

HALF-CROWNS AWARDED FOR READERS' JOKES! (SEE PAGE 11.)

The GEM

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FUN AT THE DOG SHOW! An Amusing Incident from the Sparkling St. Jim's Story— "TOWSER'S RIVALS!"—INSIDE.

TOWSER'S RIVALS!



The local dog show at Rylcombe was a quiet affair—until Bernard Glyn arrived with his amazing mastiff—and then it became a riot! This full-of-fun yarn of Tom Merry & Co. will keep you laughing from first line to last.

CHAPTER 1.

Herries Puts It Plainly!

"I WANT to put it plainly to you fellows," said Herries.

Herries stood in Study No. 6 in the School House at St. Jim's. He stood on the hearthrug, with his back to the grate and his hands in his trousers pockets, and a determined expression was on his face.

Herries looked as if he meant business.

His chums in Study No. 6—Jack Blake, Digby, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—were talking cricket. They looked round at Herries in some surprise.

Herries, as a rule, was not assertive. He was generally content to take a back seat, in his calm, quiet way. There was only one subject he ever got excited upon, and that was the subject of his dog, Towser. Wherever Towser was concerned Herries was a different Herries. His faith in Towser was really touching; but, much as they liked their chum, Blake and Digby and D'Arcy could not bring themselves to stand Towser. Towser was the limit.

"I want to put it plainly to you," said Herries, meeting the surprised glances of his chums with a touch of defiance.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Go it!" said Blake. "What's the trouble, old man? Get it off your chest."

"Yes, rather!" assented Digby.

"It's about Towser," said Herries.

And in one voice the three chums said:

"Towser!"

"Yes," said Herries. "I'm going to put it to you plainly.

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I've thought over it a lot, and now we're going to have it out."

"Are you talking about a tooth?"

"Tooth? No!"

"Oh, you said you were going to have it out, and—"

"Don't rot!" exclaimed Herries. "I tell you it's got to be settled."

"What, Towser?"

"Yes."

"Bai Jove, I should be glad for Towser to be settled," said D'Arcy. "I am vewy fond of dogs, as a wule, but Towser has no respect whatevah for a fellow's twousahs. I don't want Towser to be hurt, of course, but if he could be painlessly extwacted—I mean painlessly ddowned—"

"You chump—"

"Weally, Hewwies, you said he was to be settled—"

"I mean the matter is to be settled, fathead! You chaps have got an absurd prejudice against Towser."

"Not at all!" said Blake.

"A rotten, unfounded dislike for a jolly good dog!" said Herries warmly.

Blake shook his head.

"I haven't," he said.

Herries thawed a little.

"You haven't a dislike of Towser?"

"Not an unfounded one," said Blake sweetly.

Herries snorted.

"If you chaps can't be serious—"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"I won't say any more about it!" exclaimed Herries, somewhat nettled.

—STARRING HERRIES' BULLDOG AND GLYN'S WEIRD MASTIFF!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

"My dear chap, that was only our fun. We all like Towser," said Blake blandly. "I hope he is not ill."

"Never fitter," said Herries, calming down a little.

"Then wherefore this thushness? What are you getting raty for?" demanded Blake indignantly.

"Well, I was going to put it plainly to you," said Herries, "only you wouldn't listen!"

"We'll listen now, with all our ears," said Blake. "Even Gussy will leave off talking for a few seconds."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Now, look here that's not asking too much, Gussy."

"You uttah ass—"

"Cheese it! It's Herries' turn to jaw. Now, go ahead, Herries, old man, and let us have it plainly, whatever it is."

"It's about Towser."

"Go ahead!"

"You chaps have a silly prejudice about Towser."

"H'm! Go on!"

"You don't like him in the study," said Blake cautiously. "You know there's an order of the Head's that no pets are to be kept in the House."

"This is a special case. I've entered Towser for the dog show at Rylcombe."

"Good! Will you be sending him there?"

"Not till the day of the show," snapped Herries. "Now, I want to take the first prize with Towser, if I can."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, he's got to be looked after and kept in first-class condition."

"Aren't you looking after him now?" asked Digby innocently.

"Yes, you ass!" roared Herries. "But out there in the kennels I can't see to him every minute, and I have to dodge round there between lessons; and then the place is closed up at night, too. I want to keep Towser under my own eye until the day of the show."

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

The chums of the Fourth exchanged dismayed glances.

"I am going to put it to you plain," said Herries. "I'm not going to lose the first prize in the dog show because of your ridiculous prejudice against Towser. Towser's got to be kept in this study until the show."

And Herries, having delivered his ultimatum, almost glared at the chums of Study No. 6 as he waited for their reply.

There was a short silence in the study. Blake and Digby and D'Arcy looked at one another, but did not speak.

They would have done anything for a chum—almost anything. But the privileges of friendship had their limits. Keeping a bulldog in the study was one of the limits.

Towser certainly had no respect for a fellow's trousers, just as D'Arcy said. He had a fancy, too, for gnawing up books and papers, and in his frisky moments he had been known to reduce to tatters a carpet and a pair of curtains.

Towser was a trial, and the Head's order that no pets were to be kept in the studies, though it had caused fierce discontent among some of the fellows, had come as a boon and a blessing to Blake and Digby and D'Arcy.

They had been fed up with Towser, and they lived in constant dread that Towser would be fed up with them.

D'Arcy broke the painful silence.

"Bai Jove!" he remarked.

That was D'Arcy's contribution to the decision. It did not solve the difficulty.

"Well?" said Herries at last.

"H'm!" said Blake.

"H'm!" said Digby.

"You see, it's a rather important dog show," went on Herries, a little eagerly. "Dogs will be there from all parts. We have to pay an entrance fee, and it's divided up in prizes. I expect to rope in three or four pounds for Towser."

"Bai Jove!"

"There is a first prize for the best kept, best conditioned, and handsomest dog—"

"Handsomest?" murmured Blake.

"Yes," said Herries firmly. "Handsomest! That's where Towser will come out very strong. You mayn't have noticed it, but there are very few bulldogs just like Towser."

"I am sure of it, old fellow."

Herries looked at him suspiciously.

"Well, you'll see that it's important to keep Towser under my eye. I want to have him in the study till the dog show."

"But it's not allowed," said Blake feebly. "The Head's order—"

"That's all right if I get the Housemaster's permission."

"But Mr. Railton won't give it."

"I've asked him already," said Herries triumphantly. "He says there's no objection on a special occasion like this, if my study-mates don't object."

Blake and Digby and D'Arcy looked at one another hopelessly.

They felt that they were caught.

"Well, what do you say?" asked Herries bluntly.

D'Arcy's face brightened up. A brilliant idea had occurred to the swell of St. Jim's. He jammed his monocle into his eye.

"Bai Jove, I've got an ideah!" he ejaculated.

"Go ahead, Gussy. Out of the mouths of babes and duffers—"

"Pway wing off, Blake! Look here, Hewwies, you expect to make four pounds as a first pwize in the dog show?"

"About that!"

"Well, suppose we had a whip wound and waised four pounds, and pwesented it to you in the form of a testimonial. You would get your four pounds, and we should be saved the howwidness of havin' Towsah in the study. I should wegard that as cheap at four pounds."

Herries glared.

"You—you chump!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"You frabjous ass!"

"Weally!"

"You burbling duffer!"

"I fail to see the weason for these oppwobwious wemarks. I wegard my ideah as bein' a vevy good one."

"Look here!" roared Herries. "Am I going to have Towser in this study or am I not going to have Towser in this study? That's what I want to know."

"Oh, all right!" said Blake resignedly. "You can have him in!"

"Certainly!" said Digby.

"Oh, yaas, wathah, if you insist upon it, deah boy!"

Herries softened.

"Well, that's settled, then," he said. "I'll get a basket for Towser to sleep in and I can keep his biscuits and meat in a box here. D'Arcy's hat-box would do."

"Bai Jove, if you touch my hat-box—"

"Oh, all right, if you're going to start by making difficulties I'll get something else!" said Herries. "Anything for a quiet life. Now that the matter's settled, I may as well go and fetch Towser."

And Herries quitted the study.

The three chums exchanged hopeless glances.

"Well, we couldn't refuse," said Blake.

"Wathah not; but it will be howwid!"

"Horrid isn't the word," said Digby.

"Never mind," said Blake heroically. "A chap is called upon to make sacrifices for friendship. We can stand it."

"Ye-e-es."

Tom Merry's cheerful face looked in at the open door. The hero of the Shell stared in surprise at the downcast countenances of the Fourth Formers.

"Hallo, what's the trouble?" he asked. "Anything wrong?"

"Oh, no; only Herries has entered Towser in a dog show!"

"Well, what's the matter with that?"

"He's going to keep him in the study till the show to look after him."

Tom Merry burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jack Blake snorted.

"Oh, cheese it!" he exclaimed. "It's not a laughing matter, whatever it is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You ass!"

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

With one accord the chums of the Fourth rushed at him. Tom Merry dodged out of the study and dashed along the passage. After him went Blake and D'Arcy and Digby, glad of somebody to avenge themselves upon. Tom Merry ran into the Shell passage at top speed, and there was a collision at the corner, with a wild yell.

"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry.

He threw his arms round the person he had run into and they rolled on the linoleum together. The next moment Blake and Digby and D'Arcy were piling on them.

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CHAPTER 2.

A Licking for Lumley!

"HANG you!"
"Oh!"
"Bai Jove!"

"Hang you! You did that on purpose!"

A junior scrambled out from under the heap, dusty and dishevelled, and in a raging temper. Tom Merry sat on the linoleum, panting. D'Arcy sat opposite to him, groping feebly for his eyeglass. Blake was leaning against the wall, and Digby was sprawling on the floor at full length, and both had bellows to mend.

The youth Tom Merry had run into stood gasping and panting, and his eyes flamed with rage as they were turned upon the hero of the Shell.

"You did that on purpose!" he roared.

It was Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, generally known at St. Jim's as the Outsider, and a rank outsider he was, too, in most matters.

He had a savage temper, although he could keep it under perfect control when it suited him. It did not suit him just at present, evidently.

Tom Merry blinked at him. He was too dazed by the sudden collision to do anything else yet.

"You rotter!" howled Lumley-Lumley.

"Eh?"

"You cad!"

"What?"

"You waster!"

"Which?"

The Outsider almost foamed at the mouth. His epithets did not make Tom Merry turn a hair.

In his rage he lifted his boot and launched it at the hero of the Shell, who was sitting on the floor within easy reach.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy. "Look out!"

But Tom Merry was looking out.

It was a savage, spiteful kick, and if it had reached its mark it certainly would have hurt Tom Merry.

But the junior twisted out of the way just in time, and Lumley's foot crashed upon the wall instead, with a terrific shock.

Lumley gave a wild roar. He staggered back on one leg, and he clasped his foot in both hands, with almost a sob of pain.

"Ow-wow-wow!" he gasped. "I've broken my toes, I believe!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Blake.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Tom Merry scrambled to his feet.

"Serve you jolly well right, you rotten cad!" he exclaimed indignantly. "You were trying to kick me, you—you worm!"

"Ow, ow!"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I should wecommend you to give him a feahful thwashin', Tom Mewwy, deah boy!"

Tom Merry clenched his hands hard.

"I would if he hadn't hurt himself enough," he said. "Of all the cowardly, rotten tricks—"

"You ran into me!" groaned Lumley.

"That was an accident."

"It's a lie!"

Tom Merry's eyes blazed. He advanced upon the Outsider of St. Jim's with his hands clenched hard.

"Take that back!" he exclaimed imperiously.

Lumley stared at him doggedly. He was still twisting with the pain in his foot, and he was in the vilest temper possible.

"I won't!" he replied.

"Then put up your hands!"

"Rats!"

"Then take that!"

And Tom Merry hit out.

Lumley warded the blow clumsily. He was no boxer, though of late he had been taking lessons in the manly art of self-defence, and he had improved considerably since he had been at St. Jim's.

The blow missed his chest and caught him on the nose, and he staggered back.

The next moment he flung himself upon Tom Merry.

He was clawing like a wild cat, and the Shell fellow had all his work cut out to keep off the scratching fingers.

"Bai Jove," exclaimed D'Arcy, "what a wild beast!"

"The rotter!" said Blake. "That was what he gave me the day he came here! I thought he was learning civilised ways!"

"Not much," said Digby. "He won't learn. Why the Head doesn't sack him from the school is a mystery to me!"

The three Fourth Formers had quite forgotten by this time that they had bolted along the passage in pursuit of Tom Merry.

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They stood along the wall and watched the contest between the Shell fellow and the Outsider.

Lumley-Lumley had no chance.

He scratched Tom Merry's hands chiefly, and in return he received crash after crash upon the nose and the chest.

He dropped at last, gasping and breathless, on the floor of the passage.

"Had enough?" asked Tom Merry grimly.

"Oh!" gasped Lumley.

"I should recommend you to learn to fight in a sportsmanlike way, and not like a blessed wild beast!" said Tom Merry scornfully. "Also, to keep from insulting a fellow you can't stand up to for two minutes!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley rose to his feet. His face was black with rage.

"You score over me now," he said. "My time will come!"

"Rats!"

"You are a wottah to bear malice, Lumley!" said Arthur Augustus, wagging an admonishing finger at the Outsider of the Fourth Form. "I wegard you as an uttah wottah! I—"

Smack!

D'Arcy was suddenly interrupted.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's open palm smote him upon the face with a crack like a pistol-shot, and the swell of St. Jim's staggered against the wall.

The next instant there was a clatter of running feet, and Jerrold Lumley was gone.

D'Arcy stared after him dazedly, and rubbed his face.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped.

"The cowardly bound!" shouted Blake.

"Gweat Scott! He's gone!"

The juniors were silent with astonishment and anger for the moment. That a fellow should strike another, and then bolt at top speed before the blow could be returned, was something new to them. They had not expected it even of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the Outsider.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry at last. "That chap is the limit, and no mistake!"

"He's miles beyond the limit," said Blake—"miles! If I hadn't seen it, I wouldn't have believed it of him, really."

"Bai Jove, no!"

Tom Merry looked at his hands. They were bleeding in several places where the Outsider's nails had scratched. There was a streak of red on his cheek, too.

"Bai Jove," said D'Arcy, rubbing his crimson cheek, "I shall give that wottah a feahful thwashin'! The only thing that wowwies me is whethah it is too humiliatin' to touch the awful boundah at all!"

"I think I'll go and bathe my hands," said Tom Merry shortly. "I've never had a tussle with a chap like that before. My hat, this is something new for St. Jim's!"

He went on his way, and the chums of the Fourth returned to Study No. 6, where they found Herries with Towser. The bulldog was already installed in the study, and he greeted the returning juniors with a growl that, in spite of Herries' assurance on the subject, did not make the place appear any more cosy and homelike.

CHAPTER 3.

D'Arcy on His Dignity!

"MY hat!"
"Great Scott!"

Manners and Lowther, Tom Merry's chums in the Shell, greeted him with these exclamations as he entered his study in the Shell passage.

Tom Merry had bathed his hands and his face, but it was useless to attempt to remove the signs of the scratches. As a matter of fact, they seemed to show up more vividly after the washing.

Manners and Lowther spotted them at once. Manners even laid down his camera to stare.

"How on earth did you get your hands scratched like that?" demanded Lowther.

"I've had a bit of a row with Lumley," said Tom Merry. "I don't want to talk about it; it's rotten!"

"I should say it is rotten!" said Lowther, taking Tom Merry's hands and looking at them. "Why, he's been scratching you like a blessed cat!"

"Oh, it'll get well again!"

"That's not the question. It's the principle of the thing. The rotter has got to be taught that he can't fight like it at St. Jim's!"

"What-ho!" said Manners.

"Oh, let him alone!" said Tom Merry, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"He ought to be had up before the whole school," said



Lumley, in his rage, lifted his foot and launched it at Tom Merry, who was sitting on the floor. But the Shell leader twisted out of the way just in time, and the Outsider's foot crashed on the wall instead! "Ow-wow-wow!" roared Lumley. "My toes! Ow-wow!"

Monty Lowther, "and made an example of! Hallo! What's that?"

Tom Merry listened.

"Great Scott! That's Towser!"

There was a sound of fierce growling along the passage. Then a sudden, sharp bark and a wild yelping.

"Pongo!" roared Manners.

"Both the beasts in the House at once!" exclaimed Lowther. "Why, Railton will be down on them like a load of bricks!"

Bow-wow-wow!

Gr-r-r-r!

Tom Merry ran out of the study and along the passage, and Manners and Lowther followed him. They knew that the alarming sounds proceeded from Study No. 6, and they were curious to know what was going on. Tom Merry explained what he had heard as to Towser's future residence in the study.

The chums of the Shell chuckled over it. Towser in the House always meant trouble.

They reached the door of Blake's study.

It was open, and a youth of the Third Form stood there. It was D'Arcy minor—Wally D'Arcy, the younger brother of the elegant Arthur Augustus. His collar was soiled, his hair was ruffled, and his fingers were inky. That was D'Arcy minor's usual state.

Arthur Augustus never could make him tidy. Wally was holding a shaggy mongrel in his arms, and Towser was walking round him, yapping at the mongrel, who barked defiance from his safe perch.

"If you don't chain that wild beast of yours up, Herries, I'll shoot him!" said Wally in tense, passionate tones, as the Terrible Three came up.

Herries snorted.

"Towser's all right, only he doesn't like mongrels! Take that thing of yours out of the study, and Towser will be quite quiet!"

"Hang Towser!" said Wally irritably.

"You cheeky young sweep—"

"You ass!"

"Pway be quiet, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus

D'Arcy. "What have you brought that beast to this study for, Wally?"

"I came to speak to you."

Gr-r-r-r!

"Keep that beast away, Herries!"

"Oh rats!"

Wally kicked out at Towser, who growled and retreated, with a bloodshot eye fixed upon Pongo. Pongo yapped and snapped from the Third Former's arms.

"Why don't you take that thing away?" roared Herries.

"He's not going till I go, and I've come here to speak to Gussy!" said Wally.

"Have you seen Lumley?" asked D'Arcy.

"Lumley? No!"

"I am goin' to look for Lumley."

"Oh, blow Lumley! Look here! I'm entering Pongo for the dog show."

"What!" exclaimed Herries.

"The Rylcombe Dog Show this week," said Wally calmly.

"I haven't paid the entrance fee yet. It's five bob. Will you lend it to me?"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Five bob isn't much; for I'm bound to carry off the first prize of four quid for the best kept and handsomest dog at the show."

"Wally—"

"Look here! You're my major, and you're bound to help," said Wally. "I hope you're not growing into a rotten miser."

"I wefuse—"

"What do you think of the chap?" exclaimed Wally, exasperated. "Refuses his own minor a loan of five bob—"

"Nothin' of the sort, I—"

"Well, hand it over, then."

"I wefuse—"

"Don't be mean," said Tom Merry solemnly. "Be warned in time, Gussy, and don't grow mean in your old age."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Fork it out, and let the young bounder clear, and get

that mongrel away," said Blake. "The other beast won't be quiet till he's gone."

"Look here—" began Herries.

"Hand it over, Gus!"

"Weally, Wally—"

"You can have it back out of the first prize. It's four quid, you know, and I only want five bob now."

"I wefuse—"

"Oh, all right, I'll borrow it from Tom Merry, then!"

