

"THE RIVER RAGGERS!" FULL-O'-FUN LONG COMPLETE INSIDE!
YARN OF THE ST. JIM'S CHUMS



GEM

THE BEST PAPER FOR BRITISH BOYS

2d

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EVERY WEDNESDAY.

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AN AMUSING INCIDENT FROM THIS WEEK'S LIVELIEST SCHOOL STORY!

HERE ARE ALL THE LAUGHS OF A LONG LAUGHTIME!—

The RIVER RAGGERS!



A crowning triumph! The Chums of St. Jim's show Gordon Gay & Co., their old rivals of the Grammar School, another use for jam tarts! This is just one of the rousing rags in this ripping yarn of Tom Merry & Co.'s day out on the river!

CHAPTER 1.

Wet For Figgins & Co.!

"THE Head's a brick!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Three cheers for the Head!"

"Hip, pip, hurrah!"

And the shout rang loudly over the quadrangle at St. Jim's and echoed among the old elms, which were bright and green on this fresh June morning.

Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's were in high spirits, for the Head had just granted the school a whole day's holiday. After prayers the announcement had been made, and the fellows had poured out into the quadrangle in the gayest spirits.

Exactly what the Head's motive was, the juniors did not know. Whether it was sheer kindness of heart, or whether he had any other motive, they neither knew nor cared.

They only knew and cared that they had a glorious June day all to themselves. And that was enough.

"And what are we going to do?" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"What about getting up a cricket match?" said Manners.

"We can do that any time!"

"Yes, we want something extra special to-day," Tom Merry said thoughtfully. "Some sort of an extra special beano."

"What about an excursion for the whole giddy day?" said Lowther. "We can camp out up the river."

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"Good!" said Manners.

"You remember the island in the river is Sir Francis Fortesque's estate?" said Tom Merry. "The fellows used to camp there a lot in the summer."

"But Fortesque doesn't allow it now."

"He's going to make an exception in our favour to-day," said Tom Merry. "You know St. Jim's have a claim to that island, and there's a lawsuit pending. It's all very well for it to be put out of bounds for the sake of keeping the peace. Who wants to keep the peace?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Are we going to camp on the island in the river?"

"We are—we is."

"Then let's go and lay in a supply of grub, and get off before any of the other chaps get to know of it," said Tom Merry. "The island's too small for a big party, and we don't want a crowd to attract the attention of the keepers. We three can have a jolly time there. We'll take out a boat and some grub—"

"How jolly!"

"Come on, then!" said Tom Merry. "You and Lowther get the grub at Mrs. Taggles' while I go and get the boat out."

"Good!"

Manners and Lowther scudded to the school shop, and Tom Merry went down to the boathouse by the silvery waters of the Rhyl.

The Rhyl swirled among the reeds, shining in the sunlight in the most inviting way.

—ROW WITH THE RIVAL RAGGERS ON THE RIVER RHYL!

By

Martin Clifford

Tom Merry was not the only junior who had thought of having a boat out—there was a rush for the boats, in fact.

The stately seniors were taking out boats in their stately way, but among the juniors there was a considerable amount of scrambling.

Figgins, Kerr and Wynn of the New House were coming down to the river; and, to judge by the bag that Fatty Wynn carried, the New House chums had also decided to make a day of it somewhere.

"Hallo, Tom Merry; going out?" said Figgins affably, as Tom Merry jumped into a boat that was moored to the wooden landing-stage.

"Yes, rather."

"You can steer for us, if you like," said Figgins generously.

"Thank you for nothing," said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"By the way, we want that boat."

"Go hon!"

"Jump out."

"Rats!"

"Now, look here, Tom Merry—"

"Rubbish!"

Figgins & Co. exchanged a glance. They were not looking particularly for a House row that bright morning; but, of course, they meant to have the boat.

"Jump in!" said Figgins.

"Right-ho!"

Tom Merry grinned.

He had unmoored the boat, in anticipation of some such move on the part of the New House juniors, and he pushed off quickly just as the trio jumped.

Three splashes sounded as one.

The boat had rocked away, and Figgins & Co. had plunged into the water.

There was a roar of laughter from the fellows in caps and blazers crowded on the bank.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oo-oo-och!" gasped the plunging juniors.

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

Figgins & Co. struck out. But the bag that had been in Fatty Wynn's hand was gone to the bottom, the provisions it contained lost for ever, or, rather, providing food for fishes.

Fatty Wynn scrambled upon the planks of the landing-stage.

"It's gone!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's gone?" demanded Figgins, scrambling out after him.

"The grub!"

"Phew!"

Kerr was hanging on to the gunwale of the boat. Tom Merry leaned over, with a boathook in his hand.

"Where will you have it?" he asked pleasantly.

"You ass!" gasped Kerr.

"Name the spot," said Tom Merry, flourishing the boathook.

Kerr decided that he wouldn't have it anywhere, evidently, for he let go the boat and plunged for the landing-stage.

"You young asses!" exclaimed Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, standing up in a four-oar manned by Sixth Formers. "Go and get your clothes changed at once."

"The—the grub!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

Kildare grinned.

"Well, it's gone," he remarked. "You'll never get it back."

"Dive for it, Fatty!" shouted a dozen voices.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn did not dive for it; that would not have been much use. But he would certainly have hung about the spot where it had disappeared had not Figgins and Kerr seized him by the arms and dragged him away to the house to get his clothes changed.

They passed Monty Lowther and Manners on the way. The two Shell fellows stopped to stare at them.

Lowther carried a bag much resembling that which Fatty Wynn had lost.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Lowther. "Been taking a bath with your clothes on?"

Figgins grinned.

"Go for 'em!" muttered Fatty Wynn. "They're going picnicking—that's grub Lowther's got in that bag."

"Good! One good turn deserves another."

"Sock it into 'em!" shouted Kerr.

And the dripping trio rushed at Manners and Lowther. The odds were against the Shell fellows, and they did not stop to fight. They ran for the river. They didn't want to come into close contact with the dripping garments of Figgins & Co.

"After them!" roared Figgins.

The Shell fellows raced hard towards the river, the New House trio tearing on their track.

From the crowd on the bank and the river rose an encouraging shout:

"Go it, Figgins!"

"Buck up, School House!"

"Collar them, New House!"

"Lowther wins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther had reached the boat; but at the same moment Figgins & Co. overtook Manners.

"Got him!" yelled Kerr.

"No good!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "He hasn't got the grub."

"Rescue!" yelled Manners.

Monty Lowther swung round and charged back at the New House trio.

He swung the bag round in his hand, and Figgins went spinning on one side with a wild yell, and Kerr on the other.

Fatty Wynn sprang straight at Lowther, but Manners tripped him up, and the fat Fourth Former rolled on the grass with a breathless grunt.

"Quick—in the boat!" shouted Tom Merry, bringing the skiff nearer to the planks of the landing-stage.

"The—the grub!" gasped Lowther.

For in those two terrific biffs he had dealt at the New House chums, the bag had burst open, and a dozen or more jam tarts had scattered out on the grass. Fatty Wynn was already clutching at them.

"Never mind the grub," said Tom Merry. "Get in! Chuck the bag."

Lowther nodded, and threw the bag to Tom Merry, who caught it. Then Manners and Lowther clambered into the boat. It swayed and rocked away from the landing-stage.

Figgins and Kerr had scrambled to their feet. Fatty Wynn was eating jam tarts.

The boat was receding, and Tom Merry kissed his hand at the exasperated chums of the New House.

"Ta-ta!" he called out.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Oh, let's get back!" growled Figgins. "Come on, Fatty!"

"Groogh!"

**Mr. E. S.
BROOKS'
Latest
Triumph!**

**"THE SCHOOL FROM
'DOWN UNDER'!"**

**Starts in
Next
Week's
GEM!**

"You'll catch cold if you stay there gorging in your wet clothes."

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

"Yank him along, Ferr."

And Fatty Wynn was yanked along, and he went, still eating jam tarts. The Terrible Three, laughing loudly, put out the oars and floated out into the shining stream.

"Now for the giddy island," said Tom Merry.

And they pulled up the river.

CHAPTER 2.

Another Picnic Party!

"WEALLY, Blake—"
"The question is—"

"Weally—"

"Hallo, Gussy! Did you speak?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, don't! Now, the question is—"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"The question is, what we're going to do for the giddy day off!" said Jack Blake, the leader of Study No. 6 in the School House. "We've agreed that the Head's a brick!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah! But, I say—"

"Now, how are we going to make the best of it?" asked Blake. "The best thing is a whole-day excursion somewhere about here."

"We might go for a long tramp," suggested Herries. "My bulldog, Towser, likes to go for a long walk, and it would do him good."

"Yes," agreed Blake, with heavy sarcasm. "I think I can see us devoting a whole holiday to taking Towser for a tramp—I don't think!"

"What-ho!" said Digby emphatically. "If Towser wants to go for a tramp, Towser can go for a tramp, but we—"

"Yaas, wathah! I should uttably wefuse to go for a twamp with Towser," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, getting out of the armchair. "That wotten beast of yours has no respect whatevah for a fellow's twousahs, Hewwies!"

"Rats!"

"If you say wats to me, Hewwies—"

"More rats!"

"I am sowwy to have to ask you to delay the discuss for a short time, deah boys, while I give Hewwies a feahful thwashin'—"

"Order!" said Blake. "We can't spend a holiday in watching you play the hooligan, D'Arcy."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Shut up. Now what are we going to do? My idea is something in the line of a picnic."

"Good egg!"

"We can take some grub, and camp on the island up the river," said Blake.

"Bai Jove! That's a good ideah!"

"Yes, and the best of it is that we shall have the whole island to ourselves, as it's really out of bounds, and none of the other fellows will think of it," said Blake, with much satisfaction.

"Good!"

"We may have twouble with Sir Fwancis Fortesque, deah boy."

"I've heard that he's gone to London," said Blake. "Anyway, he doesn't matter. If he pops on the island, we'll make him pop off again. Blow Fortesque! Is it the island?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good egg! I'll go and get Towser," said Herries. Three stony stares were fastened upon Herries.

"You'll what?" demanded three voices in unison.

"I'll go and get Towser!" said Herries defiantly.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Towser's coming," said Herries positively. "Besides, don't be an ass! Suppose some of the other fellows should think of camping on the island to-day. Towser will be useful to keep them off."

"Well, there's something in that," admitted Blake.

"Of course there is."

"I object to Towser!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Towser's jolly well coming," said Herries resentfully.

"It's simply rotten the prejudice you chaps have against Towser because he's a little—a little playful!"

"He's more than a little playful," said Digby. "But if you're set on Towser, take Towser. Blow Towser!"

"Weally, Dig—"

"I'll go and get him," said Herries. "I'll join you fellows at the gate. You'd better lay in some grub for the picnic."

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"Yaas, wathah! How fortunate my governah sent me a fivah on Saturday, deah boys!"

"Yes, wasn't it?" grinned Blake. "Come on!"

And the chums of the Fourth left the School House. Blake, Digby, and D'Arcy went to Dame Taggles' little shop, to lay in the supply of provisions required for the picnic, while Herries went round to the kennels for Towser.

Herries ought really to have been at the gates first, but, as a matter of fact, it was the other three who arrived there, laden with bags, without Herries or Towser having put in an appearance.

Blake looked up and down.

"The ass isn't here!" he exclaimed. "I suppose he's stopping to feed Towser, or curl his hair, or something, before he brings him!"

"Gr-r-r-r!"

"Bai Jove! Here he is!"

Herries came in sight, with a very red and flustered face, dragging on the chain of the bulldog. Towser was trying his hardest to get away, and Herries had all his work out out to drag him to the gates.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy surveyed them through his eyeglass with an air of great interest.

"Bai Jove!" he remarked. "If Hewwies is goin' to dwag him all the way like that, I wathah wondah how long it will take to get him all the way!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all right!" gasped Herries.

"Yes, it looks it," agreed Blake.

"Oh, don't be an ass! Towser's trying to get at young Wally's mongrel!" gasped Herries. "Young Wally is taking the beast out—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Towser caught sight of him. Blessed if I know why they allow that young ass to keep such a rotten beast in the school!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Towser will be all right when we—"

"Hewwies, I wefuse to allow you to call my minah an ass," said D'Arcy, with considerable dignity. "I twust you will withdwaw the expression."

"Ass!"

"Then I shall have no wesource but to thwash you, Hewwies—"

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

Towser growled as D'Arcy made a warlike movement towards Herries.

The swell of St. Jim's hastily retreated.

"Keep that wotten beast quiet, Hewwies!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Hallo, here's Wally!"

Wally D'Arcy, Arthur Augustus' hopeful young brother, appeared in sight, with Pongo frisking about his heels. Jameson and Gibson of the Third, Wally's Form-fellows, were with him, and the three were evidently going to make a day of it, like most of the fellows at St. Jim's that day.

Pongo gave voice as he caught sight of Herries' bulldog, and, with wonderful courage considering his size, frisked up to Towser with a challenging yap.

Towser was not likely to stand that.

He made a spring that dragged the chain from the hand of Herries, and went for the mongrel with a low growl.

"Here, hold your beast!" yelled Wally.

But it was too late.

Towser was rushing upon Pongo, and Pongo, repentant too late, made a desperate rush for the open gate. After him went Towser, with his chain clinking on the ground behind him.

"My hat!" gasped Blake. "There'll be a circus now!"

The juniors rushed out into the road.

Pongo and Towser were disappearing down the road in a cloud of dust, Pongo still ahead, but Towser a good second. Wally, with a glare at Herries, jammed his cap tighter on his head, and started in pursuit.

"My hat!" panted Herries.

"Well, they're gone now, and you'll never catch them," said Blake consolingly. "Come on!"

"But what about Towser?"

"Rats!" said Digby warmly. "I suppose you don't want us to spend the whole day in chasing a blessed bulldog?"

"I don't see how we can have a picnic without Towser."

"Well, we'll try," said Blake sarcastically. "Perhaps, if we try very hard, we may have a passably good time, even without Towser."

"Oh, don't be funny!"

Herries gave a last glance down the dusty road. Pongo and Towser had disappeared, and Wally was just disappearing round a bend in the lane.

Herries grunted, and followed his comrades down to the river. It certainly wasn't much use trying to catch Towser now.



As Tom Merry pushed off the boat from the landing-stage, Figgins & Co. jumped. The next moment three splashes sounded as one as the New House trio plunged into the water! "Oo-oo-och!" they gasped in chorus. A roar of laughter followed them. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Herries was looking rather serious; but it was not difficult to see in three other faces that the majority of the party was by no means displeased by the occurrence. Indeed, Blake murmured to Digby that Wally deserved a vote of thanks for coming along with his mongrel in the nick of time like that, and Digby grinned and said:

"Hear, hear!"

They obtained a boat, dragged it out and jumped into it. Blake grinned with satisfaction as he sat down to steer.

"The best of it is," he remarked, "that we shall have the island to ourselves for the giddy picnic. That's the best of it."

CHAPTER 3.

And Another!

"THERE jolly well won't be a boat left!" said Kerr, as he towelled his head in the Fourth Form dormitory in the New House.

Figgins, who was squeezing the water out of the jacket he had just discarded, paused for a moment.

"By George, you're right!" he remarked. "All the fellows seem to be bent on boating to-day. I never saw so many blazers along the Rhyl."

"Well, we shan't get a boat!"

"That doesn't matter so much," remarked Fatty Wynn dolorously. "I'm thinking of the grub. It's at the bottom of the river. Whatever happens, boat or no boat, we shall never get that back!"

"Oh, blow the grub!"

"Well, you ass," said Fatty Wynn, "there was a ripping feed in that bag! Do you remember there were fifteen sausages, done to a turn—"

"Blow the sausages!"

"And three pounds of ham—"

"Blow the ham!"

"And a whole tongue—"

"Blow the tongue!"

"And a pot of strawberry jam—"

"Blessed if he won't make me feel hungry if he keeps on!" exclaimed Figgins, flinging a boot at Fatty Wynn.

"Shut up!"

"Look here— Oh!"

The boot cut short Fatty Wynn's remarks, as it bumped on his chest.

"Oh!" he roared.

"Shut up, then!"

"You duffer!"

"We can get some more grub," said Figgins; "but—"

"Now you're talking," said Fatty Wynn, recovering his good humour at once. "Let's raise all the tin we can, and get down to the tuckshop before Mrs. Taggles has sold out. There's a big rush on the tuckshop this morning. I don't believe there will be any sausages left, in any case."

"Rats! The bother is, whether we shall get a boat—"

"Never mind the boat if we get the grub."

"Ass! Do you want to swim to the island, then?"

"We can picnic somewhere else."

"Stuff! We don't want to be raided by a gang of School House rotters, or Grammar School cads!" said Figgins. "Rylcombe Grammar School has a holiday to-day, you know, and Gordon Gay and his lot are sure to be out."

"I don't mind a row with the Grammarians," said Fatty Wynn, "but it would be simply awful to have the grub raided."

"Besides, we made up our minds to go to the island, and we're not going to change our plans," said Figgins. "It's a good distance, and it isn't every day we get a chance of going there. Besides, we shall have the place all to our-

selves. I don't suppose it has occurred to anybody else at St. Jim's to camp on the island."

"Yes, that's so."

"Let's see what tin we can raise, and get out," said Figgins.

The New House chums were soon dressed, and a cricket-bag was found to carry the new supply of provisions in. Fortunately, Figgins & Co. were still able to raise a certain amount of cash. Figgins said generously that he would sell his diamond pin if necessary; but, luckily, it was not found necessary.

The three chums and the cricket-bag went down to the school shop, and they found Dame Taggles very red and tired, but in high good-humour.

The good dame had been doing a roaring trade that morning, and the little tuckshop was very nearly sold out.

Fatty Wynn cast a mournful glance at the empty sausage dish, and the fragment of ham that remained.

"I told you we should be too late, Figgy," he remarked.

"Plenty of tarts left, Master Wynn," said Mrs. Taggles, "and I can make you some beef sandwiches, and—"

"Good!" said Figgins. "Any old thing will do—"

"Will it?" said Fatty Wynn wrathfully. "It jolly well won't! Look here, you chaps had better go and look for a boat, and leave me to get the grub. I'll bring it down to the boathouse."

"Right-ho!" said Figgins.

And Fatty Wynn was left to examine what was left of Dame Taggles' stock, and to expend the sum of seven-shillings-and-sixpence to the best possible advantage.

Figgins and Kerr willingly left him to the task, and walked down to the landing-stage before the boathouse.

The place was not so crowded now.

The river was alive with boats and skiffs and punts, and the boathouse, when Figgins looked into it, was quite empty.

