

GRAND LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY!

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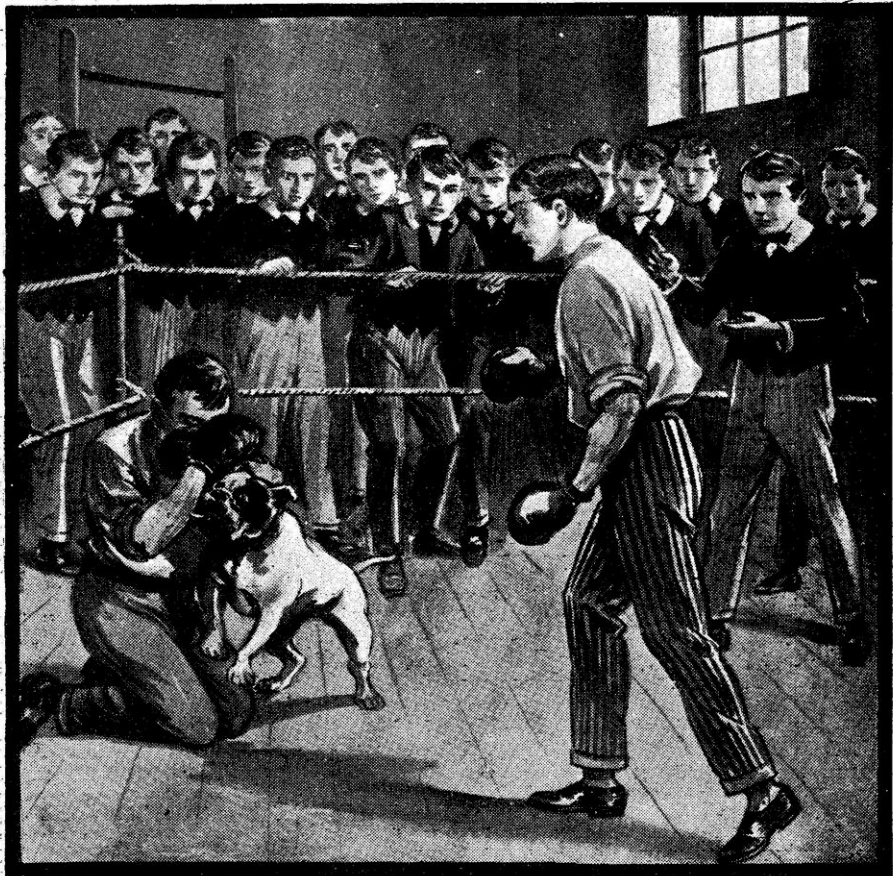
LIBRARY

20 Pages.

Every Wednesday.

June 11th, 1921.

BOUND BY A PROMISE.



A LICKING FOR HIS MASTER!

A Dramatic Incident from the Gripping Long Complete School Story Inside.

CHAT ABOUT ST. JIM'S AND GREYFRIARS.

There will be a great demand for next week's issue of the GEM LIBRARY, so I feel it is my duty to warn all readers to register their order at the newsagent's without further delay. It has already been made known to you that our magnificent new serial, "What Have You Against Me?" starts in this issue. It will be entirely your own fault if you fail to obtain a copy, and read the opening instalment of this wonderful new story. It is penned by one of the finest authors of the day, and, like all his other magnificent stories, is bound to prove one of the record-breaking variety. An advance order is quite enough to insure for you a copy of this bumper number of the GEM LIBRARY.

In addition to the above, there is to be an extra grand long complete story of the chums of St. Jim's. This magnificent long story of the rousing adventures of Tom Merry & Co., entitled, "The Plot Against St. Jim's," is most exciting throughout. In this exciting yarn a claim is made for the occupation of the old school. The cuteness of Tom Merry, together with Francis Kerr of the New

House, in frustrating the knavish tricks of the claimants, leads them both into very strange circumstances. This story brings fresh interest in every line, so make sure of your being a certain reader of this splendid yarn by asking your newsagent to reserve you a copy of next week's issue of the GEM LIBRARY. Many letters of disappointment reach me from readers who have left their order until the last minute, and have had to leave the newsagent's shop with the words "Sold out!" ringing in their ears.

"Tally-ho, tally-ho, tally-ho!" As the huntsman's cry to his hounds, so is your Editor's cry to you. Ernest Levison, who has now been missing for the past few weeks, has been sighted in Brighton. Can it be possible? His trackers are hastening here at full speed now with the news. You shall know soon!

No, P.-c. Crump was not among the trackers, although our worthy "copper" boiled over in the excitement.

What a relief to know that the popular Ernest is quite safe, after all!

A Free Holiday at the Seaside is being paid for by the "Boys' Herald" in a new and easy competition. This magnificent offer is within the reach of you all, and only requires two or three minutes of careful study. All that has to be done to provide money to cover all expenses for a real fine holiday by the sea is to solve six easy picture-puzzles denoting well-known railway-stations. Each of the stations selected are those picked from a Bradshaw's Railway Guide. If you are not lucky enough to win the first big prize, you may be the lucky recipient of one of the many other handsome money prizes. In addition to this, there are a number of Tuck Hampers awarded. Many letters have been received from readers who have already won one of these delicious hampers of tuck. Well, the same chances are open to you. All you have to do is to get a copy of this week's "Boys' Herald," and read the full particulars, and you will at once start to work to win one for yourself. You'll regret it if you don't act "right now."

:: ANSWERS TO READERS. ::

"A LOYAL ST. JIM'S ENTHUSIAST" (Blackburn).—You are quite right in what you say, my friend. Mr. Martin Clifford is, in all probability, one of the most rapid writers in existence. He commenced stories in the GEM in 1907, and, together with Backwood stories, has written well over twenty million words. I can recollect one Rugby match being played at St. Jim's. Kildare received a challenge, and collected together a team from every Form in the school. When ready to play it ran something like this: Tom Merry, Gussy, Lefevre, Kildare, Dudley, Wally D'Arcy, Herries, Kerr, Darrel, Baker, Lowther, Figgins, Menteith, Jack Blake and Fatty Wynn. I will try and put one of the rotters in the "Gallery" for you.

"A GIRL LOVER OF JACK BLAKE" (Leicester).—Despite the difference in age, height, and weight, I should say that D'Arcy minor is a better boxer than George Gerald Crooke. It is not impossible that Ferrers Locke might come to St. Jim's, and solve a case. George Durrance's father is still in the Navy. I can't tell what ship he is on at present. No doubt swimming stories, including your favourite character, will appear during the summer.

"A MODERN TOMBOY" (Glasgow).—Hammond and Frayne are about the only two boys at St. Jim's who speak Cockney. The others, with the possible exception of Trimble and Grundy, never drop their "hitches," and usually speak King's English. I think Gussy is liked by nearly all my readers. Your sketch is very good of a Russian anarchist, but I saw no resemblance in it to Aubrey Racker!

"BILL, THE KONKERER" (Hastings).—Racker's half-sister is about eighteen THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 606.

years old. I cannot promise to bring a boy named William Beckingsham to St. Jim's just yet. So you consider the portrait of Harry Noble a good one. Others which have been proclaimed as exceptionally fine are, Jack Blake, Dr. Holmes, and Cardew. Baggy Trimble was really very funny. Do you think the boys ended their barring-out too quickly? The reason was, because it proved quickly successful, and justice was done to Dr. Holmes. Wildrake is a splendid character. I am glad you like him.

"A BLACKPOOL CHUM" (Blackpool).—I will endeavour to publish the plans of the interior of St. Jim's as soon as possible. Chemistry is taught in the New House. Thanks very much for obtaining four new readers! Don't forget to show them the "Boys' Herald," as well.

"A NEW READER" (Croydon) commenced with the Cardew Number, and the following week took up the "Boys' Herald." He has given it his staunch support ever since. Many thanks, chum! I welcome you to our ranks, determined to stick firmly to our papers.

"A STANDARD FOUR SUPPORTER" (Reading).—So you read the serial, "The Invisible Hand," in the GEM, and the week after it commenced, your local film manager booked it to appear, thus enabling you to follow it closely on the silver screen and take your time over the story when you chose. Lucky chap!

PRE. R. GUILFORD (Hounslow).—George Herries takes size 9 in boots, D'Arcy minor has a shaggy dog named Pongo. Perhaps Trimble senior will blow in one day. I agree that his coming along ought to be quite funny. Blake is the Fourth's crack footer man. Glad

to hear your brother is still interested in the GEM and "Boys' Herald." Naturally, we all know more about a fellow like Skimpole or Trimble than we do about French or Lorne. They can't all be in the limelight! The reason Mr. Martin Clifford does not introduce new characters more frequently is because he has already so many to deal with.

"BOBBED HAIR" (Burnley).—You want more information of Cousin Ethel, Doris Levison, Marie Rivers, Sylvia Carr, and Racker's sister given in the stories. Well, we give a pretty fair quantity in Joy's Gossip and other odd places, don't we? And you mustn't forget, boys soon make objections when they think there is too much. Tom Merry brought Joe Frayne to St. Jim's. I am very glad to hear you are forming a girl-readers' GEM club. Write and let me know how it progresses.

"A GIRL OF GLASGOW" writes: "In this week's GEM (which is a gem), I read what that boy reader said about girls. He says we spoil everything with our stupid ways. I should like to have a few words with that young gentleman, and I bet you he would sink away with his tail between his legs! If girls are stupid, so are boys, and I can tell you that maybe I and some other girls up our way could knock spots off some of them, and teach them how to play footer and cricket. You were quite right when you said he was hard on us. Some girls didn't 'spoil everything' during the war, did they? No; in fact, they helped to win it. And since then they have come up to any man's level—and surpassed it. I am a Glasgow girl—from the same city as the great Blake—and I am sure Mr. Editor, that you will agree with me as to one having a right to stick up for one's own sex."



A Magnificent New, Long Complete Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER I.

Trouble for Wally!

"OPEN this door at once!" Mr. Selby, the master of the Third Form at St. Jim's, thumped at the closed door of Study No. 6. But there was no reply. Once again Mr. Selby thumped, getting more and more annoyed at each thump. He was not at the best of times a pleasant-tempered gentleman, and now that he was enraged his face began to grow red.

Thump, thump!
The Third Form his red nose was a known danger-signal, and Wally D'Arcy & Co. took care to avoid trouble. They were not always fortunate. At the present moment Mr. Selby was in search of Wally D'Arcy, that young gentleman being wanted for purposes of chastisement.

But Wally was discreetly missing. In search of him Mr. Selby had come to Study No. 6, habituated by Jack Blake, Herries, Digby, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Wally's elder brother, for it was not unlikely that Wally should seek refuge in his major's study.

"Hallo! What the dickens—" Jack Blake, as he came strolling along the Fourth Form passage, whistled with amazement. It certainly was peculiar to see a stately Form-master thumping on the door of a junior study.

Digby and Herries, who were with him, also gave vent to startled exclamations, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy murmured:

"Bai Jove!"
Attracted by the noise, several juniors had opened their study doors and come into the passage. Cardew, Levison, and Clive, from Study No. 9, blinked in amazement, and looked to the chums of Study No. 6 for explanation. But Jack Blake was just as puzzled as they.

"Who—who is in here?"
As he heard the approaching footsteps the master of the Third Form turned round and glared questioningly at the three chums.

Jack Blake shook his curly head. "Blessed if I know, sir!" he said. "There shouldn't be anyone. There are only the four of us share the study, and we're all here."

Mr. Selby bestowed on the swell of St. Jim's a penetrating glare. "D'Arcy," he said sternly, "where is your brother?"

Arthur Augustus gave a slight start. "Wally?" he exclaimed. "Bai Jove! I haven't the faintest idea, sir, where

the young boundah is! Do you want him?"

Mr. Selby trembled. "Boy! Fool!" he snapped. "Should I be inquiring for him if I did not require him? Don't bandy words! I believe you are concealing him!"

Arthur Augustus turned slightly red. He did not care to be addressed in that manner, but he swallowed his self-respect and held his tongue.

"Turn out your pockets," whispered Cardew in a sibilant whisper. And there was a slight laugh.

"D'Arcy," snapped the Form-master, "I command you to open this door at once!"

The swell of St. Jim's, with tight lips, stepped forward. He would not have been surprised to find that his young brother was really concealed in the study. Wally was a cheerful youth, and the worry of Mr. Selby's life. But Mr. Selby never knew when to stop in the punishment department, and more than once he had gone too far. Arthur Augustus therefore felt a slight repugnance at having to place his younger brother in the name, too tender hands of the master of the Third.

But he had no option. He rattled the handle of the door and pushed. The door did not budge.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped. "The wretched thing's locked!"

"Of course!" snapped Mr. Selby. "Do you think I would stand here knocking if it had not been locked?"

"Bai Jove! You know, I nevah thought of that, sir!"

"Well, unlock it, dolt!" Jack Blake stepped forward.

"It must be locked on the inside, sir," he said. "None of us have locked it." He turned to his chums. "Have any of you chaps locked the door?" he asked.

Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy shook their heads. But George Herries looked rather concerned. He knew that in that study was his pet, Towser, a large bulldog. Towser was not exactly popular in Study No. 6, but for Herries' sake he was tolerated. Of course, Towser should not have been in the study. His place was in the kennel. And Herries trembled lest Towser should growl, and so reveal his presence to the Form-master.

"This door must be opened!" snapped Mr. Selby, after a slight pause. "I believe this is a plot—a conspiracy on the part of you lads to keep young D'Arcy from justice!"

His small eyes glittered angrily through his spectacles.

"You have no right to say that, sir!" retorted Herries rather heatedly. "We left the study open!"

"Silence! If you do not produce the key I shall order the door to be broken down!"

The chums of Study No. 6 looked from one to the other helplessly, and there were murmurs of excitement among the crowd of Fourth-Formers in the passage.

"Better give up the key, Blake," whispered Levison.

"Ass!" grunted Blake. "The key's on the inside. We haven't got it. You can see if you look through the keyhole."

For a brief moment there was a silence. Mr. Selby stood undecided what to do. Then he spoke.

"I shall give the wretched boy one last chance!" he said angrily. "If he does not open the door I shall order it to be broken down! I am convinced that he is in there!"

He raised his hand and thumped noisily on the door.

"D'Arcy minor," he said sternly and peremptorily, "open the door at once!"

There was no reply, and the crowd of juniors began to smile.

"Now for the giddy circus!" chuckled Kerruish. And there were many grins. Mr. Selby turned round on the crowd.

"Boys," he said, "help me open this door!"

He grasped the handle and leant all his weight against the panels. Jack Blake winked at the crowd, and leant his weight, too. In an instant the whole crowd followed suit. One on the other they leant against the door. Unfortunately for Mr. Selby, he was underneath.

"Boys, stand back!" he panted. "Ugh! Blake—Digby!"

But the juniors said nothing; they leant on Mr. Selby, and Mr. Selby leant on the door. It was not surprising that the lock began to give.

