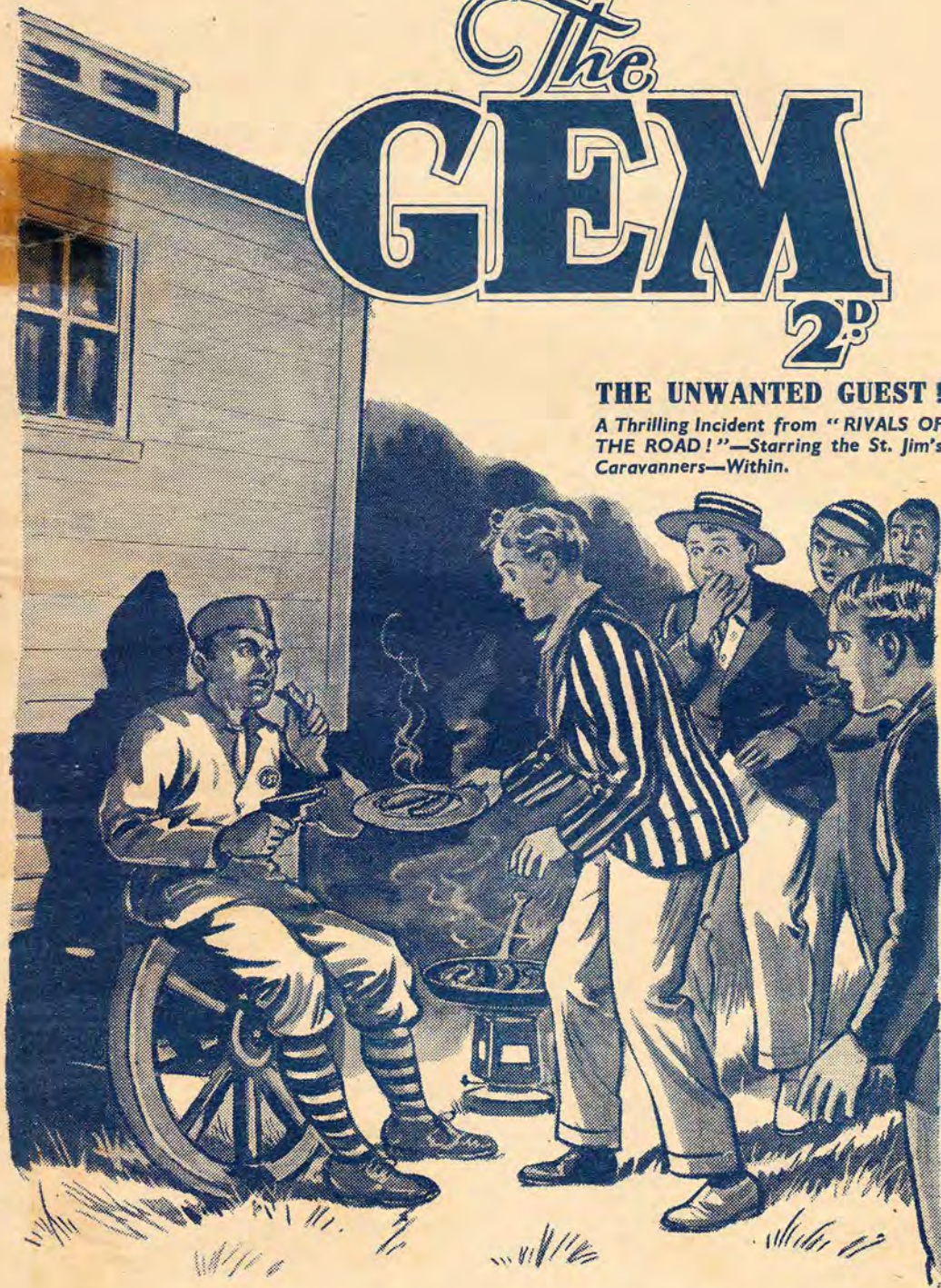


20-0600
**THREE STAR SCHOOL STORIES—FREE FOOTBALLS
—AND MANY OTHER GRAND FEATURES!**

The **GEM** 2nd

THE UNWANTED GUEST!

A Thrilling Incident from "RIVALS OF THE ROAD!"—Starring the St. Jim's Caravanners—Within.



OUR GRAND STAMP-COLLECTING SCHEME!



ARE you collecting FOOTER-STAMPS? They're all the rage, and you really must be in this wonderful scheme!

This is what to do: Every week in GEM we are giving "Footer-Stamps"—pictures of six different actions on the football field—the object of this great stamp-game being to score as many "goals" as possible in time for the second prize-giving next week, when up to 300 footballs are to be awarded.

TO SCORE A "GOAL" you must collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: KICK-OFF — DRIBBLE — TACKLE — HEADER — SHOT — GOAL.

Easy, isn't it? The more stamps you collect the more "goals" you can score. (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does NOT count as a "goal"; you must get a set of the stamps 1 to 6 each time.)

We give ten more stamps this week—five below and five others on page 35. Cut them out and try to score a "goal" with them; then keep all your stamps until you get some more in our next issue.

If you want to score some other quick "goals," remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in "Modern Boy" and "Magnet." There are more "goals" waiting in those papers!

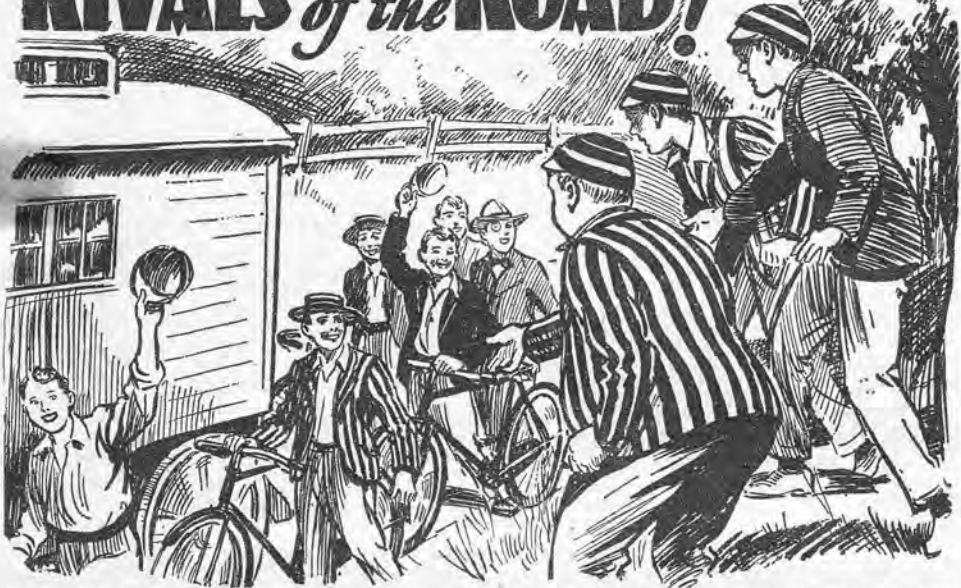
Keep at it, pals, because the September contest will close next week, and we shall then ask you how many "goals" you have scored. Up to 300 of the FREE footballs are going to be awarded then—to readers scoring the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month. More footballs will be given in the next month.

Don't send any stamps until we tell you how and where next week, when the closing date will be announced. The rules of the contest will be found on page 35.



IT'S THE HIGH SPOT OF THE HOLIDAY TOUR WHEN THE ST. JIM'S CARAVANNERS AND FIGGINS & CO. BECOME—

RIVALS of the ROAD!



"You shall have your bikes next term at St. Jim's!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Hiking is a healthy exercise!" "Give us our jiggers!" yelled Figgins. "Ta-ta, old top!" said Tom Merry. The caravan moved on, the victorious School House juniors wheeling the captured machines.

CHAPTER 1.

An Unexpected Meeting!

"I WEALLY think that the chap who called this county 'Glowious Devon' knew what he was talkin' about!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, had reason for his remark.

The St. Jim's caravan was rumbling at a leisurely pace through a deep Devonshire lane. On either side the great banks of red earth rose, topped with the brightest green of trees and grass. Overhead the summer sun shone in a cloudless sky of blue, bathing the earth with golden light.

Jack Blake was driving; but circumstances, the horse, was making the pace, and he made it slowly.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, sauntered along with the horse, with their straw hats on the backs of their heads. Herries sat at the back of the van with his legs dangling; Dig was inside, washing socks.

The caravanners looked warm and a little dusty, excepting Arthur Augustus. That natty

youth gave more attention to his toilet than the others did, and he looked, as usual, a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. A handsome panama shaded his aristocratic face from the sun.

"We have had a wippin' cawavan tour," resumed Arthur Augustus, "and I am vevy glad that we did not miss Devon."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Tom Merry. "I wonder if we shall see anything of Figgins & Co. before the end of the vac. Figgy was talking about going caravanning with Kerr and Wynn."

"Oh, those New House bounders aren't up to it!" said Lowther.

"Wathah not! Look at the feahful scwapes you chaps would have landed in if I had not been with you!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "I have felt it a great responsibility all the time."

"Well, of all the cheeky asses—"

"Of all the frabjous clumps I—"

"I am simply statin' the facts, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus mildly. "I do not mean to imply that I have found it a twouble. I considahed it my duty to look afeah you!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Rag and counter rag follow in rapid succession when Tom Merry & Co. get to grips down in Devonshire with their old rivals of St. Jim's!

"Why, we've spent nearly all the time fishing you out of scrapes!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Only a week ago you fell in love—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass—"

"And we had to rescue a village girl from your gladsome glad eye!" said Monty Lowther.

"I wegard that we mark, Lowthah, as the we mark of a wibald wuffian!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I considah that—"

"My hat!" exclaimed Herries, from the back of the van. "Look here, you chaps!"

"What is it?"

"Figgins & Co."

"Talk of angels, and you hear the rustle of their merry wings!" remarked Monty Lowther.

The caravanners looked back along the lane. Three cyclists had come into view, coming merrily on the track of the St. Jim's van, and at a glance the caravanners recognised them as

5 MORE BIKES!

And Over 2,000 Other Prizes Won in the July "Armaments" Race!

Here's more winning news for thousands of "Armaments" Stamp collectors. The July entries have now been checked, and every one of the 2,004 readers who sent in 323 or more Battleship and Tank Stamps has won the prize of his choice, while the following five collectors whose totals were the largest received win the FIVE £4 7s. 6d. "HERCULES" BIKES:

E. Richardson, 145a, Hammersmith Grove, London, W. 6.

A. Maisey, 19, Colthrop Cottages, Thatcham, Berks

Arthur Hyde, Crundalls Farm, Wribbenhall, Bewdley.

R. Scargill, 29, Ivy Street, York Road, Leeds, 9.

H. Turner, 5, Lentmead Road, Downham, Bromley.

All prizes have now been dispatched, and if you have not been successful, remember there's another prize opportunity in our Latest Collecting Scheme—FOOTER-STAMPS—on Page 2. You must be in that, too!

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, the heroes of the New House at St. Jim's.

The New House trio recognised the School House juniors at the same moment, and they slowed down as they came on.

"Hallo!" ejaculated George Figgins. "Fancy meeting you!"

"Still rolling about in your old bus," remarked Kerr.

"How have you got on for grub?" asked Fatty Wynn.

Tom Merry laughed.

"We were just speaking of you," he said.

"You were gassing about caravanning this vac, Figgy—"

"Wouldn't run to it," said Figgins, with a grin. "We've taken the jiggers out for a run instead. Fatty's been our guide over wild Wales, and now we're doing Devon. Hallo! What's that on your face, Gussy?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

"Is there anythin' on my face, Figgins?"

"Yes, rather!" said Figgins, with a very serious look. "There, sticking on the middle of your chivvy. What on earth is it?"

Arthur Augustus' hand flew to his face.

"Bai Jove! I can feel nothin' there, Figgy!"

"You've got your finger on it now."

"I've got my fingah on my nose."

"Oh, it's a nose, is it?" asked Figgins cheerily.

"Blessed if I should have thought it! Now you mention it I can see it's something like a nose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"So you're still vanning it?" said Kerr. "We're heading for Dartmoor. That your way?"

"That's it," said Tom Merry. "We're going slow, though."

"And we're going quick," said Figgins. "That's as it should be—New House always ahead of the School House—"

"Rats!"

"I dare say we shall see you again. Ta-ta!"

The New House Co. had slowed down to keep pace with the caravan. They drove at their pedals again, and Figgins playfully caught Arthur Augustus' panama hat, and jerked it off and carried it along with him.

Arthur Augustus gave a jump.

"Figgins, you ass—"

"Good-bye-ee!" sang Figgins.

"Give me my hat, you uttah ass!" shouted Arthur Augustus, dashing in pursuit of the merry cyclists.

"Bow-wow!"

Figgins put the panama on over his cap and rode on merrily, with the swell of St. Jim's dashing frantically in pursuit.

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

"You feahful wottah, give me my hat!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

Figgins smiled round at him.

Kerr and Wynn chuckled.

The three riders slowed down to let Arthur Augustus come nearer, and the swell of St. Jim's made a clutch at Figgins.

Figgy's bike shot forward again, and Arthur Augustus, overbalancing himself, fell on his knees.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh cwumbs! Ow!"

Figgins circled round on his bike, and dropped the hat on Gussy's head as he knelt in a bewildered state. Then he rode on again after his comrades, chortling.

Arthur Augustus staggered up.

"Oh cwumbs! The feahful wuffians!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not see anythin' to cackle at, you uttah duffahs!" shouted Arthur Augustus wrathfully. "Look at the knees of my twousahs!"

The caravanners looked, and roared again.

The knees of Gussy's beautiful bags had certainly lost their glory.

"If you fellows wegard this as funny—" exclaimed Arthur Augustus heatedly.

"We do! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats! The next time I meet that wuffian Figgins I shall give him a feahful thwashin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wepeat—wats!"

And, with that crushing remark, Arthur Augustus retired into the van to dust his trousers.

CHAPTER 2.

Gussy to the Rescue!

"WHO'S for a swim?"
 "Hear, hear!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"

The caravan halted.

It was a couple of hours since the meeting with Figgins & Co., and those cheerful juniors had long been lost to sight.

The caravan was following a solitary track, with deep woods on either side, and the sight of a stream glistening through the trees was grateful and comforting to the warm and dusty caravanners.

"Just the place for us!" remarked Tom Merry. "We can tie up the horse here, and there seems to be nobody about."

"Yaas, wathah! The only drawback to cawavannin' is the lack of facilities for wegulah bathin'," observed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Pway don't get out of my sight in the watah."

"Why not?" demanded Blake.

"It is wathah a wowwy havin' you weekless youngstahs to look aftah, you know."

"Ass!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"B-r-r-r-r!"

"I do not wegard that as an intelligint wemark, Blake, and I wepeat, you had bettah not get too far away fwom me!" said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I wegard myself as bein' responsible for your safety."

The caravanners grinned.

Arthur Augustus' sense of responsibility for them was very real—to him; but the other fellows persisted in declining to take it seriously.

Circumstances was tethered in the grass beside the lane, and he cropped away contentedly as the caravanners prepared for their plunge.

With their towels and bathing costumes, the seven juniors left the van and made their way through the trees towards the stream.

The stream ran a hundred yards or so from the lane, and it was a lonely spot, overshadowed by big trees. The hot sun glinted through the foliage overhead. The sight of the cool water was very refreshing, and the caravanners were prepared to enjoy their plunge.

They stripped in the thickets and put on their bathing costumes, and splashed in merrily.

Seven heads dotted the shining stream. The juniors could all swim, and they were enjoying themselves thoroughly.

Arthur Augustus, with his sense of responsibility for the party strong upon him, kept an eye upon his comrades. And he considered it fortunate he did so, for there came a sudden, sharp cry from Monty Lowther:

"Oh! Ow!"

"Lowthah! What's the mattah?"

"Oh! Ah! Oop!"

Lowther threw up his hands and disappeared under the water.

Like an arrow from a bow, Arthur Augustus plunged to the rescue.

It was rather remarkable that neither Tom Merry nor Manners appeared to be alarmed by the danger of their chum. And Blake, Herries, and Digby preserved their equanimity in quite a wonderful way. Arthur Augustus was far too excited to notice these circumstances.

He plunged wildly after Monty Lowther, who had disappeared from view.

Down went Arthur Augustus after the drowning

youth. He came up again, with Lowther clinging to his hair.

"Hold on, deah boy!" gasped Arthur Augustus, as soon as his head was above water.

"Help!" moaned Lowther faintly.

"I'm helpin' you, deah boy. Pway take hold of my shoudjah; you are pullin' my hair feahfully— Yaw-oooooh!"

"Help!"

"Oh cwikey!"

Monty Lowther seemed too far gone to understand. He clung to Arthur Augustus' hair with a grip of iron, and the swell of St. Jim's fairly howled with anguish.

But he endured that anguish with great fortitude as he rushed Monty Lowther to the bank.

Lowther was bundled ashore, gasping, and he still held on to Gussy's hair.

"Welease me, Lowthah!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "You are quite safe now."

There was a sudden howl from Tom Merry in the stream:

"Help!"

Monty Lowther released Gussy's hair at last.

The swell of St. Jim's rubbed his head as he spun round towards the stream. Tom Merry was



"Honest, sir, it must have been woodpeckers!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Rorke, 1250, Pretorius Street, Hatfield, Pretoria, S. Africa.

struggling in the water a few yards from the bank, and as Gussy's startled gaze fell upon him he sank.

Splash!

Arthur Augustus dived promptly.

The other swimmers were at a little distance, and did not seem to have observed the distress of the captain of the Shell. Fortunately, Arthur Augustus was there.

With rapid strokes, D'Arcy reached the spot where Tom Merry had sunk just as Tom came to the surface again.

"Help!" he moaned.

"All wight, deah boy! Hold on to me!" panted Arthur Augustus.

The Shell fellow clutched his hair, and Arthur Augustus gave a howl, which turned into a gurgle as his head was dragged under.

"Yooooooogh!"

D'Arcy's head came up, with Tom holding on to his hair with a frantic clutch.

Gussy struck out for the bank in desperation.

Tom Merry was safely piloted ashore, and he sank down in the grass beside Monty Lowther.

"Saved!" gasped Lowther dramatically.

"Bai Jove! I am vevy glad that I saved you fellows, but I weally wish you had not tugged my hair!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "Howevah, I

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

twist you wealise now that it is wathah lucky I am here to look aftah you!"

"Help!" came in a howl from the stream.

"Bai Jove!"

Manners was struggling wildly in the water. As Arthur Augustus stared at him he threw up his hands and sank.

"Oh cwikey!"

Arthur Augustus plunged valiantly in. He was fatigued with his exertions; but a life was at stake, and the noble Gussy did not think of his fatigue.

Manners came up, struggling feebly; but in a few seconds Gussy's strong grasp was upon him.

"Help!" moaned Manners.

"All sewene now!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I've got you. Hold on to my shouldah—yawoooh!"

It was Arthur Augustus' hair that Manners gripped, and he held on like a limpet to a rock.