Figgins grunted.

"No blessed boat here!" he remarked.

"I thought so."

"I've a jolly good mind to give up the picnic, and track out those Shell bounders, and rag them," said Figgins wrathfully.

"Do you know where they are gone?"

"Haven't the faintest idea."

"Then we'd better stick to the picnic," grinned Kerr.

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"But how are we going to get to the island without a boat?"

Kerr knitted his brows in reflection. It certainly was not an easy question to answer.

"We can tramp up the river as far as the island," he remarked. "When we get there—"

"Swim?"

"Well, we could swim, and float our clothes over on a log or something," said Kerr. "It would be good fun."

Figgins nodded.

"Or we could make a raft of the fence there," he said.

"There's a wooden fence at one part, you know."

"Good idea."

"Hallo, here's Fatty!"

Fatty Wynn was labouring down to the boathouse with the bag crammed. There was evidently quantity if not quality in the supply the fat Fourth Former had laid in.

Fatty Wynn dropped the bag on the planks, and gasped for breath.

"By George, it's heavy!" he remarked.

"What have you got there?"

"Well, I've done the best I could," said Fatty Wynn.

"No good running any risk of getting hungry and having nothing to eat, you know; so I've got a lot of bread and cheese—three loaves, and two pounds of cheese—"

"Phew!"

"That will lay a solid foundation, and then we can fill up with the tarts and buns and things," explained Fatty Wynn.

"There's nothing like laying a good foundation, as I've discovered from experience. I haven't got any ginger-pop, so we can drink water. After all, ginger-pop is a luxury, and grub is a stern necessity."

"Br-r-r-r! Who's going to eat three loaves?" demanded Figgins.

"Well, I could at a pinch, if you fellows don't want any," said Fatty Wynn. "But wait till you've been in the open air a few hours, and you'll be glad enough of the bread and cheese."

Figgins snorted.

"Well, come on. We've got to walk; there's no boat."

Fatty Wynn looked dismayed.

"How are we to get the bag along?" he asked.

"We'll take it in turns," said Figgins. "And you shall take your turn, too. There's jolly well not going to be any slacking in this party."

"Well, you see—"

"Oh, come on!"

Figgins lifted the bag to take first turn in carrying it. He strode away, and the other two followed him on the path up the river.

It was a blazing morning, and the woods were very cool and shady from the sun, but when the juniors had an open path to traverse, Fatty Wynn began to blow.

As it happened, he was taking his turn to carry the bag then, and he laboured along under it with many a grunt.

But suddenly an idea flashed into his brain. He set the bag down, and turned to Figgins and Kerr, mopping his brow with his handkerchief.

"I say, Figgy—"

"Well?" demanded Figgins.

"It was your idea to camp on the island."

"Yes, it was."

"But you thought we could get a boat, and we can't. Suppose we camp here, and have the grub now?" suggested Fatty Wynn. "I'm getting hungry."

"Br-r-r-r!"

"You see, I always get hungry in this weather," said Fatty Wynn. "There's something in the air at this time of the year, I suppose. We could get under the trees yonder, and eat the grub—"

"Pick up that bag and come on!"

"But—"

"Pick it up!" exclaimed Figgins. "If you open it we'll biff you with it. Come on."

And Fatty Wynn sighed, picked up the bag and tramped on.

CHAPTER 4.

The Island in the River!

TOM MERRY stood up in the boat, and looked ahead. Manners and Lowther rested on their oars.

The wide, deep river ran on with a steady murmur, and bubbled and sang through the rushes, and down the centre of the stream lay a golden bar of sunlight.

But nearer the rich earthy banks the overhanging trees made a pleasant shade. In the clear water the thick foliage was mirrored with flecks of golden light filtering in and dancing on the water. Overhead was the clear blue sky.

"How jolly!" said Tom Merry.

"What-ho!" said Manners. "I've been thinking that

all holidays ought to be for a whole day. You miss so much by only getting out in the afternoon."

"Yes, rather! And we ought to have one every day," said Lowther meditatively.

"And two on Sundays," said Tom Merry, laughing. "There's the island."

The island rose, a mass of green from the swirling water, and round it the trees were reflected as in a looking-glass.

From a distance it appeared a mere mass of foliage and undergrowth, but on approaching nearer, openings in the trees could be seen.

The juniors had been there before, though not often, owing to the dispute over the island between Sir Francis Fortesque and the governing body of St. Jim's.

It was a doubtful point, perhaps, in law; but the juniors had no doubts whatever on the subject. The island belonged to St. Jim's, and always had. They wanted to camp there, and to the juniors there could be no better reason for believing that the island was wholly and solely the property of the school.

"Doesn't it look gorgeous?" said Manners, craning his neck round. "A giddy picture—as pretty as a picture postcard, by Jove!"

"Jolly good!" said Lowther.

The boat glided up to the island.

The Terrible Three had congratulated themselves that nobody else at St. Jim's had thought of camping on the island, and at all events there was nobody else there as yet. The beautiful spot was quite silent and deserted.

Several birds rose from the bushes as the boat ran in to the shore, and flew away, but there was no other sign of life.

Tom Merry guided the boat in through a tangle of bushes that grew in the water, under the shade of a huge tree with drooping branches.

Bump!

The boat ran its nose upon soft mud, and Manners made fast the boat to an old tree-stump.

The Terrible Three jumped ashore.

"Ripping!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I say, this is lovely! What a jolly good idea to come and camp here!"

"Spiffing!"

"We can explore the giddy island, and get a bathe here presently, too," said Tom Merry. "We've brought towels and swimming costumes. But, of course, the first thing in camping is to have a camp-fire!"

"Blessed if I can see what we want with a fire on a giddy, blazing morning like this," said Monty Lowther.

"Ass! We can't cook dinner in the sun, can we?"

"But it's not dinner-time yet."

"It will be by the time you've done arguing, I think," said Tom Merry. "Look here, if we leave getting the fire till dinner-time, we shall be very late with dinner. We've got to select the spot, and get the firewood, and make the fire burn. That's not always so jolly easy."

"Oh, all right!" said Lowther resignedly.

The Terrible Three plunged into the trees at once in search of firewood. The spot where they had landed was fairly open, and not dangerous for building a camp-fire. There was a burnt patch on the grass, in fact, which showed that a fire had been built there before.

In the wood there was plenty of fuel to be gathered.

In a very short time the chums of the Shell had collected as much as they could carry, and then they rejoined one another, and came back through the woods to the camp, and deposited the sticks and brushwood in a heap.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Monty Lowther suddenly.

"What's the row?"

"Was that an oar on the river?"

"Shouldn't wonder! Lots of fellows pulling up the river to-day, though most of them don't come in this direction," said Tom Merry.

"Rather a joke if the Grammarians came by and collared the boat. They've got a holiday, too!"

"Phew!"

The Terrible Three hurried towards their boat.

Lowther had said that it would be a joke, but, as a matter of fact, it would prove a serious thing for the Saints if their old rivals, the Grammarians, should come upon them by surprise and get possession of the boat and leave the Saints stranded.

There was a sound of a splash from the landing-place, and a grating sound, as if one boat had jammed against another.

There was no further doubt on the subject.

Fresh visitors had arrived at the island.

The Terrible Three dashed back to the landing-place.

As they burst from the trees a familiar voice fell upon their ears.

"Bai Jove, deah boys, here they are!"

CHAPTER 5.

Rivals Arrive!

JACK BLAKE & CO. had arrived.

Blake, Herries, and Digby and D'Arcy stood on the greensward, and behind them their boat could be seen, moored alongside that belonging to the Terrible Three.

If the Terrible Three had been on the spot the landing of the Fourth Formers would certainly not have taken place undisputed, but they were ashore now.

The chums of the Shell came panting up.

Tom Merry was relieved to find that the invaders were not the Grammarians; but the island was invaded all the same.

"Well?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Well?" said Blake.

"Well, deah boy?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, putting up his monocle and staring at the chums of the Shell.

"What have you come here for?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I was just going to ask what you Shellfish are doing

CAN YOU BEAT IT?



Old Lady (to boatman, who is baling out water from boat): "Now, my man, don't you think it would be better to throw the water farther out, so that it doesn't come back into the boat again!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Graves, Dunbar, Kents Hill Road, South Benfleet, Essex.

here," said Jack Blake. "What do you fellows mean by planting yourselves on a respectable island?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We came here to picnic—"

"How curious! So did we!"

"Well, as you see the island occupied, you can go farther on," said Tom Merry. "There's lots of room on either bank."

And he waved his hand generously towards the distant banks of the Rhyl.

Blake chuckled.

"I was just going to suggest that you should move out and leave the island to us," he remarked.

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I fail to see anythin' asinine in Blake's remark. I admit that he is an ass, as a wule, but on this occasion I wegard his suggestion as vewy sensible. You Shell boundahs will have to cleah out."

"No fear!"

"I shall insist upon your doing so."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I uttably fail to see any cause for diswespectful mewwiment. I insist upon you fellows gettin' into your boat and wovin' away at once."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy's right," said Digby. "He's usually a silly chump, but—"

"Weally, Dig—"

"But this time he's hit the nail right on the head. Are you fellows going to step into your boat, or be chucked in?"

"That's it," said Herries. "Perhaps you chaps wish we had brought Towser now. He'd have cleared these Shell rotters off pretty fast."

"Upon the whole, Hewwies, we are bettah without Towzah. Although Tom Mewwy is howwibly impertinent, I don't think a fellow ought to go so far as to wish wuinin' his twousahs as would be the case if—"

"Are you Shellfish going?" asked Blake.

The Terrible Three grinned at one another.

"Are we going?" murmured Tom Merry.

"Yes," said Lowther—"I don't think!"

"The question is are you Fourth Form kids going?" said Manners. "We can't be bothered by children when we're camping out."

"Exactly," assented Tom Merry.

The Fourth Formers turned red.

"Bai Jove! I can see no wresource, deah boys, but to give these wottahs a feahful thwashin'."

"What-ho!" said Blake.

"Collar the cads!"

The Terrible Three lined up at once. They were quite

prepared to fight for the possession of the island, and, as a matter of fact, were not at all averse to a row.

Blake pointed to the boat.

"There's your giddy boat," he remarked.

"Yes; I've seen it before," said Monty Lowther blandly.

"Will you jump in?"

"Not much!"

"Better go quietly."

"My hat! Sounds like a giddy policeman, doesn't he?"

"Are you going?" roared Blake.

"Is that a conundrum?"

The Fourth Formers wasted no more time in words. Blake rushed to the attack, and Digby and Herries followed fast.

Arthur Augustus delayed a little to put his eyeglass away in safety.

"Sock it into them!" roared Blake.

"Yah!"

"Rats!"

"Collar them!"

In a second the Terrible Three and the Fourth Formers were struggling desperately.

Blake and Tom Merry rolled on the ground, and rolled over and over, as if they were performing some circus trick.

Digby collared Lowther, and was collared in his turn, and they staggered about wildly pommelling, most of the blows falling upon vacancy.

Herries seized Manners, and whirled him round and had him down in a moment, and sat on his chest to keep him there.

"Help, Gussy!" roared Blake, finding that Tom Merry was getting the upper hand.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Lend a hand, you ass!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass!"

"Got you!" gasped Tom Merry.

They rolled over for the last time, and Blake went on his back in the grass, and Tom Merry sat astride of his chest.

"Rescue!" gasped Blake.

"Now, then, make it pax, Blake—"

"Rats!"

"And get off the island—"

"More rats!"

"Or I'll jolly well roll you into the water," said Tom Merry grimly.

"Rescue!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Gussy, you rotter—"

"I wefuse to be called a wottah!"

"Why don't you help me?" yelled Blake, as much puzzled as enraged, for D'Arcy was usually quite reckless in a fistical encounter.

But just now there was a thoughtful shade upon the face of the swell of St. Jim's. He had put his eyeglass away for security, but he now took it out again and jammed it into his eye, and surveyed the struggling combatants with a reflective air.

"I've got an ideah, deah boys—"

"Rescue!"

"Yaas, I'll wescue you if necessaw, but—"

"Help!" gasped Blake, as Tom Merry began to work his way through the grass towards the water's edge, which was close at hand.

"Yaas, wathah! But I've got an ideah. You see, my white flannels would be wuined if I stwuggled on the gwass in that wotten way."

"You howling ass!"

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as a howlin' ass!"

"Help!"

"Yaas, that's all wight, wait a minute. I was goin' to make a suggestion. Suppose we make it pax with these wottahs, and all camp here on the island togethah? There's woom enough on the island for all seven of us, you know, and we should make quite a jolly party."

"Ass!"

"If Tom Mewwy will not agree, I will collah him immediately, and we will throw the wottahs into the watah!"

Tom Merry grinned.

The Shell fellows had rather the best of the combat, so far, but if D'Arcy joined in, the odds would be against them, and the chances certainly were that they, and not the Fourth Formers, would be rolled into the water.

"I'm willing!" said Tom Merry. "After all, what is there to row about? The island's big enough for fifty campers."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake grunted.

"Gussy, you howling ass—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Why couldn't you make your blessed suggestion before, you image?" roared Blake.

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"Bai Jove, you know, I didn't think of it till I saw you wollin' on the gwass, and thought how howwid it was for your clothes, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha! Is it pax?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes," growled Blake.

And the combatants separated, and rose to their feet, very breathless and very dishevelled. The only fellow there who looked at all tidy was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

D'Arcy's suggestion had stopped the combat, and the swell of St. Jim's was feeling satisfied with himself.

The look on his cheerful face changed a moment later, and he pointed across the shining stream towards the northern bank.

"Look!" he cried suddenly.

The juniors looked, and uttered simultaneous exclamations of surprise.

CHAPTER 6.

No Luck for the New House Trio!

F IGGINS & CO. had reached the bank of the Rhyl opposite the island.

Fatty Wynn, as he came down the grassy bank of the river, threw himself down in the shade of a tree, and gasped.

The morning was decidedly warm, and growing warmer, and the fat junior had had enough of walking. Figgins looked towards the island.

Little did he dream that seven pairs of eyes were fastened upon him from the island in the river. He could not see Tom Merry & Co. there, for they were hidden by a fringe of bushes. But Figgins & Co. were plainly visible to the fellows on the island.

"My hat!" murmured Blake. "I think all St. Jim's has made up its mind to camp on this island to-day."

"Looks like it," grunted Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But Figgins can't be coming over here," said Manners. "They've got no boat. They've been tramping through the woods."

"Look at Figgins."

A look at Figgins was enough to proclaim his intentions. He was stripping off his clothes in the shade of the trees. Kerr was following his example. Fatty Wynn was gasping in the grass, and did not move.

"They're going to swim to the island," said Tom Merry.

The chums of the Shell chuckled.

"They were too late to get a boat," grinned Lowther.

"Serve them jolly well right for trying to collar ours."

"Yes, rather!"

"I like Figgy for one thing—he does stick to a thing," grinned Blake. "If he can't row to the island, he'll swim to it. But when he gets here—"

"He'll find that New House bouncers are barred."

"Suppose we yell to them and warn them off," suggested Digby.

Blake made a hurried gesture of warning, for he had made the discovery that none of the campers had matches.

"No, no! Figgy may have some matches about him, and we want them. He can't have been ass enough to come out camping without matches, like the rest of you."

"Yaas, bai Jove! That's vewy thoughtful of you, Blake."

"Go hon!"

"Don't make a row—"

"Who's making a row, Tom Merry?"

"Well, don't!" said the hero of the Shell pacifically.

"If we scare them off, we shan't get the matches, and Figgins is certain to have some. He carries a matchbox on his watch-chain—a silver one."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the chums of the School House, keeping under cover of the bushes, watched the New House trio with great interest, prepared to give them a warm reception as soon as they reached the island.

In the keen interest of a House row, they forgot even that they were hungry.

Figgins and Kerr were soon ready to take the water, but Fatty Wynn was still resting in the long grass. Figgins stirred him with his foot, and the fat Fourth Former grunted.

"Get up, Fatty!"

"Groogh!"

"Buck up!" said Figgins. "We're ready!"

"I'm fagged."

"A swim will liven you up," said Kerr encouragingly.

"I'm hungry."

"Well, we're going to feed on the island."

"I think we ought to have some grub first," said Fatty Wynn, sitting up. "It will make less to carry over, and—"

"Rats!" said Figgins. "We're going to picnic on that

blessed island, if we have to fly there, I'm not going to be done."

"Rats! But I'm hungry."

"It's bad to get into the water after a feed, you duffer!"

"Well, we could have a feed now, and then a rest, and then—"

"Up with you," said Figgins, without waiting for the rest of the programme Fatty Wynn was mapping out.

And he seized the fat Fourth Former by the collar and jerked him to his feet. Fatty Wynn came up to a perpendicular attitude with a grunt.

"I think it's rot—" he began.

"Are you going to strip, or shall we strip you, Fatty?"

"Oh, I'll strip!"

And Fatty Wynn undressed.

Figgins had gathered a number of boughs and sticks as

"Certainly!"

"Here—oh—groogh—oooh!"

Splash!

Fatty Wynn disappeared into the water with a mighty splash. Figgins gave a yell. A good deal of the splash came over the raft, and upon the things it bore. Figgins had not foreseen that.

"My hat!" exclaimed Kerr, in dismay.

"You ass!"

"Well, you told me—"

"Oo-oo-ch!" gasped Fatty Wynn, coming up. "You chump! Yow! Groo! Oooh!"

Figgins reached out with one leg and shoved him under again. When Fatty came up he was puffing and blowing more than ever.

"You ass!" he snorted. "What did you do that for?"



"Come on, Fatty!" shouted Figgins, who was pushing the raft out into the river. Fatty Wynn put one toe in the water, and drew it back again. "It's cold!" he said. "Don't be afraid of the water!" exclaimed Figgins. "Push him in, Kerr!"

he came through the wood, and he plunged into the water, and fastened them together in a flimsy raft with string. The raft would not have borne the weight of one of the juniors for a moment, but it was quite capable of bearing the weight of the clothes and the bag of provisions.

"Shove the things this way, Kerr," said Figgins.

And Kerr handed out the cargo, and Figgins arranged it on the raft, and tied it there. The idea was to swim to the island and push the raft before them; not at all a difficult task for good swimmers like Figgins & Co.

"Are you ready, Fatty?"

"Yes," grunted Fatty Wynn.

"Then come on!"

Fatty Wynn put one toe in the water, and drew it back again.

"It's cold!" he said.

"Oh, come on!" exclaimed Figgins, who was swimming on, and pushing the raft out from the rushes. "Don't be afraid of the water. Push him in, Kerr!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Figgins crossly. "Come on, Kerr!"

