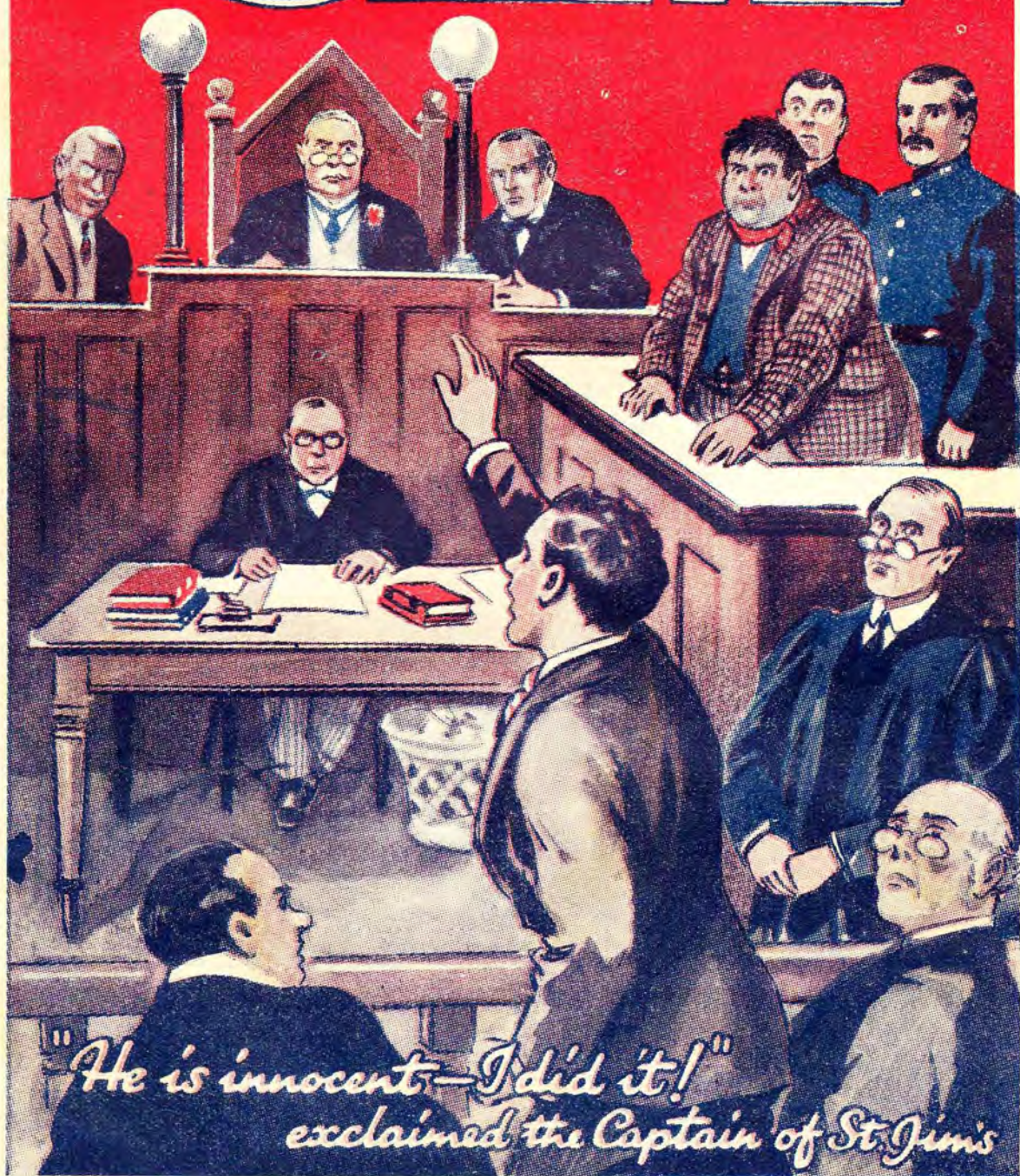


"REBELS OF PACKSADDLE!" —EXCITING STORY OF TEXAS SCHOOL ADVENTURE— **INSIDE.**

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The **GEM** 2!



A Dramatic Incident from "AN AFFAIR OF HONOUR!" The Powerful St. Jim's Yarn Within.

AN AFFAIR of HONOUR!



Lagden lay like a log after Kildare's heavy blow, and Monson ran forward, knelt by his side, and raised him from the ground. But the Ferndale senior was utterly insensible. "Good Heavens!" muttered Monson. "You've killed him!"

CHAPTER 1.

Simply Swank!

KILDARE, the captain of St. Jim's, frowned and bit his lip restlessly.

The big, handsome Sixth Former did not look happy. It was an occasion upon which Kildare might have been expected to look very cheerful. For it was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and the St. Jim's First Eleven were awaiting the arrival of a cricket team from Ferndale, and the prospect of a cricket match generally put Kildare into his cheeriest mood.

But he was decidedly not cheery now. The members of his eleven noted it, and they shared his feelings. Even the juniors who had crowded round the field observed it. Kildare certainly did his best to hide his feelings; but he was not a good hand at that, and everybody knew that he was annoyed.

It was a glorious June afternoon, and ideal weather for cricket. The well-rolled pitch looked very inviting. The stumps were pitched, and the St. Jim's First Eleven, in spotless white, were lounging outside the pavilion, quite ready.

Round the cricket field were gathered fellows of all Forms to see the match. First Eleven matches always drew a crowd, and the St. Jim's fellows were specially keen about this match; they

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all wanted very much to see the visiting team licked. The Ferndale cricketers were not popular. There was, as Jack Blake of the Fourth had remarked, more swank than cricket about them, and the amount of "side" they put on made Blake, personally, feel quite annoyed.

And they were late.

They did not have to come very far from Ferndale, and as they were coming in a motor-coach, there was no real reason why they should be late. And nobody on the ground believed that the delay was accidental. Five minutes or ten minutes might have been allowed, but half an hour was too "thick"—to quote Blake again. It was just one more sample of Ferndale "side," Blake declared, and D'Arcy, Digby, and Herries, his chums in the Fourth, fully agreed with him.

The First Eleven—great and important personages in the Fifth and Sixth Forms—felt that they were beginning to look absurd. And the other fellows were angry. The juniors might poke fun at the Sixth themselves, and frequently did; but they objected very strongly to any rotten outsiders making the Sixth look absurd!

"It's rotten!" Tom Merry of the Shell declared. "They're simply cads!"

"Rotters!" agreed Figgins of the Fourth.

For once School House and New House were united in opinion.

"Of course, there may have been an accident, or somethin'," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth, polishing his eyeglass in a very thoughtful way. "Accidents will happen, you know, deah boys."

Jack Blake grunted.

"There isn't an accident. This is swank!" he said.

"Yes, rather," said Tom Merry, in deep disgust. "When Kildare took his men over to Ferndale they weren't ready, and the First had to cool their heels for half an hour because Lagden had forgotten the time."

"Wotten!" said D'Arcy. "The fellow is a cad!"

"It's just Ferndale swank," said Monty Lowther savagely. "If I were Kildare I'd take my men off the ground and decline to play when the rotters do come!"

"Yaas, wathah! I should wogard that as a weally dignified course, in the cirs."

"Only it would muck up the afternoon, and the Ferndale cads would say that the St. Jim's First had funkled the match," said Manners.

"Yes, they've got us either way," said Tom Merry. "We've got to stand their cheek one way or the other."

"Kildale looks as if he's gettin' watty, though," said D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass upon the captain of St. Jim's.

Kildare was standing outside the pavilion with Darrell and Rushden of

—FEATURING ERIC KILDARE AND ALL YOUR ST. JIM'S FAVOURITES.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

the Sixth. The rest of the First Eleven were idling about, waiting. Some of them were saying things in low tones, others were grimly silent. Kildare's glance went up to the big clock in the tower of St. Jim's.

"Half an hour, Darrell," he said.

Darrell nodded.

"Yes; I suppose we're going to wait."

Kildare bit his lip.

"It would be rather drastic to cut the match, after they've had a journey over here," he said. "I'm sorry I accepted their challenge now. I knew that Lagden and his eleven were a set of swankers."

Darrell smiled.

"That was partly the reason, wasn't it?" he remarked. "It would be such a pleasure to take them down a peg or two, and the last match wasn't finished."

Kildare grunted.

"This match won't be finished, either, by the look of things," he said. "They're half an hour late already, and there's no sign of them."

"Might have been delayed," suggested Rushden.

"Perhaps. I don't think so, though. It's Ferndale swank."

"Better chuck the match, I think," said Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, joining the group. "The whole thing's beginning to be funny."

Kildare made a restless movement.

"Well, if they don't come soon, we won't play them," he said. "Anyway, this is our last match with Ferndale. We'll wipe out the fixture!"

Kildare looked anxiously towards the distant school gates. Several fellows had posted themselves there to watch for the Ferndale motor-coach. Murmurs were breaking out on all sides of the cricket field. The annoyance was deepening to exasperation.

But there was a shout from the gates at last.

"They're coming!"

"Here comes the motor-coach!"

Kildare's face brightened.

"They'll be here in a minute now!" he remarked. "Mind, no growling, you chaps. Must be civil to a visiting team."

"I don't feel so jolly civil," growled Monteith.

"Still, noblesse oblige, you know."

"There they are!"

The Ferndale coach had appeared at last. The sight of it was received in grim silence by the St. Jim's crowd. Even the most exuberant of the juniors had no cheer to waste upon the Ferndale swankers.

CHAPTER 2.

Not Popular.

L AGDEN and his men descended from the coach in a very leisurely way. Lagden, the Ferndale captain, was a tall, slim fellow, who cultivated elegant manners. He came towards the pavilion with his crowd, and their walk was leisurely and careless.

They were evidently in no hurry.

Tom Merry & Co. glared at them. The Ferndalers seemed to be quite unaware of it. They walked on with a careless swagger as if—as Blake remarked with intense disgust—they considered the earth hardly good enough for them to tread on.

Monty Lowther, the humorist of the Shell, detached himself from the junior

group, and fell in behind the procession of Ferndalers, imitating with exaggerated fidelity the swagger of the visiting cricketers.

There was a chuckle among the juniors, and a dozen other fellows rushed to imitate Monty Lowther's example.

Lagden and his men walked on unconscious. They were far too lofty even to glance at mere juniors, and they did not look behind them. They were quite unconscious of the fact that a dozen juniors in their rear were imitating their swagger exaggeratively, and they wondered at the sudden outburst of merriment all over the field.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cecil Lagden turned pink.

He did not know the cause of the laughter, but it annoyed him.

Even Kildare smiled. For where he stood at the pavilion he could see the oncoming cricketers and the juniors behind them, and he could not help smiling. He raised his hand, however, and made a warning gesture to the juniors. They did not seem to see it. At all events, they did not cease their antics.

Lagden looked round.

At the sight of the swaggering dozen his pink face grew scarlet.

"Stop that, you young rascals!" shouted Darrell.

He took a grip upon his bat, and started towards the mischievous juniors.

When Eric Kildare gives the unsportsmanlike skipper of a rival school the opportunity of avenging a blow on the cricket field, the popular St. Jim's captain little knows that the affair of honour, held in secret, is to end in a police court!

Jack Blake and his comrades promptly disappeared into the crowd.

Lagden was frowning haughtily as he arrived at the pavilion.

He shook hands very coldly with the St. Jim's captain.

"You're late!" said Kildare bluntly.

"Are we?" said Lagden.

"Yes; over half an hour."

"So sorry, don't you know," drawled Lagden. "Would you mind telling us where our dressing-room is?"

The Ferndalers went in to change.

Kildare bit his lip.

"Not even an apology," he said to Darrell.

"We'll take some of the swank out of them!" growled Darrell. "I fancy they think the match will be unfinished like the last."

"But it won't."

"No fear!"

"They can't play for toffee!" said Monteith. "They have licked little teams under their weight, but they've never tackled anything our size, or they'd have had some of the cheek taken out of them. We'll give 'em the licking of their lives!"

And that thought was a great comfort to the exasperated First. They had not the slightest doubt about their ability to do it. They had seen some Ferndale play, and they didn't think much of it. Every fellow there was grimly determined to play the game of his life, if only for the satisfaction of completely crushing the swankers.

Lagden & Co. were a good time

changing. They did not hurry themselves in any way. Hurry, indeed, was incompatible with the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere, which the Ferndalers cultivated with great assiduity.

But they emerged at last in flannels.

St. Jim's won the toss, and Kildare elected to bat first. He intended to pile up enough runs in the first innings to make it necessary for the Ferndalers to follow on, and then there would be no danger of the match remaining unfinished. Kildare had little doubt of finishing the match with an innings in hand. The Ferndalers had declined to entertain the suggestion of a single-innings game. As a matter of fact, Lagden preferred an unfinished match to a licking, and if the Saints proved too tough for him, there was no doubt that he would try to hang out the match till the time when it was agreed that the stumps should be drawn, and that he could decline to play longer.

Lagden led his men out to field, and the Ferndalers posted themselves in elegant attitudes, much more desirous of being taken for men of the world than for cricketers.

"Blessed set of duffers!" Tom Merry remarked to his chums. "The First will walk all over them."

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy! The juniah eleven would knock them into a cocked hat at weal ewicket," said D'Arcy.

"Hear, hear!" said Redfern of the Fourth. "I only wish we had a chance at them."

"Here come Kildare and Darrell."

"Now look out for fun."

And the crowd settled themselves down to watch with great enjoyment. And they had plenty to enjoy, as they had anticipated. Tunstall, the crack bowler of the Ferndale team, went on for the first over, and he swaggered to his place as if he were a crack county bowler at the very least.

He might have been expected to perform the hat-trick in the first over—from his manner. But he didn't.

The first over was to Kildare, and the captain of St. Jim's proceeded to make hay of it.

He wiped the very first ball away to the boundary, and then there was a yell of delight from the crowd.

The second ball followed the first, and then came a three. The fourth ball came to Darrell, and Darrell sent it on its journey with an effort, and there was another three. Kildare played the fifth ball to the boundary, and took two for the sixth. The St. Jim's crowd roared.

"Bravo!"

"Hurrah!"

"Twenty for the first over!"

No wonder the Saints were delighted, and no wonder the Ferndale fieldsmen looked grim.

As the field crossed over for the second over, there was a perceptible diminution of swagger in the bearing of the visiting eleven.

Lagden & Co. seemed to wake up to the fact that this was business, and they came down out of the clouds, as it were, and began to play.

CHAPTER 3.

Something Like a Score!

KILDARE grinned as Monson of Ferndale bowled the second over to Darrell. He could not help grinning. He had expected the Ferndale play to be feeble, but he had

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not supposed that it would be quite so feeble as this.

Lagden & Co. could bat a little, but their bowling was weak and their fielding almost comical. It was quite clear that they were nowhere up to the form of the home team, and they realised it themselves, and they did not look pleasant about it. And the cheers of the good hitting jarred upon them, and they heard remarks about themselves that were not flattering.

"My only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated D'Arcy minor of the Third Form. "Did you ever see fielding like that? We wouldn't have it in the Third."

"No fear!" said Joe Frayne, a member of that important Form. "I think we would bar it in our team. Go it, wooden legs!" he shouted to a Ferndale fieldsman who was racing hopelessly after the ball.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buck up, slowcoach!"

"Get a move on!"

The fieldsman, red with exertion and with self-consciousness—for he heard the remarks of the group of fags—clutched at the ball and looked for a moment strongly inclined to hurl it among Wally & Co.

But he restrained himself and returned it, too late to be of any service. Kildare and Darrell had scored four.

"That's cricket—Ferndale cricket!" said Jack Blake. "That's the giddy team that had the cheek to keep our team waiting!"

"Bai Jove! The silly asses ought to be playin' marbles, you know."

"Or hopscotch."

"Or noughts and crosses."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And there was a yell of laughter in recognition of the amusement the visiting team was affording the juniors of St. Jim's.

Lagden cast an angry glance round, and left his place at slip and strode towards Kildare. The captain of St. Jim's looked at him in surprise, carefully keeping his bat on the crease. Ferndale players were not above stealing little advantages.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

Lagden waved his hand towards the laughing juniors.

"If that's the kind of manners you cultivate here you might have let us know, that's all!" he snapped. "Do you think it's a pleasure to play with cheeky fags hooting at us?"

Kildare turned red.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but—"

"Well, stop them, then!"

Lagden's tone was decidedly unpleasant.

Kildare called to Monteith, who was standing outside the pavilion with his bat under his arm. He was next man in.

"Monteith, old man, tell the juniors to shut up. The Ferndale chaps don't like it."

Monteith nodded.

"All right, Kildare."

And the New House prefect strolled towards the juniors. Lagden went back to his place, biting his lip, and Monson bowled again. The ball was driven to the boundary, and there was a fresh yell from the crowd.

The next ball flew past the fingers of short slip, and three was taken. A St. Jim's fieldsman would have caught the batsman out, but it was quite beyond the powers of the Ferndale captain.

The Saints yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Butter-fingers!"

Monteith strode among the juniors.

"Stop that immediately!" he exclaimed. "The next fellow who calls

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out anything rude to the Ferndale men will get licked."

"Oh, I say, Monteith," exclaimed Tom Merry, "mustn't we laugh?"

Monteith laughed himself.

"No, you mustn't," he said. "There's such a thing as politeness."

"They ain't very polite to us," growled Blake. "They've kept us hanging about here for half an hour doing nothing."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, shut up, that's all," said Monteith. "We don't want the Ferndale men to decline to play, with the excuse that they were badgered by the crowd here."

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "They'd be quite capable of it!"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

"Shut up, then!" said Monteith, turning away.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy emphatically. "We mustn't give the wottahs an excuse for chuckin' the match as soon as they're half licked. Pway be vevy careful, you know!"

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"The rotters!" he said. "They'd be quite capable of it. Pass the word round—not a yell after this."

"Wathah not!"

And after that warning the St. Jim's juniors were punctiliously silent. They were willing to suppress their merriment rather than risk losing the pleasure of seeing the visiting team thoroughly beaten.

But there could be no objection to their cheering their own side, and they did that with great gusto, and they had plenty to cheer.

The St. Jim's batsmen were hard hitters, and they were playing their very best now. The score was at 60 when Darrell was bowled at last, and Monteith came in to join Kildare at the wickets. The St. Jim's captain and the New House prefect made the fur fly between them. The Ferndale bowlers laboured at their wickets in vain.

Even when the batsmen grew a little careless, as they did after a time, on account of the measures of their adversaries, Lagden & Co. had no chance.

The fielding was, as Tom Merry said, simply rotten, and the bowling was of no use against bats like Kildare and Monteith.

Wickets fell very slowly, and runs piled up fast. Lagden caught Monteith out at last.

Two down—for 150 runs! Langton of the Sixth came in to join Kildare, and the fieldsmen were given more leather-hunting. The two batsmen drove the ball in turn into far corners of the field, and the Ferndalers panted and gasped after it.

Kildare was batting brilliantly, and his individual score was close on the century now. By the time Langton's wicket fell the figure of the total was 200.

"Three down for 200," grinned Tom Merry. "I think it's about time that Kildare declared, my sons."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He's going to make the rotters follow their innings on, I guess," said Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth Form. "They'll pile on some more so that they won't have to bat again."

"Yaas, that will be wathah deep, you know."

"Hundred for Kildare!" roared Figgins, as the batsman crossed over again.

And there was a roar.

"Bravo, Kildare!"

"Hurrah, hurrah!"

Kildare had made his century, and the score was leaping up. Rushden's wicket went down, and Baker came in. Baker was bowled with a dozen to his credit, and by that time the St. Jim's First was five down for 260.

"Kildare will declare at three hundred," said Tom Merry, with the air of a prophet.

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Tom Merry was right.

It was still far from the time fixed for tea when the 300 was reached, and it had cost St. Jim's six wickets. Then Kildare declared the innings closed, much to the relief of the unhappy fieldsmen. They had done their best by irritatingly slow bowling to hang the game out, but their knavish tricks, as the juniors considered them, were quite upset by the declaration on the part of the St. Jim's captain.

"Three hundred for six wickets!" said Blake, chortling. "A giddy county score, and no mistake!"

"Quite remarkable—if they weren't playin' a team of silly duffahs!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "They couldn't have scored that against the Fourth here, deah boy."

"No fear!"

"Ferndale look a bit fagged," said Tom Merry, grinning.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fieldsmen certainly did look a bit fagged as they came off. Some of them looked as if they could hardly walk. They passed between rows of grinning juniors. The Saints did not say a word, but they might have been excused for grinning.

Lagden gritted his teeth as he walked off. He scowled savagely as he passed Tom Merry, and caught the glimmer of fun in his eyes. Lagden was fatigued with unaccustomed exercise, and his temper was at a dangerous point. He lost it then, and he swept out his arm and dealt the Shell fellow a blow in the face.

Smack!

The blow was utterly unexpected, and Tom Merry staggered back under the force of it, and fell among the legs of the juniors.

CHAPTER 4.

Frayed Tempers.

TOM MERRY was on his feet again in an instant.

"You cad!" he yelled.

He was springing towards Lagden, with clenched fists and blazing eyes, when Manners, Lowther, and Blake grasped him and dragged him back.

"Hold on, Tommy—"

"Chuck it!"

"Visitor, you know."

"Yaas, wathah, Tom Mewwy, deah boy! Lagden has acted in a vevy disgwaceful mannah, but you must wemembah that he is a stwangah within our gates."

"Let me go!" yelled Tom Merry, struggling in the grasp of his chums. "Do you think I'm going to let that swanking cad smack my face?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Hold on, old chap!"

Kildare hurried up.

"Stand back, Merry!" he said sternly.

Tom Merry panted.

"You saw what he did?" he shouted.

"I suppose you chipped him," said Kildare.

"I didn't say a word!"



As Lagden came off with his team, he caught the glimmer of fun in Tom Merry's eyes. His temper, after the strenuous exercise the St. Jim's First Eleven had given Ferndale in the field, was at a dangerous point. He lost it then, and dealt Tom Merry a blow across the face. Smack! With a cry, Tom staggered back among the juniors.

"Well, well, stand back! Hold your tongue! Don't play the goat, Merry!" Tom Merry calmed down. He was longing to get at Lagden with his fists. But the Shell fellow realised what an extremely awkward position Kildare was placed in, and he was loyal to his captain.

