

*Cole's*  
**HOLIDAY**  
**BOOK**

For Boys & Girls

By

**A**USTRALIAN  
AUTHORS &  
ARTISTS.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

**E. W. COLE**

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# COLE'S HOLIDAY BOOK

## For Boys and Girls

EDITED BY LILIAN M. PYKE

*Author of*

*Sheila at Happy Hills*

*Camp Kiddies*

*Max the Sport Etc.*



E. W. COLE, Book Arcade, Bourke St., Melbourne  
Sydney                      Adelaide



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## Preface



### EDITOR'S NOTE.

**T**HERE'S something in the Southern Seas Story Book for everyone in the family from six to sixty to read.

Father, who hasn't forgotten the days when he was a boy at school, will give many a reminiscent chuckle and sigh as he forgets to pass it back to Tom, from whom he has borrowed it just for a minute. Mother will hail with joy something that will keep the family quiet at the end of one of those perfect days in the holidays that parents know so well. Big sister, engrossed in the play, will promise the little ones something out of the story-book if they will be good till she finishes.

Through it all will be found that purely Australian atmosphere just as distinct as the incomparable taste of billy tea.

Everyone wants a happy book, and one that will leave a "we-want-more" feeling, and if sometimes just a little note of pathos creeps in, well, otherwise it wouldn't be true to life.

We want to know how you like the Story Book. Any letters of constructive criticism will be welcomed.

Let us know, too, what sort of a monthly paper you would like. If we find that this is the sort of thing you want,—good Australian stories by good Australian writers,—there is a likelihood of a Southern Seas Story Book coming out monthly, a little smaller than this, at a shilling.

Space is limited, and so probably is your patience, so, in case you are just reading this for politeness, we won't keep you from the stories any longer. Be happy and you'll be good.

A Merry Xmas and a Bright New Year to all in the lands of the Southern Seas.

The Editor.











"By jingo!" he said. "Why, it's a nugget, isn't it?"

## The Nugget of Gold

A Schoolboy Yarn, by "One of Them."

**H**AWKINS was one of the queerest chaps I struck during the time I was a boarder at "Ours." He was a fattish kind of fellow, with a face that reminded you of the suet pudding which the school cook seemed to think was the correct dessert to serve up to schoolboys. It has often struck me that tradition has a lot to account for. Whereas (that sounds awfully legal, like the blue paper I got once when I exceeded the speed limit on my motor bike), the Australian climate simply howls for a diet of grills and fruit-salads, the future men of the race are compelled to consume stews restewed and puddings of the spotted Dick type. You may think

this has nothing to do with nuggets, but I have done a term or two of logic, and am trying to get back to first causes. I want to make excuses for Hawkins if I can. I like to do a chap justice, and maybe a constant boarding-school diet had something to do with his pudding-faced appearance and general lack of interest in ordinary things.

For myself, I have not been a boarder long enough to be affected, as you may have noticed from my character, as revealed in the yarns I tell you. Our literature master tries to cram down our throats that the really great do not betray themselves by their writings. I am sure you could not tell from Shake-



spere's play much about his private history; though, judging from his sonnets, there are indications that he must have had a love affair or so. But then, of course, that might be said about almost any man.

From this you will see that if you can gather the kind of chap I am from what I write about, I may not really have been born great, but, of course, there is always a chance that I may achieve greatness, and also a bit of pocket money from the yarns.

To get back to Hawkins, who, on account of his size and general appearance, was usually called Jumbo, I must tell you that the only time he was ever seen with a bat in his hand was at a compulsory practice, and not always then, as he seemed to have the luck of a Chinaman in getting some ache or pain on those days. Of course, for a chap who lives almost exclusively on stew or spotted Dick, it is comparatively easy to be unwell any old time, and this just proves my theory, but it would hardly account for corns, ingrowing toenails, stiff necks, and sprained wrists, which were among the list of reasons why he could not take part in any school sports.

What Hawkins really liked was collecting. I don't mean pocket money, for, of course, there is nothing unusual about that. All school-boys have that hobby. But Jumbo was never so happy as when he had some new kind of stone, or soil, or plant, or grub that he could take out of his pocket, and gloat over at intervals. He would risk having his half-holidays and Saturdays docked, by going out of bounds, not as you might think, to buy tucker or to meet a girl, but to capture some particular kind of wog he had happened to hear frequented a spot near "Ours."

I can understand a chap keeping a dog, which can, in a way, return your affection, and can make a row when you feel like having a romp, but imagine anyone trying to cultivate reciprocal affection with a slater, those beastly slimy grey things you find under stones. Of course, there are rules against a chap keeping a sensible thing like a dog at school, but none at all about a woolly caterpillar. You can chain a dog up, and be sure of him keeping in his kennel, but with Jumbo's creepy crawlers, there was no keeping them in bounds at all. As far as anyone knew, they might crawl across your face in the night, or manufacture one of their beastly cocoons in your pyjama leg.

One of his butterflies fancied my best silk handkerchief as a suitable spot for depositing

its eggs, and I never noticed it until I wore it sticking out of my pocket at a school play, where I was sitting with one of my sister's friends who wanted to be in the limelight, and be seen by her schoolmates with one of the chaps from "Ours." I was the victim, but she was jolly sorry when she found a creepy crawly climbing over her bare arm. The jolly eggs had settled upon that particular moment to hatch, the handkerchief having laid by in my drawer for some time, owing to there being no festive joint taking place. The creatures had wriggled themselves from my pocket on to her, and there was quite a scene for a little while. Of course, I got the blame, and my sister said I had done it on purpose, to pay her out for asking me to let Flossie sit with me, and she immediately knocked off knitting me a silk tie in the school colours, for which I had purchased the material at enormous expense.

I got no sympathy from Jumbo either, who had been wondering where his silly old insect had laid her eggs, and seemed inclined to blame me for removing my handkerchief, and causing the wholesale destruction of the butterfly's offspring. I don't see why he should have been so soft about it, when the parent of the worms had been dead and buried quite a time. Perhaps he had a tender spot in his heart for the sad fate of the orphans.

This will show you that Jumbo was not quite normal; but, on the whole, we chaps tolerated him, and put up with finding lumps of clay and other perfectly useless geological specimens in the dorm. and study overflowing from Hawkin's place into ours. Certainly they came in handy as missiles when an argument arose, though this was far from being the reason why Jumbo had collected them.

The chaps got to humour Jumbo in his hobby, especially those who did not sleep in the same dormitory with him. It was safe enough for them, as they ran no risk of their gifts reacting on them. I never contributed anything to Hawkins' collection since a praying Mantis I had given him chose my nose to perform his devotions upon one night when I was asleep. When I ventured to protest, Jumbo said it was one of their characteristics to pick out the most prominent spot in the vicinity for the performance. There is no chance of a Mantis hiding his light under a bushel. When he wants to pray, he does so regardless of spectators. There were other victims besides myself to Jumbo's obsession. Billy Wagstaff, a junior in our dormitory, had



frequently suffered from spiders' eggs hatching in his hair-brush case, and, having his tooth-brush holder used as a receptacle for unwary tadpoles. Indeed, he grew quite nasty about it at times, but as Jumbo was so much bigger than he was, he was unable to lend any weight to his arguments.

The chaps were more surprised, therefore, when Tom-tit came back after the Easter holidays with a new specimen for Jumbo. In case you may be hazy about the origin of Wagstaff's nickname, I may mention that his real com-momen suggested Wagtail, and as a Wagtail is not a Tom-tit, though something similar to one, that is what they called him.

This specimen, carefully wrapped in cotton-wool, he handed over to Jumbo with quite an important air. Jumbo didn't say much until he opened the box, as he had had similar presentations which had turned out to be either something unpleasantly odoriferous, or else quite worthless. But his dull eyes actually sparkled when the object was revealed, and his face lit up in a way that must have rewarded Tom-tit for his thoughtfulness. "By jingo!" he said. "Why, it's a nugget, isn't it? It's quite a decent specimen, and not a bad shape," which, of course, was the very highest praise from a boy. "Yes," replied Tom-tit, "you may well be pleased, Jumbo. That nugget has a history. It came from a mine way up at Red-gum Range, and was embedded in a whitish substance surrounded by enamel. You will notice the peculiar shape of it. A chap I know said there never had been another exactly like it."

Jumbo was frightfully interested in this nugget, and Tom-tit got no end of tips from him while its novelty lasted. Its fame reached beyond the bounds of the dormitory, and we were quite pestered by the number of chaps who came to view it. Though only small, it certainly was an interesting specimen, and Jumbo got quite a swelled head over it. He was so proud of it that he told the geological master about it, and he became so interested in it that he begged Jumbo to let him have it for the school museum. Tom-tit had become quite tired of answering questions about its history, and in the end refused to give any more information about it, referring the enquirers to Jumbo, who was always quite willing to tell all he knew, and a good deal that he didn't.

"The School Magazine" broke out with an illuminative essay on the subject of Hawkins' nugget, and some of the old boys, who had be-

come antiquaries or some such birds since leaving college, came up to see the specimen. In fact, it brought "Ours," and, incidentally, Jumbo, quite a quantity of fame.

One afternoon I had to visit a dentist in the city about a molar that jumped every time I ate ice cream. I hated dentists, but couldn't give up ice cream when the temperature was 110 degrees. There was someone in the surgery when I arrived, so I seated myself in the waiting room and read a "Bulletin" a few months old. The door was a little open between the rooms, and my attention was suddenly attracted from "Aboriginalities" by a voice, which I knew was Tom-tit's.

"Yes, it's been aching a treat," he said, in response to a remark of the dentist.

"But I filled that cavity for you last year," plied he of the forceps.

"Yes," replies Tom-tit, "but the filling came out."

"You are a careless young beggar," said the dentist; "I took a lot of pains with that gold-filling. The cavity was such a peculiar shape. I remember it well, because after I took the first impression I put a piece of wax on my glass stand, and a small kid that a patient brought in got hold of it and ate it up."

The Tom-tit laughed. "I remember," he said. "You had to take a second impression."

By this time a slow suspicion was gradually assuming shape in my by no means dull brain. The conversation went on: "So you lost the filling, did you?" There was a pause, filled in by the clicking of instruments.

Then the Tom-tit spoke: "Look here! I'll tell you a joke if you promise not to hurt me with that instrument."

"Fire away," said the dentist.

I was not surprised by this time to hear the Tom-tit tell that man the whole of the story of Jumbo and the gold specimen. I thought the dentist would have broken some of the glassware in the surgery. Passers-by must have thought someone was having laughing-gas.

By this time I considered I ought to make my presence known, so I stepped to the surgery door and coughed. The Tom-tit's face was a study when he saw me. "I suppose the joke's all up now, Wispy?" he said. "But oh! it was great while it lasted; I've never enjoyed a term at 'Ours' like it."

"You make a mistake," I said, with dignity. "I'm only sorry I didn't think of it myself. As for the joke being up, I don't know so much about that. We can't have 'Ours' made a sub-



ject for public jest. Once the boys at the High hear it, our reputation is done for."

"I didn't think of that," said the Tom-tit, and the dentist murmured, "Brains."

I blushed, but felt I deserved it.

"Then," said the Tom-tit, slowly and reflectively, "that gold-filling will have to remain where it is in the museum."

"Yes," said the dentist, "and it will cost your

father two guineas for a new one."

"It was worth it," said the Tom-tit, resignedly.

Visitors to the museum at "Ours" are shown to this day the wonderful little nugget presented to the museum by Hawkins, and Wagstaff, Senior, in blissful unconsciousness that he was paying the piper, cheerfully footed the dentist's bill for the Tom-tit.

## Lacrosse—The Game for Thoroughbreds

By A.O.T.

A GAME for thoroughbreds," said one of the leading judges of Victoria when making a speech about the game of lacrosse, and no doubt he was right, too, as it is only the best-developed athlete and those with the soundest constitution who can stand the strain of a hard match, or the training preparations that are necessary to keep in form. In addition to strength, one has to possess more than a good supply of what is termed "common sense," and a will that commands him to "carry on," despite his feeling of physical exhaustion.

In a match where all players are first-class lacrosseurs, there is no game to equal it for thrilling and exciting moments, or where the fortunes of play change so quickly. Ask a good all-round "sport," who has donned the flannels to play cricket, taken the jersey and joined a football team, played hockey, tennis, or baseball, and has experienced all the thrills and excitements that these games can provide him with, and he will shake his head and say truthfully that "none of them" can equal the wonderful game of lacrosse. The finest points of all the popular games are to be seen in lacrosse, and let it be remembered that all the objectionable practices have been left out, while there are many features peculiar to the lacrosse game itself that make it very interesting and pleasing to player and onlooker.

A boy who is strong and active, and keen on taking up some kind of clean, healthy sport, cannot do better than join a lacrosse club; and besides finding his interest growing rapidly, he will also find himself soon outgrowing his clothes. It is an invigorating and healthy pastime at first to master the art of "catching" and of "passing" a simple rubber ball with the stringed racquet, but this will provide a lot of fun and amusement until it comes quite easy. And where is the Australian boy who does not feel pleased and proud

at accomplishing something that is more difficult and skilful, rather than follow some game which anyone can succeed at with ease? Dogged determination is instilled into one from the beginning. It was not surprising to see our soldier lacrosseurs in large numbers gaining distinctive decorations in the war. They knew what counted most. I remember my elder brother introducing a weird-looking lacrosse stick into our home for the first time. We made fun of it, and ridiculed the enthusiastic one at first, but he challenged anyone of us to find out the knack of catching even a small toss of the ball in two hours' time. So simple as it looked, we had to be shown before we could manage it, and we all got very keen on it from then on.

The incentive to succeed is always uppermost in the boy with a stout heart and plenty of grit and determination, and the pupil who takes up lacrosse with these essentials prominent in his nature will make a name for himself at the game. The novice who wants to take it easy and "Doesn't care who wins the boat race," soon gets weeded out as useless, and here also we see the force of the remarks at the beginning, that "Lacrosse is a game for thoroughbreds."

If we look back into the early history of lacrosse, it will be found that the game originated with that fine, fleet-footed, keen-eyed and sturdy race of Indians of North America. The different tribes called the game by different names, but the name, "Baggat-away," was used most of all. With them a match would last for several days at a stretch, and the distance between the goal nets was nothing less than a mile, and sometimes 10 or 12 miles, and take in the whole of the country between two villages. One tribe would get up a contest with another tribe, and a goal net would be placed in each village. The number of players would be anything over





*Interior.*

*By F. McCubbin.*



## THE EVENING HOUR.

(Interior.)

By JOYCE PYKE.

When night's dark curtain falls o'er land and sea,  
And stars their twinkling glories show,  
And drowsy birds sleep in each silent tree,  
Then comes the sweetest hour I know.

I sit within the softly-lighted room,  
And gently touch the ivory notes—  
Out to the garden, where the roses bloom  
Each year, melodious music floats.

The frowning pictures on the wall awake,  
And look on me with wistful gaze;  
The lamp-light a dreamy hue doth take,  
And seems to me a rainbow haze.

I hear soft footsteps and a rustling noise  
Of long-dead dames, who live again  
Their lives of sorrows and of sparkling joys.  
The music falls and swells, and then

The door opes wide; the call comes, "Time for bed";  
The harmony is stilled, and I  
Arise, and see that all the ghosts have fled—  
Fled with the music, silently.



200, the pick of the tribe, and the greatest pride was felt in being one of the chosen. We read that preparations would be carried on for weeks and weeks beforehand, and all manner of customs were adopted to improve their speed and stamina. The interest taken in these preparations worked the rivals into a high pitch of excitement, and you can just imagine how all would feel on the day of the match. Before commencing to play, the whole of the tribe would go through weird antics, war whoops, queer chants, and fanciful gestures, while the players were given the final training attentions. In some cases, this consisted of taking sharks' teeth, and cutting into the players' arms, legs and shoulders, with the idea of smarting them to exert themselves to the utmost. The fierceness of those games can be well understood when these peculiar methods were practised for a match in which, perhaps, up to one thousand players would join in, in deadly earnest. The whole population for many miles around looked forward to it. The keenest interest was taken by young children, as well as the veterans. So much importance, though, was attached to the winning of the matches, that treachery became a habit, and many tricks and foul play were resorted to, which created severe bitterness between the tribes. The Government had to step in and clear the game of those practices, which too often caused the death of those who had become marked men because of their extreme cleverness.

The players used to carry small hatchets hidden in their clothing, so that, when opposed in a lonely part of the long field by players of the other side, they would use these hatchets to give the adversary a knock-out blow. Treachery also was used in an endeavour to overcome the garrison of one of the forts in the country held by British soldiers. The garrison had been asked to attend a supposed "important" match, and when the excitement was at its height, the ball was worked across to one side of the fort, and at a given signal it was thrown over the wall into the fort. A rush was made for the gates, with the idea of gaining possession of the fort. Fortunately, however, they were not left without a few soldiers being on guard, and the rush was delayed sufficiently to give some of the surprised lacrosse onlookers an opportunity of beating off the Indians. This was not accomplished without a severe struggle. The squaws (Indian women) had brought tomahawks concealed in the blankets and rugs.

Deafening war whoops rang out, lacrosse sticks were discarded for tomahawks, and the soldiers and traders, who were invited to see the match, were murdered in cold blood. Only twenty escaped. The barbarous tricks have passed out now, but refined and gentlemanly as it has developed since those days, it can never shake off the memories of the Indians' craftiness.

From witnessing these tribal matches, the French, and later the British, people in Canada saw what a glorious game it was, and cultivating the art, they soon waxed enthusiastic on its merits as a field sport, and developed it on improved lines, so that now it is the prettiest game in the world to watch, the openest, the fastest, trickiest game to play, and in all respects as fine a game, as far as exercise and health-giving properties are concerned, as any other field sport known.

It was proclaimed the National Sport of Canada in 1867. Since then the Canadians improved the rules of lacrosse; the racquets, too, have been modified to suit the present style of play. In appearance, the racquet is more like a snow-shoe than anything else I can think of. The netting is made of strings of greenhide or clock-string meshed like netting to about half the length of the stick. The leading string can be tightened or loosened to suit the player. A "baggy" stick will make catching easy, but will retard throwing, so a player has to practice until he finds the happy medium between the tight and loose strings. The ball is made of spongy rubber, with an outside coating of harder or solid rubber, the weight being 5 to 8oz. The novice must first learn to catch the ball by holding the racquet upward or outward to meet the ball as far away as he can reach, and then quickly drawing the stick back in the same direction as the ball is approaching. If the stick is drawn back at almost the same rate of speed as the flight of the ball, it stands to reason that the ball must become "dead" when it does strike the net. After this has been mastered, he must learn to lessen the length of backward movement of the racquet. A short, quick catch can be made if it is done at the exact moment of contact between the racquet and the ball. Some players have made such a fine art of the catching that no movement at all is perceptible; indeed, the action appears to be a forward one instead of backward. Throwing the ball is easier. A flick is given to the ball as it leaves the end of the racquet. Bear in mind that it requires a lot of constant practice to



handle the stick properly, but the boy who admires cleverness will soon try to excel, and will find that the time spent in learning is not unpleasant.

Lacrosse is easily practised; two boys or a hundred boys can practise catching and throwing with no other accessories than racquets and balls; while much enjoyment will be found in merely throwing a ball against a wall and catching it again, gradually getting closer and closer to the wall to improve the quickness of the eye and the movement of the racquet, because the harder you hit the wall the quicker you will have to be to catch the ball on the rebound.

#### IN A MATCH.

The playing time is divided into four terms of about 20 to 25 minutes each, the players merely changing across the field, and taking up their positions to attack the goal that they were defending previous to the "change." At "half-time," a longer interval of 10 to 15 minutes is allowed. To start the game, the ball is placed on the ground in the centre of the



field. The two opposing "centre" players place their racquets on either side of the ball. At the word "play," the sticks are drawn sharply apart, so that the ball is forced out and into play. The ball is picked up with the racquet and passed from player to player, while the opponents try to intercept the possessor or dislodge the ball with a stroke of the racquet. A pretty feature of the game is the clever manœuvring that goes on between the two

sides—the one trying to get closer and closer to the goal, with the object of scoring, and the other forcing the goal-throwers out of range. The "check" is the method by which the players disarm the man who is carrying the ball by dealing a swift blow just before or after he has received the ball. There is great skill required to catch the ball when running at top speed, and throwing at the goal before an opponent can check it. The goalkeeper stands between the goal posts, which hold a net. The side scoring the greatest number of goals during a match is declared the winner. In the early days, the side which scored five goals first was the winner. But that was altered because in some first-class matches the game was over in a few minutes, so rapid is the play. The ball is ever on the move, and the players are continually on the alert. Man-to-man struggles are a feature of the game. It may happen that no other players than two opponents will be within twenty yards of the ball (fighting for its possession). Yet there is no other game played where the combination of players is so essential to success. Individualism has its opportunity for brilliancy, but a team must work together to win, and any selfishness will spoil their chances of winning without a doubt. In Australia, lacrosse is played well in all the States, and periodical contests take place between one State and another as opportunity offers, and at longer intervals a carnival is held, at which all the associations are invited to send representatives to compete in the tournament. South Australians and Victorians are considered to be on about equal terms on standard of players, followed by Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia, and Tasmania. A Canadian team visited Australia in 1907, and toured all the States in turn, and played several test matches against combined Australian teams. They were successful in all, excepting the first test match, which was won by Australia.





# The Voyage of the Ina

By R. Jackson.

**S**O that is my legacy," said Harry Gilder, coming to a stop.

"Good-o," remarked Norman Thwaites. "I'm glad it wasn't much further. She looks quite an ocean-going craft."

"Flinders, or—or Burke and Wills would have been glad of her," replied Harry. "My uncle always reckoned she was the most seaworthy craft for her size around the Australian coast. He was very proud of her."

It was to a rather lonely part of the Yarra that the two young men had come, to find the "ketch" they sought moored to a crazy old wharf that showed the ravages of time. Somewhat to their surprise, however, they found that the vessel appeared to be immensely superior to its surroundings. Fresh paint appeared everywhere, and everything about the decks was spick and span. To the young men's unpractised eyes, the simple rigging of the two masts seemed to have been recently renewed.

"She's been well looked after," said Norman.

"She was my uncle's work and recreation, his hobby and his business," said Harry. "When he died so suddenly, I believe he had been contemplating a longer trip than usual in her, although I really know so little about his movements."

At that moment an enquiring head appeared from the entrance to the cabin on the forward deck.

"Good day," called Harry. "This boat is the Bridget B.?"

"That's right," said the man, coming up on to the deck.

"I see the name has been painted out."

"That's right. She was being overhauled when the owner, old Bob Gilder, died, and the name was painted over then. Perhaps the new owners will paint it in again."

"Perhaps the new owners might find a better name."

"That's right. Bridget B. mightn't appeal to some. Though old Bob liked her by that better than any other name."

"Are you the caretaker?"

"That's right. Syd. Tinker."

Harry felt in his pocket, and produced a newspaper cutting, and a letter. The former was an extract from the shipping news of a Melbourne daily, which read somewhat as follows:—

"Owing to the death recently of Captain R. N. Gilder, the ketch Bridget B., well known in the Victorian and Tasmanian coastal trade, has passed into the hands of Mr. Harold Gilder, of Thornbury, the late owner's nephew. The ketch, we understand, is undergoing repairs, and will not resume sailings for a few weeks."

The letter was from a lawyer, and the gist of it was that Harry was legally entitled to take over the Bridget B., at any time from the date mentioned above.

Harry handed the two documents to Mr. Tinker, reaching over the edge of the wharf to do so. Then he and Norman jumped down on to the forward deck.

After a somewhat difficult perusal, the watchman held out his hand.

"So you're the old boss's nephew?" he said. "He often spoke of you. Said you were the only one he had to leave his earthly goods to. And now he's left them!"

Harry shook hands and introduced Norman.

"I never saw much of uncle, but I've heard of you, Syd.," said Harry. "You sailed with him for some years?"

"That's right. I suppose you'll want the old hooker readied up for work again soon?"

"Yes. But the first thing you can do is to paint a new name on her."

"Ain't the Bridget B. good enough?"

"I think the name had better cease with my uncle's ownership. Perhaps he would like it better that way."

"What'll I call it?"

"Oh—the Ina, I think."

"That'll be cheaper to paint, any way. Now, boys, would you like a look over your craft?"

The look-over pleased the new owner considerably. Everything was ship-shape, and under the rear hatch they came upon a brand-new six-cylinder motor which was already fitted to shaft and propeller.

"This'll do me," exclaimed Harry. "I know nothing about sailing, but I can run a motor."

Then he explained to Tinker that he and Norman intended to celebrate the acquisition of the Bridget B., or Ina, as it was now to be called, by a few weeks' holiday cruise. After that—well, the vessel could enter trade again, under a suitable command.

There was accommodation for six in the cabin, and a sail-locker forward where the



things could be stored. Near the rear mast ("mizzen-mast," Norman called it) was a little cook's galley, where Syd. assured them most efficient meals could be turned out.

When the young men left for their walk back to the city, they were full of eagerness to complete arrangements for their forthcoming voyage, the destination of which they had not yet decided upon:

A week later, Harry called up Norman excitedly on the telephone.

"Can you see me in town, at lunch?" he asked. "I've news."

"Right," said Norman.

At lunch, Harry asked: "Can you start next Monday—for Tofumira?"

"What's to-day? Thursday. Yes, I think so. But what's the hurry? And where's Tofumira?"

Harry explained. They were to combine pleasure with business. That morning a man had been to see him with regard to chartering the Ina for a trip to the South Seas—to the Island of Tofumira, to be precise. That was about 300 miles north of Fiji. All that the man wanted was a trip to Tofumira and back, with a stay of about a week at the island, an out-of-the-way place. When Harry mentioned that he had no sailing master or crew, Jamieson, the prospective charterer, offered to bring along a man who was a skilled navigator, and who knew the locality intimately—an old Island-trader captain, in fact. A friend was to accompany Jamieson.

Very satisfactory terms were agreed upon, and Harry had undertaken to sail on Monday.

"Now," he said, at the conclusion of his explanation of the position, "what do you think about it?"

"I shall be ready," said Norman.

At 2 o'clock on Monday afternoon, the Ina sailed down the river, under the power provided by the petrol-driven engine, of which Harry took sole charge.

The crew consisted of Murray, the captain introduced by Jamieson, a medium-sized, grizzled-looking man, whose beard did not entirely hide his massive jaw-bone; Syd. Tinker, a useful man about such craft as the Ina, but with no knowledge of navigation; and Harry and Norman, who agreed to help in the running of the ship in any way they could.

The passenger list comprised Jamieson, a tall, well-set-up man of middle age, and Albot,

his friend, a fat and taciturn individual, with a drooping, fair moustache.

Altogether, there were six bunks provided in the cabin, but Murray and Tinker decided to sleep in the sail-locker, where there was ample room, in order to avoid, as Tinker put it, "congestion."

They were well provisioned, and had ample petrol, and, at the captain's suggestion, there was a small cargo of timber in the hold for delivery at Suva on the voyage out.

There was a fresh wind in the Bay, where the engine was cut out, to remain in idleness until lack of wind rendered its use necessary again.

For the first six days, all went well. Jamieson and Albot proved themselves rather pleasant travelling companions, and Murray an efficient seaman, while the two young men gradually picked up the points of sailing a ketch.

What was Jamieson's precise business at Tofumira, neither Harry nor Norman knew, nor cared particularly. They were having a very pleasant run in very pleasant weather, towards lands they had long wanted to see, with the comforting knowledge that their holiday, as they regarded it, would, if anything, be a source of material, as well as temperamental, profit.

On the seventh day came the first discordant note, vague though it was. Harry was engaged on some job in the "engine-house," when Tinker approached him.

"Harry," he said, "there's something up."

"What is it?" asked Harry, slightly startled.

"I don't know, but you'll have to look out. Murray's been sounding me about all sorts of things, and last night I heard him tell Jamieson that this boat used to be the Bridget B. Jamieson whistled, and said something about having to watch the youngsters now, meaning you and Norman, I suppose."

"Anything else?"

"No—yes. Murray hinted to me this morning that, in case of a row, it 'ud pay me to stick to him. I didn't take much notice at the time, but I thought it funny afterwards."

"It does sound funny. What are these people? Pirates going to seize the ship (though the times are past for that), or what? They look decent enough, too."

"You never know," said Tinker. "Strange things happen in these islands."

"Without perjuring your soul too much," said Harry, "pretend not to be unfavourable to them; you may do us all a great service."



"Any service I can do old Bob Gilder's nephew, I will," replied Syd.

Harry discussed the situation with Norman at the first opportunity, and concluded that it was just possible Tinker was "imagining things." However, they would keep watch. If they arrived at Suva safely, they would purchase a few firearms, just for luck.

Except for an outburst of drunkenness on the part of Albot, who roared ribald songs at the seagulls, and became generally the opposite of what he was when sober, the next few days passed in quietude, the Ina slipping steadily along through the blue waters of the tropical seas into which they had come. Now and then they passed little palm-clad islands, and wherever the sun beat down upon the coral that enclosed most of them, a dazzling radiance was reflected across the waters.

"This life will do me," thought Norman to himself, as he languidly reclined against the after bulwark, trailing a barracoota spinner behind. He turned to see Harry standing behind him, a look of suppressed excitement in his eyes.

"Read this," he exclaimed in a low tone, thrusting a sheet of foolscap into Norman's hand. "I found it in a hidden drawer under the cabin table. It's in my uncle's handwriting."

Neglecting his barracoota line, Norman read:

"Dear Harry,—As, since your father died, you are practically the only relative I have, I am going to leave you the Bridget B., and all I've got. You might think that isn't much, but I am really the possessor of thousands of pounds—out on a Pacific island." Here Norman whistled.

"Read on," said Harry.

"Only two or three men know of this, and of the locality of the island where the pearls—for my wealth consists entirely of pearls—are hidden. But nobody knows the exact spot but myself. Jamieson and Albot were with me when we were blown ashore on Tofumira five years ago, and they know that I had the pearls with me, and that I hid them. They knew I would trust them as far as I could see them. And they know when the old tramp trader picked us up, that I left the pearls behind, for safety. They know, and I know, that if they get a chance they'll be out after those pearls, if they can find the island again. They haven't gone yet, because I've kept pretty well in touch with their movements through

an old friend of mine up Russell Street way. Now I'm going soon, before my health breaks up entirely, but in case anything happens and I can't go, I'll give you full directions in this letter how to get right on to those pearls. Jamieson may be clever, and he thinks because the whole island could be turned over with a spade in a week—"

Here the letter ended, old man Gilder having apparently been interrupted, or overcome with weakness before he could finish it.

"Food for thought," commented Norman.

"Much," said Harry. "There's one thing, we mustn't let Jamieson or Albot have the slightest inkling we know anything about this."

"It's a darned rum go they chartered this boat."

"Sheer fluke, of course. If they'd known that I'm old Bob Gilder's nephew, they'd have certainly got somebody else. As it is, they must regard us with great suspicion, for they have found out this was my uncle's ship."

"What will we do? We can't let them take your pearls."

"Not if we can help it."

"We'd better run straight home again, or put them overboard at Suva. Make some plausible excuse for so doing."