Kerr slipped into the water, and helped Figgins float the raft out. The astonished Fatty kept at a safe distance from both of them.

The raft floated across the placid river towards the island, the New House juniors swimming on either side of it and propelling it. They had started a little way above the island, to allow for the current.

From the island, Tom Merry & Co. watched them with gleaming eyes.

"My only hat!" Monty Lowther remarked. "This is a good dodge of Figgys—especially as we're here to collar his giddy raft as soon as he's ashore."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quiet!" said Tom Merry. "Wait till they've shoved the raft close to the shore, and then collar it and chuck the New House bounders back into the water."

"Good egg!"

And the School House fellows watched eagerly. Closer came the trio, blissfully unconscious of the reception that awaited them.

Closer and closer—till Figgins pushed the little raft through the rushes that grew on the edge of the island, and it came fast in the mud of the bank.

Then Figgins and Kerr scrambled through the reeds ashore, and gasped.

"Got here, anyway!" said Figgins.

"Yes, rather. Good!"

"The best of it is that we shall have the island to ourselves—Oh!"

Figgins said "Oh!" as half a dozen forms suddenly rushed out of the bushes and seized him and his comrade.

Before they had time to resist—before they even knew that they were attacked—Figgins and Kerr were tossed back into the water.

Splash!

"Oh!"

"Groo!"

"Collar the stuff!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

In the twinkling of an eye, almost, the School House chums collared the raft and its burden, and dragged it ashore and plumped it down.

Then they stood on the margin of the stream and looked at Figgins & Co. Figgins and Kerr came up puffing and blowing, and stared in blank amazement at the School House fellows. From Tom Merry & Co. came a yell of laughter that rang along the river.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 7.

Figgins & Co. in a Fix!

"**H**A, HA, HA!"

The School House juniors simply roared.

The faces of Figgins & Co. were an interesting study. Treading water, the New House trio glared at the juniors on the island.

"M-my hat!" gasped Figgins.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Kerr.

THE ST. FRANK'S STORY YOU'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR—

"The—the School House cads!" panted Fatty Wynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, I wathah weckon you're done this time, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his monocle upon the dismayed and astounded New House juniors.

"What-ho!" grinned Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who's Cock-House at St. Jim's?" yelled Tom Merry.

"School House!" shouted the rest.

"Where's the New House?"

"Nowhere!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Hear us smile!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you rotters!" said Figgins, finding his voice at last. "Fancy meeting you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You beastly bounders!" said Kerr. "Give us back our clothes!"

"Can't be did!" said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head. "We want to make a camp-fire, and—"

"Here, I say, you jolly well can't make a fire of our clothes!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn in alarm.

"Ha, ha, ha! I didn't mean that! We're going through your pockets for matches!"

"Here's Figgy's matchbox," said Blake, jerking it out of the pocket of Figgins' coat. "This is luck!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Like corn in Egypt in a lean year, and no mistake!" grinned Manners. "You've come just in the nick of time, Figgy!"

"And the grub will come in useful, too!" remarked Herries.

"Here, you let that grub alone!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's our grub!"

"My dear chap, you've carried the grub here, and we're going to eat it," said Lowther. "That's an equal division of labour, and quite fair."

"You! You—"

"My hat! Here's tins of salmon, and loaves, and cheese, and—"

"Come on!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn excitedly. "We're

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not going to lose the grub. You would come and picnic on this beastly island, Figgins!"

"Not much chance of picnicking there now!" grinned Kerr.

"Doesn't look like it!" grunted Figgins.

There certainly wasn't much hope of success in attacking overwhelming odds. But Fatty Wynn was too excited about the feed to think or care about that.

"Come on!" he exclaimed.

And Fatty Wynn swam desperately to the shore. Figgins and Kerr could but follow him. The three plunged through the rushes.

"Here they come!" grinned Blake. "What giddy heroes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The School House juniors lined up on the shore, and stood there ready to receive the attack. Figgins & Co. scrambled up, and each of them was seized by two pairs of hands as he landed, and tossed back helplessly into the water.

Splash, splash, splash!

Figgins & Co. floundered in the river again, gasping.

"Any more coming on?" grinned Tom Merry.

"Yah! School House rotters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better give in, and make it pax," said Blake. "If you like to admit that the School House is Cock-House at St. Jim's we'll make it pax, and you can come ashore!"

"Rats!"

"That's the music!" said Tom Merry. "Now, is School House Cock-House?"

"No!" roared Figgins & Co.

"Then you can jolly well stay in the water till it is!"

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn gasped, and exchanged glances of exasperation. They had lost their feed, and they had lost their clothes, and there wasn't the remotest chance of effecting a landing on the island while the School House chums were on guard.

"Going to give in?" asked Blake sweetly.

"No!" roared Figgins.

"Give them some turfs to help 'em make up their minds," suggested Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha! Good egg!"

The juniors detached chunks of turf, and began to pelt the three swimmers, knocking up splashes all round them.

Figgins & Co. promptly swam back to a safer distance.

"My hat!" said Figgins. "We're done this time. But we're jolly well not going to give in. Never!"

"Never!" said Kerr.

BEGINS NEXT WEEK! DON'T MISS THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

"I'm jolly hungry, though!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Eh?"

"I'm jolly hungry. I think—"

"If you're thinking of selling your giddy birthright for a pot of mess—I mean, a mess of pottage—" began Figgins excitedly.

"We'll jolly well drown him!" said Kerr.

Fatty Wynn swam away in alarm.

"Here, hold on, you duffers! I wasn't thinking of giving in. Only we shall have to get grub somewhere!"

"Blessed if I know what we're to do without our clothes!"

A voice hailed them from the bank.

"Hallo, you New House wasters!"

"Hallo, you School House worms!"

"Are you giving in?"

"Never!"

"You'll be ill if you stay in the water. You know that New House juniors and cold water never get on."

"Go and eat coke!"

"Better give in, Figgy, and come and feed!"

"Never!"

"Well, you can have your clothes, then," said Tom Merry cheerfully, pushing the raft out of the rushes. "We won't deprive you of your clothes. Mind, if you like to give in—"

"We don't!"

"We won't!"

"You've only got to say: 'Please make it pax, and we'll be good—'"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'll make you say that presently," said Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, we'll give you one last chance," said Figgins, coming nearer to the island.

The School House fellows stared at him.

"Well, I like that!" gasped Tom Merry. "You'll give us—us—one last chance!"

"Yes. You can get off that island, and leave our grub untouched, or—"

"Or you'll slay us?" asked Blake, in mock alarm.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or we'll come back with a New House crowd and wipe you up!" said Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mind, we mean business!"

"My dear chap," said Tom Merry, laughing, "you can bring all the New House, if you like, including the seniors, with your Housemaster thrown in, and we shouldn't mind a bit!"

"Not a little bit!"

"Wathah not!"

"Oh, all right!" said Figgins. "We'll snatch you bald-headed, and make you squirm. Mind, it's your last chance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The loud laughter of the School House fellows showed that they were not much alarmed by Figgins' dire threats.

The raft bearing the clothes floated down on the current. The provisions were retained, as the spoils of war.

"Mind, you can come and feed if you want to!" called out Tom Merry, as the New House juniors seized the raft and propelled it away.

"So we will, and there won't be any left for you soon!" said Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn cast a longing glance back at the island. But though the flesh might be weak, the spirit was loyal. Fatty Wynn swam off with Figgins and Kerr, and the triumphant yells of the School House fellows died away in the distance.

CHAPTER 8.

Blake Cooks the Sausages!

"THIS is where we smile, and no mistake!" grinned Jack Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get the fire lighted, then," said Tom Merry.

The fire was soon blazing merrily, and Blake squashed a place in it for the frying-pan, and it was jammed there, and the dripping rubbed round it, and the sausages put in.

Blake rather prided himself on the way he could cook sausages—he fancied himself the equal of even Fatty Wynn in that respect.

The others were not anxious to cook, and they agreed with singular unanimity that Jack Blake was exactly the proper person to handle the frying-pan.

D'Arcy, however, had his ideas on the subject. He didn't want to cook, or to touch so greasy an article as a frying-pan, but he was willing to help with advice.

"Pray don't do the sausages too much on one side, Blake, deah boy," he remarked.

Blake looked round at him with a glance that might have made a gargoyle blush.

"What's that, dummy?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"What do you know about cooking sausages?"

"I think they ought to be turned now."

"Ass!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass!"

"You think they ought to be turned—eh?" said Blake.

D'Arcy fixed his eyeglass upon the sausages, which were getting on very well. He nodded.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good!" said Blake, with unexpected docility. "I'll turn them!"

He turned them—by the simple process of swinging the pan, so that the sausages flew into the air and turned over there. But Gussy happened to be in the way of one of them, and it smote him on the nose. There was a wild yell from Arthur Augustus.

"Yawooogh!"

His nose was burned and greasy, and his beautiful white flannels were spotted over with splashes of grease from the frying-pan.

Blake gave a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Is it time to turn the sausages again, Gussy?"

The swell of St. Jim's retreated hastily, and rubbed his nose with a handkerchief.

"You uttah ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You feahful wottah—"

"Why, you told me to turn the sausages."

(Continued on 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.

CALLING THE TUNE.

A business man engaged a new boy, who worked well but would persist in whistling jazz tunes. Unable to stand this any longer, the employer said:

"For goodness' sake, if you must whistle all the time, whistle something decent!"

"Well, sir," replied the boy, "you can't expect grand opera for ten shillings a week!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Laker, 8, Selborne Road, Littlehampton.

NOT SO GOOD!

Father: "Have you been good in school to-day, Tommy?"

Tommy: "Yes, father."

Father: "Did your master say so?"

Tommy: "Well, not exactly; but he said that if all the boys in the school behaved like me, he would close the school to-morrow!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss L. Fairburn, Flat 2, 260, Canal Bridge, City Road, London.

MERELY A LODGER.

Ex-convict: "Could you help a poor man who has just left prison?"

Old Lady: "You should be ashamed to own it."

Ex-convict: "I didn't own it, mum—I was only a lodger!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Royle, Royd, Southgate, Flinton.

EMPTY-HEADED.

Professor: "What is space?"

Student: "Space is—is—I can't explain it, but I've got it in my head all right!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Allways, 72, Bury New Road, Cheetham, Manchester.

NO RECOMMENDATION.

"I don't know whether to publish this testimonial," said the inventor of the hair-restorer.

"What does it say?" asked a friend.

"Before I used your hair-restorer, read the inventor, 'I had three bald places on my head. Now I've only got one!'"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Scarsbrook, 37, Driffield Road, Roman Road, Bow, London, E.3.

JUST LIKE GUSSY!

Tom Merry: "Why all the laughter?"

Monty Lowther: "Oh, it's just Gussy. He failed to see a joke against himself."

Tom Merry: "What was it?"

Monty Lowther: "D'Arcy said: 'Bai Jove, ewevy time I open my mouth a sillay ass starts speakin'!'"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to M. B., 1, North Lodge Terrace, Darlington, Durham.

A GENTLE HINT.

Manager: "That is rather an old suit you are wearing, Smith."

Clerk: "Yes, sir; I bought it the last time I had a rise!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to F. Vince, 26, Luton Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17.

IT WAS THE PEN.

Teacher: "This exercise seems to be in your father's handwriting."

Boy: "Yes, sir; I used his fountain-pen!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Gleeson, Marist Bros. College, Koeh Street, Johannesburg, South Africa.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,376.

"You did that on purpose!" exclaimed D'Arcy, gazing down in horror at the grease-spotted clothes.

"Yes; you told me to."

"Owl! You ass! My clothes are ruined!"

"Oh, you can scrape it off!" said Blake. "Only don't go away, Gussy. I want you to give me some more advice about cooking the sausages."

But Arthur Augustus didn't. He walked away, and began to rub and scrape at his clothes. Blake received no more advice on the subject of cooking the sausages.

Jack Blake chuckled, and proceeded with his task. After D'Arcy's reception no one offered him any more advice. The sausages were cooked to a turn.

Meanwhile, most of the others were busy. Some of them were laying the cloth on the grass, and getting out plates and knives and forks, some filled the jugs with water from the stream, or cut the bread, or opened the bag of tarts.

By the time the cooking was done, all was ready.

Blake dished up the sausages, and the steaming dish was planted in the centre of the white tablecloth on the grass.

Blake surveyed it with an eye of pride.

"Jolly good, though I say it!" he remarked. "I think that lot is as well cooked as anything Fatty Wynn ever turns out!"

"So it is," said Tom Merry, helping himself. "They're done to a turn."

"Are you quite satisfied, D'Arcy?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Would you like me to turn the sausages again?"

"Pway don't be an ass, deah boy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors sat down.

They were all hungry by this time, and they enjoyed the feed on the island.

Owing to the unexpected tuck received from Figgins & Co., there was a greater supply than they had anticipated, and even Fatty Wynn would not have been able to clear the board if he had been there.

Which was all the better, as there was another meal to come before the campers left the island, the idea being to have tea there and row back to St. Jim's in the dusk.

"I wish Figgins had made it pax and joined us," said Tom Merry, as he started on his fourth helping.

Jack Blake nodded.

"Yes, rather! There's plenty here for all."

"By the way, deah boys, Figgay said he was comin' back with weinforcements," said Arthur Augustus. "We ought to keep watch."

"He won't find it easy to get the clan together," grinned Blake. "The New House kids are up and down the river, and in the village, and everywhere, and Figgins will have all his work cut out to call them in."

"Yaas, that's so!"

"If they come we'll give 'em a warm reception," said Manners. "We want a jolly good House row to finish up the day."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, I must say this has been a jolly good feed," said Herries, leaning back against a tree and slowly munching one more tart. "There's only one thing needed to make the picnic a complete success."

"And what's that?"

"Well, I should like Towser to be here."

"Bai Jove!"

"Otherwise I'm quite satisfied," said Herries drowsily. "I think we'd better take a rest now. That was a jolly good feed."

"Some sort of gentle entertainment is the proper caper now," said Tom Merry. "I'm half sorry we haven't got Gordon Gay of the Grammar School with us. He could give us some impersonations, or a song and a dance."

"As far as that goes, I should be vewy pleased to give you a song," said Arthur Augustus modestly.

"Let's have a rest," said Manners hurriedly. "Then we can have a stroll round and take photographs."

"Oh, blow photographs."

"I am quite willin' to give you a song," repeated D'Arcy with emphasis. "As you are aware, I have a wippin' tonah voice."

"Yes, I've heard it rip," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Nearly rips the roof off, doesn't it?" said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"You can't sing without an accompaniment, Gussy," said Digby. "Now, as that suggestion cannot be adopted—"

"You are quite wong, Dig. I can sing vewy well without an accompaniment," said the swell of St. Jim's. "Even if I finish in a different key, I don't suppose you fellows will notice it."

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"Order!"

"I will sing you, 'Let Me Like a Soldier Fall,'" said Arthur Augustus, getting up. "Pway excuse me if I use a tunin' fork to get my note."

"We'll excuse you altogether, if you like."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Go ahead, Gussy; we'll risk it."

"That is hardly a complimentawy way of puttin' it, Blake. Howevah, I will go ahead."

And D'Arcy, who was never without his tuning fork since he had taken up music, fished it out, and knocked it on his knee to make it sound.

"It ought to be knocked on wood," said Lowther. "Use your head."

"Lowther's beginning again."

"Bump him!"

But after that hearty meal, no one felt inclined to get up and bump Lowther, and the humorist of the Shell only grinned.

D'Arcy knocked the fork on a tree, and it buzzed out the "A"—the fork being tuned to A. By singing a third from A, D'Arcy obtained C, his starting note, and immediately burst into song.

"Yaas, let me like a soldier fall—"

Monty Lowther absently pushed out his foot, and tripped the tenor over, and D'Arcy fell—not like a soldier, perhaps—but he fell.

He bumped down on his back in the grass, and the tenor solo died away in a sputter.

"Ow!" gasped D'Arcy.

He sat up and groped for his eyeglass.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

"He like a soldier fell!" chanted Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy jammed the glass into his eye, and glared at Lowther.

"I wegard you as a beast, Lowthah!"

"Go hon!"

"I shall now wefuse to sing my tenah solo!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I will not sing a note!"

"Hurrah!"

"I wefuse—"

And D'Arcy refused!

CHAPTER 9.

Rivals of St. Jim's!

"OH dear!"

"What is the matter with you, Fatty?"

"I'm hungry!"

"Bosh!"

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Rats!"

And Figgins, having finished his towelling, donned his clothes.

The New House chums had landed at a considerable distance from the island, and towelled themselves down in no cheery mood.

They were all hungry, though Figgins and Kerr were not in the same state of famine as their unfortunate chum.

They had been done hollow by the School House fellows, and that was not pleasant; they were hungry, and that was decidedly unpleasant; and they didn't see how they were to get the upper hand of Tom Merry & Co., which was the worst of all.

Figgins had declared that he would gather the New House fellows, and return and sweep the enemy off the island, but when he came to think it out, he had to admit that it was not so easy to do as to say.

For, on the whole holiday, and in such glorious weather, the New House juniors were certain to be scattered far and wide, and it would be a long and doubtful task gathering them for a School House raid.

Wherefore the brow of Figgins was clouded, and he listened without sympathy to the complaints of his hungry chum.

"It's rotten," Kerr remarked.

Figgins nodded.

"Yes, rather!"

"Yes, isn't it?" said Fatty Wynn pathetically. "I've never been so hungry. And on a whole holiday, too."

And the fat Fourth Former almost wept.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Figgins. "I'm not thinking about your unearthly appetite. I'm thinking about being done by the School House."

"Yes, but—"

"We've got to make them sing small somehow."

"Yes, but I'm hungry—"

(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! Looking forward to next Wednesday! I'll say you are! It's a great programme that will be awaiting you in the GEM—a hundred per cent all-school story number. There's the first grand instalment of our wonderful new St. Frank's serial story, another ripping long complete yarn of the Chums of St. Jim's, and all our other popular features.

In the first chapters of the new serial

"THE SCHOOL FROM 'DOWN UNDER'!"

Mr. Brooks has packed all the exciting school adventure and sport it is possible to pack—and, as you all know, he is a past-master at it. So many of you readers have written asking for a genuine St. Frank's school story that I felt that, not only must I accede to your wishes, but that it simply had to be an unbeatable school yarn. And you can take it from me, it is!