"Welease my hair, Mannahs!" spluttered Arthur Augustus.

"Save me!"

"I'm savin' you, you silly ass; but you need not pull my hair out by the woots!" wailed Arthur Augustus. "Welease me, Mannahs, and I will get you ashore in a jiffy!"

"Save me!"

"Oh cwumbs! Oh deah! Yawoooh!"

There was no help for it. Arthur Augustus had to get Manners ashore with that deadly grip on his hair.

Manners was landed in the grass, and Arthur Augustus sat down, dripping and gasping, and rubbed his head.

He was still rubbing it when a wild howl came from Jack Blake in midstream:

"Help!"

"Gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus scrambled up, and fairly blinked at Jack Blake as the latter struggled in the water.

Gussy was not a suspicious youth, but four rescues being required one after another was so remarkable that he began to have his suspicions, especially as he observed that Dig and Herries appeared to be quite indifferent to Blake's peril.

"Hewwies!" he shouted. "Digby! Go and help Blake!"

The two juniors, apparently deaf, swam on.

Jack Blake threw up his hands and disappeared below the water.

"Save him, Gussy!" shouted Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus had his doubts by this time, but he could not leave Blake under the water while his doubts were resolved. He plunged in and swam to the Fourth Former's rescue.

Blake came up, and made a grasp at Gussy's head, evidently in search of his hair.

Arthur Augustus backed away.

"Blake, you ass—"

"Save me!"

"I wefuse to save you unless you let my hair alone!"

"Help!"

Blake went under again, and Arthur Augustus made a grab at him and dragged him up.

The next instant Blake's grasp was on his hair.

"Yawoooh! Leggo!" howled Arthur Augustus.

"Save me!"

"Stop pullin' my hair, you beast!"

"Help!"

"I am perfectly aware that you are only wottin', you wottah!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "You

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

are not in dangah at all, you boundah! You have been pullin' my leg!"

"And now I'm pulling your hair," grinned Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yell of laughter from the bathers.

The Terrible Three on the bank roared; Dig and Herries in the water yelled, and Blake chortled merrily as he held on to Gussy's hair.

It was only too plain now that Gussy's aristocratic leg had been pulled. The little comedy had been arranged among the caravanners for his especial benefit—in return for his fatherly attention.

"You uttah wottah, Blake! I shall punch your nose if you do not let go!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus jerked his head away, and swam ashore. As he scrambled out of the water he fixed a stern glance upon the Terrible Three, which ought to have withered them on the spot. But it didn't. They only yelled.

"This is a twick!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly.

"Has that dawned on you at last, old chap?" asked Monty Lowther blandly.

"I wegard you—"

"You haven't rescued Herries and Dig yet," said Manners.

"What?"

"Help!" yelled Herries and Digby together in great merriment.

"Ha, ha, ha! Save us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah asses!" roared Arthur Augustus in great wrath. "I wegard you all as a set of pwaactical jokin' wottahs! Wats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three, quite recovered now, plunged into the water again; and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in a state of great wrath and indignation, proceeded to towel himself down.

CHAPTER 3.

DONE BROWN!

"GWEAT Scott!"

Arthur Augustus uttered that exclamation a few minutes later.

Tom Merry & Co. were still in the stream, but Arthur Augustus had proceeded to the thicket where the clothes had been left.

Then he uttered the startled exclamation, which reached the ears of his comrades.

"Hallo, what's up?" called out Blake from the stream.

"The clobber's gone!"

"What?"

Six startled youths scrambled out of the stream and rushed to join Arthur Augustus.

The clothes had been left on the greensward in the thickets, quite out of sight of anyone passing through the wood or along the lane—and, so far as the bathers were aware, no one had passed.

But the clothes were gone.

A straw hat and a shoe remained, and that was all. But pinned to a tree was a slip of paper, and on the paper was written, in a rather sprawling hand:

"Thanks!—G. F."

Tom Merry & Co. blinked at the paper. They knew the "fist" of George Figgins of the New House at St. Jim's.



"Help!" moaned Lowther faintly. "I'm helpin' you, deah boy!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Take hold of my shouldah—you are pullin' my hair feahfully. Yawwooop!" Monty Lowther seemed too far gone to understand. He clung to Gussy's hair with a grip like iron.

"Figgins!" gasped Tom Merry.
 "Figgins & Co.—they've taken our clobber!" roared Blake.
 "Bai Jove!"
 "I—I—I'll give 'em thanks!" ejaculated Herries.
 "The New House rotters! They must have been watching all the time!"
 "Oh dear!"

The seven School House juniors of St. Jim's stared round them in search of the enemy, but there was no sign of Figgins & Co. to be seen.

It was pretty clear that the New House Co. had been keeping eye, from a distance, on the caravanners; and the vanners' bathing excursion had given them an opportunity that was too good to be lost.

"Bai Jove! They nevah weally wode on aftah they left us!" said Arthur Augustus. "They must have stopped and watched us, you know, lookin' for a chance to play a wotten New House twick on us!"

"The rotters!"

"The worms!"

"You fellows have been vevy careless, I must say. Now our clobber is gone!" said Arthur Augustus severely.

"Your fault as much as anybody's, ass!" snapped Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Well, isn't it?" roared Herries.

"Pway do not argue, Hewwies. There is no time for arguin'," said the swell of St. Jim's. "The question is, where are those boundahs, and where is our clobber?"

"They can't be far away," said Tom. "Anyhow, we've got some other clobber in the van."

"We can scarcely pwoceed to the cawavan, Tom

Mewwy, in our pwesent attiah. The van is by the open lane, and anyone might pass—"

"Let 'em pass!"

Tom Merry wrapped his towel round him and started for the caravan.

His comrades followed his example—Arthur Augustus the last, after considerable hesitation.

They hurried through the trees, and reached the open grass where the caravan had been halted. But there was another surprise awaiting them.

The caravan was no longer there!

They had left Circumstances in harness and tethered to a tree, and he certainly could not have wandered. But he was gone!

But on the tree to which Circumstances had been tied a slip of paper was pinned. It bore an inscription with which they were now familiar:

"Thanks!—G. F."

"The—the van's gone!" murmured Blake dazedly.

"Oh cwikey!"

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another.

They were deserted, in a lonely Devon lane, in the light attire of bathing costumes and towels, and clothes and horse and van were gone—captured by their old rivals of St. Jim's. Words could not have done justice to their feelings.

Arthur Augustus was the first to speak.

"You uttah asses!" was what he said.

"You burbling jabberwock!" was Blake's reply.

"A look-out ought to have been kept, as we knew those New House boundahs were in the neighbourhood," said D'Arcy, with great severity.

"Why didn't you keep it, then?" shrieked Blake.

"Oh, pway don't argue! I nevah saw such chaps as you for arguin'! We've got to get that clobber back. I pwesume that even those New House wuffians cannot intend to leave us stwanded like this?"

"Well, hardly," said Tom Merry.

"Hallo! There's Figgins!"

A cyclist came riding cheerfully up the lane. George Figgins grinned, and waved his hand to the sparsely clad caravanners under the trees.

He stopped within speaking distance, with a foot on his bike, ready to mount again at a moment's warning.

"Hallo! You look a cheerful crew!" he called out. "Looking for your van?"

"Bwing us our clobber, you wottah!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Look here, Figgins—" began Tom Merry.

"We'll scrag you!" roared Herries.

"Come along and do it!" grinned Figgins.

The caravanners made a move towards him, and Figgins put his leg over his bike.

Tom Merry & Co. halted. It was very clear that they had no chance of getting to close quarters with Figgins, unless he chose.

"Hold on!" said Tom. "We shall have to make terms with the bounder. Look here, Figgins, you've done us, and we own up! Now hand us back our clobber."

Figgins shook his head.

"We shall be back at St. Jim's before long," he said. "You School House worms make out that you're Cock House at St. Jim's. We're going to start the new term with a written admission from you that you're not. I want

seven signatures on this paper, and I'll give you a quarter of an hour to think it over."

Figgins tossed the paper towards the School House crowd, and mounted his bike, and rode off the way he had come—deaf to the wrathful remarks that were hurled after him.

The paper fluttered in the grass, and Tom Merry ran forward and picked it up. And with knitted brows the seven caravanners read what was written on the paper in Figgins' sprawling hand:

"THIS IS TO CERTIFY that we, the undersigned members of the School House, own up that the New House is Cock House at St. Jim's, and that we humbly crave pardon for having maintained otherwise.

"As witness our signatures—"

CHAPTER 4.

Surrender!

TOM MERRY & CO. looked at one another. Tom crumpled the precious document in his hand.

"Tear it up!" growled Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We're in rather a fix, though," remarked Manners. "If those bounders don't give us back our clobber—"

"We can't go into a town like this," said Lowther.

"We can't even be seen on the road," said Blake. "They've got us by the short hairs this time, and no mistake!"

"What a feahful fix, deah boys! But we cannot sign that papah! We shall be laughed to death by St. Jim's next term. Those boundahs will show it all ovah the school."

"They're bound to give us our clobber sooner or later!" growled Herries. "Let's stick it out."

"H'm!" said Tom Merry.

The captain of the Shell still held the paper in his hand, and he made no motion to tear it up. The fact was that Tom realised that the New House Co. had the whip-hand, and that there was "nothing doing." There was much debate among the exasperated caravanners, while fifteen minutes passed; but no decision was arrived at when there was the whir of a bicycle on the road again.

George Figgins appeared in sight, grinning, and he halted at a safe distance as before.

"Made up your minds?" he called out.

"You wottah!"

"New House cad!"

"We'll smash you!"

Figgins chuckled.

"We've had a nice tea in your caravan," he remarked. "We've found everything we wanted. Fatty told me to mention that the cake was good."

"Oh, you rotters!"

"I'll give you another hour to think it over, if you like," said Figgins generously. "I wouldn't hurry you for anything. But you can bet on it that you won't get your clobber back, or your van, either, till you've put your fists to that giddy document."

"Weally, Figgins—"

"We're going to put it up in the study at St. Jim's next term," explained Figgins.



All out
for
another
record

This year's grand new issue of MODERN BOYS ANNUAL is a winner from the start. Monster airliners, streamlined trains, the countless wonders of the modern age crowd its pages in a fascinating pageant of progress. Every up-to-date boy needs this thrillingly up-to-date book.

MODERN BOYS ANNUAL 6/-

On sale at all
Newsagents and Bookseller
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

"Worth being framed, I think. What do you think?"

"I wegard you——"

"I'll give you another hour," said Figgins, putting his leg over his bicycle again.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Tom Merry desperately.

"Well?"

"You can't keep us without our clobber——"

"Wathah not!"

"My dear chap, if you don't sign that paper before dark, we're going on with your van, and you'll be left stranded. That's a tip."

"You wouldn't dare!" yelled Herries.

"Wait and see," grinned the New House junior. "This is where you School House boudners get it in the neck!"

"Oh, you rotter!"

"You—you worm!"

"Thanks! I've had enough compliments," said Figgins cheerily. "I'm off! I'll see you again in an hour. Fatty will have made a pretty deep inroad on your grub by that time. He was going strong when I left him. You don't mind that?"

The exasperated caravanners made a move towards Figgins.

"Hallo! Here come some ladies!" remarked Figgins. "You fellows know best whether you're fit to be seen."

There was a wild rush into the trees.

Two girl cyclists came skimming along the lane, and they passed Figgins, the caravanners lying very low in cover.

The girls rode on and disappeared, little dreaming of the remarkable scene they had very nearly witnessed.

Not till they were quite gone did Tom Merry & Co. venture out of cover.

"You—you New House rotter!" gasped Tom Merry, as he came into view again.

"Good-bye!" said Figgins.

"Hold on!"

"Sorry; can't stop!"

"We—we'll sign that paper!" howled Tom Merry, in desperation.

Figgins dismounted again.

"Now you're talking," he remarked. "Sign it, dear boys. You know you've got to, and you may as well get it over."

"I wefuse to sign that papah. Tom Mewwy! I wegard it as an infraction of my personal dig to do so," said Arthur Augustus severely.

"Oh, rats! You can sign it, if we do!" growled Digby.

"Weally, Dig——"

"Any chap who doesn't sign that paper won't get his clobber," said Figgins. "Gussy's at liberty to go about clad as a South Sea Islander if he likes. He may get run in."

"Bai Jove! If you weally mean to sign the papah, Tom Mewwy, pewwaps I had bettah sign it, too."

"We haven't any pen——" began Tom Merry.

"I've got a fountain-pen for you, old top!" chuckled Figgins. "It's ready if you want it."

"Chuck it over!"

There was no help for it; the caravanners had made up their minds to sign.

"We'll get the dashed paper back, somehow, before the new term!" muttered Blake.

"Yes, rather!"

Tom Merry caught the fountain-pen as Figgins tossed it over.

The paper was spread on a flat stone, and the

caravanners signed it in turn. It was a bitter pill to swallow.

Seven signatures adorned the document of surrender, Figgins watching the proceedings from a distance with a cheery grin.

Tom Merry held up the paper.

"Here you are, you rotter!"

"Good. It's pax now?" asked Figgins.

"Pax for to-day!" said Tom.

"That's all right, Honest Injun, you know."

"Honest Injun!" answered the caravanners.

The word of Tom Merry & Co. was their bond; and George Figgins advanced and received the paper.

The caravanners looked at him as if they could eat him; but their word was passed, and Figgins was safe.

"Good enough!" said Figgins cheerily. "You shall have your old van back now. Ta-ta! You look a happy family, and no mistake."



"Now you will have to stay there till the varnish dries!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Cooper, 1, Abbots Place, Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent.

And Figgins, chortling, mounted his bike and rode away.

Ten minutes later the St. Jim's caravan came rumbling up the road.

George Francis Kerr was driving, with a smiling face; and Figgins was riding a bike and wheeling Kerr's machine. Fatty Wynn was riding his bike, too, with one hand—the other holding a cake from which he took an occasional mouthful. The fat and shining face of David Llewellyn Wynn testified that he had had a good time in the caravan larder.

Kerr jumped down and took his bike.

"Here—your old bus!" he remarked. "Come on, Figg! We'll ask you fellows over to our study next term to see your signatures in a gilt frame!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins and Fatty Wynn.

The caravanners did not reply; they were under a strong temptation to rush Figgins & Co. and smite them hip and thigh. But they restrained their wrath. They had made it pax, and pax was sacred.

Figgins & Co. rode on, chuckling, and the caravanners hastily dived into the van in search of their clothes.

CHAPTER 5.

A Mystery!

"I CONSIDAH——"

"Pass the chips, Gussy!"

"Here are the chips, Blake. I considah——"

"Any more eggs?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

"Bothah the eggs! I considah—"

"Pour out the coffee, Gussy!"

"Wats!"

The caravanners were in camp on the borders of Dartmoor. They were hungry after their day's march, and they were enjoying their supper, though they had by no means forgotten their defeat at the hands of Figgins & Co. That defeat had to be wiped out somehow; but in the meantime the hungry voyagers enjoyed their supper.

"I considah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass sternly upon his comrades—"I considah, deah boys, that it is necessary for us to recaptuah that papah fwom Figgins & Co."

"Passed unanimously!" yawned Tom Merry.

"You haven't poured out the coffee, Gussy!"

"Wats!"

"Don't slack, you know!" urged Blake.

"I am speakin' at the pwsent moment, Blake!"

"Why specify the present moment?" murmured Monty Lowther. "Is there ever a moment when you're not speaking, Gussy?"

"I wefuse to weply to that, Lowthah! I wegard you as a silly ass! I was goin' to say that—"

"Coffee!"

"I was goin' to say that cawavannin' is all vewy well, but cawavannin' will have to stand ovah until we have wecaptuahed that document. We shall nevah be able to face the fellows next term if Figgins sticks that widiculous papah up in his study at St. Jim's."

"My dear man, that's all decided, settled, finished, and done with," said Blake. "If you've got any suggestion to make how it's to be done, that's a different matter."

"It has got to be done, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus. "And I have a suggestion to make."

"Not much good, I expect! I'd rather you poured out the coffee! Don't forget the strainer!"

"My ideah is—"

"You've got an idea?" inquired Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Whose?"

"My own, you ass!" roared Arthur Augustus. "If you are goin' to be a funny ass, Lowthah—"

"Not at all! That's your job, old top, and I won't poach!"

"The question awises," said Arthur Augustus, with a withering look at the humorist of the Shell, "how—"

"How we're going to get our coffee?" asked Blake.

"Certainly not! How are we goin' to wun down Figgins & Co., and make them disgorge that papah. And I have an ideah. Those boundahs are cyclin' a'round the countwy, and it is not much good followin' them in the cawavan; we go vewy much slowah in the cawavan."

"Not really?"

"Yaas, wathah! My ideah is to camp here for a bit, and I will take the bike and go scoutin'."

"What for?"

"To wun down Figgins & Co. When I have wun them down, you fellows can woll up—"

"When!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"As a fellow of tact and judgment, I wathah think I shall wun them down easily enough. It will be quite easy to make inqiwies after three fellows like Figgins & Co.—one a lanky boundah, and another as fat as a bawwel, and the third a sandy-coloured duffah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

"They are bound to put up somewhere, or camp somewhere, or somethin'," said Arthur Augustus sagely. "I am goin' out on the bike aftah suppah, and I twust I shall bwing you news in a vewy short time. You fellows must be weady to follow my lead."

"Who's going to wash-up?" inquired Herries.

"Bothah the washin' up!"

"It's got to be done, though!"

"I must wemark, Hewwies," said Arthur Augustus severely, "that it is like you to think of such things as washin' up when the honah of the School House is at stake! Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus, having finished his supper, wheeled out the bike, loftily disregarding the prosaic question of the washing-up.

He lighted both his lamps carefully and started. Tom Merry & Co. grinned as the swell of St. Jim's disappeared in the dusk. They were very anxious to get to close quarters with Figgins & Co. and wipe out their defeat; but they did not suppose that Gussy would be successful in running down the New House juniors. Indeed, if he were successful, it was only too probable that he would succeed in running his head into a hornets'-nest.

Moreover, pax had been declared for the day, and until midnight the School House chums were on parole, as it were; and certainly they were not likely to turn out in the small hours of the morning to go on the warpath under Gussy's lead. So there was no hurry to scout for the enemy; but they gave Gussy his head to save argument.

They chatted over supper; and after supper there was washing-up, and the horse was attended to, and the tent erected, and the caravanners prepared to turn in.

Arthur Augustus had not returned by that time.

Jack Blake looked rather anxiously along the dusky track over the moor. It occurred to him that the swell of St. Jim's might easily lose himself in that lonely region and might spend the remainder of the night finding his way back.

"Turning in?" called out Tom Merry.

Blake came back from the road.

"Well, I suppose it's no good waiting for Gussy," he said.

"Not much good. He can turn in when he comes back. If he's lost his way he mayn't come home before the milk in the morning," said the captain of the Shell, with a smile.

"The ass!" grunted Blake.

