

"THE BOY FROM NOWHERE!" A STAR ST. JIM'S STORY —INSIDE!
THAT IS DIFFERENT



The GEM

THE BEST PAPER FOR BRITISH BOYS

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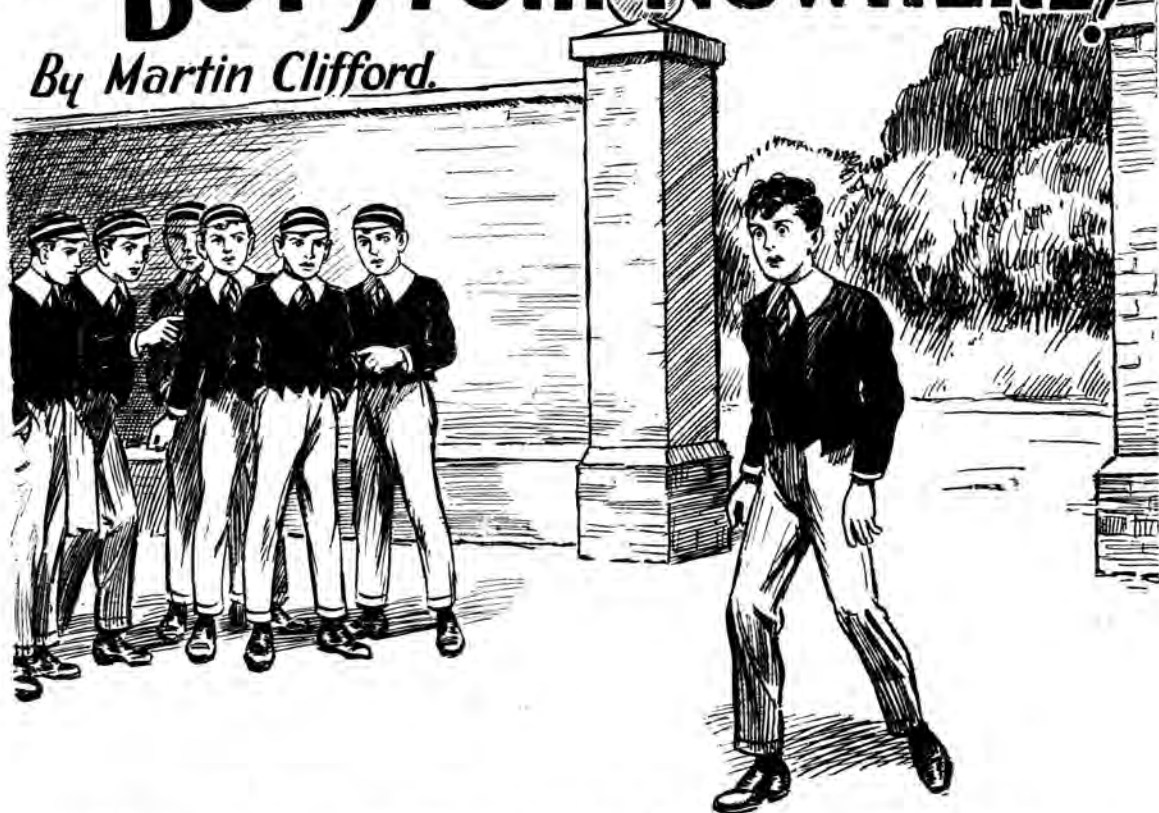


"MY HAT!"

THE BOY WHO FORGOT HIS NAME AND ADDRESS! HERE'S—

The BOY from NOWHERE!

By Martin Clifford.



"Just a cheeky new kid!" is Tom Merry & Co.'s opinion of the new boy who arrives unexpectedly at the school—for the newcomer says he has no name and comes from nowhere! But the Chums of St. Jim's little know the mystery of the nameless boy from nowhere!

CHAPTER 1.

Gussy's "Hat Trick"!

"HALLO!"

"Weally, Blake, I wish you would not uttah such sudden wemarks," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form, looking up from his work. "Weally, you thwow me into quite a buttah—"

"Hallo!" Jack Blake was standing at the window of Study No. 6, looking out into the old quad. It was a bright afternoon; the quad was baking under the rays of the sun. Blake was standing looking out over the tops of the elms towards the cricket field, while his elegant chum, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, was writing a German imposition.

Herr Schneider had descended upon D'Arcy that afternoon, and the swell of the School House had a hundred lines to write out before he could join the cricketers. Blake was staying in with him out of sheer sympathy.

He watched the cricket from the window, while D'Arcy covered the foolscap with what looked like an army of spiders marching in close order.

"Hallo!" repeated Jack Blake emphatically.

"Weally, you know—"

"I haven't seen that kid before."

"What kid?"

"The one who is coming across the quad," said Blake, looking down from the window. "New chap, I suppose. I hadn't heard there was a new boy expected."

"Neithah had I, deah boy. Nevah mind the beastlay new boy, however; I have fifteen lines to w'ite out yet."

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"Blessed if I can quite make it out."

"What can't you make out?"

"He looks queer."

"Well, let him look queeah if he likes, and let me finish my work," said Arthur Augustus; and his pen scratched over the paper.

Jack Blake continued to watch from the study window with a great deal of interest. Naturally he was interested in a new boy, especially if he was coming into the School House—the larger of the two Houses at St. Jim's, and the one that Jack Blake belonged to. But there was something interesting about the boy he was watching, apart from the fact that he was strange to St. Jim's.

D'Arcy breathed a deep sigh of relief as he wrote down the last line of his imposition and threw his pen upon the inkstand.

"My pwivate opinion is that Schillah was an ass," he remarked, as he rose from the table, "and Herr Schneider is anothah ass for givin' me the wot to w'ite down, and I'm an ass to do it!"

"No doubt about the last statement—you are an ass," Blake agreed, with great readiness.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Look here! Come and look at this chap—he's coming across the quad."

"Bah Jove, he must be a long time comin' acwoss the quad, Blake, if he's been comin' acwoss since you first spoke."

"Yes; look at him."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy joined Blake at the window. He adjusted his eyeglass with great care, and looked out through the open window into the green quad.

Past the tops of the trees that made a mass of green under

—THE STORY OF THE MOST AMAZING NEWCOMER TO ST. JIM'S!

the study window the juniors had a view of the gates and of playing-fields in the distance.

From the direction of the school gates came the boy upon whom Blake's eyes had been fixed for more than five minutes.

He was a boy of about Blake's own age, but thinner, and less strongly built, but it was his face that attracted Blake's attention. His face was pale in colour, its paleness rendered all the more prominent by the thick, black hair that clustered over his brow. His eyes were very dark, and had a gleam in them which was to be observed even at that distance.

There was something dazed and strange about the face—something that could not fail to arrest the attention as soon as the strange lad was near enough to be seen.

The boy was not walking straight to the School House. Every now and then he paused to look about him in a slow, strange, dazed manner.

Either he was under the influence of some great shock or of some drug—that was the only explanation the juniors could think of.

"Curious, isn't he?" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"He must be a new boy—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Let's go down and speak to him," said Blake abruptly. "There may have been an accident or something, and the chap may have had a knock on the napper."

"Quite wight, deah boy!"

"Come on, then!"

Blake hurried from the study.

"Pway wait a moment, deah boy!" D'Arcy called after him. "Wait a second while I get my toppah, you know."

"Fathead!" yelled Blake.

"Wait a minute—"

"Rats!"

Blake ran off down the passage. Arthur Augustus opened his hatbox, extracted the topper, and rushed out of the study to overtake his chum, the top hat still in his hand. He meant to put it on in the passage as he went, but that topper was destined never to be put on.

Three cheerful youths were leaving a study in the passage—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther—the Terrible Three of the Shell Form.

Arthur Augustus rushed right into them as he bolted from the study.

Instantly the Terrible Three stood firm as rocks, and D'Arcy reeled back from the impact, and sat down on the floor of the passage.

Squelch!

The hat had fallen first, and unfortunately it fell just where D'Arcy sat the next moment.

The swell of St. Jim's gave a yell as his hat crumpled up beneath his weight.

"Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

"Bai Jove! Ow!"

"Is this a new acrobatic performance?" asked Tom Merry innocently. "You should have warned us first."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's the hat trick," said Monty Lowther blandly. "Gussy sits on his hat, and then he restores it to its original shape—it's a conjuring trick. Go on to the second part of the performance, Gussy."

"Ow!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat in the passage groaning for his eyeglass and blinking dazedly at the Terrible Three.

The chums of the Shell winked at one another and trod on—and trod on the swell of St. Jim's, and cheerfully walked over him.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Gweat Scott! Ow! Ah! You uttah wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Terrible Three walked on their way, grinning, leaving the swell of St. Jim's on the passage floor.

CHAPTER 2.

Nobody—From Nowhere!

JACK BLAKE had reached the doorway of the School House, and he looked out into the quad for the stranger who had caught his glance from the study window.

The latter had just reached the steps of the School House, and there he had paused, looking about him in the same strange, dazed way that had caused Blake's surprise.

Blake made a sign to him.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed.

The boy's wandering eyes fixed upon him for a moment.

"Hallo!" repeated Blake. "Are you looking for somebody?"

"Looking for somebody?" the boy repeated softly.

"Yes. You're a new boy. I suppose?"

"I suppose so," said the other doubtfully.

Blake looked at him in blank amazement.

"I suppose you know whether you're a new boy or not?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"What's your name?"

"My name?" repeated the boy.

"Yes."

"I do not know."

Blake jumped.

"You don't know your own name?" he ejaculated.

"No."

"Look here, my son, if you're pulling my leg, the sooner you stop it the better!" said Blake darkly. "Come in here!"

The stranger ascended the steps of the School House, and Blake looked at him more closely. He wagged a warning finger at him.

"Now, what's your name?" he exclaimed.

"I don't know."

"You young ass—"

"Hallo! What's the trouble here, Blake?" asked Tom Merry's voice. "New kid, eh?"

Blake turned towards the Terrible Three with an exasperated look.

"Yes, a blessed new kid, with a new gag of some sort!" he exclaimed. "I can't make him out. He pretends that he doesn't know his own name."

"My hat!"

The chums of the Shell looked with curious interest at the new boy. He did not meet their glance—his gaze was wandering and unfixed all the time.

Tom Merry clapped a hand upon his shoulder.

"Look here!" he exclaimed. "What's the little game? What's your name, kid?"

The boy looked at him for a moment, and shook his head.

"I have no name."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry. "Where do you come from?"

"Nowhere."

"Eh?"

"Nowhere," said the new boy, gazing attentively at Tom Merry for once.

The juniors were staggered.

The boy was certainly a little strange in his manner, but he did not look as if he were mad. But what else could it mean?

Was it some stupendous jape, of which the old hands at St. Jim's were to be the victims, while the new boy was the perpetrator?

Naturally, such a thought made the juniors angry at once.

Tom Merry took the new boy by one shoulder, and Jack Blake took him by the other, and they shook him.

He did not resist.

"Now, look here," said Tom Merry impressively, "you can't rot us like this, you know! You've got a name, and you came from somewhere. Now then, explicate."

The boy looked at him vacantly.

"I do not know my name," he said.

"And you come from—"

"Nowhere."

Jack Blake gave a growl of wrath and doubled his fist.

"You'll get my knuckles somewhere," he said. "What's the little game?"

"Hold on, Blake—"

"Look here, Tom Merry!"

"The chap's not well," said Tom Merry, in a low voice.

"Look at him! There's something very strange about him. He's ill, or he's been ill."

"He looks healthy enough."

"Yes, but he's not," said Tom Merry. "I say, you new chap—"

The boy gave him a vacant look.

"Did you speak to me?" he asked.

"Yes. Have you been ill?"

The boy nodded.

"Yes; I have been ill."

"What was it?" asked Monty Lowther. "If it was catching, you can kindly go into the New House and leave this show alone. Was it measles?"

"Don't be an ass, Monty!"

"It was brain fever," said the boy simply.

"How long ago?"

"I don't remember."

"And you don't remember your name!"

"No."

"Now, where have you lived?"

"Nowhere."

"My hat!" muttered Jack Blake. "It looks to me as if the chap is right off his rocker."

"You feahful asses!"

It was the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's had just arrived on the scene.

"You uttah chumps!" he exclaimed. "You fyabjous asses! I am goin' to give all thwée a feahful thwashin'—"

"Order!" exclaimed Blake.

"I wefuse to ordah—I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean now, Gussy! Look here—"

"I wefuse—"

"And don't make a row when there's a new chap here!" exclaimed Tom Merry severely. "What will he think of our manners at St. Jim's?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"D'Arcy is called to order!" said Monty Lowther, holding up his hand. "We cannot allow D'Arcy to make a row before visitors."

D'Arcy was speechless. He prided himself, more than anything else, upon Chesterfieldian manners, and all the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. The wind was all taken out of his sails by this attack.

"This new chap is off his rocker," Monty Lowther went on to explain. "Can you tell us if he is a relation of yours, Gussy?"

"Certainly not."

"Oh, all right! I thought he might be. I know that kind of thing runs in the family—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"He's off his rocker, anyway," said Manners. "The curious thing is, if he's lost his memory, where did he lose it? He must have been all right when he started for school, or his people wouldn't have let him come."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I suppose he's got to the right place," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "I say, are you sure you were to come here?"

"Yes."

"This is St. Jim's, you know."

"St. Jim's!" the new boy was repeating vaguely.

"Yes, I came in the train. I had to come to St. Jim's."

"Sure?"

"Oh, yes, I am sure! I had to come to St. Jim's. I am going into the Shell with Tom Merry."

Tom Merry started.

"With me?" he exclaimed. "I'm Tom Merry! How do you know my name?"

"I don't know."

"Have you ever seen me before?"

"I don't know."

"I don't remember ever seeing him," Tom Merry said thoughtfully.

"More people know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows," said Monty Lowther, politely quoting the old proverb.

"Oh, rats! It's curious that he should know me, when I don't ever remember seeing him before. But perhaps he's heard of me from some relations."

"Yaas, wathah! Pewwaps you'd bettah leave this chap to me. As a fellow of tact and judgment—"

"Rats!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"The fact is, he ought to go in and see the Head!" Tom Merry exclaimed. "Dr. Holmes ought to see him at once."

"Yaas, wathah! I was just goin' to suggest that—I mean, I was just goin' to think of it, you know, and then I should have suggested it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Exactly!" said Tom Merry. "Come on!"

And he linked his arm in that of the new boy, and led him into the School House, with quite a little crowd of juniors round him.

CHAPTER 3.

Gussy, as Usual!

THE new boy at St. Jim's had attracted general attention by now. His peculiar answers to the questions put to him had been listened to by a crowd of fellows, and they were as amazed as the chums of the Shell.

They all followed the Boy from Nowhere into the House, and along the wide oak passage to the Head's study.

"He's off his rocker," said Snipe of the Fourth. "I suppose, as a matter of fact, he was put in the train to go to Bedlam, and he got out here by mistake."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Oh, cheese it!" said Tom Merry. "He can hear what you're saying, Snipe, and it isn't very nice."

Snipe sneered.

"I suppose I can say what I like?" he said.

"No, as a matter of fact, you can't," said Tom Merry. "You can't do anything of the sort. Shut up!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, rats!"

"Shall I give him a feahful thwashin', Tom Mewwy?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, pushing back his cuffs.

Snipe retired to the back of the crowd before that question could be answered.

He nudged Mellish of the Fourth. Mellish was the cad of the House, and he was Snipe's chum.

"What do you think of him?" whispered Snipe.

Mellish shook his head.

"Off his rocker, I suppose."

Snipe grinned.

"Well, I don't think so," he said. "He's had brain fever, has he, and can't remember his name? In that case, what did his people send him here for—without anybody to care for him, or even to see that he arrived safely?"

"It's odd."

"I should say so. You mark my words, he's shamming."

"Shamming?" repeated Mellish.

"Yes. That's my opinion. He's simply shamming. It's a dodge to get out of classes," said Snipe. "It's humbug from start to finish, and if you watch him, you'll see him give himself away."

Mellish whistled.

"He's doing it jolly well, then, that's all," he said.

"All the same, he's shamming."

The procession arrived at the door of the Head's study. Monty Lowther looked along the crowded passage, with a grin.

"All of you coming in?" he asked.

"Wathah not!" said D'Arcy. "I think it would be bettah for one chap to take the new kid in, and explain to the Head. As a fellow of tact and judgment—"

"I'll do it," said Tom Merry.

"Weally—"

Tom Merry tapped at the Head's door. There was no reply. He tapped again, and opened the door. Dr. Holmes was not there, so he closed the door again. D'Arcy adjusted his eyeglass, and stared at Tom Merry in great surprise.

"What are you closin' the door for, Tom Mewwy?" he asked.

"So that it won't remain open."

"Weally, you ass!"

"Let's buzz off!"

"But aren't you going to speak to the Head?"

"Not this minute."

"Pewwaps I had bettah do it."

"Go ahead, then."

D'Arcy stepped towards the door of the Head's study, and raised his hand to knock, and then paused and looked at the grinning juniors.

He had not looked into the study when Tom Merry opened the door, and he did not know that the Head was not there. The other fellows knew it well enough, but it had not occurred to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Sometimes he did not think of things very quickly.

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy—"

"Well?"

"I wegard it as a good ideah for me to be the one to speak to the Head, as a fellow of tact and judgment."

"Exactly. Pile in."

"But I have a howwor of putting myself forward in any way," D'Arcy explained. "I twust you will not wegard this as swankin'."

"Not a bit of it."

"Go ahead, Gussy!" said Manners. "We're waiting for you!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

D'Arcy tapped on the door.

"I suppose I had bettah open it."

"Certainly!"

D'Arcy opened the door and stepped into the study, bowing his best bow as he went in, and not noticing for the moment that there was no one sitting in the Head's usual place at the writing-table.

"If you please, sir, I twust you will excuse this intwusion— Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus broke off, as he observed the empty chair.

"Bai Jove, he's not here!"

There was a roar of laughter from the passage. Arthur Augustus cast a glance round the study, and then came out into the passage pink with wrath.

"You uttah asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Head is not there!"



With four or five juniors clinging to him, Knox went to the floor with a crash. There was a terrific struggle in the passage, and the din could be heard far and wide. Suddenly there was a hurried footstep and then a startled voice. "Good heavens! What does this mean?" "My hat!" exclaimed Lowther. "The Head!"

"Go hon!"
 "Did you know it, you howwid boundah?"
 "I looked," said Tom Merry. "That was why I let you go in, you see, because there was no one there."
 "Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that, you know! I wegard you—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I see nothin' whatever to cackle at!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with dignity. "I wegard you—"
 "Give us your kindest regards," said Monty Lowther.
 "Oh, pway don't be an ass, Lowthah!"
 "Don't ask impossibilities," said Kangaroo of the Shell.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I wegard you as a set of asses! I have nevah been able to undahstand why you genevally bwreak into a silly cackle when I make a wemark."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Hallo! What are you kicking up this row for outside the Head's study?" demanded a loud and bullying voice. The voice belonged to Knox of the Sixth, a prefect of the School House, the particular enemy of Tom Merry & Co. on all occasions.

CHAPTER 4.

Not Nice for Knox!

KNOX stopped in the passage outside the Head's study. A glance in at the open door showed him that the study was empty. Knox, when he indulged his taste for bullying, generally made sure that there were no masters close at hand. The heavy-browed, unpleasant-voiced senior looked at Tom Merry with a dark frown. Tom Merry met his gaze fearlessly. Knox was a bully, and his position as a prefect gave him many opportunities of annoying the juniors; but he had never been able to make Tom Merry afraid of him. "What are you hanging about here for?" Knox demanded. "Playing some prank in the Head's study, I suppose?"
 "No."

