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The GEM

2^d



FATTY WYNN'S



When Fatty Wynn saw the prize porker he couldn't help thinking of sausages. When Tom Merry & Co. looked at it they thought of Fatty Wynn—so they called it Fatty II!

CHAPTER 1.

D'Arcy Feels Ill!

"I SAY, deah boys—"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that remark as he came into Study No. 6 in the School House at St. Jim's.

Three voices interrupted him with singular unanimity.

"Don't!"

D'Arcy adjusted his monocle in a leisurely way, and glanced at Blake, Herries, and Digby, who had looked up from their books to ejaculate that monosyllable, and then looked down to them again.

D'Arcy's glance was withering, but it only took effect upon the tops of three heads.

"I say, deah boys—" he repeated, with slightly more emphasis.

"No, don't," said Jack Blake, without looking up this time.

"Don't what, Blake, deah boy?"

"Don't say! Don't say anything! Cut!"

"I wefuse to cut," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "and I wegard your weply as wotten to the extiweme. If a fellow on the verge of a sewious illness can't look for sympathy in his own study, I should weally like to know where he can look for it?"

Jack Blake stared at the swell of the School House.

"On the verge of what?" he asked politely.

"A sewious illness. You know, deah boys—"

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"I know I've got to get this impot done by six o'clock, or else have old Schneider on my track," grunted Jack Blake. "There's a hundred lines, and we're doing thirty each against time. Shut up!"

"I decline to shut up. A sewious illness is a mattah of more importance than a wotten German imposition."

"You'll get a serious biff in the neck if you don't travel," growled Digby. "You're interrupting the washing. Buzz off!"

"I wish I had my dog Towser here," murmured Herries. "I am extremely glad that you haven't your dog Towsah here, Hewwies. I—"

"Come and lend me a hand!" exclaimed Blake. "Schneider never knows one fist from another, and that's the best of these spider-leggy German characters. Four can get done quicker than three."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Here's a pen. You can go on from here—Und Schlag auf Schlag."

"Undah the circs—"

"Are you going to lend a hand?" roared Blake, getting exasperated.

"I feel it is imposs. A fellow on the verge of a sewious illness—"

"Ass! There is no objection to your having a serious illness, but you've got no right to start it when we're working against time to get an impot done. Can't you put it off for ten minutes, and lend a hand?"

"I wegard the suggestion as widiculous, not to say wibald."

PRIZE PORKER!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Then bunk, and let's get finished!"
 "I wefuse to bunk! You see—"
 "Oh, trot! Travel!"
 "Undah the circe—"
 "My hat! Talk about a gramophone, or the little brook! I think Gussy could give them both points at going on for ever. Look here, you can go out into the passage and have a serious illness, if you like. I can't say fairer than that. Only don't interrupt your uncle."

"I wefuse—"
 "Oh, clear! Werd ich zum Augenblicke sagen!" shouted Blake, reading aloud as he wrote, to drown the tones of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Weally, Blake—"
 "Verweile doch, du bist so schon."
 "Blake, I wegard you as a wottah! Digby, I wegard you as a wottah! Hewwies, I despise you as a gwinnin' jackanapes!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned on his heel and shook the dust of Study No. 6 from his feet.
 Jack Blake grinned.

"I thought the German would squash him," he remarked.
 "Get on. We'll have this impot ready in time for old Schneider, though the ceilings fall!"

And three pens scratched away industriously.
 It needed a trained eye, perhaps, to distinguish the writing as German characters, but Herr Schneider knew what to expect when he gave out impots to the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, and he seldom, or never, read them through.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sniffed with indignation as he left Study No. 6. He had come there for sympathy, and surely a fellow had a right to expect sympathy in his own study. But D'Arcy's expectations were not realised.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "I wegard them as wottahs! I am not often ill, and when I am on the verge of a sewious illness, I should think they might treat me with a little respect. What I weally want is to be looked aftah carefully. Pewwaps Tom Mewwy— Ah, is that you, Skimpole, deah boy?"

Skimpole of the Shell was coming down the passage. He was walking quickly, as usual, and as usual, being extremely short-sighted, in spite of his spectacles, he ran into D'Arcy. Then he stopped and blinked.

"Dear me, is that you, D'Arcy? You are just the fellow I wanted to see!"

"Weally, Skimpy—"
 "You are aware, of course," resumed Skimpole, fixing his glimmering spectacles upon D'Arcy, "that influenza is rife in this House?"

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "A number of the boys and some of the masters are down with it, and a lot of the fellows think they are catching it."

"Yaas. I myself am on the verge—"
 "It is a serious case," said Skimpole, shaking his head, "and I wanted to consult you—"

"I am on the verge of a sewious—"
 "You see—"
 "Illness, and—"

"I have a great scheme for curing the epidemic at one swoop," said Skimpole, who was the brainy man of the Shell, and a genius in many ways. "What you want to drive out influenza is a shock to the system—"

"I am on the vewy verge of a sewious illness, and—"
 "That is what I wanted to see you about, D'Arcy. Unfortunately, I have no money to carry out my scheme, but I have no doubt that you would lend me five pounds for the purpose of curing the whole School House at one swoop."

"Yaas, wathah, but I am on the verge of a sewious illness, and—"

"Dear me! Are you catching it, too?"
 "Yaas, wathah! I have felt a slight ache over my left eye all the aftahnoon, and a stwangely dwy feelin' in my thwoat, you know."

"Probably early symptoms. This is very fortunate," said Skimpole, rubbing his bony hands.

"Weally, Skimpole—"

"I mean, fortunate in the sense that you will now be quite willing, undoubtedly, to aid me with cash in curing the epidemic in the School House. If it is cured in time, it will prevent the other fellows catching it, to say nothing of preventing it from spreading to the New House."

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"My idea is to expel the influenza from the system by means of a great shock. This shock can be administered by exploding a large quantity of gunpowder in the School sanatorium in the middle of the night—"

"Eh?"

"By exploding a large quantity of gunpowder in the sanatorium—"

"You uttah ass!"

"Really, D'Arcy—"

"You dangewous lunatic!"

"I can afford to regard with scorn and contempt remarks dictated by envy of my remarkable brain-power," said Skimpole. "If you refuse to help me, I have no resource left but to represent the urgency of the case to the Housemaster, and—"

"He will kick you out, you duffer!"

"In the cause of suffering humanity, I am prepared to risk that."

And Skimpole rushed off in a hurry.

"Well, of all the feahful duffahs," murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "I weally think that Skimpole takes the cake!"

Skimpole disappeared round the corner, and the swell of the School House went on his way to Tom Merry's study.

CHAPTER 2.

Good News!

KILDARE of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, came out of Mr. Railton's study with a serious expression on his face.

Matters were going from bad to worse in the School House. The influenza was spreading, and Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, was the latest victim. The captain of St. Jim's walked slowly away, and knocked at the door of Tom Merry's study and entered.

Manners was sniffing, and his nose, rubbed hard with his handkerchief, had assumed the hue of a beetroot.

Kildare looked at him suspiciously.

"Have you got it, Manners?"

"Got which?" said Manners.

"The influenza."

"No. Only some spilt pepper."

"Oh, I suppose this study is clear of it?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry. "We're pretty fit, and you don't catch cold as a rule if you're in a good condition."

"Unless you're unlucky," agreed Kildare. "Mr. Railton is pretty fit, and he's caught it."

Tom Merry looked concerned.

"Railton! Oh, that's rough!"

"By Jove, I'm sorry!" said Monty Lowther. "I'd rather Manners had it than Railton—I would really."

"Thank you!" grunted Manners.

"I've just seen him," said Kildare. "It's coming on, and he's going into sanatorium. I dare say you know that the Housemaster of the New House is down?"

"Ratcliff down with the flu?"

"Yes."

"I didn't know," said Tom Merry. "I'm not surprised. A skinny subject like Ratty, who never takes any exercise—ahem!—I mean, I'm sorry to hear it."

Kildare laughed.

"Well, both Housemasters are down," he said, "and the master of the Shell isn't well, either. The Head has decided to—"

"To catch it as well?" asked Lowther.

"No. Lowther. You will catch something if you are too funny, though! The Head has decided that the school will break up for a time, until the influenza is over. The boys who have caught it will remain in sanatorium, and the rest will either be sent home, or placed out on the farms round about for a week or so."

Tom Merry's eyes sparkled.

"My hat! That's a ripping idea!"

"And you can take your choice which," said Kildare, with a smile. "I have to see to it, as Mr. Railton is just on the sick list. Parties of a dozen or so will be made up, to go away together, of the boys who elect not to go home."

"Ripping!"

"Spiffing!"

"Grand!"

"If no one in this study has the flu—"

"Oh, we're all right," said Tom Merry hastily. "Manners spilt a little pepper, that's all. If he dares to get the flu we'll squash him—"

"Good! There are several farms on the school list as places for convalescents to be sent to," explained Kildare. "You would rather go to one than be sent home?"

"Yes, rather! We want to hang together, you know."

"Good! I'll put your names down for the Quarry Farm. That is about five miles from here, and the first party will be sent there early in the morning."

"Ripping! I say, Kildare, can you let us have a word in making up the party?"

The Sixth-Former reflected.

"Well, I don't see why not," he said.

"You see, if a chap like Gore or Mellish is in our gang there's bound to be ructions," explained Tom Merry, "and of course, our object is to have a perfectly quiet and peaceful time."

"Oh, of course, it always is!" laughed Kildare. "Still, I don't see why you shouldn't have a voice in the matter to a certain extent. Give me the names of the fellows you'd like to make up the party, and I will see if I can put them on the same list."

"Well, first of all, there's those four bounders in Study No. 6—Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy."

"Very good. That makes seven of you."

"And, I say, suppose we had Figgins & Co. in the same party?"

Kildare looked doubtful.

"You would start House rows with New House boys along with you," he said. "You were looking forward to a quiet and peaceful time, just now."

Tom Merry grinned.

"Well, of course we don't want to be too quiet," he said. "Besides, you know our rows with Figgins & Co. never amount to much; we pull jolly well together."

"Very well, then, if you think they'd like the arrangement. I can fix it with Monteith, their head prefect. He is looking after the arrangements, now Mr. Ratcliff is laid up."

"Oh, I know they'd like it."

"Yes, rather!" said Lowther.

"That makes ten. You want two more to the dozen."

"Oh, we'd be satisfied with ten. Still, you might shove down Reilly of the Fourth; he's a decent chap, and always in good spirits."

"And Kerruish," said Lowther.

"Kerruish is on the sick-list."

"Too bad! Well, we are seven—I mean eleven."

"I may as well put down Skimpole as the twelfth."

"Oh, Skimpole! I don't know about Skimmy! Can we make it a condition that he doesn't talk Determinism, or build any airships?"

"You must settle that with Skimpole," said Kildare, laughing. "That's the dozen."

And the captain of St. Jim's quitted the study. The Terrible Three looked at one another with expressions of great satisfaction.

"I say, this is ripping!" said Tom Merry. "Better than grinding Latin in the class-room, or nursing the flu in the sanatorium."

"Yes, rather! I expect there will be some rows, though, with those cheeky kids from Study No. 6 along with us, to say nothing of the New House bounders," said Manners.

"Well, what's the good of a holiday without a row?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Something in that."

"Let's go and see Study No. 6 about it. I expect they will be glad to be in the same party."

And the chums of the Shell lost no time in presenting themselves at the door of Study No. 6.

Jack Blake, with a roll of foolscap in his hand, came bolting out at the same moment in a great hurry. He rushed right into the Terrible Three, and sent Tom Merry reeling against the opposite wall, and Manners staggering along the passage.

Lowther sat down on the hard linoleum with a bump.

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"Oh," muttered Blake, reeling back into the doorway, "you utter duffers!"

"You shrieking lunatic!" howled Lowther.

"You dangerous dummy!"

"You fearful ass!"

"What do you mean by blocking up my doorway when I'm in a hurry?" gasped Blake. "If I don't get this impot into old Schneider by six, I'm done in."

"You ass—"

"My word!" said Digby, within the study. "Six is striking, Blake!"

"Scott! So it is!"

The leader of Study No. 6 plunged through the chums of the Shell and scuttled along the passage. Six was booming out from the clock tower of St. Jim's. The Terrible Three gasped for breath, and stared wrathfully after Blake's flying figure.

One, two, three!

Blake dashed on recklessly. If he didn't deliver that famous impot before six, he would probably be told to do it over again. And after three juniors had slaved away getting it done, that would be cruel.

Arthur Augustus, coming in from the quadrangle and coming upstairs to the study, met Blake half-way. He did not get out of the way soon enough, and Blake rushed on, leaving him sitting on the stairs.

Near Herr Schneider's study Skimpole made a grab at Blake.

"I say, Blake, I have a scheme for curing the—"

Biff!

Skimpole gasped and sat down on the floor with a bump. The last stroke of six was booming out from the clock-tower when Blake tapped at Herr Schneider's door and opened it hurriedly.

"Ach! Vat is tat?"

"My impot, if you please, Herr Schneider!" gasped Blake breathlessly.

"Ach! I tinks tat it is after six before, ain't it?"

"No, sir; six just striking."

The final stroke of the hour was dying away. Herr Schneider smiled grimly and took the imposition, and laid it on his table.

"Ach! I tinks you have brought him to me just in time, ain't it, mein poy? You may go!"

And Jack Blake went, gladly enough.

CHAPTER 3.

Arthur Augustus Feels Better!

TOM MERRY and his chums were waiting in Study No. 6 for Blake when he returned. Digby was roasting chestnuts, and the chums of the Shell were helping to eat them.

Jack Blake came in rather breathlessly.

"Done it!" he announced. "Just in time."

"Good!" said Digby. "Have some chestnuts?"

"I'm glad you were in time," said Tom Merry. "Under the circumstances, we will not lick you for biffing into us!"

"That's lucky for you, isn't it?" said Blake pleasantly.

"If any licking were to start, there are some bounders who will go out of this study on their necks."

"Oh, rats!" said Lowther.

"Did you say rats to me, Lowther?"

"Yes, I did; and—"

"Then I will—"

"And I—"

"Hold on!" interposed Tom Merry. "Peace, my children! Blake, we've come here to tell you of a pleasant surprise we've arranged for you kids?"

"Who are you calling kids?"

"I stand corrected; I mean, you respectable and estimable young gentlemen of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's."

"That's better! What's the pleasant surprise? Is Lowther going to give up making rotten jokes, or is he going to get a new set of puns?"

"Look here—!" began Monty Lowther.

"Well, what is it, then?"

"We've arranged a little holiday for you," said Tom Merry. "Railton is on the sick list, and Kildare and we have been talking about it, and we've decided that we're going to have a week or so on a farm in the country till the epidemic has passed off."

Blake's eyes sparkled.

"I say, is that honest Injun?"

"Yes. The kids who have the flu are going to stick in the sanatorium, and those who haven't it are either going home or going to be sent in parties to the farms on the school list."

"My word!" said Digby. "That's ripping!"

"Yes, rather!" said Herries emphatically. "I shall be

able to give my bulldog a run, and he wants a change, Towser does."

"I don't see how you'll be able to take your bulldog," said Tom Merry, shaking his head.

"Why not?" demanded Herries in a rather belligerent tone.

"Because we've arranged for you kids to come with us to the Quarry Farm, so that we can look after you, and bulldogs are barred."

"Oh, don't say that!" said Blake. "You'll start Lowther asking us why bulldogs are like football boots."

"Look here——" began Lowther again.

"If I go, my bulldog goes!" said Herries obstinately. "I'm not going on a holiday to leave Towser behind. How do I know he would be properly looked after?"

"You could tip Taggles a bob to do it."

Blake and Herries left off their dispute to glare at the hero of the Shell.

"If you want to go out of this study by the window," said Blake darkly, "you're going just the right way to work, Tom Merry!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said a voice at the door. "I wegard Tom Mewwy's wemark as decidedly impertinent, you know!" And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came into the study.

"Hallo!" said Blake affably. "You were taking a rest on the stairs when I saw you last. Weren't you comfy?"

"I wegard the way you pushed me ovah on the stairs as uttably wude and wuff!"

"Well, is it settled about my bulldog?" said Herries. "If I go, he's coming!"

"But where are we goin', deah boys?"

"We're going to stay a week on a farm to get away from



"My heys!" gasped Taggles. Arthur Augustus gave almost a wail of anguish. "Bai Jove, my twunk!" He dashed forward to save it, but he was too late. The trunk rolled from step to step to the bottom, and there burst open!

"I'm not going to trust Towser in the hands of a school porter. He might not get his meals regularly, and you know how bad it is for dogs to have their meals at all sorts of irregular times."

"Poor Towser!"

"Well, if a fellow keeps a dog, he ought to look after it."

"Then you can stay at St. Jim's and look after it," said Blake. "We can't have that mongrel in the party."

"Lot you know about dogs! Towser is a pure-bred bulldog!"

"I suppose I can call him a mongrel if I choose?"

"Oh, you can be as big a duffer as you like!"

"Look here, Herries——"

"Oh, rats! What you don't know about dogs——"

"Oh, do be quiet!" said Tom Merry. "If you quarrel like this you'll make me sorry I decided to take you on a holiday."

the flu, Gussy, and we're going to take these Shell bounders along to look after them!" said Blake.

"Bai Jove, that's wathah a good ideah! Of course, it's understood that Tom Mewwy behaves himself and doesn't bring us into diswepute."

"Now, be serious!" said Tom Merry. "Kildare has put our names down, altogether, as well as Figgins & Co. Skimmy and Reilly made up the dozen."

"Well, that's all right," said Jack Blake. "We'll see Figgins about it, but I've no doubt they'll be glad to come."

"I do not wish Figgins & Co. to be included in our party, deah boys. They have just tweated me with gweat wudeness in the quadwangle."

"Horrid!" said Blake solemnly. "Is it possible that they have treated the one and only Augustus with anything approaching to rudeness?"

"Oh, pway, don't wot, deah boy!"

"Still, we ought to take them along," said Tom Merry. "They can learn better manners from watching the elegant manners and customs of Gussy at close quarters."

"Yaas, bai Jove, there's something in that—"

"Then it's settled," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas. And now, deah boys, I want to point out to you that I shall wequiah lookin' atfah, you know, as I feel myself on the verge of a sewious illness."

"My hat! Then Gussy's out of it!"

"I fail to comprehend you, Tom Mewwy!"

"You see, all the fellows who have the flu are to be left behind in the sanatorium," explained Tom Merry. "If you are ill you can't come to the Quarry Farm with us."

"Bai Jove!"

"I'm sorry for you, Gus; but, you see—"

"Yes, rather," said Blake; "I'm sorry, too! We shall miss Gussy!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"It would be cruelty to drag him away if he's seriously ill," said Digby, with a shake of the head. "He'd better go into the sanatorium at once."

"Yes, I'll speak to a prefect about it immediately."

"Weally, Blake—"

"We shall think of you, Gussy, when we're having a ripping time at the farm," said Blake sadly; "we shall think of you cooped up in the sanatorium, feeding on gruel and horrid medicine."

"Bai Jove—"

"But we couldn't drag you away with us when you're seriously ill."

"Certainly not!"

"I didn't say I was sewiously ill, you howwid wottahs! I said I was on the verge of a sewious illness!"

"That's all the worse. If you are just going to burst forth, as it were, in a conglomeration of horrible diseases—"

"I wefuse to allow such expressions to be applied to me, Blake! I wegard anythin' like a disease with howwor. A fellow can be ill without havin' a disease."

