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The GEM

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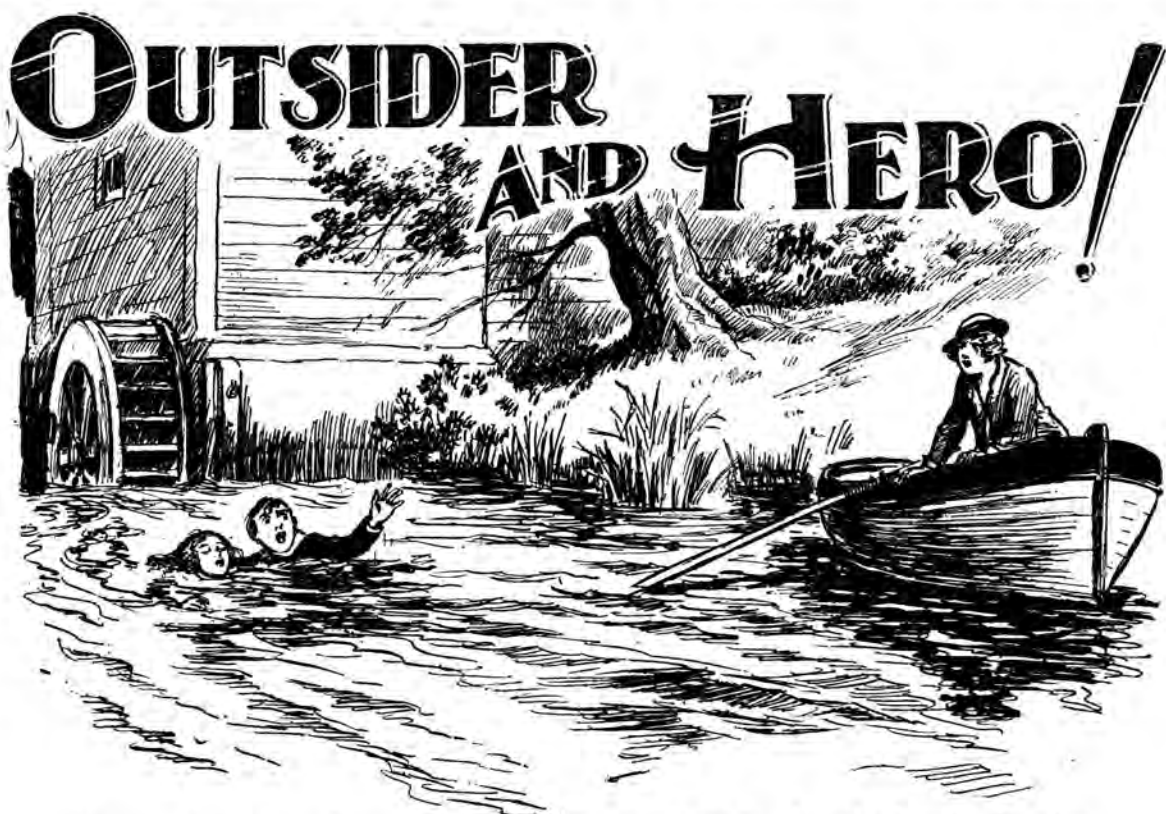
EVERY WEDNESDAY.

Week Ending June 2nd, 1934.



GUSSY IN A MESS! A Funny Incident from the Grand Long Yarn of Tom Merry & Co., "OUTSIDER AND HERO!"

A POWERFUL LONG YARN OF TOM MERRY & CO., STARRING—



Unscrupulous, treacherous, and defiant of authority, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the "Outsider" of St. Jim's, has yet one redeeming feature—courage—as he proves when he is called upon to risk his life for the sake of another!

CHAPTER 1. Not Wanted!

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY, the fellow who was known at St. Jim's as the "Outsider," stood at the window of his study in the School House.

Lumley-Lumley was alone in the study. He stood looking out of the window into the green quadrangle. He had a view of most of the front of the School House, and down below he could see a group of juniors chatting cheerily on the House steps. The sound of their voices reached him through the open window, and he distinguished words every now and then.

There was a hard look on Lumley-Lumley's face, and his lips were set tight. A feeling of loneliness weighed upon him. He might have had friends at St. Jim's—plenty of them—and it was his own fault if he had none, and the only fellow he was ever chummy with was Mellish, the cad of the Fourth. As a rule, Jerrold was quite satisfied with his way of life. But as he looked out of his study window at that cheery group of juniors, it struck him that perhaps he was not quite so clever as he had always believed, and that perhaps his way was not the best way.

He could see Jack Blake and Digby of the Fourth, and Herries was in the shadow of the doorway. They were waiting for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to come out. They frequently had to wait for D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's had a way of wanting to change his necktie at the last moment, or to put on another waistcoat, and his chums were often reduced to a state of fury by it. But they were good-tempered enough now.

It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and a fine, pleasant afternoon, and a fellow would have had to be very grumpy indeed to fail to be cheerful.

"When is that ass coming?" Lumley heard Blake say. "We shall be late!"

Digby looked at his watch.

"Oh, no; that's all right! Plenty of time for the train."

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"Well, we ought to be there early, you know. Figgins & Co. are bound to be early."

"Yes, rather! Gussy! Gussy!"

"D'Arcy! Gussy! Ass! Fathead! Buck up!"

Three youths belonging to the Shell came out of the School House. They were Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther—the Terrible Three.

"Hallo! Going out?" said Blake.

"Yes, rather!"

"Whither bound?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Same as you, I expect."

"Rylcombe Station?"

"Yes!"

"Oh, rats! I don't see what you want to go for? Look here—"

"Rats!"

And the Terrible Three walked off cheerfully. Blake grunted.

"Where is that duffer, Gussy?" he exclaimed. "Those Shell bounders will be there, and Figgins & Co. will be there, and we shall be late!"

"Rotten!"

"Buzz off and see where he is, Dig."

"Right you are!"

Digby disappeared into the House. Blake and Herries remained on the School House steps, drumming their heels with impatience.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley watched them, a curious expression upon his face. He did not know what was the cause of the excitement among the juniors. There was evidently something "on." Lumley wondered what it was, and a new thought came into his mind. He turned from the window, left the study, and walked quickly down the Fourth Form passage towards the stairs.

As he passed Study No. 6 he heard the sound of two voices raised in altercation.

They belonged to Digby and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

LUMLEY-LUMLEY IN THE DUAL ROLE OF HERO AND CAD!

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

"Buck up, you image!" Digby was saying, in excited tones.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther are gone!"

"Yaas, but—"

"Figgins & Co. will have started before now."

"Vewy pwob, but—"

"We shall be last!"

"Yaas, I know. But—"

"Well, come on, then!"

"I am sowwy, Dig, but it is uttably imposs for me to come out in a soiled collah, and I only discovered at the last moment that it was soiled!"

"You ass—"

"I wefuse to be called an ass!"

"Will you buck up?" yelled Digby.

"How can I buck up when I have to keep on leaving off to answah you?"

"You—you—you—"

Lumley-Lumley grinned as he passed on. He went downstairs and heard no more. Blake and Herries looked round quickly as he came out of the door, and then looked disappointed. They had fancied for the moment that it was D'Arcy.

Blake whistled, and Herries drummed with his heel. They did not expect the Outsider to stop and speak. They were on the worst of terms with the millionaire's son. But Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was on a new tack this afternoon. He stopped.

"Nice afternoon!" he remarked. "Going out?"

"Yes!"

"To Rylcombe?"

"Yes."

Blake's answers were monosyllabic. He did not say "Yes—coming?" as he might have said to anybody else. He did not want the company of the Outsider—the fellow who had made himself bitterly unpopular at St. Jim's by unscrupulousness and falsehood, and who narrowly escaped being expelled for breaking bounds at night and visiting public-houses.

Lumley-Lumley flushed a little. But he affected not to notice Blake's short answers.

"Anything on in Rylcombe?" he asked.

"Not that I know of."

"But you're going there?"

"Yes."

"To meet somebody at the station?"

"Yes."

"Oh, friend of yours coming, I suppose?"

"Yes."

Blake whistled again. He did not say who the friend was. He did not regard that as being any business of Lumley-Lumley's.

The Outsider tightened his lips for a moment.

"Lot of fellows going with you?" he remarked.

"Only three."

"Tom Merry has gone?"

"Yes."

"Same place?"

"Yes."

"And the New House fellows—Figgins, Kerr, and Wynne—they've gone?"

"I believe so."

"Rather a distinguished visitor, I suppose?" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes."

"Anybody I know?"

"You've seen her."

Lumley-Lumley started.

"Her! Is it a girl?"

"Yes," said Blake reluctantly.

The Outsider burst into a laugh.

"Oh, that's what you're so secret about, is it? You're going to meet a girl, and—"

Blake's brow darkened.

"We're going to meet Miss Cleveland, D'Arcy's cousin," he said sharply. "It's known to everybody who cares to know. There's nothing secret about it."

"She is paying a visit to St. Jim's?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I see!"

Jerrold understood at last. He knew how popular D'Arcy's Cousin Ethel was with the chums of St. Jim's. He remembered his own last meeting with Cousin Ethel, and coloured a little.

"Look here," said Jerrold abruptly, "I'd like to come with you, Blake!"

"I'm sorry for that."

"Why?"

"Because you can't come."

The Outsider scowled darkly.

"You don't want my company—eh?"

"To be quite candid, I don't," said Blake, in his blunt way. "But that isn't all. You have been rude to Miss Cleveland more than once. You ought to keep out of her way."

"I shall please myself about that."

"You'll please me, too, as far as that goes. You won't come to the station," said Blake, with a sparkle in his eyes.

"Sowwy to keep you waitin', deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, coming out of the House, followed by the red and exasperated Digby.

Blake snorted.

"You slow ass—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, come on, now you're here! We shall be late!"

The chums of the Fourth walked off towards the gates. Jerrold Lumley was left standing alone upon the School House steps, looking after them. His eyes were glinting.

CHAPTER 2.

The Outsider Means Business!

LUMLEY!

It was Mellish's voice calling from the House.

Jerrold Lumley did not stir.

He heard Mellish, but he was not accustomed to wasting much politeness upon his toady. Mellish could call as long as he wished.

"Lumley!"

The Outsider sat down on the stone balustrade, his hands thrust deep into his trousers pockets.

His face was hard, his eyes glinting.

He remembered Cousin Ethel well. He had been rude to her, and the hot blood burned in his cheeks as he thought of it.

Yet he liked her.

He did not quite know why or how, but Ethel had made a deep impression upon him, and he wished that he had been more like Tom Merry or Blake or Figgins, so that he might have been on terms of friendship with her.

But was it impossible now?

If only—

"Lumley!"

Mellish's voice interrupted his reflections, as the cad of the Fourth Form came out of the School House.

Mellish looked angry.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed. "Didn't you hear me calling?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you answer?"

"I guess I was thinking of other things."

"We arranged to go out," said Mellish. "I looked in the study for you, and you weren't there. Are you ready?"

"I'm not going."

Mellish stared.

"Not going?" he exclaimed.

Jerrold shook his head.

"No."

"But—we arranged it—"

"Then we can disarrange it," said Lumley quietly. "I can't go to the Four Feathers Inn this afternoon; I've changed my mind, and I've got something else on. Did you know that Cousin Ethel was coming to the school this afternoon?"

"Yes, I heard some chaps say so."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

Mellish stared.

"I didn't think you cared about it, Lumley. Why should I?"

"Well, I do care about it."

"My only aunt!" gasped Mellish. "You don't mean to say that you're following in Figgins' footsteps, and going spoons! My word—you!"

Lumley coloured.

"Do you want me to knock you down?" he asked in a low, furious tone.

Mellish shrank a little.

"Oh, keep your wool on!" he said.
 "Then stop that rotting!"
 "But you said—"
 "I'm not a soft fool!" said Lumley-Lumley. "There's nothing of that sort about me. I'll explain. You know that the fellows think a great deal of Cousin Ethel."
 "Yes, I know that."

"And Tom Merry and Blake and Figgins are all determined on one thing—that I shan't have anything to say to her," the Outsider went on.

Mellish nodded.

"I know."
 "I'm going to alter that. I don't care a rap for Cousin Ethel in any way—but I do care for being barred and excluded by those cads!"

"I don't see how you can alter it."

"I'm going to."

Mellish looked interested.

"But how?" he asked. "I'm ready to help you in anything up against Tom Merry & Co., but you see, it's impossible. Cousin Ethel herself won't have anything to do with you. She'll stick to them. You could dazzle some girls with your money, but not Ethel Cleveland. She wouldn't care!"

"I'll make her care."

"What?"

"I'm going to score over those cads!" said Lumley-Lumley between his teeth. "They're planned an afternoon with Cousin Ethel, and they're tumbling over one another to be first to meet her—and they're leaving me out."

"Yes—"

"Well, I'm going to score. Cousin Ethel is going to spend the afternoon with me instead of with them."

Mellish gaped.

"But she won't!" he almost shrieked.

"She'll have to."

"What?"

"I'm on the warpath now. What's the good of being a millionaire's son if I can't have my own way. I could afford to spend a hundred pounds on spoofing them, if I like. I'm going to spoof them. And you're going to help me."

"But—"

"So come on!"

And Lumley-Lumley linked his arm in Mellish's, and walked him away. Mellish went unresistingly. He was completely under the influence of the hard, cunning Outsider.

"But have you got a plan?" he gasped, at last.

And Lumley nodded, with a grin.

"I guess so," he replied.

And Mellish said no more.

CHAPTER 3.

A Lift for Gussy!

JACK BLAKE looked at his watch as the chums of the Fourth strode from the gates of St. Jim's.

The leader of the Fourth was frowning heavily.

"Quarter to three!" he growled. "We shall be late!"

"Oh, we can do it in ten minutes!" Digby remarked.

"Let's hurry!" Herries suggested.

"Imposs, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "It does not look gwaceful to walk too fast."

"You ass! Cousin Ethel will be at Rylcombe Station at three."

"We shall be in time, deah boy. Besides, more haste less speed, you know. I assure you it will be all right."

"Ass!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass!"

"Buck up!"

"Wats!"

When Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was obstinate there was no moving him. He had made up his mind that there would be plenty of time to arrive at the station by three, even if he progressed at a leisurely and graceful walk. From that no argument could move him, and Blake knew it.

"Come on, you fellows!" said Blake. "We'll leave him behind!"

"Right-ho!"

The three juniors pressed on at a hot pace, as if they were on a walking match. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked at them wrathfully. He had said he wouldn't buck up, and what he had said, he had said.

"Weally, you fellows—" he called out.

"Good-bye!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake, Herries, and Digby tramped on rapidly, and a bend of the lane hid them from view. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sniffed with indignation and strolled on. He

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simply would not hurry. It was certain that he would be the last to reach the station, but that did not make any difference to him now. His mind was made up.

"Hallo, D'Arcy!"

The swell of St. Jim's started as a voice hailed him from behind.

Jerrold Lumley and Mellish were behind him, and had almost overtaken him. D'Arcy looked at them coldly enough. He liked Lumley-Lumley no more than Blake did, and only a few days before they had met in fistic encounter, of which Lumley's face still bore some traces.

"Hallo!" said D'Arcy.

"Going to the station to meet Miss Cleveland—eh?"

"Yaas, wathah! Though I weally do not know how you know anythin' about it."

"You'll be late."

"I have plenty of time."

"Where are the others?"

"Gone on."

"Oh, I see!" said Lumley, walking beside D'Arcy, and assuming a most cordial manner. And the Outsider of St. Jim's could be cordial enough when he chose. "I say, D'Arcy, it's warm weather for walking."

"Yaas, wathah! I wefuse to huwvy!"

"Quite right. But would you like a lift?"

"A lift!"

"Yes, I'm having the trap out from the Golden Pig. We are nearly there, and the trap will be ready. I'll give you a lift into the village, if you like."

"Weally, Lumley—"

"Here's the place," said Lumley, stopping outside the wayside inn, and signing to Mellish to go in and call for the trap. "It's a jolly little trap, and a ripping horse. You can drive if you like. I often have the trap out."

"Yaas, I have seen you in it. The horse is wathah skittish. It would be safah for me to dwive, I think."

"Certainly!" said Jerrold readily, seeing that D'Arcy was yielding to the temptation. "Look here! I'd take it as a real favour if you'd drive for me."

"Well, if you put it in that way, deah boy—"

"I do."

"Then I accept with pleasuah."

"Right-ho! Here's the trap!"

Lumley and Mellish had intended to use the Golden Pig trap for their run to the Four Feathers that afternoon, and all was in readiness for them. Mellish drove it out of the inn yard.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eyes sparkled at the sight of it.

"Jolly good!" he remarked. "Bai Jove! It will be wathah funnay to pass Blake and Hewwies and Dig on the woad, aftah all."

"They wouldn't wait for you?" asked Lumley.

"Well, not exactly that. They wanted to huwvy, and I wefused."

"We'll pass them right enough."

D'Arcy got into the trap and gathered up the reins. Mellish exchanged a quick look with his comrade.

"What's the game?" he murmured.

"Get in, that's all," said Jerrold.

"You've got a scheme on?"

"I guess so."

D'Arcy looked round.

"Jump in, deah boys!"

His manner was quite cordial now. As a matter of fact, D'Arcy was so good-natured that anybody could have imposed upon him by a show of cordiality. Jerrold was so civil now that D'Arcy was feeling a little sorry he had been so rough on the Outsider, and that was exactly what the young schemer wanted.

Circumstances were playing into the Outsider's hands. D'Arcy would have been startled if he had known what was in Lumley's mind.

"Bai Jove! This is a decent horse," he remarked, as the trap rolled on down the road to Rylcombe.

"I guess so," said Jerrold. "I know a good thing when I see it. They know I mean to get what I want, too."

"Bai Jove! There's Blake!"

The trap was covering the ground so quickly that Blake and his chums came in sight in a very few minutes. The three juniors looked up at the sound of the wheels, and they stared at the sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the trap with Lumley and Mellish.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Blake.

D'Arcy grinned down at them as the trap slowed up.

"I wathah think I shall be at the station first, deah boys."

"You ass—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"What are you chumming up with Lumley for?"

"He has been vewy decent, and I wefuse—"



"Pway, what have you brougnt me here for?" asked Arthur Augustus. "To stay!" said Lumley genially; and without a word of warning, he gave D'Arcy a violent push. The swell of St. Jim's reeled backwards and crashed heavily into a ditch of muddy and slimy water. "Ow-ow! Yawoooooh!" he yelled.

"Look here, Gussy, get down! You don't want to take favours from that chap!" exclaimed Blake hotly. "He only wants to scrape an acquaintance with Cousin Ethel."

"Better get on," said Jerrold. "Never mind Blake."

"Weally, Lumley—"

"Get down, Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

D'Arcy was in a dubious frame of mind. He felt that Blake was right to some extent, yet, having accepted the lift from Lumley, he could hardly throw it in the Outsider's face. And yet—

Lumley settled the matter.

He gave the horse a flick with the whip, and the animal bounded forward. The chums of the Fourth had to spring back out of the way, or they would certainly have been knocked down.

"You rotter!" roared Blake.

The trap raced on.

D'Arcy gripped the reins. The horse was fresh, and it needed all the care of a skilful driver to keep it from bolting.

D'Arcy had no time to think of anything but driving for the next few minutes; and by that time Blake and his comrades were left far behind.

Rylcombe Village was by now before the trap, and just where the lane ran into the old-fashioned High Street, the occupants of the trap caught sight of the Terrible Three. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther looked at the trap as it came by, and uttered a simultaneous exclamation.

CHAPTER 4.

Meeting the Train!

"Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus had just succeeded in getting the horse to slacken.

He turned a face somewhat pink with exertion upon the chums of the Shell.

"Hallo, deah boys!" he remarked. "What are you doin' here?"

"We're going to meet Cousin Ethel!" exclaimed Monty Lowther blandly.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"I thought you were going, too!" said Manners.

"So I am, deah boy!"

