

SOMETHING NEW IN SCHOOL YARNS—INSIDE!

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SKIMPOLE'S SIMPLE SAVAGE!

This week's Mirthful Long Complete Story of
Tom Merry & Co., at St. Jim's.

SENSATIONS GALORE! YOU'LL ALL ENJOY THIS LONG STORY—

Skimpole's Simple Savage!

by MARTIN CLIFFORD

Entertaining a wild and woolly savage from the Woolfa-Woolfa Islands! Only one fellow at St. Jim's would think of doing a thing like that and consider it nothing out of the ordinary, and that is Herbert Skimpole. But neither the freak of the Shell nor anyone else is prepared for what happens during the amazing visitor's stay!

CHAPTER 1.

A Letter for Skimpole.

LETTER for you, Tommy!"
"Oh, good!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Tom Merry, the captain of the Shell at St. Jim's, had just come in from the quad with his two chums, Manners and Lowther, and Reginald Talbot of the Shell, and Blake & Co. of the Fourth. Together with one or two others, they had been punting a footer about in the Close after tea. They had come in now to do their evening's prep. On entering the School House, the big crowd gathered round the letter-rack in the hall showed Tom and his companions that the post had just arrived.

"Thanks, Clivey!"

Tom Merry took the letter that Sidney Clive of the Fourth had held out to him. The handwriting on the envelope showed him that it was a letter from his guardian, Miss Priscilla Fawcett.

Tom opened the letter, with a pleased look on his face. He was always glad to get a letter from Miss Fawcett. On this occasion there was an enclosure—a postal-order for a pound, which Tom pocketed gratefully. Funds had been a little low in Study No. 10 during the last few days.

"Anything for me?"

"Something for you, Digby!"

"Good egg!"

"I see there is a lettah for me! Wippin'! Pway pass it across, will you, Cardew, deah boy? Thanks!"

The crowd round the letter-rack pushed and jostled to get to their letters.

Kildare, of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, strolled up, and the juniors made way for him as he took up a couple of letters that were addressed to him. Lefevre, the captain of the Fifth, with his two chums, Smith major and Lee, came up to collect a letter or two. Cutts of the Fifth, with rather a guilty look on his countenance, quickly pocketed a letter with a Rylcombe postmark and moved away. From the expression on his face, the more knowing juniors judged that Cutts had received a communication from a bookmaker—probably a heavy bill. For Gerald Cutts fancied himself as rather a "dog," and was known to indulge in a little "flutter" every now and then; and as a rule, Cutts' little flutters turned out to be very expensive for Gerald Cutts!

Tom Merry, busy reading Miss Fawcett's letter, felt a touch on his sleeve. Baggy Trimble of the Fourth was at his side.

There was an eager gleam in Baggy's eyes. The Falstaff of the Fourth had seen the postal-order that Tom had just pocketed.

"I say, Tom, old chap!" Baggy's voice was very ingratiating. "Lend me a bob, will you? I was expecting a postal-order from a titled relation of mine by this post.

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but it must have got delayed. I think I shall have to write to the Postmaster-General and complain about it, you know. Just a bob, to see me through till my postal-order turns up—or what about making it half-a-crown, old chap?"

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Merry—"

"What about that five bob you owe me from last week, anyway?" growled Tom.

"Ahem! That's all right," explained Baggy. "I've put that down on the account. If you'll lend me another bob or two till my remittance comes, I'll settle up the lot together. That's the fair way—"

Tom Merry chuckled. In money matters, the "fair" way for Baggy generally proved to be rather unfair for his creditors.

Tom shook his head.

"No, Baggy; I can't lend you anything. But I don't mind making you a little present if you like—"

"A present?" gasped Baggy. "That's jolly decent of you, old chap! Of course, I wouldn't stoop to accepting a present from anybody else, but seeing we're such old pals, I—I'll waive my objections, you see."

"You will?"

"Yes, rather! My dignity wouldn't allow me to do it with anyone else," explained Baggy impressively, "because as a Trimble I have to think of the family honour, and all that. I never let myself forget I'm a Trimble—"

"That's hard luck!" grinned Monty Lowther, who was standing beside them.

"Oh, really, Lowther—"

"Yes, I'll give you a little present, Fatty," went on Tom Merry gravely. "Here it is—the present of a thick ear!"

"Yarooooooo!"

Baggy gave a roar as Tom's hand shot out and duly delivered the promised "present" before Baggy had time to dodge.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled. So did Baggy—but not with mirth.

—FEATURING TOM MERRY & CO., THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S!

He skipped out of Tom Merry's reach with surprising agility and rolled away disconcertingly, with a glare at the captain of the Shell that, if looks could kill, would have stretched Tom lifeless on the floor. With a chuckle, Tom Merry went on reading his letter.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, had opened the letter that had come for him, and was glancing at it close by Tom Merry. A couple of pound-notes had been contained in the envelope as well, and Arthur Augustus was holding them in his hand.

There was a sudden scamper of feet behind him.

Wally D'Arcy of the Third, the swell of the Fourth's minor, had come racing up, accompanied by Curly Gibson, Reggie Manners, and Frank Levison. There was a very



eager light in the eyes of the four fags as they rested on the notes in the hand of Arthur Augustus.

"I say, Gussy!" exclaimed Wally excitedly. "I wrote home to the pater asking for some tin! Has he sent it in your letter?"

Arthur Augustus glanced up. He nodded thoughtfully.

"Yaas. The patah has sent you a couple of pounds—"

"Oh, good! Hand it over!"

But Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"No, Wallay. You see, the patah says in this lettah that I am to give it to you when you need it."

"Well, I jolly well need it now!" roared Wally. "Hand it over, you dummy!"

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus adjusted his celebrated eyeglass to survey his minor frostily. "Pway speak respectfully, Wallay, or I shall considah it my dutay to administah a thick eah!"

"Rats!" Wally snorted very indignantly. "I want my tin!"

"Hear, hear!" chimed in Reggie Manners.

Again Arthur Augustus shook his noble head.

The swell of St. Jim's was not mean—in fact, there was no more generous fellow in the School House. But he took his position as Wally's elder brother very seriously, and in the opinion of Arthur Augustus it was not good for a Third-Former to have too much money all at once.

"I wefuse to hand ovah all this money at once, Wallay," said Arthur Augustus very firmly. "Howevah," he added kindly, "heah is somethin' to be goin' on with. Come to me fwom time to time for the west, and you shall have it all in due course. In the meantime—"

The swell of St. Jim's thrust a hand into his trouser-pocket, and took out a handful of jingling silver. With great care he selected a shilling and held it out with a generous gesture to his gasping minor.

"Heah you are, Wallay," said Arthur Augustus graciously. "Pway do not spend it all at once, howevah. Do not be extwava-gant with it."

Wally surveyed the proffered shilling with feelings too deep for words. But at last he found his voice.

"You—you—"

The feelings of Walter Adolphus D'Arcy struggled for utterance.

"Heah you are, Wallay," repeated Arthur Augustus kindly. "Endeavah to spend it wisely— Oh! Bai Jove! Whooops! Yawwooooh!"

The swell of St. Jim's did not finish his brotherly advice.

Words might have failed Wally, but actions did not. He had rushed at his elegant major, and his three chums, at a word, joined him. Reggie, Frank, and Curly were every bit as eager to see those two pounds handed to Wally as was Wally himself, and it was with grim determination in their faces that

they joined their leader in his attack.

Before the rush of the four fags Arthur Augustus went flying.

"Oh! Bai Jove! Ow! Gewwooop!"

The swell of St. Jim's sat down on the linoleum with a jolt and a crash and a yell. The two crisp green notes went fluttering from his fingers, and Wally grabbed them.

"You—you howwible little wuffians!"

"Rats!" grinned Wally, stuffing the notes swiftly into his pocket. "That'll teach you to try to hang on to my boodle!"

"Gweat Scott! I—I shall administah a feahful thwashiu' to each of you—"

"Bow-wow!"

Arthur Augustus scrambled up dazedly and made a grab at Wally. But Curly Gibson put out a foot, and the swell

of St. Jim's tripped over it. Once again he went sprawling face down on the floor. A winded gasp escaped him.

"Yawoooooff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors shrieked.

"So-long, Gussy!" grinned Wally cheerfully.

"You uttah little wuffians——"

But Wally & Co. did not wait to hear more. They turned and scurried away, vanishing in the direction of the fags' quarters. Arthur Augustus sat up, gasping.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co., Blake & Co., Talbot, and the rest of the juniors gathered round the letter-rack, yelled and shrieked with merriment.

Arthur Augustus limped to his feet. He glared at the hilarious faces of his fellow-juniors with feelings too deep for words. Then he swung on his heels and marched away, limping a trifle, with his nose in the air. The laughter from the hall followed him.

"Poor old Gussy!" gasped Cardew of the Fourth. "He generally manages to provide a little comic relief!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With their letters collected, the crowd was beginning to disperse now, some of the fellows moving off in the direction of the junior Common-room, others heading for their studies, with thoughts of prep.

Only one letter was left on the rack now. Tom Merry glanced at it.

It was addressed in rather a sprawling hand to Skimpole of the Shell. The postmark—Friardale—was very clear.

Friardale, as Tom Merry knew, was the name of the village close to Greyfriars School, the home of Harry Wharton & Co., who were old rivals of the St. Jim's juniors on the footer-field and in all other branches of sport.

Apparently Skimpole's letter was from some fellow at Greyfriars.

"A letter for Skimmy," said Tom, glancing at Talbot.

Reginald Talbot was one of the fellows who shared Study No. 9 in the Shell passage with Herbert Skimpole.

Skimpole was a weird youth, who had earned for himself the nickname of the Freak of the Shell. With his weedy frame and bulging forehead, Skimpole was an unusual-looking junior, to say the least—and his ideas were unusual, too. When other fellows enjoyed themselves on the footer-field on half-holidays, Herbert Skimpole much preferred to browse over his collection of defunct insects, or to study a huge volume from his collection of the works of Professor Balm-crumpet. But he was an inoffensive fellow, even though a bit of a freak, and most of the juniors liked him.

Talbot glanced at the rack. After a moment's pause he picked up the letter.

"I'm going upstairs; I'll take it along to him," said Talbot good-naturedly.

Together with Tom Merry & Co., Talbot turned towards the stairs, carrying Skimpole's letter in his hand.

CHAPTER 2.

"Stinks!"

"WHAT the dickens——"

"My hat!"

Tom Merry & Co. and Talbot had turned into the Shell passage from the stairs, and halted in amazement, staring.

"What the thump——"

There seemed to be something wrong in the Shell passage!

Quite a crowd of fellows was gathered outside the door of one of the studies. Talbot gave a gasp of surprise as he saw that it was the door of his own study, No. 9, that was attracting this mysterious attention.

The door of Study No. 9 was closed. Judging from the way in which Bernard Glyn was banging a fist on it, the door seemed to be not only closed, but locked as well!

It was not this fact that surprised Talbot, however. It was the strange gasps and splutterings that came from the excited group of juniors gathered round his study door that caused Talbot, and Tom Merry as well, to stare in such astonishment.

In addition to Bernard Glyn, Harry Noble, the Australian junior, was there. So was Grundy, from Study No. 3, and his two chums, Wilkins and Gunn. So was Racke, and so was Croke, and Luke Serope as well, and George Gore. Since Gore shared Study No. 9 with Talbot and Skimpole, it looked as though he had been locked out of his own room! But even that fact seemed scarcely to account for the ferocious glare on Gore's face as he surveyed the closed door of Study No. 9!

Gore had a handkerchief crammed to his nose. So had Racke and Grundy and most of the others. And the faces of all seemed tinged with a strange, sickly hue that was

rather startling to see! Grundy's face, in particular, seemed thoroughly green.

"What the merry dickens——" gasped Talbot.

"Oh! Grooooooh!"

"Ugh! Oh crumbs! Oh!"

"Mum—mum—mum!"

From the fellows outside the door of Study No. 9 came weird and wonderful gurgles and gasps and splutters.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another with expressions of utter bewilderment. Talbot slipped Skimpole's letter into his pocket and hurried forward. The Terrible Three quickly followed.

"I say, what on earth——" began Talbot.

He did not finish!

Instead, he stopped abruptly, within a few yards of his study door, and made a wild dive for his handkerchief. He snatched it out, gasping, and crammed it to his nose.

"Oh! Ugh! Gerooooogh!"

At last Talbot understood.

A weird and wonderful odour was issuing from beneath the closed door of Study No. 9.

It was something like the smell from a hundred broken eggs of the "kill-at-fifty-yards" variety—a mixture of that and some very, very ancient fish.

It was weird and horrible—ghastly!

"Oh! My giddy aunt! Groooooogh!"

Talbot gurgled wildly. So did Tom Merry & Co. as they, too, came within reach of the strange aroma wafted from the door of Study No. 9.

At the end of the passage they had been too far away to be affected. But now that they had joined the crowd they were getting that mysterious aroma at full blast!

"Oh! Yoooooh! Mum mum-mmmmm!"

Tom Merry, with a handkerchief held tightly over his nose, stared glassily at the closed door.

"Wharrissit?" gurgled Manners.

His face had changed colour.

Kangaroo turned a sickly face towards them. He took the handkerchief a few inches from his nose.

"It—it's S.S.Skimpole!" he spluttered. "He's in there with his blessed chemistry, and he's locked the door——"

A sudden fresh odour, more strange and horrible even than before, caused the Australian junior to break off sharply and cram the handkerchief to his nose again.

But he had told Talbot and Tom Merry & Co. enough. Now they understood!

It was well-known that Skimpole had been turning his terrific brain to the many problems of chemistry during the last few weeks. It was a new departure on the part of the freak of the Shell, however, to do "stinks" in his study! If the other juniors had any say in the matter—and they meant to have quite a big say—it would also be the last occasion on which Skimpole carried out his experiments in the confines of Study No. 9.

But, meanwhile, Skimpole was firmly entrenched behind the locked door.

Whether the freak of the Shell was too wrapped up in his experiments to hear the wrathful crowd without, or whether he was deliberately ignoring the ire of his fellow-juniors, no one knew. But in either case the effect was the same. Skimpole was busily filling the Shell passage and the neighbouring studies with smells so strange and horrible that the inmates of the other rooms had turned out in a body to deal forcibly with Herbert Skimpole.

But the door was locked!

Grundy hurled himself at the door and thundered upon it with a rugged fist.

"Open this door, or I'll wallop you!" howled George Alfred Grundy in a choking voice.

"Smash it in!" gasped Racke.

"Oh! Grooooooh!"

Crash, crash!

Grundy banged and thumped on the panels. But there was no response from within. The door remained fast. And with every moment the aromas that issued from beneath it were growing more and more unbearable.

As Monty Lowther remarked, between gasps and splutters, the atmosphere in the Shell passage just then was such that anyone could have carved their initials on it with a knife.

"I'll slaughter him——"

"Oh! Same here! Grooooooh!"

"Break the blessed door in!" panted Wilkins feebly.

"Rather! Oh! P-p-phew!"

"Come on, then!" gasped Tom Merry.

The captain of the Shell hurled himself against the door. There was a terrific crash.

"And again! Lend a hand——"

"Right-ho!" gulped Manners.

Tom Merry, Talbot, Grundy, and Kangaroo flung themselves at the door in a body. There was a sound of splintering as their shoulders landed all together. But still the door held.

"Once more!" gasped Talbot, handkerchief to nose.

"Once more'll do it!"

As a rule Talbot would have objected pretty strongly to having the door of his study smashed open. It would mean a substantial tip to old Taggles, the school porter, to have the lock repaired without the damage being reported to Mr. Railton, the Housemaster.

But anything was better than suffering Skimpole's patent aromas any more! Talbot's face was very green by now, and he was as eager as anyone to see the door burst open, and to put a forcible stop to Skimpole's experiments in Study No. 9.

Once more the juniors hurled themselves at the panels.

Crash!

This time the door flew open.

Tom Merry, Talbot, Kangaroo, and Grundy went flying

The next moment he wished he had not done so.

The atmosphere of the passage outside had been bad enough. But the air within the study was ten times worse.

"Oh! Ugh! Yerroooooogh!"

"Oh!"

"Eugh!"

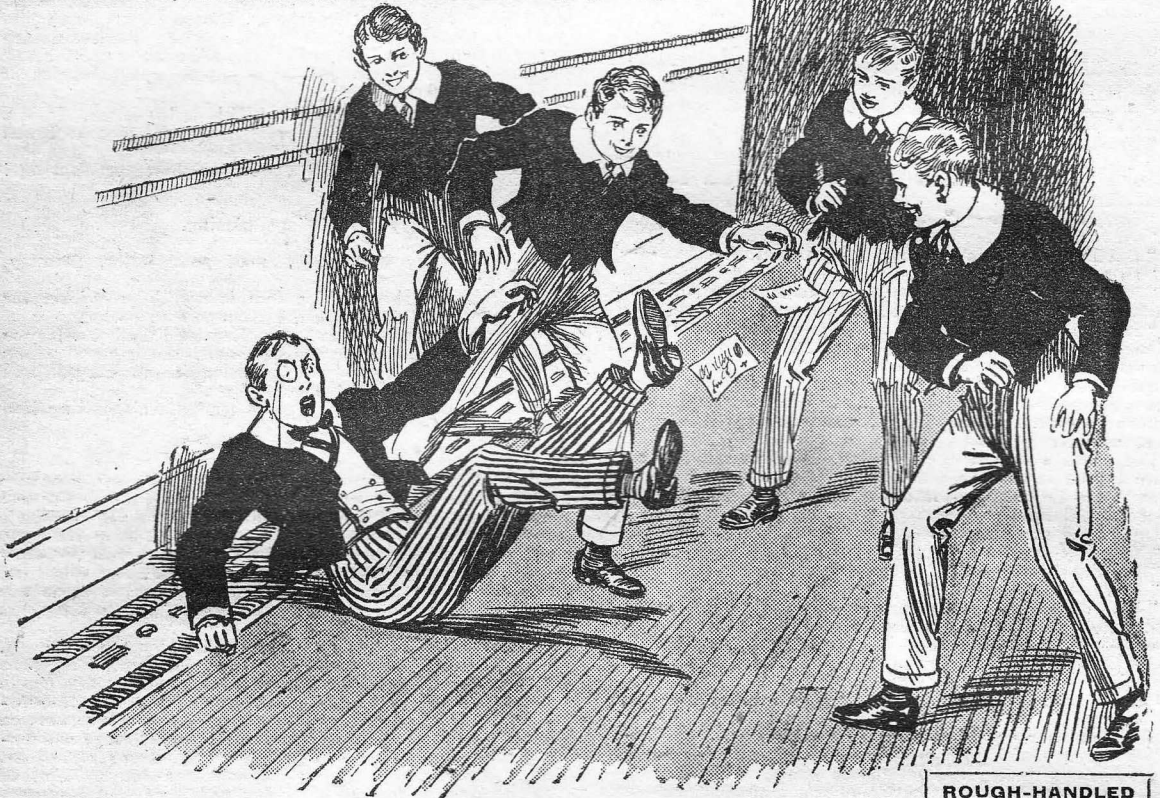
Tom Merry, Talbot, Kangaroo, and Grundy staggered to their feet, hastily returning their handkerchiefs to their noses. On the floor, Skimpole picked up his spectacles and replaced them on his nose. He blinked at the intruders with a very blank expression.

"Oh dear!" gasped the freak of the Shell.

"Collar him!" roared Grundy in a choking voice.

Even the ghastly aroma that filled the study could not

"I want my tin!" roared Wally D'Arcy indignantly. "Hand it over, Gussy!" Arthur Augustus shook his head. "I wufese to hand over all this money at once, Wallay," he said firmly. "Heah is a shillin'. Endeavah to spend it wisely— Oh! Bai Jove! Whoop!" Gussy broke off with a yell as the fags rushed at him, and he landed on the linoleum with a bump. (See Chapter 1.)



ROUGH-HANDLED BY FAGS!

into the study, carried on irresistibly by the force of their terrific impetus.

There was an excited cry from within the room.

Herbert Skimpole was standing by the table, his dome-like head, with its glimmering spectacles, wreathed in fumes and vapour. He had been bending over a dreadfully odorous mixture that he was brewing over a bunsen-burner—a mixture that was evidently the cause of all the trouble, though the freak of the Shell himself had been standing by it as contentedly as though it had been a bowl of roses.

Wrapped up as he had been in his experiments, it was a moment of great amazement and alarm for Skimpole when the door burst open, and the four sprawling juniors came hurtling into the room.

Crash!

The crash of the opening door was followed almost at once by another crash, even greater than the first.

With gasps and yells, Tom Merry and the other three floundered against the table. It went over promptly, and with it went flying the jumble of glass jars, retorts, and test-tubes that Skimpole had placed upon it. The study echoed to the noise of smashing glass as the chemistry apparatus shot on to the floor. The overturned table sent Skimpole flying with it, and he collapsed dazedly amidst the ruins.

"Oh, my hat!"

Tom Merry sat up, after pushing Grundy's floundering figure off his chest, and blinked round. Grundy was no light weight, and on freeing himself of that encumbrance Tom Merry took a deep breath.

prevent the Shell fellows from wreaking vengeance upon the cause of it all. They seized Skimpole and whirled him on high.

"Oh dear!" Skimpole gave an anguished squeak. "Pray release me! How inexplicable your behaviour is! I utterly fail to comprehend—yarooooogh!"

Skimpole's trousers met the floor with a hearty concussion. He gave an excited yell.

Again he was whirled into the air.

"Oh dear! I fear you fellows have taken leave of your senses—"

Bump!

"Yooooop! Pray desist, I beg of you—"

Bump!

"Yarrroogh! This recurrent concussion of the human body upon a hard substance—yarooooosh!—such as linoleum—gerooooop!—is calculated to be extremely harmful, I assure you—wow! So pray cease!" gasped Skimpole, punctuating his remarks with yells and howls, as he was bumped upon the unsympathetic floor.

"There!" panted Kangaroo breathlessly at last, as the juniors finally released him. "That'll teach you to stink us all out of our own passage!"

