

D'ARCY MINOR'S SECRET!

Special St. Jim's School Story  
Inside.

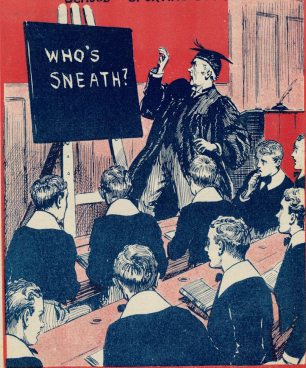
EVERY WEDNESDAY

# The GEM 2<sup>D</sup>

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SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES

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THE NAME THAT TERRIFIES MR. SELBY!

(Why is the master of the Third Form at St. Jim's so terrified at the sight of the name on the blackboard?  
Read the gripping school story inside.)



Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Victoria House, Paragon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

#### A NEW FOOTER SERIAL!

**G**EMITES will be delighted to hear that I have secured the services of Mr. Sydney Haring, the distinguished author of best stories, to write specially for the Gem a football year that will appear in serial publication. This masterpiece of fiction will start in your favourite paper the week after next, and I have not the slightest doubt that it will be enthusiastically received. The title,

#### "A LEADER OF THE LEAGUE!"

is undoubtedly an attractive one, and is, indeed, quite in keeping with the strength of this coming story. Dick Haines, the central character, is a youngster you'll like at first sight even in a League football "week" from an equally famous League team who liked his play, and invited him to turn out for his club. I'll say no more at this point. Remember—

#### THE WEEK AFTER NEXT!

I have received a very interesting letter from E. Coates, of Bowdley, who points out that in a story dealing with the first days of a new term, there is sometimes a discrepancy in the number of a study a character is said to occupy. I believe it is generally known, however, that on the first day of a new term follows at St. Jim's a fellow known to charge their studies if they can! Then a fellow from Study X, we will say, is next informed as to these changes, but sometimes the change is so insignificant, or rather, the last chapter out of a study is closed a moment, that a formal notification of the change is not made. Usually, the fellows who drift about from study to study, come back to where they started in the long run.

#### THOSE PORTRAITS!

Two or three queries have reached me from loyal readers who want to know if the portraits of St. Jim's celebrities are to be discontinued. Set your minds easy, chaps. They will continue to appear, but at irregular intervals, for the time programme is such a full one that there isn't room for these portraits every week. As, however, the majority of the principal characters have appeared with unflinching regularity, the "lower lights" can afford to be kept in the background until such time as space permits of their publication.

#### NEXT WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAMME!

##### "SAVING MR. BELBY!"

By Martin Clifford.

That's the title of next week's grand story of Tom Harry & Co. at St. Jim's. Mr. Belby, the unpopular master of the Third, is in a hole, and a certain person puts his shoulder to the wheel to help him out. What that person is I'm not going to say. You'll find that out for yourself next week.

##### "THE ORPHEUS CLAW!"

Mr. Lester Baldwin rings down the curtain on his popular mystery and adventure story in next week's Gem. Some of you, no doubt, will be sorry. But remember, all good things must come to an end. Don't miss the final chapters, chaps!

##### "MASTERS!"

The "St. Jim's News" next week is devoted to those in authority at the school—namely, the masters. You'll enjoy this supplement, boys!

##### "WALLY D'ARCY!"

The St. Jim's character has selected Wally D'Arcy for his next Jingle, and you'll like it as much as you like Wally.

Your Editor.



WIRE IN NOW!

You Know A Good Job? Let's Hear It, Chum.

Delicious Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes  
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All Entries in this Competition should be Addressed to: The GEM LIBRARY, "My Readers' Own Corner," George House, Great Square, London, E.C.4.

#### WYCOMBE WINS!

##### AN OPEN BETTING!

Night watchman Cyriel who has fallen in a hole in the road!—"Goodie!" you see the notice "Road Closed!" Cyriel (rubbing his head): "Yes, closed the thing! And it was open!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to—William R. Powley, 13, West End Road, High Wycombe, Bucks.

#### VIKE VENNA!

The captain was very angry with the cabin-boy: "The old, old tale, I suppose," he roared, "the foot of the lonely rowl to sea!"—"Oh, no, sir!" the boy replied sadly. "It has all changed since your day!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Harry Bell, The Cottage, Little Hampton, Wigan, Cumberland.

#### PANLIZ YOUR T!

Walking into a cafe, one of the newly rich picked up a man which happened to be written in French. An item to the best of the bill took his fancy, but not understanding it, he beckoned the waiter. "Waiter," he said, "bring me some of this with plenty of gravy." "You can't have that, sir," replied the astonished Knight of the Napkin. "That's what the board's playing!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. A. Vance, 2, Morrison Gap Road, Hong Kong, China.

#### TWO MEANINGS!

An ambitious lady brought her son to the recruiting office to join the Army. "But, mother," said the officer in charge, "I cannot sign your son on, he is but a mere child." "But," insisted the woman, "I want him to join the Infantry!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to William G. C. Lang, Seaman's Orphanage, Newbain Park, Liverpool.

Kit Whitrake: "Have you forgotten that you owe me five pounds, Duggy?" "Trinkie (happily): "Not yet, give me mine!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Lionel Stander, 6, Butler Street, Derby Road, Southampton.

#### RESPECTER OF AGES!

The driver called the waiter to him and said, in a confidential voice: "I suppose it is considered improper to speak disrespectfully of one's elders?" The waiter looked puzzled. "So they say, sir," he returned. "Ah," said the driver, "then I must pocket my feelings, and be silent about this egg you have brought me!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. J. Farley, 22, Silchester Road, South Norwood, S.E. 25.

#### TUCK HAMPER COUPON.

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No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

**AN AWKWARD SITUATION!** Climbing an old ruined gateway seems an innocent schoolboy prank, yet it leads to dire consequences for Wally D'Arcy, for he overhears something that is not intended for his ears!

# D'ARCY MINOR'S SECRET!



A magnificent new long complete story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, featuring Mr. Selby, the unpopular master of the Third, and Wally D'Arcy, one of his most troublesome pupils.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

## CHAPTER I. Waiting for Gussy!

**G**USSY!"

"Gussy! Gussy!"

"Gus! Gus! Gus!"

Blake and Herries and Digby, of the St. Jim's Fourth, were lifting up their voices in chorus.

They stood in the big doorway of the School House, and they shouted together; and their combined efforts somewhat resembled the roar of the celebrated Bull of Bashan. It was not quite in accordance with the rules and traditions of the School House; for justice to make their voices heard in this way. Fourth-Form fellows were supposed, as a rule, to be seen and not heard.

But the three were getting exasperated.

It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and Blake & Co. were ready to go out. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy should have been ready also.

Apparently, he was not ready.

At all events, he had not put in an appearance. His comrades had waited at the doorway—patiently at first, then impatiently, and then very impatiently. Now they were exceedingly impatient. Hence their efforts to undermately the Bull of Bashan.

"Gussy! Gussy! Gussy!"

"D'Arcy! D'Arcy! D'Arcy!"

"Gus, you see!"

Tom Merry and Masters and Leather, of the Shell, were admiring the steps of the House, outside. They also were waiting for the great Arthur Augustus, as the Terrific Three of the Shell were going out with the Fourth-Formers that sunny autumn afternoon. They remained as they listened to the lifted voices of the three.

Tom Merry looked into the doorway.

"Ready or not," he suggested. "You'll have a perfect coming along to see what the row's about!"

"Ready, Gussy!" roared Blake.

"What an earth's keeping him all this time!" asked Tom.

Blake gave a snort.

"Trying on a new medicine in the study, perhaps. Or perhaps he hasn't decided whether to walk out in a cap, a bowler, or a topper. A problem like that might keep him in till tea-time before he settled it."

"If I have to go up to the study for him," said Herries, breathing hard, "I'll jolly well swing him."

"Gussy!" bawled Digby.

"Gussy! Gussy!" D'Arcy! Foolard!"

The House was almost deserted, which was perhaps one reason why Blake & Co. ventured to make such a terrifically obdurate in the doorway. But it was not quite deserted, as they discovered. A frowning, orange-bearded gentleman came suddenly out of a study and walked to the door. It was Mr. Selby, the master of the Third.

"What does this disturbance mean?" he sternly demanded.

"Oh!"

It was just like Mr. Selby to be "frowning" in his study when the other masters were taking the opportunity to get out of doors. And it was just like him to jump on a fellow for letting himself go a little. Blake & Co. had, as a matter of fact, let themselves go more than a little—quite a lot. Possibly Mr. Selby had found it difficult to go through Latin prose papers while the three were shouting for Arthur Augustus.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Selby was the worst-tempered Form-master at St. Jim's. Probably the Third Form had a disturbing effect on his nervous system.

"What does this mean?" he snapped. "How dare you stand in the doorway and shout—on, rather, now?" In this a school of a hour-garden!

"Only talking to a chap, sir!" said Blake rapidly.

"I shall report this disturbance to your headmaster!" snapped Mr. Selby. "If I see you in my Form I should care you."



"Oh!"

Not for the first time, Blake & Co. felt pleased that they were not in Mr. Selby's Form.

"Another word, and I shall cause you, although you are not in my Form!" added Mr. Selby. "I shall report this to Mr. Bailton! You will be punished! Now—adieu!"

Mr. Selby withdrew back to his study, and a deep clammor, Blake & Co. exchanged glances of deep exasperation. Outside, there was a clammor from the Terrible Three.

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake. "That means three from Bailton! Just for calling a clasp!"

"You were making rather a row!" chuckled Monty Leather.

"It's all Gussy's fault!"

"I'll jolly well punish him!" breathed Horrie.

"Let's start without him," suggested Manners.

In their present state of exasperation, Blake & Co. might have been expected to jump at that suggestion. But they did not. They glared out of the doorway at Manners at the Staff.

"You can start if you like," said Blake. "The sooner the better, in fact. Your face worries me!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Order!" he said. "We're not going without Gussy!"

"Are you fellows going to call him again?"

"Hem! No!"

Calling Arthur Augustus was "all," now that the jokers knew that an irritable Form master was within hearing.

"Let's go and find him," said Dig. "We'll jolly well bump him, and lead him out by his ears."

"Let's!" agreed Blake.

"Come on!" said Horrie.

And the chums of the Fourth room into the House, and accepted the staircase, to seek D'Arcy in Study No. 3 in the Fourth Form passage above. They had been gone about a minute, when an elegant porter came down to the doorway and glanced out into the quad with the aid of a gleaming eye-glass.

"Hallo, here's Gussy!" said Manners.

"Dad bless! Aren't the fellows ready yet?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy innocently. "It is really too bad of Blake and Horrie and Dig to keep me waitin', when I am waitin' late already."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

"I fail to see anything funny in that remark, dear boys," said Arthur Augustus, frowning his eyes open in surprise on the Staff fellows.

"They're gone up to the study for you," explained Tom Merry. "They're going to bump you, and wrag you, and take you out by the ears."

"I should refuse to be bumped, or wragged, or taken out by my ears!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I wouldn't why they have gone to the study—I have not been there."

"Where have you been wandering, you image?" asked Leather.

"I have been lookin' for my misbit!" explained Arthur Augustus. "The young wazool is not in the Third Form room."

"Well, why should he be in the Form-room on a half-holiday?"

"He is detained."

"Oh!"

"Yes, now, I am waitin' worried about young Wally," said the crew of St. Jim's seriously. "Mr. Selby has given him detention for the affluence—see wazool's records" to Wally."

"We always get lost for nothing!" said Monty Leather, with a sigh. "There never was such a set of innocent well-meaning fellows. Yet they keep on leading out parish-wards!"

"They do!" grinned Tom Merry. "What was the 'wazool' this time, Gussy?"

"I am afraid Mr. Selby heard my young brother chattering about him as a beast in speakin' to Marnah's misbit."

"Oh, my hat! Well, he couldn't expect Selby to be pleased."

"No, Mr. Selby is waitin' a beast, but it is very probable that he is quite unconscious of it, and, in any case, he would naturally not like to beak it mentioned."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The trouble is, dear boy, that Wally had freed up an excursion for the afternoon with Marnah's misbit and Lovie's misbit, and he was speakin' very weakly about beakin' detention," said Arthur Augustus. "Of course, I could not approve of that. Form masters have to be obeyed, even when they are waitin' beasts. That is why I have been lookin' for my misbit. But I cannot find him anywhere in the House."

"Then he's looked it?" said Manners.

"Yess, waitin'!"

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"Young an!" said Leather. "Mr. Selby is sure to miss him, and that means more trouble."

"Yess. That is why I am waitin' worried," said Arthur Augustus. "I think that he has gone out in spite of Mr. Selby's prohibition, with Pevok Lovison and Wernie Marnah. Those three misbits are wazool enough to turn a fellow's hair grey."

Blake and Horrie and Dig looked up in the doorway.

"He's not in the study!" said Blake. "He—why, here he is!" He started at Arthur Augustus.

"Yess—waitin' for you fellows," said Arthur Augustus cheerily.

"Waitin'!" repeated Horrie.

"Yess, waitin'! We wazool intended to keep me waitin' like this," said Arthur Augustus, in a tone of gentle admonition. "Of course, I know you are thoughtless youngsters, but wazool—! Dad bless! What is the wazool? Oh, wazool! Yess—wazool!"

Blake & Co. did not tell Arthur Augustus what was the matter. They felt that it was a time for action, not for words.

They followed the swell of St. Jim's, and he sat down on the House steps with a mighty exclamation.

"Whoop!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"There, you an!" gasped Blake.

"There, you beak!" said Dig.

"There, you clasp!" roared Horrie.

"You beakful wazool!"

"Now, we're all here," chuckled Tom Merry. "And we're half an hour late. Shall we start-off, you Fourth Form chaps have done showin' off your good manners?"

Arthur Augustus scowled up.

"You beakful wazool wazool, beakin' a clasp affair beakin' him wazool! I refuse to start until I have thrashed Blake, Tom Merry!"

"Do you!" grinned Blake. "Start him!"

"I refuse—I begger—I repeat that I refuse— Oh, wazool."

It was all very well for Arthur Augustus to refuse to start. But his refusal did not count. Blake had one of his arms, Horrie had the other, and Digby scored him vigorously in the small of the back. In the circumstances, Arthur Augustus had no choice about starting, and he started in quite a hurry, and the Terrible Three followed, laughing.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Wally is Not Taking Any!

"WHAT HAV I?"

Wally of the Third spoke with the tolerant disdain, deeper to a Third Form man in alluding to fellows in other Forms.

Three lags were sitting in a row on the stile in Rylcorrie Lane—D'Arcy misbit, Lovison misbit, and Manners misbit. Walter Adolphus D'Arcy, supported by his Form master to be under detention in the Form-room, had evidently disregarded the severe instructions of Mr. Selby—for here he was! His detention tag lay attached on his desk at St. Jim's, and D'Arcy misbit sat on the stile, with a bag of tarts on his knees, and a lumpy and rather sticky smile on his face.

The three lags were sharing out the bag of tarts, and they seemed very cheery and contented.

Wally's misbit was fully approved of the step he had taken in "beakin'" from the Third Form-room. After all, it only meant a beakin'; and what was a beakin'? A waffle light as nice—at least, to the fellows who wasn't going to get it.

Possibly it assumed more serious proportions, in the view of the fellow who was.

But Wally of the Third was very merry and bright. It was not his custom to meet troubles half-way. For the present, Mr. Selby and his case were not on his horizon. Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof. It was a fine afternoon, the lags were fun as nice, and the tarts were good. Trouble could be left over till it came along.

Wally's remark "That he!" was called forth by the sight of seven cheery jokers coming up the lane. Tom Merry & Co. sighted the three misbits at the same time.

"Hallo! There they are!" said Tom.

"There's your jolly old misbit, Gussy!" said Blake seriously. "Look here, we'll lick him for you, if you like."

"Pleased!" said Horrie.

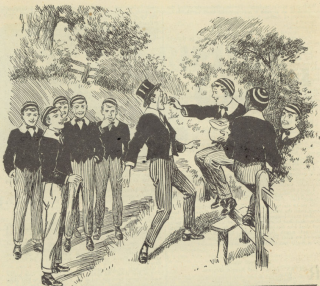
"Waz!"

Arthur Augustus had been talking all the way from the school, telling his pals what he thought of them. Blake & Co. listened cheerily, feeling that a fellow who had been bumped on the House steps was entitled to blow off steam a bit.

But Arthur Augustus ceased, as he sighted his misbit sitting on the stile. He lowered his steps.

"Wally, you young wazool!"

"Gussy, you old wazool!" returned D'Arcy misbit cheerily. "You have broken detention."



Arthur Augustus D'Arvy advanced on his victim and tried to jerk him off the stile. But Wally was ready for him. The last part came out of the bag, and in an instant it was [corrected] hard on Gussy's white countenance. Squash! "Dummed!" splattered the front of St. Jim's. (See page 6.)

"Broken it to bits," agreed Wally of the Third. "Didn't I say I would?"

"Mr. Selby will be fearfully cross."

"That's all right; he's always boundedly cross. It won't be a change."

"Not at all," said Reggie Manners. "He kept Wally in for calling him a hen! Fancy punishing a fellow for telling the truth! Is that the way to bring up kids like us?"

"Lucky for George Washington that he wasn't in Selby's Farm," said Frank Levison.

And the three rascals grinned cheerily.

"You are bound to respect your Farm master, Wally."

said Arthur Augustus solemnly, "and you are bound to respect your master, I trust, Wally, that you will return to the school immediately."

"That's a teasing matter," said Wally.

"Really, you young rascals—"

"Are we going now to Alfordton, or are we going to lose our train while Gussy preaches?" inquired Minsky Leather.

"We're but one train already, and if we lose the next, we shall lose the football match."

"Wally!"

"Yes, come on, Gussy," urged Blake. "Let those young scoundrels up! Your master's done it now, anyway!"

"I cannot leave my young leechlike heels, Blake, after my worthless defiance of the warden of the school. I am bound to see him back."

"How are you going to do it?" grinned Wally, a

"Go back at once!"

"How-ow!"

"I regard you as a disbeliever!" and decidedly young warden!"

"Go home!"

"I repeat—"

"Dear old Gus! You're always repeating yourself!" purred Wally. "I'm going back at tea-time to take my licking. It would be a licking if I went back now. Talk some, old chap!"