"You're squashing me!" Mr. Selby almost shrieked. "Get off!"

"It's all right, sir," said Blake reassuringly. "The door's giving way." "Creak!"

The door was certainly giving way. It creaked ominously. And, as it did so, Blake gave a shout:

"Heave!"

One last heave the whole crowd gave, and then—

Crash!
Mr. Selby and the door flew into the room, with a heap of juniors on top. Hurriedly the juniors jumped to their feet.

feet. None were eager to be the last on the floor with the master. Soon Mr. Selby was left alone on his knees in the study, the door open by his side, and behind him a crowd of juniors convulsed with mirth.

But their mirth soon gave way to surprise. Mr. Selby remained as he had fallen, and stared. Jack Blake gave a shout of amazement.

"The study! My hat! What's happened!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Wrecked!"

There was no doubt at all about it. Study No. 6 was wrecked. Completely and undoubtedly wrecked. The curtains lay in torn shreds on the floor; the tablecloth, a present from Digby's Uncle

James, lay on the floor, torn and utterly ruined. The bookcase reclined ungracefully on its side, showing its learned contents all over the carpet, one corner of which had been ripped up. And in one corner of the room lay a heap of boxes, ripped open, from which protruded ties and waistcoats. By their side lay a pair of elegantly cut trousers.

In the midst of this ruin sat a huge bulldog, gnawing what had at one time been a well-shaped top-hat.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he saw this, gave a shriek, and darted forward.

"Bai Jove!"

"My hat!" gasped Blake, with unintentional humour. It was truly not intentional, for Blake at that moment was feeling anything but humorous.

As Arthur Augustus darted forward the bulldog growled, and the swell of St. Jim's stepped quickly backwards.

Mr. Selby backed away, too. He was frightened of bulldogs.

Towser looked at the master and growled.

"Ow! Keep him off!" gasped Mr. Selby. "Take him away!"

Herries made a movement to go forward, but Towser was in the way. Mr. Selby stepped round the table to avoid the dog. And Towser, now thoroughly suspicious, followed him round.

"Take him away!" shrieked Mr. Selby. "Call him off! Oh!"

Herries ran into the study, and did his best to catch his favourite; but Towser had no desire whatever to be caught just then. He followed Mr. Selby round the study, growling.

The master sprang on to the table, and blinked through his spectacles at the bulldog, who laced his front paws on the table edge. The perspiration stood out on the master's brow.

"Herries, take him away!" he called fearfully.

Herries placed a large hand on the dog's collar, and almost at once Towser simpered down. Herries' face wore a very worried frown. He could not in the least understand this new departure on the part of Towser, for the bulldog was not usually destructive.

"Lie down, old boy!" he said. "Good doggy!"

Very gingerly the master of the Third got down from the table amidst chuckles from the delighted juniors in the passage.

When at last he was safe on the floor, he gave the unfortunate owner of Towser a perfectly ferocious glare.

"You will hear more of this, Herries!" he snapped.

In the excitement he had completely forgotten D'Arcy junior, which was just as well, for Mr. Selby in his present mood would not have been the embodiment of justice.

He pushed his way through the crowd of grinning juniors, and, very red in the face, hurried along to his room. Leaving behind him a storm of talk and domestic uproar.

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CHAPTER 2.

Selby is Ratty!

"HERRIES, you ass!"
"Herries, you silly chump!"

Blake, Digby, and D'Arcy glared in righteous indignation at their chum. They came into the study, and Blake shut the door on the crowd that was outside. For it was a "family" matter.

"What did you want to leave Towser in here for?" asked Blake. "You might have known he'd spoil the place!"

"How should I know?" demanded Herries rather uncomformably. "You know what a good dog Towser is as a rule."

"Rats!" snapped Digby.

"Yaas, wathah, wats!" sniffed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I entirely agree with Digby. Towser has no respect whatever for a fellow's twousahs."

"Oh, you shut up!" snapped Herries.

"I utterly refuse to shut up! I have told you often, Hewwies, what a wotten, vicious dog Towser is—"

"Towser's not vicious!" said Herries, clenching his fist. "Naturally, he growls when you come near him. Besides, wouldn't you growl if you had a lot of cackling asses come bargin' in?"

"I should utterly refuse to growl under any conditions whatever, dear boy," said the swell of St. Jim's stiffly.

Herries stroked Towser's ear, and looked down affectionately at his pet. In Herries' eyes, Towser had never, and could never have done wrong.

Digby glanced sadly at the ruined table-cover, Blake eyed the curtains with dismay, and Arthur Augustus was on his knees beside his hat-boxes. Out those boxes had come the hats. But Towser had never altered that. The once glossy toppers, the pride of the elegant junior, were now unwearable. And all through Towser. That is what the juniors felt.

Of course, it was Herries' fault! He should not have left the dog alone in the study. He might have known that the bulldog would become restive. It was the upraised corner of the carpet that had kept the door shut.

"Poor old Towsy!" murmured Herries.

"Poor old curtains!" sniffed Blake.

"Where are we going to get any more curtains? Gussy's spent his liver, and I haven't a penny. We can't expect Digby's Uncle James to fish out for a new set of curtains—"

"He'd want to know what had happened to the tablecloth," grunted Digby. "I always said Towser was expensive."

"Well, all dogs are frolicsome," said Herries, feeling bound to excuse his pet.

"I'll give him frolicsome!" grunted Blake wrathfully. "Why, you're not even lickin' him! How can a dog learn to—"

"Lick Towser!" shouted Herries.

"Go and eat coke!"

He drew the dog nearer, and glared at the warlike Blake. Jack Blake, not without reason, was feeling distinctly annoyed. For the curtains and tablecloths were just new, and to replace them would absorb all the pocket-money of the Co. for many weeks to come. If it had been caused through a House raid there would at least have been some form of satisfaction. But Towser!

Blake glared at Herries, and Herries glared back. Towser blinked up at Blake wonderingly. He scented trouble.

"You keep off Towser," said Herries aggressively. "If you touch Towser, I'll touch you!"

Blake stood there irresolute for a minute, then he tossed down the ruler with a laugh.

"Not much good crying over spilt

milk," he said, rather shortly. "But I think you ought to lick that brute."
"Hear, hear!" said Digby. "But Arthur Augustus made no sound. He was engrossed in his hats.

"What do you think, Gussy?" asked Digby hotly. But D'Arcy remained like a Sphinx.

"Gussy!"

"Eh?"

The swell of St. Jim's looked round at his chums. His face wore an exceedingly troubled expression, and there was an angry light in his eyes—a light his chums had never seen there before. As a rule Arthur Augustus was the glass of fashion and the mould of form, and, apart from being the observed of all observers, he was simply Chesterfieldian in manners. But now he looked angry, worried, and almost Hunniah.

"It's wotten!" he said at last, almost tearfully.

"Jolly rotten!" grunted Blake.

"These curtain—"

"Oh, blow the curtains!" said D'Arcy irritably. "Look at my twousahs, and my topmah's; they're winned! Oh dear!"

"I say!" exclaimed Digby. "They certainly are a mess!"

"Bai Jove! Towser ought to be jolly well killed!"

The swell of St. Jim's sprang to his feet, and glared angrily at Herries.

George Herries, puzzled and startled, returned the look. He had never before seen that angry look in his chum's eye, and he hardly knew what to say.

"What's the matter, Gussy?" asked Blake, greatly surprised.

"Mattach! Oh, nothin'—nothin' at all, dear boy! Only all my hats have been winned, and my best twousahs torn!"

"Well, you shouldn't keep them in the study," said Herries obstinately, determined to prove Towser in the right.

"Don't be an ass, Herries!" exclaimed Blake. "You know you're only talking rot. If Gussy cares to keep his toppers in the study, he can."

"Well, I've told him that Towser might happen to bite them."

"Towser has no business in the study at all!" snapped Digby. "You know that, Herries. If the Head heard of it there'd be trouble. I expect there will be now, from Selby."

"Yes. He won't swallow the scene here this evening without a row," said Blake seriously.

"I don't care," said Herries. "Anyway, if you chaps hadn't left things about there wouldn't have been anything to bite."

"Oh!" retorted Blake sarcastically.

"And what were we to do with the curtains? Hide them? And where were we to hide the tablecloth, too?"

"Blessed if I can see what on earth you wanted the dog here for at all," grunted Digby. "He's all right in a kennel. That's the proper place for a dog. They're warm and comfortable."

"How would you like a kennel, if they're so warm and comfortable?" asked Herries warmly.

"I'm not a dog."

"Besides," struck in D'Arcy, "that has nothin' whatever to do with the mattach. Towser is a wotten animal, and he has no respect for a fellow's twousahs. He'd much betrah be kept right outside the school, where he can't hurt anything. Hewwies knows that, only he's too obstinate to admit it."

"No, I'm not. I don't believe it," answered Herries roughly. "I'm fed up with your jaw! Making a fuss about nothing."

"Nothin'! Look at my twousahs and toppahs—"

"No, I'm not. I don't believe it," answered Herries roughly. "I'm fed up with your jaw! Making a fuss about nothing."

"Nothin'! Look at my twousahs and toppahs—"

"No, I'm not. I don't believe it," answered Herries roughly. "I'm fed up with your jaw! Making a fuss about nothing."

"Nothin'! Look at my twousahs and toppahs—"

"And the tablecloth—"

"and the curtains!"

"Oh, rats!"

George Herries slipped off the table, and, taking his four-footed friend by the collar, he left the study. The passage was now deserted, the other juniors having lost interest in the affair, now that the master had vanished.

The junior took the bulldog across to the school kennels. There, with great care, he lashed him up, safely out of harm's way. For some minutes Herries remained there, patting his favourite's great head. Herries was very fond of his dog, and he had great faith in Towser's intelligence—a faith that was not in any way shared by others.

But at last he left him, and returned slowly to the school. No sooner was he inside than a small flag of the Third Form came up to him. It was Jameson.

"Oh, Herries!" he exclaimed excitedly. "Old Selby wants you. I say, he's looking awfully nifty!"

He gazed at Herries questioningly. But Herries merely nodded, as though it were an invitation to tea he had been expecting. Without another word, he made his way to the Third Form-master's study.

"Come in!" came an acid voice; and Herries opened the door.

Mr. Selby was inside. As Herries entered he looked up from the book he had been reading—or, rather, attempting to read, for Mr. Selby was too annoyed to absorb what he was reading. His eyes had an angry glint, and he wheeled round upon the Fourth-Former.

"Herries," he snapped, "I have called you to tell you that I will not tolerate that dog in the House. You have no right to bring him inside the school, as you should know."

"Yes, sir; but—"

"I want no excuse. It is a rule of the school that pets shall be kept only in the place specially appointed for them. You have broken this rule, and there is no excuse whatever."

"But, sir, listen!" broke in Herries, rather angrily. "I had to have poor old Towser in the school."

"Had to! What do you mean?"

"Well, Towser was ill; he had a cold," explained Herries.

"Bah! A cold? What rot! Dogs are meant to live in the open, not to be pampered indoors. You are a fool, Herries—a sentimental fool! Give the dog fresh air, and he will get well. As a matter of fact, he caught cold through being locked in a warm study."

"No, sir."

"Don't contradict me!" thundered the master. "You will see, I am going to Dr. Holmes in the morning. This sort of thing cannot be allowed to proceed. You have a dog's muzzle?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. You must muzzle that vile, ferocious dog!"

Herries eyes blazed, and with difficulty he kept his tongue. But it was no use at all arguing with Mr. Selby.

"I shall send Kildare to see that you have done so," went on the master. "Go. And never let me see that dog in the school again!"

The master turned back to his book, and the incident was closed. Herries, scowling heavily, turned to the door. He dearly longed to throw something at the master; but with an effort he controlled himself, and did not even slam the door.

Herries, feeling thoroughly miserable, walked up to the study to get Towser's muzzle. His chums were still there, and they gave him black looks. Arthur Augustus, with an expression of sorrow, gazed forlornly at his ruined topper. The expression he turned on the burly

Herries, however, savoured more of anger than of sorrow. But he said nothing.

In silence, Herries took the muzzle from the table-drawer and as silently left the room. He felt there was nothing to say. It seemed almost as though there were a rift in the lute in Study No. 6. In the bottom of his heart Herries had a somewhat uncomfortable feeling that he had not been quite fair with his chums. But, with curly obstinacy, he would not admit that Towser could do wrong. And Towser, showing great reluctance during the process, was duly muzzled. Herries imprinted a kiss on the dog's large head, and patted him affectionately. "Poor old doggy," he murmured softly. "They are cruel to him, aren't they? Never mind. Poor old chappy!"

Towser wagged his stumpy tail, and poked a red tongue through the muzzle, licking Herries' caressing hand. Towser felt guilty, and he wished to do penance. He was fond of Herries, and felt instinctively that his master was worried, and that he was the cause of the worry.

When Herries left his pet, and wandered in to the school house, it was nearing bed-time. He did not wish to return to the study, so, for the rest of the evening he sat in the Common-room, quite by himself in a corner, away from the others. Somehow he felt that there was trouble in the air. And he was not far wrong.

CHAPTER 3.

If Mr. Selby Only Knew.

A FURTIVE figure crept along the Third Form passage, and halted outside the Form-room door. All was dark, and Wally D'Arcy felt safe.

He had been hiding all the evening from the wrath of Mr. Selby, waiting until the sun should set upon that wrath.

His success so far had given the cheeky young Third-Former, fresh heart, and now, as supper-time was drawing near, he returned as it were to his nest. He opened the Form-room door, and a familiar scent greeted his nostrils. Raised voices in argument came within.

"I didn't," shouted Jameson, and to impress his point, he shook curly Gibson with a grubby hand that he had placed heavily upon curly's even more grubby collar.

Curly Gibson, not unnaturally, yelled. "Shut up!" yelled Wally, in a hissing stage-whisper, as he closed the door. "Can't you silly asses be quiet for a bit. You know old Selby's got the tantrums."

"Well, he said I burnt the blessed kipper," hooted the indignant Jameson. "Well, so you jolly well did," returned his curly-headed companion.

"I didn't!"

"You did!"

Wally strode forward and separated the combatants, eyeing them fiercely.

"If you don't jolly well shut up, you two," he said, "I'll punch your silly heads."

Across their leader's shoulders Jameson and curly Gibson glared at one another, while in the open grate of the Form-room, the kipper burnt away with an increasingly unpleasant odour.

"Haven't you learned to cook a blessed kipper without burning it, you funny-faced sheep," demanded Wally witheringly. "No sooner do I go out of the room and leave you kids, than you start burning good food, and making the place smell."

Jameson and Gibson quailed under the fiery glance of their angry leader, and relapsed into sulky silence. Joe Frayne picked up the offending kipper, and walked, with fingers to nose, to the window, which Reggie Manners obligingly threw open.