The Terrible Three turned into the van, and Blake & Co. into the tent. There was a place there for the noble Gussy when he came back—if he did come back.

The caravanners, tired with their day's march, were soon asleep.

Overhead the stars glimmered in the sky, and the night wind sighed in the thick herbage of the moor.

The caravanners slept soundly enough, but Tom Merry awakened at last.

He rose on his elbow in the bunk and listened.

Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

It was the sound of a bicycle bell on the road across the moor, twenty yards or so from the spot where the caravanners had camped. The ringing of the bike bell was almost continuous.

"Silly ass, whoever it is!" grunted Tom Merry. "What the thump does he want to make all that noise for? Blow him!"

There was a sleepy voice from Manners' bunk.

"What thumping chump is kicking up that row?"

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

A famous explorer says when he was in the Arctic he used to live on candles and blubber. So would anyone who had to eat candles!

Overheard in the Common-room: "Gussy can talk for hours on any subject," said Blake. "That's nothing," replied Talbot; "you should hear Skimpole—he doesn't need a subject."

Story: "Can't understand why this tandem is so hard to pedal," complained Pratt, pedalling in front. "What I don't like about it," said French, from behind, "is the way the footrests keep going up and down!"

A physiologist says the strong silent man is giving way to the man who can laugh. The he-man becomes the he-he-he man!

Reflection: In this buttonless era, a chap has to be careful about his zip-pearance!

"I was at Oxford five years, taking medicine," boasted Gore's cousin. "Do you think it did you any good?" asked Gore.

A reader asks what use he can make of a

steamroller which has been left him in a will. What about using it to press your trousers, old chap?

Wait for it: The most important clue in a new mystery play is a door post. The plot hinges upon it.

A psychologist says paying a bill is a real tonic. 10,000 doctors enthusiastically recommend it!

Story: "We saved our lives by cutting up our boots and eating them," said the explorer at the boarding house dinner. "Be quiet," whispered a fellow boarder, "you might give the landlady an idea!"

"Wrestling Match Between Two Uncles." Strained relations?

Did you hear about the Nature lover who placed soap and towel beside the bird bath? You didn't? Well, it's good, clean fun, isn't it?

Here's a success story in four acts: Act I: High chair. Act II: High school. Act III: High stool. Act IV: High finance. Curtain!

"Gore says dancing is in his blood," observed Skimpole. "Must be something wrong with his circulation, then," said Talbot, "because it hasn't gone to his feet!"

Try this: "Sorry I haven't a penny," said Aubrey Rucke of the Shell, tendering a pound note on a London bus. "Don't you worry, sir," replied the conductor, "you'll have 239 of 'em in a minute!"

Remember, says Grundy, wrestling is an excellent aid to health. A grapple a day keeps the doctor away!

Keep smiling, chaps!

"Some ass of a cyclist on the road!" answered Tom.

"Go out and slaughter him!"

"Too sleepy."

Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

The bike bell rang on and on and on. It was rather difficult to sleep in the circumstances.

"I say, can it be Gussy coming home?" ejaculated Monty Lowther, from the bunk below.

"No reason why he should stay on the road ringing his bell, is there?" asked Tom.

"Not that I know of. But why should anybody do it? And somebody's doing it," said Lowther.

"Some potty chump, I should think."

"Blessed if I can sleep!"

Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

Tom Merry put a leg over the side of the bunk.

"It's a bit too thick!" he said. "Whoever is kicking up that row has got to be stopped! Let's go out together and mop him up."

"Good!"

Blake's voice was heard at the door of the van.

"You fellows awake?"

"Yes, rather! We can't sleep in that racket!

We're going out to kill the cheerful lunatic!"

"So am I!"

The Terrible Three came down from the van

half-dressed, and they found Blake, Herries, and Digby outside.

The Fourth Formers had found it quite impossible to sleep while the raucous solo was being played on the bicycle bell twenty yards away.

Breathing wrath, the six juniors started for the road with the most ferocious intentions towards the unknown cyclist who was recklessly disturbing the repose of the tired caravanners.

CHAPTER 6.

Gussy's Luck!

"THERE he is!" murmured Tom Merry.

The jarring clang of the bicycle bell rang on.

In the dim starlight the juniors could only make out the figure on the road. The cyclist was standing beside his machine, holding it by the handles, and ringing the bell for all he was worth.

Why any cyclist should halt on the road and ring his bell, as if for a wager, at two in the morning was a deep mystery. But the chuns of St. Jim's were not so keen on solving the mystery as on bumping the cyclist. They con-

sidered that he was asking for drastic treatment—and they were quite prepared to administer it.

"Collar him!" muttered Blake.

The bushes beside the road screened the juniors as they crept on towards the enemy. They were very careful to advance in cover. They did not want the cyclist to jump on his machine and pedal away and escape vengeance.

"Rush him!"

Six juniors came through the bushes with a swoop, and pounced on the dim, shadowy form of the cyclist.

Then there was a wild yell:

"Yawwooop!"

"Gussy!" roared Blake.

"D'Arcy!"

"It's that ass!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Welease me, you uttah asses! Yawwooooh!"

The astounded juniors released the cyclist. They had not supposed for a moment that it was Arthur Augustus. They could not be expected to guess that on his return Arthur Augustus would stop twenty yards from the camp and ring his bell incessantly.

"You thumping idiot!" roared Blake. "What's the game?"

"Gussy playing practical jokes on his pals!" growled Herries. "Give him a jolly good bumping!"

"Yes, rather!"

"You feahful duffahs!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "Can't you see I'm tied to the bike, you uttah asses? Welease me!"

"Tut-tut-tied to the bike!" stuttered Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Ow!"

"My hat!"

Tom Merry turned on the light of his electric torch. The juniors simply blinked at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

His wrists were tied to the handlebars with cord, just allowing him freedom enough to ring his bell; another piece of cord attached one of his legs to a pedal.

"What—what—what the merry dickens are you playing this game for, Gussy?" howled Blake.

"What have you tied yourself up like that for?"

"You uttah ass! Do you think I tied myself up?" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"Who did, then?"

"Figgins & Co., you asses!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to laugh at, you duffahs!" howled Arthur Augustus, blinking at the juniors. "Welease me at once, you duffahs! I am in a vevy uncomfortable posish. Yow!"

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

It was evident that the School House scout had found Figgins & Co., after all, not according to expectations. But, quite according to expectations, in finding them he had found a hornets'-nest.

Blake, gasping with merriment, untied the cords. It was rather a long process.

"Why did you feahful asses wush on me like that?" demanded Arthur Augustus indignantly.

"Why did you kick up that thundering row and wake us up?" retorted Tom Merry.

"I was twyin' to attwack your attention, you duffah! I called out sevewal times, and you did

THE GEM LIBRARY.—NO. 1,596.

not heah me, so I wang the bell to wake you up!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "If you had come sconeah you might have collahed Figgins & Co. Now they are gone!"

"Did they bring you here?" grinned Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I wan them down, just as I told you I would," gasped Arthur Augustus. "They were campin' on the moor, some miles away. Somehow, they spotted me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway do not cackle, deah boys! I weally do not know how they spotted me, as I was vevy cautious; but they did, and the howwid boundahs collahed me, you know, and made me a pwisonah. I thought they were asleep, you know, when I cwept wound to their camp, as it was aftah midnight; but I wathah think that Scots boundah, Kerr, sleeps with one eye open. And they collahed me quite wuffly, and that beast Figgins said it was vevy late for a little boy to be out alone—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh wats! And they bwrought me back, wheelin' my bike, you know, and they actually stuck a pin into me to make me march, you know, the awful wuffians! And when we awvired here they tied me like this, you know. I could not wheel the bike into the camp with my leg tied to the pedal, so I twied to wake up you fellows. Oh deah!"

The juniors roared.

Blake succeeded in getting the cords unfastened at last, and Arthur Augustus was free. He jammed his eyeglass into his eye and surveyed the chortling caravanners wrathfully.

"When you silly asses have done cacklin'—" he began hotly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pewwaps you will follow me, and we will mop up Figgins & Co. They are pwobably not more than a mile away."

"Seven of us on one bike?" asked Blake.

"Bai Jove, no! But—"

"Then how are we going to catch them on foot, when they've got a mile start, and they're on bikes?"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that. How-evah—"

"I'm turning in!" grunted Herries. "If you kick up any more shindies to-night, Gussy, we'll slaughter you!"

"Weally, Hewvies—"

"You can go scouting again, if you like," chuckled Monty Lowther. "If you do, don't come home till morning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The caravanners returned to their camp, chortling. Arthur Augustus followed them, sniffing. He did not go scouting again. He was fed up with scouting for that night.

CHAPTER 7.

Recaptured!

"I'VE got an idea!"

George Francis Kerr of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's made the remark.

And Figgins and Fatty Wynn replied:

"Go it!"

Figgins & Co. were taking it easy. It was the day following their encounter with the School House party—an encounter which had ended very much to the satisfaction of the New House trio.

The afternoon sun was streaming down on the

three cyclists as they lay resting on the green bank by the road, their machines close at hand.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's scouting expedition the previous night had rather disturbed the night's rest for the three cyclists. They were making up for it by a rest in the grass in the sunny afternoon. It was very pleasant in the thick grass, with the sun shining upon them.

A few yards away from them ran the road, on which motor-cars buzzed by every now and then.

"I've been thinking," continued the Scots junior, "now we've dropped on those School House duffers we can get a little harmless and necessary entertainment by pulling their legs. Now, I suppose you chaps know we're on Dartmoor?"

"Of course we do, ass!"

"What is Dartmoor famous for?"

"Blessed if I know," said Figgins. "It's jolly good air here."

"Haven't you ever heard of the convict prison?"

"Yes, now I come to think of it. What of it? We're jolly well not going to visit it!"

"Convicts sometimes escape," said Kerr.

"Do they? I hope we shan't meet any."

"I was thinking that there would be some excitement among those giddy caravanners if they met an escaped convict."

"Ha, ha, ha! I dare say there would!" Figgins chuckled. "But I suppose you're not thinking of helping a convict to escape, just to give them a scare?"

"That's exactly what I'm thinking of."

"Well, you ass!" said Fatty Wynn. "I say, Figgy, have you got any more toffee?"

"No."

"I knew you didn't get enough," said Fatty plaintively. "I told you, at the time, Figgy, that you weren't getting enough toffee."

"Bother the toffee!" said Figgins. "Look here, Kerr, what are you burbling about? I suppose it's a jape you're thinking of?"

"That's it! Have you forgotten the N.H.J.A.D.S.?" said Kerr. "Aren't we the leading lights of the New House Junior Amateur Dramatic Society? When we were playing 'Convict 99' didn't I look the part?"

"Just as if you were born in it," agreed Figgins. "But—"

"Well, we could borrow the things easily enough," said Kerr. "We could bike into Okehampton for them. There's bound to be a place there where you can get things for amateur theatricals. And an escaped convict dropping in on the caravanners—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins.

Fatty Wynn chuckled.

"We should have to get on their track again," said Kerr. "But that's easy enough; they can't be very far away, and it's easy enough to inquire for a red caravan. And—"

There was a rumble on the road, but the New House juniors did not heed it. Scores of vehicles had passed them as they lay in the grass. But the sound of a familiar voice suddenly startled them, and Kerr broke off abruptly.

"Bai Jove! Those New House wottahs!"

Figgins & Co. bounded to their feet.

The St. Jim's caravan was rolling along the road, with Blake driving and the other caravanners walking. It was an unexpected meeting,



A straw hat and a shoe were all that remained of the caravanners' clothes. But pinned to a tree was a slip of paper on which was written: "Thanks!—G. F." "Figgins & Co.!" roared Blake. "They've taken our clobber!"

and for a moment the rivals of St. Jim's blinked at one another.

Then there was a rush of the caravanners.

"Collar them!" roared Blake, throwing down the reins and leaping from the caravan.

Before Blake's feet touched the ground the other School House juniors were rushing to the attack.

Figgins & Co. had no time to get on their bikes—no time, indeed, to lift the machines from the grass. They had to put up their hands in defence as the caravanners swooped up the sloping bank and rushed on them.

Six against three were long odds; and the next moment it was seven against three. Figgins & Co. were driven back, manfully resisting.

"Sock it into them!" roared Herries.

"Yaas, wathah! Go for the boundahs!"

Back went Figgins & Co., retreating before the onslaught.

"Collar the bikes!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herries, Dig, and Manners seized the three machines and wheeled them into the road. Then the rest of the caravanners ceased the pursuit of Figgins & Co. and returned to the van.

On the grassy bank beside the road, the New House trio halted, panting and breathless.

Tom Merry waved his hand to them.

"Thanks for the bikes!" he called out. "They will come in useful."

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. And the caravanners roared.

"You—you—your School House rotters!" gasped George Figgins. "You're not going to collar our jiggers!"

"I wathah think we are, Figgy!"

"You can do Devon on foot!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Hiking is a very healthy exercise—a quite nice way of spending a vacation. You shall have your jiggers next term at St. Jim's."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here——" roared Fatty Wynn, in great wrath.

"Good-bye!"

"Give us our jiggers!" yelled Figgins.

"Ta-ta, old top!"

The caravan moved on, the victorious School House juniors wheeling the captured machines.

Figgins & Co., in great dismay, came down the grassy bank into the road and followed.

It was not much use their attempting to recapture their machines; the odds were too great. They tramped furiously after the grinning caravanners.

"Look here——" shouted Figgins at last.

Tom Merry glanced back.

"Hallo! You fellows still here?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We want our bikes!" roared Kerr.

"You can want, old chap!" grinned Blake.

"Like to come to terms?" asked Tom Merry cheerfully. "You've got a paper somewhere about you, Figgy, that we want."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'll give you three bikes for it," continued Tom generously. "That's a good price for a scrap of paper, isn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins breathed hard.

The document of surrender reposed safely in his pocket, and it was the intention of the Co. to have it framed and hung up in their study in the New House at St. Jim's. They had already looked forward to that triumph with great

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

satisfaction; but it looked now as if they had counted their chickens rather early. Certainly they were not prepared to "do" Devon on foot!

"Oh, you rotters!" gasped Figgins.

"Exchange is no robbery!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "When you make up your minds, you can come and change the paper for the bikes. Until then, we stick to the jiggers!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The caravanners swung on with the van merrily. Behind them tramped Figgins & Co. in great wrath and dismay. The rescue of the bikes was impossible; and Figgins realised that he had to come to terms.

But it took Figgins some time to make up his mind. A dusty mile had passed beneath their feet before Figgins could decide to swallow the pill.

"I—I suppose there's no help for it, you fellows!" grunted Figgins, at last.

Kerr and Wynn nodded assent. Evidently there was no help for it.

"Stop, you School House rotters!" called out Figgins desperately.

Tom Merry glanced back again.

"Made up your minds?" he asked.

"Yes, blow you!"

"Trot out the giddy document, then!"

The caravan halted, and Figgins came forward with the precious document in his hand.

Tom Merry took it and examined it and tore it into small fragments, amid chortles from his comrades. Then Figgins was allowed to take the bikes.

The St. Jim's van rolled on, Tom Merry & Co. smiling cheerfully back at the New House trio.

Figgins & Co. disappeared on the road behind, and the caravanners wended their way merrily over the wide expanse of Dartmoor. But the School House caravanners had not yet seen the last of their old rivals.

CHAPTER 8.

The Convict!

"WHAT the dickens——"
"What the thump——"
"What the thump——"

The caravan was camped on the moor, and Tom Merry & Co. were preparing supper. Digby had taken Circumstances away to tether him on the open moor while his comrades were busy with supper. And all of a sudden there was a clatter of hoofs, and Dig was seen speeding back to the camp at top speed, with Circumstances thundering along by his side.

The night was dark, and a few stars glimmered in the velvety sky. Dimly round the camp of the caravanners waved bunches of furze; nothing else was to be seen on the wide horizon.

Tom Merry & Co. stared blankly at Robert Arthur Digby as he came tearing back towards them.

Dig was running his hardest, and keeping Circumstances almost at a gallop by his side. He was panting with exertion as he ran.

"What's the mattah, deah boy?"

"What the merry dickens——?"

"Look out!" gasped Dig, as he reached his amazed comrades.

"Look out for what, ass? Is there a bull?"

"I—I saw him!" panted Digby. "He—he—he was lurking in the furze."

"Who was?" yelled Blake.

"The convict!"



**Detective Kerr
Investigates**

**No. 9.
THE
"HOLIDAY
ANNUAL"
MYSTERY!**

JACK BLAKE was surprised, on returning to his study after a short absence, to discover that his new copy of the "Holiday Annual"—which he had left on the table—had disappeared. His studymates, D'Arcy, Herries, and Digby, had not been in the study for some little while, and any fellow could have slipped in and "borrowed" the "Annual," if so disposed. Inquiry revealed that several members of the Shell and Fourth owned copies of the 1939 "Holiday Annual," but as Blake had no desire to bring wholesale charges, "Detective" Kerr made a few tactful inquiries.

KERR: Oh, Skimpole! I suppose you didn't happen to notice anybody coming out of Blake's study yesterday evening?

SKIMPOLE: I can't say I did. I know why you are asking me. I certainly went to Study No. 6 myself, to return a book D'Arcy had been kind enough to lend me. I knocked, but as there was no reply, I did not wait.

KERR: I see. Has anybody in your study got a "Holiday Annual"?

SKIMPOLE: Yes. Talbot has a copy. But surely you do not suspect Talbot of purloining it, Kerr? A fellow of Talbot's unimpeachable character—

KERR: Quite. Well, thanks, Skimmy. It seems I'm going to find a lot of fellows with copies of the "Holiday Annual" who can't possibly be suspected of "borrowing" them without permission. The worst of it is, Blake had only just bought the "Annual," and hadn't even written his name on the flyleaf.

KERR: Ever read the "Holiday Annual," Racke?

RACKE: It's not a bad five bobsworth, I hear. I was thinking of getting one. But I'm not so hard up that I'd take Blake's, if that's what's in your mind, Kerr.

KERR: No, I didn't imagine you were, Racke. I'm just hoping to put my finger on any fellow who happened to be near the Fourth Form passage last night, and saw the unknown "borrower" leaving Blake's study.

"The what?"

"A—a—a convict!" panted Digby. "I—I saw him! He made a move towards me, and—and I bolted!"

"A convict!" said Tom Merry, almost dazedly. "Bai Jové!"

The caravanners drew together. Their eyes scanned the deep shadows round the camp.

They were aware that the great convict establishment was not many miles away; but it had never crossed their minds that they might see

RACKE: Why not try Grundy? I saw him coming down the Fourth Form corridor, and he was showing a "Holiday Annual" to Wilkins and Gunn to-day, explaining it all to them, in his usual manner!

GRUNDY: I say, Kerr, have you seen the 1939 "Holiday Annual"? It's really quite amusing. These duffers, Wilkins and Gunn, don't seem to appreciate it as they should when I read bits out to them—

KERR: Don't think I'm suspecting you of having taken Blake's copy, Grundy; but did you notice anybody with a new copy when you were in the Fourth Form passage yesterday?

