

"WALLY'S WILY WHEEZE!" THE STORY OF THE GREATEST SCHOOL "JAPE" EVER INSIDE.



The GEM

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EVERY WEDNESDAY.

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A "STRIKING" INCIDENT FROM THIS WEEK'S STORY OF THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S!

Wally's Wily Wheeze!

By
Martin
Clifford.



Young Wally D'Arcy, of the Third Form at St. Jim's, is a past master at the gentle art of japing, but when he sets out to "ginger up" Tom Merry's famous "Weekly"—in a very unofficial way!—he fairly excels himself. There's a chuckle in every line of this ripping story!

CHAPTER 1.

Tom Merry Explains!

THE following notice greeted the juniors of St. Jim's when they swarmed out of class-rooms after school on Tuesday:

"NOTICE.

"Grand Special Number of 'Tom Merry's Weekly'!

"In order to celebrate the success of the Junior Cricket Club of St. Jim's, a Special Number of 'Tom Merry's Weekly' will be issued on Saturday.

"Contributions for the Special Number must be taken in not later than Thursday to the Editorial Office, No. 2 in the School House, Ground Floor.

"Contributions in prose carefully considered by the editor. Contributions in poetry inserted at usual advertisement rates.

"(Signed) T. MERRY, Editor."

It greeted the eyes of the seniors, too, as a matter of fact, but the seniors only smiled and walked on. A notice put up by a fellow in the Shell was not likely to be read by a senior.

But to the Middle and Lower School it was of great interest.

Nearly all the Shell and the Fourth Form read it through carefully, and most of the Third as well; both School House and New House fellows.

For although there was keen rivalry, and generally war, between the two Houses at St. Jim's, there were some matters they could unite loyally upon.

Japing the neighbouring Grammar School was one of THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,379.

them, and contributing to "Tom Merry's Weekly" was another.

"Tom Merry's Weekly" was not, as its name would have implied, exactly a weekly journal. It was supposed to be, and in the earliest stages of its existence it had been. But other interests continually interfered with the duties of the youthful editor, who was Form captain of the Shell, skipper of the junior cricket club, and president of the debating society, as well as editor of the "Weekly."

And so sometimes two or three weeks, or longer, passed without a number of the "Weekly" appearing; but that, as Tom Merry said, only made the fellows more pleased to see it when it did come. On the other hand, Monty Lowther contended that they would be still more pleased if it never came. But that was exaggeration. Every fellow whose contributions were inserted in the "Weekly" was eager to see them in print. Every fellow whose name had appeared in type voted the school journal a success.

The paper had not appeared now for nearly three weeks. Cricket was reigning at St. Jim's, and in the glorious weather fellows had spent most of their leisure time out of doors. The evenings were so long that there was little time to be spent in the studies and Common-room before bed, and that time was generally devoted to prep. The paper had hardly been missed save by a few fellows who were anxious to see how their stories and articles looked in type.

But this did not suit Tom Merry. With manuscripts accumulating in the study, and the paper in danger of being forgotten, the brilliant idea of a special number had occurred to him.

Hence the notice on the board, which Tom Merry had pinned up as he went into class that afternoon, leaving it there to greet the eyes of the Shell and the Fourth when they came out.

—LIVELY SCHOOL STORY OF JAPES AND SPORT AT ST. JIM'S!

A crowd of juniors gathered round the notice-board, and the paper signed by T. Merry was read aloud a dozen times.

And, to judge by the remarks passed among the juniors, the proceedings of the youthful editor did not meet with unanimous approval.

"Cheek!" said Blake of the Fourth.

"Nerve!" agreed his chum Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth, jamming his eyeglass into his right eye and surveying the notice through it. "I certainly wegard this as extremely cheeky on the part of Tom Mewwy!"

"Blessed if the chap doesn't seem to think he's the only giddy editor on the staff!" said Figgins of the New House.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And, as a matter of fact, there are ten of 'em besides Tom Merry," said Kerr in a tone of equal indignation.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, Tom Merry's chief editor," said Monty Lowther and Manners together. As Shell fellows, and as Tom Merry's chums and study-mates, they felt bound to keep Fourth Form criticism in check.

"Rats!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Wats!"

"Tom Merry may be chief editor," remarked Fatty Wynn, "but there are ten sub-editors, and the thing ought to go by the majority."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hallo! Here's Merry!"

"Here's the boulder himself!"

Tom Merry of the Shell came up, smiling.

He was looking sunny and cheery, as he always did, and he met the somewhat wrathful look of the majority of the crowd with a cheery grin.

"Hallo! You've seen the notice, kids?" he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And now we want to know what it means," said Jack Blake aggressively.

"Just so," said Figgins, "what it jolly well means!"

Tom Merry glanced at the notice in surprise.

"I thought I had made it pretty plain," he remarked. "Still, I don't mind explaining, if you can't understand it. I'll take it line by line and interpret. 'Notice.' That means that attention is called to the subject—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Manners and Lowther.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Grand Special Number of 'Tom Merry's Weekly,'" went on the youthful editor. "That means that there is a grand special number of 'Tom Merry's Weekly' coming."

Blake turned red.

"Look here—" he began.

"Yaas, weally—"

"In order to celebrate the success of the Junior Cricket Club," went on Tom Merry imperturbably. "That means that we're going to celebrate the success of the junior cricket club."

"You ass!"

"Dry up!"

"A Special Number will be issued on Saturday." That means that the special number will be issued on Saturday."

"You uttah ass!"

"Cheese it!" roared Blake. "What I mean is—"

"But you asked me to explain—"

"Ass!"

"And I'm explaining," said Tom Merry. "I want you to understand. 'Contributions for the Special Number must be sent in not later than Thursday.' That means that Thursday is the last day for receiving contributions for the special number—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You duffer!" howled Blake. "You frabjous ass! I know that—"

"You burbling chump!" said Figgins. "I meant—"

"Then," resumed Tom Merry cheerfully, raising his voice to make it audible, "'Editorial Office, Study No. 2 on the Ground Floor' means that I've obtained permission to use Room No. 2 on the ground floor as an editorial office."

"Shut up!"

"Ring off!"

"Stop playing the giddy goat, you silly chump!"

"Contributions carefully considered by the editor" means that the editor will carefully consider contributions—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Biff him if he doesn't shut up!"

"Ring off, you frabjous burler!"

"Contributions in poetry," went on Tom Merry calmly, while Manners and Lowther and Kangaroo kept off a rush of the irate Fourth Formers. "That means that contributions in poetry—"

"Shut up!"

"Accepted at advertisement rates—"

"Cheese it!"

"Means at the same rate as for advertisements."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ass!"

"Chump!"

"Signed, T. Merry, Editor," means that T. Merry, Editor, has signed it," concluded Tom Merry tranquilly, amid yells of laughter from all except the excited Fourth Formers.

"You frabjous ass!" roared Blake.

"You cheerful idiot!" gasped Figgins.

"You—you gramophone!"

"You silly chump!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What does this giddy notice mean?" roared Blake.

Tom Merry looked astonished.

"Why, haven't I just explained?" he exclaimed. "However, if it's not clear to you, I'll begin again at the beginning. 'Notice.' That means that attention is called—"

Tom Merry got no further.

There was a roar of rage from the Fourth Formers and a terrific rush.

Tom Merry was overwhelmed by that rush, and his explanation of the meaning of the notice was cut suddenly short as he disappeared beneath a sprawling mass of juniors.

CHAPTER 2. Angry Sub-Editors!

"O H!"

"Ow!"

"Yaroo!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kangaroo, struggling out of the sprawling heap. "Look out, or you'll have a giddy prefect on you."

But the juniors were too excited to look out for prefects, or even for masters. The Fourth Formers had seized Tom Merry in an avenging grip.

Manners and Lowther and the other Shell fellows tried to get to the rescue, but a crowd of the Fourth drove them back.

Tom Merry remained in the hands of Figgins and Blake, and Herries and Digby.

He struggled in their hands, but they had an arm or a leg each, and Tom Merry hadn't very much chance.

"Ow!" he gasped breathlessly. "Leggo, you asses!"

"Bump him!"

"What-ho!"

"Yaas, wathah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, surveying the scene through his monocle. "Bump the expawatin' wottah, deah boy. I wegard him as havin' tweated the Fourth Form with a want of pwopah respect."

"Bump the duffah!"

"Go it!"

"Ow! Leggo!"

Bump, bump!

The excited juniors had forgotten that they were in the School House hall, and that the doors of masters' and prefects' studies opened within a dozen yards of them.

The din was terrific, and in such a spot it was not likely to pass unnoticed.

Bump! Scuffle! Thud! Gasp!

A door was heard to open.

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, stepped out of his study, and stood gazing upon the strange scene for some moments in complete astonishment.

His voice rang out suddenly.

"Boys!"

"My hat!" gasped Kangaroo. "Cave!"

"Look out!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Run for it!"

"Wun like anythin,' deah boys!"

The Housemaster was striding towards the spot with a frowning brow.

The juniors let Tom Merry go as if he had suddenly become red-hot, and darted off in all directions.

Most of them poured out into the quadrangle in wild flight.

"D'Arcy! Figgins! Blake!"

But the owners of those names were in full flight, and they did not turn their heads, perhaps not hearing.

"Merry!"

Tom Merry gasped for breath and stopped.

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CHAPTER 3.

Not Required!

The Housemaster gazed sternly at the hero of the Shell. Tom Merry certainly presented a shocking spectacle. His collar and tie were dragged out, his waistcoat had lost half its buttons, and his Eton jacket was split up the back. His clothes were dusty and rumpled, his hair like a mop, his face flushed and dusty, too.

He blinked at the Form-master in a dazed manner.

"Merry!" rapped out Mr. Railton.

"Ye-es, sir?" gasped Tom Merry.

"What does this mean?"

"This—this notice, sir?"

"No, certainly not; this disturbance, Merry."

"I—I don't know, sir!" gasped Tom Merry. "I—I think I've been bumped, sir."

"Merry!"

"Well, sir, it feels like it," said Tom Merry ruefully; "and I—I think I'm a little bit out of order, sir. Don't you notice it?"

Mr. Railton tried not to smile.

"I certainly do notice it, Merry," he said. "There has been a scene of great disorder here. But you appear to have been the victim. You can go; but mind that it does not occur again."

"Certainly, sir!" said Tom Merry, glad to get off so cheaply. "Thank you, sir."

And Mr. Railton went back into his study, and did not laugh till he had closed the door.

Tom Merry staggered breathlessly away to the stairs.

He could not go out in the state he was in, and he wanted to get to the Shell dormitory to change as quickly as possible.

As he reached the first landing he met a youth with a large head, a pair of thin legs, and a very large pair of spectacles.

He tried to pass him, but Skimpole of the Shell was not so easily passed.

The brainy-looking youth reached out a bony hand, and seized Tom Merry by one of the few buttons that were left upon his waistcoat.

"Merry, I have been looking for you."

"Go on looking, Skimmy, will you?"

"I've found you."

"Sorry!"

"I've read your notice in the Hall," said Skimpole, blinking at the hero of the Shell, unregarding of his evident desire to pass. "I see that you are bringing out a special number."

"Yes, I—"

"I suppose it will be a double number?"

"Yes. Let me—"

"Good! Then there will be plenty of room for a rousing article from me on—"

"Rats!"

"I suppose you will find room—"

"You will find a thick ear if you don't let me pass," growled Tom Merry, trying to get loose from the brainy man of St. Jim's. "Can't you see I'm dusty. I want to get to the dorm and get a wash and a brush up."

"Never mind that now."

"But I do mind," shouted Tom Merry. "Leggo!"

"You see—"

"Yes, I see a howling ass," said Tom Merry.

"Really, Merry, I can forgive that absurd remark, which I know is due to your low order of intellect," said Skimpole patiently. "I could explain to you—"

"Don't!"

"Really, Merry—"

Tom Merry jerked himself away and passed. Skimpole caught hold of his sleeve. He was not finished with the editor of "Tom Merry's Weekly" yet.

"Hold on, Merry!"

"Rats!"

Tom Merry took the genius of the Shell by the shoulders and swung him round, and sat him down on the landing with considerable force.

Skimpole sat there blinking while Tom Merry went upstairs, hardly knowing what had happened to him.

"Dear me!" he murmured. "I feel a pain. I am very much shaken. I cannot but consider this almost rude of Merry."

Tom Merry went quickly up to the Shell dormitory, chuckling.

He brushed down and washed there, and descended to his study in the Shell passage, where he found his chums Manners and Lowther waiting for him.

"Here he is," said Lowther, "clothed and in his right mind, or as near as he ever gets. Now, then, you cheeky bouncer, explain!"

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TOM MERRY sat down to the tea-table and helped himself from the dish of buttered toast. Manners and Lowther gazed at him.

"Well?" said Lowther.

"Well?" said Manners.

Tom Merry looked at them innocently over the toast.

"Well?" he said innocently.

"I asked you to explain," said Monty Lowther.

"Oh!"

"Of course, we backed you up against those Fourth Form kids," remarked Manners, "but now you've got to explain to us."

"Explain what?"

"That blessed notice."

"But you heard me explain to Blake," expostulated Tom Merry.

"Look here, don't be funny!" roared Manners. "One's enough in one study, and Lowther's funny business is enough to drive a chap distracted, without you starting."

"Oh, is it?" said Lowther warmly.

"Yes, it is. Now—"

"You're an ass, Manners."

"Look here, Lowther—"

"I tell you—"

"Peace," said Tom Merry soothingly. "Peace, and pass the toast. I'm hungry!"

"Are you going to explain that notice?" yelled Lowther.

"Certainly," said Tom Merry, with his mouth full. "Notice—that means that attention is called to the matter for—"

His chums stared at him aghast for a moment.

"My only hat!" shouted Lowther. "If he isn't working off the same wheeze again."

"Stop him!"

"Grand Special Number—that means—"

"Collar him!"

"Bung the jam on him!"

Lowther caught Tom Merry round the neck, and Manners brandished the jam-dish. The hero of the Shell surrendered at once. He had had to wash and change already, and he didn't want to have to repeat the performance.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "Pax! It's all right!"

"Then explain. What do you mean by sticking up that notice without consulting the staff?" said Lowther excitedly.

"What does it mean, anyway?"

"Yes, that's the question," said Manners.

Tom Merry put his collar straight and started on the toast again.

"You see," he explained, "the editor's decision is final. The idea came into my head, and as editor-in-chief, I carried it out. I explain to the staff afterwards."

"Cheeky ass!"

"Impertinent bouncer!"

"Those expressions would be barred in a properly regulated staff," said Tom Merry severely. "A sub-editor who called his chief a cheeky ass would get the order of the boot, jolly sharp!"

"Look here—"

"Besides, isn't it a good idea? We've let the 'Weekly' drop for two or three weeks—it had to hang over while we were away, and then there was the cricket as soon as we came back. Nobody had any articles ready, except Skimpole, who had a long article on comets—"

The chums of the Shell chuckled at the recollection of Skimpole's comet.

"I mean, none of the staff," said Tom Merry. "There were heaps of outside contributions; the studies were crammed with them."

"That's so," remarked Lowther. "I've wiped out the frying-pan this very afternoon with a 'Thrilling Romance of Life in the Far West.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So, you see, with contributions choking up the place, and the paper in danger of being forgotten, the only thing was to produce a Special Double Number," said Tom Merry.

"The special number will have the effect of reminding all St. Jim's that there is such a paper as 'Tom Merry's Weekly.' The double number will have room in it for the contributions that have accumulated, and we can get rid of them. See?"

"Yes, I see. But—"

"Then all you chaps will have something to put in it, too; so we shall need double space. I thought it was a good wheeze."

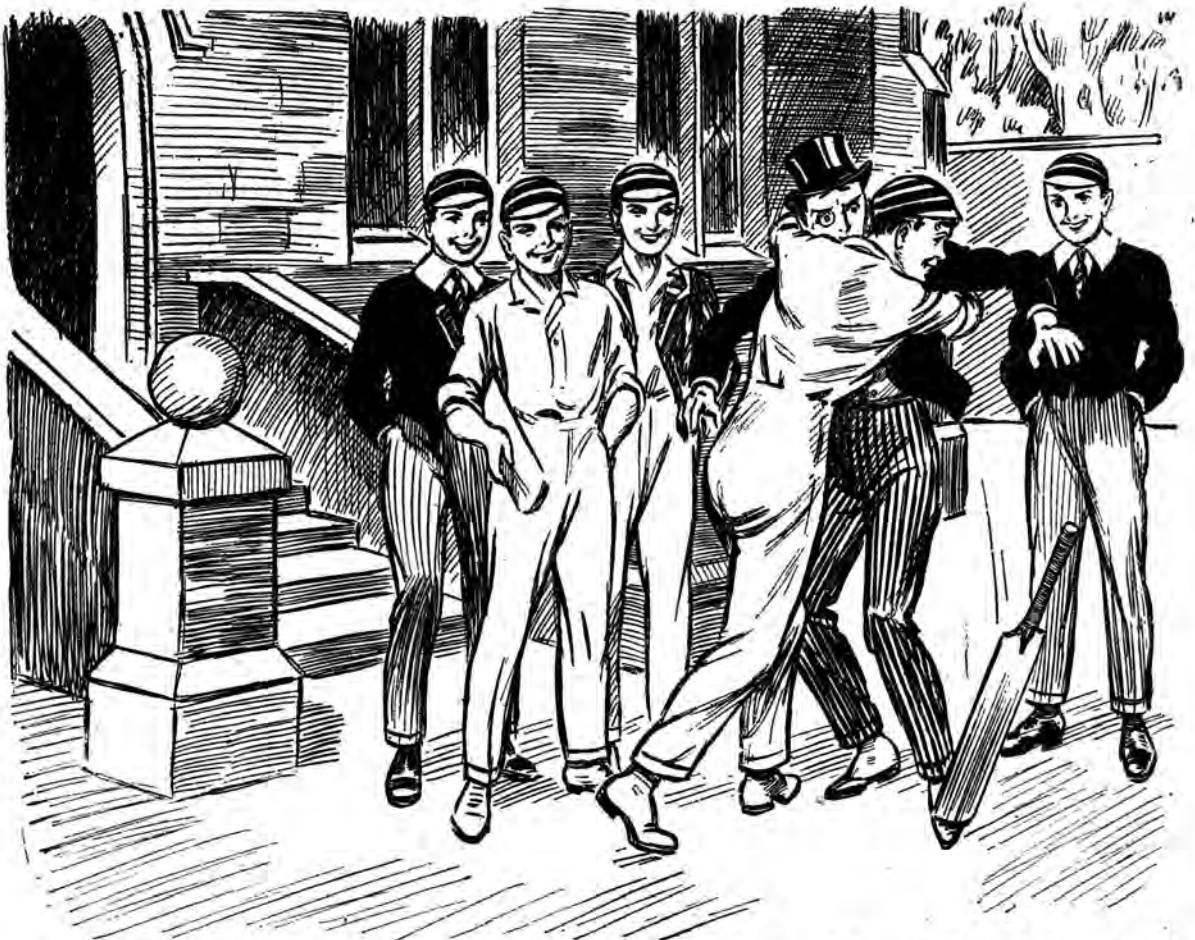
"Well, it wasn't a bad one, but—"

"As for consulting the staff, I decided to do that after putting the notice up, instead of before," said Tom Merry.

"I don't see that it makes any difference."

"Cheeky ass!"

"What do you mean by charging the editorial office."



Tom Merry threw his arms around Gussy's neck in a most affectionate embrace, and the cricket bat he had been holding fell with a clump on Arthur Augustus' elegant boot. "Yawwooh!" howled the swell of St. Jim's. "Gawwoop! My foot's crushed!"

too?" demanded Manners. "Wasn't this study good enough?"