"You misundahstand me, Wally. I wefuse to allow you to use such an *extremely slangy* expression as quids and bobs. I shall have *gweat pleasah* in lendin' you five shillings, if you like."

Wally grunted.

"I might have known you were only playing the giddy goat," he exclaimed. "Hand over the boblets."

D'Arcy counted out five shillings into his minor's ink hand.

"I'm awfully obliged, Gus," said Wally. "And you shall have it back out of the first prize at the dog show, honest Injun!"

"You young ass!" exclaimed Herries. "Do you really imagine that you are going to get a prize in the dog show?"

Wally stared at him.

"Yes, rather," he said emphatically.

"What breed is that thing?" asked Herries.

"Never mind his breed," said Wally, with a sniff. "He's got more breed in him than that tripe-hound of yours, anyway. Besides, it's not a question of breed. There's a special prize for the best kept and handsomest dog."

The chums gazed at Pongo.

How Wally could possibly imagine that he was either a well-kept or handsome dog *passed* their comprehension. But no one is so blind as the owner of a dog.

"Towser's going to take that prize, as well as some others," said Herries warmly.

"Towser!"

"Yes, Towser!"

Wally looked down at Towser.

"Well kept!" he murmured.

"Well, isn't he?"

"Handsome!"

"Look here—"

"Do you call that a dog?" asked Wally politely, pointing a scornful forefinger at the handsome and well-kept Towser.

That question was too much for Herries. He jumped up and made for Wally, and Wally edged to the door. Pongo made an effort just at that moment, and slipped from his arm. The next instant Towser was upon him.

"Look out!" shouted Tom Merry.

With a shrill yelp Pongo darted out of the study, with Towser after him. Wally and Herries, equally alarmed for their favourites, rushed in pursuit.

Tom Merry gave a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! If they kill one another—"

"Bai Jove, it would be a jolly good thing," exclaimed D'Arcy, "if Pongo killed Towser, and Towser killed Pongo! I should be gweatly inclined to award each of them a special prize, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three followed Herries and Wally, but they did not find them. The two dogs had disappeared, and the owners were hunting them in different directions.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "I think Blake is going to have a lively time with Towser. And if Wally, also, brings Pongo into the House to be taken special care of, there will be a lot of trouble in the family."

To which Manners and Lowther assented.

Jack Blake was thinking the same, and so was Digby. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was looking very thoughtful, and gnawing the handle of his pen.

"Well, thinking it out about Towser?" asked Blake, at last.

D'Arcy started.

"Towsah! No, deah boy! I had forgotten Towsah. I was thinkin' about Lumlay-Lumlay."

"Oh, never mind him!"

"You forget that he has stwuck me, deah boy," said D'Arcy, in his most stately manner. "It is impos for a D'Arcy to be stwuck without pwopahly wesentin' the affwont."

"Yes, I forgot that," said Blake solemnly. "I suppose it's a case of coffee and pistols for two."

"Pway don't be an ass!"

"Oh, leave it till the prep is done, and we'll help," said Blake. "Lumley will spoil your beauty, though, if he scratches you."

"I shall insist upon his fighting decently."

"Lot of good that will be."

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"In any case, I am bound to thwash him. It is a question of personal dig with me now."

"In that case," said Jack Blake, with due solemnity, "there's nothing more to be said. Let's get the prep done, and then we'll hunt the slipper—I mean, hunt the kipper—that is to say, the Bouncer."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And prep being finished in Study No. 6, the chums prepared to look for Lumley-Lumley.

Herries came in, looking tired and cross. Towser was not with him.

"Where's Towser?" asked Blake.

"Blessed if I know! He's dodged me!"

"Why didn't you whistle him?"

"Oh, Towser's not one of those tame animals that come at a whistle," said Herries disdainfully.

Blake chuckled.

"Are you coming with us to look for Lumley?" he asked.

"Oh, blow Lumley!"

And Blake and Digby left Herries in the study when they started to look for the Outsider of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 4.

Looking for Lumley!

THE three Fourth Formers searched high and low in St. Jim's for Lumley-Lumley, but the Outsider seemed to have disappeared.

D'Arcy was determined to find him, and Blake and Digby allowed themselves to be dragged up and down in the search.

D'Arcy explained that it was impossible for a D'Arcy to be struck without avenging the affront, and Blake admitted it, but suggested that D'Arcy should say "stricken," as more grammatically correct—a suggestion which brought only a sniff from the swell of St. Jim's.

But vengeance simply had to be postponed. Since the moment when Lumley-Lumley had struck, or stricken, D'Arcy, and bolted down the passage, he seemed to have vanished from the sight of all.

"Better give it up," suggested Blake. "Leave Lumley to his conscience."

"Wats!"

"You see, we're getting fagged," said Digby.

"More wats!"

"Now, don't be a chump!"

"You fellows can go and eat coke. I'm going to find Lumlay," said Arthur Augustus. "It is impos for a D'Arcy to west until an insult to his personal dig has been avenged."

Blake grunted.

"Oh, we'd better come with you, or you'll be getting into some mischief," he said.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Here's Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry was coming downstairs with Lowther and Manners.

"Have you seen Lumley?" asked Blake.

"No, not since we saw him in the passage."

"You don't want him?"

"Oh, no! But D'Arcy wants to avenge his dig," explained Blake. "It seems that when a D'Arcy is struck, or stricken, it is impos for him to repose until he has avenged his honour. This is worth knowing, you know, as a curious fact in the natural history of the species D'Arcy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"D'Arcy can't rest, and won't let us rest, until he has slain the Outsider, so we want to get the slaying over," said Digby. "Any information leading to the discovery of the fugitive will be thankfully received."

"I wish you would be sewious, Dig."

"I don't know where Lumley is, but we'll help you look for him," said Tom Merry. "He ought to be found and squashed, and Gussy is just the chap to do it!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The sooner Gussy finds him, and strews the hungry churchyard with his bones, the sooner he will be out of his misery," remarked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah!"

"You might wait a minute while I fetch my camera," said Manners.

D'Arcy did not wait a minute. He walked off in high dudgeon, with his nose in the air. The chums of the School House followed, grinning.

They asked all whom they met for news of the Outsider, but Lumley-Lumley was keeping very close. He was not in his study, and was not in the Junior Common-room, nor yet in the Form-room. Box-rooms and passages were drawn blank.

In the dusky quad he was not to be found, and in the gym he was conspicuous by his absence.

The juniors began to be rather tired of the hunt, but Arthur Augustus seemed tireless.

Three youths belonging to the Shell came into the gym together, chatting and laughing. They were Harry Noble, or Kangaroo, Clifton Dane, and Bernard Glyn, the chums of the end study. They were chuckling over some topic which seemed to interest them very much. Tom Merry called to them, and they stopped.

"Have you seen Lumley?"

"Lumley?" said Bernard Glyn. "No."

"What's the joke?" asked Blake.

"Joke?"

"Yes. What are you cackling about?"

"Cackling?"

"Ass! What is it?"

"Oh, nothing! I'm entering for the first prize at the Rylcombe Dog Show, that's all."

"Et tu brute!" exclaimed Blake. "Thou, too, Brutus! My hat, as Julius Cæsar said when they jabbed him—I think everybody at St. Jim's is entering for that blessed bow-wow show!"

"Oh, any others?" asked the Liverpool lad.

"Yes; Herries and young Wally."

"Oh! I rather think my dog will walk off with the prize."

"Your dog?" said Monty Lowther. "I didn't think you had one."

"I haven't."

"Then how the dickens—"

"I'm going to have one this evening."

"Oh, good! Where will you keep it?"

"In the study."

"Not allowed."

"Oh, my dog will be allowed in the study!" grinned Glyn, and he looked at his two comrades, who burst into a roar.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at them in surprise.

"Blessed if I quite catch on," said Digby.

"You wouldn't," said Kangaroo. "You'll see in time. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Kangaroo & Co. walked away, still laughing, leaving the other juniors considerably puzzled.

"They've got something up their sleeves," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"Looks like it," agreed Tom Merry. "I noticed them confabing in the Form-room this afternoon."

"Yaas, but—"

"You don't know what it is, Gussy, do you?"

"No; but—"

"I wonder—"

"But we haven't found Lumlay yet," said the swell of St. Jim's.

"My hat, what a badger he is for sticking to this!" said Digby. "Talk about sealing-wax and glue, they're not in it with Gussy."

"When a D'Arcy is stuwck—"

"Yes, we've heard that before," said Digby. "Put on a new record."

"Weally, Digbay—"

"Hallo, here comes Mellish, and he's looking awfully sly!" exclaimed Lowther. "Mellish, you worm, come here!"

Mellish was just coming from the direction of the woodshed. Instead of answering Monty Lowther's call, he broke into a run, and disappeared towards the School House.

Lowther pointed towards the woodshed.

"That's where he's been!" he exclaimed. "I shouldn't wonder if the Outsider's hiding there."

"Let's look!"

"Yaas, wathah! You see, we must find him. When a D'Arcy is stuwck—"

"Come on, then!"

The juniors hurried to the woodshed. Tom Merry pushed open the door and entered. All was dark within.

"Anybody got a match?"

Manners struck a match. Manners was a thoughtful youth, and generally had little necessities of that sort about him. The match flickered out in the gloom of the woodshed, and glimmered on gardening implements and stacks of faggots.

"Not here," said Manners.

There was a slight sound in the loft above the shed. The juniors uttered a general exclamation.

"He's there!"

D'Arcy stepped to the bottom of the ladder that gave access to the loft.

"Lumlay!" he called out.

There was no reply—nothing but the creaking of a board.

"Lumlay! I know you are there, you wottah!"

Silence!

"Come down!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Come down, you rat!" yelled Blake.

"I insist upon your comin' down immediately, you wottah! I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

There was no answer. D'Arcy grew pink with wrath.

"Lumlay, if you do not come down immediately, I shall come up and fetch you!" he exclaimed.

Still no reply. Arthur Augustus put his foot upon the ladder to mount.

"Hold on!" said Digby. "He'll have you at a disadvantage if you go up there, Gussy, and you know what a worm he is. Better leave it till he comes down."

"Imposs, deah boy! I have said that I will go up and fetch him if he does not come down, and it is imposs for a D'Arcy to go back on his word!"

"What I have said I have said!" remarked Monty Lowther, screwing a shilling in his eye in imitation of an eyeglass.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners had found a candle-end in a bottle, and lighted it. The shed was dimly illuminated. But the loft above was quite dark.

The swell of St. Jim's mounted the first step of the ladder.

There was no sound from the loft. Blake and Digby

ERNIE'S EXCUSE!



Mother: "Now, Ernie, I told you not to play on the piano until you had washed your hands."

Ernie: "I know, mother, but I'm only playing on the black keys!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Brown, Blue House, Mattingley, Basingstoke.

followed him upon the ladder. Lumley-Lumley was so reckless and so spiteful that there was no telling what he might do, and Blake did not mean to let D'Arcy go up alone.

"Come on!" said Tom Merry. "We're all in this. You lead the way, Gussy, and we'll follow."

"Yaas, wathah!"

D'Arcy mounted the ladder. After him came Blake, and then Digby, then Tom Merry, and then Manners and Lowther. They pretty well filled the ladder from top to bottom. By the time Lowther had stepped on the lowest rung D'Arcy had his head in the orifice of the loft above.

There he paused for a moment. He could not see Lumley, but there was no doubt that Lumley could see him.

"I know you are here, you wottah," said D'Arcy. "I am goin' to thwash you. You've attacked me in a cowardly mannah. I'm goin' to give you a fair fight, though you do not deserve it. Pway come—Oh!"

Something liquid, soft, sticky, suddenly descended upon the swell of St. Jim's. It smothered him and swept past him and swooped upon the other fellows who were following him up the ladder—sticky and thick and horrid.

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

"Groo!"

"Yow!"

There was a chuckle from the darkness of the loft; then the sound of a window opening, and silence. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy staggered on the ladder, lost his hold, and came tumbling down. In a moment more Tom Merry & Co. were on the floor in the woodshed, looking at one another with faces that were mostly black as the ace of spades.

CHAPTER 5. The Tarry Six!

"TAR!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Tar! The rotter!"

"The outsider!"

"Yow! It's horrid!"

"Howwid, deah boys! It's feahful!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

The swell of St. Jim's sat up.

He certainly did look "fearful" in the glimmering light of the candle. His head and face were smothered with tar. He was as black as the ace of spades, and the tar was making thick streams down his clothes.

The others, having been in part sheltered by the swell

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of St. Jim's, had escaped more lightly, but they were in a most unenviable state.

Their faces were splashed with tar, and Blake was nearly as black as D'Arcy, and their clothes were sticky with it everywhere.

Lumley-Lumley had been very thorough.

Now that it was too late, the juniors understood that the Outsider had deliberately fooled them and led them on; he had taken refuge in the loft over the woodshed, and Mellish had allowed himself to be seen intentionally—and all the while Lumley had the bucket of tar at the top of the steps ready for the pursuers.

Tom Merry could have kicked himself. He felt that he might have guessed it, but he allowed himself to fall quite blindly into the trap.

"My hat!" he groaned.

"Gwheat Scott! It's tewwible!"

"I shall never get this off!" grunted Blake. "Oh, Gussy, why didn't they drown you and keep one of the others?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Poof! I'm tarry from head to foot! Grooogh!"

"Gerooh! Same here!"

"It's all Gussy's fault!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

Tom Merry staggered to his feet.

"We'd better try to get this off before it sets hard!" he gasped. "It will want some getting off, too!"

"I am goin' to thwash Lumley!"

"He's not there, ass. I heard the window open!"

"Bai Jove! He's got out of the window. I nevah thought of that."

"Do you ever think of anything?" grunted Blake. "Come on, for goodness' sake!"

"Weally, Blake!"

"Oh, come on!"

The juniors tramped drearily from the woodshed.

It was not only the tar and the trouble of getting it off that worried them, though that certainly was bad enough; but they thought of the laughter that would greet their appearance in their present state in the School House.

As they emerged from the woodshed three youths came up with inquiring looks. They peered at the School House juniors in the gloom and burst into a roar of laughter.

"Figgins & Co.!" grunted Blake. "Of course, we were bound to run into New House bounders at this precise moment!"

"How wotten!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn. "Lumley's just told us there was something funny to be seen here. He was right."

The chums of the School House tramped past without replying. They were so downcast that they had no words even for their old rivals of the New House.

They hurried as fast as they could towards their own House, leaving Figgins & Co. roaring with laughter. Outside the School House they met Kangaroo and Dane and Glyn, also looking inquiring.

"Hallo!" said Kangaroo. "Lumley says— My hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dane and Glyn, catching sight of the faces of the chums in the light from the open doorway of the School House.

The juniors passed on.

A blackened and dragged line of figures they made as they trailed in at the door, and from everyone who caught sight of them came a yell of laughter.

"It's Gussy!" gasped Gore. "What's happened to Gussy?"

"Ha, ha, ha! What's happened to Tom Merry?"

"What's happened to Blake?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The tarry chums tramped in doggedly without a word. Kind inquiries as to how they had got like that mingled with loud laughter, but they did not reply. It was really not necessary, for Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was sure to explain.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The roars of laughter followed them along the passage and up the stairs. They made for the bath-rooms at once. Hot water and scrubbing-brushes—and plenty of both—were what they needed then.

"Bai Jove! It's howwid!" moaned D'Arcy, as he ran his fingers through his hair and brought them away black and sticky with tar.

"It's awful!"

"Horrible!"

"Oh, we'll squash that rotter!"

"Better squash Gussy! It's his fault!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"It's curious that Gussy is always getting us into something like this!" said Manners.

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"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the sort! If I were not in such a shockin' state at the pwsent moment, Mannahs, I should give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Oh, scat!"

The chums of the School House rubbed and scrubbed and growled and grumbled. The other fellows gathered round the bath-room to wait for them to come out.

When they appeared at last loud laughter greeted them. In spite of all their efforts, tar was clinging to them—their ears, their hair, and their fingernails.

They were likely to be in a tarry state for some days.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gore. "This is ripping! How did you come like that, Tom Merry?"

"It was Lumley."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am goin' to look for him again," said D'Arcy. "I was lookin' for him to give him a feahful thwashin', and he had the awful cheek to tweek me like this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He is a wank outsidah! I am goin' to thwash him feahfully! I have any of you chaps seen the Outsider?"

"I've seen him," said Bernard Glyn. "He's gone out; he had a pass."

"Bai Jove! This is wotten!"

"Oh, cheese it, Gussy!" said Tom Merry, with a snort. "We've had enough of looking for Lumley for the present, I think. Chuck it!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Br-r-r-r!"

The Terrible Three marched off. They had certainly had enough of it. The Outsider had scored, and there was no denying it. The Fourth Formers went back to their study. In their present piebald state they did not feel inclined to face the crowd in the Common-room.

Herries was in the study. Towser had been found, evidently, for he was curled up in a basket, and seemed asleep. He opened one eye, however, as the chums came in, and gave them a look which did not make them feel more comfortable.

"Oh, so you've found the beast?" said Blake.

Herries snorted.

"I've found Towser," he said.

"Did he kill Pongo?"

"No; Pongo got away!" growled Herries. "He's bitten Towser and scratched him. If young Wally doesn't keep that mongrel of his in order it will get drowned one of these days. I can't have it worrying Towser in this way."

"It seems to me that it's Towser that does most of the worrying!" grinned Digby.

"Well, he doesn't like mongrels," Herries stared at his chums, for the first time noting their blackened and spotted appearance. "What on earth have you chaps been doing with yourselves?" he asked.

"Looking for Lumley."

"Where did you pick up that tar?"

Jack Blake explained, and Herries grinned.

"Well, you were asses!" he remarked.

"Oh, were we?"

"Yes, rather! If you had waited till I found Towser for you he would have tracked Lumley down like anything, and saved you all the trouble."

"Oh, blow Towser!"

And that was all Blake had to say on the subject. When the chums of the Fourth went up to bed Towser was left in the study, curled up in the basket, and Herries had spread one of D'Arcy's best silk mufflers over him to keep off the draught—needless to say, without consulting D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 6.

Towser Is Called In!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was not at all the kind of fellow to bear malice, and as a rule he forgot an offence in a very short time.

But it was not so now in connection with the Outsider of St. Jim's. He could have forgiven the tar, as soon as it was cleared off, because that was, after all, only a jape; but the slap in the face, which had been given in so cowardly a manner, he could not forgive—at all events, until it was avenged. The honour of the D'Arcys was at stake.

And so the next day Arthur Augustus was as implacable as ever. He appeared at morning lessons with chunks of tar adhering to his hair, and smears of it round his ears, and a suppressed chuckle greeted him.

Arthur Augustus took no notice of the chuckle. He maintained a grave and calm repose suited to the caste of Vere de Vere.

He gave Lumley-Lumley one look, however, which warned the Outsider that the affair was not ended yet.

Lumley shrugged his shoulders carelessly. He had put the leaders of the School House juniors against him, and he was in for a warm time, as anyone could have told him. But to do the Outsider justice, he had a nerve which nothing seemed to shake, and he did not seem to feel the slightest sensation of fear.

When Mr. Lathom was busy with the blackboard, and his back was turned, Arthur Augustus took the opportunity of making a remark to Lumley-Lumley behind the backs of three or four other juniors who sat between them.