GRUNDY: I wasn't in the Fourth Form passage at all yesterday, that I remember. Who says I was?

KERR: Never mind. Perhaps the chap was only trying to fog me. If I could find a fellow with a motive—a hard-up fag, for instance, or—

GRUNDY: Young Piggott of the Third!

KERR: Why Piggott?

GRUNDY: Funny, I saw him sneaking into the Third Form Room with a yellow-covered book half-concealed under his jacket.

KERR: Now, Piggott, don't take it that I'm from New Scotland Yard, but have you a "Holiday Annual" in your possession?

PIGGOTT: What's it got to do with you if I have, Kerr?

KERR: Nothing. Provided it's your own, of course!

PIGGOTT: D'you think I'm a thief? Here, look for yourself!

KERR: Oh, I see! A new copy of the "Holiday Annual."

PIGGOTT: It's mine! A good many fellows at St. Jim's have got one, you know that. Look at the flyleaf, if you don't believe me. My name's there, plain enough.

KERR: Yes, so it is. "Reuben Piggott, August 27th, 1938." Is that when you bought it?

PIGGOTT: Yes, my uncle bought it for me, actually, during the vac.

KERR: What made you write your name in pencil, Piggott?

PIGGOTT: Why not? We're not so jolly fussy in the Third. But, at least, we can look after our own property, without going about accusing fellows of thieving, anyhow!

KERR: Maybe. I think Blake will be interested in what I have to tell him now, though.

(Has Kerr caught the culprit? If so, how did Piggott give himself away? See solution on page 35.)

anything of its inmates. Escapes from Dartmoor were infrequent enough; still, they occurred. And the thought that some desperate ruffian might be lurking about their encampment was not a pleasant one.

There was no sound, no movement from the shadows, save the sough of the grass and furze in the night wind.

"Are you sure, Dig?" asked Blake at last. Dig was quite pale.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

"I tell you, I saw him plainly!" he breathed. "He was skulking in a bush, and—and when I saw him—oh dear!" Dig's voice faltered. He had evidently had a scare.

"After all, he can't hurt us," said Tom Merry. "There are seven of us, and one convict can't be very dangerous."

"No fear!"

"It's all wight," said Arthur Augustus. "If he bothahs us, deah boys, we'll wecaptuah him and take him back to pwison."

But the caravanners were feeling uneasy, all the same. They were strong in numbers, but a hulking, desperate convict was a dangerous enemy to tackle.

They watched the shadows in great disquiet. There was no habitation within miles of them, and no help to be had if they needed it.

Arthur Augustus jumped into the van and brought out the golf-clubs. The clubs might be wanted now.

"Look!" muttered Manners suddenly.

The juniors caught their breath.

In the deep shadows among the bushes a creeping figure appeared in sight at last.

They felt their hearts leap.

As it came closer they recognised the convict garb of the creeping figure.

They watched the newcomer as if fascinated.

He was a short man—he did not seem taller than the juniors themselves—but he was very broad, and looked thick-set and strong.

His face as they saw it in the shadows looked very dark, and had what appeared to be a stubble of beard on the chin. It was also very dirty.

The eyebrows were very thick and heavy and black, and the nose was a dark red. Seldom or never had the St. Jim's juniors seen so savage and threatening a face.

They stood together in silence, the clubs in their hands, as the convict reached the camp.

The oil-stoves and a lantern shed a light over the camp, and they saw him more clearly as he came into the radius of light. His eyes glittered at them from under his bushy brows.

"Who are you?" demanded Tom Merry, breaking the silence at last. "What do you want here?"

The convict's eyes glittered at them.

"Food and clothes!" he muttered.

Tom shook his head.

"Like your cheek to ask!" he said. "You know very well that we can't help an escaped convict! You'd better clear off!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The man came closer. There was something grasped in his right hand which the juniors could not clearly see.

"You'd better keep your distance!" said Blake, grasping the iron-headed cleek. "You'll get hurt otherwise, my man!"

"Put down those clubs!" growled the convict in a deep, savage voice.

"Rats!"

"What are you doing here?"

"Caravanning."

"Good! Put down those clubs!" The convict's right hand rose, and the juniors felt a thrill of horrified excitement as the light glimmered on a steel tube. "Do you want me to fire?"

"Look here—"

"Drop those sticks at once!" snapped the convict. "I'm desperate! A man ain't particular after three years in choky! Wot do you think 'appened to the warden what this shooter belonged to? Do you want me to serve you the same? It's

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

the rope, anyhow, I reckon, an' one or two more won't make much difference to me!"

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

He was tempted to head a rush at the ruffian, but the glimmering tube of the firearm in his hand was too dangerous. If the ruffian had fired, the juniors could never have got near him with the golf-clubs. And his brutal, stubby face looked desperate.

The caravanners exchanged glances, and the golf-clubs were dropped into the grass at their feet.

They were utterly at the mercy of the convict, and it was no use asking for trouble that could only end one way.

"That's better!" muttered the ruffian. "Now give me some supper! I'm hungry!"

The juniors obeyed in silence.

The convict seated himself on a wheel, with his back to the van, evidently so that he could not be taken from behind.

The weapon did not leave his hand for a moment.

Tom Merry brought him a plate of sausages and chips that had been cooked for supper.

"Hold it while I eat!" grunted the convict.

With his weapon in his right hand, the convict ate with his left; but, in spite of his wolfish look, he did not seem very hungry. His supper was quickly finished.

"Do as you're told, and I won't 'urt you," he said. "I'm goin' to turn in in your van; it's long enough since I slept in a bed. But, mind, if you give any trouble, I'll drill you before you know what's 'appened to you!"

Tom Merry made no reply.

The convict stepped into the van and closed the door.

Outside, the juniors heard him turn into one of the bunks.

At a distance from the van the caravanners drew together, speaking in hushed tones. They were not thinking of supper now; their terrible guest filled their minds.

"This is a pretty go, and no mistake!" murmured Digby.

"Yaas, wathah! I think it is our duty, deah boys, to seize that wuffian and hand him ovah to the authorities!"

Blake grunted.

"We can't touch him, ass, when he's got a revolver! If he's really killed a warden, as he says, he wouldn't make any bones about potting us!"

"Yaas; but, weally, we can't let that feahful wuffian take possession of our van, Blake!"

"I'm not arguing with a convict and a pistol—I know that!"

"Not good enough!" said Manners, with a shake of the head.

"Something's got to be done, Mannahs!"

"It's plain enough what's to be done," said Tom Merry quietly. "That ruffian has turned into the van to sleep. More fool him! What we've got to do is bring the police here!"

"But how—"

"We're about four miles from a town here," said Tom. "But we've got the bike, and one of us can go—"

"That's a good ideah, Tom Mewwy. Who's goin'?"

"If the ruffian wakes up, and notices that one of us is gone—" muttered Henries.

"We can always run for it, if necessary, and leave him in the camp," said Blake. "Who's going on the bike?"

There was a whispered discussion, and it was settled that Blake was going.

Jack Blake wheeled the bicycle away very softly across the grass to the road, and did not mount till he was out of hearing of the caravan camp. Then he lighted his lamp, jumped into the saddle, and rode away at breakneck speed.

In the caravan camp Tom Merry & Co. waited with beating hearts.

From the van there came no sound.

CHAPTER 9.

The Capture!

"**H**OW long, I wonder?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

That was the thought in the minds of all the caravanners.

Supper was forgotten. The stoves were out. The caravanners were only thinking of their strange and perilous situation.

Inside the van the convict was apparently sleeping. At all events, no sound came from him. The juniors had heard him lock the door and turn into a bunk. Since then they had heard nothing. The man's utter recklessness in sleeping in the van was amazing. He could not expect that the vanners would take this invasion of their camp quietly. But it did not seem to have occurred to him that they would go for help.

If he would keep quiet in the van till help arrived, that was all the caravanners desired. When Blake came back with the police the ruffian would be dealt with fast enough.

Blake seemed a long time gone; but he had a good distance to go, and probably there might be delay at the police station. It was possible that the junior's story might be doubted. Still, the police were bound to come, on his positive assurance that there was an escaped convict at the caravan camp.

When would they come?

Tom Merry & Co. watched the road and watched the van in a state of great anxiety and uneasiness.

Still no movement or sound from the van. They concluded that the ruffian was tired out by his wanderings since he had escaped from prison. That was the only way of accounting for his recklessness in placing himself in danger of recapture in this way. There was a sound on the road at last.

"Here they come!"

It was the whir of a bicycle.

"Blake at last! My hat, it's not Blake!"

"That boundah Figgins!"

The light gleamed through the dusk as the cyclist came up.

It was Figgins of the New House, alone. He slowed down as he saw the School House juniors on the moor.

"Hallo! You fellows are up late," he called out. "No larks, you know."

"We're not much in a humour for larks!" grunted Herries.

"Wathah not!"

"Why, what's happened?" asked Figgins, getting off his bike and regarding the School House juniors very curiously.

Tom Merry pointed to the closed van.

"There's a blessed convict—"

"What?"

"An escaped convict from Dartmoor prison—"

"Gammon!" grinned Figgins.

"Weally, Figgy—"

"Honest Injun!" said Tom Merry. "Speak



PROFESSOR SKIMPOLE'S HOROSCOPE

This Week:

GEORGE HERRIES.

"I CAN'T spare a second just now, Skimpole," said Herries, pushing past me as I entered Study No. 8 in the Fourth Form passage. "You see, I'm just going down to feed my bulldog, Towser." "I'll come down with you," I volunteered. After feeding his dog, Herries looked at his watch regretfully. "Towser, old man, you've made me late. Now I shan't have time for my cornet practice before prep!" he said, half grumbling. "At any rate, you have time to give me your birth date," I put in brightly.

Under Gemini (The Twins, May 21st to June 21st), and the fiery planet Mars, Herries is shown as a rather gifted type, apt to be devoted to twin interests, torn between the two. He is over-hasty at times, and this may make him appear churlish. Through this there is the danger of good results being spoiled. His keenness should stand him in good stead, however, and he will certainly gain the respect and loyalty of his friends.

"You're right about my having two interests at once," Herries agreed. "I never know whether I'm happiest playing the latest tunes on my cornet or taking Towser out for a trot. However, I get full enjoyment from my interests—and really I don't care a fig what the stars say, Skimmy, old top!"

quietly, Figgy. We don't want to wake him up. He's gone to sleep in the van. Fagged out, I suppose. Blake's gone on the bike for the police."

Figgins jumped.

"For the p-police?" he stuttered.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"We're expecting him back every minute with the bobbies," said Monty Lowther. "What are you grinning at, dummy?"

"It's not a laughing matter, I suppose?"

"You're not pulling my leg?" asked Figgins. "You've really got a convict in the van?"

"Yes, you ass!"

"Why don't you collar him, then?"

"He's got a pistol."

"Great Scott!"

"Shush, d'eah boy! If the howwid bwute wakes up he may cleah off before Blake gets back with the peelahs."

Figgins whistled softly.

"I reckon I'll hang on a bit and see it out," he remarked. "Will Blake be long?"

"Any minute now."

So George Figgins waited, plainly very curious and interested on the subject of the caravanners' unwelcome guest.

Again there was the whir of a bike on the rough road, and it was accompanied by the staccato beat of a horse's hoofs.

"It's Blake this time," said Manners.

"And a mounted bobby—only one. Safer to have sent two or three, I should think," said Dig.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Jack Blake came whirring up, and jumped off his machine breathlessly.

A sturdy mounted constable drew rein, and regarded the schoolboy caravanners with a searching glance.

"What's this yarn?" he asked. "Where's the man?"

"In the van," said Tom Merry.

"It's queer!" said the constable abruptly. "As soon as the lad brought the news, the inspector telephoned to the prison, and was told that there had been no escape."

"Then they haven't found it out," answered Tom. "The man's here right enough, sleeping in the van at this minute. He's got a revolver, and he threatened us with it."

The constable nodded.

"Well, I'm sent here to see into it," he said.

He dismounted from his horse and strode towards the caravan. It was pretty plain that the constable had his doubts about the convict. Certainly his advance on the van was rather reckless, if the vehicle contained a desperate man armed with a deadly weapon.

"He thinks you're pulling his leg!" grinned George Figgins.

"He'll soon find out his mistake," said Tom.

"Get the clubs, you fellows. We may have to help."

"Yes, rather!"

With the golf-clubs in their grip, the juniors followed the constable. Reckless as he seemed to them, they were bound to help him in the struggle they expected to ensue.

The burly man tried the door of the van, and found that locked on the inside. He rapped on it with his truncheon.

"Open this door!"

"Bai Jove! Mind his wevolvah!" called out Arthur Augustus anxiously.

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Rap, rap, rap!

"Open this door!" shouted the constable.

"Who's there?" came a voice from within.

"You'll see! Open, in the name of the law!"

"All serene!"

The caravanners jumped as they heard that reply from within.

The door of the St. Jim's van opened.

The juniors closed up behind the constable, clubs in hand, ready to help him in the expected struggle with the desperado. They expected the opening of the caravan door to reveal the ruffian in convict garb.

Figgins remained on the road, with a foot on his bike. He did not seem to see any necessity for joining in the fray. In fact, he was grinning, as if he did not take the affair seriously at all. Probably he didn't.

"Weady, deah boys?" murmured Arthur Augustus. "Mind his wevolvah!"

"Keep back, you boys!" grunted the constable.

"Now then, show yourself, my man! Come out!"

A figure appeared in the doorway of the van. The light was dim, but the stubby face and the convict garb could be seen.

The constable jumped as he saw it.

"Surrender!" he rapped out, gripping his truncheon.

"Certainly! Shall I hand over my pistol?" asked the convict meekly.

"Yes—sharp!"

A hand came out of the doorway, holding the pistol by the barrel, with the butt extended for the constable to take it.

Tom Merry & Co blinked at the scene. This certainly did not look much like a reckless desperado.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

The constable took the pistol, and then he uttered an angry exclamation.

"Pish!"

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus dazedly.

Now that they were close to it, the juniors could see that "pistol" plainly. It was a toy pistol, and was certainly not made to shoot with; its probable value was about half-a-crown. That was the deadly weapon with which the convict had held the caravanners at bay.

"What's this game?" demanded the constable. "Look here, you get out, my man, and let's have a look at you!"

"Right you are, cocky!"



Tom Merry turned on the light of the torch, and the juniors tied to the handlebars, and one of his legs was attached to the handlebars. "Gussy?" howled Blake. "You uttah ass!"

And with that unexpected and surprising reply, the convict jumped out of the caravan.

CHAPTER 10.

Only Kerr!

TOM MERRY & Co. blinked at the convict. The constable stared at him.

From the road close by came a loud chortle from Figgins. Figgy evidently found the scene entertaining.

The convict nodded cheerily to the constable, whose stare was curious and suspicious. He took a handkerchief from his pocket and calmly rubbed it over his face.

The stubby appearance on his chin disappeared

and then he

Augustus

unions could
toy pistol,
with; its
That was
convict had

constable,
and let's have

under the rub; it evidently was not a growth of beard!

"What's the game?" repeated the constable surlily.

"Simply a transformation scene," answered the convict, taking off his bushy eyebrows, and giving his face a very different expression. And his voice was very different now, too!

Tom Merry gasped.

"I—I—I've heard that voice before! That isn't how he was speaking when he—"

"Bai Jove! It's a twick!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from Figgins.

"Who are you?" roared Blake.

"What's this mean?" growled the constable.



orch, and the juniors simply blinked at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. His wrists were
his legs was attached to a pedal. "What have you tied yourself up like that for,
You uttah ass!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "It was Figgins & Co.!"

ising reply,

the convict.

me "a loud
y found the

constable,
s. He took
only rubbed

disappeared

"I knew very well there wasn't any convict here. Pulling my leg, by gum! It's against the law to pull the leg of the police, as you will find!"

"But—but—who—what—"

"Are you going to take me to Dartmoor Prison, officer?" asked the convict cheerily. "If you don't mind, I'll change my clobber first!"

He ripped off the tunic, disclosing a sports jacket and grey flannel trousers underneath. His bulkiness was accounted for then. And, though his face was not recognisable, the truth was dawning upon the School House juniors of St. Jim's.

"Twicked!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Spoofed!" gasped Blake.

"Kerr!" roared Tom Merry, in great wrath.

"Kerr, bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from Figgins. "I

thought you fellows had got it wrong! It's not Convict No. 99 this journey! Ha, ha, ha!"

The "convict" grinned at the caravanners.

"What a pleasant evening!" he remarked.

"Thanks so much for the supper and the rest in the caravan! So good of you!"

"You spoofing rotter!" roared Blake furiously.

"You—you—you've made me bike four miles, and—and fetch a bobby, and—and—"

"Oh cwikey!"

The constable's face was growing grimmer and grimmer. That was natural in the circumstances. He had turned out at a late hour, and ridden four miles, to discover a practical joker in a caravan. It was not likely that the officer of the law would see the humorous side of the matter at once.

He dropped a heavy hand on Kerr's shoulder.

"What I want to know is," he said grimly, "what's this mean? Now, then, what have you been up to?"

Kerr smiled at him cheerfully.

"Only a little joke on these innocent ducks!" he explained. "I thought it would entertain them to see an escaped convict! See?"

"You young rascal!"

"My dear man, take your paw off my shoulder," said Kerr. "It's not against the law to play amateur theatricals on a moor, that I know of!"

The constable blinked at him.

"I—I suppose it ain't!" he admitted.

He released the New House junior.

Kerr twisted his convict "clobber" into a little bundle, smiling at the School House juniors as he did so.

The constable turned to them.

He had no cause of complaint against Kerr, who was certainly within his rights in playing practical jokes whenever he liked. But Jack Blake had brought the officer there, and the officer proceeded to tell Jack Blake what he thought of him, and his comrades what he thought of them.

Kerr, eyeing the School House juniors warily, backed towards the road. They were rather too busy with the constable to attend to him just then.

"I'm awfully sorry I brought you here, officer!" stammered Blake, with a crimson face. "I—I thought—"

"Yaas, wathah! We all thought—"

"You see, we supposed that it was a real convict!" gasped Tom Merry. "We thought that blessed thing was—was—was a pistol!"

"Oh, what a sell!" murmured Monty Lowther. "I—I say, officer, c-can we offer you a c-cup of coffee?"

"I've been brought four miles for this," he said. "I've got to make a report. Conveying false information to the police—that's what it is—"

"Oh dear!"

"Oh crikey!"

"But—but we thought—" gasped Manners.

"Weally, officah, if it had been a weal convict—"

"Yes, you see, if—if it had been a real one—"

"Four miles!" snorted the constable, unappeased. "Four miles, for a joke! This will have to be explained. You'd better all come to the station with me!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"We're awfully sowwy, deah' boy—I mean, officah!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps—pewwaps you would allow us to make you some

slight wecompense for the twouble you have been put to?"

"Four miles——"

"Pewwaps a couple of pounds, deah boy——"

The constable softened.

It was probable that five shillings would have made the matter right; but Arthur Augustus never thought in shillings.