"What's the good of asking your master to talk sense?" inquired Manners solemnly. "Isn't he incorrigible, Wally?"

Arthur Augustus breathed hard.

"As your oldish brother, Wally, I am bound to see that you toe the line," he said. "I cannot possibly approve of disrespect to a Farm master. If you do not return to the school of your own accord, I shall have no alternative but to march you back with my hand on your collar."

"My only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally.

"Are we going to Alfordton to see that football match, or aren't we?" roared Blake.

"I refuse to allow a football match to interfere with my duties as an oldish brother, Blake."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Now, Wally, get down off that stile, and do not fail me to exchange my peepah authority in a way that will be parallel to you."

"Dear old Gus!" said Wally affectionately. "Isn't he a corker? I'm not going back to St. Jim's just now, Gussy; but there's no thing you can do for me."

"What is that, you young scound?"

"Take your face away, old bean. It gives me a pain."

"Oh, ha, ha!"

"You young warden!" roared Arthur Augustus.

The presence of the warden of St. Jim's was exhausted. He had his brotherly duty to do; at least, he supposed that he had, which came to the same thing.

He rounded on Wally of the Third, and grasped at him to jerk him off the stile.

Wally was ready for him! The last last came out of the bag, and in an instant it was jammed hard on the noble countenance of Arthur Augustus.

"Squash!"

"Goo-cooch!"

Wally jumped from the side into the field.

"Come on, kids!" he said. "If we're going to the old mine, it's about time we went. Ta-ta, Gooey!"

"Goo-cooch!"

"You can keep the tart!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Three merry fags scudded away by the footpath across the field, leaving Arthur Augustus cowering and dabbling feebly at the unapproachable feet of his noble features, and Tom Merry & Co. roaring with laughter.

"Oh, Gooey! Oh, dear! I shall give that one—young wascal a healthy thrashing!" Gooey!" Arthur Augustus roared at the jam with his hands, redoubting the beautiful scientific handkerchief to a jaunty rag. "The distinguished young scamp! Gooey! I am fearfully jammed!"

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

"You small ones—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothing to cackle at, you fellows, in a fellow having a sticky tart jammed on his face!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry & Co. In spite of Gooey's opinion, they seemed to see something to cackle at.

"Are we going to catch that train?" asked Dig, as D'Arcy roared at last rubbing his crimson face.

"Fetch the train!"

"We shall have to run," said Manners.

"I am going'at my own risk," said Arthur Augustus. "I think perhaps you fellows had better help me out here again, and take him back to the school. You can see a Woodville match at Abbotsholme another day."

"I don't think!" grumbled Blake.

"Not quite!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Come on, you fellows!"

The party started again for Ryeburn. Arthur Augustus started from the side, across the field. The three fags had vanished amid bushes and trees, and it dawned upon Gooey's noble mind that hunting for Wally of the Third would be a good deal like hunting for a needle in a haystack. With malignant wrath in his noble brow, Arthur Augustus followed an after Tom Merry & Co., and the rebellious and elastic Wally was left to his own devices.

## CHAPTER 3.

### Dare-Devil Wally!

"**R**OFFEN, schne!" said Reggie Manners.

"What?"

"Rotter!"

In the Third Form at St. Jim's manners and customs were by no means polished. The celebrated Lord Chesholme could have found himself quite out of place there. In the Third it is held said what he thought, without stopping to think twice, as a rule. The result was that very plain English was spoken in the Third. There never was much more to be done about what one fellow thought of another fellow.

The three misers were strolling on from the Wayland road to the ruins of the old castle—a landmark in the neighbourhood. There was not much left of the ancient castle above ground. Here and there a fragment of old wall still showed a loophole, here which arrows had whizzed in the Wars of the Roses; but Crawford's mansion, at a later date, had knocked over most of the building. Now it was in a state which the most unscrupling of local inspectors would not have passed as fit for habitation.

It was chiefly of interest to archaeologists and picnickers. Sometimes a party of half-headed gentlemen descended from an expensive automobile on the Wayland road and tramped into the ruined walls and blinked about three through fern, ruffled spectacles and expressed their emotions in words of four, five, and six syllables. But generally only picnickers came about the place, and not very many of them, as it was a good distance from anywhere.

Wally of the Third had his own reasons for exploring the ancient ruin that afternoon.

His major's detailed attempt to make him return to law and order, obedience and devotion, had only encouraged D'Arcy misers. But on a half-holiday he was likely to run into more serious guardians of proper authority than his brother Gooey. Having hidden defiance to authority in the shape of Mr. Selby, Wally, naturally, did not want to run into a prefect or a master, who would have ordered him back to the school.

There was a liking to come for his stolen holiday; but it would have been too bad to get the flogging without the holiday. So Wally of the Third thought of the ancient castle and decided to explore it, and his chance went with him. After all, there was plenty of fun in exploring ancient

ruins, where all sorts of exciting things had happened hundreds of years ago. And no master or prefect of St. Jim's was likely to learn into the secluded ruins.

Frank Lawson asserted cheerily. He was an air-brain-chasing punk. Reggie Manners assented, but grunted a little, after his manner. He thought the idea rather, and in the plain language of the Third Form said so.

"What's the good of nosing about in these ghilly ruins?" roared Manners misers, as the three fags entered the recesses of the old gateway, of which the arch was gone.

"Not a soul here."

"All the better," said Wally.

"Well, I'm not head of Robinson Crusoe misers," said Manners misers. "I'd rather get to Wayland in a crowd."

"With a House perfect tapping me on the shoulder any minute!"

"Oh, I forgot that! But it's a dusty old show," said Reggie, staring about him despairingly. "Dust and stones and things—"

"There are treasures in stones, you know, as Shakespeare says," said Frank Lawson, with a laugh.

Reggie frowned deeply.

"That must make 'em a lot more interesting," he said.

"Of course, this place isn't bad for a picnic. But all the facts are gone. Wally missed the last one on his major."

"I've got a bag of nuts," said D'Arcy misers.

"Nuts!" said Reggie, still disparagingly.

Manners misers was disposed to be rival. Wally frowned darkly. It was his idea to explore those ruins that afternoon, and he was cock of the walk in the St. Jim's Third. Being his idea it was a good idea—or, at least, had to be admitted a good idea whether it was good or not. But Reggie persisted in the role of a critic.

"Are we going to sit around for hours cracking nuts?" he asked.

Wally breathed hard.

"We're going to explore," he said.

"What is there to explore?" asked Reggie, with an air of polite interest.

"Well, there's a lot of old things."

"A lot except, don't you think?"

"No," said Wally, with emphasis, "I don't."

"I can't say I've gone on with my brother," said Frank. "I got shut up in three more with my brother, when a silly old man shut down the store. Let's give the dangeroos a nose."

"Just like you and your brother to get shut up," said Wally. "You're an ass, Frank, and your brother's an ass."

"My brother—" began Frank warily. The only point upon which Frank was a little "tweety" was his brother, Ernest Lawson of the Fourth.

Wally held up his hand.

"Let him drop," he said. "If you begin on your major we shall never hear the end of it. I know he's the best chap breathing, the finest footballer at St. Jim's, but once, a man without a five in his character, with nothing against him except that he's got a silly idea for a young brother, let it go at that."

"Puff-bled!" said Frank.

"Well, where's the nut?" asked Reggie, sitting down on a lump of masonry.

Reggie had spoken disparagingly of sitting around and cracking nuts, but he seemed to want to know about the nuts, all the same.

"Never mind the nuts now," said D'Arcy misers. "We're going to explore the dangeroos. May find something."

"Slaps and a snake or two, perhaps," admitted Reggie.

"There's a tale about a treasure buried under this old castle," said Wally.

"I've heard it," said Reggie indifferently. "What about the nuts? I'll give you my whisk in the treasure for half the nuts."

Frank Lawson laughed, and Wally frowned. The great chief of the Third Form felt that his leadership was being derided by this cynical attitude of his fellows.

"Look here. We're going to explore," said D'Arcy misers authoritatively. "Let's get down into the dangeroos."

"Get a lantern!"

"Oh! Oh! No."

"A pocket torch!"

"Oh! No."

"It's a bit dark down in the dangeroos," remarked Frank Lawson, suppressing a smile. Reggie Manners grunted openly.

Again D'Arcy misers breathed hard. He quite understood that it was impossible to explore the castle dangeroos without a light, though he had not thought of it before. He switched off the subject with masterly coolness.

"If you're afraid of the dark, Manners misers, we'll keep clear of the dangeroos. Let's climb the old gate."

Reggie glanced up at the remains of the castle gateway. The top arch was crumbling in fragments on the ground, where the stones had lain scattered for some centuries. On one side only a fragment of the old battlement remained, but on the other quite a large stack of the ancient gate-



One glance—and then Mr. Batty reads a forbidding snarl at the glass of paper in Bossutt's hand. It was jerked back at once. "I expected that," said Bossutt calmly. "A hat's given with an odd hand like yours, sir." "You scoundrel!" roared Mr. Batty. (See page 13.)

was was left, with projecting stone-work at the top, which had formed part of the arch once upon a time. It was possible for an active climber to reach the top and be full length there. But there was no doubt that it was an extremely risky feat and required a strong nerve and a cool head.

"I've got only one nail," said Mansers miserably.

"I'd rather have the nails, thanks."

"But" said Wally. "Easy as falling off a log."

"You couldn't do it," said Reggie. "Gas, old man."

"You cheeky young an—"

"Gas!" repeated Reggie cheerily.

He was the faithful follower of the great chief of the Third, but it entertained him sometimes to get Wally's "rag" out. Besides, he did not believe that Wally could make that perilous climb, and, in the usual manner of the Third Team, he stated his opinion with frankness.

"I'll show you whether it's gas!" said Wally wrathfully. "Here's the nail. Sit there and chew nails like a monkey, while I climb up this jolly old gate."

"Like number jokers!" suggested Reggie.

"Isn't do it, Wally, old man," said Levinson miser. "It's really risky."

"Over the risk!"

"Sit down and have some nuts, instead, and out of the gas," said the impetuous Reggie.

That did it, so to speak. If Wally had felt himself doomed to break two or three links, he would have climbed the old gateway after that. His prestige as chief of the Third was at stake.

He gave Reggie a crushing glare, and approached the starting moment of the old arched gateway. He grasped at the old stones, and began to pull himself up. He found handhold and foothold, and went up quite easily for about three or four yards.

Frank watched him rather anxiously, Reggie sarcastically. Reggie burst into a chuckle when Wally came to a stop.

"Mind how you get down!" called out Reggie.

Wally was finding his task more difficult than he had anticipated. But nothing would have induced him to turn back.

Having taken breath, he climbed on again.

Higher and higher he went, till he was twenty feet above the lugs seated on the masonry below, and had his hands over the top of the pile.

Reggie Mansers was serious now, rather regretting that his jaws had driven Wally into that perilous position.

"Come back, old chap!" he called out. "Check it!"

Wally did not answer; he had no breath to waste. His heart was beating fast, and he did not venture to look below. With an effort, he drew himself up on top of the masonry, and lay down at full length there.

"All screws!" he called out.

"He's done it!" said Frank.

"More cheer he!" said Reggie. "I say, Wally, come down! Don't you want any of these nuts?"

"Jolly good view from here!" called back D'Arcy miser.

"Father!"

Wally, lying on top of the gateway, raised his head cautiously, to take a survey of the surrounding country. There was no doubt that he commanded a splendid view. Woods and meadows were spread out like a panorama, with the silvery Rhel winding in the distance. Wayland town in sight in one direction, and the old tower of St. Jim's in another. Really, the view was worth the climb.

But the sight of something close at hand made Wally give a little jump.

A gentleman in a frock-coat and silk hat was turning out  
 You Can't Lament.—No. 355.

of the Wayland road into the path that led up to the ruins on the hillside.

It was Mr. Selby!

Wally started at him in dismay.

What awful ill-luck could have brought Mr. Selby there at that particular moment on that particular afternoon?

For a moment or two Wally supposed that his Forns master knew that he was there, and had come to fetch him back to the school. But a very brief reflection convinced him that that was impossible. Mr. Selby might have missed him from the House, but he could not possibly have guessed that the tramp was in the ruined castle. It was not till after Wally had cleared off that he had thought of exploration at the old castle as an occupation for the afternoon.

Apparently Mr. Selby was simply taking a walk, like any other St. Jim's master on a half-holiday, and unfortunately had led his footsteps in the direction of the old castle.

Wally breathed hard.

At Mr. Selby's present rate of progress he would reach the old gateway in six or seven minutes. At least twice as long was required for Wally to clamber down from his perch, unless he was to risk landing in a heap with a broken neck. He leaned over a little, and looked down at Frank Levison and Reggie Manners.

"You men!" he called out in a hoarsely subdued voice.

"Hallo!"

"Quiet! Selby's coming!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Mum's the word! He'll never spot me here!"

"Oh! Right!"

And Wally drew back out of sight on top of the gateway, like a tortoise showing its head back into its shell. There was no time for him to escape, and his only resource was to be "dugge" so long as Mr. Selby was wondering about the ruins. He little dreamed, at the moment, what was to be the outcome.

#### CHAPTER 4.

##### Mysteries!

**M**R. SELBY tramped noisily up the rough, stony path to the ruined castle.

He brows were contracted; his eyes had a sleepy glint in them. It did not seem a favourable moment for any tramp to meet his grim gaze.

Believing himself to be solitary and quite unobserved, the Third Forns master did not take the trouble to control his expression. The look on his face told of a better temper within, and more than that, of deep consciousness and anxiety. It was something much more serious than worry on the part of a dissipated schoolboy that was troubling Mr. Selby at that moment, to judge by his expression.

He was fatigued, too. He had walked from St. Jim's, and he was not a good pedestrian. He took little exercise at any time, which was one reason why his temper was so hot.

Baggie Manners and Frank Levison sighted him a few minutes later, and the expression on his face made their own faces grow grave. He looked blacker and more bitter than they had ever seen him look before, and they were glad that Wally was in an unobtainable hiding-place. Certainly the Forns master was not likely to guess that a schoolboy was hidden from sight on top of the almost inaccessible old gateway.

Mr. Selby started as he saw the two lads.

He came on quickly.

"What are you boys doing here?" he snapped angrily.

"We were going to explore the ruins, sir," said Levison wisely respectfully.

"This isn't out of bounds on a half-holiday, sir," ventured Manners timidly.

"Oh, not by appointment, Manners minor."

"Oh, sir!"

"Return to the school at once!"

The two lads started at their Forns master.

This was unreasonable and high-handed even for Mr. Selby. They had given absolutely no offence whatever, yet they were ordered back to school as if their Forns master had discovered them out of bounds.

"But, sir—," began Frank Levison.

"I have no doubt that you are occupied in some mischief," said Mr. Selby sulkily, "and these ruins are not safe for schoolboys."

"They're not out of bounds, sir."

"Take thy leave, Levison minor."

"Oh!"

"Go back to the school immediately. Report yourselves to Baggie. I shall inquire of him the time of your return. Ten Ours Library.—No. 923.

If you venture to disobey me your punishment will be severe."

In silence the two lads left the ruins. Argument with their Forns master was impossible. This was tyranny pure and simple, unusual even in the over-compassed master of the Third.

"Selby's in a jolly old temper to-day!" murmured Reggie, as soon as he was out of hearing.

"Looks like it!" mentioned Frank. "What's the matter with him? He was like a bear with a sore head in the Forns-room the morning."

"Like a grizzly bear or a tiger?" agreed Reggie. "I say, he never mentioned Wally. He doesn't know that Wally has hidden."

"All the better, if Wally gets back before him," said Frank. "He may never find out, if old Wally gets back to the Forns-room in time. He's jolly odd! It's about the first time he's failed to come into the Forns-room when a chap was under detention."

"He's jolly queer to-day altogether," said Reggie. "I suppose we've got to get back to school!"

Levison whimpered.

"Better!" he said. "He will ask the porter what time we get in. So good-looking for once trouble."

"It's rotten!"

"Really?" agreed Frank. "Shew tyrant!"

"I told Wally it was a rotten scheme to explore those silly old ruins," granted Manners sulkily. "I say, I wonder how long Selby will hang around and keep him stuck up on that old gate."

"He's safe there, anyway. Selby will never spot him."

"Selby's jolly queer to-day!" said Reggie reflectively. "Perhaps he's going to be ill. I wonder if he's sickening for something. Is he too old to have measles, I wonder?"

"Must be Selby's jolly odd."

"Well, I believe you can catch measles any time, if they're knocking around. I say, what a luck for old Selby to be laid up with measles in summer!"

And that possibly, remote as it was, seemed to afford Manners minor some cheering consolation, as he tramped away to St. Jim's with his comrades.

Meanwhile, Wally of the Third, lying on top of the remnant of the old gateway, was not in a happy frame of mind.

In his elevated position he heard all that was said by the Third Forns master and the lads; the words floated up to him clearly in the still air. He watched Reggie and Frank walk away, and vanish from sight in the brown woods. Thus he gave his attention to Mr. Selby, wondering with deep impatience how long that gentleman was going to "hang around" the old castle.

It was very unusual for the Third Forns master to walk so far; and it was a surprise to see him there at all. Wally had never noticed any archaeological tendencies in his Forns master; and it was impossible to suppose that Mr. Selby had come there to picnic. His visit to the ruins was quite surprising, in fact.

His present actions were more surprising still.

After the two lads had gone, Mr. Selby proceeded into the ruins, and appeared to be searching.

For what he was searching was a puzzle.

He wandered to and fro, peering into corners and crevices, and looking among the masses of old ivy that clung to some of the decayed stonework.

He glanced upon Wally's perched rival, at last, that he was looking to see whether anyone besides himself was in the place.

If he suspected that Wally had broken bounds, he might have suspected that he was in the ruins somewhere, as the three masters were known to be generally inseparable on a half-holiday. Was he searching to ascertain whether Wally was there?

If so, he was not likely to make any discovery. He did not once look upward, and obviously it never crossed his mind that a lad was perched on top of the old stone gateway. Even if he had looked up, he could not have seen Wally there.

For a quarter of an hour, or longer, Mr. Selby scouted about the ruins, and was apparently satisfied at last that he was quite alone.

Then he returned to the shattered gateway, and stood there, staring down beneath towards the Wayland road.

