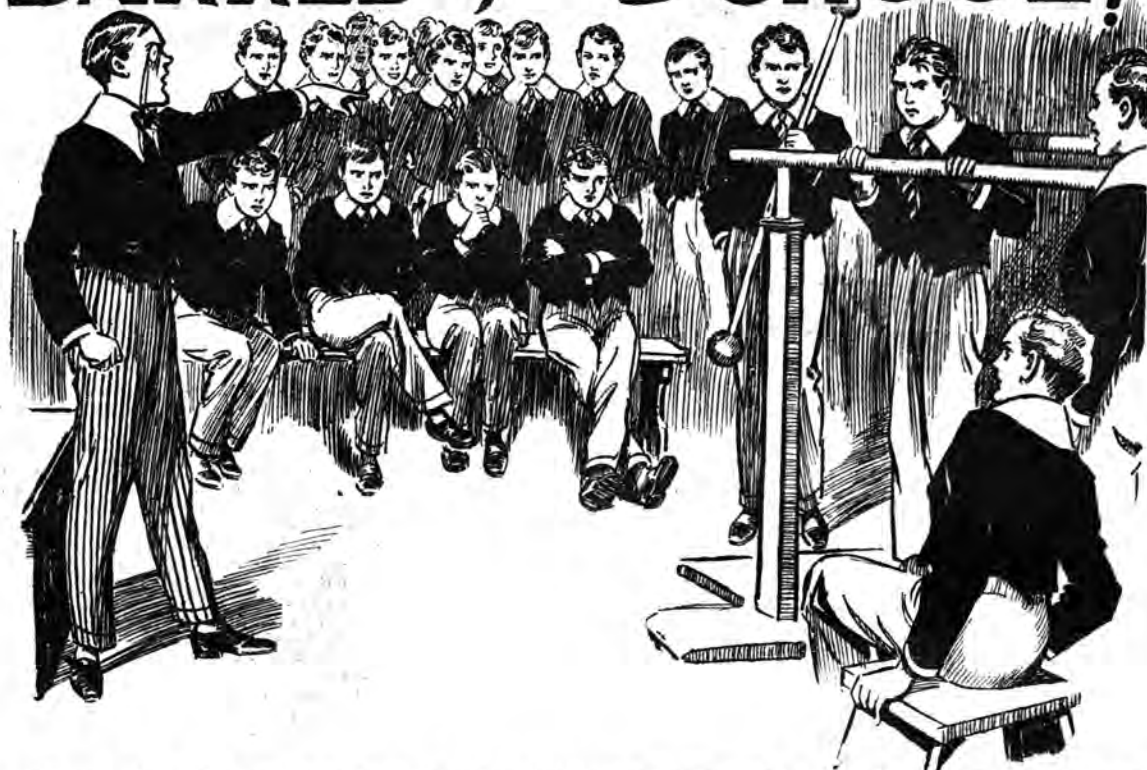


“THE BAD MAN FROM BAR-O!” Thrill-packed Tale of Texas School Adventure Inside. By FRANK RICHARDS

The GEM 2d



BARRED *by the* SCHOOL!



"Pwisonah at the bah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, magisterially, "I sentence you to be expelled ffrom the school you have disgwaced, and ordah that you forthwith be conducted ffrom St. Jim's and nevah be allowed to entah its pwecincts again!" "You can't do it!" exclaimed Levison. "You'll be flogged for this!"

CHAPTER 1.

The Indignation Meeting!

"**S**HAME!"
 "Rotten!"
 "Quite imposs, deah boys!"
 "We won't have it!"

"Never!"
 Tom Merry jumped upon a form in the Big Hall of St. Jim's, with an innumerable crowd of juniors surging round him. Tom Merry's face was red with excitement, and his blue eyes were blazing. He waved his hand.

"We won't stand it!" he shouted.
 "Who's going to back me up?"
 "There was a roar:
 "All of us!"

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth. "Ewevrybody will back you up like anythin', Tom Mewwy, deah boy!"

And the juniors roared and stamped their feet. St. Jim's was in a state of excitement that had seldom been equalled in the old school. Even the time when Figgins & Co. of the New House had barred out their House-master had not been equal to this. It was not a barring-out this time. There was no trouble between masters and boys. It was not a House row, for fellows of both Houses were mingling in the crowd in complete accord.

A roar filled the Big Hall from end to end.

More than two hundred juniors were there, and their united voices made a

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terrific din, and the old rafters of the Hall rang again with it.

Tom Merry held up his hand for silence.

But silence was not easy to obtain. It was an indignation meeting, and the juniors, being wildly indignant, were noisy, too. Jack Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy of the Fourth were all shouting together. Manners and Lowther of the Shell—Tom Merry's special chums—were roaring, and so were Figgins & Co. of the New House, though what they said could hardly be distinguished in the din. Redfern of the Fourth was waving his hand and evidently making a speech, but the speech was lost to the general car.

"Order!" bawled Kangaroo of the Shell, rapping on a form with a cricket stump.

"Silence!"
 "Silence for the chair!"
 "Gentlemen of St. Jim's!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Hear, hear!"
 "Shame!"
 "We won't stand it!"
 "Let's have him out!"
 "Hurrah!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Faith, and we'll kick him out!"

Tom Merry gasped for breath. His face was growing the colour of a freshly boiled beetroot in his efforts to make himself heard. The crowd of juniors surged to and fro in the wildest excitement. D'Arcy minor of the Third Form

and a crowd of other fags were stamping on the floor with their boots, with no apparent object but that of adding as much noise as possible to the din.

A prefect of the Sixth looked into the Hall from the upper end door. He shook his fist at the excited gathering. The juniors were not allowed, as a rule, to hold their meetings in Big Hall; but they had marched in and taken possession of it without even asking permission. Things were a little out of the usual order at St. Jim's that Wednesday afternoon.

"Clear out of here!" shouted Knox of the Sixth.

The juniors would not have listened even to Kildare, the captain of the school, at that moment. As for Knox, he was nobody to them, prefect or not. A roar of defiance answered him.

"Yah!"
 "Buzz off, or we'll bump you!"
 Two or three missiles hurled through the air towards Knox, and he dodged out of sight quickly enough.

Tom Merry waved his hand desperately.

"Fellows," he shouted, "we've got to decide on something, and do it before the masters come in and break up the meeting!"

"Yah!"
 "We won't let them!"
 "We'll bar 'em out!" roared Lawrence of the Fourth. "We've barred Ratty out of the New House once."

"Hear, hear!"
 Tom Merry frowned.

—GRIPPING LONG YARN STARRING YOUR OLD PALS OF ST. JIM'S!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

"Do listen to me!" he exclaimed. "I'm junior captain, and I call upon you to shut up!"

"Hear, hear!"
"Yaas, wathah! Dwy up, deah boys!"

"Gentlemen of the Lower School," proceeded Tom Merry, as there was a lull, "we don't want any trouble with the masters. The Head is a jolly old sport—"

"Hurrah!"
"And Mr. Railton is first chop, and so's Mr. Lathom!"

"Hear, hear!"
"We don't want to treat them badly, and we've got nothing to bar them out for. Our row is with a fellow who's disgraced St. Jim's!"

Loud groans.

"He has acted like an awful cad, and he nearly got Brooke of the Fourth sacked by forging a paper in his handwriting, insulting Mr. Lathom—"

"Good old Brooke!"

"And now he's found out, we want him sacked from the school."

"Yes, rather!"

"Yah!"

"Shame!"

"And we're going to have it!" said Tom Merry determinedly. "The Head would have sacked him as sure as a gun, but when he was found out he fell down in a fit, and he's been malingering ever since. We know Levison—"

Groans for Levison.

"We know he was only shamming all the time, and that he took the Head in, because he's an innocent old duck, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We know there's nothing whatever the matter with him, and that he's only malingering, and it's one of his dodges to save himself from being expelled. But we don't want a forger in the Fourth Form of St. Jim's."

"No fear!"

"Wathah not!"

"So we're not going to stand it. I propose a deputation to the Head of all the juniors of both Houses, to explain the matter, and insist upon our rights as decent chaps to have that awful cad sacked!"

"Hurrah!"

The suggestion was met with a roar of approval. The whole school, seniors as well as juniors, were incensed against the cad of the Fourth. It had been proved beyond doubt that Levison of the Fourth had copied Dick Brooke's handwriting in a document of an insulting nature which Mr. Lathom had found in his desk. And although the cad of the Fourth was now in bed in the school sanatorium, presumably ill, all the fellows who knew him knew that it was only one more of his inexhaustible dodges.

The news had been made known that afternoon that Levison was not to be expelled after all, and the juniors were furious. They were all convinced that he was taking the Head in, but they did not mean him to take them in as well. Levison had to go.

Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, strode in at the big door. There was a frown upon his handsome face as he surveyed the crowd of excited Lower School boys.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"You are not allowed to hold your meetings here! Clear out!"

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Go and eat coke!" roared Bernard Glyn of the Shell truculently. "This is an indignation meeting, and we don't want any prefects here."

"Yah!"

"Clear out yourself!"

"Hold on, you chaps!" exclaimed Tom Merry anxiously. "Don't buzz at Kildare. Kildare, old man, we're going in a deputation to the Head about Levison. We're going to insist upon his being sacked from the school!"

"Hear, hear!"

Kildare looked grimly at the captain of the Shell.

"Do you think the Head will let you dictate to him?" he asked. "Dr. Holmes has already said that Levison is not to be expelled. He is in delicate health now, and he is to be flogged later on; but the medical man advised Dr. Holmes to assure Levison that he should be let off expulsion, or the results might be serious. You may be sure that the Head did not want to keep him, but he's given his word now."

There was a roar.

"Levison was only pulling his leg!"

He's shamming!"

"You can't possibly know that!" said Kildare curtly.

"Oh, we know Levison!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We're going to depute to the

Head, anyway!" said Jack Blake of the Fourth. "We're going to put it to him plainly."

"Two hundred of you—in the Head's study?" asked Kildare sarcastically.

"No; we'll select a dozen or so, and the rest can stand under the Head's window in the quad and yell."

"Look here, you'd better clear off!"

But for once Kildare, the idol of the Lower School, was not obeyed. There was a sudden rush of Shell fellows and Fourth Formers, and Kildare was swept out into the passage and the door was slammed. He hammered on the outside of it a moment later, but Blake and Monty Lowther had their feet set against it.

"So much for Kildare!" grinned Figgins. "Now about the deputation!"

—

Kicked out of St. Jim's! The fate Ernest Levison had schemed for another junior comes home to roost when he is given "the order of the boot" by his Form-fellows. But that very action, which is in defiance of authority, is to prove lucky for Levison!

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time, and now, at the last, he had outdone all his previous rascalities, and again he had escaped the penalty.

The trick of falling in a pretended fit and affecting illness afterwards, until he was assured that he would not be expelled, was cunning enough, and it was not surprising that the kind and unsuspicious old Head had been deceived. The medical man from Rylcombe—fussy little old Dr. Short—had been deceived, too, but that was not difficult, for a little judicious flattery, which Levison knew only too well how to administer, and a willingness to swallow all sorts of medicines, however nasty, sufficed to gain the good will of Dr. Short.

Dr. Holmes had felt himself in an awkward position. He had intended to expel Levison for what he had done, as the whole school naturally expected. But the medical man's assurance that Levison was in a precarious state, owing to the fright he had received when he was found out, made the Head hesitate. Levison had played his game well, and Dr. Short fully believed that unless the culprit's mind was relieved on the subject of the expulsion, he would go from bad to worse. And so the Head had very reluctantly made up his mind to allow Levison to remain at St. Jim's, hoping that a public and severe flogging later on would have the effect of a lasting lesson to him.

That the boys would be dissatisfied with the verdict the Head knew, but he had not known that so wild an uproar would break out as soon as the boys learned that the cad of the Fourth was to remain.

For once the bonds of discipline were broken, and even the respect for the Head which the whole school felt could not make them bow to the decision.

Levison must go. On that the whole of the Lower School uproariously agreed; and the senior fellows, the Fifth and Sixth, felt the same about it, only they felt also that their great dignity as seniors forbade them to demonstrate on the subject as the Lower School were doing.

Kildare, outside the door of Big Hall, hammered on the upper panels with his fists, his handsome face quite crimson with anger. He had never been brushed aside like that before, and it was a shock to the captain of St. Jim's. But the Lower School were excited now, and did not much care what they did. They let Kildare hammer outside the door, while they arranged the deputation to the Head.

Half the Shell and the Fourth, and most of the Third, considered that they ought to be in the deputation, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy especially was convinced that he ought to be the head of it. There was much heated argument.

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Better select a dozen fellows from the Shell—"

"Rats! It's a Fourth Form bisney, and—"

"What price the Third?" roared Wally.

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here—"

"Weally, I considah—"

"Faith, and I think—"

"Order!" roared Tom Merry. "Look here, every Form in the Lower School ought to be represented—at any rate, the Shell, the Fourth, and the Third. We'll take four of the Shell, four of the Fourth, and two of the Third. That's more than enough."

"Good egg!"

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"Yaas, wathah!"

And that was agreed upon after much warm discussion. The suggestion that Mr. Railton might come in and break up the meeting hurried matters a little. The juniors did not contemplate shoving out a Housemaster as they had shoved out the head prefect of the School House.

Tom Merry, Manners, Lowther, and Thompson of the Shell were selected, and Blake, D'Arcy, Figgins, and Redfern of the Fourth, and Wally D'Arcy and Jameson of the Third. This having been arranged, the deputation prepared to march.

"All you fellows get under the Head's window," said Tom Merry. "We want a big crowd in sight, to show the Head that the whole school is behind us."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Give him a yell or so to show you're there," said Blake.

"Faith, and we'll raise Cain entirely!" said Reilly.

"Come on, then!"

The door was opened. Kildare, who was just hammering on it, almost fell in as it swung back. He turned a fierce look upon the juniors.

"You young rascals—"

"Sorry, Kildare, old man," said Tom Merry politely. "But we can't stand on ceremony just now. St. Jim's has got its back up."

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy! We are all in a frightful wage," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, jamming his eyeglass into his eye and giving Kildare a warlike look.

"You cheeky young asses—"

"Let's pass, Kildare, old man."

"Where are you going?" demanded the captain of St. Jim's.

"To see the Head!"

"About sacking Levison?"

"Yes."

"Then you'd better not."

There was a roar from the crowd of juniors behind the deputation.

"Get aside!"

"Roll him over!"

"Bump him!"

Two or three more prefects had joined Kildare—Darrell, Rushden, and Langton of the School House, and Monteith and Baker from the New House. At any other time, the half-dozen prefects could have driven the whole Lower School before them like sheep. But the times were out of joint just now. If there had been two dozen of them, the juniors would not have been moved from their purpose.

"Pway let us pass, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We're a peaceful deputation, you know. We're not goin' to eat the Head!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"March on!" roared Owen.

"Knock their silly heads together!" exclaimed Monteith angrily.

"Yah!"

"Wats, deah boy!"

Monteith lunged out towards Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. It was the signal for trouble. There was a rush of the Lower School. Half a hundred excited juniors swarmed over the prefects, and they were swept away like sand before the sea. The way was cleared in next to no time, and the deputation marched on triumphant.

Gasping prefects and yelling juniors were left behind, and Tom Merry & Co. tramped on, and halted noisily at the door of the Head's study.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tapped Tom Merry on the shoulder.

"I pvesume it is undahstood that all the talkin' is to be left to me?" he asked.

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"Oh, rats!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, what is we-quaished just now is a fellah of tact an' judgment, and I considah—"

Tap!

Tom Merry knocked at the door, and the Head's voice bade him enter.

"Come in!"

Tom Merry opened the door. Dr. Holmes was seated at his desk with a somewhat troubled frown upon his kind old face. Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, was with him. Both the masters looked at the deputation in astonishment.

"Dear me!" said the Head, adjusting his glasses. "What do you boys want?"

"Please, sir, we're a deputation."

"Yaas, wathah, sir! We've come to explain—"

"Dry up, Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

Dr. Holmes raised his hand for silence.

"I do not understand this," he said.

"Pray explain what you have come to my study for, Merry!"

"Pewwaps I had bettah explain, Tom Mewwy—"

Blake pinched the swell of St. Jim's, and D'Arcy broke off to gasp; and Tom Merry went on with the explanation.

"We're a deputation representing the junior Forms of this college, and both Houses, sir," said the hero of the Shell firmly. "We've held a meeting, sir—"

"I have heard a great deal of noise," said Mr. Railton.

"Yes, sir. We are wild, sir—I mean angry—we've got our backs up, sir. It's about that awful cad Levison—"

"The frightful wottah, sir—"

"We want him sacked, sir!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We regard his continued presence here as a stain upon the honour of St. Jim's, sir," said Manners, who had thought out that telling sentence coming along.

"Bai Jove! That's vewy well expwessed, Mannahs, deah boy!"

"We want him sacked, sir!"

"Expelled, sir!"

"Kicked out, sir!"

The voices of the juniors were rising in excited chorus, and Dr. Holmes held up his hand for silence.

CHAPTER 3.

"Have Him Out!"

DR. HOLMES waited until the excited voices died away.

The juniors were respectful enough, but they were in deadly earnest. It seemed that a time had come when the boys of St. Jim's found themselves set in opposition against the will of their headmaster, and when they were not prepared to give in.

It was a strange state of affairs, and fraught with the possibilities of trouble and danger to the well-being of the school. The boys felt that, as well as the masters, and there was a general feeling of tension in the study, as Dr. Holmes cleared his throat to speak, with the little cough the juniors knew so well.

"I quite understand your feelings, my boys," said Dr. Holmes at last, in his quiet tones. "You are naturally shocked and disgusted with the wicked conduct of Levison of the Fourth."

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"I had intended to expel him, as you all know. But it has already been explained to the school that Levison's state of health has caused a change in my intentions. Dr. Short assures me that he is in a precarious state. The dread of being expelled, and of having to face his family in disgrace, has weighed

upon his mind so much while he has been ill that it has brought him into a low state; and the medical gentleman has assured me that the consequences may be serious if the patient's mind is not relieved upon that point. After thinking the matter out carefully, and consulting with Mr. Railton and Mr. Lathom, I had decided to allow Levison to remain at the school. When he is well he will be severely flogged. But he will not be expelled."

"If you please, sir," began Tom Merry.

"I wish the boys of this college to know that I have not altered my opinion of Levison's conduct in any way," said the Head. "It was infamous. But he has already suffered for it, and he has given me an impression of being truly remorseful. I trust there will be a change for the better in him in the future."

"It's not likely, sir!"

"Merry!" said the Head sternly.

Tom Merry did not flinch.

"If you please, sir, Levison is an awfully deep beast!" he said. "He only pretended to fall down in a fit when he was found out—"

Dr. Holmes started.

"How do you know that, Merry?"

"We know Levison, sir. Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth used to have real fits, and Levison got the idea from that. We know the rotter!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I cannot believe this, Merry. You are surely mistaken; besides, I have the assurance of a medical man that he is really ill."

"Levison could work Dr. Short round his little finger if he liked, sir. He's deep, enough for anything!" said Figgins.

Dr. Holmes frowned.

"You are allowing your natural feelings of indignation to carry you too far," he said. "I cannot allow you to speak of Dr. Short in this way. Neither am I inclined to believe that he is mistaken, on no better grounds than that you think so."

"But weally, sir—"

The Head raised his hand.

"My dear boys, when you reflect calmly upon this matter, I think you will see that I have decided for the best. In any case, I cannot allow my decision to be questioned. The matter is now ended."

"But, sir—"

"You see, sir—"

"The matter is now ended," said Dr. Holmes, raising his voice a little. "You will kindly leave my study at once."

The juniors looked at one another.

The deputation to the Head had not been a success. As a matter of fact, they could hardly have expected the Head of St. Jim's to abandon his own opinion and adopt theirs. At the same time, they knew that the Head had been deceived, and that he did not know Levison so well as they did.

But for the great respect that all St. Jim's had for the Head there would have been rebellious looks and perhaps words.

As it was the juniors were silent.

They were not convinced, and their purpose was not changed. But they were silenced, and they left the study without another word.

Outside, in the passage, they looked at one another grimly.

"Bai Jove! What's goin' to be done, deah boys?" said Arthur Augustus, polishing his eyeglass with a very thoughtful air.

"I suppose we've got to give the Head his head?" suggested Monty Lowther, with a grin.

"Oh, don't be funny now, Lowther!" exclaimed Blake crossly. "We're not going to give in! Levison's got to go!"

"Yaas, watah!" "Bucking up against the Head!" said Manners, with a whistle. "That's rather thick, you know!"

"Not so thick as letting an amateur forger stay in the school!" said Redfern.

"Wight you are, Weddy!"

"Let's go back to the Hall and hold another meeting!"

"Good egg!"

But the great door of the Big Hall was locked and closed against the juniors. The prefects had seen to that. There were to be no more meetings in the Hall.

Tom Merry & Co. growled angrily.

"We'll have him out ourselves!"

"Faith, and we'll take the law into our own hands entirely!"

"Hurrah!"

"Have him out!"

Some of the more excitable juniors surged off towards the school sanatorium. Tom Merry waved his hand to the crowd. As a rule, when there was excitement in the Lower Forms, the captain of the Shell was on the side of peace. But now he was on the side of war, and plenty of it.

"Fellows!" he shouted. "The Head has been taken in, and the sawbones from Rylcombe is an ass, anyway, and anybody could fool him! Are we going to stand having Levison forced on us like this by a dirty trick?"

"No!" roared the crowd.

back up against the headmaster. That's my opinion."

There was a roar of disapproval. The juniors had expected Dick Brooke, as the fellow most injured by Levison's treachery, to be bitterest of all against him. Brooke's views on the subject were decidedly unpopular. The two juniors who had raised him up let him go quite suddenly, and he bumped down heavily on the ground, and there was a roar of laughter.

