yet that the captain could have met with a tragic fate seemed incredible. Who should wish to harm him?

Yet what had happened—and why? The juniors puzzled over it till their heads ached with the effort of thinking.

"I wish I could feel suah that my cousin is still alive, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus with a sigh.

"It's a dead cert," declared Hammond confidently. "If the captain had been murdered, they wouldn't have taken the trouble to take his body away. We'd have found him in the study. The fact that he isn't there shows that he's still alive."

Tom Merry nodded assent.

"Yaas, it seems vewy probable, now that you put it like that," said Arthur Augustus, with a breath of relief. "But what could they want to kidnap my cousin for?"

"That's what we've got to find out," said Kerr determinedly. "As soon as it's daylight we'll search the grounds for a sign. There's been so much rain lately that we ought to be able to pick up traces, if the rascals have left any."

"And we can have another hunt in the study," said Hammond.

"The bobby's been ordered not to let anybody in," said Wally.

"We'll speak to him," said Tom Merry. "I don't suppose we shall find any clue we haven't found already, but it's rotten to be sitting here and doing nothing."

"Yaas, wathah!"

But the juniors found the policemen adamant. He was stationed in the passage outside the door of the study, and his wants had been liberally supplied by the butler. He shook his head when the juniors spoke to him. Mr. Skeat had given him orders to see that no one entered the study, and it was his duty to carry them out.

Tom Merry & Co. retired defeated.

"All right," said Hammond. "More than one way of killing a cat. Let's get up to bed now."

There was nothing else to be done, and the juniors retired to their rooms. Ludy showed them upstairs with his most respectful manner. Four communicating rooms had been prepared for the St. Jim's chaps, so they were still together.

The butler retired and left them to themselves.

"May as well go to bed, I suppose," said Tom Merry.

Hammond crossed to the door and opened it suddenly. He glanced up and down the passage, and seemed surprised that there was no one there, but at length he closed the door and came back to the centre of the room.

"I don't trust that Ludy fellow," he explained. "Thought he might have stopped behind to listen. Now, chaps, I've been thinking. There were spots of blood on the floor downstairs in Captain Cleveland's study. But there weren't any spots on the curtains at the window, and they hadn't been disturbed or torn in any way. There weren't any stains near the window, and there weren't any on the balcony outside. Do you see what I'm getting at?"

"Blessed if I do!" said Herries.

"Well, I reckon the captain was wounded in a scrap. He was bleeding. Yet all the stains were inside the room, where he had put up the fight. None near the window, none near the door, and none outside on the balcony or in the hall!" whispered Hammond excitedly. "He wasn't taken out of the study at all!"

"What?"

"That idiot Skeat concluded that he was taken out of the window, and so did we, because we're idiots, too," said Hammond.

"But he wasn't."

The fellows stared at him blankly. "But he can't have been taken out by the door," said Lowther. "That was simply impossible with a house full of people."

"I know that."

"Well, I suppose you don't suggest that he vanished up the chimney?"

"No, I don't, ass!"

"Then what—"

"He wasn't taken out of the study at all,

"I repeat," said Hammond, with conviction. "Don't you see? He couldn't have come out by the door, and he didn't come out by the window; and so—"

"He's still there. Is that what you mean?" grunted Blake.

"Not that exactly. But there must be another way out—a way we don't know of."

"My hat!"

The juniors stared at one another, utterly startled by Hammond's suggestion.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus at last. "I weally believe that Hammond is on the twack!"

"But it's difficult to believe!" gasped Figgins.

"Why?" insisted Hammond. "In that room, with a panelled wall, it would be easy enough. The man who lived here till war broke out was a German—perhaps he was a Nazi spy; and if he was you can depend on it he had a way open to dodge if the police got after him. And I think Ludy is carrying on his rotten game. Perhaps Captain Cleveland discovered something that aroused his suspicions—"

"You're using a lot of 'perhapes,'" said Kerr.

"The key to the mystery is in that room, and I'm going to find it!" said Hammond determinedly. "I can get into the room by cutting one of the leaded window-panes."

"You're not going alone," said Tom Merry.

"It would be better if I did," said Hammond. "A crowd of us would only get spotted. I'll take a torch. It won't do to turn on the lights there. I'll get out of a window at the back of the house, run round to the study, and enter it through a window on the balcony."

"But the policeman—"

"He's outside the door—in the hall. I'll not make enough noise to disturb him."

"But if you find—"

"If I spot the secret I'll come back and tell you at once before I go ahead," said Hammond. "We shall all be wanted if there is a scrap to go through."

"Hammond's right," said Tom Merry. "He'll be quieter on his own, and we don't want the policeman looking in and perhaps warning Ludy."

