

THE BEST SCHOOL STORIES OF THE WEEK ARE INSIDE!

The GEM 2!



*Gussy's
Amazing
Visitor!*

An Amusing Incident from "CUSSY'S CANADIAN COUSIN!"—The Sparkling St. Jim's Story—WITHIN.

No. 1,419. Vol. XLV!!.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

Week Ending April 27th, 1935.

GUSSY'S CANADIAN COUSIN!



The stranger came up the steps and held out a grimy hand. "You're D'Arcy?" he asked jovially. "Yaas," said Arthur Augustus faintly. "I'm D'Arcy." "My Cousin Gussy—eh?" went on the stranger. "How do you do, Cousin Gus?" Arthur Augustus almost staggered in amazement.

CHAPTER 1.

Backing Up Gussy!

"I WANT all you fellows to back me up!"

Tom Merry & Co. ceased discussing the forthcoming cricket match with the Grammar School, which was the great topic of interest at St. Jim's now, and fixed their eyes inquiringly upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form.

Morning lessons were over at St. Jim's, and quite a little crowd of juniors were standing outside the School House talking cricket, and laying plans for knocking the Grammarians sky-high, or higher, at the grand old game.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, were doing most of the talking. But Jack Blake and Digby and Herries of the Fourth contributed a good share, and Kangaroo and Reilly and Lumley-Lumley did their little bit. In fact, most of the voices were going at once, when the swell of St. Jim's came out of the School House with a very serious expression upon his aristocratic features, and broke in.

"I want all you fellows to back me up!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy repeated, wagging a slim forefinger at the group of juniors.

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"Back you up?" repeated Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus was very serious. He was standing with his back to the school wall, and he was too serious and preoccupied to notice the wink that passed from one junior to another and the general movement they made towards him.

"It's a vewy important occasion," said D'Arcy, jamming his eyeglass into his eye, and regarding Tom Merry & Co. thoughtfully. "It is a time for all the fellows here to back me up—like anything, you know!"

Jack Blake chuckled softly.

"I suppose you mean that, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You want us all to back you up?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"Yaas!"

"Here?"

"Yaas!"

"And now?"

"Yaas!"

"Good!" said Tom Merry heartily.

"We'll do it! You fellows are all agreed?"

"Certainly!" said all the fellows, with one voice.

"Ready?"

"Yes."

"Then come on, and back Gussy up!"

Tom Merry gave the signal, and the

juniors advanced in line upon the swell of St. Jim's. D'Arcy gazed at them in astonishment.

"Weally—" he began.

"It's all right, Gussy!" said Tom Merry.

"We're going to back you up! Collar him!"

"Bai Jove! I—I—Ow!"

D'Arcy had no time to say any more.

Half a dozen pairs of hands fell upon him, and he was grasped, and backed up against the School House wall with terrific force.

Biff!

"Yawooh!"

"Back him up!" exclaimed Blake heartily.

"Now is the time for all of us to back Gussy up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Biff!

"Yawooh! You uttah asses! I didn't mean—Yow!"

Biff!

"Yawooh! Help! Oh!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's elegant Eton jacket scraped on the rough bricks, and split up the back with the force of the impact. His silk hat toppled over his eyes, and knocked his eyeglass off.

The elegant junior struggled furiously in the grasp of his enthusiastic backers-up.

"Yow, yow! Ow! Welcome me!"

"Back up!" roared Tom Merry.

—FEATURING AN AMAZING AND AMUS'NG VISITOR TO ST. JIM'S.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

Biff!
"Yowp! Oh!"
"Are you satisfied?" demanded Blake.

"You uttah ass! You dangewous lunatic! Ow! No, I'm not! I'll—"
"Not satisfied yet!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in surprise. "Well, my hat! Never mind, there's no amount of trouble we wouldn't take for you, Gussy, if you really want us to back you up! Is there, you fellows?"

"No fear! Go it!"
Biff!
"Ow! Help! Gweat Scott! You feahful asses! You misundahstand me entirely! I ordah you to welease me at once—"

"Faith, and we're backing you up, Gussy darling!" exclaimed Reilly.

"Yawwoh! Oh!"
Arthur Augustus struggled out of the grip of the juniors. He looked dishevelled and wild-eyed.

"You fighwful asses!" he roared. "You have misappwehended my meanin'! I didn't ask you to back me up against the wall, you dangewous asses!"

"Sorry!" said Tom Merry politely. "The wall was handiest. What did you want us to back you up against—the door?"

"No, you ass!"
"The elm-trees?" said Monty Lowther. "Come out into the quad, and we'll—"
"You uttah duffer! I tell you—"

"Well, we can't back you up against the roof!" said Blake. "Anything that we can do, we're willing to do!"

"Let's try the wall again!" suggested Manners.

Arthur Augustus backed away—without assistance this time—and glared.

"You silly asses! I believe you have misundahstood me on purpose!" he shouted. "I have a gweat mind to give you a feahful thwashin' all wound!"

"Oh, Gussy!"
"Don't be ungrateful, after all the trouble we've taken!"

"Faith, and we're ready to back ye up again—"

"I wufuse to let you back me up now!" said D'Arcy, with great dignity. "I considah this wotten of you! I shall go ovah to the New House, and ask Figgins & Co. to back me up!"

Tom Merry laughed.
"Well, we only gave you what you asked for," he said. "We did our little best. But what is the trouble, Gussy? What do you want us to back you up for?"

"I wufuse to tell you now!"
"Oh, Gussy!"
"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned away with great dignity, and ascended the stairs to the Fourth Form passage. The juniors heard the door of Study No. 6 close with a slam above.

Monty Lowther chuckled softly.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The one and only Gussy on his noble dig!" he remarked.

Tom Merry looked a little concerned.
"It was irresistible!" he said. "It was so funny to back Gussy up like that. But it just occurs to me that he may really want us to back him up over something. Is he in a scrape, Blake?"

Blake, as D'Arcy's study-mate in No. 6, was supposed to know. Blake shook his head.

"Not that I know of," he said. "He had a letter a little while ago, and he was staying up in the study to read it when we came out, I think. But I remember he took out a fiver with the letter from the envelope, and so I suppose it was a tip from his pater."

Monty Lowther looked quite contrite.
"You ass! Why didn't you tell us he had a fiver?" he demanded. "That alters the case, of course. Perhaps he wanted us to back him up in standing a big feed."

"My hat!"
"And now he'll go and stand it in the New House instead!" chuckled Lumley-Lumley. "I guess we were a little too previous with that giddy jape!"

"Come on!" said Tom Merry.
"Where?"

"We must make it up with Gussy."
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were half-serious. It was not really the feed they were thinking of; but they did not like D'Arcy to be offended. The swell of St. Jim's was a never-ending source of gaiety to the chums of the School House, but, at the same time, he was one of the most popular fellows in the school.

Tom Merry & Co. marched up to the Fourth Form passage, and knocked at the door of Study No. 6, and tried to open it. But the door was locked on the inside, and from within the study came a sound of vigorous brushing. The swell of St. Jim's was evidently attending to his trousers, which had scraped