"I should hardly think you were taking Lumley to meet Cousin Ethel!" said Tom Merry bluntly.

Arthur Augustus looked worried.

He was beginning to realise that the Outsider, with his usual keen cunning, had taken some advantage of his thoughtless good nature, but it was a little too late now to recede from the position he had been tricked into.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"D'Arcy has accepted a lift from me," said Lumley, with an unpleasant look. "I suppose he is his own master, Merry, and not under your orders?"

"Bai Jove! Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry looked steadily at the Outsider.

"After your caddishness to Cousin Ethel, I think you know that she doesn't want to speak to you," he said.

"D'Arcy ought to know it, too."

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

"Get out of that fellow's trap, then!"

"Yaas, but—"

"I've apologised to Cousin Ethel, and I never meant any offence, anyway," said Lumley, his teeth setting hard.

D'Arcy looked relieved.

"Yaas, deah boys! There's no doubt that Lumley was a wotten cad, but a fellow can't do more than apologise, you know."

"Look here, D'Arcy—"

"Havin' accepted Lumley's kind offah, I can hardly throw it at him, Tom Mewwy; even if I were so inclined," said Arthur Augustus. "Undah the cires, as Lumley is behavin' decently, I think I ought to encourage him."

"Thanks!" said Lumley sarcastically.

"Not at all, deah boy!"

"Gussy, you ass—"

"Gussy, you fathead—"

"Gussy, you chump—"

"I decline to listen to these oppwobwious expressions."

And D'Arcy drove on, leaving the Terrible Three standing in the road and staring after the trap.

Arthur Augustus was a little troubled in his mind about the Outsider's meeting Cousin Ethel. Accepting a lift to the station was one thing, and bringing about a meeting between Lumley and Ethel was another. It dawned upon

D'Arcy that that was what the Outsider had wanted all along. He had agreed to nothing of the sort, and he did not intend to.

"Well, there's the station," said Mellish.

The railway station was in sight. It still wanted several minutes to the hour. D'Arcy brought the trap to a stop before the building.

"Thanks awfully for the lift, Lumley!" he said, dropping the reins.

He jumped out.

The Outsider alighted, too. Mellish remained in the trap. He was wondering what Lumley's scheme was, but he was ready to back him up. That was what he was there for, but Mellish devoutly hoped that it would not mean a hostile encounter with Tom Merry & Co. If that came to pass, Mellish was much more likely to use his heels than his fists.

"Hold on a minute, D'Arcy!" said Lumley, as the swell of St. Jim's turned towards the station entrance.

"Certainly, dear boy!"

"Miss Cleveland is going to the school, I suppose?"

"Yaas, wathah! She is goin' to visit Mrs. Holmes, you see, and aftah that she's goin' to have tea with us," said Arthur Augustus.

"Very well. You'll want something to give her a lift to the school. Better take my trap!"

"Bai Jove, I should like to, but—"

"But what?"

Arthur Augustus hesitated.

"Well, go on!" said Jerrold grimly.

"Well, as a matter of fact, dear boy, you place me in a doocid awkward posish," said the swell of St. Jim's, with a troubled look. "You see, I can't take you to meet Cousin Ethel. It was vewy kind of you to give me a lift to the station, but—"

"But you don't want me to meet your cousin?"

"I am sowwy to say so."

Lumley forced a laugh.

"My dear chap, I didn't come here to force myself upon your party. You can have the trap to St. Jim's. I've got business to attend to here that will take me an hour or more. That's time for you to drive to the school, and for Mellish to bring the trap back."

Arthur Augustus looked relieved.

"Weally, Lumley, you are vewy good—"

"Oh, it's all right!" said Lumley. "Take the trap, and let Mellish bring it back."

"Weally, Lumley—"

"It's all right. I'm off!"

And Lumley, with a nod, walked rapidly away. Arthur Augustus was left in a state of doubt. He had not had time to accept or refuse before Lumley left him, and in a few moments Lumley had disappeared down one of the narrow streets leading towards the river.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus.

He looked round doubtfully.

"Do you know where Lumley has gone, Mellish?" he asked.

The cad of the Fourth shook his head.

"I haven't the faintest idea," he said.

"Couldn't you find him?"

"Oh, no!"

"You see, I don't know about havin' the twap. I should like to, but—"

"I don't think you can very well refuse Lumley. What does it matter, anyway?"

D'Arcy hesitated.

"Hallo, there's the train coming in!" exclaimed Mellish.

D'Arcy ran into the station. He didn't want to risk not being on the platform when Cousin Ethel arrived.

Three fellows in St. Jim's caps were waiting on the platform already. They were Figgins, Kerr, and Patty Wynn of the New House at St. Jim's. They had been first in the field.

"Bai Jove! You here!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

Figgins stared at him.

"Fancy meeting you!" he said.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"What are you doing here?" asked Kerr.

"Weally, Kerr—"

"I hope you haven't bothered about coming to meet Cousin Ethel," said Patty Wynn, with a fat smile. "We're doing that."

"Weally, Wynn—"

The train rattled into the station. At the same time the Terrible Three and Blake & Co. came bolting upon the platform. They were all in time for the train. Ten St. Jim's juniors were on the platform when the train stopped, looking out eagerly for Cousin Ethel's carriage.

It was Figgins who first caught sight of a sweet face at the carriage window, and in a twinkling he had rushed up and dragged the door open.

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CHAPTER 5.

Black Treachery!

"COUSIN ETHEL!"
Cousin Ethel stepped from the carriage with a smile. She seemed amused at finding so many boys waiting for her at the station. Certainly she was not likely to come to any harm in the short walk from the village to St. Jim's, with so many devoted protectors to take care of her.

"I am so pleased to see you all," she said. "How kind of you to come and meet me like this!"

"Not much," said Figgins. "The pleasure is ours!"

"It's awfully jolly of you to come, you know!" said Arthur Augustus. "I—"

"It will be such a nice walk to St. Jim's," said Tom Merry.

"Weally, Mewwy—"

"May I carry your bag?" said Figgins.

Cousin Ethel surrendered the bag to Figgins. It was an understood thing that the privilege always belonged to Figgins.

"Put it in the twap, Figgy, dear boy!" said D'Arcy.

"What!"

"Put it in the twap!"

"What trap?"

"I have a twap waitin' to take Ethel to the school."

The juniors glared at D'Arcy.

Arthur Augustus had not really made up his mind till that moment whether he would use Lumley-Lumley's trap or not, but he made it up now in a hurry.

He had come to the station to meet his cousin, and he didn't intend to have her walked off under his eyes by a crowd of other fellows.

"I've got a twap waitin'," he went on serenely, unmoved by the looks of the other fellows. "You might like to dvice, Ethel. It's a good horse."

Cousin Ethel smiled.

"How thoughtful of you, Arthur!"

Arthur Augustus coloured a little.

"As a matter of fact, the twap has been lent to me," he said. "It is a vewy nice and comfy one. This way, dear gal!"

Even if Ethel had preferred to walk to the school, it was

hardly possible for her to decline the trap when her cousin had it ready for her. For though Tom Merry & Co. made it their business to meet the girl at the station, it was, naturally, Arthur Augustus' business in the first place.

"Very well, Arthur."
"My hat!" murmured Tom Merry. "Of all the cheek—"
"Of all the nerve—"
"Of all the blessed impudence—"
"Did you speak, deah boys?"
"N-no—"
"I thought you said somethin', Lowthah."
"Oh, nothing!" muttered Lowther.

Arthur Augustus was triumphant. He walked ahead with Cousin Ethel, serene and cheerful, and the other fellows followed, looking daggers at the swell of St. Jim's.

At that moment most of them would have given a week's pocket-money for a chance of bumping D'Arcy in the dusty road.

"The boulder!" murmured Tom Merry, as they left the station. "And it's that rotten Lumley's trap all the time!"
"He's not in it, though," said Blake.

"Mellish is."
"Well, we can't say anything now. But—"
"But we'll jolly well bump Gussy for this presently!" said Figgins.

"Yes, rather!"
Cousin Ethel looked at the neat trap and the handsome horse, and she smiled with pleasure. It was really a handsome turn-out.

"You like it, deah gal?" asked D'Arcy.
"Oh, yes, very much!"

D'Arcy handed his cousin into the trap, and stepped in himself. He gathered up the reins. In the warmth of the moment on the platform he had offered to let Cousin Ethel drive, but he did not mention that now. Unless Cousin Ethel mentioned it, D'Arcy was likely to keep the reins all the way to St. Jim's.

The juniors stood round and looked at the swell of St. Jim's as he took the reins. There was no help for it; they had to let him go.

If the Outsider had been there certainly they might have stepped in, and probably Ethel would have declined to enter the trap.

But the Outsider was gone.
"See you again at St. Jim's, deah boys," said D'Arcy.
"You jolly well will!" muttered Figgins, under his breath.
"Oh, won't I give you a bumping, you horrid boulder!"
Cousin Ethel waved her hand.

The trap bowed down the street.
The juniors stood in a group outside the station looking after it. It disappeared.

Arthur Augustus smiled at the horse's ears. He was feeling very contented with himself, and quite amicable towards the Outsider. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had really been very useful to the elegant junior that afternoon.

The trap rattled out of the High Street and into the leafy lane that led to the school.

Outside the village, between high hedges and big overhanging trees, it was very quiet and solitary. It was certainly a delightful drive.

D'Arcy glanced at his cousin, who was seated beside him in the front of the trap. Mellish was behind, making himself as small as possible. Mellish always felt uneasy and nervous in Ethel's company.

"Nice, isn't it, Ethel, deah gal?" said D'Arcy.
The girl nodded brightly.

"Yes, Arthur."
"Bai Jove! What's that?"

A figure stepped from the hedge into the lane.
It stopped directly in the path of the horse, and D'Arcy had to pull in. He did not need to ask who it was.
It was Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

Mellish drew a deep breath. He was beginning to understand now the subtle scheme that the Outsider had formed, and of which D'Arcy was the unsuspecting victim.

Jerrold threw up his hand as a sign to D'Arcy to stop.
The swell of St. Jim's pulled the horse in.
"What is it?" he asked.

Lumley raised his cap to Cousin Ethel, and she gave him the slightest nod in response. She could not be cordial to Jerrold Lumley.

"I want to speak to you, D'Arcy."
"Go ahead, deah boy!"
"Get down a minute."

Arthur Augustus looped the reins and descended from the trap. He was surprised at the request, but he could not very well refuse.

Lumley looked at Ethel.
"You'll excuse me, Miss Cleveland," he said. "I've got something important to say to D'Arcy, if you don't mind."

"Certainly," said the girl coldly.
"What is it, deah boy?" asked the swell of St. Jim's, a little impatiently. "I can't keep a lady waiting, you know."

"Come here."

D'Arcy, more surprised than ever, stepped into the belt of trees that ran beside the road at that point. For the moment he was hidden from the view of those in the trap. Farther on there was a deep ditch, and on the very edge of it Lumley stopped. His manner was mysterious, and Arthur Augustus was surprised and impatient, and very curious, too.

"What on earth is the mattah, deah boy?" he exclaimed.
"Pwaw what have you brougnt me here for?"

"To stay!" said Lumley genially.
"Eh—ow! Bai Jove!"

Lumley, without a word of warning, gave the swell of St. Jim's a violent push.

D'Arcy reeled on the verge of the ditch, and, utterly unable to save himself, crashed heavily into it.

There was two feet of muddy and slimy water in the ditch, and the swell of St. Jim's almost disappeared in it.

He gasped and choked, and struggled to an upright position, choked and blinded by mud and slime and green ooze.

Lumley did not give him a second glance. He sprang back quickly into the road.

Cousin Ethel looked at him as he appeared.

Without meeting her eyes, he sprang into the trap, gathered up the reins, and struck the horse.

The girl was petrified for a moment. But as the horse

FORCE OF HABIT!



Guide (to charabanc load of trippers passing gasworks):
"On your right, ladies and gentlemen, you have the historic Bumble Museum."

Driver (in stage whisper):
"Here, wake up, you fool! Don't forget the old bus has been decarbonised, and we're travelling ten miles an hour faster to-day!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to P. May, 3, Furber Street, Hammersmith, London, W.6.

bounded furiously forward from Lumley's cruel blow, she found her voice.

"What does this mean?" she cried. "Where is my cousin?"

Lumley did not reply.

His grasp was on the reins, and all his skill was needed, too, for the horse had been hurt and frightened by his blow, and was bounding along madly.

The girl laid a hand on his arm in alarm.

"Lumley, where is Arthur?"

"He's staying behind."

"Why?"

"I'll tell you—but I must look after the horse now."

Lumley set his teeth.

Cousin Ethel looked back. A dragged, muddy, dripping figure appeared from the trees into the lane, and looked wildly after the trap as it dashed away.

It was Arthur Augustus. He rubbed the mud from his eyes and looked, and as he did so the trap rounded a bend and vanished from sight.

CHAPTER 6.

Carried Off!

LUMLEY-LUMLEY was a good driver, as he soon showed. The horse was wildly excited, and striving to break away, but the Outsider of St. Jim's soon had him well under control. But the trap continued to dash along at a high speed.

It rocked from its speed, and Mellish clung to the side in fear. Cousin Ethel showed no sign of fear. Her face was pale and set, but it was with anger and annoyance. She did not understand the Outsider's action yet. But she understood enough to make her very angry.

The horse slackened down a little now, and Lumley turned to the girl with a smile.

The trap was still going at a great speed, however.

Cousin Ethel met Lumley's glance.

"Now, tell me what this means!" she said icily.

The Outsider laughed triumphantly.

"It means that I'm up against Tom Merry & Co., and I've done them," he replied.

"I don't understand."

"I wanted to make one of the party to meet you at

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"the station," said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "They wouldn't have me."

"You can hardly be surprised at that, I should think."

"Perhaps not. But I'm not the kind of fellow to take anything of that sort lying down. I said that I'd do them, and I've done them. I think I have scored all along the line."

"Did you push my cousin into the ditch?"

"I guess I did."

"Why?"

"To get rid of him," said Lumley coolly. "He had come to the end of his usefulness. I lent him the trap for my own reasons, not for his."

Ethel compressed her lips.

"You lent him the trap?"

"Yes. Poor old Gussy!" Lumley laughed contemptuously. "I never saw a chap so easy to fool!"

"My cousin is a gentleman, and that is the reason," said Ethel, in a cutting tone. "It is easy to deceive one who is incapable of deception himself. I will not say what I think you are!"

Lumley laughed.

"You may as well. I can stand it. I am not thin-skinned."

"I have discovered that. But now that you have planned this ill-natured trick on my cousin, kindly stop the trap and put me down."

Lumley-Lumley shook his head.

"I guess not!" he said.

Ethel's lips hardened.

"Do you mean that you're going to take me to the school, whether I like it or not?" she exclaimed angrily.

"Whether you like it or not, certainly!" said Lumley coolly. "But I am not going to take you to the school."

"What do you mean?" she exclaimed breathlessly.

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"I mean that I'm going to beat Tom Merry & Co. all along the line. You were going to have tea with them—a picnic, weren't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, you can picnic with me instead."

"I refuse to do so."

He gave another shrug, but did not speak. Ethel fixed her eyes upon him. His meaning was slowly dawning upon her, but it seemed incredible.

"Do you mean"—her voice broke breathlessly, but she went on—"do you mean that you will force me to remain with you?"

"I guess so."

"You must be mad!"

He did not reply.

"I will not remain with you," said Ethel. "You shall put me down! Do you want me to jump from the trap?"

"You won't do that, I guess, while we're going at this rate," said Lumley coolly. "You'd injure yourself."

Ethel compressed her lips hard.

"Let me get down!"

"No fear!"

"But—but you dare not take me away like this!" panted Ethel. "Stop! I order you to stop! How dare you!"

"There are few things I don't dare!"

"You—you coward!"

He laughed.

"You call me a coward, Miss Cleveland! Can you guess what Tom Merry and his friends will do to me for this?"

The girl's eyes flashed.

"They will punish you as you deserve."

He nodded coolly.

"Exactly. They will rag me baldheaded—half kill me, probably. And yet you call me a coward."

Ethel was silent.

Whatever Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was, certainly he was not a coward. He knew the vengeance that would follow his action, and the fellow who could face that coolly was certainly not a coward.

Mellish caught at Lumley's shoulder from behind. The cad of the Fourth was pale and shaken. He had thought that Lumley-Lumley meant to get rid of D'Arcy and drive Ethel to the school. That he had dreamed of carrying her off for the afternoon against her wish had never occurred to Mellish.

He was thoroughly frightened now. Punishment from the juniors, and a flogging from the Head, if the affair came out, loomed before Mellish's alarmed imagination.

"Let go my shoulder!" said Jerrold angrily.

"Stop the trap!"

"Fool!"

"Stop it, I tell you!" yelled Mellish. "You mad idiot! Do you want to be expelled from St. Jim's? Do you think I want to be expelled?"

"I don't care!"

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"Well, I do care. Miss Cleveland, I had no hand in this. I hadn't the faintest idea Lumley had a mad scheme like this on!" gasped Mellish.

"Oh, shut up, you fool!" said Lumley, in his rudest tones. "You can jump out of the trap, if you like."

"And break my neck?"

"Well, I guess it's not worth much."

"Stop!"

"Rubbish!"

"I tell you—"

"If you say another word I'll give you the butt of the whip!" said Jerrold Lumley, between his teeth.

Mellish sank back into the trap, terrified. When Lumley was in that humour, Mellish was in deadly fear of him. The gates of St. Jim's were in sight now, and the trap was dashing up to them.

Kangaroo—Harry Noble of the Shell—was standing at the gates, looking out into the road. He was waiting for Tom Merry & Co. to come in with Cousin Ethel. At the sight of the girl sitting in the trap with Lumley and Mellish he looked astonished.

"My hat!" murmured the Cornstalk. "Ethel with the Outsider, and the others not with her! Blessed if I catch on!"

He raised his cap and stepped into the road, expecting the trap to come to a halt.

But it did not.

Instead of that Lumley-Lumley whipped up the horse at the sight of the Australian junior, and the trap whizzed by.

Kangaroo stared blankly.

He caught sight of the grim, hard face of the Outsider, and the terrified countenance of Mellish, and the pale, set features of Cousin Ethel.

The girl waved her hand, and called out something as the trap shot past. Kangaroo staggered as he heard it.

For he caught one word clearly.

It was:

"Help!"

Then the trap dashed down the road in a cloud of dust.

CHAPTER 7.

Hot on the Track!

TOM MERRY & Co. walked slowly away from the railway station in Rylcombe. They were exasperated with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy for carrying off Ethel in that barefaced manner, and especially for borrowing Lumley-Lumley's trap for the purpose. As they walked down the High Street they discussed what they would do to D'Arcy when he was in their hands—after the departure of Cousin Ethel from the school, of course.

The juniors left the village behind, and walked at a good rate down the lane towards the school.

Suddenly Tom Merry uttered an exclamation of amazement.

"What-on earth's that?"

"Phew!"

"Great Scott!"

A terrible-looking figure came limping along the road towards them.

Its face was caked with mud; its clothes were thick with it, and mud and water squelched out of its boots as it walked, and dripped from its baggy, soaked trousers and jacket.

For a moment the juniors did not recognise the newcomer. That awful-looking figure, and the elegant swell of St. Jim's seemed as far as poles asunder.

"What on earth—"

"What the dickens—"

"Some chap had an accident, I should think."

"Been in a ditch, I suppose."

"My hat! He's whiffy, whoever he is!"

"Keep to the windward."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The figure spoke:

"Weally, deah boys—"

There was a yell of astonishment.

"Gussy!"

Gussy felt for his eyeglass, rubbed the mud from it, and jammed it into his eye. He surveyed Tom Merry & Co. forlornly.

"Weally, you know—"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Figgins, in alarm; and he gripped Gussy by the arm, careless of the handful of mud he gained by so doing. "D'Arcy, has there been an accident?"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Was the trap upset?"

"Not at all, deah boy."