So it was settled. The fellows lay down in their clothes. Hammond did not intend to go until he was sure that the whole household was asleep. It was past one in the morning when he slipped from his bed.

Some of the chaps had fallen asleep, but Tom Merry was awake.

"Give me half an hour," whispered Hammond. "If I'm not back by then I suggest that half a dozen or so of you come down to try to find where I am. Look for a leaded pane lifted out of the study window."

"O.K.!" replied Tom Merry.

The half-hour went by very slowly, and before it was half through Tom Merry had a presentiment that Hammond would not come back—that something had happened to him.

And so on the stroke of the thirtieth minute he woke up Blake, Kerr, Figgins, Herries, and Gussy, and led the way noiselessly from the bed-room. Wally, who had also awakened, insisted on accompanying them.

They found a window at the back of the house open, and guessed that Hammond had left it so. One after the other, they crawled through it, and then together crept round to the balcony.

The night was intensely dark, with hardly a star glimmering in the sky. Tom Merry signalled for absolute silence, then pointed to a casement window of the study.

There was a leaded pane missing from it.

He beckoned his little party to follow him back a short way.

"We're going into that study and take up posts behind such hiding-places as we can find," he whispered. "If Hammond's disappeared, he's disappeared in there, just as Captain Cleveland did, and whoever captured him may reappear after taking him away. Anyhow, anybody got any other suggestions?"

They hadn't, so the captain of the Shell led the way back to the study window.

He opened it, easily by putting his hand through the hole where the missing pane had

been, and, as silently as ghosts, they climbed into the room. Tom had warned them that the slightest sound might reach the policeman on duty on the other side of the study door.

Behind curtains, desks, cupboards, and bookshelves the seven boys took up their positions, and then began a wearying wait.

Were Merry and Hammond's suppositions correct? Would anyone appear in this study, or were they merely wasting their time?

It seemed to them as if hours and hours had passed, when at last they heard a slight sound.

Click!

Their eyes were so accustomed to the darkness by this time that they saw dimly a square of floor rise and a head and shoulders come through. A man leapt out, and there was a yelp from the swell of St. Jim's:

"Collah him!"

"Mein Gott!"

Tom Merry and Blake were already grasping the shadowy figure. Kerr, ever quick-witted, switched on the light. Then all the juniors piled on the struggling rascal, and he went to the floor. The mouth of the Swiss—for it was Kasper Ludy—was open to scream.

"Wathah wuff on you, Ludy!" grinned Arthur Augustus. "But you'll soon be nice and comfy in pwison, you know!"

Kerr went through the captive's pockets and turned out an electric torch and a big bunch of keys.

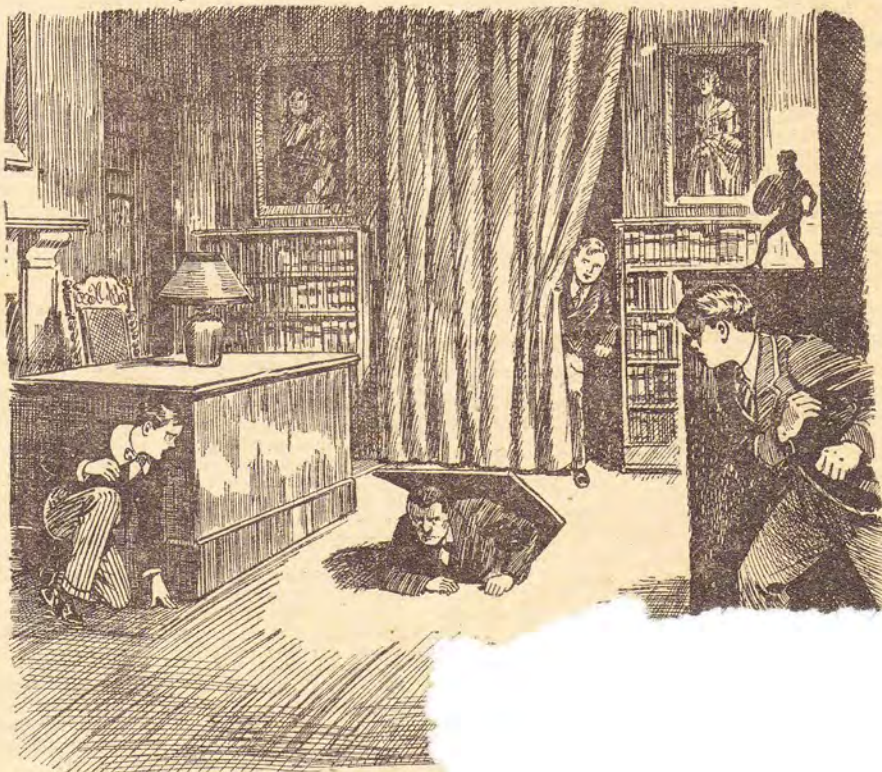
"We may want these," he remarked.