"Then what are you up to?"
 "There's a new kid here," Tom Merry exclaimed. "I was bringing him to see the Head, because he's not well."
 "You want the Head to cure him?" asked Knox, with a sneer.
 Tom Merry flushed scarlet.
 "It is the truth, Knox!" he exclaimed. "And if you doubt my word—"
 "Gently does it," murmured Manners. "You mustn't slang a prefect."
 "Look here!" said Knox. "Where's the sick kid, if he exists at all?"
 "Here he is," said Tom Merry quietly.
 He drew the new boy forward.
 The stranger to St. Jim's was looking dazed and vacant still; his expression had not changed since the juniors first saw him in the quad.
 Knox looked the new boy over with a sneering look. Knox was of the same sceptical turn of mind as Snipe of the Fourth. And he was too untruthful himself to believe anything without proof.
 "Oh, that's the kid, is it?" he exclaimed. "And you tell me that he's ill."
 "I said he's not well."
 "That comes to the same thing, I imagine. What's the matter with him?"
 "He's lost his memory, I think."
 Knox jumped.
 "His what?" he roared.
 "His memory."
 "Well, of all the rotten yarns I ever heard!" Knox exclaimed angrily. "How dare you tell me such stuff. Boy, what's your name?"
 The new boy looked at him slowly, and did not answer. Knox laid a hand upon his shoulder and shook him.
 "What's your name?"
 "I don't know."

"Don't try to stuff me!" Knox said sharply. "What is your name?"

"I don't know."

Knox gritted his teeth.

"If you think that sort of rot will work with me," he said, "you're making a great mistake. I'll give you one more chance to speak sensibly, and if you don't do it, I'll lick you till you can't stand! What's your name?"

"I don't know."

"Well, then, take that!"

The prefect began to box the new boy's ears right and left.

The new boy shrank back from him, crying out, and a yell of indignant protest rose from the juniors.

"Stop it!"

"Knox, you cad!"

"Make him stop!"

"Knox," exclaimed Tom Merry, laying a hand on the prefect's arm, "stop it! You may hurt the chap! He's not well! Stop it, I say!"

"Stand back!"

Tom Merry's eyes blazed.

"I won't stand back! Stop that!"

And as Knox did not stop, Tom Merry sprang right at him, hitting out, and the prefect had to leave off his punishment of the new boy to defend himself from Tom Merry's attack.

The new boy staggered against the wall, gasping.

Knox grasped Tom Merry; but he had no chance of dealing with the hero of the Shell alone. The other fellows were rushing on.

Lowther and Manners, and Blake and Herries, and Kangaroo and Reilly, and three or four more seized hold of the prefect, and he was swept off his feet in a second.

It might be risky to go for a prefect, but the juniors were ready to follow Tom Merry's lead anywhere.

"Let go!" roared the prefect. "Do you hear? Let go! You young hounds!"

"Down him!"

"Bump him!"

"Shove the cad over!"

Knox went to the floor with a crash, with five or six juniors clinging to him, and sprawling over him.

There was a terrific struggle on the floor of the passage,



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while the crowd of juniors stood round, yelling. The din was fearful. In the midst of it there was the rustle of a gown and a hurried footstep, and then a startled voice.

"Good heavens! What does this mean?"

"My hat!" exclaimed Lowther. "The Head!"

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

The juniors jumped up, red and flustered. There was a general movement to retreat, but Dr. Holmes raised his hand.

"Stop—all of you!"

"Ye-es, sir."

Knox sat up, gasping.

"Knox—a prefect! What does this mean? How dare you lay hands upon a prefect?" the Head thundered.

"Ow!" groaned Knox.

"Weally, my deah sir—"

"You see, sir—" began Tom Merry.

"You are intewwuptin' me, Tom Mewwy!"

"Let Merry speak! Go on, Merry!"

"I was thinkin'—pewwaps I could explain a little bettah, sir."

"Silence, D'Arcy!"

"Vewy well, sir."

"You see, sir," said Tom Merry. "Knox was knocking this chap about, and he's not well, and we had to stop him—that's how it was."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Who is this boy?" exclaimed the Head, turning his eyes upon the new junior. "I have not seen him before."

"He's the new boy, sir."

"The new boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"But I was not expecting a new boy to arrive," the Head exclaimed, in amazement. "Surely there is some mistake. What is your name, my boy?"

"I don't know, sir."

"What?"

"I don't know."

"What does this mean? What—"

"He's not well, sir," Tom Merry exclaimed. "That's why we were bringing him to your study, sir. He's lost his memory."

"Dear me!"

"He says he had brain fever, sir."

"Indeed!"

"And—and that's why we rolled Knox over, sir. He didn't understand, I suppose, and we thought he might injure the kid if he punched him."

"I—I boxed his ears because he would not answer me, sir," stammered Knox, getting up in a very dusty state. The Head looked at him.

"You should never box a boy's ear," he said. "It is dangerous. And in this case you should have been doubly careful. You have been very injudicious, Knox. You may go."

And the prefect went, aching in every limb, and gritting his teeth.

"Boy, whoever you are, come here! You say you do not know your name?" the Head asked, fixing his eyes upon the new junior.

"No, sir."

"You have come here alone?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did you come?"

"By train, sir."

"Where from?"

"I don't know."

The Head pursed his lips.

"You are sure that this was your correct destination?" he asked. "This is St. James' Collegiate School."

"St. Jim's, sir; that's right."

"Were you told to come here?"

"I don't know, sir. I came here because Tom Merry is here."

"Merry, do you know this boy?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I never heard of him before, sir."

"It is very strange. Go into my study, my lad. Merry, kindly tell Mr. Railton I should like to see him."

"Yes, sir."

The Head entered his study with the new boy, and the juniors dispersed, discussing the matter excitedly. The new boy amazed them.

"Blessed if I can make him out!" said Digby of the Fourth. "It's possible he had an accident coming here."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He may have come to the wrong place," Tom Merry said thoughtfully. "But what I can't understand is how his people could let him travel in such a state."

"It's a giddy mystery!"

And the juniors had to agree that it was.

CHAPTER 5.

The New Chum!

THE Boy from Nowhere was the talk of the school in a few hours' time.

A fellow who had lost his memory was, naturally, an object of interest; and when he was a fellow who had come to the school by himself, without being expected by the Head, the interest was doubled.

Every fellow in the School House had a look at the Boy from Nowhere, as they had all come to call him already. As he had no name, apparently, it was really the only way of referring to him.

All that was known of him was that he had arrived at St. Jim's without knowing who he was or where he had come from.

The mystery was intensely interesting to the juniors, and all kinds of theories were formed to account for the Boy from Nowhere.

Who was he? Where had he come from?

Then there was his statement that he had come to St. Jim's because Tom Merry was there. Yet Tom Merry did not know him.

The general theory was that the boy's parents had sent him to the school, and that they knew of some relation of Tom Merry who had talked of Tom to them. But then came the curious fact that the Head was not expecting a new boy at St. Jim's.

New boys did not walk into the school, naturally, without any notice of their coming. And the Head knew nothing of his coming till he came. His parents should have been in communication with Dr. Holmes, if they did not come personally; but nothing of the kind had happened.

Yet it was evidently a fixed idea in the boy's mind that he was to come to St. Jim's. Perhaps it had been intended by his parents and he had known of it, and had come of his own accord in the middle of the term. In that case it had to be assumed that he was not quite right in his head.

Yet, excepting for his want of memory, he seemed sane enough. And he was a pleasant-looking lad, and his eyes were very intelligent when the dazed look left them for a moment. But if that look left him it quickly returned. It seemed as if his mind was under a cloud.

The doctor from Rylcombe was sent for, and he examined the lad, but his report did not clear up the matter at all. The boy's state might have been caused by a severe shock, or it might be that he was of unsound mind. In either case he was harmless enough; there was no question about that.

The question that arose was—what was to be done with him? He could not be sent wandering away from the school alone; that was evidently impossible. He could be handed over to the authorities certainly; but it seemed a hard proceeding. And as the lad was evidently set upon being at St. Jim's, Dr. Holmes determined to allow him to remain there till his people could be discovered.

Meanwhile, the police were informed, and the inspector from Rylcombe came and saw the lad, and took down a full description of him.

The story of the mysterious new boy reached the other House at St. Jim's quickly, and the New House fellows came over in crowds to see him, the first being Figgins & Co.—Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn of the Fourth Form.

Tom Merry had taken the new boy in charge after the Head and Mr. Railton and the doctor and the inspector had seen him. Dr. Holmes had given Tom Merry a hint to that effect, and the kind-hearted junior was only too glad to be of service.

The Terrible Three took him up to their study in the Shell passage. The new boy looked round him with great interest.

"You are Tom Merry?" he asked the hero of the Shell as they walked down the Shell passage in the School House.

"Yes," said Tom Merry, with a smile, "I'm Tom Merry. And you came to St. Jim's because I was here?"

The new boy nodded.

"Who told you about me?"

"I don't remember."

"Was it your father?"

"I don't know."

"Did you have any accident in the train coming?" asked Manners.

"I think not."

"It's jolly odd! And you can't remember your name?"

"I'm sorry—no."

"Here's our study," said Tom Merry. "If you're going into the Shell, you'll have a study in this passage, kid. You might even be put in here with us."

"I should like to."

"Oh, good!" said Monty Lowther, with great politeness.

As a matter of fact, the Terrible Three were by no means enthusiastic about having anybody put in their study. They wanted it to themselves. But temporarily they were quite willing to take the stranger in, so to speak.

Tom Merry lighted the spirit stove, and placed it on the window-sill, so that the smell of the methylated spirit should

not be too pronounced in the study. Then he took the kettle away to fill it. Manners departed on a visit to the school tuckshop, to get in supplies.

Monty Lowther remained alone in the study with the new boy.

It was then that the actions of the Boy from Nowhere became peculiar. He trod silently to the door, looked into the passage, and closed the door with great caution.

Monty Lowther, who was cutting bread-and-butter, glanced at him, and his eyes became fixed upon the new boy in great amazement.

"What the—?" he began.

The new boy held up his finger warningly.

"Hist!"

"Eh?"

"Be careful!"

"Careful! Do you mean about cutting my fingers?"

"Oh, no!"

"What then? What are you getting at?" Monty Lowther demanded, his surprise increasing as the new boy came towards him on tiptoe.

PITY THE PLUMBER!



Householder: "Do you ever make mistakes?"

Plumber: "No, sir."

Householder: "Does your assistant?"

Plumber: "No, sir."

Householder: "Well, I thought one of you had, because the gas is like a fountain, and the bath taps are spouting fire!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Tregombo, Nautical Training Home, Penarth, Glamorgan.

The new boy sank his voice to a whisper.

"It's about Tom Merry," he murmured.

"Eh! Tom Merry?"

"Yes, yes!"

"What about him?" asked Monty Lowther, in wonder.

"Do you not know?"

"K-know what?"

"About Tom Merry." The new boy sank his voice still lower, till Lowther had to strain his ears to hear it. "He's mad!"

Monty Lowther jumped, and the knife went from his hand with a clatter to the floor. He gazed at the new boy with a pale, startled face.

"What?"

"He's mad!"

"M-mad!"

"Yes."

"You—he—I—T-Tom Merry m-mad!" stuttered Lowther, so astounded that he hardly knew what he was saying.

"Yes."

Lowther looked at him long and hard.

"Look here," he said. "I don't know what you're driving at. If you are trying to pull my leg, you're in danger of getting a prize thick ear. Savvy?"

"Hush!"

"What is there to hush about?" demanded Monty Lowther wrathfully.

"Don't let him hear!"

"You ass! I'm going to tell him what you said the minute he comes into the study!" said Monty Lowther.

"Oh, I—"

"Hush!"

"Rats!"

"I tell you it must be kept quiet!" whispered the new boy anxiously. "Mind, it's very important. That's why I've come here."

"Eh! What?"

"I've been sent here to look after him," murmured the new boy. "Because he's mad, you know, and may break out at any moment!"

"Great Scott!"

"I'll prove it to you if you like."

"Prove it!"

"Yes."

"But you're—you're off your rocker!" stammered Monty Lowther. "What do you mean? How can you prove it?"

"I can show you my card."

"Your card?"

"My professional card."

"What?"

"My father is a brain specialist, and I look after cases of madness in youths," the new boy explained, still in a mysterious whisper.

"But it's—it's impossible!"

"Look here, then!"

The new boy cautiously opened a little card-case, and took out a card, which he showed to Monty Lowther. The Shell fellow stared at it blankly.

"Dr. Ballantyne, Mental Specialist."

That was the engraved inscription on the card.

Monty Lowther staggered.

If there was nothing in what the new boy said, where did he get that card, and what was he telling this astounding story for?

"But—but you—" stammered Lowther.

"I'm Dr. Ballantyne's son."

"Oh!"

"And I'm here to watch over Tom Merry, and see how he progresses. I dare say you did not know that there was madness in his family."

"Good heavens!"

"It generally comes out in the Merry family at about fifteen," the new boy explained. "I'm to watch over him and report to my father. I'm telling you so that you will understand. Mind what I've told you—not a word."

The study door opened, and Tom Merry came in with the filled kettle. The new boy dropped back into his dazed, listless manner at once, as if it were a cloak he was putting on.

Monty Lowther opened his mouth and shut it again. Tom Merry put the kettle on the spirit-stove, and Monty Lowther said not a word.

CHAPTER 6.

Odd!

TOM MERRY looked round after lighting the spirit-stove. He caught Monty Lowther's eyes fixed upon him with a searching glance.

Tom looked a little surprised.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

Lowther started, and coloured.

"Wrong? Oh, no."

"What are you staring at me for?"

"Ahem! Was I staring at you?"

"Yes, as if you wanted to bore a hole in me," said Tom Merry, puzzled. "Have I spilt the spirit or anything?"

"I think not."

"It niffs a bit, I know," said Tom Merry. "I'll go and get it off my hands, I think. I always get some of the blessed stuff on my hands."

He crossed towards the door.

"I—I say, Tom," began Lowther.

"Yes?"

"I suppose you're feeling well?"

"Fit as a fiddle. Why?"

"Oh, nothing."

"Blessed if I can make you out, Monty," said Tom Merry.

"Oh, I'm all right."

"You don't talk as if you were all right," said Tom, with a grin. "You talk as if you were off your silly rocker."

"Oh!"

Tom Merry quitted the study, and the new boy gave Lowther a significant look. It was curious to see how his dazed expression dropped from him like a garment. The change in the new boy's face was quite startling.

"What do you think now?" whispered the new boy.

"I'm blessed if I know what to think," said Lowther, in dismay. "What you've been saying to me is all rot, of course."

"I've proved my words."

"Look here, I suppose you didn't pick up that card, did you?"

"The card I showed you is my father's card. Mind, not a word to Tom Merry. It is dangerous to let a lunatic know that you suspect him of being one—it is liable to send him right off his head at once. You see, it preys on the mind."

"I suppose it does," said Lowther.

"More than one man has gone mad simply through being suspected of madness, when he was only a trifle queer."

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder."

"That's how Tom Merry is. It runs in the family, and generally breaks out at his present age; but if he is treated carefully, and never knows it, he may be all right. I hope so, as I said to Miss Fawcett."

"Miss Fawcett!"

"Yes, Tom Merry's old governess."

Monty Lowther's doubts were shaken. If the new boy were not what he represented himself to be, how did he know anything about Miss Priscilla Fawcett, Tom Merry's old governess, or, indeed, Tom Merry himself?

Was it possible?

It was a terrible thing to think of, but it was possible—such things did happen.

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"It's rotten!" muttered Lowther.

"It runs in his family," said the new boy. "His father was the same. They keep it a dead secret from Tom, of course, in case it should prey on his mind."

"I suppose so."

"Miss Fawcett and Mr. Dodds both think that the secret should be kept from Tom; it is the only safe course to take."

"You know Mr. Dodds?"

"Yes, the curate of Huckleberry Heath, and a great friend of Tom Merry. He and I have discussed the matter."

"Oh, dear."

"I know it's a shock to you," said the new boy sympathetically, "but I thought it better for you to know, so that you can help me."

"I don't know what to think."

Manners came into the study with a bag under his arm. He plumped it down upon the table and grunted.

"Jolly hot weather," he said.

"Got the grub?" asked Lowther. "Turn it out. Can you open a tin of salmon, you new chap? There's a tin-opener in the drawer."

"Certainly."

Tom Merry came in by the time the salmon steak was turned out. He was looking very bright and cheerful, and the scent of the methylated spirit had been quite removed.

"Ready?" he asked.

Lowther started out of a brown study.

"Eh?" he ejaculated.

"Been to sleep?" asked Tom Merry kindly. "Are you getting into the habit of going to sleep standing up, like a horse?"

"You—you see—"

"Kettle's boiling," said Manners.

"Oh, good!"

Tom Merry made the tea and extinguished the spirit-stove. The four juniors sat down round the table to tea.

"Hand me that knife, and I'll cut some bread," said Tom Merry.

Lowther started again.

"I—I'll cut it," he exclaimed, taking hold of the knife quickly and pulling it over towards him.

"Go ahead, then."

They began tea. The new boy did not say a word. He sat still in his stolid way. The Terrible Three chatted cheerily about cricket and school affairs. They tried to draw the new boy into the talk, but as he would not speak, they gradually dropped him out. Monty Lowther was unusually silent. When he spoke, it was with a forced cheerfulness.

He could not help thinking of what the new boy had told him.

Surely there could be nothing in it—and yet—

That "yet" worried and puzzled Lowther.

He wondered whether it would be possible, by judicious pumping, to learn something of Tom Merry's antecedents, so as to ascertain whether there might be any grounds for the new fellow's curious statements.

He knew little of Tom Merry's people.

Tom's father had been killed in battle on the Indian frontier long ago, and his mother had died when he was a child. His uncle in America was his mother's brother, and so would not possess the supposed taint of the Merry family. Certainly, Mr. Poinsett was sane enough.

Of Tom Merry's father's relations Lowther knew nothing—he had no near relations. It was impossible to learn anything from them.

"Do you remember your father, Tom?" Monty Lowther asked abruptly.

Tom Merry stared at him blankly.

The chums of the Shell had been discussing cricket, and Lowther's question was asked suddenly, without any reference to the matter under discussion.

"My father!" Tom Merry repeated.

"Yes."

"What about him?"

"I asked if you remembered him."

"Yes, indistinctly," said Tom, in wonder. "I was a kid when I was sent home from India. I was born there, and Miss Fawcett brought me home. I didn't see my dad after that—I can just remember him in his uniform."

"Did you like him?"

"I suppose so."

"You don't remember anything about him?"

"Very little, excepting that he was kind to me—and he was a splendid chap, from what I've heard."

"Did he have a violent temper?"

"A what?"

"A—a violent temper—I mean, was he excitable?"

"Excitable?"

"Yes."

Tom Merry rose to his feet and looked steadily at

Lowther. Monty Lowther coloured under his searching gaze, and dropped his eyes.

"I think you must be ill," said Tom Merry quietly. "We're talking about Fatty Wynn's bowling, and you ask me whether I remember my father, and whether he was excitable. What's the connection?"

"I—I—"

"What are you driving at? Blessed if I don't begin to think that you're off your giddy chump, Monty."

"You—you see—"

"I don't remember whether my dad was excitable, but I shall get excitable myself if you don't stop talking piffle!" said Tom Merry crossly.

"I—I—"

"Yes. Why don't you explain yourself, Monty?" said

CHAPTER 7.

A House Row!

MONTY LOWTHER sat very silent at the table.

There was a worry on his mind, and he could not help showing it. He dropped out of the talk as the Boy from Nowhere had done, and sat with a glum frown on his brow. After a time he made an excuse to get up and leave the study, and closed the door behind him as he went.

Figgins, of the New House, looked surprised.

"Nothing wrong, I hope?" he asked.

"Not that I know of," said Tom Merry.

"I mean, if we've come in at an unlucky moment, and interrupted one of the family rows, we're willing to buzz off while you finish," said Figgins genially.



As Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came into Tom Merry's study, he stopped and stared in astonishment. The Boy from Nowhere was capering around the room, waving his arms and chuckling to himself. "Bai Jove!" exclaimed Gussy. "Are you off your silly wockah?"

