

"The TERROR of TEXAS!" — By Frank Richards — INSIDE!

The GEM 2^d



The
Schoolboy
Hypnotist!

The SCHOOLBOY HYPNOTIST!



With his eyes fixed on the dark magnetic orbs of the new boy, Lewther danced among the crockeryware on the table, smashing it and trampling it under his feet. "He's dotty!" gasped Tom Merry in amazement and alarm. "Mad as a hatter!" murmured Manners.

CHAPTER 1. Not Nice!

"MASTER MERRY!"

Master Merry—otherwise Tom Merry of the Shell Form at St. Jim's—gave a grunt, but no other acknowledgment of the remark addressed to him.

Tom Merry was seated alone in his study, driving away at a Latin imposition that had to be delivered into the Housemaster's study in the School House before tea-time, and he was not in the best humour in the world.

For it was still the time of early night-fall, and there was little daylight left between afternoon school and tea-time. And that little daylight Tom Merry preferred to utilise in punting a ball about the quad, if there was no time for regular practice.

But a hundred lines of Virgil are not written out in a few minutes, and Tom Merry was still busy while darkness thickened about the old elms of St. Jim's.

Toby, the School House page, had insinuated a shock-head in at the doorway of the study, but the Shell fellow did not look up; he went on driving his pen as if his life depended on it.

"Master Merry!"

Grunt!

Toby grinned a little. He came into the study and tapped on the table. Then Tom Merry looked up and pointed to the door with his pen.

"Scoot!" he said with brevity.

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"But, I say—"

"Vamoose!" roared Tom Merry.

"Can't you see I'm busy?"

"Yes, but—"

"Do you want to get out of this study by the door or by the window, Toby?" asked Tom Merry, rising from his chair.

The School House page backed away in alarm.

"But, Master Tom—"

"Travel!"

"Mr. Railton—"

"Whiz off!"

"Says—"

"Mizzle!"

"Yes, but I—"

Tom Merry picked up a Latin dictionary, and Toby fled. The hero of the Shell sat down again at the table, and his pen drove on with renewed vigour. Toby peered cautiously round the door.

"I say, Master Tom—"

Tom Merry looked up in great exasperation.

"I haven't done the blessed impot yet!" he shouted. "I can't take it to Railton till it's finished, ass! Go and eat coke, duffer! Scoot!"

"But Mr. Railton says—"

"Tell Mr. Railton to go and eat coke, too!"

Toby chuckled.

He was not likely to deliver that message to the Housemaster of the School House at St. Jim's. But it was not necessary, for Mr. Railton himself was coming down the Shell passage. Toby heard his footsteps, and turned round and gazed at him with a dropping jaw,

wondering whether he had heard Tom Merry's words or not.

Mr. Railton's face gave no indication. "Have you delivered my message, Toby?" asked the Housemaster in his quiet, grave voice.

"If you please, sir—"

"Very well! I will deliver it myself."

Toby cast an apprehensive glance at the door of the study. He would gladly have warned Tom Merry, but he could not, and he retreated.

Mr. Railton put his hand upon the door. Tom Merry was writing away at express speed, and as the door opened he shouted out, without looking up:

"Is that you again, you silly ass? If you come into this study I'll mop up the floor with you!"

"Merry!"

Tom Merry jumped.

All sorts and conditions of blots danced from his pen over the paper and rendered that imposition quite useless for presenting in a Housemaster's study.

He stood up and looked at Mr. Railton in dismay.

"I—I— Oh, sir—" he stammered. "I—I'm sorry, sir! I—I didn't know it was you!"

"I can quite believe that, Merry," said Mr. Railton dryly. "You would hardly have addressed me so if you had known that it was I."

"Oh, certainly not, sir!" said Tom Merry eagerly. "I thought it was that other ass—I mean I thought it was that ass Toby—"

"I sent Toby with a message to you, Merry, to come to my study."

—GREAT YARN OF FUN AND EXCITEMENT—FEATURING TOM MERRY & CO.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

"Yes, sir. I—I haven't finished the imposition, sir. I—I was trying to get it done in time," stammered the junior.

Mr. Railton looked at the imposition and smiled again.

"I think that this is a case of more haste less speed, Merry," he said. "I am afraid that that imposition will not be of much use."

Tom Merry glanced down in dismay at the blotted sheet.

"I—I'm afraid not, sir," he said.

"Never mind, Merry. I will excuse you; you need not bring the lines," said Mr. Railton.

Tom Merry was so surprised that he could only stare. He was almost certain that Mr. Railton must have heard him say that the Housemaster could go and eat coke. Mr. Railton certainly never took any notice of words overheard by accident. Still, Tom Merry's remark was hardly likely to make him feel specially kind.

"Oh, th—thank you, sir!" stammered Tom Merry at last, finding his voice.

"Not at all!" said Mr. Railton kindly. "I have something to say to you, Merry."

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry, wondering what was coming.

"There is a new boy coming to the school," said the Housemaster. "He's coming from another school, where he has been in the Shell, and he will be put into the same Form at St. Jim's."

"Yes, sir."

"And he will be assigned to this study, Merry."

Tom Merry's jaw dropped.

"This—this study, sir?" he said.

The Housemaster nodded. Tom Merry looked at him blankly.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther—the Terrible Three—had had that study to themselves for a long time, and they looked upon it as their own particular property. True, new fellows had sometimes been put in there with them; but always, somehow, fortune had befriended them, and they had had the room to themselves again after a time. They had come to believe in their good luck in this respect, and to take it for granted that they would have that room for their own private den for good.

Tom Merry understood now why the Housemaster had excused him the lines. Mr. Railton knew that his news could not be pleasant to the Terrible Three, and he had a kind heart.

"V-very well, sir," said Tom Merry.

"That is all," said the Housemaster quietly. "I have really no choice in the matter, as there have been a good number of new boys this term and space is limited. But, Merry, I have one word to say. I expect you to make things here quite comfortable for the new boy. I have heard of such things as juniors playing tricks upon newcomers in order to induce them to make some effort to change into another study."

Tom Merry's eyes twinkled for a moment. Those tactics had been adopted by the Terrible Three on one occasion, and Mr. Railton evidently knew all about it. It was often quite surprising to the juniors to find out how well Mr. Railton understood them.

"There must be nothing of that sort, Merry," said Mr. Railton. "This new boy, Barber, is, I understand, a quiet

and studious lad, with a good reputation from his last school; I hope you will find him a pleasant companion. I am sure you will not be guilty of any rough play towards a newcomer. I depend upon you, Merry."

Mr. Railton left the study without waiting for Tom Merry to reply.

Tom Merry laid down his pen, which he had been holding in his hand all the time, and savagely screwed up the imposition and threw it into the grate. Then he kicked his chair over, as a sort of safety-valve for his feelings, exclaiming:

"Well, I'm dashed!"

Then he went out to seek Manners and Lowther, and told them all about it, after which he forgot the new boy in punting a footer about the quad with a crowd of juniors.

CHAPTER 2.

The New Junior!

IT was not until the dusk was fast deepening to darkness that the punt-about ended, and the crowd of juniors came in for tea. Then it was that Tom Merry & Co. remembered the new boy, and they entered their study not at all in a good humour, to find the new boy was already there! Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther did not speak. They stood and looked at him. The new boy had been sitting down, but he rose as they came in. He was a slim fellow, not so large as any

Horace Barber, the strange newcomer to St. Jim's, couldn't lick a fag with his fists, but everyone in the school was at the mercy of his mesmeric eyes!

of the Shell fellows, and he had a somewhat pale and studious-looking face and large dark, strangely magnetic eyes.

He was not exactly good-looking, and he certainly was not athletic, but he looked interesting.

He was the kind of fellow whom Crooke of the Shell would have picked upon at once to bully; but his slight form and his evident want of muscularity would at any time have protected him from horseplay on the part of the Terrible Three. They were exasperated to have him in the study, but they would never have laid ragging hands upon a fellow who did not look as if he could stand up to a Third Form fag in fistical combat.

"Hallo!" said the new boy.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry.

"Hallo!" said Manners and Lowther in heavy tones.

"I'm a new chap," the junior explained. "Mr. Railton told me this was to be my study. He said there were three fellows here."

"We're the three," said Monty Lowther. "The trouble is, we're three, and don't want to be four. Savvy?"

The new boy grinned.

"I quite understand," he said. "You want the study to yourselves. It's only natural. There isn't much room here for four, I must say."

"Oh, isn't there?" said Tom Merry, a little nettled.

"It isn't any better for me than for you," went on the new junior cheerfully. "But it's no good looking glum

about it. Better make up our minds to take it serenely."

"Oh!"

"Anyway, here I am," said the new boy. "Is there any tea knocking about? I'm hungry. We used to have tea in the study at my old school. Do you?"

The Terrible Three did not answer for a moment. They began to think that their first impression of the new boy was a mistaken one. He might be slight in build, but he certainly did not lack cool nerve; he was "all there."

They began to think that the new junior knew how to take care of himself.

"We're going to have tea in the study," said Tom Merry at last.

"You're welcome to join us if you like." "Oh, good!" said the new boy. "I shall pay my whack, of course."

"Just as you like."

"You can begin to make yourself useful by lighting the fire," said Monty Lowther. "I'll get down to the tuckshop."

"I don't mind," said the new boy.

"What's your name?" asked Manners.

"Barber—Horace Barber!"

"Nice name to plant on three in-offensive chaps!" growled Monty Lowther.

Barber laughed. It was evident that he did not easily take offence, and the chums of the Shell rather liked him for it.

Barber showed, too, that he could be useful. He lighted the fire, and had the kettle boiling by the time Monty Lowther returned from the tuckshop, laden with purchases. Manners and Tom Merry laid the table.

The Terrible Three began to feel a little more cheerful as they sat down at the tea-table. The new fellow was not so bad, after all, and they considered that they might get on with him.

Of course, they could not admit him at first into the select circle of their society. They had no intention or wish to turn the Terrible Three into the Terrible Four. But, as Barber had said himself, it was best to live amicably, since they had no choice about staying together.

"What did you leave your school for?" asked Tom Merry, as he poured out the tea. "It isn't usual for a chap to enter the Shell here from outside."

Barber nodded.

"I was in the Shell at St. Kate's," he said. "That's in the North. My people have come South to live, you see, and they prefer me near them."

"Queer taste!" murmured Monty Lowther into his teacup.

"That wasn't the only reason, though," said Barber. "I was getting fed-up with St. Kate's."

"Ahem!" said Lowther.

Barber laughed.

"Well, they were getting fed-up with me, too," he explained. "I made a discovery, and since I made it I found St. Kate's too hot to hold me. I suppose I was a little injudicious. But it was ripping fun."

The Terrible Three stared at him.

"Blessed if I catch on!" said Monty Lowther. "Do you mean to say that you are a practical joker? We bar practical jokes in this study."

"Something in that line," said Barber. "As for barring anything in this study, I fancy that rests with me! I could become cock of the study if I liked!"

"Better not take it into your head to like, then!" said Tom Merry in a tone of warning.

"Yes, rather!" said Monty Lowther.

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with emphasis. "You cheeky little beggar, you couldn't crow over a fag here! They must have been a soft lot at St. Kate's to let you become cock of a coal-locker, I should think."

"That's because you don't understand," said Barber cheerfully. "But don't let us begin ragging. How do you get on with the fellows here?"

"All right," said Tom Merry, a little puzzled. "We have to keep the Fourth Form in their place, you know. Blake & Co. in Study No. 6 get on their hind legs sometimes, and we have to squash them. That's all. Of course, we're up against the New House all the time. You see, the School House is Cock House at St. Jim's, and we have to keep up its reputation. We down Figgins & Co. from time to time to keep them in their place."

Barber grinned.

"And they down you sometimes, I suppose?" he asked.

Tom Merry laughed good-humouredly.

"Well, yes; Figgy generally manages to keep his end up," he admitted. "But the School House is Cock House at St. Jim's. No doubt about that."

"In the School House, I suppose?" grinned Barber.

"Look here, you're a bit too fresh, I think!" said Monty Lowther. "Don't you jaw so much, kid! Fellows who jaw too much in this study go about with thick ears afterwards."

"Dear me! You must suffer from thickness of the ear very often!"

"Eh!"

"Deaf?" asked the new boy. "I suppose it's due to the thick ears?"

Monty Lowther rose from the table. His face was very red. The humorist of the Shell was not always able to appreciate fully the humour of others, when it was directed against himself.

"Are you looking for a flat nose?" he inquired.

"Not at all."

"Well, you'll jolly soon get it, if you're not careful!" said Monty Lowther wrathfully. "I don't want to lick you on your first night at St. Jim's, but you'll get it, and get it hot, if you try to be funny!"

"My dear chap, you couldn't lick one side of me!"

"What!" roared Monty Lowther.

"Deaf again?"

Monty Lowther came round the table. He laid his hands upon the shoulders of the new junior, and jerked him out of his chair.

Tom Merry and Manners rose to their feet, too.

"Now," said Monty Lowther grimly, "I'll jolly well show you whether I can lick you or not! Put up your hands!"

The new boy put his hands in his pockets.

"Hold on, Monty!" said Tom Merry. "It's his first night here, you know. Go easy, and never mind his cheek."

"Well," said Lowther, with a snort, "if he'll shut up, I'll let him off—"

"But I don't want to be let off!" said Barber cheerfully.

Tom Merry turned to him sharply.

"You'd better shut up!" he said.

"Rats!"

"What!" roared Tom Merry.

"Deaf, too?" said the new junior, with perfect serenity. "It seems to be an epidemic in this study. I said rats!"

Tom Merry sat down.

"Lick him!" he said. "He wants some of the rotten cheek taken out of him, I think."

And Monty Lowther pushed back his cuffs and advanced upon the new boy.

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CHAPTER 3. The Hypnotist!

BARBER did not seem to want to avoid the conflict, but he looked ridiculously inadequate for it as he faced the long-limbed

Lowther.

Lowther was nearly a head taller, and certainly much longer in the reach, and he probably had twice as much strength as the newcomer. It looked as if the new boy would crumple up like paper in his grasp.

Monty Lowther felt that himself, and he paused once more. He was angry, but he was a generous fellow at heart, and he did not like to tackle a fellow who was obviously no match for him.

"Look here!" he exclaimed. "What do you mean by checking a fellow who could knock you into little pieces with one hand? Are you dotty?"

Barber laughed.

"Not at all! I'll tackle you with pleasure—one to one! If those two chaps will step outside the study for two minutes, I will undertake to dispose of you in that time."

"Do you think we should interfere?" exclaimed Tom Merry indignantly.

"Oh, no! But there isn't much room here. And I suppose Lowther isn't afraid to be left alone?"

Monty Lowther went crimson.

"Afraid!" he hooted. "Afraid of a goggle-eyed little whipper-snapper! I'll show you whether I'm afraid or not! Get out of the study, you chaps, if he wants it by himself. I'll wipe up the blessed carpet with him!"

"Oh, all right!"

Tom Merry and Manners stepped out of the study. Barber closed the door after them, and the chums of the Shell stood in the passage, listening for the sound of combat. But they did not hear any. Once Tom Merry thought he heard a muffled exclamation in Monty Lowther's voice, but that was all.

Manners had his watch in his hand, counting the minutes. A minute and a half had ticked away, and Tom Merry was beginning to feel strangely uneasy.

"Blessed if I like this, Manners!" he muttered.

Manners was looking very serious.

"I don't like it, either," he said. "There's something queer about that kid. I suppose he can't be off his rocker, can he?"

Tom Merry started.

"His eyes look queer!" he said.

"Yes, I noticed that."

"I've a good mind to go in—"

"Only a quarter of a minute now," said Manners. "Better stick it out."

Tom Merry hesitated.

The silence in the study was strange, unexpected, almost uncanny. Why was not Monty Lowther licking the new boy, as he had undertaken to do? Or, if he had failed in that task, he would not be licked himself without a struggle, and any kind of a struggle would make sound enough to be heard in the passage.

But the silence was complete. There was not even the mutter of a voice from within the room. What could it mean?

"Time!" said Manners, at last, after what seemed an age to his companion.

He returned the watch to his pocket, and Tom Merry threw the door open.

The chums rushed in excitedly. They did not understand in the least what might have happened, but they were by no means prepared for what greeted their eyes. They stopped just inside the study, gasping with astonishment.

"My—my—my hat!"

The new boy was seated in the arm-chair in an attitude of careless ease. Monty Lowther was kneeling at his feet presenting him with a cup of tea in the most humble and respectful manner.

The chums of the Shell stared at him blankly. They could not understand Monty Lowther's attitude. He had his eyes fixed upon Horace Barber.

"What are you up to, you giddy ass?" roared Tom Merry.

"What's the little game, Lowther?" asked Manners angrily. "What are you playing the giddy goat like that for?"

Lowther did not reply. He did not seem to hear. There was a curious set expression upon his face and a dazed look in his eyes.

"Take the tea, my lord!" he said.

Tom Merry and Manners gasped. Had Monty Lowther gone mad?

Barber waved his hand.

"Throw it away!" he said. "Pitch it into the fire, cup and all!"

Monty Lowther rose to his feet. He swung round towards the firegrate, and sent the cup, tea, and saucer crashing into the glowing coals.

"Lowther!" shouted Tom Merry.

Lowther did not look at him. He turned back to Barber, as if for instructions. He seemed to be quite unaware of his chums in the study. Tom Merry and Manners, their amazement now mixed with alarm, watched him speechlessly.

"What are your commands, my lord?" asked Lowther.

"Stand on your head in the corner!" said Barber.

"Yes, my lord!"

Monty Lowther walked to the corner of the study, knelt down, and stood upon his head, with his feet balanced against the wall, and all sorts of things dropping out of his pockets.

Tom Merry staggered back against the door.

"He's dotty!" he gasped.

"Mad as a hatter!" murmured Manners.

"Now jump on the table!" said Barber.

Lowther up-ended himself, and made a spring upon the table. The crockery-ware went flying left and right, and there was crash after crash upon the floor.

"Stop it!" shrieked Tom Merry.

"Hold on, Lowther!"

Lowther danced among the crockery-ware that remained on the table, with his eyes still fixed upon the dark, magnetic orbs of the strange new boy.

"Now punch Manners' head!"

"Yes, my lord!"

Lowther jumped off the table, and advanced upon Manners with his fists up. The set look upon his face showed that he was not joking. But why he should thus obey the extraordinary commands of the new boy was a mystery.

Manners backed away, so helpless with amazement that he could not possibly defend himself.

Monty Lowther followed him up, punching away, and Manners roared as Lowther's fists came biffing upon his head.

"Stop it!" he roared.

Biff, biff, biff!

Manners put up his hands to defend himself, and Barber, grinning, called Lowther off as if he were a dog.

"Stop!"

Monty Lowther stopped.

"Now go for Tom Merry!"

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Tom Merry, dodging round the table. "Have



Instead of attacking Barber, Knox dropped on his knees before the new junior. The Shell fellows gazed at him in astonishment. "I'm sorry," said the prefect, in a strained voice. "I beg your pardon, Barber, and I hope you will overlook my bullying behaviour!"

you gone mad, or what? What does this mean?"

Lowther pursued him hotly. Barber burst into a roar of laughter, and shouted to him:

"Stop it now, Lowther!"

"Yes, my lord!"

"Come and sit on the hearthrug so that I can rest my feet on you."

"Yes, my lord!"

Lowther squatted on the rug, and, to the amazement of his chums, took Barber's feet, and placed them upon his shoulders. Tom Merry rushed at the new boy, seized him by the collar, and shook him.

"What does this mean?" he asked fiercely. "What have you done to Lowther? He seems to have gone dotty."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Barber.

"Answer me!" exclaimed Tom.

"What have you done to him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young rascal, I'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Collar him, Manners!"

"What-ho!"

Tom Merry and Manners grasped the new boy together, and whirled him over. Barber went with a heavy bump to the floor.

"Ow!" he spluttered. "Ow! Cheese it!"

"What have you done to Lowther?"

"Hold on! I'll explain!"

"What have you done, then?"

"I've—ha, ha, ha!—I've hypnotised him!"

CHAPTER 4.

Under the "Fluence"!

"HYPNOTISED him!"

"What!"

Tom Merry and Manners staggered back in surprise.

Barber rose to his feet, somewhat ruffled, but still grinning. He set his tie straight, and dusted his jacket.

Monty Lowther was still sitting upon the hearthrug, looking fixedly before him.

"Do you mean to say that you're a hypnotist?" demanded Tom Merry, finding his voice again at last.

Barber nodded.

"Exactly!" he replied.

"I—I can't believe it!"

Barber pointed to Lowther.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" he remarked.

"Yes! But—"

"Speak to him, and see if he knows you."

Tom Merry bent over Lowther, and touched him on the shoulder.

"Monty, old man!" he said.

Lowther did not reply. Tom Merry shook him gently.

"Monty, don't you know me?"

"Yes; you're Dr. Holmes," said Lowther, "and that's Mrs. Holmes." He pointed to Manners.

Tom Merry turned quite pale.

"It's horrible!" he said. "Do you mean to say that you can put anybody into that state, Barber, and make them do just as you like, and say what you choose?"

"Yes, certainly!"

"Make Lowther all right again then."

"All serene!"

Barber stepped in front of Monty Lowther, fixed his magnetic eyes on Lowther's fixed orbs, and made some strange passes before him with his slim, white hands.