"Come on!" said Tom.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Kerr. "We don't want to risk someone coming in and freeing this rotter before we come back! We'll fasten up the door."

He put the back of a chair under the lock of the door and jammed it tightly. Then Tom Merry led the way down the trap. Whether the Swiss had an accomplice still concealed in the mysterious recess they did not know, but it was probable enough, and they were very cautious. The ladder, bolt upright, was a long one, and Tom Merry felt his way down carefully rung by rung.

It seemed to him that he was descending into the depths of the earth. He paused once to flash on the light of the electric lamp; it revealed only the close, narrow walls of the perpendicular tunnel. It was barely two feet wide.



The juniors saw a square of floor rise and
It was Ludy, the butler.

Kerr jammed his fist into it, and the scream died away in a gurgle.

"Gag him!" whispered Tom Merry. "I think the policeman outside must have fallen asleep, and we won't call for his aid yet."

The Swiss was gagged and bound hand and foot with blind-cords, and lay on the floor, helpless, his eyes burning with rage and hate.

THE SECRET OF THE TOWER

TOM MERRY panted as he released his hold on the captured man.

In the floor there appeared an opening a couple of feet across, where the hidden trapdoor had risen on its unseen hinges. Below was a thick stone floor, but a square block of stone had slid downwards, leaving an orifice corresponding to that in the wooden floor above. Below was darkness, but the juniors could make out the iron rungs of a perpendicular ladder.

"So that's the giddy door!" murmured Blake. "We're on to it now."

At last Tom Merry felt his head in free air, and he drew himself from the top rungs into a dark room of some sort.

"Come on, you chaps!" Tom whispered. "This is the finish, so far."

There was a sudden, startled gasp in the darkness.

"My hat! Tom Merry!"

Tom spun round.

"Hammond!"

"What-ho! Show a light if you've got one."

Tom Merry turned on his torch.

He was in a small room with stone walls. On the farther side was a closed iron door. But in the room—within a few yards of him—two figures lay on blankets on the floor.

One was Harry Hammond of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's; the other was a stalwart young man with a bandaged head, whom he recognised at once as Captain Cleveland.

There was a clink of metal as the two prisoners sat up and blinked at him in the light. Each of them was secured by a strong steel chain locked round the waist and fastened to an iron staple in the wall.

"So we've found you, Captain Cleveland," said Tom. "Well, we'll soon have you out of this!"

"I found him first!" grinned Hammond. "Didn't I, captain? And I've got a lump on my head to show for it!"

The juniors came up one after another. Kerr tried the keys, he had taken from Ludy, in turn upon the padlocks on the chains, and soon found the right one.

The two prisoners stood up—free.

"There is where we cheer, I think," remarked Wally.

"Hush!" said Captain Cleveland. "I take it that you have secured that villain Ludy, or you wouldn't be here."

"Yaas, wathah, old chap!"

"But the other?"

"We haven't seen any other," said Tom Merry. "But we felt pretty certain that the rotter had a confederate—most likely the German who used to live here."

Captain Cleveland nodded.

"I think that's the man," he said. "I know he never shows himself outside this den; but every night since I have been a prisoner Ludy has come up and passed through that iron door. Several times I have heard voices and a buzzing noise. Something is going on."

"Spying of some sort," said Kerr.

"You're right," said the captain. "And now that it looks as if we're going to catch the other culprit, I may as well tell you the truth."

The juniors gathered round him curiously.

"I didn't take this house merely because I wanted somewhere to rest and recover from my wound," Captain Cleveland went on. "I came here on a War Office job."

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Gussy. "We wondered why you had taken such a jolly big house, deah boy!"

Captain Cleveland smiled.

"Well, I kept my eyes and my ears open and soon knew that something mysterious was happening here. As you know, this house was once occupied by a German named Hoffmann. He was supposed to have left the district, but he didn't. He's still here—probably in that next room. He is more important than Ludy, who is only his helper."

"How did they collah you, deah boy?" Gussy asked his cousin.

"I was in my study," said the captain. "I had seen Ludy go into my study late the previous evening, and had questioned him about it. His answers made me more suspicious, and I was far from satisfied with Ludy. Perhaps he thought I suspected more than I did, for I was attacked suddenly in the study. Ludy had come in with a pretended message. He seized me, and while I struggled with him the other rascal leaped up through the trap in the floor. I fought hard, but was stunned by a blow that laid my temple open, and when I came to I was chained up here."

Captain Cleveland paused a moment; then, breathing deeply, he went on:

"I shouted at first but I soon learned that these walls shut off all sound from the outside world; otherwise, he would have gagged me, I suppose. I had been here, as it seemed to me, for centuries, when Hammond was brought here, and then I knew that, at least, I was being searched for."

