

RIPPING LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL^AND ADVENTURE YARN INSIDE!

CONTINUOUS
VARIETY!
YOUR FAVOURITE
STARS—
TOM MERRY & Co
INSIDE!

The GEM

2^d



A LONG COMPLETE STORY OF A STRANGE NEW BOY WHO CAME TO—

The CALL of the SEA!



Jim Raleigh is a sailor's son and the call of the sea is in his blood! St. Jim's may be all right for some boys, but it's much too slow for Jim—as you will learn in this tip-top yarn!

CHAPTER 1.

Arthur Augustus Raises the Wind!

"WUN!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. "The twain's comin' in! Wun like anythin'!"

And Arthur Augustus, holding his eyeglass in one hand and his silk hat in the other, sprinted down the old High Street of Wayland as if he were on the cinder-path at St. Jim's.

Tom Merry and Jack Blake dashed after him.

"Hold on!" shouted Blake.

"Stop!" roared Tom Merry.

But Arthur Augustus was deaf to remonstrance. He dashed on at top speed to the station, and Tom Merry and Blake followed.

The three juniors, who were the leading lights of the junior football club at St. Jim's, had been over to the market town of Wayland to negotiate for the purchase of some new goalposts, and they had to catch their train back in order to get in before locking-up. The next train would have meant missing calling-over. Hence the excitement of Arthur Augustus.

He dashed into the station breathlessly, and bumped into a porter. The man staggered, and Arthur Augustus clutched him excitedly.

"Has the twain gone?"

"What train?" growled the porter.

"The twain for Wylcombe!"

The man grunted.

"Tain't in yet!"

"Bai Jove!"

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Arthur Augustus turned calmly towards Tom Merry and Blake, who had just arrived, puffing and blowing, in the station.

"It's all wight, deah boys; there's no heed to huwwy. The twain isn't in yet!"

"You utter ass!" grunted Blake. "That's what I was trying to tell you. It's the London train that's just come in, not the local."

"You shrieking duffer!" said Tom Merry. "This isn't the first time you've bolted like a mad bull—"

"I uttably wefuse to be compared to a mad bull. I wefuse to be chawactewised as a duffah. There is nothin' like makin' suah in the matter of catchin' a twain. If we lost our twain we should be late for callin'-ovah, and that would mean a wiggin'."

"But the train isn't timed to go till six-thirty!" howled Blake.

"I am quite awah of that, deah boy."

"And it's only six-twenty now!"

"Yaas, wathah! I observe that it is now, Blake."

"Well, why couldn't you look at your watch instead of bolting off like a mad colt?"

"Bai Jove, you know, I nevah thought of that!"

Jack Blake snorted.

"Weally, deah boy, I nevah thought of that, you know! But there is nothin' 'whatevah to be watty about," said Arthur Augustus. "We have caught the twain, at all events, so you need not cut up wuffly. Have you the tickets, Tom Mewwy?"

"No, of course not!"

"Have you the tickets, Blake?"

"Of course I haven't, fathead! How could I have them when you took them, and kept them in your charge?"

—ST. JIM'S AND RAN AWAY AS SOON AS HE GOT THERE!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Bai Jove, then, I am afraid they're gone! Yaas, I wemembah now, I put them in the same pocket as my handkerchief. I must have flicked them out, you know, and navaah noticed it."

Tom Merry and Blake fixed their eyes upon Arthur Augustus with an expression which said things unutterable by the tongue.

"Bai Jove, they're weally gone," said D'Arcy, feeling carefully in his pocket. "I am sowwy, deah boys. It is all the more unfortunate because I haven't any money. I was nearly broke, and it took all I had left to get the weturn tickets to Wylcombe. I have only the sum of thwepence."

"You—you—you—"

"Pway don't be wude, Blake. You can take the tickets, as there is plenty of time to catch the twain, aftah all, and I will wefund the money at St. Jim's."

"But I haven't any tin!" hooted Blake. "I spent the last tanner for those hot drinks ten minutes ago."

"Bai Jove! But Tom Mewwy—"

"I paid all I had at the shop as a deposit on the goal-posts," said Tom Merry. "I haven't even a copper left!"

"Weally, deah boys, I must say I wegard this as wathah careless of you."

"Well, yes; we might have known that you would lose the tickets."

"I did not mean that—"

"What on earth's to be done?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "We might have walked back to the school if we had known Gussy was going to play the giddy goat, and started earlier. But he has reserved this for the last possible moment—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Oh, he wants suffocating!" said Jack Blake. "If we walk now we shan't be home till near bed-time, and that will mean a gating for the next half-holiday. I've got a firm conviction that Gussy will be found drowned one of these days."

"Wats! I uttably wefuse to be found drowned. I mean, I—"

"Dear me! Is this the ticket-office?"

It was a thin, rather querulous voice. A little old gentleman with white whiskers and spectacles was peering about in the dusky station. The juniors glanced at him. He was not alone. A lad of about Blake's age was with him—a well-formed, rather handsome lad, but whose face was clouded now as if with gloomy thoughts.

Arthur Augustus raised his silk hat to the old gentleman, in his courtly way.

"This is the booking office, my deah sir," he said politely.

"Thank you very much," said the old gentleman, peering at him; and he stopped at the little opening. "Can I book here for St. James' Collegiate School, please?"

The juniors of St. Jim's looked at him with interest then. He was going to St. James' Collegiate School—St. Jim's for short—and they easily guessed that the lad with him was a new boy for St. Jim's.

A new boy was always interesting to an old boy, and there was something rather interesting about the new boy.

"Yes," said the clerk. "You take a ticket to Rylcombe."

"Thank you! I suppose I should have booked through to Rylcombe in the first place?"

"Yes, certainly!" said the clerk, yawning.

"Dear me! I was not aware it was necessary to change at Wayland, until a porter shouted out the information in a very gruff voice," said the old man mildly. "I am not accustomed to railway travelling."

"Do you want a ticket, sir?" said the clerk in the office, none too patiently.

"Yes—er—certainly! In fact, I require two."

"Well, you had better take them and make room for the next gentleman," said the man satirically.

"Dear me, that is very true! I'm sorry to be the cause of delaying anyone. Of course, I should really have booked through from Charing Cross in the first place. Indeed, I might have come from Victoria, which was nearer my residence, having the choice of two lines."

"Will you take your ticket, please?"

"Yes, certainly! Two for Rylcombe, please! You are quite sure that Rylcombe is the proper station for St. James' Collegiate School?"

"Yes, that's all right."

"Of course, it would be very awkward for me to find myself stranded in a country place, perhaps, with no train to take me away—"

"Do you want a ticket, or do you not want a ticket?" bawled the clerk.

"Dear me, certainly. In fact, I require two!"

The old gentleman laid down a pound-note at last, and the man in the office sulkily changed it and handed out the tickets. Meanwhile, a new idea had flashed into the brain of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I've thought of a way out of the fix, deah boys," he said confidently.

Blake grunted. He hadn't much faith in the ideas of his elegant chum as a rule.

"Go ahead!" said Tom Merry tersely.

"This respected old gentleman is goin' to St. Jim's. Why shouldn't we bowwow the fare fwom him?"

The juniors stared at him.

"Borrow money of an absolute stranger?"

"Why not? He will know that we are St. Jim's boys, and I shall put it to him as one gentleman to another," said D'Arcy, with dignity.

Blake chuckled.

"Well, try him, that's all!"

"I am goin' to."

And as the old gentleman turned away from the booking office Arthur Augustus approached him with a graceful bow.

"Pway excuse me, deah sir—"

"Eh? Do you wish to speak to me, my little man?"

Arthur Augustus turned pink. It was not gratifying to the swell of St. Jim's to be addressed as "a little man." But he did not allow that to make any difference to his Chesterfieldian manners.

"Yaas, wathah, sir! My fwriends and I belong to St. Jim's—"

"Dear me! I am just going there to take my nephew, James—"

"The nephew James granted audibly.

It was pretty clear that nephew James did not want to go to St. Jim's.

"Yaas, sir. We are weturnin' to the coll, but unfortunately we have lost our weturn tickets and we are stwanded."

"Dear me! How unfortunate!"

"Yaas, wathah! I am goin' to wequest you to take the tickets for us, my deah sir, the money to be wefunded when we awwive at the coll."

"Extraordinary!"

"I am awah, sir, that the wequest is somewhat unusual," said D'Arcy. "But as one gentleman to another, I expect you to wely on my good faith."

The old gentleman peered at him through his glasses.

"Certainly!" he said. "I have no doubt whatever of your good faith. I shall be very pleased to take your tickets. Certainly!"

"Thank you vewy much, sir."

"Thank you, sir!" said Tom Merry and Blake. They were really grateful.

A walk to the school through the dark wood, and a row at the end of it, did not make a pleasant prospect.

The old gentleman smiled at them kindly enough.

"How many are there?" he asked. "Three? Very good! Please give me three more tickets to Rylcombe."

And the juniors, highly delighted, accompanied the old gentleman and his nephew to the platform where the local train was to come in.

CHAPTER 2.

Kind to James!

TOM MERRY and his comrades looked with a great deal of interest at the lad who was to be a new boy at St. Jim's. They rather liked his looks, in spite of the gloomy shade that did not leave his face.

The uncle was evidently a kind-hearted, absent-minded old gentleman, a recluse from the busy world. But the nephew was keen, alert, and plainly enough knew how to take care of himself. With the freedom of a schoolboy Tom Merry spoke to him as they sat on one of the seats on the platform waiting for the train.

"You are going to St. Jim's?" he asked.

The boy nodded.

"What Form? I belong to the Shell."

"I was in the Upper Fourth at my last school."

"Oh, you've been to school before?"

"Yes." The boy grinned a little. "I was sacked."

Tom Merry's face grew serious.

"You were sacked. Expelled, do you mean?"

The boy laughed.

"No, not exactly. I mean the headmaster wouldn't take me back. I ran away, you see."

"You ran away from school?"

"Yes."

"You were treated badly?"

"No; they treated me all right."

Tom Merry looked at him.

"Then why on earth did you run away?"

"Because I wanted to go to sea."

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "What did you want to go to sea for?"

"My father was a sailor. I want to be one, too. I don't suppose I shall stay at St. Jim's, either. Why shouldn't I go to sea if I want to?"

"Because your eldahs think you shouldn't," said Arthur Augustus severely. "I am surprised at you. I wegard you as an ass!"

"What's your name?" asked Blake.

"Jim Raleigh."

"Well, Jim Raleigh, if you come into the Fourth at St. Jim's we'll jolly soon cure you of running away," said Blake. "I'm the head of the Fourth Form—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Don't interrupt me, Gussy, when I'm explaining things to a new fellow. I'm the head of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, kid, and I keep 'em in order."

"You won't keep me in order," said Raleigh.

"Won't I, by Jove?"

"Here, don't begin rowing now," said Tom Merry pacifically.

"Who's rowing?" demanded Blake.

"Keep your wool on!"

"Yaas, wathah! Pway don't cut up wusty ovah nothin', deah boy. Bai Jove! Here comes the twain."

The local train was snorting in from a siding. It stopped at the platform, and Arthur Augustus politely opened a carriage door for Mr. Raleigh. The juniors followed him in, and the porter banged the door.

The train rushed off in the dusk.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wegard you as a friend in need, my deah sir. If there is any little favah I can do for you, you can command me."

"Dear me," said the old gentleman, peering through his glasses at the aristocratic countenance of Arthur Augustus. "That is very kind and polite of you, little boy. May I ask what Form you are in at St. James' Collegiate School?"

"The Fourth Form, sir," said Arthur Augustus, inwardly writhing at the "little boy," but outwardly all politeness. "I am, as a mattah of fact, the head of the Fourth Form, though Blake and Piggins both widdleously claim that posish."

"Well, of all the——" began Jack Blake.

"Pway don't intewwupt our respected friend, Blake."

"I am very much obliged to you, my dear lad," said Mr. Raleigh. "You can indeed do me a service if you wish."

"We are all yours to command, deah sir."

"I am taking my nephew to the school," explained Mr. Raleigh. "James is a good boy—here James snorted—"a very good boy, but he has curious fancies. He actually ran away from his last school because he wished to go to sea, and the headmaster very naturally refused to take him back. If the headmaster had flogged him I do not see how I could have objected, though it would have been very painful to me."

"And jolly painful to him, I should say!" grinned Blake.

"Yes, indeed; very painful to both of us. Quite so. Fortunately, James was spared that punishment, but the headmaster refused to take him back. It was very wrong indeed of James."

"It was shocking of James, sir," said Blake.

"It was simply awful of James," murmured Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard James as havin' acted in a diswespectful mannah."

James snorted.

"I have striven in vain to induce James to promise not to run away from St. James' Collegiate School," went on Mr. Raleigh. "He refuses."

"Yes, rather!" said Jim.

"I wegard it as bad form to wefuse to accede to the wequest of an uncle."

"Oh, rats!"

"If you say wats to me——"

"Well, I did say rats to you."

"Then I feah I shall have no alternative but to administah a feaful thwashin," said Arthur Augustus, rising from his seat.

Blake pushed him into it again.

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"Don't begin rowing now, Gussy."

"I am not beginnin' wovin'. I am simply about to administah a little cowwectioh to this young wottah—"

"Order!" said Tom Merry. "I'm surprised at you, Gussy. Where is your respect for your elders?"

"Vewy well, on second thoughts I will not thwash this young person till we awwive at St. Jim's," said D'Arcy.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Raleigh. "I hope you will not quarrel with my nephew. I am afraid James is a somewhat quarrelsome boy. He has such strong opinions. This absurd fancy about going to sea is very troublesome to me. But as I was going to say, you could do me much service by keeping an eye on my nephew."

"They'd better not!" growled James.

"Pray be silent, James!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass upon James. "I wegard it as extremely diswespectful to intewwupt your uncle."

James growled.

"It would be inexcusable for James to cause his new headmaster such trouble," said the old gentleman. "But James is a headstrong boy. His poor father was headstrong. If you dear boys would keep an eye on James, and see that he does not do anything rash, I should be greatly obliged."

"Aftah your wippin' conduct towards us, sir, we should be ungatefual boundahs to wefuse," said Arthur Augustus. "We shall be vewy pleased indeed to keep an eye on the young wascal."

"Certainly!" said Blake. "I am head of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, and you may depend upon it that I shan't allow anybody in my Form to play the giddy ox."

"Same here!" declared Tom Merry. "As head of the juniors of the School House—"

"As what?" demanded Blake freezingly.

"As head of the——"

"Rats!"

"Of the juniors of the School House, I shall regard it as my duty to keep an eye on James. He shan't run away, I promise you!"

"Yaas, wathah! We all intend to be vewy kind to James," said D'Arcy.

"Thank you so much!" said the old gentleman, beaming through his glasses. "I am very much obliged to you!"

But James did not look obliged. In fact, he was muttering something or other about punching heads.

CHAPTER 3.

James Doesn't Like It!

MONTY LOWTHER and Manners were standing in the gateway at St. Jim's, looking down the road to the village, when a cab came in sight.

Jack Blake was seated by the near-side window, and Lowther gave a whistle as he saw him.

"Lazy beggars!" he said. "They've taken a cab back from the station! What was the matter with walking, I'd like to know?"

The cab halted at the school gates. Manners jerked the door open, and put his head into the dusky interior.

"Now then, you slackers— Oh, I beg your pardon, sir!"

A face with white whiskers and spectacles glimmered before the abashed Manners. Mr. Raleigh inclined his head a little.

"Eh? Did you address me?"

"N-no!" stammered Manners. "I was speaking to these duffers. Sorry, sir!"

"If you were addressin' me, Mannahs, I wefuse to be chawactewised as a slackah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Oh, jump out!"

"We have accepted a wide in this vehicle at the invitation of this extremely wipping old gentleman, who also paid our fares from Wayland, Tom Merry havin' been careless with the weturn tickets. This is St. Jim's, Mr. Raleigh. If you will kindly take your face away, Mannahs, the dwivah will proceed up the dwive to the House!"

Manners took his face away, and the driver proceeded up to the House.

Mr. Raleigh alighted, and accompanied by the gloomy James, was shown into the room of Dr. Holmes, the headmaster of St. Jim's.

Lowther and Manners, curious about the new boy, questioned the three juniors, and they all explained at once about James and their promise to be kind to him.

Lowther chuckled.

"This looks like being funny," he remarked. "James looks a determined little beggar, and he wasn't in a sweet temper. But I should hardly think he would have the nerve to bolt from here."

"We are goin' to keep an eye on him, and if he begins, we must nip it in the beastlay bud, deah boys! Will one

of you lend me a sufficient sum to repay Mr. Waleigh for his loan to us?"

"Here you are, Gussy, and don't lose it."

"Weally, Lowthah, I am not likely to lose it," said Arthur Augustus, slipping the coins into his waistcoat pocket. "Bai Jove! What is this in my pocket?"

The swell of St. Jim's drew out three return halves.

"Bai Jove!"

"You—you unutterable ass!" said Tom Merry, in measured tones. "You had the tickets in your pocket all the time!"

"Yaas, it looks like it. I wemembah now, I shoved them in my waistcoat pocket in case they should get flicked out with my handkerchief, you know. It quite slipped my memow. Weally, Tom Mewwy, I think you might have thought of a simple thing like that!"

"I? Why, you young duffer—"

"Quite possible."

"He has given me a great deal of trouble at home on this account, and he once ran away in a trading vessel."

"Very wrong indeed."

"Then I sent him to school, and he ran away from there, and the headmaster very naturally refused to take him back."

"Quite naturally."

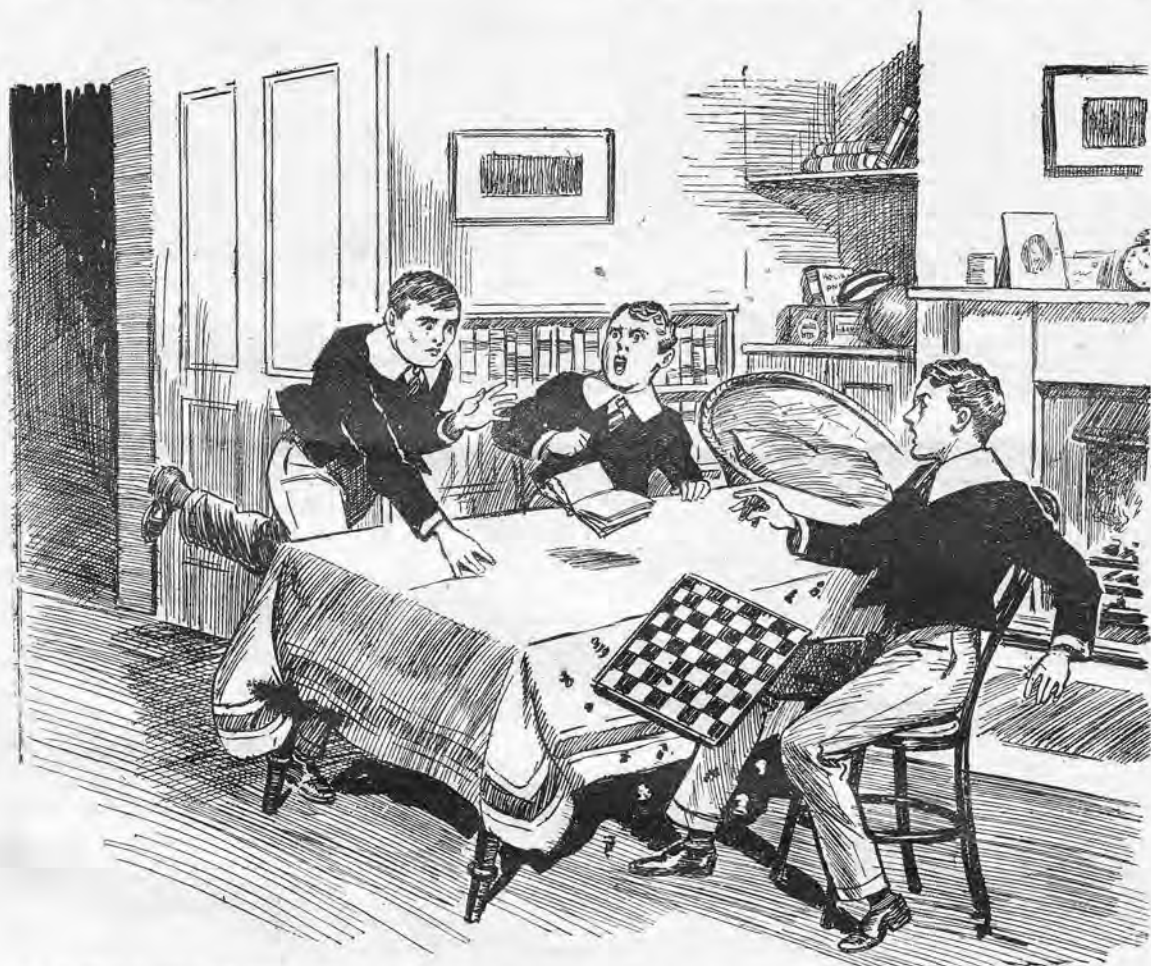
"Now I have brought him to you, my dear Holmes. I am sure that if anyone can deal with him, you can."