"Quite good enough, my son; but hardly big enough," said Tom Merry. "When all the staff get in here, there isn't room for a snail to trim his whiskers, if he had any. No. 2 room, on the ground floor, is much more—er—commodious."

"Well, there's something in that; but it was like your cheek, all the same!" said Lowther.

"Granted!" said Tom Merry. "If I admit that it was like my cheek, I suppose that settles it? Good. Now pass the toast."

"Blessed if I see it's a good time for bringing out a double number, too!" said Manners. "There's the cricket match with the Grammar School to-morrow afternoon!"

"My dear kid, all the better; we can put a report of the victory in the paper—it's to be a cricket number, you know."

"Yes; but suppose it's a Grammarian victory?"

"Oh, don't croak!"

"I know Gordon Gay and his team are in splendid fettle, and they gave Greyfriars a jolly good tussle. D'Arcy was over there and saw it."

"Well, I hope they'll give us a good tussle, too; but I think we shall beat them. Anyway, a report of the match goes in. I—"

The door opened. Lowther glared at it wrathfully. But it was Kerruish, the Manx lad, who came in, beaming upon the occupants of the room.

He nodded to the chums of the Shell.

"It's going to be double the usual size, is it?" he asked.

"I mean, the 'Weekly.' You've got my serial here, Merry; I suppose you'll be able to put the first chapters into the special number?"

"I don't know. We've got such a lot of stuff on hand," said Tom Merry. "I don't know whether I can put my hand on your stuff now, either. There's been an awful accumulation of rubbish in this study while we've been away."

"Accumulation of what?"

"I—er—I—I mean contributions!" said Tom Merry hastily. "What's the title of your serial? Perhaps I can remember it."

"Red Ralph, a Romance of Life in the Far West," said Kerruish, with a blush.

Monty Lowther started, and left off rubbing his nose for a moment.

"What did you say the title was?" he asked.

"Red Ralph."

"And the rest?"

"A Thrilling Romance of Life in the Far West."

"Phew!"

"What's the matter?" asked Kerruish anxiously. "I suppose it's all right. Of course, I know that the subject has been written upon before."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Manners. "I think it has!"

"Still, it's a jolly good subject, and very thrilling. I bet you won't sleep at night after you've read the account of the attack on the wagon train."

"Well, that's an incentive to read it, I must say."

"It will simply make your flesh creep!" said Kerruish. "The part where Red Ralph massacres the palefaces is the most thrilling. You see, they call him Red Ralph because he's shed so much blood."

"Ugh!"

"Well, you see, it's a Wild West story, and there's bound to be some bloodshed," said Kerruish. "Red Ralph simply rolls in it."

"How nice!"

"I don't think!"

"I'll read you out the part of the massacre of the emigrants—"

"Please don't!"

"Well, just hand over the manuscript, and—"

"I—I'm afraid it's mislaid just now."

"Well, I could repeat that part from memory," said Kerruish cheerfully. "Listen! 'With a yell of ferocity, the

Redskins hurled themselves upon the sleeping emigrants, and—

"They must have been jolly fast asleep, if they slept while the giddy Redskins were yelling," said Manners, with a shake of the head.

"Ass! The yell woke them up."

"Oh, I see!"

"In the twinkling of an eye," continued Kerruish, "the corral was red—"

"Corral is pink, as a rule."

"Oh, there's red coral!" said Lowther.

"You chumps!" shrieked Kerruish. "A corral is a place where you back up against the Indians. You shove your wagon round behind them and shoot—"

"For goal?"

"Ass!"

"Well, I was only asking a question," said Lowther. "Go on, it's getting interesting."

"In the twinkling of an eye the corral was red with blood. Blood was everywhere—"

"Ugh!"

"It flowed on the wagons, and on the grass, and on the heaps and heaps of dead and dying. The groans were fearful. Red Ralph brandished his tomahawk—"

"Phew!"

"And at every blow a paleface fell beneath his weapon, and rolled on the grass in convulsions of agony—"

"Go it, kid! Is this the thrilling part?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Good! I'm thrilling! Are you, Manners?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Are you thrilling, Tom Merry?"

"Lots!"

"Good! Go it, Kerruish—we're all thrilling—the whole study's up to concert pitch," said Monty Lowther.

"Look here—"

"Go ahead! We're interested in Pink Peter—"

"Red Ralph, you dummy!"

"My mistake. Go ahead! What happened after everybody was killed?"

"Everybody wasn't killed!" snorted Kerruish. "A single scout escaped—"

"Sure he wasn't married?"

"Idiot! A single scout escaped to tell the tale—"

"Then it won't do," said Lowther, shaking his head.

"You sent the tale in under your own name, and if it's been told already by somebody else, you're a giddy plagiarist. No room for plagiarism in 'Tom Merry's Weekly.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Kerruish. "A single scout escaped to tell the tale, and he tracks Red Ralph in the second chapter."

"More blood, I suppose?"

"Yes; the Redskins are massacred by the scouts."

"And who massacres the scouts?"

"They aren't massacred at all, ass!"

"Oh, come! Isn't there any bloodshed in the third chapter?"

"Well, no; only about fifty Indians are shot."

"What happens to Red Robert?"

"Red Ralph!" roared Kerruish.

"Ahem! I mean, Red Ralph. By the way, why Red Ralph? Crimson Ralph would seem more imposing," said Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ass! The title has to be—what do you call it when the words begin with the same letter?"

"Alliterative," said Manners.

"Yes, that sounds like the word. The names of the characters in Wild West stories have to be all—all—alliterative," said Kerruish. "Like Deadwood Dick, and Blood-dabbled Ben, and Snorting Sam!"

"Oh, I see! It's a ripping good story!" said Lowther.

"What a misfortune that—"

"Look here! You've got room for the first instalment!"

"Ahem—"

"You see, it's a thrilling story of life in the Far West, and—"

"Ahem! More like a thrilling story of death in the Far West—"

"Look here—"

"It's awfully unfortunate," said Lowther, "but there has been an accident in the editorial office. Somebody used your serial to clean out the frying-pan—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What?" yelled Kerruish.

"It's awfully unfortunate. You see, I remember now seeing Red Ralph as I was rubbing the frying-pan—"

"You?"

"Ahem! Yes. I remember being thrilled at the time. I

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caught sight of a massacre as I was crumpling up the manuscript—"

"You—you ass—"

"But we shouldn't have had room for it," said Tom Merry. "Besides, bloodshed is barred in the 'Weekly,' you know!"

"How on earth can you have an Indian massacre without bloodshed?" demanded Kerruish.

"Well, we can dispense with the massacre, you know."

"I'll jolly well send that story in to a London publisher!" exclaimed Kerruish. "I've no doubt that I shall get a hundred guineas or so for it, and then I'll start a school magazine myself. Hand over the manuscript."

"Sorry you see—"

"Look here! You're only rotting about the frying-pan—"

"Unfortunately—"

"You don't mean to say that my 'Romance of Life in the Far West' is really done in?"

"Sorry—" said Lowther.

"Look here, you ass—"

"Try again, and leave out the gore, and—"

"You—you dummy!" gasped Kerruish. "I—I—"

Words failed the indignant author.

He rushed at Monty Lowther and closed with him. His fist came with a crash upon Monty's nose.

Lowther struggled and roared.

"Ow! Drag him off!"

He pommelled in his turn, and Kerruish pommelled, and they staggered round the study, struggling and punching desperately. Tom Merry and Manners roared with laughter. They were too doubled up with merriment to think of interfering.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Lowther!"

"Go it, Kerruish!"

"Ow!"

"Ow! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two combatants staggered through the doorway. There Lowther managed to disengage himself, and he hurled the Fourth Former into the passage, and slammed the door.

His nose was streaming red as he turned gasping towards his chums.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling asses—"

"Ha, ha, ha! You look as if you've been understudying Red Ralph!" shrieked Manners. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groogh! My nose is bleeding again!"

"Looks like it! Ha, ha, ha!"

But Monty Lowther did not laugh; he mopped his nose and grunted, while Tom Merry and Manners yelled.

CHAPTER 4.

Study No. 6 Thinks it a Good Idea!

"BAI Jove! Here's the wottah!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy uttered that remark as the Terrible Three came out of the School House after tea.

The three chums of the Shell were in their cricketing flannels, and had their bats under their arms. Lowther's nose was looking a little red and swollen.

Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy were on the School House steps. They looked decidedly warlike as the Shell fellows came out.

Tom Merry held up his hand.

"Pax!" he exclaimed.

"That's all very well!" exclaimed Blake wrathfully.

"Look here—"

"What do you mean—"

"By that notice—"

"And that rotten Special Number—"

"We're all sub-editors—"

"And ought to have been consulted. Bai Jove!"

"Oh, I've been through all that with Manners and Lowther!" said Tom Merry patiently. "You see, a Special Number is a ripping good idea."

"Rats!"

"Yaas, wathah! Wats?"

"Because it will be double the usual size—"

"Rot!"

"Yaas, wathah! Wot?"

"And so I shall be able to shove in an extra instalment of Blake's serial—"

"Well, there's something in that," said Blake candidly. "Of course, every paper ought to have a Special Number every now and then."

"Wats?"

"Look here, Gussy—"

"I wogard it as wot—"

“And I was going to ask D’Arcy to give us a special article on fashions on the Riviera and in Paris—”

“Bai Jove! That’s a wippin’ ideah!”

“Stuff!” said Digby and Herries.

“I thought Herries would be able to put in an article on feeding dogs.”

“Now you’re talking!” exclaimed Herries heartily. “I believe in having some sense even in a school magazine.”

“Oh, piffle!” said Digby.

“I was thinking that Digby might shove in an extra column on cricket matters.”

“Good!” said Digby.

“Still, if you chaps don’t like the idea of a special double number—”

“Oh, I do!” said Blake. “I think the idea’s very good indeed. I’ll jaw these fellows over, too. They don’t know what’s what till I tell them.”

“Weally, Blake—”

“Cheese it, Gussy! I’m not going to have you running down Tom Merry’s splendid idea of a double number.”

“But I wasn’t goin’ to wun it down, deah boy. I wegard it as a weally first-chop ideah, and I shall be vewy happy to contribute an article—”

“I was thinking the same,” said Digby. “There’s never been room enough in the previous numbers to treat the subject of cricket properly. Now that we’re in the thick of the cricket season, too—”

“The subject of feeding dogs is more important,” Herries remarked. “I’ve had a lot of experience in that line. You see, my dog Towser—”

“Then you’re all agreed on the scheme?” asked Tom Merry, with a lurking glimmer of fun in his eyes.

“Yes, we are!”

“Yaas, wathah!”

“Good! Then you can turn up in Room No. 2 to help after dusk. We’ll make the most of the light we’ve got, as we’re playing Gordon Gay and his lot to-morrow.”

“Yaas, wathah! Upon the whole, deah boys, I considah that we can let Tom Mewwy off the fealful thwashin’ we were goin’ to give him.”

“Gussy!” gasped Tom Merry. “You don’t mean it?”

“Yaas, I do, deah boy.”

“Noble Gussy!” said Tom Merry, with a sob. “How can I thank thee?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Weally, Tom Mewwy—”

“I must embrace thee—”

“Weally—keep off, you ass! Yow!”

Tom Merry threw his arms round D’Arcy’s neck in a most affectionate embrace.

Unfortunately, he overlooked the fact that he had his cricket bat under his arm.

You cannot throw your arms round anybody’s neck and expect a cricket bat to stay in its place if you are carrying it under your arm. Tom Merry’s bat did not stay in its place.

It fell and clumped upon Arthur Augustus’ elegant boot.

There was a wild howl from the swell of St. Jim’s.

“Yawwoh!”

“Gussy, my dear—”

“Yoop!”

“I must embrace thee—”

“Gewwooh! My foot!”

“What’s the matter with your foot?”

“Gewwoop! It’s cwushed!”

“Really—”

“Yow—yoop—yawwoh!”

D’Arcy tore himself loose and stood on one foot, clasping the other with both hands. The juniors yelled as they looked at him.

“Like a giddy crane, isn’t he?” exclaimed Lowther.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“How long can you stand like that, Gussy?”

“He’s practised it, of course.”

“It’s a new gymnastic exercise.”

“Ow!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

D’Arcy lowered his foot to the ground, jammed his eyeglass into his eye and surveyed the Terrible Three with scornful dignity.

“I wegard you as wottahs!” he remarked.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I hope your toe isn’t really hurt, Gussy,” said Tom Merry. “You see, I forgot all about the blessed bat under my arm and—”

“My toe is considerably hurt, Tom Mewwy; but what I was thinkin’ of most was the boot—you have bwuised the leathah howwibly.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Weally, you ass—”

The Terrible Three walked off, still laughing.

D’Arcy gazed after them through his monocle, evidently in doubt whether to pursue them and call them to account.

“Come on, old dear,” said Blake, slipping his arm through D’Arcy’s. “Get into your things and come and play cricket.”

“I don’t know whethah I ought to thwash those boundahs—”

“Come on!”

“It’s a question of personal dig, you sec.”

“Rats!”

“Weally, Blake—”

But D’Arcy was rushed off to change his things before he could say more, and by the time he appeared on the cricket field he had forgotten all about Tom Merry’s offence. The swell of St. Jim’s never remembered offences long.

CHAPTER 5.

King Cricket!

TOM MERRY had all his team out on the cricket ground for practice.

The days were long, and the light was good, and the heroes of the Lower School were making the most of it.

Cricket was the great topic at St. Jim’s now.

The senior eleven were playing nearly every holiday, and Kildare and his men were winning laurels for the school at the grand old game.

But to the juniors, of course, the junior matches were of infinitely more importance than the biggest fixtures of the First Eleven.

Both the Houses at St. Jim’s had junior teams, which frequently met in House matches; but when the juniors met

NO SECOND CHANCE!



Football Player: “I could kick myself for missing that easy penalty shot.”

Captain of Team: “You’d better let me do it—you might miss again!”

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Tom Lonsbrough, 3, Wheat Street, Clarendon Road, Manchester 13.

a foreign foe, the House teams united for the purpose, and an eleven was picked of the best on both sides.

On such occasions, all House rivalry was forgotten, and the fellows backed one another up heartily for the old school.

Figgins & Co. of the New House were already on the ground when Tom Merry and his chums arrived, and Study No. 6 soon joined them there.

Tom Merry was junior cricket captain, and he had his team in good order. The practice was hard, and every fellow took his turn at the wickets to face the bowling of Fatty Wynn, who was the demon bowler of the Lower School.

Fatty Wynn was a bowler who could have made many of the seniors tremble for their sticks, if he had ever been played in a First Eleven game.

A fellow who could stand up to his bowling was likely to make a good show against the Grammar School—though Gordon Gay’s team was known to be in very fine fettle.

Fatty Wynn was in better form than ever to-day.

Tom Merry stood up to his bowling for one over, but the sixth ball brought his wicket down.

Figgins and Kerr clapped their hands and yelled.

Tom Merry was one of the finest batsmen in the Lower School, and if Fatty Wynn could take his wicket, he could take anything.

Tom Merry was surprised himself when the sticks went down; but he grinned approval, too. There was no vain glory about the hero of the Shell.

He was only too glad to see the fat Fourth Former in such good form.

“Bravo, Wynn!” he called out.

Figgins rushed up to his plump chum and gave him a sounding slap on the back.

Fatty Wynn gasped.

“Hold on, you ass!”

“It’s splendid, Fatty!”

Wynn rubbed his shoulder.

“Well, you needn’t use me as a punching-ball, if it is.”

“Ha, ha, ha! You’ll walk over the giddy Grammarians to-morrow,” said Figgins, with conviction.

Fatty Wynn grinned.

“I’m feeling specially fit now,” he remarked. “It’s

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because we had a good tea. You see, there were sausages, and poached eggs—

"Ready, there!"

"And cheese-cakes, and jam-puffs—"

"Field that ball!"

"And ham—"

"Wake that fat duffer up!"

"And meringues—"

"Get off, Figgins!"

"And ice-creams, so, you see, I'm not at all hungry now. Hallo! Were you calling to me, Blake?"

"Yes, ass!" roared Blake. "Are you going to bowl, or are you going to stand there jabbering away like an insane gramophone?"

"Where's the ball?" said Wynn, recalled to his surroundings.

"Here it is, ass—catch!"

"Yoop!" roared Fatty Wynn.

He caught the ball—with his chest. He was inclined to send it back the same way, but he restrained himself, and bowled instead.

Kangaroo was at the wicket, and it was not easy to take Harry Noble's wicket. But Fatty Wynn accomplished it.

The ball came down with a spin or it that a billiards player might have envied, and it broke in a most unexpected fashion.

Click!

"How's that?" roared Figgins.

And Kangaroo grunted.

"Out!"

"Jolly good," said Kildare of the Sixth, stopping to look on. "You've got a good bowler there, Merry."

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry heartily. "We wouldn't part with Fatty Wynn for his weight in gold—though a ton of gold would be worth something, too."

And there was a laugh.

CHAPTER 6.

A Valuable Recruit!

SKIMPOLE of the Shell came down to the cricket field while the practice was still going on.

Skimpole had a bat under his arm, and a cricket cap perched on his large head. The head was large, but the cap was small. Skimpole was not in flannels. He did not play cricket as a rule. He spent most of his time when he was at leisure in poring over dry books, and thinking out such important and interesting subjects as Determinism and Evolution.

But Skimpole was nothing if not scientific. The idea was in his head now that it was possible to play cricket on scientific principles, and if it could be done, of course, Herbert Skimpole was the fellow to do it. That went without saying. And Herbert Skimpole meant to try. Partly from a desire to vindicate the wonders of science in the eyes of unbelievers; partly from a benevolent wish to strengthen the St. Jim's team in the coming struggle with the Grammar School.

Like most geniuses, Skimpole was never understood, and never appreciated. Wisdom, it is said, cries out in the streets, and no man regards it—and Skimpole, too, was unregarded.

He called out to Tom Merry as soon as he arrived on the cricket ground, but the hero of the Shell had no time to spare Skimpole then.

The summer sunset was deepening into dusk when the cricketers came off at last, very well satisfied with themselves and with the practice they had had.

Tom Merry was captured as he came off, a bony finger and thumb fastening upon him in the objectionable way Skimpole had.

"Tom Merry—"

"Skimmy! Yes, old man?" said Tom Merry, resigning himself to his fate.

"I tried to point out to you—"

"We have got cocoa in our study, if you Shell chaps care for it," said Blake.

"Good!"

"That I could play a really startling game of cricket on purely scientific principles."

"Come and have some cocoa instead."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Skimpole shook his head.

"It will be a great advantage for the side if I am played against the Grammarians to-morrow," he remarked.

"The team's full-up, kid," said Tom Merry feebly.

"I have no doubt that D'Arcy would stand out to make room for me."

"Bai Jove!"

"Or Digby. Digby is not very much use."

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"My hat! Are you looking for a thick ear, Skimmy?"

"I did not intend to offend you, Digby, by a plain statement of the facts. I have observed your play, and I cannot praise it."

"What's the matter with it?" demanded Digby warmly.

"Well, I observed that you allowed Wynn to knock your wicket down when you could easily have stopped the ball with your foot."

"Oh, I see!" grinned Digby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"However, to resume," said Skimpole, blinking at the chuckling juniors. "I have noticed that Wynn bowls pretty well—"

"Pretty well!" snorted Fatty Wynn.

"Yes. But I have not the slightest doubt that I could bowl better."

"Had much practice?" asked Figgins.

