

THE BEST SCHOOL STORIES

The

GEM

1¹/₂

No. 730.
Vol. XXI.

LIBRARY

20 Pages.

Every Wednesday.

February 4th, 1922.



A TRYING TIME FOR TRIMBLE!

(An Amusing Incident from the Grand Long Complete School Story Inside.)

Published by Howard Baker Press Ltd, 27a Arterberry Road, Wimbledon, London, S. W. 20.



"MY READERS' OWN CORNER."

Half-a-crown is paid for each contribution printed on this page.

If your name is not here this week it may be next.

TO AND FRO.

Gentleman (to tramp): "I thought I gave you a shilling to go in the next street with that whistle?" Tramp: "So you did, sir; but the chap in the next street gave me one to come back again."—William Marsh, 64, Burton End, Haverhill, Suffolk.

A SENSIBLE FOOL.

John was thought to be very stupid. He was sent to a mill one day, and the miller said: "John, some folks say you are a fool. Now, tell me what you do know, and what you don't know."

"Well," replied John, "I know your pigs are fat." "Yes; that's true, John. Now tell me what you don't know." "I don't know whose corn fats 'em."—R. Bulbert, 100, Irishtown, Clonmel, co. Tipp., Ireland.

A SHARP RETORT.

There was a timid knock at the hall door. "If you please, kind lady," said the beggar without, "I've lost my right leg." "Well, it ain't here!" replied the lady as she slammed the door.—Gerald M. Feeny, 2, Goldsmith Terrace, Athlone, Ireland.

A DAY IN THE BUSH.

To spend a day in the Australian bush is a most wonderful experience. I have passed many days out in the wilderness, and I well remember one time last spring when the sky seemed like a vast blue vault, with fleecy, white clouds lazily drifting past. The whole bush was covered with myriads of white and gold

and blue heliotrope flowers, while the birds were radiant in their fresh plumage, and were whistling and singing on all sides. I saw a laughing jackass sitting on the stump of a gum-tree. There were also the black and white wagtails, and the bluebirds. There is nothing so beautiful as the Australian bush in spring-time.—Miss Jean Lonsdale, Henry Street, Five Dock, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

NEVER AGAIN.

The kindhearted lady visitor paused at the side of the hospital bed, and spoke to the sufferer lying there swathed in bandages. "Cheer up!" she said. "Things will come all right!" "I shall never cheer up again," was the dejected answer. "Nonsense!" said the lady. "Nonsense! You will soon cheer up again, and be your old self!" "There ain't no nonsense about it," said the victim dismally. "It's through cheering I'm here now! I was cheering the wrong team!"—A. Yelland, 69, Broadfield Road, Sheffield.



IMPROVED
IN QUALITY

REDUCED
IN PRICE

MASCO BIPLANE SETS

All you have to do to make this fine scale model is to cut out the set of paper and cardboard parts, then erect the model, just as if you were building the real plane. When you have finished you can make the model perform all the evolutions of a real plane, as it is built on the same principle. Span 12"; length 12".

Set of Parts 7d. Post Paid. Two or more sets at 5d. per set. Illustrated Book of Instructions and Drawings 4d. extra.

THE MASCO PATENTS MFG. CO.
(Dept. K), 79, Rosebery Crescent, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

A Model STEAM ENGINE

Complete, ready for work. 15/-, 21/-, & 32/- Rails, 6d. per length. Post extra 1d. **ELECTRIC LIGHT!** Battery, Switch, Wire, Lamp, Holder, Reflector, Instructions, etc. 4/6; postage 6d. Larger size, 8/6; postage 9d. **SHOCKING COIL!** Set of Parts for making, 1/9. Battery Parts, 1/6; postage 3d. each. Electro Magnet, 9d.; postage 3d. (Lifts 1 lb.) Box Electrical Experiments, 2/9; postage 4d. Special Cheap Telephone Set, complete, 1/3; postage 3d. (Catalogue, 4d.) 4-Volt Dynamo, 12/6. SEND NOW!

The HARBOUR SMALL POWER CO.
T. (38) 38, Queens Road, Aston, Birmingham.

FUN FOR ALL!—Ventriloquist's Voice Instrument. Inimitable, Astonishes, Mystifies, Imitates Birds, Beasts, etc. 1/- P.O. (Ventriloquism Treatise included).—Ideal Co., Cleveland, Som.

"ISLAND" PACKET FREE!—Grand Obsolete "MARY ANN" ISLAND (Rare Old Obsolete German Colonial), ICELAND, JAMAICA, REUNION, NEW CALEDONIA, Wallis Islands, ROUAD, Troidad and Tobago, TAHITI (Oceanic), and NEWFOUNDLAND. All these splendid ISLAND Stamps, and also a complete SET OF EIGHT RUSSIAN WEST ARMY, will be sent FREE to all who send 2d. for postage. Best quality Mounts, 7d. per thousand, post free. **VICTOR BANCROFT, MATLOCK.**

HOME CINEMATOGRAPHS—from 21—with AUTOMATIC Re-winder, from 25. Accessories—Standard Film—Illustrated Catalogue Free—Dept. K, DEAN CINEMA CO., 94, Drayton Avenue, London, W. 13.

STOP STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did. Full particulars Free.—FRANK HUGHES, 7, Southampton Row, London, W.C. 1.

CUT THIS OUT

"The Gem." PEN COUPON. Value 2d.

Send 2 of these coupons with only 2/9 direct to the Fleet Pen Co., 119, Fleet Street, London, E.C. 4. You will receive by return a Splendid Blister, Made 14-ct. Gold Xibrod Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6 (Fine, Medium, or Broad Nib). If only 1 coupon is sent, the price is 3/9, 2d. being allowed for each extra coupon up to 6. (Pocket Clip, 6d. extra.) This great offer is made to introduce the famous Fleet Pen to the Gem readers. Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. Foreign post extra.

Lever Self-Filling Model, with Safety Cap, 2/- extra.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 730.

YOUR CINEMA



will give best results when our new acetylene generator and burner is used.

Adjustable to fit any cinema, complete as illustrated.

No. 1 .. 43 post free.

No. 2 .. 63 post free.

Made solely by Bennett Bros.

NEW MODEL DYNAMOBIL

Suitable for driving models. Runs without power.

No. 1 .. 2/- post free

No. 2 .. 2/6 post free.

Satisfaction or Cash Refunded.

Illustrated Catalogues of Steam and Electrical Models 3d. post free. Colonial postage extra.

BENNETT BROS., 5, Theobalds Road, Holborn, London, W.C. 1.

FREE FUN! Our Funny Novelty, causing roars of laughter, FREE to all sending 1/- for 70 Cuts Conjuring Tricks, 12 Jolly Jake Tricks, 6 Catchy Coin Tricks, 5 Gaudy Card Tricks, 5 Mystifying Magic Tricks, 250 Riddles, 18 Games, 10 Funny Readings, 5 Funny Recitations, 21 Monologues, 75 Toasts, 52 Wealth Secrets, Easy Ventriloquism Secret, and 1,001 Stupendous Attractions. Thousands delighted! Great Fun!—C. HUGHES, 15, Wood St., Edgbaston, Birmingham.

FILMS FOR SALE, CHEAP, all in splendid condition, 14/-, 1,000 ft. Stamp for List, Samples—50 ft., 1/2; 100 ft., 1/9.—MACGREGOR, 34, Beaufort Road, Tottenham, N. 17.



HALF-PRICE SALE!

To clear stock quickly we offer overhauled and renovated Government Bicycles at HALF usual prices.

CASH OR EASY PAYMENTS. B.S. ROYAL-ENFIELD, KYNCH, NEW HUDSON and other celebrated makes—all in excellent riding condition. Many equal to new. No reasonable offer refused. Tyres and Accessories at big reductions from shop prices. Write for Free Lists and Special Offers.

MEAD CYCLE COMPANY, INCORP. Dept. B 607 BIRMINGHAM.

FULL-SIZED MEN.—These are the men who win success in business. If you are under full size, increase your height by the Girvan Scientific Treatment. This treatment has even increased the height of soldiers after years of Army drill. Students report from 2 to 5 inches increase. Send a postcard for particulars and our 2500 guarantee to ENQUIRY DEPT. A.M.F., 17, STROUD GREEN ROAD, LONDON, N. 4.

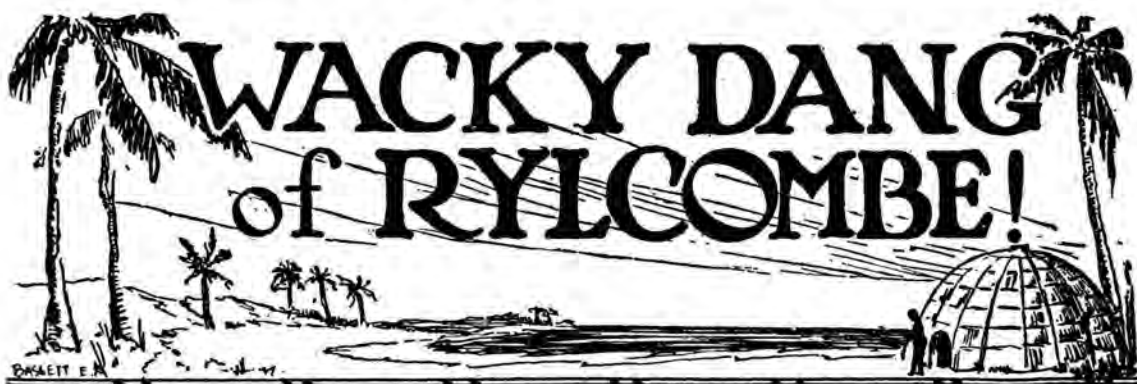
"HOW TO BECOME A JUGGLER." By RUPERT INGALISE, the World's Greatest Juggler. 20,000 words, illustrated. POST FREE. 2/6. **GASKARTH PRESS (Dept. A.F.), Balham, London, S.W. 12.**

CURLY HAIR—"It's wonderful," writes E. D. ODD Testimonials, 1/3, 2/5. (Stamps accepted.)—ROSS (Dept. G.), 173, NEW NORTH ROAD, LONDON, N. 1.

CINEMATOGRAH MACHINES AND FILMS! Lowest Prices. Cowboy, Drama, and Comic Films. Send 1/6 for large sample film. Stamp for **BARGAIN LISTS.**—A. E. Maxwell, George Street, HASTINGS.

SARAWAK PACKET 6d.—80 Stamps all diff. CAYMANS, INDORE, KELANTAN, SARAWAK, SKYHELLEN, etc. 150 assorted, 6d. 10 Stamps, 6d. 20 Unassd, 6d.—Brooks, 43, Edmund Street, Camberwell.

WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS, BE SURE TO MENTION THIS PAPER.



A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Gordon Gay & Co. and the Famous Chums of St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

A Little Misapprehension!

"MERRY!"
"Hallo, Kildare!"
"Mr. Railton wants you in his study—at once."

"Oh dear!"
Kildare of the Sixth walked on, apparently oblivious of the dismay in the sunny face of Tom Merry of the Shell.

"It's come!" said Tom.
"The chopper at last!" agreed Manners.
"Get ready for execution, old chap!" said Monty Lowther sympathetically. "Any last words you'd like to utter before the giddy execution?"
"Fathead!"

Monty Lowther could not help being humorous; but it was a serious situation, as all the Terrible Three of the Shell realised.

The last "rag" on the heroes of the Grammar School at Rylcombe had been rather beyond the limit, and after it was over, Tom Merry & Co. had wondered whether the "chopper" would come down.

Now, apparently, it was coming down.
That summons to the Housemaster's study seemed to indicate that Mr. Railton had heard of that tremendous "rag," and that he had some remarks to make on the subject.

If Mr. Railton had confined himself to making remarks, Tom Merry could have borne it with becoming fortitude. But it was only too probable that the Housemaster would introduce his cane into the discussion. That was much more serious than any number of remarks.

"After all, it was only a rag!" said Monty Lowther. "We were bound to make the Grammarians sit up, after their check."

"I hope Railton will look on it like that," said Tom. "I'm afraid he won't."

"We'd better all go," said Manners. "We were in it as much as you, Tom."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"No good asking for trouble," he said. "I'll go alone, and beard the merry lion in his den."

"Rot!"
"Rats!"

Lowther and Manners answered simultaneously.
"Now look here!" began Tom.

"What's the trouble, deah boys?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth came along, and paused to turn his celebrated eyeglass upon the chums of the Shell. "Anythin' up?"

"Railton seems to have heard of our rag on Gordon Gay's crowd," said Lowther. "Tommy's called up for execution, and we're going with him to whack out the whacks if Railton is in a whacking wax."

"Bai Jove! Is this a time for wotten puns, Lowthah?"

"Lowther would make rotten puns if he was going to be hanged," said Tom Merry. "Chuck it, Monty!"

"My dear chap, I'm trying to cheer you up," said Lowther. "Besides, it isn't a rotten pun—it's a jolly good pun. We must hope that the whacks will wane and not wax—"

"Chuck it!" roared Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! Blake, deah boy—Hewwies—Dig—we are wanted heah!" Arthur Augustus called out to his chums.

Blake and Herries and Dig came up.

"Another rag on the Grammar cads?" asked Blake, with interest.

Tom Merry grunted.

"No. A row over the last rag."

"That's not so nice," grinned Blake.

"Wathah not! But I wegard it as bein' up to us to stand shouldah to shouldah with Tom Mewwy, and take our share of the gwuel, deah boys. We were all in it."

"That's so," agreed Herries; and Dig nodded. Study No. 6 were quite prepared to face the music.

"You fellows needn't come in," said Tom. "Railton's only asked for me!"

"Then he'll get more than he bargained for," said Blake. "We're all in it, and we're all taking our share. Besides, a licking ladled out to a crowd doesn't amount to much. He might give you six. But he couldn't very well give seven more than two each."

"Yaas, wathah."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Then I'd better take a few more with me, and perhaps reduce it to one each," he remarked.

"Not a bad idea," said Monty Lowther. "Here, Kangy. Julian, Kerruish, Cardew, Clive, Levison—"

The juniors looked round from various directions as Lowther shouted their names across the quad.

"Fathead!" said Tom. "We can't take half the School House into Mr. Railton's study."

"The more the merrier," chuckled Lowther. "Come on, you fellows! It's an execution for the last Grammarian rag, and we're all guilty. We're not going to let Tommy go through it on his lonely own!"

"No fear!" agreed Levison.

"I'm ready!" said Clive.

"Anythin' for a little excitement," said Cardew.

"Look here," objected Tom.

But the captain of the Shell was overruled. All parties were equally guilty—if guilt there was. It was only just that all should share in the punishment. Besides, Blake's argument was a good one—the punishment extended over a crowd was certain to fall more lightly upon each individual.

Thirteen juniors finally made their way to Mr. Railton's study in the School House.

Hammond and Durrance and Reilly were gathered up on the way, so that sixteen fellows finally arrived at the Housemaster's door.

Tom Merry tapped.

"Come in!" said the deep voice of Victor Railton.

Tom opened the door.

He entered the study with Manners and Lowther. Behind them came Study No. 6. Behind them, again, were Levison, Clive, and Cardew. The rest brought up the rear in a jostling crowd.

Mr. Railton was sitting at his writing-table. He laid down his pen and stared blankly at the invasion of his study. It was a roomy study, but it was pretty well filled when all the delinquents had crowded in.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Railton, in astonishment.

"What—what does this mean?"

"We—" began Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy interrupted.

"Bettah leave the talkin' to me, deah boy," he suggested. "I can explain mattahs to Mr. Wailton. Yawwooh! Stop stampin' on my foot, Blake!"

"I sent for you, Merry—"

"Yes, sir! We—"

"We were all in it, sir!" said Manners.

Mr. Railton raised his eyebrows.

"In what, Manners?"

"The—the rag, sir!"

"Yaas, wathah! Keep your sillay hoof away, Blake, you ass! The fact is, Mr. Waiton—"

"The Grammarians had been rather cheeky, sir!" said Lowther.

"We only gave them the kybosh, sir!" said Blake.

"Just a rag, sir!"

"Just to keep things lively, sir!" said Cardew. "You see—"

"You see, sir—"

Mr. Railton held up his hand.

"Silence, please!"

"Yaas, wathah! I am weally surpised at you fellows talkin' all at once. You see, Mr. Waiton—"

"Silence, D'Arcy!"

"Bai Jove!"

"This is very extraordinary," said Mr. Railton. "I sent for Merry to speak to him on the subject of a new boy who is coming to the school—"

"Eh?"

"And my study is invaded in this extraordinary manner—"

"Oh, cwumbs!"

"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry. "We—we thought—we—"

"So there has been another dispute with the boys of the Grammar School, and you supposed it had come to my ears!" said the Housemaster severely.