"That's right, Joe!" said Wally. "I



Jameson plunged the brush deep into the can of paint, and smoothed the crimson pigment over the master's face. Mr. Selby did not wake. "There!" said Jameson. "How's that?" Wally chuckled. (See page 7.)

should think you're the only one with any sense left at all."

"All right, D'Arcy minor," grunted Curly Gibson. "You needn't start putting on airs. You're jolly lucky to have missed the Selby bird."

Wally whistled. "So he's been after me," he murmured. Jameson nodded.

"He jolly well has," he answered. "I don't wonder, either. Fancy calling old Selby an ass, and then expecting him to put up with it quietly. You must be a chump, Wally."

"I didn't expect him to," grunted Wally. "But I didn't think he'd be in such a beastly towering rage as he was."

Joe Frayne grimaced. "Never mind," he said consolingly. "You've escaped so far."

The captain of the Third Form tribe nodded thoughtfully.

"As a matter of fact, I'm going to give myself up," he said. "Old Selby may go to the Head, you know, and if I give myself up, he'll let me off lightly."

"Artful beggar," grinned Frank Levison. "Still, I must say I don't envy you, Wally, old son."

"Nor I," said Jameson. "Old Selby's been a perfect terror lately."

"He has," grinned Piggett. "And have you heard the latest?"

Wally turned to the sneak of the Third, rather impatiently.

"Well?" he asked. "What is it?"

"All right," said Piggett. "You needn't speak like that. Only I happened to hear—"

"Happened?" sniffed Wally. "I suppose you were listening at a keyhole."

"No, I wasn't, then," answered Piggett. "I got it from Mellish. He told me that old Selby had been to look for you in Study No. 6, and Towser was there, and went for him."

"Oh, my aunt!" chuckled Wally. "Poor old Selby bird, he hates dogs like poison."

"Yes, that's not all," chuckled Piggett. "Towser's wrecked the study."

Wally whistled in amazement. "But D'Arcy?" he grinned. "I bet Gussie's wild if his toppers have been chewed up."

"They have," sniggered Piggett gleefully. "And his trucks, too. And old Selby's going to have Towser destroyed, or something."

"What?"

"There was a shout of amazement from the Third-Formers. They could not believe that Piggett had heard aright. It was impossible that Mr. Selby could have said such a thing."

"Well, I'm blessed," ejaculated Wally. "If that's so, then I'm more than ever keen on my scheme."

"Scheme?"

"What scheme?" asked Jameson curiously.

Wally D'Arcy looked round at the door, to make sure that it was properly closed, then lowered his voice.

"Listen," he whispered. "To-night we're going along to old Selby's room, with a pot of beautiful red paint, and we're going to paint his jolly chivvy. You know old Selby takes sleeping draughts, so he'll be almost unconscious. Well, I've got the paint, and there's a lovely light brush that will do the work a treat."

Wally's eyes glistened, and he looked round at his chums. But somehow they did not seem so keen.

"But he'll wake up," said Levison minor doubtfully.

"Too risky," said Curly Gibson. Jameson, who had been going to make

the same remark, immediately expressed himself in complete favour with the whole idea.

"Jolly good," he said, glaring at Curly Gibson aggressively.

But Curly did not appear to notice the look.

"Oh, then you're the man, Jammy," said Wally, clapping the truculent Jameson on the shoulder. "Good man! You're the only one with a h'pworth of pluck. Good man!"

Jameson, now that he found himself enlisted for the risky work, was rather doubtful, but he saw the grin on Curly Gibson's face, and that settled him.

"Oh, I'm on, all right," he said. "What-ho."

"Then, don't forget," said Wally. "To-night, my lad, we're going to brighten our master's countenance. All good little boys brighten their kind teacher's countenance. I've read that somewhere. And aren't we good little boys? Good! Then we'll brighten old Selby's chivvy with red—"

"Well, there couldn't be a much brighter colour than that," agreed Frayne. "But what will the Head say?"

"The Head won't know," said Wally. "I sha'n't tell him."

Frayne relapsed into silence. He had other ideas on the matter. But he knew it was useless to try to persuade the reckless Third-Former that his scheme would fail.

"Now that's settled," said Wally, with a sigh of relief. "I'm off to the Selby bird. Cheerio!"

And with that cheery parting, Wally D'Arcy left his chums for the less congenial company of his Form master. Wally was prepared for squalls, and not without reason.

But he was happy about that night's arrangement.

He would find any amount of delight in crimsoning the master's face. A blush was certainly never seen on the sour face of the master of the Third, and there would be a few comments.

But what Wally most devoutly hoped was that the redness of his face would confine the master to his bed.

CHAPTER 4.

Mr. Selby Takes Stern Measures.

AL L unconscious of the plot that was being hatched for his benefit, Mr. Selby sat reading in his study. But he threw down his book at last with an irritable gesture.

It was no good; he could not read. The incident of that evening had quite upset him.

He paced the room, frowning heavily. It was the first time that he had had trouble with Towser. Mr. Selby hated dogs. Especially he hated bulldogs; and of that species he hated Towser the most.

In truth, there were few beings Mr. Selby really cared for. He was a hard man, and entirely lacked sympathy. He had a small nature, and had often stooped to petty deeds. It was not at all surprising, therefore, that his own Form had the most to do with him, they had suffered most at his unmerciful hands. But no one liked him. He had never in his life at the school troubled to make himself pleasant to anyone. It was only his cleverness that made him sociable with the other masters; for he was clever. At times he would be less unpleasant than usual, but of late his attacks of indigestion had become more and more frequent, and he in consequence had become more and more aggressive.

Now he was feeling angry with Towser, and, of course, with Herries. But punishing Herries would hardly remedy Towser. He pondered: there was only one thing for it. Towser must go. He had thought it over in his mind, and the decision was deep-rooted. The dog had been muzzled; he had asked Kildare to verify the fact. But he had now determined that Towser must at all costs be got rid of.

He moved to the window and looked out. The other lights were out, for it was past bed-time for the school. Mr. Selby, with set lips, came to a fixed determination. He slipped on his heavy coat, buttoned on a pair of gloves, and opened the door.

He crept down the passage softly so as not to alarm the other masters. And silently he left himself out of the School House into the quadrangle.

Diving his hands into his pockets, he strode on in the direction of the kennels. Dogs of all sorts were there, not to mention other pets in cages. But, save for the sound of snoring, all was at peace.

Stooping slightly to see the occupant of the kennel, he moved from one to the other, peering in.

At last he came to Towser. The dog poked his huge head out, looking pathetically at the master through his muzzle. Towser hated muzzles, though he had made no resistance when Herries had fixed it on.

Mr. Selby patted the dog's head fearfully. He was afraid, and Towser knew it. But Towser was not afraid of Mr. Selby.

The master unhooked the leash from the kennel, and pulled it. Towser resisted for a second, but seeing a chance of freedom, allowed himself to be hauled out.

"Good dog!" said Mr. Selby, sniffing with the cold. "Come on!"

He walked briskly to the side-gate, to which he as a master had a private key. Wondering lazily what it was all about, Towser followed him through.

At the moment Mr. Selby could not have told him definitely. At the back of his mind he had the intention of taking the dog for the night to Brent's, the dog-fancier in Bylecombe. Brent would look after it, thought Mr. Selby. At any rate, Towser would be out of mischief; and Herries could be told in the morning. There was no doubt at all that Herries, when he learned that his pet had vanished, would be exceedingly surprised. But that did not affect the master in any way. Herries should not have had Towser at school. If Mr. Selby had his way there would not be any eggs at all.

Towser, in reality an extremely docile animal, allowed himself to be led down the lane.

Outside the gates, all was dark. There were no lamps, and the moon was hidden behind a dark cloud. Thus Mr. Selby was unable to observe the small wire-haired terrier that dropped behind Towser, and followed his tracks.

But Towser, and he wheeled round sharply; so sharply, in fact, that the Third Form master lost his grip on the leash.

In a vain effort to regain it, he stamped his foot on the leash as it trailed behind the angry Towser. Towser walked stiffly towards the brown, wire-haired dog, then made a leap.

It was extremely unfortunate that at the moment the master had his foot on the leash, for it was immediately torn away from him.

With a squelch he alighted ungracefully into a puddle. Unknown to himself his heel was still caught in the leash,

Towser tugged, and his collar being loose, he left leash, collar, and muzzle attached to the master's heel.

Free! The bulldog raced in pursuit of his quarry, who, now that the warlike Towser was unhampered by human control, decided that discretion was of a colour distinctly the better part. Accordingly he fled.

Mr. Selby was left looking extremely sorrowful in the unsavoury puddle by the roadside.

Muttering angrily, he rose slowly to his feet, and gazed to where he knew Towser must have fled. But Towser could not be seen. The dog-leash and collar, with muzzle attached, still lay by the puddle, but Mr. Selby did not once glance at the puddle; for one evening at least he had had quite enough of puddles.

As he turned to walk back to the school, away up the road came the blatant siren of a large, fast-moving car. Mr. Selby turned round. The enormous headlights came nearer and nearer, fighting up the road. The master, fearful for his own personal safety, drew into the side of the road and watched the headlights as they grew bigger.

"Bless my soul!"
He gave a sudden shout. For, lit up by the car, were two dogs fighting in the road—Towser and another. The car drew nearer. Mr. Selby closed his eyes. From the road came a frightened yelp—a yelp of agony. Then, heedless of the destruction that lay in its wake, the car blazed by.

When the master opened his eyes again he was trembling. But he could not view that dead body in the road. He felt physically ill. How could he tell Herries? He must break it to him gently. The body would be found in the road, and the police would inform the Fourth-Former. Then he would explain. But he could not break the news himself. And he most certainly could not lift the dog from the road and take him back to the school.

Uneasy in mind, the master returned to the school and to his study. For some time he wandered up and down the room. The noise of the car and of the thud and agonised yelp were still in his ears.

After some minutes he undressed, but when he was in bed he could not sleep. Always he heard that whirr.

He got out of bed and poured himself some water and mixed himself a sleeping-draught.

But although near to the door, he did not hear the whispering that took place outside. At last he returned to bed and fell asleep.

The two Third-Formers listened at the door. From within all sounds had ceased, but for the unmusical snore of the master of the Third. Mr. Selby was as a rule a sufferer from insomnia, and to remedy that ailment he took sleeping-draughts. Thus it became well known in the Third that for some hours, when he was first asleep, nothing short of an explosion would awaken him.

Wally and Jameson felt quite safe as they opened the door and crept in.

"So," muttered Wally. "You take the can, Jimmy."

Jameson took the can of paint and the brush. Together the two advanced.

"Now dip the brush in and begin!" hissed Wally. "Selby's sure to ask me if I did it, and now I can deny it. If you get collared I'll own up."

Jameson nodded. He relied on his leader. He knew that Wally would not let him down should Mr. Selby ever find out the real culprit.

It was obvious, too, that the master would question the scapegrace of the Third before anyone, and now Wally could deny having done it.

Jameson, great joy in his heart, plunged the brush deep into the can of paint, and smoothed the crimson pigment over the master's face. Mr. Selby did not awake. Breathing hard, the two juniors stood there. They were rather scared, for there was the possibility that the master might awake. And they did not want that to happen.

"There!" said Jameson. "How's that?"

Wally chuckled.

"Topping!" he murmured. "Jimmy, you're an artist. No one can say we haven't enlivened or brightened his countenance now, can they?"

Jameson shook his head and chuckled. Then the two young rascals crept

silently from the room, closing the door behind them.

A footstep sounded in the corridor, and Wally drew back.

Jameson gave a yell.

"You chump, that was my toe! Ow!"

"Shut up!" hissed Wally. "It's my major!"

Jameson held his breath. It would not do for them to be seen in the passage.

For obvious reasons, they wanted their presence to be a dead, dark secret.

Arthur Augustus, in his silk pyjamas and well-cut dressing-gown, came slowly along the passage. There was a thoughtful look on his noble brow, and he was not a little worried. The affair of Towser had completely upset the swell of St. Jim's, and had quite shaken his repose that stamped the case of Vere de Vere.

He had come down now to see if his best topper, which he kept away from the others, had been disturbed. Cousin Ethel was paying him a visit, and he could not face her in anything but the shiniest of top-hats. For that reason he had come down to-night. If he were not sure, sleep would be utterly impossible.

He passed close to the two Third-Formers, yet had not the slightest idea of their presence. And but for an unfortunate action on the part of Jameson he would never have known. Jameson gave a violent sneeze which was not to be abated even by his leader's most ferocious glare.

The swell of St. Jim's stopped, and as he caught sight of the two Third-Formers he gave a cry of amazement.

"Bai Jove! Wally, you young wascal, whatever are you doin' heah?"

"Slush!" hissed Wally. "Don't make a row, Gus."

"I should utterly wefuse to make a wov. But I must have an explanation, Wally, you wascal!"

He gave his minor a freezing glance that should have withered the cheeky Third-Former. If looks could kill, Wally should certainly have perished there and then.

But he merely gave a cheery grin. "Selby!" he said laconically.

"You young wascal, you are goin' to wag poor old Selby?"



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"WHAT HAVE YOU AGAINST ME?"

Wally nodded.
"Now don't say a word that you've seen," he urged. "Promise, Gus. I know what a one you are for jawing—"

"Weally, Wally—"
"Well, don't say anything—"
"Weally, you wotthah," said the Fourth-Former, in his most stately tones. "I am not in the habit of sneaking. But as you are so insistent, I give you my word of honah that I will not say a word to anyone that I have seen you heah. But—"

"Oh, cut the cackle!" grunted his minor. "Come on back, Jimmy!"
"Wally!" Arthur Augustus took his young brother by the arm. "You must not! I order you—"

"Rats!"
Wally winked at his companion. The two Third-Formers placed down their weapons of facial destruction, and grasped the Fourth-Former. Before he knew what was happening, Arthur Augustus found himself on the floor. He gave a slight gasp.

Wally too, slipped from one of his brother's feet, and held it aloft.
"Now go back to bed, Gussy, like a good little boy," he said, "before you get spanked!"

"Bai Jove, you young wopweboth, I'll give you a fearful thwashin'! Let me see 'em!"

"Don't touch him! He'll yell and wake them all!" hissed Jameson fearfully. "Chuck his slipper out of the window!"

A window was open at the top. For it was an upper passage, and there was little risk of anyone climbing up to get in.

Without a moment's hesitation or thought, Wally heaved the slipper through the window.

Arthur Augustus gave a gasp of sheer dismay.

"You young wotthah! My slippah! Wally, Wally, come back! I orderd you as your eldah bwothah!"

But Wally refused to be ordered. He scuttled off. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was left on the cold and unsympathetic linoleum. He sneezed, and rose painfully to his feet, his noble face dark with rightful wrath and indignation.

With feelings too deep for words, he returned to the dormitory. He entered and shut the door behind him. As he got into bed, a faint voice sounded across the dormitory.

"Hallo! Who's that?"
"Wats!" said the disgruntled Fourth-Former.