"He can't be ill in a holiday party, anyway. You'll have to have your serious illness in the sanatorium, along with the other invalids."

"I wefuse to do anything of the sort. On second thoughts, it is pwob that I am feelin' only a bit wun down, and am not goin' to be ill at all."

"We can't take you away on a chance like that. You can't come unless you are quite certain you're not going to be ill."

"Certainly!" said Tom Merry. "I'd rather take Herries' bulldog than an invalid."

"As a matfah of fact, I feel vewy much bettah now, and pwobably shall not feel ill again at all."

"In that case we'll let him come," said Blake. "But, mind, don't go hunting round for sympathy, or you'll get it in the neck."

"Weally, Blake—"

"I think we'll go over and see Figgins about it," said Tom Merry. "Hallo! What's this animal in the doorway?"

The animal in the doorway was D'Arcy minor—inky and untidy as usual. He grinned coolly at the juniors.

"I say, Gus—"

"Weally, Wally, I wish you would not pwesent yourself in this study without havin' washed your face for a considerable pwiod," said the elegant swell of St. Jim's, in a tone of remonstrance. "You are the most disweputable young scallawag in the Third Form, and that is sayin' wathah a lot."

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

"As your eldah bwothah, Wally, I—"

"Oh, don't! I say, I hear that you are making up a party to go to the Quarry Farm for a week to get away from the flu. It occurred to me that I had better come with you."

"Then something else had better occur to you," said Blake promptly. "We can't have any cheeky Third Form kids in the party."

"Oh, rats!" said D'Arcy minor. "Jameson and Gibson are both on the sick-list now, and I'm stranded. I may as well come and look after Gussy."

"Weally, Wally, you young wapsallion!"

"It will be ripping fun," said Wally. "I'll show you fellows how to explore the quarries, and how to snare rabbits, and—"

The juniors united in a crushing glare at the cool "Infant," which had absolutely no effect upon the younger brother of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Is it a go, Gus?" said Wally cheerfully.

"No, Wally, it is not a 'go,' as you vulgahly put it," said D'Arcy, with stately dignity. "I should be very pleased to take you, if you pwomised to dwess and behave

in a wespectable mannah, and twy to bwing cwedit on me, but othahwise—"

"I expect it would be otherwise, too, Gus."

"Then I must wefuse you my permish to come."

"Perhaps I can manage without it," said Wally. And, with a cool nod all round, he walked out of the study.

Tom Merry burst into a laugh.

"For pure, undiluted nerve, I think that infant takes the bun!" he remarked. "I should half like to have him in the party; he would keep us lively. Well, so-long! I'll go over and see Figgins."

And Tom Merry proceeded to visit the chief of the New House juniors in his quarters, and, needless to say, Figgins & Co. jumped at the idea.

CHAPTER 4.

OR!

"**H**ERE'S the charabanc!"

It was Tom Merry who uttered the words as a charabanc from Rylcombe came up to the School House and stopped on the gravel.

It was morning—a keen, cold morning—and half a dozen of the party for Quarry Farm were standing outside the School House, waiting for the charabanc.

Tom Merry, in coat and cap and scarf, was standing on the stone steps when the charabanc rolled up, and the driver touched his cap with a cheerful grin.

"Here we are!" said Jack Blake. "Where's Taggles? Why doesn't Taggles bring down those boxes? Taggles, you villain, where are you?"

"Which I am 'ere, Master Blake."

"Then why don't you buck up?" said Blake severely.

"Do you want me to help you with that box?"

"Which it's 'eavy, Master Blake," said Taggles, who was carrying a rather large trunk belonging to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy on his shoulder.

The swell of the School House was following close behind, with an anxious eye upon the receptacle of his sartorial treasures.

"Pway be careful, Taggles!"

"Which it's 'eavy, Master D'Arcy!"

"It's all right," said Blake. "I'll lend a hand. I don't want to stand by idle while a nice, industrious man like Taggles is working."

"Same here!" said Monty Lowther. "I'll lend another hand."

"So will I!" said Manners.

"I don't want to be lazy," said Digby; "I'll lend a hand, too."

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Thank you kindly, young gentlemen, but—"

But the juniors were all lending hands. Blake pulled the trunk one way, and Lowther pulled it another. Digby gave Taggles a bump on the chest, and Manners poked him in the ribs. The school porter gave a gasp and staggered, and the trunk went with a bump on the stone steps.

"My heye!" gasped Taggles.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave almost a wail of anguish.

"Bai Jove, my twunk!"

He dashed forward to save it, but he was too late. The trunk rolled from step to step to the bottom, and crashed on the ground, and there burst open.

"My hat!" ejaculated Blake. "Who'd have thought it?"

"You wottah!"

"It has busted!" said Monty Lowther, with an expression of great astonishment. "I say, Gussy, your trunk has come open!"

"You feahful beast!"

"Why, he's blaming us," said Manners, in surprise. "If that happened when we were helping Taggles, what would have happened if we hadn't helped?" And Manners shook his head as much as to say that in that case the catastrophe would have been much greater.

"My heye!" said Taggles again.

D'Arcy gave the juniors a withering look.

"I wegard you as a set of wottahs!" he said. "I wegard this as a joke in the vewy worst of tastes. My beastly twunk has come open, and I have not the slightest doubt that my clothes are all wumpled!"

"Oh, we'll help you pack them again!" said Lowther, going down the steps.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dashed after him in frantic haste.

"Stop, Lowthah! I forbid you to touch my clothes—"

"What's the matter now?"

"I am convinced that you would deliberately wumple my garments!" said D'Arcy. "I have not the slightest doubt that you have some intention of that kind."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"If we were not just settin' out on a journey," said D'Arcy, "I would give you a feahful thwashin'! I do not

wish you to present yourselves at Quawwy Farm with black eyes and thick yaws, howevah!"

"Narrow escape for us!" grinned Digby.

Arthur Augustus turned his trunk over, and commenced to cram the displaced articles back into it.

Meanwhile, Taggles had brought out the other boxes, and they were placed in the charabanc. Then the juniors began to take their places.

There was a sound of loud and furious growling, and Herries came in sight, leading his bulldog by the chain. Behind came Figgins with his mongrel, and Wally with Pongo.

later the train stopped at the little country station of Quarrymere.

"Looks all right!"

That was Master Wally's remark as he stepped out of the train at Quarrymere.

The station was a little, old-fashioned, country one, with evergreens growing along the back of the platform, and so open that a view of the country on all sides could be obtained.

It did, indeed, look as D'Arcy minor expressed it—"all right."

The country was very green and wooded, with hills fading



"Boo!" roared Wally. "Boo!" Quack, quack, quack went the birds as they flew in all directions. "You young rascal!" The farmer dashed towards the junior waving his stick, but his shout was drowned in the quacking of the geese.

They all climbed into the charabanc, cheerfully enough, although the dogs seemed far from friendly.

"Well, we are a happy family, and no mistake," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Drive on, there, before we get any more dogs aboard the charabanc."

And the charabanc drove out of the gates of St. Jim's, followed by a cheer from the crowd, and amid an accompaniment of barking and growling.

During the short drive to Rylcombe, each of the dog owners kept a tight hold on his pet. There wasn't much room in the charabanc for a dog-fight. They reached Rylcombe Station in good time, and caught the train, and were soon buzzing off towards their new quarters. The three dogs, not without some misgivings on the part of their owners, were entrusted to the guard. Nearly half an hour

away into dusky blue in the distance. Between the grass-land and the hills lay the brown moor, pierced by the quarries from which the district had taken its name.

"Ripping!" said Tom Merry. "Mr. Johnson was to have a wagonette or something here to meet us. Where is there a porter?"

"I don't suppose they have porters here," said Monty Lowther, looking round him. "If they have, I expect he's asleep somewhere."

"Bai Jove, I can see the portah!" said D'Arcy. "I will question him on the subject of the wagonette, you know."

In a corner of the platform a man in a porter's cap was sitting asleep on a truck. The stopping of the train, apparently, had not awakened him.

Wally grinned at the sight of him, and crossed over to him, and suddenly emitted the shrill whistle with which he was accustomed to call his dog, close to the sleeper's ear.

"Ow!" gasped the porter, starting into wakefulness. "Ow! Wot's that—fire?"

"Good-morning!" said Wally blandly.

"I heard a fearful noise," said the porter, staring round him.

"Weally, Wally—"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus! I say, porter, do you usually wake up when a train comes in?"

"Yessir," said the porter—"yessir! My word! There's the train!"

And he walked forward in a leisurely way to help the guard put out the boxes.

"My only Aunt Jane!" said Wally. "They take things easy here! I suppose that's what they call leading a quiet life?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Hallo! Where's my dog?"

Wally ran towards the guard's van. Herries and Figgins were making towards it, too. Herries dragged out his bulldog, the guard glaring at him the while.

"He tried to bite me," said the guard. "I'd a brained 'im, young gentlemen, only—"

"That's all right," said Herries. "I expect you looked at him. Towser doesn't like people looking at him!"

"Which they've all bin a great trouble to me, and—"

Figgins slipped a shilling into the guard's hand.

"Thank you kindly, sir!"

"Come on, Spotty! Come on, old Spot!"

"Pongo! Pongo!"

"Quiet, Towser!"

There was a growling and barking on the platform, but the three dogs were kept from one another's throats by main force. The train crawled out of the station again, and Tom Merry questioned the porter as to the wagonette from the Quarry Farm.

"Mr. Johnson's wagonette?" said the porter, scratching his head. "There's a wagon bin waitin' outside for some time, young gents, from Mr. Johnson's farm. Perhaps that's what you want."

"I dare say it is," said Tom Merry. "This way, kids!"

They poured out of the station. A farm wagon that had seen much service was waiting there, and a wagoner in a smock frock was chewing a straw and gazing meditatively at his two horses. He turned round slowly and looked at the juniors.

"Be you the young gents from t' skule?" he asked.

"We be," said Monty Lowther.

"Then I'm 'ere to take you to the farm, young gents."

"You are from Mr. Johnson?"

"Yees."

Tom Merry looked at the wagon rather curiously. It had a good deal of hay and straw in it, and a side of bacon lay near the driver's seat.

"I understood that there was to be a wagonette, or something," said Tom Merry.

The driver slowly shook his head.

"Farmer Johnson says to me, says he: 'Garge,' says he, 'you'll take the 'ay up to the station,' he says, 'and bring back the young gents from t' skule,' he says—that's what Farmer Johnson he says to me."

"Oh, it's ripping!" said Manners. "I like the smell of hay, and there's a side of bacon ready if Fatty Wynn gets hungry."

"I am jolly hungry," said Fatty Wynn. "I always do get a keen appetite this time of the year. I've got some sandwiches, though."

"You ate about two dozen in the train."

"Nothing of the sort—I ate only nine, and I've got nine left."

"Gimme a 'and with these 'ere trunks, Garge," said the porter.

"That I will, Willyum," said Garge.

The luggage of the juniors from St. Jim's was piled into the wagon. Arthur Augustus kept an anxious eye upon his trunk. It was not fastened, and it had to be lifted into the wagon with extra care. It was safely accomplished, and D'Arcy breathed freely. Then the juniors clambered in, and the dogs were brought up. Monty Lowther suggested that they should run behind—a suggestion that was treated with utter scorn by Herries, Figgins, and D'Arcy minor.

The wagon was pretty full at last, and Garge climbed slowly to his seat and took up the reins. The horses moved off in a decidedly slow and leisurely way. The horses, like everything else, apparently, at Quarrymere, were slow and leisurely.

Gr-r-r-r!

"Keep that brute quiet, Herries!"

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"I don't see why a dog shouldn't growl a bit if he likes," said Herries. "It does a dog good to growl sometimes."

Yap, yap, yap!

"Wally, I insist upon that howwid bwute stoppin' that wotten snarlin'!"

"Yes, rather," said Herries. "It sets my teeth on edge."

"Oh, go and eat tin-tacks!" said Wally.

Gr-r-r-r!

"You'd better let him run behind," said Herries warningly. "I've got a feeling that Towser will get loose soon, and then it will be all up with your mongrel."

"Throw the savage beast out into the road, then."

"Yaas, wathah! I considah that Hewwies should thow the savage beast out into the woad. I don't like the way he is lookin' at my twousahs."

"There's something about you that annoys him," said Herries, patting the huge head of his favourite. "We're rather crowded here, and Towser doesn't like being crowded. I suppose you couldn't get out and walk, Gussy?"

D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye and gave Herries a look that ought to have bored a hole in him like a gimlet.

"I should hardly be likely to walk, Hewwies, for the sake of a beastly bulldog," he said, with great dignity.

"Well, Towser doesn't like being crowded," said Herries, with a dissatisfied look. "It's hard on a dog that likes plenty of room."

"Oh, blow Towser!" said Blake. "I'm getting fed-up with Towser."

"Towser will get fed-up with you if you don't give him a little more room."

"Yaas, I suggest that Hewwies should be wequested, in the name of ewevy gentleman pwesent, to sling the howwid bwuto into the newest quawwy."

"Catch me!" said Herries.

Gr-r-r-r!

"There's something worrying him," said Herries. "It must be you, D'Arcy. I think you ought to walk. Perhaps he's sniffing the bacon, though. Down, doggie!"

Gr-r-r-r!

Towser made a sudden leap, and dragged Herries half across the wagon. The bulldog's jaws closed upon a parcel in Fatty Wynn's lap, from which the fat Fourth-Former was in the act of extracting a sandwich.

Fatty Wynn gave a yell, and dropped his hands away in time. Towser dragged the parcel down into the bottom of the wagon, and tore it open with his teeth and paws, and buried his muzzle among the sandwiches.

"Oh, that's what he wanted!" said Herries. "It's all right now!"

"All right!" yelled Fatty Wynn. "He's got my sandwiches!"

"Yes, he'll be quiet now."

"Quiet! I'll brain him! I'll smash him!"

"Look here, Wynn—"

"He's got my sandwiches!"

"Well, he's hungry!" said Herries, in a tone which implied that he regarded that as a sufficient explanation and excuse for anything that Towser might happen to do.

"Hungry! I'm hungry, too!" shouted Fatty Wynn excitedly. "What do you mean, you School House rotter? He's not going to have my sandwiches; I'm simply famished!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "Your sandwiches won't be worth much now, Fatty!"

"The—the beast! I'll—I'll—"

Fatty Wynn stooped down towards the bulldog. Towser looked up, showing a set of teeth over the mutilated sandwiches that made the fat Fourth-Former jump back quickly.

"Call the beast off, Herries!"

"Well, the sandwiches won't be any good now if I do."

"He oughtn't to be allowed to have them, though."

"Well, he's hungry!"

"I'll—I'll—I'll give somebody a bob to shoot that dog!" said Fatty Wynn wildly. "The—the savage beast oughtn't to be allowed to live!"

"I quite agree with my friend Wynn on that point. The sandwiches aren't of much importance, but I am in continual tewwor that the feahful beast will take a bite out of my twousahs, you know."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Figgins. "I think Herries ought to bring up his dog better. Now, my Spot wouldn't think of touching any grub except when I feed him myself, and— Hold on! Come back! Quiet, you little beggar!"

But Spot got loose at last, and he flung himself upon the sandwiches. In a moment Towser had him by the neck and was pinning him to the floorboards. Before they could be separated they were rolling over and over among the feet of the juniors, with a terrific snapping and yelping and snarling.

The juniors jumped to their feet, and Pongo took the

opportunity of escaping from Wally and hurling himself upon the sandwiches. While Towser and Spot were fighting furiously, Pongo bolted the sandwiches at express speed.

Wally burst into a roar.

"Look at him!" he gasped. "Only look at him! Ha, ha, ha! Good old Pongo! Good old Pongo! The artful little beggar! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Call your beast off, Herries!" yelled Figgins.

"Well, call that mongrel of yours away! I warned you that Towser didn't like having other dogs near him."

Herries whistled and called, but Towser was deaf to the voice of the charmer. Herries dragged at his collar and dragged him up, but Towser's teeth were in the fur of the mongrel.

Figgins tried to drag his favourite away, and Towser

"I'm not thinking of your rotten Pongo. Suppose my bulldog gets lost?"

"Jolly good thing, too, I should say!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"This is what comes of having Third Form kids in the party!" growled Herries.

"Faith, and it's not sorry I am to be rid of the bastes!" said Reilly. "There's rather too much of that bulldog of yours entirety!"

Herries only grunted.

"I don't think there is any danger of the bulldog getting lost," remarked Skimpole. "All you have to do is to follow his track in the dust, Herries. You know my skill as an amateur detective. I should be glad to place it at your disposal."



Strong hands seized the bed and in a twinkling of an eye it stood upon its head and D'Arcy and the bed-clothes rolled out on to the floor. A muffled voice came from beneath the pile of bed-clothes. "You feahful wottahs!"

promptly snapped at him. In doing so, he let go Spot, who wriggled away, and was glad to get on Figgins' knee out of danger, having had enough of the fighting.

Pongo had just finished gobbling the last sandwich.

"Pongo takes the cake!" grinned Wally. "Hallo, here's that rotten bulldog getting obstreperous again. Keep him off my Pongo, you ass!"

"Oh, blow your Pongo!"

Towser's fighting blood was up, and doubtless he was disappointed about the sandwiches. He made many efforts to get at Pongo, and Herries had plenty to do to hold him in. A tremendous effort at last tore Towser's collar loose, and he hurled himself upon Pongo with a fierce growl.

Pongo went over the side of the wagon into the road, and Towser went after him. In a second the two dogs were tearing down the road in a cloud of dust in a hot chase.

"Confound it!" said Herries angrily.

"Oh, it's all right!" said Wally. "Pongo can dodge anything on four legs!"

"Oh, you go and eat coke!" said Herries ungratefully.

"Really, Herries, I cannot help regarding that remark as most rude. Not," continued Skimpole, beaming upon Herries through his spectacles—"not that I blame you for your rude and brusque manners, Herries. They are attributes of yourself, and yourself—the final ego—must be admitted to be the outcome of the combined influence of heredity and environment, and, therefore—"

"Cheese it!" said Tom Merry. "If you start Determinism now, Skimpole, we'll drop you out of the wagon, and make you walk!"

"Really, Merry, that is not a logical method of ending an argument."

"Well, it's a quick way!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard Skimpole as a feahful ass and an awful bore! It may be the result of his hewedity or his beastlay enviornment, but in eithah case the fact remains the same."

Wally rose and stretched himself, and, of course, in doing so, knocked Arthur Augustus' silk hat sideways.

D'Arcy uttered an exclamation:

"I weally wish you would be a little more careful, Wally!"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus! I'm going to walk. I suppose that white building yonder behind the trees is the farm. Is that the Quarry Farm, Gargo?"

"Yees, zir."

"Good! I'm going to have a trot! Can't be cooped up like this with a lot of old fogies!"

And Wally dropped behind the wagon. The juniors looked at him expressively. Tom Merry & Co. were not exactly pleased at being regarded in the light of old fogies.

The wagon was proceeding at a very leisurely pace, and the infant's brisk walking took him on ahead. At a pond near the gateway of the farm a flock of geese were disporting themselves, and, of course, Wally had to take it upon himself to drive them into the farmyard, for no reason except that he had no business to do so.

With a terrific quack-quack-quacking the startled geese fled before the shouting junior, who raved and waved his arms frantically in pursuit.