"All right, Kildare," he said quietly. "Thank you, Merry," said Kildare. He joined Lagden as the latter was going into the pavilion. "You oughtn't to have done that, Lagden," Lagden sneered.

"Let him mend his manners, then," he said. "We didn't come here to be ragged by a crew of fags!"

"Tom Merry wasn't ragging you!" "Some of them were—and the young cad was grinning, anyway!" Kildare's eyes gleamed.

"Perhaps he had something to grin at!" he retorted. "Anyway, you'd better keep your hands off the fellows here, or there may be trouble I may not be able to stop."

Lagden shrugged his shoulders in a very irritating way.

"I suppose you mean that we may be mobbed, like a visiting team on some slum football ground," he said.

"You're not likely to be mobbed here."

"I don't know! My men have been put off their form by the conduct of your crowd," said Lagden.

"They didn't have much form to put off, I should say!" growled Monteith.

"Dry up, Monteith!" said the worried Kildare. "That isn't the way to talk to a visiting skipper."

"Sorry!" said Monteith shortly, but he did not look very sorry.

"Oh, let him run on!" said Lagden, with a sneer. "We might have known what to expect when we came here! We did expect fair play, as a matter of fact!"

Kildare flushed.

"Do you mean to say that you're not getting fair play?" he demanded hotly. "I don't mean to say anything. I've got my own opinion."

"What have you to complain of, Lagden?" Kildare asked quietly.

"I don't complain."

"You insinuated that you weren't getting fair play!"

"Well, a yelling crowd, for one thing—"

"Their yelling was stopped the moment you complained."

"That and other things," said Lagden sulkily. "But I'm not complaining. I shall be a little more careful in selecting the teams I play with in future, that's all."

Lagden was evidently in a quarrelsome temper, and it was equally evident that his quarrelsome temper was the outcome of the big defeat in store, not of any treatment he had been accorded while on the St. Jim's ground.

But Kildare did not wish to quarrel with a visitor. And he did not wish to give the Ferndale men the excuse that they had been badly treated and had had to throw up the match.

"I'm sorry you're not satisfied, Lagden," said Kildare, with unexpected mildness. "If you complain of anything, we'll rectify it at once."

"Certainly," said Monteith, who guessed what was in Kildare's mind, and was equally anxious that the Ferndalers should not be given an excuse to escape upon.

"Oh, never mind!" said Lagden, shrugging his shoulders. "As I said, I shall be more careful in future, that's all."

"Very well," said Kildare, restraining his temper with an effort.

He walked away.

"That cad's trying to fix a quarrel on you, Kildare!" Darrell murmured. "Mind your p's and q's. They're all simply boiling at being made such an exhibition of!"

Kildare nodded.

"He won't quarrel with me," he said, "and pass the word round to the fellows to be careful."

The St. Jim's cricketers took their cue from Kildare, and they were elaborately civil to the Ferndalers.

The visitors were allowed to shrug their shoulders, and to make sneering remarks, and they were met with the most urbane politeness.

And they were baffled. There was evidently nothing for it but to play the match out. They sat down in a very ill-humour to the plentiful tea provided by St. Jim's, but they were given no chance of picking a quarrel.

"The rotters are actually looking for trouble!" Blake remarked to a number of juniors who were having tea with him in Study No. 6 in the School House. "Beautiful manners for a visiting team, eh?"

"Yaas, wathah! Uttahhly disgust-ing!"

"Rotters!" said Tom Merry. "But Kildare's got his peepers open, and he won't be drawn. The rotters are going to be licked!"

And the juniors, anticipating that happy result, kept an eye upon the study window, to be ready when the Ferndale innings commenced. At the sight of the cricketers coming down to the field again, they hurried out of the School House, and raced down to the ground.

Kildare and his merry men were going out to field, and they all looked as fresh as paint. Lagden and Monson did not look equally fresh as they went in to bat. They were still feeling the effects of the leather-hunting. The St. Jim's fellows chuckled as they saw that Langton had been given the ball for the first over. Langton was the champion bowler of St. Jim's, and he had distinguished himself once in a

match against a county eleven. He was not likely to make long work of the Ferndale batting, if it was anything like their bowling or their fielding.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye and prepared to watch the Ferndale innings with enjoyment.

"It won't last long, deah boys!" he remarked. "But I wathah think that it will be jolly good fun so long as it does last!"

And Tom Merry & Co. fully agreed with the swell of St. Jim's, and they prepared to enjoy the Ferndale innings to the full.

CHAPTER 5.

Coming to Blows.

THE crowd watched with joyous anticipation.

They knew Langton's powers; and although they had not yet seen Lagden or Monson bat, they thought they knew what to expect.

And they were right!

The St. Jim's champion bowler was in very good form, and he proceeded to make hay of the Ferndale wickets. The first over was very slow. Lagden just succeeding in saving the sticks, but the last ball of the over woke him up.

His middle stump went flying.

Lagden gazed at his wrecked wicket, and then marched off. His feelings, as he walked back to the pavilion, can be better imagined than described. To save his life, Wally D'Arcy could not help yelping:

"What price duck's eggs?"

And there was a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lagden ground his teeth.

He cast a furious glance round at the crowd, and disappeared into the pavilion. Tunstall came out to take his place.

There was plenty of time before the new batsman got in; the Ferndale players did not hurry themselves in any way.

"Trying to hang it out, you bet," said Kangaroo of the Shell, with a sniff. "They won't have much chance, though, with Langton bowling."

"Wathah not, deah boy."

"Darrell's giving 'em the second over."

Darrell bowled to Monson. Monson lived through the over, and scored a two, and his comrades from the pavilion gave him a cheer for it.

"Now look out for fun!" said Jack Blake gleefully. "Langton's bowling will make them look sick."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And fun there was! Langton was in his best form just now, and prepared to play ducks and drakes with the visitors' wickets. Tunstall was looking out for the ball when it came, but as a matter of fact he did not see it, and he did not know where it was until he heard the crash of his wicket.

"How's that?" roared all St. Jim's.

"Out!"

"Well bowled, sir!"

Another batsman came in for Ferndale. He was dismissed with a duck's egg to his credit, and the next man in fared the same. And then the Saints roared.

"How's that? The hat-trick! Hurrah!"

Lagden, looking out of the pavilion, ground his teeth. He was white with rage. The Ferndalers were four down for two, and it was pretty plain how the innings was going. If it kept on like this, the visitors would be lucky to score twenty—against a total of three hundred on the home side.

The whole thing had become farcical. Lagden was quivering with rage and annoyance. The scorn for his playing which he read in Kildare's tactics stung him deeply. The St. Jim's captain had declared on an overwhelming total, so that he could be sure of the right to demand that the visitors should follow on with their innings.

He had not left them time for a good innings, and yet he evidently meant the match to be finished. The inference was plain—he believed that Ferndale

would be dismissed for both innings before the time fixed for stumps to be drawn. And he was right, too; Lagden felt that.

The Ferndale captain could hardly contain his bitter temper as he stood there and watched wicket after wicket fall.

Kildare took Langton off from the bowling, from a consideration of mercy towards the hapless Ferndalers, and Lagden fully understood his motive, and hated him for it. Darrell and Rushden and Monteith did most of the bowling afterwards, but they made the wickets very fast.

Runs were very few and far between, and the total was nineteen when there was the announcement: "Last man in!"

Tom Merry grinned at his comrades. "Kildare needn't have troubled about piling up three hundred," he remarked. "The Ferndalers will have to follow on."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Never saw such a show!" growled Monty Lowther.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall," grinned Kangaroo. "Ferndale have got it in the neck this time, and no mistake, and serve them jolly well right, for their rotten swank."

"Quite wight, deah boy!"

"There goes last man!"

The last wicket was down for a score of twenty. The crowd did not laugh. But they could not help grinning. The score was so utterly absurd, after the amount of side Ferndale had put on, that they could not take it seriously. The faces of the Ferndalers were pink. They realised that in challenging St. Jim's they had bitten off more than they could chew, so to speak, and the digestion of their defeat was a very painful process to them.

The crowd looked on while Kildare spoke to Lagden, and the word soon passed round that Ferndale were going to follow on their innings.

The St. Jim's crowd smiled as the Ferndalers began their second innings.

Ferndale were tired, there was no doubt about that; the fancy cricket they were accustomed to playing was nothing like the gruelling game St. Jim's gave them. The batsmen were off their form, while the St. Jim's bowlers and fieldsmen were as fresh as paint.

The wickets went down fast.

One or two of the visitors made a stand, and the runs piled up to a bigger score than in the first innings, but the game was hopeless from the start.

Forty runs for the second innings was the total by the time the last wicket fell and the Ferndale men were finished.

"Sixty the lot!" said Kangaroo of the Shell. "My only hat! Sixty—against three hundred for six wickets! I rather fancy that even Ferndale will sing small after this."

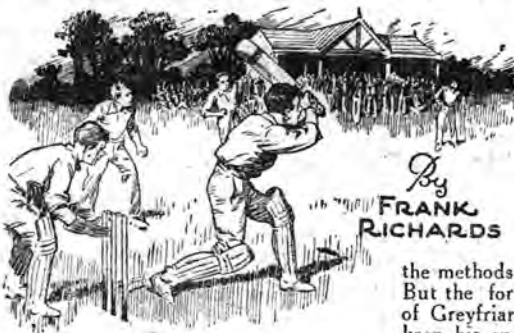
Kangaroo was right.

The Ferndale team all looked very self-conscious as they went into the pavilion to change for their journey. It wanted nearly an hour yet to the time officially fixed for the drawing of stumps, and the match was finished. The St. Jim's innings of six wickets had taken nearly twice as long as both the innings of the Ferndalers put together. And even the First Eleven could not help smiling. The unpleasantness they had been compelled to endure from the Ferndalers had been fully avenged.

"You'll stay and have something before you go, Lagden?" asked Kildare as the Ferndale captain came out of the pavilion with a dark face.

Lagden shrugged his shoulders.

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"Thank you, no. I've had enough of St. Jim's hospitality."

Kildare flushed.

"I hope there's been nothing wrong with our hospitality," he said. "About the juniors, you must make allowances for their annoyance at being kept waiting half an hour."

"Oh, don't talk to me," said Lagden savagely. "We shan't come here again, that's a cert. Your crowd is a gang of hooligans, if you want my plain opinion, and I consider it a disgrace to have played St. Jim's!"

Kildare clenched his teeth.

"You had better go," he said. "I don't want to quarrel with you, but I don't allow anybody to talk to me like that. You're a visitor here, and you're safe. But you'd better go, you cad!"

Lagden's eyes blazed. He raised his hand suddenly and struck Kildare across the face.

"Take that, hang you!" he exclaimed.

Kildare staggered for a moment. Then, without stopping to think, he lashed out with his right, and Lagden rolled head over heels in the grass.

CHAPTER 6.

Kildare Declines.

"GREAT Scott!"

"Kildare—"

"My hat!"

There was a shout and a crowding round as the captain of Ferndale rolled in the grass. The Ferndale men drew closer together, as if expecting a rush.

Lagden sat up in the grass, blinking stupidly. He could hardly have expected any other reply to his blow, and yet he seemed surprised.

Kildare stood with his eyes glittering. His temper, long held in check, had blazed out at last. And there was not a fellow there belonging to St. Jim's who blamed him for knocking down the insolent captain of the Ferndale eleven.

Lagden staggered to his feet. He stood with unsteady feet, glaring at the captain of St. Jim's as if he would spring upon him. But Tunstall held him back.

"Hold on, Laggy!" he whispered.

Lagden shook off his arm.

"I suppose you know what this means, Kildare?" he said. "You've got to meet me."

Kildare's blaze of anger died away.

Not that he cared twopence whether he stood up to a fellow like Lagden. The weedy captain of Ferndale was not likely to give the athletic Kildare much trouble in that way. But the disgrace and humiliation of a fight with the captain of a visiting eleven troubled Kildare very much. He was almost sorry now that he had returned Lagden's blow. Yet what could he have done? Lagden had made it impossible for him to hold his hand.

Kildare calmed himself with an effort.

"I'm sorry this has happened," he said.

Lagden ground his teeth.

"You'll be sorrier before I've finished with you," he said.

The St. Jim's fellows sniffed audibly. Ferndale swank had not been wholly cured by the crushing defeat on the cricket field, that was evident. To hear the slim, weedy captain of Ferndale threatening Kildare, who would hardly have made more than a mouthful of him in a stand-up fight, made the fellows restive. Kildare's quiet manner had deceived Lagden. He had jumped to the conclusion that the St. Jim's skipper was scared at the consequences

of his action. He had never made a bigger mistake in his life. But it was very like Cecil Lagden.

"I don't think there's anything more to be said," Kildare remarked coldly. "Good-bye—that's all!"

Lagden's eyes glittered.

"You've knocked me down," he said. "Do you think the matter's going to end here?"

"I think so—I hope so."

"You're mistaken, then. You're going to stand up to me for that."

"Better let it drop."

"I'll let it drop, certainly, if you'll step up here for me to knock you down, and we will call it quits, then," said Lagden, with a sneer. "If you don't agree to that, you'll fight me!"

Kildare shook his head.

"You can have the choice of fighting me here and now, or of meeting me at any place you choose to name," said the Ferndale captain.

"Look here, Lagden—"

"Give me an answer, please—here—or where?"

"I certainly shan't fight you here," said Kildare, "and I hope, when you've had time to think it over, you'll let the matter drop. I'm sorry I knocked you down, but you struck the first blow."

"We needn't go into that. If you prefer the matter to be put off to another time and place, well and good. I'll send a friend of mine to make the arrangement."

"I don't undertake to meet you."

"If you refuse, I'll see that everybody is informed of your cowardice!" said Lagden, between his teeth.

Kildare flushed scarlet. He clenched his hands, and took a step towards the Ferndale captain. Darrell pulled him back, and Kildare nodded to his chum, and walked away. He did not care to trust himself near the Ferndale captain any longer.

Lagden turned upon his heel with a sneer, and the Ferndalers climbed into their motor-coach, which was waiting for them.

It drove away from St. Jim's in the midst of grim silence.

The visiting eleven had made the worst possible impression upon St. Jim's. They had swanked intolerably, and they had played rotten cricket; they had been beaten, and lost their tempers about it, and fastened a quarrel upon the peaceable, good-tempered captain of St. Jim's. The whole affair had been utterly rotten from beginning to end, and St. Jim's was glad to see the last of the visitors.

Kildare had gone directly to his study. What he was thinking about the matter no one knew, but the other fellows talked of it freely. The Saints wondered what Kildare would do about Lagden's challenge. He could hardly refuse it, and at the same time, he could hardly accept it, considering his position as head of the Sixth and captain of St. Jim's.

"It places old Kildare in a very difficult posish, deah boys," Arthur

Augustus D'Arcy remarked to his chums. "It will be wotten and disgraceful for the captain of the school to get mixed up in a fight like a fag, you know. The Head would be vewy much annoyed if he got to heah of it. But it is hardly possible for Kildare to wufuse to meet the fellow."

Tom Merry nodded thoughtfully.

"I hope he won't meet him all the same," he said. "It would do him harm with the Head if it got out."

"Kildare will take no notice of him, very likely," said Manners. "That would be the sensible thing to do."

D'Arcy shook his head.

"Imposs, deah boy. This is an affaiiah of honah, you know—it isn't poss for a gentleman to wufuse a challenge fwom another gentleman."

"Affair of rats!" growled Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"I hope Kildare will refuse," said Tom Merry. "We all know he's not afraid of the worm; and that's all he need care about. What Lagden thinks isn't worth considering."

And most of the fellows agreed with Tom Merry. That evening there was little else talked of at St. Jim's but the fracas in the cricket field, and the fellows surmised incessantly on the subject of what Kildare would do.

Meanwhile, the captain of St. Jim's kept his own counsel.

CHAPTER 7.

Tom Merry Chips In!

"BAI JOVE!"

Arthur—Augustus D'Arcy uttered that exclamation.

It was the day after the cricket match. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Jack Blake, and Tom Merry had gone out of the School House after morning lessons and strolled down to the school gates. They intended to walk down to the village to see about the important matter of a new cricket bat Tom Merry was negotiating for. As they reached the school gates, two fellows came in, and the juniors recognised Monson and Tunstall of Ferndale.

The two Ferndale seniors took no notice of the St. Jim's juniors. They walked into the quadrangle with their noses high in the air.

The three juniors glared after them.

"Bai Jove!" repeated D'Arcy.

"That means mischief!"

Tom Merry nodded.

"They're going to see Kildare about the challenge from Lagden," he remarked.

"I dare say Lagden's hanging about somewhere, for their answer," said Blake. "We may see the rotter as we go down to Rylcombe."

"I shall wufuse to take any notice of him," said D'Arcy loftily.

"Hear, hear!" said Blake. "That's sure to put him in his place."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, come on!" said Blake. "We've got to get back to dinner, you know."

"You are intewwuptin' me."

"Exactly. Come on."

And the three juniors walked down the lane. Blake kept his eyes about him for the Ferndale captain; he thought it very probable that Lagden had walked

(Continued on the next page.)

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over from Ferndale with his friends, although naturally he would not dare to enter St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy suddenly. "Look there!"

"Lagden!"

"And Weary Willie," chuckled Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors had turned a bend in the lane, and they came upon the scene suddenly. Lagden was standing in the road. He had been leaning on the stile, evidently waiting the return of his friends, when he was accosted by the man who was speaking to him now. His interlocutor was a ragged, dirty tramp, with a complexion enriched by the incessant use of beer. The man was a most unpromising individual to meet in a lonely lane, and there was reason for the expression of alarm which had come upon Lagden's face. The manner of the tramp was decidedly threatening, and he could plainly wipe up the ground with Lagden if he had been so inclined.

"Which it would be kind of yer to help an 'onest man on his way, sir," said the tramp, and the juniors paused as they heard him.

Neither Lagden nor the gentleman, whom Tom Merry had named Weary Willie, saw the juniors for a moment.

"I'll give you a shilling," said Lagden. "Make it 'arf-a-crown, sir."

"I haven't any more money to waste on you," growled Lagden. "You'd better be off."

The tramp did not stir.

"Can't you make it 'arf-a-crown, sir?" he said, with a more threatening tone in his voice.

"No, I can't!"

"Some blokes would take wot they wanted, sir, instead of askin' fur it, on a lonely road," said the tramp, and he slipped the cudgel from under his arm into his hand.

Lagden faltered.

"Look here, if I give you half-a-crown, will you be off?" he demanded.

The tramp grinned.

"Like a shot, sir."

Lagden fumbled in his pocket. He imprudently drew out a handful of silver, and the tramp's eyes glittered with greed. He made a sudden movement forward, and grasped the Ferndale fellow's wrist.

"And it over," he said hoarsely.

Lagden struggled to pull his hand away.

"Let me alone, you scoundrel!" he shouted. "I'll have the police set on you for this."

"And it over, I says."

"You villain—"

"Then take that!"

The tramp swung up his cudgel, and, as he did so, Tom Merry came speeding on to him, and his fist caught the ruffian on the side of the head.

The attack was so sudden that the tramp went down helplessly under it, as if he had been shot.

He sprawled in the dusty lane, yelling, and his cudgel flew into the hedge.

Lagden gasped.

"Thank you!" he exclaimed. "The villain was going to rob me. Help me collar him, and we'll take him to the police station."

That was enough for Weary Willie.

He was upon his feet in a second, and he started running down the road at top speed. In a moment he had disappeared round a bend in the lane and was gone.

The juniors burst into a laugh.

"Not much chance of getting him to the station," said Tom Merry. "It

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would mean a pretty stiff foot-race first."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'm much obliged to you," said Lagden, looking at the juniors. "You belong to St. Jim's, don't you?"

"Yes."

Lagden looked more closely at Tom Merry, and laughed slightly.

"I think I remember you," he said. "You cheeked me yesterday, and I slapped you."

Tom Merry coloured.

"Exactly," he replied, "and if you like to repeat the performance now, I'll make you sorry you laid your paws on me."

"Bwavo, deah boy! I should certainly wecommend givin' the wottah a feahful thwashin'."

Lagden grinned.

"I won't lick you, after what you've just done for me," he said. "Not that you don't deserve it for your cheek."

"I'm ready for the licking, if you care to take it on," said Tom Merry disdainfully. "I suppose you're here waiting for those two cads who went into St. Jim's a while ago. I hope Kildare will kick them out."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It will be jolly bad for you if Kildare consents to meet you, anyway," said Blake, with a scornful glance at Lagden. "You will get the licking of your life."

Lagden clenched his hands for a moment, and then, without a word, he turned and walked away in the direction of St. Jim's.

"Wottah!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It would have served him wight to let that twamp wob him, as a mattah of fact. I wegard him as a wank outsidah."

And Tom Merry and Blake fully agreed with Gussy on that point.

CHAPTER 8.

The Challenge!

KILDARE was standing outside the School House at St. Jim's, talking to Darrell when Tunstall and Monson came up.

Kildare's brows contracted a little as he caught sight of them. He guessed easily enough why they had come.

"Hallo!" said Darrell, gruffly.

Tunstall and Monson exchanged a sarcastic glance.

"Good-morning!" said Monson.

"We've come to see you, Kildare."

"Well, I'm here," said Kildare, shortly.

"We'd rather see you in a more private place, if you don't mind."

"Come into my study."

Kildare's manner was the reverse of cordial. Monson and Tunstall shrugged their shoulders, but took no notice of it. Kildare led the way into his study in silence.

Monson and Tunstall followed him in, and then Kildare closed the door. Then he stood and looked at the two Ferndale fellows.

"Well, what is it?" he asked. "I suppose you've come from Lagden?"

"Yes. In the circumstances, it wouldn't have been exactly the thing for him to come himself," said Monson.

"What do you want?"

"Where are you going to meet Lagden, and when?"

Kildare made an angry gesture.

"I'm not going to meet him at all," he said. "I've thought the matter over, and I'm not going to be dragged into it. It's too disgraceful for the captain of a school like St. Jim's to be dragged into a fight like a fag. I can't do it."

"You should have thought about that before you knocked Lagden down."

"You know what he did to provoke that, and it's no good talking about it," said Kildare.

"Do you mean to say that you refuse to meet Lagden?"

"Yes."