Skimpole sat on the linoleum and gasped painfully. "I utterly fail to understand this unprovoked assault!" he stammered. "I—I fear a lapse of reason on the part of you all! There is a particularly wild look in Grundy's eye; I feel sure that it is the first sign of incipient lunacy—"

"What?" howled Grundy.

"Your uncontrollability of temper confirms my view!" insisted Skimpole breathlessly, as he climbed gingerly to his feet.

"Why, you—you—you—" panted Grundy wrathfully.

But the next moment a whiff of Skimpole's extra-special mixture—which was now spreading over the floor, steaming slightly—came Grundy's way. He rolled his eyes, gasping, and clapped a hand hastily over his nose.

"Grooooooh!"

George Alfred Grundy rushed from the study.

The others followed his example—all but Talbot.

Though the atmosphere of Study No. 9 was still anything but balmy, the current of air set up from the window to the open door was swiftly clearing the aroma from the room. Talbot flung the window higher, and put his head out, gulping in great breaths of fresh air.

CHAPTER 3.

Great News from Alonzo Todd!

SHAKING his head in sad bewilderment, Skimpole began to clean up the wreckage of his precious apparatus.

Talbot turned from the window at last and glared at his study-mate.

The atmosphere was almost clear now.

"You silly ass!" growled Talbot. He grinned. "If ever I catch you doing 'stinks' in this study again I'll jolly well slaughter you!"

"My dear Talbot—"

"Oh rats!"

"But I wish to point out that the wonders of science—"

"Br-r-r!"

"Are of vastly greater importance than the slight inconvenience caused to the nasal organs by—"

"Ring off!" roared Talbot. "If you inflict the wonders of science on my nasal organs again I'll punch your nasal organ till the cows come home!"

Skimpole blinked at Talbot through his big spectacles and shook his head sadly. But he did not continue his remarks.

Perhaps even the freak of the Shell realised that it was safer not to!

There was a step in the doorway. The rugged figure of Gore looked in and sniffed nervously. On finding the air breathable he tramped into the study and slammed the door behind him.

He glared at Skimpole.

"You silly jay!"

"My dear Gore—"

"You burbling lunatic!"

"Oh, dear! I fear you are annoyed, too," gasped Skimpole. "I beg of you not to let these angry passions rise. The emotion of anger is greatly to be deplored for scientific reasons, if for no other, in that it fills the blood with injurious toxins—"

"Oh, my aunt!" groaned Gore. "He's swallowed another dictionary!"

Skimpole surveyed him in some astonishment.

"My dear Gore! How could it be possible for anyone to swallow a large volume—to be exact, a dictionary—which, considering the formation of the human throat—"

"Shut up!" roared Gore in a ferocious voice. "You give me a headache!"

Skimpole relapsed into silence, and continued sorrowfully to clear up the mess of broken glass on the floor.

With the study ship-shape once more, Gore and Talbot pulled up chairs to the table and got out their books for prep. Skimpole had already finished his—it never took the genius of the Shell very long to get through his work. So he curled himself up in a chair by the fireplace, with a massive volume on his knees. Talbot stared as he saw the title of it:

"The Enlightening Influence of Western Civilisation Upon Our Black Brothers!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Talbot. "What the dickens are you reading, Skimmy?"

Skimpole glanced up.

"A most fascinating and instructive volume, my dear Talbot," he explained earnestly. "It deals with the problem of saving the native races of the earth from their barbaric condition, and educating them up to civilised standards. The writer, Professor Piffer, has spent many years in the South Seas and in Africa, inducing the natives to wear flannel undergarments and bowler hats. If you would care for me to read the book aloud—"

"No, thanks!" said Talbot hastily. "Don't trouble!"

"No trouble at all, my dear fellow—"

"Gore and I have got our prep to do," said Talbot.

"Some other time, old chap!"

"Certainly! If at any time you would care for me to

read aloud from this interesting volume, pray let me know."

"I will!" grinned Talbot. A sudden exclamation broke from him. "My hat, I forgot! A letter came for you by the evening post. Here it is."

He took out the letter bearing the Friardale postmark, and tossed it across to the freak of the Shell.

"Dear me!" Skimpole surveyed the envelope with great interest. "Judging from the postmark I should deduce that this letter must be from Greyfriars School. How extremely interesting! If that is a correct conjecture on my part I feel sure that this epistle must be from my friend in the Remove, Alonzo Todd!"

He ripped open the envelope. Talbot and Gore bent over their books, and for a short while there was silence in Study No. 9, save for the scratching of pens. Then there came an excited exclamation from Herbert Skimpole.

"I was right!" beamed the freak of the Shell. "This letter is indeed from Alonzo Todd!"

Talbot grinned. He knew something of Alonzo Todd, the famous duffer of Greyfriars. Alonzo was a meek and gentle youth, with a heart of gold, and the simplest nature of any fellow living! Alonzo was rather by way of being the freak of Greyfriars, just as Skimpole was the freak of St. Jim's.

"Listen!" gasped Skimpole. "This is his letter. It is a most extraordinarily fortunate coincidence. Just as I was telling you about this wonderful book—"

"Look here," roared Gore, "cut it short, or shut up! I want to do my prep!"

"My dear Gore—"

"Make it snappy!" said Gore, glaring.

Talbot laughed.

"If you really want us to read your letter, Skimmy, buzz it over!"

Talbot had a shrewd idea that it would be quicker for him to read the letter than for Skimpole to do so!

Skimpole handed the letter to Reginald Talbot. It was written in a wildly scrawling hand, the general effect being as though a spider had fallen in an ink-pot and afterwards walked over the note-paper.

Talbot read it aloud—and as he read, Gore's smiling face broke into a broad grin:

"My dear Skimpole.—It is with extreme pleasure that I take up my pen to write to you, though I fear I must be brief as I have not yet completed my evening's preparation. Should I fail to do so, I fear that my esteemed Form master, Mr. Queleh, would be considerably upset—nay, indeed, irascible. In addition, my Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me the laudable advisability of being brief and to the point upon all occasions.

Knowing that you are most interested, like myself, in the uplifting of poor, benighted savages, I feel sure that you will be delighted with my news. My Uncle Benjamin has just returned from a visit to the Woolla-Woolla Islands, and has brought back with him a savage inhabitant from that spot, with the intention of observing the enlightening influence of our modern civilisation. Next Friday happens to be a whole-day holiday at Greyfriars, in honour of a distinguished Old Boy now visiting our esteemed headmaster. I therefore propose that my Uncle Benjamin and I visit St. Jim's on that date, bringing with us this untutored savage—whose name, I understand, is Ugmumbo. I feel sure that you will find this singular opportunity of studying the savage mind a most interesting—nay, fascinating—experience. I will write again to inform you of the time of our arrival at St. Jim's.—Ever yours, Alonzo."

As Talbot finished reading there was a brief silence in Study No. 9.

Talbot stared at Gore, and Gore stared at Talbot. Skimpole watched them both eagerly, blinking excitedly through his spectacles.

"Is it not splendid?" gasped the freak of the Shell.

There was an explosive sound from Gore. He threw back his head and yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Gore—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Talbot, as well.

"Dear me!" Skimpole blinked at Talbot in astonishment.

"My dear Talbot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows!" ejaculated Skimpole, with quite an alarmed expression on his face. "I really fail to understand the reason for this hilarity! Alonzo Todd has wasted no time in idle jokes in his letter—indeed, it is a most serious and earnest epistle—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!"

"Your singular and uncalled-for mirth seems rather to indicate a lack of mental balance!" said Skimpole, shaking

his massive head sadly. "I wonder if this can be the first signs of your being 'non compos mentis'? Or, in vulgar parlance, a little—ahem—weak in the head?"

Gore's laughter ceased abruptly.

"Why, you—you—"
Talbot wiped his eyes.

"You'll be the death of us yet, Skimpy!" he gasped. "So your pal, Alonzo Todd, means to bring a blessed savage along to St. Jim's on Friday, does he? Oh, my hat!"

"What's his name—Mumbo-Jumbo?" inquired Gore, with a chortle.

"Ugmumbo," corrected Skimpole.

"Oh, my aunt!"

"Taggles won't let him in at the gates—not with a name like that!" grinned Talbot.

"Really, Talbot, I cannot perceive how the man's name should in any way affect Taggles' decision regarding his admittance!" ejaculated Skimpole in astonishment. He beamed at the other two. "This will undoubtedly be a most profitable and entertaining visit for all concerned—"

"It'll be entertaining all right!" chuckled Gore.

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!" grinned Talbot.

"Uncle Benny must be a scream!" gasped Gore.

"So must Alonzo!" added Talbot.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skimpole seemed about to speak, but he kept silent. He was still clearly bewildered as to the reason of his study-mates' merriment over the prospect of the visit of Alonzo Todd of Greyfriars, and Alonzo's Uncle Benjamin, and the black gentleman from Woolla-Woolla Islands.

But the freak of the Shell was used to failing to understand his fellow juniors at St. Jim's. With a gentle sigh he pocketed his letter, and picked up once more the weighty volume he had been reading.

"You are sure you would not like me to read aloud a few instructive passages from Professor Piffler's great work?" he inquired earnestly. "With this native islander visiting St. Jim's, I feel sure that you would be more than ever interested to know something of the work being done to lift our black brothers from the realms of savagery!"

"Nunno!" grinned Talbot hastily. "Some other time, old chap! We've got our prep to do, as I've told you before."

"Oh, very well!"

Skimpole returned to his chair, and was soon deep in Professor Piffler's fascinating volume.

CHAPTER 4.

Racke & Co. Are Interested!

"IT'S Skimpy!"

"The giddy freak!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herbert Skimpole glanced up, to find himself faced with the grinning countenances of Racke, Gore, and Crooke of the Shell, and Mellish of the Fourth.

The freak of the Shell had been crossing the quad in the direction of the playing-fields. It was just after tea on the day following Alonzo Todd's letter. But though Skimpole was heading for the playing-fields, it was not to join in punting a footer about on Little Side, with Tom Merry & Co., and Blake & Co., and several others who could be seen enjoying that vigorous occupation. Footer was not in Skimpole's line.

He had, tucked under his elbow, a large, weighty volume,

which it was his intention to read on a sheltered seat down by the river.

He paused and blinked at Racke & Co. doubtfully. Even Skimpole, wrapped up as he always was in his own earnest thoughts, and having little to do with the everyday life of St. Jim's, was vaguely aware that Racke & Co., with whom Gore was so friendly, were not considered very pleasant youths.

But at the moment, Gore and Racke, Crooke and Mellish, were smiling at him in such a friendly way that Skimpole's doubts promptly vanished.

"Yes, my dear fellows?" murmured Skimpole inquiringly.

"Off somewhere?" inquired Racke, with a grin.

"Yes, indeed," nodded Skimpole. "I was just on my way to the river—"

"For a bathe?" asked Crooke blandly.

For some reason, Crooke's innocent inquiry seemed to amuse Gore and Mellish. They chuckled. Racke frowned at them.

"Shut up, you asses!" he said reprovingly. "Nothing to laugh at. Old Skimpy may not be an athletic chap, but then what are athletics compared with brains?"

"Nothing!" said Mellish solemnly.

"Rather not!" said Gore. "Of course not," nodded Racke. "Brains are the important thing, every time!"

"I am delighted to hear you express such admirable sentiments, my dear fellows," beamed Skimpole delightedly. "I had no idea you thought so rightly on that subject. The worship of athletics at St. Jim's is most reprehensible. Of course, I know that you yourselves are not much good at athletics—"

"What?" roared Gore. "For which I congratulate you!" finished Skimpole. "I am delighted to know that you fellows also value brains far more than mere brawn!"

"Of course we do," nodded Racke. He slipped an arm into Skimpole's. "Come on, Skimpy, we'll stroll down to the river with you. Eh, you chaps?"

Racke winked at "the chaps," unseen by the freak of the Shell.

Crooke, Gore, and Mellish fell in promptly on either side of Racke and Skimpole. Skimpole glanced at them with a beaming smile through his shining spectacles as they moved off in the direction of the placid waters of the Rhyl.

That Racke & Co. had some reason of their own for this sudden show of amazing friendliness towards him never occurred to the freak of the Shell for an instant.

"Is it really true that Toddy, of Greyfriars, is visiting St. Jim's on Friday?" inquired Racke, with very,

polite interest in his tone.

"Yes, indeed," nodded Skimpole. "My friend Alonzo is—"

"And he's really bringing a giddy nigger with him?" put in Mellish breathlessly, grinning at the others.

"That is indeed so," nodded Skimpole again. He beamed at Mellish. "If you fellows are at all interested in the fascinating problem of bringing the light of civilisation to the poor black inhabitants of the savage places of the earth—"

"Oh, we are!" exclaimed Racke quickly.

"Frightfully interested!" agreed Crooke.

"In that case," went on the freak of the Shell eagerly, drawing the massive volume from beneath his skinny arm, "I feel sure that you will be delighted to let me read to you a few extracts from this fascinating book by Professor Piffler. It is entitled: 'The Enlightening Influence of THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,130.

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"Sounds ripping!" murmured Racke.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a sudden gurgle of laughter from Crooke. Racke glared at him warningly. Crooke suppressed his laughter with an effort.

"My dear Crooke! I fail to understand the cause of your hilarity!" exclaimed Skimpole in astonishment.

"Ahem!"

"Crooke was laughing to think that lots of chaps at St. Jim's wouldn't even be interested in a book like that," put in Racke quickly. "That's it, eh, Crooke?"

"Absolutely!" gasped Crooke.

Skimpole shook his head sadly.

"I fear that you are only too right, my dear Crooke. I was suggesting to Grundy only yesterday afternoon that I should visit him in his study to read him several chapters of this wonderful and instructive volume; but he declined my offer in the rudest terms."

"Dear, dear!" sighed Gore.

"Amazing!" gasped Mellish.

They had arrived on the tow-path, and Racke led Skimpole to a seat by the water's edge. The unsuspecting freak of the Shell sat down, and Racke & Co. seated themselves beside him.

Skimpole placed his book on his knees and opened it.

"I propose to read to you now from Chapter Ten," he beamed. "It contains an account of the professor's amazing adventures among the savages of Gumbaloo, where he distributed no less than two hundred bowler hats in three days to the grateful inhabitants—"

"Ahem!" Racke coughed. "Just a minute, Skimmy, old man! We'll be delighted to hear you read all about it in a jiffy—but we want to talk to you first—"

"Hear, hear!" murmured Crooke.

"About Alonzo Todd," explained Racke, "and this nigger he's bringing here on Friday."

"What we want to know," grinned Crooke, "is what time Alonzo and his giddy uncle and this blessed black chap are turning up. You said Toddy was writing to tell you what time they'd arrive."

"You see," put in Racke blandly, "we thought we'd go with you to the station to meet them!"

"That's it," agreed Crooke serenely. "We feel that their visit is an occasion of such great importance, you see."

"And we want to welcome them to St. Jim's ourselves," explained Racke.

"Hear, hear!"

"That's it!"

Skimpole beamed at them.

"This is most gratifying, my dear fellows!" he exclaimed. "I am delighted at your interest in their visit!"

"Well, what time do they turn up?" asked Mellish impatiently. "That's what we want to know."

"They arrive at Rylcombe railway station at a quarter to one," Skimpole informed them eagerly. "It would be splendid indeed if you fellows accompanied me to the station to meet them!"

"Oh, we will!" Racke assured him.

"Don't you worry; we'll be there!" grinned Gore.

"This is splendid, my dear fellows—"

"Splendid for us, you mean," said Racke gravely. "We all feel how terrifically instructive it will be for us to meet, face to face, a real native savage, and observe for ourselves the effect of our wonderful western civilisation upon his—ahem!—untutored mind. Eh, you chaps?"

"Every time," nodded Mellish.

"That's settled, then!" exclaimed Crooke. "We go with you on Friday morning, Skimmy."

"Splendid!" beamed Herbert Skimpole.

Never for a moment did it occur to the unsuspecting freak of the Shell that it was odd, to say the least, that Racke & Co. should display such an extraordinary interest in the visit of Alonzo Todd, Uncle Benjamin, and the man from Woolla-Woolla. That they were planning an elaborate jape certainly did not even enter his head.

He beamed through his glimmering spectacles at them.

"And now," exclaimed Skimpole earnestly, "allow me to read to you from Professor Piffler's great—"

Gore jumped up suddenly.

"Fraid I must be getting in," he said hastily. "I've got to do some lines for Knox."

"So have I," chimed in Crooke hurriedly. He, too, rose to his feet. "I'd forgotten about 'em."

Racke, it appeared, also had lines to do, and so had Mellish. They had all forgotten about them till that moment, apparently.

Skimpole blinked at them in great disappointment.

"Oh dear! How unfortunate!"

"Sickening, isn't it?" sighed Racke.

"Awful!" groaned Crooke.

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"But business before—er—pleasure," put in Gore. "It's frightfully disappointing for us, Skimmy."

"We feel quite cut up to miss hearing you read to us," added Mellish. "Good-bye!"

The four began to move off, but Mellish paused.

"Half a jiff, you chaps!" he exclaimed. "My shoelace is undone."

He sat down on the bench again, and bent over his foot to fasten the lace.

Skimpole had risen from the bench as the others had made to go. He plucked eagerly at Gore's sleeve.

"My dear Gore, it is most distressing that you all have to go! Cannot you wait for just ten minutes, while I give you some special extracts from the professor's book?"

"Nunno!" gasped Gore nervously.

The mere thought of having to listen to Skimpole reading aloud from that book of his was enough to make Gore's face almost change colour. He stepped back hastily to avoid the freak of the Shell's clutching fingers, and came up against the bench. Losing his balance, he sat down heavily.

Gore was a big-built fellow, who weighed a good deal.

Unfortunately for Mellish, Gore dropped on the very end of the bench.

What happened next, though it was only to be expected, was startling in the extreme. Gore's weight caused the bench to shoot up at the other end, and Gore was deposited on the hard ground.

There was a wild yell from Mellish!

As the bench shot up on its end, Mellish was sent flying through the air.

S-s-splash!

"Yaroooooosh!"

Mellish had curved gracefully through the air and come down with a mighty splash in the waters of the Rhyl.

"Oh! Yo-o-o-oooooh! Grooooh! Ug-ug-ug!"

The sneak of the Fourth vanished beneath the surface, kicked wildly, his arms waving, and strange spluttering sounds issuing from his mouth, which stopped abruptly as he disappeared from sight.

He reappeared again a moment later, and scrambled, gasping, for the bank. Looking very much like a drowned rat, Percy Mellish dragged himself up on to dry land again, choking and spluttering.

"Ow! Oh! Yoooooosh! Mum-mummmmm!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yell of unsympathetic laughter from Racke, Crooke, and Gore.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my hat!"

Racke & Co. were doubled up with mirth. Mellish glared at them ferociously.

"You—you—you—"

"My dear Mellish," exclaimed Skimpole, in the gravest concern, "I fear you are wet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"May I recommend you to hurry indoors and put your feet in a hot mustard bath immediately?" cried Skimpole anxiously. "I should advise you, in addition, to ask the matron for two of Green's Gargantuan Globules for the Gullet—"

Mellish choked.

Skimpole's advice was given with every good intention, but it seemed to irritate Mellish considerably. He flung himself at Skimpole, and the freak of the Shell sat down as Mellish's fist took him on the nose.

"Ow!"

Mellish stamped away, leaving a trail of muddy water in his wake. Skimpole rubbed his nose and blinked after him dazedly.

"D-d-dear me!" stuttered the freak of the Shell feebly.

"He seems quite upset! But it is utterly incomprehensible why he should have so violently assaulted me. Oh!"

Racke, breathless with laughter, helped Skimpole to his feet.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Racke. "Hard luck, Skimmy! You mustn't take any notice of Mellish. He's an excitable chap."

"Under the circumstances, I feel that Mellish is scarcely the kind of fellow whom I should care for my friend Alonzo Todd to meet!" gasped Skimpole indignantly. "He was most brutal!"

An uneasy look came into Racke's face. It certainly would not suit his plans for Skimpole to fall out with them now.

"Don't take any notice of Mellish," he said quickly. "He didn't mean anything. He was a bit hasty, that's all." He patted Skimpole reassuringly on the shoulder. "I'll make him apologise. He's a good-hearted chap, really, and awfully keen on the—er—enlightening of the savage races, and all that!"

"Rather!" nodded Crooke, with an anxious look at Racke.

"It would break his heart if you didn't let him go and meet Alonzo and his uncle!" sighed Gore.

"I have no wish to bear malice," said Skimpole dubiously.

rubbing his nose, which now resembled a beetroot in hue, thanks to Mellish's fist. "I—I will overlook his misdemeanour on this occasion, since, as you inform me, Mellish is so enthusiastic about the uplifting of our black brothers."

"Enthusiastic isn't the word!" Racke assured him gravely. "It—it's an obsession with him!"

Skimpole sat down on the bench, which Gore had righted, and picked up his fallen book. He was still very breathless.

"That's right, old chap," murmured Racke. "You sit quietly and read all about Professor Piffler. I—ahem!—I'll speak seriously to Mellish."

"I should be gratified if you would!" sniffed Skimpole.

"We will," said Gore. "Very seriously. So-long, old chap!"

Racke, Crooke, and Gore moved off along the towpath, leaving Skimpole rubbing his injured nose as he opened his precious volume once again.

"Well, that's all right!" grinned Racke. "Skimmy's quite keen for us to go with him to the station to meet Alonzo and Uncle Benny and the blessed nigger!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" And Racke & Co. chuckled mysterious chuckles as they strolled across the playing-fields towards the School House. Racke and his cronies meant to see to it that Alonzo Todd of Greyfriars, his Uncle Benjamin, and the man from the Woolla-Woolla Islands had a really memorable welcome to St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 5.
A Little Trap!

"DEAR me!" Herbert Skimpole gave that worried exclamation.

It was after morning classes on the following Friday—the day of the arrival of Skimpole's visitors. Skimpole had been looking forward eagerly to the time when it would be necessary to sally forth to the station to meet Alonzo Todd & Co. But now that that time had arrived he was looking far from happy.