Lowther gave a start, like a fellow awakening from sleep, and cast a sudden wild glance round him. Then he jumped to his feet.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "I—I've been asleep, I think. Hallo! Who's been smashing up the happy home?"

"You have!" said Manners.

"I? What do you mean?"

"You smashed the crockery jumping on the table," said Tom Merry.

Lowther turned red.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" he said. "What are you telling that yarn for? I suppose I couldn't jump on the table without knowing it, could I?"

"That's just what you did do," said Tom Merry. "The new chap hypnotised you. Barber's a hypnotist."

"Rats!"

"It's true, Lowther," said Tom Merry gravely. "Can you remember what happened when we went out of the study?"

Lowther started, and wrinkled his brows in an effort of thought.

"I—I was going to lick Barber," he said. "I—I seem to forget what happened. I don't remember anything after you went out of the study."

Tom Merry looked at Barber. The new boy was grinning. He was evidently enjoying his little joke on the Terrible Three. But the matter did not appear wholly humorous to Tom Merry.

"Is this what you were referring to when you said that your old school was too hot to hold you?" he asked.

"Yes," grinned Barber. "I studied the subject a long time, you know, and I found that I had the gift. I can hypnotise anybody. I was always a bit of a joker, and I made things hum at St. Kate's until they found me out. If would have been all right, then, only I made a mistake of hypnotising my Form-master. I made him do a cake-walk in the Form-room. They couldn't prove it, you know, but the Head was very suspicious, and in the end he asked my father to take me away."

"I should think your father gave you a jolly good hiding!" said Manners grimly.

Barber chuckled.

"He would have," he said, "only I told him that if he did I would hypnotise him, and make him go up to the City one day dressed as a pierrot. Then he decided to let me off."

"You young rascal!" said Tom Merry. But he could not help laughing.

"My hat!" said Lowther. "I'll give you the biggest licking you ever had in your life for your cheek in mesmerising me, you young cub!"

Barber held up his hand.

"Pax!" he exclaimed. "I've let you into this secret, but I expect you to keep it. I don't want to row with you chaps—I was only showing you what I could do. Besides, if you row with me I can hypnotise you, and make you duck yourselves in the river, or go down to class with curling-pins in your hair. Better go slow."

"My hat!" said Manners.

"You've told me that you're up against the Fourth Form here, and against the New House," said Barber. "I'm in your study, and I side with you. Think of the larks we can have if you keep it dark!"

"My giddy aunt!" said Lowther. "This chap looks like being an acquisition to this study. I say, we shall be able to wring some fun out of this!"

"Friends, then?" said the new boy.

"Just as you like."

"Only you'll have to keep it within bounds," said Manners. "Don't you start hypnotising Form-masters here, or you'll get sacked, the same as you did at your last school."

Barber chuckled.

"I know that. I'm going to stop on the right side of the limit this time. But I was a born humorist, and I don't see why I shouldn't have a little fun—what?"

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry.

There was a tap at the door, and it opened. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form looked in. His eyeglass glimmered at the new boy, and then he gave a start as he saw the

broken crockeryware on the table and the floor.

"Bai Jove! Waggin' a new boy on his first night here?" he asked. "I wegard that as wathah bad form, you know."

"Go hon!"

"Yaas, wathah! By the way, can you lend me a Latin dictionary, Tom Mewwy? I thaww mine at Hewwies' beastly bulldog the othah day, and the howwid beast picked it up in his teeth, you know, and wovwoid it, and now there aren't any S's or T's left."

"Ha, ha, ha! Here you are!"

"Thanks vewy much, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave a little start. Barber's dark eyes were fastened upon him, and the new junior was making strange passes with his hands. A glazed expression came over D'Arcy's face, and his eyeglass dropped from his eye. The chums of the Shell knew that Barber was putting the fluence on, and they watched breathlessly for a moment.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, almost inaudibly.

"Take the dictionary in your teeth," said Barber.

"Yaas."

Arthur Augustus obeyed. "Now go back to your study on all fours!"

"Yaas," mumbled D'Arcy.

With the Latin dictionary held in his teeth by the cover, the swell of St. Jim's dropped upon his hands and knees, and progressed out of the study in that manner. The sight was so utterly ridiculous that the chums of the Shell burst into a shriek of laughter. They crowded out of the doorway into the

passage to watch the progress of the swell of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy was going down the passage on all fours, the book in his mouth. They watched him till he turned the corner into the Fourth Form passage.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "It's wonderful!"

In Study No. 6 Blake and Herries and Digby, the chums of the Fourth, were awaiting the return of Arthur Augustus with the Latin dictionary. They all wanted it. Blake looked round towards the door as he heard a peculiar thudding sound in the passage.

"What on earth's that?" he exclaimed.

"Blessed if I know!" said Digby, in surprise. "It sounds like—Oh!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came crawling into the study, with the dictionary in his mouth. The chums of the Fourth gazed at him in dumb surprise.

D'Arcy crawled on all fours to Blake's feet, and deposited the dictionary there, and Blake gasped helplessly.

"Are you potty?" he jerked out.

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet. Blake jumped up and shook him. The swell of St. Jim's seemed suddenly to come to himself. The fluence was off.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured.

"What did you play that silly trick for?" yelled Blake.

"Eh? What twick?"

"Crawling into the study with a dictionary in your mouth, you silly ass!"

"Pway don't be an ass, Blake. I suppose I'm not the sort of chap to play such a widiculous twick as that."

"But you did!"

"Wats!"

"What did you do it for, you champion chump?"

"I didn't do anything of the sort, and I wufuse to entah into such a widiculous discuss," said the swell of St. Jim's with dignity. "Pway cheese it!"

And he sat down at the table to work. Blake and Herries exchanged amazed glances. They had often suggested to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in a jesting way, that he was "off his rocker," but now they could not help entertaining the possibility of that really being the case.

CHAPTER 5.

Lines for Knox!

THE Terrible Three regarded their new chum with something like awe that evening. The weird gift he possessed was not wholly reassuring to think of.

At any moment he might exercise his curious powers upon themselves, and Tom Merry and Manners had no desire to go through Monty Lowther's ridiculous experiences, and Lowther himself had no desire to repeat them. And the chums of the Shell could not help seeing that the schoolboy hypnotist possessed an almost irrepressible sense of humour.

They did not wonder that he had found his last school too hot to hold him, after he began exercising his powers as a hypnotist. A Form-master who had been put "under she fluence" was not likely to forgive such a trick. And they wondered how long it would be before the youthful humorist got himself "sacked" from St. Jim's.

But, meanwhile, they could not help seeing immense possibilities of fun. With such an ally on their side, there was no doubt that they could cover the rival House at St. Jim's with confusion.

And Barber was evidently ready for



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anything. The Terrible Three were likely to have to restrain him rather than to urge him on.

"The fact is, you're a dangerous beast," said Monty Lowther, keeping a wary eye upon the new boy, in case Barber should put the fluence on suddenly without warning. "Blessed if I like having you round the place! If the Head gets to know that you're a hypnotist, he'll ask your governor to take you away. He won't have a giddy hypnotist in the school!"

Barber grinned. "You've promised to keep it dark," he said. "And, look here, I'll promise not to put the fluence on any of you three. It's only fair to keep it out of the study. I did that at St. Kate's."

"You'd better be careful how you put it on anybody," said Tom Merry. "But it would really be ripping fun to shove it on Knox."

"Who's Knox?" "A prefect—a chap in the Sixth, and a rotten bully! He sees lights out for us in the Shell dorm to-night."

Barber's dark eyes twinkled. "If he cuts up rusty I'll give him a lesson!" he declared.

And the chums of the Shell looked forward to bed-time with some anticipation. Knox was the worst-tempered fellow in the School House, and he was pretty certain to cut up rusty in one way or another.

When the Shell went to bed Barber attracted some attention. The juniors were always curious about new boys. But nothing could have been more quiet and sedate than the new junior's manner.

No one but the Terrible Three suspected that he possessed weird powers that placed the rest of the Form at his mercy, if he had chosen.

Knox looked into the dormitory. "Get into your beds, you young sweeps!" he said. "You new kid, you take the bed next to Brookes', and you'd better look sharp!"

"All serene, Knoxy!" said Monty Lowther. "Take fifty lines for impertinence, Lowther!" Knox exclaimed.

"Oh, make it five hundred!" said Lowther. "Very well—five hundred," said the prefect, taking the junior at his word.

"Five hundred lines, Lowther, or you stay in all to-morrow afternoon." "Thanks!" said Lowther lazily.

"Won't you give the other chaps some? Tom Merry wants some lines, don't you, Tommy?" "Yes," said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"Five hundred lines will do nicely for me. May I have five hundred lines, Knoxy?" Knox stared in amazement. He had never known a junior to ask for lines.

"Yes, you young hound!" he said. "Take five hundred lines!" "May I have some?" asked Manners. "Five hundred!" yelled Knox.

"Thanks!" The rest of the Shell stared blankly at the Terrible Three. They were even more surprised than Knox. There was a football match on the following afternoon, and certainly the Terrible Three had "done" for themselves, so far as that was concerned. For such an impot as five hundred lines would require most of the half-holiday. But the chums of the Shell knew what they were doing. If Barber hypnotised Knox, the lines would not have to be done. Indeed, Barber could easily make Knox write the lines himself. After what they had seen Barber do to Lowther and D'Arcy,

their faith in the school hypnotist was unbounded.

"Better give me five hundred, too, as I'm in the same study," said Barber. "You might do that as a special favour, Box. Is your name Box?"

"My name is Knox," said the prefect between his teeth. "And you can take five hundred lines like the others, Barber!"

"Make it five thousand, if you like." "You cheeky young imp! You're beginning well, I must say," said Knox. "I don't know what your game is, but if you say another word I'll thrash you till you've got a separate ache in every bone of your body!"

"Done!" said Barber. Knox was taken aback. He had certainly not expected that reply from the new junior. But he was quite willing to keep his word. He strode towards the new boy, his hard face red with rage.

Barber did not move. He did not seem to want to dodge the angry prefect. But as Knox approached him the prefect's pace slackened, and a peculiar expression came over his face. He seemed at a loss for a moment. That the peculiar motions Barber was making with his hands could be the cause of it no one dreamed, excepting the Terrible Three. They knew!

Knox halted. Instead of attacking the new junior he dropped on his knees before Barber. The Shell fellows gazed at him in astonishment.

"What's the matter with Knox?" breathed Kanagaroo. "He's dotty!"

"Oh, look! He's begging the new chap's pardon!" "I'm sorry," said Knox, in a strange strained voice. "I beg your pardon, Barber, and I hope you will overlook my bullying behaviour."

The Shell gasped. Barber waved his hand in a magnanimous manner. "Yes, I will excuse you, if you are good," he said. "But don't let it occur again."

"Certainly not!" said Knox. "Go down to your study and write a thousand lines," said Barber. "Yes, my lord."

Knox rose to his feet, and, looking neither to the right nor to the left, walked out of the dormitory, and closed the door behind him.

The Shell stared at Barber. "What does it mean?" shouted Gore. "Are you a giddy magician, you new chap?"

Barber chuckled. "Yes," he replied. "What!"

"Knox won't bother us any more," said Barber. "Suppose we have a game before going to bed. He won't come up again."

"My hat!" "I don't understand it." "Look here, Barber, what does it mean?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

"Oh, it's all right!" said Barber. "Don't ask any questions, and I won't tell you any newspaper stories. Let's have a game before we turn in."

The Shell fellows were quite willing. They were astounded, but they were very willing to take advantage of their unaccustomed freedom. In a few minutes leapfrog was in full swing in the Shell dormitory, and the noise the juniors made was enough to wake the fellows in all the other dormitories in the School House.

In the midst of the din the door opened, and Kildare of the Sixth looked in.

The captain of the school stared at the excited juniors in amazement.

"What does this mean?" he shouted. "Why aren't you kids in bed?" The leapfroggers paused.

"You see—" began Tom Merry. "Didn't Knox see lights out?" asked Kildare. "Well, you see—"

"Go to bed at once, and take three hundred lines each!" said Kildare. "You young rascals!"

Tom Merry caught Barber by the (Continued on the next page.)

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shoulder. He could see the intention of the schoolboy hypnotist in his face. "Hold on!" he muttered. "Not Kildare! He's the best chap in the school! You musn't play any tricks on Kildare!"

"Oh, rats!" said Barber. "I'm not going to do any lines, anyway."

"Can't be helped. No tricks on Kildare!"

"Look here——"

"I mean it," said Tom Merry.

"Oh, all right!"

The juniors turned in. Kildare watched them with a stern brow, and then turned out the light, and left the dormitory. He looked into Knox's study as he went downstairs. Knox was seated at his table, writing away as if his life depended upon it.

"Didn't you see lights out for the Shell, Knox?" Kildare asked abruptly.

"Don't bother!"

"What!"

"I've got to get these lines done."

"Those lines!" said Kildare.

"Yes."

"Are you dotty, Knox? You know jolly well the Sixth don't have lines," said Kildare, wondering whether the prefect was quite right in his head.

"What on earth do you mean?"

"I've got to get them done."

"Do you mean to say that you've been given lines?"

"Yes."

"Who gave them to you?"

"Barber."

"Barber? Who's Barber?" asked Kildare.

"The new boy!"

"If you think this is funny, Knox, I'm blessed if I understand where the fun comes in," said Kildare roughly.

"Are you ill?"

"Ill? No; but I've got to get these lines done."

Kildare drew a deep breath.

"Either you've gone mad, or you're ill, or this is a new variety of joke that I don't understand," he said. "I'll speak to you about this again in the morning, Knox."

"All right! But do buzz off now and let me get my lines done," said Knox.

And Kildare left the study, wondering whether he was dreaming.

CHAPTER 6.

Licked!

TOM MERRY chuckled as he came downstairs on the following morning. He was curious to see Knox, and see whether he had recovered from the effect of the hypnotism of the evening before.

Barber came down with the Terrible Three, and they strolled out into the quad in the morning sunshine.

"Hallo, there's Knox!" said Monty Lowther, with a nod towards the figure of the prefect, who was talking to Sefton of the New House in the quadrangle.

"I wonder if he'll ask us for our lines," said Manners.

Barber shook his head.

"He won't," he said. "I've made him forget that."

"It seems too queer to be possible," said Tom Merry musingly.

"Well, see for yourself."

The chums of the Shell strolled past Knox, but he did not look at them. It was pretty clear that he had forgotten the incident of the night before in the Shell dormitory.

But the Shell fellows had not forgotten it.

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Before breakfast was over, all the juniors in the House knew of the peculiar incident of Knox having begged the new boy's pardon on his knees. It came to the ears of the seniors, later, and they did not believe it, of course. But when Kildare heard the story, he could not help remembering Knox's peculiar conduct in his study, and he wondered.

After morning school Kildare stopped in the passage to speak to Knox when the Sixth came out.

"Have you heard the yarn the juniors are telling, Knox?" he asked.

Knox scowled.

"Yes; some silly rot about me," he said.

"They say you begged the new kid's pardon in the Shell dorm—on your knees."

"It's a lie!" said Knox. "You surely are not ass enough to believe such rot, are you?"

"Well, no," said Kildare. "But you were jolly queer last night. You remember when I came into your study——"

"I don't remember your coming into my study," said Knox, looking puzzled.

"You were writing lines."

"Lines!" repeated the prefect.

"Yes; and you told me that the new junior—Barber—had told you to do them!"

Knox snapped his teeth.

"Look here! Don't talk rot!" he exclaimed angrily. "I found a lot of lines written in my study this morning, and I thought some junior had written them out, and imitated my hand for a silly joke, though I'm blessed if I can see where the joke comes in. But I certainly never wrote any lines."

"You were writing them when I came into your study," said Kildare quietly.

"It's not true."

Kildare looked at him steadily.

"You can't be well, Knox," he said. "I suppose you know that I should not say this if it were not true. I think you must have been queer last night, and you don't know what you did. I should consult a doctor if I were you."

And Kildare walked away before the angry prefect could reply.

Knox drew a deep breath of rage. He went down the passage, and paused outside the Shell class-room. The Shell were about to be dismissed, and he waited there for them. He wanted to see the new junior very particularly.

The door of the Form-room was thrown open, and the juniors came crowding out. Barber was one of the first, and Knox seized him by the collar as he came out. Barber had no chance to exercise his peculiar powers, even if he could have put the "fluence" on so suddenly.

Knox's grip was on the back of his collar, and it was a grip like iron.

"Ow!" roared Barber.

"You young cad!" said Knox, between his teeth. "I'll teach you to tell lies about me!"

"Ow! I haven't—I——"

"Come to my study!"

Barber had no choice about it. Knox whisked him off so fast that his feet dragged along the floor. In a minute he was in Knox's study, and the door was closed. The prefect did not take any chances of his victim escaping; he kept his iron grip on the back of Barber's collar, and with his free hand he took down a cane.

"Now, you young hound——"

"Ow! Leggo!"

"You have been telling a silly yarn

that I went on my knees to you last night——"

"So you did!" howled Barber furiously. "And I'll make you do it again, you brute, as soon as I get a chance! Ow!"

"Oh, I did, did I?" said Knox. "Well, I'll make you go on your knees now, my pippin! Take that—and that—and that!"

Lash, lash, lash!

The cane descended upon Barber's back with cutting force. The new junior writhed and wriggled and yelled and roared. But it was quite unavailing. The prefect was too strong for him. Knox held him as in a vice, and the cane lashed and lashed. Barber's face went white. He was not a strong boy, and he was by no means built to endure castigation of this kind.

"Leave off!" he shrieked. "Ow, ow, ow! Help!"

Knox desisted at last. It was not Barber's yelling that made him desist; it was the fact that his arm was growing tired.

He threw the cane upon the table.

"There!" he said, gritting his teeth. "Perhaps you'll be a bit more careful how you talk to a prefect in the future, you young hound!"

"Ow, ow, ow!" growled Barber.

"Now get out of my study!"

Knox opened the door and pitched Barber into the passage and slammed the door after him.

Barber staggered across the passage and fell sprawling.

He picked himself up, tingling all over his back. He had never had such a licking in his life before, and it dawned upon him that it was not all pleasure to be a hypnotist and to exercise his peculiar powers without discretion.

"Ow, ow, ow!" he groaned.

And he limped away down the passage.

He encountered the Terrible Three near the School House door.

"My hat!" Tom Merry exclaimed in alarm. "What's the matter? You look as if you've been through a mangle!"

"Ow!" groaned Barber. "That cad Knox has licked me!"

"Couldn't you put the fluence on?" asked Tom Merry.

"Ow! I didn't have a chance. Ow!"

"You'd better be a bit more careful in the future, then," said Tom Merry. "After all, it doesn't do to hypnotise fellows who can get back on you as prefects can. Besides, it will come out that you're a hypnotist. Better let Knox alone."

Barber ground his teeth.

"I won't let him alone!" he said. "I'll make him sorry for this, the hound!"

Tom Merry looked grave.

"Look here, Barber," he said seriously, "you played a big jape on Knox, and he's licked you for it. I dare say he overdid it, because he's a brute. But it's evens now, and you don't want to feel revengeful about it. That's not cricket."

"Oh rats!" said Barber.

The Terrible Three exchanged rather uneasy glances. They could see that there was a hard strain in Barber's nature which they had not noticed at first, and they could not help feeling anxious about what he might do. If a fellow with such tremendous power in his hands chose to take vengeance on the prefect there was nothing to stop him, and the results might be serious for all concerned.

"I don't half like this," said Tom Merry uneasily. "I'm rather sorry

now we promised to keep it dark about his being a hypnotist. I hope he won't make a fool of himself."

"He'll calm down when he gets over the licking, perhaps," said Manners.

"I hope so."
But the chums of the Shell felt very uneasy.

CHAPTER 7.

Ordered Off!

TOM MERRY came out of the School House with a long coat on over his football clothes. The School House juniors were playing Figgins & Co. that afternoon, and it was time for the match.

Barber was standing on the steps with his hands in his pockets, and he spoke as Tom Merry came by.

"I suppose you don't want an extra fellow in the team?" said Barber. "I can play footer."

"I'll give you a trial to-morrow at practice," said Tom Merry. "The team's full now. You can come and watch if you like."

"Thanks! By the way, is the Sixth playing?" asked Barber.

"Yes. School House seniors against New House seniors."

"I reckon I'll watch them."

"Just as you like," said Tom Merry.

"We think there's something better to be seen on the junior ground, but please yourself."

"I generally do."

And Barber walked away towards the senior ground. Kildare and his men were already there, and most of the New House seniors. Knox was among the former. When St. Jim's First played an out match players were selected from both Houses, and Knox had no place in the school team; but in House matches twenty-two players had to be found, and Knox played for his House.

Barber's eyes glittered as they rested on Knox standing with the School House seniors, chatting to Kildare and Darrell. Barber had not forgotten the cruel licking in Knox's study, and it was only natural that he should want to make Knox smart for it. He did not confide in his intentions to anybody else. He suspected that Tom Merry & Co. would probably not approve of them.

Mr. Railton, the master of the School House, was refereeing the match. He had just come on the field. There were a good many fellows standing round the ropes to look on, most of them juniors who preferred watching the seniors play.

Barber joined the juniors. Wally—D'Arcy minor—was standing there with a group of fags, and they were talking about Knox, who, it seemed, had lately bestowed some of his kindly attentions upon D'Arcy minor.