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*Gussy had a Canadian cousin,  
And only one, mind you,  
But one fine day,  
To his dismay,  
He found that he had two!*  
~~~~~

violently against the brick wall of the School House, and badly wanted brushing.

Tom Merry knocked at the door again.

There was no answer to the knock. The sound of vigorous brushing continued without intermission.

"Gussy, old man!"
"Who's there?"

"Us."
"Pway go away!"

"Oh, Gussy! But we've come to apologise!"

"Oh!"
"From one gentleman to another, you know, an apology is always sufficient to set a matter quite right," said Tom Merry through the keyhole.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—" There were obvious signs of relenting in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's voice. "In the circe—"

"Chap can't apologise through a keyhole, you know, Gussy," said Tom Merry, in honeyed tones.

"Vewy well. I will open the door."
"Good egg!"

The study door swung open. The juniors marched in with grave faces. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood in his shirt-sleeves. The split jacket lay on the table, and there was a clothes-brush in D'Arcy's hand, with which he had been active upon his dusty trousers. He gave the crowd a glance of lofty and offended dignity.

The juniors all took their caps off

at the same moment, and bowed low to Arthur Augustus.

"Sorry!" came a chorus.

"Weally, you fellows—"

"I apologise, thou apologise, he apologises," said Monty Lowther blandly. "We apologise, you apologise, they apologise—"

"You uttah ass!"
"Well, I can't say more than that," said Lowther. "Can anybody do it in Latin or Greek?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I werged you as an ass, Lowthah!"

"So he is!" said Tom Merry. "Shut up, Lowther! Gussy regards you as an ass, and you are an ass! This is where you ring off! Gussy, behold us with humble and contrite hearts—"

"Almost weeping!" said Blake solemnly.

Monty Lowther sobbed.

A smile broke over the offended visage of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"It was wathah funnny," he said. "Of course, I know you were only wottin'. But I trust I can take a joke with any chap. The sewious part of the mattah is that you have practically wuined my twousahs. A joke should always stop short of inflictin' damage on a fellow's twousahs. You fellows seem to have no more weward for a fellow's twousahs than 'Hewwies' bulldog Towshah. However, from one gentleman to another an apology makes ewevythin' all wight!"

"Hurrah!"
Arthur Augustus put on a fresh jacket.

"I shall have to have that jacket mended," he said. "It will do to wear in the class-room. Will you give me a bwush down behind, Blake?"

"With pleasure!" said Blake blandly.

And he did. He nobly resisted the temptation to use the brush as if it were a hammer, and he brushed the dust off with sedulous care.

"And now to come to business," said Manners.

"Yaas, wathah!"
"You want us to back you up?"

inquired Tom Merry.

"Yaas."

"You've had a fiver from your governor in that letter?" Blake said.

"Yaas!"
"And you're going to blow it?"

"Yaas, wathah!"
"Then you've called on just the right fellows to back you up," said Blake affectionately. "Come on; we'll give the tuckshop a look in!"

D'Arcy looked at him in surprise.

"But my cousin isn't here yet, Blake," he said.

"Eh?"
"My Canadian cousin, you know."

"Never heard of him," said Digby.

"Well, as a mattah of fact, I nevah heard of him, deah boys, until to-day, or, if I did, I'd forgotten the chap," said D'Arcy. "But my governah has told me all about him in this letter. He's lived in Canadah all his life, you know, and he's come over to England on a visit, and he has a cwiosity to see what a Bwitish Public school is like before he goes back to the backwoods, you know. I don't know what kind of a chap he is, but the patah says that he is wathah bweezy. I don't know if that means that he's a wewular wuffian. I've nevah seen the chap."

"Oh!" said the juniors.

"The patah doesn't say how old he is, but I take it he's a young man," said D'Arcy. "He hasn't been to Eastwood yet. He's comin' in here, apparently."

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on his way down to my patah's house. My patah hasn't seen him eithah. I'm wathah anxious to see what sort of a boundah he is. You see, a chap brought up in the backwoods may be wathah wuff. But whatevah sort of a chap he is, I'm goin' to stand by him. Blood is thichah than watah, you know!"

"Thicker than ink!" said Monty Lowther thoughtfully.

"And that's why I want all you fellows to back me up," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, warming to his subject. "You see, the chap is a Canadian. He comes from a distant part of the Bwitish Empire, and it is our duty to show that we welcome chaps from ovah the seas."

"Hear, hear!"

"My ideah is to give him a weally wousin' weception, so that he can tell them in Canadah that the Bwitish Empire is still goin' stwong, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Therefore," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with dignity, "I call on all you fellows to back me up, and give him a good time while he's here, and no larks!"

"Not a single lark!" said Lowther solemnly. "Not even a blackbird! Not a—"

"Oh, shut up, Monty!"

"When is he coming?" asked Tom Merry.

"Probobly this week, the patah says," replied D'Arcy. "He's sent me a fivah, so that I shall be in funds on the occasion. My cousin is goin' to let me have a wire, sayin' when I'm to expect him. It may come quite suddenly. But in the peculiah cires, I shall wegard it as a duty to throw all othah engagements aside, and look aftah my Canadian cousin."

"What's his name?"

"Aubwey."

"Might have guessed that," murmured Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"His othah name," said D'Arcy loftily, "is Smith."

"Oh!"

"My patah's sistah mawwid a man named Smith," D'Arcy explained. "I have reflected on that subject, and I have come to the conclusion that Smith is a weally splendid old Bwitish name. Howevah, I shall not call him Smith. I shall call him Cousin Aubwey. If he awwives here suddenly, I expect you fellows—What's that?"

It was a slight sound at the door. Jack Blake made a leap at the door, and flung it wide open. Mellish of the Fourth was bending down outside. The juniors did not need telling that he had been listening at the keyhole.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Mellish Has An Idea!

"**B**AI Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy. Blake grasped the cad of the Fourth and dragged him into the study. Mellish blinked apprehensively at the juniors. They were regarding him with looks of wrathful disgust. Mellish generally knew everything that was going on in the School House, and this was his method.

"I—I happened to lean against the door!" he stammered.

"Oh, shut up!" said Tom Merry, in disgust. "It's bad enough to listen at keyholes, without telling lies about it."

"Yaas, watah!"

"There was nothing secret in what we were talking about," went on Tom Merry. "But you're not going to listen

at keyholes and get off scot-free. Kick him out!"

The juniors, at a sign from Tom Merry, lined up in a double row to the door, and each of them had his right foot drawn back ready. Mellish had to run the gauntlet to get out of the doorway, and he did not like the prospect.

"I—I say—" he stammered.

"Get out!"

"But—but I—"

"Start him with a kick, Gussy!"

"Certainly, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy started Mellish with a kick, and the sneak of the Fourth uttered a yell, and ran for the doorway. Then the ready right feet lunged out, and he yelled again.

"Ow!" roared the cad of the Fourth.

Mellish whirled out of the study, with three or four distinct aches distributed about his person. He dashed along the passage breathlessly, and had reached the end of it before he discovered that he was not pursued. The door of Study No. 6 had closed again, and the chums of the School House were discussing the coming advent of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's Canadian cousin. Mellish halted, and scowled and panted, and retraced his steps to his own study.

The cad of the Fourth shared that study with Levison and Lumley-Lumley. The three had been all of a kind at one time. But since Lumley-Lumley had taken up with Tom Merry & Co., he had had little to do with Mellish or Levison, and he kept out of the study as much as he could. Lumley-Lumley was in Study No. 6 now, with Tom Merry & Co.; but Ernest Levison was in the room, sitting by the window and reading.

He looked up inquiringly as Mellish came in panting, and slammed the door.

"Anything up?"

"Those cads in Study No. 6!" growled Mellish.

"Oh! Another row?"

"I've got on to something, Levison," said Mellish, in a low, eager tone. "I think that it's possible to pile up a big jape on those cads, and make Gussy look a ridiculous ass! It came into my mind while I was listening to them."

Levison's face changed. It was not so long since Levison would have jumped at any chance of "getting at" Study No. 6 in the Fourth, and he would have brought all his keenness and cunning to bear upon the subject. But just lately Levison had been through some very unpleasant experiences. He had had so narrow an escape of being expelled from St. Jim's that he had not yet recovered from the shock. And the chums of the Fourth had treated him so decently since, with the evident intention of giving him a chance, that Levison's hard heart was a little moved by it. So he shook his head in reply to Mellish's eager words.

Mellish stared at him in angry surprise.

"You won't take it on?" he demanded.

"Look here! Gussy has a cousin coming here—a cousin he's never seen, and who may be a rank outsider for all Gussy knows. Do you see where our chance comes in?"

"I don't want to see."

"We should want some money," said Mellish. "But Crooke of the Shell would put up the cash for the sake of taking down those cads in Study No. 6. We could work it. I tell you I've got a simply ripping idea. It came into my head—"

"I tell you I don't want to have anything to do with it," said Levison

uneasily. "The chaps in Study No. 6 have been decent to me, and I'm going to let them alone. Besides, japes on them generally work out the other way. That thing we fixed on Brooke, by taking a paper from their study. It looked a dead cert—and you know how it ended."

"This is different. Even if it came out, it would be only a jape."

"I'm having nothing to do with it!"

Mellish glowered at him.

"You've lost your nerve because they sent you to Coventry!" he sneered.

"You can put it that way, if you like. I'm not going to have any more of it, anyway."

"Crooke will go into it with me," said Mellish. "I know that. I suppose I can depend on you to hold your tongue. You're not going to start a new career of goodness by telling tales about a chum?"

Levison flushed angrily.

"Of course I shan't say a word," he said.

"Good, then!"

Mellish quitted the study and walked on into the Shell passage. He knew that Crooke of the Shell was in his study. And an odour of cigarette smoke as he opened the door would have been evidence enough. That was one of the little amusements of Crooke. The unhealthy complexioned, flabby junior stared at Mellish through a haze of blue smoke.

"Shut the door, you ass!" he growled.

"Nice for me if a prefect looked in."

"Or Tom Merry, either," said Mellish.

"Blow Tom Merry! I don't care for him, or for any of them. They had the cheek to come into my study last week and burn my cigarettes—Tom Merry, and Blake, and D'Arcy. There were three of them, so I couldn't do anything. I'd have smashed any one of them if he'd come alone!"

"Of course you would!" agreed Mellish, who knew perfectly well that Crooke would as soon have thought of trying to smash Kildare of the Sixth as any of the juniors whose names he had mentioned. "It was like their cheek."

"I'll make 'em sit up for it some time!" growled Crooke.

"I can tell you how."

"Is that what you've come for?" asked Crooke, eyeing him curiously.

"Yes."

"Then take a fag and get ahead."

Mellish lighted a cigarette. There was toffee on the table, as well as cigarettes, and Mellish would much rather have had the toffee. But he would not have admitted that for worlds.

"Gussy's got a cousin coming here from Canada—fellow he's never seen," Mellish announced.

"What's that got to do with us?"

Mellish explained. And as he explained, a grin dawned upon the pallor of Crooke's unhealthy face and expanded into a laugh, and he laughed so heartily that he swallowed the smoke from his cigarette, and began to cough instead.

"What do you think of the wheeze?" demanded Mellish.

"Ripping! Groooohghup! First chop!" gasped Crooke. "It's a half-holiday to-morrow afternoon, and that's our chance. We'll fix it up this evening."

"Done!" said Mellish.

And the two young rascals chuckled loud and long over their scheme, whatever it was.



As there was a slight sound outside, Blake leaped to the door and flung it wide open, to reveal Mellish bending down outside. The juniors did not need telling that he had been listening at the keyhole!

CHAPTER 3.

Mr. 'Enry 'Arris!

"WATCHER lookin' at?" It was not a polite or pleasant question. And the dusty, tobacco-stained, beer-smelling gentleman who asked it was not a polite or pleasant object.

Mellish of the Fourth and Crooke of the Shell receded a little. School was over for the day. They had specially sought out that dusty and unpromising-looking individual, but now that they had found him they did not feel inclined to get too close to him.

The tramp lay in the shadow of a tree on the border of Wayland Moor. The sun shone down upon his whisky-bronzed face, his ragged clothes, and his tousled hair. It was very evident that he had lately visited the Green Man in Rylcombe, and there had drunk not wisely, but too well. He had been sleeping off the effects of his refreshments, and he had awakened in far from an amiable humour.

He was a young man in years, but he might have been any age from his looks. He exhaled odours of beer and cheap tobacco. He glared at the two juniors while he groped in his tattered and dirty attire for a pipe.

"We've been looking for you," said Crooke mildly.

"Ho!" said the tramp.

"You remember meeting me," said Mellish politely. "I saw you yesterday—I gave you twopence in Rylcombe Wood."

"I'd ha' twisted your ear if you 'adn't," said the tramp, without any great expression of gratitude for the twopence.

"Ahem! I remembered you, you see," said Mellish, "and that's why we came to look for you. We've got a job for you."

The man sat upright and stared at the juniors as if electrified. It was as if the mere thought of a job had a startling effect on him.

"Work?" he demanded.

"No, no; not work," said Mellish hastily. "Of course, I—I wouldn't think of that."

"No fear!" said Crooke. "But an easy job—quite a little game. In fact, and the pay will be good," said Mellish. "In fact, we want you to help us in a little joke."

"Ho!" said the tramp. "When you stopped me yesterday—ahem!—I mean, when I spoke to you yesterday, you told me you had tramped here, and you were a stranger in these parts," said Mellish.

"Yes, that's so." "Nobody knows you about here." "No, they don't."

"That's good! Now, will you do what we want, and we'll pay you? What's your name?"

"My name's 'Enry 'Arris," said the tramp, eyeing Mellish suspiciously, "and wot's it got to do with you, young feller-me-lad?"

"Nothing," said Mellish, with determined civility. "Only we want you to help us. I suppose you don't often get a pound note?"

"Ow do you know I don't?" said 'Enry 'Arris truculently.

"H'm! I mean, would you like to earn a pound note—and a big feed thrown in, and a lot of fun?" asked Mellish.

"Anything to drink?" "Lemonade, ginger-beer, and—and tea."

'Enry 'Arris snorted. "I said to drink!" he growled, with deep disgust.

"Well, you could have anything you liked to drink afterwards," said Mellish, "and perhaps I could get you something while the job was on."

"Wot's the job?" Mellish and Crooke exchanged glances. It had come to the point now, and they were both feeling a little nervous. But they had spent two hours looking for their man, and now they had found him it was necessary to go through with it.

"We belong to the school," said Mellish—"the big school by Rylcombe, you know. There's a chap there—chap named D'Arcy, who's expecting a cousin to visit him from Canada."

"Ho!" "Mr. 'Arris lighted his pipe. He

seemed to be restored to something approaching good humour at the prospect of getting a pound note without working. He blew out a cloud of evil-smelling smoke, and the two juniors tried not to cough.

"D'Arcy has never seen his cousin, and doesn't know anything about him," went on Mellish, "only he's expecting him to be a rather rough sort of chap. We've got the idea of planting you on him."

"Wot!" "It would work as easily as anything," said Mellish eagerly. "It would be an awful lark, you know. Gussy doesn't know when his cousin's coming—most likely next week. You could turn up to-morrow afternoon, and claim to be Aubrey Smith—that's the cousin's name. The wilder sort of joker you are the bigger the jape will be on D'Arcy. You can come squiffy if you like."

"Ho!" "You'll roll into the school, and announce that you're Aubrey Smith, from Canada, and that you've come to visit your cousin, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy," said Mellish. "Nobody will know any better. They'll simply think that Gussy's got an awful rotter for a cousin—"

"Wot!" roared Mr. 'Arris. Mellish jumped back.

"I—I—I didn't mean that. I mean the fellows will think that Gussy's cousin is down on his luck, you know. It will be as easy as rolling off a log. The fellows are making all sorts of preparations for D'Arcy's cousin. They're going to stand a big feed—all sorts of things to eat—and you will have a high old time."

The tramp grinned. "You don't like this D'Arcy?" he asked.

"Oh, yes; but—you see—it's a jape!" "Don't tell lies!" said Mr. 'Arris uncompromisingly. "You hate the bloke, and you're doin' this to disgrace him."

Mellish smiled feebly. "Well, we—we want to take him down a peg or two," he admitted.

"I'm hon!" said Mr. 'Arris. "Did you say a quid, or two quid?"

"I said one."

"Well, you'd better say two, or the job won't come of," said 'Enry 'Arris. "If it's worth a quid to yer, it's worth two quid."

The juniors hesitated.

"A quid is good pay for an afternoon's fun, with a big feed thrown in," said Crooke.

"You 'ear me?" said Mr. 'Arris. "I says two quid, and wot I says I sticks to."

Crooke and Mellish exchanged glances. After all, the cad of the Shell had plenty of money, and such a humiliation for D'Arcy would be cheap at the price.

"Well, say two quid," said Crooke. "Five bob now, and the rest after the job, if you bring it off all right."

"The rest after the job, any'ow," said Mr. 'Arris firmly. "Or else you'll 'ear from me!"

"That's all right," said Mellish hurriedly. "We're sure that you'll play the game, and we take your word."

"Which when I give you my word, I allers keep it, like a gentleman," said Mr. 'Arris darkly.

Mellish coughed. He had certainly not looked upon Mr. 'Arris as a gentleman hitherto, but he was quite willing to accept the startling information with civility.

"Quite so," he said. "You'll do it."

"Money talks," said Mr. 'Arris.

He held out a brown and exceedingly dirty hand. Mellish glanced at Crooke, and the cad of the Shell counted out five shillings into the horny palm of Mr. 'Enry 'Arris.

They were transferred to some recess in the rags of Mr. 'Arris, and the tramp rose to his feet. There was a thirsty gleam in his eyes. It was quite plain where the tramp was going—and where the five shillings were going.

"Hold on a minute," said Crooke hastily. "We must give you some information about the chap, you know, so that you won't give yourself away."

"I'm thirsty," said Mr. 'Arris briefly. "Yes, but—"

"I'll see yer to-morrow," said Mr. 'Arris, with a wave of his hand. "You can tell me all about it, then. I must be of now. I've got to see a man about a dorg!"

"All right," said Mellish. "Mind you meet us, because I'm going to send a wire to D'Arcy now to tell him his cousin's coming."

The tramp chuckled.

"Orl right! I want to earn them two quidlets."

"In the same place here, to-morrow," said Mellish, "at two o'clock."

"Yes."

"Good! We'll let you have another five bob then for refreshments before you start," said Crooke, "and thirty bob later."

"Good hegg, guv'nor!"

And the disreputable hero of the road rolled away towards Wayland.

The juniors looked after him, and grinned at one another.

"He'll do all right," said Mellish. "He won't miss the chance of making two quid. He'll arrive at St. Jim's in great style."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all the better to have a jaw with him just before he goes, too," said Mellish thoughtfully. "We can prime him up to the chin then with what he's got to know, and he won't forget it. Now let's go to Wayland Post Office, and we'll send the wire."

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And the two young rascals followed in the direction taken by Mr. 'Enry 'Arris, chuckling as they went.

#### CHAPTER 4.

##### The Telegram!

"HERE it is!"

"A giddy telegram!"

"A wire for Gussy!"

"Buck up, Gussy!"

The sight of the telegraph-boy crossing the quadrangle had created quite a furore among the juniors, for all St. Jim's took an interest in Gussy's Canadian cousin.

Not only had Blake and his chums come rushing down from Study No. 6. The Terrible Three came speeding over from the direction of the cricket field, where they had been finishing some bowling practice. Figgins & Co. came from the New House at a run, and Redfern, Lawrence, and Owen started up from nowhere, and bore down upon the telegraph-boy.

Nobody seemed to have any doubt that the telegram was for Gussy. In fact, it seemed impossible that it should not be for Gussy—from the Canadian cousin. All St. Jim's wanted it to be so, and the wish was father to the thought.

Other people at St. Jim's had telegrams, of course. The telegraph-boy from Rylcombe was quite familiar in the quad. But on this occasion the whole crowd of juniors felt that the wire must be for D'Arcy, or else that there was something seriously wrong with the workings of the Universe.

And they were right—it was for D'Arcy.

The telegraph-boy, grinning a little, and wondering what the excitement was about, stopped at the steps of the School House, where the juniors were crowding to meet him.

"Master D'Arcy," he said.

"Hurrah!"

"Here you are, Gussy!"

D'Arcy had recovered from his hurry. He lounged forward elegantly, and bestowed a sixpence upon the youth from Rylcombe Post Office. Then he opened the telegram and read it.

The crowd of juniors made an eager movement.

"Is it from your Canadian cousin?"

"Yaas, wathah! You can all read it, deah boys," said D'Arcy, holding up the telegram to the general inspection.

And the juniors read it eagerly:

"D'Arcy, School House, St. Jim's. Arriving early Wednesday afternoon.—AUBREY SMITH."

"Hurrah!"

"Handed in at Wayland, at 6 p.m.," read out Tom Merry. "Why, he's at Wayland, then, already!"

"Only a few miles away," said Blake.

"Why doesn't he come on at once?"

"He could have stayed the night here."

"The Head would have given him a room."

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Pewwaps he has business in Wayland, deah boys, or he may be seein' the town, you know, or stayin' with some fiend," he remarked. "Of course, he must know that we could put him up here if he liked. I think I will wire back to him to come on this evenin', if he can."

"There's no address on the telegram, excepting Wayland," said Redfern.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

"You'll have to wait till he comes," said Tom Merry. "But it's all serene.

We'll give him a ripping reception to-morrow afternoon."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We had a House match on for to-morrow afternoon," Tom Merry remarked, glancing at Figgins. "I suppose that had better be postponed?"

Figgins nodded assent at once.

"Oh, yes! We don't have a Canadian cousin come to St. Jim's every day. We'll give Mr. Smith the afternoon."

"That is weally vewy considewate of you, Figgins. But pway allow me to wemark that Aubwey is my cousin."

"Oh, rats! He's our cousin," said Figgins. "Same as Cousin Ethel—cousin to all the school! Don't be selfish!"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Yes; Gussy mustn't be selfish," said Blake, with a shake of the head. "You'd better stick that telegram up on the notice-board, Gussy, for all the school to read."

"Oh, vewy well!"

"And we may as well do the shopping for the feed now," said Fatty Yynn, with a grin of satisfaction. "Look here, on a special occasion like this, we'd better get some of the things from Rylcombe, and do some of the shopping now."

"Good egg!"

"Half a dozen had better come to carry the things."

And half a dozen went with Fatty Wynn—Kildare of the Sixth kindly giving them a pass out of gates for the purpose. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, meanwhile, made his way to the Third Form Room with a thoughtful frown upon his aristocratic brow. D'Arcy's minor Wally—his full name was Walter Adolphus, but he was called Wally because, as Blake said, life was short—was in the Third Form at St. Jim's, and on the special occasion of a visit from a cousin from Canada, D'Arcy was anxious about his minor; for Wally, so far from living up to the example of elegance set by his major, was one of the inkiest and untidiest of the fags of the Third—which is saying a great deal.

"Where are you off to, Gussy?" Blake called out.

"I'm goin' to see Wally. Wally will have to be decent to-morrow," said Arthur Augustus. "I shall insist upon his bein' perfectly respectable for once."

Blake chuckled. He did not think that the swell of St. Jim's would be successful. Wally was adamant on such matters.

Arthur Augustus entered the Third Form Room. Most of the Third were there, and his minor among them. Wally's appearance was certainly not promising. The hero of the Third was showing Jameson a trick in wrestling, and he was looking about as untidy as a fag could possibly look.

"That isn't the way, fathead!" said Wally, as D'Arcy came in. "You put your foot so, and then give a twist with your left so—and there you are!"

Bump!

There Jameson certainly was. He had sat down on the floor with considerable violence, and, instead of thanking Wally for his instructions, so thoroughly illustrated, he glared at him ungratefully, and roared:

"You ass!"

"Well, you asked me to show you how—"

"I didn't ask you to biff me on the floor, you frabjous ass!"

"Wally, deah boy—"