Monson and his companion exchanged glances. There were sneering smiles upon their faces now; it was pretty clear that they could imagine no reason excepting funk for the refusal of a challenge.

"We're empowered by Lagden to make all arrangements," said Monson, after a pause. "You'd better think it over, Kildare."

"I've thought it over."

"Lagden is determined to meet you."

"Oh, Lagden can go and eat coke!"

"Very well," said Monson coolly. "As a matter of fact, we expected something of this sort. A fellow hasn't always the nerve to do in cold blood what he's done in hot blood, and we anticipated that you would try to draw out."

"Just so!" said Tunstall.

Kildare clenched his hands.

"You'd better go," he said. "I don't want to throw you out of this room, as I asked you into it; but you may force me to do it."

"Yes, I dare say you're brave enough with only the two of us here, and a crowd of fellows ready to help you if needed," sneered Monson. "But let's get the message delivered. Lagden demands a meeting."

"Well, he won't get it."

"If you refuse to meet him," pursued Monson, unheeding, "he will come here himself."

"Let him come."

"He will pick you out and strike you before a crowd of fellows," said Monson. "You will have no choice about fighting him then, I suppose?"

"No, I suppose not," said Kildare between his teeth. "It would be pretty bad for Lagden if he did that."

Monson shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, that's what he's going to do, unless you meet him. Your only choice is whether you have the fight here, before a whole staring school, or whether it can be settled without a crowd."

Kildare was silent. He felt that he was caught.

There had been one unpleasant scene at St. Jim's already, and Kildare had felt sufficiently ashamed and humiliated about it.

If Lagden carried out his threat there would be another scene, worse than the first, and he could not persist in refusing a fellow who was actually attacking him. He would be compelled to hit out, if only in self-defence, and the fight would come off, all the same.

If he was to be driven into a fight it was better for it to take place in some secluded spot where the whole disgraceful affair could be kept a secret.

The two Ferndale fellows watched his face.

There was silence for some minutes, and Monson broke it at last.

"Well, what do you say?" he asked.

"You can't refuse to fight if Lagden comes here. He doesn't want a scene in public any more than you do, but he is determined to have satisfaction. If you choose to arrange for a quiet meeting, where you can have it out without interference or a crowd, we're here to make all arrangements with you."

Kildare bit his lip.

"If Lagden really intends to play the hooligan in this way it doesn't seem to

me that I have much choice in the matter," he said.

"Quite so," said Kildare, setting his teeth. "If you drive me to it I'll meet Lagden, and I'll make him sorry he's given me this trouble."

"Good. Will this evening suit you?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Oh, where you like!" grunted Kildare.

"Shall we say the glade near the old hut in Rylcombe Wood, at half-past six?"

"If you like."

"Very well," said Monson; "we'll be there. I shall be Lagden's second, and I suppose you'll bring a second with you?"

"Yes."

"We shall want a referee. Are you satisfied with Tunstall here as a referee? It will save bringing another fellow into the matter."

"Yes."

"It's settled, then. Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

Monson did not offer to shake hands. He knew that his hand would be refused. The two Ferndale fellows left the study, and from the window Kildare saw them swaggering across the quadrangle to the gates.

Kildare turned away from the window as Darrell came into the study. Darrell looked keenly at the captain's clouded face.

"Well?" he demanded.

Kildare laughed a little awkwardly.

"It was a challenge from Lagden," he said.

"I knew that. I hope you refused, old man."

"I did at first, Darrell. But they said that if I didn't meet Lagden outside St. Jim's he would come here and pick a row with me before the whole school. What was I to do?"

Darrell's brows contracted.

"The cad!" he said.

"Yes, he's a rotten cad. We all know that. If he had the sense of a baby he'd know that he couldn't stand against me for five minutes," said Kildare. "But they think it was funk that made me want to keep out of it."

"They would," said the prefect scornfully. "Have you agreed to meet him, then?"

Kildare nodded.

"It's rotten! It wouldn't have mattered if Lagden had come here. We'd have thrown him out on his neck, and I fancy he wouldn't have come again. They're simply dragging you into this because they're ratty about the cricket match."

"I know that, Darrell. But I've agreed to meet him now; and—and I want you to be my second."

"Nice work for a prefect, I must say!" growled Darrell. "I give the fags lines for fighting."

"I'll take Rushden if you don't care to—"

"Rats! I shall be your second, of course. Where and when?"

"Half-past six this evening, in the wood."

"All serene! We shall want a referee."

"I've agreed to Tunstall of Ferndale as referee."

Darrell gave him a compassionate look.

"Well, I must say you want a keeper!" he exclaimed. "Do you think you will get fair play from a Ferndale fellow?"

"I never thought about that!" confessed Kildare, rather shamefacedly.

Darrell grunted.

"Well, as you are a match for three or four Lagdens, it won't matter much," he said. "We will be there, and Lagden will find it worse than cricket, I think. But I don't like the affair, and I wish you hadn't agreed to go."

"Well, it can't be helped now, old man."

"No; and it will be some satisfaction to give Lagden the licking of his life."

And Kildare nodded assent to that.

"Keep it dark," he said. "If a word gets out, we shall have a gang of juniors there to watch us, and it will be the talk of St. Jim's."

"Right-ho!"

And outside Kildare's study, not a word was said on the subject.

CHAPTER 9.

The Juniors Are Left Out!

TOM MERRY and his chums looked very thoughtful during afternoon lessons that day.

They were thinking of the visit of the two Ferndale fellows to Kildare, and of what it probably meant.

All St. Jim's guessed that Monson and Tunstall had come as bearers of a challenge to Kildare, but whether he had accepted it or not was unknown.

Many of the fellows took the view that as it was an affair of honour Kildare could not possibly refuse the challenge.

Others declared that as captain of the school, with the dignity of his position as head of the Sixth to keep up, Kildare could not possibly accept it.

But whichever consideration weighed more heavily with Kildare, and whether he had accepted the challenge or refused, the school did not know.

The Terrible Three took a deep interest in the matter, and they meant to see the fight if it came off; and, indeed, there were few fellows at St. Jim's who hadn't the same intention.

The fight, if it happened at all, would certainly be worth watching. Fellows who had seen Kildare boxing with other Sixth-Formers, had often wished to see how he would shape in a real combat. That he would lick Lagden with perfect ease nobody doubted. Lagden was not built to stand against Kildare, and it was pretty certain that he had not so much courage and grit.

And to see Lagden licked would be a very great pleasure.

"Kildare's such an innocent old duck," Tom Merry confided to Monty Lowther in the Form-room that afternoon. "He won't get fair play from the Ferndale cads, but he won't suspect them, you know. They'll work in some trick on him if they can."

Monty Lowther nodded.

"Just what I was thinking," he remarked. "We shall have to keep an eye on old Kildare. We mustn't let him get into trouble."

"We shall have to see the fight, if it comes off," said Manners decidedly.

"You see—" said Tom Merry.

"Merry!"

Mr. Linton's voice rapped out.

Tom Merry started. In his interest in the great question of whether Kildare was going to fight Lagden, he had forgotten for the moment that he was in the Shell Form Room, and that he was supposed to be studying English history.

"Ye-es, sir!"

"Who commanded the Roundhead army at the battle of Worcester?" thundered Mr. Linton.

"Lagden, sir!"

(Continued on next page.)



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NOT IN HIS LINE.

Johnny had no time for grammar, and his chief fault was the misuse of such words as "did" and "done," and "gone" and "went," and so on. One afternoon his teacher, in despair, kept him in to write "I have gone home" one hundred times. When Johnny was finished the teacher had left the room, and as he did not want to wait, he wrote at the bottom of the page: "Dear teacher, I have wrote 'I have gone home' one hundred times, and I have went home!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss J. Ogden, 10, Stephens Road, Withington, Manchester.

JERRY BUILT.

Foreman (testing the wall of a new house): "I'm speaking quietly, Bill. Can you hear me?"

Bill (on the other side): "Ear you? Lumme, I can see you in three places!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to L. Piper, 77A, Canterbury Road, Margate, Kent.

GREAT SNAKES!

Lowther: "Why didn't the viper viper nose?"

Gussy: "Give it up, deah boy."

Lowther: "Because the adder adder handkerchief!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Hope-Wynne, 7, Livingstone Place, Edinburgh 9.

POINTLESS.

Disappointed Humorist: "You sit on every joke I send you."

Editor: "Let me assure you I would not do that if there was any point to them."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Smith, 175, Ingram Road, Bloxwich, Walsall Staffs.

MAKING HIMSELF HEARD.

In a crowded fish-and-chip shop a small boy was continually shouting out his order. At last the assistant behind the counter turned to him and said:

"Little boys should be seen and not heard."

But the boy was not to be put off. "Little boys," he retorted, "should be seen and soon served!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Salt, 21, Victor Street, Caldmore, Walsall.

PLEASANT FOR THE PASSENGER.

Passenger (to plane pilot who keeps grinning): "What are you laughing at?"

Pilot: "I'm just wondering what the superintendent will say when he finds out I've escaped from the asylum!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss J. Eveson, 41, Willow Avenue, Edgbaston, Birmingham.

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The master of the Shell jumped, as well he might.

"What! What!"

"I—I mean, Kildare, sir. I—that is to say—" stammered Tom Merry.

"Are you mad, Merry?"

"N-no, sir; I—I think not, sir!"

"Take a hundred lines, Merry, and stay in after lessons and write them out," said Mr. Linton severely. "And now pay attention to your work."

"Ye-es, sir!"

And the great and important affair of Kildare v. Lagden was not discussed in the Shell Form Room any more that afternoon.

When the Shell was dismissed, Tom Merry remained behind with a somewhat lugubrious face to write out his lines. Monty Lowther gave him a comforting whisper.

"Never mind, old son. We'll have a ripping tea ready in the study when you get out."

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry.

And Manners and Lowther departed to the tuckshop to lay in supplies for that consolation tea.

Thus engaged, they were not able to keep an eye upon Kildare of the Sixth, as they had intended. But the chums of Study No. 6 were performing that duty. Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy strolled casually round near the end of the Sixth Form passage. If Kildare went out with an appearance of being prepared for war, they would know.

"Fag!" Darrell called along the passage.

"Oh, good!" said Blake. "I'll go."

He hurried along the passage.

Darrell was dressed for a walk. He was standing in his study, with his hand resting on the table. He looked very keenly at Jack Blake as he came in, and the junior looked very demure and innocent.

"Hallo!" said Darrell. "You must have been pretty close at hand."

"Yes, Darrell," said Blake.

"Take some of the other young rascals and get Kildare's skiff out," said Darrell.

"His skiff?"

"Yes."

"Out of the boathouse?"

"Yes, you ass! You don't suppose it's in the library or the clock-tower, do you?" said Darrell testily.

"Then he isn't going to—" said Blake, and stopped suddenly.

"Going to what?"

"Oh, nothing!"

Blake hurried out of the study. He rejoined his chums in the passage, with an expression of disgust upon his face.

"Nothing doing," he announced; "we're to get Kildare's skiff out. He's just going for rowing practice alone, that's all."

"Bui Jove!"

The chums of the Fourth went down to the boathouse. Darrell passed them, strolling away down the towing-path towards the village. The juniors launched the boat, and ten minutes or so later Kildare came down to the bank of the Rhyl.

He nodded to the Fourth Formers.

"Got the boat ready?" he said. "Thanks!"

He jumped into the skiff and sculled lightly away down the river.

The juniors watched the skiff till it was lost to sight behind a bend in the river. Then Jack Blake gave an expressive grunt.

"No fight to-day, at all events," he said. "Kildare couldn't go without a second, anyway. I wonder when it will be."

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"We must see it when it does come off," Digby remarked.

"Yaas, watah!"

The chums of the Fourth strolled back to St. Jim's in a rather dissatisfied mood.

Meanwhile, Kildare sculled down the river for about half a mile, and then he drew his skiff into the bank, under the shadow of a wide-spreading tree on the edge of Rylcombe.

He jumped ashore and nodded with a smile to Darrell, who stepped out of the trees to meet him.

"All serene!" said Darrell, laughing.

"Yes, I think so."

Kildare moored the skiff, and they entered the wood together.

"Half the fags had made up their minds to be on the spot, I think," said Darrell. "I think they will be disappointed."

Kildare laughed.

"Yes; I fancy we shall have the place to ourselves now," he said.

But his face became graver as they walked into the wood. The whole affair was bitter and troublesome to him, and even then, at the eleventh hour, he would have avoided it if he could.

The chums of the Sixth walked on in silence under the shadows of the thick trees of the woods, till the glade in which the combat was to take place opened out before them.

It was a secluded spot in the heart of the wood. Bright sunshine fell upon the stretch of level grass under the big trees. On the farther side of the glade the fellows from Ferndale were waiting, and they turned to look at Kildare and Darrell as the St. Jim's fellows came up.

CHAPTER 10.

The Fight!

L AGDEN'S lips curled as he looked at the captain of St. Jim's.

There was a gravity in Kildare's face, a hesitation in his manner, which conveyed only one impression to the foolish and conceited fellow from Ferndale—that Kildare was faking the contest.

He fancied that the St. Jim's captain had been forced into it against his will and was worried at the prospect, and seeking some means yet of eluding it. Unfortunately, Kildare's first words only confirmed that mistaken impression upon the mind of the captain of Ferndale.

Kildare gave Lagden a short nod as he came up.

"Look here, Lagden," said Kildare abruptly, "can't you let this matter drop? You know as well as I do that it's rotten for two fellows in our positions to meet and fight like a couple of fags in the Third Form!"

Lagden sneered.

"You want to avoid the fight?" he asked.

Kildare coloured at his tone, but he answered quietly:

"Yes, I want to avoid it, because I think it's a rotten and disgraceful thing, and won't reflect any credit on either of us."

"No other reason?" sneered Lagden.

"None."

"Well, I think I could supply another reason," said the Ferndale captain, in the same sneering tone, "and I'm willing to let you off on the condition I've told you—that you stand before me and take the blow back that you gave me."

"You cur!"

"Oh, that rouses your spirit, does it?"

"It's not spirit that's wanting," said Kildare. "I think I shall soon show

you that. But I've done. I can see that it's no good appealing to you as a decent fellow. You're not a decent fellow; you're a cur!"

Lagden's eyes glittered.

"I'm ready, if you're willing to get further than words in this affair," he said.

"I'm ready, too!"

"Then let's get to business!"

Lagden removed his jacket. Kildare followed his example. Tunstall opened the bag he had brought, and took out a sponge and a basin, which he filled at the little stream which flowed past the end of the glade. Darrell had no such preparation to make. Darrell knew Kildare's form, and he knew that the stalwart captain of St. Jim's would make short work of the Ferndale man.

Tunstall took out his watch.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Yes," said Kildare.

"Quite!" said Lagden.

"Time, then!"

The two adversaries faced one another with set brows and gleaming eyes.

Lagden prided himself upon his boxing, but his boxing was of a very fancy kind, and he had certainly never stood up to an adversary like Kildare before.

The captain of St. Jim's hardly noticed his fancy sparring. He sailed in with grim determination, and the Ferndale captain was driven back before his heavy blows.

Lagden was soon panting.

Tunstall and Monson exchanged glances.

Kildare's display of strength and determination and boxing skill amazed them. If the fellow could box like this, what on earth had he been trying to avoid the fight for? That was the question the two Ferndale fellows asked themselves.

Darrell leaned against a tree, and looked on with a grim smile. He was prepared to see Lagden knocked into the middle of next week, or still further along the calendar, and he knew that it would cost Kildare hardly an effort. Lagden's boxing was about on a par with his cricket.

"Time!" rapped out Tunstall.

Kildare dropped his hands and stepped back immediately.

Lagden retreated, gasping, to his corner, and sank down upon his second's knee, breathing hard.

Monson sponged his heated face, while the Ferndale captain recovered his wind. Darrell looked sharply at his watch.

"How long are the rounds in this fight, Mr. Referee?" he asked.

"Two minutes, and one minute rests," said Tunstall, blushing a little.

"That round lasted a minute and a half."

Tunstall scowled.

"Who's refereeing this fight?" he demanded.

"You are!"

"Then I'll manage to referee it without your assistance, thanks!"

"There's such a thing as fair play, you know," Darrell reminded him.

"Kildare was satisfied with the selection of Tunstall as referee," said Monson, looking round. "It's not for you to interfere, Darrell."

"Let them have their way," said Kildare; "it won't make any difference."

Darrell laughed.

"Well, that's true enough," he said. It was pretty clear that the St. Jim's fellows were not going to get fair play. When Lagden was at a disadvantage the referee meant to make short rounds, and when he was getting the upper hand, doubtless the rounds would be

long. It was only what was to be expected, from what they knew of the Ferndale methods; but, as Kildare said, it would make no difference in the long run. Lagden had no chance of beating the stalwart captain of St. Jim's, whatever petty advantages the unfair referee gained for him.

"Time!" said Tunstall, after allowing his man a minute and a half's rest, and he gave a definite look at Darrell.

Darrell shrugged his broad shoulders, but took no other notice.

The adversaries faced one another again.

Lagden tried to keep at armslength this time, avoiding in-fighting, and he succeeded in getting in two or three sharp raps upon Kildare's handsome face.

But they were returned with more than interest.

Lagden staggered under a heavy blow, and fell upon his back in the grass, and lay gasping.

Kildare stepped back disdainfully.

"Count!" exclaimed Darrell, as Tunstall fumbled with his watch.

The referee-timekeeper obeyed, slowly enough.

"One, two, three, four, five——"

A pause.

"Six, seven, eight, nine——"

Lagden would certainly have been counted out, but for the timekeeper giving him plenty of time to recover.

He staggered to his feet.

Tunstall put away his watch.

Lagden, with a savage scowl, sprang at Kildare, attacking him savagely. The captain of St. Jim's recoiled a little, and his foot caught in a root, and he stumbled. Lagden was on him in a flash, hitting out fiercely. Two heavy blows took effect upon Kildare's chest, and he defended himself a little dazedly against the sharp assault.

"Time, you cad, Tunstall!" exclaimed Darrell fiercely. "It's lasted two minutes and a half already."

"I'm timing this match," said Tunstall.

"You cad!"

Tunstall shrugged his shoulders.

It looked as if the advantage allowed him would give Lagden the upper hand. He had no hesitation about using it. He attacked Kildare fiercely, and the captain of St. Jim's received several sharp blows before he recovered his balance. Then he leaped erect again, and advanced upon Lagden, driving the Ferndale captain before him with steady blows.

"Time!" rapped out Tunstall.

"Fast enough now," sneered Darrell.

"Mind your own business!"

"I'll have something to say to you after this is over, Tunstall," said Darrell, between his teeth.

Lagden was breathing very hard as he sank upon Monson's knee.

"You nearly had him that time," whispered Monson. "Keep at him, old man."

Lagden nodded silently. He was saying his breath. He knew well enough that he would need it all.

"Time!" said Tunstall.

The third round began.

Kildare's face was very hard now. The utter unfairness of the Ferndale methods roused his anger as nothing else could have done. He meant to bring the fight to a close in that round, and he pressed the Ferndale captain hard.

Lagden was driven before him, step by step, and the crashing blows of the St. Jim's captain came again and again through his guard.

Wild with rage, the Ferndale captain leaped at Kildare, grasping him, and hammering at him furiously.

Kildare drew back his right, and struck.

The blow crashed full in the Ferndale captain's face, and Lagden fell like a log in the grass.

Tunstall began to count slowly.

"One, two, three, four——"

Lagden did not stir.

"Five, six, seven——"

Still no movement from the Ferndale

captain. He lay a little upon his side, as if the blow had stunned him.

"Eight, nine—OUT!" said Tunstall sulkily.

He jammed the watch back savagely into his pocket.

"Done!" said Darrell. "I wonder if he's shamming," he added, in a lower tone, as the Ferndale captain did not move, even when the counting was finished.

A startled look came over Kildare's face.

"I hit him rather hard," he faltered.

"He was hitting you rather hard, old man."

"Yes, but——"

"Lagden, what's the matter?" asked Tunstall, in startled tones. "Why don't you get up, man? Lagden!"

Monson ran quickly forward, and knelt by Lagden's side. He raised his principal in his arms. But the Ferndale captain was lifeless.

"Good heavens!" muttered Monson.

"You've killed him!"

CHAPTER 11.

After the Fight.

KILDARE uttered a sharp cry.

Darrell strode forward, and seized Monson by the shoulder, and twisted him out of the way as if he had been an infant. Then he knelt beside Lagden. His belief was that the Ferndale captain was shamming. It would have been quite in accordance with what he knew of Cecil Lagden.

But he soon saw that, at least, he had done the Ferndale captain an injustice. Lagden was not shamming. He was insensible.

Kildare came forward eagerly.

"Darrell——"

"He's fainted," said Darrell. "No need to be alarmed."

Kildare drew a breath of relief.

"Thank goodness!" he muttered. "I



"'And over your money, I says!' exclaimed the tramp. 'You villain——' cried Lagden. The tramp swung up his oudgel, but as he did so, Tom Merry came speeding up, and his fist crashed on the side of the ruffian's head.

"I was afraid—I know I hit him harder than I meant to, and—and—" "He will be all right in a minute or two. Get some water, you gaping fool!" said Darrell impatiently to Monson.

Monson sullenly obeyed. He brought water in the basin, and handed the sponge to Darrell. Darrell bathed the face of the fallen senior. Lagden's eyes were closed, and he was breathing strangely and heavily. His eyes did not open. Five minutes passed away, and the Ferndale captain had not regained consciousness.

Kildare leaned against a tree, all his rage gone, all his enmity vanished. The thought that he had caused harm to the Ferndale captain, and perhaps had done him some permanent injury, haunted him, and filled him with dismay. He was not thinking of the possible consequences to himself; he was thinking only of the wretched fellow who lay in the grass at his feet, without word or motion.

What a fool he had been to meet this weedy fellow, who would have known that he was not fit to stand up in such a contest if he had not been blinded by conceit.

Kildare reproached himself bitterly. For fear of a scene in public, and of what people would say, he had been dragged into this, and this was the result.

He waited in agony for some word or sign from Cecil Lagden.

But none came. The Ferndale captain was still insensible. Darrell was looking very uneasy now, and Tunstall and Monson were utterly scared.

Darrell turned to them sharply. "Has Lagden anything the matter with him—was he ill or anything?" he asked.