"I knew you chaps would come in time," said Hammond. "I was in the study, searching for the secret door, when that Swiss rotter came into the room suddenly and almost walked over me. I had finished going over the walls, and was examining the floor, and perhaps he thought I was on to it. Anyway, he hit me a clip over the head before I could say a word or call out to the bobby, and I hadn't a chance to struggle. Then he must have brought me here—not that I remember anything but a thunderin' headache!"

"Bai Jove! He is a thorough wascal!" said Arthur Augustus. "This proves that they were all weedy to deal with anybody who gave them twouble. But what is their little game? They must be playin' some awfully wotten tickle heah to take all this twouble to keep it dark!"

"That's what we're going to find out," said Tom Merry. "We've got one villain, and now we're going to collar the other!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Captain Cleveland rose to his feet again. His face was pale, but determined.

"The door is locked," he said. "Ludy always locked it after him."

"I've got his keys here," said Kerr.

"Take care," said the captain anxiously. "The German is a powerful man, and he will be desperate. I can't allow you to run risks."

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus.

The key turned in the lock. Tom Merry put out the light quickly. The door was softly opened, but there was nothing but darkness beyond.

But as the juniors looked into the deep gloom they were aware of a glimmer of light that came from beneath a door at a little distance. There was a narrow passage before them, barely wide enough for two to proceed abreast. As they pressed on silently into the passage there came a low buzzing sound from behind the door in front of them.

The captain felt over the door, turned the handle, and flung it suddenly open.

A bright light gleamed upon their eyes.

Before them was a small, round room fitted up as a laboratory, and lighted by electricity. The buzzing sound was louder for a second, and then it suddenly ceased. A burly, blond-bearded German leaped up from an instrument and spun round.

The captain rushed forward, forgetting his wound and his weakness.

"Surrender!" he cried.

The German uttered a fierce oath.

"You!"

He dragged a revolver from his pocket.

But at the same instant Tom Merry hurled the poker. It caught the scoundrel full in the face, and he reeled back with a yell of agony.

Before he could rise the chaps were upon him.

"Pile in!" gasped Blake, as the man struggled fiercely. "The beast's as strong as a horse!"

"Collah him, deah boys!"

The crowd of juniors piled on him in deadly earnest. The German, burly as he was, was simply crushed down under the weight of numbers. In a few minutes the St. Jim's fellows had bound him hand and foot with handkerchiefs twisted for the purpose.

The German lay panting.

"Ach! Den is it all over?" he muttered. "But I have served mein Fuhrer!"

"What was he up to?" exclaimed Wally. "Wireless?"

"Yes," said Captain Cleveland. "And we have cut off the message he was sending. It will be a surprise for his friends at the other end—in Berlin, or wherever they are."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus in almost an awed voice. "Fancy the wascal bein' able to send messages from heah to the scoundwels in Berlin!"

"I shouldn't wonder if there are a dozen places like this, too, scattered about the country, sending off information to the scoundrels in Berlin!" said Kerr.

"This one is stopped, at any rate," said Tom Merry. "It will be rather a surprise for Mr. Skeat to-morrow. I'll bet he didn't think of anything like this."

INSPECTOR SKEAT was indeed surprised on the following morning.

But he was more satisfied than surprised. He cheerfully took off Kasper Ludy and Herr Hoffmann to prison, and before he had got them there he was pretty well satisfied in his own mind that he had handled that case remarkably well.

Kasper Ludy and Hoffmann went to their just deserts, and the secret of the Towers was a secret no longer.

And, needless to say, Tom Merry & Co. had a very good time at the house-warming when that postponed party was held after all.

Next Tuesday in the TRIUMPH.—Another grand St. Jim's tale, also a fine booklet: "Fighters of Britain," containing pictures of 36 bombing and fighting planes.



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HOW'DO, PALS.—It's some weeks since you heard from me, but the good old TRIUMPH has been so packed with stories that there hasn't been room for my chat.

Still, I've managed to get it in this week, and I'm hoping you are all thoroughly enjoying our latest serial, "Sandu of the Himalayas." Don't forget to drop me a line, letting me know what you think of it.

And now, a few words about the booklet I am giving you next week—"Fighters of Britain." It's a booklet every boy should have, for it will enable him to identify any plane he may see overhead. To make sure of getting it, you and your chums should order next week's TRIUMPH NOW.

Haven't much space left, but must tell you a piece of news you've all been waiting for. Super-man is returning in a fortnight's time! And what an adventure he finds himself in! You'll vote this feature better than ever. More about it next week.

Yours till flies don't fly,

THE EDITOR.