"Never mind Brooke!" yelled Kangaroo. "He's only a giddy day-boy, anyway! We're not going to stand Levison!"

"Are you all agreed on that?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Yes, rather!"

"Hurrah!"



"I give you five seconds," said Jack Blake. "You'll hop out of bed, you malingering cad, or I'll make you hop in it!" The lash sang in the air. That was enough for Levison. He made a wild spring from the bed.

They were in a dangerous mood, and half inclined to break in the door and hold a meeting in the Hall, in spite of the prefects. But calmer counsels prevailed, and they streamed out into the quadrangle to join the crowd there, who were growing very impatient and excited. Two hundred eager voices demanded to know the result of the deputation to the Head.

Tom Merry was hoisted upon the shoulders of Jack Blake and Figgins to address the swaying, surging crowd.

"What's the answer?" roared Bernard Glyn.

"Tell us what he says!"

"Go it!"

Tom Merry swayed over the crowd on the shoulders of the two sturdy juniors. His face was set and his eyes flashing.

"The Head refuses!"

There was a deep groan from two hundred throats.

"Levison has fooled the doctor from Rylcombe, and fooled the Head, and he's going to stay at St. Jim's!"

There was a wild roar.

"Never!"

"He's got to go!"

"He forged Brooke's handwriting and nearly ruined Brooke. It was only by chance that he was found out, or Brooke would be in disgrace now."

"Shame!"

"He might play some rotten trick of this sort on some of us if he stays here!"

"The cad!"

"The outsider!"

"He's got to go!"

"Let's hear what Brooke says on the subject!" roared Clifton Dane.

"Hear, hear!"

Dick Brooke of the Fourth was hoisted up. He looked over the crowd with a very red face, evidently not at his ease. There was a yell of encouragement.

"Go it, Brooke!"

"Pile it in!"

"On the ball, old man!"

"Well, chaps," said Dick Brooke. "Levison is an awful rotter, we all know that; but I don't like being the cause of all this trouble in the school, and that's flat! And I think it's our duty to obey the Head in all circumstances. I believe that Levison has taken the Head in; but—but we can't

"Will you back me up in taking the law into our own hands and kicking Levison out of the school?"

There was a yell of delight at the idea.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! We'll expel him ourselves!"

"Bravo!"

"Then let's go and have him out!"

"Hurrah!"

And the wild crowd, led by Tom Merry & Co., streamed off towards the school sanatorium to have Levison out!

CHAPTER 4.

Out of Hand!

LEVISON was reclining in bed in a cheerful, sunny room.

Through the open windows the breeze of the early summer afternoon was wafting the scent of the flowers from the Head's garden.

Levison was alone, and there was a sarcastic grin upon his face.

The distant yelling in the quadrangle THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,418.

had reached his ears, but he did not attach any great importance to it.

He knew that the announcement that he was to remain at St. Jim's would throw the fellows into transports of rage, but that only added zest to his satisfaction in pulling the wool over the eyes of the Head and the medical man from Rylcombe.

He had made good his escape, after all!

He was not to be expelled. He might yet devise some scheme to escape even the flogging—and he was filled with satisfaction at his success.

The fellows might rage—and doubtless would—but they could do nothing. Levison would keep his place in the school, in spite of them all. He might be sent to Coventry, but he could stand that. And the friendship of Mellish of the Fourth, at least, he could be sure of. For Mellish had been his accomplice—a hesitating and reluctant accomplice, it is true—in the plot against Dick Brooke.

Levison listened to the distant echo of the shouting in the quadrangle, and grinned with sarcastic contempt.

But the shouting was coming nearer, and the grin died away from the cad of the Fourth Form.

Were they coming to give him a demonstration of hostility under the windows of the school sanatorium?

He knew that very few fellows at St. Jim's would believe that he was really ill. He could not deceive the juniors who had lived and worked with him, and knew his character inside out, so to speak.

Well, let them yell; they could not touch him. He wondered that the prefects did not stop them from coming to the sanatorium; but, at all events, they would not venture to enter.

But his face changed as he heard the yells more clearly through the open windows.

"Have him out!"

"My hat!" muttered Levison. "They—they can't mean it! My hat!"

But he soon knew that they did mean it.

There was a heavy tramping on the stairs, and the door of the ward was thrown open, and a crowd of juniors surged in.

Levison, quite forgetting in his surprise and dismay that he was supposed to be too weak to rise, sat up quickly in bed, and stared at the juniors.

"What do you want?" he exclaimed in a voice rendered shrill by alarm.

"We want you," said Tom Merry.

"I—I'm ill."

"Rats!"

"I—I—"

"Get out of bed!" roared Jack Blake.

"I—I can't; I'm ill!"

Blake produced a dog-whip.

"I give you five seconds," he said.

"You'll hop out of bed, you malingering cad, or I'll make you hop in it. Now, then!"

The lash sang in the air.

Levison made a wild spring from the bed. He knew that he had to go, and it was no use being thrashed first with the dog-whip. There was a yell from the crowd.

Levison's active spring out of bed had shown plainly enough that there was nothing whatever the matter with him, even if the juniors had doubted it before. The cad of the Fourth stood in his pyjamas, his fists clenched, and his eyes gleaming with rage. Fear and fury were in his face, but nothing suggesting illness.

"Look here!" he shouted. "What do you want? You'll get flogged for this! When the Head knows you've come here!"

"We're acting on our own just now," said Tom Merry. "Get into your clothes!"

"I—I won't!"

"Give him a taste of the dog-whip, Blake!"

"What-ho!"

The lash curled round Levison's leg. The cad of the Fourth yelled, and made haste to get into his clothes. It was evident that the juniors were not to be trifled with.

Levison dressed himself in hot haste, the juniors standing round him. The plain truth that the cad of the Fourth had only been malingering, and was not really ill at all, exasperated the fellows more than ever. Levison ground his teeth as he dressed, and when he was finished he looked savagely at Tom Merry.

"Now what do you want?" he snarled.

"Come with us."

Levison backed against the wall.

"Where?"

"To the Big Hall. We're going to give you a school trial and expel you."

"Hear, hear!"

Levison panted.

"Expel me! You're mad! What do you mean? You can't expel me! Only the Head can expel a fellow!"

"Well, we're going to this time, whether we can or not!" retorted Tom Merry. "You've disgraced St. Jim's, and you're going!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I—I tell you—"

"Come on; take his arms, Blake and Lowther!"

And Levison, in spite of his furious expostulations, was taken by both arms and marched out of the ward. The crowd followed, surging down the stairs.

"We can't get into Big Hall," said Figgins. "The prefects have locked it up."

"Yaas, it's imposs, Tom Mewwy."

"Break in the door!" roared Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth.

"Hurrah! Break it in!"

"No, no; the gym will do!" Tom Merry exclaimed hastily. "We can make the gym do. Don't have trouble with the masters, if we can help it."

"Yaas, wathah! The gym will be all right."

"Bring the cad into the gym."

Levison attempted to struggle. He had no desire to be shut up alone in the gymnasium with

the incensed juniors. But his struggles were not of much use, excepting to prove that he was quite as fit as ever, and that his illness was a falsehood from beginning to end. Blake, Herries, Lowther, and Kerr lifted him off his feet, and he was carried bodily into the gymnasium.

"Help!" yelled Levison frantically, as he was borne in through the doorway.

"Help!"

Two or three prefects came dashing up.

"Is that Levison you've got there?"

shouted Darrell of the Sixth.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We've got the cad!"

"Let him loose at once!" shouted the prefect. "How dare you bring a boy out of the sanatorium! Bring him here!"

The juniors yelled defiance.

"Rats!"

"He's not ill!"

"He's a giddy malingerer!"

"We're going to cure him!"

Darrell forced his way through the crowd. Langton and Baker backed him up. But the juniors turned upon them, and the three prefects, as they drove their way into the doorway of the gym, were seized by innumerable hands, and flung out bodily into the quad. They rolled breathlessly on the ground, and the last of the junior crowd streamed into the spacious gym, and the door was slammed behind them and barred against all-comers.

Darrell staggered to his feet.

"My hat!" he gasped. "The school seems to have gone mad!"

"Mad as a set of giddy hatters!" panted Langton. "Can't wonder at it, either, for between ourselves we all know that Levison has fooled the Head, though it wouldn't be respectful to say so."

"They can't be allowed—"

"I fancy they won't wait to be allowed. Levison will be jolly lucky if they don't give him the ragging of his life, I think."

Darrell hammered at the door of the gym.

"Open the door at once, you young rotters!"

A roar of defiance answered from within.

"Yah! Go and eat coke!"

"Do you hear me? I'm Darrell, the prefect!"

"I don't care if you're a barrel of prefects!" yelled back Redfern from inside the gym. "We aren't opening the door to anybody!"

"Wathah not!"

"I order you—"

"Rats!"

And that was all that the prefect could get, and he ceased to hammer at the door of the gym. It was only too evident that the juniors of St. Jim's had taken matters into their own hands.

CHAPTER 5.

A School Trial!

LEVISON stood among the crowd of fellows in the gym. His face was pale, and his eyes glinting, but he did not look afraid.

He had been handled somewhat roughly in his transit from the sanatorium to the gym, but he was not in fear of violence now. The intentions of the juniors were more serious than that. A ragging would not meet the case. Tom Merry had announced that if the Head would not expel the cad of the Fourth, the juniors of St. Jim's would do it, and, as wild as the idea seemed, the fellows were in deadly earnest about it.

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For a fellow to be expelled by other fellows was certainly an innovation, but Tom Merry & Co. had made up their minds about it. There was no hint of discord among all the parties into which the juniors were usually divided.

The Terrible Three and the chums of Study No. 6 shared the leadership of the School House juniors, and they were quite in accord about this matter. And Figgins & Co. and Redfern & Co. of the New House had lined up with the School House party. Not a single voice was raised for the cad of the Fourth.

The knocking at the door had ceased; the prefects were gone to consult with the other seniors. Tom Merry & Co. were left to themselves for the time, and Levison was left to them. A bitter sneer came upon the face of Levison as they gathered round him.

"You'll have the masters here soon, Tom Merry," he said, between his teeth. "You are talking about expelling me. You are more likely to be expelled yourself for yanking a fellow out of bed in the sanatorium."

"I think any of the masters would see that you were only malingering if they could see you now!" retorted Tom Merry. "You can't keep up the humbug about being ill."

"Wathah not, you wascal!" Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"The Head has announced that I am not to be sacked," he said. "Dr. Holmes can't go back on his word, whether I was spoofing or not."

"We're going to save him the trouble," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! We're going to expel you ourselves, you uttah wotah!"

"You can't do it!"

"Can't we?" said Figgins wrathfully. "You'll see! I propose that we give the cad a fair trial, and kick him out of the school if found guilty—which he will be."

"What rot!" said Fatty Wynn. "We know he's guilty!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'll give him a trial, though," said Redfern of the Fourth. "Fair play's a jewel. We want to be able to show the Head that we did everything fair and above board."

"I agree with my friend Weddy, and—"

"Hear, hear!" shouted Kangaroo. "Pile in. The sooner the better!"

"We shall have the prefects here soon," remarked Manners.

"Blow the prefects!"

"Yaas, wathah! At a time like this, when the honah of St. Jim's is at stake, we can't afford to considah the pweffects vewy much."

"Or the masters," grinned Bernard Glyn. "We're running this show. If anybody knocks at the door we can't hear them. Nothing like being a bit deaf sometimes."

"Good egg!"

"Form the court," said Tom Merry. "We want a judge and jury—"

"I guess we all want to serve on the jury," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, and there was a shout of assent.

"I suppose you'd better select me as a judge," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in a thoughtful way. "In the circus, what is requiathed is a fellow of tact and judgment—"

"Well, it really ought to be a New House chap," said Kerr. "The Cock House of St. Jim's ought to be on the Bench—"

"What?" roared a score of School House voices.

"The Cock House of St. Jim's! You see—"

"Weally, Kerr—"

"Fathead!"

"Bump him!"

Tom Merry raised his hand authoritatively.

"Peace, my children! We don't want to be all day about this. I back up Gussy as judge; he's got all the qualifications—"

"Yaas, wathah! I agree with Tom Merry—"

"Judges are always long-winded, and Gussy is like that, you see," said Tom Merry; "and—"

"Weally, you ass—"

"Gussy's judge," said Redfern. "Carried unanimously—I carry it unanimously myself. You can put me down as prosecuting counsel."

"Hear, hear!"

"We shall want a counsel for the defence," said Tom Merry. "We've got to give the rotter every chance. Who's for the defence?"

There were no takers. "Nobody wanted the task of defending Levison."

Monty Lowther spoke at last.

"I'll take it on," he said. "There isn't anything to be said for the rotter. But I'll say it if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gather round," said Tom Merry. "This bench is the judicial seat. Sit down, Gussy."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The parallel-bars will do for a dock for the prisoner. The whole giddy crowd is the jury, and I am the master of ceremonies," said Tom Merry. "I appoint Figgins and Blake and Manners and Kangaroo ushers of the court. Their duty is to bump anybody who interrupts the proceedings, and to punch anybody who doesn't find the prisoner guilty."

"Hear, hear!"

"Put the prisoner in the dock."

Levison was pushed between the parallel-bars.

"The court is now open," said Tom Merry. "I—Hallo!"

Knock!

"Some blessed prefect at the door!"

"Hallo! It's Railton!"

The voice of Mr. Railton, the House-master of the School House, came clearly through the door to the ears of the crowd in the gym.

"Please open this door, my boys!"

"Don't answer!" whispered Figgins.

"We can't check Mr. Railton—he's a good sort. But we can't open the door."

"Wathah not!"

"Open this door at once!"

No reply.

"Is Levison there?"

Silence.

"You must take Levison back to the sanatorium."

Dead silence.

"My boys, I hope you do not intend to be disobedient, and compel me to call the Head."

Silence!

Mr. Railton did not speak again.

They heard him walk away, and from the windows of the gym some of the fellows watched him go back to the School House.

"We're in for it now!" said Herries.

"Ba! Jove! Do you think he'll call the Head?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"No fear! The Head won't interfere now; he'll be too careful of his dignity to risk being disobeyed," said the hero of the Shell shrewdly. "I don't think the Head's likely to come out. They know we wouldn't have touched Levison if he'd been really ill, and they know we won't hurt the rotter. Go ahead with the proceedings."

"Hear, hear!"

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet.

"Gentlemen of St. Jim's, the court is now open. As it is the duty of the pvesidin' judge to make a short speech at the openin' of the assizes, I will now pwoceed to address a few words—"

There was a roar.

"Cur the cackler!"

"Dry up!"

"Weally, gentlemen—"

"The presiding judge having

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finished his speech, we will now get to business," said Tom Merry.

D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye and gave Tom Merry a severe look.

"I have not finished my speech, Tom Merry—"

"We'll have the rest another time, then—"

"Come down to business!" roared Thompson of the Shell.

"Yes, dry up, Gussy, old man!" said D'Arcy minor imploringly. "We didn't come here to listen to you doing vocal exercises, you know."

"Weally, Wally—"

"Pitch it to the prisoner, Mr. Judge!" exclaimed Lawrence. "Guilty or not guilty—that's the conundrum you have to ask him."

"Oh, vewy well! Pwisonah at the bah, do you plead guilty or not guilty?" asked Arthur Augustus, sitting down.

"Oh, rats!" said Levison.

"What?"

"I'm not going to take any notice of this rot!" said Levison. "I'm not going to be tried. You're playing the giddy ox, and you know you can't expel me. Go and eat coke!"

"Weally, pwisonah at the bah—"

"Order!" said Tom Merry. "Ushers of the court, do your duty. Every time the prisoner shows contempt of court he is to be bumped—hard!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Refusing to answer questions put by the judge is contempt of court. Bear that in mind, Levison. Go ahead, Gussy!"

"Pwisonah at the bah, do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

"Rats!"

"Ushers, go ahead!"

The four ushers of the court seized the prisoner at the bar. Levison roared and struggled, but his struggles were not of much use against the four determined juniors.

Bump!

"Yarrah!"

Levison, looking dusty and savage, was set upon his feet again between the parallel-bars, at the sign of Tom Merry.

The ushers of the court looked ready to bump him again at a moment's notice.

"Pwisonah at the bah, are you guilty or not guilty?" asked D'Arcy calmly.

"Ow! Not guilty! Ow!"

"Gentlemen of the juwy, the pwisonah at the bah pleads not guilty. Of course, that is all wubbish!"

Monty Lowther jumped up from the stool with which he had been accommodated as counsel for the defence. Monty Lowther was of a humorous turn of mind, and either for that reason, or from a desire to do Levison all the justice that was possible, he spoke up.

"I beg to remind the honourable judge that that remark is offside!" he exclaimed. "It is not in order to characterise the prisoner's plea as rubbish."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Oh, sit down, Monty Lowther!"

"Cheese it!"

"I am here to do my duty by my client," said the counsel for the defence firmly. "I insist that his lordship's remark was not in order."

"His lordship withdraws the remark," said Tom Merry. "Now—"

"But I don't do anythin' of the sort, deah boy!"

"Yes, you do. Get on with the washing!"

"Vewy well. Gentlemen of the juwy, the pwisonah at the bah pleads not guilty, and the twial will now pwoceed," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

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"The counsel for the prosecution will open his case."

And Redfern opened his case.

CHAPTER 6.

Guilty!

"GENTLEMEN of the jury and your lordship, the prisoner is accused of having forged the hand of Brooke in writing a paper of an insulting character, which he put in Mr. Lathom's desk. This paper was found by Mr. Lathom, and was supposed to have been written by Brooke. Brooke got the order of the boot, which would have served him right if he had really written the paper. The paper was, in reality, written by the rotter at the bar—I mean the prisoner at the bar. My first witness is Brooke."

"Brooke, stand forward!"

Dick Brooke came forward.

"Did you, or did you not, write the insulting paper that was found in Mr. Lathom's desk in the Fourth Form Room, Brooke?"

"Certainly not!"

"Was it written in your hand-writing?"

"Yes."

"Did you show the Head a set of papers upon which Levison was seen practising your hand?"

"Yes."

"Did he admit his guilt in the presence of the Head?"

"Yes."

"Very good. You may stand down, Brooke. Bernard Glyn is my next witness."

"Glyn, stand forward!"

The Liverpool lad came up with his hands in his pockets. Redfern addressed him with great solemnity.

"You are Glyn of the Shell?"

Glyn stared.

"Yes, you ass!"

"That is not the way to speak in court," said Redfern severely. "You must answer questions that are put to you. I am confident that his lordship will protect me."

"Yaas, wathah!" his lordship exclaimed. "Pway ansawah the questions of the honouvable counsel for the pwosecution, deah boy."

"Well, I'm Glyn of the Shell," said Glyn, with a grunt.

"Did you invent an invisible ink, and try it upon a sheet of paper in Study No. 6 in the School House?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did the invisible ink become visible afterwards on the very sheet that was used for the insulting letter to Mr. Lathom?"

"Yes; lots of fellows saw it."

"You may stand down. Blake is my next witness. Are you Blake of the Fourth?"

"I are."

There was a chuckle from the jury. Redfern frowned.

"Was the sheet of paper upon which Glyn wrote in invisible ink placed in the cupboard in your study in the School House?"

"It was."

"Was it removed from the study afterwards, and before Brooke, who is a day-boy, had come to the school again?"

"Certainly!"

"It was therefore impossible for Brooke to have taken that special sheet of paper to write upon?"

"Quite impossible."

"You may stand down. Gentlemen of the jury, apart from the fact that the prisoner confessed his guilt in the presence of Dr. Holmes, I claim that the case is completely made out, and I call

for a verdict of guilty. I lay my hand upon my heart, gentlemen of the jury, and call for this verdict with complete confidence."

"Hear, hear!" roared the jury.

"Very good," said the judge. "I sentence the pwisonah—"

Monty Lowther jumped up.

"Hold on! You haven't heard the defence yet!"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that. Pway pwoceed, deah boy!"

Monty Lowther coughed behind his hand, not because his throat wanted clearing, but because it seemed a legal sort of thing to do.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he said, "you have heard the speech of my honourable friend opposite. I hope to smash my honourable friend's case into little pieces. My honourable friend lays his hand upon his heart and calls for a verdict of guilty. I am prepared to lay my hand anywhere, and call upon the jury, as men of good sense and good feeling, and respectable fathers of families, to find a verdict of not guilty for my client."

Laughter in court.

"I shall now call my witnesses," said Monty Lowther. "First witness is D'Arcy minor."

"Stand forward, D'Arcy minor!" called out Tom Merry.

Wally stared.

"But I don't know anything about the giddy case at all!" he exclaimed.

"That is not to the point," said the counsel for the defence. "Stand forward! Are you D'Arcy of the Third?"

"Yes; you know I am!"

"Pray do not add comments to your statements, D'Arcy of the Third. What I know or do not know is not to the point. It is what you know or don't know that we have to deal with. You are D'Arcy minor of the Third Form, otherwise called Wally?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Did you see the sheet of paper placed in the cupboard in Study No. 6?"

"No, I didn't. I wasn't there."

"I didn't ask you whether you were there, or where you were. It is a matter of no consequence to this court whether you were there or cooking herrings stuck on pen-nibs over the Form-room fire. Did you, or did you not, see the sheet of paper placed in Blake's cupboard in the study?"

"No!" roared Wally.

"Very well. Gentlemen of the jury, I leave this to your good sense of feeling. My learned brother opposite has produced a witness who saw the paper placed in the cupboard. I have produced a witness who didn't see it placed there. I claim that the evidence of Blake is thus neutralised."

"Why, you ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!" said the learned judge, in amazement.

"I shall now examine the witnesses for the prosecution," went on the counsel for the defence severely. "In the first place, I require Bernard Glyn."

"Bernard Glyn!" shouted the ushers. The schoolboy inventor came forward for the second time.

