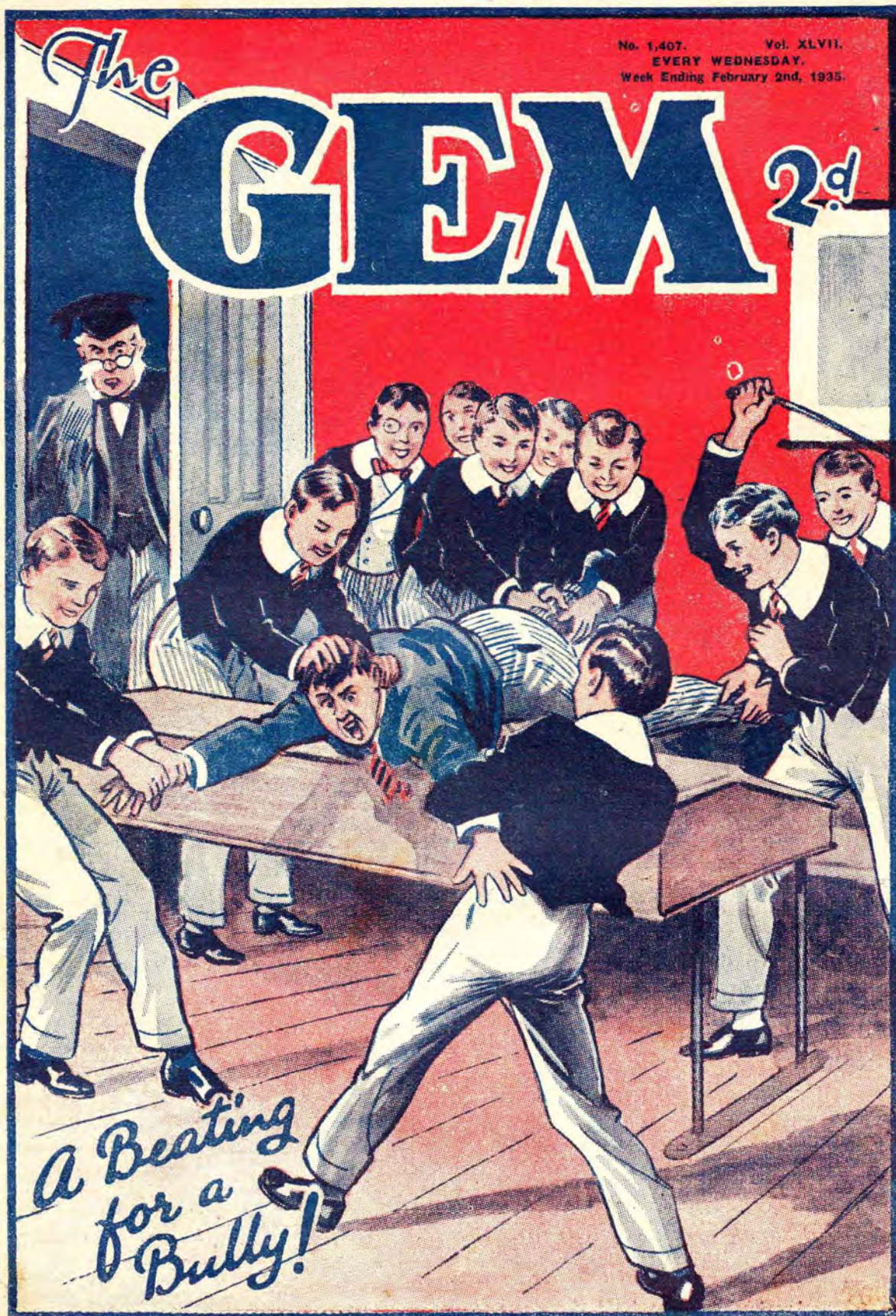


Stories by Martin Clifford—Frank Richards—E. S. Brooks—INSIDE!



"FROM FOOTLIGHTS TO FORM-MASTER!" Sparkling Long St. Jim's Story WITHIN.

From FOOTLIGHTS to FORM-MASTER!



"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Wodyer, as the juniors welcomed him with cheers. "I beg to thank you for this most enthusiastic reception." Unconsciously the new master had dropped into the manner of the footlights. "Our visit to your town, though necessarily brief, will ever remain a cheerful memory!"

CHAPTER 1. Trouble Ahead!

THERE will be ructions!" That was the opinion of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. As a rule, when D'Arcy expressed an opinion, there was unanimous dissent. Fellows who agreed about nothing else would agree cheerfully that D'Arcy was an ass. But on this occasion the opinion expressed by Arthur Augustus was endorsed by all the Fourth Form. Blake of the School House and Figgins of the New House cordially agreed with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy that there would be "ructions." Redfern & Co., the new boys in the New House, were of the same opinion.

D'Arcy said it was an insult to the dignity of the Fourth Form. Blake said he wouldn't have minded if it had been a chap like Kildare or Darrell. Redfern went farther, and said it would have been all right with anybody but Knox. But everybody agreed that they barred Knox.

And so the Fourth Formers unanimously endorsed the opinion of the swell of St. Jim's that there would be ructions.

It was only natural that there should be. There had been a considerable

amount of ructions lately at St. Jim's, and perhaps the juniors had not quite settled down yet.

Mr. Ratcliff, the master of the New House, and Form-master of the Fifth, had left quite suddenly on a holiday, for the benefit of his health. There had been trouble in Mr. Ratcliff's House, and the Head had thought of that holiday for him, and it was known that he would be away some weeks at least. There would be a temporary New House master, who might become a permanent one if Mr. Ratcliff did not return, as the fellows sincerely hoped.

The demand for a new master was sudden. New masters did not grow on every bush, as Figgins remarked. The sudden departure of Mr. Ratcliff left the Fifth without a Form-master and the New House without a Housemaster—Mr. Ratcliff having fulfilled both those functions.

What would be done until the new master, hastily summoned, arrived at St. Jim's, was a matter of conjecture to the juniors, but it was settled very much to their dissatisfaction.

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, was put in charge of the Fifth Form temporarily.

The Fourth Form was put under the charge of a prefect till the new master should arrive.

And that prefect was Knox!

Knox was the most unpopular prefect in the School House—or in the whole school for that matter. He was a bully, and he used his powers as a prefect to make himself generally unpleasant to fellows he disliked.

It was not a cheering prospect for the Fourth Form to be placed in Knox's charge, though it might be for only one afternoon.

There were many fellows in the Fourth whom Knox disliked bitterly—Blake and Figgins and Lumley-Lumley, and others—and he was certain to come down as heavily upon them as he could.

Hence Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's statement that there would be ructions.

The juniors were standing in a group in the old quad, waiting for the bell that was to summon them to afternoon lessons.

The heroes of the Fourth were looking gloomy and dissatisfied.

"It's rotten!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked, polishing his eyeglass thoughtfully. "I wegard it as weally rotten!"

"I should say so!" said Figgins. "It's beastly!"

"Not nice," agreed Jack Blake.

"There will be a fow!" Herries remarked.

"I guess I could see that in Knox's face when he told us," remarked Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "He means mischief."

—LIVELY LONG YARN OF THE CHEERY CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "He thinks he's got us down nicely," remarked Kerr. "Well, if there's any rot, we shall have to show him that we can back up against a rotten prefect as well as a rotten Housemaster."

"Hear, hear!"
 "School House and New House together, shoulder to shoulder, if we have any bosh from him," said Redfern. "Wight-ho, deah boy!"

Clang!
 "There's the bell!"
 The juniors crowded into the School House. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther—the Terrible Three of the Shell—came by on their way to their Form-room, and they could not help grinning at the sight of the Fourth Formers.

"You chaps look as cheerful as if you were going to a funeral," Tom Merry remarked.

"Patience, my sons!" said Monty Lowther. "You've got a new master coming to-morrow!"

"Or the next day," said Manners. "Cheer up!"

Blake grunted.
 "That's all very well for you, you Shell bounders," he said. "Why shouldn't they make Linton take the Fifth, and put the Shell under a prefect?"

"Oh, we wouldn't have stood it, you know!" said Monty Lowther airily.

"Rats!"
 "Yaas, wathah! Wats!"
 The Terrible Three laughed.

"It is rather rotten to be put under Knox," Tom Merry agreed. "You must handle him carefully, and—"

"If there's any rot, we'll handle him with our hands," said Blake truculently. "I'm not going to have any rot from Knox, for one!"

"Wathah not!"
 "Get into your class-room, Fourth!"
 It was a sharp, unpleasant voice.

It belonged to Knox of the Sixth. The prefect came striding down the passage with a most unpleasant expression upon his thin, acid face.

"You will take fifty lines, Blake, for speaking insolently."

"Oh!" said Blake, with a gleam in his eyes.

"Now get into your class-room!"

Knox frowned at the Terrible Three. If they had been under his charge he would gladly have given them lines, too. Tom Merry was the junior he disliked most in all the crowd that belonged to the School House.

"You'd better go into your Form-room, too, you young sweeps!" he said.

"Thanks!" said Tom Merry airily. "No hurry. Won't you let us enjoy the delights of your conversation a little longer?"

"Besides, we want to look at you, Knox," said Monty Lowther. "It's a cheap amusement, you know; we have to pay to see anything like you at the Zoo."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Manners.

Knox frowned at the Terrible Three, but he did not reply. He stamped into the Fourth Form Room, and slammed the door behind him. The chums of the Shell chuckled.

"I rather fancy Gussy was right," Tom Merry remarked. "They've been having ructions in the New House lately, and now they'll have ructions in the Fourth Form Room."

"I fancy so. It would have been

better to put Kildare or Darrell in charge of the Fourth," Manners remarked.

"Yes; the Head doesn't know how Knox gets on with us," said Tom Merry. "I dare say he'll learn, though, before the afternoon's out."

"Ha, ha, ha! Very likely!"

And the Terrible Three went into the Shell Form Room. As a matter of fact, if it had been possible they would willingly have shared in the expected "ructions" in the Fourth Form Room. Their sympathies were entirely with the Fourth. But the Fourth Form were quite able to take care of themselves.

CHAPTER 2.

.Knox Looks for Trouble!

KNOX, the prefect, looked over the Fourth Formers as they sat in their places, with a keen, suspicious eye.

The prefect, like the juniors, had some suspicion that there would be ructions before the afternoon was over, but that suspicion did not make him careful to avoid them. He was quite ready for trouble. He had the upper hand, and he meant to use it.

The Fourth Formers sat very quietly and Knox's keen and suspicious eye failed to detect anything to pounce upon as he surveyed the juniors.

If Knox could have left well alone

When Mr. Wodyer, a music-hall artist, understudies his brother as new Form-master at St. Jim's, he's the star turn of the school!

matters might have gone smoothly. But that was one of the peculiar gifts of Knox. He never could let well alone.

"You young rotters have got to behave yourselves this afternoon," he said unpleasantly, by way of a preliminary to the first lesson "You can't play the fool with me as you do with old Lathom."

Silence.
 "The first fellow who kicks over the traces will get my pointer on his knuckles," said Knox. "I'm going to have no rot!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Take fifty lines for talking in class, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, Knox—"

"A hundred lines!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Two hundred lines! And if you say

another word I'll double it!" cried Knox.

Arthur Augustus did not say another word. He sat staring blankly at the prefect. He had foretold that there would be ructions, but he had never anticipated that even Knox would begin in this high-handed way. It seemed as though Knox was looking for trouble.

And so lessons began.

Most of the prefects of the Sixth were quite "up" to taking charge of the junior Form. If necessary; and Knox, who was supposed to have a mastership in view, should have been the most capable of all. But, as a matter of fact, Knox was very much wanting on some points, and, Sixth Former as he was, there were fellows in the Fourth—one fellow, at least—who could pick him up in Latin.

In the tongue of Horace and Virgil

Kerr of the Fourth was miles ahead of many seniors. He could recite the *Æneid* by the yard, as Figgins expressed it, and the *Satires* and *Odes* by the foot. Kerr was a dangerous customer for Knox to find fault with when classics were the order of the day, but, as the old proverb has it, fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

Arthur Augustus was called upon to construe, and he acquitted himself to his own satisfaction, but not to Knox's.

"Do you call that construing?" the prefect asked unpleasantly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well you will write a hundred lines from Livy, and perhaps you will be able to do better next time."

"Weally, Knox—"

"Silence! Kerr—"

"Pway show me where I am wong, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am quite willin' to learn, you know."

"Silence!"

"But, weally—"

"Take a hundred lines, and sit down!" shouted Knox.

"Oh, vewy well!"

Arthur Augustus sat down, and confided to Blake, in a stage whisper, that he believed his construing was all right, and that what Knox didn't know about Latin would fill whole grammars—a remark that was greeted with a chuckle by the juniors near at hand. Knox glared round, and the chuckle died away. The prefect was evidently getting into a dangerous state of mind.

"Kerr, I am waiting for you."

Kerr rose to his feet and began to construe.

The prefect watched him like a hawk, keen to catch him tripping. But Kerr was not likely to be caught tripping. He was more at home with the Carthaginian War than Knox was.

In a rash moment Knox found fault, and in that moment he was at the mercy of the Scots junior. Knox had put his foot in it, and Kerr, with a honeyed softness of manner, and respectful affection of a desire for information, dragged him up and down, as it were, and made him perspire before he had done with him. In five minutes Knox had made a complete display of his ignorance of the subject, and made the juniors wonder how he had ever scraped into the Sixth.

Kerr sat down, feeling that he had deserved well of his Form. And Knox was in a dangerous temper. He knew that the juniors were laughing in their sleeves, and he watched for a chance of catching one of them laughing aloud. But they were too careful for that.

Knox's chance came at last. As in the old story of the wolf and the lamb, a fellow who is determined to take offence can never be long at a loss for an excuse.

"Figgins!" rapped out Knox.

"Yes, sir!" said Figgins. "I mean,

yes, Knox!"

"You were whispering to Kerr."

"I wasn't!"

Knox snapped his teeth.

"Don't tell lies, Figgins!"

"I'm not telling lies," said Figgins,

his eyes flashing, "and nobody but a

rotten cad would accuse a chap of telling

lies!"

There was a buzz in the class.

Figgins' reply was straight from the

shoulder, at all events.

Knox's eyes gleamed. He had the

junior at last.

"You—you call me a cad, Figgins?"

he thundered.

"Yes, if you call me a liar!" said

Figgins sturdily.

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"Figgins, come out before the class at once! I shall cane you for your insolence."

Figgins came slowly out before the class. Knox picked up Mr. Lathom's cane from the Form-master's desk.

"Hold out your hand, Figgins!"

"Don't do it, Figgy!" shouted somebody at the back of the class.

Knox glared round furiously.

"Who said that?" he shouted.

No reply.

"I order the boy who spoke to come out!"

Nobody came out.

"Very well! I will find out who it is, if the rascal is too cowardly to own up his name," said Knox, gritting his teeth.

Jack Blake jumped up.

"It was I," he said. "I'm not afraid to own up."

"Bwavo, Blake!"

"Stand out here, Blake. And D'Arcy, too!"

"Bai Jove!"

The two juniors joined Figgins. Knox surveyed them with a grim smile.

"I am going to cane all three of you," he said. "I'll keep order in this Form, or I'll know the reason why."

"Weally, Knox—"

"Hold out your hand, Figgins!"

Figgins hesitated a moment, and obeyed. He received a heavy cut. Blake received the next; and then it came to D'Arcy's turn. The swell of St. Jim's was bidden to hold out his hand, but he seemed more disposed to argue the point.

"You see, Knox, deah boy—" he began.

"Hold out your hand, D'Arcy!" shouted Knox.

"In the circus—"

"For the last time," roared Knox, "hold out your hand!"

"Oh, all wight! Don't get watty!"

And the swell of St. Jim's held out his hand.

Knox took a tight grip on the cane, and made a vicious swipe downwards at D'Arcy's hand. It would have been a severe blow if it had struck upon D'Arcy's palm. But it did not.

Perhaps the swell of St. Jim's thought that it was a little too severe; perhaps he acted merely upon the instinct. At all events, he drew his hand suddenly back as the cane swept downwards, and the cane, meeting with no resistance, swept on and crashed against the leg of the wielder.

Thwack!

It was a hard blow, and it rang like a pistol-shot through the Form-room.

Knox gave a yell of agony and clasped the damaged leg in both hands, squeezing it frantically and dancing wildly upon the other.

There was a roar from the Fourth:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 3.

And Finds It!

"YOW-OW! Oooooop!"

Thus Knox!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Thus the whole Form!

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" gasped Knox.

"You—you young villain! You did that on purpose! You young rascal! Ow!"

"Weally, Knox—"

Knox let his damaged leg slide down again at last. He limped to where the cane lay and caught it up and fairly hurled himself upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The swell of St. Jim's gave a startled

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howl, and his eyeglass dropped to the end of its cord.

"Oh, weally, Knox— Yawoooooh!"

Slash! Slash! Slash!

Knox had grasped the swell of the Fourth by the collar with his left hand, and was slashing away with the cane.

Arthur Augustus yelled and struggled. He was doing the dancing now, instead of Knox, and he was enjoying it no more than the prefect had.

"Yawoooh! Wescue, deah boys! Ow!" yelled D'Arcy.

Blake clenched his fists. Prefect or no prefect, he was not going to see his chum thrashed in that merciless way.

"Stop that, Knox!" he shouted.

"Stand back!" snarled the prefect.

"I'll give you some of the same when I'm finished with him!"

Slash, slash, slash!

"Back up!" yelled Blake.

He rushed right at Knox, hitting out. His fist caught the prefect on the side of the jaw, and sent him spinning sideways. The cane fell to the floor a second time as Knox threw out his hands wildly to save himself.

The Fourth were all upon their feet now, shouting with excitement.

"Bravo, Blake!"

"Down with the bully!"

"Bai Jove, I'm feahfully hurt!" gasped Arthur Augustus, staggering against the master's desk, his face white and drawn with pain. "Bai Jove! Look out, Blake!"

Knox, with his fists clenched, and his face furious, was rushing like a madman at Blake.

If Jack Blake had been left to face that charge of the big Sixth Former alone it would have gone very hard with him.

But Figgins was by his side, and the whole Form was now pouring out of their places to his aid.

Figgins and Blake tackled Knox together; but the powerful Sixth Former knocked them both flying, and then made a grasp for the cane.

But there was a yell from Redfern:

"Pile on him!"

The juniors hardly needed bidding.

They piled on Knox, and, in the grasp of many hands, he was borne heavily to the ground.

Bump!

They bumped him down, they rolled him over, they rolled upon him, and they sat on his chest and his legs and his head.

The infuriated prefect struggled in vain under the inundation of juniors.

"Got the cad!" yelled Fatty Wynn.

"Sit on his head, Fatty!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Got the awful wottah!"

"Lemme gerrup!" gasped Knox. "I'll have you all flogged for this! I'll have you all expelled—"

"You'll have a licking, the same as you've given Gussy!" said Blake grimly.

"Hurrah!"

There was a yell of approval at the idea.

"Let me alone!" roared Knox.

"Rats!"

The juniors meant business. D'Arcy's prediction that there would be ructions had come only too true; but the Fourth Form felt that they were not to blame.

Knox had looked for trouble, and he had found it—that was all.

The prefect was rolled over and, helpless in the grasp of a dozen pairs of hands, he was dragged face downward across a desk.

Then Jack Blake took the cane in his hand.

"How many did he give you, Gussy?"

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of countin', deah boy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll make it a round dozen," said Blake. "Are you ready, Knox?"

"You young scoundrel—"

"Wats!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooh! Ow-ow!"

There was a terrific yell from Knox. The dust rose in a little cloud from his jacket as the cane descended.

"Ha, ha, ha! Go it!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

Knox roared, wriggled, and kicked, but he did so in vain. He was held too tightly for escape. He had to go through his punishment. He made a terrific noise, and in their excitement the juniors did not reflect upon the fact that it was audible through the whole School House, if not across the quadrangle as well.

There was a step in the passage as Knox received the last cut of the cane, and the Form-room door was thrown open.

An awe-inspiring figure in cap and gown was visible in the doorway.

There was a general gasp:

"The Head!"

The Head of St. Jim's seemed petrified at what he saw. There had been some troublesome times at St. Jim's, but that was in the absence of the Head. Dr. Holmes had never dreamed of seeing such a sight as that of a Sixth Form prefect being held down over a desk in a junior Form-room and caned by a Fourth Former.

"Good heavens!" gasped the Head.

Blake's hand, with the cane in it, dropped to his side. He stared in dismay at the Head. Silence fell upon the juniors, but not upon Knox. He rolled off the desk and picked himself up, gasping and snorting.

"Dr. Holmes!" he yelled.

"Knox! What does this mean?" asked the Head. "What is the meaning of this disgraceful scene?"

"It means that those young scoundrels—"

"Moderate your language, Knox, please!" said the Head, with asperity.

"They have revolted and set upon me, sir."

"Blake! Figgins! Redfern! What does this mean?"

"If you please, sir—"

"We—we—we had to do it, sir," said Redfern meekly. "You see, sir, Knox was laying into poor old Gussy, and we had to stop him."

"Yaas, wathah! I have been tweeked with the gwosset diwespect, sir, and subjected to what I can only chavac-tewise as weekless bwutality, sir!" said the swell of St. Jim's, with a great deal of dignity.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"We're sorry if there's been a row," said Blake meekly.

"If!" ejaculated the Head. "This is—is extraordinary! Knox, you do not seem to be able to manage the class, at all events. You had better go back to the Sixth."

"Are those young villains not to be punished, sir?" bellowed Knox.

"I shall inquire into the matter, Knox, and I shall be glad if you will not use such expressions as that in my presence," said the Head, frowning.

"I—I'm sorry, sir, only—"

"Very well; you may go."

And Knox went, with a black scowl upon his face.

"This scene is simply disgraceful," said the Head, with a frowning glance at the abashed Fourth Formers. "It appears that I cannot trust you in the charge of a prefect. I shall wire for your new master to come immediately,

and, meanwhile, you can go into the Fifth Form Room and remain there until lessons are over."

"Ye-es, sir."

"I hope," said the Head, "that Mr. Wodyer will be able to arrive here this evening. For the present Mr. Lathom will take charge of you again. Now go to the Fifth Form Room at once."