"Hallo, cocky!" said D'Arcy minor, looking round. "Would you like me

to show you a trick in wrestling? I've got it from young Clifford; he's a Lancashire chap, and knows a lot about wrestling. You take hold so—"

Arthur Augustus receded.  
"Pway don't be a young ass, Wally. I don't want to learn any wotten twicks. I've come here to speak to you seriously."

Wally stared.  
"You've come to speak to me seriously?" he demanded.

"Yaas, wathah."  
"Then out you go! Bear a hand, you chaps!"

"Weally, Wally— Oh! Ow! Yawooh!"

At Wally's signal a crowd of fags rushed upon the swell of the Fourth, and he was rushed out of the Form-room before he knew what was happening. He sat down heavily in the passage outside, and the door was slammed and locked. From within the Form-room came a sound of joyous chuckling. Arthur Augustus rose rather painfully to his feet, and knocked at the door.

"Wally, you young wascal—"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Let me in at once!"  
"Are you going to talk?"  
"Yaas."

"Then you don't come in here. Buzz off, or we'll come out to you and bump you along the passage."

"You awful young wascal!"  
But Arthur Augustus took the hint, and departed. He knew Wally!

CHAPTER 5.

Great Expectations!

WHEN Mellish and Crooke came in, they saw the telegram on the notice-board, and stopped to read it, and grinned. That telegram seemed to afford the cads of the School House a great deal of amusement. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy passed while they were grinning over it, and he paused. As a rule, D'Arcy had little to say to either Mellish or Crooke—they were not the kind of fellows he chose to talk to. But just now Arthur Augustus was flowing, as it were, with the milk of human kindness.

"You've seen the telegwam, you fellows?" he asked.

"Yes," said Crooke. "What's it stuck up here for?"

"For all the coll to wead, deah boys. All St. Jim's is goin' to back me up in givin' my cousin fwom Canadah a good reception."

"So he's coming?" said Mellish.  
"Yaas, wathah. Awviving to-morrow afternoon, early. He's in Wayland now, stoppin' there for the night, I suppose," said D'Arcy.

"Oh, good!"

"On an occasion like this," went on D'Arcy graciously, "I think everybody here ought to buy all pivate differences, and I shall be glad to welcome you fellows to the feed, if you care to come."

"What-ho!" said Mellish.  
"It is a time for the whole coll to stick together, and extend a hearty welcome to a chap fwom the Dominions ovah-seas," said D'Arcy.

"Good egg—quite so—we'll back you up as much as anybody," said Crooke.  
"Thank you vevy much, Cwooke."

And Arthur Augustus passed on with a beaming smile. The two plotters looked at one another, and chuckled softly.

"They've swallowed it whole!" murmured Mellish.

"He, he, he!" sniggered Crooke,

"Not a bit of suspicion!"  
"Not a fragment!"  
"Of course, they couldn't have any," said Mellish. "They were expecting a telegram from Aubrey Smith, and they've got a telegram from Aubrey Smith. What more could they want? There was nothing to be suspicious about."

"There'll be something to be surprised about, though, when Cousin Aubrey rolls in to-morrow!" chuckled Crooke.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"But mum's the word!"  
"What-ho!"

And the two plotters kept their own counsel. Not even a whisper was allowed to escape to Levison—Levison was not to be depended upon now in their little plots. But in the Fourth Form and the Shell dormitories that night, Mellish and Crooke chuckled as they heard the discussion of the reception that was to be given to Cousin Aubrey when he arrived at St. Jim's. The preparations had been great, and the next afternoon was to witness some high jinks in honour of the representative of a distant part of the great Empire upon which the sun never sets.

In the junior dormitories the discussion ran on, indeed, to quite a late hour, before the juniors fell asleep.

And in the morning, when St. Jim's turned out to the clang of the rising-bell, the discussion was resumed with inexhaustible interest.

Cousin Aubrey was coming that afternoon!

That was all that the juniors talked about and thought about. Even cricket had paled into insignificance before the great event.

Fatty Wynn had made all his preparations for the feed. So many fellows were coming, in honour of Cousin Aubrey, that it was impossible to think of having the feed in any study. No study would have accommodated a quarter of the guests, no matter how closely they had packed themselves. But there was the Hobby Club-room, which the juniors used for big meetings, and

the Hobby Club-room was at their disposal. Many a big feed had taken place in that famous apartment, but none on so grand a scale as this. It was a case of all hands to the mill, and the preparations that went on in the Hobby Club-room were really stupendous.

During morning lessons the juniors talked in whispers of the celebrations coming on in the afternoon, and a great many of them earned lines for inattention and forgetfulness.

But what were lines to them?  
Nothing!

So long as they didn't have to stay in that afternoon to write out the lines, they were satisfied.

After dinner the final touches were given to the preparations for the Canadian hero, and D'Arcy went round looking for his minor, determined to impress upon him the necessity of being as respectable as possible, for once, that afternoon.

D'Arcy minor was not easily to be found. D'Arcy minor was as keen about Cousin Aubrey as Arthur Augustus was, but he was not so keen about being made a credit to the family for the occasion.

While the juniors were busy with making everything ready for Cousin Aubrey, Crooke and Mellish strolled out of the school, and took their way by the footpath through the wood to Wayland Moor. No one noticed them go—no one cared whether they went or stayed. Crooke and Mellish were not persons of importance. But if the St. Jim's juniors had had an inkling of their mission, they would certainly have been interested. Mr. 'Enry 'Arris was smoking a short, black pipe under the tree when the two juniors arrived at the place of appointment.

He grinned and nodded to them. Mr. 'Arris seemed to be in a high good-humour. Perhaps it was the thought of getting possession of the thirty shillings without doing any work for it, or even having to take the trouble of stealing it. Perhaps he had a sense of humour, and the "jape" he was going into appealed



By FRANK RICHARDS

Usually WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER, of the Greyfriars Remove, gets more kicks than ha'pence from his Form-fellows. Yet even Bunter, fat freak though he is, has his uses sometimes. In "JIMMY the FOX!" the superb, long story dealing with the exciting Easter holiday adventures of HARRY WHARTON & Co., of Greyfriars, Billy Bunter plays a very important part. He and Jack Drake, once a junior at Greyfriars and now assistant to the celebrated detective, Ferrers Locke, find themselves involved in a succession of thrills. Don't fail to read this gripping and dramatic story by the world's greatest Boys' author. You'll find it in TO-DAY'S issue of

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to him. Or perhaps these influences combined to make his unusually amiable. Be that as it may, he certainly was in excellent temper, and he grinned cheerfully at the two plotters as they came up. He was just a little less ragged and dirty than he had been the day before, too.

"Arternoon!" said Mr. 'Arris genially. "Where's that five?" Crooke placed five shillings in his hand.

"And thirty this evening, when it's all over," he said.

"Jest so!" said Mr. 'Arris.

"Now, just listen, and we'll tell you all about Gussy and his pater, and where Smith is supposed to come from, and all that," said Mellish.

"Go ahead!"

Mellish went ahead, and explained as much as he knew of the things Cousin Aubrey must be supposed to know. The tramp listened attentively, evidently making mental notes. He was entering into the game with a keenness that delighted the plotters. They certainly could not have found a more suitable impostor than 'Erny 'Arris.

"You think you can carry it through all right?" Mellish asked.

Mr. 'Arris nodded emphatically.

"Yep!" he said, speaking in American. "I've tramped in Canada and the States two or three years ago, and I know the country orlright."

"That's good!" exclaimed Mellish, with satisfaction. "You can pitch it to them about bucking broncos and mustangs and rolling prairies, you know."

"You bet!" said Mr. 'Arris, in American again.

"Ha, ha, ha! That sounds ripping!" Mr. 'Arris looked pleased—he was not above the influence of praise.

"I'll carry it through all right," he said. "You trust me. I'll go and get a nip, and then come along to the school."

"Good egg! Mind you don't appear to recognise us if you see us among the fellows—that would give the whole game away."

"I'll be careful."

And the two plotters returned to St. Jim's in great spirits, with the comfortable assurance that the sham Cousin Aubrey would arrive there soon after they did.

## CHAPTER 6.

### A Shock for St. Jim's!

A CROWD of fellows were adorning the ancient gateway of St. Jim's with their persons, watching the road for the arrival of the stranger.

Whether he walked over from Wayland through the wood, or took the train to Rylcombe and came up the lane, he was bound to appear to view first in the white high-road that ran past the gates of St. Jim's, and there they waited and watched.

They knew that they were waiting for the Canadian cousin, but they did not know what he would be like. Some of them were waiting for a sunburnt man in a slouched hat. Some for a tall fellow in a beard. Some for a dashing chap mounted upon a prancing mustang. But certainly there was no one in the thickening crowd who was waiting for the individual who actually came in sight—a shabby, stubbly bearded tramp, in a ragged and battered soft hat, with the signs of drink only too visible in his face.

When he appeared, slouching along

the road, nobody thought of him in connection with the expected cousin from Canada.

He came tramping on, and halted outside the gates of St. Jim's. He removed the short black pipe, which was gripped upside down in his grimy teeth, and spoke:

"I guess this is St. Jim's?"

The juniors looked at him. The "guess" hinted of America, but even yet they did not imagine that this grimy stranger could be the Canadian cousin.

"You've guessed right," said Tom Merry, feeling called upon to reply, though he was far from liking the looks of the stranger.

"Then this is the place."

"Eh?"

"Master D'Arcy here, I suppose?" asked the tramp, casting his eyes over the group, and exhaling a perfume of beer and tobacco, which made the more fastidious of the juniors back away from him.

Tom Merry thought that he understood.

"Oh, you've got a message for D'Arcy?" he said. "You come from Wayland?"

"Yep."

"Sounds like America!" grinned Blake. "Do you come from America?"

"I guess so."

"You've got a message for D'Arcy?" asked Figgins.

"I wanter see him."

"Do you come from his cousin?"

The man stared.

"I guess I am his cousin," he said.

The whole crowd staggered.

"His cousin!"

"You!"

The grimy stranger glared. "I guess I'm Aubrey Smith, from Canada," he said. "I'm D'Arcy's cousin, and I've come to see him. Ain't he got my telegram?"

"Your—your telegram!" faltered Tom Merry.

"Yep."

"You—you sent a telegram?"

"Yep—from Wayland, yesterday, tellin' him I was coming this arternoon."

"Oh!"

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, carry me in to die!" murmured Lumley-Lumley. "I guess this will be a shock for Gussy! Poor old Gussy!"

The juniors stared at the grimy stranger blankly. For a moment some of them thought of the possibility of a trick—that the grimy tramp might have learned about the matter somehow, and had come there to palm himself off as D'Arcy's cousin from Canada. But surely he would not have the nerve as the real cousin might come along at any minute. The telegram had stated plainly enough that D'Arcy's cousin was to arrive early that afternoon. D'Arcy had said that possibly he might be a rough sort of chap. He was certainly rough enough!

"My only hat!" murmured Tom Merry, too astounded to be polite.

"You—you—you are D'Arcy's cousin!"

"I guess so."

"From Canada?"

"You bet!"

"Cousin Aubrey?" gasped Redfern.

"That's my name."

"Oh!"

"I'll cut off and tell Gussy," said Mellish.

And he cut off.

Cousin Aubrey entered the gateway. The juniors made way for him. If he was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's cousin he had a right to enter. And if he was from Canada they did not want to hurt his feelings. But as they gazed upon

Cousin Aubrey the big reception idea suffered from a violent shock.

Cousin Aubrey walked into the quadrangle, looking about him with perfect coolness. He had evidently been drinking, but he was not intoxicated. There was a slight roll in his gait, but that was all. The juniors turned in after him, gazing at him, and gazing at one another in dismay.

"My word!" said Digby. "What will Gussy say when he sees him?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Looks as if he's been on the rocks for a long time," sneered Crooke. "Must have worked his passage over from Canada, I should say."

"There's no disgrace in that," said Tom Merry quietly. "A chap can't help being poor. But he can help being dirty and drunk, and—and this is awful!"

"Frightful!" said Herries. "If I had found that chap wandering round the school I should have set Towser on him. I shouldn't have taken him for Gussy's cousin."

"It seems impossible!" said Figgins. "Can't be a jape, can it?" said Redfern thoughtfully.

"How could it? The telegram said he was to come early, and he's come," said Manners. "If it's a swindle he might have sent the telegram himself."

"H'm! But how would he know anything about Gussy's cousin—his name, and that he was from Canada—and expected here?" said Kerr. "Gussy himself didn't know it till yesterday arternoon!"

"That's a clincher!" said Figgins. Indeed, it did seem to be a clincher!

The last doubt that the newcomer was what he pretended to be vanished from the minds of the juniors. This was Gussy's Canadian cousin.

"Must be the man," said Kerr. "Why should a stranger play such a game, even if he knew the facts, which is impossible? The man's a stranger here. He couldn't know anything about the cousin from Canada. And a man'd have nothing to gain by such a trick, except being kicked out when the real Johnny came along. Gussy isn't going to give him any money or anything."

"Quite so!"

"He's genuine enough," said Tom Merry blankly. "It's awful, but he's genuine. And—and it's up to us to give him a good time."

"Oh, my hat!"

"After all, other fellows have disreputable relations as well as Gussy," said Tom Merry. "Gussy isn't the fellow to turn his back on a poor relation, and we've promised to back him up. He seems rather a bouncer, but he may be all right underneath."

"His heart may be in the right place, even if his aspirates are not," Monty Lowther suggested.

"And he's from Canada," said Figgins. "From a far Dominion, you know, and it's up to us to show that we back up the Colonies."

"Yes, rather."

"Whatever he is, and whatever he does, we're going to give him a good time, and take it smiling," said Tom Merry firmly. "Shoulder to shoulder, you know, and don't let him suspect for a moment that we—that we don't like his looks."

"Honour the stranger within the gates, you know!" said Kangaroo.

"That's the idea!"

"It's a big order intirely," said Reilly doubtfully.

"But it's got to be done. Come on!"

The juniors followed the stranger from afar as he zigzagged across the quadrangle towards the old School House.



In a dismayed and whispering crowd they brought up the rear, and they arrived at the steps of the School House just behind Cousin Aubrey.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Wally appeared in the doorway. Both of them were looking as clean and neat as new pins.

They halted on the top step, gazing at the dilapidated stranger and at the surrounding crowd of juniors in amazement.

D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye.

"Mellish said that my cousin had awrived!" he exclaimed.

"So he has" said Blake.

"Where is he?"

"Here."

"Weally, Blake—"

The grimy stranger stared at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and came up the steps and held out a dirty hand.

"You're D'Arcy?" he asked jovially.

D'Arcy gazed at him.

"Yaas," he said faintly; "I'm D'Arcy."

"My Cousin Gussy, eh?"

"Oh!"

"How do you do, Cousin Gus?"

For a moment Arthur Augustus almost staggered. He would have given a term's pocket-money and his gold watch for the floor to open and swallow him up. But it didn't, and D'Arcy recovered himself in one moment more. He grasped the grimy hand in his own white and well-shaped one, and shook it with great cordiality.

"How do you do, deah boy? Welcome to St. Jim's!"

CHAPTER 7.

Gussy is Equal to the Occasion!

"HURRAH!"

The juniors burst into a cheer, which relieved the tension of the situation.

Certainly Arthur Augustus had played up splendidly.

He had not been able to avoid a single second of amazement and horror; but it had been one second only.

Now he was all himself.

His manner indicated no surprise, no horror, no disgust. It was the polished and urbane manner of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at his best. It was a blood relation who was claiming his hospitality, and blood was thicker than water. Whatever the stranger was, whatever he might be, he could claim D'Arcy's hospitality to the uttermost extent, and D'Arcy would not be found wanting.

Wally was standing open-mouthed, like a newly landed fish in appearance, and he seemed to come out of a trance as D'Arcy clapped him on the shoulder and presented him to Cousin Aubrey.

"My only Aunt Jane!" he gasped.

"This is my young bwothah Wally, Cousin Aubrey," he said. "He is vevy anxious to see you, the same as we all are."

Cousin Aubrey grinned.

"Shake!" he said.

Wally shook.

Arthur Augustus turned to the crowd of juniors.

"Gentlemen of St. Jim's, this is my cousin from Canadah. I call upon you for three cheers for Canadah!"

"Hurrah!" roared the juniors. "Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Pway step up to my studay, Cousin Aubrey!" went on D'Arcy. "You are probably in need of some wewfeshment aftah your journey."

"I could do with a drink," confessed Cousin Aubrey.

"Ahem! This way, please!"

"Good hegg!"

D'Arcy did not shudder.

"Tom Mewwy," he said, "will you see about the awrangements in the Hobby Club-room. You might come up with me, Blake."

"Right-ho!" said Blake. He would have done anything for D'Arcy at that moment, so sorry was he for the wretched predicament the swell of St. Jim's was in.

Cousin Aubrey stamped upstairs. Blake pressed D'Arcy's arm as they followed.

"I'm sorry!" he whispered.

"Sowwy for what, deah boy?"

"This awful let-down."

"If you are wewewwin" to my cousin, I trust you will not speak diswewpectfully of him to me, deah boy."

Blake stared

"Why, you ass—"

"Wats!"

It was clear that the swell of St. Jim's had resolved to swallow his dreadful cousin whole, so to speak. He was not going to listen to a word against him, even from his best chum. Perhaps he was trying to make himself think that Cousin Aubrey was all right, that any little thing that was lacking in outward appearance was only due to a rough and rather breezy life on the wild prairies.

Cousin Aubrey was shown into Study No. 6. He seated himself in the armchair, and lodged a pair of very worn and dusty boots on the mantelpiece. He put his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, and surveyed the study.

"I'm thirsty!" he remarked.

"Yaas, deah boy. What would you like to dwink?"

"Whisky," said Cousin Aubrey, "and water."

"Wh-b-hat?"

"And not too much water," added Cousin Aubrey.

"My deah fellow—"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy cast a helpless look at Blake. Blake chuckled. Wally chuckled still more emphatically. The Third Form fag was beginning to think that a great deal of fun might be "dug up" out of the visit of Cousin Aubrey. Certainly, he was like no visitor that had ever before been received at St. Jim's.

"You didn't ear me, perhaps?" said Cousin Aubrey. "What's the matter with whisky-and-water?"

"I—I—I'm afwaid we have no whisky in the studay, deah boy," faltered Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, brandy will do!"

"I—I'm afwaid that there is no bwandy, eithah."

"Well, gin, then!"

D'Arcy shuddered.

"We haven't any gin!"

Cousin Aubrey grunted discontentedly.

"What have you got to drink, then?" he asked.

"Well, there's watah—"

It was Cousin Aubrey's turn to shudder.

"Ow!"

"And lemonade—"

"Ow!"

"And gingah-beer—"

"Groo!"

"Or we can make you some tea—"

"Poof!"

"I am twuly sowwy that we cannot pwovide intowicatin' dwinks!" said Arthur Augustus, with some dignity. "But it is against the wules of the coll for any fellow to have anythin' of the kind about."

"Oh, all serene!" said Cousin Aubrey.

"It's all right. I ain't thirsty enough

(Continued on the next page.)



MAKE THE JESTER SMILE AND WIN HALF-A-CROWN!

Send your Joke to The GEM Jester, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

NO LIGHT MATTER.

"Where's your rear light?" asked the mobile policeman gruffly, as he stopped a lorry.

The driver got down from his seat and went to the rear of the vehicle. For a few moments he stood peering up and down the road; then he scratched his head in perplexity.

"Well, what about it?" asked the constable, producing his notebook. "You've got no rear light!"

"H'm! 'Tain't that what's worrying me, mate!" said the driver. "What I'd like to know is—where's my bloomin' trailer?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Pinnington, 17, Bennison Drive, Liverpool 19.

TOO TRYING.

"Dear Sir," wrote the anxious father,—"I'm afraid Johnny is not trying enough at school."

"Dear Sir," replied the harassed teacher,—"I assure you that your son is quite trying enough. He is the most trying boy in the school!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Bishop, 98, Cranbrook Road, Ilford, Essex.

ROUGH ROCKING.

Magistrate: "What's the charge?" Constable: "Rocking a man to sleep, sir."

Magistrate: "But that's no case." Constable: "Oh, sir, but you should have seen the size of the rock!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to K. Bromley, 325, Deane Church Lane, Bolton, Lancs.

UNKIND THOUGHTS.

A colonel and a general were walking along together, and every time a private saluted the colonel, he would salute back, and mutter: "The same to you!" Eventually the general's inquisitiveness got the better of him, and he asked why the colonel said it.

"I was once a private," replied the colonel, "and I know what he is thinking!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Abbott, Glenville, Signal Road, Grantham, Lincs.

A READY REPLY.

Smith: "Why on earth does a man in your position travel third-class on the railway?"

MacTavish: "Because, mon, there is nae fourth!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Jackson, 77, Beaumont Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex.

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to drink water, or lemonade, or ginger-beer, or tea. Never mind.

"I'm vevy sowwy—" "My only Aunt Jane!" murmured Wally "Look here, Gussy, is that what you call being hospitable to a chap from the place where the giddy sun never sets? Knox of the Sixth keeps whisky in his study." "Wally!" said D'Arcy, in a terrific voice.

"I've seen the bottle when I was fagging for him," said Wally calmly. "I could get the locker open with a chopper, and on an occasion like this—"

"Wally!" "On an occasion like this, when it's a question of backing up the British Empire, I wouldn't mind biffing open Knox's locker with a chopper."

"Pway shut up, Wally! The fellows are preparin' a weally decent feed downstairs, Cousin Aubrey. Pewwaps you would like a wash or a bwush down—"

"Do I look as if I want them?" demanded Cousin Aubrey.

"No, no! Of—of course not!" exclaimed D'Arcy hurriedly. "I—I wasn't hintin' at anythin' of that sort. But aftah a journey—"

"I'm used to roughin' it," said Cousin Aubrey. "On the rollin' prairie we don't ave time for washes and brushes-up. Nope!"

"I—I suppose not, but here—" "You should have seed me arter I'd tripped from Montreal to Quebec," said Cousin Aubrey, with a chuckle. "This is nothin' to wot I looked like then."

"I—I did not know that you were down on your luck, deah boy."

"Wot would I come and see my relations for if I wasn't down on my luck?" demanded Cousin Aubrey.

This was a poser, and D'Arcy gave it up. Cousin Aubrey was apparently only aware of one possible motive a man could have for visiting his relations.

"But I'm 'ungry," said Cousin Aubrey. "I'm ready for that feed."

"Vevy well, deah boy; but if you'd like me to give you a bwush down—"

"I wouldn't!" "I could lend you a comb—"

"I guess I don't want no comb." Cousin Aubrey surveyed himself in the glass, and seemed satisfied with the result of the inspection. "If I ain't good enough for you, Cousin Arthur—"

"Pway don't say that, my deah Aubrey!" said Arthur Augustus, in real distress. "You are vevy welcome, and I am delighted to see you."

"Orlright, then," said Cousin Aubrey. "Where's that feed?"

"This way, deah boy!"

And Arthur Augustus, very unhappy at heart, but keeping up a calm and polite countenance—and nobly trying to feel that his cousin was indeed welcome—led the way out of the study. He had hoped to induce Cousin Aubrey to make some slight improvements in his toilet, but Cousin Aubrey was evidently not to be induced; and the politeness of the swell of St. Jim's was equal to even this terrible strain.

## CHAPTER 8.

### The Feed!

**T**OM MERRY & CO. were in the Hobby Club-room waiting.

They all had their best smiles on, as Lowther expressed it.

They had set out to make a great fuss of the cousin from Canada, and they were going to do it.

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Everything that was a little odd in his looks or his ways they were determined to set down to the natural breeziness of a son of the boundless prairies. After all, a man who was used to the wide open spaces couldn't be expected to dress in Bond Street style.

The breeziness of Cousin Aubrey was certainly a little "thicker" than anybody had expected. But they were determined to be pleased, and, above all, to be hospitable.

"Here he comes!" said Manners from the door, which gave a view upon the staircase.

There was a movement of interest in the room at once. Fatty Wynn turned a ruddy face from the big fire at the end of the room, where he was giving some final artistic touches to various dishes provided for the delectation of Aubrey Smith.