Wally could have dropped a stone fairly on top of the Forns master's silk hat, if he had wanted to. As a matter of fact, he did want to; but he did not dream of doing so.

Minutes followed minutes; and Mr. Selby still stood and waited, and watched the distant road.

"My only Aunt Jane," murmured D'Arcy minor, at last, "he's waiting for somebody! It's a jolly appointment."

He suppressed a whistle.

Really, Mr. Selby was very mysterious that afternoon. Why he should make an appointment with anyone in that



lately ruin, instead of his own study at St. Jim's, was very perplexing. There was something extremely suspicious about it all, as even the unworldly Wally realized. He understood now why Mr. Selby had so angrily and unjustly sent the two lads back to school, why he had roared among the reins with peering, suspicious eyes. It was a secret appointment he was keeping!

Amazing as it was, there could be little doubt of it. Mr. Selby, as he stood watching the Wayland road, looked every now and then at his watch; twice or thrice the bag above board him utter an irritable exclamation of impatience. Obviously, he was expecting someone.

Wally was not an imaginative youth; but he could not help feeling curious. Mr. Selby was an important gentleman, with a most unpleasant temper, but he was the last man in the world to be suspected of anything suspicious, secretive, mysterious. He was an exceedingly matter of fact

"Yes."

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Selby."

"We need not waste time, sir!" snapped the Third Form master. "I at least have none to waste. I desire to finish this interview at the earliest possible moment, Mr. Swath— if Swath is your name."

"You are scarcely polite, sir."

"I have no politeness to waste upon you, Mr. Swath."

"Very well; then the matter may pass into other hands," said the red-eyed man. "Good afternoon, sir."

He turned away, as if to retrace his steps to the high road. Mr. Selby stared after him for a second, and then called:

"Stop! Pray stop!"

Swath walked on.

"Mr. Swath! Stop! I—I beg of you to stop!"

And the man with the red eyes turned back into the gateway.



# St. Jim's Jingles!



No. 7 GERALD KNOX.

A LANEY hat is Gerald Knox.  
A lolly overpowering;  
Stands nearly six feet in his socks,  
Above the small fry towering.  
And was-betide the junior boy  
Who dares to be defiant;  
It doesn't pay him to annoy  
This big and hairy giant!

I've said sufficient to disclose  
That Knox is not a hero;  
For he believes in bills and blows,  
His patron saint is Nero.  
That twisted saying, "Might is right,"  
Is Knox's favourite maxim;  
Sorely his conscience, in the night,  
Reproaches and attacks him!

He takes no joy in healthy sport,  
Or openly attractions;  
Ner strives to win a good report  
By true and upright actions.  
To the "Green Man," by stealth  
He goes,  
Or else the "Green and Anchor";

And there his strategy he shows  
At games like map and banker.

At periods, in his study pent,  
He's squandered cash on lust,  
To find himself in debt at best,  
Then bitter his remorse is.



GERALD KNOX.

When Fancy Man or Fairy Ill  
Have failed to win their race,  
In Queer Street he has found his  
self—  
Most undesired of places!

His sham and croog, Gerald  
Cutts.

A bird of kindred feather,  
With the tall perfect swinks and  
struts:

They snily berth together  
On many a doubtful escapade  
And shady expedition;  
Some day darkness will be  
made,  
Then awkward their position!

We do not love you, Gerald Knox,  
Your ways are dark and  
sinister:

And if this lousy lard could be,  
A thrashing he'd administer!  
Towards the ropes he'd make you  
reel,  
And cavigate you fully;  
That is the proper way to deal  
With you, you blustering lolly!

**NEXT WEEK: WALLY D'ARCY, of the Third Form!**

and practical man. Yet here he was keeping a secret appointment—with whom? The bag could not help wondering.

Another speculation from Mr. Selby caught his ears. He glanced from his perch along the path, and saw what the Form master had seen—a man coming up from the Wayland road.

Taking care to keep in cover—though it was not likely that anyone would glance up to the top of the old gateway—D'Arcy always watched the man as he came.

He was rather a shabby individual, of uncertain age—dressed in shabby black, with a well-worn bowler hat, and a pallid face with thin features. His eyes were drooped, glinting, watchful; they revealed Wally of the eyes of a rat. His lips were thin and almost colourless, and set in a tight line, his mouth looking like a gash in his ill-favoured face.

Taken altogether, he was not a pleasant man to look at; neither did he look like a man to be treated. What he was, Wally could not guess; he might have been a collector's clerk by his appearance. But this, evidently, was the man Mr. Selby was waiting for. The rat-eyed man came up to the gateway, and stopped. He eyed the St. Jim's Form master for a moment, and then Wally heard him speak.

"Mr. Selby, I suppose?"

## CHAPTER 5.

### A Terrible Secret!

WALLY of the Third lay in the bushes on top of the gateway, and wondered whether he was dreaming. Every word came to him clearly, and every word astonished him.

Who—what was this red-eyed man, of whom the Third Form master of St. Jim's was evidently afraid?

That he was afraid was quite clear. The sharp, bullying manner which he had from adapted was quite gone. Swath's mere threat of departure had been enough to bring Mr. Selby to heel. What was the "matter" that might pass into "other hands"?

Through a crack in the jagged old stones on top of the gateway, Wally looked down, unseen, unperceived. He saw that Mr. Selby's face was pale and worn, and little as he liked the man, he felt something like compassion for him at that moment. There was a cunning glint in the raty eyes of the shabby man, Swath. Who and what was he, and what power had he over a man looking so respectable and responsible a position, as that of a Form master at St. Jim's? Wally wondered dimly what it could all mean.

"Let us come to business, sir!" said Mr. Selby at last. "Perhaps I was a little blunt. This affair has tried my nerves severely."

"No doubt, sir, no doubt!" assented Swath.

"Your telephonic message this morning startled me very considerably," said Mr. Selby.

"I considered it better not to refer to the matter in writing, sir. Put it in black and white!"

"Quite so, quite so! One cannot be too careful," said the Form master. "I am very glad you telephoned instead of writing, Mr. Swath."

"There is always the possibility of a letter getting into wrong hands, Mr. Selby. Letters may sometimes be lost, and found by awkward parties. In my profession we are accustomed to take no unnecessary risks."

Swath glanced round him.

"We might find a more secluded spot than this for our conversation," he suggested.

"It is quite safe here. I have looked through the rain, and there is no one here but ourselves," said the Third Form master. "From this spot I can also see if anyone comes. Keep out of sight of the road, however. I do not wish to be seen speaking to you."

"As you please," he was prepared to call upon you at the school, if you so desired."

"Impossible! I should not dare to discuss such a matter in the House; and your visit would have excited comment, too. If you are to gain anything by this affair, Mr. Swath, you will understand that the deepest secrecy must be observed."

"Quite!"

"And now, what do you want?"

"Wally of the Third left a cheque."

Obviously, affairs of the most private kind were about to be discussed at this strange secret interview. Wally was no eavesdropper. Careless as he was, he would not have listened if he could have helped it.

"But, swamy as he felt, he had an objection. If he had allowed himself to be discovered earlier a licking would have been the result. But if he allowed himself to be discovered now—

He shivered at the thought.

He had seen this suspicious meeting—he had seen the Third Form master glare under the eaves of the shabby man as he passed. He simply dared not let Mr. Selby leave.

After all, whatever he heard would remain a secret. He would not tell anyone, not even his close chums, Lovell, Fisher and Rogers. So no great harm would be done. Anyhow, it could not be helped; and the world would be any the wiser if his promise to Mr. Selby at this juncture.

"What do I want?" repeated the shabby man. "I think I gave you a hint on the telephone of what I wanted, sir. Of course, one could not speak very plainly on the phone. But you must have gathered my meaning."

Mr. Selby compressed his lips.

"The cheque was for ten pounds," he said.

"Precisely?"

"It has not, of course, been cashed?"

"No."

"It has not been presented at the bank?"

"Not yet."

"Then all is plain," said the Third Form master. "The cheque is, in point of fact, valueless to you. A forged cheque is worth the paper it is written on, and nothing more. But I am prepared to hand you the sum specified—ten pounds, the sum which the cheque was drawn. You will hand me that valueless piece of paper, it returns. That, I suppose, will satisfy you, Mr. Swath?"

Mr. Swath laughed quietly.

"That will not quite satisfy me, Mr. Selby."

"What else is there?"

"My time is of value, sir, and the trouble I have been put to in collecting this small sum—"

"Quite so, quite so! I desire to be reasonable," said Mr. Selby hurriedly. "You shall not be put to loss, I assure you of that. I have no desire to put you to loss. Your time, your railway fare from London, your—your expenses—shall we say two pounds?"

"I am afraid that you would scarcely meet the bill, sir," said the shabby man. "Neither have you correctly stated the value of the document I hold. Presented at the bank, it is worthless; but it may be worth a great deal to you if it never to be presented."

Mr. Selby gasped.

"This—this is blackmail, Mr. Swath!"

The shabby man shrugged his thin shoulders.

"Let us not use harsh words, Mr. Selby," he said. "If you decline to do business with me, I do not complain. I shall return to London and present the cheque at the bank. What will follow, will follow in the ordinary course of the law. If you, in your position as a Form master in a great

and famous school, are prepared to face it, that is your own affair, and I have nothing to say."

"What do you want?" repeated Mr. Selby.

"I think a hundred pounds is not too large a sum."

Mr. Selby spluttered.

"A hundred pounds! Are you mad?"

"Quite sane, Mr. Selby."

"I have no more than at my command!"

"I think you will find that a mistake, Mr. Selby, on consulting your pass-book. I have made some inquiries about 94, Jim's, and am aware that a Form master's post there is a very well-paid one. I have no doubt that you could meet a much larger demand. But I have no desire to be unreasonable. Even in our profession we have our limits. A hundred pounds is the sum."

"It is impossible!" muttered Mr. Selby with dry lips.

Swath gave another shrug of the shoulders.

"Then it is useless to protract this interview," he said.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Selby!"

"Stay!" said the Form master hoarsely. "So far, I have only your word for it that you hold the—the document at all. You can scarcely expect me to hand out such a sum of money on your word alone—the word of a blackmailer. In your own showing, the document must have come into your hands surreptitiously. Is it really in your possession? You must prove it."

"I expected that, of course. One does not buy a pig in a poke," said the rat-eyed man with a soft laugh. "The cheque is in my pocket, and you shall, of course, see it."

"Let me see it, then, with my own eyes."

"Immediately!"

The shabby man handed in his pocket, Mr. Selby watching him like a cat, or, rather, like a tiger. A slip of crumpled paper came into view, and Swath held it up for the Form master's inspection.

One glance, and then Mr. Selby made a farious snarl at the paper.

"It was jerked back at once."

"I expected that, too," said Swath calmly, turning the cheque into his pocket again. "A fool's game, with an old hand like yourself, sir."

Mr. Selby panted.

"You demanded! Take ten pounds for that cheque, and hand it over. It is more than you have a right to ask!"

"Have already answered that."

"Then, you demanded, you shall give me the cheque for nothing, or—"  
Mr. Selby, blushing with fury, advanced on the blackmailer, his eyes flaming, his hands clenched convulsively. "We are alone here. Hand over that paper, or I will beat you, sir, like a dog, and take it by force!"

The infuriated man's hands rose almost upon the blackmailer when he roared back suddenly. A short, heavy life-preserver had suddenly appeared in Swath's hand.

"That, too, I expected," said the rat-eyed man calmly.

"Have a little common sense, Mr. Selby. Do you think I am an infant at this game?"

Mr. Selby stood back, panting for breath. In his fury he had felt equal to handling the shabby scoundrel, but he had no chance against the man's weapon. The cold fist followed the hot fit, and Mr. Selby leaned against the old gateway, struggling for breath.

Swath eyed him.

"Now let us talk business," he said calmly. "Do you accept the price I have placed on this document?"

"Yes!" growled Mr. Selby.

"I shall not ask for it all at once. I will accept ten pounds on account, and give you time for the rest. I am a reasonable man, Mr. Selby. I am viewing some risk in making this arrangement with you—(I-n-natured people might call it compounding a felony. But never mind that.) The usual practice is to back the two hundred notes from the Form master's travelling fund. "When the balance is paid the document is yours, sir, I will bring it at our next meeting, if you choose."

Mr. Selby nodded silently; he accepted himself of the power of speech. The shabby man eyed him for a moment or two, and then raised his shabby hat, and turned and walked away to the Weyland road.

Mr. Selby leaned on the masonry, gasping.

"Good heavens!" he muttered at last. "Good heavens! if this should be known! Boas, rats, rain!"

He moved at last, and the terrified (by on the top of the gateway saw him almost tottering away, till he disappeared in the hazy woods.

#### CHAPTER 8. AN OGGY'S FISH!

"BUMP! bump!"  
"Waddy, you fellows—"  
Arthur Augustus, hunched away across the platform at Ryebank Station. His comrades were looking quite wretched.



"Bad luck! These dashed wheels are terrible! damn, you know!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as there was a knock on his shining topper and a mine dropped at his feet. The horses ran on hurriedly. Every instant was expected, hourly, to bring down what was left of the animal gallopway. (See page 12.)

That afternoon it had been the intention of Tom Merry & Co. to visit Abbotford football ground, where the Ramsdons were playing a Second League team. According to all accounts, it was going to be a good match, and well worth watching. Tom Merry & Co. were rather given to playing football than to watching it; but they had agreed that as this special half holiday they would see how the Abbotford Ramsdons shaped against a professional team.

They had lost one train while Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was looking for his mine in the School House. Now they had lost another owing to Gony's interview with Wally in Ryecliffe Lane. They had got on speed; but they had put it on its vein. They arrived at the station in good time to see the guard's van disappearing down the line. Hence their remarks to Gony.

"These were mine trains to follow, but the next would lead them at Abbotford long after the match had started. That was not quite good enough—they had no time for seeing it at the back of a crowd nearly on half-time. They watched the train out of sight, and then glared at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "chief architect of these woes," as Shakespeare would have it.

"I think," said Blake reflectively, "that we'd better back him. Backing here is no good so've bumped him back!" Scragging him is no good! Let's back him!"

"Wally, Blake—"

"Let's!" agreed Dig.

"Back him in all!" said Lovelace. "Something happening, with backing all in it, it must be worse!"

"Wally, Lovelace—"

"All of the tradesmen come—" breathed Horace.

"Losing one train after another?" asserted Mansers. "It

will be losing himself next! But no such luck, I see now!"

"Wally, Mansers—"

Tom Merry burst into a laugh.

"Why grouse!" he said cheerily. "We've missed the faster match at Abbotford—can't be helped. Gony's a born son—that can't be helped, either. When a thing can't be helped, what's the good of grouse! Lots of things to fill in an afternoon."

"If I had my camera with me—" began Mansers.

"Thank goodness you haven't!" said Blake fervently.

"After all, things might be worse. Mansers might have had his camera with him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly son—" said Mansers.

"We can get a train to Weyland in about a quarter of an hour," said Mooty Lovelace. "There's a new picture at the picture palace there—"

"But—" said Mansers.

"My hat! Don't let's stick indexes on such a rare occasion as a fine afternoon!" said Tom. "What about walking back to St. Jan's and being up a pick-up game?"

"What about looking for some of the New House rats and giving them a 'house ragging!'" suggested Horace.

"We haven't given Figgins & Co. the kibosh this time yet."

"Wally!" said Arthur Augustus. "As you fellows have lost the train—"

"What?"

"As you fellows have lost the train, suppose we get in the afternoon books for my misad—"

"You silly son!"

"I refuse to be called a silly owl!"

"I can't see as putting in an afternoon looking for your dashed mines!" said Blake heartily. "Look here, let's get out of the station, anyhow—nothing doing here."

The juniors trooped out of Rylands Station. They strolled down the village High Street, discussing what they were going to do with the remains of the afternoon, and still somewhat inclined to loiter, swing, and loiter Gassy for having lost them the train.

Near Mrs. Murphy's bookshop, fortunately, they sighted Grammar School boys, Gay and Monk and Lane, of Rylands Grammar School, were there—and the sight of them was a relief.

There was a hot chase at once, and the three Grammar-school boys for their lives, the odds being heavily against them. By the time Gordon Gay & Co. had escaped, the St. Jim's fellows found themselves half a mile from the village, in the woods.

Then the discussion was resumed; and it was interrupted again by the sight of three Fourth-Formers of St. Jim's strolling along the footpath. Levison, Clive, and Cardew were the three—and Cardew, with a burning brow, was walking between his two comrades, who were grinning. Levison and Clive walked directly to the Co., and Cardew gave them a wistful look.

"Hallo! Weren't you fellows going over to Abbotford?" asked Levison.

"Yes, certainly; but those chaps lost the train——"

"This been about lost the train," said Blake. "Now we're at a loose end. What are you men up to?"

Levison laughed.

"Taking Cardew for a walk," he answered.

"My hat! Does he need looking after?"

"He does!" grinned Clive.

"Oh, chuck it!" said Ralph Robinson Cardew, with a grunt. "I'm giving a little rest, you know."

"What's the game, then?" asked Tom Merry, looking curiously at the three.

The trio of St. Jim's were close pals, but the course of their friendship did not always run smooth.

"Cardew thought he was going to Abbotford races this afternoon," explained Levison. "We thought he wasn't in luck as it is very tight."

"Is he, he?"

"But Jove! I am waihawk checked at you, Cardew," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy severely.

"Dear me!" said Cardew.

"I warned it as a very tight and giddy proceeder on the part of your friends to westward you been any such blackguardly action, Cardew!" said the owl of St. Jim's wistfully.

"That places the matter beyond doubt!" said Levison of the Fourth grade. "I suppose you are satisfied now, Cardew?"

Cardew grinned.

"Well, what are we going to do?" asked Manners.

"We're not very far from the old ruins here—what about looking in there? I'm rather interested in that sort of thing."

"You would be!" said Blake.

"Look here, Blake——"

"Not a bad idea," said Tom Merry. "Lathen gave a giddy lecture the other day about our giddy local antiquities, that he begged in the castle ruins. Lots of archy—archy—something——"

"Archæological——" said Manners.

"That's it—lots of archæological interest in those blessed ruins!" said Tom laughing. "They're Gothic, or Norman, or Early English, or something——"

"Not much difference!" said Cardew.