"Rot, playing him!" Jameson of the Third remarked. "Lots of juniors in the House can play better than Knox. Tom Merry and Blake, for example."

"And our noble selves," said Wally.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I don't see anything to cackle at," said Wally. "I would undertake to play Knox's head off. Hallo! There goes the whistle!"

The sharp note of the whistle rang out.

Kildare kicked off, and the senior game began.

"Did you ever see such a forward?" said Wally disparagingly, referring to Knox, who was playing inside-right for the School House seniors.

Wally was hardly just, for Knox was

really playing pretty well. But Wally's ear was smarting from a recent application of Knox's finger and thumb, and he was not disposed to be quite just to the bully of the Sixth.

Barber grinned to himself. Knox was already under his influence, and he meant to exercise that influence in a way that would have amazed the fags if they had known of it.

The game went on for some time, and there was a loud cheer as Kildare scored the first goal against the New House. Five minutes later Darrell put the ball in, and later on Rushden scored. The School House were three up before the first half was a third over, and the New House fellows looked a little blue. Monteith was looking quite angry as he kicked off again. The New House captain did not take defeat well.

The School House forwards came sweeping down the field again, and Kildare, who was at centre, passed the ball to Knox as he was tackled. Knox received it, and should have passed farther out to Rushden as the backs pounced upon him. But he did not. Instead of that he skied the ball, as if he were going through a gymnastic exercise, and it fell almost upon his head.

Baker, the right-back, cleared with a kick to midfield, and the play swayed away again.

Kildare gave Knox a sharp look as he raced back to the line.

"What on earth did you do that for, Knox?" he asked.

The prefect did not answer.

"Did you ever see such a dummy?"

"Oh, look at him!" yelled Jameson.

Kildare was on the ball again. Knox had rushed up, shouldered his own skipper off the ball, and was dribbling it away towards touch.

The players were so amazed that they stopped dead, staring at Knox.

"You fool!" shouted Kildare, losing his temper. "What are you up to?"

"Stop the ass!"

A New House player robbed Knox of the ball and bore it away towards the School House goal. It was centred quickly, and amid New House cheers, Monteith kicked it into the net.

"Goal!" shouted the New House crowd.

Kildare strode up to Knox, his brows dark with anger. He grasped the prefect by the shoulder.

"Are you mad, Knox?" he asked.

Knox smiled at him.

"What did you shove-me off the ball for?"

Knox did not answer.

"What's the matter with you?" said Kildare.

"Nothing!" said Knox sullenly.

"Well, you'd better be more careful. It would be better to play a man short than to have the kind of help you're giving us." And Kildare strode back to his place in the centre, followed by Knox.

The whistle sounded again, and this time the School House kicked off. They got away in good style and bore down upon goal. But the attack was repulsed, and play surged to the other end. The New House forwards attacked hotly, and Knox ran back to help the School House defence.

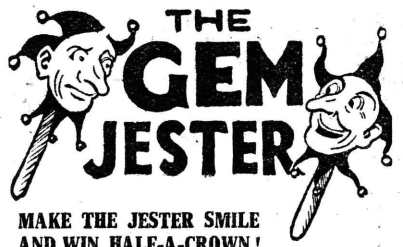
The ball came out to Knox, but he was promptly robbed by Monteith. Then Knox swung round and gave the New House skipper a thump on the shoulder that sent him spinning.

There was a yell from the New House.

"Foul!"

"Penalty!"

(Continued on the next page.)



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SHAKING HIM UP.

Smith: "I hope you don't mind the jolting of the car?"

Jones: "Not at all. I had some medicine this morning and forgot to shake the bottle!"

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* * *

LUCKY FOR TOMMY.

Teacher: "Tommy, did your father punish you for what you did in school yesterday?"

Tommy: "No, sir; he said it would hurt him more than me."

Teacher: "What nonsense! Your father is too sympathetic."

Tommy: "Oh, no, he isn't, sir. He's got rheumatism in both arms!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Dumbrell, 34a, Hyde Park Barracks, London, S.W.7.

* * *

FATTY WYNN'S WIN.

Lowther: "If Billy Bunter of Greyfriars ate 99 buns and Fatty Wynn ate 101, who would win, and by how many?"

Manners: "Fatty Wynn, by two."

Lowther: "No, he would win by one. He ate 100 and won."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Welch, 76, Rancliffe Gardens, Eltham, London, S.E.9.

* * *

SOME QUEUE.

Manager of Theatre: "Well, where's the queue to-night?"

Doorman: "They started fighting and a policeman came along and arrested both of them!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. Back, 75a, Leathwaite Road, Battersea, London, S.W.11.

* * *

SCHOOLBOY HOWLER.

Teacher (during mineralogy lesson): "Johnny, can you tell me the name of the largest known diamond?"

Johnny: "Yes, sir; the ace!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to S. Whittingham, 1, Drake Road, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees.

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There was no doubt about the foul, and it had happened in the penalty area. Mr. Railton blew the whistle, and play stopped, and the penalty was awarded to the New House. Monteith took the kick, and it materialised in a goal, and the New House crowd cheered again.

Kildare tapped Knox on the shoulder.

"Get off the ground!" he said.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean what I say. If you've come to your senses, I'll play you again in the second half. Now I'm going to play a man short."

There was a murmur in the crowd as Knox was seen tramping towards the pavilion.

"Ordered off!" said Wally. "About time, too!"

"Yes, rather!"

The play went on, and the School House fellows certainly seemed to get on better without any aid from Knox. They held their own until the whistle went for half-time, and trooped off with the score unaltered, 3-2.

Kildare sought Knox in the pavilion with a very angry brow, and he found the perfect looking very sullen indeed.

"What did you play those silly tricks on the field for, Knox?" he asked.

"I'm sorry," said Knox, with a peculiar dazed expression in his eyes. "It shan't occur again, Kildare."

"All right, then, you can come on in the second half. But mind, if there's any more rot, I shall shift you off the field, and you'll stay off."

Knox nodded without speaking. All the fellows were looking at him very curiously, at a loss to account for his curious conduct.

Knox did not say anything more, but when the team went out for the second half he went with them and lined up with the rest. Mr. Railton blew the whistle, and there was a buzz in the crowd round the ropes.

"Now let's see what the giddy ass will do next," said Wally.

But even Wally was surprised.

The School House forwards made an attack straight from the restart. Baker stopped the ball outside goal, kicking into touch, and Knox plunged after the ball, seized it in his hands, and made a dash for goal, like a Rugby three-quarter dashing for a try.

There was a yell.

"Hands!"

"Stop him!"

"He's dotty!"

Knox rushed into the New House goal and dumped the ball fairly upon the chest of the astounded goalkeeper, knocking him spinning into the net.

"Oh!" gasped the goalie, as he went down.

Knox tossed the ball into the net after him.

Kildare dashed up and dragged him out of the goalmouth.

"You mad ass!" he yelled. "This isn't the place for monkey tricks! Get off the field, or I'll kick you off it! Do you hear?"

And Knox walked off. And the schoolboy hypnotist chuckled softly. He thought that he was even with Knox now.

CHAPTER 8.

From Information Received!

TOM MERRY & CO. heard the story when their own match was over and they came off the footer ground, having drawn with the New House, 1-1.

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Knox's extraordinary conduct was the talk of St. Jim's. Some of the fellows thought that he was ill, and some that he was mad, and some that he had been playing a practical joke. Tom Merry & Co. knew what was the matter with him, and they sought out the schoolboy hypnotist after they had changed their footer togs. Barber greeted them with a cheerful grin.

"You hypnotised him!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Barber nodded.

"Hallo, what's this?" asked Jack Blake, who had overheard Tom Merry's accusation as he approached with his chums. "Who hypnotised whom? Is Barber a giddy hypnotist?"

The secret was half out now—to Blake & Co., at all events. Barber could see that it would be no use keeping his peculiar gift a secret any longer from the chums of Study No. 6. If he did not tell them they would guess now that they had a clue to the amazing happenings recently.

"I am a hypnotist," said Barber, "but keep it to yourselves. I hypnotised Knox in the football match, and I think I'm even with him now for that licking."

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in wonder. "A hypnotist!"

"My hat!" said Blake. "That explains the amazing conduct of Gussy yesterday!"

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "Barber hypnotised him."

"The wottah!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I'll promise not to hypnotise you fellows," said Barber, "if you'll keep it a secret. We can rag the New House fellows galore if we keep it to ourselves!"

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Blake.

"That we can. We promise!"

"But it wasn't quite cricket, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, "to hypnotise Knox in the House match."

"It wasn't quite football, either," said Monty Lowther, laughing.

"It's not weally a laughin' mattah, Lowtah. It's wathah too thick hypnotisin' a chap on the footah field, and makin' him give the game away."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Barber. "I made sure that the School House were well up before I started on Knox. School House won."

"They only just did it, though," said Tom Merry; "and, anyway, it's too thick. You must draw a line at interfering in a footer match, really, Barber."

"Oh, all right, if you make such a point of it!" said Barber.

"I've got an idea," Monty Lowther remarked. "Fatty Wynn's gone over to the tuckshop to refresh himself after his labours in the match. You remember that Figgins & Co. were buying a big pie to-day."

"Yes, rather! I thought of raiding it," said Tom Merry; "but—"

"But they're too jolly careful with it," said Blake, grinning. "Figgy made Mrs. Taggles send it while we were playing footer."

"Exactly! But suppose Barber made Fatty tell us exactly where it is, and then lead Figgins and Kerr away while we scooped it—"

The juniors burst into a delighted yell at the idea.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Barber.

Fatty Wynn was outside the tuckshop, looking into the little window. Fatty Wynn had come to the end of his funds, and Mrs. Taggles drew a strict line at a certain point upon the subject of credit.

Barber lost no time in putting the fluence on, and he signed to Tom Merry that it was safe to question the fat Fourth Former.

"Did you get the pie?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes," said Fatty Wynn.

"Good! Where is it?"

"In the cupboard in the study."

"Door locked?"

"No."

"Figgins and Kerr in the study?"

"No."

"Where are they?"

"They've gone to the gym, and won't be back till after six."

"Is the coast clear?" asked Tom Merry. "Anybody likely to spot us if we raid it?"

"Oh, not at all!"

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "It seems wonderful to hear him answer like that and not know what he's saying!"

"Bai Jove, I don't half like it, you know!"

"Oh, rats!" said Blake. "We're going to have that pie. Better not take a crowd, though, in case the bouncers spot us. Look here, I'll go with Dig, Tom Merry, if you're agreeable."

"That's all right," said Tom. "Two's enough."

"I feel I ought to come, Blake," said Arthur Augustus. "I trust I am not the sort of fellow to put myself forward in any way, but I want the waid to be a success!"

"Rats!"

"As a mattah of fact, I insist upon comin', deah boys," said D'Arcy, with dignity. "You are bound to come a muckah if I am not there to look aftah you!"

"Oh, come on, then, or you'll never leave off talking!" said Blake. "Better strike the iron while it's hot."

"Good egg!"

And the three juniors made their way to the New House.

Fortune seemed to favour them. Not only were Figgins & Co. well out of the way, but the other juniors of the New House were conspicuous by their absence. Even two or three who saw Blake & Co. sauntering towards the New House did not take any special notice of them.

The three juniors entered the House and ascended the stairs to the Fourth Form passage. Redfern of the New House came out of his study.

Blake & Co. halted.

They expected trouble with Redfern, but he only grinned and paused to speak a friendly word or two. He was strangely unsuspecting.

"Going to see Figgins?" he asked.

"We're going to give a look-in to his study," said Blake. "Do you know whether Figgins is at home?"

"Out, I think," said Redfern.

"Well, never mind; we'll go in," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Redfern nodded.

"If I see Figgins I'll tell him you've called," he remarked, as he went towards the staircase.

"Thanks, do!"

Redfern went downstairs. The School House juniors watched him go. It seemed plain that Redfern had no suspicion of their real object in paying that visit to Figgins.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "We are in luck, you know!"

"Hallo, here's another of the beasts!" exclaimed Blake.

Thompson of the Shell came down the passage. He started on seeing the

School House fellows—only for a moment. Then he grinned and nodded. "You fellows come over to see me?" he asked.

"No; we're going to Figgins' quarters."

"Oh, all right, then! I won't stop; I'm going to the gym!" said Thompson of the Shell. And he went upon his way.

"Another silly ass, deah boys!" Blake looked thoughtful.

"Queer they don't smell a mouse," he remarked. "Anyway, as soon as they mention to Figgins that they saw us here he'll smell a mouse soon enough, so we'd better buck up. Come on, you fellows!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the School House juniors stepped quickly into Figgins' study.

Carefully the pie was lifted out on to the table.

"Bai Jove!"

The juniors could not but help admiring Figgins' property. Digby sniffed at it.

"Not much flavour by the smell," he said.

"Blow that!" said Blake. "What we have to do is to get it away."

"We can't carry it out of the New House without covering it up, anyway," said Digby, helping Blake to search for brown paper.

Arthur Augustus continued to survey the huge pie critically through his monocle till Blake jerked him from behind, and sent him sprawling over a cricket bag.

"You uttah beast! You wuffian, Blake!"

juniors broke into a run, and the pie was borne in triumph into the School House, and upstairs into Study No. 6.

"Now you can go!" said Blake to Arthur Augustus, after the pie was at last deposited on the table in the study.

"Weally, Blake—"

"One up against Figgins & Co.—eh?" went on Blake, with a chuckle.

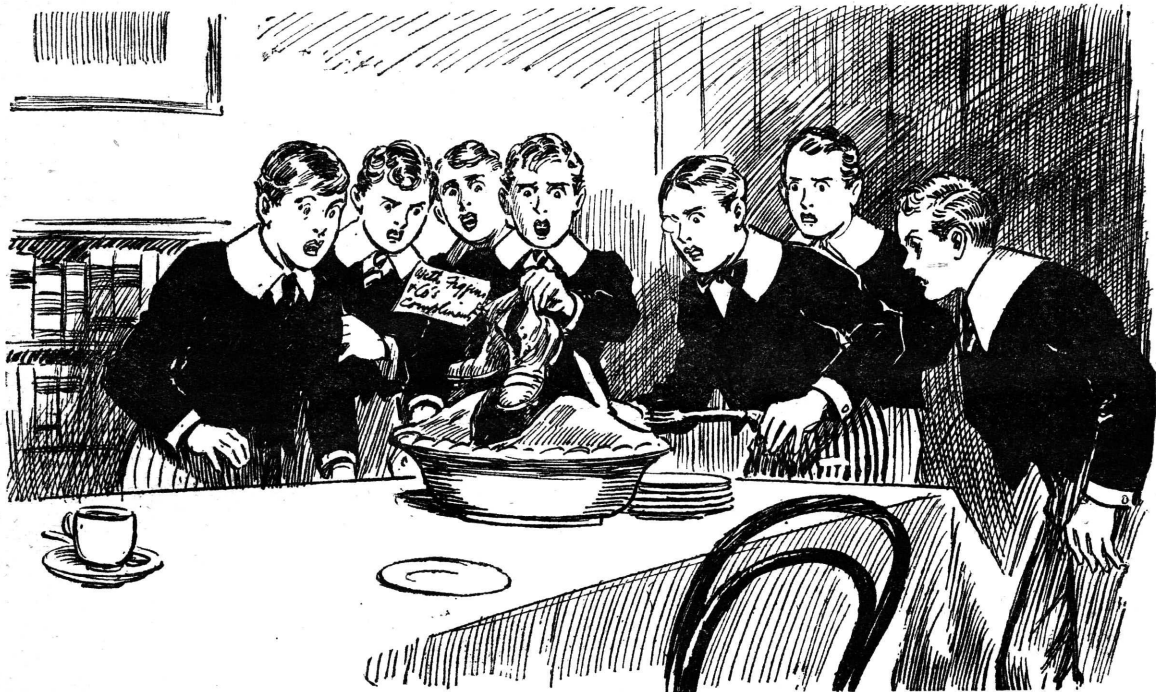
"I was speakin' to you, Blake—"

"Yes, we know. I say, Dig, call the other chaps in!"

"Right-ho!"

"As mastah of cewemonies, I shall be extwemely obliged if you will, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, as Digby dashed off. "I should be sowwy to twash you before Tom Mewvvy & Co., Blake."

"Of course, old son!" said Blake cheerfully. "Just buzz round, and get



As the juniors crowded round to survey the contents of the pie, Blake dived his hand into the dish and took out a pair of football boots, attached to which was a message: "With Figgins & Co.'s compliments!" "The bounders!" exclaimed Blake. "We've been done!"

CHAPTER 9.
Done Brown!

"B AI Jove!"

"What's the matter, ass?"

"Weally, Blake, I nearly twipped ovah somethin'—"

"Shut up, then! You make too much row!"

Digby grinned as Blake switched on the light.

"The cupboard's unlocked," said Blake, as he went across to it and opened the door.

He pointed to the pie which lay on a shelf in the cupboard. It was very large, and it looked very appetising. Digby's eyes glistened.

"Worth raiding—eh, Blake?" he said.

"Yaas, wathah! Allow me, deah boys, as a fellow of tact and judgment, you know—"

"You'll do as I tell you, Gussy!"

"I wufuse to do as you tell me, Blake!"

"Come on, Dig! Lend a hand, old son! We can't stand talking to Gussy all night!"

"You uttah asses!"

"Rats! Get off that cricket bag! The very thing, Dig!"

"I wufuse—"

"Come off it!" grinned Blake.

And in two seconds Arthur Augustus was yanked off the cricket bag.

"I shall administtah summawwy cewewction, Blake!" shouted the indignant swell of St. Jim's. "Pway put up your hands, you wottah!"

"Rats! Can't you see you're spoiling the game?"

"Bai Jove! But I insist on takin' the lead in this mattah, Blake! Your conduct doesn't inspire confidence, deah boy—"

"All right! Come on, ass!"

D'Arcy was on the point of further expostulation. But he seemed to think better of it, and in a moment he was helping willingly enough.

The pie was soon stowed safely in the cricket bag, and the little party got under way for the School House. In one of the New House passages they met Pratt.

He grinned and nodded, and passed on into his study without remark.

Once outside the House the three

out the knives and forks. There's a good boy!"

"I wufuse to be a good boy, Blake! I uttah wufuse—"

"Of course, I forgot. You're a person of tact and judgment," grinned Blake. "All serene! I'll get 'em!"

Arthur Augustus was on the point of arguing further when the other juniors came crowding in. And he assumed a calm repose which was intended to convey the idea that such success as this was to be expected when he took the lead.

"Well, I suppose you're going to give us some of it?" said Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus bowed gracefully.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boys!" he murmured. "Pway make yourselves at home! I take it I am to be carvah."

"It's very easy to spoil a pie in the cutting up—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Oh, get on, ass!" said Blake.

D'Arcy glared at Blake. But he was entertaining guests, and, of course, he considered his private resentment must wait.

Tom Merry & Co.

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took their seats in a manner that befitted fellows who were about to receive crumbs from the rich man's table.

As Arthur Augustus made his first assault on the pie they grinned.

The swell of the School House was evidently in difficulties. Lowther asked him if he would like a saw to get through the crust. But at last Arthur Augustus made an incision, and Blake and Digby looked relieved.

"Now for it!"

Arthur Augustus, having a start, as it were, was not quite prepared for developments.

Cutting vigorously at the pie he was surprised to find that the crust was only cardboard with a thin veneer of pastry on top.

"Bai Jove!"

Blake reddened.

Arthur Augustus looked suspiciously at Tom Merry & Co. They were naturally interested in the curious expression on D'Arcy's face as he stared into the depths of the pie.

"What's the matter, Gussy?" asked Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus apparently did not hear him. Putting the knife into the crust, mechanically he removed a portion of the cardboard pastry.

Blake and Digby went a fiery red as he let it fall on the table. Tom Merry & Co. were grinning from ear to ear.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Sorry, Gussy; but I am so hungry, really—"

"What the deuce are you staring at, ass?" said Blake impatiently.

"Weally, Blake! Considah my posish—"

Without any more ado Blake leaped up.

"The rotters!" he burst out as he saw what Arthur Augustus was staring at in the pie.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"My only hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry, as he and the Co. crowded round the carver and surveyed the contents of the pie.

"Weally, deah boys—"

Blake dived into the piedish and took out a pair of football boots, attached to which was a message:

"With Figgins & Co.'s compliments!" he read out aloud.

"The bounders!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Done!"

CHAPTER 10.

A Bumping for Barber!

WITH Figgins & Co.'s compliments!" The juniors in Blake's study stared at the inscription blankly.

They could hardly believe their eyes.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, for the fourth or fifth time.

"Bai Jove! It's a giddy jape, deah boys!"

"My only hat!"

"Then Fatty Wynn wasn't hypnotised at all, and he was only pulling our legs!" Tom Merry shouted.

"Great Scott!"

"The deep young beggar!"

"These Welsh chaps are awfully deep, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a sage shake of the head.

"We've been done!"

"Done to a turn!" grinned Lowther.

"My faith in hypnotism is done, too. Fatty Wynn was fooling us—he wasn't under the giddy fluence at all!"

"Wathah not!"

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"That's why the New House kids didn't seem to suspect anything when they saw us in the House!" grunted Blake.

"They were all in the game—Thompson, Redfern and the rest!" exclaimed Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake drew a deep breath.

"Where's that giddy hypnotist?" he roared.