"Of course, young men, I don't want to give you a lot of trouble, when you seem to have been taken in, as it were," said the constable genially.

And from that moment the conversation took quite a genial turn; and when, a few minutes later, the constable returned to his horse, his wrath seemed to have been quite appeased.

Meanwhile, Kerr had joined Figgins on the road, and he was only waiting to see the end of the juniors' argument with the majesty of the law.

As the constable started for his horse, Figgins put a long leg over his bike.

"Stop them!" roared Tom Merry.

But there was no time to stop them. The bike was in motion, with Figgins pedalling, and Kerr standing on the footrest behind, one hand resting on Piggy's shoulder. The bike shot away in the night, and a cluckle floated back from the New House juniors.

"Aftah them, deah boys!"

Jack Blake rushed to the machine. But he stopped. Figgins was whizzing away into the night with Kerr behind; and there was no doubt that Fatty Wynn was somewhere near at hand.

There was not much use in one fellow hurrying off in pursuit.

The constable rode off in an appeased mood, and the clatter of his horse's hoofs died away over the moor.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another.

"Aren't we goin' to win those boundahs down?" demanded Arthur Augustus.

Blake grunted.

"We've been done!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! And I considah——"

"Fancy it being Kerr all the time—that New House bouncer! We ought to have guessed——"

"Yaas, I woally think you fellows ought to have guessed!" said Arthur Augustus severely. "I must say I considah that you have wathah played the goat——"

"Did you guess?" roared Herries.

"Pway do not woah at me, Hewwies, as I have mentioned before. And now," said Arthur Augustus with dignity, "if we are not goin' aftah those boundahs, we had bettah have suppah. I am feahfully hungwy!"

And the St. Jim's caravanners sat down to supper—in rather a chastened mood.

It was quite a long time before Tom Merry & Co. were able to see the humorous side of their adventure with the convict. It was Figgins & Co. who saw the humour of it—and they were smiling as they went on their way—and their smiles might have been heard at quite a considerable distance.

CHAPTER 11.

Back to St. Jim's!

"HALLO!"

"Hallo, deah boy!"

"Here we are again!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

There was a crowd on the platform at Wayland Junction.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

St. Jim's fellows swarmed the platform from end to end. Train after train, from various points of the compass, disgorged them at the junction.

The vacation was over, and St. Jim's was gathering once more. And the caravanners, who had parted a week or two previously to scatter to their various homes, found themselves together once more on the platform.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was adorning the station with his noble person, with his brother Wally, when Blake, Herries, and Digby joined him. And a little later the Terrible Three appeared in the offing.

And the seven juniors, who had had so many pleasant weeks on the road together, proceeded to compare notes.

"I was woally sowwy to part with the old bus," remarked Arthur Augustus. "It was woally a wippin' wun we had acwoss the southern counties."

"Tip-top!" said Blake.

"Next vac I woally think we had bettah have anothah cawavan, and do the North of England," said Arthur Augustus. "I mean, next summah, of course. Is there anythin' to be seen in Yorkshire, Blake?"

Blake glared.

"More than in all the rest of England put together," he answered.

"Bow-wow!" said Tom Merry. "What about Hampshire?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And Somerset——"

"And Essex——"

"My dear men, they're not to be compared with Yorkshire!" answered Blake. "Still, it was a ripping run, and we did it well. Gussy was always getting into scrapes, of course——"

"Weally, Blake——"

"And we must admit that those New House bouncers rather did us," said Blake. "Have you seen any more of them?"

"Not a hair," said Tom Merry. "I suppose they're here, or they'll be here soon. If we'd run across them again in Devon, we'd have mopped them up, of course, but—but we didn't."

"We'll mop them up at St. Jim's," said Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hallo! There's Kangaroo, Dane, and Glyn, and old Talbot," Tom Merry rushed off to greet Talbot of the Shell.

There was a surge in the crowd, and three juniors came along, and one of them, a rather long-limbed youth, cheerily tipped Arthur Augustus' silk hat over his eyes.

"Bai Jove! Hallo, Figgins!"

Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn grinned at their old rivals of the School House.

"Here we are again!" said Figgins merrily. "Did you School House kids enjoy your little trip?"

"Oh, yaas!"

"Meet any more escaped convicts?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Figgins—— Bai Jove, if you tip my hat again, Figgins, I shall punch you silly nose, you know!"

Figgins grinned, and playfully tipped Gussy's hat off, and walked away with his chums.

Arthur Augustus breathed wrath as he rescued his topper, and then looked round for Figgins & Co. for vengeance. The chums of the New House had disappeared in the crowd.

There was a surge towards the bridge over the line to the other platform, where the local train for Rylcombe was waiting.

It was a very special train, double its usual length, to convey the St. Jim's crowd to the station for the school. But, big as it was, it was likely to be very considerably overcrowded.

There were piles and piles of luggage that looked as if they would never be dealt with; and fellows had bags in their hands as they crowded along the train.

Figgins & Co. had taken possession of a carriage, and thrown their bags in, and they held the door shut, with the firm intention of admitting only New House fellows. And there were loud tones of wrath when the Terrible Three arrived at the carriage with Talbot, and demanded admittance.

"No admission for dogs, or School House bounders!" said Figgins cheerily. "Run away and play!"

"Why, there's lots of room in the carriage!" exclaimed Jack Blake, arriving with D'Arcy, Herries, and Dig.

"Not for you, old top!"

"Let that door open!" roared Blake.

"Bow-wow!"

"Bai Jove! We'll make them open the door, deah boys, and then chuck them out!" said Arthur Augustus.

"This way, Reddy!" called out Figgins, as Redfern of the New House came along with Owen and Lawrence.

"Clear those New House bounders off!" said Tom Merry.

"You bet!"

"Charge!" roared Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The School House juniors charged, with brandished bags, and Redfern & Co. were swept away.

That was too much for Figgins; he couldn't stand by and see the New House defeated. He opened the door of the carriage and jumped out, with Kerr and Wynn close behind.

"Now's our chance!" murmured Blake.

The School House party rushed back.

Figgins & Co. jumped back into the carriage in time, but they had no time to close the door.

Blake had hold of it, and was holding it wide open.

Tom Merry charged in, and the New House trio hurled him back; but he came in again, with Manners and Lowther and Talbot behind, and there was a battle royal in the carriage.

Blake & Co. swarmed in after them, and the carriage was crammed.

There was not much room for scrapping, and the odds were too heavy for Figgins & Co.

The New House trio went down on the floor, and a dozen boots were planted on them to keep them there.

Blake drew the door shut.

"I rather think we're going in this carriage, after all," he remarked.

"Yaas, watah! Where's my eyeglass?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lemme gerrup!" roared Figgins. "Get your boot off my neck, Manners, you chump!"

"My boot's all right there, thanks!" answered Manners cheerfully.

"Yarooooh!" roared Fatty Wynn. "Get off

(Continued on next page.)



YOU can have all these wonderful BROCK'S Firework novelties — and lots more on Guy Fawkes night if you join our Club now. Somewhere near you is a shop displaying BROCK'S CLUB notice. Go to that shop—give the shopman a penny or so—he'll enter it on your savings card—and you're off. Add a copper or two each week, and as the Fifth gets near no doubt Dad will swell your savings with a shilling or two. Then you'll have the thrill of selecting Brock's latest firework surprises without dipping into your pocket specially.

Join
BROCK'S
'CRYSTAL PALACE'
FIREWORK CLUB Now!

Get your Club Card today-



HAVE YOU GOT
YOURS?

Write for Catalogue of Riley "Home" Billiard Tables NOW! Also full details of 32 Billiard Tables being GIVEN AWAY.

E. J. RILEY LTD., Raleigh Works, ACCRINGTON, and Dept. 29, 147, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.1.

STAMPS

300 DIFFERENT, incl. Airmail, Beautiful Uncommon Sets, Pictorials, Colonials, Price 6d. (Abroad 1/-).—WHITE, ENGINE LANE, LYB. WORCS.

my chest, Blake! You howling ass! You're squashing me!"

"All serene—I don't mind!"

"Yoop! Gerroff!"

Redfern & Co. appeared at the door, and a couple of School House juniors held it fast, and grinned at them through the window.

"Pass on, gents!" chuckled Blake. "No room!"

"Rescue!" bawled Figgins.

"Quiet, old top!" chided Herries. "If you yell like that I may tread on your features—"

"Rescue!"

"Like that—"

"Yaroooooh!"

"There, I told you so!"

"Yurrrrrgggghh!"

Redfern & Co. dragged at the door; but the door did not open.

A porter's voice yelled along the platform.

"Stand clear, there! There's a second train! Stand clear!"

"Wait for the second train, Reddy!" grinned Blake. "New House always waits, you know!"

"Rats! Leggo that door!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Stand back, there!"

The crowd remaining on the platform had to stand back.

The crowded train moved out of the station, Blake waving his hand to the New House juniors on the platform, and Reddy shaking his fist in response.

Tom Merry's carriage was crowded. There were four of the Shell, and four of the Fourth, as well as Figgins & Co. As there were no seats for Figgins & Co. they had to remain on the floor, and as they had strong objections to remaining on the floor an army of boots kept them there in spite of their objections.

It was not a happy journey for the heroes of the New House. It was their first experience as doornats. Fortunately for them, the journey was short.

The train ran into Rylcombe Station and Tom Merry & Co. swarmed out of the carriage.

There was likely to be a rush for the school buses, and the School House chums meant to be early in the rush.

Figgins & Co. scrambled up, dusty and breathless, and jumped out of the carriage after them. They were looking very red and very dishevelled.

"Our bus!" shouted Tom Merry. "Go for it!"

There were three buses waiting, but three certainly were not enough for the fellows who had crammed themselves into the Rylcombe train.

One was boarded by seniors, in sedate dignity, and the other two were quickly swarming with juniors. One of them drove off, swarming, and the other was rapidly loading.

Tom Merry & Co. had their places on board, with Kangaroo and his chums, and Trimble, and Kerruish, and Julian, and a crowd more of the School House, when Figgins & Co. arrived.

Figgins & Co. made a rush for the bus as it was starting.

"Jevver get left?" roared Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rush them!" gasped Figgins desperately.

The three New House fellows hung on desperately behind as the bus started down the old High Street of Rylcombe.

"Whip behind!" shouted Digby.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was certainly no room for Figgins & Co. in the bus; but they were determined not to be "left."

They hung on frantically, their feet kicking up clouds of dust behind.

Monty Lowther leaned over and gently squeezed an orange over Figgins' upturned, crimson face.

"Groooooch!" spluttered Figgins.

"Gimme room!" exclaimed Herries. "I've got a banana. He can have it down his neck!"

"Yarooooop!"

Figgins let go as the banana was squeezed down his neck.

It was rather too much for him.

Kangaroo leaned over and took hold of Kerr's nose with finger and thumb, amid yells of laughter from the bus.

"Snoooooch!" came from Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Say when!" said Kangaroo genially.

And he squeezed.

"Ow! Ow! Oh! Grooch! When!" gasped Kerr.

And he dropped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn was still holding on; but he blinked apprehensively as Clive opened a bottle of ginger-beer.

The ginger-beer streamed over Fatty's plump, upturned face, and there was a spluttering gasp from the Falstaff of the New House.

"Ooooooch!"

And Fatty Wynn sat in the road.

Jack Blake waved his hat.

"Hurrah! School House wins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the bus rolled on, amid cheers and laughter from the victorious School House.

But later that day Arthur Augustus dropped into Figgins' study in the New House, with a genial smile upon his noble face.

Figgins & Co. eyed him rather grimly, and Figgins' hand strayed to an inkpot.

"Pax, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus grimly. "We are holdin' wathah a celebration in Study No. 6, and we want you to come."

"Oh!" said Figgins, relaxing; and his hand was withdrawn from the inkpot.

"Yaas, wathah! We have a wathah nice suppah—"

Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened.

"Now you're talking!" he said emphatically.

"I say, Figgy, we don't want to start House rows on the first day of the term. Let's begin good friends—what?"

Figgins grinned.

"Certainly, if there's a cake!" he assented.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Figgins & Co. walked across the quad quite amicably with Arthur Augustus, and they were given a hearty welcome in Study No. 6, where they met Blake & Co., and the Terrible Three, and Talbot, and Kangaroo & Co., and as many fellows as could possibly be crammed into that celebrated apartment.

And the hatchet was buried—to be dug up again, certainly, by the rivals of St. Jim's; but for the first day of the term, at least, all was calm and bright.

(Next Wednesday: LEVISON MINOR!)

MEET HAROLD (GREEN-AS-GRASS) HOPKINS IN THIS HUMOROUS YARN
OF FRANK RICHARDS & CO. OF THE BACKWOODS SCHOOL!

A COCKNEY IN CANADA!



By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The Cockney newcomer to Cedar Creek is nothing if not a cheerful greenhorn. But in trying to take a rise out of him, Chunky Todgers finds his sense of humour quite damped!

Good Samaritans!

LIKE a holiday to-day, Franky?" Bob Lawless prouounded that query after breakfast at the Lawless Ranch, when it was nearly time to start for Cedar Creek School, as usual.

"What-ho!" said Frank Richards at once. "Is it a school holiday to-day?"

"Nix. But I guess I can work it with dad," said Bob Lawless. "I mean a backwoods holiday, you know."

"What's that?"

"A bit harder work than usual," said Bob, laughing.

"All serene," said Frank. "I'm not afraid of work, and it's a bit of a change from lessons, anyway."

"Then let's go and tackle the popper."

Frank Richards and his Canadian cousin left the ranch-house and looked for Mr. Lawless. They found him giving instructions to a Kootenay cattleman at the gate of the corral.

"Hallo! Isn't it time you youngsters were off?" asked the rancher, as the two schoolboys came up.

"I guess so, dad. But I've got an idea," explained Bob. "There's a new emigrant at Cedar Camp from the Old Country, and he's starting for his holding to-day. He's a regular greenhorn—a Cockney from Cockneysville."

"How do you know?" asked the rancher.

"One of the men back from Cedar told me," explained Bob. "I thought it would be only neighbourly to go and lend him a hand. You know how these new emigrants get stuck up on the trails, popper, and there's been heavy rain."

Mr. Lawless looked thoughtful.

"Good Samaritans, you know, dad," urged Bob. "They'll get landed a hundred miles from everywhere if they haven't a fellow with some hoss-sense to help them. You remember the Lawrencees getting stuck in the mud down by Kamloops, when they came first from Ontario?"

The rancher smiled.

"It's a good idea, Bob, and I'm glad to see you so thoughtful for your neighbours. You can go if you like. I'll send word to Miss Meadows at the school by the store-wagon."

"Right-ho!" said Bob. "Come on, Franky!"

It did not take the chums long to saddle and mount their ponies, and they rode off in the direction of Cedar Camp.

Frank Richards was rather curious to see the new emigrants. He was interested in people from the Old Country, his former home, which he was not likely to forget, though he had found the most cordial hospitality and good-fellowship in Canada.

He was quite ready, too, to spend a day in helping the emigrants settle in their new home, and he had seen enough of the Canadian West to be aware that that was not an easy business.

"I guess we shall catch them on the trail," Bob remarked as they cantered away from the ranch. "Billy Cook told me they were starting soon after sun-up. Cook thought they'd get about a mile, and then stick and wait for Providence to pull them out. He says they're Cockneys. Their name's Hopkins, but they pronounce it 'Opkins.'"

Frank laughed.

"How many are there of them?" he asked.

"Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins and kid," said Bob. "I dare say the kid will come to our school as they're settling in this section. Their clearing will be on the creek, about a mile from the school. It's a patch of grass and timber now, and will want clearing—not an easy job. People often roll up to help newcomers get over the first difficulties here."

"A jolly good idea!"

It was a pleasant change to gallop over the prairie in the sunny morning, instead of sitting down to lessons in the log schoolhouse at Cedar Creek.

"Hallo! I guess that's the outfit," exclaimed Bob Lawless suddenly.

The schoolboys were not yet in sight of Cedar Camp when Bob sighted the "outfit" on the prairie trail. There had been rain, and the trail, marked only by wheel-ruts and horses' hoofs, was deep with mud. A drove of cattle passing at dawn had tramped up the mud in thick masses.

In the middle of the trail a wagon had halted. There was a dip in the plain at this point, and the bottom of the hollow was soft and cozy. There the mud was softest, deepest and thickest. And there the emigrants had evidently come to grief.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No 1,596.

The wagon was stuck fast in the mud, and the single horse, not a very sturdy beast, was dragging at it in vain. A man and a boy were wrenching at the heavy wheels. A buxom, plump-faced woman was looking on, with an expression of hopeless dismay. A dog barked dismally round the group.

"I reckoned they'd be in trouble on the trail," remarked Bob Lawless. "Looks as if they've found it—hey?"

"Looks like it," said Frank. "I'm glad we came along."

The two schoolboys rode up, with a spatter of mud, and jumped off their horses. They raised their hats politely to the plump lady. The man and the boy tugging at the wheels relinquished them, and stood up, panting for breath.

Frank Richards looked with some interest at the lad who was likely to be his schoolfellow at Cedar Creek. The lad was about fourteen, with a bullet head, and unruly hair growing almost upright on it, a pug nose and a mouth of considerable size. He could not be called handsome, but his face was very good-natured and good-tempered, and Frank rather liked his looks.

"Can't we help you, sir?" asked Bob. "Mr. Hopkins, I think?"

"That's my name," said the emigrant, gasping for breath. "'Enry 'Opkins, at your service. As for 'elping me, I don't know. I think this 'ere wagin is going to stick 'ere till nigh on Doomsday. I wish I was back in the Old Kent Road—I do that!"

"Can't we leave it 'ere, father, and take a taxi?" asked the youthful Hopkins, who had evidently had enough of attempting to drag the wagon out of the mire.

"Take a what?" ejaculated Bob.

"A taxi. Don't you know what a taxi is?"

"I guess taxis are off in this section," grinned Bob. "The colony's going ahead top-speed, but it hasn't sprouted cabs yet. We can manage to do without 'em."

"Oh, wot a country!" groaned Harold. "Fancy a country where you can't 'ave a cab when you can afford one."

"This 'ere road ain't kep' in proper order," said Mr. Hopkins, wiping the perspiration from his brow. "The County Council ought to see to this 'ere road. Disgraceful, I call it!"

Like many emigrants, the Hopkins family had brought all their Old Country ideas, unchanged and unimpaired, to their new country with them. Doubtless, when Mr. Hopkins, in his dwelling in the Old Kent Road, had decided upon emigrating, he had pictured the Canadian West as a country adequately provided with good roads and cab-ranks.

But Bob Lawless was quite used to the peculiar ideas and beliefs that inexperienced emigrants brought out to the West with them. He only smiled at Mr. Hopkins' exasperated remark.

"Well, we came along to help," he remarked. "We heard you were starting this morning, Mr. Hopkins."

"I'm sure you're very kind," said Mr. Hopkins gratefully. "But 'ow is this 'ere wagin goin' to get goin', hey?"