"I hope so," said the Head, turning to the gloomy James.

"Now, my boy, you see that it is your guardian's wish that you should stay at this school."

James was silent.

"Whatever your own wishes may be, they cannot count in a matter like this. I hope you are going to accept cheer-



Buck Finn burst into the study excitedly. "I say," he gasped, "there's a — By gum!" He could not stop himself in his haste. He crashed against the table on which the chessboard rested. "Look out!" roared Lowther. But the chessboard and pieces went flying to the floor!

"I refuse to be called a duffah! These tickets are wasted now, owing to your wank carelessness! Howevah, I hope it will be a lesson to you, so we will say no more about it. I shall have to wait in the cowwidor for Mr. Waleigh when he comes out of the Head's study, to repay this little loan."

And Arthur Augustus, who was very particular about a matter of this sort, lay in wait for the old gentleman with great patience.

Meanwhile, Mr. Raleigh was explaining matters to the Head of St. Jim's.

Dr. Holmes was an acquaintance of Mr. Raleigh, though they had not met for many years, and he listened sympathetically to the old gentleman's explanation of his troubles.

"The difficulty is that James has a curious fancy for going to sea," said Mr. Raleigh. "It is probably because his father was a sailor."

fully what cannot be helped, and do your best to get on in your Form."

Still James did not speak.

The Head waited a moment or two, and then he went on in a slightly raised tone.

"If you do your best here, Raleigh, you will find yourself far from uncomfortable. If there is any nonsense, you must expect to suffer for it. I hope that you will be sensible."

He touched a bell, and James was sent, in charge of a manservant, to Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

Then Dr. Holmes turned to Mr. Raleigh.

"Now I am going to speak as a friend, and not as a schoolmaster," he said. "If the boy has such a keen desire to go to sea, why should you not send him there?"

Mr. Raleigh shook his head decidedly.

"His poor father was drowned at sea," he said.

"But that is no reason to suppose that this lad will be."

"Perhaps not, but it is a risky calling."

"Doubtless; but some must follow it. Where would England be now if all our boys were kept at home because the sea is a risky calling?"

"Ye-es; but I think James had better remain at school," said Mr. Raleigh. "At all events, we will see what can be done. I want you to do your best with him here, but if he is incorrigible, I suppose I must think of it."

It was some little time before Mr. Raleigh took his leave, and when he did Dr. Holmes accompanied him to the door.

Arthur Augustus did not care to approach while the Head was with the visitor, so he followed the cab down to the gates. There, as Taggles opened the gates, he approached the door.

"Dear me! Who is that?" said a voice within the vehicle. "Ah, I see; it is that nice little boy again! What do you want, my little man?"

"I have the pleasah of weturnin' that little loan, sir," said D'Arcy, "with my vewy best thanks for your gweat kindness!"

"Ah, yes; I had quite forgotten it!" said Mr. Raleigh, taking the money. "This is very right and proper of you. I think you are a nice lad, and I hope you will be a friend to my nephew James."

"Yaas, wathah, my deah sir! I will look aftah him."

"I am very much obliged!"

"Not at all, my deah sir. You have placed me undah a gweat obligation. I will look aftah James. I have a great deal of looking aftah youngstahs to do, and I shall be vewy pleased to look aftah James as well. Good-bye!"

And Arthur Augustus raised his topper gracefully as the vehicle rolled on.

Mr. Raleigh was gone, leaving his hopeful nephew to make a beginning at St. Jim's.

James was not making a very good beginning. He had been taken to Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, into which Form he was to enter. Little Mr. Lathom peered at him through his spectacles, and nodded.

"New boy?" he said. "Ah, yes, you are a new boy! I hope that we shall get on well together, Bailey—"

"Raleigh, sir."

"Ah, yes, Raleigh! Yes, I see I have your name here, and it is certainly Raleigh. You have been in the Fourth Form at another school, I understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"And why did you leave it?"

"I ran away, sir."

Mr. Lathom almost jumped.

"You—you—you ran away?"

"Yes, sir."

"I hope," said the Form master severely—"I hope that there will be none of that nonsense here, Raleigh. Anything of the sort will be severely punished. Let me see, you do not know what study you are in, I suppose?"

"In your study, I thought, sir."

"My study? Dear me, the boy is very dense! I mean, you do not know which of the Fourth Form studies you are assigned to?"

"No, sir."

"H'm! The studies are very full up, too, just at present, and another new boy is expected next week. Ah, Blake! Blake!"

Jack Blake was passing the open door.

"Yes, sir?" he said, stopping, and coming in.

"How many are there in your study, Blake—No. 6, is it not?"

"Yes, sir," said Blake, with an inward quail. "We're awfully crowded, sir!"

"Yes; most of the junior studies are crowded, I believe," said Mr. Lathom, with his benevolent smile. "How many are there in your study, Blake?"

"Four, sir; and Herries is a jolly big chap, and D'Arcy takes up a lot of room with his things, and Digby isn't a small size, either."

"I suppose you could find room for another?"

"I don't see how it could be done, sir. Of course, we should be very glad to have Raleigh," said Blake, looking daggers at the new boy; "but I don't see how he could be crammed in, sir."

Raleigh grinned.

"Hem!" said Mr. Lathom thoughtfully. "I will see what other arrangements can be made, Blake."

"Thank you, sir!"

"But for the present Raleigh will come into Study No. 6."

"Oh!"

"Will you take him with you, Blake, and show him where to put his belongings?" Raleigh, I will speak to the House dame about your bed. I hope you will be comfortable in the School House, and I certainly hope that you will be a sensible lad, and do your best to get on here."

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Jim Raleigh left the study with Blake. In the passage, when the door was closed, Blake stopped and looked at him.

"Well, of all the confounded cheek!" he growled. "Fancy sticking that object in my study!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Raleigh.

"Do you want a thick ear?"

"Rats!"

Blake clenched his fists for a moment. But he remembered that he was dealing with a new fellow, lonely among new surroundings, and unclenched them again.

"You'd better be a bit more careful," he said. "I've wiped up the ground with fellows for less cheek than that. Why they couldn't stick you over in the New House is a mystery to me. There Figgins & Co. are only three in a study, and a waster like you would have been in the proper place over there! But come on. I've got to show you your confounded new quarters, confound you!"

And Blake marched off wrathfully, followed by the grinning new boy.

CHAPTER 4.

One Too Many!

STUDY No. 6 was a very comfortable apartment. It was not large, certainly, but it was cosy, and it had a window that looked out on the wide quadrangle, and a fire-grate.

The latter was really a large grate, and very useful for cooking. Some of the junior studies had no grates at all, and the owners of Study No. 6 had always considered themselves in luck.

Three to a study was the usual number in the Junior Forms. Space was limited at St. Jim's, as at most Public schools. But as the youngsters generally chummed up, they did not mind close quarters. When study-mates were on ill terms, as in the case of Gore and Skimpole, things certainly were uncomfortable. But there was nothing of that sort in Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form.

Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy were true chums, though arguments sometimes waxed warm and excited in the study.

They were a little crowded, but very cosy. They had fallen into one another's ways, and a policy of give and take made things go pretty smoothly. To have a stranger thrust into the study upset everything. There was no room for him, and he was likely to fit in about as well as a square peg in a round hole.

So Jack Blake was thinking as he made his way towards the famous study with the new boy at his heels.

Herries and Digby had prepared a late tea for the juniors who had been to Wayland, and a savoury smell of frying sausages and chips proceeded from the study as Blake and his undesired protege approached it.

Jack Blake kicked open the door. Arthur Augustus was not there yet, and Herries was at the table cutting bread-and-butter, and Digby at the fire tending the sausages.

The different pieces of crockeryware on the table were of strange and diverse patterns, and the cloth had evidently seen service, but what did that matter? It was all very cosy and cheery, or would have been if Blake had not been worried by the new boy.

Digby looked round with a sausage on the end of a fork.

"Hallo, Blake! Have you got the pepper?"

"Yes," said Blake, dropping a pepper-castor on the table; "and I was nabbed by Lathom as I came back."

"Nothing wrong?"

"Yes, rotten!"

Digby and Herries looked concerned.

"Lines?"

"Licking?"

"No; new kid!"

"That?" asked Digby, with a nod of the head towards Jim Raleigh, who stood in the doorway, looking curiously into the study. He was sniffing, too, the odour of the frying sausages. He was hungry after his journey down.

Dig's way of alluding to the new boy could not be considered complimentary, but Raleigh only grinned. He was certainly not easily to be put out.

"Yes, that!" grunted Blake. "That's it!"

"Well, I don't see why that should worry you. It ain't particularly pretty to look at, but you needn't carry it about with you."

"It's coming into this study."

"For tea, do you mean?"

"No, for good."

Dig dropped the sausage from the end of his fork in his surprise and wrath.

"Coming into our study! There's four of us already!"

"Rot!" exclaimed Herries, with equal heat. "Coming into Study No. 6? Piffle! There's no room for him. Besides, Lathom won't let me keep my bulldog in here, and I'm blessed if we're going to have a new kid!"

"It's orders from Lathom!"

"Lathom can go and eat coke! There's no room, I tell you!"

"He can't come in!"

"Look at him," said Blake, in measured tones—"look at him, grinning away like a Cheshire cat! Looks as if he enjoys it!"

"We'll jolly soon stop that!" said Herries, clenching his big fists.

"You're welcome to try," said Raleigh.

"The cheeky young beggar! I'll—"

"Bai Jove, deah boys, what's the mattah? Pway allow me to pass, young Waleigh. This is my studay."

Arthur Augustus entered, and carefully put away his silk hat. He beamed round upon the chums of Study No. 6.

"I'm here," said Raleigh, "and here I stick! You were mighty prompt in promising to see that I don't bolt. This will give you your chance. I'm in this study as long as I stay at St. Jim's, anyway."

"Bai Jove, deah boys, that puts wathah a diffent complexion on the mattah!"

Blake looked rueful.

"It does, and no mistake. The sooner the beast slopes the better it will be for us."

"Yes, rather!" said Herries and Dig at once.

Raleigh came into the study and closed the door.

"Look here," he said, "we can easily fix this up. You don't want me in this study, and I'm sure I don't want to stay in such a cramped little den."



Raleigh dashed across the plank. It was wet and slippery with mud, and he lost his footing and fell on his knees on the further side. Tom Merry was close behind—too close for safety. He stumbled over Raleigh and went headlong into the water. Splash! "Woosh!" roared Tom Merry.

"I have wepaid that small sum to Mr. Waleigh," he said, "and I have renewed my promise to look aftah the new chap. I twust you will not think of wunnin' away from St. Jim's, Waleigh. If you do, I shall have no alternative but to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"You couldn't thrash one side of me," said Jim.

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Look here," said Herries, "it can't be done! That chap's not coming into this study!"

"If Blake has broughed him to tea, Hewwies—"

"I haven't," said Blake, "He's shoved into this study. Lathom has shoved him in—to stay."

"But there's no woom!"

"We've got to find room."

"Imposs, deah boy. Waleigh himself will see that it is imposs. You must go furthah on, deah boy!"

"Such a what?" shouted four voices in chorus.

"Cramped little den," said Jim. "Now—"

"I uttably wefuse to hold any discussion with a fellow who chawactewises my study as a cwamped little den."

"Well, never mind the den," said Raleigh. "I don't want to stay here. My father was a sailor, and I'm going to be one! I'm not going to stay at this school! Now, you fellows can easily help me to hook it if you like!"

"Yes, but—"

"You don't want a fifth in this study. I don't want to stay here. Let's make it a bargain! Help me to clear!"

The chums of Study No. 6 looked at one another. Then Jack Blake shook his head slowly.

"I must say I should be jolly glad to see the last of you," he said, "but we've promised your uncle."

"Yaas, wathah! We gave Mr. Waleigh our word, you know, and we are in honah bound to stand by it. We are goin' to look atfah you!"

Raleigh sniffed.

"You'll have your hands full, then."

"Wats, deah boy! We are goin' to see that you don't wan away, at any cost to our own comfort," said D'Arcy heroically. "And now suppose you join us at tea, as you are goin' to belong to this study."

"But he's not," roared Herries. "I won't have him here!"

"My deah Hewvies, it's bad form to buck against a Form master; and besides, you know we should have to give in, so we may as well take it with a good gwace. Pway be seated, Waleigh! Pass the sausages, Dig, old fellow."

And the five juniors began tea.

CHAPTER 5.

Bolted!

BUCK FINN, the American boy in the Shell at St. Jim's, came along the passage whistling, with his hands in his pocket.

He almost ran into a junior who came out of Study No. 6.

"Thunder!" said Buck Finn. "I guess you might look where you are going to, stranger!"

The other looked at him.

"Whom do you happen to be?" he asked politely.

"I guess I'll ask you that question," said Buck Finn. "I haven't been here long, but I reckoned I knew all the chivvies in the School House. I haven't seen yours before."

"I'm a new boy; my name's Raleigh."

"Oh, is it? Well, Master Newboy, don't you run into an old boy again or you may find yourself knocked into the middle of next week. But hold on," added Finn hospitably. "If you are a new kid it's all right. I don't want to rag you. I was ragged enough myself when I came here, goodness knows, and I don't want to pass it on, I guess. Where are you digging?"

"I've been put into Study No. 6 here."

Buck Finn chuckled.

"Waal, you'll be like an extra sardine in a tin, then. So you're in the Fourth Form, kid?"

"Yes. Are you?"

Buck Finn sniffed with all the conscious dignity of a Shell boy.

"I guess not—I'm in the Shell. But say, I'll show you round a bit if you like as you're new here. Like the idea?"

"Yes, rather!" said Raleigh, who had his own reasons for wishing to learn the ins and outs of St. Jim's. "I'd be awfully obliged."

"Good! Come on, then! I suppose you know this is the School House?" said Finn, rather enjoying his role of cicerone. "There are two Houses here—School House and New House. We're always having rows, you know, but we always get the best of it. Put on your cap to come out into the quad—it's chilly."

"Right-ho!"

The great quadrangle of St. Jim's was very dusky and cold. Jim Raleigh looked about him with a great deal of interest.

"There's the window of your study," said Buck Finn, pointing up to a lighted window from which strains of music were proceeding, "and that ghastly row is Herries' cornet."

Raleigh laughed.

"Yes, he started it just after tea, and I thought I'd rather go for a walk. How do the others stand it?"

"Oh, they're chums, you know. What are you staring up at that drainpipe for?"

"I was thinking that it might be possible to reach it from the sill of the window and slide down into the quadrangle."

"I believe it's been done by one of those chaps, but it's jolly risky, and I should advise you not to try," said Buck Finn. "Now this is the New House over this way. Needn't go too close or we may get collared."

"How do you get out of the grounds?"

"By the gate, of course."

"I mean, when you break bounds. I suppose you do that sometimes?"

"Waal, I guess it has been done," said Buck Finn. "I don't mind showing you, but, of course, you'll keep it dark."

"I won't mention it to a soul," said Raleigh, grinning.

"Waal, I'll show you if you like. Come round this way, though, and have a look at the New House."

Raleigh bit his lip with impatience, but he assented. They crossed the dusky quad, and the New House of St. Jim's loomed before them. Raleigh might have been interested at another time by the rival House at St. Jim's, and its endless feuds and frolics with the School House, but just then he was thinking of his own business.

"I guess that's the show," said Finn. "You see—Ow!"

Three figures loomed up in the gloom, and three pairs of hands collared the two juniors.

The pairs of hands belonged to Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, of the New House, who were just returning to their quarters from a visit to the school shop, and had at once espied School House chaps on their side of the quad.

"Collar 'em!" grinned Figgins.

And the School House juniors were promptly collared.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Buck Finn. "What the—"

"We're holding on! How dare you bring your disreputable School House carcasses over to the respectable side of the quad?" demanded Figgins.

"I guess—"

"Bump 'em!" said Kerr.

"Frog's-march!" suggested Fatty Wynn.

"I guess I'll lick you!"

"Wrong!" chuckled Figgins. "Guess again!"

"Look here—" exclaimed Raleigh.

"Hallo, this is a new kid! Treat him gently, as a stranger within the gates," said Figgins. "Don't jump on him—just bump him!"

And Jim Raleigh was promptly bumped.

Buck Finn was struggling desperately, but he was bumped the next minute, and he sprawled across Raleigh.

Then the New House trio went on their way chuckling. They vanished into the House, and Buck Finn and Raleigh staggered to their feet.

"My—my word!" gasped Jim. "Where are they?"

"Vamooseed, I reckon."

"The—the rotters!"

"Oh, seat!" said Buck Finn. "It's only a House rag. Come on! You mustn't mind little things like that, you know."

"Oh, right you are!" said Raleigh good humouredly, as he set his collar straight. "I don't mind, if it's in the game. But I think we've had enough of the New House. Just show me the place where you bunk."

"This way, kid!"

And Buck Finn led the way to the school wall at the spot where the gnarled, old slanting oak made its ascent possible. Buck Finn was as keen and cute as a boy could be, but he did not suspect what was in the mind of the other. He had no grounds whatever for suspicion, and he could hardly be blamed for it.

"Here's the oak, I guess," he remarked. "You see, by shoving yourself between the trunk and the wall, and getting a grip on the ivy, you get over. I suppose you know how to climb?"

"I've climbed all over the rigging of a ship."

"Gum! Have you?" said Buck Finn, with new interest. "You've been to sea?"

"Yes; and I mean to go again," said Raleigh. Then he changed the topic abruptly. "I wonder if I could get up here? I think I could."

"I guess so; but there's nothing to get up for now. Come on, and let's have a look in at the tuckshop."

"Wait a bit. I'd like to try that climb. Give us a bunk up."

"Oh, all right!" Finn was always obliging. "Here you are, kid!"

He gave the required "bunk."

Jim Raleigh drew himself up the wall with ease. The climb was nothing to one who could equal the feats of the most venturesome sailor on board a ship. He was on the top of the wall in a twinkling.

Buck Finn stared up at him. He could only dimly make out the form of the boy in the gloom.

"Waal, are you satisfied?" he asked. "You did it easily enough, I guess. Mind how you get down."

There was a chuckle from above.

"Thank you; I'm not coming down!"

"Eh? Gum! What do you mean?"

"I'm off!"

And Raleigh was "off"—off the wall. He dropped into the road, and Buck Finn heard a patter of feet dying away in the direction of the village of Rylcombe.

The American junior stood for a full minute petrified. He was too amazed to move. The flight of the new boy was so utterly unexpected.

Buck Finn recovered himself at last, and clambered desperately up the wall. He glared after the fugitive, but Jim Raleigh had vanished into the shadows of the night.

"Come back! You hear me? Come back, you galoot!"

But only the echo of Finn's own voice answered him. The footsteps of the new boy of St. Jim's had died away in the distance.