And the Fourth Formers went.

"I think we've got off pretty well; and we've downed that cad Knox, anyway," said Blake, with a chuckle. "He won't be put in charge of the Fourth Form again in a hurry."

"Wathah not!"

And the juniors fled into the Fifth Form Room and spent the remainder of the afternoon under the mild eye of their own Form-master.

And they were especially good that afternoon, too. Just to show that they could be when they liked.

invalid. "Austin will be hours yet; they're only just finishing the first house. Still, he can't do anything if he comes in. I suppose I shall have to let the job slide. Oh, blow!"

He looked round as the door opened.

A young man of almost his own age, and very like himself in form and features, came in, and nodded cheerfully to him.

There were traces of grease-paint upon the face of the newcomer, and his eyebrows were pencilled darkly. It was clear that Austin Wodyer had just come from his "turn" in some place of entertainment.

"Hallo!" said Arthur Wodyer, in surprise. "You!"

"Me!" said Austin coolly.

"But the second house—"

"Second houses are off," said Austin, seating himself astride a chair, with his face to the back of it, looking at his

"They want me to go down to the school this evening if possible, and if not, by the first train in the morning. It seems that I'm taking the place of a master who's left in a hurry. It's only temporary; I'm to stop the gap till he comes back, and it's an opening—a splendid opening. I may jump right into something good, after having a berth at a school like St. Jim's."

"It's a ripping chance, and you ought to be grateful to the guy who has cleared out all of a sudden," said Austin.

"Yes, only I'm chained down here by this rotten influenza and can't move," said the youthful Master of Arts moodily. "You know what sawbones said."

"You mustn't think of getting out under four days, at least."

"Yes."

"It's rotten! They can't wait four days."



As the cane descended with a vicious swipe, Arthur Augustus drew back his hand. The cane swept on and struck the leg of Knox with a hard thwack. The bullying prefect gave a yell of agony, clasped his damaged leg in his hands, and danced wildly upon the other. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Fourth.

CHAPTER 4.

The Wodyer Brothers!

ARTHUR WODYER, M.A., snorted.

He was annoyed.

He was sitting in bed, propped up by pillows, in a small room, with a small window which commanded an extensive view of the roofs and chimneys of Bloomsbury.

He had a telegram in his hand, and a frown upon his face. It was a handsome face, though pale from recent illness.

"Oh, hang!" said Mr. Wodyer. "Hang! Blow!"

These ejaculations seemed to afford him some solace.

He looked at the telegram again, and again snorted. Then he glanced at the cheap American clock, that was no proof that it was nine o'clock.

"Nine, or thereabouts!" muttered the

brother. "The manager was pleased to pass some comments on my style of rendering my comic songs."

"You don't mean—"

"I replied with some personal remarks concerning his features, manners, and customs," said Austin.

"You don't mean you've got—"

"The push!" said Austin. "Precisely!"

"My hat!"

"Yes, it's rotten, isn't it?" said the comedian, without looking very downhearted, however. "I'm out of a shop again, and the Boss Empire tour doesn't begin for three weeks. Lucky you've just hooked a new job."

"That's the worst of it," said Arthur moodily.

Austin looked at him quickly.

"Nothing wrong, is there?" he asked.

"I've just had a telegram."

"All off?"

"No—all on," said Arthur ruefully.

"Well, I had just concocted a letter to Dr. Holmes, explaining that I was laid up, and begging him to keep the place for me for a few days, if he could and would be so kind," said Arthur Wodyer ruefully. "But I can't send a letter like that when I've just had this rotten wire. They're put to it for a master; they want a man to take a class at once. I can't in reason expect them to lead a class without a master for four days while I get over the flu."

The comedian grinned.

"Well, it would be rather cool," he said.

"I'm to wire back if I can come at once," resumed Arthur. "I suppose I'd better blue some of our last shillings in explaining."

"That will mean that you won't get the shop?"

"I'm afraid so."

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"It's beastly!"

"Oh, rotten!"

There was silence.

It was really a serious situation.

The brothers were very much attached to one another, and ill-luck to one was ill-luck to both. They had always shared alike, since they were left alone in the world by the death of their parents, with no near relations.

Since their college days their friendship had never been shaken, though their paths had diverged widely.

Arthur Wodyer had stuck to the old ways, hoping still to make something of his University education, and to fulfil his ambition of being a master at a Public school. Austin had thrown up all ambition of the sort; he had never been really keen on such a prospect. At college he had had a gift for mimicry which had sometimes caused him trouble with the college authorities, and he had found, when he was thrown on the wide world of London that it was a more marketable commodity than the degree he had taken at Oxford. He had drifted into the music halls and done more or less well, and would have done better if he had not been by nature happy-go-lucky and careless.

He had done better than Arthur. Arthur had achieved only a post as tutor, and had lost it at last, and had gone from one thing to another—always with his name down on the books of the agencies—always noping for something that never turned up.

But Arthur's chance had come at last. Partly by good luck, and partly by the influence of an old Oxford acquaintance, he had obtained the offer of a temporary post at St. Jim's.

It was only for a time; he was to have charge of the Fourth Form for a few weeks.

But it was a beginning. After having held even a temporary mastership at a big Public school like St. Jim's he would be able to look higher than he had ever looked before; he would come into contact with chances he never came upon now.

He had accepted eagerly.

But by cruel luck he was laid up with influenza at the time—partly caused by want of regular food and good clothes, for of late money had been very "tight" in the shabby lodgings the brothers shared together.

Arthur was laid up.

He had still hoped—till the telegram came to inform him that he was wanted instantly at St. Jim's.

That seemed to settle it.

The two brothers sat and looked at one another.

"It's simply rotten," Austin remarked. "I'm out of a shop for the next three weeks, and you're going to lose the chance of your lifetime. These things always come together."

Arthur nodded gloomily.

"They want their man at once," he said, "and, of course, they're entitled to have him. I can't expect them to do without for a few days while I get well. I suppose nothing can be done."

Austin wrinkled his brows.

"I don't know," he said slowly.

"What are you thinking of?"

"It's only for a few days," the comedian remarked very thoughtfully. "We're very like one another, Arty, old boy."

"What the dickens—"

"I've forgotten most that I learned at coll, but I could fake up enough to keep up appearances for a few days."

"What!"

"Why shouldn't I take the berth and keep it open for you?"

"Eh?"

The comedian grinned, his eyes twinkling as he thought over his startling scheme.

"I could do it," he said. "I know the ropes well enough for that. I've still got a nodding acquaintance with the classics, and it isn't as if I had to teach the Sixth. I should be able to manage the Fourth, I dare say."

"Austin!"

"I'll run down to St. Jim's, take the place, and keep it for you. When you've mended you change places with me—we're alike enough to make it all serene, I think—and you'd only have to

drop into my place when I stepped out. My own berth doesn't begin for three weeks. I've got the time."

Arthur laughed.

"But—but you were always such a giddy duffer," he said. "You'd have to dodge every kid in the class who knew anything beyond Eutropius."

"Well, I could dodge."

"It's jolly good of you, Austin, old man. It seems the only way."

"The only way to save the situation," grinned Austin. "That's a pun—a gag worth something on the boards, I can tell you, and I'm wasting it on you. Look here, I'm going to do it. After a life on the music halls for five years, my son, it will do me good to get back into the scholastic shades for a bit."

"If you will do it, Austin—"

"Like a shot!"

"Done, then!"

"Hurrah! I'll send off the wire at once!" grinned Austin. "I'll sign it—A. Wodyer. That's my initials, you know, as well as yours. Good! It's done!"

And Austin Wodyer hurried out to send the telegram.

CHAPTER 5.

The New Master!

FIGGINS & CO. had an expectant look.

They were waiting in the doorway of the New House for their new master.

Mr. Wodyer had come to St. Jim's as Form-master to the Fourth, and House-master of the New House, during the absence of Mr. Ratcliff. It was a question of great interest to the New House fellows what their new Housemaster would be like. A good Housemaster and a bad Housemaster meant all the difference between comfort and discomfort.

"He's quite a young chap," Figgins said to the other fellows, as they waited in the doorway of the New House. "I like his chivvy. I think we shall get on with him."

"I wonder if he knows about our trouble with Ratty?" Redfern remarked.

"Most likely."

"Yes, the Head will tell him," said Kerr. "It's unfortunate, as it may start him with a prejudice against us."

"That would be rotten."

"Where is he now?" asked Lawrence.

"With the Head."

"Getting the story of the barring-out, I suppose," growled Owen. "He will very likely have his back up against us at the start."

"That's why I have brought you chaps here," said Figgins. "We'll give him a cheer when he comes, just to show that there's no ill-feeling."

"Good egg!"

"Here he comes!" called out Kerr from the doorway.

There was a general movement of interest.

A somewhat slim young man, with handsome features, was walking across the quadrangle, in company with Monteith, the head prefect of the New House.

The juniors crowded in the doorway gazed out at him with great interest.

"Looks very young to take charge of a House like this!" said Kerr.

"Yes, rather!"

"Well, if we get on with him, we'll overlook that," said Lawrence magnanimously. "He looks good-tempered, that's something."

"Monteith's jawing very seriously to him."

"And he's standing it patiently."

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"Ha, ha, ha!" "Give him a cheer as he comes in," said Figgins impressively. "We want to show him that there's no ill-feeling, and that we are glad to welcome a new master."

"Hear, hear!" Mr. Wodyer ascended the steps in the porch of the New House. His face was very calm and cheerful. Monteith was looking a little perplexed, as if he could not quite make out the new Housemaster.

Mr. Wodyer stepped into the Hall, and gazed in some surprise at the crowd of juniors.

"Hurrah!" roared the juniors. "Dear me!" said the new Housemaster.

"Hip, hip, hurrah!" The New House rang with it. Monteith frowned.

"Stop it, you young asses!" he exclaimed.

Mr. Wodyer burst into a laugh. "I suppose this is something in the way of a welcome," he said. "Gentlemen—"

"Hurrah!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, I beg to thank you for this most enthusiastic reception," said Mr. Wodyer, unconsciously dropping into the manner of the foot-lights. "Our visit to your town, though necessarily brief, will ever remain a cheerful memory. Ahem!" Mr. Wodyer came back to the fact that he was a Housemaster. "My dear boys, I thank you for this kind reception."

"Hurrah!" "Speech, Figg!" "Go it, Figgins!"

Figgins, colouring very much, stepped out before the crowd of juniors.

"If you please, Mr. Wodyer, sir—" "Certainly!" said Mr. Wodyer cheerfully. "Pile in!"

Figgins gasped. He had hoped for a cordial reception from the new Housemaster, but he had never expected to be told to pile in. That was hardly an expression he would have expected to hear from the lips of a Housemaster.

"Ahem!" said Figgins. "I—I want to say a few words, sir."

"As many as you like," said Mr. Wodyer genially, "only buck up!"

"Ahem! In the name of the juniors of this House, sir, we want to—I mean, I want to welcome you to St. Jim's, sir."

"Oh, good!"

"We had some trouble with our late Housemaster, sir—"

"Yes, I've heard all about your giddy racket, you young bounders!"

Figgins stopped. His breath was taken away for a moment. The crowd looked amazed, and Monteith stared perplexedly at the Housemaster. What language was this?

"I—I—I—" stammered Figgins, quite taken aback. "We—we want to assure you, sir, that nothing of the kind is likely to occur again, and that we are going to put in a record of really good behaviour, sir."

"Stick to that, and we shall pull together all right," said Mr. Wodyer. "You will find that I'm not the man to pick faults in my company—I mean my class."

"Oh!"

"You must look upon me as a conductor, and you are to keep in tune," said Mr. Wodyer affably. "Keep to that, and we shall simply bring the house down. What?"

The juniors gasped.

"My only hat!" murmured Kerr.

"Where does he come from?" "Bedlam!" grinned Redfern.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Wodyer waved his hand majestically.

"Thanks, and thanks again, my faithful retainers!" he exclaimed. "But hence; I am hungered. Let us to dinner."

And he walked on with the amazed Monteith.

"Off his giddy rocker!" said Redfern, in blank amazement.

"Blessed if I can make him out!" said Figgins, rubbing his nose thoughtfully. "But he seems a good-natured sort of joss."

"Yes, rather!"

"I think we shall get on with him, and that's the chief thing. But he certainly does seem to have a peculiar flow of language."

"Where does he come from?" asked Pratt.

"M.A., Oxon," said Kerr.

"Shouldn't have thought so."

"Well, give him a chance," said Redfern generously. "Anyway, he's a big improvement upon Ratty; you must admit that."

"Oh, yes, rather!"

Monteith showed Mr. Wodyer into his study, lately occupied by Mr. Horace Ratcliff. Mr. Wodyer looked round the comfortable room with keen appreciation. There was a large fire burning in the grate, and the room looked very cosy and comfortable. Mr. Wodyer thought of the bleak garret in the wilds of Bloomsbury and rubbed his hands over the fire with keen appreciation.

"This is a very comfortable room," he remarked. "I hear that you did not get on very amicably with your late Housemaster, Monteith."

"The juniors did not, sir."

"We shall try to do better," said Mr. Wodyer, with much gravity. "Good temper and kindness will be my method. Let me see, you are a—"

"Prefect, sir."

"Exactly, a prefect," assented Mr. Wodyer. "Are there any more at home like you—ahem—I mean, are there any more prefects in the New House?"

"Four in all, sir. I am the head prefect of this House."

"Very good. I hope we shall rub along all serene—I mean, I am sure we shall get on very well," said Mr. Wodyer. "What time is tiffin?"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, when do you have dinner?"

"At one o'clock, sir."

"Good egg! I'm as hungry as a professional that's been resting for six months," said Mr. Wodyer. "I'll be on hand."

Monteith left the study feeling very much puzzled. He confided to Baker of the Sixth that the new Housemaster was a queer beggar, an opinion in which Baker fully concurred as soon as he had made the acquaintance of Mr. Wodyer.

new Housemaster, and St. Jim's generally, that they were not a rough old lot, as Figgins described it, and that they had manners and customs which possessed the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

They wanted very particularly to make a good impression upon Mr. Wodyer. Thus they would be able to justify their revolt against Mr. Ratcliff's autocratic rule.

When Mr. Wodyer entered the dining-room of the New House, therefore, nothing could have exceeded the decorum of the Fourth Form as they sat at their table.

Mr. Wodyer looked round for his plate, and found it at the head of the Sixth Form table, Monteith kindly pointing it out to him.

It was the custom of the Housemaster to have his meals at the head of the Sixth Form table, and the junior tables were taken by prefects.

The seniors of the New House were all exceedingly serious and sedate at dinner, setting a good example to the juniors. Mr. Wodyer entered into conversation with Monteith, who sat next to him. It had not been Mr. Ratcliff's custom to talk much at meal-times, or, indeed, at any times, but Mr. Wodyer was evidently a chatty gentleman.

Monteith was more than a little puzzled by his conversation.

Mr. Wodyer's mind did not seem to run upon matters scholastic, and he introduced the theatre as a topic, much to the prefect's surprise. He seemed to be continually catching himself up, as it were, and keeping back things he wanted to say; but when he succeeded in becoming prim and sedate, his conversation fell off woefully, and he would drop into silence.

Altogether he was, as Monteith had told Baker, a very queer beggar indeed.

Mr. Wodyer drew a deep breath of relief as he left the dining-room after dinner. Figgins & Co. walked out with stately sedateness, as if anything like horseplay of any sort had never entered their boyish imaginations.

They kept it up until they reached the quadrangle, and there it gave way, and they burst into a whoop as they punted about an old footer.

Mr. Wodyer stood in the doorway of the New House, looking out.

"Grand old place!" he murmured, as he surveyed the quadrangle of St. Jim's, the ancient buildings, and the venerable trees. "Splendid! Imposing! But—but how on earth does anybody manage to live here?"

And Austin Wodyer had to give that up as an unanswerable puzzle. To him the bustle and roar of London streets, the buzz of an audience, the glare of footlights, were as the breath of life.

And the sham-Housemaster wondered

(Continued on next page.)

CHAPTER 6.

Awkward for Austin!

FIGGINS & CO. were specially well-be-

haved when they went in to dinner that day.

After the recent trouble with their Housemaster, the respected Mr. Ratcliff, Figgins & Co. had a pardonable desire to show the

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whether he would be able to stand it until his brother was well enough to take his place at the head of the New House at St. Jim's.

"I must stick it out for Arthur's sake," he muttered, and he walked out into the quadrangle.

A group of Shell fellows belonging to the School House were standing talking there, and they all glanced towards the new master. They raised their caps, and Mr. Wodyer nodded very genially. He was feeling in a high good-humour. As a matter of fact, the London comedian was a young man with irrepressible spirits, and was always in a good temper, and generally as ripe for a "lark" as any junior in the school he had come to as a master.

There was curiosity in the glances the Shell fellows cast at him, and Mr. Wodyer wondered why. He tried to walk with a stately stride and to drop all traces of the easy saunter with which he was in the habit of propelling himself along the Strand and the Charing Cross Road.

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther, Manners and Kangaroo, Clifton Dane and Glyn, all of the Shell Form and the School House, formed the group of juniors who were so interested in the new master. Bernard Glyn especially was staring at him with a keenness that was almost beyond the bounds of politeness.

"My hat!" Glyn exclaimed at last. "It's the same chap! I'm sure of it!" Mr. Wodyer halted.

"Are you referring to me, my boy?" he asked, with a great deal of dignity. "You must not speak of a Housemaster as a chap!"

"Sorry, sir!" stammered Glyn. "But I—"

Mr. Wodyer waved his hand. "All serene!" he said. "My hat!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Glyn thinks he knows you, sir," said Tom Merry.

Mr. Wodyer started. "Knows me?" he repeated.

"Yes, sir," said Glyn. "I hope you don't mind my speaking, sir, but it struck me at once that I knew your name, and I thought it might be the same—er—gentleman. You are Mr. Arthur Wodyer, sir?"

"And what is your name?" asked Wodyer, deftly parrying the question. "Bernard Glyn, sir."

The Shell fellow uttered the name with the evident expectation of Mr. Wodyer knowing it immediately. Mr. Wodyer, meanwhile, was racking his brain to try to remember whether his brother had ever mentioned the name to him. And wishing from the bottom of his heart that Bernard Glyn of the Shell was at the bottom of the sea.

"Glyn?" repeated Mr. Wodyer, to gain time. "Glyn, or Wynn, did you say?"

"Glyn, sir." "Ah, Glyn!" repeated Mr. Wodyer. "Yes, sir. Bernard Glyn, of Liverpool."

"Liverpool?" "Yes, sir."

Mr. Wodyer was hopelessly amazed. He knew, of course, that his brother Arthur must be known to Bernard Glyn, of Liverpool, since he spoke so confidently on the subject. But Arthur had certainly never mentioned the fact to him, or anything in connection with him, and he did not even know whether Arthur had ever been to Liverpool or not.

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It was most decidedly an awkward question.

If Mr. Wodyer failed to recognise Glyn, the whole business might come out, since Glyn evidently knew the real Arthur Wodyer.

On the other hand, if he had affected to recognise and remember him, that might lead to even worse entanglements—he would be treading on very perilous paths.

The unhappy Mr. Wodyer wished heartily that that ripping idea had never entered his head that evening in the lodging-house in Bloomsbury. But it was too late to wish that now.

"Oh, Liverpool!" exclaimed Mr. Wodyer.

"Yes, sir." "Not—not Manchester?" murmured Mr. Wodyer, to gain time.

Glyn of the Shell looked surprised. "No, sir—Liverpool."

"Yes, I—I seem to remember the name," murmured Mr. Wodyer awkwardly. "I have heard of Liverpool, before—I—I mean, I have heard the name of Glyn before. Certainly!"

"The pater will be glad to see you, sir."

"Will he really? I—I mean, that's very kind of him!"

"And so will Edith, sir."

"Oh, yes!" murmured the unhappy Mr. Wodyer, wondering whom on earth Edith might be.

"They are coming over to-morrow afternoon to see me, sir," said Glyn. "They will be delighted to see you."

"Oh, my hat!" Mr. Wodyer strode away.

It was a most injudicious thing to do; the juniors could not but think it strange. But it seemed to be the only resource in the circumstances. Mr. Wodyer, with burning cheeks, walked away, and found refuge in the Head's garden. There he paused to breathe.

"My only respected aunt!" he muttered. "Who is Bernard Glyn, of Manchester—I mean Liverpool? Who is his pater? And who the dickens is Edith? What has that boulder Arthur been getting up to? My only hat! The silly ass couldn't have known that he was booked to run into his old acquaintances here! My hat!"

CHAPTER 7.

A Case of "Spoons"!

"Ha, ha, ha!" "It's true, then?" "Ha, ha, ha!" "Hallo!" exclaimed Figgins, as he and his chums came upon the chuckling group of Shell fellows under the elms in the quad. "What's the little joke?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Where does the grin come in?" asked Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Somebody standing a feed?" asked Fatty Wynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "It's your new giddy Housemaster, that's all!" roared Tom Merry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins glared a little. "None of your blessed School House cheek!" he exclaimed warmly. "You're jolly well not going to snigger at our Housemaster!"

"Not much!" said Kerr emphatically. "You'll snigger when you know the history of the mystery," grinned Monty Lowther. "It's too rich to keep! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, get it off your chest, then!" said Figgins suspiciously.

The Shell fellows chuckled in chorus.

"It's about Wodyer—" began Tom Merry.

"You told us that!" grunted Figgins. "He's in love!"

Figgins jumped. "What?"

"Solid fact!" roared Kangaroo. "Oh, my little summer bonnet! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Glyn.

Figgins & Co. were eager for information at once. A Housemaster in love was the most interesting specimen in Natural history. The juniors had once had the spectacle of Mr. Ratcliff in love, and it had amused them greatly. The object of Mr. Ratcliff's adoration had been Glyn's sister Edith, a charming young lady who lived near St. Jim's, but she had not smiled upon Mr. Ratcliff. Miss Glyn had suitors galore in the countryside, and she was not likely to smile upon Mr. Ratcliff.

Glyn and his chums had chuckled over it very much, Glyn often describing with great relish how he had seen "Ratty" making what he called "sheep's eyes" at Edith, and how Edith had tried not to yawn when Ratty was talking to her. Glyn, it is to be feared, had a youthful way of regarding affairs of the heart wholly in a comic light.