A large contingent of schoolboy tourists from Australia, over in England with their parents for the Test matches, take over temporarily the River House school to continue their studies under Australian masters. That was a condition of their being permitted to come to England. Naturally the arrival of the newcomers causes much excitement among the St. Frank's fellows, for in the school from "down under" they sense worthy rivals in japing and cricket. Nipper loses no time in challenging the Australians to a series of Test matches of their own, and the first match is played right away. What a game it is, too! Whatever you do, don't take the risk of missing it—

order your GEM early, and don't forget to put your pals on to a good thing.

"THE MECHANICAL MAN!"

That title suggests that Bernard Glyn is up to his tricks again. You're right—he is! The inventor of St. Jim's lets loose another of his weird and wonderful inventions in next week's tip-top tale of the St. Jim's chums. And like most of his other amazing contraptions, it causes not a little fun and excitement—and trouble!—especially when Mr. Selby wakes up in the night and finds himself confronted by the giant robot! He's in an absolute blue funk. Read all about it next Wednesday, and enjoy a good laugh.

"THE BLACK HERCULES."

This is an amazing story of African adventure, that every GEMITE should make a point of reading. It is just starting in our companion paper, the "Magnet." The yarn tells of the thrilling adventures of two plucky young British airmen, who get stranded in the African jungle and fall into the clutches of King Hercules. He is a giant negro whose aim is to sweep all the "whites" out of Africa and establish himself as king of a new black empire. Ask for the "Magnet" to-day, price 2d., and start right away on this super serial story.

THE PAIN PEDLAR.

Who wants a bee-sting? "Tanner" a time! Mr. Storey, a Durham man, has hundreds for sale—that is, if you suffer from rheumatism, and want a quick cure.

Mr. Storey is something new in salesmen, for he travels from village to village seeking out those people who have rheumatism. On his back he carries a box of bees, whose stings represent so many sixpences to him. There are many people who have great faith in the bee sting as a cure for rheumatic ailments, and Mr. Storey, therefore, does very well in his queer occupation. But how does he make the bee sting when a sting is required? First he applies an antiseptic to the patient's rheumatic part, and on it he places a bee contained in a small wire cage. Then he tickles the bee with a straw until it becomes so angry that it stings!

THE TIMING CAMERA.

"How does the new camera device for timing races work?" asks Fred Willet, of Southampton. A precision clock in the camera comes into operation electrically by the starter's pistol, and as the camera photographs the race, it also records the correct time taken by the competitors. This is shown on the side of the film when it is developed.

When this race-timing camera was used for the first time at a meeting recently, in two races it recorded different results from those given by the judges. In a hundred yards race the film shows two competitors dead-heating, whereas the judges had placed them second and third. And in a 120 yards hurdle race, the film gives the competitor placed second as the winner!

THE FATEFUL MESSAGE.

It was in a monoplane, the Golden Hind, Bernard Berry, of Streatham, that the American airman, U. F. Diteman, attempted to fly the Atlantic. He set out from Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, but nothing more was heard of him until, some considerable time after, a bottle was washed up at Bantry, County Derry. In it was a piece of notepaper on which was written: "Sinking fast in mid-Atlantic. Petrol getting low. Fighting awful head winds. October 23. U. F. Diteman." Such was the manner in which the fate of an intrepid airman was revealed.

TAILPIECE.

Boss: "Did you tell that pest of a traveller that I had gone to America?"

Office-boy: "Yes, sir. He asked when you would be back."

Boss: "What did you say?"

Office-boy: "After lunch, sir!"

THE EDITOR.



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

Egbert French, 4, Shenstone Road, Sheffield 6, wants correspondents—not Australia; reading, tennis, swimming, cycling; age 16-17.

Bert Bland, 5, Hedley Villas, Sherwood Rise, Nottingham, wants a pen pal in U.S.A.—New York for preference; interested in aviation, art, and reading; age 15-17.

F. MacKlin, Bank of New South Wales, Goolagong, N.S.W., Australia, wants to exchange stamps in the Empire (outside Australia), Asia, and South America; age 11-15.

Sidney Cinnamon, 18, Brister Crescent, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, wants a stamp-collecting correspondent in Canada, Australia, or New Zealand; age 12-15.

E. King, 117, Pinner Road, Oxhey, Watford, Herts, wants a pen pal who has made a hobby of old GEMS and "Magnets," and who is keen on film stars; age 12-14.

Jim McMahon, 26, Birmingham Street, Spotswood, W.14,

Victoria, Australia, wants a pen pal interested in greyhound racing; age 12-14.

Jack Burgoyne, Jun., 108, Heald Grove, Rusholme, Manchester, wants pen pals who make a hobby of old Companion Papers.

Edward George Tranter, St. Aloysius' High School, Vizagapatam, India, wants a pen pal.

Eric March, 16, Tripney Avenue, Peterborough, South Australia, wants a pen pal interested in stamps, wireless sports, and cigarette cards.

Douglas Fanning, Railway Terrace, Peterborough, South Australia, wants correspondents interested in stamps.

Jack McMurdo, 60, Swan Terrace, Windsor, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, wants a pen pal in England who is interested in cricket and the Tests.

Alfred Victor Emmanuel, 3, Riebeeck House, De Waal Drive, Cape Town, South Africa, wants correspondents in Canada, India, Spain, and Italy, interested in hiking, stamps, and cycling; age 16-17.

Miss Gladys Middleton, 93, William's Road, Burnley, Lancs., wants a girl correspondent; age 16-21; British Empire, France, Germany, U.S.A., or China; interested in sports, films, aviation, photography, and languages.

Miss Jessie V. Emmanuel, 3, Riebeeck House, De Waal Drive, Cape Town, South Africa, wants girl correspondents in England, U.S.A., and Canada; swimming, art, sketching; age 19-20.

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THE RIVER RAGGERS!

(Continued from page 12.)

"The question is, how are we to do it?" "Famished, you know—" "Better get back to St. Jim's," said Kerr. "We may find some of the fellows there, perhaps, getting up a cricket match or something." "I suppose it's the only thing to be done."

"I don't think I could walk back to St. Jim's without something to eat," said Fatty Wynn faintly.

"Stay here, then," said Figgins gruffly. Figgins and Kerr started, and Fatty, with a sigh, followed them. The chums of the New House took a short cut through the wood, and came out on the bank again a short distance from the school, having cut across the wood enclosed by the bend of the river.

Figgins uttered an ejaculation as they came out into the towing-path.

"My hat! Look there!" "A large boat was pulling gently up the river, and it needed only one glance to tell Figgins who its crew were.

There were seven fellows in the boat. One of them, a handsome lad with very keen eyes, was standing in the bows, and Figgins knew Gordon Gay at once. Gordon Gay was the junior captain of Rylcombe Grammar School—the old rival of St. Jim's.

A youth with a large head and long hair was steering, and blinking as he steered, and was recognisable as Tadpole, the amateur artist of the Grammar School Fourth Form.

Five fellows were at the oars, and they were Jack and Harry Wootton, Frank Monk, Lane, and Carboy, all of the Fourth Form at the Grammar School.

That the Grammarians had a whole holiday that day, Figgins knew; but he was rather surprised to see so many of them in a party going up the river. The boat was near inshore, and the Grammarians were talking as they pulled gently, and Figgins & Co., keeping in the bushes along the towing-path, listened.

A suspicion had crossed Figgins' mind the moment he saw the Grammarians, and the first words he heard confirmed it.

"You don't know how many there are of them, Gay?"

"And don't care," said Gordon Gay cheerfully.

"But," began Tadpole, "it stands to reason—"

"Shut up, Tadpole! I don't suppose there are more than we are, and, if there are, I don't care a rap."

"Hear, hear!" said the oarsmen.

"We shall take them by surprise, anyway," said Gordon Gay.

"Wootton ought to have counted them," said Frank Monk.

Jack Wootton sniffed.

"How could I count them? I only had a glimpse of them on the island. Some of them were in the trees. I saw only two—Jack Blake and Tom Merry—but I know there were more there. How many more I don't know."

"And it doesn't matter," said Gordon Gay. "They were camping on this end of the island, you said, Monkey, towards St. Jim's?"

"Yes," said the Cornstalk. "Well, we'll creep along the bank past the island, and come round to the other THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,375.



No. 20. Vol. 1 (New Series).

SAINTS ROUT BIGSNORTON RECORD SCORES

Wally D'Arcy at the Microphone

Here we are at Bigsnorton—a school Tom Merry & Co. have never played before. We've heard a lot about Bigsnorton at St. Jim's. A cousin of Blake's wrote to him to say he'd seen Bigsnorton at cricket, and they were hot stuff! Merry rang them up and found them rather standoffish about a fixture. Their skipper, Bovis, finally agreed to a vacant date almost as a favour. Merry and his men have come over to-day with the grim intention of showing the Bigsnorton giants where they get off!

Watch the coin flicker—Bovis wins the toss, and elects to bat. Bovis and a giant by the name of Samson open the Bigsnorton innings. Fatty Wynn bowling—here comes the first ball, every eye following it. Bovis swipes—oh, heck, what a swipe—but misses it, utterly and completely! Crash! Bovis' stumps are down! Next man fares no better. First delivery from the Welsh wizard spreadeagles the wicket! Next man is sent back by Wynn's third ball! A "bat trick" to start with, against the redoubtable Bigsnorton eleven! Watch—here they come, and there they go—the tale of their innings can be best recorded by the sound of the falling wickets—crash, crash, crash, crash!

Bigsnorton all out for 4 runs! St. Jim's opening pair take the field—Merry and Blake. Bovis puts Samson on to bowl. Samson takes a terrific run—whoosh! The red sphere whizzes—Merry's bat flashes—the ball sails gaily skywards, high above the fieldsmen's heads, to drop well over the boundary—six. Merry at one hit has beaten the first innings total of Bigsnorton!

St. Jim's are battling like Test batsmen. Merry and Blake are good enough for any bowling. They would have a job to be bad enough to fail against this sort of stuff. Samson never looks like hitting a wicket—the batsmen's heads are in more danger than the stumps! Bovis and others labour in

vain—the opening pair are inseparable! Thirty—fifty—seventy—a hundred rattle merrily on the board! So this is the team Blake's cousin reported to be hot stuff! They must have cooled off since—with a vengeance!

At a hundred and twenty-three Merry mistakes a rank long hop and gives a catch which the wicket-keeper fumbles, but just manages to hold on to. Figgins comes in—and the second hundred goes up ere Merry declares the innings closed. St. Jim's 200 for 1.

Bigsnorton are batting again, opening with the same formidable looking pair—Bovis and Samson. They aren't nearly so formidable as they look, however! We know that! It's a shame to put Wynn on against them—but it has to be done! This time Bovis blocks three balls ere the fourth—curls round his bat and neatly removes the bails! Wynn gets one more batsman in his first over—not quite so good as his first innings "bat trick," but good enough, what? Bigsnorton need 197 to make St. Jim's bat again, but you might as well ask them for 1,197. Batsmen come and go in a stream. Wynn at one end and Tom Merry at the other share the wickets. Samson, by a miracle, survives till the last man joins him at the wickets. Samson has hit two fours—lucky drives, both of them—and he faces Fatty Wynn. Samson opens his shoulders to this one—look at him! What a slog! Samson staggers forward with his own momentum, stumbles, and falls headlong on the pitch! His fall almost drowns the rattle of the stumps, knocked back behind him! Samson the mighty has fallen—Bigsnorton are all out again for a grand total of 14.

St. Jim's are suppressing their smiles like little gentlemen! A Bigsnorton senior has just remarked to me that Bigsnorton have a strong senior eleven—that must be it! Blake's cousin saw the seniors in action and made a slight mistake!

Flying Squad Report

PILOT'S PERIL

Flying Squad watched plane from Wayland Aerodrome rehearsing "stunts" for Air Force display over Wayland Moor. Pilot did side-slips, rolls, and loops endlessly. Squad fascinated—till engine stopped abruptly, and plane circled, dropping fast. Flying Squad stood with hearts in mouths as plane half-crashed on brink of disused quarry on the moor. Tom Merry led dash to scene. Peering over edge, they could see pilot below, on ledge, clinging to tree trunk. Blake sped for rope. Chief Air-Marshall Merry clambered down quarry side with help of rope. Flying Squad hauled pilot up first; then Tom Merry. Pilot none the worse, though plane badly buckled. Squad later congratulated by Commanding Officer of Wayland Aerodrome.

STOP PRESS.

Special "Third Test Match"
Number Next Week.

St. Jim's News Reel

Pursued by Knox of the Sixth, Lowther went "all out" along the passage, made a "short turn" by the stairs, "side-slipped" down the banisters, "flattened out" in the hall, did a "roll" across to the door, and "looped the loop" "nose first" down the House steps. A fair "crash"!

Gerald Crooke has offered to take over the Flying Squad. We are "giving him the air"!

Wally D'Arcy announced that Mr. Selby had pulled the "joystick" on him six times for impudence. It transpired that by "joystick" Wally meant the birch!

Skimpole says he is very interested in airships. Skimmy always did like a lot of gas!

Fatty Wynn complains that, being twice as wide as the average fellow, he runs twice

bed during of sheet lig surprise a Jack-in-the advises: the other Especially out a lic hammer-th before bre other mor have thro very wrat Towser a No offend electric, f electrocu catching the spirit of y wasp circ We have Lathom, many year As Gora's oblivious behind his stile witha quickly: Why, the nated for oyster. yet found is a disea catch just A scientis another t ing next strength "Target" two old m Another Navy. that horr educated learning. why he s boys!

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Week Ending June 30th, 1934.

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MONTY LOWTHER CALLING

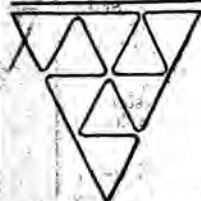
Hallo, everybody!
Did you know that
Dame Taggles is so nervous
she won't stay in

bad during a thunderstorm? She's afraid of sheet lightning! A sailor witness caused a surprise at the Wayland Police Court. A Jack-in-the-box! As the Head always advises: Always try to imagine yourself in the other man's place, and vice versa. Especially when the Head is handing you out a licking! We hear of a champion hammer-thrower who eats a dozen raw eggs before breakfast. Young Gibson tried it the other morning—but he felt so bad he couldn't have thrown even a somersault! Herries was very wrathful when a stranger called his dog Towser a saveloy. A bit premature, perhaps! No offence, Herries! Clifton Dane has an electric fishing rod which is claimed to electrocute the fish. A shocking way of catching them! "I wish I could leap with the spirit of youth!" sighed Mr. Ratcliff as the wasp circled over him menacingly. He did! We have it on good authority that Mr. Latham, who is considerably bald, has for many years held shares in a hair tonic factory! As Gore's elderly uncle said to his nephew, oblivious of the angry bull pounding up behind him: "Thanks, I can get over this stile without any assistance!" Now say this quickly: It's not enough! What isn't? Why, the top half of a ladder! Mr. Selby, noted for bad temper, found a pearl in an oyster. To our astonishment, he has not yet found anything to grumble at! Wealth is a disease, says a periodical. A nice one to catch just for the holidays, we should think! A scientist says the world will not end for another thirty million years. We are arranging next season's footer fixtures on the strength of this! "Old Master as School Target" runs a headline. We have one or two old masters we'd like to make targets of! Another headline refers to our contented Navy. Hearts of Oke! A lecturer states that horn-rimmed glasses were first worn by educated savages to show their superior learning. Mr. Ratcliff offers no explanation why he sometimes wears them! Chin, chin, boys!

(Continued from previous column.)

much risk of being hit by fast bowling. Her mind, Fatty—Nature has made you a "all-rounder"!

"Are you any good at judging pigs?" a reader. We have already awarded second prizes to Messrs. Ratcliff and Selby!



Solution of
Last Week's
Puzzle

LOOK THROUGH OUR TELEVISOR

JOE
FRAYNE
SPEAKING



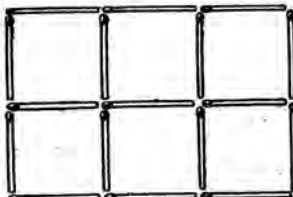
I 'ope you won't think I've got a cheek, speaking to you fellows like this. I 'aven't been at St. Jim's as long as most of your other friends, but I've been here long enough to realise that a better lot of chaps never existed—and that's no hempty compliment, either!

A fellow such as myself, with little education, might have expected trouble at a school like St. Jim's. Instead of being looked upon as an outcast, though, I'm accepted as a pal by Wally D'Arey and his chums. They judge a fellow on his own merits, without caring a rap for his upbringing! Of course, I've had a sneer or two from Piggott, and one or two of his kidney, but I can stand pin-pricks!

Tom Merry & Co., too, are a great crowd. Even Wally, who, as captain of the Third, naturally regards the Shell and Fourth with contempt, admits that you'd have to go a long way to find a better junior captain than Tom Merry. Gussy, too—he has frequently gone out of his way to say a kind word to me. Though as a loyal Third-Former I don't care a snap what the Fourth think, I do appreciate the kindness that D'Arey and others have shown to a fellow who was little more than a waif.

I've been down and out—I know what life can be like at its hardest. I didn't enjoy it, though I dare say it does a fellow good in the end—inures him to hard living, and makes him able to take care of himself in a tough spot! At St. Jim's now, I've got to concentrate on acquiring some of the knowledge I ought to have had. It's pretty hard, and I still have difficulty with my English at times. Aitches will keep cropping hup at the wrong moment, and things like that!

I'm very keen this summer to get into the Third Form cricket eleven, and Wally says I'm shaping well at practice. I'm due at the nets, so please excuse me—it's not good form to keep your cricket captain waiting! So long, and the best of luck!



Caliban's
Puzzle
Corner

Place seventeen matches on the table to form six squares, as shown. Now take away five matches, leaving only three perfect squares. This is an easy one!

end," said Gordon Gay. "There we can land without the St. Jim's chaps being any the wiser. Then we can get across the island and go for them. If they're keeping watch they'll be keeping it towards the river. We shall simply pulverise them."

"What-ho!" grinned the Grammarians.

"All the same—" said Monk.

But the boat was out of hearing now.

Figgins & Co. exchanged glances.

"They're going for the School House kids on the island," said Figgins.

"Looks like it."

"Serve 'em right!" said Fatty Wynn.

Figgins nodded.

"Yes, it may serve 'em right, but we can't let St. Jim's chaps be done by the Grammarian cads, all the same."

"But—"

"Oh, rats!" said Fatty Wynn warmly. "You don't propose going back to warn them, I suppose?"

"That's just what I do propose."

"I'm hungry."

"I believe I've heard you say so before," said Figgins. "But all the same, we can't let St. Jim's chaps be licked by the Grammarians."

"Of course not," said Kerr.

Fatty Wynn groaned.