"Oh dear!"

Sixteen fellows looked quite sickly. Mr. Railton had not, after all, heard of that tremendous "rag" on the Grammar School; it was upon quite another matter that he wanted to speak to the captain of the Shell! And now the eager crowd of Tom's supporters had given the show away, as it were—unasked and unneeded.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "You fellows have put your foot in it this time, and no mistake!"

Mr. Railton paused. He glanced towards his cane, and the glances of the juniors followed his uneasily. Fifteen of the fellows present could have kicked themselves for being in the study at all.

But there was a glimmer in the Housemaster's eyes from which they drew hope. He did not extend his hand towards the cane.

"I sent for Merry," said Mr. Railton. "The others seem to have come here under a—a misapprehension. They may go."

There was an audible breath of relief in the study. Fifteen fellows backed out into the passage with wonderful alacrity. In a remarkably short space of time the door closed on them, and Tom Merry was left alone with the Housemaster.

CHAPTER 2.

A Narrow Escape!

TOM MERRY stood waiting respectfully for the Housemaster to explain—inwardly wondering. There was no special reason, so far as he could see, why Mr. Railton should take the trouble to tell him anything about a new boy who was coming to the school. The captain of the Shell wasn't specially interested in new boys. New boys happened along every now and then, quite without ruffling the lofty serenity of the Terrible Three, or interrupting the even tenor of their way.

"Ahem! Merry, a new junior will arrive at St. Jim's in a few days," said Mr. Railton. "His name is Wacky Dang."

Tom nearly ejaculated, "My hat!"

A name like that was calculated to startle any fellow.

Fortunately, he repressed his ejaculation in time, and only replied, with respectful interest:

"Yes, sir."

"He is an African ruler," said Mr. Railton. "His title is Prince of Bhungaree."

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom.

"He has recently crossed over from his native country, and is at present in London with relatives," continued the Housemaster. "He is a ward of the Government, and it is intended to send him to a public school, and St. Jim's has been selected. He will be placed in the Shell here, and the Head has left it to me to select a study for him, with a view to"—the Housemaster paused—"with a view to making things easy for him at first, in his strange surroundings. That is why I have sent for you, Merry."

Tom Merry groaned inwardly.

He knew what was coming now.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 730.

"I shall place him in your study, Merry," continued Mr. Railton. "And I am sure you will do everything in your power to make him comfortable, and to show him kindness and friendship."

"Oh! Yes, sir."

"You are the boy upon whom I have the most reliance in all the Lower School, Merry."

This was very flattering; but just then Tom Merry wished that Mr. Railton did not place so much reliance upon him. He had no desire whatever to share Study No. 10 in the Shell with Wacky Dang, Prince of Bhungaree. His feelings were quite kind towards that unknown youth with the strange name, of course. But he really did not want him in Study No. 10.

But a Housemaster's request amounts to a command. There was nothing for Tom Merry to do but to play up, with the best grace he could muster.

"Thank you, sir!" he murmured.

"My selection of you is really a compliment to you, Merry."

"Oh, yes, sir—quite so!"

"You will make a friend of this boy, and help him in every way, I am sure."

"I'll do my best, sir," said Tom manfully.

"If you find it a little of a burden, or a trial, Merry, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are performing a duty."

"Oh, quite so, sir!"

"Thank you, Merry," said Mr. Railton cordially. "I was sure that I could depend on you to meet my wishes."

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

Tap! The door opened, and Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, came in. The old gentleman had a letter in his hand.

"Mr. Railton—ah! You have spoken to Merry?"

"Yes, Dr. Holmes. Merry is willing to do everything he can to make the Prince of Bhungaree feel at home here."

"Quite willing, sir!" said Tom dutifully to the Head.

Dr. Holmes beamed at him benignantly over his glasses.

Tom began to feel like "Good little Georgie" in the story-books. This kind approval from both the Head and the Housemaster was very flattering and nice; and not at all what Tom had expected when he came to the study.

"Very good, Merry, very good!" said the Head. "I am sure you would take pleasure in carrying out my wishes."

"Certainly, sir," said Tom, hoping that he was keeping within the facts.

"It would be an opportunity for you to display the very best side of your character, Merry."

"I—I should be—be pleased, sir!" stammered Tom, feeling more like "Good Little Georgie" than ever.

"I am only sorry," said the Head regretfully, "that you will not, after all, have the opportunity, Merry."

Tom jumped.

He seemed to see light ahead.

"Not—not—" he stammered.

"It is a pity," said the Head. "I am sure that you will regret it, Merry." He turned to Mr. Railton. "I came in to tell you that I have just received a letter on the subject. The prince has fallen a victim to our—ahem!—climate, and is laid up with a severe cold."

Tom Merry's face brightened; he couldn't help it. He was sorry the poor chap had a cold; but on the other hand the happy family circle in Study No. 10 was to remain undisturbed. That was a considerable consolation for the prince's unhappy cold.

"It seems that the poor boy's constitution is scarcely hardy enough for a northern climate," continued the Head. "Probably, instead of coming to this school, he may return to Africa."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Railton.

"It is not settled yet; we shall hear further when his health is re-established," said Dr. Holmes. "But for the present, Merry, you will not be called upon to undertake the pleasant and agreeable duty that Mr. Railton has referred to."

Tom Merry mumbled something, and escaped from the study.

He almost jazzed his way down the corridor to the stairs. He went up the staircase three at a time. In the Fourth Form passage above, he found Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"All wight, deah boy?" inquired the swell of St. Jim's.

"Why—what—yawooch— Leggo!"

Tom Merry caught the elegant Fourth-Former by the shoulders, and waltzed him round the passage.

"Right as rain!" he trilled.

"Yawooch! You are disawwagin' my tic—"

"He isn't coming after all—"

"Leggo!"

"Hurrah!"

"You uttah ass!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "I don't know what you are dwivin' at, but if you don't velease me at once, I shall give you a feaful thwashin'!"

Tom Merry chuckled, and released the swell of St. Jim's—so suddenly that Arthur Augustus sat down in the passage. The captain of the Shell sprinted on to Study No. 10 in the Shell, and burst open the door like a thunderclap. Manners, who was cutting films, gave a yell as his scissors went through a snap of St. Jim's chapel.

"You silly owl!" he roared. "Wharrer you buzzing in like that for?"

"What's the row?" demanded Lowther in astonishment.

Tom Merry gasped.

"A narrow escape—"

"What?"

"A fearfully narrow escape—"

"What's happened, then?"

"Nothing!"

"You silly ass!" howled Lowther. "How can you have had a narrow escape if nothing's happened?"

"It's what might have happened. If it had happened, we shouldn't have had the narrow escape. He isn't coming, after all!"

"Who isn't?"

"Wacky Dang."

"Eh? Which?"

"The Prince of Bhungaree."

"The—the Prince of Bhungaree!" said Lowther faintly.

"So he's not coming into this study at all?" trilled Tom Merry. "I'm sorry he's got a cold—"

"Who's got a cold?" shrieked Manners.

"Dacky Wang, the Prince of Doodlumdo—I mean, Doodlumdo Dang of Bhungaree—that is—Wacky Bhungaree."

Manners and Lowther rushed at Tom Merry, seized him, and rushed him to the wall of the study. There they jammed his head.

Crack!

"Yooop!" roared Tom Merry. "Leggo, you duffers!"

"Now tell us what you're burbling about, and if you don't explain satisfactorily, you get another crack—harder!" said Manners ferociously.

Tom Merry explained breathlessly. He was let off the second knock. Manners and Lowther shared his exuberant satisfaction when they knew the truth. Study No. 10 in the Shell agreed that they had had a narrow escape, and, in spite of the Head and the Housemaster's high opinion of Tom Merry, and the reliance they placed on him, there was great joy in No. 10. The Terrible Three were able to devote all their attention to the important business of ragging Gordon Gay & Co., of the Grammar School—untroubled by the impending arrival of Wacky Dang of Bhungaree.

CHAPTER 3.

Gay's Little Stunt.

GORDON GAY chuckled. Wootton major and Wootton minor glanced at him.

The three chums of Rylcombe Grammar School were in their study, and they were thinking of tea. At least, the two Woottons were thinking of tea, and getting the same—while Gordon Gay sat in the armchair and perused a newspaper. Wootton major was making toast, Wootton minor was untinning sardines, and both of them occasionally inquired of Gay when he was going to lend them a hand.

Gay, interested in the "Daily Mail," did not answer, and did not even look up till finally he laid the paper on his knee, with a merry chuckle that rang through the study.

"Eureka!" he ejaculated.

"What the thump—" said Wootton.

"Eureka, my sons, is a Greek word," said Gordon Gay. "It means, 'I have spotted it,' or something to that effect!"

"Teach your grandmother!" suggested Harry Wootton.

"Listen to me, children," said Gordon Gay. "Lend me your ears! Never mind the toast! Let it burn, as giddy old Alfred did the cakes! Never mind the sardines—let 'em sard! Gentlemen, maps, and duffers, the 'Daily Mail' is a great publication. It has furnished us with the stunt we have been looking for ages."

"A stunt in the 'Daily Mail!'" said Jack Wootton blankly.

"Yes. Listen!"

Gordon Gay proceeded to read aloud the paragraph of news that had so interested him, or "intrigued" him, as a modern novelist would say.

"We regret to announce that Wacky Dang, the Prince of Bhungaree, is confined to his apartments at the Hotel Splendide with a cold. His departure for St. James' College, Sussex, where he has been entered as a Lower boy, is therefore indefinitely postponed."

Gordon Gay looked up at his chums, who had listened to that item of news with perfectly blank faces.

"There's a picture of the chap on the back page," said Gay, displaying it. "Rather a good-looking Johnny, with a complexion that would make a coffee-bean look pale. Look!"

"Blow the Prince of Bungmachree, or whatever his name is! What the thump does he matter to us?" demanded Wootton major.

"Lots!"

"Well, I don't see it!"

"Do you ever see anything until I point it out?" inquired Gordon Gay. "I'm just going to point! Attention!"

"Oh, cut the swank! Come to the bizney—if any!"

"Wacky Dang, etc., was going to St. Jim's as a new kid," said Gordon Gay. "He's caught a cold, and can't go. Probably he will go when he gets better."

"Well?"

"Last time we did a play in our giddy dramatic society," said Gay, "I took the part of an African ruler. Did I do well?"

"Fairly well!"

"Tiptop, you mean!" said Gay warmly.

"I mean what I say," grinned Wootton major. "I suppose anybody could play the part. It only needs a brown complexion and a flow of strange language."

"Anybody couldn't!" snapped Gay. "Anyhow, I could—and did—and am going to."

"Going to? We're not giving that play over again, are we? Look here, Gay! We've no time now for amateur theatricals. We ought to be thinking about giving St. Jim's the kybosh. They did us last time."



Monk & Co. looked up in surprise as the young African prince walked into their study. "How doodle-do?" said the dusky stranger. "Hallo! How did you get in?" asked Monk in astonishment. "New kid?" "Hook wook acky sacky dang." "What?" "Nood bood noodle goodie bung!" "My only hat!" gasped Frank Monk.

"That's what I'm thinking of. The Prince of Bundleage—I mean Bhungaree—is going to help us."

"What! How?"

"By lending us his stunning name."

"Wha-a-at?"

"And his complexion."

"His complexion," said Wootton major dazedly.

"In a way, yes. Of course, we shall get the complexion out of the make-up box."

"B-b-but wh-w-what—"

"Oh, you'll never catch on!" said Gay, with a deep sigh. "I'd better put it into words of one syllable. I've read about that prince chap in the papers several times, though this is the first I've seen of his being entered at St. Jim's. He's lately from Africa. He's fifteen years old, and he speaks English. Of course, he's never been seen at St. Jim's. Nobody there knows him from Adam. He will come down—when he comes—with some giddy old official, most likely. But he might arrive on his own—or with a couple of black attendants."

"What in the name of the holy smoke does it matter to us whether he does or not?" yelled Wootton major.

"Lots! Tons! He's going to arrive on Wednesday—in a motor-car, with two black retainers. His name is to be Gordon Gay—privately—and Wacky Dang publicly. Savvy?"

Wootton major jumped. Wootton minor dropped the tin of sardines in his astonishment.

"You?" they yelled together.

Gordon Gay nodded.

"Got it at last?" he smiled.

"You?" stuttered Jack Wootton. "Why, you—you ass! Is that what you call a stunt? You couldn't do it! You wouldn't have the neck!"

"You dangerous lunatic!" said Harry Wootton. "You'll be spotted—"

"Fathead! I could do it on my head!" said Gordon Gay. "A brown complexion covers a multitude of sins. A black wig makes no end of difference. And I've got his photograph here to work to in making up."

"You couldn't make yourself like him."

"Why not?"

"You said he was a good-looking chap."

"You silly chump!" roared Gay. "Don't give me any time-worn humour. I want you to back me up, not to be funny."

"What about his two black servants?" demanded Jack Wootton. "Where are you going to dig up two darkies?"

"In this study. If you don't wash more than usual, you fellows will do."

"Why, you silly, cheeky chump—"

"Can't you make up your faces?" snorted Gordon Gay. "Can't you put on black complexions? Where are your brains?"

"But—but—"

"We arrive at St. Jim's," said Gay, evidently greatly taken with his wonderful scheme. "Head surprised—everybody surprised. But there we are—Prince of Bangwallop and his merry retainers. Wonderful costumes and complexions complete, and a few words of a queer language—"

"I don't know any of this Wacky Dang language."

"Make a noise like cracking nuts, and it will do. Nobody at St. Jim's knows any, either."

"Well, that's so."

"You say 'How doodle do?' to everybody. Then mix up some vowels with a double allowance of consonants, and jerk 'em out, and they'll think it's Wacky Dang language. And once we're landed in St. Jim's, with a free run, we'll make Tom Merry & Co. tired of life, and they'll never know what hit them."

"But the—the Head—"

"Leave the Head to me."

"He may telephone to the African Office—"

"Why should he? He may write; but we sha'n't stay longer than the afternoon. We shall have to be back here for call-over, anyhow. There will be a surprising disappearance of the giddy African prince, after he's pulled the leg of St. Jim's."

"I say, it's going right into the lion's den, you know," said Jack Wootton doubtfully. "If they spot us—"

"They won't!"

"But if they did—"

"Rats! Besides, why shouldn't we understudy merry old Daniel, and go into the lion's den? They won't eat us! Don't you dare to be a Daniel?" demanded Gay.

"Yes; but—"

"We're stunting this stunt," said Gay decidedly. "It's the catch of the season. The jape of the term! The last word in japes! The final syllable in stunts! Now let's have tea, and after tea we'll go through a giddy rehearsal, and Monkey shall come and judge us. What?"

"Anything for a quiet life!" said Wootton major

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 730.

Gordon Gay & Co. sat down to tea, and over tea Gay spoke on the subject of his astonishing stunt, with untiring eloquence. His chums gave in their adherence to the scheme; though Wootton major carefully explained that it was only to stop Gay talking! After tea, there was a raid on the property-box, and the three juniors were busy. And after that, there was a sudden surprise for Monk, Lane, and Carboy, of the Fourth, when a rather good-looking young African walked into their study along the passage. Monkey & Co. jumped up in surprise.

"How doodle do?" said the dusky stranger.

"Hallo! How did you get in?" asked Monk, in astonishment. "New kid?"

"Hook wook acky sacky dang!"

"Wh-what?"

"Nood bood noodle goodle bung!"

"My only hat! We don't speak that language here," said Frank Monk. "Here, I'd better take you to the Head."

"Nixey wixey woop."

"Ye gods! What a language!" said Carboy. "Nut-crackers ain't in it! Take him along to the Head, Monkey—must be a new kid from Africa!"

"Funny that he should be wandering about our passage," said Lane. "Here, young lamp-black, how did you get along here?"

"Loopey waddy wisk."

"He can't speak English, that's perfectly plain," said Monk.

"Plain as your face, Monkey, old top," said the young prince, in quite a different voice.

Monk jumped clear of the floor. He knew that voice!

"Gay, you spoofing chump—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gordon Gay. "I think I shall do! What?"

Two black faces grinned in at the doorway. They were the faithful retainers of Wacky Dang of Bhungaree.

"What on earth's the game?" asked the mystified Monk.

And when Gordon Gay explained, there were yells of merriment in the study. Gay had passed muster—there was no doubt about that—and though it cost him the time usually devoted to prep, which led to trouble with Mr. Adams in the morning, he did not regret it. He was looking forward joyfully to the forthcoming arrival of the Prince of Bhungaree at St. Jim's; an arrival which was to be a sensational episode in the history of the old school.

CHAPTER 4.

The Prince Arrives.