"We're stuck 'ere for good, it seems to me," said Harold dismally.

"Accidents will happen," said Bob. "But you'll get out of it all right. Unload the wagon first."

"Oh, strike me!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

"Then we'll hitch on our ponies and pull you out."

"I s'pose there ain't nothin' else to be done," said Mr. Hopkins, dismayed at the prospect of having to unload the packed wagon.

"Nothing else, I guess."

"Well, bear a 'and, 'Arold."

Father and son set to work unloading the wagon, and Bob and Frank piled in with great energy to help them. Household goods and all kinds of parcels and packages were piled up beside the trail. Many hands make light work, and the process of unloading was not so long as the hapless emigrant had feared.

When it was completed Bob hitched the two ponies to the wagon, and the three horses pulled together, and the heavy wheels, slowly and reluctantly, rolled out of the mire.

Bob drew on the horses till the wagon was safe on firmer ground. Then the process of reloading was undertaken. It was completed at last, and Mrs. Hopkins took her seat in the wagon.

"We shall git stuck agin, you bet your socks!" said Harold Hopkins dismally.

"Not with three horses," said Bob cheerfully. "We're sticking to you till you get home, you know."

"You're very kind," said Mr. Hopkins, greatly relieved and comforted.

"Not at all; it's a Canadian custom," said Bob, laughing.

Bob and Frank walked with the horses, leading and helping them, and Mr. Hopkins and his son gave the wagon an occasional shove. And at high noon the party arrived on the bank of Cedar Creek, about a mile down the stream from the school.

Making a Home!

"THIS 'ere our 'ome, dad?" exclaimed Harold Hopkins, in tones of incredulous horror, as the wagon halted.

"Yes, 'Arold."

"Oh crumbs!"

Harold could say no more than that. Speech failed him.

"I come out yesterday on a 'orse and saw over it," Mr. Hopkins explained to the cousins. "It knocked me pink, I can tell you. I never knowed it was like this 'ere. But other folks manages some'ow, and so can we. Keep your 'eart up, 'Arold!"

The view was certainly not encouraging to a totally inexperienced emigrant used only to town life. The Hopkins' holding lay along the creek, which was a great advantage, as it ensured a constant supply of water at their very doors. But this tremendous advantage was quite lost upon these "babes in the wood." Quite possibly they had expected "company's water" to be laid on!

The land, good and rich in its way, produced at present rough grass and innumerable wiry weeds, and an occasional clump of birch and larch, which had to be cleared before the land could be farmed.

There was naturally no shelter of any kind. Frank Richards wondered whether the Hopkins had expected a handsome house to rise from the ground of its own accord to greet them.

Fortunately, it was a fine, sunny day, though the ground was steaming from late rains.

"But where are we going to sleep to-night, father?" asked Harold, when he had recovered the use of his voice.

"We 'ave to build a 'ouse, 'Arold."
 "Build a 'ouse!" exclaimed Harold. "Why, there ain't a brick to be had!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob, unable to repress his merriment.

Harold stared at him.
 "Well, I can't see any bricks!" he said warmly.
 "Ha, ha! You don't want any bricks. You've got to build a log shack," said Frank, smiling.
 "Oh, a wooden 'ouse!" said Harold.

"You'll have to run up something quick for shelter," said Bob Lawless, "and extend it to a full-sized cabin afterwards—see? You get your materials for nothing—they're growing all round you. You only want an axe and some elbow grease."

"Oh!"
 "And we're going to help," said Bob, "and I dare say other folk will drop along to lend a hand. They often do, with newcomers."

"Well, that's kind and hearty," said Mrs. Hopkins.

"Course, I know what a log cabin is," said Harold, with new interest. "I've read all about Buffalo Bill and Deadwood Dick you know."

It was Bob Lawless' turn to stare. Amazing as it seemed to the Cockney youth, Bob had never heard of either of those thrilling characters.

"What about Injuns?" asked Harold, looking round at the shadowy wood behind.

"Injuns?" repeated Bob.
 "Yes. Suppose they was to come down on us—eh?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You can laff," said Harold warmly, "but I don't see as it's a joke to be scalped and perhaps tortured by Injuns, like the trappers in the Buffalo Bill stories I read at 'ome."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob. "Don't worry, old chap—that won't happen to you."

"Ain't there any Injuns 'ere?" asked Harold.
 "Lots. But they're all right. They won't do anything worse than sell you bead ornaments for twice what they're worth." Bob Lawless wiped his eyes. "My dear chap, your scalp is as safe here as it was in the Old Kent Road!"

"Oh, orlright!" said Harold, still a little dubious. Thrilling fiction on the subject of the Wild West had given him a weird idea of Canada which he could not get out of his head all at once.

"Better have lunch now and then get to work," said Bob Lawless.

The chums had brought sandwiches with them, and lunch was the next step. Mrs. Hopkins unpacked a bag of provisions from the wagon. Over lunch the spirits of the emigrant family revived. The glorious keen air and sunshine of British Columbia had its natural effect on them, in spite of their misgivings.

Bob and Frank noticed that occasionally Harold Hopkins cast a glance over his shoulder at the dusky woods, and they could not help grinning. Evidently the reader of those great literary works that dealt with the adventures of Buffalo Bill and Deadwood Dick was not quite satisfied that the wood did not conceal lurking braves in warpaint, with murderous tomahawks in their hands.

After lunch the emigrants set to work, Frank Richards and his cousin labouring like Trojans to assist them. Wood had to be cut in quantities on the edge of the forest, and it was hard work, though not so hard to the native Canadian as to the "tenderfoot."

While they were at work a horseman rode up in the uniform of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It was Sergeant Lasalle, whom the school-boys knew. The sergeant dismounted, and with a cheering greeting to the emigrants, piled in to help with the work of erecting the shack.

Later in the afternoon two neighbours came along—neighbours in the frontier sense, that is. Their holdings were a good many miles away. They were Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Dawson, whose sons were at Cedar Creek School. They joined in the work as if it were a matter of course.


It was rather an eye-opener to Mr. Hopkins and the cheerful Harold. It was a Canadian custom that was very pleasant and useful to the newcomers. Later still, Beauclerc, the remittance man of Cedar Camp, came along the creek with a rod under his arm. As soon as he saw the work going forward he laid down his rod, removed his coat, and joined the workers. Many hands made light work.

The shack was run up in very quick time, and, small as it was, it was a good, weatherproof shelter, all that was needed until a more substantial building could be erected.

Mrs. Hopkins looked much more cheerful when she was able to arrange some of her household goods about her new dwelling. As her husband remarked, it looked a good deal more like "ome."

The sun was low in the west when the kind helpers took their leave. Harold joined the schoolboys when they went to fetch their ponies. "Safe 'erc, eh?" he asked.

"Safe as houses," said Frank, with a smile.
 (Continued on the next page.)



Jim's got a first-class football—FREE!

It's from Cadbury's! Jim's collected 61 cocoa coupons, and look at this fine, full-size football Cadbury's have sent him! Ask your mother to get you Bournville Cocoa. Save the coupons and you can have a football too. Lots of other gifts besides. Post the form below for the Bournville Cocoa Gift Book.

BOURNVILLE COCOA 6d. per $\frac{1}{4}$ lb.

POST COUPON FOR YOUR FREE COPY

To 'NEW GIFTS,' Dept. A.176 CADBURY, BOURNVILLE. Please send me the 44-page Book of Gifts with free coupon. (Please write in BLOCK LETTERS).

NAME.....
 ADDRESS.....
 A.176.17.9.38

Post in unsealed envelope (postage 3d.). This offer applies to Great Britain and Northern Ireland only.

"There ain't a gun about the place," said Harold.

"What do you want a gun for?"

"Well, them Injuns," said Harold doubtfully.

"Oh, gum!" exclaimed Bob. "Don't I keep on telling you that it's all bunkum?"

"Oh, orlight, if you say so," said Harold, apparently satisfied.

Bob chuckled as he rode away with Frank for the ranch.

"That chap's greener than you were when you came, Franky," he remarked.

"I should say so! A good deal."

"I guess he'll have his leg pulled at school if he talks about Red Indians, Buffalo Bill, and Deadwood Dick," said Bob.

And he chuckled again.

The chums enjoyed their supper at the ranch that evening. Hard work had given them an excellent appetite. And there were smiles along the table when Bob described Harold Hopkins and his uneasiness concerning his scalp.

Taking the Stranger In!

IT was about a week later that Harold Hopkins put in his appearance at Cedar Creek School. Frank and Bob found him there when they arrived.

Hopkins was in the centre of a little crowd in the school playground, who were making him talk, apparently deriving considerable amusement from his odd pronunciation. He grinned in a friendly way at the cousins, and came towards them.

"Ere I am!" he announced.

There was at least no shyness about Master Hopkins.

"How are you getting on at the clearing?" asked Frank.

"First rate," said Harold. "Lots of work to do. I'm only comin' 'ere 'arf the week, at present. I 'ave to 'elp father."

"Good man!" said Bob.

"Father's 'ired a man, though," said Hopkins.

"What do you think? They fetches up the stumps of trees by 'arnessing 'em to oxen, and draggin' 'em out! Jevver 'ear of sich a thing?"

"It's the usual way," said Bob, laughing.

"Seems jolly queer to me," said Hopkins. "Lots of queer things in this country, if you ask me."

"And more coming every day," grinned Bob.

Hopkins laughed. He could take a joke against himself.

"Seen any Redskins yet?" asked Frank, with a smile.

Hopkins looked disgusted.

"Yes; and they ain't much like the Redskins I've read about. No bloomin' warpaint, or tommyhawks, or anythin'. The Injun I saw yesterday was wheelin' a barrow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better than raising scalps," grinned Bob.

"Yes, I s'pose so," agreed the new boy. "But it ain't what I expected. I ain't seen any buffaloes yet, nor no grizzly bears. But I 'ear there are plenty of wild Indians about, arter all."

"Oh, you've heard that, have you?"

"That fat chap told me so," said Hopkins, nodding towards Chunky Todgers. "He says it's likely enough the school 'ere might be raided, and set afire, and all of us scalped!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank and Bob were still grinning as they went

THE GEM LIBRARY.—NO. 1,596

into the schoolhouse. Evidently, Hopkins was more prepared to place faith in Chunky Todgers' fairy tales than in the facts. Chunky's fearsome yarns were more in keeping with his preconceived notions of the Far West.

"Bloomin' schoolmistress 'ere—eh?" Hopkins remarked, as he went in with the cousins, with a glance at Miss Meadows, who was in the porch.

"Yes, that's our schoolmistress," said Frank. "She's a very nice lady."

"Who's the cove in the blinkers?"

"The—the what?"

"That bloke with the barnacles, I mean."

"Oh, the chap in specs!" gasped Frank.

"That's Mr. Slimmy, the assistant master. He takes the lower class."

Hopkins looked round the school-room with a critical eye. New as he was, and decidedly green, he had the cool self-possession of the born Cockney, and was not in the slightest degree put out by finding himself a stranger in a strange land.

"Not a bad show, this," he finally pronounced. "More'n I expected to find 'ere. 'Allo, wot is it?"

Chunky Todgers joined the Cockney youth, as Frank and Bob went to speak to their chum, Vere Beauclerc. Chunky was a humorous youth, and his love of a joke was as great as his circumference—which is saying a good deal. Chunky saw great possibilities of fun in the newcomer.

"I suppose Lawless has given you a tip about the anthem?" he remarked.

Hopkins started.

"It ain't said nothin' about any anthem," he replied. "What are you drivin' at?"

"Do you mean to say you don't know it's a custom here?"

"Course I don't! Ain't this 'ere my first day?" said Hopkins. "I've 'ad just a word with the schoolmarm, and that's all."

"It's all right," assured Chunky. "A custom in Canadian schools, that's all. I suppose you want to do the right thing?"

"Wotto!"

"Otherwise, the schoolmarm might be down on you, and think you mean to be disrespectful."

"I shouldn't like her to think so," said Hopkins in alarm. "What's this 'ere custom you're talkin' about?"

"A new boy here always sings the school anthem as soon as the schoolmistress comes in," explained Chunky Todgers. "The whole class rises, of course, and then the fellow sings the anthem. You're the only new fellow here to-day, as it happens."

"But I don't know the anthem," said Hopkins in dismay. "'Ow's a chap to sing what 'e don't know?"

Not for a moment did Hopkins dream of doubting Chunky's statement. Certainly, he would have been suspicious of such a statement in a school at home. But in Canada he had come across any number of customs that appeared to him extraordinary and weird.

After seeing a house built in a day, and tree-stumps dragged out of the ground by a team of oxen, he was prepared for anything. If Chunky had told him that he had to stand on his head in the middle of the school-room he would hardly have been surprised.

He was only anxious to get information as to what he had to do, so that he would not appear wanting in respect to Miss Meadows. And Chunky was quite prepared to give him information.

"I'll tell you," said Chunky, with a face as

solemn as an owl's. "If you don't know the school anthem—sure you don't?"

"Course I am!"

"Then you sing 'Rule, Britannia,' instead. You know that?"

"Everybody knows that, I s'pose," said Hopkins. "I don't know that I could sing it all through, though."

"That's not necessary; the chorus is enough. Just stand up and sing when Miss Meadows comes in, and you'll be all right. Don't you do that in English schools?"

"Never 'eard of sich a thing," said Hopkins, with a shake of the head. "But this 'ere ain't much like the schools at 'ome."

"Hush! Here she comes!" whispered Chunky. There was a rush for the forms as Miss Meadows

heedless of the general amazement—in fact, unaware of it—Hopkins thundered on:

"Britannia rules the waves——"

"Good gracious!" gasped Miss Meadows.

"Britons never, never, never——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shall be slaves!" concluded Hopkins.

He sat down, feeling that he had acquitted himself well. The school-room almost rocked with laughter.

Chunky on the Warpath!

"HA, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

It was not so easy to get silence.

Hopkins' extraordinary feat was too much for Cedar Creek.



"Stop!" roared Bob Lawless as Harold Hopkins rushed Chunky Todgers down to the water. But the Cockney did not heed. Splash! Chunky was thrown bodily into the water by the bank. It was a disastrous end to his Redskin jape!

appeared in the doorway. Chunky Todgers kindly drew Harold into a seat beside himself.

"You sit here, Hopkins. Wait till the class rises, and then go ahead."

"Right you are, and much obliged to you!"

"Not at all. We always help newcomers to learn the ropes," said Todgers cheerily.

Miss Meadows came into the school-room, and the class rose respectfully as she came towards them. And Harold Hopkins, warned by a nudge from Chunky that the moment had come, started.

"Rule, Britannia——"

Hopkins' voice was not musical, but it was powerful. He had to sing, and he put his beef into it. His voice rang from one end of the school-room to the other.

There was a general jump. Everyone stared at Hopkins. Miss Meadows stood amazed. Mr. Slimmey looked round from his class, his glasses nearly falling off his nose in astonishment.

The new fellow looked round in surprise. He could not see what caused that burst of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He must be potty!" murmured Frank Richards, in wonder. "What the dickens——"

"Silence! Hopkins!"

Hopkins stood up again.

"Yes, ma'am?"

"What do you mean by bursting out shouting in that absurd manner in the school-room?" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"My eye! I wasn't shoutin', ma'am; I was singin'!" said Hopkins indignantly.

"Well, singing, then, you absurd boy! Do you think that this is the proper place to sing at the top of your voice when lessons are about to commence?"

"Yes, ma'am!"

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"Cert'nly, ma'am!"

"Hopkins!" gasped Miss Meadows, quite taken aback.

"I 'ope it's all right?" said Hopkins anxiously.

"Seein' as I don't know the school anthem, ma'am, I understood that 'Rule, Britannia,' would do."

"Arc you out of your senses, Hopkins?"

"I 'ope not, ma'am."

"Then explain to me at once why you acted in such a ridiculous manner."

"Ridikulus is the word, if you ask me, ma'am," agreed Hopkins. "But it ain't for me to say nothing about a Canadian custom."

"A Canadian custom!" ejaculated the schoolmistress.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Is it possible, Hopkins, that someone has told you that such an action is a Canadian custom?" exclaimed Miss Meadows, beginning to see light.

"Yes, ma'am. Which it was very kind of the fat chap to tell me, seein' as I'm a stranger 'ere, and never 'eard of the custom."

Miss Meadows fixed her eyes upon Chunky Todgers. She could guess that he was the "fat chap" alluded to.

"Todgers!"

"Oh dear!" murmured Chunky. "Yes, ma'am."

"Did you induce Hopkins to act in this ridiculous manner?"

"Only a—a—a joke, ma'am!" stammered Chunky.

"Ho!" ejaculated Hopkins. "A joke, was it? You were pulling my leg, you fat frump, was you?"

"Silence, Hopkins! Todgers, you should not play these absurd jokes on a new boy! I shall give you a detention task this evening!"

"Oh dear!" murmured Chunky, not at all pleased at this outcome of his little joke.

"Silence in class, please!" said Miss Meadows severely.

And the titters were subdued, and Cedar Creek School settled down to the morning's work. Chunky Todgers was rather wrathful during lessons. He liked the feast, but not the reckoning.

His fat face was frowning when the school was dismissed at noon and the fellows streamed out of the log schoolhouse.

"Did you ever see such a silly ass?" Chunky asked, appealing to Frank and his chums as he joined them outside. "He ought to have had sense enough to keep his silly mouth shut, oughtn't he?"

"You oughtn't to have pulled his leg, you fat fraud!" said Frank.

"Oh rats! That chap was simply born to be stuffed!" said Todgers. "I'll jolly well stuff him again, too, outside the school this time, though!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's full of Red Indians and things!" said Chunky, a grin overspreading his fat face. "I've been pitching him yarns about Redskins, and he's full up to the chin with them!"

"Perhaps he will take a discount off your yarns after this," remarked Beauclerc.

"Wait till he sees a Red Indian!" said Chunky. "Lend me your pony to trot down to Thompson, Richards. I want to get some things there."

"You're not going to get a Red Indian in the town, I suppose?" exclaimed Bob.

Chunky chuckled.

"No; I'm going to borrow a Red Indian outfit at Gunten's store. He's got them there, you know, and he will lend them to me after noon for a dollar. You lend me a dollar, Bob."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

"But, look here—"

"Don't spoil a good joke!" pleaded Chunky. "After school I'm going to copper my face and scare that young greenhorn out of his silly wits! You watch out!"

"It's hardly fair on Hopkins," said Frank.

"Oh, rot! Isn't he simply asking to be taken in? It will do him good!" urged Chunky.

"Besides, it will be no end funny!"

Chunky Todgers was persuasive, and he had his way. With Bob Lawless' dollar in his pocket, he mounted Frank Richards' pony and started at a gallop for the town.

He came back very late for dinner, and was spoken to severely by Miss Meadows; but he was so meek that the schoolmistress was disarmed. She was very far from suspecting the cause of Chunky's absence.

Before afternoon school Chunky mysteriously guided Frank Richards & Co. to the old corral near the school, where a bundle reposed on the ground.

