

SCHOOL—SPORT—ADVENTURE—FUN—THRILLS!

The **GEM**

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"THE MAROONED SCHOOL!"—MAGNIFICENT ST. JIM'S YARN INSIDE!

The MAROONED SCHOOL!



Not for nothing was Jerrold Lumley-Lumley called the Outsider of St. Jim's, but when storm and flood cut off the school from the outside world, it is he who plays the hero's part!

CHAPTER 1.

Wet!

RAIN!

Rain, and more rain!

The fellows at St. Jim's had never seen anything like it. There had been heavy rains in that part of Sussex before, certainly. But not even within the recollection of the oldest fellow in the school, Kildare of the Sixth, had there been anything like it.

"The rain, it raineth every day," had become a true saying at St. Jim's.

One Saturday half-holiday had already been "mucked up," as the juniors elegantly expressed it, by the rain; but they had tried to be patient.

However, when the rain continued all through Sunday, and all through Monday, and all through Tuesday, with scarcely any intermission, the St. Jim's fellows became, as Jack Blake said, "fed-up."

But fed-up or not, they still had to listen to the rain coming down. It dashed on the class-room windows; it spouted off the old red roof, it foamed in the gutters of the quadrangle.

It was Wednesday now, another half-holiday, and all through the morning the rain had been streaming down with steady persistence.

The boys sat for morning lessons in dim class-rooms—dim from the cloudy sky, and from the rain with which the panes were fogged.

After lessons they collected in the passages, or looked out of the windows, and said things about the weather—things which were not complimentary to the climate of their native land.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther of the Shell opened
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the big door, which had been closed all the morning, and looked out over the rainy quadrangle.

The rain was coming down in sheets, and there was a keen cold wind blowing from Wayland Moor, dashing the raindrops into the doorway.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Manners, as a gust of rain came into his face, drenching his hair and collar. "M-m-my hat!"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form. "Bai Jove! This is simplay wotten! Get the door shut, you asses! I have had a spinkle on my twousahs already!"

"Blow your trousers!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"What price this weather for cricket?" asked Jack Blake, coming up, and staring out gloomily into the wet and streaming quad.

"Cricket! My hat!"

"We had a match on for this afternoon."

"We shall have to play it in the Form-room, then, or play marbles instead," said Monty Lowther.

"Shut that door!" bawled Kildare of the Sixth, looking out of his study. "Everything will be blown away, you young asses! What did you open it for?"

"Oh, it's all right, Kildare—"

"Shut that door at once!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Bear a hand!" said Tom Merry, grasping the door.

There was no doubt that the wind was blowing into the School House. It came in at the wide-open doorway with a fell swoop, and tore down the passages and up the staircases, shrieking and howling. It brought heavy drops of rain in with it, spattering them over the juniors in the Hall.

There was a yell from all quarters.

"Shut the door!"

—OF TOM MERRY & CO., THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

"All serene!" called back Tom Merry of the Shell. "We're shutting it—or we're trying to shut it, anyway!"

Trying to, indeed, was all that the Terrible Three were doing. The door was big and thick and heavy, and always required an effort to move it. With the strong wind now bumping against it as the chums of the Shell tried to shut it, they simply could not do it.

"Lend a hand, Gussy!" shouted Manners.

"Sowwy, deah boy—"

"Lend a hand, you ass!"

"Weally sowwy, Mannahs, but I am afraid that I should get my clothes splashed if I came neah the door. Othahwise I would oblige with pleasuah, Mannahs!"

"You giddy ass!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Blake—Herries—Kangaroo—lend a hand!"

The juniors named rushed to the rescue. They flung themselves at the door from behind, in a row, all pushing at the heavy oak with all their strength.

The door swung to.

Then came a terrific burst of wind before it could be fastened, and it swung open again, hurling the juniors back in a staggering crowd.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Blake. "Hold on!"

"Pway stick to it, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, surveying the scene with his monocle jammed in his eye. "Don't give in!"

"Come and help!" roared Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

They hurled themselves at the door, battling with the swooping wind. The gale raged through the passages and staircases of the School House, shrieking madly round every corner, and tearing away caps from pegs, and papers and books from tables. Voices yelled from a dozen directions.

"Shut that door!"

"Bai Jove! There will be twouble if you fellows don't get that door closed," D'Arcy remarked. "Buck up, you know, and put your beef into it."

"Come and help, you ass!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Shut that door!" came a roar from Darrell's study.

"All right, Darrell! Buck up, for goodness' sake, you chaps!"

A dozen juniors were jamming themselves against the door now. They forced it slowly shut in the teeth of the wind.

Arthur Augustus stood by and encouraged them.

"Bai Jove! You're gettin' on wippin'!" he exclaimed. "That's first-rate, you know! Now, then, all togethah, deah boys, and you'll do it, you will, weally. I am sowwy I can't help you. Go ahead!"

"Ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

The door swung to. The juniors jammed their feet along it to keep the wind that was battering on the outside from hurling it open again. The weight of the door, and the force of the wind, required all their strength.

"Gussy—"

"Yaas, deah boy!"

"Come and fasten the door while we hold it!" yelled Blake. "What are you standing there like a graven image for?"

"I wefuse to be compared to a gwayen image!"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Come and fasten the door!"

"Undah the cires—"

"While we hold it, you chump!"

D'Arcy gave the door a look. It was closed up now, and if the heavy iron latch was lifted into place, it would be secure. There was no rain blowing in, and the door was safe to approach.

"Vewy well, Blake!"

"Buck up!"

D'Arcy approached the door in a leisurely manner. It would not have been like him to hurry his movements. Haste and hurry did not go well with the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

"Buck up!" shrieked Tom Merry. "We can't hold it long!"

"Vewy well, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus lifted his hand to the latch. But it

was at that precise moment that the juniors' resistance to the force of the wind gave way; the swell of St. Jim's had been a trifle too leisurely.

The door swung open, and through the aperture came a perfect storm of wind and rain.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was standing in the direct path of it, as his hand fell away from the latch.

Splash!

A driving torrent of rain hurled itself upon the swell of St. Jim's, and he staggered back with a wild gasp.

"Ow! Gwecat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake breathlessly. "You've got it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gwwoogh! Yow!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy staggered against the wall. He was drenched to the skin, his white shirt was a limp rag, his elegant Eton jacket hung like a sack. The juniors roared with laughter, and, as their efforts relaxed, the wind swept the door wide open, and they were hurled away.

"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry. "Ha, ha, ha! Yow!"

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, came out of his study. He frowned at what he saw in the Hall.

"Come, come, you must not have the door open!" he exclaimed.

"We can't get it shut, sir," said Tom Merry.

"Oh, I see!"

"Ow! I'm wet! Bai Jove! Gwoo!"

Mr. Railton smiled as he glanced at D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's was a woeful-looking figure now. The stalwart Housemaster lent his shoulder to the task, and the door was forced shut and fastened. The wind, as if disappointed, howled and roared wildly past the door, and round the corners of the School House. The old ivy rattled and creaked and shook, and the rattle of window-frames answered.

"What a giddy storm!" said Tom Merry.

"Ow! I'm wet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is all the fault of you wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall have to go and change!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You unsympathetic beasts—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus squelched away upstairs to change his clothes. He was certainly right about the juniors being unsympathetic. They seemed to see only what was comic in D'Arcy's mishap; and they roared with laughter over it.

CHAPTER 2.

A Fourth Form Raid!

DINNER in the School House at St. Jim's that day was not a cheerful meal. Probably it was equally uncheerful over in the New House.

The rain was dashing on the windows, and a cloudy mist hung over the school.

Stories were told of flooded roads, of broken telegraph wires. It was such a storm as even Taggles, the school porter, did not remember; and Taggles had been at St. Jim's practically from time immemorial. There was a legend to the effect that Taggles the porter had once, in the dim long ago, been a boy—but some of the juniors declared that they didn't believe it. Taggles was to them as much a part of St. Jim's as the old clock tower or the ivied walls, or the cut and defaced oaken desks in the Form-rooms.

Taggles had a long memory, but Taggles declared that he could not remember a rainstorm like this ever since he had been at St. Jim's. He had known the Rhyl in flood, but never so high as it was now. And it was rising higher! The boys felt a thrill as the news went round that the school boathouse was flooded. For the boathouse was on a higher level than the road to Rylcombe.

If it was flooded, it could only be a matter of a very short time before the road was flooded, too. The road had been flooded before, long ago, so Taggles said. But it was a serious matter. It meant that St. Jim's would be cut off from the village and the railway—and the only communications with the outer world would be by means of the Head's telephone.

"My hat!" said Jack Blake, as the juniors came out after dinner. "If the road's really in flood we shall be in a fix. What about grub?"

"Gwub?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Yes, grub!" said Blake. "St. Jim's isn't provisioned for a siege, you know, and we get our grub from the village and from the farms. If the road's flooded, the

tradesmen's carts can't get here—and I suppose Sands, the grocer, for instance, won't come swimming here with a bundle of bacon-rashers held in his teeth."

"Weally, Blake—"

"We shall be in danger of starvation," said Blake solemnly, "and in case we have to resort to cannibalism, like chaps in an open boat at sea—"

"Weally—"

"I think it ought to be settled that Gussy is to volunteer."

"Look here—"

"Gussy isn't very fat, except about the head, but—"

"I refuse to listen to these wibald wemarks, Blake. I suppose the Head will have laid in a stock of provisions at the first sign of dangah of the woad bein' flooded."

"Come to think of it, I dare say that's so," said Blake.

"We shan't need your services after all."

"I wegard you as an ass."

"What on earth are we going to do this afternoon?" said Blake, yawning. "I get indigestion if I stick indoors after dinner. Digby is a lucky bargee to be away from St. Jim's at a time like this."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Cricket will be off for the next thousand years, I suppose," grunted Blake, who was given to exaggerate when he was exasperated. "I think this weather is rotten! A fellow can stand some rain, but this is going too far. I'm fed-up."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hallo, Lumley! Doing anything this rotten afternoon?"

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley stopped, with a nod. Lumley-Lumley, once known as the Outsider of St. Jim's, was seldom called the Outsider now. He was now going steadily on his way to becoming respected and popular, though there were fellows in the Fourth who said that the Outsider was only biding his time, and that he would break out again worse than ever. That would have been difficult, for Lumley-Lumley had been undoubtedly a first-class blackguard in his earlier days at St. Jim's.

But the better natured boys admitted that it was due to his peculiar training, and that he had of late shown what really good qualities there were in his nature.

"I'm doing nothing, I guess," said Lumley-Lumley, who had never completely lost that American trick of speaking. "It's a frightful bore."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake stretched himself.

"I think I shall get up a row with somebody," he said. "I can't stand doing nothing. Are you spoiling for a fight, Lumley?"

"No," said Lumley-Lumley, laughing.

"Are you, Gussy?"

"Certainly not, deah boy."

"Herries! I say, Herries, come and have a row with me," said Blake imploringly. "You're an ass, you know, and your dog Towser is a regular tripehound."

Herries grinned.

"I'm going to feed Towser," he said. "You can go and eat coke!"

"Going to feed Towser," said Blake. "In this rain, and three hundred yards at least to the kennels?"

"Yes," said Herries stoutly.

"Well, you're an ass!"

"Towser would miss me if I didn't go," said Herries. "Besides, he wants his run, you know. A dog gets rotten if he's left in his kennel."

"A run! In this rain?"

"Well, it is a bit thick," said Herries, glancing at the window. "But I'm going to put a mac on and wrap something over my head. I shall cut across in no time, and get back—"

"But if you're taking Towser for a run—"

"I was thinking of giving him a run in the House here—"

"Bai Jove!"

"You ass—"

"Oh, I can't stop here jawing!" Herries declared, and he rushed off.

"My only hat!" said Blake. "There will be trouble if Herries brings that bulldog into the House! Why, he'll be mud from nose to tail, and—"

"I object to Hewies' dog, in any case. He has no respect whatever for a fellow's twousahs!"

Blake yawned.

"Oh, blow your trousers, and blow Towser, and blow Herries! What are we going to do? Let's go and have a row with the Shell."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Come on, Gussy! No funking, you know!"

"It is impossible for a D'Arcy to funk anything!" said the swell of St. Jim's loftily. "Howevah—"

"Bother your 'howevahs'! Come on—come on, Lumley!" Lumley-Lumley laughed.

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"I guess I'm on," he remarked.

"You see, I'm bored," said Blake. "Something must be done. A fellow can't be bored. The Shell are a cheeky lot of bouncers. Let's make 'em sit up."

"Hear, hear!" said Snipe of the Fourth.

"Faith, and I'm wid ye!" said Reilly. "Come on, Mellish!"

Mellish hesitated.

"I've got some lines to do," he said.

Jack Blake gave a snort.

"You mean you want to keep out of the row," he said.

"Go and eat coke, Mellish! Come on, you fellows, and let's wipe up Tom Merry's study!"

"Hurrah!"

The crowd of Fourth Formers, gathering in numbers and noise as they proceeded, made their way to the Shell passage. Blake caught D'Arcy by the arm before they reached the study tenanted by the Terrible Three.

"Come on!" said Blake.

"I was thinking—"

"Don't start that now, Gussy. No good going in for a thorough change just before a study raid—"

"You ass!"

"Come on!"

"I was thinkin' that if we are goin' to waid the Shell I had better wun and change my twousahs. They are wathah decent twousahs. I shan't keep you waitin' five minutes."

Blake chuckled.

"You won't keep me waitin' five seconds," he said.

"Come on!"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Here we are!"

Jack Blake hurled the door of the study open, and the Fourth Formers rushed in pell-mell, with a wild yell.

CHAPTER 3.

Something Like a Row I

THE Terrible Three were at home.

Tom Merry was looking out of the window into the rainy quad, a gloomy frown on his brow and his hands thrust deeply into his pockets.

Manners was developing some films in his daylight developer, and devoting all his attention to that object. Monty Lowther was standing on the hearthrug, looking at Manners' occupation and whistling dismally.

The weather had a most depressing effect on the spirits of the chums of the Shell. It was not only that they couldn't get out to play the cricket match with Figgins & Co. of the New House—they couldn't get out at all. And to those cheerful and lively spirits confinement to the House on a half-holiday was torment.

The sudden irruption of the Fourth Formers startled the Terrible Three. Tom Merry swung round from the window and Manners looked up from his developer. Lowther left off staring at Manners and stared at the newcomers instead.

"Hurroo!" roared Reilly. "Go for 'em!"

"Bump them!"

"Down with the Shell!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry took his hands out of his pockets. Monty Lowther made a clutch at the poker.

"Get out, you asses!" roared Manners. "You'll spoil my negatives!"

Blake paused.

"Negatives?" he asked. "What are they photographs of?"

"I've been taking Tom Merry and Lowther—"

"Then the negatives are spoiled already, and they don't matter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You chump—"

"Wipe up the study!" said Blake. "We've come here for a row, you chaps. We're going to bump you for your cheek. How dare you be in the Shell while we're only in the Fourth? I can't stand swank! Go for 'em!"

"You utter ass!"

"Wreck the study!" said Snipe.

The Terrible Three lined up and hit out. Study raids were common enough in the junior passages, and they were not wholly taken by surprise. In a few seconds Tom Merry's study was the scene of a wild and whirling conflict.

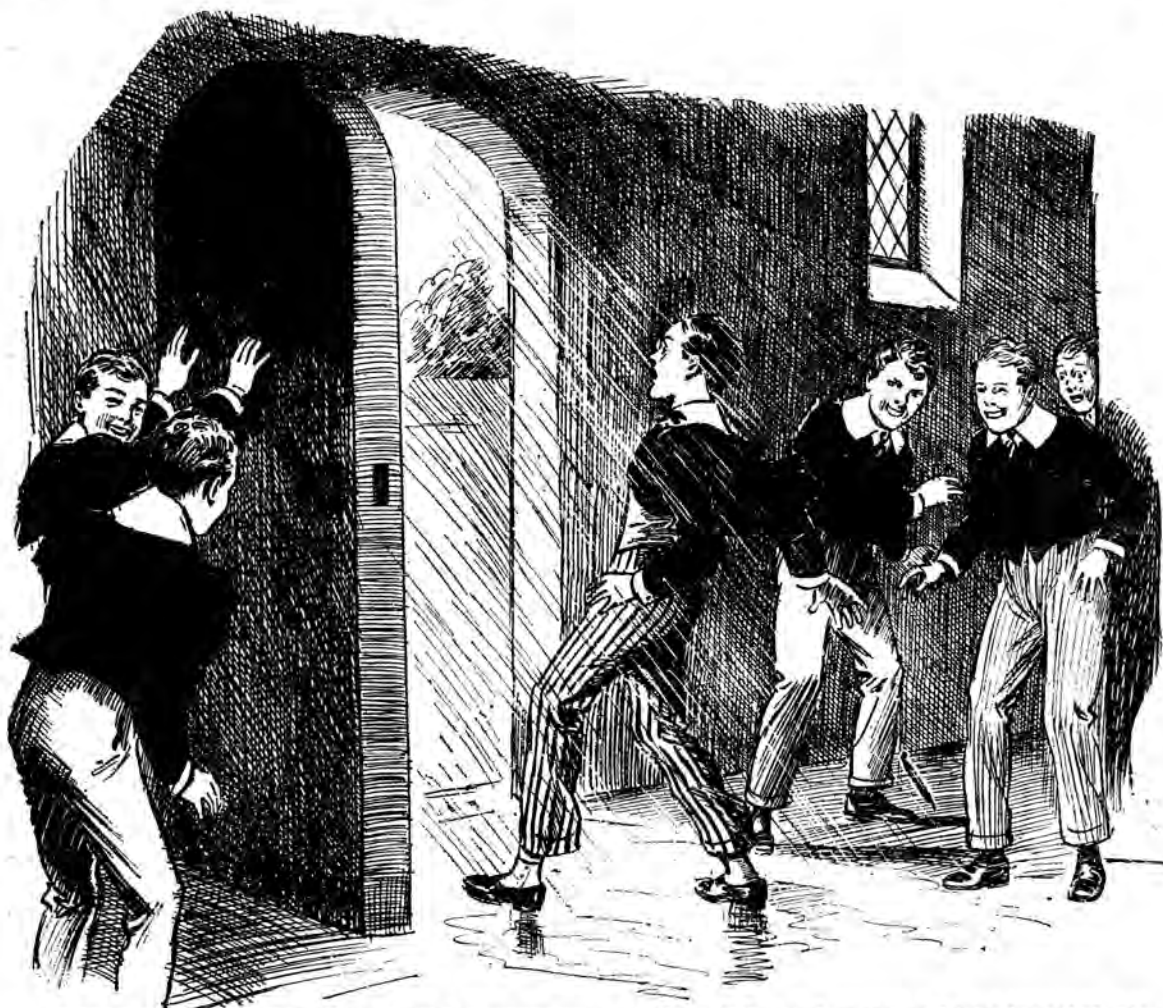
D'Arcy's misgivings concerning his trousers were more than realised. Monty Lowther swung an inkpot round, and the contents of it splashed over three or four juniors, D'Arcy among them. Ink in streams swamped over Gussy's waistcoat and trousers, and the unfortunate Fourth Former gave a wild yell.

"Ow! Ass! My twousahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My twousahs are ruined—"

"Go for 'em!"



Under the pressure of the wind, the heavy door swung open, and through the aperture came a driving torrent of rain that soaked D'Arcy to the skin. "Ow! Gweat Scott!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. "I'm drenched!"

"Rescue, Shell!" roared Tom Merry.

"My twous—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rescue!"

"Sock it to them!"

"Hurrah!"

"Buck up, Fourth!"

"Rescue!"

There was a rush of footsteps in the passage as Kangaroo and Clifton Dane and Bernard Glyn, from the end study, came racing to the rescue. They piled into the study, where there certainly was not much room for them. They were followed by Gore, from the next study, and then Skimpole and Taylor and Mason and Smith major. Fellows piled into the study till it was swarming, and there was "standing room only," as Monty Lowther put it.