"Young ass!" growled Blake, seeing Wally's actions from the wagon. "What a fearful row! He'll have the whole farm on his track in a minute!"

"Yaas, wathah! My young bwothah is an extwemely mischievous young wascal, you know!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "There's Nemesis on his track!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A stout gentleman of the farmer persuasion had appeared from an outbuilding, doubtless attracted by the uproar of

the quacking geese. He stared blankly at Wally for a moment, as if petrified by the sight.

"My geese!" he gasped. "My prize geese! Oh, you young villain!"

Quack, quack, quack!

"My prize geese!"

"Boo!" roared Wally. "Boo! Yah! Hurrororororoo!"

Quack, quack, quack, quack!

The farmer dashed towards the junior. Wally did not look round, and the sounds of the farmer's heavy boots were drowned in the quacking of the geese.

Quack, quack, quack! went the birds, as they flew and ran in every direction. From the wagon the St. Jim's juniors watched the scene with interest.

Nemesis was fast overtaking the unconscious Wally.

"Hurroo—hurroo—o-o-o-o!"

Quack, quack, quack!

"You young villain!" roared Farmer Johnson.

He gripped Wally by the shoulder, and his stick descended upon the young rascal's back with a sounding thwack.

CHAPTER 5.

Fatty Wynn the Second!

WALLY swung round with a startled yell. The farmer made rapid play with the stick, and Wally jumped and squirmed and wriggled.

"You young villain! My prize geese!"

"Leggo!"

Quack, quack, quack!

"Lemme alone, you duffer!" roared Wally. "I was only driving in your geese for you! You ought to be grateful!"

"You young rascal!"

The farmer let D'Arcy minor go at last—not so much because of his expostulations, as because the stout gentleman was becoming breathless from his exertion. With a very red face, he glared at the youthful scion of the house of D'Arcy.

Wally glared at him in return, apparently inclined to commit assault and battery on the spot in spite of the farmer's stick.

"Young villain!" gasped Farmer Johnson. "My prize geese!"

The wagon came to a halt, and the juniors tumbled out of it. They were laughing uproariously, and Wally received scant sympathy.

"Hold on, Mr. Johnson!" said Tom Merry. "Is that how you usually receive a guest at Quarry Farm?"

The farmer turned round and looked at him.

"Dang me!" he said. "Is it the young gents from the skule?"

"Yaas, wathah, deah sir!"

"And is this young willain one of you?" asked the farmer.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Not exactly," said Monty Lowther. "He's a kid in a lower Form who's been allowed to come along with us."

"Rats!" said Wally.

"You were quite right to punish him," said Lowther calmly. "And if you like to give him some more we shall be glad to stand round in a circle and applaud."

"Certainly!" said Figgins. "We will hold him, if you like, while you lay it on."

"Faith, and I agree wid ye entoirely!"

Wally pushed back his cuffs.

"Who's going to hold me?" he asked in a casual sort of way.

Farmer Johnson grinned. He was naturally a good-humoured, stout gentleman, and the punishment of Wally had quite appeased him.

"It's all right, young gents," he said. "I'm sorry I gave it him so hard, seeing as he's one of the party, but I can't abear having my prize geese disturbed."

"I was only driving them in for you," said Wally. "I thought you'd like a fellow to make himself useful."

The farmer looked at him doubtfully.

"It's all right," said Tom Merry, laughing. "We're all glad to see you, Mr. Johnson, and we think the place ripping. We shall have a good time here, and we'll do our best to keep D'Arcy minor in order."

"Yaas, I shall certainly make it a point to keep an eye on my youngah bwothah," said Arthur Augustus. "He is a young wascal, I am sowwy to say!"

"Now, don't you begin, Gus!" said Wally.

"Weally, Wally—"

"It's ripping air down here!" said Fatty Wynn. "Don't you find it gives you a jolly good appetite, Mr. Johnson?"

Mr. Johnson smiled.

"Yes, I do, young gent; and I suppose you are ready for some lunch, too?"

"Well, we could do with some," said Fatty Wynn. "I



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ought to have had a solid meal before starting on the journey; but Figgins was hurrying me so."

"I thought you did yourself down pretty well," said Figgins.

"Oh, come now, Figgy!" said the fat Fourth-Former in a tone of deep reproach. "You saw what I had—just the usual school breakfast, and a gammon rasher and some sausages besides, and a couple of kippers. There was absolutely nothing else, excepting the cakes and tarts and ham. You know that!"

Farmer Johnson looked at Fatty Wynn curiously. "Lunch is ready in the kitchen," he said. "You won't object to the kitchen, young gents? You see, there ain't room in the other rooms."

Tom Merry laughed. "Right-ho, Mr. Johnson! Don't stand on ceremony! Kids, follow your leader!"

"Who are you calling kids?"

"Yaas, Tom Mewwy, pway answah that question! I weally—"

"Cheese it, Gussy, and come in! Can't you see you're keeping Mr. Johnson waiting? When I decided to bring you Fourth Form kids here I naturally expected you to mind your manners," said Tom Merry severely.

D'Arcy could think of nothing sufficiently crushing to retort for the moment, and he followed his companions into the farmhouse. The trunks were piled in the spacious porch for the time being until they could be taken to the juniors' room.

Garge drove the wagon away. Neither Towser nor Pongo had yet put in an appearance, and the juniors—with two exceptions—were beginning to hope that they were lost for good.

The long, spacious kitchen of the farmhouse looked very bright and cheerful, and the glimpse of the dairy was refreshing. The beams of the kitchen were solid old British oak. The Quarry Farmhouse had been built at a time when builders were really builders. The other rooms of the farmhouse were very small and poky, and it was plain that there was no room for the whole party of visitors, except in the farm kitchen. But the juniors had understood that they would have to "rough it" a little in the country, and they were not disposed to grumble.

A lunch of bread and cheese and delicious pure milk was ready, and the juniors did it full justice.

Dinner, which was served at midday at Quarry Farm, was to follow later. After lunch had been disposed of the boys were shown their quarters. Accommodation was somewhat limited, but everything was clean and neat as a new pin. Mrs. Johnson, a stout and cheerful lady with cheeks like ripe apples, was evidently a careful housewife, and even Tom Merry's old governess would have been satisfied with his new surroundings if she could have seen them.

The chums of the Shell had one room, Figgins & Co. another, and Blake and his friends a third. Reilly, Skimpole, and D'Arcy minor had a fourth room, and the four rooms occupied a whole floor of the farmhouse.

Tom Merry looked out of the little gabled window of his room over a rolling expanse of green and glowing country. "Ripping!" he said. "And we'll have a trot over to those quarries one day, kids, and see what they're like. Something like the chalk-pits on Wayland Moor, I expect."

"Hallo! What's that row?" exclaimed Lowther, glancing down from the window towards the farmhouse door. "My hat, look there!"

"Phew! Gussy's trunk!"

The trunks had been left outside for the time until Garge should have leisure to carry them up the narrow, creaking stairs of the farmhouse. It will be remembered that D'Arcy's trunk had a broken lock, and the lid was unsecured. Garge had plumped the trunk down in a way that jarred the lid partly open, the disturbed articles inside preventing it from closing down again.

A huge porker had come along on a voyage of investigation apparently. The juniors gazed at the pig in admiration. They had never seen so absolutely fat and barrel-like a specimen of the porcine species. The huge porker was nosing into the trunk with his snout, probably looking for something to eat.

The half-open lid was pushed back, and the pig dragged a curious assortment of collars and ties out of the trunk. Disdaining them as articles of diet, he continued his investigations.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared with laughter. There was a sudden cry from the adjoining room, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy went tearing down the stairs. He dashed out of the porch, the juniors watching him from the window almost in hysterics.

"Shoo!" gasped D'Arcy, throwing up his hands at the pig to frighten him off. "Shoo! Yah! Bah! Groo!"

The porker did not seem to be scared by the junior's ejaculations and excited gestures. He gave Arthur Augustus one look, and then turned to the trunk again with a grunt. "Bai Jove, the howwid beast will wuin my things!" cried D'Arcy. "Help! Bai Jove! Shoo! Get away! Wun away, you howwid animal! Shoo! Shoo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the chums of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Figgins & Co. from their window.

But Arthur Augustus was too excited to heed their laughter. He picked up a broom which chanced to be in the porch and rushed at the porker. A mighty swipe made the pig turn round from the trunk with a loud grunt, and he waddled straight towards D'Arcy. Whether he meant to attack him or not, cannot be said, but he went straight at him, and D'Arcy, in dismay, dropped the broom and fled. Unfortunately, in his haste, he caught his foot in a rut in the brick floor of the porch and went down headlong.

"Help!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's faintly.

He sat up. A snout was thrusting into his face, and a puff of strongly scented breath fanned his face. The swell of St. Jim's squirmed away like an eel and tore into the house. The juniors at the window were shrieking. The porker, satisfied with having routed his assailant, returned to the trunk and pursued his investigations.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "This is too funny! I say, kids, have you ever seen anybody like that porker before?"

"Yes, rather," grinned Lowther. "Fatty Wynn! He might be his twin!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Manners. "The likeness is amazing. Fatty Wynn the Second!"

The chums of the Shell shrieked at the idea. From that moment the prize porker had his name—Fatty II.

CHAPTER 6.

No Chance for Skimpole!

WALLY came into the farmhouse kitchen as D'Arcy fled into it. He gave his elder brother a poke in the ribs to stop him, and D'Arcy reeled upon a settle.

"Bai Jove! Have you seen that howwid bwute? He's wootin' out the things in my twunk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You unfeelin' young wottah—"

"Oh, I'll sheer him off for you, if you like!" said Wally. "I should be extremewly gwateful—"

Wally went out through the wide, brick-paved hall. Fatty Wynn the Second was routing into the trunk again. Wally had heard a bark in the distance which he knew well, and he knew that Pongo was returning. He gave the shrill whistle which always made the juniors stop their ears, and Pongo came racing up.

"Good dog, Pongo! Fetch him!" shouted Wally.

And Pongo went for the prize porker like a shot.

Fatty Wynn the Second grunted excitedly, but he was no match for Pongo. The dog barked and yapped round him furiously, and the porker turned tail and made off at a trot, with Pongo snapping in pursuit. The two of them disappeared round the angle of the farm buildings.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy. "I am beginnin' to think that country life is not all wose-coloured, you know. My neckties are isplay wuined."

He gathered up his treasures ruefully. Some of them certainly were not much good now. The swell of St. Jim's jammed them back in the trunk, and jammed down the lid.

Garge came up, touching his cap, with a grin.

"Carry the trunks up now, sir?" he said.

"I weally wish you had cawwed them up before, my good man," said Arthur Augustus. "Some of my things have been absolutely wuined by that howwible animal."

Garge grinned again, and carried in the trunks. The juniors came out, grinning in what D'Arcy could only regard as a very unfeeling way. They occupied the wait for dinner in looking round the farm and its surroundings, and they found many things to interest them.

Skimpole, who was of a scientific turn, investigated the dairy, and explained to Mr. Johnson some improvements he had thought of in the art of making butter. He confided to Tom Merry afterwards that he did not think these improvements would be adopted at the Quarry Farm.

"I could, at a trifling immediate expenditure, save half the cost of butter making," said Skimpole. "I was trying to explain to the dairymaid that with the aid of the apparatus I should devise, her labour would be quite dispensed with, and Mr. Johnson would save the cost of her wages, and she interrupted me quite—well, quite brusquely."

"Amazing!" said Tom Merry.

"Yes, isn't it? I think people are very slow in the country—very slow indeed."

"I suppose so. They ought to be so jolly glad to have

their jobs taken away, so that their employers can save their wages."

"Of course, the individual would suffer, as in the case of all great improvements," said Skimpole. "Whenever a machine is invented, it throws a certain number of hands out of work. This is rather rough on the individual—"

"Go hon!"

"But, of course, it could not be allowed to interfere with the progress of science and invention. You see—"

But Tom Merry was gone.

The chums of the Shell strolled round the farm, giving Skimpole a wide berth. The Determinist of St. Jim's spotted Herries, and bore down upon him.

Herries was looking rather worried, but Skimpole was too preoccupied with the questions of the day to notice that.

"How beautifully quiet it is here, Herries!" he remarked. "Do you not feel that it is a spot destined, as it were, by Nature for study and the improvement of the intellect?"

Herries grunted.

"If you care to hear me," said Skimpole modestly, "we will retire behind the haystack and I will read you the four hundred and forty-fourth chapter of my forthcoming book on Determinism. It deals with—"

"Rats!" said Herries, walking away.

Skimpole rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"The indifference of Merry and the obtuseness of Herries are remarkably trying," he murmured. "Ah, there is Blake! Perhaps—I say, Blake!"

"Hallo!" said Blake, walking off. "I'm getting peckish. Br-r-r!"

"Dear me!" said Skimpole. "What can Blake possibly mean by that utterly unmeaning remark? Digby! I say, Digby!"

"No, you don't!" said Digby; and he followed Blake.

"Dear me!" said Skimpole. "How annoying. Ah, there's D'Arcy! D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, deah boy!" said the swell of St. Jim's.

"I was trying to explain something to Herries and he walked away."

"Pway what was it, deah boy?"

"What right has a private individual to fence round a part of England, and say—"

"Bai Jove!"

"No, no, nothing of the sort. And say, 'This is mine, this belongs to me.' My dear friends and hearers, such a contention is absurd on the face of it. Imagine two men on an island—"

"Weally, Skimpole—"

"Imagine two men on an island. One—"

"What island, deah boy?"

"Any island. One cultivates the soil and the other—"

"But what two men are you speaking of?"

"Any two men. I am simply giving an illustration—"

"Dinner's ready!" called out Wally.

"These two men on the island—"

"Bai Jove, Skimmy, you're awfully intewestin', old chap, but I weally think I had better go in to dinnaah," said Arthur Augustus, and he went.

"Skimmy, have you seen Wynn?" called out Figgins.

"No, Figgins. If you have a minute to spare—"

"I haven't," said Figgins.

The New House junior was looking for Fatty Wynn. The fat Fourth-Former seemed to have vanished. He questioned Tom Merry, as the latter came towards the house.

"He went round towards the pigsties a short while back," said Tom Merry.

Figgins looked puzzled.

"What on earth did he want at the pigsties?"

"Fellow-feeling, perhaps," suggested Lowther blandly.

Figgins hurried off. The chums of the Shell walked with him, curious to know what Fatty was delaying so long round the pigs' quarters for.

"My hat!" suddenly yelled Lowther. "Look there!"

The juniors had come suddenly upon a curious scene. There was Fatty Wynn, sitting down just in front of a huge porker who had ruffled the serenity of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

There was an almost loving expression upon the face of Fatty Wynn, and his gaze was fixed dreamily upon the huge porker.

"My word," murmured Fatty, "what ripping sausages he would make!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

Fatty Wynn looked round.

"Hallo, you fellows! I say, look at this pig! Isn't he a ripper?"

"No time to be introduced to your relations now," said Monty Lowther. "Dinner's ready."

Fatty Wynn jumped up with alacrity.

"Is it? Good! But I say, isn't he a ripper?"

And Fatty Wynn passed more than one loving glance backward at the prize porker as he went towards the farmhouse.

CHAPTER 7.

A Shock to the System!

TOM MERRY was looking very cheerful as he jumped out of bed the next morning.

He jerked the bedclothes off Manners and Lowther, and was rewarded with two ferocious growls.

"Time to get up!" he said cheerily. "I say, life on a farm agrees with me. Let's go and see if those Fourth Form kids are moving."

"Gr-r-r-r!" said Lowther. "There's no rising-bell here. Why can't you let a chap alone for a few extra minutes?"

"It is against my principles to encourage laziness in young people," said Tom Merry severely. "I regard you as being under my charge, and—"

"Oh, cheese it, old chap!"

The chums of the Shell did not take long over their toilet. They went out on the little landing and thumped on the door of Blake's room.

"Come in!" sang out Jack Blake.

Tom Merry looked in. Blake, Herries, and Digby, in various stages of deshabille, were proceeding with their toilet, but Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was still in bed. The swell of St. Jim's was sitting up, with his knees drawn up under the clothes, and his eyes fixed on his chums with an expression of intense indignation.

"If you throw any more cold watah in this diwection, Blake," he was saying, "I shall no longah wegard you as a friend."

"Get up, then!"

"I wefuse to get up. It's a cold morning—"

"Do you expect a tropical morning at this time of the year?"

"Certainly not; but I'm not in my ordinawy state of health. A fellow who is on the verge of a sevious illness—"

"My hat, are you beginning that again?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Where do you feel the pain?"

Potts, the Office Boy!



"There is an ache ovah my left eye, and a slightly dwy taste in my throat."

"Ah! Is it a dry feeling, as if it had been—been rasped over?" asked Tom Merry sympathetically.

"Yaas, wathah! That descibes it vewy accurately."

"Then I can tell you what's the matter. You've been talking too much."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"That's what it is, you may depend upon it," said Tom Merry seriously. "It isn't influenza; it's simply the effects of over-talking—what may be termed jawitis."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "I shouldn't wonder!"

"Tom Mewwy, I considah—"

"You can consider the thing settled. It's jawitis right enough. All you have to do now is to limit the output of speech. It's the same as in the manufacturing line, you know—when suffering from over-production, you limit the output."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not see anythin' to laugh at in Tom Mewwy's wude remark. I weguard him as an unfeelin' beast!"

"I've diagnosed the case for you, and given you a prescription," said Tom Merry. "I don't see how a fellow can do more than that!"

"I weguard jokes as bein' in the worst of tastes, diwected towards a fellow who is on the vewy verge of a sewious illness!"

"Perhaps Skimpole's idea of a shock to the system would work all right," said Monty Lowther, with a grin.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Did I hear you mention my name?" said Skimpole, looking in at the door. "Is my assistance required? If I can unravel any knotty point in the science of—"

"Yes, you're wanted, Skimpole. Gussy is ill—he's on the very verge of a serious illness—and it's pretty certain to be the flu. What would you recommend?"

"A shock to the system, to drive out the seeds of disease, unquestionably," said Skimpole. "If a large quantity of gunpowder were exploded under D'Arcy's bed, I have not the slightest doubt that it would put an end to his complaint."

"And to Gussy, too, I should think!" yelled Blake.

"Of course, there would be a certain amount of risk in the experiment, but D'Arcy would be willing to face that for the sake of a quick and perfect cure."

"You uttah ass!" said D'Arcy, throwing all the scorn he was capable of into his voice. "I weguard you as a dangewous lunatic, Skimpole!"

"Really, D'Arcy—"

"Got any gunpowder?" asked Blake, in a businesslike tone.

"Unfortunately, no; but in a few days some could be procured."

"We cannot leave Gussy to languish in the grip of the flu for a few days," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head. "He is now on the verge of a serious illness. He has a pain just over his left toe—"

"My left eye, Tom Mewwy!"

"I stand corrected. A pain just over his left eye, and a dry taste in his right throat—"

"You uttah ass! A dwy taste in my throat!"

"Ah, that's it! A pain just over his left ear, and a dry taste in his eye. But it really doesn't matter where he's got 'em, so don't interrupt me again. The point is, he's

got 'em. We haven't any gunpowder, so how are we to give him a sufficient shock to the system to buzz out the seeds of deadly disease?"