"You are Glyn of the Shell?"

"Oh, yes!"

"You invented an invisible ink?"

"Certainly!"

"You also invented a mechanical horse once which caused a great deal of trouble in the School House?"

"Yes. It was a jolly good invention, too. I made it—"

"That will do. You may stand down. Gentlemen of the jury, I put it to you

that a chap who will invent a mechanical horse is a dangerous lunatic, and his evidence is not to be relied upon!"

"Why, you ass——" roared Bernard Glyn.

"Gentlemen of the jury, I have now concluded," said the counsel for the defence, with a great deal of dignity. "I lay my hand upon my heart and call for a verdict of not guilty with complete confidence."

"Rats!"

"Vewy well! I sentence the pwisonah——"

"Hold on! The jury haven't decided yet."

"Bai Jove! Gentlemen of the juwy, pway considah your verdict. Is the pwisonah at the bah guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty!" roared the jury, with one voice.

"You are all agreed upon that?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Vewy good. Is it time to sentence the wottah now, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes, pile in!"

"Pwisonah at the bah, I sentence you to be expelled from the school you have disgwaced, and ordah that you forthwith be conducted fwom St. Jim's, and nevah be allowed to entah its pwecincts again. I vegard you as a howwid wottah. Kick him out!"

"Hurrah!"

And the court broke up.

CHAPTER 7. Expelled!

TOM MERRY dropped his hand upon Levison's shoulder. The cad of the Fourth gave him a look of hatred.

"You have had a fair trial," said Tom Merry. "Everybody here knew you were guilty, but we have given you a fair trial, and all the school find you guilty. You are sentenced to be expelled from St. Jim's!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Expel him!"

"Kick him out!"

Levison gave the shouting crowd a bitter look.

"You can't do it!" he said. "You can't kick me out, and you know it. And you'll all get flogged for this, hang you!"

"Weally, you wottah——"

"Gather round!" said Tom Merry.

"The prisoner has been sentenced to be expelled. We are going to take him to the railway station, bung him into a train for London, and see him off!"

"Hurrah!"

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

"Get to the gates as soon as you can when we leave the gym," said Tom Merry.

"We don't want any interference from masters or prefects. We want to do everything in order, and without trouble with the masters if possible. But Levison's got to go!"

"Hear, hear!"

The crowd formed up. Figgins threw open the door, and the two hundred juniors marched out, with Levison in their midst. The cad of the Fourth looked wildly round. But there was no escape for him. On all sides the juniors hemmed him in.

"Look here, Tom Merry!" he said hoarsely. "You can't do it! You know you can't!"

"We're going to do it, whether you can or not!" said Tom Merry coolly.

"You're going to leave St. Jim's this afternoon—for good!"

"I—I can't——"

"You've got no choice in the matter. March him on, you fellows!"

Levison was trying to delay, in the hope that some master would come upon the scene. But they hurried him on to the gates. Probably no one outside the crowd knew that the cad of the Fourth was in the midst of it, surrounded as he was by a crowd of others. The juniors streamed out of the open gateway into the road.

"Rylcombe!" said Tom Merry.

"March!"

The cad of the Fourth was very pale now. He had relied entirely upon the Head's announcement that he was not to be expelled. That the St. Jim's juniors would take the law into their own hands in this way he never dreamed. As the crowd streamed away towards the village, Kildare and Darrell appeared in the gateway, looking after them. But if they saw Levison at all they realised that it was useless to contend with an excited crowd of a couple of hundred fellows.

Down the lane went the marching crowd, and Levison, whenever he lagged, as he did several times, was helped on by the boots of those behind. They entered the village street, and nearly all Rylcombe turned out at the sight of them. Never had they seen such an excited and numerous array of St. Jim's fellows marching through the old High Street before.

The railway station was reached, and there Tom Merry raised his hand.

The crowd halted.

"Half a dozen of you can bring Levison in," said Tom Merry.

"We don't want to swarm the station. Lowther, Blake, Figgins, Redfern, Reilly, Kangaroo, please take charge of the prisoner."

"Right you are!"

Half a dozen juniors marched the pale and furious cad of the Fourth into the railway station. Tom Merry stopped at the ticket-office and felt in his pocket.

"First, single, to London," he said.

"Change at Wayland!" said the clerk, as he handed it out.

"Thank you!"

"I'm not going!" shouted Levison.

"I tell you——"

"Bring him along! The train's due in ten minutes!" said Lowther.

"Now then, all together!" grinned Redfern.

With a shove and a rush Levison was whirled upon the platform, and he stood there in the midst of his guardians, waiting for the train.

He realised now that it was all in deadly earnest that he had to go.

He began to expostulate and plead; but the juniors turned deaf ears. There was a whistle down the line, and the train came into sight.

"Take your ticket," said Tom Merry, holding it out.

"I won't!"

"Go without it, then! You're going, anyway!" Tom Merry thrust the ticket into Levison's waistcoat pocket. "Keep it or not, as you like."

The train stopped.

Jack Blake opened the door of an empty first-class carriage, and Levison was dragged towards it. On the carriage step he resisted, but he was bundled bodily into the carriage.

"In you go, you cad!" exclaimed Blake. "You're not wanted at St. Jim's!"

"Help!" he yelled.

The old porter of Rylcombe came lumbering up.

(Continued on the next page.)



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UNEXPECTED.

Boss: "What would you do with a hundred pounds, Smith?"

Office-boy: "Lumme, guv'nor, I wasn't expecting a rise!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. Hughes, 139, Congleton Road, Butt Lane, Falke, Staffs.

SOME JIG-SAW!

James: "Jig-saw puzzles originated in Scotland."

Jones: "Yes, an Aberdeen butcher inadvertently put a pound note into a mincing machine."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Birkett, 138, Crofton Road, Camberwell, London, S.E.5.

A WASH WANTED.

Wilson: "I've a good deal on my hands at present."

White: "So I notice. Why not try soap and water?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Whitehead, 28, Cholmeley Crescent, Highgate, London, N.6.

HE STOPPED THEM ALL.

Boxer's Manager: "Well, why didn't you stop his punches?"

Battered Boxer: "You didn't see any go past me, did you?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Turner, 40, Osborne Road, Erdington, Birmingham.

PAYMENT IN KIND.

"Well, Rastus," said the lawyer to his negro client, "you want me to defend you for stealing?"

"Dat's right, baas!" said Rastus.

"Have you got any money to pay me?"

"No, baas, but I've got some animals—a mule, four pigs, and twenty chickens."

"That'll do fine! Now, what are you charged with stealing?"

"A mule, four pigs, and twenty chickens, baas!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Morrish, 43, Edward Street, Shepparton, Victoria, Australia.

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"Gentlemen—gentlemen!" he exclaimed.

"It's all right," said Tom Merry. "This kid is going to London. We're seeing him off."

"I'm not!" shouted Levison. "It's an outrage! Call the police! I won't go! I—"

"My heye," said the porter, in amazement—"my heye!"

"I'll get out at Wayland!" yelled Levison. "I'll—"

"Oh, will you?" said Tom Merry grimly. "Then we'll see you as far as Wayland, and put you in the express! Tumble in, you chaps!"

The juniors followed Levison into the carriage. Reilly ran back to tell the crowd outside where Tom Merry & Co. were gone. The rest sat in the carriage round Levison. The guard was already waving his flag.

"Stand back, there!" The porter, shrugging his shoulders helplessly, as if to say that he considered it no business of his, slammed the carriage door.

The local ran out of the station.

Levison sat white and furious.

The run to Wayland Junction was a short one, and the local train was timed to catch the London express.

As the local stopped at the junction, the juniors crowded on the platform, with Levison in their midst.

The cad of the Fourth cast a wild glance round.

At the junction he had a faint hope of obtaining help and getting out of the hands of the juniors who had come to see him off to the metropolis.

But he had no chance.

Blake and Figgins held an arm each, in a grasp of iron, and the other fellows kept close round him, and he was plainly warned that if he yelled he would get hurt.

The express was waiting on the opposite platform.

In two minutes the cad of the Fourth was bundled into an empty carriage, and the juniors closed the door upon him, and stood guarding it.

Levison picked himself up off the floor of the carriage, dusty, breathless, and furious. He turned a livid face upon the crowd of juniors at the door.

"I'll make you pay for this!" he shrieked.

"Get back! The train's going!" said Tom Merry.

The juniors stood back.

The express was moving, and it gathered speed as it glided out of the station. The juniors watched it go. The white, furious face of Levison was seen at the carriage window as the express rumbled away down the line.

The last the juniors saw of him was the pale face and the shaking fist from the carriage window.

Then the express disappeared.

"Gone!" said Tom Merry.

"Expelled!" grinned Redfern.

"And now," said Figgins seriously, "we've got to go back and face the music."

"Yes; come on!"

And Tom Merry & Co. left the station, to walk back through the woods to St. Jim's and "face the music." Undoubtedly, after what they had done, there would be some music to face.

CHAPTER 8.

The Head's Decision!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY met Tom Merry & Co. as they came in at the gates of St. Jim's in the dusk.

"All sewene?" asked D'Arcy.

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"Yes."

"He's gone!"

"He's going to London at the rate of fifty or sixty miles an hour just now," said Monty Lowther.

"Bai Jove, that's good!"

"Anything happened while we've been gone?"

D'Arcy shook his head.

"Nothin', deah boys. Only the pwe-fects are very watty, and Mr. Wailton has been lookin' awfully solemn. I haven't seen the Head."

"Does he know about our sacking Levison?"

"I don't know."

Toby, the School House page, came running across the quadrangle.

"Master Merry!"

"Hallo!"

"The 'Ead wants to see Master Merry at once."

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"Now for it!" he muttered. "I'm in for it, you chaps. But he can't eat me, anyway."

"Haden't we better all come?" asked Figgins. "You're jolly well not going to face it alone. We're all in this. It's a giddy school rag."

"Yaas, wathah! I'm bound to come. As havin' taken a leadin' part in the pwoceedings, I am bound to see the Head about it."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Better wait till the Head sends for you," he said. "He's sent for me now, and I had better go alone. You fellows will get it in the neck, too, in your turn."

"Wight-ho!"

Tom Merry followed the School House page across the quad. The excitement of the "sacking" of Levison had died down now, and a good many of the juniors were feeling a little nervous as to the result. Tom Merry was not nervous, but he was very grave. He knew that there might be trouble—very serious trouble, but he was prepared to face it with courage.

He knocked at the door of the Head's study and entered. Dr. Holmes was there with Mr. Railton, the House-master of the School House. Both of them fixed their eyes upon Tom Merry in a somewhat disconcerting way.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Tom Merry.

"Yes, Merry," said the Head gravely. "This is a very serious matter. It appears that you were the leader in the disturbance to-day."

"I had a lot to do with it, certainly, sir. But we were all in it. The whole school had its back up about Levison, sir."

"You have taken a boy who was under the doctor's orders from the sanatorium."

"He was quite well, sir. We knew that he was spoofing, and he admitted it himself when we had him in the gym."

"What have you done with him?"

"Expelled him, sir."

The Head started.

"What!"

"We gave him a fair trial, sir, before the whole of the Lower School," said Tom Merry. "Then we sacked him. He was guilty of forging the hand-writing of another chap, and nearly getting him sacked. You were going to expel him, sir, but he spoofed—ahem!—he deceived you into believing that he was ill. He wasn't ill, so we took it that the original sentence held good, sir."

"Where is he now?"

"In the train, sir."

"The—the train?" said the Head dazedly.

"Yes, sir."

"Wh—what train?"

"The London express from Wayland, sir."

Dr. Holmes half rose to his feet.

"Do you mean to say, Merry, that you have placed Levison in the express train for London, and sent him away?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry respectfully.

"Bless my soul!" the Head exclaimed. "I—I have never heard of such a thing! You have actually sent this boy away from school on your own initiative."

"Yes, sir."

"I—I never heard of such a thing," said the Head, caressing his chin thoughtfully with his hand. "Do you know, Merry, that many headmasters would expel you from the school for taking the law into your own hands in this manner?"

"I hope not, sir."

"And do you not see," went on the Head quietly, "that this defiance of authority can have only one result? Whatever I might have intended to do with Levison—if, as you say, he was deceiving us about his illness—I can do only one thing now—have him brought back to the school, and keep him here in order to show all St. Jim's that the headmaster's word is law in the school and must be obeyed."

"Oh, sir!"

"That is the inevitable result of the action of the Lower School," said the Head severely. "You have placed it out of my power to expel Levison, if I wish. Law and order must be observed and Levison must return and stay."

Tom Merry was silent. He understood how the Head looked at the matter, and realised that certainly the action of the Lower School had been somewhat injudicious and hasty. It looked as if they had defeated their own object by taking the law into their own hands, yet he was not sorry.

"If I did not sympathise with you to a certain extent, I should punish you all very severely," the Head continued. "Had this been an ordinary boy you used so, I should have expelled all the ringleaders in this riot, and caned all their followers."

"We shouldn't have done it to an ordinary fellow, sir."

Dr. Holmes nodded.

"No; I realise that. As I have said, I sympathise with you to a great extent. Levison was guilty of infamous conduct, and I quite understand your disgust and contempt for him. It has carried you too far, and that was wrong, but I understand your feelings, which in themselves were quite just. But the boys of this school cannot be allowed to override the authority of their headmaster. You should surely be able to see that, Merry. You are a sensible boy."

"Yes, I see that, sir."

"I must therefore recall Levison, although I do not wish him at St. Jim's any more than you do," said Dr. Holmes quietly. "You have forced me to take this attitude. As for what you and the others have done, I shall deal with it as leniently as I can, but I cannot pass it over unpunished. There would be an end to all order and discipline if the boys were allowed to act in this way. I expect, therefore, a public apology from all the boys who were engaged in this absurd enterprise. To-morrow morning the school will be assembled in Big Hall before lessons, and every boy who has been concerned in this affair must apologise to me in public. Any boy who refuses to do so will leave St. Jim's by the first train."

"Oh, sir!"



As the train stopped Jack Blake opened the door of an empty first-class carriage, and Levison was dragged towards it. On the step he resisted, but he was bundled bodily into the carriage. "In you go, you cad!" exclaimed Blake. "You're not wanted at St. Jim's!" "Help!" howled Levison.

"I have thought the matter over and consulted with Mr. Railton, and he is quite in agreement with me."

"Quite so, sir," said Mr. Railton.

"Every boy will apologise, and promise to be guilty of nothing of the sort again," said the Head, "otherwise he will leave the school at once. I shall adhere to this decision, even if I have to expel from the school the whole of the Shell and the Fourth Form. You know me well enough by this time, Merry, to know that I shall keep my word. I would rather the whole school should be broken up than that my authority should be taken out of my hands."

"Yes, sir."

"You may go now, and acquaint the others with my decision, and you have to-night to reflect upon the matter," said the Head. "That is all."

"Very well, sir."

And Tom Merry, with a very downcast face, quitted the Head's study.

CHAPTER 9.

Toe the Line!

THE juniors were waiting in a crowd to hear the result of Tom Merry's interview with the Head.

A chorus of inquiries greeted him as he came out into the passage. His expression told the juniors that matters were not going well.

"Come into the Common-room," he said.

And they crowded into the Junior Common-room. Knox, the prefect, met them on the way, and he was injudicious enough to stop and speak.

"You young ruffians!" he exclaimed. "You are going to pay for your insolence now. I hope the Head will flog you all, from one end of the Lower School to the other."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Blake.

"Shut up, Knox!"

"Get out!"

"We're going to be ragged by the Head," said Tom Merry, between his teeth, "but we're not going to be ragged by you, Knox. Hold your tongue!"

"You young hooligan—"

"Bump him!" yelled Blake.

"Why, you—you—oh! I—oh! Oh!"

Bump!

Knox was left gasping on the floor as the juniors crowded on. He sprang up, red with rage, and clenched his fists, and seemed about to rush into the crowd, hitting out, but he thought better of it. The juniors of St. Jim's looked in a dangerous mood—as, indeed, they were. As Tom Merry said, they would put up with a ragging from the Head, but they were not at all inclined to stand anything of the sort from Knox of the Sixth.

Kildare and the other prefects, wiser than Knox, let them severely alone till they should have quietened down.

The juniors crowded into the Common-room, and the door was closed. Then Tom Merry was called upon to explain what had passed in the Head's study.

"Let's have it, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "Let's heah the giddy worst and get it over. Was the Head vewy watty?"

"Well, no. But it's a serious bisney, you chaps."

"We know that!" grunted Herries.

"What's the verdict?"

"We've all got to turn up in Hall after prayers to-morrow morning, and apologise to the Head before the whole school, and promise never to do the same again."

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

"We won't!"

"Phew!"

"But what about Levison?" demanded a dozen voices.

"He's coming back."

"What!"

"Shame!"

"We won't have him back!"

Tom Merry waited for silence.

"I'm afraid there's no help for it, you chaps," he said. "As a matter of fact, we have piled it on a bit too thick. We can't expect the Head to let the juniors in a school run the whole show. He's really letting us off lightly. He might have expelled a dozen of us and flogged the rest. Some headmasters would. Every chap who refuses to join in the public apology to-morrow morning will have to leave the school by the first train!"

"Oh!"

"It would be a bit difficult to explain to one's people at home, you see," said Tom Merry. "As a matter of fact, if any of us choose to be sacked, our people would send us back to apologise."

"I—I suppose so!" said Figgins.

"And some of us can't go, anyway," said Tom Merry. "Reddy, for instance, is here on a scholarship, and he can't afford to lose it."

"Just so!" said Redfern.

"Besides that, I must say I think we owe the Head an apology for disregarding his authority," said Tom Merry. "I don't mind that so much. It's Levison's coming back that worries me. The Head explained that he's bound to have Levison back, to show the whole school that he's headmaster, and not us."

"Bai Jove! There's something in that, you know."

"How we're to stand Levison I don't know," said Tom Merry. "But we've got to stand him, or else it's the sack for us!"

"The Head can't sack the whole

Lower School!" exclaimed Thompson of the Shell. "I'm for holding out, and chancing it!"

"Hear, hear!"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"The Head has told me that every fellow who refuses to promise will be sacked, even if the whole of the Fourth and the Shell have to go," he said. "You know he'll keep his word. I know it's a rotten position for us. We were quite right to kick Levison out. I'm not sorry for that. I'm sorry we had to back up against the Head."

"We can't have him back!"

"We won't!"

"We'll have another barring out!" yelled Pratt of the Fourth. "We barred out Ratty in the New House, and brought him to his knees. We'll bar the Head out!"

"Hurrah!"

"Oh rats!" said Tom Merry. "We can't bar the Head out. We've got no quarrel with him, except that he doesn't want the Shell to run the whole school. My children, it's time for us to pull in our horns. I don't like it any more than you do; but it's a pill we've got to swallow. I hate to have Levison back as much as you do, but we've got to have him."

"Yah!"

"Rats!"

"We won't!"

"Shame!"

"Well, think it out for yourselves," said Tom Merry. "I'm not backing up against the Head, for one. He's a good old sport, and he's been jolly lenient with us over this. It would be rotten ungrateful to give him any more trouble. As for Levison, if he comes back we're not bound to speak to him. He may have the decency enough to keep away, too."

"No fear!"

"That's not likely."

"Well, if he comes back we can send him to Coventry," said Tom Merry. "The Head can't interfere with that, and if he did we should be within our rights in backing up against him, and I'd be the first to do it! Levison will be a giddy pariah—not a fellow need speak a word to him. I think that will make him glad to go, of his own accord, in the long run."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We won't have him!" roared a score or more truculent voices.

"Well, the Head's given us the night to think it over in," said Tom Merry. "Every fellow can decide for himself. That's all!"

And the meeting broke up in great excitement. Most of the juniors realised clearly enough that the rag had come to a natural end, and that it was time to toe the line. But the more truculent spirits announced their intention of holding out, and kicking Levison out of the school if he ventured to return. How the matter would end there was at present no telling.

CHAPTER 10.

Levison's Return!

THERE was much excited talk among the juniors of St. Jim's that evening.

In every study in both Houses the matter was discussed and rediscussed, but the passing of time had the anticipated effect of quieting the juniors, and gradually they came round to Tom Merry's view of the case.

Defiance of the Head was all very well in theory, but being expelled from the school and facing the people at

home was a less pleasant prospect when looked at closely.

Some of the fellows still declared that they would not apologise, and would not promise to let Levison alone. But when the morning came, and they were put to the test, it was probable that they would line up with the rest of the Lower School.

Dr. Short came from Rylcombe in the evening to visit his patient again, and was astounded to find him gone. The little medico almost tore his hair. He announced that he would not be responsible for the consequences, and pooh-poohed the mere suggestion that Levison had been deceiving him as to the state of his health. Dr. Short explained in words of four or five syllables the complications that might ensue, and left St. Jim's in a great rage. But the fellows who heard his verdict were not alarmed. They knew perfectly well that Levison was not ill, and that there would not be any complications.

There was still a feeling of unrest in the school when bed-time came and the boys went to their dormitories.

But sleep brought calmness. When the rising-bell clanged out in the morning St. Jim's rose as usual, and the boys thought, with something like amazement, of the wild excitement of the previous day.

After prayers the school were assembled in Big Hall, and the fellows who had talked highest about resistance to the bitter end were the first to obey the prefects' orders to assemble in Hall.

It was quite evident that the matter had sputtered out like a firework, and that the school would resume the even tenor of its way.

When the Head entered by the upper door there was a deep silence. Dr. Holmes gazed over the crowded Hall, and spoke in his quiet, calm tones.

"All the boys concerned in the riot yesterday will come forward and apologise for their conduct," he said. "They will promise there will be no recurrence of it. Any boy who refuses leaves the school at once!"

There was a dead pause.

