

FULL-O'-LAUGHS LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL YARN OF ST. JIM'S INSIDE!

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

The GEM

2^d



D'ARCY
TAKES A
SEAT!

No. 1,318. Vol. XLIII.

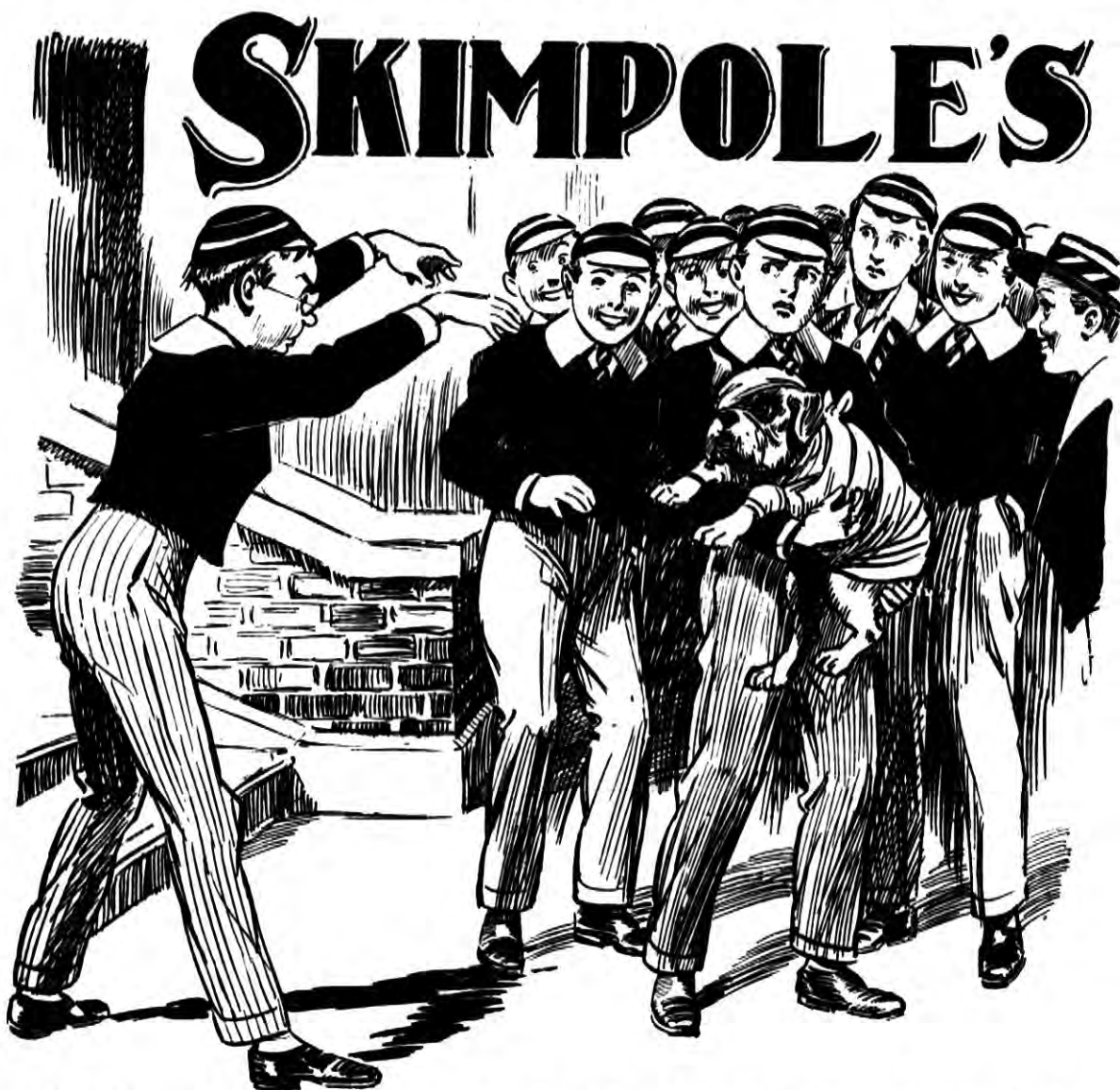
EVERY WEDNESDAY.

Week Ending May 20th, 1933.

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



SKIMPOLE IS AT IT AGAIN! HE'S GOT ANOTHER WILD SCHEME!



Skimpole certainly has a mighty forehead and he thinks it's mighty full of brains—but Tom Merry & Co. are pretty sure that that forehead is a vacuum! Read this ripping yarn and learn how Skimmy's will power won't!

CHAPTER 1.

Skimpole's Great Discovery!

"**S** KIMPOLE!" Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell at St. Jim's, rapped out the name. But the owner of it did not reply, or even look up.

"Skimpole!"

Tom Merry looked round at Skimpole in some alarm. Mr. Linton was growing angry, and he had already taken a business-like grip on the pointer. Tom Merry tried to catch Skimpole's eye, but in vain.

Skimpole was apparently immersed in thought. That was nothing unusual, for Herbert Skimpole was a genius. At all events, he said he was, and he had the information first hand. Words of six or seven syllables, of which the other fellows did not even know the meaning, rattled off Skimpole's tongue at lightning speed when he was fairly going. He could tell you the history, past, present, and to come, of every word ending in "ism." With excited face, his eyes

gleaming through his big spectacles, he would hold forth for hours together on the subject of Determinism, which was his favourite.

When Skimpole was on the trail, as Jack Blake had put it, of a new idea, or a new "ism," he was lost to the world—dead to his surroundings. At such a time, what did Roman History matter?

But the master of the Shell had no sympathy whatever with Determinism, or any other "ism," and it was his duty to cram a certain quantity of Roman History into the heads of the Shell.

Hence the cloud that gathered on his brow, and his grip on the pointer, when Skimpole failed to answer his name.

"Skimpole!"

The name was rapped out for the third time.

Mr. Linton's voice rose crescendo, but still the deep thinker did not hear, or did not heed.

Skimpole was sitting at the end of a form, and Gore was next to him. Gore could have nudged him into wakefulness, but Gore didn't. Gore preferred to sit tight, and wait for the fun.

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HE TRIES TO OVER-RULE HIS FORM MASTER BY WILL POWER!

WILL POWER WON'T!

"Skimpole!"

"The ass!" muttered Tom Merry. "He'll get a licking! The utter duffer! What bee has he got in his bonnet this morning?"

Harry Noble, the Australian junior, jerked a paper ball towards Skimpole, to startle him out of his reverie. Unfortunately, Mr. Linton's eagle eye was upon him.

"Noble!"

"Ye-es, sir!"

"You will take fifty lines!"

"Oh!"

"Skimpole!" Mr. Linton made two long strides towards Skimpole, and gave him a rap on the knuckles that effectually startled him out of his deep reflections.

"Skim—"

"Ow!"

"Boy! What do you mean by this conduct? I have spoken to you four or five times, and you have not answered!" thundered Mr. Linton.

Skimpole blinked at him.

"I am sorry, sir. I did not hear you—or perhaps it would be more correct to say that I did not heed. I was certainly conscious of someone speaking, but I tried to shut out the noise so that it would not interfere with the thread of my thoughts."

Mr. Linton gasped, and the Shell gasped, too. They were used to curious things from Skimpole, but this was strong, even for the genius of the Shell.

"Skimpole! Dear me! Sometimes I am tempted to believe, Skimpole, that you are no more than an idiot."

"Not at all, sir. As Professor Krustycrumpett says very truly, a genius is never really understood by commonplace intellects. That is all that is the matter, sir. If your own brain were sufficiently developed to comprehend mine, you would change your opinion, sir."

"Boy!"

"Yes, sir. I have been thinking out a wonderful discovery," said Skimpole, his eyes shining with enthusiasm. "I find, sir, that owing to my marvellous developments of brain-power, sir, I possess the power—"

"Skimpole!"

Mr. Linton simply gasped out the word. He never knew what to make of Skimpole, and the junior's unparalleled nerve in talking like this in the Form-room, absolutely took his breath away.

"Yes, sir. I possess the power of controlling the working of any intellect feebler than my own, by the simple concentration of will power, sir. I could, for instance, suggest to you—"

"To—me!"

"Yes, sir; to any intellect feebler than my own, I could suggest an action or a thought, which would govern that feebler intellect in spite of itself."

The Shell giggled.

"My only hat!" murmured Monty Lowther to Tom Merry. "Skimpole has the thickest head in class, and he's looking out for a thick ear; to match, I suppose."

"Watch Linton," grinned Manners. "He's just beginning to boil."

"Skimpole! I hardly know what to say. You are an—extraordinary boy! Stand out here, sir, and hold out your hand."

"M-m-my hand, sir!"

"Yes," said Mr. Linton. "I'm going to punish you for—your astounding impertinence! Hold out your hand, sir!"

Skimpole slowly left his place. A true philosopher, of course, ought to be able to despise pain, and Skimpole was a great philosopher. Yet he did not like the look of the pointer.

"If you please, sir—"

"Not a word! Hold out your hand!"

Skimpole blinked at Mr. Linton dubiously. He had an excellent opportunity now of seeing what he could do by the concentration of the will upon a feebler intellect. Mr.

Linton did not look a very promising subject. But Skimpole was a full believer in himself, and he put it to the test.

The Shell watched him in astonishment.

Skimpole wrinkled his brows, with an effort of concentration that made his big, bumpy forehead seem to be making an attempt to reach the tip of his nose.

Mr. Linton gazed at him blankly.

"Skimpole, how dare you scowl at me like that?"

Skimpole jumped.

"I—I wasn't scowling, sir! I—I was concentrating my mighty will power, sir."

"Hold out your hand!"

"One moment, sir. Allow me to explain. I am sorry I have paid no attention to the comparatively trivial matters in connection with school work. I was thinking out the great discovery I have made. You will see, sir, what a grand scope it gives me for—doing good and useful service to humanity, sir. I shall be able to cure disease, for instance, simply by suggestion. By suggesting to you with a sufficiently concentrated will-force that you have no pain, for instance, I can cause you to cease to feel a pain. You will see—"

"Hold out your hand!"

Skimpole held it out gingerly enough.

Mr. Linton gave him a sharp rap across the palm, and Skimpole gave a howl.

"Ow! Yow!"

"Hold out the other hand, Skimpole!"

"If you please, sir—"

"The other hand—instantly!" thundered the Form master.

The other hand received another cut, and Skimpole squirmed.

"Now sit down," said Mr. Linton angrily, "and if you show the least inattention again, Skimpole, I shall send you to the Head."

Skimpole sat down.

The lesson was resumed, and Skimpole sat in his place, wriggling and chafing his hands under the desk.

Gore chuckled.

"I say, Skimmy," he whispered, "there's a chance for you."

"Eh? I do not understand you, Gore!"

"Why don't you suggest to yourself that you haven't any pain in your paws, you know, and you won't feel any there."

"I—er—hem—you do not understand science, Gore. You see—"

Gore chuckled. Mr. Linton looked across.

"Take fifty lines, Gore!"

And Gore did not chuckle again.

CHAPTER 2.

Tom Merry Takes a Hand!

BOW-WOW! Gr-r-r-r!

"Hallo! What's that?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

It was after morning school, and the chums of the Shell were going up to their study, when the sudden eruption of doggy sounds proceeded from the room next to Tom Merry's. It was Gore's study, and the Terrible Three were naturally surprised, for Gore was not the possessor of a dog.

There was nothing of that sort about Gore. Gore wasn't fond of animals, and he never played cricket if he could help it. He had not the excuse of being a swot or a sap, for he never studied either, when he could get out of it. He was a slacker all along the line. Now, either Herries of the Fourth, or D'Arcy minor of the Third, would have told you at once that there was something wrong about a chap who didn't like dogs. Whether that was true or not as a general proposition, certainly there was something wrong

about Gore. He was the torment of Skimpole's life; the dreamy junior being his study-mate. He was the torment of everybody else who would stand it.

Bow-wow! Yap!

"There's a dog in there!" said Manners.

Monty Lowther looked at him admiringly.

"My word, Manners! How do you do these things?" he asked. "Fancy him guessing, just from the sound, that there was a dog in there."

"Don't be an ass—"

"It sounds to me like Wally's mongrel," said Tom Merry. "I believe I should know his bay anywhere—it's so—so musical."

"Yes; it's not Herries' bulldog, anyway, and there's not likely to be any dog in the School House except one of those two. What the dickens is Pongo doing in Gore's study?"

"Barking," said Lowther.

"Oh, don't be funny! Sounds to me as if he's being licked."

Tom Merry wrinkled his brows.

"Dogs want licking sometimes," he remarked. "But Gore has no business to be licking Pongo. Pongo can't have got into his study unless Gore took him there. It seems to me that this is a case for the S.P.C.A. Gore thinks everybody's gone out in the fine weather, and he won't be spotted. He's a cruel beast. I vote that we appoint ourselves local representatives for the S.P.C.A. and look into the matter."

"We want to get down to the cricket—"

"Blow the cricket!"

"Oh, all right! If Pongo's really being hurt—"

"Listen to that!"

The barking and growling broke forth again furiously as the chums of the Shell drew nearer to Gore's study. They could hear the voice of the owner, too, in loud and angry tones.

"You fool, Mellish! Why didn't you keep the cord round his neck?"

"It slipped off."

"Dummy! You've got the cloth off, too."

"He had it off with his teeth."

"This row will startle the whole House, you fool!"

"It's all right—they've all gone down to the cricket. The beast can't bite while you keep a good grip on the back of his collar."

"Come and shove the cloth round his head again."

"Ye-es; but I—I—"

"You cowardly cad!" roared Gore. "You're afraid of him!"

"I'm not afraid of him, but—"

"Then come and fasten his head up! How can I get at him unless he's got his jaws fastened up, you ass? He'll have one of my fingers off!"

Tom Merry tried to open the door. It was fast.

He kicked at the lower panels.

"Who's there?" bawled Gore.

"It's I—Tom Merry."

"Go and eat winks!"

"Open this door!"

"Rats!"

"What are you doing with Pongo?"

"Find out!"

Tom Merry drew back from the door, his eyes gleaming. He knew it was impossible to break down that solid oak, or to smash the lock with anything short of a crowbar. Things were solidly built at St. Jim's. But the hero of the Shell was not the kind of fellow to give in, especially when he believed that an animal was being tormented, and that he could help it.

Yap, yap, yap! Gr-r-r-r!

"Keep quiet, you beast!"

Bow-wow-wow!

Smack, smack, smack!

The Terrible Three distinctly heard the sounds of the heavy blows through the thick door, and the terrified squealing of the dog that followed.

Tom Merry gritted his teeth.

"You can't get in," said Merty Lowther.

"I will, though!"

Tom Merry ran into his own study and crossed to the window. His window was next to Gore's, but the two window-sills were a considerable distance apart. Midway between the two a thick old drainpipe ran downwards.

Lowther caught Tom Merry by the arm as he threw the window up.

"What are you going to do?" he exclaimed.

"I'm going in at that window!"

"Ass! You'll break your neck!"

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"That's all right—"

"Is it? Hold him, Manners!"

"Look here, let go!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I've been down that drainpipe before—I can do it."

"Yes; but not across to the other window—"

"Hark!"

Bow-wow-wow! Gr-r-r-r! Yap-yap!

"He knows we can't get at him, and he's giving it to Pongo!" said Manners, between his teeth.

"I'm going to stop him."

Tom Merry shook himself free, and clambered out upon the window-sill.

His chums made no further attempt to stop him, but they watched him with dizzy eyes and beating hearts.

From the window-sill he reached out to the drainpipe and caught it, and swung off the sill.

The thick, rough pipe afforded a good hold. The active junior could have clambered down it to the ground with ease, but to reach the next window-sill was a more difficult matter.

He clung to the pipe with one hand and his knees, and the other hand reached out to Gore's sill.

It was some inches short.

With great care and iron nerve Tom Merry strained himself to reach the window-sill, and his outstretched fingers approached it nearer and nearer, and at last touched it.

But there was no hold.

He touched it, but he wanted some more inches before he could get a hold.

Slowly, steadily, he forced himself towards it, and it seemed to the anxious watchers that he must lose his hold on the pipe before he secured one upon the sill.

Manners closed his eyes as he thought of it—of the falling body, the rush through the air, the spattering thud on the stones below. Lowther was white as death.

Tom Merry's face was hard set.

His grip was on the sill at last, and he hung with outstretched arms, and then he let go the leg-grip on the pipe.

With a swift jerk he swung himself across to the sill, and caught it with his other hand.

There he hung!

The effort had cost him too much for him to immediately drag himself upon the window-sill, and he hung for a full minute to recover his breath.

Then he slowly climbed upon the sill.

The window was closed, but he could see through the panes into the study.

Gore was seated at the table, with Pongo clutched between his knees, his grip like iron on the back of the dog's collar.

Pongo was snapping, but he could not bite so long as Gore kept his grip hard—and Gore was not likely to let go.

Mellish was approaching the dog with a cloth bag, intending to slip it over the animal's head to drown the noise by pulling the string tight round its neck.

Upon the table there was a colour-box, and nothing else that Tom Merry could see. What they were going to do to the dog Tom Merry could not guess, but that Gore had already ill-used it he knew, and even as he looked in at the window the dog wriggled, and Gore caught up a stick with his disengaged hand and began to thrash it.

Pongo whined piteously. The blows were heavy and savage, and the dog shrank and cowered under them.

Tom Merry snapped his teeth.

He pushed up the sash an inch to get a grip on it, and then threw it up suddenly—so suddenly that the crash of it made the two young rascals in the study jump with startled affright.

Tom Merry sprang into the study.

Gore started to his feet, and Pongo scrambled away and scuttled under the table instantly. Then he began to bark furiously. Gore faced Tom Merry with a savage scowl on his face, while Mellish promptly placed the table between himself and the indignant hero of the Shell.

"What do you mean by bursting into my study like this?" roared Gore. "I— Oh!"

Tom Merry did not speak.

He ran straight at Gore and hit out from the shoulder.

The cad of the Shell caught the blow full on the nose, and went over backwards as if a cannon-ball had struck him.

He dropped on the carpet and lay there, blinking.

Tom Merry stood over him, his chest heaving.

"Get up, you cad!"

Gore scrambled to his feet.

"Come on, Mellish!" he yelled.

And he hurled himself upon Tom Merry.

Mellish hesitated a moment, but he thought that when Tom Merry had finished with Gore his turn would come.

and that screwed up his courage to the sticking-point. He rushed forward to back up Gore.

But though they were two to one, they did not know how to handle the champion of the Shell.

Tom Merry faced them with flashing eyes—he would have faced half a dozen of them.

He knocked up Gore's lashing fists, and drove a right-hander on the bully's chin, which sent Gore down with a bump that shook the study.

Mellish's fists came home at the same moment on Tom Merry's cheek, but he whipped round in a twinkling and laid Mellish across Gore with a swift upper-cut.

Mellish clasped his chin with both hands, and groaned.

"Gerroff my neck!" mumbled Gore.

CHAPTER 3.

Looking for Pongo!

"ANYBODY seen Pongo?"

It was D'Arcy minor—more familiarly known as Wally—of the Third Form at St. Jim's, who asked the question. He asked it in a voice that could be heard from one end of the Shell passage to the other end of the Fourth Form passage.