"I say, Lumlay, you wottah!" he whispered.

The Outsider looked round.

"I twust you will not run away fwom me aftah mornin'

"Yaas, wathah, sir! I was speakin'!"

"Take fifty lines for talking in class, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, sir—"

Mr. Lathom turned to the blackboard again. Arthur Augustus looked unutterable things at the grinning Outsider. Jack Blake, unable to contain his disgust, burst out in a fierce whisper:

"You rotten cad!"

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley looked at him.

"Did you speak to me, Blake?" he asked loudly.

Blake gritted his teeth as Mr. Lathom turned round again.

"You were speaking, Lumley," said the Form-master.



As Arthur Augustus reached the opening to the loft, something liquid, soft, sticky, suddenly descended upon him. It smothered him, and swooped down upon the other fellows who were following him up the ladder. "Ow! Groo! Yow!" yelled the six juniors. "It's tar!"

lessons," said D'Arcy, with a withering look. "I do not want to have to hunt for you."

"Eh?" said Lumley.

"I am goin' to give you a feaful thwashin'!"

"What did you say?"

"You can hear me perfectly well, you wottah!" said D'Arcy, in a voice thrilling with indignation. "You are twyin' to attwact Mr. Lathom's attention."

"Eh?"

"You uttah wottah!"

"What did you say, D'Arcy?"

Mr. Lathom turned round. He was not a very keen gentleman, but he could hardly help hearing Lumley's last remark, which was uttered quite loudly. He gave the swell of St. Jim's a severe look.

"D'Arcy!" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, sir!"

"Were you speaking?"

"Weally, sir—"

"Answer my question, D'Arcy, at once!"

"I answered Blake, sir."

"You should not have done so. You, however, were wrong for speaking in the first place, Blake. You will take fifty lines."

Blake was silent and furious. The Outsider had scored beautifully. A fellow who had no scruples about sneaking was bound to score.

"Oh, you just wait a bit, that's all!" Blake murmured under his breath.

Lumley grinned.

He had reduced his enemies to silence, at all events. He knew that they were longing to whisper what they thought of him, but could not do so in case he should betray them to the Form-master.

The chums of the Fourth exchanged significant glances as the morning lessons drew to a close. They did not mean to let the Outsider escape them this time. Jerrold Lumley was grinning serenely. Although he felt no fear, he had determined to dodge the juniors—partly from mischief,

partly, perhaps, because judging them by himself he did not expect fair play.

Ten minutes before the time for the dismissal came, Jerrold Lumley stood up. Mr. Lathom glanced at him.

"If you please, sir, may I go early?" said Lumley. "I have an important letter to post, sir, and it ought to catch the collection."

"Certainly!" said Mr. Lathom.

The outsider left the class-room.

The juniors looked after him dumbly. The cheek of Jerrold Lumley always took their breath away, to say nothing of his unscrupulousness. They knew perfectly well that he had no important letter to post.

The class was dismissed at last, and the four chums came out together. They looked round for Lumley, but he was not to be seen.

D'Arcy breathed hard.

"The uthah wottah!" he exclaimed. "He's bent on hangin' the thing out. But I shall give him that thwashin', if I have to wait a feathfully long time, deah boys!"

"The worm!" said Blake. "He jolly well shan't dodge us like this! But where the dickens has he hidden himself this time?"

Herries looked eager.

"I'll find him for you!" he exclaimed.

"How?"

"Towser will do it."

Blake snorted.

"Oh, Towser!"

"Yes, Towser," said Herries firmly. "You know what he is at following a track—like a bloodhound. Just put him on Lumley's track—"

"Now, look here, Herries—"

"Look here, Blake—"

"We may as well twy Towsah," said D'Arcy pacifically. "We can't find Lumlay, you know, and Towsah won't hindah if he doesn't help."

"Oh, all right!"

"I'll fetch him," said Herries. "You fellows get something belonging to Lumley—a cap or a boot will do—anything for Towser to sniff at."

And Herries rushed away. The chums of the Fourth had about as much faith in Towser discovering Lumley as in his discovering the North Pole, but they had not the heart to deny Herries. After all, as D'Arcy said, Towser wouldn't hinder, though they did not expect him to help.

Blake discovered a cap of Lumley's, and he had it ready by the time Herries brought Towser out on his chain. Towser was dragging at the chain, as if he didn't particularly want to come, and D'Arcy eyed him rather nervously.

"Pway keep a tight hold on that beast, Hewwies. You know perfectly well that he has no wespect for a fellow's twousahs."

"Oh, Towsy's all right; it's only his fun."

"I do not want my twuicks wuined for Towsah's fun."

"Hang your trucks! Gimme that cap."

Blake handed Lumley's cap to Herries, who gave it to Towser to smell. Towser seemed a little puzzled at first to know what was meant. Finally, he took the cap, and rent it to pieces.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "You'll have to pay for that, Hewwies, old man."

Herries grunted.

"That's Towser's way of getting the scent," he said. "It's Lumley's own fault. Now, come on, Towser! Pick up the trail, old son!"

"According to what I've read he ought to wush to and fro till he picks up the twail," Arthur Augustus remarked.

"Towser's not that sort of dog," said Herries scornfully, probably because Towser was sitting quite still. "Towser's all right. You let him alone."

They let Towser alone, and waited. Towser gave the cap another rend, reducing it to tatters, and then sat still with his head on the ground. His eyes closed. Herries looked a little uneasy.

"I suppose he's thinking it out," said Blake solemnly.

Herries looked irritable.

"Well, don't look at him," he said. "Towser doesn't like being looked at."

They looked away from Towser. After about a minute they looked back at him. The bulldog was asleep.

Blake broke into an involuntary chuckle.

"Better let him have a nap, while we look for Lumley," he suggested.

Herries jerked on the chain. Towser woke and growled.

"Come on, old doggie," said Herries. "Buck up! Get a move on, you beast! On the track, you know. Smell it out, Towser!"

Towser wagged his heavy head. He evidently wanted to lie down again and go to sleep, but the drag on the chain stopped that.

A number of juniors gathered round, wondering what The Gem Library.—No. 1,371.

was going to happen. They made inquiries, which Herries did not answer.

"What's the little game?" asked Kangaroo. "Are you teaching him tricks, Herries?"

"Or putting him through exercises?" asked Gore.

"It's a system of doggie ju-jutsu, I think," said Monty Lowther. "Towser is just going to begin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Herries crossly. "How can you expect Towser to follow a track, with a silly lot of asses cackling round him?"

"Follow a track!" said Manners.

"That's what he's doing," said Blake blandly. "We're trying to find Lumley, and Towser is tracking him down."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Towser started at last. He trotted off, and Herries gave the chums a triumphant look. Towser led the way straight into the School House.

"Oh, Lumley's indoors, then!" said Herries.

Blake did not reply. He had his doubts about it. But certainly Towser seemed to be intent upon something. He led the way directly into the House, and up the stairs, and into the Fourth Form passage.

"Lumley's in his study, I suppose," Herries remarked. But it was not at Lumley's study, but at the door of Study No. 6 that Towser stopped at last.

Herries looked excited.

"By Jove! Lumley's hiding in our own study!" he exclaimed.

"How do you know?"

"Hasn't Towser led us straight here?" demanded Herries, with a snort.

"Yaas, wathah! Open the door, deah boy."

Herries opened the door.

Towser trotted in, and made straight for the basket. He entered it, curled up, and closed his eyes. Herries stared at him speechlessly.

The juniors burst into a roar. They were sorry, but they couldn't help it.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was not in his study. There was no sign of him there. Towser was sleepy, and he had gone back to bed. That was all.

The study rang with laughter. Herries, with a crimson face, dragged Towser out of the basket. The bulldog gasped and sniffed.

"You beast!" shouted Herries. "Get on the track, can't you? You lazy rotten brute! Get on the trail, I tell you! Smell him out!"

He dragged Towser from the study by the chain, and the sleepy bulldog blinked and gave way. He trotted up the passage obediently, and Herries looked hopeful again.

"Lumley's in his study, after all," he remarked.

Blake threw open the door of Lumley's study. It was empty. Neither did Towser show any desire to enter. He sniffed at the study and passed on.

"He recognises it as Lumley's room," said Herries.

No one denied that statement. Towser trotted on till he came to the end of the passage. He stopped outside the door of the last study, which belonged to Kangaroo, Dane, and Bernard Glyn.

"He's in there!" said Herries.

Blake grinned. Kangaroo shook his head.

"That's my study," he said. "Lumley's not in there."

"We'll see."

Herries tried the door. It did not budge. It was locked. The Fourth Former rapped on it with his knuckles.

"Open this door!" he exclaimed.

There was no reply from within. Herries turned a triumphant glance upon his comrades.

"I told you he was here!" he exclaimed.

"But—"

"He's here right enough; Towser's tracked him down."

And Herries spoke so positively that no one denied it.

CHAPTER 7.

Towser's Terror!

TOWSER sat down in the passage, rested his large head on the linoleum, and went to sleep, as if he considered his duty done.

Herries shook the study door again by the handle, and Harry Noble shook Herries by the arm.

"I tell you, he's not in here!" exclaimed Kangaroo.

"Rats!" said Herries.

"But he can't be."

"Bosh!"

"The door's locked!"

"He's locked it to keep us out."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But Glyn's in there."

"I don't care."

"And Clifton Dane."
 "So is Lumley."
 "I tell you, he isn't."
 "And I tell you, he is! Towser's tracked him down, and that settles it," said Herries obstinately.
 "Glyn's making an experiment,"
 "You utter ass—"
 "Oh, don't bother!"
 Herries shook the handle and kicked the door. So far, no reply had come from inside the end study. That seemed to hint that perhaps Herries' suspicions were well-founded. The chums of the Fourth were getting suspicious, too. They did not suspect Towser of having tracked down the right person. But the locked door hinted that there was something or other hidden in the end study.
 "Better have the door open," said Blake.
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Can't he did!" said Kangaroo.
 "Why not?"
 "Oh, some new mechanical jape, I suppose," said Monty Lowther. "A blessed electrical man, or a mechanical horse—eh?"
 "So Glyn's at it again, is he?" remarked Blake. "Then we'll jolly well see what kind of a jape he's up to."
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 Kangaroo laughed.
 "He won't let you in," he said.
 "We'll see."
 "Bai Jove! Stand back, deah boys, while I bweak the door in."
 "Ass!"
 "I wefuse to be called an ass! I—"
 Blake kicked at the door.
 "Glyn—I say, Glyn!"
 "Oh, go away!" came the voice of the junior inventor from within the study. "What are you bothering about?"
 "We want to come in!"
 "Rats!"
 "What are you doing?"
 "Minding my own business."
 Arthur Augustus gave a little chuckle.
 "Bai Jove! He had you there, Blake!" he remarked.
 "Oh, ring off! Glyn, we're coming in!"
 "You're not."
 "Is Lumley there?"
 "Who?"
 "Lumley—the Outsider?"
 "No, he isn't."
 "Who's there with you?"
 "Clifton Dane. He's helping me. You're hindering—buzz off!"
 "Lumley is hidden in the study somewhere," said Herries. "I know jolly well that he's there. He may be under the table or in the cupboard, or in the box that Glyn used to keep his mechanical man in. I know he's there."
 "Bweak in the door."
 "Glyn, if you don't open the door we'll bust it."
 "Bust away!"
 The chums hammered at the door. Whether Lumley was hidden there or not, they wanted to see what was the new "wheeze" the Liverpool lad was up to. Bernard Glyn's inventions had caused a great deal of mirth, and a great deal of trouble, in the School House at St. Jim's. He had made a mechanical figure once that was the double of Herbert Skimpole of the Shell, and he had made a mechanical horse that was a marvel. His father was a millionaire, and he was not stinted in the sums he expended upon his mechanical devices, and he generally had two or three things "on the go."
 But he would never allow anything to be seen till he had finished it. He had often quoted at the juniors the old proverb, that fools and children should not see things half done, which was perhaps true, but certainly not complimentary.
 Hammer, hammer, hammer!
 Growl!
 The juniors started in surprise. It was a deep, low growl, but it had not come from Towser. That growl proceeded from within the study.
 "My hat!" exclaimed Blake. "It's a dog he's got there!"
 "Look here, Blake—"
 "Anyway, we'll have the door open!"
 "I tell you—" began Kangaroo.
 "Oh, you ring off! By the way, I believe there's a Yale lock on this door, and each of the three bounders has a key to it," said Monty Lowther.
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Then this blessed Cornstalk has a key about him."
 "Collar him!"
 Kangaroo made a spring to escape, but three or four pairs of hands seized him, and he was rolled over. He

(Continued on the next page.)



Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). Half-a-crown is awarded to the sender of every joke that appears in this column.

THE BAD EGG.

Diner: "What sort of pudding do you call this?"
 Waiter: "College pudding, sir. Do you like it?"
 Diner: "No—there's an egg in it that ought to have been expelled!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to S. Smith, 3, Shurmer Street, Daubhill, Bolton.

THE RECRUIT'S RETORT.

Recruit: "Sergeant, this bread is stale."
 Sergeant: "Listen, you! If Napoleon had had it when he crossed the Alps he would have eaten it with relish."
 Recruit: "Maybe you're right—but it might have been fresh then!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Beadnell, 4, Lincoln Mount, Newtown, Leeds 9.

WORDY WARFARE.

Ted (scornfully): "Why, you coward, you'd run a mile before you'd fight me!"
 Tom: "Huh, I'd catch you before that!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Thomas, 55, Vaughan Gardens, Ilford, Essex.

GOOD ADVICE.

Explorer: "I don't know the meaning of fear."
 Bored Listener: "I wouldn't let a little word like that stump me. Look it up in the dictionary!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Pitt, 84, Second Street, Orange Grove, Johannesburg, South Africa.

SOME PROMOTER!

First Boy: "My dad's a company promoter."
 Second Boy: "Well, he will never do so well as Noah did."
 First Boy: "What do you mean?"
 Second Boy: "Noah's the only man who has floated a company when the rest of the world was in liquidation!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. Jackson, 9, St. Michael's Terrace, Stoke, Devonport.

SAFETY FIRST.

Lady: "Are you the plumber?"
 Plumber: "Yes, mum."
 Lady: "Well, be careful how you work; all my floors are highly polished."
 Plumber: "Oh, that's all right, mum—I've got nails in my boots."
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to "Regular Reader," 13, Ticehurst Road, Forest Hill, London, S.E.

THE FAMILY TREE.

Two negroes were discussing family relations.
 "Yeah," said Ambrose, "Ah can trace my relatives back to a family tree."
 "Chase dem back to a family tree?" said Amos.
 "No, trace dem, trace dem!"
 "Well, dere am but two kinds ob t'ings dat libes in trees—birds and monkeys—an' yo' shu' ain't got no feathers on yo'!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Pitt, 84, Second Street, Orange Grove, Johannesburg, South Africa.

MONEY-MAKERS.

Joe: "That man over there's a millionaire. He made his money out of iron."
 Ex-convict: "Luvvus! I made some out of lead and got five years for it!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss M. Cooke, 20, Stopford Road, Gillingham, Kent.

ought desperately, but in vain; in a few moments the key was found and taken away.

"Bai Jove, here it is!" said D'Arcy. "Open the door, deah boys."

The key clicked in the lock.

There was a sharp, startled exclamation inside the study, and the door flew open as the juniors rushed into the room.

Towser was in first!

Bernard Glyn gave a shout.

"Careful, there! You asses! Buzz off!"

"Rats!"

"We're coming in."

"Now then!"

"Bai Jove!"

There was a snort from Towser, and he pounced upon his enemy.

It was a large mastiff, with a sleek coat and an open mouth, displaying a formidable set of teeth that glimmered in the light.

Towser was on him in a twinkling.

"Keep that beast off!" roared Bernard Glyn.

"Towser! Towser!"

But Towser did not come off.

He fastened upon the mastiff with a savage growl. But it was only for a moment. The next, he released him and backed away from him with an expression of surprise and horror upon his face.

Then, with a low whine, Towser whisked out of the study and fled along the passage.

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake.

"Bai Jove!"

"What's the matter with Towser?"

"Licked, by George!"

Herries rushed after Towser, who was scuttling down the passage at top speed, with his chain clinking and rattling behind him.

CHAPTER 8.

Run to Earth!

BERNARD GLYN ran to his mastiff, who did not seem to have turned a hair, and pushed him under the table.

"My hat!" said Blake again. "Towser soon had enough. Is that the dog you're going to enter at the Rylcombe Show, Glyn?"

"Yes!" grunted the Liverpool lad. "Get out!"

"Let's have a look at him."

"Weally, Blake, I wogard that dog as a dangewous-lookin' beast. Look out for your twousahs!"

"Oh, get out!" said Glyn.

"But—"

"I'm busy."

"What are you up to?"

"Vamoose!" said Glyn. "Get out!"

"Is Lumley here?"

"No."

"Sure he's not hiding about anywhere?"

"Of course he isn't, you chump!" roared Glyn. "Why don't you go?"

"Perhaps we'd better turn the study out," said Digby.

"Buzz off!"

"Let's have a look at the dog."

"Seize him, Prince!" exclaimed Clifton Dane.

Growl!

The juniors backed out of the study. That mastiff had not looked as if he would be pleasant at close quarters.

Bernard Glyn slammed the door on them.

"My hat," said Blake. "If that's the beast Glyn is going to enter for the Rylcombe Dog Show, I don't think he's going to walk off with the prize for the handsomest dog. Of all the savage brutes—"

"He did for Towser jolly soon!" chuckled Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I can't understand Towser bolting like that," said Blake, puzzled. "Towser's got heaps of pluck, and I've never seen him afraid of a dog before."

"It's odd. But that mastiff of Glyn's was a savage brute. He has a growl enough to curdle your blood."

"Yaas, wathah! By the way, we haven't found Lumley yet."

"Oh, hang Lumley!"

"Weally, Blake—"

Herries met them in the passage with a gloomy look. They stopped to sympathise with him.

"Sorry about Towser," said Blake. "He bit off more than he could chew that time. I hope he wasn't hurt."

"Not a scratch," said Herries. "I can't understand it. Towser's never turned tail on a dog before."

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"Yaas, it's cawious; but—"

"I think he must be ill. I don't know whether the study's quiet enough for him," said Herries. "It would be rotten for him to be ill just before the dog show, wouldn't it? I noticed that he was very restless last evening while we were doing prep. It seemed to worry him."

"Perhaps the study is a bit too noisy for him," suggested Blake hopefully.

"That's just what I was thinking."

"Well, in that case—"

"Would you fellows mind if—if—"

"If you took him back to the kennels? Not at all, old chap. Of course, we should—er—miss him a little," said Blake. "That's only to be expected. But if it's for Towser's good—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I didn't mean that," said Herries irritably. "I was thinking that perhaps you chaps wouldn't mind doing your prep in the Form-room of an evening, so that Towser wouldn't be disturbed."

The three juniors looked at Herries in silence.

They had consented to have the bulldog in the study, and in doing so they had felt like three heroes out of Fox's Book of Martyrs. But to be turned entirely out of the study so that Towser could be quiet and undisturbed there—

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, at last.

"It would only be for this week," said Herries.

"My hat!"

"I suppose you don't mind?"