"I—I suppose you're right, Figgy; but—but I'm simply famished!"

Figgins chuckled.

"We won't drag you back with us, Fatty. Kerr and I will go back to tell Tom Merry, and you can go to the village shop."

"Cut off!" said Kerr.

Fatty Wynn shook his head bravely.

"No; I'll stick to you," he said. "I can stand it."

"Oh, all right," said Figgins, "just as you like! Look here, we can cut back the way we came and get to the island long before the Grammar School cads. They have to follow the bend of the river, and they were taking it easy, too."

"Come on, then!"

And the three New House juniors retraced their steps.

Disastrously as they had fared at the hands of the School House chums, Figgins & Co. had no thought but of sticking to their schoolfellows when it was a question of tackling the Grammarians. On such an occasion both Houses at St. Jim's were as one.

Fatty Wynn suppressed many a groan as the three juniors tramped through the sunny, scented woods in the blazing noon.

He was loyal to the backbone, and he nobly dismissed from his mind the vision of the village tuckshop and ginger-pop and tarts galore.

Figgins set the pace, with his long legs that seemed never to tire, and Kerr kept pace with him with his springy strides; but Fatty Wynn every now and then had to break into a trot.

The gleaming river came in sight again through the openings in the thick foliage. "There's the Rhyll!" said Kerr.

And Fatty Wynn gave a gasp of relief.

The three juniors came out on the bank opposite the island. Figgins cast an anxious glance down the stream towards the bend.

There was no sign of the Grammarian six-ox yet.

"Plenty of time," said Figgins.

"I—I say, you're not going to swim out, Figgy?" said Fatty Wynn. "I really don't think I should be equal to it without something to eat first."

Figgins laughed.

"I'll hail them," he said. "That yell we've picked up from Kangaroo will make them look this way."

And Figgins hailed the island with a bush yell.

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"Coo-ee!"
From the island, in a few seconds, came back an answering call:
"Coo-oo-ee!"

CHAPTER 10.

A Surprise for the Grammarians!

"COO-OO-EE!"
Tom Merry leaped to his feet and gave the answer. He stared out from the island towards the green, wooded shore of the river.

"Coo-ee!"
"That must be Kangaroo!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "He told me he was going with Dane and Glyn, in Glyn's car, for a run down to the coast for a whole day. I thought he was gone."

"Changed his mind, I suppose," said Blake. "That sounds like his yell."

"Coo-ee!"
"Bai Jove, it's Figgins!"

"Yes, look!"

"My only hat!"

"It's a New House jape, perhaps," said Digby.

"I don't know," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "Figgins is waving his hands as if he was awfully excited about something."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He may have some news."

Tom Merry waved in reply to Figgins.

"Hallo!" he called out. "What's the trouble?"

"Danger!"

"What?"

"Grammarians!"

"My hat!"

Tom Merry glanced up and down and round about the wooded banks of the river. There was no sign of the enemy; but he knew that Figgins would not deceive him.

"Where are they?" called out Blake.

"Coming up the river!"

"How many?"

"Seven!"

"Oh!"

"They know you're there and are coming to wipe you up," said Figgins, his voice sounding faintly but distinctly across the wide expanse of shining water. "I thought I'd come to warn you. No larks!"

"Honour bright!" said Kerr.

"That's all right," said Tom Merry. "Look here, will you kids come out if we send a boat for you? All together against the Grammar School!"

"Make it pax, eh?" said Figgins.

"Yes."

"Good! But mind, we don't give in! School House ain't Cock-House!"

"We'll settle that another time," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Just at present we'll settle the Grammar School!"

"Right you are!"

"Better buck up with the boat," said Kerr. "The Grammar cads may come round the bend any moment now."

"I say," called out Fatty Wynn, "can you send me some grub in the boat? You see—"

"Shut up, Fatty!"

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Ha, ha, ha! We'll send some of your own grub, Fatty!" Blake and Herries and Digby jumped into the boat and pulled out towards the bank. Tom Merry tossed a half-loaf and a lump of cheese in after them.

The boat reached the bank in a few minutes.

"Jump in!" said Blake affably.

The New House juniors looked rather grim as they stepped into the boat. They had made it pax, and they could not break that, and the grins of the School House fellows had to pass unpunished.

"There's your fodder, Fatty!" said Blake consolingly.

Fatty Wynn was already eating bread and cheese.

Never had any dainty morsel come so sweetly to Fatty Wynn as the bread and cheese did at that moment.

Blake and Herries pulled back to the island.

"Well, here we are again," said Tom Merry, slapping Figgins on the shoulder as he landed. "Now, where did you see the Grammar School rotters?"

Figgins explained.

Tom Merry chuckled as he listened.

"So they're going to take us by surprise, are they?" he grinned. "Good! They're going to creep along close to the bank, so that we shan't see them pass, eh? I don't think!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'll watch for 'em, and when they pass the island we'll get to the other end and be ready for them," said Blake.

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"Wire in, Fatty! Tackle the cold sausages. They're all right, I cooked them."

"You cooked them?" said Fatty Wynn.

"Yes," said Blake proudly.

"Well, never mind; I'm hungry enough to eat anything," said Wynn.

Blake gave him a frozen stare, and the other fellows chuckled.

Fatty Wynn had avenged himself by that remark. He wired into the sausages, however, as if he really found the cooking all right. All there was of them disappeared rapidly before the fat Fourth Former's vigorous onslaught. Then he began on cakes and muffins and tarts, and effected a wonderful clearance.

"My word!" said Fatty Wynn, grinning round. "It's worth while getting hungry when you can have a really good feed afterwards!"

"Look out!" said Tom Merry.

"What is it?"

"Quiet! The Grammarians!"

The juniors of St. Jim's looked out from the cover of the bushes.

The boat, manned by Gordon Gay and the Grammarians, had come in sight, sweeping in fine style round the bend of the river.

The boat was keeping well to the bank, under the shade of the overhanging trees, and as the river was very wide at this point it might easily have passed unnoticed by the picnickers on the island.

But now they were on the look-out for it.

The boat crept along, the oars making hardly any sound, and disappeared up the river past the island.

Tom Merry laughed softly.

"Come on, kids!" he exclaimed. "They're going to land on the other end of the island—I don't think! They're going to take us by surprise."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fatty can stay here to look after the boats and the grub," said Tom Merry. "I don't suppose we could drag him away from the feed, anyway. The rest of you, come on!"

And Tom Merry & Co. went plunging away through the trees across the little island, Figgins and Kerr taking sandwiches in their hands, and Fatty Wynn not even looking up from his feed.

It did not take the chums of St. Jim's long to reach the other end of the little island.

There, taking cover in the thickets, with a strip of grass before them sloping down to the water, they looked for the Grammarians.

The six-oar was already in sight.

It was floating down the centre of the stream with the current, and had the Saints been at the camp at the lower end of the island they would certainly have seen nothing of it. Now not a movement of the Grammarians escaped them.

"Quiet!" murmured Tom Merry. "They'll be ashore in a minute!"

Blake chuckled softly.

"Then they'll get a surprise!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Wait till they're ashore," grinned Tom Merry, "then rush out and collar them, and sit on them! Each of you pick his man before they land, so that there will be no mistake. I'll take Gordon Gay!"

"Good! I'll have Wootton I!"

"I'll take Wootton II!"

"Bai Jove! I'll collar Fwank Monk!"

"I'll have Lane!"

And so the St. Jim's juniors selected their victims in advance.

The boat floated down to the island.

"Here we are!" came Gordon Gay's voice.

The boat's nose ran into soft mud.

Gordon Gay made it fast and jumped ashore. The rest of the Grammarians quickly followed, Gordon Gay stretched his limbs.

"Now for the Saints!" he remarked. "They haven't the faintest idea we're here, and— Oh!"

Gordon Gay broke off as Tom Merry's voice rang out:

"At 'em!"

"Hurrah!"

In a crowd the St. Jim's juniors rushed from the trees and hurled themselves upon the Grammar School juniors.

And in the twinkling of an eye Gordon Gay & Co. were sprawling on the greensward, with the St. Jim's juniors sitting on them.

"Got them!" yelled Blake. "This is where we smile!"

And the heroes of St. Jim's smiled a smile that was audible across the river.

CHAPTER 11.

A "Crowning" Victory!

GORDON GAY blinked up at Tom Merry. He was taken utterly by surprise. The Grammarians had had no chance. They were pinned down before they knew that they were attacked.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood in an elegant attitude and surveyed the scene through his eyeglass.

As the juniors were eight to seven without him, the swell of St. Jim's had decided not to rumple his clothes unnecessarily, but he was ready to chip in if wanted.

But his aid was not required.

The Grammarians were helpless.

"Bai Jove!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "I wegard this as wippin'! It will be a lesson to the Gwammah wottahs not to buck against St. Jim's, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" gasped Gordon Gay.

"Quite a surprise, isn't it?" said Tom Merry blandly.

"Not exactly the kind of surprise you intended—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But a surprise, all the same!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You didn't know how many there were, and you didn't care!" grinned Figgins.

Gordon Gay stared at him.

He remembered his own words, and it seemed to him like magic that Figgins should know what he had said.

"You—you knew we were coming?" he ejaculated.

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"How?"

"Oh, we can do some scouting, you know!" said Figgins negligently. "We wouldn't mind putting you Grammar School chaps through a course of training as Boy Scouts, if you like."

"Rats!"

"Cheeky ass!"

"Blessed if I know how you knew we were coming," said Gordon Gay, his face breaking into a smile. "But you've got us. The surprise party has worked out the wrong way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes," growled Frank Monk; "and the sooner you make it pax and get off my chest the better I shall like it."

"No hurry!" said Tom Merry cheerfully. "You came here of your own accord, you know, trespassing on St. Jim's property—"

"Rats! The island belongs to Sir Francis Fortesque!"

"Bosh! It belongs to St. Jim's!"

"Weally, deah boy, it doesn't mattah whom it belongs to—it belongs to us now, and we have a wight to wegard these Gwammah School wottahs as twespassahs!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I suggest makin' an example of them!"

"Suppose we make them go down on their knees," suggested Monty Lowther, "and beg pardon for having been cheeky—"

"You can't!" roared Gordon Gay.

"Or send them adrift in their boat with jam in their hair!" suggested Digby.

(Continued on the next page.)

BIG CRICKET SENSATION!

Special Free "Test"-Season Offer by "Modern Boy"

2 FIRST PRIZES—Bats Specially Autographed by ALL the Australian Touring Side!

50 Other Prizes of the New "Tadpole" Model Planes

DO YOU KNOW that our famous associated paper—"Modern Boy"—is making a very special prize offer in connection with the Test Matches? Look at the wonderful prizes offered—and all FREE! To win one of them, "Modern Boy" only asks you to solve a short Cricket article given in easy puzzle form.

So that you can sample this ripping contest, we have arranged to give the first part of the puzzle here. You see that it is perfectly easy to read, only six of the words are missing from it, and pictures given instead. Can you say what those words are? Read on until you come to the first picture; plainly it means WE—so there's missing word No. 1 for you!

As you find the other five puzzle words write them on the form also. Each picture represents *one word only*, remember! Complete this form in ink, and then ask your newsagent at once for "Modern Boy" (dated June 30th—price 2d.), where you will find Part 2 of the puzzle as well as the full rules. So get busy now—making sure you get this week's "Modern Boy"—and perhaps you'll win one of those Valuable Souvenir Bats!

What an exciting cricket season this is going to

be! Not only have  the ordinary County

 but also the thrill of the Test Matches.

The first game with the Australians is over, and

now we are all anxiously awaiting the second, which

is due to  at Lord's this

What will England's  do this time

against Mr Woodfull's powerful attack? And how will

our  fare against the Aussie batsmen?

"M.B." CRICKET PUZZLE. PART 1.

FILL IN THE MISSING WORDS ON THIS ENTRY FORM.

"Cricket Pars" Entry Form No. 1.

WE
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Your name : 1

..... NOW GET "MODERN BOY" (dated June 30th) for the Next Puzzle

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll jolly well lick you some other time!" said Gordon Gay.

"Powwaps! But at pwsent—"

"At present we owe it to ourselves to make an example of them," said Tom Merry, with a nod. "Gussy, as you're doing nothing but ornamenting the landscape—and making a bad job at that—come and tie them up!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Have you got a rope?"

"I'm sowwy, Tom Mewwy, but I am not in the habit of cawwyin' a wope about with me!"

"Your braces will do—"

"Eh?"

"Take off your braces, and—"

"I uttably wufuse to take off my bwaces—"

"Well, your necktie, then!"

"I decline to take off my necktie! I wegard the suggestion as wotten and exceedingly diswespectful!"

"Then what are we to tie them with?" demanded Blake.

"There's a rope in our boat," said Digby. "Gussy can go and fetch it!"

"I shall be vewy pleased to do so, deah boy!"

"Run, then!"

D'Arcy turned back.

"I am afwaid I should find it too exhaustin' to wun in this hot weathah, deah boy! I shall walk as fast as poss."

"Buzz off, you ass!"

"I wufuse to be called an ass!"

"Will you buck up?" roared Blake, in exasperation.

"Certainly, deah boy!"

And Arthur Augustus strolled away through the trees.

He was a good five minutes gone for the rope, and during that time the Grammarians told the St. Jim's juniors in very plain, if not polite, English what they thought of them.

But, as Tom Merry & Co. had the upper hand, and meant to keep it, they replied only with chuckles.

D'Arcy came back with the rope at last, and it was cut into lengths, and the swell of St. Jim's began to tie up Gordon Gay first.

The Wallaby struggled hard, but Tom Merry gently compressed his ear between finger and thumb till he consented to leave off struggling.

"Tie his hands tightly, Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Is that knot tight?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I twust I know how to tie knots!"

"Blessed if I can trust you, though!" said Tom Merry.

"Is that knot all right, Gay?"

"Oh, I think it's ripping!" said Gordon Gay.

Tom Merry looked at him suspiciously, and jerked at the knot. The rope came open in his hand. Arthur Augustus looked at it in great surprise.

"Bai Jove! It's come undone!"

"You ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"You sit on Gay while I tie him up!" growled Tom Merry.

"Oh, vewy well!"

Arthur Augustus reposed his elegant form upon Gordon Gay's chest. Tom Merry soon had the Grammarian leader tied hand and foot in a businesslike way.

The rest of the Grammarians were served in the same way, with the exception of Tadpole. Tadpole, as the least dangerous, was left free.

"Now shove them into the boat!" said Tom Merry.

"Hang it all!" exclaimed Gordon Gay. "Are you sending us away in this state?"

"Yes!" grinned Tom Merry.

"But—"

"Tadpole will steer you away, and he can cut you loose presently!" said Tom Merry. "It's all right—the river's as smooth as glass, and even a Grammarian steersman couldn't run you into any danger!"

"You duffer—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stick them into the boat!"

"Right-ho!"

The bound Grammarians were dumped down into the boat one after the other. Tadpole stood and blinked on, till he was dumped into the stern and told to take the rudder-lines. He took them, still blinking.

Meanwhile, Monty Lowther had cut across to the camp, and returned with a bag of tarts.

He calmly crowned the Grammarians with them, one each; and the looks that the prisoners gave him during that jammy coronation spoke volumes.

Lowther surveyed his handiwork with considerable pride.

"Looks ripping, doesn't it?" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!"

"You're fond of jam tarts, aren't you, Gay?"

"Ow! Beast!"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think they may go now!" said Tom Merry. "The next time you come to surprise us, kids, I hope it will be just as howling a success as this!"

And the Saints roared.

They shoved the boat off, and pushed it away with the current, and Tadpole stood up with an oar to keep it off the bank. The other oars had been taken out of the boat to make it impossible for the Grammarians to return to the charge when Tadpole released them.

With feelings too deep for words, the Grammarians floated into the stream, and the boat drifted down on the current.

And from the island a yell of merriment followed them.

"Hear us smile!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 12.

Something Like a Wheeze!

"LICKED!"

"Hollow!"

"Diddled, dished, and done!" grinned Gordon Gay. "My only hat! Of all the giddy surprise-parties—"

"This takes the cake!" said Jack Wootton.

"It does! It do! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" growled Lane. "The Saints will never leave off chuckling over this!"

"No wonder—it's funny."

"I don't see the fun!" said Carboy, with a snort. "What will the fellows say? And why doesn't that mooning ass, Tadpole, set us loose?"

"Because he's a blithering ass!"

"And an added dummy!"

"And a frabjous cuckoo!"

"And a dotty duffer!"

"Dear me!" said Tadpole. "Are you fellows talking to me?"

"Yes, dummy!"

"I will set you free as soon as possible," said Tadpole.

"At present I am steering."

"Cut these ropes, chump!"

"Set us loose, idiot!"

Tadpole was looking away towards the bend of the river with a far-away look in his eyes. Gordon Gay tried to follow his glance.

"What is it?" he asked. "What are you looking at?"

"I was observing a beautiful effect," said the amateur artist of the Grammar School. "Look at those beech-trees—"

"Blow the trees!"

"With the sun on the leaves—"

"Blow the sun!"

"And the river in the foreground—"

"Blow the river!"

"And the church tower of Rylcombe in the middle distance—"

"Blow the middle distance!" howled Gordon Gay. "Are you going to be artistic now, you ass, or are you going to untie these cords?"

"You see—"

"My hat! We'll bump you presently!"

"I am about to sever your bonds, my dear fellows," said Tadpole, who never spoke in plain English if he could help it. "By means of my penknife I will soon restore you to your personal liberty."

"Buck up, then, and don't jaw!"

Tadpole sawed through the cords with his knife, and the Grammarian juniors were released at once. The island was fading into the banks behind them; the boat had drifted a good distance down the river by this time.

The Grammarians mopped their heads with water, and rubbed them with their handkerchiefs to get the jam out of their hair.

"Well, this is a nice go—I don't think!" Gordon Gay exclaimed. "No getting back to the island for another round with only one oar."

"Of course not. Let's sneak home and be grinned at," said Frank Monk crossly. "That's about all we're fit for."

"Not much."

"We're done—done brown—"

"Perhaps we can turn the tables, though," said Gordon Gay coolly.

"Rats! We can't! If we go back, they're on the watch now, and we couldn't land with them ready for us. They could keep a score of chaps from landing if they were on the watch."

"I'm not thinking of a raid."

"What is it, then? Have you got an idea?"

"Yes."

The Grammarians sat up attentively.

When Gordon Gay said that he had an idea they knew



"Collar him!" roared Tom Merry. "Begad! Hands off!" exclaimed Sir Francis Fortesque. But already hands were upon him, and his whiskers and moustache were grabbed and dragged off. There was a yell from the juniors as a well-known face was revealed. "It's Gordon Gay!"

that there was something good coming, and the most annoyed of them stopped his grumbling at once.