But very quickly there was not enough standing room, and the combatants rolled on the floor and over the furniture and over each other.

The table was over by this time, and Manners' developer was on the floor, the negatives in it presumably still developing. They were undoubtedly in the greatest peril of being over-developed! But Manners had forgotten even photography in his excitement. The swarming study was full of the tramping feet, and yells of laughter, and yells of another sort.

The afternoon had promised to be deadly dull, but Blake had certainly thought of an excellent means of causing some excitement!

Suddenly a voice rang along the passage—a voice of authority. It was the voice of Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's; but the excited juniors did not even hear it.

Kildare came striding along the passage.

He paused at the door of the study in amazement. Blake and Monty Lowther were pommeling each other in

the doorway, and the study was crammed with struggling juniors.

The conflict, which had started in fun, seemed to be continuing in earnest.

"Stop this!" roared Kildare.

The row in Tom Merry's study ceased at once.

The dishevelled juniors stood gasping and panting and looking very sheepishly at the captain of the school.

Kildare regarded them sternly.

"You noisy young idiots!" he exclaimed. "What is this row about?"

"It's about over!" said Lowther, deliberately misunderstanding.

The juniors grinned.

"Don't be funny, Lowther!" said Kildare. "What was the cause of it?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Tom Merry, at whom the St. Jim's captain seemed to be looking for information. "What was it about, Kangy?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Kangaroo. "What was it about, Blake?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Blake. "What was it about, Gussy?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Look here—" began Kildare.

"Oh, I can tell you!" said Lumley-Lumley, who was nursing his nose.

"Well, Lumley, what was it about?"

"The weather!"

"Eh?"

"I guess it was the weather," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Lumley!"

"I guess that's so," said Lumley-Lumley, with a grin. "We were all spoiling for trouble, and I guess we found it!"

Kildare could not help laughing.

"You can take a hundred lines each!" he said. "They will help you to pass the time, as it seems to be so heavy on your hands."

"Oh!"

"You can do the lines after tea, however," said Kildare. "At present you had better go and get yourselves a little tidy for the lecture. It begins in five minutes."

"The—what?"

"The lecture!" said Kildare severely. "If you hadn't been amusing yourselves in this peculiar way, you would have known that the Head had arranged to give a lecture this afternoon, and all those who have nothing to do are expected to attend. You had better go and get yourselves decent!"

And Kildare strode away.

CHAPTER 4. Mellish is Sorry!

"BAI JOVE!" repeated Arthur Augustus.

The juniors looked at one another in dismay. They did not mind the lines so much; that was only to be expected. They had had a royal row, and they were willing to "face the music." But the Head's lecture—that was a thing they had not bargained for.

"It's wotten!" said D'Arcy.

"Beastly!" commented Lowther.

"Nice sights we are to turn up at a lecture, I must say!"

"It's not fair!" exclaimed Gore angrily. "They've no right to make us attend a lecture on a half-holiday! It's a new thing altogether!"

"Well, it does seem a bit rotten!" agreed Tom Merry, in accord with Gore for once. "I don't know what the game is."

"Let's stay away in a body!" suggested Blake.

"I'm game!"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Can't be did," he said. "The prefects would be sent to look for us. We shall have to turn up in hall."

"It's tyranny!"



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"Might as well be in Russia!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'd better get cleared up, though," suggested the practical Manners. "We've got to go, and we can't turn up in hall in this state."

"Bai Jove, no!"

"Oh, come along, then!" growled Blake. "But I still say it's rotten, rotten, rotten!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the juniors dispersed in an extremely discontented frame of mind.

It was true that they had been bored almost to tears by confinement in the House and the deadly dullness of the weather and driven to study rows as a last resource for breaking the monotony.

But, al! the same, they felt keenly the infringement of their rights at the idea of a lecture being fixed on a half-holiday.

Rights were rights, anyway; and the juniors had a right to keep their half-holiday to themselves, and be bored as much as they liked. That was the way they looked at it.

Snipe and Mellish and some more choice spirits of the Lower School were soon discussing the possibility and the advisability of getting up a "rag" in the lecture hall, and perhaps spoiling the whole affair for the Head.

"I suppose the old fellow is doing it for our good!" said Mellish, with a sneer, as he talked it over with Snipe in the passage. "It's to prevent us from eating our heads off in idleness, you know, and quarrelling among ourselves. All the same, I'm not going to have my afternoon taken up."

"No fear!" said Snipe.

"It's unjust, rotten, beastly!" said Crooke of the Shell. "Of course it is, and I don't care what his motives are!" said Mellish. "In my opinion, the old duffer—Ow!"

Mellish broke off as a hand descended upon his shoulder, and he was shaken till his teeth came together with a click.

"Ow! Yow! Groogh!" he gasped. "Leggo! D'you hear? Leggo, Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry looked at him with blazing eyes.

"You worm!" he said scornfully. "You'd squirm soon enough if he could hear you! You'll take it back—do you hear?—and say you're sorry!"

"I won't!" Mellish yelled.

"Then I'll jolly well make you sorry!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaroor! Leggo!"

"Are you sorry?"

"No, you beast!"

Tom Merry shook the cad of the Fourth till his teeth rattled. Mellish was, as a matter of fact, quite as big as Tom Merry, and there was no reason why he should not have put up a fight, excepting that he had not the courage. He wriggled in the grasp of the hero of the Shell.

"Now then, are you sorry, Mellish?"

"Yah!"

Shake, shake, shake!

"Are you sorry for speaking caddishly of the Head?"

"Ow! Yes!"

"Are you awfully sorry?"

"Groo! Yes!"

Tom Merry released the cad of the Fourth. Mellish gasped for breath, and clutched at his crumpled collar to put it straight.

"Thank you, Merry!" said a quiet, deep voice.

Tom Merry started and swung round.

An imposing figure in cap and gown stood there.

It was the Head!

CHAPTER 5. The Lecture!

TOM MERRY flushed crimson.

He stood looking at the Head with startled eyes and crimson face—dumb!

He had not the faintest idea that the Head was near at hand when he took Mellish to task. Had he known it, nothing would have induced him to act as he had done.

"Thank you, Merry!" said the Head. "I am glad to learn that some juniors, at least, do not approve of hearing their headmaster spoken of disrespectfully."

"Oh, sir! I didn't see you, and—and—"

The Head smiled.

"There is nothing to be ashamed of, Merry," he said quietly. "You acted in a proper way. Boys should be ashamed of doing wrong; I hope that no boy under my care will ever be ashamed of doing right."

Tom Merry was silent.

Mellish stood trembling. He knew that the Head must

have heard what he said as he came down the passage, and he was nearly sick with terror.

The Head looked at him sternly.
"It is you who should be ashamed, Mellish," he said. "I shall not punish you, as I will not give consideration to words overheard by accident. I trust that on reflection you will be ashamed of yourself."

The Head walked on with rustling gown.

"Oh!" gasped Mellish.

Crooke sneered.

"You knew the Head was there, Merry!" he said.

"I did not know."

Crooke shrugged his shoulders.

"It was a good stroke," said Snipe. "You'll be in the Head's good books now, Merry—you'd be excused if you cut the lecture, even. Lucky dog!"

Tom Merry breathed hard.

"I did not know the Head was there," he said. "I never saw him any more than you did. I wouldn't have said a word to Mellish if I'd known. I don't want to curry favour with the Head. You confounded sneering rotter," Tom Merry broke out angrily, "you know I didn't know he was there!"

Snipe grinned.

"I don't blame you—" he began.

"It was clever!" said Crooke.

"Jolly clever!" sneered Mellish.

Tom Merry clenched his hands.

"You know you're lying," he said. "You know I didn't know the Head was there. Say another word like that and I'll begin on you—three at a time, if you like!"

"Oh, I'm done!" yawned Snipe. "There have been enough rows this afternoon, and we've got to get to the lecture, too! The Head's gone in!"

And the three young rascals sauntered away, grinning to one another.

Tom Merry was left standing with a red and angry face.

Tom Merry was one of the best-tempered fellows in the School House, but he was very angry now. He knew that Snipe & Co. would make what capital they could out of what had happened. They would represent him as trying to curry favour with the Head, and that was a thing so foreign from Tom Merry's nature that it stung him more deeply than anything else they could have done.

"Coming to the lecture?" asked Monty Lowther, joining him in the passage. "Hallo, what's the matter?"

"Nothing!" said Tom Merry, rather shortly.

"Nose hurt?"

Tom Merry rubbed his nose.

"Yes, a little," he said. "It's nothing."

"Come on, then!"

The chums of the Shell proceeded to the lecture hall. A crowd of juniors were going the same way.

Many of them bore signs of the late combat in the Shell study. All of them were looking discontented.

Whether there was anything to do or not, all of them resented having their half-holiday taken up in this manner.

Gore, Mellish, Snipe, and others were talking in whispers of "ragging" the Head as much as they dared during the lecture.

As a rule, Tom Merry would have been very much down on that kind of thing.

Now he was silent.

After the incident in the passage, he was somewhat inclined to join in any unruliness himself, if only to show the fellows that he did not want to curry favour with the Head.

The seniors were taking the lecture more good-humouredly than the juniors. Knox and Sefton, who had been arranging to have a little secret smoke in their study, were looking bad-tempered. But most of the Upper School seemed to welcome the lecture as a relief from the dull monotony of the rainy afternoon.

"It's jolly decent of the Head!" Darrell was heard to say. "I know he's not well—he's been seedy for days. I know the doctor from Rylcombe is seeing him. He's going to give the lecture to help us through the afternoon."

Kildare grinned.

"The youngsters don't seem to appreciate the kindness of it," he remarked, with a glance at the discontented faces.

"Ungrateful little beggars!" said Darrell.

The New House fellows were crowding into the lecture hall. Figgins & Co. of the New House looked as glum as the School House fellows. Fatty Wynn, it is true, was not so glum as the others, which was probably due to the fact that Fatty Wynn had brought a bag of tarts under his jacket, to be consumed surreptitiously during the lecture.

"Hallo, Figg!" said Blake. "You chaps are in for it, too, then?"

Figgins grunted.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"The whole school's got it in the neck," said Fatty Wynn.

"Have you chaps brought anything to eat?"

"Bai Jove, no!"

"You should," said Fatty Wynn. "I hear that the lecture is on the history and antiquities of St. Jim's. I've got a bag of tarts, and if I can get into a quiet corner I shall get to sleep when I've eaten them. Nothing like jam-tarts for making you sleepy."

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Well, I can't go to sleep," said Blake. "I've a jolly good mind to stamp on the floor, though. Don't see why we should be dragged in here."

"Wathah not!"

"Oh, rats!" said Kerr.

"Eh?"

"Rats!" repeated Kerr serenely. "I'll be bound it'll be a jolly good lecture, and the subject's interesting enough, ain't it?"

"Yes; but—"

"It's having our half-holiday taken away, you see."

"Well, what are you going to do with your blessed half-holiday?" demanded Kerr.

"I don't know—"

"Mooch about and bite your nails. I suppose?" said the Scots junior, with a sniff. "You ought to be jolly glad to get a decent lecture to come to, instead!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Yaas, wathah! Wats, and many of them!"

A HIGH POSITION!



Bill: "Remember that chap Wally Smith? He's right on the rocks now."

Bob: "Poor chap! How's that?"

Bill: "He took a job as lighthouse-keeper!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Leslie Packer, c/o The Phoenix Social Club, Cromwell Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire.

"I fancy you're alone in your views, Kerr," sniffed Kangaroo.

"The majority's against you, my boy," said Figgins.

Kerr sniffed.

"Well, you know what Ibsen says: 'The majority's always in the wrong,'" he replied.

"My hat! The young beggar reads Ibsen—"

"Bai Jove, you know, I couldn't read that, you know!"

"No!" said Kerr sarcastically. "'Jack the Giant Killer' is more in your line, Gussy!"

"Weally, Kerr—"

"Silence, there!"

"The Head!"

"Br-r-r-r!" said Blake.

Then there was something like silence.

CHAPTER 6.

The Rag!

DR. HOLMES was on the platform now.

The Head looked very pale, and his pallor reminded the juniors of the fact that he had been under the doctor's hands for the past week. The Head was a robust man, considering his years, but he was a hard worker. If he did not feel up to the mark, it was hard to persuade him to leave his duties. He was likely to die in harness. He continued to take the Sixth Form, and to perform the services in the chapel, instead of taking the rest that the medical man recommended.

For the past two or three days, however, he had left the Sixth Form to Mr. Ralton, though he still continued his duties in chapel. The fellows who were near enough to the Head to see his face clearly, could see under what stress he was labouring at the present moment. He was in no fit state to give the lecture in the school hall, and he had evidently nerved himself for it by a great effort.

But the juniors crowded in the back of the hall saw nothing of the Head save his gown and a glimmer of his face. They knew it was the Head, and that was all. He was far from them, and the light was not good.

They saw him sip from the glass of water that stood ready for him, and then face his audience.

Then Gore and Mellish, simultaneously, began to stamp on the floor.

Stamp—stamp!

The sudden sound echoed very audibly through the hall, and there was a general turning of heads to see who was the cause of it.

As if it had been a signal, the stamping was taken up in various parts of the hall.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley stamped harder than anyone, careless if he was detected. In turning over a new leaf as regards his conduct, the Outsider of St. Jim's had not lost his old reckless hardihood of character.

Crooke and several other fellows answered back to stamping by scuffling their feet, and then, one by one, the other fellows joined in the rag.

Stamp—stamp! Scuffle—scuffle!

The noise was great, and it was growing.

The Head did not speak.

He stood looking at the audience, as if startled and confused by the sudden beginning of the rag.

Never before had the juniors dared to rag the Head.

Other masters had sometimes come in for some attention, but the general respect felt for the Head prevented any demonstration of the kind in his case.

It was not considered the "thing" at St. Jim's to show disrespect to the Head of the college.

But, as a matter of fact, the whole school was in a state of nerves at this time. The endless rain, day by day, necessitating confinement to the House, had caused depression, weariness, and bad temper. The moist atmosphere, too, had a lowering effect upon everyone. The Head himself was unwell. The boys were all in a state of nerves and nervous depression, easily capable of turning to unwholesome excitement and ill-humour.

Hence this outbreak, unprecedented in the history of St. Jim's.

Among the juniors, Tom Merry, as a rule, would have stood up for order—in any case, where the Head was concerned.

But, owing to the unfortunate incident in the passage, Tom Merry did not feel in the mood to interfere now.

He was more inclined, as we have said, to take part in the rag; to show that he was not "sucking up" to the masters, as Mellish put it.

He did not take part. But he sat quite still and silent, with his eyes straight before him, saying no word.

The excitement grew.

For a few seconds the masters and prefects, taken by surprise, allowed the disturbance to go on uninterrupted.

In those seconds it grew and grew, and the noise became deafening.

Stamp, scuffle, thump, whistle, and murmur!

The lecture hall echoed with disorderly sounds.

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, sprang to his feet.

"Silence!" he shouted.

No notice was taken.

The disturbance continued.

"Silence!"

Still the noise continued.

Mr. Railton came striding down the hall with an angry brow.

Then it ceased.

By the time the School House master was upon the spot, all the juniors were sitting quietly, with demure expressions upon their faces.

Mr. Railton cast a flashing glance round.

"How dare you make this disturbance!" he exclaimed.

There was a faint murmur.

"What is the matter with you? How dare you treat the Head with such gross disrespect!" the Housemaster exclaimed indignantly. "I am ashamed of you!"

"We want our half-holiday!" piped a voice from the back.

Mr. Railton swung in the direction of the voice.

"Who spoke?"

There was no answer.

"I command the boy who spoke to step out!"

No one stirred.

The School House master bit his lip. It was evident that the speaker did not mean to own up, and that the other fellows would not betray him.

"Keep silence here!" said the Housemaster. "Any boy creating any further disturbance will be punished!"

Again a murmur.

Mr. Railton affected not to hear it, and returned to his place.

Dr. Holmes had stood with one hand resting upon his table while this was going on. The Head was evidently not himself. In his normal state of health he would have dealt very promptly with the insubordination. Now he allowed it to pass. And this slackness, of which the disturbers did not realise the cause, emboldened them.

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"The Head hasn't said a word!" whispered Blake.

"He hasn't a word to say!" sniffed Kangaroo. "He knows we're being done out of our half-holiday!"

"Just so!" agreed Manners.

"It's rotten!"

"Unjust!"

"He's just going to begin."

"So are we!" grinned Gore.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Head had opened his lips to speak. But even as the first words came forth, the disturbance recommenced. Scuffling of feet was followed by loud murmuring, and even hissing.

The Head started.

"Boys!" he exclaimed.

But his words were lost in the din.

"Keep it up!" grinned Crooke. "We'll make him sick of the lecture before he's started it! Go it!"

"Stamp away!"

"Yah! Yah! Boo!"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Bai Jove, I wegard this, on wefflection, as bein' in wotten bad form, you know."

"Rats!"

"Weally, you fellows——"

"Shut up, D'Arcy!"

"Go it, you chaps!"

"I protest. It's wotten bad form to wag the Head, and I uttably wefuse to have anythin' to do with it."

"Oh, ring off!"

"I wefuse to wing off. I——"

"Go it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The noise grew deafening again. Mr. Railton came down the hall, looking like a thundercloud. Several prefects came with him. The noise died away.

"The prefects will stay here among the juniors and keep order, as the Lower School seems intent upon behaving in this disgraceful manner," said the School House master, his voice trembling with anger.

"Bai Jove!"

"Hullo!" exclaimed Jack Blake suddenly. "Look at the Head!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Look!"

Every eye was turned upon Dr. Holmes, as he stood at the table, supporting himself there with his hand on the edge. The stately form of the doctor was seen to sway unsteadily.

"He's ill!"

"Hold him!"

"Good heavens!"

Darrell of the Sixth leapt upon the platform.

He was just in time to catch the swaying form of the doctor as he fell.

CHAPTER 7.

Cut Off!

IN a moment the St. Jim's lecture hall was in wild confusion.

Darrell had lowered the doctor to the platform, and was supporting the grey head upon his knee, and calling for assistance.

In a few seconds Mr. Railton reached him.

"Dr Holmes! My dear doctor!"

The Head looked at him dizzily.

"Get me away from this," he murmured.

"Help me, Darrell—Kildare—Rushden!"

"Yes, sir."

The seniors gathered round the Head. He was raised from the floor, and stood feebly upon his feet. With the aid of the Housemaster and the prefects, he was half led, half carried from the lecture hall by the door at the upper end.

The hall was left in confusion.

The strange attack of the Head had taken the whole school by surprise.

Everyone remembered now that he had been unwell during the past week, and that he had looked "seedy" as he came into the lecture hall.

Had the effort been too much for his strength, added to the painful excitement caused by the rag?

The authors of the rag could have kicked themselves hard, now, as Monty Lowther miserably remarked.

They were all anxious to exculpate themselves, not so much in the eyes of others, as in their own eyes.

"I didn't know he was ill," said Blake. "I mean, I'd forgotten, and I never thought it was anything serious."