Wally very often missed his favourite, for Pongo was a perfect demon at slipping his collar, and he was hard to keep in a kennel. And then, besides, when he was on the chain he would blink so pleadingly, as if dumbly asking to be allowed a run, that Wally often hadn't the heart to keep



Skimpole wrinkled his brow with an effort of concentration and his big, bumpy forehead seemed to be making an attempt to reach the tip of his nose. Mr. Linton gazed at him blankly. "Skimpole, how dare you scowl at me?" Skimpole jumped. "I wasn't scowling, sir! I was concentrating my mighty will power!"

Tom Merry looked at them scornfully.

"You cads! Do you want any more?"

Apparently they didn't, for they did not rise. Lowther and Manners were kicking at the door, and Tom Merry unlocked it and opened it.

"I see you've finished 'em!" grinned Lowther, looking at the two juniors on the carpet. "Pongo, Pongo!"

Pongo scuttled out of the room and went whisking down the passage. Manners made a grab at him too late.

"There'll be a row if he's caught in the School House," said Lowther. "Young Wally's been roped over that already. What were you doing to Pongo, Gore?"

"Find out!"

"Well, whatever it was, don't do it again! You stand—or, rather, lie—in the presence of the local self-appointed representatives of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. We shall keep an eye on you!"

"Go to Jericho!"

And the Terrible Three left the study, leaving Gore and Mellish blinking at one another very unamiably.

him fastened up. And Wally wanted to know, too, why a dog shouldn't have a run when he wanted one. Pongo wouldn't bite unless he was hurt, and as for gnawing people's curtains or books when he got indoors, and digging up flower-beds in the garden—well, a dog required relaxation now and then.

"Where's that beast, Pongo?" continued D'Arcy minor. "I'll give him a tanning when I catch him!"

And the hero of the Third went down the passage, whistling for Pongo. From the open door of Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage a protesting voice proceeded—the voice of D'Arcy major, Wally's elder brother.

"Weally, Wally, I wish you would stop that feahful wow!"

"Well, have you seen Pongo?" said Wally.

"Certainly not."

"I shouldn't wonder if he dodged into this study," said Wally, looking puzzled. "Tom Merry said he came this way, and I have just come upstairs, so he didn't get out

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that way. He must have dodged into some room, and this is the only door that's open."

Gr-r-r!

"Hallo, that's him!" said Wally, quickly and ungrammatically. "Where is the beast? Why, blessed if Gussy hasn't been shutting him up in a hatbox!"

"What!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"Look there!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

D'Arcy looked, speechlessly.

D'Arcy's hatbox was a standing joke in the Fourth Form. It was of huge dimensions, and would hold three silk toppers and a couple of straw hats and caps. There was comfortable room for Pongo to curl up in it when the hats were not there. But Pongo had made room while the hats were there!

"Oh!" gasped D'Arcy, as he gazed upon his crushed toppers. "Oh, the wotten beast! He's in my hatbox!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Scat, you beast! Bai Jove, I nevah felt so inclined to stwike an animal in my life! Hewwies' bulldog is bad enough—he has no respect for a fellow's twousahs. But this—Bai Jove, this is the limit!"

Pongo eyed D'Arcy cautiously from the hatbox. He whisked out as the swell of St. Jim's rushed at him, brandishing an umbrella. He whisked out of the hatbox and out of the study and Wally, choking with laughter, whisked after him. Blake roared with laughter till D'Arcy, brandishing the umbrella after Pongo, caught him a fearful crack on the side of the head, and then he roared with something else.

"Ow, wow! Br-r-r-r!"

"Bai Jove, I'm sowwy, deah boy!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

"Did I hit you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Digby. "Did he hit you, Blake?"

"Bai Jove!"

"You shrieking ass!" yelled Blake. "You've raised a bump as big as a roo's egg—"

"I'm sowwy—"

"My head's singing like—like—like a kettle!"

"I'm vewy sowwy indeed—feahfully sowwy. But I must wofuse to be addressed as a shwiekin' ass, Blake. I wegard the expression as distinctly oppwobwious!"

"I—I—I—I'll jump on your neck!" gasped Blake. "I won't have that dangerous lunatic in this study! I objected to him when he first came to this school. I knew I couldn't stand him! I'll—I'll jump on him!"

"I twust, Blake, that you will calm down and behave a little more decently before Cousin Ethel awwives."

Blake gave a jump.

"Cousin Ethel!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Is she coming?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"In that case, I'll let you live," said Blake magnanimously.

CHAPTER 4.

What's the Matter With Towser?

"**W**HERE'S Herries?"

Jack Blake asked the question as he dropped into his seat at the dinner-table. Blake was a little late himself, and all the rest of the Fourth—or, rather, the portion that boarded in the School House—were there, with the exception of Herries.

Herries was conspicuous by his absence.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy shook his head.

"Hewwies seems to be absent, deah boy. He went wound to feed his beastlay bulldog a short time ago, and pewwaps he is still feedin' him?"

"It's time he was feeding himself, if he wants any dinner," said Digby. "Lathom will notice soon that he isn't here."

There was a cough from the top of the table, where Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, sat. The little short-sighted master blinked through his spectacles at the vacant seat.

"Is—er—someone not yet in his place?"

"Ya-as, sir!"

"Who is it?"

"Hewwies, sir!"

"Do you know where he is?"

"I think he's gone to feed his bulldog, sir. Pway excuse Hewwies, sir! He is wemarkably fond of that howwid animal."

"Ahem! Go and find him, D'Arcy, and tell him to come in to dinner immediately!"

"Certainly, sir."

Arthur Augustus left the table, and, grace being said, the other juniors fell to without waiting for him. D'Arcy

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hurried round to the kennels, and there, sure enough, he found his missing chum.

Herries was standing regarding Towser with a deeply serious and worried look. Towser was looking as grim as usual, and wagging his stump of a tail.

Arthur Augustus tapped Herries on the shoulder, and Towser's master started, and looked round.

"Dinnah's weady, Hewwies! The chaps are beginnin', and I've been sent to look for you! Why don't you come in?"

"I'm looking after Towser!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"He's not well."

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon Towser. He could see no symptoms of ill-health about the big, powerful bulldog.

"What's the mattah with him, deah boy?"

"I'm afraid it's a kind of distemper," said Herries, looking very much distressed. "Look at his body, there are pink spots all over it."

"Bai Jove!"

"Blessed if I quite know what to make of it! There are pink spots all over him, and a few blue ones. I've looked out all my books on the subject, and I can't find any dog disease that's got blue and pink spots for a symptom."

"Poor old Towser! He looks all wight, though. He doesn't seem to be suffewin' fwom any pain."

"No; and that's what makes it serious."

"Has he lost his appotite?"

"Well, he's just eaten a whole rabbit. That looks as if he was all right in that direction."

"Well, deah boy, if he isn't in pain, and hasn't lost his appetite, he's all wight. Pewwaps the spots only show that he's moulting or something."

Herries sniffed.

"Lot you know about dogs! Do you think he's a giddy parrot? Buzz off, and don't talk rot, old man!"

"Aren't you comin' into dinnah?"

"Blow dinner!"

"But Mr. Lathom sent me to look for you."

"Blow Mr. Lathom!"

"My deah Hewwies, if you don't come he will give you a lickin'!"

"Blow the lickin'!"

Herries was evidently in an unreasonable mood. He was disturbed and anxious about Towser, so it was excusable. He watched his favourite with a worried look. Towser was not popular with the juniors of St. Jim's, or with anybody else except Herries. But to Herries he was perfection—or as near to it as a dog could get. Herries only sniffed scornfully at the general prejudice against Towser.

"But you must weally come into dinnah, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus persuasively. "It's a weally wippin' dinnah—mutton and weast potatoes, and jolly good gweens, and lots of nice bwown gwavy."

"I can't leave Towser."

"But you're not going without any gwub?"

"Blow the grub!"

"I can't go back without you, you know."

"Then stay here."

"But I can't, deah boy. Cousin Ethel will be here soon aftah dinnah, and I've taken all the twouble to dwess before dinnah, so as to cut off immediately it's ovah. I shall miss my dinnah if I stay heah."

"Then don't stay."

"But you must come back with me."

"Rats!"

"But what shall I tell Mr. Lathom?"

"Tell him to go and eat coke!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Oh, get off!"

And Herries stooped down and began to make a careful examination of his dog; and Arthur Augustus gave it up and returned to the School House.

The juniors were half-way through their dinner when Arthur Augustus arrived. D'Arcy was hungry, and he would gladly have dropped into his place and started; but he had to explain to Mr. Lathom.

"Dear me, D'Arcy, where have you been?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, who was the most absent-minded little old gentleman, and never remembered anything.

"I've been to look for Hewwies, sir, as you told me."

"Ah, yes, of course! Where is he?"

"He wishes you to excuse him, sir," said D'Arcy, thinking it best not to deliver Herries' message exactly as Herries had given it to him. "His dog is ill, sir; and Hewwies wants to look aftah it, sir, if you don't mind, and he doesn't want any dinnah."

"Ahem! I am afraid I cannot allow a junior to miss his dinner," said Mr. Lathom. "It would not be good for him. Go back and tell Herries to come at once, D'Arcy, or the table will be cleared!"

"Yaas, sir."

Arthur Augustus gave a longing glance at his plate. He had to leave St. Jim's at exactly two, if he was to meet Cousin Ethel; and it was ten minutes to two now. D'Arcy was by no means a great eater; but he had the natural, healthy appetite of youth, and the prospect of missing his dinner was not cheering.

However, he obeyed without a word, and returned to where he had left Herries.

The youth was engaged in washing Towser in a foot-bath, with a big sponge, and in a fluid which was highly scented, and doubtless contained some disinfectant.

He looked up impatiently as D'Arcy came up.

"Hallo! What do you want?"

"Mr. Lathom has sent me to you—"

"Oh, rats!"

"He cannot allow a juniah to miss his dinnah—"

"More rats!"

"Weally, Hewwies, this is wathah wotten! Between you and Mr. Lathom, I shall be dwiven to goin' out without any dinnah. Fway come at once!"

"Shan't!"

"I don't think there's anythin' weally wong with that beastlay dog—"

"You don't know anything about dogs. Keep still, Towser! Still, old dog! It's for your own good, old doggie! Still, now!"

Towser did not seem to understand that it was for his own good; for he wriggled in the water like an eel, and was evidently watching for a chance to skip out and bolt.

He splashed the water right and left, and Herries' waistcoat and shirt-sleeves were pretty well drenched; and D'Arcy had to jump away quickly to save his trousers.

Herries blinked at him with one eye, the other being closed by a splash of disinfected water.

"Hold him, Gussy! As you're here, you may as well make yourself useful. Hold him by the ears."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"He won't bite you unless he gets annoyed at something. Well, hold him by the hind legs, then."

"I shall be splashed with watah."

"Well, I'm splashed!"

"I uttally wufuse to be splashed with watah. I wegard you as an ass, and Towser as a wotten, twoublesome beast. I think—"

"Stop him!" roared Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Oh, you ass!"

With a terrific splashing, Towser got loose, and he whisked out of the foot-bath in a twinkling. Whisking drops of water on all sides of him, he bolted, with Herries in frantic pursuit.

Towser and Herries disappeared round a corner of the buildings, and D'Arcy lost sight of them.

"Bai Jove!"

He walked away towards the School House.

A terrific growling and snapping met him in the quad.

Towser and Pongo had met there, and they were rolling over and over in deadly combat.

Herries dashed up breathlessly; but at the same moment Pongo tore himself loose and dashed off, and Towser whisked away in pursuit. After Towser went Herries, and the three of them went pelting out of the gates of St. Jim's and down the road.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "It must be awfully excitin' to keep a bulldog! I wondah if I shall get any dinnah!"

Two boomed out from the school clock.

"Bai Jove! No."

Stopping for dinner meant missing Cousin Ethel at the station. Arthur Augustus hesitated one moment. The juniors were pouring out into the quadrangle. But it was only for a moment that Arthur Augustus delayed. Then he walked quickly down to the gates and went out.

CHAPTER 5. The Followers!

TING, ting, ting!
Buzz-uzz-uzz!
Toot-oot!
Arthur Augustus jumped, as the noise blared out just behind him, and turned round.

Three cyclists were dashing down the road from St. Jim's towards the village, and he recognised Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, as they bore down upon him.

The three Shell fellows dashed up within a few paces of the swell of St. Jim's, and then jammed the brakes on.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry cheerfully. "Nearly ran you down, Gussy!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I wegard that as a beastlay twick! You have thwown me into quite a fluttah!"

"Awfully sorry! We'll go very slow now," said Tom

Merry. "Manners, give me your arm. And you give me a wing, Lowther. We're going slow."

Tom Merry, who was in the middle, held on to Manners and Lowther, leaving his handlebars unheld. The three cyclists supported one another in a row, and moved along at a snail's pace.

Arthur Augustus adjusted his eyeglass and looked at them. "There is no need to play the giddy ox, Tom Mewwy! Why don't you wide on?"

"We're going slow. We don't want to throw you into a flutter again—we'd rather throw you into a ditch."

"Weally, you uttah ass—"

"This is right. Slow and solemn pace suits three respectable, serious-minded, conscientious young persons like ourselves," explained Tom Merry. "We're going to keep this up. It's good for a chap to go slow at times and reflect. Are you reflecting, Lowther?"

"Yes, rather! Are you reflecting, Manners?"

"Yes."

And the Terrible Three, with solemn visages, moved on like snails, the wheels of the cycles turning round extremely slowly. Tom Merry was free-wheeling, and Lowther and Manners pedalling very slowly.

"You uttah asses! Look here—"

"It's all right, Gussy. Don't mind us."

"I am goin' to Wylcombe—"

"We're not stopping you, are we?"

"I wufuse to be followed down the woad by three sillay asses!" said Arthur Augustus wrathfully. "Why don't you wide on?"

"We're taking it easy!"

"Vewwy well, I shall huwvy myself."

And D'Arcy broke into a long stride, which carried him over the ground at a good rate.

But the three cyclists immediately quickened their pace, and kept pace with the swell of St. Jim's, about a couple of yards behind him.

D'Arcy slackened down again, and turned round wrathfully.

"Look here, you uttah asses—"

"Yes; we're looking!"

"What are you following me about for, you howwid wottahs?"

"The fact is, Gussy, we're anxious about you," said Tom Merry solemnly. "We noticed that you missed dinner in hall. It's not good for a kid of your tender years to go for a long walk immediately after dinner—especially if he's missed the dinner. We are keeping you in sight, in case you faint from exhaustion on the road, and then we shall be at hand to render first aid. As full blown, first-class Boy Scouts we can render first aid in a first-class manner; and we shall be very pleased to pick up your fainting form and revive you by dipping your napper into the nearest ditch."

"Awfully pleased!" said Lowther. "I'm quite looking forward to it!"

"You uttah asses—"

"Do you feel faint now, Gussy? There's a beautiful, full ditch close at hand!"

D'Arcy did not deign any reply. He strode on wrathfully; and the three cyclists kept exact pace.

When D'Arcy quickened, they quickened; when he slackened, they slackened. And the wrathful Fourth-Former could not shake them off. He was strongly inclined to go for them violently, and knock their bicycles over. It was not the thought that it would be one against three that restrained him. But he was certain to get pretty dusty and rumpled in the process; and that would never do, when he was going to meet Cousin Ethel at the station.

He strode on, with the chuckling chums of the Shell keeping pace behind.

"What's the little game, Tom?" muttered Lowther. "I thought we were going out for a spin."

"So did I," said Lowther. "I'm doing as you say; but I'm blessed if I know what you're getting at. What's the jape? Are we going to waste time japing Gussy all the way from St. Jim's to the village?"

Tom Merry chuckled.

"Yes, rather!"

"What for, ass?"

"You see, Gussy has his best togz on. He was dressing himself before dinner—dressing to kill. Then he missed his dinner. Wherefore?"

"Aha!" said Lowther, beginning to understand.

"Now he's going down to the station. Wherefore again?"

"Aha! I smell a mouse!"

"There's been talk for a week or two of Cousin Ethel coming down to the school again. What?"

"Oh, that's all very well!" said Manners, with a grunt. "I haven't forgotten the other day you marched us down to the station to meet Cousin Ethel, and it turned out to be a fat porpoise named Bunter who was coming to visit Gussy."

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"Yes, rather," said Lowther, "and a jolly good snigger the Fourth Form had at our expense, too!"

"It's all right this time, though," said Tom Merry hurriedly. "Gussy wouldn't miss his dinner for nothing. Besides, why is he so ratty about being followed? This lane is free to all the subjects of King George the Fifth, I suppose. Gussy hasn't bought it. He thinks we know the little game."

"Hallo! He's getting over the stile!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was mounting the stile, to take the shorter cut through the wood. Cyclists were not supposed to ride on the footpath through the wood, and, indeed, there was little room for them, as the branches encroached a great deal on the path. There was a smile on Gussy's face as he dropped on the inner side of the stile and marched on through the wood.

But when he looked back a few minutes later the smile vanished.

The Terrible Three were lifting their machines over the stile, and they mounted on the footpath and rode after D'Arcy. Tom Merry raised his straw hat as D'Arcy glared back at him.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "I wegard them as feahful wottahs! I weally hope they will meet a keepah who will wun them in!"

But they did not meet a keeper.

D'Arcy emerged into the lane again near the village, and then paced on up the old High Street of Rylcombe, the cyclists keeping pace.

Arthur Augustus arrived at the railway station and went in. A few minutes later three machines clanked into the station entrance, and were leant against the wall. Three cheery-looking youths lounged in.

"Here we are!" said Tom Merry. "What did I tell you?"

"What-ho!"

"The train will arrive in three minutes," said Lowther, looking up at the station clock. "Let's go on the platform, in case Gussy faints from want of food."

"Ha, ha, ha! Come on!"

They followed the swell of St. Jim's on to the platform. The elegant figure, the quintessence of elegance, from the tips of the shiny boots to the crown of the polished silk hat, was discerned, standing by an automatic machine, studying his watch.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "Two minutes before the twain comes in! I am feelin' feahfully hungwy, and I must have somethin' before I walk back. I wathah think I'll get a little snack out of this machine."

He was standing near an automatic sweet-machine. He felt in his pocket for coins, and turned out a handful—several half-crowns, florins, and shillings, and sixpences, but no coppers.

A look of vexation crossed his face.

"Bai Jove! I haven't any coppahs! Tom Mewwy!"

"Hallo!" said the hero of the Shell cheerfully.

"I wegard it as wank impertinence on your part to be here, Tom Mewwy—"

"Have you bought the station, Gussy?"

"That is a ridiculous question. As you are heal, howevah, I shall be obliged if you will lend me a penny."

"My hat! Are you quite stony? I'll make it five bob if you like?"

"I do not wequiah five bob. I want a penny for the automatic machine."

"Gussy! I can't allow this! Cheap cigarettes are bad for the constitution, and—"

"You uttah ass! I don't want cigawettes, as you know perfectly well. I am goin' to have some buttahscotch, as I am feahfully hungwy."

Tom Merry laughed, and tossed over the penny.