"What if I know the difference, or any. Can't say I want to, specially. Let's wander along and look at them. Manners knows all about these things, and he can give us a lecture."

"We'll look at the ruins," said Blake. "But if Manners begins giving us a lecture, we'll swing him!"

"Yes, waihawk!"

"It's a chance of improving our minds, you know," said Levison.

"I dare say yours were improving, in the Shell," agreed Blake. "Lots of room for improvement, I admit that. Come on!"

"Come on, Cardew!" said Levison.

"I'm not going to see any blinkin' old ruins," protested Cardew.

"You are, old bean."

"Look here——"

"Take his other arm, Clive!"

"Yes, rather!" grinned Clive.

Levison & Co. moved up with Tom Merry & Co. Cardew was an extremely reluctant member of the party. But three The Gen Library—No. 863.

was no help for the misfortune of the Fourth; his comrades were looking after him that afternoon, and they were doing it effectively.

The numerous party walked on towards the Wayland Road chatting merrily as they went.

"Hallo, there's Solly!" remarked Manners.

Mr. Solly was coming towards the juniors from the direction of the Wayland Road, walking very quickly. His eyes were on the ground, and he did not see the party; and they noted the black novel that protruded his brow.

"Looks pleasant, don't he?" murmured Blake. "I should like to be in his form—I don't think!"

"But Jove! I wouid if he has been lookin' for my mine!" said Arthur Augustus.

Mr. Solly glanced up at his name caller, and frowned at the juniors. They gaped him respectfully as he passed; but he did not even acknowledge the salute.

He walked on with his quick, jerky steps, and vanished along the footpath towards St. Jim's.

"If he's looking for Wally, it's to be hoped that he won't find him," remarked Tom Merry. "I've never seen even Solly looking so black before."

"Nip-snapper man!" granted Blake. "He's getting us lines from our Housemaster because we called to Gassy in the House. I really think he might keep his ragging for his own form, and be the Fourth alone."

"Yes, waihawk!"

The juniors marched on to the ruined castle, very soon forgetting the unpleasant existence of Mr. Solly.

"Here we are!" said Tom Merry, as they passed through the remains of the old gateway. "We've got the show all to ourselves—such as it is. Go ahead with the archæological lecture, Manners!"

"Archæological, are?"

"I swear archæological, and! Hallo—why—what—look out—the blessed pile is falling to pieces!" exclaimed Tom Merry, as a stone dropped from above, and knocked off his cap.

The juniors ran on hurriedly. Every stone was expected, locally, to bring down what was left of the ancient gateway. It had not come down yet; but it looked as if the ancient pile was dropping piecemeal now. Nobody wanted to be underneath it if it fell, and the juniors decided on to a safe distance before they stopped and looked up.

What!

A fragment of stone came flying, and it caught D'Arcy's hat brim on, and lifted it from his head. The hat went spinning, and Arthur Augustus uttered an astonished ejaculation.

"But Jove! That is very remarkable, you fellows! How would that stone possibly have fallen sideways?"

"Pishad!" said Blake. "That stone didn't fall—it was checked. There's some silly ass on top of the gateway chucking stones!"

"That's it!" agreed Tom Merry.

"Some giddy practical joker," said Levison. "I say, though, he must have a nerve to plumb up there, whenever he is."

"But Jove! Look! Wally, you young ass!" roared Arthur Augustus, as a figure rose into full view against the sky on the summit of the old gateway.

"That young chump!" exclaimed Levison.

"Wally! Come down at once!" shouted Arthur Augustus, greatly alarmed for the safety of his mine.

Wally of the Third waved his cap.

"Come and fetch me!" he called back.

"But Jove! I——"

"You reckless young duffer, come down at once!" called out Tom Merry. "Are the other young duffers up there with you?"

"In Frank there?" exclaimed Manners.

Wally chuckled.

"No; I'm all alone! I say, have you fellows seen anything of old Solly knocking about? I'm not coming down till he's safe off the scene!"

"He's a mile away by this time," answered Tom. "We passed him in the wood some distance back. Has he been here?"

"Yes, rather!"

"You can come down. It's all right!"

And Wally of the Third, active as a monkey, clambered down from his perilous perch, watched anxiously from below by the juniors. Their anxiety was not without grounds; but Wally, fortunately, made the perilous descent in safety, and joined Tom Merry & Co., dusty, breathless, but safe and sound.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Wally's Secret!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY turned his eyes away severely upon his mine. Wally, not on a mass of misery to rest and recover his breath. The climb and the descent had tired him; but it was not only fatigue that troubled D'Arcy's mind. He was haunted by

what he had heard while he lay hidden on the summit of the old gateway; the burden of the secret he had inadvertently learned lay heavy on his mind.

"You are a wicked young man, Wally," began Arthur Augustus.

"Go on!"

"And I have a very great mind to throw you for knocking off my hat with a stone!"

Wally grinned.

"I simply couldn't resist it!" he said cheerily. "You fellows came along just in time. Did you think the rats were tumbling down on your silly snappers?"

"Yes, you young lot!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "We really ought to rag you for playing your bag tricks on us."

"Yes, washah!"

"Oh, come off!" said Wally. "I say, you said you passed Selby. What did he look like?"

"Frightfully bad-tempered!" said Tom.

"I suppose he would!" said Wally. "Poor beast!"

"Poor beast!" repeated Tom. "I hear that you were detained to-day for calling him a beast, without the adjective. What are you feeling sorry for Selby for now?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"He didn't find you here?" asked Blake.

"No."

"He was looking for you?"

"No."

"What the theory did he come here for, then?" asked Minny Leveson. "It's a long walk for Selby. He never walks."

Wally coloured. He knew why Mr. Selby had visited the ruins that afternoon; though he had no intention of telling what he knew. From the bottom of his heart, he wished that he knew nothing.

"Now, Wally——" began Arthur Augustus again.

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!"

"Now that I have found you, Wally, I am bound to speak to you as an old boy," said Arthur Augustus sternly.

"I trust that by this time you realize that you acted very wrongly in breaking detention."

"I jolly well wish I hadn't!" said Wally.

"But Jove, I am glad of that!" said Arthur Augustus, modified. "You realize that it was very wicked——what?"

"I'd give a year's pocket-money to have been in the Form-room all the afternoon," grunted Wally. "Can't be helped now. Look here, you chaps, you needn't chatter about finding me here, especially when Selby's around. I don't want him to know I've been here to-day."

"He will know you've been out of bounds," said Tom.

"He will be back at the school long before you can get there."

"I know that."

"Well, then, what does it matter if he knows you've been here?"

"It does matter," said the fog.

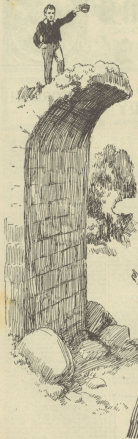
"Blessed if I see it. Still, we shan't tell Selby anything, of course," said the captain of the Shed, rather hurried.

"I mean, don't jaw about it," said Wally unsmiling.

"Selby is all ears. He hears everything. It's a pity you found me here at all. Why the thump didn't you go to Abbotford?"

"Your silly humor lost the train."

(Continued on page 26.)



"But Jove! Look! Wally, you young lot!" roared Arthur Augustus De'Arcy, as a square rose to view against the sky on the summit of the old gateway. "Butty, never drive an ass!" "That young thump!" roared Minny Leveson. Wally of the Third wiped his cap. "Come and hush me!" he called back. (See page 12.)

# THE St. Jim's News

## A DEVOTED DOG'S DIARY!

By  
TOMMIE

THE FAMOUS building belonging  
to George Herries.

### MONDAY.

Woke up at five-thirty, feeling jolly pinkish. A bit of cold morning. Cows in the yard, and chickens hanging from my window. My master came along at breakfast-time with a bundle of large, juicy bones, which he had brought from the school kitchen. I probed into those bones with the appetite of a Vandyke. Then I asked my master, in my doggy way, to take me out for a walk, but he said: "Not this morning, old fellow. I'll take you for a run after dinner." I slept all the morning, and dreamed of Jerry, delightful dog-fights. After dinner I took my master down to the village. This may seem strange, but it's a fact. I walked in front, clanking off my bell, and my master came staggering along behind. Presently I managed to break away, and then I had a glorious time! Fought the butcher's dog in Elycombe, and licked him; chased a couple of cats down an alley; stole an enormous joint of beef from the butcher whose dog I had pulverized; and, on the whole, I thoroughly enjoyed myself. But my master seemed very annoyed with me, and when we got back to the farm I was punished to my lament for the rest of the day. Oh dear! Talk about a dog's life!

### TUESDAY.

Today I was allowed to deposit myself in study No. 4, and I received notice a couple of minutes before I was to attend a portion of George's lesson. I only did it for fun, but Jerry hasn't got any sense of humor. He fumed and foamed. "Herries!" he said, "I shall hunt upon your griffin" and off that wretched hound! He has no respect whatever for a fellow's totem-pole! These boys only received yesterday from my table, so now they are attackably wined! My master approached to the window, and I had some notion I was headed to my kennel in disgrace.

### WEDNESDAY.

There was a horse-match this afternoon, and I took part in it. I dashed on to the field just as Tom Herries was going through with the ball, and took it from his hands. Then I had a game of foster on my own. Jerry was awfully ratty. He said I'd dropped him from covering a coffin post, and he went for my master behindhand. I was peered on the field with looks of mud, and I crawled grey with my tail between my legs, in disgrace again! Why shouldn't a dog be able to enjoy a game of foster, I should like to know.

### THURSDAY.

You never see such a commotion, confusion, and consternation as I caused in the school kitchen today. For a long time past I've been of some use to the school, and my duties came to a head today. I was in the act of putting Felicia's dinner, when she suddenly sprang on my back and gave me a fearful claving. I satiated, and we rolled over and over on the kitchen floor, clashing and screeching each other, and eat-

ting bits of hair and fur all over the place. I was having all the best of the fry, when Cook ended hostilities by giving me a crack with a rolling-pin. I crawled away from the battleground feeling more dead than alive.

### FRIDAY.

My master forgot to chain me up overnight, so I played truant to-day, and had the time of my life! I trotted down to Elycombe on my own, and had another "bit of honey" with the butcher's dog. He's a pugnacious pup, but I got the better of him, and left him rolling on the pavement sobbing for mercy. Before quitting the butcher's premises I helped myself to a bit of sausage. They went down awfully well, for I'd had no breakfast. After strutting round the village and looking up some old pals of mine, I was stupid enough to go to sleep in the middle of the road. A lorry passed close over my remonstrated form, without harming a hair of me, but the incident gave a severe shock to my nervous system. Life is sweet, and I've no desire to become manager of a bus line. In an afternoon I wandered for school, and got myself in the best of some woods. I spent hours trying to get out of the maze, but had to give it up at last, and called up to the undergrowth and went to sleep, bitterly regretting my foolish escapade.

### SATURDAY.

I woke early, feeling cramped and cold, and as looking at a hunter. I at once set about finding my way out of the wood, but I must have kept going round in circles, because I always found myself back at the place where I'd started. By midday I was in a dreadful state of hunger and desperation. Then a tramp came along and befriended me. He generously gave me half of his dinner; then he examined my collar, and spotted my name and address, and took me all the way back to St. Jim's. No doubt he had an eye to getting a fat tip from my master. All the same, I think it was fully decent of him to bring the wanderer back to the fold. My master was surprised to see me. I've never to be would have wrangled his tail with pleasure—if he had seen! He gave me the family hall-a-croon, and then took me along to my kennel, where I slept soundly after my great adventure.

## SPECIAL "MASTERS" SUPPLEMENT

NEXT WEEK!

## EDITORIAL!

By Tom Merry.

**A** DOG," writes Master Wally B'arcy in an essay, "is a four-footed quadruped of the Wolf class, sometimes he is distributed, and sometimes he runs wild like Herries' building, Tower. There are lots of kinds of dogs, the best-known being the French Bulldog, the Bloodhound, and the Old Time Chow. The dog is called 'the friend of Man,' and used to White May, he is the best not a fellow could have."

I will go a step further than this beyond central, and say that dogs are even less pets than white mice. They are much more intelligent, for one thing, and they have lots of questions which are looking in favor of white mice.

Most fellows are fond of dogs. Even old Tower, the builder, who is a bit of a larver at times, has plenty of friends. Herries adores him, and he believes that Tommie is far more intelligent than lots of human beings—Grandy of the kind, for example! Dogs have been the friends of man for centuries. Their earliest ancestors were the mast and the pack-dog, and it's just wonderful to think how our own ancestors managed to trap and tame them, and turn them to our own uses.

My favorite kind of dog is the Scotch terrier. He's a jolly fellow, full of frolic and mischief, and tremendously loyal to his master. Masters prefer the Great Dane, and he is said to be the kind of dog that lives in St. Jim's. My wife's got one of the sort already!

Master Leather knows the bays terrier, and Talbot prefers the big, honest dog, the Border Collie. There's also the dog, the Antler Angouleme D'Essex likes the precise, drawing-room type of dog, which shows proper respect for a fellow's totem-pole. We are thinking of making Jerry a present of a toy Pomeranian. The pugnacious Grandy is keen on dogs, and Fat Kelly declares that there is nothing to beat a Kerry Blue terrier, Jack Black, who hails from Yorkshire, is true to the Yorkshire terrier, and Tugby is very fond of pointers—the kind of pointers that are known as "wags" in the Form-room, but the canine variety!

As for Herries, he thinks the world of his dog Tommie, who is supposed to be the choicest of canines. Herries is devoted to this dog. It was Herries who begged me to publish a Special Dog Supplement of the "News." He says that dog-boys all over the country will welcome it with open arms. I believe they will. At all events, the members of our staff have worked the nibbers on "doggy" stories and "doggy" articles.

In my gallery of dogs we have confined to include Rust and Celia and my dog's life in the South and Fitch respectively. We have also outlined the "chocker young pup" of the Third. We trust they will please the children, and not start jumping and snapping because they have been left out.

Tom Merry



# WINNING HIS PARDON

A Novel Story, featuring a Canine Hero. **By DICK REEFER**

"**B**ill Love! sounds like someone kidding, Jack love?" Arthur Argus's Fairy made that remark. He was stroking down the face with Tom Merry & Co. of the Shell, when a queer, but unmistakable, sound became audible.

"The jammers stopped short and listened. A undoubtedly someone was 'blabbing'—talking on the water-top, as Monty Lowther rather indignantly expressed it. And the person who was doing the blabbing was making a very noisy business of it.

"The jammers walked on in order to investigate. They rounded a bend in the road and came upon a forlorn figure propped upon a stile. It was Grimes, the grocer's boy. At his feet lay a big retriever dog, looking up at him wistfully.

"That's the trouble, Grimes?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes—lost!" Grimes walked all the longer at the sight of the St. Jim's jammers. He dashed at his tear-streaked cheeks with a red crimson handkerchief.

"Why those tears," said Monty Lowther, "and tell us what it's all about."

Grimes sniffed and sobbed for a full minute before he spoke.

"It's—his—Chummy!" he blurted out at length.

"What! What's wrong with Chummy?" asked Tom Merry, stopping to pat the head of the big, shaggy retriever.

"They've gone" to take 'em away from me!" said Grimes, streaming a fresh flow of tears.

Tom Merry frowned.

"Hats!" he said. "Nobody can take your dog from you, Grimes. You've paid his wages, haven't you?"

"I could, but something dreadful's happened, Master Merry! Chummy's taken a bite out of the mayor's cat!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh, jove!"

The jammers stared at the grocer's boy in dismay. They knew what a poisonous and important person the Mayor of Weyland was. He was not-of-the-way, not only in the eyes of Weyland, but in the neighboring villages.

"The mayor was a Justice of the Peace and chairman of the local Board, and, altogether, a very big pot. And any dog which had the audacity to take a lump out of his right honorable cat would have to pay dearly for it—perhaps with his life."

"Chummy's a good dog," said Grimes.

"I don't go about biting' people, as a rule. But once in a while 'n comes across somebody 'n don't like, an' goes for 'em; an' the mayor was one of the unfortunates. Chummy bit 'n clean through 'n throat. It was in a heated fit, an' about it—said 'n'd pardon me!"

"Presents you, you mean?" said Tom Merry.

"That's it! I've hisn' announced to go to the court to-morrow, an' the mayor says that the Bench will make an order for Chummy to be destroyed, because 'n's bit' under proper control."

"What a wretched business!" ejaculated Arthur Argus, his eyes flashing. "I can understand the manly boy's walk-up upset. Nobody likes having 'n's lamp taken out of his cell. But if he orders Chummy to be destroyed, he's a brute, an' I'd tell him so to his face!"

"Hans here!" growled Manners.

Grimes was looking very distressed. He was decided to Chummy, an' Chummy was decided to him. The dog had been in Grimes' possession nearly a year now, and they got on awfully well together.

As for Tom Merry & Co., they were almost as distressed as Grimes.

"Something will have to be done," said Tom at length. "We can't let them take Chummy away from Grimes. It'll break the poor little fellow's heart."

"But what can we do?" asked Manners suddenly. "All the Bench makes an order for—"

"Rebuke the Bench!" snapped Arthur Argus, quite crossly. "Let's go an' see the mayor, speak to 'em, an' beg Chummy off."

Tom Merry nodded.

"We'll do our best," he said, "but we can't promise nothing. Still you be here when we get back."

"Yes, Master Merry!"

"Then we'll let you know if we've been able to work the trick."

The jammers hurried away on their mission. By reaching the mayor's residence in the pleasant after-visit of their business, were welcomed into the presence of the great man.

The Mayor eyed his visitors sternly as they trooped in.

"We have called your worship," began Arthur Argus, "in reference to the wretched accident which you have allowed. We can assure you that the dog Chummy would not have bitten you had he been properly trained."

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A Tribute to Towser.

By GEORGE HERRIES.

There are dogs of all kinds and varieties, of varying colors and size; There are dogs of all tribes and all nations, of Bismarcks and Toms, and Abolitions, French Poodles and Pure and Bismarcks, And setters and Spaniels and Shys.

I once had the pet-lapping breed, I couldn't have thought deeper; I possessed a handsome Belton, But even in the Woods I did leave her, And she, the old shaggy devils, Went mauling of on her own!