"Not that I know of," muttered Monson.

"I dare say he wasn't fit for this," said Tunstall sulkily. "We didn't expect slogging like a prizefighter."

"What did you expect—Kildare to let himself be licked?" demanded Darrell angrily.

"Well, he's got himself into a pretty hole now, anyhow!" said Monson spitefully. "There will be a row over this."

Kildare started. As he heard the Ferndale fellow's sneering words, it occurred to him for the first time that the consequences to himself might be as bad as to Lagden.

If the Ferndale captain was seriously hurt, the whole matter would come out, and Kildare would have to face the Head of St. Jim's, if he had to face nothing worse.

Darrell's lips curled. "Well, we're all in it, so far as that goes!" he said savagely. "If there's any trouble we're all in it—we're all parties to what happened."

Tunstall and Monson exchanged a scared glance.

"It was your doing from beginning to end," said Darrell. "You forced Kildare into this against his will, and you can say so in public."

"We jolly well shan't say anything of the sort," said Tunstall fiercely. "Kildare has hurt him, and Kildare can answer for it."

"And he can answer for it alone, hang him!" growled Monson.

"Oh, shut up, you cads!"

Darrell resumed bathing the fallen senior's face.

But Lagden did not recover consciousness.

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Some minutes passed. Then Lagden groaned and moved. His eyes opened with a wild stare. He looked round him, dazed.

"I—I—what—" he stammered. Darrell uttered an exclamation of relief.

"It's all right; you've fainted, that's all!"

"It's a lie!" muttered Lagden. "I didn't faint!"

"Very well, you didn't!" said Darrell pacifically. "I suppose you chaps can look after him now?"

"I must have been pretty hard hit," said Lagden, feeling the growing bump on his forehead. "You rotten ruffian! I didn't know I was tackling a prize-fighter! Is my face very much marked, Tunstall?"

"Well, a bit, rather," said Tunstall hesitatingly.

"Got your pocket mirror?"

"Yes."

"Let me have a look."

Tunstall took out a pocket mirror, and Lagden looked at his reflection. He uttered an exclamation of dismay. He saw several large bruises and reddened cuts, and a black eye, and the other eye growing black, and a very swollen nose.

"Great Scott! How can I go back to Ferndale with a face like that?" he said. "I shall be questioned at once."

"You intended Kildare to go back to St. Jim's with a face like that, if you'd been able to bring it about!" said Darrell caustically.

"That's his business!" growled Lagden. "Hang it all! The Head will spot this at once, you chaps, and I shall be called over the coals."

"You'll have to spin some yarn," said Tunstall. "It's no good thinking of letting out the facts, Laggy; it will mean an awful row."

Lagden grunted.

"Of course it would; but—"

"Say that you had a row with a tramp or something," said Monson.

"There was that tramp who begged of you to-day that you told us about—it can be put on him. I suppose he's disappeared by this time, so he can't deny it!"

Kildare and Darrell exchanged looks. The Ferndale fellows were discussing a system of lies with perfect coolness, as if lies were their usual resource in any difficulty; as indeed probably was the case.

"We'd better go, I think," said Darrell, helping Kildare on with his jacket. "I suppose we can't be of any use to you fellows?"

"No, you can't!" snapped Monson.

"I think you've done enough!"

"Come on, Kildare!"

"We'll help to get Lagden back to Ferndale, if you like," said Kildare.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Kildare compressed his lips. The two St. Jim's seniors left the glade without another word, leaving the Ferndalers still discussing how they were to keep up appearances at Ferndale.

Kildare stooped beside the river when he reached the spot where the skiff had been left, and bathed his face, and rubbed it dry with his handkerchief. There was hardly a mark upon his face, so little had Lagden been able to hurt him.

Darrell walked away, and the captain of St. Jim's sculled back to the school boathouse.

Blake was outside the boathouse when Kildare carried his skiff in, and he looked curiously at the Sixth Former. He had had a lingering suspicion that

Kildare had not gone out only for a row. But the absence of any sign of combat in Kildare's face banished his suspicion.

"Had a good row?" he asked.

"Yes," said Kildare. And he put up the skiff and walked back to the school.

CHAPTER 12.

By Whose Hand?

MELLISH of the Fourth came into the School House with a very serious and important air.

It was two days after the fight—Saturday, and another half-holiday. During those two days the juniors had carefully shadowed Kildare's movements to make sure the fight didn't take place without their presence. They little knew the fight was finished.

Tom Merry & Co. were in the hall, about to go down to the cricket ground after dinner, when Mellish came in. And Mellish's manner showed that he had news. Mellish generally knew everything that happened, and he knew it before everybody else. He came up to the chums of the School House with a grin.

"Have you heard?" he asked.

"Heard what?" asked Tom Merry.

"About Lagden."

The juniors were interested at once.

"I've heard nothing," said Tom Merry.

"I know Kildare hasn't met him, but I don't know anything else."

"Somebody's met him!" grinned Mellish.

"What do you mean?"

"He's hurt."

"What?"

"I've been talking to a Ferndale chap," explained Mellish. "There's a regular uproar over at Ferndale about it, and the police have been called in. Old Crump has been over from Rylcombe, and there's a regular row!"

"Bai Jove!"

"But what's happened?" asked Blake.

"How is Lagden hurt? Has he had an accident?"

"He's been beaten."

"Beaten!"

"Yes. It seems that it happened on Thursday," said Mellish.

"Thursday evening. Where was Kildare then?"

"Anybody know?"

"Thursday evening," said Blake thoughtfully. "Lemme see! That was when we got the skiff out for Kildare. He was rowing after lessons."

"And after he came in he had a meeting of the Sixth Form Debating Society," said Herries.

"And after that he was working in his study," Lumley-Lumley remarked.

"And we know he didn't go out all day yesterday."

"His time is fully accounted for,"

grinned Monty Lowther. "If Lagden's been out and got hurt, it's just as well for Kildare that we were keeping an eye on him. It will prove that he had nothing to do with it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It may be lucky for Kildare," agreed Mellish.

"It seems that Lagden is badly hurt. Chap from Ferndale told me all about it; Lagden went out for a walk on Thursday evening, and he came back with Tunstall and Monson of the Sixth."

"The two chaps who brought the challenge to Kildare?" said Tom Merry.

"Yes. They brought him home in an awfully battered state—eyes blacked, and nose swollen, and lips cut, and a big lump on his forehead—looked as if he'd been fighting with a lawnmower or

a motor-car, young Diggle said. He explained to the Head of Ferndale that he'd been attacked by a tramp in Rylcombe Wood and hurt. The chap didn't succeed in robbing him, but mauled him very badly. Some Ferndale chaps think it was only a yarn, and that he'd really been out fighting—but, of course, he daren't say so, or the Ferndale beaks would be awfully down on him. But I don't see how it could have been Kildare."

"It couldn't have been Kildare," said Tom Merry warmly. "We've had Kildare under our eye all the time."

"Quite imposs."

"I hear that Lagden fainted when he was taken in to Ferndale, and a doctor was sent for," Mellish went on. "Lagden is ordered to stay in bed for a week."

"Great Scott!"

"He was a very weedy chap," said Monty Lowther. "The silly ass was thinking of standing up to Kildare! Kildare would have made short work of him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The tramp hasn't been found, and Lagden doesn't seem to be able to give a good description of him, either," said Mellish. "It may be true, I suppose it couldn't really have been Kildare?"

"Of course it wasn't, you uttah ass!"

"Haven't we been shadowing him all the time?" demanded Blake.

"Well, he might have dodged us, you know."

"Wats!"

"Rot!"

"Might have met Lagden after dark somewhere," suggested Crooke of the Shell.

"Bosh!" said Blake. "Did the Ferndale kid tell you what time Lagden got back to Ferndale in that state on Thursday, Mellish?"

"Before dark," said Mellish.

"That settles it!" said Blake triumphantly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"They might have met on Wednesday evening—the night after the cricket match," said Crooke obstinately.

"Kildare didn't go out that night," said Tom Merry, "and Lagden got his damages on Thursday. That's certain, isn't it, Mellish?"

"Oh, yes," said Mellish. "Young Diggle says Lagden looked just the same as usual when he went out on Thursday, and it was when he came back that he was battered. He got his injuries on Thursday."

"Well, that's settled, then. It wasn't Kildare."

"Well, I don't see how it could have been," admitted Crooke. "But Kildare might have dodged us. He might have only pretended to be going rowing, you know, and might have landed down the river somewhere."

"Oh, rubbish!"

"Yaas, wathah! Wubbish, deah boy!"

"Were Tunstall and Monson with him when he got bashed?" asked Blake.

"No. They found him and helped him home. So they say."

"Well, I'm glad it can't be fixed on Kildare," said Tom Merry.

And that was the general feeling among the juniors. They would most of them have been pleased to hear that Lagden had been licked by the captain of St. Jim's; but now that Lagden had been hurt, apparently seriously, they were glad to think that it could be proved that Kildare had had nothing to do with it.

The matter was talked of very much that afternoon at St. Jim's. It was not long before the whole school knew all about it.

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther Calling



Hallo, everybody! The porcupine is a gentle creature, but don't rub it up the wrong way. What comes up quickest in the garden? A rake, if you step on it. No, Jameson, an autobiography is NOT a motor-car's life story. A champion Hindu wrestler eats eight pounds of steak every day. Whether before or after meals is not stated. Did you hear about the amateur camper, wanting to be helpful at home, who stewed the wax fruit for dinner? Yes, everybody was "waxy"! I hear a cannibal king objected to the building of a British aerodrome on his island. He "flew" into a rage! Then there was the batsman who always wore a wrist-watch, because he liked to "time" his wrist-work. Story: "And what is your

The story sounded straight enough, but some of the Saints had their doubts. If the two captains had met and fought, they were not likely to say so; and Lagden, at least, would have had no scruple about inventing a substantial yarn to account for the state in which he returned to Ferndale.

The juniors who had so carefully shadowed Kildare were quite certain that he was innocent in the matter; but their opinion was not universal.

Kildare declined to say a word on the subject.

Mellish, who was inquisitiveness itself, had the audacity to ask the St. Jim's captain for an assurance on the subject; and had his ears boxed for his pains—an act which the juniors of the School House heartily applauded.

Knox of the Sixth asked Kildare bluntly, in the prefects'-room, if he had any knowledge of what had happened to Lagden. Knox was always Kildare's rival and enemy, and he fancied he saw a chance to score. But he did not succeed. Kildare looked him straight in the face. He could not box a prefect's ears as he had boxed a junior's. But the expression upon his face made Knox retreat a pace or two.

"Better say out plainly, so that the fellows will know what to think!" said Knox, a little dubiously.

"I've nothing to say on the subject," said Kildare. "I refuse to be questioned by you or by anybody else! It's no business of yours, and you will oblige me by attending to what concerns you."

Knox coloured with anger. He had never received a more direct snub, and the grins of the other seniors in the prefects' room added to his discomfiture. He consoled himself by spreading hints in all quarters that there was reason to believe that Kildare had been the author of Lagden's injuries. That opinion was held by a good many fellows, but after Knox's reception, no one ventured to ask Kildare questions on the subject.

"It's uttably wotten!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, coming into Study No. 6 that evening. "A lot of fellows are muttewin' among themselves, you know, that Kildare was the chap who whacked Lagden. Of course, he had ewery wight to whack him, if he wanted

boy going to be when he leaves the University?" asked one parent of another. "An octogenarian, I fear!" came the reply. Australian natives ride on turtles. Slow—but their steeds never "turn turtle." Said Gibson: "Suppose you had one match to light a fire of wood, paper, and coal, which would you light first?" "The match," replied Wally D'Arcy. "My dad brought a chimpanzee home," writes a reader, "and now it's just like one of the family." Which one? Dame Taggles boasts that her niece is a leading light in the pictures. She shows patrons the way to their seats. "You admit breaking your stick over the plaintiff's head?" demanded the lawyer. "Yes, but it was an accident." "Nonsense. How?" "I didn't intend to break my stick." Next: A weather prophet makes a good living. Weather prophet-eering! I hear batsmen are saying that the bowling of X. Balaskas, of the South African touring side, is Greek to them. A big wave caused havoc at a seaside resort. Many bathing belles were wringing! How's this: "My good man," said the efficiency expert to the yokel painting a barn, "if you used twice as large a brush, you'd get twice as much work done." "Garn!" replied the yokel. "I bain't got twice as much work to do!" Chin-chin!

to. I'm sure Lagden was askin' for it. But it isn't the case."

"Oh, those silly asses will say anything!" said Blake carelessly. "Fellows like Knox and Sefton are always up against old Kildare, and anything's good enough for them to use as a handle."

"And Mellish and Crooke are making the most of it," said Digby. "Levison would make a regular history out of it if he were here now."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It would be rather serious for Kildare if the story got about," said Blake, with a clouded brow. "Lagden seems to be laid up by the licking, whoever gave it to him, and if the Head thought that Kildare had done it, poor old Kildare would be called up on the carpet."

"Yaas. I have been thinkin', deah boys. Lagden says that he was attacked by a twamp, and although I do not wegard Lagden as an honowable person, I see no reason to doubt the accuwacy of his statement in that respect. You wemembah that last Thursday there was a twamp twyin' to wob him in Wylcombe Lane, and we came by just in time to stop the wottah?"

Jack Blake nodded.

"Yes, I was speaking to Tom Merry about that, and he thinks it's the same chap," he said. "I suppose it's bound to be. He knows Lagden had a good deal of money about him, and he hung about for another chance of getting at him. It seems clear enough."

"Just what I was thinkin', deah boys. If the twamp could be found and awwested, it would be all wight. The wascal ought to be punished for attackin' Lagden, and for bein' a thief."

"Well, the police are looking for the man."

"Yaas; but the police aren't much good, you know," said D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "I weally think we ought to look into the mattah ourselves."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see no cause whatevah for that wibald laughtah, Blake! I know that twamp by sight, for one thing, and the police don't, and besides—"

"Besides, we've got Towser!" said Herries.

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Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass freezingly upon Herries.

"What did you wemark, Hewwies?" he asked.

"We've got Towser," said Herries. "My bulldog can follow anybody's trail, you know."

"I wufuse to entahtain the ideah of havin' Towsah! That wotten bulldog has no wespact whatevah for a fellow's twousahs."

"Look here, you fathead—"

"I wufuse to be called a fathead. I considah—"

"Peace, my sons!" said Blake. "Gussy's idea is all right. We'll have a look for that giddy tramp, and get him arrested. It will be the best way of shutting up chaps who are jawing about old Kildare."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And when Study No. 6 consulted Tom Merry & Co. on the subject, the Terrible Three entered cordially into the scheme. It was evidently the best thing to be done.

CHAPTER 13.

P.-c. Crump Arrests His Man.

"YOU fellows weady?"

"Nearly," said Tom Merry, picking up his bat out of the corner of the study as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked in at the door on Monday afternoon.

"What are you getting that bat for, Tom Mewwy?"

"Cricket, of course."

"You uttah ass! We are not going to play cwicket; we are goin' to look for that twamp!"

"My hat! I'd forgotten."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I'll tell you what," said Tom Merry, with an air of a fellow making a very good offer. "We'll go down to the cwicket now, and look for the tramp afterwards."

"That's a jolly good idea," said Monty Lowther. "You see, Gussy, the tramp may have gone to seek fresh fields and pastures new by this time."

"And I've got some films to develop," said Manners. "Upon the whole, I think we'd better give the tramp a rest."

"Wats!" said D'Arcy indignantly. "I wegard you as slackahs. I have just spoken to Blake about the mattah, and the silly ass has proposed to leave it till aftah dark, so as to get the cwicket in first."

"Jolly good idea!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Take Herries and Dig," suggested Tom Merry.

"But they've gone down to cwicket, too."

"Well, there's Lumley-Lumley—"

"The ass has got lines to do."

"Try Mellish."

"I wufuse to associate with Mellish. He is one of the wottahs who is twyin' hardest to fix this on Kildare."

"There's Figgins & Co., or Redfern—"

"They're playin' cwicket."

Tom Merry laughed.

"There doesn't seem to be much enthusiasm for hunting tramps," he remarked. "I suppose we shall have to come. If we let you out alone, you'll run into some trouble."

"Weally, you ass—"

"Oh, we'll come!" said Lowther. "You coming, Manners?"

"How can I come when I've got my films to develop?"

"Pway come on, deah boys!" said D'Arcy. "We are losin' time, you

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know, and we've got to get back before lookin' up. Mannahs can go and develop his wotten films."

"They're not rotten films!" said Manners warmly. "They're jolly good films, and I gave three bob a dozen for them."

"Oh wats! Come on, you fellows."

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther clumped their bats into a corner of the study, and followed the swell of St. Jim's. They felt that they were in for it. They walked down to the gates, and strolled out into the road. It was barely five o'clock, and the June sun was blazing in the woods and the meadows.

"Warm!" said Lowther, with a puff.

"You've forgotten to bring your parasol, Gussy."

"Weally, Lowthah, you ass—"

"Hallo, here's Crumpy!" said Tom Merry. "He looks as if he were going to melt."

P.-c. Crump, of Rylcombe, touched his helmet to the St. Jim's fellows. Tom Merry and Lowther nodded, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy raised his silk topper very gracefully.

"Very 'ot, young gentlemen," said P.-c. Crump, breathing hard. "Very 'ot."

"Yaas, wathah! Have you found the twamp yet, Mr. Cwump?"

"What tramp, sir?"

"The one who attacked Lagden in the wood last week."

Mr. Crump shook his head.

"We ain't found any tramp, sir. Master Lagden wasn't able to give much of a description, and atween you and me, sir, we've 'eard a yarn that Master Lagden was fighting somebody else, and that it was all bunkum about the tramp."

D'Arcy shook his head.

"That is not cowwect, Mr. Cwump. As a matter of fact, Tom Mewwy and I saw a twamp twyin' to wob Lagden last Thursday in this lane, and we intahfered. Tom Mewwy gave him a feahful wap on the head, and he wan away like anythin'. My suspish is that he found Lagden again, and twied to wob him."

P.-c. Crump looked very interested. He seldom had a "case" in the quiet district of Rylcombe, and he would have welcomed any sort of one.

"That throws a different light on the matter, sir," said Mr. Crump. "I'm werry glad I met you, sir. Can you give me a description of the tramp?"

"Certainly."

P.-c. Crump took out his notebook and a stump of pencil, and wetted the latter with his lips in a very businesslike way. "Go ahead, sir!" said Mr. Crump briskly.

Arthur Augustus went ahead. Tom Merry aided him, and between them they gave Mr. Crump a pretty good description of the tramp. P.-c. Crump took copious notes. He had plenty of blank pages for that purpose.

"Thank you very much, sir," he said, as he closed the pocket-book at last with a snap. "I'll know that man if I see him."

"As a mattah of fact, we're goin' to look for him now," said Arthur Augustus. "Vewy likely he's hangin' wound, you know, lookin' for somebody to wob."

P.-c. Crump pursed his lips thoughtfully.

"More likely he's bolted, sir, considering the fuss that's been made about Master Lagden being attacked," he said. "He wouldn't be likely to 'ang about 'ere arter that. But we'll 'ave him wherever he is."

"If we find him we'll send him on, this side up, with care, carriage forward," said Monty Lowther blandly.

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah!"



"Crump!" roared Monty Lowther, as the juniors raced after him—was looking out—he stepped into the middle of the road on, in the name

Good-aftahnoon, Mr. Cwump! I hope you will find him."

"I shall try, sir."

The juniors sauntered on. Mr. Crump looked after them, and then seated himself upon a fence by the roadside and fanned himself with a large red-spotted handkerchief. That was doubtless Mr. Crump's way of looking for the culprit. Perhaps he was a believer in the old saying that everything comes to him who waits. And he was waiting.

"Spare a couper to 'elp a pore man?"

It was a whining voice from a rough-looking dirty man seated upon the stile as the juniors passed it.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye and stared at the tramp in amazement.

It was the tramp! The ruffian who had begged of Lagden in the lane the previous Thursday, and who had attempted to snatch the money from the hand of the Ferndale captain.

The tramp evidently did not recognise the juniors. He had had hardly time to look at them on that occasion, when his head was singing from the knock-down blow Tom Merry had given him. To him they were simply three well-dressed boys of whom it was possible to beg.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

Tom Merry grinned.

"The very man!"

The tramp blinked at him. He had

can get a copper," said Lowther. "There's one down the lane yonder."

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

"Fway be sewious, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, fixing his eyeglass very seriously upon the tramp. "You uttah vascal, you are the feahful wottah who twied to wob Lagden the othah day and who attacked him in the wood."

"Wot?" ejaculated the tramp.

Arthur Augustus, Tom Merry, and Monty Lowther advanced at the same moment, and the tramp backed away a pace, and then turned and took to his heels.

"Aftah him, deah boys!" shouted D'Arcy. "Wun like anythin'!"

They dashed in pursuit.

"It's all right!" panted Tom Merry. "Crump's just ahead of him, and he'll pass him if he keeps on."

"Bai Jove! Yaas!"

"Crump!" roared Monty Lowther. "Look out, Crump! Stop him!"

P.-c. Crump, hearing his name shouted in the distance, detached himself from the fence he was seated upon, gave his fat face a last wipe with the red handkerchief, and looked down the lane.

The tramp was dashing directly upon him, and the three juniors could be seen in pursuit behind.

P.-c. Crump grinned with satisfaction; he understood. He stepped out into the middle of the road with a majestic gesture.

"'Old on!" he said. "'Old on, in the name of the lor!"

The tramp halted in dismay.

It was not the name of the law that made him halt, but the evident impossibility of getting past P.-c. Crump.

He looked back. The juniors came racing on.

"That's the man!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

The tramp whined.

"It's all a mistake," he said. "I'm a pore 'ard-workin' man. I'm lookin' for a job. I ain't seen them young gents afore."

"Wascal!" said D'Arcy, with his right hand raised to denounce the tramp. "Wascal! You are speakin' untwuthfully, and I am uttably disgusted with you! Mr. Cwump, this is the man, and I call upon you to awest him!"

"Wotto!" said Mr. Crump.

His heavy right hand dropped upon the tramp's shoulder.

"I ain't done nothin'!" yelled the tramp.