CHAPTER 6. A Chess Problem!

TOM MERRY smacked Buck Finn on the shoulder. The American junior had just come into the School House, and he was looking decidedly "blue."
"Wherefore that worried brow?" demanded Tom Merry genially. "Have the raggers been ragging again?"
Buck Finn grinned.
"No. I guess they got as good as they gave, and they're not worried me lately. I reckon that's a has-been."
"Then what's the row? Why do you wrinkle up your baby brow, and—"

"Phew! The young galoot! I guess he was taking me in, then—so quiet and pleasant while I was showing him round—and all he wanted was—"

"To bolt! You were a duffer!"

"Gum! How was I to know?" demanded Finn. "I hadn't a suspish. You ought to have told me—or somebody ought."

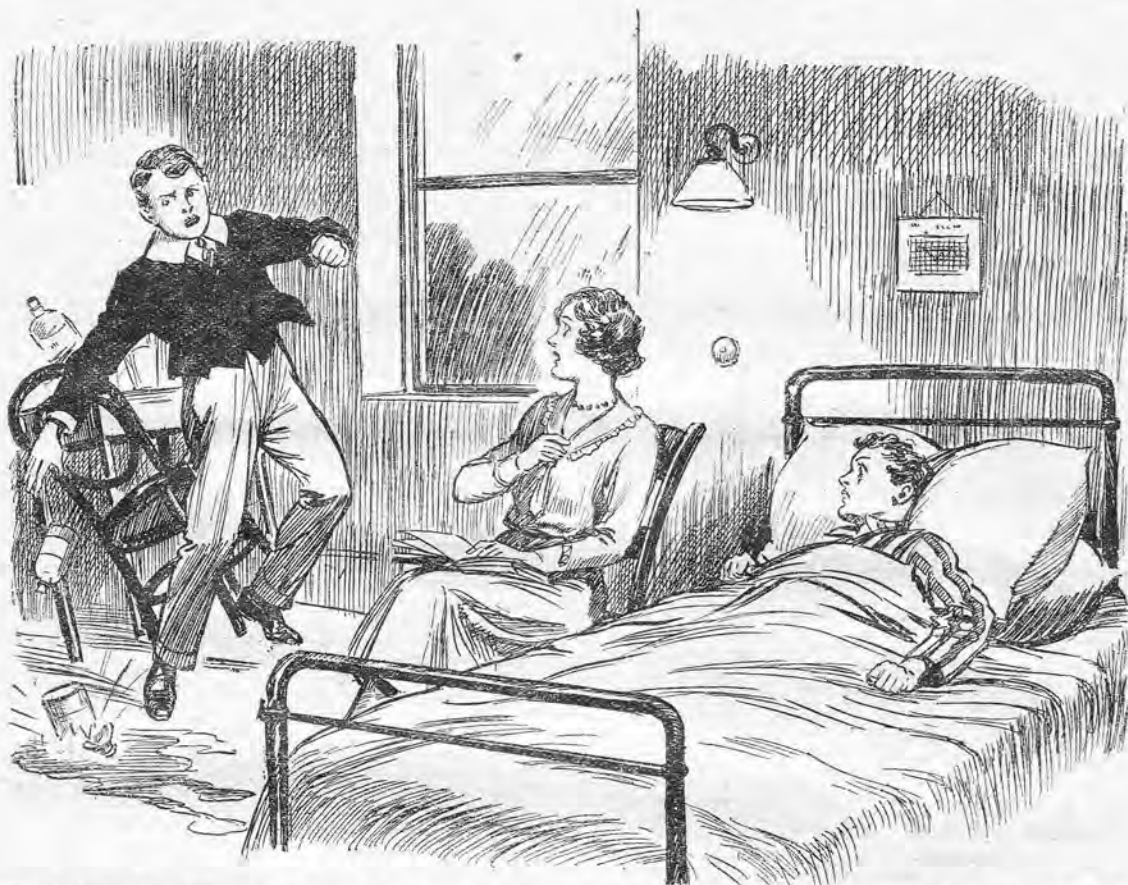
"It's Blake's fault. We all promised to keep an eye on him. And as he was put into Blake's study, Blake ought to be keeping the eye on him now. But look here! He's got to be brought back."

"Blessed if I knew what to make of it when he slid!" said Finn. "Do you really think he means to make it a clear vamoose?"

"I know he does. He'll make for the sea."

"Phew! There'll be a fearful row!"

"There will, if he isn't brought back before bed-time,"



Figgins' chair went over with a crash and knocked against a table, sending two medicine bottles to the floor with a crash that smashed them instantly. "Oh, lor!" gasped Figgins. "That's done it!"

"Gum! I'm blessed if I know what to think about it!" confessed Buck Finn. "I'm a cool chap, as a rule, and ain't easily surprised. But just now—"

"What happened?"

"Have you seen a new kid here—chap named Raleigh?"

Tom Merry looked interested at once.

"Yes, rather!" he said. "I came in the train with him from Wayland with his uncle. What about him?"

"He's bolted!"

Tom Merry gave a shout.

"Bolted?"

"I guess so."

"But—but how? The gates are closed, and Taggies wouldn't open them to a kid," said Tom Merry. "How on earth did he get out?"

"I was showing him round—"

"You—you showed him the slanting oak?"

"I guess I did. Of course, I hadn't the faintest suspicion there was anything wrong with him, and I was just showing him round. Is he off his rocker?"

"No. He's set on going to sea, and he's brought here against his will. He meant to run away from the start."

Buck Finn whistled.

said Tom Merry sternly. "He won't be missed till then. He's got to be brought back."

"I guess I'm willing to try, if you're game to break bounds and go after him."

"That's what I was thinking. I'll ask Manners and Lowther. Which way did he go?"

"Down the road towards the village."

"Good! He's making for the station. I believe he'll have to wait for a train. Will you look it up in the timetable in the Hall, while I fetch Manners and Lowther?"

"I guess so."

Tom Merry ran swiftly upstairs. He burst into his study, where Manners and Lowther were playing chess. They looked up.

"Don't make a row!" growled Lowther. "This beast will mate me if I'm not jolly careful! You can see he's thinking of it by the rotten gleam in his silly eye."

Manners chuckled.

"I've got you, old chap!"

"Rats! You haven't!"

"What about my rook?"

"Blow your rook! I've got my queen to shove in, if I

choose. And if I like to exchange queens, where are you, then?"

"Bishop, my boy—bishop! You may as well chuck it."

"How can I play if you keep on jabbering, Manners?" demanded Lowther crossly.

"Here, chuck all that!" said Tom Merry. "I want you!"

"Then you can go on wanting!" growled Lowther. "I'm going to finish this game, if the college is on fire!"

"I'm ready when Monty is," said Manners, yawning. "The game's practically done. Monty is mate in two, however he moves."

"Bosh!" said Monty.

"Well, play it out, old chap—play it out! I don't mind!"

"But I do!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Look here, that new kid—"

"Blow the new kid! Can't you see we're busy?"

"He's bolted!"

"Let him bolt!"

"Now, look here, you can leave that game. Leave the pieces as they are, and finish it when you come back," said Tom Merry persuasively.

"Some silly ass will come in and knock the board over."

"Hardly worth while, too," said Manners. "You see, Monty is mate in two."

"I'm not!" shrieked Lowther. "I'm not mate at all, if I have time to think, without a set of silly geese cackling all round me!"

"Better chuck it up!"

"I won't chuck it up; but I'll jolly well slog you in the eye if you don't stop jawing, and give me a chance!"

"Oh, please yourself!" said Manners.

"Rats!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Who's chief in this study? I want you both to come with me, and—"

"Shut up!" shrieked Lowther.



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"But I tell you—"

"How can I think this out while you are jabbering away nineteen to the dozen?"

"Look here—"

There was a hurried step outside. Buck Finn burst into the study excitedly, with an open time-table in his hand.

"I say," he gasped, "there's a train goes at— By gum!"

He could not stop himself in his haste. He bumped right against the table upon which the chess-board rested.

"Look out!" roared Lowther.

But the warning came too late.

Buck Finn crashed against the table, and clutched at it to save himself. The chess-board went flying to the floor, and there was a scattering of pawns and pieces.

Monty Lowther jumped up in a rage. Manners remained quite calm. As he had mated his rival in two, he had reason to be calm; but Lowther, who was calculating a way out of a tight corner, was naturally excited.

He glared at Buck Finn for a moment and glared at the overturned chess-board. Then he rushed at the American junior.

"You—you—you rotter!" he roared. "I'll knock your silly head off!"

"Here, hold on! I guess— Ow! Oh!"

They struggled furiously. Finn defended himself valiantly. Down they went with a bump on the floor, Finn undermost.

Lowther proceeded to bump him in a manner that was energetic and painful. Finn yelled and squirmed. Tom Merry and Manners looked on. Tom was laughing almost hysterically, and so was Manners. But Manners suddenly became serious. The combatants were rolling over the chess, and the chess was an ivory set belonging to Manners.

"Here, stop that!" shouted Manners. "You can have a scrum out in the passage if you like! Lend me a hand here, Tom!"

"Right you are! Ha, ha, ha!"

They dragged the combatants to the door and rolled them out into the passage. There they separated and rose to their feet, looking very dusty and dishevelled. They glared at one another, evidently on the point of renewing the conflict; but Tom Merry ran between them.

"Hold on!"

"He's busted up the game!" howled Lowther.

"It's all right," said Manners soothingly. "I had you mate in two."

So far from being consoled by this remark, Lowther rushed straight at Manners, hitting out.

Tom Merry dragged him back in time.

"Quiet, ass!"

"I won't be quiet," howled Lowther—"not if he says he had me mate in two! I was going to change queens, and then—"

"Then I should have done you with my bishop!"

"Utter rot! What about my knight?"

"Well, what about your knight?" said Manners pleasantly.

Lowther glared.

"You know jolly well that I could have interposed."

"Not without leaving your king in check with my rook."

"I never saw anything of the sort. Look here, let's shove the pieces back, and I'll show you! Your rook was on king's bishop's sixth!"

"Seventh!"

"Sixth!"

"Seventh!"

"I tell you—"

"And I tell you—"

"Will you shut up?" roared Tom Merry, exasperated. "If you are going on like a pair of silly kids, I'll go to Study No. 6 and ask Blake to help me instead!"

"I guess that's what we'd better do," said Buck Finn.

"Oh, rot!" said Manners. "We're ready. I don't mind the game being busted, as I had Lowther mate in—"

"Let me get at him!"

"Bosh! Listen to me! I want you to lend a hand, you pair of silly asses! Here, come along, and get your coats, for goodness' sake, and stop jawing!"

And Manners and Lowther came along.

CHAPTER 7.

A Hot Chase!

TOM MERRY kept a wary eye on the two chess players as they donned their coats and caps. He knew them of old. Football is an exciting game, but the wildest game of Rugger does not always lead to such intense excitement as a disputed game of chess.

Manners was calm enough, but his calmness only enraged Lowther the more. Manners was an adept at the soft answer which increaseth wrath.

"Come out into the quad," said Tom Merry. "But don't make a show of it, though I suppose they'd only think we were going for a sprint to keep fit if they saw us."

"What are we going out for then?" asked Manners, as they went down the School House steps into the dusky quad.

"We're going to Rylcombe."

"Eh? What! To-night?"

"Yes. It's that confounded new kid, you know."

"What about him? Have you taken on the job of grandfather to him?" asked Monty Lowther.

"He's bolted."

"Well, he doesn't belong to our study, or even our Form. Why the dickens can't you let him bolt without upsetting a fellow's game of chess about it?"

"Because I promised to see that he didn't cut."

"More silly ass you, then!"

"Oh, don't be ratty, Monty! Look here, the silly kid's bent on going to sea, and he's been brought to St. Jim's against his will. He meant to bolt at the first chance, and he's done it. It will mean fearful ructions for him if the Head gets to know about it. I promised his uncle to see that he didn't cut. Blake ought to have looked after him; but, of course, everything is left to me. I'm going to get the young ass back, and save him a licking if I can."

"We'll jolly well give him a licking ourselves then for the trouble!"

"Yes, that's a good idea," assented Tom; "only, if possible, we want to keep the matter from the Head. Of course, the young ass has no chance of getting clear. The Head would inform the police, and he would be stopped in a day or two and dragged back here like a thief. We don't want a lot of talk to get in the papers, either, about fellows running away from St. Jim's. It gives the school a bad name."

"I guess so."

"Finn was ass enough to show him the way over the wall!"

"I guess—"

"And, of course, he bolted. He's gone to Rylcombe, to try to get a train to London, of course. Did you look out the train, Finn?"

"I guess that's what I came to the study to tell you when that pesky galoot went for me like a wildcat!"

"You shouldn't have upset a game."

"Well," said Manners, "the game was practically over."

"Shut up!" said Tom Merry. "If you start that again, either of you, I'll knock your silly heads together! What about the train, Finn?"

"There's one goes at eight-forty-five. That's why I buzzed in so quickly. We've got bare time to stop him."

"My hat, you're right! Get a move on!"

It did not take the chums of the Shell long to get over the wall. They dropped into the road, and ran swiftly through the shadows towards Rylcombe.

They had indeed very little time to get to the village to stop the fugitive. But they were good at a run, and the ground fairly flew beneath their feet.

Lowther and Manners forgot the chess in the excitement of the chase. They dashed into Rylcombe in fine style.

Manners paused for a moment to look at his watch.

"Quarter to nine!" he gasped.

"All right! The train's always a minute or so late. I can't hear it yet."

They dashed on to the station.

Tom Merry stopped breathlessly at the booking-office and banged there. A leisurely young man blinked out at him.

"Has a kid taken a ticket for London here?" asked Tom quickly.

"Yes; ten minutes ago!"

"Good! Come on, kids!"

The juniors dashed upon the platform.

A dusky figure rose from a seat, and two wary eyes were upon them at once. Jim Raleigh was there, and he was prepared to dodge. There was a shriek of a train-whistle down the line.

"She's coming in!"

The rush and whirl of the train came nearer. Tom Merry dashed along the platform.

"There he is! Quick!"

The train rushed in. But Jim Raleigh was cut off from the carriages, and he dodged just in time from Tom Merry's outstretched hands.

"Stop! Stop, I say, you young ass!"

But Raleigh did not stop.

He ran along the platform, with four eager pursuers close on his track, putting all they knew into the run.

But Raleigh was fleet and active. He reached the end of the platform, where a grassy slope led down to a stile giving admittance to Rylcombe Lane. Raleigh did not know the

ground, but it was an avenue of escape. He ran down the slope and cleared the stile with a bound, and rolled over in the lane.

"After him!" yelled Tom Merry.

The four juniors tumbled headlong over the stile.

But Raleigh had picked himself up, and was off like the wind.

Down the lane he went, with the panting juniors close behind.

It was a breathless chase.

But Raleigh, good runner as he was, was no match for the champion athlete of the Lower Forms at St. Jim's.

Tom Merry gained rapidly, and his outstretched hand tapped on Raleigh's shoulder. The next clutch would have caught him, but Raleigh felt the tips of Tom's fingers, and he turned suddenly from the lane and plunged through a gap in the hedge.

Tom's grasp seized the empty air, and he reeled for a moment, but only for a moment, the next he was dashing through the hedge on the track of the fugitive.

"Look out!" yelled Lowther. "He is making for the plank!"

A small stream—a feeder of the Rhyl—bordered the wide, dark field, and it was crossed in one place by a single plank less than a foot wide.

The plank had caught the eyes of the fugitive, and he was heading for it at a desperate run. After him went the juniors at top speed.

Raleigh dashed across the plank. It was wet and slippery with mud, and he lost his footing and fell on his knees on the farther side. Tom Merry was close behind—too close for safety. He stumbled over Raleigh and slipped from the plank into the water.

Splash!

Raleigh was just dashing on again when he heard the splash and turned round.

Tom Merry came up in three feet of water, soaked to the skin, and gripped the plank. Raleigh saw that he was in no danger and he ran on again; but Lowther was upon him now.

"Let go!" roared Raleigh as Monty Lowther's strong grasp closed upon his shoulder.

"Not this time!" grinned Lowther.

Raleigh struggled. Buck Finn lent his aid to Lowther, while Manners dragged Tom Merry from the stream.

Raleigh had no chance. He was pinioned, in spite of his struggles, and in a few minutes he was a helpless prisoner in the grasp of the juniors, breathless, dishevelled, but defiant.

Tom Merry had scrambled out of the water, and stood shaking himself like a mastiff.

"Jolly good idea to give him a ducking, too!" growled Lowther.

Tom Merry shook his head. His teeth were chattering.

"No; it was an accident. It's all right. Bring him along! I shall have to sprint back to St. Jim's, or I shall catch a beastly cold!"

"I won't come!" exclaimed Raleigh. "Leggo! I—"

"Will you walk or have the frog's-march?" asked Monty Lowther.

Raleigh looked him in the eyes, and made up his mind in a moment.

"Right! I'll walk!"

And he did!

CHAPTER 8.

Caught!

"HALLO! Did you hear that?" It was Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, who asked the question. He was walking across to the New House with Monteith, when, through the silence of the quadrangle, a curious sound came to his ears.

"Atchoo! Atchoo! Atchoo-oo-oo!"

Monteith grinned.

"Yes," he said. "It sounded like a sneeze."

"Listen!"

"Atchoo-choo-choo-ooo!"

The sneeze was followed by the sound of a faint thud on the ground. The two seniors looked at one another.

"Somebody dropped from the wall," murmured the New House prefect.

"Come on!" said Kildare quietly.

And the two seniors strode towards the spot whence the sound proceeded. It was very dark in the quad, but as soon as they were near enough they saw a dark form standing by the wall, close to the slanting oak.

Two or three more were visible on top of the wall.

Kildare smiled grimly.

From the size of the dusky figures he knew that they

were juniors, and he knew that he had discovered a party just returning from an excursion beyond bounds.

He waited. Form after form dropped from the wall, until five were gathered in the shadow of the old oak. Then a voice was heard.

"Quiet, there! If you keep on sneezing, Tom Merry—"

"How can I help it, ass?"

"I guess he's got a cold, and he can't help it. It's all the fault of that pesky galoot Raleigh!"

"Your own fault! Why couldn't you let me alone?"

"Atchoo-choo-choo!"

"I say, ring off, Tom! You'll alarm the whole giddy college!"

"How can I help it, you ass?"

"Don't ask me conundrums. Suppose Kildare should be trotting round the quad? It would mean trouble if he spotted us."

"Quite so!" said Kildare, coming forward, followed by Monteith.

Monty Lowther, who was the speaker, gave a jump.

"My hat! It's Kildare! There you are, Tom Merry! I told you what would happen if you didn't leave off sneezing!"

"You utter ass—"

"I have caught you, it seems," said Kildare quietly. "Who are you? Let me see your faces! Merry, Lowther, Mannors, Finn, Raleigh! All School House boys!"

"Then I'll leave you to deal with them, Kildare," said Monteith.

And, with a nod, the New House prefect walked away.

Kildare fixed his eyes sternly upon the quintette.

"Now, what does this mean?"

"I don't know the answer to that one, Kildare," said Lowther, with his usual coolness. "Ask me another."

"Follow me to my study; or, rather, go and change your clothes first, Merry! You appear to be wet!"

"I feel jolly wet, too!" groaned Tom Merry.

"Then come to my study afterwards! Cut off!"

The juniors cut off. When the captain of St. Jim's spoke like that he was not to be trifled with. Kildare, with a stern brow, strode after them. He waited in his study for the delinquents to appear.

Tom Merry hurried upstairs to get his wet clothes off.

The door of Study No. 6 was open, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was looking out into the passage. He stared at the sight of the dripping hero of the Shell.

"Bai Jove! You look wet, Tom Mewwy!"

"You're the second duffer who's noticed it!" said Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"My hat!" said Jack Blake, looking at the crestfallen juniors. "What's the row? Been swimming with your clothes on, Merry?"