"Well, what is it?" asked Harry Wootton.

"Get it off your chest, Gay!"

"Heave it out!"

"What's the wheeze?"

"We've been done—"

"We know that!" snorted Carboy.

"Don't interrupt! We can turn the tables on the bounders," grinned Gordon Gay. "I'm not thinking of a raid. We've tried that, and you fellows have made a muck of it."

"Well, I like that! Why, you—"

"But there's another dodge," said Gordon Gay, a little hurriedly. "I suppose you haven't forgotten that we're the members of the best junior dramatic society ever known in any Public school!"

"What on earth's that got to do with it?" demanded three or four of the Grammarians at once.

Gordon Gay chuckled.

"Thereby hangs a tale. You know that that island belongs to Sir Francis Fortesque."

"There's a giddy law suit about it."

"Yes; but Fortesque claims the right to keep the boys off the island—us, as well as the kids from St. Jim's."

"If you're giving us a lecture on ancient history, Gordon Gay—"

"I'm not. I was going to ask—have you chaps seen Fortesque?"

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Never mind that; answer my question."

"Yes," said Frank Monk.

"What's he like?"

"A little man, with a red face, and white whiskers and a moustache," said Frank Monk.

Gordon Gay nodded.

"Exactly!"

"But what about Fortesque? What—"

"Suppose he came on the island and ordered the St. Jim's kids off? What price that?"

Frank Monk started.

"You can't be thinking of informing Fortesque—of giving them away to him—"

"Of course I'm not!" exclaimed Gordon Gay sharply.

"Don't be an ass."

"Well, then—"

"Besides, Fortesque is in London. I remember seeing it in the local papers."

"I was thinking of Fortesque the Second," said Gordon Gay.

Monk looked dazed.

"Fortesque the Second!" he ejaculated.

"Yes—his double."

"Has he a double?"

"No; but he will have in half an hour."

"Oh, you're dreaming!" said Monk. "You'd better go and lie down."

But the two Woottons, who had already caught on to Gordon Gay's idea, grinned.

"Jolly good!" said Jack.

"Ripping!" said Harry.

"You're jolly dense this afternoon, Monkey!" said Gordon Gay. "Have you forgotten how we dressed up as girls to play a hockey match with East Hyde?"

Have you forgotten how I took on the role of Dr. Holmes at St. Jim's, and what a blessed row it led to? My dear kid, do you think I couldn't make-up as Sir Francis Fortesque? Why, he's got a chivvy that seems built for imitation on the stage."

"My hat!"

"I'm going on the island as Sir Francis Fortesque, and one of you chaps can rig up as a keeper, and row me on," said Gordon Gay.

The Grammarians stared for a few moments.

Then, as the possibilities of the joke dawned upon them, they burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gordon Gay chuckled.

"I rather think that will turn the tables on the giddy Saints," he remarked. "Of course, we'll let them into the jape later, so that they'll know how they've been done—after I've ordered them off the island, and they've gone as meekly as a lot of little lambs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, what do you think of the wheeze?"

"Ripping!"

"Spiffing!"
"Top-notch!"

And the Grammarian juniors, with their good humour completely restored at the prospect of scoring over St. Jim's, after all, lost no time in returning to the Grammar School where Gordon Gay was soon busy with his make-up.

CHAPTER 13.

Ordered Off!

FATTY WYNN stretched himself in the grass, and leaned his head on a cushion, and sighed with contentment.

He had finished.

As a rule Fatty Wynn did not finish while there was anything left to eat. The provisions generally gave out before he did.

But the abundance was too much for the Falstaff of the New House.

He simply could not have negotiated another tart, and there were still tarts galore. Fatty Wynn sank into the deep grass in a state of complete happiness.

He listened with a languid grin to Figgins' account of the capture and the ragging of the Grammarians.

BAD DEALINGS!



Customer: "I won't deal with you any more. I have been treated shockingly in your shop!"

Shopkeeper (nursing nose ruefully): "I think you've dealt with me enough!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss R. Johnson, 82, Leyland Road, London, S.E.12.

Like the dying gladiator, his eyes were with his heart, and that was far away. He was inwardly contemplating the enormous feed he had just had.

"Wasn't it ripping?" demanded Figgins.

"Yes, rather!" said Fatty.

"They were done brown."

"Done to a turn," said Fatty Wynn.

"Well, I'm glad you take some interest in the matter," said Figgins, with a snort. "You jolly well weren't on the spot."

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"You didn't seem to care much whether we did the Grammar School cads, or whether they did us!"

"Grammar School cads! Who's talking about Grammar School cads? I was talking about the apple turnovers," said Fatty Wynn.

"The what?"

"The apple turnovers. You said they were done brown!"

"You ass! I was speaking of the Grammarians!" said Figgins, in disgust.

"Oh, I was thinking of the apple turnovers! They were done to a turn, you know. So were the tarts. I've found fault with Mrs. Taggles' tarts before now, but I've nothing to say against this lot. They were prime!"

"Look here—"

"And the sausages. They were ripping, though they were cooked by a School House chap."

"You blessed glutton!"

"Oh, come, Figgy! I know I've got a good appetite, but I don't think anybody could call me greedy. I like a lot, that's all."

"You do," said Kerr.

"I'm not a chap who pretends to have a fairy appetite," said Fatty Wynn. "Give me good grub, and I can go for it like a man. That's what I say."

"Or a blessed rhinoceros," said Kerr.

"Sure you're finished?" said Figgins sarcastically. "There's some grub left, you know."

Fatty Wynn nodded.

"Yes, I think I'm done. No good overdoing a thing, you know. It's bad for the digestion to eat too much."

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, yes, I've found that out by experience!" said Fatty seriously. "I've eaten too much on one or two occasions, thoughtlessly, you know. That's why I never do it now."

Whereat Figgins and Kerr relapsed into silence. There was no rejoinder to be made. Fatty Wynn closed his eyes.

"Don't you fellows make a noise," he said drowsily. "I think I could get a little nap now. I always thought it

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was a good idea to have a nap when you go on a picnic. Wake me up in time for tea, will you?"

"My only hat!" murmured Figgins. "Here, Fatty—"

Snore!

"Fatty, old man!"

Snore!

"My hat, he's asleep!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Do you know, Fatty Wynn reminds me awfully of a boah constwictah, you know."

"Does he?" said Figgins, looking warlike.

"Yaas, wathah! You know, the boah constwictah is a kind of weptile that gorges itself full, and then goes to sleep."

"Are you looking for a thick ear, Gussy?"

"Certainly not, Figgy! I wegard the question as wickulous."

"Then not so much of your boah constrictors," said Figgins daskly.

Figgins might chip Fatty as much as he liked about his unearthly appetite, but others were barred from making jokes on the subject.

"I'm going round with my camera," said Manners, getting up from the grass. "No good slacking all the afternoon just because it's a holiday."

"Yaas, deah boy, you can take a pictuah of me, if you like," said D'Arcy.

"Sorry; if I break the camera now I shan't be able to take any more," said Manners politely. "Otherwise, I'd be glad to take your chivvy, Gussy."

"Weally Mannahs—"

"You can take Fatty Wynn's, to be published in a series, under the title of 'Strange Facts in Natural History,'" suggested Lowther.

Figgins glared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were laughing heartily, when suddenly a sharp, staccato voice cut into the laughter, as a fat man with a ruddy face and bristling whiskers and moustache, strode upon the scene.

"Hah! What is all this? Trespassers, by James! Hah!"

The juniors stared at the newcomer.

They gave one glance at the short figure in tweed clothes, tan-gaiters, and bowler hat; at the red, white-whiskered face, with a moustache and thick brows, and rubicund nose, and exclaimed, in one voice:

"Fortesque!"

The little baronet glared at the juniors fiercely.

Sir Francis Fortesque was known all along the countryside as a fierce little man, and he was a terror to his tenants and his keepers.

He always carried a stick under his arm, and with that stick he had been known many a time to rap the shoulders of village lads who did not treat him with the amount of respect that he considered his due.

He had never tried that with St. Jim's fellows, or he would probably have met with a surprise.

Sir Francis's ideas were quite feudal. In Fortesque Hall were the portraits of a long line of Fortesques extending back into the dark ages to the time of William the Conqueror.

And Sir Francis was a reproduction of one of those old gallant knights, who, clad from top to toe in impenetrable armour, gallantly led their unarmoured men to battle, and gallantly chopped unarmoured foes, and gallantly returned home with what was left of their followers.

Sir Francis Fortesque was well known, and recognisable at a glance, and he had a face and figure which, as Gordon Gay had said, lent itself to stage caricature.

And the juniors did not dream for an instant that the fiery vision which burst upon their gaze was anything but the real and genuine Fortesque.

The St. Jim's juniors ceased laughing, and stared at the little baronet, in return for the fierce glare he was bestowing upon them.

"Trespassers, begad!" said Sir Francis.

"My hat!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Trespassers! Haven't I told you a thousand times to keep trespassers off this island, George?" roared Sir Francis, turning to the keeper who was with him.

The keeper was a short, thick-set fellow with whiskers and a moustache, and the juniors did not remember having seen him before.

He touched his cap respectfully, evidently very much in terror of his peppery little master.

"Yes, sir."

"Then why have you not kept this island clear of trespassers, George?"

"You see, sir—"

"Hah! I see that there are a crew of young rascals

here," roared the little baronet. "Camping on my island, begad! Lighting a fire on my grass, begad! Burning up my wood to cook their filthy meals, begad!"

Tom Merry turned red.

"If you please—" he began.

"But I don't please," roared Sir Francis. "Begad, I won't have tramps on my property! No, sir!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Hold your tongue, sir!"

"I wefuse to hold my tongue," said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I uttably wefuse to take any notice of you, Sir Francis Fortesque. I wegard you as bein' no gentleman."

The baronet seemed to gasp for breath.

"What! What! Hah! Insolence! Hah!"

"Weally, sir—"

"Impertinent puppy! Hah!"

"I decline to be chawactewised as an impertinent puppy. But for your age, sir, I should give you a feahful thwashin'."

"What! What!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said the swell of St. Jim's, jamming his monocle into his eye more tightly, and regarding the fiery little landowner with a stare of disdain. "I wegard you as bein' a boundah, sir—a boundah of the most pwo-nounced type."

"Begad! Hah!"

"I look upon you with the gweatest contempt."

"Bravo, Gussy!"

"Go it, Adolphus!"

"Give him beans!"

"Yaas, wathah! I assuah the unmitigated boundah that he cannot fwighten us with his wotten mannahts!" said Arthur Augustus. "I twust there is no fellow here pwsent who does not wegard him with contempt."

"Hear, hear!"

"George!" roared Sir Francis.

"Yes, sir!"

had visioned himself dwelling in a fairyland where there were mountains of delicious tuck.

"Hallo!" he said, sitting up and rubbing his eyes. "Is it tea-time?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Then what on earth have you woke me up for?" demanded Fatty indignantly. "Hallo! Who's that?"

"The great Fortesque!"

"My word!"

Fatty Wynn scrambled up, still blinking.

Sir Francis Fortesque pointed to the river with his stick.

"Turn those tramps out, George!"

"Yes, sir!"

How the single keeper was to turn out ten juniors if they did not choose to go was not quite clear. But the knowledge that the island was out of bounds hampered Tom Merry & Co. The Head had kindly given them a whole holiday, and they had a natural objection to seeing his kindness repaid with a report that they had broken bounds and fallen out with a neighbouring landowner.

"Come on, kids!" said Tom Merry.

"Oh, all right! If this island wasn't out of bounds, we'd bump the beast, and duck him in the river!" said Jack Blake regretfully.

"Yes, rather! But as it is—"

"All right; into the boat. Come on, Gussy!"

"D'Arcy! Come on!"

"Pway excuse me, Tom Mewwy, I decline to come."

"Eh?"

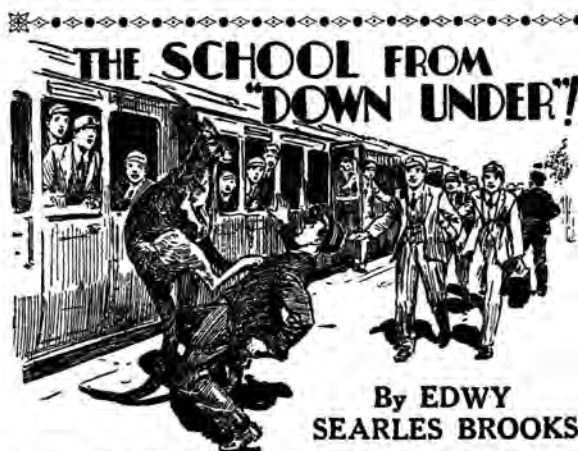
"Sir Francis Fortesque has ordered me in a vewy wude mannah to leave the island," said the swell of St. Jim's. "It would not be consistent with my personal dig to do so."

"You ass—"

"I decline to be called an ass. I—"

"Get into the boat."

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



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

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CHAPTER 14.

Bowled Out!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY jammed his monocle into his eye, surveyed the fuming baronet with great scorn, and then shook his head at Tom Merry.

He was determined not to go. When it was a question of his personal dignity, the swell of St. Jim's was immovable, and blind to consequences.

Tom Merry & Co. looked dismayed.

What was to be done? They knew of old how deaf Arthur Augustus was to persuasion when he had made up his mind.

"Look here—" began Tom Merry.

Sir Francis Fortesque struck his gaiters with his stick with a sounding whack.

"Get off my land!" he roared.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the kind."

"Throw him out, George!"

"Yes, sir!"

"I warn you that if you touch me I shall stwike you," said D'Arcy.

"Get into the boat."

"I decline to do so."

The keeper put his hands on D'Arcy's shoulder, and whirled him towards the boat.

"Hang it!" exclaimed Tom Merry, jumping out of the boat. "I'm not going to stand this. Come on, kids!"

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"Turn these tramps off my land."

"Yes, sir!"

Tom Merry fixed his eyes on the little baronet.

"You have no right to order us off this island," he said.

"It belongs to our school—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And as there's a lawsuit pending, we've as much right on it as you have, till the courts have decided the ownership."

"George!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Kick these tramps into the river!"

"Bai Jove! I uttably wefuse to be kicked into the wivah!"

"Begad! I'll report this to Dr. Holmes. I'll call on him to-morrow! Begad, I'll ride over this evening! Begad, I'll go over to the college at once! Begad!"

"Better go," said Blake, in a low voice. "The island's out of bounds, and if old Fortesque reports us, there'll be a row."

Tom Merry nodded.

"I suppose so."

"It's rotten, I know. But—"

"But it's out of bounds," said Figgins. "Let's get out."

He shook Fatty Wynn to awaken him. The little baronet strode up and down, fuming. The keeper stood like a stone statue.

Fatty Wynn came out of a glorious dream, in which he

"Rather!"
The juniors crowded out of the boat again.
Reported to the Head or not reported, they were not going to fail to stand by a chum in the hour of need.
"Throw him out!" shouted Sir Francis Fortesque.
"Yes, sir!" gasped the keeper.
He whirled D'Arcy towards the boat.
But the hands of the other juniors fell upon him, and he was whirled away from the swell of St. Jim's and sent reeling over the turf.
"Begad! How dare you lay hands on my man!" vociferated Sir Francis Fortesque.
"Rats!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.
"Yaas, wathah! I suggest that we should bump the keepah, deah boys, for his feahful cheek in layin' hands on a St. Jim's juniah—and if Sir Fwancis Fortesque gives any more twouble, we'll bump him, too!"

"Begad!"
"Hurrah!"
And the juniors collared the keeper and bumped him.
"The wottah is weavin' a false beard—"
"My hat!" yelled Figgins. "Look there!"
In the somewhat rough grasp of the juniors the keeper's whiskers had come off. With it came a wig off his head.
Then, in spite of the brick-red complexion the juniors knew the face.

It was that of Frank Monk!
They released the keeper in amazement, and simply staggered. Frank Monk gasped with breathless laughter.
"Monk!"
"Frank Monk!"
"Bai Jove!"
"Spoofed!"
"It's a jape!"
"And Sir Francis Fortesque—"
"Collar him!" roared Tom Merry. "Collar him!"
"Yaas, wathah!"
"Begad! Hands off! I—"

But the hands were on him—and Sir Francis Fortesque's white whiskers and moustache were rudely grabbed—and came away in Tom Merry's hand. Then the skilfully made-up complexion could no longer disguise the identity of Gordon Gay, the schoolboy actor.

There was a yell from the juniors.

"Gordon Gay!"

"I thought so!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Gordon Gay! Bai Jove!"

And the two disguised Grammarians were held fast, helpless prisoners, in the hands of the juniors of St. Jim's. The jape had not worked after all.

Gordon Gay and Frank Monk looked very peculiar now, with fragments of their disguises hanging about them, and the make-up on their faces worked into furrows by streams of perspiration.

The St. Jim's juniors surrounded them.

"Well, you look a pair of giddy beauties," chuckled Tom Merry. "But I will say that you did it well, you blessed spoofers!"

"Yaas, wathah! They took me in, you know!" said D'Arcy. "I hadn't the faintest ideah that I was not addwessin' the weal Sir Fwancis Fortesque, you know. Undah the circs, Gordon Gay, I withdwaw my wemarks that you were not a gentleman."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You ass!" gasped Frank Monk. "I wish you'd withdraw the thump you gave me on the chin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am sowwy, Monkey! But, bai Jove, I wegard it as an awful cheek of these Gwammah School wottahs to play a twick like this on us. We'll take them back to the Gwammah School, just as they are, and show them up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, and we'll pawade them wound the quad at St. Jim's first!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good wheeze!"

Gordon Gay and Frank Monk exchanged a desperate look.

With a sudden spring they made for the river.

It was their only chance of escape, and both were good swimmers, even with their clothes on. But the St. Jim's juniors were too quick for them.

A dozen hands grasped them and dragged them back.

Gay and Monk went to the grass, with four or five juniors sprawling over them, and there was a terrific tussle.

"Ow!"

"Leggo!"

"Collar 'em!"

"Bump them!"

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed a silvery voice in tones of surprise. "What ever is the matter here?"

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The juniors let go Gordon Gay and Frank Monk as if they had become suddenly red-hot.

Dusty and dishevelled, and covered with confusion, they turned to face the owner of the silvery voice.

Cousin Ethel looked at them in amazement.

A boat had run into the reeds, and three girls had stepped lightly ashore, and they were regarding the scene with wide-open eyes.