"Oh, not at all!" said Blake sarcastically. "But if we don't go into the study, who will watch over Towser and comfort him when he's lonely, and read to him when—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Weally, Hewvies, you know—"

"I think it would be only chummy to do it," said Herries luffily. "But if you don't care about it—"

"Oh, have the study, and every other blessed thing!" said Blake resignedly. "I only stipulate that Towser allows us to breathe."

"Look here—"

"We haven't found Lumley yet, deah boys."

"Quite so. We haven't. Come on!"

"I'm going to look after Towser," said Herries. "I'm afraid he's not quite in form. I can't understand his bolting from Glyn's dog in that way."

And Herries went back into Study No. 6. Blake and Digby and D'Arcy resumed the search for the Outsider. But he was not to be found, and the dinner-bell rang, and they had to go to the dining-room.

"We shall find him there," Blake remarked.

"Yaas, wathah, and I shan't lose sight of him again!"

Sure enough Lumley-Lumley turned up at the dinner-table. He grinned across it at the chums of the Fourth Form.

They looked daggers at him in response.

When dinner was over Blake contrived to be the first out of the dining-room, and he waited at the door for the Outsider.

Jerrold Lumley had to pass him to go out, and Blake linked arms with him as he came by.

"I want to speak to you," he said.

"Let me go."

"Not just yet."

"Will you let me go, Blake?" said Lumley, raising his voice.

Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, who was leaving the dining-room, looked round sharply. Blake gritted his teeth and released the Outsider, who immediately quitted the School House. But he was not to escape. Digby was on his track, and so was Arthur Augustus, and they followed him into the quadrangle.

D'Arcy tapped him on the shoulder there.

"I want you," he remarked.

Lumley-Lumley swung round.

There was no escape for him. Blake was coming up to join his chums, and several more juniors of the Fourth and the Shell were gathering round. There was quickly a ring round them. All the Lower School knew what Lumley had done, and that he had persistently avoided giving an account of himself, and all had agreed that he should either fight the swell of St. Jim's, or apologise for his act.

Lumley-Lumley was hemmed in now, and Mellish, his only friend, promptly scuttled off as the crowd gathered.

A look of hard defiance came over the Outsider's face.

"Well, what do you want?" he demanded.

"We want you, Lumley."

"If you're thinking of a ragging, I guess you'd better go slow," said Jerrold. "I'm not the chap to take it lying down. If you lay a finger on me, the Head will hear all about it, I promise you that."

There was a general hiss.

(Continued on page 14.)



Let the Editor be your pal! Write to him to-day, addressing your letters :
The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, CHUMS! Another grand "Lumley-Lumley" story is on the programme for next week. So far we have only seen the worst side of the Outsider of St. Jim's, but in next Wednesday's powerful and dramatic yarn, entitled:

"OUTSIDER AND HERO!"

—the hard-natured boy from New York shows up in a new light. It is not easy to conceive Lumley risking his life for the sake of another; yet that is what he does—but not before he has brought down the wrath of Tom Merry & Co. on his head for treacherous and eadish behaviour. You can take it from me, chums, you'll enjoy this story of the Outsider more than you've enjoyed any of the others.

You will find all the thrills you want in the next nerve-tingling chapters of our tremendously popular serial,

"GHOST RIVER RANCH!"

The rest of the St. Frank's chums are captured by Black Riders, but old Mesa Matt comes to their rescue. It is a big surprise to the juniors—but little do they know who Mesa Matt now is.

All our other features will be up to their usual high standard. Another tiptop number of "Tom Merry's Weekly" will entertain you with the latest news and fun from St. Jim's; Mr. Brooks will have something more to talk over with you; the GEM Jester will have another column of jokes for you, and lastly, yours truly will be in the chair again.

GOLD FINDS.

Just by chance the hoard of wealth of someone probably long dead was dis-

covered recently. A Croydon Corporation carter was raking over the remains of rubbish burned in the Corporation incinerator when a gleaming speck among the ashes caught his eye, and he picked it up. It was a round object, mostly blackened by heat; but on scraping it the carter was surprised to discover that it was a sovereign he was holding. Naturally, he made a careful search for more, with the result that a number of guinea pieces, sovereigns and half-sovereigns, amounting to £150 in all, were found among the ashes! The coins, of course, are worth considerably more than £150 owing to the high price of gold at the present time.

By an extraordinary coincidence another lucky gold find was made on the same day at Colchester. Two boys found a tin box at the root of a big tree; and on opening it to discover what it contained, they were pleasantly surprised to see a number of discoloured gold coins inside. There were six sovereigns and fifteen half-sovereigns in the box. The dates on the coins varied between 1853 and 1860, so presumably the gold must have been hidden there for many years.

ANOTHER MONSTER!

Since the story of the Loch Ness monster has become known all over the world, rival monsters are springing up like mushrooms—if we are to believe the reports that unknown sea beasts have been seen in different parts of the world. The latest story of a monster having been seen comes from Massachusetts. Two youths were cruising in an outboard motor-boat when they spotted the monster. The sea beast made for the motor-boat, and while one boy steered the other fought it off with an oar. The monster then disappeared.

The creature was over thirty feet in length and three feet thick. Its body was a dull green in colour and it had a snake-like head, with dark, luminous eyes. Believe it or not!

A MILK MYSTERY.

The milking of his cows at night by some person unknown was troubling the Montana farmer, so he decided to keep watch. His lonely vigil continued for several nights, but never a sign of the thief did he see. Yet when he didn't keep watch the thief got busy. He was completely baffled, and so he sought the aid of the police. Two detectives hid themselves near the cowhouse at night and waited for the thief to appear. Imagine their amazement when they saw the farmer in night attire coming towards the cowhouse. The detectives watched in silence as the farmer milked the cows and then gave the milk to the pigs. Afterwards he went back to bed. The mystery of the missing milk was solved. The farmer himself did it in his sleep!

LUCKY THIRTEEN.

While Big Ben is in the hands of the cleaners, Great Tom, the bell which strikes the hours in St. Paul's Cathedral is doing duty for the B.B.C.'s time signals. There is an interesting story about Great Tom, which happened when it used to chime the hours from Westminster Tower.

A sentry on Windsor Castle terrace was sentenced to death for sleeping on duty at night, but his astonishing statement was that he couldn't have been asleep because he heard a clock in the distance strike thirteen at midnight! Fortunately for the soldier other people came forward and substantiated his statement, declaring that the bell in Westminster Tower did strike thirteen on that night. Hence the sentry was reprieved. Great Tom had saved a life!

TAILPIECE.

"With this gadget attached to your carburettor," said the salesman to the car owner, "you will use fifty per cent. less petrol."

"Indeed," said the motorist. "Let me see, I've already bought a gadget which saves me thirty-five per cent on my petrol bill, and another which saves twenty-five per cent. Why, before I've driven far with all these gadgets my petrol tank will be overflowing!"

THE EDITOR.



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal post your notice to The GEM LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Miss Dorothy Linaker, 28, Walton Hall Avenue, Walton, Liverpool 4, wants girl correspondents; interested in wireless and stamps.

R. A. Rankin, 18, Castle Road, Tipton, Staffs, wants pen pals overseas.

Miss Kitty Clague, 7, Church Street, Peel, Isle of Man, wants girl correspondents; ages 14-15.

Billie Lloyd, Albemarle Hotel, Marine Parade, Brighton, wants to hear from stamp collectors overseas; ages 13-16.

W. Fleckmy, Vera House, 303, London Road, Isleworth, Middlesex, wants members for the Welcome Club; interested in radio stars, cinema organs, the cinema, and theatre; ages 13-25.

Aubrey Benson, 174, Vaughan Avenue, Selkirk, Manitoba, Canada, wants correspondents anywhere interested in stamps; ages 13-15. Africa, India, China, Australia, South Sea Islands.

Miss Vera Craig, 105, Burst Street, Boulder, Western Australia, wants girl correspondents; ages 13-18.

Miss Violet Coppleston, 131, Lower Addiscombe Road, Croydon, Surrey, wants girl correspondents in the British Empire and U.S.A., interested in sports, swimming, cycling, films, etc.; ages 16-19.

Edward Sacks, Durban Street, Belleville, Cape Province, South Africa, wants pen pals interested in sports; age 13-16.

A. Kerner, 4, Glynn Street, Cape Town, South Africa, wants pen pals in Canada, U.S.A., India, England and France, interested in stamps, sports, chemistry and films; ages 13-17.

Miss Patricia Thomson, 14, Muthaiga Place, Durban, Natal, South Africa, wants a girl correspondent in England.

Gifford Crocker, 37, Thomas Street, Ashfield, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, would like to hear from match brand collectors.

Miss Rena Sharp, 31, Palmuir Street, Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland, wants a girl pen pal in England; ages 13-15.

Arthur H. Mendel, 1572, Van Horne Avenue, Outremont, Pro. Quebec, Canada, wants to hear from stamp collectors; age 13-15.

Miss Ida Beaver, 8, North Parade, Middleton Road, Morley, Leeds, wants a girl pen friend in India, Canada, or North Africa.

Laurence Smith, 92, Hartley Avenue, Delph Lane, Leeds, wants members for his Blue Triangle Correspondence Club.

(Continued on page 22.)

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TOWSER'S RIVALS!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Sneak!" Lumley shrugged his shoulders. "Sneak or not, I'm not going to be ragged!"

"We're not thinking of ragging you," said Blake quietly. "You struck D'Arcy yesterday and ran away. He's been looking for you all the time, and you've kept out of his way. You're going to fight him or apologise."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Lumley laughed contemptuously.

"Apologise to that tailor's dummy!" he exclaimed.

Arthur Augustus turned crimson.

"I wesus to be alluded to as a tailah's dummy!" he exclaimed. "I wegard you as a low wottah, Lumley, and it will be a weal pleasuah to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Oh, I don't mind!" yawned Lumley. "Here's for a start."

His fist lashed out, and D'Arcy would have caught a fierce blow, which he was quite unprepared for, had not Tom Merry struck up the arm of the Outsider.

"You coward!" he said.

"Bai Jove!"

"Can't you learn to fight fairly, Lumley?" demanded Blake. "By Jove, you ought to be ragged baldheaded, and then kicked out of the school. Bring him along, and we'll put him through it."

"Yaas, wathah! I hardly like to touch such a wotten cad, you know; but I have weally no wecourse but to give him a feahful thwashin'!"

And Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, in the midst of a crowd of angry juniors, was marched off to a quiet spot behind the chapel railings, where little affairs of this sort were usually settled by the St. Jim's juniors.

CHAPTER 9.

Gussy is Avenged.

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY carried his head high, and the look of defiance seemed to have hardened upon his face.

He did not seem afraid, in spite of the fact that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had already licked him. But Lumley had proved many times that he could take punishment, and perhaps he was hopeful of reversing the result of his previous fight with D'Arcy.

The crowd of juniors stopped behind the chapel. They formed a ring, with the swell of St. Jim's and the Outsider in the centre of it.

Arthur Augustus was looking very determined. He removed his jacket, folded it carefully, and gave it to Digby to hold.

"I suppose you are goin' to be my second, Blake?" he said.

"Oh, rather!"

"Who's your second, Lumley?" asked Tom Merry.

Lumley looked round for Mellish. He was not to be seen.

The Outsider shrugged his shoulders.

Among all the crowd of thirty or forty fellows, there was not one whom he could call his friend, not one who hoped that he would get the better of the conflict with the swell of the Fourth.

But that thought did not affect the hard nature of the Outsider. He did not care.

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No. 15. Vol. 1 (New Series).

SAINTS COLLAPSE BUT EXCITING GAME AGAINST ST. FRANK'S

Eric Kildare's Running Commentary

St. Jim's are turning out to-day without Manners, who has hurt his ankle. I think they should be able to cope with Reggie Pitt and his men from St. Frank's, though report has it that Pitt has worked his men up to a great pitch this season. Still, St. Frank's are without such stalwarts as Nipper and Handforth, who are in Arizona.

Winning the toss, Pitt opens the innings with Tregellis-West. The bowling's from Fatty Wynn. Hallo! Pitt edges the first ball, and Lowther makes a lightning leap. The leather is lodged safely in his hand—Pitt is out for a "duck"! Hard luck! Watson comes in. He gets his shoulders behind a few—now the score-board is jumping! Nemesis overtakes Watson, though, in the shape of a ball from Figgins which beats him by a swerve! Nasty mess, those stumps! St. Frank's all out for 64.

Tragedy mars the first overs of the St. Jim's innings. Merry, with only three to his credit, gives a difficult chance at the wicket, but Watson snaps it like a flash! Blake follows, leg before; D'Arcy mistimes a "shooter"; Noble fails to get going. Melancholy procession; St. Jim's all out 23—the lowest total of the season!

St. Frank's, batting again, are not so confident against wonderful bowling by Fatty Wynn, ably seconded by Noble. Pitt is sticking, but the rest come and go again quickly. Pitt has a pretty style, and an eye like a hawk. He has 20 now, while the other fellows are scraping and floundering. St. Jim's are well served by Wynn and Noble, with Figgins as change. St. Frank's lucky to amass 57—39 of them from the bat of Pitt.

St. Jim's, set 99 to win, open strongly. Merry is watching every ball, determined not to be caught napping again. Blake, too, bats with stolid Yorkshire ruggedness. They are parted at 30—Blake having scored 14. Lowther makes a bright show, hitting two fours and a six—then falls to a catch by Lawrence in the long field. D'Arcy plays with ease and grace, making 24 without giving a chance. Merry is still there, batting like a champion! Digby goes cheaply—so does Herries—bad luck, both of them. But Noble comes in to steady matters, and he and Merry are rattling along now. St. Jim's total is 83—Noble clean bowled. Figgins holds the fort while Merry hits. The score board leaps—a four from Figgins helps—seven wanted to win! Watch Merry—clack!—there it goes—a "sixer," high above our heads! St. Jim's snatch a gallant victory, with two wickets in hand!

Nobody knows exactly what goes on at prefects' meetings, except that occasionally a Fifth or Sixth Former is dealt with privately. Rumour has it that Cutts of the Fifth was once ordered to "bend over" by Kildare for insolence! Ask Cutts—if you want a thick ear!



**LOOK
THROUGH
OUR
TELEVISOR
WALLY
D'ARCY
SPEAKING**

Cheerio, everybody! Yes, it's Walter Adolphus D'Arcy doing his stuff this week—and how!

I speak, gentlemen and others, as the lord and leader of the Third Form, and in the spirit of pax vobiscum—which means a Happy New Year this year, next year, and always!

You've probably heard about me. The Third Form at St. Jim's is, of course, much more widely known than the Shell or the Fourth, or the Sixth, for that matter. We in the Third are really the backbone of the school, and we make no bones about saying so. After all, why be modest? The modest chap never gets anywhere—at least, he wouldn't get very far in our Form! And it takes a tough lot of eggs like us to stand old Selby jawing and sloshing out with the cane day in and day out.

Selby, of course, is our pet aversion. He ought to have been bumped off long ago—or shall we say just bumped, as I shouldn't like even that old beast to be put "on the spot."

As captain of the Third you may think I'm sitting pretty, but, believe me, I have to hold the lid down pretty tight, and it's only because I've a useful pair of fists that everything's just jake. Get me?

Not that I believe in bullying. But we get through a lot of "ragging," and a Third Form rag is a real rag—I'm telling you! Which reminds me that I've got a date with young Jameson after classes to show him a few tricks with the gloves—just a friendly School House v. New House scuffle, you know—nothing serious. Jameson was spilling a bibful in Form about being the hot shot at boxing, so I asked if he'd like his thermometer taken down a degree or two—and the fixture's on!

It's possible that you may have heard one or two Americanisms in my chin-wag. My elder brother Gussy calls them "howwid Americanisms," and orders me not to use them. Do I ignore him? You're right—I do!

Not that I've a word against old Gussy—he can't help being a high-falutin' ass some times. What's that, Curly? Oh, coming! Sorry to rush off, fellows, but young Jameson is waiting for that boxing lesson, and little Wally mustn't let him down. Not that way at all events. Of course, I hope to let "Jammy" down quite hard in another sense. All the best, lads!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy denies the report that he possesses a collection of 196 ties, new and part-worn. He states definitely that the total is 197 (to the time of writing).

Fatty Wynn denies the rumour that he ate three dozen buns the other day at a sitting. Figgins and Kerr had at least two each, urges Fatty.

Flying

B

Jack Refused chums. caught look-up still sile perfect! Head to punishr Chums fights a confess. try to Attempt D'Arcy great c hoping himself. Squad C Rylcom set was Living mind. brought tied to L rebuildi Blake o fearing greatly leader o on Blak celebrat

SC

Sound Air Mar Tom M Shell do making him off Squad to box-box-foo in dress pursuit. rods, si avoiding followed flat gym capture. surrou underneath er to turned congratu

Solut

Merry's Weekly



Week Ending May 26th, 1934.

Flying Squad Reports

BLAKE'S MYSTERY MISSIONS

Jack Blake late for call-over several times. Refused explanations of lone flights even to chums. Knox, of Sixth, glad of chance, caught Blake for third time coming in after lock-up, and took him to the Head. Blake still silent. Declared reason for his absence perfectly innocent; a purely private matter. Head took serious view; Blake confined to punishment-room pending Head's decision. Chums risked prefect's vigil, making secret flights to Blake's door to appeal to him to confess. Blake adamant. Flying Squad try to smuggle tuck to Blake via window. Attempt "spotted"—lines all round! Finally D'Arcy brought letter to Tom Merry. With great compunction, D'Arcy had opened it, hoping to be able to help Blake in spite of himself. Blake's letter read aloud to Flying Squad Council. Letter was from old lady in Rylcombe, saying how much better her radio set was going now that Blake was seeing to it. Living alone, it was all she had to occupy her mind. Flying Squad flew to Rylcombe; brought back old lady in taxi! Old lady testified to Dr. Holmes how Blake had been secretly rebuilding her radio. Knox nettled, and Blake confused. Blake kept visits secret, fearing he would be stopped. Dr. Holmes, greatly relieved and pleased, complimented leader of Study No. 6. Flying Squad conferred on Blake Order of the Cream Bun in steady celebration!

SQUAD'S MIDNIGHT CHASE

Sound in Shell dormitory aroused Chief Air Marshal Merry. Shadow moving about—Tom Merry leapt out of bed and gave alarm. Shell dormitory buzzing instantly. Intruder making for window! Merry and Noble cut him off—intruder turned to door. Flying Squad, in full cry, pursued him along corridor to box-room. Intruder scrambled through box-room window on to leads. Flying Squad in dressing-gowns took the air courageously in pursuit. Intruder followed zigzag course over roofs, side-slipping frequently. Flying Squad, avoiding nasty crashes by luck and skill, followed close on his tail. Intruder stalled on flat gym roof, faced with thirty foot drop or capture. Facing round, he was immediately surrounded by Flying Squad, who sank him beneath close fire. Would-be thief handed over to Inspector Sharp. Flying Squad returned to hangars for hot coffee and congratulations!

Solution of Last Week's Puzzle



Digby's mistake was in showing the tendrils of the bean climbing spirally as in illustration A, whereas the scarlet runner, the variety shown, always climbs as shown in illustration B. One of Nature's little mysteries!

