

"THE FIGHTING FORM-MASTER!" GREAT YARN OF SCHOOL ADVENTURE AND BOXING INSIDE!



The GEM

THE BEST PAPER FOR BRITISH BOYS

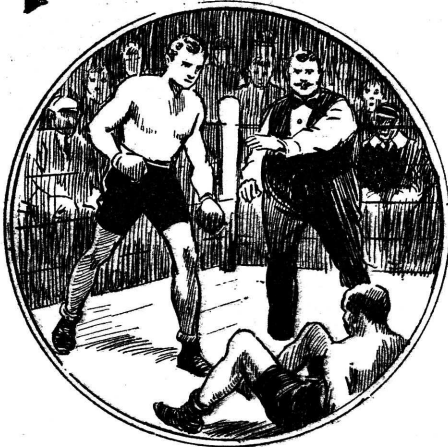
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THE FIGHTING FORM-MASTER!

A SCHOOLMASTER WHO CARRIES A K.O. PUNCH IN EACH FIST!—

THE FIGHTING FORM-MASTER!



From boxing-ring to school-room is a very welcome change to the temporary new master of St. Jim's. But the coming of the fighting Form-master is not so welcome to the cads of the school — or to the gang of toughs which is infesting the district!

CHAPTER 1. In a Hurry!

"IT'S fwightfully wisky!"

"Rats!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Come on!"

"I wemarked that it was wisky——"

"Now, look here, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "If you're in a state of nerves——"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye with deliberate care, and stared at Tom Merry of the Shell.

"You uttah ass!" he said. "If you mean to imply that I'm afwaid, you must be off your silly wockah."

"Then come on."

"I said that it was wisky——"

"Blow the risk. Come on!"

"I do not mind the wisk at all. I simply wemarked that it was fwightfully wisky, and so it is. But I am quite weady to come."

"Buck up, then, and not so much jaw," said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"My hat!" exclaimed Manners. "If we wait for Gussy to finish talking, the fight will be over, and we shall have the journey for nothing, and I shan't get the blessed photograph. Come on—drag him along!"

"I uttahly wefuse to be dwaggled along. Ow!"

Jack Blake of the Fourth and Tom Merry of the Shell seized the swell of St. Jim's by the arms and rushed him down the passage.

"Ow! Ow! Let go! You howwid boundahs! You're wumplin' my jacket!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy was rushed downstairs so fast that the three juniors rushed into Kildare of the Sixth, who was standing at the foot of the staircase talking to Darrell. Kildare gave a shout.

"You young rascals——"

"Sorry!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Sowwy, deah boy—it's the fault of these uttah wottahs——"

Kildare grinned, and Blake and Tom Merry rushed D'Arcy onwards. In the doorway of the School House D'Arcy caught at the cornice, and clung.

"Pway, hold on a minute!" he gasped. "You wouldn't let me finish. I was goin' to make a suggestion——"

"Rats!"

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"It's fwightfully wisky goin' to see the fight——"

"Bosh!"

"And I suggest——"

"Piffle!"

With a wrench the two juniors tore Arthur Augustus away from his hold, and he was rushed down the School House steps into the quadrangle.

The old quad at St. Jim's was bright with summer sunshine. School was over for the day, and most of the fellows were out of doors, playing cricket, or chatting and strolling under the green old elms.

A general chuckle from the fellows near at hand greeted the hurried appearance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, pinioned between the other two fellows.

"My hat!" ejaculated Kangaroo of the Shell. "What's the trouble? Taking Gussy to be measured for a strait-jacket?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No—he's only in a hurry, and we're helping him along," Tom Merry explained.

"You uttah ass——"

"Come on, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I——"

"This way!"

"I was goin' to suggest goin'——"

"March!"

"Yawwooh!"

Onward went D'Arcy at top speed across the quadrangle, willy-nilly, and a roar of laughter followed him. D'Arcy's silk hat was at the back of his head, and his eyeglass was fluttering at the end of its cord. There was dust upon his beautifully-creased trousers, and his fancy waistcoat was rumpled. It was no wonder that the swell of St. Jim's was in a state of boiling indignation.

But there was no help for it. Tom Merry and Blake held his arms in a grasp of iron, and he was rushed on at top speed towards the gates.

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn were standing at the gates. Figgins & Co. belonged to the New House at St. Jim's, but for once they were not on the warpath against the School House.

They roared as D'Arcy rushed helplessly up in the grasp of his chums.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wescue!" gasped D'Arcy. "Wow! I—oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins. "Where are you going?"

"Out!"

"Are you taking Gussy for a walk like that?" asked Kerr.

—MEET HIM IN THIS THRILLING YARN OF TOM MERRY & CO.!

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

"Well, he's in a hurry, you see, and he doesn't know it. We're going to see the fight at Rylcombe," Tom Merry explained, "and we don't want to miss it while Gussy gives a solo performance on the jawbone of an ass."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"If you will come quietly, Gussy——"

"I wefuse——"

"Then we'll jolly well give him the frog's march," exclaimed Monty Lowther, coming up panting. "You New House bounders had better lend a hand. Collar him!"

"I wefuse to be collahed—I—oh—upon the whole, I will come quietly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the swell of St. Jim's was released. He smoothed his ruffled attire with an indignant hand. He put his silk hat on straight, and jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and sniffed.

Manners came up, with his camera slung over his arm, and Herries of the Fourth, and the party was complete.

"You New House chaps coming?" asked Tom Merry.

"It depends upon where you are going," grinned Figgins. "We were thinking of going to meet the new master this evening. I hear that he's coming by the seven train."

"New master," said Tom Merry.

"New master of the Fourth," said Figgins. "Nothing to do with you Shell bounders, of course; you wouldn't know."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I remember. Mr. Lathom's got a few weeks away, and a substitute is coming to take his place," he remarked. "Well, it would be only civil to meet him at the station."

"What is his name?"

"Mr. Harrison."

"We may be in time to meet the train," Blake remarked. "I should like to, and, of course, Gussy would come out strong on such an occasion."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But we can't give up the fight for it. We may be back in time—but we can't miss the Chicken and the London Boxer—not much."

"No feah!"

"By Jove! That sounds interesting," said Figgins. "What is it—a boxing match?"

"Yes, rather."

"Better come," said Tom Merry.

Figgins reflected.

"It's the boxing match or meeting the new master," he said. "After all, we're not bound to meet the new master. Besides, we may be in time, as you say. What do you say about it, Kerr?"

"Toss up!"

"Good wheeze!"

Figgins tossed up a penny.

"Head the master, tail the boxing match," he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tail, bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, looking at the coin in Figgins' broad palm.

"Then it's the boxing match."

And the School House and the New House juniors started down the road towards Rylcombe, on the best of terms and in the best of spirits.

CHAPTER 2.

Straight From the Shoulder!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY lagged a little behind the others.

He was flicking dust from his trousers with a cambric pocket handkerchief, and generally-smoothing out the wrinkles in his waistcoat, and finally polishing his silk hat, of which the nap had been a little disturbed during his abrupt transit from the School House to the gates of St. Jim's.

The other fellows tramped on steadily. They wanted to get to Rylcombe in time.

Tom Merry & Co. all boxed, more or less, and they naturally took an interest in a boxing match. There were many tips to be picked up from watching professional

boxing, and Tom Merry & Co., like other boys, wished to improve their own powers in that line.

The contest they were now going to see was a specially interesting one; for it was a local man pitted against a stranger from London. The gentleman known as the Chicken was a native of Rylcombe, and celebrated in the neighbourhood for boxing displays at fairs and entertainments of a light nature—famous for half a mile or more, as Monty Lowther put it. His opponent was a man from London, unknown in Rylcombe, and naturally everybody wanted to see the Rylcombe man win.

Only it was, for the juniors of St. Jim's, somewhat risky. After a discussion they had settled that there was no harm in going, and they had decided to go.

But would the masters and prefects of St. Jim's take the same view?

There was no harm in the thing. That was settled. At the same time, it was wiser to keep one's own counsel about it. Hence the juniors had said nothing outside their own circle.

"Which way now?" Herries asked, when the juniors reached the old High Street of Rylcombe.

"The tent's behind Jackson's barn."

"When does it begin?"

"At half-past six."

"Hallo, we're not the only Saints going to the show!" said Jack Blake, as they turned into the lane leading to Jackson's barn.

"Snipe and Mellish," said Tom Merry.

Two St. Jim's caps had come into view in the lane. Snipe and Mellish, the cads of the Fourth, were evidently making for the same destination. They glanced round and caught sight of Tom Merry & Co., and slackened pace for them to come up.

"Going to see the fight?" asked Snipe.

"Yes," said Tom Merry shortly.

"Got any money on it?"

"Eh?"

"I've got a half-a-crown on the Chicken," said Snipe coolly. "If the stranger is beaten I get five bob."

Tom Merry coloured.

"So you're making bets on the match, are you?" he asked. Snipe shrugged his shoulders.

"I haven't come here for the fun of walking two miles in this blessed hot weather," he replied.

"No good talkin' to the wottah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "He will nevah undahstand what sport weally is. As a mattah of fact, now that Snipe and Mellish are goin' I'm beginnin' to have doubts whethah it is a wopah place for us."

"H'm!"

Snipe sneered.

"Stay out, if you like!" he said. "Go back and sing songs in the Form-room; it's about your mark. Lot of good watching a glove-fight if you don't have some tin on it. What do you think, Mellish?"

"What-ho!" grinned Mellish.

"Oh, shut up!" said Tom Merry. "If we mentioned all that to a prefect you would get a good hauling over the coals, and you know it."

"Are you going to sneak?"

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

"You know I'm not, Snipe; but it would serve you right if I did!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Snipe gave another irritating shrug of the shoulders.

"Come to that, you're breaking a good many of the rules yourselves," he said. "You know jolly well you've not got permission to see the boxing match, and you'll have to stay out till after call-over if you see it through. You're not quite such plaster saints as you make yourselves out to be, you know."

"You uttah wottah!"

"I don't make myself out to be a saint, and I dare say I bust as many rules as the next fellow," said Tom Merry quietly. "But I don't bet, and you know it!"

"How do I know it?" sneered Snipe. "You say so"

"Then you mean that I may be telling lies?"

"You may, for all I know."

Biff!

Tom Merry's fist came out straight from the shoulder, and Snipe of the Fourth sat down in the dust.

"Oh!" he roared, rubbing his nose. "Ow! Yah!"

"Bai Jove! Serve the wottah wight! Let that instwuct you not to doubt a gentleman's word, you uttah boundah!"

"Ow!"

Tom Merry pushed back his cuffs.

"If you want any more you can get up and have it!" he said.

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Lowther. "I'll just as soon see this as a fight in the tent, by Jove! Go it, Snipe!"

Snipe did not go it. He picked himself up and mopped his nose with his handkerchief, but did not put up his hands. Tom Merry waited for him a few moments, and then swung on.

The Shell fellow's brow was clouded and moody.

"I'm blessed if I like going in!" he exclaimed. "If it's a thing to the taste of those outsiders the less we have to do with it the better."

"Yaas, wathah! But——"

"But we've come a long way to see it," said Kerr.

"I've got some sandwiches to eat, too, and we can eat them in the tent where it's cool," Fatty Wynn remarked.

"Oh, blow the sandwiches."

"They're the best ham, and——"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Perhaps we'd better go in for a bit, and we can come out early if we don't like it, and go to meet the new master," said Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah! That's a pwetty good ideah for you, Figgay!"

And the juniors walked on to the tent.

CHAPTER 3.

Not Nice for Knox!

THE tent was already pretty well filled, but the juniors got seats near the front.

The contest was simply a glove contest, with nothing in the shape of prizes depending upon it—at all events, so far as was known. It was supposed to be an exhibition of pugilistic skill pure and simple.

Tom Merry glanced round the tent.

There were all sorts and conditions of people present, and among them he saw several St. Jim's fellows, who had evidently come in spite of terror of prefects.

Snipe and Mellish were there, and in the distance Tom Merry recognised Knox, the prefect, and Sefton of the Sixth, a New House fellow.

"Two Sixth Formers here," murmured Tom Merry. "Well, if we're busting the rules we're busting them in good company."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"One of them a School House prefect, too," said Kerr.

"Now, you wouldn't find a New House prefect here."

"Rats! Sefton's in the Sixth, anyway."

"Yes; but——"

"Yaas, wathah! Bosh, deah boy! Hallo! There comes the showman!"

A fat gentleman in evening dress, with a diamond gleaming in his shirt-front—a stone that would have been worth about a thousand pounds if it had been real—appeared on the little stage.

He waved a fat and not over-clean hand to the audience.

"Gentlemen——"

"'Ear, 'ear!" said the audience.

"Bwavo, deah boy!"

"Gentlemen, you are about to witness a display that may prove historic in the history of British boxing."

The juniors chuckled.

The glove contest might be interesting enough to the Rylcombe farmers and the young men from the shops in the High Street and to the juniors of St. Jim's; but it was not likely to become historic. It did not seem likely to mark an epoch in the history of the noble art of self-defence.

"The Chicken, gentlemen—the Rylcombe Chicken, 'oom all of you know!"

"'Ear, 'ear!"

"Is about to stand up for the native town against a London boxer—an amateur boxer, gentlemen, 'oo prefers to be known under the name of Nemo."

"Unknown under that name, I should think," murmured Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"This gentleman, gentlemen, has achieved fame as an amateur boxer," said the announcer, "and he has the honour of appearing before you this hevenin' in a contest with the gloves hon, without fee or payment, simply for the honour of facing the Chicken!"

"'Ear, 'ear!"

Then there was a fresh burst of cheering as the boxers came into view. The Chicken was easily recognised.

He was a short, thick-set, somewhat squat fellow, with enormously powerful shoulders, and a very long reach. His face bore some resemblance to that of a bulldog, and he had little blue eyes that twinkled under his shaggy brows. But there was a hearty and good-natured look about the boxer that was very prepossessing.

The other man was taller, but evidently weighed less.

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He was of athletic build, medium size, and moved with a springy step that told of perfect condition.

"My hat!" Tom Merry muttered, as he glanced at the handsome, clear-cut face of the amateur. "That chap doesn't look much like a boxer."

"Strong enough," said Manners.

"And quick enough on his feet," Blake remarked.

"Yes; but—but he's jolly good-looking, isn't he?"

"Yaas, wathah! I should have taken him for an Oxford chap, f'wom his looks, if I had seen him anywhere else," remarked Arthur Augustus.

"He's keeping his name dark, whoever he is," Monty Lowther observed. "Nemo doesn't mean anything, excepting that he's hiding his name."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It may be some chap having a lark," Figgins remarked.

"I shouldn't wonder."

The two boxers stood in the roped enclosure in the circle of seats. The fat showman glanced over the tent with an eye of satisfaction. Almost every seat was taken by this time.

"Merry—Merry!"

Tom looked round as his name was called.

Knox, the School House prefect, was standing up farther along the row, and looking at him, and waving his hand.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry.

"Go out of this tent!" said Knox.

"I've paid for admission," said Tom Merry innocently.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Go out at once!"

"What for?"

"Because I tell you to. I'm your prefect, and I order you to get out! You've no business here!"

"You've no business here yourself, if you come to that," said Tom Merry. "If it isn't a proper place for us, it isn't for you."

Knox turned crimson with anger.

"Will you go out?" he shouted.

"No!"

"Wathah not!"

"Tom Merry——"

"Sit down!" roared the audience.

Knox cast an angry glance round him. Knox was given to swank, and he did not fancy being shouted at by farmers and rough fellows of all sorts and conditions.

"I shall do as I like!" he exclaimed haughtily.

"Sit down!"

"Bah!"

"Thee will sit down," said a big farmer, grasping Knox's straw hat in his two hands and crushing it down on the prefect's head. Knox sat down with a thump, and let out a yell of anguish. "If thee get up again, it will be the worse for thee!"

And Knox did not get up again. He cast a furious glance in the direction of the juniors and subsided.

Monty Lowther gave an expressive sniff.

"This means a row when we get back to St. Jim's," he said resignedly.

"I don't think so. Knox can't report us without saying that he was here himself," said Blake, with a grin. "I can't fancy him marching into Mr. Railton and saying that."

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Wathah not!"

"Shut up, there!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy cast a glance of astonishment round as if hardly believing his ears. His astonishment made him "shut up," as requested. The fat showman was talking all the time, and the audience wanted to hear what he was saying.

"They're getting to bisney now," said Figgins. "My opinion is that the Chicken is going through the mill."

D'Arcy nodded. D'Arcy had a keen eye for the good points of either a man or a horse, and he knew a great deal about boxing.

"Yaas, wathah!" he remarked. "I fancy the Chicken is booked for a high old time, deah boy. Mr. Nemo is a dark horse."

The boxers had the gloves on now, and the referee had his watch in his hand.

CHAPTER 4.

The Fight!

"TIME!"

The juniors and the whole of the audience looked on with keen interest as the glove-fight began.

The manner of the Rylcombe Chicken was confidence itself. It was evident that he had every expectation of easily beating the gentleman boxer from London, and that he only wanted to drag out the contest a little by



"Sit down!" roared the audience. "I shall do as I like!" retorted Knox haughtily. "Thee will sit down," said a big farmer, and he grasped Knox's straw hat in his hands and crushed it down on the prefect's head. Knox let out a yell of anguish and sat down with a bump—and he did not get up again!

not beating him too quickly. He thought the audience were entitled to have something for their money.

But the progress of the first round was quite sufficient to show the Chicken that he had miscalculated.

His heavy drives did not touch the gentleman boxer at all, and he received several taps which made him consider himself very seriously.

When the call of time came for the end of the first round, there was a peculiar expression on the face of the Rylcombe Chicken.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy read that expression aright, and he smiled softly.

"That chap has just discovered that he has woke up the wong passengah, deah boys," he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Chicken will put up a good fight, though," said Lowther. "He's good stuff!"

"Yaas, wathah! But if I were a bettin' chap, I should lay two guineas to bobs on the London man."

"Time!"

The two boxers faced one another again cautiously.

The Chicken pressed the fighting very hard in the second round, striving to get close to his adversary, to get in some of his heavy body blows. Nemo kept the Chicken at armslength, and administered a little light punishment in the way of taps on the nose and chest, which somewhat bewildered the Rylcombe man.

The display made by the Chicken, so far, was poor, and the audience—not all of whom, by any means, were sportsmen—began to groan at him. Many of them had laid money on the unfortunate Chicken, and they saw their pounds in danger.

"Go it, Chicken!"

"Don't give the fight away!"

"He's sold out—that's what it is!"

The Chicken, as he sat on the knees of his second after the round, cast a glance of sullen anger at the murmurers, but said nothing. He was doing his best, and he could not do more, and it was cruelly unjust to find fault with him.

"Time!"

The Chicken was looking savage and determined as he faced Nemo for the third round. He was in a sullen temper, and that was not the temper in which to win a

boxing contest. The gentleman boxer simply walked round him in the third round, and drove him up and down.

The audience groaned and cheered.

"Go it, Chicken!"

"Paste him!"

"Don't chuck it!"

As if spurred on by the groans, the Chicken made a sudden effort. He pressed the gentleman boxer hard, and drove him back, and managed to get home with his right full on Nemo's chin.

The gentleman boxer staggered back, and as he did so, quick as lightning the Chicken's left came up, in a terrific uppercut, and Nemo went with a crash to the floor.

There was a roar.

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo, Chicken!"

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "That must have been a fearful shock! If the chap stands up aftah that, he must be made of iron, deah boys!"

"I should say so."

The timekeeper was counting.

"One, two, three, four, five—"

The Chicken was waiting, with eyes as watchful as a tiger's, ready for his opponent to rise.

"Six, seven, eight—"

Nemo came to his feet unsteadily as nine was called, and with a feeble and yet determined guard, he fought off the Rylcombe boxer, who was attacking him hard and fast.

Right back to the ropes he went, under a terrific shower of blows, yet managing to keep his feet till time was called. Then he sank upon the knees of his second with a gasp that was heard by all the audience.

The Chicken grinned at the crowd.

He was on the best of terms with them now; the third round had quite restored him to favour.

They cheered him till the tent rang with it.

"Hurrah, hurrah!"

"Bravo, Chicken!"

"Ripping!"

"Bravo!"

"Hurrah!"

"Yaas, wathah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But it won't happen a second time, deah boys. If our fwiend Nemo gets ovah those fearful whacks, he will make wings wound the Chicken yet."

"He looks pretty well done in," said Manners.
 "Oh, he's all wight! He's got the wind, and the Chicken has got bellows to mend already!" said the swell of St. Jim's sagely.

"I say—" began Fatty Wynn.