"That's the things," he announced—"feathers and blanket and moccasins, same as the chaps used in the show at the mission. I've got some paint for my face, too. I shall make a tophole Redskin. You fellows will have to keep Hopkins from clearing off till I'm ready."

"But—"

"Oh, bother your buts!" said Chunky. "Take him down to the creek and show him your canoe, and then bring him for a walk this way. I'll be ready in less than half an hour after lessons."

"Right-ho!" said Bob Lawless, laughing.

And they returned to the schoolhouse, where several other fellows were taken into the joke—not, of course, including Hopkins. That innocent youth was left in blissful ignorance.

But Chunky Todgers occupied what time remained before lessons in relating to Hopkins thrilling yarns of Indian risings, and speculating whether a ferocious brave was likely to drop in at the school in search of scalps.

It was possible that the keen Cockney had had his eyes opened by Chunky's previous wheeze, and that he did not take the humorous youth's statement as gospel now. But Chunky was quite satisfied.

He was grinning all over his fat face when Cedar Creek went in to afternoon lessons. So keen was Chunky on his jape that he was extremely inattentive to lessons, and more than once came under Miss Meadows' special and severe attention.

But Chunky bore that philosophically. It could not be helped.

When school was dismissed at last he was detained for a quarter of an hour. But as soon as he was released he disappeared in the direction of the old corral.

Bob Lawless had seized upon Hopkins and taken him down to the creek to see the birch-bark canoe. Hopkins was in no hurry to get home, and he had accompanied the chums of Cedar Creek cheerfully.

Half an hour after lessons they turned their steps down the creek in the direction of the old corral. Chunky Todgers had had time to put on his warpaint and feathers, and it was time for the wild Indian to appear.

"Hallo! Somebody is there!" remarked Bob Lawless, as there was a sound within the old fence of the corral.

He moved along to the gate and looked in. The next moment he struck an attitude of dramatic terror.



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging views on matters of mutual interest. If you wish to reply to a notice published here you must write to the Pen Pal direct. Notices for publication should be accompanied by the coupon on this page, and posted to THE GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Miss R. Drayton, c/o. Ox Lane Nurseries, Harpenden, Herts; girl correspondents, age 14-21; photos, sport, dancing.

H. J. Van den Heuvel, 427, Prince Alfred Street, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa; age 15-19; general topics, stamps.

The Empire Pen Pals Club welcomes members. Write to W. Leigh, 4, Seaton Street, London, N.18.

Miss M. Dubash, Villa Belvedere, 214, Cadell Road, Mahim, Bombay 16, India; girl correspondents, age 11-14; New York, Hollywood, San Francisco, Los Angeles.

J. Johnson, 72, Coronation Street, Cape Coast, Gold Coast, British West Africa; sports, snaps, curiosities.

E. Crasie, 29, Coronation Street, Cape Coast, Gold Coast, British West Africa; games, sports, etc.

L. Dobson, 61, Millgate, Flockheim, Angus, Scotland; stamps, photography, coins, cigarette cards, match-box labels; Egypt, Eire, Colonies.

J. Platt, 88, Finch Lane, Liverpool 14; stamps, sports, coins; age 13-16; overseas.

P. G. Giles, 29, Burlington Road, Chiswick, London, W.4; age 12-15; stamps; British Empire, especially Aden.

M. Orret, 61, Manchester Road, Prescott, Lancs.; age 15-18; stamps, films; overseas.

"Indians!" he gasped.

"Indians!" repeated Frank and Beauclerc in gasping voices.

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Harold Hopkins.

There was a wild whoop in the corral, and a fearsome-looking figure came bounding into view through the gateway. Harold Hopkins stood rooted to the ground, blinking at him.

Rough on the Redskin!

"**W**HOOP!" "Holy smoke!" gasped Hopkins.

The Indian was terrifying to look at. In build he was short and stout, but a magnificent headdress of war feathers made him look taller. He wore moccasins and a blanket, and his skin was brown as a berry, and daubed with warpaint in red and yellow ochre.

In his brown hand he flourished a tomahawk as he charged towards the group of schoolboys on the bank of the creek. Bob, Frank, and Vere Beauclerc crowded behind Harold Hopkins as if for protection.

The Red Indian, brandishing his tomahawk and letting out ear-splitting whoops, rushed right at them.

Hopkins seemed petrified for some moments. But as the Redskin came close, the Cockney lowered his head and charged at him with a suddenness that startled his companions and the Redskin, too.

Hopkins rushed right under the flourishing tomahawk and grasped the Redskin round the body.

"Yaroooh!" roared the startled Indian, in tones quite unlike those of a Redman on the warpath.

L. Peake, 41, Broomhill Road, Perrycommon, Erdington, Birmingham 23; pen pals overseas; age 14-17.

N. Hayes, Rosleigh, Passfield Avenue, Eastleigh, Hants.; pen pals; Brit. Guiana, West Indies.

C. Wickremetunge, 34, Middle Street, Fort Galle, Ceylon; stamps, sports; Malta, Samoa, Africa; age 11-13.

L. Lipson, 523, Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; stamps; age 16-21; anywhere.

D. Sewell, 88, Kingsdown Road, Upper Holloway, London, N.; pen pals, age 17-20.

Ng Sow Yat, 163 A, Burmah Road, Penang; age 15-20; stamps, snaps; New Zealand, America, and Europe.

C. C. Yeoh, Anglo-Chinese High School, Ayer Itam Road, Penang, Straits Settlements; stamps.

Miss S. Foster, 11, Marcia Road, Old Kent Road, London, S.E.1; girl correspondent; stamps, sports; overseas.

Miss Betty Haydock, 31, Livingstone Road, Purewell, Christchurch, Hants; girl correspondents; Russia, China, America; sport, films, autographs.

S. Peasey, 78, Heath Way, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham; age 14-16; films, sports, stamps; Straits Settlements, Antigua, Fiji Isles, Bahamas, British Empire, Barbados, Bermuda.

Lim Eng Chuang, c/o. O. E. H. & Co., 46, Main Bazaar, Kuching, Sarawak; age 15, upwards; stamps, photos; all letters answered.

Wong Pak Shoon, 4, Lahat Road, Ipoh, Perak, Malaya; stamps; New Guinea, Bahamas, North Borneo.

R. Bestall, 81, Commercial Road, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa; sport, stamps; overseas.

PEN PALS COUPON

17-9-38

Hopkins whirled him off his feet and brought him down to the ground with a crash. The tomahawk flew through the air, and most of the Indian's feathers were scattered far and wide. The Redskin rolled on the ground, roaring under the weight of the Cockney.

"Yoop! Ow! Leggo!" roared the Red Indian.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yurrrrg!"

"Got 'im!" yelled Hopkins. "Got the Injun! Lend a 'and, you coves, to chuck 'im in the water."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Bob.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Frank Richards, wiping his eyes. "Oh dear! Poor old Chunky! He's woken up the wrong passenger."

"Yah! Oh! Yawp!" came from Chunky in tones of anguish, as Harold Hopkins pommelled him.

Thump, thump, thump!

"That's 'ow I 'andle wild Injuns with tommyhawks!" yelled Hopkins, as he pommelled away. "Take that, you Redskin rotter! Take that, you wild Injun! Take that, you skelper!"

"Yaroooh! Oh! Ah!"

"Hopkins, you ass, let him alone!" gasped Bob Lawless, almost in hysterics. "He's not an Indian. Do you hear?"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Hopkins, you ass, I tell you—"

"Gammon!" retorted Hopkins. "He's an Injun right enough. Look at his warpaint. Look at his tommyhawk! Take that, you waster! Take that, you skelping blackguard!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Oh crumbs! Ha, ha, ha!"

(Continued on page 36.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

RUNG UP ON THE HEAD'S PHONE BY A BOOKMAKER! JACK DRAKE IS PLACED IN A TERRIBLE PREDICAMENT IN THIS GREAT STORY!

THE SHADOW OF DISGRACE!

By OWEN CONQUEST.



"I'm coming up to the school to call for the money you owe me," came Gentleman Smith's voice over the phone. "You—you can't!" gasped Jack Drake. "You——" He broke off. The grim aspect of the Head's face, almost at his elbow, petrified him.

A Talk on the Telephone!

"DRAKE!"
"Yes, Lovelace?"
"You're wanted—Head's study!"

The Fourth Form at St. Winifred's had come out from classes, and were scattering cheerfully over the main deck of the Benbow when Lovelace of the Sixth called to Jack Drake.

Drake was chatting with Dick Rodney, with a very cheery face, but his looks clouded as he received the summons to the Head's quarters.

There was rather a peculiar expression on Lovelace's face, which Drake did not fail to note.

"Anything up?" the junior ventured to inquire.

"I should say so!" grunted the captain of St. Winifred's. "It's rather new, I think, for a Fourth Form kid to be rung up on the Head's telephone!"

"Wha-at?"

"Oh, you weren't expecting a call?" grinned Lovelace.

"No fear! On the Head's telephone!" exclaimed Drake. "It's some mistake. It can't be me that's wanted."

"The Head wants you at once," answered Lovelace; and he turned away.

Jack Drake made his way aft, wondering. His first thought had been that he was called to Dr. Goring's presence for a carpeting, but that, evidently, was not the case. It was not likely that his people had rung him up from home, and the junior simply could not imagine who had had

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

the nerve to ask for him on the telephone sacred to the use of the Head of St. Winifred's.

The Head's study was the former captain's cabin of the Benbow—an apartment which the fags of St. Winifred's, at least, firmly believed had once been occupied by the great Admiral Benbow himself. If that was so, the old admiral would have been surprised if he could have seen its present appearance, with the bulkheads lined with bookshelves, a Persian carpet covering the deck, and an electric reading-lamp on the table.

Dr. Goring was standing by his desk, upon which the telephone stood. The receiver was off.

The Head was frowning a little. It was a surprise, and not a pleasant one, to the stately old gentleman to be called to the telephone and informed that a junior of the Fourth was wanted by an unknown interlocutor.

"Drake!" said Dr. Goring. "You have been asked for on the telephone by some person of the name of Smith. I need not tell you, Drake, that

"Pay me my five pounds—or I split to the Head!" That is a bookmaker's ultimatum to Jack Drake! And with no hope of meeting the debt, the shadow of expulsion looms close over Jack's head!

you—— Bless my soul! What is the matter, Drake?"

Jack Drake almost staggered.

"S-S-Smith!" he stammered.

"You know the name, I presume, Drake?"

"Ye-es, sir."

Drake had wondered who could have had the temerity to ring him up. And it was Smith—Gentleman Smith of the Lobster Pot—the sharper to whom he owed money! This was Mr. Smith's way of reminding him that the debt was not yet settled.

"I need not tell you, Drake," resumed the Head sternly, "that junior boys are not allowed the use of this instrument."

"N-n-no, sir! I—I understand."

"This man Smith declares that he has important business with you," said the Head. "For that reason I have sent for you."

"Th-thank you, sir."

"Kindly tell me who this man is, Drake," said the Head.

"He is—he is—is—Smith, sir!" stammered Drake.

"I am already aware of that."

"Ye-es, sir!"

"Whoever the man may be, he has no right to ask for you on this telephone. Evidently, it is some person acquainted with the customs of St. Winifred's. Your confusion, Drake, leads me to suspect that you have perhaps made some undesirable acquaintance outside the school."

"Oh, sir!"

"Is that the case, Drake?"

"I—I—"

"You may take the call," said Dr. Goring grimly, "and I will remain here while you speak to this man."

The unhappy junior dragged himself to the telephone. To talk with Gentleman Smith with the Head standing by was a task that would have taxed the nerve of Daubeny of the Shell himself. But there was no help for it. Drake took up the receiver and placed it to his ear.

"Hallo!" he muttered into the transmitter.

"Ow long am I goin' to be kep' waitin'?" demanded a harsh and sulky voice along the wire.

"Is that young Drake?"

"Yes."

"Ho! You know me, I reckon?"

"I—I know you."

"I'm speaking from the Lobster Pot."

Drake shuddered. Fortunately, the Head could only hear what Drake was saying, and did not even surmise that St. Winifred's was now in telephone communication with the lowest haunt on the riverside.

"You shouldn't have rung me up," Drake stammered. "We're not allowed to use the telephone here."

"I knows that. I did it a-purpose," said Mr. Smith cheerfully. "You see, you ain't sent along that there fiver, and I want the money."

"I—I—"

"Are you comin' along 'ere with it?"

"N-n-no!"

"I thought not. 'Ave you posted it on?"

"N-n-not yet."

"Jest so! So you think you're going to diddle me—wot?"

"No, no! Later—"

"Too late already! I'm comin' up to the school to call for it."

"You—you can't!" gasped the junior. "You—you—"

Drake's voice broke off.

The grim aspect of the Head's face, almost at his elbow, petrified him. He could not guess what the Head was thinking of this peculiar conversation. How was he to answer Gentleman Smith without giving Dr. Goring a clue to the purport of the talk was a puzzle—and a terrifying one. And there was plainly a talk with the Head coming, after the talk with Gentleman Smith was over.

A low chuckle sounded along the wires.

"Can't I? You'll see!"

"But—"

"You come along this 'ere arfternoon," went on Gentleman Smith's voice. "If you ain't 'ere by five, I'm comin'!"

"I—I—"

"I've waited long enough. Don't I always pay up fair and square? Ain't a man to be paid likewise?"

"Yes, yes—next week—"

"This arfternoon, or you'll 'ear from me."

"I—I can't—"

"Them's my last words!"

And Gentleman Smith rang off.

Danger Ahead!

JACK DRAKE put up the receiver with a trembling hand. His face was pale as he turned to face the grim glance of the headmaster of St. Winifred's.

Even if the Head had surmised nothing from the fragments of talk he had heard, the junior's confusion was more than enough to make him suspicious.

"Th-thank you, sir!" muttered Drake; and he made a movement towards the door with a faint hope that the matter was at an end.

Dr. Goring raised his hand.

"You need not go yet, Drake."

The junior stopped, his heart beating fast.

"It is necessary for you to explain this matter, Drake. Who is this man Smith?"

"He is a—a—a—"

"A friend of yours?"

"Oh, no, sir—nothing of the kind!"

"But you know him?"

"I—I've met him, sir."

"Where have you met him?"

"On—on shore, sir!" stammered the junior.

"I did not suppose that you had met him on board the Benbow, Drake," said the Head dryly.

"In a word, what are your relations with this man? What business have you with him?"

"None, sir. I—I've met him, and I don't want to meet him again. He's a—a rotter, and I wish I'd never seen him."

"Possibly. Yet he is keeping up communication with you?"

"Against my wish, sir," said the junior eagerly. "I hadn't the faintest idea who it was asking for me on the phone. It was like his cheek to ring me up."

The Head's look was very searching.

"It seems, then, Drake," he said slowly, "that on some occasion on shore you have made an undesirable acquaintance whom you would be glad to get rid of, and who refuses to be got rid of."

"Yes, sir," breathed Drake.

"In that case, you have acted foolishly, but you are perhaps not very seriously to blame. From your replies I gather that this man was threatening you."

"Ye-es, sir, in a way."

"In what did his threats consist?"

"He—he said he would come here if I didn't see him on shore," faltered the junior.

Dr. Goring raised his eyebrows.

"Indeed! That simplifies the matter. When does he wish to see you?"

"This arfternoon."

"And if you do not go he threatens to come here?"

"Ye-es!"

"Very good! You will remain on board ship this arfternoon, Drake. You will not go ashore under any pretext whatever. I shall give instructions to the porter. As for this man, I will see him if he comes. You may go."

Jack Drake almost staggered from the study. Dick Rodney was waiting for him on deck. And a good many of the Fourth Formers had gathered round, greatly interested by the fact

that one of the Fourth had been called up on the Head's telephone.

"What's the little game?" asked Raik. "Was it the Kingsford tailor after his little bill, Drake? Haven't you paid for those lovely bags?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or was it one of your beery friends at the Lobster Pot?" chortled Sawyer major.

Drake flushed at the last question, but he did not make any reply to the inquiries. He drew Rodney aside and they walked forward. They left the juniors chuckling.

Tuckey Toodles followed the two chums forward. Tuckey wanted to know, and he was not to be denied. Drake and Rodney stopped by the mainmast, and Tuckey joined them there.

"Drake, old chap—" he began.

"Oh, don't bother!" said Drake irritably.

"Cut off, Tuckey! I want to speak to Rodney."

"My dear chap, you want to speak to me," answered Toodles confidently. "I'm your pal, and I'm the fellow to see you through. If it's a question of money, rely on me."

"Fathead!"

"Tell me all about it," said Toodles encouragingly. "I can see you're in a scrape. Now, spin me the whole yarn, dear old chap. Of course, I shan't breathe a word to anybody."

"Buzz off, for goodness' sake!"

"If that's what you call gratitude, Drake—"

Drake walked away impatiently. But Tuckey Toodles was not to be shaken off. He rolled in pursuit.

"I say, Drake—" he shouted.

Drake turned and seized the persistent Tuckey by the shoulders and jammed him against the mainmast. There was a gasp from the plump junior, like air escaping from a punctured tyre, and he slid down and sat on the deck, blinking.

"Ow!"

"Come on, Rodney!" muttered Drake.

And the chums of the Fourth escaped into the bows, while Tuckey was still trying to get his second wind.

"Now, what's the trouble?" asked Rodney, when they were free from the inquisitive Tuckey at last.

Drake leaned on the foremast, his hands driven deep in his pockets, and deep gloom in his face.

"It's all up," he muttered.

"Not so bad as that, perhaps," said Rodney quietly. "Anyway, get it off your chest."

"You remember that night when you wanted to stop my breaking bounds with Daub & Co.," muttered Drake. "That night—I backed Brown Boy, you remember. I owe Gentleman Smith five quids. I—I've been going to raise the money somehow and pay him, but—I haven't done it. I—I've been thinking of my work lately, you know. I was going to sell my bike, but—of course, I ought to have seen to it at once—"

Rodney smiled faintly.

Drake's happy-go-lucky disposition was very different from his own, and it was a little hard for him to understand a fellow who allowed things to drift at their own sweet will.

"Of course, I ought to have seen to it, but I hoped something would turn up, you know," muttered Drake. "I don't want to part with the jigger if I can help it—at a loss, too. Now I'm poor I can't afford to throw money away, can I? And the bike would go at a big loss. I—I was really trying to be a bit more careful than I

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

used to be, and—and something might have turned up—"

"What did you expect to turn up?"

"Well, nothing exactly definite, you know—but something. I couldn't guess that that rogue Smith would be beast enough to speak to the Head. Of course, he'd threatened. But—"

"Is there still time?"

"He's coming to-day unless I take the money to him at the Lobster Pot this afternoon. And I'm gated; old Coote's told not to let me cross the gangway to-day. Not that it makes any difference—I haven't the tin. And—and the Head's going to see him if he comes. It's all up; and—and I came back this term to work like a nigger," said Drake miserably. "I don't quite know how it's all gone wrong, but it has!"

Rodney wrinkled his brows in thought.