"Weally Tom Mewwy—"

"The only way I can think of is by turning the bed over—"

"I uttably wefuse to have my bed turned ovah! I weguard you as beasts! I am on the verge of a sewious illness, and I wequiah lookin' aftah. I want my bwakfast in bed this morning, and I don't feel as if I could eat anythin' but kidneys. I want them devilled, and pway see that they are done nicely, because—"

"You see, it's a bad case," said Tom Merry, shaking his head. "His mind is beginning to wander already."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothin' of the sort, Tom Mewwy! I suppose I can have my bwakfast in bed, if I like, and devilled kidneys for bwakfast if I choose?"

"Yes—I don't think! It would be quicker and easier to cure you with a shock to the system. Shall we get Skimpole to speak to you on the subject of Determinism, or shall we turn your bed over?"

"Weally, Mewwy—"

"Oh, let's be merciful!" said Blake. "Turn the bed over!"

"Stand back, you wottahs! If you touch this bed—I tell you—weally—Ow! You feahful beasts!"

Strong hands seized the end of the bed, and in the twinkling of an eye it stood on its head, and D'Arcy and the bedclothes rolled on the floor. Then the bed was yanked over and inverted on top of the swell of St. Jim's. A muffled voice came from beneath the pile.

"You feahful wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I no longah weguard you as fwriends!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus struggled out from under the mass of bedclothes and mattresses. He groped for his eyeglass, and jammed it into his eye. In his many-hued pyjamas, which seemed to have borrowed their colour scheme from Joseph's coat, he made a charming picture in the morning sunlight. His indignant and scornful glare only brought fresh yells of laughter from the juniors.

"You wotten wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I weguard you as wank outsidahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Words failed the swell of St. Jim's. He turned away, and began to make his toilet, sniffing with indignation. The idea of having breakfast in bed was dropped, and for some time nothing more was heard of the serious illness that hung over the swell of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 8.

Skimpole Milks the Cow!

SKIMPOLE was looking very thoughtful. The juniors had poured out of the farmhouse after breakfast, breathing in the pure air of the meadows.

Life on a farm, as Tom Merry had said, agreed with them. It was a very pleasant change from the classrooms of St. Jim's. Master Wally looked longingly at the geese round the pond, but he remembered Mr. Johnson's



stick, and let them alone. He whistled shrilly to Pongo, who was inclined to worry the brown cattle grazing in the meadow.

"Come here, you young boulder!" said Wally, shaking a warning finger at his ragged pet. "Haven't I told you before never to worry cattle near the farmhouse? You'll get a stone on your napper; farmers don't understand dogs! Come along with me, and we'll look for some rabbits! I say, Garge, are there any rabbits hereabouts?"

Garge grinned, and touched his cap.

"Heaps, zir—heaps and heaps!" he said.

"Good! There won't be so many in an hour or two," said Wally. "Come along, Pongo!"

And the hero of the Third Form at St. Jim's walked off with his mongrel at his heels. Figgins was giving Spot a run, and Herries wore a worried look. Towser had not turned up yet. Herries was beginning to be afraid that the bulldog was lost. He questioned everybody, and everybody answered that he hadn't seen Towser. Skimpole, as we have said, was looking thoughtful. He was gazing at a cow in the meadow, and apparently thinking out some problem connected with her.

"I am thirsty," he remarked presently. "I say, Herries, I—"

"Well, there's the pump!"

"I should prefer a drink of pure milk, fresh from the cow. Will you hold that animal while I milk her?"

"Not much!" said Herries.

The cow did not look very amiable, and she had a business-like way of lowering her horns as she looked at the juniors. Herries did not feel inclined to come to close quarters with her.

"Really, Herries—I say, Tom Merry, will you hold that animal by the horns while I obtain a modicum of fresh milk?"

"I don't think!" said Tom Merry.

"D'Arcy—D'Arcy!"

"What is it, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus, turning round. The swell of St. Jim's seemed to have forgotten his impending illness for the present. He was clad in a really natty garb for the country, and his gaiters fitted him like gloves, and the cap he wore looked as elegant as his topper.

"I am thinking of milking yonder cow," said Skimpole, who always talked in book-language, unless he was in a great hurry. "I wish to obtain a modicum of lacteal fluid for my refreshment."

"Why don't you ask Mr. Johnson for some milk, deah boy?"

"I prefer to obtain it fresh from the cow. I have a glass here, and if you will aid me by holding the cow by the horns, I shall be able to obtain a supply of lacteal fluid in a few minutes."

Arthur Augustus was always obliging, and ready to run risks for the sake of politeness, but he looked at the cow and hesitated.

"Bai Jove, I don't see how I could hold the beast by the horns without the wisk of soilin' my gloves!" he remarked.

"You could take your gloves off!"

"Yaas, but that would only make mattahs worse; I should wun the wisk of soilin' my hands."

And D'Arcy, who seemed to think that he had propounded an unanswerable poser, shook his head and turned away.

"Wait a minute, D'Arcy! Suppose you stand beside the cow, and keep her attention upon you, while I am milking her!"

"Yaas, wathah! I shall be vewy pleased to do that, Skimmy! I have heard that animals can be quelled by the powah of the human eye. I shall be vewy pleased to quell that old bwute by the powah of my eye, if you like!"

"Good! Let us proceed," said Skimpole. And they proceeded.

The cow regarded them with some surprise as they came up—Skimpole with a glass in one hand and a milking-stool in the other. She looked at them, and then trotted off.

"Bai Jove, we shall have to wun aftah her, Skimpole!"

"Yes. The animal apparently does not understand. Let us pursue her."

They pursued her.

The cow stopped presently, and began to graze. Skimpole cautiously approached behind, while D'Arcy went in front of her. The cow looked at them, but remained still. There was a glimmer in her eyes which meant mischief, but the juniors did not observe it.

"Wight you are now, Skimmy! I am quellin' her with the powah of my eye," said D'Arcy, planting himself before the cow.

"Good! She certainly seems very quiet."

"Yaah, wathah!"

Skimpole placed the stool in position and sat down. The

cow certainly was very quiet, but it was only the calm before the storm. Skimpole began to milk into the glass. He had hardly commenced, when a sudden change came over the cow. Her head went down, and her heels went up, and Skimpole shot skyward.

Arthur Augustus fell back in wild confusion.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated.

The glass came down and shattered on the ground. The cow dashed off to another part of the field. Skimpole came down on the ground with a bump that was sufficient, according to his own theory, to shock out of his system any seeds of disease he might have had.

"Ow!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Dear me! I—I am hurt!" Skimpole stared about him blankly. "I—I trust that was not an earthquake, D'Arcy?"



A sudden change came over the cow. Her head went down and her heels went up, and Skimpole shot skyward. Arthur Augustus fell back in wild confusion.

"No, old chap; it was only the cow!"

"Dear me! I feel very much upset."

D'Arcy could not help grinning. Skimpole certainly looked very much upset. The amateur milker blinked round him in amazement and bewilderment.

"Where—where is the cow, D'Arcy?"

"She's gone!"

"Dear me! I do not think this would have happened if you had held her tightly by the horns, as I requested you in the first place, D'Arcy."

"Bai Jove! I might have gone up into the air instead of you, deah boy! I pfer it as it is!" said the swell of St. Jim's. "I twust you are not hurt."

"I—I feel as if I had had a shock."

D'Arcy helped the genius of St. Jim's to his feet.

"I—I think I will take a rest," said Skimpole. "I will lean upon your arm, if you do not mind, until we reach yonder bench. I do not feel quite strong enough at present

for going out. I—I think I will take the opportunity for completing the four hundred and forty-fourth chapter of my book on Determinism. If you like, D'Arcy, I will read aloud to you my notes for that chapter."

Arthur Augustus made a grimace.

"Thanks awfully, Skimmay; but—but I think I'd better go and see what Hewwies is lookin' so wowwied about."

"Oh, that is nothing. He is only thinking of his beastly bulldog, and I could improve your mind wonderfully, and the need for such improvement must have occurred to you, I say, D'Arcy—D'Arcy! Dear me, he's gone!"

Herries was indeed looking worried. Arthur Augustus detested the very sight of the bulldog, but he had a feeling for a chum in distress. He tapped Herries on the arm.

"Haven't you found the bwute yet?" he asked.

"No," grunted Herries.

"Wathah singulah that he hasn't found his way heah," remarked D'Arcy. "My young bwothah's mongwel came home all wight!"

"My dog Towser isn't always snuffing after his master like that rotten mongrel," said Herries crossly. "He's independent. He comes home when he thinks he will."

"Why don't you teach him to obey ordahs?"

"Oh, of course he obeys my orders!" said Herries hastily.



down and her heels went up, and Skimpole shot skyward. Arthur confusion. "Bai Jove!" he ejaculated.

"He never leaves me, I—I mean, except sometimes. What I'm afraid of is that he's gone back to St. Jim's."

"But he couldn't find his way along the railroad."

"Towser could find his way anywhere. Don't you remember how he tracked down the burglars who robbed the chapel at St. Jim's?"

"Ya-a-as!" said D'Arcy doubtfully.

"He could find his way back if I took him a hundred miles. Of course, if he's at St. Jim's he's all right, but—but you know people have a prejudice against Towser. Blessed if I know why. He's a nice quiet dog, and never bites you if you don't look at him."

"If you like I'll help you look for the wotten bwute, Hewwies. You know I am pwetty good at followin' twacks."

"You may as well come," said Herries.

It was not a flattering way to accept D'Arcy's offer, but Gussy made allowances for the stress of mind the owner of Towser was labouring under.

They set out in search of the bulldog, and did not come into dinner. It was nearly sunset when Herries and D'Arcy reappeared at the Quarry Farm, looking extremely fatigued and very dusty. But they came without Towser, and D'Arcy confided to Blake that he would see Towser in Timbuctoo before he would be "dwagged all ovah the country lookin' for him again!"

CHAPTER 9.

Rather Wet!

"WHO'S coming to have a look at the quarries?" Tom Merry asked at breakfast the next morning. "Oh, I'll come and look after you Shell-fish!" said Blake. "I believe it's a rather dangerous

quarter, isn't it, Mr. Johnson?"

The farmer nodded.

"It is that," he replied. "My dun cow fell into one of the quarries time the fence was broke, and she stayed there for two days and nights afore we found her."

Blake whistled.

"Rather rough on the dun cow," he replied. "I shouldn't like that to happen to you, Merry. I'll come and look after you."

"Thank you for nothing! You can come if you like."

"The quarries ain't worked now," said Mr. Johnson. "There's the old crane and truck lines still there, but they ain't been worked since they was flooded last spring. The company hasn't raised the money, I hear. It's a dangerous place, and I don't recommend you young gents to go there."

"Oh, we shall be all right!" said Tom Merry. "I shall keep an eye on the youngsters!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"It's a five-mile walk," said the farmer.

The juniors grinned at the idea of a five-mile walk deterring them.

"Then you have to cross the stream on the stepping-stones," said Mr. Johnson, "and the water's high at this time of the year. The stone's is slippery, too."

"Well, if we slip off we can pull one another out of the water."

"Faith, and ye're right!" said Reilly. "Sure, I'm for going to the quarry entoirely! Maybe we shall find the bulldog there."

"How could he get there?" said Herries.

"Sure, he might have fallen in, like Mr. Johnson's dun cow!"

Herries snorted.

"My dog Towser isn't likely to fall into a quarry," he said. "You can trust my dog Towser to look after himself all right."

"Yes, you can trust him to get lost," said Figgins. "I shouldn't wonder if he's at the railway station all the time, waiting to be called for."

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Very likely," said D'Arcy minor. "Ask Mr. Johnson to get Garge to inquire for him when he goes up to the station again!"

"You young ass, I tell you—"

"Any rabbits in that direction, Mr. Johnson?" asked Wally.

The farmer looked at his hopeful guest.

"Yes," he said, "there is. But it ain't allowed in these parts to poach rabbits."

"Oh!"

"There's been complaints yesterday and the day before," said Mr. Johnson, "that rabbits have been killed round here. I hope that it isn't any of the dogs belonging to you young gentlemen."

Wally gave an expressive whistle. Every eye was fixed accusingly upon him, but he never turned a hair.

"I say, it's rather hard that a dog can't have a rabbit now and then," he said. "It's their nature to, you know. My dog Pongo—"

Mr. Johnson looked very significantly at the hero of the Third.

"Mr. Hunk has said to me, he said yesterday, if he catches any dog after his rabbits he is going to hang him in his barn, he said to me."

Wally's eyes gleamed.

"If he starts hanging my Pongo there will be trouble!" he exclaimed. "Why shouldn't old Pongo have a rabbit or two?"

"Because it's poaching, young gentleman, and poaching's no better than stealing," said the farmer quietly.

"Of course, I'd pay for the old rabbits," said Wally—"or Gussy would, which amounts to the same thing."

"Weally, Wally—"

"But I don't think a dog ought to be kept short of

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rabbits. I suppose Mr. Hunk doesn't want Pongo to grow into a nunny," said Wally, with an injured expression.

"You'd better keep Pongo on the chain," grinned Figgins. "Now, my dog Spot never goes after bunnies unless I tell him."

"He wouldn't know how to if you did tell him!" sniffed Wally.

And when the juniors sallied out after breakfast Wally kept a keen eye on his shaggy favourite. Every minute or two his terribly shrill whistle burst forth to recall the wandering Pongo.

Arthur Augustus bore it for some time, stopping his ears whenever he saw Wally pursing his lips up. But at last he could bear it no longer, and he remonstrated.

"Weally, Wally, I must request you to stop makin' that fearful wow!" he exclaimed. "It throws me into quite a fluttah."

"Do you want Pongo to get lost?" demanded Wally.

"That is a mattah of extweme indifference to me, Wally, but I weally cannot stand that awful wow you call a whistle. I am on the vevy verge of a sewious illness already, and my nerves weally will not stand it."

"Why don't you put a chain on him?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, he'd slip his collar, then!"

"You could make the collar tighter."

"He wouldn't like that."

"Well, I agree with young Wally there," said Herries. "I don't believe in making a dog uncomfortable because Gussy has nerves."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

Wally gave a piercing whistle again. Pongo was apparently on the track of a rabbit, for he suddenly darted off through the hedge and disappeared. Arthur Augustus stopped his ears. Thrice Wally sent forth that ear-splitting note, but Pongo did not return.

"He's off!" he said in a tone of resignation. "He's after a bunny."

"You should bwing the little wottah up bettah, Wally," said D'Arcy. "I cannot say I am sowwy that he is off."

"Better go after him," grinned Kerr. "You remember he's sentenced to be hanged by the neck until he's dead if he's caught rabbiting."

"I suppose I'd better," said Wally. "Don't you fellows get into mischief at the quarries if you go without me."

And D'Arcy minor followed the track of the truant. The juniors resumed their way.

Figgins tapped Fatty Wynn on the shoulder. The fat Fourth-Former was gazing back at the farmyard with a rapt look.

"What are you moaning about, Fatty?" asked Figgins. "Making up some rotten poetry for 'Tom Merry's Weekly'?"

"Oh, no! I was thinking——" Fatty Wynn sighed.

Figgins looked at him in amazement.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. Only——"

"My only hat! Have you caught Gussy's complaint? Are you in love?"

"Oh, rot!" said Fatty Wynn. "I was thinking—can't you see that splendid great porker from here? He's routing in the garden."

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Blake. "Fatty Wynn the Second!"

"Doesn't he look prime?" said Fatty Wynn feelingly. "Have you ever thought what ripping sausages he would make, Figgy?"

"You cannibal!" said Tom Merry. "Fancy Fatty setting up as a fraticide!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Fatty Wynn. "I was dreaming about that porker last night. The thought of the beautiful sausages he would make haunted me."

"Oh, come on!" said Figgins. "You'll make me hungry if you keep on!"

"I'm getting rather peckish myself," said Fatty Wynn, as he reluctantly turned his back on the farmyard. "You fellows were in such a hurry that I didn't have time to make much of a breakfast."

"I saw you put away four rashers of bacon," said Figgins.

"And seven eggs!" said Kerr.

"Only five, Kerr, and the rashers weren't big ones. That was all I had, except the cold beef and the bread-and-butter and the marmalade. I get awfully peckish at this time of the year, too. Luckily I thought of asking Mrs. Johnson for some bread and cheese and some sandwiches."

"You weren't likely to forget that."

"Well, it's no good getting into a low state for want of food when you can afford enough to eat," said Fatty Wynn philosophically.

The path of the explorers lay towards the hills that

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loomed in the distance. The quarries, as they came nearer, could be seen more distinctly—great ragged rents in the ground, mostly without a vestige of fence to secure wayfarers from falling in.

"Nice place for a stranger to walk about in on a dark night!" Jack Blake remarked. "There seems to be a lot of trusting to luck in the country."

"I'm not surprised that the dun cow went in," said Digby. "I don't see how she got over that stream, though."

"The water was low, perhaps; it's low in the summer. Here are the stepping-stones," said Blake, halting. "They don't look too safe, either!"

"Bai Jove, wathah not!"

The stepping-stones certainly did not look inviting. The water in the stream was high, and was washing over the surface of most of the stones. They were a very irregular row, of different shapes and heights, at various distances apart. The water made them slippery, and they were very uneven at the best of times.

"Bai Jove, you know, it looks as if we shall get our beastly boots wet!" Arthur Augustus remarked doubtfully. "Which would be horrid," said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah, I should feel extwemely uncomfy if my boots were to be dirty for the west of the mornin'!"

"We might carry D'Arcy over," suggested Figgins, with a humorous twinkle in his eye. "I should be pleased to lend a hand."

"Certainly," said Lowther immediately. "I'd be happy to lend another."

"Faith, and it's meself that will help, with pleasure!" said Reilly.

"Bai Jove, that's wathah a good ideah, you know! Would you be vevy careful to hold me quite safely, deah boys?"

"Certainly," said Lowther. "You could depend upon us to——"

"To let you drop into the water," said Figgins blandly.

"Weally, Figgins——"

"Faith, and that's what I was thinking myself!"

"I wegard these jokes as bein' in extwemely bad taste."

"Come on, Gussy, we're ready!"

"I uttably wefuse to be cawwied across the watah! I am on the verge of a sewious illness already, and I wefuse to endangah myself!"

"You are quite wrong, D'Arcy," said Skimpole. "A sudden plunge into icy-cold water would probably furnish the shock to the system required to drive the seeds of disease from your system. It would probably have as efficacious an effect as a quantity of gunpowder suddenly exploded under your bed."

"You uttah ass!"

"Well, are you going to be carried?" asked Figgins.

"No, Figgins, I am certainly not goin' to be cawwied!"

"Let's get on!" said Tom Merry. "Who's going first?"

Skimpole blinked at the stepping-stones.

"If you like, Merry, I will go first. Crossing a stream in this way, like everything else, simply requires a little brain-power brought to bear on it. I shall have great pleasure in crossing first, and showing you fellows how to do it."

"Go ahead, then!" grinned Tom Merry.

Skimpole stepped gingerly on the first stone. He slid a little, and jumped to the second, and the water came up over his ankles, and a splash went back behind him over Herries, who was following.

Herries gave a howl.

"You ass! Be careful!"

Skimpole turned round and blinked at Herries.

"Did I splash you, Herries?"

"Yes, you did, you dummy!"

"I'm very sorry, and I really think that those expressions are almost rude, Herries. A little happening of this kind should be taken with patience."

"Are you going on?" yelled Herries.

"Certainly!"

"Get on!" shouted Blake from the bank.

"Really, Blake——"

"Go on, or I'll shy this rock at you!"