Jack Blake chuckled.
"Good-night, Gussy!" he said.
But Arthur Augustus did not reply. He turned into bed, and before long fell asleep. Little dreaming what was to be the outcome of his nocturnal adventure, he slept the sleep of the just.

CHAPTER 5.

Taking the Blame.

YAW-AW-AW!"
Jack Blake sat up in bed and yawned. Rising bell had sounded a few moments previously, and Jack Blake never slept long in bed after he had heard the bell.

He looked round the dorm. Already some of the fellows were out of bed. Digby on his left was sitting up, rubbing his eyes, but Herries and D'Arcy were apparently still asleep.

"Herries!" yelled Blake. Then, as he received no reply, he sprang out of bed, and, grasping his pillow, made his way to where Herries should have been sleeping.

"My hat!" he gasped, in surprise. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 666.

"He's not here. Dig, Herries has gone. Where on earth has the ass gone? And why didn't he wake us?"

Blake looked round indignantly.
Robert Arthur Digby shook his head.
"Blessed if I know where the ass has got to," he said. "See if Gussy is still in bed."

Blake turned round and glanced at the elegant form of Arthur Augustus as it lay enveloped in folds of clothing.

"Gussy!" roared Blake.
"But there was no reply. He crept towards the swell of St. Jim's bed, and fellows who were standing near watched with grinning faces.

Blake crept very near, then raised his pillow high above his head. With a resounding thwack, he brought it down on the sleeping figure.

"Ow! Ah! Gewwoff! Bai Jove!"
Arthur Augustus sat up in bed and yelled. Wild-eyed with astonishment at that sudden awakening, he stared round. Blake grinned at him cheerfully.

"Wake up, wake up!" he trilled. "Salute the smiling morn."

"You silly fathead!" shouted the ungrateful swell of St. Jim's.
"Well, I like that!" growled Blake. "Here am I doing you a pally action in saving you from a master's mercies, and all the thanks I get is abuse!"

Arthur Augustus sniffed, and arose in silence.
"Blake stared at him.

"Blessed if I can make you out, Gussy," he said, scratching the back of his head thoughtfully. "Where did you get to last night, anyway?"

"Wats!"
"All right! Keep your wool on!" grunted Blake. "Don't tell me if you don't want to."

Mellish, the cad of the Fourth, turned round with a sneer. Nothing would have pleased Mellish more than to trouble between the chums of Study No. 6.

"Been on the tiles, Gussy?" he asked. "I heard someone go out last night. Crept pretty softly across the quad, whoever it was."

"Don't be a cad, Mellish!" said Clive. "Gussy's not that sort of chap."

Mellish sneered.
"He says he isn't," he retorted. "He was out of the dorm last night; he won't deny that."

"Were you, Gussy?" asked Clive.
"Yaas, I was, deah boy," said the elegant Fourth-Former, with dignity.

"But I utterly refuse to discuss my private affairs in public. I think you are an inquisitive lot of boundahs!"

"If I didn't know that you were upset by that Towser business," Blake said darkly, "I'd give you a thick ear!"

The swell of St. Jim's sniffed contemptuously. He was feeling out of sorts this morning. He was annoyed with Herries, annoyed with Towser, and, last, but not least, annoyed with his minor. He was determined to punish Wally for the escapade of the previous evening, but he had given his word to say nothing, and he would keep silent.

As D'Arcy gave no explanation, Blake turned away and started dressing. Not a word was passed between the chums; and, indeed, there was little conversation at all in the dormitory. Everyone felt that there was trouble in the family of Study No. 6, and trouble had a subconscious dampening effect on everyone.

The swell of St. Jim's was adjusting his tie, when there came a sudden interruption. An angry junior burst into the dormitory, holding in his hand something which he waved angrily.

"Herries!"
Everyone stopped quite still. For there was a peculiar look on Herries'

face—a look half of baffled rage and half disgust.

"What's up?" asked Blake quickly.
"Up!" gasped Herries. "Up!" He stood still spluttering. "Tower's missing!" he shouted, at last. "Someone has let him loose!"

"Missing!"
It was a general shout. And Herries nodded.

The juniors looked at him queerly. They wondered if Herries was over-excited. But Herries was obviously in dead earnest. He waved his hand.
"I found this in the quad!" he exclaimed. "Whose is it?"

He held aloft a slipper. It was a well-shaped, elegant slipper, and could belong to only one person. Every eye was turned on the swell of St. Jim's.
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy went a deep pink.

"You wotthahs!" he exclaimed. "You don't think I'd do a thing like that? Hewwees—"

Mellish gave an unpleasant giggle. "Now why did he leave the dorm?" he asked.

Blake started, a look of suspicion coming into his eyes. Almost immediately the swell of St. Jim's was the recipient of accusing glances.

"Oh, Gussy! Faith, an' I niver thought it ay ve!" said Reilly, the Irish junior, shaking his head sorrowfully.

"You asses! You fatheads—"
"Names won't help you," said Clive soberly. "Tell us, Gussy. Where were you last night? That is your slipper?"

"Yaas, it is my slippah! I went down, if you must know, to see if my best toppah was all right!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" several juniors laughed. And Mellish sniggered.

It certainly sounded rather lame, and the swell of St. Jim's realised it directly the words had left his mouth. But it was too late. He bit his lip. He could not explain without giving away his brother. And he had given his brother a promise not to mention that he had been seen. With D'Arcy promises were sacred. He would rather have been burnt alive than break a promise, given 'though it might be without full realisation of its purport.

And so he stood in the middle of the crowded dormitory, a silent figure with clenched hands and white face, accused by his chum of a deed he had never committed, but unable to explain.

"Sneak out, Gussy!" said Blake, after a painful pause. "Say something!"

"I did not do it!" said D'Arcy firmly, and there was finality in his tone.

"Then, why don't you explain?" asked Clive persuasively. "How did your slipper get there?"

Arthur Augustus did not reply. And there were several murmurs. Someone hissed, but whoever it was was quickly silenced.

"Go on!" sneered Mellish. "Tell them that I did it, and that I put the slipper there to throw the blame on you! Go on, good little Eric!"

"That's enough, Mellish!" snapped Blake. "You're dead in this act! Understand? Any more from you, and I'll pulverise you!"

"Steady, Blake," murmured Lumley-Lumley. "That won't help. I'm as keen as anyone to hear Gussy cleared. But unless the slipper was taken out by Gussy, how did it get in the quad? He admits being outside."

Herries, an indignant figure, stood in the doorway. He said nothing, but he glared unspeakable things at the fellow who had once been his closest chum.

"The fellow who did this was a cad!" said Herries, at last. "You're not a cad, Gussy. Tell us what happened."

The swell of St. Jim's shook his head, and looked at him in the face.

"I cannot tell you, Hewies," he said. "I would not harm Towshah, although he has no wesspect whatever for a fellow's towshahs!"

"Then you're guilty!" said Herries. "I hate to think it. I must have been mistaken in you. You have always hated Towser, and you've done this because he fore your rotten toppers——"

"Toppers are not wotten toppahs——"
"Sass!"
Mellich started to hiss, and it was taken up. Clive tried to silence it, but it was impossible.

Blake caught Mellich by the neck and jammed his head into the pillow. The hiss died away into a gurgle, and re-developed into a yell.

At the sound of the yell, the door opened to admit Eric Kildare. Kildare stared in blank amazement at the scene before him.

"What does this mean?" he exclaimed angrily, and strode forward.

Blake released the unfortunate Mellich as though that youth had suddenly become red hot.

Kildare was the captain of the school—not only the captain, but also the idol of all the sport-loving juniors and seniors. But he was just. Now he was angry, and not without cause.

"Don't you know it's time for brekker?" he said. Blake, you'll take fifty lines for kicking up this shindy!"

Mellich opened his mouth to explain, but Blake gave him a look that changed his mind. He sneered instead, and followed the captain from the dormitory. The other fellows followed, leaving till last the unhappy D'Arcy.

Breakfast was not by any means a pleasant meal for the swell of St. Jim's. His own chums did not look at him. They could not quite believe him guilty, yet there was no other course. How had that slipper got into the quad? How had it only by walking into the quad could he have left it there? They could hardly have reasoned otherwise. And if he had been in the quadrangle for some legitimate purpose, why did he not explain? That was what was puzzling Blake and his chums.

There was a great deal of whispering at the table, and Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, could see that something was amiss. His Form was usually restive on all occasions, but this morning they passed all bounds.

"Silence!" he exclaimed angrily, for the third time. "I will have silence at this table! If there is any more whispering I shall have no recourse but to mete out fitting punishment. Mellich, take fifty lines!"

For a time there was silence. Few cared to whisper in the face of the little master's glittering eyes. Arthur Augustus kept his attention fixed on his plate. He was not afraid to face anyone, but the scornful looks that he received were unpleasant. He looked at Blake, and Blake gave him an uncomfortable glance, a pitying, questioning look, as though to say, "Why did you do it?" But it was nevertheless accusing, and it cut the swell of St. Jim's to the quick.

D'Arcy, tired of the accusing glances, turned to look at the Third Form table. As he did so he started. Mr. Selby was not there. Kildare sat at the head of the table, and Wally D'Arcy and the other Third-Formers were chuckling hugely.

They had some joke amongst them. Could it be their master's absence? D'Arcy wondered. But it was not until breakfast was over that he was able to satisfy his curiosity. Then he went up to Kildare.

"Kildare, dear boy," he said, "what

is Mr. Selby? I wish to see him." He did wish to see him, but not to speak to him.

"Mr. Selby is confined to his room," said Kildare. "He will be unable to see anyone to-day."

"Bai Jove!" The swell of St. Jim's started visibly, and Kildare gave him a keen look.

"Mr. Selby has had a trick played upon him," said the Sixth-Former, watching the swell of St. Jim's face. "Someone painted his face red in the night."

"Bai Jove! What a wotten trick!" D'Arcy was staggered with the realisation of what his young brother had done, for he knew that it must have been Wally. It was like Wally to do a thing like that. And now he understood his brother's desire for silence.

Kildare, satisfied that D'Arcy was not guilty, passed on. But D'Arcy stood still. Even more than ever he realised the need to keep silent, if only for his brother's sake. If it came out who had maltreated the Form-master, there would be only one punishment—expulsion. The swell of St. Jim's shuddered. The name of D'Arcy must at all costs be saved. He would not be expelled, even if it were proved that he had loosened Towser. But with Wally it was different. He must keep silent, even though it would mean a break with his friends—even though it meant his own unhappiness.

CHAPTER 6. Poor Old Herries!

THE Fourth Form had just settled down, and Mr. Lathom, having arranged his books and papers, was on the point of starting the lesson when there came an interruption in the form of a tap at the door.

"Come in!" called the master irritably, looking round.

The door opened, to admit Toby, the

page. Toby's face wore a wide smile that stretched from ear to ear.

"Well, boy, what is it?" asked Mr. Lathom.

"Please, sir, a policeman to see Master Herries," Toby sniggered.

"A policeman!" exclaimed the master, and there were some grins. The juniors glanced automatically at George Herries. Herries looked as surprised as they, but he rose to his feet.

"May I go, sir?" he asked meekly.
"Certainly!" said Mr. Lathom sarcastically. "But I wish you would conduct your legal affairs in court, and out of school!"

The Form dutifully laughed, and Herries turned red, and moved to the door. He followed the grinning pageboy down the passage. Toby was highly amused, but Herries was worried. It had occurred to him that P.-c. Crump—for there was only one policeman in the little village of Rylcombe—must have come about Towser. His heart beat quicker, for he wondered vaguely whether anything could have happened to his favourite.

He entered the visiting-room, where P.-c. Crump stood, helmet in hand, a look of ponderous importance on his fat, florid face. In his hand the policeman held the fated leash, collar, and muzzle of the missing Towser.

Herries sprang forward and took them. "Where—where did you find these?" he asked, looking inquiringly at the stolid figure.

P.-c. Crump cleared his throat with an official cough.

"Which as I've brought them to say as there's been a accident."

"Accident!" Herries gasped.
"Yus. A farmer chap was comin' along the road from the school 'ere early this morning—coming to work early 'cos, as 'e explained, 'e——"

"Yes; cut that out! The dog?"

"I'm a-comin' to that," said the police-



Blake crept very near to the bed of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, then raised his pillow high above his head. With a resounding thwack he brought it down on the sleeping figure. "Ow! Ah! Gewwo! Bai Jove!" The other fellows standing near were grinning. (See page 8.)

man, not to be hurried. "This 'ere chap what I was telling you of, was comin' to work early, becuss as 'e told me—mind, this is in confidence—"

"Oh, get on!"

"Or right!" said the policeman huffily. "Keep your wool on, young gent! This chap found a dead dorg—"

"Dead!" Herries went as white as a sheet, and grasped the man's arm. "Tell me what happened!" he exclaimed thickly.

"I was just goin' to. This chap what I was telling you of found the dorg—awful mess he was—" Herries shuddered. "So the chap, being a decent sort of chap," went on the policeman, "buried the dorg. 'E found this 'ere"—he indicated the collar which Herries clutched in his hand—"and brought it to me as the local authority."

"P. Crump," all unconscious of the serious nature of the news he had brought, stuck his thumbs into his belt and scratched his head.

A mist swam before the junior's eyes, and he clutched a chair for support.

"Dead!" he said dully, in a choked voice. "Poor—poor old Towser—dead!" His voice broke, and he plumped down on the chair.

For the first time P. Crump realised what it meant to the junior.

"I—think I'd better be goin'," he said awkwardly. "Er—good-bye!"

Very hurriedly he made for the door. He felt that it was not a policeman's duty to offer words of sympathy—that was for women—and P. Crump left the miserable junior to his own bitter thoughts.

Herries' shoulders shook, and his eyes filled with what looked suspiciously like tears.

"Poor old Towsey!" he murmured again, and clutched the collar tighter. Some of the dog's hairs still adhered to the leather, and Herries picked one off.

Clumsy, thoughtless Herries had a big heart, most of which had been devoted to the dog with which he had spent so much of his time. He had begun to look upon Towser as part of his existence, a natural part of his life. Never had he dreamed that Towser could die. It had never occurred to him. In that he was as a child. Death meant nothing to him, for he had never encountered it.

"Towsy!" he said tearfully. "Poor old doggy!"

For some moments he remained there. Then, rising shakily to his feet, he staggered to the door. It had completely unnerved him. School meant nothing for him. Punishment had no terrors.

They could do with him as they willed. He did not care. What did anything matter now that Towser, his best pal, had gone?

"Why, why had they taken Towser?" he mused.

In his imagination he could hear the dog's whimper and bark. Slowly he trudged to his study, and flung himself into a chair. It had once been Towser's chair, he reflected sadly. Poor old Towser!

Round the study were still the remains of Towser's last escapade; the bitten tablecloth, the torn curtain—everything spoke of Towser. He heant back in his chair, and covered his face with his hands. How long he sat thus he did not know, but when he removed his hands from his face, Jack Blake was standing beside him.

"What's wrong, old man?" said Blake softly. "What's the matter?"