BAGGY TRIMBLE, of the St. Jim's Fourth, rushed into the School House with great excitement on his fat face.

"He's come!" yelled Trimble.

A dozen juniors were chatting round the fire in the hall. It was early on Wednesday afternoon, and some of the juniors were debating what they were going to do with the half-holiday.

Tom Merry was in favour of football, while Lowther favoured a raid on the Grammar School. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy backed up the idea of a raid, but doubted whether it would be successful unless the leadership was placed in his able hands. To which the other fellows rejoined by referring to a well-known rodent in the plural. And then Trimble came bursting in, full of excitement.

"He's come! I've seen him!" gasped Trimble.

"Bai Jove! I wish you would not wear at a fellow like that, Twimble. I have wepeatedly mentioned that I do not like bein' woreed at."

"But he's come—"

"Who's come?" snapped Blake.

"The prince."

"One of your princely pals, Trimble?" grinned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The African prince—the Prince of Pingpong-wallop—"

"What?"

"The car's coming up to the house now," said Trimble, satisfied at having made an impression at last. "No end of a swell—glittering with jewels. Two black niggers in the car with him. It's really a taxi—the taxi from Wayland. Must have come to Wayland Junction by train. I say, I've seen in the papers that he's laid up with a cold. Must have got well and come on. No end of a swell! Friend of mine really. We were going to have him with our house-party at Trimble Hall, only—"

There was a rush of the juniors to the door.

If the Prince of Bhungaree had arrived after all, the fellows were curious to see him—especially the Terrible Three. For if he had arrived, their study was to be invaded after all; the happy three were to be changed into a more or less comfortable four.

The taxi had stopped outside.

Three dusky faces looked out of it; but all eyes were fixed on one specially—evidently the prince. He wore a fur-collared overcoat, but it was partly opened, showing glimpses of rich attire beneath. His headgear was ablaze with gems, which must have been worth a fortune if genuine. His dark-brown face was rather good-looking, his eyelashes and brows were black as midnight, and his hair, worn rather long, was jetty. He was dark, even for an African.

Tom Merry gave his chums a glance of comical resignation. "That's the Johnny," he said.

"Must be," grunted Lowther. "Blessed if I see why he should be landed in our study! But I suppose we've got to do the polite."

"Weally, Lowthah, you ought to be vewy glad to greet the stwangaah fwom afah," said Arthur Augustus reprovingly. "Chummin' with an Afwican wulah stwengthens the bonds of Empiah, you know, and—hands across the sea, and so on."

"Here's Railton," murmured Talbot of the Shell.

Mr. Railton had seen the arrival from his window. He hurried into time to greet the prince as he stepped from the taxi. If the prince's heart beat faster as the Housemaster bore down upon him, he did not show any sign of it. His darkly bronze face was very calm, his manner slow and stately. He bowed solemnly to the Housemaster.

"How doodle do?" he asked.

"That's the way you greet a chap in Afwica, you know," Arthur Augustus murmured, sapiently, to his comrades. "It means somethin' or othah, you know."

"Go hon!" murmured Blake sarcastically.

"It does weally, Blake!"

"Wacky Dang?" asked Mr. Railton.

"May you live a thousand years, bonga!"

"Your arrival is somewhat unexpected," said Mr. Railton, perplexed. "I—I understood that the Head would be notified when you were well enough to come to school, Wacky Dang."

"The honourable notification was duly administered," said the prince. "My slave Mustapha shall have sent it to honourable headmaster." He turned to one of the black servants. "Hoko wag nook?"

"Chick!" replied the black man.

The prince turned to the Housemaster again.

"Honourable notification should have reached respected headmaster, unless there shall be some delays in post service," he said.

Mr. Railton nodded.

"Very well; doubtless the letter has been delayed," he said. "Your arrival to-day is unexpected, Wacky Dang, but you are very welcome. Pray come with me."

"Thousand best thanks, bonga! Honourable headmaster is home?"

"Dr. Holmes is absent this afternoon, attending a meeting of public school headmasters," explained Mr. Railton.

"Good! I—I mean, let us enter the great and honoured domicile, seat of learning and abstruse knowledge," said the prince.

"Come with me!"

The prince accompanied Mr. Railton into the School House. His two black servants followed. There was a sort of yelp from the taximan.

"Who's paying for this 'ere keb?"

The prince paused.

"Mustapha!"

"Chick!"

"Give him gold!"

"Hick hock!"

Mustapha turned to the taximan and paid him, and the man drove away. Mr. Railton glanced after the taxi.

"Your luggage, Wacky Dang—"

"The honourable luggage is extensive as sands on the seashore, and could not be placed in confined space of taxi. Honourable headmaster will doubtless send large waggon."

"Oh!" said Mr. Railton. He looked dubiously at the two black servants. "Are these men your servants, Wacky Dang?"

"Chick! I—I mean they are my faithful slaves."

"St. Jim's boys are not allowed to have personal attendants," said Mr. Railton, rather puzzled.

"Let them sleep on the floor outside my room!" said the prince carelessly. "They are of no moment."

"H'm! I fear that would be impossible. However, they can be provided with accommodation for to-day, and to-morrow they can be sent away," said Mr. Railton. "Come into my study, Wacky Dang."

"I follow the honourable bonga with light heart."

It is probable that this statement was not strictly in accord with the actual facts. However, Wacky Dang followed Mr. Railton into his study. The two black servants took up their station outside the door, standing as motionless as statues, stared at by half St. Jim's.

"Funny looking teggars, ain't they?" remarked Baggy Trimble. "I say do you chaps speak English?"

"Chook nooky," answered Mustapha.

"Must be African, argo," said Trimble. "I learned a few words once from a African prince—a friend of mine—a wully big gun, you know. I happen to have forgotten, though."

"Weally, Twimble—"

"I say, what a lark to pull that joker's flowing locks!" said Trimble.

"Let him alone, you fat duffer!" said Tom Merry.

"Rats!"

Trimble, eager to distinguish himself before so many eyes, dodged behind Mustapha, to pull that black man's hair. The black man swung round on him suddenly, and there was a yell of terror from Trimble as a blade flashed from the black man's girdle. The fat junior jumped back from the glittering steel in the dusky hand.

"Yaroooh! Help!" he gasped.

"Hook!" hissed Mustapha. "Wooky langy loop! Goooooh!"

"Oh dear!"

Trimble backed away, dodged through the crowd of juniors, and fled. He did not intend to trust himself near the black men again, and he had no further desire to "lark" with Wacky Dang's servants. Mustapha returned the dangerous looking article to his girdle, and took up his stand again, with his black comrade, outside the Housemaster's study door.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "That chap seems weally wathah fewocious. His face seems wathah familiah to me, somehow. I could almost swear that I have seen that pug nose somewhah. Bai Jove, he is blinkin' at me, just as if he undahstood what I was sayin'! Hallo! Heah comes the mewwy pwince."

The Housemaster's door opened, and Mr. Railton came out with the Prince of Bhungaree.



"Wacky Dang," said Mr. Railton, turning to the prince. "This is Tom Merry, captain of the Form to which you will belong." "Glad to meet you," said Tom, holding out his hand. The prince grasped it and shook it, and gave it a grip that made Tom Merry jump. Mr. Railton smiled slightly.

CHAPTER 5.

Looking After the Prince.

"MERRY!"

The captain of the Shell came forward.

"Yes, sir?"

Tom knew what was wanted. The new boy from Africa was to be placed under his wing. Tom was willing to do his best, though the prospect was not exhilarating.

"Wacky Dang will be in your Form, as I have already mentioned, Merry, and it is my intention to place him in your study. I shall be obliged if you will take the new junior in hand for this afternoon, and do your best to make him comfortable. He is quite new to English schools, and naturally will require a little guidance here at first."

"Oh! Yes, sir."

"You have no football-match on this afternoon?" asked Mr. Railton, who was always considerate. "If so, I will make other arrangements."

"No, sir," said Tom. "We were just talking about what we'd do with the half-holiday, sir, when Wacky Dang came along."

"Very good. Then you will do as I wish?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"Wacky Dang," said Mr. Railton, turning to the prince, "this is Tom Merry, captain of the Form to which you will belong."

The prince bowed deeply to the captain of his Form.

"How doodle do, Bonga?" he said.

"Glad to meet you," said Tom, and he held out his hand frankly and cheerily.

The prince grasped it, and shook it, and gave it a grip that made Tom Merry jump. Tom was unprepared for that vice-like grip, and he gave a sort of yelp as his fingers were crushed.

Mr. Railton smiled slightly.

"You will go with Merry now, Wacky Dang. I will send for you as soon as the Head returns."

"To hear the command of honourable bonga instructor is to obey."

Mr. Railton coughed, and returned into his study. The African youth's flow of flowery language was rather striking, and Mr. Railton hoped that a term at St. Jim's would pare it down a little. He was not aware of the exceeding brevity of the prince's probable stay.

"Come along with me, kid!" said Tom Merry. "Like a look round the school?"

"I should be glad to see honourable study."

"This way, then!"

Tom glanced at his chums. He was booked. But he did not want to spoil the half-holiday for Manners and Lowther. But his loyal chums determined to stand by him. Monty Lowther, indeed, hoped to extract a little fun from the guileless youth from Africa.

"Come on, your Highness!" said Monty Lowther. "We're going to be study-mates, you know. Grand slam—I mean, salaam."

"Boola bonga wonga loo."

"This is Lowther, Wacky Dang," said Tom. "This chap is Manners. We're all in Study No. 10—that's your study. By the way, what are you going to do with your servants?"

"They will follow me."

"H'm! But—"

"It is impossible for a Prince of Bhungaree to move without the attendance of faithful slaves!"

"My hat! You'll have to get used to it here, old scout. Still, I suppose they can come along now," said Tom Merry, with a smile. "Do they speak English at all?"

"They speak the language of their native country, bonga. I will command them." The prince turned to his servants.

"Hakey wook tooley took."

"Chik, chak, wump!" answered Mustapha.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "What a fearful language! That African chap of the New House speaks it with quite a different accent."

"Probably he comes from a different part of Africa," remarked Blake. "There's lots of languages in Africa."

"Yaas, it is pwob. It would be wathah nice for the pwince to meet a fellow-countyman heah," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully and considerately. "I will suggest it." And the swell of St. Jim's came over to the Shell fellows. "Tom Mewwy, deah boy, pewwaps the pwince would like to meet Johnson of the Fourth?"

"Oh, good!" said Tom. "That's quite a brain-wave, Gussy. Wacky Dang, there's a chap from your country already at St. Jim's, named Sam Johnson."

"From Bhungaree?" asked the prince.

"Well, from Africa," said Tom. "He's some sort of a big gun in Africa, isn't he?"

The prince frowned.

"Muckatub" he exclaimed.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 730.

"Yes, that's where Johnson hails from—somewhere in Africa."

"The dog!"

"What?"

"There has been war between Bhungaree and Muckatub!" exclaimed the prince. "If I meet a dog from Muckatub I shall order my servants to slay him!"

"Great pip!"

"Where is he?" exclaimed the prince.

"Oh, my hat! Never mind where he is," said Tom hastily. "He doesn't belong to the School House, luckily; he's a New House chap. Gussy, old man, your idea isn't worth a red cent. If you see Johnson, keep him off the grass. We don't want a fight."

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy. I weally thought the pwince would like to meet a fellow-countyman, you know," said Arthur Augustus, taken aback.

"He doesn't, it seems. Come on, Wacky Dang."

The prince walked away with the Terrible Three, and the two black servants followed with solemn faces. Arthur Augustus glanced after the party.

"I do not thing vevy much of that pwince, Blake," he remarked. "He may be a vevy big gun in his own county, but he has a gweat deal to learn. He is not vevy clean."

"What?" ejaculated Blake.

"It is a fact, deah boy. He left a howwid dirty mark on Tom Mewwy's hand aftah shakin' hands with him. I saw Tom Mewwy wipe it on his twousahs—wathah a slovenly thing to do. There was a distinct black mark on Tommy's fingahs."

"Somebody had better lend the chap a cake of soap," chuckled Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Arthur Augustus shook his head seriously. The swell of St. Jim's would have been still more disgusted if he had heard the prince, a few minutes later, emphatically decline Tom Merry's offer to take him to the dormitory for a wash and brush-up after his journey. It was evident that the Prince of Bhungaree had an objection to washing. A wash would probably have made a startling change in his dusky complexion!

CHAPTER 6.

Caught Napping!

"THIS is our study!"

The Terrible Three ushered Wacky Dang into No. 10 in the Shell. Having had the prince landed on them, as it were, they were prepared to be hospitable. Manners was ready to show him his flims. Monty Lowther would not have objected to reading out to him his latest "Comic Column" for the "Weekly." Tom Merry was ready to offer to initiate him into the mysteries of football. Meanwhile they showed him the study. They hoped he would be pleased with it. The prince glanced round him.

"This is honourable study?" he asked.

"Yes. You'll dig here with us," said Manners.

"How vevy good!" said the prince graciously. "There is room for my servants also."

"H'm!"

The black men, or rather boys, followed the prince in. Each of them had a black moustache, and looked older than the prince, but they were no bigger. It was rather difficult to tell their age.

"My hat!" said Lowther. "Do these chaps follow you wherever you go?"

"Always!"

"You'll learn some new customs here," said Lowther. "You've never been to school in England before, what?"

"I have heard of great scholastic establishments," said the prince, not replying to the question. "There is Grammar School near to this honourable edifice, is it not so?"

"Oh, yes; Rylcombe Grammar School," said Lowther. "Not much of a show."

"They play football?"

"After a fashion," said Manners.

"They beat you all along the honourable line, I hear?"

"Blessed if I know where you heard that," said Lowther rather warmly. "Somebody has been pulling your leg, Wacky Dang. We always beat the Grammarians."

"Nearly always," said Manners.

"My excellent information is otherwise," said the prince. "But I bow to superior judgment. Mustapha! Selim!"

"Chik!" said the black men together.

"Took wook tooley wool."

That mysterious communication was Greek to the Terrible Three. But whatever it was, the black men seemed to understand.

Mustapha and Selim stepped out into the passage.

"Sending them away?" said Manners.

"One moment, my honourable friends."

The prince stepped out into the passage drawing the door

shut after him. Apparently Wacky Dang had something to say to his servants that he did not wish the Terrible Three to hear. The three chums looked at one another.

"Queer fish!" murmured Lowther.
"Blessed if I like his manners very much," murmured Tom.
"Still, I suppose he doesn't know our ways."
"Hallo, look what he's at!" ejaculated Manners suddenly.

A dusky hand came round the door, extracting the key from the lock. The Terrible Three simply blinked. The key was jammed into the outside of the lock and turned. There was a gasp from the chums of the Shell.

"He—he's looking us in!" babbled Manners.
"Is he mad?" stuttered Lowther.
Tom Merry ran to the door, caught the handle, and shook it.

"Wacky Dang!" he shouted.
"Natha bongu boo!"
"What have you locked us in for?"
"For honourable joke."
"You—you—ass!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "Unlock the door at once!"

"That would spoil honourable joke bongu."
"Let us out!" roared Manners.
There was a chuckle in the passage and a sound of receding footsteps.

The Prince of Bhungaree was walking away with his black servants.

"Well, my hat!" said Tom Merry blankly.
"The potty idiot!" howled Manners. "Locking us up in our study! If that is an African idea of a joke, I don't like it."

"Wacky Dang!" yelled Lowther.
There was no reply from the passage. The Prince of Bhungaree was gone—with the key in his pocket.

Tom Merry thumped on the door.
The Terrible Three were willing to make allowances for the stranger from a strange land. But this was really a little too "thick." They had no desire to spend a half-holiday locked in their study, because of the prince's misdirected sense of humour.

"Hallo, what's the row in there?" called out Gore of the Shell, coming out of the next study.
"That howling ass of a nigger has locked us in!" yelled Lowther.

"Great Scott!"
"Let us out, Gore," said Tom Merry.
"There's no key here," chuckled Gore.
"The fathead has taken it away. Go after him and get it back," said Tom. "Tell him we're fed up with his rotten, silly jokes."

"Oh, all right," said Gore, with a chortle. "I wish you joy of your merry study-mate. I'd brain him if he was in my study."

George Gore departed chuckling. The Terrible Three raved in the study. They had been prepared to be very kind to the Prince of Bhungaree; but this perfectly idiotic trick was too much for them. All their kind feelings had vanished. It was very probable that they would punch the prince's head when they were out of the study again.

But they were not out yet!
Five minutes later Gore's footsteps were heard returning. His chuckle sounded through the keyhole.

"Hallo, in there!"
"Got the key?" yelled Manners.
"No fear! The nigger says he doesn't like your looks, and he's going to keep you locked in till tea-time!"
"Is he mad?" howled Lowther.