Manners. "What do you want to know about Tom Merry's governor?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Merely talking out of your hat?" said Manners.

"Well, you see—"

"Well, what?"

"Oh, nothing!"

Then Manners stared. Certainly, Monty Lowther had never been quite so strange in his manner before.

There was a knock at the door, and Figgins & Co. came in. Figgins grinned genially at the chums of the School House.

"Having tea?" he remarked. "Good! So will I!"

"Hear, hear!" said Kerr.

"Yes, hear, hear!" grinned Fatty Wynn. "I'm hungry. It's a curious thing, but my appetite is always good at this time of the year—"

"Sit down!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "There's heaps."

And Figgins & Co. sat down to tea; and over tea they learned all that was to be learned of the Boy from Nowhere. But they did not learn what Monty Lowther could have told them.

"Or we'll stay as spectators and see fair play," suggested Kerr.

"Or you can leave it till after tea," said Fatty Wynn. "Pass the shrimp paste."

Tom Merry laughed.

"It's all right," he said. "We haven't been having a row; but Lowther has been talking out of his hat for some reason. Perhaps he's feeling seedy."

"Oh, all serene, then!" said Figgins. "Pass the ham! After tea we'll do some of the 'Weekly'."

The Boy from Nowhere looked at Figgins.

"The 'Weekly'?" he said. "What is that?"

"Our school paper," Figgins explained. "We publish it weekly. It's called 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' but that's really only a matter of form. It's really a New House paper."

"Rats!"

"All the good stuff is written by New House fellows, I mean," Figgins went on. "We let Tom Merry call himself editor."

"I am editor!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Merely a matter of form," said Figgins loftily. "Besides, I've been thinking that it's time there was a

change of editorship, and that the chief editor ought to be chosen from the New House for this term."

"More rats!"

"You see, you School House swankers—"

"You New House asses—"

"Look here—"

"Look here—"

"We came over here on a peaceful visit," said Figgins, beginning to glare. "If we have any rot, though, we are quite ready to wipe up the study, and everybody in it!"

"Bah!"

"Bosh!"

"Hold on a minute, Figgy," said Fatty Wynn, who was bolting jam-tarts as fast as he could. "Hold on; don't have a row till I've finished the grub. It's ripping."

"You fat bounder—"

Gobble, gobble! went Fatty Wynn. There was a storm coming, and before it burst Fatty Wynn meant to get through as many of the tarts as possible.

"Let the grub alone!" said Kerr. "We were quite willing to come to tea, but if Tom Merry prefers a row—"

"Not much choice about having a row when there are New House chaps in the study," said Manners. "There won't be so much row if you shut up!"

"Fathead!"

"Look here—"

Gobble, gobble!

"Peace, my children—peace!" said Tom Merry. "Figgins, don't be an ass!"

"What!"

"Don't play the giddy goat! Of course, we haven't any special desire to keeping the editorship of the 'Weekly' in this study, only we know that it wouldn't be properly managed in the New House."

"Well, of all the cheek—"

"So, for perfectly disinterested reasons, I'm going to remain chief editor of the 'Weekly,'" said Tom Merry. "It's really a great sacrifice on my part."

"How do you make that out?"

"Well, as chief editor, I have to keep an eye on the copy, and so I have to read all the contributions sent in—including yours."

"Why, you ass—"

"The other fellows can skip the page when they come to the 'Mystery of the Bandbox,' by G. Figgins, but I can't," said Tom Merry. "Under the circumstances, I expect sympathy."

Figgins rose to his feet.

"You utter ass—" he began.

"Order!"

"My serial story is the best thing that has ever appeared in the 'Weekly,'" said Kerr.

Gobble, gobble!—from Fatty Wynn.

"Excepting Kerr's chapters on playing the violin and his articles on music," said Figgins generally.

"You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours," murmured Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the serial is getting better every instalment," said Figgins. "I'm doing some of it this afternoon. It goes on from Chapter X—What the Bandbox Contained. It runs like this—"

"Order!"

"Like this; 'Aubrey opened the bandbox. What was his horror—'"

"Blessed if I know!" said Manners. "What was it?"

"Ass! 'What was his horror to see, lying in the bandbox—'"

"Groogh!"

"The severed head—"

"Ow! Chuck it!"

"The severed head—"

"Cheese it!" said Tom Merry. "That's not the sort of stuff to write for the 'Weekly.' That's only fit for an American horrible."

"The severed head—" persisted Figgins.

"Stow it!"

"The severed head of a young—"

"Stop!"

"The severed head of a young cabbage—"

"Eh?"

"You ass!"

"That's where the mystery comes in," Figgins explained. "The mysterious document was concealed in the cabbage, which proved that Aubrey was the real Duke of Cashbooks, and that Adolphus Vere de Vere was an impostor. You see, the story goes on—"

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"The story goes on, but you're jolly well not going to!" said Manners. "Chuck it!"

"Look here, Manners—"

"Rats!"

"If you're looking for a thick ear—"

"I'd rather have a thick ear than any more of that blessed serial!"

Figgins glared.

"Then you can jolly well have it!" he said.

And he reached over the table. Manners jumped up, and his knees caught the table underneath.

Crash!

The table spun over, and the crockeryware and the cakes and the shrimp paste, and the rest of it shot in an avalanche to the floor.

CHAPTER 8.

Lowther is Alarmed!

CRASH!

"Oh!"

"Great Scott!"

"You asses!" roared Tom Merry, mopping his knees frantically. A pot of hot tea had fallen there, and Tom was scalded.

"Oh! Ow! Chumps! Yarcooh!"

"Sorry; it was Figgins!"

"It was Manners!"

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

Figgins and Manners rushed at one another, and in a moment they went whirling round the study with their arms round one another's necks.

Tom Merry rushed to interfere, but Kerr jumped in the way, and the next moment Tom Merry and Kerr were struggling in a deadly grip.

Fatty Wynn gave them one glance, and then began to pick up the tarts that were strewn among the wreckage of the tea-table.

The combatants were two to two, as Lowther was absent, and the Boy from Nowhere did not interfere. Fatty Wynn was therefore disengaged, and he was improving the shining hour in his own way.

"Yarcooh!"

"Oh!"

"Take that!"

"Yah!"

Gobble, gobble!—from Fatty Wynn. The remaining tarts were disappearing at a really record speed.

There was a sudden step outside the passage, and the door was flung open, and Monty Lowther rushed in, his face wildly excited.

He gave a hurried glance round the study, and rushed at Tom Merry, and dragged him away from Kerr.

"Stop!" he shouted.

Tom Merry and Kerr were both hitting out, and as Lowther had rushed between them Lowther had the benefit of their blows.

Biff, biff!

The unfortunate Shell fellow gave a fearful yell, and dropped on the floor as if he had been shot.

"Oh!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Tom Merry. "Sorry; but—"

"Ow!"

"Sorry!" grinned Kerr. "But—Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow!"

They raised Lowther up. He rubbed his head, and glared at them. Figgins and Manners were still rolling on the floor, pommelling.

"What did you rush in for like that?" demanded Kerr.

"Who set you up as a giddy peacemaker?"

"Ow!" gasped Lowther. "Keep an eye on him!"

"Eh? On whom?"

"Tom Merry?"

"Tom Merry! Why, what do you mean?"

"He's mad!" gasped Lowther.

"Eh?"

"What!" roared Tom Merry.

"That's why he's broken out like this," said Lowther gaspingly. "I—I was afraid he would. Mind he doesn't get a knife."

"Look out, I say!"

"But it wasn't Tom Merry broke out; it was Figgy broke out!" yelled Kerr.

"Oh, I—I thought—"

"Look here!" shouted Tom Merry wrathfully. "What do you mean by saying I'm dotty? I think you're jolly near that yourself!"

"I—I—"

"What do you mean?" demanded Tom Merry, advancing upon Lowther, his hands up. "Are you looking for a thick ear?"

"You—you ass——"
 "What do you mean by saying that I'm mad?"
 "I—I mean—you can't help it—that is to say——"
 "Can't help it?"
 "No; it's in the blood—I mean it's in the Merry family—that is to say, it isn't. What I really mean is—— Ow!"
 Monty Lowther did not really mean to say "Ow!" but Tom Merry's patience was exhausted, and he gave his chum a tap on the nose.

Lowther staggered back.
 The tap was really a light one, but Monty seemed quite knocked up by it. He dodged round the fallen table and Fatty Wynn.

"Keep off!" he yelled.
 "What!"
 "Keep off!"
 "You utter ass!"
 "Don't let him get that knife, Wynn!" roared Lowther.
 "Eh?" said Fatty Wynn.
 "Keep that knife by you."

"You chump!" roared Tom Merry. "I wasn't going to take that knife! What should I want the knife for?"
 "I—I don't know. I—I thought perhaps——"

"Oh, he's rocky!" said Kerr. "Look here, Figgy, we've got into a giddy lumatic asylum by mistake, and we'd better clear."

Figgins and Manners had separated at last. Both of them looked considerably the worse for wear.

"All right!" gasped Figgins. "Come on!"

"Yah! Get out, New House cads!"

"Yah! School House rotters!"

And with that exchange of compliments the foes parted. Fatty Wynn had finished up the tarts by this time, and he followed Figgins and Kerr from the study. In the Fourth Form passage, as Figgins & Co. made their way out, Blake and D'Arcy were standing talking. They had heard the terrific din from the Shell passage and were wondering what was up.

"Bump them over!" muttered Figgins. "Down with the School House!"

"Hurrah!"

The three juniors rushed down the passage right into Jack Blake and the swell of St. Jim's.

"Bump them!"

Blake roared.

"Hallo! Chuck it! Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

Bump, bump!

Blake and D'Arcy dropped on the passage floor with loud bumps, and Figgins & Co. trod calmly over them and went downstairs.

Arthur Augustus sat up.

"Bai Jove! What was that?"

"Ow!" grunted Blake. "That was Figgins & Co."

"Bai Jove! The cheeky wettahs! I wufese to be tweated in this way! I considah——"

"Ow, ow!"

"I have been thwown into quite a fluttah. This is the second time I have been bumped ovah in this vevy passage to-day, and I wufese to stand——"

"You're not standing, you're sitting."

"I wufese to stand it. I shall give Figgins a feahful thwashin'!"

Apparently Figgins did not consider the offer enticing enough—at all events, he did not come back.

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet and dusted his trousers down.

"Bai Jove! I feel howwid!" he exclaimed. "I shall have to go and change my clothes for the second time this day. I weward it as wotten!"

"Ow!"

"Yow!"

"Are you injahed, deah boy?"

"No; I'm doing this for fun!" groaned Blake.

"Bai Jove! I'm awfully sowwy!"

"Oh, buzz off and don't jaw and it won't be so bad!" said Blake ungratefully.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Rats!"

And Blake limped into his study, and D'Arcy limped away to the dormitory for a change of clothes, both of them breathing vengeance upon the heroes of the New House.

CHAPTER 9.

More Madness!

TOM MERRY glared at Monty Lowther after Figgins & Co. had left the Shell study.

He was very excited and very exasperated.

"Look here, will you explain what the dickens you mean?" he exclaimed.

Lowther blinked at him doubtfully.

(Continued on the next page.)



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

OH, YEAH!

Butler (entering dark room): "Is that your lordship?"

Burglar (desperately): "Yus, that's right, guv'nor!"

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

ANOTHER MEANING!

Teacher: "What is the meaning of C.I.D.?"

Small Boy: "Coppers in disguise, sir."

Half-a-crown has been awarded Arthur Whitehead, 48, The Meadows, Bent Hill, Prestwich, Manchester.

TINNED FOOD BARRED.

The cannibals had just caught an armoured man. The prisoner was brought before the chief by his captors.

"Your majesty, we have here a dainty titbit for your dinner."

"Let him go," said his majesty. "You ought to know I never touch tinned food!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded J. Lavelle, 11, Castle Street, Rochdale, Lancs.

A CLEAR CASE.

Teacher: "What is your name?"

Boy: "Arrison."

Teacher: "Oh, no, think again."

Boy: "If a haitch, and a hay, two hars, a hi, a hess, and a ho and a hen don't spell 'Arrison, what do?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded Miss Marjorie Cox, 76, Queen Alexandra Mansions, King's Cross, London, W.C.1.

PAYMENT BY RESULTS.

Friend: "You're looking glum, professor."

Professor: "Yes. One of my pupils to whom I gave two courses of memory training has forgotten to pay me, and I can't remember his name!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded Ronald Morgan, The Manse, 57, Brindley Street, Stourport, Worcs.

NOT WHAT HE WANTED.

Son (to father): "I say, pop, the instalment man's downstairs!"

Father: "I'll be down in a minute. Tell him to take a chair."

Son: "I have already asked him, but he says it's the piano he's after!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded S. Crabtree, 31, Marlborough Avenue, Goole, Yorks.

LATEST ADDITION.

"Now, boys," said the science master, "can anyone tell me some of the twelve signs of the Zodiac?"

"Yes, sir, I know one," said Brown. "Taurus, the Bull."

"Right," said the master. "Another."

"Cancer, the Crab," said Smith.

"Right again," said the master. "Do you know one, Jones?"

"Yes, sir," said Jones. "Mickey, the Mouse."

Half-a-crown has been awarded J. Bingham, 2, Canada Road, Cathays, Cardiff.

AILING 'AM!

"Look here, boss," said a negro patron of an Alabama market, "dat ham you sold me last night was spoiled."

"Impossible," said the butcher; "it was cured in the best way."

"Well, boss, if dat ham was cured, it sho' had a powerful relapse."

Half-a-crown has been awarded Frank Raymond Williams, 5, Bee Bank, Vronceysyllte, Llangollen, Denbighshire.

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"What I mean?" he repeated.
 "Yes. Explain yourself!"
 "You—you see—"
 "What are you keeping at that distance for? Do you think I'm dangerous?" demanded Tom Merry.
 "Dangerous?" Lowther murmured.
 "My hat! He's turning himself into a giddy parrot!" said Manners. "Have you really gone off your rocker, Monty?"

"Oh, he's as mad as a hatter!" said Tom Merry crossly.
 "Am I?" said Lowther warmly. "I'm not the chap here that's mad—though there may be one who is."

"What do you mean?"
 "Oh, nothing!"
 Tom Merry looked at him very curiously and a little anxiously. He wondered whether the blazing heat of the August weather had affected Monty Lowther's head a little.
 "You're not well, Lowther!" he exclaimed.
 "Yes, I am."
 "You seem jolly queer."
 "I'm all right."
 "Hadh't you better go and lie down for a bit?" said Tom Merry.

"What should I lie down for?"
 "Until you get—well, calmer."
 "I'm calm enough, I think!" shouted Lowther. "So long as you keep calm it's all right. That's what I'm afraid of."
 "You're afraid of what?"
 "Oh, nothing!"

Tom Merry and Manners exchanged glances. They were beginning to feel seriously alarmed about Lowther. Certainly his manner was very strange, and his words were stranger still.

"Won't you go up to the dorm for a bit, Monty?" asked Manners softly. "It will do you good to lie down in the cool for a bit."

"Oh rats!" said Lowther.
 And he stamped out of the study and slammed the door after him.

Tom Merry and Manners looked at one another in consternation.

"What on earth's the matter with Lowther?" Manners exclaimed.

"Must be the heat," said Tom Merry.
 "Perhaps I can explain."

The chums of the Shell looked round as the Boy from Nowhere spoke in his quiet voice. They had almost forgotten his presence in the study.

"What do you know about it?" Tom Merry demanded a little acidly. The curious events of the afternoon had set his nerves on edge a little.

"I could explain what is the matter with Lowther."
 "Well, what is it?"

"He's mad," said the new boy, lowering his voice to a whisper. "Mad!"
 "What?"

"Hush! It's a dead secret. His people are keeping it from him, in case he should get frightened at knowing that there is madness in the family and go mad in consequence. If he is never told he may never go quite mad."

"What on earth are you driving at? How do you know anything about Lowther, when you've never seen him before to-day?" demanded Manners.

"I was sent here to see him."
 "What?"

"I was sent here by my father, Dr. Ballantyne, the brain specialist, to look after Lowther," said the new boy with perfect calmness. "His people engaged my father to take up the case."

"My hat!"
 "Here is my father's card."

The chums of the Shell stared at the card of Dr. Ballantyne, mental specialist.

"Mad!" muttered Tom Merry. "Oh, impossible!"
 "It is true."

"But Lowther—Monty Lowther— Oh, you ass!"

"Haven't you noticed how he has been acting?" said the new boy. "It breaks out in the Lowther family at just his age, and that is why I have been sent here to keep watch over him. Mind, he must not be told a word! If he realised the awful truth it would have the effect of sending him quite mad at once!"

"Good heavens!"

Tom Merry and Manners sat down quite limply. Monty Lowther's extraordinary conduct certainly required some explaining; and here was the explanation, with a vengeance. Strange and startling as it was, it seemed only too true.

Monty Lowther had acted like a fellow whose brain was not quite steady, there was no doubt at all about that—unless, of course, he had something on his mind. And what could he possibly have upon his mind?

The new boy's strange coming to St. Jim's was explained, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,384.

too, by the fact that he was the son of a mental specialist, and had been sent to St. Jim's to look after Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry and Manners were silent for a few minutes. They were not able to realise the fearful truth all at once.

Tom Merry broke silence at last.
 "It's impossible—impossible!"

He almost groaned out the words.
 The new boy shook his head.

"It is quite true," he said—"perfectly true. It is terribly hard for Lowther; but I hope it will not be necessary for him to be placed under restraint."

"Under restraint! Good heavens!"
 "That's what it may come to. I am sent here to watch over him and see what turn it takes with him."

"Oh dear!"
 "But let us hope for the best."

"Look here," said Tom Merry, "I can't believe this! I won't say a word to Lowther in case—in case it should be true. But—"

"But keep your eyes on him—that's all," said the new boy. "I shall do that!" Tom Merry rose to his feet. "Let's get out, Manners—I feel choked here."

"Right you are! Come on!"
 The chums of the Shell left the study.

The Boy from Nowhere remained alone in the room. As soon as he was alone the dull expression passed from his face. He closed the door carefully.

Then he capered round the room, waving his arms and gesticulating in a peculiar way, chuckling all the time.

Anybody looking at the Boy from Nowhere at that moment would have come to only one conclusion—that he was insane.

Suddenly the door opened.
 It opened quietly, and the new boy was too occupied in his strange diversion to notice either the tap on the door or the fact that it was opening.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked in.
 The swell of St. Jim's glanced at the Boy from Nowhere, and seemed to become rooted to the spot.

He jammed his eyeglass into his eye and looked again, as if he doubted the evidence of his eyes.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated at last.
 At the sound of his voice the Boy from Nowhere became aware of his presence, and he stopped suddenly in his capering and stood quite still.

The dull look came back on his face, but in his eyes now was a haunted look of fear and apprehension.

He looked like a fellow who had been caught in the act of betraying himself and did not know what was to come of it.

"Bai Jove!" repeated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.
 "I—I—" stammered the new boy.

"I came here to speak to Tom Merry," said the swell of the Fourth. "I see that he is not here. I twust I am not intewwuptin' you?"

"Not at all. I—I—"

"I twust you are not off your silly wockah?" said D'Arcy.
 "Eh?"

"What were you capewin' about like a giddy lunatic for, you ass?"

"It was—was—a new kind of exercise," said the new boy haltingly. "It's supposed to make the joints supple, you know."

D'Arcy gave him a curious look.
 "Well, I suppose it would do that," he agreed.

"Oh, yes, rather!"
 "Do you often take that exahaise, deah boy?"

"Oh, no—I mean, yes—sometimes!"
 D'Arcy gave him another curious look, and quitted the study. He returned to Study No. 6.

"Blake, deah boy," he said, "that new chap is quite off his giddy wockah."

Blake grunted.
 "Not the only chap at St. Jim's in that state," he said.