"There you are, my son!"

D'Arcy jammed the penny in the slot, and drew out the little drawer containing the butterscotch. He had the butterscotch out of its wrapping in a twinkling. The sound of the train could be heard in the distance.

"Bai Jove, this is wathah hard!" murmured Arthur Augustus, as he tried his teeth in the butterscotch. "I pwe-sumo it will get softah."

He gnawed the butterscotch. Finally he made a desperate effort to bite it through, so as to reduce it to a negotiable size. His teeth jammed right into it, and almost met. When he tried to force them apart again it was not quite so easy.

With a clatter the train rushed into the station.

Tom Merry & Co. kept back a little.

"We'll let Gussy meet Cousin Ethel," Tom Merry remarked; "that's only fair. Then we'll come on the scene like the good fairies in the pantomime."

"More like the demons in the panto to Gussy, I expect," chuckled Lowther.

The train stopped.

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A charming face appeared at one of the carriage windows, and Arthur Augustus ran to open the carriage door. At the same time he was trying to open his jaws. But it was impossible; his teeth were firmly embedded in the butterscotch, and would not come apart.

His face went crimson with the effort.

He opened the carriage door, and gave Cousin Ethel his hand to alight. The girl looked very charming in a neat blue serge cycling costume.

"So kind of you to come and meet me, Arthur!"

"M-m-m-m-m!" said D'Arcy.

"My bicycle is in the guard's van. Will you take it?"

"M-m-m-m-m!"

Cousin Ethel gazed at him in astonishment.

CHAPTER 6.

D'Arcy Receives First Aid!

COUSIN ETHEL looked at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked at Cousin Ethel.

The swell of St. Jim's was crimson. It was not particularly dignified to be caught eating butterscotch on a railway platform; but it was worse still to be found with his teeth stuck together, so that he could not open his mouth, or give any explanation at all.

Ethel Cleveland was naturally surprised.

"Arthur, how red you are! Have you been running?"

"M-m-m-m-m!"

"Don't you feel well?"

"M-m-m-m-m!"

"Dear Arthur," exclaimed the girl, in real concern, "there is something the matter. What is it?"

"M-m-m-m-m!"

Arthur Augustus' efforts to speak were tremendous. But they were all in vain. His teeth might have been glued together.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther came up, with ingratiating smiles, and three straw hats went off at once.

"How do you do? So glad to see you!"

"I am afraid Arthur is ill," said Ethel, looking distressed.

"Can you help him?"

"Certainly! We are qualified to administer first aid to the injured," said Monty Lowther immediately. "Tom, look after Cousin Ethel's bike, will you, while we see to Gussy?"

Tom Merry scuttled down the platform to take the handsome machine from the guard. Monty Lowther and Manners proceeded to administer first aid to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Lowther caught him by the shoulders and shook him, and Manners thumped him on the back with hearty energy.

Arthur Augustus struggled violently.

"M-m-m-m-m!"

"Do you feel better, old dear?" asked Lowther sympathetically.

"M-m-m-m-m!"

"Give him a little more, Manners."

"Right-ho!"

"M-m-m-m-m!"

D'Arcy's silk hat rolled off, and was blown along the platform. The train clattered out of the station, and the passengers looked out, with broad grins, to see the first aid administered to the unfortunate swell of St. Jim's.

Cousin Ethel looked on anxiously.

"Don't you feel better, Arthur?"

"M-m-m-m-m!"

"Good gracious! He seems to be choking. He must have swallowed something. Oh dear! Arthur, cannot you speak?"

"M-m-m-m-m!"

"Better lay him on his back," said Manners. "Get some water, and bathe his face. If he doesn't recover I'll bleed him. I've got a pocket-knife, and if I jab it into his neck he's sure to bleed."

D'Arcy struggled furiously.

But the chums of the Shell laid him on his back on the dusty platform, and Manners took out his pocket-knife and opened it.

With a final effort D'Arcy freed his teeth.

"M-m-m-m-m! Owl! Beasts! Wottahs! Lemme alone!"

"Water here!" roared Monty Lowther. "Porter! Water! Buck up! Water, porter!"

"Yessir!"

"Don't you bwing any watah, portah! Lowthah, you are a wotten beast! Mannahs, if you do not immediately wesease me, I shall stwike you!"

"I was rendering first aid—"

"I wefuso to have first aid wendered me! Lemme alone!"

"Well, of all the ungrateful bounders, I think you take the bun!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet.

Tom Merry brought the bicycle running along the platform. There was a sweet smile on his face. D'Arcy evidently could not have known that Cousin Ethel was bringing her bicycle.

"I must apologise to you, Ethel, for this ridiculous scene," said Arthur Augustus. "The fact is—"

"I thought you were ill, Arthur."

"Not at all, deah boy—I mean, deah gal. The fact is, I was eatin' some butterscotch," Arthur Augustus hastened to explain; "but I happened—"

"Here's the water, sir!" exclaimed the Rylcombe porter,

pway bwush me down. Lowthah, if you come near me, I shall stwike you!"

"That's the D'Arcy brand of gratitude, I suppose," said Monty Lowther. "I'm afwaid you'll shock Cousin Ethel, Gussy."

Gussy deigned no reply. He was brushed down, and the dust flew in all directions.

Meanwhile, Tom Merry was chatting with Cousin Ethel.

"I see you've got your machine," he observed.

"Yes; it's the one Arthur bought me in Coventry," said Cousin Ethel, laughing. "You remember?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry, laughing, too. "We



Monty Lowther and Manners proceeded to render first aid to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Lowther caught him by the shoulders and shook him and Manners thumped him on the back with hearty energy. Arthur Augustus struggled violently. "M-m-m-m-m!" He could not speak—his jaws were locked tight on the piece of butterscotch!

hurrying up with a can full of it. "Here you are, sir! Which young gent wants the water, sir?"

"It's all wight, portah—"

"This is the chap," said Lowther. "Chuck it over him, and—"

"Stop!" shrieked D'Arcy. "If you bwing that watah here, portah, I will weport you to the company!"

"Now, Gussy, don't be a cad. The man's trying to help you, and—"

"Pway stop your wotten jokes, Lowthah. I wegard you as a beast! Portah, take that watah away, and bwing a clothes-brush."

"Yessir," said the porter cheerfully. He knew D'Arcy of old, as a munificent donor of tips.

He quickly returned with the clothes-brush.

"I'll brush you down, Gussy," said Lowther. "You want a gentle hand, and—"

"I don't want anythin' of the sort, Lowthah. Portah,

have our machines with us. You'll let us see you to the school, of course."

"Certainly! But, Arthur—"

"Thank you, portah. Pway accept this shillin'. Ethel, my deah gal, I was not awah that you were bwingin' your machine—"

"I am sure I mentioned it in my letter, Arthur."

"Of course, if you say so, you did, but I wead the lottah three times and nevah noticed it," said D'Arcy, who was far too polite to contradict a lady. "I pwesume it is my mistake."

"Of course," said Tom Merry. "I—I had a sort of—of feeling that Cousin Ethel would bring her bike, and—and so we looked in at the station. How lucky, wasn't it, Gussy?"

"Ya-a-as, watah!" said D'Arcy, not very enthusiastically.

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"We shall be able to see Cousin Ethel to St. Jim's all right," Lowther remarked. "It's very fortunate, isn't it?"
 "You are so good——"
 "Not at all——"
 "Not a bit," said Manners. "We'd do anything we could, Cousin Ethel."
 "You would really?"
 "Yes, rather!"
 "Then," said Cousin Ethel, "perhaps you would be so kind as—— But no, it would be a great deal of trouble."
 "No, it wouldn't!" said Tom Merry. "It would be a pleasure."
 "The greatest pleasure in the world," said Lowther.
 "Go on," said Manners—"of course, it would! What is it?"
 "Well, I was going to suggest——"
 "Yes, yes!"
 "That you should wheel my machine to St. Jim's——"
 "Eh?"
 "So that I can walk with my cousin."
 The Terrible Three exchanged sickly smiles.
 "Ye-es," said Tom Merry. "With—with pleasure! I—I wonder we never thought of it."
 And they walked out of the station.

CHAPTER 7. The Meet!

"FIGGINS!"

It was Fatty Wynn of the New House at St. Jim's who spoke. He was standing at the school gateway, with his hands in his pockets, looking down the road.



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Figgins and Kerr were a little further back, and Figgins was explaining to Kerr an especially telling stroke he had lately developed for baffling the School House bowlers.

"You see," said Figgins, "I take up my position like this——"

"Figgins——"

"And I hold the bat like that——"

"I say, Figgins——"

"And when the ball breaks——"

"I say, Figgins, old man——"

"Can't you shut up for a minute?" demanded Figgins, turning wrathfully upon his plump chum. "I'm explaining to Kerr——"

"Yes, but——"

"Don't jaw for a minute. I got the ball so, and send it——"

"But I tell you, Figgins——"

"Will you ring off a tick?"

"Well," said Fatty Wynn resignedly, "I thought you'd like to know that Cousin Ethel was coming, but if you don't——"

Figgins jumped.

"What's that?"

"Cousin Ethel——"

Figgins made one bound into the road. Even cricket vanished from his thoughts at the name of Cousin Ethel.

Some little time before the Terrible Three had come in, one of them wheeling a lady's machine. But Figgins & Co. hadn't noticed them particularly. Now Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his fair cousin were coming down the road on foot. Arthur Augustus was beaming, and though he was feeling very hungry he was in a contented frame of mind.

Figgins dragged off his cap at once.

"Miss Cleveland! So jolly glad to see you!" he exclaimed.

Cousin Ethel smiled sweetly as she shook hands with Figgins.

"Has Tom Mewwy got in with the machine?" said Arthur Augustus, with a grin.

"Oh! Was that Cousin Ethel's machine?" exclaimed Figgins, in delight. "Yes, I saw him wheel it in. Are you riding this afternoon, Cousin Ethel? If you haven't made any arrangements yet, it would be jolly to make up a party for the road, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, very nice indeed," said Cousin Ethel sweetly. "Wouldn't it, Arthur?"

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy slowly.

He had intended to take Cousin Ethel for a delightful spin that afternoon all by himself, but the girl was apparently unconscious of it.

"It will be ripping," said Figgins enthusiastically. "I shall be able to look after Gussy, and help him over the rough parts——"

"I should uttahly wefuse to be helped ovah the wuff parts," said Arthur Augustus stiffly, and he walked on with Cousin Ethel, leaving Figgins simply beaming.

"By Jove! This is a stroke of luck!" exclaimed Figgins, looking at the Co. "What do you think, Kerr?"

"I think you've forgotten that we were going to play cricket."

"Cricket!" said Figgins vacantly, as if he had never heard of the great summer game before. "Did you say cricket?"

"Yes," said Kerr, with emphasis. "I said cricket! Cricket!"

"Were we going to play cricket?"

"You ass!" growled Kerr. "Yes, we were going to play cricket!"

"Well, we can play cricket any time, I suppose."

"Yes, I suppose so. I'd like to come for a spin first-rate; but the other fellows may cut up rusty."

"The other fellows can go and eat coke!"

"What about tea?" asked Fatty Wynn. "It was arranged that we should have a bit of a feed after the cricket match."

"You can have it after the spin instead."

"Well, that's all right! I'm satisfied."

"I'm going to look after my bike," said Figgins. "It will want a bit of a clean-up. Come along, you chaps!"

Figgins & Co. walked away to the cycle shed. Pratt of the New House came hurrying over to speak to Figgins.

"I say, Figgins, am I going in first this afternoon?"

"Eh?" said Figgins.

"Am I going in first?"

"Going in where?"

Pratt stared at him. He wondered for the moment whether Figgins had taken leave of his senses.

"Where?" he said. "Are you off your rocker? I mean in the match—the cricket? Am I going in first? I want to know."

"Oh! The cricket's off!"

"Off!" exclaimed Pratt.

"Well, not exactly off," said Figgins hastily. "I mean I'm standing out this afternoon."
 "You're—you're standing out?"
 "That's it. The eleven can be made up without me. You see, it isn't as if it were a regular House match—it's only with young Noble's scratch eleven. I think I ought to give another chap a chance."

"But look here—"
 "Sorry, Pratt! I know you're awfully pretty, but I haven't time to stand looking at you. Go and look at yourself in the glass, if you like."

And Figgins hurried on after his chums.
 He left Pratt staring after him blankly.

"Well, my hat!" muttered Pratt, in perplexity. "This won't do! What's come over Figgins? He must be off his rocker! He knows jolly well that Noble's team will knock spots off us if he doesn't bat for us and Wynn doesn't bowl! My hat!"

And Pratt walked away in perplexed dismay.
 Figgins & Co. entered the cycle shed, and Figgins had just taken his machine off the stand when French, of the Shell—a New House fellow—came in hurriedly. He rushed straight up to Figgins.

"Hallo, Figgins! What's this I hear?" he exclaimed.
 "Blessed if I know!" said Figgins, rubbing at his machine with an oilrag. "I suppose I'm not responsible for all the things you hear, am I?"

"Pratt says you're not playing this afternoon."

"Well, that's Pratt's business."

"Oh, then it's not a fact!"

"Yes, it's a fact."

"Why couldn't you say so, then?" exclaimed French wrathfully. "Look here, you've got to play! Who's going to captain the side if you don't?"

"Well, I was thinking of you, French."

"Oh!" said French, mollified.

"You ought to have a chance to show what you can do," said Figgins solemnly. "I don't believe in a one-man side. You make up the eleven and take 'em into the field, and show the chaps that you can do it."

"Right you are," said French, greatly gratified. "I will."

And he went out, very pleased with Figgins and himself. Figgins chuckled.

He was still chuckling, and cleaning his machine, when the Terrible Three came into the shed. They began to dust their machines very carefully.

Figgins looked across at them.
 "Going out for a spin this afternoon?" he asked.

"Yes," said Tom Merry, dusting away.

"I thought you were playing in Noble's scratch eleven."

"So did I."

"You've given it up?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Oh, we're attending the meet!"

"The meet!" exclaimed Figgins, staring.

"Yes," said Tom Merry calmly. "I hear there's a cycle meet—and Cousin Ethel's going. We're going, too."

"Oh!" said Figgins.

And he oiled his machine without saying any more.

CHAPTER 8.

Skimpole Shows What He Can Do!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was hungry enough to eat shoe-leather as he walked across the quadrangle with Cousin Ethel; but politeness came before everything with the swell of St. Jim's.

He escorted Miss Cleveland to the Head's house, and did not leave her till the door had closed upon her. As the door closed he stood in a graceful attitude, hat in hand.

The next moment he was descending the steps very rapidly. The meet was to be in a short time, and before then he had to change his clothes and get something to eat. Dinner, of course, there was no chance of getting now; but the school shop was always open on half-holidays. It was in that direction that the swell of St. Jim's bent his steps, and he almost ran into Skimpole near the shop. Skimpole was walking with his eyes on the ground, and a very thoughtful frown upon his face.

"Sowwy!" said D'Arcy, dodging round him.

"Stop a minute, D'Arcy! Hold on—it's important!"

"Pway what is it?" said Arthur Augustus, still polite, though extremely hungry.

"You are looking rather pale."

"Weally, that is pprobably because I have missed my dinnah! I am goin' to get a snack, and I'm in a deuce of a huwvy, deah boy!"

"Ah! You are hungry?"

(Continued on next page.)



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Conjurer (to assistant chosen from audience): "Now you can hear your watch ticking inside this handkerchief. Are you satisfied?"

Assistant: "More than satisfied, sir. It hasn't been going for a month!"

JOHN SOUTHWORTH, 17, Nelson Terrace, Brithair, Rhymney, Mon.

HE WAS!

Man: "You sold me a surprise packet for sixpence yesterday and there was nothing in it!"

Hawker: "Well, weren't you surprised?"

ALBERT HARRIS, 151, Railway Street, Nelson, Lancs.

AS PER PROGRAMME!

Teacher (giving singing lesson): "Does that end the first verse?"

Pupil: "Well, I've got to where it says, 'Refrain!'"

Teacher: "Then do as it says!"

N. COPE, 9, Gloucester Gardens, Golders Green, N.W.11.

A SMART RETORT!

Offensive Youth (entering village store): "D'you sell puppy biscuits in this rotten little shop?"

Shopkeeper: "Yes, sir. Shall I put them in a bag or will you eat them here?"

W. DURIER, 4, Guion Road, Fulham, S.W.6.

QUITE!

Father (giving small son a lesson in Natural History): "Tommy, how do you expect to know what a hippopotamus looks like if you don't look at me?"

S. GRIMWOOD, 138, Tredegar Road, Bow, E.3.

WHO WAS GUILTY?

Constable O'Grady (arriving on the scene of a collision): "Now then, I'll be after knowin' which of the two cars hit the other first!"

M. H. RUSSELL, 44, Minster Road, Bromley, Kent.

CAREFUL!

Customer (angrily): "I ordered a dozen oranges this morning, and you only sent eleven."

Fruiterer: "Yes, madam, I know. But one of them was so bad I didn't trouble to send it!"

DOUGLAS CLARK, 88, White Hart Lane, Tottenham, N.17.

TAKEN AT HIS WORD!

Tommy: "Please, father, can I have sixpence?"

Father: "Don't you think that you're getting rather a big boy to ask for sixpence?"

Tommy: "All right, dad, make it a bob!"

H. ADAMS, 48, Callandar Road, Catford, S.E.6.

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"Yaas, wathah!"

"Have you not had time to take your lunch leisurely?"

"No. I've got to buzz off, you know!"

"If you like, I can save you the waste of time necessitated by lunching, as you are in a hurry," said Skimpole. "With the wonderful powers of influencing by suggestion, of which I am possessed, I can work the trick in a very few moments. I place the tips of my fingers upon your forehead—thus."

"Weally, Skimpole—"

"I bend my gaze earnestly upon you—so."

"Weally, deah boy—"

"I concentrate my will power upon you. You are concentrating yours in the same direction. Hunger is largely a matter of habit. If you think you are hungry, you are hungry. Do you comprehend? By the sheer force of will power I can banish your hunger in a few seconds. It is worth while trying the experiment. It will save you time, and also the cost of the lunch. I can save you pounds. Now—"

"But—"

"Have you concentrated your mind upon the subject?"

"Yaas," said D'Arcy, resigning himself to his fate.

"Say to yourself, in a determined manner: 'I do not feel hungry.'"

"Yaas; I do not feel hungry."

A minute elapsed.

"Do you feel the hunger now, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"As bad as ever?"

"Worse than evah, deah boy!"

And, indeed, a mysterious rumbling that proceeded from under Arthur Augustus' waistcoat seemed to indicate that there was a great emptiness there.

Skimpole shook his head with a puzzled look.

"Dear me, this is very curious! You are sure you feel hungry?"

"Quite sure, deah boy."

"Extraordinary! However, we will give the experiment a fair test. We will remain exactly in this position for ten minutes, concentrating our wills!"

"Bai Jove! I cannot—"

"You need not mind me," said Skimpole. "In the interest of science I am prepared to take any amount of trouble."

"You may be, Skimmay, but I'm not," said Arthur Augustus, jerking himself away. "I'm goin' to get some lunch."

"But I can save you the expense."