Then Tom Merry walked quietly forward. He had been the leader in the outbreak, and he felt that it was "up" to him to play the leader now when the rioters had to eat humble pie. He advanced up the Hall, and his chums followed him, and then the rest of the rioters came into line.

Tom Merry meant to express his regret for what had happened, because he felt that it was right to do so, and there was no shame in his face as he stood before the Head.

"We are sorry we disregarded proper authority yesterday, sir," said Tom Merry, in a clear voice. "We know that that was wrong. We shall not interfere with Levison when he returns to the school."

"Yaas, wathah! In the cires, sir, we feel that we owe you an apology," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Very well," said Dr. Holmes. "Do you all say the same?"

"Yes, sir!"

There was no dissentient voice.

"I am glad of this," said the Head. "I should have been very sorry to compel any of you to leave. The feelings that actuated you, I know, were very right and proper. You were disgusted with Levison's wicked conduct. But now that you have had time to reflect, I am sure that you realise that you did wrong in taking the matter into your own hands. Levison will return to the school to-day, and it is your own action that has made this necessary. The matter is now ended. Dismiss!"

The school marched out.

The boys went very quietly into their respective Form-rooms.

Morning lessons passed off as usual, or more quietly than usual.

The juniors seemed to have expended all their exuberance in the riot of the previous afternoon.

The return of Levison was a bitter pill for them to swallow; but, as Blake said, they had to get it down, and it was no good making a wry face about it.

Levison had not come yet, and the juniors wondered when he would appear. Dr. Holmes, they knew, had written to his father, explaining the matter, and it was to be supposed that Levison was having a far from pleasant time with his people. He had had to leave Greyfriars, his previous school, for some rascally conduct, and so any excuses he might make for the trouble at St. Jim's were not likely to satisfy his father.

Blake expressed a gentle hope that his pater would give him a record licking before he came back.

"We'll meet him when he comes, and give him a warm reception," said Gore. "Suppose we all stand round and hiss the cad?"

"And bump him!" said Glyn.

"No, no!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "It's better to take it quietly. We've agreed to let the brute alone, and the best thing we can do is to send him to Coventry."

"Yaas, wathah! That would only be playin' the game."

It was late in the afternoon when the junior who had been kicked out of the school returned.

He arrived in the station hack from Rylcombe, and came up the steps of the School House with a sneering smile on his face. The lesson he had had did not seem to have had much effect upon the cad of the Fourth.

Many juniors saw him come, and the word was passed round that Levison was back again, and a crowd gathered to look at him.

There were some hisses from the crowd, but for the most part the juniors took Tom Merry's advice and let him alone.

Levison was called into the Head's study at once.

He found Dr. Holmes there, and his sneering grin vanished as he entered the presence of the Head. Dr. Holmes' face was very hard.

"Levison," he said. "I have allowed you to return to the school. I should have been better pleased if your father had kept you away: but he has decided to send you back, and I permit you to take your old place here."

"Yes, sir," said Levison.

"That does not mean that I condone your conduct. You have acted infamously. But it is necessary, for the discipline of the school, that you should be allowed to return. But you will be well watched, Levison, and I warn you plainly that if you are guilty of any transgression in the future you will be instantly expelled, without the possibility of return."

"Very well, sir."

"If this lesson has not been lost upon you, you will make some attempt to amend your conduct," said the Head. "I hope that will be the case."

"I will try, sir."

"I hope you will; it will be better for you. Words cannot express the disgust and scorn I feel for the baseness you have been guilty of."

Levison winced a little. The Eastern proverb says that contempt will pierce even the shell of a tortoise—and even the cad of the Fourth, perhaps, was not quite so thick-skinned as a tortoise.

"I am very sorry, sir," said Levison in a low voice. "I know that I did wrong, sir, but I didn't realise it at the time. I—I think I should have confessed, sir, even if I hadn't been found out."

The Head's face softened a little.

"I hope you are speaking the truth, Levison. Certainly the contempt of all your school-fellows should show you that you were foolish as well as wicked to act as you did. I hope to see signs of amendment in you. Whether you will ever be able to set yourself right with your school-fellows I do not know, but I advise you to try. Repent of your wickedness, and try to make the boys understand that you have repented. That is the best advice I can give you. You may go."

"Thank you, sir."

And Levison went.

Outside, in the passage, a bitter sneer came upon the face of the cad of the Fourth. The Head's words had made but little impression upon his hard heart. Repentance did not come easily to Levison; he was more likely to depend upon cunning and trickery to help him out of his difficulties.

In the Hall he met a crowd of juniors, who stared at him, and there were a few hisses. The Terrible Three were standing in the doorway, and Levison came up to them with a derisive grin upon his face.

"I've come back, you see," he remarked.

Tom Merry looked at him.

"Yes, I see that," he said.

"I told you I should."

"Yes, I know."

The quietness of Tom Merry's answers surprised Levison. He had expected impotent anger and threats, and he was amazed and a little uneasy.

"Well, you've taken it jolly quietly," he said.

"We've promised the Head not to touch you again."

"I suppose he would have sacked you if you hadn't!" sneered Levison.

"Exactly!"

"You won't get rid of me so jolly easily!" said Levison. "I'm here again, and I'm going to stick here. You fellows will have to make the best of it!"

"We're going to make the best of it," said Tom Merry—"and the best we can make of it is to send you to Coventry. Not a fellow will speak to you. And you will oblige me by not speaking to me again."

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know that I want to," he said.

"Then that will suit both of us."

"Look here, Tom Merry—"

The Terrible Three turned their backs upon him and walked away. Levison gritted his teeth with rage. He turned and found Jack Blake at his elbow.

"Blake—" he began.

Blake walked away without speaking. Levison clenched his hands. He had triumphed over his enemies by returning to the school, but his triumph after all was a hollow one, and he was beginning to realise that.

CHAPTER 11.

In Coventry!

LEVISON was somewhat at a loss. With all his keenness, he had not expected this new development. He had expected that he would receive black looks on his return, and perhaps some ragging, and then that matters would go on as usual.

But that was evidently not to be the

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther
Calling



Hallo, everybody! Who was it sent me an empty envelope? It "conveyed" nothing to me. "Electrons and atoms are constantly warring," says Mr. Linton. Up, electrons, and "atom"! "£50,000 Hair Disappears," reads a headline. Hair to-day and gone to-morrow! Remember, when tackling a job, only "push" will "pull" it off! "Psychology is needed in selling motor-cars," says a writer. "Auto" suggestion? Get ready! Why are black hens cleverer than white ones? Because black hens can lay white eggs, but white hens can't lay black eggs. When Gore left his pet marmoset at home this term, they wired: "Your monkey is pining for a companion. What shall we do until you return?" "I was the only fellow who could answer old Selby's question this morning," said Wally D'Arcy. "What was it?" asked his major. "Who broke the class-room window?" said Wally. No, Curly

case. The juniors of St. Jim's had been compelled to receive him back among them. But they would have nothing to do with him. He was barred by his school-fellows, and there was no one to give him a word. Even Mellish, his chum, under threat of a Form ragging, had not a word to say to him.

The day of his return to St. Jim's the cad of the Fourth made several attempts to break through the grim silence which was his punishment. But he failed every time.

Fellows he spoke to turned their backs without answering, and Levison gave it up at last. He even tried to get on speaking terms with fags in the Third, and Second, but fags even would have nothing to do with him.

When he looked into the Third Form Room Wally hurled a book at him. And he realised more and more that his success had been a hollow one. He was back at St. Jim's, but he might as well have been upon Robinson Crusoe's island.

And Levison thought the matter over very carefully. On Friday the grim silence towards him remained unbroken. Fellows chatting among themselves became suddenly dumb if Levison ventured a remark. If he joined a group, the group broke up at once. If he looked into a study, he was pushed out—in silence.

On Friday evening Levison knocked at Tom Merry's door, when the Terrible Three were doing their preparation.

Tom Merry did not know, of course, who was at the door, and he called out in his cheery tones:

"Come in!"

Levison came in.

The Terrible Three looked up from their work, and Monty Lowther pointed silently to the door. Levison did not take the hint. He came into the study, closed the door, and stood looking at the chums of the Shell.

Monty Lowther's finger remained pointing. Levison took no notice of it,

Gibson, a mandoline is *not* a high Chinese official. Any more? Joe Frayne has just told me that a centimetre is an insect with a hundred legs. As young Hobbs said to Mr. Selby, a cereal is a story that lasts several weeks. Hobbs' "impost" will last that long, too! Switch in for news. I hear Channel services are being brought still further up to date. But will they provide level crossings? "There can be only one result to the last Test Match," says a writer. We'll be surprised if there are any more! "If you want to see me, you must be short," snapped the employer. "I want to see you because I am short," said the applicant. Telegram just received: "Radio comedians are not so funny as they were four or five years ago." That's funny—they're using the same jokes! "How can I win promotion?" asks a postman. Well, don't "stick" to your post! "Spending a lot of money is a big responsibility," says Cutts of the Fifth. Yes, but you can always get help. "Nothing beats a long holiday by the sea," says Figgins. Unless it is a longer holiday. Heard this? "In Mexico I was in a terrible earthquake," said the traveller. "Were you scared?" "Not a bit—the earth trembled more than I did!" As the Mexican bandit put it, being hanged with the rest of his gang: "I'll String Along With You!" By the way, young Hobbs of the Third has been running an account at the tuckshop, and owes ten shillings. Like Hobbs, I'll say: Cheerio!.

and Lowther ceased to point, and picked up a cricket stump.

"Hold on!" said Levison, his cheeks flushing. "I've got something to say to you fellows—something important!"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I know I've been a rotter," said Levison desperately. "I did a rotten thing in planting that paper on Brooke, but I'm sorry!"

Another shake of the head.

"I'm really sorry!" said Levison. "Dash it all, can't a sinner repent? I'm sorry for what I did, and I'm willing to beg Brooke's pardon."

Shake.

"Look here, I'm giving it to you straight!" said Levison miserably. "I've had a rotten time since I came back! I want this to end. I'm willing to do anything to show that I'm really sorry!"

Shake.

"You mean to keep me in Coventry?"

Nod.

"All the time I stay here?"

Another nod.

"And you won't let me off, even if I say I'm sorry?"

Shake.

"Hang you, then!" said Levison.

And he went out of the study and slammed the door with a slam that rattle the length of the Shell passage.

Monty Lowther shrugged his shoulders. Manners went sedately on with his work. Tom Merry looked a little uneasy.

"I—I wonder if he's really sorry?" remarked Tom Merry, in a tentative sort of way.

"Rot!" said Monty Lowther. He's only spoofing!"

"H'm! I suppose he is."

"Of course he is!" said Manners. "He would laugh at us up his sleeve if we took him at his word. He would congratulate himself on having pulled the wool over our eyes once more."

"Yes, I suppose you're right."

But Tom Merry sighed as he bent over

his work again. He had a very tender heart, and he was only too willing to believe that Levison was sincerely repentant. But it was impossible to trust the cad of the Fourth.

Levison went slowly down the passage. Was he really repentant? He hardly knew. But he knew that he was willing to say or do anything to escape from the punishment of his offence.

Dick Brooke of the Fourth was coming out of Mr. Lathom's study as Levison reached the lower passage. Brooke was a day-boy, and should have gone home, but he had stayed behind for extra tuition, which the Form-master was giving him. Brooke was working for an examination, and Mr. Lathom was helping him to prepare for it. Brooke glanced at Levison, and passed on, but Levison quickened his pace and caught him by the sleeve.

"Just a word with you, Brooke."

Brooke shook his head and coloured awkwardly. He did not want to be hard on Levison, though he had been the most injured by Levison's treachery. But he had agreed with the rest to send Levison to Coventry, and he did not intend to depart from it.

"Look here, Brooke, I'm sorry for what I did," muttered Levison. "I know that it was caddish. I'm really sorry. You believe me?"

Brooke did not reply.

"I'd do anything to make it up to you!" said Levison. "You've only got to say what I can do, and I'll do it."

Brooke shook his head.

"You don't want me to do anything?" Shake.

"A word from you would help to set me right with the fellows," pursued Levison. "I know I don't deserve it, but you might pity a chap who's down."

Brooke was silent.

"Don't you believe in a chap repenting when he's done wrong and is being punished for it?" said Levison.

"Yes," said Brooke, breaking silence at last. "I hope you're really sorry, and I'm sorry for you, but the whole school has agreed to send you to Coventry, and I stand in with the rest. You ought not to have come back. Any decent chap would have stayed away, in the circumstances."

"I had to come back; my pater sent me."

"You ought to write to him, then, to take you away again."

"He wouldn't," said Levison miserably. "I was sacked from my last school, Greyfriars. If I get sacked from here the pater says he won't send me to a Public school again."

"You ought to have thought of that before. Hang it all, Levison, people have been sent to prison for doing what you did! You've got off jolly easily, and you can't expect fellows to speak to a chap who forged another's handwriting. You oughtn't to speak to me; you nearly got me sacked from the school."

"I know I did, but I should have owned up, I think."

"I can't believe that!"

Brooke walked away. Levison muttered something between his teeth, and stood in the passage, miserable and undecided. Where was he to turn now? He walked out into the dusky quadrangle. Most of the juniors were indoors now, but Levison caught sight of Jameson of the Third, a New House fag, outside the tuckshop. Jameson was regarding with hungry eyes an array of jam tarts, which a temporary want of funds did not allow him to sample.

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Levison tapped him on the shoulder. Jameson looked round at him and drew away. Then he took out a handkerchief, and in a very deliberate way, wiped his shoulder with it where Levison had touched it, as if to wipe away some contamination.

Levison reddened, but he affected to take no notice of the action.

"Like some jam tarts, Jameson?" he asked, in a very friendly way.

Jameson would certainly have liked some jam tarts, but he did not reply to Levison. He did not want to be treated by the cad of the Fourth.

"I'm in funds," said Levison. "Come in, and I'll stand you half a dozen."

Jameson turned his back.

Levison's eyes burned, and he reached out and boxed the fag's ears with savage force.

Jameson reeled against the tuckshop with a sharp cry.

"You cad!" he yelled.

Levison grinned savagely.

"Oh, you've found your voice at last, have you?" he sneered. "I'll help you to find it again. Take that, and that, and that!"

"Ow! Help!" yelled the fag, as Levison grasped him and boxed his ears right and left. "Yah! Yaroooh! Help! Rescue!"

There was a rush of footsteps in the quad. Redfern of the Fourth came dashing up. He did not speak, but he grasped Levison by the shoulder, and swung him away from the yelling fag, and hurled him to the ground.

Then he pushed back his cuffs, and stood waiting for Levison to rise to his feet.

"Ow—ow!" groaned Jameson. "The beast slogged me because I wouldn't speak to him, Reddy. Ow! Go for him! Yow! Oh!"

Levison rose slowly, but he did not "come on," as Redfern's attitude plainly invited him to do.

He turned and tramped away.

"Never mind, Jimmy," said Redfern consolingly. "If the rotter touches you again, let me know, and I'll lick him baldheaded!"

Levison did not trouble Jameson again, and he did not try that method with any of the other fags. He had had enough of Redfern's handling. With slow steps he returned to his study, and did his preparation there—in solitude.

When he was finished he did not go down to the Common-room. He felt that he could not face dead silence and scornful glances. He remained in his study till bed-time, and when he went up to bed with the Fourth there was no word spoken to him. The fellows said good-night to one another, but there was no one to say it to Levison.

In the darkness, after the other fellows had fallen asleep, Levison remained long awake.

The Fourth Formers would have been surprised if they had known that Levison's pillow was wet with tears.

CHAPTER 12.

Cousin Ethel's Visit!

"FOUR o'clock, Kerr, old chap," said Figgins, as four strokes boomed out from the clock tower at St. Jim's.

"What about it?" asked Kerr.

"Cousin Ethel's coming at four."

It was the following afternoon, and Figgins and Kerr were walking together in the quad, Figgins with one eye on the gateway. The New House leader was always like a cat on hot bricks when Cousin Ethel was coming to St. Jim's.

The two juniors came upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, D'Arcy, as Miss Ethel Cleveland's cousin, was a very important personage on the occasions when the girl came to the school to spend a week-end with Mrs. Holmes, the Head's wife.

"Time your cousin was here, D'Arcy," said Figgins agreeably.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Might get down to the gates," suggested Figgins.

"I was just goin' down to the gates, deah boy."

"I'll come with you."

"Pwaw don't bothah!" said the swell of St. Jim's politely. "I am quite capable of escortin' my cousin from the gate to the Head's house."

"Well, the more the merrier, you know," said Figgins feebly. "And—and I want you to give me some tips about a new topper I'm going in for, D'Arcy."

The swell of St. Jim's was all smiles



Grasping Levison by the shoulder, Redfern swung him a "Ow!" groaned Jameson. "The beast slogged me!"

at once. Sometimes he suspected Figgins of taking too much interest in his cousin. Indeed, he had once or twice remarked to his chums, with some asperity, that Ethel might really have been Figgy's cousin, and not his at all, by the way Figgins seemed to hang about when she came to St. Jim's.

But if a fellow wanted advice on the subject of silk hats, Arthur Augustus was just the fellow to give it to him. As the best dressed fellow at St. Jim's, and the glass of fashion in the Lower School, D'Arcy was an authority on that subject.

And so the two juniors strolled away to the gates together with great cordiality. Figgins was thinking of Cousin Ethel, and wondering whether she had driven over from Cleveland House, or come by train, or whether she would come walking in at the gates. D'Arcy was thinking of silk hats, and he expatiated upon the subject to considerable length. But he broke off as Figgins suddenly exclaimed:

"Oh, good!"

A graceful, girlish figure had just entered the gates of St. Jim's, and Figgins rushed off to greet Cousin Ethel.

The girl met him with a bright smile. Arthur Augustus walked up in a more dignified manner, and Cousin Ethel greeted him with a cheerful smile. The two juniors walked one on either side of the girl towards the Head's house.

"Did you come by twain, Ethel?" asked D'Arcy.

"Yes; and walked from the station," said Ethel.

"Oh, I wish I'd known!" said Figgins. "I could have come to the station."

"You are stayin' o'ah to-morrow, of course, deah boy—I mean deah gal!" asked D'Arcy.

"Yes; till Monday," said Ethel brightly.

"Good egg! We'll go on the vivah to-morrow."

"Might make up a party," suggested Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy unsuspiciously. "A good many fellows in our House would like to come, Ethel."

"Abent! And in the New House, too," said Figgins, colouring. "As the—the two Houses have been so—so united lately, I—I think all these little things ought to be arranged in—in unison."

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass severely upon Figgins.

"What a good idea!" said Cousin Ethel. "And what have you been so united about?"

"Oh, we wanged up shouldah to shouldah to kick Levison out!" said Arthur Augustus. "We expelled him f'rom the school, you know, for playin' a wotten twick on Bwooke of the Fourth—vewy decent chap, Bwooke—but the Head let him come back again."

"Oh!" said Cousin Ethel.

They had reached the Head's house now, and Levison, who was near, raised his cap to Cousin Ethel. Ethel gave him a cold nod. She did not like the cad of the Fourth, for she could not forget the time when he had slandered Figgins, and made her believe—though only for a short time—that Figgins had been guilty of a miserable trick. Levison seemed to have forgotten the matter; perhaps he had too many sins upon his conscience to remember any one specially. He came towards the girl.

"So glad to see you at St. Jim's again, Miss Cleveland!" he said.

"Thank you!" said Ethel coldly.

Figgins looked daggers at the cad of the Fourth. It seemed to him almost like sacrilege for a fellow like Levison to speak to a girl like Cousin Ethel. Arthur Augustus looked very uncomfortable.

"I've wanted to see you again, Miss Cleveland," said Levison. "I wanted to speak to you. I did a rotten thing—about Figgins, you know—and I wanted to tell you I was sorry."

"I'm glad you are sorry," said Cousin Ethel.

And, with a nod to D'Arcy and Figgins, she went into the Head's house. Figgins turned upon Levison, his fists clenched and his eyes blazing.

"How dare you speak to Cousin Ethel, you cad!" he said, in a low and furious voice.

Levison looked at him with a bitter expression.

"I suppose it's for Miss Cleveland to say whether I may speak to her or not," he replied.

"You—you cad! I—I—"

"You seem to have forgotten that I'm in Coventry," said Levison bitterly.

"You musn't speak to me, you know."

He swung away with a shrug of the shoulders. Figgins contained himself with a great effort. If they had not been under the windows of the Head's house, and in danger of being seen by Cousin Ethel if she looked out, he would have laid violent hands upon Levison on the spot.

"Pway keep calm, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Do you know, I am beginning to think that Levison isn't such a frightful cad, you know, and—"

"Oh, rot!" said Figgins.

And he stalked away, leaving the swell of St. Jim's speechless with indignation.

CHAPTER 13.

The Mad Bull!

THE next day was Sunday—a day of rest and quiet at St. Jim's. After morning service the juniors had the morning to themselves.

In the afternoon a party of juniors had been arranged to take Cousin Ethel for a quiet row on the river; but in the morning it was Ethel's intention to visit her old nurse, who was married and had settled down in a cottage near Wayland.

The girl left the school soon after morning service for that purpose, and she had smilingly given permission to her friends to meet her at the footpath in the wood as she came back.

Half an hour after she had left, Levison went out by the gates. Levison knew of Ethel Cleveland's intended visit to the cottage near Wayland, and he crossed the wood by a short cut and came out into Wayland High Street.

He walked through the town and took the path to the cottage, and halted when he came in sight of the red-tiled roof in the distance over the green fields.

He sat down upon a stile and waited.

The junior's face was very thoughtful, but there was nothing of malice in its expression.

Levison was feeling utterly down-hearted.

His punishment was too heavy for him. He had defied the school, and the school had come down upon him heavily, and Levison, like Cain of old, felt his punishment was greater than he could bear.