"It's all ready," he said. "I hope he's got a good appetite. This feed will be rather a record."

"The visitor's rather a record, too," said Monty Lowther.

And there was a chuckle.

Cousin Aubrey, still a little unsteady in his gait, came downstairs between Blake and D'Arcy, with the grinning Wally following in the rear. He looked as dusty and dirty and seedy and blackguardly as when he had gone up. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy hoped fervently that none of the masters would see him, though he did not put that hope in actual words to himself. But on awkward occasions, it seems impossible for people to avoid turning up just where they are not wanted. Cousin Aubrey had almost reached the bottom of the stairs when Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, came in from the quadrangle with Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth.

The amazement of the two masters at the sight of Cousin Aubrey may be imagined. They stopped dead, staring at the hero of the highway. Mr. Lathom fumbled with his glasses, and put them straight, as if doubting the evidence of his eyes. Mr. Railton frowned darkly.

"Blake!" "Yes, sir," murmured Jack Blake.

"Who is this man? What have you brought him into the school for? How dare you! What does this mean?"

"Pway excuse me, Mr. Wailton, sir!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with stiff dignity. "This gentleman is my cousin, sir."

"What!" "My cousin from Canada, sir."

Mr. Railton was not easily astonished. He had had to do with boys for many years, and he had grown hardened to surprises. But now he almost staggered.

"Your cousin, D'Arcy!" he repeated, and his voice was quite faint.

"Dear me!" murmured little Mr. Lathom. "Bless my soul!"

D'Arcy's face was crimson. But he stood firmly by the side of his disreputable relation, and did not withdraw the arm that was linked in Cousin Aubrey's.

Blood was thicker than water. "Yaas, sir," said D'Arcy. "Pway allow me to introduce my cousin from Canada, sir—my cousin, Aubrey Smith."

"Good heavens!" muttered Mr. Railton.

"Glad to see yer, sir," said Cousin Aubrey. "You must excuse my comin' in a rather rough and ready way. We don't stand on ceremony out there on the perarers, sir."

Mr. Railton gulped down his astonishment. He knew all about Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's Canadian cousin being expected at St. Jim's. Certainly, he had not anticipated beholding an

object like this. But D'Arcy had had permission for his cousin to come, and there was no getting out of that. The Housemaster gave Cousin Aubrey a short nod, and turned away and went into his study.

"Nice and polite, ain't he?" said Cousin Aubrey, rather resentfully. "P'raps he thinks that I ain't good enough to come to this 'ere school."

"Not at all, deah boy," said D'Arcy hastily. "You mustn't take any notice of Mr. Wailton's ways. It's all wright."

"Ho!" said Cousin Aubrey.

"Pway come on. The feed's quite weady, deah boy!"

The mention of the feed restored Cousin Aubrey's good humour. He allowed himself to be led into the Hobby Club-room. The aspect of that room was very cheerful. The large table in the centre, round which the schoolboy clubs were accustomed to hold their meetings, had been increased in size by several other tables being jammed up close to it. The whole was covered with a succession of spotless tablecloths, specially borrowed from Mrs. Timms, the House dame, for the occasion. There were certain inequalities in the surface of the combined tables, but all the fellows were agreed that that did not matter in the least.

What did matter was the splendid array of eatables and drinkables disposed to great advantage upon that extensive table.

Seldom, if ever, had St. Jim's beheld such a spread.

Seldom, too, had Cousin Aubrey beheld such a one. His eyes glistened as he looked at the well-spread board. The crowd of juniors in the room gave a cheer as he came in. They were going to be pleased with the Canadian cousin, or they would know the reason why.

"Hurrah for Canada!" "Hurrah for Cousin Aubrey!"

"Genel'men," said Cousin Aubrey, with a wave of his dirty hand—"genel'men, I thanks yer!"

"Hurrah!" "It does me proud," continued Cousin

Aubrey, evidently persuaded that a speech was expected of him. "It does me proud, it really do, to ave a welcome in the hold country like this!"

"Bravo!" shouted Figgins.

"Hip-pip!"

"It goes to my 'eart," said Cousin Aubrey, laying a hand upon the liquor and tobacco stains which almost concealed his waistcoat. "It does me proud! Genel'men, I propose to drink the 'ealth of the British Hemptire and 'er Colonies, and may 'er shadder never grow less!"

"Bravo!" Tom Merry stood up to reply.

"Cousin Aubrey, we're jolly glad to see you at St. Jim's. We recognise you as a true son of the great Empire upon which the sun never sets. We'll drink that toast with pleasure. Pour out the Rhine wine."

The Rhine wine was a figure of speech. It was lemonade and ginger-beer that the juniors poured out, but they poured them out generously, amid a loud popping of corks. A foaming glass was handed to Cousin Aubrey, and he turned quite pale under his dirt.

"Wot's that?" he said.

"Ginger pop—the best!"

"Genel'men, in the Wild West we don't drink toasts in ginger-pop," said Cousin Aubrey severely. "Where's the whisky?"

"Oh!" said Tom Merry & Co. "We can't keep ourselves up to the mark on the wild perarers on ginger-pop," said Cousin Aubrey.

"No—no, of course you can't!"

assented Tom Merry dubiously. "But—but—"

"Dask it all, a guest's a guest, and he's entitled to what he wants!" whispered Figgins. "We must get him something to drink."

"But—but how—"

"There's some in the House somewhere. By Jove! Taggles!"

"Good egg! Cut off and see Taggles. Offer him anything he likes."

Figgins dashed off.

There was little doubt that intoxicating drinks could be found in Taggles' lodge. Taggles, the school porter of St. Jim's, was well-known to be a strict teetotaler; but that, as Monty Lowther said, was only when he wasn't drinking. If Taggles was a strict teetotaler in practice as well as theory, certainly the rubicund hue of his nose did him a great injustice.

"It's all sewene, Aubwey, deah boy," said D'Arcy, with relief. "Figgy has gone to get you somethin' you like."

"Now we're talkin'," said Cousin Aubrey.

And, with a more contented mien, he allowed himself to be led to his place at the table. He sat down and looked at the serviette provided for him by the care of his generous entertainers. He seemed a little puzzled as to the use it was to be put to.

It must be admitted that table napkins did not always find a place at the hospitable board when the juniors stood feeds, but on special occasions they could be very high-class in their arrangements.

The high-class arrangements were wasted upon Cousin Aubrey, however. The son of the wild and woolly West was a stranger to table napkins, and, after regarding it with surprise for some moments, he blew his nose with it, and put it in his trousers pocket.

The juniors kept their countenances as admirably as if the said countenances had been carved in wood or marble. From their looks, one might have

imagined that they were habitually accustomed to seeing their guests use serviettes as pocket-handkerchiefs. Politeness could go no further.

A dozen juniors crowded round Cousin Aubrey to help him. He was not backward in helping himself, either. He took a knife in his right hand as if it were a sword, and a fork in his left as if it were a dagger. Then he started.

There is a famous story of a German gentleman who complained of the orchestra in his hotel at dinner-time, because it prevented him from hearing himself eat. An orchestra would not have troubled Cousin Aubrey in the same way. He could easily have beaten a brass band.

For some minutes there was little heard in the room excepting the steady, rhythmic champing of Cousin Aubrey's jaws.

Then he looked up, holding a piece of rabbit impaled upon his fork, and a potato impaled upon his knife, and spoke.

"Where's that beer?"

"Ahem!"

"Whisky, beer, or gin, I don't care!" said Cousin Aubrey generously. "We ain't pertickler on the peraters."

And his knife and fork chased one another to his mouth. Arthur Augustus watched him as if fascinated. Courtesy prevented him from making any remark. But he was in momentary terror of seeing Cousin Aubrey increase the already considerable size of his mouth by the use of the knife as a utensil for conveying viands thither.

"Go and see if Figgy's coming, Kerr," said Tom Merry.

"Right-ho!"

Kerr ran off. Liquid refreshments not yet being forthcoming, Cousin Aubrey seemed content to go on with the solid part of the entertainment. He kept three or four juniors very busy helping him. Fatty Wynn's fears that he might

not have brought an appetite equal to the occasion proved to be quite groundless.

CHAPTER 9.

Another Telegram!

"NOTHIN' of the kind!" said Taggles.

Figgins was negotiating with the school porter. Figgins, certainly, would not have touched whisky or gin or beer himself; but the laws of hospitality, especially to a cousin from the uttermost bounds of the Empire, were above all other considerations. Figgins felt that the reputation of St. Jim's was at stake. The school could not fail in hospitality to a visitor from the overseas Dominions. When Cousin Aubrey returned to the wild and woolly West, he might relate his experiences at St. Jim's round a dozen camp-fires on the wild prairies. And surely then it would be too bad to have to say that his thirst was unregarded by his hosts. If he had asked for champagne or Tokay, the juniors would have felt that it was up to them to provide it. Of the consequences that might arise from providing a man of Cousin Aubrey's appearance with strong liquor, the boys had not thought. Such considerations naturally did not enter into their minds.

"You know, Master Figgins," said Taggles impressively. "Hev everyone knows that I'm a strict teetotaler. The lips that touch liquor, Master Figgins, shall never touch mine."

"Well, Cousin Aubrey doesn't want to kiss you that I know of," said Figgins. "All he wants is some of that filthy stuff you lap up, Taggy."

"I tell yer—"

"Any kind of muck will do—whisky, brandy, gin, or beer," said Figgins. "Blessed if I see why ink wouldn't do."



Crash, crash, crash! One after another Cousin Aubrey hurled the plates into the grate. "Here, hold on!" exclaimed Manners. "You mustn't smash the crockery like that!" "Who's goin' to stop me?" demanded Cousin Aubrey ferociously.

It's just as nice to taste. Now, what have you got, Taggles?"

"Nothin' of the kind."

Figgins extracted a pound-note from his waistcoat pocket. It was part of the funds pooled for the entertainment of Cousin Aubrey. Taggles' eyes glistened.

"Now, then, Taggy—"

"Perhaps I might find a bottle of whisky wot I keep for the toothache," said Taggles, as if struck by a sudden thought.

Figgins grinned.

"Find it quick, will you, and there's a quid."

"I don't know as I've really got any," said Taggles defensively. "But I remember I was goin' to 'ave some for the toothache."

"Quick! Cousin Aubrey's thirsty."

Taggles disappeared into his lodge and came back with a bottle of whisky in his hand. Figgins had a strong suspicion that he could have produced two or three more if he had liked, and that he would have done so at a pound a time. But one bottle was quite enough for Cousin Aubrey. Figgins did not imagine that there was anybody in existence who could drink a whole bottle of whisky. He was not yet fully acquainted with Cousin Aubrey.

"'Ere you are!" said Taggles, looking greatly surprised, as if he had not really expected to find any whisky. "It was there, arter all! 'Ow much am I to keep outer this quid, Master Figgins?"

"Keep the lot, Taggy. It's all in the funds, and you're an angel in disguise," said Figgins. "This will do Cousin Aubrey beautifully."

And Figgins concealed the bottle under his jacket, and raced back towards the School House. He met Kerr coming out in quest of him.

"Got it?" demanded Kerr.

"Yes. Here it is!"

"Good egg. He's asked for it four times."

"Ha, ha, ha! What do you think of Gussy's Canadian cousin, Kerr?" chuckled Figgins.

"I think he's a coughdrop."

"Breezy—hey?"

"Breezy isn't the word for it!" grinned Kerr. "I wonder if there are any more at home like him?"

They hurried into the Hobby Club-room.

Cousin Aubrey had already made great devastation among the viands. Round him on the floor and on the tablecloth were fragments of bones and crusts. Cousin Aubrey was not a tidy eater. But, as D'Arcy whispered to Blake, they must be bound to wuff it at meal-times on the pwaiwie. And Jack Blake nodded a sympathetic assent.

Cousin Aubrey looked round thirstily as Figgins came in with Kerr.

"Got it?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"Wot is it?"

"Whisky."

"That's the stuff!" said Cousin Aubrey.

Figgins placed the bottle on the table. Cousin Aubrey mixed himself a glass of whisky-and-water. The amount of whisky he put in took away the breath of the juniors. The amount of water was not large. But Cousin Aubrey drank it without winking.

"My word!" murmured Digby.

Figgins looked rather alarmed.

"I—I hope we haven't done wrong in getting him the whisky?" he muttered.

"We only meant to be hospitable, any-

way. It's all right, Gussy. I suppose he won't get—er—"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"He won't get squiffy, I suppose?" whispered Figgins.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass freezingly upon Figgins.

"If you are hintin' that my cousin might get squiffy, Figgins—"

"Oh, all right, if he won't!" said Figgins.

"It would be uttably imposs for a D'Arcy to get squiffay, deah boy."

"But he's a Smith," said Monty Lowther, with a grin. "It's possible for Smiths to get squiffy, isn't it?"

"Yaas, I suppose so."

"Well, suppose the Smith half of him gets squiffy," suggested Lowther.

"The D'Arcy half may not be able to keep the Smith half in order."

"Weally, Lowther—"

"There he goes again with the whisky!" murmured Manners.

"Phew!"

"He will be raving soon," grinned Crooke.

"Well, that's nothing to grin about, ass!" said Redfern crossly. "I say, Gussy, keep an eye on your cousin. Don't let him get too wild and woolly."

"Weally, Wedfern—"

Cousin Aubrey finished his third glass of whisky, forgetting to put any water in it this time. His face was almost purple now, and his eyes had a rolling look. He went on with his meal, however, his knife and fork making more clatter than before.

Arthur Augustus was secretly dismayed. The idea of a relation of his getting intoxicated made him feel almost ill. And if the liquor got into Cousin Aubrey's head and he became uproarious, what then?

D'Arcy shuddered.

"I suppose it's a way they have on the giddy prairies," remarked Herries.

"Better let him alone. Must be hospitable."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"There he goes again!"

"'Ere's to you!" said Cousin Aubrey, swamping whisky into a glass, and unfortunately swamping a good deal of it outside the glass. "'Ere's to all of us! And may you never be 'ard up for a drink!"

And he guzzled again.

"Oh deah!"

"This is getting interesting," Mellish murmured to Crooke. "I fancy he'll start breaking things soon."

Crooke chuckled.

"Better keep out of the way, in case of accidents," he murmured.

"Yes, rather!"

And the two juniors quitted the room. They left the School House, and strolled round towards the open window of the Hobby Club-room, through which they could get a view of the interior and watch the proceedings.

Mellish uttered a sudden exclamation:

"Look there!"

Crooke looked round, and uttered an exclamation, too.

The telegraph-boy from Rylcombe had entered at the gates and was coming towards the School House. He had a telegram in his hand.

"I wonder if it's for Gussy?" murmured Mellish.

"My hat!"

"I'll soon see!"

Mellish ran to meet the telegraph-boy.

"That wire for D'Arcy?" he asked breathlessly.

"Yes, sir."

"Good! He thought it was, and he sent me to fetch it. Hand it over."

"Here you are, sir!"

The lad handed Mellish the envelope, and Mellish went into the House with it. The telegraph-boy had no suspicions. But Mellish did not take the wire into the Hobby Club-room; he hurried up to his study with it, and Crooke followed him. The study was empty, and the two young rascals locked the door.

"It's for Gussy?" asked Crooke.

"Yes. Look!"

"The boy oughtn't to have given it to you."

Mellish shrugged his shoulders. "That's his look-out!" he said.

The cad of the Fourth stirred the remains of the study fire together and jammed the kettle upon the blaze. Crooke watched him rather uneasily.

"You're not going to open it?" he asked.

"Yes, I am."

"But, I say, that's rather thick!"

"I don't care. I can seal it up again so that Gussy won't know."

"But—but, I say—"

"Oh, rot!"

Mellish held the envelope over the steam that began to issue from the spout of the kettle. The flimsy envelope came open easily.

Crooke turned a little pale as the cad of the Fourth drew the telegram out. He was unscrupulous enough, but opening another fellow's correspondence seemed to him rather past the limit. But Mellish did not seem to mind.

He held up the telegram to Crooke, and the Shell fellow, in spite of his scruples, read it:

"Coming by the afternoon train. Arrive about six.—AUBREY SMITH."

The two plotters stared at one another.

"My hat!" ejaculated Crooke, with a deep breath. "He's coming to-day, then."

Mellish knitted his brows.

"Of course, we couldn't foresee that!" he said. "It was a thousand to one that he wouldn't come to-day, I thought."

"I don't know—he might pick a half-holiday to come."

"Well, it can't be helped now. 'Enry 'Arris may be gone before he comes and if he isn't they can settle it between them," said Mellish, with a shrug of the shoulders. "We can keep out of the way. This wire was sent from London; and the real Smith won't be here until six. Time for Aubrey to have his fling and get out. If he's still here there may be a row!"

"He, he, he!" chuckled Crooke. "But what are you going to do with that wire?"

Mellish gummed the envelope again.

"Lose it," he said cheerfully. "Somebody will pick it up in the quad—later on—unopened. That's all."

"All serene!"

And the two plotters left the study. The intercepting of the telegram had saved their plot.

In the Hobby Club-room Cousin Aubrey, little dreaming of the narrow escape he had had of being detected, or that the real Aubrey Smith was then on his way to St. Jim's, was devoting himself to the feed—and especially to

the bottle of whisky. And his entertainers, determined to be hospitable as they were, could not help growing more and more alarmed.

## CHAPTER 10.

## Cousin Aubrey Breaks Out!

**A**RTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY preserve! the repose which is the distinguishing trait of the caste of Vere de Vere; but it was only by a great effort.

Cousin Aubrey had made deep inroads upon the whisky bottle, and he evidently intended to finish it. And the purple hue of his complexion, the thickness of his breathing, and the rolling of his eyes, showed that he was sinking deeper and deeper under the influence of the potent liquor.

D'Arcy's fixed persuasion that a relation of his could never get into a state of beastly intoxication was rudely shaken. Whether it was the Smith half or the D'Arcy half of Cousin Aubrey that was to blame, certainly he was getting into a most hilarious state.

Some of the juniors were grinning, and some of them were looking alarmed. Some of them wondered what Cousin Aubrey might do.

"Suppose we knock the bottle over by accident, Gussy?" Tom Merry whispered.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Yaas, pewwaps that's a good ideah, deah boy."

"I'll do it!"

Tom Merry reached across the table towards a plate of oranges, as if to take one, and knocked his elbow against the whisky bottle. It crashed over on a plate, and there was a gush of liquor upon the tablecloth. Cousin Aubrey gave a kind of howl, and grabbed the bottle and set it upright.

"You clumsy idiot!" he roared.

Tom Merry coloured. He had not expected the distinguished guest to use expressions of that sort.

"Ahem!" he stammered.

Cousin Aubrey held the bottle tightly.

"You clear orf!" he growled.

"Ahem—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Pway don't mind him, Tom Mewwy, deah boy!" murmured Arthur Augustus softly. "Chaps are bound to be wathawh wuff in their way of speakin' on the pwaivie."

"All serene, Gussy!"

Cousin Aubrey poured what was left of the whisky into his glass and drank it at a gulp. His eyes rolled more wildly than ever. He lifted the empty bottle and hurled it into the grate, where it broke into pieces with a terrific crash.

"Oh!" ejaculated the juniors.

Cousin Aubrey chuckled.

"Ho!" he said. "That's my style!"

"Weally, Cousin Aubrey—"

Cousin Aubrey rose unsteadily to his feet, grasping the edge of the table for support, and glared across the table at his aristocratic cousin.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"Eh?"

"You 'ear me!" said Cousin Aubrey.

"Who are you?"

"I? You know me, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, in dismay. "I'm your cousin, Arthur, you know."

"You ain't!" said Aubrey.

"Weally, deah boy—"

"You little pink-eyed bounder!" said Cousin Aubrey.

"Bai Jove!"

"Get hout!"

## JUST MY FUN

## Monty Lowther Calling



Hallo, everybody! "What was 1066?" asked Mr. Selby. "William the Conqueror's telephone number," replied Wally D'Arcy. His ear is still "ringing." More Third Form "howlers." It was William of Orange who said: "Eat More Fruit." Great "pip." The Black Prince was the boy who refused to wash. A master has retired after teaching the same class for thirty-five years. What a backward lot! "Mountaineering makes one sleepy," states Mr. Railton. Ah, those "yawning" precipices! "A recently discovered metal," says Mr. Lathom, "is called toluograytorbosodium." But not often. "Art is fighting for its very existence," says Skimpole. Yes, our pictures have their backs to the wall. Crooke, Mellish, and Levison have been

"What!"

"Houtside!" roared Cousin Aubrey. "I don't like your sort! I ain't taking any of your sauce. You get hout, or there'll be trouble. You 'ear me?"

"But weally, Cousin Aubrey—"

"Har you going to get hout?" roared Aubrey.

"Oh deah!"

"Better go, Gussy," whispered Blake. "He's getting excited."

"But weally, Blake—"

"Go—quick—he'll go for you!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus, in great distress and alarm, stepped outside the Hobby Club-room into the passage. He was in a state of bewilderment. He had determined to swallow his terrible cousin whole, so to speak; but what was he to do if the man made a disturbance in the school? The mere thought of it made D'Arcy feel cold all over.

Cousin Aubrey seemed to be somewhat placated by the departure of the swell of St. Jim's. He muttered wrathfully to himself on the subject of pink-eyed bounders and thick ears. The juniors were all silent now, wondering what would happen. Some of the fellows had slipped out of the room quietly. They were fed up with Cousin Aubrey.

Cousin Aubrey's rolling eye seemed to be looking for mischief. He began to collect the plates upon the table and hurl them after the whisky bottle.

Crash, crash, crash!

"Here, hold on!" roared Manners. "You mustn't smash the crockery like that!"

Cousin Aubrey glared at him.

"Who's going to stop me?" he demanded ferociously. "I arsk you, who's a-goin' to stop me? You 'ear me?"

"Let him do as he likes," said Tom Merry. "We can't lay hands on a guest! Dash it all, we can pay for the crocks!"

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" murmured Wally, in ecstasy. "What larks!"

"Rather more than a lark!" grunted Jack Blake. "We shall have a pretty penny to pay for this giddy crockery."

badly stung by mosquitoes. The "smart" set. "We all get our ups and downs," says a reader. Yes, I had the end seat of a row in a cinema the other day myself. The Wayland Golf Club has some bad players, and the club is losing ground. You can see it flying any time you pass. How does spring affect you? It makes some people go all of a "twitter." All right, spare me the "bird." A car which moves sideways has been invented. The taxicab. Mr. Ratcliff lost his temper, and was rude over the phone last week. The "call of the wild." Despite his bulk, Fatty Wynn says he can turn a somersault. He can "throw his weight about." How's this? After much trouble, two elderly women who hated each other had been reconciled. "Well, here's wishing you all you wish me, Mrs. Smith," said one. "Now who's being nasty?" snapped back the other. Wait a minute. Pity the poor moth! It has to spend summer in a fur coat, and winter in a bathing dress. Needlework is advised as a cure for sleeplessness. And "sew" to bed. Here's a nightcap: "Is the rope on this cage safe?" asked the old lady, going down a coal-mine. "Safe as anything," replied the guide. "That rope is guaranteed to last twelve months, and it isn't due to be renewed till tomorrow." Hang on, boys!

"Can't be helped," said Tom Merry, as cheerfully as he could. "Hospitality, you know—honour the stranger within the gates—"

Crash, crash, crash, crash!

Cousin Aubrey seemed to find a great solace in the smashing of the crockery. He cleared the table with speed and care. Plates and glasses and cups and saucers and dishes went crashing into the grate, till the pile of broken china rose higher than the fender. And the contents of the dishes went along with the dishes, and all kinds of viands were added to the pile. Fatty Wynn snorted with indignation, but Figgins and Kerr held him back. The fat Fourth Former looked as if he wanted to rush upon Cousin Aubrey and slay him.

"He's only a little excited," said Tom Merry softly.

"My hat!"

"Go it, Cousin Aubrey!" shouted Wally. "This is gorgeous! Here you are!"

And the fag pushed crockeryware across the table to Cousin Aubrey, to keep him supplied with ammunition.

Crash, crash, crash! Smash, smash!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eyeglass gleamed in at the door. Cousin Aubrey seemed to know that he was looking in, for he swung round with a dish in his hand, and hurled it. The swell of St. Jim's whipped back in time, and the dish smashed on the wall across the passage.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Here, stop that!" shouted Tom Merry. "You'll do some damage!"

"Who's going to stop me?"

"I will, if you chuck any more crockery at anyone," said Tom Merry determinedly.

Cousin Aubrey glared, but perhaps something in the junior's tone had an effect on him, for he made no further reply.