"Wodyer in love!" said Figgins. "Why, he hasn't been here two hours!"

"Oh, it isn't one of the housemaids here!" Monty Lowther explained.

"Who is it, then?" demanded Figgins, mystified.

"Glyn's sister."

"My hat!"

"Do you know him, then?" asked Figgins, looking at Glyn of the Shell in surprise.

Bernard Glyn nodded.

"Yes, I only met him once, but I know his name jolly well," he said. "It was before we left Liverpool, you know. Mr. Wodyer was tutor to a travelling chap—a chap my pater knew—who fell seedy in Liverpool, and came to stay in our house. Mr. Wodyer was with him, and he and my sister were a great deal together. I was at school, but I went home one day and saw him there, and I could see it was an awful mash. I heard her call him—Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat! That was a queer name to call anybody."

"Ass! I mean—Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth do you mean, fat-head?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Glyn.

"Thump him on the back, somebody," said Tom Merry. "He's going to have a fit!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Glyn. "She called him—He, he, he! Ow! Leave off, you ass; you'll dislocate my spinal column! Ow!"

"Well, what did she call him?" demanded Manners.

"She called him 'Owney-owney'!" shrieked Glyn.

"What?"

"Owney-owney?" repeated Tom Merry, perplexed. "What does that mean? Is it a foreign word?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"It sounds like Chinese, or Hindustani," said Tom Merry. "It's not English!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What does it mean, then, you ass?"

"Ha, ha, ha! It means 'own,' only it's affectionate, you see. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I see!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Owney-owney!" chuckled Lowther. "My hat! That's rich! D'Arcy of the Fourth has been in love lots of times—he always falls in love when he meets a girl named Ethel; but he's never got so far as Owney-owney! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Serious case!" said Figgins, with a shake of the head.

"Of course, you fellows must keep it frightfully dark," said Glyn. "I don't know much about this man, Wodyer, but Edie thinks a lot of him, you know, and I believe he's a very decent sort. He seems to have changed a bit since I saw him—seems to be younger, somehow, and doesn't speak quite the same. But he's the right Wodyer. I wondered if it was the same directly I heard that Arthur Wodyer was coming here; and it's all serene—it's the same."

"Jolly lucky for him to drop into a berth here, with your people living near at hand now," Figgins remarked. "But I say, it's funny! Ownney-owney! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep it dark!"

"Oh, of course!"

"He's frightfully self-conscious about it," grinned Monty Lowther. "He wasn't going to let on at first that he knew Glyn, even."

"My hat! As bad as that?"

"Yes. And when Glyn put it to him straight, and he couldn't get out of it, he turned as red as anything, and fairly bolted."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly well wish it was my sister!" said Figgins. "Chap gets a jolly easy time if his Form-master is mashed on his sister. I knew a case once, and the chap used to get passes out every day, and his Form-master used to go over his work for him; he was no end civil. It would have been a stroke of luck for you, Glyn, if Wodyer had been the master of your Form instead of master of the Fourth."

"Yes; but it's all right as it is," said Glyn. "The pater and Edie will be surprised to see him to-morrow. As he's practically a relation, I don't see why we shouldn't have him to tea in the study."

"Here, you let our giddy Housemaster alone," said Figgins indignantly. "If anybody has him to tea in the study, I'm the chap."

"Rats! He's not your giddy brother-in-law."

"Well, he's not yours yet," said Figgins. "He's our Housemaster, and we're going to have him. You let our giddy Housemaster alone."

"Now, look here, Figgy—"

"Rats! You look here!"

"Clang-ang-ang!"

"Hallo! There goes the bell," said Tom Merry, laughing. "You Fourth Form kids had better get into your Form-room, or Glyn's giddy brother-in-law will be on your track!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Shell fellows and Fourth Formers hurried away towards the School House. In the few minutes that elapsed before afternoon school, however, there was time for the secret to get out. By the time the new master of the Fourth faced his Form, there was hardly a fellow in the Fourth who did not know that Mr. Wodyer was "spoons" on Glyn's sister, as the juniors elegantly expressed it. And that was the cause of the general smile which the Fourth bestowed upon Mr. Wodyer when he came in, and which puzzled that gentleman very much.

CHAPTER 8.

Very Surprising!

MR. WODYER cast a keen, quick glance over the Fourth Form as he came in.

He was wondering whether Bernard Glyn, of Liverpool, was in that Form. Glyn belonged to the Shell, and so, of course, was not likely to be in the

Fourth Form Room; but Mr. Wodyer did not know his Form yet.

The smile upon the face of every Fourth Former there puzzled the new master; but after a moment or two of reflection, he attributed it to his hurried departure from the group of juniors in the quadrangle. Not knowing the explanation that the juniors had found for his curious behaviour, he wondered what they thought of it, and he knew that it must appear very peculiar.

The Fourth Form—especially the New House portion of it—were on their best behaviour. They did not intend that there should be the slightest sign of unrest or insubordination in the class. They wanted to show the Head that all previous trouble was the fault of Mr. Ratcliff and of Knox, the prefect.

Mr. Wodyer assumed possession of Mr. Lathom's desk, and coughed.

As a matter of fact, Austin Wodyer, who never suffered from stage fright in the most crowded theatre or music-hall, was suffering just then from a very severe attack of it. He had never been a swot in his college days, and since leaving college, he had spent his time chiefly in unlearning all he had ever learned. He had never dreamed of becoming a teacher, and certainly he was very unfitted for the task. He had a strong doubt whether his Latin would pass muster in the First Form, let alone in the Fourth, and he wondered how long it would be before he was found out.

"Ahem!" he remarked.

The class waited respectfully. "As a stranger to this town," began Mr. Wodyer—"I—I mean, as a new master here, I shall have to depend on you kids for some tips. I—I should say, that I shall be gratified if you will afford me some insight into the usual procedure of the class."

"Yaas, wathah, sir," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, taking it upon himself to reply. "We shall be vewy pleased, sir."

"Let me see," said Mr. Wodyer thoughtfully, "there should be some—cr—books."

"Mr. Lathom's books are in the desk there, sir," said Blake.

"Ah, thank you!"

Mr. Wodyer fumbled in the desk, and brought some books to light. As it happened, Mr. Lathom was in the habit of keeping a good many books in the desk, as well as those he used in instructing the Fourth Form. The first book that Mr. Wodyer drew out was a volume of Homer, which was kept there for Mr. Lathom's private delectation. Mr. Wodyer opened it, and gave a sort of shudder. Like many college men who have had Greek driven into their heads by sheer force, against all their inclinations, he had forgotten everything he had learned of the tongue of Homer. The mere sight of Greek type, as he had often declared, was enough to give him a headache. The thought of having to drive Greek into the heads of the St. Jim's juniors, when he had forgotten the little that had been successfully driven into his own, made him shudder. But he felt that he was in for it.

"Ahem!" he said. "Ahem! Yes."

He glanced over the first page of the volume, trying to familiarise himself with the characters which danced before his eyes.

"We will take the first book of the Iliad," he remarked. "Now, we shall commence at Menin acide, Thea—"

The Fourth Form stared.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Figgins.

(Continued on next page.)



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NOT WHAT HE MEANT.

The well-dressed young man had had an unfortunate adventure with a newly-painted seat in the park. Crimson with rage, he rushed over to the painter, who was at work on another seat.

"Why don't you put 'wet paint' on your seats?" he shouted.

"That's what I am doin', ain't it?" retorted the painter.

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Petch, Guthrie Road, Havelock North, H.B., New Zealand.

THE RESULT OF LAZINESS.

Father: "Why were you kept in after school to-day, Tommy?"

Tommy: "Well, teacher told us to write an essay on 'The Result of Laziness,' and I handed in a blank sheet of paper!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to N. Chandler, 33, Lion Terrace, Portsmouth, Hants.

OFF THE MARK.

Sergeant (to recruit): "You've fired four times at that target, and missed every time. Get behind the target and shoot yourself!"

Recruit (after sound of rifle shot): "Missed again, sergeant!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Nicholson, 55, Gurney Street, Darlington, Durham.

MUSIC(K).

Willie: "Father says could you lend him your gramophone for to-night?"

Next-door Neighbour: "Have you a party on?"

Willie: "Oh, no. Father wants to get a little sleep to-night!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to L. Howarth, 16, Preston Old Road, Marton, Blackpool.

SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE.

An old lady who could not see eye to eye with the taxi-driver on the question of fare, finally remarked:

"Don't try to tell me anything, my good man. I haven't been riding in taxis for many years for nothing."

"No," replied the driver, "but I bet you had a blinkin' good try!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss F. Fierz, 1b, Oakwood Road, Golders Green, London, N.W. 11.

TOUGH.

Diner: "Hey, waiter! What kind of a bird do you call this I'm trying to eat?"

Waiter: "A wood pigeon, sir!"

Diner: "I thought so. Bring me a saw!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to T. Barker, York House, Otley Road, Harrogate, Yorks.

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"My hat!" murmured Redfern.
 "Is that by order of the Head, sir?" asked Kerr, in amazement. Kerr was great in Greek. He was one of those youths who take it up for pleasure, and he was by no means averse from having it in class; but he was astonished.

Mr. Wodyer frowned.
 "What?" he exclaimed. "Of course! I am placed in charge of this class by order of the Head. What is your name, boy?"

"Kerr, sir."
 "Then what do you mean, Kerr?"
 "We—we haven't heard of it before, sir," stammered Kerr. "I—I thought there must be some mistake, sir."

"You have not heard of Homer's 'Iliad' before, Kerr?" exclaimed Mr. Wodyer in astonishment.

Kerr grinned.
 "Yes, sir; but I mean, having Greek in class, sir, I haven't heard anything about that, sir. It would be rather thick—ahem! I mean difficult—to begin with Homer, wouldn't it, sir, if we're going to take up Greek as a subject?"

Mr. Wodyer stared at him.
 "Greek is an extra at St. Jim's, sir," Jack Blake explained. "They have Greek in the Sixth, sir, but we don't have it in the Fourth."

Mr. Wodyer's jaw dropped a little.
 "Oh!" he said.
 "It's Livy this afternoon, sir!" said Lawrence kindly.

Mr. Wodyer bent over the Form-master's desk to hide his blushes. He replaced the unlucky Homer where he had found it, and felt inclined to kick himself.

"Can any of you lend me a Livy?" he asked.

"Certainly, sir!"
 Digby handed over a Livy.
 Mr. Wodyer thanked him, and accepted it, and opened it. Latin came a little easier than Greek, naturally, but Mr. Wodyer's heart sank as he looked at it.

"Book 22, sir," said Kerr. "We begin there this afternoon."

"Thank you!"
 Mr. Wodyer opened the volume at the twenty-second book, where commences that stirring account of the war: "Quod Hannibale duce Carthaginienses cum populo Romano gessere."

Mr. Wodyer was no more able to construe Livy than he was able to construe the teachings of Confucius from the original Chinese.

He mentally deplored the many days of slacking he had spent, when he might have been improving his knowledge of the noble tongue of Cicero and Caesar. But it was rather late in the day for such regrets.

However, it was fortunately not for him to construe, but for his class, and so long as he assumed an air of sufficient wisdom, he might get through very well.

"Ah, you will construe, Kerr?" he said.

"Yes, sir."
 Kerr stood up and construed.
 Kerr could have gone on for ever. Latin was to him as easy as French or German or English. He had the gift of tongues. He would have been surprised if he had known that the Form-master was following him with envious wonder, and wishing that he could do it so well.

Mr. Wodyer seemed quite content to let Kerr go on all the afternoon. Kerr went on for about ten minutes, and then he paused in sheer wonder. Mr. Wodyer recollected himself.

"Ah, next boy!" he said.

Fatty Wynn construed.
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Fatty Wynn's work was not quite up to the level of Kerr's, and he proceeded to make a series of mistakes which would have brought down upon him the vials of Mr. Lathom's wrath if the Fourth had been under their old master.

But the new master said nothing.
 Either he did not notice the blunders, or he was excessively kind, for Fatty Wynn was allowed to read the most extraordinary meanings into his old friend, T. Livius.

The Form stared, wondered, and finally chuckled.

"Blessed if I catch on to this," muttered Blake to Figgins. "Why doesn't he drop on Fatty for those giddy howlers?"

Figgins shook his head.
 "He doesn't seem to notice them," he said.

"But I suppose he can construe himself."

"Doesn't look like it."

"He's a jolly queer beggar."

"My word, he is!"

Levison of the Fourth was watching Mr. Wodyer keenly. He was the next fellow called upon to construe, and there was a peculiar twinkle in his eyes as he rose to the work. He took up the tale where Fatty Wynn had left off, and went on from "in Hasdrubalis locum," etc.

If Fatty Wynn had made the Fourth stare, Levison made them gasp.

"In Hasdrubalis locum haud dubia res fuit," Levison turned into "Hasdrubal had a bad headache."

The Fourth Form gasped.

But Mr. Wodyer gave no sign.

Levison went on in the same strain, and the juniors looked at one another, and looked at him, and finally, unable to contain their merriment, they burst into a roar of laughter.

Mr. Wodyer looked at them sharply.

"Boys!" he rapped out. "How dare you laugh in class!" exclaimed Mr. Wodyer angrily. "Silence at once!"

The laughter died away. The Fourth Form remembered their good resolutions—rather late.

"Go on, my boy," said Mr. Wodyer, with a severe glance at the Fourth. "If you are interrupted again, I shall be compelled to use the cane."

"My word!" murmured Digby.

"Bai Jove!"

Levison went on, his statements growing wilder as he proceeded, and at intervals a suffocated chuckle escaped from some overwrought junior. The Fourth Form were nearly in hysterics by the time Levison finished.

The curious part of it was that Mr. Wodyer had not the faintest idea of the joke.

In the other lessons he did not figure well, but not so badly as with the unfortunate Livy, and he was very much relieved when the time came to dismiss the Fourth. The Fourth Form were relieved, too. They wanted to laugh, but respect for their new Form-master forbade them to laugh in the Form-room.

But once in the passage they roared, and they marched out into the quadrangle almost shrieking.

CHAPTER 9.

An Invitation in Style!

TOM MERRY & CO. came out of the Shell Room a few minutes later, and they found a crowd of the Fourth Form in a state bordering on hysterics in the quadrangle.

Even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had forgotten his aristocratic repose of manner, and was leaning against the School House wall, gasping with laughter.

The Shell fellows surveyed the Fourth Formers in amazement.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the joke?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry seized Blake by the shoulder and shook him.

"Now, you ass, explain!" he exclaimed warmly.

Blake wiped his eyes and almost sobbed.

"Oh, it's too funny!" he gasped. "I don't know what kind of queer bird we've got for a Form-master. But—Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! He's a vewy decent chap, but—Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what has he done?" asked Glyn.

"He doesn't know a giddy word of Latin," yelled Figgins. "He took us in Livy, and he didn't know a word."

"What!"

"Not a giddy syllable!" gasped Redfern. "Levison was rotting him. He translated 'locum' as 'headache,' and Wodyer let it pass."

"Impossible!"

"He did! Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Romano arma as a 'Roman armchair'!" shrieked Herries.

The Shell fellows looked astonished. Most astounded of all was Bernard Glyn.

"There's something jolly queer about that," said Glyn. "Mr. Wodyer was tutor to a chap after leaving Oxford, and he was well known to be awfully up in the classics. I heard from Edie that he was past editor of a new edition of Livy."

"Ha, ha, ha! I should like to see that edition!" yelled Blake.

And the juniors roared again.

"Well, I'm blessed if I understand it," said Bernard Glyn. "I don't catch on to it at all. I suppose it's impossible that a Form-master could be rotting in the Latin lesson."

"Bai Jove! Wathah!"

"Then I don't understand it."

"We don't, either!" gasped Blake.

"But it's funny. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Fourth Formers laughed till they had no laughter left in them. Knox, the prefect, came out, and looked at them very suspiciously as he passed.

"What's all that cackling about?" he demanded.

"About finished!" replied Blake.

"Don't be funny, you young sweep! What is it?"

"I always laugh when I see something funny," said Blake, staring hard at Knox's countenance.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The prefect walked away.

"Well, your new master seems a queer customer, and no mistake," Tom Merry remarked. "But I like him. He seems a jolly chap. As he's practically Glyn's brother-in-law we're going to have him to tea in the study."

"Rot!" said Blake. "He's a Fourth Form chap—I mean a Fourth Form master, and we're going to have him to tea in Study No. 6 if anybody has him."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"That you're jolly well not," said Figgins warmly. "He's the New House master, and it's up to the New House to entertain him."

"Rats!"

"Look here, Blake—"

"I tell you—"

"Rot!"

"If you're looking especially for a thick ear—"

Tom Merry waved his hand pacifically. "Peace, my children!" he said.



Mr. Wodyer came face to face with Miss Glyn as she entered the Head's garden with the juniors. For one instant he stared at her blankly, then with a sudden bound he fled and disappeared into the shrubberies.

"Peace! Suppose we combine resources, and have an extra big feed in the Hobby Club-room, and ask him all together?"

"Bai Jove, that's a wippin' ideah!" Figgins nodded.

"Well, that's not a bad wheeze," he said. "I'm agreeable."

"Change for you!" suggested Monty Lowther.

"Eh?"

"I mean, you're disagreeable as a rule!"

"Look here, you ass!"

"Shut-up, Monty! Don't be funny!" implored Tom Merry. "Let's get along to the tuckshop, and Fatty Wynn can do the shopping for us."

"Now you're talking," said Fatty Wynn emphatically. "I'll do that with pleasure. It's a specially favourable opportunity now, too, because Mrs. Taggles has a fresh lot of steak-and-kidney pies in to-day."

"Pewwaps I had bettah go and wequest the pleasuah of Mr. Wodyer's company," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully. "You see, it will wequiah to be put delicately. It needs a fellow of tact and judgment for a thing of this sort."

"Oh, I'll go!" said Blake. "You see—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"I think I'd better go," Tom Merry remarked. "In the circumstances—"

"Bosh!" said Redfern. "Why not write him an invitation in good style, and send it by a fag or the School House page?"

"Bai Jove, that's a good ideah!"

"Ripping!" said Blake.

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "Let's get up to the study and write it out. Some of you chaps can help Wynn with the grub. Better leave all your cash with Wynn, you chaps. He can lay it out to the best advantage."

"What-ho!" said Fatty Wynn emphatically. "You can rely on me to get the best value for money, where shopping for tommy is concerned."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn was soon busy. Tom Merry and half a dozen of the fellows repaired to Study No. 6 to draw up the invitation to Mr. Wodyer.

It was not an uncommon thing for a junior to be asked to tea in a master's study when he was very, very good. But it was rather uncommon for a master to have tea with the juniors.

But Mr. Wodyer was so kind and good-natured, and evidently so different in many respects from other masters, that the juniors felt that they could ask him.

After all, as Glyn said, he could only refuse.

"But he can't very well refuse when he's practically my giddy brother-in-law," said Glyn. "If he does, I'll call him Oowney-owney."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How shall we begin it?" asked Tom Merry, taking up a pen, and thoughtfully dipping it into the ink and then gnawing the handle.

"Wespected sir!" said D'Arcy.

"Too formal!"

"Dear sir!" said Blake.

"Too businesslike!"

"Dear Oowney-owney!" suggested Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put it to him in a chummy way," said Redfern.

"Bettah twy the third person," suggested Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, we don't want a third person present!" said Lowther, with a shake of the head. "Ourselves and one master at a time will be enough."

"You misundahstand me, you ass! I mean the third person—"

"But two's company, and three's none!" said Lowther.

"Pway don't be an ass! I weally considah that the lettah might sound much bettah in the third person, Tom Mewwy! 'The juniahs of St. Jim's wequest the pleasuah of Mr. Wodyer's company to tea at six o'clock!'"

"Put in something about the grub being first chop," said Herries.

"Wats!"

"Well, he ought to know that," said Herries. "When there's anything special on, you shove it in a corner of the card, like 'Music,' you know. You could put 'steak-and-kidney pies' in the corner of the card."

"Wubbish!"

"Look here, Gussy, you ass—"

"I wepeat, Hewwies, that I wegard your suggestion as uttah wubbish and fwightfully bad form!"

"Ass!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"I don't think Herries' idea is a bad one at all," Tom Merry remarked, very thoughtfully. "I suppose Wodyer knows something of schools, and he must know that feeds in junior studies are very often jolly skinny. Suppose he thought that we were going to stand him stale buns and whiffy sardines, like the kids in the Third?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Of course, he wouldn't come. You couldn't expect him to. A Form-master is a blessed Form-master, after all, and one must consider him," said Tom Merry. "We don't want to get a polite refusal, especially as the chap is almost our brother-in-law. He ought to be told that the feed is something rather special in his honour."

"Certainly!" said Figgins.

"Quite so!" agreed Redfern.

"Yaas, wathah! I agree to that. But THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,407,

I think it must be regarded as bad form to shove it on the card, as if it were 'Musio' or 'Bwidge,' said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with an obstinate shake of the head.

"That's all very well; but if we don't put it on the card, how are we to let him know?" demanded Tom Merry. "We can't tell Toby to shout out to him that we're having steak-and-kidney pie when he hands him the invitation."

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Wathah not! But—"

"It's got to go on the card, or he won't know," said Tom Merry decidedly. "And if he refuses our invitation because he thinks the feed will be skinny, it's a slight to the whole Lower School, and we shall have to rag him to keep our end up."

"Quite so!"

"Yaas, but—"

"Oh, ring off, Gussy! You're in the giddy minority."

"Yaas, but—"

"Order! Gimme a card. Manners; one of those giddy gilt-edged cards."

"Here you are!" said Manners.

"Pewwaps I had bettah wite it, Tom Mewwy! It ought to be written vewwy nicely, you know."

"Rats!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Don't talk, Gussy; it jolts the table!"

"You uttah ass!"

"Now, quiet, while I write!"

Tom Merry wrote on the card with great care.

"The juniors of St. Jim's request the honour of Mr. Wodyer's company to tea, at six o'clock, in the Hobby Club-room."

"N.B.—Steak-and-kidney pies."

"There you are!" exclaimed Tom Merry, surveying his chandiwork with great pride. "I rather think that looks all right."