"No, dummy! I've been after that new beast Raleigh, and he's led me a dance, and made me take a ducking."

"You don't mean to say he's bolted already?" exclaimed Blake in amazement.

"Yes, he did—owing to the excellent way you were looking after him!" growled Tom Merry. "Br-r-r-r!"

He ran on to the dormitory.

Five minutes later the juniors presented themselves at Kildare's door. Tom Merry's nose was red, and his eyes were watery. He was sniffing and sneezing as if for a wager.

The captain of the school looked at him grimly.

"And now, what does this mean?" he said. "I caught you returning from breaking bounds at night?"

"Yes, Kildare."

"What had you been doing?"

The juniors looked at one another.

They could easily have exculpated themselves by telling the exact truth. But that would have amounted to "sneaking" with regard to Jim Raleigh.

"Well," said Kildare, "I'm waiting."

"The fact is," said Tom Merry, "we—atchoo—choo—choo! Oh!"

"You what?"

"We—choo—choo—atchoo—o-o-o-o!"

"You had better explain, Finn."

"I guess I can do that," said Buck Finn. "The fact is, we—we were taking a little run—a kind of race, you know. Raleigh ran first, and we ran after him."

Jim Raleigh grinned.

Finn had stated the exact facts, but without giving the fugitive away.

"H'm!" said Kildare. "I haven't any objection to your entering into as many races as you like, but you know very well there's plenty of room in the quad. Where have you been?"

"I guess it was to the village."

"Very well, you'll have six each, and perhaps next time you'll decide to do your foot-racing on this side of the school wall."

"Phew!"

"You first, Lowther. Bend over!"

"It's all right," said Jim Raleigh boldly. "You needn't punish them, Kildare. It was all my fault."

Kildare looked at him.

"How was it your fault, Raleigh?"

"I bolted. They came after me to fetch me back," said Raleigh coolly. "You can lay into me, if you like. I've had it before."

Kildare looked long and hard at the new boy.

"You mean to say that you ran away from the school?" he exclaimed.

"Exactly."

"And why?"

"Because I mean to go to sea."

"Oh, well, Master Raleigh, what you say puts a different complexion on the matter. Do you bear him out in the statement, Tom Merry?"

"Yes, Kildare. That's how it is."

"I guess so."

"Very well. You kids have done well, and the Head will be obliged to you when he knows all about it."

"I say, Kildare, you're not going to tell the Head?" asked Tom Merry anxiously.

The captain's face was very stern.

"I must report the matter," he said. "It is not as if Raleigh was sorry for what he has done. It is plucky of him to own up, but he does not say he is sorry for having gone."

"I want to go to sea."

"You look a decent lad," said Kildare musingly. "If you gave me your word not to go beyond bounds again I should be inclined to trust you."

Raleigh was silent.

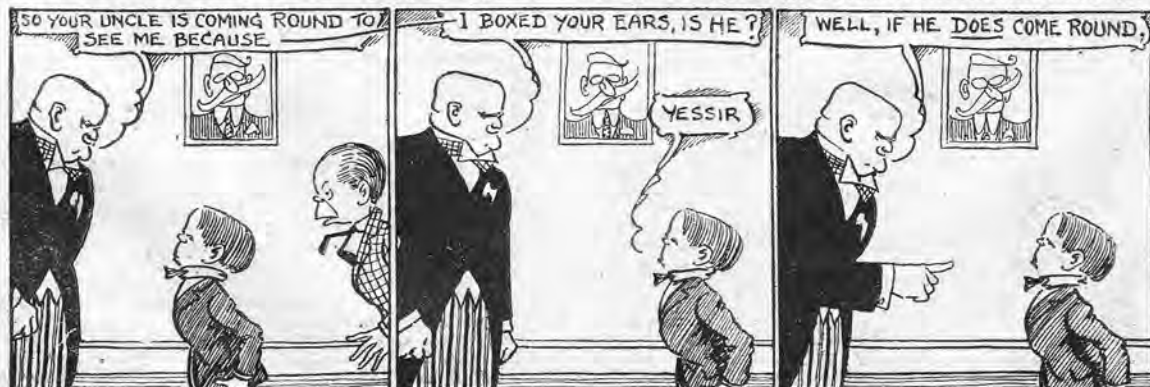
"Come, kid, what do you say?"

"I can't give it."

"Does that mean that you will bolt again if you have the chance?" demanded Kildare sternly.

"Yes," said Jim, with the utmost frankness. "You can lick me if you like. The Head can lick me. But I'm going to sea, all the same."

Potts, the Office Boy!



"Then I shall report the matter to Dr. Holmes, and I expect you will find your liberty considerably curtailed," said Kildare dryly. "You may go now."

And the juniors went.

CHAPTER 9.

D'Arcy Has a Bright Thought!

JIM RALEIGH'S adventure was the talk of St. Jim's next day. Raleigh having owned up to the attempt to run away, there was no keeping the secret. Boys of all Forms looked with great interest upon the youth who had had nerve enough to run away from school. But their interest was not wholly of an approving sort. They admired, perhaps, the new boy's nerve and pluck, but they all felt that running away from school was going a little bit too far.

"It's beastly bad form, you know," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Of course, we know the young beggar has pluck, but wunnin' away from school is beastly bad form, dear boys."

And the "dear boys" agreed that it was.

There was one individual, however, who gave the new boy his whole-hearted sympathy. That was Wally D'Arcy—D'Arcy minor of the Third Form. He sought out the new boy in the Fourth that day to explain his views on the subject to him. He met Raleigh in the quad, and greeted him with a slap on the shoulder that made him stumble.

Jim Raleigh turned round with a wrathful look to meet the beaming look of the younger scion of the house of D'Arcy.

"You're the new kid in the Fourth, ain't you?" demanded D'Arcy minor.

"Yes," said Raleigh, unclenching his fists as he realised that Wally's greeting was not meant in a hostile spirit.

"Good!" said Wally. "I've got a brother in your Form, Gussy. You must have seen Gussy D'Arcy. You tried to bolt last night?"

"Yes."

"Well, I think you're real grit," said Wally, digging him in the ribs. "I bolted once myself."

"Did you, really?" said Jim, with interest.

"Yes, rather!" said Wally emphatically. "I bolted to London after a tiff with Selby. Selby's the master of the Third, you know. I had a ripping time—selling papers for a living, you know. I like your pluck. Go it!"

"I mean to go it," said Raleigh eagerly. "Can you tell me any way of bolting?"

"How did you get out last night?"

"I climbed the wall by the oak. I can't do that again. The porter has chained the dog there. I don't know whether it's on purpose."

Wally chuckled.

"You can bet your boots it's on purpose."

"Do you know any other way?"

"Perhaps I do," said Wally, "and perhaps I don't. I like your pluck, kid, but I can't help you to bolt. That's a different matter. After all, as Gus says, it's bad form to bolt."

"If you know a way—"

"Can't be did, my son. Hallo, there's Dudley calling me!"

And D'Arcy minor vanished.

Jim Raleigh looked disappointed. He had begun to hope something of the scamp of the Third. But even the careless

little scallyway realised that it was bad form to "bolt," and would not lend his aid. All the same, Raleigh's determination was not changed. He would go to sea!

He strolled round the quadrangle, but he observed that wherever he went one, at least, of the chums of Study No. 6 was in sight.

He guessed that the Fourth-Formers had made up their minds to watch him, and he was furious inwardly. But there was no help for it, and he gave no outward sign of having observed the surveillance.

He arrived at the gates, and looked through the bars down the road. Taggles, the porter, looked at him, with a grin. Taggles had been warned of the curious proclivities of the new boy, and he was on his guard.

"Which them gates ain't goin' to be hopened, Master Raleigh," said Taggles, with emphasis. "You can go back."

Raleigh coloured a little. He looked squarely at the porter.

"Is a pound any good to you?" he asked.

"I should say so, Master Raleigh," said Taggles, with visibly increased respect.

"Well, if you should happen to drop your keys for a few minutes, you'll find a pound note along with them when you pick them up again."

Taggles shook his head.

He knew that it would be as much as his place was worth, and he did not intend to risk his comfortable berth at St. Jim's even for a pound.

"Which you can't bribe me, Master Raleigh," he said. "I'm above it. I'm a man of integrity. If you hofferred me a hundred pound—"

Raleigh sniffed.

"I'm not likely to!"

And he thrust his hands deep into his pockets and walked away.

It began to look as if his going to sea was to remain a dream. He had not suffered very much for the previous night's escapade. The Head had talked to him very seriously. His pluck in owning up had saved him from the severe caning he would otherwise have received.

The Head's words had not been without their effect upon the boy.

He had gone to bed, dubious in mind, trying to think it out, trying to make up his mind that he would be a landsman.

But in the morning all was changed again.

With the fresh morning breeze came the longing for the sea; that heart-longing which the true sailor knows. The blue waters, the boundless sky, the white sails, and the cheery voices of the sailors—all were ever present to his mind.

Within the walls of St. Jim's he chafed like a wild bird in a cage.

But there seemed to be no help for it.

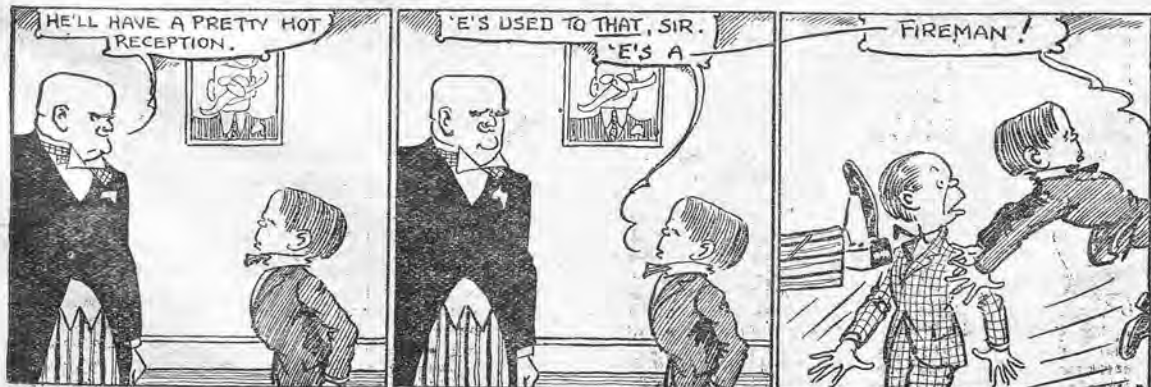
He turned his steps slowly towards the School House as the dinner-bell rang. He noticed that Tom Merry was not at the Shell table, and remembered that he had not seen him that morning.

After dinner, passing Lowther and Manners, he stopped to inquire after the hero of the Shell. The chums gave him disconcerting glares.

"Anything wrong with Tom Merry?" Raleigh asked.

"You ought to know!" growled Lowther. "I've a jolly good mind to give you the licking of your life now, only I promised Tom I wouldn't."

HOT STUFF!



"Where is he?"

"In bed."

"Not ill?" exclaimed Raleigh.

"Yes, ass! Do you think he's staying in bed for the fun of the thing?"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Raleigh. "Was it the ducking last night?"

"Yes. Get along before I change your features for you!"

Raleigh grinned as he walked on. Arthur Augustus was coming along with a very thoughtful expression upon his face. He almost walked into Lowther and Manners before he saw them, and then he stopped.

"I was lookin' for you, deah boys," he said. "I suppose you know that Tom Mewwy is ill?"

Lowther sniffed.

"Yes, I suppose so, dummy!"

"I wefuse to be called a dummy!"

"Oh, travel along!" growled Lowther, who seemed to be in an irritable mood that day. "I am worried."

"Yaas, wathah; I quite undahstand that, deah boy. It's wathah wuff of Tom Mewwy to be cut out of the footah and the othah things, and I can quite compwehend that you feel it vewy much. I wemembah Hewwies was vewy iwritable when his dog Towsah was ill!"

Lowther glared. He was worried about Tom Merry's illness, and he didn't like to have that illness placed on the same footing as the illness of Herries' dog Towser.

But Arthur Augustus went on cheerfully.

"I wemembah Hewwies was awfully watty at the time, and he used to cut up wusty ovah nothin'. I was vewy sowwy for him, and I suggested killin' Towsah and buyin' anothah dog, and even that seemed to annoy him. But to return to Tom Mewwy. It is wathah wotten to have him laid up, as I don't twust these doctahs, you know. They always make a weal illness out of evewythin'. I was thinkin'—"

"Oh, don't pile it on!" said Lowther.

"I wegard that as a wude wemark, Lowthah, but I excuse you as you are wowed about Towsah—I mean about Tom Mewwy. I was thinkin' that what Tom Mewwy weally wants is a good, kind nurse."

"The House dame is looking after him."

"Yaas, and the House dame is a vewy wespectable and eweditable old lady, but what Tom Mewwy weally wants is a wippin' good nurse."

"Well, ass, where are we to find one?" demanded Lowther crossly.

"I have already found one."

"Whom?"

"Cousin Ethel."

"Cousin Ethel?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

CHAPTER 10.

Laid Up!

TOM MERRY was in bed. There was no doubt about it, the hero of the Shell was ill this time. His strong, healthy constitution usually threw off anything of the kind quite easily. He always kept himself fit, an illness was almost unknown to him. But the ducking in icy water after a hot chase, and the long journey home in his wet clothes, had done the business at last.

Tom Merry had caught a chill, and he was laid up. Whether the matter turned out seriously depended a great deal upon the care that was taken of him.

Tom Merry had begged the Head not to inform Miss Priscilla Fawcett, his old governess and guardian. At the news of her darling's illness, Miss Fawcett would have flown to St. Jim's, with enough medicine to kill a whole regiment of Dragons.

Tom did not wish to cause her anxiety, and he did not want any of Dr. Bones' Purple Pills for Pecky Patients, or any of the Green Globules for Sad Sufferers. And the Head had agreed to send no message to Huckleberry Heath unless the illness should become of sufficient seriousness.

Of that he was not much afraid. Tom Merry was too healthy, he believed, for the malady to get a good grip on him, unless he was careless. And the Head had impressed upon Mrs. Minns the absolute necessity of looking after the patient well.

Mrs. Minns certainly meant well, but she was a busy woman. The House dame of a big House like the School House had plenty to do. She suggested sending for a nurse, and the Head reflected upon it.

Meanwhile, Arthur Augustus had acted.

It was after afternoon school, and Tom Merry was in

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bed, propped up with pillows, and looking and feeling very blue.

He could hear the merry voices in the quadrangle. The days were getting longer now, and the boys were able to get a run after school.

Tom felt very much left out of it. As he thought of Jim Raleigh he did not bless him. It was all the fault of the new boy that he was laid up here.

The door opened, and Arthur Augustus came in on tiptoe.

He jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and looked towards Tom Merry's bed before approaching it. Tom was in a bed-room in the separate building used as a sanatorium at St. Jim's. He looked at Arthur Augustus, turning his



Raleigh crossed a plank over a wide-flowing ditch that bordered the water. The chums of the Fourth pulled up abruptly and

head on the pillow, and the swell of the School House caught the glimmer of his eyes in the light.

"Bai Jove! You're awake, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes, Gussy!"

"How do you feel, deah boy?"

"Rotten!"

"Yaas, I suppose it is wathah wotten to be shut up heah," said D'Arcy sympathetically. "I have weceived Mr. Wailton's permish to come and speak to you."

"Good old Gussy!"

"I pwesume you have been feelin' lonely?"

"Yes, beastly!"

"Lowthah and Mannahs want to come, and they are twyin' to pwevail on Wailton. But you mustn't be disturbed, you know. I wemembah when Towser was ill Hewwies was vewy particulah about his not bein' disturbed.

Of course, my conversation won't disturb you, Tom Mewwy."

Tom Merry smiled—his old smile.

"Not at all, Gussy. It's soothing—not to say soporific." "Weally, Tom Mewwy! But I excuse you, as you are laid up, deah boy. But pway don't make any more wotten jokes. I have some news for you."

"Go ahead!"

"It stwuck me—"

"What did?"

"A bwight thought."

"Where?"

"In my bwain, of course," said D'Arcy. "I was thinkin' about you, Tom Mewwy, and it stwuck me all of a sudden,



farmyard and stopped a moment to hurl the plank into the water. He gasped defiance from the other side: "Done you! Go!"

you know. It flashed into my bwain, as good ideahs do, you know. You want a good nurse."

"Oh, I'm all right!"

"Yaas, but you want a good nurse. I hear that the Head is thinkin' of havin' a twained nurse for you."

Tom Merry groaned.

"Oh, scissors! Oh, figs! They'll make me ill among the lot of them. It's having all the paraphernalia of an illness about you that makes you ill."

"Yaas, but that's where my bright thought comes in. I have thought of a much better nurse. What do you think of Cousin Ethel?"

"She's a ripper!"

"Yaas; but what do you think of her as a nurse?"

Tom Merry almost jumped.

"Cousin Ethel! As a nurse!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But she's not here."

"She will be soon."

"Why—how?"

"Because I wired for her this morning."

Tom Merry stared blankly at the swell of St. Jim's. D'Arcy smiled the smile of complete self-satisfaction.

"You—you wired for Cousin Ethel?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"To—to nurse me?"

"Exactly!"

"She'll think it an awful cheek!"

"Wats, deah boy! She'll come like anything. You know, Cousin Ethel is a jolly good nurse," said D'Arcy confidentially. "I was on the wooks once, and she nursed me and brought me wound all wight. She's a wippin' gal in ewevy way, and so patient, too. Look how she stands that fellow Figgins."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes, she's a dear girl, Gussy, but she will think it a cheek, and—and I couldn't think of giving her all that trouble."

"Wats, dear boy! Ethel is goin' to nurse you and bwing you wound. She'll talk to you, you know, and wead to you. She used to wead to me when I was wocky."

"What did she read?" asked Tom nervously, with a dreadful feeling that he was going through the ordeal of hearing the adventures of Good Little Dicky, the boy who never told a lie, or Bad Little William, the boy who robbed an orchard and was gored to death by a mad bull.

"Oh, wippin' things—the 'Magnet,' you know, and things like that. Good school stowies, you know."

Tom Merry's face cleared.

"Good! That's all right! When is she coming?"

"I am expectin' her ewevy minute, as a mattah of fact," said D'Arcy. "Bai Jove, I believe this is the cab in the quad now. I'll go and bwing her here as soon as poss, deah boy."

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy quitted the room, leaving Tom Merry in a decidedly more cheerful frame of mind.

CHAPTER 11.

A Quiet Time for the Patient!

JIM RALEIGH was coming slowly along the corridor. He saw D'Arcy come out of Tom Merry's room, and appeared to be at once interested in studying a picture on the wall. But the swell of St. Jim's did not even glance at him. He was hurrying on to greet Cousin Ethel.

Raleigh waited till he was gone, and then walked on quietly to Tom Merry's room, tapped gently at the door, and entered.

Tom Merry looked up.

Raleigh came quickly in and closed the door, and walked up to the bed. His face was very serious.

"I say, old chap! I knew you were awake, as D'Arcy has just been in," he said. "I say, I'm sorry for this. It wasn't really my fault, you know, I couldn't help your tumbling into the water."

Tom Merry grinned.

"It's all right. I was feeling inclined to punch your head a few minutes ago, but it's all right now."

"Are you really bad?"

"No; only laying up in case I get worse," said Tom. "I'm feeling absolutely rotten, you know, and it may turn serious if I don't take care; that's all."

"That's enough, I should think. I'm awfully sorry it happened. I thought I'd come and tell you so, if I found you awake. That's all, Merry. I'm really sorry."

"Don't bother about it," said Tom Merry. "I shall be the envy of the house soon. Cousin Ethel is coming to look after me—D'Arcy's cousin, you know. It's all right. Hallo, who's that at the door?"

A large head, adorned by a large pair of spectacles, was inserted at the doorway.

Skimpole of the Shell blinked round the room.

"Ah, I observe you are not alone, Merry, and I presume that you are awake," he said. "I thought I had better look in and see you."