And then, feeling quite miserably " My lion had quite me a bit, I thought 'twould be awfully jolly To get a magnificent Collie, But 'twas Mr. Russell—a jolly! Result—his was ordered to quit!

And then I grooved in Towser, A boy of the building breed, He's a wonderful dog, I avow, an' I possessed a monstrous, a monstrous, And at lighting a regular rowant, Giving rival dogs more than they need!

Old Towser's a wonderful fellow— He beats all your Poodles and Frises; When I play on my corner an' yells, He joins in this voice in most fervent, And I don't have to bark or to howl, I murmur "Here, boy!"—and he strokes!

Yes, Towser's a wonderful chappie; I'm proud of his prowess and pluck, It's a wonder to say that he's snapper, So sharp or so soft of papper; He's quite contented and happy— I find him on Broad dog-track!

A B for your Yorkshire and Kerries, Two Whippets and Chews and Great Danes!

A B for the pals of Tom Merry's! St. Jim's may be confident there is No pet like the pet of George Herries— Old Towser that invariably roars!

been such of your identity. If he had wronged you as the Mayor of Weyland, it would have given you a wonderful wage of his tail an' pawed on. We understand from Grimes that your worship is rather wally about the incident, an' that you have threatened to have the dog destroyed."

"Probably," said the mayor.

"That being the case, we have come back to insist to you, with all the best an' judgment of our command, to reconsider your decision," said Arthur Argus, with dignity.

The mayor frowned.

"You have made a brilliant journey," he said. "The dog in question is a brilliant beast and a menace to public safety. Tomorrow morning—provided my colleagues on the Bench are agreeable—your order will be made for the dog to be destroyed!"

"Shame!"

That word, from the lips of Arthur Argus, rang through the mayor's drawing-room. Grimes' sudden outburst and judgment had been thrown to the winds. He was indignantly indignant, and he could not help the fact.

The mayor, staid and purple, waved a fat hand towards the door.

"Leave my house immediately!"

"But, look here, your worship—" began Tom Merry.

"Go!" bellowed the mayor.

The jammers exchanged glances— and went. What business had failed, wofully and completely. Really, they had expected an other result. The dog Chummy was doomed, and Grimes must resign himself to being his faithful friend.

Excitedly, however, Grimes was not a pleasant task, but Tom Merry & Co. managed it somehow. Then, having the grocer's boy Maurice broken-knowledge, they tramped off in goodly array to St. Jim's. They were not a long way from town, however. They were not "out," but they lay for Grimes in his trouble, and the approaching fate of his Chummy seemed a real tragedy.

Tom Merry & Co. found it difficult to concentrate on business next morning. They were thinking of the row which was being started in Weyland Police Court. There was no doubt in their minds now that Grimes and his dog would have to part company.

But when the hour of dismissal came, and they trooped out into the street with their umbrellas, they were astonished to see Grimes come striding in at the gateway, an animal, with a big dog, and with "Whoa!" and "Greeting happily behind."

"My only son!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, in wonder. "Chummy's still in the land of the living! What's happened?"

The answer came up to Grimes, who breathlessly explained the situation.

"Chummy's his retained, young gent!" he said joyfully—meaning, approved, of course. "It was the biggest stroke of luck that ever happened! Early this mornin' I was taking Chummy for a long walk by the river, before we got up at the court, an' a little girl who was strolling on the bridge slipped through the rails some'one, an' tumbled into the water. I stood there like a fool, not knowin' what to do. You see I ain't no swimmer. But she wouldn't sink! I made no bones about it. 'I was in the water where you could see 'em!' It means out to the little bit, an' brought 'er to the bank, an' an' 'er up, an' she was a bit scared, but 'er safe all."

"And she turned out to be the mayor's daughter!" said Tom Merry, with a smile.

"Not 'n daughter, but 'n niece, who 's 'pposed to be very kind, an' 'n' said Grimes, "she told 'em all about the reason of course, an' the old lady was as nice as pie to me when I talked up in court. 'We're goin' to give your dog another chance,' she says. 'But when you takes 'em through the streets of Weyland, be sure, mind 'er's on a leash or lead, an' I don't want to see another lump of rock, an' get 'er—what's 'n name?'"

"Hydrophobia!" suggested Manners.

"That's it! No swimming's allowed on 'er, 'pposed to give 'em, an' 'n' said Grimes, "she told 'em all about the reason of course, an' the old lady was as nice as pie to me when I talked up in court. 'We're goin' to give your dog another chance,' she says. 'But when you takes 'em through the streets of Weyland, be sure, mind 'er's on a leash or lead, an' I don't want to see another lump of rock, an' get 'er—what's 'n name?'"

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(Continued from page 15.)

"Wally, Tom Morley—" Just like you!" grunted Wally. "Oh, juss! Bother Selby! If he hadn't detained me and I hadn't had to keep out of sight for the afternoon I should never have come here at all. And now—" "Now what?" "Oh, nothing."

Tom Morley looked very carefully at the bag, and so did some of the other fellows. There was a change in the usually careless and thoughtless tramp of the Third. Even Arthur Augustus, though not an observant peep, could see that Wally was deeply troubled about something.

"Has anything happened here this afternoon?" asked Tom.

"What could have happened?" grunted Wally evasively. "Has Jim?" Did you check stamps at Selby's, but you're wrong, as you did at mine?" Wally grinned faintly.

"No, how?" "Where are the other two young coppers?" asked Lovell.

"You were all together when we saw you last?" "Selby found them here and scooped them off. He didn't see me, as I was on top of the gate."

"And you kept dogs while Selby was around?" "Yes."

"Well, what's worrying you?" asked Tom. "You'll get licked for breaking detention. But you know that."

"Yes, I know that."

"Well, then, what's the trouble?" "I didn't say there was any trouble."

"You don't say so," said Tom, with a laugh "but I can see there is. You can tell us, kid. You're a cheeky young scoundrel, but not to all your friends. Get it off your chest."

"Yuss, wuss! Consider in me as your oldish brether, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus encouragingly.

"Wally shook his head. "Then something has happened?" said Tom, in a wiser wonder.

"Well, you—" "And you can't tell us what it is?" "I can't."

"Something to do with Selby?" asked Lovell.

"Yes." "Well, what?"

Wally of the Third did not answer. His face was dark with trouble. It was obvious that he was not "rotting." Something had happened that afternoon at the old room which had brought a deep cloud over his usual cheery spirit. What it might possibly have been Tom Morley & Co. could not even conjecture.

Wally ran down the old staircase at last. "Look here, you chaps. Don't say a word about having met me here," he said. "If Selby got to know he'd suspect at once—" The fog broke off.

"He would suspect what?" "Never mind what," said Wally irritably. "I suppose you don't want Selby to be waded down on me then he is already? Goodness knows I wish I hadn't been here. I couldn't help it. I simply dared not show myself when they were here."

"They?" repeated Tom.

Wally hid his lip. "I-I mean—" "Do you mean that there was somebody else here—that Selby met somebody?" asked Tom sharply.

"Well, suppose he did?" answered Wally. "He might think I hinted on purpose. In fact, I know he'd think so. You know the kind of man he is. He listens at the Post-office door kind of to hear if we're saying anything about him. Hullo, caught him once. He'd be bound to think that I was saying so here."

"What would it matter if you heard him talking to another man here?" said Lovell. "I suppose they weren't plotting a ruse?"

"Well, it would matter," said Wally. "Did—did you follow me anything of another man—a shabby fellow with eyes like a cat—"

"No. Was that the man Selby met?" "Look here. The low said the better," said Wally miserably. "I've not going to tell you. I can't. I wish

The Gen Library.—No. 303.

I hadn't heard anything, but I couldn't help it. I'm going back to the school."

The fog moved away, the janitor staring after him blankly. His words had utterly surprised them.

"Good-bye!" murmured Andrew softly. "Has old Selby been meeting a bookmaker and hucker before?"

"Fustled!" said Olive.

"Well, that kid's bound steeper than that scold his body," said Andrew. "Selby's gone over the odds somehow, and that kid knows it, and it frightens him."

Arthur Augustus followed his minor. Wally gave him a miserable look, but did not speak.

"Shall I walk back to St. Jim's with you, old chap?" asked Arthur Augustus very gently.

"If you like."

"See you fellows later?" called out Gassy. And he walked out of the rain with Wally.

Major and minor took the footpath into the road together. They walked in silence till they were nearly at the Rycomb road.

"Wally, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus at last. "I can see that something has happened, of course. Are you quite sure that you cannot tell me what it is?"

"Quite!" said Wally curtly.

"You overheard Mr. Selby talking to another man."

"You know that already."

"If you heard anything private, Wally, you are bound to keep it a secret, of course. It was a very unfortunate peep for you to be placed in. It is wiser to have a secret to keep."

"Don't I know that?" grunted Wally.

"But it cannot be anything very serious, Wally. There could be no harm in whatever it was you heard."

Wally did not answer.

"The best thing you can do, Wally, is to discuss the matter entirely to your mind."

"I wish I could!" muttered Wally.

"You must, dear boy. You are bound to learn not to take any interest in Mr. Selby's personal affairs."

"I know that. But—" "But what?" "Oh, nothing."

And the walk home to St. Jim's was finished in gloomy silence.

## CHAPTER 8.

## "For It!"

"THERE'S Selby!" murmured Lovell's minor.

"Looks more like a Ham than ever!" muttered Reggie Mansers.

The two lads were hanging about the doorway of the House in the hope of seeing their clean return. If Wally came in before Mr. Selby he had a chance of getting back to the Third Form room and having a "go" at his detention task. There was a possibility that his "job" would remain undisturbed in that case. But it was not Wally whom the chance of the Third was coming up the path to the House. It was Mr. Selby himself, and the tramp of old Third was still absent.

Mr. Selby undoubtedly noticed anything but a good jumper. His brows were knit, and his eyes glared under them.

The interview with the man South had told on the Third Form master's nerves, none very well under control. He was in a black and bitter mood—plunged in gloomy and angry thought, as he came up to the House. Mr. South passed him, and glanced at him rather slyly. The Third Form master seldom looked good-natured, but he seldom or never looked quite so openly bad-tempered as now.

He came into the House, and his glance fell on Mansers' minor and Lovell's minor. His eyes glared at them. He was in a mood to punish somebody.

"Mansers' minor! Lovell's minor! You came back directly to the school, as I directed you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you report to Taggles?"

"Yes, sir."

"I shall question the porter," said Mr. Selby.

The two lads made an endeavour to that, and Mr. Selby passed. He turned his steps in the direction of the Third Form room. The sight of Mansers' minor and Frank Lovell had reminded him of their inseparable chum, Wally of the Third, whom he supposed still to be under detention.

So far, Mr. Selby had not missed the lesson; his interview with the man South had occupied his mind, to the exclusion of less important matters. Now he remembered Wally, and decided to give him a lesson, and see how he was getting on with his detention task. If he was not making good progress with it, there was a reason the inflicting punishment—and after his interview with South Mr. Selby was almost revering to inflict punishment on some victim or other. But he was a just man, according



to his rights; he would not inflict punishment undescribed. It was very possible, however, that Wally's detention took would furnish a cause for the infliction.

To Mr. Selby's surprise, he found the Form-room empty. He started around.

D'Arcy minor, who should have been sitting at his desk, wrestling with Latin irregular verbs, was not to be seen. On his desk lay his detention tag—untouched.

The Third Form master could scarcely believe his eyes. It was hours in upon his mind at last that his order had been disregarded—that Wally, searched into the Form-room after dinner, had taken French leave as soon as his master's back was turned.

But for his preoccupation that afternoon, Mr. Selby would certainly have looked into the Form-room earlier. It was his way to worry a fellow under detention. He had not done so, and the scamp of the Third, taking full advantage of his remissness, had evidently enjoyed his half-holiday after all, regardless of authority.

Mr. Selby's thin lips came together hard.

He was in want of a victim, though he did not acknowledge as much to himself. The reckless lad had offered himself as one, for it was a serious matter to break detention. "Six" was the lightest punishment such a transgression could expect—there might even be a Head's flogging.

Mr. Selby did not think of reporting the transgression to Dr. Holmes for a flogging. He was going to keep the matter in his own hands—and the transgressor's punishment was going to be severe. A Head's flogging was supposed to be much more painful than a caning. But Mr. Selby knew how to make a caning much more painful than a flogging.

With his thin lips close hard, the Form master walked out of the room. It was not likely that the transgressor would turn up till call-over, he supposed. Wally would make the most of his stolen holiday. Mr. Selby went to his study and waited.

As it happened, he did not have to wait till call-over. Half an hour later he saw Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his minor coming up to the House together.

Mr. Selby whisked out of his study, to meet the juniors as they came in.

"D'Arcy minor?"

"Yes, sir," said Wally, his heart sinking at the sight of the closed lips and glaring eyes of his Form master.

It was only too clear that he was "for it."

"You will go to my study, D'Arcy minor."

"Very well, sir."

"Pway excuse me, Mr. Selby," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Perhaps you will allow me to speak a word."

The Third Form master stared at him.

"What have you to say, D'Arcy?"

"My young brother, sir, has done very wrong in breaking detention," said the oval of St. Jim's. "I have spoken to him very seriously, sir, and I trust I have brought him to a proper frame of mind on the subject. He regrets very much having gone out without leave this afternoon, sir."

"Indeed?" sneered Mr. Selby.

"I assure you, sir, that such is the case," said Arthur Augustus. "He will tell you so himself, sir."

"I have no doubt of it," said Mr. Selby. "He will probably tell me that, or anything else, now that the time has come to answer for his disrespect and disobedience."

"But Jove! I do not mean that at all, sir! I mean, Wally—I mean my nephew—can you see that he has acted nobly, sir, in giving him a talking-to, and in the event, sir, I trust that you will be wretched kind with him."

"Kindly do not be impertinent, D'Arcy."

"Oh! It was not my intention to be impertinent, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "I was merely pointing out—"

Wally, Mr. Selby, if you will kindly listen to me—

But Jove! Arthur Augustus stared after the departing figure of the master of the Third. "But Jove! What frightful nonsense is a Form master! Actually walkin' away while a fellow's speakin' to him! Wally, Selby is the limit!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy shook his noble head scornfully as he ascended on his way.

Unheeding the oval of St. Jim's, Mr. Selby followed the hapless lad to his study.

He followed Wally in, and shut the door.

D'Arcy minor stood facing him, with a downcast face. In the presence of Mr. Selby, the lad could not help thinking of the interview he had overheard under the old gateway of the north—he could not help wondering what Mr. Selby would have thought had he guessed. The Form master's secret—a secret of shame and disgrace—was in his hands; there was power in his hands, had he thought of using it, though that thought certainly had not come into his mind. The shadow of disgrace—of ruin, to use his own wretched word—hung over the master of the Third; and his secret, so carefully guarded from all the school, was

known to the lad who stood before him, and whom he was about to punish with bitter severity.

Mr. Selby selected a case from his table. Then he fixed his eyes on D'Arcy minor with a black look. He noted the dark, troubled expression on Wally's face, but made no account of the thoughts that were in the boy's mind; he attributed it to apprehension.

"You left the Form-room without leave, D'Arcy minor?"

"Yes, sir," said Wally in a low voice.

"You have been absent all the afternoon?"

"Yes, sir."

"Your detention tag is untouched?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you any excuses to offer?"

"No, sir."

"I thought not!" said Mr. Selby grimly. "I thought not, D'Arcy minor. I have considered whether to report you to Dr. Holmes for a flogging. I have decided, however, to be lenient, to the extent of administering your punishment with my own hands."

Wally, looking at him, could guess how lenient the punishment was likely to be. But he had expected a flogging for his recklessness, and he was not the fellow to labor now that the reckoning had come after the feast. Many a flogging had come his way since he had been a member of the Third Form, at St. Jim's, and some of them had been severe enough. But there was something in Mr. Selby's look which warned him that this flogging was going to be unusually drastic.

"You will bend over that chair, D'Arcy minor."

Wally bent over the chair.

Whack, whack, whack!

The scamp of the Third set his teeth hard.

It was a matter of pride with him to take a flogging without pining. Generally he succeeded. But all his fortitude was called upon now to keep back the cry of pain that rose to his lips.

Whack, whack, whack!

The case came down hard and fast, with almost savage lashes.

To do Mr. Selby justice, he believed that he was administering a much needed chastisement to an incorrigible young rascal. He did not realize that his own bitter temper and shattered nerves were finding solace and satisfaction in the infliction.

Wally of the Third indignantly deserved punishment, and had fairly asked for it. But he did not deserve this, and he knew that he did not deserve it. He was suffering now for the sin of another—he was getting what Mr. Selby would have liked to inflict upon the rascally man who had maltreated him. The sixth stroke brought a sharp cry from D'Arcy minor, in spite of his hardness and his resolution.

But the case did not cease.

It was to be seen that the usual "six," though six was the limit except in very exceptional cases.

Whack, whack!

There was a yell from D'Arcy minor then. Flesh and blood could bear no more in silence.

"Oh!"

Whack!

The sixth stroke fell, harder than the others. Possibly Mr. Selby intended to make it a round dozen. If so, his intention was not carried out.

D'Arcy minor sprang away from the chair, spring to a safe distance, and faced his Form master, his eyes blazing.

"That's enough!" he panted.

## CHAPTER 3.

### "Hands Off!"

MR. SELBY stood, gripping the case, staring at the lad.

He was too surprised to do anything else for a moment or two.

Wally of the Third panted, his face white and his eyes ablaze. He was utterly reckless at that moment; and what concern might come of it, he was determined that he was going to have no more. If Mr. Selby had been a wise man he would have realized that he had exceeded the limit; but he was not a wise man; he was only a very obstinate and bitter one, attacking his destiny for a score of days.

"D'Arcy minor!" he stammered.

"That's enough!" repeated the lad.

"How dare you?" thundered Mr. Selby. "Stand over that chair once more, D'Arcy minor!"

"I won't!"

"Upon my word! This—this passes all bounds! D'Arcy minor, do you desire me to take you to the headmaster, to be expelled from this school?" demanded Mr. Selby.

THE OLD LAMEN.—No. 323.

Wally set his teeth.

"You can do what you jolly well like, but you're not going to touch me again!" he said savagely. "The Head master'll let you ease a chap like that if he knows!"

"No?"

"You know he wouldn't!" snarled Wally. "He wouldn't let you be a brute if he knew!"