"Ripping!"

"Yaas, but—"

"Now we'll shove it into an envelope and get Toby to take it," said Tom Merry.

"Good!"

And in a few minutes the School House page was dispatched with the invitation card, and the juniors waited anxiously for the reply.

CHAPTER 10.

Great Preparations!

MR. WODYER sat in Mr. Ratcliff's study in the New House. He stirred the fire, for the weather was cold, and he frowned thoughtfully into the dancing, ruddy flames.

"It's getting too thick!" Thus ran Mr. Wodyer's reflections. "I've made an unwholly muck of the lessons this afternoon, and I'm blessed if I quite know where I was run out—but I was run out! If I made a show like that on the stage, I should get the bird, and no error! I wonder if they tumbled?"

There was really no room for wonder on that subject.

The Fourth Form had certainly "tumbled" to the fact that Mr. Wodyer was not designed by Nature or by training to give them instructions.

Mr. Wodyer was thinking the matter out, with the help of a briar pipe, when there came a tap at the door.

"Come in!" said the New House master.

Toby, the page of the School House, entered, with a letter in his hand.

"Please I'm to wait for an answer, sir," he said.

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"Thank you!"

Mr. Wodyer took the note in some uneasiness. He inwardly wondered whether it might be from the Head, to inform him that he had not given satisfaction as a Form-master.

He opened the envelope with nervous fingers. He stared as he saw the card inside, and looked at it blankly.

"The juniors of St. Jim's request the honour of Mr. Wodyer's company to tea, at six o'clock, in the Hobby Club-room."

"N.B.—Steak-and-kidney pies."

"My only Aunt Matilda!" ejaculated Mr. Wodyer, in surprise, and much to the surprise of Toby, who had never heard a master invoke his Aunt Matilda before. "Well, this is—Ha, ha, ha! You want an answer, young shaver?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Toby.

"Tell 'em I'll be on hand."

"Ye-es, sir."

Toby departed. Mr. Wodyer read the note over again and grinned, and slipped it into his pocket.

"Jolly good!" he murmured. "I never did like having meals alone, in solitary state—ugh! I don't know whether it's infra dig for a House-master to accept an invitation to tea from juniors, but—but I'm jolly well going!"

And he did.

Toby returned to the School House, still gasping with astonishment. He was grasped by Tom Merry and Blake as he presented himself at Study No. 6, and jerked into the study.

"Well?" demanded the juniors, in a breath.

"He's coming!" gasped Toby.

"Oh, good! What did he say?"

"He said 'Tell 'em I'll be on 'and!' " gasped Toby. "And I never 'eard a master speak in sich a way before!"

"Bai Jove!"

And Toby departed, still astonished.

"Well, our giddy Form-master has a flow of language quite his own, I must admit!"

Blake grinned.

"But he's coming—that's the main point!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Now to prepare the giddy spread!" said Tom Merry.

And the juniors were soon very busy.

Their scheme of making a good impression upon the new master seemed to be working well. And they were not insensible to the honour of having a Housemaster to tea. They meant to "do" Mr. Wodyer well—very well indeed.

The Hobby Club-room—a rather large apartment on the ground floor—was soon the scene of busy preparations. The table was covered with a succession of spotted tablecloths, borrowed from the various studies, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy even borrowed a large jug for flowers, to give the tea-table a tone, as he explained to his friends.

Fatty Wynn & Co. came in laden with good things, and the steak-and-kidney pies figured prominently among them. Dame Taggles was certainly an artist when it came to making steak-and-kidney pies, and these triumphs of her culinary skill graced the festive board in great profusion. It was, as Figgins said, a feast fit for the gods.

By the time six o'clock rang out from the old clock tower of St. Jim's all was ready. Chairs were ranged along the table, and knives and forks and spoons were almost as numerous as the guests, having been begged and borrowed on all

sides. Monty Lowther tapped D'Arcy on the shoulder, as the swell of St. Jim's surveyed the table through his eyeglass with an air of satisfaction.

"There's one thing been overlooked," Lowther remarked.

"Bai Jove! What's that, deah boy?"

"To have a really successful feed—and, of course, that's what we want, isn't it?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We shall require a waiter."

"A waitah! Bai Jove!"

"Gussy is willing to do anything to make the thing go," Lowther remarked, looking round. "And he looks exactly like a waiter when he's in evening clothes—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"So I vote that Gussy is appointed head waiter," said Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle into his eye and stared at Monty Lowther. He stared at Lowther's boots, and his gaze ascended to Lowther's face as far as the curl on his forehead, and then descended again to Lowther's boots. That sweeping gaze ought really to have withered the humorist of the Shell upon the spot and reduced him to silence, if not to ashes. But Lowther did not seem to be in the least withered.

"What do you say, Gussy?" he asked affably.

"I wedged you as an uttah ass, Lowthah!"

"Don't you think it's a jolly good idea?" asked Lowther, in astonishment.

"We really want a head waiter, you know, and what is required of a head waiter is a fellow of tact and judgment, and you look exactly the part when you—"

"I shall be sowwy to intewwupt the pwoceedings by givin' you a feahful thwashin', Lowthah—"

"You're not going to refuse, of course?" said Lowther. "You're not going to spoil the show? You could pass so easily for a waiter!"

Arthur Augustus pushed back his cuffs.

"Will you kindly put up your wotten hands, you wottah?" he said.

"But—"

"I am goin' to thwash you—"

Tap!

Mr. Wodyer looked in at the door with a smiling countenance. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dropped his hands and flushed.

"May I come in?" said Mr. Wodyer.

"Please walk in, sir."

"All ready, sir."

"So kind of you to come, Mr. Wodyer!"

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

Mr. Wodyer walked in cheerfully. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave Lowther a look, and that was all. It was not possible to give him anything more in the presence of the guest of honour.

"Here's your chair, sir, please!" said Tom Merry.

"Thank you!" said Mr. Wodyer, as he sat down.

"Glyn's sitting next to you, sir. You like having an old friend next to you, sir?"

Mr. Wodyer breathed hard through his nose for a moment.

"Ye-es, certainly!" he said. "How do you do, Glyn, my boy? I—I hope all your people are well in—in Manchester?"

"Liverpool, sir," said Glyn.

"Yes, I—I mean Liverpool."

"My people don't live in Liverpool now, sir," said Bernard Glyn. "My father moved down South when I came

to St. Jim's, sir, and he has a house not far from the school."

"Indeed! I'm glad to hear it! I hope your father is quite well, Glyn?"

"Quite well, sir, thank you!"

Glyn winked at his thumbs with the eye that was away from Mr. Wodyer. He expected the next query to be about his sister. But Mr. Wodyer had apparently forgotten that Bernard Glyn had a sister. He did not mention her, and the juniors attributed it to the shyness natural to a man who was in the lamentable state of "spoons."

"All ready," said Monty Lowther. "Pass the rosy wine."

Mr. Wodyer started a little. "My hat!" he ejaculated. "You don't mean to say that you fellows give wine-parties here, do you?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Figure of speech, sir!" "Oh, I see!"

"The ass means make the tea, sir," Tom Merry explained. "Do you prefer tea or coffee, sir?"

"All one to me, kid!"

Figgins made a terrific face at Tom Merry across the table. It was meant to imply that the hero of the Shell must be careful, as there was no coffee among the supplies. Tom Merry did not understand, however, and he looked at Figgins in some alarm.

"Anything wrong, Figgy?" he asked. "N-no!" murmured Figgins, turning the colour of a beetroot.

"Your face went quite queer."

"You ass—I mean—never mind! Hurry up and make the tea!"

"All serene!"

And the tea was made, and the juniors took their places round the hospitable board. And Monty Lowther whispered to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy that it was not yet too late to slip into his evening clothes and take the place of head waiter, if he liked. To which the swell of St. Jim's replied only with a stony stare.

CHAPTER 11.

The Honoured Guest!

TOM MERRY poured out Mr. Wodyer's tea very carefully.

Figgins passed him a liberal helping of steak-and-kidney pie. Redfern handed up the bread-and-butter. Kerr passed the salt and Fatty Wynn the pepper and Lawrence the mustard. Manners looked round for something to pass up, and handed up the jam tarts.

Mr. Wodyer smiled and started operations on the pie. The pie was really good, and the master was hungry, and in his mind he could not help contrasting the scene of plenty with the bare room in Bloomsbury where he had left Arthur Wodyer, M.A., recovering from his attack of influenza.

"It was awfully jolly of you to come, sir!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, by way of starting the ball of conversation rolling.

"Not at all!" said Mr. Wodyer with his mouth full.

"You like St. Jim's, sir?" said Bernard Glyn.

"Oh, top-notch!" said the master.

The juniors grinned; but they were getting used to Mr. Wodyer's peculiar vocabulary by now. Mr. Ratcliff or Mr. Railton would not have said that anything was top-notch; but the fellows were learning to expect remarks of that sort from the new master of the New House.

"It was quite a surprise to see you here, sir," said Bernard Glyn. "I had no idea that you were an old acquaintance, sir, till I heard your name. You

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther
Calling



Hallo, everybody! And now let us sit down and see where we stand, as the chairman remarked. Constant use will wear anything out, says an authority. But not Gore's voice, we fear. There is an eighty-seven year old bell-ringer at Rylcombe. He should be patient—his tea and toast may arrive yet! As the diner remarked to the waiter: "Take this egg away and wring its neck!" "I rather despise competitions," said Crooke. "No, I can't win anything either," agreed Mellish. "On your way to Messrs. Brown's you will pass the football ground," said the employer. "Yes, sir?" replied the office-boy. "Well, pass it!" snapped his employer. "Nother employer entered the office and

didn't know that I was at St. Jim's, sir, did you?"

"Not a bit of it."

"It will be a surprise for Edith to see you, sir."

"It's bound to be!" agreed Mr. Wodyer.

"You haven't forgotten meeting me in Liverpool, have you, sir?"

"I never forget meeting people," said Mr. Wodyer. "Lemme see—you were quite a little fellow then, weren't you?"

Glyn stared.

"It was only a year ago!" he said.

Mr. Wodyer coughed.

"Yes, that's what I meant to say," he remarked. "It's wonderful how time passes, isn't it? You haven't changed a bit!"

"He doesn't remember Glyn at all, only he's too polite to say so!" Manners murmured to Tom Merry.

And Tom Merry nodded assent.

"You've been living in London since, sir?" Glyn went on. He was somewhat puzzled by Mr. Wodyer, and rather curious about him.

"London and the provinces," said Mr. Wodyer absently. "Of course, a man would rather play in London all the time, but needs must, you know, when the old gentleman drives, and on the whole it's pretty good luck to get bookings for a tour of the provs. I—"

The amazement in the faces of the juniors stopped him.

"Oh, I see! Travelling tutor, I suppose, sir?" said Glyn in bewilderment.

"Travelling grandmother!" said Mr. Wodyer. "I mean—yes, exactly! You are a sharp kid; you've guessed it first shot. Pass the pickles."

"Here you are, sir."

"Jolly good spread, if I may say so," remarked Mr. Wodyer. "I've seldom sat down to a better, even when the ghost was walking."

"The—the ghost, sir?"

"Yes," explained Mr. Wodyer. "When they pay up on a tour, you know, we say the ghost walks. One of our expressions in the profession, you know."

"Oh!"

"Ghosts didn't always walk," said Mr. Wodyer reminiscently. "I remember

demanding: "Has the telephone been going while I was out?" "It's gone, sir," replied the junior clerk; "they've just taken it for non-payment of the bill!" A Wayland dye manufacturer is giving away a joke book with each packet of dye. The idea is to "dye" laughing! As one fag said to another: "How do you spell the word 'weather'?" "Oh, I usually say it has been pretty fine," replied the other. One from the Wayland police court: "My client is charged with a simple theft," said the counsel. "Simple! I'd like to see you do it!" snapped the prisoner. From the Wild West: "Is there any danger from Indians?" asked the nervous tourist. "Not if you keep out of the way of their automobiles," said the guide. "What are pauses?" demanded the school music instructor of the fag. "Things that grow on pussy cats," replied the fag. Then there was the Irishman who suffered from insomnia, so his friend advised him to go to bed and sleep it off! I hear Bernard Glyn of the Shell is completing a home-made aeroplane which he is calling the "Dragonfly." We suggest calling it the "May-fly!" "And how many times have you failed in this examination?" demanded Jameson's father. "To-morrow will make the third," answered Jameson resignedly. Whoopee, boys!

being down to my last waistcoat. Ahem! Pass the—the mustard."

"It's at your elbow, sir," said Tom Merry.

"Indeed? Oh, yes, of course! Thank you!"

Mr. Wodyer had turned quite red.

The juniors were all politeness, but some of them could not help exchanging queer glances, and Kangaroo tapped his forehead significantly as if to imply that Mr. Wodyer was not quite right in that region. He did not intend Mr. Wodyer to see him, but the new master happened to turn his head at an unlucky moment and he caught the Cornstalk junior fairly in the act.

Kangaroo went scarlet, but with wonderful presence of mind he proceeded to scratch his forehead as if it itched there.

Mr. Wodyer coughed.

Tom Merry kicked Kangaroo's foot under the table as a warning to be more careful—only, unfortunately, it turned out to be not Kangaroo's foot, but the august ankle of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and the startled swell of St. Jim's gave a sharp yelp.

"Ow!"

"Dear me! What is that?" said Mr. Wodyer.

"Gwoogh! Somebody kicked my foot!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You clumsy ass, Figgins!"

"I didn't kick your silly foot!" said Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Pass the pickles," said Mr. Wodyer. He seemed to regard it as a resource in all difficulties to ask the juniors to pass something.

In spite of Mr. Wodyer's peculiar little slips of the tongue, which caused the juniors constantly renewed surprise, the tea was a great success.

Mr. Wodyer was in high good-humour, and he talked almost incessantly, and he allowed views on life to escape him which surprised the juniors very much.

It was pretty evident from his talk that he knew the theatre inside and out, and Tom Merry ventured to remark that he seemed to be a great theatre-goer.

"What-ho!" said Mr. Wodyer. "I've done the legit many a time, of course;

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though the halls are where the money comes from."

"The legit!" repeated Tom Merry in wonder.

"The legitimate stage," explained Mr. Wodyer. "The halls are knocking it right and left now, and for a jolly good reason—the theatres charge a high price for poor stuff, and the halls give you good stuff at a low price."

"Bai Jove!"

"You should have seen me at the Friv! I tell you, I was a shriek!" said Mr. Wodyer impressively.

"A—a—a what?"

"A shriek," said Mr. Wodyer. "You should have heard the house! I was simply a scream! I—I mean—pass the wanuts!"

And Mr. Wodyer changed the subject hurriedly.

After tea was over Mr. Wodyer drew out a briar pipe and proceeded to cram it with very thick and strong tobacco. He glanced at the juniors, who were watching this proceeding with great interest. Masters at St. Jim's smoked, as a rule, but it was severely and very properly forbidden for growing boys.

"I hope you young boys don't smoke cigarettes," said Mr. Wodyer.

"Bai Jove! Warrah not!"

"Certainly not, sir."

"Never do," said Mr. Wodyer.

"When you smoke, smoke a pipe, as I do—it's better in every way, and isn't so rough on the voice. Chap who smokes cigarettes can never expect to sing, but a pipe goes easier on the vocal chords."

Tom Merry laughed.

"We don't smoke pipes, either, sir," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha! No, I suppose you don't," said Mr. Wodyer, laughing. "I suppose you've no objection to my lighting up, either?"

"Oh, no, sir; please do!"

And Mr. Wodyer did.

He lighted his pipe, and was soon blowing out thick clouds of tobacco-smoke that floated in the air and drenched every corner of the room with the smell of strong tobacco.

All the juniors coughed, but they restrained it as much as possible out of courtesy to their guest.

Mr. Wodyer filled and refilled his pipe several times, and the smoke floated in a blue haze in the room. He had smoked his third pipe by the time he rose to go and the juniors felt almost suffocated. The new master knocked out his ashes absently into a plate of figs.

"Well, I'll be getting along," he said.

"Thank you very much. It's been simply a ripping time! If you come up to London and find yourselves near the Friv at any time—Ahem! I—I mean—Good-bye!"

And Mr. Wodyer departed hastily.

CHAPTER 12.

Amazing Conduct!

WHEN Mr. Wodyer took the Fourth Form the next morning the Fourth Formers were prepared for fun. They had it.

The whole Form had agreed that Mr. Wodyer was not to be "given away," and that they would keep quiet when he made his "howlers." They liked the new master very much, and they wanted to stand by him. If this kind of thing continued their education certainly was likely to suffer, but fellows in the Fourth do not as a rule look very far ahead.

How a man of such attainments had The GEM LIBRARY—No. 1,407.

got the post of Form-master and House-master at St. Jim's they could not guess, and they felt that there must be some mistake somewhere. But there he was—and he was very kind to them—and they wouldn't have betrayed him for worlds. Even cads like Mellish and Levison entered into the spirit of the thing. Levison had been warned that there was not to be any more "rotting" on pain of raggings after lessons—and Levison wisely forbore.

The morning lessons went through without the new master being aware in the least that he had given himself away in the completest manner to the heroes of the Fourth.

It was a half-holiday that day, much to Mr. Wodyer's relief. He knew his deficiencies of course, and he felt that he had thoroughly forgotten what he had never thoroughly learned. By the help of cribs he hoped to prepare himself for further ordeals, but it was a dismaying prospect to have to shut himself up in his study to labour on a fine spring afternoon, when it would have been so much pleasanter to take his pipe for a walk along the river.

He had intended to "swot" the previous evening, but somehow or other he had smoked instead, and dreamed of the time when London would be at his feet, and rival managers would be telegraphing him offers of salaries of two and three hundred pounds a week. And on this half-holiday, after dinner, he looked round his study—looked at the various works of wisdom which contained the knowledge that was so necessary to him—and groaned.

He had never liked study—he had never been able to cram knowledge of that sort into his head—and it was too rough to have to begin it now.

"I'll chance it!" he murmured. "I've been lucky, so far. And why shouldn't the luck hold out? Blessed if I don't chance it!"

And he did.

Instead of settling down to an afternoon's work, which would have fitted him much better for taking the Fourth on the next occasion, he strolled out into the quadrangle with his pipe in his mouth.

Masters at St. Jim's smoked pipes, as a rule, but it was not exactly the thing for a master to be seen in the quadrangle with a pipe between his teeth. Fellows who saw Mr. Wodyer grinned at the sight of it.

Mr. Wodyer was quite unconscious of breaking any unwritten laws; he strolled round the quadrangle and enjoyed himself.

Tom Merry & Co. were not playing footer that afternoon. The Terrible Three and Bernard Glyn were seen proceeding from the School House dressed in their best, and they were joined in the quadrangle by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth. The swell of St. Jim's was looking his neatest. From the glitter of his boots to the gleam of his eyeglass, he was a picture of elegance. It was evident that there was something unusual "on."

Bernard Glyn looked at his watch.

"Edith will be here at three," he said. "Five minutes."

Arthur Augustus adjusted his glistening white cuffs.

"I wish she'd come to tea in the study," said Glyn. "But she's going to have tea with Mrs. Holmes; only she's going to walk round the school first. She wants to see my study. But it won't be such a bother as I expected now Wodyer's here."

The Terrible Three grinned; but a



"You can't come in!" exclaimed Mr. Wodyer's voice from inside.
"If you do not immediately open the door," said the Head, in

severe expression came over the aristocratic features of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

He turned his glimmering eyeglass reprovingly upon the Liverpool lad.

"Weally, Glyn, I twust you would nevah wegard the visit of any lady as a bothah," he said.

"Well, it generally is a bother, isn't it?" asked Glyn, with a stare.

"Weally, Glyn—"

"The pater is coming later, I believe, and so I'm in for it," said Glyn. "It's jolly good of you fellows to stand by me in this way."

"Not at all," said Tom Merry. "You'd do the same for us, I'm sure."

"Oh, yes! What-ho!"

"But it will be fun, as Wodyer's here!" grinned the Liverpool junior. "Edith doesn't know anything about his being here, you know, and it will be fun to see them meet unexpectedly. I won't say a word till she sees him. I wonder what she will call him?"

"Owney—owney!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will be fun," said Tom Merry. "And it will be a pleasure to both of them, of course, so we're entitled to the fun."

"Yes, rather."

"Upon the whole, deah boys, I considah that you ought to treat this mattah sowiously. I wegard bein' in love as a vewy sewious mattah."



inside the study. "I've got influenza and it's catching!" and banging on it with his fist, "I shall have it broken in!"

"Well, you ought to know," agreed Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Yes; the young ass was spoons on Edith once," said Glyn. "But she never called you Owney-owney, I'll bet, Gussy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Glyn, I wegard your we-marks as bein' in bad taste."

"Here she comes!" exclaimed Glyn.

"Bai Jove!"

"You buzz off, and get Wodyer here, somehow," said Glyn. "I'll keep Edith talking till you fetch him up. We'll be under the elms."

"Right you are!"

Monty Lowther hurried away towards the Head's garden, where Mr. Wodyer had been seen to stroll. Bernard Glyn and Tom Merry, and Manners and D'Arcy, hurried down to the gates to meet Miss Glyn. Edith Glyn was a very charming girl, a good many years older

than her brother, the junior of St. Jim's.

Bernard gave her a careless brotherly kiss on the cheek, and Edith shook hands with the other juniors. All the fellows liked Miss Glyn very much, and they had a grateful remembrance of the way she looked after their comforts whenever Glyn took them home to tea.

"Friend of yours here, Edie," Bernard Glyn remarked, as they walked into the old quad together.

"Friend of mine!" repeated Miss Glyn.

The juniors exchanged grins.

"Yes. Guess who it is?"

"Miss Cleveland."

"No. Cousin Ethel isn't here. It's a chap."

Edith Glyn looked puzzled.

"I really don't know who you can be alluding to, Bernard," she said.

"Chap you knew in Liverpool," said Glyn.

The girl wrinkled her brows in an effort to remember.

"Tutor chap," said Glyn.

Edith started.

"You don't mean—"

"Yes, I do."

"Bernard!"

"He's here," grinned Bernard Glyn, forgetting all about his intention to say nothing. "He's the new Housemaster here."