"Which it's my dooty to warn you that anythin' you says may be taken down to be used in evidence agin yer," said Mr. Crump severely. Mr. Crump rolled those words out with great relish. He did not often have an opportunity of uttering them.

"Which I ain't done nothin'!"

"Which the magistrate will settle that," said Mr. Crump. "You come along with me. Put hout your hands."

"But I ain't—"

Click!

"Now you come quietly," admonished Mr. Crump. "I'm much obliged to you,

young gentlemen. You've been of great elp to the lor. Kim on, my man!"

And P.-c. Crump marched the furious tramp away with great satisfaction to himself, of course, not to the tramp. The three juniors of St. Jim's walked back to the school. Arthur Augustus was beaming with satisfaction.

"It's all wight, deah boys," he said. "We have wid the countwyside of a vewy dangewous chawactah, and we shall cleah Kildare of all suspicion in connection with that wottah Lagden! I wogard this as a twiump'h."

And Tom Merry and Monty Lowther agreed that it was.

CHAPTER 14.

A Surprise for the Fourth!

D'ARCY'S exploits were the theme of much talk among the Lower Forms that evening.

Arthur Augustus went to bed, very well satisfied with himself. He was prepared to go up to court at Wayland on the morrow and swear to the identity of the tramp, if necessary, for the sake of helping justice to be done—and he would not be displeased with a little excursion instead of lessons.

Tom Merry and Blake were equally ready to sacrifice their lessons in a noble and disinterested way for the same purpose.

If Kildare had known about the matter he would not have been so well pleased as D'Arcy and his friends; but the chatter of the junior studies did not often reach the Sixth Form, and Kildare went to bed that night in blissful ignorance of the fact that the tramp had been arrested.

When Tom Merry came down on the following morning the Fourth Form were already down, and he found Blake and D'Arcy waiting for him.

"You two are wanted at Wayland this morning," Blake said. "They don't want me—that's rather curious, but perhaps the justices think that they can manage the affair without my help. Dense chaps, these justices."

"Weally, Blake—"

"You can mention to the Head that I'll go instead of either of you, if you like," said Blake.

Tom Merry laughed.

"No fear! It will be ripping to get a run out with Lathom instead of grinding Latin with old Linton," he said. "Come on, Gussy! This is where we score!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the captain of the Shell and the swell of the Fourth walked away.

After breakfast Mr. Lathom told the two juniors to wait for him in the Hall, and went to put on his hat and coat. Then he left St. Jim's with Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and the crowd followed them to the gate. It was understood that the arrested tramp was to be brought up before the justices at their first sitting in the morning, and there was only one train in time for Wayland.

Mr. Lathom and the two juniors walked away to Rylcombe to catch it. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked with a very lofty air. He felt that he had distinguished himself. Was it not to him that the very arrest of the dangerous ruffian was due, and, incidentally, this little run out in the morning at a time usually devoted to lessons?

The juniors went in to morning lessons. Dr. Holmes spoke to Kildare on his way to the Sixth Form Room and asked him to take the Fourth during the absence of Mr. Lathom.

Kildare assented at once and went into THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,427.



tramp. "Look out, Crump! Stop him!" P.-c. Crump held out his arms. "'Old on!" he exclaimed. "'Old on, in the name of the lor!"

been drinking, and his face was flushed, his legs unsteady as he slid off the stile.

"Which I'm a pore man," he said. "I'm a 'ard-workin' man, looking for work. If you could 'elp me on my way, sir."

"I'd help you with pleasure, if my boot would do," said Lowther politely.

"Just a copper or two, sir."

"Would one copper be enough?" asked Lowther humorously, thinking of P.-c. Crump not a hundred yards down the lane.

"Yes, sir; any little 'elps, sir," said the tramp, looking over the juniors to calculate whether they would be too much for him if he attempted threats or violence.

"Well, I can show you where you

CHAPTER 15.

Kildare Faces the Music!

KILDARE had rushed from the Form-room with his brain in a whirl.

The news had come suddenly, unexpectedly, and he was almost bewildered by it. One thought was clear in his brain—that a man was before the justices charged with what he—Kildare—had done, and that he must speak up and clear him.

There was not a moment to be lost. He knew the way of a country bench with tramps and vagrants. The case of a tramp, who was already known to be a dishonest ruffian, was not likely to detain them long. The fact that he had interfered with Lagden early in the day upon which Lagden had been injured would probably be enough for that. He had tried to rob Lagden, he had been hanging about the neighbourhood. What more proof would they want? And the justices would probably consider it an excellent thing to rid the countryside of such a character for six months. Probably it would be a good thing; but that was not Kildare's business. The man was innocent of this particular charge, and he must be cleared, whatever it cost the captain of St. Jim's.

He must be cleared! That was Kildare's one thought.

The Fourth-Form, his duties at St. Jim's—everything must make way for that. He ran into the quadrangle, without even stopping for his cap. He paused there for a moment to think. How was he to get to Wayland in time?

He knew the times of all the local trains—they were not many—and knew that there was none to serve his purpose. One second's reflection, and he ran to the bicycle shed. He dragged out his machine, mounted it, and rode down to the gate, and out into the road.

Bending over the handle-bars, the captain of St. Jim's scorched away at top speed.

He rode hard, with the perspiration streaming down his face in the blazing June sun.

Wayland at last!

He knew the way, and he dropped his bicycle and ran on without a pause. He reached the courthouse and brushed past an astonished and indignant doorkeeper. A policeman put out a large hand to push him back, but he thrust the hand aside and burst in.

There was a loud murmur.

Kildare, with a scarlet face, looked breathlessly round.

The whole scene was like a dream picture to him, in his confusion of mind—the justices on the bench, the rough-looking, savage tramp, standing between two policemen, the bald-headed usher, with his queer gown, the people in the body of the little courthouse staring at him.

There were three justices, two of them old gentlemen, who seemed to be dozing through the proceedings, the third a younger man, with a mouth that shut like a vice and a reputation for making things very hot indeed for vagrants, tramps, and other noxious persons who ventured to come between the wind and his nobility. This gentleman frowned and stared hard at Kildare.

"Please excuse me, Sir George," Kildare panted.

The stern-browed J.P. glared.

"But I shall not excuse you!" he rasped out. "How dare you interrupt the proceedings of the court in this way?"

"I—I—"

"Stand back!"

"Horder!" said the clerk of the court severely.

"I must speak!" said Kildare. He swung his hand towards the tramp. "That man is accused of having assaulted Cecil Lagden. He is innocent—I am guilty!"

"What?" ejaculated Sir George.

"What?"

"It was I who did it, sir!"

"You! Who are you?"

"My name is Kildare," said the captain of St. Jim's quietly. "I'm in the Sixth Form at St. Jim's. I'm here as a witness to clear that man. Put me on oath!"

"Swear him!" said Sir George curtly. Kildare was sworn.

"And now tell us what you know about this matter," said Sir George ominously, evidently not at all pleased to see his prey escaping him, owing to this unexpected interference on the part of the captain of St. Jim's.

"Lagden challenged me to a fight, and I fought him in the wood," said Kildare quietly. "It was agreed that nothing should be said about it; the secret was to be kept on both sides. Lagden did not consult my wishes about the excuse that a tramp had attacked him; but it was not my business to contradict him. But when I heard that this man had been arrested, I came at once!"

"You were guilty of assault upon the unfortunate youth?" demanded Sir George, in a terrifying tone.

"It was not an assault, sir. It was a fair fight."

"A fair fight, eh? I have a doctor's certificate stating that the boy is too ill to appear this morning!" snorted Sir George.

"I fought him fairly, sir, and never meant to hurt him—"

"You are not here to tell us that. Your evidence clears this man, and that is enough. I consider, sir, that you have acted like a disgraceful young ruffian!" snorted Sir George. "That is my opinion, and I shall certainly communicate my opinion to your head-master!"

There were serious faces at the old school after morning lessons that day.

Tom Merry and Darcy had told what had happened; and when Kildare went into the Head's study the fellows knew that he was "on the carpet."

What would be the result for the captain of St. Jim's?

They did not know; and they were very uneasy. Mellish, who ventured near to the Head's door, heard nothing but a murmur of voices.

The juniors knew that Kildare was having a most unpleasant time, and that was all. In their eyes he was a hero. He had licked Lagden and that was to his credit—and he had thrown up all other considerations to save the man who was charged with it. That was splendid! But they knew that the Head might not take the same view. The Head was very sensitive about the good name and reputation of St. Jim's, and the talk there would be on the subject inside and outside the school, would be as gall and wormwood to him.

Kildare faced the Head bravely, though he faltered under the keen grey eyes of the old gentleman. Dr. Holmes was stern.

"You have disappointed me, Kildare," he said very gravely. "I had expected better things of you. You say you were challenged, you could not very well refuse. Of course, I believe every word

(Continued on page 28.)

the Fourth Form Room. The captain of St. Jim's had heard nothing, so far, of the cause of Mr. Lathom's absence. It was talked of among the juniors, but the seniors did not take any interest in the matter, and the proceedings of a Shell fellow and a Fourth Former were not likely to be specially noticed by the captain of the school.

Kildare frowned a little as he came into the Fourth Form Room. The Form-master being absent that morning, the Fourth were allowing themselves a little latitude, and there was a buzz of voices, which did not cease as Kildare came in.

The captain of St. Jim's rapped on the desk with Mr. Lathom's cane.

"Silence!" he exclaimed.

"Right-ho, Kildare!" said Jack Blake cheerfully.

"None of your nonsense, Blake!" said Kildare sternly. "You will be quiet, or there will be trouble. What is the matter with you this morning?"

"Gussy's distinguished himself," explained Figgins. "We're going to celebrate the occasion after lessons."

Kildare glanced over the class.

"D'Arcy is absent!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, that's all right."

"Has he had permission to be absent?" asked the prefect.

"Haven't you heard?" said Blake and Figgins together.

"Heard what?" asked Kildare testily.

"Gussy's gone over to Wayland with Tom Merry, to give evidence," said Blake.

"Indeed! I hadn't heard about it."

"Mr. Lathom's gone with them," said Blake. "I'd have gone in his place, only, for some reason, the Head didn't think of me. And I know the tramp. I could have given evidence, too, if they'd wanted some more. I'd have given evidence in every case they've got before the justices this morning, if necessary, only—"

"I don't understand you," said Kildare, an anxious shade coming over his face. "What tramp are you speaking about? Has D'Arcy got mixed up in some row with a tramp?"

"The tramp who walloped Lagden, you know," Blake explained.

Kildare turned pale.

"What—what did you say?"

"Gussy and Tom Merry have gone to identify the tramp who walloped Lagden in the wood the other day—last Thursday," said Blake, wondering at the emotion in Kildare's face. "Haven't you heard about him being caught?"

"Caught? Oh! Great Scott!"

"Wh-what, Kildare—"

Kildare's face was white. He strode towards Blake.

"Is this true?" he demanded fiercely.

"Has a tramp been arrested for assaulting Lagden?"

"Yes," said Blake, in wonder.

Kildare set his teeth.

"He's being brought up before the justices at Wayland this morning," said Blake. "It's a chap who tried to rob Lagden one day last week, and it's supposed to be the same fellow who assaulted him in the wood. He—why—what—my hat!"

Kildare had not waited for him to finish.

He turned, and, with a bound, he was at the door. He rushed out of the Form-room, and all the juniors were upon their feet in astonishment.

"What on earth's the matter with Kildare?"

"He's off his rocker!"

"He's bolted!"

The captain of St. Jim's had indeed bolted.



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

HALLO, chums! Once again Martin Clifford has delivered "the goods"! I have just finished reading next Wednesday's St. Jim's yarn, and it's a scream. The story is an unusual one, too, but never have we had one funnier. The title in itself is intriguing. It is called:

"MISS PONSONBY'S PETS!"

"What's it all about?" you may well ask. But when I tell you that the pets are the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, and Miss Ponsonby is their temporary Form-mistress, you will gather something of what next week's ripping yarn is about! A Form-mistress—petticoat rule at St. Jim's! It is certainly something new for the old school. But you can bet the Fourth Formers are not happy! They become the laughing-stock of St. Jim's and the village boys of Rylcombe. How and why Miss Ponsonby takes over the Fourth Form and the fun that follows her arrival, makes a story that you mustn't miss for worlds. Look out for it!

"REBELS VERSUS ROUGHNECKS!"

After the laughs come the thrills, and you'll find them in plenty in Frank Richards' next gripping yarn of the "Packsaddle Rebellion" series.

Having failed to reduce the rebels of the cow town to order, Job Wash, who is determined that the bunch shall have the new headmaster in place of Bill Sampson, resorts to desperate methods. He hires a dozen of the toughest roughnecks in Packsaddle to storm the schoolboys' defences and break down their resistance! What a thrilling scrap follows! You'll simply revel in this great story.

Next on the programme comes more stirring chapters from "The Secret World!" which, with the GEM Jester's selection of readers' prize jokes and

"Just My Fun," completes our next grand number.

TELEVISION TRIUMPHS.

From television it was only a step to television gramophone records, but it was a step that baffled many inventors. At last, however, one has been successful. Mr. Plew is to be congratulated on achieving the object after ten years of patient work. The scenes and accompanying music or dialogue are recorded just the same as in making gramophone discs, and the record can be played over and over again on a radiogram with a television attached. These records are already being made and marketed.

Talking of television, another wonderful invention has been made which will revolutionise the sending of scenes over the ether. Hitherto, television pictures, when received and reproduced, have been blurred. This is due to the fact that the image or picture, when thrown on a screen, is made up of many thin strips which, blended together to form the picture, have not been sufficiently compact to make the details perfectly clear. So far it has not been possible to transmit more than a few strips to the square inch to form the scene televised. But now, with this latest invention, up to seven hundred strips to the square inch can be transmitted, and a perfect picture is thrown on the screen. Another important point is that it can transmit pictures taken in the dark.

THE WILY WITCH-DOCTOR!

From a Reading chum comes an unusual query. He asks whether witch-doctors still hold sway over native tribes. They certainly do. The

witch-doctor is a menace to the administrators of the government under whose control the tribe happens to come, for he still has a great influence, and can often make the natives do just what he wants.

There is a story of a witch-doctor in Borneo who hit on a great idea for getting rich quick. He told his tribe that they would soon be growing wings and, therefore, would not need their riches. The natives fully believed him, and presented all their worldly wealth to the cunning old rascal. Then many tribesmen, in the firm belief that they would be able to fly, launched themselves from high trees, and, of course, were either killed, or severely injured. Finally, however, the witch-doctor's cunning scheme came to official ears, and he was very promptly and firmly subdued.

NICE FOR THE MICE.

If two live mice were placed in the cage of a reptile it would be long odds, one would say, on the snake being the only one left alive in that cage in the space of a few minutes. But a case has just been recorded where a blue racer snake was given two live mice to eat, and it was the mice who did the eating! A day after the mice were put in the cage six inches of the snake's four-foot length had disappeared! The two mice were blown out with food, and but for that fact, the whole snake might have disappeared. At any rate, the mice were speedily taken out of the cage, leaving the poor snake bemoaning the loss of its tail!

WORLD'S LARGEST DIAMOND.

"I have been reading about the Crown jewels," writes J. Berry, of Burnley. "Is it a fact that the Cullinan is the largest diamond ever found?" It is. The diamond, which weighed 3,025½ carats (1½ lb.), was discovered in the Premier mine in the Transvaal in 1905. It was named after the purchaser of the site where the mine was situated. In 1907 the Transvaal Government bought it for £150,000, and presented it to King Edward VII. The largest gem cut from it—it weighs 516 carats—was called the Star of Africa, and was set in the British sceptre. Another gem, weighing 309 carats, was cut from it and is set in the Crown.

TAILPIECE.

Brown: "Black is a very particular musician, isn't he?"

Green: "Oh, yes! He won't play anything else but a lullaby on a baby grand piano!"

PEN PALS COUPON
22-6-35

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.

D. Benton, 114, Warham Road, Harringay, London, N.4; age 15-16; U.S.A. and France; swimming, dance music.

Miss Betty Trott, 27, Links Road, Cricklewood, London, N.W.2; girl correspondents in Australia, South Africa, and America; sports, swimming; age 14-16.

Geoffrey Little, Hazelhurst Cottage, Kerne Bridge, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire; football, gardening; age 16-18.

V. Rayment, 151, High Street, Peckham, London, S.E.; stamp collectors; British Empire and U.S.

Miss Barbara Wash, Bedford, 45, Heath Road, Ipswich, Suffolk; girl correspondents; age 12-14; Africa or America; stamps, camping, guiding.

Ronald Bulden, 38, Cleveland Park Crescent, Walthamstow, London, E.; overseas.

Victor Mann, 579, Logan Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada; aviation.

James Johnstone, 244, Bronson Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; age 12-15; England; boats and the Companion Papers.

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THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,426.

REBELLION BREAKS OUT IN THE TEXAS COW TOWN SCHOOL!—

REBELS of PACKSADDLE!



By FRANK RICHARDS.

Scadder is Seared!

"GET Scadder!"

It was a wild roar in the playground at Packsaddle. It woke every echo in the cow town school, and it might have been heard as far as the cow town down the trail. It rang in the ears of Mr. Elias Scadder, the new headmaster, as he peered out from a chink in a closed shutter at the schoolhouse window.

In front of the schoolhouse the Packsaddle bunch roared and surged. More than once that rough-and-tough bunch had been rather out of hand. But never so much as now. Bill Sampson, the six-gun schoolmaster, had not found it easy to ride herd over that bunch. Little chance had Elias Scadder!

The shutter was bolted, the door locked, and behind those defences Elias wiped perspiration from his brow, and wondered what was going to happen. Just then, Elias wished, from the bottom of his heart, that he had never stepped into Bill Sampson's shoes!

"Have him out!" roared Slick Pindexter.

"Ride him on a rail!" yelled Mick Kavanagh.

"Duck him under the pump!"

"Come out, Scadder!"

Bang, bang, bang! came at the locked door. Bang, bang! came at the window shutter, and Elias jumped away from it like a startled gopher.

Small Brown, the Packsaddle teacher, looked across the playground from his cabin, his eyes bulging through his horn-rimmed glasses. Mr. Brown had anticipated trouble when Bill went.

Brown knew, if the Packsaddle school committee did not, that a man like Bill was needed to handle the bunch. Thankful that the bunch did not give him any attention, Small Brown watched from a distance. There was no help for the new schoolmaster from Mr. Brown.

Neither was there any other help. Tin Tung, the Chinese cook, blinked from

the cookhouse with his slanting eyes—having locked the cookhouse door. Hank, the hired man, sat on the fence and chewed tobacco. Hank was not hired to handle that bunch, and he would not have taken on the job for all the dollars in the bank of San Antonio. It was up to Scadder to handle the bunch—instead of which, Scadder was going to be handled if the bunch could get at him.

Bang! Thump! Bang!

"Come out, Scadder!" bawled Pie Sanders.

"Get Hank's axe, and we'll soon have that door in!" shouted Slick.

"You said it!" Pie rushed off to the wood pile.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Dick Carr. "Let's speak to Scadder and give him a chance to quit! Shut up a minute!"

There was a lull in the roar, and Dick Carr stepped to the window and tapped. There was no glass in the window, and there was a chink in the wooden shutter. He had caught a glimpse of Scadder's dismayed face there.

"Mr. Scadder!" he called out.

There was a gasp within.

"Cease this riot immediately!" came Scadder's voice. "You shall all be punished for this! I shall send for help to Packsaddle—I shall send for Marshal Lick—I shall—"

"Pack it up, Mr. Scadder!" said Dick Carr. "We're giving you a chance to get out! You're not wanted at Packsaddle—"

"I'll say nope!" roared Slick.

"We want Bill—"

A terrific roar from the bunch interrupted. The bunch wanted Bill—there was no doubt about that. Bill Sampson had ruled with a rough-and-ready hand; but the bunch, almost to a man, were standing for Bill.

"You're going, Mr. Scadder," went on Dick Carr. "We've given you a chance, because Bill asked us to when he went. You're no good! Now—"

"Now your jig's up, Scadder!" roared Slick.

"You got to hit the trail, Scadder!"

"Get going!"

"Vamoose the ranch!"

"You hear that, Mr. Scadder?" said Dick Carr. "We'll give you a chance to run, if you want to! Are you going?"

"No!" came Scadder's yelp. "How dare you, Carr! I shall punish you most severely—"

"Oh, chuck it!" said the tenderfoot of Packsaddle.

"Can it, Scadder!"

"Listen to me!" came Scadder's howl through the chink. "Order will be restored here! I have been appointed headmaster of Packsaddle by the school committee. I shall be supported in my authority. I shall remain in this house till help comes from the town. Then you will all be severely punished—"

"Talking hoss-sense to that guy won't buy you anything, you Carr!" snorted Slick. "We got to get him going!"

"We'll ride him on a rail!" hooted Mick. "We'll put him wise that he ain't big enough to stand in old Bill's boots!"

"You said it!"

"Have him out!"

"Get Scadder!"

Pie Sanders came scudding back with Hank's axe. The bunch surged and roared before the door. Slick took the axe, grasped it with both hands, and brought it down on the pinewood door with a terrific crash.

The door shook and groaned; the timber schoolhouse almost shook. Scadder, inside, jumped.

Scadder was new to Texas. And Packsaddle was the wildest corner of Texas. Scadder had not expected much trouble, but he was getting it hot and strong.

At the best of times the bunch was not an easy proposition. Now they were wild with indignation at the treatment of Bill, and they were determined to have Bill back. Scadder had to quit.

—AN ACE-HIGH YARN OF THE PALS OF PACKSADDLE.

But if Scadder was not a man like Bill, at least there was a vein of obstinacy in him, and he was not going if he could help it.

The school committee were bound to stand by the man they had appointed. Help would come to reduce the bunch to order. He had only to play possum till it came.

But the bunch were wise to that as well as Scadder. Already it was known in the cow town that the school had broken herd. Job Wash, chairman of the committee, had been chased away down the trail under a lashing quirt. Scadder was going to follow before Job had time to rally his forces. The bunch were not wasting time.

Crash, crash, crash!

The door split and fell in.

Slick threw the axe aside. A dozen hands tore away the fragments of the door, and, with a yell that would have done credit to a war-party of apaches, the Packsaddle bunch rushed in.

Riding the Rail!