"I am about to proceed," said Skimpole.

And he stepped gingerly on. Whether by luck or care, Skimpole stepped from stone to stone in safety, and drew nearer to the farther bank. Herries stepped after him, with his hands in the air, feeling his way a good deal like a tightrope-walker. The others followed one by one.

"It's all right," said Fatty Wynn, "you've only got to be careful—Ow!"

As Fatty spread out his arms a packet of sandwiches dropped from under his jacket. The fat Fourth-Former made a frantic clutch to save them, and his foot slipped on the wet stone.

Splash!

Fatty Wynn took a header into the stream. The wave

made by the immersion of the plump junior soaked the legs of the two or three fellows nearest him, and a chorus of gasps followed.

"Oh! Ow! Groooh!"

"You ass!" roared Blake. "My trousers are soaked!"

"Look at mine!" hooted Manners.

Fatty Wynn came up, gasping. Kerr lent him a hand to drag him out. Wynn jerked it, and Kerr's foot slipped on the slippery stone. The next moment he had joined the fat Fourth-Former in the water.

"My hat!" roared Tom Merry. "Are you New House bounders practising diving with your clothes on?"

"Help!" gasped Kerr.

"Gr-r-r!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

Figgins and Tom Merry dragged them out. They were dragged into grass ashore, where they lay gasping like landed fish. Manners, Blake, and Reilly stood gazing down at their trousers which were wringing wet.

"Well, of all the dummies!" said Blake, in measured tones.

"How c-c-could I help it?" stuttered Fatty Wynn. "I s-saw the sandwiches going!"

"Blow your sandwiches! We shan't be able to keep on now. We shall catch our death of cold in these wet bags."

"I'm going back!" growled Manners.

"Faith, and I think that I'll go with ye!" said Reilly, shivering.

"Bai Jove, deah boys, undah the cires, I think I will accompan' you!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I have a feelin' that I shouldn't get across that steam without wuinin' the polish on my gaitahs."

And the wet contingent set out for the farm, making remarks all the way to Fatty Wynn.

Fatty Wynn, however, bore them philosophically. The sandwiches were gone, and Fatty had no desire to continue the excursion at the risk of finding himself hungry at the quarries, without the wherewithal to satisfy his appetite.

Meanwhile, Tom Merry and the others who had crossed in safety continued their way.

CHAPTER 10.

In the Quarry!

"THE quarries at last!" said Tom Merry.

The explorers halted. The number of the party had been considerably reduced before the quarries were reached. Blake and Manners, Wynn and Kerr, Reilly and D'Arcy had gone back to the farm. Skimpole had not kept on far beyond the stream. He was no pedestrian, and he soon halted to rest, and announced his intention of getting on with the four hundred and forty-fourth chapter of his great book, while he waited for Tom Merry & Co. to return.

They promised to come back the same way, and tramped on to the quarries.

Right up to the verge of the excavations grew the rich, green grass, and on the verge flourished ferns and creepers. The juniors halted on the brow of a precipice, which dropped a sheer forty or fifty feet to the lower level.

"Breezy here," Digby remarked. "A strong wind would blow you over the edge in no time, I fancy."

"Better keep away from the verge," said Tom Merry. "I'm going to look down, but—"

"So am I," said Lowther; "but you kids—"

"Oh, go and eat tin-tacks!" said Figgins. "I'm going to look down, of course."

"Now, don't be reckless!"

"Rats!"

And the juniors crawled on their hands and knees towards the edge of the cliff. It was almost as level as a table, and from the clear-cut edge the drop was sheer. Far below they looked into the old quarry.

Far—far below it seemed. Here and there water glistened in the sun, showing where the remnant of the flood remained. Down below was the remnant of the lines the trucks had run upon when the quarry was working, and an old truck could still be seen, turned partly over on its side, and half full of rain water. Opposite the cliff rose a huge crane, with the rope still dangling from the pulley, and, by stretching out his hand, Tom Merry could almost have touched the swinging rope.

"There must be some way of getting down there," Digby remarked.

Tom Merry glanced along the pits.

"Farmer says it was blocked up when the quarries were flooded," he said. "All the same, I should like to go down."

"Jump on to that rope," suggested Figgins. "You could catch it, and swing yourself down."

Tom Merry shivered at the idea.

"Let's go and look for a way down," he said.

The juniors crawled back from the verge.

A walk of about a quarter of a mile brought the juniors to the slope leading down into the abandoned quarry. As Tom Merry had said, the flood had wrought havoc there, and beams and shattered machinery were mingled with masses of rock and earth.

Tom Merry whistled as he looked at it.

"Rather a climb down there," he remarked.

Figgins' eyes glistened.

"I'd like to try," he said. "Who's game?"

"Oh, we're all game!" said Herries. "Come on!"

And the juniors set themselves to the task.

They were game enough, but if they had foreseen the extent of the task, it is probable that they would not have undertaken it.

The climb down would not have been an easy one for monkeys. Their clothes were soon muddy from head to foot, and their hands dirty and bruised, and their breath coming in short, quick gasps. They climbed, rolled, and slid down among the debris, Tom Merry and Figgins in the lead.

Suddenly Tom Merry uttered an exclamation. They were clambering down a specially steep spot, and Tom Merry had just discerned the alarming circumstance that just ahead of them was a sheer drop. How deep it was he could not say, but there it was, and he shouted to his comrades to stop.

"Hold on!"

"I—I can't!" gasped Figgins. "I—I'm going!"

A tuft of grass he was grasping had given away, and Figgins, clutching vainly at the debris round him, rolled down the steep.

"Good heavens!" gasped Tom Merry.

There was a shout from beyond the drop, and his heart beat again. For a moment his face had gone pale as death.

"All right."

It was Figgins' voice. It sounded at a good distance, but it showed that Figgins had not broken his neck, as Tom Merry had at first feared.

"All right?" sang out Tom Merry, in return.

"Yes. Hold on there, though. There's no way of getting out again!"

"My hat! Hold on, you chaps!"

"I'm sticking on," said Herries. "Mind yourself; you're going!"

"Phew! Great Scott!"

The jutting slate to which Tom Merry was clinging began to slide. Figgins' fall had disturbed the masses of debris, and Tom Merry's hold was gone.

"Stand clear, Figgy!" he yelled. "I'm coming!"

"My hat!"

Figgins stood clear, and Tom Merry came sliding down in the midst of a shower of stones and earth and dust.

The hero of the Shell bumped on the ground, but fortunately the ground here had been soddened into softness by puddles of rain water, and grass was growing thickly there.

The shock jarred every bone in Tom Merry's body, but he was not otherwise hurt, and in a minute he was on his feet, with a helping hand from Figgins.

"My only hat!" he gasped.

He looked up the way he had come.

There was a sheer drop of eight or nine feet, and beyond that the slope was steep, and, what was more serious, insecure. The whole mass looked as if it only wanted a touch to bring it down in an avalanche.

Tom Merry looked at Figgins, and Figgins looked at Tom Merry in dismay.

"How on earth are we going to get out again?" ejaculated Tom.

Figgins shook his head.

"Blessed if I know!"

Tom Merry looked up again. He could see nothing of his followers, but it was evident that they were holding on in safety higher up the slope.

"I say, Lowther!"

"Hallo!" sang out Lowther. "Are you all right?"

"Yes, all serene!"

"Good! Shall we come on?"

"No; there's no way of getting out again!"

"My Aunt Sempronia! What are you going to do, then?"

(Continued on page 19.)

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HALLO, chums! Isn't this week's story one of the best? I'm sure you've enjoyed every word of it. Believe me, next week's yarn of Tom Merry & Co. goes one better! In

"THE SCHOOLBOY JOCKEY!"

Gussy D'Arcy surprises everyone by his wonderful riding, and the yarn is packed with thrills and fun! It's worth waiting for! If you want more thrills you will find plenty in

"THE LOST LEGION!"

of which there is a further instalment. Potts once more supplies a tonic laugh, and there will be another page from the Editor's Notebook. Sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

ANNUALS FOR ALL!

Have you got your "Holiday Annual" yet? Or your "Popular Book of Boys' Stories"? These two ripping books are on sale at all newsagents and it will be well worth your while to go round to your local run and have a look at them. The "Holiday Annual," price 6s., contains thrilling yarns of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's. There are also many other yarns featuring Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, as well as grand adventure yarns of all sorts. If you like you can buy a "Holiday Annual" through your newsagent's Christmas Club. Ask him about it. "The Popular Book of Boys' Stories," price 2s. 6d., is a ripping book chock-full of gripping adventure yarns, and abounding with thrills.

ATTACKED BY FIFTY WOLVES!

Two English boys went on a walking tour among the Scandinavian mountains. Manning and Gray, the two boys, left Bodo and set out for Krickjock, a Lap village in the most northerly corner of Sweden. They had nearly reached the village when night fell, and despite the terrific cold they decided to follow their normal custom and sleep in the open. They built a fire and having cooked and eaten their evening meal, they settled down to sleep in their sleeping-bags.

The region in which they were is a famous hunting ground for wolves, and they had only been asleep for an hour when a pack of fifty wolves scented them and began to approach. Their sniffing, however, awoke Manning, who realised what was happening and fired at the nearest wolves through his sleeping bag. The wolves were scared and ran off, and the boys were able to get out of their sleeping bags before the wolves returned. When the pack

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came back the boys kept up a steady fire and after fifteen wolves had been killed, the rest fled.

Utterly exhausted, the boys pushed on to the village, but after spending the rest of the night there they set out again on their walking tour the following day. History does not say whether they slept in the open again!

"PILOT, WHAT'S THE TIME?"

At Heston Aerodrome, Middlesex, a new and gigantic clock is being installed, for the use of pilots who forget to set their clocks before starting on a flight. This clock will be readable from three thousand feet by day, and from 1,500 feet when flood-lighted at night. The clock is 47 feet in circumference, the minute hand is 7 feet 6 inches long, and the hour hand 6 feet 9 inches. The hands are of white metal and are worked by a synchronised electric motor. The dial is a shallow bowl of blackstone with the figures on the edge. The minute hand will move at the rate of nine inches to the minute. Big Ben is said to be quite upset at the thought of this new rival!

A LONDON FOXHUNT!

It isn't often that Londoners get a chance to go foxhunting without going into the country, but the inhabitants of East Dulwich had their chance the other day, and about two hundred of them took it.

A pet fox escaped, and the two hundred, led by a plain-clothes policeman named Huck, pursued the animal, armed with umbrellas and sticks. P.-c. Huck eventually captured it, but he was so badly bitten in both hands that he was forced to let the animal go again. It ran off, knocking down a woman and child, but eventually it was cornered by Constable Spowage. At bay, it turned, and leapt at the policeman's throat, but the constable drew his truncheon and that was the end of the fox. So perhaps after all a policeman's lot is not a happy one!

HEARD THIS ONE?

Teacher: "Can you tell me the kind of illumination they had on Noah's boat?" Little Tommy: "Yes, teacher. Arc lights!"

TUSKO THE HOUSEBREAKER!

Tusko is very proud of himself. He says that he is the only elephant who ever rose to being a house demolisher. In that he is probably right! It was this way. Tusko, who lives in Seattle, Washington, loves smashing things. An enterprising firm of housebreakers saw a very good use for Tusko, so they bought him, and now he has just completed his first job by demolishing a house in the town. Tusko thinks life is just swell!

THE TWO-YARD GUARDS!

This week when the Prince of Wales visits Belfast to open the new Ulster Parliament buildings, a guard of honour will be formed by the Royal Irish Constabulary, and every man in that guard will be six-foot or over!

NEW RUBBER SUITS!

If the latest idea comes into being and we all wear rubber suits it will be very pleasant to be able to go out on an English summer day without taking a macintosh! A new invention has been made for using rubber in the weaving of material, and negotiations are now in progress for starting the manufacture of this material. The chief idea behind this invention is that it will give clothes longer life and make them creaseproof.

A GOOD OMEN?

Our cricket team in Australia certainly started in the right way, both our batsmen and our bowlers performing very creditably in their opening matches. The Nawab of Pataudi joined the select band of batsmen who have scored a century in the first match in Australia (incidentally Jardine is a member of that band), and he went on to score another in his second game. Sutcliffe also scored a century in that game and Verity took seven wickets for thirty-seven runs! Is this, do you think, a good omen for our prospects when the Test Matches start? It certainly looks like it!

LONDON IN ONE MINUTE!

Perhaps this will be possible if the invention of Professor Weissinger turns out to be a success. The professor has invented a new type of train driven by an air screw—in fact, it is a sort of aeroplane on wheels—and its inventor claims for it a speed of from 150 to 300 miles an hour. Fellows going from the suburbs to London will just step into the carriage by one door as the train starts and by the time they have crossed over to the other door the train will be in London, or very nearly so!

FASTER STILL!

But that is a mere nothing compared with the new stratosphere plane which is being studied at the California Institute of Technology. This new plane is intended to hurtle through the stratosphere at a thousand miles an hour. It is believed that this plane was designed by an Italian, General Rocco. It will be propelled by burning petrol in long, open-ended tubes, though it will also have an ordinary internal combustion engine which will be used to raise it to a height of twenty miles before the tube-engines come into operation.

A GRAND ADVENTURE!

Two Margate boys recently had a grand adventure. They were playing on the beach when they found a boat roughly made of wood and canvas. The call of the sea got the better of the two boys and they launched the boat and set off on a voyage of discovery. Unfortunately the wind blew the boys and their boat out to sea, and they had only a piece of wood for an oar. Eventually they sighted a schooner and made towards it. They were rescued by a boat from the schooner and both they and their boat, which was half-full of water, were taken aboard and later landed at Margate. Luckily they were none the worse for their adventure.

YOUR EDITOR.

FATTY WYNN'S PRIZE PORKER!

(Continued from page 17.)

"Phew!"

"You chaps had better climb back before you get rolled in after us," said Tom Merry. "Go back to the place where we looked into the quarry; we shall be able to see you there."

"Right you are!"

"We'll look round for a way out. There may be some other way."

"I hope so. Ta-ta!"

"Ta-ta!" said Tom Merry.

And the sound of the juniors clambering back followed. Tom Merry and Figgins stepped farther away to escape the shower of fragments that came rolling over the verge.

"Well, this is a nice go," said Figgins, with an expressive whistle. "I suppose there must be some other way of getting out?"

"I hope so!" said Tom Merry ruefully. "We'd better look. What's the matter?" he added, as he saw Figgins' features a little contracted.

Figgins grinned rather dubiously.

"I gave my wrist a knock," he said. "It's all right; it's not sprained. It hurts a bit, though. But it's all right. Only—"

"Only what, old chap?"

"Only I don't know how I shall be able to do any climbing, that's all."

"Phew!"

"Anyway, let's look for a way out. There may be an easy climb."

"Anyway, let's look. I don't expect so."

The two juniors began to search. But it was all in vain. Sheer walls shut them in, and the galleries piercing the cliffs, when they explored them, all ended in blank walls. They moved along, fatigued with tramping over uneven masses, and came at last under the cliff whence they had first looked into the excavations. Three figures were visible on the top of it, and Herries, Digby, and Lowther waved their caps.

Tom Merry waved his handkerchief in return.

The distance was too great for speech, with the rough wind that was blowing over the moor and through the hollows of the quarry. A shout was caught up by the wind and carried away.

Tom Merry saw Lowther's lips moving, but he could hear nothing.

"My hat!" said Figgins, holding his left wrist in his right hand to ease the pain by compressing it. "It looks as if we're done in."

Tom Merry looked very grave.

It was already close on noon, and if the juniors above had to go for help to the farm, it was probable that the two boys would never get out of the quarry before dark. A cold night in the quarry was not an attractive prospect.

"We must get out somehow," said Tom Merry.

Figgins shrugged his shoulders.

"There's no way out that I can see."

Tom Merry did not reply. He was looking at the rope that dangled from the abandoned crane. His eyes were fixed upon it, and his brow was thoughtful.

Figgins, with a look of alarm, nudged him.

"What are you thinking of, Merry? You can't climb that."

"Perhaps—"

"You can't! Anyway, I can't, with my wrist! Don't be an ass!"

"I think I could."

"You can't! You'll break your neck! You shan't!"

But Tom Merry's face was setting in an expression of grim determination.

CHAPTER 11.

Tom Merry's Climb!

THE three juniors above, on the brow of the cliff, were watching anxiously.

They saw Tom Merry standing with his eyes fixed on the rope, and guessed the thought that was in his mind. Monty Lowther shouted, but his voice was carried away by the wind.

Figgins caught the hero of the Shell by the sleeve.

"You can't do it," he said again, and his face was white.

Tom Merry gave a short nod.

"I think I can."

"But—but—"

"Look here, Figgy, we can't get out of the quarry, can we?"

"Doesn't look like it, but—"

"If those chaps go for help, when will they get back?"

Figgins looked dubious.

"Before dark, I hope."

"We shouldn't be got out of this before dark. They'll have to get ropes, long and strong ones, too, and I think we should be here till morning."

"I shouldn't wonder. But—"

"You can't climb the rope with your gammy wrist," said Tom Merry quietly. "Of course, if you stay, I stay. But I think if I can get out, we can get you out."

"How?" asked Figgins.

Tom Merry pointed up to the crane, where the end of the long arm projected towards the edge of the high cliff.

"You see how the rope hangs there. If I get up to the level of the cliff I can swing myself to a footing."

Figgins shuddered.

"You'll break your neck."

"I hope not," said Tom Merry, with a faint grin. "I'm pretty steady in the napper, you know, and I don't think I'm likely to lose my nerve. Of course, it all depends on the nerve."

"I—I suppose so, but—"

"If I get landed there, with a grip on the rope, we can detach it from the crane, and pull you up on it, Figgy; in a safer spot than this, of course."

"Merry, suppose the rope has rotted; it's been exposed a jolly long time!"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"It hasn't. It is used to heavy weights—twenty times my weight. It will stand a strain like that easy enough."

"But—but if it should break!"

"We'll put our weight on it and see. If it will stand the pair of us at the bottom, it will stand me alone, that's a cert."

"Well, that's so," admitted Figgins.

And the two juniors caught hold of the dangling rope and threw their whole weight upon it. The rope bore the strain easily enough, and would evidently have borne a dozen times as much. So far as the rope breaking was concerned, Figgins' fears were relieved.

"It's all right, you see, Figgy."

"Ye-es. But—but I don't like your climbing it. If my wrist was all right I wouldn't let you."

Tom Merry laughed.

"You'd have more confidence in yourself?" he said, laughing.

"Well, not exactly, but—"

"It's all right. I'm going."

"If you lose your nerve—"

"Come, old chap, you don't think me a coward."

"A jolly brave man might lose his nerve swinging up there on a rope!" said Figgins, with a shiver. "Don't you understand that if you let go you would be smashed as flat as a pancake down here?"

"I shan't let go!"

"I—I don't like it!"

"That's all right. Hold the end of the rope to keep it steady, and I'll go up like a monkey on a stick!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

Figgins made no further demure. It was clear that Tom Merry had made up his mind. And if the feat was possible it was the best thing to be done. It would probably rain in the night, and in the quarry there was no shelter. And the juniors would soon be cold and hungry. But could it be done?

Tom Merry grasped the rope with firm hands. He had climbed ropes before, over the wall at St. Jim's, but they had generally been knotted ones. But this rope was thick and easy to hold.

The weight at the bottom held it steady. Figgins watched the School House junior with his heart in his mouth.