Edith's cheeks burned red for a moment.

"Is it possible, Bernard?"

"Yes—isn't it, Tommy?"

"Mr. Wodyer is the new master here, certainly," said Tom Merry.

"Arthur Wodyer?"

"Yes; rather!"

"Oh!" said Edith.

Bernard Glyn looked round anxiously.

"I thought you'd like to meet him," he remarked. "Lowther's gone to fetch him, Edie. You'd like to see an old friend, wouldn't you?"

"Very much, Bernard," said the girl quietly.

"Buzz off and see where he is, Tom Merry!" said Glyn.

"Right-ho!"

Tom Merry ran off to the Head's garden. He had seen in Edith's face, quiet as it was, the pleasure she felt at the thought of meeting Arthur Wodyer. Tom Merry ran into the Head's garden, and found Monty Lowther talking to Mr. Wodyer. The latter gentleman was looking somewhat disturbed. He had his pipe in his hand, and he had allowed it to go out.

"An old friend of yours, sir," Lowther was saying.

"Ahem! Lowther!"

"I told Glyn I would tell you, sir."

"Ahem!"

"Miss Glyn has arrived," said Tom Merry.

Mr. Wodyer turned pale.

"Oh!" he said. "Ahem! Exactly!"

Tom Merry looked perplexed. Even if Glyn was mistaken about the case of "spoons," it was only to be expected that Mr. Wodyer would be glad to see an old friend, and that friend so

charming a girl as Edith Glyn. But he certainly did not look it. He looked anxious enough, but not anxious for the meeting.

The two juniors felt surprised. They looked at Mr. Wodyer, and they looked at one another. But the awkward situation was interrupted by the opening of the garden gate. As the mountain did not come to Mahomet, it was necessary for Mahomet to go to the mountain, so to speak; and Bernard Glyn and his friends had walked Miss Glyn to the Head's garden.

Miss Glyn's charming face came into view in the gateway as Manners opened the gate for her. Mr. Wodyer looked at her with a startled gaze.

Their eyes met.

Miss Glyn looked startled—Mr. Wodyer turned quite pale. For one instant he remained staring blankly at the girl; then, with a sudden bound, he fled, and disappeared into the shrubberies.

CHAPTER 13.

Light at Last!

"B AI Jove!"
"My hat!"
"Great Scott!"
"Phew!"

The crash in the shrubbery died away, and the juniors were left looking at one another in blank amazement.

Miss Glyn still looked startled as she stood staring at the place where Mr. Wodyer had disappeared.

"He's dotty!" muttered Monty Lowther.

"Mad as a hattah, bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy.

"Was that—was that Mr. Wodyer?" asked Edith haltingly.

"Yes, Miss Glyn."

"He has changed, then, since I last saw him," said Miss Glyn. "Are you quite sure that it was Mr. Arthur Wodyer?"

"Oh, yes!" said Tom Merry. "Arthur Wodyer, M.A. There's no doubt about it, you see, as he's master here."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It is very curious. He is very like Mr. Wodyer, as I knew him, yet—"

The girl paused. "Do you know why he has acted in this extraordinary manner?"

"Haven't the faintest idea."

"Wathah not."

"It's extraordinary."

Miss Glyn nodded, and walked away towards the Head's house. There was a very thoughtful expression upon her face. Her brother went with her, looking blankly amazed; the meeting between his sister and Mr. Wodyer had been more surprising than he had anticipated.

The Terrible Three and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remained staring at one another.

They were too amazed to speak.

"Hallo, what's the trouble?" asked Figgins, as he strolled up with Kerr and Fatty Wynn. "Has Glyn's sister come?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Met Woddy?" asked Fatty Wynn with a grin.

"Yes."

"Called him 'Owney-owney'?" grinned Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha! No! He bolted!"

"Eh?"

"He bolted the moment he saw her, as if he thought she was going to bite," said Tom Merry. "Blessed if I can understand it!"

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"My hat!"

"There's something fishy about it somehow," said Monty Lowther. "Miss Glyn didn't seem to think that he was Arthur Wodyer at all. It's queer!"

"Jolly queeah!"

"Perhaps there's been some sweetheart's tiff, or something," Figgins suggested. "People are jolly queer when they're in love—not exactly what we should call sane, you know. It may be something of that sort."

"I don't see why he should bolt."

"I wegard him as bein' off his wockah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I considah that he is as mad as a hattah—not that hattahs are weally mad, as a mattah of fact," he added thoughtfully. "Hattahs are weally a most intelligent class of men. I pwesume that we owe the invention of the silk toppah to a hattah."

"Let's go and see him. He may be ill or something," said Figgins. "Where is he?"

"Blessed if I know."

"Gone into the House very likely," said Kerr. "Let's look."

The conduct of the new master had been so extraordinary that the juniors were really a little alarmed about him, and they could be pardoned for being curious, too.

Mr. Wodyer had been very mysterious from the first, but it was now, as Monty Lowther had said, growing a little too thick.

The juniors walked over to the New House, and they stopped outside Mr. Wodyer's study door.

There was a sound within, as of things being dragged about, and it alarmed them still more.

"Quite dotty!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Better go in and see him."

Tom Merry knocked at the door, and opened it without waiting for a reply. Mr. Wodyer was in the study. He was looking very red and disturbed, but the sound of hurried movements in the room was explained by the fact that he was hastily packing a bag, cramming articles into it in the most reckless manner.

He started as the juniors came in.

"Oh, buzz off!" he exclaimed.

"Really, sir—"

"Don't bother! Keep off the grass!" Mr. Wodyer exclaimed irritably.

"Are you leaving, sir?" asked Figgins, staring at the bag and the untidy articles scattered about the room.

"Yes."

"Leaving St. Jim's?" echoed the juniors.

"Yes, yes!"

"We're sowwy, sir," said D'Arcy.

"Thank you! Don't bother any more. Do, you know when the next up train is?"

"Four-thirty, sir," said Tom Merry. "You've lots of time. If you start now you'll have to wait an hour at the station."

"Oh crikey!"

The juniors gasped. Mr. Wodyer seemed in a state of uncontrollable excitement, but they never expected to hear him say "Oh crikey!" The unhappy master of the New House bestowed a sudden kick upon the half-packed bag, which sent it flying across the study and scattered its contents on the floor.

The juniors crowded back towards the door in alarm.

"Are you—are you ill, sir?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

Mr. Wodyer seemed to catch at the word.

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"Ill? Ye-es, ill! Of course I am!"

he exclaimed. "Why on earth didn't I think of that before? I—I mean yes, I'm ill! I can't see anybody! Will you explain to them that I can't see anybody, Figgins? You might ask the House dame to make me some—some gruel. I'm frightfully ill!"

And Mr. Wodyer stretched himself upon the sofa.

"Bai Jove!"

"Run away!" said Mr. Wodyer faintly. "I'm very ill! I can't bear a noise. Tell everybody that I'm not to be bothered. Nobody is to come to my study—no message is to be delivered."

"Shall I buzz for a doctor, sir?" asked Figgins.

Mr. Wodyer started up.

"No!" he roared. "You young ass—I—I mean, no, I don't want a doctor; it is not so bad as that. All I want is complete quiet and rest. Get out—I mean run away."

The juniors withdrew from the study and closed the door. They stood in the passage, staring blankly at one another.

"There's something jolly wrong about all this!" Tom Merry muttered.

"Yaas, wathah!"

There was the sound of a scratching match from the study. It was followed by the smell of tobacco.

Tom Merry grinned.

"He's not too ill to smoke," he remarked.

"He isn't ill at all," said Kerr.

"Either he's a lunatic, or there's something very fishy going on. It can't be a case of imposture, surely. Miss Glyn didn't think he was Arthur Wodyer. But if he isn't, where is the real man?"

"That's rather thick, Kerr." "But it is vewy extwaordinawy, deah boys."

Toby, the page of the School House, came down the passage.

"Mr. Wodyer here?" he asked.

"He's in his study."

"Dr. Holmes wants to see him at once."

"Phew!"

"What for, Toby?"

"I dunno, Master Tom. But I think it's something the matter," said Toby. "Miss Glyn was with the 'Ead, and they was both looking very solemn."

"Bai Jove!"

Toby tapped at the study door.

"Who's there?" roared a voice.

"Me, sir," said Toby. "The 'Ead wants to see you in 'is study, sir."

"Tell the Head I'm sorry I can't come. I'm ill—confined to my room. I'm afraid it's going to turn to smallpox—I mean, influenza!"

"Shall I say smallpox, or influenza, sir?" asked the amazed Toby.

"Influenza, you idiot!"

"Yessir!" said Toby, very much astonished. "But the 'Ead says, sir—"

"Give my message to the Head, and hold your tongue!"

"Yessir!"

Toby departed. Bernard Glyn passed him in the passage and joined the juniors. The Liverpool lad was looking much disturbed.

"Wodyer in there?" he asked.

"Yes. He says he's ill, and can't see anybody."

Bernard Glyn whistled softly.

"I fancy he'll have to see the Head," he remarked. "There was something queer about him from the start, and it's come out now. My sister declares positively that he isn't Arthur Wodyer. He's like him, but he isn't the man. She's certain about it, she says; and she's very much upset. She thinks something must have happened to the real man, as there is an impostor here in his name."

"Gweat Scott!"

The juniors looked very serious.

"Well, that would account for his queer conduct," said Tom Merry.

"It would account for his awful howlers as a Form-master," said Kerr. "But—but if Miss Glyn is right, and he isn't the man, how did he get here? He must have been awfully deep to impose upon the Head. They don't take a master at a school like this without plenty of investigation. And—and he seemed such a decent chap—"

"Yaas, wathah! I adhere to the opinion that he is a decent chap, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I wefuse to wegard him as a wottah!"

"My sister thinks that something must have happened to the real man," said Glyn. "She's even afraid he may have been put out of the way somewhere in some way. If he was able to come forward, of course, this man wouldn't dare to use his name."

"My hat!"

"Look out! Here comes the Head!"

The stately figure of the Head was advancing. Dr. Holmes was looking very serious and stern. The new master had refused to go to him, and the Head had come to see the new master. His lips were set hard, and he looked more grim than the juniors had ever seen him look before.

The boys fell back as he came up, and Dr. Holmes knocked at the study door.

"Who's that?" howled Mr. Wodyer from within.

"It is I—Dr. Holmes!"

"Oh!"

"Kindly open the door! It appears to be locked," said the Head, having turned the handle in vain.

"You can't come in!" said Mr. Wodyer hurriedly. "It's influenza, and it's catching! Please go away!"

"If you do not immediately open the door," said the Head, in a deep voice, banging on the door with his fist, "I shall have it broken in, Mr. Wodyer!"

"Sir!"

"I command you to unlock this door at once!"

The key was heard to turn in the lock. Dr. Holmes pushed the door open and entered the study. Mr. Wodyer looked very crimson and confused, and stood facing him, but he looked very uneasy beneath the grim, steady gaze of the Head of St. Jim's.

"I must have an explanation from you, Mr. Wodyer," said Dr. Holmes icily. "Miss Glyn, who knows Arthur Wodyer well, declares that you are not he. She is positive upon this point. In the light of this information, I cannot help recalling several peculiar circumstances in connection with you. What have you to say?"

"I—I—I—"

"I'm waiting for your answer."

Mr. Wodyer sank upon the sofa.

"It's all serene!" he gasped. "The game's up, I suppose."

Dr. Holmes' brow grew sterner.

"You confess that you are not Arthur Wodyer?"

"Not much good sticking it out any longer. And Arthur would be pretty ratty if he knew that charming young lady was being troubled about it, I suppose," said Mr. Wodyer philosophically.

"Your name is not Wodyer?"

"Oh, yes it is!" said the comedian, with a grin. He seemed relieved that it was all over now, and his confidence was returning. He relighted his pipe. "You see," he explained, looking at the Head through a growing cloud of smoke, "I happen to be Arthur Wodyer's brother."

(Continued on page 23.)



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

HALLO, chums! All this week stacks of letters, full of praise for our grand new programme, have been pouring into my office. For once in a way, the office-boy, who brings the mail in to me, and opens the letters, has been busy. He's thinking of asking for a rise on the strength of the extra work entailed! But as he spends most of his time reading the GEM or the "Magnet," I don't see where the extra work comes in. Usually, he only comes to the office to wear out the seat of his trousers!

To revert to your many letters of congratulation, however. I am highly delighted that our new stories have gone down so well with you all, and that our two-inch-wide columns are so universally popular. When an editor chooses a new programme of stories and pins his complete faith in it, he naturally is pleased to know that his choice is hundred per cent popular with his readers. Very many thanks to all those chums who have written to me. I cannot possibly reply by letter to you all, but I know you will forgive me if I say that the GEM would not come out next week if I did.

"THE TRUANT OF PACKSADDLE!"

In next Wednesday's great number Frank Richards has surpassed his previous yarns with his story of the

chums of the cow town school. It is packed with fun and thrills, and introduces again that border rustler, Red Ike. Dick Carr, too, plays a big part in the story, for it is the tenderfoot of Packsaddle who plays truant. Why he does it and the nerve-tingling adventure it leads to makes a great yarn, and one that you mustn't miss at any cost.

"TRUE BLUE!"

This is the title of the next ripping St. Jim's yarn, which is a sequel to the sparkling story in this issue. It tells of the adventures of Arthur Woddyer, the youthful new Housemaster at St. Jim's. The brother of Austin, the music hall artist, becomes a big favourite with the juniors, but he is not so popular in another quarter. A gang of cracksmen, however, who are "working" the St. Jim's district, alters the whole course of events for Mr. Arthur Woddyer! Another wonderful yarn, this, chums!

Edwy Searles Brooks' gripping chapters of "The Secret World!"—which tell of the further adventures of the St. Frank's boys, who are made

PEN PALS COUPON

2-2-35



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.

Miss Barbara McBryde, 54, Moore Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wants a girl correspondent; age 11-14.

D. Hodgson, 63, Potter Hill, Greasbro', Rotherham, Yorks, wants correspondents; age 15-17; views, pictures, newspapers.

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prisoners by the Northerners—combined with all our other popular features, round off this tip-top number. Order early, chums!

THE MUSICAL WELL!

Music coming from a well! Such is the amazing discovery made recently by an Alberta farmer. He went to draw up a pail of water when good orchestral music came to his ears. He was at first nonplussed as to the source of the music. But after listening for a time the farmer was convinced that it was coming up the well. Yet, unless somebody was playing a practical joke with a wireless set, the farmer could see no way of accounting for the phenomenon. For it was proved that the music coming from the well was that being broadcast by a radio station. But it was no joke, and the farmer has many times listened in to wireless programmes issuing from his well. One theory advanced is that, in some way, the earth of a wireless set is sending the broadcasts through the ground and so up the well.

A FORTUNE FROM THE SEA!

A boy was paddling in the sea at Rockland, U.S.A., when he spotted some flotsam on the water. He picked it up, and, finding that it was just some greishy substance, tossed it into the water again. Fortunately, his father saw what he did, and recovered the flotsam. Later, he sent it to a chemist to be analysed, and the flotsam turned out to be ambergris, a rare and valuable substance found in the sea, and which comes from whales. It is used in the making of perfumes. The chunk of ambergris found by the boy was valued at £3,200!

HEARD THIS ONE?

"Nature designed me as a poet," said the caller proudly, handing the editor a roll of poems.

"Ah!" exclaimed the editor, after hastily reading the first one. "May I ask what interfered with Nature's plans?"

THE EDITOR.

Miss Bertha Levitaky, 31, Holland Street, Fairfield, Liverpool 7, wants Jewish girl correspondents in Africa, Canada, Australia; age 12-14; cigarette cards, snaps, painting.

Miss Janet Hermon, 1647, Dumbarton Road, Scotstoun, Glasgow, W.4, wants girl correspondents; age 15-17; British Empire or Europe.

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Miss Doreen San-Garde, 209, Church Street, Kenilworth, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wants girl correspondents; age 17-19; swimming, books.

Miss Pat McGaghey, Victoria Girls' High School, Grahams-town, Cape Province, South Africa, wants girl correspondents in Canada, India, Australia, and South America; age 14-16; sports, films.

B. J. Callingham, The Lees, Marine Parade, Tankerton, Kent, wants pen pals who are interested in aviation.

Tony Baylis, Whitehall, Alcester, Warwickshire, wants to hear from stamp collectors.

Laurence Smith, 92, Hartley Avenue, Delph Lane, Leeds, Yorks, wants members for his Chums' Correspondence Club; keen on sports.

Norman Solomons, 17, Harding Street, Stepney, London, E.1, wants pen pals in the British Empire and U.S.A., age 11-13; sports, science, geography.

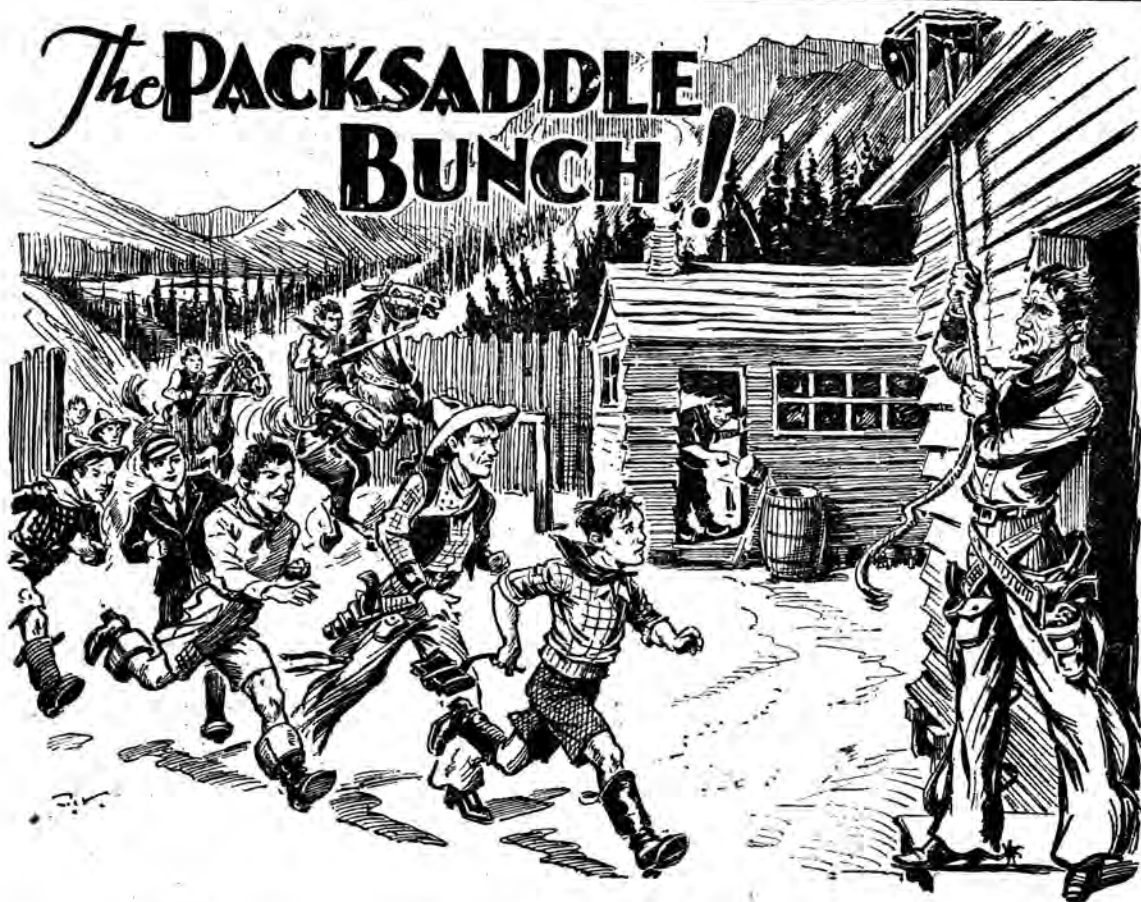
B. Morrison, Lowford, Bursledon, nr. Southampton, wants pen pals in Canada and South Africa; age 12-14; stamps, books.

Miss Mollie Kimber, 78, Southfield Road, Ponders End, Enfield, Middlesex, wants girl correspondents in England, Ireland, Australia, and America; age 15-18; films, swimming, books.

Victor Wales, 12, Redclyffe Road, East Ham, London, E.8, wants a pen pal in India or Australia; age 11-13; swimming, football.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,407.

The PACKSADDLE BUNCH!



Missing!

"SPILL it!" hooted Bill Sampson. The headmaster of Packsaddle School was wrathful.

Dawn was gleaming on the waters of the Rio Frio, and whitening the waving grass that stretched, mile on mile from the river to Squaw Mountain. Bill Sampson had ridden late and hard the previous night; but he had turned out of his bunk at the first gleam of the sun.

Generally, Bill's rugged, bearded face was good-humoured. Now his brows were darkly knitted as he sat at breakfast in the frame schoolhouse, his long legs stretched out, his Stetson on the back of his untidy head. "Small" Brown, the teacher of Packsaddle, blinked at him quite nervously through his horn-rimmed glasses, and stammered. The bell was ringing, and the Packsaddle bunch was turning out of the school bunkhouse, when Small Brown came in to speak to the cow town schoolmaster.

"The boy—the new boy—Carr—" he stammered.

"Spill it!" hooted Bill. "Anything happened to that doggoned tenderfoot?"

"He is missing!"

"Missing!" roared Bill.

"He is not with the other boys!" stammered Small Brown. "His bunk does not appear to have been slept in. He must have been missing all night."

"Jumping painters!" howled Bill.

He jumped up from his breakfast so

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suddenly that the table rocked, and his chair flew backwards. He grabbed down the quirt that hung on the wall.

"I'll say this is the limit!" exclaimed the exasperated headmaster of Packsaddle. "Ain't there trouble enough on hand, without that goldarned tenderfoot from the Old Country moseying off and getting himself lost? Ain't that all-fired fire-bug, Red Ike, stuck me up and cinched five hundred dollars off'n

trophy. Bill had killed the grizzly that once had worn it, in a gulch on Squaw Mountain. With its fierce-looking head fitted with glass eyes, it looked very life-like. Bill forgot for the moment that he valued that bearskin highly. He gave it a kick that lifted it from the floor, and it flew.