"They'd certainly cause trouble if we did that, legally and otherwise. Besides, there's nothing to stop them immediately getting another boat, and getting ahead of us with that. For we do not know where that island is, and they do. It's jolly hard luck my uncle stopped writing where he did!"

"There aren't any more pages in the drawer?"

"No—there was nothing else but a revolver and a box of cartridges."

"Well, that might come in handy, anyhow."

"That's right, as Sam Tinker would say. We'll have to tell Sam of this."

"Yes. It looks as if it will be three to three. But don't you think we could leave them ashore at Suva? Give them the slip—the whole three of them. We could work the boat."

"We could, if we could only navigate it. That's where we are beat. If we could only lob on to somebody trustworthy at Suva, I'll do that—give them the slip. Otherwise, we'll have to stick to the boat, say absolutely nothing, and trust to luck."

The fickle goddess did not seem to favor the hopes of the young men, and their scheme of ridding themselves of their secret enemies at Suva were doomed to have no chance. For,



two mornings later, Harry awoke to the sound of an anchor-chain running out, and, putting his head out of the cabin, he saw that the Ina had come to rest some three hundred yards off a small island.

"Is this Suva?" he called out to Murray, who was letting go the mainsail.

"No," he replied. "This is en route."

"I thought we were calling at Suva first?"

"Well, I found it was a better passage round this way, and as I thought you were in no hurry to get to Suva, I brought her round here first."

"This is Tofumira?"

"Yes."

Keeping his thoughts to himself, Harry hurriedly dressed, awaking Norman. He slipped the revolver, loaded, into his hip pocket at a moment when Jamieson and Albot had their backs turned.

While Harry was on deck, scrutinising the island through a pair of glasses, Jamieson came up, and held a whispered conversation with Murray. The latter then approached Harry, and said:—

"Mr. Jamieson wants me to take him and Mr. Albot ashore after breakfast. I suppose you've got no objection?" There was a slight glint in his eyes as he spoke.

"Can't Tinker row them over?"

"No. I will be able to find the channel through the reef, while Tinker won't."

"Very good," said Harry, although, as there was a break in the reef opposite to where the ketch lay, the finding of a channel did not seem a difficult matter. But Harry, while looking through the glasses, had overheard a few words spoken by Murray: "You were camped on the other side," and he had seen something that had given him a happy idea.

After the "opposition party," as Norman called them, had left in the dinghy, Harry said:—

"I think Murray must have been the captain of the trader that took my uncle and the others off here. They have taken him ashore, so that we cannot sail away without them, I suppose."

"That's right," said Tinker, who was by now completely in the confidence of the other two.

"But I don't think they'll get the pearls, and in the meantime we'll have a look on our own account. I've got a bit of a clue."

"But we can't leave the ship; they have the boat," said Norman.

"Swim?" suggested Harry.

"Too risky; sharks," said Tinker, while

Norman reiterated the latter words.

"When is it low tide?" asked Harry.

"About three this afternoon, I should say," said Tinker.

"And at about three to-morrow morning. Well, at that hour, I borrow the dinghy. You two must watch my interests here. It will be moonlight, thank goodness!"

Jamieson and his two companions beached the dinghy, and set out to the other side of the island, which was not more than half a mile across. Albot carried a spade and Murray a pick. All day long they remained out of sight, and it wasn't till the short tropical twilight had begun, that the clack of rowlocks announced that the dinghy was returning.

"Have any luck?" asked Harry, as Jamieson stepped aboard.

"No," he answered, rather shortly.

"What are you looking for, if it's not a rude question?"

"Pearls," came the unexpected reply. "My mate and I buried some pearls here five years ago, and we're trying to get them again."

"Why didn't you mark the place, if you buried them?" Harry was prompted to say.

Jamieson growled some answer, then changed the subject by enquiring if the evening meal was ready.

The "opposition" seemed worn out with their unaccustomed exertions on the island, and early in the evening they retired to bunk, leaving the other three to guard the ship. The usual watch was considered unnecessary in such a mooring ground, but, nevertheless, Norman and Syd. stayed awake, while Harry slept. At three, they awoke him, and silently he hauled in the dinghy and made off.

The others saw him make for the opening in the reef, and then he was lost to view amid the shadows on the waters.

Anxiously they awaited his return.

Several times Norman cautiously approached the bunks where their rivals lay, to re-assure himself that they were sleeping soundly.

The moon had paled, the dawn was breaking, and Tinker was asleep against the mainmast when Norman saw the long-sought-for dinghy approaching through the reef. At the same time, he heard a slight movement in the cabin below. He awoke Tinker.

"Get to bed, quick," he whispered. "If the others find out that we haven't been to bed, they'll suspect something, and we don't want to be marooned out here."

So silently the two repaired to their respec-



tive bunks, fearful lest the others should wake at an inopportune moment.

It seemed almost twenty minutes to Norman before Harry quietly came down the steps into the cabin, and lay down, "all standing," in his bunk. Apparently he, too, had had great exertions.

Jamieson was the first to stir. He awoke Albot, and the two went up on deck. As soon as they had gone, Norman, who had been disturbed by their movements, leaned over and shook Harry softly.

Harry turned over lazily.

"How did you get on?" whispered the former.

"I've found them!" Harry answered. "It sounds ridiculous, but I've found them. And hidden them, too."

Just then Jamieson re-entered for something, cutting off Norman's half-formed congratulations.

After breakfast, the "opposition" set out for the shore again, and Harry narrated how he had come upon the precious little spheres so easily.

"I got them half-way out on that bit of reef," he said, pointing to a line of coral that ran out from the shore towards the encircling reef, and which was now pretty well submerged and scarcely visible. "There is a hint in the last line of my uncle's letter to the effect that Jamieson would not find the jewels on the island, so that turned my thoughts to other places, and that seemed the likeliest, seeing that it is submerged most of the time, and is on the opposite side of the island to their old camp. I looked along that reef this morning for about two hours, when I found them in a bit of a pothole covered by a large chunk of coral. I'll show them to you."

Harry waited till the shore-party was well out of sight before he produced from the "engine-room" a leather bag, and displayed its contents—an iridescent mass of beautiful pearls. The others watched awe-struck.

"By jove, what beauties!" exclaimed Norman.

"They are, indeed," said Harry, "and so far we've had no trouble to get them. We haven't even had to maroon anybody."

"Your uncle's legacy turns out all right, after all," said Norman.

"And our little pleasure trip showed more profit than we expected. All we've got to do now is to wait till those beggars are tired of digging up Tofumira, and then resume our holiday cruise.

That afternoon, Jamieson and his friends came down to the beach a little earlier than before. The sun had still about an hour to go, but already there were traces of evening in the air. The light wind had dropped, and the sea, where the Ina was moored, calm before, became glass-like, without a ripple. The gracious beams of the afternoon sun flooded the sea with mellow light, and played at light and shade among the palm trees on the island.

The dinghy was half-way across to the ketch, when Norman, who was idly watching the little boat, saw Jamieson, who was sitting in the stern, suddenly stoop and pick something up from beneath his feet. He spoke to the others, who stopped rowing. There was a hasty examination of what Jamieson held in his hand, and a hurried consultation. Then the rowing was resumed, and Norman thought that he saw the big man loosen something in his hip pocket.

"Harry!" called Norman. "Get that revolver. I think we might need it."

"What's up?" called back Harry, from the cookhouse.

"Dunno. We'll see shortly."

When the dinghy arrived at the Ina's stern, the three on board the ketch were in readiness for emergencies.

Norman and Tinker stood upon the rear deck, while Harry, with the sole fire-arm amongst them, lay in a point of vantage in the "engine-house."

As Albot stood up to cast the painter aboard, Norman called out:

"I'm not taking that rope till I see what Mr. Jamieson there has his hand on."

"What's that?" called the big man in the stern.

"Chuck that revolver away, Jamieson, or you're not coming here."

"Oh, aren't we?" retorted Jamieson. "Well, you're not sailing from here till you hand over those pearls you've got. You shouldn't go dropping specimens about on the floor of the dinghy, if you don't want your thievings to be discovered."

"What pearls?"

"You know what pearls! I might have known you chaps had something up your sleeves all the while; you seemed so darned quiet and innocent. You took things too easily not to have known something. Albot reckoned you were all right, but I should have known better."

"You've still got that revolver."

"Yes, by Gad! And I'll use it in a minute!"



And Jamieson made a threatening movement.

"I'll tell you what," he went on. "We'll share and share alike, if you like. You can't get away from here without us, and, though you've really got no right to those pearls, we'll forego that."

"If you forego that revolver——"

"Ah! there you are, then." There was a splash, and Jamieson's fireiron disappeared into the sea.

With his right hand Albot swung the painter, and, as Tinker caught it, he made a rapid movement with his left hand.

There was a sudden report from the engine-house, and the fat man let out a howl of agony, nearly upsetting the boat as he flung his arm about. A revolver clattered on to the floorboards at his feet.

"Chuck that thing overboard," roared Harry, from his place of concealment. "Quick!"

Murray reached for it, hesitated a fraction of a second, then dropped it into the water.

"Have you got a gun, too, Murray?" demanded Harry, coming out on to the deck.

"No."

"Well, we'll search you first as you come

aboard. But before that we'll tell you our terms. There's to be no funny business on your part. Murray can sail the ship back for us if he likes. If he doesn't, we'll get out ourselves somehow. We're going to up anchor right away, while this fine weather lasts. As there are too many of you to take chances with, and as the sea is calm, one of you will have to ride in the dinghy behind. You can take turns. I might mention that a very strict watch will be kept. As for your share of the pearls, you can have——"

"Yes?" queried Jamieson, anxiously.

"What you have got already."

As Jamieson and his party did not relish the prospect of an island life, now that the chief charm was removed from Tofumira, they accepted.

The voyage home proved a very pleasant one, especially to the three who had possession of Old Bob Gilder's island treasure (for Harry had decided to give both Norman Thwaites and Syd. Tinker a share), and who spent many a happy hour planning other pleasant voyages.

## The Dwarf's Tea Party

**T**HE little dwarf crept out of the ground. The rocks snapped together behind him, but the little dwarf pulled his toes in quickly, so that they did not get pinched. I'm sure you are glad about that. Then the little dwarf stretched himself.

"I don't know if it's one hundred o'clock or one thousand o'clock," he said, "but I've had a long nap."

He took three long leaps, each of which carried him 528,611 inches. The last brought him so near the edge of the sea that another quarter of an inch would have taken him into the water. So he sat down on a big rock, and began to wonder whether he should call his next meal "supper" or "dinner."

Just then a little golden boat with red silk sails came around the corner, straight towards the dwarf. The sailors were big boy dolls in sailor suits, and on a real golden throne sat a real live little prince. The prince landed and stood looking at the dwarf, with his arms folded, and a frown on his face. The king, who was the prince's father, looked just that way when the prince had done something he shouldn't.

"I've come to tea with you," he said.

"I hadn't invited you," replied the dwarf, and turned his back.

Wasn't the dwarf rude?

"Teg em emos reppus," said the prince.

The dwarf gave a squeal that sounded something like a cat when you step on her tail, and something like a motor car that doesn't like to work. For you see, if you want to make a dwarf do anything, tell it to him backwards, and he must, must, must do it. And the prince had found out the secret.

So the dwarf began to run back and forth and up and down very fast. First he took a handful of grains of sand, and threw them up into the air. They came down a pile of jam sandwiches. Then he took two pebbles and a blade of grass and three drops of sea water, and stirred them together in his hat to make some cakes.

"Hubble, gubble, rubble, dubble!!" he shouted.

Then he looked into his hat, and saw a pair of rubber shoes. He had forgotten the magic words. In a rage he leaped several times into



the air, each time higher than the last, and tried again.

"Hoof, goof, roof, doof!!" he cried. Then he looked into his hat again, and found a whole family of little china cats.

So he leaped several times more into the air, and tried again.

"Hicky, licky, micky, sicky!!" he called.

The prince and the sailors were so interested in all this that they did not notice a big gold ship, with big red sails, coming around the

corner. And out of that ship got a great king. When the little prince saw the big king, he blushed very pink, and hung his head, for the little prince had run away from home. And without even saying good-bye to the dwarf, he got into his boat, and the big ship and the little one sailed away together.

When the dwarf had watched the ships sail out of sight, he looked into his hat and found a plateful of cakes, each one with a cherry in the middle. So he sat down and ate them all up very fast.



"I've come to tea with you," he said.

## Billy Turns Detective

By K.K.

**B**ILLY MARSDEN went to bed murmuring to herself:—

"This time to-morrow night, where'll I be?

Out of the gates of miser-ee."

It was the last night of the term; to-morrow was prize-giving day, and then home! Billy loved her country home, and hated town life

in Christchurch. Leaving home meant leaving Judy, her greatest chum and companion. Judy wasn't allowed to go to school—not a town school, at any rate. Billy had raved and stormed and begged to be sent to a country school, so that Judy might come too, but Mr. and Mrs. Marsden were firm, and Judy had to be left behind.



Billy's parents came up for the prize-giving next day, and then, instead of going straight home, Mrs. Marsden and Billy stayed in town for several days, to do some shopping, while Mr. Marsden went up to Wellington on business.

Little did Billy think that an "adventure" would have its beginning in a chemist's shop in Christchurch. Mrs. Marsden was buying some toilet requisites, while Billy was amusing herself on the weighing machine at the other end of the shop. Suddenly she started, her attention arrested by the words, "Marsden is up in Wellington and the rest of the family are away; I've made the cattle medicine the excuse for getting up to town."

"Who's that talking about us?" Billy thought, and she crept nearer to the tall case by the door, from the other side of which she could hear low voices. Peeping round the corner, she saw two men with their backs towards her.

"I've got the papers and money stowed in that old whare in the bit of bush back of the forty-acre; pretty safe, I think. I'll get the silver there pretty late to-night, but you be there early and make a get-away with the lot. They'll never suspect me. I've arranged things all right, and you see you'll be able to——" Here the speaker seemed about to turn, so Billy drew back. She had recognised him as Adams, one of their own station hands!

What was she to do? Her father could not possibly arrive till next morning (which would be too late to prevent the burglary), even though she wired him to come at once. Her mother was so nervous and delicate that Billy would not dare say anything for fear of upsetting her.

Billy had her mind made up by the time Adams and his friend were away down the street, and Mrs. Marsden had finished her purchases.

They returned to the hotel, and while Mrs. Marsden went to lie down, Billy repaired to the writing-room. A little later she tiptoed into their bedroom, pinned her note on the dressing table, took her purse, put on her hat, and slipped out again, without waking her mother.

Half an hour later Mrs. Marsden was reading:—

"Dearest Mum,—I simply can't stand being away from home any longer, so I'm catching the next train back. I know it's awfully naughty, and you'll be furious, but do forgive

me. I knew you wouldn't leave until to-morrow and I can't stay away from Judy another day. I'll telephone when I get home, and say I'm there. Don't you worry. Heaps of love. Billy."

Mrs. Marsden was cross. "Really, how naughty of her to go running off like that! She's fourteen, and anyone would think she was four," she said. There was no other train home that day, so she just had to settle down and make the best of it. "However, I shall tell her father to give her a severe talking to," she added.

Arrived at her station, Billy alighted quickly and slipped into the little waiting-room. Yes, there was Adams, coming out of a second-class smoker, and he set off down the road for home at a brisk walk. Billy gave him time to get well ahead, and then followed, thinking hard. It was three miles to Mr. Marsden's station, and by the time she arrived her plans were well laid. She rang her mother up as she had promised, coaxed a substantial tea out of the cook, and then set to work. First of all, she collected all the silver out of the dining-room, and hid it in her bedroom, and then went into her father's study. There was the safe in the wall, looking as it always did, and fast shut when Billy tried it. Probably Adams had a special key to fit it. She went to her father's desk, and after opening several drawers, finally found what she wanted—a revolver! It was unloaded, otherwise she would not have dared to take it; but it would look well if she met a burglar in the whare and could flourish it in his face. It was almost dark, so she slipped out to get Judy; it would never do to go on an adventure of this sort without Judy! It didn't take her long to let her chum know there was some real excitement on, and Judy seemed as eager as herself to be away. "We must ride, Jude," she said, "and pretty hard, too."

So very soon they were off, cantering steadily over the paddocks, picking their way through the creek, and then up the gully. Presently the bit of dark bush came into view, and Billy reined in. Everything was very still, and quite dark. They approached the bush steadily and quietly, threading in and out between the straggling trees. Soon the bush became denser, so Billy dismounted. "It's no good both of us going, so I shall leave you here, Judy, and make for the whare alone; you might make too much noise." Judy did not demur; in fact, she was used to being ordered about by Billy,



so with a word of farewell Billy left her and disappeared among the trees.

It was not a great distance to the whare, and Billy knew the way. At each step the sticks underfoot seemed to snap with a report like thunder, no matter how softly she walked. Here and there a bird fluttered, as though it had tumbled off its perch. How still and mysterious everything seemed, and how Billy's heart thumped! By the time she reached the whare, she felt like turning round and running all the way back. "Don't be a silly," she told herself, and listened carefully; not a sound; so she pushed open the door and stepped in.

Taking out her electric torch from her haversack, she switched it on. She knew the little hut well; they had often sheltered there on a rainy day. Billy went straight to the cupboard and peered inside; nothing but dirty old tins; but she hopefully looked into them all. Empty! Then she thought of the fireplace; under a loose brick, perhaps! Down she went on her knees and began pulling at the bricks; something made her look up the chimney, and she espied a kettle hanging from a piece of wire. Taking it down, she looked inside. At last! Bundles of papers and bank notes packed in carefully! She quickly stuffed them into her haversack, and then suddenly stood up. Someone was coming!

Billy slipped outside and hid behind a big white pine. Tramp, crash, nearer and nearer. "Adams' friend, of course," she thought. He had a torch, and was coming straight for the hut. She watched him go in and shut the door, and then she started on her journey back to Judy.

What a noise she made! Snap! That was a bit of tree she had grabbed hold of, and it had broken off. The man must have heard, because the door of the hut creaked.

"That you, Bob?" he said softly.

Billy stood quite still, hoping he would go inside again; but he moved uneasily, and then she heard him walking towards her. Suddenly he switched on his torch, and she was right in its light. There was nothing for it but to run; she *must* reach Judy before he could catch her.

"Hi! Kid, you come along here," he called, starting to run after her. On Billy fled, stumbling and crashing through the undergrowth, fear clutching at her heart. She had the empty revolver in her hand, and as a last resource would try holding the man up with it. He was gaining on her rapidly, in spite of her

good start.

"Judy, Judy," gasped Billy, "quick!" Judy started as Billy stumbled up to her. Then, tearing the reins from the little branch to which she had hung them, she flung herself into the saddle just as the man arrived. He made a frantic attempt to grab the bridle, but she lifted the revolver high and then flung it with all her force in his face, at the same time digging her heels into her pony's sides. The man lost hold, as the pony bounded forward and galloped down the gully like a mad thing.

Billy never quite knew how they got home; had it not been for Judy's unerring instinct, she does not think they would ever have arrived that night.

Once within the walls of her own familiar room, Billy felt more like herself, and, quickly undressing, she tumbled into bed, and was soon fast asleep.

On waking early, she took the silver back to the dining-room before it could be missed. She thought it better to keep her secret until her father's arrival.

To her surprise, he came that morning, with her mother, having got down earlier than expected from Wellington.

Billy was so eager to tell her story that Mr. Marsden did not even have time to give her the scolding that was in store for her.

Billy had her "lecture" after it was all over, but her father was so proud and pleased with all she had done, that it wasn't a very bad one after all. "Though, don't you ever do anything like that by yourself again, Beryl; *next* time, if Dad isn't there, just tell someone else about it. You know, things might have turned out very differently, and then——" Mr. Marsden did not finish, but, instead, gave his brave little daughter a very big hug.

Well, the end of it all was that Adams was arrested, tried, and found guilty. He had not run away, because he thought he was perfectly safe, and that his absence would only arouse suspicion. He and his companion, who was caught later by the police, are now both in prison, where they are likely to remain for some time.

The girls at school often make Billy tell them about her exciting adventure. "But, you know, Judy did just as much as I did," Billy will add. "I couldn't have managed without her."

And Judy? Well, I expect you haven't found it very hard to guess that Judy was just Billy's faithful little pony.



## Southern Seas Story Competition

THE Southern Seas Story Competition was open to boys and girls attending secondary schools in any part of Australasia. There was a very good response indeed, entries being received from every State and from New Zealand. The successful competitors each receive a prize of £2/2/- (two guineas). To each of those placed, a copy of the Southern Seas Story Book has been sent.

The stories, on the whole, showed a very high order of merit, and prove that there is plenty of literary talent in this part of the world. It is gratifying to note that the schools themselves took such an interest in the competition, some being represented by three or four stories each.

The adventure story proved the most popular, both boys and girls entering for this very freely. There is no doubt that the young Australian has great advantages in obtaining local colour for good adventure stories, and it is evident that the competitors have used their powers of observation to a very great extent. Descriptions of kangaroo hunting, the rounding up of brumbies, bush fires and encounters with the blacks were given in a very vivid manner.

Perhaps the school stories were not quite so free and natural as the adventure ones, the English model being evidently followed to a great extent. School life in Australia has a distinct atmosphere of its own, and its traditions are not always those of older countries. However, most of the competitors recognised that it was the essential thing for their characters to play the game, which shows that, in that respect at least, the ideal is the same all the world over, in both boys' and girls' schools. It is evident that the girls like writing and reading boys' school stories, as well as their brothers, for a good many competitors were of the fair sex.

In judging the competition, the choice fell on those who showed that they understood that in short story-writing the interest should be held throughout by one incident, as if for a short period an insight was being given into the moods and actions of a particular group of characters. Each of those who obtained the first prize rounded off the story in this manner. Some whose descriptive work was perhaps better, lacked this essential.

Those who failed to obtain a place must not be discouraged. There was scarcely one story that was not interesting in its way, and it must be remembered that the art of short story-writing is not acquired in a day. The stories were all considered first by the Editor of the Southern Seas Story Book, and the final judgment made by Mr. Henry Stead ("Stead's Magazine").

The names and addresses of the first four in each section are given, with the name of the story:—

### GIRLS' SCHOOL STORY.

1. Aileen Nolan, St. Mary's Convent High School, Maryborough, Queensland, "Peggy."
2. Clibby Hicks, Girton College, High Street, Fremantle, W.A., "The Amateur Detectives."
3. Vera Martin, Catholic Ladies' College, Gipps Street, East Melbourne, Victoria, "The White Lady."
4. Beryl Temple, Girton College, High Street, Fremantle, W.A., "The Bravest Girl in the School."

Elsie Hobbs, Girls' High School, Claremont, W.A., ran very close with "Peggy Warren's First Term at School."

### BOYS' SCHOOL STORY.

1. George Leo Dethridge, Haileybury College, Brighton Beach, Victoria, "Piddington's Position."
2. William A. G. Diamond, Boys' Grammar School, Maryborough, Queensland, "The Geoffrey Cup."
3. R. Paris, c/o Mr. Whitbread, The Wurlie, Keswick, Adelaide, S.A., "For the School."
4. Bessie Durlacher, Girls' High School, Claremont, W.A., "Goose Flesh."

### ADVENTURE STORY.

1. Allan C. Harris, Prince Alfred College, Adelaide, S.A., "Guarded Gold."
2. Nina Patten, Church of England Girls' Grammar School, Elizabeth Street, Launceston, Tasmania, "McAllisters."
3. William H. Robertson, Oyama, Huntingtower Road, Malvern, Melbourne, Victoria, "Fear Triumphant."
4. Marion Rankin, C.E.G.G.S., Girton, Myrtle Street, Bendigo, Victoria, "An Australian Bush Fire."



## Boys' School Story—Piddington's Position

By George Leo Dethridge.

IT was the last morning lesson at Whitecliff Grammar School, and very little work was being done, as everyone seemed too excited. This state of excitement was due to the fact that in the afternoon Whitecliff were to play Culverhouse Grammar School, to decide which was the Premier Football Team of the Schools' Competition, to which both belonged.

It was in the Fifth Form Room that least work seemed to be done. The lesson was arithmetic, and the master, Mr. Mansfield, was having great difficulty in getting attention from his class. He had given impositions freely, but as this did not have the desired effect, he threatened to send the next boy who was caught fooling to the headmaster. For a few minutes he received some attention, but, as he went on working a sum on the blackboard, the lawless spirit again came over the class. Balls of paper were thrown across the room, and paper darts were directed with the truest aim. Everyone seemed engaged in some kind of mischief, and the wonder was that such little noise accompanied their efforts. However, it was evident that, sooner or later, the master would detect someone, and that is just what happened.

Sitting at a desk in the middle of the classroom was a fair-headed boy named Frank Piddington. Next to him was his particular friend, Eric Harvey. Both boys were about sixteen years of age, and both were taking an active part in the unruly proceedings of the class.

While Mr. Mansfield was busy at the blackboard, Piddington picked up a piece of screwed-up paper from the floor, and, turning to his friend, whispered, "I say, Eric, watch me hit young Mullins on the crust." He then threw the paper with such force that it hit Mullins—a small boy who sat in the front row—on the head, and bouncing off rolled at the feet of Mr. Mansfield. The latter wheeled round from the blackboard, and demanded, in an angry voice, "Who threw this piece of paper?" No one spoke. None of the other boys, most of whom were busily engaged doing the same thing, had noticed what had happened, and all looked surprised and guilty when this question was suddenly fired at them. Mr. Mansfield again spoke, and this time he asked, "Will the

boy who threw this piece of paper please stand up?" No one moved, and Piddington looked straight ahead of him.

He was not dishonest by nature, but he did not see why he should own up when all the other boys had been doing the same thing; and, combined with this, although perhaps he did not realise it, was his excitement and his fear of having to face the headmaster. "Very well," said Mr. Mansfield; "as the boy who did the throwing does not seem to have the courage to own up, the whole class can do extra work on Monday, provided that the culprit does not own up beforehand, which I hope he will."

Perhaps Frank Piddington would have owned up then, but the bell for dismissal having rung, he held back, thinking that he could confess later, and Mr. Mansfield, with a brief command to do the sum on the board for homework, dismissed the class. As the class left the room, there was some talk and speculation as to who threw the paper, but as some of the boys were not quite certain where their own paper balls went, and the rest of the school were discussing the football match, the subject was soon dropped.

Frank Piddington was on his way home, partly troubled by his conscience, but more excited about the match, when Eric Harvey came up with him. His first words to his friend were, "What are you going to do about it, Frank?" Frank looked a bit ashamed, and replied, "Oh, I'll own up before Monday, all right."

"I thought you would; it was stiff luck getting copped."

"Yes, it was rotten luck," said Frank; "but, anyway, I would rather report to the Head after than before the match."

"Do you think we can pull it off?" asked Harvey.

"I don't see why we shouldn't," replied Piddington. "They say they are a heavy lot, but what we lose in weight we make up in speed, and we have a very good captain in Carter."

"Yes, we are fast all right, and if the forwards play together, we ought to win the Premiership, as the backs are quite strong."

Frank Piddington and Eric Harvey were both members of the Whitecliff XVIII., and each was a reliable forward. Upon parting, each had



forgotten the unpleasant affair of the arithmetic lesson, and the only thought that occupied their minds was: "Can we win?" And indeed, this was the thought which all the bigger boys of both schools had been thinking for the last week. The schools were old rivals and there was every indication of a great match, as the teams were decidedly good for boys' schools and the weather was perfect.

The match was to be played on the Whitecliff Grammar School Ground, and some time before the start of the match a large crowd of boys and their relatives had assembled there. Culverhouse Grammar School was situated about five miles from Whitecliff, and their team and supporters had journeyed across in good time for the match.

An incident occurred before the match which tended to remind Frank Piddington of the unpleasant task of owning up, which it was his duty to perform. As he and Eric Harvey approached the football ground, which lay a few hundred yards from the school, prior to the match, they met Mr. Mansfield. He stopped them and asked if they thought they could win the premiership. Eric Harvey replied that he thought they stood a very fair chance, but Piddington, much to his own surprise, found that he could not look his master squarely in the face, and could only reply, "Yes, sir." As he passed on he felt sorry that the matter had not ended in the morning. But as he answered greetings from his school-fellows, it once again took a secondary place in his thoughts.

When the teams came out on the ground, they were warmly cheered by their supporters. The Culverhouse team looked to be the heavier, if anything, but both sides were in good training. After Simpson, the captain of Culverhouse, and Carter had tossed for ends, the game commenced. From the start it was seen that there was little difference in the sides, and that either team might win. The game was a fast one throughout. It was soon evident that Simpson, who was playing half back, was a good player, as he saved rush after rush by the Whitecliff forwards. The Whitecliff centre, White, was also playing good football, but most often his work was frustrated by the dashing Simpson, who, with long kicks, transferred the ball to the other half of the ground. However, both sides scored freely, and at half-time Culverhouse were leading by five points.

After half-time it was seen that the player whom Simpson had been minding had changed

places with Piddington. This change had good results, as Simpson was not so prominent, although he still played well, while Piddington played splendidly. He frequently passed to the other forwards, but they seemed to make nothing of their opportunities. During this quarter Culverhouse played slightly better than Whitecliff, kicking 2 goals 3 behinds to 1 goal 3 behinds. Thus at the final change Culverhouse were leading by eleven points.

During the change of ends Carter approached Piddington and said: "Look here, Piddington, those other forwards don't seem to be playing for goal, so instead of passing to them shoot for goal yourself." "Very well," replied Piddington, and soon after the game recommenced.

The spectators had been in a state of great excitement all through the match, but it reached its height when the last quarter commenced. The Culverhouse supporters were feeling confident of winning, while those who favoured Whitecliff were hopeful of catching up to and beating their rivals.

Soon after the start of the last quarter Piddington scored a goal. This brought Whitecliff to within five points of their rivals. For a long time no one scored, and the Whitecliff boys began to feel anxious, when Piddington secured the ball from a crush and sent it on to Harvey. The latter marked, and amid silence took his shot for goal. Much to the disappointment of the Whitecliff supporters, it was only a behind, and Culverhouse were still four points in the lead. The Culverhouse full back did a beautiful kick-off. Several players went up for the mark, but one went slightly higher than the rest and secured the mark. It turned out to be Piddington, and when, with a long kick, he secured a goal, the cheers of Whitecliff Grammar School were deafening, as it put them in the lead by two points. A few minutes later time was called, without any more scoring, and the game was won for Whitecliff.

It had been a great match, and the spectators realised that it was largely due to the efforts of Piddington and White, and especially the former, that the match had been won. Congratulations were offered to them by Carter and the other members of the team. The sports master said that Piddington had practically won the match by his good play, while Dr. Newton, the headmaster, shook hands with him and said that he had given "a very good display."

Frank Piddington was beginning to think it



was worth while having done something to win the match, when Mr. Mansfield approached and congratulated him on having "played the game as it should be played." It was then that this other thing broke in on his triumph. It all came back to him how he had not owned up in the morning.