"Then Cousin Ethel is all right?"
 "I presume so."
 Figgins released him.
 "Oh, all right!" he said, growing a little red as he saw that the juniors were grinning. "I—I was afraid—"
 "It's all wight; but I'm all wong. My clothes are wuined."
 "How on earth did you get like that?" asked Tom Merry.
 "What did you leave the trap for—and where is it? Is Cousin Ethel driving?"
 "Wathah not!"
 "Then who's driving?"
 "Lumley."
 "Lumley!" shouted the juniors together.
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Lumley's in the trap with Cousin Ethel!" exclaimed Blake.

Merry. "But Lumley forcing himself on Cousin Ethel in this way is a little bit too thick."
 "I should say so."
 "The boulder!"
 "The rotter!"
 "The rank outsider!"
 "We shall have to let him alone till Ethel's gone," said Tom Merry. "But then I think he ought to be made an example of. This sort of thing has got to be stopped."
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Let's get to St. Jim's," said Figgins abruptly. "My hat! I don't know how I shall keep my hands off that waster till Ethel's gone!"
 "I feel in a howwid state," said D'Arcy dolefully. "I weally do not like to pvesent myself at the school looking like this, you know."
 "Well, you aren't pretty, that's certain," said Tom Merry.



Kangaroo stared blankly as the trap containing Cousin Ethel, the Outsider, and Mellish dashed on past the gates of St. Jim's. The girl waved her hand and called out something. Kangaroo caught one word clearly. It was "Help!"

"Yaas."
 "Tell us how it happened."
 Arthur Augustus explained.
 The juniors, exasperated as they were at the action of the Outsider in thus forcing his company on Cousin Ethel—for as yet they suspected nothing more—could not help laughing at D'Arcy's recital.
 "You utter ass!" exclaimed Tom Merry.
 "Weally, Tom Mewwy—"
 "Lumley fooled you all along the line."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I suppose he did," said D'Arcy ruefully. "Of course, I was not prepared for such beastly tweachewy. I shall give him a feahful thwashin' when I get to St. Jim's. It is impos for a D'Arcy to ovahlook such a feahful insult. He actually pushed me into the ditch, you know, in a feahfully wuff mannah."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I see no cause watevah for this wibald mewwiment. My clothes are wuined, and I am in a feahful state."
 "It doesn't matter what's happened to Gussy," said Tom

"Suppose you go and have a swim in the Rhyl with your clothes on. That will clean you a bit."
 "Weally, you know—"
 The chums hurried on. Arthur Augustus went with them, still squelching at every step. They came in sight of the gates of St. Jim's. Kangaroo came running towards them. His face was startled and pale.
 "Hallo!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Has Cousin Ethel arrived?"
 "She's passed!"
 "Passed?"
 "Yes," said Kangaroo. "Can you tell me what it all means? She came up in a trap with Lumley and Mellish. I thought they were going to stop—"
 "And didn't they?"
 "No."
 "Why—what—"
 "Lumley drove right past, and Cousin Ethel called out: 'Help!'"
 The juniors stood petrified.

"The trap had passed me then, and it was too late to try to stop it," said Kangaroo. "Lumley was going at a fearful rate, and he was round the bend yonder in a shake of a lamb's tail. What does it all mean?"

"Mean!" shouted Figgins. "It means that Lumley has taken Ethel away—against her will—and that we're going after him to smash him!"

He started running up the road. Kerr caught him by the arm and stopped him.

"Hold on, Figgy!" said Kerr, in his cool, quiet way. "If that trap was going at top speed, as Kangy said, you'll never sight it again on foot. You've got no chance. Let's take our bicycles."

The delay of an instant was exasperating to Figgins. But he had to admit that Kerr was right. On foot the juniors would have had only a useless run for their pains.

"The bikes—quick!" muttered Blake.

They rushed into the quad.

"Wait for me while I change my clothes, deah boys!" shouted Arthur Augustus, pelting off towards the School House.

But no one listened to him.

The ten juniors—for Kangaroo had joined the party—tore off towards the bikeshed for their machines. Tom Merry dragged D'Arcy's machine out, but the swell of St. Jim's was changing his clothes in the School House, and was not there to take it. It was left standing against the shed as the juniors ran their bikes rapidly down to the gates. D'Arcy's clothes needed changing, it is true, but the other fellows were not likely to wait for him under the circumstances.

They ran the bikes into the road, and mounted. Hardly a word was spoken. The hard, set faces of the juniors showed how deep their indignation and anger were, and their looks hinted what Lumley-Lumley might expect when they caught him. And they were determined to capture him.

They mounted in the road, and started off at high speed, and as soon as they were fairly going, they scorched for all they were worth. Right off they went, in a cloud of dust, on the track of the Outsider of St. Jim's.

But would they catch him?

That was the question.

CHAPTER 8.

Too Much for Mellish!

Cousin ETHEL sat in the trap beside Lumley Lumley, her face pale, her lips set, and not uttering a word. She had recovered from her surprise at the unexpected action of the Outsider, but her anger was unabated.

Cousin Ethel was seldom angry, and never without cause; but she was angry now, and it showed in her set lips and the gleam in her blue eyes.

Lumley glared at her several times, as he handled the reins, but she did not meet his glance. She appeared unconscious of his presence; her manner was cold as ice.

The Outsider did not seem to care.

There was a light of triumph in his eyes.

But it was different with Mellish. He was only anxious to get out of the trap, and escape from the companionship of the Outsider. But that was not easily done. While the trap was dashing along at the top speed of the mettlesome horse, it was impossible to leave it.

Lumley was a good driver; he seemed to have wrists of steel, and his eye and his hand were equally sure.

But he was given to taking risks that might have been fatal to a less expert handler of the ribbons.

The trap dashed round corners at top speed, and more than once Mellish's heart jumped almost into his mouth, as the wheel grazed a bank or a fence, or escaped the edge of a ditch by half an inch.

Cousin Ethel did not move a muscle.

Even if she felt alarmed, she would not show a sign of fear to meet the mocking eyes of the Outsider.

"By George," said Lumley at once, "you are a girl! I've never seen a girl I admire so much as I do you, Miss Cleveland."

"Thank you!"

"Eh? I guess you're mad with me," said Lumley, who always spoke in American idiom, the result of his early training in the streets of New York. "I guess you'd like to see Tom Merry hammering me right now."

Ethel was silent.

"Don't you like the drive?" asked Lumley.

"Not with you!"

The Outsider winced.

"Not with me; but you'd like it otherwise?"

"Yes."

"Good! Do you know," said Lumley, "I'm a millionaire's son, and I can have as much money as I care to

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ask my pater for? I've a hundred pounds in banknotes in my pocket now. I'd give it all to you to hear you say that you liked this drive with me, Miss Cleveland."

The girl looked at him.

Her thought was that the Outsider was mocking her; but his keen, sharp face was quite earnest. Jerrold Lumley meant what he said.

"Nonsense!" said Ethel.

"I guess I mean it!"

"It's nonsense, all the same."

"I've never met a girl like you over there," said Lumley. He spoke of America as "over there." "I guess I'm more American than English, you know. You'd get to like me, perhaps, if you knew me better."

"This is hardly the way to make one like you."

Lumley laughed.

"I don't know. You wouldn't speak to me otherwise, would you? You're only with me now because you have no choice in the matter."

Ethel did not answer.

The trap dashed on, and trees and fields and hedgerows flashed past. A great deal of country had been covered. Ethel knew the countryside pretty well close round St. Jim's. But they were getting into country now that she did not know. Where was the Outsider taking her?

What were her friends doing? She knew that Kangaroo had heard her call. Tom Merry & Co. would follow.

But would they overtake the trap?

The horse was settling down now to a hard, long run, and Lumley knew how to get the best speed out of his animal.

The trap rocked and creaked as it dashed on. Mellish turned a dozen shades of colour as it narrowly escaped hedges and fences and ditches.

"I say, Lumley," he exclaimed at last, "put me down! I can't stand this!"

"I guess I'm not going to stop for you, Mellish."

Cousin Ethel looked at the pallid junior in the trap. She took pity on him, though she despised his cowardice.

"Let him get out, Lumley," she said.

Lumley looked at her.

"If I slacken, you will get out," he said. "I can't afford to risk it. I've taken too much trouble to throw up the cards now."

Ethel hesitated a moment.

"I will remain here while Mellish gets out," she said.

Lumley nodded.

"I know I can take your word," he said.

He slackened speed at once.

Mellish rose from his seat. He was white and shaken.

Lumley brought the trap to a stop. He looked back at Mellish, not even looking at the girl by his side. He knew she would keep her word. Lumley would not have given her a second thought if she had been capable of breaking her word. He was a breaker of the most solemn promises himself, but he knew what to expect in others.

Mellish dropped to the ground.

"You can go back," said Lumley. "Keep out of the way of Tom Merry."

And the trap dashed on.

CHAPTER 9.

In Sight!

TOM MERRY'S eyes scanned the road as the St. Jim's juniors pedalled on. So far they had followed the recently-made wheel marks of Lumley's trap very easily, and now they turned into a lane.

The lane was not much used by vehicles, and in the dust of the road they could see wheel-marks.

Whether they were made by Lumley's trap was a question, but it was very probable, and the sign was a hopeful one.

The juniors pedalled harder than ever.

The lane narrowed down, and the grass grew in the road, and here the wheel marks were as plain as ever.

Ahead, through the trees, the juniors caught a glimpse of wide silver rolling in the sun. It was a river.

"We're coming to a bridge, I suppose," said Digby.

The road was growing rougher. There was a sudden pop as Digby spoke, and he uttered a sharp exclamation.

"There goes my tyre!"

He slackened down.

"Sorry, old chap!" called out Tom Merry, as he passed.

"Oh, it's all right! Keep on; see you later, perhaps."

And Digby jumped off his machine.

He had it upside down by the roadside and was at work on the tyre before the party had swept out of sight. It was rough on Digby, but it could not be helped. The trap had to be overtaken, and it was agreed among the juniors that if anybody had to stop he could not be waited for.

Tom Merry & Co. rode on.

The track they were following led into a wide, country road, and that road ran beside the river.

On one side was a park fence, with big trees nodding over it; on the other the ground dropped away gently in a grassy slope towards the gleaming water.

The juniors turned into the road, and then Tom Merry paused.

Which way had the trap gone?

It might have turned either to right or to left, and there was no indication on the hard surface of the high road.

Figgins gritted his teeth. Had they lost the track?

Tom Merry climbed a tree by the roadside, and, holding to a branch and with his feet on another, swept the road up and down with his keen eyes.

He uttered a sudden shout.

"Hurrah!"

"Seen them?" yelled Figgins.

Tom Merry came slithering down the tree.

"I think so!" he said excitedly. "There's a trap ahead with two people in it. I can't make them out, but I think—"

"Come on!"

The juniors were on their machines in a twinkling, and riding up the road. The ground flew under the flashing wheels.

The juniors of St. Jim's had scorched before, but never as they scorched now. The cycles seemed to fly.

Tom Merry was a little ahead, but Figgins was very nearly level. The rest were strung out behind.

The trap was soon easily in sight.

The figures of a boy and girl were recognisable sitting in it, and the juniors had no more doubt that they were the ones they sought.

Figgins' eyes blazed.

"We'll have him soon!" he muttered. It was likely to go hard with the Outsider of St. Jim's when Figgins got within hitting distance of him.

The cyclists raced on.

As they swept nearer, they could quite recognise the forms in the trap; they saw Lumley-Lumley look back, and then begin to whip the horse savagely. They saw Cousin Ethel look back and wave her hand.

"We've got him now."

"Put it on!"

"Two minutes more."

Lumley lashed the horse with savage force. The animal bounded on, but it was growing worn with the hard drive. And it was not equal in any case to the speed the Outsider of St. Jim's required of it.

Harder the Outsider drove, and harder the horse strained. But faster still the cyclists came on behind.

The juniors were fairly confident now.

They were closing in on the trap. Nothing could save the Outsider of St. Jim's from capture now.

"We've got him!" muttered Figgins, once more.

Lumley looked back.

The leading cyclists were within twenty yards of the trap. He caught sight of the grim, set face of Figgins.

He saw Tom Merry swerve a little to the side, and he knew what that meant. Tom Merry was going to shoot past the trap, dismount ahead, and block the way.

And Lumley could not prevent him.

The Outsider gritted his teeth.

His glance swept round savagely, and rested on the river, on the grassy slope down to the bank, and the shining waters beyond.

Cousin Ethel looked at him.

"Stop!" she said.

Lumley-Lumley gave her a dogged glance.

"I guess not. I've never caved in yet," he said, between his teeth. "I guess they won't beat me this time."

"Be sensible. You cannot get away now—"

"I guess I've an idea."

"What do you mean?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"You'll see."

Tom Merry was abreast of the trap now. He shot past it, pedalling ahead on the hard white road.

Jack Blake shot ahead on the other side, and sprang to the ground fifty yards ahead of the dashing horse. Intrepidly the two juniors rushed into the road and threw up their hands to stop the horse.

Figgins was only a couple of yards behind the trap. The others were coming on at top speed.

It seemed all up with the Outsider.

But Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had a card yet to play—a desperate one. He dragged on the reins, and the horse swung from the road.

"Stop!" yelled Tom Merry.

The Outsider was deaf—the horse obeyed the rein. The trap swung off the road upon the grass.

Cousin Ethel clung to the seat as the vehicle swayed and rocked. Lumley sat as still as a bronze image. He was driving on, straight towards the gleaming river.

(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.

LIVING IN HOPES.

Golfer: "The day I get round this course in under a hundred I'll give you five shillings."

Caddie: "Thank you, sir. It'll come in handy in me old age!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Abbott, 8, Northwood Way, Green Lane, Northwood, Middlesex.

O.K.!

Teacher (to new pupil): "What's your name, boy?"

Pupil: "Kaye, sir."

Teacher: "Hayes?"

Pupil: "No, sir: Kaye."

Teacher: "Oh, Kaye?"

Pupil: "Sez you!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Morey, Gordon Boys' Home, West End, Woking.

INCONVENIENT.

Lady of the House: "I can't give you any clothing. You must come after six o'clock when my husband is in."

Tramp: "Can't be done, lady. My working hours are from ten till four!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to "A Reader," 9, Cashel Street, Dunedin, Otago, New Zealand.

A GENTLE HINT.

Bill was tired of hearing his neighbour's wireless, so one day he said to him:

"I've got a useful attachment for your wireless set."

"What is it?" asked the neighbour.

"Oh, it's a few yards of rope with a brick attached. The river is just down the end of the road!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Rodger, Bank Head, Balerno, Midlothian, Scotland.

PUBLICITY.

Boxer: "You're a fine publicity man. I win a big fight and all you can get in the papers is two columns!"

Publicity Agent: "What are you grumbling for? Look at all the big fights Nelson won, and he only got one column!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to M. Hill, 52, Love Lane, Pinner, Middlesex.

NO CONSOLATION.

Customer: "I've been waiting here for a quarter of an hour."

Waiter: "That's nothing, sir. I've been waiting here for a quarter of a century."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Davies, 4, Cory Street, Resolven, Glamorgan.

MOST NECESSARY.

"Do I really need brushing down like this?" asked the visitor as the negro attendant carefully brushed his coat.

"Yes, sah, you mos' surely do," replied the negro. "You see, sah, I've broke!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Ivey, 31, Durham Road, Esh Winning, Co. Durham.

NOT INVITING.

Policeman: "We want you to take part in an identity parade. You won't be kept five minutes."

Loafer: "Oh, yeah! I was told that yarn before an' I was kept six months!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Jones, 50, Burlington Road, Enfield, Middlesex.

"Good heavens!" cried Cousin Ethel. "What do you mean to do?"

He did not reply.

Right on he drove. The cyclists were pedalling over the grass now towards him, with many a bump. Tom Merry and Blake and Figgins, on foot, were tearing madly towards the trap. But they had no chance of reaching it in time.

Right down to the grassy, sedge bank the Outsider drove; and right on, into the gleaming water, and the next moment the trap was afloat, and the juniors were standing baffled and furious on the water's edge.

CHAPTER 10.

Lumley Gets Ahead!

TOM MERRY & CO. stood on the bank, looking out over the water. They could hardly believe their eyes for the moment.

They had not expected that hardy recklessness on the part of even the Outsider of St. Jim's.

"The fool!" muttered Tom between his teeth. "The mad fool!"

Lumley-Lumley did not look back.

Hasty as his action had been, he had observed everything before he acted, and he was quite aware of what he was doing.

He drove the trap into the water till it was a dozen yards from the bank. The river was shallow here, as the clumps of willows and rushes emerging from the water had shown to Lumley's keen eyes. At a dozen yards from the bank the horse was up to its shoulders in the water. The water washed into the vehicle as Lumley drove it to a stop. Another two strides of the horse, and it would have been under the water. But as yet neither Lumley nor Cousin Ethel were wetted in the least. A plunge of the horse might have sent them at any second, however, into the bosom of the river. But Lumley's hand was like iron on the rein, and the horse knew its master.

The juniors stood on the bank.

They were quite ready to plunge into the river to the aid of Ethel, but it flashed into Tom Merry's mind that that was the worst thing they could do for her, and he waved his comrades back.

Lumley was desperate, and he seemed determined to stop at nothing.

When the trap was halted Lumley glanced over his shoulder.

He was ready to drive on if the juniors entered the water.

"Stop where you are!" he called out.

"You cad!" shouted Figgins.

Lumley laughed.

"Not a step nearer," he said. "If one of you enters the water I shall drive on."

"Are you mad?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess I'm going to come out ahead on this deal," he said. "Miss Cleveland is going to spend the afternoon with me."

"She does not wish to."

"Oh, come off!"

"Let her speak for herself, then," cried Figgins.

"I guess not. I'm running this show."

"Look here, Lumley," said Tom Merry, eyeing the Outsider of St. Jim's steadily across the expanse of shallow water, "you know you'll get into trouble for this. You're at an English Public school, not in the Bowery of New York now. This is the kind of thing fellows get into prison for. You'll be expelled from St. Jim's if this gets to the Head's ears."

"I guess the Head won't find it easy to expel me."

"I know your father has tricked him into some agreement," said Tom Merry sharply, "but you've had a flogging already, and you may have another."

"I guess I can stand it."

"You'll get worse than a flogging from us," said Figgins.

"I can stand that, too!"

"Then you won't come ashore?"

"I guess not."

The juniors clenched their hands.

Appeals to Lumley were evidently useless. He was not afraid of the consequences of his act, and an appeal to his better nature was futile, because he did not seem to have any better nature.

Ethel was silent.

She was not frightened, though she had ample reason to be. But she was not so calm as she had been. She was beginning to fear the hard, desperate boy at her side.

Lumley looked mockingly at the juniors.

"You can go back the way you came," he said. "I swear

that if you enter the water I'll drive across to the other side, whatever the consequences."

Tom Merry gritted his teeth.

But Jerrold Lumley held the trump card. For Ethel's sake the juniors dared not enter the water.

Lumley looked at them with a sneer, and then his glance swept across the river. He had already discerned a boat by the farther bank with a lad in it, fishing. The lad was a stolid-looking country youth, younger than Lumley. His boat was moored to the willows, and he had a line out, but he was neglecting it now, standing up in his boat to stare across the river at the trap in the water.

Lumley waved his hand to the lad.

"Bring that boat over here!" he called out.

The lad stared at him.

"I'll give you five pounds to use your boat!" called out Lumley, and he held a rustling banknote in the air.

The lad still stared; but Lumley's meaning sank into his slow brain, and he suddenly cast off his mooring, seized his oars, and rowed out into the river. The boat came rapidly towards the submerged trap.

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged glances.

"He'll get away!" muttered Blake.

"What can we do?"

"Hang it! Nothing!"

Figgins clenched his hands.

"We can't let him take her away under our eyes."

"Hold on, Piggy! He's rotten enough for anything; if you get into the water he'll drive on."

Cousin Ethel waved her hand to the juniors.