He dropped to his knees by his chum's side, and looked up into Herries' eyes, now strangely moist. Herries turned his face away, hating his chum to see him thus.

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"It's all right!" he said brokenly. "Don't you worry!"

"Has anything happened to Towser?" Blake caught sight of the collar. "He hasn't been—"

Herries nodded.

"He's dead," he said softly. "Poor old dog! They found him in the road. If I can find the chap who let him loose, I'll smash him!"

"Herries, old man!"—Blake placed his hand on his chum's shoulder—"don't take it to heart so! There are other dogs—"

Herries shook his head.

"Not like Towser!" he muttered.

Blake stood up. Consolation, he saw, was useless. Besides, Mr. Lathom, who had sent him in search of Herries, would wonder what had happened to him.

"Come out in the quad, old man," he said softly. "I'll explain to Lathom. You'll feel much better in the open air. Take a walk round for a bit."

Herries rose obediently. He realised that his chum was right. It could do no good staying there in the study. He grasped his cap, and thrust it on his head. Blake lead the way from the study, and Herries followed.

"Come on," said Blake, linking arms. "Right out into the open."

Blake was worried. He knew how fond Herries had been of the bulldog, and although Blake had not exactly been fond of the dog, he could quite understand Herries' feelings.

A dog is always a friend. Often, when all had seemed wrong, Herries had found consolation in Towser. The dog was always pleased to see him, always a great friend. Whether the sun shone, or all the world was dark, Towser was the same.

At times the chums of Study No. 6 had been disgruntled at the preference Herries had shown for Towser's company, but they had said nothing.

And now that the dog was gone, Blake intended to show that they could feel for their chum. But he could not help letting his thoughts turn on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. What would Herries do now? He believed the swell of St. Jim's guilty. He would even more so now. Blake wavered. He hated to believe it of D'Arcy. It was so utterly unlike the swell of St. Jim's to do anything so unworthy of meanness, and yet unquiet doubts filled his mind.

He led Herries to a seat under the elms, and left him, while he returned to explain matters to the master of the Fourth.

When he returned to the Form-room, some moments later, many curious eyes were turned in his direction. The curiosity was intensified when he told the master what had occurred.

Mr. Lathom, in his kindly way, was very sympathetic, and had not the slightest objection to the grief-stricken Herries remaining in the fresh air.

Blake returned to his seat amongst a buzz of whispers, and silence was not regained until Mr. Lathom tapped on his desk with a pointer.

"Now, boys," he rebuked rather gently, "no talking, please. You must wait until after lessons. Levison, proceed!"

Levison commenced to construe, and order was restored. But when the master's back was turned for a moment the whispering restarted.

Lessons that morning were more than ever an irksome tie, and when at last the bell rang for the end of morning classes there were sighs of relief from every junior, and even little Mr. Lathom looked relieved. For it is no easy task dealing with a restive Form.

"Blake, what has happened?"

"Jack, where's old Herries!"

Half the Form crowded round Jack Blake as he left the Form-room, and he was bombarded with eager questions. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood on the edge of the crowd, awkward and silent, but with his head held erect. He had done nothing of which to be ashamed, but he shifted uncomfortably at the look Jack Blake darted at him.

"Towser was found killed this morning," said Blake briefly. "Old Crump brought his collar, leash, and muzzle back to the school. That's all. Poor old Herries is awfully cut up!"

Blake turned to go, but several hands detained him. Blake shook them off irritably. He was not in the mood to answer questions. He felt that there was really nothing more to say. They all knew as much as he did now. But they were not to be denied.

"Where is Herries?" asked a long-legged New House junior, George Figgins' face wore a worried frown. Although the two Houses were always at daggers drawn, the feeling of friendship was stronger even than that of rivalry, and Figgins, having a dog, felt for Herries.

Blake shook his head.

"Better leave the poor chap alone," he said. "You can't do any good."

Kerr, Figgins' bosom chum, nodded.

"No, Figgys. You can't do any good. Herries knows that we're all sorry, but to go and talk to him will be like keeping a wound open."

Fatty Wynn, the third and easily fattest member of the New House Co., had a glum look on his fat and usually cheery face.

"How about standing him a feed?" he asked hopefully.

"Good, old Fatty!" said Kerr, laughing. "Always thinking of feeds! A feed might cheer you up, but it wouldn't do Herries any good."

"I don't know," spoke up Fatty, shaking his head. "Grub has a wonderful cheering effect on a fellow!"

And while he philosophised on the soothing effects of food, the crowd broke up, and Blake, followed by Digby, wandered dismally off to Study No. 6. His feelings were none too cheerful; for it was a break now in the old companionship that had meant so much to all four of the chums. D'Arcy had been cut out of the chums. He was too downhearted even to speak, and there was a heavy black cloud in the air. Blake felt it instinctively. He knew that it could not be very long before Herries challenged the swell of St. Jim's. If Herries really believed that Gussy was the guilty party, what else was there to be done?

And Figgins & Co., as they wandered away, were equally dispirited. Cardew, Clive, and Levison were coming along the passage, and as the New House trio approached, they stopped.

"Rotten, isn't it?" said Clive.

"Beastly!" frowned Figgins.

Cardew gave a thoughtful nod of the head.

"What's more," he said, "there is worse to come. Herries is bound to meet my noble kinsman in deadly conflict. There will be an assnat-at-arms."

"Why, on earth?" asked the surprised Figgins. Clive explained and Figgins whistled.

"My hat!" he said. "I just can't believe it of Gussy. No, he isn't the sort of chap to do a thing like that."

Clive shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I don't want to believe it," he said, rather awkwardly. "But the facts—"

There was a silence. The facts were

certainly dead against the unfortunate swell of St. Jim's. And no amount of talking would help. When the two trios parted there was a thoughtful look on the brow of Ralph Reckness Cardew, and his chums brightened.

Cardew was a peculiar youth, an unusual mixture of good and evil, yet popular with those who understood him. There were some who would never understand him, and who could not bear his scathing, sarcastic wit. Yet, underneath that mask of levity and cynical contempt there was a great knowledge of human nature. He had known life from books and in the bitter school of experience; for time had been when Cardew was rightly dubbed a black sheep. There was still in him a hungering after the old days; but his inherent wisdom restrained him.

Now he was thinking of Towser, of Herries, and of D'Arcy. He knew all three, and he was unravelling the tangled skein. That is why Clive and Levison, realising it, smiled. They had great faith in their chum's sagacity; but would that faith be justified now?

CHAPTER 7.

Not To Be Comforted !

FATTY WYNN tapped on the door of Study No. 6, and pushed it open. Under one fat arm he held a piedish. It was one of

Mrs. Taggles' renowned steak-and-kidney pies, so well-cooked and so thoroughly enjoyed. Fatty's face bore a serious look, for his was a serious errand.

Steak-and-kidney pies, although nothing to the average junior, meant a great deal to the Falstaff of the New House, and that pie had made a considerable hole in Fatty's pocket. He had been looking forward to that all the morning, despite the fact that he was to be as usual a good dinner for the whole school. Ordinary dinners did not appeal to Fatty; but steak-and-kidney pies were a godsend.

As the door opened, Jack Blake looked up with an expression of annoyance on his usually cheery face. There had been many visitors after lessons that morning. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther had paid the unfortunate Herries a visit, and, of course, there had been others on the same errand. But Herries, like Rachel of old, mourned and would not be comforted. He felt that there was no comfort. How could any ordinary two-legged human being replace Towser?

"What do you want?" asked Blake rather gruffly.

Fatty Wynn smiled. It was as near to a grin as he could manage under the circumstances.

"I want to see Herries," he said, and laid his parcel on the table.

Blake pointed to the figure of his chum.

Herries was sitting in an armchair, looking dully into the empty grate. His elbows rested on his knees, and his chin was supported by his left hand; the other hand nervously stroked his temple.

"I—I say, Herries, old man," said Fatty Wynn awkwardly, with a little cough. "I'm—I'm awfully sorry about old Towser, and I've brought you a steak-and-kidney pie."

He finished with a rush, and lifted the huge pie. Herries turned round and looked at it. He said nothing, but essayed a wan smile.

"This'll buck you up," said Fatty, with an attempt at joviality. "Nothing like a pie to buck a fellow up, especially in this weather. I always get jolly

hungry at this time of the year, you know."

"You usually are hungry," said Blake gruffly.

Fatty Wynn coughed. The balm was not being taken in the right manner. He felt, and he moved in front of Herries. His fat fingers worked quickly to open the pie, and the pie at last was revealed.

"Smell!" he said encouragingly. "Isn't it just prime?"

Herries shook his head slowly and sadly.

"It's no good, Fatty," he said. "It's really awfully good of you, old man!" His voice broke a trifle. "But I don't want it, really. You eat it. It would make you so much happier. Won't you have a little snack?"

Fatty Wynn, torn between temptation and altruism, hesitated.

"Well, no, I brought it for you, Herries. Come on; try just a piece."

Herries shook his head.

"No, old man, really. You try a piece."

Fatty Wynn looked at him questioningly. It was evident that Herries did not want it.

"Well, just a little snack," he murmured.

Blake and Digby grinned. They knew Fatty Wynn's little snacks. It would not be long before he had a few more snacks. It was extremely probable that there would be little left of that pie by the time the dinner-bell rang!

Fatty Wynn sat down at the table, and Blake handed him a knife and fork. The fat junior gave a grunt of satisfaction.

"This is prime!" he murmured. Twinged by conscience he laid down his knife and fork and sighed regretfully. He had had the snack. He eyed Herries

doubtfully. Herries nodded, and Fatty recommenced.

"Finish it up," said Blake. "Herries doesn't want any."

The Falstaff of the New House, with another sigh, waded into the pie, and soon nothing but the crumbs and the empty dish were left.

"Thanks," said Herries, as the fat junior rose. "It was awfully good of you, and I sha'n't forget it!"

Fatty Wynn, with a rather guilty face, departed. He had meant very well, and that was all that mattered.

"Good old Fatty!" chuckled Jack Blake. "He's a jolly good sort, you know!"

"Jolly good!" agreed Herries; and he resigned himself again to his thoughts.

He could not forget his loss, and the chums felt awkward and in the way.

The fat junior had hardly been gone more than a few moments than there came another tap at the study door. This time a big-limbed, rugged-faced junior entered, and without preamble made for the despondent Herries.

It was George Alfred Grundy, of the Shell. Grundy, though large-handed and clumsy, and at times inclined to "throw his weight about," had a very tender heart. He sympathised with Herries, for in George Alfred's composition there was a large amount of sentiment.

Blake and Digby stared at him, but Herries did not look up. On Jack Blake's face was a look of absolute amazement, for Grundy was carrying a small dog, a wire-haired terrier of unknown breed. The dog had been in hot water ever since his arrival at the school, but Grundy was proud of it—possibly because of opposition. Opposition always strengthened the convictions of the big Shell fellow.

"I say, Herries," he began bluntly,



Herries entered the visiting-room, where P.-c. Crump stood. In his hand the policeman held the faded leash, collar, and muzzle of the missing Towser. "Which as 'ow I've brought these 'ere to say as there's been a accident." "Accident!" gasped Herries. (See page 9.)

"I've heard about Towser. I'm awfully sorry! I know you liked him. He wasn't a valuable dog, and rather inclined to bite." Grundy frowned, remembering an occasion upon which he had been chased by the zealous Towser. "But you liked him. Now, look here, here's a jolly good dog! He's a thoroughbred mongrel, so the chap I bought him of told me."

Blake and Digby grinned. But George Herries frowned. Grundy had certainly been rather tactless in his offering.

"Here you are!" said Grundy gruffly, thrusting the dog into Herries' arms. Herries blinked at the dog, and the dog struggled to free himself. He barked; but Grundy shook his fist.

"Lie down, Gippy!" he said fiercely. "You'll be all right. I shall see you; and I won't let Herries spoil you."

He opened the door. "I say," said the astounded Herries. Grundy turned back.

"It's all right," he said magnanimously. "Don't trouble to thank me. I thought, 'I'll cheer you up that's all. Gippy's a jolly good dog, and you'll soon forget Towser.'"

"But, Grundy, old chap," said Herries, rising to his feet. "It's awfully good of you, but—really—I—" Herries did not know quite what he could say without hurting the Shell fellow's feelings. "But Gippy won't like it. It isn't fair to him. He'll want you all the time, and he won't take to me. It isn't fair to a dog to give him away. It's awfully good of you."

"Perhaps you're right, Herries," he said, in his ponderous way. "It wouldn't be fair. But if you'd like him."

"No, take him," said Herries. "Look, he wants you!"

Sure enough the dog, now released, rushed at the big Shell fellow, and, jumping up at him, licked his large hand.

Grundy picked up the dog, and walked to the open door, just as an elegant junior was on the point of entering. Grundy drew back.

"I shouldn't think you'd care to come here, D'Arcy," he sniffed.

Arthur Augustus made no reply, but brushed past the Shell fellow into the study.

Blake and Digby looked at him, somewhat embarrassed, and Herries glared.

"What do you want?" snapped Herries.

"Howwies!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, slipping forward softly. "I'm awfully sorry about Towser—"

"So you ought to be!" growled Grundy. "If I were Herries, I'd pulverise you! Towser may have been a bit of a rotter, and bitten things, but that doesn't excuse you—"

"I did not speak to you, Grundy," said the swell of St. Jim's stiffly. "I was speakin' to Herwies!"

"You needn't!" said George Herries surlily.

"Howwies!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's. "You don't believe—you can't—Howwies—"

George Herries rose to his feet.

"I'll believe you," he said, "when you explain where you were last night, and how it was that your slipper got into the quads."

Arthur Augustus opened his mouth to speak, then snapped it shut.

"Well?" asked Herries.

"I have nothin' to say. There has been a gross misunderstanding—"

"Misunderstandin' be hanged!" snapped Herries. "You're a rotten cad!"

Arthur Augustus drew a deep breath. Back Blake gazed with his excited, overwrought chum by the arm.

"Steady, Herries, old man!" he said. "For old times' sake, whatever he has done now—"

The swell of St. Jim's wheeled upon Blake.

"So you, too, Blake, think that I am a wretched cad?"

Blake shifted uneasily.

"I didn't say that," he murmured.

"Don't be a lousy ass, Gussy!"

"Don't call me Gussy. I am Gussy to my friends—" said the swell of St. Jim's freezingly. "If you believe this

written accusation, you are no friend of mine!"

"But, Gussy—"

"Why don't you explain, ass?" said Digby, exasperated at his chum's manner. "For goodness' sake get off the high horse! This isn't a time for fooling."

"I am not foolin', and I refuse to be called a cad! I will give the next fellow who calls me a cad a severe thrashing!"

"Cad!" snapped Herries, and thrust himself in front of D'Arcy.

Blake watched them with a worried frown.

"Don't make asses of yourself!" he implored. "Gussy—"

Smack!