"A—o—a brute!" stammered Mr. Selby, scarcely able to believe his ears.

Mr. Selby had his own methods of bearing, sometimes, what his Form thought of him. The lags were then accosted him of trailing staidly and listening quietly. But this was the first time he had heard such plain language fare to face.

For a moment or two he stared blankly at D'Arcy minor. Then he strode at him and gripped him by the shoulder. The case rose in the air.

Wally's eyes glared at the angry face towering over him.

"Don't touch me again, Mr. Selby!" he said, between his teeth. "You'll be sorry if you do! Do you think I don't know why you're giving me this? It's not for breaking detention. It's because you're afraid of that man South!" By gum, if you touch me again, I'll shoot it out for all the school to hear!"

"South!"

Mr. Selby repeated the name, with pallid lips. He released the lag. The lags dropped from his trembling hand. A wave of pallor came over his face, and he staggered away, with his eyes fixed almost wildly on Wally of the Third.

He dropped heavily into a chair. It seemed as if his legs would not support him under the terrible shock he had received.

Wally, staring at his stricken face, could almost have supposed of the words he had uttered. They had been torn from him, as it were. But the injustice of it had been too much for him. He was in possession of the Form master's secret, and had resolved never to let a word of it pass his lips.

But why should he suffer because the blackmailer had terrified and cowed the master of the Third? Mr. Selby had an right to wreak his fury upon him. For what he had done he had been more than sufficiently punished, as even Mr. Selby would have realised had he been calm. But certainly the lag had not expected the wretched man to look so unscrupulous at this.

But he was not sorry that he had spoken out. He had had as much as he could stand, and he did not mean to have any more, come what might.

There was a long, almost terrible silence in Mr. Selby's study. Wally stood panting and quivering, and at last he leaped to the door. Then the Third Form master spoke.

"Stop!"

D'Arcy minor stopped.

"What—what was the name you mentioned, D'Arcy minor?"

The lag did not answer.

"Tell me!" snarled Mr. Selby in a faint voice.

"South," said Wally reluctantly. He would have been glad to escape from the room with nothing more said.

"Where did you hear that name?"

"I—I heard it this afternoon."

"Where—when?"

No answer.

Mr. Selby made an effort to collect himself. But it was not easy; he was not a man of much nerve. The discovery that the blackmailer's name was known, and known to a boy in his own Form, made him almost dizzy. How much did the boy know?

"You must explain this, D'Arcy minor," he said, as calmly as he could, and the fear in his eyes flashed the lag, sure and savage as he was. "Have you seen a man of the name you mentioned?"

Wally did not answer. He did not want to add to the Form master's fear and anxiety. He wanted nothing except to escape from Mr. Selby. He thought rapidly, and resolved to tell Mr. Selby nothing. The Third Form master could not force him to speak. It was not a subject upon which Mr. Selby could use authority or the name.

"I've nothing to tell you, sir," said the lag. "I'm not going to tell anybody anything. It's not my business."

"You must tell me, boy," said Mr. Selby hoarsely. "You have nothing to lose—I shall not punish you. I—I expect that I scared you so severely!"

Wally's lip curled irrepressibly. Mr. Selby was no longer a severe, overbearing Form master; he was a weak man in a tank.

"Have you seen this man?"

No reply.

The Third Lesson.—No. 99.

"Will you not explain, D'Arcy minor?"

"I've nothing to say, sir," answered Wally stubbornly.

"But you mentioned the name," said Mr. Selby. "You know something about the man."

His eyes almost burned at the lag, and Wally discerned how gladly Mr. Selby would have taken him by the collar and thrashed a full confession out of him. But Mr. Selby dared not use such methods now.

D'Arcy minor stood silent.

"The fact is," said Mr. Selby slowly, "I saw a man of that name today on business connected with—a relative of mine. Were you aware of that, D'Arcy minor?"

"Silence."

"The business," went on Mr. Selby, "was of a purely private nature—a matter that I should not care to have talked about. I did not desire the man South's name to be mentioned in the school, D'Arcy minor."

"I shall not mention it, sir."

"Can I rely upon that, D'Arcy minor?"

The hapless man's eyes searched the lag's face.

"Yes, sir. I'm no talker," said Wally. "I never meant to say a word. I wouldn't have, only—"

He broke off.

"Have you nothing more to tell me, D'Arcy minor?"

"No, sir."

There was a long pause.

"Very well," said Mr. Selby, with an effort, at last. "You may go. I—I rely upon your discretion, D'Arcy minor. If you expect to receive kindness at my hands you will be discreet, and will not talk about matters that do not concern you. You may go."

"Thank you, sir," said Wally.

He opened the study door and stepped not-fairly into the arms of Lavion master and Reggie Minor.

Wally gave a jump.

He made a sign of silence to the two lags, and closed the door. In silence the three went down the corridor; but on the faces of Wally's two comrades there was a burning curiosity, and he knew that they had hoped what had passed in the Form master's study. And that knowledge was demoralizing.

Lull alone in his study, Mr. Selby paced to and fro with a haggard face.

What did the boy know? How much did he know? Was that secret interview with the man South to become the talk of the school? How did the boy know anything? Could he have witnessed the meeting at the old castle? But how, when Mr. Selby had searched the rains before the blackmailer arrived, and found no one there? It was impossible. Yet the boy evidently knew of South's existence, and knew that Mr. Selby was afraid of him. How much more did he know? The words he had cried out, as the man searched over him, showed that he knew more; but how much did he know? These were questions to which Mr. Selby could find no answer.

"Tap!"

"Come in," said the Third Form master hoarsely.

He expected to see D'Arcy minor returning, but it was D'Arcy major who opened the door of the study.

Arthur Augustus glanced in surprise at the Third Form master's troubled, tormented face.

"What do you want?" snarled Mr. Selby hoarsely.

"I am sorry if I have interrupted you at an inconvenient moment, Mr. Selby—"

"What do you want?"

"I suggested that my initials was harsh—"

"D'Arcy minor is gone, Ge?"

"Very well, sir. I was only going to point out to you—"

"Oh! Oh, rather, stay a moment, D'Arcy major. Come into the study."

"Very well, sir," said Arthur Augustus amiably. Mr. Selby seemed to him in a more reasonable mood now. "You see, sir, you walked away before I had finished speaking to you; but, after some reflection, sir, I thought I had better look in, and point out to you, sir, that—"

Mr. Selby set his teeth.

"You are D'Arcy minor's elder brother," he said. "I suppose you have some influence over him."

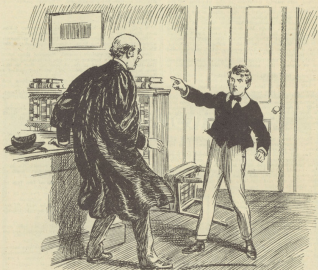
"I trust so, sir. In fact, it was my speaking to him that brought him to a better frame of mind this afternoon, and made him realize that he had done every wrong in his school's detention, sir."

Mr. Selby made an impatient gesture.

"In some matters, D'Arcy, your brother has become acquainted with certain private matters that concern only me. It is not a matter of much importance, but I do not desire my personal affairs to become common talk in the Lower School."

"That is very natural, sir."

"D'Arcy minor appears to have heard something, and



"Do you think I don't know why you're giving me this?" panted D'Arcy miser. "It's because you're afraid of that man South!" "South!" Mr. Selby repeated the name with puffed lips. He released the lip at once, the nerve dropping from his nerveless fingers as in the floor. Then he staggered away, his eyes fixed almost wildly on Wally D'Arcy of the Third. (See page 18.)

doubtless has wholly misunderstood what he has heard," said Mr. Selby.

"Very likely, sir; he is with a young man."

"Nevertheless, I do not desire my personal affairs to be talked of. I request you, D'Arcy major, to use your influence with your brother, and see that he does not tell any ridiculous stories in the school. Should he do so, and cause me annoyance, I shall speak to the headmaster, and demand D'Arcy minor's expulsion from the school."

"But, sir?"

"The matter is, as I said, of no special importance," said Mr. Selby, with wrinkling lips. "It is very probable that D'Arcy minor has misunderstood some words which were spoken in jest rather than in earnest. So I gathered, at least, from what he has admitted. But this foolish misunderstanding on his part might cause unpleasant talk, if he should be so foolish as to repeat it. If you desire to avoid very serious consequences for your brother, D'Arcy, you will use your influence with him to hold his foolish tongue."

"Certainly, sir!" said D'Arcy.

"You understand?"

"Oh, quite, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, though he was very far from understanding. "I shall speak very seriously to Wally about this, sir."

"Very well. You may go."

Arthur Augustus went.

Mr. Selby resumed his dismal pacing of his study. He wondered whether that appeal to D'Arcy major had made matters better or worse. Really, it was impossible to tell. Mr. Selby was in an unenviable position. His secret was known, or partly known, to a boy in his Form who had the deepest reasons for detesting him—in whose power it now was to repay with interest a hundred acts of petty tyranny. Would the boy be silent, or would the name of South be tumbled up and down the Third Form, with all

the details that D'Arcy minor knew? What did he know? What could he know? And again and again the hapless man tormented himself with questions to which he could find no answer.

## CHAPTER 10.

### Who Is South?

"BEGGINS me!" said Layton miser.

"Hollo!" agreed Huggie Manser. Wally of the Third was nothing. His comrades had searched him away to the Third Form-room, deeply sympathetic, and intensely puzzled and anxious. There were two or six other lads in the Form-room now. Hobbs and Frayne had brought in something in the canteen line, and were discussing the pros and cons of cooking it in the Form-room gait. The three mimes dove to one end of the long room by themselves. Wally was feeling keenly the effects of that severe evening in Mr. Selby's study. He stood, and leaned on a desk, while Manser miser sat on the end of a form, cross-legged, and Frank Layton leaned on the wall.

"You had it jolly hot?" said Huggie.

Wally nodded.

"But he was going to give you some more, and you stopped him. I say, it beats me!"

"Blowed if I catch on," said Frank. "It was like glidy magic. I say, who's the man South?"

Wally granted. He was occupied with his pains and aches, but not so much occupied as he made it appear. He had told Mr. Selby that he would say nothing about South; but it was not necessary to say anything; his chains knew now. Deeply anxious for Wally, they had followed on to the Form master's study. Outside this door, they had

listened with painful interest to the whispering of the case. They had had no intention of listening to anything else; their concern was all for their chairs, in the hands of the master who had looked so black and angry. They had not supposed for a moment that there would be anything else to listen to, except Mr. Selby's scolding voice raising their courage. But their curiosity anxiety for Wally had done the mischief. They had heard him speak of Smooth; they were aware that Mr. Selby's collapse had followed. What it all meant was a deep mystery, which they expected Wally to explain.

Wally did not want to explain; in fact, he was determined not to explain. But, naturally, the two lads wanted to know.

"Feeling bad, old chap?" asked Reggie.

"Yes."

"Tell us about it later, then," said Levison mildly and sympathetically. "It's jolly new to us, too."

"Oh, tell us now," said Reggie. "Last time, we jolly nearly opened the door when Selby was pinning into you, Wally. I can tell you I was getting alarmed. I thought I'd better in, and pretend I'd come for a book or something, just to interrupt him, see? And then all of a sudden he checked it."

"Then you said he was afraid of Smooth," said Levison mildly.

"That's where," agreed Reggie. "Who's Smooth?"

"Oh?" murmured Wally. "My Aunt Jane! I do feel rather! I've never had it so hard before!"

"You had?" said Mansers more sympathetically, but bursting with curiosity. "I see, what does it mean, Wally? Selby never touched you again when you said 'Smooth' at him. I could tell by his voice he was frightened. You said you wouldn't be liked, and Selby would have scragged any other fellow who said that. He didn't touch you. Tell a story about it, Wally."

"Do?"

"Oh, let Wally show off he's got over it," said Levison mildly. "He'll tell us about it presently."

"I can't!" said Wally desperately.

"Oh? Why won't you?"

"Because I can't!"

"What not?" said Reggie Mansers, staring at him. "You can, if you like. What are you making a mystery about?"

"It's not my business, nor yours, either," said Wally, grudgingly. "Let it drop."

"Well, I like that!" exclaimed Mansers more indignantly. "I must say I like that! We've been hanging about, waiting about you. We came right up to Selby's door, and if he'd happened to see us he might have liked us, too. And now you tell us it's not our business. Call that jolly!"

"Well, it isn't your business, nor mine," said Wally. "I don't want to talk about it."

But Mansers' mind was rather wanting in the delivery that characterized Frank Levison. He looked extremely silly.

"Wally needs't tell us if he doesn't want to," he growled. "I think it's not making a jolly mystery. Besides, I want to know. You said that old Selby was afraid of a man named Smooth, and that was why he was giving you tons."

I thought Selby would bash your skin for saying it, and he never touched you again. I suppose we haven't got a new headmaster in a bit of Smooth since dinner?"

"No, indeed!"

"Well, Smooth—what's Smooth?" inquired Reggie. "I say, Holbo, do you know who Smooth is?" Holbo looked across from the Farm-room box.

"Smooth? No. No chap in the Third named Smooth that I know of," he answered. "Might be some new kid in the New House, perhaps."

"There isn't any prefect named Smooth, and besides, a Farm-master wouldn't be afraid of a prefect," said Reggie. "A Farm-master wouldn't be"

afraid of anybody but a headmaster. This man Smooth isn't a St. Joe's man at all."

"Of course he isn't!" growled Wally testily.

"Then who is he?"

"Find out!"

"I jolly well will, then!" said Reggie angrily. "You men, three, any of you ever heard of a man Smooth?"

"Shut it!" said Wally loudly. The name of Smooth seemed in a fair way to become common property in the Third year.

Some of the lads gathered round. Some of them were interested in Wally's reckless proceeding in breaking detention that afternoon, and in the obvious fact that he had been severely lashed. Mansers' more's questions recalled a Green year.

"Smooth? The name was repeated up and down and round about. "Who's Smooth?"

"No man at St. Joe's of that name, in the School House, at least," said Carly Gibson. "Might be some old in the New House."

"There isn't any Smooth in our House," said Jamieson, who belonged to the New House. "There was a Smooth once, in the Sixth, but he went. Do you mean Smooth?"

"No, Smooth?" said Reggie. "I mean—"

"Shut it!" hissed Wally.

"There's a man named Smooth that old Selby is afraid of," said Reggie, unobtrusively. "Wally told him so, when he was lashing him, and Selby checked it at once. Wally simply said 'Smooth' at him, just like you might say 'Ho' to a goose. Just Smooth, and Selby crumpled up."

"Gumman!"

"We were there," said Reggie. "Just outside the door, waiting for Wally. Now he won't tell us who Smooth is, and wants to make a mystery about it."

"Well, who is he, Wally?" asked three or four lads together.

"None!" was Wally's reply.

Reggie Mansers gave a snarl.

"Keeping secrets from his old pals?" he said. "I can't trust a fellow. What does it matter about Smooth, I'd like to know? If old Selby's afraid of him—"

"Oh, let it rest!" said Frank.

"Well, I'll jolly well try it on myself if old Selby cuts up nasty to prep," said Reggie. "I'll say 'Smooth,' and see how it works."

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"He'll jolly well skin you, if you do so," said D'Arcy mischievously.

"Wally, dash his!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came into the Third Form room. "I've been lookin' for you. I want to speak to you very seriously."

Wally gave a dismal groan.

"I've had enough jaw from Selby, Genl. Don't you begin!"

"I have just spoken with Mr. Selby, Wally. He is afraid you must have misinterpreted something you heard this afternoon, in the old written, and placed a wrong construction on it."

"Dry up!" hissed Wally fiercely.

"Hoody, Wally—"

"Hush it!"

"I refuse to hush it, Wally, until I have spoken to you very seriously. I suppose your mother had mentioned, as I see you have been punished," said Arthur Augustus severely. "It is Mr. Selby's very natural dislike, Wally, that you should not talk about his affairs, and I have told him that I will represent upon you the necessity of being discreet."

"You have talked!"

"Wally, you cheeky young rascal—"

"So Wally heard something in the old castle, did he?" grinned Mansers mischievously. "Selby was there this afternoon—by choice, or not, and Wally had to keep things while he was there. Who that where you heard of this man Smooth, Wally?"

"Ho and cut your!"

"Do you know who Smooth is, D'Arcy master?"

"I am quite unacquainted with the name, Mansers' mischief."

"Wally told Selby that he was afraid of the man Smooth."

"But Jove! It was very disrespectful to say such a thing to your Farm master, Wally. Who is Smooth?"

"Father!"

"I trust, Wally, that you have not been making undesirable acquaintances outside the school?" said Arthur Augustus sternly. "If you know a man named Smooth, pray tell me who he is, and I will decide whether you ought to know him."

"No!"

"Do you, or do you not, know a man named Smooth, Wally?"

"Chump!"

Arthur Augustus fixed his eyes upon his miscreant with a concentrated stare of indignation.

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"If Mr. Selby had not already chastised you, Wally, I should consider it my duty to give you a fustian thrashing," he said.

"Can't you run away and play?" booted the exasperated Wally. "This Form isn't a place for idlers, or it's no place for you!"

"How, dear?" grinned Hobbs.

"But Jove! I really think—"

"He won't tell us who Swath is," said Reggie Mansers, deeply aggrieved. "He said Selby that he was afraid of Swath, and he won't say a word about the man."

"Kindly tell me at once, Wally, who this man Swath is!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "It looks to me as if you have been making bad acquaintances. Who is the man?"

"Oh and out with it!"

"If you refuse to tell me—"

"Farewell!"

Arthur Augustus breathed hard and deep.

"I can only conclude, Wally, that you have made some undesirable acquaintances outside the school, and I shall have to consider whether to speak to your Form master about it."

Wally jumped.

"You cross ideas!" he gasped. "If you say a word to Selby—"

"I'll tell you what," chuckled Mansers again. "Let's chalk the name on the blackboard and watch Selby's face when he comes in for prep."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wally, I repeat that I require you to explain—"

"D'Arny minor jerked an inkpot from the desk he was leaning on. He took aim at his detested elder brother.

"I give you one minute to clear it," he said, with intense severity. "You can't see that you're putting your silly head in it; but you see! Ha!"

"Really, Wally—"

"Here you!"