The situation was growing very peculiar, not to say intolerable. To be almost on fighting terms with a guest was a new experience to the juniors of St. Jim's. But then they never had such a very peculiar guest before.

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Cousin Aubrey was something quite out of the ordinary.

Crash, crash, crash!

The last of the crockery was deposited in the grate. Then Cousin Aubrey looked round for fresh worlds to conquer.

"I'm goin' to see the 'Ead!" he announced.

"What!"

The juniors were horror-stricken.

If Cousin Aubrey went to see the Head in that state they almost fainted to think of what would happen.

Cousin Aubrey glared ferociously.

"Where's the 'Ead?" he roared. "Ain't I good enough to see the 'Ead—hey?"

"Of—of course you are!" said Blake. "Too good, in fact. But—but the Head is—is engaged."

"In fact, married!" said Monty Lowther.

"Oh, shut up, Lowther!"

"I'm goin' to see the 'Ead!" said Cousin Aubrey. "P'r'aps he'd stand a feller somethin' to drink. Where's my Cousin Arthur? Where's the pink-eyed bouncer?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here I am, deah boy!" said D'Arcy faintly. "But I have a vewy stwong objection to bein' chawactewised as a pink-eyed boundah!"

"Gimme your 'and!" said Cousin Aubrey, apparently having forgotten the enmity he had shown towards the elegant junior. "Now, lead hon!"

"Yaas, deah boy! Come on!"

Arthur Augustus had to lead the way. But he led it in a direction exactly opposite to that leading to the Head's study. In the empty Form-room Cousin Aubrey would not be able to alarm the school, or to do much damage.

## CHAPTER 11.

### Two Cousins!

Cousin AUBREY leaned heavily upon D'Arcy's arm. His legs showed a strong inclination to travel in different directions, which made it difficult for him to walk. To steady himself he put one arm affectionately round Arthur Augustus' neck, and in that attitude they staggered together down the passage.

"Pway help me, Tom Mewwy, deah boy!" murmured D'Arcy, in a stifled voice. "He is fwightfully heavy! Pway back me up!"

"Like a bird, old son!"

Tom Merry had no wish to come into close contact with Cousin Aubrey. He felt that it might soil him all over. But he played the game heroically, and backed up the suffering swell of St. Jim's. He took Cousin Aubrey's other arm round his own neck, and took half the weight of the distinguished visitor. Between them they propelled Cousin Aubrey down the passage.

"What—what—what is this?"

Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, stood suddenly before the juniors. The procession halted. The juniors were simply horror-stricken, but Cousin Aubrey was quite cool.

"'Allo, old cock!" he remarked.

"How do yer do?"

The master of the Shell, the most dignified and staid gentleman at St. Jim's, not even excepting the Head, was electrified.

He jumped almost clear of the floor.

"Wh-wh-wh-what!" he gasped faintly.

"Come and have a drink!" said Cousin Aubrey generously. "I've struck oil this afternoon, and I've got thirty bob to come!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,419.

"Good heavens!"

"I know you!" resumed Cousin Aubrey, gazing with rolling eyes at the horrified master of the Shell. "You owe me money!"

"What!"

"You're the bar-keeper at the Green Man, ain't you?" demanded Cousin Aubrey.

Mr. Linton almost fainted. That he could be taken for a barman was wildly impossible. He gazed at Cousin Aubrey in horror.

"Who is this man?" he demanded, at last.

"If you please, sir," groaned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "he's my Cousin Aubrey from Canadah."

"What?"

"I had permission to entahtain him at the school, sir, this aftahnoon," said Arthur Augustus. "He's weally all wight, sir; only a little bweezy!"

"Breezy!" gasped Mr. Linton.

"Yaas, sir. It's a way they have in the Wild West, I think, sir," said D'Arcy. "He's weally all wight, sir."

"He is intoxicated!" shouted Mr. Linton.

"Only a little hilawious, sir."

"Take the man out of the House at once!"

"But weally, sir—"

"Instantly!" cried Mr. Linton angrily.

"Wot's that?" said Cousin Aubrey belligerently. "Who's goin' to put me out? It ain't closing-time yet, young man, not by long chalks!"

"Leave the house, sir!"

"No fear, young man! I'm willing to pay for all I drinks," said Cousin Aubrey, apparently still under the impression that Mr. Linton was the barman of the Green Man in Rylcombe. "And it ain't time yet. Wot time do you close? Answer me that?"

"Take him away!" said Mr. Linton faintly.

"I'll take you away, you skinny little boiled howl!" said Cousin Aubrey, suddenly releasing himself from Tom Merry and D'Arcy, and prancing towards Mr. Linton, brandishing his fists. "Now, then, if you're a better man than I am, put up your dukes and prove it! You 'ear me?"

"Oh, good heavens!"

Mr. Linton backed away in alarm and horror, and Cousin Aubrey followed him, waving a pair of very large and very dirty fists in the air.

"Put 'em up!" he roared.

"Take this man away!" gasped Mr. Linton.

"Put 'em up! I says to yer—"

Tom Merry & Co made a rush, and collared Cousin Aubrey just in time, as he was about to hurl himself upon the astounded Shell master. They grasped the cousin from Canada, and held him fast, in spite of his struggles, and Mr. Linton walked away, quite dazed and bewildered.

"Do be quiet, Cousin Aubrey, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, almost tearfully.

Cousin Aubrey roared.

"Quiet! Not me! I ain't a quiet bloke! Where's my thirty bob?"

"What?"

"Where's my thirty bob? You 'ear me?"

"What thirty bob, deah boy?"

"My thirty bob!" shouted Cousin Aubrey. "I don't trust you further'n I kin see you. I guess I want that thirty bob right here and now!"

"He's wavin'!" said D'Arcy, in distress. "Bai Jove! I wish we hadn't got him that whisky. What can we do with him, Tom Mewwy? Advise me, deah boy."

"Blessed if I know!" said Tom Merry hopelessly. "We shall have a tremendous crowd round if we take him into the quad."

"I'm goin' to see the 'Ead!"



"What—what is this?" asked Mr. Linton as he met Tom Merry in the passage. "'Allo, old cock!" said D'Arcy's cousin. "Good heavens!"

announced Cousin Aubrey. "I want my thirty bob!"

"Oh, gweat Scott!"

"Get him into the Form-room," said Blake. "There's nobody there."

And Cousin Aubrey was piloted into the empty Shell Form Room. He sat down on one of the desks, and gazed about him vacantly.

The juniors, relieved to get him into a quiet place, collected round the doorway to cut off his escape if he tried to go. But Cousin Aubrey seemed to be content to rest where he was for the present.

"Oh, bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy.

"What a day we're havin'!"

"We are!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Next time you have any relations come to see you, Guss, you'd better wire for a special constable to be here, too, to look after them."

"Weally, Lowthah, you ass!"  
The voice of Cousin Aubrey was raised again.

"Where's my thirty bob?"  
"What on earth does he mean, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus, in utter bewilderment.

"Thirty boblets!" roared Cousin Aubrey. "I arsk yer, as man to man, whether I wasn't promised thirty bob for this 'ere job?"

"What?"  
"I'm 'aving that thirty bob, or there'll be a row!" said Cousin Aubrey, and he shook his fist and slid from the desk, and landed upon the Form-room floor with a heavy bump.

"Oh! Ow!"  
Aubrey sat on the floor and gasped. He seemed surprised to find himself there, and he looked round suspiciously,

"That's orlright," he said. "You ain't cheatin' me! I'm fair and square. Thirty bob was the amount, and thirty bob I mean to 'ave. You 'ear me?"

All St. Jim's might have heard Cousin Aubrey, as a matter of fact. He was roaring. He rose to his feet, but his legs travelled away from him, and he sat down again with a bump.

"Who shoved me?" he roared.  
"Bai Jove! Nobody shoved you Aubrey. You fell down."

"You're a liar!"  
"Oh deah!"  
"I'll fight anybody who says as I fell down!" roared Aubrey ferociously. "Come 'ere, you pink-eyed bouncer, and I'll smash you!"

"I wufuse to be called a pink-eyed boundah!"  
"Come 'ere!"

"I decline to come there!"  
"Then I'll fetch yer!" said Cousin Aubrey, scrambling up. "I'll show yer! You can't come any of yer old buck with me. Who says I'm drunk?"

"Nobody said so," said Tom Merry.  
"Yer a liar!" said Cousin Aubrey elegantly. "That pink-eyed bouncer said so, and I'm going to smash him! Ho!"

He made a wild lunge at Arthur Augustus. The dismayed swell of St. Jim's dodged among the desks, and Aubrey lumbered and staggered unsteadily after him, breathing fury and alcohol.

"I guess I'll make you hop!" he exclaimed. "Wait till I get my gun hout!"  
Some dim idea that he was supposed to be from Canada and the wild prairies was working in the tramp's confused brain. He groped in his rags as if he supposed there was a revolver there. There was a wild rush of the juniors to the door.

"Run for it!" yelled Figgins.  
"Wun like anythin', deah boys!" gasped D'Arcy.

The juniors streamed out of the Form-room and tore down the passage. Kildare met them at the end of the passage with a stern brow.  
"D'Arcy—"  
"Wun for it, deah boy!" panted D'Arcy. "He's fivhtfully dwunk, and he's got a wevolvah!"

"Good heavens!"  
The juniors, greatly alarmed, rushed out of the House. They did not want to be near the gentleman from the wild and woolly West when he started firing.

They streamed out into the quadrangle in great excitement. The crowd surged and eddied round a tall and handsome young man, with a sunburnt face, and a slouched hat, who had walked in at the school gates, and was striding up to the School House. In their excitement they did not notice him for the moment.

"Hallo!" exclaimed the stranger. "What's the row here? Is it fire, hey?"  
The juniors all turned to look at him. The tall young man was regarding them with good-humoured astonishment from under the wide brim of his slouched hat.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry.  
"Hallo!" returned the stranger. "I guess you look scared. What's the trouble?"

"Man in there, drunk, with a revolver!" said Tom Merry, wondering who the stranger was. "He says he's going to shoot."

"It's my Cousin Aubrey, from Canada," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "and he's bwoken out! F'way don't go in, sir! It's dangewous!"

The tall man stared at him.  
"Your Cousin Aubrey, from Canada?" he ejaculated.

"Yaas."  
"Then who are you?"  
"My name is Arthur Augustus D'Arcy," said the swell of St. Jim's, with some dignity.

The tall young man burst into a roar.  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy groped for his eyeglass, jammed it into his eye, and surveyed the hilarious stranger with lofty astonishment.

"I fail to see anythin' to laugh at!" he said.  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, my deah sir—"  
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the sunburnt stranger. "Ha, ha, ha! So you're D'Arcy, are you—you are Augustus? And you've got a Cousin Aubrey from Canada kicking up a row in there!"

"Yaas. But—"  
"Then you've got two of them!" grinned the stranger.

"Two of them?"  
"I guess so."  
"Weally, I fail to undahstand you!"

"It's easy enough," said the sunburnt young man cheerfully. "You see, if you're Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of St. Jim's, I'm your Cousin Aubrey from Canada!"

"What!"  
There was a shout of amazement from Tom Merry & Co.  
"You!"

CHAPTER 12.

The Order of the Boot!

COUSIN AUBREY from Canada laughed.

The juniors were staring at him in blank amazement.

They could not doubt his statement. The sunburnt young man in the slouched hat was exactly what they expected to see when they had first anticipated the visit from the Canadian cousin. But if he was the genuine Cousin Aubrey from Canada, who was the man in the Form-room? Certainly, D'Arcy hadn't two Cousin Aubreys from Canada!

"You—you mean to say that you are my Cousin Aubrey?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus at last, in hopeless bewilderment.

"I guess so!" said the Canadian cheerfully. "Didn't you get my wire?"

"Yaas. You said you'd come this aftahnoon—"

"I didn't! I said I'd arrive about six, and it's six now."

"There's a mistake somewhere," said Tom Merry. "We had a wire from Wayland last night, signed with your name—"

"Well, I didn't send it!" grinned Cousin Aubrey the Second. "I've just come down from London, and I wired before I started."

"Bai Jove!"

"Somebody else sent that wire last night, then, and signed your name to it," said Figgins. "Blessed if I can make it out! Who's that man in there?"



Merry and Arthur Augustus propelling Cousin Aubrey down the passage. "How do yer do?" The master of the Shell jumped. "Good evening," gasped faintly.

as if wondering whether there had been an earthquake. The juniors could not help bursting into a chuckle; he looked so utterly ridiculous.

"Larfin', are yer?" said Cousin Aubrey sulphurously. "I'll show yer! I'm goin' to have that thirty bob. You 'ear me?"

"Give him thirty bob, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "We've got that much left out of the funds for the feed, I think. For goodness' sake let him have anything he wants, if it will keep him quiet."

"Yaas, wathah! Waise the money somehow," said the distressed Arthur Augustus.

Thirty shillings was not difficult to raise. Cousin Aubrey held out a dirty paw, and the money was counted into his palm. He grunted as he transferred it to his rags.

"I knew all along that a welaion of mine couldn't possibly act in such an awful mannah!" said Arthur Augustus. "The man is an impostor, of course!"

"My hat!"

"It's a jape! Somebody's put him up to this!" said Blake. "And whoever it was has got hold of Mr. Smith's telegram and suppressed it!"

"What an awful wotah! Bai Jove!"

"We'll soon see who that man is," said the Canadian. "He's called himself by my name; but he isn't me—that's a dead cert!"

"No; that's quite imposs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Canadian strode towards the steps of the School House. Tom Merry caught him by the sleeve.

"Don't go in!" he exclaimed. "He's got a revolver! He said he had, anyway, and—"

The sturdy young Colonial laughed.

"I'll risk the revolver, if he's got one!" he said.

"Weally, Cousin Aubrey—"

"It will be all O.K.!"

And the Canadian strode into the House. In the Hall there were several of the masters and prefects assembled, looking amazed and bewildered. The voice of the tramp could be heard roaring from the Form-room.

"Come on, all of yer! I'll wipe up the floor with the lot of yer! Come on, I says! You 'ear me?"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Dr. Holmes. The Head of St. Jim's had been brought out of his study by the terrific uproar. "What—what is to be done?"

"It is D'Arcy's cousin from Canada, apparently, sir," said Mr. Linton. "The man is a fearful ruffian, and quite intoxicated!"

"Bless my soul!"

"We'll have him out, if you like, sir," said Kildare.

"Hold on!" said the Canadian cheerfully. "Allow me to remark that I am D'Arcy's Cousin Aubrey from Canada!"

There was a general exclamation.

"What!" said Mr. Linton. "You! Then—"

"Some impostor appears to have come here in my name," explained the Canadian. "I'm going to interview him! But I'm Aubrey Smith from Canada!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Then it is—is a—a—a trick?" gasped Mr. Linton.

"I guess so!"

"Extraordinary!" gasped the Head.

"I'll run him out and make him explain," said Aubrey Smith cheerfully.

He strode down the passage and entered the Form-room. The tramp was on his feet again now, and he spared up to the genuine Cousin Aubrey at once.

"Come hon!" he roared.

The Colonial chuckled.

"I'll come on, with pleasure!" he replied at once.

And he came on like a whirlwind. Mr. 'Enry 'Arris hit out furiously and blindly, but he was knocked round the Form-room as if he were a punching-ball.

It seemed to the unhappy Mr. 'Arris that a whirlwind or an earthquake, or both combined, had suddenly struck him.

Cousin Aubrey the First dropped heavily on the floor at last. He sat there, rather sobered by his terrific experiences, and blinking at the gentleman from Canada.

"Had enough?" demanded Mr. Smith.

"Groo! 'Ands off!"

"Well, I guess you'll do!" said the Canadian, with a nod. "Now I'll see you off the premises, if you don't mind."

He did not wait for Mr. 'Arris to say whether he minded. He stooped and grasped the tramp by the back of the collar with a grasp of iron, and half-carried, half-dragged him out of the Form-room and down the passage.

The tramp wriggled painfully, and spluttered wildly in the powerful grip of the young Canadian. But he did not try to resist. One of his eyes was closed, and his nose was a little sideways. He did not want the other eye closed. He felt as if he had been through a threshing-machine already.

"Here he is!" announced the Canadian. "Do you want to ask him anything before I pitch him into the road?"

The fellows crowded round. The Hall was crammed. There were exclamations and laughter on all sides. The tramp looked a wretched object enough, and he had certainly had his punishment. And Arthur Augustus, in his relief at finding that the dreadful person was not really his cousin, felt that he could almost forgive Mr. 'Enry 'Arris for the trick he had played.

"Who are you?" demanded the Head severely.

Mr. 'Arris blinked at him out of his still serviceable eye.

"I'm 'Enry 'Arris!" he said.

"What did you come here for, calling yourself by this gentleman's name?" the Head exclaimed, frowning.

"It was a lark!" said Mr. 'Enry 'Arris feebly. "That's all it was—a lark! I was given thirty bob for the job, sir! It was only a lark on the young gents!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "That's what he meant by asking for thirty bob! He was paid to come here and play this trick!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And who employed you to do this?" asked the Head sternly.

"Two young gents, sir!" gasped Mr. 'Arris. "Which it was only a lark, sir, and I 'opes no offence!"

The iron grasp on the back of his collar had reduced Mr. 'Arris to a wonderful state of sweet reasonableness. A little lamb could hardly have been more tame than was the erstwhile truculent tramp.

"It is inexcusable!" exclaimed the Head. "There has been a dreadful disturbance! Do you know the names of the boys who employed you to play this ridiculous joke?"

"No, sir."

"Can you see them here?"

Cousin Aubrey the First blinked round at the crowd. But he was not likely to see them there. Crooke and Mellish were hiding in the box-room above, very careful indeed to keep out of sight just then.

"Might have been the Grammarian chaps, sir," suggested Tom Merry.

He did not think so; but, as he said, it might have been, and he did not want the japers to be punished. The jape was not exactly one that Tom Merry would have played himself, but all the juniors were agreed that they didn't want the investigation to go further.

The Head pursed his lips angrily.

"It was a most outrageous thing!" he exclaimed. "I shall severely punish the boys if they are discovered! Let that man be seen off the school premises at once!"

"Come on!" said Mr. Smith cheerily.

Tom Merry & Co. escorted the

Canadian and the tramp to the school gates. Mr. 'Enry 'Arris went with remarkable quietness. The Canadian marched him into the open gateway, and, with a twist of his powerful arm, spun him into the road. Mr. 'Arris sat down in the dust, with a yelp.

"Now cut off!" said Aubrey Smith, laughing. "And if you ever make use of my name again—"

Mr. 'Arris did not wait to ask what he would do. He jumped up and ran. The juniors grinned as the speeding figure passed out of sight down the lane.

"Well, he's gone," said Tom Merry, "and we're jolly glad he's not Gussy's cousin, after all. There wasn't really much likeness between them—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Merry— Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus exclaimed suddenly.

"What's the matter now?"

"That awful tramp. He's gone—"

"Well, you didn't want him to stay, did you?" grinned Figgins.

"No, you ass. But—I nevah thought of it—he's got our thirty bob!"

There was a rush to the gates. But the tramp was long out of sight, and, in the circumstances, he was not likely to be seen near St. Jim's again. The thirty shillings had vanished, and they were not likely to be seen again, either.

"Well, never mind," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Let him go. Mr. Smith, you must excuse us for having taken that awful rotter for you; but we had never seen you, you know."

The Canadian laughed.

"I guess that's all O.K.," he said. "It's the biggest joke I've struck for a long time."

"Yaas, I ought to have known it couldn't be poss!" said Arthur Augustus. "It was ridiculous to be taken in like that. We're all awfully glad to welcome you to St. Jim's, Cousin Aubrey."

"Yes, rather—welcome to the old country, sir!" said Figgins. "Jolly glad to welcome any chap from Canada."

"Hear, hear!"

"Thanks very much!" said Cousin Aubrey, smiling.

"We had a splendid feed ready for you, sir," said Fatty Wynn regretfully. "That awful rotter has wrecked it—and smashed all the crockery. But if you don't mind waiting a few minutes, sir, we'll look after you all right."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Come on," said Fatty Wynn, "some of you show Cousin Aubrey round the school while we get a feed ready!"

"Good egg!"

Cousin Aubrey smilingly assented. He seemed all good-humour. He declared himself delighted with St. Jim's, and delighted with the fellows, and delighted with things in general. And there was no doubt that the fellows were delighted with him. The Head shook hands with him very heartily, and welcomed him to St. Jim's, and begged him to stay for some days, which Cousin Aubrey cheerfully promised to do. And he made the juniors joyous by telling them that he would be glad to play in a cricket match, and promised to show how they played cricket in Canada. The impression the real Cousin Aubrey made upon the fellows was as good as Mr. 'Arris' impression had been bad.

And Fatty Wynn & Co., stretching their credit at the school shop to its utmost limits, provided a feed to welcome the stranger from afar, which, if not quite so extensive as the previous one, was quite as good, and quite big enough. And the Hobby Club-room—newly swept and garnished after its

(Continued on page 23.)





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.

**H**ALLO, chums! The stage is all set once again for that greatest of all sporting contests—the Cup Final. From North, South, East, and West on Saturday thousands of excited football fans will be pouring into London—"Oop for t' Coop!" as the Lancashire fan has it. Most of the 95,000 people who will pack Wembley Stadium will come from Yorkshire and the Midlands, for you may be sure that all the supporters of West Bromwich Albion and Sheffield Wednesday will make a special effort to be there to cheer their team on to victory. Nevertheless, such is the attraction of this great game that footer fans from all over England will be at Wembley.

### THIRD TIME LUCKY!

What of the two teams which have reached the last hurdle in what is regarded as the "Blue Riband of Soccer"? West Bromwich Albion are more famed as Cup fighters, for they have played in the Final seven times. Their first taste of it was in 1886, and it was rather a bitter taste. They lost 2-0 to Blackburn Rovers in a replay after drawing 0-0. It is said that the wage bill of the West Brom team for that year was only £5! How different it is to-day—probably over £80, with each player receiving a bonus of £8.

West Brom won through again to the last round in the following year, but once more they were beaten, this time by local rivals in Aston Villa. The Albion, however, were not to be denied, and in 1888, for the third year in succession, they appeared in the Final. "Third time lucky" is the well-known saying, and it was so for them. West Brom took the Cup back to the Midlands after beating Preston 2-1.

Only four seasons had passed when they again figured in the Final. They had their revenge on Aston Villa by defeating them 3-0. The Villa, however, returned the compliment in 1895,

and the Albion met with their third defeat in Finals. There was a lapse of seventeen years before they reached the last round again. In 1912 they met Barnsley at Crystal Palace and drew 0-0. The replay was held at Bramall Lane, Sheffield, and Barnsley won 1-0 during extra time after a terrific struggle.

Coming to more recent years West Bromwich first appeared at Wembley in 1931. With the youngest team that has ever appeared in a Cup Final, they defeated Birmingham 2-1, to win the Cup for the third time in the club's history.

### SHEFFIELD SHINE!

Although Sheffield Wednesday have not reached the Final so many times as West Bromwich, their record as Cup winners is nearly as good as that of their opponents. Three times have the Wednesday reached the last round, and they have won through twice. In 1890, their first Final, they met and were defeated by Blackburn Rovers. They went down rather heavily at Kennington Oval, 6-1. Six years later, however, the Wednesday gained their first success, beating Wolverhampton Wanderers 2-1 at Crystal Palace. And in 1907 they won by the same score against Everton. Since then they have done nothing of note in the Cup until this season. Therefore, they have yet to play at Wembley. Perhaps the Wednesday will make up for it by winning the Cup for the third time. Cheers from the Sheffield readers! "Oh yeah!" respond my West Bromwich chums. Well, Saturday will tell, and I hope all my readers who are making the trip

### PEN PALS COUPON

27-4-35

to Wembley will see a thrilling game, with victory going to the better team.

### "REDFERN'S RECORD RAG!"

Turning from football to cricket, the opening of the new season is almost here, and so for next week Martin Clifford has written us a grand yarn of the popular summer game.

Since Redfern & Co.—known as the New Firm—came to St. Jim's they have not been a lot in the limelight, but they come to the fore with a flourish of trumpets in next Wednesday's splendid story. Being County Council school boys who have come to St. Jim's on scholarships, Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence are not considered to be any good at cricket. That's the assumption of the St. Jim's juniors, which is based, it must be confessed, on ignorance and not snobbery. Not unnaturally, the New Firm resent the attitude of Tom Merry & Co. So Redfern proposes a rag on St. Jim's which has highly amusing and exciting results. Tell all your pals about this great cricket story. It's much too good to be missed.