"Please stay on the bank," she called out in her low, clear voice.

"We'll follow you, Ethel," said Tom Merry. "We'll make that scoundrel suffer for this!"

Lumley laughed.

"My turn now, though," he remarked.

Tom Merry shouted to the lad in the boat. But the country youth did not appear to understand. The distance was great, and perhaps the rustling banknote in Lumley's hand had a great deal of effect.

The boat came up to the trap.

It glided past the shaking, plunging horse, and the bows grated against the step of the vehicle. It was almost aground.

"Ere you are, zur," said the lad.

"Thank you," said Lumley. "Will you step in, Ethel?"

The girl hesitated.

"You don't want to stay here, I guess," said Lumley coolly. "The trap will be settling down in the mud, and you'll be in the water in ten minutes."

"Very well," said Ethel quietly, with compressed lips.

Lumley released the reins and jumped in after her.

"Look here, my lad," he said, "take that trap back to the Golden Pig, near Rylcombe, and I'll pay you well for it. Come up to St. Jim's and ask for Master Lumley. Here's your five for the boat. I'll leave it somewhere for you and let you know."

"Please—"

"No talk! Get into the trap!"

The slow youth was hesitating, evidently not accustomed to the keen, quick American ways of Lumley. But the Outsider of St. Jim's wasted no time. He had paid liberally, and he meant to be obeyed.

He shoved the lad into the trap, and then seized the oars and pushed the boat farther into the stream. The country youth, in a dazed frame of mind, took the reins and pulled the horse round towards the bank.

The boat glided out into the middle of the river.

Lumley-Lumley had never shown off at St. Jim's as a good oarsman, but he proved that he was one now. He went with the current, and fairly made the boat fly. He did not ask Cousin Ethel to take the rudder lines.

Tom Merry & Co. stood on the bank and watched them, with feelings too deep for words.

Cousin Ethel waved her hand silently.

Lumley grinned.

The juniors surrounded the country youth as he brought the horse and trap ashore. They shouted at him and said things to him, but apparently only with the effects of still further confusing his slow wits.

"Let him alone!" said Tom Merry, with a short laugh. "It's too late now to do any good, anyway. The Outsider's gone, and we've got to follow him."

"Yes, rather!"

"There's no other boat in sight," said Blake.

"There's the road beside the river, though, and we can keep the boat in sight," said Tom Merry.

"Good! Let's get on!"

They mounted and rode along the white, dusty road, the river gleaming on their right, with the boat in sight.

(Continued on page 14.)



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

HALLO, chums! Once again popular Martin Clifford has "hit the high spots" with his latest yarn of the cheery chums of St. Jim's. As a reader of the fair sex said in her letter to me the other day, "it's a marvel the way Mr. Clifford keeps writing winners for us week after week."

In next Wednesday's grand yarn, entitled:

"THE MYSTERY OF THE MILL!"

there are all the ingredients that combine to make a first-class yarn—school fun and frolic, thrilling adventure and mystery.

When Gussy gets caught out in the rain on a dark and stormy night, he takes shelter in an old deserted mill reputed to be haunted. But being a sensible fellow—so he says—Gussy scoffs at the story of a ghost haunting the mill—until he hears eerie noises and blood-curdling groans! Then he promptly beats it!

What is the mystery of the haunted mill? You'll see in next week's great story.

"GHOST RIVER RANCH!"

In the next thrill-packed instalment of this powerful serial events in Ghost River Valley take a surprising turn. A band of horsemen, who call themselves the White Riders, suddenly appear on the scene, with the object of scaring the Black Riders and driving them out of the Valley. Who are they? Perhaps you can guess. You'll enjoy immensely the further adventures of the St. Frank's chums.

All our other popular features will figure in the programme as usual. There will be a grand "First Test Match" number of

"Tom Merry's Weekly," another prize selection of readers' jokes, Mr. Brooks' weekly chat, and more notes and news from your Editor.

A DOG'S WAR MEDAL.

Have you ever heard of a dog winning a medal for bravery on the field of battle? This actually happened at the battle of Austerlitz, in 1792, when Moustache, the dog mascot of a French regiment, rescued his master's regimental colours after they had been seized by the enemy. The colours—a flag mounted on a pole—fell from the standard-bearer's hands during the heat of battle, and were immediately grabbed up by an Austrian soldier, who bore them off in triumph. Only Moustache saw him, but the dog ran after the soldier, grabbed the flag-pole between his teeth, tugged it free, and dashed back to the French camp. After the battle, Moustache was awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honour—a decoration for an act of valour on the battlefield!

SPEEDMAN'S LUCK.

The history of motor-racing is full of accounts of miraculous escapes from disaster, but there are not many speedmen who can claim to have been uninjured in a crash in which a racer turned three somersaults at 70 m.p.h.! Such, however, was the amazing luck of F. Allen, driver of an M.G. Midget in a race on Southport Sands, Lancashire. Allen's car hit a soft patch of sand just as it was about to take a bend in the course, and, leaping into the air, turned completely over three times. The driver was flung out just as the

machine was going over for the third time, and was unhurt except for a slight cut on his cheek. Such an escape ranks with the miraculous luck of Jules Foresti, Italian driver of a Djetmo racer, who overturned his car at 160 m.p.h. on Pendine Sands, Carmarthenshire, when attempting to break the world's speed-record. Foresti was absolutely unscathed, and was able to pick himself up and walk away before the car finished its mad career across the beach.

THE PUG-NOSED REGIMENT!

Someone asked me the other day what regiment was nicknamed "The Pugs." As I didn't know the answer, I made it my business to find out, and so came upon an interesting little story. "The Pugs" were a regiment in the Russian Army from 1796-1917, and were so called because every soldier in that regiment was pug-nosed. The troop, which was officially called the Paulowski Regiment, was raised by Czar Paul I, who ordered that since he himself was pug-nosed, all soldiers in his pet regiment should be, too!

IS YOUR NAME "BILL"?

The little town of St. Briene, in France, wants every fellow whose name is William Guillaume, Guglielmo, Wilhelm, or anything else that means the same, to "come up and see them" some time between September 30th and October 7th. The occasion is the Congress of Williams in honour of the seven hundredth anniversary of St. William, patron saint of St. Briene, and it's going to be a mighty big affair. The GEM office-boy wants to know what would happen if you went into a crowded street during the festivity and shouted out: "Hi, Bill, you've won the Irish Sweep!"

HOLIDAY CRUISES—BY TRAIN!

The latest brainwave of the people who run Britain's railways is "land-cruising." The Northern Belle, a crack express, is being sent off on four 2,000 miles tours of England and Scotland, lasting one week each, so that passengers can get a good look at the Old Country while travelling in the greatest luxury. The Northern Belle has been specially fitted up for the occasion, and is equipped with a shop, a post office, sleeping cabins, shower-baths, and a travelling kitchen. Some train, eh!

THE EDITOR.

Harold W. May, 86, Valley Road, Grove Hill, Middlesbrough, Yorks, wants a pen pal in Africa or India; ages 15-16.

Frank Williams, 3569, Fourth Avenue, West Vancouver, B.C., Canada, wants pen pals in England, Germany, and France; would exchange magazines.

Ralph Fogg, 2886, Rosemount Boulevard, Rosemount, Montreal, Canada, wants to hear from readers; interested in the front pages of newspapers.

George Smitheman, 1/42, Gravelle Street, Ladywood, Birmingham, wants correspondents interested in writing stories.

R. Moreland, Osric, Tuffley, Glos., wants to hear from stamp collectors; ages 11-14.

F. Wood, 9, St. Lawrence Terrace, Radcliffe Lane, Pudsey, Leeds, wants pen pals interested in Pitman's Shorthand; ages 16-19.

Miss Terry Coates, 116, Taylor Road, Birmingham 14, wants girls' correspondents; ages 18-19.

Miss Ina Smith, 120, Taylor Road, Birmingham 14, wants girl correspondents overseas; ages 26-28.

S. Sharp, 41, Albert Street, Slough, Bucks, wants correspondents interested in sports; ages 14-15.

George Harris, Jun., 61, Russell Street, Gisborne, New Zealand, wants correspondents; interested in stamps, postcards, sports, etc.

R. Clarke, 74, Market Street, Paddock, Huddersfield, Yorks, wants a correspondent in Bradford or Southampton; ages 16-17; cricket and photography.

Miss Blanche W. Wright, 12, Elphinstone Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17, wants girl correspondents; interested in sports.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,372.



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.

Vincent Loveday, 93, Nursery Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, wants a correspondent in France interested in stamp collecting; age 13-16.

F. H. Grundy, Estelle, Slade Road, Roughley, Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham, wants to hear from stamp collectors.

Bill Ward, 13, Dalton Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wants correspondents interested in snaps, sports, stamps, coins, etc.; ages 13-15.

Miss Ruby Evans, 22, Macquarie Street, North Williamstown, Victoria, Australia, wants girl correspondents; ages 14-16.

Malachy Tully, 123, Chrod Road, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Ireland, wants to hear from stamp collectors; ages 10-13.

Miss B. Dean, Castlefield Road, Sands, High Wycombe, Bucks, wants girl correspondents interested in gym and sports; ages 16-20.

Robert Radford, 43, Monivea Road, Beekenhams, Kent, wants pen pals in U.S.A., Australia, Spain, and France; interested in theatricals and dancing; ages 12-13.

OUTSIDER AND HERO!

(Continued from page 12.)

But the road made a curve and left the river, and thick woods intervened, and once more Jerrold Lumley was lost to their view.

CHAPTER 11.

The Outsider to the Rescue!

JERROLD LUMLEY laughed lightly as his eyes swept the bank, and he only saw thick woods ahead against the bright sky.

The cyclists had disappeared. Cousin Ethel did not look at him. She gave one anxious glance towards the bank, and that was all.

"Exit Tom Merry & Co.!" said Lumley.

Ethel did not reply. "That was a close shave, I guess, back there," said Jerrold Lumley. "But they won't find it easy to corner me, I guess." "You are causing a great deal of trouble for nothing," said Ethel, "and you brought both of us into danger."

Lumley shrugged his shoulders. "That was not my fault; it was theirs. Didn't I say that I was going to score over Tom Merry & Co.? I mean it, every time. You're going to spend the afternoon with me, Cousin Ethel. You're going to have tea with me. Then I'm going to take you back to the school at five o'clock or so, just as would have happened if you had been with those fellows."

Ethel looked at him steadily. "I shall not have tea with you," she said.

"Then you will be hungry," said Jerrold Lumley, laughing. She was silent.

"Come, come, why should you make it a point to be angry with me?" argued the Outsider. "Why not make up your mind to enjoy the outing?"

"That is not likely." "I don't see why not. I'm not such a bad fellow, you know, when I'm treated well, and you can't say I've hurt you."

"I'm not afraid that you will hurt me. But you have forced me to come with you against my will. You cannot expect me to forgive that."

"You wouldn't have come otherwise." "Quite true!"

"Well, it is an adventure," said Lumley good-humouredly. "You have nothing to complain of."

"You are very foolish."

"Thank you."

The boat glided on. Since the cyclists had disappeared behind the trees Lumley had taken it more easily. The boat glided on with the current, with an occasional dig of the oars.

"Do you know where we are going?" asked Lumley suddenly.

Ethel shook her head.

"No."

"Neither do I," said Lumley. "I thought you might, as you know this country better than I do. I haven't been at the school long."

"It is too far from St. Jim's," said Ethel, glancing round at the green, well-wooded banks, over which in the distance rose in one place a cloud of smoke, indicating the neighbourhood of a town. "I have never been here before. And you turned so often in the trap that I quite lost the direction."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,372.



No. 16. Vol. 1 (New Series).

HIGHCLIFFE "HIT THE HIGH SPOTS" SAINTS' STRUGGLE TO BEAT THE CLOCK

Eric Kildare's Running Commentary

Visiting Highcliffe is a pleasant experience, as many of the Greyfriars fellows come across to watch the match, and possibly to note our form!

Here we are—ropes crowded with Highcliffians and Greyfriars men; I can see Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry among them.

Here comes Courtenay, the junior captain, a fellow who has roused Highcliffe from lethargy on the sports field to keen endeavour. He is with De Courcy, his slacker-turned-sportsman chum.

Merry wins the toss, and puts the Highcliffians in on a rather soft wicket.

Fatty Wynn bowling—for once he isn't having his usual success. Courtenay and De Courcy are opening their shoulders to the bowling—runs are coming thick and fast! Twenty—thirty—up goes the half century! No stopping Courtenay—he scores all round the wicket with freedom and discretion! De Courcy is elegant to watch, apparently sleepy—but meeting the ball with an unerring flick of the bat! There she goes, along the turf, for a four! Next delivery catches De Courcy in two minds—a snap catch at the wicket by Herries dismisses him for 27.

"Flip" Derwent follows in—an Australian. He is soon among the runs. St. Jim's are fielding as keenly as Test cricketers, but with the batsmen set they can do little. Derwent has 25 to his credit when Lowther makes a brilliant catch at long-on. Benson does not stay; Jones minor spoons one into Merry's hands. Wilkinson major sticks, though, and helps Courtenay to carry the score beyond the century. When Wilkinson goes, his brother follows. Highcliffe all out at last for 173—of which Frank Courtenay has made 70 not out.

St. Jim's bat steadily, Merry settling down speedily and rattling along the score. Blake goes early, caught in the slips. Figgins hits out—30 runs to his credit, flogged in his usual free style, when De Courcy catches him with a lightning leap. Saints batting stolidly against really good bowling are all out for 100—Tom Merry 47 not out.

Fatty Wynn has a gleam in his eye—and his bowling this innings shows all his old cunning, and more! Highcliffe are all at sea! Courtenay leaves, a victim to Fatty Wynn, with three! De Courcy clean bowled by Wynn, for two. Benson out, a "duck"! Derwent sticks, but the rest are victims of the "rot."

A record Highcliffe collapse ends with Jones minor's wicket falling to Wynn—the side's total 23!

Set 97 to win, St. Jim's have just time—



MONTY LOWTHER CALLING

Hallo, everybody! Scottish automatic machines don't give chocolate. No—you

have to put a penny in. Which reminds me of the Scot who was too mean to give anyone the time! And I heard of a Scot who had a friend whom he hated, but he was too mean to give him the air! Oh, and there was the Scot who was drummed out of the Clan for giving an Englishman a pain in the neck! But of course, a true Scot always thinks twice and saves his breath.

Now—before Kerr assassinates me—Mr. Ratcliff was heard to say that he is a self-made man. We are glad he takes the blame! The Shell were set to write an essay on Test cricket. Gore, feeling lazy, wrote: Rain; no play! It was Gore who told Mr. Linton in class that in Venice people travel about in gorgonzolas! Herries was taking a long time writing a telegram. "Oh," said Blake, when D'Arcy asked why. "Herries is trying to tell a stingy old uncle what he thinks of him in ten words!" "One Thousand Ways to Spend a Pleasant Evening" is the title of a new book. We do hope they haven't mentioned prep! Digby was lifting up his voice in song when Blake said Dig reminded him of a canary. "Why?" asked Dig. "You're certainly a fine yeller!" answered Blake. Gore announces that he is taking steps to put up a better wireless aerial. He'll need a bigger ladder than that! A crowd will always laugh at a fat fellow, declares Wynn, who doesn't care if they do. Making jokes at his expanses! Thrushes conceal their nests with extraordinary cunning. Yet their eggs are always spotted! Ow! After visiting Wyland golf course, Skimpole said the substratosphere was full of minute earth-particles projected from the world into space. We think Mr. Ratcliff must have been having his round just then! At Whiteun, young Gibson was taken to see the Mauretania. "That," said his uncle, "is an ocean greyhound." "Where's the hare?" demanded Gibson stolidly. Heard in the Common-room: "What did Figgins say when Crooke called him a liar?" "Nothing much." "That's funny. Figgins is a pretty quick-fisted fellow." "Well, he never said a word except 'Have you had enough yet?'" After which I will now sing the whole of the Opera, "Rigoletto." Oh, sorry you can't wait!

(Continued from previous column.)

providing they get on with the job quickly! Merry opens at a rattling pace; Blake backing up. Merry has 14 when a full-length dive by Courtenay sends him back—brilliantly caught! Figgins holds the fort, and the score leaps. Blake goes, but D'Arcy replaces him nobly. D'Arcy makes the running, beating even Figgins—then D'Arcy is bowled for 22. Kerr plays quietly while Figgins gathers the runs; ten are needed when Figgins faces De Courcy's bowling. A four—then a mighty, smashing "six"—and St. Jim's have won—only two minutes ahead of the clock!

Merry's Weekly



Week Ending June 2nd, 1934.

Flying Squad Reports

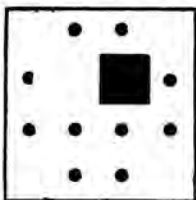
RIVALS IN RHYL BATTLE

D'Arcy suggested aerial cruise over upper reaches of River Rhyll on half holiday. Lacking seaplanes, Flying Squad attempted to hire Monteith's motor-boat—New House prefect rejected offer, with cuts from ash-plant for cheek! Squad fled, but rallying, resolved on reprisal. Immediately after lunch, Flying Squad swooped on school boat-house and commandeered Monteith's water craft. School House Flying Squad under way when Figgins & Co. arrived on scene. Squad pursued by Figgins & Co., flying along towpath route. Reaching wooden footbridge, Figgins & Co. dropped recklessly on Tom Merry & Co.—Wynn flattening into water and causing tidal wave! Cruise interrupted for pitched battle; many planes sunk; Tom Merry & Co. finally gained upper hand. On being asked to join cruise, Figgins & Co. assented. Cruise a great success—Monteith raging on return, but Squad landed secretly and in safety.

A LESSON FOR GORE

Gore boasting in Common-room of the Mediterranean cruise he took last vac.; doubting Thomases silenced by Gore's realistic descriptions of ports visited. Lowther suggested descriptions probably came out of advertising folder, and that Flying Squad action should be taken to teach Gore a lesson. Gore's holidays known usually to be spent at Bigsea. Lowther made flight to Dame Taggles, who has friends at Bigsea. Casually asked how she enjoyed her last holiday at Bigsea, Dame Taggles mentioned that she saw Gore on the sea front! Flying Squad being good customers at her tuckshop, Dame Taggles readily put statement in writing, signing it. That evening Gore entered Common-room to find Flying Squad and grinning crowd clustered round Dame Taggles' framed statement! Gore fled! So much for Gore's imaginary cruise—successfully exploded by Flying Squad!

CALIBAN'S PUZZLE CORNER



A local landowner wanted to divide his estate up into five equal sections with straight boundaries, so that each section contained two of the valuable old trees shown. He excluded his own house from the division, and don't count that. It is marked as a black square. The landowner was obliged to call on St. Jim's master to aid him, but Kerr says a keen fellow could have done it for him. Can you?

Solution of Last Week's Puzzle

The Head's shortest route is to start at B and take the following course:

B A D G E F I C B E H K L I N G J K

Thus the only corridors traversed twice are

LOOK THROUGH OUR TELEVISOR
GORDON GAY SPEAKING

Stand by, you fellows! I don't want to boast, but you're getting a real treat this week—this is Gordon Gay, of Rylcombe Grammar School, speaking, in person!

Merry has very courteously asked me if I would care to say a few words to you, and I'm jumping at the chance! You hear a good deal about Merry and his friends—rattling good fellows, mind you—but very little about myself and my chums at the Grammar School. I expect you've gathered the impression that whereas St. Jim's always lick us hollow, we at the Grammar School are just a second-rate crowd who think a lot too much of ourselves? If so, banish the thought! I admit the balance of victories on the sports field may lie slightly in favour of St. Jim's, but that's because I haven't been able to whip our fellows into proper shape yet. Wait until we really get going, and then you'll see something!

You may know that the Woottons and myself—Jack and Harry Wootton, I mean, the twins—are referred to as the three "Wallabies." A wallaby, in case you weren't born in Australia, is a species of kangaroo! Oh, yes, we three are "Aussies" all right—and if you go in for cricket, you'll know that we play it! The Woottons are crack all-rounders, and as for myself, well, perhaps I ought to be a little modest about that!