"What do you think, Wynn, deah boy?"

"I think—"

"You agwee with me?"

"Yes, but I think—"

"My deah chap, you can take my word for it," said Arthur Augustus. "I assuah you I know a chap's fighting form when I look at him."

"I was thinkin'—"

"You follow my lead," said D'Arcy; "you can wely on me!"

"I was thinking that it was time—"

"No; the vefewee hasn't called 'Time!' yet."

"That it was time to have some sandwiches!"

"You uttah ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'm getting jolly peckish!" said Fatty Wynn. "I always get extra hungry in this August weather somehow."

"Ass!"

"You needn't have any, but I'm going to! No good getting ill for want of grub!" said the fat Fourth Former. "You can't enjoy a good show, either, unless you lay a good foundation first."

"Wats!"

Munch, munch, munch! That was the only reply of Fatty Wynn. His jaws were too busy for words just then.

"Time!"

The fourth round started. The gentleman boxer was still in a very bad state, and he confined himself strictly to defence all through the round. The Chicken pressed him hard, but he could make little impression upon the steady guard. Nemo's intention was to gain time, and he succeeded.

The fifth round was on the same lines, with some slight advantage to the man from London.

When the sixth round was commenced the interest of the audience was at boiling-point. It was felt generally that

a great deal depended on this round; it was the crucial point of the fight.

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy, who had his monocle stuck fast in his eye, and never moved his gaze from the boxers for the moment. "Bai Jove! Watch that chap!"

The "chap" was worth watching. The gentleman boxer was throwing all he knew into that round. He allowed the Chicken to get close, which the Chicken had been aiming at all the time. But it was only in order to foil him, and punish him severely. The Chicken staggered back from a heavy blow, and the stranger's left and right came upon his face with stunning force, and he had no chance to counter.

Crash!

The Chicken was down—for the first time, but not for the last.

The call of "Time!" saved him from defeat, and he moved off drunkenly to have his blazing face sponged.

The audience were silent now.

Even the most unsportsmanlike of them realised that the Chicken had been fighting his hardest, and that he was standing his punishment like a man.

The seventh round was all Nemo's. He knocked the Chicken round the ring, and the round finished with the Rylcombe man again on his back.

But the Chicken would not admit defeat. He stood up for another round, and it was the least eventful of all. But the explanation was easy.

The man from London was sparing him.

He guarded himself, but he would not hit the Chicken, except with light taps that did not hurt him.

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "He's a decent chap! I'll wagah that his jaw is still achin', and will be for the west of the day, too! But he doesn't want to hurt the Chicken, you see."

"He's very decent."

Crash!

The Chicken had forced the fighting too hard, and the London man had hit out. The Rylcombe boxer was on his back again.

"All ovah, deah boys!"

D'Arcy was right; the fight was finished.

Click!

Some of the audience looked round. Manners slung his camera on his shoulder. He had taken a snap of the scene—the victorious boxer standing erect, the fallen champion at his feet. Manners looked very pleased with himself as he tramped out of the tent with the others.

CHAPTER 5.

He Cometh Not!

TOM MERRY glanced round as they came out; he did not want to meet Knox. He caught sight of the prefect and Sefton in the crowd, and drew his companions away round the tent.

"We'll keep out of Knox's sight," he remarked. "He'll have time to cool down by the time we get to St. Jim's, and he may realise by then that the least said soonest mended."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Better lie low for ten minutes or so," said Fatty Wynn. "No good standing round here, though. I know a comfy place."

"Where's that?"

"The tuckshop in the village."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it is a comfy place, ain't it?" demanded Fatty Wynn. "We can sit down there for a bit, and have some jam-tarts. Mother Murphy's jam-tarts are ripping! I'm hungry, too! I've only had eight sandwiches!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Tom Merry. "The tuckshop will do. We'll wait there till it's time to meet Mr. Harrison's train, and if we go back to St. Jim's with the new master, I dare say we shall get in without any questions being asked."

"Good!"

And the juniors adjourned to Mother Murphy's little tuckshop in the old High Street of Rylcombe.

There Fatty Wynn immediately proceeded to eat jam-tarts and continued with cake and doughnuts, and would probably not have concluded at all if he had not been forcibly interrupted at last by Figgins.

"Time to get to the station!" Figgins exclaimed.

"Wait a minute!"

"Oh, come on!"

"I think I ought to have some of the cream puffs. They're jolly good, ain't they, Mrs. Murphy?"

"Very good indeed, Master Wynn. Fresh this afternoon." said the good dame.

"You see, Figgy—"

"Well, you can have one, then."

"Lot of good in one!" spluttered Fatty Wynn, eating the

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cream-puff at the same time. "Gimme six, Mrs. Murphy!"

"Yes, Master Wynn."
 "You can keep them, Mrs. Murphy, and put them down to Fatty's account," said Figgins, inserting his finger in Fatty Wynn's collar and dragging him towards the door.

"Ow! Yow! Hold on, Figgy!"
 "I'm holding on!" grinned Figgins.
 "Ow! I mean leggo! I haven't paid yet!"

"Pay up, then!"
 "I may as well eat the cream-puffs while I'm paying!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins took out his watch.
 "I'll give you five seconds," he said.
 "Oh, hang it all, Figgy—"

"One second gone!"
 "Well, you pay then," gasped Fatty Wynn, bolting the cream-puffs, I haven't time!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins laughed, and paid, and Fatty Wynn bolted cream-puffs at express speed. But quick as he was, five cream-puffs did not go in five seconds. Two were left when Figgins and Kerr seized him by the shoulders and rushed him towards the door.

But Fatty Wynn took a cream-puff in either hand, and marched off in triumph with them. He finished them in the street.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus remarked. "I weally believe that Wynn has the digestion of an ostrich!"

Fatty Wynn sniffed.
 "Oh, I can eat!" he said. "I've got a healthy appetite! I'm not one of yo'r lanky, long-legged, skinny—"

"Eh?" said Figgins.
 "I mean, I'm not one of your silly jays with an eye-glass—"

"Weally, Wynn—"
 "No, you're more like an old Oxford ox than anything else!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Come on, we shall miss the train, and the master into the bargain!"

"Yaas, wathah! Wun like anythin', deah boys!"
 And the juniors hurried to the station.
 They reached the railway station, and learned to their satisfaction that the train was not in yet.

Trumble, the porter, accepted a munificent tip of a shilling, and they marched upon the platform to wait for the train.

"Jollay lucky a new mastah comin' to-day!" Arthur Augustus remarked. "We shall be able to walk into the coll with him, and stiff at the pweffects! They can't ask any beastlay questions when we come in with a mastah!"

"Rather not!"
 "Here comes the train!"
 "Hats off at once, when we see him, and your best bow and Sunday smile," said Tom Merry. "We must show him what good and dutiful chaps we are."

The train came steaming in.
 It stopped in the station, and several carriage doors opened, and the passengers alighted on the platform.

The juniors looked them over carefully, and scanned them, but there was no one among the half-dozen passengers who alighted who could by any possibility be taken for a new master bound for St. Jim's.

There were three farmers from Wayland, and a lad with a basket and a pretty girl and an old lady.

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "If he's in that lot, he's come in disguise, that's all."

Herries gave a snort.
 "He's missed the train, that's what it is, and we've had all our trouble for nothing!" he exclaimed.

"Careless ass!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"

"He may have come by an earlier train," Figgins suggested. "I didn't know this was the train for certain; but I heard what time he was expected at St. Jim's, and I took it for granted—"

"You should never take anythin' for gwanted, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, with an air of superior wisdom that made Figgins snort.

"Ass!" said Figgins.
 "Weally, Figgay—"

"Well, he isn't here, and our little scheme is knocked on the head," said Tom Merry ruefully. "We'll ask Trumble if he's come; Trumble will know."

But Trumble, the porter, could tell nothing when they inquired. He had not seen anybody alight at Rylcombe Station who looked like a new master for St. Jim's, and he knew for a fact that the station hack had not been engaged to drive to the school.

"Looks as if the blessed duffer isn't coming to-day!" Kerr growled.

"I suppose we'd better get back," said Monty Lowther.

"No good sticking here. Bless the man; what a bother these masters are!"

"Yaas, I-agreee with you there!"
 "Let's get off; we shall get a wigg'in' when we get in. But after all, the show in the tent was worth it."

And the juniors walked back to the school.
 The dusk was thickening in the old quad when they arrived there. Taggles, the school porter, gave them a very significant look as he admitted them.

"You're booked for it, young gentlemen!" he said.
 "You have got to go and report yourselves to your 'Ouse-master."

"Oh, all serene!" said Tom Merry. "As a matter of fact, Taggy, we've been looking for the new master at the station; we took a fatherly interest in him."

Taggles grinned.
 "That won't wash, Master Merry."
 "Eh? What do you mean?"

"It's very peculiar that you ain't seen 'im," said Taggles.
 "That's hall! Ho, ho, ho!"
 "He hasn't come?"

"He's come all right!"
 "What?" shouted Tom Merry. "Mr. Harrison has come?"

"He have, Master Merry, and he's been 'ere some time

SOME JOB!



Tommy (to sailor): "Please, sir, are you going down to-day?"

Sailor: "Yes, sonny."
 Tommy (brightening up): "Well, please will you look for my toy boat which sank yesterday?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Paul Whitsun-Jones, Bengoe School, Hertford.

now. You must 'ave been lookin' the hother way when he came at the station. Ho, ho, ho!"

"He must have come over from Wayland, then," said Blake. "He certainly didn't come to Rylcombe Station."

Taggles grinned with evident disbelief.
 The juniors, looking and feeling very much surprised, walked on. They separated to go to their own Houses—there to receive lines for missing calling-over.

CHAPTER 6.

A Startling Surprise!

"I WEGARD this as remarkable!"
 Arthur Augustus made that remark.

The chums of the School House, having seen Mr. Railton and received a hundred lines each for missing calling-over, had gone to the Common-room. They were all in a very puzzled frame of mind.

Taggles had told them that the master of the Fourth—the substitute who was to take Mr. Lathom's place for some weeks had arrived.

The school porter had evidently been telling the truth. But how had Mr. Harrison, the new master, arrived at St. Jim's?

He could not have come by way of Rylcombe Station certainly. Coming by railway from London, he would have to change at Wayland. He might have taken a vehicle at Wayland, and finished the journey by road, but that was a most unusual proceeding. It was very curious indeed.

"It is remarkable," said Tom Merry. "I don't see it at all. The chap ought to have come to Rylcombe Station."

"And saved us a hundred lines each," grinned Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard it as wotten of him!"
 "I wonder if any of the fellows have seen him?" said Manners. "Snipe, have you seen the new master yet?"

Snipe shook his head.
 "I've been in only ten minutes," he replied. "I've got fifty lines."

"Oh, we've all got lines!" said Tom Merry.
 "I've lost my half-crown on that blessed Chicken!" said Snipe savagely. "Rotten fight he put up, didn't he?"

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the cad of the Fourth.
 "I wegard you as a wank wottah!" he said. "Serve you wight for losin' your money! Bettin' is caddish!"

"Oh, rats!"
 "If you say wats to me, Snipe—"

Snipe put his hands in his pockets and strolled away, whistling. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked after him very expressively. He was in doubt whether to go for Snipe or not. But Digby of the Fourth came up at that moment.

"Seen the new master?" he asked.

"No," said Blake. "Have you?"

"Yes."

"What's he like?"

"Looks decent enough—athletic-looking chap," said Digby. "Rather a change after old Lathom. Looks all right!"

"How did he get here?" asked Tom Merry.

Digby started.

"Came by train, I suppose," he replied. "How should he get here?"

"We waited for him at Rylcombe Station, and he didn't turn up."

"That's odd," said Digby. "Come to think of it, I don't know what train he would come by. He was too early for the last from Wayland."

"How long has he been here?"

"About half an hour."

"Did he come in a cab?"

"No; he walked in, I remember."

"Bai Jove! Then he must have walked from Wayland."

"Must be a good walker, to take that on for nothing," said Tom Merry. "What about his luggage? I suppose he has some?"

"I believe it was delivered from the railway earlier," said Digby.

"H'm! Well, I suppose he's something in the pedestrian line, and he preferred to send on his traps and walk from Wayland Junction," Tom Merry remarked. "It's rotten, of course, but he couldn't know that anybody was waiting for him in Rylcombe."

"No. It's no good feeling ratty about it."

"Certainly not, deah boy. I wequest you all to tweek the new mastah with pwopah wespsect, so long as he plays the game."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Seen your new Form-master, you kids?" asked Harry Noble of the Shell, coming up, with a peculiar grin on his face.

"No, Kangaroo, not yet."

"I fancy he's had some sort of an accident coming," said Kangaroo. "I saw him as he went into the Head's study."

"An accident!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "That might account for his not turning up at Rylcombe Station. But Trumble would have told us if there had been any accident on the line."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, he looked as if he's been in the wars," said Kangaroo. "He's got a lump on his chin, and a swelling on his nose."

"Phew! That looks like a fight."

"I suppose he hasn't been fighting with the porters or the cabman," grinned the Cornstalk. "But it looks jolly like it."

"I'm getting quite keen to see him," said Monty Lowther. "I dare say he will introduce himself to you kids before bed-time."

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as a kid, Lowthah."

"Oh, you'll see him!" said Clifton Dane of the Shell. "I hear that he's going to tuck the Fourth in to-night, instead of Kildare."

"I wefuse to have my goin' to bed chawactewised as tuckin' in, you ass!"

"Then I shall be around to see him," said Tom Merry.

"I guess I want to see him, too," remarked Jerrold Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth. "I saw him when he came in, and—"

"And what?"

"I thought I'd seen him before."

There was an eager circle round Lumley-Lumley at once. The new master, and the peculiar circumstances of his arrival, had aroused general interest.

Lumley-Lumley was wearing a very thoughtful and somewhat puzzled expression. The sight of the new Fourth Form master had evidently surprised him.

"Where have you seen him?" asked Tom Merry.

Lumley-Lumley did not reply.

"At another school?" asked Blake.

"Oh, no!"

"Where, then?"

"I guess I hardly like to say," said Lumley-Lumley slowly. "You fellows know I've been in some places where—well, to put it plainly, where fellows of my age don't usually go."

There was a buzz of deep interest. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had been called the Outsider of St. Jim's, and he had merited that title—he had certainly, at one time, been the rankest of rank outsiders. And he had had many experiences that seldom fell to the lot of a lad of fifteen.

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Young as he was, Lumley-Lumley had seen many countries and many strange places, and the juniors of the School House knew that he could have told many a wild tale if he had chosen.

"Explain!" said a dozen voices. "Buck up! Where have you seen him?"

"Well, it was in the National Sporting Club, in London," he said.

"My hat!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Nothing in that," said Tom Merry. "Everybody goes there—though a kid of your age might as well keep away."

"I went with my father when he was in London," said Lumley-Lumley.

"And you saw Mr. Harrison there?"

"No; I saw him—"

The Outsider hesitated.

"You just said you saw him there," said Kangaroo.

"Yes; but not among the spectators."

"Where, then?"

"In the ring!"

"What!"

"Boxing," said Lumley-Lumley—"unless I'm mistaken! I may be—in fact, I must be! I guess it's only a resemblance!"

"Bai Jove!"

The juniors stared at Lumley-Lumley in blank amazement.

In the midst of the general silence an athletic figure appeared at the door of the Common-room, and a pleasant voice addressed the juniors.

"Bed-time, my lads!"

The juniors swung round and looked at the newcomer.

Tom Merry uttered a cry of amazement.

It was the new master of the Fourth—and the new master of the Fourth was the man they had seen fight the Rylcombe Chicken!

CHAPTER 7.

The Master of the Fourth!

THERE was no doubt about it.

It was the same man!

The handsome, clear-cut features, the athletic figure, the steady eyes—all were the same. Even the mark on the chin was the same, and the juniors remembered the terrible upper-cut that had caused it. Mr. Harrison's chin must be still aching.

There was a pleasant smile on Mr. Harrison's face.

It was clear that he did not recognise anybody present, and that he had no idea that any of the juniors had been present in the tent when he was slogging the Rylcombe Chicken.

In the crowded audience, they had been lost among the great throng, and, naturally, he had not noticed any of them.

But they had seen him clearly in the light, and they knew every line of his face, and they would have recognised him anywhere.

Tom Merry heard a deep hiss of breath from Snipe. The cad of the Fourth had recognised "Nemo," too.

Tom Merry's brain was in a whirl.

The gentleman boxer of the showman's tent, and the new Fourth Form master of St. Jim's were one and the same.

It was amazing!

Now it could be understood why Mr. Harrison had not turned up at Rylcombe Station at the time the juniors had expected him.

He had certainly come down to Wayland early in the day, had gone to the boxing match, and after that he had walked to the school.

He had said nothing about the matter, and he did not expect anybody to be aware of it. That he had mentioned it to the Head was incredible. Dr. Holmes was not likely to allow a boxer—professional or amateur—to enter St. Jim's in the capacity of master. It was not to be supposed for a moment.

The juniors stared blankly at him. Those who had been in the boxing tent knew him at once; to the others he was simply the new master of the Fourth.

Mr. Harrison seemed a little surprised at the deep interest his arrival excited; but he doubtless attributed it to the fact that he was a new Form-master, and that the fellows were anxious to know what he was like.

He came into the Common-room, the pleasant smile still on his handsome face.

"Some of you know me already," he said. "I am the new master of the Fourth Form. I have taken the opportunity of introducing myself. We shall meet in the Form-room to-morrow, and I hope we shall pull together very well."

"Bai Jove!"

"Great Scott!"
 "It's the very man!" murmured Jack Blake.
 "I guess I was right, after all!" muttered Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "That's the man I saw in the ring at the National Sporting Club."
 "It is bed-time now," said Mr. Harrison pleasantly.
 "The Fourth will kindly go to their dormitory."
 "Yes, sir."
 "Oh, yaas, wathah!"
 And the Fourth Form went up to bed.
 In the dormitory Jack Blake & Co. stared at one another as they began to undress.
 "Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus said, in a low tone. "Bai Jove, you know, it's the vevvy man!"
 "Yes, rather!" said Herries.
 "It's amazing, deah boys!"
 "Amazing ain't the word for it!" said Jack Blake.
 "It's simply staggering! But—mum's the word!"

"Dear me!" said Blake, with a yawn. "Snipe knows it, so there's no more to be said about the matter."
 "Do you mean to say that you don't recognise the man?" Snipe exclaimed.
 "I don't mean to say anything."
 "Wathah not. It's no bizney of ours, deah boy, nor of yours, eithah. Bettah attend to your own affairs, you know."
 Snipe sneered.
 "That means that you do recognise him," he said.
 "Besides, I jolly well know you do. So does Mellish, and he's ready to back me up."
 "Back you up!" repeated Blake in astonishment.
 "Yes. Suppose we thought it our duty to acquaint the Head with what we know, Mellish would bear witness."
 "You're not going to do that, you cad?"
 "I might consider it my duty," said Snipe loftily. "It's jolly certain that the Head knows nothing about it yet. He



It was obvious to Blake and D'Arcy that the two toughs in front of them were out for robbery. "Let's get back to Wayland," said Blake. "Yaas," said Gussy; "but—look!" Behind the juniors two other rough-looking fellows had stepped out into the road. They were trapped!

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "Not a word to a soul," said Jack Blake. "The chap may be a boxer as well as a schoolmaster, but it's no bisney of ours. It's his own bisney, and we've no right to talk about him. We saw him by chance. Mum's the word. And I know Tom Merry will say the same."
 "I quite agree with you, deah boys."
 Snipe strolled over to them, with a very disagreeable grin on his face. The juniors stopped talking at once.
 "Well?" said Snipe, in an interrogative sort of way.
 "Well?" said Blake.
 "What do you think now?"
 "Oh, I think it's time we turned in, unless we want to go to bed in the dark."
 "I mean about Harrison."
 "Harrison!" said Blake vaguely.
 "Yes," said Snipe, with a spiteful look. "Don't think you can pass it off that way—you can't. You know you know him."
 "Naturally. He's introduced himself to us in the Common-room."
 "I don't mean that. You can recognise him. He's the man who fought the Rylcombe Chicken in the tent."
 "Do you think so?"
 "I know it."

wouldn't have a master at St. Jim's who'd given a pugilistic exhibition in a boxing booth, I take it."
 The chums were silent. They had agreed among themselves that "mum" was the word; but they had not counted upon Snipe and Mellish.
 "What do you think about it?" Snipe demanded.
 "I think you're a worm!"
 "Thanks. Anything else?"
 "Yes. A rotter!"
 "Not in bed yet?" said a deep and pleasant voice at the door.
 Mr. Harrison looked in.
 Conversation ceased in the Fourth Form dormitory in the School House, and the juniors tumbled into bed. Mr. Harrison bade the boys a cheery good-night, and put out the lights, and the door closed behind him.
 But the chums of the Fourth did not immediately go to sleep. Mr. Harrison, the new master of the Fourth Form, had given them a great deal of food for thought.
 What they were going to do, themselves, they knew; but what Snipe and Mellish might do they could not know, and they felt that there was something probably very unpleasant in store for Mr. Harrison.
 And they already liked their new Form-master. If he

was keeping a secret from the Head, no doubt he was to blame. But what they had seen of their new Form-master, the juniors were inclined to like him very much, and they felt concerned about him.