"None at all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, I should bowl on purely scientific principles," explained Skimpole. "The mind governs matter, as you know. I should will the ball to follow a certain trajectory, and the arm would obey the impulse of the mind, and the ball would go in the desired direction. Do you see?"

"Ripping!" said Blake. "Did you fellows say you were coming?"

"Yes, rather."

"Pray stop a minute, Tom Merry. As captain of the junior cricket team, it is your duty to test every recruit possible for the sake of the team."

"Skimmy, old man—"

"I am certainly entitled to a trial."

"Oh, give him a trial!" said Monty Lowther. "It will be as good as a comic opera, anyway! All we really want is a cinematograph machine to take it down!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, Lowther—"

"Bai Jove, it will be funny, anyway! Bettah give Skimpole a twial, Tom Mewwy, and pewwaps he will leave off talkin' for a little while!"

"That's too much to expect," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head. "However, we'll give him a trial. Stick those stumps in again, Reilly!"

"Very good!" said Skimpole. "Give me the ball!"

"Here you are!"

"Please put your strongest batsman at the wicket, Tom Merry. I have not the slightest doubt that I shall perform what I think you call the cap trick!"

"The hat trick! Ha, ha, ha!"

And Skimpole grasped the round, red ball and went down to bowl.

CHAPTER 7.

Skimpole the Bowler!

THE juniors crowded round the ground, and some seniors, too, who saw what was toward. They had never seen cricket played on scientific principles such as Skimpole's before, and they were curious to see it.

There was no doubt that Skimpole's performance would be worth watching, though perhaps not from a cricketing point of view.

Figgins took his bat and went to the wicket. He did not expect to have anything to do there. Skimpole's bowling was not likely to come anywhere near the stumps.

Skimpole blinked along the pitch at the batsman.

The scientific junior was very short-sighted, and that alone was a very great handicap, for Figgins' form was very dim to him at the end of the pitch.

Figgins grinned and waited. The juniors looking on chuckled, and waited, too.

Skimpole grasped the ball, but he did not take a run. He appeared to be making a calculation. He was to bowl from the pavilion end, and the grinning juniors in front of the pavilion were not far from him.

"Go it!" called out Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Pulverise him, Skimmy!"

"Look out, Figgins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skimpole paid no attention whatever to the exclamations or the laughter. His mighty brain was deep in calculations.

"It will have to be a three day match when Skimmy plays in it," Monty Lowther remarked, "if he's going to take all this time over each ball."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skimpole stood with corrugated brows.

Suddenly his right hand shot up, the ball in it. His

hand swept round his head as if he were waving his cap, and the ball left his fingers.

Crash!

"Hallo!"

"What's that?"

"Ha, ha, ha! The window!"

"The pav window!"

The yells of laughter drowned the tinkling glass. Skimpole blinked round at the yelling juniors.

"Where is the ball?" he asked.

"Goodness knows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Figgins' wicket does not appear to have been struck," said Skimpole, blinking along the pitch with an expression of great astonishment.

"I wish you would give me the ball! It is getting darker, and it will soon be too dark to play!" said Skimpole patiently.

"Field the ball, somebody!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The ball was found, and tossed back to Skimpole. He let it slip through his fingers, of course, and groped in the grass for it.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom, the master of the Shell, stopping to look on, and blinking at Skimpole through his glasses. "Are you still at practice, my boys, in this light?"

"Only Skimmy, sir," said Tom Merry. "He's showing us something in bowling, sir. It's too good to be missed!"



Tom Merry's hand swept up, and he brandished the inkpot aloft. "Now then, Skimmy, are you going?" Skimpole dodged out of the door—he had no desire to argue with the inkpot-armed editor of "Tom Merry's Weekly"!

He evidently had expected to see Figgins' wicket a wreck.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You frabjous ass!" roared Gore. "You've bowled round the back of your neck, and busted the window of the pavilion!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Impossible!"

"Look at the window!"

Skimpole blinked.

"Dear me! I must have let the ball go too soon—or too late! A slight miscalculation, that is all, which really does not affect the matter in any way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were almost in hysterics. Skimpole's first essay at bowling had been even richer than they had anticipated.

"Please give me the ball!" said Skimpole.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold me, somebody!"

"Dear me! I did not know that Skimpole was a cricketer," said the master of the Fourth.

"He isn't, sir."

"That's the best of it!"

"He's playin' on purely scientific pwinciples, sir. It is wathah funnay!"

"Dear me!"

Mr. Lathom looked on with interest as Skimpole bowled again. The Form-master had been out, and he was wearing a coat and silk hat. He had reason, soon, to wish he had not brought that silk hat so dangerously close to the scientific bowler of the Shell.

Skimpole's hand, clutching the ball, performed some mysterious gyrations round his head, and the ball flew again.

"Look out for the windows!" murmured Blake.

Biff!

"What is it?"

"Where is it?"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Lathom. There was a roar.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Goal!"
 "Bravo, Skimmy!"
 Mr. Lathom clutched his silk hat as he staggered back. The side of it was completely smashed in. The Fourth Form master gasped.

"Dear me! Bless my soul! Really——"
 "Is Figgins' wicket down?" asked Skimpole, blinking round.

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"
 "No, Skimmy; but Mr. Lathom's hat is."
 "Boy!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "How dare you throw that cricket ball at my hat?"
 "Oh, sir!" gasped Skimpole, in alarm. "I, sir! The cricket ball, sir! Your hat, sir!"
 "Yes!" thundered Mr. Lathom. "It cannot have been an accident! I was standing almost directly behind you!"
 "I—I must have made a slight miscalculation, sir!" stammered Skimpole. "The ball was certainly intended for Figgins' wicket!"

"What! Figgins is yonder, and the ball came here!" Skimpole rubbed his bumpy forehead thoughtfully.
 "I cannot understand it, sir. My calculations were based on pure science, and I do not see how a mistake can have occurred. Are you sure the ball touched your hat?"
 "What! What! Look at the hat, boy!"

"It certainly appears to be damaged," said Skimpole thoughtfully. "But you may have knocked it against something, sir——"

"Boy, you are stupid! I felt the ball knock the hat off my head!"

"That may have been due to the imagination, sir! People often imagine things happen, and come to believe in them firmly!"

"Skimpole!"
 "And it is well known, sir, that the imagination is most powerfully developed in beings of a low intellectual order——"

"Boy!" said the Fourth Form master, almost choking. "You will take a hundred lines!"
 "Oh, sir!"

Mr. Lathom walked away with his battered hat. Skimpole blinked after him, and then blinked at the convulsed juniors.

"Mr. Lathom seems to be annoyed about something," he remarked.

"Oh, carry me home to die!" murmured Kangaroo weakly. "Oh! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where is the ball?"
 "You've had enough of the ball; it's your last chance, Skimmy! You might brain one of us next!"

"Impossible!"
 "Why, what do you mean, you ass?"
 "I mean that the ball cannot come in your direction, owing to my calculations."

"Let him have one more try, and keep a safe distance," said Tom Merry.

"Right-ho!"
 "Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, dodging round the corner of the pavilion. "I do not intend to twust my person too near to Skimmy!"
 "Here's the ball, Skimmy!"

"Go it!"
 Skimpole took the ball, and the juniors crowded away. Skimpole made more careful calculations this time, and Figgins grinned at him along the pitch.

But Figgins did not wear that grin many seconds. Skimpole bowled.

Figgins was seen to drop his bat, and jump into the air, clear of the ground, and come down with both hands pressed to his ear.

Skimpole blinked at him.
 "Is the wicket down, Merry?" he asked.
 "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom Merry. "No, the wicket isn't; Figgys is!"

"Ow!" roared Figgins. "The villain! The dangerous lunatic! He's brained me! Ow!"

"What has happened?" asked Skimpole.
 Blake threw himself in the grass and kicked his heels in hysterics. The juniors roared with glee.

Figgins roared with rage.
 He had stopped that ball with his left ear, and it was fortunate that it was only thrown with the force that dwelt in Skimpole's thin, weedy arm.

Figgins clasped his ear and roared, and the juniors shrieked.

"The ass!" howled Figgins. "Here, let me get at him!" He picked up his bat and made a wild rush at Skimpole.
 "Really, Figgins——"

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Tom Merry grasped the scientific bowler by the arm, and dragged him off the pitch. He could hardly manage to speak from laughing, but he managed to gasp a warning.

"Run, you ass! Figgins is going to slay you!"

"Run, you chump!"

"Wun like anythin'!"

"But I haven't batted yet!"

"Run, you ass!"

"Besides, I am sure that the ball cannot have struck Figgins! If he thinks that it has, it is a pure effect of the imagination!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Run, you duffer!"

It was too late!

The vengeful Figgins was on the spot. He jammed the end of the bat at Skimpole, and Skimpole roared.

"Ow! Leave off! Yarooch! Stop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take that!" bawled Figgins. "And that! You've brained me! And that! My ear's singing! And that! And that!"

"Yarooch! Yow! Yoop!"

Skimpole staggered away as the bat lunged at him again and again, every lunge ringing on his bony limbs.

He ran at last—rather late; but it was better late than never. He broke into a wild trot, and dashed off the cricket field, and Figgins dashed after him, still prodding at him furiously.

They disappeared together.
 "Ha, ha, ha" roared Tom Merry.

The juniors yelled and shrieked till they were quite winded. They were weeping with mirth as they moved off after Figgins and Skimpole.

"Oh dear!" said Blake, wiping his eyes. "Skimmy is good as a Determinist, but I think as a cricketer that he fairly brings down the house!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we haven't seen him bat," said Monty Lowther regretfully. "It would be a sight to see Skimpole bat—a sight for gods and men and little fishes!"

And they wept once more at the idea as they went in. A gasping heap of humanity was discovered on the School House stairs. The glimmer of a big pair of spectacles showed that it was Skimpole.

"Feeling all right?" asked Blake cheerily.

"Oh! Ow! No. I am not feeling all right, Blake. I am feeling very sore indeed," said Skimpole. "Figgins chased me all the way to the School House, prodding me from behind with his bat in the most brutal manner."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can see nothing whatever amusing in it. I am considerably hurt."

"Imagination, my boy," said Blake blandly. "The effects of the imagination are wonderful. I don't suppose you're feeling any pain at all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, Blake——"

"For instance, if I were to jump on you now——"

Skimpole squirmed off the stair, and beat a hurried retreat. And the chums of the School House, with a fresh yell of laughter, went off to their studies.

CHAPTER 8.

The Collaborators!

"DON'T you kids make a row——"

"Look here, Wally——"

"You're beginning already——"

"Look here——"

"Oh, do shut up, Gatty! We've got to put it gently to the Fourth Form duffers," said D'Arcy minor. "Don't you jaw!"

"I'll——"

"Ring off! Here we are! Don't you jaw, either, Gibby!"

"I'll——"

"That's right; shut up!" said Wally D'Arcy. "Here we are!"

The chums of the Third Form stopped at the door of Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage. Jameson and Gibson were looking a little wrathful. Wally was their acknowledged leader, but at the same time they couldn't help regarding him as rather autocratic.

Wally tapped at the door of Study No. 6 with great respect. That alone showed that he had some favour to seek in Blake's study.

He opened the door.

"Better keep that rotten mongrel out!" murmured Jameson, as Pongo sniffed in at the heels of his master.

Wally turned a freezing glare upon his chums.
 "That what?" he asked.

"That, mongrel!" said Jameson.
 "If you're looking for a thick ear, Jimmy—"
 "Who's opening that blessed door?" came Blake's voice.
 "Whoever it is, come in or stay out, and shut the door after you!"

"Right you are, Blake!"
 Wally came in, followed by Pongo and Jameson and Curly Gibson. There were quite a number of fellows in Study No. 6.

The four chums of the Fourth were there, doing the honours to the Terrible Three and Kangaroo, all the juniors drinking cocoa and eating biscuits.

The crockery was of the most surprising variety, not one cup resembled another in pattern, and few resembling the saucers.

But the cocoa was good, and that, after all, was the chief thing.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry, looking round at the Third Formers. "What the dickens are these inky kids here for? Guests of yours, Blake?"

Jack Blake snorted.

"Rather not!"

"What do you want, Wally?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass upon his hopeful young brother.

"A word or two," said Wally. "I've seen a notice up in the Hall about a special number of the school paper."

"Oh dear! And you've got your contribution, of course!" groaned Tom Merry.

"We've come to talk on that subject," said Wally.

"I—Down, Pongo!"

"Kick that beast out!" roared Blake.

Pongo was pulling at the tablecloth with his teeth, to the great danger of the crockery that reposed upon it.

"Oh, Pongo's all right!" said Wally cheerfully. "Now we were thinking that the school paper has been rather running to seed lately—"

"Were you weally, deah boy?"

"Yes; and we thought that some real strong contributions from a new source would be just the thing to buck it up."

"Go hon!"

"So we've decided that the double number will give us a good chance to do the paper a good turn," said Wally.

"Haven't we, kids?"

"Just so," agreed Gibson.

"We're thinking of coll, coll, coll— What the dickens is the word?"

"Collarorating," said Jameson.

"That's it—collarorating, over a ripping serial," said Wally. "The three of us are going into it together, and it will be a jolly good thing."

"Ripping!"

"Spiffing!"

"So we're willing to let you have it," said Wally. "We shan't expect payment."

"Go hon!"

"It will be worth anything to the paper, you know. You must have noticed how dry and rotten the 'Weekly' has been for some time."

"Weally, Wally—"

"What with Blake's poetic serials, and Gussy's fashion articles—"

"Why, you young bounder—"

"You cheeky young wascal—"

"And Herries' awful piffle on the subject of feeding dogs—"

"You young ass!"

"And Digby's dreary stuff about cricket. Fat lot he knows about cricket—"

"My hat!" ejaculated Digby. "I—I—"

"And Manners' awful photography stuff—"

"Why, you—you—"

"And Lowther's comic column. 'Nuff to make a tomb-stone weep!"

"You impudent young rascal!"

"And Tom Merry's leading articles! Awful stuff—"

"Why—"

"And Figgins' piffle, and Kerr's rot, and Fatty Wynn's bosh, the paper is coming to a pretty pass," said Wally.

The juniors who were responsible for the editorial management of "Tom Merry's Weekly," glared in silence at their cheerful critic.

"Go it, Wally!" said Jameson.

"On the ball!" chuckled Curly Gibson.

"Well, we thought we'd buck the paper up for you," said Wally.

"What do you say to the offer, Tom Merry?"

"Rats!"

"Eh?"

"Rats! R-A-T-S! Rats!" said Tom Merry. "And now you can get out, stay out, and keep your little friends out!"

(Continued on the next page.)



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

DISCOVERY I

Teacher: "Tommy Brown, come and point out America on this map."

Tommy (after some hesitation): "Here it is, sir."

Teacher: "Quite right! Now, John Jones, tell me who discovered America."

John Jones: "Why, Tommy Brown, of course!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Slawko Batycky, 468, Garlies Street, Winnipeg, Man., Canada.

TOUGH GUY I

"Yes, sir, I gave it to him straight. He's twice as big as me, and he's got muscles of iron, and a constitution like an ox, but all the same I told him just what I thought of him."

"Didn't he hit you?"

"What, that big idiot? I should say not! As soon as he started to answer me back I hung up the receiver and stalked off!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Catt, High Street, Burwash, Sussex.

HE BIT IT!

Harry: "Did you hear about our old friend Wally swallowing a teaspoon?"

Larry: "Great Scott, no! How's he getting on?"

Harry: "He can't stir!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Stanley Greer, 9, Ludwig Road, Anfield, Liverpool, 4.

GOOD 'ELF!

"Now," said the teacher, "what is an elf?"

Up sprang the "bright boy" of the class.

"I know," he exclaimed. "It's a person wot you can't see wot comes to the 'ouse at Christmas time. You know—the chap my dad means when he lifts his glass and says, 'Ere's 'elf!'"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to T. Blackburn, 6, Mitchell Road, Durban, S. Africa.

SOME LEAK!

The bus was crossing Westminster Bridge, and the American passenger gazed out upon the River Thames with considerable scorn.

"Say, conductor," said he, "what's that little stream out there?"

With well-feigned concern the conductor looked out over the river.

"Oh darn," he answered, "our radiator must have been leaking again!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Kenneth Ward, 557, Bromford Lane, Washwood Heath, Birmingham.

LAZYBONES!

Foreman: "Look here, Jones, why is it that you only carry one plank at a time when all the other fellows carry two?"

Jones: "Can't think, guv'nor—unless it's that they're too bloomin' lazy to go to the stores for 'em twice!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Baker, "Penmon," High Street, Tunstall, Staffs.

SAUCY!

Master: "What happened after Napoleon mustered his army?"

Pupil: "He peppered the enemy and took the city by assault (a salt)!"

Master: "Take five hundred lines for being so saucy!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Jemmett, 42, Bennett Park, Blackheath, London, S.E.3.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,379.

"Look here——"

"Nuff contributions in hand already for two double numbers," said Tom Merry. "We can't have the regular staff crowded out by outside contributors. And I really don't think that Third Form stuff would improve the paper very much."

"That's your fatheadedness, of course!"

"Thanks!"

"Not at all. Now that serial I was speaking of is a ripping one. It deals with life in the coal mines in Yorkshire——"

"What ever do you know about coal mines in my county?" demanded Blake.

Wally sniffed.

"Not much, of course. I suppose an author isn't supposed to know everything."

"Have you ever been in a coal mine?"

"Of course, I haven't! You might as well ask a chap if he's been up in an aeroplane when he writes an aeroplane story. Jules Verne wrote a ripping good story about some chaps going to the moon. Do you think he'd ever been there himself?"

"Got you there!" grinned Jameson.

"Besides, the paper will circulate among the fellows here. And how many of them have been down a coal mine?" demanded Wally.

Blake grinned.

"Well, I'm sorry," said Tom Merry. "The paper's full up, and there's no room for the coal mine—I mean the serial. Good-evening!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But look here," urged Wally. "As editor, you might be looking out for a chance to improve the tone of the paper."

"Ha, ha, ha! That's what I'm doing."

"What you want on the staff is young blood, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Our serial will wake things up—especially the realistic description of the flooding of the mine when the North Sea breaks in, and they pump it out——"

"My hat! They'd want a lot of pumping!"

"They don't pump out the North Sea, fathead! They——"

"Pity we haven't room."

"Look here, you could make room by leaving out some of the rot!"

"I say you're an ass——"

Tom Merry shook his head.

Wally looked at the editorial staff grimly. But there was evidently nothing to be got by argument. Tom Merry & Co. were simply blind to the great advantage of having that splendid coal-mining serial in the school paper.

"Oh, all right!" said Wally, with a grunt. "Come on, you kids. Pongo, Pongo! Where's that blessed dog?"

"Gnawing the curtains!" grinned Jameson.

"My only Aunt Jane! So he is! Pongo, Pongo!"

And Wally whistled shrilly to his dog. Jack Blake jumped up and grasped a cricket stump. Pongo probably guessed what that meant, for he left off worrying the curtain, and scuttled out of Study No. 6 after his master.

CHAPTER 9.

All Offers Refused!

TOM MERRY was down early the next morning. Between the Special Double Number of the "Weekly" and the coming cricket match with the Grammarians he had plenty to think of.

It was a bright, cheery summer's morning, and all Nature seemed to call out to Tom Merry to take his bat and go down to the cricket ground.

But he nobly resisted the call. He had his duties as an editor to think of.

He went into Room No. 2 on the ground floor before breakfast, while the other fellows were going down to early cricket or an early swim in the rising sunlight.

Monty Lowther and Manners looked in at the door as he took his seat at the editorial table, which was covered with papers and cuttings of all sorts.

"Coming out?" asked Manners.