Jim Raleigh nodded to Tom Merry, and left the room.

Skimpole, the genius of St. Jim's, took his vacant chair.

"I am in a difficult position," he said. "I thought you would like to hear all about it, Merry, and advise me."

"Oh, go ahead!" said Tom Merry.

Skimpole was a terrible bore, but Tom Merry was patient. Besides, now that afternoon school was over, he expected a succession of visitors, so Skimpole was not likely to be left long in undisturbed possession of the chair by the bedside.

"You remember that during our journey to America I compiled notes for a book of travel?" said Skimpole.

"Yes, I remember."

"I took up this idea to the exclusion of everything else I had previously interested myself in. Now I am placed on the horns of a dilemma. It was my intention to write a book on Determinism which should revolutionise the whole world."

"You mightn't hit the mark, you know."

"Oh, there is no doubt about the effect of the book, once published! I had commenced it: in fact, I had already written the first four hundred and forty-five chapters, and was getting fairly into the subject, when the work was interrupted by the journey to the United States. Now that I am home again, I do not quite know whether to continue the book, or to make use of my notebooks in compiling a book of travels, to be entitled: 'Modern America, as Seen From Within.' Do you think the latter would be a good idea?"

"Excellent!" said Tom Merry heartily. "I should advise you to go at once and begin work on 'Modern America, as Seen From Within.'"

"But in that case the great book on Determinism would have to stand over."

"Well, let it stand over."

"Yes, but then arises the question," said the genius of St. Jim's seriously. "then arises the pressing question—am I justified in letting this great work stand over, while I busy myself upon a book of mere travels?"

"No, I suppose not. Better write the book on Determinism first. Go and begin at once on the four hundred and forty-sixth chapter."

"Yes, but then arises the question, how am I to get it published? It would cost some hundreds of pounds, as it is hopeless to expect a publisher to bring out a book which will revolutionise the world. The profits on a book of travels would pay for the publication of the book on Determinism, however."

"Then bring out the book on travels first!"

"And then arises the question—"

"Oh dear—oh dear!"

"But perhaps I fatigue you, Merry?"

"Not at all, I'm enjoying it. Go on. What's the question this time?"

"Then arises the question whether, in order—dear me! If you must come in, Manners and Lowther, pray be quiet, as I am explaining to Merry the difficult position in which I find myself with regard to—Ow!"

Lowther jerked the freak of the Shell out of the chair.

"Cut!" he said, with Spartan brevity.

"Really, Lowther—"

"It's all right; I'll kick him out," said Manners.

"You need not trouble, Manners; I will retire."

"Buck up, then!"

Skimpole retired.

Lowther sat in the chair and Manners on the edge of the bed.

"Rotten to have you laid up like this, Tom," said Lowther. "We want to come and keep you company, and we've persuaded Railton that is the best thing to do, and so we've come. We're to stay here if we don't excite you, so I suppose we'd better not talk too much. Would you like us to sit beside your bed and play a game of chess?"

Tom Merry grinned.

"It might turn out more exciting than talking," he remarked.

"Oh, Manners would have more sense when you're ill!"

"And I should think even Lowther wouldn't be such an obstinate ass!"

"Oh, chuck it, Monty, old man! When I play a game of chess, all I want is to play it, and have a chap admit when he's licked. When I've got my man mate in two—"

"Has that ever happened in your experience?" asked Lowther, with elaborate sarcasm.

"Yes. It happened last night. I had you—"

"What about my queen?"

"Rats!"

"As for your bishop—"

"Rats!"

"Look here, Manners—"

"Look here, Lowther—"

"If you're going to begin that again—"

"If you're going to talk like a silly ass—"

"If you knew anything about chess, you'd know that my queen—"

"If you had the brains of a bunny rabbit, you'd know jolly well that my bishop—"

"What about my knight?"

"Look here—"

"Look here—"

Lowther had risen from the chair, and Manners had slid off the bed. Tom Merry grasped his pillow.

At that moment there was a gentle tap at the door.

"May I come in?"

It was a sweet, girlish voice.

Manners and Lowther turned to see Cousin Ethel looking at them from the door, with a smile upon her face, and a glimmer of fun in her bright eyes.

CHAPTER 12.

Figgins Tries to be Quick!

Cousin Ethel smiled demurely from the doorway. "Please come in, Cousin Ethel. Manners and Lowther have finished rowing."

Tom Merry smiled a welcome.

Manners and Lowther turned very red.

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Lowther fiercely.

"Ring off, you beast!" said Manners, in a whisper.

"Manners and Lowther have done rowing," went on Tom Merry calmly. "Or if they haven't, they wouldn't mind finishing somewhere else, would you, chaps?"

"You—you—"

"You—"

"I am so sorry you are ill, Tom," said Cousin Ethel gently, as she took Tom Merry's hand. "I have seen the Head and Mrs. Holmes, and they both think that it would be a good idea for me to look after you. So if you like—"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry emphatically. "I don't mind being ill a bit, if you look after me, Cousin Ethel."

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"Well, I hope we shall soon have you well. But you must not be disturbed or excited. Manners and Lowther must run away."

"Oh, I say, you know!" said Lowther.

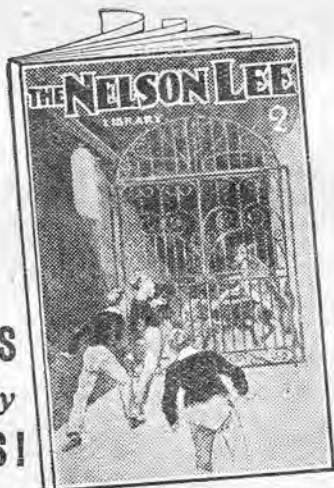
"We're awfully quiet chaps," said Manners. "We can sit in a room without making a sound, you know."

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus, who had followed Cousin Ethel into the room. "You were makin' a fearful vow just now. I quite agree with Cousin Ethel. You must wun away—and you had bettah wun off like anythin'!"

"Yes," said Cousin Ethel. "And you go with them, Arthur."

"Oh, weally, Ethel—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Lowther. "We're going! Come along, Gussy!"



SCHOOLBOYS kidnapped by TERRORISTS!

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"Weally, Lowthah—"
Lowther took one of D'Arcy's arms, and Manners took the other. They marched him off between them.

Cousin Ethel sat down.
"Now I am to see that you are quite quiet, Tom," she said seriously. "You must not talk much or get excited, and you must drink all that Dr. Short sends you."

The hero of the Shell made a wry face.
"Couldn't you get rid of it, Cousin Ethel?"

"No; you must take it at the regular times, too. I am to see to it. Do you feel inclined to go to sleep?"

"Not the least bit in the world."
"Would you like me to read to you?"

"Immensely!"
"What shall I read? 'Hamlet,' or 'Pilgrim's Progress'?"

"Jolly good things," said Tom Merry. "But I prefer something rather—rather easier while I'm ill, you know. Of course, I'm not really ill. This is only a bit of a cold."

Cousin Ethel smiled assent.
"Of course, Tom. You will throw it aside in a day or two. What shall I read, then? I bought this week's number of the 'Magnet' at the station."

"Good! Go it!"

There was a tap at the door, and a fat, pink face looked in. The face belonged to Fatty Wynn of the New House. But the New House junior was not on the warpath now. He came in on tiptoe, looking terribly serious. He had a bag in his hands, which was bulging at the sides.

"I—I didn't know Miss Cleveland was here," he murmured. "I—I want to speak to you. Merry—just a minute!"

"One minute, then," said Cousin Ethel. "I am Tom's nurse now, and he must not be disturbed."

"It's—it's about the grub. I heard that Tom was put on filthy doctor's stuff, so I've brought him something to eat. Look here!"

Fatty Wynn opened his bag, and showed it crammed with excellent things—for a youth who was well, and had a good appetite. There were sausages and cold chips, part of a chicken, some tongue, half a rabbit pie, and nicely cut sandwiches galore.

Tom Merry looked at them and smiled.

"What do you think of that little lot?" grinned Fatty Wynn. "I was nearly half an hour getting them at the tuckshop. I tell you, I jolly near ate them myself on the way, they're so ripping. And I get so hungry in this February weather."

"Jolly nice!" said Tom Merry. And he looked at Cousin Ethel.

Miss Cleveland held up a finger warningly.

"Take them away, Wynn."

"But—but I've brought the grub here for Tom Merry," stammered Fatty.

"Tom is ill. He mustn't eat anything that is not prescribed by the doctor."

"Oh, really, Cousin Ethel!" said Fatty Wynn, in tones of remonstrance. "When a fellow's ill there's nothing like a good feed to set him up on his pins again."

"Nonsense, Wynn!"

"Oh, come now! I know Tom must be hungry! Why, this rabbit pie will very likely revive him, and he may be able to come down to-morrow."

"I shouldn't wonder," murmured Tom Merry.

But Cousin Ethel shook her head decidedly.

"You must take it all away, Wynn."

"I say, be reasonable, you know!" urged Fatty. "Suppose Tom had a couple of sausages and a few chips?"

"It's no good, Fatty," said Tom, laughing. "I'm under doctor's orders, old chap. Thank you awfully for looking after me in this ripping manner, but it won't do!"

Fatty Wynn looked extremely disappointed.

"Well, I've done my best," he said. "I know jolly well I've been ill myself, and a good feed always pulls me round. Some fellows say you feed a cold, and starve a fever. That's all rot! You feed a cold and feed a fever. There's nothing like a good feed to revive you. I say, Miss Cleveland—well, I must say I don't like to see a girl so determined," said Fatty Wynn indignantly. "Oh, all right, I'm going!"

And Fatty Wynn departed with his bag.

"Good old chap!" said Tom Merry. "Just like him!"

"He doesn't realise that you are really ill," said Ethel.

"Well, of course, I'm not exactly what you'd call ill," said Tom Merry, who had all a healthy boy's dislike for being considered an invalid. "This is just a little touch of a chill, that's all."

"Of course," Cousin Ethel assented tactfully.

The room was very quiet. The window was open to the quadrangle, where the trees were showing the first green of spring. The sun was almost set, but the boys' voices could still be heard in the open. The light was subdued

(Continued on page 19.)



Send your Jokes to—

"THE GEM JESTER,"

5, Carmelite Street,

London, E.C.4. (Comp.).

Half-a-crown will be paid for every joke that appears in this column.

UNDOUBTEDLY!

Manufacturer (showing visitor over factory): "This is our latest novelty. Good, isn't it?"

Visitor: "Very good. But you can't hold a candle to the goods I turn out."

Manufacturer: "Oh, are you in the same line of business?"

Visitor: "No. I make gunpowder!"

WILLIAM BEDDOW, 16, Vale Street, Parkfield Road, Wolverhampton, Staffs.

MISUNDERSTOOD!

Old Lady (to street musician): "Do you always play by ear?"

Musician: "Yes, lady. 'Ere or 'ereabouts!"

PEGGY CALOW, Amorel, Narboro Road, Brawistone, Leicester.

HALF PRICE!

Sandy: "What's the charge for pressing trousers?"

Cleaner: "One shilling a pair, sir."

Sandy: "Well, just press one leg—I'll ha'e my photograph taken sideways."

JOHN PETTIT, 11, Linley Road, Bruce Grove, N.17.

A CLOSE-UP!

Sergeant: "Did you shave this morning?"

Recruit: "Yes, sir!"

Sergeant: "Well, next time you shave stand a bit closer to your razor!"

ROBERT McKIE, 24, Cathcart Place, Edinburgh.

NOT AT THE ZOO!

"Now then, wake up!" shouted the stage-manager. "Everything's ready. Run up that curtain!"

"Run up the curtain yourself," replied the new stage-hand.

"I'm a stage-hand, not a monkey!"

GORDON MORRIS, 60, Curzon Street, Blakenhall, Wolverhampton.

JUST SO!

Orator: "If we turn and look ourselves in the face, what do we find that we need most?"

Voice from the crowd: "I know, guv'nor, indiarubber necks!"

STUART LEIGHTON, 126, Goldbeaters Grove, Welling Estate, Edware.

MAKE IT LOWER!

Squire (to Pat, who is riding a bicycle): "Why, Pat, both your tyres are flat!"

Pat: "Sure, and Oi lit thim down because the saddle was too high!"

GEORGE ROBBINS, Coach Lane, Faringdon, Berks.

HE SAID IT!

Teacher: "Sambo, give me a sentence bringing in the word 'dispatch'!"

Sambo: "The dog bit a hole in ma trousers, so Ah puts on dispatch!"

B. HILL, Mountview, Honeybrook Lane, Salford.

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NEWS AND NOTES FROM—



Address all letters: The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, chums! What do you think of this week's yarn? Good, isn't it? Martin Clifford's in fine form just now, and next week he contributes one of his very best yarns, packed with thrills and fun.

"THE 'SWOT' OF ST. JIM'S!"

is a wow of a story! It's about that amusing ass Skimpole, and his efforts to win a scholarship! Don't miss it, boys! Cecil Fanshawe has written another gripping yarn of adventure among the South Sea Islands, in which Battler Bart Crewson and his brother Dick once more play important parts.

For those who like a good laugh, or rather several good laughs, there will be another column of prize-winning jokes sent in by GEM readers, and also there will be another page from my notebook. In short, next Wednesday's ripping issue of the GEM is one which must not be missed on any account—so order your copy now!

CANNED MUSIC!

The day of the Army band leading a battalion of soldiers on a long cross-country march seems doomed, if the recent Army manoeuvres in Denmark can be regarded as a pointer. For in place of the band the marching columns kept perfect time with the regimental airs supplied by a super gramophone fixed in a motor-car, upon which were erected a number of large amplifiers. The soldiers themselves had little to complain about, for there was plenty of music and it was loud enough to "go round" for all. The spectacle of this unwieldy looking car following closely behind a highly-placed officer and in turn followed by a long line of troops was unusual, to say the least. But it's a sign of the times!

A DEAD HORSE COMES TO LIFE!

At least, that's what thousands of American folk thought recently when they attended a race meeting at Belmont Park. The horse in question was the Australian wonder horse—or galloping goldmine—Pharlap, which won something like thirty-seven races with wondrous ease. But as the horse had died six months before this particular race meeting you can imagine the astonishment of the crowd when they saw it drive up in a motor horse-truck. It was Pharlap, too—a dead Pharlap, though, brought to "life" again by the skill of the modern taidermist. New ideas were put into the re-creating of Pharlap, and the result was astonishing. Even when a real live horse was placed next to the dead Pharlap

and two jockeys got up into the saddles it was extremely difficult to tell which indeed was the live horse, for the taidermist had reproduced every muscle and tendon with uncanny skill. Now Pharlap is on exhibition in Australia—as alive to-day as he ever was, if looks are anything to go by. In Javanese Pharlap means lightning, and the Australian wonder horse was all that when the tapes went up.

THE TALKIE BIRD!

Yes, parrots go to school now, and there they learn, or are supposed to learn, how to put over the human voice. To assist them their "teacher" gives them lessons by means of gramophone records. The result, according to the teacher, is very gratifying!

THE MAGIC FOUNTAIN!

You step up to the public fountain, bend your nut over the bowl, and, hey, presto! up shoots a gurgling fountain of water. You don't have to touch any handles, or press any buttons—just your shadow, which interrupts a beam of light, does the trick. That's electricity up to date, and it's certainly economical, for the moment you have withdrawn yourself from the basin of the fountain the beam "joins up" again and the flow of water ceases.

ONE FOR THE HOLD-UP MAN!

We are always reading of desperate gunmen who prey upon innocent bank clerks whose unhappy job it is to carry large sums of money to and from the bank. But these lawless individuals will have to think twice about it now, if the latest invention from America is adopted generally. This invention takes the form of a concealed tear-gas pistol which is strapped to the wrist of the bank messenger and is practically concealed by his coat sleeve. When he is attacked the messenger just bends his wrist and—whiz!—out hisses a stream of tear gas right into the face of his assailant. An almost invisible thread of catgut is connected to the trigger of the pistol and an ordinary-looking ring on the messenger's finger. By bending the wrist he drags on the catgut and the gas cylinder promptly empties its load of mischief. To prevent the wrist of the wearer from being burned by the gas, he wears a wide leather wrist strap just below the muzzle of the pistol. Once that tear gas gets near enough to the bandit's hide his capture is a practical certainty—and a good thing, too!

HOW MANY MILES DO THE M.C.C.?

That's a conundrum sent me by Arthur Todderson, of Walsall, who's been mighty keen on following the

fortunes of our Test men out in Australia. The answer, I believe, is thirty-five thousand miles, for that's roughly the distance our men will have travelled by the time the present series of Tests is over. Just think of it—twenty-five thousand miles by sea and over ten thousand miles by train in the space of eight months, with severe, hundred-per-cent cricket thrown in as a sandwich. Not all joy being a Test cricketer, whether the Ashes are won or not, is it?

THIS WEEK'S THRILL STORY.

How would you like to be in a cage with six polar bears. I can't add tame bears because I am given to understand that you can never really tame a bear. I'm prepared to believe that, anyway. But I haven't finished yet. You are in the cage (we will assume) and as the bears' trainer you are doing your stuff. Then suddenly out go all the lights! What would you do? Personally I'd bolt! But the experience of Janesco, the animal trainer, didn't end like that. For a quarter of an hour he remained in the cage with his bears when the lights failed during a recent show, but he couldn't bolt for the door of the cage, anyway. A nasty-looking polar with whom he had had a bit of a bother the day before stood guarding it. Janesco knew that if the bears scratched him and drew blood he would be a goner. But this courageous animal trainer never lost his head. He had a short whip with him, and by cracking it he managed to keep his charges at bay, although one, more venturesome than the others, actually ripped his trouser leg. Was Janesco relieved when the lights came up again? Ask yourself!

HEARD THIS ONE?"

Long-haired Post: "You are suggesting, Mr. Editor, that I should give up writing poetry?"

Long-suffering Editor: "No, sir. I am suggesting you should start writing it!"

WHAT THE OPERATOR HEARD!

She was a telephone operator, by the way, and in the course of her duties she heard strange noises coming over the wires from a certain subscriber's line. They sounded like groans and heavy breathing, so she promptly informed the police. Two officers dashed round to that house too sweet. Did they find a wounded man or a dead man? Had any fearful crime been committed? No, sir! What they saw was a dog curled up on the floor fast asleep and snoring fit to beat the band. And by the side of the dog was the telephone, which he had knocked over! What a sell!

"ANY ICES?"

If anyone had asked you during the recent cold spell whether you'd like an ice you would very likely have told him to go and chop chips. But what about the gentlemen—three in number—whose job it was to eat fifty ices an hour each for six hours! Fact! Three hundred ices per day these daring folk consumed—and they're still alive! But they were judges at the National Ice Cream Exhibition and had practised the art for many years. In between sampling the ices they resorted to copious draughts of iced lime juice in order to restore their palate. Did these judges deserve a medal? They did—and how!

YOUR EDITOR.

THE CALL OF THE SEA!

(Continued from page 17.)

in the sick-room, burning under a shade. Cousin Ethel made a pretty picture as she sat there in the subdued light, reading to Tom Merry.

Tom Merry lay back on his pillow, listening.

The soft, sweet voice was soothing to hear, and at times Cousin Ethel's cheeks dimpled and a smile played round her lips as she read. Tom Merry grinned with huge enjoyment over the story. But the reading was fated to be interrupted again. There was a faint tap at the door—so faint that neither heard it. It was repeated, and then the door opened, and a big junior looked in.

It was Figgins of the New House—Figgins, with his rugged, good-natured face, and hands that he never seemed to know quite what to do with.

Figgins was looking unusually nervous, and he hesitated on the threshold. His face became scarlet as Cousin Ethel's eyes rose from the book and turned upon him.

"Hallo, old Piggy!" said Tom Merry. "I'm in clover, you see!"