Herries started back, a white mark showing distinctly on his left cheek. Arthur Augustus with blazing eyes, faced him.

"Now, deal boy, we know wheah we are!"

Herries placed himself in a sparing attitude, and rushed at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Steady!" pleaded Blake. "Herries! D'Arcy!"

He thrust himself between the two. Grundy grasped the swell of St. Jim's with rough hands, and Digby held back Herries.

"If you two silly chumps must fight," said Blake, "for goodness' sake fight in the gym! This study has been in hot water often enough already."

"I am ready, if Herwies is."

"I'm ready," said Herries, through his teeth.

"Well, leave it till after dinner," said Blake. "There goes the bell. Two o'clock in the gym, both of you."

And they went down to dinner. But not before the news of the forthcoming fight had spread through the whole Form.

Thus when they took their places at table, Herries and D'Arcy were the recipient of many looks. Poor Herries did not feel in the mood for dinner; nor, to tell the truth, did Arthur Augustus. His handsome face was wrinkled, and he avoided glancing at his chums. Many

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remarks were passed, but the swell of St. Jim's heeded them not. Cardew looked at him keenly, and whispered to his chum Clive.

"Clive, old bird," he said, "our noble friend has not the guilty look and trembling hand. I fear there has been a mistake."

Clive gave an ambiguous nod of the head.

"I wish you wouldn't treat everything so flippantly, Ralph," he said. "This is a rotten business."

The whimsical Fourth-Former smiled.

"It is," he said. "But would it not be better to devote more time to reason and less to sentiment? By being angry with an accused man, we are assuming that the accusation is justified. Is it? Has anyone troubled to work the matter out?"

"Well, no," admitted Clive. "But it seems no obvious."

"That is exactly why I am suspicious of it," said Cardew, helping himself to bread. "You never read O. Henry! No, of course you don't. Well, that genius has a wonderful story wherein a nice man, well dressed, just like Gussy, worships trousers and their regal crease. He only wears his trousers for brief periods, lest they should become baggy

"But what has this to do with it?"

"Wait," admonished Cardew. "Let me expound. This chery man is suddenly missing. Some time later he is found in a monastery, wearing the chery old sackcloth, simple in line and straight. Eh? No, he had not turned religious. He had discovered the ambition of a lifetime—something that would not bag at the knees!"

Cardew chuckled, and watched his chum's puzzled face.

"What a ridiculous!" said Clive. "Now, what has this—"

"Lots, dear boy! Gussy says that he went down to see that his best topper was O.K. Everyone said it was feeble. But no; all was correct. Gussy is a fellow who would do penance to find something that would not bag at the knees. Most certainly he would trot down at midnight to assure himself that all was correct with his headgear."

"Yes."

"Very well. Suppose his story is correct. He went down for that reason. He had slippers, therefore, we presume, pyjamas."

"Possibly."

"Then someone else released the nimble Towser," resumed Cardew. "But Gussy cannot speak. He is bound to silence. Why? That remains to be seen. Now, Selby is in bed. Why? The rumour has gone round that in the night his face was crimsoned artificially by paint and in the moonlight."

"Yes, I know that, ass! What has it to do—"

"Who did that, do you suppose? You don't know. Of course you don't. You are too busy sympathising with Herries and censuring Gussy. My dear chap, since Selby was hunting Wally D'Arcy, why could not Wally have been the awful culprit?"

"He might; but—"

"Then again, Gussy was downstairs at midnight, and there, too, was his brother, with painting appliances. What more natural that the noble fellow should remain silent for his dear brother's sake?"

"My hat!" gasped Clive. "Then you mean that Wally messed up Selby's face, and Gussy is keeping dark on his account?"

"I do. The former is obvious. Selby has strong suspicions, must have."

"But who released Towser?"

"That is the question. Who has caused to hate Towser?"

"Well, the chaps in Study No. 6, especially Gussy, and— My hat!" Clive almost jumped out of his chair. "Selby!"

Cardew smiled cynically, and commenced his apple-tart.

"Reason is the ruination of appetit," he mused. "Cold reason—cold apple-tart. Ugh!"

Sidney Clive drew a deep breath.

"Cardew," he said, "I do believe you've hit it!"

Cardew nodded.

"Right on the head!" he smiled.

CHAPTER 8.

What is Sauce for the Goose—

"SECONDS out!"

Tom Merry, the curly-headed captain of the Shell, stood in the gymnasium, watch in hand. He glanced from D'Arcy to Herries then looked at his watch.

"Time!" he said curtly.

Manners and Lowther, who were seconding for the combatants, had left the ring, and watched eagerly. Digby and Blake stood by the side. It was better that they should second in their third only second one of their chums, and Manners and Lowther of the Shell had undertaken the task willingly enough.

There was a large crowd present, and all watched the two combatants with the keenest interest. The general opinion was that the swell of St. Jim's was assured of victory, although Herries' weight made some difference. Moreover, argued some, Herries was right, and right was mostly on his side when a fight was to be considered.

But D'Arcy drew first blood.

Herries advanced in a bull-like manner, his guard rather wide, and a wild look in his eyes. In his imagination he could see Towser lying in the road—Towser!

His left shot out at Arthur Augustus' head, and the swell of St. Jim's side-stepped it neatly. He kept a cool head, and as his gloved fist grazed his ear, he jarred Herries from neck to heel with a stinging drive on the bridge of the nose.

Before Herries could recover, the elegant junior counter-crossed with his right, on his opponent's ear.

There were gasps in the crowd. It looked as though D'Arcy would have it all his own way.

But Herries rallied, drew back and smothered a jab that would have floored him—by the deadly solar plexus! Relentlessly, the swell of St. Jim's pursued with drives, hooks, and jabs; and at each blow Herries gave hard-fought ground. It was an onslaught he could not stay.

"Make him miss!" shouted Blake. "Herries, you chump, pull up; don't let every one get you!"

Herries hardly heard, but he shifted his head a fraction of an inch. A hook that should have lifted his jaw from beneath his ear passed harmlessly upwards, unbalancing the over-eager D'Arcy. That was Herries' chance; and he took it with a half-arm smash that tore its way through his opponent's lowered guard, and caused the swell of St. Jim's to emit a painful gasp.

"Hurrah!"

"Well played, Herries!"

The crowd was obviously for Herries. They wanted him to win. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a look of grim determination on his handsome, well-cut features, had other ideas.

He stepped back quickly, and brought up Herries with a jerk as the burly Fourth-Former sought to follow up his advantage. Then it was hammer and

tongs! But Herries was rapidly losing ground, and breath.

When Tom Merry called "Time!" and the first round finished, Herries' chest was heaving in an alarming manner.

Monty Lowther, serious for once, waved a towel to and fro as Herries leaned back on his chair.

"A long one, and then six short," whispered Lowther. "Pull yourself together, Herries! Don't let him keep you moving! Wait for him! Let him run around, while you play possum!"

Herries was not listening; his head was ringing, and swimming. And he felt almost sick. For it had been a gruelling round. Neither of the two had spared their punch, and Arthur Augustus, despite his slender build, was no mean hitter. Every blow found its intended billet, and behind them was all the force and weight he could muster. "Time!"

The second round was even faster than the first. And once again Arthur Augustus was scoring rapidly. He was cool and collected. He waited, while Herries wasted his breath and blows in attack. Often he hit, but Arthur Augustus was not quite so often there. And each wasted blow took breath and energy.

Time and time again, the swell of St. Jim's got home with a smart blow on the burly fellow's nose. Nothing pulls a man up more than a smart blow on the nose; it stings; it hurts, and, moreover, it dazes.

Each blow that he landed on Herries' nose, Arthur Augustus followed by a smashing body blow.

And once again the round finished in favour of D'Arcy.

Blake looked at Digby, and raised his eyebrows in expression of utter hopelessness.

"A good!" he said. "If only Herries would steady up, he'd be all right! But the ass won't! He's just hoping that he can floor Gussy!"

Digby nodded.

"It's Gussy's fight all along," he said. "Gussy's a good little boxer—Herries can only fight! He's game enough for a dozen! But look!"

The round had begun, and Herries had started the ball rolling by flying at the swell of St. Jim's. This time Arthur Augustus, whether taken by surprise, or whether he had tired himself, was not quick enough in slipping away. A wild, heavy swing caught him on the jaw. His arms dropped forward and his neck bent, dropping his head on to his chest.

"Now!" said Blake, with an indrawn breath.

The hush could almost be felt. George Herries let out a left. It was all that was needed. Arthur Augustus spun round like a top, and fell.

"One—two—three—"

Tom Merry counted evenly, and the crowd counted with him. Arthur Augustus lay inert, while Herries, his arms by his side, looked down on him.

"Eight," the swell of St. Jim's raised himself on his elbows, and looked dazedly round. His face was white as a sheet; his lips were slightly parted, and in his eyes was a strange, dazed look.

With an almost superhuman effort, the swell of St. Jim's rose to his knees.

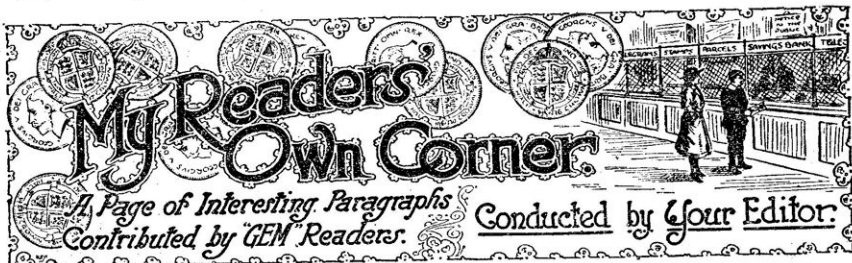
"Time!" shouted Tom Merry, amongst a terrific yell.

"Out!" yelled Grundy.

But Tom Merry raised his hand.

"Time!" he roared again. "I'm timekeeper, Grundy!"

Manners rushed forward, and dragged his stunned principal to his corner. He rubbed the back of D'Arcy's ears, and massaged his heaving stomach. And all the while Harry Noble fanned him.



Half-a-crown is paid for all contributions printed on this page.

HEARD IN COURT.

A lawyer was one day pleading before a Scottish judge who was a friend of his. His client, a lady of the name of Tickle, was defendant in the action, and the counsel commenced his speech in the following strain: "Tickle, my client, the defendant, my lord—" The public in court burst out laughing, and there was still more merriment when the judge replied: "Tickle her yourself, Harry! You are as well able to do it as I am!"—Jack Murray, 38, Powell Road, Stamford Hill, Durban, Natal, South Africa.

A TONGUE TWISTER.

A meeting had been called in the schoolhouse, and the chairman rose to address those present. "My friends," he began, beaming on them, "the schoolwark is the bulhouse of civilisation. I—I mean, the ah—the bulhouse is the schoolwark—" He paused a second, and drew a deep breath. "The warkhouse is the bulschool of—" The audience, rather heartlessly, began to titter. He tried again. "The schoolul is the housewark—" He glared ferociously at the titters. "As I said," he began firmly, "the schoolwark—" He mopped the perspiration from his brow, gritted his teeth, and made a fresh effort. "The schoolhouse, my friends—" A great sigh of relief went up from his audience. At last he had got his unruly tongue in order. A smile of triumph dawned on his fevered face. "The schoolhouse, my friends," he said again, just to let them see how easy it was, "is the wulbark—" The meeting was then adjourned.—Miss Olive Guppy, Slate Saw Mills, Pemberton, New Jarndrup, West Australia.

THE HOUSE THAT DID NOT EXIST.

A farmer intended to spend his holidays with his aunt, who lived in London—No. 12, Oliver Street. Arriving at the station, the farmer inquired his way to there. After having been shown, he wended his way over. At last he came to the street, and walked along it, looking up at the numbers till he came to a house marked in large letters, "No. 12." The farmer let out a gasp of surprise, and exclaimed: "Well, I'll

eat my hat, if auntie didn't say that her house was No. 12, and here it says in plain big letters that there ain't no 12!"—Eddie Nelson, 31, Rompart, Kipdorp, Antwerp.

QUEENSLAND'S "DEAD SEA."

Lake Eeacham (North Queensland) has been aptly termed the "Dead Sea" of Queensland. This lake is one of the marvels of Nature. It is surrounded on all sides by dense scrub. There is not a fish found in its waters, no rivers flow into it or out of it; and although rain falls in torrents, the level of the water never alters. Geological students say that this lake, which has never been fathomed, is the crater of an extinct volcano. The aborigines would never camp within miles of it. They believe that a spirit haunts it, and that dead souls of the tribe are found at the bottom.—Gordon Glazebrook, The Bays, Boude Road, Boude, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

SOUND ECONOMY.

A young fellow who had never paid more than sixpence to see an entertainment was attracted while passing a theatre by the posters announcing the performance of "The Forty Thieves." Going up to the ticket-office, he put down a shilling and said:

"Give me a good seat."

The ticket-seller raked the shilling into the drawer, and handed out a ticket. "Where's the change?" asked the young man.

"There is no change. Gallery seats are a shilling," was the reply.

The youth stared at the ticket, then at the theatre official.

"Keep your ticket," he said quietly. "I don't care to go in and see the other thirty-nine thieves."—B. Braudon, 25, Lansdowne Place, Hove, Sussex.

FAN-CY.

Two venerable Japanese gentlemen, noted for their thrift, were one day discussing fans.

"This fan which you see," said one, "has lasted me for fifteen years. I never think of opening the whole fan, but open only a small section at a time; using it with care, that lasts for a year, and then

I pass on to the next section, until at last the fan is used up."

"A most extravagant method," snorted the other. "This fan of mine was bought by my great-grandfather, and has been in use ever since. I open the whole fan, but never dream of wearing it out by waving it. Certainly not! I hold it under my nose, just so, and wave my face."—A. L. Jacobs, 25, Llanthwy Road, Newport, Mon.

STRIKES AT SCHOOL.

At many large public schools there have been strikes, or barrings out. At Eton the greatest outbreak was in 1768, when the Head flogged a boy for an alleged minor offence. The remainder of the offenders resigned in a body, and were ordered to leave the school, which they did; about one hundred and sixty marched to Maidenhead, where noisy demonstrations and speckmaking took place. In the end they were compelled to return to Eton to be punished, most of them being flogged. Thirty-one years after this Rugby had a strike. The cause was the punishment of a boy who bought explosives from a grocer in the town. The offence was denied. The boy was flogged, and his school chums attacked the grocer's establishment with such fury that a magistrate was called in and the Riot Act read. The disturbance ended with punishment for the ring-leaders.—H. Quaintance, 55, Green Lanes, N.16.

TWICE OMITTED.

A simple-minded man ordered a gramophone, and hoped to get it for nothing. This was his letter to the firm supplying the instruments: "Kind Sirs,—Please forward me a fine gramophone, for which I enclose full amount. Yours truly — P.O. It is very forgetful of me." A day or two later, back came a letter: "Dear Sir,—We have great pleasure in sending you one of our gramophones, and trust it will give every satisfaction. P.S.—Have forgotten to send gramophone. It must be due to the carelessness of our clerk."—A. Burgess, Lower Park, Aldington, Hythe, Kent.