Arthur Augustus retired hurriedly from the Third Form room. His temper was evidently not in a mood for brotherly converse, and Gussy did not want the contents of the inkpot.

He walked away with a thoughtful frown on his noble brow, and he left the Form-room in a haze of discussion—a haze in which the name of Swath persistently occurred and re-occurred.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Shadow of a Secret!

**T**OM MEWBY!

"Adieu!" said Tom, with a smile.

The Veritable Three were sitting in a cheery row by the fire, in the old stone-flagged passage in the School House. They had come in a good deal later than Arthur Augustus, after exploring the old castle ruins, and ransacking in the woods with Blake & Co. It was close on time for prep; but the chums of the Shell were feeling very comfortable and cozy on the old oak settle by the fire, and they were not in a hurry to go up to their study. They had been talking football, when the swell of St. Jim's blew along, as it were.

They greeted him smilingly. There was a cloud of thought on Arthur Augustus' noble brow, and he looked like a fellow in the throes of a problem.

"Well on all about it, old bean!" said Mussy Leather encouragingly. "Is it water-tight?"

"Oh?"

"Or anything?"

"Wally, Lemnab—"

"I can see that some deep problem is occupying your majestic intellect, old man," said Mussy gravely. "Have they got out something new in the line of the silk test? Was't the hands run to a new topper in the latest style? What about a subscription? I'd contribute twopenny myself. We can't have the one and only going about in a topper that's a week behind the fashion."

"We can't," agreed Mansers. "Put me down for three pence."

"Mine's expence," said Tom Merry, with great gravity.

"And I don't need taking the hat round in the Shell. No it that's St. Guss—"

"I wish you fellows would try to be serious on a serious subject," said Arthur Augustus.

"But isn't that a serious subject?" exclaimed Mussy Leather, in surprise. "What is there in the giddy business more serious than the style of a topper—unless it's the craze in a fellow's legs. Of course, that's serious, too!"

The swell of St. Jim's frowned. Apparently something even more serious than toppers and "legs" was troubling an aristocratic mind.

"All serious, Gussy," said Tom, with a smile. "We'll be serious as judges—"

"That's not very serious in these days, with the judges setting up in business as fancy merchants," remarked



CLIFTON DANE.

A member of Study No. 11 in the Shell passage. A Canadian by birth and a real good sort. Is doubtly gifted with a wonderful brain power and a splendid physique. Has held his own with most of his Form fellows when it comes to scrapping. Not a regular member of the Junior eleven, but always "puffs his weight" when the time plays. Like the average fellow in the Shell, Danes is fond of a joke providing it is not carried too far. Two great chums are Bernard Gips and Mussy Muck, both of whom "dig" in the same study as Danes. Mr. Linton, his Form's master, cannot speak the highly of Danes which is indeed something to be proud of.

Leather. "Look here, Gussy, we'll be as serious as an American homicide."

"Go ahead, old man!" said Tom.

"I am worried worried about my misdeed," said Arthur Augustus. "You fellows are aware that he cleared out of detention this afternoon, and we found him at the old ruins. Now, I know what I can make out, he has made the acquaintance of a man named Swath. That's about the name."

"Never!"

"It is of quite new to me," said D'Arny. "The special thing is that Wally admits having made the man's acquaintance, or, at least, so I gather, but he refuses to say a word about him, or to explain who he is, or what he is. Now, there is a very strict rule in this school against fellows making outside acquaintances, unknown to their Housemaster. As Wally's elder brother, I am bound to keep an eye on him, and see that he does not get into trouble."

The chums of the Shell smiled.

Their opinion was that Wally of the Third was far better able to take care of his clerical and independent self than Arthur Augustus was. But it was useless to say so to Gussy. He had a fatherly nature.

"Now, if it is all above-board, why does not Wally say who and what the man is?" said Arthur Augustus. "I told him that I would decide for him whether this man Swath was a person fit for him to speak to. What are you getting at?"

"Oh, nothing! Him an!"

"He refuses to say a word. He has had a word with young Mansers because he refuses to explain to him about

Smith. I am wretched worried about it. The fellow may be some respectable character—like those lads' wraiths that Wally of the Shell knows."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Wally's not that kind," he said. "He's all right. He wouldn't speak to any of that kind."

"I don't rot, but it is very odd. I am responsible for Wally, you know, as my coach."

"I have been wondering' whether I ought to mention the matter to his Form master. If Mr. Selby were a nice man like Mr. Walling or Mr. Lathams, I should not hesitate, you know; but—"

"But he isn't," said Tom. "Least said soonest mended, Guss. Wally isn't the kind of lad to pick up with bad characters, like Backs or Crooks, or Mitchell. Let him rip! he's all right!"

"Right as rain," said Leather.

Arthur Augustus seemed a little relieved.

"But it's very odd, you know," he said. "Your friend, Mansers, says that Wally told Selby that he was afraid of Smith, and that Selby left off looking him as soon as he said it. It's extraordinary that Wally should have a man his Form master is afraid of, isn't it?"

"Jolly extraordinary, if true," said Tom Merry, with a start. "But it's all rot. Young Mansers was pulling your leg."

"Buggie must have been talking out of his hat," said Mansers.

"But Wally did not deny it, dear boy—only he refused to explain who this Smith is. It would mention me every week. Wally does not really own the same lad there what happened this afternoon at the wraiths."

Merry Leather gave a little start.

"This afternoon at the wraiths," he said. "That was when young D'Arcy saw Mr. Selby meet somebody, and heard them talk. Was this man Smith the man old Selby met?"

"But Javel! I never thought of that!"

The Terrible Three exchanged various glances. They had passed a good deal over Wally's rather peculiar conduct at the old castle before discussing the matter from their point of view. Wally of the Third had been worried and troubled, apparently scared, by what he had heard between Mr. Selby and the unknown man. And now he seemed to have spoken of a man named Smith of whom the Third Form master was afraid? It seemed to the Shell fellows as if they were fitting together the different parts of a puzzle.

"Mr. Selby seems very anxious that Wally should not repeat what he heard," said Arthur Augustus. "But if Mr. Selby knows the man Smith, I suppose he must be a respectable character. I should feel surprised if I thought that Mr. Selby knew Smith."

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"Hold on! There's Selby!" murmured Mansers. Mr. Selby was coming along the flagged passage on his way to the Third Form room for evening preparation.

Mansers' warning came too late.

The Form master had heard the name on D'Arcy's lips, and the effect of it, as he heard it, was striking. He pulled up suddenly, as if he had received a blow.

The Terrible Three looked at him. They could not help it. The Form master's face was quite white.

Arthur Augustus made a quick step towards the master of the Third.

"But Jess! Are you ill, Mr. Selby?" he exclaimed. "Can I be of any assistance to you, sir?"

Mr. Selby gave him a blank look. His lips opened, but he closed them again without speaking and passed on down the corridor, leaving the juniors staring.

"What on earth does that mean?" said Tom Merry in a low tone.

Mansers shrugged his shoulders.

"It means that Selby does know somebody named Smith, and that the name scares him into a cooked hat," he said. "Goodness knows what else it means. That young man Wally must have heard something jolly serious this afternoon at the old castle."

"Looks like it," said Leather.

"Yess, wathah!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But—but— Wally I do not know what to make of this, you fellows. Mr. Selby is a St. Jim's Form master. There cannot be anything wrong about him."

The Terrible Three did not answer that. They had a vague feeling that something was very wrong somewhere; they did not know what.

"Least said soonest mended," said Tom Merry, at last. "It's no history of ours. What about prep, you chaps?"

And the juniors went to their studies.

Mr. Selby kept on his way to the Third Form room, but he did not immediately enter that apartment when he reached the door. He stood outside for some minutes, collecting himself. There was a host of voices in the Form-room, mingled with the sound of laughter. The Third were all there, ready for prep, and Mr. Selby, for once, was late.

He opened the door at last and entered.

There was instant silence.

The expression on Mr. Selby's face warned the lads at once that it was a time to be careful. The fellows who were out of their places jumped to their feet at once, and Reggie Mansers felt a palpitation at his heart. There were words chalked on the blackboard, and Reggie Mansers surreptitiously wiped chalky fingers on his trousers. From the bottom of his heart at that moment Reggie wished that he had not carried out that "jape" on Selby, even though the hard-handed Form master had spoiled his ball-batting for nothing.

But it was too late for repentance now. Reggie and all the Third watched Mr. Selby's freezing face as it illuminated there, awaiting, and almost dreading, the moment when his glance would turn on the blackboard.

(Continued on page 23.)

## FIENDISH!

performed in cages suspended in a pit where a horde of hungry, savage punks are snapping and snarling in their eagerness to tear them to pieces. Penny Rudd and Pin Shoo are prepared bravely to face the snarling and Yea How intends for them. But the end is not yet!



A New and Powerful Adventure  
Story of Chinese mystery and  
intrigue.

By  
**LESTER BIDSTON.**

## How's Method of Persuasion!

"ENGLAND cannot help us here," Starr replied. "But, sorry as I am for you fellows, nothing will make us aid this fiend. He wants me to produce helicopter planes, so that he can bomb European cities; he wants Takano's machine for the bombing; above all, asks Kario to give him a wireless beam powerful enough to send a poison ray splashing over Europe—a ray he made by torturing and killing an American named Takano."

Pan gasped. So this was the reason of How's arduous dash to London! Training mighty armies in Southsea under Russian officers, manufacturing munitions in his own metal-loaded state, he was seeking to smash Europe by turning its terrible genius against itself.

At Starr's dramatic disclosure, the Son of Heaven appeared faintly amused.

"Such a tale makes laughter for mine ears," he sneered. "Already I have told you I had desire to bring disbanded China under the able rule of the League of the Crimson Claw—the gathering of patriots you see here, who desire only peace to their country."

Pan laughed satirically.

"You don't need machine and poison rays to smash any opponents China can field against you," he said.

Pan was even more direct in giving How the lie. In fact, knowing quite a lot about Chinese methods of persuasion, he deliberately tried to trick the Son of Heaven into a real rage that would mean work, and successful retaliation for himself and Pan.

"Outcast, ambition has rendered your brain, so that you become a danger to all men," he sneered. "It is to be hoped your own yellow fingers will hang you high for various crimes to neck, before you ruin China with your madness."

Pan could hardly have been more scathing, but How was no fool; he let all the effect the words had on him.

"I have allowed you to speak that the issue between us might allow of an understanding," he said slowly.

## WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

FERDINAND BERRY, better known as "Ferry" Bould, born and bred in China of English parents. Given the habit of the Orient from 4 to 8. Attached to the Fatin Legion, and holds a matching job for the British Government on matters affecting British residents in China.

PAU CHOW, a young Chinese, Ferry's close friend and assistant.

YEA HOW, chief of the notorious League of the Crimson Claw. Possessed of amazing linguistic powers, and all the subtle tricks of the East, Yea How bids fair to become another Napoleon.

CHAM PI, one of How's principal agents.

Yea How aims to dominate China, but without modern machinery and European alliance to aid him, he realizes that he can do nothing. With circumstances during the recent prize chase to England and tidings too of the most famous European scientist. He seizes the ten thousand pounds prize, from which, in turn, they are transferred to a quiet study house for China, Ferry Bould and Pan then manage to smuggle themselves aboard this steamer, that eve, some time later, surprised by Yea How's agents. The subsequent events change the fate intended for them, however, by dropping to earth in Philadelphia. To their amazement, the two deaths had themselves in the heart of China, close to the great Fatin Legionary. The head of this powerful brigade and brother of Ferry and Pan, and subjects them on their arrival. They journey to the wild mountains of Szechwan, and, in the guise of members of the "Claw," eventually work their way into the "Claw's" innermost circle. Their destiny is plotted, however, and they are pinned to make a pretence in the river, where they capture a merchant and spend six weeks a haul of bullock. But the haul is against them, for they are recognized and taken before Yea How, where they locate the red steaming creature. Pan appeals to How then, one of the ten, who then for his satisfaction the capture of Yea How to help him in his wild scheme, to remain firm.

"Stick it out," he says, "and don't let sympathy for us weaken you."

(See next on.)

"Either you three make me the things I want, or these prison spies will stir in agony as a foretaste of what you yourselves will suffer."

"They'll die, as we will, with mouths closed!" Kario snapped, breaking away from the steady silence that had overpowered him.

"They may; but I think the time will change me to someone's son be set!" How measured coldly. "For to-night, members of the Claw, I suggest the hunters be permitted to rest in the den."

"And may their denizens be calm and untroubled," one creature snarled.

"With dawn, Chang will be here to act his share," another laughed venomously.

On a sign from How a dozen ferocious orderings sprang at the chains and held them tautly, while two iron chairs, each six feet high, with bars six inches apart, were wheeled forward.

Fastening a struggle that must end in failure, the chains swung calmly into the center the moment How pointed. Pained, and obviously apprehensive, they watched a series of flooring rolled aside and a pit of unknown depth uncovered. Then hanging by chains already secured to their cages, the howled pair were toppled into the hole.

For a time the hall lights gave the truth the appearance of an ordinary cable danger, but, as the three lags were replaced, and the moment six left for running chains, it became certain that something particularly diabolical was afoot.

The descent ceased before the ground was reached, leaving the pair swinging rhythmically with every movement they made. The weighted silence of the tomb on their heads beating more rapidly—their anticipated a thousand dangers that never happened. Only after an interval, faintly calculated to produce maximum fear, did the column fall of a distance half more than that the rest above was measured.

But the third lecture is an adept in making his victim dread sudden danger, then keeping him on the rack of suspense. Her quick a minute this "out and mouse" cry.

glipped the chairs, then, abruptly, came the clang of an opening gate, the "plop, plop" of velvet feet and serious sniffling whiffs of incense, quelling breaths!

"Sacred Hiddah!" Fen whispered. "We're caged in a menagerie! We'll be cycled to riddles!"

"Now I can guess why our knees were left with us," Fen answered grimly. "This game's been played many times. It's a masterpiece of soulless cruelty."

He under-stated the truth. Before ten minutes had passed he had gained a hatred against How so passionate that his whole being shakened with longing to have just one free minute with him, though he died the next.

### A Terrible Ordeal!

THAT Fen was correct in saying the torture game had been played many times was a fact quickly proved by the anxious looks looked against them.

Working on certain well-defined lines, the things round round in a narrow circle, their eyes pin-points of light in the darkness, their countless whistles the raw hoarseness in an oppressive silence. Watching the only visible danger spots, Fen felt something getting up through the floor of his cage. Springing nimbly to quick alarm, he heard and felt the tearing snap of a claw on his leather boot.

"Ye gods, Fen!" he yelled. "The things are trained to job at us through the bars!"

But Fen was busy on his own account. A red deed and the laugh of his crain warned that another creature was near his head. Stabbing blindly upward, his hand splattered along smooth fur, the knife he held came up against something hard, and he had the joy of hearing a spitting snarl as the thing rebounded to the ground.

That was the beginning of a grim deed, growing more bitter each second that passed. Fen had the case nearly stripped from his back as he stumbled and dodged at something crawling him. Fen granted unadvised things as a middle point just touched and grasped a wrist, and the game

was growing really hectic when How abruptly exposed the full horror of his ordeal by groan.

One wall of the first pit became trebly and brilliantly illuminated. The caged victims glimpsed six black points of the giant Asian leaved bounding away into the shadows, snarling and spitting venom at the glare that blinded them.

But it was on that same glare that the chess' eyes turned to digest. There, through a barred grill giving view to an lower cellar, they could see the three Europeans roped in chairs, passing forward with food boxes, and How with his creature in snarling, urbane attentiveness.

"Gentlemen, the stage is set," the yellow food announced. "To make my intentions quite clear, I might explain that the experience of the caged spies will become yours, if you three continue obstinate."

"You heard?" Starr cried. "You are making us responsible for the lives of those two poor fellows!"

"Exactly," How parried, gently rubbing his hands together. "If the spirit is strong in their bodies, I hope to afford you much entertainment."

"What happens to them if we do your will?" Tabasco, the Spanish explosives expert, demanded.

"They'll go free, as you will, in time," How answered grimly.

"Don't believe it, Tabasco!" Fen yelled fiercely. "He're willing to stick it out. For goodness' sake don't be gulled by the beast!"

"He dare not let us go!" Fen agreed loudly. "HE'LL kill us in any case, as he will you, the moment he has your secret!"

"They're right, Tabasco," Starr protested. "But right or wrong, we dare not place such awful power in this beast's hands, so make up your mind to die with them."

"Alas then, gentlemen, not with them," How corrected smoothly. "However, I have great faith in my 'cats.' Seldom indeed have they failed to cure obstinacy. For one hour I will leave you in darkness, a happy family, I am sure, who will derive great pleasure from the playfulness of my 'pussies'!"

Coldly ignoring the other men's appeals, he slipped through a door, and the game was resumed. But now, as he had cruelly intended, a new terror was added to the tortures. The caged pair were in doubt that their sufferings would bring the wise men to their knees, and to the betrayal of Europe.

The moment the light faded the "cats" were at it again, purring, tearing with razor-pointed claws until they found some vital spot—that was the game successive victims had taught them to play, with the penalty of hunger for failure.

To the three bound scientists the drama of sound was perhaps worse than the danger of action. In their case eyes peered blindly into a blackness that was impenetrable, but ears told the story of a grim struggle being enacted round the twin cages. Snuffling whines, leaping whispers, snarling coughs, all carried their message of dread to strained minds racked by pity.

"It can't go on!" Starr suddenly yelled in agony. "We'll promise the best anything—anything, if only he'll drive those beasts away!"

"You'll promise him nothing!" Fen's voice peated from the darkness. "Whatever you promise won't help us any. Sit tight and keep faith with your colour, sir!"

"Dash!" came softly from Fen's cage, followed by a dull, coughing snarl and the thud of a falling body.

"Much hurt, old fruit!" Fen asked anxiously.

"Velly much scratched up!" Fen sighed plaintively. "But black fella got sliced flippel to lick 'im chops over—so that's the life!"

"But it can't go on," Fen groaned, shaking violently at an exploring paw. "Even though we avoid vital injury, we'll drop exhausted in the end and get mopped up."

"As these brutes velly probably know—and count on," Fen murmured.

"If only we had a fixed point of direction, we'd give 'em something new to ponder over," Fen raved. "If we could once start our eyes swinging in exactly opposite directions—they're hairy three feet apart—any prying puss'd get his one knuckled sideways!"