"Ye-e-es. I'm glad to hear you're ill, Merry!" stammered Figgins, who never knew quite what he said or did when Cousin Ethel's eyes were upon him. "I—I mean, I'm sorry you're in clover, old chap—I—I mean—"

"Thanks, Piggy!"

"I—I heard that Miss Cleveland was here—I—I mean, I thought you might like me to come and sit with you for a bit!" stammered Figgins.

Tom Merry chuckled, and Cousin Ethel's cheeks dimpled a little.

"I—I hope I may stay?" said Figgins. "Of course, I should sit down perfectly quietly, and not make a sound. Tom Merry knows what a quiet sort of chap I am about the place."

"I do, by Jove!" murmured Tom Merry.

Cousin Ethel looked undecided. Figgins came into the room and shut the door, letting it inadvertently slip from his hand and slam. Then he knocked a jar over and kicked against the chair.

"I'll make it a point to be quiet!" stammered Figgins. "I'll just sit on the edge of the bed, and—"

He bumped down on the bed and shook it violently. Cousin Ethel pursed up her lips. Figgins got off the bed and pulled up a chair, and knocked it against the bedpost. Then he sat down heavily.

"That's all right," said Tom Merry. "If you make it a point to be as quiet as that, Piggy, you'll do. We can't be much quieter, unless we get an earthquake. It's all right."

"If—if—if I'm disturbing anybody—"

"Not a bit of it! Sit quiet, and listen to Cousin Ethel reading."

"If I may—"

"You may," said Cousin Ethel doubtfully. "But I don't know whether you can keep quiet, Figgins. I am sure Tom would like you to stay, but you mustn't make a sound."

"I won't move a limb."

"Very well, then. Shall I go on, Tom?"

"What-ho! Fire away!"

Cousin Ethel continued to read. Gradually, as he listened, Figgins' confusion died away. He was all right when Cousin Ethel was not looking at him. But he was not used to sitting still.

The room was very still. Tom Merry lay quiet enough on his pillows, and Cousin Ethel sat with the perfectly upright back of a well-trained girl. But Figgins was more used to the football field and the gym than to the sick-room. He felt that he must move, but he dared not.

He felt hot and cold all over. Pins and needles attacked his right foot, and he would have given worlds to move it, but he did not venture to do so.

There was a feeling of cramp in his back, a bursting of perspiration on his hot forehead. The light of the room seemed to confuse his eyes. Pins and needles slowly crept up his calf to his knee.

He felt that he must move or perish where he sat. He ventured to move the cramped leg at last. Of course, his boot clumped against the bedpost, with a clump that sounded like a cannon-shot in the quiet room.

Cousin Ethel looked up.

"I—I—I am sorry!" stammered Figgins, turning the colour of a beetroot.

"Oh, don't worry!" said Tom Merry.

"I—I—I am going to keep quite still."

Cousin Ethel's voice went on steadily. Figgins wondered

how on earth girls could sit still so long at a time without getting the cramp or shrieking. He was strongly inclined to scream himself.

The momentary movements had not banished the pins and needles.

It seemed to have made the painful visitation worse, and the cramped feeling was creeping along both legs now.

A cold sweat broke out over Figgins.

He dared not move again for his life; but he felt that if he did not do so he would go into violent hysterics.

The crisis came at last.

The excruciating tickle of the pins and needles made him forget himself for a moment, and he jumped wildly up. His chair went over backwards with a crash and knocked against a table, sending two medicine bottles to the floor with a crash that smashed them instantly.

"Oh lor!" gasped Figgins.

He dare not face Cousin Ethel after that.

He made two long strides to the door and disappeared. And the girl, after the first glance of amazement, broke into a rippling peal of laughter, in which Tom Merry joined. Figgins did not return to the sick-room.

CHAPTER 13.

In the Dead of Night!

"IT strikes me," said Jack Blake, laying down the law in Study No. 6—"it strikes me—"

"Pway pardon me for intewwuptin' you, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, raising his hand; "but don't you think that's wathah a vulgah expression? You might say that it occurs to me."

"What occurs to me?"

"Wathah it is you are speakin' about. 'Stwikes me' is a decidedly vulgah expression, and it should be barred in this study."

"Have you finished, ass?"

"I decline to be called an ass. I was simply dwawin' your attention to a point of some importance. It stwikes me—I mean, it occurs to me that—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I weally fail to see what you are cackling at, Dig."

"Look in the looking-glass, then!"

"Weally, Dig—"

"If Gussy ever leaves off talking," said Blake in a tone of patient resignation, "I will tell you what strikes me."

"Sowwy, deah boy! Pway pwoceed!"

"It strikes me—or it occurs to me, as Gussy prefers that—it occurs to me that, as Tom Merry is laid up, the duty of looking after that new boulder falls upon the chaps in this study."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, we've been watching him round pretty closely to-day," said Digby. "He's been nosing round every corner of the place. Taggles tied his bulldog up to the slanting oak, so he couldn't skip that way."

"He may try to work it to-night."

"Ah, bunking out of the dormitory when we're all asleep, I suppose?"

"That's it!"

"Very likely," said Herries. "But I can make that all right. I'll take Towser into the dormitory with us to-night."

"You jolly well won't!" said Jack Blake, with emphasis. "I'd like to know how we are to sleep with a raging beast in the dormitory?"

"Towser isn't a raging beast. A nicer, quieter dog—"

"Wats, deah boy! I must say I agree with Blake on that point. Towser is vewy cowwectly chawactewised as a wagin' beast. Besides, he might start gnawing our clothes in the night. He has bitten my twousahs more than once."

"I suppose you looked at him."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Towser in the dorm is barred!" said Blake decisively. "But one of us will have to stay awake to-night to keep an eye on the new kid. After a few days he is bound to settle down and stop playing the giddy goat; but the honour of this study is involved in keeping him here now. You see, we want to get rid of him out of this study, and we'd give a fortnight's pocket-money each to get him sent to sea, and that makes it a special point of honour with us to keep our promise with Mr. Raleigh."

"Yaas, wathah! The fact is that it is a painful stwuggle to keep a pwomise makes it all the more necessary to keep it."

"It's rotten, though," said Herries. "It's rough on us, and rough on him. I can't see why he shouldn't go to sea if he wants to. Lots of people go to sea."

"His uncle's afraid he might get drowned."

"Well, I suppose he could insure him."

Blake looked at Herries admiringly.

"By Jove, you know, I dare say he hasn't thought of

"That," he said. "You might drop him a line suggesting it. Meanwhile, our honour is involved in seeing that Nephew James doesn't do a guy. Which of you chaps is going to stay awake?"

"As chief of the study, I vote for Blake," said Digby hastily.

"Do you?" said Blake unpleasantly. "The chief of the study assigns the duty to one of his followers, of course."

"Of course he doesn't!"

"Yaas, wathah! A chief's place is to do all the unpleasant duties, you know, to encourage his followahs," said D'Arcy. "I vote for Blake."

"My sentiments exactly," agreed Herries.

Jack Blake looked round at three innocent faces. He seemed on the verge of an explosion for a moment. But he calmed himself.

"We'll all remain awake," he said. "Come to think of it, one might drop off to sleep. We'll all remain awake, and stick it out together."

"Yaas, wathah! I wergard that suggestion as wathah wippin'."

And Herries and Digby, after some demur, assented. Raleigh came into the study to do his preparation, and the discussion had to cease.

The self-sacrifice of the juniors in taking steps to prevent the new boy from running away was indeed great.

There wasn't room for five in the study. Raleigh bothered them all; and, as a matter of fact, the new boy, in his quiet way, was bothering them just as much as he could. He thought he might as well get his "own" back for the way they had watched him during the day, and also he rightly considered that the more trouble he was, the less likely their watchfulness would be to continue.

He upset ink, he knocked over books and papers, he moved suddenly when they were working, and jolted the table, he sat on D'Arcy's silk hat, and he kicked over Herries' cornet, all in the space of one short hour.

When he left the study the four chums looked at one another, breathing hard.

"And that's the unspeakable gnome we're going to try to keep here," said Blake.

"Bai Jove, you know, we were wathah hasty in makin' that promise to Mr. Waleigh," remarked Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "But we must stick to it, deah boys!"

And the "deah boys" reluctantly agreed that they must. At bed-time Raleigh quietly joined the Fourth Form going up to the dormitory, and he turned in with the rest. But there was a look in his eye that meant mischief, as Jack Blake was quite keen enough to see.

Kildare saw lights out in the Fourth Form dormitory. He gave Raleigh a curious glance as he said good-night.

Half an hour after lights out Raleigh sat up in bed. He peered to and fro in the darkness, and muttered:

"You fellows asleep?"

Three voices responded in unison:

"Not much!"

And a fourth voice added:

"Wathah not, deah boy!"

Jim Raleigh settled himself down again. But he did not sleep. As the clock in the tower chimed out the hour of eleven he sat up again.

"Asleep, you chaps?"

"Hardly!" said Blake.

"Not half!" said Digby.

"Wathah not, deah boy!"

Herries did not reply. He was fast asleep.

Another long period of waiting. Raleigh was too excited to sleep. But the chums of the Fourth were fighting against drowsiness heroically. They were determined not to allow slumber to creep upon them, but to boys tired with a hard day's work and play it was not easy to keep awake in the silent watches of the night.

Half-past eleven!

Raleigh slipped from his bed. He made but slight sound, but that sound, slight as it was, was heard.

A voice came from the shadows of the long dormitory:

"You needn't get up, you new kid."

"Bai Jove, wathah not! I've got an eye on you, deah boy."

Raleigh gritted his teeth. But the next moment he grinned. Digby was evidently asleep now, as well as Herries. Only Blake and D'Arcy remained wakeful.

Twelve!

It was midnight, and all St. Jim's was silent. Raleigh lay wakeful, his heart beating. As the last stroke of midnight died away he slipped from his bed again.

A drowsy voice sounded in the darkness.

"Chuck that, Raleigh!"

Arthur Augustus had dropped off at last. But Jack Blake, like the last of the Old Guard, was still steadfast. Jim Raleigh crept back into bed savagely.

Half-past twelve!

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"You fellows asleep?"

It was a whisper from Raleigh's bed.

But now there was no reply. Jack Blake, the last of the watchful four, was safe in the embrace of Morpheus.

Raleigh grinned in the darkness. He crept out of bed, and hastily but silently donned his clothes. It did not take him long. His boots were downstairs, but he had placed a second pair under his bed ready. He was finished in a few minutes, and he crept to the door. His boots made a slight sound, and he paused and listened intently, his heart beating like a hammer.

But no sound or movement came from the juniors. They were fast asleep, and Raleigh might probably have tramped heavily across the dormitory without waking them. But he didn't risk it. He trod slowly and carefully to the door.

He drew a deep breath as he gripped the handle. At last he was free—at last nothing lay in his path! To reach Study No. 6, to slide down the drain-pipe to the quad, and flee—all was easy before him.

He turned the handle of the door silently and pulled.

He pulled again in amazement. The door usually opened easily enough. Now it seemed to be jammed. He pulled again with all his strength. But the door did not budge.

Raleigh pulled, and pulled, and pulled. But there was nothing but a creak from the door to reward him. It would not open.

With feelings too deep for words the new boy at St. Jim's realised the truth. The door was locked on the outside!

CHAPTER 14.

More Self-Sacrifice!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY sat up in bed at the first clang of the rising-bell the following morning.

He fished out his eyeglass and jammed it into his drowsy eye, and glanced towards the new boy's bed.

Jim Raleigh was there, fast asleep.

"It's all wight, Blake!" said D'Arcy, in a tone of relief. "The wottah is all wight! I must have fallen asleep last night!"

"Eh?" said Blake sleepily. "By Jove, I must have been asleep, too!"

"So was I!" said Herries, sitting up and rubbing his eyes. "It's curious, too, that I don't remember falling off!"

"But it's all wight," said D'Arcy. "Fortunately, I stayed awake long enough to see that the wottah did not look it. It's all wight!"

Jim Raleigh woke in time to hear D'Arcy's remark, and he grinned. If the dormitory door had not been locked on the outside the previous night the chums would not have found him in bed that morning.

The Fourth-Formers went down to breakfast. Tom Merry was not to be seen at the Shell table. He was still laid up. But Cousin Ethel was staying at St. Jim's to look after him, and there was more than one fellow who envied Tom Merry his illness.

"As a mattah of fact, the boundah's in clovah," said D'Arcy. "Cousin Ethel's a wippin' nurse, you know. I don't suppose Tom Mewwy will be in a feahful huwwy to get well, eithah."

It was a half-holiday that day—a keen February day—and the weather was excellent for football.

To the football field the thoughts of all the juniors turned as they left the class-room after morning lessons.

"It's a ripping afternoon!" Blake remarked. "After the wicked weather we've had, it's a chance to get in a really good practice match."

"Yaas, wathah, but—"

"Don't you start butting me, D'Arcy. You're coming out to footer practice, whether you're exhausted or not."

"I have no objection to footah pwactice, but—"

"Then blow your buts! You're not going out to get a new hat or necktie this afternoon. You're going to practise."

"But—"

"Do you want to be left out of the Form team when we play the Shell?" demanded Blake indignantly.

"Certainly not, Blake, but—"

"Blessed if I ever saw a chap like Gussy for arguing!" exclaimed Blake, exasperated. "Whatever I say he starts butting—"

"But—"

"There he goes again, like a giddy gramophone with only one record—"

"Yaas; but—but you won't give me a chance to speak!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I wergard your intewwuptions as bein' in the worst of taste. I was goin' to say that if we all play footah, who is goin' to look aftah young Waleigh?"

"My hat! I had forgotten that worm!"

"Yaas, I wathah thought you had, deah boy. If I didn't



Raleigh rushed round the corner and crashed into little Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form. Raleigh reeled back from the shock and sat down in the mud; and Mr. Lathom sat in the mud, too. "Dear me!" he gasped. "What has happened? Where are my glasses?"

wemembah things, I weally do not know how we should get on at all."

"Look here, we can't give up an afternoon's footer to look after that young rotter!" said Herries wrathfully.

"It's rot!" said Digby. "Why can't they let him go to sea?"

Blake looked worried.

"It can't be helped," he said. "We've given our word to look after the blitherer. We didn't know what a big job it was going to be. But we've given our word. We've got to keep it."

"Do you mean to say we're to cut the footer?" demanded Digby, rather excitedly.

"No; you chaps can play," said Blake glumly. "I'll look after the beast!"

"Wathah not!" said D'Arcy instantly. "I'll keep you company, deah boy."

"Oh, that's bosh!" said Digby. "We'll stick to you, Jack. If you cut, we all cut!"

Jim Raleigh passed them at that moment. Blake shook his fist at him, and Jim grinned as he passed on. He could see that he was getting on the nerves of the chums of Study No. 6, but that did not trouble him. Sooner or later he thought they would be willing to close one eye while he escaped.

During the half-holiday he was pretty certain, however, of finding an opportunity of bolting, even with the chums of the Fourth on the watch.

When most of the juniors were on the playing fields, and all of them more or less absorbed in their own pursuits, it would be curious if the would-be sailor could not find his chance.

And the consequences of failure in case of recapture did not frighten him. He was willing to "face the music."

When the shouts of the juniors rang from the football field, Jack Blake and his chums looked at one another lugubriously.

Self-sacrifice had never seemed so hard as at that moment. "Absolutely rotten!" said Blake. "Fancy having to loaf about a whole afternoon, instead of going down to footer!"

"Suppose we go and pay Tom Mewwy a visit?" suggested Arthur Augustus. "That would be only kind, you know."

"Good idea! I suppose we needn't follow that Raleigh beast about like shadows? He can be left alone for a minute or two?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'll give him a jolly good hiding when he bolts again," said Digby; "and if he gets a bigger hiding every time, he'll drop it in the long run."

The four chums made their way to the sanatorium.

Tom Merry was still in bed, but he was allowed to receive visitors for a short time, and, of course, he was glad to see the chums of the Fourth.

Cousin Ethel opened the door, and the boys entered on tiptoe. Mrs. Mimms was seated in an easy-chair by the fire, sewing. Cousin Ethel had been reading to Tom. Tom was looking rather pale, but still cheerful, and he grinned pleasantly at the chums of the Fourth.

"Hallo! Why aren't you down at the footer?" he asked.

"Got to look after the new beast."

"Oh, I see!"

"Thought we'd give you a look in, too," said Blake. "How are you?"

"Ripping!"
 "You're looking rather putty-coloured."
 "Oh, that's only staying indoors, you know."
 "I weally fail to see how you can be wippin' when you are ill, Tom Mewry."
 "Oh, I'm not exactly what you'd call ill. This is a cold, that's all, only it's got down my neck."

Jack Blake grinned.
 "I hope we shall soon see you up again, Merry," he said.
 "You've got to play in the Form match, you know. We don't want to lick the Shell without you in the team."
 "Don't you worry, my son! You won't lick the Shell!"
 "We'll jolly well—!" Cousin Ethel held up a warning finger, and Blake calmed down at once. "That's all right, Tommy, we mean business this time. Sorry you've got to stick indoors in this ripping footer weather."
 "Oh, I'm all right!" grinned Tom. "I'm jolly comfy here."

He looked comfortable. When the Fourth-Formers took their leave, Cousin Ethel's sweet voice went on reading, and Tom Merry listened very contentedly. He was feeling weak, and it was very restful there, and he thought, too, how gladly Figgins would have given up footer that afternoon to change places with him.

"I say, Ethel," he said, at the pause at the end of a chapter.

The girl looked at him.

"Yes, Tom?"

"It's awfully good of you to look after me like this."

"Nonsense! Why shouldn't I?"

"But you must be leaving a lot of things to come here all of a sudden and turn nurse," persisted Tom. "I'm jolly grateful, you know." He coloured. "I'm not much of a hand at jawing; but I'm really jolly grateful. All right, I'll shut up if you like. Go on with the yarn."

And Cousin Ethel smiled and read on.

CHAPTER 15.

Run Down!

JACK BLAKE glanced round the quadrangle as he came out of the School House. There were plenty of fellows in sight, but Jim Raleigh was not among them. Lowther and Manners were going down to football, Lowther with a ball under his arm, and Blake tapped him on the shoulder.

"Have you seen the new kid?"

"Finn? Yes, he's yonder."

"I don't mean Finn. I mean the new kid in the Fourth."

"Oh, I never notice Fourth-Formers," said Lowther loftily. And he walked on, leaving Blake on the verge of an explosion.

"Pway don't get watty, Blake," said D'Arcy. "There's no time to give Lowther a thwashin'. Pway have you seen Waleigh, Weilly?"

"Sure, I have," said the Irish junior, stopping. "I've just been speaking to him, bedad."

Blake drew a breath of relief.

"Then he's not bolted?"

"Faith, and he was there five minutes ago, anyway."

"Where is he?"

"I left him at the gate of the Head's garden. He was asking me what was on the other side of the garden, and sure I told him."

"The young rotter! He's at it again! Come on, kids!"

And the chums of the Fourth dashed off, leaving Reilly staring after them in astonishment.

There was little doubt that Raleigh was "at it again," as Blake expressed it.

There were too many watchful eyes for Raleigh to hope to leave by the public gates. But by cutting across the Head's garden it was possible to leave St. Jim's by climbing the ivied wall.

If the junior crossed the garden undetected, the rest would be easy, as the practicable part of the wall was out of sight of the windows.

Juniors were not allowed in the Head's garden, but that was not likely to trouble Jim Raleigh just then. It did not trouble Blake & Co., either. They scrambled over the gate and dashed up the gravel path. There was a cry from D'Arcy.

"Pway hold on, deah boys! I've dwopped my toppah!"

The "deah boys" did not even answer.

They dashed right on, and D'Arcy stopped alone. He chased his topper and caught it, and dashed after them with the hat in his hand, and his eyeglass flying at the end of its cord.

There was a voice from down the garden—that of the Head's gardener, scandalised by the nerve of the juniors.

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"Hi, there! Stop! Do you 'ear?"

The juniors heard, but they did not stop.

Onward they dashed, and Blake, Herries, and Digby scrambled one after another over the ivied wall.