Tom Merry slowly but steadily climbed the rope.

Lowther, Digby, and Herries could see him from the top of the cliff, though he looked almost like a speck below at first. They were as white as chalk.

"He'll be killed!" muttered Lowther. "Tom, go back—go back!"

But Tom Merry did not hear. If he had heard he would not have heeded. He climbed steadily, slowly, swinging on the rope, his eyes steadily upward. He knew that if he looked down he would probably fall, yet in a curious perverseness of the imagination, he felt an intense longing to turn his gaze downward. He resisted it, however, and his eyes were on the sky and the edge of the cliff above him.

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The extremity of the abandoned crane was on something like a level with the verge where the three juniors stood, but well out of their reach. There was little danger of the crane moving. In the wreck of the quarry works it had been jammed and rendered useless, and had remained in its present position for months. But if Tom Merry should slip from his hold—

The juniors watched him breathlessly. Higher and higher went Tom Merry, climbing steadily. Higher and higher, while Figgins watched him from below with his heart beating like a hammer.

Higher and higher!

The juniors on the cliff could see him easily now; see his hard, white face, set with determined effort.

Higher and higher!

Now he was near to them; could come within reach by swinging on the rope.

"Buck up, Tom!"

Tom Merry could hear Lowther's voice plainly enough now.

"Stand back!"

They understood. Back from the verge they crowded in haste, to give him plenty of room. The junior began to swing on the rope. To and fro he went like a pendulum, at every swing almost touching the edge of the cliff.

They watched him with thumping hearts.

Thud!

"Tom! Oh, Tom!"

The swinging junior had knocked heavily against the cliff. But it was hard and fast there; no crumbling, no giving way.

Again he swung at it, and this time he sprawled on the summit, still clinging to the rope, and he did not swing back.

Below, Figgins gave a gasp.

"My hat! He's done it!"

Lowther, Herries, and Digby rushed forward to seize the hero of the Shell.

Still keeping a firm grip on the rope, Tom Merry was pulled back from the dangerous verge.

"Hold the rope!" he gasped.

"Yes, rather!" said Lowther.

The rope was pulled up from below, and as much as possible was dragged in and cut off with Herries' knife. It

would be enough to secure Figgins in some rather less thrilling spot at the sides of the old quarry.

Tom Merry sat on the grass and gasped for breath. His arms were aching, and his heart was throbbing fast.

CHAPTER 12.

Pongo's Peril!

LOWTHER slapped his chum on the back as he staggered to his feet at last.

"I almost thought you were a goner," he remarked.

"Thank goodness you've scraped through. My heart was in my mouth most of the time."

"So was mine," said Tom Merry, with a faint grin. "Now we've got to lug old Figgins out. He's damaged his wrist and can't climb."

"We'll soon do that!"

Lowther spoke briskly; but the task was not so soon accomplished. It took some time to find a spot where the rope could be lowered down a less precipitous slope, and Figgins could be dragged to the top.

But it was done at last, and Figgins rejoined his chums on terra firma. Half-climbing, half-dragged, he came to the top, and sank down on the grass, panting.

Tom Merry slapped him on the shoulder.

"Well out of that, Figgy, old son!"

"Yes, rather," gasped Figgins; "and I don't want to get into it again, either. I've not got an ounce of breath left in me."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Lucky it wasn't Fatty Wynn," he remarked. "Four of us would never have pulled him up, and he couldn't have remained down there without becoming a cannibal. I should have got nervous when Fatty got hungry. Anybody got any grub?"

"I've got some sandwiches," said Figgins. "Fatty filled my pockets as well as his own before he started out, in case of accidents."

"Then we'll forgive him for being a giddy cormorant. I'm hungry."

And the juniors disposed of the sandwiches with great satisfaction. Then they set out on the homeward journey.

Skimpole was still making his notes for the four hundred and forty-fourth chapter of his famous book when they sighted him again. He looked up with a start as Tom Merry smote him on the back.

"Dear me! Is that you, Merry? You haven't been long gone."

"Only three or four hours," grinned Tom Merry.

"Dear me, is it possible! I do not notice the flight of time when I am engaged in composing my book. I am, however, getting hungry."

"Nothing to eat nearer than the farm."

"Then I think we had better return," said Skimpole, getting up, and shoving his big notebook into a capacious pocket.

"Yes, let's get on. We want to be in before dark."

"I wish I could enlighten you as to the—"

"Rats! Get on!"

And Skimpole, with a sigh, gave it up. It was dusk when the adventurers arrived at the farm, and they found Mrs. Johnson growing anxious about them. The tale of their adventures excited great interest. They devoured a high tea with great relish. They were hungry.

"Bai Jove," Arthur Augustus remarked, "it is weally wemarkable that you fellows can't go anywhere without me without gettin' into some mischief!"

"It's very singular," assented Blake. "I had a feeling that something would happen to the kids if we left them to their own."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Faith, and I'll kape an eye on you in the future, Tom Merry!"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Figgins. "Where's young Wally?"

"He's been out all day; he hasn't come in yet."

"I expect he's got into some mischief," grinned Tom Merry. "Why don't you keep an eye on him, Gus?"

"Bai Jove—"

"I'm surprised at you, Gussy!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I suppose I could not be expected to go chasin' all ovah the country in search of a young wapsallion and a wotten mongwel!"

"I suppose that dog of his has led him a dance," said Farmer Johnson. "It will get him into trouble one of these times. Mr. Hunk, he said to me that it was the most troublesome little beast he ever see, he said to me."

"We'll go and look for him if he doesn't get in by dark," said Blake. "I suppose you chaps are too tired to come?"

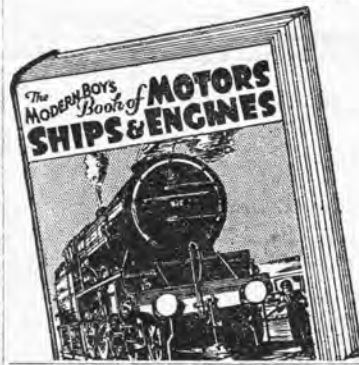
"Then there's something wrong with your supposing apparatus," said Figgins pleasantly. "He's not worth the trouble, but we'll come."

"And we can have a look for my bulldog," said Herries.



A Good Send-off!

Away goes Mr. Kaye Don, the world-famous racing motorist, in a 150 m.p.h. car tuned-up for an attack on a speed record. Mr. Don is one of the team of experts who have written the intensely interesting articles, full of the romance of man's Mastery of Speed on Land and Water, which appear in the MODERN BOYS BOOK OF MOTORS, SHIPS AND ENGINES. This magnificent NEW book is crowded with hundreds of fascinating pictures, and well-written articles which tell of great achievements in things mechanical. It also contains four coloured plates.

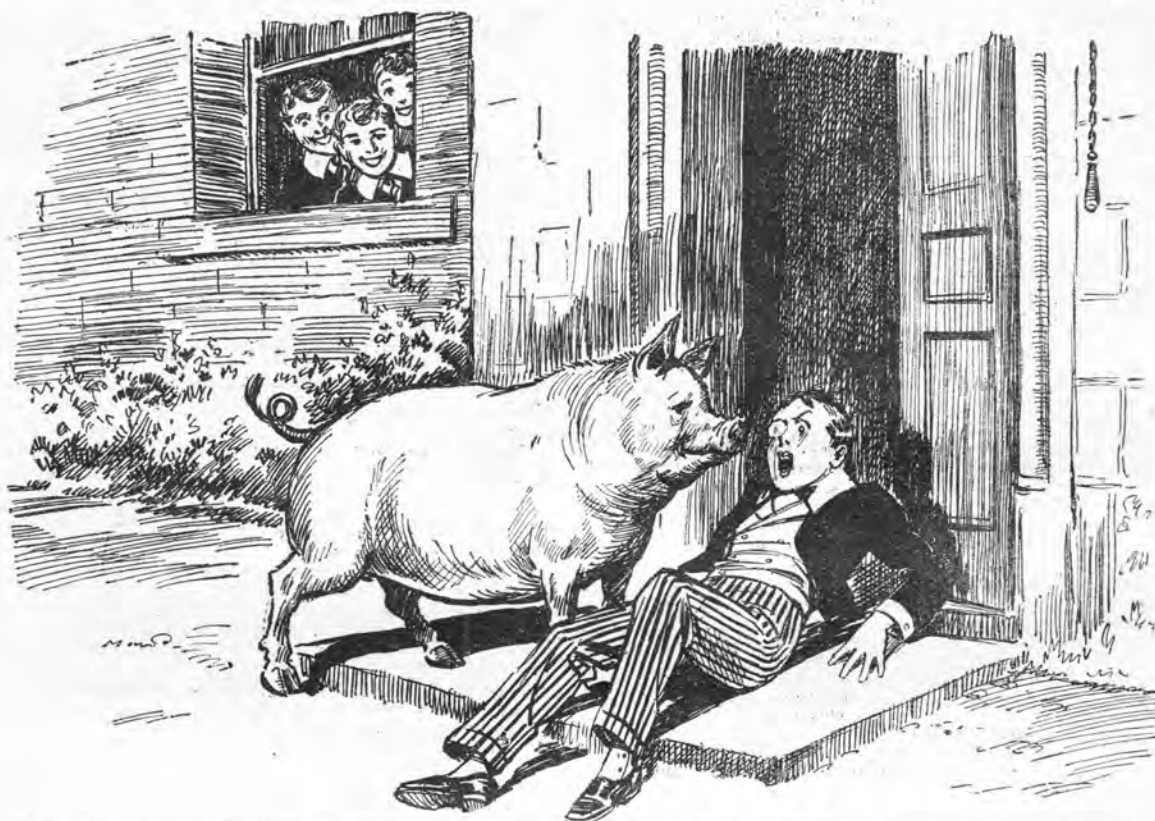


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D'Arcy caught his foot in a rut and went down headlong. "Help!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. He sat up. A snout was thrust into his face and a puff of strong-scented breath fanned his face.

"Oh, he's gone for good!" said Figgins. "You should have taught him to stick to you, as my Spot does, you know. Dogs want a lot of teaching."

"You don't call that thing of yours a dog, do you?" asked Herries politely.

"Order!" said Tom Merry.

After the meal—which they made a pretty solid one, very nearly clearing the farmer's hospitable board—the juniors went out to look for Wally. Skimpole remained at home to start the four hundred and forty-fifth chapter of his book, but all the rest went out with Tom Merry.

Fatty Wynn cast a glance in the direction of the pig's quarters.

"Oh, come away!" said Lowther. "You can't have Fatty II in the party."

"I was thinking—"

"Thinking of pork sausages, or ham sandwiches?" asked Lowther. "Blessed if I believe you ever think of anything else!"

"Mr. Johnson has promised me a string of sausages to take back to St. Jim's with me," said Fatty Wynn, unheeding. "While you chaps were fooling about in a quarry to-day I've been looking about, and I've learned a lot of things. They make their own sausages on this farm, you know, and I've been watching 'em. They make 'em of real pork, too. I am going to let Dr. Holmes know about it so that Mr. Johnson can supply St. Jim's regularly with sausages!"

"Splendid!" said Tom Merry. "Very thoughtful of you, Fatty, and the Head is bound to be grateful."

"Well, I think of these things, you know," said Fatty Wynn modestly. "I think a fellow ought always to keep his eyes open to learn things, and to make himself useful. It will be a great benefit to St. Jim's to have really reliable sausages. They're very uncertain articles, you know. There's the butcher in Rylcombe—well, after I learned that he took in all the stray dogs of the neighbourhood I never liked his sausages. Of course, he may have been simply a humanitarian. But a chap in that line of business ought to be above suspicion, you know."

"My word!" said Digby. "When Fatty starts on the subject of grub he's as bad as Skimpole on Determinism. Chuck it, Fatty!"

"Oh, I don't expect you to understand these things!" said the fat Fourth-Former, with a sniff. "There's an art

in cooking and an art in eating, and fellows like you don't understand. You just gorge like an animal, without noticing what you eat. Why, there is room for a poem on the subject of sausages alone. Then, to speak of kidney pies—"

"My hat! Let's get off before he gets on to the kidney pies!"

And the juniors quickened their pace, and Fatty Wynn, with a sniff of scorn, dropped the subject.

"We'd better separate and go round halloing for Wally," said Tom Merry. "Hallo, hallo! Who's that? Talk of the Prince of Darkness!"

A figure loomed up out of the dusk, running towards them at top speed. It was that of Wally. He looked a shocking sight. Pongo had evidently led him a dance. He was wet and muddy from head to foot, his clothes were torn, his boots caked with mud. His face was thick with mud and dust and perspiration, and flaming with excitement.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Wally stopped, with a gasp, and reeled. Tom Merry threw out an arm and caught him. The junior breathed in great gulps, his heart beating like a hammer. Arthur Augustus was at his brother's side in a moment. He could see that there was something wrong.

"What's the mattah, Wally, deah boy? Is anybody aftah you?" he exclaimed. And D'Arcy clenched his gloved hands, ready to do battle with the supposed pursuer. The rascalities of the scallawag of the Third Form were forgotten for the moment.

"N-no!" gasped Wally. "I—I— Oh, will you help me?"

"What's the matter?" asked Tom Merry. "What's happened?"

"It's—it's Pongo!"

"Pongo! Where's Pongo? What's the matter with Pongo?"

"Yaas, wathah! Explain yourself, deah boy."

"They—they've got him!" gasped Wally. "The little bounder's been leading me a dance all day. Old Hunk's got him!"

"Phew!" whistled Tom Merry. "Farmer Hunk?"

"Yes; he's got him!"

"Poor old Pongo!" said Figgins, looking sincerely sorry. "It's hard cheese! I suppose he's been killing rabbits?"

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"Well, he's killed a few rabbits," said Wally. "They've got him, the brutes! I begged the old rotter to let him off, and offered to pay for all the rabbits."

"If Wally offered to pay for the wabbits, that makes it all wight, as fah as Farmer Hunk is concerned," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Of course, it's wathah wuff on the wabbits!"

"I don't suppose the farmer is thinking about the roughness on the rabbits," grinned Lowther; "he's on the track for vengeance. I don't see why he wouldn't let himself be squared."

"He's a beast!" said Wally. "He's given Pongo to two of his hands, and they're going to hang him in the barn!"

"Poor old Pongo!"

"I was coming to ask you chaps if you'd lend me a hand to rescue him," panted Wally. "I—I went for the brutes, but there were two of them—big fellows—and they chucked me into a muddy ditch and laughed at me. Oh—the junior clenched his hands furiously—"oh, if they hang Pongo I'll—I'll—" He broke off with a sob. "They're going to hang him now!"

"Bai Jove—"

"We can't stand this!" exclaimed Tom Merry decidedly. "Come on, kids, and we'll rescue Pongo, on condition that young Wally keeps him on a chain while we're staying at the farm."

"Yaas, that's a weasonable condish, Wally."

"I agree—I agree to anything—only come!"

"Lead the way, then, kid!"

Wally turned and led the way. The juniors—some of them rather dubious, but all of them game—followed him. Wally burst through hedge and ditch, bush and briar, running as if he were on the cinder-path, and the others were rather put to it to keep up with him. Tom Merry, Blake, and Figgins kept close, and just behind were Kerr and Reilly, running hard, and the others were strung out at various distances.

A light gleamed ahead.

Wally turned round, with an excited gesture.

"That's the place! Oh, I can hear him!"

Through the night silence of the countryside rang the quick, short, terrified yelp of a dog.

"Hurry! Oh, hurry!"

Wally tore on blindly. The barn door was wide open, and the light of a lamp glimmered from it. The Third-Former of St. Jim's rushed fiercely in.

Pongo was in the sorriest strait of his chequered career. Two rough fellows had him in their grip. One had slung a rope over a beam, and the other was holding the dog and adjusting a noose round its neck. He had tied a rag over its mouth, by way of a muzzle to keep it from biting.

"Ready, are you?"

"Yes; pull the beast up!"

The rope tightened. It was at this moment that Wally dashed into the barn. He ran right at the two executioners, and the man who held the dog went reeling to the floor under a fierce thump on the chest. The other let go the rope and grasped Wally, with an oath.

"It's that young imp agin'!"

Wally clutched up the dog into his protecting arms.

"Help!" he yelled.

CHAPTER 13.

The Sausage Supper!

TOM MERRY and Jack Blake dashed into the barn. Figgins was only a moment behind.

They arrived only just in time. In a few moments Wally would have been hurled out, and Pongo would have been swinging on the rope. But the coming of the juniors of St. Jim's changed the aspect of affairs. In a twinkling the two hangmen were hurled into a heap of straw, and before they could get out of it the rest of the juniors were pouring into the barn.

"Better go slow," said Tom Merry coolly.

Wally grasped Pongo in his arms. The dog crouched there, whining. The two men gained their feet, but the odds against them were too great. One of them grasped a pitchfork, and the other a broom. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy poured oil on the troubled waters.

"Pway calm yourselves, my deah fellows!" he remarked. "My young bwothah is goin' to take care that his wotten beast doesn't wowwy anybody in future, and you can tell your respected mastah that, with my compliments. You have been wathah wuffly handled, but these chaps are wathah wuff wottahs, you know. Pway, accept this ten-shillin' note to dwink our health, and say no more about the mattah!"

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That decided it.

"Thank 'ee kindly, sir," said the hero of the pitchfork, dropping the weapon and taking the note. "It's all right, sir!"

"It be," assented the other promptly. "Thank 'ee kindly, sir!"

And they touched their caps, grinning, as the juniors crowded out of the barn.

Wally caressed his favourite tenderly.

"Good old Pongo! All right now, old boy! Safe and sound! I say, Tom Merry, I suppose you were joking about keeping Pongo on the chain?"

"I wasn't!" said Tom Merry grimly. "And if I find him loose again I'll—I'll hang him myself!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors made their way back to the Quarry Farm. Wally was a fellow of his word, and during the remainder of the stay at the farm Pongo was kept from the track of the unfortunate bunnies—much to his discontent.

The week on the farm ended all too soon. News from St. Jim's told that the influenza was almost gone there, and so the stay in the country was not prolonged.

On the Monday the juniors climbed into the farmer's wagon, with their trunks, to go to the station, and Garge took the reins.

Fatty Wynn II had not been visible for some days, but Fatty Wynn I carried a special basket, to which he devoted great care during the drive to the station. Whenever Spot or Pongo came near it Fatty was on the alert. As for Towser, he had not turned up yet, and Herries was almost in despair.

The juniors alighted at the station. There was a sudden howl, and a bulldog rushed forth and greeted Herries. The junior gave a yell of delight.

"Towser!"

Towser it was.

"Towsey! Good old Towser! He's turned up again!"

"I've been looking after him for you, sir!" grinned the porter. "He came back arter you left the station the other day, sir, and he didn't seem able to find his way to the farm, so I took care of him for you, sir!"

Herries slipped a two-shilling-piece into the man's hand.

"Thanks," he said, "you are very good. But you might have let him come to the farm."

"He couldn't find his way, sir."

"Perhaps he didn't want to come," said Herries, with a nod. "As for his not being able to find his way, of course, that's all piffle! Towser could find me anywhere, if he liked; couldn't you, Towsey, old boy?"

Gr-r-r-r! growled Towser.

The juniors entered the train. Herries smuggled Towser into the carriage with him. In spite of his faith in Towser's powers, he didn't mean to lose sight of him again. Towser showed a great interest in the basket carried by Fatty Wynn. The fat Fourth-Former put it up on the rack, and Towser growled.