A moment's silence, then Starr's voice called eagerly from the darkness.

"Sound plan, Haid!" he yelled. "I'll count slowly—you take direction by sound. We're standy facing you, remember."

"Get the idea, Fen!" Fen said quickly. "Sway evenly to and from Starr's voice—you'll find it easy, once you get going."

It was anything but easy in the beginning. The cages represented a quarter ton of solid iron—no light weight to set in motion. But once the swing and swing of movement was established, the rest was simply a matter of maintaining even rhythm.

At first the savage brutes kept a respectful distance, pondering a novel problem. Then, for a time, they cooed incessantly round the walls, growing bolder and approaching

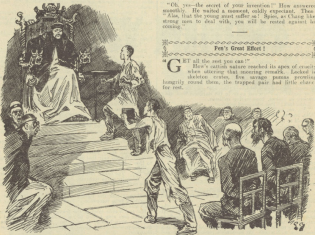
## Who is the Man in the Red Mask?



Look out for the amazing mystery story featuring the Hon. John Scarfott, the millionaire detective, and his boy assistant, Jimmy Wood, in next week's issue of

## "THE BOYS' FRIEND!"





Leaping to the ground with his greatest treasure, Penny Radd lowered the curtain on the show thoroughly frightened tyrant. "Now, O'Connell," yelled Radd, "we'll try the little experiment you mentioned!"

clear as they grew accustomed to the instrument. Finally, one spring, tumbled Pan's cage with its forepaws, and was set in the same second by the crushing weight of Pan's prison!

Thrown like a stone from a catapult, the beast crashed into the wall with a force that completed the pile-driver onslaught of the iron crate. Though the humans knew it not, the first blow had broken the brute's spine, the second but helped to shorten its misery.

For quite a minute its coughing screams sent by shivers sounding down the backs of those forced to listen, then, with a deprecating whisper that was infinitely pathetic, the mangled brute layed to final silence.

That felix tragedy proved a wholesome lesson to the surviving provokers. They continued to snarl and hiss vainly as they pad-padded ceaselessly round the double pedestal, but not one ventured the whole-hearted spring that alone could give them their desire.

The sad need here been the same, of course, for human endurance has its limits. Indeed, the chains were very near that limit when the lights unexpectedly faded and Yen How reappeared.

With a warning side-glance at the snarling cages and the dead "cat," he reached slowly. Without a trace of anger over the evidence that had defeated his glumish plan, he waited until the cages ceased their crying and the exhausted victims sank to rest.

"Very clever, Radd," he said quietly. "So clever that I am almost tempted to see how long you could continue it."

"Come a trifle nearer, you beast, and you'll see and feel my fist!" Pan paried.

But How had already turned to his more important victims—the three scientists.

"You persist in your obstinacy," he asked.

"Of course they do, you see!" Pan shouted.

"We won't letty our home people—if that's what you are dying at!" Star snapped angrily.

Ernie and Talano nodded agreement, and How looked mildly sad.

"Very, very unfortunate for those poor fellows," he sighed. "Chang Fu will be here in a few hours, and I've promised him the special entrance to experiment with."

"Will nothing tempt you to stay your hostility?" Ernie pleaded.

"Oh, yes—the secret of your invention?" How answered quickly. He walked a moment, slyly eyeing them. "Also, that the young must suffer as! Spies, as Chang likes strong men to deal with, you will be rested against his coming."

#### Fan's Great Effort!

"GET all the rest you can!" How's catlike snare cracked its open of cruelty when uttering that moaning remark. Locked in skeleton veins, five savage panas prowling hungrily round them, the trapped pair had little chance for rest.

The torture seemed interminable. At stated intervals How would return, seeking the technicians' surrender. When this was refused, the unequal battle of aged humans against quivering beasts was resumed—with the humans proving steadily weaker and the beasts more daring.

Then, as a climax to his villainousness, How announced a change of programme.

"You are not giving my 'prison' a fair chance," he said to Pan. "Star's voice guides you, and I fear they will see visitors near swinging cages after their mate's sudden demise. So, though I regret to part you, you three must come away—leaving the spies to their own sad troubles."

"Stick it out, Star!" Pan yelled. "He'll tell you all kind of creepy lies about our sufferings, but we're happy for hours yet."

"Two or three days make no difference to my plans," How parried. "But I fear, Penny Radd, a few hours will make a difference to yours!"

Reluctantly enough Pan agreed when he and Fan were alone. Impressed by Star's guiding voice, the swing of the cages proved a haphazard affair that brought jolting collisions every minute.

"Really glad!" Pan muttered. "He knows quite well we're all in, and very happy he is over it."

"And why not?" Fan asked. "He's paying off old scores against his worst enemies and putting terrible pressure on the stolen inventors."

"The brute knows he could torture and kill them, and that they'd take their secrets to the grave," Pan growled. "But I doubt if they'll hold out much longer against the idea of other fellows going through it."

"That is the weakness of your colour," Fan sighed. "If they were yellow, other people's pain wouldn't hurt them much."

But Pan remained silent. Between half-hearted attacks of the now cautious beast, Fan heard his grunting, as though exerting his strength to the uttermost. Wondering what was afoot, he was about to make another inquiry when a cry of satisfaction came from Pan.

"That's done it, old dear!" Pan whispered excitedly. "An hour ago, the lights showed me that three very iron dogs were fastened with big, flat-headed screws. Ever since I've

been groping round for one that'd give, and now my knife's helped loose one!"

"You're going to beat How by seeking a quick despatch amongst his 'cubs'?" Fan asked, agape at one of these eyes.

"No, you are!" Fan snapped. "One out of three eyes, there's chains around that angle had to something! Those blessed things are about a hundred years old; try if there's any lock your side."

In ten minutes he had completely freed one end of the strip on which he worked and found a twenty-inch space to crawl through. But Fan drew a complete blank, and they were busily considering the position when the crates touched lightly, and gave him an idea.

"Cages very old, Fungus Ridd," he said. "Scratch 'em together, a blow might start a lock."

With a little manœuvring, they had the crates swinging in something like parallel lines; then, changing the move of their bodies, they worked away in the darkness until they crashed in violent, bone-jarring collision.

"Any luck?" Pen whispered anxiously.

"No, no, no!" Fan grunted, testing each eye in turn.

"No, no—oh, here, on top!"

"Hold to it, Fan," Pen said quickly. "I've coming along to help you."

It was ticklish work, for some instinct seemed to warn the guards that the prey was escaping. Fan's arm was hardly out of the cage than a soft "pad" on the earth floor sent a warning, and he drew back just in time to avoid clanking teeth.

But the venture had to be taken. Tearing off his ragged coat, he threw it away into the darkness, waited until a snuffling whine told it had been found, then hastily severed his prison.

Five seconds he took to reach the top of Fan's cage, and one more in freeing his pal's hand.

"Hold the left your side—I'll seize this," he whispered. "Swing as you work, Fan, for I've a creepy feeling those things are watching every move we make."

Quite probably they were, for presently a thud on the swinging cage rattled with the rasp of claws on metal. It told that one brute had obtained hold, and was clanking out like to the roof!

Jumping to his feet in alarm, Pen grabbed the chain and lashed out with a foot. At the same instant Fan struck, and felt the rip of soft flesh, even as the knife was torn from his hand. But the double attack drove the thing to the ground with a snarling outcry that reverberated through

the vault as the chains again tattered furiously to their work.

At length, Pen felt the screw give readily to his fingers.

"Up with you, Fan," he said quickly. "There are two ways out of this pit, one to the hall above, the other along the support beams to the grill where Starr & Co. sit."

"The hall will be guarded," Fan said, scurrying nimbly from his prison.

"Upset us, but we'll try it first," Pen replied.

The climb presented little difficulty, for most rubble-chain is almost as good as a ladder. The snapping, snarling uproar from the foiled beams was near enough to send them shivering aloft without pause until their hands were working the loose flaps separating vault from hall.

"Come quiet enough," Fan whispered. "Lie down, Fan, whilst I prospect a bit."

Look by look, he eased the stone until his own nose above ground level. The place was wrapped in gloom, except for one cluster of lights a way back, but a glance in that direction showed enough to direct him down to Fan's level with a warning hiss.

"Full conceal sitting," he whispered. "Change's back, they're the men whilst grunted at the table, near enough to hear the banister rapping below."

"Then it's the beams!" Fan mentioned. "Seems good headhold, anyway."

As in all old Chinese buildings, a forest of strong timbering had been used as foundation. But the dust of ages stirred with every move the chains made, and it was a grimed, ragged pair that struggled across the queer bridge to How's right-seeing room.

Even in the terrifying darkness there was no mistaking the way. The beams ran in straight lines, cross-beam here and there for extra strength, and within a minute the pair were over the grill, and had safely reached the fifteen-foot drop to the ground.

"Mustn't risk the light," Pen whispered. "There's a dear back here somewhere. Feel for it, Fan, and pray it isn't locked."

His own hands touched the framework a moment later, and the iron ring turned to his touch. It was disabled of the door even hoisted heels or bars, for never before had covered prisoners been known to find a way from that death chamber.

A wren, whirling sideways and with another wooden barrier. Cautiously opening this an inch, Pen found him- self staring into the vast and gloomy hall, the back of How's

high throne chair twenty feet away, the

"Chair" concourse filling one side of a long table. Facing them were the whole party of stolid Europeans, each strapped to the chair he occupied, and there to give a wholesome lesson in discipline.

How was speaking, and, despite the scuffed marble from the panes' pit, every word was audible to the throne.

"Darkness here, you wear my patience thin," he was saying. "Soon I ride my 'Dragon' to the parishment of Harjar, for that quaint monastery has involved in my affairs for the last time."

He paused, and the wren's buzzers could imagine the last move that would be on his face. "The breeze below grows impatient, as I do. I fear the spirit must be falling, and that game ending."

"How, you're both brave and fool!" Starr yelled furiously. "You boast you can put ten million men in the field! Try on, think they'll last long against Europe's trained armies, even with our inventions to help you? I warn you again, they'll be crushed in less than a month!"

"You persist in that fantastic idea about Europe," How parried. "My aim is China, and, with your help, I can rule it in less than a month. I have here that which will destroy opposition without a shot being fired or a life wasted."

"You mean the red ray?" Estrie asked.

"If you have that you're a thing the residents of two continents have failed to find, and you want to keep it?"

"The ray is here, beyond in this tiny box," How boasted, "but not in sufficient quantity to be of use to me. Unfortunately, its inventor died before its formula was told to me."

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"You claim that the ray will turn solids to dust," Karion said, slyly. "Well, that has been the alchemists' dream for ages, and many men have falsely claimed its discovery. Perhaps, then, the American Jakeman has also claimed falsely?"

"That is not so, for I have seen the claim proved," How answered, quietly. "Jakeman professed the thing in my laboratories, but refused to give me the formula. I pleaded with him that it would bring peace to China, that with its help I would smother its little wars and unite the people in peace. For long he withheld my—my—person, but at last he gave way and I foolishly returned the test to him. Alas, he died!"

"You killed him, you mean?" Store snapped. "I mean that he turned his own devilry on himself," How replied, slyly. "An unhappy coincidence for me, though a most interesting sight."

The sound of a fat thudding on the table was followed by the hoarse wailing of Chang's voice.

"By Backus!" he shrieked. "Son of Heaven, let us see that sight repeated! I own the cursed spots a debt—let me lift them from the pit, let me spray them with the devilry!"

The women listeners waited breathlessly for How's reply. "You can have what is left of them, if those fools will refuse to help me," How drawled. "But, a moment, faithful one."

Pen placed his lips against Fan's ear. "This is where we move," he breathed. "I'm after the ray. If I fail, grab a gun or sword—and attend to How!"

Fan nodded grimly. Together they crept forward on hands and knees, hugging the lengthy shadow cast by How's high chair, listening keenly to every word that passed.

"Karion, you have one second to decide," How said, slyly. "Jakeman boasted that this poison ray could be wielded to a wretched extent."

"As rays are force, it possibly could," Karion admitted.

"Then you'll do that for me, or you heard Chang's suggestion?" How hinted, slyly. "The spins the first, your colleagues next, you last of all."

"Make me your first victim, you cheat," Karion snapped back. "For I'll not do your wish—though you torture a thousand!"

He saw the women were within three feet of the Buchanan yacht. Fan was preparing to rise when a warning touch from Pen stayed him. Crouched for the spring, they listened and waited.

"The sight of smoking flesh and screeching bones will perchance change your tune," How asserted, slyly, then: "Chang, lift the cages!"

**The Red Ray!**

As Pen had already reasoned, the puppets leaving How's control tumbled over to assist Chang in lifting the heavy iron cages. Until the first rasp of stone told that the flags were being cast aside, he waited. Then, with a nod to Fan, he spring to his feet and swiftly craved the throne!

In one lightning glance he saw How starting up, his eyes agape with amazement and fear. Recovering swiftly from the staggering surprise, his hand was reaching to a metal box floating free on an obscure table. But the fractional pause had been fatal, and his hurried enemy was on him!

Clearing the four broad steps in one Herculean leap, Pen landed the yellow hand music and smothered on the box!

In the same moment Fan's fat crashed beautifully on the Son of Heaven's jaw, and Pen, leaping to ground level with his poisonous treasure, turned its protruding nozzle on the now thoroughly frightened tyrant!

"Now, Cheung," he yelled, "we'll try the little experiment you mentioned!"

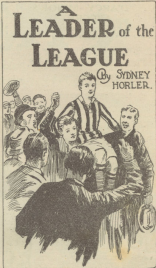
For a moment every actor in the tense drama was frozen to deathly immobility. The laser in How's face was level as though his features were carved in stone; the shackled prisoners sat with staring eyes and dropped jaws; Chang and his group crouched like quaking boats over the newly opened hole!

Then, whilst Pen's fingers still explored the Jakeman box for understanding, How spoke—his tone as unrolled as though no raging torrent of hatred seethed within.

"Well, Redd!" he said, slyly. "At best, you can but kill a few—"

But his voice broke abruptly, for Fan had seen a hand smacking steadily to a pocket and had clasped it again with a hand of warning. In a flash the man clashed in those struggle for the hidden weapon, staggered from dais to dais and crashed to the ground in limb-loosed fury!

Fearing to do his pal unthinkable injury, Pen hastened,



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though his finger was wedged on the tiny disk that must operate the ray. Then a warning yell from Store brought him whipping round—to face Chang and his sinister assistant!

"Stand back, Chang!" he yelled.

But Chang was in a berserk fury that was vain to restrain. Snatching a Babing miniature from its wallboard, he aimed a defiant roar and sprang forward! And Pen, halting himself for what he was bound to do, pressed the disk and watched a pale red beam reach out to the charging Manchurian!

One horrifying instant filled the hall of Chang's sword whirled from his hand and clattered against the wall! His flesh screeched and dissolved, a grinning skeleton stood where a living man had been a moment before! For a split second a gasped, grotesquely pained—then collapsed to dust on the floor. In ghastly, tongue-tied silence the terrified audience stared at the pitiful heap of white ash and the gleaming sword that alone proved Chang had ever existed.

But Pen was allowed no time for sympathy over Chang's awful fate. Gripped in the nightmare of the ray's agonies, able night, he saw ruin and devastation taking form wherever the beam had touched!

(Don't miss the concluding chapters of this fine story next week. Order your Gem copy.)

# D'ARCY MINOR'S SECRET.

*(Continued from page 25)*

Mr. Selby cast a bitter look over his class. With so much worry on his mind, with his heart of Swath and his throat, his fear of Wally and of what Wally knew, he still had his usual duties to carry out, the uneasy, troublesome Third to steer through evening preparations. It looked as if the Third were looked for an unpleasant hour.

Then Mr. Selby's glance fell on the blackboard. Clashed on it, in large capital letters, were the words:

**"WHO'S BENEATH?"**

Mr. Selby stood and stared at it as if petrified. The Third watched him breathlessly. Mr. Selby did not speak.

He paced at the blackboard and the chalked work throbbed in a deep silence, and a pin might have been heard to fall in the Third Form room. The silence grew painful.

Mr. Selby moved at last. He took a dustier and carefully wiped the board clean, and the fags could see that his hand was trembling. Then his eyes fixed on D'Arcy minor.

Wally jumped up with a cry of pain. "Mr. Selby, I never did that! I couldn't!"

Mr. Selby did not answer him. Probably he knew that Wally was not the culprit; but, knowing that, he knew also that the name of Swath was common property in the Form. The Third wondered what he was going to say, what he was going to do. Every heart was beating fast.

Mr. Selby said nothing. What he did was to turn towards the door and walk out of the Form-room with restless steps.

He disappeared from the eyes of the fags, and deep silence for a full minute followed his departure. Then a haze of voices broke out.

"He jolly well knows the name," said Reggie Masson. "I'm jolly glad I did it now. Making up a fellow's ball-holiday for nothing!"

"Knocked his coat," said Biddle. "But why?" "Goodness knows," said Frank Levison. "Wally knows," said Reggie. "Caught it up, Wally! Who's beneath, and why is he called so?"

"Find out!" "What's in your bag, though!" asked Frayne. "I say, has he gone to touch the lead to us?" "There!"

There was deep anxiety in the Third, which intensified when the door was opened. But it was Killdare of the South who came in.

"Where's Mr. Selby, Killdare?" asked Levison quietly. Killdare's face was grave.

"Mr. Selby is awfully. He can't take you in prep this evening. I'm taking you instead."

"Oh!" "How?" "You've done it now, young Masson!" muttered Wally. Reggie smiled.

"Well, I'd rather do prep with Killdare than old Selby," he said. "It's all to the good."

Killdare had rather a difficult task with the Third in prep. The fags were simply agog with suppressed excitement and curiosity. Mr. Selby was "usual"—too usual to take his Form in prep. This was the effect the name of Swath had on him. What did it all mean? What could it all mean? That night there was one topic in the Third Form of St. Jim's, and the topic was—Swath. And from the Third that topic spread to other Forms. But of what he knew Wally of the Third said no word. That was said D'Arcy minor's secret.

THE END.

*(Look out for the next St. Jim's story starting with Mr. Selby and Swath, the blackboarder, entitled— "Having Mr. Selby!" It's grand!)*

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