"Cousin Ethel!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"My Cousin Phil!" murmured Frank Monk.

"Miss Vera!" gasped Gordon Gay.

The three girls looked at the crowd of dusty and confused juniors with prim and demure smiles.

"Goodness gracious!" said Miss Phyllis Monk.

"Dear me!" said Cousin Ethel.

"My word!" said Miss Vera.

Tom Merry turned a face of crimson towards the girls.

The hero of the Shell could have kicked himself.

A gleam of fun was in Miss Cleveland's eyes.

"So sorry we interrupted you," she said.

"Oh, Miss Cleveland!"

"Weally, Ethel, deah girl—"

"I suppose that is a new game?"

"Of course," said Miss Phellis, "it must make those who play it very dusty, though. What do you call the game?"

"I suppose it has a name," smiled Miss Vera.

Tom Merry laughed ruefully.

"Yes, we call it bumping the spoofers!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors all laughed, and the tension was relieved. The girls laughed, too, they could not help it.

Gordon Gay chuckled breathlessly.

"It's all right," he said. "You musn't imagine for a moment that we are fighting, you know."

"Of course not," said Cousin Ethel gravely.

"Monkey and I came here rigged up as Sir Francis Fortesque and a keeper, and—and—"

"And we bowled them out," grinned Tom Merry.

"Not till we had taken you in, though."

"Admitted! But—"

"And then," said Gordon Gay, "then—"

"Yes, then—" said Tom Merry.

"Then, you see, deah gals," said Arthur Augustus lamely.

"We see perfectly," said Cousin Ethel. "Don't we, Vera?"

"Perfectly," said Miss Vera.

"Quite so," assented Miss Phyllis.

"Oh, I suppose you see it all!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "We were bumping them for spoofing us—no harm meant at all. As for this bump on my nose, it was—"

was accidental."

"So was this mark on my chin," said Monk.

"And that beautiful blue eye of Digby's," said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But now you're here," went on Tom Merry, "you'll stay and finish the picnic with us?"

The three girls smiled.

"Well, we were going back to Westwood Lodge for tea, after our row," said Cousin Ethel. "But we'd rather have tea here."

"Certainly," said Miss Phyllis and Miss Vera.

"Then you'll stay?"

"Yes, with pleasure."

"Jolly good!"

"Hurrah!"

Grammarians and Saints fraternised with perfect good feeling over tea, and as Monty Lowther remarked, it was like the giddy lion lying down with the lamb.

And the end of that picnic was more successful than the beginning had been.

"Well," said Fatty Wynn at last, "I've had feeds before, many a time—"

"You have," said the rest cordially.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Many a time," went on Fatty Wynn, "but never one quite so ripping as this. And I vote that we drink the health of the ladies in ginger-pop, with thanks for—"

gracing the festive board with their presence."

"Good old Fatty!"

"Hear, hear!"

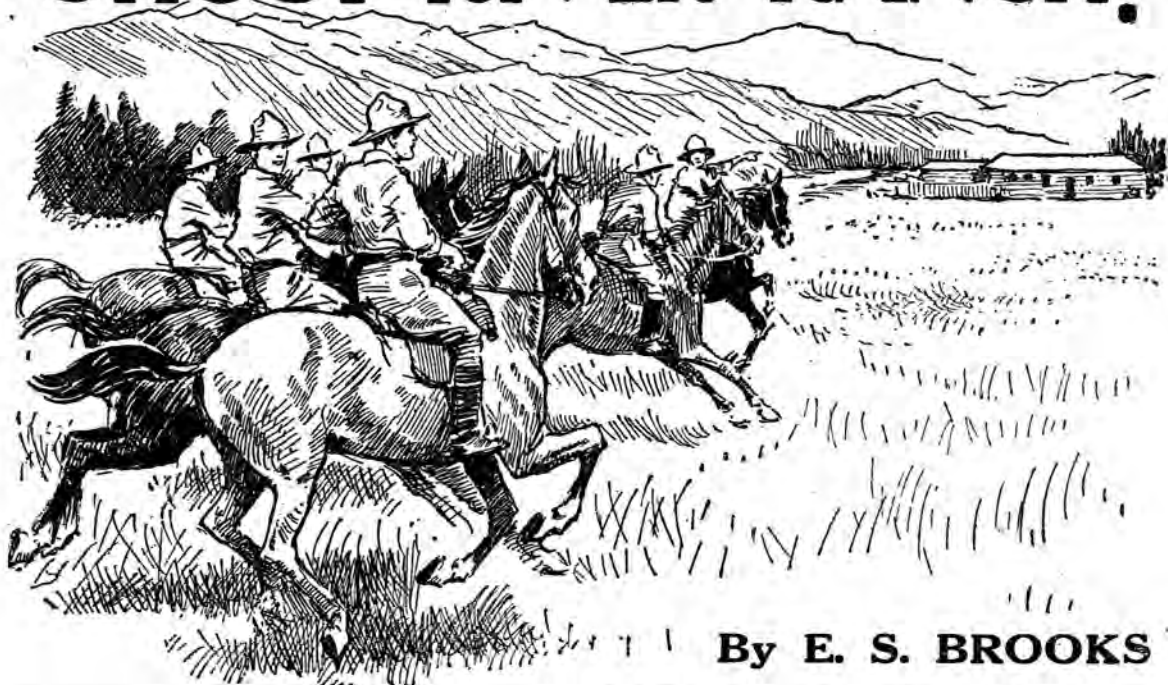
And the toast was drunk in ginger-pop with great enthusiasm. And when the setting sun warned the merry party that it was time to think of home, the rival ragers of the river all agreed that they had never spent a pleasanter day before.

THE END.

(Another ripping St. Jim's yarn next week, chums—featuring Bernard Glyn and his weird and wonderful invention. Look out for "THE MECHANICAL MAN!" It's a woe!)

MORE BIG THRILLS AND BIG SURPRISES IN THESE GRIPPING CHAPTERS OF—

GHOST RIVER RANCH!



By E. S. BROOKS

The Ambush!

BLACK figures, in the gloom of the night, rode across Ghost River Valley. The horsemen, Black Riders all, numbered between forty and fifty, and at their head was Diamond Eye himself.

There were prisoners, too—and these were on foot, marching sullenly, hopelessly, with their hands tied cruelly behind their backs.

Diamond Eye's raid on the Double Z ranch had been a complete success. Big Jim Farman, all his ranch hands, and all the St. Frank's schoolboys were captives. At last, the man who had long remained a mystery, until Handforth had revealed him as Dirk Dixon, the sheriff of Fortune City, had got the upper hand.

"Gee, chief, we never knowed who you was until to-night," said one of the Black Riders, as he rode alongside Diamond Eye. "Shucks! I guess it's a big laff! You, the terror of this valley, turning out to be Sheriff Dixon—"

"Forget it, you scum!" snarled Diamond Eye, with such ferocity that the man wilted in his saddle. "To you and the rest of the boys I'm jest—Diamond Eye. Get that, and get it good! From now onwards, if any of you boys think you know who I am—waal, you'll never be able to think again!"

The gun in his hand clicked ominously, and the Black Rider turned cold.

"Sure, chief," he stammered. "I—I get you."

No more was said. Except for that one incident, Diamond Eye was gloating with satisfaction. He had gained a great victory, for he had seized the entire Double Z "bunch"—and he knew perfectly well that it was Big Jim Farman and his men and the schoolboys who had been operating as "White Riders." Well, that was all over now.

They were prisoners, and soon they would be working in the secret gold mines in the hills. And the people of Fortune City would be freshly terrorised, and there would be no further opposition.

"Listen, boys!" shouted Diamond Eye suddenly. "I guess there's no need for the whole bunch of us to ride with these rats."

He gave quick orders. Half his force detached itself, and supported him. Twenty Black Riders were left in charge of the prisoners. It was their task to see that the prisoners were taken safely into the mountain stronghold.

The rest, with Diamond Eye at their head, went off at the gallop. Perhaps Diamond Eye was uneasy; perhaps

he had a lurking suspicion that the night's excitement was not yet over. In any case, he knew that the caverns and tunnels in the hills had been left virtually unguarded, and it was better that he and his men should get back without loss of time.

The force of twenty armed men was quite big enough to guard the prisoners.

So, slowly, the party made for Whispering Canyon—which was a short cut into the hills. Six Black Riders rode in advance, then came the prisoners on foot, with other Black Riders on either side of them, and more horsemen brought up the rear. It was a dismal procession.

Nearly all the St. Frank's boys were depressed and hopeless. Everything had gone wrong. They had been tricked by Diamond Eye into leaving the security of the ranch-house, which had been a veritable fortress.

"Fancy this happening, boys," said Justin B. Farman gloomily. "Gee! And we were figuring on wiping out this gang, too!"

"We're lucky to be alive," said Church.

"Rats!" came from the aggressive Handforth. "We may be able to turn the tables, even now!"

His companions grunted, for it seemed to them that the situation was completely hopeless. But Nipper was not despairing—yet. For he remembered that Nelson Lee was lurking somewhere in the hills—active, alert. In the character of old Mesa Matt, the great detective had been keeping his eyes wide open.

The party was already entering Whispering Canyon, and the moon, peeping over the hills, was shedding its silvery light upon the rugged scene. In the gloom, some distance ahead, a solitary figure was moving down the grassy hillside from a shack.

Nipper's heart leapt, for he knew that that figure was Nelson Lee. But all the Black Riders believed him to be Mesa Matt. Yet Lee was alone, and if he attempted—

"Hey, ther!" came a threatening hail. "Hold your horses, pardners! I'll plug the first galoot that crosses my line!"

The Black Riders laughed. They were well accustomed to the old prospector and his precious "line," which marked off the property he had appropriated for himself. For years Mesa Matt had been cranky in that way.

"Take it easy, old-timer," called one of the leading Black Riders. "We ain't goin' to cross your doggone line."

"Waal, ye'd best not!" came a growl from the figure.

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"Keep clear of my claim, and ye're safe! I ain't askin' questions." "Take my business."

"You're a wise old gun, Matt," laughed one of the Black Riders. "Allus mindin' your own business, huh? Ef you didn't you'd ha' been in your grave years back."

"Hold it, boys," said the supposed Mesa Matt, as he advanced. "Mebbe I ain't been mindin' my business to-night. I've seen things. Yep, sirree! Ther's queer doings in the hills to-night."

"Meaning what?" asked the leading Black Rider, reining in.

"Waal, I wouldn't like to say," replied the old prospector. "But ef you boys figger that you're the only riders in these hills—waal, it's likely you'll get a surprise." He turned, and pointed into the fir-clad hills beyond the shack. "Up ther!" he said significantly. "Figgers movin'. I seen 'em. Gosh! They're ther' right now!"

An alarmed note sounded in his voice, and the Black Riders all stared intently.

"Shucks! The old fool is crazy!" said one of the other men. "There's nothin' movin' in them hills."

A dazzling beam of light, as broad as a fan, suddenly shot out in the rear of the Black Riders—from the opposite side of Whispering Canyon. The bandits, cursing, swung round, their hands leaping towards their guns.

"Reach for the stars!" came a sharp, clear-cut command. "Stick 'em up, you skunks!"

From a score of points on the opposite hillside figures had appeared as though by magic—and rifle barrels gleamed wickedly in the searchlight's glare.

"Down, Jim—down, all you boys!" came a quick order from Mesa Matt, in a totally changed voice. "Flat on your faces."

Crack-crack-crack!

The roped prisoners flung themselves down in the nick of time, for several of the Black Riders, loosing off their guns, were preparing to make a break. And in the same instant a volley of rifle fire broke out, and three of the riders, screaming, fell from their horses.

"Better surrender!" advised Nelson Lee, in his own voice. "You are trapped, my friends—and if you resist further, you'll be wiped out."

His own guns were ready, and the Black Riders saw, to their consternation, figures advancing upon them. At the first glance they knew that these men were strangers in the valley—Federal agents!

The surprise had been complete, for whilst the supposed Mesa Matt had detained the bandits, the Government officers had closed in from the rear. Then their carefully placed searchlight had blazed out—giving the men in ambush all the advantage of the situation.

"Ride, boys—it's our only chance!" yelled one of the Black Riders.

He dug his spurs home, but the next moment rifle shots rang out, and the man fell dead from his saddle. Grimly the Federal agents closed in, and the rest of the Black Riders, realising the hopelessness of the position, flung their weapons down and raised their hands.

Cursing, they dismounted, and there followed a great jingling and "click-clicking" as handcuffs were snapped over their wrists.

"Good work, Mr. Lee!" said a breathless voice. One of the Federal men grasped the horny hand of old Mesa Matt, and the latter laughed.

"There was no certainty, of course, that the Black Riders would come this way," said Lee. "But we have captured less than half of them, and there is still plenty of work to be done."

"Hurrah!"

"We're saved!"

"Three cheers for Mr. Lee!"

The St. Frank's fellows were wild with excitement; Square-Deal Reeve and the other cowboys were yelling with joy, too. And Big Jim Farman thrust his way forward and seized Lee's hand.

"Gosh! You're a magician, Lee," he declared heartily.

"I've been keeping my eyes open—that's all," said Lee calmly. "If the Black Riders had brought you in by another route, I should have had my men ready. My only fear was that some of you had been killed or injured in the fight at the ranch."

"But what does it all mean?" asked Mr. Farman. "Where did you get these men from? How did they come into the valley?"

"They have been coming in for days—or, to be more exact, nights," replied Lee. "They acted on my instructions—they came in by the routes I indicated. They gathered at the meeting place I arranged. A lot of things have been going on, Jim, under cover of darkness. Diamond Eye and his gang are dangerous men, and fighting them in the open means slaughter."

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"What other surprises have you got up your sleeve, Lee?" asked the millionaire rancher. "Isn't there any way in which I can help?"

"Yes, you'll be needed," replied Lee. "There is still a lot of work to be done to-night."

"Can we join in, guv'nor?" asked Nipper eagerly. Lee pointed grimly to the bodies of the shot Black Riders.

"Any one of you boys might have been killed five minutes ago, Nipper," he said quietly. "You were quick to fling yourselves upon the ground; but a stray bullet might easily have carried death. And this little affair is trifling compared with the dangers I am expecting."

"Which means, I suppose, that we're to keep out?" asked Nipper gruffly. "If there's any danger we're not to be in it!"

"That's not fair, sir!" burst out Handforth. "We've done our bit so far, and—"

"All right—all right," interrupted Lee, with a laugh. "You boys have done very well—and those of you who want to be in at the finish can come with me."

They all eagerly accepted the offer.

"The finish, sir?" asked Justin, his eyes glowing. "Do you really think that we'll get Diamond Eye and his gang to-night?"

"If we're lucky, we'll make a clean sweep," replied Lee.

"I have been making very careful plans—"

"By George! Has somebody told you, sir, that we've twigged Diamond Eye?" broke in Handforth. "I grabbed his cowl—and we saw his face. He's Dixon, the sheriff."

If Handforth expected Nelson Lee to express astonishment he was disappointed. The disguised detective merely nodded.

"Dirk Dixon has been playing a very dangerous game," he commented.

"But aren't you surprised, sir?" asked Handforth blankly.

"One is not surprised when he hears something he already knows, young 'un," replied Lee with a smile.

"Yes, I knew it. I know a great deal more, too. But we shall have time for talking later. The great need now is to get into action."

"We're ready, guv'nor," said Nipper. "Where do we make for?"

"Ghost Pass—and the hill country beyond," replied Lee crisply. "There are horses here for you all—and guns, too."

They were quickly mounted, and round them they strapped the gun belts which had been removed from the Black Riders. The prisoners, all handcuffed, had been taken to Mesa Matt's shack, and there they were locked in, with one or two men on guard. Time enough to remove them to Fortune City—and gaol—in the morning.

Nelson Lee delayed for a few moments whilst he removed his disguise. The climax was at hand, and he preferred to operate in his own identity.

He rode away towards Ghost Pass, at the head of his party, and the schoolboys thrilled with anticipation. They were taking part in this last adventure, and something told them that it would be the most sensational of all!

The Train Wreckers!

Diamond Eye sat at his handsome mahogany desk, in his "office." Overhead the shaded lamp glowed, casting its light down upon the desk. One or two men were standing about, facing their leader.

"Boys, it's a cinch," said Diamond Eye. "We've grabbed that Double Z crowd, and there'll be no more trouble."

He and his men had come in some little time before, and they had found everything quiet. How were they to know that it was merely the calm before the storm?

"Looks like we'll be sittin' pretty, chief," said one of the men. "Ther's nobody around Fortune City likely to start any trouble. It was that Double Z bunch which kept us guessin'."

Diamond Eye sat back in his chair, and his chromium "window" glimmered eerily.

"There's one guy we haven't got," he said grimly. "Lee, the English tec."

"Gee! Do you think he's around, chief?"

"Think! Say, are you going nuts?" grated Diamond Eye. "Who's been organisin' all this trouble we've been findin'? Big Jim Farman? Them kids of his? Not on your life! Ther's a big brain behind everything that's happened, boys—and I'm tellin' you right now that Nelson Lee's the guy—"

He broke off, for at that moment a man, panting heavily, came bursting through the rock doorway into the office cavern. His face was haggard, and the perspiration was pouring from him.

"Chief—chief!" he gasped.



It was impossible for the locomotive to pull up, and it went hurtling right into the gap in the trestle bridge, red-hot fire splashing from the fire-box! With a devastating, ear-splitting roar, the weakened bridge began to collapse, and coaches went crashing down to destruction! The Black Riders watched grimly the appalling catastrophe they had caused.

Diamond Eye leapt to his feet.

"Spill it!" he rapped out.

"The Double Z bunch—rescued by a crowd of armed men!" panted the newcomer.

"What?"

"Gee, chief, I seen it all!" went on the man. "I was watchin' at the top of Yellow Peak—!"

He blurted out his story. He was one of Diamond Eye's watchers, and from a high eyrie, he had seen the whole thing in Whispering Canyon, a mile or two distant. He had seen the blaze of the searchlight; and, through his night-glasses, he had seen the Federal men, and the defeat of his own comrades. Furthermore, he knew that there was something queer about old Mesa Matt—for Mesa Matt had joined up with the enemy, and his bent figure had straightened, and he had moved with the vigour of a young man. The entire force, including the rescued prisoners, was now making its way into the hills.

"Looks like we're up against it, boys!" said Diamond Eye harshly. "Federal men, or I'm a gila lizard! Yeah, and that guy Lee is leadin' 'em!" He swore fluently. "Mesa Matt!" he went on. "Say, Lee has been around hyar for weeks—rigged out as Mesa Matt! That's the secret!"