As he went home from the match the words "played the game" came back to his mind, and it struck him how far he had been from playing the game in arithmetic. He had intended to own up before, but how could he now, he reasoned to himself, after being congratulated personally for practically winning the match by the head, to whom he would be sent, and by Mr. Mansfield, to whom he would have to confess? How their opinions of him would change; they said he put up a good fight on the football field, but what would they say of the cowardly part he had played in not owning up. No, he could hardly confess now, after his performance this afternoon. And any way, the chaps did not know who threw the paper, and it would not be so very hard doing the extra work. But what a pity he had thrown the paper, and what a fool he was not to see that Mr. Mansfield was in a line with that fool Mullins!

Thus he reasoned with himself during tea, while his mother wondered if the football match had been too much for him. On his way to school that evening, he was still thinking over his awkward position, when suddenly the words "played the game" came into his mind again, and like a flash he realised that to play the game again he must own up at once. How foolish he was not to see his way in that light before, he thought. Of course, it was the only way out of the difficulty, and

he realised that he would be doing his duty not to his team, but to his class.

The first thing he did when he got to school that evening was to knock at the study door of Mr. Mansfield. Upon being bidden to "Come in," he entered and saw Mr. Mansfield reading at a table. Piddington quickly explained why he had come. Mr. Mansfield did not reply at once, but sat thinking. When he spoke he said: "It may surprise you, Piddington, to know that I had a very good idea that you were the boy who threw that piece of paper this morning. I had a good idea of the direction from which the paper came, and I think your appearance then and later, in the afternoon, was rather guilty. Perhaps you will realise when you are older that it is not so hard to find a guilty person as it looks. However, I think you have cleared yourself of your mistake this morning, as the circumstances in which you confess are quite different. Bring me one hundred lines by Monday—and I hope you will attend more in the future." Piddington just managed to stammer "Thank you, sir," and left the room. To say he was surprised is putting it lightly, as he fully expected to be sent to the headmaster after a long, uncomfortable lecture.

Outside, he met Eric Harvey, who pounced on him, and said, "I've been looking for you everywhere. Come down to the Fifth Form room quickly. Everyone is down there, kicking up a great shindy. Wasn't it great winning the match?"

"I just feel like kicking up a noise," replied Frank, "and on the way I will tell you about that sport, Mansfield. He has just been jolly decent to me."

## Girls' School Story—Peggy

By Aileen Nolan.

RECREATION time at St. Winifred's College. The playground was alive with girls—girls from all parts of Queensland—and happy, girlish laughter rang through the air. Three girls were sitting under an old fig tree in a somewhat secluded part of the grounds.

"She's gone about half-an-hour," said Miriam Walters, uneasily, her sunny face clouded with anxiety, as she peered up into the tree. "She should be back now."

"Don't you worry," advised Gracie Berne, complacently. "Peg will turn up all right. She always does."

"Oh! but she might be hurt or something," murmured Julie Taylor, nervously. "She's so careless."

There was a faint rustle overhead, and a gentle shower of leaves fell upon the group.

"Peg!" The exclamation came simultaneously from all three. For descending the tree was a girl—a girl with such a piquant, laughing



face, framed with a mass of short brown curls—a girl with dancing, blue eyes that gleamed roguishly on the little group.

"Oh! Peg, you took an awful time," began Miriam, as the newcomer swung easily off a branch and dropped beside them.

"We didn't know what to think," put in Julie.

"Peggy! Just look at your skirt!" cried Grace, in dismay.

Peggy Thornton laughed wickedly. "Pooh! That's nothing," she replied, demurely, patting a big rent in her serge skirt.

"Did you get the ball?" Miriam asked, eagerly.

Peggy chuckled. "I did, me darlint," and she produced a tennis ball from her pocket.

The girls laughed. "But you must never do it again, Peg," said Julie, firmly. "Not if you send fifty balls over the wall into the next door garden. You might get caught."

"Pooh! There's only a harmless old man lives there, and it's as easy as easy to climb from this fig to the one opposite next door. The branches touch," she replied.

"Nevertheless——" began Julie.

"Did you meet anyone, Peg?" put in Grace, breathlessly.

"Y—Yes. That is, no, I didn't."

Peggy Thornton crimsoned as she met her friends' puzzled gaze. But she could not tell even them, how, after finding the ball she had been forced to hide behind some hedging to escape being seen by someone who was coming her way, and she had recognised that someone as Alma Leigh, a sixth form girl, not particularly loved by Peggy and her fourth form friends. And Alma had stumbled quite close to Peggy's hiding place. Something had shot out of her hand—something that flashed in the sunlight as it fell. Alma had picked it up quickly, nervously, and hurried on. Peggy had been mystified. "How did Alma Leigh get in there, and what was she doing?" were the questions that raced through Peggy's brain. And because she could find no answer for them she was silent. So now she repeated with rather unnecessary firmness—

"No. I did not meet anyone."

"Anyhow," she soliloquised to herself, "I did not meet her. I only saw her."

"Look! There's Gladys Wren calling us," exclaimed Miriam, pointing to a figure on the school steps, beckoning vigorously.

Julie sighed resignedly.

"Come on. We had better go."

They made their way across the grounds.

Miriam had slipped her arm through Peggy's.

"You girls have to go to your class room at once," said Gladys, as they came up.

"The class room!" echoed Miriam. "What on earth for?"

"I do not exactly know. All the Fourth girls are wanted," and Gladys looked keenly at the four as she spoke. "Some row on, I fancy."

"Is there?" sweetly inquired Peggy. "What about?"

"You will soon know," was the rather grim reply.

Four pairs of eyes looked volumes.

"Come on. We may as well find out," and Peggy took the lead. But all her self-possession fled, when, on flinging open the class-room door, she beheld, on the raised platform, just a few feet away, the Principal, Miss Burton, and Miss Brookes, the Fourth Form mistress, in close confab with a little, old man, whose grey moustache seemed fairly bristling with rage. Peggy was still holding the ball. With a quick movement she slipped it into her pocket—for the gentleman was no other than the "harmless old man" who lived next door. Thirty girls were gazing with suppressed excitement at the group at the door.

"Margaret Thornton, hand me that article you have placed in your pocket." Miss Burton spoke sternly and commandingly.

The hot colour dyed Peggy's cheeks.

"Give it, Peg. Go on, give it," came in an agonised whisper from Miriam.

Peggy stepped forward, and slowly and unwillingly produced the fatal ball.

"A-ah! I thought so." The Principal turned to the visitor. "Mr. Denton, is this the ball that fell into your garden?"

"It looks very much like it," replied that gentleman. "So you are the young woman who deliberately threw that confounded ball into my yard, and destroyed two of my prize roses, nearly breaking the bush as well, eh?" and he glared at Peggy.

"I beg your pardon," and the clear, girlish voice rang through the room. "I did not throw that ball. I was fooling with it and it went over itself."

There was an awful silence.

"Pon my soul!" Mr. Denton ejaculated at last.

"Margaret Thornton," Miss Burton's stern voice broke the silence. "If this ball fell into Mr. Denton's garden, how did you get it back?"

There was another silence. Then a proud little head was raised defiantly.

"I went in and got it."



Mr. Denton started in amazement.

"How did you get in?" It was he who asked the question, before Miss Burton regained her speech.

"I—I climbed the fig in our yard and swung on to the one that touches it in your garden," was the clear reply.

There was an audible gasp from Miss Burton.

"*'Pon my soul!*" Mr. Denton seemed incapable of further speech.

"My dear sir, I am extremely sorry that a pupil of mine should be guilty of such disgraceful conduct." Two red spots were visible in Miss Burton's cheeks. "I can assure you that you will not be subject to such annoyance again, and I can also assure you that the culprit will be severely punished."

Mr. Denton felt himself dismissed.

With a muttered, "Yes, yes, exactly," he turned in a dazed manner towards the door. At the door he looked back. Peggy was standing proudly erect, the blue eyes gazing scornfully at the departing figure. He closed the door hurriedly. "*'Pon my soul!*" the maid heard him mutter as she showed him out.

Twenty minutes later Peggy emerged from Miss Burton's study. Such a flushed, rebellious Peggy.

"I won't! I won't! I won't!" she said, passionately, as she made her way to the dormitory. Then she sobbed. "No more holidays for the rest of the term. No more tennis; no more cricket; and consider myself lucky I wasn't packed off home. Ugh!" and she threw herself down on the bed, and cried. She lay there for over an hour, hugging the pillow. Then someone called her name. It was Miss Brookes.

"Get up, Margaret Thornton," she said gently. "Miss Burton wants you in her study."

A tear-stained face was lifted to hers.

"Want's me again?"

Miss Brookes nodded. "Hurry up, child," she said, still gently. Peggy got up wearily from the bed, and went. Miss Brookes sighed, as she watched her go.

Later that evening, the whole school was agog with excitement. Peggy—Peg Thornton had stolen a diamond ring from Mr. Denton. Gracie Berne was trying to comfort the sobbing Julie. Miriam's face was very pale.

"Well, it's time the little thief has been caught." It was Alma Leigh, a tall, dark girl, a few feet away from Miriam, who was speaking.

"How dare you say that?" Miriam's eyes flashed fire. "Peg is no thief. She didn't touch

that ring, and all of you know she didn't. You—you cowards!"

"Girls! What does this mean? Has the tea bell to be rung a second time for your benefit? Form into line at once!"

Little did Miss Brookes guess of the quarrel she had so opportunely interrupted—of the hot, burning words that were crushed back on her appearance.

But there was very little tea eaten by anyone that night.

Meanwhile, Peggy was alone. Alone in the room where she had been sent after the second interview. Such a forlorn, little figure she looked, huddled up against the window sill, gazing up into a clear, starry sky. The blue eyes, so tired and frightened, were gazing at the little twinkling lamps. Somehow they seemed like messengers of hope to the lonely girl.

"But it's no use," she sobbed despairingly. "Nobody will believe me, and Alma Leigh won't say she was there. She must have taken it." Bitter sobs were shaking her frame now. Once again she raised her face to the starlit sky. "I can't tell on her. Dear God!" she cried, wildly, "make Alma Leigh confess," and then, groping her way to the bed, she sobbed herself to sleep.

It was late that night when the head mistress, candle in hand, entered the room and stood by the bedside of the sleeping Peggy. Miss Burton's face softened as she gazed at her. It was hard to imagine Peggy Thornton a thief. If only there had not been that incriminating bit of blue serge that Mr. Denton had found caught in the window catch; and Peggy's dress had been torn. True, all the girls' dresses were made of the same cloth, but no other girl would have dared to leave the school grounds. Yes, Peggy was the culprit. But then—and Miss Burton frowned perplexedly—what had she done with the ring? Threats and pleadings had failed to produce it. There was a movement from the bed.

"*'Pon my soul!*" Peggy murmured distressfully. A ghost of a smile flitted over the still handsome features of Miss Burton. So Peggy was given to talking in her sleep. But the smile died away as she listened to what followed. Poor Peggy's broken cry rose to her lips even as she slept.

"Dear God—make—Alma Leigh—confess!" and then followed incoherent, almost wild talk. A startled look crept into Miss Burton's face, as the full sense of the disjointed sentences dawned on her. Peggy's voice had trailed off into a dry



sob. There was silence. Miss Burton waited, but Peggy was sleeping quietly now. Softly the Principal left the room and turned up the corridor, never stopping until she reached the door of Alma Leigh's room. Each sixth form girl had a room to herself. She opened the door gently. There was a startled exclamation from a figure standing by the window, in the full glow of the moonlight. Something fell and rolled on the floor.

"Stay where you are, Alma," commanded Miss Burton quietly. But the command was unnecessary. Alma Leigh, pale and trembling, was too stunned to move. Watching her narrowly, the headmistress placed the candle on the table, and felt for the switch. The next moment the electric light was gleaming mercilessly on a glittering, round circle in the middle of the floor. Miss Burton picked it up. Then with unhesitating steps she walked towards the wardrobe. She flung open the door. Yes, there was the other clue she sought—a torn skirt. There was a pitiful, gasping cry, and Alma Leigh fell unconscious to the floor.

Two days later, Peggy was standing by the window of the little room where Miss Burton had thought best to keep her. She was gazing up into a blue, cloudless sky, with a look of deep thankfulness. Everybody was so kind to her now—so kind. There was a movement at the door. Peggy glanced round quickly. Alma Leigh stood on the threshold.

"Peggy!" the voice was tremulous, pleading. "Peggy, I—I am going away to-day, and I—I have come to ask your pardon."

A curious, hard look had come over Peggy's face. She did not speak. The red colour mounted the elder girl's cheeks.

"I suppose you despise me," she went on, bitterly, "Well, I was mad to come. Only—

only, I thought you might forgive me."

Still there came no reply.

"You will not speak. And yet, perhaps, if you knew—you might not be so hard. You have a mother, Peggy," and the voice softened. "I saw her once when she came to the school, and I often thought if I had a mother like that I—I would have been better. You have known love," she went on, again bitterly; "I—I have never known it. I never knew either of my parents, and all my relatives think me a bother, and do you wonder when I found that path into the next house, and went inside and saw that ring—I—I stole it. I wanted money. Well, I am paying the price now," she ended with a hard laugh. "Good-bye, Peggy. Forgive me if you can," and Alma Leigh turned wearily towards the door.

But Peggy stood in front of her. A little, white hand was stretched towards the elder girl. The blue eyes were glistening with tears.

"Good-bye, Alma," she said gently. "I am, oh! so sorry."

Alma's lips quivered.

"Thank you," she said simply, as she took the outstretched hand. "Good-bye, Peggy."

The door closed and Alma Leigh had gone.

"Did you ever see such a harum scarum as that Margaret Thornton," complained Miss Brookes to the Principal, some time later. "Just look at her now." Miss Burton did look, and certainly Peggy seemed an ideal harum scarum. The curls were running in wild confusion over her forehead; her blouse showed a decided tendency to "stick out," while Peggy, herself, seemed here, there and everywhere. And seeing all this, Miss Burton only smiled wisely.

"Some day," she said, softly, "we will all feel very proud of our madcap, Peggy."

## Adventure Story: Guarded Gold

By Allan C. Harris.

IT was nearing evening, after a hot November day, in a year of drought. The homestead on the plain presented a lifeless, deserted appearance to the eye. Month after month had passed without a drop of rain, and the cattle and flocks had starved on the arid plains. Situated in the far north of South Australia, and within thirty miles of the Flinders Range, Bob Ward's station was remote from civilisation. Bad years had blighted Ward's hopes

and resources, so that now nothing remained to him but two fine horses. His land was mortgaged, and he was on the point of abandoning everything. His only companion in this desolate spot was a man of middle-age and doubtful character, named Larry McShaine, and Ward was endeavouring to reform him. They were now preparing for their journey southwards, which was to begin on the morrow.

"It'll be an awful day in the sun to-morrow,



boss, if to-day is any indication."

"Yes, indeed! I'll go and attend to the horses," replied Ward. Some moments later he returned in a hurry. "Larry, what is that moving out there in the west?" he called. Rushing inside for his field-glasses, McShaine was soon able to declare that it was a man, bending low in the saddle, approaching the homestead. In a few moments Ward was riding away toward the west.

"Well, I never! It's old Ned, the prospector, and he looks sick, indeed," he exclaimed, as he approached the rider. It took some time to bring the sick man back to the station, where McShaine had prepared a bed and some food. The old man, whom they had discovered was an old prospector, who some months previously had left the station, on a prospecting trip. No one knew much about him, and he often disappeared for months at a time. By now the sun was setting over the distant range, not very far from a reddish-coloured mountain, named Coppertop.

The sick man had fallen into a state of delirium, although the only intelligible words Ward, sitting by his bed, could hear were "gold" and "beware." In the middle of one of Ned's outbursts, McShaine entered the room, and over-hearing these words, the cunning look which stole over his face bespoke his desire to discover the old man's secret. Gradually, however, Ned ceased to rave, and slept more peacefully, to awake after a night of repose in his right mind. He tried to speak, but Ward bade him desist until he was stronger. Soon Ned managed to convey to Ward that he had something for his ears alone, so sending McShaine out to attend to the horses, he approached Ned's bedside, where he heard Ned's tale.

"After leaving you last, I went off into the hills some seventy miles north-west of here, and, after much searching, I came across a grassy, well-watered valley. The nature of the country made me think it contained gold, and after a short time I found gold in a watercourse formed by a spring in the valley. I gathered gold dust and nuggets in large quantity, and hid it in a cave, in a chest of my own make."

Here he stopped, and gasped for breath. Bob gave him a drink, and ran outside, calling McShaine, who very suspiciously slunk round the corner. "Go for the doctor down at McDonald's, quickly; Ned is very ill." The fellow went off to saddle-up. Soon Ward returned to the old man's side. After a while, Ned, who was looking very weak, continued slowly. "I can't live much longer, so I will tell you my secret. Here

is the plan of the way to the valley, which contains the gold. But I have carefully guarded the chest. Be careful how you approach it, for it means death——." Ned stopped abruptly, and passed away without saying another word. Quickly shoving the plan in his pocket, Ward rushed outside to recall McShaine. To his surprise he found he had gone in that short space of time, as the dust on the plain showed. Was it worth while to go after him? Ward then set to work and interred Ned's remains.

Some time later he inspected the plan with great interest, for here was a chance to recoup his losses. The main directions were:—"Make for Mount Coppertop, then proceed in a north-easterly direction until you again strike the range, which forms a semi-circle past Mount Coppertop. In the distance you will see a hill crested with three gums, though otherwise bare. This marks the valley." Inset was a map of the valley, and over the word "cave" was written, "Lie to open." But there was no indication of danger, such as Ned had hinted at.

It was still early in the day, and Ward decided to make the search at once. Packing some food and a rifle, he set out, and toward evening reached Mount Coppertop, where he camped for the night. Tired after his ride, he soon began to doze. Unnoticed in the gloom was the shadowy figure of a man, who, as the fire fell lower, crept slowly towards the recumbent Ward. Suddenly he was stunned by a blow from a cudgel, and the form of a man knelt over Ward, and drew from his pocket the plan of the valley. Then he withdrew and quickly disappeared in the gathering gloom. Hours later, Ward awoke, to find the light gathering in the east, and with a throbbing head prepared to break his fast. Slowly the night's happenings dawned on him. Who was it, he asked himself? Had McShane followed him? or was it some partner of Ned, the prospector? Luckily, he remembered all the points of the simple plan.

Off he set as the dawn was breaking, with the knowledge that his assailant had some hours start. The sun shone warmly, and his aching head caused Ward to stop at noon, out on the plain. In vain he searched for water, and his thirsty mount was in no condition for further travel that day. The thought of the lead which the other possessed tormented him. Slowly the afternoon dragged away, and the lack of water was beginning to tell on Ward. Just as he lay down for the night, under a shrub, he detected the twinkle of a fire in the hills some ten miles distant. Away there in the silence, not far from his goal, was Ward's assailant.



Ward woke with the coming of the day, and was soon on his way, though he still felt the tortures of thirst. Some miles further on he came upon a dead horse. It was the horse on which McShaine had supposedly gone for the doctor. So McShaine was his violent rival. Examination showed that the horse had broken its leg, so that the rider was forced to shoot it. Hurriedly he pushed on, and after an hour or two he came upon McShaine's camp on the hills. The hot ashes showed that the other, feeling secure from pursuit, had not long left his camp. Fortunate, indeed, for Ward that the loss of McShaine's horse had hindered his progress. "If I only had water!" he groaned. "Surely there must be a spring nearby." But no search revealed the thing he most required. There was nothing for him to do but push on as best he could.

Cheered indeed was he, when in the distance there rose to view the hill crested with three gums. Clearer and clearer did the hill appear, when suddenly from behind a bush rose McShaine, who covered Ward with his revolver. "You have caught up, I see, boss, ha! ha! But I'll thank you to dismount right away, and try Shank's pony. I'm the only one who will get this gold." Helpless, Ward dismounted, and to his disgust was left to trudge on, while McShaine galloped away. Now, Ward was in a pitiful state, for the other had his rifle and his food. "The villain," he muttered, "and after all I have done for him. But he shall not succeed." The dust thrown up by the horse was becoming barely noticeable, showing how desperate was his case. Still he must push on, for he knew there was water in the valley, and there was nought but a waste behind.

Higher climbed the sun, and the heat which poured upon him, caused his head to swim, till he stumbled, only to rise and drag himself forward. The rider ahead was now out of sight, and Ward was on the point of dropping, when he caught sight of a small trickle of water ahead. "At last," he cried, as with a supreme effort he dragged himself to what proved to be a tiny spring. Falling flat on his face, he drank his fill, and rested himself while he bathed his face and his aching feet. Soon he rose to his feet, feeling like a new man, with hope stirring in his breast once more. Quickening his pace, he pushed forward in the direction of the hill he was seeking, and now only a few miles lay before him. Several minutes later the thing which he feared happened. Slowly over the hill rode McShaine, appearing like a spot as he reached the brow of the hill, and

disappeared. "I am afraid that my luck is right out this trip," he muttered.

Slowly, but surely, the distance decreased, until barely a mile separated him from his goal. Ward now advanced more cautiously, taking advantage of any cover afforded by the low, stunted scrub. Bang! To his eager ears came the faint report of a fire-arm. What could it mean? Was there a third treasure seeker? At last Ward reached the foot of the hill over which McShaine had disappeared. Ignorant of what dangers lay in store for him over the ridge, Ward crept from rock to rock, and thus climbed the hill, every moment expecting to be challenged. But no such thing happened, and he reached the top in safety. Cautiously he peered around a boulder, when his eyes lighted on an oasis in the desert. A fertile valley stretched away before him, while in the side of the hill bubbled a spring, and its course was bordered with green. There was his horse browsing, but McShane was nowhere to be seen.

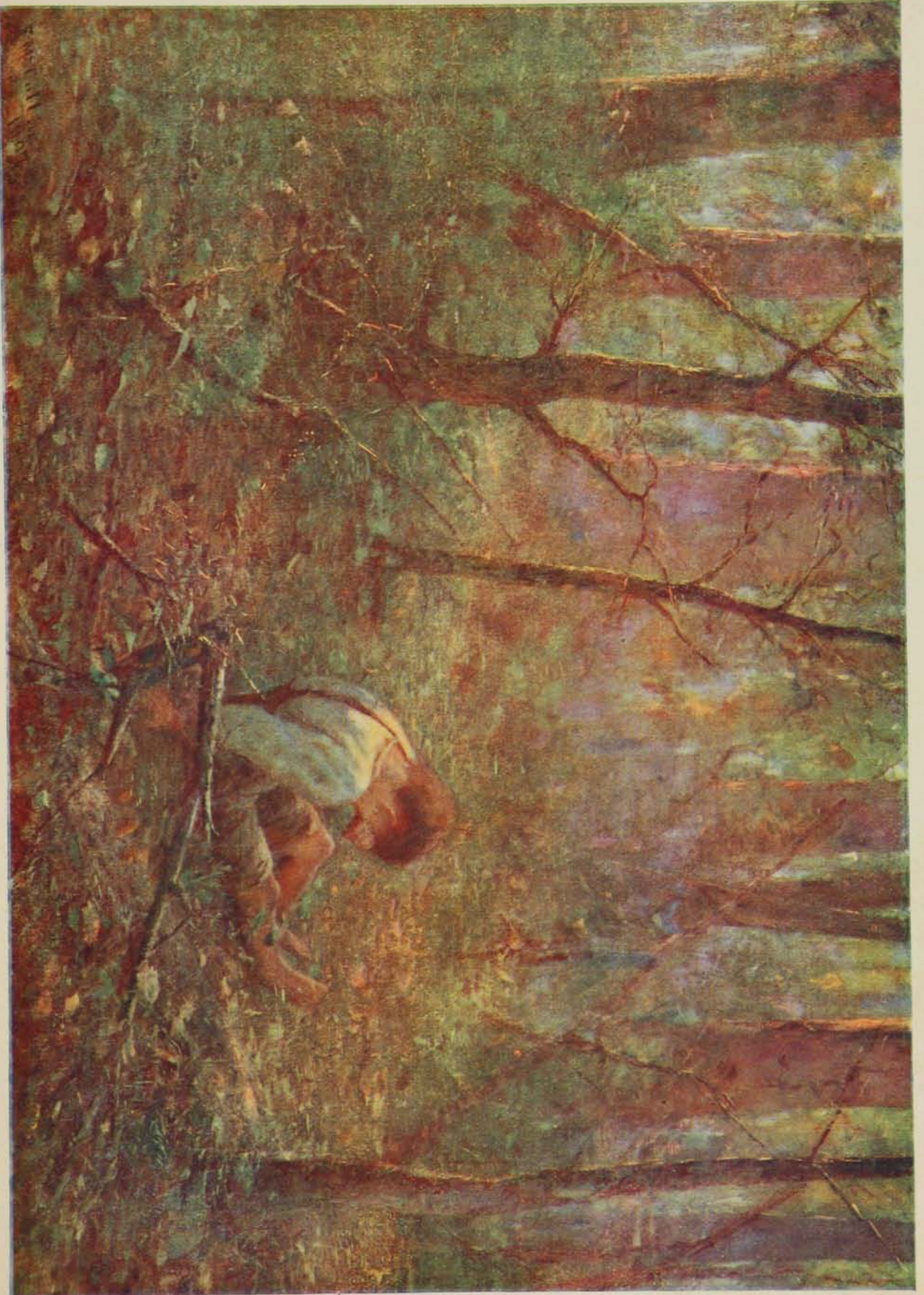
Ward scanned the hillside for some time before discovering the cave containing the gold. The surprising calm of the place worked on his nerves, so, making a detour round the hill, he slowly approached the cave. Still there was no sign of McShaine, and Ward ventured to peer into the cave. He was almost stunned by the sight which met his eyes, for there on the floor of the cave lay McShane lifeless. Entering the cave, Ward carried him out to the open air, but he was dead, his corpse being almost cold.

"So that was the result of the shot which I heard," he exclaimed, as he discovered that a bullet had passed through McShaine's heart. But who had fired the shot? There was no sign of another anywhere! Covering McShaine's face, he walked into the cave. There in a nook in the rear, was a chest, made from a hollow tree trunk. Its lid was lying loose, showing that it had been tampered with.

Carefully raising the lid, Ward beheld the precious contents of the chest, wealth such as he had never dreamed of, in the shape of nuggets and gold dust. Again he looked, and his look solved the mystery of McShaine's death. Attached to the under side of the lid, near the catch, was a large pistol. Ward lowered the lid until it was almost closed, and found that the pistol pointed straight at his breast. Evidently, he surmised, some string had connected the catch of the lid and the trigger, so that when McShaine, standing in front had raised the lid, the pistol was fired, with fatal effect. A broken string showed that he was correct. Quickly Ward's mind flashed back to



*Lost in the Bush.*



*By F. McCubbin.*



## LOST IN THE BUSH.

All the golden afternoon,  
Through the waving grasses,  
In and out the gums and ferns  
Dickie strays and passes.

Wee creeks sing for him their song;  
Gleaming fish are glancing;  
In a secret playground near,  
Bower-birds are dancing.

Nature's beauty all around,  
Sunset glory shining;  
Dickie does not heed at all—  
For his home he's pining.

Just a little hut of bark,  
With a chimney crazy;  
Blue smoke rising in a curl,  
As if the fire were lazy.

'Neath his feet, wee rabbits grey,  
Play with white flags flying;  
Do not heed our tired Dick,  
Notice not his crying.

If Dickie, like a little man,  
Lifts his head and listens,  
A happy smile will wreath his face,  
Though a tear drop glistens.

"Coo-ee," comes his mother's voice;  
Soft, yet clear, she's calling,  
"Dickie, come and get your tea;  
Evening shades are falling."



old Ned's bedside, and he remembered the warning which had been uncompleted. The words, also, which were written in the plan. "Lie to open," had now a peculiar significance. How fortunate, indeed, had been all his setbacks.

"He who laughs last, laughs longest," he said to himself, as he turned away to inter McShaine's corpse. After he had performed this painful duty, Ward caught his horse and hobbled it, for the westering sun would not shine much longer.

Then quickly he worked, until he had transferred all the gold he could carry to his saddlebags and clothing. Taking a short ramble through the valley, he noted the golden glitter of the sand in the shallow watercourse. The night soon closed in, and passed uneventfully.

Next morning Ward rode off with a light heart towards his station, carrying the means to repurchase all his land, and with the knowledge of a greater store of wealth than all his land would produce.



So they marched off as fast as they could.

## Shaky Knees and the Dragon

Written and Illustrated by C. E. James.

ONCE there were two kings, who lived on opposite sides of a deep ditch or gully. The name of one was King Fuzzletop, and the other was King Cheerisoul.

For many years neither had crossed the ditch, because if one attempted to, the other would send all his soldiers and knights to drive him back.

Now, very early one Christmas morning, King Fuzzletop could not sleep, so he climbed to the top of his tower to get a breath of air. They had no windows in the tower, for fear the enemy should get in; only long narrow slits for the soldiers to shoot their arrows through, so there was not much fresh air inside.

Well, no sooner had King Fuzzletop reached the top of his tower and begun to sniff the fresh air, than he cried: "By my beard and whiskers, I smell Christmas puddings!" Sniff! Sniff! "Very good ones, too, by my nose and eyebrows," and down the winding stairs he clattered as fast as his heavy armour would let him, and, calling to his chief knight, he said: "Hark thee, Sir Boolby de Bottlenose, our enemy hath rich Christmas puddings in his store. Go thou and bring them hither, for by

my sword and gauntlet, I must have them."

"Your Majesty surely means by *mine*," quoth Sir Boolby de Bottlenose, saluting and bringing his ankles together so suddenly that the clatter of his spurs woke all the sleeping soldiers, who started up and stood in a row like skittles.

"Now," said King Fuzzletop, "take with you sufficient men to capture those puddings. Leave not one behind in the enemy's storeroom. If any man dares to return without a pudding, by my nose and earrings, I shall have his head."

"Very good, your Majesty," replied Sir Boolby de Bottlenose. "How many puddings did your Majesty smell?"