But when Cousin Ethel came he thought he saw a gleam of light. If he could speak to the girl, if he could convince her that he was really innocent, he felt that she would help him.

For Levison felt that he was coming to the end of his tether. He did not want to leave St. Jim's, but if the sentence of Coventry continued he felt that he would have to go. He had sneered at it at first, but he had come to realise that it was too much to bear. The thickest-skinned fellow could not stand long, alone and unaided, against general scorn and aversion.

Something must be done, or he would have to go. He felt that. And in Cousin Ethel was his only hope.

"What a fool I've been!" he muttered to himself, as he sat there in the sun. "What an utter fool! It's rotten! If Ethel Cleveland believes me—"

He broke off.

Why should Ethel believe him? He had lied to her before—lied so cunningly that she had been deceived.

Would she not believe that he was lying again?

In the old fable the shepherd boy cried "Wolf!" so often when there was no wolf, that when at last the wolf really came no one would listen to his cries. Levison was in the same position now.

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ay from the bag and hurled him to the ground. "Ow! buse I wouldn't speak to him, Reddy. Go for him!"

He had lied so often that when at last he came to tell the truth he could not expect to be believed.

And it was the truth this time—whether temporary or not, it was the truth that the cad of the Fourth was sincere.

He raised his eyes at last and glanced towards the distant cottage. Cousin Ethel had just come out, and was standing by the porch, shaking hands with an old woman who had followed her from the cottage.

Levison drew a deep breath.

She was coming. His last chance, such as it was, was at hand. He turned his head in the opposite direction, and gritted his teeth. On the edge of the wood in the distance, past the heathery moor, he could see moving dots, which he knew were the caps of the juniors of St. Jim's. They had come to see Cousin Ethel home, and it occurred to him that they must have seen him sitting there on the stile. A gleam of anger came into his eyes.

If they had seen him they would hurry, and they might prevent him from seeing Cousin Ethel alone.

He fixed his eyes upon them intently. The caps were moving in his direction, and he knew that he had been seen.

"Hang them!" he muttered miserably. But they were still very distant. He looked back towards the red-tiled cottage. Cousin Ethel had said good-bye to the old woman, and was coming down the track across the field.

She looked up from the path as she reached the stile on the opposite side of the meadow, and saw Levison.

There was a field's width between them, but Levison could see the expression of repugnance that came over the fair face.

She had seen him, and she knew that he was there waiting for her to pass. What would she think he wanted? Would she try to avoid him?

He soon knew.

Instead of entering the meadow that separated them, Cousin Ethel turned by another path across another field, to take a more roundabout path to the wood.

Levison gritted his teeth.

She would not give him a chance to speak to her, then. He could not blame her, when he remembered what he had said the last time she listened to him.

The high green hedge hid the girl from his sight.

Levison could catch glimpses of the pretty summer hat when it passed gaps in the hedge, but the girl he could not see.

He gave a sudden start as he looked towards the field she was traversing. She was following a path that ran beside the high hedge at the edge of the field. Farther on, in a far corner of the same field, Levison caught sight of a large black bull, and he saw that the animal had ceased to graze, and had his gleaming eyes fixed upon the girl. Cousin Ethel had not noticed the animal when she turned into the field. Levison's heart seemed to turn to stone.

He knew that bull, which was kept in the field with locked gates. Once the brute had escaped, and had chased several juniors belonging to St. Jim's, and had charged into the school quadrangle, and several fellows had had narrow escapes.

And the quivering of the animal's powerful flanks, and the flicking of its tail, showed that it was in its usual savage mood. There was a red flower in Cousin Ethel's hat, and that spot of

red had caught the glaring eye of the bull.

"Good heavens!" panted Levison. "She will be killed! It's my fault!" It was his fault!

If he had not been there, Ethel would have come back by the public path, instead of going round, and she would not have entered the field where the black bull was confined.

Levison stood trembling in every limb, his heart beating to almost suffocation. He shouted—but his voice did not carry across the wide field.

What could he do?

There came a deep, thunderous roar across the meadows. The bull had given voice. The roar startled the girl, and through a parting in the hedge Levison saw her stop and face round towards the animal.

The wind brought a faint cry to his ears, and he saw Cousin Ethel try to scramble through the hedge. But thick wire ran through the thickets, to prevent the passage of the bull, and Cousin Ethel could not get through.

Levison groaned.

"Run!" he shouted. "Run!"

But the wind was against him, and his voice did not reach the girl. But she ran. She disappeared from his sight, but he could see the red flower on the hat as she ran along the hedge.

Another deep roar from the bull. He was pawing the ground in his fury, and Levison knew that he was about to thunder down upon the girl as she ran.

If anyone had told Levison a week before that he would ever risk his life to save any human being from danger, the cad of the Fourth would have laughed cynically.

But now—almost without previous thought—he broke into a desperate run across the meadow, tearing along as if his life depended upon it.

He reached the stile on the opposite side, breathless, panting. He cleared the stile at a bound, and was in the field.

He looked round with an agonised glance. Ethel was half-way along the hedge—and the bull, from the opposite side of the field, was running towards her. By putting on desperate speed Levison had time to get between them.

For one moment he hesitated.

In that moment Cousin Ethel's life hung in the balance.

But then all that was decent in Ernest Levison rose to the surface. He tore off his jacket, and held it in his hand, and dashed forward at top speed.

Faster—faster—with starting eyes and thumping heart, his breath coming and going in sobs!

He was not in good condition, and that terrific burst of speed told upon him heavily. But he succeeded. He reached the intervening space between the fleeing girl and the charging bull, and he faced the charge of the thundering animal.

"Run!" he shrieked. "The fence—quick!"

Cousin Ethel turned her head.

She saw Levison, in terror and wonder—she saw the charging bull—she saw his fearful danger, and stopped. Levison waved his hand wildly.

"Run!" he yelled. "Run for the fence! Quick! I'm all right! For mercy's sake, run!"

He had no time to say more. The earth seemed to shake under the heavy tread of the black bull as it charged down upon the junior.

CHAPTER 14.

Levison Earns His Pardon!

LEVISON faced the bull, his heart beating almost to suffocation, and a mist sweeping before his eyes. He was not cool, he was not collected. He was afraid—horribly afraid. But he did not run.

He could not run without sacrificing Cousin Ethel, and, afraid as he was, he would not do that. And in a few seconds it was too late. If he ran now it would only have been to feel the bull's lowered horns behind him, and to be tossed and gored without a chance of defending himself.

His nerves were in a quiver, but he acted instinctively and as cunningly as if he had been quite cool.

He faced the charge of the bull, his loose jacket ready in his hand, knowing that he had but one chance, and that if it failed he was lost.

The bull gave a deep bellow and rushed right at him.

The lowered horns were within three or four feet of him when Levison made a desperate spring aside and flung his jacket over the lowered head.

It caught on the horns, and hung over the bull's head, and the animal gave another deep bellow of rage and surprise.

Then Levison ran.

The bull, blinded by the cloth that swung over his eyes, whirled round and charged madly in the wrong direction, and then dashed his head into the grass, striving to tear off the strange encumbrance.

He roared with rage as he tore at the jacket, and between the ground and the horns it was quickly ripped to shreds.

Levison had but a few seconds.

But he made the best use of them. He dashed after Cousin Ethel, who seemed to be rooted to the ground.

"Run!" he gasped.

"Oh, Heaven!"

"Come—come—quick—"

He caught the girl by the arm and dashed on with her.

Cousin Ethel ran with him.

As they fled towards the fence there was a wild roar behind them and a frantic trampling.

The black bull had got rid of the blinding jacket, and was glaring about him furiously in search of his victims.

The roar announced that he had seen them, and the ground seemed to shake again under his heavy trampling.

Cousin Ethel was panting wildly.

"I—I can't run any more!" she gasped, stumbling on the rough ground.

Levison's grip closed like a vice upon her arm.

"You must! Come—come!"

He half-led, half-dragged her on. They were at the fence now, and the junior helped the girl over it, and Ethel fell almost fainting upon the other side.

Bellow—bellow!

Levison clambered wildly at the fence. His strength was spent, and it seemed to him that he would never get over in time.

He dragged himself frantically up, and rolled over it, and as he did so there was a terrific crash.

The lowered head of the bull had struck the fence where the junior had been a few seconds before, and the whole fence shook with the concussion.

But Levison was safe, and he rolled down in the grass on the safe side of the fence, gasping and panting.

(Continued on page 28.)



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

HALLO, chums! Now that Easter is almost upon us, I expect many of you are thinking of taking hiking and cycling trips during the holiday. And what better way of spending Easter? None. After a long winter, we are all eager to get out farther afield and explore the high-ways and byways of the countryside, and Easter, being the first holiday of the year, gives us the opportunity. Hiking and cycling are popular pastimes, and besides keeping one fit, they act as outlets to the spirit of adventure with which we are all imbued. But hiking and cycling can be overdone; that is, if you go out on a trip with your pals, don't keep pedalling or tramping away regardless of the distance you are covering. The surest way to spoil your hike or bike ride is to overdo the mileage. Being fresh and eager on the outward journey, you are tempted to go a little farther. But always remember that one mile more means another mile to be covered on the return journey, when you will probably be feeling a little tired. Much the best way is to plan beforehand the itinerary of your hike or bike ride, bearing in mind to avoid the main roads as much as possible.

"GUSSY'S CANADIAN COUSIN!"

For next Wednesday there is an extra-good and lively yarn of the chums of St. Jim's, and you will revel in the fun and adventure caused by the visit to the school of Gussy's cousin from Canada. Tom Merry & Co. make great preparations to welcome the distinguished

visitor, and a record spread is got ready. The juniors are all eagerly awaiting the arrival of Cousin Aubrey, whom Gussy has never seen, when a tramp approaches the school gates. Not for a moment do the juniors connect him with Cousin Aubrey, and they get the shock of their lives when the tramp says he is that individual! That's the start of a series of amazing and amusing events which will compel your interest to the last line. It's a story that I strongly advise you to recommend to your pals. Tell them to look out for it—and don't forget to order your own GEM in advance.

FINDINGS KEEPINGS!

The truth of the old saying that findings are keepings has been borne out by the story of two boys' lucky find in the cellar of an old house in Baltimore, U.S.A. Actually, it is an offence against the law for the finder of treasure trove—which legally means objects or coins made of gold or silver—to keep what he finds. It is his duty to give it up; then the local coroner holds an inquest to discover if the owner can be traced. If not, the treasure does not go to the finder, but he is suitably rewarded.

When the two boys found a large

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number of old coins in the cellar, they very honestly gave them up. At the inquest, many people came forward to register a claim on them, but there was nothing doing. It was ruled that as no claimant had satisfied the judge as to his ownership, the coins should go to the two boys. It was a fortune for them, for they had unearthed 3,583 gold coins, and their value was estimated at about £6,000! Honesty is the best policy.

THE GROWTH OF SPEED.

The remarkable speed of 277 miles an hour set up by Sir Malcolm Campbell at Daytona Beach a little while ago calls to mind the fact that forty-seven years ago the first car succeeded in passing the mile-a-minute speed. A racing driver named "Red Devil" Janatzy set up the record. In an electrically-propelled car, he attained a speed of 65.82 m.p.h. during a race. In those days it must have been just as amazing to learn that a car had travelled at over 60 m.p.h., as it is for us to-day to know that a car has hurtled along at nearly 280 m.p.h. One wonders what the record will be forty years hence. Land speed has advanced 212 m.p.h. in forty-seven years; that is, at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ m.p.h. faster per year. If it continues to grow at this speed, the record ought to be, somewhere about 450 in 1975!

"KIDNAPPED!"

This is the title of the next great yarn of Western school adventure that Frank Richards has written for you. It is the first story of a short and thrilling series, in which Slick Poindexter, Dick Carr's chum, is kidnapped and held to ransom. Unfortunately for Dick, he is made the dupe of the kidnapper, and this fact is to be the cause of many dramatic and exciting adventures for the tenderfoot of Packsaddle.

Another grand instalment of our ripping serial, "The Secret World," and all the GEM's usual humorous and interesting features will complete the next programme. Cheerio until next Wednesday, chums!

THE EDITOR.



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

Jan T. G. Johnstone, c/o Government Printing Office, Wellington, New Zealand, wants members for the Mizpah Correspondence & Exchange Club.

Victor C. W. Reynolds, 1, Longbrook Terrace, Exeter, wants a pen pal; age 13-15; meccano and pets.

Billie Lloyd, Albemarle Hotel, Marine Parade, Brighton, wants stamp correspondents.

Miss Susan Stajano Ferreiro, Soriano 1342, Montevideo, Uruguay, South America, wants girl correspondents; age 13-18; sports, books, stamps.

Donald Leveridge, 32, Drayton Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.10, wants stamp correspondents.

Miss Kit Clague, 7, Church Street, Peel, Isle of Man, wants girl correspondents; age 14-16.

Chas. England, 42, Stockton Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester, wants correspondents overseas; age 15-17; scouting, camping, drawing, sports.

Victor Mann, 579, Logan Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wants correspondents; age 12 upwards; aviation.

Miss Ofelia Stajano, Soriano 1342, Montevideo, Uruguay, South America, wants girl correspondents; age 15-20; stamps, tennis, riding, films, books.

John Pross, Sandy Bay Baths, Sandy Bay, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, wants correspondents; age 14-15; stamps, post-cards, cigarette cards; England, France, U.S.A., Africa.

Raymond J. Smith, Box 69, Richmond, Queensland, Australia, wants pen pals; age 10-13.

Leonard Harrison, 25, Branksome Road, Acre Lane, Brixton, London, S.W.2, wants to hear from stamp collectors; age 13-16.

Geoffrey Masurel, 102, Westerfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, wants a pen pal keen on electricity; age 10-12.

Eric Brown, 7, Alexandra Crescent, Alexandra Road, Newland Avenue, Hull, wants a correspondent; England or Australia; age 14-15; swimming, Scouts, Guides.

Clive Boswell, 87, Abbey Road, Warley, Birmingham, wants to hear from stamp collectors; age 11-17.

R. J. W. Hadley, 45, St. James Road, Dudley, Worcs, wants a pen pal in England.

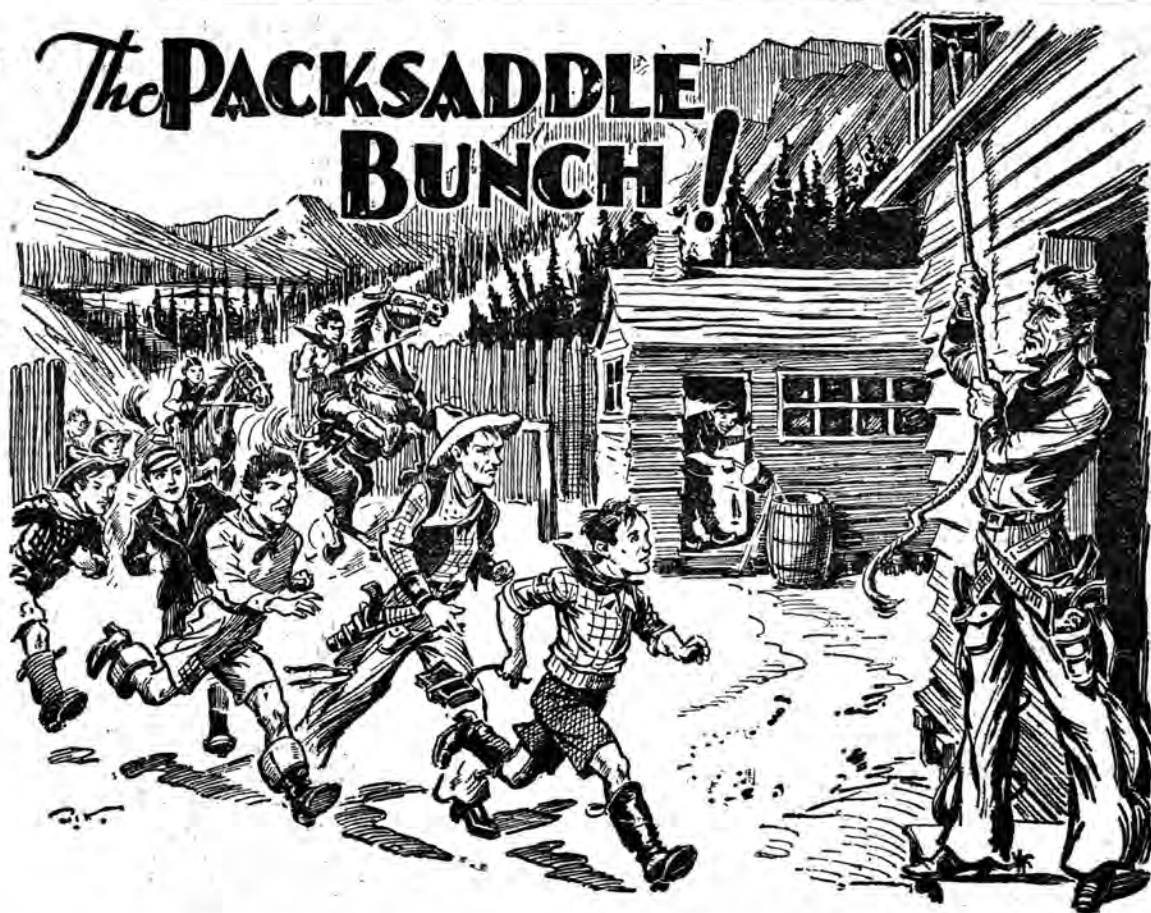
Fred Smith, 10, Attwood Street, Hawne, Halesowen, Worcs, wants correspondents; age 16; Pitman's shorthand, and birds' eggs.

V. Baxendale, 1, Vincent Street, Openshaw, Manchester, wants a pen pal in Texas, or Hollywood.

Robert Wm. Parks, 57, Wadley Lane, Sheffield 6, wants pen pals in the Sheffield area; hobbies, correspondence club, etc.

Harold Barrett, 37, Hookfield Park, Epsom, Surrey, wants pen pals; boys' books and sports; age 11-16.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,413.



A Word of Warning!

"LISSEN, you 'uns!" roared Bill Sampson. The Packsaddle bunch listened.

Small Brown might have told them a dozen times over to listen and hardly a fellow in the bunch would have taken heed, but when Bill Sampson talked the most reckless and unheeding fellow at the cow town school sat up and took notice.

Bill's bronco, saddled and bridled, was at the porch. The headmaster of Packsaddle School was going to hit the trail that morning. Quite a number of fellows were waiting eagerly to hear the hoofbeats of his departing horse; for when Bill was away discipline generally dropped off the bunch like a discarded cloak. Small Brown, the teacher, did not enjoy life while Bill was absent.

Instead of mounting his brone, however, Bill came striding into the school-room, his quirt under his arm, a frown on his rugged brow under the shade of his ten-gallon hat. He fixed a grim glare on the bunch.

"Spill it, Bill!" said Slick Poindexter encouragingly.

"Shoot!" said Mick Kavanagh.

"I'm telling you to lissen!" roared Bill. "I guess I got to hit the trail for Kicking Mule. I allow I'm going to be away most of the day. And I reckon you 'uns are going to keep quiet and 'tend to Mr. Brown while I ain't here to ride herd over you."

Steve Carson winked at his friends, The Gem Library.—No. 1,418.

Slim Dixon and Poker Parker. If Bill reckoned that Steve was going to keep quiet while he and his quirt were at a safe distance, Steve figured that Bill was out in his reckoning. Steve was only waiting for Bill to ride clear before he started in to make Small Brown wish he had never been born—or, at least, that he had never travelled as far as Texas looking for a teacher's job! Slim and Poker grinned back at Steve.

Unluckily for Steve, Bill caught that wink and knew what it meant. He

"Want some more?" roared Bill. "Aw, you pie-faced old gopher, what's biting you?" yelled Steve furiously.

Whack!

"You squat!" roared Bill.

Steve squatted at once; so did Slim and Poker. They glared at Bill—but they did not want any more quirt.

"Now," resumed Bill, "like I allowed, I'm aiming to hit the trail for Kicking Mule, and I guess I want Mr. Brown to keep order hyer while I'm gone. You get me? Any guy kicking up a rookus in this hyer school will get his when I come back. And that's a sample for you to go on with, you Steve."

Steve scowled savagely, but did not answer. The rest of the bunch sat very quiet. With Bill in this mood, no fellow in the cow town school was feeling like arguing with him.

"Mr. Brown!" rapped Bill.

"Yes, sir?" squealed Small Brown.

The little man blinked at Bill through his horn-rimmed spectacles. He was not looking forward to handling the bunch while Bill was away.

"I guess," said Bill, "that the bunch will know better than to hand over trouble while I'm gone arter what I've jest spilled; but if they do, you take a quirt to them, Mr. Brown. Got that?"

"Oh, yes!" gasped Small Brown.

"What you grinning at, like you was a Mexican monkey, you Carr?" roared Bill Sampson.

Dick Carr, the tenderfoot of Packsaddle, jumped. He had grinned involuntarily at the idea of Small Brown

THE BAD MAN FROM BAR-O!

By

FRANK RICHARDS.

made a stride towards the class, his quirt slipping down from under his arm into his hand.

Whack!

Steve gave a fearful yell as the thong whacked round his shoulders. He jumped up from the pinewood desk, yelling.

Whack, whack!

Slim Dixon and Poker Parker jumped up in their turn, roaring.

—ANOTHER BIG-THRILL YARN OF TEXAS SCHOOL ADVENTURE.

taking a quirt to the rough and tough bunch.

"Oh!" he stammered. "I— Yaroooooh!"

Whack!

Bill seemed to have a free hand with the quirt that morning. Perhaps he wanted to make it clear to the bunch what they had to expect if they handed out the usual trouble while he was away. A few licks of the quirt helped them to remember that he was coming back later.

"Ow!" gasped Dick. "Wow!"

Nobody else in the bunch ventured to grin. Bill glared round over a crowd of serious, not to say solemn, faces.