"I wonder where it is?" Skimpole peered round Study No. 9 and blinked in great perplexity.

He seemed to be searching for something. But whatever it was for which he searched, it was evidently not to be found.

The door behind him swung open. Gore stepped into the study.

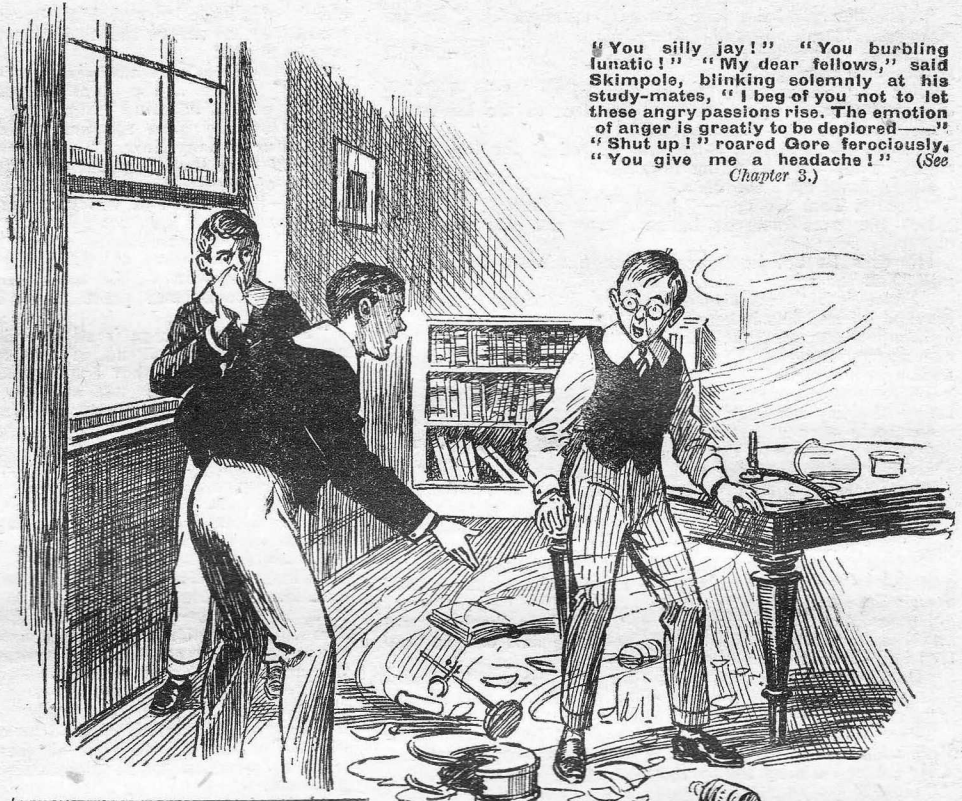
Gore was looking much smarter than usual. He was, in fact, dressed in his best. So were Racke, Crooke, and Mellish, whose grinning faces could be seen in the passage outside.

Racke & Co. were all ready to go forth to meet Skimpole's visitors, even if Skimpole himself was not!

"What's up, Skimmy?" inquired Gore.

"Lost something?" murmured Racke.

"Indeed, yes!" nodded Skimpole. "It is most trying! I had intended to take with me to the station Professor Piffler's splendid book, so that if the train is at all late I can peruse the volume in the interval of waiting. But in some most puzzling manner the book seems to have disappeared."



**THE CHEMICAL MANIAC
IN TROUBLE!**

"You silly jay!" "You burbling lunatic!" "My dear fellows," said Skimpole, blinking solemnly at his study-mates, "I beg of you not to let these angry passions rise. The emotion of anger is greatly to be deplored—" "Shut up!" roared Gore ferociously. "You give me a headache!" (See Chapter 3.)

Gore coughed. "Is that so?" he exclaimed, in deep concern. "Sure you've looked everywhere?"

"Everywhere!" "Stunty!" murmured Gore. "Isn't it, you chaps?" Racke & Co. stepped into the study.

"What's the matter?" inquired Racke blandly. "Skimmy's lost that wonderful book of his," explained Gore, with a very grave face. He winked at Racke, however—a fact which Skimpole, short-sighted as he was, failed to observe.

"Not Professor Piffler's great work?" ejaculated Racke. "I fear so!" nodded Skimpole unhappily. "I—"

"Why, I can tell you where that is!" grinned Racke. Skimpole stared at him.

"My dear Racke! You really mean—"

"I saw Tom Merry with it only a few minutes ago," nodded Racke. "I supposed you had lent it to him—though I must say he looked a bit guilty when he saw me. He was sneaking up the stairs to the box-room with it, I fancy."

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Skimpole. "He must have pinched it if you didn't lend it to him," went on Racke. "I suppose he was sneaking up to the box-room to read it, where he would be safe from you finding him with it. I know he was mad to get hold of it—"

"Dear me!" Skimpole surveyed Racke in great astonishment. "Is that really so? I—I had no idea! In fact, when I suggested to Tom Merry last night that I should read to him aloud from the book, he declined my offer."

"Ah!" murmured Racke. "I expect he wanted to put you off the track, Skimmy, so that when the book had disappeared you wouldn't suspect him."

"That must be it," agreed Gore, with great seriousness.

"Shocking!" said Crooke.

"Awful!" sighed Mellish.

"But—but how unlike Tom Merry to behave in this way!" exclaimed Skimpole, quite unsuspectingly. "He is the last fellow I should have thought capable—"

"Appearances are deceptive," put in Racke sadly. "Look here, I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll all go up to the box-room at once and catch him red-handed!" He glanced at his watch. "Just about time! Come on!"

There was still a very bewildered expression on the face of the freak of the Shell as he accompanied Racke & Co. along the passage and up the stairs in the direction of the box-room.

"Tom Merry's behaviour is most reprehensible!" he exclaimed. "I am shocked! I——"

"Hush!" muttered Racke. "He'll hear you! He mustn't know we're coming!"

They had reached the top of the stairs. Racke, walking exaggeratedly on tiptoe, stole to the door of the box-room, with Skimpole close behind him.

Crooke, Mellish, and Gore had waited at the top of the stairs. They were grinning broadly.

Racke flung open the door.

"Really, Tom Merry——" began Skimpole.

But the next moment he saw that the box-room was empty.

His eyes lit up, however, to see that on a box in the middle of the room lay the missing volume.

"There it is!" exclaimed Racke. "Merry must have sneaked off and left it here!"

Skimpole stepped past him into the room, going forward eagerly to where his precious book lay. He picked it up, with a sigh of relief, and turned to leave the box-room.

There was the sudden click of a closing door, and the sound of a key turning in the lock.

Skimpole gave a startled cry.

"My dear Racke! You—you have shut me in——"

He hurried to the door and shook the handle.

There was a look of staggered astonishment on the face of the genius of the Shell.

Already he could hear chuckles dying away outside, and hurriedly retreating footsteps on the stairs.

Skimpole's precious volume slipped from beneath his arm and fell to the floor with a crash as he realised that he had been trapped.

The story of Tom Merry taking the book to the box-room had been untrue. It had simply been the bait for the trap that had been laid for him.

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Skimpole feebly.

He raised his voice to a quivering squeak.

"Racke! Gore! Come back! Pray release me!"

There was no answer from without. In the box-room utter silence reigned—but for Skimpole's panting breaths.

He banged a bony fist on the door.

"Help!"

He hurried to the window and found, to his dismay, that the sashes, unopened for months, were stuck fast and would not open.

Peering down, Skimpole was just in time to see Racke & Co. emerge from the School House and stroll off in the direction of the gates.

There were broad grins on their faces.

Racke & Co. had decided that to carry out their little plans successfully it was better for Skimpole not to be with them when they met the train that was bringing Alonzo Todd and his companions to St. Jim's that morning.

Their scheme to prevent the freak of the Shell from going with them had worked splendidly.

As they passed out of the gates Racke glanced at his watch.

"Plenty of time!" he said blandly.

"Good!" sniggered Mellish.

"Poor old Skimmy!" chuckled Gore.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Racke & Co. roared with merriment as they passed out into Rylcombe Lane and vanished from the sight of the dismayed face of Herbert Skimpole, watching from the closed window of the box-room high up under the eaves of the School House.

CHAPTER 6.

Mr. Ugmumbo!

"**D**EAR me! We have arrived!"

It was Alonzo Todd of Greyfriars who spoke. The train had stopped in Rylcombe Station, and Alonzo blinked out of the window of his carriage, with a very pleased expression on his face.

He was an extraordinary-looking youth of weedy stature. He had a very prominent nose, and his hair seemed to grow in large tufts. He was possessed of an amazingly simple and benevolent cast of countenance. Judging from his face alone, it was scarcely surprising that Alonzo was known as the duffer of Greyfriars.

Alonzo Todd was not alone in the compartment.

Seated opposite him was a rather podgy gentleman, with a genial face that was, in its way, almost as simple as that of the duffer of Greyfriars. Old-fashioned side-whiskers adorned his beaming countenance.

This was Alonzo's Uncle Benjamin.

But the strangest figure of the three was seated at the side of the duffer of Greyfriars.

Mr. Ugmumbo, of the Woolla-Woolla Islands, had a face as black as Uncle Benjamin's boots. He was a large individual, and his appearance was fierce, to say the least of it. Clad as he was in his own native costume, which consisted

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chiefly of a huge leopard-skin, the man from Woolla-Woolla seemed by no means the sort of person to meet in a dark lane at night!

He rolled his eyes and glared out of the window at the station platform as the train stopped. Alonzo Todd turned to him with a beaming smile.

"At last we have reached our destination!" exclaimed the duffer of Greyfriars. "Is that not splendid news? Soon you will have the delightful and highly educational opportunity of inspecting another of England's great public schools—St. James', of which my friend Herbert Skimpole is a member. Is that not pleasant?"

Mr. Ugmumbo rolled his eyes.

"Ug!" he observed briefly. "Ug! Woggle!"

Uncle Benjamin sighed as he rose to take his silk hat from the rack, and place it on his round and shining cranium.

"I fear our protege is still persisting in using his own native language, instead of endeavouring to speak the quantity of English that I have endeavoured to instil into him," he murmured. "If only we were in a position to translate his strange utterances in Woolla-Woollian, no doubt we should obtain many interesting side-lights on the native mind. However——"

The Rylcombe porter swung open the door, interrupting Uncle Benjamin's observations.

"Alight 'ere for St. Jim's!" he announced, as though guessing from Todd's Greyfriars cap that he and his companions were visiting St. Jim's.

Alonzo Todd beamed at him.

"Thank you for the information, my good man!" he exclaimed. "I happen, however, to be already aware that it is incumbent upon us to alight at this station for St. Jim's. But my Uncle Benjamin here has always instructed me to render thanks for even unnecessary information, and therefore I thank you heartily."

"My heye!" gasped the porter.

He had met a good many queer youths in his time. But never in all his experience had he come across a schoolboy who talked like Alonzo Todd of Greyfriars.

Alonzo and his Uncle Benjamin stepped out on to the platform.

As they did so the porter jumped.

"Good 'evings!"

He had caught sight of the gentleman from Woolla-Woolla.

"Ug!" remarked Mr. Ugmumbo thoughtfully. "Boojy boojy wug!"

"My heye!" gasped the porter.

Uncle Benjamin smiled at him genially.

"You appear considerably surprised, my good man," he observed kindly. "But let me beg and implore you to remember that even a poor untutored savage has his natural feelings, and to hurt them by staring in what I am afraid I can only describe as a rude manner, is not in good taste."

Uncle Benjamin wagged a reproving finger at the red-faced porter.

"M-my heye!"

"Remember," urged Uncle Benjamin, "that, after all, he is your brother——"

"What?" roared the porter.

"In fact, we are all brothers," nodded Uncle Benjamin firmly.

"Not much we hain't!" sniffed the porter, with a withering look at the leopard-skin-clad figure of the man from Woolla-Woolla. "I don't think!"

With an indignant snort he rolled away along the platform. Uncle Benjamin laid a kindly hand on the massive shoulder of his black protege, and propelled him towards the station exit.

The duffer of Greyfriars followed, his simple face lit by a beaming smile.

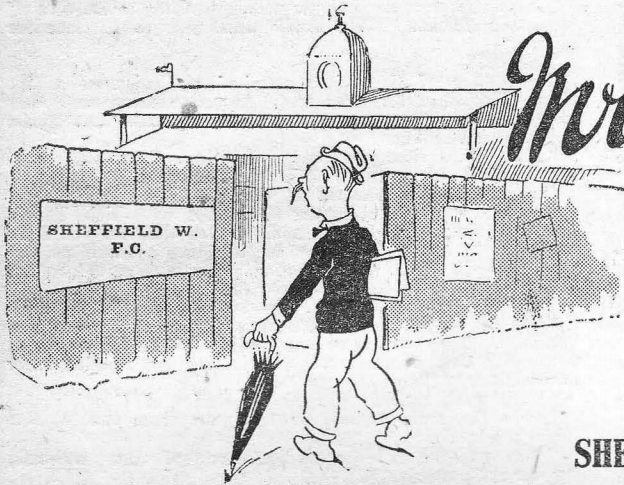
Under his arm Alonzo Todd was carrying a well-worn book—an old present from Uncle Benjamin—entitled: "The Story of a Potato—from the Seed to the Saucepan." Alonzo had read several chapters of this fascinating volume aloud on the journey, in the hope that its contents would assist in the education of Mr. Ugmumbo. Whether it had done so or not it was hard to tell, however. On having been asked if he had understood and enjoyed it, Mr. Ugmumbo had replied very doubtfully, "Oh lor!" which, according to Uncle Benjamin, meant "Very much indeed" in the language of the Woolla-Woolla Islanders.

"In his letter, Skimpole assured me that he would be at the station to meet us," murmured Alonzo, as the three emerged into the station yard. "As yet, however, I fail to observe him."

He blinked round.

The station yard was empty. An ancient cab was rolling out of the gates, bearing with it the only other passenger that the train had deposited at Rylcombe. There was no other cab, and there was no sign of Herbert Skimpole of St. Jim's.

(Continued on page 12.)



Mr. Parker POPS IN

TO SEE
SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY.

Now, what do you think of the way Mr. "Nosey" Parker gets hold of his information? Cute! Well, he's got a lot to say about the famous Wednesday this week.

HAVE you ever thought seriously about the ups and downs of football teams? Here's a story to remind you. A few years back I had to go to Hillsborough. That's where Sheffield Wednesday play. In those days the club was right down in the dumps, and you may take it from me not very far off the rocks.

A director took me in hand when I called that day some seven or eight years ago. He showed me all round the offices of the club—wonderful! He showed me the dressing-rooms, equally wonderful, and he showed me the mighty terraces and the wonderful stands which were around a beautiful green playing-pitch.

"You've got everything a football club could want," I said to this Wednesday director.

Then he made the sort of noise which usually accompanies the swallowing of one's own Adam's apple, and replied huskily: "You're wrong, Nosey. There is just one thing we haven't got here, and that's a football team."

TOP DOGS NOW!

The remark was made in such a plaintive tone that I almost had to wipe a tear from the corner of my own eye. But that was a few years back. When I poked my nose into the Hillsborough ground the other day I met the same director, and his ears were in danger of being split by his broad smile. He didn't show me the offices any more: the dressing-rooms or the green patch on which the lads couldn't play football for little apples. He took me to a certain point of vantage and pointed a finger. I knew what he was pointing at almost without looking—the flag which denotes that Sheffield Wednesday are the champions of the First Division. How proudly it flutters over that Hillsborough ground. What a fine sight! And the contrast from just a few years back when that director said: "We've got everything except a football team."

Well, Sheffield Wednesday have a football team now all right. Though the director wore a broad smile, it was no broader than that which I noticed on the face of Jimmy Seed when I bumped into him at the entrance to the dressing-room. Jimmy won't like me saying so, I know, but it is my honest conviction that he did more than any other player to help the Wednesday win the championship last season. He was the skipper for one thing; he was the master tactician for another; and on top of it all he was dead keen to show some good folk at Tottenham that they made a mistake when they parted with him thinking that he was nearly finished.

THE INSPIRATION!

The really funny part about Wednesday now holding the title of League champions is that they came so desperately near to having to struggle in the Second Division last season. In the season before last, everything went wrong for the Wednesday for a long time; so wrong that they seemed doomed to drop into League II.

The situation was such that, for some weeks, the newspaper critics only discussed this question: Which club will go down into the Second Division with the Wednesday? Then a strange thing happened. About Easter-time, the Sheffield players went to Tottenham, and that was where Jimmy Seed was specially anxious that the lads he captained should do well. And the Wednesday won at Tottenham.

That was a bit of sugar for the lads, but they didn't regard it as anything else—certainly not as the spring of a new hope! But when the match was over, one of the directors went to the players with a newspaper in his hand containing the League table up to date.

"Now, look here, lads," he said. "I've been working it out, and it is still possible for us to escape the big drop into the Second Division. All that you have got to do, is to win practically every match."

The players smiled; it seemed such a hopeless proposition.

"How are we going to win every match?" asked one of the players. Quick as lightning came the reply:

"Merely by playing as well as you did to-day."

And then, somebody asked:

"Are we down-hearted?" To that question there was a cheery and a long-drawn-out "No!" From that very day the Wednesday went from victory to victory, and managed to escape the drop into the Second Division. I have told the story of the inspiration for the first time. Now just to complete the joke: make it a very good one, shall I tell you the club which went down when Wednesday stayed up? It was Tottenham Hotspur. But to return to the players.

Seed plays the piano, and I'll let you into a secret. He has taught some of the Sheffield lads to sing as well as given them certain lessons in football. But I'll tell you another secret, too. Judging from what I heard one night, Jimmy has been more successful as a football teacher than a singing master. I am not going to tell you the names of the Sheffield players I heard trying to sing, but as I didn't want anything to happen to the Wednesday team, and as they were trying to entertain me, I wrote a big notice and put it outside the door: "Don't shoot! They're doing their best."

A GOOD IDEA!

—And I would certainly hate them to get an idea that they can't sing, because they are such a happy band of fellows, these Hillsborough boys. Manager "Bob" Brown is proud of them, as he has every right to be. He has done some good things—brave things, too—in making the Wednesday team as we know it to-day. He had certain forwards on the staff—Strange, Leach, and Marsden. Now each of these fellows have become half-backs, and the line is nearly the best in the country. Here's an idea I commend to all managers. If your cards are not turning up well, give them a shuffle.

Trainer Chris Craig knows what he is about too. He knows how to work the lads up to concert pitch—this has no reference to the singing aforementioned—and he is a great believer in pace. I overheard him say to one lad who was going round the track leisurely: "You won't win the Schneider Cup at that pace." As a matter of fact, Craig would have made a good trainer for a Schneider Cup team, because he does make them go. The Wednesday are the fastest lot of footballers I have seen for many a day.

Watch those wingers—little Mark Hooper, for instance, along the right wing. There isn't much of him, and I am told that for a joke the other players sometimes get him a "child's" ticket to travel on the railways. Centre-forward Allen dreams of scoring goals, and so I asked him what was the secret of his success.

THE SHORTEST WAY!

He took me to a spot somewhere about the middle of the field. "You stand there," he said, "and when the ball comes you go there—just like this." By there he meant to the net, and his finger didn't wobble as he explained himself. That's Allen all over. He knows that by trying to get to a certain place zig-zag you take longer than if you go straight. And so he goes straight. That's the Sheffield goal-scoring motto all the time—that the shortest way to goal is the best. Not too artistic you may say. Perhaps not, but jolly effective.

Of course, much of the time of the other lads is spent in mid-week in trying to make a real Englishman out of the one Scot in the side—Walker, the left full-back. I don't think they will ever succeed, for he can cap every joke which is made at his expense. At least, they agree that he can do this, though I suspect that they do not always see the point of Walker's jokes.

Two defenders—Blenkinsop, the left-back, and Brown, the goalkeeper—have played for England. In a word they are real blades every one—as sharp as they make 'em even in Sheffield.

There is another team in Sheffield, of course, and as I wanted to poke my nose into the United headquarters, I innocently asked the way. But they wouldn't tell me. "You've found the team that matters in Sheffield," I was told, "so you can get out, and don't put us in the paper at the same time as the United."

"NOSEY."

SKIMPOLE'S SIMPLE SAVAGE!

(Continued from page 10.)

"Dear me!" murmured Uncle Benjamin. "I fear your friend is late, Alonzo. Tut-tut!"

Uncle Benjamin disapproved strongly of people who were late for appointments. He shook his head sadly.

There was a sudden exclamation from Ugmumbo.

"Lookah there!"

Alonzo and Uncle Benjamin looked.

Four fellows, evidently St. Jim's juniors, had come hurrying into the station yard. They were strangers to Alonzo, however.

But what surprised Alonzo Todd and his uncle was the fact that the newcomers were leading by the bridle three rather restive donkeys, complete with saddles.

The St. Jim's juniors hurried up breathlessly to the strangely assorted trio.

Their faces were very apologetic and grave, though at first sight of Alonzo Todd and his uncle, and Ugmumbo in his leopard-skin, they had seemed to be struggling with some peculiar emotion.

The four halted before them and raised their caps with a flourish.

"Alonzo Todd of Greyfriars?" queried one of them.

Alonzo beamed.

"Yes, indeed, I—"

"Good egg! My name's Racke. Skimmy sent us along to meet you."

"Dear me! I trust—"

"He wasn't able to come himself, after all," explained Racke vaguely; "so he asked us if we'd meet you instead. We—ahem!—we're great pals of dear old Skimmy's—"

"Rather!" nodded Crooke solemnly. "Inseparables!"

"This is very kind of you, boys!" beamed Uncle Benjamin.

"The pleasure is ours," said Mellish blandly.

"You see," put in Racke, "we're all frightfully interested in meeting Mr.—er—Ugmumbo! Our great hobby at St. Jim's is the study of the mind of savages, our black brothers—"

He was interrupted by an explosive sound from Gore, hastily checked. Racke shot him a frowning look, and Gore recovered himself with an effort.