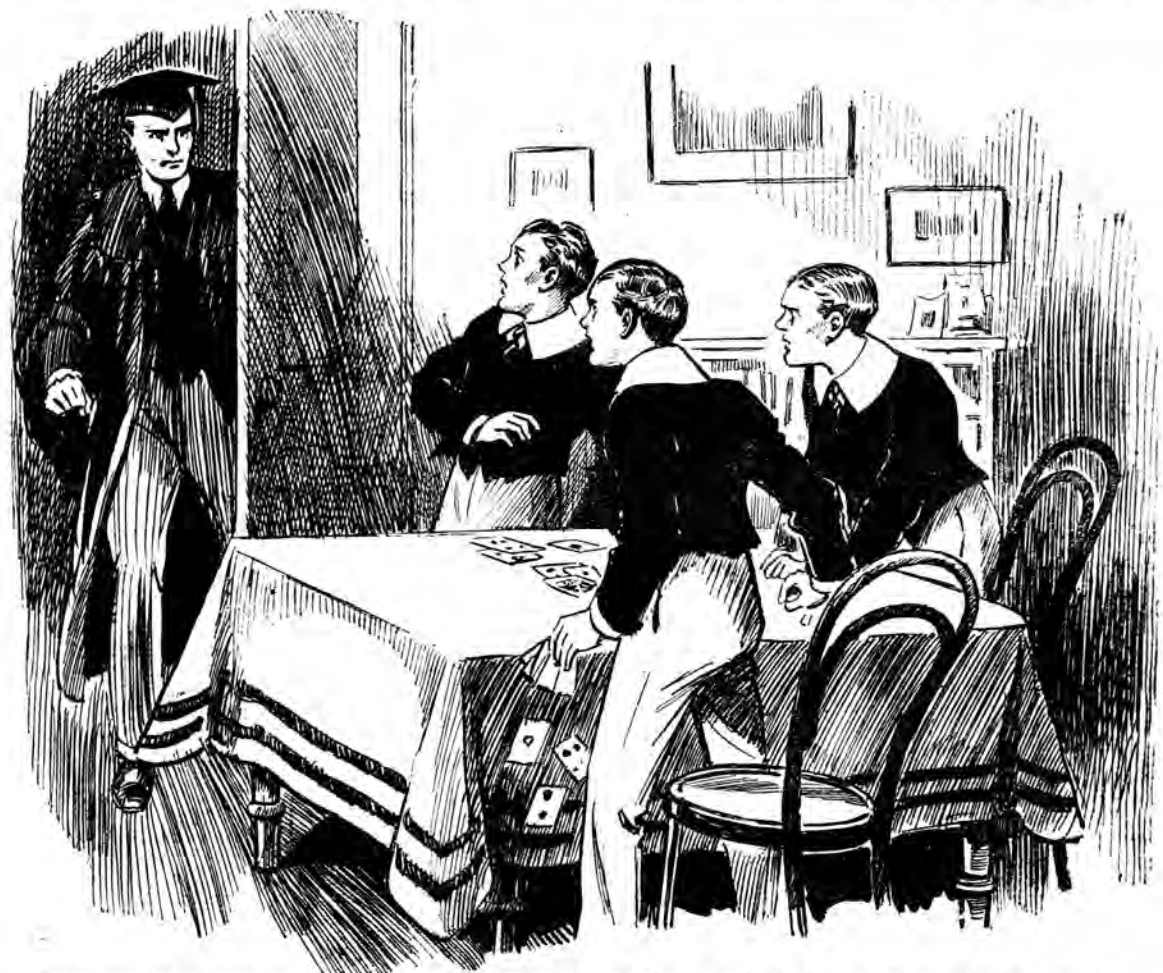
"I didn't, either."

"Never thought about it."

"Bai Jove, wathah not!"

"It's rotten."
 "I wonder if he's bad?"
 "It was caddish to treat him like that, anyway," grunted Blake. "He's been a jolly good headmaster to us, and treated us a lot better than we deserve."
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Poor old chap!"
 "Hallo! Here comes Railton!"
 "He's going to speak! Shut up, you fellows, let's hear!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 Mr. Railton came back into the hall, and the voices died away in silence. There was a dark cloud on the Housemaster's face.
 He held up his hand.
 "I hope that those who have been guilty of this wretched

Even Mellish and Crooke and Snipe had nothing to say. It would have been dangerous for them to air their usual opinions at that moment. The juniors were in no humour for Mellish's sneers or Crooke's cynical remarks. Silence had fallen upon them.
 The Head was ill!
 How ill, they did not know; but they could guess, from Mr. Railton's tone and manner, that it was serious.
 The rain was still beating incessantly upon the windows; the weather still lowered gloomily over the school, but the juniors were not thinking of that now. They were not thinking of drenched cricket fields and abandoned matches. They were thinking of their headmaster lying in his room, awaiting the doctor from Rylcombe.
 Their cheeks flushed with shame as they thought of that



As the study door suddenly opened, the juniors started to their feet. It was Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, and they were caught red-handed, with the cards and money still on the table!

disturbance will feel a sense of shame now!" he exclaimed. Dead silence.

"The Head is ill—very ill—much more so than was supposed, and what has happened here to-day has brought matters to a climax. That is all I have to say. You are dismissed; there will be no lecture. Keep as quiet as you can."

"Yes, sir," came the low, answering chorus.

The juniors were strangely silent.

The whole crowd quitted the lecture room. The threatened lecture was certainly "off" now, but no one felt pleased at that.

The juniors, especially, were not in a humour to be pleased. The Head was ill—very ill—and they had chosen that very time for treating him as he had never been treated before—with open disrespect.

Their cheeks were burning, and their eyes were down-cast as they crowded in silence out of the lecture hall. Mr. Railton had his wish. Those who had taken part in the disturbance were undoubtedly feeling thoroughly ashamed of themselves.

scene in the lecture hall, and of the Head standing there, his voice dying away under the disturbance.

"It's rotten," Tom Merry muttered again as he stood at the hall windows with his hands in his pockets, looking out gloomily into the drenching rain.

"We're all sorry about it," said Lowther.

"Yes, I know, but—"

"But that doesn't undo it," said Manners. "It's a rotten shame! But you didn't have anything to do with it, Tom; you were sitting as mum as a mummy all the time."

"I ought to have helped stop it."

"Oh, rats! You couldn't know the Head was seedy. I hope he isn't very bad. I wonder when the doctor will get here?"

"That's what I was thinking of," said Tom Merry quietly. "The doctor!"

"Yes. How is he to get here?"

"How is he to get here?" repeated Manners. "I suppose he will come in his car as usual."

"He can't. The road's flooded."

"My hat! I'd forgotten that."
 "I dare say a car could get through the flood," said Monty Lowther. "It can't be very deep on the road."
 "He hasn't been here to-day," said Tom Merry. "He usually came in the mornings to see the Head. He hasn't been to-day, and I fancy the road's stopped."

"The telephone was going in the Head's study this morning, too," Lowther remarked thoughtfully. "The doctor may have phoned to him that he couldn't come. But he'll manage to get through, as soon as he knows that Dr. Holmes is really worse, and in a serious state."

"Yes, I suppose he will manage it somehow, then."
 Lumley-Lumley joined the chums of the Shell. His face was very gloomy.

"Rotten, isn't it?" he said.
 "About the row? Yes."
 "I was as bad as anybody," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "I don't deny it. But I never knew that the Head was rocky. I wouldn't have done a whisper if I'd known."

"Nobody would, I fancy."
 "I guess so. We're all in the same boat. What's going to be done about getting a doctor here?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"Mr. Railton has phoned to Dr. Taylor."
 Lumley-Lumley shook his head.
 "Haven't you heard?" he said.
 "Heard—what?"

"The wires are broken, owing to the flood," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Broken!" Tom Merry exclaimed, catching his breath.

"Yes."
 "Then we're cut off!"
 Lumley-Lumley nodded.

"Yes, cut off. There's no way of getting to Rylcombe—of sending word to anyone, excepting by the road."

"And that's impassable," said Monty Lowther.

"I guess so."
 And the juniors stared out of the window gloomily. St. Jim's was cut off from the outer world—until the floods should subside!

What was going to be done?

CHAPTER 8.

Towser is Taken In!

HERRIES had missed the scene in the lecture hall. He had been feeding Towser, and in that absorbing occupation he had forgotten all about the promised lecture for the afternoon.

Towser was in a state of depressed spirits, like everybody else at St. Jim's. Towser missed his usual exercise, and Towser looked doleful as he blinked at the rain. He turned up his nose at his food, and hardly condescended to touch a mouthful, much to Herries' concern.

But Herries had made up his mind what to do. He released Towser from his kennel and led him towards the School House. In that blinding rain it was impossible to take a run in the open air, but Herries knew what he could do. Why shouldn't Towser have his little run along the passages of the School House?

There was no reason that Herries could see, unless it was the reason that dogs were not allowed in the School House. But this was a special occasion, and, besides, Herries refused to recognise that as a reason at all.

Anyhow, why should anybody know? That was the thought that occurred to Herries as he remembered—a little too late—that a lecture was impending. Everybody would be in the lecture hall—he would really have the School House to himself.

Nothing could be better—the moment could not have been more judiciously chosen. Herries bent his head to the wind, and rushed off towards the School House with Towser.

The rain came drenching down.

Herries had on a macintosh, thick boots, and a cycling cape wrapped over his head, but he was considerably wet before he reached the House. As for Towser, he was soaked, and covered with thick mud from nose to tail.

But Towser didn't care.

In spite of the rain, he was rejoicing in his freedom, and trying to run round and round Herries in his delight.

He succeeded in tripping Herries up once and smothering him with mud, but Herries didn't mind. He reached the School House, and entered by the side door which gave access to the Form-room passage.

Towser seemed unwilling to come in, but Herries finally coaxed him through the door. Then Towser shook a shower of mud off.

"My hat!" murmured Herries. "I think I'd better get him up to the study and give him a rub down before he has his run."

It really seemed advisable. Towser was reeking with

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rain and mud, and he left a muddy trail wherever he moved. Herries dragged him off to the stairs, and thick mud was left on every step trodden by Towser.

To Herries' surprise, fellows were standing about the passages and staircases. Some of them said things about Towser.

"Oh, rats!" said Herries. "Why ain't you fellows at the lecture?"

"Haven't you heard?" asked Clifton Dane.

"Heard what?" said Herries. "I've been feeding Towser. I've no time for lectures."

"The lecture's off."

"All the better."

"The Head's ill."

"The Head?"

"Yes, fainted in the hall."

"I'm jolly sorry for that," said Herries. "All right, Towser, I'm coming!"

And he piloted the bulldog upstairs. Herries had expected to have Study No. 6 to himself while he gave Towser his rub down. He opened the door, and found Blake and Arthur Augustus sitting there. Digby, usually the fourth occupant of the study, was absent.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his head and seemed almost petrified at the sight of the muddy bulldog.

D'Arcy had, of course, changed his clothes since the row in Tom Merry's study, and, excepting for a slight swelling on his aristocratic nose, he looked the elegant swell of St. Jim's once more.

"Bai Jove, Hewwies!" he ejaculated. "What do you mean by bwingin' that howwid beast here, you sillay ass!"

"I'm going to give him a rub down."

"The study will want a rub down after you've done it," said Blake.

"Well, what of it? I can't leave him like that."

"Oh, sling him out of the window!" Blake suggested.

"Ass!"

"Bai Jove, I wefuse to have that howwid bulldog wubbed down in this study!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "It will make the place howwid. You are bound to splash somethin' or somebody."

"You can get out if you don't like it, Gussy," suggested Herries pleasantly.

"I wefuse to get out. You can hardly expect me to wetiah in favour of a beastly bulldog, Hewwies."

"Then lend a hand and make yourself useful," said Herries crossly. "Get me something to rub Towser down with."

Blake grinned and handed Herries a duster. Towser certainly needed a rub down, but he did not seem to be in a humour for it. He twisted and wriggled as Herries started operations.

Suddenly Towser made a snap at the duster, wriggled himself away, and rushed under the table.

"Towser! You beast—I mean Towser! Come out!"

Towser declined to come out.

"Towser! Towser!"

Towser did not budge.

"Wonderful!" said Blake, winking at the ceiling.

"Amazing how he obeys the slightest sound of your voice."

"Hem!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Herries crossly. "I like a dog with some independence of character. Towser isn't one of your sneaking mongrels that do just as they're told."

"Come out, Towser, old boy! Come on!"

"Poke him out with the pokah," suggested D'Arcy.

Herries glared at him.

"You fathead!"

"Weally, Hewwies—I was only makin' a suggestion."

"Towser, old boy!"

Grrrrrrr!

"I should weally wecommand the pokah——"

Grrrrrrr!

"Shove your hand under the table and pull him out, Blake."

"No fear!" said Blake promptly.

"Towser, old boy! Come out, Towser!"

Grrrrrrr!

"Better lift the table away," said Herries.

"Yaas, wathah! Pway get that beastlay bulldog out of the studay as soon as poss."

"Oh, rats!"

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Lend a hand with the table, and don't jaw," said Herries.

The juniors grasped the table and lifted it away. It tilted a little in the process, and some books and an inkpot slid off upon the floor, but Herries said that could not be helped.

Towser was disclosed, and Herries made a dive to get hold of the chain attached to his collar. Towser dodged, and his master rushed round the study after him.

"Shut the door, Blake!" gasped Herries.
But Towser was first—even if Blake had been inclined to shut the door and keep him in—which he certainly wasn't. Towser rushed out of the study, and Herries rushed after him.
Blake shut the door.
"Betta lock it," suggested Arthur Augustus, with a grin. And Blake grinned, too, and locked it.

CHAPTER 9.

Herr Schneider Makes Terms!

"**W**HAT'S that blessed row?" exclaimed Manners peevishly.

Everybody seemed to be peevish just now in the School House. It was the same in the New House. There was a rumour that Figgins and Marmaduke Smythe had been pommelling one another over there, but perhaps it was only a rumour.

In the School House certainly fellows seemed inclined to grow snappish at the smallest provocation. Manners felt he had real cause for provocation. The negatives he had been developing when the Fourth Formers invaded the study had remained in the developer for a couple of hours, with the result that the unfortunate photographer had to throw them away. It was no wonder that Manners was peevish.

There certainly was a row in the passage, too—fellows running and calling. Tom Merry grunted as he rose from the armchair.

"Sounds like a dog loose," he said.
"Young Wally with his blessed Pongo, I suppose!" snorted Lowther.

"Or Herries with Towser."
"Oh, even Herries wouldn't be ass enough to bring Towser into the House on a day like this!" said Manners.

"I'll soon see," Tom Merry remarked, and he opened the study door.

"Stop him!"
It was Herries calling. Towser was dashing along the passage, with chain trailing and clinking behind him. Perhaps he thought Tom Merry had opened the study door on purpose to afford him a refuge. At all events, he dashed in.

"Stop him!"
"My hat!" exclaimed Lowther, jumping up. "Keep that beast out! He's smothered with mud! Keep him out!"
"Towser! Get out! Shoo!"

"Shoo!"
"Shoo!"
"Shoo!"

But Towser declined to be "shooed" off.
He retreated into a corner and growled and showed a set of teeth that might well have made a foe hesitate.

"M-my hat!" said Manners. "What a savage-looking beast! Herries had better come and take him out."

"Yes, rather!"
"Shoo!"
"Shoo!"

"You can't shoo him out; you'll have to boot him out," said Monty Lowther.

"That's the ticket!"
Armed with a bat, a stump, and the fire-shovel, the three chums advanced upon Towser, just as Herries arrived panting at the study door.

"Let my dog alone!" he roared.
"Take your blessed dog away, then!" said Lowther.

Towser blinked at him and sat tight. Herries advanced upon him cautiously and caught hold of the chain. Towser made another jump, jerked the chain out of his hand, and dashed out of the study.

"Stop him, Kangy!"
Kangaroo wisely did not attempt to stop Towser. He would certainly have been smothered with mud, and very probably bitten.

Towser raced off, with a crowd of juniors after him. The Terrible Three joined in the chase. If Towser were not recaptured there would very likely be trouble for Herries. It was not the first time Herries had got into trouble for bringing his bulldog into the School House.

"Oh, you duffer!" shouted Herries. "Why don't you stop him?"

"Faith, and why don't you?" exclaimed Reilly.
"Oh, don't jaw!"

"Mein gootness! Vat is tat after?"
Herr Schneider, the German master of St. Jim's, who had his quarters in the School House, came out of his study.

The fat German was short-sighted, and he only saw that some sort of chase was going on in the corridor.

"Poys," he shouted, "stop mit yourselves! Tat you stop tat running after! You vas hear me, ain't it?"
"Stop him!"

(Continued on next page.)



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

BLOCKHEAD!

Smith: "Our Form-master said the other day that I had the head of a future emperor."

Brown: "Sez you! He probably meant that any block of wood can be made into a ruler!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to P. Thayre, 25, Crescent Road, Brighton, Sussex.

THERE AND BACK!

Railway Passenger: "I want a return ticket, please—one of those advertised at cheap rates."

Booking Clerk: "Certainly, sir. And where do you want to go to?"

Passenger: "Why, back here, of course!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Sidney Juby, Ward Seven, Grove Hospital, Tooting Grove, London, S.W.17.

NEARLY THERE!

Nervous Aeroplane Passenger: "How far are we from the ground? Is it safe?"

Pilot: "Of course it is. Why, we're only a stone's throw away!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Hart, 131, Mansfield Road, Gospel Oak, London, N.W.3.

ANYTHING TO OBLIGE!

The thoroughfare was crowded, and the ill-tempered motorist was in a hurry.

"Look here," he roared to a costermonger trundling a barrow in front of his car. "Get out of the way, can't you?"

"Orl right, guv'nor," replied the coster. "Where d'you want me to go—up the lamp-post or dahn the drain?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. W. Harris, 92, Weedington Road, Kentish Town, London, N.W.5.

SAILORS DON'T CARE.

Tramp: "Could you do something for a poor old sailor mum?"

Old Lady: "Poor old sailor?"

Tramp: "Yes, mum; I've followed the water for twenty years."

Old Lady: "Well, you certainly do not look as if you have caught it up!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. Randles, 63, Morningside Road, West Derby, Liverpool, 11.

A SWALLOW OF ANOTHER SORT!

Diner: "Waiter, this soup is bad."

Waiter (indignantly): "Who told you that, sir?"

Diner: "A little swallow."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to L. Morris, Ward One, County Infirmary, Bowbridge Road, Newark, Notts.

TOUGH!

Brown: "The hen you sold me was no good."

Poultry Dealer: "It ought to have been—it won the hen show eleven years in succession!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Henry, 26, York Avenue, Sedgley Park, Prestwich, Manchester.

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"Ach! Mein gootness!"

Herr Schneider jumped clear of the floor as Towser rushed towards him.

He made one wild bound back into the study.

Towser rushed in after him.

It was the natural instinct of a dog to pursue whatever was running, and he dashed after Herr Schneider as a matter of course.

The fat German master rushed round his table and turned, panting, but Towser followed him round with gleaming teeth and fiery eyes.

Whether Towser would have used his teeth on the fat limbs of the German master is a doubtful question. But Herr Schneider certainly thought that he was going to use them.

He dashed round the table, with Towser snorting almost at his heels.

The juniors reached the door of the study and stood gazing in amazement.

Herr Schneider would never have been taken for a sprinter, but certainly he seemed to develop a wonderful form of speed as he raced round the study table.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Go it, Schneider!" yelled Lumley-Lumley.

"Go it, Towser!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Towser came up with the gasping German. Herr Schneider felt rather than heard him just behind, and he made a wild leap upon the table. The fat German would never have suspected himself of such activity—but terror lent it him. He landed on his hands and knees on the table, knocking books and inkstands, papers and German dictionaries and grammars flying in a shower on all sides.

There he remained, while Towser dashed round the table, growling with disappointment, apparently puzzled to know what had become of his enemy.

Herr Schneider cast an imploring glance towards the door.

"Mein poys," he gasped, "drive him out mit himself, ain't it before? I implore you mit yourselves, and to drive him mit you out, after, ain't it?"

Herr Schneider's English was mixed, but his meaning was clear.

Herries came shouldering his way through the grinning crowd at the study door and strode in.

"Herries," gasped Herr Schneider, "fat is your dog! You haf done ferry wrong to bring him into te House mit himself before; but if you get him away I pardons you!"

"Certainly, sir!"

Herries succeeded in getting his feet on the trailing chain and stopping Towser. Then he got a grip on the collar. Instantly all Towser's playfulness vanished, and he became perfectly quiet and obedient.

"Come on, Towser!"

Herries led the bulldog from the room. Tom Merry closed the door; but through the closed door came the sound of chuckles in the passage.

Herr Schneider was as red as a beetroot as he descended from his undignified perch upon the table.

"Mein gootness!" he murmured.

He regretted that hasty promise to Herries. But a promise was a promise, and Herr Schneider felt that he could not retract it now. But he mentally promised Herries some very close attention in the near future.

"You'd better get that beast out of the House while you've got him, Herries," Tom Merry remarked.