### "NOT WANTED AT PACKSADDLE!"

How do you like the first yarn of Frank Richards' powerful new series of the Packsaddle pals? Ripping, isn't it? Dick Carr has certainly run up against trouble, but there is worse to come. In next week's yarn Dick finds himself the despised outcast of the school, and, but for Bill Sampson, the Packsaddlers would turn him out. Dick, however, is a high-spirited boy, and he's not standing for the sneers and jibes of his former friends. How he hits back comes as a shock to his school-fellows. You'll thoroughly enjoy this fine story, chums.

And so you will the next gripping chapters of "The Secret World!" Not a reader writes to me without praising this wonderful serial, and there is no doubt it is the most popular we have had in the GEM. Look out for next week's all-thrilling instalment.

### TAILPIECE.

"It was in the Cup Final," said the famous footballer, relating his experiences to his club-mates. "I was rushing through the opposing defence with the ball at my feet, when suddenly I saw the goalposts just ahead of me. Raising my foot I shot with all my force—" "And did you score?" asked a listener.

"Why, it took me ten minutes to disentangle my foot from the bedposts!"

### THE EDITOR.

Norton Burns, 1, Hector Road, Shawlands, Glasgow, wants members for the Magnet & Gem Club.

Fred Hughes, 17, South Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent, wants pen pals; France, Germany, Hollywood; boxing, acting.

Leonard Griffith, 74, Park Street, Brockville, Ontario, Canada, wants correspondents.

Charles Walder, 7, Marmadon Road, Plumstead, London, S.E.18, wants to hear from readers who have made a hobby of old "Magnets" and GEMS.

R. Rowe, 79, Drummond Road, Skegness, Lincs, wants to hear from readers keen on old copies of "Nelson Lee" and who are interested in astronomy.

C. D. Hicks, 32, Queen Street, Devonport, wants correspondents: age 18 upwards; Canada or U.S.A.; sports, newspaper exchange.

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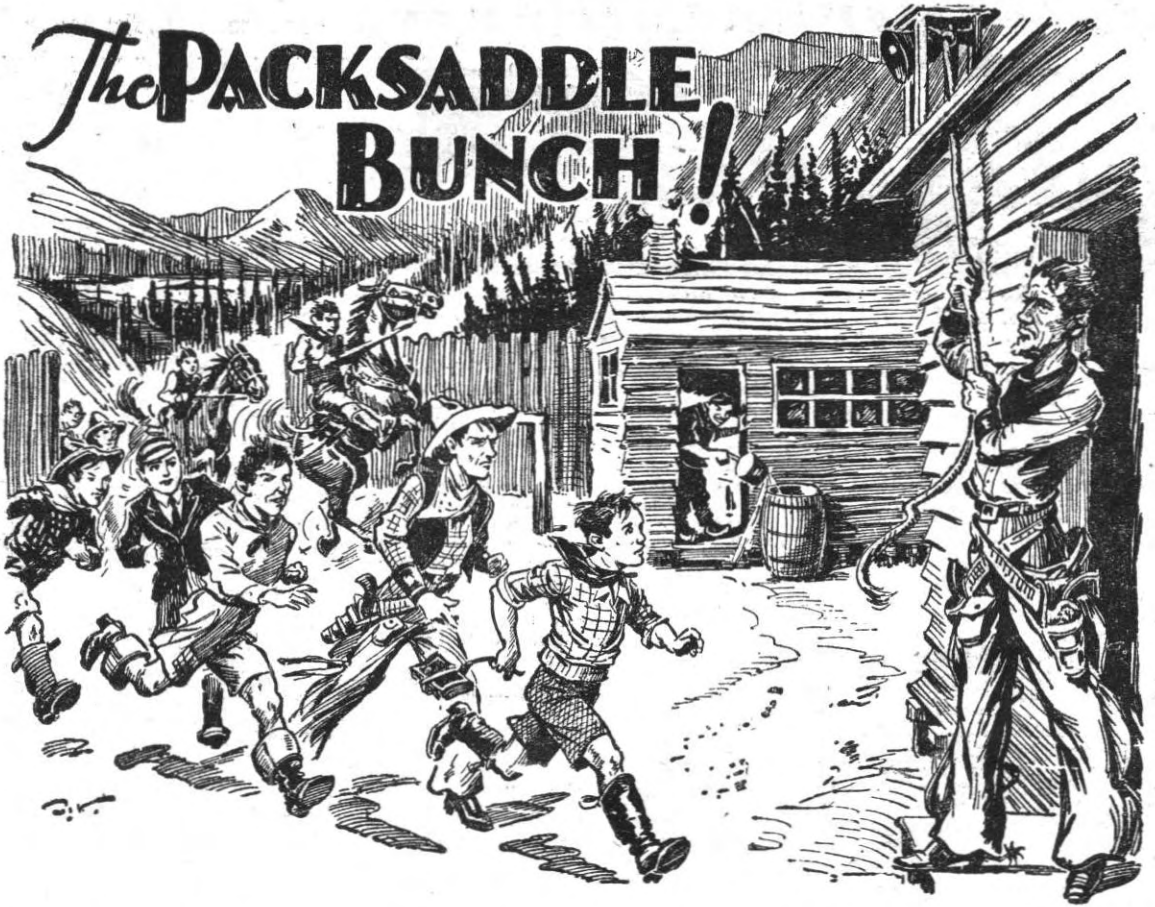
A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal, post your notice, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

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# The PACKSADDLE BUNCH!



## Cinching Slick!

"**S**AY, big boy! Pull in a piece!" Dick Carr, the tenderfoot of Packsaddle School, halted. He was coming up the school trail from the cow town when the man in the buckboard hailed him.

The buckboard stood beside the trail, the horse cropping the grass, the reins loose on its back. Dick glanced with some curiosity at the man in it who had hailed him. He was dressed in "store" clothes, rare attire in the cow country of Packsaddle. But the inevitable stetson was on his head—and his face under it was hard as iron, his eyes keen and sharp as a hawk's. Those eyes fixed on the Packsaddle schoolboy like gimlets.

"I'll say you b'long to that joint!" said the man in the buckboard, with a jerk of his thumb towards the school.

"Right!" answered Dick Carr.

"You Poindexter?"

Dick smiled, and shook his head.

"No. I'm Carr!" he answered.

"Poindexter around?"

"Slick Poindexter's at the school, if you want to see him," answered Dick. "You've only to drive up the trail."

"I guess I ain't hornin' into that shebang, bo!" said the man in the buckboard. "Nope! Not so's you'd notice it, big boy. I've had trouble with that schoolmaster of yours, Bill Sampson, and I'll mention that I ain't honing to see that guy again! Not by a jugful, I ain't! Mebbe you'll put young Poindexter wise that I'm around?"

"I'll tell him, certainly," said the

tenderfoot of Packsaddle. "What name shall I tell him?"

"I guess if you allow that Mustang Dave has moseyed along from the ranch, that'll work the riffle."

"Right!"

Dick Carr walked on up the trail, the man's keen eyes watching him as he went. It was not far from the cow town to the school that was built on the bluff overlooking the Rio Frio. The gate stood wide open, and Dick walked into

## KIDNAPPED!

By

FRANK RICHARDS.

the playground, where most of the Packsaddle bunch were to be seen. Steve Carson, mounted on his bronco, was displaying his horsemanship. Steve was a good rider, though not quite so good as he believed himself to be. He was making the bronco rear on its hind legs, till it stood almost upright, and the bunch stood round watching him.

"I guess," remarked Slick Poindexter, "that that guy will hit Texas, and hit it hard, if he don't watch out!"

"You said it!" grinned Mick Kavanagh.

Dick Carr joined the watching crowd. Steve's eyes flashed at him for a second.

He swung the rearing horse round, with the intention of bringing down the sawing forefoot with a terrific crash on the earth just in front of the tenderfoot. That, Steve reckoned, would make the guy from the old country jump some!

Unfortunately for Big Steve, that sudden jerk on the rein caused the rearing bronco to lose his balance. The horse pitched over on its side, and Steve was flung from the saddle, landing in the playground with a crash. Steve gave a fearful yell. It was echoed by Mick Kavanagh, who caught a knock from one of the lashing hoofs, and hopped on one leg, clapping the other, and roaring. The rest of the bunch roared, too, with laughter.

"I'll say he's hit Texas!" chortled Slick.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Howly Mike!" roared Mick Kavanagh, dancing with anguish.

"Sure, me laig's broke intoirely, and so it is!"

"You want to stay clear when Steve's cavorting around on a bronc!" chucked Pie Sanders.

Steve Carson lay breathless and winded on the earth, while the bronco struggled up. His face was like a demon's as he scrambled to his feet. He snatched up the quirt he had dropped, sprang to the bronco, and grasped the reins. The quirt rose and fell in savage lashes on the squealing animal.

"Aw, can it, Steve, you geck!" shouted Slick Poindexter. "It sure wasn't the cayuse's fault. You was showing off and took a tumble."

# —STARRING DICK CARR, THE TENDERFOOT OF PACKSADDLE.

Lash, lash, lash! the rain of blows descended, the bronco squealing and struggling and rearing. Dick Carr's eyes flashed.

"Stop that, Carson!" he shouted.

Steve Carson did not heed. Neither did any of the bunch think of intervening. It was the unbroken law of the cow country never to come between a guy and his cayuse. But Dick Carr was new to the cow country, and if he knew of that universal law he did not care a red cent about it. He was not going to see a horse cruelly beaten for no fault.

He made a jump at Steve, grabbed him by the shoulders, and fairly wrenched him away from the squealing bronco.

Once more Steve Carson hit Texas, sprawling at full length. The bronco, immediately it was released, tore away, with reins dangling loose. It headed for the open gateway, with tossing head and mane and thundering hoofs, and went careering out on the prairie.

"I'll say Steve will have to hoof it some to rope in that critter!" grinned Slick.

"Ow, ow!" Mick was still hopping. "Ow! Me laig's broke intirely! Ow!"

Steve Carson sat up dizzily. Poker Parker and Slim Dixon ran to help him to his feet.

Dick Carr tapped Slick on the arm. He kept a wary eye, however, on the bully of Packsaddle. He had had plenty of trouble with Big Steve, and he was ready for more. But Steve did not approach him. He was bruised and breathless, and he only gave the tenderfoot a bitter, evil look as he limped away between his two friends.

"There's a man on the trail wants to see you, Slick!" said Dick Carr.

Poindexter stared at him.

"I guess he can hit the school if he wants to see me!" he answered.

"He says he's had trouble with Bill some time or other. His name's Mustang Dave."

"Gum!" said Poindexter. "I guess I want to meet up with Dave if he's moseyed along from the ranch! I ain't ever heard of him having trouble with Bill, though. Where is he?"

"On the school trail, half-way to the town."

"Ow, ow! Wow!" howled Mick. "Give me a hand to the bunkhouse, can't you? Can't you see me leg's broke intirely? You, Slick—"

But Slick was already swinging towards the gate. Dick Carr ran to Kavanagh and gave him a helping hand to the bunkhouse. There Mick sat on his bunk and his damaged leg was examined. It was not broken, or anything like it, but there was a bad bruise that needed attention at once. Dick Carr lost no time in giving that black brute first aid.

Meanwhile, Slick Poindexter hoofed it down the school trail. Passing round a bunch of pecans and post-oaks he came in sight of the buckboard, where the hawk-eyed man sat watching. At the sight of the schoolboy the man slipped from the vehicle. Slick stared at him. He had never seen the man before, and certainly he was not Mustang Dave, from the Poindexter Ranch.

"Say, you young Poindexter?" asked the hawk-eyed man.

"You said it!" answered Slick. "Say, you seen a guy around here—a puncher? I guess—"

"You aim to meet up with Mustang Dave?"

"Sure thing!" answered Slick. "I got

a message that he was hanging up on this hyer trail—"

"I guess," said the hawk-eyed man, "that if you want to see Mustang you want to hit your popper's ranch, and that's a long step from hyer, and then some. I'll mention that I borrowed his name to get you out of your school, big boy. You won't see no Mustang Dave—but you sure seen Hawk Walker, that's me! I'll whisper that you're going on a leetle paseo with this baby."

Slick, in blank astonishment, jumped back as the man leaped at him. The next moment he was struggling in a fierce grip.

Slick Poindexter was strong and husky. But he crumpled in the powerful grasp of the kidnapper.

For a full minute he struggled desperately. Then he was down, breathless, overpowered, and a rope was knotted round his wrists and another round his ankles. He lay panting, staring up at the hawk-face.

Hawk Walker cast a swift glance up and down the school trail. Then he jerked a buffalo rope from the buckboard and rolled the bound schoolboy in it, completely concealing him from sight. Slick was tossed into the buckboard like a sack of alfalfa. Hawk followed him in, gathered up the reins; cracked the whip, and drove away

When Slick Poindexter falls into the hands of a kidnapper, it is Dick Carr, his own chum, who is accused of betraying him!

rapidly, the buckboard jolting and bumping wildly across the rough prairie. He grinned as he drove.

At Packsaddle, Tin Tung clanged the bell for class. But there was one member of the Packsaddle bunch who did not turn up in the school-room for lessons with Small Brown.

## Missing!

"SIR—Mr. Sampson—" squealed Small Brown.

"Spill it!" said Bill.

"One boy is absent—"

"Who's that geck?"

"Poindexter!"

The headmaster of Packsaddle School frowned. He stared over the class and picked the quirt from his desk.

"I guess," said Bill, "that you'll hear from young Poindexter, pronto! I guess you'll hear him yauping when I round him up with this hyer quirt! Yep!"

And Bill Sampson strode out of the school-room to round up the truant. All the bunch were wondering where Slick was. Mick had been busy with his bruised leg till the school bell rang, and had not missed his chum till the bunch gathered for class in the school-room. Dick Carr remembered that Slick had gone down the trail to see Mustang Dave, but the school bell could be heard as far as the town, and Slick could not have failed to hear it.

Bill, quirt in hand, went round the playground and looked into the corral and into the chuckhouse and the bunkhouse. But he saw no sign of Slick. He questioned Tin Tung, but the Chinese cook had not seen him since

chuck, and Hank, the hired man, had not seen him at all. Bill's rugged brow grew grimmer. Bill ruled the Packsaddle bunch with a heavy hand—and a quirt in it! Any guy who was late for class was apt to be herded in like a stray steer, with a quirt whacking round his legs. But Bill did not sight the truant, and it was soon clear that Poindexter was not within the timber fences of Packsaddle School at all.

"Jumping painters!" growled Bill, when he came to that conclusion. "I'll say that young geck has broken herd; and I'll say I'll sure hide him a few when he horns in agin!"

And Bill returned to the school-room, where he generally sat at his desk, during class, to keep order. Bill did not teach—that was Mister Brown's department. But without Bill to keep the rough and tough bunch in order, Small Brown would not have got in much teaching.

Short as his absence had been, he was wanted. Big Steve, aching from his contact with Texas, was in the worst of tempers. He had always disliked the tenderfoot, and now Dick Carr had had the "gall" to come between a guy and his cayuse—an unforgivable offence. Small Brown affected to take no notice when Steve heaved a school book across the class, catching Dick Carr on the back of the head.

There was a howl from the tenderfoot, and a crash as the book dropped. Dick rubbed his head and stared round at grinning faces.

Dick grabbed up the inkpot from his desk.

With a swift jerk of his arm he sent the contents whizzing at Big Steve's grinning face.

Splash!

Steve ceased to grin on the spot! He gave a fearful yell and leaped to his feet as the ink splashed over his face.

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

Through the black streak of ink Steve's face was red with fury.

"Sit down! Sit down!" squealed Small Brown.

Steve did not heed the teacher's squeal. He came charging through the class at Dick Carr.

The next moment they were scrapping, punching wildly, in the midst of an excited bunch, all on their feet. Small Brown squealed and waved his pointer unheeded.

It was then that Bill came striding in.

He gave one glance at the uproarious bunch and waded in with his quirt.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

Bill did not waste time in words. He laid the quirt on Dick Carr and Big Steve impartially. Which of them had started the rookus did not matter very much. No galoot was going to raise Cain in Bill Sampson's school-room—not if Bill knew it!

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack! Yelling frantically, the combatants separated. By the time Bill had finished Steve was sorry that he had heaved the book, and Dick that he had retorted with the ink.

Steve sat with an inky face, scowling savagely. Dick wriggled painfully on the pinewood bench.

Bill, with a cheerful grin, sat down at his desk, his quirt ready for more action if it was wanted. But it was not wanted. Under Bill's eye, Small Brown always had an orderly and attentive class.

Class was over at four. Slick had not come in, and all the bunch were asking

themselves what his game was. Packsaddlers often gave class a miss when Bill was away; never when Bill was around.

"I guess that guy Slick is sure asking for it," said Mick Kavanagh, as he limped out—his leg was still painful. "What the howly Mike is he playing this fool game for? Bill will hide him, sure!"

"I suppose nothing can have happened to him?" said Dick Carr.

"What would happen to Slick, you geck? I guess he's given himself a holiday, and I'll allow he will be sorry for it when he sees Bill agin."

But Slick did not seem to be in a hurry to see Bill again. He had not returned when the sun sank westward behind Squaw Mountain. Day boys sorted their broncos out of the corral to ride homeward. Boarders went into the chuckhouse for supper.

Dick was getting anxious by that time. If Slick had given himself a holiday, he would surely have gone in the saddle. But his bronco was still in the corral. No Packsaddle fellow ever went a mile on foot. In the cow country they took to horses as naturally as they breathed.

Bill was seen to tramp down to the gate several times and stare out over the school trail. His quirt was under his arm. But when the bunch were at supper Bill came tramping into the chuckhouse.

"Say, you 'uns!" growled Bill. "I want to know if any guy here's wise to what young Poindexter is up to? Shoot!"

No answer.

"Anybody seen him quit?" demanded Bill.

"Yes," answered Dick Carr. "He went down the trail to speak to a man from his father's ranch, before school. I don't know why he hasn't come back."

Bill knitted his brows.

"How'd he know that guy was there?" he asked.

"I told him! I passed the man coming up the trail, after posting Mr. Brown's letter at Hanson's store," explained Dick. "The man gave me his name as Mustang Dave, from the Poindexter Ranch, and he was in a buckboard."

"And why didn't he hit the school if he aimed to see young Poindexter?" demanded Bill.

Dick grinned.

"He told me he'd had trouble with you, and didn't want to see you again," he answered.

Bill stared at him.

"What guff you giving me?" he grunted. "I ain't never met up with no Mustang Dave from the Poindexter lay-out! Nope!"

"Well, that's what he said!" answered Dick. "And Slick went out to see him on the trail. He knew the name."

"Mebbe his popper sent the buckboard to tote him home for a piece, Bill!" suggested Mick.

Bill snorted.

"I guess Mister Poindexter wouldn't tote no guy in this bunch home without asking leave of his schoolmaster!"

Bill strode out of the chuckhouse again. There was a worried look on his rugged, bearded face.

Dick was worried, too. He followed the Packsaddle headmaster down to the gate. The dusk was deepening over the prairie and the rippling waters of the Rio Frio. Down the trail lights were gleaming from the town of Packsaddle.

Bill leaned on the gate, staring into

the thickening dusk. There was a sudden beat of horse's hoofs coming up the trail. Dick heard his headmaster draw a deep breath of relief.

"I guess that'll be the young guy," he heard Bill mutter.

But it was not Slick who rode up in the shadows.

A horseman drew rein at the gate. Under his seton hat his face was hidden in the dusk, and his neck scarf was drawn over the lower part of it. He drew up with a jingle and a clatter, and stared at the two faces looking over the gate.

"Say, you 'uns, I reckon I got a message for the schoolmaster!" he called out.

"I'll mention that I'm the schoolmaster," grunted Bill. "Shoot!"

"You Bill Sampson?"

"Sure!"

"I guess you'll have heard of Hawk Walker?"

Bill stared.

"I've heard of that doggoned firebug," he answered, "and if I ever meet up with him in Santanta County I'll sure hide him with my quirt a few!"

"I'll say he's sent you this here billy-doo," said the horseman, with a laugh, and he tossed a letter over the gate, put spurs to his horse, and dashed away at a gallop. Bill stared after him blankly as the crashing hoofbeats died away in the falling night.

#### Steve Asks For It!

DICK CARR picked up the letter which had fallen to the ground inside the gate. He handed it to Bill, who turned to him, after a long stare after the vanishing rider. Bill took the letter, blinking at it. There was a glitter in his eyes under his knitted brows, and his hand dropped for a moment on the butt of his six-gun. The name of Hawk Walker was strange to Dick, but it was easy for him to see that it was quite familiar to his headmaster. Bill gritted his teeth.

"By the great horned toad!" he muttered. "I guess that guy was Hawk himself; he allers works alone, so they say. Jumping painters, if I'd knowed it—"

It was too dark to read the letter at the gate. Bill tramped away to the schoolhouse, where kerosene lamps burned. He signed to Dick Carr to follow him.

The tenderfoot trailed after Bill into his office. He was feeling uneasy and alarmed. Somehow he guessed that Bill saw some connection between the missing Slick and the letter from Hawk Walker. What the connection could be was a mystery to the tenderfoot of Packsaddle. The schoolmaster's face was dark and fierce.

He grabbed open the envelope and jerked out the folded sheet of coarse paper within. It was written on in pencil. Bill blinked at it in the light of the kerosene lamp hanging in the room, and then handed it to Dick Carr.

"Spill it!" he grunted. Schoolmaster as he was, Bill found difficulties in reading anything but print. Bill had been raised as a cowpuncher, and education was not his long suit.

Dick's face paled as he read the letter aloud. It was startling and amazing to the schoolboy from the Old Country. Dick had heard that in the United States kidnapping was a regular business carried on by gangsters. But no sample of it had hitherto come his way, and he had never even heard of Hawk Walker, and did not know that that

hombre's name was famous all over the West for his kidnapping stunts.

The letter ran:

"Run up a rag on your flagpole when you're ready to pony up five hundred dollars for young Poindexter. I guess his popper will stand for it. Put it through pronto. I ain't feeding no boarders.

"HAWK WALKER."

Bill Sampson's face was a picture of anxiety and fury as Dick read out the kidnapper's letter.

The meaning of it was clear enough, though the tenderfoot could hardly believe it. The school flagpole could be seen for miles over the rolling prairie, and a "rag" run up to the summit was to be the signal that the ransom would be paid. The last line gave Dick a thrill of incredulous horror. It meant that the prisoner in the kidnapper's hands would starve to death if the ransom was not paid.

Was it possible?

One look at Bill's face showed that it was not only possible, but certain. Dick shuddered. There was silence for a long minute, and then Bill spoke in a hoarse voice.

"You young geck! What was that guy like what fooled you into sending young Poindexter out to be cinched?"

In a faltering tone Dick gave a description of the hard-faced man in the buckboard. Bill listened attentively and nodded.

"Yep! I guess that was Hawk!" he said. "You was a bone-headed young geck—but sure Poindexter was the same. I guess he picked on Slick because his popper's got a ranch and can stand for the dollars. Carry me home to die! If I'd knowed that Hawk was in Santanta County, or in Texas at all—" Bill gripped the butt of his six-gun almost convulsively. "By the great horned toad, I'll sure hit that guy's trail and make it last sickness for him! Git!"

Dick laid the letter on the table and left the schoolhouse.

His face was white, his heart heavy as lead, as he went to the bunkhouse, where the bunch were now going in to bed.

He knew now how he had been tricked. Hawk had been watching the school trail for Poindexter. All unwittingly Dick had sent his friend into the hands of an enemy.

"Say, what's biting you?" asked Mick Kavanagh, as Dick came into the bunkhouse. All the bunch stared at his white, harassed face.

"Slick—" faltered Carr. "A villain called Hawk Walker has got him! You ever heard of Hawk Walker?"

There was a buzz in the bunkhouse. Every fellow in the bunch, it was plain, had heard of the notorious kidnapper.

"Hawk Walker!" yelled Steve Carson. "Great gophers! How'd he get hold of Slick?"

"How'd he work the raffle?" exclaimed Mick.

"That man on the trail," faltered Dick Carr. "He used the name of a man on the Poindexter Ranch to get Slick out, and I—I brought in his message—"

Steve burst into a loud laugh.

"You handed Slick over to Hawk Walker? Say, what did he give you for helping him cinch Slick?"

Dick stared at the bully of Packsaddle, his face flaming. He blamed himself for having been made use of by the kidnapper; but, after all, the pretended Mustang Dave might have sent in such a message by any other fellow

in the bunch who had happened to be passing on the trail. Unless a fellow knew the gangster by sight he would not have been on his guard. It was easy to be wise after the event. But Steve was hinting very plainly that Dick had known what he was sending Poindexter into.

"Aw, can it, you Carson!" snapped Mick. "The tenderfoot never knowed Hawk—"

Steve laughed again maliciously.

"I guess I wouldn't have taken no such message for a guy I'd never seen afore!" he said derisively. "Mebbe Carr didn't know Hawk—and mebbe he did! His picture's been in the papers a heap times."

"I'd never even heard of him!" shouted Dick. "How was I to know?"

You'll take it back, or I'll thrash you till you can't crawl!"

"You sold Slick to Hawk Walker!" panted Steve. "I'll tell all Texas that you sold Slick to Hawk Walker, you—"

"Can it!" roared a bull-voice in the doorway. Bill Sampson strode in. "Why ain't you young geeks in your bunks—hey? You honing for the quirt, you pesky young piccans?"

"That rotter says—" panted Dick Carr.

"And I say it agin!" yelled Steve, staggering to his feet. "I say that pizen coyote sold Slick to the kidnaping guy—he knowed what he was doing when he sent Slick out to be cinched by Hawk Walker—"

Dick sprang at him, red with rage.

enough to believe a word of that lying cur's?"

"I guess," said Bill grimly, "that I ain't standing for being called no fancy names, young Carr! I guess you want to turn in, and turn in quick, and put a cinch on your yaup-trap!"

He picked up the tenderfoot from the floor and tossed him bodily on his bunk. Dick bumped there, gasping.

"Now, you 'uns, turn in!" snapped Bill. "Any more trouble in this hyer shebang, and I'm wading in with the quirt. I don't believe nothing agin the tenderfoot, young Carson, except that he's the world's prize boob, what we've always knowed ever since he hit Packsaddle. Pack it up, and turn in."

The bunch, in silence, turned in. Bill was in a grim mood, and nobody



With a swift jerk of his arm, Dick sent the contents of the inkpot whizzing at Big Steve's face. Splash! Steve ceased to grin on the spot! He gave a fearful yell as the ink splashed over his face. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the bunch.

"Spill that to Bill!" grinned Carson. "Bill may lap it up. He sure is a bone-head. But it ain't no use to me." Steve looked round at the staring, excited bunch. "You 'uns, I'm saying that that guy's handed Slick over to Hawk Walker, and I'm saying that he never did it for nix! I'll say he's got dollars in his rags that Hawk handed him for working the rifle."

With blazing eyes Dick Carr rushed at the bully of Packsaddle. He fairly leaped on him, hitting out right and left.

There was a howl from Steve as he staggered under the fierce blows. He rallied swiftly and gave blow for blow. Fighting furiously, they tramped to and fro in the bunkhouse till a fierce uppercut sent the bully of Packsaddle crashing to the floor.

He lay panting, glaring up at the tenderfoot with deadly rage in his gleaming eyes. Dick stood over him with clenched fists.

"You cur!" he shouted. "You're lying—and you know you're lying!

But Bill Sampson's iron grip on his shoulder swung him back.

"Forget it, you!" snapped Bill.

Dick struggled furiously in his grasp.

"I'll drive his lies back down his throat!" he shouted. "Let me go! Let me go. I tell you—"

Bill's grasp tightened. His bearded face was grim. The bunch looked on breathless. Hardly a fellow believed a word of Steve's wild accusation.