But Uncle Benjamin had noticed nothing; he was beaming genially.

"I am delighted to meet boys with such excellent and thoughtful interests!" he exclaimed. "Delighted!"

"Thank you!" said Racke gratefully. "I am afraid there are some boys at St. Jim's who care nothing for such subjects. But we—ah!"

"We're all out for uplifting niggers—I—I mean, coloured gentlemen!" gasped Crooke.

"Boost the black—that's our motto," nodded Gore.

"Oh, rather!"

"And we—welcome this opportunity of coming face to face with a real live savage more than we can say," said Racke blandly.

"My dear boys!" beamed Uncle Benjamin. "Splendid—splendid!"

"I wish some of the boys at Greyfriars could hear you say so," sighed Alonzo Todd. "Some of them, such as Bolsover, have done nothing but make fun since my Uncle Benjamin came to stay at the school with Mr. Ugmumbo."

"Shocking!" gasped Mellish.

Apparently the man from Woolla-Woolla thought it was time he joined in the conversation.

"Ug!—Woozie galoooh?" remarked Ugmumbo inquiringly.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Racke in a choking voice.

"What for dese donks?" inquired Ugmumbo in his very doubtful English, pointing an ebony finger at the three donkeys.

"He is inquiring the purpose of these three animals you have with you, my dear fellows," explained Alonzo Todd.

"What, Neddy & Co?" cried Racke. "As a matter of fact, they are for you."

"For us?" echoed Alonzo in astonishment.

Racke nodded gravely.

"Absolutely. We guessed that you might not be able to get a cab, and we couldn't possibly allow you to walk to the school, of course. So we hired these mokes—"

"We want you to arrive at St. Jim's in style, you see, sir," explained Mellish to Uncle Benjamin.

"Exactly!" agreed Racke in his blandest tone.

"You are very, very kind!" gasped Alonzo Todd.

"Oh, not at all!"

Alonzo eyed the donkeys very doubtfully. So did Uncle Benjamin. The donkeys did not look the mildest and best-tempered of animals.

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"If you three will climb on we'll get along to St. Jim's," suggested Racke. "We don't want you to be late for dinner."

"Ahem!"

The duffer of Greyfriars coughed and glanced at his Uncle Benjamin for guidance. Alonzo, clearly, was very reluctant indeed to mount one of the animals that Racke & Co. were holding.

"I feel sure that you are an excellent rider, sir," murmured Racke flatteringly to Uncle Benjamin.

Uncle Benjamin beamed at him.

If there was one thing in the world on which Todd's Uncle Benjamin prided himself, it was that he could do anything in the sporting or athletic line as well as any youngster—in fact, rather better! He was certainly not going to be beaten by a donkey-ride.

"Splendid, my dear boy!" he exclaimed. "It is most thoughtful of you to provide these animals for our convenience. They will save our limbs considerably—and, as you point out, we must not be late for the midday meal at St. Jim's! Come, Alonzo."

"Very well, uncle!" gasped the duffer of Greyfriars.

Uncle Benjamin turned to the man from the Woolla-Woolla Islands.

"You will be able to navigate one of these animals, my dear Ugmumbo?"

"Oh, yum-yum! Yess!" agreed Ugmumbo, with a flashing smile.

"But how about you fellows?" inquired Alonzo Todd.

"I trust—"

"That's all right," grinned Racke. "We'll follow on foot, you know. We'll keep up with you, I dare say—"

"We're—ahem—very athletic chaps, you see," explained Gore.

"Oh, rather!" nodded Crooke.

"Then let us—er—mount these beasts of burden," beamed Uncle Benjamin. "Come, Ugmumbo. Come, my dear Alonzo."

"Um!" grunted Ugmumbo.

"Very well, uncle!" gasped the duffer of Greyfriars.

And with a very doubtful look in his simple countenance Alonzo Todd gingerly approached one of the donkeys.

"Allow me to help you up," murmured Racke kindly.

Alonzo put his foot in the stirrup. Racke grasped him and hoisted him up.

Crooke was holding the bridle, but the donkey did not stand quietly to be mounted. It slithered sideways, with a snort, and Alonzo Todd gave a yell as he found himself sprawling face downwards across the donkey's hairy back.

"Ow! Oh, dear!" gasped Alonzo wildly.

"You're all right!" Racke reassured him.

"Oh! I greatly fear I am not all right! Ow! Something tells me that at any moment I shall be deposited on the ground!" puffed the duffer of Greyfriars.

Alonzo was a true prophet.

The donkey twisted and kicked out, and Alonzo went flying. He was thrown clean into the arms of Uncle Benjamin, and the wildly waving arms of his beloved nephew clasped that genial old gentleman round the neck.

Uncle Benjamin staggered and lost his balance altogether. Crash! Bump!

"Oh!"

Uncle Benjamin sat down with a resounding concussion, in the dust, with Alonzo sprawling breathlessly on top of him.

"Oh—oh, dear!"

The St. Jim's juniors repressed their inward mirth with a tremendous effort.

"Hard luck!" murmured Aubrey Racke, helping Alonzo to his feet, while Mellish assisted Uncle Benjamin. "Better luck next time."

"I—I really feel that I should prefer to walk!" gasped Alonzo.

Uncle Benjamin, still a little breathless, shook his head at his nephew.

"Tut—tut, my dear Alonzo! How many times have I impressed upon you the old adage 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!'"

"Come on," grinned Racke. "I'll give you a leg-up again."

Alonzo groaned inwardly. But he submitted to his fate. Once more he was given a "leg-up" on to the donkey's back.

This time he managed somehow to get into the saddle, where he clung precariously, and gasped.

Ugmumbo had watched the proceeding with a gleaming smile, his white teeth shining like ivory in his black countenance.

"Goodah egg!" he grunted approvingly.

He jumped on to the back of one of the other two donkeys, and sat there grinning with childish glee. Uncle Benjamin approached the last of the three.

"All aboard, sir!" grinned Gore, who was holding the bridle, as the old gentleman scrambled into the saddle.

"I fancy I shall be able to show you youngsters a thing

or two in donkey-riding!" beamed Uncle Benjamin. "In my younger days—oh!"

The donkey apparently objected to Uncle Benjamin's weight. Or else it was tired. At any rate, it calmly lay down, and Uncle Benjamin was tipped sideways from the saddle.

"Oh!" gasped Uncle Benjamin. "D-dear me!" The donkey, relieved of its burden, rose lazily to its feet again. Uncle Benjamin rose, too—rather painfully.

Strange choking noises were coming from Racke & Co. But Uncle Benjamin was not beaten yet. He mounted again, and this time the donkey resigned itself to the inevitable.

"Now for St. Jim's!" gasped Racke. "Ha, ha, ha!" Croke, Mellish, and Gore chuckled—but they were quiet chuckles, unheard by the visitors.

It certainly looked as though a treat were in store for St. Jim's!

CHAPTER 7.

Donkeys for Three!

"O H, dear!" Alonzo Todd gasped.

The three donkeys were trotting leisurely along Rylcombe Lane, with their oddly assorted burdens. Racke & Co., hurrying along behind, were able at last to give way to paroxysms of mirth, unseen by Alonzo & Co.

Ugmumbo, with the tail of his leopard-skin waving in the breeze, was going along in fine style. Uncle Benjamin, too, though he was puffing somewhat, was keeping his seat well enough.

But Alonzo Todd did not seem to be enjoying his ride at all!

"Ow! Oh! Oh, dear!" With every step of the donkeys, Alonzo jolted painfully, till he felt that he had hardly another breath left in his body.

Racke, suppressing his chuckles, hurried to Alonzo's side. "Comfy?" inquired Racke.

"Ow!" Alonzo gasped. "I should be glad to reply in the affirmative, my d-dear Racke, but regard for the truth compels me to state that I am not comfortable! I—oh!"

Unable to keep his seat any longer on the back of the trotting donkey, Alonzo slid forward. His arms shot out wildly, clasping the animal round the neck.

"Oh! Oh, dear! R-rescue!" panted the duffer of Greyfriars. "My dear Racke, I beg you to assist me! I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Croke, Mellish and Gore were gurgling with stifled laughter.

"Ride him, cowboy!" gasped Gore. "Yaroooooh!"

There was a wild yell from Alonzo Todd.

The donkey, disliking the duffer of Greyfriars' affectionate embrace, had kicked up its heels, and Alonzo shot forward over its ears. He landed in the dust of Rylcombe Lane with a hearty concussion.

"Ow! Oh! Goodness gracious!" Alonzo sat dazedly in the road, blinking at a regular solar system of stars that seemed to be circling before his eyes.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Croke, Mellish and Gore shrieked.

"My—my dear fellows—" "Shut up, you asses!" muttered Racke, glaring at his hilarious chums. "Chuck cackling, or they'll twig we're pulling their blessed legs, you dummies!"

Racke turned to help Alonzo Todd to his feet. But he found that Uncle Benjamin had jumped from his own steed in order to go to the aid of his nephew.

"My—my dear Alonzo!" gasped Uncle Benjamin anxiously. "I trust you are not injured? I—oh! Yooow!"

Uncle Benjamin did not finish his inquiries. He had been bending over Alonzo Todd, and the sight of his broad trouser seat had apparently been a tempting one for Alonzo's donkey. It landed a hearty kick—and Uncle Benjamin shot forward with a yell, and sprawled in the dust.

It was too much even for Racke. He doubled up, shrieking with mirth. His three cronies were already helpless with laughter.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Racke. "Ha, ha, ha!" Simple though Alonzo Todd and his uncle were, as they staggered to their feet and found the St. Jim's juniors yelling with mirth, they began to realise that Racke & Co. were not really so solicitous for their comfort as they had appeared.

A stern frown darkened the face of Uncle Benjamin. He seemed about to speak, but swung on his heel, turning his back coldly upon the shrieking juniors.

"Come, Alonzo!" sniffed Uncle Benjamin. "We will leave these youths. I fear they have deceived us, and that they are most unpleasant persons. Let us pursue our own way to St. James' School!"

Alonzo wagged a bony forefinger at Racke & Co. "I am shocked—nay disgusted," exclaimed the duffer of Greyfriars. "Evidently your whole behaviour has been calculated to provide amusement for yourselves at our expense. I can only trust that you will reflect upon your conduct, and realise that it is only to be characterised as exceedingly reprehensible."

Alonzo turned and followed Uncle Benjamin, leaving the four japers still breathless with merriment.

Their plan to bring Alonzo Todd & Co. riding into the quad at St. Jim's on donkeys had failed, after all. But they had certainly had plenty of fun out of them, at any rate!

Racke straightened himself with an effort. Suddenly he gave an exclamation of dismay.

The donkeys would have to be returned to the farmer from whom they had been hired—otherwise there would be trouble. Two of the animals were cropping the grass contentedly by the roadside. But the beast ridden by Ugmumbo had vanished, with its rider, round the distant bend, during the downfall of Alonzo Todd!

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Racke. Alonzo and Uncle Benjamin, too, had suddenly remembered Ugmumbo. They had vanished round the bend in pursuit of him.

A long way up the lane, in the direction of the gates of St. Jim's, a galloping figure could be seen.

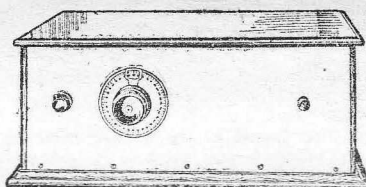
The man from Woolla-Woolla was apparently enjoying his ride! He was heading for St. Jim's at a rousing pace.

CHAPTER 8.

Ugmumbo Arrives!

"HALLO, hallo! Listen!" The Terrible Three of the Shell had just emerged from Study No. 10. They were moving towards the stairs, intending to punt a footer about in the Close for a few minutes while waiting for

(Continued on next page.)



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the dinner-bell, when Monty Lowther suddenly halted and exclaimed:

"Hear that?"

Tom Merry and Manners listened. The captain of the Shell shook his head.

"Blessed if I can—"

"Sssh! There it is again!"

Tom Merry & Co. strained their ears. This time Tom and Manners caught the sound that Monty Lowther's ears had detected before—a faint, far-away shout.

"He-e-elp!"

"What the dickens—" began Manners.

"It came from up there!" exclaimed Lowther excitedly, nodding up the stairs that led to the box-rooms. "Come on!"

A moment later the Terrible Three were hurrying up the stairs. As they neared the landing at the top, they heard again the mysterious shout, in a tremulous, high-pitched voice.

"Help! Rescue!"

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "There's someone in the big box-room!"

The three chums of the Shell hurried to the door at the far end of the landing. From within came the excited voice of Herbert Skimpole.

"Rescue! Pray unlock the door! I have been locked in—"

It was the work of a moment for Tom Merry to unlock the door and fling it open. The glimmering spectacles of the freak of the Shell gazed out at the Terrible Three as they stared in.

"Thank you!" gasped Skimpole.

"How on earth did you get locked in here?" demanded Manners in astonishment.

"I—I was the victim of a trick!" panted Skimpole. He hurried out on to the landing. Under his skinny arm he was carrying a book, which Tom Merry & Co. recognised as being the famous work of Professor Piffler. "I utterly fail to understand their purpose; but Racke & Co. lured me up here with a false story, and locked me in!"

"Racke & Co.?" echoed Monty Lowther. "Why on earth—"

"I was about to go to the station to meet Alonzo Todd of Greyfriars, his Uncle Benjamin, and their black protege," explained Skimpole breathlessly. "They had professed their intention of accompanying me. But—"

"My hat!" breathed Tom Merry.

It was clear enough to the Terrible Three now.

They realised that Racke & Co. could have no desire to meet Skimpole's guests unless they had planned some jape in connection with their arrival at St. Jim's.

Tom Merry's face went grim.

Everyone at St. Jim's had heard of the coming visit of Alonzo Todd and his companions—and most of the fellows had been considerably amused at the thought of the Woolla-Woolla Islander being brought to the school. Tom Merry & Co. had chuckled over the story, with the others.

But however eccentric and amusing Skimpole's visitors might be, they were, after all, to be guests of St. Jim's. To jape Alonzo Todd and his uncle when they arrived with their "pet savage," as Monty Lowther had put it, was scarcely "the thing," in the opinion of Tom Merry & Co. They felt that it would be thoroughly discreditable to St. Jim's for such a thing to happen!

That the cads of the School House would have no such scruples they knew. Hence Tom Merry's anxious frown.

He grasped the freak of the Shell by the arm.

"Quick!" he rapped out. "Come on, Skimmy! Come on, you chaps! There may be time to stop Racke & Co. even yet!"

"You really think that Racke would stoop to some reprehensible behaviour with Alonzo Todd and his uncle?" gasped Skimpole aghast.

"Of course, you dummy!"

"Oh dear! B-but—"

"Come on!"

The next moment the Terrible Three and the freak of the Shell were hurrying down the stairs.

In his heart, Tom Merry felt that it was scarcely likely that they could be in time to prevent Racke & Co. from trying some little game with Skimpole's visitors. But they might, at any rate, be in time to rescue Alonzo & Co. from the clutches of the cads of the School House.

The four emerged from the School House doorway and hurried out into the quad.

Monty Lowther gave a quick exclamation.

"Look!"

A big crowd was gathered by the school gates. Yells of mirth came to the ears of the Terrible Three and Herbert Skimpole as they crossed quickly towards the gates. Something seemed to be amusing the crowd.

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"What the thump—" gasped Manners.

As Tom Merry & Co. ran up, the crowd divided, evidently to make way for somebody or something.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The shrieks of merriment were almost deafening. Seniors and juniors alike were laughing helplessly.

"What the dickens—"

"My hat!"

Tom Merry & Co. stopped dead.

A strange figure had appeared, racing in through the big gates. A huge black man, clad chiefly in a leopard-skin, his eyes goggling widely in his ebony countenance, came rushing wildly into the quad. Tom Merry & Co. had no difficulty in guessing correctly that this was the famous Woolla-Woolla Islander whom Alonzo Todd of Greyfriars was bringing to St. Jim's.

Though he was a fierce-looking individual, at the present

As Gore lost his balance and sat down heavily on the bench, there was a wild yell from Percy Mellish. Gore's weight caused the bench to shoot up at the other end, and Mellish was sent flying through the air, to come down with a mighty splash in the waters of the Rhyl. Splash! "Yaroooooh!"

(See Chapter 4.)



moment the man from the Woolla-Woolla Islands seemed to be very scared indeed. The reason of his fright was soon clear enough.

Some yards behind his racing figure there followed a large donkey, with glaring eyes and savage-looking teeth. It was chasing the Woolla-Woolla man, and evidently meant business.

Behind the donkey, panting and gasping in a wild attempt to catch it, came the skinny figure of Alonzo Todd of Greyfriars. On the heels of Alonzo there followed Uncle Benjamin, running hard. And bringing up the rear of that strange chase came the figures of Aubrey Racke, Percy Mellish, Gerald Crooke, and George Gore.

In a long line, that amazing procession, headed by the gentleman in the leopard-skin, came pouring into the quad through the gates of St. Jim's.

And the St. Jim's fellows fairly yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, ye cripples!"

"It's the blessed nigger!"

"And Alonzo Todd!"

"And Uncle Benny!"

"Hurrah!"

The man from Woolla-Woolla gave a despairing yell, and bolted wildly across the quad in the direction of the School House. The donkey followed, evidently intent upon registering a good bite somewhere on that black anatomy. Alonzo Todd heroically followed the donkey, and Uncle

Benjamin came galloping along in the road. Behind them all came Racke & Co., dismay upon their faces.

Racke & Co. had to recapture their donkey, or there would be trouble for them with the farmer from whom it had been hired. But at the moment they looked very unlikely indeed to catch it.

"Oh lor!" wailed the man from Woolla-Woolla. "Help!"

Evidently his English was sufficient for the occasion—a fact which should have caused great satisfaction to Uncle Benjamin.



"YOUR MOVE, MELLISH!"

"Dear me!" gasped Alonzo. "I—I greatly fear I am unable to overtake the brute! Pray stop the fractious quadruped, somebody!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

No one seemed inclined to stop the donkey.

"Neddy's got his rag out properly!" grinned Cardew of the Fourth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. joined in the laughter. They could not help it. Though they guessed that the donkey was part of Racke & Co.'s little scheme for japing Skimpole's guests, and were very wrathful with Racke, they could not help but shriek with laughter as that strange procession careered across the quad.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a sudden startled exclamation from Levison of the Fourth:

"My hat! The Head!"

The tall, impressive figure of Dr. Holmes had appeared at the top of the School House steps, gazing at the streaming chase that was taking place in the quad, with frowning surprise.

"Bless my soul!" he gasped.

The man from Woolla-Woolla, with the angry donkey in hot pursuit, was heading straight for the School House steps, where the astonished figure of Dr. Holmes stood full in his path.

CHAPTER 9.

Skimpole's Guests!

WHAT the Head's feelings were on seeing a wild-looking black man rushing in his direction pursued by an infuriated donkey, which in turn was being pursued by the peculiar figure of Alonzo Todd, only Dr. Holmes himself could have said.

In any case, the headmaster of St. Jim's had little time to analyse his own feelings, if it came to that.

Before he realised his danger, the dignified old Head was cannoned into full tilt by the gentleman from Woolla-Woolla. Dr. Holmes did not actually sit down on the steps, but he came very near to doing so.

He staggered, with a gasp, against the stone balustrade as the man from Woolla-Woolla clutched him frantically round the neck.

"Help!" gasped Mr. Ugmumbo. "Oh lor!"

"B-bless my soul!" panted Dr. Holmes. "Oh!"

The donkey came to a halt at last. It stopped at the foot of the steps, snorting, and wagged its ears angrily, glaring balefully at the skin-clad figure of its quarry.

"He-e-e-eeee haw!"

At sound of the donkey's triumphant bray, Mr. Ugmumbo clasped the Head tighter than ever.

"Ug!" wailed Ugmumbo. "Oh! Ow! Yooglemuzzook!"

"Y-yooglemuzzook?" echoed the Head dazedly.

"Gollibanana!" gasped Ugmumbo. "Yow! Him donk not like black feller! Him throw black feller off, and try bite black feller! Ow!"

"P-pray release me!" panted the Head faintly. "I—I sympathise with your nervousness regarding the animal, but I would be glad if you would release me at once!"

Ugmumbo relinquished his affectionate clasp. The Head straightened his mortar-board a little dazedly.

"Whose—whose is this animal?" he exclaimed breathlessly.

By now Alonzo Todd had arrived at the foot of the steps, and made a gingerly attempt to catch hold of the donkey's bridle. But Neddy was not to be caught so easily. He kicked up his heels and trotted off, with a defiant bray.

The headmaster of St. Jim's fixed Alonzo Todd with a gleaming eye.

"Is that your animal, sir?" he thundered. "Whoever you are, is that your animal?"

"Animal, sir?" gasped Alonzo.

"Yes!" cried the Head, a majestic anger in his tone. "Are you responsible for bringing that horrible beast into the quadrangle?"

"Quadrangle, sir?" echoed Alonzo Todd.

"Yes! Are you the offender?"

"Offender, sir?"

When he was nervous, Alonzo Todd of Greyfriars had a peculiar habit of repeating what was said to him, in a parrot-like fashion, instead of giving an answer. Dr. Locke of Greyfriars was well acquainted with Alonzo's peculiar habit, but Dr. Holmes of St. Jim's was not. He stared at Alonzo Todd.

"Do not repeat my words in that absurd manner, boy!" thundered the Head.

"M-manner, sir?"

"Is this an insolent joke?" demanded Dr. Holmes, with a terrible frown.

"Joke, sir?" gasped Alonzo.

The Head gasped, too.

"I see from your cap that you are a Greyfriars boy!" he exclaimed, with compressed lips. "I shall write to your headmaster!"

Dr. Holmes turned majestically and sailed into the House with rustling gown.

Alonzo Todd looked round him very unhappily. Tom Merry went up to him.

"Where on earth did you get that donkey from?" he inquired.

"Donkey!"

"Eh?" roared Tom. "Who are you calling a donkey?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors, gathered round in an excited crowd, shrieked. They found Alonzo funny.