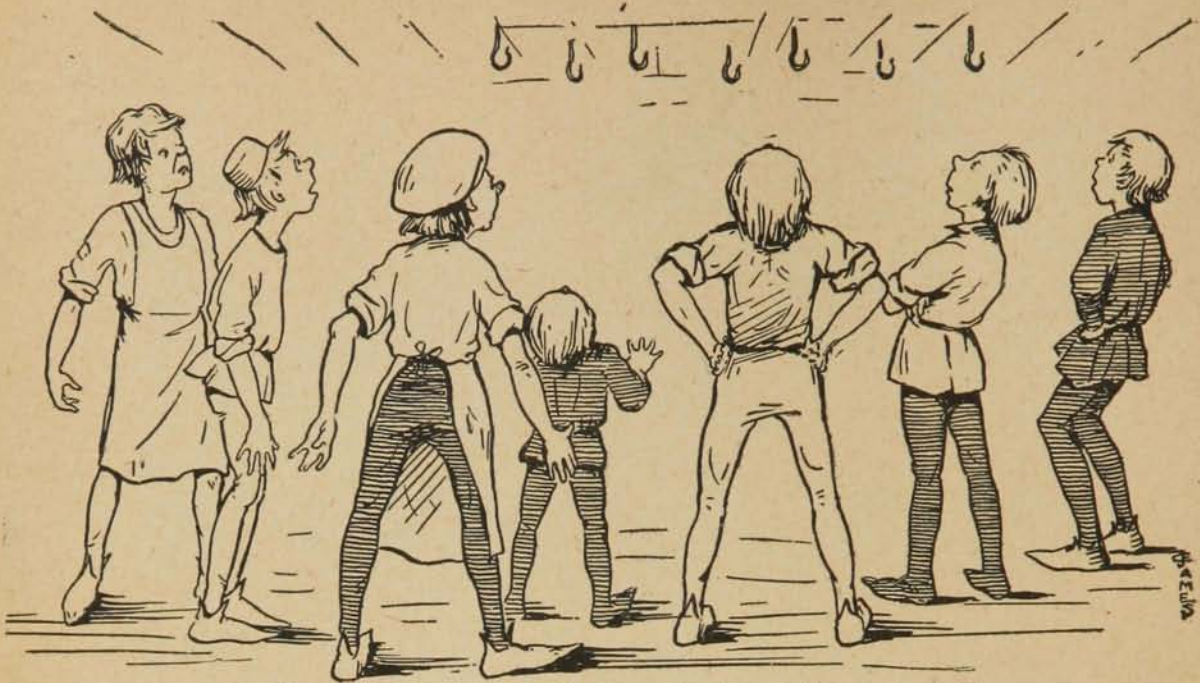
King Fuzzletop took off his helmet and scratched his head, then he put it on very carefully again and pulled down the visor in front; then in a deep voice he answered: "The smell of those puddings was so strong there must have been at least six or eight."

"Very good, your Majesty. Shall I take six men or eight?" replied Sir Boolby de Bottlenose.

"Take eight," said the King, "for if you only take six you may lose two puddings."

"Just so," returned the Knight, "but if I





They found every one standing, staring at the empty hooks.

take eight and there are only six puddings, two men will lose their heads."

At this the King again took off his helmet and scratched his head, and he kept it off this time, as it was rather hard to put on. Then he said: "If there be eight puddings and only six men, we will lose two puddings; take eight men." So, you see, King Fuzzletop was rather selfish.

Sir Boolby de Bottlenose crept off in the early dawn with eight men. They scrambled quickly down the ditch and up the other side. There were no soldiers on guard (I suppose they were too busy looking at their Christmas presents), and following the smell of the puddings, they at last reached the storeroom of their enemy King Cheerisoul. The door had been left open by accident.

Quoth Sir Boolby de Bottlenose in a loud whisper: "Our luck is in. Now fetch the puddings out."

In the storeroom were seven sucking pigs all ready to cook, also seven large turkeys and seven fine hams. Round the walls on benches were seven trays of mincemeat pies, and hanging from hooks in the ceiling were seven huge plum puddings.

"Let each man seize a pudding and be gone before the enemy smells a rat," ordered Sir Boolby de Bottlenose. There was a sudden dash for the puddings, and they were quickly cut from their hooks; but as there were only seven, there was one man over, and his name

was Shaky Knees. And now his knees did indeed shake. "Alas!" cried he to Sir Boolby de Bottlenose, "what shall I do? If I go back with you I must lose my head, and if I stay here I may lose my life."

"You will certainly lose your head if you come with us," returned Sir Boolby de Bottlenose. "I advise you to stop here and take your chance when you see it coming. Methinks I hear the enemy approach. Hide thou behind yon sack of flour, and for us, we will go disguised as a dragon." And turning to the others, he said: "Let each man sling his pudding over his shoulder and let the second man's nose touch the first man's pudding, and the third man's nose touch the second man's pudding, and so on, to form a dragon with sixteen legs, and I myself, with my flashing sword, will be the tail."

So they marched off as fast as they could, and Sir Boolby de Bottlenose himself came last, walking backwards, and using his bright sword for the tail of the dragon, which he twirled so viciously no one would dare approach. In the dim dawn King Cheerisoul and his lovely daughter, Princess Brighteyes, saw this strange beast, and at once took it for a dragon. "Look! Look!" cried the Princess, clutching her father by the arm. "A dragon! Seest thou not its flashing tail?" A shudder ran through King Cheerisoul from the top of his head to the soles of his feet, for it was well known in those days that lovely maidens,



especially Princesses, were in great danger from dragons, who, whenever possible, would carry them off to their caves or caverns, and there keep them prisoner till some brave warrior, at the risk of his life, succeeded in killing the dragon and rescuing the maiden.

In a flash, all this ran through the mind of King Cheerisoul. "My lovely child," he cried, clasping her in his arms, "there is an old proverb that says, 'Prevention is better than cure.' I will seek some brave man now, that he may destroy the dragon before it carry thee away." Then, taking the Princess with him (for he would not let her out of his sight until the dragon should be destroyed), he went in search of his soldiers, but not a soul could he find; no, not a soldier, nor a servant, nor a man, nor a maid. Whither had they gone? The King and the Princess went from room to room, along corridor after corridor, calling loudly, but not a sound could they hear. They descended to the kitchens, and finally out to the storeroom, where they found every one standing, staring at the empty hooks where the puddings had hung.

"How now!" quoth the King. "What is amiss here?"

"Alas!" cried the chief cook, falling on his knees before him. "Alas! Woe is me!"

"Cheer up, Pasty Face," cried the King, "and tell me thy trouble."

"Many years," sobbed the cook, "many years have I served your Majesty, and served you

well with gravies and sauces and puddings and meats, but never before had I prepared so luscious a feast nor such round and rich puddings, and now, alas! alack! they are *gone!*"

"*Gone?*" cried the King, now staring in his turn at the empty hooks. "*Gone?* Whither have they gone, and who has taken them?" And he turned a frowning gaze on all his frightened servants.

"Father," said the trembling Princess, still clinging to his arm, "thinkest thou it could have been the *dragon?*"

"The dragon!" groaned the King, turning as pale as the seven sucking pigs. "My beautiful Brighteyes, thou hast the quickest brain of all, and here I swear that any man, no matter who he be—I say *any man*, who, single-handed, will overcome the dragon and fetch me his flashing tail in proof thereof, to him I will give my daughter in marriage, and also the half of my kingdom. I swear it."

All the soldiers and servants looked at one another, but no one spoke, for, though they all loved the Princess, and would gladly have



"Alas!" cried the Chief Cook, falling on his knees before him. "Alas! Woe is me."





For a moment all were struck dumb.

accepted half the kingdom, none would offer to attack a dragon single-handed.

Now, all this time poor Shaky Knees still crouched behind the sack of flour, and when he heard the silvery tones of the Princess's voice, his heart gave a great leap.

"Oh!" thought he, "what a heavenly voice! What would I not do to have the music of that voice always near me. It gives me strength, and so much courage, I could almost leap out from my hiding place and face all my enemies."

While this was running through his mind, he heard the King saying, "To *any* man, no matter who he be, I will give my daughter, if he but bring me the dragon's flashing tail."

"This," thought Shaky Knees, "is the chance Sir Boolby de Bottlenose told me to watch for. I must seize it without delay." So, while the servants and soldiers looked at each other to see who would offer to attack the dragon, suddenly the sack of flour was overturned, and out sprang Shaky Knees and stood before them.

For a moment, all were struck dumb with astonishment; but, striding boldly up to the King, and dropping on one knee, "Noble King," said Shaky Knees, "thou hast sworn to give thy lovely daughter and half thy kingdom to the man, whoever he be, who brings to thee the dragon's tail in token that he has overcome the monster. I offer myself for that

service, and with your Majesty's permission will go at once."

"Arise, brave youth," cried King Cheerisoul, "and tell me thy name and whence comest thou."

"That, oh, King," replied Shaky Knees, "is a secret I must guard with my life. Only give me thy permission to attack the dragon e'er it be too late, and I will be gone."

By this time the others had recovered from their surprise, and the chief cook, looking with jealous eyes on Shaky Knees, approached. "Methinks, your Majesty, that this man hath stolen the puddings, and only wishes to escape our fury."

At this all the others crowded round Shaky Knees, till he began to fear his chance was very small. But the Princess Brighteyes, who dearly loved a mystery, whispered to her father: "Oh, my, father, what matters it, who and whence he is? Bid the noble youth go and seek the dragon, and I will watch and pray for his safe return, for I like well his looks."

Then said the King to the chief cook: "Foolish man, dost think so slight a youth could devour seven large puddings in one night? Begone to thy kitchens, and all of you be about your business; and as for you, mysterious stranger," he said to Shaky Knees, "I give thee leave to go, for I will not have a moment's rest until I know the dragon is no more."

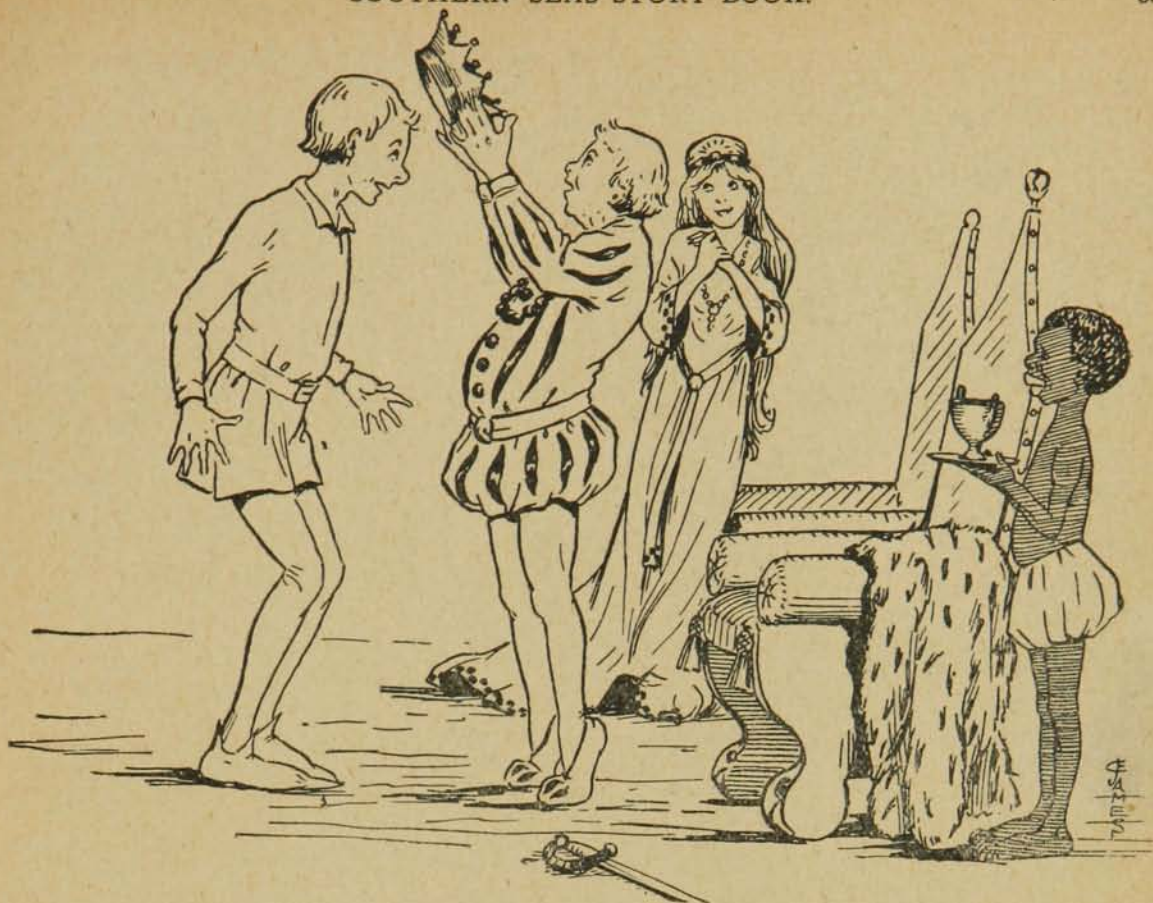
Shaky Knees bowed low to the King, and, kissing the hand of the beautiful Princess, with one long look into her deep blue eyes, he strode off towards the ditch just as the sun arose over the mountain tops.

Now, we know that the dragon's tail was nothing more than the sword of Sir Boolby de Bottlenose, and, though not as dangerous as a dragon's tail, Shaky Knees had to pluck up all his courage to approach the tower of King Fuzzletop and seek out Sir Boolby de Bottlenose. So all the way there, and while he clambered down and up the other side of the ditch, he wondered how he could manage to escape the anger of King Fuzzletop for returning without a pudding, and how he could get the sword of Sir Boolby de Bottlenose.

"If I were only rich," said he to himself, "I would pay *any* sum. Oh! I have it!" he exclaimed aloud as this thought came to him. If Sir Boolby de Bottlenose would give him his sword and promise not to give him up to King Fuzzletop to have his head cut off, he would, when he married the Princess, make Sir Boolby a Baron, and give him a beautiful castle to live in.

Having made up his mind to this, he sneaked





He took off his crown and placed it on Shaky Knees' head.

along under the shadow of the wall, and slipped in the side gate when no one was looking. When Sir Boolby de Bottlenose, who was having his breakfast, saw Shaky Knees approach, he was so surprised that his jaw dropped, and also his knife and fork; but he quickly recovered them, and, springing up, "Hist!" he whispered loudly. "If King Fuzzletop seest thee, thy head is gone."

"I know it," said Shaky Knees, also in a whisper, "but, good Sir Boolby, I have come for thy sword."

"My sword!" cried Sir Boolby de Bottlenose loudly, starting back.

"Hush! Hush!" pleaded Shaky Knees, glancing fearfully towards the door. "Hush! Good, dear Sir Boolby, thy sword I must have, or——"

"My sword!" cried Sir Boolby again, stamping his foot. "Are you mad? You pink-nosed son of a green-eyed platypus, no knight will part with his sword, and I will defend my sword with *my life*."

"Listen!" said Shaky Knees, in a sterner voice, seeing that he must make a bolder stand if he would gain his end. "Listen, Sir Boolby de Bottlenose——"

"Never!" quoth that Knight, striding up and down and gulping great mouthfuls of coffee in between. "Never! you pink-nosed——"

But Shaky Knees would not let him finish. "Hark thee," he shouted, in such a loud and commanding tone that Sir Boolby sank into his chair, overcome by astonishment, and sat staring at him until he had quite finished telling him all that had happened to him, and the plan he had hit upon. Then Sir Boolby blinked and said: "Er—say it again?"

So he said it again: "I will give thee, Sir Boolby de Bottlenose, a castle to live in, and make thee a Baron!"

"A Baron! A Castle!" repeated the Knight dazedly.

"Yes! Yes!" said Shaky Knees. "Only haste thee and give me thy sword."

Sir Boolby de Bottlenose rose from his chair, never taking his eyes from Shaky Knees' face. He thought: "This must be a dream, but I'll give it to him and see what happens." So he gave the sword to Shaky Knees, who said: "I thank thee, Sir Boolby, and, never fear, but I shall keep my promise, and thou shalt be

(Continued on page 43.)



## The Saving of Winnebango: An Indian Story

By R. X. Jackson.

A LITTLE party of men were seated around the fire outside Jim Thomson's tent, yarning after the hard day's work on the diggings. There were men there who, although they all belonged to the one great nationality, had come from nearly every corner of the earth when the first great news of gold being discovered in Australia went abroad. For the most part, their faces lay in shadow, but now and then, as a flame gleamed up, a weather-tanned countenance or a bearded visage shone in the transient light. Away down the flat, faint shouts and calls came up from the direction of a high glare that was reflected among the white trunks of the distant creek gums. But elsewhere, all around, the great silver-specked night had closed down upon the lonely bush in her blackness and silence.

Once, when talk died down in the camp and there was a short period of silence the sounds from down the creek suddenly burst out louder and clearer—strange, wild calls, and cries that surely never came from the throat of man before.

"The Blacks are holding a fine old corroboree to-night!" said a digger who was known as Sam the Yank, although he was an Englishman. "It sounds as if they mean business."

"I don't think they mean much business as far as we are concerned," growled an old bushman named Fred Walker. "It might mean war against the 'possum or the goanna, but that's about all."

"We are in a lonely spot here," went on Sam, "and only the few of us here know about these diggings. There are probably two or three hundred Blacks down there."

"Oh, these fellows are all right. Of course, some of them do go after blood at times, and they go about it in an effective way, but a few bottles of whisky and some tobacco would soon fix these chaps."

"If I heard the natives going on like that off any of the Mississippi Rivers," said Tom the Yank, "I'd prepare for an attack. Of course, I haven't been in the bush long enough to know natives like you do, Fred, so I guess I'll sleep quiet to-night on your recommendation. I could tell you some yarns about those Indians."

"Tell us one," said Jim Thomson.

"Yes," chimed in Fred Walker, in his gruff voice.

"Tell us something about those savage Indians of yours, and it will make us all kindly disposed towards these harmless natives of ours."

"Those of them that are harmless," put in another.

"Most of them hereabouts are," said Fred.

"Very well," said Sam, after a pause. "I'll tell you something the Indians did to me just before I left the Ohio River, and if your natives aren't like them, it's up to you to drop a thanksgiving lot of tobacco things in their camp in the morning. It was this way."

About fifteen years ago, my partner—Uriah Bird—and I had established ourselves by the upper waters of the Ohio River. We built a fairly substantial log cabin, in a good, defensive position, in case of any unwelcome attentions from the Indians, although at that time the white folk had been quite at peace with the red for nearly two years. But ours was the furthest little settlement out in that direction, and we only thought it wise to take what precautions we could. The nearest white men to us dwelt in a small village called Winnebango, which lay nearly twenty miles away, through the forest, at the junction of the Ohiaic and the Sahkee Rivers.

It was autumn when we came to the Ohiaic, and during the winter that followed we did very well at hunting and trapping, for bears, foxes, beavers, and even buffaloes abounded in those parts. Using our cabin for a temporary storehouse for the furs we captured, we would wait until the space therein became too cramped for our personal comfort, and then make a journey, laden with precious peltries, to Winnebango, where there was an agent of the Western Fur Company, who was always willing and anxious to do business with hunters. Several of these profitable journeys we had made, and it was not until we were returning from our sixth trip that we had any notion of the impending trouble in the land.

Although our log hut was practically on the banks of the same river that ran down through Winnebango, the trail we took lay for the most part pretty far from the stream, which, between our headquarters and the settlement, took a wide sweep to the north. The distance



by river was probably half as far again as that by land.

The afternoon sun was down among the tree trunks as we drew near our journey's end. A couple of miles from our cabin, there was a fairly large natural clearing, where we had previously noticed faint traces of the presence of the red-men. As we approached this, Uriah held up his hand.

"Listen!" he said.

We drew up our horses, and faintly came the sounds that we had learned to dread. The Gawlettees—that was the tribe which traversed these forests—were holding one of their pre-war meetings, when weapon-wielding war dances and other forms of exercises are indulged in. The sounds were unmistakable. The Gawlettees were on the war-path. Why, we did not know; for, up to the present, there had been no sign of discontent.

A tactless settler may have offended them in some way; there may have been a dozen reasons for the red-men, the original owners of these vast tracts of beautiful country, deciding to attack the usurping whites, as they called us—that did not matter to us. The fact was, we were liable to run into the extremest danger, and the sooner we got out of it, and warned others, the better. For these noble red-men were terrible enemies in war, and, once their blood-lust was raised, they showed no mercy to man, woman or child. Many and horrifying were the tales of tortured victims that had come to us, but up till then neither Uriah nor I had had any personal knowledge of the viciousness of the Indian reprisals.

"We'd better go straight back and warn the people in Winnebago," I said. "It's not much use trying to get to our hut now, with these fellows in between us."

Uriah thought a moment. "What about our possessions?" he said. "Are we going to sacrifice all of them after our hard winter's toil? We can scarcely expect everything to remain untouched until this affair is over. It might last months. And anyhow, by this time tomorrow I reckon that they will have set fire to the place, if they've had the chance."

"But surely you're not thinking of holding our cabin against all the Gawlettees?"

"I *was* thinking so. We're in a good, strong position."

"Granted. We have plenty of food. We've even got a little spring within the palisade, where, with luck, we can dash out and catch water for our needs without being shot from

the trees. But we haven't too much ammunition, Uriah, and, as you say, this thing might last for months."

"Oh, they wouldn't waste all their time on us. We'd find an opportunity of sneaking away some time. I don't want any blamed Indian to grab what I've toiled all these months to acquire."

"Neither do I. But we must use judgment in these affairs. Besides, we have a duty. The people of Winnebago must be warned. There are women and children there, Uriah—women and children."

Bird paused before replying. He was, in a way, a typical frontiersman, brave to the point of recklessness, but unyielding almost to the extent of selfishness when there came a question of his property or his rights. And he bore the Gawlettees no love. He would have sooner died, I verily believe, than let one of that accursed tribe make off with anything that was his. But my words had borne home to him that there were others concerned in the matter besides himself. Sometimes it was better to make sacrifices for the sake of others.

"Women and children," he said at last. "Sam, that was one reason why I was so anxious not to lose anything of what we had gained here. There's a girl down in St. Louis whom I'm going to ask to be my wife when I have made enough money. And that time had nearly arrived. But you're right about Winnebago. We'll have to warn them somehow."

"The sooner the better. These fellows may be planning to attack in the early hours tomorrow morning."

"You ride back," said Bird, "and I'll push on to the cabin. Afterwards you may join me if you can; or you can bring help as soon as it is available."

"No, Uriah. We'll both be needed at Winnebago, to help defend the women and children. We must risk a loss, for their sake."

Bird considered for a few moments, frowning heavily. Then he said: "We have a good bit of money at our hut, from the previous sales of our skins. I must make an attempt to get that. The rest doesn't matter so much, as the season is practically over now, and we won't get many more decent furs till next year. I'll go on, and join you later at the village. You go back now."

"Uriah, I don't like letting you do this thing alone."

"You can come with me or not if you like, but I'm going on."



He said this with such an air of finality that I saw it was useless to argue further with him.

"You'd better hide your horse hereabouts, then," I said, "and do the rest on foot. Otherwise they'll hear you."

"Yes," he said, "I'll do that."

So he led his mount in among the bushes, while I took charge of the two pack-horses upon which we had taken our skins to the village. By this time it was nearly dark, and the shouts and yells from the Indians' practice grounds had increased, while the light of the huge fires was visible through the trees.

Presently there was a rustling in the undergrowth that lined the track.

"Well, Uriah," I said, "I hope you've got a spot that you can pick out again."

But instead of hearing the familiar voice of my partner in reply, I heard a sharp exclamation, and in the next instant a heavy missile whizzed past my head. Turning, I beheld the shadowy forms of two Indians emerging from the bushes. Instantly, I lashed my horse into a gallop, at the same time releasing the pack horses so that I might make the better progress. This latter was a foolish action on my part, for before I had gone fifty yards I heard the sound of horses hoofs behind me, and realised too late what I had done. The Indians were using my own horses in their pursuit of me. Framing a fervent wish that Uriah had remained undiscovered, I dashed on. So far, no shot had been fired. Evidently my pursuers had no firearms, and I had purposely refrained from using mine, as I did not want to alarm our enemies' camp, and thus jeopardise Uriah's chances of reaching safety. The trail I followed was rough enough to travel in the daytime, but now, in the gloom, it was risky in the extreme. Now and then a branch would almost sweep me from the saddle, and occasionally the horse would stumble, sending out a small shower of sparks from the rock-strewn ground. Mine was a good horse, however, and it bore up well, while those on which my enemies were, were partially weary from their late experience under the rash saddle. In spite of my advantage, however, I was never very far in front, and the noise of pursuit was constantly in my ears.

How long this race in the dark would have continued, I do not know. I had just resolved to turn and fire one of my pistols towards my pursuers, when a dark mass loomed suddenly before me, and then there was a crash and millions of stars. My horse, which had hitherto picked his way through with marvellous ac-

curacy, had run straight into a huge boulder around the base of which the trail ran. When I came to myself, which could not have been very long afterwards, I felt a strange sense of elevation, and then found that it was on the small, flat top of this rock that I lay. Beyond the feeling of dizziness, and a dull pain in my left shoulder, I seemed to be unaffected; I appeared to be safe after my hurtle through the air. I was, perhaps, about twelve feet from the ground, and the smooth sides of the boulder—which I now remembered perfectly as quite a landmark on our journeys to and from the settlement—offered no foothold whatever for a person desirous of ascending or descending.

I lay quite still. I could hear the two Indians searching about below for my body. That of my horse, presumably, was a mangled heap beneath. Evidently my pursuers had no inkling of my position, and I did not choose to let them know of it. It was quite dark in this spot, and they could not see me, nor I them.

They were obviously puzzled, as I judged from their muttered conversation, some of which I understood. They seemed undecided what to do, as, naturally, I suppose, they did not want to give me the slightest possible chance of escape that could be avoided. Presently, they sat down at the base of my rock and relapsed into utter silence. They did this, I judged, in order that, should I be alive and endeavouring to escape, I might betray myself by some noise, thinking they had given up the search. In this they were disappointed, however, for I lay as quiet as they, and in about fifteen minutes' time I had the satisfaction of hearing them mount the horses—my horses—and slowly move back towards their camp. Even then I did not move, but gave them fully half an hour before I attempted to leave my elevated position. This presented me with a little problem. How should I jump from my perch twelve feet high on to the hard ground below without running a serious risk of at least spraining my ankles? For there was no alternative to jumping. Not the slightest vestige of any grip was apparent anywhere on the surface of my lofty pinnacle. However, I soon bethought myself of my poor horse lying there. Judging as well as I could of the position in which its body would be below me, I let myself drop, and fell softly on to the still warm flesh. Gathering myself up, I hastened as rapidly as I could towards Winnebango.

It was nearly two o'clock when I arrived at the village. The night was moonless, and



pitchy black, for clouds had drawn over the sky and hid the brilliance of the stars. Winnebango, wrapped in darkness and silence, was like a village of the dead.

As I stumbled into the place, however, a dog barked, and then another. A sleepy voice hailed me from nowhere, asking my business.

I lost no time in narrating it, and soon the whole of the place was in a stir of preparation. The women and children were all taken to a large, central storehouse which stood in the middle of the hamlet, and, should the worst come to the worst, everybody was to fall back upon this and make the last stand there. The men of the place, who, I suppose, did not number more than twenty-five, were posted at various spots about the rough pallisade that ran around the village. Everything was ordered as quietly as possible, so as not to let the enemy—should any such be about already—know that preparations were being made to receive them. It was to be a surprise visit, and a surprise reception. One brave young fellow, named Josh Anderson, volunteered to ride away to Lambertville, the nearest town where troops were stationed, in order to raise the alarm and bring the relief to Winnebango that we felt might shortly be necessary. Accordingly, at 3 o'clock, he slipped away, taking our "God-speeds." His journey would be hazardous, for the road he was to take was somewhat in the nature of a main one, and was almost sure to be watched along its later stages by sections of the Indians.

We also prepared about a dozen messages in bottles, and threw them into the river at different intervals, in the hope that, should young Anderson fail in his perilous mission, our plight might still become known. By the time all our preparations were made, I was utterly weary from my long walk and the excitement before and since. So when old Peter Anderson (Job's father) persuaded me to lie down and sleep in the storehouse, I consented, on the condition that I should be awakened upon the commencement of hostilities. Up till then, there had been no sign of Uriah, who should, if all had gone well, have actually overtaken me on the trail to the village, and I was feeling very concerned on his behalf.

However, my weariness was so great that it overcame all else, and soon I was fast asleep.

I awoke to the sound of firing—a sound that had seemed to permeate my dreams for hours past. I leaped to my feet with a feeling that the fight was at least half over, but I found

later that I had awakened within two minutes of the discharge of the first shot. There was an anxious murmur behind me among the other occupants of the storehouse; I remember trying to say something cheering to them as I left. Outside, the day was just breaking, and a faint, wan light pervaded the scene. To the west, a declining moon made a feeble effort to pierce a heavy mass of rain cloud. The would-be invaders seemed to have concentrated upon the spot where the trail whence they (and I) had come, entered the clearing around the village. Dull flashes of flame leapt every instant from the bordering forest, to be answered only by other tongues of fire that hissed back defiance. As I, somewhat luckily, gained the shelter of the pallisade, under cover of which one section of our gallant little band of defenders was stationed, our enemies made a determined rush against the position. Firing haphazard into the dark, approaching forms, we accounted for half a dozen of their number, judging by the cries and shrieks that arose, but still the remainder pressed on. A hand-to-hand fight was imminent, and I did my best to nerve myself for the struggle. In a few seconds about a score of panting forms were tearing at the timbers of the pallisade. Using what weapons came handiest, we endeavoured to beat them off. Some of us had cutlasses, and with these good work was done, others had bowie knives, sticks, or clubbed muskets. For twenty minutes the rough and tumble battle raged in an atmosphere of sweat and profanity. By that time we had the satisfaction of seeing our aggressors fall gradually and then rapidly back and leave us for some time at least. But at no light cost was our temporary ascendancy gained, for two of our brave fellows were dead and Old Man Anderson was seriously wounded, stabbed in the neck.

It was now much lighter, and our shadowy surroundings were becoming more and more discernable.

"I don't think they'll trouble us much more for a bit," panted Dave Pellew, the lumber-fellow, who had assumed command on the incapacitation of Peter Anderson. "They thought to take us by surprise with a small force, but failed, thanks to Sam here. Later, they may bring the rest of the tribe along and make a more determined attack on us. To-night will be our danger-period, and if we can hold out beyond then, the troops ought to have arrived to save us from further trouble."

Shortly afterwards we were hailed from the door of the storehouse, and one of the women



(bless her!) announced that they had prepared a quantity of hot tea for those that needed refreshment. That steaming drink and the few biscuits that accompanied it was one of the most inspiring little meals I have ever tasted.

Meanwhile, there was still no sign of Uriah Bird, and I had just about given up all hope for him. Naturally, I felt very uneasy, owing to the ominous absence of my partner, and in order to relieve my nervous tension I took a stroll around the village, taking care to keep under cover as much as possible to avoid being "picked off" from the woods. I had completed half the circuit of the palisade, and was at a point opposite to where the fighting had taken place, when I noticed a curious thing. One of the slabs which helped to form the rude barricade was shaking unmistakably. There, flat on his stomach, was a lusty young savage loosening the slab, by means of a large knife.

Other slabs showed signs of similar attention. In a flash the situation dawned on me. This young blood was preparing a way for a secret and silent entrance into the enclosure at a later time. Acting instinctively, I scrambled over the barrier, and sought to pin the Indian to the ground before he could rise. I had made a fatal mistake, as I soon learned. With a mighty heave, he cast me from him, and, half stunning me with a blow from the massive handle of his knife, before I could rise he made me his captive.

It was a strange thing that during our brief struggle I had no thought to cry for help, or raise the alarm, and at its termination I had no opportunity of doing so, for he clapped his huge hand over my mouth, and hurried me into the woods.

By a tortuous route, I was led back to their main camp, on the other side of the clearing, and there a sort of council of war was held over me. At the finish, I was tied to a tree, and left to my own meditations for about three hours. That these were not pleasant may easily be imagined. The most unkind sting of all was the knowledge of the proposed way of attacking my friends, which I was unable to impart to them.