CHAPTER 8.

A Caning for a Cad!

"OH!" It was Figgins of the Fourth who uttered that exclamation in the class-room on the following morning as the Form-master entered.

"O-ho!" said Figgins.

The New House juniors had not seen the new Form-master overnight. That portion of the Form that belonged to the New House had had to wait till morning for the pleasure of making the acquaintance of their new Form-master. Mr. Harrison boarded in the School House, in Mr. Lathom's old rooms.

Mr. Harrison was, therefore, a surprise to the New House members of the Fourth when he entered the Form-room the following morning.

Of all the New House fellows, only Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn had seen him before; but Figgins & Co. knew him at once.

There was no mistaking the handsome, clear-cut face, the steady eyes, the athletic figure; and the mark on the chin was a sufficient clue, in any case.

Figgins half-rose to his feet in his amazement at seeing Nemo, the boxer, walk calmly into the Form-room at St. Jim's, with a master's cap and gown on.

Mr. Harrison looked at him.

Figgins stared back in blank amazement. Kerr dragged his long-legged chum back into his seat. Kerr had recognised Mr. Harrison instantly, but he had realised in the same instant that it was best to say nothing.

"Good-morning, boys!" said Mr. Harrison pleasantly.

"Good-morning, sir!"

"It's Nemo!" muttered Figgins.

"Yes. Dry up!" said Kerr.

"The boxing chap!"

"Hush!"

Figgins subsided into silence, still very much astonished. Those of the juniors who knew that Mr. Harrison had figured in a boxing tent as a pugilist, waited, with some keenness, to see how he would shape as a Form-master.

They found that Mr. Harrison's scholastic attainments were fully equal to his pugilistic skill.

He was quite up to his work, and a great deal sharper than old Mr. Lathom had been, and the Fourth Form realised that under their new master they would have to "buck up."

More than once Mellish was called to account for his habitual slovenliness, and each time Mellish's eyes glittered dangerously.

It seemed to Mellish that, knowing a secret as he did about the Form-master, he ought to be allowed to do as he liked, and that it was like Mr. Harrison's cheek to haul him over the coals.

It was upon the tip of his tongue to say so more than once; but a glance at the firm, steady face of the Form-master was enough to stop him.

Mr. Harrison did not look like a man who could be lightly argued with.

Mellish was the richer by fifty lines when morning classes were dismissed, and he had a warning that he had a caning to look for unless he mended his ways. He came out of the Form-room in a state of simmering fury.

"I'm jolly well not going to stand this, Snipe!" he muttered to his companion, as he stood biting his lips angrily in the Form-room passage.

Snipe nodded.

"Nor I!" he said. "I was stopped three times in my blessed construing, and I was doing it all right—quite as well as I did it for Lathom, anyway!"

"He's a rotter! He says there's going to be no slacking. I know jolly well that I'm not going to fag myself mugging up rotten Latin!"

"Rather not!"

"I'll jolly well tell him so, too!"

"You wouldn't have the nerve!" said Snipe coolly. "But look here—come with me, and we'll jaw him together!"

Mellish gritted his teeth.

"I'm game if you are!" he said.

"Well, I am!"

Snipe had seen Mr. Harrison go into his study—Mr. Lathom's old study—and he led the way there. Several juniors watched them go. The Shell had just come out, and the Terrible Three had paused in the passage to speak

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to Blake and Figgins. Tom Merry watched Snipe with an uneasy expression.

"What's that cad's little game, Blake?" he asked.

Blake shook his head.

"I don't know—unless he's going to tell Harrison we know him!"

"He may get licked."

"I hope he will!" said Blake, very sincerely.

Snipe knocked at Mr. Harrison's door, and opened it without being invited to enter. The Form-master looked round quickly.

He had taken off his cap and gown and his coat, and was in his shirtsleeves, punching a ball, which was rigged up near the window.

Evidently the new master of the Fourth believed in keeping himself fit. A little exercise of that sort before an open window was very refreshing after the morning's confinement in the class-room.

He looked sharply at Mellish and Snipe.

"Well," he asked, "what do you want?"

Mellish was dumb. He had very little nerve, and what little he had deserted him as soon as he found the steady eyes of the new master upon him. Snipe was made of sterner stuff, but even he felt his courage waning as the steady glance turned on him. He felt somehow very small and mean.

"We want to speak to you, sir," said Snipe.

"Very well; you may do so."

"Mellish has got fifty lines, sir—"

"Well?"

"And I've got twenty-five—"

"Yes?"

"We don't want to do them, sir."

Mr. Harrison stared at them blankly.

"I dare say that is very probable!" he exclaimed. "I have never heard of schoolboys who did want to do their lines. I did not expect you to be enthusiastic on the subject. You may go. I shall expect the lines after tea."

"If you please, sir—"

"Well?"

"We don't want to do them, and we're not going to do the lines, sir."

Mr. Harrison stared.

"What?" he thundered.

"I—I mean we—we shan't!" stammered Snipe.

Mr. Harrison looked at him fixedly for a moment, and then picked up a cane from the table. Mellish sidled towards the door.

"Stop!" said Mr. Harrison.

Mellish paused.

"Your name is Snipe, I think?" said Mr. Harrison, looking at the cad of the Fourth.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Hold out your hand, Snipe. I cannot imagine how you came to think that you may address a Form-master in this manner, but I think I shall very soon eradicate your insolence!"

"I—"

"Hold out your hand!"

Snipe put his hand behind him.

"Boy! Are you insane?" exclaimed Mr. Harrison.

"I'm not going to be caned!"

"And I won't, either!" said Mellish, with shivering defiance.

Mr. Harrison made a step forward and grasped Snipe's collar with his left hand. The cad of the Fourth struggled, but he was like a baby in that athletic grip.

"Oh!" he roared. "Leggo! Look here, I know who you are! I know—Oh, oh, oh!"

Lash, lash, lash!

The cane rose and fell rapidly. Snipe had refused to take it across his hand, but he took it all the same, and it hurt more. He roared and struggled in the grip of the new Form-master.

"Ow! Yow! Ow!"

Mellish stood looking on with trembling lips. He felt that his turn was coming, and he had no word to say.

What, after all, availed his knowledge of the Form-master's secret now? He might tell the Head, but there was the caning for him, all the same. Mellish's flesh was creeping in anticipation of the caning.

Half a dozen severe lashes round Snipe's body reduced him to a state of shrieks. All his defiance was gone now.

Mr. Harrison released him.

"Will you hold out your hand now?" he asked.

"Ye-es!" stammered Snipe.

"Very well; it is sufficient for you to be obedient. I shall not cane you again," said the master of the Fourth. "Leave my study!"

And Snipe went without a word. Mr. Harrison turned to Mellish, who was shaking in his shoes.

"I—I beg your pardon, sir!" stammered Mellish, through his dry lips. "I—I'm sorry! It was all Snipe's fault! He made me come here, and—and—"

Mr. Harrison laid down the cane and pointed to the door.
 "You may go," he said. "Do not let this insolence be repeated, that is all!"
 "Th-thank you, sir!"
 And Mellish followed Snipe. Mr. Harrison, left alone in his study, went on punching the ball serenely.

CHAPTER 9.
 The Footpads!

"LOOK out!"
 "Bai Jove!"
 It was growing dusk in the lanes, and the big trees in the wood cast deep shadows over the dusty road.

Jack Blake and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were coming down the lane towards the school. It was Blake who uttered the exclamation of warning.

From the shadow of the wood that bordered Ryleombe Lane two men had suddenly appeared.

They were both powerful fellows, roughly dressed—one with a cap and the other with a battered bowler on the back of his head. That they were tramps, who might become footpads whenever opportunity coincided with necessity, was evident at a glance. And the way they stood in the lane made the two juniors naturally uneasy.

The two men had jumped into the road, and now they stood there, watching the juniors. Blake and D'Arcy paused.

It was only too clear that the roughs were waiting for them to come up, and their intentions after that could be guessed.

"It means trouble, Gussy."
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 The man in the cap grinned at the other one, and they moved a little farther out into the road. The St. Jim's juniors could not pass them without being stopped, if the roughs chose to stop them. Blake had heard of several robberies in the neighbourhood of late, attributed to a gang of tramps who had made the vicinity their headquarters, and he had no doubt that he had now fallen in with a couple of members of the gang.

"No good stopping here, Gussy."
 "Wathah not!"
 "Do you think you could tackle one of them?"
 D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the roughs. They were powerful fellows, and even Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, would have found it far from easy to deal with one of them.

"Bai Jove, Blake, it will be a big ordah, you know," said D'Arcy. "I wathah think I shall get the worst of it. It's vevy fortunate that I haven't my gold tickah with me. Luckily it's gone to be mended, and I have bowwowed Dig's watch."
 "Nice for Dig!"
 "Yaas, it's wathah wotten for Dig, but mattahs might be worse. I might have my own watch with me. I feah we are goin' to be wobbed."
 "Let's get back to Wayland," said Blake, halting. "We can dodge those villains!"
 "Yaas; but—look!"

Behind the juniors, cutting them off from the village, two other rough-looking fellows had stepped out into the road. Blake changed colour a little.

There was no doubt that the gang of footpads were out for robbery that evening, and that they had chosen the Rylcombe road as the scene of their operations.

Blake set his teeth.
 "We'll try to get past, Gussy."
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Come on, then!"

The two juniors dashed on towards the school. The roughs in their path exchanged a grin, and stood in the middle of the road to stop them. With a thick wood on one side and a ditch on the other the juniors had not a chance of leaving the road.

The man in the cap raised his hand.
 "Stop!" he said.
 "Rats!"

The juniors dashed on, and in a moment more the two roughs had grappled with them and brought them to a stop.

"Hold the young fool, Ginger!" said the man in the cap. Ginger grinned.
 "I've got him, Nobbler!"
 "Keep still, you young idiot!" growled Nobbler, grasping D'Arcy by the collar. "Can't you see you're caught?"
 "You uttah wascal—"
 "Quiet!"

"I wefuse to be quiet! I wegard you as an uttah wastah, and I insist upon bein' immediately released!" exclaimed

(Continued on next page.)



Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). Half-a-crown is awarded to the sender of every joke that appears in this column.

A K.O.-LD.!

Boxer: "Have I done him any damage?"
 Disgusted Second: "No; but keep on swinging your arms and the draught might give him a cold!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss J. Stanford, 8, Ryecroft Avenue, Penn, Wolverhampton.

SALTY.

Boy: "Your yarns have a strong flavour of the sea about them, Mr. Boatman."
 Boatman: "Do you think so, sonny?"
 Boy: "Yes, 'cos you can't help taking them with a bit of salt!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to Colin Heidke, Euramo, via Tully, North Queensland, Australia.

NOTHING LIKE LEATHER.

Tramp: "Could you give me another piece of steak like you gave me yesterday?"
 Lady: "I am glad you liked it."
 Tramp: "It's not that, mum, but my other boot needs a sole!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to Denis Bayfield, 9, Godwin Road, West Hove, Sussex.

QUITE ANOTHER MATTER.

Thin Man: "Hallo! Reduced to walking?"
 Stout Man: "No! Walking to reduce!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to Alex Burke, Birdwood Avenue, Springwood, Blue Mountains, N.S.W., Australia.

A CUSHY JOB.

Kind Lady: "So you want work, eh? What can you do?"
 Lazy Tramp: "Well, ma'am, give me an easy chair and a copy of the GEM, and I'll see your kitchen fire doesn't go out!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Singleton, 19b, Hill Rise, Richmond, Surrey.

FORCE OF HABIT.

Corporal: "That new recruit used to be a clerk."
 Sergeant: "How do you know?"
 Corporal: "Every time he stands at ease he tries to put his rifle behind his ear!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. J. Cass, 1, Ceres Road, Plumstead, London, S.E.18.

AWAITING THE WAITER.

Diner: "Are you the waiter who took my order?"
 Waiter: "Yes, sir."
 Diner: "You're looking well. Had a good holiday?"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to Cadet R. Grey, s.s. Konistan, Strick & Ellerman Line, Ltd., 117-121, Leadenhall Street, London, E.C.3.

LIVELY TIMES.

The park orator was warming to his subject. "Yes, my friends," he said, "we live in a great era. This age of steel—"
 "You're right!" excitedly exclaimed a listener. "Somebody's taken my watch!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to Bernard Cook, 35, Ringmer Road, North Moulsoomb, Brighton.

the swell of St. Jim's, struggling in vain to remove the iron grasp from his collar.

Blake grunted in the grip of the man Ginger. He was done, and he knew it, and he stopped resisting.

"Chuck it, Gussy!" he exclaimed. "It's no good!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"They're too many for us. Chuck it!"

"I decline to be wobbled!"

The other two men had now come up. There was the sound of a whistle in the wood, and another and another ruffian came out. There were now six of them round the two juniors, and even D'Arcy realised that it was useless to struggle. He surrendered with dignity.

"Will you kindly remove your hand from my collah?" he said. "I will not wesit furthah, and I do not want you to wumple my jacket. I am afwaid that you have soiled my collah fwithgfully alweady."

Nobbler chuckled.

"I reckon I'll 'old you, though," he said. "What have you got about you?"

"Very little."

"Hand it out—money, watch, and things—quick!"

"I am vevy pleased to say that I have hardly any money!" said the swell of St. Jim's. "I certainly have not more than two pounds!"

Nobbler grinned. Two pounds in cash was a bigger haul than he had expected to make from a schoolboy.

"Hand it over," he said. "Clear that kid out, Ginger. We don't want to hang up here all night!"

"Right-ho, Nobbler!"

D'Arcy unwillingly handed over his money. His purse being a valuable one, Nobbler took possession of that also. Then he reached for the watch and chain, but D'Arcy laid a restraining hand on his wrist.

"Pway don't take my watch," he said. "You see, it isn't weally my watch—it's Dig's. He lent it to me while mine was gone to be regulated."

"And it over!"

"You see, it's Dig's—"

The fact that the watch was Dig's did not apparently influence Mr. Nobbler in the least. He snatched the watch and chain and stowed them into his pocket.

"Anythin' else?" he demanded.

"I have nothin' else, and I wegard you as a beast—"

"Lemme go through your pockets!"

Nobbler satisfied himself that there was nothing else, but he jerked D'Arcy's eyeglass away and put it in his pocket after the watch. The swell of St. Jim's uttered an indignant exclamation:

"You uttah wottah! Give me my monacle!"

"It may be worth sumthin'," Nobbler remarked, with a grin. "If it doesn't sell I'll send it back to you per registered post—I don't think!"

And the ruffians chuckled in chorus.

"Cleaned that whelp out?" asked Nobbler.

"Yes, pretty clear."

"What have you got?"

"Five bob and a watch and a penknife."

"And you'll get six months, too!" said Blake cheerfully.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I reckon we'll be moving," said Nobbler. He knocked D'Arcy's silk hat off and pitched it to the ground. "Tread on that, Weasel!"

"Bai Jove! My hat!"

Crunch!

"You uttah wottahs!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Haw, haw haw!"

"I think I've seen you before," said Blake, looking at the man called the Weasel. "You're the rotter who came down here to see Joe Frayne and get money out of him. I hope I shall meet you again, in the daylight, by yourself."

"Get away," said Nobbler. "Thank your lucky stars we don't strip you to the skins."

"Weally—"

"Come on, Gussy!"

"I insist upon telling this uttah scoundwel my opinion of him before I go—"

"Ass!"

Blake seized Arthur Augustus by the arm and dragged him away. They left the footpads chuckling behind them as they tramped off disconsolately in the dusk.

CHAPTER 10.

Knox Puts His Foot in It!

TAGGLES, the porter, grinned sourly at the juniors as he admitted them. Both of them were looking very flustered, and D'Arcy was hatless.

"You're to go in and report yourselves to the 'Ead," said Taggles. "Them was the horders from Mr. Railton, who is hout. Mr. Railton he says to me, says he,

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'I've 'ad enough of these goings hon of them young rips,' he says."

Blake burst into a chuckle.

"Yes, I think I can imagine Mr. Railton saying that," he remarked.

"Bai Jove!"

"Send them into the 'Ead's study, Taggles," says Mr. Railton," says he," went on the school porter. "'They'll get a tannin' this time," he says, 'and serve them jolly well right,' he says, 'for hof all the young rips them two is the worst,' he says."

"Taggles, you are an untwuthful wottah," said D'Arcy severely. "I wegard you as a beast, Taggles. It is shockin' to hear you woll out untwuths in this way."

"I says to Mr. Railton, I says—"

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

And, leaving Taggles snorting, the two juniors walked on to the School House. Kildare, the captain of the school, met them in the doorway.

"Missed calling-oyer again!" he exclaimed.

"Yes; it really wasn't our fault—"

"It never is!" said the St. Jim's captain dryly. "But you can explain that to the Head. You are to go to his study at once."

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Buzz off!"

The two juniors went rather disconsolately to the Head's study. Certainly they had a good excuse for being late, having been delayed in the lane by the footpads; but the unfortunate part of the business was that they seldom were without a good excuse. And good excuses, as Blake dolefully remarked, were apt to pall upon the taste after a long time.

"But we weally couldn't help it this time, could we?" D'Arcy remarked, as they paused outside the Head's door.

"We never can, you know."

"Yaas, wathah; that's wathah unfortunate. But this time—"

"Well, come in, anyway."

Blake knocked.

"Come in!" said the deep voice of the Head.

The juniors entered the study. Dr. Holmes glanced at them with a severe look. The Head was looking somewhat pale and frail. He had recently been away for his health, but he had a strong sense of duty, and he had returned to his work at St. Jim's at the earliest possible moment—possibly sooner than was judicious. And he was looking somewhat worn and tired.

"You have missed calling-over two evenings running," said the Head. "What does this mean, Blake and D'Arcy?"

"We're awfully sowwy, sir—"

"We went down to the village to see about the new cricket nets, sir," Blake exclaimed. "We left in good time to get home, and we were stopped in the lane."

"Ah! Another quarrel with the Grammar School boys, I suppose?"

"No, sir; we've been robbed."

The Head started.

"Robbed!" he repeated.

"Yes; our money and watches and—"

"And they twod on my toppah, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "I don't mind the money so much, or Dig's watch, but they twod on my toppah out of sheer wantonness, sir."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the Head. "Tell me all about it, Blake."

Blake explained the circumstances of the robbery in the lane. The Head listened, with an anxious brow.

"It is shocking!" he exclaimed. "There were several robberies committed last night on the Wayland road, and a man was robbed on the moor, too, this morning. It is clear that there is a dangerous gang of footpads in the neighbourhood. Until the police have been able to deal with them bounds will have to be very much restricted. In the circumstances, my boys, I cannot, of course, blame you for being late. I shall communicate with the police at once, and I hope your property will be recovered. But I am only too thankful that you have not been injured. Could you identify the ruffians again?"

"I think so, sir. One was called the Weasel—the fellow who came here some time ago, sir. I think I should know most of the others."

"Very good. I have no doubt the inspector from Rylcombe will call to see you in the morning. I shall telephone to the station now. Good-night, my lads!"

"Good-night, sir!"

The juniors left the study.

"Bai Jove! We've got off all wight!" D'Arcy remarked. "Come to think of it, there was weally nothin' to be afwaid of, as we weally weren't to blame."

(Continued on page 14.)

MORE NOTES AND NEWS FROM—



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

HALLO, CHUMS! An old favourite of past GEM yarns makes a welcome reappearance in next Wednesday's wonderful story of Tom Merry & Co., though the circumstances responsible for his reappearance are by no means welcome! The old favourite I refer to is that great sportsman Lord Conway, Gussy's elder brother.

Suspected of a diamond theft, Conway flees from the police and heads for St. Jim's to seek a hiding-place. Convinced that he is innocent, Tom Merry & Co. naturally back him up, though Conway is very secretive about the crime. A place of concealment is found for the wanted man, but the chums of St. Jim's are given many anxious moments when the police come to search the school! What is the mystery of the theft that has made Lord Conway a hunted fugitive? This is a problem that baffles the juniors. You will find the answer to it in next week's thrilling and dramatic yarn:

"THE SECRET OF STUDY SIX!"