"Weally, Blake—"

"What was he doing?"
 "Capewin' about the study and wavin' his hands in the air and gwinin'!"

"Great Scott! Nice for Tom Merry!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"

And Arthur Augustus looked very thoughtful indeed.

CHAPTER 10.

Dark Secrets I

TOM MERRY was of such an open, sunny nature that anything in the shape of a secret worried him, and he could not help showing when he was worried.

When he went out with Manners after the strange communication from the new boy his face was darkly overcast.

(Continued on page 14.)

NOTES AND NEWS THAT WILL INTEREST YOU.



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

HALLO, chums!—If a census of opinion was taken as to who is the most popular St. Jim's junior with readers at the present time, I wonder what character would get most votes. Tom Merry, Gussy, Jack Blake, Figgins, and others all have their many admirers, but, judging by readers' letters of late, I should say that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley would get most marks. At any rate, I am repeatedly getting requests for more stories about this junior. In the hard-natured, worldly wise boy from New York, Mr. Clifford has created a unique character, and that is why Lumley, disliked and despised as he is at St. Jim's, appeals to many readers. He is a boy that is different.

It is Lumley who is starred in the next great yarn of the chums of St. Jim's, and you can take it from me this story will cause something of a sensation. Of late, Lumley has shown a tendency to keep to the straight and narrow path, but he breaks out again in next week's yarn,

"A SHADOW OVER ST. JIM'S!"

The Outsider will go to any lengths to achieve his object, but the baseness to which he descends to prove his words that the Fourth will beat the Shell at football leaves the St. Jim's juniors breathless. Yet once again Lumley's pluck comes to his help to wipe out his misdeeds, but the ultimate outcome of it casts a shadow over St. Jim's. For the Outsider is in danger. Is his life to be forfeit for all he has done?

This is a story that you will remember for many a day, and with the next gripping chapters of "The School From 'Down Under'!" and all our usual tip-top features, makes a simply unbeatable number of the GEM.

TROUBLE IN THE TUCK-SHOPS!

The Government's Ministry of Health, whose job it is to see that we are all properly cared-for, has started an inquiry into the kinds of food that are best for boys, and it's quite on the cards that school tuck-shops will be asked to cease stocking some of the nicer, if not very digestible, delicacies they sell. All I hope is that they don't try to substitute skilly, carrots, lentils, barley-water, and what-not for chocolate, toffee, cream buns, and ginger-pop!

GOOD NEWS!

After that bit of bad news you'll need cheering-up, so here's the tonic!

Dentists have at last discovered how to draw teeth painlessly, and as soon as the system has been properly tested it will probably be adopted everywhere. The tooth to be extracted is fitted with a little "jacket" that exposes only the decayed part, and on to this bared portion acid is poured. The acid eats into the tooth, and in a few minutes the aching molar can be lifted out without any pain to the patient. The chap who invented such a ripping idea deserves a medal, don't you think?

WILL IT RAIN?

Dumb animals and plants that have no opportunity for listening-in to wireless weather forecasts have their own ways of finding out when rain is in the offing. What's more, their weather prophecies are often a jolly sight more accurate than anything that scientists equipped with

barometers, wind-recorders, and what-not can give us. So next time you have a particular reason for wanting to know how the weather is going to turn out, take a loaf or two from Nature's note-book. If, for instance, your cat sits indoors for a long time with its back to the fire, it's a sign that a storm is brewing, and this can be confirmed if dogs seem restless, or, should you live in the country, if pigs keep wandering about their sties with fodder in their mouths. Cows will stand in the fields all day if fine weather is ahead, but coming rain makes them lie down for a spell of cud-chewing. But the best weather prophet of all is the scarlet pimpernel plant, which spreads its scarlet flower-petals only when the weather is going to be fine, and shuts them tight if rain is due. Interesting things to know, eh?

SKY-SAILING!

Although gliding has only recently become a popular sport, it was the first means of flying in winged aircraft that man discovered. Long before the Wright brothers built the world's first powered man-carrying aeroplane and flew it for a few seconds at Kittiwake Field, U.S.A., inventors had taken the air in gliders, and made successful flips. But those early pioneers rarely covered more than a few yards in flight, and the world has moved on a whole lot since then. The other day, Heini Dittmar, a Continental gliding "ace," set up a new world's record glide by covering 233 miles at Gitschin, in Czecho-Slovakia. He was in the air six hours and a half—a really amazing performance for a plane without any sort of engine!

A WILY BIRD!

A certain London Fire Brigade station is very worried—and all because of a pigeon. The staff of fire-fighters there can deal effectively with a big blaze, but, for the time being at least, one little defenceless pigeon has got 'em beat! It's this way: The pigeon was taken by one of the staff to his quarters at the station after he had found it lying hurt in the road. In due course, the pigeon grew well again, and it was decided to send it ten miles into the country and set it free, as it could not be kept at the station. This was done, and the fireman who had liberated the bird returned to the station to report, "All's well." But was it! The first thing he saw when he got back to his quarters was that self-same pigeon strutting about the station as if it had never been away for a minute. It had flown back to the fire-station the moment it was set free, and had arrived there before its liberator!

THE EDITOR.



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal, post your notice, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

Hector McLean, School House, Eiffel Flats, Gatooma, S. Rhodesia, South Africa, wants a pen pal interested in shipping; age 11-13.

Miss Lilla J. Meiers, Dallasdale, P.O. East London, West, Cape Province, South Africa, wants a girl correspondent in Ireland, Scotland, Hollywood, Canada and Holland; cinema photos, etc.; age 19-21.

Miss Joan Rudd, 48, Culme Road, West Derby, Liverpool, 12, wants girl correspondents; age 15-17.

Reginald D. F. Meiers, Dallasdale, P.O. East London, West, Cape Province, South Africa, wants a pen pal in N.S.W., Australia, U.S.A., Canada and New Zealand; age 13-15; pets, boxing, swimming, horse-riding.

PEN PALS COUPON

25-8-34.

Miss Isabel Calder, 87, Victoria Road, Torry, Aberdeen, wants girl correspondents; age 12-14; swimming, books, films.

Donald V. S. Martin, 4625, Wellington Street, Verdun, Province Quebec, Canada, wants to hear from stamp collectors, and those who have made a hobby of old issues of the companion papers; South Africa, England, Australia; age 13-15.

Lionel A. Locke, Richmond Terrace, 122, Cox Street, Coventry, wants a correspondent in France or Germany; age 16-17.

Miss Winnie Hurding, Hurlstone, 9, Norrisville Road, Ashley Road, Bristol, 6, wants girl correspondents; America or Australia; age 15-18; exchange cigarette cards and snaps.

Norman Ryder, c/o Ryder Rubber Co., 137, Main Street, E. Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, wants a pen pal in South Africa, Europe, or New Zealand; age 11-14.

Miss Venona Barreiro, Miguel Barreiro Street, 3327, Pocitos, Montevideo, Uruguay, South America, wants girl correspondents.

Miss Viorrey McLean, 13, Stanley Road, Peel, Isle of Man, wants girl correspondents; age 15-17.

Miss R. Smith, 25, Acacia Road, Sydenham, London, S.E.26, wants girl correspondents in Egypt, U.S.A., and India; age 18-20.

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THE BOY FROM NOWHERE!

(Continued from page 12.)

The friendship of the Terrible Three was a very strong one—three brothers could not have been more firmly united. True, there had been tiffs, even rows, in Tom Merry's study, but never of a lasting nature.

The friendship of the three juniors was firmly cemented, and would last as long as they lived.

The discovery that there was something wrong with such a close chum as Monty Lowther was weighing like lead upon the minds of Tom Merry and Manners.

It seemed only too true, but if Lowther had developed insanity, or anything else, it would have made no difference to his friends.

They would only have thought of helping him, comforting him and looking after him and making everything as easy for him as possible.

The thought that there was insanity in the Lowther family, and that it might break out at any moment in poor Monty, was like torture to them, and it made them very tender in their feelings towards them.

"It's simply awful!" Tom Merry said, as they walked out into the cool dusk of the old quad.

Manners nodded. "It's frightful!" he said. "But—but it can't be true."

"And yet—" "There's a 'yet,' that's the worst of it," said Manners. "It's awful to think of! I wonder if it would do any good asking Lowther's people?"

"He lived with his uncle at home," Tom Merry remarked musingly. "His uncle never married—he took Lowther away from St. Jim's once, possibly because of this."

"It won't do to say a word to Monty?"

"Oh no! If it's true he must never know it!"

"Poor old Monty!"

There was a shout from the dusk of the quad. Three or four figures loomed up from the dim shadows of the elms.

"School House cads! There they are!"

Tom Merry raised his hand as Figgins & Co. rushed up.

"Pax!" he exclaimed.

"That's all very well!" said Figgins indignantly. "Blow pax! We're jolly well going to bump you!"

"Hold on, Figgy!"

There was something in Tom Merry's voice that struck Figgins. He dropped his hands at once. The hostility between School House and New House was only half serious, and in times of trouble it was quite forgotten.

"Anything wrong?" asked Figgins.

"Yes."

"Sorry! Can we do anything?"

Tom Merry hesitated. He was sorely in need of advice on the subject, but he felt that it would not do to tell Lowther's terrible secret to anyone.

"No," he said heavily. "It's a bit of a worry on our minds, that's all, but it's another fellow's secret, and we can't very well tell you. I'd be glad to have your opinion, old chap, but it can't be done."

"That's how it is," said Manners.

"Sorry!" said Figgins again.

"Anything about grub?" asked Fatty Wynn anxiously. "Is it something gone wrong with the feed, or anything of that sort? If it is I might be of service."

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No. 28. Vol. 1. (New Series).

LOOK THROUGH OUR TELEVISOR

BERNARD GLYN SPEAKING



Just a moment, fellows—I must just screw this nut tight! That's got it! Now I can speak to you for a moment.

Please don't think me rude, but you know, I am very busy just now on a new invention. It's something pretty special this time, I may tell you, though I am keeping its exact nature a secret at present. Fellows at St. Jim's are apt to laugh at me as an inventor, though I've taken them in with one or two of my little efforts already—my mechanical mastiff, for instance!

Since the first invention—it was probably a chair—the inventor has always been harassed by people who knew it couldn't be done, and there are quite a number of fellows at St. Jim's who are always ready to heap ridicule on my efforts. Not that I care a fig, anyway. An inventor who listened to the "croakers" would never get far. Imagine how badly we'd all be off if men like the Wright brothers had given up because the first aeroplane wouldn't fly!

I think Tom Merry and his chums really believe I've got the right idea, but they enjoy a "rag." Kangaroo and Clifton Dane, my study mates, are ready enough to admit there may be something in my inventions, but they won't allow me to fill the study table with steel parts when they want to do their prep! Only the other day Kangaroo swept a heap of my stuff into the corner because he wanted to do an "impot"—and for the life of me I can't remember exactly how I was going to put all those parts together. It was going to be a completely self-operating telephone, with automatic messages, saving the caller the trouble of talking and not hearing what the other fellow said, the messages being controlled by buttons and reproduced by loud speakers—if it had come off!

You may wonder if I ever get time for footer or cricket? Oh yes, I turn up for practice. I'm not a crank, like Skimpole. You can't chum with two hefty fellows like Kangaroo and Dane and be a slacker! But my inventions are very close to my heart, sometimes to the exclusion of prep.

By jove—a wheeze has just struck me! I can turn this new invention into something—excuse me, won't you? It's vitally important. You must come and see it when it's done!

St. Jim's News Reel.

Skimpole visited London, but he was disappointed to find no circus at Piccadilly Circus, no angry kings at King's Cross, no elephant at Elephant and Castle, no friars at Blackfriars, and no bakers at Baker Street!

Monty Lowther's cheery grin rarely deserts him. Even when the Terrible Three had 500 lines to write out, Lowther remarked that Titus Livius probably had a stiffer task writing the original manuscript!

Tom Merry

SAINTS v. ENGLAND STORM BURSTS DOWN

Wally D'Arcy at the Microphone

Brilliant sunshine favours the start of the holiday match at Eastwood House between Tom Merry's XI and the team drawn from all England, captained by Harold Holcliff, the boy wonder batsman. Holcliff has a great team with him, including Duckwood, a marvellous all-rounder, and Frank Woollyn, a non-stop left-handed bat. I don't trust the sun, somehow—it's too hot for words.

Here they come—Holcliff wins the toss and goes in with Bruce. Holcliff is determined to avenge the defeat we inflicted on his Northern XI, and I expect Frank Woollyn is out to avenge our defeat of his Southern XI, too! Fatty Wynn bowls the first over against Holcliff, who puts a straight bat in front of everything. As we beat the "Aussies" last week, possibly he feels caution is necessary when facing Wynn! Second over now—Bruce nibbles at the third ball, and Lowther at first slip brings off a splendid catch! Bruce goes back, to be succeeded by Frank Woollyn. With Holcliff batting right-handed and Woollyn left-handed, the field has a lot of changing over to do, which tires them. Bowling is good, but Holcliff and Woollyn are getting set and whacking the leather all over the place! Twenty and thirty flash past. Fifty—sixty—seventy—Holcliff and Woollyn are showing us some real England form! The hundred sees them still together, bowling changes having no effect whatever. They are scoring at a great rate now—more than a run a minute. Woollyn, elegant but fierce in action, drives a "six" to put up the second hundred just before the luncheon interval! With 200 for one wicket on the board, Tom Merry and his men might well pull long faces!

By Jove—here comes that storm I felt in the air! A black cloud blots out the sun, and in a few moments the ground is drenched in sheets of torrential rain! It's soon over, but it leaves the wicket in a fearful mess. Luckily it needed water, and the pitch dries quickly. Holcliff and Woollyn resume on a real "sticky" wicket—and Fatty Wynn wreaks immediate havoc! Holcliff is clean bowled by a ball which "gets down" unexpectedly—Duckwood stays only to spoon up a catch, and succeeding batsmen are all at sea on the extremely difficult wicket! England XI are all out for 222. It cuts both ways, though—Saints opening with Merry and Blake are as much in the soup as were the later England XI batsmen—without having the advantage of a good start as Holcliff and Woollyn had! Merry bats with caution, but Blake is caught in attempting a hook to leg. Figgins refuses to be subdued, and hits out freely, running risks, but getting away with them by a combination of uncanny skill and a certain amount of luck. You need luck on a wicket like this, though—good man, Figgy! With 53 to his credit, Figgins hits one hard into the hands of mid-off, who hangs on to it. My major, Gussy, goes in to join Merry, and puts up a

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ENGLAND XI
S DURING MATCH

good show. Three "fours" flow from Gus' elegant bat ere he is smartly stumped. Kangaroo hits out strongly, but with a score of runs collected he is run out in attempting a single. Merry carries his bat for 67, every one of them hard-earned! Merry had batted right through the innings. Saints 144.

Batting again, the England XI have a big advantage, but this time they begin disastrously. Fatty Wynn, showing some of his best Test Match form, bowls Holcliff with his second ball, and sends Duckwood back with his fourth. In his next over he lifts Woollyn's leg stump neatly out of the ground, and dismisses Bruce with the next ball. The England XI's stars thus disposed of, Saints are looking very chirpy, especially as the wicket under a hot sun is rapidly drying, and should be good for the Saints' second innings. Fatty Wynn is bowling in unstoppable style, and nobody can stand against him. He sends back the last man with the total at 60, his analysis reading 8 wickets for 22 runs!

Saints are set 139 to win, with very little time. Merry sends in Gussy and Figgins to open—an unusual departure. Gus and Figg make a dashing start. Figgins flogs everything, knowing time is short, and conscious of the admiring eye of my Cousin Ethel watching him from the pavilion! Gus hits out gallantly, going down to a catch with 25. Blake hits 20 and runs back to save time, while Kerr passes him at the double on the way to the wicket. Figgins is clean bowled with a smashing 33 as his "bag." Kerr and Tom Merry are now together. Duckwood is bowling his fastest, but Kerr backs up coolly and calmly while Tom Merry picks the right balls to hit. The century is passed—thirty to win—twenty—ten—Tom Merry has done the lion's share of the hitting, but it is Kerr who bangs the winning hit away to leg for "four"—bringing victory to the Saints after one of the hardest-fought games they have taken part in! Saints have triumphed over everything—even a thunderstorm!

PRESENTATION of "ASHES"

A grand celebration was held at the country residence of Harry Noble's uncle for the final presentation of the "Ashes" won by Tom Merry & Co. Noble's uncle congratulated his nephew and his team of "Aussies" on their sporting display. He pointed out that defeating so redoubtable a combination in the Fifth and final Test match, Tom Merry and his St. Jim's XI had done really magnificently! The "Ashes"—consisting of the ashes of the stumps and bails used in the last Test, burned and enclosed in a silver urn—were duly presented to Tom Merry by Mr. Noble. In replying, Tom Merry said the matches had been quite the most enjoyable in his experience. Gussy rose to make a long speech, but Blake took a firm grasp on his mother garments and hauled him back into his seat before he could get into his stride.

MONTY
LOWTHER
CALLING

Hallo, everybody!
Did you hear about the Scot who broke a salesman's heart?

He said: "No, I wouldn't have one if ye were giving 'em away!" Skimpole assures us that it is the skin of the fruit that does you good. A bit hard on a fellow who likes coconuts, what? Mr. Ratcliff was "blowing up" his tailor. "The sleeves of this coat are miles too long!" he snapped. "How much shall I take off, sir?" asked the tailor. "Oh, about half an inch!" responded Ratcliff. "D'Arcy minor, you need more will-power!" said Mr. Selby, urging Wally to apply himself to a task. Wally has a lot of won't-power, though—as Selby has discovered! Skimpole says Gore has advised him to learn the gudgeon-stroke in swimming, but Skimmy feels there must be something "fishy" about it. Gore is a "whale" of a joker, and a "shark" when it comes to "plaining" his victims. Sorry to "crab" his act in public, but it's a time his fate was "sealed"! A reader in King Kong (sorry, Hong Kong) wants to know who is the most intrepid big game hunter alive to-day. Vellet difficult, but we find answer: The keenest big game hunter alive to-day is the Lancashire man who has not missed a Cup Final for thirty-five years! I've often been intrigued by old Taggles' expression of vacancy as he sits in his lodge, and the other day I asked him how he spends his leisure. "Sometimes I sits and thinks," answered Taggles, "and sometimes I just sits!" We believe him! Old Isaacs, the pawnbroker, was advising a nephew. "Remember, in business you must be honest!" urged Isaacs. "If a customer gives you two ten-bob notes by mistake, you are in honour bound to share with your partner!" Some are wise, but most are otherwise, as the Eastern proverb might have it. And remember, you can't call a man with a moustache a bare-faced liar, either! Talking of fabrications, did you hear about the naval gunner who was dismissed for "potting" rabbits ashore with a 16-in. gun? Burglars who broke into a Wayland banker's house recently took only one thing—a glance at the wolfhound!

All the best, chaps!

CALIBAN'S
PUZZLE
CORNER

Got a pencil? Make five lines—five only, mind—altering the figure shown so that it shows eight triangles, and no more. Manners, who is keen on puzzles, says this is easy!

Solution of Last Week's Puzzle

Figgins, Manners.
Lowther, Herries.
Digby, Merry.
D'Arcy, Wynn,
Kerr, Blake.

Tom Merry grinned.
"No, it's not that!" he said.
"If yor chaps want to stand a feed we're in funds just now, and we'd help," said Fatty. "We'd be glad."
"It's not that, thanks."
"Oh, you said it was serious, so I thought it might be," Fatty Wynn explained.

And Figgins & Co. walked away. Figgins looked worried.
"Blessed if I can make it out," he said.
"Tom Merry's not the chap to make a mountain out of a mole hill, so I suppose there must be something wrong. I wonder what it is? I hope there's no trouble ahead for them, anyway."

Kerr pinched his arm.
"Looks as if there's trouble in the School House, anyway," he said. "Look there!"

In the deepening dusk of the summer evening a figure was pacing up and down the quad, dimly seen as it passed lighted windows.