"Wats!"

"My dear D'Arcy," urged Skimpole, following the swell of St. Jim's into the tuckshop, "I can save you both time and money. With my wonderful powers—"

"Wing off, deah boy!"

"In the interests of science—"

"A wabbit-pie, please, Mrs. Taggles!"

"Immediately, Master D'Arcy!"

"I shall go on with the experiment," said Skimpole, resolutely. "I will do so while you are eating. I shall save the latter half of your lunch, at all events. Healing by suggestion is one of the greatest discoveries of modern times. Hunger being largely a matter of habit, and, in point of fact, in many cases really non-existent, can be cured by suggestion by a sufficient powerful exercise of the will."

"Yaas, please, cold potatoes."

"I will therefore sit opposite to you and direct my will power upon you and cause your hunger to vanish."

"And some salt."

"Yours is a specially obstinate case, due, doubtless, to the fact that you are of little faith, but I hope I shall succeed in convincing you."

"Bai Jove, this is a wippin' pie!"

"Would it incommode you very much, D'Arcy, if I placed the tips of my fingers on your forehead while you are eating?"

"If you place the tips of your beastly fingahs on my forehead, I will jab you with the fork, deah boy."

"Really, D'Arcy—"

"Some peppah, please, Mrs. Taggles!"

"However, I will concentrate my will," said Skimpole. "I will will that your will will will that you cease to be hungry."

"I nevah tasted a wabbit-pie quite so nice as that before. There's nothin' like missin' a meal to give you a good appetite. Yaas, I will have some of the puddin'."

"Do you still feel hungry, D'Arcy?"

"Not quite so much, deah boy."

"Ah!" said the great discoverer, with much satisfaction.

"It is working!"

"What is—the wabbit-pie?"

"No; the concentration of my will."

"Wubbish, deah boy!"

"Infallibly, D'Arcy—infallibly! You see, a brain like mine possesses boundless power over the weaker intellect."

"Ovah what?"

"A weaker intellect. Yours is weaker than mine— weaker, in fact, than the average intellect of a fellow of your age, and, therefore—"

"Are you out this aftahnoon lookin' for a feahful thwashin', Skimmay?"

"I am stating scientific facts."

"Bai Jove!"

"Ah, you are surprised that I can judge so—"

"No; I was thinkin' that this is a wippin' puddin'."

"Ahem! Do you feel as hungry now as you did, D'Arcy?"

"Bai Jove, no! I will finish with an ice, Mrs. Taggles."

"Certainly, Master D'Arcy!"

Skimpole's gaze was bent fixedly upon D'Arcy while he was eating the ice.

Arthur Augustus was feeling very comfortable after his meal, which was an unusually large one for him, and very satisfying.

Skimpole's brow was wrinkled up, and his frown was very portentous, and a casual observer might have supposed that he was scowling ferociously at D'Arcy. As a matter of fact, he was simply concentrating his will, to heal Arthur Augustus' hunger by suggestion.

The ice was finished, and D'Arcy rose, and whisked away a crumb from his mouth with a corner of his serviette. He was feeling very comfortable.

"You look better, D'Arcy," said Skimpole.

"I feel bettah, deah boy."

"Do you still feel the craving for food?"

"Not at all."

The scientific junior simply beamed with satisfaction.

"Splendid!" he exclaimed. "Magnificent!"

"Yaas, it was a good lunch!"

"I was not speaking of the lunch. That was a minor

Potts, the Office Boy!



detail. I have cured this attack of habit-hunger by the force of suggestion."

"Weally, Skimmay—"

"It is another proof of the reality of the power I have discovered myself to be possessed of," Skimpole rubbed his bony hands. "It is splendid. I shall continue to experiment in this way."

"Bai Jove! I've no doubt you could cure anybody's hungah, deah boy!"

"Ah, you acknowledge it!"

"If they ate a wabbit-pie and a puddin' while you were doin' it," said D'Arcy, and he walked out of the tuckshop with a grin on his face.

Skimpole followed, still beaming. He had hardly heard D'Arcy's words. He was full up with satisfaction at the great success of his newly-discovered powers. In fact, he was already thinking of making a businesslike arrangement with the Head by which he might take the place of the doctor who attended St. Jim's, at half the fees of the latter gentleman, thus effecting a saving for the school, and getting a little financial benefit himself from his great discovery.

CHAPTER 9. The Deserters!

HARRY NOBLE, otherwise known as Kangaroo, wore a worried look.

It was a fine afternoon, one of the finest. The sunny playing fields, the green grass, and the gleaming wickets, seemed to call aloud for cricket. The young Cornstalk was a born cricketer, and he played the great game quite as well as even Tom Merry. He had looked forward to a game that afternoon, but something was amiss.

That Wednesday afternoon, like most of the half-holidays at St. Jim's just at this time, had been booked for a cricket match. The Junior Eleven, captained by Tom Merry, and formed of juniors chosen from both Houses, had been engaged away, but the fixture had been broken off. But as Noble didn't want to lose his game, he had arranged for a scratch match to be played between the juniors of both Houses—New House against School House.

It was understood that Figgins would captain the New House juniors. As it was not a regular House match, Noble had not been surprised, however, on learning rather late that Figgins had another engagement, and had left the captaincy to French. But when he learned that Kerr and Wynn were engaged along with Figgins, Noble frowned a little. He had a splendid side to take into the field, and he didn't want to meet a side of duffers.

But after that he began to discover that his own side was not quite so strong as he had expected. Tom Merry was junior cricket captain, but as Noble was getting up the match, Tom had willingly left the captaincy on this occasion to the Australian. It was understood that he was to play, however. But about half an hour before the time fixed for the first ball to be bowled, the Terrible Three came along with excuses.

"Awfully sorry, old chap," said Tom Merry. "I'm glad, now, we arranged for you to captain the side. I'm suddenly called away."

"Oh, never mind," said Noble. "The New House side

is jolly weak, so it will be all right if I play Hancock instead of you."

"I'm sorry, too," said Lowther. "You see—"

"Hallo! Aren't you playing?"

"You see, I'm called away with Tom Merry."

"Hem! What about you, Manners?"

"I'm called away with Lowther."

"Oh, get off the earth!" grunted Noble. And they got off that part of it.

Noble frowned a little. He couldn't understand any fellow missing a game of cricket on a fine afternoon if he could possibly help it, especially fellows like the Terrible Three, who were sportsmen to the core.

But the end of his troubles was not yet.

He met Arthur Augustus coming away from the tuckshop, and tapped him on the shoulder.

"You're playing, of course?" he said.

"Eh! Playin' what, deah boy?"

"Cricket!" roared Noble. "Did you think I wanted you to play marbles?"

"Cwicket? I'm sowwy. I've a most particulah engagement this aftahnoon."

"Look here!"

"I'm wathah in a huwwy, Kangawoo. I've got to change my clothes."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I—"

"Where's Blake?"

"I weally do not know. I'm sure he'll play, though. He always plays cwicket. I hope you have a weally wippin' time, Kangawoo!"

And Arthur Augustus hurried on, leaving Kangaroo growling.

The Australian junior looked out for Blake, and found him going to the cycle-shed. He dug him in the ribs, and Blake gasped and stopped.

"Ow! What do you want?"

"Are you playing this afternoon?"

"Well, I was going to play," said Jack, "but a most particular engagement has turned up. I'm going out for a spin."

"What about Dig?"

"He's coming with me."

"And Herries?"

"Herries? I haven't seen him—I think he's nursing his dog. You'll find him round in the pets' house."

Thither Kangaroo bent his steps. There sure enough he found Herries. Herries had recaptured Towser after a long chase, and chained him up.

To his great delight, he found that the disinfectant wash had removed most of the blue and pink spots, and he left Towser for a sleep. He returned later to look at him, to make sure that he was all right, and, to his dismay, discovered a fresh outbreak of the spots.

Towser was simply covered with them. He looked otherwise very well, and was contentedly gnawing a bone which some Good Samaritan had bestowed upon him.

Herries jerked the bone away, and threw it far; he had a strong objection to Good Samaritans feeding his dog at irregular times.

He was engaged in making an examination of the spotted bulldog when Kangaroo came along. He did not look up.

"Are you playing this afternoon, Herries?" asked Noble.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" grunted Herries.

"I mean, are you playing cricket?"

NOT LONG!



"Blow cricket!"

"Anything the matter with the dog?"

"Look at him! He's come out in spots. I cured him once, and he's broken out worse than ever. Blessed if I know what to make of it!"

"Leave him for a bit, and come——"

"Rats!"

"I want you in the eleven."

"Bosh! Think I'm going to play cricket while Towser's ill!" demanded Herries indignantly. "I tell you what I'm jolly well going to do—I'm going to have my dog indoors and look after him properly, and if the rules are against it, blow the rules!"

"What about the game?"

"Blow the game!"

It was evident that there was nothing to be done with Herries.

Harry Noble sniffed, and left him to look after Towser. He met Reilly, the boy from Belfast, near the School House, and stopped to speak to him.

"I'm blessed if I quite know how to make up the side!" he said. "Blake and his lot, and Tom Merry's lot, are out of it. Let me see, there's Dane, and Glyn, and you——"

"Faith, and I'll have to ask ye to excuse me," said Reilly.

"What! You, too?"

"I've an important engagement this afternoon."

Noble glared.

"Look here, what's the little game? Every silly ass in the school seems to have an important engagement this afternoon!" he exclaimed. "What's the——"

"I say, I can't stop," said Reilly hurriedly. "I've got to clean my bike."

And he hurried off. Noble stared after him.

"Everybody's going out cycling!" he exclaimed, turning to Clifton Dane, his study-mate, as the latter came out of the School House. "I shall be playing a side of giddy duffers this afternoon. It's rotten! There's you and Glyn——"

"Excuse me, old chap," said Dane, colouring a little.

"I've got to go out this afternoon. I must hurry out."

And Clifton Dane dashed away after Reilly.

"My only hat! What's the matter with them all?" Kangaroo exclaimed, as he entered the School House in search of Bernard Glyn.

Kangaroo, Dane, and Glyn occupied the end study in the Shell passage, where they chummed up very amicably. Bernard Glyn, the lad from Liverpool, was of a scientific turn of mind, and he sometimes carried on experiments in the study to the discomfort of the others, who did not enjoy sitting unexpectedly on electric chairs, or being suffocated by eerie chemical smells.

Kangaroo had no doubt that he would find Glyn in the end study, deep in some experiment, and that he would have to drag him out by main force to the cricket field, but to his surprise the end study was unoccupied.

"My word! Where's Glyn, I wonder?" he ejaculated.

He returned along the passage. He caught sight of Wally of the Third looking a deal neater than usual, in a trim flannel suit. Kangaroo called to him.

"Have you seen——"

"Can't stop!" said Wally, as he rushed past.

And he vanished.

"Great Scott! The whole House has gone rocky in the napper!" muttered Kangaroo, with conviction. "Hallo, Glyn!" He caught sight of his chum coming downstairs.

"You ought to be in flannels. We're nearly ready to play."

"Play?" said Glyn.

"Yes, the cricket!"

"By Jove! I'm awfully sorry, Noble! Are you playing this afternoon?"

"Yes!" roared Noble. "What are you driving at? Where are you going?"

"I'm going out for a spin, old chap. I—— Ow!"

The exasperated Cornstalk gripped his chum by the throat and backed him up against the wall. There he pinned him fast, and flourished his disengaged fist in his face.

Glyn stared at him dazedly.

"Now, then," roared Kangaroo, "just explain yourself, you ass, before I knock your silly napper right through the wall! Where are you going? What's this bosh about everybody going cycling instead of playing cricket this afternoon? Have you all gone off your silly rockers?"

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Explain yourself, then!"

"You see, Cousin Ethel——"

"Eh?"

"Cousin Ethel's come, and she's going for a spin, so I——"

"Oh!" Kangaroo released his crumpled chum. "I see! It's a meet, isn't it?"

"Well, something of the sort. I understand that D'Arcy is taking his cousin for a spin, and everybody is inviting

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himself," grinned the Liverpool lad. "I'm going. Why don't you out the cricket for once, and come, too?"

Kangaroo chuckled.

"I think I'd better. Make 'em wait while I get into my things."

"Right you are!"

And Kangaroo rushed upstairs.

CHAPTER 10.

Another Wonderful Cure!

"DEAR me, Herries! Is anything the matter with Towser?"

It was Skimpole who asked the question.

It certainly seemed as if something was the matter with Towser. He was wrapped up so carefully that only one eye showed among the various bandages that were scientifically wound round and round him, and Herries was carrying him in his arms.



In the study a strange form swathed in bandages could be seen and whom it was. "Towser!" gasped Digby.

"Yes," grunted Herries. "He doesn't look as if he was in the bloom of health, does he?"

"No, he certainly does not. What is the matter with him?"

"He's come out in spots."

"Oh! Some mild form of skin irritation due to inward trouble of some sort," said Skimpole. "How fortunate!"

Herries glared at him.

"Eh? What?"

"How fortunate!" Skimpole rubbed his hands. "It is very lucky indeed!"

"You howling ass!"

"Ahem! Herries, this is—er—almost rude. It is very fortunate, because——"

Herries disengaged one hand and let it out with a heavy

tap on Skimpole's nose. The tap was unexpected, and the amateur healer sat down suddenly.

"Ow!" he gasped. "What did you do that for, Herries?"

"You ass!" said Herries. "You rotter! Fancy saying it's fortunate that my dog's ill! Don't you get up, or I'll jolly well knock you down again!"

"Really, Herries, you misapprehend me. I did not mean that it was fortunate that Towser was ill. I meant it was fortunate that I have lately discovered myself to possess the power of healing practically any disease." Skimpole picked himself up. "I can, if you choose, cure him."

"Don't be an ass! I know more about dogs than you do, I suppose, and I can't make out what's the matter with him."

"That does not matter. I can cure him. Have you never heard of healing by suggestion? I find that, owing to the remarkable development of my brain, I am able to heal by suggestion. I concentrate my will, and imbue the patient with the will to will away the pain, and the pain vanishes."

"Ever done it?" asked Herries sceptically.



ing to the seat of D'Arcy's trousers. The growl showed what Help!" shrieked D'Arcy. "Murder! Help!"

"Yes, certainly! I cured D'Arcy of a feeling of hunger, caused by having missed his dinner."

Herries looked dubious. Skimpole spoke very earnestly, and he knew that the genius of the Shell would have scorned to tell an untruth. It was barely possible that there was something in it, and Herries was anxious to leave no stone unturned to cure Towser of his mysterious complaint.

"Well, I suppose there would be no harm in trying," he said cautiously.

"None at all. Even if Towser were not cured, he could not possibly be hurt; but there is no doubt that he will be cured. You see, my method is infallible. It is due to the gigantic developments of my mental powers, and—"

"Well, how are you going to do it?"

"I place the tips of my fingers on Towser's head, thus—

Ow!"

Skimpole drew his fingers away just in time, as Towser made a snap at them. There was a general chuckle from the fellows who were gathering round to look on.

"Ahem! I hope he will not bite," said Skimpole mildly. "I am afraid that would—er—prevent me from concentrating my will."

"Don't look at him, then. Towser doesn't like being looked at."

"H'm! I am afraid I cannot concentrate my gaze upon Towser without looking at him. I will—er—avoid touching him, however. Hold him so that I can concentrate my gaze upon him in order to facilitate the passage of the will influence."

"Right-ho!" said Herries.

Towser's single visible eye blinked at Skimpole and Skimpole blinked at Towser. The crowd of juniors looked on with great interest. Kildare of the Sixth came by in flannels and with a bat under his arm. He stopped to look on, in great surprise.

"What on earth are you doing with that dog, Herries?" he demanded.

"He's ill."

"But why—"

"Pray do not interrupt, Kildare," said Skimpole mildly. "I am healing him by suggestion—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, Kildare—"

The captain of St. Jim's walked away, laughing. Towser made a sudden wriggle, escaped from Herries, and flopped on the ground.

He made a desperate effort to run, but the bandages prevented him. He sprawled and growled, and Herries grasped him again.

"Now then, Towser, old boy! Have you finished, Skimpole?"

"Yes, I think so, Herries. I think I have sufficiently concentrated my will to drive away the disease that has been troubling Towser. I should recommend a wash to remove the traces of disease, and then Towser will be all right."

"Good! I'll try it, anyway."

And Herries marched off with Towser. Jack Blaka, who was wheeling a cycle down to the gate, called out to him.

"Aren't you coming out, Herries?"

"No; I'm looking after Towser."

And Herries, followed by Skimpole, carried Towser up to Study No. 6. Towser was growling; he didn't appear to like the bandages or the carrying.

"Lend a hand with the washing, old chap," said Herries.

"If I let him go he will bolt. He doesn't understand, you know. Get a foot-bath out of the dorm, will you, and ask one of the maids for some hot water."

"Certainly, Herries."

Skimpole would have done anything for anybody; he was genuine in that respect. He hurried away in search of the requirements for the washing of Towser, and returned presently with a foot-bath under one arm and a can of water in the other hand.

"Good!" said Herries. "Pour it out, and, mind, not too hot. Towser doesn't like it hot."

"I had better get some cold water, then."

"Yes, perhaps you'd better."

Skimpole fetched the cold water in another can. Then it was discovered that there was no soap, and Skimpole was sent to fetch Herries' special dog-soap. Then a towel had to be smuggled from somewhere to dry Towser upon when he was washed. By that time the hot water was cool enough to be used without any addition from the cold.

Herries began to strip Towser of his bandages to wash him.

Towser was stripped, and plumped into the water. He growled ominously, and would certainly have bitten anybody but Herries. He snapped several times at Skimpole, and the amateur healer gave him as wide a berth as he could.

Towser got worse as Herries began to wash him. Perhaps he considered that one wash was enough for one dog in one day. He struggled and splashed, and Herries had a great deal of trouble to hold him.

"Oh, do lend a hand, Skimmy!" he exclaimed. "The spots are coming off!"

"Ah, I thought they would!"

"But they did before, when I washed him before dinner," said Herries. "They came back worse than ever, though."

"They will not come back this time," said Skimpole; "you will see. Yes, I will hold him with pleasure."

He took a cautious grip on Towser. Towser objected violently. He made a terrible splashing, and Herries was jerked to and fro as he held him, and so was Skimpole.

"Look out!" gasped Herries.

He plunged forward upon the bath, and sent it reeling. The water came up in a great wave over Skimpole, and soaked him to the skin.

"Ooooh!" gasped Skimpole.

Herries received the return wave as the bath righted. He gasped and spluttered, and Towser wrenched himself loose and bolted. But the door was closed, and Towser was reduced to bolting round and round the study in an effort to escape his master's clutch.

"Stop him, Skimpole!"

"O-o-o-oh! I'm wet!"

"Never mind that now. Stop him!"

"I'm soaked!"

"Bosh! Stop Towser!"

Skimpole ran into Towser's path, but Towser showed his teeth so terribly that he ran out again. Herries rushed at the bulldog, who skipped away actively. Round and round the study they went, knocking over everything that was in the way. Chair after chair went flying, then the table, and finally Herries' broad shoulder brushed the clock off the mantelpiece, and it fell into the grate with a fearful crash.