Barber looked alarmed.

"I—I say," he explained. "I—I don't know how this has come about, but—but I'll swear that Fatty Wynn was under the fluence, and didn't know that he was giving anything away."

There was a general snort from Tom Merry & Co. They were feeling very sore at being taken in by the New House trio, and their wrath was turned in the direction of Barber. They felt that they owed it to the amateur hypnotist.

"You may be able to hypnotise giddy prefects, but you can't hypnotise porpoises for toffee!" said Monty Lowther warmly.

"You've helped them to do us brown!" said Digby.

"But I say—"

"Oh, rats!" said Blake. "We shall never hear the end of this! The real pie is hidden in the New House somewhere, and Figgins & Co. will be killing themselves with laughter. I think you're a rotten impostor!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard the feahful ass as a wotten impostah! I quite agwee with the wemarks of my friend Blake—"

"Oh, bump him!" said Blake. "It's bad enough to have a dangerous ass about the place hypnotising people, without his playing into the enemy's hands like this! Bump him!"

"Yaas, wathah! I considah that a bumpin' will meet the case!"

"Collar the giddy ass!"

Barber made a rush for the door. But the exasperated juniors collared him before he could escape. He had no chance to put the fluence on. The juniors did not give him a chance of making mesmeric passes with his slim hands, and they took care not to meet the dark, magnetic eyes that had such a strange power in their depths.

"Bump him!"

"Hard!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh!" roared Barber. "Leggo! Look here, if you bump me, I'll hypnotise the lot of you! I'll make you eat coke! Ow!"

"Bump him!"

Barber descended upon the study carpet with a bump that made the dust rise.

Bump, bump!

"Ow! Yow!"

The unfortunate hypnotist struggled fiercely. But he was powerless in the grasp of so many juniors. Again he was bumped, and in the struggle his collar was torn out, and his jacket split up the back.

"There!" gasped Blake. "I think that will do. And now you'd better chuck your rotten hypnotism for good, you ass! It's too rotten!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the juniors streamed out of the study, leaving Barber sitting on the floor and gasping for breath.

Barber rose to his feet when they were gone, still pumping in breath, and dusted down his clothes. His eyes were gleaming.

"Can't hypnotise for toffee, can't I?" he muttered. "I'll jolly well show them!

I'll make them sit up in class to-morrow morning!"

And the schoolboy hypnotist, grunting breathlessly, took his way to the dormitory, to change his split jacket and get a new collar.

Tom Merry & Co., in no good humour, walked over to the gymnasium. Figgins & Co. were there, and they greeted the School House juniors with a series of exclamations.

"Like the pie?" asked Figgins.

And Kerr and Wynn chuckled.

"You blessed fat fraud!" said Blake, glaring at Fatty Wynn.

The fat Fourth Former looked astonished.

"What have I done?"

"It was my plan," explained Kerr. "I noticed that you fellows were casting sheep's eyes on our pie when we bought it in the tuckshop to-day, and it occurred to me that you would raid it if you had half a chance. So we rigged up a dummy pie, and left it in the study for you, and gave the fellows the tip not to stop you if you came mooching over. We thought you would."

"And I suppose that was why Fatty answered my questions about the pie outside the tuckshop?" said Tom Merry.

"Eh?" said Fatty Wynn. "Who asked me questions outside the tuckshop?"

"I did—about the pie!"

Fatty Wynn looked amazed.

"I don't remember it," he said.

"When was it?"

"Why, not half an hour ago!" said Tom Merry wrathfully. "What do you mean by saying you don't remember, you duffer?"

"I jolly well don't!" said Fatty Wynn. "You're off your rocker, I think! I remember seeing you come up to the tuckshop, and I don't clearly remember what I did just after that. But you never spoke to me!"

"Sure of that, Fatty?" asked Blake.

"Yes; of course I am, you ass!" said Fatty testily.

Tom Merry whistled softly. The School House juniors moved away, and the New House chums roared with laughter. Figgins & Co. were enjoying the joke immensely, and so were the rest of the heroes of the New House.

Out of hearing of Figgins & Co., Tom Merry and his comrades looked at one another rather curiously.

"You heard what Fatty said?" remarked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He seemed to have been really under the fluence, after all!"

"Looks like it," said Blake. "I suppose he had the dummy pie in his mind, and you never thought of anything of the sort, naturally. He just answered about the pie that was rigged up for us in Figgins' cupboard. Perhaps the real one has been eaten already. Come to think of it, Fatty wouldn't be able to keep off it."

"Quite wight, bai Jove! We've bumped that chap Barbah wathah too soon, deah boys!"

"We have been a little too previous, come to think of it," said Tom Merry, rather ruefully. "I suppose we had better tell him that we're sorry?"

"Yaas, wathah! An apology from one gentleman to another is quite sufficient, you know, to set any mattah wight."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I don't suppose it will set Barber's bones right if he's got an ache in them," he said. "But I'll go over and see him, anyway, and tell him we've made a mistake."

"Yaas. Put it to him nicely, deah boy."

Tom Merry returned to the School House. He found Barber in his study doing his preparation. The new junior looked up rather grimly as Tom Merry came in.

"We've seen Fatty Wynn——" Tom Merry began.

"Have you?" said Barber in a most uncompromising tone.

"Yes. It seems that he was really under the fluence all the time," said Tom Merry, rather awkwardly. "We jumped to conclusions rather too quickly, Barber, old man."

Barber grunted.

"I told you so," he said.

"Well, we're sorry!"

Another grunt.

"Being sorry doesn't undo the bumping," said Barber. "I'm going to put the fluence on all of you, just to make matters even!"

"Here, draw it mild!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in alarm. "You see——"

"You wait till to-morrow, and you'll see!" said Barber.

"But, I say——"

"It's settled!" said Barber. "I'm going to do my prep now."

"Look here, if you play any rotten tricks on me——"

"Wait till to-morrow!" he replied.

Tom Merry left the study. He was feeling considerably uneasy in his mind, and the rest of the Co. felt uneasy, too, when he told them what Barber had said. Blake looked angry.

"If he plays any hypnotic tricks on me, he'll get a jolly good hiding, that's all!" said Blake belligerently.

"Yaas, wathah! I considah it beneath a fellow's dig to be hypnotised and made to do wicudulous things, and I should certainly give Barbah a feahful thwashin'!"

"He's a rum beggar!" said Tom Merry musingly. "There's never any telling what he will do. I can't help thinking that he will go on till he gets the order of the boot. I'm not surprised that he made his last school too warm for him."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"There's a time when practical jokes should stop," said Blake. "And that time comes when——"

"When they're played on us, deah boy," said D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha! Exactly!"

"I don't think Barber will see that," said Monty Lowther.

Blake clenched his fists suggestively.

"Well, if he doesn't see that, he won't be able to see anything," he remarked. "The first time I feel the fluence, he gets a dot in the optic!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked that he considered it a jolly good idea.

CHAPTER 11.

The Madness of Tom Merry!

THE next morning Tom Merry was thinking of the schoolboy hypnotist as he came down to breakfast. Barber was in a good temper, certainly, for he was all smiles. But his good temper might mean that he was planning some surprises for Tom Merry & Co., and the Terrible Three did not like it. They had discovered already that the new junior had a peculiar sense of humour, and they did not like the idea of its being directed against themselves. There was truly something almost impish in the peculiar nature of the schoolboy hypnotist.

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther Calling



Hallo, everybody! Did you hear about the man who always wore two wrist-watches because he liked to have plenty of time on his hands? As the witness said: "I had the right of way, but the other fellow had a lorry!" By the way, I'm writing this in a greenhouse. Why? To "force" the humour. Seriously, though, you should remember that what the eye does not see, the foot will trip over. Then there was the heavy-weight boxer who smoked a pipe, because he liked to feel there was something he could "knock out"! Mr. Lathom complains somebody has been stealing his snuff. It had been

"He's jolly rum altogether," Tom Merry remarked. "I suppose a normal chap wouldn't have a queer gift like that at all. I must say I wish Railton had put him into some other study."

"What-ho!" said Manners and Lowther feelingly.

At the Shell breakfast-table in the dining-room in the School House, Barber sat opposite Tom Merry. It did not occur to Tom Merry that Barber would begin so soon, and he fell an easy victim.

Mr. Linton was at the head of the table, and he was not looking good-tempered. Mr. Linton was sometimes ill-tempered in the mornings. When he looked cross, the Shell fellows were very careful. But Tom Merry, instead of being careful, appeared to be unusually reckless that morning.

"Will you pass me the salt, sir?" he asked.

Mr. Linton looked at him. It was not usual for the boys to ask their Form-masters to pass them things. However, Mr. Linton passed the salt.

"Will you pass the bread-and-butter, sir?"

"Pass Merry bread-and-butter, Manners!" said Mr. Linton, with a frown.

"Will you pass me a knife, sir?"

"Merry!"

"Will you pass me a fork, sir?"

"How dare you, Merry!"

"Will you pass me——"

"Merry!" thundered Mr. Linton.

"Yes, sir!" said Tom Merry, smiling. "Will you pass me the pepper, sir?"

The pepper was nowhere near Mr. Linton's end of the table. The master of the Shell gazed at Tom Merry speechlessly for some seconds. He could only suppose that Tom Merry had the extraordinary audacity to venture to rag him before the Form and the rest of the school in the dining-room.

"Is this intended for impertinence, Merry?" he asked.

"Oh, no, sir! Will you pass me the jam?"

"Boy!"

"Will you pass me——"

"Stand up, Merry!"

Tom Merry stood up.

"I cannot understand this insolence!" said Mr. Linton, his voice quivering with rage.

"Will you pass me a handkerchief?"

"pinched" before its time! "I learned Italian in a week," boasts Gora. We can't understand it—and neither could the Italians! 'Nother complaint. Ratcliff has chronic insomnia. He can't even sleep when it's time to get up. That's a bit off, as the shopkeeper remarked, marking the price ticket down. "What is a sale?" inquires Digby. At a sale you can get priceless bargains at less price. "Curious" asks: "What do sword-swallowers do with their old razor blades?" If I told you, you wouldn't "swallow" it. We hear that Spaniards now serenade their senioritas with comic songs. Jester song at twilight. 'Nother sad reflection: The boy who is a boon to his mother may be just a baboon to his teacher. And many a man who thought he was a "big gun" has got "fired" quickly! Pratt wants to know of an example of still life. An example of still life is two Scotsmen sitting at a table waiting for each other to order the lunch. Then there was the born slacker who complained that he only got three hours' sleep a day. He got the rest at night! Turn over, boys!

"What!"

There was a suppressed giggle at the table. Manners and Lowther looked at their chum in amazement, and Lowther pinched his arm.

"Shut up, you ass!" he muttered.

"Are you dotty?"

"Will you pass me the pickles, sir?"

"Leave the table at once, Merry!" almost shouted the Form-master. "You—you insolent boy! Leave the breakfast-table at once!"

"Certainly, sir!"

Tom Merry stepped away from the table. He picked up his plate, and placed his cup and saucer upon it, and arranged another plate on top of the cup, and placed the salt-cellar on top of the plate.

Mr. Linton stared at him.

"Merry!" he ejaculated.

Crash!

Mr. Linton's voice startled the junior, and the crockery in his hands fell to the floor with a terrific crash.

"My hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Are you insane, boy?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"How dare you play such absurd tricks?"

"My dear fellow——"

"What!"

"You see, old boy——"

Mr. Linton rose to his feet. His face was red with anger.

"Leave the dining-room at once, Merry!"

"Yes, sir."

Tom Merry proceeded towards the door. He lifted his right foot off the floor and hopped instead of walking. There was a buzz of amazement from the whole of the room. Kildare jumped up from the Sixth Form table and ran towards the Shell fellow and grasped him by the collar and stopped his peculiar performance.

"You young ass!" he growled. "How dare you!"

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Come out, you silly young fool!"

Kildare jerked the Shell fellow out into the passage.

"Now, what do you mean by it?" he demanded.

"Mean by what?" gasped Tom Merry.

"These silly tricks."

"What quilly tricks?"

"I suppose you know what you're

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doing, unless you've gone suddenly dotty?" Kildare exclaimed angrily.

"Oh, get your hair cut!"

"What!" yelled Kildare.

"Go and eat coke!"

Kildare gasped. He had certainly never been spoken to like that by a junior before. He clenched his hands hard, and then paused. There was a dazed look in Tom Merry's face that reminded him of an expression he had seen upon Knox's face on a certain occasion. He dropped his hand on the boy's shoulder.

"Are you well, Merry?"

"Right as a trivet, cocky!"

"Do you know what you are doing?"

"I suppose so. Where did you get that face?"

"Go to your study and stay there!" said Kildare.

"Right-ho, old bean!"

Tom Merry went upstairs. Kildare returned to the dining-room looking very puzzled. A thunderstorm seemed to be brooding over the Shell table during the remainder of breakfast. The fellows did not envy Tom Merry. A severe caning was the least he could expect for his extraordinary conduct in the dining-room.

What had he done it for?

There was only one explanation to the juniors who knew of the peculiar powers of the schoolboy hypnotist. Manners and Lowther cast furious glances at Barber. He grinned serenely. They could not betray him. In the first place it would be sneaking. In the second place they had promised to keep secret the fact that he was a hypnotist. They were regretting their promise now.

After breakfast Kildare joined Mr. Linton as the latter left the dining-room. The Shell master's brow was like a thundercloud.

"I think Merry is not well, sir," said Kildare. "You don't mind my saying so? It seems to me that he has had a fit or something."

Mr. Linton started.

"Do you think so, Kildare? It was, indeed, most extraordinary. Is he subject to attacks of any sort, do you know?"

"No, I never knew he was, sir," confessed Kildare. "But—I saw another chap here the other day acting in a most extraordinary manner, and that put it into my mind. I—I suppose there can't be something in the air? It is extraordinary. The chap I am speaking of is a prefect, and he acted as if he had gone dotty—ahem!—I mean, insane. Merry certainly didn't seem to know what he was doing."

"It would be extraordinary if two boys had a similar attack of the same nature," said Linton, a little tartly.

"Quite so, sir, but—but all the same, I am sure Merry was not responsible for what he did just now."

"I will question him," said Mr. Linton.

"He is in his study, sir."

"Very good."

Mr. Linton ascended to the Shell passage and looked into Tom Merry's study. Tom was there. He was standing by the window, looking out, and he turned round as Mr. Linton came in, and stared at him strangely.

"Merry!" said Mr. Linton.

"Hallo, Wally!"

Mr. Linton staggered back.

"Merry, do you know who I am?" he gasped.

"Yes, you're D'Arcy minor!"

"The boy's mad!" exclaimed Mr. Linton, aghast. "Merry, remain here."

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I will telephone for the doctor at once from Rylcombe. This must be seen to. Remain here!"

"Yes, sir."

And Mr. Linton hurried downstairs.

CHAPTER 12.

A Surprise for the Shell!

THE Shell were in a buzz of excitement when they took their places in the Form-room that morning.

Tom Merry was mad!

That was the extraordinary story that ran through the Form.

Those who had seen his strange conduct in the dining-room could hardly doubt it, and the New House fellows, when they heard about it, hardly doubted it, either.

That he was confined to his study, and that the medical man had been sent for from Rylcombe, was known to the whole school.

The fellows were excited, naturally. They had never suspected Tom Merry of incipient lunacy. But there seemed to be no doubt about it now. In the Shell Form only two fellows knew better—Lowther and Manners. And they could not explain. Barber, of course, knew as well. Barber was grinning to himself with a sort of gnomish glee. He was evidently well pleased with himself. Monty Lowther and Manners, mentally, were promising him all sorts of things when lessons were over. But before lessons were over their own turn had come.

Mr. Linton was very grave. Tom Merry was one of his best pupils, and although he had been angry at first, all his anger, of course, had vanished now, and he was only sorry. He was not in a-humour, however, for any ragging in the class-room, and when Monty Lowther and Manners started it together, fellows looked at them in astonishment.

The chums of the Shell could not have chosen a worse moment.

"Manners!" said Mr. Linton, indicating that Manners was to construe.

Manners rose to his feet.

But instead of construing Virgil, he placed the book on the end of his nose, bending his head back, and commenced to balance it.

Mr. Linton gazed at him dumb-founded.

"Manners!" he thundered.

"Ow!" roared Gore, as the book slid from Manners' nose and fell upon the back of Gore's head. "Oh, you silly ass!"

"Silence, Gore!"

"Gw! I got a biff on the napper, sir!"

"Silence! Manners, how dare you!" "Sorry, sir!" said Manners. "I'll try with the ink-bottle."

Manners grabbed an ink-bottle from Gore's desk, and balanced it upon his nose. But not for long. It slid off,

and as it fell the cork came out. Manners' collar and tie were drenched with ink, and several splashes were bestowed upon the fellows round him. Gore jumped up, and left his place in alarm, and Skimpole gave a yell.

"Manners!" gasped Mr. Linton.

"Yes, sir!"

"What are you doing? What—"

Mr. Linton paused. He remembered Tom Merry, and turned quite pale. Was Manners a victim of the mysterious madness of his chum?

"Manners!" he said faintly.

"He's mad!" roared Gore, rubbing



Hopping on his left leg, Manners followed up Mr. Linton's foot. "Boy!" gasped Mr. Linton. "Go bac

the ink from his face with his handkerchief, and quickly reducing his handkerchief to an inky rag. "He's as mad as Tom Merry! Ow! I'm inky all over! He ought to be shut up in an asylum! Ow!"

"Bless me!" said Skimpole. "I'm very inky! I—"

"Manners! Come here!" said Mr. Linton, very angry.

"Yes, sir."

Manners came out before the class, hopping on one leg. He held the other straight out before him, and the effect was comical enough. Mr. Linton dodged away just in time to escape being prodded upon the watchchain with Manners' extended boot.

"My hat!" gasped Kangaroo. "What a game! Is it a jape?"

"He's dotty!" said Glyn.
 "He's as dotty as Tom Merry."
 "Great Scott! Look at him!" yelled Kangaroo.

Manners was following Mr. Linton, hopping upon his left leg, with the right prodding at the amazed and dismayed Form-master.

Mr. Linton, gasping with astonishment and dismay, retreated round his desk, and Manners followed him fast.

"Boy," gasped Mr. Linton, "go back to your place at once! Sit down at once!"

"Rats!!" said Manners.

"Boys, he has taken leave of his senses! Secure him!"

"Certainly, sir!" said Kangaroo.

The Cornstalk junior ran towards Manners, and several more fellows lent a hand. The unfortunate junior was secured.

He did not resist. He stood smiling at Mr. Linton, and seemed to be wondering why the Form-master did not continue to play the game.

"Take him to the Shell dormitory!" gasped Mr. Linton. "Dr. Short is there, and he will see to him as well as to Merry."

"Yes, sir," said Kangaroo. "Come on Manners, old man! We're not going to hurt you, but you must come!"

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" said Manners to Mr. Linton.

"Good heavens!"

Manners was removed from the Form-room. Mr. Linton sat down and mopped his brow with his handkerchief. He was in a perspiration.

It was some minutes before the juniors returned, having disposed of Manners in the Shell dormitory, where Tom Merry was already in the hands of the medical man from Rylcombe.

They took their places, and an attempt was made to resume lessons. Unfortunately, it was Monty Lowther who was first called upon to construe.

Lowther rose, and instead of construing Latin, began to sing in a high-pitched voice:

"Two little tomtits were tweeting on the tip-top of a tree—"

Mr. Linton jumped.

"Lowther!" he shouted. "You are taking advantage of the unfortunate state of your schoolfellows to pretend to be afflicted in the same way!"

"Two little tomtits were tweeting on the tip-top of a tree," chanted Lowther.

"Lowther, silence!"

"He's mad!" yelled Gore.

"Mad as a hatter!"

"Mad as the other two!"

"It is—is extraordinary!"

gasped Mr. Linton, sinking into his chair. "Noble, take Lowther to the Shell dormitory."

"Yes, sir," said Kangaroo.

"I can't understand this! It is like an epidemic! But Lowther certainly is not in his right senses! Take him away at once! The class will be dismissed for the morning," said Mr. Linton. "I do not feel equal to it any longer. You may leave the Form-room. Dismiss!"

The Shell crowded out.

They were glad enough to be excused for the remainder of morning lessons; but they were amazed, and most of them were very much concerned for the Terrible Three.

Lowther was taken to the Shell dormitory. Manners and Tom Merry had been put to bed, and they had gone quietly enough. Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, was in the dormitory with Dr. Short, the little medical man from Rylcombe.

"What! Another of 'em!" gasped Dr. Short, as Lowther was brought in. "Yes, sir. Quite dotty!" said Kangaroo.

"This is most amazing!" "Can you account for it in any way, doctor?" asked the Head, who was looking very pale and disturbed.

"I cannot, sir—absolutely!" said the medical man. "It is the most extraordinary case I have ever heard of. The boys must be taken every care of, and they had better not attend lessons again yet; but—it is remarkable, sir, that they seem to be absolutely normal in every respect, excepting—"

Excepting that they have suddenly become insane?"

"Absolutely!" gasped the doctor. "It is amazing!" said the Head. "I cannot understand it in the least! There are not three more healthy boys in the school. It is a puzzle."

"Absolutely!" said Dr. Short, apparently finding some comfort in that absurd adverb. "I admit I am very much surprised. But we shall see."