Contributions are invited from readers of the "GEM" for publication on this page. Anything will do, so long as it is interesting, short, and concise—a good joke, a description of a holiday, a bright idea for increasing the popularity of the "GEM," a good anecdote. "Pars" should not be more than three hundred words long—the shorter the better. They can be sent in on a postcard. Address all contributions to The Editor, The "GEM" Library, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. and mark them "Readers' Own Corner."



JOHN SHARPE.

New Readers Start Here.

John Sharpe, the great analytical detective, is engaged by Chief Burnett, of the Secret Service, to track down the band of organised and dangerous criminals operating under the guidance of Iron Hand, a fearless, clever man of dominating personality. Marna Black, one of the band of crooks, is captured, and Burnett induces Anne Crawford, a woman agent of the Secret Service, to assume Marna's identity and get into the confidence of Iron Hand.

She is instructed to keep her real identity a secret even to Sharpe; but she often assists him and sends him information concerning the movements of the gang, and he is puzzled to know just where it comes from.

Iron Hand has a number of hiding-places in different parts of the country, which are referred to as "Nests," the most important of which is Eagle's Nest, situated on a deserted cliff. The leader's chief assistants are Potsdam and Black Flea. John Sharpe has had many big tussles with the gang, and has foiled many of their deepest schemes. Iron Hand has robbed Colonel Bledson, the Cattle King, of a casket of valuable jewels, and he takes them to his assistant in Chinatown, Wong Li, to take care of.

After a great struggle Sharpe succeeds in getting them back, and he deposits them in a safe in Colonel Bledson's room.

Iron Hand makes a determined effort to secure them again, but he is foiled repeatedly by Sharpe. The gang next turn their attention to a collection of valuable Russian furs, and they decide to hire a room in the building in which they are stored in order to secure them.

(Now read on.)

The Visitor.

PRESENTLY the motor-lorry entered the warehouse yard, and the disguised Potsdam descended from his seat and instructed the chauffeur to wait until his return.

The second in command at once made his way to the office, where he found the caretaker of the building. He inquired about a room, and was shown a plan of the entire building.

Potsdam studied the chart for a moment, and then, pointing to a certain room on the ground floor, he said:

"That one will suit me! I want to store some costly electrical equipment there while we are fitting out our place."

The caretaker informed his new client that this would be all right, and, taking out his note-case, Potsdam handed over some notes, in order to pay a deposit on the room. He waited a moment until his receipt was written out, and then made his departure, saying as he went that he would order his chauffeur to drive the lorry containing the goods up to the room. The manager, meanwhile,

The INVISIBLE HAND



IRON HAND.

Vitagraph.

instructed some of his employees to get ready to remove the barrels from the lorry.

When he had given his instructions to the chauffeur, Potsdam walked along the pavement in the direction of the fur store. As he went he gave a sly look around to make quite sure that his movements were not being watched. Then he endeavoured to assume a businesslike manner as he walked towards the entrance of the shop. When he got inside he found it laden with costly furs of all descriptions, and he was quite impressed by their value.

Potsdam at once went over to one of the shopmen and asked for Mr. Laroque, whom he had heard was the proprietor of this establishment. The man went to the rear of the shop, and a moment later he came forward again with the gentleman in question. Potsdam introduced himself.

"I represent the Royal Canada Fur Company," he said. "I wish to make inquiries about your consignment of Russian sables."

Mr. Laroque bowed, and it was obvious that he was impressed by the importance of his visitor. He asked Potsdam to follow him, and took him through a door in the back of the shop leading to a middle room lined with wall cabinets. Some contained furs, and some were empty. In the centre of the room was one very large cabinet containing a quantity of Russian sables.

Mr. Laroque took his visitor over to it, and Potsdam at once started to inspect the furs. He also paid particular attention to the position of the room, although, of course, he did his very best not to let Mr. Laroque see his interest in this matter.

Potsdam pretended great admiration for the furs, and he was full of enthusiasm as Mr. Laroque handed them to him for his inspection. After a while he said:

"I'll telegraph your price to my principals. In all probability we shall make a bid for part of your furs."

Mr. Laroque was quite agreeable to this, and Potsdam wished him good-bye, and shook his hand vigorously as he made his departure.

Potsdam walked towards the warehouse. This adjoined the middle room which he had just left, and it suited his scheme admirably. He noticed that a number of the barrels from the motor had already been placed in it. The warehouse employees were at that moment busy wheeling other barrels and placing them in position.

Potsdam produced a pad and pencil, and quickly sketched the room, at the same time adding a rough sketch from memory of the one he had just left, in which his interview with Mr. Laroque had taken place. When the last of the ten barrels were brought in, the manager arrived on the scene, and Potsdam pretended to check them up, while the manager was giving instructions at the door to one of his men. Then he slyly folded the paper containing his sketch so that it would slip through the bung hole of one of the barrels. When he had done this, he joined the manager at the door.

He was then handed a key, and both men left the room, the manager closing the door behind them.

The chauffeur was cranking up the motor-lorry in the warehouse yard, waiting for the return of Potsdam. That worthy arrived a moment later, and, bidding the manager good-bye, he mounted the truck, and was driven out of the yard.

The chauffeur drove the vehicle along a deserted street, and Potsdam and his accomplice chuckled over the success of their plans, so far. Then the second in command removed his false beard, and placing it in his pocket, he alighted from the lorry, leaving the chauffeur to continue the journey alone.

Meanwhile, at the bung hole of one of the barrels in the warehouse, an eye appeared. It glanced slowly around the room, then gradually the top of the barrel lifted up, and the face of one of the gang came into view.

The man peered around the room, then he made a signal to the others, and the next minute three other outlaws appeared in similar manner. They got out of their barrels, and then, lifting the lid from one of the remaining ones, they produced food and drink from it.

The first gangster then took out the folded paper containing the sketch, which Potsdam had pushed through the hole of the barrel. He smoothed it out, and all the men looked at it. It was a rough map showing the room, with the barrels indicated by crosses. Also the middle room of the fur store was indicated, showing the row of cabinets on the wall, and the large one in the middle. This one was marked "sables."

An arrow was drawn in the sketch, representing the warehouse room, pointing towards the brick wall which divided the two, and underneath the cabinet in the fur store appeared the cryptic words: "Here."

The men studied the map for a few moments and memorised it, and then the leader tore it up into small pieces, and put them in one of the barrels.

They next moved the barrels away from the spot in the brick wall which had been indicated on their map. One of the men stationed himself at the door to listen, another traced a square on the wall about two feet by three, and the two others went to another barrel, and produced tools, which included a punch, hammer, crowbar, and so on. In a very short time they would be able to make a hole in the wall sufficient for their purpose.

The Plot Succeeds.

THAT night the watchman in the fur store made his usual round of inspection, but he did not think to look in the barrels in the warehouse. As soon as he had gone the

gang commended operations. A number of flashlights shone through the hole in the wall, lighting up the scene.

One of the gang set to work with a chisel to force open the doors of the cabinet, and as soon as this was accomplished, the other men commenced to carry the furs back through the wall to the warehouse. These they deposited in the barrels. Very soon all the valuable sables had been transferred from the cabinet to the barrels belonging to the gang. It was, so far, one of the easiest jobs they had yet undertaken, and the men chuckled with glee at their success.

Before leaving the room, the gang set to work to sweep up the traces from the floor which had been caused by the hole which they had made in the wall. Then they carefully replaced the bricks, and put the cabinet back into position, in order to hide their handiwork. The men in the warehouse then plastered the bricks with a special quick-drying substance which they had brought with them. They left nothing to chance.

"When this stuff sets," said one of the gang, "it will be impossible to distinguish anything. It was a very fine job of theirs."

The other men agreed with their spokesman.

The following morning Detective Sharpe happened to be in the office of the Chief of Police chatting over affairs, when suddenly there was a commotion outside, and Mr. Laroque, the well-known fur merchant excitedly entered.

"My store has been broken into," he shouted, in an agitated manner, "and all my valuable Russian sables are gone!"

John Sharpe at once showed his interest in the man, and he wondered whether this was another of Iron Hand's tricks.

"It looks very like it to me," he said to the police chief. "We'd better have Miss Roberts—that girl that we captured in Nest 1 here. We may get some information from her."

The chief summoned an attendant, and hurriedly gave him some instructions.

"I don't want the police to move in the matter yet," said Sharpe. "They'll spoil my game. You get into plain clothes, chief, while Mr. Laroque gives me further details."

The fur dealer, who was still very angry and excited, gave all the information he had, and John Sharpe looked at him intently, paying attention to even the smallest details.

Anne Crawford, whose real identity was still unknown to Detective Sharpe, was a prisoner in the hospital to which she had been taken after the raid by the police on Iron Hand's headquarters. At the moment she was sitting up in bed sewing, for she had almost completely recovered from the effects of the gas administered to her by Potsdam.

Presently a nurse entered, and intimated that she had orders for the girl to accompany a police-officer who was downstairs.

"You are to be removed to the goal this morning, Miss Roberts," said the nurse, with sympathy.

She then went to the cupboard to get Anne's hat and coat. The girl seized this opportunity to reach under the mattress and take out a mask, which she had hidden there. It was a large one, which completely covered her head. She hastily concealed it in her blouse. A moment later the nurse returned, and helped her on with her coat, at the same time bidding her good-bye. Then the police-officer entered, and escorted her away.

By this time the chief of police had already changed into plain clothes, and

Sharpe, too, had disguised himself by means of a pair of dark glasses and a few other aids.

"Miss Roberts is being brought here in accordance with your wish. We'll see her when we return," the chief said.

Sharpe nodded, and the men left the room.

As soon as the officer in charge of Anne left the hospital, he called a taxi, and he and the girl got into it.

Anne pretended great weakness when she took her seat, and leaned back, closing her eyes as though exhausted.

The officer was amusing himself by looking out of the window, and Anne, watching him stealthily through her half-closed eyes, waited her opportunity, and then took out her black mask.

As the officer pulled his head back into the car, Anne, quick as a flash, drew it over his head.

The surprised officer struggled, and tried to free himself, but it was too close-fitting, and before he could do so, the girl had opened the opposite door of the car and jumped out.

Still covered by the mask, the official groped for her, but just missed clutching her.

Anne immediately leaped off from the running board of the taxi, and rushing off between other cars, quickly disappeared from view. It was a clever escape from her guardian.

There was considerable excitement in the fur store when Detective Sharpe, the Chief of Police, and Mr. Laroque entered the building. Laroque indicated where the furs had been stored.

Sharpe immediately questioned him about his employees. A number of these were standing around, but the manager spoke confidently about the honesty of them all.

"I have no reason to suspect anyone," he affirmed.

Sharpe next questioned the watchman.

"I went through this room every half-hour, sir," the man replied.

Sharpe accepted the explanation, and then ordered everybody out except the chief and Mr. Laroque. He went over and inspected the cabinet where the furs had been stored, and he was quick to note a number of marks which had apparently been made by a chisel.

Mr. Laroque then unlocked the cabinet, and the detective inspected the locks, and carefully examined the floor of the cabinet. He rubbed his hand slowly along the floor, and noted that it was fairly dusty. He wiped his hands, and then proceeded to move the empty cabinet away from the wall through which the outlaws had effected their entrance.

He stooped down, and rubbed his hands along the floor. Strangely enough, this was quite clean, with the exception of some particles of mortar. He was rather interested in the fact that there was no dust on his fingers, for he knew that, so far, the room had not been swept.

The detective looked more closely at the floor, and then reached down to pick up the particles of mortar, but he was unable to do this, for they adhered to the floor.

Sharpe took out his penknife, and scraped them up into the palm of his hand. Looking towards the rear wall, he saw further chisel marks, and he compared these with the ones that he had previously noted. Quite satisfied that he had solved the mystery, he turned back towards the others.

All this time the chief and Mr. Laroque had been watching his movements with interest.

"Have you a plan of this room?" asked the detective.

Mr. Laroque answered that he had, and he went over to his desk to get it.

Anne's Return.

IRON HAND was enjoying his breakfast when his able lieutenant Potsdam entered.

The leader was anxious to know how things had progressed.

"The truck has gone for the furs," Potsdam reported. "They are safe in the barrels. Red Sam is on the watch. This is the nearest job we ever did, but, of course, we had no Sharpe to buck up against."

Iron Hand looked pleased for once. Then the expression on both men's faces changed somewhat as they heard a signal.

"Go and see who it is," Iron Hand told Potsdam.

He went to the door and opened it, and, to his great surprise, Anne walked quietly in. It was some seconds before Potsdam could get over his startled astonishment. He quite believed that he had killed Anne when he had left her in the gas chamber, at Nest 1.

The girl looked at him disdainfully, and then, in a freezing voice, she said:

"You called me traitor! Tried to kill me, and gave me to the police. You're the traitor! I've escaped, and come back. That should prove me true!"

Potsdam tried to speak, but he could only stammer, so amazed was he to see the girl again.

Anne interrupted him, and, in a threatening tone, said:

"If I tell Iron Hand, who is devoted to me, he'll kill you! Don't interfere with me again! Where is he?"

Potsdam was completely cowed, and he led her to where the chief was sitting.

The leader was quite overjoyed at her appearance, and he spoke of his admiration of her devotion to the cause.

Anne sat down, and related her experiences to him.

Mr. Laroque took Sharpe and the Chief of Police to the assistant manager, and he introduced Sharpe to the man.

The detective's first request was for a plan of the building, and when this was produced, it was handed to Sharpe. He did not need to look at it very long. Pointing to the room adjoining the fur store, the detective asked the manager who occupied it. The man considered for an instant, and then replied:

"That room was recently taken by a concern calling itself the Ladin Electric Company. It was only a few days ago, and they have already moved some of their goods into the place!"

"Ah, as I believed!" muttered Sharpe. "Will you be good enough to take me there at once!"

(Get next week's GEM for the continuation of this amazing story.)

NEXT WEEK!

"What Have You Against Me?"

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Sharpe's Clever Scheme.

JOHN SHARPE considered for a moment as to what his best move would be, then he asked for a telephone directory. One was soon obtained and brought to him, and he turned over the pages quickly, until he came to the names beginning with the letter L.

Sharpe looked carefully through for the name of Laffin. But after a while he shook his head.

"They're not in the telephone directory," he said.

The manager looked puzzled for a moment.

"They paid their money in advance," he said, "so I did not go into their history very closely."

"Will you take me to their room?" John Sharpe asked.

"Yes. Come this way," the manager answered. "I will take you there."

The detective, accompanied by the manager and Chief of Police, made his way to the warehouse where the gun barrels were stored.

"This is the room hired by the Laffin Company, and these are some of the goods which they have deposited here," the manager informed Sharpe, as he indicated some of the barrels.