Carson stood wiping the dripping blood from his nose. Dick Carr wrenched at Bill's grasp, but he wrenched in vain. He was an infant in the hands of the herculean schoolmaster of Packsaddle. Steve lifted a hand, crimsoned from his streaming nose, and pointed at the tenderfoot.

"I say he sold Slick—" he roared.

"Can it, you!" hooted Bill. "You shoot off your mouth too much, you Carson! You Carr, you allow you never knowed it was Hawk Walker—"

"Of course I never knew!" shouted Dick passionately. "Are you fool

wanted the quirt. But it was long before the Packsaddle bunch slept that night.

### Proved Up!

DICK CARR'S face was pale and troubled in the morning.

He was deeply concerned for the missing Slick, in the ruthless hands of a professional kidnapper. He blamed himself for the part he had unconsciously played, and he saw that all the bunch blamed him. But Steve's wild accusation hit him hardest. He could not think that any fellow in the bunch believed it—not even his enemy himself. But it hit him hard. He had lain awake half the night—not till after midnight had he fallen into a deep sleep, from which the clang of the bell awakened him in the dawn.

In the chuckhouse at breakfast, Steve and his friends, Slim and Poker, gave him sneering looks. Other fellows eyed him dubiously, as if they were wondering

whether there could be anything in it. Mick Kavanagh made it quite clear that he did not doubt his friend. Some of the others followed his example. But Dick was worried and miserable.

Small Brown, in the playground, blinked at him suspiciously through his horn-rimmed spectacles. Small Brown did not like him, and evidently he had heard of Steve's talk. Dick gave him a fierce glare in return for his suspicious blink, which brought an angry flush to Mr. Brown's face.

That morning, Bill Sampson mounted his bronco to ride down to Packsaddle town, and take Hawk's letter to Marshal Lick. Whether he entertained the idea of paying the ransom or not, Dick and Mick could not tell. So far, at all events, no signal had been run up to the top of the flagpole to meet watching eyes on the prairie.

"Bill ain't the hombre to stand for it!" said Mick, as the bunch went into the school-room. "He's as mad as a hornet. I'll tell a man he'd shoot Hawk on sight if he spotted him. He ain't weighing out no five hundred bucks."

"But Slick—" said Dick Carr miserably. "That villain has got him, and he threatens to starve him—"

"I guess he means every word, too!" said Mick. "Hawk's game is pretty well known—he's run the kidnapping stunt for years, and he's always got by with it. A guy's folks always pony up, sooner'n let a guy pass in his checks for want of eats! I'll say he's some bulldozer, is Hawk!"

"But where—" muttered Dick. "If a fellow could find out where he was he—"

"I guess that buckboard hit the high spots quick! He ain't nowhere around Packsaddle, sure! I reckon they'll have to squeeze out them bucks if we're going to see Slick alive agin!"

"Stop talking in class!" snapped Small Brown. "Carr, be quiet at once!"

Dick gave him a black look, and said no more. Steve, Piker, and Slim were talking, but Small Brown took no notice of them. Steve was rather his favourite, chiefly because he was afraid of the reckless bully of Packsaddle.

The bunch did not give Small Brown the usual trouble in Bill's absence. The kidnapping of Slick filled all thoughts.

Steve Carson's voice came to Dick's ears, bringing a flash of rage to his eyes. Steve's idea seemed to be that if he threw enough mud, some of it would stick. He was asking Piker Parker how much he reckoned Hawk had handed the tenderfoot to betray Slick into his hands.

Dick Carr jumped to his feet. In school or out of school, he was not standing for that!

"Sit down, Carr!" squealed Small Brown.

Unheeding the teacher, Dick tramped through the class, his gleaming eyes fixed on Big Steve. Small Brown whisked between them.

"Stand back, Carr! Do you hear me?" he squealed. "How dare you!"

"Do you think I'm going to let him get away with his lies!" roared Dick Carr. "You shut him up, Mr. Brown, or I'll shut him up fast enough!"

"Be silent, Carr—"

"Aw, let him chew the rag!" sneered Steve. "I'll tell a man that he sold Slick, and I guess it'd be proved up on him, too, if you went through his rags. How much did that all-fired bulldozer give you, Carr?"

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Dick gave Small Brown a shove, pushing him out of the way. Small Brown staggered against a desk.

"You—you young rascal!" squealed Mr. Brown. He grabbed Dick by the arm. "Go to your place at once! I shall report you to Mr. Sampson! If he were here now, I would ask him to have you searched."

"Searched!" panted Dick. "Do you think I'm afraid to be searched, you fool?"

Small Brown's watery eyes glittered through his spectacles. Gladly he would have picked up a quirt, and handled the angry and rebellious tenderfoot after Bill's fashion. But Dick Carr looked ready to knock him spinning across the school-room.

"Search him!" grinned Steve. "He never handed Slick over for nix, I reckon. I'll say that Hawk stood him at least ten bucks."

"Aw, can it, you gink!" growled Mick Kavanagh. "I'll sure eat all the bucks that Carr has got about him. His popper ain't a poker sharp like yourn, and he ain't got no bucks in his rags."

"I've a dollar bill and a quarter in my pocket!" snapped Dick Carr. "But nobody's going to search me. I'm not standing for that."

Steve gave a derisive laugh. "And he allows he ain't afraid to be searched," he grinned. "But nobody's going to search him. I guess that's no use to this bunch."

Small Brown set his lips.

"I shall search you, Carr!" he said viciously. "If you refuse to be searched, I shall have no doubt—"

"You won't!" said Dick savagely. "Lay a finger on me, and I'll knock you across the room."

"Dick, old-timer," urged Mick, "you better prove it up to the bunch."

"Never!"

"I guess that lets him out," grinned Steve. "Give him till Bill horns in, and I guess he'll hide the durocks."

Dick leaped at him with blazing eyes. Small Brown gave a yell.

"Seize him! Carson, Parker, Dixon, Sanders—all of you! Seize that boy! I insist on searching him, and if money is found on him—"

Five or six pairs of hands were laid on Dick Carr at once. Mick made a movement to go to his aid, but he stopped. He could understand Dick's passionate resentment of a search of his pockets, but he figured that it was the best thing for the tenderfoot to prove that he had no more money than usual in his possession.

Dick struggled fiercely, but helplessly.

Steve Carson gripped one arm, Piker Parker the other. Slim Dixon and Pie Sanders had a grip on him. In so many strong hands he was powerless.

"Aw, keep cool, you big stiff!" said Pie. "Ain't this going to prove that Steve's jest blowing off his mouth, you geek?"

"Hold him!" gasped Small Brown.

"Hold him!"

Not till he was sure that the enraged

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tenderfoot was safely held did Mr. Brown approach him to make the search. At that moment, in his angry annoyance, Small Brown certainly would not have been displeased to find the tenderfoot of Packsaddle guilty.

Dick stood panting in the grasp of four hefty fellows. Small Brown turned out his pockets.

"What—what—what is this?" he squealed.

He held up a ten-dollar bill, which he had hooked out of a pocket of Dick Carr's shirt.

All eyes were fixed on it.

Dick Carr stared at it blankly, amazed. Hardly more than once since he had been in Texas had he possessed as much as ten dollars at one time. He knew that he did not possess it now. Yet Small Brown had taken a ten-dollar bill from his pocket, and was holding it up for all the Packsaddle bunch to see. Dick could only gaze at it dizzily. How had he come to overlook that ten-dollar bill?

"Howdy Mike!" gasped Mick Kavanagh. His eyes almost popped from his head. "You goldarned geek, you allowed you had only a dollar'n a quarter! I'll tell a man that's ten bucks!"

Small Brown blinked at the tenderfoot in genuine disgust and scorn. There was a deep murmur from the bunch.

"Carr, where did you get this money?"

"Dick stammered.

"I—I don't know; I—I never knew I had it. I—I suppose I—I must have forgotten it." His voice trailed away.

Even as he spoke he knew how lame it sounded.

The schoolboys released him. They stepped away from him with dark and contemptuous looks. Only Steve Carson grinned. His accusation, wild as it had seemed, was proved now—proved up to the hilt. Every fellow in the Packsaddle bunch knew that Dick Carr had not had ten dollars of his own. It was as much as his pocket-money for a score of weeks. Where had the tenderfoot cinched that ten-dollar bill?

There was only one answer to the question in the minds of the Packsaddle bunch. Even Mick drew away from him.

"I—I never—" stammered Dick.

Steve's mocking laugh interrupted him.

"I guess I allowed he never sold Slick for nix," he said.

Dick gazed almost wildly at his accuser. He gazed round at the faces of the bunch—all accusing now.

"Mick!" he panted.

"Aw, can it!" muttered Mick.

"Where'd you get them ten bucks, if it wasn't from Hawk for helping him cinch Slick, you doggoned coyote?"

"I shall keep this ten-dollar bill till Mr. Sampson returns!" squealed Small Brown. "I shall tell him—"

"I tell you—" panted Dick Carr.

Steve interrupted him again.

"Say, I guess we ain't standing for having that coyote in this bunch!" he shouted. "I guess we're going to ride him on a rail out of Packsaddle."

"Boys!" squealed Small Brown.

But Small Brown was unheeded. Led by Steve, the whole bunch rushed on Dick Carr, and in the midst of an angry, shouting mob the tenderfoot of Packsaddle was whirled out of the school-room.

(How did the ten-dollar bill get into Dick's pocket? Look out for the next grand story in this series "NOT WANTED AT PACKSADDLE!")

ANOTHER POWERFUL INSTALMENT OF OUR POPULAR SERIAL.

# The SECRET WORLD!



"I was directed to seek thee, Lee the Lionhearted!" panted the man urgently. "I bring ill tidings, forsooth! The royal barge hath not arrived at Westwold. 'Tis said it hath been captured by a pirate galley!"

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

## At the Mercy of Pirates!

WHEN war breaks out in a secret medieval world in the Arctic, it is Nelson Lee, Lord Dorrimore, and the boys of St. Frank's who are mainly responsible for saving Northestia, the country in which they have been stranded, from an overwhelming defeat at the hands of the Gothlanders. The enemy armada is put to rout in the first battle, and it retreats to Gothland. Meanwhile, Princess Mercia, the girl ruler of Northestia, has been sent by boat to a place of safety, with the St. Frank's boys acting as her bodyguard. But they are captured by pirates, and Siegan the Slim, the leader, intends to hold them to ransom to Kassker, the ruler of Gothland.

Out of all this trouble there seemed to be but one satisfactory point. The girls realised that they were in no immediate danger—neither, for that matter, were the lives of the St. Frank's fellows. They were all too valuable to Siegan! For every life meant a bigger ransom, a greater price!

But what of Northestia?

Just when the Gothlanders had been driven off, when it seemed that the defensive measures were entirely successful, this devastating blow would fall! When Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore and the Northestrian leaders heard of

the capture, they would be helpless. How could they leave their princess and her brother to die? How could they allow the other boys and girls to languish in a Gothland prison? A rescue raid would be futile, and thus surrender would be the only course.

Without a doubt, Siegan the Slim had dealt a master-stroke! Greed was at the bottom of his action—even more than revenge. For Siegan, the outlaw, had clearly seen that here was a chance for him to gain not only vast wealth, but power, too. If he sold his prisoners to Kassker, it was certain that the enemy overlord would appoint him to a high official position.

And Siegan meant to act swiftly, too.

Any kind of delay might be fatal, for it would not be so very long before the non-arrival of the royal barge would be talked about. The news would spread like wildfire, and then ships would come searching. It was even possible that the pirate galley's swoop had been witnessed by some of the simple peasants ashore.

So the great oars of the galley were kept furiously at work. The majority of the slaves toiled mechanically. But the St. Frank's contingent found the labour well-nigh unendurable.

They perspired freely, and there was no rest.

At the first sign of slacking the guards on the gangway cracked their cruel whips. And sometimes they flicked the lashes upon the backs of their victims.

Clearly they had been ordered not to strike hard.

And, as some of the prisoners had suspected, the mid-lake islands were the galley's objective. There was one rocky island, and several jutting crags. For many a year they had been the resort of pirates. It was an impregnable fortress, this mass of rock. On many an occasion the combined merchants of Northestia and Gothland had sought to destroy the corsairs, but had never succeeded.

True, the pirates were now practically non-existent, and it was probable that this one galley was the sole surviving ship of the previous villainous fleet. But this galley was quite sufficient for Nipper & Co.

It seemed that there was no possible landing spot. The rocks were mainly volcanic, and rose sheer from the water, barren and stark, without a trace of grass or shrub.

But the appearance was deceptive.

Swinging round a jutting crag, the galley swept into a rocky inlet, and directly ahead lay a low cave. It was wide, but the roof descended to within ten feet of the water.

The schoolboy galley-slaves could see nothing of this, for they had their backs to it as they rowed, but the girls had a clear view. And they could now understand why the galley was constructed on low lines. This cave was

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its harbour. Little wonder that the pirates had never been conquered! For that cave entrance could be easily held by a handful of men against a thousand.

On every side stretched the lake, and so far out was this island that all sight of the mainland was lost. They seemed to be upon an open sea, and not a ship of any kind was in view.

The order rang out for all rowing to cease, and oars were held still. The galley shot into the cave entrance, and for the first time in weeks the juniors were treated to a taste of darkness. In this great oasis there was no night, since the volcanic fires were continually burning, and reflected down by the everlasting mists of the upper air.

At first the blackness of that cave was bewildering. The boys and girls were blinded; they stared into impenetrable gloom. But later, when their eyes grew accustomed to the change, they were able to see more clearly.

The cave roof domed upwards just inside the entrance, and in every direction there were dark mysterious grottos, penetrating far into the rock. These grottos, doubtless, were filled with loot—stores and other things. The living quarters of the pirates were here, too, in all probability.

The royal barge was brought up alongside the moored galley, and there was great activity. Siegan the Slim was not waiting.

Near by the juniors could see one or two other galleys—smaller vessels. But, curiously enough, all the chained slaves were ignored. They were left at their oars, quite helpless there, since it was an impossibility to break those iron bands.

But the other prisoners—all those members of the fair sex—were quickly ordered into a boat, and rowed to a wide ledge of rock which formed the background of the great cave. Hardly a word was spoken. Siegan himself was not there, a dozen pirates forming the escort.

Flaming torches were lighted, and with three men leading the way, the prisoners were taken up a great flight of stairs, hewed out of the solid rock. It seemed that the stairs were endless, but at last a heavy stone door was reached. It was an enormous thing, with bolts as large as a man's arm.

"Ye will all pass within!" growled one of the guards.

Neither the princess nor any of the others made comment. They went through the doorway, and after the last of them had passed through the massive stone clanged into position, and the bolts were shot home.

The prison was a low cave, high up the cliff. It was of curious shape, with odd twists and corners, but there seemed to be no other exit. The roof was low, so that it was almost necessary to crouch when walking. But there was a plentiful air supply, and light, too.

For at the far end of the cave there was a small opening, just a little gap in the rocks. It was high above, and Doris stood beneath it, her eyes gleaming.

"Quick!" she said. "Give me a hoist up!"

Three of the athletic Moor View girls obeyed, and a moment later Doris was peering out of that little rock opening. She found nothing to cheer her up. Outside there was a brief, narrow ledge, and then sheer rock right down to the water. A cliff, without a ridge or a spur.

Even the view was limited, for the opening was set deeply in that inlet, and nothing but frowning rocks were

in sight. Doris tried to crane round, but she could not see the open lake. And she realised why. No prisoners would be placed in such a cave as this if any passing ship could be signalled. No, it seemed that escape was utterly impossible.

### The First News!

NELSON LEE stood back and surveyed his handiwork.

"You'll do, Dorrie," he said genially.

"I should have done without any of this messin' about," growled Lord Dorrimore. "Plaster here, an' plaster there, until I'm nothing but a botch!"

Lee chuckled.

"My dear man, you've got to be patched up," he said. "The battle's over, and the wounded must be attended to. Where's Umlosi?" added Lee, looking round. "Confound the fellow! I distinctly told him to wait!"

"He saw what you were doin' to me, an' naturally got scared," said his lordship. "By the Lord Harry, it's a good thing there isn't a mirror handy, or I'd tear these infernal things off!"

The famous sporting peer was grossly exaggerating, of course, for the "infernal things" were merely one or two patches of adhesive plaster which Nelson Lee had affixed to Dorrie's wounds, after washing them. His lordship had got gashed on the arm, and in three different parts of his face.

Nelson Lee himself had hardly come off any better, and most of the hurts were from stray arrows, which had fortunately spent their force before striking. Upon the whole, Lee and his men had come through the recent battle with amazing good fortune. There were no serious casualties, and only a few injuries. Umlosi, perhaps, was the most serious case of all.

The giant African chief had not been content with using a rifle, or manipulating a machine-gun. He had charged into the thick of the fray with his trusty spear—and the invading Gothlanders had known all about it.

Exactly how many men Umlosi had slain nobody knew, but it was an established fact that he had wrought havoc among the Gothlander ranks. Their chain-mail had been little guard against Umlosi's terrific thrusts.

And all the Gothlanders were gone now, all except the dead and injured. Over a thousand bodies were being cleared away and buried by the North-eastrian troops, and the Red Cross striations were overcrowded with thousands of the injured, friends and foes alike.

Taking all in all, however, the casualties were light. Kassker's savage hordes had been beaten back. They had invaded Northestria, and they had been thrust out again, and the last enemy transport had long since vanished over the horizon of the lake. The Gothlanders had fled back to their own land in utter disorder.

All round Dunstane, the North-eastrian capital—which had been the point of invasion—there was joy and jubilation. Not only were the troops celebrating the victory, but the entire populace was excited with the wonderful achievement. In spite of Kassker's immense superiority, he had been beaten off.

"It was warm work while it lasted," said Lord Dorrimore, lighting a cigarette, "but it's all over now, bar shoutin'."

Lee looked at him soberly. "Don't you believe it, Dorrie," he snapped. "All over, eh? I wish it were true! Kassker will come back,

and we must be prepared for a much greater onslaught than the one we have beaten."

Lord Dorrimore shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, well, it's no good worryin'," he said philosophically. "If there's goin' to be another battle, there'll be another dose of excitement, that's all. I'm not grumblin'. Let 'em all come! The more the merrier!"

Nelson Lee frowned. "It's all very well to take that irresponsible attitude, Dorrie, but this is no picnic," he growled. "It was only by a fluke that we beat the brutes off this time. Our tanks started a panic, and it spread. You don't quite realise how lucky we are to be rid of the enemy so soon."

Captain Waring, the airship commander, had just come up, leading Umlosi with him.

"I think you want this gentleman, don't you, Mr. Lee?" he asked dryly. "We found him going down to the lake—"

"I need but to wash my trivial hurts," rumbled Umlosi sullenly. "What need have I of messes and ointments?"

"I've had messes an' ointments, Umlosi, an' you've got to have messes an' ointments!" said Lord Dorrimore grimly. "An' you look as if you need 'em, too! Gad, that's a nasty slash on your shoulder; an' that's not such a pretty wound in your chest. The man's cut to ribbons!"

Umlosi was indeed a sorry spectacle. Several deep gashes were visible on his great, half-naked body. All had been bleeding, and he was in a serious condition, to judge by appearances. But his eyes blazed at Dorrie's words.

"They are nothing, N'Kose!" he protested. "Wau! Am I a baby, to be frightened by a few scratches? These are nothing, my master. In mine own country I have been really wounded in battle."

"These little pin-pricks are just nothin', eh?" said Dorrie. "You'd better take him, Lee, and bung him in hospital for a fortnight."

"That's just where he's going!" said Nelson Lee firmly.

And, in spite of all Umlosi's protests, he was handed over to a group of Red Cross men, with strict instructions that he should be washed, bandaged, and put to bed. The black giant was utterly disgusted, but as Lord Dorrimore insisted, he made no further demur. With him, Dorrie's word was law.

Lee turned to the sporting peer. "We had better get some food," he said. "We've had nothing for nearly twelve hours, I believe. To tell the truth, I've rather lost count of time."

"I don't wonder at it," said Dorrie. "It's a frightful job to know exactly where we are in this place without any darkness to remind us. But who's this desperate gentleman?"

He was watching a horseman, a courier, apparently, who was dashing up at the gallop, approaching from the city walls. His horse was well-nigh exhausted.

"I was directed to seek thee here, Lee the Lionhearted," he panted urgently. "I bring news—ill tidings, forsooth!"

"What!" shouted Dorrie. "Have the beggars landed farther down the coast?"

"Nay, 'tis concerning her Majesty!" replied the courier, addressing himself to Lee. "The royal barge hath not arrived at Westwold!"

Nelson Lee started slightly. "Not arrived!" he repeated. "Where did you hear this?"

"Our men were posted on every hill-top 'twixt the capital and Westwold,"



replied the other. "As thou knowest, my lord, we have in Northestria a system of signalling. I come from the inland town of Ixwell, where we heard definite news of grave import."

"And this—news?" demanded Lee curtly.

"This said by some of the coast peasants that the royal barge hath been captured by a pirate galley!" replied the courier. "Happily, 'tis only a rumour, so far, but methinks it should be investigated forthwith. I seek my lord Ethelbert, but none can say where he is to be found—"

"He comes now," interrupted Lee, nodding.

Ethelbert the Red, the chief adviser to the princess—the actual ruler of Northestria—came hurrying up on horseback, and his very expression as he dismounted indicated that he had heard the news.

"Is't possible?" he panted, as he joined the others. "By St. Guthric, her Majesty captured by pirates! 'Faith, 'tis unthinkable!"

"We must lose not a minute in making close inquiries," said Nelson Lee quickly. "It certainly seems impossible. The royal galley was in charge of the bodyguard—"

"Boys—mere boys!" broke in Ethelbert.

"Yes, but fighters!" said Dorrie pointedly.

"Why was I not warned of this?" demanded Lee angrily, turning a pair of blazing eyes upon Ethelbert. "Why was I not told that pirates were abroad? I was led to understand that they had long since been inactive—indeed, exterminated!"

Ethelbert groaned.

"I fear 'tis my fault!" he muttered. "Amid these endless anxieties and excitements I forgot such paltry knaves as pirates! There can be but one galley, at the most—although 'twas enough to overwhelm our dear princess!"

"Well, it's no good standing here and talking," said Lee gruffly. "We've got to move at once—and, if necessary, get after this pirate galley, and seek it."

"Thou art optimistic, good Lee!" shouted Ethelbert. "Even with thine own wondrous methods, 'twill be impossible to seize these curs, if once they have penetrated into their lair."

Nelson Lee compressed his lips. "We'll have a good shot at it, anyway," he said.

"By glory, you bet we will!" agreed Lord Dorrimore, with conviction.

**Guntha the Crafty!**

**S**IEGAN THE SLIM was losing no time.

While the princess and her brother were being escorted to that cave-prison, far above the level of the lake, accompanied by the Moor View girls, the pirate chief was busy in the great grotto below.

The smallest galley was being prepared for a trip.

And none of the slaves were being put to the oars. Under Siegan's orders, the pirates themselves manned the sweeps. And all of that motley crew prepared to leave. It seemed that none were being left on guard.

The galley was ready within fifteen minutes, and with the oars creaking and splashing, the craft swept out of the low opening and went its way. Not a word had been addressed to the chained slaves in the big galley.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Nipper, as the pirates left. "That's rummy!"

"What's rummy?" asked Reggie Pitt, from a near-by seat.

"They've left us here without anybody in charge of us."

"Nothing rummy about that," said Handforth, with a sniff. "What the dickens can we do, anyhow? These chains are as effective as prison bars!"

And the others realised that Handforth was right.

"Yes, there was no need to leave any guard over us," admitted William Napoleon Browne. "Alas, we are helpless. For even if some of us broke free, what could be done? I fear we are very much in the soup, brothers."

"I'm not a bit surprised," said Handforth bitterly. "It's Mr. Lee's fault for taking the command of the bodyguard out of my hands—"