"Any other guy in this bunch honing for the quirt?" he demanded.

No answer.

"Waal," said Bill, "I guess I've put you wise, Mr. Brown, I'm leaving you to ride herd over this hyer bunch. There's a quirt on my desk, and I'll say you want to handle it if they give trouble. You get me?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Small Brown.

And Bill Sampson strode out of the school-room, the thick pine planks creaking under his heavy tread, and mounted his waiting bronco.

There was a clatter of hoofs as he rode out at the school gate, and Hank, the hired man, shut it after him.

"Bill's gone!" murmured Slick Poindexter.

"You said it," murmured Mick.

Dick Carr rubbed his shoulder where the lick of the quirt had fallen. He liked and respected his headmaster, much as Bill had astonished him when he first came to Packsaddle. The schoolboy from the Old Country had never seen a schoolmaster like Bill before he hit Packsaddle. But, though he had learned to like Bill, he had not learned to like Bill's quirt. He wriggled painfully as he rubbed his shoulder.

Small Brown eyed the class uneasily as the hoofbeats died away on the prairie. Bill had warned the bunch, but Mr. Brown would not have been surprised by the usual outbreak of uproar.

It did not come, however; for the present Bill's warning had its effect. Steve Carson lounged in his seat and let his school books slip off the desk to the floor, evidently as a hint that he was going to do no work. But if that was the worst that Small Brown had to expect it was a relief to him.

Finding the class so unusually quiet and orderly, Mr. Brown felt his confidence revive. It was his ambition to handle the bunch as Bill did—an ambition never yet realized.

"Carr!" he rapped out.

Dick looked at him.

"Sit still!" rapped Small Brown.

"How dare you wriggle about in your seat in that manner! Sit still!"

Dick's lip curled. That was Small Brown all over. He was afraid of Steve, the bully of Packsaddle; he was not afraid of the tenderfoot. So he had picked on the tenderfoot to display his new authority. Steve Carson, leaning on the desk behind him, put his legs across his own desk; Mr. Brown did not heed him.

Dick sat still. But the twinge in his shoulder was rather severe. Bill had a heavy hand. The tenderfoot was soon wriggling again.

Small Brown picked up the quirt which Bill had so thoughtfully left for him on the headmaster's desk. He was not going to put his authority to too severe a strain by laying it round Steve's legs as they rested on his desk; he gave his attention to the tenderfoot.

"I have told you to keep still, Carr!" he said.

Whack!

Dick gave a roar as the quirt lashed.

"Stop that!" he shouted.

"What—what?" squealed Small Brown. It was almost the first time that the tenderfoot had kicked. He was, in fact, the only member of the bunch on whom Mr. Brown would have ventured to handle the quirt. "How dare you, Carr! I shall punish you severely!"

Whack, whack!

Steve Carson chuckled. Some of the bunch laughed aloud. Small Brown as a cheap imitation of Bill Sampson was rather amusing. But it was not amusing to the fellow who was getting the quirt.

Dick jumped up, grabbed the handle of the quirt, and wrenched it away from Mr. Brown.

He stepped across to the window and flung it out into the playground.

Small Brown fairly shook with wrath. "Carr!" he squealed. "Go and fetch that quirt at once!"

"Rats!" answered Dick Carr.

"I order you—"

"Rot!"

"I shall report this to Mr. Sampson!" squealed Small Brown—his last resource in time of trouble.

"Report and be blowed!" answered the tenderfoot of Packsaddle, and he went back to his desk and sat down.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the bunch.

When Yuba Pete, a six-gun hobo, holds up Packsaddle School, he thinks it's his lucky day. But he's got another think coming—as the boys of the cow town school show him!

Small Brown glared at the tenderfoot. He glared at the class.

"Silence!" he squealed.

"Aw, pack it up, you, Brown!" grinned Pie Sanders. "You ain't no Bill Sampson, you ain't, and don't you forget it!"

To which Mr. Brown made no reply. It was only too clear that he was no Bill Sampson. The lesson began—with a laughing, talking class paying very little attention to Mr. Brown. There was no outbreak of disorder—Bill's warning lingering in the minds of the bunch. But it was a very free and easy time in the school-room that morning.

Only Dick Carr was grim and worried. He was going to be reported to Bill, when Bill came back—as the only fellow who had given real trouble while the headmaster was away. He was feeling strongly inclined to fetch in the quirt, and lay it round Mr. Brown!

The Bad Man Blows In!

HANK, the hired man, stood looking over the school gate, meditatively chewing tobacco and squirting the juice right and left, when the stranger came up the trail.

Hank looked at that stranger.

He was a big, powerful man—almost as big and powerful as Bill Sampson himself. He was dressed like a cow-puncher, but his garb was old and worn

and tattered and stained. The goat-skin chaps were almost in rags; the stetson hat on his untidy, frowzy head looked as if it had been picked off a refuse-heap. The butt of a big Colt peeped from the holster on his gunbelt. The hired man of Packsaddle School, as he gave that stranger the once-over, wished that Bill was not away. He knew a "hobo" when he saw one, and this was the roughest, toughest specimen of a hobo that he had ever seen. Hank rather hoped that the tramp would pass the gate and keep on to the cow town farther down the trail.

But the hobo did not pass on. He stopped at the gate, turned his shaggy, stubby face towards him, and fixed a pair of sunken but very keen eyes on him.

"Say!" he greeted.

"Mornin'!" answered Hank civilly. Hank was not famed for civility. But it was wise to talk turkey to a ruffianly looking tramp who packed a gun.

"This here the school?"

"You said it."

"I guess I've heard of it," said the stranger. "Yep! I'll say so! Me, I'm from the Bar-O."

"Fired?" asked Hank. The pilgrim on the trail looked as if he had been fired a good time ago, and had roughed it a lot since.

"You're shouting!" agreed the man from the Bar-O. "I guess I was fired for gouging my foreman. Yep! I'm mentioning that I'm a bad man."

Hank thought that he looked it, but did not say so.

"Right on to the burg!" he said. "You'll hit the Red Dog as soon as you raise it, right on the plaza."

"I guess I ain't hitting no burg," said the bad man from the Bar-O. "I'll say I'm coming in for chuck. You got anything to say agin it?"

Hank had nothing to say against it. Hank was hired to split logs, sweep, and make himself generally useful at the cow town school—not to raise Cain with hobos who packed guns. He shook his head.

"I'll say you'll open that gate!" said the bad man from Bar-O.

Hank hesitated a moment. The hobo's hand slid to the butt of his gun.

"I'll jest mention," he remarked casually, "that Yuba Pete—that's me—is pretty sudden on the shoot! You get me?"

"Mr. Sampson will sure be mad!" said Hank.

"Who's Mr. Sampson when he's to home?" asked Yuba Pete derisively.

"He's sure the schoolmaster."

"Trot him out," said the bad man from Bar-O, "and I'll fill him so full of holes you can use him for a colander."

Hank would have liked nothing better than to trot out Bill Sampson had he been there. Unfortunately he was many a long mile away, on the ranges of the Kicking Mule Ranch.

In silence, Hank opened the gate.

The dusty wayfarer tramped in. Hank resumed chewing tobacco and spitting. It was no concern of his.

Yuba Pete stared round him, under his tattered stetson, and tramped on to the schoolhouse.

At the porch he halted and roared:

"Say! Anybody to home?"

Tin Tung, the Chinese, popped out of the house into the porch, his almond eyes almost popping out of his yellow face at the same time. Tin Tung was cook, and many other things at the cow town school, and at present he was busy tidying up Bill's quarters.

"A doggoned Chink!" growled the

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bad man from the Bar-O. "Say, where's your boss?"

"Mistee Sampson lide to Kicking Mule," answered Tin Tung. "Mistee Blown in school-loom."

"Git!" snapped the bad man.

He grasped Tin Tung by the neck, whirled him out of the porch, and sent him spinning into the playground. Yelling, the Chinese sprawled there in the bright sunlight.

Having thus disposed of the Chinaman, the bad man from Bar-O tramped through the porch into the open doorway of the school-room.

It was getting near time for chuck—the school dinner—and little in the way of lessons was going on. Steve Carson, Slim, and Poker were sitting on their desks, swinging their legs, and talking. Slick Poindexter and Mick Kavanagh were holding an argument on the subject of the respective merits of their broncos.

Domingo Duque, the Mexican schoolboy, was showing an interested group some steps in the fandango of his native country. Dick Carr was almost the only fellow who was sitting quietly at his desk. Still, Small Brown, thankful for small mercies, was glad that the bunch were only careless and inattentive. Bill's warning had borne fruit.

There had been times when the bunch had chased Mr. Brown out of the school-room, pelting him with their books! It was not so bad as that now.

At the heavy tread in the porch, and a setson hat against the sunlight, there was a gasp of alarm from the bunch. For a moment they figured that it was Bill Sampson coming back, and there was a rush to the desks. But the next moment they saw that it was a false alarm.

"Aw, don't you worry, you guys!" drawled Steve Carson. "I guess it's only a doggoned hobo horning in to touch some galoot for the price of a drink at the Red Dog."

Yuba Pete tramped in.

Small Brown goggled at him in alarm through his horn-rimmed spectacles. Dick Carr stared at him in astonishment.

Dick was getting used to Texas and Texan ways. But the tenderfoot had plenty to learn yet. This was the first hobo he had seen. Tramps he had seen in his own country—some of them rough enough. But the armed and desperate tramp of the Wild West was a new specimen to him. He had heard tales of hobos holding up some lonely homestead or ranch-house for chuck, and a lodging for the night. But the reality was very surprising to him.

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Small Brown in alarm. "What—what do you want, my good man?"

The bunch stared at Yuba Pete. He was not so surprising to them as to Dick Carr. He was not the first ruffian who had horned into the cow town school. But on other occasions Bill Sampson had been there to deal with the situation. Small Brown was not the man to deal with it.

"I'll say I'm Yuba Pete from the Bar-O, and I guess I want chuck!" roared the bad man. "You the school-master?"

"Oh, dear! The schoolmaster is away—I am the assistant master!" stammered Small Brown. "I—I—I will give instructions for—for food to be given you—"

"I guess," said Yuba Pete, "that I can give all the orders I want, you guy with the goggles! Say, you ornery young piccan, what did you call me when you seen me horn in?"

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He stepped towards Steve Carson.

Steve, looking at him, rather wished that he had not let that dangerous-looking customer hear his remark. The man was evidently a "bulldozer" of the toughest description, hunting for trouble. Trouble with a towering ruffian, who packed a gun, was not what Steve was honing for. But he was not going to show the white feather before all the staring bunch.

"I guess I called you a hobo," he answered. "And I'll say—"

Steve got no further.

Yuba Pete made a grasp at him, and Steve jumped back. But the grasp closed on him, and he was dragged out of the desk.

Lifting him in his powerful arms, strong as a gorilla's, the ruffian pitched him headlong across the school-room.

There was a crash and a yell as Steve hit the pinewood wall, and rolled on the floor, knocked half-senseless.

Slim Dixon and Poker Parker moved simultaneously forward as Steve was seized. The next second they were moving back—quick! But Yuba Pete had noticed the movement, and his red-lidded eyes gleamed round at them.

Smack, smack! came his big heavy hands, and the two schoolboys spun. Slim staggered in one direction, Poker in the other, and both fell.

"Wake snakes!" breathed Slick Poindexter. "I'll say that galoot is some bulldozer, and he sure is the bad man from Badtown."

Three fellows were sprawling on the floor, groaning and gasping. The rest of the bunch eyed Yuba Pete grimly.

His hand was near his gun. Would he burn powder if they rushed him? That was what kept them back. There were no cowards in the Packsaddle bunch; but rushing on a loaded revolver, in a reckless hand, was not wise.

The bad man from Bar-O glared at them.

"I guess you 'uns don't want to shoot off your mouths at Yuba Pete!" he roared. "Say, you with the long laigs! You got any more to spill?"

He glared at the sprawling Steve.

"Ow! Nope!" groaned Steve.

All the bunch looked at Small Brown. He was twittering with dread. Bill, had he been present, would have handled Yuba Pete fast enough. Small Brown was there in Bill's place. It was up to him. But Small Brown did not pack a gun—almost the only man in the Frio Valley who did not. He was, indeed, afraid of firearms. And, so far from packing a gun, did not like to touch one at all. But even Small Brown felt bound to horn in when the hobo started throwing his pupils about the school-room.

"Please—please do not be violent, my good man!" squealed Small Brown. "I—I beg you to go away! Otherwise, I shall call in the Marshal of Packsaddle, and—and you will be arrested."

Bang!

The hobo's gun leaped into his hand, and he fired. Small Brown gave a fearful yell as a strip of cloth was torn from the only tail coat in Santanta County.

Bang!

A lock of Mr. Brown's scanty hair went away with the bullet. Another terrified squeal came from the teacher of Packsaddle.

He made a bolt for the doorway.

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Yuba Pete. Bang, bang! The gun roared twice as Small Brown dodged through the doorway.

The ruffian was not shooting to hit, but to scare. But he was utterly reckless, and one of the bullets took a strip

of skin from Small Brown's skinny leg as he hopped out into the porch. If the hot lead had gone right through him, Small Brown could not have uttered a more piercing shriek.

He vanished across the playground like a frightened gopher, darted into his cabin, and slammed the door, and bolted it inside.

Yuba Pete roared with laughter.

He flourished the smoking revolver as he turned to the staring bunch again.

"Say, you guys want some?" he roared.

"Not so's you'd notice it, old-timer," said Dick Poindexter.

Dick Carr's hand was on a ruler on his desk. His eyes were gleaming. It went sorely against the grain to allow that frowsy ruffian to carry on with a high hand at Packsaddle School. But Mick Kavanagh pushed him back from the desk.

"Forget it, you gink!" he whispered. "Say, you honing to pass in your checks in a hurry?"

It was not good enough. Dick realised it. The man with the gun was master—at least, till Bill Sampson came back.

"I guess," said Yuba Pete, "that I've horned in here for chuck. And I'll say that you guys are going to raise a few dollars to help a guy on his way. Yep! Here, you!" He beckoned to Dick Carr. "You put me wise to where I get chuck—pronto!"

Dick, suppressing his feelings, guided the ruffian across the playground to the chuckhouse. There, Tin Tung, shaking in every limb, his slanting eyes dilated with terror, handed out the biggest and best meal that the cow town school could provide. Which the bad man from Bar-O proceeded to dispose of, with his revolver lying on the table beside his platter.

Handling the Bad Man!

DICK CARR set his teeth.

"Are we standing for this?" he muttered.

Slick Poindexter shrugged his shoulders. Mick grinned.

From the open doorway of the chuckhouse Yuba Pete had a view of the playground, and the bunch had a view of him as he sat at his meal. He was eating like a hungry coyote; but his red-lidded eyes gleamed sharply under his beetling bushy brows, and his Colt was ready to his hand. That he would shoot to kill if he was attacked, all the bunch knew now. And though it was certain that Marshal Lick would get after him if he did, and very likely run him down and string him up, that was cold comfort to a fellow who stopped a bullet.

"I guess we got to stand for it, old-timer," answered Slick. "I'll mention that I ain't walking up to that gun and asking for what's inside it."

"You said it," grinned Mick.

"Aw, let the tenderfoot cinch him!" sneered Steve Carson. "What's the good of blowing off your mouth, dog-gone you, you pesky gink? You don't dare to go near the guy."

"He wouldn't have chucked me across the school-room as he did you, anyhow," retorted Dick Carr.

Steve gave him an evil look.

"Waal, let's see you handle him!" he jeered.

"I guess we could get help from the burg," said Slim. "But that guy would sure burn powder if he spotted any galoot breaking herd to beat it down to Packsaddle, and it ain't good enough."

"We're not standing for it!" said Dick Carr.



As Yuba Pete passed under the waiting, watching schoolboy above the porch, Dick flung the rope. The noose settled over the bad man's shoulders, and there was a roar of rage from the ruffian. But instantly Dick was dragging frantically on the rope.

"Aw, can it!" snapped Poker Parker. "Forget it, big boy!" advised Slick. "He sure will hit the trail soon. And I guess I'll be glad to see him go. I tell you he's a bad man. We got to smile."

"What about your lasso?"

Slick gave a snort.

"Nothing about my riata, you geek! I guess I ain't roping in a guy with a six-gun in his grip. Nope!"

"There's Bill's rifle in his room in the schoolhouse," muttered Big Steve. "If a guy could get a head on him—"

Steve's eyes gleamed wickedly. "Cut that out!" said Dick Carr curtly.

Brute and desperate ruffian as the hobo was, Dick shuddered at the idea of shooting him down—an act of which Steve was quite capable, and for which few in Santa County would have blamed him. But Big Steve, though he was capable of putting a bullet through the hobo, did not like the idea of risking the six-gun. He made the suggestion; but it was pretty certain that Bill Sampson's rifle in the schoolhouse was going to remain where it was.

"Here he comes," muttered Pie Sanders.

There was a crash in the chuckhouse. Yuba Pete, having finished an enormous meal, hurled the wooden platter at the Chinaman who was submissively waiting on him. Tin Tung's yell rang across the playground as he was bowled over. After that act of wanton brutality the ruffian came tramping out into the sunlight.

The Packsaddle bunch watched him uneasily. Small Brown was still bolted inside his cabin, quaking with dread. Some of the schoolboys had gone into the bunkhouse to keep out of the ruffian's way. But there were a good

many in the playground. It was past time for chuck, but nobody was thinking of dinner. They only hoped that the hobo, now that he had had his meal, would go on his way. But Yuba Pete was not prepared to go yet.

"Say, you!" He beckoned to Slick. "You want to show me where your schoolmaster packs his roll, and you want to do it quick!"

Slick breathed hard.

A sign of hesitation was enough for the bad man from Bar-O. He whipped out his revolver, and fired at the schoolboy's feet.

Slick jumped, just in time. A second later and the bullet would have crashed through flesh and bone.

Bang, bang!

"Jump you!" roared the bad man from Bar-O.

Slick jumped actively. The ruffian was "fanning" him with bullets, and Slick knew better than to disobey. He had to save his feet by jumping, and he jumped quick.

"Now you putting me wise?" roared Yuba Pete.

"I'll say yep!" gasped Slick, only too thankful that the rain of bullets had stopped.

He led the hobo into the schoolhouse and into Bill Sampson's room there. It was evidently the ruffian's intention to help himself to anything there was in the way of cash before he hit the trail again. And there was no one at Packsaddle to stop him, unless—

"That does it!" said Dick Carr, between his teeth. "That brute isn't going to rob Bill!"

"You figure that you're going to stop him?" sneered Big Steve.

Dick did not trouble to answer the bully of Packsaddle. He cut into the bunkhouse, where he kept his lasso.

In the use of the looped rope Dick had made some progress, but he was not nearly so skilled yet as the Texan boys. Still, he could handle the rope, and he was going to try.

But he was cautious. He was determined, but he was no fool. To face the ruffian's six-gun, or to let Yuba Pete see him with the rope in his hands, was to ask for death, or, at least, serious injury. He knew only too well that the ruffian would fire on him, reckless of what damage his bullet would do. But the tenderfoot's brain worked quickly. By going into the schoolhouse the ruffian had given him a chance. It was a desperate chance, for he knew that if he failed—and he might fail—the roaring of the six-gun would come next. But, desperate as it was, the tenderfoot of Packsaddle was going to take the chance.

Keeping out of sight of the doorway, Dick Carr clambered up the side of the wooden porch. The bunch, in the playground, watched him breathlessly.

They spotted his game at once—a desperate game, yet with a promising chance of success. On top of the porch Dick held the looped rope ready. When the hobo came out again he would have his chance.

He would be able to make the cast, at all events, before Yuba Pete knew what was coming to him.

On that cast of the rope all depended. He would have no chance for a second throw if it failed!

If it failed he would come rolling down to the earth with a bullet through his body, and he knew it.

His face was pale and set, his eyes gleaming with resolution, as he waited for the hobo to emerge.

From within the schoolhouse came a

sound of crashing and breaking. Yuba Pete was smashing open Bill's private desk in his office. Bill had left it locked, and there was no doubt that there were dollars in it. Yuba Pete, with a heavy stool in his hand, smashed the desk to pieces, as the easiest way of getting it open.

Slick Poindexter watched him savagely. But he was powerless to interfere.

As the desk fell in pieces the grinning ruffian groped in the wreckage. Bill's various private belongings were scattered over the floor of the office. Yuba's greedy clutch closed on a roll of bills. There were two or three twenties, a fifty, and a hundred—and Yuba's eyes gleamed with satisfaction over his plunder.

"By the great horned toad!" he chuckled. "I'll say it was a lucky day I hit this hyer school! Yep! And then some!"

He thrust the roll of bills into a pocket of his tattered chaps.

"Now I reckon all I want is a cayuse," he remarked. "And I'm mentioning that you're going to pick out the best critter in the corral for me, you young geek!"

Slick gritted his teeth. The hobo had struck Packsaddle School on foot. Had he left on foot there was a very good chance that he would be run down and captured and forced to disgorge his plunder. But if he picked out the best horse in the school corral and burned the wind there was little likelihood of Santanta County ever seeing him again.

"Beat it, you!" he growled to Slick, and Poindexter went out of the house, through the porch, with the ruffian tramping at his heels.

Slick emerged into the sunlight of the playground, unaware that a pair of eyes from the roof of the porch were watching.

After him came the burly hobo.

There was a deep-drawn breath from the bunch as they watched. Steve Carson sneered. Hardly a fellow there believed that Dick would have the nerve to carry on, Steve least of all.

But he had the nerve—and he did!

As the stetson, on the frowzy head, emerged from the porch and Yuba Pete passed under the waiting, watching schoolboy, Dick gritted his teeth and flung the rope.

The open noose settled over the stetson hat and dropped round the bulky shoulders of the bad man from Bar-O.