The gardener rushed in pursuit, spade in hand.

Arthur Augustus was last, and he redoubled his efforts as he heard the angry gardener's footsteps pounding on the gravel behind.

He reached the wall, and took a desperate leap, and clambered over the ivy, and shivered all over as he heard the spade clump against the wall behind him.

He rolled over in the lane, his hat flying into the mud, and sat up, feeling dazed.

"Pway hold on, deah boys! I am uttably exhausted."

But the juniors were tearing up the path to the road.

Arthur Augustus collected himself and his hat, and followed breathlessly.

Blake & Co. turned into the road, and looked along it in the direction of the village of Rylcombe.

"There he is!" roared Herries.

He pointed at a figure that was going up the road at a racing pace. It was Jim Raleigh.

The wind carried Herries' voice to his ears, and he looked back over his shoulder, and quickened his pace as he caught sight of the chums of the Fourth.

"That's the beast!" said Blake, with much satisfaction.

"We'll have him!"

"Wight-ho!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Wun, deah boys! Wun like anything!"

They dashed up the road.

Raleigh was in good condition, and he gave them a good lead. But Blake was in splendid form and quite fresh.

Steadily he gained on the fugitive.

Raleigh looked round, and saw Blake drawing closer.

A fierce look came over his face, and had Blake been alone the runaway would undoubtedly have stopped and fought the matter out.

But he had no chance against four, and stopping meant being recaptured and being marched back to the school.

So he redoubled his efforts, and dashed on at renewed speed. But steadily nearer and nearer came the beat of Blake's footsteps, and close behind him ran his chums.

Raleigh realised that he would never reach the village, and if he did he could not fail to be cornered at the station. He caught sight of the stile giving admittance to the footpath through Rylcombe Wood, and he turned from the road and cleared it at a jump.

"Good!" exclaimed Blake.

And he followed suit.

After him came each of the juniors in turn—Arthur Augustus stumbling, and rolling on the grass, much to the detriment of his clothes.

Raleigh was going down the path in fine style, but the steady, pounding footsteps behind him came nearer and nearer.

The junior suddenly turned from the path and dashed along a scarcely marked track, leading through the trees.

Jack Blake smiled grimly.

He knew that Raleigh hoped to dodge him in the wood, among the trees and thickets, and had it been summer-time he might have succeeded.

But now there was no foliage on the trees, no leaves on the thin, frozen-looking thickets, and the fugitive could be seen plainly enough between the leafless stems as he ran on.

"Keep together!" panted Blake. "We'll have him now!"

"Yas, wathah!"

Again Raleigh turned. The track was hard going, and he was unable to lose himself to the sight of the pursuers.

He came out of the wood upon the road again, and took to the fields. The run was beginning to tell upon all the juniors now. The pace was slower, and they were breathing hard.

But they stuck to it with indomitable pluck. Raleigh was determined not to be caught, and the pursuers were equally determined not to be beaten, and so the chase was certain to go on till either one or the other dropped.

Raleigh crossed a plank over a wide-flowing ditch that bordered a farmyard, and stopped a moment to hurl the plank into the water. The chums of the Fourth stopped abruptly on the verge of the water.

Raleigh gasped defiance from the other side.

"Done you! Go and eat coke!"

"Bai Jove!"

"We're going to jump this!" said Blake, between his teeth. "Come back and get a run! Hallo! Look out, Raleigh!"

Raleigh turned round.

A farmer's man was rushing at him with a very red and angry face. The excited junior had hurled the plank into the water in the full view of the farmer's man, who was pitchforking straw near at hand.

The action seemed to the farm hand the very height of schoolboy nerve, and he was rushing at Raleigh with vengeance in his eyes.

The junior dodged him, and dashed off.
 "Come back, dang you!" roared the man.
 And as Raleigh did not stop, he rushed in pursuit, still with the pitchfork in his hand.
 The chums of Study No. 6 retreated to a distance from the ditch to get a run, and then dashed forward again.
 It was a wide jump, but they were in a resolute humour, and they succeeded.

Clear across the wide-flowing water they sprang, landing with several inches to spare on the other side.
 "Bai Jove, that's wippin'!" gasped D'Arcy. "I was afraid we should get a duckin', like Tom Mewwy, and Cousin Ethel doesn't want to stay and nurse all the juniors of St. Jim's, you know."

"Come on!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 They were sprinting across the farmyard in a second or two more. Raleigh was running well, with the angry farm hand close behind him. The St. Jim's juniors soon overtook the farmer's man.

Blake was grinning now.
 There was a wall ahead of the fugitive, and Blake, who knew the country well, knew what was on the other side of that wall.

"It's all right now," he panted. "That's Sir Neville Boyle's land on the other side. You know, since the poaching affair, Sir Neville has had his grounds guarded as if the birds were worth their weight in gold. Raleigh will be stopped in two ticks if he gets over the wall!"

"And if he doesn't?"
 "We shall have him."
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 Raleigh was close up to the wall now.

It was not a high one. Raleigh did not hesitate for a moment. He leaped at it, caught with his hands, and scrambled up.

The pursuers expected him to disappear on the other side. But he did not.

There was a sound of loud and angry barking from beyond the wall, and Blake burst into a breathless laugh.

"He stopped!"
 Raleigh remained sitting on the wall in dismay.

The chums of St. Jim's arrived breathless, and looked through the gates. Three or four savage-looking dogs were barking at Raleigh, and leaping up in the endeavour to reach him with their teeth.

It was as much as Raleigh's skin was worth to jump down amid the savage animals.

"Got him!" gasped Jack Blake.

CHAPTER 16.

Mr. Raleigh Gives In!

JIM RALEIGH looked down at the dogs, and looked back at the juniors. The angry look faded from his face. He was a sportsman, and he could take a defeat.

"You've done me," he said.
 "Yaas, wathah! Pway step down, deah boy!"

"I'll please myself about that," said Raleigh.
 "You won't!" said Blake grimly. "Here, you with the pitchfork, give him a prod or two, will you?"

"Right-ho!" grinned the farmer's man.
 Raleigh squirmed off the wall.

"Hold on! I'm coming!"

He was on the ground in a moment, and the grasp of the juniors fastened on him. The farmer's man reversed his pitchfork, with the evident intention of giving Raleigh a drubbing with the handle; but Arthur Augustus interposed. He slipped a shilling into the man's horny hand, and the farmer's man grinned and took himself and his pitchfork off.

"Now, you're coming back to St. Jim's, young Raleigh!" said Blake grimly. "Are you going to give your parole, or shall we march you home?"

"I'm going to cut if I get a chance."
 "Take his arms, then."

And Raleigh was marched off, with Blake holding one arm and Herries the other. Digby walked behind with D'Arcy, to cut off the escape of the new boy if he should contrive to get loose and bolt.

They entered the Rylcombe Road again, and proceeded in this order towards the school.

Raleigh's eyes were very restless. He was looking for a chance to bolt, but the juniors held on to his arms in a way that was not to be argued with.

But at a corner in the lane there came a chance at last. The juniors crowded on to the path out of the way of a lumbering market-cart, and Raleigh, with a tremendous wrench, tore himself loose and bolted.

"After him!" shrieked Blake.
 Raleigh dashed on, round the corner of the lane, and then there was a yell.

A little gentleman, in spectacles, was walking towards the village, and Raleigh, dashing round the corner, had rushed right into him and sent him flying.

He reeled back from the shock, and sat down in the mud; and Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, sat in the mud, too.

"Dear me! What has happened? Where are my glasses?"

"Collar him!" gasped Digby.

As Raleigh staggered up he was collared. Blake helped Mr. Lathom to his feet, and Arthur Augustus picked up his glasses and handed them to him with a polite bow.

"Wh-wh-what was it ran into me?" he exclaimed.
 "I'm sorry, sir," said Jim.

The Form master turned his spectacles upon the breathless new boy.

"Ah, it was you, Raleigh! Oh, some more of your escapades, I suppose? You were forbidden to go beyond the school walls this afternoon."

Raleigh was silent.
 "You have run away again!"

Still the new boy did not speak.
 Mr. Lathom's brow grew very stern.

"I am glad to see that your schoolfellows have prevented you from this act of disgrace to the college!" he exclaimed. "You will come back with me, Raleigh, and I shall take care that you do not escape again. I am ashamed of you!"

"I am sorry, sir; but—"
 "Not a word more. Come!"

And Mr. Lathom linked his arm in Raleigh's, and the new boy was marched back to St. Jim's under the wing of the Form master.

Blake & Co. followed in silence.

"It's a licking for him, I expect," Blake remarked, as they entered the gates of St. Jim's. "But he's only got himself to thank."

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "And it would have been a worse licking if he had got away, and had to be hunted up and down the country before he was brought back. And he'd jolly well deserve it!"

But it did not mean a licking, after all. Instead of that, Raleigh was locked up in the Fourth Form dormitory; and Binks, the boots, was sent down to the village with a telegram.

The chums of Study No. 6 saw him go and wondered. But they guessed the state of affairs when, a few hours later, the station cab drove up with Mr. Raleigh in it.

The chums saw the old gentleman come in, and Arthur Augustus took off his hat very politely to him.

"He's come for Raleigh!" Blake exclaimed, with conviction. "The Head's had enough of him—and so have we!"

"Yaas, I wathah think you're wight, deah boy!"
 Blake certainly was right.

Mr. Raleigh was shown into the Head's room, and Dr. Holmes shook hands with him cordially. But there was a determined look upon the Head's face.

"I understand that James has been giving you trouble, Dr. Holmes," said Raleigh, looking very worried.

"Yes, I must say so; hence my wire to you," said the Head. "He has made two attempts to run away, to my knowledge; perhaps others that I do not know of. On one occasion a boy in the Shell, in recapturing him, fell into a stream, and has caught a severe chill, and is now laid up in the sanatorium. On the second occasion Master Raleigh ran into his Form master, and gave him a very severe shock. To be quite plain with you, I think James is a little too troublesome for St. Jim's."

Mr. Raleigh nodded.

"I was afraid you would find him so," he said.
 "I am willing to keep him, if you wish," said Dr. Holmes.

"But in that case I shall be compelled to adopt the severest measures with him. I shall flog him in public for his second attempt to escape, and shall curtail all his holidays. Do you wish me to proceed to such severe measures?"

Mr. Raleigh looked very distressed.

"Dear me—dear me! Certainly not! The poor boy must not be flogged!"

"As a matter of fact, Mr. Raleigh, I think the punishment would be too severe for this peculiar case; though it would be the only way to check him. I am going to take a friend's liberty of speaking to you candidly."

"Pray go on."

"If the boy has such an intense desire to go to sea, why not let him go? He will certainly get there sooner or later. If it is left till he comes of age, you cannot stop him. He will go then and become a sailor. And he will have

(Continued on page 28.)

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THINGS BEGIN TO HUM WHEN—

BATTLER RUNS A PLANTATION!

A THRILLING COMPLETE YARN By Cecil Fanshawe.



When Battler says "Jump to it!" he doesn't mean maybe! It doesn't matter a hoot whether it's with cannibals or head-hunters, when Battler says "Jump!" they all jump.

CHAPTER 1. Mutiny!

"STOP that shockin' shindy one-time! What name you Solomon boys sing out like blazes, eh?"

It was big Bart Crewison, known throughout the South Seas as Battler, roaring the angry protest.

Wearing stained duck trousers, a tattered vest, and a cork sun-helmet, Battler stood on the deck of his trading schooner, the *Radio Ray*, shouting in the brilliant tropical dawn. The schooner was moored up an inlet of Morovo Island, and big Battler was much riled by the din, which came from the coconut plantation ashore.

It had wakened him up.

Again he bellowed like a buffalo. But the row increased.

Battler glared through the palm-trees at the native labourers' grass huts, of which the thatched roofs were just visible over the compound wall. A most horrid din assailed his ears—yells, shouts, thuds, all the racket of cannibal islanders having a good set-to.

"My word!" trumpeted Battler. "Suppose I come ashore I knock seven bells outa you blighters! I bang'm head belong you too much, savvy?"

The din redoubled.

Hoarse laughter mingled with the roars of the savages.

Plainly the Solomon Islanders—for of that unpleasant race were the cannibal workers on Morovo plantation—didn't care a tinker's hoot for Battler's protests.

"Ho! We are not amused," Battler laughed grimly.

"I'll give you gentry something to sing about. Come on, Dick! Hey, you Kanaka fellers, up on deck with you! A spot of trouble ashore already, my lads! Well, Fred Hodson warned us! Ha, ha!"

At that, from the cabin of Battler's young brother Dick came rushing up excitedly, just roused. From the little schooner's fo'c'sle emerged some of the rest of the brothers' crew, three sturdy Kanakas, headed by brown Tokelau Jim, the stalwart bo'sun.

Instantly Battler spotted two were missing.

"Where's Buttermilk and George the First?" he snapped.

"My word, master! Me think um gone along shore,"

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Tokelau Jim gasped, rolling his eyes. "Me no see um go."

"Great boilers!" roared Battler. "Have the silly chumps got nabbed by that Solomon gang? Come on, lads, bring belaying-pins! They may be scuppered by now!"

Instantly he led a rush ashore, needing no weapons himself except his huge, granite-like fists.

At his heels were his young brother, followed by Tokelau Jim and the other Kanakas. All burst into the compound, to utter shouts of anger and dismay.

Buttermilk and George the First were still alive, but not likely to be living much longer. Both were surrounded by a yelling, hooting gang of Solomon Islanders, who were making the din that had roused Battler.

The latter's eyes flashed as he saw the Solomon boys laying into his absentee Kanakas with sticks, and pelting them with coconuts and ripe fish. He saw knives and spears flashing in the sunshine, heard the howls of the Solomon blacks:

"Kill um Kanakas! Chop um! We 'kai-kai' (eat) them plenty quick!"

"No fear, you don't!" Battler shouted, and charged into the black throng, both fists swinging.

Crack! Down went the Solomon boss-boy—a hideous, one-eyed black, wearing huge shell ear-rings and a pig's tusk skewered through his nose. Under Battler's terrific punches more Solomon Islanders went down like ninepins, and with Battler charged young Dick and the remainder of the Kanaka crew.

So fierce and sudden was the brothers' onslaught that the Solomon Islanders were rushed off their feet.

In a few seconds Battler & Co. rescued Buttermilk and George the First and rushed them back through the plantation to the schooner. It seemed plain that the pair of chumps had been up to some silly jape, that the fierce plantation labourers were determined to kill and eat them.

"Now what's it all about? What for you Solomon boys cross along my Kanakas?" roared Battler from the deck of his schooner when all were aboard.

A howling mob, the half-naked blacks lined the lagoon bank. They shook spears and cane-knives up at the

schooner and demanded the instant return of Buttermilk and George I.

"They bath along yam-pot!" howled the Solomons' one-eyed boss-boy. "What name those Kanaka fellers bath along yams? Him yam-pot taboo! You give us them Kanakas plenty quick—plenty quick we kai-kai um!"

Battler and Dick nearly burst out laughing.

The absentee members of the crew had been tubbing themselves in the huge iron pot in which the Solomon boys cooked their yams. The latter apparently wished to avenge the insult by cooking the two offenders.

"Give um to us!" they howled, brandishing weapons.

"Gammon!" Battler roared down. "I fine um two Kanakas five dollars, savvy? I give um dollars along you."

"No, want um dollars!" came a savage chorus.

"That's enough!" Battler laughed grimly. "You Solomon blacks get to work along plantation. S'pose you no go work, I come bang um heads belong you again!"

The blacks' reply was a threatening howl.

At a sudden shout from their one-eyed boss-boy, named Julius Caesar, they all shinned up palm-trees. Thence they started a terrific fire on the schooner's deck.

Things looked serious.

About Battler and his comrades whizzed a deadly hail of missiles. Spears, flashing in the sunlight, sang past their ears; cane-knives came whistling, coconuts bounced and thudded on the decks. There was a perfect storm of over-ripe fish.

"Get rifles, lads!" shouted Battler, eyes grim as he dodged the assorted missiles. "O' course we won't surrender the bathing party. Let fly round those black monkeys' legs and scare the rotters! Then I'll work 'em, by thunder!"

But a volley of bullets, purposely aimed wide, had no effect.

Black Julius Caesar & Co. defied Battler to shoot them, and threatened to report him to a magistrate if he did.

They kept up their rain of missiles and wounded two Kanakas. Just as Battler thought he would have to wing some of the ruffians to prevent his schooner being rushed, young Dick got a brain-wave.

"Wash 'em down!" the lad whooped delightedly. "A good dowsing'll shift the blighters, Battler!"

He scooped up the deck hose and turned the nozzle at the islanders aloft.

Swish! Swish! An ice-cold jet gushed from the hose-pipe, sparkling in the rays of the rising sun. It thrashed, stung, and pelted the Solomon mutineers up in the palm-trees. It was a vigorous, hissing cascade, which quickly drenched the howling blacks as though by magic.

Loudly whooped Dick as he played his hose to and fro, and the powerful stream went hissing and crashing through the palm fronds. Battler and the Kanakas laughed grimly.

"That's the style, old son!" beamed Battler. "They need a spring-cleaning, by jingo!"

"Taboo!" roared Julius Caesar, bouncing on his perch like an angry gorilla. "Water taboo, savvy?"

But he broke off, gurgling and spluttering, as the water suddenly gushed into his mouth, then slammed into his stomach, causing him to release all holds and go whizzing into the air.

The evil-looking, one-eyed boss-boy landed on the ground with a mighty thud. His pals aloft continued to gibber with fury. But they shed all their missiles as young Dick's hose flailed them mercilessly and one by one swept them from their perches.

There sounded a series of heartrending howls, bumps, and thuds as the murderous Solomon boys went crashing to the ground. They were drenched and frightened, and all the fight and bounce had gone out of them.

"Jolly good work, Dick!" cried Battler, starting to run down the gangway. "Now we'll show 'em who's boss. I'll soon set the yapping hyenas to their jobs."

But that instant a startling thing happened.

From the other side of the compound wall sounded a chorus of ferocious yelps and screeches. Then the brothers and their Kanakas saw a hideous throng of black dwarfs come bursting out of the jungle. Thick-set, woolly-headed, and almost naked, the stumpy newcomers brandished barbed spears, bows and arrows, and frightful-looking knives. They were the jungle bushmen head-hunters, about whom Battler had been warned.

"Yah-boo!" they howled, meaning "Here's fun!" and came whooping over the wall, to fling themselves on the Solomon boys, plainly out to collect some nappers.

"Bushmen! A bushman raid!" Battler roared. "Bring rifles, lads! We'll jolly well stop this head-hunting beano and give those bounders a lesson. No wonder Fred Hodson said running this plantation wasn't all jam!"

CHAPTER 2.

The Head-hunter's Raid!

BUT the dwarf bushmen were in great force, and obviously determined to get some trophies and paint the plantation red. Several times previously they had raided the place in small war parties, content to garner a few heads and nip back to their jungle stronghold. Success had made the grisly dwarfs bold. They thought they had only one white man to fear. They were quite unaware of the fact that Battler, Dick, and the Kanakas were temporarily in charge of Morovo plantation, so they were making a raid in force.

They howled and screamed in a bloodthirsty fashion as they pounced on the Solomon Islanders. The latter had not got over their ducking and defeat at the hands of young Dick and his hosepipe; but they scrambled up and strove desperately to defend themselves.

All happened at racing speed. In a twinkling the plantation was in chaos.

Even as Battler & Co., grim-eyed, came rushing down from the Radio Ray's deck with rifles the Solomon Islanders and the savage bushmen were at death grips.

Yells and shrieks rose to the blue sky, startling gaudy parrots and cockatoos in the jungle. Knives, axes, and spears flashed; groans sounded; blood ran.

"Bang um salt-water fellas!" whooped the delighted baboon-like bushmen. "Give 'em blazes! Catch um heads too much!"

"Help, masters!" howled Julius Caesar and the Solomon boys. "Bushman fellas have good time too much."