"Oh dear!" gasped Small Brown, as the rug wrapped itself round him, and he sat down suddenly in the folds of the bearskin. "Oh! My dear sir—Wow!"

Bill gave a snort, and tramped out of the porch. He glared at the bunch in the playground. Some of them were laughing—but they left off laughing quite suddenly as Bill strode up, quirt in hand. Bill did not look as if it was a time for laughter.

"Say, you young boobs!" roared Bill. "Mr. Brown allows that that kid, that tenderfoot from Tendertown, young Carr, is missing. I'll say I want to know! Where's that boob?"

There was no answer from the Packsaddle bunch. Big Steve Carson closed one eye at his pals, Poker Parker and Slim Dixon. But Bill was not looking at Big Steve. He fixed his eyes on Slick Poindexter and Mick Kavanagh. He cracked the quirt.

"You, Poindexter! You, Kavanagh!" roared Bill. "You been playing tricks again on that doggoned tenderfoot?"

"Nope!" answered Slick.

"Nunk!" answered Mick.

"You played a trick on him the day he hit Packsaddle!" hooted Bill. "Now I guess you been playing more! Where is he?"

THE TENDERFOOT'S TRIUMPH!

me, and lit out on my own bronco, doggone him, with my dollars in his grip? And now—"

Small Brown hopped out of the way as Bill rushed to the door. Bill was in a hurry—in so big a hurry that he caught his foot in his bearskin rug, tripped over, and fell in the doorway. He gave a roar as he hit Texas with his nose.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the playground. Some of the fellows there had seen Bill go over.

Bill scrambled up, seething. He turned and kicked at the rug he had tripped over. That bearskin rug was a

—SPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR THE "GEM"—

"Search me!" said Slick Poindexter, shaking his head.

"You don't know a thing, of course?" snorted Bill.

"Not a thing!" agreed Mick. Bill Sampson glared. The bunch eyed him warily.

The hold-up at Packsaddle the previous night had ruffled Bill's temper very considerably. Red Ike, the rustler, had got away on Bill's favourite black bronco with five hundred dollars of Bill's. It was enough to get any man's goat, and it had got Bill's. He was in no mood to be patient with guys who had played fool tricks on a new kid. He was in a mood to handle his quirt, hard.

"No guy here knows a thing, hey?" roared Bill.

There was a general shaking of heads. Three fellows there knew what had happened to Dick Carr. But Big Steve and his friends had no intention of telling Bill.

"Waal," said the cow town school-master, "I guess some guy here knows where that tenderfoot has got to, and I reckon that after a few licks of this quirt that guy will uncork it. I'm sure going to hide the whole bunch till I'm put wise! Got that?"

There was a yell from the Packsaddle bunch as Bill started in with the quirt. They scattered, with the leather thong lashing and thrashing round dodging legs.

Bill was a big man, six feet in his socks. But he was quick and active. He handled the quirt like an experienced puncher. The Packsaddle fellows scattered and dodged. Some of them clambered on the fence, some on the bunkhouse or the chuckhouse. Slick Poindexter swarmed up the flagstaff in the corner of the playground. Mick Kavanagh scrambled on the wooden porch over the head of Small Brown, who was staring out blankly through his horn-rimmed glasses. Yells and howls awoke the echoes of the Rio Frio, and were heard among the shacks and shanties of the cow town at a distance.

"Can it, Bill, you gink!" roared Steve Carson. He was clambering over the fence when Bill reached him, and the quirt rang on his leather trousers.

There was a yell from Slick, hanging to the top of the flagstaff.

"Say, Bill! Here he comes!" Bill stared round.

There was a thudding of horse's hoofs on the prairie trail. Slick, clinging to the tall flagstaff with legs and one hand, waved the other and pointed. A horse-man was riding at a gallop towards the cow town school. The rider was a boy, and the steed he rode was a big black bronco. Bill Sampson stared through the gateway with his eyes almost bulging from his bronzed, bearded face, as the rider came thundering up.

"Carry me home to die!" gasped Bill.

"Dick Carr!" yelled Slick.

"The tenderfoot!" gasped Steve Carson. "What's he doing on Bill's bronco? Say, where did he cinch that cayuse?"

Bill stood rooted to the ground. The Packsaddle bunch gathered round him, staring. The quirt was idle now. It was Dick Carr, the tenderfoot new kid, who was riding in, and he was riding Bill's stolen horse. The Packsaddle bunch would never have figured that the tenderfoot could ride a Texas cayuse at all. But he was riding the big black bronco, and riding him at a gallop.

"Great gophers!" gasped Mick

Kavanagh, dropping from the porch. "I'll tell all Texas! It's the tenderfoot, and so it is, and he's sure got Bill's cayuse."

Dick Carr dashed in, drew rein, and halted almost under Bill's astonished nose. He threw the reins to Bill Sampson.

"Your horse, sir!" he said coolly.

Bill could only gasp.

"B'ar!"

DICK CARR joined the bunch at breakfast in the chuckhouse. He was the centre of all eyes. He ate his breakfast with a good appetite, a smile lurking on his face. He was, in the estimation of the Packsaddle bunch, a tenderfoot from Tindertown, a boob from Boobsville. But he had astonished the cow town school. Lost on the prairie, he had dropped on Red Ike's camp; he had got Bill's horse away, and ridden home on it. The rustler had been left on foot, and already Ezra Lick, the town marshal, and his men were riding out of Packsaddle to rope him in. If they got him it would be due to the tenderfoot. Dick grinned over his crackers and beans.

When the bunch went out of the chuckhouse Steve Carson lounged up to

The butt of his school-fellows' jape, the tenderfoot of Packsaddle is yet the one to show up best when the real peril comes!

the new boy. Steve was feeling uneasy. Dick had said nothing about Carson's bunch having taken him out on the prairie during the night, and stranding him there to find his way back as best he could. Steve was not anxious for Bill Sampson to hear that.

"Say, you young guy, you ain't chewed the rag to Bill!" said Steve.

"I'm not going to."

"Stick to that!" said Carson. "Me and my bunch will sure make you sorry you're alive if you spill it to Bill."

Dick's lip curled.

"You and your bunch can go and chop chips!" he answered. "I'm not giving you away, but I'll make you sit up some time for playing that dirty trick on me."

Big Steve laughed and lounged away to join his friends. So long as Bill was not put wise he did not care what the tenderfoot's motives were.

The day boys were coming in now—some on foot from the cow town, some on broncos from the ranches. One of them, Pie Sanders, from Squaw Mountain, called out to the bunch as he jumped from his mustang and turned it into the school corral.

"Say, you 'uns, where's Bill? I guess I got noos for Bill."

"What's up?" asked Poindexter.

"B'ar!" answered the boy from Squaw Mountain, and he hurried across to the schoolhouse, where he spotted Bill in the porch.

Dick Carr stared after him and joined the crowd of fellows who were following him. The news he had brought seemed to have caused some excitement in the bunch, but what it meant was rather a mystery to the

English schoolboy. He caught Slick Poindexter by the sleeve.

"What did he mean?" he asked.

Slick stared at him.

"Just what he said, I guess," he answered. "B'ar."

"B'ar?" repeated Dick, mystified.

"What sort of bar? Do you mean a bar in a river, or a bar in a saloon, or a bar at the gate—or what sort of a bar?"

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Slick. "Say, you 'uns, listen to the boob! He's never heard of a b'ar!"

"I guess there's no b'ars in the Old Country!" grinned Mick. "But there's b'ars in Squaw Mountain, honey."

"I guess no b'ar will come down from Squaw Mountain as far as Packsaddle," said Steve Carson. "You don't want to be skered, tenderfoot."

"Who's scared?" snapped Dick. "I don't see—"

"Haw, haw, haw! Ain't you ever heard tell of a b'ar before?" yelled Poker Parker.

"Of course I have!" said Dick. "But I don't see anything to be scared of in a b'ar! What sort of a bar do you mean?"

"Grizzly!" yelled Slick.

"Oh!" Dick Carr gasped. "You mean bear."

"Haw, haw, haw!"

Pie Sanders was gasping out his story to Bill. Now that he understood that a "b'ar" was a bear—and a grizzly at that—Dick understood the excitement. He had never seen a grizzly bear, but he had heard of that terrible and ferocious animal. In the rocky recesses of Squaw Mountain a few of those savage animals still lurked, and it gave Dick a thrill to hear what Pie had to say. Bill Sampson gave a snort as he listened.

"B'ar!" he repeated. "You telling me that b'ar will come moseying down as far as Packsaddle! Forget it!"

"Popper told me to warn you, Bill," answered Pie. "They been after him for days, and he's wounded and taken to the prairie. They've lost his tracks, and his last trail was seen heading for the river. I guess if he's making for the Frio, he won't pass far from the burg."

"Aw, guff!" growled Bill. "Forget it, I'm telling you!"

Evidently Bill did not think it likely that the wounded grizzly, driven out of his den on Squaw Mountain by the hunters, would venture anywhere near the cow town or the cow town school, but he rapped out an order to close the school gate before the bunch went in to lessons.

During class with Small Brown that morning Dick Carr found his thoughts wandering a good many times to the grizzly. He could picture the savage animal—wounded, fierce, desperate—driven from the mountain, creeping through the long grass of the prairie, seeking a hiding-place—perhaps hungry and seeking food.

It did not seem to Dick impossible that the brute might be seen at Packsaddle, though Bill made light of the idea. He observed that Slick Poindexter and Mick Kavanagh were whispering together a good deal, and wondered if they were discussing danger—from the lost grizzly.

After class Bill Sampson mounted his black bronco to ride down to the cow town and learn if there was any news of Red Ike. Bill was thinking of the

five hundred dollars that the gunman had cinched from him. Two or three of the bunch shouted after him as he rode away.

"Watch out for b'ar, Bill!"

"Aw, can it!" snorted Bill, and he dashed away down the trail to the cow town.

As soon as he was gone Slick and Mick slipped quietly into the schoolhouse. Small Brown was in his own cabin; Tin Tung was in the cookhouse, and there was no eye on them.

"Say, Mick, it's a daisy of a stunt!" chuckled Slick. "I'll say the tenderfoot will be scared to a frazzle."

"You said it!" grinned Mick.

They gathered up Bill's bearskin rug from the floor. Mick packed himself inside it, and Slick Poindexter drew the folds round him and fastened them. Mick's red head disappeared inside the huge head of the grizzly, grim and fierce-looking with its glinting glass eyes.

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Poindexter, surveying him. "That gink knows there's a grizzly loose on the prairie, and I guess he won't stop to think when he sees you in that outfit, Mick!"

A chuckle came through the grinning muzzle of the grizzly.

"Say, it's warm inside!" said Mick, his voice coming strangely from the head of the bear.

"I guess that cuts no ice. You stick there till I pass the word round the bunch, or some guy might get hold of a gun and let daylight through Bill's prize bearskin!" chuckled Slick.

Leaving Mick in the porch, Slick walked, grinning, out into the playground. Dick Carr was speaking to Mr. Brown at the door of his cabin next to the bunkhouse, quite unaware that a joke was going on. Quickly Slick passed the word round among the rest of the bunch, amid a chorus of sniggering and snickering. It was necessary for the bunch to be warned; for Bill kept a loaded rifle in the schoolhouse, and at an alarm of "B'ar!" some fellow might have rushed for it.

Dick Carr left Mr. Brown and came across the playground, glancing round him in surprise. He saw no cause for the grin that adorned every face in the bunch. But suddenly from Steve Carson there came a yell.

"B'ar!"

"Watch out!"

"Run for your lives!" yelled Slick.

Dick Carr jumped, and his heart almost missed a beat. Waddling from the direction of the schoolhouse was a ferocious-looking grizzly bear with fierce eyes that gleamed and glinted in the sunlight. The tenderfoot of Packsaddle stood rooted, his heart thumping wildly.

Not for an instant did he dream that the dreaded apparition was a Packsaddle fellow enveloped in Bill Sampson's bearskin. It looked fearfully lifelike as it crawled. Indeed, had not Slick passed round the word that the joke was on, plenty of other fellows would have been deceived as well as the tenderfoot. As it was they all affected terror for the tenderfoot's benefit.

"Run!" yelled Poker Parker.

"Beat it!" shrieked Slim Dixon.

"Burn the wind, you guys!" roared Slick Poindexter. He grabbed Dick Carr by the arm. "Beat it, you gink! You want to be chewed up? Hit that flagstaff—and hit it quick!"

"Gr-r-r-r!" came a deep, savage growl from the bear's muzzle, as it lurched towards the tenderfoot.

Dick made a rush for the flagstaff. After him lumbered the bear, growling

horribly. A great paw lashed at him. He bounded at the tall pole, clutched it, and clambered out of reach. In breathless haste he climbed to the top of the pole and clung there, staring down with startled eyes as the bear reared on its hind legs and glared up after him and gave a hideous growl.

The Laugh's on Dick!

DICK CARR clung desperately to the summit of the flagstaff. He stared down at the bear below. From that height, in the clear sunlight of Texas, there was a wide view over rolling prairie and rippling river, and over the tin roofs of the cow town to the distant wooded slopes of Squaw Mountain. But Dick's eyes were fixed on the fearful monster at the foot of the tall pole. The Packsaddle bunch were widely scattered on fence-tops and roofs, staring towards him.

Small Brown, alarmed by the disturbance, came out of his cabin, spotted the bear—or, rather, the bearskin—and darted back with a single frantic bound, banging the door after him. The teacher was not in the secret, and he did not like grizzly bears at close quarters.

Tin Tung looked out of the cookhouse, where he was cooking dinner, his slanting eyes distended, and he promptly slammed his door and rolled a barrel against it. From the bear came a deep, horrible growl that floated up to Dick's startled ears as he clung to the top of the pole.

Gr-r-r-r!

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Dick Carr.

The "bear" was rearing on his hind legs, the paws feeling at the flagpole, apparently trying to climb after him. From various points in the distance the Packsaddle fellows watched it. Some of them were grinning, though Dick, in the thrilling excitement of the moment, did not notice it. All his attention was fixed on the bear.

He knew that bears could climb—better than a man could. If that bear wanted him, that bear could get him. And it looked as if the bear wanted him. He had started to climb. Dick's eyes were fixed on it in horror; his heart almost died within him. He had plenty of pluck, but he was unarmed; he had no chance. And the fearful beast was beginning to climb.

"Help!" shouted Dick. He gave a desperate glance round at the fellows in the distance. He noticed now that some of them were grinning—Steve Carson was laughing aloud. They were out of danger, so long as the bear concentrated on Dick; but he wondered at their indifference to his peril. The Packsaddlers were a tough bunch, but he had never figured they could be so tough as this.

"Hang on, tenderfoot!" yelled Slick from the top of the fence. "Say, you geek, don't let him get you! He'll sure chew you up!"

"I'll say that tenderfoot's scared stiff!" chortled Steve.

"Help!" yelled Dick. "Poindexter, cut into the School House and get a gun! There's a rifle over Mr. Sampson's desk there."

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Slick. He was tickled to death at the idea of getting Bill's rifle and letting daylight through Mick in the bearskin. Dick Carr had not observed that Kavanagh was absent from the crowd in the playground, and certainly never dreamed that he was in the bearskin.

The tall pole was thick and strong. But it swayed under Dick's weight at the top, and swayed still more as the

"bear" clambered. Dick had plenty to do to keep his hold at the summit, with the wind from the prairie whistling past his ears. He shouted.

"Will you help me? Get a gun—get the rifle! Poindexter!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

There was no help from the bunch. With a heartless indifference that was simply amazing to the tenderfoot, they laughed at his appeals. Dick stared desperately down at the slowly-clambering bear. If he could have leaped past it, as it climbed, he had a chance. But he realised that there was no chance of jumping past the bear. He could only cling to the top of the pole and hope that the savage brute would not be able to climb so high and reach him with its fearful claws.

There was a sound of hoofbeats. He stared round in the direction of the cow town, and his heart leaped at the sight of Bill, in his red shirt and ten-gallon hat, riding back to the school on the black bronco. Bill, as he came, stared at the clinging figure at the top of the flagpole, visible to him over the fences and the buildings.

Dick Carr freed one hand and waved to the approaching rider. He gesticulated frantically.

"Help!" he yelled. "Mr. Sampson! Help!"

His voice carried to Bill on the wind and made him stare harder. The fences hid the "bear" from Bill's sight, and he could only wonder why the new schoolboy was hanging to the top of the flagstaff and yelling for help.

"Help!" shrieked Dick.

"Jumping painters!" ejaculated the cow town schoolmaster. "Is that pesky young guy loco?"

He cracked his quirt, and the black bronco galloped on. Something was amiss at the school, Bill knew that, and a sudden misgiving came into his mind of the wounded grizzly driven down from Squaw Mountain by the hunters. His bronzed face set hard, and he drove the bronco on with quirt and spur.

There was a yell of alarm from Poker Parker.

"Say, you guys! Here comes Bill!"

"Oh, great gophers!" gasped Slick Poindexter. "I'll say Bill will be mad when he sees his bearskin!"

The gate was closed. But Bill did not stop to open it. The black bronco rose to the leap, and Bill came sailing over the gate to land in the playground with a crash of hoofs. He was down from the saddle in a second.

To Dick Carr his sudden arrival brought joy and relief. It had rather a different effect on the bunch, who suspected that Bill would be mad when he discovered the use to which his bearskin had been put.

"Help! Help!" yelled Dick. "Shoot! Oh, shoot!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"Say, don't you burn powder, Bill!" howled Poindexter. "You don't want to burn holes in your bearskin, old-timer."

But Bill was not likely to shoot. From the ground he could see what Dick Carr could not see from above—human legs that showed under the clambering bearskin. Bill Sampson was not thinking of pulling a gun. He grasped his quirt and rushed across towards the flagstaff.

"Beat it, Mick!" yelled Poindexter.

"Howly saints!" gasped Mick Kavanagh. He had ceased to climb, and was staring round in dismay at the alarm that Bill was coming. It was not easy to move quickly in the thick folds

of the big bearskin. Mick slid down the pole and landed on the ground as Bill reached him.

"Jumping buffaloes!" roared Bill. "I guess I'll wallop you a few."

Dick stared down blankly. He had expected Bill to pull his gun, or else rush for his rifle. He could not imagine why the cow town schoolmaster was tackling a grizzly bear armed only with a puncher's whip. But the next moment, as Bill grasped the "bear," he understood.

The bear rolled over in Bill's grasp, and the skin burst open and a red head and a crimson face emerged into view. Dick stared at it with starting eyes,

will I'arn you a few, Mick! I guess you won't play any more tricks with my bearskin, and skeer a doggoned green-horn stiff and cold! Nope! I'll say you won't!"

"Whoo-hooop!" roared Mick, as he staggered away. "Ow! Oh, wake snakes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the bunch. Bill was grinning, too, as he picked up the bearskin and threw it over his arm.

"Say, you doggoned tenderfoot, you figure that it was a real b'ar!" he exclaimed. "I'll say you're some boob!"

"I—I-I thought—" gasped Dick, his cheeks burning. "I—I knew there

face in the class wore a grin—except Dick Carr's. Dick's was dark and frowning—but his dark looks only added to the merriment of the bunch. Probably Bill Sampson would have been grinning, too, had he been there. But the headmaster of Packsaddle had ridden out on the prairie with Marshal Lick and his men on the trail of Red Ike, leaving the bunch to Mr. Brown. Every now and then there was a chuckle in the class, and two or three times a voice called out "B'ar!" in tones of pretended alarm, raising a howl of laughter. Dick sat with knitted brows.

He had been made a fool of, and the whole bunch was laughing at him. Most



There were wild yells from the Packsaddle bunch as the door was sent spinning open. "B'ar! The grizzly!" From the bear came a deep-throated roar, and its little red eyes burned at the scattering crowd of scared schoolboys!

almost losing his hold in his amazement. From the Packsaddle bunch came a howl of merriment. From Mick came a howl of anguish as Bill's sinewy grasp dragged him out of the bearskin and the quirt was laid on.

Whack, whack, whack!
"Aw! Can it!" shrieked Mick. "Howly Moses! Sure it was only a joke on the tenderfoot intirely! Howly saints! Let up, Bill, you piecan!"

Whack, whack, whack!
Instead of letting up, the headmaster of Packsaddle laid it on hard. The quirt rang on Mick like pistol shots.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Dick Carr.

He understood now. With a burning face, he slid down the flagstaff. He knew now why the bunch had been indifferent to his peril. There had been no peril. It was only another rough jest on the tenderfoot. But for the fact that Bill Sampson was handling Mick, Dick would have hurled himself on the practical joker. But Mick was getting enough from Bill!

"Thar!" gasped Bill. "I guess that

was a grizzly about, and I—I thought—"

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Bill.

He walked away with the grizzly's skin. Dick Carr looked round at grinning faces, his own red as the blossom of the malva that grew along the Rio Frio.

"You silly asses!" he exclaimed indignantly. "What was a fellow to think—"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"Ain't he the world's prize boob!" gasped Slick. Even Mick was howling with laughter, in spite of the quirting he had received. Dick, crimson with anger and vexation, stamped away to the chuckhouse, followed by shrieks of laughter from the Packsaddle bunch.

Pluck!

SMALL BROWN was smiling when he took his class in the schoolroom that afternoon. His eyes glimmered with amusement through his horn-rimmed glasses. Every

of them laughed good-naturedly, but Steve Carson and his friends sneered and jeered. Dick's cheeks burned when he thought of the ridiculous figure he must have cut, clinging to the top of the flagstaff with a practical joker in a bearskin growling after him.

Any fellow at Packsaddle who had taken Mick in the bearskin for a genuine grizzly, would have bolted for cover; he knew that. Unluckily, only he had been taken in. Hunting cover, in such a case, was no sign of funk. But, as it had turned out, it was ridiculous, and he realised it only too keenly.

When Mr. Brown's back was turned at the blackboard, Steve Carson leaned over to Dick and gave a sudden bellow in his ear that made him jump.

"B'ar! Beat it for the flagstaff, tenderfoot!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

It was the last straw! Dick Carr was a good-tempered fellow, but he had a temper. As Steve drew back his grinning face, Dick's arm swung up, and

the back of his hand smacked hard on Big Steve's features. It was a hard smack, and Steve lurched under it and fell off his bench. He spluttered as he went down among riding-boots.