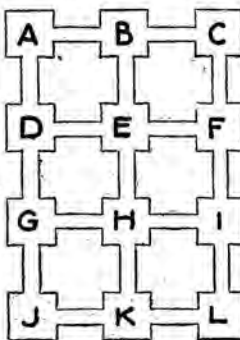
MONTY LOWTHER CALLING

Hallo, everybody! What is a fortification? Quick, anybody? A fortification is two fortifications. "How can I press my trousers?" demands a reader. Well, you could put them under a steam-roller, old chap, but the mattress is much easier! An onion-eating contest among the fags was stopped by a prefect. A "crying" shame! Skimpole had been boring Manners with a lengthy dissertation. "Do you follow me?" asked Skimpy. "Not if you're really going!" answered Manners. Young Piggott, of the Third, caught purloining pastries in the school pantry, pleaded that he suffers from kleptomania, which makes him not responsible for his actions. Turning the theft into a stainless steal, what? Mr. Ratcliff complains that we young lads are completely beyond his comprehension. Youth is stranger than fiction! It is estimated that nearly every fellow at St. Jim's has a bicycle. And some of them are in going order! The day is not far distant, says Blake, when every study will be fitted with a wireless set. What's an "ohm" without a radio, after all? Gore inquires the best method of stopping his home-made set from howling. Choke it to death, old fellow! The story goes that when Skimpole had a singing in his ears, he went to a Doctor of Music! The other day I read of a lamb which can run at a speed of thirty miles per hour! We know of some "black sheep" who can do more than that—when a prefect is after them! P.-o. Crump pulled up Mr. Selby in Wayland for careless driving. Mr. Selby was indignant. "I've driven a car for five years and never had a wreck!" he announced. "You mean you've driven a wreck for five years and never had a car!" said Crump critically. So-long, chaps!

CALIBAN'S PUZZLE CORNER

The Head wished to inspect twelve rooms in the New House, together with the connecting passages, as shown. He wanted to arrange his route so that it would take him through every room and corridor with as little travelling as possible. He could begin and end where he liked.

You will find that the Head must go through some of the corridors more than once. Supposing each corridor counts one each time it is traversed, over how many corridors must the Head travel, and which route would you suggest?



"I guess I don't want a second," he said.

"I will be your second, if you like," said Tom Merry.

The Outsider sneered.

"You needn't trouble," he said.

"Oh, very well!" said Tom Merry, with a flush.

"Are you ready?" asked Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I guess so."

The two juniors faced one another.

The elegant figure of D'Arcy was seen to be athletic as well as elegant, but Lumley could not be called either.

He certainly was not elegant, and a glance was enough to tell that he was not in good condition.

His habits and amusements were not likely to make him so.

But he had an iron will and determination and endless nerve, and so it was probable that he would put up a pretty good fight. There was no doubt that he meant to do his best, and that he was prepared to take almost any amount of punishment without wincing.

"Man in!" said Digby humorously.

And the tussle began.

The Outsider led off with a fierce rush at D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's gave ground, two or three of Lumley's rattling blows reached him, and he began to gasp.

A look of triumph came over Lumley's face—a hard, cruel look, which told as plainly as words what D'Arcy might expect if he could not take care of himself. There was no such thing as mercy in the Outsider's breast.

But the swell of St. Jim's quickly showed that he was quite able to defend himself. He was a little slow in getting down to work, that was all.

In a few minutes D'Arcy was all himself.

Lumley's drives were stopped, and D'Arcy's counters began to come home with effect upon the savage, scowling face of the Outsider.

And when he had once fairly started, Arthur Augustus had it all his own way.

Blow after blow fell upon the Outsider's face and chest and shoulders, till he was aching with them; and now, in spite of his efforts, his fists could never reach the cool, handsome face of the swell of St. Jim's.

Three rounds were fought with continual disadvantage to the Outsider, and then he showed signs of flagging.

As he stepped up for the fourth round at the call of "Time!" from Manners, who was keeping the rounds, D'Arcy paused.

"Have you had enough?" he asked.

Lumley gritted his teeth.

"I don't want to hurt you!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I only want to avenge the affront you put upon me, as it is impossible for a D'Arcy to be stuwck—"

"Stricken," said Blake.

"Shut up, Blake! As it is impossible for a D'Arcy to be stuwck without avengin' the insult."

"Come on!" snarled Lumley.

"The mattah havin' gone so far, I think that my honah is satisfied, if you like to chuck it up now, deah boy."

"If you're afraid—"

"Weally, Lumley—"

"Shut up and come on, then."

"Weally—"

A savage drive from Lumley cut D'Arcy short.

He guarded it easily, however, and then they fell to it again, hammer and tongs. But Jerrold Lumley received most of the hammering, if not all of it.

But he was "game."

In spite of severe punishment, he stuck to the contest, and came ~~was~~ readily for the next round.

"~~By Jove~~, the cad has some pluck, anyway!" said Monty Lowther. "Blessed if I understand him! A fellow with so much grit ought to be decent."

"But he jolly well isn't," said Kangaroo.

"No; that's a fact."

Arthur Augustus was "putting his beef" into it now. He drove Lumley-Lumley round the ring, and the round finished with an upper-cut that swept the Outsider off his feet, and laid him, with a bump, in the grass.

Tom Merry picked him up.

He made a knee for the Outsider and sponged his face, and now the cad of St. Jim's did not refuse his assistance.

Lumley blinked dazedly at the hero of the Shell, and fumbled over his jaw with his hand.

"That was a hard knock!" he gasped.

"Yes, rather! Are you going on?"

"I guess so."

"Better chuck it, Lumley."

"I shall suit myself about that."

Tom Merry looked impatient.

"What's the good of standing up to be knocked down like a blessed sack of wheat?" he asked. "You can see you have no chance."

"I shall stick it out."

"D'Arcy could make rings round you at any time, and he's knocked you out now. What's the good of going on?"

"I guess that's my business."

Tom Merry gave it up. If Lumley-Lumley chose to go on and take his punishment, it was his own business, after all.

"Time!" said Manners.

Lumley-Lumley toed the line. He was looking decidedly "rocky," but his hard lips were set with determination.

"I am sowwy, deah boy, but if you go on I shall have to hurt you," Arthur Augustus remarked.

"Hang you!"

"Weally—"

Arthur Augustus had no time to say more. The Outsider was rushing at him, attacking fiercely, and the swell of St. Jim's needed all his breath for the fight.

Good as D'Arcy's defence was, the desperate Outsider succeeded in getting through it several times, and his knuckles crashed home several times upon D'Arcy's face, but the punishment he received in return was terrible.

The round was fast and furious, and the crowd of juniors looked on with eager eyes.

For a moment or two it seemed possible that the Outsider might carry all before him and win the fight by mere savage determination and recklessness of heart; but that was not to be.

Arthur Augustus made an effort, and the wild attacking of the Outsider was stopped by a right-hander that crashed between his eyes.

Lumley-Lumley reeled back, and fell like a log.

Tom Merry ran to the fallen junior.

He tried to help Lumley, but the Outsider was "done" this time. He could not rise. He sat up, and his head fell heavily against Tom Merry's knee.

Manners counted.

After ten had been counted, Lumley-Lumley was still sitting dazedly in the grass, his head resting on Tom Merry's knee, and his breath coming in short, quick gasps.

Manners snapped his watch shut.

"Time's up!" he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Gussy wins!"

D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and looked down at the gasping, beaten Outsider. His look was rather compassionate.

"I am sowwy I have had to give you a fearful thwashin', deah boy!" he remarked. "It was weally vewwy much against my wish. I only wanted to avenge the affront to the D'Arcys. I weally wish you had left off soonah. I am sowwy!"

The Outsider groaned.

"Hang you!" he said. "I'll lick you yet!"

"You are welcome to try," said D'Arcy, with dignity.

"As far as I am concerned this mattah is now closed." And, putting on his waistcoat and jacket with Blake's help, the swell of St. Jim's walked away with his friends.

Tom Merry lingered a moment with Lumley.

"Can I help you?" he asked hesitatingly.

"No!" snarled the Outsider.

"But—"

"Keep your help for those who ask for it."

Tom Merry went away quietly.

Jerrold Lumley remained alone.

He stood up, holding to the chapel railings to keep himself from falling. He was weak, exhausted, dizzy. His senses were swimming. He looked round him with dizzy

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eyes. He was alone; all were gone—D'Arcy accompanied by a congratulatory crowd, himself left without even a sympathiser.

It was his own fault, but that did not make it any the more pleasant. Jerrold Lumley gritted his teeth, and with slow and heavy steps made his way towards the School House.

CHAPTER 10.

Towser in Clover!

"LET'S take him for a run," said Kangaroo.

"But—"

"We may as well see how it goes."

"But—"

"Oh, come on! What do you say, Dane?"

"Good egg!" said Clifton Dane, grinning.

Bernard Glyn still hesitated.

"The chaps may catch on," he said.

"Oh, rats! They're more likely to be afraid of Prince catching on!"

"Oh, all right, then. I'll bring him."

The chums of the end study quitted their quarters at the end of the Shell passage, and Bernard Glyn led his mastiff by a cord.

The big, massive animal followed him with a somewhat jerky, mechanical walk, but quickly enough. It was evidently an active animal, and Glyn evidently took care of it, for its coat was very clean and good.

Its eyes moved a little sleepily, and the partly-opened jaws showed a set of teeth which seemed to hint that Prince might not be a comfortable neighbour at close quarters.

Tom Merry met the chums in the passage. He gave the dog a rather doubtful glance.

"That beast safe?" he asked.

"Safe as houses," said Glyn cheerfully. "If you touch him, you're safe to get a bite!"

"Oh!"

"Stroke his head and see," suggested the Liverpool lad.

"Thanks; I'll take your word."

Bernard Glyn grinned, and walked on. He passed the door of Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage and kicked it open. There was a growl from within. Herries was there with Towser, but the others were out. Herries glared at the chums of the Shell.

"What the dickens are you making that row for?" he demanded. "You're disturbed Towser."

"Poor Towser!"

"Oh, get out!"

"I thought he might be lonely," said Kangaroo. "We've brought Prince to see him."

Herries frowned.

"Take that beast away!" he exclaimed.

"But—"

"Towser will go for him and kill him, I expect."

"Ha, ha, ha! Towser's welcome!"

The bulldog looked over the top of his back at Prince. He did not jump out to tackle the stranger, in his usual way. Instead of that, he gave a whine, and cowered down in the bottom of the basket. Herries gave him a glare of angry surprise. He simply could not make Towser out.

Cornstalk & Co. burst into a roar of laughter.

"Oh, buzz off!" exclaimed Herries. "You're making Towser quite ill among you. Get out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herries reached towards the inkpot on the table. The Shell fellows hurried out, and Bernard Glyn dragged Prince after him.

Herries turned to Towser with a worried look.

"Poor old Towsy!" he murmured. "You're not ill, I suppose?"

Poor old Towsy whined, but gave no further explanation of what was the matter with him. Herries rubbed his head affectionately, and tickled his neck, but Towser was evidently worried.

"Hewwies, old man—"

Herries turned round irritably as Arthur Augustus came into the study.

"Don't make a row, D'Arcy."

"Eh?"

"Be quiet!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I think Towser wants to go to sleep."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"I'd rather you didn't talk."

Arthur Augustus jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and looked alternately at Herries and the bulldog. His feelings were too deep for words for some moments.

"Hewwies!" he said, at last.

"Don't jaw, old chap. It disturbs Towser!"

"Blow Towsah!"

"Quiet!"

"I came in here to get a necktie—"

"Look here, D'Arcy—"

"My necktie is soiled," said D'Arcy. "I have dis-
covered a spot of ink on it. I did not see it myself, but
Lowthah pointed it out to me. I am vewy gwaterful to
Lowthah for that service. He has his good points. I can-
not see my necktie-box. Have you seen it, Hewwies?"

"Oh, don't talk, Gussy!"

"But my necktie-box—"

"Take one of Blake's ties!"

"Their colour does not suit me, Hewwies. I should
think you know that the colour of a necktie has to eithah
harmonise with, or contwast with, the colour of a chap's
eyes. It is vewy important to weah a necktie that suits
you!"

"Hush!"

"Where's the box, then?"

"What kind of a box was it?" asked Herries, exasper-
ated. "How should I know?"

"It was a wooden box with an inlaid top, Hewwies; a
pwsent fwm Cousin Ethel."

"Wooden box? Oh, you can't have it!"

"Can't have it?"

"No."

"What do you mean?"

"It's in use!"

"In use?"

"Yes. Do get out, Gussy. Take one of Dig's ties."

"But—"

"You're keeping Towser awake!"

"Look here, Hewwies, where's my tie-box?" demanded
D'Arcy.

"I've used it to prop up Towser's basket on one side. It
rocks if it's not propped up, and Towser doesn't like it to
rock."

D'Arcy was speechless for a moment.

"You—you used my tie-box—my inlaid box, a pwsent
fwm Cousin Ethel—to pwop up a wotten basket for a
wotten bulldog?" he gasped at last.

"Look here, D'Arcy—"

"Give me my box!"

"I can't, without disturbing Towser!"

"Hewwies—"

"I'll try to get it presently, and put something else in
its place, when Towser's feeding," said Herries. "I can't
have him disturbed now. He looks as if he's going to
nod off!"

"You uttah ass—"

"Hush!"

"Hewwies—"

"S'hh!"

"Hewwies, if you do not immediately hand ovah that
box, I shall forget that you are my fwiend, and stwike
you!"

"Don't you make a row here, Gussy!"

"I insist—"

"I think you're utterly inconsiderate," said Herries.
"You've got a prejudice against Towser, like Blake and
Digby. You might be decent about it, when I've entered
him for the dog show."

"But, weally—"

"I don't see what you want to come into the study at all
for. This constant coming in and going out may have a
serious effect on Towser's nerves."

"I suppose we haven't got to sacwifice ewewythin' to that
wotten bulldog, have we, Hewwies?" gasped D'Arcy.

"Hush!"

"But—"

"Hush! Hush! He's asleep!"

D'Arcy stared at Herries blankly, undecided whether to
kick the basket flying and take his necktie-box, or to do
as Herries wished. He decided on the side of friendship,
and left the study quietly, leaving the inlaid box, the
pwsent from Cousin Ethel, still propping up Towser's
basket, and Herries watching affectionately over his bull-
dog's slumbers.

CHAPTER 11.

Something New in Dogs!

"HALLO! Here's Glyn with his new beast!"

"Looks a ruffian, too!"

"Look at his teeth!"

"Phew!"

"Better keep your distance!"

Those remarks, and many more of the same kind, greeted
Bernard Glyn and his chums as they strolled in the St.
Jim's quadrangle with Prince.

Prince was walking very jerkily, but that may have been
caused by Glyn's jerking of the leash. Otherwise he
seemed an active dog enough. Fellows looked at him from

far and near. They knew that Glyn had entered him for
the local dog show on Saturday, and they knew that Towser
and Pongo were already entered. The general idea seemed
to be that Prince would take the biscuit, as far as the
school was concerned. He was certainly a better-looking
dog than Wally's mongrel, and quite as good as Towser.

"Hallo! Where did you dig that up?" exclaimed Wally,
who was in the quad with Jameson and Gibson of the
Third. "What do you call it?"

"Prince."

"I mean, is it a dog?"

Bernard Glyn laughed.

"Looks a pretty middling sort of tripehound," said
Jameson. "You haven't had the cheek to enter him for the
dog show, Glyn?"

"Yes, I have!"

"Poof!" said Wally. "My only Aunt Jane! Fancy having
the cheek to enter a thing like that, when you knew that
Pongo was entered."

And Wally bestowed an affectionate look upon the shaggy
mongrel which was, as usual, at his heels.

Pongo was eyeing Prince very doubtfully. He seemed
dubious whether to attack the stranger or not. He yapped
and growled, and Prince growled in response. Wally looked
curiously at the mastiff.

"That's a curious beast," he said. "He only growls
when you jerk the string. He's got no spirit."

"Let Pongo go for him," suggested Kangaroo. "Then
you'll see whether he's got any spirit or not."

Pongo had settled that matter for himself. He made
a sudden bolt at Prince and fastened upon his neck.

"Here, Pongo—Pongo!" shouted Wally. "Come off!"

But Pongo did not need calling.

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No sooner had his teeth closed upon the mastiff's neck than they unclosed again, and Pongo, with a whine of terror, darted off at top speed across the quadrangle.

"Pongo!" roared Wally.

But Pongo did not stop.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bernard Glyn.

"Pongo! Pongo!"

"What on earth's the matter with Pongo?" exclaimed Jameson, in amazement.

"Blessed if I know! Pongo! Pongo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally rushed off after Pongo.

Cornstalk & Co. chuckled, and strolled on with the mastiff. They strolled towards the New House, and there was a shout from a group of New House juniors outside the building.

"School House cads!"

"Get off!"

The chums of the Shell walked on.

"My hat!" said Figgins of the New House. "Look at them!"

"The cheek!" said Kerr.

"By George! We'll—"

"Hold on," said Fatty Wynn hastily. "They may be coming to ask us to a feed, or something of that sort!"

Figgins snorted.

"Don't they look like it?" they demanded.

"Well, no; but you don't want to run any risk on such an important matter," said Fatty Wynn. "You see—"

"Rats! They're just swanking over on our side of the quad out of pure cheek," said Figgins. "It's up to us to bump them!"

"Hear, hear!" said Kerr.

"Oh, all right! Only if—"

"Come on!"

Figgins stalked off towards the School House fellows, with a crowd of New House juniors at his heels.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "What do you chaps want here?"

"Nothing, only to look at your sweet faces," said Glyn.

"We don't often see a face like yours, Figgins, except as an ornament on a waterspout, and—"

Figgins turned crimson.

"Bump them!" he exclaimed.

Gr-r-r-r!

The mastiff growled.

"Oh!" ejaculated Kerr. "Hold on!"

"Seize 'em, Prince!" shouted Kangaroo.

Bernard Glyn jerked the string.

The mastiff made a spring forward, and the New House juniors scattered before the white teeth and red jaws.

It was no wonder. The mastiff looked quite capable of disposing of a limb or two with his teeth without any difficulty.

"Here, keep that beast off!" roared Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Seize 'em, Prince!"

"Go for 'em! Good dog!"

The New House juniors backed away.

Glyn and his comrades advanced, with the mastiff snapping his teeth, and Figgins & Co. fairly bolted.

Bumping the School House fellows was one thing, but arguing at close quarters with a savage mastiff was quite another.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kangaroo.

The chums of the end study paraded before the New House with the mastiff, and no one ventured to say them nay.

They were watched with great admiration from the other side of the quadrangle by a crowd of School House fellows.

They came back to their territory at last, triumphant.

"Jolly good!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "That was a set down for Figgins & Co., and no mistake!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Would the brute really have bitten them?" asked Kerruish.

Bernard Glyn laughed.

"I don't think so," he said. "But you can see whether he would bite! Give him a tap on the head."

Kerruish drew back.

"Thanks, no!"

"Here, Mellish, you try."

"Rats!" said Mellish.

Mellish backed away from the mastiff as Glyn came towards him. Mellish was afraid of dogs. He was cruel to animals, and a fellow who is cruel to animals generally is afraid of them. He eyed Prince very uneasily, and the chums of the end study came on towards him, and he backed into the School House, his face going white.

"Take that beast away!" he panted.

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mellish retreated into the passage. Glyn & Co. followed him, laughing, and Mellish reached the end of the passage, and could go no farther.

A large broom stood there, left there temporarily by the housemaid. Mellish grasped it with both hands.