Rapidly had the situation changed. The cannibal Solomon Islanders now begged Battler and his outfit to save them, and yelled wild promises of future good behaviour. They fought desperately, but were far outnumbered by the horde of bushmen, who rushed on them with pig-like squeals and whistling knives. But—

Bang! Crack! Battler and Dick let fly a crashing volley into the midst of the bushmen. Tokelau Jim, the brown Kanaka bo'sun, heaved some sticks of dynamite, which exploded thunderously, with excellent effect.

Battler had left Buttermilk and George I to guard the schooner in case bushmen tried to rush it. He could not spare more. Seeing the dwarf bushmen rattled by the unexpected rifle fire, he charged forward.

"Come on, lads!" he shouted, eyes flashing, jaw squared. "Give 'em beans! Chuck 'em back into their jungle! I bet we'll teach 'em not to come raiding again in a hurry!"

Clubbing his rifle, the herculean Battler sent bushmen down with broken heads and fractured limbs. He towered up in the midst of the baboon-like head-hunters, hurling them about like straw.

The fight, while it lasted, was sticky, however. Battler received several flesh wounds. Dick and the Kanakas all got roughly handled. Several of the Solomon boys got bumped off. But suddenly, with squeals of rage, the dwarf bushmen broke and fled back into the jungle, discomfited. They had collected some trophies, however, and their white-woolled old chief escaped with some interesting plunder.

But that was only to be expected in the circumstances, for the bushmen raid had come at the very moment that Battler and his party were busy quelling the mutiny of the Solomon Islander plantation workers.

All seemed over at last, however, without the plantation being much damaged, and with only a few losses.

"And I think we've taught 'em a lesson," beamed Battler. "After that drubbing the little stiff'll stick to their jungle haunts, what?"

His muscular forearms grimed with dust and blood. Battler stood leaning on his rifle, looking at the dense wall of jungle into which the fleeing bushmen had vanished. The head-hunting scoundrels had indeed paid heavily for their raid, several being killed. Further pursuit seemed impossible.

Battler reckoned the day had been started well, after all, with the bushmen properly routed and the Solomon blacks put in their places.

"Now to start work, lads," he beamed, dashing sweat from his eyes and swinging round. "I'm going to run this plantation properly. No more bun fights!"

But that moment a thoroughly cowed, battered-looking bunch of Solomon blacks approached him. They were minus their shell ear-rings, nose-rings, much of their garments, and a lot of skin, and saluted Battler humbly.

"Done catch'm, Julius Caesar," said their spokesman.

"What?" snapped Battler.

"Bush fellers take Julius Caesar along jungle, also three brothers belong us, master," came the anxious reply.

"Suppose you no rescue um, those bush fellers kai-kai um plenty quick, take'm head, smoke'm head, put um head along dare-devil house. My word! Suppose you go rescue brothers belong us one time!"

Battler stared at the battered group. He gasped at their cheek.

Then he looked at the grim wall of jungle.

Battler knew all about the perils of pursuing savages into jungle haunts, for his wanderings in the South Seas had taken him into the grim forests of New Guinea, the jungles of the Marshall Islands, and many other deadly places. He guessed the bushmen would have traps set on all the paths leading to their village, that the chances of rescuing Julius Caesar and the other captives would be almost nil.

Not for himself did Battler hesitate, however. But why should he risk the lives of his young brother and their gallant Kanaka crew in an almost hopeless attempt to rescue three villainous Solomon Islanders?

The latter had brought their own fate on their heads. The Solomon blacks' effort to cook the two Kanakas for tubbing in their yam-pot had started the rumpus. But for the ensuing mutiny, Battler and his party would have spotted the head-hunters' raid in time to nip it in the bud. Those thoughts flashed through Battler's brain, and he swung grimly round.

"Gammon!" he barked. "I no go along jungle."

The bunch of islanders set up yells of dismay.

At that Battler relented, and offered to lead the rascals to the rescue of their pals and their one-eyed boss-boy. But the Solomon Islanders weren't having any.

They weren't for tackling the dwarf head-hunters in the latter's own country. Moreover, they said the jungle was haunted by obnoxious ghosts, who at times shook the ground, throwing trees down, and breathing fire and smoke.

Battler knew that Morovo Island was, in fact, volcanic. He had noticed smoke from a distant volcano, which towered up above the vast rolling jungle in the distance.

He called the Solomon Islanders hard names. That instant sounded an anxious hail from young Dick on the deck of the Radio Ray.

"They've pinched the binnacle!" howled Dick.

Battler swung round, started forward.

"Eh?" he shouted, bewildered.

"The schooner's compass—the brass stand and all—the whole box o' tricks!"

"Who've pinched it?"

"Those rotten baboons! Come on! Hurry! We may catch 'em!"

"Great boilers!" gasped Battler, and raced to the schooner.

He was joined by Tokelau Jim and the other two Kanakas as he dashed up the gangway. It was quite true. The binnacle, the shining brass stand containing the schooner's compass, had vanished from its position in front of the steering-wheel.

It had been forcibly wrenched from the deck.

Near it Buttermilk and George I, who had been left to guard the schooner, lay wounded and half-stunned.

"A party o' bushman blighters came down the lagoon in canoes," Dick shouted angrily, "while we were scrapping ashore. I was just in time to spot 'em nipping off with our binnacle. After 'em, old scout!"

"You bet we will, son!"

Battler uttered a shout of rage, but he was also bewildered.

The fact that Buttermilk and George I had not been killed, still had their nappers, showed that the boarding party of bushmen must have been in a mighty hurry.

Why on earth did the head-hunters want the binnacle? Why did they prize it so highly? They must want it mighty badly to make such a quick getaway. They had not stopped to plunder the schooner while the fight raged ashore, had not even stopped for the heads of the two Kanakas after overcoming them.

"This alters matters. Blowed if I'll have my compass pinched by a gang of head-snatchers!" Battler snapped.

The old scar on his cheek, caused by the throwing-stone of a cannibal in the Marquesas, glowed red with anger as he swung round on the battered Solomon boys clustered on the lagoon bank. There were now about forty, and they looked quite a docile bunch.

In few words Battler told the Solomon Islanders that he was off into the jungle, and would try to rescue their infernal mates as well as recover some stolen property.

Would any of the Solomon Islanders volunteer to come, too?

Half a dozen screwed up enough courage, having now amazing faith in the two brothers, and being eager for a smack back at the dwarf head-hunters. The rest promised to behave themselves.

"Right-ho!" cried Battler. "Come aboard."

A few minutes later the Radio Ray chugged off up the jungle-fringed lagoon as fast as gas in its hot engine could churn the machinery.

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Now Battler was determined to put the wind up the bushmen for good.

At full speed he chugged after the raiders' canoes, spotted by Dick. All gathered on deck—Battler, Dick, the five Kanakas, and six Solomon Islanders, all gripped their various weapons, and strained their eyes ahead up the sunlit lagoon.

At last the Radio Ray could proceed no farther.

"Then we proceed in a boat, my lads!" Battler smiled grimly and dropped anchor. "It will be quieter, Dick, old lad, and I'll leave these six Solomon thugs to guard the schooner. Oh, no, they won't desert here! Look at 'em—all scared stiff of this jungle! Nor will they beat it with the schooner—because they don't know how."

Dick laughed, and the brothers and their Kanakas piled into a boat. Into the boat Battler put some light baggage—not any of his trade-goods, however. He knew it would be useless to try to bargain with the bushmen for the return of the binnacle, or for the release of black Julius Caesar and his pals.

Nor indeed did Battler dream of bargaining. He shipped signal-rockets, sticks of dynamite, and other explosives which he thought might be useful. Then they pulled away up the river, which got darker and darker as the jungle formed a laced roof over their heads.

Time passed; they were rowing through greenish gloom. At last Dick and Battler began to wonder anxiously if they had missed some side stream. That moment they heard a terrific shindy from some distance ahead.

They heard howls and whoops echoing through the dark jungle, mingled with horn-blowing and drum-thumping.

"Village belong bushmen, master," Tokelau Jim gasped, rolling his brown eyes. "Big feller village close."

"I hope we're in time to save those Solomon bounders from losing their nappers!" Dick whispered excitedly.

"I'm jolly well going to get back my binnacle!" gritted Battler, thrusting out his chin. "What the thump did the ugly little baboons bone it for?"

CHAPTER 3.

The Fight in the Lagoon!

THE uproar ahead increased. It showed there must be hundreds of bushmen in the village. How Battler hoped to rescue the three Solomon Islanders and recover his schooner's compass not even he yet knew.

"We will act with kindness, but firmness, m' lads," he said, with a grim smile on his rugged, sun-bronzed features.

The Kanakas pulled steadily at the oars. All were alert for surprises or traps as the boat forged on through jungle gloom, nosing through masses of weeds.

The hideous din from the bushmen's village increased. But nothing happened; it was plain the dwarf head-hunters had posted no sentries, not dreaming anyone would dare to come so far inland.

At last Battler signalled to moor the boat to the bank. Then the brothers and their sturdy Kanaka crew went ashore, gripping rifles, and humping several pounds of dynamite and signal-rockets.

A leafy tunnel through the jungle confronted them. It was little more than a wild-pig run, but they could see the tracks of countless bare feet, and guessed the tunnel led to the head-hunters' village.

Ten minutes' cautious advance, stooping, with sweat raining off them, brushing aside the dense foliage, and suddenly the party came on the village.

Battler's eyes flashed. He snapped his fingers as a signal to halt. Dick and the Kanakas crowded close round him with gasps of surprise and bewilderment.

All saw a number of grass houses. They were large, long, gabled houses, with open end about fifteen feet high, resembling the gaping jaw of monstrous reptiles.

Amongst the houses stood weird-looking posts, carved to resemble gods and demons, half animal and half human. The air was heavy with the smell of wood-smoke and tropical vegetation, and here and there hung strings of crocodiles' skulls and fish tails.

All were gasping at sight of a horde of bushmen, leaping, howling, and dancing inside the biggest house. There were two or three hundred of the grisly little head-hunters inside it, beating drums, blowing on reed-pipes, kicking up the hideous din which the party had heard.

But what made Battler gasp was the sight of his binnacle.

The brass-framed compass of the schooner Radio Ray had been placed on a big stone, near that on which lay the three bound captives.

All the bushmen were bowing to the binnacle. Even the wizened old chief paused in his ferocious antics, to bob before the brass binnacle, and howl incantations. The din was deafening with the dwarfs' pig-like squeals, the throb-
bing of drums, and skirling of native pipes.



"Come on, lads!" shouted Battler Bart, eyes flashing and jaw squared. "Give 'em beans! Chuck 'em back into their jungle!" Clubbing his rifle the herculean Battler waded into the bushmen. He towered in the midst of the baboon-like head-hunters, hurling them about like straws.

At once all was plain to Battler. "Great boilers!" he gasped, with a grim laugh. "The little bounders are using my binnacle for a god! So that's why they pinched it!"

In fact, the bushmen had made a god of the schooner's big compass. Its shining brass case and brass stand had attracted them. Possibly the old chief, before making his raid on the plantation, had done some scouting, to see Battler consulting the compass. Of course, he had thought the big white man was having a pow-wow with his brass god, which must be a ju-ju of immense power and wisdom.

But there was not a second to lose.

Even as Battler glared at his exalted compass he saw the white-wooled chief about to end the rites by decapitating Julius Caesar and his mates with the rusty chopper.

But there were hundreds of bushmen in the devil-devil house between Battler and the captives. How could the small rescue party get at them? It seemed impossible.

But Battler had previously noticed the smoking volcano which towered up close above the bushmen's village. Banking on the fact that most savages regarded volcanic eruptions as something diabolical, he hurriedly breathed orders to his young brother.

"Nip behind that house, old lad. Take a few sticks of dynamite, and, here, half a dozen signal rockets. Buck up! Make all the shindy you can. Directly yonder mob swarms out we'll run in—rescue! It's our only chance."

Dick grinned.

He seized the armful of explosives his hefty brother thrust on him, then dashed away round through the jungle. Full split he legged it for the rear of the humming devil-devil house.

Battler and the Kanakas waited breathlessly, eyes on the savage scene in the dim interior. Suddenly—

Swish, swish! From behind the big grass house there shot up whistling rockets, to explode in showers of golden balls with hearty bangs. Followed more rockets, then the thudding boom of dynamite cartridges, making the ground shake.

A moment of awe-struck dismay, then Battler and the Kanakas saw the bushmen horde stream out past them, with howls of terror. They saw them rush down to the river, to scramble into canoes, and pull madly away into the gloom.

The ju-ju house was suddenly empty, except for the captives, the gleaming binnacle, and the grisly decorations. "Good lad, Dick!" grinned Battler, and led his sturdy brown Kanakas in a charge into the huge grim, grass building.

They stumbled forward into the gloom, whipping out sheath knives. And suddenly, to the amazement and un-

bounded relief of Julius Caesar and his black pals, the latter found themselves being cut free.

Battler pounced on the binnacle, grabbed it up in his mighty arms, and then started back for the open front.

The rescue party poured out of the devil-devil house, to be instantly joined by young Dick, chuckling heartily. Then all tore back down the pig-run for their boat.

In front ran Battler, hugging the recovered binnacle, gasping at its weight, despite his gigantic strength. Close behind him came Dick and the Kanakas, followed by Julius Caesar and the other rescued Solomon boys. The latter ran stiffly; they were grey with terror, and amazed to find their heads were still on their shoulders.

"Run, lads!" boomed Battler. "Those little blighters may pursue when they spot we've boned our god back!"

Battler proved right.

Getting over their fright, the bushmen began to cluster back to their ju-ju house. Then they uttered howls of fury.

A moment later, with a sound like a giant hornets' nest aroused, the pursuit was on.

But Battler and his party ran like mad. They reached their boat; Battler hurled the binnacle into it; then all tumbled in, the rescued Solomon Islanders as well as the Kanakas.

Then they pulled for their lives.

But discordant shrieks resounded through the jungle. Glancing back, Battler saw a fleet of bushmen in canoes coming full split. The black dwarfs brandished bows and arrows and spears, and the white-wooled chief, with the china doorknob gleaming on his chest, could be seen dimly in the leading canoe.

It became a race down-river for the Radio Ray.

Battler's party rowed like mad. Just as arrows began to flash amongst them they reached the schooner and hurled themselves up the gangway.

They were back on board the Radio Ray. Battler and his comrades were armed with rifles, and now had the assistance of the six Solomon Islanders, left aboard as guards.

All told, there were about fifteen aboard the schooner. But the river was black with the canoes of the bushmen. A host was sweeping down on the schooner. And the dwarf bushmen were obviously made bold by fury at the loss of their binnacle god.

Shrieks, howls, and pig-like squeals made a hideous racket. Then spears and arrows flew thick and fast, and yells sounded from the schooner's decks as men were hit.

There was no time to up-anchor and make off. Battler decided on a grim fight for it, and a ragged volley banged amongst the bushmen's canoes. It seemed only to infuriate

them, however. They came on in a swarm, their canoes shooting up all round the schooner.

All seemed up with the defenders. The odds were about twenty to one.

But young Dick got a brain-wave. The lad dived for a heap of trade-goods, hastily to wrench out a number of trade-mirrors. Then he yelled to the Kanakas to help place the mirrors all round the scuppers.

The effect was magical. Hardly were the flashing mirrors planted all along the deck railing than the host of howling bushmen came swarming aboard, led by their old chief.

They saw instantly their own reflections in Dick's mirrors. They thought they saw vast numbers of hostile bushmen rising from the very deck of the Radio Ray, attacking them with weapons like their own, and hideous grimaces. They thought Battler had conjured up a host of fiendish allies to aid him.

"Bewitched!" howled the bushmen. "Along this ship plenty demon he stop! Plenty ghost!"

The grisly dwarfs dropped back to their canoes with howls of superstitious terror; but not before Battler reached over the schooner's rails, to seize the wizened bushman chief and haul him, kicking and screeching, aboard.

Victory was gained at the last minute, thanks to Dick's ruse, at a cost of only about a dozen cracked trade-mirrors.

"Which means seven years' bad luck for the bushmen!" beamed Battler. "Bully for you, Dick! You've got the brains, old lad!"

And they dragged up to the anchor, to chug back for Morovo plantation in triumph.

There was no more trouble with the Solomon Islander labourers. The one-eyed boss-boy, Julius Caesar, astounded at his rescue from the ju-ju house, set his savage mates to work vigorously.

And a week later to his plantation returned Fred Hodson, the owner, astonished to see his tough Solomon Islanders working like blazes and almost eating out of Battler's hand.

"How the thump did you tame those black tigers, Battler?" he asked, pop-eyed.

"Kindness and firmness," grinned Battler.

Then Battler told all that had happened, and pointed out the captive bushman chief who was doing his bit in the plantation with a large hoe.

"You'd best keep that feller as a hostage for the bushmen's behaviour," laughed Battler. "And I don't think you'll have any more trouble with Julius Caesar & Co. If you do, tell 'em you'll wireless for us."

Fred Hodson gleefully insisted on paying the brothers double the agreed payment for running his plantation during his absence. And the notorious Solomon Islander gang actually cheered the brothers when they pushed off, and begged them to come back again.

(Battler Bart is up against a pretty tough proposition next week when he sets out to find "BLOOMS OF DEATH!" on Peril Island in the South Seas! Don't miss next Wednesday's gripping story!)

THE CALL OF THE SEA!

(Continued from page 23.)

spent years in cramming knowledge that will be useless to him as a sailor, and at the same time will be ignorant of all he might have learned to enable him to rise in his profession.

Mr. Raleigh appeared to be struck by this remark.

"You are right," he said slowly. "I hoped that this longing for the sea would die away in time, but it appears now to be stronger than ever."

"That is undoubtedly the case."

"Then you would advise me to concede this point."

"As a friend I should."

"Then I will do so. I had already thought of doing so if he failed here, and he certainly has failed."

Master James was sent for, and he was brought in in charge of the captain of St. Jim's. His face fell at the sight of his uncle, but the old gentleman's kindly smile reassured him.

"I hear that you have been giving your headmaster a great deal of trouble, James."

The junior coloured deeply.

"I am sorry," he said. "I hope Dr. Holmes will believe that I am sorry. But—but, uncle—I—I can't stay here! I must go to sea. My father was a sailor, and I am sure he would wish me to follow his profession. If you would interfere on a training ship I'd be as orderly and obedient as you could wish."

"I have decided to do so."

Jim's face lighted up wonderfully. He rushed at his uncle and hugged him.

"Hurrah!" he shouted, and the Head's study echoed again. "Hurrah! Good old uncle!"

"Dear me! You—you must not make such a noise in Dr. Holmes' study!" exclaimed the old gentleman.

"I—I am sorry, sir."

"I excuse you," said Dr. Holmes, with a smile. "You had better go and pack your box now, Raleigh, and say good-bye to your friends. You will be returning to London with your uncle to-night."

"Thank you, sir—oh, thank you, uncle! You shall never regret this!" said Jim earnestly.

"And he quitted the study."

He packed his box, with a light heart. Then he made his way to the sanatorium to say good-bye to Tom Merry.

Tom was sitting up in bed propped with pillows, playing chess with Cousin Ethel.

The hero of the Shell was looking decidedly better, and it was clear that his illness was not going to take a serious turn, after all.

Raleigh came quietly in.

"I'm going," he said.

"Going? Where?"

"Home—and then to sea. It's all right."

Tom Merry held out his hand.

"Good! he said. "I'm glad to hear it. Don't forget to give us a look-in when you come ashore, you know."

The soft tones of Cousin Ethel were heard as she moved a piece.

"Check!"

"By Jove!" said Tom Merry.

Raleigh closed the door.

And a quarter of an hour later St. Jim's had seen the last of the junior who was the son of a sailor!

THE END.

(Martin Clifford writes another ripping yarn of St. Jim's in next week's GEM entitled: "THE 'SWOT' OF ST. JIM'S!" Order your copy now and make sure of it!)

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