It was Monty Lowther.
The Shell fellow had his hands thrust deeply into his trousers pockets. His head was sunk forward a little, and he was evidently buried in gloomy thoughts. The New House chums gazed at him in silence for some moments. They had seldom seen a lad so deeply plunged in gloomy reverie.

"Looks like trouble, and no mistake," said Figgins.

"Perhaps he's hungry," suggested Fatty Wynn.

"Ass!"
"Well, I feel like that when I'm hungry," said the fat Fourth Former; "and there's something in the air at this time of the year, too, that makes a chap extra hungry. I feel it myself."

"He's got something on his mind," said Kerr.

"That's jolly certain."

"Let's ask him to a feed in our study and cheer him up," said Fatty Wynn.

"Well, we might do that."

Monty Lowther paced on, to and fro, to and fro, the grim frown upon his face never relaxing. The New House fellows were quite close upon him before he saw them, and then he started.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Hands off! I don't want a row now—I'm worried."

"What's wrong?" asked Figgins.

"Oh, nothing!"

"Then what are you worried about?"

"Well, you see—"

Monty Lowther broke off. Like Tom Merry, he would have been glad to consult Figgins and Kerr—they were both sensible fellows, and could have given him counsel, perhaps; but, like Tom Merry again, he did not feel that he had a right to betray such a secret.

"Well?" said Kerr.

"Oh, nothing!"

"You're bothering over something," said Figgins. "If it's anything we could help in, we'd be glad."

"Thanks, awfully, but—but it's not my secret, really," said Lowther. "I dare say it will come out all right."

"My hat! Is it the same thing that's bothering Tom Merry?"

Lowther started.

"Tom Merry?"

"Yes. We've just seen him, and he's got some worry, and doesn't like telling anybody what it is."

Monty Lowther turned quite pale.

"Does he know?" he gasped.

"Know what?"

"About—about— But, no, he can't know! Nobody could have told him!"

"Told him what?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Blessed if you're not getting jolly

mysterious," said Figgins, in wonder. "Then it's not the same thing that's bothering Tom Merry?"

"I suppose not."

"He's got something on his mind, anyway."

Monty Lowther groaned.

"Poor old Tom!"

"Oh!" said Figgins. "Is that it? Is there something the matter with him?"

"Yes—no—H'm—"

"Not getting ill, is he?" asked Fatty Wynn. "I've noticed that he's not very careful in his diet. I never thought he had quite enough to eat."

"It's—it's not that," said Monty Lowther. "You see, he—he—It's nothing! Besides, it's a secret, and I can't tell you. Goodness knows, I'd be glad enough to have some advice, and I'd ask you, only I can't!"

"I don't make it out," said Kerr. "You're worried over Tom Merry for something."

"Yes, that's it. Look here," said Lowther, sinking his voice, "you've just been talking to Tom Merry, haven't you?"

"Yes, a few minutes ago."

"Did you notice anything peculiar—anything a little unusual, or anything of that sort?"

"Yes, I did."

Lowther groaned again.

"It's coming on, then."

"What's coming on?"

"Oh, nothing!"

And, without waiting for any further talk, Monty Lowther nodded abruptly to the New House juniors and walked away. Figgins & Co. stared at one another blankly.

"Well, my only summer hat!" Figgins exclaimed. "If that doesn't capture the giddy cake! The chap must be wandering in his mind."

"Better speak to Tom Merry about it, I should think."

"I jolly well will!"

Figgins ran over to the School House. He found Tom Merry and Manners talking in low tones on the House steps.

"Seen Lowther?" asked Figgins.

"Not just lately," said Tom Merry, anxious at once. "Have you seen him?"

"Yes, and there's something wrong with him."

"Good heavens! What is it—quick!"

"He was wandering in his mind, I believe, and jabbering rot of all sorts. I suppose it's the heat," said Figgins. "I thought I'd just warn you to keep an eye on him, that's all. I should say he was going to be ill."

"Thanks, old son!"

Figgins departed. Tom Merry and Manners looked at one another in utterly miserable dejection.

"It must be true," said Tom, in a low voice. "Figgins has noticed it. Poor old Monty!"

And Manners echoed his words miserably enough:

"Poor old Monty!"

CHAPTER 11. Another Lunatic!

THE Boy from Nowhere occupied a bed that night in the Shell dormitory next to Tom Merry.

In the chat of the Shell dormitory, before the boys turned in, he took no part; he preserved his dull, listless manner, as if unobservant of everything that passed round him. But some of the fellows knew him better by this time, and the Terrible Three, who sometimes had their eyes upon him, noticed how keenly his eyes would flash at times. As a matter of fact, nothing escaped him—and that fact bore out his statement that he was there to watch a fellow suspected of insipient insanity.

Tom Merry and Manners did not sleep easily. As for Monty Lowther, he lay looking into the gloom with a worry on his mind that quite banished sleep.

It was a moonlight night, and the rays of the full, round moon came in at the windows of the dormitory, and a twilight reigned in the long, lofty room.

One by one the fellows dropped off to sleep, but some remained awake—those who were worried too much to close their eyes.

It was towards midnight that there was a sound heard of someone rising from bed. Tom Merry started up at once. His thoughts were with Monty Lowther. He sat up and peered through the gloom.

"Is that you, Monty?"

"Eh?" came back a voice from Monty Lowther's bed,

"Oh, you're not asleep?"

"No. You're not, either, Tom?"

"No. I don't feel like it, somehow."

"Poor old Tom!"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean nothing."

"Was it you getting up just now, Monty?"

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"I? No!"

"Who was it, then?"

"I don't know."

"Somebody's up," said Manners. "Look there!"

A figure moved in the dim light of the dormitory. It passed into the broad rays from the moon at the window, and they recognised the Boy from Nowhere.

Tom Merry called out to him:

"Hallo! What are you up to?"

The new boy came back to bed immediately.

"I couldn't sleep," he said; "that's all."

"Well, don't disturb everybody else," said Manners, rather snappishly. The worry on his mind was beginning to tell upon Manners' temper.

"Very well," said the new boy quietly.

And he stepped into bed again.

The chums of the Shell dropped off to sleep towards morning, and when daylight came, and the rising-bell clanged through the sunny air, they were still sleeping soundly.

Kangaroo shook Tom Merry by the shoulder.

The hero of the Shell started up with an exclamation. The Cornstalk grinned down at him with a dripping sponge in his hand.

"Can't you hear the rising-bell?" he demanded.

Tom Merry rubbed his eyes.

"Yaw-aw-aw!"

"Well, that's a sensible remark to make, I must say!" said Kangaroo. "I suppose what you really want is a little help in waking up."

"I—oh—oooh!"

The dripping sponge splashed full in Tom Merry's face.

He leaped up in bed with a wild gasp.

"Ow! You utter ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll—I'll—"

"That's all right. I'm going to help Manners to wake up. He seems as sleepy as you are. So does Lowther."

"You're jolly well not!" said Manners, sitting up in bed. "If you bring that blessed sponge near me I'll jolly well buzz this boot at you."

"Turn out, then!"

Manners turned out. Monty Lowther was still fast asleep, and muttering in his sleep. Evidently the rising-bell had not penetrated his slumber, and, to judge by the moving of his lips, he was in the grip of a nightmare.

Kangaroo lowered the sponge. He did not want to wake Monty Lowther too suddenly. As he bent over the sleeper to shake him gently, a word dropped faintly from Lowther's lips.

"Mad!"

Kangaroo gave a jump.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Tom Merry anxiously.

"Lowther's got a horrible dream, I should say. He's muttering about madness."

"Oh!"

"Wake him up!" exclaimed Manners.

"Yes, rather!"

Kangaroo shook Lowther gently by the shoulder. Monty opened his eyes, and stared wildly at the Cornstalk.

"What is it? He's mad!" he muttered.

"Eh? Who's mad?"

"He is—I—I mean—oh, nothing!" said Monty Lowther, beginning to recover himself. "I—I've been dreaming, I suppose."

"I guess you have," said Kangaroo. "You've been having nightmares, I guess, you silly ass! This is what comes of sleeping late in the morning."

"Oh rats!"

"Will you get up now, or would you like the cold sponge down the back of your neck?" asked the Cornstalk politely.

Monty Lowther decided to get up. He went down with the rest of the Shell, looking very pale and worried. As a matter of fact, he had been dreaming that Tom Merry's insanity had taken a homicidal turn, and that his chum had been after him with a chopper.

He looked uneasily at Tom Merry as they went downstairs. He noticed that the hero of the Shell was looking pale and harassed.

Tom Merry had enough to be harassed about. From that muttered word of Monty Lowther's it looked as if the lad was aware of his malady, and as if it were weighing upon his mind, even in his dreams.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy met the juniors in the passage downstairs.

"Bai Jove! You are all lookin' wathah seedy this mornin'!" he remarked.

"We're all right!" said Manners shortly.

"Well, you don't look all right," said Jack Blake. "Have you been keeping it up in the dorm—devouring the giddy jam sponges and the unwholesome doughnuts in the small hours of the morning?"

"Ass!"

Tom Merry and Lowther walked on. Blake caught Manners by the arm. Manners stopped with a growl. The usually calm and quiet Manners was very upset and sharp-tempered just now.

"What's the row?" he demanded.

"You all look seedy," said Blake. "I hope there's nothing wrong?"

"Oh rats!"

"Bai Jove! I must say you are not vewy polite, Mannahs," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity. "I wegard your weply as wotten and wide."

"Bosh!"

"You are perfectly cwoewct in descwibin' your own wemark as bosh. But—"

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

Manners jerked his sleeve away from Jack Blake, and walked away. The chums of the Fourth Form stared at him in amazement.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Blake. "I don't think I ever saw anything quite like that before. What's the matter with Manners?"

"Bai Jove! I wegard him as a wude beast!"

"He must be ill!"

"Even illness is no excuse for bad mannahs," said D'Arcy, in a vewy stately way. "I shall no longah look upon Mannahs as a fwien'd. I shall ewase his name fwom my list of acquaintances."

"But I wonder—"

The Boy from Nowhere had stopped, and was listening. He gave Jack Blake such a peculiarly significant look that Blake stopped short in his remark, and stared at him.

"Do you know anything about it?" he asked.

The new boy nodded.

"Yes."

"What is the matter, then?"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy! What's the matter with Mannahs?"

The new boy lowered his voice mysteriously, and whispered: "He's mad!"

CHAPTER 12.

Tactful!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY gave such a jump that his eyeglass jerked out of his eye and fluttered at the end of its cord.

Jack Blake gasped, and stared at the new boy blankly.

"Mad!" he murmured.

"Hush!"

"Did you say mad?"

"Yes, but hush!"

"Off his wockah, do you mean?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in amazement.

"Yes."

"Rot!" said Blake.

"I have been sent here to watch over him," said the new boy quietly. "I am the son of a mental specialist, and I have come here specially to watch over Manners. He has it in his blood, you know, and in his family. It breaks out just at his present age. That is why I came to St. Jim's."

"Great Scott!"

"Here is my father's card, if you want proof."

Blake and D'Arcy stared at Dr. Ballantyne's professional card.

"Well, bai Jove!"

"Mind, not a word to Manners," said the new boy. "He does not know it himself, and if he knew it it might send him right off immediately."

"Good heavens!" muttered Blake. "But—but it's horrible!"

"He may recover if the secret is carefully kept from him," said the new boy. "I am here to watch if he shows any signs of becoming really insane. So far he has only shown a few slight signs—such as his conduct just now."

"Oh dear!"

"Bai Jove, this is fearful! I shall not ewase his name fwom my list of acquaintances aftah all. I did not know the poor chap was off his wockah!"

"It's awful!" said Blake.

"I thought I'd better explain to you," said the new boy. "But mind, not a word to anybody else. I rely upon you." And he walked away, leaving D'Arcy and Blake quite overwhelmed.

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

"It's horrible!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But—but perhaps it's not true," said Blake.

"He showed us his fathah's card," said D'Arcy, to whom the professional-looking inscription of "Dr. Ballantyne, Mental Specialist," was convincing enough.

Blake nodded slowly.

"And I've heard of that name, too," he said. "Dr. Ballantyne keeps a home for mentally deficient people on the South Coast. I remember seeing the name in the paper once."

"Bai Jove! That's pwoof, then."

"It looks like it. But—"

"I'm afwaid it's only too twue, deah boy," said D'Arcy in great distress. "You sec, Mannahs was vewy wude just now, and a chap who is wude without weason must be a bit off his wockah, you know."

"I wonder if Tom Merry knows?"

"That may be why they're lookin' so wowwied," said D'Arcy. "The new chap may have told them."

"Yes, perhaps. But—"

"But we'd better not mention it to them. It would be wuff to give poor old Mannahs away if they don't know," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "The new chap is in the same study, and he can keep an eye on Mannahs."

"Yes, that's true."

"I weally had an ideah that the new chap was a bit wocky in the uppah stowly himself," the swell of St. Jim's remarked in a thoughtful way. "Pewwaps it comes fwom livin' among lunatics, you know—it may be catchin'."

"Let's go and look after Manners," said Blake abruptly. "We can lead him on to talk, and judge by what he says whether he's rocky."

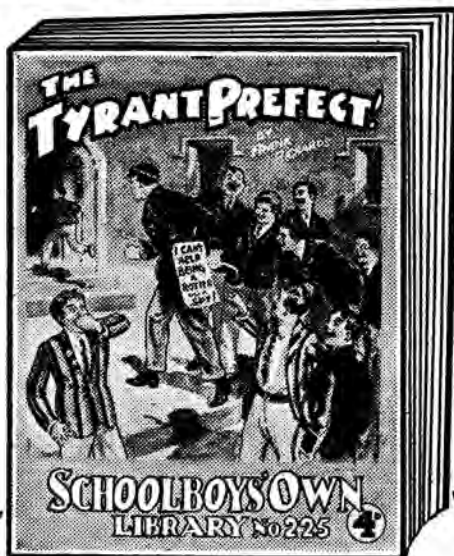
"Bai Jove, that's a jolly good ideah."

"We might ask the other chaps if they've noticed anything, too."

Herries was the first fellow they asked. Herries was coming in from the quad, and he was looking red and rather excited. They stopped him.

"Have you seen Manners?" asked Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Have you seen Mannahs, deah boy?"



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Herries snorted.

"Yes, I have," he said. "I've seen the idiot!"

"Oh! What makes you think him an idiot?"

"He's an idiot or a lunatic—I don't care which."

Blake and D'Arcy exchanged significant looks. Here was proof, if they wanted it. Herries had evidently noticed Manners' strange mental state all on his own accord.

"But what has he done, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy.

"I just asked him to look at Towser—my bulldog Towser," said Herries. "Towser's learned to sit up and ask for biscuits. What do you think Manners said?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"He said Towser was a silly beast, and I was a silly ass not to have him drowned," said Herries wrathfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eh? Why, you're as big an idiot as Manners!" exclaimed Herries. "I can jolly well tell you that my dog Towser—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake and D'Arcy walked on, leaving Herries to expend his indignant eloquence upon desert air.

Manners was in the quad, strolling about aimlessly with his hands in his pockets. Nobody could have looked at him without guessing that he had something on his mind.

"There he is," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Suppose you leave the talkin' to me, deah boy, and I approach the subject in a tactful way," D'Arcy suggested. "What is weaquahed in a case like this, you know, is a fellow of tact and judgment."

Blake sniffed. Apparently he placed little reliance upon D'Arcy's tact and judgment. The swell of St. Jim's saluted Manners in his courteous manner.

"Feelin' all wight, old boy?"

Manners stared at him.

"Eh?"

"I asked if you were feelin' all wight."

"Why shouldn't I be?"

"Oh, no reason at all," said D'Arcy, who had heard that it was wise to humour lunatics, and who was resolved to humour Manners. "No reason at all. Of course, you are feelin' all wight—isn't he, Blake?"

"Oh yes," said Blake.

"How do you know?" said Manners peevishly. "I don't see how either of you can know how I'm feeling, as I haven't told you."

"Yaas, but—but yaas, of course! How could we know, Blake? Mannahs is quite wight."

"It's my belief that you're off your rocker," said Manners crossly.

"Yaas, certainly, deah boy, so I am," said D'Arcy, still humouring Manners. "I wondahed whethah you would notice it—didn't you, Blake?"

"I noticed it long ago," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Blessed if I don't think you're both rocky," said Manners. "I suppose there's insanity in the air, or something."

"So there is, deah boy. By the way, have you evah had any lunatics in the Mannahs' family before?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Before!" howled Manners.

"I—I mean, have you evah had any lunatics in the family at all?" stammered D'Arcy. "That was what I weally meant to say, you know."

"You ass—"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Look here," said Manners. "I suppose you chaps are pulling my leg—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You—you—you frabjous chump!" said Manners. "I'm not in a temper for your funny little ways. Buzz off!"

"Certainly, deah boy! But look here, I weally should like to know exactly how you feel, you know—whether you have a dizzy feelin' in the head, or whether things seem to be turnin' wound and wound, or anythin' of the sort," said D'Arcy cautiously.

"My hat! Has he been drinking, Blake?"

"Weally, you know—"

"If this is a rag, I'm fed up with it!" said Manners angrily. "If I have any more of your rot, I shall dot you on the nose!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Pewwaps you wouldn't mind tellin' me whethah your father was mad, too?" suggested D'Arcy gently.

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Blake.

"It's all wight, Blake. I'm puttin' it to him vevy tactfully."

"You ass—"

"Weally, Blake—"

Manners was glaring at the swell of St. Jim's. He did

not seem to be able to find his voice for a minute, but when he found it it sounded quite emphatic.

"You burbling ass!" he shouted. "Take that!"

Biff!

"Ow! Yow!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat down in the quad. Manners stalked away, bristling with wrath. The swell of St. Jim's blinked up at Blake, who was grinning.

"Ow!" he groaned. "Ow! My nose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see no cause whatevah for wibald laughtah. Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass! I cannot imagine why Mannahs bwoked out like that. I am stah I was appwoachin' the subject with gweat tact and judgment. I can only conclude that he is weally a howlin' lunatic, and I shall leave him severely alone."

CHAPTER 13.

Detained!

"DODDS, by Jove!"

Monty Lowther uttered that exclamation suddenly in the Shell class-room during the morning lesson.

He had been deep in thought—thinking of anything but his work, however. Twice or thrice Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, had called him to account, but without the effect of driving away Lowther's deep reverie.

Lowther started out of a brown study with that sudden exclamation.

The fellows turned their heads to look at him, and Mr. Linton fixed his cold, grey eyes upon the junior.

"Lowther!"

The Shell fellow coloured.

"Yes, sir."

"Have you been paying attention to the lesson, Lowther?"

"Yes, sir—no, sir!"

"Is not that answer slightly contradictory, Lowther?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did you mean by suddenly saying 'Dodds, by Jove!' Lowther?"

"I—I—I—"

"An incessant repetition of the first personal pronoun is not an answer to my question, Lowther," said the master of the Shell, with crushing sarcasm.

And some of the Shell fellows tittered feebly, as in duty bound when their Form-master condescended to unbend as far as to make a joke.

Lowther turned crimson.

"You—you see, sir—" he stammered.

Mr. Linton shook his head.

"No, Lowther, I'm afraid I do not see; that is why I am questioning you," he said, still in the same vein of irony.

"I—I was thinking, sir—"

"You were thinking of the lesson, of course, and preparing to construe?" Mr. Linton suggested, to another soft titter from the class.

"N-no, sir."

"Then what were you thinking of?"

"Mr. Dodds, sir."

"Who may Mr. Dodds be?"

"A—a curate, sir—a curate of Huckleberry Heath, and a friend of Miss Priscilla Fawcett, sir."

"And why should you be thinking of him during your Latin lesson, Lowther?"

"I—I—I—I was thinking of seeing him, sir."

"During your lessons?"

Another dutiful titter.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Monty Lowther. "Afterwards, sir."