Herries granted.

"I'm going to give him a rub down."

He tried the door of Study No. 6. It was locked, and Herries kicked vigorously at the lower panels.

"Open this blessed door!"

"Towser there!" came Blake's voice from within.

"Yes."

"Then we're not opening the door!"

"Wathah not!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"But I want to bring Towser in!" shouted Herries.

"Rats!"

"Yaa, wats, deah boy!"

"Open the door!"

"Rats!"

"Wats!"

Herries snorted.

"I suppose you don't mind if I come in and give him a rub down in your study, Tom Merry?" he remarked.

"Don't I?" said Tom Merry. "If you want him brained with a poker you can bring him into my study."

"I suppose you wouldn't mind, Lumley—"

"If he were brained? Oh, no!"

"Ass! I mean, if I bring him into your study!" roared Herries.

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"I'll brain him myself if you do!"

Herries looked round wrathfully at the grinning juniors. There seemed to be no takers for Towser.

Kildare came along the passage and settled the matter. He stopped and glared at Towser and at the mud he had plentifully scattered over the passage.

"Herries, take that dog back to the kennels, and write out a hundred lines of Virgil for bringing him into the House!" rapped out the captain of St. Jim's.

"Oh!" said Herries.

And he departed with Towser.

The juniors watched him through the window. Towser was getting his run—Herries and the bulldog disappeared at top speed through the rain.

CHAPTER 10.

Lumley-Lumley's Fall!

RAIN! *

It was still coming down!

Lumley-Lumley, the Outsider of St. Jim's—seldom, as we said, called the Outsider now—came into his study, yawning dimly.

It was the blackest half-holiday he had known at St. Jim's.

The Head lay sick in his own house. Taggles, the porter, had been sent to attempt to carry a message to Rylcombe, since it was discovered that the school telephone was cut off.

He had not yet returned.

Few believed, however, that Taggles would succeed in getting through. The fellows were all feeling the Head's sickness keenly enough, and it reacted upon their spirits. Lumley-Lumley, who was always keenly alive to his very finger-tips, seemed to feel the general depression more than anybody else. He growled aloud as he came into his study with his hands in his pockets.

Mellish was there with Snipe. There was a smell of tobacco in the study, and, from the way Mellish held his hand under the table, it was evident that he had just thrust a cigarette out of sight.

Lumley-Lumley frowned.

Time had been—and not so long ago—when Lumley-Lumley was leader and chief in this kind of thing; and his study in the Fourth Form passage was the centre of all the blackguardism that went on in the Lower School.

That time had passed.

Lumley-Lumley had changed; but his former associates had not done so. Lumley-Lumley had, however, reformed himself without becoming priggish. He advised the others to do the same, but he did not preach at them.

Some of his former followers had followed his example; but Mellish and Snipe were not among them.

They seemed to take a delight in keeping up the old traditions of the "smart set" in the Lower School. They also enjoyed annoying Lumley-Lumley on the subject, and, as they shared the Outsider's study, they were able to do that very easily.

There was generally a scent of tobacco in the study, and it was a continual exasperation to the Outsider, especially as any suspicious prefect, knowing his old habits, might put his head into the study at an inopportune moment and jump to the conclusion that the black sheep of the Fourth had been smoking again, and, in fact, relaxed into his old habits.

The two young rascals looked at Lumley-Lumley with a sneer as he came in.

"Will you have a cigarette?" asked Mellish, withdrawing his own "gasper" from concealment as he saw that the newcomer was only a junior.

"No," said Lumley-Lumley.

Snipe drew a pack of cards out of his pocket, where he had hastily thrust them as the door opened.

"We were going to have a little game to while away the time," he said. "This weather is enough to drive a chap dotty! We can't get out, and nothing's going on indoors, and all the fellows are looking as solemn as owls because the Head's seedy. I'm sick of it, and I should think that you are! What do you say to a game of banker?"

"No."

"Oh, don't be ridiculous, you know!" yawned Snipe. "Haven't you kept up this new game long enough? I never could stand good little Georgies!"

Lumley-Lumley flushed.

That was his tenderest spot, so to speak. He had strength of mind enough to lead a decent life, in spite of the past, but he dreaded being considered "goody-goody."

"Oh, shut up!" he said roughly.

"Been reading 'Alec; or Bit by Bit'?" sneered Mellish,

(Continued on page 14.)

GATHER ROUND, CHUMS, FOR MORE NOTES AND NEWS FROM—



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

A SCHOOLBOY friend of mine remarked the other day: "School's all right, but it would be a whole lot better if there weren't any masters!" "Carried unanimously," I can hear you fellows say!

Well, in next week's story of Tom Merry & Co.,

"ST. JIM'S WITHOUT MASTERS!"

that's just what does happen. Every single master in the school, from the Head to the Third Form Master, is away from St. Jim's—and even the prefects are absent with them. Around that lively situation Mr. Martin Clifford has written a yarn full of rollicking fun and tingling adventure. You simply mustn't miss it!

There are also further ripping chapters of our popular serial,

"THE SCHOOL FROM 'DOWN UNDER'!"

and all the usual weekly features—the GEM Jester, "Tom Merry's Weekly," Mr. Brooks' Chat, and my own Notebook.

But just a word of warning. I know that when next week's GEM gets about among the fellows who buy their copies early, those chaps will start telling their friends what a really ripping issue it is. That will mean extra copies being sold, and the latecomers will be greeted by their newsgents with: "No more GEMS left—sold out!"

There you have the reason why I am always asking you fellows to give your

newsagent a regular weekly order. It costs you nothing to do so, but it safeguards you against having your copy sold to someone else. If you like, you can ask to have your weekly copy delivered at your home every Wednesday morning, and then you'll save yourself the trouble of having to collect it from the shop. Write to me!

AMAZING MOTOR-RACES.

R. J. Collins, a Birmingham reader of the GEM, wants to know which is the most strenuous motor-race in the world. It's a matter of opinion, for some races are considered difficult on account of the course over which they are run, and others because they last a very long time, and, therefore, test the endurance of cars and drivers very severely. The Targa Florio, for instance, is held over the steep mountain passes of Sicily, and the course is so difficult that even the finest drivers in the world's fastest cars can only average about 45 m.p.h. Then there is the Swedish Grand Prix, which is run in the depth of winter over ice-bound, snow-blocked roads; the Monaco Grand Prix, where no straight stretch is longer than a mile and there are nearly 1,000 corners to be negotiated; and the Grand Prix de Tripoli, held over desert roads under the midsummer heat of the tropical sun. These are all comparatively short races, but both France and Belgium have road-races which last for twenty-four hours—a complete day and night—and the French event is generally considered the most important and most arduous motor-race in the world.

TALES ABOUT TAILS!

Scientists have been trying to find out to what purposes animals put their tails, and some very interesting facts have been brought to light. The anteater, for instance, which has a big bushy tail, uses it as a sunshade; the alligator uses his as a weapon for knocking victims into the water, where he can seize them; the beaver uses his as a rudder, a trowel for modelling his mud-built dam, and as an alarm-gun for signalling to his friends by smacking it on the water; the penguin and kangaroo use theirs as a support when resting; and the kinkajou employs his as a safety-rope when climbing about in the branches of trees. Some animals' tails are apparently quite useless. The elephant, for instance, has a funny "little bit stuck on behind" which can only be explained as one of Nature's practical jokes!

A BATTLE OF WITS!

A little story from a recent Test match. A certain newsreel company had obtained sole rights to film the game, and cameramen from other companies were not allowed inside the ground. But, not to be beaten, the rival photographers had a stand built outside the fence, and, using this as a viewpoint, proceeded to film the cricket. The members of the other newsreel company thereupon bought a balloon, filled it with coal-gas, and fixed it in position in front of the "pirates'" home-made grand stand, so as to block their view of the match. Shortly afterwards the balloon mysteriously burst—by accident!

LOST—A CROCODILE!

If any Lancashire readers of the GEM happen to come across a crocodile in the street one of these days, he need not jump to the conclusion that he is "seeing things," for a baby crocodile has escaped from its owner's house at St. Helen's, and cannot be found. It's only a little one—just two feet long—but it can bite hard enough to make it an unpleasant customer to pick a quarrel with. This is the second time crocodiles have escaped from private zoos recently, for not long ago ten baby crocodiles got loose at Shepperton, near London, and took up their home in the River Thames. Some were recaptured, but the others disappeared, and probably died from exposure.

THE EDITOR.

Albert Gough, 39, Hartington Road, Gloucester, wants a pen pal in Australia; interested in rabbits, birds, and birds' eggs.

Frederick C. Marshall, Elm Cottage, Crookham Common, near Newbury Berks, wants a pen pal in Texas, or Mexico; age 13-16.

Edward Collard, Edgehill, 5, Leeming Lane, Mansfield Woodhouse, Notts, wants a pen pal in Australia, or New Zealand; interested in Test Cricket and sports generally; age 13-14.

Jack Hudson, 560, Englehardt Street, Albury, N.S.W., Australia, wants to hear from stamp collectors in British Empire and U.S.A. Glad to exchange photos of Australia for those of the old country.

Miss Eileen Jarman, 3, Griffin Street, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa, wants girl correspondents; age 12-16; sports, books, films.

Howard Couch, 83, Clare Street, Portland, South Australia, wants correspondents anywhere; age 10-15.

Charles J. Waugh, Foster Street, Maffra, Victoria, Australia, wants a pen pal in England or South Africa; age 17-18.

Eric Fayne, Modern School, Surbiton, Surrey, wants to hear from readers who have made a hobby of collecting old GEMS, etc., before 1917.

E. Dawson, Gracemere Street, Newmarket, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, wants a pen pal interested in athletics; age 14-18.

E. G. Head, 87, Winstanley Road, Wellingborough, Northants, wants a pen pal in Africa, Australia, or U.S.A. interested in sports and stamps; age 15-16.

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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 Constance Leeckerhoff, 151, Laviolette Avenue, Three Rivers, Pro. Quebec, Canada, wants girl correspondents; age 18-20; sports, especially swimming and skiing.

Harold W. Whittle, 29, Alsop Street, Semaphore, South Australia, wants correspondents interested in gold-fish and their management.

A. E. Sadler, 5, Avon Street, Suspension Bridge, Sydney, Australia, wants correspondents; age 16-17.

Darcy O'Brien, 9, Ratiray Street, Devonport, Auckland, New Zealand, wants correspondents; age 15-17; stamps, football, tennis, swimming.

W. H. Sheasby, Oakley, Slade Road, Roughley, Sutton Coldfield, nr. Birmingham, wants to hear from stamp collectors in British Empire and France; is also keen on football.

Miss Kathleen Bere, 33, Purley Vale, Purley, Surrey, wants girl correspondents; any country except France; age 18-20; sports, books, walking.

THE MAROONED SCHOOL!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lumley-Lumley did not reply. He sat down in an armchair, put his feet on the fender, and opened a book.

"Play!" yawned Snipe.

The young rascals began to play. They were playing for coppers, and a great many coppers changed hands, with silver among them.

The click of the money and the swishing of the cards awoke old memories in Lumley-Lumley's mind.

He glanced up from his book more than once.

Snipe caught his eye, and grinned. He knew what was passing in the Outsider's mind.

After that Lumley-Lumley kept his eyes fastened upon his book; but he was no longer reading.

"Hang it," said Snipe suddenly, "you've cleared me out, Mellish!"

Mellish grinned.

"Only five bob!" he said.

"It's all I had!"

"Borrow some from Lumley!"

"Oh, Lumley-Lumley's turned too good to lend a chap any money," said Snipe.

"I'll lend you some tin if you like," said the Outsider, looking up.

"Good! You can have it on Saturday—or now, if I win!"

With that fresh capital Snipe started again. He was looking anxious and angry—the inevitable feelings roused in gamblers who cannot afford to lose.

The game was changed to nap now, and Snipe conned over his cards anxiously.

"Look here, Lumley," he said, "what would you call?"

Lumley-Lumley glanced at his cards. After all, he could do that without playing himself—in fact, it was only polite.

The junior was already beginning to juggle with his conscience. It was the first step downwards.

"Make it nap," he said.

"Good! Nap!" said Snipe.

Snipe won.

The luck had changed. The little pile of money lying before Mellish on the table gradually changed sides, and Snipe grinned and returned the Outsider his loan of ten shillings. Mellish was not grinning now; he was scowling.

"Why don't you take a hand, Lumley?" urged Snipe. "Three makes the thing livelier than two. This is rotten!"

"I don't play."

"Just for once! We don't get weather like this every day, you know, and a chap must do something to keep his blood in circulation."

Lumley-Lumley hesitated.

The old spirit was still strong within him. He had hitherto been able to keep it within bounds. But it was growing too strong for him now.

Snipe, as if Lumley-Lumley had consented, dealt out cards for three. Mellish and Snipe took up their hands.

"Waiting for you, Lumley!" said Snipe, without looking round.

One moment more the Outsider hesitated, then he took up the cards. The tempter had won!

"Three!" said Mellish.

"Nap!" said Lumley-Lumley.

They played.

Lumley-Lumley was taking his last trick when the study door suddenly opened. The three juniors started to

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No. 24. Vol. 1. (New Series).

MONTY LOWTHER CALLING



Hallo, everybody! Wanna fly? I'll catch one for you! The footballer sat heavily in a chair.

"I'm a little stiff from Rugby," he explained. "I don't care who you are or where you come from!" snapped his listener.

A fast bowler was wreaking havoc on the batsman as well as the wickets. "Who is he?" gasped someone.

"The local vicar's son," came the answer. "By the way he bowls," gasped the victim, "I should think he was a Vickers, Son, and Maxim!"

(The famous arms manufacturers). Figgins tells me hikers should take particular care of their feet.

A case of where ignorance is blisters! Two Scots went bathing. One said: "Bet you I can stay under longer than you!"

Both submerged. The police are still looking for the bodies. The Head's wife entertained some fags to tea as a special treat.

Wally D'Arcy ate surprisingly little, and the Head's wife asked him if he was suffering from loss of appetite.

"No, ma'am!" responded Wally. "What I'm suffering from is politeness!"

One of the school housemaids was boasting to a friend in the village: "I've got a good place," she said. "I came out to-day at three o'clock, and I can go back when I like!"

"My place is better than that," said her friend. "My mistress said I needn't go back!"

Now, come closer: "Oh, yes," said Gore, "my cousin is a crack oarsman. He's won hundreds of races, and each time he has the name and date painted on his scull."

"Dear me," said Skimpole, "he must have a skull as big as an elephant!" Dame Taggles was annoyed because the medicine she had been expecting by post hadn't arrived, so she complained at the Rylcombe post office.

"Kindly fill in this form and state the nature of the complaint!" snapped the post-mistress. "Well, if you must know," retorted Dame Taggles, "it's indigestion!"

"Do you stop at the Ritz?" demanded Mr. Rateliff of the London bus conductor. "What, on my salary?" gasped the conductor.

Skimpole came up to me to-day. "Mellish wants to borrow five pounds from me, Lowther," he said. "Do you think he is good for that amount?"

"Oh, yes, with proper securities," I answered. "I suggest a chain and padlock, a pair of handcuffs, and a watch dog!"

"Oh, how I enjoyed the beautiful Gorge at Cheddar!" said the American tourist's wife. "Yep!" agreed the American. "It was the only square meal we got!"

Gore submitted a bunch of what he no doubt thought were original jokes to Tom Merry as Editor of this "Weekly." Tom Merry sent them back with the following note:

"Dear Gore, Your jokes received. Some we have seen before, some we have not seen yet!"

Figgins believes in sun-bathing, wet or fine. Basking for trouble! He also states that sun-bathers should live on honey. We advise him not to keep his bees too near! A stinging reply, that.

Oodles of luck!

Tom Merry

THE OLD BOYS ST. JIM'S HAVE A C

Wally D'Arcy at the Microphone

End-of-term examinations occupying some of the regular St. Jim's First Eleven, Kildare filled two vacancies with Tom Merry and Fatty Wynn—junior batting and bowling champions. There is a big muster of juniors to see how their chums fare against the Old Boys' XI, captained by Lionel Frobisher, an old school captain and county player, and also including Bruce, a "demon" bowler!

Kildare wins toss, and decides to bat first, opening himself with Darrell. Bruce goes on to bowl—and has an early success, Darrell giving a catch in the slips off the third ball. Hard luck, Darrell! Rushden comes out to bat, and sticks—now Kildare is making runs. Bruce bowls like a hurricane, but Kildare is his usual imperturbable self—picking the right ball to hit with unerring judgment, and banging anything the least bit loose swiftly to the boundary!

Rushden goes, and Monteith gives us some fireworks for a brief period. The total is still under fifty, however, when Tom Merry makes his appearance, a trim figure as he walks coolly to the crease. His first stroke is a smashing drive clean over the bowler's head. His second is an open-shouldered sweep to the leg boundary! His third is a perfectly-timed on-drive, which speeds across the carpet for "four"! That finishes the over. A bright and profitable partnership follows now, and it is only after hitting up an invaluable 34 that Tom Merry finally gives a hard catch, which Frobisher hangs on to! Saints all out for 130. Kildare, not out, 72.

The Old Boys open in promising style with Frobisher and Bruce, their best men. The Old Boys usually bring down a strong team, and lick us easily; but this time there is more than a hope for the School. Frobisher, who has played against the "Aussies," deals successfully with everything the St. Jim's trundlers can send him—till Kildare gives the

Flying Squad Report

SQUAD FIGHT FOREST FIRE

Flying Squad week-end camp startled by news of woodland on fire! Flying Squad out of hangars, and fit for the air in a few seconds! Chief Air-Marshall Merry led fire-fighting squadron to scene of blaze. Flying Squad seized branches and set example to excited village youths by beating out flames. Child panicked and ran screaming into the thick of the smoke. Chief Air-Marshall Merry, at great personal risk, dashed after her, and finally reappeared with child, gasping for air and singed, but otherwise, unhurt! Villagers, following Flying Squad's lead, backed up nobly. Fire beaten back—under control at last, thanks to Chief Air-Marshall Merry and his gallant Squad. Merry's heroism cheered by villagers—and for once, Chief Air-Marshall Merry ordered retreat, to escape embarrassing gratitude of rescued child's relatives!

Merry's Weekly



Week Ending July 28th, 1934.

BOYS' MATCH
A GREAT "WYNN"

ball to Fatty Wynn, the Welsh wizard. Fatty bowls a deceptive slow delivery, but the ball nips off the pitch with an unexpected "break." It does so now—and, by Jove, Frobisher plays forward—misses—clickety-click, his stumps are down! Oh, good man, Wynn!

Now, watch! The rest are frankly not up to standard, and this is Fatty Wynn's day! The Old Boys "process" in and out for a total of 40. Following on, a thing they have not done for years, the Old Boys find Wynn in unstoppable form! The innings is swiftly over—all out 129.

Saints are set 42 to win—not many, but time is getting short! Kildare wisely decides to make a bid for a win. He opens with Darrell, the instructions being: Hit, or get out! Darrell smites a four—and falls to the next ball! No fault of his; there is no time to get your eye in now! Monteith makes a good show—oh, heck! Kildare himself, with 10 to his credit, mistimes one and gives the wicket-keeper a chance! Out! Here comes Tom Merry. Go it, Shellfish!

Merry leaps out at the very first ball. The umpires will draw stumps in a few minutes. Merry slams the ball hard to the ropes—again, and again! Only 8 runs wanted now! Merry snicks the last ball for a single, takes the bowling, and drives into the long field for two. Five wanted—Bruce bowling. Flash!—clack!—it's up there, a speck in the blue. Jumping catfish, boys, Merry's hit a "six" clean over the pavilion roof, and St. Jim's have beaten the Old Boys for the first time in fifteen years! Hurrah!

St. Jim's News Reel

"Camping is the breath of life," says Blake. Of course, if it blows half a gale, you can have too much breath!

Skimpole paraded ready for camping. He had twelve pounds of provisions strapped on his back, together with a saucepan, a kettle, a cooking-stove, a trestle chair, and a collapsible table. He must have felt like a Mopsible Skimpole!