"Say, chief, it looks ugly," said one of the men nervously. "Federal agents, huh? Ain't it time for us to quit?"

"Quit nothing!" snarled Diamond Eye. "Ther's still a big bunch of us left, and we hold the advantage—"

"Aw, I ain't finished, chief!" interrupted the man from Yellow Peak. "I seen something else, too—away beyond the valley. Red sparks shootin' up into the black sky! Yeah, and I heard puffin' and rumblin'—"

"What in heck are you saying?" shouted Diamond Eye, striding round the table, and seizing the man.

"Honest, chief, it's true!" gasped the fellow. "A train, comin' along them rusty tracks from outside—from Crag Junction! Ther' wasn't no mistakin' the sparks from the funnel—"

"A train—comin' into Ghost River Valley for the first time in years!" muttered Diamond Eye, thoroughly shaken. "Boys, it can mean only one thing—the military!"

There were startled, frightened exclamations.

"But we ain't done yet!" snarled Diamond Eye. "If that train makes it, we're wiped out." His eyes burned behind his mask. "It's Lee again!" he went on. "Say, ther's one way—"

He broke off, and swung towards the door.

"Follow me, all of you!" he ordered. "Ther's a chance for us—and mebbe we'll make the grade, after all!"

His men, confronted for the first time by the grim possibility of capture, were ready enough to make a bolt for it. But Diamond Eye was made of sterner stuff; he was determined to fight.

Something of his purpose was guessed by his men when he told them to fetch some big charges of dynamite from the magazine. There was no delay; within five minutes they were all outside—Diamond Eye and every man he could muster. In their black clothes and cowls they looked a formidable force.

And they went riding down Ghost Pass at the gallop, black shadows on either hand, the moon riding serenely in the sky overhead.

Thundering out of the pass, they galloped across the broken, rocky country beyond. Diamond Eye did not keep to the recognised trail now; he had swerved off, and was heading southwards. Some distance ahead lay a black gash in the landscape—a great gully known as the Devil's Ravine.

At last the Black Riders reined in, and some muttered talk broke out amongst them.

"Silence!" snarled Diamond Eye. "Listen!"

Immediately in front of them stretched a great, crazy-looking, wooden trestle bridge. Every beam and strut was clearly defined in the moonlight. The bridge was narrow, and along its surface were the warped, rusty tracks of the railroad.

And in the stillness of the night air the horsemen heard a sound—coming from the rocky country lower down, on the farther side of the ravine. There could be no mistaking the laboured puffing, and the thudding rumble. The train was near at hand—climbing the steep incline. Within a few minutes it would be thundering over the trestle bridge itself.

"You hear?" grated Diamond Eye, swinging round upon his men. "Soldiers—guns! Hundreds of them! They're coming on that train, and if that train crosses the trestle bridge—"

"Gosh! The dynamite!" gasped one of the others. "Shucks, chief, you ain't thinkin' of—"

"Why not?" thundered Diamond Eye. "It's them or us, ain't it? Is this a time to be squeamish?"

He pointed.

"Get out on that bridge—and fix the dynamite!" he ordered. "Make it snappy and don't talk! Every second counts!"

There was no hesitation. Four of the men, carrying the deadly dynamite, went hurrying out across the trestle bridge. Meanwhile, the ominous puffing of the labouring locomotive grew louder and louder. Indeed, in the distance the ruddy sparks could be seen shooting skywards from the funnel of the engine. She was toiling up the grade, and within a few minutes she would be on the bridge.

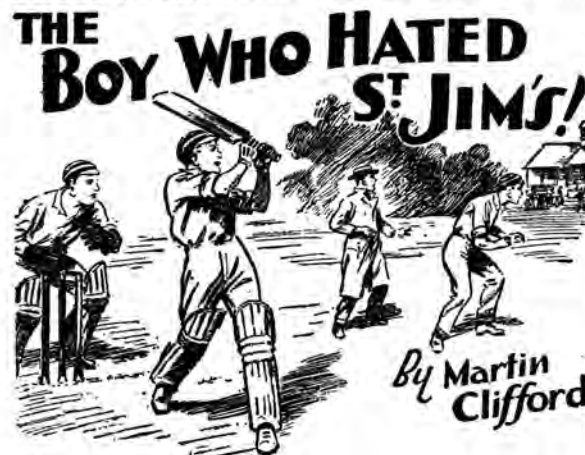
The four men came running off, stumbling, shouting. Before they reached the end of the bridge the train came into sight, swaying round the bend, and passing a mass of frowning rocks at the ravine's edge.

In the moonlight Diamond Eye and the Black Riders could see that the train was one of considerable length. The ancient locomotive was sending forth masses of black smoke and lurid sparks. With a thunderous roar, the train started across the bridge. And the bridge itself, ancient and rotten, quivered and shook and groaned.

"Thunder!" muttered Diamond Eye. "I guess we've timed it just right, boys!"

A sharp explosion suddenly rent the air—ear-splitting, devastating. From the bridge's centre a blinding flash split the night, and the echoes of the explosion rolled amongst the hills, and the trestle bridge, in the centre, was shattered to fragments. Great timbers went hurtling skywards and outwards, and there was a vast gap in the structure.

Impossible for the train to pull up; the locomotive went hurtling right into the gap, and the Black Riders, injured as they were to grim sights, were transfixed with horror. Over went the engine, red-hot fire splashing in a cascade from her fire-box; and as she went, the rest of the trestle bridge, already weakened, collapsed like a house of cards.



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With a devastating, ear-splitting roar of sound, the bridge dropped into the ravine, carrying with it the entire train. The coaches went crashing to destruction.

The silence, after that appalling catastrophe, was nerve-racking. Not a sound had come from the victims as they went hurtling down to certain death.

"This is the end, Diamond Eye!" said a calm, crisp voice. "Hands up!"

Diamond Eye swung his horse round; the Black Riders did the same, for the voice had come from their rear. The next moment the bandits shouted with consternation—for they saw something which filled them with utter fear.

Facing them in the moonlight, apparently having sprung from the ground itself, were fully a hundred men—men in uniform—men with rifles to their shoulders!

There were others, too—in the background. Nelson Lee, Big Jim Farman, the ranch hands of the Double Z, the schoolboys—

"Trapped!" snarled Diamond Eye.

He sat his horse like a statue. It was indeed a trap—a trap which had been sprung with brilliant ingenuity. Nelson Lee had guessed from the first that the bandits would attempt to destroy the trestle bridge; in any case, Lee had doubted the trestle bridge's strength, even if it had not been weakened by an explosion. He would never have allowed human lives to cross in that train.

The train had served its purpose—it was one composed of ancient rolling stock which was of no further use—its locomotive was wheezy and destined for the scrap-heap. But it had performed its last office gallantly.

Some time earlier the soldiers, with their equipment, had left the train—had crossed the shallow part of the ravine, a mile or so down, and had crept round in the darkness. Then, during the awful sound of the crashing trestle bridge, the soldiers had taken up their position. Whatever sounds they had made had been drowned in the general din—and the bandits had had their attention distracted towards the ravine.

Thus they were taken unawares. At the very moment when they believed that victory was theirs defeat had come. Defeat, overwhelming, utter and absolute.

Those desperadoes knew when they were beaten; they stared into the wicked muzzles of the rifles, and they saw at a glance the overwhelming force which opposed them. As though actuated by clockwork, the Black Riders raised their hands to the skies. Not a shot was fired.

"Go in and get them!" said Colonel Grant, who was in command.

He was glowing with satisfaction. He appreciated the subtlety of Nelson Lee's scheming. To have routed these men out of their bolt-holes might have taken weeks. But Nelson Lee, by his strategy—by foreseeing that the Black Riders would come out to destroy the bridge—had insured that the enemy would be in the open, unprepared. They were taken in the rear, and their surrender was tame.

But Diamond Eye was not tame. He, at least, was reckless enough, and courageous enough, to make a final bid for liberty.

True, he was in an advantageous position; but he had the wit to appreciate it. Within five yards of him arose a mass of rock, and, with a sudden shout, he dug his spurs home, and his black horse leapt forward.

"Come in and get me!" he shouted defiantly.

The next second he was behind the cover of the rock. Crack, crack, crack! Rifles spurted fire and lead, but Diamond Eye was already safe from the bullets. Once behind the rock he swerved, and galloped on in a straight line, so that he still enjoyed the protection of the intervening rock mass. By the time the soldiers had leapt aside, and were taking aim, he was almost out of range.

Bullets whistled past him, over him, but he seemed to bear a charmed life. He rode hard, making straight for Ghost Pass.

The End of Diamond Eye!

THUD, thud, thud! Thud, thud, thud!

Pursuit, grim and relentless. Two score men, at a command from Colonel Grant, had detached themselves from the main body, and were thundering into Ghost Pass on Diamond Eye's trail. They were led by an eager young lieutenant.

So swiftly had the action been taken that the soldiers could see their quarry in the distance ahead, riding hard.

"Faster, boys—faster!" urged the lieutenant. "He can't get away from us!"

But he was unfamiliar with the tricks of Ghost Pass. At the head of his men he went thundering round a curve, where the rocks rose sheer on either side. And, mysteriously, the quarry had vanished. The trail lay ahead, empty in the moonlight. Horse and rider had gone. Yet there seemed to be no crevice, no gully which could have concealed them.

Diamond Eye was not beaten yet. Out of sight of his

pursuers, he had flung himself from his horse, and at a touch he had opened a rock door. He and his steed passed within, and the door closed. He heard the pursuers gallop past.

He had no further use for the horse, and, pulling an electric torch from his pocket, he flashed it on. The sudden light frightened the animal near by, and it lashed out and backed violently. As a result, the rock door, which was not completely secured, swung open, and Diamond Eye's horse, still backing, passed out into the open.

A shout sounded from the soldiers, and a moment later they came riding up. They had found a secret way into the mine workings and the caverns.

Cursing, Diamond Eye fled along the tunnel. It mattered nothing now; he was not worried because the soldiers were getting into his stronghold. It was certain to fall. There was scarcely a handful of men left, and they would

"Hold tight!" yelled the pilot.

He opened up wide, and, with a throbbing roar, the machine gathered speed. Just ahead Merton saw the end of the rock ledge, and he pulled at the control. Up went the plane, soaring magnificently. She was clear.

"Good work!" came from Diamond Eye, behind. "That was smartly done, Merton! We're up!"

"Where do we go from here?" yelled Merton, half-turning his head.

"Anywhere—climb high, and fly in a straight line," said the other. "I'll give you further instructions later."

Merton, after his long weeks of captivity, gloried in this adventure. He was in the air again, at the controls of one of the fastest machines he had ever flown.

But he hated the thought of obeying the dictates of the murderous criminal behind him.

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surrender. But Diamond Eye was thinking of his own safety—his own future.

For months he had prepared his "getaway," and he was now ready to abandon his whole project and seek only his own safety.

Running from one tunnel to another, he was aware, behind him, of shouting voices and hurrying footsteps; but he cared not. He reached, at length, a rock door, and he opened it and passed through. He closed the door securely, and the light of his electric torch revealed the fully dressed figure of an athletic man immediately in front of him.

"You again!" said Captain Merton, the airman. "What's happening out there? I heard an explosion; it shook the very walls of this cavern and—"

"Don't talk—get busy!" interrupted Diamond Eye. "She's ready for flight?"

He indicated the neat plane which stood in the cavern's centre, which Captain Merton had assembled during the past weeks.

"Didn't I tell you a few hours ago that she's ready?" retorted the airman. "Tanks full—engine tested—everything."

"Then get her going, and see that the automatic brakes are secure," ordered Diamond Eye. "Race the engine as much as you dare."

"Are you mad?" asked Merton. "There's no way out of this cavern—"

"Do as you're told!" snarled Diamond Eye.

With a shrug, Captain Merton climbed into the cockpit. At a touch the powerful engine sprang into life, and soon the cavern was humming and reverberating with the rhythmic din. The brakes prevented the machine from moving forward.

Merton, glancing up, was amazed by an extraordinary sight. Diamond Eye had evidently operated a lever or some machinery. For one entire side of the cavern was rolling back. And through the open space moonlight was streaming in, and Merton could see, beyond, a long flat rock plateau. Beyond that—nothing, for the plateau ended in a sheer precipice.

"So that's the secret," muttered Captain Merton.

He realised in that minute that Diamond Eye must have spent many months preparing the movable rock wall. This, indeed, was true. The kidnapped men—virtually slaves—had been compelled to work on the job. The false wall moved on rollers which were completely hidden in grooves.

Diamond Eye, in his extremity, was thinking nothing of his dupes—the men who had served him for so long. This plane was for his own escape. He came climbing up into the rear cockpit.

"Let her go!" he commanded. "Once you're outside you can open right out—there's a long, flat stretch and she'll take off easily. And no tricks, my friend!"

Skilled pilot though he was, Captain Merton did not like this job. But there was nothing else for it. He set his teeth, released the brakes, and the plane rolled forward, out into the open.

With a sudden, grim decision, he sent the plane earthwards, gliding steeply down.

"Say, you fool, what are you doing?" roared Diamond Eye.

"Landing!" snapped Merton.

Diamond Eye rose to his feet in the cockpit, and, leaning forward, he rammed a gun into the pilot's back.

"Take her up!" he commanded harshly.

But Captain Merton only laughed.

"You don't scare me with that bluff!" he said coolly. "I hold the ace, Diamond Eye! If you shoot me, you'll share my fate. There are no controls in that rear cockpit, and the ship will crash!"

"You've figured it all out, huh?" grated Diamond Eye. "Maybe you've figured out what will happen when we land?"

Merton was suddenly startled.

"Do you get it?" jeered Diamond Eye. "Sure, you can take me down—and it will mean capture. But the instant the wheels touch land, and I'm safe, you'll get six bullets through your vitals! Better take her up again, Merton."

The airman knew, then, that he was beaten. He had not thought of that contingency. He was trapped. Diamond Eye could certainly riddle him with bullets as soon as the plane landed; and Merton was fond of life. He saw no reason why he should sacrifice himself in that useless way.

With sudden ferocity, he opened up the throttle wide and pulled at the controls. With a screaming roar, the machine zoomed vertically skywards, answering magnificently.

In fact, she answered very much quicker than Captain Merton had intended. He had never flown a machine of this type before, and she was sensitive to the controls. Before he could correct the fault, the aeroplane was in a half-loop, and the captain had to flip the plane on to its back to prevent a stall. Merton felt himself falling head-downwards out of the cockpit. At the last second he hooked his feet round the pedals on the floor, jamming them. In the same instant he clutched at the seat. The machine rolled.

A scream, terrible in its despairing note, sounded from behind. Merton twisted his head and caught a single glimpse. His passenger, unprepared for that loop, and with no pedals to hook his feet round, had dropped out!

Again came that scream, and Merton shuddered. He saw Diamond Eye falling, turning over and over in the moonlight. Captain Merton brought the plane back on to an even keel, and gave a horrified glance at the spinning, falling figure. Diamond Eye had paid the last penalty!

From a considerable distance the tragedy had been seen.

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Nelson Lee, Nipper, and the other boys—in fact, all the members of the Ghost River Ranch party—had watched the aeroplane. They had known that Diamond Eye was escaping. Then they had seen that unexpected manoeuvre; they had seen the falling body.

Nelson Lee's glasses were to his eyes, and in the moonlight he glimpsed the black figure; something gleamed and shimmered as the doomed man turned over and over.

"Diamond Eye!" muttered Lee. "A pity! I should have preferred to get my man alive."

The plane, after circling above, came down under perfect control and made a good landing a mile distant. Meanwhile, Lee and the schoolboys and others were running across the rocky country; and, at last, they reached that shattered thing which had once been a man.

"Stone dead, of course," said Lee, as he bent over the body. "Now, boys, keep back—this is no sight for you."

"Well, Dirk Dixon is finished," said Big Jim Farman soberly.

"Not Dirk Dixon," said Nelson Lee quietly. "Look!" He stripped the cowl away, and those about him found themselves gazing down upon the waxen features of Elmer C. Kyle!

The round-up was complete.

With the coming of daylight, victory, complete and absolute, crowned Nelson Lee's efforts. Every member of Diamond Eye's gang was secured—even including Dirk Dixon, who was taken in one of the disused mine workings.

It was later in the day, at the Plaza Hotel, in Fortune City, where Nelson Lee explained things to a body of men representing the city's interests.

"You harboured a traitor in your midst," said Lee quietly. "Elmer C. Kyle was your mayor—you looked up to him as a fine man. Yet, all the while, he was the murderous criminal behind the banditry which ravaged Ghost River Valley for so long."

"It doesn't seem possible," said Big Jim Farman. "I counted Kyle as one of my friends."

"He lived in this city all his life," said Lee. "Mostly, I believe, he was honest. Then he got his 'big idea' when the President of your country offered to buy gold at a record price. The old mines of this valley had been abandoned years ago; but there was still gold in them."

"The cost of labour, however, was more than the gold was worth. But Kyle kidnapped his workers—he paid them no wages. They laboured in the caverns, washing for gold—and getting it. Even their food was stolen, for he rustled cattle, and his prisoners lived on practically nothing but beef. In that way he made the thing pay—handsomely. Being the president of your bank, he had ways and means of getting rid of his gold without arousing any suspicions."

"And the sheriff?" asked somebody.

"Dixon, of course, was in league with Kyle—they worked together," replied Lee. "They were very cunning in that respect, for they went out at different times in command of their men. On some occasions Kyle was 'Diamond Eye,' and on other occasions Dixon was 'Diamond Eye.'"

"To-night they both took turns to lead the Black Riders. They had a special costume, clumsy and ungainly, with an imitation club foot. Thus the imposition was easier—for even their own men knew nothing of this substitution."

"He organised the Vigilantes—but they were his own crooks. Even then they did not know that he—Kyle—was 'the unknown.' Because of that, he was unable to accompany the Vigilantes to the ranch-house last night. He made some excuse, and stayed away. His plan was to capture everybody at the ranch-house and then to carry on as before. But as events have proved it was his undoing."

Nelson Lee was the "man of the hour" in Ghost River Valley. There was a great celebration in Fortune City, for, at last, the menace was over. From now onwards Fortune City would be a place of peace.

And so, largely owing to Nelson Lee's clever work, Justin B. Farman came into his inheritance. But now all the excitement was over he was not particularly keen on the ranch, and he was glad enough to return to St. Frank's with his schoolfellows.

Little did the boys realise that they would soon be mixed up with more excitement—but of a totally different brand!

THE END.

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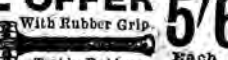
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