"The giddy medico can't understand it any more than we can," Kangaroo remarked, as the Shell fellows went down. "He's quite in the dark—"

"Absolutely, as he would say himself!" grinned Barber.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kangaroo turned to the new boy suddenly.

"Look here, I suppose you've not had anything to do with this?" he asked.

Barber backed away a little.

"I!" he ejaculated. "How? Why?"

"Well, I don't know," said the Cornstalk junior, "but it's queer that the three of them should go balmy all at once, just after you've arrived here and been put into their study. I don't know whether lunacy is catching."

"Oh, rot!" said Barber, and he walked away rather hastily.

In the quadrangle the Shell fellows gathered in groups, discussing the matter. They could not understand it in the least. They were as puzzled as the medical man, and though they talked of nothing else they did not come anywhere near finding a solution of the mystery.

CHAPTER 13.

Figgins & Co.'s Discovery!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY jammed his monocle very firmly into his eye as he came out of the School House into the quadrangle and looked upon the peculiar antics of three juniors in the quadrangle.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were waltzing in the quad with a complete disregard of the amazed looks and ejaculations around them. They were evidently under the mysterious fluence.

"It's a blessed epidemic of madness," said Figgins. "I don't understand it myself. What the dickens does it mean, Kerr?"

Kerr shook his head.

"It beats me!" he said.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "The uttah wottah!"

Figgins tapped him on the shoulder. "What's the matter with your pals, Gussy?" he asked.

"I'm afraid I cannot explain, Figgy, deah boy!"

"Oh, you know, then?" said Kerr.

D'Arcy nodded.

"Yaas, wathah!"



prodding the amazed and dismayed Form-master with his right hand, "Go back to your place at once!" "Rats!!" said Manners.

"What!"

"Stand where you are, and I'll kick you!" said Manners, hopping round the desk after Mr. Linton.

"Good heavens!" gasped the master of the Shell faintly, as he dodged Manners' boot. "This is—is terrible! The boy is certainly mad!"

"Look here! You're not playing fair!" said Manners, as Mr. Linton circled the desk again. "Come out into the open!"

"Boy!"

"I'll have you in a minute!"

"Help!"

Biff, biff!

The hopping junior tapped the Form-master below the watchchain with his boot at last. Mr. Linton staggered back towards the boys' desks.

"Seize him!" he exclaimed feebly.

"Then why don't you explain?"

"Because I pwomised the wottah!"

"What rotter?"

"Ahem! I'm afwaid I can't say any more," said Arthur Augustus in distress. "I must not bweak my word, you know."

And he hurried away, leaving Figgins & Co. more amazed by his words than by the strange antics of Blake, Ferries, and Digby.

Fatty Wynn tapped his forehead.

"Looks like it!" agreed Figgins.

But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had not "got it" yet. But he felt that his turn was coming. It would not be long before he did get it. He was the last of the fellows who knew Horace Barber's secret, and he had no doubt whatever that Barber would lose no time in putting the fluence on him also.

The swell of St. Jim's was in a decidedly difficult position—a "doocid awkward posish," as he would have called it himself.

But for his promise to keep the new boy's secret, he would have made his knowledge public at once. It would have been his duty to do so. But nothing could justify breaking a promise. But if he sought out the schoolboy hypnotist to reason with him, and get him to release Tom Merry & Co., he guessed what the result would be. Barber would put the fluence on him at once, and he would be a helpless slave to the will of the hypnotist.

But there was nothing else to be done. His chums must be rescued from their extraordinary state, and D'Arcy looked for Barber.

"Affah all," murmured the swell of St. Jim's, "a fellow with a wemarkably stwong personality like mine can resist a wotten hypnotist. I shall buck up and defy the uttah wottah to put his beastly fluence on, and I wathah think he will get the worst of it!"

He found Barber in the gym. The new junior was alone, and he was grinning. He grinned still more as D'Arcy came in. He had expected him.

"Seen the other chaps?" he asked airily.

"Yaas, you uttah wottah!"

Barber chuckled.

"I fancy I'm getting my own back," he remarked. "You fellows won't bump me again in a hurry, I think."

"Wats! I wegard this as a wotten twick, and I ordah you to welease Tom Mewwy and the othahs at once fwom your wotten hypnotism!" said D'Arcy angrily.

There was a low exclamation outside the door of the gym. Figgins & Co. had followed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Thinking that the swell of St. Jim's had "got it," as Fatty Wynn had said, the chums of the New House intended to look after him, in case he came to any harm.

As they approached the doorway of the gymnasium, they heard what he said to Barber, and in a flash they understood.

"Hypnotism!" murmured Figgins.

"The new chap!" muttered Kerr.

"Who'd have thought it?" said Fatty Wynn, with a low whistle of amazement. "It—it can't be true!"

"Hush! Listen!"

"I ordah you to welease them!" said Arthur Augustus, with some heat. "Othahwise, I shall give you a feahful thwashin'! Do you undahstand? Don't make any wotten passes at me! You cannot hypnotise me now. I am

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on my guard. I have too stwong a personality for that!"

"Good old Gussy!" murmured Figgins.

"I wepeat, Barbah—"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's voice died away.

Figgins & Co. looked into the gym. Barber had his back to them, and did not see them. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was facing them, but the expression of the swell of St. Jim's was fixed. In spite of his strong personality—which perhaps was not quite so strong as he supposed—he had fallen under the hypnotic influence quite easily.

Barber was making slow passes before his face. The lids of D'Arcy's eyes drooped, and he closed them. Barber chuckled softly.

"Open your eyes, D'Arcy!" he said.

D'Arcy opened his eyes.

"Go!" said Barber. "You're to go into the Head's study and do a cake-walk there. Do you understand?"

"Yaas."

"Go at once!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked to the doorway of the gym. Barber looked after him, grinning. The three New House juniors had their eyes upon him, and Barber knew that they must have been watching him, and that his secret was discovered.

"I say, keep it dark, you fellows!" Barber exclaimed eagerly.

Figgins frowned.

"So you're a giddy hypnotist!" he said.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"I'm not going to keep it dark," said Kerr scornfully. "I would never have believed it possible, if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. It's jolly clever of you, but it's a rotten trick to play on anybody."

"Oh, rats! You'll keep it dark, or—"

"Or what?" exclaimed Figgins, clenching his big fists.

"Or I'll put the fluence on you three chaps, and make you punch one another black and blue," said Barber coolly.

"You can't put it on three at once, I suppose," said Kerr, with a grin. "Collar him, you chaps, and we'll make him own up before all the fellows. We're not going to have the whole school supposing that Tom Merry & Co. are mad, just to please that rotten joker."

"No fear!" said Figgins.

And Figgins & Co. rushed upon the schoolboy hypnotist.

Barber had no chance.

He could not, as the keen Scottish junior had remarked, hypnotise three fellows at once; Figgins & Co. gave him no time to hypnotise even one. They collared him, and whirled him off his feet, and dragged him out of the gym.

"Hallo! What's the row here?" demanded Kangaroo, as a crowd of juniors were attracted by the sight of the School House boy struggling with the chums of the New House. "Hands off the School House, you bounders!"

"Pax!" said Figgins. "We've found him out. He's a giddy hypnotist."

"What?"

"He's hypnotised Tom Merry and the other chaps," Kerr explained.

"Phew!"

"Mind he doesn't put the fluence on you!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Gussy's just gone in!" exclaimed Kerr.

"After him!"

Figgins & Co. rushed after the swell

of St. Jim's, anxious to stop him before he could get to the Head's study. They left Barber surrounded by an excited and threatening crowd of fellows.

D'Arcy was already in the School House, and as the New House juniors ran in after him into the lower passage, they saw him disappear into the doorway of the Head's study.

"Too late!" gasped Figgins.

It was indeed too late to stop the swell of St. Jim's from obeying the command of the schoolboy hypnotist. He had entered the Head's study without knocking, and the three masters there looked at him sharply. It was the first time anybody had ever known the elegant Fourth Former to be guilty of such an indiscretion.

CHAPTER 14.

The Last of the Fluence!

"D'ARCY!" said the Head sternly.

"Yaas, sir."

"What do you want here?"

"I am goin' to do a cake-walk, sir."

"What?"

Arthur Augustus did not answer again. He began to cake-walk. Mr. Railton, Mr. Linton, and the Head stared at him blankly. It was another case of the same mysterious malady—they knew that at once.

Mr. Railton strode towards him suddenly, and grasped him by the shoulder, and forcibly stopped the performance.

"D'Arcy," he said quietly, "listen to me."

"You are intewwuptin' the performance, deah boy!"

"Who told you to do it?" asked Mr. Railton, fixing his eyes upon D'Arcy with a steady gaze.

D'Arcy was silent.

"You were told to do that, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, sir."

"Who told you?"

Silence.

"It appears, sir," said Mr. Railton, turning to the Head, "that the boy is under the influence of another, but cannot speak his name."

There was a roar from the quadrangle. The masters turned hastily to the window. Out in the quad an excited crowd of juniors were gathered. Figgins & Co., too late to stop D'Arcy, had returned to take summary vengeance upon the hypnotist. Barber was wriggling in the grasp of a dozen juniors. The shouts of the boys were wafted in at the open window of the Head's study.

"Bump him!"

"Bump the rotten hypnotist!"

"We'll teach him to hypnotise here!"

"Bump him!"

"Give him another!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Railton smiled slightly.

"You hear that, sir?" he said.

"Yes," gasped the Head. "What—what does it mean?"

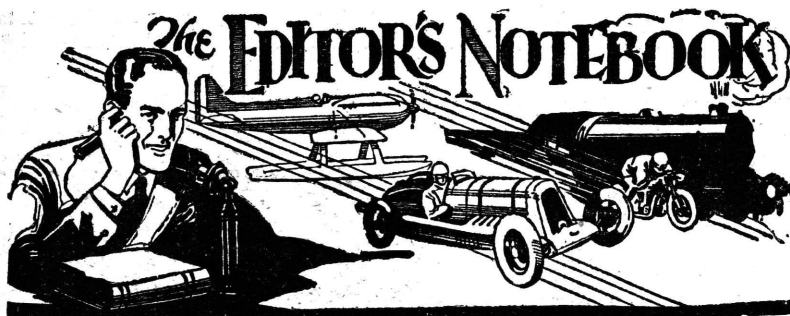
"It means that the boys have discovered a hypnotist."

Dr. Holmes nodded. He understood. He crossed to the window and called out to the excited crowd in the quadrangle.

"Boys!"

The hubbub ceased at once. The fellows, startled by the Head's voice, turned towards the window. Barber, with his clothes rent, his jacket split, and his collar hanging by a single stud, staggered from amid the press of juniors. Kildare had just arrived upon

(Continued on page 28.)



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

HALLO, chums! What would you think if when you turned the tap on one morning to have a wash, fishes started issuing out of it with the water? It would give you something of a shock—eh? And so it did the people of the Bronx district of New York when small minnows started flowing one day not only from the cold water taps, but the hot water taps, too! It is probably an unique occurrence to receive fish on tap, free, gratis, and for nothing, but fish only about an inch long could not be at all acceptable to the receivers. Something more welcome and edible once flowed from the taps of a house in Canterbury, New South Wales. They were prawns! Both these cases were investigated by the local water boards, and it was discovered that the fish and the prawns had got into the reservoirs from the sources that supplied them.

"HIS HONOUR AT STAKE!"

Changing the subject from fish to stories, an extra special powerful long yarn of the St. Jim's chums is on the programme for next Wednesday. It is the story of the sinister plotting of a rascal and the consequent sacrifice three juniors are prepared to make to save the honour of a chum. Not many fellows would face a flogging to save a friend's honour, yet that is what Tom Merry & Co. are willing to do to save George Figgins from being shown up as a cheat to the school. This ripping yarn will appeal to all of you, chums, and it will go down as one of Martin Clifford's best efforts of the year.

A GRAND DANCE!

By the way, I received a letter recently from Miss K. Costello, a long-standing GEM reader, who is secretary of The Henry Edwards British Film Club. She asks my assistance in making

it known to GEM readers in London that the club is holding a jolly dance and party next Saturday, March 2nd, at Bush House, Aldwych, W.C. There will be spot prizes, competitions, and plenty of fun. The profits from the dance will go to the Cinematograph Benevolent Fund, so all readers who are dancing fans will be helping a worthy cause if they go along. The tickets, price 3/9, including refreshments, can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, 32, Amesbury Avenue, Streatham Hill, S.W.; or from J. Hudspeth, Esq., 172, Plumstead Common Road, S.E. 18.

"LYNCH LAW!"

For next week's number Frank Richards has written another wonderful yarn of Western school adventure. It tells of the wild scenes in Packsaddle following on the capture of Jud Judson, a notorious gunman and bandit. The citizens of Packsaddle seek to break into the calaboose to lynch the bandit, and only Bill Sampson, the cowboy schoolmaster, and the town marshal, stand between Judson and the raging mob trying to get at him. Look out for this stirring story of the pals of Packsaddle School. It is the most thrilling we have had yet.

The next gripping chapters of "The Secret World!" are full of excitement and interest, for the twelve members of the St. Frank's party who are to penetrate into Gothland, Northestria's enemy country, to rescue Princess Mercia's young brother, start off on their mission of deadly peril. Don't miss this great instalment of Mr. E. S. Brooks' super serial.

PEN PALS COUPON

2-3-35



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

William J. Lindegreen, 24, Horner Street, Wellington, S.1, New Zealand, wants pen pals outside England and Australia.

Miss Marjorie Williams, 53, Stringhey Road, Wallasey, Ches, wants a girl correspondent; age 14-17; films, books, stamp collecting, swimming.

Miss M. Yeo, 2, Devon Avenue, Wallasey, Ches, wants a girl correspondent; age 14-16; books, films, swimming.

Miss Joan Robinson, 114, Beccles Drive, Barking, Essex, wants a girl correspondent; age 12-14.

"THE ANTLERED MAN!"

Talking of Mr. Brooks reminds me that our popular author has recently had his first seven-and-sixpenny book published. Many readers, I know, will be pleased and interested to know this. The story is a detective-thriller, and the scene is laid in an English village, where there is an age-old legend of an antlered man. No one has ever seen the figure—until it makes a dramatic appearance on the same night as a man is killed. It is a gripping story of clever detective work combined with baffling mystery, and there are many surprise twists in it that hold the reader's interest throughout. It is written in Mr. Brooks' best style, with which GEM readers are fully acquainted. "The Strange Case of the Antlered Man," published by Messrs. G. G. Harrap, Ltd., is on sale now.

A YOUTHFUL MUSICIAN!

Living in Ospringe, Kent, there is a six-year-old boy who can play the piano, the violin, and the flute—and yet he has never had a music lesson in his life! He is Andrew Anstell, and he seems to have had an "ear" for music since he was a baby. He started at the age of two on a penny whistle, and when he reached four he went on to the violin, and now the flute and the piano are numbered among the instruments he has mastered—all within four years. If Andrew goes on at this rate he ought to be conducting his own orchestra by the time he's twelve years of age!

A LIGHT MYSTERY!

A farmer in Thorney had electric light fitted up in his cowshed so that the cows could be milked more easily on dark winter nights. After milking had been done the cowman would switch off the light. But on several mornings the farmer was surprised to see that the light was still burning. At first he thought it was due to the cowman's negligence, but when it persisted, he decided to find out how the lights came on. He hid himself near the cowshed, and when the lights were suddenly switched on he rushed into the cowshed—to find a cow licking the switch. Apparently the cow preferred the light to the darkness.

TAILPIECE.

Green: "Life is full of trials."
Brown: "Yes, thank goodness!"
Green: "Why do you say that?"
Brown: "Because I'm a lawyer."

THE EDITOR.

Miss Doris Eveling, 33, Kitchener Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17, wants a girl correspondent; age 18-22; films.

G. Butler, 21, Quinn Buildings, Essex Road, London, N.1, wants correspondents.

Bob Gea, 387, Zebina Street, Broken Hill, N.S.W., Australia, wants a correspondent interested in sport.

Alfred Houston, 3, Jarvie Street, East Brunswick, N.11, Victoria, Australia, wants correspondents interested in magic.

Frank C. West, 201, Riverslea Road, North Island, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, wants a correspondent; age 14-15; gardening, stamps, wireless, pigeons.

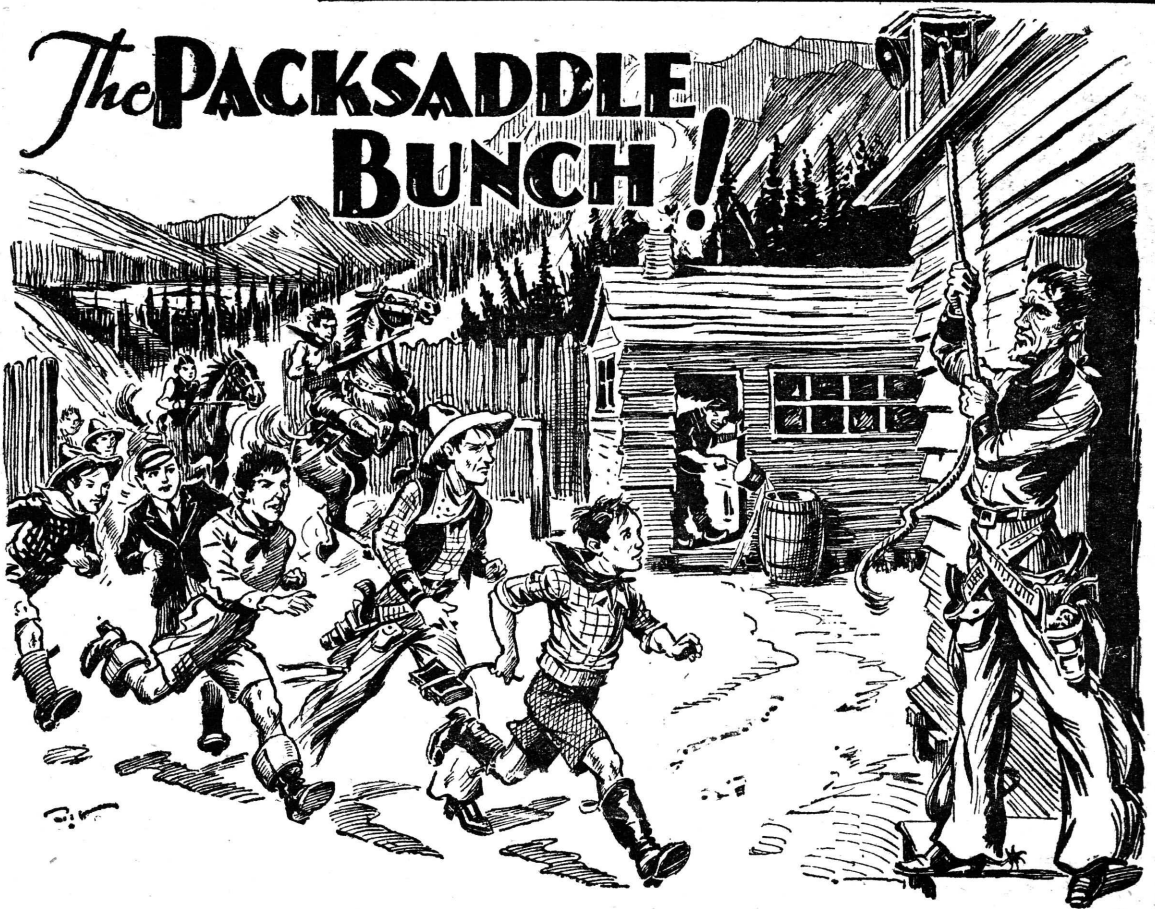
Norman Hiscox, 30, Hamilton Road, Birches Head, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs, wants correspondents in China, U.S.A., and South Africa; age 14-15; swimming, sport.

Walter McIntosh, Cross Roads P.O., Jamaica, West Indies, wants a correspondent; Wesleyan Sunday-school work; dairy farming or poultry—White Leghorns.

Don McDougall, Box 139, Adelaide Road, Murray Bridge, South Australia, wants to hear from stamp collectors.

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PUNCHERS VERSUS BANDITS IN A BATTLE OF DEATH!



A Stampede From School!

SILENCE!" squeaked Small Brown.

He squeaked in vain.

Not a fellow in the school-room at Packsaddle was silent.

Excitement reigned in the cow town school. If the Packsaddle bunch listened it was not to the voice of Small Brown, their teacher. They listened for the sound of hoof-beats on the prairie, and ringing rifle shots!

All the bunch knew that Ezra Lick, town marshal of Packsaddle, was hard on the traces of the Judson gang—hold-up men and rustlers! Bill Sampson, schoolmaster, was riding with the marshal's outfit. It was rumoured that the Judsons had been cornered somewhere on the rugged slopes of Squaw Mountain.

Small Brown cut little ice with the unruly bunch when Bill was away. Now he cut none at all.

Slick Poindexter climbed into a window to stare out over the school fence. Steve Carson lounged to the door. There was a buzz of incessant voices.

Class—such as it was—had been going on for an hour that morning. But one fellow had not yet arrived. That was Pie Sanders, who lived at Squaw Mountain. The bunch wondered whether he would come. They envied Pie, right on the spot if the outlaws really were rounded up at Squaw.

"Silence! Go to your places!" squeaked Small Brown, in despair.

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"Aw, can it!" said Steve Carson.

"Quit chewing the rag, Mr. Brown!"