Then he plumped himself on Towser at last, and collared him. Towser quietened down, and did not take a lump out of Herries, as Skimpole fully expected. Herries held him fast, and rubbed him down with the towel, and then began to bandage him again.

"I—I think I will go and change my clothes," murmured Skimpole. "I am very wet."

"All right; shut the door."

Ten minutes later Skimpole looked into the study. Towser was bandaged up, and Herries was arranging him comfortably in the armchair for a snooze.

"Is he all right?"

"Yes, seems so. Don't make a row. I think he's going to sleep."

"All the spots gone?"

"Every one."

"Ah! You will not doubt my marvellous powers again, I think," said Skimpole, rubbing his hands.

"We'll see whether they come back again."

"Oh, I am sure they will not come back."

"Good! Go out quietly, and latch the door."

Skimpole went out quietly and latched the door. He met Gore in the passage, and Gore gave him a curious grin.

"I hear you've been curing Towser," he remarked.

"Yes. He came out in spots, but by the concentration of my will power I—"

"Cured 'em?" asked Gore, laughing.

"Exactly."

"I suppose the spots are gone, then?" Gore asked sarcastically.

"Certainly; but it was my concentrated will power."

"What! Oh, I suppose he's been washed, too!"

"Certainly; but it was my concentrated will power that—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see no reason for merriment, Gore," said Skimpole, blinking at the cad of the Shell through his spectacles in a puzzled way. "There is nothing comical in Towser coming out in spots, surely?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And it is a matter for congratulation, not for merriment, that I should possess the marvellous power of curing him by a concentrated effort of will."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door of Study No. 6 opened suddenly, and Herries glared out.

"Can't you go and giggle somewhere else, Gore?" he demanded. "You're disturbing Towser. Go and make that row somewhere else!"

And as Herries had a cricket-stump in his hand, Gore thought he had better go.

CHAPTER 11.

The Cyclists!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY wheeled his bicycle—a handsome machine that shone like a new pin—up to the Head's house, and at the same moment the door opened and Cousin Ethel came out.

"All woody, deah gal!" said Arthur Augustus. "Tom Mewwy is wheelin' your machine down to the gates."

"Very good. What a beautiful afternoon for a spin!" said Cousin Ethel brightly.

"Yaas, wathah! Tom Mewwy is comin'!"

"Yes, I am glad."

"And Mannahs and Lowthah."

"I am very pleased."

"Oh, vewy good!" said D'Arcy. "If you are pleased it will be all wight. It will be wathah a cwoyd."

"I think a large party on a spin is so pleasant," said Cousin Ethel sweetly. "It will remind me of the ride to Coventry, too. How sweet it was of you to buy that

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machine, Arthur, and how dreadfully reckless and extravagant."

"Well, I find the gov'nah wathah a wowwy at times," said D'Arcy. "It is only fair that he should sholl out, you know, sometimes."

Cousin Ethel laughed as she walked down to the gates beside D'Arcy. Figgins & Co. were waiting there, and the Terrible Three were chattering to the New House trio, apparently on the best of terms. House rows were barred in the presence of a lady. Cousin Ethel nodded cheerily in reply to the general raising of straw hats.

"I think we're all here," said Arthur Augustus, a little sarcastically.

"Yes, I think so," assented Tom Merry. "Let's be off before any more bounders turn up. Here come Blake and Digby."

"Oh, we're in time, I see!" said Blake, doffing his straw hat as he came up. "So jolly glad to go on a spin with you, Miss Cleveland."

"Yes, rather!" said Digby.

They moved out into the road. In the road Reilly and Clifton Dane were leaning on their machines and chatting. They joined the party with agreeable smiles, and apparently did not see the frigid look of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The party had barely started when a ringing of bells were heard behind them, and D'Arcy, looking round, saw Kangaroo and Bernard Glyn scorching after them. A minute later a more diminutive figure whisked out of the gates, and came dashing up the road. It was that of D'Arcy minor.

"Bai Jovo!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Quite a large family," said Harry Noble, as he overtook the cyclists, and rode into the middle of them, making some of them shift very hurriedly, with muttered words, to avoid a collision.

"Yes, too many, in fact!" growled Lowther. "I thought you were going to play cricket."

"So did I."

"Why don't you, then?"

"I couldn't resist the temptation to come for a spin with you instead. I want to hear some more of your jokes," said Noble blandly. "I'm getting quite an attachment to your jokes. They remind me of my early childhood."

Lowther murmured something, and Manners grinned.

"Don't shove that bike into mine!" growled Figgins, looking back.

"You're in the way, old man."

"Noble, I insist upon your keepin' cleah of my back wheel."

"Why don't you keep your back wheel clear of mine?"

"Weally, Noble—"

"I was thinking that if I rode beside Miss Cleveland, I should be able to help her up the hills," said Kangaroo.

Figgins glared at him.

"I'm quite able to do that, thank you, Kangaroo."

"Yaas, wathah! I dare say I could manage it. I wegard you as an ass, Kangaroo."

"Go hon!"

Cousin Ethel smiled, and pedalled on quietly. Figgins and D'Arcy were escorting her, and the rest of the riders were strung out behind.

The party came in sight of the stile, half-way to Rylcombe. The leading riders passed on, and rounded the bend of the lane. Dane, Reilly, and Digby were the last to pass, and as they went by three youths came out of the wood, and stared at them over the stile.

They were Monk, Lane, and Carboy, of Rylcombe Grammar School.

They sent a Grammarian yell at the disappearing cyclists, who sent a yell back; but there was no time for more. The riders disappeared.

"Pity we didn't have our pea-shooters," said Carboy reflectively.

"Yes, rather!" said Lane. "What are you screwing up your chivvy for, Monkey?"

Frank Monk grinned.

"I was thinking. You know what we've just walked down to Rylcombe for?"

"Yes," said Lane wonderingly; "to get a packet of tacks to stick the new linoleum down in the study. What about it?"

"I've got the tacks in my pocket."

"I know you have. What on earth—"

"Jolly big ones, and a pound of them," said Frank Monk.

"Oh, he's dotty, my sons!"

"Look here!" said Frank Monk. "There's a party of St. Jim's cyclists gone by—we didn't see all of them—a dozen or so, perhaps."

"Well, they're gone now!"

"They're going towards the village, easy pace. If we cut through the wood by the footpath, we can easily get ahead of them."

"What on earth do you want to get ahead of them for?"

Frank Monk drew out a big packet from his pocket and jammed it under Carboy's nose.

Carboy gave a yelp.

"What's that?" demanded Monk.

"Tacks, I suppose!" howled Carboy. "Keep them to yourself, you ass! Have you gone off your rocker?"

"Not much!" Monk grinned. "What price punctures?"

"Punctures?"

"Yes. A pound of tacks scattered in the road, and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I say, isn't that playing it rather low down?" said Lane. "You see——"

"All's fair in war. Didn't Tom Merry come to our school disguised as a new boy, and give us a high old time?" demanded Monk. "Besides, I've got an idea. I heard the other day that D'Arcy expected his cousin down at St. Jim's. I shouldn't wonder if they're going to the station to meet her. What price busting them up on the road, and going ourselves?"

"Good!"

"Then come on, and don't argue."

And the three Grammarians dashed on along the footpath at top speed.

They emerged into the lane far ahead of the cyclists, and in the road they scattered the tacks with a liberal hand. The road was smooth and hard; the tacks, light in colour, were lost to view in the dust.

The buzz of a bicycle-bell in the distance warned the Grammarians that the St. Jim's cyclists were coming. They scuttled back behind a hedge to watch the result of their stratagem.

The cyclists came in sight, whizzing along at a good rate now.

Frank Monk, peering through the hedge, uttered a sudden exclamation:

"My only hat!"

"What's the matter?"

"There's a lady in the party! It's Miss Cleveland!"

"Too late now!" said Lane. "It can't be helped! They're on the tacks!"

They were!

CHAPTER 12.

The Spin!

"BAI Jove! There's somethin' wong with my tyah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The cyclists had swept on past the Grammarian ambush. They were going at a good speed, and they had collected up a large number of the tacks without noticing it. But as they rode on, the tyres noticed it.

D'Arcy was the first who remarked that his tyre was flattening. Cousin Ethel noticed that her own tyres were going down. Figgins were quite flat, and he had not said a word. He did not know anything about the tacks, and he would have ridden with flat tyres, or without tyres at all, rather than give up his place beside Cousin Ethel.

"Hallo! I'm going as flat as a flounder!" said Tom Merry. "Curious!"

"I'm punctured!" growled Manners.

"So am I!" said Lowther.

"Faith, and I'm punctured, too!"

"And I!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in bewilderment. "What a crop of punctures in a minute! Why, look at this!" he added, as he jumped off his machine. "The tyres are stuck full of tacks!"

"Tacks!"

"My only Aunt Maria! Tacks!"

"It's a trick!"

"A rotten, caddish trick, too!"

The whole party dismounted. There was only one machine that was not punctured, and that was Harry Noble's. Noble had been riding on a strip of grass beside the lane, and so had escaped the tacks.

He was very sympathetic, but very pleased at his own escape. A glimmer of fun came into his eyes.

"You chaps are in a bad way," he remarked. "You won't mend those punctures very soon. Let's begin on Miss Cleveland's machine, and get that done, anyway."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors were, of course, quite willing to do that. Noble, Tom Merry, and Jack Blake set to work on Cousin Ethel's tyres, and were busy for some time. Ethel's machine was nearly new, and the tyres in good condition, and so she had suffered the least injury. Some of the oldest tyres in the party, which had already been mended and remended, looked desperate.

Reilly and Digby wheeled their machines back towards St. Jim's. The others began the work of repair. Soon a group of cycles were reposing upside down by the roadside,

and warm juniors, in their shirtsleeves, sweated over the work.

Cousin Ethel sat on the grassy bank to wait.

She was disappointed at this ending of an afternoon's spin. It was pretty clear that the spin was over for the greater part of the band of cyclists. It was really too bad. And the juniors murmured things about the liberal distribution of tacks, and wished they could get within comfortable hitting distance of the cads who had scattered them in the road.

Three youths in Grammar School caps came along as they were busily engaged.

"Hallo!" said Frank Monk cheerily. "Is this a puncture competition?"

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the Grammarians.

"Some uthah wottah has been scattewin' tacks in the woad," he said. "I wish I knew whom it was and I would give him a fearful thwashin'!"

"Dear me!"

"Rotten cad, whoever he was!" said Manners savagely.

"Regular sweep!" said Blake.

"Yes, it was rotten," said Monk thoughtfully. "Pretty nearly as bad as getting oneself up as a new boy and ragging chaps in their own school."

Tom Merry grinned.

"I don't suppose the giddy joker would have done it if he had known there was a lady in the party," added Carboy, raising his cap to Cousin Ethel.

"Of course not," said Lane promptly.

"I am not sure," said Cousin Ethel, with a smile. "But it was a very thoughtless thing to do, all the same, and rather more than a joke."

"Well, yes, I suppose it was," said Monk. "I'm sorry—I mean, the chap who did it would be sorry if he could see you. Can we lend a hand, Blake?"

"No!" growled Blake. "I'll lend a foot if you don't sheer off!"

"Can we help you, D'Arcy?"

"Oh, go and eat coke, deah boy!"

"Can we help you, Dane?"

"Rats!"

"We can't be of any assistance here," said Monk. "Perhaps Miss Cleveland would like us to escort her home while these punctures are being mended."

"No, thank you," said Miss Cleveland, smiling.

"Well, I wish we could do something to help. You don't look as if you could handle that machine, Glyn. Let me lend you a hand."

"Look here," said Glyn, "these Grammar School rotters punctured our machines. There's a ditch there full of water!"

"Yaas, wathah! Ethel, deah gal, would you have any objection to our thowwin' these cads into the ditch?"

"Please don't do anything of the sort," said Ethel.

"Yaas, but weally——"

"Good-bye!" said Monk hurriedly. "See you again another time. I hope you won't have any more punctures. And the Grammarians walked away rather hurriedly."

Kangaroo and Blake were putting the tyres back on Ethel's machine. One was already finished.

"We shan't be long now," said Blake.

"Oh, I don't mind waiting at all!"

"You can't wait till the lot are done," said Blake. "It's messing up your afternoon. Your machine is done now. Kangaroo will lend me his jigger, and I will look after you while you have a spin."

"But, really——"

"Upon the whole, Blake, Kangaroo had better lend me his jigger so that I can look after my cousin," said Arthur Augustus stiffly.

"Really——" said Cousin Ethel.

Noble shook his head.

"I think Miss Cleveland ought to have her spin," he said, "and some chap had better take my bike to ride with her. I hope you will decide upon that, Miss Cleveland."

"If you all think so——"

"Oh, certainly!" said all the juniors.

"Very well, then!"

"I should like to lend you my machine, Blake," said Kangaroo thoughtfully, "but, you see, D'Arcy, as Miss Cleveland's cousin, has a claim."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I should like to lend you my machine, D'Arcy, but you see, Blake, as head of your study, has a claim."

"Weally, Kangaroo——"

"To prevent friction I think, perhaps, it would be better for me to ride the machine myself, after all," said Kangaroo,

(Continued on page 19.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,318.

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM—



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

HALLO, chums! On page 17 of next week's issue you will find a grand offer of Five "James" cycles as prizes in a simple one-week competition. All of you should have a go at this easy contest, for apart from the handsome prizes it's good fun solving the puzzles. Step in and try your skill! Now for next week's fine long story of St. Jim's. It's entitled:

"THE JAPE OF THE TERM!"

which tells you in advance that there are laughs in store. There are—and how! Martin Clifford has scored another triumph with this yarn, and I strongly urge all his "fans" to make certain of reading it. Those of you who have been following the stirring chapters of

"THE SPY-FLYERS!"

won't need much urging from me to keep an eye open for next week's continuation of this thrill-packed story. It will hold you spellbound from first line to last. For a hearty laugh you can depend on Potts, the office boy, and another column of jokes sent in by readers. In case some of you don't know it, I award prizes of half-a-crown to the senders of these jokes, so what about sending in your attempt? Ready for some news para's? Right—here they are!

THEN THE CURTAIN CAME DOWN!

A well-known Oxford Operatic Society was giving its performance of a comic opera not long ago, and the "show" was going along splendidly until it reached the scene where one of the players had to take a long drink. Then things happened—that were not in the play! No sooner had the player drained the tankard than a fearful expression shot across his face. Dropping the tankard he bolted from the stage, to the bewilderment of fellow artistes and audience alike. Down came the curtain, and along came explanations. Someone had made a mistake. It transpired that the tankard contained paraffin—not water! Enough to make the hardest actor bolt, what?

A REAL THOROUGHbred!

One of the strangest and most moving sights ever witnessed on a racecourse happened last month when a gallant racehorse won a hurdle race on three legs! Boomlet was the name of the plucky animal. He was leading the field when he leaped at the last hurdle and struck his right hind leg. The bone snapped and the horse, naturally, stopped.

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His rider, not knowing what had happened, urged the animal on again towards the winning post. It responded gamely enough and covered the remaining two hundred yards to the winning post at full gallop. Once past it he halted, raised his broken hind leg as if to show what was the matter with him, and shivered. His rider was overcome with grief, which was shared by the watching crowds when the facts became known, and the sound of a shot rang out. For Boomlet had run his last race.

A REPLY TO ARTHUR BENDALL!

Arthur writes and asks me what an ostrich eats when in captivity. Afraid I don't know the official diet of the captive ostrich, but I remember reading the other day that when the gizzard of a dead ostrich from the London Zoo was "opened up" it contained the following: A Belgian franc, a key, three gloves, a tyre valve, two handkerchiefs, a pencil, two collar-studs, three pennies, a comb, and other odds and ends! What an appetite!

A DREAM—AND ITS SEQUEL!

A Wellingborough resident dreamed that there was a hefty well under the scullery of the house in which he lodged. He must have impressed his landlady, for she started to thump the floor of the scullery with a walking stick. Suddenly there was a crack and a large portion of the stone flooring fell away and disappeared far below with an eerie splash. Yes, the dream had come true, for further investigation revealed a well. Well, well!

CAN YOU BEAT THIS?

Do you cycle? If so, you've got a good idea what it feels like when you have covered, say, a hundred miles. But what do you think of the feat put up by a Leicestershire Grammar school boy, aged seventeen, recently. He cycled from Coalville to Skegness and back in one day—a distance of two hundred and five miles! What makes the effort more remarkable is that he did the journey alone. Nothing worse than cycling a long distance without company—as you fellows who are cyclists will know.

OR THIS?

His age is eleven, and his parents in Nairobi particularly wanted him to attend school in England. So he was put on board the trans-African air mail plane and flown to Croydon—a distance of five thousand miles! This young air traveller spotted herds of elephants en route, but he resisted the impulse to have a pot at them with his air-gun. How would you like to journey to school like that?

ONE FOR THE GIRLS!

Now you girl readers of the GEM, here's a special par for you. Do you know that a sixteen-year-old Mexican Indian girl ran a distance of twenty-eight miles in four hours fifty-six minutes. Wants some beating, what! Tell your boy friends about that when they start to boast of their performances on the running track! But perhaps you had better not tell them that this record was set up in 1927—they might think it a bit out of date!

A REPLY TO "SPY-FLYER" OF BRISTOL.

He wants to know when the famous German flying ace, Baron von Richthofen was brought down, and how many Allied machines fell to his deadly marksmanship and skill in the war clouds of the Western Front. The famous baron, who flew a red triplane, accounted for eighty enemy planes, and was mighty near adding another one to his "score" when a bullet ended his amazing career. That happened on April 21st, 1918, and, with the passing of the gallant baron, the Allies' supremacy of the air was never seriously challenged again. "Spy-flyer" doubtless will be interested to know that Baron von Richthofen was thirty years of age, and that before joining the German Air Force he had previously seen service with the cavalry.

HE ALTERED HIS MIND!

The scene was a hospital ward. In came the nurse to tell a young patient that it was time for him to proceed to the operating theatre for an operation. But the patient was misgiving—and so were his clothes! The police were put on his track, and eventually they found him. Yes, sir, they found him having tea with his girl friend!

BURIED TREASURE.

Something like seven hundred years have passed since King John lost his famous jewels in the Wash. Now an attempt is to be made by a water diviner to retrieve those jewels. It appears that the diviner would fancy his chances of finding the exact locality of the jewels if he had a button which once belonged to King John. So if you know anyone—hm! But, seriously, if ever you get the chance of seeing a water diviner at work, watch the hazel twigs which he carries in his hand begin to jump and twirl the moment he locates water. The water might be many feet down in the ground, but the expert diviner will soon trace it. The moment he moves away from the course of the water the twirling twigs will remain still. The second he picks up the track of it again the twigs will start their jumping tricks afresh. It's uncanny to watch, believe me!

MOLLISON AGAIN!

Jim Mollison and "Amy" Johnson are shortly to attempt to lower the non-stop flight record. If all goes well they will set off from Roosevelt Field, New York, and fly across the Atlantic to Baghdad—a distance of more than six thousand miles. Their twin engine machine will resemble nothing so much as a giant petrol tank, for every available inch of space has been "collared" to provide room for the storage of the fuel. We wish them good luck and a safe journey!