"Take that beast away!" he said, between his teeth. "If it comes any nearer I'll—I'll smash it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mellish swung the broom into the air and brought it down with a crash upon the back of the mastiff.

The blow would have killed or crippled any other dog; but, curiously enough, it had no effect upon Bernard Glyn's mastiff.

Mellish, with startled eyes, saw the animal's back "give" to the shock, as if it were made of indiarubber, and then the mastiff walked on as if nothing had happened.

With a shriek of terror, Mellish dropped the broom and bounded past the dog, and fled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A roar of laughter followed him, but Mellish did not stop.

CHAPTER 12.

Too Candid!

HOW'S Towser? That was the question all the fellows put to Herries whenever they met him.

The whole School House seemed to be taking the keenest interest in the progress of Towser.

Herries was pleased and flattered by it. He confided to Jack Blake that the fellows weren't such asses. Whereat Jack Blake winked into space and agreed that they weren't.

Towser seemed to be progressing favourably.

He was feeding well, to judge by the amount of food Herries took to the study for him, and which did not reappear.

He had quite taken possession of the study now.

The chums of the Fourth not only did their prep in the Form-room, and took their tea in Hall or other fellows' studies, but Herries had asked them if they could keep their props somewhere else, and so books and papers and cricket-bats and footers, and all sorts of conditions of things, were transferred to Form-room lockers.

Herries seemed to be satisfied with that for a time.

But only for a time.

He reappeared before the public, so to speak, with a request that the Fourth Form would make less noise in their passage, as noise disturbed Towser, and was supposed to have an irritating effect upon his nerves.

The Fourth Form were so flabbergasted, as Reilly described it, by this modest request, that they didn't quite know what to say to Herries.

When they recovered their breath, they said things.

The things they said were not polite. Some of them collected outside Study No. 6 and amused themselves by kicking at the door and stamping on the floorboards. That was to show the independence of the Fourth Form.

But Blake & Co. soon put a stop to that. They sympathised with Herries to some extent, and Blake remarked that, if they had given up their study to Towser, the least the other fellows could do was to let the bulldog be quiet there.

The others did not see it quite in that light at first, and the matter was argued out behind the chapel, and they came round.

But, as Monty Lowther put it, the sooner Rylecombe Dog Show was over the better, for the whole school was getting fed-up with Towser.

Meanwhile, Towser was having a good time.

He lived on the fat of the land, and looked so fat and sleek that there was no doubt that if there was a prize for avoidupois, Towser would take it.

It was a sore point with Wally that he did not receive so much encouragement as Herries did.

But Jameson and Curly Gibson wouldn't stand Pongo at any price.

When Wally proposed keeping him in a basket in the Form-room in the evenings, Jameson and Gibson and nearly all the Third Form rose in revolt.

"We won't have it," said Jameson. "The rotten brute would be sneaking all our grub, for one thing. You know the last time he was here he boned a herring."

"A herring I'd given three-ha'pence for, too," said Curly.

Wally sniffed.

"It was pretty high, and Pongo never ate it," he said.

"I don't care whether he ate it or not. I know he took it—and I know he gnawed up one of my impots."



"Selza 'em, Prince!" shouted Kangaroo. The mastiff made a spring forward, and the New House juniors promptly fled. The big dog looked quite capable of disposing of a limb or two! "Here, keep that beast off!" roared Figgins. "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Cornstalk & Co. "Go for 'em! Good dog!"

"I expect you'd have got it doubled for the rotten writing if he hadn't."

Jameson breathed deep.

"If you're looking for a thick ear, Wally—"

"Oh, rats!" said Wally. "I don't see why you don't like Pongo. Look what Herries' friends are doing for Towser."

"More duffers they."

"Yes; you said so yourself, Wally," remarked Curly.

"H'm!" said Wally. "Perhaps I did—but that was about Towser. Of course, it's a totally different matter with Pongo."

"Bosh!" said Jameson, with Third Form politeness.

"Yes rats!" said Gibson.

"Suppose I take first prize?" said Wally. "There's four quid for the best kept and handsomest dog, and there's no reason why Pongo shouldn't rope it. Think what a stunning feed that would mean."

"Well, yes; but—"

"Look here, I've got a proposition to make," said Wally—"a business proposition. I want you fellows to score over this dog show."

"Go ahead!" said Jameson suspiciously.

"If Pongo takes the cake, I'm going to divvy up, if you help me," said Wally. "Now, look here! Suppose we have Pongo in the Form-room every evening and look after him?"

"Rats!"

"Let me finish, you ass!"

"Oh, go on!"

"Well, and suppose we club together our pocket-money to feed him up thoroughly well—"

"Our pocket-money!" gasped Jameson.

"To feed Pongo!" murmured Curly Gibson.

"Yes."

"Oh, he's off his rocker!" said Jameson, with a shrug of his shoulders. "Mad as a hatter! Maddier than a March hare!"

"Look here, suppose we feed Pongo up, and make him fat and well, he's bound to take first prize—"

"Rats!"

"And many of 'em!"

"Then I'll divvy up the four quid."

"Lots of quids you'll have to divvy up!" sneered Jameson.

"The prize is for a handsome dog. Do you call Pongo handsome?"

"Do you call him a dog?" Curly Gibson wanted to know. Wally sniffed.

"Nice kind of chums you are for a fellow to have!" he exclaimed. "Look what sacrifices Blake and the others are making to help Herries get the prize."

"Well, they're duffers, and we're not. Besides, your rotten mongrel hasn't a ghost of an earthly, anyway," said Jameson, with friendly candour. "You don't seem to be able to see it, Wally, but Pongo is a regular tripe-hound. I'm telling you this as a friend, you know, to save you from being disappointed. Pongo is such an awful blighter that he's more likely to be chucked out of the show neck and crop than to get a prize. I—Ow, yow!"

Jameson left off speaking as a friend as Wally seized him by the collar and ran him up to a tree and knocked his head against it.

"Ow!" roared Jameson. "Leggo! Chuck it! Ow!"

"There!" panted Wally. "Speaking as a friend, I'd advise you to keep that grub-trap of yours snut up a bit. That's all."

And he gave Jameson a final shake, and left him gasping, and walked away whistling, with his hands in his pockets.

"Ow!" gasped Jameson. "Fancy young Wally cutting up rusty like that because I spoke to him candidly as a friend! Ow!"

And it was some time before Jameson spoke to Wally as a candid friend again. But Pongo was not installed in the Form-room of an evening—neither did the chums of the Third club together their pocket-money to feed him up.

CHAPTER 13.

The Mechanical Mastiff!

"WHERE'S Towser?" asked Jack Blake, looking into Study No. 6 on Saturday morning.

The bulldog was not to be seen. The basket was empty, and Blake's dictionary lay on the table, and D'Arcy's tie-box could be seen under a chair.

"He's gone," said Herries.

"Gone!"

"Yes."

"Phew! The beast!" said Blake sympathetically. "What a sell! What a rotten, unreliable beast! I'm sorry."

Herries glared at him.

"What are you sorry about, you ass?" he asked.

"Why, that rotten bulldog bolting like this, on the day of the show. I suppose it's all U P now?"

"You chump! I mean he's gone to Rylcombe. He's been taken to the dog show!" growled Herries.

"Oh, I see!"

"Wally has sent his rotten mongrel in, too," said Herries.

"I can't understand that kid's cheek!"

"I heard him say he couldn't understand yours."

"What!"

"I heard him say——"

"Oh, rats!"

Herries stalked away. Blake grinned and went along to the end study in the Shell passage. He was curious

SIX OF THE WRONG SORT!



Batsman (as he hits ball through cottage window):

"What's that, umpire—six?"

Umpire (owner of cottage):

"Yes, six bob to you!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Scully, St. Mary's School, North Hyde, Southall, Middlesex.

about Bernard Glyn's dog. Kangaroo and Glyn and Clifton Dane were there, and they were all standing round the mastiff, looking at him. Blake looked in at the door.

"Oh, here you are!" he said. "Towser and Pongo have gone. Why haven't you sent Prince?"

"I'm taking him myself after school," said Glyn.

"You'll be late."

"That's all right; I've arranged it. And the judging isn't till five," said the junior inventor. "What do you think of Prince?"

"Looks all right," said Blake, eyeing the mastiff curiously.

"How still he sits."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling about?" demanded Blake, mystified.

Cornstalk & Co. roared.

"Oh, nothing!" said Kangaroo. "But a dog of Prince's breed always sits quite still."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Blake, walking away.

Morning lessons were a bore that Saturday to at least three fellows in the Lower School at St. Jim's—Glyn of the Shell, Herries of the Fourth, and D'Arcy minor of the Third.

Half St. Jim's was going to the dog show.

After school a steady stream of fellows stepped off in the direction of the village.

Herries started off early, to take another look at Towser—to make sure that the famous bulldog was in the pink of condition. Blake, Digby, and D'Arcy went with him. Wally was soon after him; with Jameson and Gibson. The latter two heroes of the Third Form openly declared that they did not take much interest in the show, and did not expect Pongo to get anything but jeers, but they were willing to go if Wally stood the tickets. And Wally said that if he could stand them, he supposed he could stand the tickets; so they went.

Bernard Glyn came out with his mastiff after dinner, and a great many fellows gathered round to look at Prince.

There was no doubt that he was a very fine dog; but, at the same time, there was something about him that was not natural.

Exactly what it was was hard to define, but he did not strike the observer as being exactly like other dogs.

The Terrible Three were on the spot when Glyn appeared. They came up to look at Prince. Bernard Glyn was helping

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him carefully into Taggles' pony-cart, in which he was to be taken to Rylcombe.

The Liverpool lad was grinning serenely. He evidently anticipated great things of Prince.

"Looks in good form, doesn't he?" said Kangaroo.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes, he's quite up to Towser's form, I think."

"What-ho!" said Clifton Dane. "And he's not subject to any of Towser's little failings, either. Never had a disease in his life."

"Never knew what distemper was?" said Kangaroo.

"Never had a pain in his inside?"

"Never!" said Bernard Glyn solemnly.

"Well, he's a jolly good dog," said Tom Merry. "If you're sure he doesn't bite, we'll come in the pony-cart with you to Rylcombe."

"Oh, come in! We can make room."

And six juniors crammed themselves into Taggles' pony-cart with the mastiff, and it rolled down towards the school gates. Three youths stood there, and they stood in the way. They were Figgins & Co. of the New House.

"Got room for three?" asked Figgins.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Tom Merry. "My dear chap, we haven't room for three white mice!"

"Well, three of you could get down," Kerr suggested.

"Four," said Fatty Wynn. "I don't want to be squeezed."

"Oh, come off!" said Kangaroo. "Let's get on."

"Down with the School House bounders!" said Figgins.

The three New House fellows rushed at the trap.

Bernard Glyn lifted Prince's head over the backboard.

"Seize 'em!" he said.

In a second Figgins & Co. let go the pony-cart and jumped back.

"Yow!" said Figgins. "I didn't know you had that beast there! Look here——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The trap rattled on, leaving the heroes of the New House in the gateway.

"Good old Prince!" said Tom Merry, stroking the neck of the mastiff.

Glyn pushed his hand back quickly, but too late! Tom Merry had stroked the neck, and in doing so he had made a discovery.

His face seemed to be petrified for a minute.

Then he gave a gasp.

"My hat!"

Bernard Glyn turned red.

"What an ass I was to let you in the cart!" he muttered.

"You've bowled me out!"

"My word!"

"Keep it dark, then."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the joke?" asked Monty Lowther, in astonishment.

Tom Merry roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fathead!" exclaimed Manners. "What's the joke?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry's chums seized him and shook him. But the more they shook the more he laughed, until he seemed in danger of going into hysterics. Cornstalk & Co. were laughing, too, now; they couldn't help it.

"What's the wheeze?" roared Monty Lowther, exasperated. "What are you cackling at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Explain, you ass!"

"Stroke Prince!" gasped Tom Merry at last. "Then you'll know. Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther, looking very perplexed, stroked the mastiff.

He jumped.

"My only hat!" he gasped.

"What the dickens——" began Manners.

"Stroke him!"

"But what——"

"Stroke him and see——"

Manners obeyed. Then he, too, uttered an exclamation of amazement.

"My only hat! Who'd have thought it?"

"Keep it dark, that's all!" said Bernard Glyn.

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!"

And the chums of the Shell laughed in chorus.

It was a peculiar discovery that they had made; yet, knowing Bernard Glyn as they did, and remembering his former efforts as an inventor of strange contrivances, they felt that they might have guessed it.

In touching Prince, they did not touch the warm flesh of a healthy dog; there was no warmth and no pulsation there.

Prince was one more of Bernard Glyn's wonderful contrivances. To look at him, no one would have imagined it; but the touch betrayed him.

The mechanism was very nearly perfect, and the growls that mechanically issued from his throat when the string was jerked were very lifelike; but as soon as he was touched it was revealed that he was a lifeless mechanism.

"My only hat!" said Tom Merry, with deep breath. "And you've had the cheek to enter that blessed machine at the dog show?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, it's a jape," said Glyn. "If he takes the prize, I shan't accept it—I shall explain. But I don't suppose it will go as far as that. Prince will be bowled out—but until he is—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will be funny!"

And the chums of the Shell roared again, as the pony-cart rolled up to the building in Rylcombe where the dog show was being held.

CHAPTER 14.

Excitement at the Dog Show!

HERRIES met Tom Merry as the latter came in with his chums. Herries was looking very satisfied and very cheerful. He gave the Terrible Three a pleasant nod.

"It's all right!" he announced.

"What's all right?"

"Towser."

"Oh!"

"He's in ripping condition," said Herries. "Looks as right as rain. I heard one of the adjudicators remark that that was a very fine bulldog."

"Joking, I suppose," suggested Lowther.

Herries glared, but in the cause of peace let the subject drop.

The dog show was very popular, and there were a good many exhibits, and as it was a Saturday afternoon, there was a goodly crowd to view them.

The juniors of St. Jim's spent a very pleasant hour or two in inspecting the animals, and discussing their merits.

Herries, who was not usually talkative, talked all the time. He talked dogs. Dogs in general, and Towser in particular, formed the burden of his song. Herries knew all about dogs of all sorts and conditions, and he explained at great length that a bulldog was really the finest kind of a dog, and that Towser was really the finest kind of a bulldog.

The juniors were very patient. As Blake remarked, sotto voce, it was no worse than Gussy on the subject of neckties and silk hats.

"By the way, is Glyn's beast here?" Herries asked presently.

Tom Merry grinned.

"Yes, rather," he said. "Glyn brought it along. He can tell you where it is now. Here's Glyn."

Bernard Glyn came up and nodded cheerfully to the chums. There was a curious twinkle in his eyes, of which Tom Merry knew the meaning now.

"Hallo, you're here, are you?" said Wally, coming up with Jameson and Gibson. "You two chaps have really had the cheek to show up those two tripehounds. One of the adjudicators has been looking at Pongo. It's Major Watson, and you know he knows a lot about dogs. I heard him say that he didn't expect to see a dog like Pongo here. Shows what he thinks of Pongo!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It does!"

"He was surprised to see so fine an animal," Wally explained hastily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Begad!" said a wheezy voice near the juniors. "That's a good dog—a very good dog indeed! Begad!"

The chums looked round quickly. It was Major Watson, a white-whiskered old gentleman, who spoke, and he was regarding Prince through an eyeglass. He seemed to be very much interested in Prince, who lay with one eye partly open, in a very reposeful attitude.

Certainly, Prince looked a very handsome dog.

Herries suppressed a scornful sniff.

"Blessed if I know what he can see in that thing," he whispered to Blake.

Whereat Jack Blake grinned and said nothing.

"Begad! Whose dog is that, I wonder?" said the gentleman.

"Mine, if you please, sir," said Bernard Glyn softly.

"Ah, yours!" said the major, turning his eyeglass upon the Liverpool lad. "Good! A very fine dog, my boy! How long have you had him?"

"Three or four days, sir."

"Oh! How old is he?"

"Three or four days, sir—I-I—mean—I—" Glyn stammered.

"Oh, you don't know! Well, he's a fine dog, and well kept, too," said the major. "He— Begad, come here, you rascal—come here! Good dog!"

Prince did not move.

"Good doggie! Come here!"

Glyn moved forward.

"He's a little shy of strangers, sir," he said, stooping over Prince and stroking his neck. "Now then, Prince—good dog!"

Something clicked faintly inside the mechanical dog, and Prince rose to his feet, and his mouth opened a little wider. He growled.

"Begad!" said the major. "Bad-tempered—eh?"

"Oh, no, sir! That's his little way!"

"Good dog! Come here! Hi!"

Prince walked towards the major. The latter looked a little puzzled. There was something he didn't quite understand about Prince's movements. But certainly he looked a very fine dog.

The major stooped to pat his head. Glyn exchanged a hopeless look with the chums of the Shell. All the fat would be in the fire now.

Major Watson patted Prince—and started. He patted him again, and then stroked him. His face was a study.

"Begad!" he murmured. "Begad!"

"Do you like him, sir?" asked Glyn cheerfully.

"What the dooce—what's the matter? Am I dreaming?" murmured the major. "What's the matter with the dog, boy?"

"Matter, sir?"

"Yes, matter! It's cold—cold as—as a dead dog, sir, and it's not alive!" ejaculated the major, with startled eyes. "What—what—what— Begad!"

He backed away from the mastiff. Prince walked on solemnly towards him. The major backed farther away, alarm mingled with astonishment in his face. He was evidently thrown completely off his balance.

He had backed to the wall, and could go no farther. A hundred eyes were on the scene now. Prince still walked towards the major. He looked quiet enough, but the major had made the discovery that he was not alive, and so the major did not regard him as the other spectators did.

Major Watson grasped his cane, and raised it in defence.

Bernard Glyn, alarmed for his dog, ran forward.

"Hold on, sir!"

It was too late.

The cane descended with a crash upon Prince.

The dog did not howl, as might have been expected. No sound came from his mouth, but from his body came a curious whirring sound.

(Continued on the next page.)



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The spectators gasped.
 "My hat!" yelled Blake. "I know it now—it's a jape!"
 "Bai Jovel! It's anothah of that boundah's blessed machines."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 The blow on the dog's back had evidently disarranged the mechanism. Prince broke into a run, and ran straight at the wall, just missing the major as he jumped aside. Major Watson did not stand upon his dignity—he ran. Prince butted his head into the wall, receding, and rushing on again, impelled by the mechanism within; and then, slanting off after a crash on the wall, he rushed among the crowd.

There was a wild alarm at once.
 The general impression was that the mastiff was mad, and a cry arose:

"Mad dog!"
 There was a rush to escape.
 "Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake. "There will be a row over this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 The mechanical mastiff rushed on, scattering the crowd like chaff. Glyn rushed in pursuit, but the mechanism was fairly running away now, and was too quick for him. An open doorway lay before Prince, and he charged through it, scattering the people before him, and scuttled down a wide flagged corridor, where a great doorway and a flight of steps gave access to the street.

After him went the juniors at top speed, bent upon capturing him before he could do further damage.

Prince rolled down the steps into the street, and lay for some moments on his back, his legs wildly working in the air like an overturned beetle.

Then he fell upon his side, and as Glyn rushed up and grasped him, the mechanism recovered itself, and Prince was off again.