This great story is supported by another exciting instalment of our popular serial: "THE SCHOOL FROM 'DOWN UNDER'!"

Eager to discover what crooked business Mr. Rutter, the Australian master, and the impostor Sayers are up to, Handforth and Jerry Dodd become detectives and shadow them. But the St. Frank's boys little know that Rutter is fully aware of what they are doing—with disastrous results to Handy and Jerry!

In the other fascinating features of this next GEM programme you will find much to amuse and interest you again. There is a special final Test match number of "Tom Merry's Weekly," with a thrilling account of the last match between the St. Jim's junior eleven and the team of Australian schoolboys. Each team has won two games and the fifth is the decider. Don't miss it!

PEN PALS.

So popular has this feature of the GEM become, I have been compelled to ensure

PEN PALS COUPON

11-8-34.



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal post your notice to The GEM LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Wilbert D. Roberts, 18, Somerset Lane, Franklin Town, Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies, wants correspondents in the British Empire, U.S.A., Germany, and Spain—specially in-

where off the coast of Trinidad, where three Spanish galleons were sunk by the British in 1796. With those galleons there went to the bottom £40,000 worth of gold. And now an Englishman, who says he has discovered the exact spot, off the Port of Spain, Trinidad, has got permission to go down after it. Jolly good luck to him!

There is more treasure inside the sunken liner Egypt, off the French coast. Some of this has been recovered—about £1,000,000 worth of gold and silver—but there is still a quarter of a million pounds waiting to be fished up. Divers say the liner's strong-room has now been emptied of all treasure, and they believe the remaining £250,000 is in the ship's hold. So they're going to tunnel their way into the hold and look for it. They think that part of the treasure must have slipped into the hold from the strong-room when the Egypt went down. Four years ago the divers first started to hunt for the liner's gold and silver, and now they're on the last lap. Good luck to them, too!

HAVE A BANANA!

Two-and-a-half tons of live elephant sat down in the middle of the road a week or two back and caused one of the strangest traffic-jams that London has ever known. As if Rosie—that is the elephant's name—knew what she was doing, and was determined to do her very worst, she chose as her squatting place a point where four lines of tramways converge. And she wouldn't budge an inch.

Hundreds of vehicles of all sorts—trams, buses, carts, and cars—were held up whilst the police tried frantically to get Rosie moving so that they could untie the nightmare traffic tangle.

Apart from shooting her, or yanking her out of the way with a big crane, it seemed that nothing could be done—until Rosie's trainer had a bright idea.

"Have a banana, Rosie?" he said wheedlingly, and offered her one of the yellow fruits.

"Yep!" said Rosie—or something to that effect, snaffled the banana, heaved herself up, and strolled quietly away.

THE MISSING BULLET.

The Great War that started in 1914 seems as remote to-day, to many fellows, as the Crimean War. Yet amazing links with that awful World War are cropping up still, every day. Recently an old soldier, who served in the Great War, suddenly started coughing—and out of his mouth came a bullet that had entered his neck nineteen years ago!

The wound had healed, but the doctors had never found out what had happened to that bullet. They searched for it in his neck with X-rays. Everything possible was done to locate it. And then, nineteen years after it had hit him, it comes suddenly to light.

It seems incredible—but it is perfectly true.

THE EDITOR.

interested in stamp collecting, gardening, photography, and books.

F. H. Grundy, Estelle, Slade Road, Roughley, Sutton Coldfield, nr. Birmingham, wants to hear from stamp collectors in Canada, U.S.A., Africa, and China; also wishes to hear from H. W. G. Couch, 83, Clare Street, Portland, South Australia.

Douglas J. Wurtele, Apt. 6, 5460, Park Avenue, Montreal, Province Quebec, Canada, wants members for his correspondence and exchange club.

Gerald Thomas, Holyrood, Selborne Road, Claremont, South Africa, wants correspondents in Canada and South America interested in cattle and horses.

(Continued on page 26.)

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THE FIGHTING FORM-MASTER!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Some masters don't stop to ask questions," said Blake sententiously. "The Head is a brick."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He doesn't look any too well, either," said Blake. "You've got to keep on your best behaviour."

"Weally, Blake—"

"There's going to be no more rot, breaking bounds and that sort of thing," said Jack Blake severely. "While the Head is seedy we must play the game, mind!"

"I considah—"

"Oh, so you've come in!" said a very unpleasant voice. It belonged to Knox, the prefect, and he stopped as he met the juniors at the foot of the staircase.

Blake looked at him with a grin. Juniors were supposed to respect the Sixth, especially if they were prefects. But nobody had ever been able to respect Knox. It was really asking too much of anybody.

"Have we come in, Gussy?" asked Blake.

D'Arcy smiled.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy; we've come in!" he said.

"Yes, Knox, we've come in!" said Blake.

The prefect gritted his teeth.

"You don't look as if you've been licked," he said.

"We haven't."

"Wathah not!"

"Then you haven't reported yourselves to the Head."

"Yes, we have, my son."

"I don't believe you!" said Knox savagely. "I know you couldn't miss call-over twice running without being licked."

"Weally, Knox—"

"Come with me!"

The two juniors grinned at one another as Knox signed to them to follow him to the Head's study. The prefect was of a very suspicious nature, and as he had chosen to doubt their word the juniors had no intention whatever of explaining matters to him. If he chose to make an ass of himself it was not their business to stop him.

They marched on solemnly after Knox. The prefect tapped at the door of the Head's study, and was bidden to enter. He walked in, and the juniors followed him. Dr. Holmes looked at the trio in some surprise.

"Blake and D'Arcy have returned, sir," said Knox.

"Yes, I—er—yes," said the Head.

"They have missed calling-over, sir, and as they were ordered to report to you I have brought them here, sir."

"Dear me!" said the Head. "Did you not tell Knox, Blake, that you had already reported yourselves to me?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

The Head looked sharply at Knox.

"Then I fail to see why you should bring them before me a second time, Knox," he said somewhat tartly.

The prefect turned crimson.

He realised that he had put his foot in it this time, and he gave the juniors a further look out of the corner of his eyes.

"I—I did not believe them, sir," he said.

The Head's brow grew very stern.

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No. 26. Vol. 1. (New Series.)

LOOK THROUGH OUR TELEVISOR

P.-C. CRUMP SPEAKING



Wot I says is, nobody ain't gladder than I am when it's August! To see the backs o' the young gents of St. Jim's for a time is the finest rest cure a man could ave!

From beginning to end of each term, it's one long torment to a conscientious officer o' the law! The law was meant to be respected, but precious little respect does it get from you young rips—begging pardon, you young gentlemen—at St. Jim's!

Honly the other day I was patrolling my beat in Rylcombe Lane—well, to be hexact, I 'ad stopped a minute by the old stile, to do up my bootlace. Don't go thinking that I was sitting on it, fast asleep—that would have been neglectin' dooty, and I never neglects me dooty. Not P.-c. Crump! Well, as I was sayin', just as I bent down to tie up my bootlace, young Master D'Arcy—the one in the Third Form, I mean—came up the lane with several of his friends. As soon as he saw me, me not seeing him, as you understand, he outs with a peashooter and lets fly. I don't mind admitting I was hurt—and I saw red!

I gave chase to those young rips—I mean, those young gentlemen—determined that if I laid hands on them they would have finished up in a cell for the night! I was fair mad, as you might say—badly stung, in fact! Of course, I didn't catch them. They had the legs of me—they knew that before they started! All the same, I haven't forgotten the matter, by a long chalk. I'm only waiting my chance to re-open the question—the trouble is, collecting evidence! My only evidence was a stinging pain which remained for some hours, but that's gone now, and in a court of law I haven't a leg to stand on!

Never fear, though—if I lay hands on young Master D'Arcy or any of his friends I'll warm them! There's one comfort—when they're away on holiday, it's safe for a man to stop by the old stile if he feels a bit weary like. I only jest leans against it, you understand. An officer o' the law can't afford to risk getting a peashot on the nose during term-time, you see, and I have to be pretty spy. It's quiet now, though, and I feel sleepy in this hot weather. Good-day to you, young gentlemen. Yaw-aw-aw!

Seen wearing a hideous tie of glaring colour scheme, Gore protested it was his old school tie! For wearing the tie of another school in the St. Jim's quad, Gore was frog's-marched and left "all tied up."

The following fellows are quite certain they could edit "Tom Merry's Weekly" much better than Tom Merry does: Figgins, Blake, Gore, Skimpole, Noble, D'Arcy major, D'Arcy minor, and Buck Finn. (More next week.)

Tom Merry's

SAINTS v. THE SPLENDID HOLIDAY

Wally D'Arcy at the Microphone

Stand by, boys! You're getting this hot from Eastwood House, where my major has invited a team of schoolboy cricketers representing the South of England for a holiday game with the St. Jim's Test Eleven! Saints are captained by Tom Merry as usual, my major Gussy having gracefully stepped down from the captaincy of the "House" team. Kangaroo has come over specially to play for St. Jim's, with Clifton Dane and Glyn. The Southern Eleven, captained by Frank Woollyn, are just coming out of the pavilion.

Their bright green blazers contrast vividly with the red and white of the Saints. Now to business. Winning the spin, Woollyn opens with Bede, a stonewaller. While Woollyn hits freely all round the wicket with effortless strokes, Bede "sits on the splice" and keeps his end up. He need do no more. Saints in holiday mood are not so deadly as usual with the ball, and Woollyn is a class batsman who lifts the sphere through the covers or glides it to the boundary with equal facility! Figures speak—80 up in an hour, 140 up in an hour and a half! 120 for 1—Fatty Wynn having captured Woollyn's leg stump at long last! Woollyn goes with 97 to his credit—jolly hard luck to miss his century!

Now there seems to be hope for the Saints. Steady, fellows! They don't need telling—the fielding is just as keen as at the start, and now it's bringing results. Four batsmen come and go swiftly. Woollyn was the star of the side, and though the tail wags bravely, the Southern Eleven are all out for 175.

Tom Merry takes Gussy in first. Gus isn't a first wicket batsman, but at holiday times risks are sometimes taken! Not such a risk after all, by Jove! Gussy hits out at the first ball, and his eye seems in. A "four"—and another, and another! The South are well served by their bowlers, but Merry and Gussy could play Verity in this mood! Merry—a born "Test" batsman of the future, as Kildare says—instinctively leaves

Flying Squad Report

MID-CHANNEL THRILL

Flying-Squad elated at offer of cruise in Lord Conway's spacious air liner. Conway—skilled pilot—laughingly refused his brother Gussy's offer to take over the controls. Conway and Flying Squad zoomed over coast roads, noting streams of cars heading toward sea. Caravanners and hikers' camps everywhere in evidence. Cruising over English Channel, Chief Air Marshal Merry suddenly spied small steam yacht flying distress signals. Occupants waved sheets and blankets as plane swooped. Lord Conway dropped and circled over yacht. Apparently her wireless was not functioning. Conway at once began sending out S O S signals from his own yacht on yacht's behalf. Signals answered almost immediately by cargo steamer, which sped

the good mercless hundred skipper! greater things I them were four thro By Jove! enjoying great ba in and c Figgins nervous! Oh—I k him, Fig Watch h though he put washes a Figgins! Gus falls 51 to his hundred—man goes bat for 10 "Very li for the fielding h falling li A couple the South. No need and Fatty team a G can do is tea"—ex

SOLUT The en Number 3 order: 8, 7, 4, 3 This leav positions.

to scene enabled s aving t several t photograp wirelless Queen' r Steamsh night in "J.K." I Star Que set off him warmly averting serious si of waves shipping details, F newspaper real thrille in the Pro

Merry's Weekly



Week Ending August 11th, 1934.

THE SOUTH HOLIDAY GAME

the good ones alone and smites the loose ones mercilessly to the ropes! Hurrah—the hundred is up, and Gus is still partnering his skipper! Now they're both hitting with greater freedom. Gus in particular is doing things I never believed possible of him—doing them well, too! See that leg glide! That four through the slips? That smashing six? By Jove, look at Cousin Ethel's face—she's enjoying it! Hallo—Merry's bowled, a great ball, too. Merry has 68. Blake goes in and comes out—not his lucky day. Now Figgins saunters to the wicket. Is Figgynervous? He looks it—unusual for him. Oh—I know. With Cousin Ethel's eye on him, Figgins feels he's got to do or die. Watch him facing up to the first ball as though his life depended on it. Clack! He put something behind that one—it flashes across the turf, there it goes—a four. Figgins lays about him like another Jessop! Gus falls to a great catch by Woollyn, with 51 to his name. Figgyn sends up the second hundred—the score is 292 when the last man goes, and Figgins is left to carry his bat for 104—a brilliant century.

Very little time left as Woollyn opens again for the Southern Eleven. Look, though—fielding has tired Woollyn's men, and they are falling like plums into Fatty Wynn's basket. A couple of "hat tricks" to Fatty's credit—the Southern Eleven, tired, all out for 24. No need for the Saints to bat again—Figgins and Fatty Wynn have brought the House team a gallant victory. Well, the least we can do is give our opponents a real "high tea"—excuse me, I want to be in this, too!

SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE.

The engine which has had a breakdown is Number 6. Move the others in the following order:

- 8, 7, 4, 8, 7, 2, 3, 5, 2, 4, 1, 2, 4, 3, 5, 4, 3.

This leaves the eight engines in the required positions.

to scene. Conway, circling over yacht, enabled steamer to head directly for it, thus saving time. Conway swooped very low several times, and Manners took close-up photographs with his reflex camera. Conway wireless coast station: "Steamship 'Star Queen' now heading towards us." Later: "Steamship 'Star Queen' has now taken yacht in tow. Engines disabled, but all O.K." Lord Conway circled widely as the Star Queen took disabled yacht in tow, then set off himself full stretch for Croydon. Conway warmly congratulated on speedy action, averting what might have developed into a serious situation. Yacht drifting at mercy of waves would have been dangerous to shipping as night fell. While Conway gave details, Flying Squad rushed photographs to newspaper friend of his. Manners and the rest thrilled to see his photographs reproduced in the Press next day!



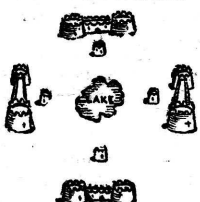
MONTY LOWTHER CALLING

Hallo, everybody! It should be a hot day, if the sun keeps out, which it may do, if the

wind drops, and if the snow holds off. As the witness said regarding the motor accident: "It might have been, probably was, in fact, I should say, perhaps, that it was possibly twenty yards away, definitely." Nothing like making sure, as the ship's captain remarked when his craft grounded on a sunken reef. Now, here's a short story: There was once a motorist who was in such a hurry to get into the next town that he went right into the next world! Overheard in the school tuckshop: "A bottle of ginger-pop, please, Mrs. Taggles." "Certainly, sir. To drink here, or to take away, Master Digby?" "Both!" Interval for refreshments. Query from a reader: "What strikes you first about the modern car?" Usually the metal point of some beastly mascot on the radiator, old chap! As the irate magistrate at the Wayland sessions barked: "Another motor-cyclist before the Bench! These fellows ought to be kept off the roads! What's the charge?" "Riding on the footpath, sir!" responded the constable. We hear some schools are being fitted for sun-ray treatment. That's an improvement. We've been used to more Spartan methods! "Nother query (I never refuse to reply, even if I don't know the answer): "What is a rhinocoephant?" demands this reader. A rhinocoephant is the animal a lion dreams of meeting in a nightmare. One or two news items: An American millionaire has placed an order for a carpet which will be the largest in the world. That'll take some beating! "More cars on the road this August!" says a headline. A "bumper" holiday! Mr. Rateliff was in a seaside cafe, and he didn't like the soup. "What's this?" he demanded. "It's bean soup, sir!" answered the waiter. "I don't care what it's been!" snapped Ratty. "What is now?" Oh, and one about Mrs. Mimms, the matron, when a beggar called. "Don't you know better than to come begging with your hands in your pockets?" she demanded. "I'm beggin' for a pair of braces, m'm!" responded the beggar! See you later, chaps!

CALIBAN'S PUZZLE CORNER

In days of old, four minor chieftains built their four strongholds to north, south, east, and west of a lake. They were overcome in battle by four powerful lords who proceeded to build their four castles directly behind the strongholds of the minor chieftains. The victorious lords then decided to build a wall which would cut off the chieftains from the lake, while allowing the castles free access to it. Try and draw the shortest wall possible, fulfilling these conditions. The wall may be curved or have as many angles as you think necessary.



"And why did you not believe them, Knox?" he exclaimed sharply. Knox bit his lip. He would have been glad to say that the juniors were known to be untruthful; but the Head knew very well that they bore excellent characters, and a falsehood like that would only recoil upon Knox.

"They had not been punished, sir," he stammered at last.

"I had my reasons for not punishing them. Their explanation was quite satisfactory. I am sorry to see, Knox, that you allow yourself to doubt a boy's word lightly. It is the best way to make a liar of a boy. I trust you will be more careful in future."

Knox almost choked. To be lectured like this before the juniors was no more than he deserved; but it was a bitter pill to swallow.

"You may go!" said the Head.

"Ye-es, sir!"

They left the study. In the passage Knox fixed a furious look upon the chums of the Fourth.

"I will make you smart for this," he said, between his teeth.

Blake wagged a warning finger at him. "I trust you will be more careful in future, Knox," he said, imitating the severe tones of the Head.

"Yaas, wathah!" grinned D'Arcy.

Knox almost exploded; but he dared not touch the juniors so near to the Head's door. He ground his teeth and tramped away down the passage, reserving his vengeance for a more opportune occasion. Blake and D'Arcy took very great care not to come too near Knox of the Sixth for the rest of the evening.

CHAPTER 11.

Baffled Inquirers!

THE news of the robbery in Rylcombe Lane caused a great deal of excitement at St. Jim's.

The next morning Blake and Arthur Augustus found themselves centres of interest, and they had to relate their thrilling experiences over and over again.

Arthur Augustus was never tired, as a matter of fact, of describing in tones of burning indignation how his topper had been squelched under the sacrilegious foot of the Weasel. It really seemed as if that would be a topic that would last the swell of St. Jim's for the term of his natural life.

What proper punishment there was for such an outrage it was difficult to say. D'Arcy himself thought that a severe application of the "cat" would suffice. Monty Lowther solemnly suggested something lingering, with boiling oil in it, a suggestion which was received by the juniors with a yell of laughter, and which caused Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to walk off with his nose very high in the air.

There had been more than one outrage of late committed by the gang of footpads who visited the neighbourhood of Rylcombe, and the local police were very busy looking for them. The Head of St. Jim's was very active in the matter, and a notice was posted up outside the police station in Rylcombe offering a reward of twenty pounds for information leading to the arrest of the ruffians who had robbed Blake and D'Arcy.

But during the day there was no news of any arrest having been made.

There was one amusing side to the affair, and that was the misadventure of Knox, the prefect, in taking the two juniors into the Head's study. The juniors chuckled over that very much. But Knox did not chuckle. He was looking for an opportunity of coming down very heavy upon Blake and Arthur

Augustus; and as the two juniors knew it very well they were careful to give him a wide berth as long as they could. But the prefect's opportunity came at last.

Mr. Harrison took the Fourth Form that day as usual; and the Fourth Form found themselves getting on very well with their new master.

Mr. Harrison was certainly much keener than Mr. Lathom had been, and he kept the boys much more on the alert, and there was no chance for slacking; but upon the whole, he was popular in the Form, excepting with Snipe and his set.

Since the complete failure of his first attempt to "buck up" against the Form-master, Snipe had lain very low.

He knew something about the Form-master, and he felt that if it were reported to the Head it would cause trouble for Mr. Harrison.

But he was not sure. It was possible that the Head had been told—it was not likely, but it was possible. And in that case, a report from Snipe would only get its author into trouble.

The cad of the Fourth set to work more cautiously. He started by confiding the story of the fight in the showman's tent to several other fellows in the Form, and it was soon all over the Fourth.

Mellish corroborated Snipe's statement, but both of them were known to be untruthful, and there was a great deal of scepticism on the subject.

But Snipe referred Doubtful Thomases to Blake & Co. During the afternoon, Blake and Herries and Tom Merry and the other fellows who had seen the boxing contest were asked many questions.

Blake's invariable reply to inquirers was: "Find out!" It was not a polite reply, but it had the effect of stopping questioners.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was more courteous, but equally firm. He said that he had nothing to say.