"He wants that," said Herries in a tone that implied that he thought that Fatty ought to let the bulldog have it.

"I dare say he does," said Fatty Wynn. "There's pork sausages in that basket, and I saw 'em made myself."

"Towser likes sausages," said Herries suggestively.

"He won't have any of this lot."

"I think you might give him half a dozen."

"No fear! I say, you fellows, we'll have a sausage supper in our study in the New House to-night," said Fatty Wynn, beaming round upon the juniors. "I hope you'll all come. We shall be back in good time for me to get the cooking done."

"Good wheeze!" said Tom Merry & Co. heartily.

"Yaas, wathah! Do you know, deah boys, I wathah think I shall not have that sewious illness, aftah all. I feel vewy much set up by my stay in the country, and, as you know, when I went there I was on the verge of a sewious illness. I feel vewy much bettah, and I shall be vewy pleased to come to the sausage suppah!"

And in the New House that evening the sausage supper was a great success. And when it was over Tom Merry proposed the health, in lemonade, of the founders of the feast—Fatty Wynn I and Fatty Wynn II—and the toast was drunk, with much laughter and enthusiasm.

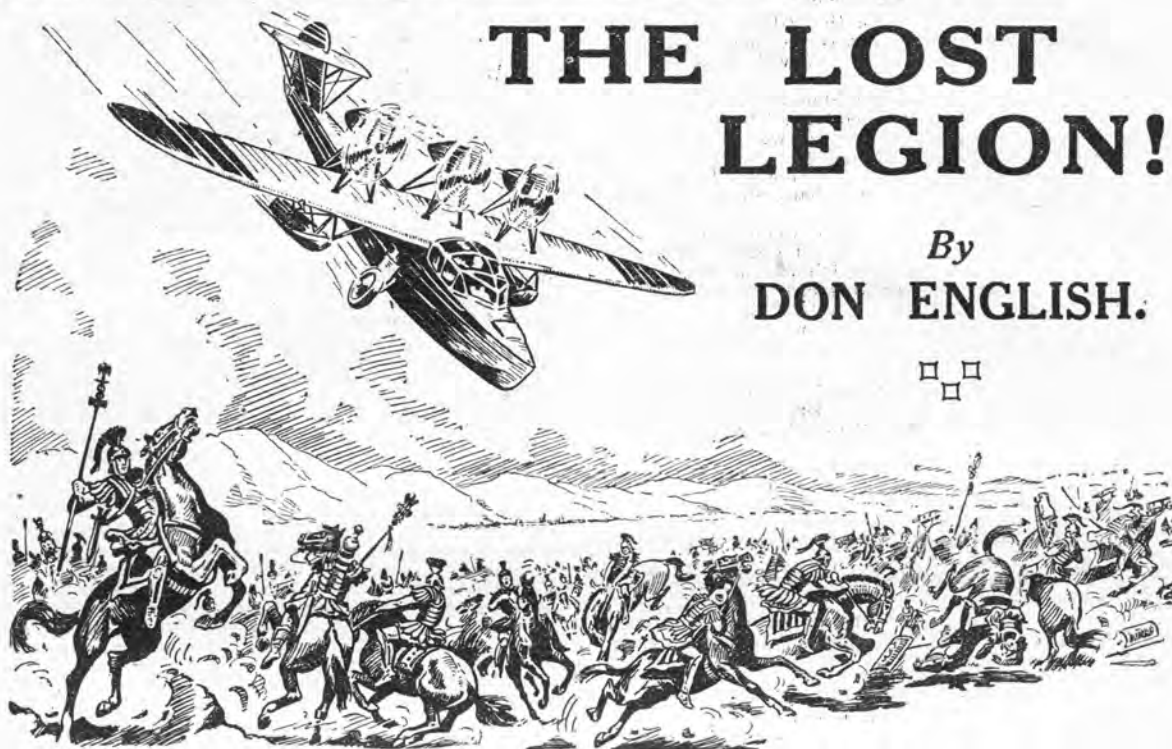
THE END.

(Next week's ripping yarn of Tom Merry & Co. is called "The Schoolboy Jockey!" Martin Clifford is at his best in this yarn which is packed with thrills!)

A GRIPPING ADVENTURE YARN! PACKED WITH THRILLS!

THE LOST LEGION!

By
DON ENGLISH.



Jim Nelson and Phil Harris were fed up when a forced landing put an end to their round-the-world flight—but then they didn't know of the amazing adventures that were to follow their descent in Central Asia!

Preparing for War!

IF I'd known then what I know now, nothing," said Jim Nelson firmly—"nothing, I repeat, would have induced me to come on this trip!"

Phil Harris stared at his chum in unfeigned amazement.

"What on earth d'you mean by that, you ungrateful duffer?" he demanded. "Here you are with the chance of a billion lifetimes absolutely thrown at your silly head, and you actually start to grouse. Just think of it—being able to mix with people who are to all intents and purposes Ancient Romans—"

Jim snorted—a rude snort.

"Huh!" he said. "It's all right for you—you've swotted Latin for years. Whereas I, being a thorough modernist, have made a patient study of German, and where does it land me? Here, in a place where I've got to learn a new language before I can even ask for my breakfast in bed."

Rex Bruce, a fellow-sufferer, chuckled.

"Never mind, laddie!" he said. "There's one consolation, anyway—it's not everyone who can have a genuine Ancient Roman to teach him Latin! Better make the best of it!"

They were all seated in the peristyle of the House of Donati, the magnificent home of Valerius Martius, Imperator of Roma Secunda, and his younger brother Camillus. The peristyle was a big inner colonnaded court, which reminded the boys of the cloisters of a monastery more than anything else, though it was infinitely less severe in character, being provided with a deep fountain-pool in the centre, and planted with many shady flowering shrubs.

Among the bushes had been set up a small table and several comfortable seats, and Jim and Rex were engaged in taking their first Latin lesson from Camillus' own tutor—a stern-looking old gentleman in a toga. Phil and Camillus himself—a boy of about his own age—were perched on the edge of the pool a few yards away, chatting idly as they awaited the return of Valerius Martius and Colonel K, the guardian of the two English lads, from the Senate.

It was an amazing chance which had brought the strangers into this Roman community. They had left England some days previously in their monoplane, the Albatross, with the intention of making a world cruise. But a slight engine defect had forced them to descend in a shut-in valley of Central Asia, and there they had come upon this lost colony, which

still preserved the manners and customs of two thousand years ago.

The land was at war, for the renegade Dolabella was trying to deprive his nephew Claudius, the rightful heir, of the throne. Colonel K had thrown in his lot with the army under Valerius Martius, sent to put down the rebel and his legions, with the result that Dolabella had been completely routed and forced to take to the hills. The one danger now was that he would unite with the Albani, the strange white race which inhabited an adjoining valley and were the hereditary enemies of the Romans.

A sudden clamour, in the atrium, the great main hall of the house, announced the return of the master and his guest. A few moments later the two men, having divested themselves of their cumbersome togas and changed their street shoes for indoor sandals, entered the peristyle and joined the group about the fountain.

"Well, sir, what's the news?" demanded Jim eagerly, forgetting his grievances in an instant.

Colonel K looked grave.

"The worst has happened," he said. "The spies left to watch the hills reported that Dolabella gathered together the remnants of his forces and marched to Iolensis, where he appears to have been very well received. The Albani have been trying to wipe Roma Secunda out of existence for centuries, as you know, and a traitor like Dolabella can give them invaluable aid. It means war to the knife, my lads!"

"By Jove, sir!" cried Phil. "We're going to stay till it's over, aren't we?"

The colonel pretended to be doubtful, though there was a twinkle in his blue eyes as he glanced round at the anxious faces.

"What about the air-cruise round the world?" he asked. "We can't do both, you know."

"Air-cruise he blowed!" was the unanimous verdict of his two wards and Rex. "We can have that any time, but a Roman war doesn't happen every day in the twentieth century!"

Colonel K laughed and turned to the Imperator, who was listening interestedly to the conversation, though, naturally, he did not understand a word.

"There is no fear that your tribuni militum will desert you, O Valerius Martius," he said in Latin, referring to

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the fact that the three had been appointed officers of the First Legion. "They refuse flatly to leave Roma Secunda until the successful conclusion of the war against Dolabella and Iolensis."

"I am indeed grateful," replied the young general, with a smile. "We need every man who can fight, for the Albani, with the addition of the rebels, must have a very large force. It will mean straining every nerve if Roma is not to be defeated by her ancient foe."

"She won't be beaten if we can help it!" Phil assured him. "And I don't think that Iolensis will trouble you again when we've finished!"

Before Valerius Martius could make any answer the head slave came hastening out into the peristyle and dropped on one knee in front of his master.

"Lord, the Prince Claudius is without, and begs that you will receive him," he said.

"Claudius!" ejaculated the Emperor. "Request him to come hither immediately."

He threw several swift commands over his shoulder at two other slaves near by, and moved forward with the colonel to meet his distinguished guest at the entrance of the court. Claudius came in—a tall, smiling, young man, entirely unaffected by his rank, who greeted them all with marked cordiality.

"Hail, my friends!" he said. "Valerius Martius, I am come to take my midday meal with you, and exchange the gossip of the day. Hast heard the tidings of my uncle?"

"We are but newly come from the Senate," replied the general. "It is what I have feared ever since he escaped to the hills after the battle. But let us discuss the matter further while we eat."

He led the way to one of the smaller dining-rooms opening on to the colonnade, where already the slaves had set the cold midday repast. There the seven of them—for the tutor had quietly effaced himself long since—disposed themselves on the couches, and the meal began. Since in Rome dinner was always served at three o'clock in the afternoon, this lunch was necessarily a slight affair, consisting mainly of eggs, fruit, cheese, bread, and salad. Over it the situation was thoroughly discussed.

"Well, it seems to me," said Colonel K at last, in Latin, "that we ought to find out exactly how strong the Albani really are. And the obvious way to do that is to take a trip over to Iolensis in the bird-chariot."

"By Jupiter, it is so!" agreed Claudius. "Cannot this thing be done, O Colonnus?"

"Certainly!" was the reply. "We will go no later than this afternoon, after the siesta. Wilt thou accompany us?"

"I will, indeed!" said Claudius, and after some debate it was arranged that Camillus and Valerius Martius should go in the Albatross as well.

"We'll dump the stores to lighten her, Rex," Colonel K told his secretary. "She'll carry a dozen men then if need be. I want to see this city of Iolensis and its mysterious inhabitants very much; it seems to me that there's a stern struggle ahead of us."

The Wall!

AN hour later the seven were entering the great Circus Maximus, where the monoplane was housed. The vast arena made an admirable aerodrome, and with two picked cohorts mounting guard over her night and day the Albatross was as safe as in her hangar at home. But Llewelyn, Colonel K's wizened little Welsh servant, trusted no one and nothing where his beloved machine was concerned, and by far the greater part of his time was spent where he could keep an eye on her.

He was there now to greet the others as they came into the huge gloomy hall beneath the stadium, clad in greasy overalls and fussing about with a spanner. The colonel slapped him affectionately on the shoulder.

"Well, Llewelyn, how is she to-day?" he inquired. "All ready for the air as usual?"

"Indeed to goodness, yes, look you!" was the reply.

"Then come on in and help to hand out some of the stores," said the colonel briskly. "We're all going over to Iolensis, so we'd better reduce the load a little."

Under his directions the boxes and bags stowed away in the tail of the plane were soon dumped out and stacked along the walls of the hall. The heavy doors leading out into the arena were opened, and the Albatross was wheeled out on to the sand. The passengers climbed in, and she stood for a few minutes with her propellers whirling softly. Then she began to move forward across the mighty oval, gathering speed swiftly, and soared up into the sky with the grace of a bird.

Claudius and Camillus, whose first trip this was, seemed inclined to keep their seats in the beginning, but the glimpses they caught of Roma Secunda spread out like a

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map beneath proved too much for them. Forgetting their instinctive fear, they leaped up to peer more closely out of the windows with the others at the wonderful scene below.

"See, there is the lake-palace!" cried the prince as they circled about. "It is there that my grandfather, the king, lies sick. I fear that he was worse this morning, for the rebellion has been a great shock to him."

The world-flyers looked at the building with eager curiosity, for it was one of the wonders of Roma Secunda, and they had had no previous opportunity of examining it.

Constructed entirely of spotless white marble, its foundations must have rested upon some low island in the centre of the glorious blue lake where it lay. But so completely did it encircle and cover the ground that no trace of the original rock remained, and the snowy walls seemed to rise direct from the still waters which reflected them so faithfully.

A single narrow causeway connected it with the shore, and this was broken half-way down its length by an archway, beneath which was a strong gate to bar the road. On either side was a guardhouse, and even as they passed overhead they could see the tall sentries on duty. Evidently the old king was well protected from his enemies.

Then the monoplane was over the city again, which was just beginning to wake after the noonday siesta, and the streets were thronged with people who stared upwards and waved. Llewelyn shut off the engine for an instant as they swept over the crowded forum, and a cheer rose faintly to the ears of the flyers. Then the droning, powerful roar recommenced, and the Albatross slid away eastwards in the direction of Iolensis.

The shut-in valley where Roma Secunda and her enemy had lain hid so many centuries was actually twice the size it first appeared. From the frowning hills to the north and south projected two high rocky spurs which divided it into more or less equal parts, and it was in the farther half that Iolensis was situated. As the monoplane approached the ridge, Valerius Martius caught the colonel's arm and pointed down.

"Look!" he said. "There is the Wall, and the Pass of Iolensis. And the Pass is the only road through the hills between the two cities."

"Shades of Hadrian!" ejaculated Colonel K, gazing downwards in amazement. "You can't get away from it—the Romans were the most thorough people on earth when it came to defences. They've actually built a wall all along the top of the spurs!"

It was true. Clear along the summit of the ridge to right and left ran a broad wall, turreted here and there with legionnaires on guard pacing to and fro, their burnished armour flashing in the sun. The Pass itself seemed to be full of buildings, and after a few quick glances about, the colonel shouted to Llewelyn to land on the Roman side.

"I must have a closer look into this!" he said in English; then, turning to Claudius and the Emperor, he added in Latin: "We have your permission to examine these important defences more minutely, have we not?"

"Even so, O Colonnus!" agreed Valerius Martius, and the prince nodded.

The Albatross came to earth lightly on the road that led to Roma Secunda from the Pass, and taxied up to the first gate, which was thrown open at her approach. A cohort of the Second Legion marched out, and Jim Nelson gave a whoop of delight as he caught sight of the figure at their head.

"Look, sir! It's our old friend Curiatius Fufetus!" he cried, naming the centurion who had found them when they first landed and conducted them to the Emperor's camp.

Valerius Martius understood the name, if nothing else. "It is indeed Curiatius Fufetus," he said in Latin. "He has been promoted to be Captain of the Wall for a time, and will doubtless be overjoyed at seeing you again."

So it proved. The newly-appointed captain received his distinguished guests with every appearance of pleasure, and soon they were all on a tour of inspection of the fortifications.

The Pass itself was a broad one, with the rocky slopes of the spurs rising gently away on either hand, and it was protected by a triple row of defences. First, flung forward on the enemy side was a high breastwork of earth with a formidable spiked ditch, twenty yards wide in front. Behind was a clear space of fifty paces, then a great wall of bricks and stone slabs, topped with a score and more catapults and ballistae, the latter engine for throwing stones, the former for shooting arrows. This wall was pierced by a turret-flanked gate, a massive affair of wood nearly two feet thick and bound and studded with iron. Valerius Martius indicated it proudly.

"It is five hundred years since the Albani broke through that gateway!" he said. "They came in their thousands, armed to the teeth, and with many engines of war. They stormed the breastwork at dawn, and carried the inner wall at noon, but beyond the court behind they could not set

foot! It is easy to take one line of defence, and even a second, but the stoutest heart sinks at attacking a third!"

And the last line of fortifications was stronger than the middle one. Before it was a deep, staked ditch, fifty feet across, and filled with five feet of black water, traversed by a wooden bridge, which could be drawn up at will. It looked impregnable; and Phil said as much. But the colonel shook his head doubtfully.

"It could be taken by determined men," he said, "though, naturally, it wouldn't be a simple matter. Still, these little fortifications appear to be capable of holding an enemy who isn't armed with heavy artillery for a considerable time."

"The Albani are going to have a tough job to get past this little lot," opined Jim, as they said good-bye to Curiatus Fufetus, and proceeded to rejoin the Albatross.

"Wait until we've seen them, my lad!" said Rex. "They may have some very unpleasant surprises up their sleeve for us."

The monoplane took the air again, and, after circling about once or twice to gain height, passed over the dividing ridge. And there, perhaps twenty miles away across the level plain, was the city of Iolensis. It was an exciting moment for them all, for actually it was the first time any of them had set eyes on it, though the Romans were familiar with its general appearance from descriptions given by spies.

As they drew nearer they could see plainly that it was a large walled town, not at all unlike Roma Secunda itself, but after one quick glance the flyers wasted no more time on it. There were far more important things to be noticed outside the walls.

"By Jupiter," breathed Valerius Martius, staring down, "they are indeed prepared for war!"

Engaged in manoeuvres on the plain below was an army of men, which could not have numbered less than forty thousand. Clad in scarlet tunics, cuirasses of some dull white metal, and strange winged caps which were more like Viking helmets than anything else, the great body of the Albani was easily distinguishable from the few thousand Roman rebels who had followed Dolabella to Iolensis, and who now formed the extreme right wing of the enemy.

Obedient to orders inaudible to those above, they were marching and counter-marching, wheeling, charging, retreating, all in perfect order. And Colonel K whistled softly as he watched them.

"Magnificently drilled and disciplined!" he remarked. And added dryly: "I should like to meet their sergeant-majors!"

Without leaving the window he boomed over his shoulder to Llewelyn:

"Come on, Llewelyn! Just swoop down and let's see how they'll take it!"

To the Romans he explained, as the Albatross began to dive earthwards:

"We will test the courage of these Albani. I observe that they have no cavalry. Dolabella must have informed them already how we stampeded his horses."

The monoplane was now shooting down at a terrific pace, the wind screaming past her. Below, all the precise machine-like evolutions of the troops had ceased, and a sea of white faces was turned up to this terrible creature of the skies.

Here and there an uneasy movement in the ranks betrayed the nervousness of some soldier, and these became more and more marked as the Albatross plunged on. The colonel took Valerius Martius' arm excitedly.

"Look!" he said in Latin. "They're breaking! They won't stand much longer! Another hundred feet and—Ah!"

Suddenly, almost without warning, the whole great army was on the run, fleeing madly from this bird-chariot which whizzed down upon them like a thunderbolt. The panic started in the centre and spread like wildfire to the wings; in a few short moments even the Romans were "splitting the breeze," as Jim inelegantly termed it.

Disaster!

COLONEL K laughed his big, booming laugh as Llewelyn flattened out and zoomed upwards again.

"What a stampede!" he said in English. "Forty thousand men bolting like sheep! But I'm afraid it won't happen again. Next time they'll know the plane can't hurt them, and they'll stand their ground. If only we had one or two machine-guns, now—Hullo! What the dickens is the matter?"

Even as he spoke a change had become audible in the deep note of the engines. Instead of running smoothly they

were spluttering and coughing; and the colonel's face hardened as he remembered the last occasion when they had done that. It was just some such defect that had forced the Albatross down originally in Central Asia, and he was not anxious to have to make another landing here in the heart of the enemy country, surrounded by the entire army!