YOUR EDITOR.

SKIMPOLE'S WILL POWER WON'T!

(Continued from page 17.)

still in the same thoughtful strain. "If Miss Cleveland does not object to me as an escort—"

"Of course not," said Cousin Ethel.

"Then that's settled," said Kangaroo cheerfully.

And Blake and D'Arcy exchanged looks, and mentally promised Kangaroo something when they had him safe back at St. Jim's without Cousin Ethel looking on.

Figgins did not speak, but there was a look on his face as he glanced at Cousin Ethel that Kangaroo saw, and which went straight to the Australian junior's heart. His eyes met Figgins', and Figgins dropped his glance and coloured.

The Cornstalk chum was coolness itself, and he generally contrived to have things the way that pleased him. But he had a generous heart. He wanted very much to go on that spin, but—

"It was Figgins who arranged for the spin in the first place," said Jack Blake, catching the Australian's look. "Play the game, Kangaroo!"

"Oh, all right!" said Noble. "If Cousin Ethel doesn't object to Figgins instead of me, I'm willing to do the fair thing."

"Of course not," said Cousin Ethel, in exactly the same tone as before.

"There's the jigger, Figgy!"

Figgins grasped it as if it had been a priceless gift.

"I'll remember this, Wallaby," he murmured.

Noble grinned genially.

"That's all right! Take it, and welcome."

Tom Merry held Cousin Ethel's machine till she mounted. And she rode away with a sweet smile all round, Figgins by her side.

The juniors looked after them till the next winding curve of the lane hid them from sight.

"Well, this is nice for us!" said Noble. "No good thinking of a spin this afternoon, kids. Better wheel the machines back to the school."

"I suppose so."

"It's rotten," said Wally, growling—"absolutely beastly!"

"Weally, Wally, I stwongly object to your usin' those expressions."

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

"I insist upon beginnin'! I wefuse to allow you to use slangy expressions! I—"

"Rats!" said the disrespectful younger brother; and he turned his machine to wheel it homeward. "I wish I could get hold of those Grammar School cads! I'd—I'd fill 'em up with solution!"

"Yaas, wathah! I quite agree with you there, but—"

But Wally did not wait for the rest. Some of the juniors went on mending punctures. But the punctures were too numerous for a roadside job. Most of them gave it up and wheeled their bicycles away towards St. Jim's.

Noble, with Figgins' machine, was the first to reach the gates. Skimpole was standing there, blinking out into the road.

"Have you seen young D'Arcy, Kangaroo? His dog Pongo—"

"Blow his dog Pongo!" said Kangaroo. "I say, I hear you are healing things by suggestion, and that sort of thing."

"Certainly! I have already—"

"Can you heal punctures in a tyre by suggestion?"

"Really, Noble—"

"If so, you can begin on mine. Sufficiently concentrated force of will ought to be enough, I suppose, to mend a common or garden puncture?" said Kangaroo, with a perfect seriousness of manner which quite deceived Skimpole.

The genius of St. Jim's was never known to see a joke.

"Really, Noble, you entirely misapprehend the whole matter," said Skimpole patiently. "My wonderful discovery is only of use to human beings. Pain being largely a matter of imagination, can be cured by the force of a will. A puncture—"

"I see. You can cure a puncture in a human body, but not in a bicycle tyre?"

"Yes, to put it that way. Hallo, young D'Arcy! Here you are! Your dog Pongo—"

"My only Aunt Jane! If you've been trying any experiments on my dog Pongo—"

"Not at all. I only wish to tell you that he has shown the same disease as Herries' bulldog, doubtless owing to

contact when they were fighting to-day. I just saw him come along the Shell passage covered with blue and pink spots."

Wally turned quite pale.

"Where is he?"

He rushed off towards the House without waiting for an answer to the question, and Skimpole hurried after him.

"D'Arcy minor, I will cure him if you like. I have already cured Herries' bulldog of the same complaint. My wonderful discovery—"

"Oh, ring off!"

"With my marvellous powers, I can soon restore him to a normal state of health; and, as a matter of fact, I—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" roared Wally.

And he dashed away, calling to Pongo till the echoes of the old quadrangle rang again.

CHAPTER 13.

Towser Is Not To Be Sat Upon!

"PONGO! Pongo! Pongo!"

Wally called and whistled, but the voice of Pongo did not answer.

"Pongo, Pongo!"

"Have you seen Pongo?"

"Where's that dog got to?"

"Pongo, Pongo!"

Gore came out of the School House, with a grin on his face, and a smear of paint on his fingers. Gore had apparently been using his colour-box that afternoon, rather an unusual thing for Gore, who was not at all artistic.

"Looking for Pongo?" he asked.

"Yes. Have you seen him?"

"I saw him in the Shell passage a while ago," said Gore, with a peculiar grin. "I think he's outside now."

"There he is!" shouted Harry Noble suddenly.

Wally whisked round and dashed away on the track of Pongo. Pongo appeared to be in an unruly mood, even more so than usual, for he whisked off in a twinkling, and he and his master vanished round the buildings at top speed.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he entered the School House. "Those wotten fags seem to be givin' a lot of trouble this afternoon. First, there was Hewwies' beastly bulldog, which was the cause of my missin' my dinnah, and now there's Pongo. Do you know, deah boys, I am wathah tired from wheelin' this bike home. I think I will sit down and have a west in the studay."

"I think I'll brush some of the dust off!" grunted Jack Blake. "Hallo! What's the matter here? Where's Herries?"

"I think I saw him on the cricket field."

"What's the study dark for?"

The chums of the Fourth were surprised. The blind was down in Study No. 6, and the interior was quite gloomy, though the sunshine was brilliant outside in the quad.

Blake crossed towards the window to pull up the blind, and Arthur Augustus stepped towards the armchair. There was a sudden yell from Blake, and he was heard to stumble, and there was a splash.

"Ow! Gerooch!"

"Bai Jove! What's the mattah, deah boy?"

"Some idiot has left a bath of water standing here in the dark!" howled Blake. "I've—ow—sat in it! Wow! I'm wet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Digby. "This is a little joke of Herries! That's why the blind's down."

Blake splashed out of the foot-bath.

"If this is a little joke of Herries', Herries will have to be instructed to grow less funny!" he said, as he shook the water off. "My trucks are soaked through, the asinine duffer!"

"Bettah change 'em, deah boy!" said D'Arcy. "I'm goin' up to change in a few minutes, when I have had a west. I am quite exhausted, bai Jove!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sank gracefully into the armchair.

He reposed there for about the fiftieth part of a second, and then he jumped up with a terrific yell.

"Oh!"

"What's up?"

"Oh! Ow! Help!"

Gr-r-r-r!

In the dimness a strange form, swathed in bandages, could be seen clinging to the seat of D'Arcy's trousers.

The growl showed what and whom it was.

"Towser!" gasped Digby.

Towser it was.

Arthur Augustus had sat upon him in the dimness, and

Towser had been remarkably prompt to make his presence felt.

"Help!" shrieked D'Arcy. "Murder! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake dragged up the blind, and a flood of sunlight rushed into the study. It revealed Towser, bandaged up to the chin, clinging to D'Arcy, who was leaping to and fro like a kangaroo, in wild attempts to shake him off.

Fortunately, Towser's teeth had met in the cloth, not in D'Arcy, and the swell of St. Jim's was more startled than hurt.

"Take him off!" shrieked D'Arcy. "Help! Murdah! Help! Fiah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "This is another of Herries' little jokes, I suppose!"

"I will give Hewwies a fearful thwashin'! Take this howwid beast off! He will bite me in a minute! He is wuinin' my twousahs! Help!"

"Get off, you brute! Shush!"

"Shush!" roared Digby.

But Towser declined to shush.

He hung on like grim death, and refused to budge, and only growled as Blake applied a boot to his ribs and Digby a cricket stump to his back.

Suddenly there was a rending of cloth, and D'Arcy's garments gave way.

Towser dropped off, with a mouthful of cloth as a trophy of victory, and D'Arcy gasped with relief.

"Dwive the beast out, deah boys!"

Towser did not want driving out. He whisked out of the study instantly, and careered down the corridor, with the cloth in his jaws. His career was rather curious to watch, for the numerous bandages impeded all his movements, and he progressed sometimes like a crab and sometimes like a kangaroo.

Arthur Augustus gasped for breath.

"Bai Jove! I am feelin' quite in a fluttah! I wegard Hewwies as a beast—a wank beast!"

"Hallo! Here comes Herries!" said Digby, as the sound of well-known footsteps approached the study.

"Collar him as he comes in!" said Blake, in a hurried whisper. "I approve of japes when they're up against the Shell fellows or the New House. But a jape on one's own study-mates is past the limit. Herries has got to go through it!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I say, what are you—" began Herries, as he came in, in cricketing flannels. "Oh, oh! Leggo!"

They were upon him in a twinkling.

Three pairs of hands grasped Herries, and, sturdy as he was, he had no chance.

He was whirled into the study, whirled round to the bath, and sat down in it with a terrific splash.

He sat there for some moments, too dazed to move, while his three chums grinned at him.

Then he jumped up, soaked with water, and furious.

"You utter idiots!" he roared. "Are you off your rockers? What are you up to?"

"He that japed his study-mate, shall be likewise japed!" said Blake solemnly. "Give him another!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hold on! Who's japed you, you shrieking idiots? I haven't!"

"You shoved this bath here for me to fall over—"

"I left it here. How should I know you were dummy enough to fall over it?"

"You put Towser in the armchair for Gussy to sit on."

"And he tore my twousahs—"

"I left him in the armchair to sleep!" yelled Herries.

"Do you mean to say that that howling ass has sat upon him?"

"I wefuse to be called a howlin' ass! I —"

"You pulled the blind down, so—"

"That was to make the study dark, so that Towser could go to sleep," said Herries indignantly.

Blake burst into a laugh.

"Then you weren't japing us at all?"

"Of course I wasn't, you ass!"

"Then you've had a bath for nothing. Serve you right for being such an ass, though! Chaps who leave a bulldog in a study ought to be drowned!"

"I thought you were out for the afternoon, you duffers! When I heard you had come in I came over from the cricket field to see that you didn't disturb Towser—"

"Ha, ha, ha! You've arrived too late!"

"You've soaked my trucks, you dummy!"

"You've soaked mine, you ditto!"

"Now, where's Towser?"

"Blessed if I know! He's gone."

"Gone!" roared Herries. "He's ill!"

"Well, he didn't look ill, the way he bolted!" grinned

Blake. "Perhaps he's recovered. Anyway, he's gone, and a jolly good riddance!"

"Look here—"

"Haven't time. I'm going to change my things."

And Jack Blake went upstairs, whistling; and Herries, having glared after him, and glared at Dig and D'Arcy, hurried away in search of Towser, heedless of the big patch of wet upon his white trousers.

"Bai Jove!" remarked D'Arcy. "I'm beginnin' to get fed-up with these dogs, you know!"

"Towser nearly got fed-up with you!" grinned Dig. "I'm going down to the cricket. Better than mending punctures all the afternoon. Can do that on a rainy day!"

CHAPTER 14.

The Invitations!

TOM MERRY came off the cricket field with his bat under his arm, and the ruddy glow of exercise in his face. The St. Jim's juniors had not allowed the Grammarians' little joke to spoil their afternoon.

The "spin" was off, but the weather was ripping for cricket, and they were filling up the time with complete satisfaction to themselves while Figgins and Cousin Ethel were away. Bernard Glyn was looking on at the game, and Tom Merry stopped to speak to him as he came off the field.

"Getting near tea-time, I think?" Tom Merry remarked.

"Yes, how long are you playing?"

"Oh, this is only filling up time. We shall chuck it when Cousin Ethel comes in, and have tea."

"Good! Come over to my place for tea," said Glyn. "I was going to ask you, only as the spin was arranged, I left it."

"No more electric chairs, or electrified walking sticks, I hope?" said Tom Merry, laughing.

The Liverpool lad chuckled.

"Oh, no; bring Cousin Ethel along, too."

"With pleasure."

And Glyn's invitation was accepted with pleasure by most of the fellows. Tea on the lawn at Glyn House, with Miss Edith Glyn presiding, was something to be enjoyed, as some of them knew by experience.

"My deah chap, I shall be extremly happay," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, when Glyn asked him. "I we-membah with gweat pleasuah my last visit to Glyn House. Pway wely upon me."

"You're coming, Herries?"

"Thanks awfully," said Herries. "I'm rather anxious about my dog, though."

"Bring him with you."

"Oh, weally, Glyn! I thought this was to be a pleasuah partay."

But Herries shook his head.

"Towser can't go on a run just now. He's ill. Skimpole has been working the healing-by-suggestion wheeze on him, and it seems to have done him good, though I'm blessed if I can understand how. The spots haven't come back."

"Oh, you've caught the wotten beast, then, Hewwies?"

"I've caught Towser," said Herries. "Lots of energy that dog has. Took me an hour. I've got him on the chain now."

"Let's have a look at him," said Glyn. "If he's well enough to be left, you'll come over to my show to tea?"

"Jolly good!"

They walked round to the pets' house. Towser was there, on his chain, and Gore of the Shell was looking at him. Gore concealed something hastily under his jacket as the juniors came up, and strolled away. Herries looked after him suspiciously. He knew that Gore was cruel; but there seemed to be nothing wrong with Towser. Herries examined him with fatherly care, but there was no sign of returning spots.

"He seems all right," said Glyn.

"Yes, he does. There may be something in Skimpole's piffle, after all. You never know."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'll come over to Glyn House with pleasure," said Herries. "Jolly glad to. Towser will be all right till I come back."

Skimpole met them as they walked away. The brainy man of the Shell immediately buttonholed Herries.

"Have you been to see Towser?"

"Yes. He's all right."

"No return of his disease?"

"Not a bit of it."

"Ah! What did I tell you, Herries? I trust that you will not doubt my wonderful powers again," said Skimpole, beaming through his big spectacles. "Wonderful as my discovery is, I am really surprised at such splendid results in so short a time. I cured D'Arcy of an attack of habit-hunger—"

"I was eating a wabbit-pie at the time—"
 "Now I have cured Towser, simply by suggestion," said Skimpole unheeding. "I regard these results as little short of marvellous. I really wish D'Arcy minor could capture his dog. I should be very pleased to work a cure in Pongo's case."

"Marvellous, and no mistake," said Glyn, with a grin. "You must come over to my place with us, Skimmy, in case anything unforeseen should happen there."

"Thank you very much," said Skimpole. "I should be very pleased to come."

Glyn strolled down towards the gates with D'Arcy. It was time that the cyclists returned; it had been arranged that the spin should be over in good time for tea.

Figgins nearly fell off his machine.
 "Ha-ha-hallo! Why, hero we are at school!"
 "Dear me, so we are!" said Cousin Ethel.
 "Pway allow me to take your machine, Ethel," said Arthur Augustus, in his most stately manner.
 "Certainly, Arthur! How good you are!"
 "I say, you're coming over to Glyn House to tea, aren't you, Miss Cleveland?" said Bernard Glyn. "My sister Edith wants you to come, you know, and it's going to be a bit of a spread—if you come. Will you?"
 "Pway do, Ethel; but if you are too exhausted to walk over to Glyn House, pway be fwank, and we will have a spread heah."
 "I shall be very pleased to come," said Cousin Ethel.



"Look out!" gasped Herries. He plunged forward upon the bath and sent it reeling. The water came up in a great wave over Skimpole and soaked him to the skin. "Ooch!" yelled Skimpole. Towser struggled fiercely, and made a wild effort to get out of the bath.

"Bai Jove! Here they come!"

Two cyclists came into view.

Figgins and Cousin Ethel were riding at a leisurely pace, their machines just level, and talking as they rode, and they did not seem to be aware that they were getting near the gates of the school at all.

D'Arcy put up his eyeglasses and looked at them.

"I can't quite make it out," he said. "I weally nevah could quite make it out."

"Can't make what out?"

"How my cousin can be interestwed in the piffle that chap Figgins talks, you know. She weally is an awfully intelligent gal, you know," said Arthur Augustus confidentially. "Yet she can listen to the stuff that chap talks! Figgins doesn't know anything about anything except football and cwicket, and Ethel doesn't play eithah football or cwicket. It's simply amazin'."

"Yes, isn't it?" said Glyn, laughing.

Figgins' voice became audible as the cyclists came nearer. "I just charged, you know, and he went down, and then he blubbed, you know, and then I was sorry."

"Hallo, Figgins!"

"Good!"

"Yass, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus wheeled Ethel's machine away, and Figgins placed his in the hands of Bernard Glyn. Glyn looked at it, and at him.

"Shove it somewhere for me, old chap," said Figgins. "It's Noble's, you know."

And without waiting for a reply, Figgins walked away with Cousin Ethel towards the Head's house.

After the door had closed behind Ethel, Figgins walked away slowly to the New House, and his chums, Kerr and Wynn, met him. They stopped in his path, expecting him to stop, too; but Figgins was so immersed in thought that he ran right into Fatty Wynn without seeing him.

"Here, gerroff!" gasped Fatty Wynn, as he staggered back. "Are you blind, you owl? You've knocked all the wind out of me!"

"Hallo! Is that you, Wynn?"

"Yes, it is," growled Fatty. "What's the matter with you? What do you mean by mooning about like that in the broad daylight?"

"Mooning?"

"Yes, mooning. Look here! Glyn wants us to go over to his show for grub—"

"Ah, yes! Yes!"

"Are you coming? I'm hungry."

"Yes. No. Yes."

"Have a good ride?" asked Kerr.

"Yes. Certainly. Nice ride," said Figgins absently.

"Where have you been?"

"Eh?"

"What road did you take?"

"Road?"

"Yes. I suppose you've ridden somewhere?"

"Oh, yes!" said Figgins. "We rode somewhere. I'm blessed if I noticed the road! We were talking most of the time, you see."

"Yes, I see—lots," said Kerr. "But it's time to wake up now, and come to tea!"

"Oh, I say!" said Figgins more briskly. "That chap Glyn is standing a tea at his place, and I'm going—"

"Why, I've just told you—" began Fatty Wynn.

"Cousin Ethel's going, too," said Figgins. "Better get ready. Don't stand about there, wasting time, you chaps. Come in."

And they went in.

CHAPTER 15.

Services Declined!

THE tea at Glyn House was excellent, and a merry evening followed. Bernard Glyn showed his many models to his guests, and hours passed all too quickly. The time for parting came at last, and Cousin Ethel was seen off at the station by the whole party, and then Tom Merry & Co. walked back to St. Jim's.

The sun was setting, and a glow of golden light lay across the old quadrangle. The cricketers were going in, and lights were beginning to gleam in the studios. A piercing whistle rang through the quad as the juniors entered the gates, followed by a shout:

"Stop him!"

"Bai Jove! Stop whom?"

"Look out! Pongo!"

Wally's mongrel was dashing towards the gates at full

speed, with Wally on his track. The hero of the Third was looking very red and breathless. Tom Merry made a spring at the dog, and Pongo bolted away from him and ran between D'Arcy's legs.

The swell of St. Jim's stumbled over him, and sprawled on the ground. Harry Noble made a clutch at Pongo, and caught his collar.