I shall have achieved something, though, if you understand that we at the Grammar School are very much alive, and quite likely to administer a licking at cricket or rowing to our friends at St. Jim's any day! Of course, we have nothing against Merry & Co. personally; they are first-class chaps, every one of them; but a ragging now and then does them no end of good! Gussy, for instance—I remember the time we fixed him up so that he had to hop home to St. Jim's on one leg—with his face painted red and blue and yellow in vivid colours! We "released" him about a hundred yards from the gates, so as not to exhaust him—it was a great lark!

Perhaps some time I'll tell you about the St. Jim's reprisal, in which I was made to look pretty much of a guy—one of the rare occasions when the Saints have taken a rise out of us!

Chirripees, chaps—we'll be meeting you!

P.-c. Crump has put in over twenty years' service as the Rylcombe constable. He doesn't claim many arrests, but avers that his presence has deterred would-be wrong doers before the act. It hasn't deterred St. Jim's fags from "scrumping" in Farmer Blunt's orchard.

D to G and F to I. The route may be varied, but it cannot be shortened.

"So did I," said Lumley. "Never mind; if we follow the river we shall come to something, I suppose. There's a stream that flows into the Rhyll about a mile from St. Jim's. This may be it."

Ethel nodded.

"It is very likely," she said. "It is roughly in this direction from the school, at all events. But I cannot say."

Jerrold Lumley grinned.

"In that case we're going towards St. Jim's again," he said. "But that is all right. Tom Merry and the others are far enough away. They are not likely to find us."

The Outsider glanced round ahead of the boat. The stream was widening, where it joined another, between well-wooded banks. In the distance rose a spire, and along one of the banks sprawled a quaint old village.

Ethel uttered an exclamation.

"I know this place!"

"What is it?" asked Lumley.

"That's the Rhyll; we're floating into it."

"Then we're only a mile from St. Jim's."

"Yes."

Jerrold Lumley looked thoughtful for a moment.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Then there's a wayside inn only a short distance from here where we can get a lunch-basket and things for camping. We can picnic on the island. You've picnicked there before, I think, with Tom Merry and the rest."

"Yes."

"Then you will like it."

"I shall not picnic there with you."

"Won't you be reasonable?" said Lumley in a low voice. "I don't want you to be hungry, Ethel, and it's no good being obstinate."

The girl did not reply.

Lumley took up the oars again and rowed on into the Rhyll. New as he was to the country, he recognised the banks of the familiar river now. He knew where he was and he had decided what to do. Of the pursuers there was no sign. Tom Merry & Co. had been shaken off.

There was currents and eddies where the stream ran into the Rhyll, and it required all Lumley's care to look after the boat. As it rocked on the eddies he glanced at Cousin Ethel. She was quite composed.

"You have a strong nerve for a girl!" said Lumley. "Can you swim?"

"Yes."

"But you would never reach the shore if anything happened to this boat," said Jerrold, "unless I saved you. I am a good swimmer."

"Indeed!"

"I could give points to some of those swanking bounders at St. Jim's if I thought it worth while, I guess," said Lumley, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Perhaps I could show them something at cricket, too, if I cared."

"But you do not play?" said Ethel, with some interest.

"It's not worth my while."

"Better worth while than some of your amusements, I should think," the girl could not help saying.

Lumley sneered.

"So they told you tales about me?"

Ethel flushed.

"Certainly not. My friends are not likely to tell tales about anyone. But your actions are common talk at the school, and I have heard you speak yourself about smoking and card-playing."

"I guess I have to pass the time, you

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know," said Lumley carelessly. "You see, I'm no older in years than the other fellows, but I'm older in other things. I was a man before I was a boy. When I was ten I had to fight for myself. I knew most things at eleven. At twelve there wasn't a sharper in New York who could have done me."

Ethel looked at him curiously.

"You have had a curious experience," she said.

"I guess so. I could interest you in some things, I think, if you cared to listen," said Jerrold Lumley. "I guess I've lived more in fifteen years than Blake or Tom Merry would live in fifty. But—"

He broke off.

"You wouldn't care to hear," he said, "and you would be horrified, too. I've had a hard life, and so has my governor, before Lumleys', Limited, 'got there.' We've been hit hard, and we've hit hard back, and some went under. I guess I've seen a man who was worth millions selling matches in Mulberry Street. It makes you think. St. Jim's is a change to me after all that."

"It must be!"

"But you'll see that a fellow like me couldn't knuckle under to Tom Merry & Co.," said Jerrold. "I must be top dog."

"They would willingly be friends with you if—if—"

Lumley laughed.

"If I were different," he said—"if I were a good little boy, and said 'yes, sir,' and 'no, sir,' according to rule. I guess I shall never come to that."

"If you would be truthful and fair and kind," said Ethel steadily. "If you play the game, as they would put it."

The Outsider nodded.

"I don't know," he said—"I might." He paused. His eyes were fixed upon the Rylcombe mill, which the boat was now passing. "If that kid isn't careful," said Lumley, "she'll be in the water in two shakes, I guess."

Cousin Ethel looked round.

The mill-wheel was revolving steadily, and the water lashed and sang round the wheel. The murmur of it reached their ears in the boat.

A little girl was playing by the wooden fence a little distance above the mill. The fence was broken in one place, and the drop into the water below was unguarded, and the child was certainly in danger.

Ethel turned pale.

The child was placing her doll on the broken fence, trying to make it sit there, and at every instant Ethel expected to see her tumble into the river.

"The little duffer!" muttered Lumley. "Where are her parents? She'll be in the water, as sure as a gun!"

Ethel's lips trembled.

"Shall I call out to her?" said Lumley, looking at Ethel. "It might startle her, and—"

Ethel shook her head.

"No—but—oh, good heavens!"

The catastrophe had come.

The doll slipped from the broken fence rail, and the child made a wild catch at it. She missed the doll, and the next moment was over the dizzy edge. The sharp, frightened cry, the quick splash rang in Ethel's ears.

The girl turned towards Lumley.

"Save her!" she cried. "I can't save her! She'll be sucked under the mill-wheel, and so should I be if I went in for her!"

Ethel clasped her hands.

"Oh heavens! If Figgins were here! Oh!"

Lumley flushed crimson.

"Take the oars!" he said sharply. "Keep the boat off! I'll try!"

"No, no!" cried Ethel. "She's lost! You cannot—"

Lumley did not listen.

A long, powerful spring carried him far into the water, and the next moment he was swimming with powerful strokes.

CHAPTER 12.

Jerrold Lumley—Hero!

Cousin Ethel stood in the boat as it rocked. Her face was as white as chalk, her eyes shining with fear. She was afraid for Jerrold Lumley as for the child. A woman had appeared on the bank, and was crying and wringing her hands.

"Save her—save her!"

A man in a white, floury coat came into view from the mill. It was Miller Giles, a fat and comfortable miller, well known to the boys of St. Jim's. But he did not look comfortable now. Miller Giles had lived by a river all his life, but he could not swim a stroke, and if he had gone

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into the water he would have gone direct to the bottom like a stone. That, however, would perhaps not have stopped him from plunging in to the rescue of his little daughter had not Lumley been first.

Lumley had reached the child.

As the current swept the little girl down towards the mill-wheel Lumley, swimming from the boat, had intercepted her, and his grasp had closed upon the long, floating hair.

The child was unconscious, and did not make a movement.

Lumley secured a firm grip upon her, and swam for his life.

For his life—that was what it was now!

The current was sucking him towards the mill-wheel, and once sucked under there no power on earth could save him. The mere thought of it sent a cold shudder through his body.

He fought for his life, and the life of the little girl he held. Bravely, with steady courage, the Outsider of St. Jim's struggled with the current that sought to drag him to a horrible doom.

The water sang and bubbled round him—sang and bubbled, not with music to his ears, but like a chorus of demons. The sun flashed in his eyes, the mill and the trees on the bank seemed to be swimming round him.

He was fighting hard, but he knew that he was getting the worst of it. The current was sucking him down to death under the wheel.

Without the dead weight that was dragging him down, Jerrold Lumley knew that he could save himself ere his strength was spent.

Save himself!

Why should he give his life for a stranger—he, who had never helped a lame dog over a stile, never extended a helping hand to a human being in distress, never cared whether anyone was in distress or not?

He could have laughed at himself in the midst of the whirling, swirling waters.

What was it kept him from throwing aside his burden and fighting for his own life? What was it?

The thought of a scornful face that would look at him when he came back safe—alone, and the knowledge that Figgins would have died rather than let the child sink if he had been there, and that Cousin Ethel knew that.

What did it matter to the Outsider of St. Jim's if Cousin Ethel despised him?

It mattered enough to make Jerrold Lumley cling to the unconscious child, while the whirling waters dragged him to death.

But it was not to death that Lumley was to go. He had left the girl in the boat, and Cousin Ethel had not been idle.

The miller shouted to her, and with a few strokes she brought the boat near enough for Giles to jump in.

The miller seized the oars, and with a few strokes sent the boat to the rescue. In the water Giles would have been helpless, but in the boat he was the right man in the right place.

Lumley could hear now the grim grinding of the wheel in his dizzy ears. He had given himself up for lost! Still he clung to the child.

But a rough, white face bent over him, blotting out the sky, and a hand grasped him, and he was dragged with the child into the boat.

"Heaven bless you, lad!" a husky voice muttered.

That was the last Jerrold Lumley heard or knew. Darkness descended upon him.

Consciousness struggled back, and it seemed to Jerrold Lumley that he was still fighting in the whirling waters, that the mill-wheel was dragging him down, down, down to death!

Now he was under the wheel, grinding, grinding, with a horrible clatter; now he cried out aloud and came to his senses. He was lying on a sofa in a room of the mill, the water dripping round him from his drenched clothing, the sun shining upon him through a window.

The miller was on one side of him, Cousin Ethel on the other. There were tears on Cousin Ethel's cheeks. Lumley felt a taste of brandy in his mouth. It was not a strange taste to the reckless blackguard of St. Jim's.

Lumley started up.

"What—what—where am I, then? I—I thought I was under the mill! I—I thought—"

He broke off.

"Thank goodness you're not, my lad!" said the miller, with tears in his eyes. "My word, I thought you were gone for good!"

"Where is she?"

"The child? Safe with her mother, thanks to you, young master!"

Lumley had not meant the child—he was thinking of Cousin Ethel.

The girl laid her hand on his, and he looked at her. "You're safe!" he muttered—"you're safe! After I jumped from the boat I was afraid—afraid it might drift on the wheel, but—but you're all right!"

Ethel's tears fell.

Lumley grinned through the wet on his face. He had been through a terrible experience, but already he was recovering. He was the rough-natured, hardened Outsider of St. Jim's again almost.

"You're crying!" he exclaimed.

"No," said Ethel. "Yes. I—I—"

"Did you think I was drowned?"

"No; but—"

"Would you have cried if I had been?" asked Lumley.

"Yes, indeed!"

"Why?"

Ethel did not answer that question. She wiped away her tears. The heroism of the Outsider had touched her strangely.

"I say, I'm sorry!" said Lumley, after a pause. The miller, satisfied that he was all right, had gone into the adjoining room, where the mother was trying to restore the child. "It was a cad's trick to carry you off like that. I only wanted to score over Tom Merry and Figgins; but it was rotten! I'm sorry!"

"That is all right," said Ethel.

"You don't bear any malice?"

"Indeed—no!"

"Because I fished that little duffer out, do you mean?" asked Lumley, with a grin. "That's a curious reason. It has nothing to do with it, you know."

"Because you are brave and noble," said Ethel, in a low voice; "because you are not all bad, as I thought you were; because I admire you."

Lumley stared.

"I guess you're joking," he remarked.

"I'm not."

"Brave and noble! My hat!"

Ethel smiled. It had never occurred to Lumley that his action was either brave or noble. And Lumley had one virtue—he had no humbug about him.

"I think it was brave and noble," said Ethel.

"Oh, you're off the track!" said Jerrold coolly. "I don't want to strut in borrowed plumes, you know. It wasn't noble. I suppose it was rather brave, when you come to think of it, though I never thought of that at the time; but anybody who knows me will tell you that I've got grit. My hat! I needed it in the old days, too. But don't you make any mistake; I didn't go into the water from any noble motive."

"You went in to save the child," said Ethel.

"I guess so. But I didn't care a Continental red cent for the child, or because of it," said Lumley, with brutal frankness. "The brat was nothing to me. Do you think I would risk my life for a stranger's kid?"

Ethel looked at him.

"Then why did you do it?" she asked.

"Because I was an ass!" said Lumley, with a grin. "I held on to the kid because—because— Oh, you'll laugh!"

"I shall not laugh, Lumley."

"Well, I jumped in, and I held on to the kid, while I knew I was a gone coon if I didn't let go, because—because"—he laughed scoffingly—"because I knew that Tom Merry or Figgins would have done it, and—and I wouldn't do less than they'd do, with you looking on. That's all, and it's the solid truth!"

Ethel was silent for a minute.

"Well," said the Outsider, "now you know how noble it was. It was dead mean—like everything I do, Ethel. I'm a rank outsider, you know—a blackguard of the Lower School; no good in me. The Head would kick me out if he could. The fellows would all like to send me to Coventry. And I don't care a red cent for the lot of them if they do. I guess I can stand alone anywhere. And I've treated you like a cad, Ethel. And now I'm on my back here, and can't move for a bit, now's your chance to cut."

"Cut?"

"Yes," said Lumley, with a sneer. "There's the door, and I can't stop you. Now's your chance. You can get away. It's only ten minutes' walk by the short cut to Wayland. Now's your chance."

Ethel did not stir.

"Why don't you go?" he asked. "Why?"

"I shall not leave you till you are quite recovered," said Ethel quietly.

He looked at her grimly.

"When I have recovered I shall not let you go."

She smiled.

"We will talk about it then," she said.

The miller and the miller's wife were all gratitude to Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

Whatever his motives may have been, all the miller knew or cared about was that Lumley had risked, and nearly lost, his life to save the little girl, and had saved her.

That was enough for Mr. Giles and his wife.

The mother wept tears of joy and gratitude over Lumley, and, in fact, put his politeness to a very great strain by her emotion, which the hardened lad did not understand.

"It's all right!" he exclaimed at last. "If the kid's safe I'm glad. And if you can dry my clothes for me I'll take it kindly. But that's enough. I'm not a hero, and wouldn't be one at any price, and I guess I don't want any scene."

And Mrs. Giles made no more scene, but she attributed Jerrold's rudeness to his modesty, and perhaps thought the better of him for it.

Jerrold was taken to the miller's room to change his clothes, and he came down in a suit of clothes belonging to Mr. Giles while his own were being dried. He looked odd enough in them, too, and Cousin Ethel could not help smiling.

Jerrold grinned awkwardly.

"I know I look a blessed guy," he remarked.

"I am glad you have not caught cold," said Ethel.

The junior laughed.

"Just like a girl to think of that," he said. "I never catch cold. I'm as tough as nails—hard all through. They say my clothes will be at least an hour before I can put them on again. It's rotten."

"You must wait."

"And you?" said Jerrold.

Ethel smiled.

"You are quite yourself again now," she said. "You have quite recovered."



Kit Erroll comes to Rookwood as the son of a hero, but in reality he is the son of a crook who plans to rob the famous school. Yet the cheery chums of Rookwood, Jimmy Silver & Co., make a great friend of the new junior and stick by him when his secret comes out. There are thrills in plenty in this grand book-length yarn of the schoolboy who was the son of a cracksmán.

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"I guess so. And you remember what I said? You're not going?"

"No."

"And you will stay?"

"Yes."

"I guess I don't catch on," said Jerrold.

"After what you have done—"

"Oh, leave that out of it!" said Lumley. "I've told you my motives. I never was a humbug. Don't make me one." Cousin Ethel smiled.

"I cannot leave that out of it," she said, "and I will not. And I think your motives were nobler than you suppose yourself. You wanted me to picnic with you—to have tea before we returned to St. Jim's, and to go back good friends."

"Yes."

"Well, if you still wish it—"

"Of course I do!" said Lumley eagerly.

"Let it be so, then."

"You mean it?"

"Certainly!"

"Honour?"

"Honour!" said Cousin Ethel, laughing.

"Hark!" exclaimed Jerrold Lumley, holding up his hand. There was a sound of oars in the river, floating in the still afternoon, clear over the grind of the mill-wheel.

Jerrold stepped to the open window.

Out on the stream a boat was in sight—a large boat, with six St. Jim's juniors in it. Ethel and the Outsider recognised Figgins and Kerr, and Blake and Tom Merry, and Lowther and Kangaroo. The others were not to be seen.

What had happened was easily guessed. The chums of St. Jim's had obtained the boat, and these six had followed the chase by water, while the others took charge of the cycles.

The faint sound of their voices came to the ears of the two in the mill, though what they said could not be heard. Jerrold looked at Ethel.

One call from the girl would have brought the juniors to the mill, and she would have been rid of the Outsider of St. Jim's.

But after what she had said—

The girl compressed her lips.

There were her friends searching for her, but she was honour bound now not to betray Jerrold Lumley. She had to let them pass.

Cousin Ethel turned from the window. Jerrold turned, too, and there was a curious expression upon his face.

"You keep your word," he remarked.

"Did you think I should break it?"

He mused.

"I have broken mine," he said, "many a time. I was never taught to look on a promise as sacred."

"You were very badly taught, then."

"I guess so. And you always keep your word?"

"Always."

"You have never broken one?"

"Never!"

"I guess that's real nice," said the Outsider.

And his face remained very thoughtful for some time afterwards.

CHAPTER 13.

A Surprise for Gussy!

"LOOK here—"

"Weally, Dig—"

"I tell you—"

"Weally—"

"Stop, you chump!"

"I refuse to be called a chump!"

"Fathead, then!" said Digby emphatically. His voice had been growing more emphatic for some time.

"Waster! Ass! Fralicious ass!"

"Weally, Dig—"

"We've done Wayland," said Digby. "We haven't heard anything of them there. My idea is to go up the river."

"And my ideah is to go down."

"Ass!"

"Duffah!"

And D'Arcy and Digby held their bicycles, and stared at one another and frowned. They had dismounted on the bank of the Rhyl, within sight of the mill.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had changed his clothes at St. Jim's, and then set out on the track of Tom Merry & Co. He was very exasperated at being left behind, being under the impression that he had changed in record time, whereas, as a matter of fact, the change had occupied a quarter of an hour at least.

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The swell of St. Jim's had met Digby on the road, and stopped to help him mend his puncture. Mellish had passed them while they were so engaged, and from him they had learned that Lumley had gone in the direction of Wayland.

When Dig's bike was in order again, they had started off for Wayland. Mellish's information might or might not be correct; but, in any case, it was too late to think of overtaking Tom Merry & Co.

They rode to Wayland, and looked for Lumley there; but no one, of course, had seen anything of the trap, which was in quite a different direction. Then they rode down to the river, thinking that Lumley might have taken that direction, and at the point where the upper stream joined the Rhyl they had stopped.

D'Arcy was of opinion that if Lumley had come in that direction, he would have gone down the river towards St. Jim's; and Digby thought that the Outsider would have done exactly the opposite. So they argued it out, not very politely.

"You see," said Dig, "he would want to keep away from the school."

"On the contrary, deah boy," said D'Arcy, "he would double back towards the school, you know, so as to throw us off the twack."

"Rats!"

"Weally, Dig—"

"He would keep as far off St. Jim's as he could."

"Wubbish!"

"Look here, Gussy—"

"I refuse to do anythin' of the sort. I am assured that the wascal has gone down the wivah."

"If he's been here at all, he's gone up."

"Vewy well. I will go down, and you shall go up," said Arthur Augustus. "It wouldn't be safe for you to meet him alone, but you're not likely to, in that direction."