"If I had the tin I'd stand by you like a shot," he said. "But I haven't, unluckily. What about Daub?"

Drake crimsoned.

"I'd rather be kicked out of St. Winifred's than ask that cad!"

"I don't mean that. Daubeny seems to have been the cause of your getting into Smith's clutches. He must have some influence with the man. If your affair comes out, Daubeny will be in danger."

"I wouldn't give him away, of course."

"But there would be danger, all the same, if that blackguard came here. Unless—" Rodney knitted his brows again. "It's rather odd that Smith should be so bitter—about such a small sum, too. I suppose he's had more than that out of you, one time or another?"

"Ten times as much."

"And he will lose the tin if he comes here and kicks up a ehindy."

"He means it, though."

Rodney nodded.

"Daub's very savage with you now, Drake, since you've rowed. Do you think it likely that he has put Smith up to this?"

"Daub—" Drake started. "My hat! If I thought—"

Drake broke off, setting his teeth. As if in a flash he saw the hand of his enemy behind the bullying of Gentleman Smith—his false friend, now his enemy—Daubeny of the Shell! He drew a deep, hard breath.

"Oh, I'm a fool!" he muttered. "Daub, of course. I chucked him out of my study the other day. This is his answer to it. Smith is a brute, but he knows he will get his money, and he's chucking it away by kicking up a row. He wouldn't do it. It's Daub, of course. I dare say he's standing the loss if Smith loses the money by showing me up. I—I—"

"Hold on—where are you going, Drake?"

"To see Daubeny!"

Jack Drake dashed round the mast and there was a crash and a yell. He came into full collision with Tuckey Toodles, and the impact made him sit down heavily on the planks. And Tuckey Toodles sprawled and roared.

Daubeny Does His Best!

"YOU—you prying rotter!" gasped Drake.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"You—you—"

Toodles sat up dazedly.

"I—I wasn't listening!" he gasped. "I—I didn't creep behind the mast to listen to you, old

chap—never thought of such a thing. I haven't heard a word—not a syllable! I—I say—yaroooh!"

Tuckey Toodles broke off with a yell as Drake jumped up and commenced operations with his boot.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Rodney.

He dragged the fat Fourth Former to his feet.

"Toodles, you young rascal——"

"Yow-ow-ow!" howled Toodles. "You needn't mind me, Drake; I'm not going to tell anybody that Gentleman Smith is coming here to see you——"

"Shut up!" hissed Drake.

"Well, you be civil, then, if you want me to shut up," said Tuckey Toodles independently. "I'm jolly well not going to be kicked; it's a thing no fellow would stand. Look here, I'm the man you want, Drake—not Rodney. Rodney's an ass——"

"Oh, ring off!"

Jack Drake hurried away, leaving Tuckey Toodles still eloquent. Drake headed for the Shell quarters and found Daubeny there, lounging outside the studies. The junior captain of St. Winifred's met him with a glare.

"A word with you, Daubeny——" began Jack.

Daubeny waved his hand.

"Nothin' of the sort—I don't know you," he answered. "If you've come here to borrow money——"

"You know I wouldn't, you cad!" exclaimed Drake fiercely. "I've been rung up on the Head's phone by Gentleman Smith——"

"That's your business."

"Yours, too, I think! Will you step into your study with me——"

"No, I won't!"

"You can have it out here, if you like. Smith is coming to the Benbow to-day——"

"No business of mine," said Daubeny, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"I believe you're putting him up to it. He's no reason of his own for playing such a dirty trick."

"What rot!"

"And if he comes," shouted Drake savagely. "I'll see that the Head hears of you as well as of me, Daubeny!"

"Come into the study," muttered Daubeny hurriedly.

Several fellows were gathering round. Second thoughts were best in this case, and Daubeny decided to have the interview in private.

Drake followed him into the study.

"Now," said Vernon Daubeny, with a savage look, "what do you mean, Drake?"

"I mean what I say—every word," said Drake more calmly. "You've put Smith up to this game, and you can stop him. If you don't you'll take the consequences as well as I."

"You mean you'll sneak to the Head because that man gives you away for not paying him?" said Daubeny, with an evil look.

"Put it like that if you like. You're working it with Smith to give me away, and you'll get the chopper along with me if you don't stop him!"

Daubeny gnawed his lip.

"I shall deny the whole business and Smith will back me up," he said.

"If you can make the Head believe your lies you'll be all right. I don't think you can. The Head's rather too downy for you to pull his leg, I think."

"I've had nothin' to do with Smith comin' here."

"That's not true; it's clear enough."

"Hang you! What do you want me to do?" muttered Daubeny savagely.

"Stop him!"

"How can I stop him?"

"That's for you to decide. Stop him in time, if you know what's good for yourself."

Drake turned to the door.

"Hold on!" muttered Daubeny. "Look here, I'll try—I'll do my best!"

"You'd better be successful."

"I'll cut off and see him after dinner, and— and use my influence with him, if you like," said Daubeny, biting his lip. "I can't answer for him——"

"It will be as bad for you as for me if you don't."

With that, Drake quitted the study. The bell was ringing for dinner, and he joined Rodney as the juniors went into the dining-room amidships. Daubeny was looking thoughtful and a little harassed as he went to his place at the Shell table.

After dinner the captain of the Shell consulted with his chums, Egan and Torrence, and the trio headed for the shore.

At the end of the gateway from the Benbow they found the gate closed, and Coote, the porter, was standing outside his cottage.

"Open the dashed gate, Coote!" snapped Daubeny.

"Ead's orders, sir!" he replied. "Nobody allowed on shore this afternoon!"

Daubeny started.

"What the dickens! Do you mean to say that the whole school is gated?" he exclaimed.

"Them's the orders, sir."

"Look here, Coote——" Daubeny showed a half-crown in his hand.

Mr. Coote's eyes lingered regretfully on the coin, but he shook his head again.

"Sorry, sir—the 'Ead was very pertickler in his horders. Nobody under the Sixth to go ashore."

There was no help for it. The knuts of the Shell turned back along the gangway to the Benbow.

Drake was leaning on the bulwarks there, and he eyed Daubeny grimly as the latter came up. The Shell fellow approached him, muttering in a low voice.

"It can't be helped, Drake—I can't go. The whole school's gated."

"You'd better!"

"I tell you I can't! You can ask Coote yourself! You saw that he turned me back," breathed Daubeny. "It's on your account, hang you! The Head's gated us all so that you can't send anybody to stop Smith. Look here, Drake——"

Jack Drake drew a deep breath.

"You mean that Smith can't be stopped?" he asked.

DETECTIVE KERR INVESTIGATES.

Solution:

KERR: There could be no doubt that Piggott was guilty when he stated definitely that he had bought the 1939 "Holiday Annual" on August 27th, when, as any regular reader of the GEM and "Magnet" could have told him, the "Annual" was not on sale until the usual date, September 1st. So Piggott had obviously written his own name and the date in Blake's book, using pencil to avoid the telltale appearance of recently-dried ink. Blake did not report the matter; but Piggott got a licking with a five bat that he will long remember!

"You can see for yourself."

"Then you'll be sorry that you fixed it with him to come at all!"

"Drake—"

"That's enough!"

Jack Drake turned on his heel.

Vernon Daubeny glanced at his chums. Torrence looked worried, and Egan shrugged his shoulders. They had no help to give.

Daubeny hurried after Drake at last. Jack had gone down to his study, and the Shell fellow found him there with Rodney and Tuckey Toodles.

"Drake, old man," Daubeny began appealingly, "I've done all I can. You know I can't get ashore."

"Get out!" growled Drake.

"It won't benefit you to spin yarns about me to the Head. I—I swear I had nothin' to do with Gentleman Smith comin' here!"

"What's the good of telling lies?" exclaimed Drake scornfully.

"I—I—"

"Get out!"

Drake advanced towards Vernon Daubeny with his fists clenched, his eyes gleaming over them. The Shell fellow backed out of the study.

"Old chap," he muttered from the passage, "we used to be pals, Drake. Don't be a cad! I assure you that—"

Slam!

The door closed on Daubeny with a slam, and the hapless buck returned to the upper deck in a state of rage and alarm. His plot was recoiling on his own head with a vengeance.

Drake threw himself into a chair.

"Precious specimen, isn't he?" he muttered satirically. "I suppose it won't do me any good

NELSON LEE shows the Cattle-Rustlers a Thing or Two!

On vacation on a ranch in Montana, the boys of St. Frank's have the time of their lives! But there's mystery at Roaring Z as well as fun and excitement. For cattle are continually disappearing, and it's a mystery how the wholesale rustling is carried out. Read all about it in this powerful story, featuring Nelson Lee, the schoolmaster detective, on the trail.



Of all Newsagents 4^d

THE MYSTERY OF ROARING Z RANCH

No. 348 of SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

to give the cad away. He would stop that brute coming if he could—now. Oh, what a fool I've been! And now the game's up!"

Rodney was silent, but Tuckey Toodles chimed in cheerily:

"Never say die, old man! Rely on me!"

"You fat idiot!" said Drake, rather ungratefully. "For goodness' sake don't worry me now with your silly rot!"

"Go it, old chap! Slang your best pal if it does you any good," said Tuckey considerably. "All the same, I'm going to see you through. I've got an idea—a regular wheeze!"

"Dry up!"

"But I tell you—"

"Kick him out, Rodney!"

Tuckey Toodles made a strategic retreat to the door. In the doorway he paused to bestow a fat wink upon the exasperated Drake.

"You rely on me," he said. "I'll see you through."

And Tuckey Toodles vanished, leaving the hapless Fourth Former quite uncomfortable by his assurance.

Toodles to the Rescue!

AFTERNOON lessons that day were a long-drawn-out misery to Jack Drake. He could not give much attention to Mr. Packe, and the Fourth Form master was very sharp with him in consequence. But Drake could not help it. In every sound he seemed to hear the heavy footsteps of the sharper who was coming to the Benbow to betray him.

The more he thought over the matter, the more clear it was that Gentleman Smith was simply the instrument of Daubeny's malice. The rascal would scarcely have taken such a step on his own account. And Daubeny, now that he understood what the man's visit meant for himself, was powerless. Probably he was as troubled and harassed in the Shell room that afternoon as Jack Drake in the Fourth.

During classes Tuckey Toodles bestowed several significant winks and nods upon his study-mate which Drake did not even notice.

Some scheme apparently was working in Tuckey's fat brain. Tuckey was determined to show that he, and not Rodney, was the fellow to be relied upon, but what was working in the grubby junior's mind was a mystery. Drake did not give him a thought.

It was a relief to Jack Drake when the Fourth were dismissed, though it brought the fatal hour nearer.

At tea-time Jack was not thinking of tea. He was leaning on the bulwark near the gangway, watching. At every moment he expected to see the squat figure of Gentleman Smith emerge from the shadow of the woods and approach the gate. Dick Rodney was with him—silent! There was nothing he could say—nothing he could do. The chums could only wait. Tuckey Toodles came rolling along to the gangway.

"Rely on me, old top!" he whispered, as he passed Drake.

"Fathead!"

Toodles strolled along the gangway, half-way to the gate on the bank, and sat down on the low parapet. He, too, was watching.

Drake caught Rodney's arm suddenly.

"There he is!"

A squat figure appeared from the path through the woods and came along by the sports ground. The juniors recognised Gentleman Smith, of the

OUR GREAT COLLECTING SCHEME!

5 MORE STAMPS AND FULL RULES. Read All About It On Page 2.



RULES: Up to 300 Footballs will be awarded in the September contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties.

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps"—Nos. 1 to 5, inclusive. All claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (to be given next week). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B. "Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: "BOY'S CINEMA," "MAGNET," "MODERN BOY," "DETECTIVE WEEKLY," "TRIUMPH," "WILD WEST WEEKLY," "THRILLER," "SPORTS BUDGET," and "CHAMPION.")

OVERSEAS READERS! You pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best scores from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course!

Lobster Pot, with his bowler hat a little sideways, and a cigarette stuck in the corner of his mouth.

Cootie, the porter, stared at the sharper as he came up to the gate; but Cootie had evidently had his instructions, for he admitted that remarkable visitor without question.

Mr. Smith lounged through the gate and came along the gangway, with a grin on his red face as he caught a hundred pairs of eyes turned upon him from the Benbow. Toodles rose from his resting-place on the low rail by the side of the permanent gangway. He started running towards the gate.

Apparently the grubby junior did not see Mr. Smith, for he was charging straight at him like a bull at a gate.

"Ere, look where you're going!" ejaculated Smith.

But the warning came too late, or perhaps the astute Toodles did not choose to look where he was going. He came at the bookmaker like a bull, lowering his head to the charge.

Crash!

Tuckey Toodles was not a lightweight. His bullet head, with his very considerable weight behind, smote Mr. Smith upon his ample waistcoat.

Gentleman Smith staggered away. The back of his legs came in sudden contact with the low parapet, and he fell heavily backwards over it.

Splash!

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Drake blankly.

There was a yell of laughter from the crowded deck of the old warship.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well hit, Toodles! Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Smith had fallen on his back where the water was shallow. He came up in two feet of water, streaming, drenched, and thick with mud. His fat, red face was coated with it and unrecognisable, and the sounds that proceeded from him were scarcely human.

"Groogh! Hah—hooh—goooog! Gug-goooog!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tuckey grinned at him from above.

"Sorry, old chap! Did I run into you?"

"Groooogh!"

Gentleman Smith scrambled wildly through the mud to the shore. But there was a good distance of shallows and mud between him and the solid bank. Loud yells of laughter and shouts of encouragement followed him from the Benbow.

He reached the bank, and sank down breathless. He sat there for some minutes, spitting out mud and ooze and uttering savage oaths. When he staggered to his feet at last he did not come towards the gates again. At that moment Mr. Smith was more in need of a bath and a change than of anything else. He shook a furious fist at the grinning faces on the ship and tramped away.

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

Tuckey Toodles came back on the Benbow, grinning. He gave his astonished studymate a wink.

"Didn't I tell you to rely on me?" he grinned. "I'm the man, you know. Put your money on old Tuckey!"

"You—you ass!" gasped Drake, hardly knowing whether to be relieved or not. Tuckey's extraordinary wheeze had put off the evil hour, at least, and there was a chance.

"Toodles!" It was Mr. Paacke's voice. "Go to the Head at once!"

"Oh lor!" gasped Tuckey

And the triumphant grin faded from Tuckey's grubby features as, at a snail's pace, he made his reluctant way to the Head's study.

(Next Week: "CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP!")

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,596.

A COCKNEY IN CANADA!

(Continued from page 29.)

"What are you up to, Hopkins?" shrieked Bob Lawless as the Cockney, crimson with exertion and excitement, dragged the fat Redskin down the bank towards the creek by main force.

"Lend a 'and!" gasped Hopkins. "I'm goin' to drown 'im!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"That's the only way of killin' 'im. I ain't got a gun!" yelled Hopkins. "I'm goin' to drown 'im! Bear a 'and!"

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!"

"Help!" shrieked the unhappy Chunky.

"Help! Yaroo! I ain't going to be drowned. Oh jiminy! Help me, you dummies! Yooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards & Co. were almost doubled up with laughter. This outcome of Chunky's jape was so totally unexpected that it overcame them. Instead of frightening the Cockney schoolboy out of his wits, poor Chunky had only turned him into a terrific fighting-man with deadly intentions. Chunky was no match for the Cockney, and he was encumbered by blanket and moccasins. He had simply no chance. With a rush, Hopkins brought him down the sloping bank to the water.

"Great Scott!" gasped Beaulere. "We mustn't let him drown poor Chunky! Come on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three chums rushed down the bank after the Cockney. But Hopkins was not to be balked. He raised the fat Redskin bodily in his arms, and Chunky, with his feathers and arms and legs wildly flying, was rushed down to the water.

"Stop!" roared Bob Lawless. "Oh crumbs! After him! Stop him!"

Splash!

"Gug-gug-gug!"

Chunky Todgers went bodily into the shallow water by the bank, and Harold Hopkins stood paning.

Chunky's head came up, and his face showed with half the Redskin complexion washed off as he struggled wildly towards the shore.

"Keep 'im in!" roared Hopkins. "Keep 'im there and let 'im drown! Anybody got a gun?"

Frank Richards grasped Hopkins and fairly dragged him back, while Bob Lawless and Beaulere helped Chunky out of the water.

"Don't let 'im get out!" yelled Hopkins. "Wait till I get 'is tommyhawk and brain 'im! 'Old 'im while I finish 'im off!"

"Grooogh! Hooh! Whoop! Oh dear! I'm all wet! I'm soaking! Yow-ow-ow!" wailed Chunky.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you silly dummies!" howled Chunky indignantly. "Look at these clothes! Who's going to pay for the damage?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards & Co. laughed till they wept. They could not help it. It was such an unexpected ending to Chunky's great jape, and he looked such a bedraggled object as he stood squelching in water and mud.

"Oh, you ass, Hopkins!" gasped Bob at last.

"I tried to tell you that it was only a joke."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hopkins.

"Oh, you can see it now, can you?" exclaimed Bob.

Hopkins roared.

"You jolly nearly drowned me, you dangerous idiot!" howled Chunky Todgers.

"No, I didn't," said Hopkins, chortling. "I knowed the water was shallow there, my tulip. I knowed there wasn't any danger, 'cepting to your Injun complexion. Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards jumped.

"You knew it was Chunky all the time?" he yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha! 'Old me, somebody!" gasped Hopkins. "Of course I knowed. I'd know that fat little oyster anywhere if 'e was dressed as a Red Indian or a pink nigger. Ha, ha, ha! Still, he wanted me to take 'im for an Injun, so I took 'im for an Injun—see?"

And with a chuckle, Harold Hopkins walked away, leaving Frank Richards & Co. blinking at one another.

"Gug-gug-gug!" came from the unfortunate Chunky. "I shall catch c-c-cold! Grooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of Cedar Creek, laughing hysterically, marched Chunky away to get him dried. They were rather late in starting for home that evening, but they went in a merry mood.

As for Chunky Todgers, his sense of humour was a little damped for the time, and it was probable that he would think twice before he attempted to take another rise out of Harold Hopkins.

(Next Week: "FOR HIS FATHER'S SAKE!")

ROYAL NAVY

Boys may now enter between the ages of 15 and 17½ years.

Full particulars are

contained in the illustrated booklet "The Royal Navy as a Career and How to Join It," which may be obtained on application to the Recruiting Staff Officer, R.N. and R.M., (N), 85, Whitehall, London, S.W.1, or at any Post Office.

TRIANGULAR PKT. FREE.—Holland Triangular, Estonia, Luxembourg, 56 different, GREECE, Bohemia, South Australia Centenary. Postage 2d.; request approvals.—**Robinson Bros. (A), Moreton, Wirral.**

BLUSHING, Shyness, "Nerves," Self-Consciousness, Worry, Habit, Unreasonable Fears, etc., cured or money back! Complete Course 5/. Details—**L. A. STEBBING, 28, Dean Road, London, N.W.2.**

All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, The GEM, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.