"Well, he looks sane enough," chortled Gore. "Sort of funny merchant, I should say. Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you ass? There's nothing funny in locking chaps in their study, is there?"
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gore. "It seems to me rather funny! You fellows must be awful duffers to be caught napping like that."

"You silly owl, we weren't looking for anything of the kind, of course!"

"Well, I hope you'll enjoy your afternoon," said Gore charitably. "Good-bye!"
"Look here—"

But George Gore was gone.
The Terrible Three looked at one another in utter exasperation. The trick was utterly unexpected. They really could not help having some doubts about the prince's sanity.

"We can't stay here," said Manners. "By gad, I'll give that black idiot the licking of his life when I get out!"

"Same here!" growled Lowther, clenching his fists. "By Jove! I'd give a week's pocket-money to be within hitting distance of his silly nose!"

"He must be out of his senses," said Tom. "Who ever heard of a new fellow playing a potty trick like this!"
"How are we going to get out?"

"Well, we can't jump forty feet from the window," said

Tom, "that's a cert. And we can't open the door without a key."

"We could take the lock off if there's a screwdriver in the study."

"But there isn't."

"Dash it all, we'll smash it with the poker, then!" howled Lowther.

Tom Merry shook his head.
"Smash the poker more likely," he said. "That lock's pretty hefty. Besides, we don't want to kick up a row and get half the school round the door. They would think us idiots to be caught like this."

"But we can't stay here—"

"The black idiot may come back and let us out," said Tom. "Better wait a bit before we start smashing the door, anyhow."

Monty Lowther drew a deep breath.
"I'll smash that black potty dummy when I get out," he said. "I won't leave a feature that his relations would know him by."
The Terrible Three felt a great deal like rabbits in a trap. But there was no help for it. They had to stand it, only hoping that the African who possessed so peculiar a sense of humour would repent and return, and release them. And when he did so, they were prepared to reward him with the biggest hiding ever administered to a new junior at St. Jim's!

CHAPTER 7. Green!

WACKY DANG strolled into the quadrangle, followed by his two black servants. There was a cheery smile upon his dusky face as he bent his steps in the direction of the New House. For the present, apparently, he was satisfied with his proceedings in the School House.

Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster of the New House, was in the doorway, and he glanced with some interest at the advancing figure. Mr. Ratcliff was rather a snob, and he had a weakness for titles. A prince was a prince, even if he was the colour of a coffee-bean; and Mr. Ratcliff summoned up the most genial smile his features were capable of as the Prince of Bhungaree came up the steps of the New House.

"Boko wongo, how doodle do?" said Wacky Dang.
"Good-afternoon, my boy!" said Mr. Ratcliff genially.

"May your shadow never grow less, honourable bongu! May it flourish for a thousand years like the green bay-free beside running waters!" said the prince gravely.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Ratcliff, rather taken aback by that flowery compliment.

"May my humble self enter honourable mansion to speak to bongu Figgins?" asked the prince.

"Certainly, my boy. Pratt!"
Pratt of the Fourth came up.

"Do you know where Figgins is, Pratt?"

"In his study, sir."

"Take this lad there, Pratt."

"Yes, sir."

"Follow Pratt, and he will take you to Figgins' study, Wacky Dang," said Mr. Ratcliff graciously.

"May you live a thousand years, bongu!"

The Prince of Bhungaree followed Pratt of the Fourth, and the two black servants followed the prince. Pratt, blinking curiously at the party, led them up to the Fourth Form passage, and pointed out Figgins' door. Then he departed, whistling.

The prince knocked at the study door.

"Come in, fathead!" called out the voice of George Figgins of the Fourth.

Figgins & Co. were in their quarters. Fatty Wynn was roasting chestnuts at the study fire, while the Co. discussed an important matter. Figgins & Co. of the New House were debating a raid on the Grammar School—being quite in agreement that it was up to the New House to give the enemy the kybosh—the New House being ever so much better fitted for the task than the School House; in the opinion of Figgins & Co. at least.

The three juniors stared round as Wacky Dang came in, followed by Mustapha and Selim.

"Hallo! It's the merry prince!" exclaimed Kerr.

"How doodle do, bongu?"

"Same to you, and many of them, old scout!" said George Figgins affably.

"May you live a thousand years!"

"Good! That would be no end of a joke on the Old Age Pensions Department!" grinned Figgins. "Fatty, hand out the merry chestnuts! We've got visitors!"

"Right you are!" said Fatty Wynn hospitably.

Wacky Dang sat down, his followers remaining standing with their backs to the door.

"Do you eat chestnuts?" asked Figgins.

"Honourable chestnuts are very good."

"They are! Help yourself, old top!"

The prince helped himself.

Figgins & Co. were hospitable, though they were wondering why the Prince of Bhungaree had called on them. Kerr's keen eyes were rather curiously fixed on the prince. There was something about the dusky youth's features that puzzled the Scottish junior. Certainly the Prince of Bhungaree was a complete stranger at St. Jim's. But it seemed to Kerr that he had seen somebody like Wacky Dang before.

As if by chance, the prince sat with his face turned from the window. He moved a little, too, so that Kerr had a view only of his profile. It was really as if he was conscious of the Scottish junior's thoughts, and felt uneasy under those keen eyes.

The prince chatted freely and agreeably, chiefly about Africa. Figgins & Co. listened and answered politely, inwardly wondering when their guest would take his departure. The prince mentioned the jugglers of his native land, and described the celebrated rope-trick. He offered to show it to Figgins & Co. He whipped a cord from under his loose garments. Figgins & Co. were quite interested.

"You hold out honourable wrists—so—" said the prince.

Figgins held out his honourable wrists.

Wacky Dang passed a slip-noose over them loosely.

"Now your honourable friend—"

Kerr's wrists were looped.

"But what's the trick exactly?" asked Figgins puzzled.

"I don't quite see what this leads to."

"My honourable friend will see in one moment. I draw the three nooses tight—in this manner—"

"Yes, I see that!"

"That's plain enough," said Fatty Wynn. "But I'm blessed if I see any rope trick in that!"

"It is a great and celebrated trick," said the prince.

"Well, go ahead."

"Now I knot the cord—so—"

"Yes?"

"Now can you move your honourable wrists?"

"Of course we can't!" said Kerr. "They're all tied together in a bunch."

"That is the trick," explained the prince.

The three New House juniors stared at him blankly.

"Call that a trick!" said Fatty Wynn, with a sniff. "Why, anybody could tie three fellows' wrists together, couldn't he? There's no trick in that."

The prince rose.

"It is very clever trick," he declared. "Anybody could do it, certainly, if fellows were asses enough to let him."

"Wha-a-t?"

"But it is only at St. Jim's that such asses are found," said the prince.

"Why, you cheeky chump—"

Figgins & Co. glared at the prince. He was grinning cheerfully at the three helpless juniors. Figgins & Co. with their wrists bound together in a bunch, were quite helpless. It was not the celebrated rope-trick of the African jugglers, but certainly it was a trick—and the New House chums had been very completely tricked.

"Look here, chuck this!" said Figgins gruffly. "If you call this a trick, I don't. Untie that cord."

The Prince of Bhungaree shook his dusky head.

"That is the trick!" he said. "You have been caught napping, my honourable fatheads!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mustapha suddenly, greatly tickled by the expression on George Figgins' face.

"Take this rope off!" roared Figgins.

Instead of taking the rope off, the prince took the loose end, and tied it to the leg of the table. Figgins & Co. watched him as if they were mesmerised.

"Is the chap potty?" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "What the hump are you fixing us up like that for, Wacky Dang?"

"That is the trick!" said the prince blandly.

"You silly ass! Let us go!"

"I'll jolly well punch your nose for this!" roared Figgins.

"Honourable nose is quite safe while your hands are tied," said the prince agreeably.

"The fellow's off his rocker," said Figgins. "We shall have to yell for some of the fellows to come in and loose us."

But Figgins & Co. had no chance to yell. Wacky Dang, Mustapha, and Selim seized the three helpless juniors, and stuffed their own handkerchiefs in their mouths. There were some rather dark marks on the handkerchiefs when they had finished, and they caught Kerr's keen eyes. All of a sudden it flashed into the Scottish junior's brain where he had seen the prince's features before—when they were not coffee-coloured! He made a desperate effort to speak. But the gag was stuffed well in, and he had to be silent. His eyes gleamed at the prince, and the dusky youth understood.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 730.

"Honourable Scotsman is very sharp!" grinned the Prince of Bhungaree. "He knows?"

Kerr nodded savagely.

"Too late, my honourable friend!" murmured the prince.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wacky Dang took a tube of paint from a pocket. He squeezed out a quantity of green paint upon a duster, and rubbed it into Figgins' face, with a gentle but ruthless hand. In a couple of minutes George Figgins was looking as green as grass.

"It is quite harmless, my honourable and fatheaded friend," said the prince soothingly. "It will wash off—later. But it will show honourable Figgins in his true colours."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The prince turned to Fatty Wynn, and in a couple of minutes more, David Llewellyn Wynn had a complexion to match Figgins'.

Kerr glared helplessly as his turn came; there was no help for him. He was soon as green as Figgins and Fatty Wynn.

"The sorrow is great to leave honourable friends so uncomfortable," murmured the prince. "But it will not be for long! Is the laugh up against the Grammar School this time, bongas?"

Figgins jumped, and Fatty Wynn wriggled. They understood now, as well as Kerr—the prince had spoken in a familiar voice!

"This is where we smile!" remarked Mustapha, speaking English for the first time since he had arrived at St. Jim's.

"We does—we does!" chuckled Selim.

Figgins & Co. wriggled in helpless fury.

Wacky Dang smiled at them, and walked out of the study, locking the door on the outside. He put the key in his pocket, and strolled away with his black followers, smiling. In Figgins' study, three green faces glared at one another in impotent wrath. Certainly, the laugh was not up against the Grammar School this time! It was likely to be very much up against Figgins & Co. when they were discovered in that extraordinary predicament.

CHAPTER 8.

In the Hands of the Philistines!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY paused in the important task of brushing his silk topper, and bestowed a polite nod upon a dusky youth who glanced in at the doorway of Study No. 6.

"Pway twot in, deah boy!" said the swell of St. Jim's courteously.

The Prince of Bhungaree trotted in, with Mustapha and Selim at his heels. D'Arcy was alone in the study.

"Honourable friends are absent?" asked the prince.

"They're down at the footah, deah boy. By the way, Wacky Dang," said Arthur Augustus, rather severely, "I have heard a tewwible wow fwom No. 10 in the Shell. Tom Mewwy told me thwough the keyhole that you have locked him and Mannahs and Lowthah in the study."

"That is honourably correct," said the prince, with a nod.

"Isn't that wathah a wotten twick to play on your study-mates?" asked Arthur Augustus, raising his noble eyebrows. "I weally wecommand you to go and welease them at once. They are gettin' vewy watty, I believe!"

"Shouldn't wonder, old bean!"

Arthur Augustus jumped.

It was the voice of Gordon Gay, of the Grammar School, that came from the dusky youth, all of a sudden.

The familiar voice from the strange face was so astounding that Gussy's noble jaw dropped, his eyeglass fell from his eye, and he gazed at the Prince of Bhungaree with his aristocratic mouth open, gasping like a fish out of water.

He could scarcely believe his ears. He gazed, and he blinked, too astounded even to notice that Mustapha was locking the study door.

"Gweat Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus, at last.

"Surprised you, old bunny rabbit?" asked the prince genially.

"Bai Jove! I—I know your voice—"

"You've heard it often enough, Gussy."

"Is it weally possible—" mumbled Arthur Augustus dazedly.

"Quite! Allow me to introduce myself—Prince of Gay—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mustapha Wootton and Selim Wootton—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Wootton major and minor.

Arthur Augustus fairly spluttered.

"Oh deah! This is—is—is weally inewedible! You feahfully cheeky ass, you are not a pwince at all! You are Gordon Gay with your cheeky face blacked—"

"You've got it at last!" grinned the prince.

"Bai Jove! You cheeky wottah—"

"Collar him!"

Arthur Augustus' silk hat flew in one direction, and the polishing-pad in another, as the three Grammarians seized him. He opened his noble mouth for a yell, and the pad was shoved into it.

"Groooogh!" mumbled Arthur Augustus.

Chuckling, the three invaders of St. Jim's proceeded swiftly to work. They tied a length of twine round Gussy's head, to keep the pad in his jaws, and then tied his wrists to the leg of the table. Arthur Augustus sat on the carpet, blinking with rage.

There was a footstep in the passage. D'Arcy's face lighted up—he knew Blake's rather heavy step.

The Prince of Bhungaree made a sign to his comrades, and quietly unlocked the door and opened it.

Jack Blake came along the Fourth Form passage, ruddy from the football practice. He seemed rather surprised to see the prince looking out of his study.

“Hallo, old scout!” he said.

“Wallo wambo! Enter honourable study!” said the prince.

Blake grinned, and walked in. The next instant the door was slammed, and Jack Blake was on the floor under three gripping pairs of hands.

He uttered one yell before he was overpowered.

“Herries! Dig!”

“Hallo!” came back Herries' voice along the passage. There was a sound of footsteps hurrying towards Study No. 6.

But Blake was overcome almost in a twinkling; three to one was too long odds even for the sturdy junior from Yorkshire. A cord was knotted round his wrists, and another round his legs, and a handkerchief shoved into his mouth. He was rolled towards the table out of the way.

“Number Two!” grinned the prince. “Two more to come! No end of a happy afternoon, Blake, old infant! Did you ever dream that you could keep your end up against the Grammar School?”

Blake's eyes widened.

A hand was trying the door without, and Herries shouted: “Hallo! What's up in here?”

Wacky Dang opened the door hastily.

Herries and Dig tramped in, in a surprised state. They stared at the Africans, and stared round the study. The Prince of Bhungaree slammed the door and locked it.

“Why—what—” stuttered Digby.

“What on earth's this game?” yelled Herries, in amazement.

The Africans did not reply; they rushed on Herries and Dig, and brought them down on the carpet with heavy bumps.

The two juniors struggled gamely. But they were held by two, while the third Grammarian tied their wrists.

Study No. 6 had been taken in detail, and quite overcome. The four juniors, helpless in the hands of three, sat up and glared.

“What's this game, you cheeky nigger!” howled Herries, jerking savagely at the cord on his wrists.

“Just a Grammar School jape, old bean,” answered the prince.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“What?”

“How—what—which—”

Herries and Digby fairly spluttered. “Never seen me before?” grinned the Prince of Bhungaree. “Never seen me before I grew this rich complexion?”

“Gordon Gay!” stuttered Digby.

“That—that Grammarian rotter!” panted Herries.

“Little me!” agreed Gordon Gay.

“Looks like a win for the Grammar School this time, doesn't it?”

Herries gave a yell.

“Rescue! Grammarian rotters! Groooooogh!”

He spluttered as his handkerchief was shoved into his mouth. Dig's handkerchief was used on Robert Arthur Digby.

Then Wacky Dang & Co. gave some touches to their wonderful garb, which had been rather disarranged in the tussle.

Study No. 6 glared at them as if they could eat them.

“Jevver hear of such a jape?” inquired the prince. “Think St. Jim's could play it?”

“Not in their lifetime!” grinned Wootton major.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

There was a tap at the door. The

handle turned, but it did not open. Kit Wildrake of the Fourth called through the door.

“Anything up here, you fellows?”

Blake & Co. would have given worlds to reply. But they couldn't. Not a sound came from them.

“Hallo, in there!” called out the Canadian junior. “What's up?”

“One honourable moment!” called back the prince.

“Oh, you're here, are you?”

“My honourable self.”

The prince unlocked the door and partly opened it, keeping Blake & Co. screened from view. Wildrake, in a state of surprise, looked in at the prince.

“Somebody was yelling that the Grammarians were here,” he said. “I guess I came to inquire.”

“They are here, honourable bonga.”

“Here!” ejaculated Wildrake. “Where?”

“Just here, old top,” said Gordon Gay, in his natural voice, as he caught Wildrake by the collar, and jerked him into the study.

Taken by surprise, the Canadian junior sprawled on the carpet. Before he could move, Wootton major and minor were upon him, and though he resisted gamely he had no chance. In a few minutes he was added to the collection.

“Quite a bag!” said Gordon Gay. “We're getting on.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Here comes another—”

Tap! came at the door.

“I say, let me in, you chaps,” came Baggy Trimble's fat voice. “Jolly mean to lock your study door at tea-time, I think.”

The Prince of Bhungaree unlocked the door. Baggy Trimble rolled in. He started at the sight of three dusky faces.

“Why, what— Yarooooooh!” roared Trimble, as he was seized.