Instantly Dick was dragging frantically on the rope.

There was a roar of rage from Yuba Pete as the noose tightened round him, pinning his left arm to his side.

But his right arm was free, and his gun was in his hand. But even as he whipped it up a fierce jerk on the rope tumbled him over and he sprawled on the ground.

He would have been up again in a moment. But in that moment Dick Carr leapt down from the roof of the porch, fairly on him.

The schoolboy's boots crashed on the sprawling ruffian, his whole weight falling on Yuba Pete, knocking the wind out of him.

"Great gophers!" gasped Slick.

"Back up!" yelled Dick Carr.

His clenched fist smashed into the bearded, stubbly face as Yuba Pete twisted round at him, snarling like a wolf. He grabbed the ruffian's gun-arm and forced it down.

Had Yuba Pete been free of the rope it would have gone hard with the tenderfoot of Packsaddle. But with the rope

gripping him hard, pinning one arm, the ruffian, powerful as he was, was at a disadvantage, and his gun was forced to the ground. It roared, as the hobo pulled the trigger, the bullet skidding along the earth.

Fiercely and savagely, panting with rage, Yuba Pete wrenched at his arm. He would have got it free in a few moments, desperate as Dick's grip on it was. But he was not given those few moments.

Slick leaped on him like a panther. His heavy boot crashed on the ruffian's hand, and the revolver flew from the numbed fingers.

Mick Kavanagh darted in and grabbed it.

Spluttering fury, Yuba Pete heaved up. His left arm was still pinned by the rope, but his right gripped Dick Carr in a bear-like hug.

Crash! came the butt of his own revolver on the back of his head. Crash! it came again. Mick Kavanagh dealt the blows with all the strength of a strong arm.

And Yuba Pete, half-stunned, rolled over helplessly. Then came the bunch with a rush and a roar.

Hands grasped the writhing ruffian on all sides. Steve Carson yelled to Mick: "Burn powder, you gink! Put a bullet through him!"

"Aw, forget it!" said Mick. "I guess we got him."

"We sure got him dead to rights!" grinned Poindexter.

Yuba Pete still wriggled. But his wriggles did not avail him. The bunch wound the lasso round him and knotted it, and he lay on the ground, bound hand and foot!

Slick picked the roll of bills from the pocket of his chaps.

"I guess Bill will be glad to see this agin!" he remarked with a grin, and he carried the roll back into Bill's office.

Yuba Pete was dragged to one of the timber supports of the porch, and tied to it with the end of the lasso. Leaving him there, to wait for Bill's return, the Packsaddle bunch went grinning off to chuck.

Dick Carr tapped at the door of Small Brown's cabin. A scared squeal came from within.

"Go away! Oh, dear! Go away!"

Dick chuckled.

"It's all right, Mr. Brown," he called out. "We've got the hobo fixed, and you can come out."

And he walked away to the chuck-house for dinner with the bunch. But apparently it seemed to Small Brown too good to be true, for he did not come out. It was a holiday for the bunch, till Bill Sampson rode in at the gate, when the sun was setting over Squaw Mountain. Then, and not till then, did Small Brown venture out.

WHO'S THE CULPRIT?

"Don't come back After Easter! We're Fed Up With You! Too Much Jaw! Too Much Cane! Every Man in the Remove is Sick of Your Gargoyles of a Chivvy! Get Out—AND STAY OUT!"

Such is the disreputable message sent in an Easter Egg to Mr. Quelch, master of the Greyfriars Remove. Who the culprit is remains a mystery. Until—Every "Gemite" should make a point of reading

"QUELCHY'S EASTER EGG!"

—By Frank Richards—

the sensational school story of
HARRY WHARTON & CO., in

THE MAGNET

On Sale Now

Price 2d.

Yuba Pete Hits the Trail!

"CARRY me home to die!" gasped Bill Sampson.

He stared at the wriggling hobo tied to the porch.

The grinning bunch surrounded him. A dozen voices told him what had happened during his absence.

"And who roped him?" demanded Bill.

"The tenderfoot!" grinned Slick.

Bill looked at Dick Carr.

"Kid!" he said, "I'll say you're the goods! I'll say that you're all wool and a yard wide and then a few! I'll tell a man!"

Then his eyes turned grimly on the hobo.

"Ontie him!" said Bill.

Yuba Pete was untied.

"Hombre!" said Bill in measured tones. "I guess you allow you're a bad man! You allow you're some bulldozer! I'll mention that I'm going to make you feel like a small piece left on the counter! I'm going to put you wise that you ain't worth a cent, and that a Mexican one! You get me?"

And Bill began.

For about three minutes, Yuba Pete stood up to the heaviest and hardest fists in Santanta County. Then he was down on the earth, and preferred to stay there.

Bill gave him a genial nod.

"I guess," said Bill, "that I'd let you run with that, but I got to put you wise that this hyer school ain't a healthy spot for guys of your heft! I got to make you plumb tired of horning into Packsaddle!"

Taking his quirt in hand, Bill proceeded to make the hobo plumb tired. The bunch looked on grinning.

Yuba Pete did not grin! He rolled and roared, and leaped and hopped, and howled! The lashes of the heavy quirt came down like rain! The hapless hobo made a wild break for the gate. After him went Bill, still lashing with the quirt, putting every ounce of his beef into it. The gate was shut—but that did not stop Yuba Pete. He was yearning for the open spaces now!

He made a wild and frantic leap over the gate. Crash! came the last lash of the quirt, as he jumped. It rang like a rifle-shot on the hobo's back. Over the gate went Yuba Pete, landing in a yelling heap on the earth outside.

But he did not linger there! He was up in a twinkling and running. Down the trail went the bad man from Bar-O like a runaway bronco, and he vanished into the grass of the prairie.

Bill grinned.

"I guess," he remarked, "that that guy won't be in no hurry to hit Packsaddle agin!"

And it was probable that Bill was right!

"Mr. Sampson—sir!" squealed Small Brown.

Bill turned to him.

"Uncork it, Mister Brown!" he said.

"I have to report Carr—"

"Hay?"

"Carr, for disorder in the school-room—"

Bill looked at him.

"Carr, what roped in that bulldozer while you was playing possum in your cabin, Mister Brown!" said Bill.

"Carry me home to die!"

Bill took a grip on his quirt.

"Git!" he roared.

Small Brown gave him one startled blink—and "got"!

(Next Wednesday: "KIDNAPPED!" Don't miss this first grand yarn of a smashing series starring the Packsaddle Pals. Order your GEM early.)

GALLEY SLAVES TO PIRATES! THAT'S WHAT BEFALLS THE ST. FRANK'S BOYS IN—

The SECRET WORLD!



Crash! The pirate galley rammed the Royal craft, and for a moment all was confusion, and the air was filled with wild shouts. "Hold your swords!" roared Browne, realising it would be little short of suicide to engage such enemies. "We surrender!"

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

The Pirate Galley!

HIDDEN in the Arctic by an almost impenetrable barrier of volcanoes, Northestia and Gothland, two countries belonging to the Middle Ages, are at war. On the side of the Northestrians are Nelson Lee, Lord Dorrimore, and a crowd of St. Frank's boys, who were stranded in the country when their airship crashed. In the first skirmish against the Gothlanders, the Northestrians repel the invaders, thanks to Nelson Lee, who has been made commander-in-chief of their army. Meanwhile, Princess Mercia, the girl ruler of Northestia, has been sent in the Royal galley to a place of safety, with the St. Frank's boys acting as her bodyguard.

"**W**ELL, it's all over bar shouting," said Church complacently.

"Yes, and Handy'll do the shouting," grinned McClure. "In fact, he's doing it now. He's a queer chap, you know. Never satisfied!"

Edward Oswald Handforth was, in fact, indignant.

"I'm not saying anything about the victory," he snorted. "Our side has won—and the enemy is routed. But where did we come in? That's what I want to know!" he added grimly. "What part did we play?"

"The most important part of all, old man," said Nipper.

"Eh? You silly ass—"

"We're in charge of the Princess Mercia," explained Nipper, "and we've brought her through the danger zone, and—"

"I know that, you chump!" interrupted Handforth, with a sniff. "But what about the fighting? We didn't even get a sniff of it. That's what I'm grumbling about. All the others have had a hot time in battle, and we've simply dawdled along in this giddy barge, as safe as babes in a cradle."

All the fellows within earshot grinned at Handforth's complaint. So far as they were concerned, they had nothing to grumble at, and they were perfectly content with the situation. They were not such fire-eaters as the war-like leader of Study D, and they felt that they had played their own part with creditable distinction.

Princess Mercia herself was in high spirits, and her eyes were sparkling with excitement and enthusiastic joy. Those brown eyes of hers had missed nothing during the past few hours, and she had every reason to be grateful towards these enforced visitors from the outer world.

For Nelson Lee, Lord Dorrimore, Umlozi, and the other members of the ill-fated airship party had saved Northestia from utter and absolute defeat. There was not a soul in that

quaint little country who did not give "Lee the Lionhearted" full credit for his masterly handling of the situation.

And now the crisis was over.

"Brothers, we can safely continue our trip in the knowledge that all is well," remarked William Napoleon Browne, the genial skipper of the St. Frank's Fifth. "We have done our bit, and Brother William is safely in our midst. Upon the whole, we have every reason to congratulate ourselves."

"Hear, hear!"

"What-ho! Absolutely!"

Handforth thought fit to disagree.

"Rats!" he growled. "We've got a fat lot to congratulate ourselves! We left before anything happened, and we've only looked at the battle from a distance."

Nipper grinned.

"You're a bloodthirsty bounder, Handy," he said cheerfully. "You'd like to go straight back now, and charge into battle, wouldn't you? But it can't be done, old son. We've got our orders, and we've got to carry 'em out. The Princess Mercia has got to be conveyed safely to Westwold Castle."

Handforth made no comment. In his heart he knew that Nipper was right. But it galled him to think that they had just missed the most exciting part of the grim engagement.

And now the battle was over.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,418.

The aggressive Gothlanders, under their Overlord, Kasker the Grim, had been turned back. The enemy fleets were now scattered all over the lake, disordered and disorganised. They were fleeing back to Gothland. Many of these enemy ships were in view, and could be seen from the Royal craft as it turned towards a rugged river-mouth on the Northeastrian coast.

"So far as I can see, we might just as well turn back," said Handforth, as he stared across the lake. "Why should we take the princess to this inland fortress now?"

"Mr. Lee's orders," said Church briefly.

"But things are different now," said Handforth. "The battle's over, so we might just as well go back to Dunstane. Now then, you chaps! Ease up! We'll turn about and make tracks for the capital! And then we can hear all the news!"

"You ass!" muttered Church. "It's not your place to give orders."

"I'm captain of the bodyguard, aren't I?" roared Handforth.

"A delusion, Brother Ted!" said Browne, shaking his head. "I have heard a rumour to the effect that you once held that post, but you are now a mere lieutenant. I am in command, and thus far our voyage has progressed with success. Pray do not make it necessary for me to remonstrate."

"You can go and eat coke!" said Handforth gruffly.

"A strange way for a junior officer to address his senior; but no matter, we will let it pass," said Browne. "Experience has taught me that any argument with you is fraught with lurking dangers. You shall have your own way, Brother Ted. I graciously permit you to have the last word."

Handforth was so disgusted that he didn't want it. He took his turn at one of the sweeps, and resigned himself to the inevitable.

The princess, her brother, and her ladies-in-waiting now appeared from the well-appointed deck cabin aft, and they were all looking happy. The young princess felt quite safe in charge of these St. Frank's fellows.

The Royal craft was now swinging round into a gorge between frowning cliffs. They had reached the river which led to Westwold Castle. More than one of the Remove fellows felt that this trip was a little more than they had bargained for. It was hard work wielding those great oars, and the vessel itself was by no means a racer. She plunged along rather clumsily, answering slowly to her helm, and sluggishly to the pull of the sweeps.

"It'll be a jolly good thing when we finish this trip," remarked Tommy Watson, as he took a brief rest. "How much farther is it to Westwold, anyhow?"

"Two miles up the river, I understand," replied Nipper.

Tommy pulled a long face.

"Against the current," he grumbled.

"It's not powerful—only just an easy flow," smiled Nipper. "I should think it'll take us another three hours, at the most."

"Begad!" said Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "Three hours, dear old boy? An' we haven't eaten for over four! That'll make seven hours without a feed!"

"It was very thoughtless of them not to pack up some sandwiches, and provide a few thermos flasks!" said Nipper dryly. "Never mind, my lads! We shall survive, I dare say. We're fairly into the gorge by now."

The open lake had been left, and the

rugged cliffs rose on both sides. On this part of the coast there were no villages, for the land was barren and rocky. There was no sign of human life anywhere.

At least, so it appeared at first. But before the Royal vessel had progressed another hundred yards a surprise came. From beyond a jutting spur of rock appeared a great galley, and the vessel bore down menacingly upon the school-boy knight-errants and their charges.

As yet, the strange galley was nearly half a mile distant, having appeared so dramatically from the rocks on the other side of the wide cove. It almost seemed that the craft had been lying in wait.

"Hallo!" said Stevens of the Fifth.

"Who's this?"

"I don't know; but I don't like her looks," replied Browne, staring across the calm waters of the bay. "Brothers, we must be ready for action."

"By Jove!" breathed Nipper. "You don't suspect—"

"I may be wrong—I trust I am wide of the mark—but I have a feeling that there is dirty work afoot," said Browne calmly. "Seldom have I seen such a sinister-looking craft as this."

They were all staring at the approaching vessel, and many of the fellows at the sweeps relaxed their efforts in their curiosity. It seemed incredible to them that there could be any danger. Handforth, in fact, laughed outright.

"Rats!" he said. "This is a Northeastrian ship, sent here on purpose to guard the bay until we arrived, I expect. You're not suggesting, Browne, that she's a Gothlander, I suppose?"

Browne was looking very perturbed.

"Neither Gothlander nor Northeastrian," he said significantly.

Handforth stared.

"There aren't any others, you chump!" he retorted. "You know as well as I do that—"

"A pirate!" broke in Nipper, with a jump.

"Exactly," muttered Browne. "Such, Brother Nipper, is my fear."

"Oh, corks!"

"A pirate!"

"Ods corsairs and galley slaves!" ejaculated Archie Glenthorne. "I mean to say, yo-ho for the Spanish Main—"

what? Dash it, we shall all be walking the plank next! Life, laddies, is becoming somewhat too strenuous for the Pride of the Glenthornes. Absolutely!"

Handforth took a deep breath.

"Pirates!" he said tensely. "By George! Of course! I guessed she was a pirate as soon as I set eyes on her! Good! This means a scrap!"

"You hopeless optimist!" snapped Nipper. "What chance shall we have against a galley like this? It's over twice our size, and she seems to be swarming with pirates!"

The galley was now approaching with greater speed than ever. That she was a pirate ship became more and more obvious. Men could even be seen on the gangway amidships, wielding heavy whips, lashing the unfortunate galley slaves at the sweeps.

Curiously enough, nobody had taken the possibility of pirate intervention into account. When Nelson Lee had sent this Royal ship on her journey he had feared that the Gothland invaders would swoop down in their thousands, and he had dispatched the St. Frank's fellows in charge of the princess at an hour's notice. None of the Northeastrians had warned him of pirates. On the contrary, they had assured him that the Royal ship would have a free and unhampered journey.

For years prior to the recent enmity the Northeastrians and the Gothlanders

had developed a considerable commerce, and trading ships had regularly plied to and fro across the lake.

Naturally enough, perhaps, piracy had developed at the same time as the commerce. For here was rich prey—vessels laden with merchandise of every kind. And so, speedy galleys had made their appearance, filled with armed ruffians, their great oars wielded by slaves. Most of these slaves were prisoners, men who had been captured from raided and sunken merchant ships.

But of late there had been little or no traffic between the two countries, and the pirates had been having a lean time of it. Their headquarters were known to be among the rocky islets in mid-lake, and it had been the custom to swoop down suddenly upon unsuspecting trading vessels.

But since this commerce had practically ceased, the majority of the pirates had gone out of business. Perhaps this was why Lee had received no warning of such a danger. Piracy, nowadays, was almost dead. Practically only one galley of this type was known to exist, and even then, only rumours of it reached the capital. But the simple fishermen of the coastal villages were in no doubt. For this particular pirate galley had made a habit of raiding the mainland for supplies.

Possibly this was the very galley!

In view of all the turmoil on the lake—the clash of the opposing fleets—the pirates had sought refuge in this gorge. She was no warship of the ordinary type, and she wanted to escape the chance of being embroiled in actual warfare. It was an ill chance that had led her commander to seek shelter here.

"She's a pirate, all right!" said Nipper grimly. "If it comes to a fight, you chaps, we shall be done. There's not an earthly chance of beating them off. We didn't come prepared for trouble of this sort."

The Princess Mercia heard echoes of the alarm. And she was now looking at the approaching galley with deep concern. Her two native ladies-in-waiting were visibly affrighted, although the Moor View girls were far more curious than scared.

"Is there any danger, your Majesty?" asked Irene Manners wonderingly.

"I fear so!" replied the princess.

"For this galley is surely a pirate! We thought not of such dangers when we set forth."

"Oh, but surely they won't dare to attack us?" asked Doris Berkeley. "It's too absurd! They must know that they'll be caught and executed if they dare anything so rash. It's more in their line to raid helpless villages."

"But see!" said Mercia, pointing. "They come apace!"

There was no denying the aggressive appearance of the galley, for she was now only fifty yards away.

Men could be seen waiting on her bulwarks, ready to spring aboard the Royal barge at the moment of contact. Raucous orders were being shouted, and the motley throng of ruffians outnumbered the bodyguard by three or four to one.

"Oh, what can we do?" asked Irene, in alarm.

"Fear not!" said the princess. "They will not dare harm us."

"We'll fight!" roared Handforth excitedly. "Get ready, you chaps! As soon as these rotters try to board us, slam into 'em!"

"Hear, hear!"

"St. Frank's for ever!"

Some of the fellows abandoned their oars and reached for any handy object that might serve as a weapon. For now,

at the last moment, it was clear that a fight was inevitable, and equally clear that flight was impossible.

William Napoleon Browne pursed his lips.

"Stay!" he shouted. "Let them take us!"

"What?" yelled a dozen juniors.

"We must surrender!" shouted Browne. "Steady, brothers! When these brutes come aboard, make no attempt to hinder them!"

"You're mad!" gasped Handforth. "You're off your rocker!"

A Startling Discovery!

BUT Browne was very sane, and he was proving his qualities as a leader, as compared with the excitable Handforth's.

For this was indeed a case where surrender was wise, and in no way cowardly.

Browne had seen at one glance that fighting would be fatal—that resistance would only lead to unnecessary bloodshed. What good would it do if half these youngsters gave their lives for absolutely nothing? The pirates were so overwhelmingly superior that a defeat was certain.

Far better, then, courageously to surrender.

Nipper agreed with Browne wholeheartedly, and so did such fellows as Fullwood and Reggie Pitt. It went against the grain, but they could see the futility of a fight. As members of the bodyguard, they were all armed with swords.

But they were opposed to at least a hundred pirates—ruffians with pikes and other deadly weapons. It would be little short of suicide to engage such an enemy as this.

Crash!

The pirate galley rammed into the Royal craft, the idle oars of the latter being smashed to matchwood. In a second the air was filled with wild and alarming shouts. Confusion reigned.

"Hold your swords!" roared Browne. "We surrender!"

"Tis well!" shouted the pirate leader as he leapt aboard. "Thou art wise in such a decision. Remember my orders, men! None of these young puppies is to be harmed."

Browne sighed.

"Alas!" he murmured. "It seems, then, that we could have had a smack at them, after all. They didn't mean to perform their little massacre, in any case. Life is full of such blows."

There was no fight—although, of course, Handforth ignored all orders, and went into action on his own. He was lucky to escape alive, for he was beset by a dozen pirates, and he was quickly disarmed and subdued.

The young princess had remained near the doorway of her cabin throughout, watching the scene with wide eyes. She had gone pale, but otherwise she held herself well in hand. Irene & Co. just watched with breathless excitement.

"What is this?" murmured the princess suddenly. "In faith, do mine eyes deceive me, or is it a truth? Siegan! 'Tis Siegan, as I live!"

The pirate commander turned, and swept off his hat.

"We meet again, fair Majesty!" he said mockingly as he bowed. "But methinks this time the circumstances are more favourable. Thou art in no danger, so let the colour return to thy pallid cheeks."

The princess' eyes blazed.

Eastwood League.

ST. JIM'S OFF THE GOAL STANDARD.

Forwards Fail Against Abbottsford.

By George Figgins.

St. Jim's dropped a valuable point by only making a draw with Abbottsford. As I missed the first penalty kick I have ever missed in a League match, perhaps I ought not to have too much to say about the shortcomings of our forwards. With St. Jim's and St. Frank's running neck and neck for the championship, we hoped for an easy victory against the not-very-impressive Abbottsford team. Tom Merry led off in hopeful fashion, banging in a first-minute shot which just grazed the crossbar. Blake immediately brought the Abbottsford goalkeeper to his knees with a real "stinger," and Lowther was unlucky with a shot which a full-back deflected. The referee awarded us a penalty kick for "hands," which I took—shooting wide, a thing I haven't done for ages. That began our chapter of mishaps. Lowther was clean through, but lifted the ball over the bar. D'Arcy shot wide when well placed, and even Tom Merry caught the habit and "ballooned" a really easy centre from Digby. Fane and his Abbotts troubled Wynn a little in the second half, and for a brief period we were on the defensive. Fatty was as safe as ever—and it was fortunate he was, since our forwards were still peppering the enemy's goal fruitlessly when the match ended. Just one of those days.

"I fear not a cur such as thou!" she retorted proudly.

Siegan the Slim scowled.