STOP! Stand back!" Scadder brandished his cane. Bill's quirt would not have stopped the bunch just then. Scadder's cane had no more effect on the bunch than it would have had on a stampeding herd.

"Get him!" roared Poindexter.

"Cinch him!"

Down came the cane, lashing. Poindexter roared as it landed. A second slash Scadder gave, eliciting a frantic yell from Mick Kavanagh. But he had not time for more.

The rush of the bunch swept him over. The cane was torn away, and the new headmaster of Packsaddle grasped by countless hands.

"Yank him out!" yelled Slick.

"Oh! Ow! Ooooooogh!" gurgled Scadder, as he went flying out into the playground, in the grasp of the bunch, arms and legs in the air.

"Get a rail!" shouted Mick.

Two or three fellows rushed up with a long rail dragged from a fence. It was held shoulder-high, and Scadder was hoisted on to it.

Astride of the rail, clinging to it wildly with both hands, his hair blowing in the wind, his eyes starting from his head, his long legs dangling, Elias Scadder rocked in the midst of the roaring bunch.

"Ow! Stop! Wow! Put me down! Yow! I shall fall—urrrrrgh!" spluttered the hapless successor of Bill Sampson.

Bill, back on the Kicking Mule Ranch, punching cows, may have wondered how his successor was getting on. Bill would probably have smiled his grimmest smile if he could have seen him now.

"Ride him!" roared Poindexter.

"Get him going!"

"Put me down!" shrieked Scadder.

"I—I—I will—urrrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The long rail rested on several shoulders. The bunch surged away towards the gate, Scadder riding the rail in their midst. He clung to it desperately as it rocked.

Suddenly he rolled over, unable to keep his balance. He hung to the rail with arms and legs.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the bunch.

"Oh dear!" gasped Small Brown, blinking from a distance with goggling eyes. "Oh dear!"

"I'll say this is some circus!" remarked Hank, the hired man. He watched like an interested spectator at a rodeo.

Hanging under the rail, Scadder swept on. Losing his hold, he bumped on Texas—hard!

He yelled frantically as he bumped, and yelled again as the bunch trampled over him.

But Poindexter called a halt. Breathless, dusty, dishevelled, the hapless headmaster of Packsaddle School was swung on the rail again.

"I guess you want to stick there, Scadder!" grinned Slick. "Your best guess is to hold on."

"Oooooogh!"

"Ride him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Astride of the rail again, Elias contrived to hold on. He had hit Texas once, and did not want to hit it again! Texas was hard!

With a wild roar, the bunch surged out at the school gate into the trail, riding Elias on the rail.

"Hit Packsaddle!" roared Slick. "We'll show them pesky guys what we think of their noo schoolmaster."

"You said it!" chuckled Mick.

"Ow, oh! Release me! Put me down! Yooop! Urrrrgh!"

Down the school trail went the roaring bunch. In the midst of the wild mob, Scadder bobbed and rocked.

Packsaddle town was not far away. As the bunch drew near the cow town, startled and amazed eyes turn on them.

It's a man-sized job to run the Packsaddle bunch, and Mr. Scadder, the new master, realises that it's several sizes too large for him, when the bunch boots him out!

Barney Bailey, foreman of the Kicking Mule Ranch, was riding into town, and he pulled in his bronco, staring at the approaching bunch, grinning from ear to ear. Barney and his outfit had ridden to school when Bill was "fired," prepared to stand by their old side-kicker with their guns, but Bill had decided for peace. Barney grinned with glee at the sight of Bill's successor riding the rail.

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared the Kicking Mule foreman. "I'll say this is a sight for sore eyes, and then some! Say, you Scadder, you figuring that you can handle Bill's bunch! I'll tell a man you can't!"

"Help!" shrieked Scadder. "Help me—use your whip— Oh, ow! Will you help me?"

"Not so's you'd notice it!" roared Barney. "Say, I guess I'll spill this at Kicking Mule, and the boys sure will smile a few! Haw, haw, haw!"

"Tell Bill we want him back, Barney!" shouted Dick Carr, as the bunch surged past the halted cowman.

"I'll sure put him wise to it!" grinned Barney. And he sat in the saddle and watched the mob sweep on to the cow town, roaring with laughter.

Main Street, Packsaddle, was not usually crowded. But it was quickly crowded as the school bunch swept in with Scadder.

Punchers from the ranches rushed out

of the Red Dog and Hanson's store. They roared with merriment at the sight of Scadder. Every guy in Packsaddle turned out into the street, or to door or window, to "rubber" at the exciting scene. Ezra Lick, town marshal of Packsaddle, stepped out of his door in his official residence at the calaboose, and almost fell down as he saw the bunch. Two-Gun Carson stared from the Red Dog, and scowled. Job Wash looked out of his store with a wrathful face. Amid yells and roars and howls of merriment, the Packsaddle bunch surged on to Wash's store.

In the doorway, Job stood and gesticulated. He was still red and wrathful from his recent experiences at the school. But the sight of his specially selected schoolmaster riding the rail threw Job into a paroxysm of fury. He raved—he roared—he brandished fat fists.

"Here's Scadder, you Wash!" roared Slick.

"We've brought your schoolmaster back, Mr. Wash!" chuckled Dick Carr. "We don't want him at Packsaddle."

"We want Bill!" roared the bunch.

"Here's your pesky Scadder!"

"Tote him home!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The rail tipped, and Elias shot off it—right at the fat storekeeper in the doorway. He crashed on Mr. Wash, and threw his arms wildly round his neck for support. Job Wash staggered back and sat down, with Elias sprawling headlong over him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can keep your Scadder!" yelled Slick. "You tote him along to Packsaddle again and we'll sure drop him to the Frio."

The bunch surged away, leaving Mr. Wash and Elias Scadder to sort themselves out. As they marched down the street through a grinning crowd, Marshal Lick horned in.

"Say, you young guys, you guess that you're getting by with this?" roared Mr. Lick. "I'll say I'll sure quirt you a few. I'll say—yaroooh—ooogh—whooh—goooooh—hooooop!"

Marshal Lick, official representative of law and order as he was, rolled over in the grasp of the bunch. Recent rain had left a large puddle in Main Street, and Mr. Lick was dropped into it, face down, and Slick trod on the back of his head to push his features deeper into the mud.

"Gurrrrrgh!" was all the town marshal could say.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the bunch marched on, leaving Mr. Lick to sit up and grab mud from his eyes, nose and mouth, and gurgle. They marched back up the school trail.

"I guess we're through with Scadder!" chortled Slick, as they marched in at the gate.

"I'll say yep!" grinned Mick.

"There'll be trouble!" sneered Steve Carson. "You wait till the trouble comes."

"We'll handle it when it comes, you geek!" answered Slick. "This bunch is kicking till Bill comes back! And if them guys hone for more trouble, they can have all they want, and some over."

"You bet!"

"You said it!"

The bunch expected trouble. They were ready for it! And it was not long in coming!

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A Licking For Lick!

BAR the gate!" said Dick Carr. The gate slammed shut, and the bar was jammed into the sockets.

The rebels of Packsaddle were in possession of the school now, and they had resolved to remain in possession—till Bill came back!

Every fellow in the bunch had agreed on that—nobody but Bill was going to ride herd at Packsaddle—even Steve Carson agreeing, lest worse should befall him! Dick, Slick, and Mick figured that when the school committee got wise to it that the bunch were in deadly earnest, they would climb down and fetch Bill back from Kicking Mule. Anyhow, the bunch were going to kick till they did. And with more than twenty husky fellows ready to scrap till the cows came home, it was not easy to see how they were going to be handled.

Over the barred gate Dick kept an eye on the school trail. There was a ten-foot fence found the school grounds, not easy to climb. And every fellow had got hold of a weapon of some sort, ready to knock off a climber. And the bunch were full of beans—so full that there was a whoop of joy when Dick shouted that the enemy were coming.

Immediately the top of the gate was lined with faces.

Up the trail from the cow town came the forces of law and order. Ezra Lick and two of his men on foot, Two-Gun Carson on his bronco, and Mr. Scadder and Job Wash. The two latter brought up the rear. Evidently they did not intend to horn in till the marshal and his men had reduced the bunch to obedience.

Slick burst into a laugh.

"Them guys figure they can handle us!" he exclaimed derisively. "I'll say we can eat that crowd body and boots."

"Say, Steve, you sing out to your popper to beat it!" yelled Mick. "Put him wise that he will sure get hurt if he horns in here agin."

Steve Carson grinned sourly.

"I guess my popper's on the school committee, and he's sure seeing it through!" he retorted. "Your best guess is to take what's coming to you, and take it quiet!"

"Aw, forget it, you gink!"

Mick brandished a quirt.

"It was sure that guy Two-Gun, that worked it to get Bill fired!" he exclaimed. "I'll say I'll hand him a few if he horns in!"

The marshal and his men halted at the gate. Two-Gun pulled in his horse, scowling at the schoolboys. They gave him a yell.

"Say, Two-Gun, you lit out mighty quick when Bill was here!" yelled Mick. "A guy couldn't see your heels for dust!"

"You sure did look plumb sick when Bill got after you, Two-Gun!" roared Slick. "You stayed away like a good little man till Bill was gone!"

Two-Gun gritted his teeth. He did not like being reminded how he had vamoosed from Bill. He snarled to the marshal:

"Say, you, Ezra Lick—you coming down to cases? We ain't moseyed along to stand here like cows on a feeding range!"

Marshal Lick took no notice of the gunman. He scratched his nose, apparently puzzled what to do. His two deputies were grinning. They seemed amused by the schoolboy rebellion.

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"Now, you young geeks!" said the marshal at last. "You git that gate open, pronto! You hear me toot?"

"Beat it, Ezra!" answered Slick. "No guy ain't coming in till Bill comes back! We want Bill!"

"We sure want Bill, Ezra!" roared the bunch.

Ezra shook his head.

"I guess the school committee have sat on that and fixed it," he answered. "I'm here to put Mr. Scadder back where he belongs!"

"Get on with it!" said Dick Carr, laughing.

"You opening that gate?" demanded the marshal of Packsaddle.

"Not so's you'd notice it!" grinned Slick.

The marshal waved his men on.

"Git over that gate!" he said.

His two deputies strode forward. The marshal came with them. The three of them jumped, caught the gate, and clambered. They did not seem to reckon that the bunch would come to blows at close quarters.

But the bunch did!

Mick's quirt came down on one head, Slick's on another, and the marshal's two men dropped back into the trail, bellowing.

Dick Carr grabbed the marshal himself by his neckscarf, and dragged him half-over the gate. Fie Sanders, Poker Parker, and Slim Dixon grasped his arms, and held him helpless there.

Head and shoulders inside the gate, legs outside, the marshal struggled and gurgled. Up went Dick's quirt.

Whack!

It came down across the marshal's leather trousers, landing with a crack like a pistol-shot.

There was a terrific roar from Mr. Lick, and a yell of laughter from the bunch. Ezra struggled frantically.

"Hold him!" shouted Dick Carr.

"You bet!"

"We got him cinched!"

"Lambaste him!"

Up went Dick's quirt again, and down it came.

The marshal roared wildly.

"Say, you young geeks, you let up! Say, I'll sure skin you for this! I'll sure quirt you like you was a bunch of ornery steers! Whoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him the quirt!"

"You've sure bitten off more'n you can chew, Ezra!"

The two deputies scrambled up and jumped at the gate again. Half a dozen butts of quirts crashed on their stetsons, and down they went, their hats squashed and their heads spinning.

"Come on!" shouted Dick Carr.

"Horn in all you want, you 'uns!" yelled Slick.

But the two deputies did not horn in again. They backed out of reach of lashing quirts, and stood rubbing their damaged heads, and making remarks that almost turned the atmosphere blue. They looked as if they had had enough from the bunch.

Two-Gun Carson pushed his bronco nearer the gate, and lashed at the schoolboys with his riding-whip.

There were loud howls from the fellows who caught it. But that was a game that more than one could play at. Slick and Mick lashed back, and Two-Gun yelled in his turn as he caught the lashes. One or two landed on his horse, and the startled animal squealed and cavorted, nearly unseating the rider.

Two-Gun grasped his reins to control the horse. The bronco's hoofs clattered wildly on the trail as the gunman

pulled at the reins. Slick reached over and lashed again, getting Two-Gun across the shoulders, and Carson was glad to ride clear.

Meanwhile, the marshal of Packsaddle was not enjoying life. Sprawling half-over the gate, his wrists and arms grasped by many hands, he was quite helpless, and Dick Carr was laying on the quirt on Mr. Lick's leather trousers as if he fancied that he was beating a carpet.

Ezra Lick's wild howls rang far and wide. He struggled and howled and roared like a roped buffalo.

"Let up!" he raved. "I'm saying let up! You doggoned, pesky young piecans! I'll tell a man I shan't be able to sit down for a month of Sundays! Doggone you, let up!"

"You beating it, Ezra, if we let you rip?" chuckled Dick Carr.

"Owl! Yep! I'll say so!" spluttered the marshal. "Doggone the school, and doggone the committee—doggone the hull caboodle! Let up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The marshal was pitched back, and he crashed down: into the trail outside the gate. He landed with a heavy bump; the gate was high. He sat up and bounded to his feet, yelling. Then he strode towards Job Wash.

"Say, you Wash!" he roared. "What do you call this here game? You figure it's a town marshal's job to be quirted like an ornery steer? I'll tell a man I was always agin firing Bill! I'm telling you you want to fetch Bill back to handle that bunch! You get me, you Wash?"

"Do your duty!" yapped Mr. Wash. "You're here to reduce those schoolboys to obedience and reinstate Mr. Scadder—"

"Scadder nothing!" roared the enraged marshal. "That bunch wants Bill, and I'll say that Bill is just what they need, too! You figure that I'm honing to have my trousers dusted by them young geeks, you got another guess coming, and I'll say you can chew on that!"

And Marshal Lick, snorting, tramped back down the trail. His two men went after him. Marshal Lick wriggled as he went; his two followers were still rubbing their heads. Job started after them.

"Say, you Lick—" he gasped.

"Go and chop chips, you, Wash!" bawled the marshal over his shoulder. "You figure you can handle that bunch. I ain't stopping you! Get on with it—as much as you want!"

And the marshal tramped on with his deputies, evidently finished with the business.

Job Wash and Mr. Scadder looked at one another. They both of them looked at Two-Gun. Carson backed his horse away from the gate across the trail.

"Leave this to me!" said Two-Gun between his teeth. "I guess when I get among them with a quirt, I'll sure make them talk turkey! You young geeks, you opening that gate?"

"Not by a jugful!"

"I guess I'm coming over, then!"

And Two-Gun gave his horse whip and spur, and came at the school gate at the gallop, and the bronco rose to the leap.

Putting Paid to Two-Gun!

GUM!" gasped Slick Poindexter. "Stand clear!" yelled Dick Carr.

"Watch out!"

There was a hurried scurrying among the defenders of the school gate.

The action of Two-Gun Carson was utterly reckless; any of the fellows inside the gate might have been injured by the crashing hoofs had they not been spry. Holding the gate against an attack was one thing; holding it against a leaping bronco was quite another.

The bunch scattered back, barely in time. High in the air rose the leaping bronco, clearing the gate, and coming down in the playground with a thunder of hoofs.

Two-Gun had got in. He did not seem to care for the damage he might have done. He grinned savagely and handled his quirt. Once inside the defences, he had no doubt of getting the upper hand—riding herd over the

into the schoolhouse!" shouted Two-Gun. "I guess I'm going to see Mr. Scadder lambaste the whole caboodle before I quit! Get going!"

He rode at the schoolboys, lashing out. They scattered far and wide from the reckless rider. Two-Gun, for the time at least, had the upper hand.

Dick caught Poindexter by the arm as they ran.

"Your rope, Slick!" he panted.

Slick's eyes gleamed.

"You said it!" he breathed.

He raced into the bunkhouse for his lasso.

Some of the bunch were taking cover in the schoolhouse, some in the chuckhouse. Two or three clambered on fence or roof; one climbed the flag-pole. Two-Gun, cavorting recklessly on his

Two-Gun pulled in his bronco, and grinned at the chairman of the school committee and the new headmaster.

"I guess we're putting it through," he said. "I'll say the young geeks are getting more than they want. I reckon I'll have them feeding from yo'r hand, Mr. Scadder, in a few shakes of a 'possum's tail."

Slick Poindexter came out of the bunkhouse, his coiled lasso in his hand, his eyes gleaming.

The rope whizzed through the air, uncoiling as it flew, and the loop dropped over Two-Gun's head and shoulders.

"Look out!" gasped Mr. Walsh.

But the warning came too late. Two-Gun made a fierce clutch at the circling rope, but it tightened instantly as Slick dragged on it, and the gunman was roped in.

Plucked from the saddle by the drag of the rope, Two-Gun Carson hit the playground, and hit it hard. His



"You'll get the laughs in Packsaddle, Two-Gun!" chortled Mick. "Urrrrggg!" came from the gunman. "Set him going!" grinned Dick Carr. A smack on the flank of the bronco started it down the trail to the cow town, and the bunch roared with laughter as Two-Gun, looking a funny sight, departed for Packsaddle, raging!

bunch, quirt in hand, as Bill Sampson had been used to do. But the Packsaddle bunch were in a mood now that Bill had never known.

"You pesky scallywag!" panted Slick Poindexter.

He had been grazed by a lashing hoof as the bronco came over the gate.

"You doggoned gun-slinger!" howled Mick.

Carson rode at them, lashing with his quirt, and they dodged in haste. He turned his horse towards Dick Carr, as if to ride him down. Dick bounded out of the way, getting a terrific lick from the quirt as he did so.

"Cinch him!" yelled Pie Sanders; and he led a rush at the rider.

But Carson made his bronco cavort, and the lashing hoofs drove them back. "Now, you young geeks, you herd

bronco, was master of the situation, and he pursued one after another, running him down, and lashing with the quirt.

Big Steve saw his chance, while his popper was keeping the bunch busy. He cut along to the gate, and dragged away the bar. The bully of Packsaddle threw the gate wide open.

"This way, Mr. Wash!" he shouted.

Mr. Wash and Elias Scadder came in. Luckily for the bunch the marshal and his men were gone, or Steve's treachery would have brought in more assailants than they might have been able to handle. Job Wash and Scadder were not much use in a scrap. All depended on Two-Gun, and it looked as if Two-Gun was riding herd with success. His quirt had landed in turn on nearly every fellow in the bunch, and there were wild howls on all sides, and the playground was almost cleared.

startled bronco reared, and backed away, leaving him sprawling.

There was a roar from the bunch. Two-Gun, sprawling on the ground, struggled wildly with the rope. But he was not given time to loosen it.

From all sides came the bunch, swarming on him. Job Wash and Elias were knocked out of the way. Carson was gripped on all sides.

"I'll say we've cinched that bulldozer!" gasped Mick Kavanagh. "I'll tell a man we got him by the short hairs."

Two-Gun struggled desperately. He was dragged to his feet, and held on all sides. Slick knotted the rope round him. Pie snatched his quirt, and gave him a lick to go on with.

Job Wash and Elias Scadder exchanged a glance, and backed out of

the gate. Matters were not going well for them, and they realised that the Packsaddle playground was not a healthy spot. Two-Gun, struggling in the grasp of the bunch, yelled to them; but if they heard they did not heed, as they burned the wind down the trail.

"I guess we got this guy where we want him," grinned Slick. "Cinch that caysue of his'n, and stick him on it!"

Pie caught the horse and led it up. He held it by the bridle, while Two-Gun was heaved up on to its back, backwards, with his face to the tail.

With howls of laughter the bunch tied him to the horse in that position, fastening his feet underneath, and knotting him to the saddle. The gunman's face was crimson with rage. He howled and spluttered fierce threats, unheeded by the Packsaddlers.

"I guess you're going back to town like that, you Carson!" chuckled Slick. "I'll say the guys will snigger a few when they see you."

Two-Gun was still wriggling and struggling, mad with rage at the idea of riding back to the cow town with his face to the horse's tail. He could picture the roars of laughter that would greet him when he arrived there. But he had no chance. The forty-foot rope was wound round and round him, and knotted in many places, and he was helpless.

He glared round desperately for Steve. Big Steve could not have helped his popper; but he was not to be seen, anyhow. Some of the bunch had seen him open the gate to the enemy. And now that they were victorious, Big Steve was in dread of what would be coming to him. While his popper struggled and wriggled in the hands of the bunch, Big Steve was getting his horse from the corral, and riding away—going while the going was good. The bully of Packsaddle disappeared from the scene unheeded.

"Hank!" roared Slick Poindexter.

"Yeah," grinned the hired man.

"Tote along that can of paint you was using on the chuckhouse door."

"Carry me home to die!" gasped Hank.

He guessed what the paint was wanted

for, and he hesitated. But as two or three of the bunch started towards him, Hank hurried to obey.

He came back with a large can of green paint, with a big brush sticking in it. Two-Gun Carson gave a howl.

"Don't you dare—"

He broke off with a horrible gurgle, as Slick jammed the paintbrush into his open mouth.

"Gurrghh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold that hoss steady," said Slick. "I guess I ain't no hand at painting, but I'll sure make Two-Gun look like he was a picture over a candy store."

"Urrrghh!" Two-Gun spluttered paint. "Yurrghh!"

Yells of laughter came from the bunch as Slick Poindexter handled the brush. He daubed green paint on Two-Gun's face, laying it on with a liberal hand.

Two-Gun's face was red with rage; but the crimson disappeared under a thick coating of green. His eyes sparkled with rage from a green complexion. His hat had been knocked off in the struggle, and his hair was wildly ruffled; but Slick smoothed it with the paintbrush, coating it thick. There was plenty of paint, and he let the gunman have it all. Face and hair and ears were painted green, and then Slick poured what was left down the back of his neck. Then he jammed the empty can over the gunman's head in the place of his stetson. It came down to his ears like a tin hat.

Two-Gun was rather a dapper and handsome fellow in his way, in his natural state. But he did not look handsome now. He looked extraordinary. Spluttering fury and paint, he sat backwards in the saddle, green as the prairie grass, reeking.

The bunch, looking at him, were almost in hysterics. They howled and gasped with merriment.