Small Brown spun round from the blackboard.

"What—" he squeaked. "Keep order! You Carr—Carson—I tell you—" Small Brown could not handle the bunch like Bill Sampson. Big Steve did not heed him. He scrambled up, grabbed a book from his desk, and hurled it at Dick Carr's head.

Dick dodged just in time and the school-book flew past him and caught Slick Poindexter on the side of his jaw. There was a howl from Slick.

The next moment Dick had caught the inkpot from his desk and shot the contents at Big Steve in reply to his missile. Steve's missile had missed—but the ink did not. It splashed full in Carson's face, spreading there, and transforming him suddenly into a coon. There was a gurgling, gasping howl from the bully of Packsaddle, and a chortle from the class. Small Brown shouted at Dick.

"Carr! How dare you! You young rascal! Keep order!"

"Let that rotter keep order, then!" snapped Dick. "I'm fed-up with his cheek."

"B'ar!" shouted Poker Parker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up, you dummy!" shouted Dick with flashing eyes.

"Silence, you Carr!" squeaked Small Brown. "You must expect to be made fun of, Carr, if you run away from a boy dressed in a bearskin."

"You bolted into your cabin fast enough, anyhow, Mr. Brown!" retorted Dick. He had not forgotten how Small Brown had dashed indoors, and banged the door of his cabin after him.

Small Brown crimsoned. He had not forgotten it either, but he had hoped that that little incident had passed unnoticed.

"You—you—young rascal!" he stutted. "I shall report you to Mr. Sampson for punishment." He raised his hand and pointed to the door. "Go to Mr. Sampson's office and wait there till he returns, and tell him that you have been sent to him for a beating."

Dick Carr hesitated, breathing hard. He was angry and indignant. He had noticed already that Small Brown had very little authority with the bunch; indeed, his life would hardly have been worth living at Packsaddle School had he not been backed up by Bill and his quirt. When Bill was absent, little Mr. Brown walked warily in dealing with the tough bunch; but he seemed to figure that he could be authoritative with the tenderfoot. It was unfair, and it made Dick angrier than ever; but he choked down his angry resentment, and stamped away to the door.

"The greenhorn's sure got his mad up!" chuckled Mick as he went.

"B'ar!" shouted Slim.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dick tramped out with gleaming eyes and flaming cheeks. From the school-room he had to cross the hallway to Bill Sampson's office, which was on the other side. He glanced out of the porch which opened from the hallway into the bright sunshine of Texas, and was tempted to go out into the playground instead of where he was bidden to go. But he restrained that impulse, and crossed into Bill's office. He stumbled over the big bearskin rug as he went in; it was back in its old place, between the doorway and Bill's table. He gave the grinning muzzle a kick in passing.

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and threw himself into Bill's chair with knitted brow.

The lesson went on in the school-room. He heard the murmur of Small Brown's voice—and the murmur of other voices. The bunch were not giving Mr. Brown a lot of attention—as was their way when Bill was not on hand. From where he sat Dick saw Steve Carson come out of the school-room and go out at the porch, no doubt to wash the ink off his face at the pump. He glanced in at the open doorway of the office as he passed, and gave Dick an inky glare. Then he went out to the pump.

A few minutes later, there was a crash of hurried footsteps coming back to the schoolhouse.

Dick, who was looking at Bill's rifle, elung on the wall over the schoolmaster's desk, stared round. Big Steve came bolting in from the playground, his half-washed face, still inky, streaming wet. The look on it fixed Dick's attention, and he stared hard. Big Steve's face was chalky with terror, where the ink was washed off. His eyes were staring from his head. He bolted into the hallway from the porch, and ran for the school-room.

"What—" exclaimed Dick Carr.

Something in the playground had terrified Big Steve almost out of his wits. Dick stepped to the office doorway and looked down the hallway to the porch. What he saw made his face as pale as Big Steve's. Framed against the sunlight in the open porch was a gigantic and terrible form. Dick's heart thumped against his ribs.

"The grizzly!"

It was strangely like the pretended grizzly that had fooled him that morning. But it was no trick this time.

It was the grizzly bear that had been driven from Squaw Mountain—with daubs of dried blood on its fur, foam on its fearful jaws, hunger and ferocity burning in its little red eyes. No wonder Steve Carson had come bolting in, at that fearful vision in the playground. Dick Carr stood transfixed, staring at the animal; then, as the bear came shambling in, he slammed the office door.

"B'ar! B'ar!" Steve was panting as he burst into the school-room.

"Aw! Can it!" grinned Slick Poindexter. "The tenderfoot ain't here, Steve—"

Steve, unheeding, grabbed at the school-room door to slam it. But his hands were shaking with terror. From the hallway came a fearful growl that startled every ear. Steve had the school-room door half-shut, and all the fellows were on their feet, when a heavy paw struck the door and sent it spinning open again, almost knocking Steve over.

There was a yell of wild alarm.

"B'ar!"

"The grizzly!"

"Oh! Help! Help!" shrieked Small Brown, blinking in terror at the fearful figure as it shambled into the school-room. From the bear came a deep-throated roar. Its little red eyes burned at the scattering crowd of scared school-boys. It was wounded—hungry—fierce and savage—a more dangerous and deadly beast than the tiger in the jungle. Its foam-flecked jaws were open as it shambled towards the terrified bunch.

It was no false alarm this time. The hunted, hungry beast from Squaw Mountain had found its way to Packsaddle School. And Bill, the only man who could have tackled it, was away.

The Packsaddlers had laughed loud and long at Dick Carr's scare that morning. They did not feel like laughing

now. They scattered from the desks with yells of alarm and terror. Some of them leaped for the windows; others ran and dodged among the desks. Small Brown skipped like a frightened gopher. The fearful beast was famished, and he had come for food! Wildly the bunch scattered and dodged and fled up and down the big school-room, the grizzly shambling and growling in fierce pursuit. Only the fact that his attention turned from one to another saved at least one of the bunch from being dragged down in his terrible claws. But it could not have lasted many minutes.

In Bill's office Dick Carr heard the frantic yelling and shrieking with beating heart.

He had slammed the door, from instinct, to shut out that fearful visitor. But now he opened it again and looked across the hallway into the open door of the big school-room.

He saw Slick Poindexter, his face like chalk, leap over a desk, barely evading a clutching claw. He saw Mick Kavanagh pitch over the blackboard as the bear leaped at him, and dodge, just escaping a slash from talons as sharp as razors.

Dick's face was white—but he was cool! He remembered Bill's rifle on the wall. He had heard that it was kept ready loaded, and he hoped that it was.

He leaped across the room and grasped the rifle from the wall. With the weapon in his hands, he rushed back across the hallway to the school-room.

Bill's Winchester was a heavy weapon, but Dick did not notice its weight. Inside the school-room he dropped on one knee, clamping the butt of the rifle to his shoulder. He was cool—cool as ice—and he needed all his coolness.

Bang!

In the wild excitement the schoolboys had not even seen him, or known that he was there, till the rifle roared. Steve Carson had clambered onto a window, and was dragging himself up when the grizzly reached him. A terrible claw was lifted to drag him back, and in a moment more the bully of Packsaddle would have been in the clutches of the grizzly. It was well for Big Steve at that fearful moment that a steady eye was looking along the barrel of Bill's rifle, that a finger steady as steel was on the trigger.

The bullet struck the grizzly on the jaw and glanced. But the sudden crash of hot lead made the huge animal swing round with a savage growl, and Steve Carson dragged himself up into the window out of reach. The roar of the Winchester was followed by a yell:

"The tenderfoot!" howled Mick.

"Shoot!" shouted Slick. "Oh, shoot!"

Bang, bang! Dick fired twice with a steady hand, and each bullet crashed into the huge furry form.

With a growl of rage and pain, the grizzly turned on Dick Carr, shambling across the pine-plank floor at him with a speed that seemed incredible in so huge and heavy an animal.

Shouting voices died away—the Packsaddle bunch gazed spellbound. Small Brown, from the farthest corner of the long room, blinked dizzily over his horn-rimmed glasses, which had slid down his nose. Not a fellow in the bunch could believe that the tenderfoot dared remain where he was, facing the rush of the enraged grizzly. But Dick Carr did not stir.

He was still, still as a figure in bronze, aiming. He knew that he had time for only one more shot before the fearful brute reached him. And he aimed with

(Continued on page 23.)

MORE THRILLS FROM OUR SUPER ST. FRANK'S STORY!

The SECRET WORLD!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

Amazing Discoveries!

IN the Titan, a super airship, a party of St. Frank's boys and Moor View School girls depart for the Arctic with Lord Dorrimore, Nelson Lee, and Umlooi, Dorrie's negro companion. They go in search of a missing explorer, but the airship gets caught in a violent storm, and is swept on into the Arctic Circle at the mercy of the gale. After a time it grows unbearably hot, and the Titan passes over an immense volcano. The storm abates, but it is still very hot, and through the swirling mists the airship party see a warm glow like sunlight filling the whole horizon ahead.

"What—what does it mean, sir?" asked Nipper helplessly.

"Heaven may know, my boy, but I don't," replied Nelson Lee huskily. "We are within the Arctic Circle—in the Polar regions. And, as every schoolboy knows, the Spring Equinox does not begin until March—and that heralds the coming of the Arctic 'day'—a day which lasts for half a year. It ought to be dark here now—or dim, continuous twilight—week in and week out."

"And yet it's dazzling, sir—like mid-summer in England!" breathed Reggie Pitt.

"But—but it's all impossible!" said Handforth. "How can there be this heat near the North Pole—and this light?"

"Keep cool, young 'uns!" said Lord Dorrimore. "I'm goin' along to the navigation-room now. I'll try to find out what's doin'. We're on an even keel, by the look of things."

He hurried off, and when he got into Captain Waring's presence the latter was looking like a dazed man.

"It's no good asking me what's happened, sir," he said dully. "I think I must be going mad, or something. My instruments tell me that we're not many hundred miles from the North Pole—and here we are sailing through something which looks suspiciously like tropical daylight!"

"How's the airship?" asked Dorrie breathlessly.

"Still whole," said the skipper. "But several of our balloonnets have burst, by what I can see—that heat was too much for her. We're losing gas now, and we're dropping."

"You mean we're likely to crash?"

"No—it's only a slow descent," replied Captain Waring. "And I'm increasing it, too—I'm tipping her nose downwards deliberately. I want to get out of this cloudbank if I can. We're nearly fifteen thousand feet up, even now!"

"The mist's thinning, sir!" said one of the officers.

They crowded to the great observation window, which provided a clear view of everything ahead of the airship and below her.

The officer was right. The wreaths

were thinning. The Titan, nose tilting downwards, was plunging steeply, her engines still working well. And as she dropped lower, so the mists cleared. There was dead calmness now, and the heat, too, had grown less fierce—although it was still tremendous.

Dorrie hurried back amidships to report the good news—for it was good news, indeed, to know that the airship was still more or less under control, and that the loss of gas was not serious. But as he entered the saloon he had no opportunity of speaking; for Handforth was shouting at the top of his voice.

"There it is again!" he was yelling. "Trees! A forest! I tell you I saw— Oh, rats! The mist keeps—"

He broke off, the words failing on his lips. Everybody was staring out of the windows—and the silence that followed Handforth's words had been occasioned by dumbfounded amazement.

At last the airship had dropped below the level of the mists. She had fallen out of them just as she would drop from a cloudbank. She was still between eight and ten thousand feet high, but now the earth was visible below.

And it was no waste of Arctic snow that the voyagers looked upon, but a great sweeping vista of green countryside. The green was curiously pale—almost like that of hothouse plants. But there were forests visible—fields, rivers,

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and hills and valleys. And there, right in the dim distance, a sea, or a lake, its blue waters stretching away into the infinity of the horizon.

And then the vocal chords of the watchers lost their paralysis. A score of shouts broke out at once.

"Land! Oh, look—look!"

Nelson Lee turned to Dorrie.

"It's no good lookin' at me, old man," said his lordship helplessly. "It's more than I can understand!"

"But are we actually in the Arctic Circle?"

"So the skipper swears," declared Dorrie. "Personally, I should say we've dropped into the region of the Amazon—"

"This is a place that no man on earth has ever seen!" interrupted Lee grimly. "There's no such delicate green as this on the Amazon, Dorrie! By James, look at the colour of it!"

Lord Dorrimore passed a hand over his brow.

"Unless it was absolutely impossible, I should imagine we had left the old earth and dropped on to some other planet," he muttered. "What about the sun, Lee? This light! Where does it come from? It's not sunlight, an' yet it's nearly as strong!"

He stared outwards, and as they were dropping lower and lower, so they could see the pall of mist above them—that pall which they had dropped through. It now hung overhead like an enormous luminous roof. There was something extraordinary in its appearance. As far as the eye could reach, the whole upper sky seemed to be filled with the sun-like radiance. And below lay the delicately green-tinted landscape.

"No; it's not sunlight, Dorrie," said Nelson Lee. "You remember that raging cauldron of molten fire we caught sight of? It seemed close, but I'll guarantee it was between fifty and a hundred miles away! A gigantic volcano! Outside there are the Arctic snows—the everlasting cold of the Polar regions. But the enormous heat from that super-volcano is the cause of these vaporous mists. The luminosity spreads for hundreds of miles and thus provides the light. Perhaps there are other volcanoes, too."

"Can't we open some of these windows?" shouted his lordship suddenly. "What's the air like? Let's find out! We're gettin' lower every minute, an' unless we do something, I shall go crazy!"

They eagerly unfastened the sealed windows. They were hermetically secure, so that no trace of the outer air could enter. But now the fastenings were thrown back, and the windows dropped into their slots.

Cooling air now came in, to relieve the stifling atmosphere of the saloons. But it was not an icy blast, but a dry, equable air of moderate temperature. Every window was treated in the same way, and the St. Frank's fellows and the Moor View girls leaned out, staring downwards.

The captain had shut off his engines, and the great airship was drifting and getting lower and lower as the time went on. She was now not much higher than a few thousand feet, and that landscape was becoming clearer.

Reggie Pitt pointed.

"Knock me on the head, somebody!" he panted. "But is that an old-fashioned stone castle down there, or am I just going off my rocker!"

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Into the Middle Ages!

"A CASTLE!" yelled Handforth. "An old Norman castle, with towers and turrets and keep, and everything complete!"

Well, I'm jiggered!"

"Then—then this place is inhabited!"

"And look over there!" shouted somebody. "There's a whole town over there—right in the distance!"

It certainly seemed that this was a fact, and there was no question about the castle almost immediately beneath. And now that one had been seen, there were others visible—quaint old places, with moats and drawbridges. It was as though the St. Frank's party had dropped back into the period of the Middle Ages. Here, beneath them, was a picture of what Britain might have been like in medieval times!

There were roads, wooded parks, and great stretches of pastureland. Cattle, too, peacefully grazing, with dotted villages, and the tiny figures moving about which told of human presence.

"Can't you explain it, sir?" asked Nipper helplessly, appealing to Nelson Lee.

"I am afraid that I cannot," replied the schoolmaster-detective, shaking his head. "We are thankful at being alive, Nipper; for I can truly confess that I never believed for a moment that we should escape death in that terrible vortex of Arctic blizzards. And yet here we are—in a new world!"

"Looks more like an old world to me!" said Reggie Pitt.

"But here is the point—this is a world that we know nothing of," continued Lee. "In spite of all our knowledge, all our progress, all our exploration, no man of our own great world has ever set eyes on this place!"

"But—how can you explain it, sir?" asked a dozen voices.

"Well, judging by what I have seen, it seems possible that this place is a kind of oasis," Lee said, pointing out through the open window. "You see the great mountain ranges on every side, with their summits changing into glaciers, and vanishing into the everlasting mists. It matters not in which direction we look, we see these encircling peaks. We have been pitchforked over the rim of this basin, so to speak, and are comparatively safe. Indeed, we are perfectly safe from any further Arctic storm. This is a haven of refuge—a place of continuous calm, with a ring of raging elements surrounding it."

He continued to point.

"We must have passed over fifty miles of country already, and there is that great lake ahead—itself fifty miles from shore to shore, if I am any judge," he went on. "And there, I believe, is more land—perhaps of an even greater extent than this."

"The oasis must be two or three hundred miles across, then?" ejaculated Pitt.

"No less," agreed Lee, nodding. "I imagine there must be not one gigantic volcano, but many. Looking at the thing from a scientific point of view, the heat is concentrated within this enormous basin, the volcanoes providing constant light, by means of reflection. See? The entire pall of mist is luminous, providing the oasis with a false daylight."

"And, a false heat, too," said Lord Dorrimore quickly. "Why, it's almost sub-tropical, Lee! Gad, look at the people down there! They're gettin' excited, by all appearances!"

They were drifting still—drifting over

towards the great lake. And below them they could see figures running in hundreds. They were too high up to see the mode of dress, or the type of people that lived here. But these Norman castles were significant, for they were of the real European type, of which many are still standing to this day.

"It's beyond me!" said Dorrie helplessly. "Why hasn't this place been discovered? Didn't Peary get to the Pole? Didn't Commander Byrd fly over it? Others, too, I believe—"

"On the face of it, it seems remarkable that such a place as this could have been missed," interrupted Nelson Lee. "But it is not so very puzzling, after all. Arctic explorers are generally prone to stick to well-established routes, Dorrie. And even if this basin is five hundred miles from end to end, and an equal distance broad, it is only a fragment of the whole Polar region. And you must remember the terrible storms we passed through—storms, I am convinced, which are raging just beyond the rim of this oasis continuously, everlastingly, caused by the sudden difference in temperature. Here we are in the centre of the area, and at peace. But encircling the oasis is that raging chain of cyclonic blizzards. No explorers on foot could or would venture into this, and thus men like Peary saw nothing whatever of this undreamed-of land. And any airman who has flown over the Pole, or in the region of the Pole, has been kept away by the same reason—the violence of the storms. We, being adrift, could not help ourselves, and were sent hurtling into this place over the top of the protecting mountain ranges, whether we wanted to be hurled or not."

"Then it looks pretty cheerful for gettin' back again!" smiled his lordship.

"Back!" echoed Lee. "We'll never be able to fight our way through those blizzards again! Let us be thankful that we are safe—and, at least, our wireless is intact, and there is no reason why we should not be in constant communication with the outer world!"

"Gad, that's true!" agreed Dorrie excitedly. "An' we've made the discovery of the age, Lee! Great glory! I've always wanted to make a name as an explorer, but this will beat everythin' in the world's history!"

"By George!" shouted Handforth, "if we can still send wireless messages to England, we shall be able to tell everybody about this place. And they'll get up rescue parties—"

"Let us think of our position at the moment, my boy," interrupted Lee quietly. "We have plenty of time to make plans for the immediate future. Our one problem now is to land safely."

Everybody looked at him sharply.

"Why, sir, is there a chance we might be in—danger?" asked Nipper.

"I am afraid there is," replied Nelson Lee. "Danger from two sources."

"Two, sir?"

"You must all know that bringing an airship to earth is a delicate and dangerous operation, where there are no willing hands on earth to assist," replied Lee grimly. "It takes hundreds of men to do it without a mooring-mast. In other words, boys, we shall have to land, and chance it. And the airship is not even airworthy now. I am giving you this warning so that you may be well prepared. I don't want to alarm you, but you must be ready to obey orders without a second's hesitation."

"All right, sir!"

"Trust us, Mr. Lee!"

"I am sure I can—all of you, including the girls," replied Lee, smiling. "I do not know what Captain Waring's plans are, but we can be sure that he will take the best possible steps in the circumstances."

"You mentioned two dangers, old man," said Dorrie.

"I did," replied Lee. "There is a danger from these people below us. This airship is probably a demoniac monster to them, and we may have a great deal of difficulty in making ourselves understood—or assuring them that our coming is friendly. We must take nothing for granted, but must be ready to act."

None of the young explorers, however, took much notice of Nelson Lee's timely words. They were too enthralled by everything they saw. It seemed to

old man! It's more like William the Conqueror's period!"

The Crash!

"LOOK!" said Doris, as she levelled her own glasses. "Oh, Reggie, just look at those men! What terrible-looking brutes!"

"They're not particularly handsome, are they?" asked Reggie. "By Jove, I've seen a few ruffians in my time, but these beggars are an awful-looking crowd!"

There was no doubt about it. The inhabitants of this extraordinary country were fierce, savage-looking men. Through the glasses the juniors could see those horsemen on the ground below. Most of them were looking

prosper! We shall drop out of the frying-pan into the fire!"

Handforth granted

"We can fight, can't we?" he demanded fiercely.

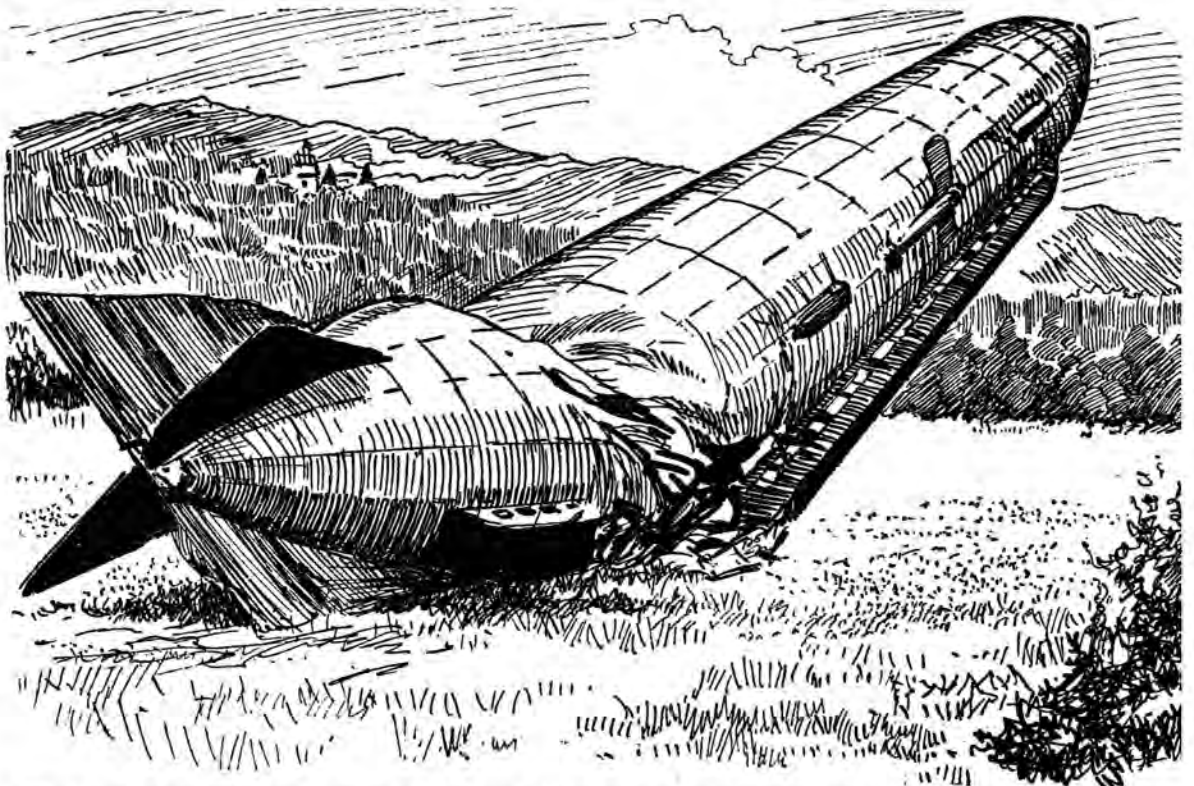
"That won't do much good," said Church, shaking his head. "Look over there! By jingo, there must be thousands of men, and they all seem to be soldiers, too! And look at all the ships drawn up on the beach of the lake! Hundreds of them! They all use paddles, though."