Herbert Skimpole came squeezing through the crowd, and grasped Alonzo Todd's hand warmly.

"My dear Alonzo—"

"My—my dear Skimpole! We have arrived!" gasped Alonzo, his unhappy expression changing to a beaming smile.

"So we realise!" chuckled Talbot.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We have had a somewhat adventurous journey from the station," exclaimed the duffer of Greyfriars, "but we have at last arrived! My Uncle Benjamin is there on the steps, with Mr. Ugmumbo, of Woolla-Woolla!"

At that moment the dinner-bell sounded. The grinning St. Jim's fellows dispersed very reluctantly.

with many chuckles. Skimpole took charge of his guests, very proudly, and led them into the School House.

It was not often that fellows had visitors for dinner. But on such occasions it was possible to get permission to be absent from the meal in Hall; and Skimpole had arranged with Dame Taggles for an excellent cold dinner in his study. He had already asked Reginald Talbot to join the party, and in the hall the freak of the Shell tapped Tom Merry on the arm and eagerly inquired if the Terrible Three would care to join them, too.

Tom Merry & Co. agreed readily.

Five minutes later, in Study No. 9, the Terrible Three and Reginald Talbot, Herbert Skimpole, and his three guests were sitting down to the meal.

Uncle Benjamin beamed round the table at the St. Jim's fellows.

"This is indeed a happy little gathering!" he exclaimed.

"Rather, sir!" agreed Tom Merry politely, with a grin.

"I confess," murmured Alonzo Todd, "that after my unwonted amount of exercise in pursuit of that angry quarrelled, I am in possession of a truly voracious appetite."

He glanced at the man from Woolla-Woolla.

"I trust you are enjoying an equally healthy appetite, my dear Mr. Ugmumbo?"

"Ug!" nodded the gentleman in the leopard-skin. "Wug! Boooy-wooyoy!"

He flashed a gleaming smile round the table, and licked his lips. Skimpole started nervously.

"I—I trust there are no cannibalistic tendencies in the inhabitants of Woolla-Woolla?" he whispered to Alonzo Todd.

"I fear that cannibal feasts are not unknown there," answered Alonzo regretfully. "But my Uncle Benjamin has lectured him most severely upon the shocking, nay, disgusting habit of cannibalism—"

He was interrupted by Mr. Ugmumbo.

"What am him?" inquired Mr. Ugmumbo, pointing a black finger at the cold beef. "Nice fat boy?"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Manners, under his breath.

Uncle Benjamin gazed at his black protege reproachfully.

"My dear Mr. Ugmumbo! That is beef—"

"Nice fat boy heap much nicer!" grinned Mr. Ugmumbo, licking his lips, his eyes fastened on Herbert Skimpole.

The freak of the Shell was not fat; he was, in fact, distinctly skinny. But it certainly looked as though his black visitor rather fancied a meal off him. Skimpole coughed very nervously, and glanced at the door as though measuring his distance if it came to rapid flight.

"I—I should be obliged if you would carve the meat, Talbot!" gasped the freak of the Shell. "A—a particularly large helping for Mr. Ugmumbo!"

Talbot chuckled. So did Tom Merry & Co.

It was evidently Skimpole's idea to take the edge off Mr. Ugmumbo's appetite as soon as possible!

Alonzo Todd glanced round the table.

"After dinner, before you fellows have to go to classes, I should very much like to read to you for a while from a most fascinating volume I have brought with me, entitled: 'The Story of a Potato,' which contains much valuable information in a light and readable form. I read some of it aloud during the journey from Greyfriars. Mr. Ugmumbo was delighted—"

"Grooooh!" answered Mr. Ugmumbo guardedly, busy with beef and potatoes.

It was difficult for the Terrible Three and Reginald Talbot to keep grave during that meal.

To hear Alonzo Todd, of Greyfriars, and Herbert Skimpole, of St. Jim's, in conversation with one another was rather like listening to a couple of talking dictionaries, as Monty Lowther afterwards remarked. Uncle Benjamin, too, was quite the funniest uncle in the juniors' experience.

But Mr. Ugmumbo, of the Woolla-Woolla Islands, was the star turn in the opinion of Tom Merry & Co.

His table-manners were more suited to his native isles than to a civilised meal—but there was no doubt that he enjoyed his dinner, nevertheless. Crumming food into his mouth in a way that evidently shocked Uncle Benjamin, he grunted and grinned and gurgled strange words in Woolla-Woollian, in evident satisfaction.

Herbert Skimpole was certainly getting all the opportunity he could have wished for to study a member of the savage races at close quarters.

The freak of the Shell had produced a note-book, and in it he kept jotting down the results of his keen observation of his black guest. He did not eat much. He was far too busy studying Mr. Ugmumbo!

"Most interesting!" he kept murmuring, his eyes gleaming delightedly behind his glimmering spectacles. "Most interesting."

The meal over at last, Alonzo beamed round at the others.

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"Now, you must hear some chapters of my book, 'The Story of a Potato!' exclaimed the duffer of Greyfriars. "It traces the whole period of the potato's existence, from the seed to the saucepan. It is a most thrilling narrative, and—"

"We shall all be delighted, my dear Alonzo!" nodded Skimpole. "Pray take that seat by the window there, and—why, my dear fellows! You are not departing?"

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther had sidled towards the door. They glanced round guiltily as Skimpole called after them in great surprise.

"Hem!" Tom Merry coughed. "Fraid we must be getting along, Skimmy!"

"But surely you wish to hear Alonzo read to us about the potato?" exclaimed the freak of the Shell.

"Oh, rather!" gasped Manners. "But the fact is, duty calls! French this afternoon, you know—and I've got to look over my prep, to make sure of it!"

"Same here!" nodded Monty Lowther, his hand on the door-handle.

Tom Merry, it appeared, also had to go over his French prep before afternoon lessons. So, it seemed, had Talbot. According to Talbot, he would only interrupt Alonzo Todd's fascinating discourse were he to remain in the study and go over his French exercise there.

"I'll do it in Tom Merry's study," mumbled Talbot.

He opened the door hastily, with a nervous glance at the book that Alonzo Todd was already opening.

"How very unfortunate!" exclaimed Alonzo Todd, in a disappointed tone. "I am sure you would have been very thrilled by this book—"

"Sure to have been!" nodded Manners hurriedly, edging into the passage. "But work before pleasure, you know!"

"Exactly—exactly!" Uncle Benjamin nodded approvingly. "I am delighted to meet boys who are so fond of their work as to sacrifice their pleasure in this way!"

"Ahem!"

"Ug! Umzeebanooonah!" grunted Mr. Ugmumbo, eyeing the duffer of Greyfriars and his book with a rolling eye.

Skimpole whipped out his notebook, and jotted down the word hastily for future reference.

"Well, so long!" grinned Tom Merry.

And the Terrible Three left the study with Reginald Talbot, leaving Skimpole, Uncle Benjamin, and the man from the Woolla-Woolla Islands to settle down to the continuation of that thrilling book, "The Story of a Potato."

As Tom Merry closed the door, he fancied he heard a curious stifled groan from Ugmumbo. But if he did, the sound was drowned by the gurgles of laughter from Manners and Lowther and Talbot!

CHAPTER 10.

Skimmy's Brain-wave!

TAP!

Toby, the School House page, tapped on the door of Study No. 9 in the Shell passage.

It was tea-time, and Toby entered the study to find Reginald Talbot, Herbert Skimpole, Alonzo Todd of Greyfriars, Uncle Benjamin, and Mr. Ugmumbo gathered round the table.

After afternoon lessons, Skimpole had shown his guests round the old buildings of St. Jim's, accompanied by a crowd of juniors, who had been inclined to be hilarious. After their tour, Skimpole and his visitors were very ready for their tea, and the meal was going with a swing in Study No. 9.

"Which there's a telegram for Master Todd," grinned Toby, his eyes riveted on the ebony features of the man from Woolla-Woolla, who was busily devouring a huge slice of cake that Talbot had just cut for him.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Alonzo, in great surprise.

He took the telegram and opened it. As he read the wife a look of dismay appeared upon his countenance.

"Oh dear!"

"What is the matter, my dear Alonzo?" inquired Uncle Benjamin anxiously.

Alonzo gazed at his uncle in consternation.

"Oh dear! This telegraphic communication is from Dr. Locke of Greyfriars!" gasped Alonzo. "He seems to have taken exception to Mr. Ugmumbo's brief presence at Greyfriars, and has sent this telegram to state most definitely that I am not to bring Mr. Ugmumbo back to the school!"

There was a deathly silence in Study No. 9. Then Uncle Benjamin found his voice.

"B-bless my soul!"

"Oh dear! This—is this exceedingly awkward!" said the duffer of Greyfriars unhappily. "What ever are we to do?"

Uncle Benjamin glanced at Ugmumbo in a bewildered way as Toby withdrew.

It was certainly a difficult situation.

Ugmumbo was certainly not a gentleman for whom it would be easy to find quarters at short notice. His appearance was too unusual, to say the least of it. No hotel would permit him within its portals, it was pretty certain, and Uncle Benjamin's own home, to which he intended to take Ugmumbo in another day or two, had not yet been prepared for him again after his absence abroad.

"I have an idea!" It was Skimpole who spoke. There was a bright smile on the face of the freak of the Shell.

"Let Mr. Ugmumbo stay at St. Jim's for to-night!" beamed Skimpole.

"What?" ejaculated Talbot. "I fancy the scheme is practicable," said Skimpole eagerly. "He can sleep in this study—"

"M-my hat!" gasped Talbot. "What would Railton say?" "It is not necessary for Mr. Railton to know of the occurrence," said Skimpole in a determined voice.

"But—" Alonzo Todd interrupted Talbot. "That would be a splendid way out of the difficulty, my dear Skimpole!"

"Indeed it would!" cried Uncle Benjamin. "I can doubtless find rooms in the village for myself to-night, and to-morrow I will fetch Mr. Ugmumbo, to take him to my own house, which will be ready for occupation by then. Splendid!"

"Ug!" said Mr. Ugmumbo. "Woogles!"

"I trust, Mr. Ugmumbo, that you are comfortable?" Herbert Skimpole was looking very proud and pleased.

It was late that evening. Uncle Benjamin had gone to rooms he had procured in the village—rooms presided over by a grim old landlady who certainly would not have admitted Mr. Ugmumbo of Woolla-Woolla to her precincts for untold gold. Alonzo Todd, after taking an affectionate and long-winded farewell, had returned to Greyfriars, bearing with him his precious book, "The Story of a Potato."

Of Skimpole's guests Mr. Ugmumbo alone remained.

It was risky, allowing him to spend the night in the study. Such things were not allowed at St. Jim's. But Skimpole, in the cause of the noble movement for the uplifting of poor untutored savages, was ready to take far graver risks than that.

Talbot was in the secret, of course, and so were Tom Merry & Co.; but otherwise the St. Jim's fellows were ignorant of the fact that Skimpole's strange guest was spending the night in Study No. 9 of the Shell passage. Even Gore was not aware of the fact.

Skimpole, who was delighted at this further opportunity for studying the savage mind, concerning which he had read so much in Professor Piffler's wonderful work, was feeling very pleased with himself as he surveyed the comfortable bed that had been rigged up on the study floor. It was composed chiefly of cushions, some of them borrowed from Study No. 10; but it looked very comfortable.

Mr. Ugmumbo had nothing to grumble about concerning his sleeping quarters.

"Me very comfortable!" grinned Ugmumbo.

"This is splendid!" beamed the freak of the Shell. "I fear that I must leave you now, since the bell has gone, and I have to repair to my dormitory. I will leave you to go to bed and compose yourself to sleep. Perhaps it would be wiser for you to turn the key in the lock when I have gone." Remember, no one should know of your presence here.

"Wug!" murmured Ugmumbo, his white teeth flashing in his ebony countenance.

Skimpole dotted the word down in his notebook.

With a final reassuring smile at his ebony guest, the freak of the Shell left the study, and closed the door carefully behind him.

"Bed-time, young 'un!"

Eric Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, had appeared at the end of the passage.

"Indeed, I am just about to go to the dormitory, Kildare," replied Skimpole. "Good-night!"

And the freak of the Shell moved off up the stairs, his spectacles glimmering serenely.

CHAPTER 11.

A Shock for Mr. Linton!

GUGGLE! Guggle! Guggle! It was Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, who had been having a bath. The bath water was gurgling merrily out of the bath as he dried himself.

"Tooral, rooral, rooral!" hummed Mr. Linton, in musical mood, as he "stropped" his bony shoulder-blades with the towel.

In the opinion of most of the Shell, Mr. Linton was an

acid and short-tempered individual, if ever there was one. But Mr. Linton having a bath was a very different person from the Mr. Linton of the Form-room.

In a bath-room Mr. Linton was gaiety itself.

He finished drying himself, slipped his feet into his slippers, and picked up his dressing-gown—rather a gay affair of mauve and yellow, of which he was inclined to be proud—and then—

"Yarooogh!" gasped Mr. Linton.

He had stepped on the soap.

How it came to be on the floor at all he did not quite know. But it was, and as he stepped on it his feet shot from under him. Mr. Linton collapsed on the floor with a painful gasp, and the dressing-gown in his hands sailed through the air and landed in the bath.

Mr. Linton rose a little unsteadily to his feet. He gave an anguished yelp as he saw his gorgeous dressing-gown in the water.

He fished it out hastily. But it was too late. The gorgeous dressing-gown was soaked.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Linton. "How exceedingly unfortunate!"

Clearly it was impossible to don the dripping garment, but it was equally impossible to make his way to his bedroom with nothing on. Though the chances were that he would meet nobody at that time of night, there was also the chance that he might.

There was only one thing to be done.

Hanging his dripping dressing-gown by the hot-water pipes to dry, Mr. Linton picked up the big bath-towel and wrapped its voluminous folds round his somewhat bony frame. Looking very much like an ancient Roman, the master of the Shell hurried from the bath-room.

His way led him past the end of the Shell passage.

Suddenly Mr. Linton stopped dead.

A faint sound had come to his ears from somewhere

along the passage—the sound of a softly opening door.

"Bless my soul!" breathed Mr. Linton.

He did not doubt for a moment who the night-prowler was. Undoubtedly, Mr. Linton told himself, some junior had left his dormitory in the middle of the night for some nefarious purpose—possibly a midnight feed!

Mr. Linton's eyes glinted.

It was dark in the Shell passage, but he himself was standing in the bright light of the passage that led to the masters' bath-rooms. It occurred in a flash to Mr. Linton that if he were to catch the culprit he must conceal himself. If he were seen now the junior, whoever it was, might escape him.

He glanced round quickly.

The door of a cupboard stood beside him. It was a cupboard used to keep brooms and brushes and other cleaning apparatus, and it offered an ideal hiding-place from which to pounce on the unsuspecting junior now, apparently, emerging from one of the studies.

It was the work of a moment for Mr. Linton to open the cupboard door and step quickly within.

Crash!

"Oh! Yarooogh!"

Mr. Linton's hiding-place was not the success he had expected it to be!

(Continued on next page.)

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In the darkness of the interior he had failed to observe a low shelf across the top of the cupboard. He had crashed a shoulder against it, and a large round tin that had been standing on the shelf went flying. It flung its contents over Mr. Linton as it flew, and the master of the Shell felt a torrent of some thick liquid pouring over him.

"Oh! Groooosh!"

The towel had slipped from him, and Mr. Linton's bare frame was fairly smothered in the contents of the tin.

It smelt like paint; and as he staggered out into the passage, dragging the fallen towel round himself once more, the master of the Shell found that it not only smelt like paint, it was paint! Or, to be more precise, black enamel.

"Yooooosh! Oh! Gooo!" groaned Mr. Linton, gouging the paint from his eyes.

His face was black with it, his shoulders and arms were black with it, even his feet gleamed like ebony in the light. The rest of him, hidden by the towel—which was also pretty black by now—was probably as black as everything else. The only thing about Mr. Linton that was not black at the moment was the white of his eyes.

"Oh! Ooooooch!"

Mr. Linton had quite forgotten the marauding junior whom he imagined he had heard. He stood at the end of the Shell passage, screwing up his eyes and gasping. When he opened them he jumped.

He was not alone.

The huge figure of Mr. Ugmumbo, of Woolla-Woolla, was standing within a yard of him, grinning from ear to ear.

Mr. Linton had seen Ugmumbo in the quadrangle that morning. But he certainly had not expected to see him now!

"G-g-g-good gracious me!" gasped Mr. Linton faintly.

Mr. Ugmumbo of Woolla-Woolla waved an excited, ebony arm.

"Wully-galook!" cried Ugmumbo joyously. "Oojah ka piv! Womble wumble wook!"

"I—I beg your pardon?" stammered Mr. Linton.

He was wondering wildly how Ugmumbo came to be there at all. But since he was there, and was considerably larger than Mr. Linton, and looked the sort of individual to whom it was wiser to be thoroughly polite, the master of the Shell avoided asking any personal questions!

"I—I beg y-your pardon?" repeated Mr. Linton nervously.

"Wagah-wagah?" cried Ugmumbo excitedly.

Mr. Linton took the plunge.

"No," he answered feebly. "Or, if you prefer it, y-yes! I agree with you!"

Ugmumbo looked puzzled.

"You Woolla-Woolla man! But you no talk Woolla-Woolla!" he ejaculated.

"Good heavens!" breathed Mr. Linton. "He—he actually mistakes me for a black!"

Considering the master of the Shell's dusky appearance at that moment—already the enamel was drying nicely—it was scarcely surprising that Mr. Ugmumbo took him for a black man and a brother. But the realisation of the fact was a shock to Mr. Linton. He gasped feebly.

"You are mistaken, sir!" he panted. "You are labouring under a delusion! I am a white man—"

"Zonky-banana!" growled Ugmumbo, with a "Tell-that-to-the-marines" expression on his ebony countenance.

"Oh, dear!" breathed Mr. Linton nervously. "I fear I have offended him! I don't think he believes me!"

"You black brother!" snorted Ugmumbo angrily. "You live at England longa time, maybe, and forget Woolla-Woolla. But you Woolla-Woolla man all the same! Ug!"

"B-but I assure you—"

The man from Woolla-Woolla gave an angry yell. It struck terror into Mr. Linton's heart. With his towel clutched tightly round his figure—a figure now as black as that of Mr. Ugmumbo—he turned and fled.

With what seemed a snort of savage fury the man from Woolla-Woolla rushed in pursuit.

CHAPTER 12.

The Woolla-Woolla War-Dance!

AS he raced away Mr. Linton's one panic-stricken thought was to gain the shelter of his study, which was not far away.

Even if he had thought of it he was far too breathless to have shouted for help!

Mr. Linton had a vague idea that his "black brother" wanted to kill him.

With Ugmumbo's following footsteps hot in his rear the master of the Shell reached his study door and flung it open. He leapt into the room and turned with a terror-stricken gasp to slam the door behind him. But he was

too late. An ebony shoulder had already been thrust into the room, holding the door open.

"Keep out!" panted Mr. Linton in an entreating voice as he could muster. "G-go away! You hear me? G-g-g-go away, I say!"

His only answer was a deep chuckle from Mr. Ugmumbo. The face of the man from Woolla-Woolla appeared round the door, and with a surge of relief Mr. Linton saw that it bore now a beaming smile.

"Wozzyglook!" grinned the man from Woolla-Woolla in a friendly way.

"Undoubtedly!" gasped Mr. Linton. "I feel sure you are right in saying so! B-but please go away!"

The man from Woolla-Woolla did not go away. Instead, he gave a heave which thrust the door open wide and sent Mr. Linton staggering back breathlessly. Ugmumbo stepped into the study and shut the door. His teeth flashed in a happy smile.

"You black brother!" he observed.

"I assure you—"

"Black brother and Ugmumbo do Woolla-Woolla war-dance!" suggested the man in the leopard-skin cheerfully, struck by a bright idea.

"A—very attractive suggestion!" agreed Mr. Linton hastily, terrified of rousing his companion to anger again by a too factless refusal. "A most attractive idea, in many ways. Unfortunately, I am afraid I am not well acquainted with the Woolla-Woolla war-dance, and so I much regret that I shall be unable to join you!"

Ugmumbo did not appear to hear his objections. He had caught sight of the handsome tiger-skin adorning Mr. Linton's hearth-rug. He snatched it up excitedly.

"Black brother wear Woolla-Woolla togs, same as Ugmumbo!" he cried joyfully. "Ug! Take off that—put on this! Good!"

Mr. Linton was too terrified to refuse. He made the exchange of covering, and now that the big tiger-skin had replaced the bath-towel he really looked like Ugmumbo's black brother. The enamel had dried on his face and limbs, and his ebony skin seemed almost natural. Apparently it was natural enough in appearance to deceive Ugmumbo!

Hanging on the wall of the study were several native weapons, ornaments of which Mr. Linton was very proud. Ugmumbo gleefully took down a couple of spears, and thrust one into the trembling hand of the master of the Shell.

"Oswaldwhistle!" chanted Ugmumbo, prancing round the carpet in great style, waving his spear. "Wolly-galook!"

Mr. Linton, in abject terror now lest that big spear should be turned in his direction, to encourage him with a few jabs to join in the war-dance, felt that the best thing he could do was copy his companion. He waved his own spear nervously and pranced.

"Wolly-galook!" wavered Mr. Linton.

Round and round the study, Mr. Ugmumbo and Mr. Linton danced wildly.

"Wolly-galook!" chanted Ugmumbo.

"Wolly-galook!" echoed Mr. Linton, with more courage.

"Wolly-galook!"

"What the dickens—"

"What the thump—"

"Listen!"

In the Shell dormitory, most of the fellows were sitting up in bed. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, Talbot and Skimpole, Grundy and Racke and Kangaroo and Bernard Glyn, were all staring at one another in the gloom with wondering faces.

Kangaroo, the Australian junior, had been the first to wake up, disturbed by curious sounds from somewhere below. He had roused the others—and now nearly all the Shell were listening with straining ears.

"Sounds like a blessed earthquake!" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"Or a bull in a china-shop!" ejaculated Clifton Dane.