Fatty Wynn says he likes camping because you can eat just whenever you want to. It's advisable however to avoid orchards—farmers are apt to be so touchy!

CALIBAN'S PUZZLE CORNER

To assist in aerial manoeuvres, a naval commander wished to place twenty-seven buoys over a wide area of sea, so that the buoys would be in ten rows, with six buoys in each row.

How did he place his twenty-seven buoys to gain the desired effect?

LOOK
THROUGH
OUR
TELEVISORPATRICK
REILLY
SPEAKING

Sure, you must understand it's a great pleasure to speak with ye all over the televisor, face to face with ourselves, as it were. There's nothing I like better than a cheery chat with people, being Irish by birth and by nature sociable.

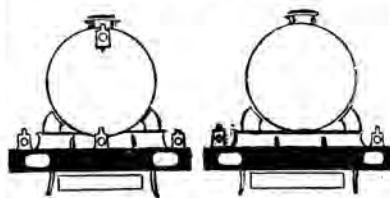
Since coming to St. Jim's I've made a lot of new friends. They're a fine fighting bunch—take Tom Merry, the junior captain, for instance—there's a broth of a boy for ye! Tom Merry is the sort of Englishman an Irishman would like to have been if he weren't an Irishman, which is much better, of course, if you'll pardon me saying so. They say in Ireland we talk in a rather mixed way, but don't you believe it! They say we have the pigs and the hens and the rest of the farmyard to breakfast with us in the kitchen—but don't you believe it. We may have the pigs and the hens, but never anything bigger. How in St. Michael's name would we be getting them in?

I enjoy being at St. Jim's. I kissed the Blarney Stone before I came, and if you kiss that you know you can be sure of good luck for seven years. I've made a start with some fine friends, by playing football and cricket for my Form, and now by being asked to speak to the readers of the GEM like this!

While I'm here I must tell you that in Ireland we have the finest scenery in the world. If you can beat the lakes of Killarney, for instance, you can't! Ask Kildare, who comes from Killarney—he's captain of St. Jim's, as an Irishman should be. I believe Kildare has English ancestry as well, but let that pass.

Now, I mustn't detain you, but I wouldn't be Irish if I wasn't after telling you a story before I go. "Your ticket," said the ticket collector to the Irishman, "is for Manchester, and we are travelling to London!" "Begob!" gasped the Irishman. "Does the droiver know?"

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



The engine shown last week carried four lamps, as at left. An express passenger engine carries only two lamps, as at right.

their feet. In their eagerness they had not noticed the tap on the door, and it was immediately followed by the opening of the door.

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, stood in the doorway, looking in.

CHAPTER 11.

The Black Sheep!

JEROLD LUMLEY LUMLEY groaned aloud.

In an instant he realised what his conduct had cost him. The accusing glance of the Housemaster was not needed.

Snipe and Mellish were silent. Mellish was trembling, terrified almost out of his wits at being caught gambling by the Housemaster. Snipe was cool, but his heart was sinking.

There was no possibility of disguise. There lay the cards on the table—the cards and the money.

Mr. Railton was silent for some moments.

"I'm sorry to see this," he said at last; "You have been gambling—playing cards for money!"

"Yes, sir," said Snipe.

"Is this how you keep your promise, Lumley-Lumley?"

The Outsider was silent. Then:

"I'm sorry, sir!" he faltered.

"You have said that before, Lumley!"

Lumley-Lumley winced.

"I know I have, sir," he said. "I—I suppose I haven't a right to expect you to believe me. But this is the first time since—the time you were so kind to me, sir, and I stopped doing this kind of thing."

"The first time, Lumley?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you are going back to your old ways?"

"No, sir. I—I know I'm to blame!" said the Outsider desperately. "I—I suppose I'm a fool! I don't ask not to be punished, sir."

"It is not a question of that, Lumley. You will certainly be punished. But I feel that you are not to be trusted! So long as you associate with the other boys you will lead them into temptation."

Lumley-Lumley's lips opened and closed again.

Mr. Railton was watching him closely. "Who was responsible among you for this play?" he asked.

"I guess we were all to blame, sir!"

"I know that, Lumley. But from your record I cannot but consider that you were the leader. If the Head were not ill I should take you before him at once. As it is, the matter will stand over until he has recovered. Meanwhile, I shall see that you have no opportunity of leading other boys in your Form astray. Mellish and Snipe will occupy other studies for the present."

Mellish drew a deep breath, and Snipe clicked his teeth. It was natural that Mr. Railton should take this view of the matter, yet it seemed to the chief delinquents too good to be true.

"You will leave this study to Lumley-Lumley," said Mr. Railton. "Kindly refrain from speaking to him again until you have my permission!"

"Yes, sir," said Mellish.

"Each of you will take five hundred lines!" said Mr. Railton. "This is a light punishment for what you have done, but I am taking into consideration the fact that you were acting under the influence of Lumley-Lumley! You will go into Hancock's study for the present, Mellish, and you, Snipe, into Blake's!"

"Yes, sir."

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"I trust, Lumley, that you will reflect over this, and if by any chance Dr. Holmes allows you to remain at this school, I hope the lesson will not be lost on you."

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley did not reply.

He stood like one crushed.

Mr. Railton quitted the study, closing the door behind him. The three juniors looked at one another.

"You rotten cads!" said Lumley-Lumley.

Snipe shrugged his shoulders.

"You've got it in the neck, and no mistake!" he remarked.

"If you'd been decent, you'd have owned up."

"Owned up! To what?"

"Making me play."

"I didn't make you play; I invited you. But I suppose you're old enough to mind your own business, ain't you?" said Snipe. "What rot! I couldn't make you play. You'd play of your own accord, or not at all."

Lumley-Lumley burst into a bitter laugh.

"Quite right!" he said. "I guess you're right, too. I suppose I'm as big a blackguard as you are, if you come to that."

"Look here, Lumley—"

"Shut up!" said Lumley-Lumley. "I've had enough of you, anyway."

He picked up the cards, and flung them into the fire, which had been lit, as it was cold. Snipe made a movement as if to save them, and Lumley-Lumley thrust him back.

"Stand off!" he snapped.

"They're my cards!"

"Why didn't you tell Mr. Railton so?"

Snipe was silent.

The cards burned up and were consumed. Lumley-Lumley turned to the two cads of the Fourth with a bitter expression upon his face.

"Get out of my study!"

"Your study!"

"I guess you heard what Mr. Railton said. I'm not fit for good lads like you to associate with. I'm tainted. Anyway, this is my study now—mine alone till further orders! Get out!"

"I'll go when I choose!" said Mellish.

Lumley-Lumley threw open the door.

"You'll go when I choose!" he said.

Mellish did not move. The Outsider advanced towards him with his hands clenched, and Mellish sidled round the table. He slipped out of the door with a scowling face. Lumley-Lumley turned upon Snipe.

"Are you going?"

Snipe yawned.

"Oh, yes! I'm sure I don't want to stay. I can't say that I find your company either cheerful or beneficial. Sorry if you get expelled."

And Snipe stepped out of the study.

Lumley-Lumley clicked the door shut, and threw himself into a chair. The rain beat against the panes; the clouded sky was growing darker.

"I guess it's all over now," Lumley-Lumley said miserably, staring into the leaping blaze of the fire. "What a fool I've been!"

He turned his head as a junior entered the study. It was Tom Merry. There was a keen and cheerful look upon Tom Merry's face as the firelight played upon it. It was very dusky in the study now, and the dancing firelight made the only illumination, and Tom Merry could not clearly see the face of the Outsider.

"Glad you're here, Lumley!" he exclaimed. "I've got an idea—if you're game."

"Oh!"

Tom Merry peered at him in the dusk.

"Anything wrong?"

"Oh, no!"

"I thought your voice sounded queer."

"I guess it's nothing. Sit down and get on. What's the idea?" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Shall I turn on the light?"

"No; sit down."

Tom Merry sat down. He was wondering a little, and he could not help thinking that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was out of sorts; but, after all, everybody at St. Jim's was out of sorts that day. The Outsider sat very quietly in the dusk, staring at the fire.

CHAPTER 12.

Yes or No!

TOM MERRY peered at Lumley-Lumley in the gloom of the study.

When a gleam of firelight played upon the Outsider's face Tom Merry thought that it looked unusually pale. But he could not be sure.

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"Well, what is it?" asked Lumley-Lumley restlessly.

"Taggles has come back."

"He can't get through?"

"No."

"I guessed that was how it would be. I went up to the tower before sundown, and looked with my field-glasses," said Lumley-Lumley. "The meadows are all under water, and it's deep on the lane."

Tom Merry nodded.

"So the message can't get through to the doctor?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"No," said the Shell fellow. "Taggles gave it up, and then Mr. Railton tried in his car, but he had to turn back. The flood water was over twenty feet deep in places on the road."

"My hat!"

"It seems that it's impossible to get through," said Tom Merry. "And as it's dark now it will be harder. I don't know how Dr. Taylor will get here, even if a message gets through to him."

"Can he swim?"

"I don't know; but not that distance, certainly."

"What about a boat?"

"The water isn't deep enough for that. It's ten or twelve feet deep in the hollows, you see, and only six inches or a foot on the high ground. In two or three places the road is still above water."

"The Head is getting worse," went on Tom Merry. "They say that the effort he made this afternoon quite knocked him up, and then the reception he got in the lecture hall was the finishing touch."

"It was rotten."

"Beastly!"

There was a short silence. Lumley-Lumley stared into the fire. Probably he was thinking more of his own troubles than of the Head's at that moment. He turned suddenly round to Tom Merry.

"You said you had an idea?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"About getting through to Rylcombe?"

"Yes."

"You want me to help you?"

"I thought of it."

"Go ahead!" said the Outsider tersely.

"I'm a good swimmer," said Tom Merry. "I don't want to swank, you know that. I've taken the top swimming prizes in the Lower School and beaten competitors from the Fifth. You're just as good, though you haven't gone in for it so much."

"Well?"

"We two might go together."

Lumley-Lumley drew a quick breath.

It was a startling proposition. Tom Merry was proposing something from which most of the St. Jim's fellows—seniors as well as juniors—would have shrunk; and small blame to them.

To face a dark, flooded road in the heavy rain on a dark night—it was no light task for anybody to undertake.

But there was something reckless and devil-may-care in it that just appealed to the nature of the reckless Outsider.

And Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was at that moment in a mood for reckless deeds. He had ruined himself at St. Jim's, he knew that.

It seemed to him at that moment that he would have cared little even if the floods had swept him away to death.

"Well, what do you say?" asked Tom Merry anxiously.

Lumley-Lumley looked at him in the darkness.

The firelight flashed up, played upon his face, and showed it strangely pale and eager, the eyes strangely gleaming.

"Do you know what you are proposing?" he asked.

"I think so."

"We may lose our way in the dark and the rain; we may get into the flooded fields; we may be swept into the river."

"I know that."

"When we turn our backs on the school it may be for the last time," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley deliberately. "We may be going to our deaths, Tom Merry."

"I know it."

"And you don't care?"

"Yes, I do care; but it's for the Head's sake."

"For the Head's sake?" repeated Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes."

Tom Merry felt a keen sense of disappointment. Knowing Lumley-Lumley's reckless nature as he did, he had imagined that the Outsider would leap at this reckless adventure. The Outsider was the only fellow he would have asked, for the Outsider was the only swimmer in the Lower School whose powers equalled Tom Merry's. And swimming would be needed more than anything else.

"You do not care to come?" asked Tom Merry slowly.

The Outsider laughed.

"Why don't you ask me in plain English if I'm afraid?" he said.

"I didn't mean that. Any fellow would have a right to hang back from such a thing; it wouldn't be cowardice."

"I'm not afraid."

"Do you care to come, then?"

The Outsider was silent for a moment.

Tom Merry waited.

There was a strange inflexion in the voice of the Outsider when he broke silence at last, his eyes gleaming strangely still as he fixed them upon Tom Merry in the dusk.

"For the Head's sake?" he repeated.

"Yes."

"Suppose," said Lumley-Lumley slowly—"suppose, Tom Merry, that instead of being the kind of fellow you are, you had been brought up amongst tough and rough people—that you'd had to fight for yourself in a hard world before you were ten years old—that you'd knocked about the cities of Europe and America till you'd become as hard and unscrupulous and determined as the men you had to contend with—and suppose, after all that, wealth came into the family, and you came to a school like this, among fellows of your own age, who hadn't seen as much life in their fifteen years as you had seen in fifteen days."

"Well?"

"Under those circumstances I dare say you'd have started at St. Jim's as I did—you'd have been nicknamed the Outsider, perhaps."

"Perhaps," said Tom Merry.

"And suppose that after you'd turned over a new leaf and became decent, and tried to be like the better sort of chaps, and succeeded in a way, that you'd been tempted to fall back into the old ways sometimes."

"I suppose I should be tempted like that."

"And suppose that once—mind, only once—you'd fallen back, acted in the old blackguardly way, chiefly through being bothered and tempted by a worse rotter than yourself—"

"Lumley!"

"And at that very moment you were discovered by a master—"

"Ah!"

"And that your conduct was to be reported to your headmaster as soon as he was sufficiently recovered to hear about it, so that at the earliest convenient moment you could be expelled from the school—"

"You don't mean—"

"Yes, I do."

"Oh, Lumley, I'm terribly sorry!"

The Outsider gave a hard laugh.

"If things were like that with you, Tom Merry, would you be keen to help in getting the doctor for the Head?"

Tom Merry was silent.

"Would you?" repeated Lumley-Lumley, with an indescribable irony in his voice. "Haven't you an answer to give?"

"I don't know."

The Outsider laughed again.

Tom Merry rose to his feet.

"I understand you," he said slowly. "What I should do in your place I don't know. I don't set up to judge you, anyway. I'll go alone."

Lumley-Lumley rose, too.

"You won't go alone," he said.

Tom Merry peered at him, trying to read his meaning in his face.

"What do you mean, Lumley? You've just said that you don't want to come."

Lumley-Lumley laughed—a curious mocking laugh.

"Never mind what I've just said," he replied. "I guess I was only talking, anyway. I'm coming."

"But you said that—that—"

"That I shall be expelled from St. Jim's as soon as the Head is well. It's true. Railton has done with me, and I dare say I deserve it."

Tom Merry winced a little. He could not understand Lumley-Lumley at all just now; but he understood that the Outsider was labouring under a stress of conflicting emotions.

"You're a sportsman all through, Lumley," he said at last, holding out his hand. "Give us your fist!"

CHAPTER 13.

Gussy Wants to Go!

"B Al Jove! You're not going out?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy uttered that surprised exclamation.

He had just entered the Fourth Form dormitory in the School House.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the Outsider of St. Jim's, was there, donning a thick-soled pair of boots, lacing them up tightly, while a pair of gaiters and a heavy macintosh lay on the bed beside him.

Lumley-Lumley gave a start.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Gussy? What do you want here?" he exclaimed roughly.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stopped, jammed his monocle into his eye, and surveyed the Outsider with some indignation.

"Weally, Lumley," he exclaimed, "I twust I have the wight to entah my own dorm if I wish. I came here for a clean collah."

The Outsider uttered an indignant exclamation.

"I was stwuck by surpise at seein' you pwepawin' to go out, in such weally abominable weathah as this," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "It is, however, no bisney of mine, and you can go to Jericho for all I care!"

"Hold on, D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, deah boy? Can I help you?" asked the swell of St. Jim's, placated at once by the civil tone of the Outsider.

"Look here, I don't want the fellows to know I'm going out," said the Outsider abruptly.

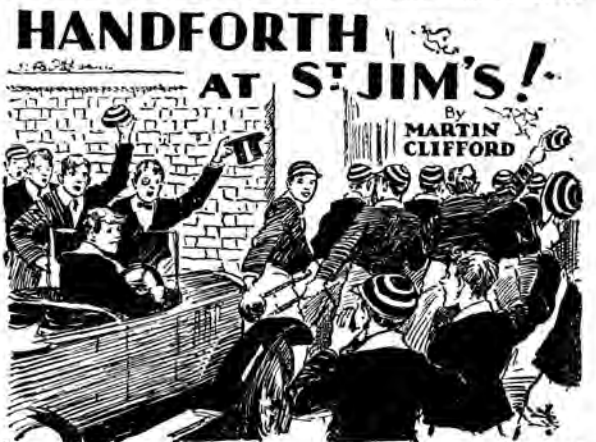
D'Arcy's brow darkened a little.

"None of the old tricks, I hope, Lumley?" he said. "I don't think I could undahtake to keep a secwet in that case."

The Outsider laughed impatiently.

"Do you think I should be going down to the Green Man to play cards on a night like this?" he demanded.

"Well, you are such a weckless boundah, that there's no tellin' what you might be doin'," said Arthur Augustus. "Howevah, I am quite willin' to take your word."



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"I'm going out with Tom Merry."

"Very well; that makes it all wight, deah boy. I won't say a word."

"Thanks!"

"Ready, Lumley?"

Tom Merry stood in the doorway. He looked a little uneasy at the sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the dormitory. The two juniors had intended to keep their expedition a dead secret. They had a well-grounded fear that if it were known they would be forbidden to leave the school.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the hero of the Shell.

"You seem to be keepin' this expeditish a secwet, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes, Gussy. Don't say a word, there's a good chap."

"Very well. But it seems to me vewy weckless to go out in this wotten weathah. You will uttally wuin your clothes."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I have put on my oldest ones," he said.

"That was weally vewy thoughtful of you, deah boy. But—"

"Ready!" said Lumley-Lumley.

Tom Merry hesitated a moment.

"You can keep a secret, Gussy?" he said. "I'd rather tell you where we're going in case of—of accidents—if you'll keep it dark."

"I do not approve of keepin' secwets as a wule, deah boy, but in this case you can wely upon me."

"We're going to Rylcombe."

"Bai Jove!"

"To fetch the doctor."

"For the Head?"

"Yes."

The eyeglass dropped from Arthur Augustus' eye, and fluttered at the end of its cord. He stared blankly at Tom Merry.

"You'll nevah get through!" he exclaimed.

"We shall try."

"You wun feahful wisks, deah boys!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's, somewhat agitated. "You can't go. It's imposs! The woad is flooded, and Taggles says he was nearly drownded, and Mr. Wailton had to turn back in his car."

"I know that."

"Kildare asked him for permission to twy to get through, and was wefused."

"I know."

"Well, you ass, you can't go—I won't let you!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I'm not goin' to have you two chaps gettin' drownded like wats!"

"We're going to try it, Gussy. The doctor doesn't know he's ill—I mean, doesn't know he's worse, and he won't let anyone try to get through the flood. But we've got to get through somehow."

"You can't. I won't allow you to twy."

"Remember your promise, Gussy."

"Bai Jove!"

"Not a word to a soul!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I told you for only one reason," said Tom Merry quietly. "If we don't come back, if—if anything should happen, it will be best for Mr Railton to know. Don't say anything till bed-time. If we're missing then, you can tell Mr. Railton that we've tried to get through."

D'Arcy looked distressed.

"It's too awfully wisky!" he muttered hoarsely.

"It can't be helped."

"Look here!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, as if struck by a brilliant idea. "Look here, deah boys, I'll come, too!"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"No, Gussy. Two will be enough."

"What is wequahed on an occasion like this, Tom Mewwy, is a fellow of tact and judgment," said D'Arcy firmly. "It will be evah so much bettah for me to come."

"You'll spoil your clothes," said Lumley-Lumley, with a grin.

D'Arcy hesitated one moment.

"I'll wisk even that, deah boy!"

"It can't be done, Gussy. You're not up to so much rough business as Lumley and I are, and you're not so good a swimmer."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"You stay here, Gussy, and tell Railton if we're not back by half-past nine," said Tom Merry. "I expect we shall get through all right."

"But weally—"

"You can come and let us out and cover our retreat."

"It would be evah so much bettah for me to come."

"No!"

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"Vewy well, Tom Mewwy, as I suppose this is your bisney, I will let you out of the House," said Arthur Augustus.

"Come on, then!"