Handforth grunted.

"We can fight for our lives!" he said firmly. "By George! What about guns? You've a revolver, haven't you, Dorrie?"

"I've got an automatic," admitted his lordship, "and so has Mr. Lee."

"Umlosi's got his spear—" began Pitt.



With the ground only twenty feet below, the nose of the Titan tilted acutely upwards. The tail ground into the earth, and there was a tearing and shrieking of fabric and metal as the back of the airship was broken!

them that there could be no possible danger. The airship was drifting steadily on an even keel, and she appeared to be under perfect control.

By this time they were down to within three thousand feet, and some of the juniors had dashed off and had secured binoculars.

"It's like fairyland!" breathed Irene Manners, as she gazed through the glasses. "There's a whole city on the lakeside over here, with an enormous castle on the hill in the centre!"

"Yes, Renie; you're right!" said Pitt eagerly. "And can you see those horsemen? Great Scott! They're all in armour, or chain-mail! They've got lances, too!"

"It's like England in the time of Boadicea!" roared Handforth.

"You ass!" said Church. "They didn't have Norman castles in Boadicea's time! You've got mixed,

upwards, their faces full of amazement and fear. There were other inhabitants on foot, and these latter were not dressed in armour or chain-mail, but in simple garb. And it was curious that their clothing should remind the watchers of pictures they had seen depicting scenes from the history of England during the Middle Ages.

And all-mounted men and others—were burly, coarse-looking brutes. Most of them were full-bearded, and their faces were expressive of everything that was savage and violent.

"The gov'nor was right!" muttered Nipper, drawing in his breath. "I'm afraid we should be in a bad fix if we fell into their hands! They wouldn't even give us a chance to explain—"

"If!" echoed Watson. "There's not much 'if' about it! We've got to land some time, and we're bound to fall into their hands. Oh, corks, what a lively

"Wau!" rumbled Umlosi, his eyes shining with battle. "I smell a fight, N'Kose!"

"You would!" snapped Dorrie. "You'd smell a fight two hundred miles off, you bloodthirsty old beggar!"

"Methinks this land is better than the regions of everlasting snows," said the African chief gloatingly. "For do I not behold warriors? Is there not the odour of battle in my nostrils? Wau! 'Tis well, my father! If there is fighting to be done, I, Umlosi, will lead the attack!"

Lord Dorrmore smiled grimly.

"You may lead it, Umlosi, but I'm afraid it wouldn't last long," he replied. "After one look at those fellows down there, I've come to the conclusion that we'd better be friendly with 'em. We've got some machine-guns on board—fitted in those whippet aeroplanes—but I hope

to Heaven we shall never have to use 'em! If we start any fightin' in this place, our number will be on the board!"

"We've got to land first, Dorrie," said Nipper, with a glance round. "And as far as I can see, we're going to land in the lake!"

"Yes; the steering-gear is out of order," agreed Russell. "We can't turn back, and we're getting lower all the time! Gee, it's beginning to look serious!"

The juniors had suddenly become alive to the danger. By this time the airship had dropped to little more than fifteen hundred feet, and was drifting continuously over the wide expanse of the lake. The land was receding in the rear, with its castles and its towns and its men in armour.

Were the explorers doomed to drop into the lake, and thus perish?

Until now nobody had considered the possibility. But the juniors and the girls exchanged startled glances as they noticed the inevitable drift of the helpless airship. They could see right down into the water, and it was surprisingly clear. Even the elusive forms of great fishes could be seen, shooting about in the limpid depths.

But interest in the scene had gone.

It was suddenly realised that Nelson Lee's warning had been timely—that there might be stark danger ahead. Somehow the young adventurers had taken it for granted that they could land. After their awful experiences in the blizzards, this calm air seemed perfectly safe.

But what if the airship dropped into this inland sea? It seemed to be about double as wide as the English Channel!

And although they could see the opposite shore in the far distance, it was obviously impossible for anybody on land to see across it.

"Hallo!" shouted De Valerie. "The engines are going!"

"Hurrah!"

"They're getting her under control!"

"Do not jump to hasty conclusions, brothers!" said William Napoleon Browne gravely. "We must hope for the best, but, at the same time, we must prepare for the worst!"

However, most of them were thrilled by the sound of the throbbing engines. It proved, at least, that the airship's captain was doing something to mitigate the danger. The truth was, the airship was leaking badly. And even now half the members of her crew were preparing to throw everything overboard of a heavy nature.

Captain Waring knew, even if the others did not, that it would need every ounce of his skill to avoid death, in addition to destruction. The latter was certain, for no power on earth could save the airship from crashing. But her nose was pointing across the lake towards the opposite shore. If only her pace could be hastened, and if only she could be kept afloat, there was a chance of getting her down on dry land. And that might mean safety for her precious human freight.

And then commenced the fight.

Men were working feverishly on the steering-gear, and this was partially restored. The airship could now be certain of her direction, and, as she forged ahead, the far-distant shore of the lake came steadily nearer. But all the time she was dropping—slowly, but unquestionably she was dropping. Only a

matter of six or seven hundred feet now separated her from the surface of the lake. Would it be possible to get across that great stretch of water?

"It's going to be a near thing!" muttered Nipper, his face pale and his eyes anxious. "In fact, we shall never do it unless she's lightened. The gas is escaping all the time, and she's just a dead weight!"

"Oh, my goodness!"

"Let—let's dash into the cabins and grab the beds and things!" roared Handforth. "Let's chuck everything overboard we can!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Come on, you chaps!"

It was rather curious that Handforth should get that idea, for just then Nelson Lee himself came hurrying along from the navigation-room.

"Boys, there's a chance!" he shouted.

"Hurrah!"

"It is just possible that we may succeed in reaching the other shore, but only if we jettison everything of a movable nature!" went on Nelson Lee urgently. "The crew are starting already; they are scrapping the electric dynamos, and everything of a similar nature. All hands to the pumps!"

"There you are!" yelled Handforth. "What did I tell you?"

There was a quick rush, and during the next five minutes the scene was an astonishing one. Beds were wrenched from their fastenings in the cabins, dragged to the windows, and slung overboard into the water below. The furniture of the saloon itself was torn down and sacrificed.

It seemed a terrible waste—but it was a case of life or death.

As each batch of stuff went overboard, so the great airship rose, and before long she was nearly two thousand feet high again. By now they were almost half-way across the great stretch of water, and they hardly had time to take stock of several rocky islands which jutted up hereabouts. There were ships in one or two of the coves, and men among the rocks, too. But the airship, travelling fast, soon passed these islands and left them well behind.

"It's all right, boys! Ease off!" shouted Lord Dorrimore, as he ran along. "The skipper says he can make it now. Better not lighten her any more. The lower we sink the better, as long as we can get to the land."

"Right you are, sir! But we're ready to tear up the floors, if you give us the word!" shouted Handforth.

They all watched with intense eagerness.

The captain's task was a difficult one indeed. As everybody knew, it required the utmost skill to bring such a huge dirigible to earth. But when the dirigible is disabled and sinking from lack of gas, a crash is absolutely unavoidable.

The captain's task was to engineer this crash in such a fashion that no lives would be lost—not only the lives of those on board, but the lives of the people who lived in this strange land. For it would be an ill omen if they killed a number of the natives in bringing the airship to earth.

As for the passengers, they could now do nothing but wait.

"By jingo, look at the land here!" shouted Nipper, as he leaned out of a window and pointed to a rolling vista of countryside ahead. "We thought the other side was good, but this is heaps better! Look at these moated castles! Look at the great town, nestling on the

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lake shore! And the roads, and the cultivated fields!"

They could see it all—in the near distance. The crippled airship was down to six hundred feet again, and within half a mile of the shore. It was obviously Captain Waring's intention to bring the Titan down on the beach itself. But he was defeated in his object.

When the great vessel arrived over the beach, she was still three hundred feet in the air, and drifting onwards like some disabled monster. Her size now seemed terrific. So near to the ground, and doomed for a crash, there was something absolutely terrifying in the aspect of her. Over the house-tops she glided, and now the watchers could hear the shouts of men and the screams of women.

Somehow the captain just managed to tilt the Titan's nose upwards, and with a drunken roll she answered to the call, and forged a hundred feet farther into the air. But then she began to sag back again. The danger for the moment was over, however, and she had cleared the city, and here a hill rose up, and it seemed that the crash was now certain. Indeed, for the moment the startled passengers thought that they were going to be sent to destruction on the walls of a great castle which surrounded the hill-top.

But again the captain's skill saved the situation, for the airship swung lazily round, and skimmed past the castle wall, with only a bare yard or two to spare.

Beyond lay a valley, and this proved a blessing indeed. For, with the ground dropping away, there was now a little air-room. And this valley was grassy, without houses or trees. It was, perhaps, three or four miles inland, and in every direction stretched the wooded, fertile country, with cultivated fields everywhere.

Only one or two glimpses of the people had been seen, but they seemed to be of a very different type to the bearded brutes on the other side of the oasis. Most of them were fair, and they bore no signs of savagery. But the voyagers had only obtained the merest glimpses. They were thinking of their own danger.

And a very real danger it was, too. Once the airship crashed, she would naturally drag along on her keel, and that meant the destruction of the saloons and cabins, and the death or frightful injury of those within. By a brilliant piece of strategy, Captain Waring avoided the tragedy.

At the last moment, when the ground was only twenty feet below, the nose of the airship tilted acutely upwards. The tail ground into the earth, and there was a tearing and shrieking of metal and fabric. Then, with a lurching, rolling motion, the great bulk of the airship swung over on to her side. Those within the passenger cabins were flung into violent heaps.

With a broken back and a crushed stern, the Titan settled down, and lay there, sprawling over the fair grassland, a pile of wreckage.

Safe!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH fought for breath.

To move was impossible, for not only were Irene Manners and Doris Berkeley sprawling over him, but there were others in the tangled heap. Over half a dozen of them had been flung into that corner, and for a moment they were too dazed to move.

Eastwood League.

SAINTS' FORWARDS IN FORM. RIVER HOUSE ROUTED.

Special Phone Message by E. O. Handforth.

A sprained wrist keeping me out of the St. Frank's eleven, I decided to watch St. Jim's big battle with Hal Brewster & Co. of the River House. St. Jim's led off at a fast pace, notching two goals through Merry, and appearing good for half a dozen at least! But Brewster & Co. rallied, and St. Jim's were forced on the defensive. An inspired piece of work by Brewster lessened the deficit, after which River House were awarded a corner-kick. As the ball dropped in the goalmouth, three of the River House team rushed at it and carried the leather over the line by sheer weight of numbers. The second period saw St. Jim's in the ascendant again. River House were tiring, and they were powerless to stem the St. Jim's tide. D'Arcy and Blake added goals, and Merry took a brace. Figgins scored one from a penalty for "hands," and D'Arcy got the eighth and last. River House played as well as they were allowed to play!

ST. FRANK'S THIRD DEFEAT.

For their League match away from home with Claremont, St. Frank's were without Edward Oswald Handforth, their goalkeeper. But they anticipated no trouble in beating their opponents, who are near the bottom of the table. Early in the game Tommy Watson scored for St.

The saloon was tilting over, and a great crack had developed in its side. But the actual crash had been comparatively mild, and nobody was suffering from anything worse than bruises and scratches.

"Oh, help!" gurgled Handforth. "I—I'm flattened!"

Gradually the foremost juniors picked themselves up and struggled out of the mass. They helped the girls up.

"Oh, Ted!" breathed Irene, as she hopped about, clutching on to one of the other fellows. "We must have nearly killed you! I believe my ankle's twisted, but I seem to be all right otherwise."

"Don't—don't mind me!" gurgled Handforth, as he struggled up. "I'm all right, except for about five broken ribs, and—"

"Oh!" cried Doris. "Are you hurt, Ted?"

He flushed. "Sorry—I was only kidding," he said, with a wry smile. "I think I'm all right really."

By this time Nelson Lee had struggled in, and there was an expression of thankfulness upon his face. Lord Dorrmore appeared from the other corridor, and, although blood was streaming from a gash on the side of his face, he was smiling.

"Gad, I thought we were all goin' to Kingdom Come that time!" he panted. "But we're on dry land, an' we don't seem to have come to much harm."

"Climb out as quickly as you can, and don't stop for anything," urged Nelson Lee. "Boys, help the girls out, and don't lose a second!"

"Right you are, sir!" "Quickly—quickly!" shouted the schoolmaster-detective.

They rather wondered at his urgent tone, for it seemed to them that the

Frank's, but then things began to go wrong, and Claremont assumed the upper hand. Before the interval arrived they had taken the lead with two smart goals by Baxter. After the interval, however, Nipper equalised for St. Frank's with a rasping shot. But Claremont came again, and first Baxter and then Merrivale put on goals for them. Ten minutes from time St. Frank's launched several strong attacks to pull the game out of the fire, but only once were they successful, Nipper netting from a corner, and Claremont ran out winners by 4—3.

FULL RESULTS.

RIVER HOUSE	2	ST. JIM'S	8
Brewster (2)		Merry (4)	
		D'Arcy (2)	
		Blake, Figgins	
CLAREMONT	4	ST. FRANK'S	3
Baxter (3)		Watson,	
Merrivale		Nipper (2)	
ABBOTSFORD	1	RYLCOMBE	2
		G. S.	
BAGSHOT	2	HIGHCLIFFE	3
REDCLYFFE	3	GREYFRIARS	7
ST. JUDE'S	0	ROOKWOOD	3

LEAGUE TABLE.

	P.	W.	D.	L.	F.	A.	Pts.
St. Jim's	15	10	3	2	80	34	23
Greyfriars	15	10	3	2	68	29	23
Rylcombe G.	15	10	3	2	46	31	23
St. Frank's	15	10	2	3	60	36	22
Highcliffe	15	8	3	4	46	27	19
Rookwood	15	8	3	4	52	40	19
River House	14	5	4	5	37	38	14
Abbotsford	14	4	1	9	19	45	9
Bagshot	15	2	4	9	18	35	8
Claremont	14	3	1	10	26	56	7
Redclyffe	14	2	2	10	22	63	6
St. Jude's	15	0	3	12	11	51	3

worst danger was now over. But Nelson Lee's acute anxiety was not without reason. If there was one deadly peril to be feared, it was—fire!

Nobody knew what had happened to the other part of the airship. At any moment there might be an explosion—just a spark, and then the great petrol tanks would be alight.

And so it became a scramble. Through the open windows the juniors let themselves down, helping the girls at the same time.

From other parts of the vessel the officers and crew were escaping.

Soon everyone was clear. The petrol tank, containing thousands of gallons of unused spirit, was intact. Astonishingly enough, too, two of the whippet aeroplanes were unharmed, and they hung there from the great distorted body, looking curiously small. Even the motor-boat was still clamped on, and had come to no damage.

"Wouldn't it be a good idea, captain, to get those aeroplanes free, and to pull them away?" asked Nelson Lee, as he came hurrying up. "As the gas escapes there may be a movement of the great body, and it would be a pity to have them crushed and destroyed. They may be useful."

"By glory, you're right!" said Dorrie. "Quick, men!"

Many willing hands helped, and, although it was a difficult enough task, the two uninjured aeroplanes were freed from their grappling hooks and wheeled well clear.

And in the meantime, the St. Frank's fellows were looking about them. At close quarters this strange land was even more wonderful than it had seemed from the air.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the next nerve-tingling chapters of this great serial!)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,407.

From Footlights to Form-master!

(Continued from page 16.)

"His brother!" ejaculated the Head.
"Exactly!" Austin Wodyer, of the Trivoliety Music Hall and the Boss Circuit, said the comedian, with a bow. "Please don't run away with the idea that there is any fraud in the case, sir. I came here to do poor Arthur a favour, though I suppose I've only messed the thing up for him, as a matter of fact. But the best laid schemes of mice and men—you know the rest."

"Will you kindly explain why you have played this extraordinary trick?" asked the Head, his stern look changing to one of perplexity. "I cannot think that you are a common swindler and impostor."

"That would be rather rough on me," said Mr. Wodyer. "I am nothing of the kind. I am an actor, and I happened to be out of a shop just now, and Arthur is laid up with influenza. He had accepted the offer of a post here, hoping to be well in time to come. Then you sent a telegram, requiring him to

turn up at once. He couldn't; the doctor wouldn't let him leave his bed yet. What was to be done? This shop—excuse me, this post—was the chance of a lifetime for Arthur, and he had to let it slide. I hit on the idea of coming here as Arthur, filling the place till he was well and keeping it open for him—see?"

"Oh!" said the Head.

"We are very much alike; and we thought he would be able to change into my place, and nothing said about the matter," said Austin Wodyer. "You see, there was no harm intended. But I suppose I've done for Arthur, instead of helping him. It's beastly rough!"

The Head's face softened. He smiled a little.

"It was a very reckless proceeding on your part," he said. "It has alarmed Miss Glyn very much. She is a great friend of your brother's, and, finding another man passing under his name, she was very much alarmed, fearing that some misfortune had happened to Arthur Wodyer. It was a very reckless thing. But I'm glad to find that matters are no worse. You had better come with me and explain to Miss Glyn, and relieve her of her fears. As for your brother, I am sorry he is ill; and I shall certainly not allow this curious affair to interfere with his prospects here. You had certainly better leave St.

Jim's. But the post is open for your brother as soon as he is able to take it." "My only hat!" ejaculated Mr. Wodyer. "I must say you are a brick, sir!"

The Head smiled.

"Come with me to Miss Glyn," he said.

Tom Merry & Co. learned the curious facts a little later—in time to give Mr. Wodyer a cheer when he departed.

The comedian Form-master was gone, and Figgins & Co. were again without a Housemaster; but the kind old Head had taken a generous view of the matter, and the post was open, waiting for Arthur Wodyer to come and fill it.

"He was a jolly decent chap, what-eva he was, and I'm sorry he's gone," Arthur Augustus remarked. "I trust his brother will be as decent as he is."

To which Figgins replied heartily:

"Hear, hear!"

And D'Arcy's wish was fulfilled—as all the juniors of St. Jim's admitted when they saw Figgins & Co.'s new master.

(Next week: "TRUE BLUE!" Watch out for this powerful long gun, starring the new master of St. Jim's.)

The Tenderfoot's Triumph!

(Continued from page 22.)

cool care and fired with the huge brute hardly a dozen feet from him. And one of the blazing red eyes went out like an extinguished lamp, as the bullet crashed into it, and the great furry form rocked and rolled over.

Dick Carr panted. The sweat was running down his face. The grizzly, growling and roaring horribly, clawed and clutched, tearing great splinters from the floor in mad fury. Bang, bang! roared the Winchester, as Dick emptied the remaining shots into the struggling, writhing form. And with the last shot a shudder ran through the gigantic figure, and it lay still at last!

"Dead!" stuttered Slick Pointexter. He was the first to approach the grizzly, terrifying even in death. "Dead! And the tenderfoot's killed it!"

"Faith, and he's some lad entirely!" gasped Mick.

Dick Carr dropped the rifle. He stood unsteadily, mopping the sweat from his face. The grizzly lay dead before him, but he could hardly believe that it was dead—that he had killed it! He had saved lives that day—at least one life, probably many. Even Big Steve, as he dropped in from the window, looked at him with a new respect.

"Faith, it's a broth ar a boy ye are, and it's me that's telling ye so!" yelled Mick Kavanagh, and he rushed up to Dick and fairly hugged him. And the roar of a cheer, that woke all the echoes of Packsaddle School, greeted the ears of Bill Sampson as he rode in from the prairie.

"Say, you ginks, what's this game?" roared Bill, as he strode into the school-room. "You playing tricks agin, as soon as my doggoned eyes are off'n you?"

He glared at the grizzly for a second, taking it for his own bearskin and another practical joke. But that was

only for a second. His jaw dropped as he stared at the dead bear, lying in a pool of blood, and he realised the truth.

"Howling coyotes!" gasped the headmaster of Packsaddle. "Who shot that grizzly?"

Dick Carr grinned.

"The tenderfoot!" gasped Slick.

"Aw! What you giving me?" booted Bill.

"The goods!" gasped Mick. "It sure was the tenderfoot, Bill!"

Bill Sampson gazed at the bear, gazed at the bunch, and gazed at Dick Carr. Then he held out an enormous hand to the new boy at Packsaddle.

"Carry me home to die!" said Bill. "You've got me beat, and you the boot from Boobsville! Put it thar!"

Dick Carr grinned and "put it there." Bill gripped his hand. The next moment the new boy at Packsaddle hopped and yelled. Bill had a grip not unlike that of the grizzly!

(Next Wednesday: "THE TRUANT OF PACKSADDLE!"—telling of the boy who walked out on his Form-master!)



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