"You're not likely to, or I'd come with you," said Dig. "I should not need your assistance, deah boy. Now, which way are you going?"

"Up the river."

"Pway listen to weason—"

"Rats!"

"I insist—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"I refuse to do anythin' of the sort. I should be sowwy to have to thwash you before we part, Dig—"

Digby laughed.

"Oh, buzz off, Gussy! We'll compare notes at St. Jim's. I don't suppose either of us will be right."

"Very well, deah boy. Good-bye!"

And Digby rode up the towing-path. D'Arcy wheeled his bicycle along the bank in a thoughtful mood. He was nearer to the fugitive than he imagined, but he was not in the least on the track. He glanced at the mill and paused.

"Bai Jove! Pewwaps Millah Giles will have seen somethin' of the twap!" he exclaimed. "No harm in askin', at any wate."

And Arthur Augustus wheeled his machine up to the mill. He rang his bell as he came up, and the miller came out. He knew D'Arcy of St. Jim's very well.

"Good-afternoon, Master D'Arcy!" he said.

"Good-afternoon, Giles!" said the swell of St. Jim's, raising his cap gracefully to the miller's wife, who was looking out. "I am lookin' for a chap. Pewwaps you have seen him?"

"Perhaps," said the miller.

"Has a chap in a twap passed this way?" asked D'Arcy.

"I have not noticed him."

"A wotten-lookin' chap," said D'Arcy. "A mean, ewawlin' wottah, with a face like a—a—a pwize-fightah, you know, and a wotten, wuffianly expression. A kind of chap who looks capable of pushin' a fellow into a ditch and wuinin' his clothes."

The miller smiled.

"I haven't seen him."

"He may have left the twap somewhere," D'Arcy remarked thoughtfully. "He would have a gal with him, vewy pwobably."

"I'm sorry I haven't seen him. Will you come in and rest?" asked the miller. "There's a young gentleman belonging to St. Jim's here now."

"Bai Jove! Who is it?"

"I don't know his name," said Mr. Giles; "but he's a splendid chap—one of the best. He jumped into the river to save my little Alice, and was nearly sucked under the mill-wheel."

"Bai Jove! It must be a School House chap," said D'Arcy.

The miller laughed. He knew of the rivalry between the Houses at St. Jim's as everybody round the school did. It certainly seemed humorous to him that D'Arcy should



"Oh, good heavens!" gasped Cousin Ethel. The catastrophe had come. The doll slipped from the child's hands and she made a wild clutch at it. The next moment the little girl, with a sharp, frightened cry, fell over the edge of the bank into the water!

conclude, as a matter of course, that the heroic rescuer was a School House fellow.

"I don't know about that, Master D'Arcy," he said. "I only know he's a splendid lad, and as brave as a lion."

"Blake, very likely."

"No, it's not Master Blake. It's a lad I haven't seen before," said the miller. "I think he's a new boy."

D'Arcy looked puzzled.

"Bai Jove! The only new boy lately is that wank outsidah Lumley, the chap I'm lookin' for," he remarked.

"Will you come in?"

"Yaas, wathah! I'd like to see this chap."

Arthur Augustus leaned his bicycle against a tree, and followed the miller in. He was puzzled by what Mr. Giles had told him. Not for an instant did he connect the rescuer of little Alice in his mind with the Outsider. That was too wildly improbable to be thought of.

But he could not guess whom it might be. Any one of the chums of the School House might have acted so; but Mr. Giles knew them all by sight, and this was a fellow the miller did not know.

"Is he a juniah, Mr. Giles?" asked D'Arcy.

"Yes; no older than yourself, sir."

"Bai Jove! Was he hurt?"

"No, luckily," said Mr. Giles. "He's only waiting here for his clothes to dry, and I've given him some of mine to wear while they're drying. The young lady is waiting, too."

"The young lady?"

"Yes, Master D'Arcy."

"So there was a young lady with him?"

The miller paused and looked at D'Arcy. He knew that Ethel was D'Arcy's cousin, and D'Arcy's ignorance of the fact that she was with Lumley seemed to point to a secret being kept. Mr. Giles was a good-natured man, and he did not want to put his foot in it if he could help it. But

he reflected at once that Ethel was not the kind of girl to be making secret excursions with anyone, and she was not likely to object to her cousin knowing that she was at the mill.

"Yes, it was your cousin, Master D'Arcy," said the miller, having come to this conclusion.

D'Arcy jumped.

"My cousin!"

"Yes."

"Cousin Ethel?"

"Certainly!"

D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and stared blankly at the miller, who had his hand on the door now of the little sitting-room overlooking the river, where Lumley and Cousin Ethel were sitting.

"You are jokin', I suppose, Mr. Giles?" said Arthur Augustus.

"Certainly not!"

"But—but my cousin—"

"She is here."

"Imposs!"

The miller looked flurried. He began to think that he had put his foot in it, after all. D'Arcy's amazement was so extreme.

"And she was with the chap who fished your little gal out, Mr. Giles?" asked D'Arcy, in surprise.

"Yes."

"Then one of our chaps must have found her and taken her away from that wottah," said D'Arcy. "But you say you don't know the chap? Then I fail to undahstand the mattah at all. You had bettah show me in."

The miller opened the door, and D'Arcy walked in. Two figures turned towards him from the open window. One was Cousin Ethel. The other was a lad in clothes

half a dozen sizes too large for him—a ludicrous figure enough—but his face the swell of St. Jim's knew well.

He uttered a cry of amazement.
 "Lumley!"
 Cousin Ethel caught her breath.
 "Arthur, you here!"

CHAPTER 14.

Just Like Lumley!

LUMLEY stood looking at D'Arcy in silence, his hands clenched. He had believed that he had thrown Tom Merry & Co. completely off the track. They had been left behind up the river, and most of them had passed in the boat, and disappeared towards the school. And he remembered that he had not seen Arthur Augustus among the pursuers at all. The swell of St. Jim's was the one he feared least. But it was the one he had feared the least who had found him.

Arthur Augustus stared at Lumley in blank amazement. He was too astonished to find Lumley there to be able to speak.

"That's him!" said the miller behind. "That's the chap who pulled my little girl out of the river. That's the young gentleman, Master D'Arcy. And I can never say how thankful I am to him."

"What!"

The miller closed the door and left them.

Ethel made a step towards her cousin.

She was in an embarrassing position enough, and the colour was burning in her cheeks now.

"Arthur!"

"Ethel, I've found you, then?"

"It seems so."

"And I've found this wascal," said Arthur Augustus, clenching his hands as he turned round towards the Outsider of St. Jim's. "I don't know how you got here, Ethel, deah gal, but I'm glad I found you. Will you pray step into the next woom for a few minutes while I speak to Lumley?"

"No."

"Ethel—"

"Let me explain, Arthur."

"The wascal needs no explainin'," said the swell of St. Jim's. "I have found the scoundwel, and it only remains for me to thwash him."

"But—"

"There are no buts in the mattah. Now, Ethel, pway leave us alone! Lumley, you cad, you are an ntitah wottah to sheltah yourself behind a gal in this way!"

Lumley laughed.

"I guess I'm not doing that," he said, "but I'm ready to face the music at St. Jim's. I'm not taking any till then."

"You will take a thwashin' now?"

"Go ahead!"

"I cannot thwash you in the pwesence of a lady, as you know perfectly well," the swell of St. Jim's exclaimed, in a tone of great exasperation.

"Then you had better put it off for a bit, I guess."

D'Arcy breathed hard through his nose. Cousin Ethel laid her hand gently upon his arm.

"Arthur, will you listen to me?"

"Certainly, deah gal!"

"You must not touch Lumley."

"Weally, Ethel—"

"He has been very brave. He has done wrong, but—but I have forgiven him," said Ethel quietly.

"That's all vewy well, Ethel, and I will forgive him when I have given him a thwashin'!" said Arthur Augustus. "Not before, of course."

"You must let him alone, Arthur, and ask Tom Merry and the others to do so. He risked his life to save the miller's little girl."

D'Arcy shrugged his shoulders.

"Pewwaps," said D'Arcy, with heavy sarcasm—"pewwaps, Ethel, you would pwefer me to wetiah and leave you with that boundah."

Ethel nodded.

"That would be best, Arthur."

D'Arcy jumped.

"Ethel!"

"It would be quite the best thing to do, under the circumstances."

"You are jokin', of course, though weally this is not a time to joke."

"I am not joking."

"But you don't mean—"

"Yes, I do."

"But—"

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"Surely you can trust me to know best what to do, Arthur," said Ethel, laying her hand on her cousin's shoulder with her sweet, winning smile.

"Well, I know you are a keenah chap—I mean gal—than I am," said D'Arcy. "But—but I don't quite see—"

"It is all right."

"Oh, vewy well! If you wish me to wetiah, I twast I shall nevah oppose the wishes of a lady, even of one natuwallly undah my authowity as my cousin," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I will wetiah. But, wemembah, Ethel, I don't believe in that wascally boundah the least bit. I considah it all spoof."

And Arthur Augustus, with his aristocratic nose very high in the air, retired from the room, and went back to his bicycle in quite a dazed frame of mind.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley looked curiously at Cousin Ethel as D'Arcy retired.

The Outsider of St. Jim's wore a very odd expression upon his face. He did not understand girls—at least, girls like Cousin Ethel—and he did not follow the workings of her mind at all.

Ethel smiled.

"Poor Arthur!" she said. "He does not understand."

"No," said Lumley.

"But—but you must excuse him for not believing in you," said Ethel. "You will admit that you have not acted in a way to raise his opinion of you."

Lumley laughed.

"Quite so!"

The miller put his head in at the door.

"The clothes are quite dry now, sir."

"Thank you!" said Lumley.

He went to the miller's room to change back into his own clothes. In a quarter of an hour he reappeared. Ethel was waiting.

"You are ready?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And you will really come?"

"Of course."

"And picn' with me?" pursued Lumley.

Ethel looked at her watch.

"We shall have to make it a very short picnic, then," she said. "I must get to the school, you know."

"Very well. I promised to take you back to the school by five o'clock," said Lumley. "We shall stop at the riverside inn for tea, and go straight on to the school. Then we shall not be so very late."

"That will be very nice."

They went down to the boat.

The miller and his wife overwhelmed Lumley with thanks again as he stepped into the boat, to all of which the junior listened with a bored expression upon his face.

He put out the oars, and the boat glided down the river.

Ethel took the rudder-lines.

She was in a very curious position, and she felt it. A thought was in her mind that what had happened might have a good effect upon the Outsider. The fellow who had dared to risk his life must have good elements in his nature.

But she did not know the Outsider well yet.

The boat glided down the river in the direction Tom Merry & Co. had gone in an hour before.

The quaint, old-fashioned inn of the waterside, with its terrace looking on the river, rose into view among the trees.

Lumley brought the boat towards the bank.

"Here's our place," he said.

Ethel nodded.

Now that she was fairly committed to have tea with the Outsider, she felt a little chilling doubt in her mind.

But it was too late to think of retreat now.

Lumley moored the boat, and gave Ethel his hand ashore, and they went on the terrace. There, at one of the little tables, Lumley ordered tea.

Lumley's orders were lavish; he had unlimited pocket-money, and he always gave himself the best of everything. He wanted to give Ethel the best, too. But the resources of the inn were not needed for Ethel.

She would take nothing but tea and a little bread-and-butter, and it was in vain that the Outsider urged her.

She simply would not allow him to expend money upon her; she had forgiven him for what he had done, but she would go no further.

Lumley bit his lip.

He did not understand girls, and if Cousin Ethel had sent Arthur Augustus away, and come with him, he could not see why they should not have what he regarded as a really good time.

Was it merely nonsense on her part, designed to irritate him and keep up his interest?

If Ethel had known that that thought was in the Outsider's mind she would have risen from her seat and left him on the instant.

But she did not know.

She was anxious for the ordeal—for such it was to her—to be over, and she wanted to get to St. Jim's. Unless Arthur Augustus had fallen in with Tom Merry & Co., they were probably still searching for her, and she disliked to think of their wasting their time in that manner.

She made a gesture at last.

Lumley looked at her.

"You are anxious to go?" he asked.

Ethel nodded.

"Yes; I should like to get to the school."

"A couple of hours is enough of my society, I suppose?"

Lumley remarked, with a grin. "It is nearly two since I took you from D'Arcy, in Rylcombe Lane!"

"I ought to get in."

"Very well; here's the boat."

Lumley placed her in the boat, took the oars, and pulled away slowly towards St. Jim's. The Outsider did not know whether to be satisfied in his mind or not. He had certainly scored over Tom Merry & Co., as he proposed, and for the consequences—certain to come—he did not care a straw!

But—

Well, after all, it was better to have Cousin Ethel contented to be with him than to have her sitting silent and angry and resentful.

He looked at her as she sat in the stern of the boat.

The girl looked very pretty and very sweet, and there was a gentle expression on her face, which had not been there before the incident at the mill.

Lumley wondered what she was thinking of.

He caught her glance, and coloured a little.

"Are your thoughts a secret?" asked Lumley, smiling.

She smiled, too.

"No, not at all. I was thinking of you."

"Of me!"

"Yes. I was thinking that a boy capable of such an act of bravery—"

"Oh, no more of that, please!"

"Capable of such an act of bravery," went on Ethel calmly. "I was thinking that it was a pity such a boy should not be truer to his better nature—more worthy of his courage. If you chose—"

Lumley laughed lightly.

"If I chose I could become a model like Tom Merry or Figgins," he remarked.

"You could become a nice and kind-natured boy like Tom Merry or Figgins," said Cousin Ethel.

He yawned.

"That's not my ambition. Perhaps I could—perhaps I couldn't. But I don't feel any ambition in that direction."

"It is a pity."

"I guess not. I'm very well as I am. And won't you ever like me unless I become more like Tom Merry or Figgins?"

Ethel was silent.

The boat glided on, and Lumley brought it to the bank under a clump of willows some distance from the St. Jim's landing-place.

He jumped ashore, and helped Ethel out.

"We can walk through the trees to the school," he said, as they stood under the deep shadow of the drooping branches.

"Very well," said Ethel.

"But perhaps you would rather say good-bye to me here, and go into the school alone?" Lumley suggested.

"I do not care."

"You do not care if the fellows passed remarks about your coming in with me?"

Ethel's head was very erect.

"Not in the least."

"Ah, I like you!" said Lumley. "Do you know, I think you must like me a little—although I'm not at all like Tom Merry or Figgins—or you wouldn't have been so kind to me the last hour."

The girl moved away a pace. There was something in the Outsider's manner she did not like; an indefinable something in his tone. It struck her that, after all, perhaps, she had acted unwisely; the Outsider was not the kind of boy to understand her finer motives.

He came nearer to her. With a sudden movement he took both her hands in his and held them tightly.

Ethel drew a quick breath.

"Good-bye—good-bye!" she said quickly.

He did not release her hands, but stood looking in her eyes with a peculiar expression in his own.

"Don't hurry away," he said.

She tried to drag her hands away.

"Let me go!" she exclaimed.

"In a moment! But—"

"Let me go!"

"Come, come," said Lumley, with a smile. "No acting, you know!"

"What!"

He laughed.

"Come, come, Ethel! We've had a very pleasant afternoon, now, haven't we? Before we part, won't you give me one—just one—little friendly salute?"

Ethel panted.

"You—you cad!" she said, in tense tones. "How silly I was to think for a moment you would understand anything—ever look upon anything as a decent boy would! You cad! Let me go, or I'll call for help!"

Lumley, in his surprise, relaxed his hold, and she tore her hands away and ran quickly through the trees.

He made a motion to follow, and then paused. She was gone.

Lumley turned back towards the boat, a strange expression upon his face.

CHAPTER 15.

In Honour Bound!

"COUSIN ETHEL!"

"Ethel!"

"At last!"

The girl ran out of the trees, still crimson with exertion, and breathing tremulously.

She almost ran into Tom Merry & Co.

They looked at her, and Figgins ran forward, almost unconsciously taking her hand. She caught his arm, and stood breathing hard, her colour coming and going.

SOME CONSOLATION!



Passenger: "Be careful—this hill is dangerous!"

Driver: "I can't slow down—the brakes aren't working."

Passenger: "You don't mean to say—"

Driver: "Don't get excited—the horn's all right!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Tounstain, 118, Town Street, Earls Heaton, Dewsbury.

"Ethel, what is the matter? Has that cad dared—"

Figgins broke off.

Ethel recovered herself almost in a moment. She had all a well-bred girl's horror of making any kind of scene.

"It is nothing," she said. "I have been running, that is all. Is Arthur here?"

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass curiously upon his cousin. "I met Tom Mewwy and the west some time back, and weported to them that you had decided to wernain with that wottab, Ethel."

"Shut up, Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Cheese it!"

"I wefuse—"

Ethel smiled at the juniors.

"I am all right," she said. "I have been running. Lumley put me ashore by the willows, and I came through the wood."

"That's all, then?" said Figgins, in great relief.

Ethel blushed. It occurred to her that if she said that that was all, it would be perilously near an untruth. But if she said Lumley had frightened her, it would be very bad for Lumley.

"N-no," she murmured. "That is not all. But—but it is all right. I have not been hurt."

The juniors exchanged significant glances.

If Ethel said she had not been hurt, it was the truth; but they had no doubt that Lumley had been guilty of some rudeness, as on previous occasions.

And their looks spoke volumes of what they could not say before the girl. They meant to make the Outsider of St. Jim's smart for it.

"I am so sorry, Ethel," said D'Arcy gently, without specifying exactly what he was sorry for. "But weally, I wanted to take you away from that boundah, you know, and you would not let me."

"It is all right, Arthur."

"I felt that I could not oppose your wishes, deah gal, though weally Lowthah has been tellin' me I was an ass not to slog the Outsidah on the spot."

"Oh, shut up!" growled Monty Lowther.

"It is all right now," said Ethel. "I must go to the school. Mrs. Holmes will be wondering what has become of me."

The juniors gathered round Cousin Ethel like a bodyguard. They walked to the school with serious faces. Ethel

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wished to speak, but for some time she could not decide what to say. It was not till they had nearly reached the School House that she found words to say.

She looked uneasily at the juniors.

"I want you to do me a favour," she said.

"Anything, deah gal."

"Of course," said half a dozen voices. "You've only to say, Cousin Ethel."

"You are sure you mean that?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Quite sure?"

"Honour bright!"

"Very well, then. You are thinking of Jerrold Lumley, and about punishing him for his action this afternoon," said Ethel.

Tom Merry & Co. were silent.

They certainly were thinking of that, but they didn't want to go into details before Ethel.

The girl looked directly at them.

"Well," said Tom Merry at last, cautiously—"well, you see, he's acted like an awfully rotten cad."

"A weally wank outsidah, you know, Ethel."

Cousin Ethel shook her head.

"You must not touch him," she said.

"Oh!" exclaimed Herries. "Really, you know—"

"Draw it mild!" murmured Digby.

Ethel's look was firm.

"This is a favour I want to ask. You must all promise not to touch Lumley for what he has done—each of you."

The juniors looked dumbfounded.

They were at a loss for words, and Cousin Ethel pursued:

"You think it curious I should ask this, as the injured party. Lumley treated me very foolishly and rudely, and I know he ought to be punished. I dislike him very much—more now than ever before. I do not think I can ever bear to see him again, if I can help it. But—but I do not want him to be punished."

Tom Merry appeared to gulp something down.

"Then we agree," he said.

"I know I can trust you," said Cousin Ethel. "Not one of you will lay a hand on him. I have your promise?"

"Honour bright!"

"Thank you so much!"

And Ethel, with a graceful smile, went into the Head's house.

Cousin Ethel did not see very much of Tom Merry & Co. that visit, for the afternoon was now gone. But presently she had tea in Tom Merry's study, and it was a very pleasant meal. One thing only was weighing on the juniors' minds—the fact that their promise bound them, and they could not touch Lumley-Lumley.

The Outsider of St. Jim's was to escape scot free after all he had done.