Trimble did not struggle. He was in too deadly a fear of the black men's short swords, not being aware that they were “property” swords. He was tied up in record time.



“Here's a collection of keys for you, dear boy,” said Gay, as he playfully stuffed three study keys down Gore's back. “One belongs to Figgins, one to Tom Merry, one to Study No. 6. You'll find the innocent youths all at home. Give them my love, and tell them to wash their next African prince, and see whether he's a Grammarian.”

"Six!" grinned Gordon Gay. "Shove his hanky into his jaws, Jack. His own fault if it's not clean."

"Groooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake & Co. gazed at the disguised Grammarians. If looks could have slain, something terrible must have happened to Gordon Gay & Co. on the spot. But they couldn't. Study No. 6 were in the hands of the Philistines, and they could only grin and bear it. At least, they bore it, though they were not observed to grin.

CHAPTER 9.

The Prince's Farewell.

GORDON GAY coolly opened the study door, and glanced into the passage. Two or three fellows were to be seen at a distance. He closed the door again.

"Pretty nearly time for us to bunk!" he remarked.

"I rather think we won't wait for the merry old Head to come home."

"Ha, ha! I rather think not!" chuckled Mustapha.

"We'll just attend to these smiling beauties, and slide."

The attentions of the Grammarians were not very welcome to the juniors in Study No. 6.

Gordon Gay had evidently come prepared for a campaign. He produced several tubes of colour.

Six noses were daubed with red, till they blazed like a rich sunset. Six pairs of eyebrows were coloured blue, and six pairs of ears were painted green.

The aspect of the St. Jim's juniors after that adornment was really remarkable.

Arthur Augustus'ilk hat was jammed on his head, a little askant, giving him a very rakish look. With impot paper the Grammarians made five fool's caps for the other juniors, and jammed them on. Blake & Co. looked at one another with sickly looks. Only Kit Wildrake grinned a little.

Then Gordon Gay dipped a brush in ink, and daubed an inscription on the looking-glass.

"SOLD!"

"(Signed) WACKY DANG, Prince of Rylcombe."

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

"I think that message will enlighten the simple youths," yawned Gordon Gay. "By gad, if I wasn't anxious to get away before the Head came home, I'd go through the blessed School House, and serve them all alike! We could do it. St. Jim's can't keep its end up with us!"

"No fear!"

"But we'd better slide," said Gay regretfully. "Good-bye, dear boys! And next time you meet a prince, make sure that he's not a Grammarian!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake & Co. could only glare by way of reply.

BEST Football and Sports STORY BOOKS!

BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY, 4d. each.

No. 595.—OUT FOR THE CUP!

A splendid yarn of the footer field. By Walter Edwards.

No. 596.—BANDITS AND REDSKINS.

A thrilling story of the Wild West.

No. 597.—FROM CHOPPING-BLOCK TO CHAMPION.

A grand tale of the boxing ring. By Captain Malcolm Arnold.

No. 598.—A TROUBLED TERM.

A fine school yarn of Jack Jackson & Co. By Jack North.

No. 599.—THE THIRTEENTH PLAYER.

A magnificent story of Northern Union footer. By T. C. Wignall.

SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY, 4d. each.

No. 213.—THE STUDIO MYSTERY.

Another magnificent tale of fascinating detective work. By the author of "Terror Island," etc., etc.

No. 214.—BEYOND THE LAW.

A story of mystery and stirring adventure in the hills of Kentucky.

No. 215.—THE CASE OF THE TWISTED TRAIL; OR, THE HIDDEN MOTIVE.

A wonderful story of detective work and adventure, featuring Elspeth Drell. By the author of "The Golden Casket," etc., etc.

No. 216.—SEXTON BLAKE IN SILESIA.

A thrilling tale of the adventures of the famous detective and his young assistant, Tinker, in Eastern Europe.

No. 217.—THE CASE OF THE RAJA'S SON.

A most enthralling detective story, introducing the cunning Hindu, Gunga Dass. By the author of "The Idol's Eye," etc., etc.

NUGGET LIBRARY, 3d. each.

No. 65.—THE BOY WITHOUT A FRIEND

A splendid long, complete story of life at Glendyke School. By Ralph Simmonds.

No. 66.—THE CASE OF THE ARAB FOOTBALLER.

A stirring narrative of football and detective adventure, introducing Nelson Lee, Nipper, and the Hon. John Lawless.

Now on Sale. Buy your Copies TO-DAY!

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 730.

Wacky Wang cautiously peered into the passage again, and as the coast was clear, he stepped out, and his black servants followed him. He locked the study door on the outside, not taking the risk of a discovery until he was clear of the school. But there was one more detail before the Grammarians departed. Gay cut along to Study No. 10 in the Shell.

"Honourable bongas!" he called through the keyhole.

A howl of fury answered him.

"You dashed nigger!" yelled Lowther. "Let us out!"

"We'll skin you!" roared Manners.

"You confounded idiot!" shouted Tom Merry. "We'll mop up the passage with you for this!"

"Getting tired of the study, honourable bongas?" chuckled the prince.

"If you don't let us out we'll smash the lock!" shouted Lowther. "That will bring up the Housemaster, and there'll be a row."

"Dear man," said the prince, "I'm just going, and I'll leave the key with somebody to let you out!"

"Going?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yes, rather! You see, we've got to get back to the Grammar School to tea!"

"What?"

"The Grammar School?"

"Why, what—how—"

"Dear old innocent ducks," said Gay, in his natural voice, through the keyhole. "Don't you know me yet?"

"Gordon Gay!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Prince Wacky Dang Gordon Gay, Prince of Rylcombe Grammar School, with a complexion that will wash off!" chortled Gordon Gay.

"Oh, my hat!"

"That—that Grammarian rotter!" yelled Lowther. "He's not a new boy at all! We've been spoofed!"

"Great Scott! Why, we—we—we'll—"

Crash!

There was a terrific attack on the lock inside Study No. 10 now. Crash, crash!

Gordon Gay chuckled, and cut back along the passage, and rejoined his comrades. George Gore tore out of Study No. 9. He had heard.

"Look out, you fellows!" roared Gore. "Grammar cads!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Gordon Gay. "It will be a close fit now! Hook it!"

The three ran down the staircase. Gore was simply raving in the passage above.

"Grammar cads! Stop them!"

Half a dozen fellows looked up as the prince and his followers raced down the staircase, and Gore's voice boomed behind.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Levison of the Fourth.

"Grammarians!" roared Gore.

"Where?" shouted Cardew.

"There. They're passing you. The prince—"

"What?"

The Prince of Bhungaree and his faithful Mustapha and Selim, passed through the astonished juniors with a rush, and sprinted out into the quadrangle. Gore came down the stairs three at a time.

"Grammarians! Stop them!"

"What on earth are you burblin' about?" demanded Cardew.

Gore spluttered breathlessly.

"They're Grammar cads!"

"Who are?" yelled Clive.

"Those niggers."

"You're potty, dear boy!" said Cardew.

"I tell you I heard them! I—I— After them!" shouted Gore. And he rushed out of the School House in pursuit, leaving the juniors staring blankly.

Three dusky figures in peculiar garb were sprinting across the quadrangle for the gates. Knox of the Sixth was in the gateway, and he held up his hand as a sign to the fugitives to stop.

"Where are you going, Wacky Dang?" he called out.

The Prince of Bhungaree did not reply. There was no time for talk now. Gore's astounding news took some time to comprehend, but it was certain that pursuit would not be long delayed. The three Grammarians rushed right at the prefect, and collared him, tackling him low, as if they were on the Rugger field. Knox came down with a bump and a roar.

"Hook it!" panted Gay.

The trio were out of gates the next minute, Taggles staring after them blankly from his lodge.

Gore rushed in fierce pursuit, shouting to the fellows in the quad. Two or three ran after him.

Tucking up their loose garments, the three dusky youths sped down the road. But they halted suddenly, and Gore, coming on like a bull, rushed right into them. The next moment Gore was on his back, and Mustapha was sitting on his chest.

(Continued on page 18.)

The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited By TOM MERRY.

Great Motor-Bike Race Result.

THRILLS AND EXCITEMENT
ALL THE TIME.

By RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW.

PART TWO.

THE thirteen night-riders were just about a mile past the spot where they had encountered the constable, when from the rear of Angel's machine in front appeared the ominous red light again. When the road was all clear a green one showed, but the red light meant that something was amiss. The riders quickly throttled down, and, as the mocking red signal continued to show, there was no alternative but to shut off altogether.

Impatient and curious, we brought our machines to a standstill. Angel's reason was what I had half suspected myself. He wanted to know whether we should continue our perilous ride through the night. Our halt also had the double effect of allowing those who had lagged behind to catch up. When I and the twelve who made up the "thirteen" were gathered together, Gerald Cutts addressed his party.

"We've got to make a dash for Brightown!" he exclaimed. "I think we'd better travel round in a circle, so that we can skid back without stopping again. If you slowcoaches can only keep up with us we shall win past this spot again before the boys in blue are even out of their little cots. That old fool with the lantern will have to tramp a couple of miles at least before he reaches a local cop-shop. And even then he'll have to find a ton of dynamite before he can wake anybody up. You all know what a copper is once he's safely in the land of corks and beefsteak-pies!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"My machine's in fine fettle," said Cutts.
"How are the rest?"
"Topping!"
"Sparking!"

The fellows chuckled, and formed up in the arranged order. Aubrey Angel went on ahead, and mounted.

"Right away!" he roared. "Come on, ye infants! Let 'em rip!"

With a really appalling series of roars and bangs the thirteen night-riders recommenced. Carrying out Angel's instructions, we accordingly "let our jiggers rip!"

Nine miles had to be covered before we should again pass the spot where we had encountered the constable, and, as Cutts said, if he'd had to walk the distance, we should be back long before he had succeeded in rousing anybody.

But Gerald had taken things too much for granted.

How could he suspect that that highter of a constable had got a three-speed bike hidden behind the hedge near by? This, apparently, is what he did have, and the fact remains that Mr. Constable reached his village long before we even attained our out-going destination.

Quite unaware of this, we roared and hummed over the smooth road in the direction of Brightown. The experience was absolutely glorious. As far as the giddy eye could see there was no sign of a living soul or vehicle of any description. It seemed just as though we had the whole of the South of England to ourselves.

At somewhere round one o'clock we entered Prestown Park—a place which is just a short distance from our outward goal. We made a long, winding detour of this town, and then got round on to the cliff road.

The ozone from the sea as we raced along for the next half-mile was delightfully exhilarating. The dull booming of the surf even came to our ears, above the roar of the engines, at times.

Then we left the cliff road, and started the return journey.

This trip was not destined to occur without incident.

A mile and a half of road, incline and level alternately, was the first surprise in store for us. Fortunately, we had all driven motor-bikes on such ground before, so the experience stood us in good stead. Two miles from Prestown Park, where the road became quite level again, Aubrey Racke all but sent himself and an old night-watchman, who had evidently just come off duty, to kingdom come.

We had just flown over another mile when I saw a driver collapse over the back of his early morning market-cart, gasping faintly: "It's ghastlies! I knows eet! Ghastlies in the moonlight! I be a-bearin' all their boues a-rattling! Ooooooh!"

What resemblance there is between the rattling of a ghost's clerey old bones and the sweet sound which comes from thirteen motor-bike engines I have yet to discover.

Another mile run, and we passed—I mean flew by—a gentleman of the road; a tramp, in fact. He nose-dived clean through a thick-set hawthorn-hedge, with the weird gurgle: "Ow, murrver! I've gottum summat awful to-night!"

We did not meet a soul after that for some time, and the miles sped by like lightning.

Suddenly a motor-cyclist from the rear rode up past us in an alarmingly reckless manner. Although, of course, the white hood and black gown which he wore made it impossible to recognise him, the chug-chug of his ill-treated engine immediately gave away the fact that it was Coker. He appeared to be shouting to each pair as he passed.

A few disconnected words came to my ears:

"Not sure . . . motor racing along behind . . . big headlights, anyway . . . as if it's getting near . . . like the police . . . but I—"

The howl of half a dozen roaring engines entirely drowned the Fifth Former's voice, but the significance of the brief snatches I heard impressed me. Coker careered on ahead, until he reached Angel. Having told him, he dropped back, and took up a position just behind me.

Another half-minute run, and I realised we had long passed the spot where he had originally seen the constable with the lantern. When we came to a straight stretch of road a minute later, I realised what the Greyfriars senior had said was correct.

Faintly in my mirror I could make out two small dots of white light—the headlights of a fast-moving motor-car in the distance!

We accelerated to a higher speed, and the fellows who had hitherto been content to ride in the arranged order came dashing up recklessly on both sides.

It was every fellow for himself now—a real race, without any choice in the matter.

Vernon-Smith came up from the rear to the forward line, and Aubrey, on his powerful Indian, continued to glide along in front.

We shaved two more old farmers by a fraction of an inch as the miles were eaten up. What on earth they were doing out of doors at such a time is as much a mystery

to us as our terrifying squad must have seemed to them. One was faintly heard to gasp: "It's the Ku Klux Klan!"

And the other stated his opinion that it was the Martians paying the world another visit.

Just after that incident Gore came up to Cutts' side, and told him that the car was a Ford, and contained three policemen.

In reply, Cutts made a sweeping movement of his arm. We all saw it, and knew that it was a signal to go all out. And I quite realised that it was a case of either "do it or bust!"

I jammed my throttle open wider and wider, and the speed I attained nearly made me giddy. But that rotten old Tin Lizzie moved along just as fast as we did—it simply stuck to our trail like glue.

However, a climax came at last. It was a very queer trick that happened.

Two miles exactly from Paddlewood there are some cross-roads. With the exception of three, our party went straight on. These three—myself and two others—veered round sharply to the left. The correct road was hidden by a large belt of trees, and our mistake can easily be understood. As a matter of fact, I had slowed down to adjust my white hood, which had got a trifle crooked. Coker and French were the couple who accompanied me.

We had barely gone a hundred yards when I became certain we were riding in the wrong direction. The three of us quickly dismounted, and left the road, endeavouring to make a short cut back to our party. We had pushed our bikes a short distance when a startling thing occurred.

The moon lay hidden behind a huge bank of dark clouds, and it was only possible to see a few yards. Our headlights had been turned out. Knowing we were almost lost, I did not wish to blunder straight into the Ford car, or even give the police an inkling as to where we were.

The ground became strangely soft as I walked, and the footsteps of Coker and French became very indistinct. I stopped at last—I could go no farther. The very earth seemed to be sinking beneath my feet.

It was about the most horrible moment I have ever spent. The bike would not budge an inch; the front wheel seemed to be struggling forward, to be going downwards, and I was powerless to stop it.

For one awful moment I became seized with panic; a feeling assailed me that I should never get back to St. Jim's. I was alone—lost!

"Cardew!"
From somewhere behind came a cry of terror. It came faintly.

Coker and French had paused when the moon had disappeared. I had pushed my way on. Where was I? What had happened to separate us? My feet seemed glued to the earth itself, and all the time I was sinking. "Coker!" I gasped. "Help! This way! Help!"

As if in response to my cry, two bright little beams shot out and showed up the country strangely. The torchlights roamed around in a circle. Twice they shone in my direction and swept away. The third time one beam remained. It grew larger and larger, until the sound of padded footsteps became audible.

To cut a long story short, Coker and French discovered the predicament I was in, and fished me out. The bike took some shifting, but with the united effort of the three of us we succeeded. Then the moon cast down a pale glimmer again, and we

made another attempt to gain the correct road. After altering our direction considerably, we walked along for half a mile or so. "Is this New York or Liverpool?" grumbled Coker, staring into the darkness.

A hedge loomed up ahead in the distance, and we made our way towards it.

Dame Fortune had looked our way, it seemed, for, after dragging our motor-bikes through an opening in the hedge, we found ourselves on the right track again.

Our relief was therefore great. We quickly mounted, and after scorching along the smooth road for several minutes at a furious pace, were lucky enough to catch up the other ten of our party. Apparently they had missed us, and were waiting to see if we had lost ourselves.

Cutts asked if we had seen the car which had been pursuing us. They lost sight of it after passing the cross-roads, and I said neither I nor the two fellows who had been with me had seen a sign of it.

We started off again in the group, somewhat perplexed at the absence of the police motor. And for the whole of the remainder of the journey back to St. Jim's there was no sign, no sound, of the faintest glimmer of that Ford car. The whole thing seemed to have disappeared into thin air. It had gone, utterly and entirely!

The explanation, which I saw in a daily paper giving a report on the incident a few days later, seemed quite simple to me after what I went through. On the other hand, it was really astounding.