The beat of horse's hoofs came from the school trail, and Slick, in the window, yelled:

"Here comes Pie!"

There was a rush to the door. Small Brown squeaked and waved his hands. But the whole bunch passed him with a rush. They wanted to hear the news from Pie.

Dick Carr, the new boy at Packsaddle, was in his place. The tenderfoot of

panting bronco. His face was red from hard riding.

"Say, you guys!" he exclaimed. "They got 'em! The Judson gang—five of 'em—rounded up on a mesa at Squaw Mountain! I tell you they're a-shooting!"

"Is Bill there?" gasped Slick.

"Where you figure Bill would be?" grinned Pie. "He's sure there, along with the marshal's outfit and a bunch of the Kicking-Mule punchers and a heap more guys. They got the Judsons at last."

"Go back to your places, boys!" came Small Brown's squeak. Nobody heeded the order.

"They got 'em dead to rights!" went on Pie. "I heard Bill say that some Injun had cinched their critters and left them on foot. They aimed to hunt cover in Squaw Mountain, but they was run down, and they're making a stand on the mesa. Burning powder, I'll tell a man!"

"Gum!" exclaimed Slick Poindexter. "Say, who's game to ride to Squaw Mountain and take a hand?"

"You've said it!" chuckled Mick Kavanagh.

There was a shout from the whole bunch. Small Brown rushed out of the schoolhouse.

"Stop!" he shouted. "Boys, go back into the school-room at once! Sanders, get off that horse."

"Not in your lifetime, ol' man!" said Pie. "I guess I moseyed along to give the bunch the office; I ain't come to school! Nope!"

And Pie, wheeling his bronco, dashed

**THE
TERROR OF TEXAS!**

By

FRANK RICHARDS.

Packsaddle was the only fellow who remained at his desk. But he did not remain there many moments. He was as keen as the rest, and he did not see being the only guy in the bunch to keep order. He jumped up and scudded after the others.

Pie Sanders came in at the school gate with a thud of hoofs, and pulled in a foaming bronco in front of the school porch. Twenty voices yelled at him as he halted.

"What's the noos, Pie?"

"You seen the Judsons?"

"Spill it!"

Pie did not dismount. He sat his

—ALL-THRILLING STORY OF SCHOOL ADVENTURE IN THE WILD WEST.

away to the gate again and galloped out on the prairie trail.

That was more than enough for the bunch. There was a scamper across the playground to the school corral.

"Stop!" yelled Small Brown.

"Can it, you!" grinned Slim Dixon, over his shoulder.

"You coming, tenderfoot?" grinned Slick, as he found Dick Carr running by his side for the corral.

"What-ho!" answered Dick.

"Aw, you forget it!" sneered Steve Carson. "I guess this ain't a game for a tenderfoot! You'll sure be scared stiff when you hear the guns."

"Rats to you!" answered Dick.

Mick jerked away the corral bar, and the bunch ran in for their horses.

"Pep!" shouted Dick, and his pinto came trotting up to him. The tenderfoot saddled and bridled his pony as swiftly as any of the bunch. He was the first to ride out.

Small Brown jumped in his way. Any other of the rough and tough Packsaddle bunch would have ridden on unheeding, and Mr. Brown would have jumped out of the way faster than he jumped into it. But the English school-boy reined in.

"Get off that horse!" shouted Small Brown, grabbing Dick by one leg and jerking at him.

"No fear!"

"Follow on!" roared Slick Poin-dexter, dashing by at a gallop. After him went Mick, Steve, Poker Parker, Slim Dixon, Domingo Duque, the Mexican boy, and the rest of the bunch.

"Let go, Mr. Brown!" snapped Dick.

"Stop! Come back! I order you!" squealed Small Brown. "Carr, dismount at once!"

It was the Packsaddle teacher's duty to keep the bunch in school—if he could! But he couldn't! The whole bunch, with the exception of Dick Carr, was riding out at the gate. Dick was not likely to remain behind. And he was well aware that Small Brown had picked on him because he was the "tenderfoot" of the school, and more amenable to discipline than the rest. But discipline was thrown to the winds now.

"Will you let go?" roared Dick Carr.

"Certainly not! Dismount, or I will pull you from the horse! I order you to—" howled Small Brown.

Dick gave the pony a touch of the quirt. Pep needed only the slightest touch to start him buck-jumping. In an instant he was rearing, plunging, and cavorting, and Small Brown, with a squeal of alarm, leaped backwards from the whirling hoofs.

One of the playground benches was behind him. His backward leap landed him on it, the back of his knees catching the edge.

"Oooohh!" spluttered Small Brown, as he went over backwards, his feet and coat-tails flying in the air.

He landed on his shoulders and the back of his head on the other side of the bench. He yelled wildly as he smote Texas. Dick chuckled and dashed on to the gate. Small Brown scrambled up, stuttering with rage, rubbing the back of his head with one hand, and shaking the other, clenched, after the tenderfoot. Unheeding the wrath of Mr. Brown, Dick galloped out of the school gate and dashed down the trail after the bunch.

Short as the delay had been, they were well ahead of him, riding hard for Squaw Mountain—the great mass that barred the blue sky to the west, fifteen miles from the bank of the Rio Frio.

But Pep, the pinto, was the fastest pony at Packsaddle, and in a couple of minutes Dick had overtaken the bunch and was riding with the foremost. With a clatter of hoofs and a jingle of bridles they swept away across the prairie. The miles raced under the galloping hoofs, and as they drew nearer to Squaw Mountain the ringing of rifles came to the ears of the bunch on the prairie wind.

The Cornered Rustlers!

BILL SAMPSON, schoolmaster, pushed his ten-gallon hat back on his untidy hair and wiped a stream of perspiration from his bronzed head, and a streak of blood from his cheek. A bullet had gone very close, taking a strip of skin and a tuft of beard. The Judsons were putting up a fight—a fight that was likely to be long remembered in the valley of the Rio Frio. Cornered on Squaw Mountain, the desperate gang were standing at bay, and they were gunmen and killers, every one of them. Every man who rode on their trail knew that powder would be burned and blood would be spilled before they were roped in.

Looked at from the distance, Squaw Mountain seemed like a solid mass against the sky. Closer at hand it was split by great canyons, gulches, and arroyos.

Medicine Canyon rived the mountain in a great gap, shut in on either side by towering cliffs and clinging pines.

In Medicine Canyon stood the "mesa."

The Terror of Texas, fighting for life and freedom, has no terrors for the pals of Packsaddle!

—one of the great volcanic masses of rock common in Texas, Arizona, and Mexico—flat-topped, whence came the Spanish name of mesa, or table.

On the summit of the mesa clustered the Judson gang, burning powder.

There were five of them—desperate border ruffians. Chief Seven Horses, the outcast Navajo, had stolen their cayuses in the night, and left them on foot, with the pursuit already up. They had hoped to scatter and escape in the gulches of Squaw Mountain, but the hunt had been too hot on their trail. Horsemen had ridden them down in Medicine Canyon, and they had turned to bay.

On top of the mesa, lying in cover of loose rocks, and firing whenever they saw a Stetson hat, they were surrounded, but not yet taken.

The mesa was twenty feet high. The sides were steep and rugged. It was not an easy position to rush, and the five men on the summit were all good shots, armed to the teeth and desperate.

But more and more enemies were gathering round the cornered Judson gang.

Ezra Lick, the marshal of Packsaddle, was there, with a dozen Packsaddle citizens. Barney Bailey, the foreman of Kicking Mule Ranch, had ridden up with punchers from the outfit. Punchers had come from other ranches. Bill Sampson, of course, was there. Bill was not likely to miss this.

Bill, with a rifle in his grip, and a

streak of blood running down his cheek, did not look much like a schoolmaster. Bill had forgotten that he was headmaster of Packsaddle School.

"Doggone my cats!" growled Bill, as he dabbed his cheek. "I guess that one went close. That'll be Jud that pulled trigger. He sure is some shot! But we got 'em, marshal."

Marshal Lick, in cover of a big rock with Bill, nodded.

"We got 'em!" he agreed. "We got 'em dead to rights! I guess the Judsons won't ride no more trails after this rookus. And there'll be some other guys that won't when we get to grips."

"Sure!" assented Bill.

"I'll say there's enough of us to eat 'em, body and boots!" growled Barney Bailey. "Waiting for you to give the word, marshal."

Marshal Lick peered round the big boulder.

Rifle-shots were ringing from the summit of the mesa. Return fire came from a dozen points in the wide canyon, the hot lead sweeping over the mesa and keeping the Judsons close in cover.

Mr. Lick chewed his under-lip thoughtfully.

He had waited for plenty of force to gather before coming to grips with the outlaws. Now there were more than thirty men in the canyon surrounding the rugged mesa, loosing off their rifles. Enough, as the Kicking Mule foreman said, to eat them body and boots if they got at them. But it was a tough proposition to rush the rugged slopes of the mesa in face of five rifles.

Bang!

A bullet spun the Stetson on the head of the marshal of Packsaddle as he peered. Mr. Lick gave a howl and jumped back to cover.

Bang! roared Bill's rifle, almost at the same instant. Bill was watching through a crevice of the rock, and he had seen a Judson lift himself on the mesa to fire.

A fearful yell came from the top of the mesa. The man who had fired at the marshal sank back there, the rifle falling from his hands.

A roar of rage from the other rustlers echoed the yell of the fallen man. Fast, and furious came a blaze of fire from four rifles.

Bill grinned.

"I guess," he remarked coolly, "that there's one guy in that bunch that won't pull trigger when we come to grips, marshal."

"You said it!" grinned Mr. Lick. He set his Stetson straight on his head again. "You ain't forgotten how to shoot, Bill, quirting them young guys at the school."

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

From somewhere along the canyon came a sharp shriek. Bill's grinning face became grave.

"That's one of our outfit got his!" he said.

Barney Bailey snapped an oath. "I guess that's a Kicking Mule guy, and he's got it where he lives!" he growled. "How long you going to wait, marshal? Say, if you don't get a move on, I guess the Kicking Mule outfit will handle this rookus, and leave you out in the cold!"

"Aw, can it, Barney!" grunted the marshal.

He peered round the rock again, giving the position the once-over. Then he rapped out his orders, which were passed along from man to man.

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From thirty rifles came a peal of heavy fire, and bullets rained on the mesa, driving the Judsons to close cover on the summit. Following that burst of fire came a rush from all sides, and Packsaddle men and punchers rushed and clambered up the steep sides of the mesa to the attack.

The Fight at the Mesa!

"I'LL say they're going it!" panted Slick Poindexter.

"And then some!" grinned Mick.

The leaders of the Packsaddle bunch were riding into Medicine Canyon. Slick and Mick led, Dick Carr keeping up with them. He could have shot ahead on the fleet-footed pinto, but it was new country to the tenderfoot of Packsaddle, and he knew none of the trails. Close behind the three came Big Steve Carson, using whip and spur on his grey bronco. The rest of the bunch were strung out behind, in ones and twos and threes. All were riding hard for Squaw Mountain, but all were not equally well-mounted.

An incessant roar of rifle-fire greeted the ears of the schoolboys as they dashed into the canyon. The leading riders came suddenly in sight of the rugged mesa, and reined in.

"They're getting to grips!" panted Carson.

"They got the Judsons!" said Slick.

Dick Carr stared at the thrilling scene before him, his face ablaze with excitement. It was a scene to make the tenderfoot's heart thump.

Puffs of smoke, the barking of rifles, came from the summit of the mesa. The Judson gang were defending themselves desperately. But thirty men or more were swarming to the attack, clambering up the rugged rock, some of them losing off revolvers as they clambered.

At the foot of the mesa three men lay wounded, and as Dick Carr looked he saw another man come rolling down the rugged rock, to crash helplessly on the earth.

"There's Bill!" breathed Slick. He pointed. Bill Sampson's brawny form could be seen clambering up with an activity amazing in so bulky and brawny a guy. "Good old Bill!"

Bang, bang, bang! roared the rifles of the rustlers.

A bullet whizzed towards the bunch of schoolboys. They were hardly a hundred yards from the scene of the desperate fight.

Dick Carr involuntarily ducked as he felt the wind of it. It missed him by a foot or more, however, and whistled away towards the distant canyon wall.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Steve Carson. "I guess that skeered you a few, you Carr. Say, you want to hunt cover."

Dick's face crimsoned.

"I'm not scared!" he snapped.

"But—"

"I'll say you looked it!" grinned Carson. "What you doing here, anyhow, tenderfoot? I guess this ain't no place for a soft boob."

Slick and Mick grinned. Pie Sanders reined in beside them and chuckled. Dick Carr set his lips. He would have given anything to recall that involuntary duck of the head; but gunfire at close quarters was rather a new thing to the Packsaddle tenderfoot.

"Beat it, you!" grinned Carson. "I guess you'll find a prairie rabbit's hole to stick your cazeba in."

Dick's eyes gleamed, but he made no reply. He turned his gaze on the mesa again. Bill Sampson was at the summit,

and as he scrambled forward a burly ruffian with a black beard and a scarred face leaped at him with clubbed rifle.

"That's Jud!" panted Slick.

The schoolboys gazed, spellbound. It seemed to them, for one terrible instant, that the Packsaddle schoolmaster would be swept away by the whirling rifle-butt, and hurled from the summit of the mesa to the canyon below—to crashing death.

But Bill Sampson dodged the crash of the rifle-butt, closed in on Jud, and grasped him.

For a moment or two they struggled on the edge of the mesa; then, losing their footing together, they rolled down the rough slope, still grasping one another and struggling fiercely.

"Oh!" panted Dick Carr, his face white. "He will be killed!"

"Aw, can it!" sneered Big Steve. "If you ain't got the nerve of a gopher, why don't you beat it?"

Dick hardly heard him. His eyes were fixed tensely on the Packsaddle schoolmaster. Gripping each other fiercely, like fighting panthers, Bill Sampson and Jud Judson rolled down the jugged rock, bumping, jolting, crashing, but still clutching and fighting.

There was a yelling and trampling on top of the mesa now. Ezra Lick and Barney Bailey and six or seven others had reached the summit, and the Judsons were hard driven. One had already fallen to Bill Sampson's rifle—another had rolled over under Barney's Colt, and the leader was rolling down the rock in Bill's grip. Two remaining ruffians, dodging among the rugged boulders on the mesa, loosed off revolvers and kept up a desperate resistance, while more and more foes clambered up to assail them.

Bump! came Bill Sampson and Jud, rolling from the rugged slope to the rocky floor of the canyon. The crash on the rocks tore them apart, and both of them lay panting for the moment. Bill, striving to rise, sank back.

"Bill's hurt!" panted Dick Carr.

He set his pony in motion, riding towards the mesa. Bullets were still flying wildly, crack after crack ringing out. But the Packsaddle tenderfoot did not heed them. He dashed on to Bill's help, and Slick and Mick followed him, and then Pie Sanders. Steve Carson sat his grey bronco where he was. In spite of his sneers at the tenderfoot, the bully of Packsaddle did not seem keen on getting near Jud Judson.

Bill Sampson needed help. His leg had twisted under him as he fell, and he was unable to get on his feet. Jud had been more lucky, and he was scrambling up, revolver in hand.

But for the schoolboys, Bill was at his mercy. The fight was still going on, and the marshal's men who were not yet at close quarters with the outlaws, were clambering up to the attack. Not a man there had an eye for lame ducks. Bill Sampson, struggling in vain to rise, lay under the muzzle of the rustler's revolver. Jud, panting, swaying, brought the weapon to bear on the Packsaddle schoolmaster, his fierce eyes blazing over the barrel.

Dick Carr dashed up, and slashed with his quirt, the only weapon he had. In the wild excitement of the fight, neither the marshal's men nor the rustlers had seen the schoolboys arrive. Jud did not even know that Dick was there, till he came up with a clatter of hoofs, and the slashing quirt caught the levelled revolver and tore it away from the black-bearded ruffian's hand.

The Colt clattered on the rocks, and

Jud was disarmed. He leaped back, spitting out an imprecation. His hand flew to the knife in his belt, and the long, broad blade flashed out into the sunlight.

"Watch out, you Carr!" shrieked Slick.

Dick was watching out—not for himself, but for Bill. The schoolmaster was struggling fiercely to rise, but his injured leg held him down. Dick rode between him and the rustler, his eyes on Judson, his quirt ready for another slash. It was a poor weapon in a boy's hand against a long knife in the grip of a brawny desperado.

But Jud, about to hurl himself at the schoolboy, paused, and stared round. Up to that moment the ruffian had only thought of fighting to the bitter end, like a cornered wild beast, killing till he was killed. But now he saw a chance of escape.

Bill lay powerless; his revolver was empty, and he could not rise. All the rest of the marshal's men were on the mesa, attacking the remnant of the outlaw gang. For the moment, Jud had a chance. He glared round with burning eyes under his black brows, leaped back from the spot and rushed towards Steve Carson. Dick, Slick, and Mick were round Bill, ready to defend him the best they could; and they were glad enough to see the brawny ruffian, with the flashing bowie in his hand, bound away from them. But the next moment they saw his intention, and shouted to Steve Carson.

"Look out, Steve!"

Pie Sanders slashed at the ruffian, but Jud passed him unheeding. He reached Steve with swift bounds. The bully of Packsaddle whirled away his pony, too late. The ruffian's hand was on the bridle, his knife flashing in the air.

Steve rolled off the saddle, just in time to escape the slash, and pitched heavily over on the rocks. Judson dragged the horse round, ran by its side for a second, and then leaped on its back. Steve was left lying dazed on the earth.

The rest of the Packsaddle bunch were riding up. They were right in the path of the fleeing ruffian, who had seized so promptly upon that unlooked-for chance of escape. They reined their ponies out of his way, as he came charging towards them, knife in hand, desperate fury in his bearded, blood-spattered face.

"Stop him!" yelled Slick.

But Jud was past the schoolboys and riding away like a madman on Steve's horse. Bill Sampson gave a roar of rage.

"Jumping painters! That guy's beating it—and he's the king-pin of the crowd! Aw, carry me home to die! This is sure the bee's knee!" Bill roared to the men on the mesa. "Say, you guys, Jud's beating it—get after that guy!"

But the last of the Judsons, on the mesa, were fighting like tigers, and the marshal and his men gave no ear.

Dick Carr waved his hand to Slick and Mick.

"After him!" he shouted.

"I guess—" gasped Slick.

"After him!"

Dick gave his pinto a touch of the quirt, and Pep leaped into a gallop. Bill lifted himself on an elbow and yelled after the tenderfoot.

"Come back! You Carr, you come back! You figure you can handle that firebug! Come back. I'm telling you."



As the desperate rustler, his fierce eyes blazing, brought his revolver to bear on the Packsaddle schoolmaster, Dick Carr dashed up on his bronco. Next moment Dick was slashing with his quirt, and the weapon was torn from the rustler's hand!

Dick was already out of hearing, galloping on the track of the fleeing outlaw. Slick and Mick exchanged a glance. Then they put spurs to their horses and dashed after the tenderfoot. Pie Sanders rode after them. Bill staggered up on one leg, holding to a jutting spur of the mesa. He yelled to Steve Carson.

"Say, you geck, what for you want to give that fire-bug a mount!" he roared. "What you doing here, anyhow, instead of at school? By the great horned toad, I'll sure quirt you a few!"

Steve made no answer. He stood staring blankly after the chase, vanishing down Medicine Canyon. On the summit of the mesa the fight sputtered out. The Judson gang were wiped out. The marshal and his men, missing Jud, came scrambling down. They rushed for their horses—but the cayuses were tethered at a distance. Jud Judson was gone; and unless the schoolboys galloping on his track could cinch him, he was gone for good.

Roping in the Rustler!

"YOU gink!" panted Slick Poindexter as he came up beside Dick Carr.

"You geck!" howled Mick, racing up on the other side.

Pie Sanders was already dropping behind. Five or six more of the bunch who had wheeled their horses to join in the chase, were strung out behind Pie. In a few minutes they were lost to sight, if the three in the lead had looked back. But they did not look back.

Unheeding, Dick rode on, his eyes on the fleeing outlaw ahead. Jud Judson was riding hard on Steve Carson's horse, getting every ounce of speed out of a good animal. But Dick easily kept pace on Pep. The handsome pinto was more than equal to the race.

"What you figure you're doing, you pesky boob?" yelled Slick. "You backing your quirt agin a Colt?"

Dick gave a breathless laugh.

"He's lost his gun, Slick! If he had a gun, he'd have fired back at us before this! Keep going, and we'll get him."

"He's sure got a 'leven-inch bowie!" gasped Mick.

"We're three to one! Keep going."

"I'll say you're some tenderfoot, you Carr!" grinned Slick. "I'll say you're as loco as a hornet; but if you're trailing Jud, I guess we're trailing him, too!"

The three schoolboys galloped on, miles of ground racing under the thudding hoofs. Jud had swerved into a narrow gulch that led into another wide open canyon. Evidently the outlaw knew his way about Squaw Mountain.

Medicine Canyon and the mesa where the gang had been wiped out, were miles behind now. If the marshal's men were riding, they were far out of the race. Dick did not know the country; but Slick and Mick knew it, and they knew that the hunted outlaw was heading for the loneliest stretch of Squaw Mountain in the hope of getting away to the prairie beyond and the recesses of the Staked Plain in the distance where he could hunt safe cover. Unless

the three schoolboys could deal with him, Jud was safe for the Staked Plain.