"I guess the guys along to Packsaddle won't be honing for more trouble with this bunch when they spot that baby," chuckled Slick. "And I'll mention that Two-Gun won't be honing in again, not in a doggoned hurry."

"He sure will make them smile a few

when he hits Packsaddle," chortled Mick. "You'll get the laughs, Two-Gun."

"Urrrghh!"

"Set him going," grinned Dick Carr. "Ha, ha, ha!"

The bronco was led to the gate, and out into the trail. A smack on its flank started it down the trail to the cow town.

With his face to the tail, Two-Gun looked back as he went, with a green face, and eyes burning with rage. The bunch roared with laughter, and waved their hats as he went. And when the bronco trotted into Main Street, Packsaddle, with that astonishing-looking rider on its back, the whole town rushed out to see the sight, and the cow town rocked with laughter from end to end. Marshal Lick, though he was still wriggling, laughed till he almost wept.

"I'll say them young guys is genooino ginger," said Mr. Lick. "I'll mention that they ain't seeing me no more along to their goldarned school! No, sir! No Packsaddle bunch on my plate!"

And it was probable that Two-Gun was as tired of the bunch as Mr. Lick.

At Packsaddle School the gate was barred again, and the victorious bunch crowded to the chuckhouse for supper.

"I guess we've worked the rifle, you'uns," said Slick Poindexter, as he dealt with his bacon and beans. "I'll say that we've put paid to them pesky piccans, and they're wise to it by this time that nobody but Bill is going to run this shebang."

"You said it!" chuckled Mick.

"Bill or nobody," said Dick Carr.

The Packsaddle bunch had made up their minds to that. It was Bill or nobody, and they figured that the school committee would chew on it, and make it Bill. And if there was going to be more trouble before they got Bill, the rebels of Packsaddle were ready for it—ready and willing.

(There certainly is more trouble in store for the Packsaddle pals, as you will read in "REBELS VERSUS ROUGHNECKS!"—next week's smashing yarn. Look out for it.)

PEN PALS

(Continued from page 17.)

Stanley G. Biddle, 43, Priory Road, Alcester, Warwickshire; Australia; stamps; age 10-11.

Miss J. Jennings, Mayfair, Poyle Road, Guildford, Surrey, wants girl correspondents in U.S.A., South Africa, Australia; age 14-17; film stars, dance music.

Jim Fox, 11, Dewsbury Terrace, Bishophill, York; Australia, India, Canada; age 12-14; stamps, swimming, sports.

Miss Phyllis Sanders, 19, Throckmorton Road, Custom House, London, E.16, wants girl correspondents; age 16-18.

S. G. Cheeseman, 7, Doyle Gardens, Kensal Rise, London, N.W.10; age 19-25; scouting, camping, photography, etc.

Edward Yared, 258, Outremont Avenue, Outremont, Province Quebec, Canada; age 12-14; sports, postcards, film stars.

Miss Phyllis Brett, 32, Cornwallis Road, Walthamstow, London, E. 17, wants girl correspondents; age 20-21.

Miss Eileen Bay, 190, 50th Street, East Rangoon, Burma, wants girl correspondents; age 18-25; sports, stamps, films, photography.

V. Maniam, 21, Kajang Road, Penang, Straits Settlements; stamps, wireless, etc.

Lance R. Goldsack, 38, Glenunga Avenue, Glen Osmond, South Australia; stamp collectors; British Empire.

Jmail Bin Mohamed Ali, 1726-2, Peel Road, Pudu, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Federated Malay States; stamps, photography.

John Thompson, 53, Alvey Street, Walworth, London, S.E.17; Scouts; British Empire.

Miss Lily Katz, 263, Jeppe Street, City, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wants girl correspondents.

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Lionel Baylis, Whitehall, Alcester, Warwickshire; Jubilee stamps; British Empire.

Wm. Holmes, 36, Thorney Lane, Midgley, nr. Luddenden, Yorks; age 16-17.

Robert Wiseman, 73, Walpole Road, Newtown, Great Yarmouth; age 12-14; U.S.A., Canada, and England; match brands.

A. Lawton, 10, Meadow Avenue, Bacup, Lancs; age 11-13; France, Australia, America; stamps, coins.

Allan Linton, 46, Macdonald Street, Gisborne, North Island, New Zealand; books and science.

Raymond Hewitson, 14, Craig Street, Miles Platting, Manchester 10; age 16-18; cricket, wireless, bands, sports, films; British Empire.

Jim Lloyd, 24, Judkin Street, Cubitt Town, London, E.14; wants a London correspondent; age 15-17.

O. C. Ponyat, 7, Central Road, Kencot, Half Way Tree P.O., Jamaica, West Indies; age 15-21.

H. H. Carey, 3, Central Road, Kencot, Half Way Tree P.O., Jamaica; age 15-21; photography.

Tony Cohen, 8, Exeter Road, Brondesbury, London, N.W.2; age 8-10; sports, autographs, stamps.

Miss R. E. Cruise, 5, Torrington Road, Kingston, Jamaica; girl correspondents; France especially.

B. George, 1, Coxwell Road, Ladywood, Birmingham 16; a home cinema.

Jack A. Relf, 14, Hurst Street, Herne Hill, London, S.E.24; the States, Canada, or Australia; age 12-14; sports, gardening.

Ralph Yucker, 50, Harehills Avenue, Chapeltown, Leeds 7; stamp collectors overseas.

Miss Metta Hulme, 241, Kingsway, Levenshulme, Manchester; girl correspondents; age 14-16; films, photography, cycling, swimming, dancing.

Miss Bessy Hulme, 241, Kingsway, Burnage, Levenshulme, Manchester; girl correspondents; age 14-16; dancing, swimming, cycling, films.

A FEW SCHOOLBOYS DEFEY HUNDREDS OF ENEMY SOLDIERS!

The SECRET WORLD!



As the St. Frank's boys reached the top of the wall, they were met by a flight of arrows from the enemy archers. But they caught a glimpse of what was happening. Hundreds of Gothlanders were in the courtyard, and they were smashing down the doors of the castle in which Princess Mercia and the Moor View School girls had sought safety!

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

The Strange Flow.

WHEN the airship in which Nelson Lee, Lord Dorrimore, the boys of St. Frank's, and a crowd of Moor View School girls are travelling crashes in a secret world, they discover that there is apparently no way of getting out again. The strange medieval world, inhabited by two races—the Northestrians and the Gothlanders—is hemmed in by a barrier of almost impassable volcanoes.

Nelson Lee & Co. throw in their lot with the Northestrians, and when the latter go to war with the Gothlanders, they fight for them. The enemy armada crosses the lake which divides the two countries, and hordes of Gothlanders succeed in making a landing.

In the meantime, the boys of St. Frank's have taken a galley out on the lake, and they chase a Gothland vessel, but it escapes. The juniors, however, make an important discovery. At the extremity of the lake there is an immense cavern from which salt water flows, indicating that it connects with the sea in the outer world—a way of escape for the stranded adventurers! The juniors tell Lord Dorrimore of their discovery, and then Sigbert, a Northestrian, starts to tell his lordship about the strange Flow which comes from the cavern.

"How do you know when the Flow comes?" asked Lord Dorrimore.

"In my father's time it was heralded by a wondrous coldness of the air," said Sigbert. "Many creatures of the water were cast up on the beaches, dead. And then 'twas discovered that the water itself had become as brine. And with these things came floods, for the whole lake rose. My father has oft spoken of that miracle."

"And how long did it last?"

"Twelve days—possibly longer."

"And then?"

"Why, then the strange happening passed," replied Sigbert. "Gradually the lake became normal and the air warmer. And so 'twas soon forgotten."

"And this happens about three times in a hundred years!" mused Lord Dorrimore. "H'm! It's pretty rummy, old man. How do you know that this Flow, as you call it, is a sort of regular thing?"

"Did not my father learn of it from his own father?"

"The story has been sort of handed down, eh?" said his lordship. "That seems to prove that it's a periodic stunt. And all this cold water flows through that big cavern at the bottom of the lake?"

"Always it flows there."

"Salt water—flowing through that great cavern," said Dorrie, pursing his lips. "Why on earth haven't you ever tried to explore, and find the explanation?"

The other shrugged.

"We have not been curious," he replied, smiling. "I faith, there is another reason—sufficiently excellent. There are none strong enough to force a boat against the strong current. Many have tried, I do believe; but have always been beaten."

"What about when the Flow isn't on?"

"At such times—and that meaneth, as thou wilt realise, most of the time—our people have been afraid," confessed Sigbert. "'Tis said that the cavern extends for miles—many miles—into the mountains. And all is dark there. Some have penetrated deeply, but have returned with fear in them. And none have discovered whence the water arises. In ordinary times there is no Flow, and the level is such that boats have gone aground. So, you see, 'tis a problem."

"Yes, I can appreciate that," nodded Dorrie. "And when the Flow was on you couldn't get any of your boats to beat the current? Well, this little tub is a different proposition. I've a good mind to have a shot at this thing myself!"

More Adventures!

HANDFORTH stared down the lake rather absently.

"The boulder!" he murmured. "The awful twister!"

"What's the matter with you, THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 1,427.

Handy?" asked Church. "Who's an awful twister?"

"Dorrie, of course," said Handforth. "I'll bet a quid he's gone off to that cavern!"

"Anything criminal in that?"

"To explore it," said Handforth darkly.

"Supposing he has?" asked McClure.

"Gone off to explore that cavern—without us!" said Handforth, with rising indignation. "We discover the place, and Dorrie calmly leaves us out in the cold!"

"Be reasonable, old man," argued Church. "He couldn't very well take the whole crowd of us out on that motor-boat, could he? If he does explore the place, and discovers anything exciting, he's bound to tell us later."

"H'm! I suppose we shall have to be satisfied with that," grunted Handforth. "Look at him—putting on speed! Nearly out of sight already! I was thinking about going with him, but he was too quick for me."

Handforth turned his attention to other quarters, staring round in every direction, as though looking for fresh excitement. As it happened, his gaze rested upon something interesting.

A big, heavily-laden ship was just in view, round a secluded inlet. She was some distance from the shore, but her inactivity was rather significant. Handforth frowned as he looked.

"An enemy boat, I'll bet!" he said. "One of the transports that got isolated from the fleet, I suppose. How about making a few inquiries? If she's a Gothlander, we can get some excitement."

Nipper shook his head.

"I think we've had enough excitement for the time being," he said. "Still, if everybody votes with you, Handy, I'm game. We're out to do our bit against the enemy. But I was rather thinking of taking a run up to Westwold."

"Westwold?"

"Yes, up the big river three or four miles farther along the coast," replied Nipper. "The princess is in the castle there, to say nothing of Irene & Co. I thought we'd better go along and see if they were all serene."

"Of course they are!" said Handforth firmly. "They're as safe as houses up there, and we needn't bother ourselves. Too jolly tame, making all that trip for nothing!"

"You'd see Irene," said Church. "D'you call that nothing?"

Handforth frowned.

"Girls are all very well in their way, but this is no time to bother about girls!" he said firmly. "There's serious business afoot—Northestria's invaded—and we haven't had our snack yet. It might be a good idea to run up the coast to Dunstane, and see how things are going there. I'll bet that all the excitement is developing round the capital."

"You're probably right there, old man," agreed Nipper. "According to all the early signs, Kassker hurled his main forces on the coast near Dunstane. But we're a good many miles from that spot, so we'll have a look at this ship in the inlet, and see what she's up to."

The others agreed, and the galley changed her course. The juniors weren't particular as to where they went, so long as they found some excitement. They felt rather out of touch at present. This section of the coast was quiet, and the whole lake, as far as they could see, was deserted. During their hours of absence the invaders had either landed or had

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been sent back to their own country. It was difficult to get any definite information, although Lord Dorrimore had hinted at grave doings.

"Hallo!" said Pitt keenly. "She's moving!"

There was no doubt about it. The other ship was getting under way, and was making straight for the shore at the lower end of the bay. It was becoming more and more evident that she was an enemy ship. And, seeing the galley's deliberate approach, she had taken fright.

The juniors were instantly alert.

"Full speed ahead!" roared Handforth. "Let's take a tip from those rotters who tried to smash us in the gorge. Let's ram this beggar!"

"Hear, hear!"

"She's an enemy ship!"

"Steady on, you chaps!" protested Nipper. "We're not going to take any chances of that kind. She's an enemy transport, and if we deliberately smashed into her we should sink ourselves. By Jove, though, she's bolting, sure enough! And there's no exit from this bay!"

"We're forcing her ashore!"

The excitement grew as the galley swept along in chase of the enemy. It was now fairly clear that the ship had been hiding there, hoping to avoid any such encounter as this. Like Attawulf the Terrible, her commander apparently believed that the galley was dangerous.

"We shan't have time to overtake her," said Fullwood. "She's going straight ashore, and—There you are! She's gone aground already! My stars! Look at the men pouring out!"

The transport had rammed straight into the steep beach, and now men were swarming over her side, dropping into the water, and plunging ashore in a panic. They were expecting the galley to close in on them. Their experience out in the open lake had unnerved them. They knew what to anticipate from these deadly foes. Hundreds of men were deserting the ship like rats.

"We've done a fine thing!" roared Handforth. "Instead of capturing this beastly gang we've driven them ashore on to Northestrian soil! Whose idea was it to chase this ship? Where's the idiot who suggested it?"

"He's not far off!" growled Reggie. "I have a faint recollection that you mooted it first, Handy."

"Eh? I—I—" Handforth turned red. "Oh, well, how the dickens was I to know that the cowards would bunk like a lot of rabbits, and beach their beastly ship? Let's go ashore and round them up!"

"An entirely unnecessary performance," said Browne languidly. "Behold, brothers! We have done good service, after all. This, I imagine, will be well worth watching—although, I fear, gory."

"By George!" yelled Handforth. "The Northestrian soldiers!"

"Hurrah!"

The galley, now close in shore, was swinging slightly round, having accomplished its purpose. This bay was a quiet one, and the thick wood descended almost to the edge of the beach. The juniors had expected to see the enemy troopers disappearing among the trees.

But they never got the chance.

For, without warning, the beach became alive with running figures—men in chainmail, men with heavy battle-axes and pikes. For that wood had been swarming with Northestrians, and they were swooping down upon the foe!

Startling News!

"HURRAH!"

"They're trapped—and we've driven them into it!"

It was an unexpected turn, for, two minutes earlier, there had been not the slightest sign of a defender. Nipper had been rather puzzled at this, for he knew full well that Nelson Lee had placed the Northestrian troops down the entire coast, in readiness to repel the invader.

The ensuing battle was swift, and, in Handforth's opinion, disappointing. For the Gothlanders surrendered without a fight almost, and were all taken prisoners. If the positions had been reversed—if these were Northestrians invading Gothland—there would have been no quarter. A massacre would have taken place before the eyes of the schoolboys.

But the Northestrians were not such brutal savages. They had no desire to take life wantonly, and when the enemy threw down their arms, they spared them. Within half an hour the prisoners had all been marched away, and a guard had been placed over the captured ship.

"That's a bit of a nerve, isn't it?" asked Fullwood, with a chuckle. "Isn't that ship ours, really? We drove her ashore, and she's our prize."

"Of course!" agreed Handforth promptly. "I'll take a crew on board, and command her—"

"Rats!" said Nipper, laughing. "We'll all stick together on this galley, my lad! As for the transport, these chaps are welcome to her. We've been of some use, it seems—although, goodness knows, it was a fluke!"

"All these prisoners are ours—"

"Exactly, Handy, but we don't want to bother with them," said Church soothingly. "There's an officer coming out in one of the boats, by the look of it," he added. "Perhaps we shall be able to get some news."

"Old Wynwed, by George!" roared Handforth, as he recognised the figure in the approaching boat. "Wynwed the Jovial!"

The juniors gave their Northestrian friend a cheer as he came alongside the galley in the small boat. The whole beach was now filled with men.

"By St. Attalus, thou are welcome, goodly knight!" grinned Reggie Pitt, looking over the bulwark. "What of the battle? Is aught toward?"

Wynwed chuckled.

"I' faith, but thou art mimicking me, good youth," he said dryly. "Thy own speech is serviceable enough, methinks. I greet ye all, comrades! 'Twas a bold effort this of yours. My men were awaiting amid the trees but feared that the enemy would skulk away."

"Just one of those pieces of luck, Wynwed," said Nipper. "We didn't know you were there, and we only chased the transport on the spur of the moment. What have you done with all the prisoners?"

"They are being taken inland, to the great camp where all such rats are held," replied Wynwed, with a frown. "Myself, I would slay them all! I believe not in this policy of mercy."

"You bloodthirsty old rascal!" said Pitt severely. "And we've always looked upon you as a jolly sort of chap! What's the news from the battle-front? Hast heard whispers of what is afoot?"

"A murrain take these accursed dogs!" growled Wynwed.

"They were rats just now, but we'll let it pass," said Reggie. "What's the reason for this sudden frown?"

"The enemy hath landed in strength," replied Wynwed angrily. "'Tis said that many thousands are engaging our first army near the capital. A grim

"battle is developing, we hear. And 'tis also said that Kassker the Grim is with his troops. 'Tis ill news."

"It might be good news," replied Nipper. "If Kassker's hordes are beaten in this battle, there'll be a decisive end to all the fighting. You can't expect to whack the enemy without a big struggle, Wynwed."

"I fear thou art right, wise youth," agreed Wynwed, nodding. "We have to thank Lee the Lionhearted for our readiness. There are many willing fighters in Northstria these days, and the enemy, never fear, will regret this madness. But much ill may befall ere the dogs are flung back."

"You must expect a lot of trouble—"

"Ay, but 'tis rumoured that her Majesty herself is menaced!" said Wynwed, his tone anxious.

"The princess!" shouted a number of juniors. "In danger?"

"Ay, so we hear!"

"You hear?" said Nipper sharply. "From whom?"

"Word hath come along the coast," replied Wynwed gravely. "We know not the real truth of it."

"But the princess is safely protected in Westwold Castle!" exclaimed Nipper. "How can she be in any danger?"

"And Irene & Co.!" shouted Handforth. "They're with the princess! If she's in danger, they must be in the same fix! Let's take the galley and rush up the river, and see if we can help—"

"By my soul, a goodly suggestion!" interrupted Wynwed quickly. "'Tis said that two enemy ships have forced their way up the river, and that they are even now menacing Westwold Castle."

"It must be a yarn!" declared Nipper. "Isn't that river impregnable? We have been told that none of the enemy could possibly penetrate—"

"But amid the excitements of the fight it seemeth that a trick was perpetrated," said the Northstrian. "Many troops were drawn aside by a ruse, and while the battle raged, so these accursed ships passed the danger zones—"

"That's enough!" yelled Handforth. "It's true, you chaps! These cunning Gothlanders have got up the river, and they're trying to capture the princess! Who's for making a dash to the rescue?"

What Happened at Westwold!

WYNWED THE JOVIAL had not been talking idly.

The danger at Westwold Castle was acute. Up and down the coast, many miles inland, the enemy forces had penetrated. The landing had not been so successful as Kassker had planned, for a great many of his soldiers had gone ashore in isolated groups, instead of en masse. The majority of these groups had been quickly overcome by the defenders.

But nothing could alter the fact that the Gothlanders were invading Northstria in strong force, and nobody could tell, in the present confused state of things, what successes the enemy had achieved. The battles were only just developing.

But how those two enemy transports had gained access to the Westwold river remained a mystery. Somebody had apparently blundered. The young princess had been placed at Westwold because this particular castle was regarded as an impregnable retreat.

Indeed, so secure was it believed to be, that the princess' bodyguard was only small. Nobody had believed it possible that the enemy could reach this spot. It was a fastness among the rocks, only

approachable from the river—and this was effectively guarded. There was a road across the mountains, but this was so difficult that none would take it.

How, then, had those ships got by?

Only by treachery or negligence. And Nipper rather favoured the latter theory. These Northstrians, after all, were new to warfare, and might easily have been led away by a cunning ruse. Not that it much mattered now; little good could come of making surmises. The main thing was to get to the spot and see if the story were actually true.

And so, while the galley set forth on its mission, Westwold Castle was besieged. Five hundred strong had surrounded those grim old walls, and were even now making fierce, determined attempts to scale them and gain access. The commander of this force had conceived the idea of capturing Princess Mercia and her brother, the young Prince Oswy. The rest could be put to slaughter.

Westwold Castle was a quaint, picturesque pile, perched among the rocks like some castle in a fairy book, with towers, battlements and gables. The surrounding wall was of a serviceable height. But on this side, where the river flowed, there was a possibility of forcing an entry.

The water was deep, and boats of quite heavy draught could anchor alongside the wall. The two enemy transports were there now, and hundreds of men were at work, while the rest gave battle to the defenders.

From every position of advantage the Northstrians were sending their arrows down upon the enemy. But the Gothlander archers were busy, too, and it was death for any man to appear openly on top of the wall. On the decks of those ships men were constructing crude scaling ladders.

They had not come prepared with these, and so a delay was inevitable. But once these brutes succeeded in overrunning the castle, there would be little hope. To escape by the mountain path was impossible, for word had come that fierce fighting was in progress beyond.

This, then, was the situation, a totally unexpected one for all concerned. The young Princess Mercia was quite calm, mainly, perhaps, because of the example set her by Irene Manners and her girl chums of the Moor View School.

"If 'tis decreed that we shall die, of what use to fear?" said Mercia simply. "But I believe not this terrible thing. My soldiers will protect me."

"There ought to have been hundreds of men here, not a handful," said Doris Berkeley, with a frown. "I can't understand it. Mr. Lee told us that everything would be quiet here—"

"But how was he to know that these ships would come up the river?" interrupted Irene. "I think there must have been a traitor. The river was defended by lots of troops, and they were drawn off somehow—led into an action somewhere else. And these ships came up unhindered."

The girls were standing on a small balcony, overlooking the wall. They could see little from here, but they could tell, nevertheless, that the position was growing more acute. The Northstrian soldiers below were alarmed. Many had been hurt, some killed, and almost continuously arrows were falling over into the courtyard. And from beyond the wall came a continuous clamour.

Miles away, Ethelbert the Red—the princess' chief adviser—was fondly assuring himself that his royal charges were safe. Nelson Lee was of a similar opinion.

"Is there nowhere we can hide?" asked Doris practically. "What if these brutes capture the castle? Can't we get out?"