Arthur Augustus let the two juniors out by the side door. The wind was howling past the School House wall, laden with rain.

The darkness was intense.

"Bai Jove, what a night!" murmured D'Arcy. "Good-bye, deah boys, and good luck!"

"Au revoir!" said Tom Merry.

The two juniors plunged away into the darkness and rain. D'Arcy closed the door with some difficulty and turned back.

There was a cloud of deep thought on D'Arcy's brow as he went slowly back to the Fourth Form quarters. Hancock slapped him on the back in the passage.

"Wherefore that thoughtful frown, Gussy?" he queried.

"Eh?" said D'Arcy, starting.

"What are you thinking about?"

"About Tom Mewwy—I mean, Lumley—that is to say, the wain, or, wathah, the Head," said Arthur Augustus, somewhat confusedly—"that is to say, pway mind your own bisney, deah boy!"

And he walked away, leaving Hancock staring after him in astonishment.

Arthur Augustus was keeping the secret!

CHAPTER 14.

Through the Flood!

BLINDING rain and darkness!

No one could have known St. Jim's, its surroundings, every wall and clump of knotted ivy, better than Tom Merry did. But even Tom Merry of the Shell was at a loss now.

The rain dashed and tore into his face, and swept over him and drenched through the macintosh. The wind roared round his ears and cut at his face like a knife. For some minutes he was deaf and blind.

A hand grasped his arm and led him on. It was Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's.

They tramped on through the dark.

Tom put his mouth close to Lumley's ear, and shouted:

"Where are we going? Is this the way?"

The Outsider chuckled.

"I guess so."

"But—"

"You're lost?"

"Yes."

"I'm not. I've tracked game through woods as black as your hat while you were doing Latin irregular verbs, I guess. Come on!"

He dragged Tom Merry onward.

Blinding wind and blinding rain.

Tom Merry bumped into soaking ivy, and water drenched down upon him. He groped out with his hands—it was a school wall; there was the ivy in wet masses, there was the slanting oak he had often climbed.

"My hat!"

Lumley-Lumley crouched under the shelter of the wall. The wind swept past them and left them soaking in the rain.

"Well, Merry?"

"You must be able to see like a cat, Lumley."

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"Perhaps I can. Well, here's the wall. Take your breath, and let me help you over."

"Oh, rats! I can manage by myself."

"Just as you like."

Lumley-Lumley clambered up the ivy.

He drew himself up on the wall, clutching at the stone and at the ivy to save himself from being torn away by the shrieking wind.

Tom Merry was beside him in a moment.

"All serene, I guess."

"Yes!" gasped Tom breathlessly.

"Come on, then!"

Lumley-Lumley dropped into the road.

Tom Merry followed, and they stood close to the school wall to evade the wind. Lumley-Lumley peeled off his macintosh.

"That's no good, I guess," he said. "I shan't be any wetter without it. Do the same, Tom Merry—we may have to swim any minute."

"Good egg!"

They flung the soaked macintoshes down by the wall. Then they faced the wind that swept up the flooded road.

Tom Merry knew the way well enough, black as the darkness was. The road was well defined—high hedges or fences, and gaunt, shadowy trees, blacker than the black sky.



Almost stunned by the force with which the flood had dashed him into the half-submerged tree, Tom Merry clutched at a branch for support, and the light of Lumley-Lumley's torch glimmering into his face showed it deadly pale. Tom Merry's arm was hurt, and he could no longer swim!

They tramped off towards Rylcombe.

There was not an inch of their clothing dry—their skin ran with water under their clothes. But they did not heed it.

Suddenly Lumley-Lumley stopped with an abrupt exclamation.

"Look out, Tom Merry! Here's the water!"

They halted.

They were at the head of a gradient that sloped down towards the village of Rylcombe—a slope where the St. Jim's cyclists had free-wheeled down at reckless speed many a time and oft.

But that low-lying slope was flooded now. The waters of the Rhyl were flooding over low meadows, and sweeping over the deep country lanes. The whole of the lower part of Rylcombe Lane was under water. That countryside was very hilly, and the road followed the rise and fall of the land, and the lane, usually dry and dusty, was now a succession of islands.

The water swished up to their knees as they halted.

"My hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"It's deep, I guess."

"A foot deep here—six yards deep in the hollow," said Tom Merry.

"I guess so."

"We shall have to swim."

"You bet!"

Lumley-Lumley drew a thin, strong cord from his pocket, tied it to his own waist, and then to Tom Merry's. It would save them from being swept apart in the swirl of the wild waters.

Tom Merry peered into the gloom.

Nothing was visible, save an occasional gleam from the waters, as they rolled and eddied and swirled.

"I wonder if the hedges are covered?"

"I guess not—not all the way."

"If we miss them, and get out into the fields—"

"I've a light."

"What?"

Lumley-Lumley chuckled. He drew an electric lamp from under his jacket, and pressed the button. A long arrow of brilliant light shot out into the rain.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "You think of everything!"

"I guess I learned to do that—when I had to. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Then come on. I've kicked off my boots!"

"I'll do the same—better without them."

They plunged into the flood.

The waters swirled and eddied, and they were often swung into the hedge; but they fought their way out again, and swam on, beating along the half-submerged hedges.

In the hollow of the road the hedges were quite under water, and they floated over the tops into a flooded field.

But Tom Merry felt the hedge beneath his dragging feet. Realising that they were leaving the road, he jerked at the cord.

Lumley swam back.

"What's the row?"

"You're leaving the road!"

"My hat! Lucky I had the cord on!"

They swam down the road. The water shallowed as they came to the opposite rise, and in a few minutes more they were tramping barefoot through mud.

"The road again!"

"Good!" gasped Lumley-Lumley.

"Hark! The wind!"

A terrific burst of wind crashed down upon the flooded lane. The trees groaned and shivered, and the water roared and eddied. Tom Merry felt a great wave pass over his head, and he struck out wildly.

The water hurled him to and fro as if he had been a cork.

His senses were swimming, but he fought for his life—bravely, desperately.

Crash!

The shock almost stunned him. He realised what had happened—the flood had dashed him into the branches of a half-submerged tree. He clutched out, and caught hold, and the waters roared below him.

A numbing pain gripped his right arm, and he let go his hold with it, clinging to the tree only with his left. Lumley-Lumley caught hold of a lower branch with one hand, and turned on the electric lamp with the other.

The light glimmered up to Tom Merry's face, and showed it deadly pale and contracted with pain.

Lumley-Lumley grinned up at his comrade. This wild adventure was after the Outsider's own heart.

"I guess that was a close shave for both of us," he said.

"Yes," muttered Tom Merry.

"Ready to come on?"

"No!"

Lumley-Lumley stared up at him.

"Not ready?"

"No!"

The Outsider looked alarmed.

"You're not hurt?" he asked quickly.

"Yes—my arm. I—I can't swim again."

CHAPTER 15.

The Doctor!

LUMLEY-LUMLEY was silent. It was a cool caprice of fortune, when the comrades were almost at their journey's end.

What was to be done now?

Tom Merry was crooked. He could not swim a stroke, and he knew it. When the pain in his arm was gone, perhaps, but not now.

He forced a laugh.

"I'm sorry to muck it up like this, Lumley. It can't be helped."

"Hang it!"

"You must go on."

"And leave you?"

"Yes."

"I can't do that, you ass."

"You must," said Tom Merry steadily and firmly. "You must, Lumley! You're going to the village to get the doctor for the Head."

"Yes, but—"

"Give the cord to me—you won't want it again. I'll tie myself in the tree in case I slip, and wait for you. You must come back this way, if you get through at all. Then

HIS HOMEWORK!



Tourist (meeting countryman staggering under weight of huge boulder): "What on earth are you carrying that about for?"

Countryman: "I'm a stone-breaker, sir, and I'm just taking back my homework!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Fred Humber, 50 Dale Road, Derby.

you can help me back to the school, perhaps. It won't be so jolly hard getting back with the wind behind us."

"But—"

"There's nothing else to be done, Lumley. You've got to get through and get word to the doctor."

Lumley contracted his brows.

He felt that Tom Merry was right, but to leave him there went sorely against the grain. But there was, as Tom Merry said, nothing else to be done.

"I guess you're right," he said at last.

"That's the stuff! Get on!"

"Right-ho! Take the torch and send out a flash at intervals, then I'll not miss you coming back."

"Good!"

Lumley passed the electric lamp up to Tom Merry. The cord followed it. Tom Merry wedged himself into a fork of the tree, passed the cord round him, and bound it to the branch.

"Safe?" asked Lumley.

"Quite safe."

"I don't like leaving you."

"That's all right—it's for the Head's sake. Buzz off!"

Lumley-Lumley struck out in the swirling waters under the trees.

He swam for a dozen yards, and then his feet touched mud again—he was on another rise of the flooded road.

This time he knew he was on the last acclivity leading into the village of Rylcombe. Rylcombe was built far above the perils of floods. Lumley-Lumley tramped on through the mud and darkness.

The water grew shallower, and finally ceased. He tramped through clinging mud, and now the lights of the village glimmered through the rainy mist.

Rylcombe at last!

Lumley-Lumley tramped wearily into the village—wearily, but with indomitable spirit. The streets were deserted—every house was closed and shuttered against the storm.

Lumley-Lumley made his way to the doctor's house. Black as the night was, he found the house without difficulty, and, groping his way through the dark, muddy garden, thundered at the door.

It was some minutes before it was opened. No one, naturally, expected a visitor on such a night.

The door was opened a couple of inches at last by a startled maidservant. At the sight of the wild figure without, she shrieked, and tried to close the door, but Jerrold Lumley-Lumley held it open.

The girl shrieked again.

"I want to see Dr. Taylor," said Lumley-Lumley breathlessly.

There was a deep voice in the hall.

"What is the matter?"

The door was swung open. An athletic man stood in the open doorway looking at Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. It was Dr. Taylor.

He uttered a startled exclamation at the sight of the stumbling, drenched, mud-covered figure of the junior.

"Come in at once!"

He helped the junior into the hall. Lumley-Lumley was stumbling with exhaustion now. Now that his task was over his strength seemed to be spent. His brain reeled as he was lifted in the doctor's powerful arms and carried into an adjoining room. He came to himself as he lay on a sofa, with something warm and bitter in his mouth, and he gulped it down.

Dr. Taylor was bending over him.

"Where have you come from, my boy?"

"St. Jim's."

The doctor looked at him intently.

"How could you come from St. Jim's? The road's flooded—at the foot of the hill, in the hollow, the water is twenty feet deep."

"That's why I've got wet, I guess."

Dr. Taylor smiled.

"You were a brave lad to attempt it," he said. "It is a marvel to me that you got through. But why did you come?"

"The Head is ill."

The doctor looked puzzled.

"But Dr. Holmes was to call me up on the telephone if he required me," he said. "I should have managed to get there somehow, but I was not called."

"The telephone's not working."

"Oh!"

"It's cut off," Lumley-Lumley explained, "because of the flood, I suppose. Taggles tried to get through to here this afternoon, and after him Mr. Railton, but they couldn't."

"And then you tried?"

"It was Tom Merry's idea. He suggested it, and we came together," said Lumley-Lumley faintly.

The doctor started.

"Then where is Tom Merry now?"

"He hurt his arm, knocking against a tree in the flood. I've left him on the road—we shall pick him up as we go back."

The doctor uttered a startled cry.

"Good heavens! Then you had better stay here, my lad, with my housekeeper to look after you, while I go out after Merry."

"I guess not, sir. I'm going back to Tom Merry. I told him I should come back, and I'm ready now."

The doctor paced the room. His face was dark with thought. He was a young man, keen and athletic. He did not shrink from the danger, but how was the journey to be done?

Lumley-Lumley watched him.

"Can you swim, sir?" he asked.

The doctor coloured.

"Yes, a little," he said. "But nothing much. I should have no chance in the flood—it's a miracle you got through."

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess we'll have to take a chance," he said. "We shall have the wind behind us getting back to St. Jim's, that's something."

"True. But—"

"I guess it's up to you to manage it somehow, sir."

The doctor smiled.

"I shall manage it somehow," he said. "The question is, how?"

He stepped to the door and called out an order. Then he returned to Lumley-Lumley.

"I shall ride on horseback," he said. "As for you, my lad, you had better remain here."

"Can't be done, sir!"

The doctor shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Very well; I can't stop you. Will you have something to eat or drink?"

"Thanks—no!"

"I shall be ready in five minutes; warm yourself at the fire."

"Thanks!"

The drenched junior steamed at the fire while the doctor was preparing for the dangerous attempt. The doctor came in a few minutes, dressed for riding, with a leather bag strapped to his back. Lumley-Lumley turned from the fire and followed him out into the wind and rain. Outside, stamping in the rain, was a horse with a man at its head.

The wind roared down the old High Street of Rylcombe, answered by the dull surge of the flooding waters outside the village.

CHAPTER 16.
Through!

TOM MERRY was waiting. Round him was darkness, broken only by fitful gleams upon the surface of the flooding waters. He was numbed with cold and chilled by the tearing wind. But he waited with calm patience. His arm was hurt—it was only a twist—but it made it impossible for him to use the limb, and he knew that he could not swim without assistance. There was nothing for it but to wait the return of Lumley-Lumley.

When would he come? At intervals Tom Merry turned on the electric light of Lumley-Lumley's lamp and flashed it across the surging, booming waters.

It was a guide to Lumley-Lumley when he should return.

In the gleam of the light when he turned it upon the flood, Tom Merry observed that the waters were still rising.

The torrents of rain that had descended for days had flooded the Rhyl far above its usual level, and the low lands beside it had long been under the water. The flood was creeping up now, higher and higher, and if it crept up much farther, the lowest houses in Rylcombe would be invaded. Tom Merry knew that the waters must now be in at the back doors of the Green Man, the inn on the slope of the bank. Higher and higher—rising almost visibly—the water slopped round the tree where the junior clung.

Tom Merry untied the cord which bound him to the tree, and retreated to a higher branch.

The water lapped below him, as if hungry and impatient for its prey. Tom Merry's eyes were turned loungingly in the direction of Rylcombe.

Would Lumley-Lumley never come?

He flashed out the light, as the sound of splashing came to his ears. His keen ear, listening intently, detected the sound made by a horse. The electric gleam shone out over the waters, and there was a shout.

"Tom Merry!"

Tom gasped with relief.

"Lumley! Hallo!"

"You're still there, then? Show the light!"

"Right-ho!"

The electric light lay like a white bar across the black waters. Into the lights came the white face of Lumley-

Lumley, and he clambered into the tree beside Tom Merry, spluttering and gasping.

"Where's the doctor?" Tom Merry exclaimed.

"He's here!"

"Mounted?"

"Yes."

Tom Merry flashed the light round, and strained his eyes to see. The figure of the doctor loomed up, black and dripping. He was sitting his horse steadily, as the animal swam in the flood. The horse's nostrils steamed above the surging waters, and he swam on strongly.

Tom Merry caught only a momentary sight of the horseman. Dr. Taylor passed him in a few seconds, and Tom heard the horse splashing on in the darkness.

"My hat!" said the Shell fellow. "He's taking a big risk!"

"I guess so."

"I'm ready to go."

"The doctor thinks we'd better get into Rylcombe, and stay at his house," said Lumley-Lumley, with a chuckle.

"In fact, he told me to. He can't help us to the school—it's all he can do to get through himself."

Tom Merry echoed the Outsider's chuckle.

"We're going back to St. Jim's," he said.

"I guess so."

"Besides, the doctor mayn't get through so easily—he may want help."

"I guess that's what I was thinking of. How's your arm?"

"Stiff!"

"Hold to me with the other one."

"Right!"

They slipped into the water.

Lumley-Lumley struck out stoutly in the direction the doctor had taken. The wind was blowing hard behind them, and it seemed to help them on. Lumley-Lumley had appeared exhausted when he stumbled into the doctor's house at Rylcombe, but his strength returned with the need for it.

Tom Merry held on tightly. He knew how to incommode the swimmer as little as possible, and also kicked out with his legs as well as he could. Lumley-Lumley hardly felt his weight as they swam on towards the rising ground.

Soon they touched ground under their feet, and were tramping through the mud again.

(Continued on the next page.)

HORNBY SPEED BOATS

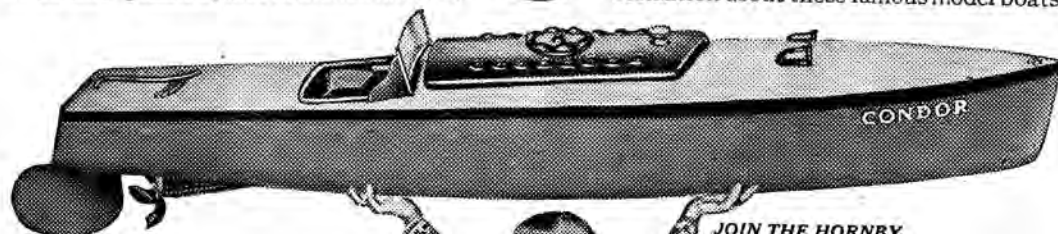
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There was nothing to be seen of Dr. Taylor. The horse-man was probably well on his way to the school, or—

Tom Merry looked at the flooded fields, and shivered for a moment. If the man had been swept away towards the flooded Rhyl, there was little hope for him.

Tom Merry put the thought out of his mind. The water was lapping their feet again—they had to swim.

"Soon through now," said Lumley-Lumley.

They fought their way on through surging waters. Something splashed by them in the darkness—something that splashed, and rolled, and whinnied. Tom Merry felt a deadly sickness at his heart. It was a horse that had swept by, struggling in the flood—it could only be Dr. Taylor's horse. Where was the doctor?

"By gum!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"The doctor!"

"I'll hold you while you turn the light on."

Tom Merry swept up his sound arm with the electric lamp in his hand. The gleam of light pierced the blackness.

Tom swept it round in a circle.

"Doctor!" he shouted. "Where are you?"

The light gleamed upon a white face that showed for a moment over the waters. Lumley-Lumley grasped at it, and his grasp closed upon something.

"I've got him!"

"Hold on, for goodness' sake!"

"All right!"

"Doctor! Doctor!"

The doctor was struggling—he had not lost his senses—and he grasped Lumley-Lumley's shoulder, struggling for breath.

"Hold on to me, sir."

The doctor tightened his grasp, as a sign that he was understood; he could not speak. Two minutes later they were treading the mud, and the rolling flood was behind. As soon as they reached firm ground, the doctor dropped down on the thick mud, exhausted—too exhausted to speak. Tom Merry was panting helplessly.

"Thank you, my lad!" the doctor gasped at last, when he found his voice. "You have saved my life!"

"What happened, sir?"

"My horse lost his footing at the finish, when we should have been safe in another minute. We were just getting out of the water when he slipped over. I hope he will save himself. But I should have been gone, only—"

"It was lucky we didn't stay at Rylcombe, sir."

"My word—yes."

After a few minutes' rest they tramped on towards St. Jim's. As they came in sight of the school there was a glare of lights from the gates. Tom Merry started.

"My hat! The whole school seems to be on the quiver."

Lumley-Lumley laughed breathlessly.

"It must be past half-past nine," he said. "We've been a jolly long time coming, you know. D'Arcy has told them about us, and they're watching for us. I guess."

"I suppose so."

Lumley-Lumley shouted.

"Hallo!"

A shout came back from the night.

"Hallo! Bai Jove! Is that you, Lumley, deah boy?"

"I guess so."

"Thank goodness, bai Jove!"

And a crowd of fellows rushed out from the gateway, careless of the drenching rain, to surround them, and march them into the school.

"Bai Jove! You've got the doctah, then?" D'Arcy exclaimed.

"I guess so."

"Gweat Scott! I must wemark that you are a wegulah hewo."

"Rats!"

"Weally, Lumley—"

"More rats!"

"Let's get in," said Tom Merry, laughing. "I hope the Head isn't worse, Blake?"

"Just the same, I believe," said Blake. "But it's ripping to have got the doctor! This way, sir! Can I carry the bag?"

And the three were marched into the School House triumphantly.