He dived through the charthouse into the cockpit, and they could hear him talking to Llewelyn. But the combined efforts of the pair of them were fruitless. For a minute or two longer the engines struggled on, then, with a final gasp, first one and then another came to a complete standstill. Phil, Jim, and Rex looked at each other with horrified eyes. They knew what that meant. The monoplane would have to descend while Llewelyn made an inspection and removed the cause of the trouble!

"Great Scott!" breathed Rex. "This is a nice mess! The moment we land we'll be attacked—that's a certainty! And goodness only knows how long it'll take Llewelyn to fix us up again. Better get hold of some guns, I think, laddies."

The three moved towards the charthouse, where the rifles were racked, but before they could reach it Colonel K reappeared in the doorway, his face grim. He had evidently heard the last part of his secretary's speech, for he nodded approvingly.

"Yes, arm yourselves to the teeth!" he said in English.

Then he turned to the three Romans, who, though they understood nothing as yet of the disaster which had overtaken them, were vaguely uneasy at the stoppage of the mighty engines.

"Please do not be alarmed!" he said, speaking Latin. "I deeply regret that it will be necessary for us to come to earth for a short while, but—"

"To earth!" interrupted Valerius Martius, in consternation. "Surely thou art mad, O Colonnus? To descend is to be captured!"

Colonel K shrugged, glancing out of the window at the ground, which was now very close.

"Much though I dislike the situation, I fear that it cannot be helped," he said smoothly. "We shall, of course, do our utmost to protect ourselves and you until the bird-chariot is able to fly once more."

He was turning away to enter the charthouse and secure weapons for himself, when suddenly Claudius created a totally unexpected diversion. He had sunk into a seat at the first announcement of the alarming news, but now he bounded to his feet once more, arm outstretched, accusing eyes ablaze.

"Treachery!" he cried. "I am betrayed, O Valerius Martius! It is a plot—a plot to deliver me into the hands of my uncle!"

For a long moment there was dead silence in the cabin. No one moved a muscle, waiting with bated breath for Colonel K's reply. But the explorer did not deign to utter a word. He stood there sternly regarding his accuser, and slowly the young prince's angry gaze faltered and dropped.

"I crave pardon, O Colonnus!" he said, in shamed tones. "I—I repent me of my hasty words, and desire to withdraw them."

At that precise moment the Albatross touched the plain, and went bumping to a standstill over the uneven surface. So, with a hasty little bow to show that the apology was accepted, the colonel leaped to the nearest gun-rack, and was back in an instant, rifle in hand, shouting instructions to the boys and Rex.

"Here, Philip, you see whether you can tell these Romans how to fire a gun without killing themselves or each other!" he boomed. "Jim, cover the left side; Rex, the right! And keep a good look-out, in case they try to rush in from the tail! I'm going out to make sure they don't damage the propellers!"

The cabin door opened, and he was gone.

The next ten minutes were nerve-racking ones for them all. While Phil strove manfully to instruct their three passengers in the gentle art of revolver shooting, Jim and Rex had nothing to do but watch the movements of the enemy.

Although momentarily scared out of their wits by this weird apparition from the clouds, they had, being wonderfully disciplined troops, recovered from their panic with remarkable speed. Even before the landing of the Albatross, they had begun to reform their ranks, and by now the whole army was in some sort of order. But though they hung about the plane on every side like a menacing wave, they did not at first attempt to advance on her, evidently suspecting some trap.

Meanwhile, Llewelyn was tinkering feverishly with the refractory engines, and Phil's pupils were beginning to show some familiarity with their strange weapons.

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Obviously, though, this respite would not last. Jim could see the officers of the Albani and the Romans conferring together, and he remembered how some of Dola-bella's cohorts had attacked the helpless Albatross on a former occasion.

"Hey, Rex!" he called warningly. "I believe they're getting ready to charge. Look out!"

"Look out yourself!" was the grim retort, followed by the sharp crack of a rifle.

A little column of infantry had pushed itself out from the main body on Rex's side of the plane, and he had sent a dissuading shot over their heads. They fell back a trifle, clearly undecided, then they came on again, and this time they were not alone. Close behind rolled the entire front line, and the young Englishman set his teeth as he saw them. Half measures were of no use against these people. There was nothing for it but to shoot to kill.

Picking out the officer who was leading the charge, he took deliberate aim and fired, at a range of three hundred feet. The man pulled up short in mid-stride, flung out his arms, and pitched forward on his face without a sound. His cohort paused momentarily, but kept on towards their objective, and Rex, his face very grim, was forced to empty his magazine into their packed ranks. That pulled them up. Several of their number fell, either dead or wounded, and they waited only to carry them off before retiring to the main line, which had halted.

Behind him, on the other side, Jim, too, was busy. He repelled a determined attack almost at the same time as Rex, and there was a tiny lull in the proceedings. Then fresh soldiers were seen to be coming to the enemy front, and the boy whistled as he caught sight of them and their weapons.

"Mind your eyes!" he said lightly. "Here comes the Bow-and-Arrow Brigade!"

It was so. A few instants later a cloud of shafts came whizzing down about the Albatross like a swarm of angry wasps. One, shot cleanly through the open window, missed Jim by a hairsbreadth, and stuck quivering in the opposite wall. In revenge he began to pump lead as hard as he could into the slowly-advancing Albani, and many of them went down.

By now Phil and the three Romans were all firing with varying degrees of success, but with such gigantic odds against them, it was obvious that the gallant crew of the monoplane could not hold out for long. Seven against forty thousand was too few, even when the seven were armed with the latest rifles and revolvers.

Then all at once a shout from outside recalled to those within the fact that Colonel K was risking his life in the

open. Jim and Camillus, the two nearest, leaped to the door, and the former flung it wide, careless of stray arrows. The next moment he gave a cry of anger and concern and jumped to the ground, closely followed by Camillus.

Colonel K, with the blood streaming down from an arrow wound in the left shoulder, was whirling his clubbed rifle about in an effort to hold off half a dozen Albani who had crept up and taken him unawares. It was clear that they wanted to capture him alive, for they were trying to dodge in under the flailing blows to grapple with him, instead of felling him with one of their great maces.

So far, the colonel had managed to keep them at bay, but even his mighty strength was failing. The two boys came to his aid in the nick of time. With a few quick pressures of his revolver-trigger, Jim put three of the attackers definitely hors de combat, while Camillus, seizing the explorer's arm, half-dragged and half-supported him into the cabin.

And at the same instant the deep, sonorous roar of the engines, waking suddenly to life, broke the glad news that the toiling Llewelyn had found and repaired the defect.

Camillus thrust the colonel into the nearest seat, and swung about to look for Jim. Then, with a gasp of dismay, he fairly flung himself out of the machine once more.

More of the Albani, seeing the fight before the cabin door, had raced up to the help of the comrades, when the two lads came on the scene. Jim had shot down several, and then made the horrifying discovery that his gun was empty. In desperation he turned to make a bolt for safety, but he was half a dozen yards from the plane, and before he could cover the distance one of the soldiers had overtaken him.

It was just as the Albani dropped his hand on Jim's shoulder that Camillus shot him. For a second it seemed that the English boy was saved, but somehow as the man fell he tripped him, and they went down together in a heap. Camillus fired again and again at the rest of the attackers, while Jim strove to release himself, and shouted for his brother to come to his aid. But his voice was drowned by the noise of the engines, and Valerius Martius himself was very busy at the time repelling an attack on the far side. No one paid any attention to the desperate plight of the pair.

It was Rex who finally settled their fate. He had seen their valiant rescue of the colonel, who had now staggered through into the charthouse in search of dressings for his wound. And, believing them both to be safe in the plane, he suddenly called to Llewelyn.

"What the dickens are you waiting for? Get us out of this as fast as you can! Don't hang about!"

The little Welshman in the cockpit obeyed the order unquestioningly.

And so it happened that just as Jim struggled free, and he and Camillus prepared to leap to safety, right before their horrified eyes the Albatross began to taxi forward to take off. In vain they shouted and ran, with the Albani hard on their heels. The plane outstripped them, scattered the front ranks of the encompassing army in all directions from her path, and soared up lightly into the blue.

The gallant pair turned at bay, and, standing back to back, they fought like cornered wolves. But against such overwhelming odds, even courage like theirs was unavailing, and it was not long before they were overpowered by sheer weight of numbers, and pinioned.

It was Phil who first noticed their absence from the plane. He looked round the cabin in search of Jim, then into the charthouse and cockpit, and, finally, in a mild panic, in the kitchen and store-room. The swift inspection confirmed his worst fears.

"Rex," he yelled suddenly, "Jim and Camillus aren't here! We must have left them behind!"

"What?"

With one accord the two leaped to the window as the Albatross circled about and pointed her nose for Roma Secunda. And there, far below them, they saw the end of the fight. They looked at each other in silent horror, and then at the colonel, who had overheard and come to join them.

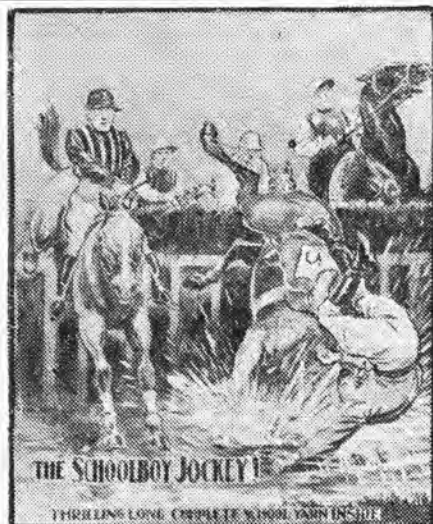
"H'm!" said the explorer coolly. "That's an unfortunate piece of work. We must see what can be done. But I think we'd better go home and lay our plans there. And I suppose I must break the news to Valerius Martius that his brother and my ward are in the hands of the enemy."

In the City of Iolensis.

THE massive bronze doors which barred the main gateway of the city of Iolensis were closed at nightfall and opened again at sunrise. Every morning the trumpeters on the tall flanking towers sounded an elaborate call, and as the last note died away the great portal swung wide.

It was a signal for the crowd of peasants without, which

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had been steadily growing for half an hour before, to take up the big baskets of country produce they were bringing to the market, and hasten into the city. Nobody paid much attention to them; certainly, none of the sentries outside the guardhouses on either side of the gate thought of regarding them with suspicion.

So it happened that on a certain morning a middle-aged man in a wide hat that shadowed his face, and a brown-skinned boy, laden with a heavy sack, passed unchallenged into Iolensis with the rest.

To the eyes of the Alban soldiers there was nothing about the pair to mark them out in any way from the other hurrying countryfolk. But a Roman legionnaire, had he chanced to scrutinise them closely, might have told a different tale.

For the tall man and his young companion were none other than Curiatius Fufetus, captain of the wall between Roma Secunda and Iolensis, and the English schoolboy, Phil Harris.

An hour before dawn the Albatross had left them on the plain three or four miles from the city, all ready dressed for their dangerous venture. They had completed the journey on foot, while the monoplane had gone back to the wall to await developments.

Since a few years previously Fufetus had actually lived for several days in Iolensis in disguise, he knew how the poorer classes of the Albani were clad. So that neither he nor Phil excited any suspicion among the peasants by their clothes, and one or two of them even grunted a "Good-morning, friends!" as they came up and joined the throng at the gate. The captain, who spoke Alban as well as he spoke Latin, replied to the greeting, but Phil remained silent.

"What ails thy son?" asked a motherly looking woman with a basket of eggs on each arm. "Hath he no tongue to answer for himself?"

"Alas, he is sore afflicted," returned Fufetus, shaking his head sorrowfully. "He is a good lad, but hath been both deaf-and-dumb from birth."

It was an old device, but one which they hoped would serve to hide the boy's ignorance of the Alban tongue. The woman regarded him with interest and pity.

"That is a great shame—" she began. But before she could say more the huge doors were opened, and in her anxiety to reach the market as soon as possible with her eggs, she speedily forgot the two. Which was perhaps just as well.

Phil felt his heart commence to bump wildly against his side as he followed Fufetus through the gate into the paved street beyond. He had a feeling that eyes were watching them suspiciously from every corner, that people were turning to glance curiously in their direction, and that their thin disguise must have been penetrated long ago.

But they advanced farther and farther into the city, and still nothing happened. No one stepped forward and denounced them as spies, no soldiers ran hotfoot to arrest them. Phil's confidence returned, and he swung along jauntily in the wake of his tall companion.

And then suddenly danger stared them in the face. Down the street came reeling a Roman centurion, one of the rebels who supported Dolabella. He was homeward bound after a night's carouse, singing drunkenly as he staggered along, and scattering people right and left from his path.

Curiatius Fufetus uttered a soft exclamation of dismay as the man made towards them, for he had been one of his messmates when they first became soldiers. If he saw and recognised him now, then he and Phil would be taken before they had been five minutes in the city.

He side-stepped in an effort to avoid the drunkard, but in vain. The latter made an unexpected lurch as he passed, and caught at his shoulder to save himself from falling. Phil held his breath as he peered at the captain's face, which was hidden by the wide brim of his hat.

"Hail, brother!" he said thickly in Latin. Curiatius Fufetus drew himself up and tried to throw off the other's clutching paw.

"I understand thee not," he replied coldly in Alban. "I beg you release me that I may go about my business."

But the soldier was not to be got rid of so easily. He clung about Fufetus' neck with his face close to his, and had he been only a little less drunk he could not have failed to know his old comrade at once. As it was, discovery seemed only a matter of moments, and the captain was very pale under his tan.

The Fates, however, were with the daring pair that day. All at once help came—from an undreamed-of quarter.

An Alban officer of high rank who was passing caught sight of the little scene, and strode forward with a frown. His hand fell on the drunken centurion's shoulder, and he swung him sharply away from Fufetus, breaking his hold.

"Here, thou!" he said, in his own tongue, with which every Roman was more or less familiar: "Leave our people

in peace, or it will be the worse for thee! Get thee back to thy lodging with all speed!"

With a smart shove, he sent the man reeling down the street, and turned to Fufetus.

"Go thy ways, countryman," he said coolly. "He will not molest thee again."

Before the astonished captain could do more than stammer out a few words of thanks, he was gone in the wake of the drunkard. For a long moment Fufetus stood staring after him, then slowly a smile of mischievous delight spread across his face, and he winked at Phil.

"By Jupiter, Lord, 'tis fortunate indeed, he does not guess to whom he renders service!" he muttered, with a chuckle, as he pretended to be busy with the fastening of the sack which the boy carried. "Come! Let us to the market—and forget not that thou art deaf-and-dumb."

He led the way off down the street again as calmly as though nothing had occurred, and Phil, after taking a deep breath, followed him. In a few minutes they reached the market without further mishap.

The market proved to be a great square, divided into narrow lanes by little stone walls barely two feet high. In each lane different goods were sold, and Fufetus made for the one where fruit and vegetables were displayed. Soon he and Phil had spread their stock out attractively on the ground, and were settling themselves comfortably on top of the wall to wait for customers.

These were not long in coming. In Iolensis, as in Rome, the daily round began at dawn and ended at sunset, for the ancients lacked the twentieth-century means of turning night into day with gas and electricity.

So very shortly the poorer people and the many slaves of the rich were coming and going in the market in a ceaseless stream, passing from lane to lane and merchant to merchant in their search for their household requirements. And Phil began to understand better why Fufetus had chosen to disguise himself as a peasant and sit in the square.

For, though he did not know a word of Alban, it soon became evident to him that the market was much more than a place where one went to buy food and clothing. From the groups of citizens who stood about chattering on all sides, and his companion's intentness on overhearing everything he possibly could, he realised that it was here that the gossip of the day was exchanged, and he wished, not for the first time, that he understood the language.

Several times during the course of the morning Fufetus succeeded in drawing some of his customers into conversation, and once or twice the watchful English lad caught a glint of satisfaction in his eyes.

But it was not until nearly midday, when almost all their stuff was sold, and the market-place was emptying rapidly, that the Roman ventured to address a word to him. Then he beckoned to him to come near, and whispered the news in his ear as he helped to pack the remaining fruit back into the sacks.

"Good tidings, lord!" he said in Latin. "The prisoners are confined in the Temple of Antimon, a building with which I am familiar. We will eat and sleep now, like the rest of the city—then to work!"

And though Phil protested that he could do neither, he found to his surprise that he could do both. He ate a hearty meal at a tiny cookshop in a near-by street, then repaired with the captain to a rest-house. There, upon payment of a small sum to the slave at the door, they were admitted to a big, dusky room whose floor was covered with straw pallets. Imitating his companion, Phil flung himself on one with his precious sack close beside him, and in an instant was asleep.

The Temple of Antimon.

A SOFT touch on the cheek awoke him some hours later. He opened his eyes to find Curiatius Fufetus bending over him.

"Do not speak!" warned the centurion, in a whisper. "Get up and follow me. It is time now to act. We go to the Temple of Antimon."

Phil rose silently in obedience to the command, and they passed out again into the streets. It was late afternoon, and the pavements were thronged with citizens taking an evening stroll after the day's work. In the general confusion the two went unnoticed, slipping through the crowds like shadows in their coarse, brown cloaks. And under Fufetus' skilful leadership it was not long before the temple they sought loomed up in front of them.

The Temple of Antimon was a vast pile built of some red stone in a style which reminded Phil of ancient Egyptian architecture. Its colossal ram-headed pillars gave an impression of strength rather than grace, and the apparent size of it was enough to make the stoutest heart sink, when confronted with the problem of finding two closely guarded prisoners in it, and bringing them safely

out. Phil felt his heart plop down into his sandals as he surveyed the mighty edifice.

"By Jupiter, Curiaius, we shall never find them!" he managed to whisper to his comrade as they mounted the few broad, shallow steps to the doorway.

Fufetus chuckled softly.

"Courage, lord!" he replied, in the same tone. "The task is not as hopeless as would at first appear. We—"

He broke off suddenly as a noise arose behind them, and, without looking round, pushed Phil abruptly into the shadow of the nearest column. The next moment a gilded litter was set down at the foot of the stairs, and out of it stepped Gaius Procellus Dolabella, the traitor whose one desire was to make himself King of Roma Secunda. Now clad in the fashion of an Alban gentleman, he was evidently on his way to see the prisoners Fate had delivered into his hands the previous day.

He strode haughtily up towards the great entrance, glancing neither to right nor left, and the pair by the pillar breathed a sigh of relief as it seemed he would pass without remarking them. But they rejoiced too soon. Just as the relief came abreast of them, one of the black-robed

priests who had come to welcome him into the temple held up an arresting hand. Dolabella came to an angry halt, his dark eyes flashing as he regarded the man who had dared to bar his way.

"What is it?" he demanded, in Alban.

"My Lord Dolabella, you know the law." The old priest was polite, but firm. "No one, be he the first person in the land or the last, may enter the Temple of Antimon bareheaded. You cannot be admitted here as you are."

Dolabella stiffened, flushing, but he knew better than to try to flout the ancient customs of Iolensis. He swung about in a rage, and his gaze fell upon Curiaius Fufetus, standing not half a dozen paces away.

"Very well, old greybeard, I will get me a covering for my head," he said insolently to the priest. Then, turning to the supposed peasant, he called! "Ho, there, countryman! Thy hat I beg! Thou shalt be amply recompensed for it!"

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