Once, a fiendish-looking Gawlettee brought me a little dried meat and some water, and before departing ran the point of his razor-sharp knife around the circle of my scalp, just breaking the skin here and there. Laughing wickedly, he left me, with little drops of blood and perspiration mingling together on my brow.

The monotony and inactivity of my captivity was maddening. How I prayed for something to happen! But nothing happened until at last another comfab of the chiefs took place near me, and I guessed, concerning me. Presently I gathered from their gesticulations, and the little of the language that I knew, that they had identified me with the man who had warned Winnebango of their proposed attack. Thus, I presumed, they would mark me out for some particularly awful fate. In this I was not far wrong. Two young braves approached me, and I was cut away from the tree. My arms were then bound tightly around my body, but my legs were given sufficient freedom to permit my walking. I was then escorted along a winding track, until we came to the side of the river. Here, there was a shelving bank of what apparently was hard sand, but when one of the Indians threw a large stone upon its surface it slowly sank, and finally disappeared with a slight sucking sound.

My fate was now apparent to me. I was to be placed on this "quick-sand" to be slowly engulfed into its awful depths. I recoiled in horror. The Indians grinned hugely. I think I must have fainted for a bit, for the next thing I knew, was that my legs were bound as tightly as my arms. My two savage companions patiently waited until I had fully recovered my senses. It would not do for me to be thrown into the frightful clutches of the sand while I was at all oblivious to what was happening to me.

Then came the terrible moment. I was lifted over the bank, and my legs were pressed as far through the soft surface as possible, in order that I might stay upright, and have the more lingering death. I can never forget the next few minutes, but I will not harrow you with their fearsome details. Suffice it to say that I had given myself up for lost, and was endeavouring to force myself into unconsciousness, when I heard a sharp crack from across the water, and my right ear began to sting considerably. At the same moment, however, one of my escort, who was gloating over my position, subsided into a limp heap on the ground. The other savage leaped to his feet, only to fall a second later as another shot rang out. Then I heard a voice—a voice that I knew well—but had twice given up hope of ever hearing it again. It was Uriah Bird's. "Sam, bear up, I'm coming!" And in a few minutes he had come, in a little birch bank canoe, from across the water, and not any



too soon either. I was nearly down to my armpits before he had fastened around me the rope with which he saved my life.

"Drink this," he said, putting a flask to my lips when he had dragged me to safety. I drank; I needed it.

"Now tell me all about it."

I told him.

"Now it's your turn," I said.

Briefly, Uriah's story was this:

On leaving me, before he had found a suitable spot in which to conceal his horse, in some manner the animal had suddenly become nervous and slipped from his light grasp. It took a few minutes to capture it, and tie it between two thick bushes, which formed a splendid hiding-place. On his return to where he had left me, he found me gone, but attached no importance to that, thinking that I had merely hastened away. Uriah then set off for our cabin, which he reached without much difficulty, though several times he ran pretty close to small parties of the enemy. He soon had all our money securely packed about his person, and he was just locking the door of our abode, preparatory to leaving, when a shot rang out. He rushed into the trees on the far side of the clearing, deciding to trust himself to the woods and the darkness. About twenty warriors ran out and surrounded the hut. Meeting with no opposition, they began to beat in the door. Uriah then left on his return journey, while the Indians were thus occupied. But he found the woods between our place and the Indian camp alive with warriors, and he had the utmost difficulty in avoiding detection. For hours he skirted about, sometimes lying for lengthy periods concealed in bushes or behind rocks. At length, he found himself on the river bank. He sought the edge in order to slake his thirst, and there, in the waning darkness, he found—a canoe! Now he was practically safe. Boarding the frail craft, which evidently belonged to some of the Indians, he pushed out into the stream. By the time it was broad daylight, he was well on his way to Winnebago.

"I arrived there safely about half an hour ago," he concluded, "and was highly pleased

to find that you had saved the place from massacre, but was terribly cut up when I learned that you had mysteriously disappeared. So I came up the river again to scout round a bit."

"And you couldn't have come at a better moment," I said. "Now, if that canoe of yours—it is yours now, of course—will hold us both, we'd better return to Winnebago. We might be needed there again."

"Not very urgently," remarked Uriah, "for just as I left the troops arrived from Lambertville. Young Anderson met them coming before he had gone half-way. They had learned of this impending rebellion before we did, and had acted with admirable promptitude."

"Still, I think we'll get back. I've had enough of this part of the river. In fact, when this little trouble is over, I'll leave the district for a bit. I'm thinking of going to Australia. Will you come with me?"

"No," replied Uriah Bird; "I'm going to St. Louis."

There was a silence for a while around the diggers' fire as Sam, like the Yank, concluded his story.

"I suppose," said Jim Thomson, slowly, "I suppose Bird married his girl all right?"

"I suppose he did," answered Sam, meditatively. "I came to Australia shortly afterwards. You see, I knew Uriah's girl very well, too—and, well, perhaps that is why I came over here."

There was a sympathetic silence.

Then Fred Walker spoke: "I hope you've forgotten her pretty well, too, Sam?"

"Forgotten her!" laughed Sam. "Easy! And there's half a dozen others I've forgotten since. But there's one thing we mustn't forget, boys. Our little thanksgiving presents to our black friends down the creek. I shall never forget my experience with their red brothers out in Indiana."

The others murmured an easy assent; and then, with stretching of limbs and knocking out of pipes, the little company slowly dispersed, leaving their smouldering fire to die alone beneath the silent stars.

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES  
SHOULD READ .. ..

## "GOLDEN BUCKLES"

The Great Australian Novel by CONRAD H. SAYCE.

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## A Private Performance

A Schoolboy Yarn, by "One of Them."

**T**HERE are some chaps at school who are never satisfied unless there is something doing. If they are not playing cricket or football, they are hitting balls up against a wall, or chasing one another round the garden paths. When they are inside the big study, instead of settling down with a detective yarn inside an exercise book cover, they must be thumping at the piano and singing songs with ridiculous choruses. Now, I'm not like that at all, but then I'm an exception. I can sit on one chair tipped on its two back legs, with my feet resting on another, and think of absolutely nothing in particular for quite a long time.

But Gregson and Huggins and Young Anthony are always on the move. Restless themselves, they won't let anyone else enjoy a bit of peace. So one night when there was nothing particular on, they decided to get up a concert. It was a Saturday, and a lot of the chaps had gone to the pictures. But about half a dozen of us had not been allowed to go, because we had soused one of the masters the previous evening with some chemicals from the fire extinguisher. Anyway, we were juggins enough to get caught, and so had to pay for it.

It was Young Anthony's suggestion about the concert. His pater is a theatrical manager, and he seems to have inherited his talent. It was arranged that we should each choose what we liked to do for our performance, and if we could find anything to dress up in, so much the better. Huggins put himself down for pianoforte pieces. I told Anthony whatever he did not to let him go first, because he's one of those chaps who once he gets at the instrument, is exceedingly difficult to remove. He fixes his eyes on the ceiling, acquires a dreamy expression, and runs his fingers from one end of the keyboard to the other. "This is a fine thing," he will say, and proceed to vamp, and at the same time hum an air in a totally different key. The silly ass knows all the time that it is someone else's turn, and that the only item each boy enjoys is his own. A decent chap would make way for the next, but Huggins is not decent.

I promised to do a whistling solo, and this news was received with cheers. I have a tooth out in front owing to an early argument

with the butcher boy, and though it does not add to my appearance, it certainly lends a sibilant charm to my whistling.

It took Gregson and Anthony some time to persuade Robertson to take part in the concert. In fact, it was not until they sat one on his chest and the other on his feet that their arguments had any weight with him at all. When Gregson and Anthony removed themselves from his anatomy, Robertson said that he would not perform unless he were permitted to retire during the other items, and only come in for his own. The concert-managers had to be satisfied with this, as they were anxious for performers, and expected to have a good laugh at Robertson, who is a big, bulky chap, rather overgrown for his age.

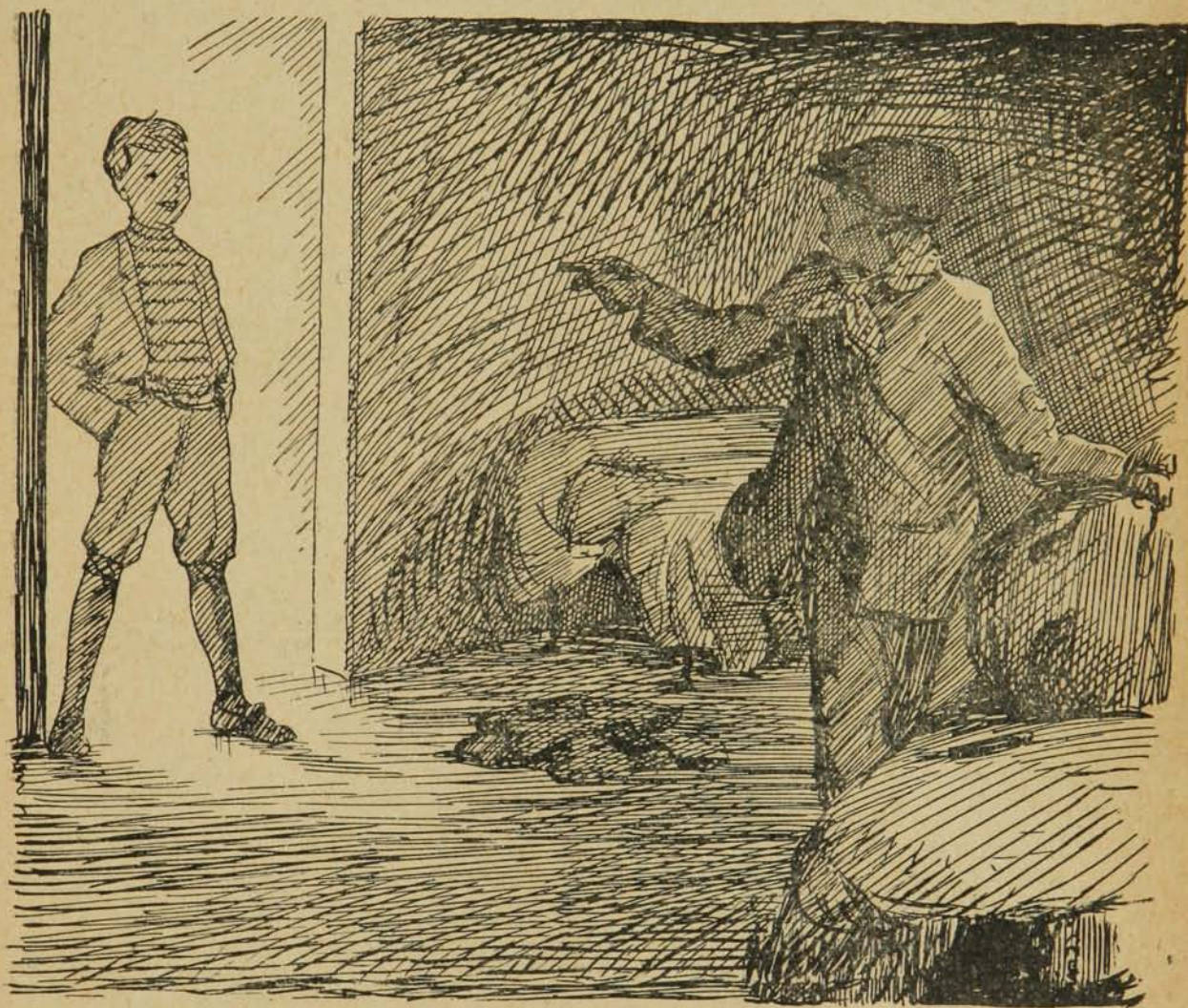
He told the others that he would be in the dorm. when his turn came, as he had some silkworms' eggs under his mattress, and he thought they might be hatching, and the caterpillars get smothered. Of course, it was against the rules for Robby to be in the dorm. at all till bed-time, but that was his look-out. Saturday night there is very little supervision at "Ours," and the rest of the building was pretty deserted and still, those of the masters who had to be on duty congregating in the Common Room to smoke and laugh over the crimes which they had caned the chaps for during the week. There was usually such a row in the big study, that a peace-loving master found good reasons for not appearing there until bed-time.

Well, the concert proved quite a success. As each of the audience would in turn be a performer, the applause each item received was quite tumultuous. Huggins, as I expected, retained his seat at the piano until he was forcibly removed. Young Anthony recited the "Happy Warrior," and as it was in our text books we were in a position to be critical and helpful in the parts he had forgotten. After my whistling solo, which quite brought the house down, Huggins took possession of the piano stool again, and started to play "The Soldiers' March," from Faust, with variations. This was a very popular item, as the boys kept time with their feet, and whenever a familiar part arrived assisted Huggins with the full strength of their lungs. As this ap-



peared to be going on indefinitely, Anthony sent me to fetch Robby from the dormitory. I thought I would give him a scare, and crept up very quietly, same as Sampson, our house-master, does when it's lights out time. The corridor was pretty dark, and I tip-toed along it to the dormitory door. Robby hadn't the light on, but I could just see his figure moving about with the electric torch my pater had given me before he went away. I hadn't lent

said, in an assumed kind of husky voice. Really, Robertson had done himself very well, and, regardless of hovering masters or matron, I stood where I was and roared with laughter. He had dressed himself up in such rummy clothes, quite shabby-looking; he had a blue-spotted handky knotted round his neck, and a peaked cap pulled down over his eyes. He must have got some black cork from somewhere; his chin and lip were as dark as any thing.



"He turned round and pointed something that looked like a toy pistol at me."

it to Robby either, and I felt wild at his cheek in borrowing it without so much as asking me.

I suppose I must have given him a start, when he suddenly looked round and caught sight of me in the doorway, for he straightened himself up, and pointed something that looked like a toy pistol at me. "Stop there, kid," he

"By Gad! Robby," I said, "you look just it. Come on with me, and you'll be the piece-de-resistance." (I'd just learned that, and thought it a good chance to trot it out.)

"Don't you talk about resistance, young feller," said Robby. "It won't do you no good, and might do yer some harm."



"Oh, cut it out," I said. "The chaps are waiting for you in the study. They're full of Huggins' strumming."

"Waiting for me, are they?" asked Robby, in that queer, husky whisper he was putting on for the occasion. "Wot are they goin' to do when they get me?"

"Why, listen to your turn," I said, impatiently, not seeing any sense in Robertson wasting his perfectly good item on me alone. "The concert's nearly over, and it's time for you to say your piece. Your beastly silkworms don't want any more attention just now."

"Wot do you expect a chap to do at your concert?" he asked, lowering his toy gun, and coming a bit nearer. Really, Robertson did look a bit ferocious, and I pulled out into the corridor.

"Well, you look jolly like Bill Sykes," I said. "You'd better give a recitation from Dickens."

With that he made a rush to get past me, but I wasn't going to let Robby off so cheap. He'd gone to a lot of trouble to get himself up; he mustn't get stage-fright now. So I grabbed at his coat-tails, and he made quite a vicious jab at me, and I do believe he would have hurt me, only Mr. Vickers, the house-master, hearing the scuffle, came along just then.

"What's this row about, boys?" he began. Robby loosed his hold and slunk back into the shadow.

"Please, sir, it's Robertson, sir," I said, a bit out of breath. "He's got himself up like Bill Sykes, sir, and now he won't come down to the study and do his turn." A growl from Robby set me giggling again.

"Really, boys," said Vickers, "the corridor is not the place for such behaviour. If you must make a fool of yourself, Robertson, get along and do it in the study. Will you go, or shall I take you?"

Robby, looking as if he wanted to sink through the floor, muttered "I'll go," and so I got behind him, and ran him down into the study.

Here the boys were getting impatient, but when they saw Robby and me, they set up a shout, for his get-up was A1. They hustled Robby up on to the platform, and called "Speech, speech!" There's no doubt he scored a success before he opened his lips, but he didn't look a bit pleased. With his cap pulled down and his collar turned up, you could hardly have told it was Robby. The disguise was perfect. But the boys wanted more than dumb Crambo, so they yelled out at Robby to

begin. He looked as though he would make a bolt of it, but all at once he made up his mind to the plunge, sat himself at the piano, and broke into a comic song. It was comic, too, a kind we'd never heard before, but we understood it all right, and joined in the chorus

After that he sang another, but though we yelled for an encore, he wouldn't give in to a third. Instead he swung round on the stool, and pulled out his toy pistol again. "Now I've done my turn," he said, pointing the weapon at the audience, "you kids stop there while I git and change my clothes," and as we all knew Robby's funny ways, we laughed and clapped and said, "Right-oh!" So Robby slipped out and up the stairway he had come.

Naturally the talk all turned on Robby's performance and disguise, and we all agreed that he was wasting his time at school—the masters had said so often enough—and ought to be on the stage. It was some time before he came back, and to look at him you wouldn't have thought he had ever dressed up at all; he looked just like the old Robby, who never made a name for himself at anything but loafing.

Of course, we all congratulated him, and asked him where he got the duds, but as we all spoke at once, he didn't get much chance to answer for a bit. Then he yawned and said, "I don't know what the dickens you fellows are talking about. I wasn't going to make a fool of myself at your beastly concert, so I sneaked out of bounds, and went for a walk. What's all the ragging about?"

"That's all right, Robby," I said, "you can't fool us. Your disguise was jolly good, and just for a moment up in the dorm. I thought you really were a burglar."

Robby dropped his joking tone and became serious. "What are you talking about?" he said. "I wasn't in the dorm, at all."

Just for a moment nobody spoke. Then Huggins said, "Are you pulling our legs, Robby?"

"On my word," said Robertson, seriously, "I don't know what you're gassing about," and you couldn't help but believe him.

"Then who was the chap that was dressed up like Bill Sykes that Wispy brought down from the dorm, to do a turn?"

"I haven't an idea," said Robertson, indifferently; "it wasn't me anyway."

All at once a horrible thought came over me.

"Chaps," I whispered, "it must have been a real thief."

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"Oh!" yelled Anthony. "You juggins, Wispy, to let him go."

I thought that was pretty good, as they had done nothing to stop him either. Pretty crest-fallen, we sought out Mr. Vickers in the Common Room, and told him our story.

"What a trick," he said, "if it's true. Come and have a look at the dorm."

We did, and oh! the scene that met our gaze when the light was turned up. Drawers were pulled out—the contents heaped on the beds—sleeve-links pulled out—the watches had disappeared, a suit or two, and goodness knows what else. It was a clean sweep of all the valuables in the dormitory. Of course, we saw it all then. The burglar, knowing that

Saturday was a good time for such a job, had made a raid on the dorm, while everybody was busy elsewhere. Then when I went to look for Robby, he had covered me with his pistol, and I took the wind out of his sails by laughing. He picked up from my babble that there was a concert on, and that I mistook him for one of the boys dressed up, and when Vickers appeared he was forced into playing the part.

How we blamed our stupidity in not seeing through his game, and how we ragged Robby for sneaking out of bounds, I will leave to your imagination. But I will tell you one thing. I get cold chills down my spine whenever I remember that that was a real pistol.

## SHAKY KNEES AND THE DRAGON

*Continued from Page 33*

Baron Boolby de Bottle Nasalorgan, and have the finest castle in my kingdom."

Sir Boolby de Bottlenose, still thinking it must be a dream, let him out the back way, so that King Fuzzletop did not see him, and he made haste to return to the castle of King Cheerisoul.

He found the King seated on his throne, with the lovely Princess beside him, and, dropping on his knee before them, he handed the sword of Sir Boolby de Bottlenose to the King, saying: "This, sire, is the tail of the dragon. It became a sword in my hand the moment that I grasped it—which was perfectly true—and the monster is buried for ever out of sight."

The King was delighted at this news, and, springing up, he took off his crown, and placed it on Shaky Knees' head, so that he was now a King and was married immediately to the Princess Brighteyes.

They lived happily ever after, and though he kept it a deep secret how he had overcome the dragon, his great-great-grandchildren said he had chased it furiously till it fled in terror to its cave, and just as it was disappearing through the entrance to the cave he grasped its shining tail, which he twisted off, and it immediately turned into a sword. Then he rolled a great rock to the mouth of the cave, and buried the monster, so that it soon died from starvation and want of fresh air.

## WHY THE FISH WERE NOT CAUGHT.

When an angler comes home, and success has been low

(Which is rather a common occurrence, you know),

He always has plenty of reasons to show  
Why fishing's a failure.

First, the weather was wrong; it was either too hot,

Or too cold, or too windy, too still, and what-not.

The weather gets blamed such a horrible lot  
When fishing's a failure.

Then the stream was at fault; it was either too high,

Or too swift, or too slow, or too deep, or too dry.

The river shows often a good reason why  
The fishing's a failure.

Then he had the wrong bait, for he should have used flies,

Spinners, hoppers, worms, crickets or grubs of such size—

The poor bait must suffer most horrible lies  
When the fishing's a failure.

There are other things, too; p'raps he caught on a snag,

P'raps his tackle was bad, or his luck was a hag.

Oh, there's millions of ways to explain a light bag

When the fishing's a failure.

Though he blames a large number of things for this ill,

There is one small omission he seems to make still—

He never appears to consider his skill  
Has to do with the failure.



## Motherkins

She was by no means a beautiful animal. She was little and half-starved and lamed—that I cannot deny—and her coat rivalled Joseph's in its many colours, but her eyes were two straw topazes for brilliance and clearness, and she had a character (surely, animals do have characters as well as human beings), dog-like in its devotion and faithfulness. These attributes are universally denied to cat-kind, I know, but I have met with them now and again for all that. As she sat curled up in my lap, purring happily, every touch of her little red tongue was cementing a friendship which I, for my part, have never forgotten.

Jim and Ben, sons of the pastrycook at the hotel, stood regarding her.

"She's got two kittens," said Jim.

"She had three, but the Strongs' Rabbie killed one."

"Why, she's not much more than a kitten herself," I exclaimed. "Three kittens, and one of them killed! Poor little Motherkins! So that is the reason you are so thin, and why you look so scared and hunted."

The next morning they beckoned to me mysteriously from the side verandah, where they were lying on their stomachs, peering under the lattice work. I joined them, and emulated their position of inquiry much to their delight.

"Look!" they whispered. "There they are!"

Two topaz eyes were looking into mine, proudly, contentedly. "I know I'm no beauty," they seemed to say, "but look at my children. They're pretty enough, aren't they?"

Surely they were. Two fluffy balls lay at her side lazily boxing each other with tiny paws. One was a grey-and-white mite, the other, tiger-striped, with beautiful yellow mottlings about the ears.

"The one that Rabbie killed was black," said Ben, in a hushed voice.

"With white feet," explained Jim.

The pastrycook, a worn, thin woman, in a limp calico skirt and an unbelted blouse, came out of the kitchen, and joined in the conversation.

"Yes, Miss," she remarked, "I seen that white cat prowlin' round here one evenin', and I thought he was lookin' for scraps. But I woke up in the night hearin' the greatest mewin' and spittin' an' screamin' that ever was goin' on right under the verandah, and in the mornin'.

the little black cat was dead, and the mother was all scratched up and lame, and I picked up a big bunch of white fur just outside the verandah here. I felt real sorry for the mother. She's ugly, but she's very affectionate, and the care she takes of them kittens! Well, Miss, 'twould set some human bein's an example, only they wouldn't care about followin' it, I daresay. When I hear that Livingstone baby crying upstairs with the nurse-girl, while its mother gallivants round in the evenin', I can't help feelin' she'd better come down here an' learn a lesson in duty from that poor starved-lookin' cat. She left the cool, sweet outside air for the stifling little kitchen, from whence the slamming of oven doors told me that she was engaged in looking after the welfare of her pastry.

Jim and Ben had organised themselves into a vigilance committee of two, their object being to drive back the Strongs' Rabbie with shouts and yells, stones carefully aimed so as to just miss hitting the big white cat, wild gesticulations of arms, accompanied by Indian war-whoops, and every method tending to keep the marauder at a distance, that their fertile brains could invent.

But one morning, in spite of our vigilance, Rabbie eluded us. I saw him trotting up the road, evidently bent upon mischief, and I rushed to the back of the house calling to Ben and Jim as I went. But Rabbie had disappeared. I stooped down and looked under the verandah. There crouched Rabbie, his green eyes sparkling in the half-darkness, his tail lashing from side to side. Near me, on an old carpet, curled together into a furry ball, slept little Grey-and-White and Tiger. Between them and Rabbie, not half his size, her back arched, her tail bristling, stood their little mother, facing the big white cat bravely. Suddenly, she hurled herself straight for his glowing eyes and snarling mouth. There was a wild scramble, a yell of pain from Rabbie, and then a white cat rushed out from under the verandah, pursued by a little thin, variegated fury with vengeful yellow eyes, who, with a leap in which four paws edged with sharp claws were spread wide in the air, landed straight upon Rabbie's back, where she rode him from the yard in triumph, scratching, and tearing at his thick, white fur until he was well round the side of the house. Then she



### SAWING TIMBER.

There is no place on the land or the sea,  
Where the clear, fresh wind blows strong and free,  
Like the cleared space 'mong the timber tall,  
Where the patches of shade and sunlight fall.

Here one of the kings of the forest lies;  
Once his up-flung boughs reached out for the skies:  
His roots drew vigor and strength from the earth;  
He held his court in the land of his birth.

Now, though his pride and his triumph are o'er,  
And over his fellows he reigns no more,  
There's a pleasant duty before him still—  
To warm the cottage-folk up on the hill.

The breath of autumn has colored the leaves;  
The frost king's at work on the old brown eaves;  
The bush lad prepares for the winter cold,  
And saws into logs the monarch of old.

Boyhood dreamings brood in his sun-tanned face,  
This hardy son of a pioneer race;  
The strength of the bush-born his muscles know,  
And steady's the beat of his pulse's flow.



Sawing Timber.



By F. McCubbin.



came back, trembling and weak, her eyes no longer topazes, but black diamonds from their dilated pupils. Straight under the verandah she went, and, lifting little Tiger by the nape of his neck, carried him to the verandah steps. Then she went back for little Grey-and-White and brought her out. Her head well up, limping and tottering from her burden, she deposited her by the side of her brother on the steps, then sank down by their side, exhausted, lifting languid eyes to mine as her ever-hungry children, all unknowing the peril which had threatened them, nestled down at her side.

From that time on, although Rabbie came no more, the little nest under the verandah was abandoned. She had learned the disadvantages of a quarrel in close quarters. All night long she lay on the steps, with wide-open eyes and listening ears, alert, watchful, guarding her children while they slept. She seemed to grow thinner and smaller day by day, but her kittens grew big and fat and playful.

Poor little Motherkins! She had yet to learn that there were other perils threatening her little ones. The hotel began to fill, and among the arrivals was a small girl of three, whose angelic blue eyes and golden curls blinded one to the fact that there was nothing in the least degree angelic about her stubborn little mouth and chin. She shrieked with delight when she discovered the kittens, and straightway annexed Grey-and-White as her own. Holding the luckless kitten in her two plump hands, she would squeeze it with all her might, until the poor thing's sides fairly came together, and it mewed faintly with discomfort. Protests against such treatment and admonitions to more gentle methods in handling the poor little creature were met with an upward glance of the angelic eyes, a toss of the golden curls, and a renewed grasping of the kitten.

"I must do it, because I love it so," she said in explanation, "and, besides, it's mine, mine, mine! Mamma says I may take it home with me when I go."

Poor Grey-and-White! It seemed unlikely that there would be anything left of her to take anywhere. Under this strenuous loving, she grew thin and sickly. The mother-cat watched her anxiously, following the little girl round distractedly. But her rights as mother were always quite overlooked. Grey-and-White was pulled from her side in the middle of a much-needed meal and carried off to be put to bed in some distant hammock, crushed down and held firmly in place, in spite

of her wriggings and feeble mews. Ben and Jim fairly cried with indignation and helpless wrath at the sufferings of the small animal.

One morning, while dressing, I heard a lively discussion going on outside my window.

"There! I told you what would happen if you bothered them so. Now, you see, they're gone. It's all your fault!"

"It isn't! It isn't!" passionately, from the small girl. "'Sides, she was my kitty, anyhow."

"No, she wasn't, neither. She belonged to her mother, and she's taken her away. I told you so! And it's all your fault."

Sobs from the small girl, accompanied by a sound as though she were engaged in slapping Ben with all her might. "It isn't! It isn't! And she was mine, mine, mine! So!"

I threw open the blinds, and leaned out. "What's the matter, Ben?" I called.

Ben, one cheek very red, looked up at me. "The mother-cat and the kittens have all gone—every one of them. And it's all her fault. I told her so!" The angel-eyed girl had disappeared.

Wherever the fault lay, our little friends had gone. The days slipped by, and nothing was seen or heard of them, when one morning I found the mother-cat. She leaped upon me as a dog might have done, and sprang into my arms, purring with delight, licking my hands, my arms and my face, when I put it down on her rough fur caressingly.

For a week after that she appeared and disappeared at intervals, always alone. It was evident that she intended to keep the whereabouts of her kittens a secret.

One morning I encountered her alone, over by the golf links. She ran up to me eagerly, as was her wont, rubbing against me affectionately, and, looking up into my face, began to mew softly. She was evidently trying to tell me something.

"What is it, kittums?" I asked, stooping down and smoothing her. She licked my hand, mewed piteously, and ran away a few paces, stopped, regarding me earnestly for a moment, then came back to me with her queer little halting run and rubbed against me again. When she had repeated these manœuvres several times, it dawned upon my stupid human brain that she was asking me to go with her.

For a mile I followed her along the dusty road, till suddenly she sank down in the cool shadow of an apple tree. She was panting and exhausted from her long run, but she looked up at me affectionately, and, stretching



herself out on the cool grass, she uttered that peculiar, soft little cry with which a mother calls her kittens.

The farmyard gate stood open. Presently, from round the gate post, a little grey-and-white head appeared, followed closely by another with bright eyes and yellow mottlings round the short ears, and little Grey-and-White and Tiger came trotting down the road. They

ran straight for their mother, and, hungry, as usual, nestled down by her, digging her poor thin sides with their tiny paws. She welcomed them with languidly contented eyes.

"See, they're all right," she seemed to say. "I had to take them away where I could bring them up in peace. I knew you wouldn't tell if I showed you."

And I never did.

## An Interrupted Flight

By Jessica.

YES, I do think she is decidedly queer," said Cecily, the "baby" boarder at Westmeath. She was an important little person, and had been spoilt by everyone at the College, from the Principal downwards, since one dreadful day when she had narrowly escaped with her life by falling from a tree which she had climbed strictly against rules.

"And pray, what do *you* know about the queerness or otherwise of those who are older than yourself?" said the dormitory "mother," who was looked up to as an example to the house girls.

Sadie Ross was always the dux of her form, though there were those in the school who determined each year that they would outrun her, but her persistent perseverance, sheer love of hard work, keen sense of duty, combined with the very real ability she possessed, kept the ambitious girls behind her each term. Her sweet, unselfish nature made her a favourite with everyone, and she had won the title of little House Mother, because not only did she keep the rules herself, but kept her companions up to the mark too.