When Cousin Ethel departed the juniors saw her off, and they walked back to the school in a gloomy group. They wanted to make Lumley pay for what he had done, but it was not within the realms of possibility now. Clifton Dane, Bernard Glyn, and Reilly were lounging at the door of the School House. They stared at the clouded faces of Tom Merry & Co.

"Anything wrong?" asked Glyn.

"Oh, no!"

"Faith, and ye look specially cheerful, if everything's right!" remarked Reilly. "Have you sat on yer Sunday topper, Gussy?"

"Weally, Weilly—"

"Oh, it's rotten!" said Tom Merry, while the others grunted with annoyance. "You know we were hunting that cad Lumley up and down this afternoon, because he had driven off with Cousin Ethel. Well, Ethel's made us promise not to punish him. You know how a girl is—always tender-hearted, and not wanting even a beast like Lumley to be hurt? We've given our word."

"Rotten!" said Dane.

"Beastly!" agreed Glyn.

"Faith, and ye're done in, then!" said Reilly thoughtfully. "Have ye all promised not to touch the spalpeen?"

"That's it!" said Figgins gloomily.

Reilly grinned.

"Then ye're all barred. But—"

"But what?" asked Tom Merry, struck by the expression on the Irish junior's face. "We can't get out of it."

"No, but—" Reilly chuckled "Shure, and the spalpeen ought to be punished!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And sure, I'm the boy to do it!" said Reilly. "I haven't promised anybody anything, and I'm going to do it."

The chums stared at him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Trust a blessed Irishman to find a way out of a difficulty! Ha, ha, ha!"

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"I don't know whether our promise allows that," debated Tom Merry. "We said we wouldn't touch him."

"That's all right," said Blake. "We didn't say Reilly wouldn't touch him. Reilly's name wasn't mentioned."

"But Ethel meant that he wasn't to be punished for what he did—"

"Reilly's a free agent—we're not going to give him orders," Manners remarked.

"Faith, and ye're right. Besides, sure, I'm not going to punish him for what he did," said Reilly solemnly; "I'm going to fight the boulder because I don't like the way he does his front hair, begorra!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, here he is!" exclaimed Digby.

The Outsider of St. Jim's came down the passage. There was a gloomy look upon his face, too. Perhaps he was not wholly satisfied with the ending of the afternoon's adventure, and was realising his blunder.

"Faith, and I want to speak to yez, Lumley."

Lumley looked up.

He scowled at the sight of the chums of St. Jim's.

"Oh, it's you!" he exclaimed. "A ragging, I suppose? Well, you're a dozen to one, and I guess you can do as you please. I'm ready."

"We're not going to rag you," said Jack Blake. "We promised Cousin Ethel not."

"I guess I don't care. I'm not asking to be let off. You may begin as soon as you like," said Lumley, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"We shall not begin."

"Wathah not!"

"Faith, and it's me ye've got to deal with!" exclaimed Reilly. "I don't like the way ye do yer front hair, me jewel, and ye're going to fight me for it."

"You dummy—"

Smack!

Reilly's open hand smote the Outsider of St. Jim's full upon the cheek, and he staggered. The next moment he sprang fiercely upon the Irish junior.

Kangaroo ran between.

"Not here!" he exclaimed. "We don't want all the prefects in the School House on the scene. Come to the gym."

"I don't care where I come," said Lumley, between his teeth, "only be quick, that's all!"

The juniors made their way to the gym in a body. They did not enter it. In a quiet spot, lighted by the blaze from one of the gym windows, they stopped, and there they formed a ring, and Lumley and Reilly took their jackets off.

The Outsider rolled up his sleeves with a bitter smile upon his face.

"So you're all keeping off the grass," he said. "Don't you feel inclined to wade in, Figgins?"

Figgins gritted his teeth.

"Yes, I do," he said, "but I've promised Cousin Ethel."

"What a convenient promise!" sneered Lumley.

Figgins made a movement towards the Outsider, but Kerr caught him by the arm and pulled him back.

"Don't be an ass, Figgy," muttered the cool Scots junior.

"Can't you see his game? He'd give anything to make you break your promise to Cousin Ethel. That's what he wants."

Figgins breathed hard through his nose.

"It's all right, Kerr, old man; I won't touch him."

"Are ye ready, Lumley?" asked Reilly.

"I guess so."

And they began.

The Outsider put up a good fight—for him—but he was not the match for the hardy, high-spirited Irish junior. Reilly received many a hard knock without flinching, but he gave back many more than he received.

There was no danger of the Outsider refusing to take his punishment. He stood up to Reilly till he could stand no longer.

But that time came at last, and after the fifth round Lumley-Lumley lay on his back, too exhausted to rise.

He refused any helping hand with the usual snarl, and they left him.

Tom Merry & Co. had kept their promise to Cousin Ethel, but the Outsider of St. Jim's had not escaped punishment.

But as the Outsider sat alone in his study afterwards with dizzy brain and aching head, it was not his bruises, his aches, that troubled him most—for he was thinking of the change he had had that day of gaining the regard of Cousin Ethel—the chance he had had of winning her respect—and how he had, with the caddishness that seemed inherent in his nature, thrown that chance away.

THE END.

(Fun, frolic, mystery and adventure are the star features of next week's great yarn of the chums of St. Jim's. Watch out for "THE MYSTERY OF THE MILL!")

ANOTHER THRILLING INSTALMENT FROM OUR GREAT WILD WEST SERIES!

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 terrorizing Ghost River Valley. The St. Frank's chums are unharmed, but the pilot, Captain Merton, falls into the hands of the Black Riders. Nipper and Willy Handforth go to his rescue, but they are captured. Farman then sends for Nelson Lee to help them. The famous detective, however, replies that he cannot come yet.

A Ray of Hope!

"**R**OTTEN!" said Handforth despondently.

"Absolutely poisonous!" groaned Archie Glen-thorne.

With Justin B. Farman, Church, and McClure, they were standing on the wide veranda of Mayor Kyle's house, in Fortune City. Big Jim Farman had just read the telegram from Nelson Lee, and the news it contained had hit the boys pretty hard.

"Gee! It's sure tough!" said Farman, looking at his father. "Mr. Lee is the one man who could rip this mystery wide open, and he can't be around for two weeks!"

"It's tough all right, son," agreed Mr. Farman. "We sure counted on Mr. Lee. But I guess he's still busy on that New York case, and can't leave it."

"Then he ought to leave it, sir," growled Handforth, with a snort. "Didn't we tell him that Nipper has been grabbed by the bandits? Even that information didn't shift him! I can't understand it."

"You must not have any hard thoughts, young 'un," said Big Jim. "Maybe Mr. Lee is worried sick by the news. He's a man of strict integrity, and when he takes on a job he goes through with it. I guess he's tied back there in New York."

"Sure, and he'll hustle around good and plenty and get out here just as soon as he's free," said Mr. Kyle kindly. "You don't need to fret, kids. Just take it easy for a couple of weeks. Let things drift on quiet like, and mebbe the crooks will figure that you have quit the fight. Then, when Mr. Lee gets around, you can start right in and get things moving."

"That's all very well, sir," protested Handforth. "But what about my young brother? What about Nipper? We've got to rescue them."

The Mayor of Fortune City looked grave.

"Say, ain't you seen enough?" he asked. "If you try any rescue stunts you'll sure find yourselves in the same trap. Doggone it, kids, I know what I'm saying! Diamond Eye and his gang have got this valley fixed, and you can guess what it costs me, as Mayor of Fortune City, to admit a thing like that! Only a fool would refuse to look facts in the face." He swept his hand outwards. "Everything I got is right here in this dump they call a city. I've been robbed good'n plenty by these skunks, but I know better than to kick. I'm a patient man, and I'm just—waiting."

"But it seems so tame!" protested Handforth. "You stand there and admit that the crooks have got the upper hand, and you, the mayor, do nothing!"

Kyle smiled, but the corners of his mouth were grim. "I guess you're figuring things out, son, like you were in your own country," he replied. "In England, folks are law-abiding, and if they ain't they don't get much run for their money. It's much the same in our big cities out here. But in a country like this lone corner of Arizona things are different. We don't have policemen, and when things get kind of tough we just have to get busy ourselves. Any gang of hoodlums, if it's desperate enough, can have its own sweet way for a time—but only for a time! Lawlessness is a part of our life, and we get kinder used to it. But you can take it from me that Diamond Eye will slip up one of these days—and then we'll get him."

"Mr. Kyle's right, boys," said Big Jim Farman. "It's a far-flung country out here—a land of great distances, rugged mountains and lonely passes. Back in the foothills the outlaws can shelter for months on end, and spring out just when the fancy takes them. We're up against a mighty tough proposition. Maybe you're beginning to realise it now."

The boys were. They had been at Ghost River Ranch long enough to understand the difficulties which confronted them. Any normal investigation was out of the question.

"Things being as they are, I reckon you'd be wise to mosey around for a couple o' weeks, like you was sick of it all," continued the mayor. "It's tough on the two boys who vanished, but maybe they're alive. Anyways, if you try to locate them you're likely to find the same trouble

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yourselves. You can't play fancy tricks with this Diamond Eye guy—he's poison. And I guess he's got his spies right here in Fortune City, and he knows just what's going on."

"He'll try to grab us next," said Church uneasily.

"Listen, Jim," said Mr. Kyle. "Maybe the boy's right. I'm sort of worried about you folks at the ranch. I ain't saying you haven't got things fixed, in case the Black Riders make a raid. But I'm figuring that you and the kids would sleep a whole heap better if I had some of my own boys around nights."

"You mean the Vigilantes, sir?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"Sure," replied the mayor. "From now on I'll have a bunch of the boys out at the ranch every night—to guard it. Not right indoors, but riding around, kind of. Get me? A night patrol."

"It's mighty good of you, Elmer," said Big Jim Farman. "You bet I'll agree. Let the Vigilantes get around about a couple of hours after sundown—they can ride away at dawn. It'll sure allow us to sleep more soundly."

So it was arranged, and presently the boys mounted their horses and rode off in the glaring afternoon sunshine. Mr. Farman had business in the town, and would return later.

"Two weeks of idleness," grunted Handforth, as he and the others ambled along one of the weed-covered roads towards the outskirts of the crumbling city. "Look here, you chaps, why should we stand it? We're St. Frank's fellows, aren't we? We five! Why not act on our own? Nipper and my minor—"

"Let's not go all over it again, Handy," said Church, in a weary voice. "Mr. Farman and Mr. Kyle know best."

"But we needn't tell them," urged Handforth. "Tonight, for example, we might slip out—"

"Impossible," interrupted McClure. "What about the Vigilantes? They'd spot us and turn us back."

"My only hat! So that arrangement will work two ways!" exclaimed Handforth, with a start. "It'll protect us from the Black Riders—but we won't be able to get away from the ranch. I hadn't thought of that. Oh, rats!"

"Maybe Mr. Kyle thought of it," said Justin B. Farman shrewdly. "He figures that we might get busy during the nights, so he thought he'd protect us. Say, look who's here!" he added.

They were riding in the welcome shade of a great ruined building which, in the boom days, had been a smart hotel. Coming along the dusty, pitted road was a queer old figure riding on the back of a shaggy mule.

"Mesa Matt, the lone prospector," muttered Handforth.

They all remembered the strange old man of Whispering Canyon. Apparently Mesa Matt was coming into town for supplies.

Mesa Matt looked up as he was about to pass the schoolboys. His beady eyes, beneath their grizzled brows, darted from one to another, and all the time his lower jaw was champing rhythmically on his tobacco chew.

"Hold hard, strangers," he said abruptly.

They reined in, and Mesa Matt pulled thoughtfully at his shaggy whiskers and gave the boys a sidelong look. Then he glanced up and down the hot, empty road. They were nearly at the end of the town; beyond there was nothing but the worn trail which led to the ranch-house.

"Kinder lucky, meeting you tenderfoot kids," he said, lowering his voice. "Guess you've been in town, seein' the sheriff about them missin' boys?" He spat contemptuously. "Gosh my dadburned hide! Might as well talk to a dead coyote! Dirk Dixon ain't even no good as a piece o' decoration."

"I guess he does his best," said Farman.

"Shucks! I ain't no sheriff, but I guess I know a hull lot more than he does," replied Mesa Matt. "Say, mebbe I can help you some. Mind, I'm an old man, and I ain't hankerin' after getting mixed up in any trouble. I'm nutral. What these durned Black Riders do ain't no affair of mine. Get me?"

"What are you trying to spill?" asked Farman.

"Waal, I seen things last night," replied the old prospector, in a mysterious manner. "Yep, sons! Back ther, in Whisperin' Canyon. I guess I see a hull heap o' things I ain't meant to. Them crooks hev got kinder used to me. They reckon I'm just a no-good old man, and part of the scenery. But I've seen 'em ridin'; ay, and I've seen other things."

"By George! You—you mean—" began Handforth.

"I ain't aiming to get tied up with that fool sheriff, or Mayor Kyle, or any of the other folks in this muck heap," said Mesa Matt. "But mebbe I could out you tenderfoot kids on a straight trail. Lost two of your playmates, ain't you? Waal, I ain't saying I know where they is, but last night I seen queer things. If you'd care to be around my shack at sundown I could mebbe spill a piece."

"But why not now?" asked Farman eagerly.

"Tain't safe here," replied the old man, looking about.

him suspiciously. "What I got to say is private, and I don't want folks knowin' that I talked with ye at all. Guess I'll be on my way. Coupla riders totin' out of town. Waal, I'll be seeing ye, mebbe, at sundown."

He got his old mule into motion, and, without another word, pattered on. In the distance two men on horseback came into view, but they turned off on to another trail. Obviously old Mesa Matt had cut the interview short because he had no desire to be seen talking with the schoolboys.

"Kind of queer!" muttered Justin B. Farman, frowning.

"We'll have to go, you chaps," said Handforth eagerly.

"That old boy knows something."

"Guess we'll need to be wary, though," said Farman. "I never feel like trusting anybody these days."

"But we can't be in any danger in Whispering Canyon—in daylight, too," said Handforth. "It's on your ranch, Farman. It's not back in the wilds, near the hills. I'll bet Mesa Matt knows what happened to Nipper and my minor. We've got to see him again."

They discussed the thing as they rode back along the trail to the ranch-house. It was clear enough that Mesa Matt had no desire to be mixed up in this strange valley warfare. No doubt he was right, for he was a lonely old man, and if the Black Riders guessed that he was working against them, they would "rub him out" without compunction. He had every reason to be cautious.

While the ranch-house was still hidden from view by a turn in the trail—where rock masses intervened—a figure on horseback suddenly appeared away to the right.

The boys saw him against the sun—a black silhouette on the top of a ridge, appearing as though from nowhere. Horse and man stood motionless against the skyline. They could see that he was no cowboy, but a man dressed in riding-breeches, open shirt, and close-fitting cap.

"He's not one of our boys," said Farman, staring. "Guess he's a stranger around these parts. What's he doing, anyway?"

At that moment the horseman turned and vanished. With one accord the boys set their own horses at the steep slope, and at the gallop they mounted the ridge. Yet when they arrived on the top, and a narrow valley lay before them, there was no sign of the strange lone rider!

The Secret of the Tunnels!

"IT sure is hot to-day!" grumbled Slick Ed, removing his wide-brimmed hat, and mopping his brow with a big red handkerchief.

"You said it," agreed Twirly Sam. "Kinder peaceful, too. Tain't easy to believe there's bad men around this range, Ed."

The two cowboys had just entered Sunset Hollow, a dreamy, placid little spot on the outskirts of the range. It was mid-afternoon, and the sun was blazing down with ferocious intensity from a cloudless sky. The very air shimmered with the heat.

A creek trickled some distance away, and farther afield steers were grazing, or lying down in the shade of the scrub. A more peaceful scene could not have been imagined. It was, indeed, a typical picture of ranch life.

"Looks like them strays we been tryin' to locate," said Slick Ed, shading his eyes with a horny hand. "Yep, Twirly, that's the bunch."

They urged their horses forward. Ordinarily there should have been no cattle in Sunset Hollow, for the grazing was poor. Exactly how the animals had got here was a mystery, for Sunset Hollow was near to the foothills and the rocky passes, and of late, owing to the insidious rustling which had been going on, Mr. Farman had had the cattle located nearer home.

The two cowboys moved down towards the creek, where on either side of them the sagebrush grew in dense patches. Suddenly, dramatically, four figures appeared from the brush close at hand. They stood upright, appearing as though from nowhere, and the sun glinted on blued steel.

"Reach!" came a sharp order. "And reach high!"

Slick Ed, although elderly, had not earned his nickname for nothing. With the speed of a lightning flash his gun was out of its holster, and his finger depressed the trigger.

Crack!

But as he fired there came a second "crack," and Slick Ed sent forth a furious yell. His gun whirled through the air, and blood started streaming from his forearm.

"Aimin' to hev thet interview with Gabriel?" jeered a voice. "You doggone old fool!"

"Guess I'm gettin' slow!" growled Slick Ed, in disgust.

Twirly Sam had his hands up, for there was no alternative. The four figures came out from the brush and stood revealed as Black Riders. Obviously the bandits were growing more and more daring. Here they were in broad sunlight, engaged in a hold-up. Their guns were trained on the two cowboys, and any resistance would have been fatal.

"Get their guns, boys!" said one of the Black Riders. Two minutes later, Twirly Sam and Slick Ed, disarmed,

were securely roped. They had dismounted, and their arms were tied behind their backs. They were left in charge of one man, who kept his gun on them. The others, moving hurriedly away, produced horses from behind the further clumps of scrub.

Then, before the very eyes of the cowboys of the Double Z outfit, the cattle were rounded up—between forty and fifty head.

"Goshdarn my scalp! Rustlin' in front of our very eyes!" said Twirly Sam in fury. "No wonder that bunch strayed! Seems like it was drove in here."

"Mighty good at figgerin', ain't you?" jeered the masked bandit. "We got them steers ready so that we can move 'em off in our own time. It don't seem to be your lucky day, pardner."

Slick Ed and Twirly Sam were angry. Admittedly they had not been on their guard; but then, they had never expected to come face to face with the enemy in the broad sunlight of afternoon, so comparatively near home. They had been taken completely by surprise.

"Was you plugged bad, Ed?" asked Twirly, with concern.

"Aw, shucks! 'Tain't nothin'," growled the other cowboy.

"Jest a hole through the forearm." He spat in disgust.

"And I allus figgered I was quick on the draw!"

shadows, and the creek now occupied the entire floor, with the cattle and the horses splashing their way through the shallow water.

It was the route by which Captain Merton had been brought when he had been captured. There seemed to be no outlet to the canyon, for, some distance ahead, a noisy waterfall barred all further progress—and behind the falls were precipitous rocks. At this point the river came tumbling down in a roaring cascade from the upper level.

With shrill, noisy cries, the rustlers urged the steers on; and they accompanied their shouts by repeated salvos of revolver shots. The reports boomed and echoed amongst the rocks of the gully, and the effect was immediate. The cattle stampeded, and went charging onwards, apparently to certain death. But, as a matter of fact, when the frightened animals charged full tilt into the waterfall, they went clean through. The passage was swift, and it was a wet one. But on the other side there was perfect safety, for at the rear of the waterfall there was the opening of a big cavern.

Behind the cattle came the rustlers. Slick Ed and Twirly Sam were ordered to dismount, and they found themselves wet to the skin, in a strange place of subdued light where the air was full of moisture. Gazing back, they saw the



"By George!" exclaimed Handforth abruptly. With characteristic recklessness, he swung round and sent his left fist crashing into the masked face of one of the Black Riders. The man reeled backwards with a roar of pain. "Come on, you chaps!" yelled Edward Oswald. "Now's our chance!"

Presently, two of the bandits rode up and the prisoners were compelled to mount two of the outlaw's horses. They sat in front of their captors, and as they moved off they saw two horsemen silhouetted against the skyline—one at either end of Sunset Hollow. From first to last the rustlers had kept a careful watch on the surrounding countryside.