"What on earth—"

Tom Merry slipped out of bed, and snatched up a dressing-gown.

"I'm jolly well going down to see what it is!" he announced grimly. "Sounds to me as if it comes from old Linton's room. It's just under here! He may be having a fit or something!"

Tom Merry hurried across to the door of the dormitory. A crowd of others, led by Manners and Lowther and Talbot, followed him.

The Shell dormitory was not the only one to be aroused, they soon found. On the stairs they were joined by a swarm of Fourth-Formers, led by Jack Blake & Co.

"What's up downstairs?" muttered Blake excitedly.

"There's the dickens of a blessed row going on—"

"Whatever can it be, I wonder?" breathed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, adjusting his monocle and drawing his purple silk dressing-gown more tightly.

round his elegant figure. "It's a most extwaordinawy wow!"

"Come on—we'll find out!" said Tom Merry.

He hurried down the stairs, with the swarm of juniors at his heels.

At the foot of the stairs, along the passage to their right, a gleam of light could be seen.

"That's Linton's room all right!" exclaimed Glyn.

Uncle Benjamin bent over his nephew anxiously. "My dear Alonzo!" he gasped. "I trust you are not injured? I—oh! Yooow!" The sight of Uncle Benjamin's broad trouser-seat was a tempting one for Alonzo Todd's donkey. It landed a hearty kick—and Uncle Benjamin shot forward with a yell and sprawled in the dust. (See Chapter 7.)



THE DONKEY'S REVENGE!

"Sounds as though he's doin' a step-dance, what?" drawled Ralph Reckness Cardew, the slacker of the Fourth. "Gad! What a row he's makin'!"

"Sounds to me as if he's gone off his rocker!" grinned Aubrey Racke. "I always thought he would one of these days!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Suppressed chuckles came from the crowd of puzzled juniors as they hurried silently along the passage in a body, towards the light issuing from beneath the door of Mr. Linton's study.

As they drew nearer, the din within the room certainly seemed terrific!

Tom Merry halted outside the door, and swung it open.

"M-my hat!"

Tom Merry stared in dazedly. The juniors crowding behind him gazed in, wide-eyed and breathless.

"Great pip!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Look at him—"

"He's potty!"

The weird and wonderful sight of Mr. Linton, whom they could recognise despite his blackened figure, clad in a tiger-skin and waving a spear as he danced round the study with Skimpole's guest, left the juniors staggered.

They could scarcely believe their eyes.

"Gweat Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy faintly. "Linton's off his wockah! Wacke was wight! Linton's gone mad as a hattah!"

Mr. Linton went scarlet beneath the enamel as he caught sight of the juniors crowding in the doorway. But he was too terrified of the man from Woolla-Woolla to check his

wild career on their account. He pranced on round the room, imitating the antics of his black companion to the best of his ability.

"Wolly-galook!" sang Ugmumbo joyfully, beaming at the watching juniors. The arrival of an audience seemed to encourage him rather than otherwise.

"Wolly-galook!" croaked Mr. Linton, not daring to cease in his efforts.

"My hat!"
"Stop him!"

There was a majestic tread in the passage. Tom Merry glanced round, and caught his breath.

The gowned figure of Dr. Holmes was approaching, with a deep and angry frown on his face.

"It's the Head!" gasped Manners.
"What is the meaning of all this?" demanded the Head in awful tones. "What are you boys doing here at this hour? What is this noise? I demand an explanation—"

The Head broke off.
He had reached the open door of the study, the juniors falling back before him. As he glanced in, his gaze became riveted. His jaw seemed to drop.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head faintly.
The headmaster of St. Jim's gazed into the study as though he could not believe his eyes.

CHAPTER 13.

Awkward for Mr. Linton!

"MR. LINTON!"
Dr. Holmes had found his voice at last. And it was like thunder.

Even his terror of Ugmumbo could not have persuaded the master of the Shell to disobey that awful voice. He halted, with a startled yelp. Till then, he had not seen the Head's presence in the crowd outside the door.

The spear fell from his hand with a clatter to the floor.
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"Mr. Linton! Do my eyes deceive me?" thundered the Head. "Is it really you, sir?"

"Yes!" gasped Mr. Linton. "Pray allow me to explain—"

The Head's eyes gleamed.

"You have a great deal to explain, sir! I am amazed and scandalised! But explanation is useless! Your condition is only too clear to me!"

"My condition?" faltered the master of the Shell. "I beg you to listen—"

"I will not listen!" thundered the Head. His eyes went from Mr. Linton to the man from Woolla-Woolla, who had stopped his war-dance at last, and was surveying the headmaster of St. Jim's with a beaming smile. "There can be only one reason why you should have persuaded this—this savage to spend the evening here with you, and then stoop to blacking your own face, and performing these reprehensible antics! Only one possible reason for your amazing behaviour, Mr. Linton!"

"But—"

"Mr. Linton, you have been drinking," said the Head in a quiet, steely tone.

"Dr. Holmes! I—I assure you—"

"Your disgusting condition is plain, sir!" rasped the Head. "You are intoxicated!"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Linton. "I deny it! Dr. Holmes, I am innocent! I beg you—"

"What was the word that I heard you repeating in a loud sing-song just now, Mr. Linton?" demanded the Head, with gleaming eyes.

"I—I can explain—"

"What was the word, sir?" thundered the Head.

"Ahem! Wolly-galook—but—"

"Wolly-galook!" repeated the Head contemptuously.

"And you still have the effrontery to deny that you are under the effect of alcoholic liquor! My anger, Mr. Linton, is exceeded only by my pity. I had not the faintest idea that you were a secret drinker, but now I—"

"I'm not!" howled Mr. Linton desperately. "I swear I have not touched a drop of intoxicating liquor in my life! I am a teetotaler—"

"Teetotalers, sir, do not black their faces and prance about to the accompaniment of such gibberish as 'Wolly-galook!'" interjected the Head coldly. "I shall not, however, continue to bandy words with you, in your present state. I will speak to you in the morning, Mr. Linton, when you are sober!"

"I am as sober as you are!" roared Mr. Linton hotly, his temper beginning to rise. "I assure you—"

"Cease this drunken shouting!" thundered the Head. "I command you to remove that black from your body, sir, and to see your native friend from the premises at once! Then I advise you to sleep it off, Mr. Linton. Sleep it off, sir! I will deal with you in the morning."

Dr. Holmes swung on his heel and strode into the passage. His gleaming eyes swept round the crowd of juniors.

"Return to your dormitories, boys!" he commanded in majestic tones. "I regret that you have witnessed this disgraceful scene. But under the circumstances I cannot blame you for having ventured forth from your beds to discover the cause of the—er—tumult. Boys, retire!"

Very reluctantly, the juniors turned to make their way back along the passage.

But Mr. Linton was by no means willing to let the matter rest where it was. The master of the Shell was fairly fuming. He was labouring under a sense of wrong that made his blood boil.

He hurried from his room and grasped the Head by the arm.

"I insist upon your listening to what I have to say, Dr. Holmes!"

"When your brain is clear of the alcoholic fumes, certainly, Mr. Linton!" sniffed the Head.

Mr. Linton ground his teeth. His dusky countenance hid the colour of his skin beneath, or it would have been seen to be nearly purple.

"I am perfectly sober!" he shrieked.

"Nonsense!"

"Nonsense to you, sir!" fumed Mr. Linton, quite beside himself. "I tell you that I did not black myself deliberately, but by a most unfortunate accident, which I can easily explain! And this native is not a friend of mine! He forced me to join him in savage war-dance, under the delusion that I was a fellow black man! I was naturally nervous of such a man—I dared not refuse his request! I swear that is the truth of it!"

The master of the Shell broke off for breath.

Dr. Holmes stared at him closely.

"A very extraordinary story," he said suspiciously.

"It's true!" said Mr. Linton, in a desperate voice.

"Bless my soul!"

Something in the Form master's voice convinced the headmaster of St. Jim's at last. He looked very taken aback.

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"Dear me! In that case, Mr. Linton, I—I am afraid I have done you an injustice! A grave injustice! I owe you a deep apology, sir!"

"Thank you!" snapped Mr. Linton viciously. "I accept your apology, Dr. Holmes!"

"Then if you did not invite this black man to remain here to-night, who is responsible for his presence on the school premises?" demanded the Head, in great wrath.

Dr. Holmes was beginning to get very bewildered indeed. His eyes roamed over the crowd of juniors in a vague, puzzled way—the juniors having failed to disperse after all, somehow!

"P-please sir, I am!"

The Head jumped.

He had not expected an answer to his question from any of the juniors. But he saw now that the weedy figure of Herbert Skimpole had stepped forward nervously from the crowd, and was blinking up at him through his spectacles in an earnest way.

"You!" gasped the Head. "Bless my soul!"

Dr. Holmes stared at Skimpole as though he were some strange specimen in a museum.

"You, boy?" he gasped wonderingly. Then his look of amazement turned to a deep, dark frown. "Explain yourself, sir!"

With a gulping voice, the freak of the Shell did explain. The Head of St. Jim's listened to him, with a stern countenance.

"Bless my soul!" he muttered, when Skimpole had finished. "You are a most extraordinary boy, Skimpole!"

"You see, sir," finished Skimpole, his eyes shining suddenly with an eager light, "I am at present devoting a large portion of the time free from school tasks in studying the great question of the enlightenment and uplifting of the savage races. It is a most fascinating study, I assure you, sir. I have a most valuable volume, the author of which is a Professor Piffler, which sets forth the whole matter in a most erudite way. I should be delighted to lend it to you, sir, at any time you cared. I feel sure you would find your interest aroused, and held from the first page to the last. That is why I was so anxious to have an opportunity of studying at first-hand the childlike and untutored mind of a genuine native savage—"

"He's swallowed another dictionary!" muttered Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, boys!" rapped out the Head sternly, and the juniors' chuckles died away abruptly.

"You are a most unusual youth, Skimpole," said Dr. Holmes, and for a moment something very like a smile flickered at the corners of his lips. "It is beyond my experience to have met a boy of your age who has interested himself in such a subject as you have mentioned—a subject which I will agree is a very fascinating and worthy study. But your zeal has led you to go too far, Skimpole!"

"I'm sorry if it has, sir; but—"

"Silence!" frowned the Head. "On this occasion I will not punish you, although it was a grave error of judgment on your part to offer hospitality for the night to this man. You say you have provided him with a bed in your study. Then he had better return to it for the remainder of the night, and in the morning he must leave the premises. I will get into communication with the uncle of this Greyfriars boy, Alonzo Todd, and insist that he removes his protegee as early as possible."

"Very well, sir," stammered Skimpole sadly.

"Boys, disperse!" rapped out the Head. He turned to Mr. Linton. "I apologise again for the unwarranted conclusion that I arrived at concerning your behaviour," he said generously. "Though under the circumstances I confess that I consider my mistake was not an unreasonable one. Skimpole, take this—er—protegee of yours to your study, and see that he composes himself for the night. There must be no further disturbance!"

And the Head sailed away majestically, with rustling gown.

Mr. Linton, with a glare at Skimpole that Monty Lowther declared was like that of a hungry tiger—a suitable kind of glare for the master of the Shell, considering the skin which he was clad in at that moment—stamped away to the bath-rooms. But it was a long and weary while before the black enamel gave way to the treatment of turpentine and pumice-stone! Not till the small hours of the morning was Mr. Linton unmistakably a white man again. And even when he retired finally to bed, there were still traces of enamel in his ears and hair.

It was a long while, too, before the fellows in the Shell dormitory went to sleep.

Skimpole had taken his charge back to Study No. 9, and had lectured him severely upon the error of his ways in leaving that room at all. But Mr. Ugmumbo had only beamed upon the freak of the Shell with great good-humour, childishly delighted, it seemed, to have been the centre of so much interest.

"Skimmy, you ought to be in a museum all right!" said Reginald Talbot, when Skimpole had returned to the dormitory. "You're the giddy limit!"

"My dear Talbot! I consider—"
"Oh, ring off!"

There was silence for a time in the dark dormitory. Then the voice of Herbert Skimpole was heard again.

"I wonder if the Head would care to borrow Professor Piffer's illuminating work?" asked the freak of the Shell thoughtfully. "I consider—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall take it to him in the morning, I think—"

"He'll brain you with it if you do!" chuckled Tom Merry.

"Or perhaps Mr. Linton, after his interesting experience in direct contact with the savage mentality—"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Manners. "Do you want to be skinned alive, Skimmy?"

"My dear Manners—"

"Oh, shut up, ass!"

"My dear Racke—"

"Br-r-r! Go to sleep!"

Herbert Skimpole sighed, and relapsed into silence at last. One by one the fellows dropped off to sleep.

But for a long while occasional sleepy chuckles were to be heard in the Shell dormitory.

CHAPTER 14.
Vanished!

"GONE!"
"Scooted!"

"And taken my money!"
"And mine!"

The three inmates of Study No. 9—Herbert Skimpole,

Reginald Talbot, and George Gore—were standing in that apartment with very peculiar expressions on their faces.

It was before breakfast next morning. And an amazing discovery had been waiting for Skimpole, Talbot, and Gore when they had descended from the dormitory.

Ugmumbo had gone! And with him had gone a pound note that Gore had left in a drawer, and several shillings from Talbot's desk.

Skimpole, Talbot, and George Gore stared at one another dazedly.

"Great Scotland Yard!" gasped Talbot.

There was a sudden yell from the next study.

"My watch has been stolen!"

"And my cash!"

"G-good gracious!" stammered Skimpole, as he heard. "Oh dear! I—I fear that Tom Merry & Co. have been robbed, too!"

In a moment Talbot had rushed from the study and round to the door of Study No. 10.

Tom Merry & Co. were within, and the faces of the Terrible Three were a picture.

Tom Merry was standing by a desk in the corner, which was open, its broken lock showing that it had been opened forcibly. They glanced round as Talbot hurried in.

"Someone's broken open my desk, and stolen some money I had in there—one pound seven shillings!" gasped Tom.

"And I left my watch on the mantelpiece last night, and now it's gone!" yelled Manners.

"Who the dickens—" began Lowther wonderingly.

"I can tell you!" snapped Talbot. "Ugmumbo!"

"That blessed black?" roared Tom Merry.

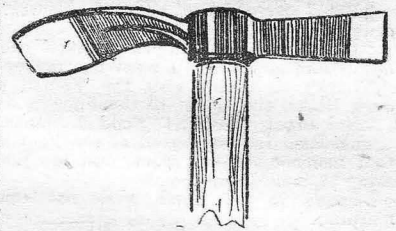
"Yes," nodded Talbot grimly. "He's vanished. And he's taken a quid of Gore's and some silver of mine!"

(Continued on next page.)

ASK THE ORACLE!

Will readers please note that there is no truth whatever in the rumour that the Oracle intends to retire from the GEM staff at the tender age of 105 and pass on his job to the office-boy?—
EDITOR.

Q. What is a beck?
A. The chum who sent in this query mentioned in his letter something about a farm, so I must presume that he had in his mind something in that connection. There is indeed a tool used in the dressing of turnips known as a "beck"—a thing rather of the mattock type and shown in the picture herewith. A beck is a name also given in some parts of the country for a brook or mountain stream; it is more commonly used in the north, I think. A beck, too, may be a mute signal derived, of course, from the word "beckon."



This is the weapon they use for digging up the turnips "down on the farm."

Q. Of what use is a rabbit skin?
A. The obvious reply to this query is to hold the rabbit together. But that I'm afraid would not satisfy "Little Bill," of Walsall, who, according to his letter to me, got into a hot discussion with a pal of his on this subject. The upshot was that poor Bill got a clump over the head with a stick that laid him out "flatter than a pancake." The two hadn't been good friends for some days previously, and this rabbit question brought things to a head—to a broken head, it would appear! It seems an absurd matter to scrap about, "Little Bill," but you can tell your former chum he was right in stating that a rabbit's skin often appears on the sleeves of ladies' winter coats in the guise of ermine and other more expensive furs. It is only too easy to treat rabbit skins to look like something else, especially the silky white fur of the Angora rabbit. The fur trimmings of children's indoor shoes and

many other similar articles are often made of the skin of the humble bunny.

Q. What were the Augean Stables?
A. The 3,000 stalls of oxen, Arthur B., of Bradford, owned by Augeas, an Ebian king. In the ancient mythology their cleansing was one of the twelve labours of the mighty Hercules, who, being an artful lad, turned two rivers through the said stables and so finished what might have been a nasty job quite comfortably in a night. The phrase "cleansing the Augean stables" is still much used by politicians and others to describe some stupendous or hopeless looking task.

Q. What are the A.A. and the A.A.A.?
A. This is an easy one, "Old Gemite," and if other fellows sent in equally simple queries I should offer the Editor the privilege of paying me half my present salary. The A.A. is the Automobile Association, which is an organisation to which motorists and motor-cyclists belong for their mutual benefit. The A.A.A. is the Amateur Athletic Association. I have asked the artist to draw you pictures of their respective badges so that you can easily recognise them. The A.A. badge you may see on numerous cars on the roads.



A.A. and A.A.A. are the initial letters of two famous associations. A.S.S. means something quite different—you ask our office-boy. He's got a brother of the same kind.

Q. How many finger-prints of criminals have the Paris police collected?
A. Over 1,727,000 choice specimens, "Seeker for Truth." This, incidentally, is the largest collection in the world.

Q. Are many fellows colour-blind in England?

A. No, George Walker, of Wanstead—only about five per cent of the total population. Without being actually colour-blind, though, quite a number can't properly distinguish between red and green, and so could not be accepted either for the Navy or service on the railways.

Q. What mountain in Europe is on the move and threatens to destroy a settlement?

A. Mont Arbindo, near Bellizona, in Switzerland.

The Terrible Three stared at Talbot dumbly. At that moment there was an excited shout from down the passage. Hurrying footsteps came running to the door of Study No. 10, and Grundy glared in.

"Look here!" roared Grundy, waving his hands excitedly. "I've had some money stolen! Fourteen bob! It was locked in a drawer, and the lock's been smashed! I—"

He was interrupted.

The red and wrathful face of Kangaroo had appeared behind him. Kangaroo was breathing hard.

"Somebody's been to our study in the night and pinched a lot of stuff," he yelled. "Ten bob of old Glyn's, and a quid or so of Clifton Dane's, and a raincoat of mine! Who the dickens can it be?"

"Ugmumbo!" said Talbot quietly. "He's cleared out with all he could lay his hands on!"

At breakfast that morning there was only one topic.

The disappearance of the man from Woolla-Woolla, together with most of the valuables he had been able to collect in the Shell passage, was a staggering blow to Skimpole. But the rest of the juniors, particularly those who had been robbed, it was a matter for furious wrath.

At first it was believed that Ugmumbo had confined his activities to the Shell studies, but after breakfast it was learned that a suit of clothes and a pair of boots were missing from Mr. Lathom's room.

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, had telephoned to the police, and a search for the missing black was soon in progress in the neighbourhood.

The juniors who had been robbed by Skimpole's "simple" savage had to content themselves as best they could with that knowledge. But after breakfast they gave vent to their feelings by bumping the freak of the Shell in the junior Common-room, till Herbert Skimpole heartily wished he had never set eyes on Mr. Ugmumbo of the Woolla-Woolla Islands.

"There's one thing," growled Tom Merry, to the excited crowd in the Common-room, after Skimpole had been allowed at last to limp painfully away, "the chap is bound to be caught. A black man is too conspicuous to get far without being spotted!"

"Oh, rats!" growled Aubrey Racke, who had been the poorer by no less than three pounds at the departure of Mr. Ugmumbo. Racke was the son of a profiteer-millionaire, and liked to show off his wealth by leaving his money about, but this time to his cost. "This chap Ugmumbo is as cute as a blessed fox! He's pretended to be a simple savage, and all that—just waiting for his chance! He may be a rotten nigger, but he's got his head screwed on, it's clear. He didn't steal for nothing. Dressed in his ordinary togs, he'll probably get clean away!"

"Rot!" snapped Levison of the Fourth. "He's sure to be caught!"

"It's all very well for you to talk!" snarled Racke. "You didn't lose anything. I want my money!"

"Lucky he didn't visit the Fourth passage!" grinned Jack Blake, the leader of the Fourth, cheerfully.

"Bai Jove! Wathah!" nodded Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The Shell fellows glared at the Fourth-Formers. But at that moment the bell went, and the juniors had to hurry away to their Form-rooms.

Lessons in the Shell were not exactly peaceful that morning.

Mr. Linton was in a very bad temper indeed, after his experience of the night before. This, added to the fact that most of the Shell fellows were thinking most of the time about their stolen property instead of their lessons, caused the atmosphere in the Form-room to become positively dangerous.

Lines fell thicker than leaves in Vallombrosa, and half a dozen or more of the Shell felt Mr. Linton's ashpant during the morning. It was a relief to all when at last the longed-for bell sounded the end of work for the day. For, being Saturday, it was a half-holiday—a fact for which the Shell fellows were more than thankful.

After dinner the fellows gathered in eager groups to discuss their losses. But Tom Merry was the first actually to do anything.

Tom Merry was the patrol leader of the Eagle Patrol of Boy Scouts. This, he felt, was a good chance for the patrol to show what it could do.

If the Scouts spent their half-holiday searching the country round St. Jim's for Ugmumbo's tracks, and were successful in picking up a clue or two to aid the police, it would be a big feather in their caps. Accordingly, Tom Merry gathered his Scouts together, and shortly after dinner the patrol marched off on the trail of the mysterious man from Woolla-Woolla!

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CHAPTER 15.

Tracked Down!

"BAI JOVE! Look, deah boys!"

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who gave that exclamation.

The swell of St. Jim's, looking as immaculate as ever in his Scout uniform, with his eye-glass jammed tightly in his eye, was peering into a group of bushes in Rylcombe Wood.

Judging by the expression on his aristocratic countenance, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had made a discovery!

The Scouts had been at work for an hour or more in the woods. It had occurred to Tom Merry that Ugmumbo, after his stealthy departure from St. Jim's, would probably have taken to the woods, and accordingly he had set his Scouts to work there, searching for "sign."