"You haven't forgotten this afternoon, I suppose?" added Lowther.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Better come and have a knock at the ball," said Lowther persuasively.

"Can't be did."

"Why not?"

"I've got to get the paper ready."

"Rats!"

"Blow the paper!"

"The special double number's coming out on Saturday, and it will have to be in the printer's hands on Thursday at the latest. To-morrow is Wednesday."

"Yes, but——"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,379.

"It's a lovely morning!"

"Can't be helped. Buzz off, unless you like to wire in here!"

"No fear!"

And Monty Lowther and Manners buzzed off.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked in a few minutes later.

"Coming down to the cwicket, Tom Mewwy?"

"No."

"There's the Gwammawian match this aftahnoon, you know."

"I know."

"Bettah come and have a little pwactice. I'll bowl to you, so that you will have a weally tough job to keep the sticks up!"

"Thanks! But I'm an editor this morning and a cricketer this afternoon. Can't do everything at once."

"Yaas, that's vewy twue. If you like, Tom Mewwy, I will captain the side against the Gwammah School this aftahnoon, and you can devote the whole day to your editowial labaha."

"Thank you for nothing!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"You're too generous, Gussy," said Tom Merry gravely. "I couldn't possibly take advantage of it, you know."

"Yaas, but——"

"So buzz off! You're the third duffer that's interrupted me!"

"Undah the cires——"

"Shut the door!"

And Tom Merry began to write. D'Arcy gave him an expressive look through his monocle, and went out and shut the door with unnecessary vigour.

"Hallo, kid!"

Five minutes had passed, and the cheerful hallo through the open window rang through the editorial room, and Tom Merry started and dropped a blot.

He glared at the window.

"Hallo, ass! What are you yelling about?"

Jack Blake grinned in at the window.

He had a cricketing cap and blazer on, and a bat in his hand. He glanced at the table littered with paper.

"Hard at work?" he asked.

"Yes, ass!"

"Well, go it! It's the early bird that's caught by the worm, as the proverb says. By the way, the Grammarian match is this afternoon."

"I know that, ass!"

"You might need a little practice."

"I shall have a go at it presently."

"If you like. I suppose you're pretty busy——"

"Awfully!"

"Heaps to do to get the paper in to the printer before Thursday night?"

"Heaps. No time to waste in talk, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Well, I don't mind if I help you——"

"All right. Come and do some of this copying out. I always have to copy out Dig's fist for the printer. I——"

"I don't mean that!" said Blake hastily. "I mean that if you like I'll take the trouble of the match off your shoulders this afternoon. I'll captain the side against the Grammar School!"

"Thanks!"

"You accept?"

"Not much."

"It would save you a lot of trouble," said Blake persuasively. "You could stand out of the match entirely, and I'll find another chap for eleventh man."

"Go hon!"

"It's a good offer!"

"Rats!"

"Well, I'm off!"

"You must be, to think that you could captain a side against Gordon Gay & Co.!" Tom Merry remarked cheerfully. "Off your rocker!"

"Why, you ass——"

"Oh, get along!"

"You chump!"

"I'm busy!"

Jack Blake grinned, and marched away with his bat across his shoulder. Tom Merry turned to his editorial labours again.

Kangaroo passed the window and looked in.

"Hallo!" he called in.

Tom Merry looked up, with a tired expression.

"Hallo!" he said. "Another duffer!"

"Hard at work, eh?"

"Yes—no time for jaw!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I hear that you'll have a big job getting that paper into the printer's hands by Thursday night!"

"Yes—especially if chumps come and talk to me while I'm at work!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Well, look here, if you'd like a chap to

(Continued on page 14.)

MORE NOTES AND NEWS FROM—



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

HALLO, chums! The other day I was talking to a fellow who has been a reader of the GEM for many years, and he told me that he has never found a character to equal his favourite, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. Judging from the letters you fellows write me, a good many more of you share the same opinion, and will be delighted to know that in next week's story of the chums of St. Jim's, entitled

"THE MAROONED SCHOOL!"

the one-time Outsider plays a big part.

There is certainly something likeable about the Outsider. He's so very human—full of good points and bad ones, like the rest of us. Next week's yarn tells the story of his greatest adventure,

"THE SCHOOL FROM 'DOWN UNDER'!"

Further chapters in our gripping serial of adventure and sport at St. Frank's appear next week. The St. Frank's chums hire an air-liner to take them to the match, but the Aussies are not going to be left behind if they can help it, and—but that's telling you the story, and I know you'll prefer to find out what happens for yourself.

A SPLENDID OFFER!

If you would like to have a beautifully illustrated 48-page catalogue of free gifts for boys, write at once (a post card will do) to Libby, McNeill, and Libby, Ltd., S. D. Dept. 8, Great Tower Street, London, E.C.3. Among the gifts offered are Cameras, Tents and Camping Outfits, Torches, Rucksacks, Sheath Knives, etc. Mention GEM when writing; this is all you have to do to get a catalogue which will delight you and put you in the way of receiving a fine free gift.

"DUNCE" IS A COMPLIMENT!

Did you know that, strictly speaking, it's a compliment to be called a "dunce"? But only, I'm afraid, if the speaker is someone who knows where the word comes from. The term was first obtained from the name of John Duns Scotus, who lived between A.D. 1265 and 1308 and was one of the very cleverest men of his time. He founded a famous School of Learning, but his rivals, who refused to believe in his teachings, called his followers fools, and later gave them the nickname, "dunces." Tell your schoolmaster that, next time he calls you a dunce!

USEFUL!

Talking of school reminds me of a Hindu Johnny I heard about the other day. His name is Avadhani, and his claim to fame is his amazing memory. You can read him a thousand sentences from a book at normal reading speed, and when you've finished he is able to repeat the passage from memory word for word. He can also memorise any poem in any language after hearing it once. How would you like a memory like that when prep-time comes along?

POCKET THIS POCKET-KNIFE!

They do queer things in America. The latest eccentricity is that of a New York cutler who has made a pocket-knife no less than six feet seven inches long. You'd need a bigger pocket than Carners's to keep that little gadget about you! Another very novel penknife is one made in Sheffield which has no less than 370 blades. A new blade is added every year to this amazing knife.

FORCED DOWN BY GNATS!

Have you ever noticed how the radiators of some cars are simply covered with the bodies of gnats, moths and flies that have been caught by the car and killed? The same thing sometimes happens to the radiators of aeroplanes, and just recently a flyer passing over a hot, arid desert in America flew into such a dense cloud of gnats that their dead bodies choked the air passages in his machine's radiator, and he had to land and clear away the "corpses"! Flyers in Africa have had similar trouble with locusts, which sometimes gather in such vast masses that they form a cloud between the earth and the sun, and turn day into night. Another natural menace of the skies is the condor, of the South American Andes, which fearlessly disputes the right of way with airmen flying through its territory. On more than one occasion a condor has so badly damaged a plane that the machine has crashed!

CAUGHT—BUT NOT OUT!

A friend of mine tells me of an amusing incident in a cricket match he was watching recently. The game was between Chiswick and the M.C.C., and a player named the Hon. Christopher Lowther—no relation of the one and only Monty!—was batting against a fast M.C.C. bowler. Seeing a ball coming down on the leg-stump, the batsman made an attempt to "glide" it to the boundary. But just at the crucial moment a sparrow flew into the path of the bat and got the mighty swipe that was intended for the ball. Square-leg, fielding close in, saw a round, dark object hurtling through the air at him, and dived and caught it. Judge his amazement when he found himself clutching a crumpled, dead sparrow!

A REAL BLUE MOON!

A GEM reader—J. A. Cheney, of Hammersmith, London—has just returned from a holiday in the Black Mountains of Germany, where he tells me he saw a blue moon. Now he wants to know how such a phenomenon could have occurred. The explanation given by scientists is that a cloud of dust gets between the moon and the earth, and the light of the moon shining through this takes on an unusual tinge. So when we talk about things happening "once in a blue moon" we're not so absurd as we sound! Readers of the GEM who live in Ireland may have seen the famous blue moon that appeared there in the summer of 1927.

THE EDITOR.

wants a pen pal interested in swimming; age 12-14; Africa, France, and Italy.

Miss Helen Perry, Box 547, Revelstoke, British Columbia, Canada, wants girl correspondents; age 15-18.

Francis Cowley, Manifold Street, Camperdown, Victoria, Australia, wants pen friends; age 18-20; anywhere outside Australia and New Zealand—with the exception of Rotorua.

John Forrester, 49, Crossgate, Cupar, Fife, Scotland, wants correspondents; age 17-18.

Miss Marie McCormack, 783, Ste. Genevieve Street, Three Rivers, Province Quebec, Canada, wants girl correspondents interested in sports, dancing, snapshots, and books; age 18-20.

Keith S. Webb, 46, Ray Road, Epping, New South Wales, Australia, wants a correspondent in England or France; films, books, and tennis; age 13-15.

E. Massingham, c/o Mr. F. Chapman, Moss Vale, N.S.W., Australia, wants correspondents in Yorkshire; age 18-20; Redcar and Marske especially—anyone of the name of Massingham or Hyde.

Richard V. Rainsford, 34, Alsop Street, Semaphore, South Australia, wants correspondents interested in gold-fish-keeping, ferns, and the water plants necessary.

Miss Joan Metcalfe, Agg. Barkly Street, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia, wants girl correspondents; age 15-17.

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

Miss Margaret Garrahan, 7117a, De Normanville Street, Montreal, Canada, wants to hear from Miss Sheila Ashwell, formerly of Umblo, Durban, Natal.

Harold Holmes, 1, Stanley Street, Long Eaton, Notts, wants to hear from a reader in Russia; age 16-18; photography, cinematography, politics.

Miss Enid Colbon, 46, Hawthorn Way, Cambridge, wants a girl correspondent interested in films to exchange news and pictures; U.S.A.—Los Angeles or New York; age 14-16.

Stanley Dracass, 21, Athenaeum Road, Whetstone, London, N.20, wants pen pals in Africa and South Seas; age 14-15; swimming, birds, and cycling.

G. Savins, 89, Cambridge Road, Kilburn, London, N.W.8,

WALLY'S WILY WHEEZE!

(Continued from page 12.)

captain the team this afternoon and save your time—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't mind if I oblige you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Kangaroo.

"You're the third chump who's made the offer!"

"Oh!"

"And I haven't accepted!"

"Oh!"

"And I'm not going to!"

"Rats!"

"If you meet any other duffer coming along with a generous offer like that tell him to pass the window without poking his head in, will you?"

Noble laughed.

"All right. But look here, you could take your innings, you know. I'd make you last man in. I wouldn't leave you out of the side."

"You're too good, old chap. But I'm not going to impose on your kindness. Good-bye!"

Kangaroo laughed, and walked on.

Tom Merry resumed his work. He was allowed ten minutes in peace, and then the door opened, and a bumpy forehead and a pair of big spectacles glimmered in.

Tom Merry groaned. It was Skimpole of the Shell, and he had the beaming smile of benevolence upon his face which showed that he was going to do a good deed, and would be quite impossible to be got rid of.

"Ah, I thought I should find you here, Tom Merry!" he said, blinking at the worried editor. "I hear you will be very busy to-day."

"Yes!" groaned Tom Merry.

"And as there is the Rylcombe cricket match this afternoon I have come to make you an offer—"

"Stop!" roared Tom Merry.

"Eh?"

"Shut up!"

"But I've come to make you—"

"Get out!"

"An offer—"

"Travel!"

"To save your time—"

"Outside!"

"Really, Tom Merry—"

Tom Merry jumped up and seized the inkpot.

"Now, then, are you going?"

"Yes, certainly. But—"

"Go, then!"

"But—"

Tom Merry's hand swept up with the inkpot in it. Skimpole dodged out of the door and closed it behind him hurriedly. He went along the passage, blinking in great amazement, and gasped as Gore met him and grasped him by the shoulder.

"Anything up, Skimmy?" asked Gore.

"Yes. Oh, I am quite—really quite astounded! Do you think Tom Merry is quite right in his head, Gore?"

"Ha, ha, ha! What's happened?"

"Why, as he was so busy with the paper, and has a match on this afternoon, I went in to offer to help him copy out the sheets, and—"

"And—"

"And he would not even listen to me, but compelled me to retire hastily—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He has a lot of copying to do, and I thought he would be glad of my

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No. 23. Vol. 1 (New Series).

FOURTH TEST MATCH

TOM MERRY & CO. v. HARRY NOBLE'S XI.

Wally D'Arcy at the Microphone

Fourth Test between Tom Merry's XI and Harry Noble's team of "Aussies" from rival schools! A win for the "Aussies" will level scores at two all, leaving the deciding match to be played. Otherwise, the "rubber" is St. Jim's!

Tricky pitch—there has been a night shower. Merry is tossing with Noble—Merry wins, elects to bat, and opens with Blake. Noble goes on to bowl—Squiff of Greyfriars can be seen moving about at point. Something in the wind? Merry watches Noble's first deliveries closely. Squiff keeps on the move. Now he is running—running like the wind—hands outstretched, to scoop the ball as it rebounds from Merry's bat and dismiss the St. Jim's captain for a "duck"!

A collapse? It looks like it. Here they come—and there they go! Kangaroo's bowling has got them "rattled" for once. Squiff fields at "silly" point, running all manner of risks, seemingly regardless of the fact that a hard slog might lay him out. Saints are all out—would you believe it?—for 23 runs!

Now the "Aussies" are batting. A steady start. They've nothing to worry about so long as Fatty Wynn doesn't find a "spot" and skittle them as they skittled the Saints. Noble and Squiff between them knock off more than the Saints' total—and still they go on! Squiff gives a difficult chance in the long field—but difficult chances are Figgins' speciality. Squiff is out! Conroy of Rookwood wields a pretty bat, combining style with force. He takes toll to the tune of 30 runs ere Fatty Wynn clean bowls him. Can't get rid of Derwent of Highfields, either. Gay and the Woottons of Rylcombe Grammar School are stickers, too—pity the scorer! No individual triumphs, but the whole side

does well. A nice solid total of 120 at the close!

Facing a heavy deficit, how would you play? Caution? That's the ticket—but excessive caution encourages the bowlers, and a wicket or two may start them going through the side again for practically nothing! Blake plays carefully, stolid Yorkshire, prepared to remain for a week if need be! Merry gets his eye in, then lashes out. A couple of smart fours puts a different expression on the bowlers' faces. Not going to have all their own way this time. Merry follows up with a "six"—he didn't enjoy netting a "duck" at first venture, and he wants his revenge. He's getting it—hold that one, if you can!

Phew, Squiff has held it—Merry leaves, value for an exciting score of runs! Now, what? Needs a strong bat and a cool head to stop the rot. Who? Gussy—my major! He adjusts his monocle before taking his first ball—immaculate, imperturbable as ever! Whoopee, his duck's broken! A dazzling "four," straight along the carpet to the boundary! Another! I've made jokes about that late cut of Gus', but it's a wow now, it's a wow! Gus is inclined to be a bit too elegant sometimes. Nothing of that now. He knows it's a case of do or die. Runs flash from his bat. Thirty—forty—fifty. Batsmen at the other end stay a while, hardly score. Gus goes on, like a house on fire. Oh, good man, sir—great stuff! Gussy has topped his hundred—last man's wicket crashes—Saints all out 162. D'Arcy 101 not out!

"Aussies," needing only 66 to win, begin to hit. Kangaroo and Squiff are slamming them to the ropes! Kangy goes, but Conroy bangs them just as hard in his place. Gay backs up. Fatty Wynn bowls his hardest, and mows down six batsmen—but the 50 is passed, and an open-shouldered effort by Squiff brings victory to the "Aussies" in one of the hardest fought games on record!

Flying Squad Report

SQUAD "ARREST" PAGEANT GHOST

St. Jim's juniors were approached by Rylcombe Pageant Committee to present an incident in history of St. Jim's—the siege of the medieval fortress which once stood near by. Legend that the ghost of Sir Broderick Pulteney, killed centuries ago on the field now given over to the pageant, might appear as it had done in broad daylight at past Rylcombe Pageants laughed at by Squad. Chief Air Marshal Merry, acting part of William the Norman, led his men into Rylcombe Wood to burst therefrom and attack improvised "castle." As Merry gave order to charge, a figure in white armour walked slowly from opposite side of field between the opposing forces. Merry repeated his command to charge, and led his men in determined rush. The "ghost" knight was seized by Flying Squad "Normans," and revealed as Gordon Gay, leader of the Grammarians!

St. Jim's News Reel

"What's the best thing for a crick in the back after playing cricket?" asks a reader. Crick it!

"I'm not sure if my new bat is good enough to make a century!" writes Gore. "Test" it!

A cricketer was sent to gaol. He refused to be "bailed out," because he said that was not a legitimate way of dismissing a batsman!

An old cricketer refused to have all his teeth out. He said he must keep three stumps, or he would feel completely "bowled out"!

"O'Reilly, Larwood!" said Bradman. "You Woodfull the Oldfield and McCabe give a catch!" "Oh, really, Larwood!" said Bradman. "You would fool the whole field and make Abe give a catch!"

aboard. And rivers are And dhow hundred po birds every tramp was off with a c steed the ho carpet and t a driver of a sheek of 2, that he was An old actor Wayland E Hamlet," h ham to leav lame?" in tongue zigh school doct answered W A cousin of for giving a the sands. trying to p says that c were super cept pitch a smah-and-but kept in sea f I note on hiking. the mount appeared o beer supply Crooks, we their mone Jim's Boy bees in a f Hay-stings mended. S in the after A friend o had an un throwing f to take th Eastern ru posing of sword swa Nice job— an "in Tell, ta

Regarding marks: Feed 7 success, but lies Knott find a bett

Solution The bat game can and one c riar white Blankshire good catch

Merry's Weekly



Week Ending July 21st, 1934.

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MONTY
LOWTHER
CALLING

Hallo, everybody!
Better give me a wide
berth, as the fat pas-
senger said, stepping

aboard. An American tourist says Arabian
rivers are navigated by all kinds of craft.
And dhow! It is estimated that seven
hundred pounds of bread are thrown to the
birds every day in this country. Crumbs! A
tramp was arrested in Rylcombe for running
off with a carpet. Apparently he misunder-
stood the housewife when she handed him the
carpet and told him to beat it! We heard of
a driver of a tramcar who was uninjured by a
shock of 2,000 volts. The explanation was
that he was not a conductor. Think it out!
An old actor was boasting to a friend at the
Wayland Hippodrome. "When I played
Hamlet," he said, "the audience took half an
hour to leave the theatre!" "Why, was he
lame?" inquired the friend. "Put your
tongue right out, D'Arcy minor!" said the
school doctor to young Wally. "Can't, sir!"
answered Wally. "It's fastened at the back!"
A cousin of Gore's at Brightsea was arrested
for giving an exhibition of all-in wrestling on
the sands. He explained that he was merely
trying to put up a deck chair! Mr. Linton
says that on his cruise last vac deck games
were suspended during stormy weather. Ex-
cept pitch and toss! And did you hear of the
smash-and-grab raider who went on holiday,
but kept in practice by throwing stones in the
sea? I note we are to have some wireless talks
on hiking. More rambling statements! As
the mountaineer said when his pal dis-
appeared over the precipice with the ginger-
beer supply: "He's left me high and dry!"
Crooks, we hear, are invariably lavish with
their money. But careful of coppers! St.
Jim's Boy Scouts recently fought a swarm of
bees in a farmer's rick. Another "Battle of
July-stings!" Midnight dentists are de-
manded. Sporting dentists could play cricket
in the afternoon, drawing stumps all night!
A friend of Dame Taggles in Rylcombe who
had an undesirable caller got rid of him by
throwing flowers at him. She didn't trouble
to take them out of the pots, either! An
Eastern ruler has solved the problem of dis-
posing of his old razor blades. He has a
sword swallower permanently on his staff.
Nice job—if you have a "sharp" appetite,
an "iron" constitution!