Pongo barked and squealed, but the Cornstalk held him fast till Wally came panting up.

"Got him!" said Kangaroo cheerfully.

"Thanks!" panted Wally. "Come here, Pongo! You little beast! I'll—I mean, I've got a good mind to skin you! You young bounder! You—you beast! A nice dance you've led me! You ought to be larruped!"

Wally held the dog by a tight grip on his collar, but as a matter of fact, he was patting his shaggy head while he uttered the threatening words. Pongo, once caught, was quiet enough. Skimpole came panting up, his spectacles nearly falling off his nose in his excitement.

"Have you caught him, D'Arcy minor? Good! Now I will cure him—"

"Rats!"

"By the concentration of my powerful will—"

"More rats!"

"My dear D'Arcy, surely you want to have the dog cured?"

"I don't know that there's anything the matter with him yet," said Wally, examining his shaggy favourite.

"Oh, yes; I clearly saw the blue and pink spots on him."

"It's right enough," said Herries, looking at the dog.

"They're the same spots on him that I found on Towser."

"My hat!" said Tom Merry, in amazement. "I never saw anything like that on a dog before."

"Neither did I," said Noble. "I know something about dogs, too. I rather think it's a jape."

"A jape?" exclaimed Herries.

"Yes; they're not natural spots."

"They are the symptoms of disease due to some internal disorder!" exclaimed Skimpole. "By concentrating my powerful will upon the animal, I can banish the disease."

"More rats!"

"I have already done so in the case of Towser. Herries will bear me out."

"Well, that's true enough," said Herries. "Towser came out in spots like this twice. I washed off the first lot with disinfectant, and he broke out again; then Skimmy tried the healing by suggestion dodge, and—"

"And the spots disappeared?"

"Yes."

"Did you wash him?" asked Noble, with a grin.

"Yes, I washed him."

"That's why the spots disappeared, I reckon. Look here! If you examine these spots closely, you'll see that they scratch off with your nail."

"Well, but—"

"It's paint."

"Paint?"

"Yes, simply paint. That's why they came off in the washing," chuckled Kangaroo. "Skimmy could cure that by concentrating his will power just as much as he could get the paint off a fence by boiling his head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You are quite mistaken, Noble," said Skimpole patiently. "I have cured D'Arcy of habit-hunger by the concentration of will. If I will that my will will—"

"Wats! I was eatin' a wabbit pie, and that was what cured my hungah!"

"Really, D'Arcy, such a frivolous detail as that—"

"More wats!"

"I cured Herries' bulldog, and I can cure Pongo. Hold him securely, D'Arcy minor, while I place the tips—"

"Rats!"

"Then, by concentrating my will, I can—"

"Buzz off!"

"I can restore him to his normal state of health. I—"

"I think I can do that by washing him," said Wally, with a grin. "I wish I could find out the practical joker who painted this giddy disease on him. I'd paint him! Come on, Pongo, old boy; come and have a wash!"

"Really, D'Arcy minor—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

And Wally carried his dog away, and sure enough the signs of disease yielded to soap and water.

CHAPTER 16.

Caught in the Act!

SKIMPOLE remained blinking at the grinning juniors, and quite as convinced as ever of the reality of his wonderful powers as a healer by the method of suggestion.

"I am sorry to see this spirit of scepticism in D'Arcy minor," he said. "His dog may succumb to some terrible



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disease, owing to his refusal to allow me to work a cure, as I did with Herries' bulldog."

"Bosh!" said Herries. "I never thought of it before, but now I come to think of it, of course it was paint. It's a jape!"

"Nonsense! You see—"

"Yaas, wathah! It's a wotten twick of some boundah!"

"And I think I know who it is!" exclaimed Tom Merry abruptly. "Do you remember how we found Gore with Pongo in his study, you chaps, and he wouldn't unlock the door? I remember now, there was a colour-box on the table."

"Bai Jove!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Herries excitedly. "And I remember now seeing Gore near Towser's kennel just before I went out to tea, and there was something smeared on his fingers. He was going to do it again, only I stopped him by going there."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Better go and have a look at Towser now," suggested Noble. "Gore knows we've been to the station with Cousin Ethel, and he may be up to his tricks again."

"By George, so he may!" exclaimed Herries excitedly. "Come on!"

And he dashed off at top speed.

Tom Merry & Co. hurried after him.

There was a light gleaming from the open door of the little building at the back of the house, where the boys kept their pets.

Noble caught Herries by the arm.

"Hold on—"

"Towser—"

"Yes; but let's see what he's doing before we jump on him."

"Oh, all right!"

And the juniors hurried quietly to the door and looked in. The interior of the place was very dusky at this hour, save where an acetylene cycle-lamp gleamed, casting a circle of bright light. In the circle of light was Herries' bulldog, Towser, and two juniors were with him. One was Mellish, and the other was Gore of the Shell.

Mellish was holding Towser by the collar, and Towser was gnawing a bone, apparently satisfied with the situation so long as there was any meat on the bone. Gore had a colour-box on the ground near him and a brush in his hand. There was an ill-natured grin upon his face.

"Keep him still, Mellish!"

"He's still enough. You never know how to take this beast, though, so buck up," muttered Mellish. "He's got such a beastly uncertain temper."

"Let him have the bone, and he's all right."

"Yes, but—"

"Shut up! I shall be finished soon," said Gore, dabbing Towser with the paint. "This looks as well as ever. Herries will find that he's broken out in spots again when he comes in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't make a row and get all the fellows round here. Herries would make a row if he knew. He's fond of this rotten beast. Blessed if I can see anything about him to be fond of. Of course, Herries is a silly chump or he'd guess that the spots were really paint. We couldn't work a trick like this on Tom Merry or the Australian chap."

"Oh!" murmured Herries, at the door.

Noble grinned and held him back. Skimpole was blinking at the dog-painters, and his face was a study.

"Buck up, Gore! He's stirring! I don't want to be bitten!"

"I don't care if you're bitten. But he won't bite. You can give him a licking when I've finished, if you like. It does dogs good to lick them. Hold still, you brute! I expect Herries will have him shot if he keeps on breaking out like this. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Herries might come back—"

"Oh, he's gone to the station with D'Arcy's cousin! That's all right! He won't be back yet. I shan't be another minute."

"That you won't!" roared Herries.

And breaking away from Noble's hold, he burst in upon the rads of the School House.

Gore jumped to his feet, inadvertently treading on his colour-box as he did so, and there was a grinding crash under his boot.

Herries went straight at him like a bull and hit out from the shoulder. Gore put up his hands, but he could not stop Towser's indignant master. He warded the first blow, but Herries' left came out like a flash and it caught Gore full upon the nose. He dropped upon Towser.

There was a terrific growl from Towser, and a wild yell from Gore.

"Ow! Help!"

"Bai Jove! Towser's got him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a case of poetical justice! Gore had been painting Towser, and now Towser was bestowing his attention upon Gore.

His teeth were fastened in Gore's trousers, and apparently in Gore, too, to judge by the fearful yells of the bully of the Shell.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "Call him off, Herries!"

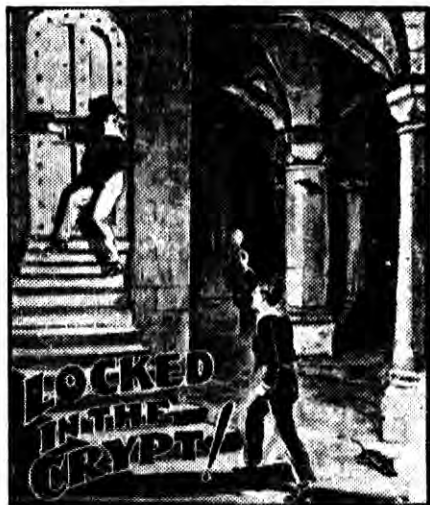
Herries grunted.

"Call him off, Hewwies, deah boy!"

"Blessed if I see why I should call him off!" growled

(Continued on page 28.)

THE JAPE OF THE TERM!

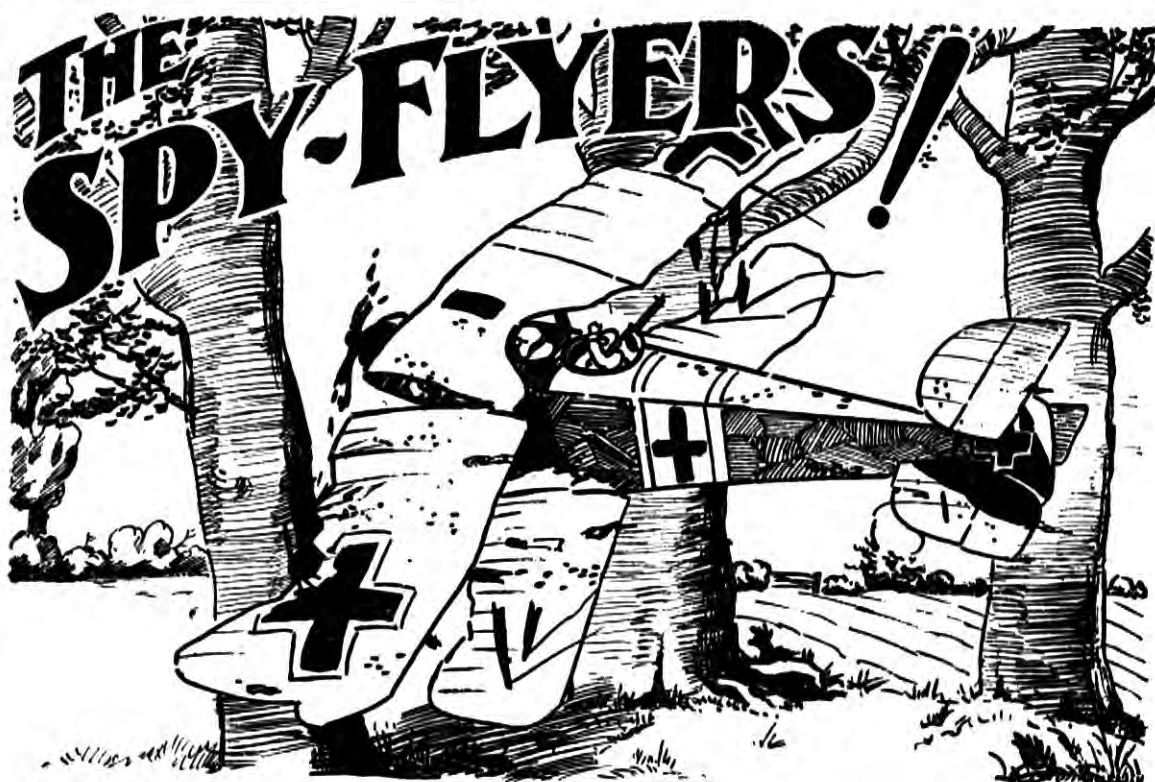


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REX LOVELL and TONY FOSTER, engaged on Secret Service work in the air, discover that MAJOR TREVOR, their "boss," is himself a German spy! With the aid of CAPTAIN FAIRFAX, a mysterious British officer, they manage to escape from a German aerodrome, where they have been caught while on a secret mission. The plane in which they are escaping runs out of petrol and crashes in a field in which German soldiers are camped!

Fairfax Hears the Truth!

A TRICKLE of blood was running down the side of Fairfax's face, and he dabbed at it unconcernedly with his handkerchief.

"Well," he went on, "we're in a mess, but don't lose your heads. I've been in worse holes than this and got out of them. Leave the talking to me."

"What the devil are you doing?" roared an irate voice. "Don't you know that landing on this field is forbidden?"

"Landing?" said Fairfax, grinning, to the German lieutenant who had spoken. "Do you call this landing?" he went on, pointing to the crash with grim humour. "Donnervetter! We had no choice when the engine packed on us!"

"What were three of you doing in that machine?" asked the lieutenant suspiciously.

"Well, we might as well make a clean breast of it," answered Fairfax reluctantly. "You look a good sport, so I hope you'll say nothing about three people being in a two-seater—I'll see you lose nothing by it."

The lieutenant came closer and stiffened to attention when he saw that Fairfax wore the uniform of a Hauptmann.

"To tell the truth," went on Fairfax, "we've been to a party in Lille. We couldn't get road transport, so we went the only way we could—we flew. And now, on the way back, that cursed engine has let us down. Just my luck!" he concluded plaintively.

"Are you hurt?" asked the German anxiously, with a change of tone, flattered by the "senior officer's" friendly attention.

"Oh, it's nothing!" replied Fairfax. "Only a scratch!"

"Well, come and have a drink, and I'll see what I can do," smiled the lieutenant. "By the way, where are you bound for?"

"Varne," answered Fairfax briefly.

"All right; I'll see you are not late back."

"For goodness' sake don't ring up the squadron!" cried Fairfax, in real alarm. "Let us get back and tell our tale first. The C.O. can confirm it with you afterwards. You saw what happened. The engine cut out, and in the dark—

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ness and anxiety of the moment we forgot that this field was out of bounds."

The lieutenant smiled.

"Well," he said, "as long as it doesn't get me into trouble, I don't mind. You can borrow my car and chauffeur to get home."

They made their way through the excited troops to a corner of the field where a small, carefully camouflaged hut stood under the trees. The lieutenant gave a sharp order, and a moment or two later an old four-seater Benz car trundled along the road to where they stood.

They opened a bottle of beer with the friendly officer—it would have been difficult to refuse—and then took their places in the waiting car, Fairfax sitting next to the driver, and with a parting wave, set off down the road.

"My word, it is chilly to-night!" growled Fairfax, a few minutes later, groping in his hip-pocket. He took out a flask, unscrewed the top, and placed the opening to his lips. "Sorry to fetch you out so late at night," he apologised to the driver. "Here, take a pull of this; it will warm you up."

The driver, with the ever-present German willingness to drink, stopped the car and accepted the proffered flask with a grunt of thanks.

"Ah!" he gasped, smacking his lips. "That's great stuff! Got some kick in it that has! It isn't often that we poor devils get—a chance—hic—got—a kick—Gott in himmel!"

His voice trailed away to nothingness, and he sank back limply in his seat. Fairfax rose calmly to his feet, seized the man by the collar, hauled him out into the road, and then carried him behind the hedge out of sight of any passers-by.

"He'll have a difficult story to tell in the morning. I'm afraid," he said coolly, as he took his place at the driver's seat.

"What on earth did you give him?" gasped Tony.

"Only a little drop of my own special brew!" grinned Fairfax. "It's part of my equipment; I've often found it useful."

"But why didn't it affect you like that?" asked Rex in surprise.

"Me!" laughed Fairfax. "Good Lord, I didn't drink

any—I only pretended. That stuff is only for my special friends."

"I see. Well, where are we going now?" asked Rex, changing the subject abruptly.

"Falconfeld," replied Fairfax shortly. "You'd better come over here where I can talk to you."

Rex climbed over into the front seat beside the new driver; Fairfax slipped in the clutch and they rattled noisily down the road.

"Before we go any farther, hadn't we better put our cards on the table?" asked Rex.

"No," replied Fairfax. "You know the old saying in our profession. 'When you are at work, even if you meet your mother, you do not recognise her.' You have no cards to show, anyway," he went on. "I know them all."

"The devil you do!" said Rex coldly. "Who are you, anyway?"

"You know!" grinned Fairfax. "Hauptmann Baron Gustav von Karnhofen—and the cleverest Secret Service agent in the German corps," he added glibly.

Rex shook his head.

"You may be," he said slowly; "but you are working for our side, or you wouldn't have acted as you did to-night."

"You're right," admitted Fairfax. "We'd better understand each other on that point. As a matter of fact, if I knew my job I should just have stood by and watched you shot, because by helping you I've exposed myself, and lost a position which has taken many years to acquire. I'm in as bad a fix as you are now, and I've got to get out of it; unfortunately, my work is not complete."

"If you were waiting to short-circuit the plans of the British advance you needn't worry!" said Rex tersely.

"Why—how?"

"I've burnt 'em!"

"Good heavens! You don't say so?" gasped Fairfax.

"I thought you knew all my cards," smiled Rex, and then, with a change of tone: "You don't, Fairfax, not half of them. I'm going to play one now. I don't like doing it, but I've got to, in case you get back over the lines and we don't. I've got to take a chance that you're on the level."

"What is it?" said Fairfax shortly.

"The name of the man who is at the head of the group of agents working behind our lines," answered Rex crisply, watching the other's face closely.

Fairfax risked a spill as he stared at Rex in amazement.

"You know that, eh?" he muttered through his teeth.

"I do."

"What is it?"

"Trevor. Major C. L. Trevor, of 91st Wing Headquarters, to be more precise. How do you like the look of that card?"

The car pulled up with a sudden grinding of brakes, and Fairfax stared at Rex in wide-eyed astonishment.

"If you get back, and we don't, you'd better get him," went on Rex. "If he isn't at home, I'll tell you where you can find him. Make a dart at the Chateau Neuf on the Amiens road; I fancy you'll find enough proofs there to hang him ten times over. There's another card out of the pack you may not have seen!" he added, with a grin. "And now perhaps you'll tell me why we're going to Falconfeld?"

"Because my SE5 is there," replied Fairfax quietly, "and I reckon that card's a trump!" he smiled, starting the car again.

Rex stared.

"This game is too fast for me," he confessed. "If ever I get back home, I'll be satisfied with plain, ordinary dog-fights in future," he murmured sorrowfully. "Well, what about the SE? We can't all three get in it."

"You will fly the SE back—if we can get it."

"What do you mean—if we can get it?"

"Falconfeld is a German aerodrome. They have probably been warned of our escape."

"And why do you suggest that I fly it, if we do get it?" inquired Rex.

"Because you can fly the Bristol, which is now at Neuville, better than I can. It would be safer. You've got to slip back, get the Bristol, and then come back here and pick us up. Fraser and I could just squeeze into the back seat; and it's got to be done before daylight, don't forget!"

"Where shall I pick you up?"

"Two miles due west of Falconfeld there is a large triangular wood. The apex points north, and it makes a good landmark. Just by the apex you will see a big field, which I happen to know is not wired. We shall hide in the wood after you've gone, and then watch the field until you come back."

"Well, let's see about getting the SE," grunted Rex.

The Raid!

F AIRFAX brought the car to a halt in the silent roadway.

"The hangars are on the side of this road about a quarter of a mile ahead," he said. "And the other side of this hedge on our left is actually the aerodrome. I think this is our best plan. We will get over the hedge here and walk quietly along to the shed where I left the SE. If nobody is about, we'll pull her right up to this end of the aerodrome before we start her up."

"If anybody wants to know what we are doing, we shall soon know whether they have been warned about us or not. If they have—well, there may be a scrap. If they haven't, there should be no difficulty; they are used to my queer comings and going. If you get off, make for Neuville, and get back to the wood as fast as you can. Is that all clear?"

Rex nodded.

"Come on, then, this way!" muttered Fairfax, forcing his way through the hedge. "We must keep as far away from the squadron buildings as possible, or the headquarters guard will spot us, and we must avoid that if we can."

For some time they walked in silence across the dew-soaked grass, and then Fairfax laid a restraining hand on Rex's arm.