"Then why think about the matter when your whole attention ought to be devoted to Latin hexameters?" asked Mr. Linton.

"It suddenly came into my head, sir."

"I am afraid there was nothing in your head, then, or it could not have entered," said Mr. Linton. "I remember now meeting Mr. Dodds, whom I respect very much, but even Mr. Dodds cannot be allowed to fill your thoughts to the exclusion of your lessons, Lowther. You will stay in for an hour this afternoon and write lines."

"Oh, sir!"

"And now kindly construe."

Monty Lowther proceeded to construe in a way that brought down the vials of Mr. Linton's wrath upon him again, so that his detention for the afternoon was lengthened to an hour and a half.

It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and when lessons were over the boys were free until evening preparation.

After dinner, Monty Lowther had to return to the class-room, and, naturally, Tom Merry and Manners returned with him to speak words of comfort.

Mr. Linton looked in at the door.

"If you remain here, Merry and Manners, you can write out lines with Lowther," the master of the Shell said crossly.



"What you really want," said Kangaroo, with a dripping sponge in his hand, "is a little help in waking up!" "I—oh—oooooh!" spluttered Tom Merry, as the soaking sponge splashed full in his face. He didn't need any further help—he leaped up in bed!

"Oh, sir!"
"Better buzz off," said Lowther dismally. "No good you two chaps being detained, too. You can go down to the cricket."

"It's rotten!" said Tom Merry.
"Never mind; it can't be helped."
"But what on earth did you mean by thinking about old Dodds suddenly in class like that, Monty?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, nothing!"
"But you must have meant something, old chap. What was it made you think of Mr. Dodds all of a sudden?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter!"
"Do you feel well, Monty?"
"Yes, of course I do."
"I don't like leaving you here alone."
"Can't be helped. Better buzz off, in case old Linton comes in again. Look here, ask Kangy to give me a look in."

"Oh, all right!"
Monty Lowther was left alone in the class-room. The clock ticked away dully over the bookcase; from the distant playing-fields, through the open windows, came the faint shouts of the juniors.

Monty Lowther's pen scratched away lazily. The number of lines he had to write during his hour and a half of detention had not been specified, but it was necessary for him to make some sort of a show of work done.

Kangaroo came in about ten minutes later. He was in cricketer flannels, and had a bat under his arm, and a ruddy flush on his cheeks.

"Hallo!" he said. "Tom Merry says you want to speak to me. I was batting, and I couldn't come till I was out."

Monty Lowther nodded.
"It's all right!" he said. "There's no hurry. Will you do me a favour, Kangy? I'm detained here, and can't get out."

"Certainly. What is it?"
"I want a telegram sent."
The Cornstalk nodded cheerfully.
"I'll take it."

"Then I'll write it out on some impot paper, and you can copy it out at the post office," said Lowther. "It's rather important."

"I'll take it, with pleasure. But why couldn't you ask Tom or Manners while they were here?" asked Kangaroo.

"I—I don't want them to see it."

"Oh, all serene! Some giddy secret, eh?"

"Well, yes, in a way."

"Go ahead, then—I'm mum."

"I want to see Mr. Dodds," Lowther explained. "It's very important; but, of course, I can't get away from the school and go down to Huckleberry Heath. I'm going to ask him if he can come here and see me."

Kangaroo whistled.
"He'll think it's a jolly cheek—unless the matter is important," he said.

"Well, it is important. I may as well tell you as you will have to read the message, anyway," said Lowther.

"It's about Tom Merry. There, read it."

He handed a scribbled note to the Cornstalk. Kangaroo took it in some wonder, and read what was written on it:

"Mr. Dodds, the Vicarage, Huckleberry Heath.—Can you come here? Important matter concerning Tom Merry."

"LOWTHER."

"My hat!" said Kangaroo. "He'll think Tom Merry is ill or something. Blessed if I know what to make of this."

"No need for you to make anything of it," said Lowther. "It's quite a private matter, and you've said you'll keep mum, so it's all right."

"I suppose it is," said the Cornstalk dubiously. "I don't want to be inquisitive, but—well, I suppose you know your own bisney. I should say that this will fetch Mr. Dodds here by the first train if he can get away from his duties."

"I hope it will."

"I'm off, then."

"It will be one-and-fourpence. Here you are!"

"Thanks!"

And the Cornstalk departed, whistling cheerily. Monty Lowther settled down to his imposition with a lighter heart. It had suddenly come into his mind that morning to consult Mr. Dodds on the troublesome matter that was weighing on his mind, and it was certainly an excellent idea. According to the Boy from Nowhere, Mr. Dodds had consulted Dr. Ballantyne about having a watch set upon Tom Merry, and in that case Mr. Dodds was the one to consult.

He would be able to tell Lowther exactly what to expect, and to advise him what to do. It was a great relief to Monty Lowther to feel that he had an older and wiser head to help him out.

CHAPTER 14.

The Telegram.

THE Boy from Nowhere was in the Form-room passage as Kangaroo came out. Kangaroo closed the classroom door, and almost ran into the new boy as he turned to go down towards the quad.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed.

The pale face of the Boy from Nowhere was strangely excited.

"You have a telegram?" he asked.

SAFETY FIRST!



Firemen (holding jumping sheet for Irishman trapped in a burning house): "Jump, sir, jump!"

Irishman: "No, begorra, you might drop the sheet. Put it on the ground first!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Chester, 160, Victoria Road, New Brighton, Cheshire.

"Yes."

"May I take it for you?"

Kangaroo hesitated. As a matter of fact, he would have been glad to get back to the cricket ground, but his good nature had led him to undertake that commission for the detained Shell fellow.

"I don't know," he said. "Lowther asked me to take it, and I said I would."

The new boy smiled.

"But you can trust me with the telegram," he said. "I have nothing to do—I am not playing cricket—I can walk down to the post office quite easily, you see, and send the wire to Mr. Dodds."

Kangaroo started.

"How do you know it is to Mr. Dodds?" he exclaimed.

"Is it not, then?"

"Yes, it is; but you must have been listening at the Form-room door, or you wouldn't have known it," said Kangaroo indignantly.

"I did not listen; but I heard—"

"I don't see how you could have heard without listening!" said Kangaroo indignantly. "But, in any case, I don't trust this wire in your hands."

"I promise—"

"Rats!"

"Look here, I should like to take it. I—"

"You'd like to read it, I expect," said Kangaroo.

"You're jolly well not going to. Buzz off!"

And the sturdy Cornstalk strode down the passage and passed out into the brilliant August sunshine in the quad.

The new boy's eyes glinted. He stood uncertain for some moments, and then followed the Cornstalk out into the sunshine. Kangaroo, with his hat on the back of his head, was striding towards the gates.

The Boy from Nowhere broke into a run, and joined him as he was going out into the road.

"May I walk with you to Rylcombe, Noble?" he asked.

"Oh rats! What do you want to do that for?"

"I should like to come."

"Well, I suppose you may, if you like," said Kangaroo.

"The road's public property, I believe."

"Thank you!"

"Rats!"

Kangaroo's manner was abrupt enough. He did not in the least like the new boy's curiosity with regard to Lowther's telegram; and he had a strong suspicion that the new boy wanted to accompany him solely for the

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purpose of getting a sight of the telegram when it was handed in at the telegraph office. And Kangaroo was grimly determined that if that was his object he should not be able to effect it.

The new boy walked silently beside the sturdy Cornstalk until the post office in Rylcombe was reached.

"Wait outside for me," suggested Kangaroo.

The new junior shook his head.

"Oh, no; I'll come in!"

And he followed Kangaroo into the post office.

Kangaroo took a form and wrote out the telegram, purposely placing himself so that the new boy could not get a glimpse of it.

"How many words?" asked the new boy.

"Fourteen—no, sixteen."

"Better let me count them and make sure."

"The postmaster will do that, thanks."

"Better let me—"

"Rats!"

Kangaroo handed in the form. The new boy craned his neck to see it; but Kangaroo kept the writing turned away from him.

The Cornstalk grinned as they left the post office. The new boy's face was dark and sullen.

"Now we'll have a nice walk back to St. Jim's," grinned Kangaroo.

"Look here—"

"Well, what—"

"What was in that telegram?"

"That's Lowther's bizney, not yours, my son. I knew all the time you wanted to spy into it, and I wasn't going to let you," said Kangaroo coolly. "Go and ask Monty Lowther if you want to know about it."

"Why should he be writing to Mr. Dodds?"

"Ask him."

"About Tom Merry, too?"

"Better inquire."

The new boy's face clouded angrily.

Kangaroo strode on, and left him behind in the road.

It was some ten minutes after the Cornstalk had gone back to the cricket field that the new boy arrived at St. Jim's.

He crossed the quad direct to the School House, and made his way to the Shell Form Room.

Monty Lowther was still there, his pen travelling at a snail's pace over the impot paper.

He looked up as the Boy from Nowhere came in. The latter closed the door and came quickly towards the detained junior.

"I've got a message for you," he said.

"From whom?"

"Harry Noble."

"Kangaroo?" exclaimed Lowther anxiously. "Hasn't he sent the telegram?"

"No. The wind blew the paper away, and he's asked me to get it from you again. He's waiting at the gate now."

"Why can't he come and get it again himself?"

"He's talking to Tom Merry."

Monty Lowther rose from his desk, crossed to the window, and looked out.

From the Shell class-room a view could be had of most of the quad, with the gates in the distance, and the cricket field in another direction. Monty Lowther looked towards the gates, and saw Taggles, the porter, there, and no one else. On the cricket field a batsman was running, and even at that great distance Monty Lowther could recognise Tom Merry of the Shell.

He descended from the steps, and gave the new boy a quiet, scornful look.

"You have lied," he said.

"What?"

"Kangaroo is not at the gates, and Tom Merry is on the cricket field. I don't believe a word you've said."

"Look here—"

"Oh, get out! If Kangy has lost my message he can come and ask me for it again himself. I shan't tell you a word of it!"

The new boy gritted his teeth.

"What have you sent Mr. Dodds a telegram about?" he asked.

"Mind your own bizney."

"Is it about what I told you of Tom Merry?"

"Find out!"

"I—I—hang you! I tell you—"

"Oh, buzz off!" said Monty Lowther. "You've bothered me enough, and I'm about fed-up with you. Buzz off, or I'll help you, with my boot."

The new boy gave him an angry look, and quitted the Form-room. Monty Lowther settled down again to his detention work till the clock struck the hour of his release, and he went down to the cricket field to join Tom Merry.

CHAPTER 15.

A Shock for Mr. Dodds!

CRICKET ceased as the dusk fell on the old quad. The juniors, with bats under their arms, streamed in a warm and ruddy crowd towards their Houses. The Terrible Three walked together, as usual, and they were looking a little more cheerful than of late. The grand old summer game had cheered them up, and banished their troubles from their minds for a little while. Toby, the page, met the chums of the Shell as they came into the School House. He had a telegram in his hand. "For Master Lowther," he said. "Thank you, Toby." Monty Lowther took the telegram. Manners and Tom Merry went on, while Lowther passed into the hall, and opened the buff envelope. It was a reply from Mr. Dodds.

"Coming down this evening. DODDS." That was all. But it removed a great weight from Monty Lowther's mind. He felt that things would go better when the handsome, athletic curate arrived. Mr. Dodds was just the man for a boy to go to in a time of difficulty. Lowther followed his chums to the study in the Shell passage. He felt that he must let Tom Merry know that Mr. Dodds was coming, though, of course, it was necessary to keep secret the reason for the curate's long journey to St. Jim's. "Any news?" asked Manners, as Monty Lowther came in. Lowther had put the telegram into his pocket. "Yes; we're going to have a visitor." "Good! Who?" "Mr. Dodds." "Dodds!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in surprise. "Old Dodds! What is he coming down for?" "To see us."

"Was the wire from him?" "Yes." "Let's see it," said Manners. Lowther laid the telegram down on the table. The chums of the Shell glanced at it, and Tom Merry looked very puzzled. "Well, I'm glad Dodds is coming down," he said. "I haven't seen him since we came back from the cruise in the Pacific, and I shall be glad to see him again. But it's very odd that he should wire to you instead of me."

"I'm jolly hungry," said Monty Lowther. "What is there to eat?" "Eggs and ham," said Manners. "Good—let's get 'em ready." "Yes; but how is it Dodds wired to you instead of to me?" Tom Merry asked. "He knows you, but not so well as he knows me."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Lowther. "Let's have some tea, and talk about the cricket. We've got to settle something about the Grammar School match." "Yes, but—"

"Where's the kettle?" "Look here!" said Tom Merry. "I don't quite catch on—"

"I'll go and fill the kettle while you get the spirit stove going," said Monty Lowther. And he left the study with the kettle in his hand. Tom Merry and Manners looked at one another.

"It's coming on again, I suppose," said Tom Merry, in a low voice. "Dodds must have heard something about Lowther's being rocky, you know, and he's coming down to see him on that account."

Manners nodded. "I suppose so," he said. "Poor old Lowther! It's rotten for him! But I shall be glad to see Mr. Dodds. We can tell him all about it, and ask his advice."

"Good idea." Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked into the study. "You fellows come in to do the 'Weekly' in our study this evenin'?" he asked.

Tom Merry shook his head. "No; we've got to entertain a visitor," he said. "Mr. Dodds is coming down to see us."

"Bai Jove! I shall be glad to see Mr. Dodds again, deah boys. I suppose you don't mind if I give you a look in?" "Pleased, I'm sure."

"Besides, I want to consult Mr. Dodds about something—about Mannahs—"

"Eh?" said Manners. "I—I mean, I want to speak to him," said D'Arcy hastily. "It's all wight—I'll look in duwin' the evenin', deah boys."

And the swell of St. Jim's departed before Manners could make any further remark. "Blessed if there doesn't seem to be insanity in the air

now," said Manners peevishly. "Anybody might take this School House for a giddy lunatic asylum. I—"

"Hush, here's Monty!" Monty Lowther came in with the kettle of water, and no more was said upon the subject.

The chums of the Shell had their tea, and then tackled their preparation, to get that over, if possible, before Mr. Dodds arrived, so that they would have more time to devote to their visitor.

"By the way, I wonder where that new chap is?" Tom Merry remarked. "I haven't seen him for some time."

"Oh, he hasn't any prep to do!" said Manners carelessly. "No need for him to come in. I dare say he's somewhere."

Tom Merry laughed. "Yes, I suppose he is," he agreed. There was a tap on the door. "Come in, fathead!"

The door opened. "Thank you!" said a cheery voice. It was Mr. Dodds.

Tom Merry jumped up with a crimson face. "I'm sorry, sir!" he exclaimed. "I—I thought it was one of the chaps from down the passage. Please come in, sir! We're jolly glad to see you!"

The big, athletic curate of Huckleberry Heath came into the study. Tom Merry swung round the armchair at once. Mr. Dodds sat down.

"It wasn't easy for me to get down this evening," he said, "but I felt that I had better come. I have to catch the nine train back from Rylcombe. Now, Lowther, I think you have something to say to me."

"Yes, sir," Lowther coloured. "I—I—"

Tom Merry looked at him in wonder. "Is it anything private?" he asked. "Manners and I will get out."

"I—I want to ask Mr. Dodds' advice about something," Lowther stammered.

"Oh, I see! All serene! Come on, Manners!" "Right you are!"

The chums left the study, closing the door behind them. Monty Lowther stood with a crimson face, hesitating to speak.

Mr. Dodds looked at him curiously. "Well, Lowther," he said, "I felt I had better come, after getting your telegram; but I haven't the faintest

(Continued on the next page.)

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idea why I'm here. What is the matter with Tom? He certainly looks all right, so far as I can see."

"It's awful, sir!"

"What is awful?"

"What's the matter with Tom," said Lowther. "I couldn't believe it at first, but it seems clear enough now."

Mr. Dodds looked very grave.

"I don't understand you, Lowther," he said. "You don't mean to say that Tom has done anything wrong?"

"Oh no!"

Monty Lowther blurted out the denial eagerly.

"He is not ill, I should think."

"Ill! Oh no; not exactly ill!"

"Then what is the matter?"

"He's mad!"

Mr. Dodds jumped.

"What!" he shouted.

"He's mad!" said Monty Lowther miserably. "But you know all about it, of course. You know that madness is hereditary in the Merry family, and that it breaks out at Tom Merry's age, as a rule. Isn't it awful?"

Mr. Dodds looked at the junior long and hard.

"I believe, Lowther," he said slowly, "that you have a reputation in your Form for being an extremely humorous fellow."

"Ye-es, sir; I think so."

"You are famous for your japes, and for the extraordinary schemes you concoct for pulling people's legs," said Mr. Dodds.

"Perhaps; but—"

"But I should not have expected you to send me an alarming telegram, and to make me come on a long journey for the sake of a jape," said Mr. Dodds.

Lowther stared at him.

"Oh, sir, you don't think it's a jape, do you?" he gasped.

"Is it not one?"

"No, sir. Oh no!"

"Then," said Mr. Dodds warmly, "if you are not joking, and if you are not wandering in your mind—what the dickens do you mean, Lowther?"

CHAPTER 16.

Light at Last!

MR. DODDS rapped out that question very sharply. Monty Lowther could only stare at him. After what he had learned from the Boy from Nowhere, he had expected the curate of Huckleberry Heath to be perfectly cognisant of all the facts of the case. He was puzzled and bewildered.

"Well," exclaimed Mr. Dodds, "I'm waiting for you to explain, Lowther."

"I—I—I—"

"You wired to me that something was wrong with Tom Merry. I have come down to see what is the matter. Explain yourself."

"I—I have explained. He's mad!"

"I think you must be mad!" said Mr. Dodds testily. "What has put that utterly absurd and cranky notion into your head?"

"It's hereditary in his family—"

"What is?"

"Insanity, sir. And it always breaks out at his present age."

"Who told you so?"

"Isn't it true?" demanded Lowther. "Don't you know it yourself?"

"Certainly not. I know the reverse to be the case. I knew General Merry, and I knew all about his family. There is not the slightest suspicion of anything of the sort being the case."

"My hat!"

"Who has told you that absurd story?"

"The Boy from Nowhere."

"Who?"

Monty Lowther explained. Mr. Dodds listened in blank astonishment to the story of the peculiar arrival of the nameless boy at St. Jim's, and to the strange statement he had made to Lowther concerning Tom Merry.

"Dear me! This is utterly amazing!" Mr. Dodds exclaimed. "What name has this boy given you?"

"Ballantyne, sir."

"I am well acquainted with Dr. Ballantyne, a most worthy gentleman," said Mr. Dodds. "He keeps a home for people with afflicted minds on the South Coast. He has a son about fifteen years old, who has shown himself very clever in dealing with the mentally afflicted. But—"

"This is the fellow, sir. He showed me his father's card."

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Mr. Dodds rubbed his chin in bewilderment.

"I cannot understand this," he said. "It puzzles me completely. Is the lad still at the school?"

"Yes. He digs in this study with us."

"It is amazing! Where is he now?"

"I don't know. I could find him."

"Please find him then, and bring him here," said Mr. Dodds. "Don't tell him I'm here, or he may try to avoid the interview. But now I may assure you that there is not a word of truth in the story. Tom Merry is as sane as I am, and there is no taint of madness in the Merry family. The boy has been deceiving you, I suppose, as a ghastly sort of joke."

"He said that you and Miss Fawcett consulted Dr. Ballantyne about Tom Merry's state, and that was why he was sent here—to keep watch over Tom Merry, in case his insanity broke out suddenly."

"There is not a word of truth in it."

"My hat! I'll lick him—"

"Wait a little. Let me see him before he is punished. It looks to me as if he must be insane himself to tell such a story as this. Go and find him!"

"Very well, sir!"

Monty Lowther left the study. As soon as he was gone, Manners and Tom Merry came in.

"We'd like to speak to you while Monty isn't here, sir," said Tom Merry quickly. "It's something we can't very well let him hear."

"Go ahead, Tom!"

"There's a new chap come to the school; we call him the Boy from Nowhere, because nobody knows who or what he is," Tom Merry explained.