And now, quite openly, the cattle was moved out of the hollow and taken across the rocky, broken desert lands in the direction of Red Rock Gully. It was slow going, but the rustlers appeared to be in no hurry. Their confidence was supreme. They knew that they were the masters of the situation.

Less than an hour later they were well within the gully, and ahead of them the stolen cattle were being forced along. It was a wilderness of confusing defiles and craggy hills, and on all sides the rocks rose in majestic masses.

As they progressed farther into the gully the crags towered high on either side. They were reddish in colour, and at the bottom of the canyon a shallow stream trickled.

The gully grew narrower and narrower, and the cliffs of rock rose sheer until they almost closed in. Overhead was but a slit of sky, and at this hour of the day no sunlight penetrated to the bottom of the gully. It was a place of

body of water falling over the cavern's mouth—and completely concealing it.

"Waal, I'll be a horned toad!" ejaculated Slick Ed. "Do you get it, Sam?"

"Fust time I knowed there was a way through hyar," replied Twirly Sam. "We're learnin' things, Ed. So this is whar the skunks hev their hideout?"

"Not so much lip," said one of the Black Riders. "Get going."

All the men had dismounted, and, to the astonishment of the cowboys, the cattle was being herded along a wide, lofty rock tunnel. Two men had gone in advance carrying flaring torches; two others followed with similar lights.

The cowboys knew that they were in one of the old mine workings—tunnels which had been abandoned for a great many years. They found themselves in an evil-smelling cavern, and they saw, with fresh surprise, that rough corrals had been constructed here. The steers were being forced behind wooden fences, and gates were closed upon them. The cavern was so big that the roof could not be seen; there was nothing but utter blackness overhead.

Before long the prisoners understood the meaning of the

vile odour; for they saw things which told them that this cavern was used as a slaughter-house, too.

"Gosh! D'you get it, Ed?" murmured Twirly Sam. "The blamed animals is brung in here and killed! Say, that explains why none of the stolen steers is ever traced."

"Yep, sure!" said the other. "But what's the doggone idea of killin'? Don't seem to make sense."

They were glad to get out of that cavern, and now they found themselves being marched down a narrower tunnel—which shelved steeply for some time. The walls closed in upon them, and the roof descended, until they were obliged to walk in single file. One guard went in advance, and another brought up the rear. Both were holding electric torches now. The big flaming torches had been left behind in the cattle cavern.

"Too bad you boys had to come into Sunset Hollow this afternoon," said the foremost Black Rider. "Guess you butted in just when we was gettin' busy with them steers. Waal, you won't see daylight agin for quite a piece. Mebbe a change of work will suit you, huh?"

He laughed raucously, and continued walking on. But the journey was nearly at an end, for, suddenly, after the tunnel had taken an abrupt turn, the two prisoners found themselves in an extraordinary place.

It was another cavern—but much vaster than the one they had already seen. At various points all round enormous flares were burning. They were not torches, but special petroleum flares which gave forth lurid masses of flame, and which were fed from special reservoirs. The air of the cavern was pungent with the fumes.

More astounding still, a wide, shallow river flowed right through the cavern, and here men were working in considerable numbers. At the first glance, Slick Ed and Twirly Sam knew what they were doing. They were washing for gold! There was all the necessary paraphernalia. From end to end the cavern was busy with gold-getting.

"Gee! If it ain't Ed and Sam," went up a sudden shout.

The cowboys started. They recognised the voice of one of their former comrades. He was standing knee-deep in the river, with a pannikin in his hand. He waved it, and Slick Ed waved back.

"Holy smoke!" he ejaculated. "Do you get that, pardner? It's Dakota Pete!"

Slick Ed blinked. He could scarcely believe the evidence of his own eyes. There were over two score men at work, and every man wore thin steel chains on his legs—chains which made it impossible for the wearer to run, or even to walk quickly. Standing about, here and there, guards were constantly on the watch.

"You'd best get busy, too," said one of the men who had brought the cowboys in. "Fer a long time now, boys, you're going to work right here. If you work hard, you'll get fed." He laughed uproariously. "Mebbe you'll get tired of the diet pretty soon, too."

"Gosh!" ejaculated Twirly Sam.

In a flash he knew why the cattle was rustled; he knew why it was brought into these hills and killed. The prisoners were fed on stolen meat! Here was the answer to one of the minor puzzles—why only a comparatively few cattle were rustled at a time.

"Keep goin', boys!" said a grim voice.

The new prisoners were bewildered, for there was so much to see. They knew, too, that they had been brought to stay. They had seen so much, that the gang—for its own safety—would never allow them to get away. Like all the other men who had disappeared in Ghost River Valley, they were doomed to spend the future—the immediate future, at all events—in the buried heart of the mountain.

They were taken away from the gurgling, underground river, and they saw numerous tunnel openings leading out of the main cavern. In some lights were glowing, and they caught glimpses of long tables—doubtless where the prisoners were fed. In others were rough mattresses, lying side by side on the floor.

"Right here!" said one of the captors.

Slick Ed and Twirly Sam were obliged to sit down. A man in shirtsleeves, with a coarse, brutal face, was ready to fix chains on their legs. While this operation was being performed, the Black Rider who had escorted the pair divested himself of his big hood and upper clothing. He emerged as a check-shirted man, with a lean, lantern-jawed face, down which the perspiration streamed.

"Mighty glad to get some air, pardner," he remarked. "Jumpin' rattlesnakes! It's sure tough going, wearin' this darned outfit in the daytime. Wish the chief'd keep to his old plan, and only use us nights."

"Ed!" exclaimed an eager, boyish voice.

"Gee-whiz, son, I'm a hull heap glad to see you!" exclaimed Slick Ed. "Seems like we both struck a bad patch."

From one of the tunnels two figures had emerged, escorted by an evil-looking half-breed. The newcomers were Nipper

and Willy Handforth—both chained. They had been brought up from their prison in the old mine working.

"Me, I bring them," said the half-breed. "You sell them to work, huh?"

"You said it, Injun Joe," replied one of the other men. "If the kids want to eat, I guess they've got to work."

"Sure—sure!" grinned the half-breed, with a flash of white teeth. "No work—no eat. You savvy? Get going!"

Nipper and Willy were marched on, and then Twirly Sam and Slick Ed, chained, were obliged to join the working parties, too.

They at last knew something of the mystery which had for so long brooded over Ghost River Valley; but everything they had seen this afternoon only served to baffle them.

What was the meaning of this strange organisation, and who was running the racket?

The Mystery of Mesa Matt!

"LOOKS like more trouble," said Justin B. Farman uneasily.

The sun was getting low, and he and Handforth & Co., and Archie Glenhorne were lounging about in front of the great log-built ranch-house. Their horses, ready saddled, were near by.

For some little time they had known that all was not right. Slick Ed and Twirly Sam had gone out on one of their usual rides during the day, and they had not returned. And Square-Deal Reeve, the foreman, had gone off with some of the other cowboys, searching.

"I don't see how anything could have happened to them in the daytime," said Handforth. "In any case, why should we wait? We're going to Whispering Canyon, aren't we?"

"I'm not sure that we ought to go," said Church.

"What?"

"Well, it's taking a chance, isn't it?" continued Church. "Supposing the Black Riders spot us from the distance, and swoop down?"

"If we let this thing get on our nerves, we're finished," replied Edward Oswald aggressively. "We're not scared, are we? My only hat! Are you fellows content to hang about the ranch-house day after day—until Mr. Leo finds time to come along? Why, he might never come at all! And there's my minor in the hands of the crooks—"

"O.K., pardner," interrupted Justin B. Farman. "Take it easy. We know you've been hit harder than the rest of us. I guess we'll go out and see Mesa Matt. Maybe he'll help us; but it would be just plumb crazy to count on it."

An elderly ranch-hand was ambling by, leading a couple of pintos. He was not one of the active cowboys, but a man who had spent twenty years on this ranch, and who still worked about the place. Square-Deal Reeve and the other "boys" had been brought out by Big Jim Farman.

"Say, Cy," called Justin suddenly.

"How?" asked Cy Higgett, the old ranch-hand, as he paused.

The boys approached him. Cy was the owner of a grizzled goatee beard, and there was a tattered hat on the back of his bald head. A straw protruded from between his uneven old teeth, and his leathery face was a mass of wrinkles.

"We ran across Mesa Matt in town, Cy," said Farman casually.

"Tain't often he gets around town," replied the old-timer. "Went in fer stores, likely."

"Queer old chap," went on Farman. "Wouldn't surprise me to hear that he's mixed up with the rustlers."

"Aw, shucks! You got him all wrong, sonny," replied Cy, with a shake of his head. "Matt's a straight shooter. I'll allow he's a bit queer in the head, mebbe, when folks go near his claim; but that's only his way. Guess I've known old Matt for twenty years, and ther ain't a squarer desert rat in whole Arizona."

"You mean he's honest?"

"Surest thing!" said old Cy. "Back in the old days, afore he got loco notions, him and me often rode out together, into the mountains, huntin'. A reg'lar straight-dealin' pardner. Old Matt wouldn't double-cross nobody. Guess I'll have to go and see him one of these days, it's likely he gets kinder lonesome back ther in the canyon. Not as that claim of his is any good. He don't find enough gold in six months to pervide him with reg'lar meals."

"Well, that's that," said Farman, after the old hand had moved off. "No need to worry about Mesa Matt. We shall be safe in going to his shack."

"Jolly smart of you to question old Cy," said McClure. "It makes us all more comfortable. By jingo! It's possible that old Matt can give us some important information. Let's go right out to Whispering Canyon now!"

"Hold hard!" said Farman. "Square-Deal's just coming in, and it looks like he's leading a couple of riderless pintos."

Square-Deal Reeve was just riding past the corrals, and he reined in as the boys ran up to him. His face was grim and set.



Let's Talk it Over!

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.

GEORGE S., of Portsmouth, says that I must be getting lazy. According to his reckoning, it can't take me long to write the weekly serial instalment; and he apparently imagines that all I have to do otherwise is to twiddle my thumbs, or play golf, or otherwise occupy my time in some such frivolous manner. He doesn't know the half of it! What about my stories in the BOYS' FRIEND 4d. LIBRARY? Each one of them is every bit as long as a complete GEM serial. Better keep your eye on the Editor's announcements, George—and when you think of me again, please picture me as a hard-working chap, with my fingers ceaselessly tapping away on the keys of a typewriter.

Here is the information you ask for, Muriel P., Chelmsford.

"Where's the boss?" he asked bluntly.
"Right here, Square-Deal," replied Farman.
"Gee, I'm sorry, boss," said the foreman. "I guess I meant your dad. Looks like two of the boys ain't coming back no more!"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Handforth. "You—you mean that—"

"Goshdarn them murderin' crooks!" shouted Square-Deal, in an outburst of fury. "It's Ed and Sam! They went out this afternoon, and here's their hosses. Found 'em grazin' by the creek, way back to the west. A bunch of steers gone, too. Looka here, kids!"

He pointed out the ominous stains on one of the empty saddles.

"Blood!" muttered Church.

"You said it!" grunted Square-Deal. "That means one of the boys was plugged. Mebbe he's dead, mebbe he's only wounded. How in Hades can we know? Guess it's the old story all over again—men go out and—pouf!—they vanish! What's the big boss?"

He went riding on, grim-faced—to make his report to Mr. Farman. The schoolboys, with strange tinglings down their spines, stared after him. Although it was still full daylight, they felt uncomfortable and uneasy. An absolute calm gripped the valley, and the air was heavy and humid.

"Ugh! This doggone place kinder 'gets' me!" muttered Farman. "I'm beginning to think that dad was right. We should never have come."

"Well, we're here—and, by George, we're going to stay!" vowed Handforth. "What's more, we're going to find my minor and Nipper. Come on—let's make for Whispering Canyon before your dad comes out and asks questions."

They were soon mounted and away. There was no reason why they should not go for a ride across the range, for it was felt that there could be no danger whilst they kept comparatively near to the ranch-house; and Whispering Canyon was not very remote. Moreover, the sun had not yet set, and ordinarily, it would have been an ideal period of the day for a ride.

But this evening the air was stifling. As the boys progressed the sense of oppression increased. Overhead, the sky was brazen, and the sun, low in the west, looked angry.

"Phew! There'll probably be a storm during the night," said McClure.

"Guess not," said Farman. "We get weeks of this heat out here, sometimes. Mighty fine weather for rattlesnakes! Best watch your step when you happen to be walking amongst rocks."

They were soon entering Whispering Canyon, with its grassy slopes on either hand, leading up to the pine-woods on the higher levels. Surmounting all were ominous-looking crags. Old Mesa Matt's shack stood out clearly, and smoke was rising from the crazy-looking chimney.

The strange old prospector himself was standing on the inner side of his "dividing line."

"Howdy, tenderfoot kids!" he said, by way of greeting.

John Busterfield Boots is still a "big noise" in the Fourth Form at St. Frank's. Before he came to the school, Bob Christine was the leader of the Modern House juniors. At that time it was called the College House—and here, I shall have to go back a bit further, in case you get confused. In the older St. Frank's stories, there were two Houses—the Ancient House and the College House. But when St. Frank's was enlarged, there were five Houses—Ancient House and West House on one side, Modern House and East House on the other side, and the School House in the Middle. In those days, Bob Christine was certainly an important fellow, and perhaps you are right in regretting the fact that Bob has been more or less eclipsed. But Buster Boots carried all before him when he arrived, and he soon assumed the leadership of the Fourth. Boots is a powerfully built junior with broad shoulders and a strong, freckled face. His hair is glaring red. He is brimming over with energy and enterprise, and he's never willing to play "second fiddle" to anybody. Bob Christine, on the other hand, is apt to be a bit easy-going, so he is quite content to follow Boots' lead.

Yes, Peter K., Manchester, there are two Australian boys at St. Frank's. I can quite understand your interest, now that we have the Australian cricketers over in England. Jerry Dodd is a great cricketer himself, and one of the main pillars of the Junior eleven. The other Australian boy, also in the Remove, is Charley Bangs—better known among the fellows as "Boomerang." He is a great cricketer, too, but somewhat eccentric in style, and he only occasionally plays in the team.

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

"Best let your hosses graze around here; don't need to bring 'em up to the shack."

"What about crossing your line?" asked Farman, with a smile.

"When I invite folks over, I guess it's O.K.," replied the old man. "Come right along, boys. Supper's kind of ready."

"Jolly good of you to ask us to supper, Mr. Matt," said Handforth.

"Say, cut out the 'mister,' will you?" said the old man, frowning. "After we've eaten I'll mebbe have something to tell you."

"We can't stay long," said Farman. "We've got to get back to the ranch-house before dark."

"That's O.K.," said the other. "Step right in. If ye don't have a notion for corned beef hash and beans, ye needn't eat!"

They went into the shack, which was filled with an appetising odour. A blackened pot was standing on the stove, and the old man, without further ado, went across and dished out several plates of food.

"Mebbe I'd best put you wise straight away," said the old man suddenly. "That's a kind of secret, kids, and I'm figgerin' to share it with you. But you'll need to give me your word that you won't—"

He broke off abruptly, and as he swung round towards the open door, one hand went to the big gun on his hip.

"What's wrong?" asked Handforth, staring.

"Thought I heard somethin' out there," replied Mesa Matt.

Craaaaaaash!

As the old man moved towards the door there came a shattering of glass from the window at the end of the shack. The old man and his visitors swung round, and they saw two wicked pistol barrels pointed at them.

"Reach for the roof, and make it snappy!" said a harsh, strident, muffled voice.

Behind the guns stood a Black Rider.

Chairs overturned as the boys leapt to their feet. Then, before Mesa Matt could reach for his own gun, quick footsteps sounded, and two figures leapt through the doorway. A hand grabbed the old man's pistol from its holster.

"Git back, old-timer!" said the Black Rider, who had just entered. "We ain't aimin' to hurt you!"

"Trapped!" roared Handforth. "By George! It was a frame-up, after all! Old Matt lured us here—"

"Forget it, kid!" interrupted the Black Rider. "Guess I'll take care of these!"

With quick fingers, in spite of their gloved condition, he seized the boys' guns. There were six of the Black Riders now; it had been a clever move for one man to smash the window and cover the occupants of the room, whilst his companions dashed over the open ground in front of the shack.

"Waal, boys, Diamond Eye will be sure pleased with THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,372.

us!" drawled the leader of the party. "Guess we've got the hull bunch now. Mighty smart young fellers from England, huh?"

"How did you know?" asked Mesa Matt fiercely. "By the jumpin' Jehosaphat, you'll pay for this, you skunks! You've crossed my line—"

"Easy, old-timer!" said the Black Rider contemptuously. "Say, you birds don't realise that Diamond Eye's organisation covers the hull valley, do you? Guess one of our spies was right on hand when you stopped the kids in Fortune City—and that bozo heard enough to put us wise to your play. Told the boys to get around here at sundown, didn't you? Waal, we thought we'd be around, too!"

The St. Frank's schoolboys were startled by this information. So one of Diamond Eye's spies had been lurking in the old deserted building, near the spot where Mesa Matt had stopped them! It was the worst of bad luck—but it was a relief for the boys to know that the old man himself had not played them false. He was as much surprised by the holdup, as they were.

"Too bad to butt in just as you was settin' down to supper," said one of the Black Riders. "Guess we can't wait while you eat. We'll be movin'!"

"What are you going to do with us?" asked Justin B. Farman fiercely.

"Aw, quit the innocence stuff!" said the bandit, with a sneer. "We're gonna take you for a nice, comfortable ride!"

"Take us for a ride!" gasped Handforth. "Crumbs! That—that means that you're going to kill us, doesn't it?"

"We're in Arizona, kid—not Chicago!" said the Black Rider, with a laugh. "You don't need to worry. Diamond Eye is kinder soft. Killin' ain't his racket. We're takin' you to join your two young friends. Mebbe old man Farman will quit this valley now!"

The crooks were utterly contemptuous of their prisoners. The old man was not worth considering: he was shaky and slow-moving. The boys were raw tenderfeet—from England. This was one of the easiest captures the Black Riders had ever made. And, confident of their superiority, the black-garbed men lounged about, treating the whole affair as a joke.

"By George!" exclaimed Handforth abruptly. He swung round with tremendous ferocity, and his right

fist crashed into the masked face of one of the Black Riders. The man reeled backwards with a roar of pain.

"Come on, you chaps!" yelled Handforth. "Now's our chance!"

It was a characteristically reckless move. Nobody but Edward Oswald Handforth would have attempted to escape. Five unarmed boys against half a dozen desperate gunmen! The thing was mad, on the face of it. But Church and McClure, always loyal, leapt into the battle.

"What-ho!" sang out Archie Glenuthorne. "Absolutely, old things! Kindly sample this, dash you!"

Crash!

He delivered a beautiful wallop, and then Justin B. Farman himself joined in. He knew that it was useless, but his blood was fired by Handforth's plucky resistance—although he expected, at any moment, to hear the ominous cracking of pistols.

The Black Riders were taken by surprise. Hitherto they had dealt with men who had understood their grim purpose—men who "reached for the sky" at the command, knowing that their lives depended upon their quickness. The Britisher boys were not so accustomed to the law of the West, and so they had taken a chance which was really sheer insanity.

In a moment the fight was developing in an ugly fashion. The leading Black Rider, cursing, made a grab for his two guns.

But he was a shade too late.

For an unexpected thing happened. Old Mesa Matt, with a leap which was like that of a panther, reached the guns first. It was incredible that such an old man could have moved so quickly—and still more incredible that his gnarled fingers could so nimbly whip the guns out and twirl them round.

"Stand dead still, my friends!" came a cold, decisive voice from the mouth of Mesa Matt, and the command in it was charged with grimness. "Stick up your hands!"

Handforth and the other boys reeled back, staring dazedly at the lone prospector—for the voice which came from that grizzled old face was the voice of Nelson Lee!

(What a surprise for the chums of St. Frank's! Is it really Nelson Lee in the guise of Mesa Matt? Don't miss next week's startling developments.)



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