"There is no way, except the mountain road," replied the princess. "The river is the only certain path, and that is held by the enemy. Should we take the mountain road, the Gothlanders will overtake us—"

"But can't we lock ourselves in the dungeons?" suggested Doris. "We could hide—"

"No, that would only be playing the enemy's game. They would soon drag us out."

"Look! They're coming!" murmured Irene.

All the girls felt a sudden thrill. The top of the wall was swarming with Gothlanders—powerful men, in chainmail; men armed with battle-axes and flashing swords. They came up in continuous numbers and spread out along the battlements of the walls. The Northstrians were driven back, for they were hopelessly outnumbered, and all seemed lost.

St. Frank's to the Rescue!

THE galley came up the river with a powerful flashing of oars, and with groups of anxious St. Frank's fellows standing about on the decks. The current of the stream was sluggish, and offered little resistance to the sweeps.

There was nothing to make the juniors feel cheerful. Frowning rocks looked down upon them from either side, and in every direction the scene was rugged and barren.

The river twisted and turned, and every fresh view was more sinister than the last.

Westwold Castle could not be more than a mile ahead now, hidden there among the rocks—an inland fortress which had been deemed the safest haven in all Northstria for the princess. And yet the Gothlanders had penetrated!

Nipper was sure of this now, for the galley had passed up the river unchallenged. Yet there should have been many soldiers on guard, ready to ask what this galley required. The very fact that these guards were missing proved that something of an alarming nature had taken place.

"There's going to be fighting up here," said Handforth firmly. "We ought to prepare ourselves for the battle, you chaps. I'm going below, to fix on my chainmail! You'd better come, too, Church."

"No, thanks!" said Church. "I feel freer as I am. I don't want to be encumbered with a lot of heavy chains and things. Besides, how can we engage in hand-to-hand fighting with these Gothlanders? Be reasonable, Handy!"

"Are we going to let those girls be captured without putting up a fight?" roared Handforth, glaring.

They didn't argue with him, and he stamped below to the main cabin of the galley, which contained stores, food, and so forth.

Handforth went over to a corner and pulled out a number of odds and ends with impatient haste. He knew that he had thrown his chainmail down somewhere.

"By George!" he ejaculated abruptly. He beheld two curious-looking objects in that corner. At first glance they looked like heavy rockets. In a way, they actually were rockets.

"Smoke bombs!" breathed Handforth. "Maroons, by George!"

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He was rather excited, and a moment later he grabbed the maroons and rushed up on deck with them. During their earlier adventures on the galley, Lee had supplied the juniors with these rockets to be used in case of emergency. When fired, they soared to a tremendous height, exploding with a high-pitched, shattering crack, accompanied by dense bursts of smoke. As signals they had proved invaluable. Indeed, it was these rockets which had brought succour to the juniors when all hope had seemed dead.

"Look at these!" shouted Handforth, as he burst into view.

"Rockets, aren't they?" asked Nipper. "Where did you find them, Handy? I didn't think we had any left."

"They were in a corner, among a lot of lumber," replied Handforth. "They might be useful—"

"No might about it!" interrupted Nipper. "Good man! Keep them handy, and have them fixed— Here, Reggie, you'd better take charge of them," he added. "It might be a good idea to get them ready to explode at a moment's notice."

"Rather!" said Pitt. "I'll use two of these broken sweeps. Leave it to me, Nipper. I'll fix 'em up. You mean we can signal for help? Or perhaps we can use the rockets to scare the enemy?"

"That's more like it," said Nipper, nodding. "These things explode with a terrific crash, although they're not particularly dangerous."

The galley had just turned another bend, and a chorus of shouts went up when the immediate view was beheld. Almost before they realised it they were right on Westwood Castle. There rose the walls, and against them were those two Gothlander ships, with the scaling ladders—rough, crude affairs—fixed in position. A few men were on the decks, but only a handful, at the most. And they were staring in alarm at the approaching galley.

"They've done it!" gasped Nipper. "Look! Empty ships—and those ladders! The curs have got over the wall, and they're in the castle!"

"Oh my goodness! What about the girls?"

"And the princess?"

"Full speed!" yelled Handforth. "Let's rush these beggars here, and then climb those ladders! St. Frank's to the rescue!"

"Hurrah!"

The rest, wildly excited, were ready to brave any dangers. Had they paused to think, they would have hesitated. For they must have realised then that this enterprise was akin to courting death. But they only thought of the princess' peril—and the peril of their girl chums.

The galley swung alongside the first enemy ship, and the juniors leapt. In another moment they were rushing for the ladders, and swarming up them. There was no fight here, for the Gothlanders had fled. They did not like the look of this determined body of young strangers!

"Come on, everybody!" shouted Nipper. "It's for the sake of the girls!"

"Hurrah!"

They reached the top of the wall—a wide, ample space. Farther along, bodies were lying just as they had fallen. But the juniors took little heed. Something hissed past Nipper's head, and he rapped out a sharp command.

"Down!" he shouted. "Duck, you chaps! Arrows!"

They managed to get a glimpse of the castle courtyard. Men were swarming

there—hundreds of them. They were smashing down the castle doors, intent upon gaining an entry. As yet, they had failed. But what could these few schoolboys do against such a savage mob? The very idea of a fight seemed madness.

Arrows were flying over the top of the wall in scores, and it was fortunate for the fellows that they obeyed Nipper's urgent command. The battlements protected them so long as they kept down.

"What about these rockets?" yelled Pitt eagerly. "I say, Nipper, hadn't we better loose them off?"

"Yes—one at a time!" replied Nipper. "We'll see what effect the first one has—and instead of sending it up in the air, we'll direct it downwards, into the courtyard. We can't hope to beat this horde in a hand-to-hand fight—they'd have us whacked in twenty seconds."

"Rats!" roared Handforth. "Let's dash down, and show these brutes what we're made of! We can't mess about with those rockets—"

But Church and McClure, fearful of what Handforth might do, seized him and held him down. And Reggie Pitt applied a match to the first maroon. It was already fixed to a long length of wood.

Zzzzzh!

A trail of hissing sparks shot out, and then the maroon went off with a roar, and fell down into the courtyard, leaving a train of sparks and smoke behind it. It struck a number of men, and they fell back. Then the rocket hit the ground, rebounded, and slewed round wildly, scattering a number of other men. Already there was a sign of panic.

And then— Boom!

It was a penetrating, shattering explosion, like a clap of thunder at close quarters.

Success!

THE result was staggering.

Immediately following the explosion, which left a feeling of utter deafness in the ears of all the juniors, a vast, billowing cloud of acrid smoke rolled across the courtyard with unbelievable density. It blotted out the panic-stricken figures of the Gothlander soldiers, and continued to roll on like a pall.

But men were flying everywhere—fighting to get out of one another's way. And yet there was absolutely no danger!

If a high explosive bomb had fallen, the moral effect could not have been greater. Not a man was injured, not one of them was even scorched—but that terrific explosion, followed by the pall of smoke, had done the trick.

"Hold on!" shouted Nipper. "Don't fire the other one, Reggie!"

"Isn't it necessary?" asked Pitt.

"I don't think so—but we'll hold it in reserve, anyhow," replied Nipper. "By Jove, look at them! What a piece of luck it was, finding those maroons!"

"Yes, that was my doing!" said Handforth promptly.

"That one alone has turned the tables!" continued Nipper swiftly. "And now it's up to us to take advantage of the panic. Come on, you chaps! These Gothlanders haven't got an ounce of fight left in them!"

What followed was almost as startling as the result of the explosion. The Gothlanders, probably believing that their last moment was near, were racing up their improvised ladders to the top of the wall. Once there, they did not give battle to the juniors, but flung themselves headlong into the river.

The vast majority of them went hurtling down, many falling on the decks of the ships, with serious results. Others, encumbered by their heavy armour and chainmail, sank before they could pull themselves out of the water. It was a complete and absolute debacle.

And all caused by one signal rocket!

True, it had been fired at a crucial moment, and fired, too, in such a way that it had seemed a thousand times more deadly than it actually was. But these Gothlanders, who knew nothing of such explosives, it had driven mad with panic.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Handforth indignantly. "There's nobody left for us to fight! Look! A group of Northeistrians have come out into the courtyard, and they're polishing off the remnant of the enemy! They haven't even left us a couple!"

"I rather think we've done our bit!" said Nipper.

"Hear, hear!"

"We're not all such fire-eaters as you, Handy, thank goodness!"

Elated by their unexpected success—for, in their hearts, many of the fellows had expected a deadly encounter with the enemy—they hastened down the ladders, and reached the courtyard. They were just in time to greet Irene & Co. and the princess as they came hurrying out.

"Oh, you have saved us!" cried Irene delightedly. "We saw you from one of the windows, and knew that we should be all right."

"Trust St. Frank's to butt in at the right moment!" said Doris.

"Good old Ted!" chimed in Ena Handforth. "I'm a bit surprised to see you alive, to tell the truth!"

They all talked at once, and there were many chuckles when the princess expressed fear at the maroon.

"It was nothing much, your Majesty," said Handforth, grinning. "Only a smoke-bomb. It sounded pretty bad, but these high walls made it twice as noisy as it really was. Anyhow, it scared off the enemy, and that was the main thing."

The princess regarded him with those dazzling eyes of hers.

"Once again, bold Handforth, thou hast saved me!" she muttered. "What can I do to repay thee for those wondrous services? Gentle youth—"

"Oh, I say!" protested Handforth, in sudden alarm. "Cheese it! I—I mean, these other fellows were in it just as much as I was. Nothing to make a fuss about, your Majesty!"

Handforth always grew alarmed when the princess gave him one of her special smiles. To his great relief, Nipper changed the subject.

"Your Majesty, I'm going to ask you to come on board the galley," he said firmly. "After what's happened, I don't think you are safe here."

The fair Mercia inclined her head.

"Thy wishes will be heeded," she said simply.

"And what about us?" asked Irene.

"You'll come, too, of course," replied Nipper. "You see, Mr. Lee has established a headquarters ship—one of the biggest ships of Northeistria, fitted with aero-engines, and lots of other gadgets. I'm going to put you safely on board the Spitfire—that's her name—under the gun'or's wing. We can't let you risk any more misadventures of this kind. These rotten Gothlanders have gained a strong hold, and the invasion is a reality."

"My poor country!" murmured the princess, in distress.

"Don't worry, your Majesty—your armies will soon drive the brutes off,"

declared Nipper confidently. "But at the moment the lake seems to be the safest spot. And you'll all be secure on the Spitfire."

The rest of the juniors were in hearty agreement with Nipper's decision, and less than an hour later the galley was off again, after another triumphant adventure. The two Gothlander ships had fled with their depleted crews, but they didn't escape. Out in the lake they encountered a trio of Northestrian ships, and their fate was swift.

Into the Unknown!

LORD DORRIMORE, in the meantime, was having quite an adventure of his own.

He was exceedingly interested in this Northestrian story of the "Flow." It intrigued him. And he was determined to make some close investigations before he did anything else.

"We'll have a shot at this wonderful cavern of yours, Sigbert, old man," he declared, as the motor-boat skimmed speedily over the lake. "We're getting near the gorge now, and we shan't be long before we're—"

"But stay!" protested the other. "You would venture this alone?"

"Not alone; you're coming with me." "Ay, but i'faith, 'tis a risk!" protested Sigbert.

"I thrive on risks," said Lord Dorrimore genially. "The doctor ordered me to take two after every meal."

Sigbert shook his head. He could not understand the workings of this "mad-brain," as he privately dubbed the reckless Dorrie.

"There's somethin' rummy about this flow of salt water," continued his lordship keenly. "It comes at periodic intervals, and causes a flood. It lasts for nearly a fortnight, and it goes as suddenly as it appears. A geyser, or I'll eat my necktie!"

"A geyser?" repeated Sigbert, puzzled.

"One of those merry things which bubble up hot water every now and again," explained Dorrie. "You've got plenty of them in your country. But, of course, there are geysers and geysers. I take it that this beggar is a pretty hefty one. He must be, to cause such a widespread disturbance. An' he functions, apparently, about three times every century. He takes a lot of moving, but once he starts he evidently means business. There's a famous geyser called 'Old Faithful'—as regular as clockwork. This joker appears to belong to the same family."

Lord Dorrimore's theory was an astute one. He knew that this whole region was volcanic, and it was just the district to harbour geysers of all types. Perhaps there was one far beneath the mountains—But how could that be? Salt water—sea water—could not come from such a source.

Dorrie, with vague wonder within him, set forth on this present mission with boyish eagerness. In his heart he felt that he was on the verge of a tremendous discovery. A discovery that might have startling consequences.

But he did not allow his thoughts to run loose. It was no good getting all sorts of high hopes, only to have them smashed to fragments against the rock of hard fact. Perhaps this tunnel would lead nowhere. In all probability, the rocks would close in, and forbid of any exploration.

So Dorrie kept an open mind. And he opened up the engine of his motor-boat, and raced up that frowning gorge. Before long, the effect of the current was felt, for the fast little craft slowed

down. Even so she still made rapid progress.

"'Tis wondrous, indeed!" declared Sigbert. "Our own vessels, manned with expert oarsmen, could scarce beat against this swift flow. And yet thy craft makes light of it."

"I've got a good reserve of power, too," nodded Lord Dorrimore, with satisfaction. "The old tub is goin' like a dream, an' there's no risk, anyhow. If the engine fails, we shall just drift back. It's easy."

"Within this cavern, darkness prevails—"

"Don't you worry about that. It won't prevail for long," smiled his lordship. "We've got a pretty little search-light on this boat. Just an ornament until now—an' everythin' has its uses, sooner or later."

The Northestrian officer was freshly amazed soon afterwards, for as the boat plunged into the great cavern entrance, so Dorrie pressed a switch. The search-light blazed out, and flooded that great cave with dazzling light. The rocks stood out clearly, and even Dorrie was astonished. The roof domed above, vastly high, and the speeding stream came tumbling along from out of the very bowels of the mountain range. It reminded Lord Dorrimore of a railway tunnel on a gigantic scale—for it was twenty times larger than any man-made tunnel.

The boat was making great speed, even now. In spite of the current's strength, a steady twenty miles an hour was maintained—for this little craft, in still water, could go like an express train. Silence fell upon the two as they penetrated deeper and deeper into the mysterious unknown.

Mile after mile! Dorrie felt his heart beating more rapidly. His pulse was quick and ex-

cited. The deeper they went into this great tunnel, the colder became the air.

"I fear greatly!" confessed Sigbert, after a long silence. "No man has ever penetrated thus far—"

"Then you'll be making history," interrupted Lord Dorrimore grimly. "We've started on this business now, old man, and we're going through with it. Nothin' is goin' to stop me except a barrier of solid rock!"

Occasionally, the roof of the great tunnel would grow lower, and sometimes Dorrie's head would almost miss a beam as the rocks closed down. But then they would open up again, always revealing a clear and unhindered passage.

And the cold grew intense.

The unfortunate Sigbert was shivering—not merely from cold, but from fear, too. He was no coward, but this adventure was turning his blood to water. Never in his life—never in the life of any Northestrian—had such a temperature as this been experienced. It was something beyond his ken!

"If you're feelin' chilly, you'd better slip down into the cabin," suggested Dorrie, through clenched teeth. "It's a poky hole, but the warmth from the engine—"

"Nay, I will stay," interrupted Sigbert, huskily.

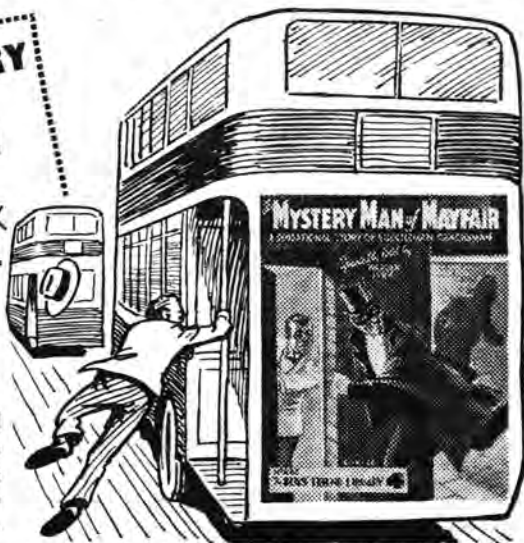
His curiosity was beginning to get the better of his fear, and he was staring at the distance ahead like a man in a trance. This adventure was exciting even to Dorrie—but to Sigbert it was an epoch-making event.

The motor-boat was moving slower now, proving that the current was stronger. Even so, the sturdy little craft seemed to be flashing past the glistening walls of rock. The waters were black and inky, and the air was

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icily cold. The farther they went, the colder grew the temperature.

Would this tunnel never end? Lord Dorrmore told himself repeatedly that his imagination was running riot. But he could swear that there was a curious tang in the air—the smell of the sea! And yet how could this be possible? In this region, in the frozen North, there was no open water. And yet—

Dorrie stared ahead, his face grim and set, his eyes gleaming.

Dorrie's Amazing Discovery!

ONE fact was incontrovertible. The motor-boat was passing right beneath the great barrier mountains. Lord Dorrmore remembered how they towered up for thousands and thousands of feet—an utterly impassable barrier. Even the notorious Mount Everest—the highest known peak—was a mere hill compared to this vast range, with its fearsome glaciers.

But here Dorrie was speeding beneath this incredible mass of rock and ice! Hour after hour! Two hours had already sped, and still the motor-boat continued. It seemed unbelievable. Over forty miles had been covered—forty miles of this extraordinary tunnel.

And what could be beyond? The Arctic? If so, it would be a frozen waste—a solid mass of ice, where open water was unknown. Yet where was this rushing stream coming from? Dorrie's mind was beginning to stagger. He could not form any feasible idea.

And then, almost without warning, he detected that something was different. The air was much colder now, and Dorrie's hands were almost frozen to the wheel. His limbs were numb—his

ears felt as though they were on fire. And now the great tunnel was a dazzling picture of wonderful icicles, hanging down in great festoons. They sparkled and scintillated in the powerful searchlight.

There was a wind—a distinct, cutting breeze! Dorrie's heart nearly stopped beating again. What could this wind portend? Only one thing, surely!

Then Dorrie's breath refused to come. He gasped as he stared. The motor-boat had passed out—had left the tunnel behind! Fields of ice and snow were dimly visible in the gloomy distance. And on every side of the boat stretched black masses of rippling water.

"Great gad!" muttered Dorrie. He stared—he stared unbelievably.

For overhead he could see the sky—the deep, black sky, with stars! Stars! A great lump came into Lord Dorrmore's throat. He hardly expected to see such stars again. But there they were, gazing down upon him from the purple sky.

"Ye gods!" he croaked. "We're outside—we're out in the open!"

Sigbert was speechless. This thing was beyond him. In all his life he had never set eyes on such a wonder as a twinkling star, because of the mists!

But Dorrie knew the truth now, and it overwhelmed him. Automatically, he closed the throttle, and the motor-boat skinned along under its own momentum. A high wind was blowing here, and the air was like a knife-edge. Glancing back, Dorrie could see the glaciers rising, tier after tier, far, far up the icy peaks. But ahead there was this vast expanse of water—unfrozen! And in the dim distance, ice.

An open lake amid the freezing air of the Polar regions?

Dorrie leaned over the side of the boat, and plunged his hand into the water. He withdrew it sharply, and took a deep breath.

"A geyser!" he muttered. "But, by the Lord Harry, what a geyser!"

The water was cold, but not icily cold. Dorrie could bear his hand in it easily. Somewhere, far below, there was a submarine geyser. He was convinced that his theory was correct, and this geyser, operating by some freak of Nature only once in every thirty odd years, caused the ice to thaw, and caused this great open lake to form. And the overflow found its way through the great natural tunnel directly into the oasis beyond.

"An outlet!" said Dorrie exultantly. "Good glory, Sigbert, an outlet! Don't you understand?"

"I am bewildered—I am afraid!" muttered Sigbert.

"I don't wonder at it," said Dorrie sympathetically.

But he spoke almost mechanically, for his thoughts were busy. He remembered that glorious message which had come through on the wireless. The British Navy was preparing a great fleet of seaplanes to reach the Arctic!

Those seaplanes could never cross those barrier mountains, but here, outside—Dorrie caught his breath, and refused to allow his thoughts to go further. Until this minute he had not dreamed how dearly he longed to get back into the great world—and away from this unreal atmosphere of the Middle Ages.

(An outlet from the secret world! It's a great discovery, but the Gothlanders are still a menace to the safety of the St. Frank's adventures. Don't miss next week's gripping chapters.)

An Affair of Honour!

(Continued from page 16.)

you have told me. But you have done wrong. You should have remembered your position here, the example you were called upon to give to the younger boys."

"I know it, sir," said Kildare humbly. "I've played the fool, I know that!"

The Head's frown relaxed.

"I'm glad that you see it in that light," he said. "It was a fault, Kildare—a very great fault—but I shall say no more about it. I am sure that it will be a lesson you will not forget. The affair, I hope, will be forgotten, and you will never again act in a manner unworthy of your position as captain of

the school. Let us say no more about it, then."

And Kildare, with a muttered word of thanks, left the Head's study.

He found a crowd waiting for him outside, and the cheer that greeted him showed that St. Jim's, at all events, thought as well of him as ever.

"All right, Kildare?" asked Tom Merry anxiously.

The St. Jim's captain nodded without replying.

"Oh, good!"

"I regard you as havin' acted wipin'ly, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus.

"It seems that I wasn't wight afaik all about that twamp, and you have pwevented a shockin' miscawwage of justice. It is a vevy unfortunate endin' to an affaiah of honah!"

Kildare walked away.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the juniors.

"You blessed ass!" said Jack Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"You fathead!" said Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"You jolly nearly got an innocent man sent to quod, with your blessed cleverness!" said Monty Lowther. "I suggest that the next time Gussy shows any signs of being clever, we take him out in the quad and bump him!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Better bump him now," said Figgins.

"Weally, Figgay—"

"Good!" said Fatty Wynn. "After all the trouble he's given, I call upon Gussy either to be bumped or to stand a feed."

"Hear, hear!"

Arthur Augustus stood the feed.

(Next Wednesday: "MISS PONSBY'S PETS!"—a humorous long yarn telling how the Fourth Form at St. Jim's fared under "petticoat rule." It's a scream!)



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