From what I could gather, the car must have pulled up at the cross-roads, and the police evidently searched for tracks. The tyres of my bike, as well as those of Coker and French, had all been of the rubber-studded variety. And by some curious coincidence the tyres of the ten chaps who had taken the correct road had all been plain ones. It is therefore not at all surprising that the brilliant police officials discerned our tracks, and decided to follow them.

The patch of marshy ground into which I had blundered gave way to a treacherous bog, full of slime and mire. The narrow escape I had only dawned upon me when I visited the place some time later.

Of course, all that happened was the fault of the beastly old moon, which, as I said, disappeared for about ten minutes. The Ford car followed my tracks to the edge of the bog where I had started sinking to certain death. But did it pull up? No, not a bit of it. It went on, and then down, and then in, and then under! The luckless policemen were just up to their necks when they were rescued—twelve hours later.

Well, when the sudden disappearance of the Tin Lizzie and its contents had gone from the minds of the thirteen night riders, attention was given to the great race.

Two miles past the historic cross-roads came the small village of Piddlewood. This meant there was still a considerable distance left in which to "have it out."

The nerves of several chaps were gradually failing under the strain of such furious riding. It was only grim determination to obtain a victory for their school which kept them in the running at all.

When we had covered another mile Cutts led, Vernon-Smith and your humble came next, running level. Behind us glided Racke and Mornington. In this order we sped along until the Sussex town of Lexham was reached.

When this place was left behind a big alteration occurred. Vernon-Smith forged ahead, and led by a hundred yards, while Cutts, Mornington, and yours truly came behind, riding in one long line. The rest trailed along behind us again, spread over the road for about half a mile.

As we neared Wayland, Cutts lessened the gap between himself and Vernon-Smith considerably. The Fifth-Former had organised the race, and he was determined to move heaven and earth to win it. Unfortunately, it seemed that Vernon-Smith had got hold of the same idea himself.

Valentine Mornington stuck close behind Cutts, and Peele and Racke fore along after the dandy of Rookwood. At this point my rotten old hood became wonky again, and I was compelled to drop back to sixth.

Cutts crouched down low over the handlebars—he was overhauling the plucky Greyfriars fellow hand over fist. But, then, five miles are skimmed over like the wind by a fast motor-cycle. With a little start I realised that before another minute had

elapsed we should have passed our winning-post.

The fellows clung to their jiggers for dear life—excitement was at its highest pitch now. I got my dashed hood straight at last. Then, by dint of careful lever movements, I was able to send my bus along at an even greater pace.

Behind me came the roar of Angel's Indian; he drew up level with me, and together we began to overhaul those in front. We drew level with Cyril Peele, and then left him behind. Angel fell behind me half a length—I gained slowly, and caught up Racke. I left him behind, and Angel dropped a full length in my rear, determinedly pacing my back wheel.

Then Somerset Road level-crossing loomed ahead. The gates were just opening, after a good-strain. Thank goodness there was no train due! If those gates had just been closing instead of just finishing to open I don't think I should have been here to tell the story. (No doubt you would have fallen out of bed and awoken.—Tom Merry.)

As it was, I jerked over the uneven rails in a ten-yard leap. Angel did the same, but skidded badly on landing, and all but sent me flying into the ditch by the roadside. When we had both righted ourselves we were more or less level again.

There was now a bare half-mile left in which one of the three great public schools would claim the winner.

Vernon-Smith was riding a Sunbeam, and I must admit the way she hummed over the ground in the final part of that race was superb.

Inch by inch Cutts lessened the gap between himself and Smithy, until at last he was within a yard of his back wheel. My bus made another terrific spurt; I reached Mornington's back wheel—I would do it yet!

On we roared, gaining and losing on each other by inches. Spurring was impossible, and useless now—for that half-mile was up.

SMITHY WINS

Cutts was second—and I think myself that his failure, which was honourable and glorious in every respect, is the best thing he has ever attempted in the name of St. Jim's—Mornington was third, and an individual known as Ralph Reckness Cardew was third and a half. If I had had another five yards to ride I should have been No. 3. Angel drove in fifth, Racke came sixth, Peele and Skinner were seventh, Gore and St. Leger eighth, and lastly came French and Gilmore.

I have made a mistake, though. When we had dismounted four and a half minutes, up charged Horace Coker like a Red-skin on a mad-careering warhorse! He was minus his white hood, and resembled a monk.

He waxed quite wrathful when he found he had not won the race, and the prize attached to it. Cutts then handed over the prize to Vernon-Smith, and we all gave the fellow our compliments.

The next item on the programme was to get back to our respective colleges. Fortunately, I was one of the lucky ones, who had only to ride another three miles before St. Jim's was reached.

In the field adjoining the road in which our winning-post had been marked we removed our night clobber, and prepared for the next ride clad in respectable-looking overalls.

Then we removed the empty petrol-tins from our carriers, and the Rookwood and Greyfriars chaps refilled their tanks. Ours, of course, were rather low, but contained enough to last the distance to Pepper's Barn.

Without any more cackle we bade each other good-night, and then the three parties separated.

Aubrey Angel, Smithy, Horace Coker, and dear old Skinner swung off in a group, bound for Greyfriars. Morny and Peele went with them as far as Lexham. Here the main road branched, and the parties divided.

We who were left cleared things up a bit, and then made for Rylcombe. Arriving at the barn, we pitched our dusty machines into the cellar, and our overalls followed them. Half an hour later, Cutts, St. Leger, Gilmore, French, Racke, Gore, and this child were safely beneath the sheets. It was already Sunday morning, so we shouldn't have to worry about rising-bed.

When four o'clock chimed the six visitors were all "safely in," and fast asleep. On the other hand, several dozen policemen were out scouring the countryside for night-

riders, presumably the leaders of a great secret society. The police awoke many an innocent person with the idea of getting information of the strange disturbers of the peace. But it never occurred to them to look into a certain college in Sussex, another in Hampshire, and a third in Kent for the culprits.

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW.

Gussy's Great Blunder!

A SLIGHT MISUNDERSTANDING WITH SKIMPOLE.

HERBERT SKIMPOLE, the philosopher of St. Jim's, sat in the well-worn armchair which reposed in Study No. 9 in the Shell passage at St. Jim's. He was at the moment deeply engrossed in a large volume which he held open in his bony fingers.

He had been engaged like this for some considerable time, in fact, Gore, his study-mate, who had vacated the study an hour before, had left the bespectacled youth so. When Skimpole had once settled himself down to the famous works of Professor Balmcrampton, nothing in the wide world would attract his attention.

It was on this particular occasion that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tapped on the door of Study No. 9. It was the usual thing for the Swell of St. Jim's to call upon Skimpole to ask his version on any new clobber he was about to don. His own study-mates would more often than not ridicule him, but he had since learned that in Skimpole he had found an interested party.

Skimpole lifted his eyes from off his precious volume as he heard the tap on the door.

"Come in, dear boy!" he shouted. "You—"

"Hallo!" said D'Arcy, entering the threshold, and paying no heed whatsoever to Skimpole's remarks which poured forth. "Pway, excuse me for interwuptin' you! But would you—"

"Most certainly, dear boy! It is the more educated people to guide and instruct those who are lacking—"

"Quite so, dear boy!" broke in the elegant swell of St. Jim's. "But does this pwoessor johnny of yours say that the different colours of a tie should all win in the same groove? If so, I am placed in wataah an awkward posish! You see, one of my new ties—"

"My dear boy, the mere colour of a tie matters not in the least. Our thoughts should be taken up by a study of the evolution of man."

"Quite, dear boy. But—"

"When I am in the least difficulty, I open my book, and—"

"Oh!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"And ascertain the root of the whole trouble!"

"Skimming, dear boy, but supposin'—"

"Yes, supposing any of your friends were in any difficulty, I am quite willing, even for their sakes, to open my book—"

"But surely youah intentions are not to open a book?"

"Most assuredly so!" continued Skimpole, beaming. "It is for the interests of the community at large. Do you fully realise the use of my book? Would you not be interested in it, and spend—"

"I certainly should not encourage such wogweny as this!" said D'Arcy, who firmly believed that Skimpole had decided to go in for bookmaking. "You, too, would be the last of all persons that I should encourage in such a low-down trick! I would never even lower myself to such an extent as to be friendly with a chap who opens a book. I hate betting!"

"My dear boy," said Skimpole, waggling a bony forefinger at the enraged swell of the Fourth, "you can't understand!"

"Understand, be hauged!" thundered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a gleam of anger in his noble eye. "I am thoroughly ashamed of you! If that is one of your principles, we'll leave you to it."

And with this remark, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stamped out of Study No. 9.

He went to his own sanctum, wondering what views his study chums would take of Skimpole's new undertaking.

"Fancy Skimpole daring to open a book!"

(Continued on page 19.)



RAM DARRY

The Mystery Man

Written by Professor Hector Gordon, Science Master of St. Jim's.

START THIS WEEK!

The Crystal Gazer.

ON the outskirts of the city where Dr. Brutell resided was situated the headquarters of a curious Eastern society. The leader was named Ram Darry, and, although to all intents and purposes he was carrying on a legitimate business as a curio dealer, he was in reality far from being such a harmless member of society as he would have people suppose. Ram Darry was really the high priest of the society, and behind his curio store was what almost amounted to the temple of this queer sect. It was here where all their important meetings were held, and where many strange rites took place.

Although parading in the guise of merchants, the mission of these men from the East was of a far more important matter to them than the mere buying and selling of goods.

Some years ago a monster diamond, known as the Sun of Siva, was stolen from the eye of the idol in a Buddhist temple. And Ram Darry and his followers were determined to recover this wonderful gem at all costs.

By a curious stroke of fate, Madeleine, the daughter of Robert Stanton, the millionaire ranch owner, was now the possessor of this magnificent diamond. It had been given to her as a present from her father some years ago, and it was now destined to be the cause of many trials and troubles for the unfortunate girl, who had already suffered a great deal at the hands of the Black Circle gang of outlaws.

Madeleine's wonderful diamond, which was the delight of all who were privileged to see it, was always kept secure in a strong safe. More than one attempt had been made by burglars during recent years to secure this tremendously valuable jewel, and therefore no risks were taken.

If it were taken out in order to be worn on a special occasion, expert detectives were employed to keep their watchful eyes upon it. And at the earliest moment it was deposited in its place of security again.

But there were troublous times ahead! Ram Darry and his fanatical followers were determined that the time had come for them to recover the precious jewel that had been torn from the eye of their idol many years ago.

Robert Stanton, when he bought the diamond from an antique dealer some time ago, was informed that there was a legend attached to it, but what the story was exactly he did not know.

Had he been aware that it had been obtained originally by violent robbery, he would not have bought it at any cost.

Ram Darry was anxious to begin the operations which he hoped would place the Sun of Siva once more in their hands. He put a hasty question to one of his followers who was seated at a table gazing intently at a large crystal ball in front of him.

"The great jewel we seek is among the treasures belonging to Miss Stanton. It was given to her by her father, Robert Stanton, the ranch owner."

So spake the crystal-gazer, who by the aid of this queer ball of glass in front of him was able to see into the future.

A look of intense pleasure passed over the countenance of the sinister figure known by the name of Ram Darry.

"Tell us whom we have most to fear, O crystal!"

The man at the table made a few mystic passes over the crystal, then he bent closer towards the object and gazed intently into it.

The crystal became clouded, and then something began to take shape within it. The seated figure kept his eyes riveted upon the ball, and a tense silence filled the room.

Everyone remained as quiet as death for two minutes or more, and during this time the smoke-like cloud in the crystal took on a still more definite shape.

Ram Darry grew impatient, and, speaking in a harsher tone, he demanded an answer to his question.

"Look for yourself, O great leader!" replied the other.

Ram Darry stepped towards the table and looked into the crystal, but its message was not so clear to him.

"Speak, seer!" demanded Ram Darry.

"Our enemy is one named Dr. Brutell!" responded the prophet. "He is a great scientist. Here you see him working in his laboratory, making fresh discoveries. He is a clever and very dangerous man for us to deal with, O great leader!"

Ram Darry broke into a laugh. It was clear that he held a considerable opinion of himself, and he quickly dismissed the idea that this enemy of which his seer spoke could be a real danger to him.

"Tell me more of this man—Dr. Brutell!" put in Ram Darry.

The other glanced once more into the crystal before him, and the leader looked on with eager eyes.

"Dr. Brutell is a great friend of Robert Stanton, the ranch owner," continued the crystal-gazer. "The millionaire has been captured by the Black Circle gang, and they are holding him for ransom. They demand much money to give him back his liberty, but he will not pay."

Ram Darry held up his hand. It was a signal for the other man to pause for a moment. Ram Darry always did this when he wanted to think hard. His crafty mind worked better when everything was quiet, and just now an important idea entered into his head.

He was wondering what this Black Circle gang was, and whether it would be possible for him to make use of their services in any way. If they already had Robert Stanton, the millionaire, in their grip it might make things very much easier for him.

Ram Darry was altogether unscrupulous and crafty, and he saw a way of obtaining a good deal more than the wonderful jewel. "Proceed!" ordered the leader.

The man at the table shifted somewhat uneasily in his chair. This crystal-gazing

took a good deal out of him. It needed strict concentration on his part, and he would be glad when the ordeal was over, and his master was satisfied.

"Dr. Brutell, the scientist, has sworn to do everything in his power to assist Madeleine, the pretty daughter of Robert Stanton, and he will not rest until he has secured her father's release. He has already rescued her from their clutches on several occasions."

"Go on! What else does the crystal tell you?" thundered Ram Darry.

"It tells me, O leader, that Dr. Brutell has things of great power which he can turn to his advantage. It was he who invented the triple X-ray, which burns through prison walls, and also enables him to jump to great heights when he so desires!"

"Yes, that is all true, alas!" muttered Ram Darry. "I have heard it said of this Dr. Brutell that he is of a truth a great inventor. But I am impatient; tell me more of what the crystal rays. What else does it reveal to you, my slave?"

Again the prophet looked intently at the globe.

"I see something very strange now!" he continued.

There was a pause, and a cold shiver seemed to run down the spine of the prophet. The room seemed full of some uncanny power, and Ram Darry looked at the seer, with a strange fear in his eyes.

"What is it you see? Let me hear!" he said.

"I see now what was once the face of Dr. Brutell; but, instead of the smiling, kindly eyes, there is a look terrible to behold. It is the face of a demon—a madman!"

"Explain to me, you fool!" roared Ram Darry. "I do not understand!"

"It is indeed strange, O leader. But as I see it, Dr. Brutell is sometimes affected by a strange malady. It changes his whole nature, and turns him from a good man into a bad one. These evil moods do not last long, but he is only able to stop them by drinking a strange medicine which he has made. If he is unable to reach this medicine in time he is powerless to prevent one of these attacks of evil!"

Again Ram Darry's brain was working. Here he saw another way in which it might be possible to reach the end he had in view.

The prophet continued to read what the magical visions in the crystal revealed to him, and at last Ram Darry had heard enough. He had learnt a good deal of information concerning the Stanton, and also Dr. Brutell, and he had no doubt that the almost priceless jewel which he sought would soon be in his possession again.

Dr. Brutell, the great scientist and friend of humanity, who was still completely unconscious of the fact that he had a darker side to his nature, was determined to stick by Madeleine until the end, no matter what might befall.

He was a true friend in time of need, and Robert Stanton's daughter was to find this out during the dark and troublous days that were to follow.

Ram Darry had already learnt from the crystal that Madeleine was at present staying in Brutell's city house, and he intended to make a raid on it at the earliest possible moment.

He knew that the Sun of Siva would not be there; but if they could capture Madeleine, it might be possible to force her to assist them in getting it.

But they must arrange their plans carefully, so that if possible they could time their entry during the absence of Dr. Brutell.

This would make things much easier for them to begin with, and Ram Darry was not the sort to run into trouble if it could reasonably be avoided.

(To be continued.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 730.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS IN PROFESSOR GORDON'S STORY.

ROBERT STANTON, a millionaire ranch owner who has been captured by a band of outlaws known as the Black Circle, and is being held for ransom.

DR. RICHARD BRUTELL, a friend of Mr. Stanton's. Brutell is a great scientist, but he is afflicted by a strange malady which at times turns him from a good man into an evil one. He has promised Madeleine, the daughter of Mr. Stanton, that he will not rest until he has obtained the release of her father.

RAM DARRY, the man of mystery, who is leader of a strange Eastern secret society. He is in search of a monster diamond called the Sun of Siva, which has been stolen from the eye of an idol. Madeleine is the possessor of this wonderful gem, but she is unaware of its strange history.

THE VALLEY OF SURPRISE

A Thief in the Night.

HERE was a yell of execration from the little group of Indians, a rush that finished abruptly as the old chief raised his hand and roared fierce orders at them. Abashed by their momentary lapse of discipline, they drew back, all except two, who came forward and, bending over the unconscious man, lifted and bore him away.