CHAPTER 17.

A Word for Lumley!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY had kept the secret of the expedition until the stipulated time had expired. But when the bed-time of the juniors arrived, and Tom Merry and Lumley-Lumley were both absent, he had to explain.

The anxiety that was felt at St. Jim's was only to be expected. Nobody thought of bed. A crowd of fellows

waited under the shelter of the old stone gateway to watch for the return of the two juniors, and it was decided that if the return was delayed much longer a party of prefects should go out and look for them.

But it was not needed now. Tom Merry and Lumley-Lumley had returned, safe and sound, and they had brought the doctor with them. The fellows of the School House were in a state of delight, only tempered by the knowledge that the Head was ill. But for that they would have cheered till the old walls rang again.

Tom Merry and Lumley-Lumley were marched off to a dormitory, to be rubbed down and put to bed. Dr. Taylor was taken to the room of Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, and accommodated with a change of clothes before he went in to see the Head. The doctor seemed little the worse for his adventure, perilous as it had been. As for Tom Merry and Lumley-Lumley they were feeling very tired, but very cheerful and satisfied.

The rain was still pattering against the panes when the St. Jim's fellows turned out the next morning. But it was sligher now, and there was a gleam of sunshine on the drenched, dripping quad.

Tom Merry descended with the other fellows. His arm was stiff, and he was a little tired still; but that was all. Lumley-Lumley looked very fit when Tom met him downstairs. But the Outsider's face was very grave.

"Heard anything about the Head?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes. I've seen Dr. Taylor this morning. He's staying here for the present," said Lumley-Lumley. "The Head's in a pretty bad state. It's serious, and he'll be ill for some time."

"Poor old chap!"

Lumley-Lumley smiled a peculiar smile.

"You've forgotten what I told you last night, then—I'm to be expelled as soon as the Head is well enough to expel me."

Tom Merry started. Truly, the exciting events of the night, and his anxiety about the Head, had driven from his mind what the Outsider had told him.

"It can't be so bad as that, Lumley."

"I guess it's quite as bad as that. I tell you I was caught gambling—for money—and Railton jumped to the conclusion that I had led the others into it."

"And you didn't?"

"No."

"Who were they?"

"Snipe and Mellish."

"I understand," said Tom Merry quietly. "It was awfully hard cheese on you, Lumley. But why didn't you explain?"

The Outsider laughed.

"And show up as a sneak as well as a blackguard?"

"But—"

"I guess I shall go without waiting to be kicked out," said Lumley-Lumley.

"But after what you've done now, Lumley—"

Lumley-Lumley made an irritable gesture.

"Oh, rot!" he said. "I did no more than you did—less, in fact, as it was your idea in the first place. I don't want to make capital out of that—hang it!"

The Outsider swung away with a gloomy brow. Tom Merry stood silent for some minutes, and then he walked quietly to Mr. Railton's study. The Housemaster was not there, but he came up just as Tom Merry was turning away from the door.

"Good-morning, Merry. They have told me what you did last night—you and Lumley. Are you feeling any the worse?"

"Very little, sir. I came here to speak to you—"

"Come in!"

Tom Merry followed the Housemaster into the study. Mr. Railton looked at him attentively.

"You have acted very bravely, Merry," he said, "and so has Lumley-Lumley. I am only sorry that Lumley's other qualities are not equal to his courage."

"I came here to speak to you about Lumley, sir, if I may."

Mr. Railton's face hardened.

"I am afraid I cannot listen to any plea for him, Merry. He has proved that his reformation was only a pretence."

"May I tell you what I know, sir?"

"Certainly."

"But—you won't consider it sneaking, sir?" said Tom Merry, turning very red. "I can't clear Lumley without involving the other fellows, and—if there is to be any punishment for them, I—I can't speak."

Mr. Railton nodded.

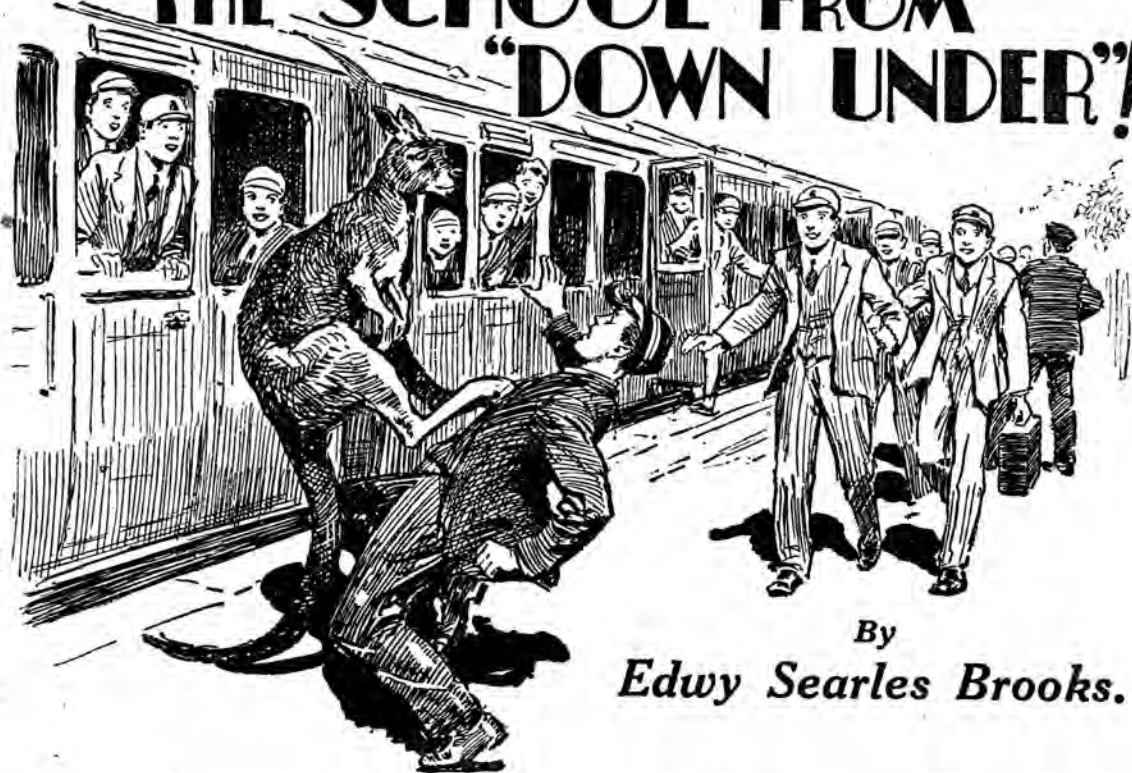
"I understand you perfectly, Merry. I shall make no use whatever of what you tell me excepting in favour of Lumley, if you can help him."

"Very well, sir. Lumley's told me about it. You found

(Continued on page 28.)

NIPPER & CO.'S GREAT JAPE ON THEIR AUSTRALIAN RIVALS!

THE SCHOOL FROM "DOWN UNDER!"



By
Edwy Searles Brooks.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Some schoolboys from Australia take over River House School, near St. Frank's, for the summer, and immediately the two schools are at grips in a friendly "war." After a cricket match between the schools, Jerry Dodd, of St. Frank's, discovers that one of the Aussies, Jim Sayers, is an impostor, but keeps his discovery secret. Later, Sayers discovers Handforth and Buster Boots, of St. Frank's, trussed up with ropes near a river, where they have been left by the other Aussies after a "jape." He ties Handforth to a branch over the river, and Handforth is nearly drowned when the branch breaks and carries him into the water. He is rescued by Nipper & Co., his Form-mates, and that night breaks into River House School in search of Sayers. In the grounds of the school he sees a mysterious figure burying a parcel—which turns out to contain only pebbles. He goes on into the school, drags Sayers from his bed, and is about to fight him when a master appears on the scene!

Mr. Rutter Decides!

HANDFORTH was bewildered as he stared at the man in the dormitory doorway. The Australian boy's attitude was unmistakable. The man they called Mr. Rutter was one of the masters.

And he was the man Handforth had seen, not long before, stealthily burying a bag of pebbles in the garden! "What's going on here?" asked Mr. Rutter, striding into the dormitory, the knots of his dressing-gown trailing on the floor. "Who is this boy? What is he doing here at this hour of the night? You, young man—answer me!"

"You can see, can't you, sir?" growled Handforth. "I'm giving Sayers a good hiding—at least, I was starting on the job."

"And apparently, Sayers' schoolfellows were content to stand round and see you do it," said Mr. Rutter unpleasantly. "You are a St. Frank's boy, are you not?"

"Yes, sir—Handforth."

"Well, Baines, I'm waiting," continued the master, looking at Curly. "How is it that you have allowed this St. Frank's boy to come here and fight one of your school-fellows?"

"They wanted a scrap, sir, so we thought we'd let them have one," replied the boy from Melbourne.

"That's not true!" burst out Sayers viciously. "I didn't want to fight the hulking fool! He forced his way in here, and my own coppers turned against me."

"Tell them why!" flashed Thomson, of Perth.

Mr. Rutter nodded.

"I think I understand!" he said grimly. "You played a rather unpleasant trick on Handforth this evening, Sayers, did you not?"

Sayers looked at him, angry and bewildered.

"I played a joke—yes—" he began.

"And Handforth was nearly drowned, owing to a tree branch breaking," continued Mr. Rutter. "If this news came to the ears of Mr. Atherton he would be very severe. But I don't propose to tell him. Handforth, you can go ahead!"

There was a murmur of surprised approval. The Australian boys, as a whole, had no high opinion of Mr. Rutter. Their feelings towards him suddenly changed.

"By George, you are a sportsman, sir!" exclaimed Handforth enthusiastically.

He was convinced, in that moment, that there had been nothing wrong in Mr. Rutter's mysterious activities. A man who could be so sporting could not possibly be a wrong 'un!

As for the boy who called himself Jim Sayers, he was mad with rage. He had expected Mr. Rutter to get him out of this uncomfortable position—and, instead, Mr. Rutter was sanctioning the fight!

Like a tiger he leapt at Handforth—again trying, by surprise tactics, to get in a knockout blow. He punched low, but Handforth, anticipating the blow in the nick of time, swung round. Sayers' fist caught him on the hip, instead of in the stomach, and he staggered.

"So that's your game?" he roared. "You—you dirty cad!"

Crash!

His famous right came round with devastating force, and it smashed hard into Sayers' face. Shrieking with pain, Sayers reeled back, clutching wildly at his nose.

"Come on!" shouted Handforth ferociously. "What's the matter with you? Funky?"

The Australian boys were disgusted and indignant. And Sayers, realising that he was in for trouble unless he made some sort of showing, rushed to the attack, his arms whirling madly.

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Now it became a real fight—a hard, gruelling, ferocious "mill." Sayers was strengthened by his rage and panic, Handforth remained irritatingly cool. Again and again the Australian boy staggered back from Handforth's deadly punches, but again and again he rushed in.

Utterly desperate now—thinking only of making a good fight of it before his schoolfellows—Sayers was unconscious of pain. He took his punishment well, and repeatedly came back for more.

There was no timekeeping—no referee. It was a straightforward scrap, with one fighter utterly desperate, and with the other cool and determined. Handforth, in fact, was beginning to enjoy himself.

Hotter and hotter grew the pace. Sayers, his face blood-smeared, his eyes burning with rage, hurled himself into the battle, his clenched fists smashing at Handforth's chest and face. But the mighty Edward Oswald easily avoided most of those wild blows, and, with deadly persistence and accuracy, kept hammering his own punches home just as he pleased.

"Had about enough, haven't we?" grunted Handforth at last.

He suddenly took the offensive, sweeping Sayers' "guard" aside. His powerful right smashed into the Australian boy's face; his left, whirling round, rammed home into Sayers' chest. With a grunt, the boy from Bathurst sank to his knees and dropped full length on the dormitory floor.

"Well, that's that," said Handforth, dusting his hands. "I'll say this about the chap—he knows how to take it. Not that it was a real scrap," he added, with a sniff, "though I always thought that you Aussies could fight!"

"If you don't believe it, take me on!" said Curly Baines fiercely.

"Rats! I've no quarrel with you."

"That's enough!" snapped Mr. Rutter. "You will get back to your beds. Handforth, there's no object in your remaining here any longer. How did you get into this dormitory?"

"By the window, sir."

"You mean, you came across the grounds?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did anybody see you?"

"Not a soul," replied Handforth truthfully.

But he did not say that he had not seen anybody; and the answer, apparently so innocent, satisfied Mr. Rutter that his own movements had not been witnessed.

"You had better leave by the window, then," he said. "Go as quietly as you can—and let me hear no more of this regrettable affair. Come, Sayers, I will take you to a bath-room."

He grabbed at Sayers, who was an unpleasant sight, and roughly yanked him to his feet. He said nothing more until they had reached the privacy of a bath-room; then—

"You young fool!" exclaimed Mr. Rutter, after he had closed the door.

"Fool yourself!" snarled Sayers. "Look at me! Why did you let that roughneck smash into me?"

"Because the circumstances demanded it," said the master curtly. "The only other course open to me was to report you to Atherton. You didn't want that, did you? What would the other boys have thought if I had taken sides with you? Do we want the whole school to know that we are so closely connected? To all outward appearances I am an ordinary schoolmaster, and you are an ordinary schoolboy. Therefore, I had to treat you as I would any one of the others. Haven't you enough sense to see that?"

"Oh, all right!" muttered Sayers.

"By letting Handforth fight you I settled the thing out of hand," continued Mr. Rutter. "The other boys look upon me as a sportsman, and you can be quite certain that nothing will reach Mr. Atherton's ears. If our plan is to work smoothly, boy, you'll have to do better. This affair is a failure, and it had better be forgotten. We'll think of some other way—a more ingenious way—of getting your name into the English newspapers."

Without another word he strode out, scowling. He was thinking of Handforth again—and wondering if Handforth had seen anything in the school grounds.

In order to satisfy his uneasiness he went down an hour later and unearthed the bag of pebbles. He was relieved—and satisfied that they had not been touched.

But in order to be on the safe side Mr. Rutter found a fresh hiding-place.

All Aboard for the Test Match!

THE door of Handforth's dormitory in the Ancient House at St. Frank's softly opened.

"Time to get up, you chaps!" said Nipper cheerily.

"Hallo! Dressed all ready—oh? Good man!"

Some days had elapsed since Handy's fight, and it was a
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really glorious July morning, with the azure sky flecked with filmy white clouds—a day that promised to be blazingly hot.

Handforth and Church and McClure were full of a great excitement; they went downstairs to find Vivian Travers, Archie Glenthorne, Sir Montie Tregellis-West, Reggie Pitt, and others—and all were full of that same happy excitement.

"She'll be here soon!" said Jimmy Potts, going to the open door and looking up into the blue sky.

Their thoughts were of cricket—not school cricket, but the great Test Match between England and Australia which was in progress at Leeds. The game had started on the previous Friday, and to-day would see the end. The best cricket of all, perhaps.

On the Friday, when the Test Match had started, nobody at St. Frank's had ever dreamed of being able to see any of the play. It was not until a day or two later that Vivian Travers had had a brain-wave. If only they could get permission to have a day off—on the understanding that they would make up for the lost time by working during their ordinary hours of freedom—they could go to the Test Match, see all the play, and return to St. Frank's in time for bed.

"You're mad!" Jimmy Potts had said. "How can it be done in one day? St. Frank's is practically on the south coast, and Leeds is up north, two or three hundred miles away."

"Are you trying to teach me geography?" said Travers urbanely. "But these are days of swift travel, dear old fellow. An air liner leaving here in the early morning can be at Leeds in heaps of time for the beginning of play. It can leave just after the close of play, and land us at St. Frank's before bed-time. The only snag is paying for the air liner and getting permission to go."

By having a whip-round and mortgaging their pocket-money twenty fellows had pooled enough to pay the expenses. Mr. James Kingswood, the headmaster, being a sportsman, had readily agreed to the plan, if weather permitted.

Thus it was that the excited St. Frank's juniors were up and about an hour or two before rising-bell. There was no question about the weather permitting; the weather could not be more glorious.

The fortunate few were the envy of the school. Incidentally, they were also the envy of Curly Baines and the Australian boys.

For, naturally enough, the news of the forthcoming trip had reached the ears of Nipper & Co.'s rivals. Curly Baines was sad. He and his Aussie chums were not able to go to the Test Match. Leeds was too far away. Besides, they had been "parked" at the River House School by their parents so that they should be well looked after. They would all see the final Test Match, at the Oval, but that would not be until the third week in August.

Handforth, owing to all this excitement, had forgotten for the time being the curious incident of the buried sea-shore pebbles. Jim Sayers was more or less "cut" by his own schoolfellows, but he did not seem to care. As he privately told Mr. Rutter, he was biding his time. As soon as this Test Match fever was over he would get busy.

"Listen!" shouted Handforth suddenly.

By this time he and all the others were out in the Triangle. The sun was peeping over the trees, and in the still morning air the boys could hear a faint, far-away rhythmic throb.

"She's coming!" said Nipper contentedly. "Get ready, you chaps! She'll land in the meadow on the other side of the playing fields. Tons of room there."

"Everybody ready?" bawled Handforth, looking round.

"Where's Archie?"

"The fathead hasn't finished dressing yet!" grinned Fullwood. "Some of us had better go in and fish him out."

"Plenty of time," said Nipper. "The plane's a long way off yet, and it'll be some minutes before she lands."

Meanwhile, at the Australian School things were moving, too.

A side door had opened, and Curly Baines, fully dressed, emerged. Behind him came a score of his chums, and the Australian boys were grinning happily.

"All here?" murmured Curly, looking round.

"You bet!" said McVittie.

"Then let's go!" said Curly.

Unlike the St. Frank's boys, they fairly tiptoed out of the River House School grounds. They were up before anybody else, and they were mightily anxious to get away without being seen. For, as a matter of fact, they were taking French leave.

"By cripes!" panted Vic Taylor, when they were well beyond the school wall. "Listen! She's coming!"

"We timed it just right," said Curly Baines, grinning.

"Come on!"

They went running across a small meadow. Bursting through the hedge on the other side, they found themselves in the great meadow which lay practically midway between

the River House School and St. Frank's. If anything, it was rather nearer to the River House. Baines had been counting on this—and on something else.

Overhead sailed a great triple-engined air liner, and, with one accord, the Australian boys whipped their caps from their heads, and waved wildly.

It was an ingenious trick—and it worked to perfection. For the aeroplane pilot, who had intended circling St. Frank's, changed his mind. He knew that he had to pick up twenty schoolboy passengers from St. Frank's—and here they were, apparently, in the meadow, ready. No need to waste time by flying over the school.

He throttled back his engines, glided down, and made a perfect landing.

It was a matter of seconds now—perhaps of split seconds. The Australian boys, after one wildly anxious look in the direction of St. Frank's, rushed towards the stationary plane. Her engines were still ticking over.

"Hallo, boys!" greeted the pilot, smiling, as he opened the cockpit door.

"Cheerio!" sang out Baines. "We're ready to go. You can get her up as soon as you like!"

see a number of boys climbing into the stationary air liner; they saw the steward wave a hand, and they saw the fuselage door close.

"Hallo! What the——" began Handforth, staring. "The Aussies!" exclaimed Church, with a start. "Didn't you spot their caps?"

"But—but that's our plane!" roared Handforth. "The cheeky asses! What do they mean by getting into it? By George! Do you think they've got a plane of their own?"

But Church and McClure, whose wits moved more rapidly than Handforth's, already had an inkling of the dreadful, horrible truth.

"Hi, Nipper!" yelled Church, at the top of his voice. "Travers! Pitt! Quick! Baines and his gang have pinched our plane!"

"What!" howled Handforth, leaping a yard into the air.

He had an awful, sinking feeling inside him. His jaw sagged, and his eyes bulged. He saw the great machine taxi-ing—taking up position for the take-off. There wasn't a breath of wind—the air was absolutely still—so there was no necessity for the pilot to get into any special position. As long as he had the whole meadow in front of him he would be all right.

"Hi!" howled Handforth, running forward.