The detective walked round inspecting the room, then he noticed something on the floor which attracted his attention. Moving one of the barrels slightly out of the way, he picked up a small quantity of white dust, which he examined very closely.

Sharpe then walked towards the wall, and taking out his magnifying-glass, he looked carefully round it, until he came to the place where the outlaws had plastered up the wall again after they had made their hole in order to gain entrance to the next room.

There was just a faint line in the brick-work, showing where the new plaster joined the old. Sharpe turned round to the others, saying:

"There is nothing out of the way here; we'll have to look elsewhere for an explanation of this mysterious affair."

He did not want anyone at this stage to know what he had discovered.

The three men left the room, and the manager closed the door behind them.

At the gang's hiding-place Iron Hand listened intently until Anne Crawford had finished her story.

"So that's how it got away," she concluded; "but I am afraid the police suspect something. They were taking me to headquarters to question me when I managed to jump out of the taxi."

Iron Hand snapped his fingers in order to show his contempt for the police.

"We'll get the sables in less than an hour," he said, "and then we'll get away in the Los Angeles steamer to-night. All will be well."

Turning to Potsdam, the Chief ordered him to get some refreshments for the girl, and the second in command started to obey the order, but in a very sudden manner.

Anne commenced to remove her hat, and was about to place it on the table, when she observed that the top was quite dusty. And she looked very disdainful at this.

Obtaining a newspaper, she spread it out upon the table, and then placed her hat on that. A little later Potsdam entered with some articles of food.

Potsdam still felt very cross towards the girl, and, noticing what she had done, he was about to place the food upon the dusty table, in order to annoy her further. But she took it from him and put it into her lap. Anne gave Potsdam a severe glance, as though to warn him

not to try any more tricks, or she would inform Iron Hand.

Some time later the motor-lorry previously used by Potsdam, and driven by the same chauffeur, arrived outside the warehouse again. The chauffeur called to a clerk who was standing in the doorway of the office. The man went over to the lorry, and the chauffeur handed him an order for the removal of the barrels.

The clerk glanced at the paper, and then, looking up at the chauffeur rather curiously, asked him to wait for a moment. The man went into the room where Sharpe, the Chief of the police, and the manager were talking.

Although the Police Chief did not put the matter to the detective, he rather suspected that he had found out more about the mystery of the stolen fire than he cared to tell just then. There was a look of satisfaction on Sharpe's face, which seemed to indicate that things were going pretty well.

Presently the clerk entered, carrying the order for the removal of the barrels which the motor-driver had given him. He handed it to the manager, who raised his eyebrows in surprise.

The man at once informed Sharpe that someone from the Laffin Company had sent for the barrels, and that a lorry was outside ready to take them away.

"Shall we let them go?" he asked.

Sharpe nodded, with a quiet smile on his face.

"Why, certainly!" he replied. "Let them take them away at once if they desire."

The Chief of Police was more puzzled than ever at this. Surely, he thought, it would be better to detain this man.

Further thoughts were interrupted by Sharpe, who looked at him and whispered a few words of hurried instructions. "And use one of your very best men," he concluded.

The clerk went back and informed the chauffeur that it was quite all right, and that he might remove his barrels as soon as he wished; and the operations commenced.

When the whole of them had been placed on the lorry, the man drove it from the yard. But there was a startling occurrence as soon as he had got a little way away, which quite surprised that gentleman.

A man who was walking along the road suddenly jumped on the truck, as though he was desirous of a lift. The chauffeur shouted angrily to him to clear off, but the newcomer responded by drawing a revolver, and ordered him very forcibly to drive on where he was told, and not to argue about the matter. There was a look in his eye which meant business.

The chauffeur was certainly intimidated, and did as he was instructed. His uninvited guest turned out to be a plain-clothes policeman, and at his orders the vehicle was driven off along a road leading to the right.

Some distance away Red Sam, a member of the gang, who had been instructed to watch events and render any assistance, if possible, looked rather worried. It was quite plain to him that the plans of the gang had gone wrong, and, very alarmed and excited, he rushed off in order to inform Iron Hand.

Sharpe, Mr. Laroque, and the Chief of Police had now returned to the police-station, and the officer, still in doubt as to the detective's plans, endeavoured to obtain some information in a diplomatic manner; but he failed. Sharpe always kept things to himself until his plans were completed.

While they were waiting, the door to the police yard opened suddenly, and the motor lorry, driven by Iron Hand's chauffeur, arrived on the scene. At the back was sitting the plain-clothes policeman.

As soon as the truck was brought to a standstill the driver was taken into custody, and Sharpe instructed some men who were standing round to force open the barrels. They leaped on the truck, and soon succeeded in their task.

The Chief of Police was astonished to see that some of them contained members of the gang. It was a complete capture, and all those standing round were highly amused at the turn of events.

When the other barrels were opened the valuable collection of Russian furs were disclosed, and Sharpe asked Mr. Laroque to identify them.

The merchant nodded, and, greatly pleased at the success of his plan, he went over and congratulated the clever detective on his splendid work.

Before the prisoners were led away Sharpe carefully looked them over.

"Only small fry in this haul," he muttered, half to himself, "but better luck next time. Now I will go and question Miss Roberts. No doubt she will have arrived by this time."

The detective, followed by the Chief of police, walked towards the station. When they arrived there, however, they were met by the officer from whom Anne had escaped in the taxi.

He looked very sheepish as he faced the detective. Then, showing him the mask which Anne had placed over his head, he explained how she had got away.

The Police Chief was naturally highly indignant when he heard this confession of failure, but Sharpe put in a word for the man's defence.

"That girl has outwitted wiser men than you, officer," he said. "Never mind, see if you can make one of those prisoners we have just caught give away some information. I'll be back after lunch."

The Chief, who was still annoyed about the escape of Anne, said that he would certainly do his utmost to gain some information out of the prisoners.

The detective then made his departure, while the Chief and Mr. Laroque superintended the loading of the furs.

(The continuation of this amazing story will appear next week.)
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BOUND BY A PROMISE!

(Continued from page 13)

When "time" came he was able to stand unsteadily on his feet.

From the other corner, Herries, heedless of the many words of advice and congratulation, had been gazing at him with fixed, almost glazed, eyes.

D'Arcy moved forward as in a dream, and Herries stepped forward.

"Now—" breathed the crowd.

It may have been that half-spoken word, or the sight of Herries and the look in his eyes, but Arthur Augustus, from whatever cause, sprang to life. He slipped away from a left lead, and, keeping away that left with his wrist, drove his own left glove into his opponent's face with the full weight of his agile body behind it.

Herries staggered back. D'Arcy pursued, and followed the left with a right that caused Herries to fall slightly forward. With every ounce, and the last ounce of power and energy in him, the swell of St. Jim's sent up his right in a terrible upper-cut.

Herries fell on his face. The swell of St. Jim's drew back. The fight was his. If Herries were not quite out, he was indubitably beaten.

For one, two, three, and four, Herries lay motionless, while the crowd swayed in deep agitation. On seven, he raised his head wearily on all fours.

Before him was a picture of Towser—Towser, for the vengeance of whom he was fighting. Drunkenly, Herries reeled to his feet. And from the crowd came a cheer that could have been heard for miles.

"Well done, Herries!"

"Good man!"

"That's the spirit!"

Herries has absolutely the sympathy of the crowd. He had rallied when nine hundred and ninety-nine fellows out of a thousand would have given in.

Louther would have thrown in the towel, but Herries waved him back.

"I'm a-right!" he muttered, through torn and cut lips.

His glassy eyes stared at the swell of St. Jim's.

But Arthur Augustus did not move. He could have knocked his opponent down and completely out then; but he did not. He could not. Never could he forget that once they had been friends. Once they had shared their pleasures. His arms hung by his sides.

Herries lurched forward, tired, miserably tired, without life.

The waiting was ghastly. Would neither of them move? One must, surely.

Herries gave a gasp—a gasp of defeat. Something in his throat gurgled, and he fell to his knees.

"Herries!" pleaded someone.

But Herries was deaf to everything—deaf to the world.

Arthur Augustus could have wept at having brought his chum to this plight. He moved forward to raise the fallen Herries, and from the crowd came an angry roar.

"Stand back! Don't hit a man when he's down!"

It was unfair. But then a crowd is always unfair. As a mob they were on the level of the meanest member, and they hooted. Through his bruises the swell of St. Jim's flushed angrily.

Herries covered his face with his gloves.

Suddenly there was a stillness, and D'Arcy looked round. He started. The crowd yelled. Something warm and moist touched Herries' bare arm. He removed his hands and stared.

"Towser!" shouted the crowd.

"The dog, Towser, Towser!"

"The dog, started at the cries, growled, and the swell of St. Jim's drew back.

"See!" shrieked Mellish. "He's frightened of Gussy!"

"Yah!"

"Sssss!"

Herries, through his cracked and bruised lips, smiled. He cuddled the dog to him, and Towser licked from his master's face the tears of joy that were streaming down.

Then Herries broke down. He sobbed and cried like a child, and the crowd looked on in wonder. They did not speak.

Ralph Reckness Cardew, on the edge of the crowd, smiled at his chum Clive. "Clive, old gun," he said, "is that not a fitting climax? The true end to a fight."

"I would rather have stopped the fight," muttered Clive. "Look at that."

Blake and Digby raised their fallen chum to his feet, and Manners helped D'Arcy into his jacket.

Surrounded by a huge crowd, the two were taken back to the school. Herries smuggling Towser in his jacket.

Cardew led the way into the school with Clive at his side.

"Cardew," shouted Blake, "how did you do it?"

"One of those things," answered Cardew, smiling.

"So simple," he murmured. "I went to the police-station, and there, as large as life, was this beauty!"

"But the dog who was killed?" came a chorus.

"Stray one—a wire-haired terror."

The passage buzzed with talk. The whole crowd would have pressed into Study No. 6. But Blake kept them on and locked the door. Clive would have entered, but Cardew dragged him aside.

"It isn't finished yet," he said. "There's the real end to come. Gussy is still under a cloud. He hasn't proved that he did not lose Towser—nor have I."

"How can you do it?"

"I am going to the Selby bird with a subscription for a wreath for Towser. He may not have heard about the dog's accident."

He wandered off in the direction of the Third Form-master's study, while in Study No. 6 Herries fondled his favourite. His chums said nothing. Arthur Augustus watched sadly. He felt that he had not yet redeemed his name; that by beating Herries he had not improved his position.

Herries looked up at last.

"Gussy," he said, "you fought like a man. You haven't proved you didn't lose Towser. But—but as the old chap's back, I'll let bygones be bygones."

Arthur Augustus drew a deep breath. "I did not do it," he said firmly.

"And until you believe me, we cannot be friends, Hewwies. I am not a liar!"

Herries shrugged his shoulders.

"Believe you," said Blake, and held out his hand.

Arthur Augustus took it and shook it warmly. Digby, without a word, but with eloquence inexpressible in words, held out his.

There remained only Herries. As the swell of St. Jim's, with troubled

brow, stood looking at his chum and the dog, there came a tap on the door.

"Who's there?" asked Blake.

"It is I—Mr. Selby! Open at once!"

Herries gasped.

"Hide Towser!" he breathed.

Blake took the dog from his chum's arms and dived with him under the table.

Arthur Augustus turned the key in the lock and opened the door.

"The master of the Third Form, slightly red in the face, entered. He looked round him somewhat awkwardly. And, although he could not help noticing the traces of a recent fight, he said nothing.

"Herries," he mumbled awkwardly, "I have just heard that your pet, Towser, has been killed. Er—er—"

he paused, and looked round. "Er—I thought I had better tell you that last night I took your animal out with the intention of handing him over to Brady, the local dog-fancier."

The three juniors stared. And from under the table came a gasp.

"And the wretched animal too loose! I presume it must have been run over."

Herries gazed.

The master shuffled awkwardly.

"I should be greatly obliged if you would let the matter rest as it is at present," continued Mr. Selby, "and prevent any further inquiries."

Herries looked from one to the other of his chums. They were all relieved, especially D'Arcy.

"Certainly, sir," said Herries.

"Very well." The master made as though to turn to the door, but wheeled about.

"There is another matter," he said angrily. "I understand that you, D'Arcy, were out of bed last night."

"Yes, sir."

"Kildare reported the matter to me. As you will by now have heard, I was grossly maltreated—disgracefully disfigured—in the night by the application of red paint. I want to know—did you see anyone about last night?"

It was like the matter to ask such a question. D'Arcy made no reply.

"I demand to know the name of the culprit!"

In a flash Herries saw it all—saw why he swell of St. Jim's had kept silent. A chance had come to the burly Fourth-former to make recompense to his chum for the wrong he had done him.

"Mr. Selby," said Herries, springing to his feet, "one good turn deserves another. I should be greatly obliged if you would let the matter rest as it is at present, and prevent further inquiries."

"What—what do you mean?" The master staggered back, white as his complexion allowed. Then, with vexation, he bit his lip. He was beaten, and he knew it. "Very well!" he said, and slammed the door.

"Hurrah!" yelled Herries, forgetting his secret. "Put it there, Gussy! Forget that I've been a end! I'm sorry for being a fool! Shake!"

And Arthur Augustus shook him by the hand. Once again the chums were friends.

It was mainly due to Cardew, however, and when that evening a feast of celebration was held, Cardew shared with Towser the place of honour. Towser was alive; Study No. 6 was reunited, and there were great rejoicings.

THE END.

(There will be another grand long story of the chums of St. Jim's next week, entitled "THE PLOT AGAINST ST. JIM'S." By Martin Clifford. Order your copy EARLY.)

EDITORIAL.

My Dear Chums,—

There is a great treat in store for you all next week, for in that issue of the "Gem" our splendid new serial, entitled: "What Have You Against Me?" will positively appear. This story is without a doubt the greatest drama of schoolboy life which has ever appeared in any boys' paper, and you must not miss it on any account. Week by week the engrossing story of Tom Mace's life at Willford College will be unfolded to you in the "Gem," and I am certain you will all enjoy it. It is quite unlike any other yarn you have ever read. Do your best

to introduce this story to your acquaintances so that everybody can share in this good thing. Don't forget, "What Have You Against Me?" starts in next week's "Gem." Order your copy early so that there will be no disappointment! This number will also contain another splendid long complete story of Tom Merry & Co., by Martin Clifford, which will also delight you.

At last a clue has been received in connection with Ernest Levison, who, as you know, has been missing from St. Jim's for some time now. A private investigator was immediately sent to the district

where he is reported to have been seen, and I hope to have some definite news to tell you next week! The strange mystery of Ernest Levison is deepening!

The splendid new serial in the "Boys' Herald," called "The Lad from the Lower Deck," has proved immensely popular, and all readers of the "Gem" should get a copy of that ripping paper, with the glorious coloured cover, at once. On sale every Tuesday. Price 1½d.

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YOUR EDITOR.

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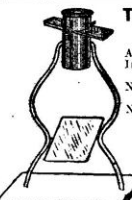
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