There was a loud whirring and ticking from within him. Glyn held on to the leash for a moment, but before he could tighten his grasp it was jerked from his hand, and Prince was gone.

"Stop him!" shouted Tom Merry.

"I—I can't!" gasped Bernard Glyn.

"Can't you turn a handle or press a button, or something?" demanded Lowther, who had rather hazy notions about machinery.

"He won't stop till he's run down."

The juniors rushed after the mechanical mastiff. A stray dog outside Mrs. Murphy's tuckshop caught sight of him, and rushed to encounter him. He seized Prince, and rolled him over in combat. But only for a moment. Like Pongo and Towser, he was struck by something unnatural about

Glyn's mastiff, and he let go with a whine of terror and ran.

But he had upset the mastiff, and the juniors rushed up and secured it before it could get going again.

"My only hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "You'd better get this out of sight, and keep it deadly dark—or there will be a row."

And they did.

That was the most exciting incident at Rylcombe Dog Show. Bernard Glyn's exhibit had made the greatest sensation, but Herries took first prize.

Herries did not seem to be surprised when he received it. He was pleased. But, as he explained, he had expected it. As a matter of fact, there was nothing else to be expected; for, as Herries said, was there another dog there so well fed, well kept, and handsome as Towser? Herries asked that as if it were an unanswerable conundrum, and the chums of the School House gave it up.

The really surprised person was Wally. He was simply astounded.

Pongo was not, perhaps, entitled to take a prize on a point of pure breed, or anything of that sort. But as a well-kept and handsome dog Pongo ought to have taken the biscuit, as Wally was ready to maintain, with or without gloves, at all times.

"It was just what I expected," said Jameson, with a sniff. "They were surprised at your cheek in exhibiting such a blessed freak! Here, hands off!"

"It was your fault!" said Wally wrathfully.

"My fault! How do you make that out?"

"If you and Curly had clubbed together, as I suggested, and we had given Pongo a really good time, he'd have taken the prize."

"Rats!"

"Well, it means four quid wasted, and a big feed lost," said Wally. "Serve you right; I don't lose much, as I am going to Herries' feed, with my major."

And Wally did justice to the feed that was stood in Study No. 6, in honour of Herries having taken the prize. He explained to Herries that, as a matter of fact, Pongo ought to have scored; and Herries received that explanation with unusual patience. He could afford to do so, in the serene consciousness of having taken the first prize for Towser!

THE END.

(Look out for another great yarn of the chums of St. Jim's next week. It is entitled "OUTSIDER AND HERO"—starring Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. Don't forget to order your GEM early.)

PEN PALS

(Continued from page 13.)

Miss Gwen Frood, 11, Francis Avenue, Brighton-le-Sands, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wants a girl correspondent anywhere; age 19-20; sports, travel, Nature, writing.

Bruce P. Cox, West Lavington, Wilts., wants a pen pal in Canada or U.S.A.

A. E. Broom, 7, Sharlanda Square, Tiverton, Devon, wants correspondents anywhere, especially in Los Angeles; interested in films and chemistry.

George Dorn, 23, Thanet Road, Ramsgate, Kent, wants correspondents who have made a hobby of old GEMS, and who are interested in football; age 14-18.

B. J. M. Stansfield, Brooklyn, 359, Clapham Road, London, S.W.3, wants a French correspondent; age 13-15.

Ted West, 259, Iroquois Street, West, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada, wants to hear from "Magnet" readers.

W. Butterworth, 21, Chertsey Street, Guildford, Surrey, wants to hear from readers who have made a hobby of old GEMS and "Magnets"—especially the "Talbot" yarns.

Billy Cooke, 68, Doveridge Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, wants pen pals in U.S.A., Canada, and Australia; interested in engineering, electricity, engines, and cycles; ages 13-15.

Miss Joan Hanlin, Endyong, Long Handborough, Oxford, wants girl correspondents interested in aeroplanes and sport; ages 15-17.

Miss Rosine delle Piane, 60, Potosi Street, Monte Video, Uruguay, South America, wants girl correspondents in all foreign countries, especially the East, Russia, Switzerland, and Sweden. Sports, stamp collecting, etc.

Leslie M. Brown, 289, Martin Way, Merton Park, Surrey, wants correspondents in Spain, England, America, Australia, interested in antiques, also the companion papers, "Magnet," GEM, and "Schoolboys' Own Library."

Miss Yvonne Brooks, Prestatyn Motor Co., High Street,

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Prestatyn, North Wales, wants girl correspondents in Egypt, India, and Australia; ages 17-18.

Miss Phyllis M. Davidge, 7, Tolmer Square, Hampstead Road, London, N.W.1, wants a girl correspondent; interested in politics, art, journalism and sports; age 16-19.

Frank Rook, 12, Beauchamp Road, Bishopston, Bristol 7, wants a pen pal overseas; age 12-14; any interesting topics.

William Costello, 24, Buchanan Street, St. John's, Newfoundland, wants to hear from readers in England, Ireland, S. Africa, Australia, and Italy; interested in stamps.

P. Grimby 5, Burlington Street, Brighton, wants a pen pal in England or U.S.A.; age 13-14; photography, aero-gliders, and tortoises.

James Rayner, Street Farm, Bergh Apton, Norwich, wants a pen pal in Canada or Australia; farming, mechanism, shooting; age 10-20.

Miss Cornelia Paola, P.O. Box 178, Krugersdorp, Transvaal, S. Africa, wants girl correspondents.

W. Emes, 69a, Highbury Street, Prospect, S. Australia, wants to hear from stamp collectors in Canada.

Jack Revitt, 7, Findon Crescent, Wiswood, Sheffield, 6, wants a pen pal interested in films to exchange news and photos; U.S.A., especially Los Angeles.

Peter F. Barlow, 4, Stonegate Avenue, Meanwood, Leeds, 7, wants a pen pal in Chicago; age 10-12.

D. Turner, Isarne, Kenton Lane, Harrow Weald, Middlesex, wants a pen pal in the South Seas; cycling, stamps; age 12-15.

Miss Iris Almond, 202, La Bonte, Longueuil, Quebec, Canada, wants a girl correspondent in England—in Finabury Park, London, preferably; age 11-15; interested in sketching and painting.

H. Bradford, 101, Lewisham High Road, New Cross, London, S.E.14, wants pen pals in Australia, America, and Africa; ages 14-16; films and sport.

George Butler, 82, Queen's Head Street, Islington, London, N., would like to correspond with readers in the Bowery district of New York.

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NIPPER AND WILLY HANDFORTH CAPTURED BY THE BLACK RIDERS!

GHOST RIVER RANCH!



By E. S. BROOKS

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

When Justin B. Farman, of St. Frank's, learns that strange things are happening on the ranch he has inherited, he goes to Arizona to investigate, taking with him Nipper, Handforth & Co., Willy and Archie Glen-thorne. No sooner do the seven schoolboys arrive by plane than they are attacked by mysterious horsemen known as the Black Riders, who are terrorising Ghost River Valley. The St. Frank's chums are unharmed, however, but the pilot, Captain Merton, is captured and imprisoned in a secret cavern. He fires a distress signal through a crack in the roof, and Nipper, Willy Handforth, and Farman spot it. In the night Nipper and Willy go exploring and make a big discovery.

The Fight in the Cavern!

AS Nipper and Willy Handforth, on their lone adventure, approached the strange glow in the rocks they instinctively became cautious.

The glow had been hidden from them until they had climbed to the summit of the Skull Rock—for, from the lower level, it was invisible, owing to a ridge of rock which intervened. But now they knew their bearings, and they crept up like shadows of the night.

Then suddenly they found a rock crevice at their very feet—a slit two or three yards long, but only fourteen or fifteen inches wide. It penetrated deeply, and far below, down this strange shaft, there was the reflected glow of some artificial light.

"It is a cavern!" whispered Willy. "By jingo, we've made a big discovery, after all!"

"Quiet, you young ass!" warned Nipper.

They lay flat down, stretching their heads over the cavity. There was a faint oily smell, and the air which drifted upwards was slightly warmer than the outer atmosphere. Down in that cavern, then, an oil-lamp was burning. It was this which gave forth the glow of light.

The boys listened intently, and, after straining their ears, they were certain that they heard something—a slow, steady, almost rhythmic sound.

"Somebody breathing!" whispered Nipper. "And the sounds are echoed by the rocks."

"Somebody asleep and half snoring."

"Jove, you've hit it!"

"That airman chap Merton."

"But we can't be sure," said Nipper, frowning. "It might be one of the bandits. Yet how can we find out? If

we call down, and the man isn't Merton, we shall betray ourselves."

"That's easy enough," replied Willy. "I'm small, and this crevice is big enough to take me. You lower me down on the rope and I'll soon find out the truth."

"Not likely," said Nipper. "If anybody goes down it's me."

"Now, don't be a chump!" protested Willy. "How the dickens do you suppose I can lower you? You're so much heavier; I shouldn't have the strength. Obviously I'm the one to go down."

Nipper grunted.

"Well, I suppose you're right," he admitted at length. "But I don't like it, Willy. There might be danger down there."

"So what?"

"Well, I don't like it, that's all."

"If we're going to sprawl here on these rocks, arguing, it'll be morning before we're finished!" growled Willy. "Where's that rope? I'd better tie it round my waist, and you can get busy on lowering me. My hat, you're almost as bad as Ted!"

Nipper was plucky and daring, but he usually exercised caution. Normally he would have hesitated before taking any steps to explore this mysterious cavity in the rocks. He would have been satisfied with the night's work—and would have returned to the ranch-house, content with his knowledge and ready for action at a more propitious time.

But Willy's eagerness had taken hold of him. Moreover, Willy was a mere fag, and Nipper could not possibly allow him to maintain the initiative. If Willy was game, then Nipper had to be game. In any case, it would be just as well to make sure of things—to find out something definite—before returning to the ranch.

"Ready?" whispered Willy.

"I'm not sure we ought to do this," said Nipper, frowning. "I don't like it, Willy. Nobody back home knows of this, and if something goes wrong—"

"My goodness! You're more like Ted than ever!"

"No, I'm not!" said Nipper. "Your major would blunder headlong into any adventure without hesitation. But a good general makes certain of his lines of retreat."

Nipper's innate caution had come to the surface again to warn him.

"Not scared, are you?" said Willy.

"You cheeky young fathead!" growled Nipper. "All

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right—go ahead! But keep your gun ready, and be the first to pull trigger if there's any shooting."

The truth of the matter was, Nipper hated the idea of Willy going down first. He wanted to do this job himself. But as Willy was undoubtedly the lighter there was nothing to argue about.

So Nipper braced himself against the rocks, and a moment later Willy, at the end of the rope, was being silently lowered into the strange crevice.

Before he reached the floor he was startled by the sight of a partially built aeroplane; he could see it dimly, and he knew in that moment the identity of the cavern's occupant.

All was quiet—except for the steady breathing. A glow of light was coming from a recess of the rocks. Willy's feet touched the floor, and he glanced up and nodded. He knew that Nipper could see him. Holding the slack of the rope, Willy tiptoed across the hard floor and peeped into the recess.

An oil-lamp was fixed to the rock wall, and the wick was turned fairly low. A man was sound asleep in a small camp-bed.

"Wake up, captain!" murmured Willy, shaking the sleeping man's shoulder.

Captain Merton sat up on the instant, and he blinked dazedly at his visitor for a moment. Then realisation leapt into his eyes.

"Yes," said Willy, reading his thoughts, "we've come to get you out of this."

"You saw the rocket, then?" whispered Merton eagerly.

"Two or three of us saw it, that's all," replied Willy. "There's been some excitement at the ranch—but there's no need to waste time by telling you of it now. We've got to get out of here."

"I'm ready," said Merton, leaping from the bed. "You see, I'm fully dressed. After I sent the rocket up I was hopeful of things happening; but the hours passed, and at last I got tired of it. Gee, you kids are smart!"

"I'm wondering if you'll be able to get through that slit in the roof," said Willy, eyeing his companion's big figure. "Anyhow, you can try. Nipper will haul me up, and then we'll both lower the rope—"

"Are there only two of you on this job?"

"That's all, and we've got to hurry," said Willy. "Nobody up at the ranch-house knows of our expedition, and if we're caught by the enemy it'll be all up with us."

"Come on, then!" said Merton breathlessly.

But he was still a bit bewildered; for he had never really had any definite hope of rescue. Willy's coolness, his matter-of-fact tone, gave the airman another thrill. There was something very soothing about Willy; he was a good nerve-steadier.

"Here we are," said the fag, glancing up and giving a signal. "You stay here, and when the rope comes down again—"

He broke off abruptly, for he saw that Captain Merton was staring intently into the black depths of the cavern, where the shadows seemed to be moving. Willy's hand leapt for the gun at his belt; but the next moment the shadows were upon him, and his shoulder was seized in a vice-like grip.

The surprise was complete. There were four of the Black Riders, and they had come, apparently, from nowhere. In their grotesque costumes they had emerged from the blackness like ghosts.

"Fight!" gasped Willy.

Crash!

With his free hand he punched at the "face" of the man who held him. He heard a muffled curse, and the grip on his shoulder tightened. In the same moment Captain Merton sprang into activity. He lashed out with both fists, and one of the Black Riders went down with a crash.

With their very liberty at stake, Captain Merton and Willy battled as though possessed; and the four black figures were kept so occupied that they had no chance of using their guns, or even of yelling for help. The affair was a whirlwind scrap, carried on with terrific speed and energy.

Willy, wrenching himself free from the detaining grip, had leapt back, and, like a veritable young tiger, he hurled himself at one of the bandits. His fists did considerable damage, for the redoubtable leader of the Third Form was a regular firebrand when it came to a fight. His attack was bewildering in its ferocity.

Merton, at the same time, let himself go. He was a young man in prime condition, and he knew a good deal of boxing. And the power behind his punch was deadly.

With both fists he attacked. One blow happened to catch a Black Rider on the point of the chin, and the man reeled back, crashed to the floor, and rolled over, too dazed to get to his feet again. But the others, gasping and cursing, were coming on with redoubled determination and fury.

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And up above Nipper watched in an agony of suspense. He had been right from the very first. But it might not be too late, even now. Apparently there had been no general alarm, and as far as Nipper could see there were only three or four of the bandits fighting against Willy and Merton in the cavern. Nipper realised that the two could never win the battle unaided. With deft fingers he secured the rope round a jagged piece of rock. Then he lowered himself into the crevice, hung for a moment, and dropped.

"Coming down, Willy!" he sang out. "Stand clear!"

Once he half-jammed in the crevice, and he heard his clothing tearing; but his own weight came to his help, and a moment later he was dropping sheer.

Willy was attacking at the moment, and he gave his assailant a violent heave, and the man reeled back.

Thud!

It was a smart move on Willy's part. Nipper dropped like a plummet on to the head and shoulders of the Black Rider. Together they crashed to the rock floor. Nipper came off lightly, but the man upon whom he had fallen was knocked clean out. He lay senseless as Nipper staggered half-dazedly to his feet.

In the gloom he saw a shadowy form hurtling upon him. He saw two slits, and his right fist swung round like a sledgehammer, his knuckles aiming just below the eye slits.

Crash!

It was a glorious punch, and the Black Rider, with a gurgling, sagged at the knees and reeled drunkenly back. Before even he could attempt to recover, Captain Merton's fist drove hard into the side of his head, and he was done for.

There was one man left, and Merton turned upon him like a tiger. The Black Rider fought madly, but there was only one possible result. Merton was a boxer, the other man was not. The blows he aimed were wild, his guard was feeble. The captain's left crashed home, and the fellow went to join his companions.

Willy, seeing that the fourth foe was trying to rise, whipped out his gun, and with the butt end he rapped the bandit hard over the head. It was enough. The man sank back without a sound.

"Not bad," said Willy cheerfully. "Phew! That was hot while it lasted. You came along at the right moment, Nipper."

Nipper looked round him quickly.

"We're more lucky than you imagine!" he exclaimed. "If we get out of this, we shall be luckier still."

He sprang for the rope, for he knew that seconds were of value.

"I'll get up, and then I'll haul you through the roof, Willy," he went on. "You'll have to wait until we drop the rope again, Captain Merton."

"Go ahead!" said the airman, breathing hard. "This is your show. I'll do anything you say."

"Oh, yeah!" came a sneering voice. "I guess you'll do what we say, you poor sap!"

Nipper and Willy jumped round. As they did so half a dozen electric torches blazed out from the dark recesses of the cavern, and the two boys and the airman were dazzled by the concentrated beams. Yet they could see the muzzles of many guns.

"Reach for the roof, you fools!" said the cold voice of Diamond Eye. "Try any more fancy tricks, and we'll drill ventilation into your carcasses!"

In the Enemy's Hands!

THE mystery man of Ghost River Valley came nearer to the prisoners, so that he stood out in the white light of the torch beams. As always, he was clothed from head to foot in black, and the gleaming, silver diamond in his headgear shimmered strangely.

The other men came quickly forward at Diamond Eye's order, and whilst Nipper and Willy held their hands aloft, their guns were secured.

"Smart work, kids!" said Diamond Eye, with a sneer. "Too bad you did all that fighting for nothing."

"Were you watching all the time?" asked Merton angrily.

"I wanted to see what the 'boys' could do," replied Diamond Eye, with contempt. "Waal, I seen. They're mussed all over the floor. Four men against two tenderfoot kids, and a tenderfoot Easterner! Gee! Seems like my boys is gettin' soft."

He kicked savagely at the fallen warriors.

"Soft!" he went on, with a snarl. "You'll do no more riding after this, you cissies! I need men around me, not jelly fish!" He turned to Nipper and Willy. "But it's gonna be just too bad for you, sonnies. To-morrow you'll be posted as 'missing,' like the rest of the guys who've vanished out of this valley."

"You'll have to reckon with our friends," said Nipper. "Forget it!" jeered the other. "Mebbe you think it was jest chance that we dropped on you? Nix! My boys was waiting for something to happen—and it sure happened."

The bandit chief, in fact, had thought hard after he had heard what old Mesa Matt had said about a "firework." Diamond Eye had half-expected a rescue effort, and he had had a watch set.

"Yep, we heard the kid, too!" went on Diamond Eye gloatingly. "He told you, Merton, that you had to look lively, because none of the folks back at the ranch knew of this stunt. So if they disappear, it'll be all jake with me. My boys found two horses down in the gully, and by this time them horses is hidden."

Nipper's last hope had gone. Bitterly he regretted having been led into this adventure by Willy. Diamond Eye and his gang, far from being taken by surprise, had been fully prepared. Nipper and Willy had walked right into the trap.

"I'm a heap obliged to you kids!" said Diamond Eye, with a leer. "I guess Old Man Farman will be tearing his hair when he hears the news. Mebbe he'll clear the

Every torchlight was snapped out, and the shadowy figures vanished into the gloom on the far side of the big cavern. Captain Merton, left alone in his rock alcove, heard no further sounds.

With an impatient exclamation, he leapt out of bed and ran into the black, open space.

He was alone.

As mysteriously as the bandits had come, they had gone. Even the unconscious men had been removed from the floor. There was no sign of a door in the rugged rocks of the cavern's sides.

Baffled, the prisoner went back to his bed, but not to sleep.

Meanwhile, Nipper and Willy, unable to see a thing through the cloth bags which covered their heads, were being forced along a crude rock tunnel—in fact, a disused mine working.