Well, take care of yourselves. . . .

Regarding a new Test batsman, Lowther
remarks: "He Ames high but Woolley
need? He has been what you Macaulay
success, but in all Verity the Root of the matter
lies Knott in our Wisden." Wyatt empt to
find a better Mann?!"

Solution of Last Week's Puzzle

The batsman is not out, and before the
game can proceed the Blankshire XI. must
send one of their TWELVE fieldsmen (shown
in white circles) back to the pavilion!
Blankshire hoped to get away with it—
good catch, isn't it? Try it on your friends!

LOOK
THROUGH
OUR
TELEVISORTOBY
THE PAGE
SPEAKING

I expect a good many people would think
the lot of a page dull and uninteresting. I
run dozens of errands every day, and I don't
mind admitting I'm sometimes pretty nearly
run off my bloomie feet! Apart from answer-
ing the bell whenever anybody rings, I've
quite a number of jobs to do in the kitchen;
and the matron, Mrs. Mimms, though a good
sort, believes in everybody doing their bit—
and me doing the rest!

Not that my life is just one long round of
toil—not by a long chalk! I'm working with
a view to better things, and while I'm a page
boy I keep my eyes open. Oh, yes! You'd be
surprised at the difference in the way some
of the young gentlemen treat me! Master
Kildare, the captain of the school, is always
polite, and never expects the page to run
himself off his legs and be back with an
answer before he has started—like Knox does,
for instance!

Then, among the masters, you'll find Mr.
Railton, Housemaster of the School House, as
perfect a gentleman as you could wish to meet.
On the other hand, when Mr. Ratcliff of the
New House calls me, I take care to mind my
P's and Q's—old Ratcliff being a regular
Tartar, and no mistake!

Of the juniors, I think Master Merry is a
really fine fellow; Master D'Arcy is another.
They don't look down on a page boy just
because he cleans shoes and does odd jobs.
They judge a man on his merits, which is what
I hope the world will do one day, when I begin
to make my mark in it!

Tom Merry has asked me to say what I do
in my spare time. You may be surprised to
know that I study engineering. One day I'm
going to do something at it. I don't think I
shall ever settle down like old Taggles to sit
in a porter's lodge and report fellows for
missing call-over—though it's a quiet life, if
you care for it!

I know if I had Taggles' job I'd make it hot
for some of those chaps who make themselves
unpleasant. I'd show 'em it pays to be polite!

CALIBAN'S
PUZZLE
CORNER

Here is a drawing
of the front of an ex-
press passenger train.
The artist has made
one quite palpable
error.

Now, you railway
enthusiasts, can you
find it?

assistance," said Skimpole, blinking. "It
is very strange, is it not?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I expect there's some
mistake."

"I'm afraid Tom Merry is not quite
right in his head," said Skimpole sadly.
"He has shown weakness in that direction
before. He thinks Determinism is all
piffle, and he walked away yesterday
when I began to explain— Oh, really,
Gore—"

But Gore was walking away, too.

CHAPTER 10.

Skimpole Proves Things!

TOM MERRY was looking cheerful
enough when he turned up in the
Shell class-room that morning for
first lesson.

He had worked hard, and the special
number was well on its way.

Tom Merry had no doubt that he would
be able to get it into the printer's hands
on Thursday if he stuck to the work, and
made his staff stick to it.

But for the present he dismissed it from
his mind.

The cricket match with Rylcombe
Grammar School was the next important
item on the programme, and Tom Merry
gave his thoughts to that—somewhat to
the detriment of his lessons.

The Shell were glad when the welcome
signal of dismissal came at last, and they
were free for the rest of the day, with the
exception of calling-over and evening
prep.

They poured out into the quadrangle in
a happy crowd.

The weather was perfect for cricket,
and they fully expected to beat the
Grammarians hollow.

"We always have licked them!" Monty
Lowther remarked. "Except—except on the
occasions when they have licked us, of
course."

"Hardly worth mentioning," said
Manners.

"Only they've got a stronger team now
than of old," said Tom Merry, with a
shake of the head. "The three Wallabies
—Gordon Gay and the two Woottons—are
terrors!"

"They are," remarked Kangaroo.
"Australians play cricket just as ducks
take to the water—you've seen me do it."

"Is it cricket you play?" asked Monty
Lowther, with an air of polite interest.

"Eh?"
"When you're at the wicket I've some-
times fancied it was a new kind of Indian
club drill you were doing."

"Why, you ass—"

"Peace!" said Tom Merry, pushing his
arm between the two juniors, for
Kangaroo was looking decidedly warlike.

"Order! Shut up!"

"The silly ass said—"

"Ring off!"

"But look here—"

"Silence in court. You can jaw after
the match."

"Yaas, wathah, deah boys," said Arthur
Augustus D'Arcy. "Pway keep the peace
now, you know. I wegard you as a pair
of asses! I—"

"Tom Merry—"

It was Skimpole. The hero of the
Shell nodded to him with a sickly grin.
There were times when Skimpole seemed,
as Blake remarked, altogether too much
and too many.

"Hallo, Skimmy! Hadn't you better go
and finish your article for the special
number?"

"I have finished it."

"Suppose you go and plan out another
for the next number?"

"Ahem! I was going to make you an
offer—"

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"Thanks! I've had all the offers I want."
 "But as you have a cricket match on hand——"
 "Go and eat coke, Skimmy!"
 "I only want to be obliging——"
 "Do you really want to do me a favour, Skimmy?"
 "Certainly!"
 "You don't mind taking a little trouble?"
 "Not at all."
 "Or spending all the time between now and dinner on the matter?"

"No. As a sincere Determinist I am always willing to oblige."

"Then—but it would be asking too much——"

"Not at all——"

"Then—will you walk round the School House——"

"Yes."

"Till you come to the chapel railings——"

"Yes."

"And sit on the top rail——"

"Sit on the top rail?"

"Yes."

"Very well; and what then?" asked Skimpole, in surprise.

"Stay there!"

"Eh?"

"Till the dinner-bell goes."

"But——"

"That's all——"

"Really, Tom Merry——"

"Thank you very much, Skimmy! I'll never forget this!" said Tom Merry gravely, and he walked away with Manners and Lowther towards the junior cricket ground.

Skimpole blinked in a dazed way at the other fellows. They were all grinning, but the amateur Determinist of St. Jim's could not see anything to grin at.

"I have had fears for Tom Merry's sanity before," he remarked. "This seems to be a clear proof that he is not right in his head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is no laughing matter, my dear friends," said Skimpole, with a shake of the head. "Of course, we cannot blame Tom Merry for his insanity. It is wholly due to his heredity and environment. Doubtless far back among the monkey-like progenitors of the human race there was some ape-like creature that had a strain of madness in its brain, and that taint has been transmitted to Tom Merry during the countless millions of years which have passed during the development of the human race. We should pity Tom Merry——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And regard his case as another proof of the wonderful truths of Determinism. That man derives his descent from an inferior creature——"

"Well, that's a nice way to speak of your governor, Skimmy, I must say!" remarked Jack Blake, with a grave wag of the head.

"I was not speaking of one's immediate parents, Blake, but of the remote ancestors from whom we all derive our descent. That man is the outcome of the evolution of a monkey-like creature is proved by his very appearance. Take me——"

"Not as a gift!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not mean in that sense, Blake. Take me as an example, I mean. Cannot you trace in my form, in my features, a strong resemblance to the monkey tribe?" demanded Skimpole enthusiastically. "My dear friends, the truths of evolution glare at you from my eyes, and speak to you with my lips. Cannot you see the very slight modifications that have taken place since I——"

"Now you speak of it, I can," said Blake, while the others roared. "It's often struck me that you bear a great resemblance to a monkey——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And a considerable resemblance to a donkey——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And some likeness to a parrot——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, it's evolution," said Blake. "As Skimpole's evolution isn't very far advanced, you can actually see the process going on. It's marvellous!"

"Really, Blake——"

"The only question is, whether Skimmy oughtn't to be kept in a cage," said Blake. "Is he far advanced enough to be let out loose?"

"Really——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look at him," continued Blake. "How can anyone believe that the great discoveries of science are all rot, when here's Skimpole as a living proof? Look at his features—pure monkey! Listen to his jabber—pure parrot! Remark his brains—pure donkey! Why——"

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"I refuse to continue an absurd discussion," said Skimpole, with dignity. "Your inferior intellects are not capable of realising the great truths of Evolution and Determinism. I decline——"

"My dear Skimmy, you've converted us!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The link is no longer missing, Blake. Here we have him, gentlemen—Skimmy is the living proof! Observe his features——"

But Skimpole did not wait for his features to be observed. He walked away, followed by a roar of laughter from the juniors.

CHAPTER 11.

Gordon Gay's Eleven!

GORDON GAY of the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School jumped out of the charabanc before the School House at St. Jim's. Gordon Gay was looking in very fine form, and so were all his men—Jack Wootton and Harry Wootton and Carpenter, Frank Monk and Lane and Carboy, and the rest. But there was no doubt that the three Wallabies were the strength of the team, though Frank Monk & Co. were very good seconds. Gordon Gay was a marvel for a junior cricketer, and none were more eager to admit the fact than Frank Monk, his rival in the Grammar School, or Tom Merry, his rival at St. Jim's. Tom Merry shook hands with the Grammarian junior skipper cordially.

"Glad to see you!" he said. "You're looking fit!"

"Feeling fit, too!" grinned Gordon Gay. "Lovely weather—good team—great game! What more could a chap want?"

"Nothing!"

"Bai Jove, you're quite wight, Gay, deah boy! I twust you will put up a wippin' game, as you did the othah day when I watched you playin' Gweryfwiahs!"

"We'll do our best, D'Arcy," said Gordon Gay gravely. "But, of course, you mustn't expect too much of us this time. You see, we're playing against you."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And then we had only Harry Wharton and his lot against us."

"Quite wight!"

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

"Weally, deah boy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Gay—— Oh, so you were wottin', eh? I wegard you——"

"Gussy," said Jack Blake solemnly, "I hope you are not going to be rude to a visitor!"

"Bai Jove!"

"You must excuse him, you Grammar School chaps," said Blake. "It's the fault of his training—or else his heredity and environment, as Skimpole would say."

"Weally, Blake——"

"Hallo, here you are!" exclaimed Figgins of the New House, coming up with Kerr and Wynn, in shining whites. "Glad to see you. What ripping weather for a game!"

"You are intewwuptin' me, Figgins!"

"Good! I suppose it's time to start——"

"Weally, Figgins——"

"I've seen to the arrangements about tea," said Fatty Wynn, with a cheerful smile. "It will be a very decent spread!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Undah the cires——"

"Come on, you fellows!"

Arthur Augustus had simply no chance to finish his remarks. Skimpole dodged up to Tom Merry as the latter reached the cricket pavilion with Gordon Gay.

"Buzz off now, Skimmy, old man! I'm busy!"

"But I was going——"

"Go, then."

"I mean, I was going to offer——"

"Bunk!"

"To offer——"

Blake and Herries seized Skimpole before he could say any more, and ran him forcibly off the ground. They rushed him round the pavilion, and left him in a heap on the grass, blinking and gasping for breath, in a state of great astonishment.

A crowd of juniors were gathering round the fields.

Among them the Third-Form were very strongly represented. Wally & Co. came up to the pavilion arm-in-arm, with the nerve and assurance of Fifth Formers at least, Pongo running at his master's heels.

"Tom Merry, old man!" said Wally.

Tom Merry glared at the cheerful fag with all the dignity of a member of the Shell and junior captain.

"Don't bother me, kid!"

"I want to speak to you."

"Buzz off!"
 "It's important!"
 "Oh, rats! What is it—quick?"
 "We feel that the Third Form ought to be represented in the Double Number!"
 "Hang the Double Number!"
 "So if you like," continued Wally imperturbably—"if you like, I'll do a special article describing the cricket match."

"Bosh!"
 "I can sling it out all right, you know, and we'll fill up with a page of it. I'll sit in the pavilion and take notes for the purpose."
 "Oh, rats!"
 "You don't refuse?"
 "My dear kid, the 'Weekly' is crammed from end to end. And the Third Form aren't admitted anyway. Can't have kids scribbling all sorts of rot in a serious school paper."

Wally turned pink.
 "Well, you cheeky ass—"
 "Now, buzz off, Wally, and don't bother—we're going to play cricket."

"Look here—"
 "Travel, you fags!" yelled half a dozen voices.
 Wally cast a look of defiance round.
 "Go and eat coke!" he said. "Look here, we're going to have space—and a fair amount of space in that Double Number."

"Full up, kid!"
 "Then leave out some of the bosh!"
 "Buzz off! Bunk! Get!"
 "Poof!"
 "Kick them out!" said Manners.

And half a dozen sturdy cricketers helped Wally & Co. off the scene. Somewhat hustled and hustled, the heroes of the Third stopped at a safe distance, and looked wrathfully at one another.

"What do you think of that for cheek?" demanded Wally, adjusting his collar, which was even less tidy than usual.

"Rotten!" said Jameson.
 "Are we going to stand it?"
 "No fear!"
 "Are we going to be left out of that Double Number?"

"No!"
 "Blessed if I see how we're to get into it," said Curly Gibson. "Tom Merry will make it up for press himself, and send it to the printer. We can't get into it without his permission, I suppose."

Wally snorted.
 "You leave it to me."
 "But how—"
 "I'm going to have an article on this cricket match in the number," said Wally determinedly, "and if they won't take it, then instead of a flattering article, they can have a slating one."
 "Ha, ha, ha! But how—"
 "Blessed if I can see how, either," said Jameson.

"That's because you've not got my brains, my son," said Wally patronisingly. "Come along, and let's watch the match, and I'll explain."

The match was beginning now.

Tom Merry had won the toss, and the St. Jim's juniors were the first to bat. Jack Blake and Monty Lowther went out to open the innings, and Gordon Gay led his merry men out to field.

The crowd was thickening round the ropes now.

There was certain to be a good game of cricket between two teams like Tom Merry's and Gordon Gay's, and it would be well worth watching. Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, strolled down with Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, to see the St. Jim's innings open.

It opened well for St. Jim's. Blake and Lowther made the runs fast, and the score was at 20 when Lowther was caught out by Gordon Gay. Figgins took his place, and went on scoring.

Most of the home batsmen were in good form, and most of them knocked

up a goodly number of runs. Fatty Wynn had the misfortune to be dismissed for a duck's egg; but then Fatty was excellent as a bowler, and it was not as a bat that Tom Merry relied on him. Fatty's turn would come in the Grammarians' innings, when his comrades were looking to him for many wickets.

Gordon Gay played up well as a bowler. Besides dismissing Fatty Wynn for a blank, he sent out Kerr for 8, and Manners for 2.

But the runs mounted up at a fair average speed, till Tom Merry came in and joined Figgins at the wicket.

Between them the two juniors made the fur fly.

The score topped the hundred, and still they went on batting merrily.

"Jolly good!" said Fatty Wynn, looking on, to Kerr. "Figgins is playing a grand game this afternoon, Kerr, old chap."

"Grand!" agreed Kerr.
 "It will make a jolly good item for the article in the 'Weekly.'"

"Jolly good!"
 "Looks as if the innings will be a jolly long one," Fatty Wynn remarked. "We're going to have tea after the first innings."

"Just so!"
 "Looks like being protracted, I think."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Kerr, whose eyes never left the players.

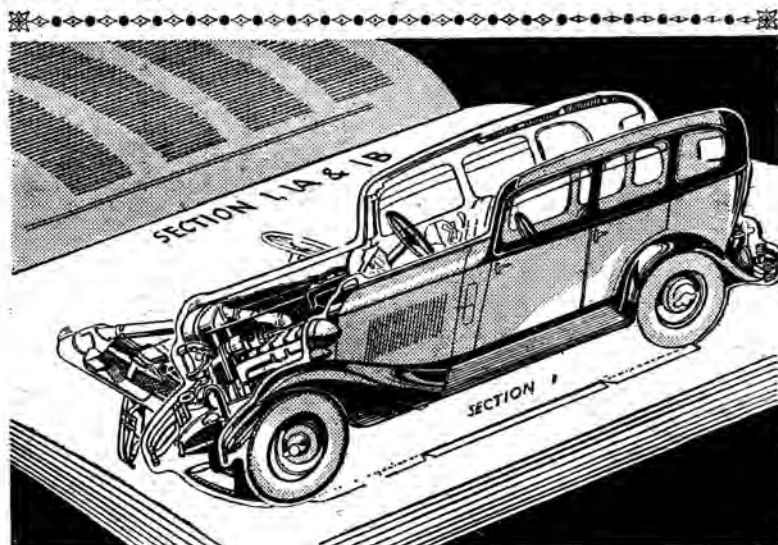
"I think perhaps I ought to go and have something—"

"Rot!"
 "Just a tart or two—"

"Bosh!"
 "I'm feeling awfully peckish. I get very hungry at this time of the year," said Fatty Wynn pathetically. "I really think I ought to go over to the tuckshop, and—"

Kerr took a firm grasp on his plump chum's arm.

"You jolly well won't, Fatty!"



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"Now, look here——"
 "Rats!"
 "I'm hungry."
 "Wait for tea."
 "You'll make me wish that Gordon Gay will take Tom Merry's wicket, Kerr."
 "Poof!"
 "I'd better have a snack, or I shan't be in condition to bowl," argued Fatty Wynn.
 "You're not going to have any snack," said Kerr mercilessly. "You're going to wait for tea. Then you're going to have some stale brown bread-and-butter and weak tea, and nothing else!"
 "Look here, Kerr——"
 "We're not going to chuck the game away for you to feed on tarts, Fatty. You can have all the tarts you want after the match."
 "Yes, but——"
 "That's settled!"
 "Leggo my arm, old chap."
 "Shan't!"
 "I—I want to take a little stroll," urged Fatty Wynn.
 Kerr chuckled.
 "Yes—towards the tuckshop!"
 "Well, you see——"
 "You can stay here."
 Fatty Wynn grunted. He glanced at the game, and he glanced towards the distant shop. He grunted again, and tried to jerk his arm away. But the Scots junior held him fast.
 "I say, Kerr, old man, leggo."
 "Rubbish!"
 "Look here! I'm going——"
 "You're not," said Kerr calmly.

"Leggo my arm."
 "I won't!"
 "Look here! I—I'll jolly well punch your head if you don't let go!"
 "Punch away!" said Kerr cheerfully. "I'm not going to let go!"
 And Fatty Wynn resigned himself to his fate.

CHAPTER 12.

Fatty Wynn is Looked After!

FIGGINS and Tom Merry were putting in a great innings.

The Grammarians had plenty of leather-hunting to do, and some of them were looking very red and panting as the innings continued.

The score stood at 120, and still the merry batsmen played on, and the ball made its long journeys, and the fieldsmen panted after it.

"My hat!" said Gordon Gay. "This won't do!"

"Rotten!" Frank Monk agreed. "Why don't you bowl them out?"

Gay sniffed.

"It's not so easy."

"Oh, go it, old fellow!"

"Well, I'll try another over," said Gordon Gay, and his lips set determinedly.

Gordon Gay put all he knew into that over.

But the wicket did not fall to his bowling—it was due to the fielding of Frank Monk that Tom Merry's stumps went down.

Monk made a difficult catch in the slips, and there was a cheer. The St. Jim's crowd were quite keen enough sportsmen to cheer a successful enemy.

"How's that?" roared the Grammarians.

"Out!"