Several times as he rode the black-bearded outlaw cast a savage glare over his shoulder.

The schoolboys could read at first puzzlement, and then relief, in his fierce face.

Jud had feared to see armed men, in ten-gallon hats, with Colts in their grip, riding on his trail. All he saw was a bunch of three schoolboys, unarmed. His look told what was in his mind. At first he could hardly believe in his own good luck. Now he was riding hard, not because he feared the schoolboys, but because he feared others who might be coming on behind.

Had the ruffian still possessed a firearm, he would have shot down the three as they rode, with no more compunction than if they had been prairie rabbits. But he would not delay to deal with them with the weapon that remained to him—the razor-edged knife with a blade eleven inches long. But Jud reckoned that if they came up with him the bowie-knife would put paid to them fast enough. Meanwhile, he rode hard, with the Packsaddle trio on his track.

They were out on the open hillside now, and ahead appeared rolling plains of waving grass stretching away to the towering bluffs of the Staked Plain. Like a great wall in the distance, that high tableland barred the horizon.

But it was still far away, and the pursuers were gaining. Dick Carr's pinto could have run the outlaw down long since, but he kept with his

comrades. The pursuit was reckless enough, but he was not so reckless as to think of tackling the desperate outlaw singlehanded.

Pep kept a little in the lead, Slick and Mick going all out on their ponies to keep the pace. And Steve's horse, under the heavy weight of the bulky outlaw, was getting winded.

"We've got him!" said Dick, between his teeth.

"I'll say he's got us!" grinned Slick. "What'll he do with that seven-inch sticker, you gink, when we cinch him?"

"You've got your lasso!"

"Sure!" assented Slick, his eyes gleaming.

"And by the same token, so have I!" said Mick.

"I'll say it's a chance!" said Slick. And his riata was in his hand as he rode now.

Dick Carr had his lasso at his saddle, but he was not yet skilled in the use of the noosed rope. He left it there, keeping his quirt in hand. But Slick and Mick held their lariats ready for a chance.

Closer and closer they drew to the galloping outlaw.

Again and again Jud glared back at them. He had spotted the lassoes, and knew what was intended. Once within reach of the forty-foot rope, even a schoolboy's hand could have plucked him from the saddle, as he well knew. It was very near time for Jud to turn at bay. Neither was he unwilling. His heavy weight had tired Steve's pony, in a desperate gallop of five miles over hard country, and he had a horse-thief's eye on Dick's pinto.

That he could get the worst of a struggle with the schoolboys hardly occurred to the ruffian. All he wanted was to be clear of other pursuers while he handled them. And he was clear of other pursuers now.

Whiz!

Mick's rope flew, uncoiling as it spun through the air. It dropped hardly a yard behind the outlaw, flicking his horse's tail as it fell. Hurriedly Mick coiled it in.

Judson whirled round his horse. The long knife flashed in his hand as he rode back at the schoolboys.

"Scatter!" yelled Slick.

The three separated at once, dashing out of the outlaw's way.

Judson pulled in his horse, uncertain which to attack. As he paused, Slick's rope flew, and only by a swift and desperate twist did the outlaw escape the dropping noose. It struck the Stetson from his head as it grazed him.

"Aw, shucks!" growled Slick, as he dashed on, coiling in the trailing rope.

Jud whirled his horse again, and dashed at Dick Carr. He had to deal with the three separately, and to pick his man, and he picked the rider of the pinto.

He came swooping at Dick, the knife flashing in his hand. A touch of the quirt, and the pinto leaped into a wild gallop, and Dick rode away, with the outlaw panting behind. It was well for the Packsaddle tenderfoot, then, that he had a good horse, and knew how to ride it. Pep distanced the outlaw riding fiercely after the tenderfoot.

And after Jud came Slick and Mick riding in pursuit, ready to dodge him if he turned on them. Judson felt, rather than knew, that a whirling rope was coming, and swerved to avoid it, and again a loop dropped a yard from him. He snarled an oath through his clenched teeth, as he dragged round Steve's horse to ride back at Slick and Mick.

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"Beat it, Mick, you guy!" panted Slick.

"You said it!" grinned Mick.

They dashed away in different directions as the outlaw came thundering back at them.

With burning eyes Judson picked on Slick, and rode madly after him. Now it was Slick's turn to flee, and he rode for his very life, with the outlaw plying his spurs behind. After Jud came Dick Carr and Mick, in hot chase.

So desperately did the outlaw drive on Steve's pony that it seemed for some moments that he would ride Poindexter down. One slash of the bowie would have finished all things for Slick had Judson reached him. But Slick plied whip and spur, and kept ahead, and Steve's weary pony, overloaded by the brawny outlaw, stumbled, and Jud was nearly thrown. Poindexter glanced back over his shoulder, grinned, and reined in. He was safe from the outlaw's reach.

"Say, Jud, I guess we got you dead to rights!" yelled Slick. "It's you for the calaboose at Packsaddle, Jud!"

A yell of rage answered him.

Judson turned on the two schoolboys behind. They reined in at once as he turned. Mick's lasso flew, and the outlaw, with a desperate bound, barely avoided it. He made a spring to grasp the rope as it fluttered on the earth, but Mick was not likely to give him a chance of that. Swiftly he jerked the trailing rope away.

It was dawning on the ruffian's mind now that it was not so easy to deal with the schoolboys as he had reckoned.

He sat the almost spent pony, his eyes glittering with rage, his grasp convulsive on the handle of the bowie-knife. There was murder in his eyes, and in his heart, if he could have reached them, but he could not. And while the minutes passed, pursuit was drawing nearer and nearer.

For long, long minutes he watched them, like a cornered panther, and they watched him. Then, with a sudden crash of spurs on the flanks of Steve's pony, he galloped at Dick Carr. Instantly Dick dashed away, and instantly Slick was riding after the outlaw, lariat in hand, whirling the coiled rope for a cast.

Whiz!

A fearful yell came from Jud. This time he did not escape the whirling rope.

Forty feet of cowhide stretched in the

air, and the loop dropped over the outlaw's head and shoulders.

He dragged in his horse and clutched at the rope—too late! Slick whirled his pony and dashed away, putting a sudden strain on the rope, that tightened the loop like an iron band round the outlaw, and plucked him from the saddle like the clutch of a giant's hand.

Crash went Judson on the rocky earth, with a concussion that almost stunned him. The bowie-knife flew from his hand, falling yards away. He was dragged along the rocks a score of feet before Slick pulled in his pony.

"I'll say we got him!" shrieked Mick.

Mick and Dick dashed up, and leaped from the saddle. One of Jud's arms was pinned by the lariat, the other they grasped as he strove to struggle. Slick joined them in a few seconds. The three of them had their hands on the outlaw, and the lasso was wound round and knotted, pinning both his arms.

Jud Judson, leader of the Judson gang, for years the terror of Texas, lay a helpless prisoner in the hands of the Packsaddle schoolboys.

Slick Poindexter fanned his face with his Stetson.

"I'll say this is a cinch!" he chuckled.

"I guess Bill will be mad with us for lighting out of school and leaving Small Brown on his lonesome. But Bill will sure be a glad guy when he sees this baby with the rope on."

"And then some!" chuckled Mick.

"Stick him on his horse!" said Dick Carr.

Jud Judson was lifted to the saddle of Steve's pony. There his feet were tied together under the animal. Slick Poindexter held the end of the lasso, and the schoolboys rode back the way they had come, leading their prisoner.

They had to cover several miles before they sighted a bunch of bobbing Stetson hats. They waved their own hats, and yelled and shouted. Marshal Lick and his men came up at a gallop, with amazed faces. Bill Sampson, pulled in his horse, gazing at the three schoolboys and the bound outlaw with an expression on his face that made the boys chuckle.

"You—you got him!" gasped Bill. "You got that all-fired rustler! You sure got that goldarned firebug! Jumping painters! Say, boys, pinch me and wake me up!"

The marshal of Packsaddle took the rope from Slick. Still amazed, he stared at the savage, scowling face of the outlaw.

"It's sure Jud, and we got him!" he said. "Mister Sampson, I'll tell a man you're some schoolmaster, to raise a bunch that can handle a firebug of Jud's heft! Yes, sir, I'll tell all Texas."

"Carry me home to die!" said Bill. "I was going to quirt the whole bunch for breaking herd that-away. I sure was going to make them sit up on their hindlegs and yowl! But—"

"Forget it, Bill!" said the marshal of Packsaddle.

And Bill forgot it!

Dick, Slick, and Mick rode back to Packsaddle with the marshal's men, and saw Jud Judson safely lodged in the calaboose of the cow town. There was no more school at Packsaddle that day. Small Brown had expected to see Bill's quirt handled, hard and heavy, on the unruly bunch. Instead of which, much to Small Brown's disgust, Bill announced that the rest of the day was a holiday.

(Next week: "LYNCH LAW!"—another stirring Wild West story, starring the Packsaddle pals. Order your GEM early.)

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ANOTHER POWERFUL INSTALMENT FROM THE BEST ST. FRANK'S STORY EVER!

The SECRET WORLD!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

Suspicious!

STRANDED in Northeustria, an unknown world in the Arctic, when their airship crashes, Lord Dorrmore, Nelson Lee, and a number of St. Frank's boys and Moor View School girls become prisoners of the Northeustrians, who think they have come from Gothland, their enemy country. Even when Handforth saves the life of Princess Mercia, the youthful ruler of the country, from a spy's arrow, the Northeustrians are not convinced that the airship party are friends and not enemies, and they are kept in captivity. Handforth, however, is made captain of the princess' guard, and, with his two chums and brother, whom he insists on making members of his guard, sets out after Gothland spies. They stop at a wayside inn, the innkeeper of which has aroused Willy Handforth's suspicions by signalling from a window as they approached.

The cavalcade pulled up with a clattering of hoofs and a jingling of stirrups and chainmail. Handforth was glad enough to dismount, and to stretch his legs a bit. The inn was a very small place—a low, poorly built house, with a thatched roof.

The innkeeper himself was at the door, and there was something in his manner which Handforth didn't quite

like. The man seemed to be very nervous, and he was watching the soldiers with frightened eyes. He was a hang-dog-looking customer, with a permanent scowl. Indeed, Handforth set him down as a villain.

"Horsemen?" repeated the man, shaking his head. "Nay, thou art wrong, good officer! No horsemen have travelled this way for many a day."

"What!" said Handforth, startled. "Are you sure?"

"Hast seen no strangers?" put in Wynwed.

"Not one," smiled the other. "'Tis seldom enough that folks travel this road, my lords. Thou art come wrong."

Handforth scratched his head.

"H'm! This is a nice go!" he grunted. "Those rotters must have turned off the road somewhere between here and the last village. Well, the only thing we can do is to ride back, and make a thorough search."

"'Twill be a great task, methinks," grumbled Wynwed. "I would surely be better to tarry awhile in this hostelry, bold Handforth. 'Tis ill to strain our horses unduly."

Handforth hesitated.

"Oh, well, perhaps we'd better have an hour," he admitted. "You see to the horses, Wynwed. Get some of the men to take them over to that pond, and let them have a good drink. Landlord,

bring us coffee, and plenty of bread, and a good supply of cheese."

The innkeeper was flustered.

"I fain would do as my lord commands, but I am unprepared for such numbers," he protested. "If thou wilt forgive me—"

"Well, never mind!" growled Handforth. "Let's get indoors, and have half an hour's rest. That'll be good enough."

He was ushered into a small room with a ceiling so low that it almost touched the top of his head. Church and McClure and Willy followed him, and the latter was looking rather keen.

"By George, that's good!" said Handforth, as he sat down on a low chair. "Is it, though? Whoa! I'm pretty sore, you chaps! Must be this riding—we're not used to it."

"You don't believe this innkeeper, do you?" asked Willy softly.

"Believe him?"

"Yes. You don't think he's telling the truth?" said Willy. "Because, if you do—I don't! He's seen those horsemen, Ted, and, what's more, I'll bet a quid to a stick of chewing-gum that he's mixed up with this spy crowd. This is probably one of their meeting-places."

Handforth looked startled.

"Yes, now you come to mention it, the chap looks a real crook!" he

muttered. "But we've got nothing to go on—"

"Only the man was signalling from one of the upper windows before we got here," said Willy quietly. "But, of course, I don't need to tell you that, Ted. You're in charge of this hunt—not me. Naturally, you saw him, didn't you?"

Handforth started. "Well, yes," he said. "Of course—That is to say, no! Signalling—eh?"

"That's what he was doing," replied Willy.

"I must have been thinking," said Handforth. "So this rotter was signalling, was he? Signalling to those dirty spies! All right, leave him to me. I'll soon make him cough up the truth!"

Edward Oswald strode out of the inn, yelling loudly for the landlord. And that individual, hustled forward by two of the soldiers, stood in front of Handforth, shivering.

"You've been lying!" snapped Handforth.

"Nay, my lord, 'tis not so—"
"You've been lying!" repeated Handforth. "You said that those horsemen didn't come this way. Well, they did! And, what's more, you know where they are, too! Come on—out with it!"

The man vigorously protested. "Nay, good master! 'Tis naught I know!" he panted. "Thou hast made a blunder, my lord! Have I not already told thee—"

"Take him away!" snapped Handforth curtly. "Here, Wynwed! Cenuwlf! Wilfrid! Forward, all of you! Take this dirty knave, and tie him to that fence. And get the archers ready!"

Screaming with terror, the innkeeper was grabbed by the soldiers, who were willing enough to obey Handforth's orders. Their new captain had a way with him that these simple Northestrians could not ignore.

"I know naught—I know naught!" shouted the innkeeper desperately. "Spare me, good master! Thou art accusing me falsely—"

"We'll see about that!" rapped out Handforth fiercely. "That's right! Tie him securely! I believe in doing these things swiftly—killing them out of hand! Now then, the archers! Get your arrows ready!"

A dozen archers stood on the other side of the road, and they unslung their powerful bows. There was something grim and significant about the whole performance, and the innkeeper had gone white to the lips with fright.

"Now, get ready!" shouted Handforth. "Innkeeper, you've got just one minute! Where are those three horsemen? Speak now, and your life will be spared. When my hand drops you'll die!"

He raised his hand, and the archers drew their bows, the arrows quivering, ready.

"Hold—hold!" screamed the landlord. "I will tell thee the truth, my lord, if only thou wilt spare my unworthy life!"

Hounded to Their Lair!

HANDFORTH took a deep breath. It was really a breath of relief, although he did not show this. For, of course, he had no intention of giving the order to have the innkeeper killed. It was just a bluff—and it had worked.

"Hold your arms, men!" he ordered. "Lower the arrows! Now, you rat, out with that story of yours! Where are these horsemen? Which way did they

go and where can we find them? The whole truth, mark you, or back to that fence you go!"

The man was shaking in every limb. "They—they are in the hills—yonder!" he panted, pointing with a quivering finger. "If thou wilt penetrate into this neighbouring wood, thou wilt find a pathway. And then, beyond, caves amid the rocks—"

"And is this where these men are hiding?"

"'Tis where they live!" muttered the innkeeper tensely. "Spare me, good sire, I am but a poor man, and I did mean no harm—"

"Just a minute," interrupted Handforth. "Were you signalling to these pals of yours? Did you wave something from one of your back windows as soon as you caught sight of all the soldiers?"

"Nay, my lord, 'twas merely—"

"Back to the fence!" roared Handforth. "Archers, prepare—"

"I will tell the truth!" gasped the man. "Ay, good soldier, 'twas a signal, by my faith! 'Twas a warning that the soldiers were coming—but it seemeth that the men saw it not, for I received no answering signal—"

"Well, anyhow, we can't wait," interrupted Handforth. "Wynwed, make one of these men dismount, and let him remain here. This beggar will use the horse, and show us the way to these caves!"

"Good egg!" said Willy. "That's the stuff to give 'em! Ted, old man, you're doing wonders!"

"Trust me!" said Handforth.

"Yes, you'd have been a fat lot of good without Willy, wouldn't you?" asked Church unkindly. "You wouldn't have suspected a thing if Willy hadn't given you the tip!"

Handforth frowned. "H'm! Well, perhaps Willy helped a bit," he admitted. "But we haven't got the spies yet!" he added. "Before we do any crowing, let's get something done."

The innkeeper was forced to climb upon one of the horses, and he was given to understand, very clearly, that if he led, the soldiers wrong, he would be promptly used as a target for a dozen arrows. The man was so thoroughly frightened that there was not much chance of him attempting any treachery.

All the juniors had forgotten their tiredness now, and were eager for the hunt. And even Wynwed the Jovial was looking excited and keen. In fact, all the soldiers were worked up to a pitch that had never fallen to their lot before. They had grown so accustomed to slack, sleepy methods, that this simple adventure was getting into their blood like fire.

"Forward!" commanded Handforth, when they were all mounted. "Follow me, my lads! We'll soon have these spies by the heels, and we'll be back in Dunstane within two or three hours."

"Hurrah!" yelled Church. "Let's hurry on!"

And the whole cavalcade went thundering off across a grassy meadow. Then, a little farther on, the frightened innkeeper led the way into a dense wood. It was obvious that he was taking them along the correct path, for among the trees there was a clearly defined track.

Fortunately, the actual journey was short—not more than a mile and a half. And suddenly a wall of rock loomed up in the semi-gloom of the high trees. The forest grew right against the cliff face, and here there were low cave

All the soldiers dismounted, and the horses were tethered to trees.

"This looks like being a pretty ticklish job, Ted," said Willy. "The place is a warren, by what I can see. Look at the cave entrances. The best thing we can do is to send two or three men into each one at once, and if they're all connected inside the cliff, the spies will be trapped."

Handforth looked at him coldly.

"That's exactly what I've planned to do," he said. "It won't take me long to get these beggars out. Why, it's the first time they've ever been hounded down, and they'll get the shock of their lives. Come on; we'll take this biggest cave. Wynwed, get your men ready, and we'll all march in at the same minute. Leave three or four soldiers out here, though, in case of emergency."

"May I suggest, good Handforth, that we should tear down these tree branches, and make them into torches?" said Wynwed. "I'll be better than penetrating these caves in the darkness. For, by St. Attalus, 'twill be a fool's task, fighting in the blackness of these caves!"

"The torches will take a long time to make—"

"Nay, these trees are full of gum," said the jovial one quickly. "And 'tis a gum which, by my faith, burneth swiftly. 'Twill take but a minute or two to prepare these torches."

"Go ahead, then," said Handforth.

"We can do with 'em."
Wynwed was perfectly right. For the branches of the peculiar trees snapped off quite cleanly, and with no trouble. But when Handforth produced a box of matches and struck a light the soldiers were all startled.

"Beshrew me for an ignorant dog!" gasped Wynwed. "But what strange wonder is this, Handforth, the Bold? Fire in a twinkling, as I live! I' faith, sirrah, thou art truly a youth of many surprises!"

"My hat!" said Handforth, glancing at his chums. "They don't even know what matches are. I'll tell you all about 'em when we get back to the castle, Wynwed. By George, these chunks of wood burn like real torches! Come on! Now for the spies!"

The different parties of soldiers marched into the black openings of the caves, and Handforth and his three companions of St. Frank's entered the biggest one. They found themselves penetrating into the very heart of the cliff, with jagged rocks on both sides and with the roof high above them.

That cliff, indeed, proved to be a veritable warren.

But the methods employed were such that there could be no escape for the trapped spies. Every cave entrance had been located, and thus every exit had been blocked. It did not matter whether the caves joined up with one another or not. There were soldiers searching them all.

"Hallo!" shouted Handforth suddenly. "Here's somebody! I just caught a glimpse— Yes, that beggar who shot the arrow at Princess Mercia! I'd know his face in a thousand! Quick! This way!"

They ran round a bend of the tunnel-like cave, Handforth well in advance. An enormous chunk of rock came hissing through the air.

"Duck!" yelled Handforth, in alarm. He dodged down as he shouted, and the other juniors were only just in the nick of time. The rock whistled over their bent backs, and dropped with a thud on the rocky floor beyond.

"Better go easy, Handforth!" gasped Church.

"We've got him!" roared Handforth. "The murderous rotter! That rock might have killed me! He won't do it again!"

Handforth threw himself forward, and found that the trapped man was quite alone, and the cave at this point was a dead end. With a concerted yell, the St. Frank's juniors hurled themselves upon the enemy.

"Mercy, I beseech thee!" shouted the spy. "I will come without struggling, good sirs! Thou hast caught me, and I admit defeat!"

Handforth snorted.

"It doesn't matter whether you admit defeat or not, my lad—you're whacked!" he snapped. "And you'll just take this, too—to be going on with!"

Crash!

The man took it—a crashing blow on

This rock warren had produced eight spies altogether.

They were all men of the same type—all coarse-looking brutes, with villainous expressions. Wynwed the Jovial was startled.

"Gothlanders, by my faith!" he declared. "Out upon them for knaves of the worst type! 'Twill create a sensation in Dunstane, methinks, when we ride in with this motley crew! 'Twill be the chopping-block for them all!"

The Price of Life!

THE prisoners were terrified. One look at them was sufficient to prove their guilt. Not that there was the slightest question on this point. They had been hounded

extent. Two of them commenced babbling at once, and Handforth strove to silence them.

"It's no good; you can plead for mercy as much as you like," he said coldly. "It won't work. We've got you—"

"If thou wilt promise to save our heads from the block, we have information for thee!" urged one of the spies. "Thou wilt be willing to make a bargain? 'Tis well for both sides—"

"I don't make bargains with crooks!" growled Handforth.