Tony had rejoined his friends and secured his rifle, striving to look fully at ease, though in truth his body ached abominably from the bruise of the thrust that had come so near to settling him.

The chief approached. His face was a mask once more, though his fierce eyes showed the hatred that he suppressed.

Slowly he lifted his hand with a gesture of one raising a weight, and as he did so the stone door rose slowly. He spoke with a passionless voice.

"Him say we can go," said Billy. "But if we try to come back we will all be killed, even if it takes 'em all to do it. Him say he hopes the beasties in de lake or in de forest will gobble us all up."

"Tell him we hope he will live long and prosper," replied Tony.

Slowly and warily the three crossed the terrace, on the alert for any treachery, while the people watched them go with round-eyed wonder. They jumped through the doorway, lest the heavy stone door be let fall upon them. But the chief was a man of his word, and there was no movement. Neither did anyone follow as they passed through the halls, and so came to the further terrace overlooking the lake.

Hobby, who was leading, ran to the parapet. A moment he stared, then turned with a face of horror.

"We're done!" he gasped. "Something has been at the raft. It's all broken up!"

It was only too true. The remains of the raft, torn to fragments by some mighty creature, littered the beach. They could not return to the forest by water—and the land swarmed with so many terrors that they were as good as doomed if they attempted to walk home.

"Couldn't we patch it together?" asked Tony, and knew as he spoke that it was impossible.

"No," replied Hobby. "Look—half the planks are floating on the lake, and we couldn't get any lianas for rope near here. We'll have to pad the hoof. Hallo! Here comes the jaguar!"

The big beast had appeared at the door behind them. He trotted towards them in friendly fashion, arched his neck for a caress, looked down upon the beach, and growled

thunderously, as though to show his disapproval of the place. Then he turned away, ran to the extreme end of the ledge, and leapt aloft up a narrow path that had so far escaped the notice of the three.

"I believe he's going hunting on his own!" exclaimed Hobby. "Let's follow him. We can't stay here—and, to tell the truth, I'm getting uncommonly peckish. We'll find a safe place, and have a bite out of that grub-basket, eh?"

Tony agreed. It was just possible that they might find a path which would enable them to get back to the Ariki village. Catching up their bundles, they hastened after the jaguar, and reached the beginning of the path, to see it disappearing round the curve of a narrow ledge high aloft.

The way up wasn't easy, but they accomplished it, and were soon hard on the animal's trail. Apparently Spots had often gone that way before, the ledge being covered with the marks of his big paws. It ran on and on for more than a couple of miles, without any sign of a break, until, turning a corner, they saw before them the mouth of a wooded valley, which opened upon the cliff, though the descent at its mouth was precipitous as elsewhere.

The adventurers' hearts beat high. Was it possible that here was the beginning of a gorge that might lead them out of this valley of terror? But their hopes were speedily dashed. A moment later they saw that the place, though it extended for a considerable distance, was yet a mere pocket, the forbidding walls rising behind and around it on all sides.

As they halted there came a sound of crackling amidst the undergrowth, and a number of small antelopes appeared, running at full speed, with Spots in hot pursuit. Even as they saw him he made his spring, and nailed the hindmost, while the others came tearing on, not perceiving the three, who were hidden by large ferns.

"Meat!" quoth Tony; and, throwing up his rifle, brought down the little buck that led the herd.

The rest swerved at the flash, and speedily disappeared. Billy, running forward, despatched the buck, and at once began to cut it up. Soon they had a fire blazing, and the smell of broiling venison chops put the last edge on Hobby's appetite.

"That jaguar is the only decent creature in that den over yonder," he murmured, a short while later. "It seems a pity to leave him with them. There he is over yonder. I'd like to try to take him out with us."

"He's better off where he is. Even if we ever got him out, he'd have to be caged," replied Tony. "Look! He's going."

Spots was seen making his leisurely way along the ledge, licking his chops. At the turn he hesitated, made as though to return, then, thinking better of it, disappeared.

Their meal finished, the three trudged on. Beyond the limits of the valley mouth they found another ledge, and continued their way. The going was rough, however, and several times they found the way impossible, and had to go up or down. Still, they made good progress, and began to hope that they would be able to make the circuit of the valley in safety.

Evening found them many miles from the house of the last of the Incas, travelling along cliffs hung thickly with creeping vines which bore a species of fruit not unlike a tomato in shape and size. Hobby, who sampled the first, declared the flavour mawkish. However, the fruit was refreshingly juicy, and they chewed it from time to time.

Finding a convenient camping-place at a spot where a rannel of water trickling down the rocks made a tiny pool, they settled for the night, lighting a small fire of dead wood. Billy took the first watch, though they had no reason to think that anything could get at them. About midnight he roused Tony.

"Marse Tony, I reckon dere's sperrits here!" he said, in a husky whisper. "A minute ago I looks up and sees something wink at me from outer dem bushes. A mighty big eye it were, and it wink at me!"

Tony glanced at the bush in question. It was quite motionless. And, from its position on the face of the rock, it seemed quite im-

possible that anything could be concealed in it.

"Nonsense, Billy! I suspect you were dreaming," he said. "Get to sleep. I'll keep my eye on the spirits."

Billy rolled himself in his blanket without more words. Truth to tell, he wasn't quite certain that he had not fallen asleep for a moment, and dreamt of the phantom eye. In a couple of minutes he was snoring.

Tony sat over the fire, his blanket around his shoulders, the night wind being chilly. The usual noises came up from the valley below, but around that part of the cliff all was silence. Half an hour passed. He threw more sticks on the fire. They flared up, and as they did so he thought he saw something move amongst the thick trail of vine that overhung Hobby.

He half rose; his hand slid towards his rifle. Something dark slipped out of the thicket, and Hobby, kicking and gurgling, not yet awake, was drawn out of sight with startling suddenness, to the accompaniment of crackling twigs and a hoarse cackle of demoniac laughter.

The Power of Song.

IT all happened so suddenly, and seemed so utterly against reason, that Tony sat for a moment petrified with astonishment.

Hobby had been lying on the farther side of the fire, under the shelter of the overhanging vine, at one moment. In the next he was being swiftly hauled out of sight through the thick mat of foliage that draped the cliff.

"Gurrh!" moaned the unfortunate. Then he appeared to awake, and a frantic yell burst from the brushwood.

Tony leapt across the fire, and alashed at the bushes through which his comrade had disappeared, and Billy awoke.

"Hatchet! Chop!" yelled Tony. "Hobby!" "Help! Something's grabbed me! I'm being lugged along!" bellowed Hobby, from somewhere near, though his voice seemed to be retreating.

Billy's hatchet smashed away the brush, Tony hacked down the vine, and the mystery was disclosed. There was the mouth of a deep cleft or cavern in the rock, running away into utter blackness.

"De eyes! Dey was dere!" cried Billy; and, snatching a burning brand from the fire, plunged into the cavity, followed by Tony, who held another on high.

The floor of the place was level enough. Together they raced forward, yelling. From ahead came an answering call.

"Dere. Something running!" screeched Billy. "Him carry Marse Hobby! Oh lord! Look dere!"

They had come out under the stars again, and there was light enough to show a huge dark form climbing rapidly up the face of the rock, dragging Hobby along with it. His voice came down to them jerkily.

"Don't shoot! Some sort of gorilla! Might drop me! Follow on! Pot him if you've a chance!"

"We'll follow!" replied Tony encouragingly; and began to climb, with Billy keeping pace.

Fortunately, there was much creeper to furnish handholds, or they would have fallen far behind in the chase. As it was they managed to reach the ledge on which the great brute finally halted, not long after it had seated itself with its face to the climbers. Hobby was clasped firmly between its knees. So far the creature had done him no injury. In fact, it appeared rather to like him, than otherwise.

Perhaps curiosity had inspired it to snatch him up. Certainly it now showed a spirit of inquiry that should have delighted its captive. Its big hands wandered over his face, stroked his nose, played with his ears. The unfortunate Hobby, helpless as an infant in the grasp of the enormously powerful animal, was dandled and fondled as though he had been a doll. But he did not lose courage nor his sense of humour.

"Goo-goo!" he gurgled; while his friends halted a score yards away, afraid to advance or shoot lest the beast should drop its captive over the verge, or strangle him in sudden fury.



Threatened By Three

A GREAT NEW SEXTON BLAKE STORY.

If you have not met Sexton Blake, the world's most daring detective, DON'T MISS this opportunity. "Threatened By Three!" is the wonderful story of his most sensational and exciting battle against the combined forces of the world of crime. This long complete story appears in this week's

UNION JACK 2d

On Sale Thursday, February 2nd.

"Goo-goo!" responded the great ape affectionately, and nuzzled Hobby's cheek with its great lips.

"Ugh! You slobber!" ejaculated the unfortunate youth. "Keep away, Tony! I don't think it will hurt me. I'll make friends with it!"

"Sing!" replied Tony, suddenly inspired. "That may scare it."

And Hobby began to sing. Nobody ever accused him of having an ear for music, and curiously enough he could never remember more than one or two lines of a song. Nevertheless he struck up with a wild jumble:

"I'll sing thee songs of Araby,
I love you, ma honey, yes I do!
Wrap me up in my old stable jacket,
And lemme go, you silly old cuckoo!"

The effect on the gorilla was amazing. As the first discordant note struck upon its large ears, it threw back its head in alarm. At the second line it laid an ear to Hobby's chest, as though to make sure that the noise really came from there. At the third it released him and started back in real horror, and ere the fourth line was concluded, it was clambering aloft, hand over hand, in a frantic attempt to reach safety before the worst happened.

"Hail, smiling morn, smiling morn!
I have a little nipper, and he talks;
I was courtin' a farmer's—"

"Shurrup!" cried Tony, in a voice choked with laughter. "You'll bring the cliff down on us. I've heard that music had charms to soothe the savage breast; now I know that discord can scare gorillas! Come along! I think we're safe for the night!"

And so it proved, for, though they kept watch and watch till dawn, there was no further alarm. Evidently the great ape did not intend to take further risks.

All morning they travelled along the cliffs without any great difficulty, till, near noon, they found themselves at the end of a ledge. Beyond that point the rock face was absolutely impassable.

"There's nothing for it. We'll have to go down!" said Tony. "We haven't very far to go, though. D'you see that group of trees over yonder? Do you recognise the thing stuck among the branches?"

"Why, it's the canoe we came down in!" exclaimed Hobby. "It's not more than a couple of miles away, and there's nothing in sight. Everything will be snoring. We'd better make a break for it. Here goes!"

He began to descend the cliff, but Tony stopped him.

"Wait a bit," he said. "Let's carry fire. A torch in time may save a dozen cartridges. There's some wood along there. Get it, Billy!"

Each provided with a flaring torch and some spare wood, they descended the rocks, and struck out across a comparatively open plain towards the trees, at a trot, keeping a bright lookout on all sides.

For a while nothing stirred. The whole country looked as peaceful as an English landscape. All the beasts that made the nights hideous with their noises appeared to be slumbering through the heat of noonday. Already they had covered more than half the distance. The ground ahead was clear of cover, so that they were safe from surprise in front.

It was not any warning sound, but an instinctive feeling of danger that made Tony turn his head. He saw nothing. But still the feeling persisted.

"Something is following us," he said, in a low voice. "I can see nothing, but—"

"Guess it's over in dat bush," said Billy, pointing with his chio, after the negro fashion, at a tangle of high grass and ferns on their flank. "Oh golly! Run, gemmen—run!"

For as he spoke the suspected covert had opened, and a magnificent beast stalked majestically out into the open. It was one of those same creatures which had slain the brontosaurus close to that very spot during their first night in the valley. It was neither tiger nor lion, though it had something of either in its appearance, and, in addition, it had a couple of huge curved teeth, which projected downwards from its upper jaw.

"Sabre-tooth tiger!" exclaimed Hobby. "What a beauty!"

"Run! Don't talk!" snapped Tony. "It's coming after us!"

The tiger had stood yawning and blinking for a moment. Most likely it had had a

good meal during the night, and was not particularly inclined for exertion; but the sight of the running figures roused it.

It began to move after them at what appeared to be a slow trot, but really at a great pace. It began to overhaul the fugitives. But now they were close to the tree in which they had first taken refuge.

"It's close, but we have time!" said Tony. "Up we go!"

They were at the foot of the tree now. Hobby scrambled aloft. Billy snatched Tony's blanket bundle, and swung himself up, and the tiger sprang. Tony grabbed at a swaying strand of creepers, drew himself up, then dropped back to earth. In that moment of supreme need the usually reliable liana had turned traitor. He had grabbed a rotten one!

With a grating, rumbling growl that made the earth vibrate, the tiger was upon him. Tony raised his torch, and let drive the flaming brand fairly in the brute's face, and at the same instant wheeled round the tree, gripped another dangling ladder, and, with the desperation of despair to speed him, swung into the air.

A heart-shaking roar, the thud of heavy pads, the swish of a huge paw as the great beast leapt up and struck. Tony felt something graze his thigh, his breeches ripped, and then he was scrambling on to a friendly branch, while below him the baffled tiger gathered himself for another spring.

Up it came, struck short by a few inches, then fell back, to sit glaring and roaring at the titbits he had missed.

"Are you hurt?" cried Hobby anxiously. Tony, sprawling on a bough, examined his damages. He had escaped, literally by a hair's-breadth. The leg of his breeches showed a great rent, while three bruised welts on his thigh told that the ripping claws had only just missed inflicting a terrible wound.

If You Want A Great Treat

— Get the —

"BOYS' HERALD,"

and read the splendid new series of long complete school stories dealing with

"Teddy Heron's Schooldays!"

You will like these amusing stories of St. Bridget's School.

GET THE "BOYS' HERALD" EVERY WEEK!

There are heaps of other fine features.

"A miss is as good as a mile!" he gasped. "I'm all right. Let's wait. Don't shoot!" "Ain't going to Marsa Tony," replied Billy soberly. "I've only got de cartridges in my pistol. I been and lost de rest. I dunno where. When we climb after Marsa Hobby, I reckons."

This was serious. Billy's .45-calibre revolver was their heaviest weapon. Tony's rifle being a .32 bore, while Hobby had only shot cartridges. To make matters worse, neither had many rounds left. The great brute raving at the tree foot could carry a lot of lead, since it was hardly possible to hope that two or three shots would settle him.

Meantime, the day was passing. All too soon the greater reptiles would come forth, and one of these might wander their way, and pick them from the tree-top, which was low compared with the giant trees of the forest.

"We got to settle him, and do it quick, and no shooting!" muttered Billy. Then he chuckled at an idea which had just occurred to him. "You knows I been in a circus, gemmen. Well, I've learned to throw a rope. I've make a rope, and try to get dat long-tooth tiger beast!"

In spite of their plight neither Tony nor Hobby could refrain from laughing. The thought of nooting that huge bundle of muscle and demonic energy was too much for them.

"I suppose you'd throw him, and tie him up like a calf?" asked Hobby grinning. "The big negro's underlip shot out."

"I ain't dat sorter fool, Marsa Hobby!" he said shortly. "I've going to try something. If it ain't no good, den we shota to cripple him. Lend me your knife, Marsa Tony."

He fell to work among the lianas, selecting long lengths of the stoutest. These he plaited together, and in a short while had a cable that looked strong enough to hold a pitching liner or a stampeding elephant. One end of this he secured to the thickest bough, the other he fashioned into a running noose.

Then he descended cautiously to the lower bough on which Tony had found safety, and, sitting down, extended a wagging foot invitingly. The tiger gathered his mighty muscles for the effort and shot straight up towards the bait. As he sprang, Billy whisked the foot out of harm's way, and as the great head with flaming eyes and gaping jaws came within reach, he dropped the noose over it!

It drew tight. There was a strangled roar.

"Hold on!" yelled Billy, and gripped the trunk as a tremendous convulsion shook the tree, nearly hurling its occupants to the ground.

The liana cable stretched, the bough to which it was attached creaked and groaned as the frantic beast whirled, flailing the air with its paws. To and fro it swung, bumped against the trunk, found claw-hold, raised itself a little, lost its grip, and fell back. There was a loud snap, and it ceased to struggle, swaying limply. Its neck was broken.

"Yah, Marsa Hobby, what do you think of dat?" yelled Billy, madly exultant. "I done him! You come along down. Pull him tail! Yah, old tiger, nigger has done you!"

"And if you make that row, something else will come!" said Tony. "Hurry up! We still have the river to cross—and it's full of alligators!"

"Don't you bother about dem! I knows how to get over!" crowed Billy. "Dis am Billy Kettle's day!"

"All you white folks, come along o' me, Come wid Billy, and you'll see what you shall see!"

he chanted, and raved ahead, pausing to pick up stones as he neared the river banks.