"That will do, Wriggles," said Sadie, as the child persisted in her remarks. "Be off with you, Mavourneen, and let Sadie read up this chapter before the bell rings," and she took the child by the hand and accompanied her to the school-house close by, where day and house girls were already assembling for the morning studies.

The subject of Cecily's question, a lean, tall, angular girl, about fifteen, strolled along behind all the other maidens from the house, looking as if she were not quite sure whether she should really take her place in the line or wander off somewhere else. "Hurry up, Lena

Pental, you're always where the cow's tail is," shouted the harsh voice of Miss Burton, whose duty it was to inspect the toilet results of the assemblage. As the prim, lady-like head assistant mistress was fond of remarking, it was a pity that Miss Burton's sense of refinement was not on a par with her undoubted brilliance as a mathematical mistress. Poor Lena strove to obey the command to "hurry up," and in doing so her foot caught in the top step, and she fell headlong across the verandah where the classes gathered before going into morning assembly. "Dear me, some people are born to clumsiness"; was hurled from the unsympathetic mistress; "take a hundred lines, Lena. Attention, girls!"

A repressed giggle reached the sensitive ears of the poor girl, but the words had probed very deeply, and Lena's face was a study. It was the colour of a red peony, tears were streaming from her eyes, but the lips were tightly compressed, and with a supreme effort she took her place beside Mona, a quiet, gentle girl of about Lena's own age, who sat beside her in the fourth form.

"Never mind, Lena," Mona managed to whisper, "I'll help you with the lines," but Lena's heart was too full to reply, and once again her reserve was put down to obstinacy.

Lena had come to Westmeath with an almost passionate desire to win love and companionship. It had seemed to her a wonderful and almost unbelievable thing when her father had told her that she was to have a few terms there, and a vision of life as she pictured it at boarding school, opened up a new vista for her. But she had not taken into account the conservative nature of girls and their unwillingness to accept any one into their inner circle



in the middle of the year, when friendships had been formed and all sorts of traditions had been honoured.

With the unconscious cruelty of youth they put Lena down as uncouth, countrified, and gauche. In truth she was all these things, for she had grown up with a mother who never lost an opportunity of letting her know the grudge she bore her for being a girl. A boy, she was told, might have been of some use on the selection which they had taken up, some thirty miles from the town where Westmeath College stood. These sarcastic remarks fell on Lena's ears like blows, and she had needed to make a desperate effort at self-control not to answer that it was not her fault, that at least she might be given credit for the drudgery she performed on the farm, attending to the poultry, feeding the pigs, milking the cows, keeping the dairy sweet and wholesome, baking the bread, to say nothing of ordinary household duties. She often wondered if even a boy could have done more. Now she was at Westmeath amongst other girls who had enjoyed a happy home life and healthy girlish enjoyments, she longed to be one of them, to find some kindred spirit to whom she might confide all her longings and ambitions. But her very eagerness made her appear clumsy and undignified, and they one by one wearied of her and left her to her own devices. Her one enjoyment was to sit on the steps of the side verandah, listening to the beautiful piano in the drawing room, which Miss Hetherington loved to play after the busy hours of the day, to soothe her wearied brain and to find enjoyment in the sweet harmonies of the best masters.

But this lack of response in her companions aroused in her the same feelings that she had experienced back on the farm, and one day, unable to restrain her feelings, she shocked the placid Mona by saying, "I'll do something desperate some day, I know I will."

"Oh, promise me, Lena, you won't," begged Mona; "though I don't know what you *could* do in a quiet place like Westmeath. Would you run off to Sydney, or would you just go home? Lena drew a deep breath. Home! Mona little knew what she suggested, and a shadow of pain flitted across her face. For a moment she felt inclined to unburden her soul to her class-mate, but a feeling of shame prevented her. No girl at Westmeath should ever know of her unhappy childhood. Her repression made her more than usually bitter. "Oh, I know what you're afraid of Mona," she said; "You think I'll hurt the dignity of your precious old dormitory four.

You don't care if *I* get into trouble." Mona turned away hurt by her words, the more that she did care very much for the honour of her dormitory, and she was ever in terror lest Lena's strange moods would lead her into some mischief which would upset their chances of getting highest marks.

There was one bright spot in her days of discontent, and that dated from the day when Miss Hetherington had told her, after a music lesson, that she had a great gift. "Do you know, child," she had said, "there are times when I quite forget I am teaching you, you are playing so beautifully. You have real talent and some day, if you apply yourself to your music, you may make a name for yourself." It had been too wonderful to think that she, the girl who was not wanted by her mother, and was no use to anybody, might become a great pianist. She hugged the thought to her secret soul, but though it was almost too good to be true, she felt more than ever the need of some human soul to whom she might convey the great news.

So the year gradually wore on, and things did not improve much between Lena and the rest of the girls. Matters seemed to come to a head one day when Miss Hetherington had occasion to speak to her about her want of concentration in her music.

"I am disappointed in you, Lena," she said. "You are playing without any animation, and the faults you make are shocking."

Lena sprang from her seat in a mood that the other mistresses knew well, but which she had never shown before to Miss Hetherington, whom her starved soul regarded with hero-worship. "I seem to spoil everything I do," she raged. "It isn't my fault the music won't play. I wish I had never come here; nobody wants me."

This outburst brought deeper feelings into the Head's mind. This strange girl, so different from all the other ordinary lassies, was a revelation to her. She wished she might probe the disordered nature and find the key to it, but just then the bell went and the school routine must be observed. "Run away, now," she said, "and forget your studies for a time in a good game of tennis, and find an appetite for tea."

That evening a restlessness which Lena exhibited at preparation class, disturbed more than her fellow students, for the ever watchful Miss Burton discovered it.

"What in the name of fortune has come over you to-night, Lena Pentel? Will you either settle down to your lessons, and let everyone



else do the same, or go to your bed?"

"I'll do my lessons," she replied, ungraciously.

Miss Burton seemed to be on the alert that night to make Lena conscious of her very apparent antipathy to her. Lena had been unable to get a game of tennis, and Miss Burton had overheard her say that some mistresses seemed to think the court belonged to them. Evidently she had worn the cap, for she looked at the girl vindictively. Later on, Miss Burton bounded suddenly out of her room, as Lena was approaching the door, and in consequence the house mistress's pet corn had suffered.

"Lena Pental," she cried, unheeding Lena's profuse apologies, "your clumsy big feet are always treading on someone's toes."

Then, at the tea hour, Miss Hetherington not being present, she determined that Lena should be made feel mentally some of the pain her corn had given her physically, and applied pin pricks in the shape of sarcastic remarks about the girl's table habits. So by the time all the girls were seated for preparing the following day's lessons, there appeared to be a certain amount of electricity in the air, and this, in some way, perhaps, accounted for Lena's restlessness.

"1760 yards in a mile, 1760 yards in a mile. I expect when to-morrow comes I shall think it is 1780 yards. How I should love to fly, fly right away up, up, and up into space, away from every living person, into the realms of space, space, air, air, sky and skies, beyond reach of Burtons, Gruntons, Heth—. What am I thinking? 1780 yards in a mile. Oh, I can't learn. It's no use for me to try," and the girl's head sank lower and lower on to her desk, when suddenly a rasping voice roused her.

"Lena Pental, you seem absolutely devoid of sense to-night. Just go up to bed and rise an hour earlier in the morning to prepare that work."

Lena looked first at Mona, then at Miss Burton, as if she had not understood.

"Do you hear me, or are you deaf as well as stupid?" The girl slowly returned to animation, and just heard the repeated order. "Go at once!" stormed Miss Burton.

Without looking round, Lena slowly departed. Her bed was on the balcony, and without going to her room to undress, she flung herself down on it, and the pent-up misery of the day overwhelmed her all at once, and great tearing sobs rent her bosom. After the storm came a calm. Not one minute longer would she stay at a place where everyone hated her. Mona's words came back to her. She would run away. Never

again, perhaps, would such a chance occur. It would be an hour yet before the others came to bed. No one had gone yet but Cecily, the Baby Boarder, whom everyone loved, but who had failed to respond to Lena's clumsy advances. No clear idea entered her confused brain as to what she would do to support life. She only knew she must get away. Not to home, though, but to some place where no one knew her, and she could start afresh. She might get a place as nursemaid even. She would leave no message, let them think what they would; nobody cared. Perhaps when they found she was gone, they might be sorry. Sobbing pitifully under her breath, she gathered up a few belongings, put on her thick coat and a tam-o'-shanter, and looking round to see that no one was about, slipped over the railings of the balcony, and was soon in the shadowed garden. It was very dark, and the place seemed lifeless. She knew where there was a gap in the hedge beyond. If she could reach that in safety, she would soon be outside Westmeath. Lena felt nothing but a thrill of pleasurable excitement that she had at last found courage to leave the place where she had been so unhappy. Nothing, no, nothing would persuade her to go back.

Now she was through the hole in the hedge, and out on the shadowed road. She shivered a little, more with excitement than with cold.

The road—quite a country one, for Westmeath was a little out of the town—was eerie in its silence. A little rustling noise on the far side startled her. As she looked in the direction of the movement, a little white shape flitted into sight, dancing, dancing ever, on and on, up the road.

Lena's heart stood still for a moment, then beat painfully in heavy, hurried throbs. What, oh, what could the little dancing form be? She stood rooted to the spot as in a nightmare, when suddenly something struck her as familiar about the little dancing shape, a little halting in the tripping step, a slight unsteadiness of gait. Cecily danced like that, Cecily with her little lame foot. Could it be she dancing there in her little white nightgown, out in the dark, shadowed road, away from the safety of Westmeath. Suddenly the memory of its security stabbed Lena with a remorseful pang. The little figure seemed to suddenly pause, and then all at once Lena remembered that the child had once before walked in her sleep. That must be the explanation. All thought of flight had now left Lena's mind. She must get the Baby Boarder, little Wiggles, back somehow. She had heard that sleep walkers must not be wakened suddenly.

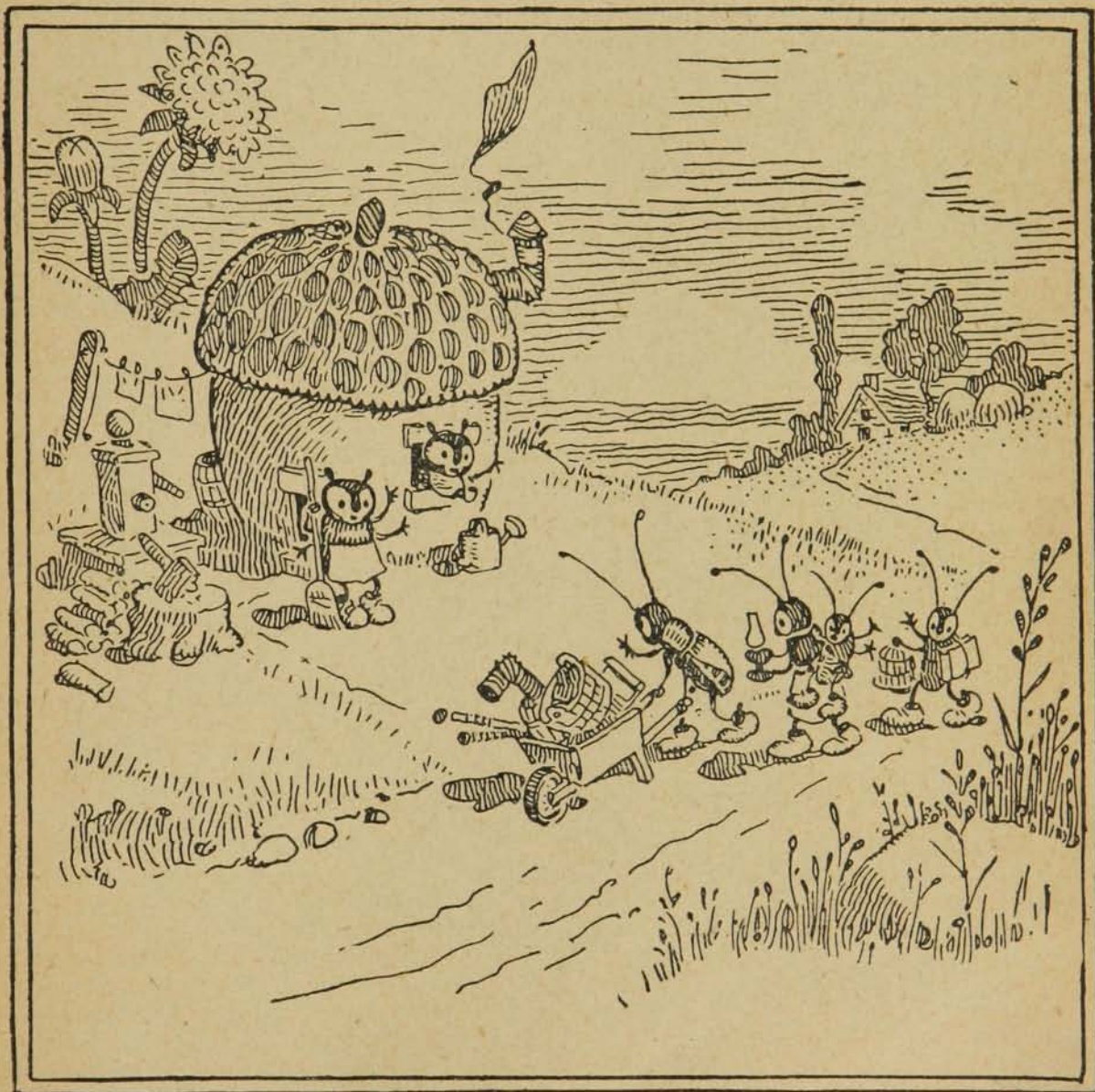


What should she do?

The little white shape decided for her. She began to run, with a limping hop, into the shadowed, unfenced paddock on the other side of the road. Dropping her suit case, and throwing off her coat, Lena followed her footsteps, making no sound on the grass. Like a flash came the memory of the waterhole in the direction Cicily was taking. She might run into it at any moment. She must overtake her and risk the awakening. But Lena was a second too late; there came a splash, a shrill cry of terror. Then Lena blessed the fact that she had learned to swim in the home creek. She was in the

water in a flash, and as the little figure, with its dripping hair came to the surface, she held it up, saying soothingly: "Don't be frightened, Cecily. It's Lena who's got you." Spluttering and shivering, the child's arms around her, she pulled her to the bank. Cecily lay sobbing in her arms, trying to speak through shivering blue lips. "Don't talk, darling; Lena will carry you home." Little wet arms clung round her, and a soft, cold cheek was laid for a moment against hers.

"Dear Lena, I do love you," came a tiny whisper, and a wonderful thrill ran through Lena at the words. Wet, cold, uncomfortable



Mr. Cockroach (to dwellers by the roadside): "Yes, we're moving to the country for a while; those city flats are awfully dangerous during the house-cleaning season."



in her clinging garments, a fugitive from everybody, Lena yet felt happier than ever in her life before. She was loved. Wrapping the child in her coat, she bore her back to the school, and though her arms ached and her limbs were hampered, she felt a strange exaltation. As she neared the gate, she saw an excited group. Cecily and she had been missed, and mistresses and girls had come in search of them.

Cecily gave all the explanation that was necessary for the moment.

"I did sleep walk, and my Lena did pull me out of the waterhole."

It took some persuasion to get the little despot to leave Lena's arms, and only when she was promised that she should sleep in her bed when dried and warm, would she consent to be parted from her. Miss Hetherington would allow no further talk on the subject that night, and Lena, after a hot bath and a good draught of hot milk, crept in beside the drowsy Cecily, and, folded in each other's arms, they soon slept.

Later on, Miss Burton sought out the Principal, with a suit case in her hand, and an ominous frown on her forehead.

"This explains much," she said. "The girl

you are making such a fuss about was running away from school."

Miss Hetherington looked at her with saddened eyes, yet behind them was a divine glow.

"To her who loveth much, much shall be forgiven. Are we quite without blame, Miss Burton?"

After the event of the night, Lena's popularity knew no bounds. Cecily, the school pet, had been in danger of a dreadful death, and Lena had saved her. The secret of how she had chanced to be there was between the Principal and Lena alone, and for some weeks the once despised girl tasted to the full the joy of being loved.

A letter from home then brought her life at Westmeath to close. It was from her mother, telling of the arrival of a baby brother, and finished with:—

"Can you come home to us, Lena? I never knew before how much I need you, and long for you to be with us."

Lena's cup of happiness was full, and though she felt leaving Westmeath and the girls very keenly, it was enough for her that her mother wanted her, and that there was a place there for her to fill.

## Poetic Justice

By Lillian M. Pyke.

WHAT school's going to win to-morrow?" was the question on the lips of everyone from six to sixty after the first heats had been rowed at the Head of the River races on the Friday afternoon.

Frank Thornton, wearing the St. Andrew's colours, had spent the hours on the river bank, roaring at the top of his voice for his school, and had the satisfaction of seeing its crew beat St. Joseph's by a canvas. He was therefore highly elated in spirit, though somewhat exhausted as to lung power, when he was slapped on the back by Jim Craydon, a fellow-pupil. "Hallo, Crayfish," he exclaimed, giving a start. "Where did you hail from? Didn't we put one over St. Joseph's, eh?"

"Hail from?" laughed Craydon. "From one of those trees on the river bank. I don't know if there is such a thing as a slippery elm tree, but if there is, I was on it. I had to grip so hard with my legs round the trunk, I thought I should be bow-legged for ever. Where were you?"

"Oh, behind the judge's box, in a frightful crowd. Some of the asses around started pushing, and if I hadn't dug my heels into the bank I would have gone into the water. As it was, they shoved against the judge's box, and the old bird inside put his head out in a frightful stew. Thought he and his pill box were going head over turkey into the water, I suppose."

"Big surprise, St. Virgil's only winning by a foot or two," went on Craydon, falling into step beside his companion among the crowd making its way up to the station. "For first favourites, they didn't put up such a marvellous performance. They started off with a bit of a splash, and took some time to make it up."

"Any way, it was owing to Harry Bourne they won their heat. He's a bonzer stroke," replied the other. "The Western District Grammarians will have to fight another day. That leaves in the Victorian Grammars, St. Virgil's and ourselves."

"Somehow," said Thornton, meditatively, "I



think it will be a go between the last two. The Victorian Grammarians had to row all they knew against Mervale College, and everyone knows they were jolly weak this year. St. Virgil's and St. Andrew's seem likely to be rivals once more."

"Funny to think how we always seem to have a strenuous go against one another," commented Craydon. "There's more feeling between those two schools than any of the others. Strange how the very sight of one of their caps stirs something even in me, and I'm usually too lazy to take sides."

"I'm sure the girls think their caps becoming enough," laughed Thornton. "Look at the competition among them for collecting badges."

"Sometimes I wish the bad old days of cap snatching were still in existence," said Craydon. "There must have been some satisfaction about clawing the head gear off a chap after a match or a race. I can understand the Indian's joy in scalping. There was something to show for their win."

"We are fallen upon pussy times," misquoted Thornton. "Nowadays there are no regrettable incidents, and such things are *never* done. Might as well go to a girls' school and walk out in a crocodile."

"If we lived in the good old mediaeval days," went on Craydon, "we could capture Harry Bourne, the St. Virgil stroke, and lock him up in some secluded place till 5 o'clock to-morrow."

"By Jingo," said Thornton, "that would cut out the St. Virgil's chances all right. He holds the crew together for St. Virgil's."

"Can't you imagine it?" rattled on the other. "One of us chaps disguised as a female in distress, enticing Bourne to a lonely spot, where two or three St. Andrew's fellows, also disguised, would pounce on him, gag and bind him, and throw him into a convenient shed."

"Then after the boat race was over," Thornton took up the tale, "and St. Andrew's was head of the river, some unknown person would unbind him and let him out."

"What a subject for the 'Good Old Times Association,'" laughed Craydon. "But we are a few centuries too late. We are taught to behave like nice little gentlemen, and turn the other cheek now." Here the dissatisfied St. Andrewite lifted up his right foot with a howl and simultaneously let out with his elbow into the ribs of a St. Virgilian who had accidentally stepped on his toe in the crush. "Clumsy bounder," he growled, and but for the fact that the crowd pressed them apart again, there

is very little doubt but that the veneer of civilisation which Craydon so deprecated would have been scratched off and the human boy of all ages have stood revealed in a "ding-dong go."

Thornton grinned. "Strikes me, Crayfish, that the amicable relations between the schools that the Head talks about exist only in his imagination. Yet for all that, there must be some quite decent chaps go to the other schools. Look how they hob-nobbed at the war."

"'Combined before a common danger,'" quoted Craydon, who was something of a history student. "It would have to be something very out of the way in the danger line to make me fraternise with a St. Virgilian. Well, here we are at the station, Prickles. I suppose your people will pick you up in the car—bloated aristocrat!"

"You're lucky to live in a suburb where the trains run," said Thornton. "We'd be cut off from civilisation if we didn't have the car."

"See you to-morrow?" asked Craydon.

"Pater's got tickets for a motor boat," replied Thornton. "Good luck, any way. So long."

"Hooroo," replied the other, and the two shining lights of St. Andrew's parted for the night.

The day on which the Head of the River was to be decided broke bright and frosty. Any privileged person who knew the old boating melody, "Glorious April Weather," burst forth into song at a very early hour in any number of keys and registers, from the deep bass of the St. Virgil stroke himself, through all the varieties of tenor, cracked baritone, and contralto, to the shrill soprano of preplings and such unconsidered folk as girls. For there was hardly a soul in the whole community who had not some interest in the boat race. All the sister, cousin and aunt colleges were, of course, eager partisans, as was only to be expected, but the bacillus of infection spread to the very butcher boys, who supplied the heroes with steak for their grills, and to the girls in factories, whose was the honour of knitting the school sweaters. And even those who were not so intimately connected as that, yet knew a cousin of the housekeeper at St. Virgil's or Victorian Grammar, based their faith in some particular crew on such slight grounds as that.

At any rate, whatever the cause, the whole atmosphere was vibrant with interest in the Head of the River race, and all Melbourne, with a good sprinkling from the country dis-



tricts and representatives of all the States, prepared to go and find a square foot of land or water whereon they might settle for some hours to watch an event which occupied not much over five minutes.

The Thornton household, consisting of Frank, Dora and Tim, were ready to start in good time. Frank was to be entrusted with the car, having recently obtained his licence, and was to meet Mr. and Mrs. Thornton at a specified place on the river bank. Tim, a fragile boy of ten, was all excitement. This was his first boat race, the first time he had been considered strong enough to go. He could hardly wait to finish his dinner before he urged the others to get ready. "Oh, Dora," he said, "aren't you glad it's such a lovely day? St. Andrew's is sure to win. I think I'll die if they don't. I wish the St. Virgil's crew would all get measles or something."

Dora, a pretty girl of sixteen, patted him on the shoulder. "Go it, Tim," she said. "You barrack your hardest, and St. Andrew's can't help winning, even without the measles to help them. Come on, there's Frank calling."

The motor had been gaily decorated by Dora that morning, with the flags and ribbons of St. Andrew's, and presented a very gay sight as it left the gates. Balloons in the familiar colours floated out on the breeze, and badges and hat bands streamed from the coats of the redoubtable three as the car got under way.

"What a sell if we had a breakdown," joked Dora. "St. Andrew's would never win if we were not there to shout; 'Come on, School!'"

Tim's face clouded over. "But we simply couldn't," he said. "There's no other way of getting to town from here, is there?"

"Don't worry, old chap," said Frank. "This old bus will get us there all right. Any way, we could walk to the tram and get in that way, but we'd be too late to get any sort of place: it would take so long to go the round-about route."

They had not gone very far, when they saw a motor bike in front them, going at a good pace. All of a sudden the engine apparently refused to work, for after emitting a few kicks and snorts the bike came to a standstill, and the rider jumped off and began to investigate. The Thorntons' car rapidly approached, and soon passed it, going rather slowly, as there was a steep hill to climb. Frank, intent on the car, apparently did not notice what had happened, but Dora, giving a slight gasp, sat

back in her seat, a bright spot on either cheek. As the car slowly ascended the hill, she looked back. The cyclist was evidently in distress, for there was no sign of the engine having started to work. Suddenly, as if having come to a decision, she touched Frank's arm.

"Keep still, Dos," he snapped. "You nearly turned the wheel that time."

"Frank," she said, in an excited tone, "look round at that stranded motor bike. Do you know who it is?"

"No, and I don't care," replied Frank. "Let go my arm. We'll be late."

"That's Harry Bourne, the St. Virgil's stroke! He lives out our way, you know."

"My godfather!" exclaimed Frank. "Why, if his bike's out of order, he'll never get to the sheds."

The top of the hill was reached now, and Frank pulled the car to a standstill.

"What's wrong?" asked Tim, anxiously.

"Nothing with us," replied his brother, "but Harry Bourne's back there in trouble with his bike."

"What?" cried Tim. "The St. Virgil's stroke? What a joke! He'll be too late to row in the crew."

"No, he won't," said Frank, grimly, preparing to start the car and turning it round to go down the hill again. "No, he won't, for we'll take him with us in the car."

"Oh, Frank," almost sobbed the child. "If he isn't there, St. Andrew's is sure to win."

"You've a lot to learn, kid," replied his brother, steering carefully. "A chap can't be such a rotter as that. We've got to take Bourne in somehow." Dora gave his arm a squeeze; she knew what lay beneath her brother's words. It had cost her something to tell him about Harry Bourne, and she realised the temptation he had conquered to go on and leave the St. Virgil stroke to his fate.

Harry Bourne looked up as he saw the car which had passed him returning down the hill towards him. He was a finely built boy, deservedly the most popular and depended upon member of the St. Virgil's crew.

A worried frown at the present moment wrinkled his brow as he surveyed his disappointing machine. The car with the rival colours flaunting at him drew up, and the driver hailed him.

"Something wrong with the bike?" The sympathetic faces of Frank and Dora and the ill-concealed impatience of the little fellow caused him to wonder.



"Bike's gone back on me," he replied. "Engine trouble, I'm afraid. Can't get a move out of her."

"Can you put it somewhere till later on?" asked Frank. "If so, we can give you a lift to the sheds. You'll be too late for the race."

"I must get there somehow," said Harry Bourne. "I'm in the crew."

"I know," replied Frank, quickly. "You're the St. Virgil's stroke. My sister recognised you. But let's stop gassing, or you'll be too late to row at all. Put your bike in that house and get in as quickly as you can."

Harry gave the brother and sister a grateful glance. "Well, I must say you're sports," he said. "Sorry, kid, to keep you waiting," to the scowling Tim, and quickly taking Frank's advice, he was soon back, and, seated in the car, was whirled along on his way to the boat sheds.

The Thorntons' car covered the ground to the river bank in good time. There was very little said during the journey, Frank's mind being busy with his conversation with Craydon the previous day, and he rather hoped that truculent young gentleman would not see the St. Virgil's stroke in his company. It was all very well to have done what he felt was the only possible thing, and quite another to have to listen to Crayfish's comments on it afterwards.

Arrived on Prince's Bridge, Frank pulled up the car. Harry Bourne jumped out with a hurried good-bye and a few words of thanks, which ill-expressed his real feelings. For he knew the crew depended upon his leadership, the emergency who would have taken his place being quite good in his way, but not of a temperament to be depended upon in a crisis. He was received with cheers at the St. Virgil boat shed.

"Thought you were never coming, Harry," said Jim Hopton, who rowed seven.

"Had a breakdown," said Bourne, rapidly getting himself prepared to take his place in the boat.

"How did you get in from that remote suburb of yours, then?" asked the cox. "Airship?"

"No, sonny; you'll never guess," said Harry. "Who'd be the most unlikely person to give me a lift?"

"A Merry Andrewite," joked the other.

"Right!" said Harry, with a twinkle in his eye.

The cox collapsed. "This is so sudden," he said. "I never knew you were a perverter of the truth, Bourne."

"Dinkum," said the stroke, and the cox. gave a low whistle of astonishment.

"Decent," muttered one of the others. High praise, this.

By this time the river bank was a seething mass of human beings. Mothers, fathers and all the relations under the sun, city men, agriculturists, old boys, present boys and future boys jostled and pushed to get a glimpse of the brown stream that flowed between them. The river itself, with the centre space marked off for the competitors, was alive with craft of all descriptions, from the painted canoe usually only to be seen at the beach, to motor boats of quite considerable size. On one of these Frank, Dora and Tim were standing with their parents. There was plenty to occupy their attention even before the boats appeared. Now and again an aeroplane would sail overhead, piloted by some "old boy" and trailing the school colours through the air. Seagulls poised on their white wings, swooped into the river looking for salvage in the way of unconsidered biscuit or cake.

But all other interests paled before the launching of the boats, and the sight of the crews rowing up to the starting place. Each one received a cheer as it passed, the eight lightly clad boys bending to their oars in regular and unhurried sweep. It was difficult to tell which was the most popular crew, Victorian Grammar, St. Virgil's, or St. Andrew's. Each seemed to have the sympathy of innumerable supporters. After the last boat load had disappeared from view, there was a settling of the crowd on the bank, and the craft on the river sneaked as near as they dared to the floats. Every now and again some humorist would start, "Here they come," and necks would be craned to their utmost stretch.

But presently they did appear around the bend, Victorian Grammar slightly in the rear, St. Virgil's second, and St. Andrew's just leading. A mighty, prolonged roar went up from thousands of throats. Staid matrons climbed unashamed on rockeries, the trees on the banks seemed like animate things swaying and rocking with their cheering freight. Even those who could see nothing but their neighbours' backs made up in sound what they missed in sight. Soon the Victorian Grammar fell back a little, and St. Virgil's crept forward another foot or two on the leaders. Tim Thornton on the motor boat was almost frantic with excitement. "St. Andrew's, St. Andrew's," he yelled as the boats neared the winning post. With an almost superhuman effort the St. Vir-



gil's crew gained again, and the boat measuring its length against St. Andrew's, they shot home together. Tim's efforts to see all there was to be seen suddenly came to a disastrous end before he realised that the crowd was shouting "A draw, a draw." For a moment no one realised what had happened as a scream and a splash arose from the water. But Harry Bourne, in the St. Virgil's boat, panting from his exertions, realised that a child had overbalanced and that a life was in danger. Trained to act quickly in an emergency, he pulled in his oar, and springing as lightly as possible, so as not to endanger the crew's equilibrium, was almost immediately in the water, swimming for the little dark head which had appeared once above the surface. By this time the interest in the immediate vicinity was centred in the new struggle of the St. Virgil stroke. The sudden immersion after his strenuous rowing had made the task—in other circumstances an easy one for a boy of his athletic prowess—quite a difficult affair. But before long he had reached that little struggling figure and putting into practice what he knew of life-saving, soon had poor, exhausted

Tim in friendly hands. The cheers that had greeted the finish of the race were as whispers compared with the sound that went up as Harry Bourne reached the bank.

Tim, never strong, looked ghastly, but he was alive. Frank was beside him at once, and the crowd having withdrawn to make a clear space, he was attended to by a doctor.