Which only gave confirmation to the statements of Snipe. Yet Snipe was so fond of playing pranks and "pulling the leg" of anyone who trusted to his word, that the fellows for the most part did not know what to believe.

The story was being whispered about the Form-room that afternoon under Mr. Harrison's eyes, and the new master noticed that a great deal of muttering was going on. He rapped out an order for silence, and the juniors ceased to whisper; the Form-master little dreaming what the subject of the whispering had been.

When the Form was dismissed after the last lesson, the Fourth gathered in groups in the passage discussing the matter.

"Faith, and I believe it's only one of Snipe's rotten yarns," said Reilly. "We all know him—he'd say anything!"

"This is true, though," said Snipe.

Reilly gave a sniff of contempt.

"Sure, I've heard you say that before," he said.

"I was there, too!" said Mellish.

"Sure, you're a bigger whopper-merchant than Snipe is, entirely!"

Blake and D'Arcy and Herries were there, and Figgins & Co. and those Shell rotters," said Snipe.

"I'll ask them about it," said Reilly. "We ought to have this out. If our Form-master is a giddy prize-fighter, we ought to know entirely."

"I don't see that it's our bizney," said Pratt of the New House.

"Faith, we might pick up some tips in boxing from him," said Reilly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, it's a good idea!"

"Hallo! Here's Blake!"

Blake, D'Arcy, Herries, and Digby were going out with their bats for practice at the nets. Reilly and his companions rushed up to them in the doorway.

"Hold on, Blake darling!" exclaimed Reilly. "Faith, and we want to ask ye a question."

"Go ahead," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Did you see a glove-fight in Rylcombe yesterday?"

"Yes."

"Was our Form-master one of the boxers?"

"Ask me another."

"Can't you answer, ye spalpeen?"

"No time for jaw—I'm going out to the cricket."

"Look here!" exclaimed Hancock. "We want to know if—"

"Find out, then!"

"I—I—I—"

"Weally, deah boys, you should not be so inquisitive," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, shaking a finger at the excited juniors. "Bettah not inquire, deah boys."

"Rats!"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, you know—"

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"You were there, Herries!" exclaimed Pratt. "You were there, I know. What have you got to say about it?"

"Mind your own bisney, that's all," said Herries.

"Why, you ass—"

"Oh, let's ask Figgins!" said Reilly. "Figgins knows."

"Good egg!"

And a crowd of eager inquirers rushed off in quest of Figgins & Co. They found them at the tuckshop. Figgins and Kerr were marching Fatty Wynn out of Dame Taggies' little shop by main force. Fatty Wynn was wanted to bowl, and Fatty Wynn had dodged into the tuckshop to sample the jam tarts. The fat Fourth Former was expostulating with great indignation.

"It's an hour to tea, Figgy," he said—"a whole hour, you know, and if I'm going to bowl it's no good going hungry. You can't play cricket, or anything else, without laying a solid foundation."

"Rats!" said Figgins. "Come on!"

"Look here, Figgy—"

"Hallo, Figgins! We were looking for you!" Reilly exclaimed. "Did you chaps see the glove-fight in Rylcombe yesterday?"

"Yes, we did."

"Was Harrison there?"

"Find out!"

"Faith, that's what we're trying to do! Was Harrison there, Kerr?"

"Ask him."

"Ask your grandmother! I don't want a licking, bedad! Was Harrison there, Wynn?"

"Oh, don't talk to me about Harrison!" said Fatty Wynn. "I'm hungry! Look here, Figgy—"

The rest of Fatty's expostulation was lost as Figgins and Kerr rushed off towards the cricket ground at top speed.

"Blessed if we can get a word out of the rotters!" Reilly exclaimed. "This looks as if there were something in it."

"Let's ask Tom Merry."

"He'll be just as mum as the others, I suppose. But we may as well ask him entirely."

Tom Merry & Co. were discovered on the cricket field. Tom Merry was going in to bat, and Manners and Lowther were looking on from the pavilion. Reilly caught Tom Merry by the arm.

"Tommy darling—"

"Scat!" said Tom Merry. "Leggo!"

"Did ye see Harrison boxing the Chicken yesterday?"

"Ask him."

"Faith, and I—"

Tom Merry jerked himself away, and went on to the pitch. The inquirers surrounded Manners and Lowther.

"Lowther, old man, you went to see—"

"Never!" said Monty Lowther.

"Eh?"

"I never went to sea," said Monty Lowther, with perfect solemnity, "unless you're referring to the trip we had to the South Seas."

"You ass! You went to see a glove-fight in Rylcombe."

"Did I?"

"Yes. Did you see Harrison there?"

"Is that a conundrum?"

"No, it isn't!" roared Reilly. "Did you see him?"

"I'll give that one up," answered Lowther.

"You—you ass! Did you see him, or didn't you? Why can't you answer?"

"Because one rode a horse, and the other rhododendron," and Monty Lowther, with a face as solemn and serious as that of an owl.

"What!" roared the excited inquirers.

"Isn't that the right answer?" asked Monty Lowther innocently.

"You—you fathead!"

"I'll try again," said the humorist of the Shell. "Because one takes his hat to go, and the other goes to take his hat."

"You chump!" roared Reilly.

"Well, ask me the riddle over again, and I'll think it out."

They turned away from Monty Lowther. As Pratt remarked, there was no getting any sense out of him.

"Look here, Manners—" began Reilly.

"Well, I'm looking."

"Snipe says that you were at the glove-fight yesterday, and you took a snapshot of the boxers."

"Go hon!"

"Well, will you tell us if it was Harrison?"

"Well fielded!" shouted Manners, gazing at the cricket.

"Manners, you ass—"

"Play up, Kangy!"

"Will you let us see the negative?" bawled Reilly.

"Nix!"

"Look here!"

"Well bowled! Oh, well bowled!"

The baffled inquirers glared at one another. There was no getting any answer out of the fellows who had been present at the glove-fight, anyway. They were determined to say nothing. Their determination probably meant that Snipe's tale was true, and that the new Form-master had really appeared in the ring as a boxer. It might, however, be only a rag on their part.

"I know!" Pratt exclaimed suddenly. "You said Knox was there, Snipe?"

"Yes; I saw him," said Snipe.

"We'll ask him."

Some of the juniors were dubious. Knox was a prefect, and Knox was a fellow of very uncertain temper. But their curiosity had reached burning point. They crowded off to look for Knox, and they found him in the prefects' room—an apartment in the School House sacred to the use of Sixth Formers who had attained prefects' rank. Knox was conning over a little book, which probably contained records of bets. He looked up very irritably as the juniors crowded into the room.

"What do you kids want here? Get out at once!"

"May we speak to you, Knox?"

"No; get out!"

"You went to see a glove-fight yesterday—"

"What!" roared Knox.

Reilly backed away a little.

"Faith, and Snipe says you went to see— Ow, ow!"

Knox ran at the juniors, boxing their ears right and left. Whether he imagined that they had come there to cheek him, or whether it was simply an ebullition of bad temper, cannot be said; nor did the juniors pause to inquire. They bundled out of the prefects' room with loud yells. Knox was not asked any more questions on the subject.

CHAPTER 12.

Knocks for Knox!

TOM MERRY & Co. came off the cricket field with glowing faces. The weather was hot, and the cricket was warm work; but they enjoyed it.

Arthur Augustus had had a remittance that afternoon, and he and Blake stopped at the school shop to take in something additional for tea in the study.

"You Shell chaps had better come in to tea," said Blake. "Gussy is going to blue ten shillings on it. I'm going to see that he does it."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Get the kettle boiling. Dig, and we'll be along with the grub in two shakes of a pen-wiper."

"Right you are!"

"Oh, we'll come!" said Monty Lowther.

The two juniors stepped in the tuckshop, and Blake cheerfully ordered goods right and left, and Arthur Augustus cheerfully paid for them. Then they started out with bags and parcels under their arms.

"Ware New House!" suddenly exclaimed Blake.

Three or four figures started up in the loom of the quadrangle.

Blake and D'Arcy ran for the School House.

The New House juniors had come upon them suddenly, and if they had a chance at the provisions it would be a long farewell to the prospect of a feed in Study No. 6.

The two School House juniors dashed on at top speed. A cake slipped from under D'Arcy's arm and dropped to the ground, but there was no time to stop for it. They ran on up the steps of the School House.

"All serene!" panted Blake.

There was a yell behind.

"Follow them in!"

It was Figgins' voice.

"Buck up!" yelled Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

The New House juniors came dashing in. A big Sixth Former came into the doorway, and Figgins & Co. stopped suddenly. It was Knox, the prefect.

"What do you want here?"

The New House juniors did not stop to reply to the question. They melted away into the quadrangle.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy. "That was a narrow shave!"

"Yes, rather!"

Knox stared at them.

"So you must bring your House rows right into the place!" he exclaimed. "Can't you keep order even in the House?"

"Weally, Knox—"

"Follow me!"

(Continued on next page.)

ROUND THE LIBRARIES.

THE MONTH'S BEST BOOKS!

WHEN a master or a prefect becomes a bully and takes advantage of his superior position to torment those beneath him, the underdogs, as a rule, have little chance of hitting back at him. But, when the underdogs happen to be Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars—well, that's different, as you will see for yourselves if you get Mr. Frank Richards' latest masterpiece, "THE TYRANT PREFECT." What Harry Wharton and his pals do to the bullying prefect goes to make this yarn a winner. It is the SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY No. 225.

And here's another superb school yarn—Rookwood School, this time, featuring popular Jimmy Silver & Co. It is called "THE FIFTH FORM REBELLION," and is by Owen Conquest. For fun and thrills there has never been a better story written. Note the number—the SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY No. 226.

You can imagine, perhaps, the sensation it would cause if dozens of boys at a big Public School were kidnapped and held to ransom. But can you imagine what those boys would do to their kidnappers? That is what makes Edwy Searles Brooks' latest story, "THE KIDNAPPED REMOVE," a feast of thrills. This is a book to read and remember. It is BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY No. 441.

Mr. Charles Hamilton is famous for his stories of Ken King—King of the Islands. But he has written no more exciting yarn

than "THE WILD MAN OF THE ISLAND," which is just out. Ken King and his pal, Kit Hudson, are marooned on an island which is believed to be uninhabited. But someone else is there, and that is the cause of the mystery and the amazing adventures. This yarn will bring the wild Pacific to you vividly. Take a note of the number—BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY No. 442.

The BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY is famous for first-class stories, but this month's issues are even better than ever before. No. 443, "THE SCHOOL FOR CHAMPIONS," by H. Wedgwood Belfield, is a gripping yarn of boxing and baffling mystery that cannot be bettered. No. 444, "THE MYSTERY BATSMAN," by Anthony Thomas, is a story of cricket and international intrigue that holds the interest to the last line.

If you revel in detective novels you cannot afford to miss this month's issues of the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY No. 441, "THE MYSTERY OF CELL 13," by G. H. Teed, introduces that cunning and daring adventurer, George Marsden Plummer, whose schemes are frustrated by the genius of Sexton Blake.

"MURDER BY MISTAKE," by Paul Urquhart, which is No. 442 in this series, deals with as baffling a mystery as ever Blake has been called upon to solve. I doubt if any reader could arrive at the truth before Sexton Blake clears things up in the end.

There are two more novels in this series which maintain the high standard of the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY. No. 443, "THE SACRED CITY," by Pierre Quiroule, features Granite Grant and Mlle. Julie, of the Secret Service. No. 444 is by that popular writer, Allan Blair. It is called "THE CRIME AT THE SEASIDE HOTEL." The mystery remains a mystery to the end, and no one but Sexton Blake could have solved it.

For those who like mystery-thrillers there is "THREE DIE AT MIDNIGHT," by John Hunter. This book is No. 3 of the new and already established THRILLER LIBRARY. Three men were killed at places miles apart, and at the same moment. In each case a creaked man with a limp had been seen at the time. The mystery of how it was done was wrapped up in the greater mystery of why it was done. This is one of the most gripping, and certainly the most entertaining and readable story of the kind you have ever come across.

"THE MAN FROM DARTMOOR," by David Goodwin, No. 4 of the THRILLER LIBRARY, is different in style and plot from the last-mentioned book. The scene is Dartmoor, a convict escapes, and finds refuge almost in the shadow of the prison walls. How Joyce Nesbit, the rich young owner of a near-by big house, employs the convict as her butler, and how he rescues her from blackmailers, and other troubles, makes this yarn one you will never forget.

All the Volumes mentioned here are NOW ON SALE, Price 4d. each.

The juniors hesitated. Knox, as a prefect, had the right to order them, and it would hardly do to disobey. They followed the Sixth Former, unwilling enough, to his study.

Knox's eyes were gleaming as he entered the room.

He was a bully to the backbone, and he had no scruples about taking advantage of his position as a prefect to wreak his dislike upon the juniors.

"Come into the study!" he rapped out.

Blake and D'Arcy came in.

"What have you got there?"

"Grub!" said Blake tersely.

"P'ovisions, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus.

"Put them on the table!"

"Vewy well!"

The parcels and bags were placed on the table. Knox took up a cane. The juniors' eyes began to gleam. They knew that they were to be punished, not because they had done any wrong, but because Knox had made a fool of himself in the Head's study the previous evening.

But they were in a difficult position. The prefect had a right to cane juniors for infraction of House rules.

"You must be taught to keep better order here," said Knox, with an unpleasant grin. "You have been told often enough about these rows with the New House. There's altogether too much of it. Now you are bringing the hooliganism right into the House, and it's got to be stopped!"

"They didn't come in," said Blake.

"They were going to when I stopped them."

"But it wasn't weally our fault, deah boy," D'Arcy expostulated; "we were comin' in quite peacefully when the boundahs went for us."

"Do you mean that they attacked you unprovoked?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then if you make a complaint against them—"

"Bai Jove!"

"In that case, I will take you over to the New House to identify them, and leave it to Mr. Ratcliff to punish them," said Knox.

Blake's eyes flashed. Nothing would have pleased Knox better than to put the two juniors in the position of sneaking and complaining about their rivals of the New House. Their lives would hardly have been worth living at St. Jim's afterwards.

But they were not to be caught so easily.

"Bai Jove!" D'Arcy repeated. "Do you think we are going to sneak, you uttah wottah?"

"What!" roared Knox.

"I chawacterised you as a wottah," said D'Arcy fearlessly. "I do not withdraw the exp'ession. Any chap who tries to induce chaps to sneak is a wottah, and I don't care if you are a p'efect or not."

"Hold out your hand!" shouted Knox.

"Vewy well; but I wegard you as a wottah, all the same!"

Slash!

It was a cruel blow, and it brought a gasp of pain from Arthur Augustus. The prefect gritted his teeth.

"The other hand!" he exclaimed.

"I wefuse!"

"What?"

"You are a bwute and a beast!" said Arthur Augustus. "You know vewy well that if the Head saw this howwible mark on my hand he would dwop on you like a load of bwicks. You are a beast and a coward, and I wefuse to be caned by you!"

"Same here!" said Blake, clenching his fists and breathing hard through his nose. "If you touch me I'll go for you, p'efect or no p'efect!"

Knox set his teeth, and rushed at the juniors. He was in such a great rage that he seemed hardly to know what he was doing. He lashed at them with the cane, and D'Arcy caught a lash across the cheek and Blake on the neck. With a yell, the two juniors fastened on the prefect, and bore him backwards, with a crash, to the floor.

"Let me go!" yelled Knox. "I'll half kill you!"

I'll—Ah!"

The door opened.

"What's happening here?"

It was the voice of Mr. Harrison, the new master of the Fourth.

CHAPTER 13.

Knox Makes Terms!

MR. HARRISON looked in with a stern, set brow. Blake and D'Arcy released the prefect as if he had suddenly become red-hot, and jumped up.

Knox staggered to his feet, dusty, dishevelled, and very furious.

Mr. Harrison looked from one to another of them.

"What does this mean?" he exclaimed angrily.

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Knox gasped for breath.

"It means that these—these two young whelps have attacked me—me, a prefect, in my own study, and—"

"I saw it," said Mr. Harrison. "Have you any explanation to give, Blake and D'Arcy?"

"Weally, sir—"

"Unless you have, you will be flogged!" said Mr. Harrison sternly. "Such an outrage as this, I should think, is unheard of at this school!"

Blake seized D'Arcy's wrist and held up his hand for the master to see.

"It's all wight, Blake—"

"Rats! Let him see!"

There was a great red mark across D'Arcy's hand, and the skin was swollen. Mr. Harrison looked at it in surprise and alarm. He noted, too, the cut across D'Arcy's cheek and on Blake's neck.

"What does this mean, Knox?" he exclaimed.

The prefect looked sullen.

"I have caned D'Arcy."

"Do you dare to say that you caned a junior with force enough to make such a mark?" the Form-master exclaimed.

"It was my duty—"

"You brute!" said Mr. Harrison. "And this mark upon the boy's cheek is also attributed to you, I suppose?"

Knox bit his lip.

"They attacked me—"

"Not before you lashed us with the cane, and you know it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What are you punishing these juniors for?" asked Mr. Harrison, in very quiet and ominous tones.

"A House row," said Knox.

"I saw what just occurred, from my study window," said Mr. Harrison quietly. "If anybody was to blame, it was the other party; but it was only boyish fun, in any case, and not worth taking notice of. I'm afraid, Knox, that you must have a personal spite against these two boys."

"I—I—"

"Blake and D'Arcy, you may go. As for you, Knox, I shall report your utter brutality to Dr. Holmes, and I trust he will relieve you of your duties as a prefect."

Knox started.

"What! You will report me?"

"Certainly."

"You—you—you'd better take care, sir," sputtered Knox. "It might be safer for you to do nothing of the sort."

Mr. Harrison stared at him in blank amazement. Blake and D'Arcy exchanged looks of dismay; they knew what was in Knox's mind now. But Mr. Harrison had ordered them to leave the study, and they had to go.

The door closed behind the two juniors. Then Mr. Harrison spoke.

"What do you mean by that remark, Knox? Are you mad?"

The prefect's lip curled in a sneer.

He was recovering his self-possession now, and the knowledge that he had a powerful weapon in his hands gave him nerve, and a courage he did not usually possess.

"No, I'm not mad," he said. "But you must be, I think, to come and fight in a prize-fight so near the school where you intend to come as a master."

The Form-master started back.

The colour wavered in his face, and a startled look came into his eyes as he fixed them upon the School House prefect.

"Knox!"

The mocking smile grew on the lips of the Sixth Former.

"I saw you there," he said.

"You saw me?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"In the boxing tent—Mr. Nemo!"

The master of the Fourth was silent for a few moments.

Knox went on:

"I was there! I had some money on the match, and I went there to see it—and I never expected to see Mr. Nemo again; and you can imagine how surprised I was when I recognised our new master as a prize-fighter."

"Silence!"

The prefect continued, unheeding:

"I have said nothing—there were some juniors present, too, and they apparently have said nothing. But I can give you away to the Head any minute I please; and I think I can guess what Dr. Holmes would say if he knew he had admitted a boxer into the school as a Form-master."

Mr. Harrison bit his lips.

"I imagine that it is against the rules here for a prefect to visit boxing shows," he said. "Above all, to make bets on them."

Knox grinned.

"We sometimes do things we are not allowed to do," he said. "Just as in your own case, you see. There are a pair of us."



As Knox rushed at Blake and D'Arcy, lashing out with the cane, the two juniors grappled with the enraged prefect. "Let me go!" yelled Knox. "I'll half kill you!" Suddenly the door opened and Mr. Harrison, the new master, entered. "What's happening here?" he asked sternly.

"You are a rascal," said Mr. Harrison quietly. The prefect shrugged his shoulders. "I don't see it," he said. "But have it like that if you like."

"You have become acquainted with a matter that ought never to have come to your knowledge, and you propose to make a base use of it."

"Put it as you like. Let me alone, and I'll let you alone," said the prefect. "It's a fair bargain."

"I am bound to report your brutal conduct to the Head."

"Rats!"

"What?" shouted Mr. Harrison.

"You heard what I said. You hold your tongue, and I'll hold mine," said Knox insolently. "If you report me to the Head, I'll report you, and that's an end of it."

Mr. Harrison looked at him steadily. Knox was in danger just then of being taken up in the powerful grasp of the fighting Form-master and used as a duster to wipe up the study. He realised it, and he made haste to place the table between him and the master of the Fourth.

"Hands off!" he said.

The Form-master smiled contemptuously. "I shall not touch you," he said. "It would not keep your evil tongue silent, and you are not fit for a decent man to touch, I think."

"Well, is it a bargain?"

"Follow me."

"Follow you—where?"

"To the Head's study," said Mr. Harrison sternly. The prefect changed colour.