"And yet we can supply thee with information which will surely please the heart of Princess Mercia," went on one of the men. "Let us be placed in a fortress—but spare our heads from the block!"



Hot on the track of the spy, Handforth & Co. ran round a bend of the tunnel-like cave. "Duck!" yelled Handforth suddenly. The four juniors bent double as they ran, and a huge chunk of rock went hissing over their heads!

the jaw. Handforth was in his element now. When it came to a fight, he forgot all about tiredness, and entered into the scrap with a whole-hearted enthusiasm.

In less than a minute the man they had trapped was lying on the floor of the cave, whimpering with fright. He was a fairly big fellow, too, dressed in nondescript garb. He looked such a ruffian that the juniors were convinced that he was a Gothlander, and no traitor Northestrian. He was one of Kasker's picked men.

"This'll mean the chopping-block for you, you spy!" said Handforth fiercely. "You're the man who tried to kill the princess! Come on! Up with you! Where's the string, Church? Bind his arms behind him!"

The man was pulled to his feet and rendered helpless. And then, with their prisoner marching in front of them, the juniors passed out of the cave again. They found that the majority of the soldiers had returned, and they were holding not two prisoners, but seven.

down immediately following the attempt upon Princess Mercia's life, and that was all the evidence that was needed.

"They're all Gothlanders," said Handforth. "After we hand these over, they can't accuse us of being mixed up with Kasker's rotten crowd, can they? It'll put all those dotty ideas out of their heads! And the rest of the crowd will be released, and everything in the garden will be lovely!"

"Marry!" exclaimed Wynwed the Jovial. "But the capturing of these spies will arouse the populace to a right earnest realisation of their peril. Kasker is becoming dangerous!"

"Only just realised it?" asked Handforth sarcastically. "We haven't been in your country for a couple of minutes, but we know a lot more about your troubles than you know yourselves! The execution of these spies, though, will give Kasker a nasty jolt."

Such conversation as this, in the full hearing of the captives, was not calculated to cheer them up to any great

"Ay, we will speak freely!" exclaimed the others.

"Take no heed, good Handforth," said Wynwed. "These men are but carrion, and their word is not to be trusted!"

"I don't need any telling, thanks!" interrupted Handforth curtly. "They won't do any bargaining with me. Now we've got to decide how to take them back. Eight of you must stop behind, and get fresh horses and come later. The rest of us will ride to the capital with these prisoners in our midst—"

"Wait, I beseech thee, young sir!" shouted the Gothlander who had spoken at first. "We can tell thee where young Prince Oswy is to be found!"

"By the bones of Offa!" ejaculated Wynwed, staring.

"Prince Oswy?" repeated Handforth.

"Ay, 'tis even as I speak!" went on the man. "Givest thou thy word that thou wilt spare our necks from the block, and the place of Prince Oswy's

imprisonment will be given thee. Ay, not only the place, but the door by which it can be reached, the passage into which to turn, the dungeon in which he languishes! All shall be spoken—if thou wilt promise."

"Lies, by my faith!" swore Wynwed. "Perhaps so—but that's not very likely," put in Willy Handforth quickly. "Why not promise, Ted? It's worth trying."

"You don't believe that rot?" said his major, frowning.

"Yes, I do."

"Then you're a young ass—"

"If you'd only think, Ted, instead of standing there and scoffing at everything, you'd realise that this information might be jolly valuable. Promise these men that they'll be spared from the chopping block—and get that information in return. Dash it, Ted, you're not a bloodthirsty chap, anyhow. And think of the princess' joy if she heard of her brother's exact whereabouts."

Handforth started.

"Yes, by George!" he breathed into Willy's ear. "And perhaps we could go along and take a trip to Gothland one night, and steal Prince Oswy out of his prison in the darkness!"

Willy shook his head.

"Afraid we should have to wait a long time," he murmured. "This present day, according to all calculations, has lasted about eight hundred years—"

"My hat! It doesn't get dark here, does it?" interrupted Handforth. "H'm! That's a beastly nuisance, if you like!"

"Well, don't waste time on making plans about rescuing Prince Oswy," grinned Willy. "I think you've done enough chasing about for once. Promise to spare those rotters, and they'll give you the information."

"But supposing it's false?"

"It won't be false, ass," retorted the Third Former. "What would be the good of them giving you dud directions? If a party went over there and found everything wrong, these spies would

simply be executed. Naturally, you'll have to hold them until their story's been proved."

"Oh, rather!" said Handforth, with a start. "That's the idea! Yes, by George! I'll make this bargain with 'em! I don't much care for the poor beggars being beheaded, anyhow. They'll be just as harmless if they're shoved into one of these moated castles. They've got plenty to spare in this country."

"Good man!" said Willy. "Go ahead!"

Handforth turned back to the prisoners.

"You say that you'll tell us where Prince Oswy is to be found?" he demanded. "You'll give us this information in return for your lives?"

"'Tis a bargain, great lord!" said one of them.

"You will be held prisoners until the story is proved," said Handforth grimly. "If it is found to be false, off come your nappers—I mean it'll be the chopping block for you directly after breakfast!"

"We will speak the truth, by our souls!" panted the man fervently.

"'Twas Kassker who forced us into this devil's business. 'Twill be death for us if we return to Gothland with our mission unaccomplished. Rather would we languish in one of thy prisons—for there, at least, shall we be safe from the great overlord's revenge."

"I promise," said Handforth solemnly. "As captain of her Majesty's bodyguard, I give you my promise that your lives shall be spared. Now, let's have that information."

The rascals were only too ready to adhere to their part of the bargain.

Handforth wrote down every detail of the careful directions the spies gave him. Then the party started off. With Handforth leading, and ten mounted soldiers behind him, the procession looked imposing. In the centre came the eight captives, their hands bound behind them, their feet tethered to the stirrups of their horses. In the rear rode another dozen members of her Majesty's bodyguard.

It was a victorious cavalcade—and one that created wonder and awe in every village and town it passed through on its way back to the capital. There wasn't the slightest doubt that these schoolboys were waking things up with a vengeance!

A Great Welcome!

ALL Dunstane was out in the streets to watch the bold procession as it came trotting through the city towards the Royal castle. And the air was filled with the sounds of acclamation and cheering. And these were all for Handforth, who was recognised as the great hero.

But it had been Willy's idea to send a soldier galloping hard into the capital, in advance of the actual cavalcade, so that he could give warning of the victor's approach.

"Hail—hail!"

"Handforth the Bold!"

"Welcome, brave Handforth!"

"Thou hast done well, good youth!"

These and endless other cries made Edward Oswald feel decidedly proud as he bowed his acknowledgments to the ever-increasing crowds. And when he crossed over the drawbridge and clattered into the courtyard of the Royal castle he found other throngs awaiting him—with the princess and Ethelbert the Red on the balcony, watching.

More cheers arose.

As a matter of fact, both the capital and the Royal Court were amazed. Handforth had been appointed captain of the bodyguard—much against the wishes of Ethelbert the Red. But the chief adviser was feeling a little different now. For in these brief hours Handforth the Bold had already proved himself!

"How now, good Ethelbert?" cried the princess, as she pointed to the dejected prisoners. "Thou wert angry with me, I think, for appointing this brave youth to the captaincy of the bodyguard. What hast to say?"

"By my soul, but the boy hath the makings of a wondrous soldier!" vowed Ethelbert the Red. "I will grant thee, Majesty, that thy judgment was truly sound."

"'Tis gracious in thee, my Ethelbert," smiled the princess. "But is there not something else? What of thy fears now?"

"Fears?"

"Were it not thy suspicion that these brave strangers were from Gothland—sent hither by Kassker's orders?" asked the lovely Mercia, her eyes twinkling. "Surely, good Ethelbert, thou art now willing to confess that thy first impression was wrong? These people are friendly—and, therefore, 'twould be but gracious to honour them as they all deserve. Let them be sent for. Let them be brought hither, and placed as Royal guests under my roof."

"But, think, dear Majesty—"

"'Tis my wish," said the princess quietly.

She walked gracefully down the steps, and met Handforth at the bottom, who had just strode up, and was now saluting.

"'Tis a great triumph, brave Handforth!" said Princess Mercia, looking at him with tender eyes. "My hand!"

She extended her hand to him, and Handforth looked flustered.

"'Tis thine to kiss!" said the princess gently.

"Oh, I say!" gasped Handforth. "I—I mean— Rather!"

He bent down and kissed that fair

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little hand, and then stood back, flushing deeply. He had had a speech all prepared, but every word of it was now forgotten.

"I went for the spies, your Majesty, and here they are!" Handforth managed to blurt out. "Eight of 'em! I thought it better to round them up at once."

"Thou hast taught mine own people a signal lesson," said the princess quietly. "For long have I urged an awakening. Perchance thy goodly deeds will have the desired effect."

"Well, I'll admit most of the towns and villages we passed through were as dead as mutton," said Handforth, nodding. "By George! I believe they've all been sound asleep for centuries—and the sound of our hoof-beats must have awakened them! But there's one thing I want to ask your Majesty," he added suddenly. "Have we not proved our sincerity?"

"Thou hast, indeed."
"I don't think even old Ethelbert can now believe that we were all sent here by Kassker," went on Handforth. "So I was going to ask you to let our friends out of that fortress—"

"'Tis a request that shall be granted," put in the princess promptly. "Have I not already spoken with my Ethelbert, and—"

"Wait, good Majesty!" put in Ethelbert the Red, as he joined her. "Make no rash promises, I beseech thee! Harken to this youth's story, but make no declaration of what thou wilt do."

The princess turned upon him half-angrily.

"Thou art full of suspicions, Ethelbert!" she exclaimed. "Is't not enough for these brave strangers to capture spies who did attempt my life? What else suggesteth thou, my adviser?"

But Handforth was speaking again. "We have other news for you, your Majesty!" he exclaimed. "News of your brother, Prince Oswy."

"By my faith! Is that so?" cried the princess gladly.

"Rather!" said Handforth. "I told the spies that their heads would be saved from the chopping block—I gave them my word—and in return they have told me the exact whereabouts of Prince Oswy—how to find him, and every single detail of his prison. Is it not good news?"

"Wondrous news, indeed!" said the fair Mercia, her blue eyes sparkling with excitement. "List ye, my Ethelbert! Is there no end to the favours of these people whom thou wouldst thrust into the dungeons? Out upon thee, Ethelbert!"

"Perchance I am at fault, Majesty!" interrupted Ethelbert the Red, his face flushed. "Yet I would urge thee to listen to my counsel. I desire a few words, good Majesty."

He was tugging at his red beard, and his eyes were grave.

Rather impatiently, the princess went aside with him.

"Now, say on!" she murmured. "What is't?"

"My advice is that thou shouldst be cautious," replied Ethelbert softly. "Do not release these other prisoners from the Athelstane fortress yet awhile—"

"But I shall!"

"'Twas thy father's wish—"

"Stay!" interrupted the princess angrily. "If ever I wish to rule, my Ethelbert, and if ever my desires clash with thine, thou speakest of my father's wishes! 'Tis enough! These good people have proved themselves—"

Glyn Challenge Cup—Fourth Round.

SAINTS' STERLING STRUGGLE WITH NINE MEN.

Last-Minute Reward.

(Verbatim Report by A. A. D'Arcy.)

Visitin' Wippingham — which Tom Mewwy wudely informs me is pronounced with an "R," not a "W"—St. Jim's were at full stwngth, with myself at outside-left. Wippingham had already beaten Wedclyffe 6—1, Claremont 9—2, and Wylcombe Gwammar School 5—3, so we expected a hard fight. Before the game was ten minutes old, however, I was off the field, nursin' a badly bwuised ankle. When I took the field again, I was hobblin', and was no more than a passengah. Meanwhile, Wippingham's star centre-forward, Alex Pountney, was makin' a big impession. Wynn saved magnificently ffrom him twice in succession, but Pountney beat him at the third attempt with a gweat dwive. Early in the second half Digby fell and twisted his knee—a pure accident, like mine, but weducin' our fightin' stwngth to nine. With Dig and myself little more than spectators on the touch-lines, it seemed that St. Jim's had little chance, but they took the bit fairly between their teeth, and flung themselves upon the Wippingham defence. Tom Mewwy, playin' a do-or-die game, flashed in the equalisah, and a few moments ffrom time, Lowthah twicked the defence to give us the lead. And Pountney was the first to admit that we had shown the Wippingham giants somethin' new in the way of inspired football!

"Ay, these good people before us!" agreed Ethelbert quickly. "But the others are powerful and clever men. 'Twould be better, I urge, to put them to the test ere thou art too free with thy favours."

"And what test, pray, wouldst thou suggest?"

"'Tis but a simple one," replied the chief adviser. "Let a chosen party from these men go into Gothland to rescue Prince Oswy. Let them prove their allegiance to thee by the accomplishment of this task."

"Thou wouldst send them into the jaws of death?" asked the princess, in horror.

"If they are men of such wondrous powers, 'twill mean no death," replied Ethelbert grimly. "Is't not thy dearest wish to have Prince Oswy back by thy side? What Northestrian dare set foot in Gothland these days? Perchance these strangers will fare better in Kassker's country."

"'Tis an idea!" agreed the princess, her eyes shining. "Much would I give, indeed, to have dear Oswy back. By my faith, I am minded to agree with thee, my Ethelbert!"

"'Tis well!" said the other. "Let me suggest a feast—a great feast in honour of this Handforth the Bold. Let all attend—all his companions. And, during this feast, 'twill be easy for thee to study the strangers, and to pick out those that are to venture upon this mission into Gothland."

"'Tis done!" cried the princess. "A feast it shall be, splendid Ethelbert! And a good round dozen shall be chosen from the guests." She smiled disdainfully. "They will rescue my poor Oswy, never fear! If thou hast not faith in them, I have much."

SIX GOALS AGAINST ST. FRANK'S—

But They Got Seven!

Drawn against Mel Tor, a Midland team, in the Fourth Round of the Glyn Cup, St. Frank's suffered an early reverse, Beauchamp, the Mel Tor centre-forward, scoring in the first few minutes. This early goal upset St. Frank's, and their defence went to pieces. When the interval arrived they were four goals down. After the change of ends, however, a change came over St. Frank's, and their forwards attacked strongly. In half an hour they had levelled the scores, so fierce were their onslaughts. But Mel Tor came again, and gained the lead at 5—4. St. Frank's then took control of the game, and three more times the Mel Tor net was shaken. The Midland team put in a big effort to save the game in the last few minutes, but though they managed to scramble home a sixth goal, St. Frank's ran out winners by 7—6.

FULL RESULTS.

RIPPINGHAM	1	ST. JIM'S	...	2
Saxby		Merry,	Lowther,	
ST. FRANK'S	7	MEL TOR	...	6
McClure,		Beauchamp (3),		
Nipper (2),		Smith (3)		
Pitt (3),		Watson.		
TADDISTOCK	2	GREYFRIARS	3	
Brook (2).		Wharton,		
		Cherry, Nugent.		
LYN GORGE	0	ABBOTSFORD	1	
		Fane.		

"Hush, I beseech thee!" warned Ethelbert.

The princess turned back to Edward Oswald, and her eyes were twinkling with a new happiness.

"Get thee off to sleep, good Handforth!" she said gaily. "Thou art surely worn and weary after thy wondrous deeds."

"I'm all right!" muttered Handforth.

"Such words of courage are to be expected from thy lips," said the princess gently. "But get thee gone—and thy companions with thee. Kindly Wynnwed will attend to thy wishes. And after thou hast slept, and are refreshed, then will there be a surprise."

"A surprise?" echoed Handforth.

"Alas, 'tis a surprise I must give thee now," laughed the princess. "For 'tis impossible for me to keep a secret. Whilst thou art sleeping, noble youth, a great feast will be prepared. Thou and thy friends will be the guests, and the castle will ring with our merriment."

"All of them?" asked Handforth eagerly. "They'll all be freed from that fortress?"

"All—for this feast, at least," replied the princess, as she found Ethelbert the Red's eyes upon her. "Go now, and sleep thee well."

And Handforth saluted and escaped. He found Church and McClure, and clapped them on the backs.

"It's all right, you chaps!" he said happily. "We can sleep now in comfort; and when we wake up all the rest of the party will be free! On the whole, we haven't done so badly, have we?"

Handforth & Co. went off to bed then, and while they slept, great preparations were made for the feast, and Nelson Lee and all the other prisoners were later brought from Athelstane Castle to join in it. They learned all about Handforth's triumph in the spy-hunt, and when Edward Oswald and his chums appeared for the feast, fully refreshed after a good sleep, they were warmly congratulated.

But Handforth wasn't feeling quite so pleased as he had thought he would. The fact was, a few words that the princess had uttered had come back to him since he had awakened.

"A good round dozen shall be chosen from the guests," she had said. "They will rescue my poor Oswy, never fear."

And it suddenly occurred to Handforth that the princess had meant the guests at this particular feast. A dozen members of the airship's party were to be selected—chosen while they sat round the festive board. And then, later, they would be sent into Gothland, in an attempt to rescue the young prince.

At first Handforth had thought little of it—indeed, he had eagerly hoped that he would be one of the chosen. But he had since spoken with Wynward the Jovial, and with several other members of the bodyguard, and all, without exception, vowed that it would be certain death for any party to venture upon that wild expedition into the enemy country.

For it undoubtedly was enemy country now. News of the capture of Kassker's spies would soon reach the ears of that ambitious overlord, for it seemed that he had a cunning system of communications, with boats constantly crossing the lake. Any party that landed upon his soil would be seized.

Such unfortunates would be conveyed straight to Kassker's castle and executed.

And Handforth had remembered the glimpses, they had seen of Gothland while the airship had been drifting helplessly over Kassker's domain. He could well believe that any party would be

utterly lost, should it venture to land upon those unfriendly shores.

For there was no such thing as darkness in this strange oasis.

It would be impossible for a rescue party to steal ashore under cover of night, and to effect a lightning raid. Eyes were constantly watching, and no landing could be attained without Kassker's men being aware of the fact.

So what could this mean but death? Handforth kept his suspicions to himself, for he had no certain knowledge; but during that feast he was anxious and concerned. He knew that some of their number—twelve of them, at least—were to be selected for this wild, perilous expedition.

That feast was a wonderful success in every way. It was a glittering pageant of colour and laughter and gaiety. But over it hung the grim shadow of uncertainty and peril.

(Who will be the chosen twelve to penetrate into Gothland? Look out for next week's gripping chapters.)



The Schoolboy Hypnotist!

(Continued from page 16.)

the spot, and the Head made a sign to him.

"Kildare, bring that junior here—the new boy, Barber."

"Yes, sir."

One minute later the dishevelled new boy, gasping for breath, and with Kildare's grip on his collar, was marched into the Head's study.

"Barber," said Dr. Holmes sternly, "you are discovered! You have the power of hypnotism, it appears?"

Barber was silent.

"If you do not answer me at once frankly I will flog you and expel you from the school," said the Head grimly.

"Ye-es, sir! I—I am a hypnotist!" faltered Barber.

"Very good! You have hypnotised the boys who have behaved in an extraordinary manner this morning?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"You are, I suppose, able to release them from the state you have thrown them into?"

Barber grinned a little.

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Do so with D'Arcy."

"Very well, sir."

Barber made a few passes before the dazed face of the swell of St. Jim's. The masters and Kildare watched him with breathless interest. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave a kind of start, and stared round him wildly.

"Bai Jove!" he exclaimed. "How did I get here? What—"

"He's all right now, sir."

"Bai Jove! You uttah wottah, you have been puttin' the 'fluence on, aftah all—"

"You will do the same thing for the other boys, Barber," said the Head, in his deep voice, "and then you will pack your box and leave the school by the next train."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Barber.

"A boy with such a dangerous gift cannot be allowed here when he has shown himself so wanting in self-control as to exercise his gift in this way," said the Head sternly. "You have thrown the whole school into confusion by these absurd tricks, and caused a great deal of trouble. If you had not been found out I do not think you would have admitted the truth, and a number of boys here would have remained under the imputation of being partially insane. You have acted recklessly, thoughtlessly, and wickedly. Barber, I shall not punish you, because I do not think you fully realise what you have done. But you will leave the school instantly, and I shall write to your father explaining

the matter. And I should recommend you, if you gain admission to another school, to cease from exercising that unfortunate gift. Not a word! You may go!"

And Barber went.

When the boys of St. Jim's gathered in the Form-rooms for afternoon lessons one place in the Shell-room was empty. Horace Barber had gone.

He had already left St. Jim's, and did not return. Tom Merry & Co., freed from the mysterious 'fluence now, took their usual places in the Form. They were not sorry that Barber had gone.

"He was too jolly dangerous a chap to have about," Lowther remarked when the juniors came out after school.

"I'm glad he's gone."

"He would have picked up an awful crop of lickings from the fellows he hypnotised if he had stayed!" grinned Manners.

"Yes, rather!"

"And we've got the study to ourselves again now," said Tom Merry.

"By Jove, yes! I forgot that! Hurrah!"

And to celebrate the recovery of their own den the Terrible Three stood a magnificent spread in the study to all the victims of the schoolboy hypnotist.

(Next Wednesday: "HIS HONOUR AT STAKE!" Don't miss this powerful St. Jim's yarn, chums.)



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