The alarm had spread by now, and the other St. Frank's fellows were racing up at full speed. Even Archie Glen-



"Look!" roared Handforth, pointing at the air liner. "The Aussies have pinched our plane!" The St. Frank's Juniors looked on helplessly as the great machine roared away, with their Australian rivals waving derisively from its cabin windows.

"You're in a bit of a hurry, aren't you?" chuckled the pilot, a straight, clean-limbed young man named Captain Transom. "Well, there's no reason why we shouldn't get off at once. Pile in!"

A uniformed steward had opened the cabin door of the fuselage, and without a moment's hesitation the Australian boys poured themselves into the luxurious saloon.

"O.K.!" sang out the steward, waving his hand to the pilot, as he closed the fuselage door.

It was all done naturally—smoothly. Captain Transom had been told to land in this field, and to pick up twenty St. Frank's fellows. It never occurred to him to question the identity of the twenty boys who were on the field to meet him. That they were in a hurry was natural enough, and there was really no reason for delay.

While the Aussies were "putting over" this jape of japes—a minor classic in its way—the St. Frank's fellows were hurrying across from their own school. Handforth & Co., who were in advance, had seen the great plane descend, vanishing beyond the trees and hedges in the distance.

Handforth and his two chums hurried on in advance of the others, and they were the first to break through a gap which led into the big meadow. They were just in time to

thorne—he who had kept everybody waiting—was running like a hare.

But before they could get through into the big meadow, the triple engines of the air liner were roaring aggressively, and the great machine was sweeping over the level grass, gathering speed rapidly.

"Stop!" hooted Handforth, waving his arms like mill sails. "You've made a mistake! We're your passengers—not those fatheaded Aussies!"

He might have saved his breath—for, of course, his voice could not possibly reach the ears of the pilot. And Captain Transom came to the perfectly natural conclusion that the schoolboys on the ground were friends of his passengers, who had come to see them off.

Gracefully, smoothly, the big plane took the air, and from the open cabin windows the Australian boys waved. They grinned happily upon their St. Frank's rivals.

"Good-bye-ee!" came in a concerted chorus.

Frantically, madly, Nipper and his chums waved and signalled—and, although they didn't realise it, they looked exactly as though they were giving the flying schoolboys a hearty send-off.

"Well, coppers, it worked!" beamed Curly Baines. "We've always said these English chaps are slow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The St. Frank's juniors were helpless. They saw the great machine swing round; they saw their rivals waving from the cabin windows; then the plane went off across country, diminishing in size, her engines beating a rhythmic tune until gradually the sound grew fainter and fainter.

"Dished, diddled, and done!" said Travers sadly. "Well, well! We've got to hand it to the Aussies."

Most of the others were incapable of speech: they did not possess Travers' tranquil temperament. They were dancing with rage, and generally behaving like a lot of crazy Dervishes. But at last, discovering that this performance led them nowhere, they desisted.

"The cheek of it—the nerve!" said Nipper breathlessly. "To score over us like this! To come here, and bag our plane!"

"Undeniably smart work," said Travers, nodding.

"You don't seem very upset about it," growled Handforth, glaring.

"My dear fellow, what's the good of being upset?" drawled the imperturbable Travers. "The thing's done. No good crying over spilt milk. As a matter of fact, I rather admire Baines' brilliance."

"And what about our money?" bawled Handforth. "We're all stony broke—our pocket money mortgaged for weeks! We can't hire another plane. We can't do anything."

"It's our own fault," said Nipper gruffly. "Knowing the Aussies as we do, we ought to have been ready for their tricks. We ought to have been out here, on the field. We might have known that Baines would spring a surprise."

"A bit late to talk like that, isn't it?" asked Handforth bitterly. "You're Remove skipper. Why didn't you think of all these things?"

"Well, we're not going to squabble amongst ourselves," replied Nipper. "But by jingo! Baines is piling up a big score for us to wipe out!"

"If only we could turn the tables on them to-day!" said Travers dreamily. "By Samson! What a perfect revenge! Isn't there a genius here? Can't somebody think of something next door to a miracle? How can we turn the tables on the Aussies?"

"Why ask silly riddles?" asked Handforth irritably. "The Aussies are thousands of feet in the air—and miles away. I want to know who's responsible. I was on the field in time and— By George! Archie kept us waiting, didn't he?"

"Good gad!" ejaculated the elegant Archibald Winston Derek Glenthorne.

All eyes were turned upon him, and the juniors closed round in a menacing, warlike circle.

"I mean to say, dash it!" protested Archie, jamming his monocle into his eye, and surveying the ever-closing circle. "Odds shocks and staggerers! I sincerely trust that you chappies are not thinking of laying violent hands upon the old carcass?"

"The river's near by," said Pitt ominously. "How about chucking him in?"

Archie Glenthorne shuddered and shook like an aspen leaf.

"Absolutely not!" he bleated. "Good gad! You wouldn't absolutely do a thing like that, would you?"

"Watch us do it!" retorted Jimmy Potts aggressively. "Grab him, my sons! Let's waste no more time. This is going to be as funny as a circus!"

Many hands reached out for Archie—the disappointed juniors were determined to "take it out" of somebody, and undoubtedly it was Archie Glenthorne who had caused the delay.

"Circus!" yelled Archie, his eyes blazing, and his monocle dropping to the end of its cord. "Odds brain-waves and wheezes! Desist, you blighters! The old brain is firing on all six cylinders. We can get to the Test Match after all!"

Archie to the Rescue!

FOR a moment there was a dead, breathless silence. "Say that again," said Nipper, at last.

"Absolutely! We can get to the Test Match!" exclaimed Archie happily.

"Is this the genius with the miracle idea?" murmured Travers doubtfully.

"And how!" said Archie, beaming.

"Don't take any notice of him," said Handforth impatiently. "How the dickens can he get us to the Test Match?"

"It was the word 'circus' which caused the brainwave to buzz like a circular saw into the old grey matter," explained Archie.

plained Archie. "The chappie who can get us to Leeds is Brother Bertie."

"What!"

"Absolutely! My brother—Bertie!"

Nipper started.

"Captain Bertram Glenthorne—yes, he's your brother, Archie," he said. "He's a famous airman, too."

"It begins to sound good," murmured Travers. "Tell us more, Gorgeous."

"Well, I mean to say, you all know that Bertie is giving exhibition flights this week with that spanking new stunt plane of his?" said Archie. "Dash it, haven't you seen the advertisements? The Sky Demon's Air Circus. Bertie is one of the good old demons—in point of fact, and in manner of speaking, the Demon King himself!"

"But where is the Air Circus?" demanded Nipper.

"At Helmsford, for the first three days of this week."

"Helmsford!" went up a concerted yell.

"Good gad! Didn't you hear me?" gasped Archie.

"Helmsford—only twenty miles away!" panted Nipper. "You've got your car, Handy; and there's your motor-bike, Travers, and mine, and— Why, we can get there in half an hour."

Everybody was wildly excited in a moment.

"But—but do you think that your brother Bertie will help us?" asked Fullwood doubtfully.

"No snag whatever, old boy," beamed Archie. "You see, there's an air liner attached to the circus, and it takes people up for joy-rides. Heaps of room for all of us. Bertie's a sportsman; he'd stand the exes."

"We'll try it," said Nipper crisply. "Archie's right about his brother being a sportsman. He is. And he might fall for this wheeze of ours. Come on!"

In a moment they were all streaking back to St. Frank's. In the quiet Triangle they saw a solitary figure—a lean, lanky figure.

"What is this I see?" asked the lanky one, who was none other than William Napoleon Browne, the imperturbable skipper of the Fifth. "I was under the impression, brothers, that you were winging your way to Leeds."

"The Aussies dished us," said Nipper. "They got to the plane first, and the pilot took them aboard, thinking they were us."

"Alas! too late. The cry goes up, too late," said Browne tragically. "Forgive me if I am unduly caustic—but don't you think you were somewhat snail-like, brothers? Knowing these Australian youths to be filled up to the eyebrows with mustard, you might have expected something of the kind."

"Are we going to stand here and talk to this lamp-post?" demanded Handforth impatiently.

"What is the hurry, Brother Handy?" asked Browne.

"Since you are going nowhere—"

"But we are going—Archie's had an idea," said Nipper.

"Goodness knows how he got it, but he did!"

And in a few brief words he explained.

"Capital!" said William Napoleon Browne approvingly. "In fact, I might even say, spiffing! If you permit me, I can help you in your trouble. I have a roomy Wolseley car in the garage."

"Good old Browne!" said Nipper heartily. "Thanks awfully!"

"Don't thank me too soon, brother," said Browne. "As compensation for doing you this favour, I shall want a seat in your air liner."

Within five minutes they were off—Browne's car, Handforth's car, and several motor-bikes. There was sufficient room for all the boys—two riding pillion, in some cases. And each car was packed to its limit.

Helmsford was reached without mishap, however, and the temporary aerodrome in use by the Air Circus was soon located. Luckily enough, Captain Bertram Glenthorne himself, free and easy in flannel trousers and tennis shirt, was near the entrance.

"Hallo, Archie!" he said, as his brother hurried towards him. "I thought you were with the youngsters in the air-party for Leeds."

"Absolutely, Bertie—I was!" said Archie. "But the dashed party had a most frightful sideslip. In fact, it's here. Allow me to present the lads."

"But I don't understand," said Captain Glenthorne, in surprise. "I know Transom personally—he's a great friend of mine—and I saw his ship sail right over this aerodrome half an hour ago. You don't mean to say that he's going to Leeds empty?"

"No, full-of Australians," said Nipper sadly. "It's a tragic story, Captain Glenthorne."

Archie's brother, apparently, thought it the reverse of tragic, judging by his roars of laughter when he had heard all the details.

"I must say these Australian chaps are smart," chuckled Captain Burton. "But what do you want me to do?"

"It's absolutely simple, old thing," said Archie. "There she is—that whacking great air liner," he added, pointing. "All we want you to do is to buzz into the engine-room or footplate, or whatever it's called, and dash us off to Leeds."

"Well, the machine's airworthy, and her tanks are full," said Captain Glenthorne dryly. "She can do the trip to Leeds in about a couple of hours."

He was a true sportsman, and he was tickled by the possibilities. Then and there he decided to help the school-boys.

"I can easily fix this with my colleagues," he said briskly. "As it happens the air liner doesn't start joyrides until this afternoon; and I can get back in plenty of time to hand her over to the pilot. As for the expenses, I'll fix everything."

"By Jove! You're a brick, sir!" said Nipper eagerly.

"No; I'm an Old Boy," chuckled Captain Glenthorne. "This takes me back to my own time at St. Frank's; and it's good to be mixed up in a jape again. Come on! There's no time to lose."

Happy, excited, the boys hurried to the big machine, and piled into the cabin. There was accommodation for them all—in comfort. At the last minute, while Captain Glenthorne was standing ready to climb into the cockpit, Nipper came rushing up to him. And there was a twinkle of excitement and mischief in Nipper's eyes.

"Hallo! Thought you were aboard," said Bertie.

"I've got an idea," replied Nipper breathlessly. "It's a corker, sir! A stunner—a knockout!"

"There's nothing like cracking up one's own ideas," said Bertie approvingly.

"Is this plane equipped with wireless?"

"Of course."

"Then listen, sir!" grinned Nipper lowering his voice. "Listen with both ears wide open, and drink in every word. And if you don't agree that this idea is solid twenty-two carat, you're not the chap you claim to be."

Captain Glenthorne listened; his smile grew into a grin, and his grin became a roar of laughter. Finally, he thrust out a hand, and clasped Nipper's.

"My son, it's on," he said happily. "You're a genius."

Meanwhile, the Australian boys were enjoying themselves. Their journey was already half over, and they were flying at the height of some thousands of feet over the green, park-like countryside of England. Curly Baines and the chums appreciated it, too. There was no such scenery in Australia, and they fairly gloried in that stolen trip.

"What about getting home, chum?" asked Kennedy. "Don't you think it's likely that those English fellows will send wires to Leeds? After all, this plane is theirs—"

"Nipper is a sportsman, and that goes for the rest of the crowd," interrupted Baines serenely. "They won't play the dog in the manger. They can't go to the Test themselves now, and they won't spoil our sport. It would be just vindictive of them to prevent us using the plane for the return trip. No, they'll admit their defeat, and do their best to take it out of us some other time."

And so the journey continued. The machine went soaring over smoky industrial towns, and then onwards over fields and woods and meadows.

At last, a great town showed ahead and below. Captain Transom was flying low now, and he was descending all the time. Presently, the eager passengers saw the aerodrome right ahead.

"Leeds!" said Baines, with a chuckle. "Good old Leeds! Any sign of the cricket ground?"

"From up here a cricket ground would look like a green pocket handkerchief," said Rod Taylor. "Don't worry, clobber, we'll find the cricket ground soon enough after we've landed."

A few minutes later, the machine made a perfect landing in the very centre of the aerodrome. The steward opened the door, and the boys went leaping out upon the turf. They were a considerable distance from the aerodrome buildings—which, in itself, was rather unusual, for incoming planes generally taxied after landing.

"Here we are!" sang out Captain Transom from the cockpit. "Hope you youngsters don't mind stopping here? You can stretch your legs a bit. I want to taxi to the other end of the drome."

"O.K.!" sang out Baines. "Thanks awfully for the trip."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The others yelled with laughter as they went running off towards the aerodrome buildings. The great machine, taxiing round, went in the opposite direction. Rather to the Australian boys' surprise, Transom took the plane up again.

"What machine was that?" were the first words of an aerodrome official who came out to meet the party.

"One that was specially chartered to fly from St. Frank's to the Test Match," replied Curly blandly.

"The Test Match?" repeated the official, staring. "Then why have you landed here?"

"Where else should the machine land us?" asked Curly Baines. "Everybody knows that the Test Match is being played at Leeds."

"At Leeds, yes," nodded the official.

"Well, this is Leeds!" shouted a dozen Australian boys.

"Seems to me that somebody's been playing a joke on you," said the official, shaking his head. "This isn't Leeds."

"Not—not Leeds?" gurgled Baines, a horrible suspicion coming into his mind.

"Of course not. You're in Norwich!"

"Norwich!" howled the Aussies.

"Yes, Norwich—and that machine which landed you has gone up again," growled the official. "You'd better come with me to the offices. We shall have to ask you some questions."

Baines looked at his dismayed chums.

"Norwich!" he moaned. "And our plane has gone! My hat! Nipper and his crowd have turned the tables on us. We're stranded here and we shan't get a smell of the Test Match."

And a chorus of dismal groans went up from his school fellows.

Not long after that, Captain Glenthorne landed his joyous passengers at Leeds. Handforth, Travers, and the others eagerly looked round for the air liner which had left St. Frank's. But it was nowhere to be seen.

"Oh, by the way," said Nipper casually. "I'm afraid our Aussie rivals have gone astray. Isn't that so, Captain Glenthorne?"

"Sad, but true," sighed Bertie, his eyes twinkling.

"Transom, like a chump, landed his passengers at Norwich—and then took the air again. I'm afraid the Australian boys won't see much of the Test Match at Norwich."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nipper.

They swarmed round him, grabbed him, and forced the truth out of him. Whilst flying, Captain Glenthorne had got into touch with his friend Transom in the other air liner—with disastrous results to the Aussies.

"Well, it serves them jolly well right," said Handforth, but with a dubious note in his voice. "They japed us, and we japed them. A great wheeze of yours, Nipper. All the same—" he hesitated. "Isn't it a bit rough, leaving them stranded like that?"

Nipper grinned.

"Don't worry," he replied lightly. "I thought of that. The idea was to give the Aussies a shock. Captain Transom promised to stay up in the air for half an hour, and then land again and bring the Aussies on to Leeds. They'll be at the cricket ground before play starts."

So honour was satisfied, and everybody was happy. And after that the gay St. Frank's party went to the Test Match—and soon afterwards Curly Baines and his chums arrived, breathless, but just as happy.

"It's one up to you, chums!" grinned Curly. "You gave us the scare of our lives—and it was mighty nice of you to fix things so that we could see the cricket, after all."

And they did see cricket—marvellous cricket—and Nipper & Co. had the satisfaction of knowing that St. Frank's, for the time being, was well on top in the matter of japes!

(Next Wednesday the Aussies get their own back, but their jape has a sensational outcome!)



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THE MAROONED SCHOOL!

(Continued from page 22.)

him gambling—playing cards for money. I know it was beastly rotten, but I am quite sure that it was his first slip since—since he started afresh."

"How can you be sure of that, Merry?"

"I know him well enough to be sure, sir. We've been friends all the time and I've seen a lot of him. I know he doesn't possess even a pack of cards now."

"Then the cards I saw—"

"They belonged to somebody else, sir."

Mr. Railton looked very thoughtful.

"I know it's the truth, sir," said Tom Merry. "Lumley wasn't the leader in what happened. Since he's changed other fellows have tried to get him back into the old ways—I know that for a fact. I don't want to mention names, but I want to clear Lumley. I know it wasn't he who started that game and got the others into it. It was the other way about. I'm as sure of that as I am of anything, sir."

Mr. Railton compressed his lips.

"I shall have a talk with Lumley, Merry. What you have said throws quite a different light on the matter. Send Lumley to me."

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry joyfully.

CHAPTER 18.

All Serene!

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY was in the House-master's study for ten minutes, and Tom Merry waited in the passage for him. When he came out the Outsider's face was very bright. He grasped Tom Merry's hand and shook it hard.

"Thank you!" he said.

"Is it all right?"

"I guess so!"

"Good!"

"I owe it all to you, I suppose," said Lumley, as they walked away. "Railton was very decent. Of course, he piled it on about the pluck of going through the flood to fetch the doctor, and I stood that rot as well as I could. And he made me explain about the card-playing, and, as you'd said so much, and he undertook to let Mellish and Snipe alone, I explained. And all's serene—Hallo Mellish!"

Mellish of the Fourth looked at them, with a sneer.

"Leaving to-day, Lumley?" he asked.

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"I guess not!"

"Oh, you're not going to be expelled until the Head's well, I suppose?"

"No—and not even then!" grinned Lumley-Lumley. "I'm going to be changed out of your study, and that's all, and I shan't have the pleasure of your company, or Snipe's, again, and I guess I shan't miss it!"

And he walked on, leaving Mellish staring.

There was a great deal of anxiety that day about the state of Dr. Holmes. For that day, and the next, and several following days, the familiar figure was not seen about the school.

Until the flood subsided Dr. Taylor remained at St. Jim's—he had no choice in the matter—and the other Rylcombe medical man had charge of his patients. But when the rain had ceased, and the roads were made passable, the doctor still came every day to the school.

Dr. Holmes left his bed at last.

His convalescence was likely to last some time, and the boys of St. Jim's learned that he was going away for a change of air and that Mr. Railton would take his place.

Before he went, however, he received from all the Lower School a voluntary apology for their conduct on the day of the lecture. The Head had not said a word about it himself. The apology was voluntary, and it touched the kind old gentleman very much. He told the boys so, in addressing a few words of farewell to them before he quitted the school and took the train to Southampton, whence he was to cross to France.

On the day of the Head's departure all St. Jim's turned out to see him off. The whole staff of masters, and the chief prefects, made up a party to accompany him to Southampton to see him off; but all St. Jim's determined to go as far as Rylcombe, at all events.

Tom Merry & Co. came out strong on that occasion; Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, indeed, proposing to hire a brass band—or, more exactly, a "bwass" band—but being overruled. It was a proud moment for both Tom Merry and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley when the Head shook them by the hand before all the school and publicly thanked them for what they had done that night in the flood—a proud moment, though a somewhat embarrassing one.

And strange indeed did it seem to Jerrold Lumley-Lumley when the school cheered him—the one-time Outsider—with the ringing cheers he deserved for what he had done for the Head's sake!

THE END.

(Next week—High jinks at St. Jim's, when the school is left without masters!)



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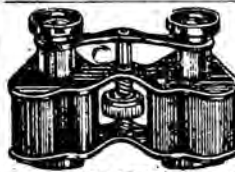
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