Mr. Dodds started.

"Yes; I have just been hearing about that extremely peculiar youth from Lowther," he said grimly. "But go on!"

"He's told us the secret," said Tom Merry. "He's been sent here by his father, Dr. Ballantyne, the mental specialist, to keep watch over Monty Lowther. There's madness in the Lowther family."

"What!"

"It's horrible, isn't it, sir? It gave us an awful shock to know it!"

"I should think it did," said Manners. "But we're going to stick to poor old Lowther, all the same. I don't care if they have to shove him in a strait-waistcoat, we should stick to him, wouldn't we, Tommy?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry. "But I hope to goodness that it won't come to anything like that. Young Ballantyne says he may not break out if everybody's careful to keep from him the knowledge that there's madness in his family."

"Oh!" said Mr. Dodds.

"We want you to advise us what to do, you see, sir," Tom Merry went on. "We want to do the best for Lowther. We've never noticed anything rocky about him before the new chap told us, but since then we can't help noticing it. Lowther's got some fearful trouble on his mind; other fellows have noticed it as well."

"You are sure?"

"They've spoken to us about it, Figgins especially."

Mr. Dodds smiled.

"Lowther certainly has had a trouble on his mind," he said. "But you need have no fear that he is insane."

"But, sir—"

"I am fully able to assure you on that point."

"Yes, but—"

"He has had a worry on his mind on your account."

"On my account?" exclaimed Tom Merry in great astonishment.

"Yes."

"But why, sir?"

"Because—" Mr. Dodds paused as a tap came on the door.

"Come in!" said Tom Merry.

The door opened, and an eyeglass glimmered in from the passage, showing that the caller was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form.

"I hear that Mr. Dodds has awwived," remarked Arthur Augustus. "I should be glad to speak a word or two to Mr. Dodds, if Mannahs will excuse me."

"I!" ejaculated Manners.

"Yaas. I should not mind Tom Mewwy heavin', but I should like you to wotiah from the studay for a few minutes, if you would have the extweme goodness."

"Oh, bosh!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"We can't allow you to bore our visitor."

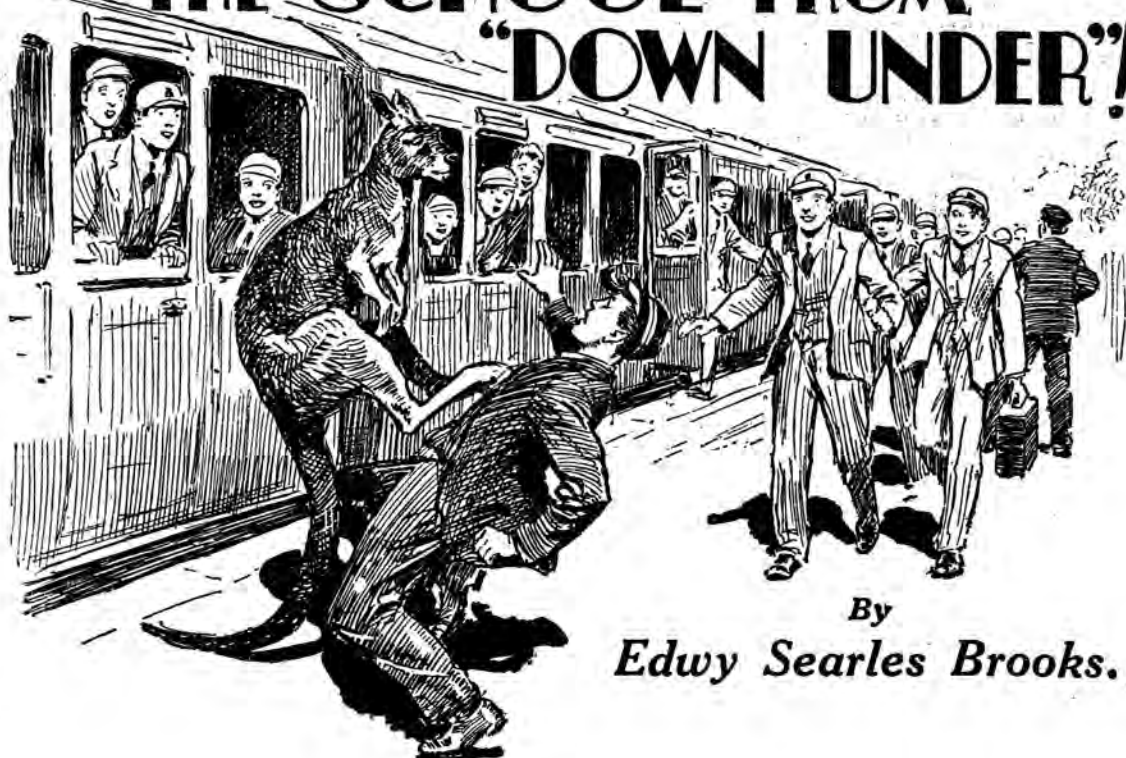
"Weally, you ass—"

"Buzz off for a minute or two, Manners, old chap, and let's get it over," said Tom Merry. "Gussy will never leave off, otherwise."

(Continued on page 23.)

THE ST. FRANK'S BOYS WHO SEEMED TO BE IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE!

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." Jerry Dodd, of St. Frank's, discovers that one of the Aussies, Jim Sayers, is an impostor, but keeps his discovery secret, because he wants to find out what the impostor's game is. Later, however, Jerry tells Handforth, of St. Frank's, about Sayers, and the two juniors start investigating secretly. They find out that Mr. Rutter, an Australian master, is in league with the impostor. They shadow the master, but are trapped in a dungeon in some old ruins. Suddenly, the imprisoned boys hear a knocking.

The Missing Juniors!

THUD—thud—thud!

Edward Oswald Handforth, and Jerry Dodd, imprisoned in the abbey dungeon, looked at one another excitedly in the beam of light cast by the electric torch.

"What was that?" whispered Handforth tensely.

"Sounded like somebody knocking," replied Jerry Dodd, striving to keep his voice steady.

They had been imprisoned for a comparatively short time—only a few minutes, in fact—and it seemed incredible that rescuers could be coming already.

"Hi!" bellowed Handforth, suddenly, his voice echoing in the confined dungeon. "Help! Help!"

But only silence followed the echoing of Handforth's yells; there was no repetition of the mysterious knocking. As the minutes passed the juniors' high hopes dwindled.

"It must have been the wind, chum," said Jerry at length.

"But how could the wind make that knocking noise?"

"The branch of a tree banging against the ruins, perhaps."

"Yes, that's possible," admitted Handforth. "Think we'd better yell again?"

"What's the good?" growled the Australian junior. "Nobody can be looking for us yet."

As it happened, Jerry Dodd was wrong, for at that very moment two figures were walking about amongst the ruins in the dusk above. They belonged to Church and McClure.

Handforth's chums had changed their minds. After

Handforth had abruptly left them in the lane, they had at first dismissed him from their thoughts. Yet they were struck by the significance of the information he had unwittingly given. Their thoughts had run on parallel lines, and, after a brief consultation, they had plunged into Bellton Wood on Handforth's trail.

Passing through the wood, they were in time to see Handforth and Jerry Dodd crossing the quiet meadows towards the river. And in the far distance there was another figure—the figure of Mr. Rutter, the master from the Australian School.

So far, then, Handforth had given a true statement of the facts; he and Jerry were trailing Mr. Rutter. Church and McClure decided that the matter needed looking into.

So they trailed Handforth and Jerry. Thus they had seen Rutter's meeting with Jim Sayers; they had followed to the very abbey ruins. And from a safe distance they had seen, after a strange interval of inactivity, Mr. Rutter and Jim Sayers emerge. The pair had walked off in the direction of the River House School.

But Handforth and Jerry Dodd, apparently, remained in the ruins. So Church and McClure, after a while, penetrated the ruins with the intention of finding the others and asking what it was all about.

But the ruins were deserted; of Handforth and Jerry Dodd there was no sign.

"It's funny," said Church, frowning. "Where can they have got to?"

"They must have gone home another way."

"But we should have seen them," said Church. "From the place where we were crouching we had a clear view of the ruins, and I'll swear that Handy and Dodd haven't come out."

"No, it's queer," admitted McClure. "I wonder what the dickens became of them?"

They were puzzled, but not alarmed. They were still of the opinion that Handforth was on a wild-geese chase.

In moving from one part of the ruins to another, they forced open a heavy door. It stuck a bit, and they were obliged to barge heavily against it. This, in fact, was the explanation of the noises which the prisoners had heard. When Handforth and Jerry had yelled, however, the two boys in the ruins had passed out of earshot.

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"Let's be going!" growled Church at length. "This place gives me the creeps!"

"We shall have to go, anyhow," said McClure. "If we don't, we shall be late for locking-up. The beggars must have given us the slip somehow. We were asses to come. It's just another of Handy's frosts."

They left the ruins and went back to St. Frank's by way of Edgmore lane, which took them past the Moor View School. They managed to get in just before the gates were locked.

Church and McClure went straight along to Study D, but Handforth was not there. They looked into Study F, Dodd's room. Jarro was the sole occupant.

"Hasn't Jerry come in yet?" asked Church.

"I regret that I have not seen him for some hours," replied Jarro, looking up from his prep.

"Have you seen Handy?"

"No, and I cannot truthfully say that I am grieved," replied Hubert Jarro. "Handforth is a disturbing influence. I wonder if influence could be brought to bear on our Housemaster?" he added ruminatingly. "Approached diplomatically, he might consent to giving us a whole holiday, so that we can see the Test match."

"Blow the Test match," said Church.

They separated before Jarro could force any more of his long-winded talk upon them. While they were pausing uncertainly in the doorway of Study D, Mr. Wilkes came along.

"A word with you, my friends," he said, in his friendly way. They saw that he held a telegram in his hand. "Do you know anything about this?"

"Handforth, sir!" they exclaimed together in surprise.

"Read it," said the Housemaster.

They saw that it had been dispatched from Bannington less than an hour ago, and it ran:

"Have gone with Jerry Dodd to meet some of his Australian relatives, or friends, in London. Back in a few days. Hope you won't mind."

"HANDFORTH."

"But—but I don't understand, sir?" said Church, bewildered.

"Isn't the message clear enough?" asked old Wilkey, with annoyance. "Handforth and Dodd have taken French leave—that's all. I have not the slightest doubt that Handforth is the instigator. I was wondering if you two boys knew anything about it."

"Not a thing, sir," said McClure.

"Handforth did not tell you that he was contemplating a forbidden trip to London?"

"Of course not, sir."

"That's very strange—very strange, indeed," said Old Wilkey. "Handforth does not usually keep his secrets from you, does he? Has he, by any chance, expressed a desire to see the Test match at the Oval?"

Church and McClure stared.

"Why, yes, sir," said Church quickly. "He said he'd give a term's pocket money to see some of the match. He's said it dozens of times."

"There is little doubt, then, that Handforth has gone to London to see the cricket," said Mr. Wilkes, a twinkle appearing in his eyes. "I'm afraid he is not very cunning; the wording of this telegram does not deceive me for a moment. Well, there will be hard reckoning when Handforth and Dodd come back. You are quite sure that he told you nothing of his plans?"

"I can't understand it at all, sir," said McClure. "Only to-day Handy was saying that we might get permission to see a day's play at the Oval. It's strange that he should go off like this, knowing that he'll get the chopper when he comes back."

"Handforth, apparently, is not satisfied with a day's play," replied Old Wilkey. "He wants to see two or three days of the match. Very reckless—but quite like him."

And with a nod, Mr. Wilkes went back to his own study, quite satisfied in his own mind that Handforth and Dodd had daringly gone up to London to see the Test match.

"There's something queer about this," said McClure in a startled voice.

"Queer?" grunted Church. "How do you make that out? The hopeless ass! He'll be flogged when he comes back, and Jerry Dodd, too, if old Wilkey reports them. Somehow I don't think he will. He's a sport."

"Where's Nipper?" said the Scottish junior abruptly.

He strode into Study C, and, luckily, Nipper was alone. Church, who was not so keen witted as McClure, wondered why his chum was looking so anxious.

"Anything wrong?" asked Nipper, as he saw the expression on Mac's face.

"There might be—I don't know," said Mac.

"Has Handy been up to something again?" asked Nipper.

"Oh, nothing much," said Church. "He's only taken

French leave, and gone up to London with Jerry Dodd to see the Test match!"

"Phew!" whistled Nipper. "That's asking for trouble, if you like!"

Church told him about the telegram which Mr. Wilkes had received.

"Don't be in such a hurry, Churchy," said McClure. "I'm not sure that Handy did send that telegram."

"You mean Dodd sent it?" asked Church, staring.

"I'm not sure that either of them sent it," retorted Mac. "There's something dashed queer about the whole business. Look here, I'm going to tell Nipper about that other affair."

Rapidly, with anxiety in his voice, he explained how they had got Handforth "talking." He told Nipper how, in consequence of that information, they had trailed Handforth and Dodd.

"Now, here's the strange part of it," he concluded.

"Handy and Dodd went into the ruins after those two, but we didn't see them come out again. Rutter and Sayers came out, and from the spot where we were hiding, we could see the ruins on every side."

"Yet Handy and Dodd could have eluded you in the dusk," said Nipper.

"Only by going into Edgmore," said Mac shrewdly. "Why should they go to Edgmore—which is in the opposite direction from Bannington? According to that telegram, they were in Bannington at ten minutes to eight, when the wire was handed in. Churchy and I didn't leave the ruins until a quarter to eight. I don't see how Handy and Dodd could have got to Bannington by ten to eight."

"What are you getting at?" asked Nipper, staring.

"I don't know—but there's something mysterious about it all," said McClure. "We know for a fact that Handy was as keen as mustard on trailing the Australian schoolmaster. He wasn't thinking about the Test match, or going to London. Neither was Dodd. If Handy and Dodd have gone off to the Test match, they must have decided on the spur of the moment—after leaving the ruins. But why should they do that? Only this evening he was saying that there was a distinct hope of getting permission to see some of the play at the Oval. Then why should he take French leave?"

"I'm beginning to get something of what's in your mind, Mac," said Nipper.

"You think that something alarming happened to Handy and Dodd in the ruins."

"But—but that's idiotic," protested Church.

"But is it idiotic?" said Nipper. "I'm beginning to think that Mac is right. Aren't the facts significant? Handy unconsciously told you that he suspects Rutter of being a crook, and that Sayers is an impostor. We know for a fact that they went to the ruins—"

"But—but you're not taking any notice of Handy's rot?" asked Church in amazement. "Dash it all, Nipper, you know what a chump Handy is when he gets 'on the trail,' as he calls it."

"If Handy had gone into this thing alone," said Nipper. "I should have taken very little notice of what you have told me. But Jerry Dodd was with Handy, and Jerry is calm and level-headed. What's more, he's an Aussie, and he comes from the same part of New South Wales as Sayers. It was Dodd—not Handy—who said that Sayers was an impostor. Handy merely repeated Dodd's words. It looks fishy to me."

"My only sainted aunt!" ejaculated Church, aghast. "You—you mean that something happened to them in the ruins?"

"If Rutter is a crook," replied Nipper, "and he found Handy and Dodd on his trail, he might have done something drastic. Sending that telegram was a trick to avoid a wide search of the countryside for the two missing chaps. As you know yourselves, Old Wilkey is quite satisfied that they have gone to the Test match, and he won't be alarmed for days."

"It sounds fantastic," said Church.

"I know it does, and it's likely enough that there's nothing to worry about," replied Nipper. "At the same time, I think we ought to go along to the ruins and have a general look round."

"But we can't go now," said Church. "It's after locking-up."

"We'll risk it," said Nipper briskly.

Truth to tell, he shared McClure's theory. This talk of Rutter being a crook and Sayers being an impostor had set a train of thought in motion in Nipper's mind.

Sayers, he knew, was supposed to be a brilliant cricketer; yet Sayers had not touched a bat or a ball since coming to the River House School. Sayers was supposed to be a thoroughly decent chap; yet by his malicious practical jokes, he had proved himself to be a cad. Sayers' very activities corroborated that statement of Handforth's—that he was an impostor. As for Rutter—well, Nipper had seen

him once or twice, and had taken an instinctive dislike to the man.

"Come on!" said Nipper.

The juniors were soon outside, and they left the school grounds by means of the playing fields; then they cut across the meadows in a direct line towards the old ruins. It was nearly dark, and the clouds overhead had broken up. In the heavy air of the summer's night there was a feeling of tension.

"Oughtn't we have told Old Wilkey, or Fenton, or somebody?" asked Church, as they ran.

"Better not, in case our fears are groundless," said Nipper. "We don't want to make asses of ourselves. Far better to investigate on our own, first."

When they reached the ruins they were hot and breathless. Nipper flashed his electric torch about. Church and McClure felt uneasy. The shadows looked mysterious, and the whole place seemed eerie. They were in the centre of the ruins, in the stone-floored chamber, where the crumbling walls rose grotesquely on all sides, and where, overhead, the roof was the sky.

"See this?" he said, pointing to the edges of the slab. "Unless we were looking for something we should never notice that this slab has recently been disturbed. But, look! The grass and the weeds and the earth in the crevices are torn here and there."

"But we can't do anything!" panted Church. "The slab's too heavy, and it's flush in the ground."

"Wait!" said Nipper tensely.

He had noticed a smaller section of stone at the big slab's end. When he tugged at this it came away fairly easily, and he flashed his light into a shallow cavity. The three boys saw an enormously heavy and rusty iron lever, with a catch.

"Great Scott!" said McClure.

"This slab is a trapdoor, and it opens downwards—not upwards," said Nipper, as he eagerly scrutinised the mechanism. "Don't you see? It's hundreds of years old; yet a lot of the rust has been cleaned away and the catch is thick with fresh oil."

He seized the lever and pulled it back. But nothing happened.



"Look!" exclaimed Curly Baines, pointing. "There's our St. Frank's cobbler, Handforth." Mr. Rutter leapt to his feet in amazement, and saw, standing up and waving a panama, Edward Oswald Handforth—the boy he had left imprisoned in the old abbey ruins!

"There are dungeons somewhere, aren't there?" murmured McClure.

"We'll explore them," said Nipper. "First of all, though, let's give a big shout. Now, then—all together."

They raised their voices in a mighty yell; then, breathless, they waited, listening.

"Help!"

The cry sounded vaguely, as though from the bowels of the earth.

Cunning Against Cunning!

"DID you hear anything?" asked Church hoarsely.

"Let's shout again," said Nipper.

They did so, and this time Nipper was sure. The muffled reply came from somewhere beneath them, a little to the left. He moved in that direction, and stamped hard with his heel on the stone slabs.

"Hi! Help!" came the faint call.

"Right here—under this very slab," said Nipper grimly. "By Jove, Mac, you were right! Handy and Dobb are prisoners."

As Nipper spoke he directed the light upon the stone slab at his feet. The next moment he was down on all fours, and his eyes were gleaming.

"It doesn't work that way!" said Church breathlessly.

Nipper thought for a moment, and then he pressed hard on the big slab. Instantly he overbalanced, for the slab moved downwards at his touch, then it slowly came back into position.

"That's it!" he ejaculated. "There's a powerful spring. Do you see? When the catch is left in the 'open' position the slab looks solid; but it isn't. Anybody walking on it drops through. Then the slab, worked by the spring, comes back. After that it's easy enough for anybody to set the catch in the 'secure' position, and replace the small square of stone."

"My only hat!" said Church.

"A nice little death trap, apparently invented by the ancient monks," said Nipper. "Help me to hold the slab down, you chaps."

They all heaved, and the great square of stone was forced downwards.

"Hi, help!" came a hoarse voice, now loud and strong. "Who is it up there? You dirty rotter, Rutter—"

"Keep your hair on," said Nipper. "You've got to thank Churchy and Mac for getting you out of this mess."

"Hurrah!" came Handforth's yell. "We're saved, Jerry!"