"To the Head's study? You're bluffing—you dare not!"

"Come!"

"But I—I say—"

"Follow me, or I shall take you there with my hand on your collar," said the Fourth Form master sternly. He strode out of the study.

Knox followed him, with a pale and anxious face. He could hardly believe that the new master was in earnest.

"He must be bluffing!" Knox repeated again and again to himself.

But the master of the Fourth never swerved from his way; he strode right on to the Head's study, and knocked at the door.

"Come in!"

It was the deep voice of Dr. Holmes.

Knox uttered an exclamation, and caught hold of the sleeve of the master of the Fourth.

"Mr. Harrison, listen to me! I—"

The Form-master shook his hand off and opened the door. He entered the study, and Knox followed him, with pale cheeks and hanging head.

Dr. Holmes looked at them in surprise. From their expression he could see at a glance that something of an unusual nature had occurred.

"I have a report to make to you, sir," said Mr. Harrison quietly. "I have caught Knox in the act of treating boys in my Form with utter brutality, and I considered it my duty to report the matter to you, so that you can decide whether Knox is fit to continue to hold the post of prefect."

Knox ground his teeth.

It was all out now, and it was pretty clear that Mr. Harrison meant to face the consequences; threats had had no effect upon him, and it only remained for the prefect to take his revenge.

"I also have something to report, sir," he said. "The man who has come here as Mr. Harrison, as a Master of Arts of Oxford, and a Form-master, was appearing yesterday in a showman's tent near Rylcombe, fighting a ruffian in the ring for a money prize."

Dr. Holmes started to his feet.

"Knox, are you mad?"

The prefect pointed to the Form-master.

"Ask him, sir. He cannot deny it."

"Mr. Harrison—"

Dr. Holmes looked directly at the new master. But the man was silent; his face was pale, and no word came from his lips.

CHAPTER 14.
The Blow Falls!

DR. HOLMES gazed steadily at the master of the Fourth. Mr. Harrison looked pale and distressed. There was a triumphant gleam in Knox's vindictive eyes.

"Mr. Harrison—the Head's voice was very quiet—'what have you to say?'"

"I have something to say, sir. This boy need not remain, I suppose? He has told you all he had to tell you."

The Head made a gesture towards the door.

"You may go, Knox."

"I am willing to prove, sir—" began Knox.

"I will hear you afterwards, if necessary."

"If he denies it—"

"You may go."

"Very well, sir."

Knox quitted the study, and closed the door after him. There was trouble in store for him, that was only too probable. And his denouncement of the Fourth Form master had not crushed Mr. Harrison as he had hoped. There was a dignity in the bearing of the master of the Fourth that did not look like that of a man who had a shady secret to keep.

Dr. Holmes watched the door close after Knox, and then his gaze returned to the Form-master. There was a troubled wrinkle on his brow.

"I have to go to Rylcombe this evening to consult with the police about the footpads," he said. "I was about to leave my study. But if you have anything to say to me, I will stay and hear it. As for Knox's accusation, I dismiss it. I hear nothing from the boys against their Form-masters."

"It is true, sir."

Dr. Holmes started.

"What—true?"

"True—or nearly all true. It is not true that I fought for money; but it is true that I took part in a boxing match in Rylcombe yesterday."

"Good heavens, Mr. Harrison!"

The master's head dropped a little.

"I heard of that boxing match," said Dr. Holmes. "A local prize fighter met a man from London—a man of the peculiar name of Nemo—"

"I was Nemo."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"Good heavens!" said the Head again.

"May I give you my explanation, sir?" said Mr. Harrison quietly.

"Please do."

"I see that you are shocked and disgusted," said the Form-master. "I am not surprised at it—I hardly expect you to understand. I am Frank Harrison, Master of Arts at Oxford; but I am also Frank Harrison, beggar. I am one of the droves of young men turned out by the universities, who, unless something is done for them, can do nothing for themselves—I am one of a crowd. Such a position as you have offered me here—that of Form-master in a Public school—was my ambition. I was fitted for it in every way, I believe, but I was unable to attain it. I hoped—and I have some friends who were willing to help me if opportunity came. Meanwhile, it was necessary to live."

Dr. Holmes nodded slowly.

"I understand," he said.

Mr. Harrison went on, in a calm and even voice:

"I taught a little—I had pupils—pupils who paid little or nothing. I instructed in various things, for little or nothing. The uncle from whom I had had great expectations had died—and he died a bankrupt. I was at my last pound when there came an opportunity to live by my skill as an athlete. I had always been a good boxer, and I found that I could make money by it. A prize fighter I would never have consented to be, but to give exhibitions of boxing skill and endurance, where men could see, and learn from seeing—that did not seem to be too degrading. I know the general view is different, but that was my view."

Dr. Holmes nodded again.

"That was the way, then, that I made my daily bread for two years, added to a little teaching of languages and mathematics. Then came my opportunity. One of the governors of St. Jim's remembered me, and when you required a substitute here for the master of the Fourth Form, he recommended me, and you accepted my name."

"He knew nothing of—of—"

"The boxing? No!"

"You should have told him."

"Perhaps so. But—but I hoped that this would be a beginning for me and that, having once planted my feet on the ladder, I might rise," said Mr. Harrison. "Perhaps I was wrong."

"You were."

The Form-master bowed his head.

"Be it so. I should doubtless have told you. I intended to tell you, but not till after I had proved to you that I was a faithful and reliable master. If Mr. Lathom did not return here, I hoped to retain my place—if he returned I hoped to obtain your interest in getting another position. But—"

"But it is impossible now."

"I fear so. You know what I have been, what I have done. It was unfortunate, but I had the engagement for the Rylcombe show booked weeks ahead, and I could not disappoint the man. But I refused to take any fee or reward—I fought merely to keep my word, as I was bound to do, and I never expected any boy belonging to this school to be present. I do not know this part of the country well, and until almost the last moment I had no idea that St. Jim's was near the village I was booked to appear in. But Knox saw me there—and that is all."

The Head was silent.

"I suppose it is useless to say more," said the Form-master slowly. "You do not need telling that at the first opportunity of taking this post I gave up all idea of boxing. That became a thing of the past."

The Head had a troubled look.

"I can understand, and I feel for you," he said. "But you cannot think that a man who had boxed with prize fighters in public booths is the man to take charge of a Form of boys at this school."

"I hoped so."

"It is impossible."

Mr. Harrison's troubled face turned a shade paler.

"You mean that I must go," he asked.

"Unquestionably."

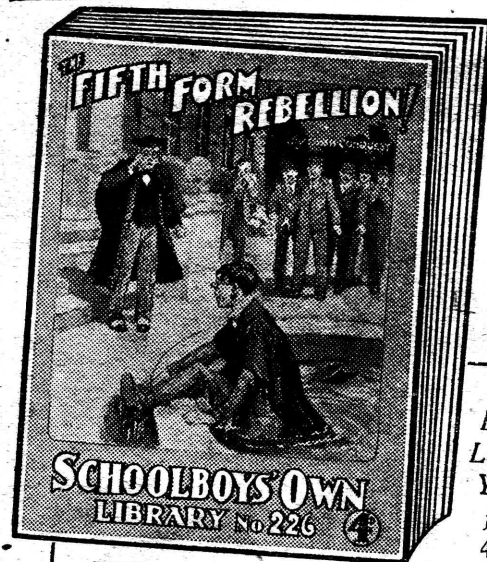
"Be it so."

Dr. Holmes rose.

"I am sorry," he said.

"Thank you! I have nothing more to say—excepting that I will leave the school to-night, and shall not return," said Mr. Harrison. "I regret very much not having told you the facts in the first place, but I did not want to miss the one chance of my life. You have been very kind to me, sir, and I am sorry to go."

"I hope you will be successful elsewhere," said the Head. "It is impossible for you to remain here." Mind, I believe your character is excellent, but some of the boys, as you say, know already of what you have done, and the whole thing would be too utterly out of place. Parents who came to hear of it would complain, and the governors themselves would give trouble. I'm sorry, for I had thought that we should pull together very well. As for your salary, that will be paid for—"



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The Fourth Form master made a gesture. "I shall not accept it," he said. "I will take nothing I have not earned. I am sorry only that I did not explain everything to you at first—but it is too late to think of that now. Good-bye, sir!"

Dr. Holmes held out his hand. The Fourth Form master shook it, and left the study. There was a shadow on the brow of the headmaster of St. Jim's.

The quiet dignity of the Form-master had impressed him very much, and he was sorry that Mr. Harrison was going.

Dr. Holmes left his study a few minutes later, and as he walked down to the village of Rylcombe, the shade was still on his brow. He could not help thinking of the fighting Form-master, and of the cruel disappointment his dismissal from St. Jim's meant for him.

But there was no help for it.

The Head strove to dismiss the matter from his mind. Mr. Harrison would be gone by the time Dr. Holmes returned to St. Jim's; his brief stay at the school would be ended. What would he do? Go back to the boxing—change the quiet study at St. Jim's for the noisy boxing-booth—the quiet Cloisters for the Ring and the roaring crowd?

What else could he do?

And, in spite of himself, the Head was thinking of the handsome Form-master, and of the blighting of his hopes, as he walked down to Rylcombe in the dusk of the evening.

CHAPTER 15.

Good-bye!

"GOING!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Phew!"

"I'm beastly sorry!"

"But what is he going for?" asked Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy shook his head.

"I weally don't know, deah boy," he said. "It's wathah sudden, isn't it? But I saw him in the passage just now, and he said he was goin', and said good-bye to me."

The juniors looked surprised and dismayed. There were seven or eight of them in the group to which Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had just imparted the news that Mr. Harrison was leaving St. Jim's.

"It's jolly sudden," said Tom Merry. "Anybody know the reason?"

"He was in the Head's study a while back," said Lumley-Lumley.

Jack Blake whistled softly.

"Oh, it's Knox!"

"Knox! How?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Knox has told the Head about the boxing."

"The cad!"

"The worm!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, with a nod. "That's it, deah boys—Knox has given him away. I see it all now."

"It's rotten!"

"I suppose he couldn't stay after that," Blake remarked.

"It's hard cheese, for I know he was a very decent chap."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Let's give him a send-off," said Tom Merry. "We can see him off at the gates, you know, and tell him we're sorry he's going. He must be feeling pretty cut up. I should think, if he's got the order of the boot on his second day here."

"True!"

"Quite wight, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus approvingly—"quite wight! I quite agwee with Tom Mewwy's suggestion. In fact, I wegard it as wippin'!"

"I'd like to give Knox a bumping, too," said Manners.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Serve the rotter jolly well right!" said Snipe, who had heard all that was said. "He ought to be kicked out. We don't want a blessed professional bruiser for a master in our Form!"

"Oh, shut up, Snipe!"

"Rats! I— Oh!"

Bump!

Snipe landed heavily on the floor, and the juniors walked out of the Common-room, leaving him sitting there.

Tom Merry & Co. were really very much concerned.

They had come to like the fighting Form-master, and they were sorry that he was leaving St. Jim's; sorrier still, because they knew instinctively that the sack must be a serious matter for him.

If a man of his attainments had been driven to public boxing to get a living, it must have been a godsend to him

to get a position at St. Jim's, and it was cruelly hard luck to lose it again, after committing no fault; but simply because his previous career told too much against him.

Not that there was anything in his career that was worthy of real blame. It was not that. It was only that, in the natural fitness of things, it would not do for him to remain at the school as a master.

The juniors tramped across the dark quadrangle to the gates, there to wait for the master of the Fourth.

They wanted to make him feel that some of the fellows, at all events, were sorry that he was going, and would miss him.

An athletic figure loomed up in the gloom of the quad.

It was the master of the Fourth. He was carrying a gladstone bag in his hand; the rest of his luggage was doubtlessly to be sent after him.

He paused as he saw the juniors clustered at the gate.

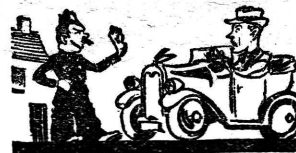
"Hallo, my lads!"

"We wanted to speak to you, sir," said Tom Merry respectfully, taking off his cap. "We hear you are leaving St. Jim's, sir."

"That is correct."

"We are sorry, sir."

NO EXCUSE!



P.-c. (to motorist): "Hi! Do you know you were going over sixty miles an hour?"

Motorist: "Impossible! I've only been out twenty minutes!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to James Dyer, 179, Goswell Road, London, E.C.1.

"Yaas, wathah! We want to assuah you that we are weally sowwy, sir," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "As a mattah of fact, it's beastly, sir. We were hopin' you would remain for good, sir, if Mr. Lathom wasn't able to come back."

"Yes, rather, sir!"

Mr. Harrison smiled faintly.

"Thank you very much," he said. "It is a comfort to me to know that some of the boys, at all events, have come to like me. I am very sorry to be going."

"It's weally wotten, you know, sir."

"I—I suppose it's about the boxing, sir?" said Blake timidly.

Mr. Harrison started.

"The boxing! What do you know about that?"

"We saw it, sir."

"Yaas, wathah! And it was a wippin' fight!" said D'Arcy. "I knew from the start that you would knock the Chicken out, sir!"

"Indeed! You saw it—somewhat against the rules, I think?"

"I—I'm afraid so, sir. We didn't think there was any harm in it," said Tom Merry. "We should like you to know that we never jawed about it, sir; if it's got out, it wasn't our fault."

"Wathah not!"

"Thank you," said Mr. Harrison quietly. "I did not know that you knew anything about it, my lads; but I thank you for holding your tongues, if you thought it would be of service to me. It was wrong of me, in the first place, not to explain it to the Head, and you may find a lesson in that to be perfectly frank, whatever it may cost you, and even when concealment may seem justifiable."

"You are vewy good, sir. Can we do anythin' for you?"

"I think not—except to wish me well," said Mr. Harrison, smiling.

"We all do that, sir."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Was it Knox mentioned it to the Head, sir? We know he was there."

"Yes, it was Knox—from a sense of duty, I trust."

"I don't think!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Well, good-bye, my lads!" said Mr. Harrison.

"Good-bye, sir!"

The master of the Fourth shook hands with the juniors in turn, and walked out into the dusky road, and tramped away towards Rylcombe.

The juniors watched the athletic figure till it disappeared in the dusk, and then turned back towards the School House.

"It's wotten hard lines!" said D'Arcy.

"Beastly!"

"And all that cad Knox's fault!"

"Unless he did it from a sense of duty!" grinned Monty

Lowther. "Fancy Knox cultivating a sense of duty at his time of life! Comic, ain't it?"

"I wegard Knox as an awful cad, and I——"

"Hush!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Quiet! There's Knox!"

"Bai Jove!"

The figure of the prefect had swung past a lighted window. He was crossing towards the New House, and in a minute he had disappeared into the gloom.

Tom Merry's eyes blazed with excitement.

"He's going over to visit Sefton, I expect," he muttered. "Look here, Knox has got Mr. Harrison sacked——"

"Yaas, the wottah!"

"Let's bump him!"

"Phew!"

The suggestion of "bumping" a prefect of the Sixth made even the reckless juniors of the School House hesitate.

But not for more than a moment.

"I'm on!" whispered Jack Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Come on, you kids!"

The juniors ran softly and silently through the gloom towards the New House. The moon was just beginning to peep over the edge of a big black cloud, and there was a glimmer of light, but not sufficient for the prefect to recognise his assailants.

With a rush, Tom Merry & Co. were upon him.

Knox was seized and swept off his feet in the twinkling of an eye, and brought down with a bump upon the hard, cold ground.

Bump, bump!

"Ow! Ow! Yow!" roared the prefect.

Not a word did the juniors speak. Only their panting breath could be heard in the gloom as they bumped the cad of the Sixth.

Bump, bump!

"Ow! Ow!"

Then they left Knox lying and gasping, and dashed off. The dark figures seemed to melt away into the gloom as if they were part of it.

Knox, the prefect, sat up and gasped.

"Ow, ow, ow! Help! Help! Yow! Help! Ow!"

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed a voice as Kildare of the Sixth came into view. "Who's that? Knox?"

"Yow! Yes; I've been assaulted. Ow! Bumped!"

Kildare grinned.

"New House chaps. I suppose? Why can't you keep your own side of the quad?"

"Ow! I was coming over here to see Sefton. Yow! I've been bumped over! I——"

"Did you see who did it?"

"Ow! No. How could I see in the dark?" howled Knox. "Yow! But I know who did it. Groo! Those young cads——"

"Oh, rats! If you didn't see who did it, you'd better hold your tongue about it!" said Kildare gruffly. "Stop that row!"

And he walked away, leaving Knox saying things which it was as well for him that Kildare did not hear.

CHAPTER 16.

One Against Six!

"HERE he is!"

Dr. Holmes started back.

He was walking towards the school from the village. His business there was over, and Inspector Skeat had held out to him great hopes that the footpads who had robbed the St. Jim's boys would shortly be brought to justice.

The Head was thinking of the dismissed master of the Fourth as he walked back to St. Jim's. It occurred to him that if Mr. Harrison walked to the station he was quite likely to meet him in the lane. The Head did not desire another meeting with the "sacked" Form-master. But all thoughts of Mr. Harrison were driven out of his mind by the sudden rough shout, and the rush of feet that followed it.

Five or six dark figures came into view in the moonlit lane. Where the shadows of the overhanging branches fell it was very dark, but in the middle of the lane the moonlight made a track of silver.

Into the moonlight the dark, rough figures came, and in a moment the Head of St. Jim's realised who they were.

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He mentally blamed his own carelessness in walking unprotected through the lonely lane, after what had happened only the previous night to Blake and D'Arcy. But he had been so busy thinking over other matters that he had not considered the possibility of an attack upon himself.

He put up his cane to defend himself as the shadowy figures closed round him. He caught a glimpse of rough, shaggy, excited and savage faces.

The looks the roughs cast upon him were evil and mocking. Nobbler was grinning with a kind of demoniac glee, and the Weasel, and Ginger chuckled aloud.

"It's 'im!" said Nobbler.

"The 'Ead himself!"

"Stand back!" said Dr. Holmes.

Nobbler did not move.

"You can't frighten us with big words!" he said, sneering. "We know you! You're the man who's offered twenty pound reward for us——us!"

The Head of St. Jim's eyed him steadily.

"I am," he said. "I hope you will soon be in the prison you have earned for yourselves. Now let me pass!"

Nobbler chuckled.

"No blooming 'fear!" he said. "We've got you, and we're going to give you a lesson, I reckon."

"Wotto!" chorused the others.

"If you want to rob me I cannot prevent you," said Dr. Holmes. "You will be punished for this, as well as the rest of your crimes."

"It ain't robbing we want now," said Nobbler. "You've set the perleece on us, and offered a reward that makes every bloomin' peeler of them as watchful as a cat. You've started on us, and now we're going to start on you!"

"Ear, 'ear!" said the Weasel.

"We're going to bash you!" said Nobbler, with cruel satisfaction. "We're going to make mince and 'am of you——wot?"

"Wotto!" said Ginger.

And the roughs rushed at the doctor.

The Head of St. Jim's swung his cane round to defend himself, and Nobbler gave a cry as he caught it across the face.

"Help, help!" shouted Dr. Holmes.

"Sock it to 'im!" yelled Nobbler.

And the Head of St. Jim's went down under the savage rush of the gang.

A moment more, and he would have been under the feet of the roughs, and the brutes would have been trampling, stamping upon him in revengeful spite.

But the doctor's cry had been heard.

There was a patter of rapid footsteps in the lane, and a man came dashing up, flinging the bag he was carrying into the road as he ran.

Two heavy fists came crashing among the ruffians, and they reeled to right and left, and the newcomer reached the fallen man.

"Dr. Holmes!" he exclaimed in astonishment.

"Mr. Harrison!"

There was no time for more.

The roughs had scattered for a moment, but as they realised that they had only one foe to deal with, they closed round again, growling like savage dogs.

"At 'im!" shouted Ginger.

"Sock it to 'im!"

"Pile on 'im!"

Mr. Harrison caught up the Head in his powerful arms and whirled him to the side of the lane. In this place a park paling made a solid wall behind him, and against that wall the gasping headmaster leant, exhausted. Before him stood the dismissed master of the Fourth—the fighting Form-master—with his hands up. His eyes gleamed behind his lifted hands as he faced Nobbler and his gang.

"Come on!" he said grimly.

The ruffians closed in on him in a half-circle.

Under the trees the shadows were dark, but they could see one another more and more clearly as the moonlight penetrated through the branches.

The Fighting Form-master watched the enemy without a tremor in his face. He had six foes to front, and several of them were bigger men than himself.

But he never flattered for an instant.