So far their search had been unsuccessful. But now it looked as though the swell of St. Jim's had found something of importance!

"What is it, Gussy?" sang out Jack Blake, who had been searching the bushes on the other side.

Blake hurried round the clump, and peered in. He gave an exclamation.

"My hat!"

"It's the niggah's leopard-skin, deah boy!" cried Arthur Augustus excitedly.

Lying among the bushes, evidently thrown there to be out of sight, was the leopard-skin that had been worn by Ugmumbo upon his visit to St. Jim's! Arthur Augustus plunged his staff into the bushes, and managed to lift it out.

"This must be where the chap changed into those togs he bagged!" breathed Blake excitedly.

He gave the call of the Eagle Patrol, and almost at once a number of other Scouts came running up. Manners and Monty Lowther, Levison and Clive, Herries and Digby and Dick Julian, were the first on the scene. Then Tom Merry appeared, and Kangaroo.

Tom whistled softly as he saw the cause of the excitement. His eyes gleamed.

"Yes, this is where Ugmumbo changed into ordinary togs!" he muttered. "No doubt about that. There's the rest of his native costume!"

Almost hidden among dead leaves, in the centre of the clump of bushes, Tom's keen eyes had caught sight of Ugmumbo's other native garments and ornaments.

"Look round for his tracks, you chaps," said Tom quickly. "I'll gather the rest of the patrol!"

By the time that the rest of the Eagles had come upon the scene, Clifton Dane, the Canadian junior, had found footprints leading away down a narrow, mossy path. They were so faint that, but for his scouting training, Dane would never have noticed them. Tom Merry gave an exclamation of satisfaction.

"We're on the blighter's track all right!" he breathed.

It was a difficult task, even for the Scouts, to follow that faint trail through the woods. But despite numerous checks, they succeeded in tracking their quarry's route for nearly a mile. They led to a clearing in the heart of the woods, where a tumbledown hut stood in the shadow of a big oak.

There was a sudden shout from Jack Blake.

"Look!" he yelled.

Never dreaming that they were close to their quarry, the Scouts had not bothered to keep particularly silent. Evidently their arrival in the clearing had been heard by someone in the hut, for a figure had stepped quickly into view in the doorway.

That it was the man whom Alonzo Todd of Greyfriars had brought to St. Jim's, it was difficult at first for the Scouts to realise.

Part of the man's face was as black as it had ever been. But parts of it were white!

The strange figure was clad in a suit that was at once recognised as belonging to Mr. Lathom.

"That's the chap!" gasped Talbot.

The Scouts stared at the figure in the doorway of the hut in sheer bewilderment. That strange mottled face, partly black and partly white, was almost unrecognisable.

Then in a flash Tom Merry understood!

"Ugmumbo" had been fooling them all the time at St. Jim's. He was in reality a white man!

How the scoundrel had come to impose upon Alonzo Todd's Uncle Benjamin was at present a mystery. But there was no doubt now that the man was no more a Woolla-Woolla Islander than Alonzo Todd himself. Evidently he had been hiding in the hut since his departure from St. Jim's, attempting to remove the stain from his face—an attempt in which he had only been partly successful as yet.

"A—a white man!" stammered Talbot dazedly.

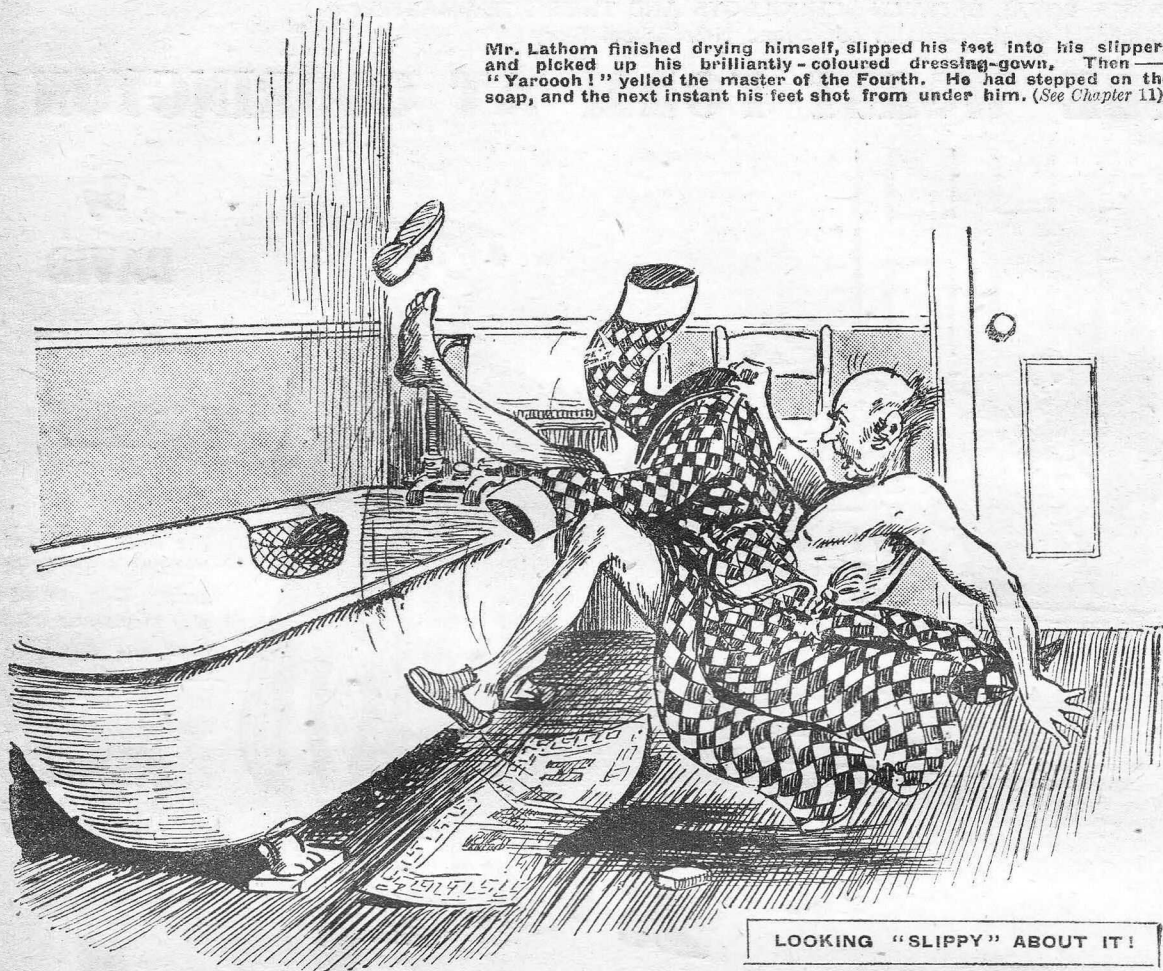
"G'weat Scott!"

"Collar him!" yelled Tom Merry.

The Scouts sprang to life, and made a rush.

Their quarry made a desperate attempt to evade them, and gain the shelter of the trees. But Monty Lowther

Mr. Latham finished drying himself, slipped his feet into his slippers and picked up his brilliantly-coloured dressing-gown. Then—"Yaroooh!" yelled the master of the Fourth. He had stepped on the soap, and the next instant his feet shot from under him. (See Chapter 11)



thrust forward his scout-staff, and the man tripped over it with a gasping cry.

He went sprawling on the grass, and in another moment the Scouts of St. Jim's were on top of him.

"Hold him!" cried Tom Merry breathlessly. Panting and glaring, the man lay on his back, pinned down helplessly by the swarm of Scouts. Blake held one arm, Arthur Augustus another; Manners was sitting on one leg, and Kangaroo was holding down a foot. Talbot and Levison and Dick Julian were all lending a hand—and even then there were plenty more to help them if necessary!

But it was not necessary. Black or white, "Mr. Ugmumbo, of the Woolla-Woolla Islands," was the Eagle Patrol's helpless prisoner.

"Truss him up!" commanded Tom Merry grimly. The Scouts had plenty of cord with them, and it did not take long for them to fasten their prisoner's arms securely behind his back. He was dragged to his feet, scowling sullenly.

Tom Merry went into the hut, and there found a bottle of turpentine, with the aid of which the man had evidently been busily removing his dusky "complexion" when the Scouts had tracked him down. But his chief find brought a shout of delight from the Patrol Leader of the Eagles.

In a corner of the hut, lying on a rain-coat that was evidently the one stolen from Kangaroo's study, was a quantity of money, chiefly in silver, and a watch Tom recognised as belonging to Manners.

The Eagle Patrol had not only succeeded in capturing the scoundrel who had imposed upon St. Jim's in such an amazing way, but had recovered the stolen property into the bargain!

"My hat!" grinned Monty Lowther, who had come hurrying into the hut with several of the others on hearing Tom's excited shout. "What a score for the Eagles!"

Probably the most astonished man in the world when he learnt the truth concerning his "black" protegee, was Alenzo Todd's Uncle Benjamin!

Now that the game was up, the scoundrel who had called himself "Ugmumbo" admitted the whole truth,

He had been a beachcomber, living by his wits at the Woolla-Woolla Islands. He had wanted to get back to England, but had not the money for his passage, and had been unable to obtain a job on a ship—he was far too unsavoury an individual for any captain to want to sign on.

He had heard of Uncle Benjamin's intention of taking home a native of the islands to England, in order to study the effect of Western civilisation upon the savage; and with amazing effrontery he had adopted the disguise of a native and managed to get himself chosen for Uncle Benjamin's experiment!

Had Uncle Benjamin been a less simple old gentleman, of course, the scoundrel would not have been able to carry out his amazing imposture for an hour with any success. As it was, however, he had not only managed to get himself brought to England, but had been making a very good thing out of his strange role!

But he had grown tired of it at last. And seeing a splendid opportunity for clearing off from St. Jim's with a good haul of ready money, he had taken it.

Had it not been for Tom Merry and the Eagle Patrol, there was no doubt that the crafty ruffian would have escaped for good; for the police were all searching for a black man. With the stain once removed from his face, Tallon, as his real name was, would have been able to walk past any police station in perfect safety, his identity never dreamed of.

Skimpole at first utterly declined to believe the facts. But when at last he was forced to do so, no more was heard at St. Jim's of Professor Piffler's wonderful work on the uplifting effect of civilisation upon the savage races.

Skimpole had had enough of it, after the amazing visit of the man from Woolla-Woolla, and it was a long time before St. Jim's forgot Skimpole's simple savage!

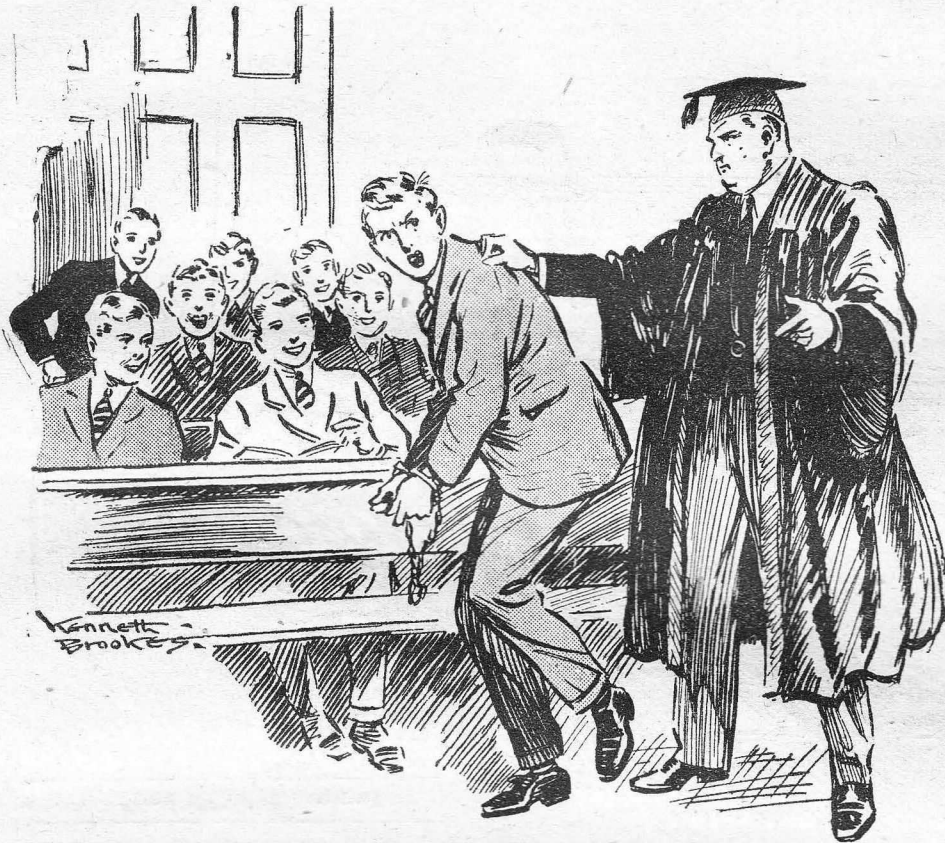
THE END.

(Now look out for another long laugh in next week's grand long story of Tom Merry & Co., entitled; "LEAVING IT TO GUSSY!" It shows Martin Clifford absolutely in his best form. See that you order your "GEM" early, chums!)

BATTLE ROYAL BETWEEN SCHOOLBOYS AND THEIR FORM-MASTER!
Sensational developments in our Grand New School Story!

THE WORST FORM AT CODRINGTON!

By
**DAVID
GOODWIN.**



The Fourth Form at Codrington are up in arms. They are beside themselves with rage and mortification—for their Form master has proved himself quite capable of looking after himself and his scholars! The unruly Form is being tamed at last!



"Many thanks, Kempe, for your gifts," said Mr. Lambe. "Have you tried these on?" "N-no, sir!" said Kempe nervously. There was a short, sharp click, and before anybody knew it had happened, Kempe found his wrists manacled together by the handcuffs.

Ruling the Roost!

"I ADMIRE this so much, Wynne," said the new Form master, looking more lamb-like than ever, "that I have booked you to make me three hundred copies of it, to be shown up to-morrow. Don't forget."

Mr. Lambe turned away, leaving Taffy, who realised what a task he had in hand, raging inwardly.

"I'll bet he spotted it while you were doin' it, and got it off directly he was out of the room," whispered Dereker, grinning. "We'll give you a hand with the copies."

"Beast!" murmured Taffy. "I'm beginnin' to wish I'd taken a hand in Kempe's jape— Hallo! Look out, now!"

The Form preserved a dead, unusual silence as it watched the new master approach his chair. They saw his eye light upon the two prison souvenirs on his desk.

He stopped, and placing his eyeglass leisurely in his eye, peered blandly at the handcuffs.

"Ah!" he said. "A little relic of Scotland Yard, it seems! I see! You mean to suggest that my only way of keeping you in order is to lock these on the worst offender. Not a bad idea—not at all a bad idea!"

The Form said nothing, though everybody was urging his neighbour to explain; only nobody seemed quite to like to begin.

"Whose property are these, and who put them on my desk?" said Mr. Lambe.

Every boy sat with a face of stone, while the new master looked inquiringly at the class.

"No answer?" said Mr. Lambe mildly. "Thanks! That will do."

The boys, somewhat surprised, had expected him either to fall into a passion or to grow scared, knowing what they did about him. And on getting no reply, they had supposed he would threaten the whole Form with a heavy punishment, or an appointment before the Head himself, if the culprit

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did not confess. Even Taffy, who had refused to be "in the know," wondered who had placed the handcuffs there, and guessed it might be Kempe.

Mr. Lambe did none of these things. He seated himself, still smiling, and made a leisurely but very close inspection of the handcuffs. The smile grew more marked still. He took a long, thoughtful look round the whole class, his sleepy gaze dwelling on each boy in turn.

"Ferguson, Kempe, Kent-Williams," he said, "come here, please."

The three companions did so, rather uneasy to find themselves picked out.

"Hold out your hand!" said the master to Ferguson.

The big youth obeyed, expecting to get a sudden stroke across his palm with a cane or ruler. But instead, the Lambe took from his pocket a little metal box, which he opened with one hand, took hold of Ferguson's wrist with the other, and pressed the ball of the boy's right thumb upon a small tablet of wax-like stuff in the box.

Ferguson, bewildered at this behaviour, was motioned back to his place, and Kempe and Kent-Williams underwent the same process. Then Mr. Lambe took a small, powerful magnifier from his waistcoat pocket, and examined the bright steel of the handcuffs and the surface of the wax in his box, with the air of a man well used to it. It did not take him long. He called Kempe out.

"Many thanks, Kempe, for your gift," said Mr. Lambe dreamily. "I understand your modesty in not acknowledging that it was you who made it. Have you tried these on?"

"N-no, sir," said Kempe nervously.

There was a short, sharp, double click, and before anybody knew it had happened, Kempe found his wrists manacled together in front of him by the handcuffs. Kempe was not a frightened person as a rule, but there was something about the sudden grip of those steel implements round his wrists that made him nearly jump out of his boots. He gave a gasp, and turned white.

Mr. Lambe laid a heavy hand on his shoulder, which made

Kempe jump again, and, with a grim, policeman-like tread, marched him into the centre of the floor and halted him there.

Strange to say, Kempe was trembling visibly. It is only fair to record that he had never quailed before any master of the Remove up to date, and had helped to whiten the hairs of more than one. But whether it was the handcuffs of Mr. Lambe, he certainly trembled now, and looked rather like collapsing.

The new master took his hand off Kempe's shoulder and regarded him dreamily for a few moments.

"Ferguson and Kent-Williams next, please," he said. And the pair, looking very blue, came forth.

"Give me your pocket-knives," said the master.

Rather relieved, the chums handed them out. Both were white-handed and much alike. Mr. Lambe opened them both, glanced at them, and sent Kent-Williams back to his place, returning him his knife.

"I hope, Ferguson, as you have such an ominous liking for rope, that you may never meet your end by it," said Mr. Lambe. "Bring the chair from the corner there, and sit down by Kempe, who must remain standing. Bring the piece of rope with you."

The class was quite astounded to see the ease with which the actual culprit was picked out each time. They watched eagerly.

Ferguson meant to mutiny openly. He had done it before, and borne the consequences of it without murmuring. But somehow the Woolly Lambe's mild and sleepy eye, gleaming behind the eyeglass, fascinated him like a basilisk's, and drove him to do as he was told.

"Cross your legs on the chair," said Mr. Lambe.

"I can't, sir!" broke out Ferguson fiercely.

"I think you can, Ferguson," said Mr. Lambe, taking a couple of slow steps towards him.

Ferguson somehow scrambled hurriedly into the required position, and sat like a tailor on the chair, his legs crossed under him. By this time the Form was sniggering in chorus.

"With your fondness for rope, you may now imagine yourself in one of his Majesty's prisons," said the Woolly Lambe blandly. "I do not mind telling you, Ferguson, that the amount of rope you have there is just what is allotted to each prisoner to pick in half an hour. You will render that piece of cordage into oakum in that time. Penalty in default, five thousand lines and a month's gating. We will now proceed with the morning's lesson."

Ferguson nearly fell off the chair. When he was told to pick the oakum, he decided at once to take a flogging, or even a week's gating, rather than obey. But the dose prescribed by the Woolly Lambe was too appalling. And his eye was still on Ferguson. Somehow—somehow Ferguson started to untwist the rope and pick it to pieces, stifling a groan.

The whole Remove was rocking with laughter. Kempe stood, with a face as long as a violincello, his jaw dropped, and his toes turned in, staring at the handcuffs and shrinking as if they burnt him. He cut a most peculiar figure. Ferguson, on the other hand, was redder than an average beetroot, and was muttering to himself as he picked painfully at the tarry rope.

"Beast! Beast! Beast! Beast!" he breathed, but without daring to let a sound pass his lips.

The laughter grew to a roar. Mr. Lambe gave one slow look round, and it died down and ceased.

"The lesson deals, it appears, with English History," said Mr. Lambe suavely. "While our two youthful friends here continue their tasks, we will inquire into the trial of the conspirators in the Popish Plot—an appropriate subject One minute!"

He stepped across to Kempe, and slipping his fingers into the waistcoat pocket of that gentleman, after a short search drew forth the key by which the handcuffs were unlocked, and pocketed it himself. Kempe observed the act with horror, wondering how he was going to get the manacles off afterwards, and already wishing he had never seen them.

"Wynne," said Mr. Lambe, "I will trouble you to begin." The lesson went forward with rather more snap than most Remove lessons, and through it all the unlucky Kempe stood with his "ironed" hands before him and the perspiration trickling down his face.

A fly paid him marked attention, buzzing round and

settling on his nose, making thence an excursion to his left ear and back. Kempe worked his features fiercely, and snorted and blew in desperation. But the fly, knowing he had got a soft thing, was not to be driven away.

Meanwhile, Ferguson, with no eye for anybody's troubles but his own, was picking oakum against time till his fingers were sore. His one idea was to get the task done, for he felt Mr. Lambe would be as good as his word if it were not, in which case Ferguson might as well be dead as alive for a month to come.

The Form took some keeping in order, with such a sight before it, and several members broke out from time to time, but were quickly brought to reason by the new master. When the time came for writing out a synopsis of the history lesson, and each boy was allotted his sheet of foolscap, the Form was remarkably quiet—for the Remove. But the failure of the attempts to score off Mr. Lambe had, perhaps, damped them somewhat.

It was not fashionable in that Form to apply oneself very diligently to writing a synopsis, except in the case of a few serious souls who felt themselves out of place in the Remove and wanted to get their "step" into the Fourth. Everybody made some sort of a shot at writing out his ideas, however, and De Quincey, who was particularly quick when he chose, dashed his off in a very short time, and then devoted himself to writing something else on another piece of paper.

A thoughtful frown was on his forehead, and a sour smile twisted the corners of his mouth—a combination that made De Quincey's dark face look very peculiar. Dereker knew the signs, and whispered to Johnson, who sat next him.

"Quince is taken with a poem. Look at him!"