Harry slipped off to the boat shed and was rubbed down and waited upon by enthusiastic admirers. The presentation of the Head of the River Cup had to be delayed until the St. Virgil's stroke was clothed in dry garments. A ringing shout went up as the strokes of St. Virgil's and St. Andrew's stood side by side to receive the trophy. For the first time the two schools were to share the Cup, instead of the race being re-rowed. Destiny had decided that it should be the old rivals who were the first to make history. When Tim heard the result and remembered who it was that had rescued him from a watery grave, he no longer bore Frank a grudge that he had decided against the policy of the "good old times," and had brought the St. Virgil's stroke to the river bank.

#### IF I WERE RICH.

(The foregoing title is often given in schools as a subject for an essay, wherefore our school poet was moved as follows:—)

Oh, what a time I'd have, be sure!

If I were rich.

I would'nt come to school no more,

If I were rich.

I wouldn't come to hear them say,  
"Now, Smith, you're late again to-day.

Well, you till half-past four can stay!"—

If I were rich,

A lengthy holiday I'd take,

If I were rich,

With Buffalo Bill or Sexton Blake,

If I were rich.

I'd only read what gave delight;  
There'd be no home-work any night.

I tell you, things would be all right

If I were rich.

I'd often stand my pals a spread,

If I were rich,

With ginger-beer and ginger-bread,

If I were rich.

On tarts, and cake, and fizoes cool,  
I'd let them gorge till they were full—

They'd often be too sick for school

If I were rich.

I think I'd run a picture show,

If I were rich;

Run only for Bill Hart & Co.,

If I were rich.

I'd start a boys' newspaper, too,

Where any boy could state his view

On what schoolmasters ought to do,

If I were rich.

An aeroplane I'd buy, indeed,

If I were rich,

An' dash through space at furious speed,

If I were rich.

I tell you I would make things hum,

I'd buy a dreadnought and (by gum)

Blow Bolsheviks to kingdom come—

If I were rich.

I guess I'd do a lot of things,

If I were rich,

And never—there, the school bell rings,

And I'm not rich!

I've got to go to school to-day,

And swot, and sweat and stew away,

And write some fibs for an essay,

"If I were rich."



# The Bush School

By Erica.

Miss Owl and Miss Pussy Cat thought they would open a school in the country for all the creatures who live in the bush, and so they wrote to Mrs. Kookaburra, who knew *all* about everybody, to tell the mothers they would be at home to see them every afternoon.

Miss Owl bought a new pair of specs., and Miss Pussy Cat brushed her fur coat and tied a blue ribbon round her neck, and they sat waiting for visitors.

Rat-tat-tat, went the door knocker. Polly



Polly Possum Opened the Door.



Possum opened the door, and in glided Mrs. Snake, bringing her little daughter, Sarah, with her. "So glad you are going to have a school, Miss Owl.

Papa said yesterday we should have to take a flat at the Zoo, so that Sarah could learn to wriggle and writhe in the latest

shapes, but now there will be no need for it, and Sarah will still be able to have her little bush playfellows, and she will like that, won't you, darling?"

"Yes-s-s-s, Ma!" said Sarah, with a pretty smile, which made her look like a worm in a fit.

After a little more talk and some refreshment, they went home, and then some more mothers and fathers came along, till there were quite a lot of scholars arranged for, and Polly Possum was so tired with opening the door and bringing in afternoon tea, that she had to go to bed without curling her hair, and the two ladies were so excited they could not sleep.

\* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER II.

Next morning the scholars began to arrive. The first one to appear was Lizzie Lyre Bird, who was very shy, and wanted to hide in a corner of the schoolroom, but Dolly Duck spoke nicely to her, and persuaded her to sit on a form with her. Kenneth Kangaroo and Willie Wallaby came hopping along next, and jumped the fence in one bound. Percy Platypus and





Teddy Bear were the last, and then Miss Owl appeared, with Miss Pussy Cat following her.

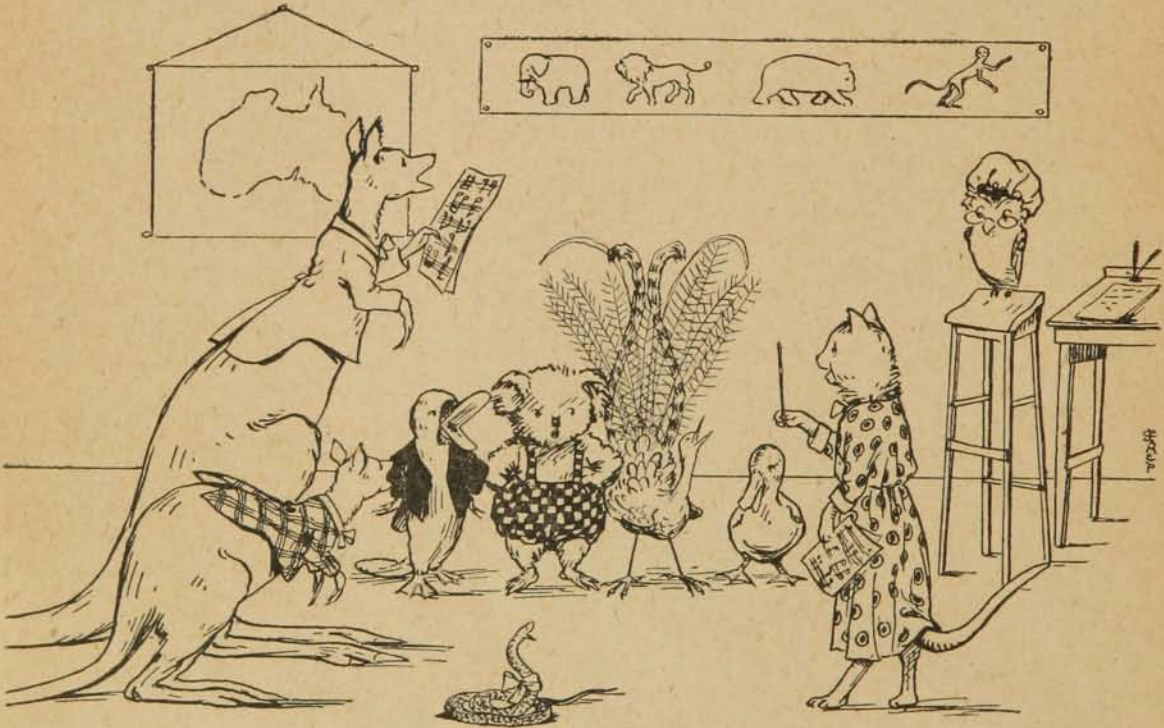
"Good morning, my dears," they said. "We will sing one of our school songs, and then get to work. But where is Sarah Snake? We cannot begin until she is here." Just at that moment a loud hissing sound was heard, and in glided Sarah, with her scales all polished, and her lunch in a neat packet, tied round her neck. She coiled up on the floor, and Miss Pussy Cat stood up, with a stick in her paw, and beat time while they all sang, squeaked, quacked and barked the well-known school song:—

Here we are again,  
Birds and beasts and fishes;  
We sing with might and main,  
To welcome our School Misses.

Miss Owl rapped on her desk for silence, but still the noise went on. Kenneth Kangaroo put up his hand: "Please, Miss, I think it's Katie Kookaburra. She said she was going to spoil our lessons, because her Pa wouldn't let her come to school. Shall I go and chase her away?"

"But where is she?" said Miss Owl. All began to look, when all at once there was a crack of a whip, and Miss Owl called out: "Don't beat her like that!" But just at that moment Sarah called out, "I believe it's Lizzie Lyre Bird, all the time," and so it was. She had learned to mimic all the bush sounds, and thought it would be great fun to show off.

After all this came playtime, and they trooped into the playground and began to amuse themselves in many ways. Some of the younger



Here we are again—Birds, Beasts and Fishes.

Then they were divided into classes. Lizzie and Dolly were together, and Willie and Kenneth sat on the same form, while Teddy and Percy Decided they would like to be with Sarah, because she had brought her lunch, and they thought they could smell toasted cheese, of which they were very fond.

Suddenly, when they were all very busy, they heard someone laughing: "Ha, ha, ha, ha, hoo, hoo."

brothers and sisters of Kenneth Kangaroo and Willie Wallaby were outside the fence, eager to know what school was like, and they were invited in to have a game, and so they made up a team of cricket and started playing.

Ken. was captain of one side and Willie of the other. Lizzie was wicket-keeper, because her tail spread out so far, and Sarah was put right on the boundary, as she could slither so quickly and bring the balls back. Then the



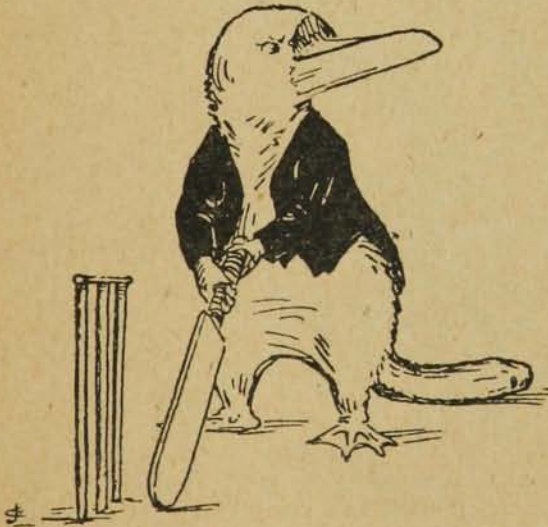
bowler, Teddy Bear, started off with a ball that went like the wind. Percy Platypus was batting, but when he saw the ball coming, he lay



Teddy Bear started off with a ball that went like the wind.

down and let it go right through the wicket, and his score was 0.

"That's because he has a duck's bill," said Dolly, who was inclined to be funny. Ken then went in, and hit the ball ever so far, and in



Percy Platypus was batting.

two bounds went from one end of the patch to the other; but Katie Kookaburra, who was at the other end, could not hop or fly so quickly, and said it wasn't fair. They argued the point so long that the bell rang before they had any

game at all, and Sarah had gone to sleep and had to be wakened up to go into school again.

The first lesson after recess was geography, and Miss Owl told them how the earth was divided into two parts—land and water—and how some lived in one and some in the other, but Percy quacked: "Please, Miss, I live in both. What am I called?"

"Antibilious," said Teddy Bear.

"Oh, no," said Miss Owl, "you mean amphibious—living both in water and on the land."

"But you can't fly," said Katie Kookaburra, who had crept in behind the others.

"Don't want to," said Percy.

"Sour grapes," said Katie.

"Order! Order!" called out Miss Pussy Cat, who had been setting some arithmetic on the blackboard. "Katie, what are you doing here?"

"Pa said I could come and see if I liked lessons, and if I did he'd let me come."

"Very well, sit down and don't talk. Now what is the earth made of?"

"Mud," called out Dolly. "No; land and water," said Miss Owl.

"Well, they make mud when they are mixed, don't they?"

Miss Pussy Cat, seeing the geography lesson was not getting on very well, called out: "Now, class, please form for arithmetic."

After some pushing and fluttering, they were ready. Sarah got on very well at this lesson, for a great many snakes are adders, and all have good figures, but Teddy and Kenneth wanted to do physical culture, and took a lot of persuading before they would settle down to their slates.

At last the morning was over, and the bell rang for dismissal.

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### CHAPTER III.

In the afternoon music was the chief item, both singing classes and orchestral work. Ken had the 'cello, Teddy violin, Sarah harp, Lizzie and Dolly flutes. They wanted to get up a musical play for the Xmas break-up, and were going to have a chorus of frogs and little birds to help them.

Old man Kangaroo taught them to play, and was very pleased with the way Sarah managed the harp. She slid up and down the strings, and the most beautiful sounds came out.

Lizzie occasionally dropped her flute and warbled a little song, but as it was very pretty,



Old Man Kangaroo didn't mind, and gave a great deal of attention to Ken. and Willie, who wouldn't hold their instruments right way up. Ken. treated his 'cello like a bat, and stood up to play, and Willie used his bow as a cane, and hit everybody within reach. Percy came in for most of the smacks; he was playing the drum and triangle. He managed by jumping up and down on the drum, and beating the triangle with a stick, which he held in his mouth.

After a little while, however, they dropped their games and settled down to work, and by degrees began to do really well, and at the end of the afternoon their master told them if they practised at home they would make quite a success of their instruments.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

The heads were very glad when the first day was over, and, while having a cup of tea in their little sitting room, talked over the events and planned the programme for the next day's work.

The dancing teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Rabbit, were coming, and physical culture lessons were to be given. As these were not an extra, all the pupils were to learn. Miss Owl thought it

would be a good idea to teach cooking, and said she would take the class.

In the morning Mr. and Mrs. Rabbit arrived, bringing two of their youngest children (twins) with them. The boy was named Bobby and the girl Rosey. They were very good children, and walked hand in hand into the schoolroom and shook paws with Miss Pussy Cat, who made them very welcome.

The bell rang and all the pupils came in. As usual, they sang, and then settled down to physical culture exercises. First came the grand march, Ken. leading with Willie, then Teddy and Percy, followed by Bob and Rosey; Katie and Dolly came next, and Lizzie and Sarah were the last, because they both had tails which rather got in the way.

Miss Pussy played the piano, and Mr. and Mrs. Rabbit gave directions; but Sarah could not mark time, and wriggled in and out and upset all the others, and Ken., who was really a very naughty boy, hopped over the blackboard, knocked it over, and nearly squashed Miss Owl who was standing by. She just escaped by flying up on the mantelpiece.

The march was stopped, Ken. was put in the corner, and Sarah tied up to the leg of a chair. Once more they started, and to the



And shook hands with Miss Pussy Cat.

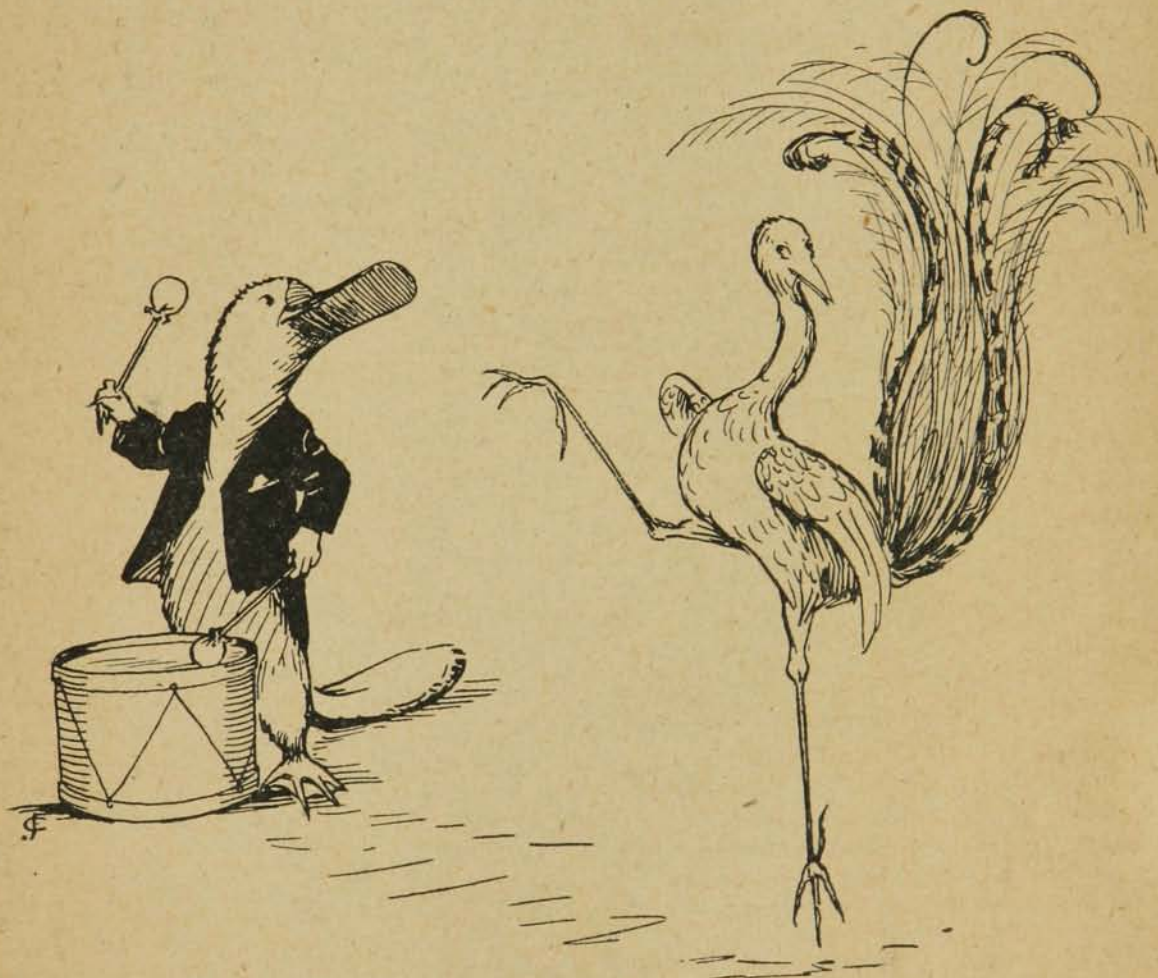


tune of "The Animals March Out Two by Two," they marched round the room. Then all formed in a line and did arm exercises and touched toes with finger-tips. Of course Sarah, having neither, made her head and tail meet. This so amused Katie that she laughed and had to be shut up in a cupboard, and Teddy went too far and stood on his head and stayed there, with his little legs kicking wildly, till Mr. Rabbit had to reverse him and stand him on his feet again.

After an hour of this, all were exhausted and sat down to cool for ten minutes.

well. The teachers took one each and taught them the new steps, and by the end of the morning they were quite tired and glad to go into the air to rest and eat their lunch.

During the morning, Mrs. Henny had opened a tuck shop in the play ground, and packets of grass, fresh lettuce, boiled sweets, and fruit of all kinds were displayed on a barrow, also worms and beetles in bottles for the birds, and nuts and cake. Everybody rushed up and Mrs. Henny did a roaring trade till all her goods were sold, when she put the money in the barrow and pushed home in great glee.



Performed some wonderful solos.

Dancing came next, and it was quite a dream to see Ken and Sarah waltzing together. Willie and Rosey Rabbit were partners, and enjoyed themselves tripping over each other's feet, and getting in the way generally. Lizzie would not dance with a partner, but performed some wonderful solos, Percy playing for her on the drum. Occasionally, Katie would join in with a laughing obligato, which really went very

#### CHAPTER V.

Well, school went on from week to week, and at last summer-time came, and the Sports Day drew near. By this time the school had grown to quite a size. There were classes for the smaller birds—robins, blue caps, wrens, and more of the kookaburra family joined, and at least a dozen frogs.



Anthony Rowley was engaged to teach the frogs, as they spoke quite a different language, and the bathroom was given up to them, so



Anthony Rowley was engaged to teach the frogs.

that they could keep themselves moist, because, though they can live out of water for a long time, their brains are more active when they are wet.

#### SPORTS.

The pupils were all very busy now, practising for the sports, which were coming off early in November. All the boys got up early and trained, wearing only short pants and sweaters; the birds practised flying, looping the loop, double dives and all sorts of fancy stunts. Dolly and Percy, though not the most graceful of swimmers, paddled about in the water, and managed to get quite a lot of fun. Of course the frogs joined in that game, and dived from a great height, playing leap-frog and swimming about in great style.

Sarah could swim, too, but the frogs rather objected to her going in with them, as one day, after having been in the water together, two

froggies were missing, and Sarah looked rather plump. So she was put in a small pond near the schoolhouse, and swam by herself. Kenneth was very good at jumping, but the sports master, Mr. Wombat, said he would have to be handicapped, on account of the extra length of his back legs. They were so excited over the games that they could not pay much attention to their lessons, and the head mistresses said they would be very glad when the Sports Day was over and the animals could settle down to their books again.

Lizzie had been working very busily at her dancing, and had invented a very pretty fancy dance for herself and Sarah. It was called the Writhesome Wriggle and Strutsome Dance, and consisted of a march down the centre of the platform, which was to be decorated with small trees and ferns, while Sarah Snake slid up and down the trees and wriggled about after Laurie on the grass, hiding from her, and then standing on her own tail, and waltzing by Laurie's side, turning round and round in a most graceful way. The orchestra played some pretty music for them, and it was a great success.

\* \* \* \*

#### CHAPTER VI.

At last the day arrived. Invitations had been sent to parents and friends, and by 2 p.m. the paddock was well filled and looked very gay with bright-coloured ribbons and flags. Several mia-mias had been built and afternoon tea was to be served by the pupils and staff. First of all, there was a race for all; the handicapping had been very difficult, owing to the different lengths of leg. Teddy Bear and Percy Platypus were in front, and Kenneth Kangaroo on scratch. Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Wombat were in charge of the proceedings, Mr. Rabbit with a large watch and Mr. Wombat with a small pistol, of which he seemed very much afraid.

Bang! went the gun, and off the creatures started. Dolly Duck and Laurie Lyre Bird ran a few yards and then tried flying. Stop! cried Pa Rabbit, no flying allowed! So they had all to come back to starting point, and begin again. This time Teddy began by turning head over heels, and became so giddy that he had to be helped off the ground and fanned with eucalyptus leaves, which soon revived him, but it was too late for him to get into the race, so he sat up on the fence and watched the others. Kenneth Kangaroo was bounding along, passing everyone. Presently he got near Sarah, and



thought he would soon beat her too, but suddenly she put on a spurt, and, with two slithery slides got to the winning post, and with a loud hiss of satisfaction, won the race. In the meantime, Willie Wallaby caught sight of his father, and in his excitement tripped over a group of frogs, and so upset them and himself that it took him all the rest of the time to sort them out. The little froggies were very angry with him for spoiling their chances, so it was arranged that they were to have a race of their own after the other events were over.

The high jump came next. Kenneth Kangaroo was not in this, as he was too big, but Willie Wallaby, Teddy Bear, and the frogs were all waiting to try. The pole was put up. Teddy was first, and managed to hop 1ft. 3in. Florrie Frog made one big attempt, 1ft. 4in. Then came Willie Wallaby, who, amid the cheers of all, with a mighty bound cleared 2ft. 6in. He rushed off the ground to where his father was standing, and went into hysterics with excitement.

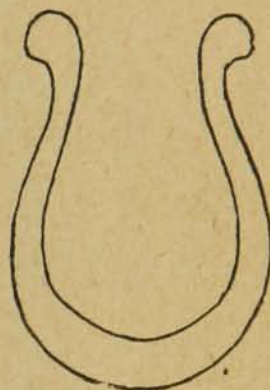
After some flying races, which Katie Kookaburra won, and swimming, in which Percy Platypus came first, the bugle rang for refreshments, and a great rush was made for the miamias. The ice cream was delicious, and Sarah Snake fell into one of the buckets. She stayed there till she had eaten as much as she could, and then let the froglets come and lick her scales clean. Most of the grown-ups had cups of tea and cakes, and the little pupils were kept busy running about with trays. When everyone had finished, the little frogs had their race. Someone suggested it should be leap frog, and it was just the funniest thing of the whole afternoon. They ran and hopped and fell over each other, till at last there was no one left to jump, and the prize was given to the froggie who was left without a partner.

The prizes were given out after this. Sarah Snake received a necklace of turquoise, which would go round her neck three times. Willie Wallaby a silver collar, suitably engraved; Katie Kookaburra a large picture book; and the Froglet a silver medal, which showed up well on his white chest. Percy Platypus received a waterproof watch. He was often late for school, and used to excuse himself by saying he had to swim across a river on his way, and never knew the time, so they thought this would keep him up to the mark. Everybody was quite satisfied, and they all went home, the parents feeling that the education their children were getting was quite worth the money, and the pupils very pleased with prizes and refreshments.

## CHAPTER VII.

The next week was given up to revision of all the work they had been through during the year, to prepare for exams., which were to come off the following week. History was the first subject. One question was: How did the lyre bird get its name? Now, there are too ways of spelling the word, and the meanings are very different. Sarah Snake thought it was spelt "liar," which means an untruthful, or person who cannot speak the truth, and made up the following story:—

There was a bird whose tail was shaped like this, which had no proper name, and one day he



Whose tail was shaped like this.

was sent with a message to King Billy, to ask him who was the best bird in the bush. King Billy laughed very much, and it sounded like "Who, who, you, you!" and without waiting to hear any more, the bird ran away home and said that the King said he was the best. "Then you're a liar, bird," said the cockatoo, "for he knows I am." So ever after that the name stuck to him!

Of course, the true story is that the tail is the shape of a lyre—a kind of harp.

Language came next. The chief question was: Give plurals of possum, cockatoo, Kangaroo, wallaby, willie-wagtails? Some answers to these were—Possum, possible; platypus, platycats; cockatoo, cockatwice; kangaroo, kangaroosters; wallaby, wallabus; willie-wagtail, willie's wagtails. I am sure some of the naughty little pupils knew better than this, but wanted to make fun.

Geography was Kenneth Kangaroo's special subject, and, indeed, he looked very imposing standing up by the map of the world, pointing out the oceans and islands with a long stick. The worst of him was he could never remember where the east was, until Miss Pussy Cat told



him to watch the sun rise, and then he would know, as it always rose in the east. But on dull days, when he could not see the sun, he was just as bad as ever, and gave it up as a hopeless task.

However, he was great at remembering the names of the oceans—'Lantic, 'Cific, Arctic, Antarctic, Red Indian and Bass Straits—and was always top of the class. So he expected to get the prize for this subject, and scribbled away on his paper so hard that often his pen went through, and he got so hot (his Mama hadn't time to make him a cool frock, and he was still wearing his winter fur coat) that the perspiration ran all down his face into the desk; but he



The perspiration ran all down his face.

did not care, because he could see all the others puzzling and worrying over the questions, particularly over the one which asked, "What is the cause of the strikes in Australia?" But Kenneth knew—he put "This is a Hughes (huge) question."

Arithmetic, writing and drawing exams. followed, and the excitement was very great when, at last, they were all over, and the pupils were dismissed in the afternoon and told to come early next day to the last practice for the concert and little play which they were getting up for the "Break-up," or Speech Day.

No one was late that morning. In fact, before the head mistresses had finished their breakfast, they heard a great chattering and shuffling in the schoolroom, and sent Polly Possum to see what was doing. She came back to say nearly all the pupils were there, with their fur in curling pins, and the birds with their feathers all trimmed and tidied up, waiting for Mr. and Mrs. Rabbit and the singing teachers, to hear them go through the musical play which they had been practising so long. The froggies and blue wrens were at the sides to do the chorus, and the orchestra in front. Everything was very satisfactory, and just as they finished, two or three dray-loads of tree ferns and branches of gum trees and all sorts of bush shrubs arrived to decorate the stage and room for the even-

ing. All stayed to help with this, and when it was finished you would have hardly known the place.

\* \* \* \*

#### CHAPTER VIII.

The evening arrived, and, oh my! you should have seen the parents and friends, big brothers, little sisters, grandfathers and aunts, coming in, each one in his or her very best suit, the ladies with their heads beautifully decorated with wreaths of flowers and grasses; the gentlemen with their nails polished and feathers and furs in the pink of condition. All the kangaroos had brought eye-glasses for the occasion, and looked very wise as they hopped in.

Miss Owl and Miss Pussy Cat received the guests in the middle of the hall, where a carpet was spread and several easy chairs placed for them, also Mr. Emu, who had kindly consented to give out the prizes. Then the programme was opened with an overture by the orchestra, and a display of marching and physical culture. Ken. Kangaroo headed the march, carrying a large Australian flag, and four of his younger brothers, dressed in khaki, followed, with smaller flags. They marched round the stage four times, then formed themselves, with the others, into a hollow square, and in another minute a small aeroplane came whizzing down into the middle of the square, and out hopped four little magpies, all dressed up as airmen. This scene was clapped and cheered, and then the curtains were drawn together, and when they re-opened, Laurie Lyrebird and Sarah Snake were seen on the stage, bowing and wriggling. They were going to do a very pretty fancy dance, which Sarah had invented, and called the Writesome Wriggle and Strutsome Dance, and consisted of a march down the centre of the stage by Laurie, while Sarah Snake slid up and down the trees and wriggled about after him, hiding now and again, and then waltzing by his side, turning round and round in a most graceful way, while the band played sweet music for them. They had to come back and bow six times before the visitors would stop clapping. Then the play followed.

The story was about "The Babes in the Wood," and the different parts were taken by:—The Father, Willie Wallaby; Wicked Uncle, Kenneth Kangaroo; Wicked Servants, Teddy Bear and Percy Platypus; The Babes, Two Froggies; The Robin, all the little birds in the chorus; while Laurie Lyrebird and the Kookaburra family were the grave-diggers, and



scratched and shovelled the graves for the babes. When Willie brought the babes to the Wicked Uncle, the audience called out, "Don't trust him, he looks sly!" but Kenneth stood up and took out his hankie, and cried real big tears, so Willie left them with him, and went away looking very ill and sad. Soon after the Wicked Uncle said to his servants, "Take these children away and kill them," but the little froglets looked so miserable that Teddy and Percy hadn't the heart to kill them, so just left them at the edge of the bush, and told them not to come back that way, and then went home and said they were dead. But the poor little things wandered about till they were starved.

Early next morning, when the little birds woke up, they found them all stiff and cold. The grave-diggers were called, and scratched and dug a trench, laid the froglets in, and all the little birds covered them over with leaves, singing sad little songs all the time. Then they all formed into a procession and marched back to the castle of the Wicked Uncle, singing songs of revenge and horror, Laurie Lyrebird leading, as he had a loud voice and knew a lot of things to say that he had heard the men in the bush say.

#### THE FROGS AND THE CRANE.

In the heart of the woods there lay a cool, green pond. The banks of the pond were set with ranks of tall bullrushes, that waved crisply in the wind, and in the shallow bays there were fleets of broad water-lily leaves. Among the rushes and reeds, and in the quiet water, there dwelt a large tribe of frogs.

"Kerrump! Kerrump! I'm chief of this pond!" croaked a very large bullfrog, sitting in the shade of a water-lily leaf.

"Kerrump! Kerrump! I'm chief of this pond!" croaked a hoarse voice from the opposite bank.

"Kerrump! Kerrump! I'm chief of this pond!" boasted a third old frog from the furthest shore.

Now, a long-legged, white crane was standing near by, well hidden by the coarse grass that grew at the water's edge.

He was hungry that evening, and when he heard the deep voice of the first bullfrog, he stepped briskly up to him, and made a quick pass under the broad leaf, with his long bill.

The crane almost had him, when something cold and slimy wound itself about one of his legs. He drew back for a second, and the frog got away. But the crane did not lose his dinner after all, for about his leg was curled a large, black, water snake, and that made a fair meal.

"Kerrump! Kerrump! I'm chief of this pond!" the second frog croaked boastfully:

The crane began to be hungry again. He went round the pond without making any noise,

When the Wicked Uncle heard all the noise, he got frightened and ran away, so when they arrived at the castle there was no one there, and they burned it down. This was a beautiful sight, and the visitors were delighted.

But now came the prize-giving, which, after all, was, to the pupils, the most important part of the whole evening.

Kangaroo got the geography prize—a beautiful cricket bat.

Teddy for spelling, dictation and writing, got a fountain pen.

History—Laurie Lyrebird, tennis racquet.