"By gum!" said Nobbler, in a husky, savage voice.

"By gum! There's only one, and 'e's standin' up to us! By gum! Smash 'im!"

"Limb 'im!" said Ginger.

"Knife 'im!" said another.

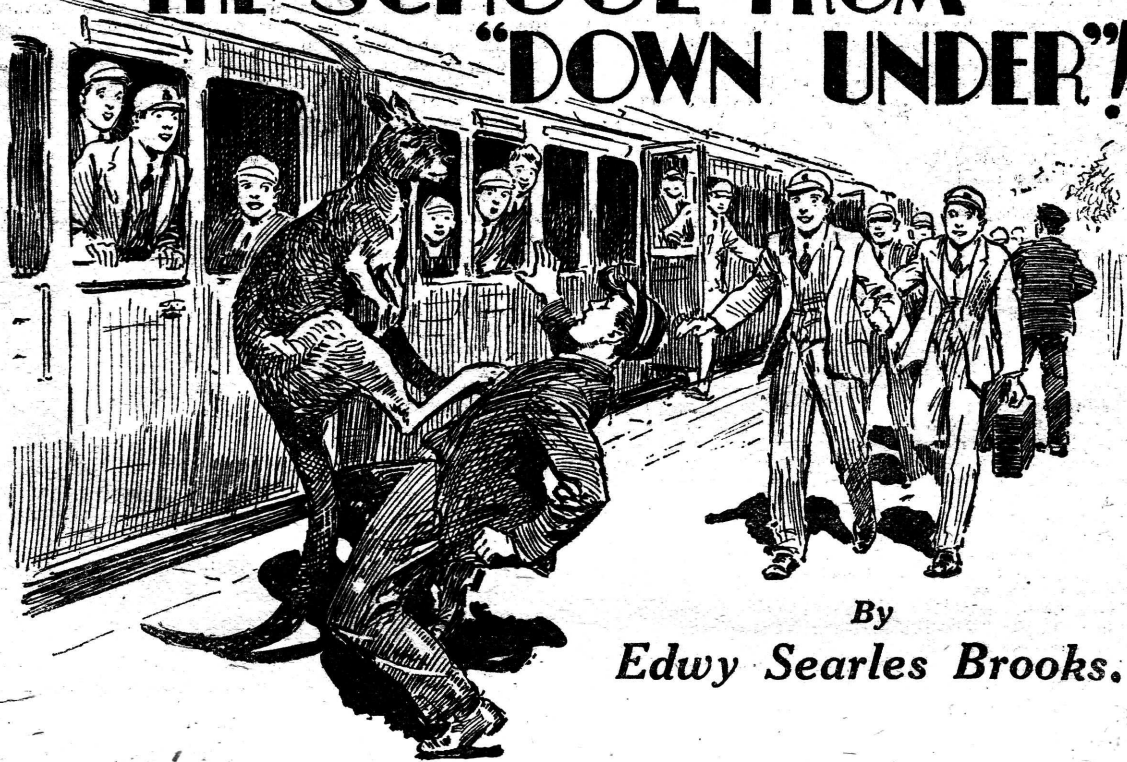
Nobbler chuckled horribly.

"None o' that!" he said. "Get 'im down, and get your boots on 'im; that's what 'e wants! By gum, we'll mark

(Continued on page 23.)

THE MASTER WHO BIRCHED AN ARMCHAIR!

THE SCHOOL FROM "DOWN UNDER"!



By
Edwy Searles Brooks.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Some schoolboys from Australia take over River House School, near St. Frank's, for the summer, and immediately the two schools are at grips in a friendly "war." After a cricket match between the schools, Jerry Dodd, of St. Frank's, discovers that one of the Aussies, Jim Sayers, is an impostor, but keeps his discovery secret because he wants to find out what the impostor's game is. Unknown to anyone, Mr. Rutter, an Australian master, is also in league with Sayers. Later, the Aussies jape the St. Frank's chums, and Sayers turns on a fire hose in a dormitory at St. Frank's, causing considerable damage. He then brazenly admits that he did it, and Mr. Rutter takes him before the headmaster of the Australian School.

The Mock Flogging!

MR. LIONEL ATHERTON, the kindly faced athletic headmaster of the Australian School, listened with ever-growing gravity to the happenings at St. Frank's.

It was Curly Baines who explained the true nature of the jape. McVittie corroborated.

"Your joke was harmless enough, Baines, and I need not detain you further," said Mr. Atherton, at length. "You may go. You, too, McVittie."

Gladly they left the study. Mr. Atherton went to a corner of the room, and with some reluctance produced a wicked-looking birch.

"It is four years since I had occasion to use this unpleasant thing, Mr. Rutter," he said regretfully. "But Sayers' conduct is such that nothing less than a drastic flogging will meet the case. Sayers, come here!"

Every scrap of Sayers' insolence had dropped from him like a cloak; he was pale with apprehension.

"You—you can't do this, sir!" he panted. "You can't hit me with that thing! This is a school—not a reformatory!"

"I'm thinking, Sayers, that a reformatory would suit you better than a decent, honourable school!" retorted the Australian headmaster. "Come here, I say! Your outrageous insolence to Mr. Kingswood has been fully reported to me, and that insolence took place after you had committed an act which, for sheer maliciousness, surpasses anything in my experience as a schoolmaster. I'm going to punish you with the utmost severity!"

Mr. Rutter, his face grimly set, intervened. "Will you allow me a word in private, sir, before you commence the flogging?" he asked.

The headmaster eyed him coldly. "Are you going to plead for this wretched boy?" he asked. "Quite the opposite, I can assure you, sir!" replied Mr. Rutter.

The Head motioned to the anxious Sayers. "Go outside, Sayers, and wait in the Hall!" he ordered briefly.

Sayers went. "Now, sir," said Mr. Atherton, laying the birch on his desk and gazing hard at Mr. Rutter.

The latter picked up the birch and swished it viciously.

"I want you to leave the punishment of Sayers to me," he said, and the grip of his fingers, the squaring of his jaw, hinted that Sayers would have no cause to congratulate himself on the change.

"I fail to understand why you should make this request, Mr. Rutter," said the Head. "As principal of this school, it is my duty—"

"As man to man, Mr. Atherton, I want you to leave the boy to me!" interrupted Mr. Rutter tensely. "Sayers is a pupil of Hedingham Grammar School, Sydney. Perhaps you had forgotten that I also am attached to the teaching staff of the Hedingham Grammar School. In a word, Sayers is one of my own boys!"

"I am sorry, Mr. Rutter," said the Head. "Sayers has not merely dishonoured this roof," went on Mr. Rutter, "but he has dishonoured his own school. My school! And I claim the right to punish him. Leave him in my hands, sir, and rest assured that he will be dealt with as he deserves."

The man was quivering with the indignation and anger which surged within him. The honour of his own school was involved, and his feelings were understandable.

"Perhaps I had better punish the boy, Mr. Rutter," said the Head quietly. "I appreciate just how you feel; but, to tell you the truth, I am half afraid that you will be too drastic. Sayers deserves a flogging, and I will see that he gets one, but a birch can be dangerous in the hands of an angry man."

Mr. Rutter looked hurt. "You are suggesting, Mr. Atherton, that my justifiable indignation will induce me to treat Sayers with brutality instead of justice," he said. "You will forgive me, sir, if

I resent your attitude. My desire is to punish Sayers as he deserves, but I have no intention of doing him an injury."

"Take the birch, Mr. Rutter, and flog him," said the Head quietly. "Forget what I just said."

Satisfied now that Mr. Rutter would not go too far, the Head was only too glad to be relieved of the unpleasant task. Without a word, Mr. Rutter strode to the door and passed out. He found Sayers in the Hall, nervy, jumpy.

"Go to your study, Sayers!" said Mr. Rutter harshly. "Wait there until I come!"

"Look here, sir—"

"Go!" thundered Mr. Rutter.

Sayers went hurriedly. He crossed the quad to Marshall's House, and went into Study No. 10.

Five minutes later Mr. Rutter, birch in hand, looking neither to the right nor left, strode into Marshall's House. He was observed by Curly Baines, Kennedy, McVittie, and many others. The Australian boys steered well clear of that dangerous-looking man.

"Looks like the chopper," murmured McVittie. "Sayers is in for a hot ten minutes!"

"The hotter, the better!" said Baines curtly.

They were irresistibly drawn indoors; they crept along the corridor, silent, tense, and soon they heard ominous sounds coming from behind the locked door of Study No. 10.

"No, confound it, I'll not submit to this!" came Sayers' angry, alarmed voice.

"You'll do as I say, boy!" came Mr. Rutter's shout. "You are a disgrace to Hedingham Grammar School!"

"I'll be hanged if—"

Swish!

A wild howl followed, then a scuffle, some muttered words from Sayers, then a suggestive, ominous silence. The listening Australian boys glanced at one another, and nodded. What was happening within the study was as clear to them as though they could see it with their own eyes.

"Now!" came Mr. Rutter's strained voice.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Hi! Don't, don't! Ow! Yow!" came Sayers' gasping cry of anguish. "You brute, stop! Yaroooooh!"

Swish, swish, swish!

The ominous swishing of that birch was monotonous in its regularity; and Sayers' gasps and groans became more and more feeble.

Swish, swish, swish!

Outside the study, the Australian boys listened breathlessly. Inside the study, Mr. Rutter was diligently belabouring an easy-chair; and Jim Sayers, grinning all over his face and uttering moans of anguish, was lolled at his ease, an amused spectator, in another easy-chair!

Handforth Gets Busy!

THE door of Study No. 10 opened and Mr. Rutter emerged. He was breathless from his exertions; his face was streaming with perspiration. Looking neither one way nor the other, the birch gripped tightly in his hand, he strode down the corridor and vanished. Curly Baines and the others, who had witnessed that exit, looked at one another.

"Hadn't somebody better go for the undertaker?" murmured Ken Taylor.

"I reckon a pail of cold water will do!" said Curly Baines.

A sound came from the study. It was like a chair crashing over on its back; then came the sound of the table being forcibly pushed aside. The door opened, and Jim Sayers appeared.

He was like a fellow in a daze; he clung to the doorpost, and his face was pale and bedewed with moisture. He looked up, and saw his schoolfellows standing about staring at him. He braced himself, and his lips parted in a bitter sneer.

"Satisfied?" he muttered thickly.

"Well, you asked for it!" grunted Curly, looking uncomfortable.

"It serves him right!" said somebody else.

Sayers glared, and marched on. His movements were so stilted, so racked with pain that his schoolfellows felt almost sorry for him. It was clear enough to them that he had been "through the hoop" pretty badly.

"Did Rutter pile it on?" asked Richards.

"You're not deaf, are you?" snarled Sayers; and he dragged himself to the staircase, and then painfully ascended.

When somebody went upstairs soon afterwards, Sayers was found in bed, and snappily said that he wanted to be left alone.

Alone he gloated over the evening's events. He was particularly pleased with Mr. Rutter, who had worked everything so cunningly that even Mr. Atherton believed that the punishment, if anything, had been too severe. And Sayers' own schoolfellows, so furious with him earlier, so

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ready to vent their wrath upon him, were now half inclined to be sympathetic. Certainly he and Mr. Rutter between them had "put it over" very astutely.

"By George!" ejaculated Edward Oswald Handforth, leaping out of his chair.

The ink on the table in Study D spurted out, and splashed all over McClure's prep. McClure yelled with anguish and alarm. Church, at the other end of the table, in the act of drawing a map, had put in a coastline where there should have been nothing but deep sea.

"You raving lunatic!" he roared, glaring at Handforth.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Handforth dazedly.

He was staring at the evening newspaper, his own prep done. He took no notice of his chums' wild expostulations. He was, in fact, quite unconscious of them.

Everything had been quiet in Study D for a full half hour, which was something of a record. After that unfortunate fiasco earlier in the evening, Nipper & Co. and the Moor View girls had had their feast in one of the smaller lecture halls. There had been a considerable delay, of course, while Vera Wilkes, the Housemaster's daughter, had got her mother's domestic staff busy on the job of drying the girls' clothes. The boys had had to change their things, too. However, at last the feast had been held, and everybody had enjoyed themselves. Prep was late in consequence, and now it was nearly bed-time.

"My only sainted aunt!" said Handforth breathlessly.

"Look here! You drivelling fathead—"

"Amazing!" said Handforth.

"Look at my map, you hopeless chump!" roared Church.

"Then I was right the first time," said Handforth dreamily.

"What!"

"And they're still there," said Handforth.

So singular were his remarks that Church and McClure forgot their anger. They stared at him in bewilderment.

"Have you gone off your rocker, Handy?" demanded Church, in alarm.

"Buried!" said Handforth dramatically.

"He's as mad as a hatter!" yelled McClure.

Handforth started.

"Eh? What the dickens are you fatheads gurgling about?" he asked irritably. "Hallo! How did you manage to spill the ink, Mac? I've never seen such a careless ass—"

"You spilt it!" roared McClure. "Look what you've done to my work! And what the dickens do you mean by drivelling on like that?"

They noticed that Handforth was still grasping the evening paper; and Church suddenly snatched it.

"Hi! That's mine!" roared Handforth.

"What is it you saw in here which made you act like a lunatic?" said Church. "I can't see anything exciting."

He scanned the newspaper in vain.

He had half expected to see an account of smugglers or coiners—Handforth's favourite crooks—but there was nothing of that nature in the news. As far as he could see there was nothing whatever on the page to explain Handforth's excitement.

"Well? What is it you saw?" demanded Church.

"Nothing," replied Handforth. "At least, nothing much. You wouldn't understand, anyhow. And that paper's mine."

He regained possession of it, folded it up, and put it in his pocket.

"Jolly mysterious, aren't you?" asked McClure.

"We won't discuss the subject any more," said Handforth carelessly.

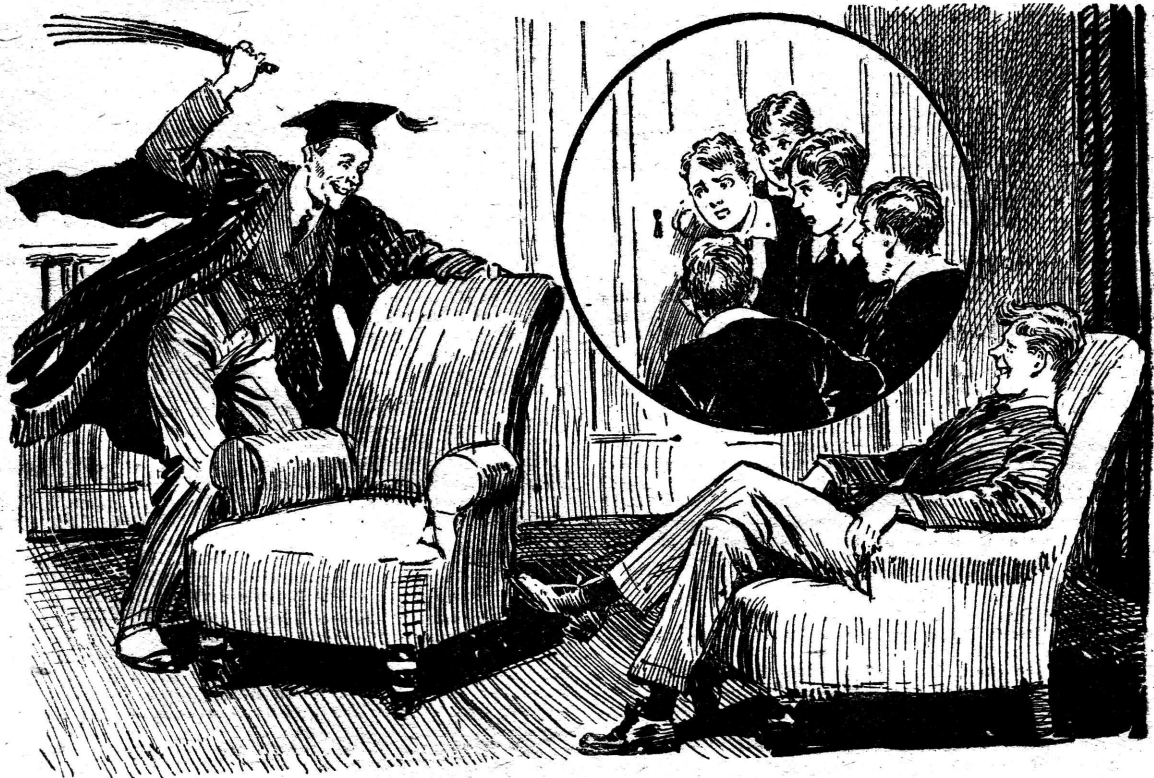
He walked out of the study, leaving his chums puzzled. They had not been fooled by his exaggerated carelessness. They knew perfectly well that he had something on his mind.

"Oh, well!" said Church. "It's no good asking him. He's in one of his secretive moods. But he'll let it out sooner or later. He always does."

When everything was quiet in Jim Sayers' dormitory at the River House School, the boy from Bathurst silently left his bed. He was very wide awake.

When the others had come up to bed he had pretended sleep, rolling from side to side occasionally, muttering to himself as though in pain. He had heard the comments of his schoolfellows, and the truth of the old adage, "Listeners never hear good of themselves," was fully thrust home. For most of the comments were of an entirely unsympathetic character.

Now that everybody was asleep he slipped into a dressing-gown, and, with slippers in his hand, he padded to the door. If anybody awoke and missed him it wouldn't



Outside the study the Australian boys listened breathlessly to the swishing of the birch. Inside the room Mr. Rutter diligently belaboured an easy-chair, while Jim Sayers, the "victim," lolled in another armchair, grinning and uttering moans of anguish!

matter. It would only be assumed that he had gone out to apply balm to his tender spots. He donned his slippers on the landing, and then crept downstairs.

Mr. Rutter was in his study, reading and smoking, and the master looked up sharply as the door opened.

"You shouldn't do this, Sayers," he muttered. "I've told you before, we must be careful."

"Well, who's to see us?" grinned Jim Sayers. "I want a cigarette, and a chat. Everything went off bonzer, didn't it?"

"You came perilously near to a real flogging, all the same," said Mr. Rutter, as Sayers helped himself to a cigarette, and sat down. "Atherton was dead-set on punishing you himself, and it was as much as I could do to make him alter his mind."

"Well, I guess everything's all right," grinned Sayers. "I do the dirty deeds, you swipe me, and everything's dandy. To all appearances we're not on speaking terms—and that is just as well, perhaps."

"It's exactly what we want," replied Rutter, leaning forward. "You played your part well, kid. You've disgraced the name of Sayers pretty thoroughly. To-morrow I'm mailing a report to my headmaster in Sydney, regarding your conduct; and you can be quite sure that he'll pass it on to old Bartholomew Easton."

"That's great," said Sayers lazily. "And what about the local newspaper?"

"Leave it to me," said Rutter. "I'll get a paragraph in—and a good one."

"Maybe it'll get into the London papers, too," said Sayers. "That's fine, Rutter. I reckon we're doing mighty well between us."

Meanwhile, another schoolboy was wakeful—not at the River House, but at St. Frank's. And his wakefulness was no coincidence. It was directly connected with the plotting schoolmaster and his schoolboy confederate.

Edward Oswald Handforth, in fact, had done very much as Jim Sayers had done. Whilst pretending to sleep, he had remained fully awake, until Church and McClure were soundly off.

For Handforth had seen something in the evening newspaper which had made sleep impossible.

There was a picture in the newspaper—a small photograph of some valuable diamonds which were missing. They were

uncut diamonds—and in the photograph they looked exactly like seashore pebbles. More than that, the writer of the little article stated clearly enough that the diamonds might easily be mistaken for worthless pebbles.

So Handforth had jumped; and Church and McClure could not understand.

He had not told them of that strange adventure of his, when he had gone over to the River House School to give Sayers a thrashing—when, at dead of night, he had seen Mr. Rutter, the master, burying something in the school grounds. Handforth had dug up some rough-looking pebbles, and for one breathless instant he had wondered if they were uncut diamonds. Then he had examined them again, and he had been quite sure that they were not diamonds.

But now, after seeing that photograph in the newspaper, he was just as sure they were diamonds, and he had decided to go to the River House to dig up the pebbles.

When Handforth was quite certain that his chums were soundly asleep he got out of bed and dressed. They were in a different dormitory to-night, for their own, after its flooding, would not be habitable for a week or two. Handforth was rather glad of this, for the new room was bigger, and his own bed was quite near the door.

He would have taken his chums into his confidence over this matter, but as it might get them into serious trouble, he had conscientiously decided to act alone. For his mission meant breaking bounds after lights out—and discovery might mean expulsion, or at least a flogging. Handy decided that it was up to him, therefore, to do the job single-handed.