Tom Merry carried out his bat. An ovation greeted him when he returned to the pavilion. He had put 40 runs on the score himself, and his comrades were proud of him.

"Next man in," said Tom Merry. "You're the chap, Kangy."

The Cornstalk junior began to bat in a way that showed that he was in earnest. Two boundaries, a 2, and a 3 started the innings for him, giving him 13 for the over.

"Another of 'em!" said Gordon Gay.

And Kangaroo put 20 on the score before he was stumped.

"Last man in!"

The innings was drawing to an end.

But it was not finished yet, as Figgins and the last man in continued the fight in good style, and added run after run.

"Bravo!" roared Kerr, as Figgins put on 3.

"Hurrah!" said Fatty Wynn. "I say, Kerr, I'm jolly hungry."

"Bravo!"

"Hip-pip!"

"We shall have a jolly late tea——"

"Blow tea! Hurrah!"

"Hullo!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "There's the last!"

The wicket had gone down to a smart return from Jack Wootton and St. Jim's were all out. But it was not Figgins' wicket. Figgins was "not out."

Figgins and Kerr were always Fatty Wynn's inseparable chums; but they were more inseparable at the tea-table. They meant to look after Fatty Wynn. If he was once given his head, as Blake expressed it, in his horsey way, he would never stop, and he would be more fit to be carried home to bed than to bowl against fellows like the Grammarians.

It was necessary to watch him, and Figgins and Kerr performed that duty with noble fidelity.

They almost counted the mouthfuls that Fatty Wynn ate, and they saw that he had no pastry, cake, and no new bread. Fatty Wynn grunted and remonstrated in vain. His chums were simply determined to keep him fit.

Tea over, the Grammarians prepared for their innings.

"We've got to get one hundred and sixty-one," Gordon Gay remarked to his comrades. "Of course, we're going to get 'em. But buck up and do your level best."

"What-ho!" said Jack Wootton.

And Jack Wootton and Frank Monk went on to open the innings.

Tom Merry put his men to field and tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn.

"Now, then, Fatty!" he remarked.

Fatty Wynn grinned as his hand closed over the round red ball.

When he had a cricket ball in his hand Fatty was all himself, and he forgot even the fact that he was hungry.

He trotted to his place cheerfully.

"Now look out for something good," said Pratt of the New House gleefully.



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Slowly, with his eyes fixed on the round dot in the air, Tom Merry backed to the boundary. Then, when the boundary ropes were almost touching him, he leapt into the air, and took the ball in his right hand. It was a great catch—a catch that gave victory to St. Jim's!

And Fatty Wynn did not belie the expectations of his comrades.

He took his little run and turned himself half over, and the ball came down the pitch like a shell.

Frank Monk was a second too late.

The ball curled in under his bat, and there was a click of a falling wicket. The bails were on the ground.

Monk gave a low whistle.

"How's that?" yelled all St. Jim's, in delight.

"Out!"

"Good old Fatty!"

"Go it!"

"Man in!" said Gordon Gay, unmoved.

And Harry Wootton went in to join his brother.

Harry was feeling and looking very fit, and he stood at the wicket as if he meant to stay there for a considerable time. He did mean to, as a matter of fact, but it did not work out like that.

Harry Wootton proposed and Fatty Wynn disposed, so to speak. The Welsh junior took his little run and swept himself over like a catherine-wheel, and—

Clack!

Wootton stared blankly at a wrecked wicket.

"Hurrah!" roared St. Jim's.

And a ripple of hand-clapping went round the field. Harry Wootton carried out his bat, with a long face. He vainly tried to keep unconcerned.

Third man in was Carpenter. He came down to the wicket with something of a swagger, being of a rather swanky sort. He meant to show both St. Jim's and the Grammar School that batting was batting when he batted.

He swaggered to the wicket and took up his stand, and occupied it for exactly the length of time that it took Fatty Wynn to deliver the third ball of the over. Then—

Crash!

Two stumps went down, and the bails, and Carpenter turned crimson and bit his lip. The crowd did not need the umpire's laconic "Out!"

They roared.

"Bravo, Wynn!"

"Hurrah!"

"The hat trick, by George!"

"Good old Fatty!"

"Gallant little Wales!"

Figgins left his place in the long field and rushed up to Fatty Wynn and slapped him on the shoulder with unbounded enthusiasm. The fat Fourth Former roared.

"Ow! Chuck it! What are you up to?"

"Bravo! Ripping! Gorgeous!" gasped Figgins.

"Ow! You ass!"

"Fatty, old man, you shall have as many tarts as you can eat after the match," said Figgins in the warmth of his enthusiasm.

Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened.

"Good! I'll remind you of that, Figgy!"

"Get back, Figgy!" called out Tom Merry.

And Figgins went back to his place. The next man was coming in, and he was Gordon Gay. Gay had intended to come in later, but he decided to appear sooner to stop the rot in the Grammarian batting, if he could.

"It's Gay next," said Monty Lowther from short slip.

Tom Merry nodded, and waved his men away deep. He knew the kind of hitting he might expect from the Cornstalk.

And he was not disappointed. Gordon Gay stood up to Fatty Wynn's bowling, and began to score off it, too.

The over finished with six runs to the credit of Gordon Gay, and the Grammarians breathed again. They had begun to fear that the innings was to be a walk-over for the St. Jim's bowlers.

Jack Blake bowled the second over, and Wootton was caught out in the slips, Monty Lowther accounting for the ball.

Four down for six!

The Grammarians looked blue.

But a change came over the spirit of their dream when Gordon Gay had a fair chance with the bowling. While Fatty Wynn was bowling Gay was very careful; but he was too strong for the other bowlers, and he hit out mightily.

He sent the leather here, there, and everywhere, and the St. Jim's fieldsmen began to take more exercise than they liked.

Lane had joined the Cornstalk at the wickets, and Lane could be relied upon to put in any amount of steady stonewalling when necessary, and to play a wholly unselfish game for the sake of the side.

And that was what Lane did now.

He backed up Gordon Gay splendidly, stealing a run every now and then, but leaving most of the run-getting to the Wallaby.

The Grammarian score, which had started so badly, joined up to 50 by the time Lane was caught out by Figgins. Gordon Gay was still at the wicket, batting away as well as ever.

CHAPTER 13.

Well Caught!

THE St. Jim's bowlers had exhausted themselves against Gordon Gay's wicket without being able to damage it.

The Australian junior batted wonderfully. Even Fatty Wynn could make no impression upon him.

Fatty Wynn was beginning to look a little grim.

The affair had resolved itself into a duel between him and Gordon Gay, for it was abundantly clear by this time that no other bowler in the St. Jim's ranks could dream of touching the wicket, and Gay gave no chances to the fieldsmen.

The score crept up steadily.

Fatty Wynn's bowling gave the batsmen plenty of trouble, and Gay's scoring off the Welsh junior was slight. But when the Grammarian was dealing with the other bowlers he made the fur fly.

One hundred runs for six wickets—that was the total now, and Gordon Gay was still at the sticks, batting away as cheerfully as ever.

His comrades cheered and clapped him loudly from the pavilion, and so did the St. Jim's crowd, for that matter.

It really looked as if he would never be moved, and would remain at the wickets to be not out at the finish.

Carboy came in to join him.

Carboy was a rather slim youth, and affected an elegant attitude at the wicket. But he had his eyes open, and was on the watch for chances.

He knocked up 10 runs for himself before he was stumped. Then Hanks came in, and kept his end up pretty well, while Gordon Gay did the scoring. Run after run was added.

One hundred and twenty, 130, 140 for seven wickets, 150 for eight.

And Gordon Gay was not gone yet.

Tom Merry whistled softly.

"Tough beast, Tom Merry," said Fatty Wynn, as the field crossed over, with a nod towards Gordon Gay, who was looking as cool as a cucumber. "I don't believe I can shift him."

"You've done jolly well, anyway, Fatty."

"He's good," said Fatty Wynn; "but I think we'll clear the others out, and leave him not out with less than 160."

"Bai Jove! I hope so."

"Yaas, wathah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "This is getting decidedly exciting. They only want eleven runs to win."

"They shan't get them."

The next batsman came in to join Gordon Gay. Fatty Wynn was bowling to his wicket, and at the third ball that wicket fell for a duck's-egg.

Then the words rang through the crowd—"Last man in!"

The last Grammarian batsman came in to join Gordon Gay.

The excitement was intense now.

The Grammar School wanted ten to tie, and eleven to win, and if Gordon Gay once had the bowling there wasn't much doubt that they would get them.

But five more balls of the over remained to be delivered against O'Donnell, and though O'Donnell was a good bat, he was not anything like a match for Fatty Wynn. Fatty Wynn understood how much depended upon that over, and he put all he knew into the bowling.

Gordon Gay composed his face, with a fervent, inward longing that O'Donnell would prove equal to the strain. If O'Donnell's wicket fell, Rylcombe Grammar School's last chance was gone. Gordon Gay would be "not out," but that would be a poor comfort.

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Micky O'Donnell understood how much depended on him, too, and he looked a little flustered as he stood at his wicket to receive Fatty Wynn's bowling.

But he was well on his guard. Fatty Wynn sent down a lightning ball, and more by luck than anything else. O'Donnell saved his stumps, the ball glancing off his bat, and very nearly giving short slip a catch.

Then O'Donnell pulled himself together.

He set himself doggedly to defend his wicket, and save himself through the over, without a thought of scoring runs. That could safely be left to Gordon Gay, if he succeeded in keeping the game alive till the Australian had a chance to score.

Fatty Wynn sent down ball after ball.

He had performed the hat-trick at the beginning of the innings against three batsmen as strong as O'Donnell, or stronger. But he could not take O'Donnell's wicket now. The Irish lad defended himself gallantly, and stopped every ball in turn. There was a breathless hush as Fatty Wynn delivered the last ball of the over. But O'Donnell stopped it dead on the crease; and there was a gasp of relief from the Grammarians.

"We're saved," said Frank Monk.

"Splendid," said Jack Wootton, rubbing his hands. "Just you bouncers wait till Gordon Gay begins to score, that's all."

The field crossed over.

The bowling was to Gordon Gay now, and Jack Blake went on to bowl. Blake was good, though not up to Fatty Wynn's form, but for that over, at least, Fatty Wynn was off. Blake did his best, and so did Gordon Gay. The first ball from Blake was cut away to the boundary, and it gave the batsmen four without the trouble of moving from their wickets.

"Hurrah!" roared the Grammarians.

They had cause to rejoice.

Only seven more wanted to win, and Gordon Gay batting. The Grammarians had all made up their minds that the game was over bar shouting.

Tom Merry's lips were set hard.

He did not expect the bowling to take Gordon Gay's wicket, but he was on the alert for the slightest chance of a catch.

Down came the ball again, and away it went, and another boundary was scored for Gordon Gay, bringing the Grammar School score up to a total of 158.

Three wanted to win!

"Bravo, Gay!"

"Go it!"

"Hurrah for the Grammar School!"

Gordon Gay stood quietly and composedly at the wicket. He meant to get those other three. He knew that O'Donnell would never live through another over at the wicket. He had only survived by luck, as it was. If Gay did not score the runs that were wanted they would never be scored.

Gay waited for the ball to come down.

Blake, with a grim face, bowled—what he felt would be the last ball. Gay stood ready to swipe, and he swiped.

Click!

Bat met ball, and away went the leather—away—away—where? The batsmen were running, running at top speed.

Where was the ball? Was it a boundary?

There was a roar.

"Merry! Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry was seen to run like the wind, then to stop, then to turn, then to back away, slowly—slowly—his eyes on a round dot in the air.

Back—and back—to the ropes that confined the field of play—till they were almost touching him. Then he leapt into the air, and took the ball in his right hand just when it looked like crossing the boundary line for six! It was a great catch!

There was a wild roar from St. Jim's.

"Oh, well caught!"

Tom Merry's eyes sparkled. He sent up the ball, straight as a die, and caught it again in his palm as it came down.

St. Jim's had won!

On the verge of victory, Gordon Gay had been caught out, and it was O'Donnell who was "not out." It was a stroke of good fortune—and good play—for St. Jim's, and the hardest of luck for the Grammarians.

But Gordon Gay took it well.

"That was a jolly good catch, Tom Merry!" he said.

"And a lucky one for us!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I must congratulate you on your innings, Gay. It was really wippin'!"

An opinion with which the rest of St. Jim's cordially agreed.

CHAPTER 14.

Wally's Dodge!

WALLY was looking out for Tom Merry when the Shell came down the next morning. Tom Merry made straight for the editorial room, and the hero of the Third followed him there.

"I've got something to say to you, Tom Merry," he remarked.

"Buck up, then!" said the editor of "Tom Merry's Weekly," briefly. "I've got to get the Special Number ready."

"I've sketched out an article describing the cricket match yesterday—"

"Good! Now you can burn it."

"Can't you find room in the paper?"

"Sorry, kid—no room."

"It will only take a page."

"Sorry; no room."

"Leave out Blake's rubbish."

"Impossible!"

"Or your own piffle—"

"Look here—"

"Mind, my article's going in!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"I don't think!" he remarked. And he went into the editorial room and closed the door.

Wally bestowed a sounding kick on the door, and went away in wrath.

Jameson and Gibson met him at the end of the passage.

"Well, it was his last chance," said Jameson darkly.

"He's only got himself to thank for the consequences."

Wally nodded.

"Yes, rather! If all St. Jim's giggle at him and his Special Number, it's his own fault! I've done my best for him!"

And the heroes of the Third departed whispering. There was evidently some dark plot among the fags.

Tom Merry was very satisfied when he knocked off for breakfast.

"How goes the Special Number, kid?" asked Monty Lowther, as he met his chum going towards the dining-room.

"Finished."

"Good! I was thinking of coming to lend you a hand."

Tom Merry sniffed.

"Well, you're too jolly late! It's done—quite ready for the press, and we shall get it into the printer's hands to-day. As it's so late, there won't be time for us to have the proofs to correct, but that won't matter. Mr. Tiper is a careful printer, and we can rely on him. Besides, it would be no joke to have to read over the proofs of a Special Double Number, as a matter of fact, especially as I get such a jolly lot of assistance from the staff."

"Tom Merry!"

It was Wally again. Tom Merry looked at him with a smile.

"Well, kid, what do you want?"

"I'll take the Special Number down to the printer's for you, if you like," said Wally affably. "I'm going down to Mother Murphy's after morning lessons."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Thanks, Wally, but there might be an accident!"

"I should be awfully careful, of course!"

"Still, we won't bother you!"

"Cheeky young rascal!" said Monty Lowther, as Wally walked away with his hands in his pockets. "More likely than not to play some jape with the copy."

"Exactly what I was thinking. The Third Form have collaborated in an article for the 'Weekly,' and I haven't been able to find room for it," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Better keep an eye on the stuff, then," said Lowther.

"It's all right. I've locked the door of the room, and I've got the key in my pocket."

And the chums of the Shell went in to breakfast.

When the bell rang for the first lesson Wally went into the Third Form room with a thoughtful frown on his face.

He glanced several times at Mr. Selby, the Form-master. The master of the Third was not a nice-tempered man, and Wally did not quite know how to tackle him. The hero of the Third had to get out of the Form-room during lessons to carry out his plan, and Mr. Selby had to be managed somehow.

"How are we going to work it, Wally?" whispered Jameson.

"Oh, I'll manage it all right!"

"But—"

"Shut up! Selby's looking this way!"

"D'Arcy minor," said the Form-master, with his unpleasant, rasping tone, "I think you were speaking to Jameson!"

"Ye-es, sir," said Wally.

"You will take fifty lines, D'Arcy minor!"

"Fifty lines, sir?"

"Yes!" snapped Mr. Selby.

"What for, sir?"

"For talking in class!"

"If you please, sir—"

"Silence, D'Arcy minor!"

"Certainly, sir! But, if you please—"

"Silence!"

"Oh, rather, sir!" said Wally, with perfect coolness.

"But I say—"

"Another word," said Mr. Selby, as the class began to grin—"another word, D'Arcy minor, and I will send you in to the Head to be caned for impertinence!"

"Yes, sir! But, really—"

"Come out here!" thundered Mr. Selby.

"I, sir?"

"Yes; at once!"

With well-feigned reluctance Wally stepped out before the class. Mr. Selby wrote a note at his desk with a hand that trembled with anger.

Jameson and Gibson watched their chum in silent admiration.

They knew that Wally had deliberately "cheeked" Mr. Selby, in order to be sent in to the Head, braving a caning for the purpose of carrying out his scheme.

Mr. Selby had no suspicion of anything of the sort. He handed the note to Wally, with a brow like thunder.

"You will present this to the Head!"

"Ye-es, sir!"

"And I trust that the caning you will receive will make you more amenable to discipline in class, D'Arcy minor."

"I hope so, sir," said Wally demurely.

Mr. Selby almost choked. He waved his hand towards the door.

"Go! Go at once!"

"Yes, sir."

And Wally left the class-room. He did not proceed in the direction of the Sixth Form Room, where the Head was, however. After a glance round, he scuttled away swiftly and cautiously towards No. 2 Room—the editorial office of "Tom Merry's Weekly."

He reached the door, and tried it, and snorted softly as he found that it was locked.

"Rotters!" he murmured.

Then he grinned. It was really hardly to be expected

(Continued on the next page.)

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that Tom Merry would leave the valuable copy of the "Weekly" at the mercy of a marauder.

But Wally was not easily beaten.

He scuttled out of the School House, and in a couple of minutes he was outside the window of the editorial room.

The window was closed, and the catch was fastened; but a simple catch like that was nothing to the ingenious scamp of the Third. He climbed on the window-sill, thrust the blade of his pocket-knife between the loose sashes, and forced back the catch.

Then he threw up the lower sash and jumped in.

"My only Aunt Jane!" he murmured. "What would Tom Merry say if he knew?"

Fortunately for the enterprising Wally, Tom Merry did not know.

On the table lay a packet nicely wrapped up in brown paper, and tied with string—the "copy" of the "Weekly" Special Number, all ready to be taken down to the local printer's.

Wally opened it carefully, and came to the page upon which the leading article appeared. That article, naturally, was chiefly occupied with cricket, and with the match that had been played at St. Jim's the day before.

Wally calmly detached the page, and inserted in its place a page in his own writing. He made a few corrections with pencil, with his eye on Tom Merry's article, and then refastened the pages together.

Then he wrapped up the precious copy, and left the parcel exactly as it was before he entered the room. Tom Merry's leader-page he crumpled up in his pocket. Then he left the room by the window.

The most unpleasant part of the business remained to be done—he had to present Mr. Selby's note to the Head, and face the music.

But Wally did not shirk it. He made his way to the Sixth Form Room, where the Head was busy with the Sixth, and none too pleased at being interrupted.

Dr. Holmes glanced at Mr. Selby's note, and caned D'Arcy minor, and the scamp of the Third endured it like a Spartan.

Jameson and Curly Gibson looked at him eagerly when he re-entered the Form-room. As soon as Mr. Selby's eye was off them, Jameson whispered eagerly.

"Is it all right?"

And Wally grinned gleefully as he replied:

"Right as rain!"

CHAPTER 15.

A Surprise for Tom Merry!

SATURDAY morning arrived at last, and the juniors were looking forward to the afternoon with as much eagerness as if a big cricket match had been on.

Fortunately, it was a Special Number of the "Weekly," and not a cricket match, that signalled the day, for it began to rain towards noon.

Some of the juniors who had intended to walk down and meet the carrier on the road gave up the idea as soon as they came out after morning lessons and found the raindrops dashing down on the steps of the School House.

"No cricket to-day!" said Blake, with a grunt.

"Bai Jove! Wathah not!"