Although Nipper could not see, his ears served him well. There could be no mistaking the echoing sounds; he knew that he was in a tunnel. Now and again, too, his shoulder brushed against the rock wall; and at other times he was roughly ordered to bend low, so that his head should not come in contact with the low roof.



As Nipper, Willy, and Captain Merton were about to make their escape from the cavern, electric torches suddenly blazed out from the darkness, dazzling them. "Reach for the roof, you fools!" said the cold voice of Diamond Eye. "Try any more tricks and we'll drill ventilation into your carcasses!"

rest of the bunch right out. I'll be sure glad if he does, because you kids are giving me trouble!"

"Our chums back at the ranch will give you more trouble yet!" said Willy.

"Oh, yeah!" snarled Diamond Eye. "Waal, I'm figgerin' on clearing them right out, and it'll be all the easier with you youngsters in my hands. Boys, get busy! Take these kids away!"

It was a dismal ending to the adventure—alarming for Nipper and Willy, and grievously disappointing for Captain Merton. Liberty had been so near at hand.

Heavy bags of black cloth were thrust over the heads of Nipper and Willy, and drawn tight under their chins. Thus they were very effectively blindfolded.

"Seems like you have to stay and finish your job, Captain Merton," said Diamond Eye. "You were dead smart to send up that rocket; and mebbe you've got more of the blamed things in your pockets? Waal, we'll see! Strip!"

"Confound it, I'll not—"

"Strip!" ordered Diamond Eye harshly.

There was no help for it. Captain Merton, seething, removed his clothes, and then got into his camp bed. One of the Black Riders came forward and took possession of the discarded garments.

"Stay right where you are!" said Diamond Eye.

The mine working twisted and turned crazily; in places there were side-tunnels leading off, and anybody not familiar with the geography of the place would have been utterly baffled.

On they went, sometimes descending steeply, their feet slithering on loose rocks, twisting that way and this way, and penetrating deeper and deeper into the heart of the mountains. At last a halt was called, and, although the prisoners could not see it, a black abyss yawned at their feet.

It was a vertical shaft, and on the brink of it Nipper and Willy were roughly roped together. Then they were lowered into the depths. Down—down—down—far into the shaft which, at a lower level, led to another old working!

The ropes were cast free, and they were ordered to march. They went on again, but this time the journey was brief. The young captives heard the creaking of some rusty metal, then the captors released their hold. Nipper heard a dull clang, followed immediately by mysterious shuffling footsteps. After that—silence.

He felt about him, groping with his hands. His fingers came in contact with cold rock, and in the same moment he realised that the string at the bottom of the "head-bag"

had been loosened. He tugged at the coarse material, and he was relieved when the bag came off in his hands.

"Phew!" he muttered, wiping the hot perspiration from his brow. "That's better! Just a minute, Willy!"

Willy was near him, and Nipper removed his head covering. They were both half-stified, for they had had no ventilation, and breathing had been getting more and more difficult.

They were not in total darkness. Some little distance away, stuck on a ledge of rock, was a burning candle. Its radius of light was limited, and everywhere else the shadows were black and forbidding. The silence was like that of a tomb.

"Look here!" muttered Nipper.

He had moved towards the candlelight, and he pointed to the floor. Several rough blankets were lying there in a heap, and they were obviously intended as a bed for the two prisoners. Over their heads a rock roof stretched roughly, and here and there, supporting beams, black with age, were propped up against the walls.

"Where the dickens are we?" asked Willy, staring.

"It's one of the old mine workings," said Nipper, taking the candle. "My son, we've got ourselves into a nice old mess, and the worst of it is we haven't helped Captain Merton!"

"My fault!" grunted Willy. "You wanted to go back to the ranch, but I egged you on!"

"No good talking now, old chap," said Nipper, with a shrug. "We're in the cart, and we must make the best of things. In fact, we must count ourselves lucky that Diamond Eye and his gang didn't put us on the spot!"

"Holding us as hostages, I suppose," said Willy. "We're more valuable to him alive. I say, what a frost! I feel like kicking myself!"

"I'd kick you, too, if I thought it would do any good," said Nipper frankly. "Let's have a look where we are."

By the candlelight they soon found that they could not advance. The old mine working was a "dead end." They had only walked a couple of paces before they were brought to a standstill by the solid rock which marked the end of the tunnel. Turning about, the boys walked for perhaps ten yards, and then they uttered exclamations of surprise.

For their progress was barred by a great iron gate, or grille, which stretched from one side of the tunnel to the

other. The bars were rusty with age, and they were two inches thick. On either side the bars ran into heavy wooden uprights, and a crude locking device, with a six-inch beam as a "bolt," made the whole thing immovably secure. From the prisoners' side, it was impossible to reach the bolt or to move it.

"Well, that's that!" said Nipper ruefully. "We're bottled up in here, my son, and I imagine we must be many hundreds of feet below the surface!"

Willy Handforth yawned.

"The blankets don't look so bad, anyway," he said. "What about putting out the light and going to sleep?"

"Yes; that's a sensible suggestion!" agreed Nipper. "Do you think you can sleep?"

"Why not?"

"Aren't you scared?"

"I'm not scared—I'm wild!" grunted Willy, in disgust. "Think of all the fun we shall miss after this! The other chaps will go ahead and have tons of excitement, and we shall be bottled up here! Oh rats! It gives me a pain to think of it!"

Missing!

"ANYBODY seen my minor?"

It was Edward Oswald Handforth who asked the question, and he asked it in a tone of some anxiety. The morning sun was blazing over Ghost River Valley, and there was every promise of a scorching hot, cloudless day.

Handforth had been downstairs for some minutes; he would have been down earlier, only a little argument with Church and McClure had delayed him. Church and McClure were still upstairs—removing the signs of the argument.

"I guess your brother's gone out with Nipper," said Justin B. Farman.

"Like his cheek to go out without telling me!"

"Queer they should go off so early without telling anybody," went on the American boy, frowning. "Seems that Nipper and Willy took a couple of horses and went for a ride. I guess they'll be back by breakfast-time."

"Took horses, did they?" said Handforth. "What time did they start off, for goodness' sake?"

"Nobody seems to know," replied Farman. "That's the strangest thing of all. Some of the ranch hands have been on sentry duty all night—right up to the time I came downstairs. Yet they swear that neither Nipper nor Willy came down early."

Handforth's anxiety grew.

"Something's happened," he said urgently. "Look here, Farman, we've got to get busy! We've got to get horses out, and search the range—"

"No need to get alarmed yet," interrupted Justin. "I don't suppose there's anything in it at all. They just slipped out and went for a morning run."

But when breakfast was ready, Nipper and Willy were still absent; and Big Jim Farman himself was beginning to get worried. As soon as the meal was finished, he called all the available hands together, and a thorough search was made of the ranch buildings. Men were sent out on horseback to scout round.

They returned, after an hour, to report that they had seen nothing of the missing boys.

"It's so darned funny," said Farman. "The Black Riders could not have come here in the night and grabbed them. They went off on their own accord—that's certain. But why did they go? And when?"

"Something must have happened, I tell you," said Handforth grimly. "That cheeky young minor of mine is capable of any reckless adventure. But why did Nipper go with him—without telling me?"

"Gee whiz!" ejaculated Farman suddenly.

The others looked at him with interest, for there was an excited, eager expression on his face.

"Spill it, son," said Mr. Farman.

"Well, dad, it's like this," said Justin. "Last night—before the Black Riders swooped down on us—Nipper and I saw a rocket go up in the hills—"

"A rocket?" repeated everybody.

"A sort of distress signal."

"My only hat!" said McClure. "You told us nothing about it!"

"Well, all the excitement happened after that, and I kind of forgot it," said Justin. "But here's the point. Nipper and Willy and I were the only three who saw that rocket. Yes, Willy saw it, too—he came along and spoke to us about it. We kind of figured that it might have been sent up by Captain Merton."

"By George! I'll bet you were right, too," said Handforth, with a start. "And—and you think that Nipper and my minor went off—but that's rot! They wouldn't go alone."



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Unscrupulous, reckless, defiant of authority—Herbert Vernon-Smith, of the Greyfriars Remove, is all these and then some! But there's good as well as bad in the Bounder's make-up, as witness the fact that he doesn't hesitate to do a Form-master a good turn—landing himself in deep disgrace as a result. But though expulsion stares the Bounder in the face, he will not speak to save himself. Read

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Mr. E. S. Brooks welcomes letters from readers. Write to him c/o The Editor, The GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

IN my last chat I said that I had had many letters from old readers, and I promised to answer them in this feature. The trouble is, although your letters are most interesting, I can find little or nothing actually to reply to. In the main correspondents confine themselves to saying how much they like the St. Frank's yarns. Well, that's fine! But, for instance, I would like you all to ask me questions. Then, you see, I'd have something to "bite on" in my reply.

One reader—J. O. Y. B., of Tottenham—is, I think, one of my oldest friends. The last time he wrote me was in November last, and I feel a bit guilty because I have left it so long before answering him. He tells me that he started reading my

stories when he was twelve; he read them intermittently until he was fourteen or so, and from then on he has not missed one story. Now he is twenty-five years of age, is married, and his wife enjoys the St. Frank's yarns as much as he does himself. Very many thanks, J. O. Y. B., for your charming letter, and for your loyal support.

Harry B., of Sideup, deprecates the fact that he cannot get enough St. Frank's "stuff" to read. It seems to me that he must have overlooked my book-length stories which have recently appeared in the "Schoolboys' Own Library"—"The Bootboy Baronet!" which appeared in No. 212, and "The Wizard of St. Frank's," which came out in No. 216. I believe both of these are still obtainable. Very soon, too, a brand new St. Frank's story of mine will be appearing in the "Boys' Friend 4d. Library"—and others will follow in quick succession. I suggest that Harry keeps a look out for the announcements.

Ethel K. S., of Montreal, would like to know what has happened to Dr. Malcolm Stafford. She must be a reader of long standing. Many thanks, Ethel, for showing such interest. Dr. Stafford retired long ago, and the headmaster of St. Frank's is now Mr. James Kingswood—known as "Fighting Jim," because of his boxing prowess. Personally, I think he is a much better headmaster than the kindly old Dr. Stafford. Times have changed, and Mr. Kingswood is an essentially modern man, young, virile, and a splendid "mixer" with the boys. Undoubtedly the most popular Head St. Frank's has ever had.

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

"Maybe they just went scouting," said Mr. Farman. "If so, it might be some hours before they return."

"Just what I was thinking, dad," said his son. "The rocket seemed to go up near Skull Rock, and that's a long way off. How about getting on our horses and riding in that direction?"

"It's a good idea," said his father promptly.

They were soon in the saddle, and, meanwhile, Square-Deal Reeve and the other cowboys were setting out to distant parts of the range. A thorough search was to be made.

"I may be talking rot, of course," remarked Archie Glen-thorne, when he and the other schoolboys had approached the rocky hills. "But it seems to me that if this frightful country is to be searched properly, we shall need a dashed Army Corps."

"You're right, lad," said Mr. Farman, who was riding near by. "That's the trouble in this valley. It's all so rugged and far-flung. A bunch of riders can vanish into the rocky defiles like magic, even in broad daylight. I guess we'll need to go carefully. We don't want to ride into a trap."

They had left the grasslands behind, and they were riding over barren desert; ahead lay the rocky hillsides, towering blazingly in the hot sunshine. Skull Rock rose in picturesque grandeur, and as far as the eye could see there was no sign of a human being, or any living thing.

"It's no good, boys," said Mr. Farman, reining in, at length. "Guess it's like looking for a needle in a haystack."

"But we can carry on for a bit, dad," said Justin.

"No son, we're going back," declared his father. "I don't like the look of things around here. We're too far from the trail."

He was right. Any careful search of the hills was out of the question, for it was a task which would have tested the endurance of a hundred men.

Meanwhile, in a grassy, secluded dell, where herds of cattle grazed peacefully, and where a noisy stream trickled on its way, Square-Deal Reeve and Twirly Sam made a discovery.

"What's them?" asked Twirly Sam bluntly, as he and the foreman were riding across the little valley.

He pointed. Two horses, fully saddled, were grazing on the rich grass near the bank of the stream. Twirly Sam cupped his hands and let out a peculiar high-pitched call. Instantly, one of the distant horses turned its head and whinnied.

"Gosh!" said Square-Deal. "Them hosses is ours, sure enough."

The two cowboys dug their spurs home, and they went towards the riderless horses at a gallop. When they came up, they flung themselves from the saddle.

"Sure thing, Twirly," said Square-Deal. "These are the hosses which was missin'. Looks like the kids might be around here some place."

They stared about them, but they knew they were looking in vain. They were both thinking of other riderless horses which had come back—or which had been found peacefully grazing, just like this, far from home.

"Jumpin' rattlesnakes!" ejaculated Twirly suddenly.

He reached up to the pommel of one of the saddles, and

from it he took a ragged-edged piece of old newspaper which had been secured to the pommel by means of a piece of string. Unfolding it he found some words, in capital letters, written boldly across the newsprint with a blue pencil.

"THESE TWO KIDS WON'T COME BACK. BEST QUIT WHILE THE QUITTING IS GOOD."

"Holy smoke!" said Square-Deal Reeve, staring at his companion. "So that's how!"

With one accord they leapt upon their horses, and, leading the riderless steeds, they went galloping across the range.

It was a full hour before they sighted Mr. Farman and his schoolboy companions, some miles distant, right over the valley. In that clear atmosphere it was possible to see with fair distinctness for miles.

"Bad news, boys?" asked Mr. Farman, when at length the two cowboys came galloping up.

"You said it, boss," replied Square-Deal. "Take a peek at this hyar note."

Mr. Farman read it, and his face went haggard.

"What is it, sir?" asked Handforth hoarsely.

"The worst!" said the millionaire rancher. "Nipper and your young brother are in the hands of the enemy!"

There was wild excitement amongst the boys.

"My minor!" said Handforth, his eyes burning. "Willy grabbed by those crooks! By George! We've got to do something, you chaps!"

He looked round at his companions, but they could only look back helplessly.

"But what can we do?" asked Church. "I—I mean, where can we start?"

"I don't care where we start—we've got to get busy!" shouted Handforth. "Do you think I'm going to leave my minor in the hands of these bandits and killers?"

"Steady, young 'un—steady!" said Mr. Farman grimly. "Well, junior, this is the end. Yes, son, I mean it!"

"Mean what, dad?" asked Justin, staring.

"We're through!" said the millionaire. "Before the day's out, we're leaving this accursed valley!"

"Leaving it?" gasped Archie Glen-thorne. "Good gad! Kindly think what you're saying, old bean! I mean to say, you're not absolutely suggesting that we should dash off and leave those two chappies in the lurch?"

"I'm not going to have any more of you trapped by these skunks!" retorted Mr. Farman. "I'll send a telegram to Washington, and have the Federal authorities—"

"Gee, dad, what's the use?" interrupted Justin impatiently. "I'm an American citizen, and I'm sure proud of it; but I've got mighty little faith in those Federal guys at Washington. I guess they'll waste weeks in making inquiries before they take any action; and then, as like as not, they'll send a couple of men to look into things."

"I'll make them send the military!" vowed Mr. Farman.

"Maybe—after a month or two," said his son. "No, dad; we've got to go carefully. Don't you see that Nipper and Willy might be killed if you take such drastic action? We've got to stick around, keep our eyes open—and do the rescuing ourselves."

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"Hear, hear!" roared Handforth.
 "Absolutely!" said Archie, his monocle gleaming.
 "I guess you boys are sure game," said Mr. Farman.
 "Gee! You show me where I get off, don't you?"
 "I'm figgerin' the kids is right, boss," said Square-Deal.
 "Tain't no use quittin' now. The war's on, and it's sure up to us to do our bit!"
 "Where can we start?" asked Handforth tensely. "When I think of Willy in the hands of those brutes—"
 "Say, listen!" interrupted Justin B. Farman, his eyes burning. "Boys, I've got a swell notion!"
 "Spill it!" invited Archie. "That is to say, old thing, kindly entertain us with an earful."
 "Nelson Lee."
 "What!"

"Nipper's gov'nor—Mr. Lee," said Farman. "Gee-whizz! Why didn't we think of it before? Mr. Lee's in New York right now, and if he gets a fast plane, he could be here within twenty-four hours. We know his hotel, and we can send him a telegram right away. What's he going to do when he hears that Nipper has vanished?"

"Why, come right out like a shot!" said Handforth. "And Mr. Lee is the man! He'll get on the track of the crooks, and round them up. There's no man on earth who could do it so well!"

"You've sure hit it, junior," said Mr. Farman, with approval. "It's a swell idea. Let's go."

The very thought of Nelson Lee in this crisis was comforting. The boys were even more hopeful than their millionaire host; for they had been with the great detective in many stirring adventures, and they knew of his brilliant qualities. A case like this would appeal to him, with its mystery, its danger. Yes, Lee was the man—and he was within call.

Fortune City was dozing in the noonday sun when the party of riders came galloping in, leaving a great trail of dust behind them. Mr. Farman and the boys flung themselves off their horses outside the post office, and a number of citizens came hurrying across from the shady side-walks.

Dirk Dixon, the sheriff, came out of his office.

"Fresh trouble?" he asked gloomily.

"Sure enough, Dirk," replied Mr. Farman. "Two of my young guests have been taken by the bandits—Nipper and young Handforth. Look at this."

The sheriff looked at the message, and shook his head.

"Guess it looks almighty ugly," he said.

"But can't you do something?" demanded Handforth fiercely. "Dash it, you're the sheriff, aren't you? Everybody here seems to be hopeless! The crooks have everything all their own way!"

"What's the trouble?" asked a quiet voice.

It was Mr. Elmer C. Kyle, and he was gravely concerned when he heard the latest news.

"Yes, there's no doubt of it," he said at length. "The Black Riders are making a dead set against you up at the ranch. And you're not quitting—eh? That's bully! I'm with you to the bitter end in this fight. You can count on me for any help—just when you need it."

"Thanks, Mr. Kyle," said Justin. "We're getting somebody else's help, too—the help of Mr. Nelson Lee."

Without another word Farman went into the telegraph office to send the wire, and it was left to his father to explain things to the mayor.

"It's a dandy plan!" he declared. "Say, I'll sure be tickled to meet this guy, Lee. We may be kind of cut off from the world out here, but I guess we've heard of Mr. Nelson Lee. Yes, sir! He's the man for this job, and I'll sure be pleased to give him the freedom of Fortune City. Maybe it would be a good notion to make him sheriff. Dirk is kind of slow."

"By George, that's the wheeze!" said Handforth eagerly. "Make Mr. Lee sheriff—with full powers—then he'll show you!"

They waited impatiently—although Mr. Kyle did his utmost to make the time pass pleasantly. He invited them all to his own house for luncheon, and they had a splendid meal. It was about half an hour later when a youth in shirt-sleeves flung himself off a horse and came running up to the mayor's front porch. In his hand was a yellow Western Union envelope.

"Deeply concerned to hear your news, but cannot come for at least two weeks. Do everything in your power to find Nipper and Willy, and take no further chances."

"NELSON LEE."

It was a blow in the face for the hopeful St. Frank's boys. Nelson Lee, upon whom they had relied, could not come yet. They had been buoyed up with hope, and now they were cast down into the depths of depression.

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