Like a shadow he crept out of the dormitory, and he softly closed the door. Then, advancing along the passage, he told himself that everything was all right. As he was about to turn the corner, a board creaked somewhere just ahead.

He pulled up with a jerk, his heart thudding rapidly. He pressed himself into a doorway, and then round the corner came a stealthy, creeping figure.

The Midnight Errand!

THERE was something mysterious about that silent figure. Handforth knew in a flash that it belonged to no master or prefect. The very stealthiness of the marauder proved that his business was not legitimate. He came on, and Handforth's mind juggled with thoughts of

burglars and smugglers and coiners. The figure was practically upon him now, and he tried to press himself farther back into the doorway. Then, just as the figure came opposite, it halted and stiffened. He had sensed, rather than seen, Handforth's shadowy form in the doorway.

In that second, Edward Oswald acted. He leapt out, and the next moment the pair thudded against one another, and crashed to the floor.

"Got you!" breathed Handforth exultantly, as he rammed one of his knees into his victim's chest.

"By cripes!" gurgled the victim.

Handforth started. The expression was familiar; his thoughts leapt to their rivals of the Australian school. Perhaps his prisoner wasn't a burglar, after all.

"Easy, Handy—easy!" murmured the voice. "For goodness' sake, don't wake the whole House! Don't you know me?"

"By George! Dodd!" panted Handforth, in astonishment.

He released Jerry Dodd without hesitation; and he noted, almost subconsciously, that the St. Frank's Aussie was fully dressed. Jerry scrambled to his feet.

"Nobody seems to have heard," he whispered. "Better come downstairs before we talk—it's safer."

They went down, and neither spoke until they were in the Remove passage. Jerry Dodd flashed an electric torch, and the light revealed the fully dressed Handforth with his shoes in his hand.

"So you were thinking of breaking bounds, chum?" asked Jerry accusingly.

"Eh? Well, as a matter of fact— Breaking bounds?" repeated Handforth. "What rot! I—I was only going to— By George! What about you?" he added, with a start. "You were going to break bounds, too, weren't you?"

"It looks a bit like it," admitted Jerry, with a grin.

"You're going to mess everything up!" said Handforth. "How can I go to the River House in secret with you butting in— I—I mean—"

"River House?" repeated Jerry sharply. "Were you going to the River House?"

"Nun-no! That is to say—" He paused. "Why should I tell you?" he continued. "I'm going to conduct these investigations on my own."

"Better rope me in, chum," said Jerry Dodd. "I know so much now that you'd better tell me the rest. We might be able to help one another, too. Rummily enough, I was thinking of slipping over to the River House."

"What! Then you know about Rutter?"

"Rutter? He's the man who gave Sayers such a tanning this evening," said Jerry. "You heard about it, didn't you? Fairly took the skin off him."

"It serves Sayers right—for what he did to our Common-room," retorted Handforth gruffly. "It seems that Rutter is a master of Sayers' own school, in Melbourne."

"Sydney," corrected Jerry.

"What's the difference? But blow Sayers! He's an ill-natured cad, and I go hot when I hear his name," said Handforth. "Rutter is my man! Look here, Dodd, I'm going to take you into a secret. Rutter is a crook! A thief—a diamond thief!"

"A thief—a diamond thief," said Handforth dramatically.

"Draw it mild, chum," protested Jerry.

"I'm giving you a surprise, eh?" went on Handforth, with relish. "But listen to me! Remember that night I went over to the River House to give Sayers a licking?"

He told the surprised Jerry Dodd of his adventure in the River House grounds.

"The pebbles in that tobacco pouch were diamonds!" he concluded dramatically. "When I saw that photograph in to-night's paper I was sure of it. Why should a schoolmaster go into the grounds at dead of night and bury diamonds? I'm going over there now—to dig 'em up! I know exactly where they are."

"Hold on, chum—hold on!" said Jerry slowly. "This needs thinking out. Now, I'm going to tell you something. But you'll have to promise me to keep it under your hat."

"Go ahead! I promise."

"Well, Sayers isn't Sayers at all."

"What do you mean—he isn't Sayers at all?" asked Handforth, staring. "That doesn't make sense."

"Yes, it does. I don't know what his real name is, but I've got an inkling of his game," said Jerry. "He's an impostor, and I'm beginning to think that he and Rutter are working together. When I first went over to see Sayers I was alone in his study—and Rutter came in."

"But—but I don't get it!" protested Handforth.

Jerry explained. He told Handforth that he had known Jim Sayers since childhood. The Dodd station, in New South Wales, adjoined the Easton station. Jerry and Jim had camped together, had fished together, and they were firm cobbbers. And Jerry, on meeting the supposed Jim Sayers, had allowed the impostor to believe that he was safe.

"He thinks we haven't met since we were little kids," Jerry explained. "I've allowed him to go on thinking that—because I want to discover his game. I think I know what it is. Do you remember how he boasted and bragged of his so-called joke? It's the real Jim Sayers who'll get the discredit. For some reason this unutterable cad is dragging Jim's name into the mud."

"And Rutter is helping!" breathed Handforth. "By George! They're crooks—both of 'em! Let's go straight over to the River House and unmask them!"

"No need to be in such a hurry, old man," said Jerry. "My idea was to go over there and do some scouting. We might as well go together. Not that we're likely to make any discoveries at this hour."

"We'll get those diamonds, anyhow," declared Handforth. "Come on! There's no telling what we may discover."

PEN PALS

(Continued from page 13.)

Miss Helen Bainbridge, 78, Redman Buildings, Bourne Estate, Holborn, London, E.C.1, wants girl correspondents; age 14-16.

Miss Hilda Rennett, 71, Shirley Road, Wollstonecroft, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wants a girl correspondent interested in books and sport; England or Canada; age 12-15.

Eustace Netscher, 2, Convent Road, Bangalore, South India, wants a correspondent; England or Africa; age 15-16.

Miss Lily Trinh, 6, Dragon Terrace, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong, China, wants girl correspondents; age 13-14; sports, music, swimming; America, Australia, Spain, Canada, and Africa.

Miss Pauline Trinh, 6, Dragon Terrace, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong, China, wants girl correspondents in Germany, Hawaii, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Australia, Egypt, Greece, and America; age 15-16; music, stamps, sport, swimming, shorthand, typing.

Harold Hemming, 30, Grove Road, Keneot, Half Way Tree P.O., Jamaica, wants pen pals; age 15-16; swimming, scouting, horses.

Miss Joyce Ellison, Railway View, Harden, N.S.W., Australia, wants a girl pen pal in England, America or Egypt; age 17-19.

Peter Boyle, 27, Buckingham Street, Davenport, Stockport, Cheshire, wants pen pals.

Miss Joyce Harbottle, 8, Uppingham Road, Wallasey, Cheshire, wants girl correspondents.

Miss Nancy L. Stenbridge, 15, Hazwell Road, Putney, London, S.W.15, wants girl correspondents.

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Kemal Mahfood, 21, Heathfield Avenue, Upper Elletson Road, Jamaica, wants correspondents interested in stamps and old copies of the GEM; age 14-17.

G. Goldie, 56, Buckingham Street, North Richmond, E.1, Melbourne, Australia, wants members for his Pen Club; interested in the old GEMS, and photos.

Miss Peggy Wilson, 73, Belgrave Street, Manly, N.S.W., Australia, wants a girl correspondent in England or Ireland; reading, films; age 11-13.

Ron Buckingham, 7, Coulton Street, Bondi, Sydney, Australia, wants to hear from stamp collectors; Newfoundland, Straits Settlements, and America.

Fred Goldie, 56, Buckingham Street, North Richmond, E.1, Melbourne, Australia, wants correspondents; interested in pets.

William Yerbury, 80, 34th Avenue, Lachine, Province Quebec, Canada, wants to hear from stamp collectors; age 11-14; any British Colony.

Miss Alice Gibson, 4, Tennyson Street, Salford 6, Lancs., wants girl correspondents; interested in Rugby; age 20-24.

Keith Goldie, 56, Buckingham Street, North Richmond, E.1, Melbourne, Australia, wants pen pals interested in conjuring.

E. Phillips, Marist Bros' College, Joubert Park, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wants to hear from a correspondent in England; age 13-14; interested in stamps.

Cyril Hepworth, 41, Rowland Street, Skipton, Yorks., wants a Scout correspondent in Australia; interested in sports and camping.

Miss Betty Tricker, 115, Bury Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, wants a girl correspondent; age 12-16.

Miss Marguerite de Courcy, Lyndhurst, Algiers Road, Loughton, Essex, wants a girl correspondent in England, South Africa, or Canada; age 13-15; swimming, riding, sports generally; fond of animals.

Miss Maria Esperanza Lafone, Benito Blanco Street, 1733, Pocitos, Montevideo, Uruguay, South America, wants girl correspondents.



Mr. E. S. Brooks welcomes letters from readers. Write to him c/o The Editor, The GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

YOU have gone one better, this time, William C. Leitch, Aberdeen. Your last letter is a fair "knock-out." In fact, it's hardly a letter at all, but a work of art! Do you write all your letters in this highly pictorial fashion? You are asking me rather a lot when you want me to give you the titles of all the "St. Frank's Blue Crusaders" stories which appeared some years ago, in the old "Boys' Realm." I have files of these stories, and one day, if I feel energetic enough, I will look them up and then give you the list. But have a heart in all this heat! With regard to Cecil de Valerie, he first appeared in the old "Nelson Lee Library," in the issue dated December 15th, 1917. The story was called "The Mysterious Schoolboy." He went into a study with a fellow named Kemp, who seems to have somehow disappeared since then. De Valerie's entry into the school was not a particularly happy one, as he had accepted a bribe

They donned their shoes and got out by means of the window in Study D. Like shadows they crept across West Square, and soon they had climbed the school wall. And as they went across the meadows to the River House School they continued to talk.

Jerry urged the necessity of keeping mum.

"Don't take it the wrong way, Handy, but you do let things slip," he said earnestly. "But don't say anything about this. If you do—if it gets talked about generally—that cad who calls himself Jim Sayers will be warned, and then he'll be on his guard. I'm playing a waiting game—a watching game."

"Think I can't do the same?" retorted Handforth. "Haven't I kept mum about Rutter and the diamonds?"

"Well, yes," admitted Jerry, in some surprise. "That's true."

"Then don't talk rot! I can keep a secret as well as anybody!" growled Handforth. "We're in this together—and we'll stick together. It's a real detective job—and that's just my mark!"

When they reached the wall which surrounded the River House property they decided to do no more talking. They swarmed up and dropped silently over. The school buildings were in darkness, and the August night was hot and still. Caution was very necessary, for it was certain that bedroom windows would be wide open—and the sleepers within perhaps restless.

Handforth led the way unerringly to the spot where he had seen Mr. Rutter digging. With his bare hands, Edward Oswald turned the earth over. But, search as he might, he could not find the tobacco pouch with its strange contents.

"It's gone!" he whispered at length. "That's queer, too. I put it back after I'd looked inside."

"Sure this is the right spot?"

"Absolutely certain!"

"It's a big garden—"

"But I marked the spot in my mind's eye," interrupted Handforth. "Rutter must have taken the diamonds away."

Jerry Dodd wondered. Truth to tell, he had no particular faith in Handforth's somewhat sensational story. True, Handforth could not have imagined it all; but it was likely enough that Rutter's activities had been quite innocent. Handforth had a way of exaggerating trifles and adding picturesque details of his own unconscious invention.

"Well, don't let's bother," murmured Jerry. "We'll forget about the—er—diamonds."

"Oh, will we?" breathed Handforth. "The very fact that Rutter has dug them up proves there's something fishy about the whole business. Let's get in, locate Rutter's study, and search it. We're bound to find something incriminating—and then we shall have him in the hollow of our hands!"

Jerry grinned in the darkness.

"What you're proposing is rank burglary," he murmured. "Rats! Detectives often have to break into houses to get evidence," replied Handforth. "Besides, if we're twigged we can easily say that we came here to work a jape on our Aussie rivals. Let's scout round for a likely window."

from some crooks to do a spot of dirty work. He was, in fact, fooled, and regretted it afterwards. At that time, he was a supercilious sort of chap, disliked by most of the fellows. But they soon knocked some sense into him—or to be more exact, they knocked the nonsense out of him.

* * *
"Names List"—No. 5. West House, Remove. Study S: Dick Goodwin, Solomon Levi, Morgan Evans. Study T: Justin B. Farman, Charles Owen, Augustus Hart. Study U: Clarence Fellowe, Timothy Tucker, Robert Canham. Study V: Harold Doyle, Yung Ching, Larry Scott.

* * *
There is no need for you to worry, "Cherry," Bethnal Green. Tom Merry & Co. will not be cut out of the old paper. You will still continue to get your story of St. Jim's, and the serial featuring my St. Frank's characters. You might let me know how you like the present all-school serial.

* * *
It is not only possible for a St. Frank's story to appear in the "Boys' Friend 4d. Library" regularly, C. Willson, Lewisham, but it is a fact! In June, you had "The Schemer of St. Frank's," and in July, "St. Frank's On Broadway." There are lots more to come! Look out for the announcements. By the way, have you seen "Handforth At St. Jim's" in No. 224 of "The Schoolboys' Own Library"? This is not actually a St. Frank's story, but it features Edward Oswald Handforth throughout. Sorry, old man, but the old 4d. books you mention are now quite out of print and unobtainable.

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

Jerry Dodd did not object. The adventure appealed to his own active spirit, and he realised—as Church and McClure had often realised—that he had better stick close to Handforth, in order to save the latter from getting himself into a mess.

They crept through the grounds, making no sound, skirting the building which was Marshall's House. And no sooner had they turned an angle of the wall than they saw a lighted blind. Jerry placed a restraining hand on his companion's arm. He saw that the window was partially open—and the blind, too, did not reach the bottom.

"Easy, chum!" he whispered. "Every little sound can be heard. As likely as not, this is Mr. Atherton's study—"

"No fear!" interrupted Handforth. "Atherton's the Head—and the Head's quarters are round the other side. This is Rutter's study."

Thoroughly excited now, they crept forward. Like shadows they approached the lighted window, moving on all fours. Luckily, Jerry Dodd spotted a half-open cucumber frame in the nick of time, and he pulled Handforth back. For Handforth was about to stumble headlong into the frame. They skirted it successfully, and now they could hear voices.

Sure enough, one voice belonged to a man, and the other—Jerry Dodd started. The voice of the impostor!

He raised his head, and took a quick peep into the room—for there was a long crack under the lowered blind. At the first sight, Jerry Dodd nearly jumped.

For the supposed Jim Sayers was sprawling in an easy-chair, smoking. There was a languid, malicious grin on his face. Sitting at the table, leaning forward and talking earnestly was Rutter, the Australian schoolmaster.

Jerry dodged down, his mind in a whirl. For here was clear evidence that Rutter and Sayers were in league.

He thought of the reports which had reached St. Frank's. Rutter had given Sayers the fogging of his life, yet they were here together on friendly terms. It stood out like a beacon that that fogging had been a fake—a complete "frame-up."

There was a plot here—a plot in which the Australian schoolmaster was deeply involved. He was helping the impostor to ruin the name of Jim Sayers. Where, then, was his one-time cobbler?

Crack!

His thoughts were scattered, and he gasped. Handforth, eager to take a look into the room, too, had raised himself, resting his hand on the trellis which ornamented the wall. Something had broken, and the sound was like a pistol shot in the silence of the night.

"Crumbs!" came a startled gasp from Handforth. Inside the room, Sayers sat forward, staring. Mr Rutter leapt to his feet, his chair crashing back. Not for a second did he hesitate. He dashed at the window, thrust the blind aside, and pushed the window wide open.

Are Handforth and Dodd discovered? Don't miss the startling developments in next week's chapters.

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THE FIGHTING FORM-MASTER!

(Continued from page 22.)

'im so 'is own mother won't know 'im—the swab! Go for 'im! Rush 'im, I tell yer!"

The roughts came on like savage dogs upon a stag. Six to one, the gang had not the slightest doubt that they would be able to rush down the schoolmaster and get him under their feet, and then work their own savage will upon him.

But they counted their chickens too early. The Form-master's fists seemed to be here, there, and everywhere at once. They came home, left and right, upon the jaws of Nobbler and Ginger, and the two ruffians went down yelling.

The Weasel fell across them, lifted off his feet by a tremendous upper-cut, and there was a terrific grunt from Nobbler as his comrade crashed across him.

The other three closed fast on the Form-master. But one of them reeled off with a tremendous drive on the throat, and another dropped as if he had been shot, hit fairly between the eyes.

The last man was clinging to the Form-master, hitting, tearing, scratching, and even biting; but as he was freed from the others, Mr. Harrison grasped him.

In his powerful arms the rough was helpless. He was whirled off his feet, and hurled fairly across the lane.

The Form-master stood breathing hard, ready and alert. Dr. Holmes leaned back against the palings, panting. He was useless in this savage fight; but it looked as if the Fourth Form master did not need assistance. The Head could only gasp and stare at his champion.

The Form-master knew that the fight had only started. One of his foes was placed out of the fight—hors de combat—but there were five savage ruffians closing upon him again.

"Get 'im down, and use yer boots!" muttered Nobbler. And they rushed right at the fighting Form-master.

Crash, crash!
Nobbler groaned, and fell heavily, and did not move. A heavy fist had crashed between his eyes, and Nobbler's eyes were closed now, and were not likely to open again for a quarter of an hour or so.

The Weasel started back, and escaped a blow. Three ruffians fastened on the fighting Form-master like tigers.

Crash!
Down went one of them, groaning with the pain of a fractured jaw; down went a second, swept away by a crashing elbow on his chest.

The Weasel came on again, and the Form-master had two foes still at close quarters hammering furiously.

His face was black with bruises now—his nose and mouth were streaming red. But he was game to the backbone.

Two foes he could deal with. He drove up their clumsy guard, and planted his blows with terrific force and precision.

The Weasel dropped like a log, half stunned and groaning, and the other man was whirled off his feet by a fearful upper-cut.

Three of the footpads staggered to their feet—three of them were past the effort. Three foes now closed upon the powerful man again—the champion boxer who had never put up a fight like this in the ring.

The Form-master did not wait to be attacked. He leaped forward, hitting out savagely, and Ginger fell; and lay groaning, knocked completely out.

Two other men went backing away, guarding feebly against the powerful attack of the Form-master.

He drove them across the lane, under heavy blows, till one fell and lay covering his face with his arm, and the other ran.

Mr. Harrison came back towards the Head. He was gasping with breathless fatigue, and his head was reeling from the hammering he had had.

But he was keen and alert still. If Nobbler and his gang had returned to the attack, they would have found plenty of grit left in the fighting Form-master.

"Come, sir," said Mr. Harrison quietly. "Let me help you to the school."

"Heaven bless you, Harrison."

"It is nothing, sir."

"It might have been death to me," said Dr. Holmes. "I shall not forget this, Mr. Harrison. Pray give me your arm to the school. I have something to say to you there."

The Head leaned heavily upon Mr. Harrison's arm as they moved towards St. Jim's. The Form-master picked up his bag. A quarter of a mile from the scene of the affray, they passed a mounted constable—one of the numerous patrols that had been sent out lately to scour the lanes in search of the footpads.

Mr. Harrison stopped him.

"You will find your men—the men you want—in the lane," he said.

And the constable rode on fast.

The Head and his companion reached the school. As they entered the House, there was a general buzz, and a gathering of a crowd.

"What has happened, sir?" cried Tom Merry.

"Footpads!" said Mr. Harrison briefly.

And he helped the Head into his study.

Dr. Holmes sank into a chair.

For some minutes he did not speak, and the Form-master stood silent. The Head found his voice at last.

"Mr. Harrison!"

"Yes, sir," said the Form-master quietly.

"I dismissed you because you had been a professional boxer; but your boxing, and your wonderful courage, saved me this night—saved my life, perhaps."

"I am only too glad!"

"Harrison! Will you stay at St. Jim's?"

The Form-master shook his head.

"What I did, sir, I did not do with any view to a reward," he said quietly.

"If I asked you to stay?"

Mr. Harrison hesitated.

"But the facts remain, as they were," he said. "I have been a boxer—a most inappropriate person to be a Form-master here, and—"

"But I ask you to keep your position here."

And Dr. Holmes held out his hand.

Mr. Harrison grasped it. The face of the Form-master was very bright now; a weight was lifted from his mind.

"If you are sure, sir—"

"I am sure."

Five minutes later the school heard the news—and there were few in St. Jim's who did not join in the hearty cheer that was given for the fighting Form-master.

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