"He seems to have caught the infection from you, Hobby," said Tony, dragging his reluctant friend away from the tiger, which he was contemplating with eyes of desire. "Put your best foot foremost. I know you want that skin and skull, but if we don't get away, you'll leave yours here! Look over yonder!"

Hobby looked, saw the head of some huge reptile nosing along the cliff at the place where they had quitted it, and followed Tony without more ado. Full speed they raced down to the bank, where they found Billy throwing stones as far down river as he could.

Several ominous ripples appeared on the surface, speeding towards the place where the stones fell.

"Dere go deigators—and here go us!" said Billy. "Don't stop to wash your faces!"

And he led the way into the water. Fearless of the noise they made, they dashed through the shallows and up the further bank. They were only in time, for as they reached the higher ground there was a rush through the water, and two huge alligators slithered up the bank.

Billy heaved the last of his stones at them as he fled, which proved discouragement enough. They did not pursue. Another burst of running brought the trio to the trees of the forest, and a short half-hour later they were hailing the Aiki village, where they were received as folks returned from the dead. Lala alone seemed to suspect where they had been. He shook his head sadly when he heard what had happened among his kinsfolks.

"They are bad! I heard the tale about the white folks who drove my ancestors out long ago," he said. "But I do not hate you for it. You have been good to us! That is enough. I will never try to see the people of the Stone House again. I am your friend. Now, you are hungry. You shall eat!"

And, clapping his hands, he gave orders for a feast.

(To be continued next week.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 730

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PAGE 2:

"WACKY DANG OF RYLCOMBE."

(Continued from page 12.)

"Neatly caught!" said Gordon Gay.
"Ow!" gasped Gore. "Leggo, you cads! Rescue, St. Jim's!"

"Here's a collection of keys for you, dear boy," said Gay. "One belongs to Figgins, one to Tom Merry, one to Study No. 6. You'll find the innocent youths all at home. Give them my love, and tell them to wash their next prince and see whether he's a Grammarian."

"Grooogh!"

Gordon Gay playfully stuffed the three study keys down Gore's back, and then the Grammarians ran on, leaving Gore gasping in the road. Three or four St. Jim's juniors were running up, and it was time to clear. Gordon Gay & Co. raced on, while the St. Jim's fellows gathered round Gore of the Shell.

The three dusky youths vanished from sight into Rylcombe Wood. A quarter of an hour later they were discarding their garb, and washing off their dark complexions in a shady glade, with the assistance of Monk and Lane and Carboy. Later the six Grammarians took their homeward way to Rylcombe Grammar School in a joyous crowd.

That evening there was great hilarity in the Fourth Form at the Grammar School. Loud sounds of merriment were heard from every study. But at St. Jim's it was quite a different story.

CHAPTER 10.

Done to the Wide!

TOM MERRY came out of Study No. 10 in the Shell with a crimson face. Manners and Lowther followed him, red and raging. Gore had unlocked the door. The lock had not yielded by the time Gore came to the rescue.

"Where are they?" gasped Tom Merry.

"Safe at the Grammar School by this time, I fancy!" grinned Cardew. "Was that merry prince really Gordon Gay?"

"Yes. The cheeky rotter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Cardew. "What a spoof! What a toppin' spoof!"

"You silly owl!" roared Lowther.

The Terrible Three did not see—just then—where the laugh came in. They were wrathful, and they regarded Ralph Reckness Cardew's merriment as entirely misplaced. So they collared Cardew and bumped him on the floor, and Cardew yelled again in quite a different manner.

Then the chums of the Shell went on to Study No. 6, of which Gore had the key. The study door was unlocked and thrown open, and a crowd of juniors stared into the room.

Even Tom Merry & Co., wrathful as they were, joined in the howl of laughter that went up at the sight of Study No. 6.

Red noses and blue eyebrows and green ears had a striking effect, and Blake & Co. struck all beholders as comic.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a crew!" gasped Gore.

Blake & Co. were released, amid howls of laughter.

"You fellows want a wash, I think," said Gore. "I'm going over to the New House. Something's happened to Figgins & Co. I've got their study key, at any rate."

The Terrible Three, and a crowd of other fellows, accompanied Gore to the New House. They found a dozen New House juniors gathered outside Figgins' study. Faint sounds, like grunts and moans, were heard from within.

Gore unlocked the door.

Figgins & Co., with their wrists tied together in a bunch, and their faces gleaming green, were revealed, and there was a gasp of stupefaction from Redfern and the New House crowd.

"What the thunder" stuttered Redfern.

"Grooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins & Co. were freed. Fatty Wynn made a jump for the fender, and caught up the poker.

"Where is he?" he bawled. "Where's that spoofing rotter, Gay? I'll give him prince! I'll give him Bhungaree! Where is he?"

"Gone from our gaze like a beautiful dream!" chuckled Levison. "Too late, Fatty! He's spoofed both Houses, and cleared."

"Oh! He's spoofed you, too?" said Figgins, a little consoled.

"Not Study No. 9," grinned Levison. "But he's made a clean sweep in some studies. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cut the cackle!" growled Kerr. "I knew who the beast was just a minute or two too late."

"A pity you didn't know a minute or two too early!" grinned Gore. "He's fairly done us this time! Had the cheek to face Railton, too! Got up as a blessed nigger! What on earth will Railton say?"

Tom Merry & Co. quitted the New House, also wondering what Mr. Railton would say.

As Tom Merry came into the School House, Mr. Railton stepped from his study and called to him.

"I was about to send for you, Merry. The Head will be back at six. Will you bring Wacky Dang to his study about ten minutes past?"

Tom Merry stood dumb. Certainly he couldn't do as his Housemaster requested, obliging youth as he was.

"Where is Wacky Dang now?" asked Mr. Railton.

"I—I think he's gone, sir!" gasped Tom.

"Gone?" repeated Mr. Railton, in surprise.

"Ye-es, sir. He—he—he was seen running out of the gates," stammered Tom. "He—he—he hasn't come back, sir."

"Bless my soul! This is most extraordinary!"

"Yes, is-isn't it, sir?" gasped Tom.

"Doubtless he will return soon," said the Housemaster. "Bring him to my study when he comes in, Merry."

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

And Mr. Railton, to Tom's great relief, went back into his study.

There was a surprise for Mr. Railton and the Head that evening.

For Wacky Dang, Prince of Bhungaree, did not return.

Wacky Dang, with a much paler complexion, was at prep in Gordon Gay's study at Rylcombe Grammar School, which accounted for it. But the Head and the Housemaster, of course, did not know that.

They were perplexed and puzzled.

Finally, the Head obtained a trunk-call to London, where he made an inquiry of Wacky Dang's relatives.

To his blank amazement, he learned that the Prince of Bhungaree was still confined to bed with a severe cold, and that his Highness certainly had not been anywhere near St. Jim's that day.

The Head almost dropped the receiver in his astonishment.

"Upon my word!" he said faintly. "Mr. Railton, we—we have been deceived! The—the prince—I mean, the person—was—was an impostor! Some designing and unscrupulous person deceived you, Mr. Railton!"

It was not till the Housemaster had talked on the telephone himself that he was convinced. And he was more amazed than the Head. Evidently there had been an impostor—some unscrupulous person; but as nothing was missing from the school, it was difficult to guess at the impostor's motive for playing such an extraordinary trick.

And needless to say, Tom Merry & Co. did not think of enlightening the mystified gentlemen. In Tom Merry's study that evening there was an infuriated meeting, and deadly threats were uttered most emphatically, and it was agreed on all hands that Gordon Gay & Co. should be completely crushed. That was definitely settled. The sentence was pronounced, and it only remained to carry it out. That, however, was another proposition entirely, and meanwhile the honours were with the Grammarians, and Gordon Gay & Co. enjoyed the triumph of Wacky Dang, the Prince of Rylcombe.

THE END.

(Will Tom Merry & Co. turn the tables upon Gordon Gay & Co.? For the further exciting adventures in this great fight for supremacy see the splendid, long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co. in next Wednesday's GEM.)

GUSSY'S GREAT BLUNDER!

(Continued from page 14.)

He reached Study No. 6 in double quick time. Blake and Herries were pondering over a game of chess, whilst Digby was engrossed in writing a letter.

D'Arcy, in his great excitement, bundled into the study, and before the two players could protect their board, the whole set of players was sent flying in all directions.

"Hi! What the—"

"Whoa—"

"You silly ass!"

Herries made a dive for the chessmen, whilst at the same time Blake made a grab for the board. There was a hard crack as their heads came in contact with each other.

"Oooh!" gasped Herries.

"Ugh!" groaned Blake.

The two juniors rubbed their heads, and stared hard at Arthur Augustus.

"Why frajulous chump!" roared Blake. "You the thump did you come barging in just as I'd got Herries' mate in two moves?"

"But for you," yelled Herries, "I should have cleared Blake with my king!"

"Bump him!" yelled Digby, whose inkpot had been knocked over in the catastrophe, spluttering its contents over his letter.

There was a sudden rush made for Arthur Augustus, but D'Arcy held up a warning forefinger.

"Listen, you chaps!" he said. "I have something very interesting to impart to you!"

"Rats!" yelled Digby, making a grab at the swell of St. Jim's legs. "Let's have him!"

Blake pulled Digby back.

"Let's hear what our famous tailor's dummy has to say first," he said, "then we'll pommel him afterwards!"

The chums could see the excitement on D'Arcy's face.

"It's like this, you fellows," began the elegant Gussy, as he pushed his monocle safer into position in his eye. "Goodness knows what this place is comin' to! I just popped along to ask Skimpole's version on a new wig-out I had just purchased, and, believe me, he had the cheek to inform me that he was about to open a book!"

"What!" shouted Blake and Herries in unison.

"Yaas, deah boy. Skimpole is weally goin' to open a book. I tried to wemoustwate with him, but he would not listen!"

There was a sudden interruption, and the study door was thrown wide open. The

grinning face of Aubrey Racke, the black sheep of the Shell, popped his head round the door at that moment.

"Did I hear the noble son of Lord Eastwood remark that he was opening a book?"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy. "Surely you know better than to think I would lower myself to such an extent? Take back those words, otherwise I may deem it necessary to chastise you! If Skimpole wishes to open a—"

"Skimpole!" roared Racke. "Oh dear, the awful ass! Ha, ha, ha!"

He left the chums of the Fourth to argue with themselves, and hurried away to impart the glad tidings to his cronies.

The black sheep of the Shell made for Study No. 2. He tapped gently on the panel of the door.

Scrope was in there with Mellish, having a quiet smoke.

"Who's there?" came in answer to Racke's knock.

"Racke; open the door, Mellish—quick!"

There was a grating sound as the key turned in the lock, and the door flew open.

Racke pushed himself into the study, and Mellish locked the door again after him.

"Anything wrong?" he asked, after Racke had settled himself down in a chair. "You look mighty excited, old bean."

"Well, I've heard something that will interest you both. Herbert Skimpole, above all people, has opened a book!"

The young blades looked at Racke in surprise.

"Opened a book?" whispered Mellish. "You don't mean it?"

"I do, really," continued Racke. "D'Arcy has just told me."

There was silence for a few minutes, then Racke withdrew from his vest-pocket a letter.

"It is rather fortunate that this has happened," he said. "I have here some very valuable information. It has come from a relation of mine, a very good source, I can guarantee. We can rake up a fever between us, and with this real good information we'll back a winner and smash Skimpole up first pop! What do you both say?"

The two cronies fell to with a will. Between the three of them they managed to scrape up five pounds, and the three left the study in quest of Skimpole.

They met several fellows en route, and imparted the news to them. In fact, in a very short time nearly the whole population of the junior school were aware of Skimpole's new venture.

In numbers of threes and fours they flocked towards Study No. 2 to demand an explanation.

Gore, who had heard the news when searching through some books in the library, could hardly believe his own ears. He made his way with the others, and the din that was being made by the noisy crowd outside the study was appalling.

Aubrey Racke and his two pals were the first to reach the study.

Skimpole was sitting in front of the fire, book in hand, as usual.

He looked up in astonishment as Racke entered. He was even more surprised when he espied the whole host of fellows behind Racke.

"What ever is the cause of all this unrest?" he inquired.

"First come, first served!" shouted Racke. "Take that! It's from Mellish, Scrope, and myself!"

Skimpole read the inscription on the crumpled scrap of paper. His astonishment knew no bounds; his face went pale, and the piece of paper fluttered to the ground.

"What is the meaning of it all?" he cried, dropping into his chair in wonderment.

"Pway, deah boy," cried Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, elbowing his way forward. "Wacke has actually taken you at your word."

There was a silence for a while till Tom Merry, who was also among the crowd, suddenly grasped the situation.

"Order, chaps!" he cried. "There's surely a misunderstanding here. Let Skimpole explain."

"Weally, deah boy," broke in the swell of St. Jim's, "it is general knowledge now that Skimpole intends openin' a book."

"What's that?" roared Skimpole, rising.

"You told me, deah boy," expostulated D'Arcy, "that that was your intention, and Wacke overheard me informin' my chums Blake and Howwies and Digby."

Skimpole could plainly see now that the cause of the whole trouble was D'Arcy. He held up his hand for silence.

"Fellow schoolboys," he implored, "I am being cruelly misunderstood. I merely stated when in conversation with D'Arcy that I would open my book at any passage he liked so that he could read something of the evolution of man. As for 'opening a book' in any other sense, it has never been my desire. Kindly leave me in peace so that I can continue to digest chapter three hundred and thirty-nine of my worthy leader's most interesting works."

It was plain to all that once again Gussy had blundered. He had quite misunderstood the unfortunate Skimpole.

"Gussy is the man to be ragged!" shouted the junior captain.

"Weally. Tom Mewwy," remonstrated D'Arcy, "youn insult is most unnealed for. Pway follow me to the gym, that I may bestow upon you the severe thwashin' you deserve."

Gussy was in a war-like attitude, but he soon quietened down when the juniors whom he had misled set upon him with a rush.

For a few minutes the swell of St. Jim's was the centre of a most vigorous rag, and there is no doubt that he will not be so quick to jump to conclusions in future.

EDITORIAL.

My Dear Readers,—

By the way, please buy the "Gem." This is not a grumble, it is a request. The "Gem" is worth buying. Just as one man has one vote, so each reader should have his "Gem." Don't be one of the borrowing sort. I am immensely grateful to friends of mine who show their copies to non-readers, but the latter like the stories so much that they want to borrow the "Gem" every week, and so on, with the result that often enough, one hardworked copy of the "Gem" is set to do the work of a dozen. If they like the "Gem," tell them to buy a copy for themselves each week. My chums generally like to keep their own copies, and it is not quite fair to them to have them worn out and soiled through passing through so many hands.

What is the most likely thing a fellow would do if he found himself marooned on a desert island? He would not sit

down on the sad sea beach and pipe his eye. We can dismiss that theory. But there are ways and means to be adopted in such circumstances. Some methods are all right, some all wrong.

You would not find the experience so enjoyable as a camping jaunt. Then all you do is to light a fire and fry the frisky rashers in the frying-pan you have brought. After that you discuss interesting things and get chatty about the adventures of the morrow before rolling yourself in your blankets and sleeping the sleep of the just. But if you get dumped down suddenly, if there is scarcely any food ready to hand, and supposing shelter and all comforts are missing, then it is another pair of shoes entirely. You can be jolly under these conditions, or miserable. There is the choice.

In the new "Gem" serial, "The Island of Pleasure," one gets a lesson as to how to act. The characters in this topping yarn took the cheery view. They started in to make the best of what certainly looked like a sad, bad job.

To begin with, they did not mope. They did not begin abusing the island, calling it damp and unsuitable, as people

do with a house they hate. Such groumings would have been futile. It was not the fault of the island. It had been established for long years. No, what these hardy adventurers felt was this, that it was a sound thing the island was there. They saw it had possibilities, and they turned to and did the best for themselves. At the beginning, the island did not look promising, but, thanks to the work put in by the castaways, it became the Island of Pleasure. You will like this grand adventure yarn which starts soon in the "Gem."

MARTIN CLIFFORD'S PHOTOGRAPH.

There is a wonderful treat coming along for you all, and it is no less than a splendid art photograph of your great favourite, the world-renowned Martin Clifford. There is bound to be a record rush for the copy of the "Gem" containing this picture, and so for the next few weeks you must give your newsagent a standing order for the paper. This is the only way to make quite sure of obtaining one of the photographs. Tell your newsagent to save you the "Gem" each week.

YOUR EDITOR.
THE GEM LIBRARY, No. 730.

The ISLAND of PLEASURE



WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Supposing you and a party of your chums found yourselves upon an uninhabited island. What would you do? See the great GEM serial, starting soon.