"Dry up, Handy!" interrupted Nipper. "Browne did the right thing!"

"A champion!" murmured Browne. "At least I have one champion."

"Don't worry, old man—you've got nearly a score," said Nipper. "If Handy had been in charge we should have been all dead by this time, I expect. As it is, we may be prisoners, but we're still alive. Just imagine it! Galley-slaves—chained to our oars—like they used to do in the days of the corsairs!"

"The puzzle is, where the dickens have those rogues gone to?" asked Fullwood.

"They're up to some mischief, I'll bet. A special mission, too, or they wouldn't have gone on their own. It's no pirate trip they've undertaken."

Nipper nodded.

"Well, we can easily guess," he said quietly. "We're all being held as hostages—Prince Oswy, the princess, and all the girls, too. Ransom is the stunt, I'll guarantee."

"By George, ransom!" said Handforth. "They've put a price on our heads, eh? Then—then that means that

we shall probably get free? If they pay the ransom, we'll be handed over!"

"Hurrah!" yelled some of the fellows, with great relief.

"Don't cheer too soon!" said Nipper. "We don't know who we're going to be ransomed to yet."

"Good gad!" gasped Archie. "Ods horrors and ghastly prospects! Old bean, you're not absolutely suggesting—"

"I think it's far more likely that a man like Siegan would sell us to the Gothlanders, rather than to his own people," interrupted Nipper grimly. "And if that happens, we shall be in the ox-tail up to our necks—as Browne would put it."

"Not necessarily, Brother Nipper," said Browne.

"Kassker has threatened to behead all of us!" said Watson.

"That, I believe, is one of Kassker's pet ideas of a little recreation, but I am not so pessimistic," said Browne. "We shall be more valuable to him alive, brothers. I take it that Siegan will sell us to Kassker, and that Kassker will sell us to Northestria, at a large profit. The profit being, of course, the surrender of Princess Mercia's lands."

"Yes, and as soon as Northestria has surrendered, and the Gothlanders take possession, there'll be a nice little public exhibition," said Handforth bluntly. "A few beheadings, or something like that. So what's the difference? As far as I can see, we're booked for the block, in any case!"

"Your reasoning powers, Brother Handforth, are disconcertingly acute," said Browne, shaking his head. "I fear that you are horribly near the truth. But let us take heart in the knowledge that the entertainment will

*"A goodly tale," the spectre said,  
As on his hand he held his head.  
'I've never been so breathless since  
The headsman's chopper made me wince!"*



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is  
the  
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**ACES OF THE LEGION**

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be delayed. And I have sometimes heard a succinct remark to the effect that while there is life there is hope. And so, brothers, let us hope."

"There's a fat lot of consolation in that!" growled two or three voices.

Before long the juniors began to exchange conversation with the slaves, and then learned quite a lot—and, incidentally, it was made fairly clear to them that any hope of escape was futile. Some of these men had been captive for years. It was a custom of the pirates to leave the poor wretches chained to the oars in this fashion. They were safe here—for they could not possibly break those heavy shackles.

Handforth got the wonderful idea of rowing away—out into the lake. But Siegan was not such a fool as to leave the galley free. Heavy anchor chains, locked and bolted, secured the vessel to the rocks. And any of the juniors, examining the iron cuffs which encircled their wrists and ankles, knew that nothing could be done.

And while the galley-slaves talked in this fashion, Siegan the Slim was making good progress across the lake towards Gothland. It was twenty miles from that island to the enemy shore, but this light galley was capable of high speed. And there was something else in Siegan's favour, too, for after travelling seven or eight miles a ship came in view—a crippled Gothlander craft, one that was crawling back home after a hot encounter with the Northestrians.

Siegan at once recognised this ship as one of Kassker's leading vessels—with an important commander on board, in all probability. It was a chance that could not be missed. The pirate galley bore down upon the other ship.

"You think 'tis safe to approach?" murmured one of Siegan's companions. "Safe!" echoed Siegan. "What fear is there?"

"Mayhap there are archers aboard—and they will readily recognise our character," said the other uneasily. "I' faith, we have none too good a name on the lake! 'Twere better to go cautious."

Siegan the Slim laughed. "Fear naught!" he replied. "There seemeth but little fight in this sorry craft at the best! 'Tis full of wounded, I'll swear! But we'll fly them a white flag, as a token of our friendliness."

Siegan's description of the Gothlander vessel was accurate enough, for this particular ship was one that had fared badly in the recent battle. Over half her company had perished during the brief invasion, and the rest were panic-stricken and demoralised. There were scarcely sufficient men aboard to man the sweeps, and as a fighting unit the ship was a negligible quantity.

So the pirate galley swept alongside, and Siegan found himself looking at the figure of a man he knew well by sight. And Siegan's heart leapt, and his eyes glittered with satisfaction.

"Guntha!" he muttered. "By my soul! Guntha the Crafty!"

### The Bargain!

#### GUNTHA THE CRAFTY!

It was a name to conjure with, as Siegan well knew. Kassker the Grim had two high commanders—two men whom he entrusted with his armies, when it was impossible for him to command personally. One was Attawulf the Terrible, and the other was Guntha the Crafty.

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And here, looking at Siegan, was the latter Gothlander general!

Nothing could have suited the pirate's plans better. Luck was with him, for he had deemed it necessary to journey right into Gothland in search of such a man. It was far better to make his bargain here, on the open lake, where there could be no danger whatever.

"What is this foolery?" thundered the Gothlander, his voice savage and angry. "Pirates, by my bones! Have we not suffered enough indignities this day, without these pirate scum?"

"Hold!" shouted Siegan. "I bring news for thee, Guntha the Crafty. 'Tis in my power to convert thy recent defeat into an overwhelming victory!"

"Pah! Empty words!" retorted Guntha ferociously. "Make off, thou dog! I tarry not with pirates!"

"I have prisoners," said Siegan quickly. "If thou art willing, good Guntha, these prisoners can be transferred to thy care."

"What want I with prisoners?" snarled Guntha, from the deck of the other ship. "Am I not already hampered with injured and dying?"

"The prisoners of whom I speak are not soldiers," replied Siegan cunningly. "They are Northestrians—nobles! 'Twill well repay thee, Guntha, if thou wilt consent to a private conference. Either thou wilt hear me, or I go straight to Kassker himself."

Guntha stroked his great beard impatiently.

"Come on board, then," he said gruffly.

"Nay; I desire thy presence with me," replied Siegan. "If thou art mistrustful, I will order a dozen of my men to place themselves on your ship as hostages for thy safe return."

After a good deal of haggling—for neither one nor the other trusted the situation—the Gothlander general came aboard the pirate galley. He was led at once into the cabin, where Siegan lost no time in dealing his cards.

"Thou art distrustful of me, Guntha, but I will soon set thy fears at rest," he said. "I come to thee with something worthy of the selling, and 'tis my desire to strike a bargain."

"Apt words from a pirate!" retorted Guntha.

Siegan frowned. "Thou art in a tigerish humour, by my soul!" he protested.

"Ay, and who would not be?" snarled Guntha. "Need I tell thee what has happened? By St. Guthrie! Kassker will take a heavy toll for this day's defeat! In Northestria they may think themselves safe; but ere long we Gothlanders will overrun the entire country, and make good this humiliation. And thou," he added, staring—"thou art a Northestrian! What is thy will?"

"A Northestrian!" sneered Siegan. "Nay, good Guntha, thou art wrong. I am but a pirate—with ambitions to become a loyal subject of Kassker. In Northestria I received naught but kicks and slurs. I am ready to join forces with thee and thine own warriors. But to business! What sayest thou to the prospect of carrying the Princess Mercia into Gothland as a hostage?"

Guntha the Crafty stared. "What folly is this?" he growled. "I cannot waste my time in such—"

"And what sayest thou to the prospect of carrying the Prince Oswy as a hostage, also?" continued Siegan.

"A plague take thee!" thundered Guntha. "Art mad? What riddles are these?"

"No riddles, my lord; but plain simple facts!" replied Siegan. "I have, in my power, both the prince and the princess. At a price, they shall

be handed to you. There are other prisoners—other valuable hostages. A number of these stranger youths and maidens of whom, no doubt, you have heard."

Guntha recoiled as though he had been struck.

"Remind me not of those accursed strangers!" he said thickly. "Our distasters to-day are due to them and their monstrous appliances—"

"'Tis your chance to seize over a score of them," interrupted Siegan quickly. "Think, my lord Guntha! What will Kassker say to thee if thy ship enters Gothland with the princess and prince as hostages?"

"Lies—lies!" snarled Guntha. "I believe not this fantastic tale. 'Tis but a trick to fool me, dog! What manner of magician art thou to conjure up these great personages at thy pleasure? Nay, Siegan, I believe not this story. Where is thy proof?"

"Here!" retorted Siegan the Slim.

He produced evidence—the Royal necklets of Princess Mercia and Prince Oswy. He had taken care to remove these insignia before making his journey. Guntha the Crafty stared at them dazedly, and then picked them up.

"Marry, but they seem genuine—" He broke off, and picked the necklets up from the table. "By my bones, 'tis true!"

Siegan watched him as he continued his examination. The pirate knew well enough that these trinkets would provide satisfactory proof. For they were unmistakable emblems, and the very fact that they were in Siegan's possession could mean but one thing. Unless he had those royal persons in his power, how could he have become possessed of these trinkets?

"Is't enough?" asked Siegan gently. "The picture doth blind me!" muttered Guntha, in a breathless voice. "Meanest thou I can take these two into Gothland?"

"Ay, and a score of the stranger youths, too," replied Siegan gloatingly. "Rare hostages, Guntha! And worth much gold, I vow! Thou art a man of power—of authority! Thy guarantees will satisfy me."

The Gothlander chief was overwhelmed with triumph.

"'Twill mean victory—vast, overwhelming victory!" he muttered. "And I will be the man to gain this fame! If I can but carry such hostages to Kassker, those dogs of Northestrians will be obliged to capitulate. Ay, and Kassker can make what terms pleases him!"

"'Tis worth a fortune," said Siegan. "And 'tis part of my bargain, Guntha, that I shall be placed in a position of high command."

Guntha the Crafty waved his hand. "Be sure thy reward will be ample," he said quickly. "Where are these Northestrian nobles? Where are these stranger youths and maidens! Bring them forth!"

Siegan shook his head. "I am not such a fool as to bring them on this galley!" he replied. "They are in safe keeping, and will be handed over after our bargain hath been sealed, Guntha. 'Tis not my way to be rash."

"When canst thou produce them, then?"

"Within three hours from the sealing of your word," replied Siegan promptly. "It must be signed, Guntha; but 'twill be possible for thee to protect thyself in the document. I ask nothing unreasonable. I receive my payment only upon production of the hostages."

Guntha scowled.

"Thou art a crafty one!" he muttered, glaring.

"It seemeth, then, that we are a pair," replied Siegan. "Twould be better, perhaps, for thee to take me before Kassker. He, I doubt not, will readily seal such a bargain as I have suggested."

"Nay, nay!" said Guntha hastily. "Not so speedily, Siegan! I am empowered to deal with this. Am I not next to Kassker himself? That which I promise will be fulfilled. Let us bargain, and then let us have this document drawn and signed. I will make good terms with thee, never fear."

And so, for over twenty minutes, they talked. And Guntha was so eager to seize these valuable hostages that he suggested far better terms than Siegan had ever dreamed of. The Northestrian rascal made no mention of his men—his cut-throat pirates. He saw no reason why they should share in his ill-gotten wealth.

Guntha the Crafty was flushed with excitement. In Gothland he was famed as a man of strategy. And, then and there, he decided that he would conduct this affair entirely on his own. He would wait here, out on the lake, until Siegan returned with his great galley. Then Guntha would have all the prisoners transferred on to his ship, and he would proceed to Gothland and give Kassker the Grim the surprise of his life.

Already high in Kassker's esteem, this exploit would place him even higher than Attawulf the Terrible—Guntha's only rival.

After such a coup, anything in the land would be his for the asking.

### Doris' Great Idea!

PRINCESS MERCIA smiled rather wanly.

"We are in sorry plight, indeed," she murmured sadly. "It grieveth me to think so many of you are also drawn into this vortex—'tis my quarrel, not yours. I would that I could do something to—"

"Please, princess," interrupted Irene, "we're all in the same boat, and we're not grumbling! After all, things might be worse!"

"Worse!" echoed the princess. "How so?"

"Well, we're all safe, at least!" replied Irene thankfully. "We're all here together, and the boys are down below, chained to the terrible galley!"

"All in all, we're in a nice, cheerful position!" said Doris Berkeley dryly. "But you never know your luck! Perhaps we can do something, after all. Anyhow, we can have a jolly good shot at it."

Mercia looked at the Moor View girls with wonder.

"What is this?" she asked. "You are soon recovering your strength, it seems."

"We were only spoofing," smiled Doris.

"I know not the word," confessed the princess.

"Spoofing, you know—just pretending," said Irene. "We wanted those men to think that we're weak and frail. In your country, princess—and in Gothland, too—all the men seem to regard the women and girls with contempt. They think we're not worth considering."

"They don't know the modern British girl, then!" said Ena Handforth quietly. "We're not going to sit down and sob, are we, girls? If there's anything to be done, we'll get on the job! How about making an attempt to escape? There's

### Glyn Challenge Cup Final.

## ST. JIM'S AND ST. FRANK'S IN THRILLING STRUGGLE.

### Wally D'Arcy at the Microphone.

After battling through five rounds of the Glyn Cup, St. Jim's and St. Frank's are meeting each other here on the Rookwood ground before a record crowd. There's the coin going up. Nipper calls correctly, and Tom Merry touches the ball off against a stiffish wind. Gussy—my major, you know—is already speeding down the touchline in anticipation of a long pass. Here it comes, slithering across the turf. Gus will miss it—no, he's trapped it; he's wriggling past a full-back. Handforth is coming out to meet him, hands outspread. Thud! Handy bites the dust. Ball's spinning in the net. Gussy has scored for St. Jim's!

We hold no advantage yet, though. Watch Nipper lead an attack on our citadel. St. Frank's line comes sweeping through the Saints' defence. Now Fatty Wynn comes running out, dives heroically at Nipper's feet, but a second too late. Nipper transfers to Pitt, who goes through unopposed. Tap—that's all it needs to level the score. Now St. Frank's are warming up. Is our defence just a little "nervy"? A miskick presents Nipper with an absolute "sitter." Nipper steadies, drives the pill home from pointblank range. St. Frank's lead 2-1. Half-time the same.

All out for that equaliser. St. Jim's show their best form now. Was it those lemons? Something has imbued them

with fresh energy. They're quicker, cooler. Lowther leaps high for a dropping "centre," misses it; but the ball cannons off the back of his neck on to Handforth, and before Handy can grasp it, it's in the net! Lucky? Well, the luck has run out evenly now, and it's level pegging.

Here's where stamina shows. St. Jim's are always sticklers, as many teams have discovered. See Merry thread a neat path through striving defenders. Watch; he'll shoot! Booomph! No, Handforth, you didn't even see it. That was a daisy! In the lead, St. Jim's aren't letting up. St. Frank's are penned. Blake snicks a fast one through a bunch of players, and once again Handforth has to pick the ball out of the net. St. Frank's come with a rush, but Figgins and Kerr are steady as of old, and behind them Fatty Wynn deals deftly with the only two shots he is called upon to handle. Whoopee! We're away again, Tom Merry leading a gallant line to storm Handforth's citadel yet once again. Handforth deals coolly with shots from D'Arcy and Blake, and he turns a sizzler from Merry over the bar. But the "corner-kick" drops dead in the goalmouth, and as it drops Lowther leaps. It's in! A great "header," Monty; our fifth goal! Now we're in for a warm five minutes, though. St. Frank's make a desperate effort to carry us off our feet, but time's too short. That bad patch has cost them the Glyn Cup. There's Fatty Wynn saving on his knees! Pheep! It's all over, and St. Jim's have won! You left it just a little late, St. Frank's. But we'll give you another chance next year.

"an exit here," she added, indicating the hole in the rocks.

"No good," said Doris, shaking her head. "The cliffs are as smooth as glass, and— Wait a minute, though," she added. "I'll take another look. Lend a hand, you girls."

In a twinkling she was hoisted up, so that she could look out through the opening. The Northestrian ladies watched wonderingly—for they were, indeed, very frail and helpless compared to these sturdy British schoolgirls.

"It might be done," murmured Doris, taking a quick breath. "Anyhow, I'm game to chance it— Hallo! What the—"

She paused, watching a craft that had just come into sight.

Down below there the pirate galley was just starting out. Doris was watching Siegan the Slim starting off on his treacherous mission. Only for a moment did she glimpse the galley, but in that moment she noted that the vessel was filled with the pirates, and they even manned the oars. The slaves, evidently, were left behind.

What could it mean?

"I've got it!" murmured the girl. "The brute is off to offend us as hostages to the enemy! We're safe up here, and the boys are all chained in the galley! I wonder if there's any chance of doing something?"

She got down, and the other girls listened eagerly while she told of what she had seen. The princess was freshly startled, and the other two Northestrian ladies were horrified.

"The pirates have gone," said Mary Summers, "and it seems that they haven't even left a watch. Can't we do something?"

"Yes," breathed Doris, "we can!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Irene. "You— you've got an idea, Doris?"

"The beginning of one, anyhow," replied Doris, her dark eyes sparkling with excitement. "Listen! Am I dreaming or not? You remember when they chained Ted and all the other poor chaps to the oars?"

"Yes," said Winnie eagerly. "Poor old Reg is there, too—"

"Never mind your brother now," interrupted Doris. "Siegan went to the fellows and padlocked them to the oars, didn't he? We watched him—we saw him fasten them all up."

"Of course we did," agreed Irene impatiently.

"What did he do with the key?" asked Doris.

The other girls jumped.

"The key!" cried Mary. "Why, he—he came into that cabin where we were pretending to be half dead with fright! He put the key on a big hook, just beside the doorway."

Doris nodded.

"Thought so!" she agreed. "Then I was right."

All the girls remembered that little incident, although they never believed that it would have any special significance. That key, apparently, was always kept on the hook in the deck shelter. Why not? Of what use was it to any of the slaves, since they could not even move six inches from their places?

And there was probably a sinister reason for the key's handy position. Although none of the girls spoke their thoughts, they individually came to the same conclusion. No doubt a slave would occasionally faint and die at his post, and it was thus necessary to unlock his bonds speedily, drag him free, and replace him with an effective unit.

But, after all, what did it matter? Doris knew that the key was there, and

nothing else concerned her at the moment.

"They think we're all mollycoddles!" she murmured breathlessly. "So they've left us up here, taking it for granted that we can't possibly escape. But isn't there a chance for us to do something while those brutes are away?"

"But what can be done?" asked the princess wonderingly. "We are prisoners. The door is of solid stone and—"

"I am not thinking of the door," said Doris.

"But there is no other exit!" declared Mercia, in greater wonder than ever.

"What of this?" asked Doris, pointing to the hole in the rocks.

"You—you mean dive?" asked Winnie Pitt, with a start.

"Right on the nail!" nodded Doris. The princess uttered a cry.

"Dive!" she exclaimed, horrified. "Art mad? 'Tis an impossibility! 'Twould be death to make the attempt. Think of the great drop—"

"It's a pretty high dive, I'll admit," said Doris. "But I'm not such a bad diver at school—in fact, I've taken prizes for it," she added modestly.

"And this one doesn't particularly scare me. My idea is to take a dip, swim into the cave, and see if there's any chance of getting hold of that key. Just think of the way we can turn the tables if I can unlock all the slaves!"

"You can't go alone," said Winnie warmly. "I'll go with you!"

"No, no!" shouted the others. "I'll go!"

They all wanted to go, in fact, but Irene controlled her excitement, and shook her head firmly.

"It's Winnie's job—and Doris!" she said. "They're the champion divers of the school, and the rest of us aren't exactly up to it. Besides, it's Doris' idea, and two will be ample for the job."

"I tell thee 'tis impossible!" panted Mercia, seizing Doris, and swinging her round. "I implore thee not to embark upon this rash venture, sweet Doris! 'Twill be death itself, no less! Hast thought of the monsters?"

"Oh, my hat!" said Irene, with a start.

"Remember how the boy, Willy, nearly lost his life by one of the great creatures which infest these waters!"

"Crumbs!" murmured Mary. "We'd forgotten those beauties!"

But Doris was not to be scared.

"Willy was right out in the lake, miles from shore," she argued. "It's not likely that any of the beastly things will venture near this inlet. Besides, the swim's practically nothing. It's the dive that matters. Once we're in the water, we've only got to swim a few strokes, and we shall be in the cave. We can dive in just as we are, fully dressed."

"There'll be nothing else for it, anyhow," said Winnie practically. "It was very thoughtless of us to come along without bathing costumes! Well, the longer we talk the less time we shall have; so let's be off!"

"Nay!" pleaded the princess. "I beg of you! Perchance there are men down there on guard—"

"There can't be many, if any at all," interrupted Doris. "Perhaps one—or two. Well, we may be able to avoid them. They're lazy beggars, and it's quite likely they'll be having a nap in

one of those grottos. And supposing they're not? Supposing they collar us? Well, they can only bring us back up the staircase, so we shan't be any worse off."

"You're right, Doris," said Winnie. "The whole thing's a chance, at the best. I don't suppose for a moment that we shall be successful, but I should never forgive myself if we didn't have a good try."

And the two girls made a move towards the outlet in the cliff wall.

Although Dorris Berkeley and Winnie Pitt made light of the projected undertaking, they both knew that it would be a desperate venture.

But there was a chance that they might be successful in their enterprise. It seemed the only thing to be done. For while there was a chance it was their duty to take it. The St. Frank's fellows were, for once, utterly helpless.

This was a chance for the girls to do their bit!

They lost no time, either. Doris insisted upon taking the first dive, and the other girls, although they were inwardly filled with apprehension, encouraged her with cheery words and confident predictions of success.

They all pretended that there was no danger, that it was just an everyday sort of adventure. And Doris, having waved her hand, wormed her way through that narrow opening, and cautiously stood upon the precarious ledge.

(Will the Moor View girls be able to rescue the St. Frank's boys? More big thrills from this stirring serial next week.)

## GUSSY'S CANADIAN COUSIN!

(Continued from page 16.)

devastation by Mr. Arris—presented a very cheerful and hospitable appearance as Mr. Aubrey Smith was led into it by a most enthusiastic crowd of juniors.

Arthur Augustus sat at the feed with his cousin on his right hand, beaming. He was proud of his cousin from Canada—as, indeed, he had reason to

be. Cousin Aubrey was a cousin whom anybody might have been proud of.

Two fellows did not join in the celebrations—Crooke and Mellish. They were only too glad that their share in the transaction had not come out. But nobody wasted a thought upon Crooke and Mellish. The fun in the Hobby Club-room was fast and furious, though in a different way from that of the first Cousin Aubrey. Cousin Aubrey the real gave a song after the feed, and then Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of course, gave a tenor solo, and the juniors, in the merriment of the moment, clapped him uproariously, and D'Arcy took that

for an encore and gave them another, and when that was finished the juniors considerably moderated their transports.

But, tenor solos notwithstanding, it was a most joyous and successful celebration, and all the fellows of St. Jim's agreed that Cousin Aubrey was a ripping fellow, and that the British Flag was in no danger of being lowered in any part of the world, so long as it was backed up by fellows like Gussy's Canadian Cousin.

(Next Wednesday: "REDFERN'S RECORD RAG!"—a sparkling long St. Jim's story of exciting adventure and cricket. Don't miss it.)



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