"Tis idle talk!" he snapped. "You are all my prisoners, and 'twill go ill with any of these boys if they attempt mischief."

"Siegan the Slim!" shouted Handforth, staring. "The rotter I smashed in combat! The ex-captain of the bodyguard!"

"Yes, by Jove, the same man!" said Nipper. "We wondered what had become of him—and now we know! He's turned pirate!"

Siegan, a man with vicious-looking eyes, nodded.

"Ay, pirate!" he agreed. "What else? Thou knowest naught of my escape from prison, good Majesty! Ay, 'twas well concealed from thee, I doubt not! An outcast and an outlaw, to whom could I turn but to these good friends of the lake? And now, by the bones of Sarus, 'tis my hour!"

There was something sinister in his tone. This man had been the captain of the Royal bodyguard, and Handforth had defeated him with his bare fists. Since then, none of the St. Frank's fellows had given the man a thought. But here he was—an avowed pirate, and obviously the leader.

Most of the crew were Gothlanders, as the juniors could see by their bestial faces. Others were Northeistrians, however—rogues who had been driven out of decent society by their very habits. This motley mob, indeed, represented the scum of both races.

And Siegan's present activity could be guessed at.

In all probability he had been hiding

ST. FRANK'S RECORD SCORE.

Redclyffe Routed.

While the St. Jim's forwards were failing against Abbottsford, it was a very different story at Redclyffe, where St. Frank's were playing. The Redclyffe defence was completely overrun by Nipper and his fellow forwards, and the St. Frank's attack had a real joy day.

Curiously enough, Redclyffe scored first, Judd, their centre-forward, netting in the first five minutes. But after that there was only one team in it. When the interval arrived, St. Frank's were leading six—one, Nipper having scored four and Travers two.

After the change of ends St. Frank's, continuing to play delightful football, monopolised the game to such an extent that they eclipsed their first half performance. The Redclyffe goalies must have got tired of taking the ball out of the net. Ten times he had to do it, Nipper putting the ball there twice, Travers twice, Pitt twice, Tregellis-West three times, and Watson once.

Just near the end of the game, Redclyffe made one of their rare attacks, and Judd succeeded in scrambling the ball into the net for the second goal. When the final whistle went, St. Frank's had won by the record score of 16—2!

FULL RESULTS.

ST. JIM'S	0	ABBOTSFORD	0
REDCLYFFE	2	ST. FRANK'S	16
Judd (2)		Nipper (6), Wat-	
		son, Pitt (2), Tra-	
		vers (4), Tregellis-	
		West (3)	
GREYFRIARS	8	CLAREMONT	2
HIGHCLIFFE	1	ROOKWOOD	1
RIVER HOUSE	3	RYLCOMBE	
		GRAM. SCH.	3
ST. JUDE'S	3	BAGSHOT	1

in this cove by mere chance. Recognising the Royal barge, however, his quick brain had decided upon a sudden coup, and so he had seized the vessel and all her company.

"Thou art rash, Siegan!" said the princess quietly. "It were better for thee to order our release. Naught but disaster will overtake thee—"

"I know what I am doing, my proud Mercia!" interrupted Siegan sneeringly. "By St. Attalus! The boy is here, too," he added in a gloating voice. "The young Oswy! 'Tis a greater coup than I anticipated! Marry, but my triumph will be complete!"

"You idiot!" roared Handforth. "You'll all be wiped out for this! If you dare to harm any of us—"

"A murrain take thee!" snarled Siegan, turning upon him with blazing eyes. "Thou art the youth! I have full reason to remember thee, thou cur! And well shalt thou suffer! My memory is good!"

Church and McClure and the other fellows were alarmed, for they half expected to see Handforth done to death on the spot. This man naturally had a terrible grudge against Edward Oswald. But Siegan included all these boys in his enmity, it seemed. His expression, as he looked them over, was proof enough of his evil designs.

And while this was taking place, Irene & Co. were acting in a somewhat curious manner. Far from accepting this situation with plucky reserve, they were fairly whimpering with fright, clinging to one another like helpless children. And more than one St. Frank's fellow was looking at them in wonder.

The girls presented a sorry picture.

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- Sobbing and whimpering, they were clustered round the princess, their eyes large with terror, their limbs scarcely stable enough to support them.

"My only hat!" muttered Handforth, as he stared.

"Ass!" whispered Church. "They're bluffing!"

"Eh? What the dickens—"

"They must be!" insisted Church. "They wouldn't act like that otherwise."

Handforth looked relieved, but he was very puzzled. Why were the girls behaving as though they were bereft of all courage?

The reason was not far to seek. Irene & Co. had decided that it might help them, later on, if they made a big pretence of being helpless. They would be treated with contempt, and thus they might escape indignities that would otherwise be heaped upon them.

The Schoolboy Galley-Slaves!

SIEGAN THE SLIM turned to a group of his subordinates, and gave them some muttered orders. The men regarded him askance.

"Well, fools," snarled Siegan, "what ails ye?"

"'Tis a risky thing, bold Siegan—"

began one of them. "By St. Guthrie! Am I to be questioned by such scum as thou?" roared the pirate chief. "Out upon thee, Aspar! Do as I bid, or 'twill go hard with thee! I am here to be obeyed!"

The man turned aside, scowling. It was fairly obvious that the rank and file of the pirates were alarmed. They did not like this enterprise at all. It seemed to them, likely enough, that they were deliberately running their heads into a noose. To seize the Royal barge and all its occupants was a feat they had never bargained for.

What would be the inevitable result? A vast uproar throughout the whole of Northstria—a grim search for the captives—and death to their captors. And how could this one pirate craft hope to defy, not only the Northstrians, but these accursed strangers, with their own uncanny craft? Certainly, it seemed to Siegan's followers that the proceeding was rash.

But Siegan the Slim was perfectly at ease.

"Think ye I am mad?" he asked gruffly. "I know what I do! There will be no danger—but wealth! By this one stroke we make ourselves secure for life—ay, and gain high favour, too!"

He said no more than that, but insisted upon his orders being carried out.

The Royal bodyguard was helpless—much to their chagrin. But even Handforth was now realising that William Napoleon Browne's attitude was the correct one. At least, they were all alive and unharmed. On the other hand, had they shown fight, it was a certainty that they would have been slain. Siegan may have given orders that no blood was to be shed, but in a desperate fight these pirates would not have remembered such unnatural instructions.

"Things look very bad, my lads," murmured Nipper. "But we can't do better than maintain old Browne's policy. We'll take a tip from the girls, too, and pretend to be scared out of our wits."

"It goes frightfully against the grain, old boy, but I suppose you're right," said Archie. "I mean to say, we'll make these dashed blighters think we're a platoon of milkops, what? Good gad! The old Glenthorne blood rises against it, but it's got to be done."

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"Rot!" growled Handforth. "I'm going to take a smack at Siegan as soon as I get near him!"

"Handy, you'll be crazy if you do!" urged Church. "Can't you see there's no sense in fighting when the odds are all against us?"

"Odds!" retorted Handforth. "I never count the odds!"

"I know you don't," said Church bitterly. "And one of these days you'll never count anything else, either! Be reasonable, Handy! These pirates are armed with swords and cutlasses and pikes, and goodness knows what else. They're double our size, and they're three to one against us. They're all murderers—pirates who have been preying on trading ships for years! We're lucky to be alive now, so we don't want deliberately to ask for trouble."

Handforth grunted. Not being exactly devoid of wits, he knew that the others were right. But he felt that it was necessary for him to oppose them—if only for the sake of argument. Edward Oswald was one of the best chaps in the world, but occasionally he could be exasperating to a degree.

As it happened, he had no chance to argue further.

Siegan the Slim was giving more orders, and a number of the pirates were hustling the St. Frank's fellows, and edging them towards the side of the vessel.

"Over with ye!" roared one of the men. "Aboard the galley, ye puppies!"

Curbing their inward fury, the St. Frank's crowd tumbled over the bulwarks of the galley, and were there seized upon by other pirates. They were placed in groups of five as they came.

In the meantime, activities were afoot among the galley-slaves. A number of these hapless wretches were being unchained, and the movement was a significant one. The juniors watched, with a dim suspicion of what was coming.

This pirate craft was a galley of the recognised pattern—similar to those deadly vessels which were once the scourge of the Mediterranean—manned by corsairs, with Christian slaves at the oars.

There were slaves here, too—men who had been captured for the purpose. They were a pitiable-looking lot. Each great sweep had five men to it, and all were chained to their seats.

Right down the centre of the galley ran a wide gangway, with the oar-pits on either side. In all, there were twenty oars—a hundred slaves to propel this ship through the water. Up and down the gangway strode the burliest of the pirates—armed with cruel lashes. Every slave was bare to the waist, and many of them bore ugly scars across their backs.

Princess Mercia herself was not spared. She was transferred to the galley, too, with Lady Githa and Lady Elfrida, her two native companions. The Moor View girls were taken aboard immediately afterwards. And all were escorted into the galley's great cabin by Siegan himself.

Many of his men were now manning the Royal barge, and the unchained slaves were being hustled across to take their places at the captive vessel's oars.

And into their vacant seats the St. Frank's fellows were thrust.

"'Tis well!" gloated Siegan. "Chain them tightly, my bold henchmen! Let them have a taste of the whip, too. Never did I hope for such sweet revenge as this!"

"Look!" murmured Irene Manners, as she peered through the window of the

cabin. "Look, Doris! They're chaining them all to the oars!"

"The brutes!" said Doris hotly. "Don't worry, Renie—they'll pay for this before long!"

"I hope so," said Irene quietly. "But how can we be sure? I believe they're going to take us out to those islands! Or—or perhaps—" She paused, and a startled expression came into her eyes. "Oh!" she went on. "I wonder?"

"You wonder what?" asked Mary Summers.

"Why, don't you remember?" breathed Irene. "Wasn't there some talk of Siegan being a paid spy for Kassker? Perhaps he means to take us all into Gothland—prisoners! And that's why he is so confident!"

"There's nothing like being cheerful!" said Doris dryly. "So we might be taken into Gothland, eh? What a lovely prospect!"

All the girls knew that Irene had made a shrewd guess, and the prospect was enough to alarm the stoutest heart. Siegan's complacency seemed to indicate that he planned something deeper than a mere act of piracy.

The Gothlanders were routed—flying back in disorder to their own land. But what a reversal of the whole position if the Princess Mercia and her young brother were taken by the enemy!

Siegan's Plan!

"GOOD gad!"

GARCHIE Glenthorne gazed in dismay at his delicate, shapely wrists. Rough iron cuffs had been clamped about them, and he was securely chained to the middle section of one of the great oars. With him, two on either side, were Nipper and Tregellis-West, and Ralph Leslie Fullwood and Clive Russell.

All the other fellows were chained to other sweeps in the same way—five apiece. Four of the powerful oars were thus manned, the other sixteen, of course, still being in charge of the slaves.

A miserable, wretched-looking crew they were! Long weeks of hardship had reduced them to craven, spineless wrecks of humanity. None had shaved since the first moment of their slavery, neither had their hair been cut. They were matted, dirty, and altogether repulsive. Not that this was their fault, poor beggars! Chained to those oars, day in, day out, life had ceased to be life, and had become a tortured existence.

Siegan the Slim came down the gangway, and surveyed his new slaves with open exultation.

"So-ho, my fine striplings!" he jeered. "A taste of hard work will do ye good, I dare swear! And, if faith, ye shall work now! Beshrew ye for the mischievous brats ye are! Work—work until ye drop! That's the order!"

Most of the fellows had sense enough to keep quiet, but the irrepressible Handforth, who was nearest the gangway, glared defiance into Siegan's face.

"All right—jeer away!" he snapped. "It's your turn now, you ruffian, but ours'll come soon!"

Siegan roared with laughter.

"Ho, ho! Bold, fine words from a galley-slave!" he gloated. "Fool! Thinkest thou there will be any escape? Naught but death will release thee from this bondage!"

"We'll see about that!" roared Handforth fiercely.

"Thou wilt!" retorted Siegan. "Now these padlocks are fastened around thy wrists, death alone bringeth their

release. Thou art a galley-slave, and there is no future for a galley-slave except slavery!"

"You're mad!" said Handforth, as he continued to glare into Siegan's face. "Just wait until Mr. Lee or Dorrie gets to hear of this! They'll sweep up with the motor-boat, or the aeroplane, and you'll be wiped out!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good for you, Handy!"

Siegan the Slim scowled viciously.

"I fear not thy friends, young cur!" he snarled. "Ere they can know of this affair, we shall be in safety. Silence, or I'll go ill with thee! Enough of this insolence! Thou art a slave, and—"

"Rats!" retorted Handforth. "I'm not afraid of you, you snake!"

Thud!

Siegan's heavy boot swept out, and the point of it caught the unfortunate Edward Oswald on the side of his head. He reeled, and his face went deathly pale, only to flush crimson.

"You coward!" he panted dizzily.

Handforth wrenched madly at his chains, but it was useless.

"I'll pay you back for that!" he muttered. "By George! I shall get my chance before long—"

"Don't, Handy—don't!" breathed Church, in alarm. "You'll only goad him again."

It seemed that Siegan the Slim was about to deliver another murderous kick, but he thought better of it, and laughed jeeringly.

"I waste my time!" he snapped. "What manner of fool I am to converse with dogs of slaves? Hey! Come, ye carrion!" he added, beckoning to a group of pirates. "Hither with the whips! Let these young pups taste the lash if they work less hard than their fellows!"

Siegan walked away, and most of the juniors took a little breath of relief. They had been half-expecting a tragedy, for Handforth was a reckless idiot at the best of times.

"You'd better go easy, Handy, old man," said Nipper, from the next oar. "We're helpless now, and there's no sense in inviting trouble."

"Are we going to take this lying down, then?" asked Handforth thickly.

"Steady, Ted!" broke in Willy soberly. "How the dickens can we do anything when we're chained down? You'll only get one of those whips across your shoulders if you keep up this attitude—and that won't help us, will it? This is one of those cases where we've got to possess our souls in patience, as some Johnny once said. Strategy, my son!"

"By George!" said his major, with a start.

"Of course, you'd thought of that already," went on Willy cunningly. "There's nothing like strategy, Ted. We'll pretend to be scared into fits, and we'll cringe and crouch down whenever Siegan comes near us. He's a conceited fool, and we can bluff him as easy as falling off a form. That's your game, isn't it? That's the idea you've got in mind, eh?"

Handforth gave another start.

"Bluff him, eh?" he whispered. "By George, rather! That's just what I was planning in my own mind! Then, perhaps, we might get a chance—"

"Exactly!" said Willy, nodding.

"The girls are doing the same stunt, and there's just a chance that we might be able to turn the tables later on. We've got to use our brains here—not our muscles. Think of Irene, too. How can you get to her aid if you get laid out by another of Siegan's kicks?"

Handforth took a deep breath.

"Yes, we'll pretend to be terrified," he murmured. "When Siegan comes by again, I'll cringe down and yelp like a frightened mongrel!"

Willy winked at the juniors who surrounded him. And they wisely said nothing. The Third Former had cleverly brought his major round to a sensible point of view.

And Siegan in the meantime was talking.

In fact, he was talking too much. The glamour of his victory had got into his head, and he could not resist the opportunity of revealing his plans to his chief victims. He anticipated no miscarriage, so spoke freely.

"Let not thy brow be worried, good Mercia!" he was saying to the princess. "No harm will come to thee or thy companions. 'Tis my aim to adopt a simple and old-fashioned method. Thou art to be held for ransom."

He spoke familiarly enough; indeed, his tone was insultingly so. But the princess caught her breath in with a momentary note of relief. And her ladies-in-waiting listened eagerly.

"Ransom?" said Mercia. "Thou art bold, wretch!"

"Boldness in a pirate is a necessary qualification," retorted Siegan.

"And thinkest thou there is any chance for thee?" went on the princess, contemptuously. "By my faith! A ransom, forsooth! What manner of folly is this? Thou wilt do better to release us whilst thy head is still upon those worthless shoulders of thine!"

Siegan grinned with triumph.

"Perchance thou didst not understand my statement," he said softly. "'Tis

not to Ethelbert the Red that I shall go. I require no ransom from Northestria."

The princess opened her eyes wide.

"Not—not Gothland? You won't hand us to Kassar the Grim?" she faltered, momentarily staggered.

"Who else?" asked Siegan the Slim. "I bargain with Kassar—and none other!"

Princess Mercia had turned pale.

"Thou wilt bargain with Kassar?" she repeated, in a husky voice.

"Ay, to be sure!" said the pirate.

"With whom else? Kassar the Grim will pay a wondrous price for such hostages, I doubt not. I will make an offer to Kassar to hand him not only a prince and a princess, but full twenty of these stranger youths! Could better hostages be secured? And what of those young ladies?" he went on, indicating Irene & Co. "Ay, I am well provided for such bargaining!"

"You would never hand us over to the enemy!" shouted young Prince Oswy, his voice shrill with anger. "And thou a Northestrian!"

"Pah!" snarled Siegan. "I am naught! An outlaw—a pirate—a man whose head would not rest on his shoulders for a day if he set foot ashore! A Northestrian! I? Nay, I prefer to throw in my lot with Kassar's tribe!"

"You traitor!" cried the princess scathingly.

"'Tis true!" cried Siegan, without a tremor. "Didst thou not spurn me, and appoint one of these stranger youths in my place? 'Tis now my turn, proud Mercia, and thou wilt see that my revenge is bitter! By the bones of Offa! 'Twill mean complete victory for Gothland without an invasion, since Ethel-



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feet must surrender in order to save thy necks from the chopping-block!"

He turned aside and went out.

"So that's his dodge!" said Doris Berkeley. "The awful rotter! He's going to hand us over to the Goth-landers for a huge price, and sell his own country!"

The young princess proudly held up her head.

"Siegan is over-confident," she declared. "Neither Ethelbert nor any

other Northestrian will surrender his country to 'Kassker!'"

"But they'll be forced to do so," said Irene quickly. "Don't you see? They can't allow us all to die! They'll be in such a position that surrender will be the only possible course."

"Can they not save us from this fate?" asked the Lady Elfrida timidly.

"We can hope for it, but I don't think there's a single chance," replied Doris, with shrewd conviction. "You can be sure we shall be taken to an inland for-

treas, and guarded by thousands of men. And if any attempt is made to rescue us, Kassker will threaten to have us killed. No; once we get into the Goth-landers' hands, Northestria's fate will be sealed."

"My poor country!" murmured the princess brokenly.

(Another powerful instalment of this great serial next week. Don't miss the further adventures of the St. Frank's boys in the hands of pirates.)

BARRED BY THE SCHOOL!

(Continued from page 16.)

Loud bellows came from the disappointed bull, and they could hear him racing up and down on the other side of the fence, evidently seeking for an opening.

Cousin Ethel bent over Levison as he lay panting.

"You—you have saved me!" she cried.

Levison staggered to his feet.

"Let's get out into the road. He may get through somehow!" he gasped.

"Yes—yes! Quick!"

They ran across the meadow which separated them from the road, and clambered over a stile. As they stood safe in Wayland Road, a bunch of St. Jim's juniors came in sight, running as if for their lives. Tom Merry & Co. had seen Ethel's danger from the far distance, and they were running to her aid as they had never run on the cinder-path for a prize. But they would have arrived too late—too late but for Levison.

The juniors came panting up.

"Ethel, dear gal!"

"Are you hurt?"

"I'm all right now," said Ethel. "I'm not hurt."

"Thank goodness, dear gal!"

"But—but for Levison—" said Ethel. She shuddered as she deep,

angry bellowing came from the distance. "Oh, I thought I should be killed! Oh!"

"My dear gal, why did you take the path instead of the footpath?" asked Arthur Augustus. "It was awfully weekless, you know!"

Ethel coloured. "I did not know the bull was there," she said. She would not explain why she had avoided the regular footpath.

But Levison broke in:

"Miss Cleveland did not take the other path, because she saw me waiting there," he said. "She ran into danger to avoid me."

"Bai Jove!"

"I am sorry, Levison," said Ethel simply.

Levison laughed grimly.

"You needn't be sorry," he said. "You were quite right. The last time you let me speak to you I told you a pack of lies about a friend of yours, and you were quite right to leave me alone. Only—this time—it was something else I wanted to speak about—only it doesn't matter now."

"I'm sorry I avoided you," said Cousin Ethel—"very sorry! It was very, very brave of you to act as you did. It was brave and noble."

"And you wouldn't have expected it of me, either?" said Levison, with one of his old, unpleasant grins.

"Don't speak bitterly now," said Ethel. "I am grateful, and I shall never forget your courage."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Levison, dear boy, may I have the honour of shaking you by the hand?"

Levison grinned. "Have you forgotten that I'm in

Coventry, and barred by the whole of the school?" he demanded.

"Yaas," said D'Arcy firmly. "I'm going to forget that, and all these fellows are going to forget it, too. You're not such a wottah, after all, and you're not in Coventry any longer, afrah savin' my cousin's life."

And the swell of St. Jim's shook hands with Levison.

"We all say the same," said Tom Merry. "Blessed if I know whether this will last in you, Levison, but after what you've done, you ought to have a chance. The sentence of Coventry is all over, of course."

"Yes, rather!" said Figgins, though with something of an effort. "And there's my fist on it, if you like to take it."

"And mine!" said Redfern.

Levison, with a very strange expression upon his face, shook hands all round with Tom Merry & Co., Cousin Ethel's face beaming.

"I'm so glad!" she said softly.

And the party walked back to the school on the best of terms, and in the best of spirits.

And the St. Jim's fellows, when they saw them come in, were amazed to see Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, walking arm-in-arm in the most amicable way with the cad of the Fourth, whom he had judged and sentenced when Levison was kicked out of the school!

(Next week: "GUSSY'S CANADIAN COUSIN!" Look out for this full-of-fun long yarn of the St. Jim's chums. It's a scream!)



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