"Here we are, down this hedge," he said, leading the way as one perfectly familiar with his surroundings. A dark mass loomed up in the darkness ahead. "This is a small hangar that has been set aside for my use," he whispered. "Hark!"

The silence was intense. Only the far-off sound of an engine whistling and the distant rumble of the guns along the Front reached their ears. Stealthily they crept to the front of the hangar and stared with straining eyes into the darkness along the tarmac. Tony's heart was thumping painfully, and he was glad when Fairfax, noiseless as a cat, led them both through a fold in the front of the canvas shed. Inside, Fairfax again paused to listen. A match flared in the darkness and was held above his head as he looked suspiciously around. In the dim light they could just make out the shape of the SE5.

"Good!" he muttered under his breath. "Pull back the doors—don't make more noise than you can help." He lifted the SE's tail, and began to drag the machine towards the entrance, which was, of course, the easiest way to move it.

"What's that?" asked Rex suddenly, and again they all stiffened into attitudes of tense expectation. Some distance away, but coming rapidly nearer, was the unmistakable whoof! whoof! whoof! of Archie. Rex groped his way through the canvas door and peered out. A few miles away the air was full of dancing specks of fire, and a dozen search-light beams probed the sky with their silent fingers. "They are coming this way!" he cried, in a low voice. "Jumping snakes! I believe they are coming here! It's a raid!"

The hum of the aero engines was now plainly audible, and the silent aerodrome suddenly broke into unbelievable turmoil. Doors slammed. Orders were shouted, and voices yelled back. There was a sound of running footsteps along the tarmac, and all the noises of a sudden panic. Outside the squadron office a machine-gun broke into a series of short, stuttering bursts, and a stream of tracer bullets winged their way into the sky. The hum above was drowned in a whining shriek that rose swiftly to a shrill crescendo.

"Bombs!" yelled Fairfax, and together they dashed for the hedge.

There was a blaze of flame that seemed to reach to heaven as the first bomb landed not a hundred yards away, and the rush of air that followed the roar of the explosion swept Rex off his feet. Another pillar of fire leapt skywards, temporarily blinding him.

"Tony, Tony—where are you?" he shouted wildly.

"Here!" cried a voice at hand.

"Let's get out of this!" yelled Rex, trying to force his way through the hedge. "There's a dozen bombers up there and they've only just begun!"

The noise was indescribable. The shriek of falling bombs, the stunning crash of explosion after explosion, and the incessant rattle of machine-guns seemed to make the earth rock. Anti-aircraft guns and field-guns joined in the general uproar, and the sky was full of stabbing flame and white criss-cross lines of tracer bullets. Yells and groans mingled with the noise of falling debris; low overhead roared the engines of the heavy bombers.

A thundering detonation not fifty yards away seemed to lift half the tarmac above the sheds, and Rex saw the SE5 hangar blaze up like a petrol-soaked rag. In the middle of the leaping flames stood the machine in which they had hoped to escape, and even as Rex watched it he saw the petrol tank explode in a fountain of flame.

"Come on—come on! Let's get away!" he cried again incoherently. "Heavens, what a row! Where's Fairfax?"

"I haven't seen him!" screamed Tony, gasping out a mouthful of acrid smoke.

"Fairfax—Fairfax!" shouted Rex, but the sound of his voice was smothered in the roar of the raging inferno, for the hangars were now all ablaze, and cast a vivid orange glow over the scene of carnage and destruction. Prone figures lay in grotesque positions near the blazing ruins. Rex saw a German officer trying to drag a machine out of the flames. A Fokker D VII raced across the aerodrome like a living streak of fire, and then soared into the heavens like a comet. Another pilot was standing up in the cockpit of an Albatros, yelling for someone to start his engine. He sprang to the ground, and ran round to his propeller; a bomb caught the machine amidships, and it vanished in a cloud of flying fragments, the pieces falling like a shower of fiery rain.

Sobbing, and gasping for breath, Rex dragged Tony into the next field.

"Come on!" he choked. "The place will be alive with troops in a minute. Why didn't Fairfax stay with us?"

Blindly they ran on, stumbling and falling, into the night. "Wait!" cried Rex at last, his breath coming in great gasps. "Where are we? Let's get to the wood—Fairfax's wood—two miles to the west, he said—he'll make for there if he isn't hit."

A Handley Page, evidently one of the raiders, roared past just over their heads, and Rex shook his fist at the pilot who, unconsciously, had helped to spoil their plans. They slowed down to a steady trot, crossing roads and fields, as they kept their direction by the stars.

"This must be it," said Rex at last, coming to a halt. In front of them lay a sinister-looking wall of darkness.

Rex's surmise proved correct; it was the wood—or, at least, a wood—and they swung to the right towards the north end. They soon reached the point that Fairfax had described; it was still pitch dark. Rex looked at his luminous watch.

"Four o'clock, eh?" he muttered. "Well, I don't know about you, Tony, but I'm all in. I couldn't make another mile if the whole blinking German army was on my heels. Let's get in here and rest; we can't do anything, anyway, until the morning, and it's not much use making plans until we know if Fairfax got away. I hope he has, because he may have a scheme—which is more than I've got. I'm too tired to think."

Together they crawled into the undergrowth. Fortunately, the place was fairly dry and there was plenty of bracken, which they plucked in armfuls and piled under a tree, the prickly nature of which revealed it to be a holly. They sank down on their primitive beds utterly worn out.

"Well, if this is special missions, you can have 'em!" growled Rex, and the next moment was fast asleep.

He was awakened by the sound of an aero engine low overhead. It was still dark, but a pale grey light in the east showed that the dawn was not far off. Raising himself on his elbow, he listened intently.

"Tony! Tony! Wake up!" he muttered in a low voice, shaking his still-sleeping partner.

"What is it?" asked Tony sleepily, opening his eyes.

He was wide awake in a moment, his ear turned towards the sound of the now receding engine.

"That's no Mercedes!" he said excitedly. "That's a Rolls-Royce, or I'll eat my hat!"

"It certainly sounds like it," said Rex, quivering with excitement. "But who on earth can it be? Poor old Fairfax hasn't turned up yet; they must have got him. I'm sorry about that; I was just beginning to like him. Good heavens! That machine's coming back again; I believe it's going to land!"

The machine was very low now, and a sudden blipping of the engine brought both of them to the edge of the wood at a run.

"That's Fairfax or I'm a Dutchman!" cried Tony. "He's blipping his engine as a signal to us. He guessed we would come here. Hark!"

It was still too dark to see more than forty or fifty yards, but there was no doubt that the machine had landed, for Rex distinctly heard the wheels bump as they touched the ground.

"Stand fast a minute, Tony," he said, catching hold of his companion, who was about to rush forward into the field. "I'm getting tired of falling into traps. How could it be Fairfax, unless—I know!" he cried in a flash of inspiration. "He must have got away in one of those Hun single-seaters when the raid started. He's been over the lines and fetched the Bristol. Well, we'll soon find out, but be ready to bolt."

Cautiously, peering anxiously ahead, they strode out into the dim dawn twilight. An aeroplane loomed darkly in the distance.

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front of them, and they ran forward, with a faint cheer, as they recognised the familiar outlines of the Bristol Fighter.

"Fairfax!" cried Rex excitedly. "How did you do it?" A figure in flying clothes was climbing out of the pilot's seat.

"How did you manage it?" asked Rex again.

"Easily!" replied a voice in English, as the figure turned and faced them, and with a sudden movement pushed up his goggles to disclose the face of Von Henkel, smiling evilly. In his hand gleamed the polished barrel of an automatic. "Don't move, either of you!" he said. "Yes, it was easy," he went on, with a sneer. "You forgot I had a Bristol, too. There are very few fields about here big enough for a machine to land in, so it didn't take me long to find you. We heard you were down within five minutes; the crash was heard for miles. Keep those hands up and do what you're told; I'm in no mood to take any more chances with you. Make one false move and I'll shoot! Now, where are those plans?"

"Where you won't get 'em!" replied Rex grimly.

"I'll give you ten seconds to make up your mind!" snarled Von Henkel. "Tell me where the plans are, and I'll take you back for a fair trial."

"I can imagine what your idea of a fair trial would be!" exclaimed Rex coldly.

"Refuse, and I'll shoot you where you stand! I've no time to waste!"

"Bah!" sneered Rex. "You might as well know the truth and shoot us now as later on! I burnt those plans last night. Put that in your pipe and smoke it—and I hope it chokes you!"

"You burnt them, eh?" gritted Von Henkel through his clenched teeth. "Then take this for a schwein hunt, Englander!" He threw up the automatic.

There was a spurt of flame and a crashing report of a shot.

Von Henkel stared at the boys with wide-open eyes, an expression of curious surprise crept over his face. His arm dropped, his knees sagged, and he slumped forward on to the wet grass.

"I don't know where you fellows would be without me," said a well-known voice calmly.

Fairfax stood before them, a still-smoking pistol in his hand.

"Where have you sprung from?" gasped Rex.

"Oh, I've been here an hour or more!" stated Fairfax casually. "I did some quick thinking when that raid started. When the S.E. blew up it looked as if now or never was the time to get hold of another machine, so I slipped across and jumped into that D. VII that was standing on the tarmac. I didn't expect anybody would ask me where or why I was going, and I was quite right, they didn't; the Handley's were giving them plenty to think about. I slipped over and fetched the Bristol, landed here an hour ago, and have been hunting high and low for you in that infernal wood ever since. I heard this machine land, and came across to see what was going on, and it looks as if it was a good thing for you I did. You were all far too engrossed in the argument to notice me walk up behind the machine. But come on, don't let's stand talking here! That shot may have been heard; there'll be plenty of time to talk later on. There is no need for three of us to pack into one machine now. You take Fraser back in this one, Lovell, and I'll go back in the machine I came in. We'll fly back together. It's a bit thick down here, but it's clear enough once you get above five hundred. Take off straight in front of you, you've plenty of room, and rendezvous over the wood at two thousand feet in three minutes."

Rex was in the cockpit in a flash, Tony swinging up into the back seat. The Bristol moved forward as the engine burst into its rhythmic roar; the tail lifted, and they soared gracefully into the still, morning air.

As Fairfax had said, it was clear overhead. They circled until he joined them, and then, side by side, the two machines raced for the lines. Tony kept a vigilant lookout, but they were not molested, and the two pilots waved gaily to each other as the shell-torn earth of No Man's Land swept below and behind. A moment later the British lines could be seen underneath. Rex turned, with a broad grin on his face, and stuck up his thumbs jubilantly. In less than ten minutes the two machines landed side by side at Maranique.

"And now for Trevor!" said Fairfax grimly, as they turned towards the mess. "You'd better come over to Divisional Headquarters and tell me all you know. It's time we compared notes."

The brigadier to whom they told the story listened white-faced to the tale of treachery and betrayal.

"Very good, gentlemen!" he said at last, after a long pause. "This will, of course, have to be reported to the Commander-in-Chief. You can leave everything in our hands now; we'll do the rest. I shall need you all at the



The noise was indescribable. The shriek of falling bombs, the stunning crash of explosion after explosion, and the incessant rattle of machine-guns seemed to make the earth rock!

court of inquiry, possibly before; but, meantime, you had better get some rest. Lovell and Fraser, go back to your unit and await my instructions. Fairfax, you'd better stay here for a bit in case the general wishes to ask any further questions."

Rex felt that he had no sooner closed his eyes than he was awakened by the violent shaking of his batman.

"What's the time?" he murmured drowsily. "A Captain Fairfax is on the phone for you, sir; he says it is very urgent," replied the ackenna.

Rex leapt bolt upright as if he had been stung by a hornet.

"Fairfax, did you say?" he cried in astonishment.

"Yes, sir," answered the orderly, "that was what he said his name was, sir."

Without even waiting to put on a dressing-gown, Rex dashed to the phone and put the receiver to his ear.

"Lovell here. Is that you, Fairfax?" he called.

"Yes. Listen, Lovell!" came the reply. "I'm speaking from a field telephone near Chateau Neuf. The place has just been raided, and we've scooped the pool, except for the big fish. You know who I mean? Somehow or other he got through the cordon and pushed off in a DH 4 before we could stop him. I don't think he can fly himself, so he must have got a pilot with him. He has headed for the line, your way, about three minutes ago. I daren't ring up the Service Squadrons to stop him, or our people will be shooting each other down; that's why I've rung you. You know where he'll make for, and the general says you can take any steps you like to prevent that machine reaching Germany," he concluded.

"Right! I'm after him!" yelled Rex, and slammed the receiver down with a crash that must have nearly deafened the man at the other end of the wire.

"Run like the devil to the sheds! Tell them to get my machine out and start her up. I'll be there in two minutes. Run, man—run!" he shouted at his startled orderly, and then burst into Tony's room like a whirlwind.

"Tony! Tony! Come on out of that!" he cried, pommeling the recumbent figure on the bed. "Trevor has escaped! He's in a Four, making for the line! Jump to it! I'm on my way!"

He stopped at his own room only long enough to snatch his flying kit from the peg and pull it on over his pyjamas. Buckling his belt as he ran, he sprinted down the tarmac towards the Bristol Fighter, which he could see already ticking over.

"Come on down, Smyth!" he yelled to the fitter, who was sitting in the cockpit warming up the engine; and as the mechanic tumbled out of his seat Rex sprang into his place,

fastened his safety-belt, and thumbed the throttle impatiently.

Tony, looking ridiculous in his sheepskin boots and pyjamas, coat and helmet over his arm, came racing down the tarmac towards him. Rex opened the throttle to test his revs, while the mechanics clung like grim death to the tail to keep it from rising in the swirling slipstream.

Tony leapt nimbly into his place.

"Look out!" yelled Rex to the mechanics, and waved his arms above his head. Tony was pouring a stream of lead into the ground to test his guns. He struck his pilot lightly on the shoulder to show that he was ready, and then quickly pulled on his flying kit. Before he had fastened his helmet the Bristol was in the air, climbing in wide circles for height. He pulled on his gauntlets, adjusted his goggles, and surveyed the sky doubtfully. There was a lot of broken cumulous cloud at about 6,000 feet, and he knew that it would form a ready-made hiding-place for another machine that was seeking to escape.

In a few minutes they had reached the great white accumulations of moisture, and the pilot put his nose down for speed, and then zoomed steeply through a hole to the blue sky above. He was just in time to see a DH 4 disappear into a cloud about a mile away, heading for the German lines.

"There he goes!" yelled Rex, rocking his wings and pointing; and the round, stub nose of the Bristol swung round as he started in pursuit. He believed that he had an advantage over the other pilot in that he had not been seen, but he was not sure. In any case, it was going to be difficult to keep the DH 4 in sight. The cloud into which the Four had disappeared was too big to go round; at least, it would mean making a wide detour, so he plunged boldly into it in the wake of the fugitive.

It was dull, cold, and clammy inside the soaking-wet fog, but he held on his way, with a watchful eye on his instrument board. The engine started racing, and he knew that his nose was dropping. He pulled the stick back gently in an effort to check it, but the bubble in the centre of his bank-indicator began to swing from side to side in an alarming way; he made no effort to check it, for he knew from past experience that "bubble chasing" was a waste of time.

He burst into the sunlight with startling suddenness, and, bringing the machine on even keel, peered ahead through his centre section in search of the other machine. He saw it almost at once, about half a mile ahead and slightly below him, evidently having lost some height in the cloud. A tall figure was standing in the back seat, and Rex had no further doubt as to who it was.

(Will Trevor get away before Rex can catch him? Watch out for thrills in next week's grand instalment!)

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SKIMPOLE'S WILL POWER WON'T!

(Continued from page 23.)

Herries. "Gore knew that he could bite, I suppose, when he started playing his tricks."

"Aaas, but—"

"Help! Ow! Help!"

Gr-r-r!

"Call him off! Ow! Help!"

"Towser!" called Herries. "Here, don't let that hound Mellish get away! He was going to lick Towser! Hold him!"

Digby caught Mellish by the ear and held him. Herries called Towser off, but Towser seemed to be deaf to the voice of his master.

"You see, he won't come off," said Herries. "He knows Gore's a cad, and ought to have a bite or two. Let him alone!"

Tom Merry dragged at Towser's collar.

The bulldog slowly and unwillingly released his victim, growling ominously.

Gore sank against the wall, white as a sheet.

"Oh!" he gasped. "I—I shall have hydrophobia! Ow!"

"Serve you right! Bring those cads here and I'll let them have some painting!" said Herries, picking up Gore's brush and sticking it into the moist colour. "Come on, you rotters! What's good enough for Towser is good enough for you!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Good idea!"

"Hold on! I—ow—ooch!"

Gore ceased to expostulate as the brush was dipped into his mouth. He choked and spluttered, and spluttered and choked, as Herries daubed his face with colours of various kinds.

Herries laid it on with a liberal hand, and Gore's face was a curious sight when he had finished.

"Now yank that other cad here!"

"Here you are!"

"I—I—I say, it was only a joke, you know!" stammered Mellish feebly. "I—I wasn't really going to lick Towser, you know! I—I—"

"No lies!" said Herries. "Keep your mouth shut!"

"But I—I— Ooooooch!"

A dab of paint in the mouth warned Mellish that it would be wiser to keep it shut, as Herries directed.

In a few minutes he was in the same condition as Gore. They looked at one another in sickly dismay, while the juniors round them roared with laughter.

"Now get out of this place!" said Herries. "If I catch you near it again I'll knock you into the middle of next week."

And Gore and Mellish proceeded outside, with half a dozen boots behind to help them go.

They vanished into the dusk, and the juniors, laughing heartily, strolled away towards the School House, only Herries remaining behind to see his favourite settled for the night.

In the School House they found Gore and Mellish the centre of a laughing crowd. It was some time before the painted juniors could escape to a bath-room and begin getting the paint off.

Herries came in, and Skimpole took him by the middle button of his waistcoat.

"Is Towser all right, Herries?" he asked.

Herries nodded cheerfully.

"Right as rain, Skimmy!"

"No sign of disease about him?"

"Not a sign!"

"Ahem! That indicates that the disease is working inwardly," explained Skimpole. "I consider Towser to be in a dangerous state."

"Rats! He hasn't any disease! Gore painted those spots on him!"

"H'm! Gore certainly seems to have attempted a joke on the subject, but I am convinced that the spots I cured were genuine ones. If you like, I will go to Towser now and cure him of his internal complaint."

"Bosh!"

"The complaint is, of course, all the more dangerous as it has taken an inward turn," said Skimpole. "If taken before it is too late I can concentrate my will upon it, and heal it by suggestion—"

"Oh, ring off, old son!"

"Gore requires some healing, Skimmy," Tom Merry suggested. "Gore's hurt, you know. You'd better go and heal Gore by suggestion."

"A very good idea, Merry," said Skimpole. "I shall certainly do so. I cannot allow my wonderful abilities as a healer to lie fallow. I must place my astounding discovery at the service of suffering humanity."

And Skimpole hurried away in search of Gore.

What happened when he found him Tom Merry did not know, but later that evening he observed that Skimpole had a red and decidedly swollen nose. And when Monty Lowther suggested to Skimpole that he should heal it by suggestion Skimpole only blinked at him disconsolately.

THE END.

(Look out for next week's splendid yarn of Tom Merry and Co! See the special announcement on page 23!)



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