"Lucky we've got the Double Number to read," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "It couldn't come at a more opportune time."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"See what it is to have a really capable editor," Tom Merry remarked modestly.

"Why, you ass, you never foresaw that it would rain to-day!"

"Never mind what I foresaw. The Double Number is the right thing at the right moment, and—"

"Hallo! There's Taggy at the door."

"He's got a parcel."

"It's the 'Weekly.'"

The juniors crowded round Taggles, Tom Merry tossed the porter a shilling, and then cut the string of the bulky parcel, as all trooped to the Common-room.

"Here you are!" exclaimed Tom Merry, as he tore away the paper and the finished copies of the "Weekly" came in sight.

The juniors were soon in the possession of their copies of the "Weekly."

They sat down to read.

Then there was more silence and order in the Common-room than there generally was when it was so well filled, for every fellow was eager to look through the paper and to read his own performance over.

Tom Merry turned to the leading article.

Wally, Jameson, and Gibson were standing just outside the door of the lecture-room; they had followed Taggles there when they saw him with the carrier's parcel.

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They were ready to dodge.

"Look!" murmured Wally, as he saw an expression of amazement creep over Tom Merry's face. "He's got on to it!"

There were exclamations from various parts of the room.

"What the—"

"How the—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Tom Merry, you ass, what have you been putting in this piffle for?"

"I—I—" gasped Tom Merry.

Figgins jumped up and thrust his paper under the unhappy editor's nose.

"Look at that!" he roared.

"I—I—"

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Blake, who had been reading his own poetic effusions and had not seen the leader page yet.

"Look here!" roared Figgins.

"What is it? Read it out!"

"Listen, then! Collar that chump first!"

"Hands off!" gasped Tom Merry. "Hold on! I—"

But the angry juniors piled on him, and half a dozen of them, deaf to his expostulations sat on him and kept him there while Figgins began to read out the offending article.

"Our readers may congratulate themselves upon the success which has attended the efforts of the Junior Cricket Club to play the giddy goat. All the team played up nobly, and there is no doubt that, outside Colney Hatch and Bedlam, such a team was never seen before. Tom Merry, as chief duffer, was superb, and Figgins was a good second. Spectators remarked among other things the splendid development of—ahem—"

"Go on, Figgy."

"Oh, I'll miss that line—it's only rot."

"I'll read it out," said Lowther, jerking the paper from the long-limbed New House junior. "Here goes. Spectators remarked among other things the splendid development of Figgins' calves, which looked like fine specimens of pipe-stems."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And it was generally agreed that Gussy's chivvy was worth tuppence a day to scare crows with—"

"Weally, you know—"

"Figgins and Fatty Wynn ran each other close, but it was admitted that Fatty Wynn was as broad as Figgins was long."

"It should be mentioned that Lowther—ahem—"

"Go on."

"It's only rot! I—"

"I'll read it out, then," said Blake. "It should be mentioned that Lowther had curled his favourite curl with the curling-tongs, and it looked almost natural—"

"That's enough! Let's bump the cheeky ass!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hold on!" roared Tom Merry. "I tell you—"

Bump!

"Listen to me—"

Bump!

"I—I—"

Bump!

"Ow!"

Bump!

They released Tom Merry at last, after such a bumping as has seldom been administered.

"You—you asses!" gasped Tom Merry. "I—I didn't write that piffle. It has been shoved into the paper since I left it. Somebody must have got at it at the printer's."

"Eh?"

"Or else Blake did it as he was going—"

"The packet wasn't opened in our hands," said Blake warmly.

"Then it was got at before you took it!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Wally, unable to contain himself any longer. "Perhaps you wish you'd shoved in my article now. Tom Merry?"

"What?"

"I told you I'd have an article in the 'Weekly.' Ha, ha, ha!"

"What—Wally—collar him!"

The juniors made a rush at the Third Formers, but Wally & Co. were already darting from the room.

"After them!" panted Tom Merry.

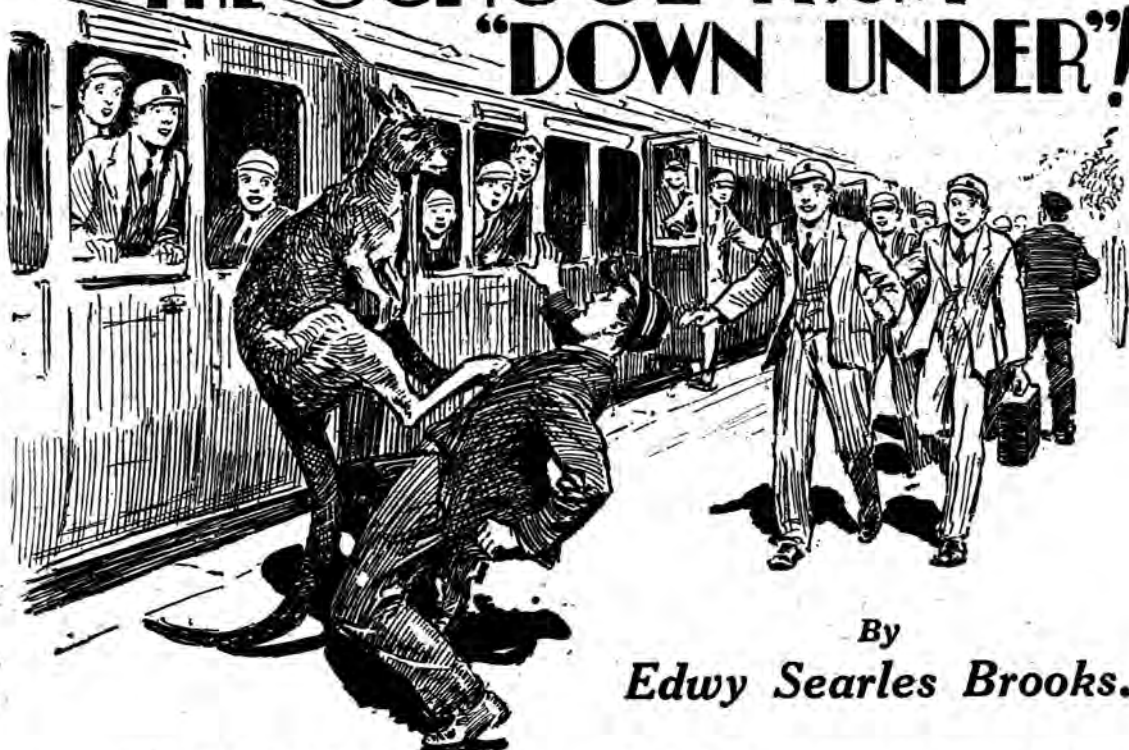
And the juniors dashed in pursuit. But Wally & Co. had reached the Third Form Room, and the key turned in the lock as the avengers arrived, panting.

In the Third Form Room, Wally and the fags roared with laughter. And even the chums of the Fourth and the Shell had to admit that Wally had scored with Tom Merry's Special Number!

THE END.

MORE BIG THRILLS AND BIG SURPRISES IN THESE GRIPPING CHAPTERS OF—

THE SCHOOL FROM "DOWN UNDER!"



By
Edwy Searles Brooks.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

A contingent of schoolboys from Australia take over temporarily the River House School, near St. Frank's, to continue their studies under Australian masters. The juniors of St. Frank's challenge the "Aussies" to a cricket match, and win an exciting game by eleven runs. After the game, Jerry Dodd, an Australian St. Frank's junior, discovers that Jim Sayers, one of the Aussies, is an impostor, because Jerry had known the real Jim "down under." He keeps his discovery from everybody—even from the impostor. Later, Nipper & Co. try to jape their rivals, who turn the joke on the St. Frank's fellows, and leave Handforth and Buster Boots bound and gagged near a river. Sayers discovers the victims, and maliciously ties Handforth upside down to a branch, which breaks off into the river, carrying Handforth with it.

By Whose Hand?

HANDFORTH, horrified by the result of his desperate struggle for liberty, was carried deeply under the river's surface by the treacherous undercurrent; and he was held there by the sprawling tree branch which had broken completely away from the parent trunk.

He was roped, too, so it was even impossible for him to make a fight for his life. Desperate, indeed, was his plight.

Too late, he realised that he had been mad to struggle. Rescue would soon have come. But now he deemed himself beyond rescue. The current had got him, it was sucking him deeper and deeper—and between him and the surface lay that sodden mass of twig and foliage.

Roped as he was, he struggled madly. His lungs, already at bursting point, could stand the strain no longer. He exhaled, and then he gulped the river water into his lungs—his senses swam—he was choking, suffocating! It was the end!

Meanwhile, through the dusk of the summer's evening ran Nipper & Co., exasperated and indignant, but with no knowledge of the tragic disaster. Reaching the river bank, they found a gagged and bound figure on the grass. They knew it at once for John Busterfield Boots, and Boots was struggling like a madman.

"Here, steady!" panted Nipper. "You'll hurt yourself, Buster! No need to get into a frenzy—"

"Where's Handforth?" yelled Travers.

He was staring out across the river; he had seen some ominous ripples—yes, and bubbles. He dreaded to put his thoughts into words.

At the same time, Nipper instinctively felt there was, indeed, need for desperate hurry. He dragged the gag from Boots' mouth, and the helpless Fourth Former gave vent to a sound which was half-yell half-scream.

"Handy—in river—branch broke!" he gulped. "He's bound—helpless! For Heaven's sake, be quick!"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Nipper, sick with apprehension.

One glance at the tree showed him the great white gash where the branch had broken off. He stared across the river, and he, too, saw bubbles swirling to the surface. Without hesitation, the Remove skipper plunged in. This was no time to ask questions. Action, instant action, was necessary.

Quickly as Nipper dived, Vivian Travers struck the water almost at the same moment. Together they swam with rapid strokes towards mid-stream—though they both knew that the Stowe, here, was both deep and dangerous. Neither had wasted time in shedding any clothing, but both were strong swimmers, and they made good progress.

In their rear they heard other splashes; for more of the St. Frank's juniors were plunging in.

Nipper, leading by a foot or so, saw a disturbance on the surface just ahead of him. Some twigs and some sodden leaves turned sluggishly over, and then again became submerged. Somewhere below, then, there was movement. Nipper dived, cleaving downwards and forwards cleanly, swiftly.

His outstretched fingers touched a tangle of twigs, then he felt a rope. He grabbed it, and he felt something heavy, something like a dead weight, pulling at the other end of the rope. He rose, and his head broke surface. He gulped a lungful of air, and beside him he found Travers.

"Dive—dive!" he panted. "I've got hold of the rope. I'm pulling on it. Help me, Travers!"

Travers dived without a word; and, almost instantly, he struck against something soft and still. He grabbed; he felt a leg, and he took a firmer hold. Up he went, fighting against the current, tearing at the entangling twigs and leaves with his other hand.

"We've got him!" he gasped, as he came up. "Easy now—he might not be dead."

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Nipper wasted no breath on words. Between them, they had got Handforth's head clear of the water, and Handforth's face was deathly white; he was without movement, for his senses had left him.

Then other swimmers came, and the task was easier. Between them, they took their burden to the bank; willing, eager hands dragged Handforth up on to the grass; somebody's penknife was ready to slash through the ropes.

"He's dead—Handy's dead!" wailed Church, his face almost as white as Handforth's.

"Not yet!" snapped Nipper, as he knelt in the grass, water streaming from him. "Quick! We're all good Scouts, aren't we? We know what to do."

Without the loss of a second, artificial respiration was commenced.

"He's not dead," said Nipper, after some moments of tense, agonising silence. "We got him out just in time. He'll soon come round. I don't think it's a really bad case."

His judgment was sound. Handforth, fortunately, had not inhaled a great deal of water. Yet it was true that he would have been drowned if the rescuers had arrived but one short minute later. It was their lightning promptitude which had saved his life.

"Ug-gug-gurrrrr!" came from Handforth, at length.

"He's breathing!" muttered McClure joyously. "He's alive, then! Oh, thank goodness!"

"You mean—thank Nipper and Travers," said Buster Boots. "They did it. Great Scott! You chaps deserve the Royal Humane Society's medal for your quick action."

"We don't want any medals!" grunted Nipper. "We're glad enough to see Handy coming round. That's it, old man—take it easy. Don't try to talk yet."

Within five minutes, Handforth—a very limp, white-faced Handforth—was able to talk coherently.

"The cad—the hound—the dirty rotter!" he muttered. "I thought I was done for! Thanks, you chaps, for getting me out. Oh, my goodness! When I was under water, and I felt my senses going—"

"Don't think of it, old son," interrupted Church gently.

"That Aussie chap did it!" went on Handforth, in something like his old aggressive manner. "Put a rope round my ankles, lugged me up on that tree branch, and then went off, laughing. And when I struggled, the branch broke—"

"I tried to warn you that the branch was unsafe—but I was gagged," said Boots, breathing hard. "Of course, that Aussie fellow didn't mean you to fall into the river—"

"But he left me hanging there—head downwards!" broke in Handforth fiercely. "It was a caddish, dangerous trick."

"How do you know he was one of the Australians?" asked Nipper.

"Of course he was," said Boots. "He found us lying helpless, and he left Handforth dangling head downwards over the water. He didn't even know how long it would be before rescue came. One of the meanest, dirtiest, low-down—"

"Yes, it was all that," interrupted Nipper. "But do you know who he was?"

"I didn't see him very well," admitted Boots; "but I believe I'd know him again. I'm not sure. I don't know his name, anyway."

"Neither do I," said Handforth. "But I'd know his face. I'd identify him, and I'm going to identify him, too!" He tried to struggle to his feet. "I'm going to the River House School!" he added fiercely. "I'm going to slaughter that cad—"

"Cheese it, Handy!" interrupted Travers. "You're in no fit condition to slaughter anybody. Church and McClure will take you straight home—yes, and put you to bed."

"Not likely!" growled Handforth. "I'm better now."

"Well, if a prefect or a master sees you, he'll ask awkward questions," said Travers. "Have you thought of that, dear old fellow? You'll have to tell what happened, and then you'll be put in the sanny for a few days."

"Crumba!" muttered Handforth, in dismay.

"In any case, we don't want the beaks to know anything about the affair," said Nipper. "We don't want to get these Aussie chaps into a lot of trouble. We'll deal with the matter ourselves, and see that the culprit is fittingly punished."

Handforth was persuaded to return to St. Frank's with Church and McClure, and he did not need much persuasion after he had tried to walk and had discovered he was so unsteady on his legs that he needed assistance. He was still very groggy, and his lungs and his whole inside felt afe with pain.

As soon as he had gone Nipper called the other juniors round him. The Remove captain was looking grave.

"Some of us are soaking wet, but I think we'd better go straight to the River House School," he said quietly. "A thing like this can't wait. One of the Australians played that cad's trick on Handforth—after Baines and his pals

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had japed us in a perfectly legitimate way. We've got to tell Baines what we think of it."

"Yes, and the cad must be punished," said Travers. "Come on!"

And, wet as they were, they went marching in a grim body towards the Australian school. With them was Jerry Dodd—and Jerry was looking thoughtful and troubled. Was Jim Sayers the culprit? Somehow, Jerry felt certain of it, but he kept his own counsel.

Meanwhile, Sayers himself, in Study No. 10, was chuckling amusedly as he explained things to Mr. Rutter. This questionable gentleman listened with a malicious, appreciative smile on his thin lips. The schoolboy and the schoolmaster, in the privacy of the study, were on terms of equality.

"And that's how I left him," concluded Sayers coolly. "Roped-up, helpless, hanging head downwards, with his face only an inch or two above the water."

"There'll be an inquiry about it, of course, Jim," said Mr. Rutter. "The St. Frank's boys will be mightily angry!"

"Sure they will," agreed Sayers, grinning. "Wait until to-morrow! They'll come here full of fury, and I shall boldly tell 'em that I did it. Not much of a stunt, Rutter, but it'll do to start off with. You might even wangle a paragraph in the local newspaper about it. Can't you see the headlines: 'Vindictive Attack by Australian Schoolboy!—St. Frank's Boy Left Hanging Head Downwards Over River!' By cripes, these English fellers are easy!"

"It'll mean some bother with Atherton," said Rutter. "He's the headmaster here, and he'll have you on the carpet."

"Who cares?" grinned Sayers. "He'll hand me over to you, and you'll see that I'm fittingly punished. Simple, isn't it? As for the rest of our bunch, I don't care what they think, or how they treat me. We're out with one object, Rutter—and you know what it is. This isn't a real jape; it's only just the beginning."

It was strange that Jim Sayers should be so anxious for his mean action to be widely known. There was an understanding between him and the schoolmaster—and there was something very unusual, very mysterious in their association.

"Hallo!" said Sayers suddenly. "Do you hear all those voices? Looks like the St. Frank's crowd is here already." He grinned. "On the warpath—eh? Swell! I'd better go along and do my stuff."

He strolled out, and a moment later he was in the big Common-room. Nippers, Travers, Boots, De Valerie, Gresham, and others had just walked in, in a body, and they were looking grim-faced and determined.

Tom Baines, McVittie, Kennedy, and other of the Australian boys were crowding round, grinning, and full of questions.

"No need to take it so much to heart, chums!" chuckled Curly Baines. "You japed us, and we japed you. We got the best of it, that's all. No hard feelings, surely?"

"No hard feelings about the bull," agreed Nipper. "You turned the jape against us brilliantly, and we give you all credit. But the thing which followed was dirty."

"The thing which followed?" asked Baines, staring.

"One of your men did something to one of ours—and he was nearly drowned," said Nipper. "If we had been one minute later he would have drowned!"

"But—but I don't know what you mean!" ejaculated Baines, bewildered. "The joke we played was good-natured enough—"

"Do you call it good-natured to tie a chap by the feet, and to leave him hanging head downwards, with his face only an inch from the river?" interrupted Nipper. "That's what one of your men did! The branch broke, and Handforth—he was the victim—fell into the deep water, trussed up like a dead chicken—"

"Here, hold on!" interrupted Baines grimly. "Take it easy! It wasn't one of our cobbars who did a thing like that. We left the two fellers lying on the bank, and we didn't hurt them at all."

"This Aussie came along by himself," said Boots. "He wasn't one of your crowd, Baines. He wasn't a cricketer—he wasn't one of the fellers who had the feed with us this evening. In fact, I don't know who he was."

"Isn't that a bit vague?" asked Kennedy, glaring.

"Hadden't you better be more careful with your accusations?"

"This chap was an Australian," insisted Boots. "He called me 'cobber,' and after he had slung Handforth to that tree branch, he gave me a push with his foot, and said, 'Maybe you English fools will know now that we Australians are top dogs.' Of course, he was one of you Aussies. I tried to warn Handy, but he struggled, and the branch broke. It's only by a miracle that he wasn't drowned!"

There was a silence. The Australian boys were startled, dismayed, angry. And Jim Sayers, hearing all this, kept in the background. It would be very inadvisable, he



While Travers tugged at Handforth's leg, Nipper hauled on the rope that bound his ankles, and then up they went through the water, dragging their unconscious burden with them.

decided, to own up now. The consequences for himself might be far too uncomfortable!

"We're saying nothing to our masters," continued Nipper. "We're keeping it to ourselves, Baines, but we expect you to find the culprit and punish him—in your own way. Rivalry is all very well, but when it comes to playing filthy, low-down tricks like that—"

"Easy, pardner!" interrupted Curly. "I'm not satisfied that this thing was done by one of us. Where's your proof?"

"Haven't I given you proof enough?" demanded Boots aggressively.

"Not by a long chalk," retorted Baines. "Any ill-natured cad, finding you and Handforth helpless, might have done it. No, chums! It isn't good enough. We don't do things like that in Australia!"