Johnson nodded, grinning. Walsh, sitting behind, had seen for some time what De Quincey was about, and also had seen—what De Quincey did not know—that Mr. Lambe had been watching him, though apparently deep in some papers.

The master came drifting across the room presently, in an absent-minded way, and Walsh gave De Quincey a warning kick. The scribbler only frowned more deeply, however, without looking up from his work. The next moment Mr. Lambe had captured the paper and was blandly perusing it.

De Quincey made a hurried snatch at the foolscap as it disappeared, and then flushed red as he saw what had happened. The Form stopped work to see what the matter was. Mr. Lambe frowned.

"Not English history," he murmured; "no, not English history. Verse! A poem, as it were. So you are not only an artist, De Quincey, but a bard?"

"Yes, sir," said De Quincey, stammering; "but I—"

"Such talent must be encouraged, even at the expense of the Popish Plot," said the master, who had only glanced at the paper. "Step out, De Quincey, and recite this effort of yours to the Form." He led the flushed and unhappy poet on to his desk platform. "Let us have it in your own impassioned words."

"Please, sir," said De Quincey desperately, "I—I'd rather not!"

"I have no doubt of that, De Quincey," said Mr. Lambe, bending his gaze upon the author; "but I would rather you did. So would the Form. Oblige us."

De Quincey glanced round despairingly, as if looking for a chance to bolt. Then, seeing there was no help for it, and feeling the eyes of the whole Form upon him and Mr. Lambe's figure towering over him, he cleared his throat and began to read in a husky voice, while the grins of the class grew audible and louder still.

(AIR: "MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB.")

"Taffy had a little Worm,
Its skin was dirty white;
It crawled and crept and sneaked and wept,
It was a loathly sight.

"I am its keeper," Taffy said,
'I shelter it from woe.
Did I hear anyone remark
That I'm a prig?' (What-
ho!)

"And though the Woolly
Lambe may fall
Upon us, like a blight,
I and my Worm will still
contrive
To keep the game alight."

De Quincey stopped short, and the master's eyeglass suddenly dropped from its place.

"Proceed," said Mr. Lambe solemnly. "Proceed, De Quincey. Why do you pause?"

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WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

While waiting for a train to convey them to Codrington College for a new term, Talbot Delaval Wynne—better known as "Taffy"—and Richard Dereker, his chum, are amused to see in the newspaper an advertisement for a new master of the Remove. This Form, of which Taffy and Dereker are members, prides itself in being unique in unruliness, for no master has yet been found capable of handling it. A new Form master duly arrives at Codrington—a Mr. Wollaston Lambe, a strange-looking individual whom Taffy & Co. had seen stalking mysteriously round the station with a constable in close proximity. Suspecting the man to be an escaped criminal, a Removite named Kempe procures a pair of handcuffs and a length of tarred rope, with one end unpicked into loose fluffy oakum, and places them on the Form master's desk. Several voices are breaking out in angry protest when Mr. Lambe enters the Form-room, walks straight up to Taffy's desk, and lays before him a square of foolscap with the word "Wanted!" on it that Taffy had pinned on his gown the day before.

(Now read on).

Ferguson Swears Vengeance!

"THERE—there isn't any more, sir," faltered De Quincey. The whole Remove was heaving and shaking with laughter. Even the two prisoners were amused.

"No more!" said Mr. Lambe in surprise. "Do you mean to say this masterpiece is at an end? One more verse, De Quincey, surely?"

"There's not another line, sir," replied the poet desperately.

"Perhaps it is lucky," said the Woolly Lambe thoughtfully. "I am not sure the Form would stand any more. And how do you reconcile it with your conscience, De Quincey—if you have one—to perpetrate such miserable drivel as this?"

The poet scratched his chin in an embarrassed manner. "If there is any meaning in it, which I doubt," said Mr. Lambe, taking the paper and scanning it through his eyeglass in a puzzled way, "it is quite beyond me. De Quincey, such talent as yours soars too high for our mean and groping intelligence. Methinks I see the laurels of fame upon that dark and Celtic brow. And so this is a specimen of your work? Humph!"

De Quincey looked very sulky, but made no reply. "Taffy—Worm—Woolly Lambe," murmured the master, perusing the paper again. "And what of the English history essay? You were about to postpone that till this great epic was completed?"

Mr. Lambe picked up the other paper and saw that, in spite of the rapid way it had been slashed off, the essay was complete and particularly good.

"This is fortunate for you, De Quincey," he said suavely. "You hardly know how fortunate."

De Quincey thought he did, but he said nothing.

"But to return to this poem of yours—we must do something to honour it and you."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" said De Quincey hurriedly. "I'd— I'd rather not!"

"Hush, De Quincey! Am I in charge of this Form, or are you?" said Mr. Lambe, with bland politeness. "You will commit this idiotic piece of doggerel to memory, and will repeat it, without the paper, before we begin morning lessons for the next three days. By that time the Form will have learnt to expect and enjoy it. You will also transpose it into Latin verse—elegiacs—as accurately as possible, to be shown up to-morrow morning. The recital of the Latin version will follow that of the English. Take it away, De Quincey, and return to your seat. The Form," concluded Mr. Lambe, "will now relapse into complete silence."

It did so. Hardly a cough was heard as the Woolly Lambe looked at his watch and then at the progress Ferguson had made with the rope.

"Only three minutes more, Ferguson," said the master pleasantly, "and you have still several inches of yarn to pick. I fear you will hardly do it."

Ferguson's fingers worked at a furious rate. He had been working hard at the abominable rope's-end all the time, and had got it untwisted and most of the yarn shredded out. But time was running very short, as Mr. Lambe remarked. Picking oakum is not an industry that can be learned in a hurry. Ferguson's fingers were sore, aching, and smeared with tar.

The Woolly Lambe went round and collected the essay papers, watch in hand, and the Form watched Ferguson's race against time with keen interest and broad grins, many surreptitious bets being made on the result. The odds asked were six to four against Ferguson, and they presently lengthened to five to two when he got into difficulties with a tough knot in the yarn.

The cross-legged victim, sitting with a great bunch of tarry tow spread over his knees, redoubled his efforts as the last seconds drew near. Perspiration trickled down his face, and he groaned as he thought of the five thousand lines and the month's gating that promised to be his. Mr. Lambe had collected the papers, and was watching him blandly.

The clock in the tower boomed deeply, and the bell began to clang. But just as the eleventh stroke of the clock sounded Ferguson shredded out the final strand of the rope into a fluff of oakum, and gave a tremendous gasp of relief as it fell from his nerveless fingers.

"A very near thing, Ferguson," observed Mr. Lambe amiably, putting back his watch and dropping his eyeglass. "I am glad to hail you as the victor over the rope. May you always continue so! You may keep it as a souvenir. Au revoir, my young friends!"

He sailed out of the room, and as the door half closed behind him, Ferguson hurled the wad of oakum at it, with an imprecation.

"Beast! Brute!" he hissed. "If I don't scrag him for this, cut me dead—never speak to me again! Ugh!"

"Keep the oakum to scrag him with, old chap!" said Dereker provokingly; and Ferguson, maddened beyond endurance, sprang up and strode towards him.

In the general rush of everybody towards the door, all excitedly talking at once, however, the rivals could not get at each other for the moment.

"What about me? What about me?" cried Kempe in anguished tones, dancing up and down. "He's left me with these beastly things on! What shall I do, you chaps?"

"Oh, take 'em off and stick 'em down your neck!" said Taffy impatiently. "I say, Ferguson—"

"He's taken the key away with him, you ass!" cried the exasperated Kempe. "Oh, blazes, I shall go off my chump if I don't get rid of the ghastly things soon! Go an' ask him for the key, somebody!"

Most unfeelingly, the Removeites burst into roars of laughter as they realised Kempe's helpless state. They had almost forgotten him during de Quincey's and Ferguson's troubles.

"Go for a promenade round the quad, with a bodyguard of fags beatin' a gong in front of you," suggested Walsh, who did not like Kempe, "singin' the 'Rogues' March.' Beastly appropriate! Eh, what?"

"Get another pair an' shove 'em on his ankles!" urged several other voices, amid roars of laughter.

"You cads!" screeched Kempe, almost weeping with rage. "I go an' get pipped like this for the good of the Form, an' this is all the gratitude I get, you beastly scugs! I wish I may be boiled if ever I do anything for you again! I—"

"Here, shut up, you beggars, an' let him alone!" growled Ferguson, shouldering his way through the crowd that surrounded Kempe. "You've nothing to brag about, any of you—you never did a thing! Haven't you got another key, old chap?"

"No!" groaned Kempe. "That brute's got the only one! How am I to get rid of them?"

"Go to the Head an' ask him to take 'em off for you!" giggled somebody.

"By Jove, that's a good idea!" said Ferguson enthusiastically. "Come on, Kempe—we'll go with you! It'll all come out then about Lambe being wanted by the police!"

"Go to the Head like this, you idiot," roared Kempe, in a frenzy, "and have to explain the whole thing with handcuffs on! Why don't you tell me to go and jump down a well? He'd flog me to a jelly!"

"He wouldn't hurt you much, Kempe," said Kent-Williams soothingly. "A floggin' doesn't last long, does it? An' think how you'd score getting Lambe hooped out! There'll be no peace for any of us while he's boss here, and you might think of that."

"Yes; don't be selfish, Kempe," said Taffy. "Go an' take your floggin' an' rid us of the Woolly One. We'll dress the wounds for you afterwards."

"An' rub salt into 'em," suggested Dereker.

"If you think I'm fool enough to do anything more for you you're jolly well mistaken!" said Kempe savagely.

"Shut up an' let me think how I'm to get out of this!"

"Order! Kempe's goin' to think!" said Birne. "Clear a space! Hold on to something, all of you!"

The Remove seemed rather undecided what to do next. The outgoers halted on their way to the door.

"Well, you've put the jape through," said Taffy, addressing the Form blandly. "I don't know whether you think you've scored, but I'm blown if I do!"

"A knock-out for the Remove, I call it," murmured Dereker. "But what can you expect of such a crew?"

"How on earth did he pick out the right chaps like that?" queried Kent-Williams uneasily. "It was Kempe who drew the lot to shove the handcuffs on Lambe's desk; an' the rope was Ferguson's, right enough. He must be a wizard."

"Rot!" said Taffy. "He told it by the thumb-marks on the steel of the handcuffs. No two thumb-marks are ever alike. He took impressions of the thumbs of three of you on the lump of wax, an' it didn't take him a tick to see that Kempe's agreed with the marks on the bracelets. I tell you what—it's my belief he's an uncommon scientific burglar, or something like it. That's a regular Scotland Yard trick. He's up to all the police dodges—like that sort of king-of-the-criminals chap in Sherlock Holmes—"

"What's his name?"

"Moriarty?" said Birne.

"Yes, like Moriarty. It's no wonder the police can't catch this chap!" said Dereker. "I'll bet he don't leave any thumb-marks about when he burgles a jeweller's shop!"

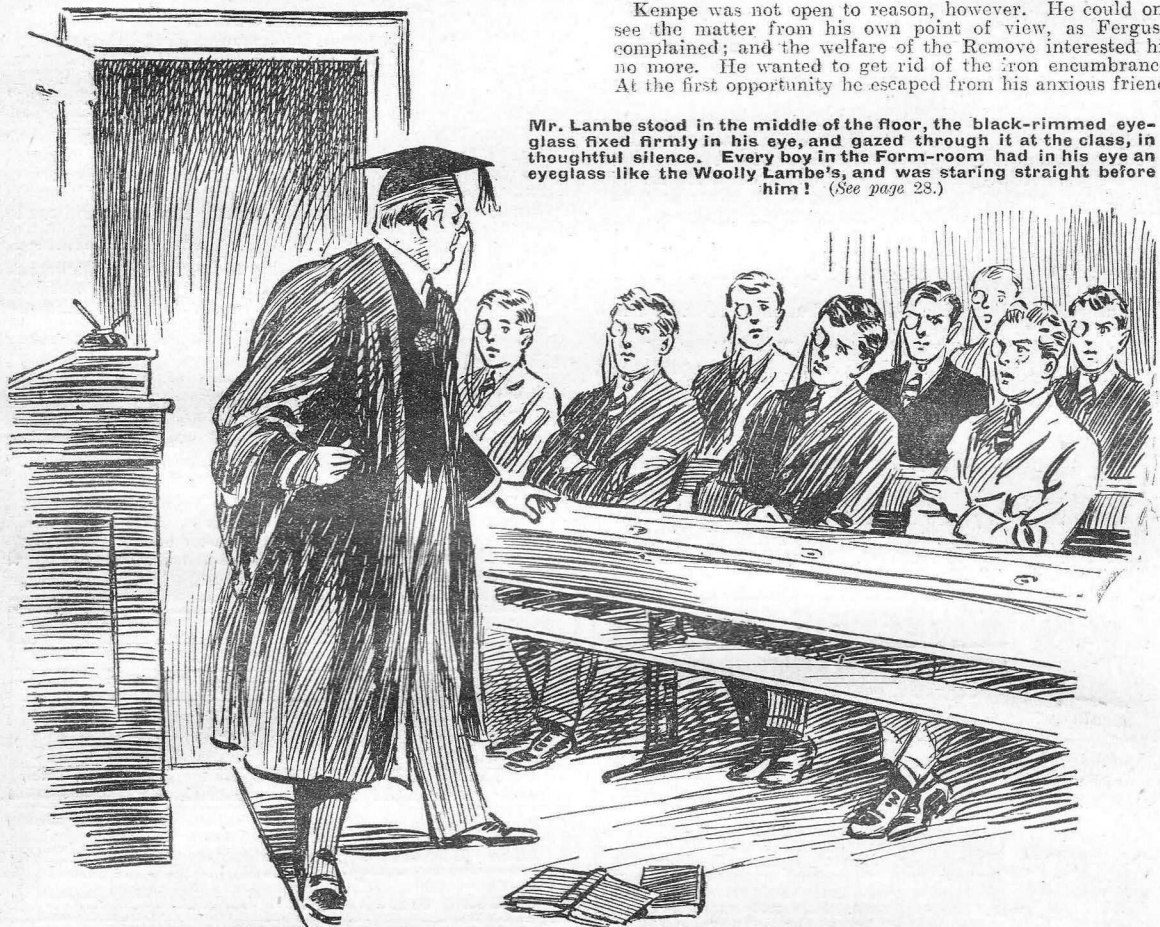
"My aunt! To think of havin' a chap like that for a master!" said Johnson, with a shiver. "It can't be true!"

"What about Fergy's bit of rope, though? No thumb-marks on that!" put in Kent-Williams.
 "It was a piece cut off with a knife, wasn't it?" said Taffy. "He asked to see your pocket-knives an' found some tar on Ferguson's. Simple enough, ain't it?"
 "But why did he pick out us three at once to choose from?" grunted Ferguson.
 "He's spotted your giddy characters already," grinned Taffy. "He knows you three dear pals are the sort to pitch on a dirty jape like that. Or, maybe, he'd got some dark clue to go upon."
 "You think you know a beastly lot, don't you?" growled Ferguson. "It's time you shut your fat head! Did anybody do better than we did? Did Quince?"

"Dash it all, man, you can't do that!" cried Kent-Williams very indignantly. "Why, it's knucklin' under to him! The honour of the Form—"
 "I don't care; I'm goin' to have 'em off!" raged Kempe, making for the door.
 "Here, wait a tick!" exclaimed Ferguson, darting out to the lobbies, and returning with a macintosh. "Never do to let the fags spot one of us like this! Shove this thing over you, old chap, an' keep your wrists under it."
 He threw the wrap over Kempe's shoulders, and, with the help of Kent-Williams, escorted the enraged victim through the corridors and up to Room No. 12, hurrying him along to escape observation; and a hot argument took place on the way.

Kempe was not open to reason, however. He could only see the matter from his own point of view, as Ferguson complained; and the welfare of the Remove interested him no more. He wanted to get rid of the iron encumbrances. At the first opportunity he escaped from his anxious friends,

Mr. Lambe stood in the middle of the floor, the black-rimmed eyeglass fixed firmly in his eye, and gazed through it at the class, in thoughtful silence. Every boy in the Form-room had in his eye an eyeglass like the Woolly Lambe's, and was staring straight before him! (See page 28.)



Kenneth Brooks

THE MONOCLED FOURTH!

"No; that's so. Your giddy poem was feeble, Quince. It didn't sound stirrin' enough," said Dereker.
 "I call it infernally unfair to make a chap read out a thing he hasn't half finished!" snapped De Quincey, scowling viciously. "Of course, it was tosh. That was only the rough draft; an' when I'd polished it up it would have been deuced good. I bet I'll turn out some verses that'll make the beggar squirm, anyhow!"
 "The rum thing is," concluded Taffy, jumping off the desk on which he had been sitting, "nothing seems to hit him. He must see plainly enough we know the danger he's in, an' yet he don't turn a hair. And, of course, he knew Quince was referring to him as the 'Woolly Lambe,' but it never drew him out a ha'porth. So far—"
 "Oh, rot!" burst out Kempe frantically. "Drop the cackle, an' help me get these vile things off, or I'll break somebody's head with them! Here, I'm going to Lambe to ask him to take them off for me!"

and, like a shameless renegade, went straight to Mr. Lambe's study. He knocked on the panel with the edge of the handcuffs.

"Come in!" said the Woolly Lambe's voice.
 Kempe did so, after a good deal of difficulty in turning the door-handle. He found the new master seated comfortably in a big leather easy-chair.
 "Well?" said Mr. Lambe.
 "I—I wondered if you'd mind unlockin' these handcuffs for me, sir?" said Kempe, blushing. "I can't get them off."
 Mr. Lambe sat and looked at him in silence for quite a minute, during which Kempe felt a most abject fool. Then the master rose, and, producing the key, freed the boy from the bracelets in a twinkling.
 Kempe heaved a great sigh of relief.
 "In future, Kempe, don't jump to conclusions," said Mr. Lambe, blinking at him pleasantly. "You had better tell your youthful friends the same. Here are your—ah—handcuffs."

Kempe stammered something.
 "I am afraid," murmured the Woolly Lambe sleepily, "you are a little inclined to be a cad, Kempe. That is a pity. There is no need for you to be a cad. I do not mind a boy being the biggest scapcegrace on earth; but cads I abhor. And in a decent school ere does not expect to find them. Give it up, Kempe; it never pays."
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He nodded pleasantly and a little contemptuously. Kempe left the study feeling many sizes smaller than he had felt for some time past.

The Lambe's Weak Spot!

MR. LAMBE soon became the topic of conversation. "Something's got to be done," said Dereker. "He's gettin' too much of a hold on the Form." "Not for a day or two yet. I want it to be a howlin' success when it does happen," said Taffy; "an' not to make asses of ourselves an' the Form as well, like the other gangs have." "Well, but in the meantime, we ought to spring a good crisp jape on him, as openly as you like, to freshen things up," said Dereker earnestly, as they made their way to Room No. 12. "Don't you think the one I told you of is good enough? Because I do." "Yes, it's all right," said Taffy. "Of course, it means our getting all dropped on to." "I don't think so myself; but that don't matter much. It may be a bit beyond him to deal with. That eyeglass the Lambe wears is a weak spot in his riddy armour, and I don't like to see it glarin' at me from his desk, either." The other members of the Remove, when the plan was submitted to them, expressed themselves in favour of it, with the exception of Ferguson's brigade. "We aren't goin' to do what you sweeps tell us," said Ferguson sulkily. "Who are you to settle what the Form shall do?" An outbreak of discussion followed, but most of the Form were in favour of Dereker. "Fair play's a good word," said Johnson II. "We stood an' callin' for you an' your lot, Fergy, when Kempe did the handcuff trick. Now it's only fair Dereker should have his turn if he wants it. If the jape tickles the rest of us as much as Kempe's troubles did"—Kempe scowled darkly—"I'll vote for it solid." The Form agreed readily, for Dereker had considerable reputation. "Only we've got to know what it is first," said Walsh. "We aren't buyin' a pig in a poke." "I'll transmit the idea to the Form in two days' time, before first lesson," said Dereker. "Anybody who doesn't like it can stand out."

Two mornings later, according to his word, Dereker turned up at Room No. 12, with his chums behind him, and a wooden box under his arm. He opened it before the assembly and showed a perfect stack of eyeglasses. Taking one out, he screwed it into his own optic.

It was exactly similar to the one the Lambe always wore—a rather unusual sort, with the old-time black rim round it, and a watered-silk ribbon instead of a cord. The Form grinned.

"I hired these from a London optician," said Dereker, "an' had to pay a stiff deposit. However, that's no matter. I object to the Woolly Lambe's giddy eyeglass. He wears it for side, if you ask me. If he can wear one in class, why shouldn't we? There are thirty here, all up to sample, and enough to go round. I propose to use 'em this mornin'; so come an' take your choice, my bucks."

"I don't see much fun in it," grunted Kent-Williams. "Of course you don't, my little lad. It's subtle humour, and doesn't reach your turgid brain. It's new, an' it'll be interestin' to see if the Woolly Lambe gives himself away."

A clamour of agreement with Dereker's idea came from the Form. They were all willing. Those who would have preferred to "crab" any scheme of the Taffy partners found the pressure of public opinion too much for them. It was decided that all should bear a part, and that it would be worth while to see what the Woolly Lambe would make of it.

A curious quiet reigned in the Remove class-room that morning when first lesson was due to begin. Mr. Wollaston Lambe somewhat wondered at it. He was accustomed to hear a considerable uproar before he arrived, which did not stop till he entered the room itself.

He came stalking down the corridor with long, swinging strides, and turned into the class-room. Then he halted; and for the first time since his entry into Codrington, the Woolly Lambe showed signs of something like surprise, for every boy of the twenty-six had in his eye an eyeglass exactly like the Woolly Lambe's, and was staring straight before him, making no sound. The whole Remove was eyeglassed and ribboned to the last member of the Form!

(If this doesn't get the "Woolly Lambe's" rag out, nothing will. What say you, chums? Look out, then, for more ructions in the Remove next week. You can only make sure of your GEM chums, by ordering it well in advance!)

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