By this time Nipper had wedged the slab, and the light of his torch blazed down on to the upturned faces of Handforth and Jerry Dodd, quite a long way below.

The rescue was quickly effected. A number of tough creepers were torn down, and, twined together, they made a strong rope. This was lowered, and Handforth and Dodd, one after the other, swarmed up to freedom.

"By George! We thought we were going to be kept prisoners for weeks!" gasped Handforth, his eyes blazing. "How the dickens did you chaps know? Thanks awfully for coming!"

"You told us yourself, Handy," said Church. "You didn't know it, but you told us that you suspected Rutter of being a crook, and that you were trailing him. We saw you go into the ruins, and we didn't see you come out."

Explanations were rapid, and soon the rescued pair knew exactly how lucky they were. But for Handforth's incautious "talking," no suspicions would have been aroused.

Even Nipper was thrilled by the unexpected drama of the situation. Handforth and Jerry Dodd were startled when they heard of the telegram which Mr. Wilkes had received.

"By cripes! That's proof that Rutter meant to keep us locked up for days," said Jerry grimly. "He didn't want any search. The trouble is, we've no proof."

"No proof of what?" asked Handforth.

"No evidence that Rutter trapped us," replied Dodd. "We know it, of course, but we can't prove it. Supposing we take this story to the police? Rutter can deny that he knew anything about the trap, and the police won't be able to touch him."

"What rot!" said Handforth. "Who else could have done it?"

"Never mind," said Nipper. "It doesn't matter. What does matter is that you fellows were provided with food and water to last you a week or more."

"Meaning?" asked Jerry Dodd.

"Meaning, my son, that Rutter won't come to the ruins for four or five days," said Nipper shrewdly. "And that gives us time to act. No sense in letting Rutter know that you've escaped. Even if there is no proof against him, he'll get the wind up, and probably bolt. Then we shan't ever get to the bottom of the mystery. Our game is to match cunning against cunning."

"By George! That sounds good!" said Handforth.

"I think it's about time that we fellows were in this game with you," went on Nipper dryly. "Now the position is this. Rutter and Sayers are crooked. They got to know that you were interested in them, and they put you out of the way. And that telegram to Old Wilkey prevents any hue and cry."

"But only for a few days," said Jerry.

"But don't you see the cleverness of it?" asked Nipper. "When the hue and cry did come, it would not be until after the Test match. And the centre of it would be somewhere in London. In other words, there would be no search in this part of the country. You two would have just vanished."

"You're not suggesting that they meant to kill us?" asked Jerry Dodd soberly.

"No, I don't think that; but they meant to keep you locked away until their own plans, whatever they are, were completed," said Nipper. "And that may take weeks."

"What are we going to do?" asked Handforth.

"Well, you can't go back to St. Frank's, or Rutter will know that you've escaped," said Nipper. "We want him to believe that you are still prisoners. While he's unsuspecting I can do some investigating on my own. Then, when the time's ripe, we can jump and make the capture. But we must find out what the game is."

"You're right, Nipper," said Jerry Dodd. "The trouble is—where can Handy and I lie low?"

Nipper's eyes twinkled.

"Well, a crowd is as safe as any other place," he said. "Old Wilkey thinks that you've gone up to London to see the Test match; so you'd better go to London. And while you're there, I dare say you'll drift towards the Oval."

"It's a good idea," said Jerry Dodd firmly.

"It's a rotten idea," declared Handforth who, at that moment, was not interested in cricket. "Where do we come in? Don't forget this is my investigation."

"But you're supposed to be a prisoner, and must keep out of the way," said Nipper. "Now I suggest that I write a note to my guv'nor, and you can take it to him. You can walk to Bannington, catch the late train, and when you get to London, go straight to Mr. Lee's place in Gray's Inn Road. You'll be comfortable there; and very likely the guv'nor will decide to take a hand in the game himself. Anyhow, do nothing until you hear further

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from me. Just lie low. I'll keep a watch on Rutter at this end."

It was a good plan. Its very simplicity recommended it. The all-important thing was to leave Rutter and Sayers unsuspecting.

Nipper wrote his letter, and half an hour later Handforth and Jerry Dodd set off, very thrilled. Handforth hated leaving the scene of operations, but it could not be helped. Better for them to have an easy time in London than to return to that murky vault. Circumstances made it impossible for them to continue the investigations personally; but Nipper was in the game now, and he would carry on.

With Church and McClure, Nipper returned to St. Frank's, and, although they got into a bit of trouble for being out after locking-up without permission, they did not mind.

There was a good deal of talk amongst the juniors about the colossal cheek of Handforth and Dodd in taking French leave to see the Test match, but nobody had the faintest suspicion of the real circumstances of their disappearance.

Next morning Nipper heard some important news.

The entire Australian School, including all the masters, had gone up to London for the Test match. There would be a reunion between parents and boys and other relatives, and the Australian schoolboys were in for a royal time. When the St. Frank's fellows heard of it they were green with envy.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Nipper, facing Church and McClure in the privacy of Study D. "Here's corroboration of my theory—eh?"

"What theory?" asked Church.

"Why, that Rutter has no intention of going near his prisoners for some days," said Nipper. "That's why he left the food and water. Rutter's in London, and Sayers, too. They won't be back until the Test match is over, and that might not be until the end of the week."

"Does it make any difference?" asked McClure.

"It might," said Nipper thoughtfully. "Anyhow, it'll give me an opportunity to go over to the River House and do some prowling about. Don't forget, Rutter is unsuspecting, and I might be able to pick up a clue."

"There's too much 'I' about it," said McClure. "Where do Churchy and I come in?"

"You can come over with me, if you like," said Nipper, smiling. "But we won't be in a hurry. It might be a good idea to delay things until to-morrow. By then we shall be sure that Rutter is away."

Meanwhile, in London, Handforth and Jerry Dodd were thoroughly enjoying themselves. Whilst supposedly languishing in a dark and gloomy vault, they were living in comfort at Nelson Lee's chambers in Gray's Inn Road.

Upon arrival they had found, rather to their disappointment, that Nelson Lee was away. The great detective was somewhere in the north of England investigating a murder mystery. However, Mrs. Jones, Lee's house-keeper, made the visitors very comfortable. For Nipper, ready for any emergency, had armed Jerry Dodd with a letter for Mrs. Jones, too. In any case, both Handforth and Jerry were known to the good lady. As Nelson Lee was not there, and as it was necessary, therefore, to cool their heels, their thoughts automatically switched towards the excitement at the Oval.

So to the Test match they went, and in the joy of watching the cricket they forgot all about Mr. Rutter.

A Shock for Mr. Rutter!

IT was a sunny day when Nipper, accompanied by Church and McClure, strolled into the deserted quadrangle at the River House School. The doors of Wragg's House and Marshall's House stood wide open; but no one was in sight as the St. Frank's boys mounted the steps of Marshall's House.

In the doorway, however, they encountered the house porter, who was in his shirtsleeves and a green apron.

"No good you coming here to-day, young gents," he said.

"There ain't nobody in the school except us servants."

"One of our fellows left his cap behind the other day," said Nipper—a perfectly true statement. "Mind if we have a look through the chaps' studies?"

"Not a bit, Master Nipper," said the porter agreeably.

"Mighty hot to-day, ain't it? Why, thank you kindly, young gent!" he added, as Nipper gave him a shilling.

"That's all right," said Nipper, smiling. "So the whole school has gone to the Test match—eh? Not even a master left?"

"Not one of 'em, sir," said the porter.

He went outside, and the three visitors wandered through the passages. At length Nipper halted in front of a door, and he tried the handle. The door was locked.



Mr. E. S. Brooks welcomes letters from readers. Write to him c/o The Editor, The GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

I WILL remember your request, Irene Matthews, Southwark, and in a future serial I will try to bring your namesake, Irene, of the Moor View School, into the story. I'm not sure that we can have a "good deal of Irene" in it, as, after all, the St. Frank's fellows are the chief characters. Very glad to hear that you have enjoyed my stories for so many years, and you have my very best thanks for your loyalty.

Your long letter, Helena Bentley, Liverpool, gave me a tremendous lot of pleasure, and your enthusiasm is most

"I thought it might be," he said. "This is Rutter's study."

"But we can't get in," said Church. "Can't we?" grinned Nipper. "Watch!"

He produced a small bunch of skeleton keys, and Church and McClure looked on in some consternation.

Nipper had no scruples. Rutter was a crook. His unscrupulous treatment of Handforth and Dodd proved, too, that he was desperate.

"Rutter and Sayers are wrong 'uns," said Nipper, as he manipulated one of the keys, "and it's our job to find out what the game is."

"But—but this is burglary!" protested Church. Supposing someone comes along and finds us in here?"

"Who's coming along?" asked Nipper, as the lock gave a click. "The porter believes we're searching through the junior studies. He won't come near us. We've got the school to ourselves."

As he spoke, the lock was conquered, and a moment later they were inside. Deftly, Nipper locked the door again.

"Easy enough—eh?" he murmured. "Nobody can guess that we are in here—and nobody can enter, because the door's locked. Steer clear of the window, that's all."

The search, at first, was abortive. But on looking under a pile of letters on the desk, Nipper found an extraordinarily long telegram. It had been dispatched from Sydney, Australia, only three days ago.

"By Jove!" said Nipper keenly. "What does it say?" asked Church.

"It's a cablegram telling Rutter to seize the opportunity of visiting various places in England," replied Nipper. "It also asks him to bring home three suits of clothes, some hats, and shirts. A perfectly friendly telegram, in fact, and it's signed 'Tom.'"

"Then why are you looking so keen?" asked McClure. "For two reasons!" said Nipper grimly. "Firstly, this cablegram is tremendously long; secondly, it deals with trivial matters."

"I don't understand," said Mac.

"Cablegrams from Australia cost a lot of money," said Nipper. "Why should one of Rutter's friends spend ten or twenty pounds on such an unimportant message? I believe that the telegram is in code—that it contains a cipher of some kind."

"By jingo!" ejaculated Church.

"The real message is hidden somewhere among this confusion of words," continued Nipper. "Anyhow, I'm going to take a copy of it—and if there's one man who can decipher it, that man is my guv'nor. It might be an important clue."

"But it's silly!" protested Edward Oswald Handforth. "We were safe enough yesterday, weren't we? Then why shouldn't we be safe to-day?"

"We ought not to go, really," said Jerry Dodd dubiously.

They were outside Nelson Lee's chambers, in Gray's Inn Road, and parked against the kerb stood the powerful motor-cycle which Jerry Dodd had hired for use while he was in London. He was a keen motor-cyclist, and he was sorry that he had had to leave his own "jigger" at St. Frank's.

"I'm blessed if I can see why Nipper should have sent us such a letter!" said Handforth. "The Australian School is at the Test match, including Rutter. What of it? Are we to be barred from seeing the match because of that?"

heartening. As regards Kirby Keeble Parkington & Co.—known as the "Red Hots"—if they ever come into the stories again, they will only come as visitors to St. Frank's. They were only temporary pupils, and they have been back at their own school for quite a time. They are such a lively bunch that I must seriously think of bringing them back into one of my coming stories.

"Names List."—No. 6. West House, Remove. Study W: Lord Pippington, Alan Castleton, Tom Burton. Studies X, Y and Z are spare studies, and are not occupied at the moment.

It seems to me that writing pads in South Africa are standardised. Anyhow, I have noticed that in nearly every letter I get from a South African reader the paper on which it is written is almost the same. Even the handwriting of my South African readers is similar, and I must add that the handwriting is usually first rate. However, the letter's the thing, and I must thank Stanley Jonson, of Port Elizabeth, for his very chatty epistle. I'm afraid, Stanley, that what you ask is "completely impossible." The multitude of St. Jim's enthusiasts would kick up a rare fuss if the Editor cut down the St. Jim's story as drastically as you suggest.

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

"Well, the Oval is the last place we should go to, really," said Jerry. "Rutter thinks we're his prisoners. If he catches sight of us—"

"What rot!" protested Handforth. "Twenty or thirty thousand people at the Oval! How could he spot us? We're not wearing Etons, or school caps. What's more, he'll be too busy with the Australian chaps, looking after 'em, to bother about anything else. Blow it, Dodd, let's go and see the cricket!"

Jerry Dodd did not need much urging. It seemed a shame to miss the Test match, now that he and Handforth were compelled to be in London. And, as Handforth had said, the risks were so small as to be almost non-existent. It wasn't even certain that Rutter would be at the Oval.

"He doesn't care tuppence about cricket," argued Handforth. "We're just as likely to run up against him in Piccadilly Circus. We're safer in that huge crowd at the Oval than anywhere."

"O.K., chum," grinned Jerry Dodd. "Hop on the pillion. We'll go."

And half an hour later they were hidden among the thousands of spectators at the famous enclosure of the Surrey Cricket Club. They had bought Panama hats for the occasion, and the wide brims concealed their faces.

As luck would have it, Mr. Rutter was in one of the stands, watching the game. He did not want to be there; but he was on duty. Carly Baines, McVittie, Kennedy, and all the other stalwarts of the Australian school were in the stand, and they were taking a breathless interest in the game.

It was near the luncheon interval when one of the fieldsmen brought off a superb catch, and a mighty roar went up.

"Oh, well caught!"

"A ripping catch, by George!"

That stentorian voice was unmistakable; it sounded just after the great shout had died down.

"Look! It's our St. Frank's clobber, Handforth!" exclaimed Carly Baines, pointing. "No mistaking that voice—eh?"

Mr. Rutter, who was sitting near by, leapt to his feet. He saw the direction of Baines' pointing finger; and then he saw, right in the crowd, and standing up and waving a Panama—Edward Oswald Handforth! The boy he had left imprisoned in the old abbey ruins! What could it mean?

He blinked, looked again; but somebody had dragged the figure back, and it was lost completely.

"Excuse me!" said Mr. Rutter harshly.

He forced his way out of the stand. He was wildly alarmed. Before he could rest another minute he must make certain! Mr. Rutter took his car out, and, with a grim, set face, he drove southwards.

Through Helmford—then Bannington. As he drove, he told himself that he was a fool. That boy in the Oval crowd couldn't have been Handforth. But he would soon know!

Along the Edgmore Lane, and then, in the hot sunshine, he parked his car. Two minutes later he was alone in the abbey ruins.

He removed the little slab of stone, released the safety catch, and thrust the heavier stone downwards. He stared into the depths.

And a stray shaft of sunlight, beating straight down, revealed the sprawling figures of Edward Oswald Handforth and Jerry Dodd on the bed of ferns, fast asleep!

(How did Jerry and Handy get there? More big surprises and excitement in next week's chapters.)

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THE BOY FROM NOWHERE!

(Continued from page 22.)

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Oh, very well!" snapped Manners.

He went out of the study and shut the door after him. Arthur Augustus approached the curate of Huckleberry Heath in a very mysterious manner.

"It's a howwibly important mattah," he said. "It concerns Mannahs, you see. Tom Mewwy ought to hear it, upon the whole, as he is Mannahs' best chum. You see—"

"Come to the point, Gussy, old son."

"Pway don't intewrupt me, Tom Mewwy; you throw me off the thwead of my wemahs. There is a new chap come to the school, Mr. Dodds—a chap we call the Boy from Nowhere, because nobody knows who he is, but he has told Blake and me the dweadful twuth."

"By Jove!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

Mr. Dodds smiled grimly.

"And what is the dreadful truth?" he asked.

"He is the son of a chap who deals in lunatics—a mental specialist, you know," D'Arcy explained, "and his fathah has sent him here to keep special watch ovah Mannahs."

"Why?"

"Because there is madness in the Mannahs' family, and it bweaks out at Mannahs' age," said Arthur Augustus. "It's howwid, isn't it?"

"It certainly would be horrid if true," Mr. Dodds agreed. "Fortunately, there is not a syllable of truth in it."

"Bai Jove!"

"He has confided to you that Manners is mad, and at the same time he has told Tom Merry and Manners that Lowther is mad."

"Gweat Scott!"

"And Lowther wired me to-day to come down here because something was wrong with Tom Merry, and I find that this new boy has confided to him that Tom Merry is mad."

Tom Merry jumped.

"I!" he shouted. "Mad!"

Mr. Dodds laughed.

"Yes. It seems to be an amusement of this boy to tell people that other people are mad, and that it must be kept a secret from them," he said. "If you had not all told me, you might never have compared notes, and never learned that he was deceiving you. It is all nonsense, of course."

"Bai Jove!"

"The young scoundrel!" Tom Merry exclaimed wrathfully. "Why, he ought to be licked baldheaded for playing such a rotten jape!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Mr. Dodds held up his hand.

"What is that scuffling?" he exclaimed.

Tom Merry threw open the door. There was a sound of gasping and scuffling footsteps in the passage.

"Let me go! Let me go!"

It was the voice of the Boy from Nowhere.

"Not much!" said the cheery tones of Monty Lowther. "You're coming into the study! Bear a hand, Manners, old chap!"

"What-ho!" said Manners.

The Boy from Nowhere was struggling in the grasp of the chums of the Shell. He evidently guessed that Mr. Dodds was in the study, and he did not want to see the curate of Huckleberry Heath.

But he could not escape. Tom Merry stepped out of the

study and lent a hand, and the Boy from Nowhere was whirled into the room in the grasp of the Terrible Three.

He was brought up just in front of Mr. Dodds, gasping, panting, wriggling.

The curate of Huckleberry Heath started to his feet.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Rayner!"

The Boy from Nowhere ceased to resist. At the sound of his true name he seemed to be completely overcome. He stood limply in the hold of the chums of the Shell.

Mr. Dodds looked at him hard.

"How did you come here, Rayner?" he asked.

The new boy was silent.

"He must have escaped," said Mr. Dodds. "It is extraordinary."

"Bai Jove! Who is he, sir?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"His name is Rayner, and he was a patient in Dr. Ballantyne's home," said Mr. Dodds. "I have seen him there and talked to him there many a time."

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "And that is how he knew about St. Jim's—how he knew your name and my name and the rest of it."

"No doubt."

"Bai Jove! And is he wocky, sir?"

The Boy from Nowhere trembled. Mr. Dodds did not reply to D'Arcy's question; he dropped his hand upon the new boy's shoulder.

"Come with me, Rayner," he said. "I will take him to your headmaster, my boys. I will then return here."

And Mr. Dodds led the now quiet and submissive Boy from Nowhere from the study.

The juniors waited in astonished silence for his return. Mr. Dodds rejoined them in ten minutes; his face was very grave.

"I have explained to Dr. Holmes," he said. "The boy is in safe keeping, and he will be sent back at once to Dr. Ballantyne's Home."

"Is he mad, sir?" asked Tom Merry breathlessly.

"Yes—though not dangerously so. His intellect is sometimes very vigorous, and at other times quite clouded. He is possessed with a peculiar fancy that he is quite sane, but that other people are mad, and that it is his duty to look after them," said Mr. Dodds. "His mania is quite harmless, but it is necessary for him to be kept under restraint. He has evidently persuaded himself that he is the son of Dr. Ballantyne—he is about the same age—and the card he showed you he must have taken before he left the asylum. He has escaped, and the doctor will be searching for him everywhere."

"Bai Jove!"

"It is fortunate that I came here and recognised him before he had come to any harm," said Mr. Dodds.

"I'm jolly pleased we've found out the truth!" said Tom Merry, with a sigh of relief. "It's been a fearful weight on my mind. I suppose that chap is treated all right at the asylum, sir?"

"Oh, yes, certainly! The doctor is kindness itself," said Mr. Dodds. "This is merely a freak on his part—a most extraordinary freak. I shall take him away with me when I leave St. Jim's, and really it is time for me to go now."

Ten minutes later Mr. Dodds was driving away from the school, and with him went the new boy; but for a long time the most interesting topic in the studies at St. Jim's was the strange case of the Boy from Nowhere.

THE END.

(Next Wednesday—"A Shadow Over St. Jim's!"—starring Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the Outsider. It's a dramatic and sensational story you must on no account miss!)



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