"I don't doubt it," said Nipper. "That goes for the majority of you—but there are black sheep in every fold. We have a few at St. Frank's, and we're heartily ashamed of them. But they're there, just the same."

Baines looked straight at Buster Boots. "You were there," he said. "This fellow tied Handforth up, and he kicked you. Well, have a look round. Do you identify your man?"

Buster Boots looked round from face to face, but he only saw indignation and anger on every Australian countenance. "Well, I can't exactly identify the fellow," he finally admitted. "The dusk was pretty deep, and—and—"

"And it might have been somebody else, eh?" interrupted Curly Baines. "Of course it was somebody else! I'm not blaming you for coming here like this—but it's as clear as daylight that you were tricked. We Australians are good sports, I hope. If we play a joke, we play it in the right spirit. This thing was dirty, and we won't have you saying that we did it. We're all mighty glad that Handforth is safe—but if you want to find the culprit, you'd better look somewhere else."

The Man in the Night!

HANDFORTH made a remarkable recovery. By the time Church and McClure had got into bed he was so much better that he wanted to get out again and dress himself. His colour had returned, and, with it, all his old aggressiveness.

By then, however, it was the official bed-time, and the Removites came trooping up to their dormitories. A number of them came crowding into the room which belonged to Handforth & Co.—and, in the forefront were Nipper and

Travers. Boots, of course, had gone to his own dormitory in the Modern House.

"Well?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"The Aussies say it wasn't one of their men," replied Nipper. "Boots couldn't identify anybody, and, after all—"

"Rot!" broke in Handforth fiercely. "It was an Aussie. I could identify him, too. He came close to me—when he bound me up—and I'd know his face among a hundred. Let me go over there. I'll pick him out! Yes, and I'll slaughter him, too!"

"You seem pretty much yourself, Handy," said Nipper, with relief. "That's good. You'll be all right by to-morrow and we can keep the whole unfortunate incident to ourselves."

"Why wait until to-morrow?" asked Handforth. "I'm going to get dressed, and I'm going straight over—"

"You silly ass, you can't break bounds," said Travers. "Wait until to-morrow."

"Oh, all right!" said Handforth, with sudden resignation.

He fell back upon his pillow, as though the effort of talking had partially exhausted him. And Nipper and the others, after bidding him "good-night," went to their own dormitories. No sooner had the door closed, however, than Handforth sat up like a jack-in-the-box.

"No sense in arguing," he said calmly. "In any case, it's my affair. If they knew I was going to the River House School, they would insist upon going with me—and that would spoil everything. I'm going to identify that cad and knock him into the middle of next week."

Church and McClure looked at their leader in alarm.

"You don't mean it, Handy," urged Church. "You've got to leave it until to-morrow."

"Rot!" snapped Handforth.

"Why be in such a hurry?" demanded Mac, breathing hard. "What difference does it make? The cad will be there in the morning, won't he?"

"Why should I wait until the morning?" retorted Handforth. "You weren't nearly drowned like I was, so you can't understand how I feel. I can see the blighter's face now, with its sneer of vindictive maliciousness! I'm going to smash that face!"

"Oh, well, then," said Church, with an air of resignation, "if you insist, there's an end of it. Mac, you'd better go along and tell Nipper. Get a dozen of the chaps to make ready. We'll get off soon after lights out."

"What are you getting at?" asked Handforth, staring. "No need to tell any of the others. We can do this job

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ourselves, can't we? Isn't Study D capable of looking after one Aussie?"

"And do you think we want to get slaughtered, too?" asked Church. "What's going to happen if we go over to the River House School, just by ourselves? Baines and his crowd will jump on us like a ton of bricks. We've got to go in force, or not at all."

"Oh!" said Handforth.

He became thoughtful after that, and, at last, when Church and McClure were in bed, he gave an expressive grunt.

"Oh, well, perhaps we'd better wait until to-morrow!" he said gruffly. "But it's dotty, all the same. Far better to have got it over and done with to-night."

"Now you're talking sense, Handy," said Church heartily. "To-morrow we can go over in force—and exact full redress."

Again Handforth granted, and his head was on the pillow and his eyes were closed. Soon he breathed evenly, and a gentle snore sounded.

"Poor chap—he's still bad, but won't admit it," muttered Church. "But a good night's sleep will put him right."

Ten minutes after lights out both Church and McClure were sleeping soundly. But Handforth had fooled them both. For he had not slept a wink—and had no intention of sleeping. Rather than go to the River House School with a whole crowd of Removites, he would go alone.

In fact, it would be heaps better to go alone. He had conceived a grand idea. Single-handed he would make his way into the Australians' dormitory, he would identify the culprit, and, then and there, surrounded by the "enemy," he would pulverise the guilty one.

It was characteristic of the mighty Edward Oswald to decide on such a hare-brained plan. The very idea of waiting until the morning was idiotic to him. He must have action now—and with every minute that passed, he chafed. He was feeling so much better after his recent escape from death that he felt that nothing but instant action would suffice. A thing like this could not wait.

And there was much to be said for Handforth's point of view. He it was who had suffered; as he lay in bed, waiting, he lived again through those dread, awful moments when he had been drawn under the water, bound and helpless. He had believed, then, that his last moment of

life had come. And all because of the cruelly malicious act of one of the boys of the Australian school! Well, that boy had to be identified—and punished. The sooner, the better.

Handforth positively raged as he lay in bed, thinking it all over. His breathing became short and jerky as the anger and indignation welled up within him. Even now his chest was sore, and his arms were aching from the rough handling he had received from his schoolfellows, when they had resorted to artificial respiration. Handforth was in a burning fever of impatience. Sleep for him was out of the question. He must find that Australian, and punish him!

At last, when he had heard eleven o'clock boom out, he quietly got from his bed, and was surprised to find that he was slightly dizzy. But this fact did not deter him. He dressed himself, and then, shoes in hand, crept out of the dormitory. By the time he got downstairs he felt better. He was more like himself. He slipped out through one of the lower windows, donned his shoes, and then crept away to the outer wall, and swarmed over it.

"By George!" he muttered. "Now for it! It's going to be easy, too!"

The idea he had formed was perfectly simple—in fact, childishly simple. Handforth's schemes, as a general rule, were never elaborate.

He knew the River House School perfectly—every door and every window. He knew just where the Aussies' dormitory was situated—he knew that there was creeper on the wall. Being summer-time, the dormitory windows would be wide open. How easy for him to climb up, then creep in the window, and go from bed to bed, examining the boys until he found his quarry! The Australians had been in the River House for such a little time that none of the St. Frank's fellows knew much about their rivals; names meant nothing. The only Australian names familiar to Handforth, in fact, were those of the Cricket Eleven.

And Handforth knew that the culprit was not one of the fellows who had played cricket. Yet he had been at St. Frank's, for Handforth remembered having seen him after the match.

It was a calm, peaceful summer's night, with a myriad stars overhead, and, low in the sky, a half-moon. From Belton Woods, some distance away, came the occasional cry of some night creature. An owl was hooting in a spinney nearer at hand.

But Handforth took no notice. He was concentrating upon his task, and, having crossed the fields, he climbed the wall which took him straight into the private grounds of the River House School. He had decided that it was better to go this way—for, by creeping over the gardens, he could easily reach the dormitory window, and it would not be necessary for him to show himself in any open space.

He heard the half-hour strike distantly from Belton Church, and he crept on purposefully. Pain in his chest constantly reminded him of his narrow escape from death, and he was much taken with the idea of doing this job single-handed. Church and McClure were far too inclined to interfere, and the other fellows were no better. Well, he would show the Remove that he could handle the Australian cad without help from anybody! He was the only victim, so it was only right that he should do the job alone. Thus Handforth reasoned as he crept through the dark grounds of the rival school.

Not a light showed anywhere. There was no one about—but he was wrong. For, suddenly, unexpectedly, he distinctly heard a dull sound, as though somebody, in walking, had stubbed his toe against an unseen obstacle. As though in verification of this theory, Handforth heard a muttered exclamation. At the same second the white beam of an electric torch flashed out not twenty yards away from him, just beyond a mass of flowering bushes.

Amazed, startled, he dropped to the ground, lying flat in the grass behind a flower bed. There was somebody in the grounds with him! And it was such an extraordinary thing that Handforth, for some moments, could not collect his wits. Then it occurred to him that one of the masters was having a final smoke, perhaps. After all, it yet wanted half an hour to midnight, so the hour was not very late.

He waited, tense. It would never do for him to be discovered by one of the masters of the Australian School. Lying flat, he was screened by the flowers in front of him, yet he could see quite easily between the clumps.

The man had extinguished the electric torch now, and was walking along, almost parallel with Handforth, in a stealthy, secretive manner. It was impossible for Handforth to see who the man was, or what he was like. The figure was just a blur in the semi-darkness.

The man passed on, and now he was bending low in an odd corner of the grounds where there were no flower beds—a kind of waste corner, almost completely hidden by laurels and other bushes.

Handforth heard the chink of a spade, or a trowel, and he was freshly intrigued. His curiosity was so great, in fact, that he half-rose to his feet, and now he could see

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BAGGY TRIMBLE is a character who appeared in the St. Jim's stories, F. J. Hudson (Portsmouth). So if you want any information about him, I suggest that you write to Mr. Martin Clifford or to the Editor.

I don't profess to be an expert on Physical Culture, E. R. Guy (Penryn), and when you ask me for the normal measurements—biceps (expanded), biceps (normal), height, neck, chest (expanded), chest (normal), weight, etc.—of a schoolboy of 14, I can only say that this sort of question is quite outside the province of our chat. So I'm blessed if I know why I've given you this much space! The only logical reason is that other readers might see this, and avoid writing me on similar matters. Ask me anything you like about the boys of St. Frank's—and

the masters, and the local characters, and the school, and the countryside—anything, in fact, connected with the school, and I'll "come across" with prompt answers.

"Names List"—No. 3. Ancient House, Remove. Study I: Ralph Leslie Fullwood, Clive Russell. Study J: Harry Gresham, Alec Duncan, Ulysses Spenser Adams. Studies K, L, M, and N, in the Ancient House are spare studies and at present are not occupied by Removites. Next week we'll start on the West House.

Many thanks for your long and amusing letter, Yendys Walker (Chiswick). (I hope I have spelt your name correctly. It's a new one to me.) I am still writing a lot of St. Frank's stories, and if you buy No. 435 of the "Boys' Friend Library," which is on sale at all newsagents, you'll find that it contains my latest story, "The Schemer of St. Frank's." And I think it is just the kind of yarn you're looking for. As regards Jerry Dodd, he still has his performing pony, Budd, and one of these days I'll feature him again. There are four boarding-houses at St. Frank's—Ancient House, Modern House, West House, and East House. Their colours, respectively, are red and blue, green and gold, mauve and yellow, and black and orange. The School House contains no boarders, but is confined solely to class-rooms, lecture halls, laboratories, library, etc. The head prefects are as follows: Ancient House, Edgar Fenton. West House, Arthur Morrow. Modern House, Walter Reynolds. East House, Simon Kenmore.

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

between two of the bushes and thus obtain a clear view of what the marauder was doing.

"Well I'm jiggered!" breathed Handforth, in amazement. The man had placed the electric torch on the ground, so that its beam was confined to a foot or so of the earth. With a big trowel he was digging a considerable hole in the dry soil. He was crouching sideways to Handforth, and it was impossible to see his face. But the man was wearing a big coat which billowed over him—until, indeed, he looked something like a human owl.

Now and again, as he worked, he paused to listen—and to look about him. Then, to Handforth's surprise, the man began filling in the hole once again. Obviously, he had buried something—and this fact, alone, was significant. The whole affair was mysterious in the extreme.

At last the task was done, and Handforth saw the man's hand, in the torchlight, smoothing the disturbed earth, so that no trace should be left. Then, very carefully, the marauder picked up the electric torch and flashed it directly upon the ground. He bent down to smooth away one or two footprints. Then he backed to the path, smoothed over the rest of his footprints, and the light snapped out. Like a shadow, the man moved off.

Handforth heard him creeping down the path—and it was a path which led straight towards the school buildings. Soon afterwards a faint click came to Handforth's ears—and he knew what it meant. A key had been turned in the lock of a door. The man had gone into the school!

"My only sainted aunt!" muttered Handforth. "I'll bet he's a thief—he's robbed the masters, or the boys, and he's buried his booty in the garden."

Soon, Handforth's curiosity got the better of him to such an extent that he was drawn back to that fateful spot. He had an electric torch of his own, and he flashed it upon the earth. Not a trace. But he knew the spot, almost to an inch. Only for a minute did he hesitate.

"Why not?" he muttered, at length. "It's a cert the fellow's a crook—and it's my business to find out what he was up to."

And, then and there, he commenced scraping the earth away with his bare hands. Deeper and deeper he dug—until, at length, his fingers encountered something soft. He withdrew it into the torchlight, shaking the last traces of soil from it. He stared at it in surprise—for it was nothing but an old indiarubber tobacco pouch!

There was something inside the pouch which rattled, but it was a dull, stony sound—not at all like coins. Handforth unfastened the pouch, and flashed his light upon the contents. His jaw sagged, and his eyes opened wide with amazement.

For he saw a handful of pebbles! Just ordinary seashore pebbles! There wasn't a doubt of it. He took one or two of them in his fingers, and turned them over, for he could not believe the evidence of his own eyes. But his first impression was clearly correct, for he had seen pebbles like this on the beach hundreds of times. They were smallest, mostly round, and dull. They weren't even pretty pebbles.

"Well I'm jiggered!" he ejaculated. "That fellow, whoever he was, must be as mad as a hatter! Fancy going to the trouble of burying a few rotten shingle pebbles!"

He suddenly jumped. It occurred to him that they might

be uncut diamonds. He had never seen any, but he had heard that uncut diamonds looked a bit like stones. Yet this theory was wildly untenable, for when he looked at the stones again he could see that by no stretch of the imagination could they be identified as diamonds. No, they were just ordinary pebbles, and there was an end of it. The whole thing was fantastic.

"Oh, well, it's none of my business, I suppose!" he muttered. "After all, I wasn't supposed to see what the man did; and if he likes to bury something, it's not my affair. All the same, it's jolly rummy."

He closed up the pouch again, dropped it into the hole, and filled the earth in. Having done so he took care to leave no traces. Like the mysterious marauder he smoothed the earth over, and obliterated his own footprints.

Then he got back to the path and stood for some moments, trying to find an explanation of the incident. But for the life of him he could make neither head nor tail of it.

He was reminded of his original project, and in view of what had just happened he was half inclined to abandon it. But just then a queer spasm of pain in his chest reminded him of his dreadfully narrow escape, and his indignant anger returned. His jaw became squarely set, and he crept towards the ivy-covered wall of the school.

Handy Means Business!

THE ivy was strong, but climbing it wasn't half so easy as Handforth had imagined. In fact, he made quite a lot of noise about it, and it was rather a wonder that nobody heard him. Finally, he managed to grip the old-fashioned stone window-sill he had aimed at. After that it was easy enough. He hauled himself up, sat astride the window-sill to regain his breath, and then cautiously and stealthily entered.

He had made no mistake.

This was the dormitory where a good many of the Australian boys were sleeping. Of course, there was no



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certainly that his quarry would be here; for there were other dormitories and bed-rooms in the school. But a trifle like that did not enter Handforth's mind. Or, if it did, he was quite prepared to stalk throughout the entire school, entering dormitory after dormitory until he found his man. A few paltry difficulties didn't daunt a fellow like Handforth.

However, he was lucky. In this dormitory slept Curly Baines, McVittie, Kennedy, the Taylor brothers, Richards, quite a few more, and Jim Sayers.

Handforth went from bed to bed, flashing the light of his torch upon the sleepers' faces. The wonder of it was he did not awaken them all during the first minute or so. But they were tired after a hard day's sport, and were sleeping soundly. The mere flashing of a light in their faces was not sufficient to arouse them.

Suddenly Handforth halted. He was at the sixth bed, and the fellow in it was sleeping on his back, with his face in full view. It was a handsome face, yet somehow not altogether pleasing.

"Got him!" muttered Handforth ferociously. "By George! You're the dirty dog!"

Handforth had no use for gentle measures. He grabbed Sayers by the shoulders, and shook him so violently that Sayers' head seemed in danger of being jerked off.

"Hey! What the— How the— Stop it!" gasped Sayers, opening his eyes and blinking. "Who's—who's that?"

"It's me—come up from the river-bed to give you the hiding of your life!" breathed Handforth sulphurously. "Get out of this bed, and put your hands up!"

"But—but—" Sayers was bewildered, and as yet still very heavy with sleep. "What are you doing here?"

"You're the fellow who tied me to that tree, aren't you?" demanded Handforth fiercely. "Answer me! Do you confess?"

More fully awake Sayers would have uttered a flat denial, but he was still bewildered.

"I—I didn't mean any harm," he stammered. "I didn't know the branch would break—"

"That's enough!" roared Handforth. "You've admitted it! Now get out, and put your hands up! I'm going to reduce you to pulp!"

After that, of course, everybody in the dormitory was awake. For when Handforth started shouting, sleep of any kind was out of the question. The Australians sat up on all sides, blinking, rubbing their eyes, and wondering what on earth had happened.

"Look out!" ejaculated McVittie, the boy from Geelong. "St. Frank's raiders! Wake up, coppers!"

Half a dozen of the stalwart Aussies leapt out of their beds, and made a rush at Handforth. He was seized from all sides.

"Keep your hair on!" he said impatiently. "This isn't a jape. I'm the only St. Frank's chap here!"

"What!" gasped Baines. "Do you mean to say, chum, that you had the nerve to walk right in amongst us?"

"Nerve, be blowed!" retorted Handforth. "Pax! I'm not quarrelling with you fellows, or playing any jokes on you, either. I'm not in a mood for joking. I was nearly drowned this evening, and this blighter was the cause of it!"

"Sayers?" asked Curly, his voice suddenly hardening. "So that's his name—Sayers?" said Handforth. "All right. I'm going to slaughter him! And I don't want any interference!"

The Australian boys, in their pyjamas, were crowding excitedly round. They had released Handforth now, and Sayers was standing back, pale of face, his shifty eyes defiant.

"The feller's mad!" he said desperately. "I've never seen him before in my life!"

"Liar!" roared Handforth. "It was you who tied me to that tree. Why, when I woke you up two minutes ago, you admitted it!"

"That's true, coppers," said a fat-faced boy, who was sitting up in bed some distance away. He was Evans, and he came from Ballarat. "I woke up just as they were talking, and I heard Sayers admit it."

Sayers scowled. "What of it?" he snarled. "I didn't mean any harm. Supposing I did tie the fool to the tree, how was I to know that he would struggle and break the branch?"

There was a babble of voices, but Curly Baines quelled them.

"Those St. Frank's chaps who came here during the evening were right," he said grimly. "It was one of us. Handforth, go ahead! Knock his head off! We won't interfere!"

"Good man!" said Handforth heartily. "I knew you were sports!"

Sayers knew now that he had to fight. He clenched his fists, and an ugly, evil light came into his eyes. With the ferocity of a tiger he hurled himself upon Handforth, and the latter, taken by surprise, was nearly sent crashing over. But he pulled himself together, and then the fight began in real earnest.

But it only began, for scarcely had two blows been exchanged when the door suddenly opened, a click sounded, and the dormitory became flooded with electric light.

"Cave! Mr. Rutter!" breathed one of the Australians. They all stood transfixed, and a gulp sounded from Handforth's throat. He was staring at the man in the doorway, and in an instant he recognised him as the man who had buried the pebbles in the grounds; and he was one of the Australian schoolmasters!

(Thrills crowd on thrills in next week's instalment of this magnificent yarn. Don't miss it!)

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