The prizes for the other subjects were all well distributed, so that nearly everybody got something, and after the pupils had all been satisfied, Mr. Emu made a little speech to the principals, and presented them with a silver travelling clock, for their own sitting room. Then the orchestra played "God Save Our Gracious King," everybody joined in, and when it was over, Miss Owl and Miss Pussy Cat were overwhelmed with good wishes and good-byes. The school doors were closed, and with thankful hearts and tired heads our little friends went to bed.

and pounced upon the second frog, who was sitting up in plain sight, swelling his chest with pride, for he really thought now that he was the sole chief of the pond.

The crane's head, and most of his long neck, disappeared under the water, and all over the pond the little frogs went splash! splash!

Just as he had the frog by one hind leg, the crane saw something that made him let go, flap his broad wings, and fly awkwardly away to the furthest shore. It was a mink, with his slender, brown body and wicked eyes.

After a long time, the crane got over his fright. The pond had been still so long that the frogs were singing their pleasant chorus, and above them all there boomed the deep voice of the third and last bullfrog, saying:

"Kerrump! kerrump! I'm chief of this pond!"

The crane stood not far from the boaster, and he determined to silence him once for all. The next time he began to squeak, he had barely said "Kerrump!" when the crane had him by the leg. He croaked, and struggled in vain.

But just then a fox crept up behind the crane and seized him. The crane let go the frog, and was carried off screaming into the woods for the fox's supper. So the third frog got away; but he was badly lamed by the crane's strong bill, and he never dared to open his mouth again.

It is not a wise thing to boast too loudly.



## The Baker that Baked.

ONCE upon a time there was a Baker-That-Baked-Gingerbread. What kind of gingerbread? Just plain gingerbread. But one day there came to town the Fool-Who-Did-What-He-Was-Told. He, by the way, is not such a fool as you'd think. And the Fool-Who-Did-What-He-Was-Told was asking questions of everyone he met.

"How does one walk up the street?" he asked. And the person whom he asked felt pleased because he knew just how.

"You pick up your feet, and then you put them down again," he said. Which, of course, was perfectly true.

So the Fool walked it by picking up his feet and putting them down again. And by and by he got to the Baker's.

"How do I get into the Baker's?" he asked of the Man-In-The-Street. Now, the Man-In-The-Street was cross, and when people are cross they are never very kind to this particular Fool.

"How do I know?" said he. "Go through the window if you like."

So the Fool went through the window. And, of course, the window broke.

The Baker caught the Fool by the back of the neck. "Now you'll stay and bake gingerbread until you've paid for it," said he.

So the Fool stayed and baked gingerbread. Monday they baked gingerbread, and Tuesday they baked gingerbread, and Wednesday they baked gingerbread—always the same gingerbread. And when Thursday came, the poor Fool was nearly crazy. But that day the Baker had to go out on business.

"What shall I bake to-day?" asked the Fool.

That made the Baker very cross.

"Bake some cats and some camels," he cried, and then he went out very fast and shut the door very hard.

The Fool was perfectly delighted. He made all the gingerbread dough up into the dearest little cats and the funniest camels with very long legs. But before he could put them in

the window to sell, the Baker came home, and he was very dreadfully angry (the Fool could never see why), and he threw away all the dear little cats and the funny camels, and made him set to work to bake some more.

But the next day he went out again, and the Fool asked the Baker's wife what he should do.

"Bake some pigs and some peacocks," she said, and she smiled disagreeably. She thought the Fool would feel very much ashamed. But the Fool was perfectly delighted. He set to work and made up all the gingerbread dough into little fat pigs and peacocks with spreading tails. Then he put them in the window to sell. When the Baker's wife saw them she began to cry tears.

"Oh, who will want to buy pigs and peacocks to eat?" she sobbed. "Oh, you foolish man, to spoil the dough! And oh, how angry the Baker will be."

But when the people in the street saw the pigs and peacocks in the window they stopped and looked. And when they had looked for a while, they came in and bought them. And before the Baker came home they were all bought.

The next day the Fool got up very early in the morning, and he mixed up the dough without asking anyone any questions. He made some ferocious little tigers, and he put them in the window. He baked and baked until the window was so full it could not hold any more—all full of turtles and tigers. And then he packed his things and ran away very far—very far indeed.

And when the Baker and his wife got up there was a long line of people in the street, waiting to get in to buy tigers and turtles.

And to this very day, if you go to that Baker's (it is a long way off, but I'll tell you the address if you write and ask me), you can buy cats and camels, and pigs and peacocks, and tigers and turtles, all made out of gingerbread.

But the Fool was not heard from again—or, at least, not for a very long time.



## A WINTER'S MORN.

By JOYCE PYKE.

'Tis winter, yet it seems like spring ;  
Soft-colored clouds are in the sky ;  
Gold leaves still to the elm tree cling,  
While full-dressed gum trees tower high.

The grass is green and dewy wet ;  
The hens with joy are clucking loud,  
As if to say to Day, "Well met !  
We're up the first, and feeling proud."

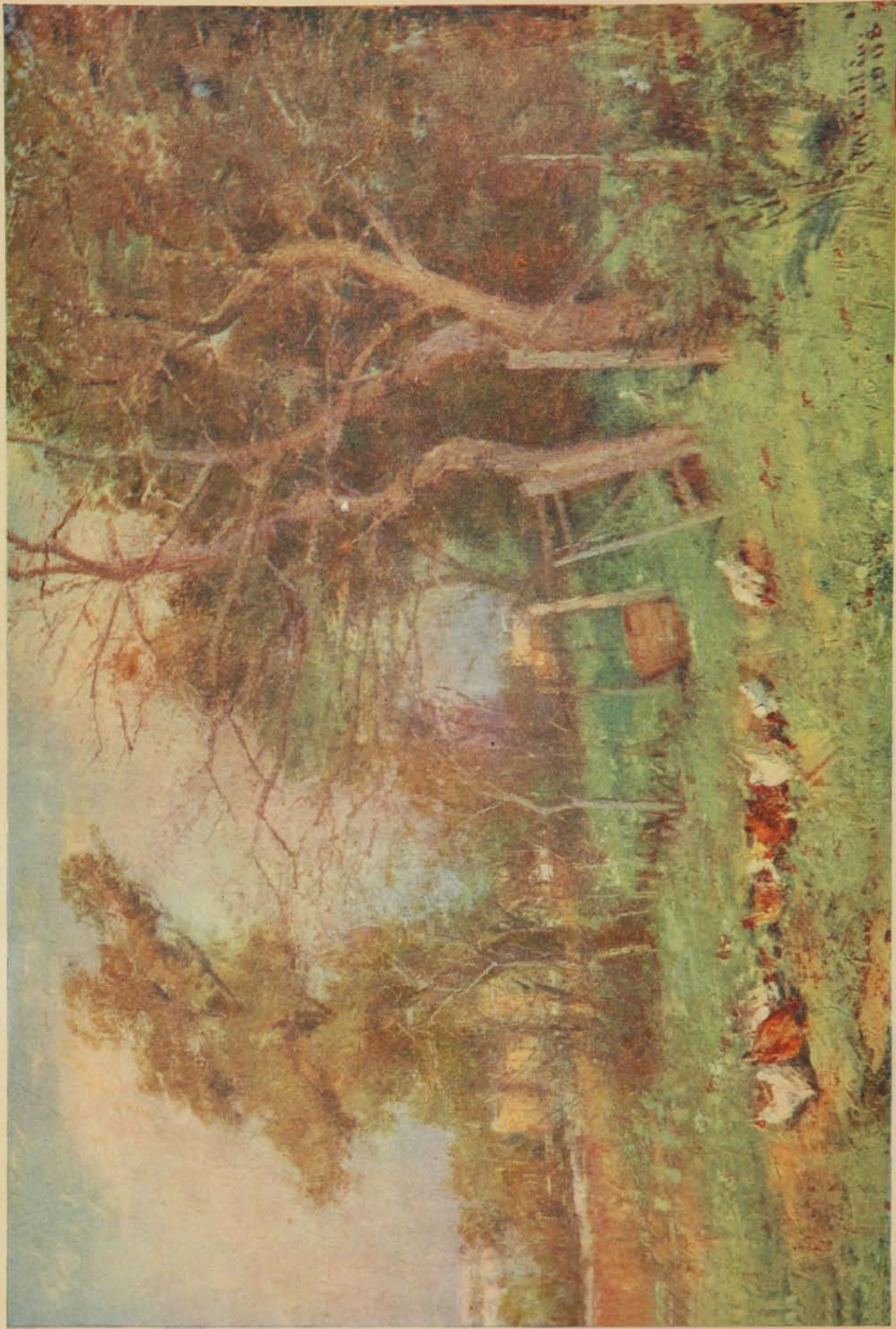
The farmhouse still lies fast asleep  
Beneath the morn's first happy glow ;  
But soon from doors bright eyes will peep,  
And little prattling tongues will flow.

Then through the deep and chilly shade,  
To where the sun is shining clear,  
Will come the farmer's rosy maid  
With golden grain to sprinkle near.

And then she'll stand awhile and dream  
Of fairy folk and fairy gifts,  
And in her fancy see the gleam  
Of gems in magic mountain rifts.

When, turning, she will sing out, gay,  
"There may be joy in fairy dell ;  
But on a bracing winter's day  
Our dear old earth does just as well."





*A Winter's Morn.*

**"J. K. MOIR  
COLLECTION"**

*By F. McCubbin.*



## The Water-Lily Fairy.

One fine day, Nurse took Mary and Billy for a day at the Gardens, in the middle of which was a big lake, and growing in this lake were beautiful water-lilies of every colour and hue.

"Oh! do let us stay here, Nurse, and gather some of these pretty water-lilies?" said Mary, and Billy jumped and clapped his hands for joy at the thought of gathering these beautiful blossoms.

Just as the children stretched out their hands to pick the water-lilies, they heard a tiny voice like a little silver bell, saying, "Who are you, and, oh! please don't pull so hard."

Mary and Billy stared at each other, wondering where the voice had come from, but Billy said, "It is only the rustling of the leaves in the trees," so they again began pulling at the flowers, and again the tiny voice called out: "Oh! Oh! How can you be so cruel," and, to their surprise, poised on a large water-lily was a tiny little fairy. She had a dress made of the petals of the water-lilies, and on her head she wore a tiny crown of dewdrops, which glittered and twinkled in the sun, and in her hand a tiny little wand.

"I am one of the Water-lily Fairies," she said, "and you have been pulling at our home, and we would have had no where to live."

Billy, who was the bolder of the two, had now quite recovered from his surprise, and was feeling very curious to know all about this beautiful little Fairy.

"Do you really live in that flower, and have you any sisters?" said he excitedly. "Yes, I do," said the Fairy, and again the voice reminded Billy of the little silver bells he had heard ringing on their Christmas tree. "Would you like to come and see my sisters, and our lovely Queen?" "Oh! we should love to," said the children, clapping their hands with delight. "But how can we come, we are so big?" So the Fairy waved her little wand over them, and the children found themselves changed into the size of the Fairy, with little wings fastened on to their backs. "But how are we to get across to the water-lily?" they said; whereupon the Fairy answered, "Close your eyes and jump into the air," and this they did, and found themselves caught up by the wind and carried over and placed safely beside the Fairy on the flower.

"Give me your hands," she said, "and I will lead you to our Queen."

The Fairy then took them down the flower, into a beautiful little hall, where fireflies lit it up like hundreds of tiny lanterns, and a host of little fairies were dancing to the music made by the lapping of the water against the flower home.

"Oh! how beautiful," the children cried, "and which one is the Queen?" At that moment the dancing stopped, and from a door came four little gnomes, bearing on their shoulders a water-lily petal, on which sat a most beautiful fairy. She wore a dress made of the wings of butterflies, and her golden hair reached right down to her feet. It looked like a golden cape, and in front of her head was a little glittering star, which must have fallen from the sky. Mary and Billy could only gasp and stare.

The gnomes set the Queen on her throne, and every fairy bowed low before her.

When the Queen saw the children, she called them to her, and asked them if they would like to stay and have supper with her fairies. They said they would, so the Queen waved her wand, and what do you think?—when they looked round a lovely little supper was all laid out with mushrooms for chairs. For supper they had honey from the honeysuckle, pollen from the flowers; and to drink they had dew in little rose petals for cups.

After supper, the Queen asked Mary and Billy if they would ask all the other mortals not to pluck the water-lilies, because it was their home, and if they had taken the flowers the fairies would have all died.

The Fairy then took them back out of the flower, and asked them to hop in the air, as she did before, and the wind again carried them to the bank. Then she waved her wand, and they were again turned into their proper size, but when they looked for the Fairy, she had gone and all they heard was Nurse Crossly calling them, as it was time to go home.

When they told her about their visit to the water-lily fairies' palace, she laughed at them, and said they must have been dreaming, but they knew better, and never tried again to pick the beautiful flowers that grow in the gardens, or on the lake.



# The Platypus

QUEER REMARKS ON A QUEER CREATURE.

**T**HERE are many queer creatures in the world—such as dromedaries, politicians, and gnats—but the platypus, perhaps, is the queerest of them all.

The platypus cannot live away from water, so is unlike the dromedary; it is shy and unobtrusive, so is unlike the politician; it does not weep into its own ears, and so is unlike the gnat. But beyond these little points of dissimilarity, the platypus resembles, in some way, almost every kind of creature—"Fish, flesh, and fowl"—and has peculiarities of its own as well.

Now, if you asked a professor or a biologist what a platypus was, he would probably answer:—

"Oh, you mean the *Ornithorhynchus paradoxus*. It is an aquatic, burrowing, monotrematous, egg-laying mammal, indigenous to the Antipodes; amphibious, primordial, consanguineous—." And so on. The dictionary might tell you something the same. If you did not know better, you would think that an animal with a name like that would be some enormous beast, big enough to browse on whole gum trees as if they were grass blades, and, when it was thirsty, to empty lakes as quickly as you would a bottle of "stone ginger" on a hot day.

Our little friend with this preponderous name is not much more than a foot in length. It lives in the water; in fact, it cannot live out of it; yet like the whale, must come to the surface to breathe. Its body is covered with a rich brown fur, and thus it is like an animal. On the head is a bill, like that of a duck, and it lays eggs, thus it is like a bird; and it swims and dives like a fish, its little fin-like feet rendering assistance. The three great classes of beings in the world are thus combined in one.

Everything about the platypus is strange. It is no relation to the catfish, as you might imagine by the name. So it does not "me-ow," as that fish is reported to do when caught; but its voice is like the bark of a small dog. Platypup, then, might be a better name for it.

The platypus loves to make its home in a quiet pool of some fresh-flowing river, and it is generally among the mountains and the sequestered spots that we find it. In the mornings and the evenings, it is generally to be seen, floating on the surface of the water, like a piece of bark, but ready to dive at the first hint of danger.

Its habitation is a large burrow upon the bank, but although the "living rooms" are above the water line, the entrance is always beneath the water. It is in these burrows that they teach the platykittens to bark, possibly so that the dogfish won't chase them.

Once, a school-teacher was giving a lesson upon the "platter-pus," as he called it. He was a cheerful school-teacher, and liked, as a rule, to make little jokes to amuse his class. During the lesson one boy seemed a little inattentive.

"Jones," said the master, "I was talking about the plate cat. What do you know about the plate cat?"

No answer.

"Don't you see, Jones—the plate cat?"

"I saucer," said Jones.

If ever you should catch a platypus—but I hope you do not, for the little creatures are rightly "protected" by law—you should beware of getting "stung." Sometimes these creatures are caught by anglers on hooks used for ordinary fish, especially at night. Bushmen say they would sooner risk a snake bite than a platypus sting, which is supposed to cause a wound that never heals. It is quite true that the male platypuses carry a sharp spur on the rear "foot," and with this they can inflict such a nasty cut that you would probably never forget it.

I just now referred to "platypuses." I hope you do not think I should have said "platypi." The plural of platypus is not platypi. It is a word that comes from the Greek language, not the Latin, as many people seem to think, and, therefore, the true plural (in the language from which the word came) would be "platypodes"—the same as antipodes. But it is sheer affectation to use such a far-off plural for a word that is now a "naturalised" English one, so platypuses is really the correct way.

There was once a celebrated professor at the Melbourne University who was giving a lecture on the platypus. During his speech he used the term "platypuses" more than once. Afterwards a lady from the audience approached him and said:—

"Oh, Professor, why did you not say platypi, instead of platypuses?"

"Because, Madam," he replied, "I did not wish to show my ignorance in three different languages at once!"



That the strange little creature is a "mixture" was recognised by even our somewhat slow-witted aboriginals. They have a little legend concerning its origin. Put briefly, it is this:—

A long time ago (when all the strange things happened), the wild duck had a tiff with the black swan, with whom she was keeping company. Feeling very lonely, and a little bit spiteful, perhaps, she went at twilight to the edge of a lagoon to drink. There she met with the water rat, who made fierce love to her. Presently they eloped together to a little island on the far side of the lagoon, where they

married and set up home. In due time, they had a little son, and he was the first platypus.

We do not know if this is what actually happened. But if some evening you wander along by some quiet pool of the Yarra before it becomes muddied by its contact with the city, or of some other clear stream that comes from the mountains, if you are very quiet, and look carefully, you may see a platypus swimming softly about on the surface, or drifting slowly with the stream. Then you may judge of the truth of this little story about the wild duck and the water rat for yourself.

WHEN A BOY GETS  
IN A FIGHT, MOTHER  
SAYS, "DID YOU GET  
HURT?"



FATHER SAYS,  
"DID YOU SPOIL YOUR  
CLOTHES?"



BROTHER SAYS,  
"DID YOU LICK HIM?"





## Fear Triumphant

By William H. Robertson.

IF anyone had ever asked Dick Cornwallis if he was afraid in the dark, he would have invariably answered in the negative, and when they broached the absurd question of staying alone in a large house, without fear, for a few of the darker hours, he would have treated it with scorn. He prided himself on many things, but above all his bravery, which had, as yet, never been put to the test. He lived with his parents in a quiet street in a fashionable suburb of Merton. The home of the Cornwallises was an up-to-date, two-storied house, surrounded by two acres of ground, which consisted chiefly of tall, dark pines and bushes of all descriptions. The Cornwallises, being in the fashion of the day, were maidless. Consequently, whenever the family desired an outing, the house was locked up and left alone to the gloom of the trees. Dick had never been left alone in the house after 8 o'clock.

One particular night, however, as he and his parents sat down to dinner, there came a ring on the 'phone. Mrs. Cornwallis—expecting a call—rose from her seat and answered it. In a few minutes she returned.

"Oh, Dick, would you be afraid to stay alone in the house for a couple of hours? Mrs. Jones wants father and me to go and meet her son, who is back from the war on leave."

"No, of course not, mother. I will be rather glad, because I want to finish an essay for the school magazine. I will do it better being alone, too," answered her son. Mrs. Cornwallis had heard the "No, of course not——" and had hastened out of the room.

Everything was finally settled, and as Mr. and Mrs. Cornwallis departed for their evening's pleasure the latter called back: "Fill my hot water bag, and put it in my bed, there's a good boy, Dick." "Right, mother," he answered, "I will put it on now." He went straight out to the kitchen and put on a kettle of water. He returned to his essay, and, drawing a cosy chair before the fire, in a few minutes became interested. Half an hour went by, and his interest began to lag. He felt tired, but did not want to go to bed, and so, with his writing utensils on his lap, he dozed slowly to sleep. As he slept, he dreamed. He seemed to be in some far-away land, where dragons lived and giants hunted them like rabbits, and dwarfs walked about with knives in their belts. He was walking down the main road of a weird

town, when six of the latter pounced upon him and started pricking him with their knives. Then one took out of his pocket a bottle, and tipped the contents over his leg. At this particular moment, Dick woke up. Something cold was clinging to his leg, and something was sticking into him above the knee. He thought of his dream, and glanced down to ascertain the cause. Something sharp was driven into him. In a flash the truth dawned on him. The sharp instrument was his pen, and the cold feeling was easily explained when he saw an empty ink bottle lying on the floor. He looked at the clock, and saw, with a start, that he had slept two hours. It was half-past 10. As he looked he heard a strange noise in the kitchen. "I wonder what that was?" he soliloquised. "No doubt the mice." He listened, and distinctly heard a crackling noise, then a sharp crack. "It sounds very much as though someone was forcing the kitchen window," he thought. Again he heard the noise. It was louder. Crack—ss-scraack, click! He was now thoroughly alarmed. What should he do? The 'phone! Yes, he would try the 'phone. He walked to the door, and—thud. Something landed in the hall, opposite his destination. He could not see what it was, owing to the darkness, but approach it he could not. The window! If he should escape that way, it would look very much as if he were afraid. After all his boasting, too, he was. The noise in the kitchen became more alarming every minute. He stood still in terror. Then he remembered his father's gun. It was in the top drawer of his desk. He stooped over and took it. It was empty, and nowhere could he find any cartridges. Never in his sixteen years had he been so startled. The only thing left for him to do was to walk out bravely; but he could not control his feelings sufficiently to enable him to do this. Unarmed, he was useless. Hesitating and fearful, he stood. Crash! Something had fallen. Unable to bear the suspense any longer, he rushed to the window—tried to open it—it was locked. The lock was high up, and an awkward one to unfasten at any time, let alone in such a condition as Dick was now in. Feverishly he dragged a chair into the desired position, and at last was able to unlock the window. He flung it up and jumped. He landed into one of the numerous bushes of the garden, and



was extricating himself from their meshes when something warm touched his hand. This was the climax. He fled, screaming, down the drive, and fell at the gate, fainting, into his father's arms. It took him fully five minutes to explain the facts.

"Sh—hush, dear boy—sh—it's all right. What is the matter? Tell me," soothed his father. Then, in broken sentences, he told the causes of his fright. His dream, the ink spilling—the noise in the kitchen—the thud at the 'phone—the crash, and last of all the warm touch on his hand.

Mr. Cornwallis, leaving Dick to the care of his mother, ran to the house, opened the front door, and rushed in. He switched on the light. There, lying on the floor was a smashed vase, and lying curled up on a rug was a cat. "That accounts for the thud and the crash, most probably," he mused, and walked into the kitchen. The gas stove was still alight, and standing on it were the remains of a kettle. It was still crackling and wrinkling under the heat. The bottom had almost been burnt out. "Ha,

ha," laughed Mr. Cornwallis; then he thought of his son's condition and became graver. Also, there was the final fright to account for. By this time Dick and his mother were in the diningroom, and the former was just recovering sufficiently to feel a perfect fool when he saw the grin on his father's face. Mr. Cornwallis then explained to him the causes of his foolish error, and said if he would go alone into the garden and find the last mysterious something, nothing more would be ever said about his childish cowardice. Dick hesitatingly clinched the bargain, and, after resting for a few moments, walked timidly into the night. A dog's bark came to his ears, and he understood. No longer afraid, he whistled, and a collie ran from the trees and jumped around him, barking furiously. He called his father, who had heard the canine talk. He came out of the house, and saw the dog. "Why, this is the dog that Mr. Jones lost and offered £2 reward for. Take him along in the morning, my boy, and claim the reward," he said.

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#### THE LITTLE WAVE'S STORY.

School had just broken up for the holidays, and Alice Martin was staying with her aunt at the seaside.

One day when she was paddling in the sea, she wondered why the little waves ran back so quickly when they had touched her feet. So feeling very cross, she threw herself on the sand and watched the big white clouds chasing one another across the sky.

All of a sudden she heard someone calling her name: "Alice! Alice! why don't you come and play with me?"

Alice jumped up and heard the voice say: "I am the little wave you would not play with." "But," said Alice, "you would not stay with me, but ran quickly away, as if I would hurt you." "Oh! no," said the little wave, "I am not afraid of you, but I travel such a long way from home that as soon as I reach the shore my mother calls me back again." "Who is your mother, and where does she live?" said Alice. "She is the big wave, and only comes to shore when she is angry, and lives away out in the ocean," said the wave, "and I can hear her calling me now, so I must not loiter, but hurry back

to her," and with these words the little wave ran quickly back again, making a little lapping sound, as if it were throwing Alice a kiss.

The next thing Alice knew was that she was sitting up rubbing her eyes, as she had fallen asleep, but she was quite happy again, and was not cross with the little waves for running away so quickly.

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## The Fox and the Rooster



Then he flew up a tree.

**A** FOX was one day lurking about near a farmyard to see if he could capture one of the fowls and carry it off for his dinner. Presently he saw a rooster, but the rooster also saw him, and was careful to keep at a safe distance. So the fox said: "Don't be afraid, Mr. Rooster. I want to have a little friendly chat with you."

"All right," said the rooster, "I don't object to talking with you if only you don't come any nearer."

"Your suspicions hurt my feelings," the fox responded. "However, never mind. I wanted to ask you how many tricks you could do."

"I can do three tricks," replied the rooster. "How many can you do yourself?"

"I can do thirteen."

"Can you?" said the rooster. "And what is the best one of all?"

"It is one my grandfather taught me," answered the fox. "He could shut both eyes and give a great shout, and I learned to do the same thing."

"Why, that's nothing; I could do that myself," bragged the rooster.

"Do you really think you could?" asked the fox. "Try it."

So the rooster crowed as loud as he could and then made himself big and flapped his wings as though he had done a great thing. But he only shut one eye, for he wanted to watch the fox.

"Very pretty," said Reynard. "However, you didn't shut both eyes; I hardly thought you could do the trick as well as my grandfather did."

"But I can," declared the rooster, and, forgetting the need of caution, he closed both eyes and crowed once more.

That gave the fox the chance he wanted, and he leaped forward. By the time the rooster had his eyes open, the fox had gripped him by the neck, and started to run off with him. But the rooster's favourite wife saw what had happened, and she gave chase, crying out: "Let go that rooster! He's mine!"

"Mr. Fox," said the rooster, "my wife can run very quick, and if you don't want her to catch up with us and peck you, I advise you to call back, 'This rooster is not yours. He is mine!'"

The fox found it slow work lugging along the heavy rooster, and he did not wish to be pecked. He thought the plan the rooster suggested was a very good one, and he opened his mouth to shout back at the hen that the rooster was his.

But by so doing he let go his grip on the captive's neck. No sooner did the rooster find himself free, than he flew up into the tree. Then he shut both eyes and gave a loud crow; and that is all there is to this story.





## A SCHOOL YARN.

By "One of Them."

THERE'S no doubt about the fact that the members of the working class are directly responsible for much. They set a bad example to another class which should be a working one, but seldom is. I mean the class of schoolboys to which I myself belong. I am a bit of a thinker myself, and I have ideas on the subject, but as I have suffered from being compelled to listen to other people's ideas when I would much sooner have been reading Deerfoot yarns, I will have mercy and not put them in just here.

The Adelaide tramway strike caused a good deal of inconvenience to business people, who wanted to go and buy shares when they weren't worth much to the unforeseeing outsider, or to sell them when apparently they were really gilt-edged. Also, a good many ladies, who were accustomed to getting bargains in the shops, and then spending the money they saved on morning tea and waffles, were forced to stay home and mend their husbands' socks. This was a great drawback to them, but a jolly good job for the men, for, after all, a fellow does expect to have his wife keep his clothes in repair. I know a fellow who bought new socks every time a hole came in the ones he was wearing, and saved the lot up till he was married. He said it kept his wife from worrying about him when he stopped out at night. I believe she was surprised at the number and variety of socks and holes; said she had not reckoned on marrying a centipede. But this is drifting away from the subject of strikes, though, after all, it

has something to do with it, as I believe at last she struck.

School boys, as perhaps you know, are always more than ready to do their bit during a strike, and willingly act as conductors on trams, when the real thing is forbidden by his union to collect tickets. It isn't that they really bear the strikers any ill-will, but that any old excuse for stopping away from school is as good as another, and a change of occupation is as good as a rest. I myself even volunteered to do stoking during the gas strike, until Sniggers, of the Fifth, told the chaps who came round that it was only at meal times that I was any good at the job. That hurt my dignity, so, as I managed to strain my wrist at the same time, I got a week off swotting without having to bung in at coal-heaving.

During the tramway strike I mentioned before, a lot of the chaps had to walk from the city to school in the morning, unless we could cadge a ride in a motor car. Still the walk wasn't so bad, because it was all through parklands and near the river Torrens. It was only about a mile and a half, but somehow it always took an hour to go, whereas, in the afternoon, it was comfortably walked in half the time.

One morning, owing to a rather longer hunt than usual for my collar stud under the bed, I was a little late, and met rather a great chum of mine, by the name of Teddy Leather. The Public Examinations were being held at the time in the Exhibition Building. Chaps from our school did not have to attend school



until their exams. were completed. For this reason the far-seeing Teddy Leather had put his name down for Botany, in the Senior Public, although he had never had a lesson of any description about it in his life. You will understand his reason when I tell you that Botany, being an unimportant exam., came at the end of the lists, and was about a week later than the last exam. taken by the average boy, which meant that Leather had an extra week's holiday. He certainly had brains, and I never could understand why he didn't pass Senior Public. A chap who could think of the things he did to avoid swotting should have been able to pass a simple exam.

It was during his last week when he had come up to town, wondering what to do with his time, when he met me. I promptly suggested his walking out to school with me, and then walking back on his own. For a wonder he agreed to do so, which showed he must have been fairly bored stiff, as though Leather is quick at thinking out ways to avoid work, he's not particularly energetic otherwise. So off we set to pad the hoof. On our way out we passed the Exhibition Building, where a lot of our unfortunate friends were going their hardest at a three-hour exam. paper. Just inside the gates was a car which we knew belonged to a chap named Tompkins, also of "Ours."

We both knew the car well by sight, but that was as far as it went. The sight of it was quite enough though, and we both had the same inspiration at the same moment, which is rather reminiscent of a Greek exercise I was once kept in for. We knew that once in the examination room it would be a jolly good hour before Tompkins could come out.

After trying three or four mixtures of petrol and air, we at last started the car, but not until I had torn the sleeve of my coat. Then the trouble was to get out from behind the gates. As luck would have it, Leather, who was driving—or at least trying to drive—had the car in its reverse gear. So we sailed backwards out of the Exhibition, with several police watching us, in the reverse gear all the time. Then the next trouble arose. Where were the other gears? Hunt as we would they were not to be found. I have never seen such a peculiar

idea for gears on any other car, and for reasons which, perhaps, I need not state, I never asked Tompkins to explain their mechanism afterwards.

At last we decided upon what we thought was a good plan. Turning down a road which runs from the city through the Park-lands to the River, we let the car pick up a good speed down the hill in neutral. We came to the bottom without finding out any more about the gears, the only real excitement being that of narrowly missing several big motor lorries, to say nothing of avenue trees, which seemed to act as magnets to the car. So we turned into the Park-lands to avoid any more motor cars. But there the roads wind in and out all the time, and one can't fiddle around with gears and drive straight at the same time. This meant that instead of turning when we should have, we went straight ahead into a tree which seemed unable to make up its mind as to whether it should tip us right over or not. But luck favoured us, and its decision was in our favour.

Of course, it must not be forgotten that I was gradually getting out to school. After looking to see what damage was done, we got going once more, though still in bottom gear. Luckily for him and me, a little slot jumped into place without his knowing it, and we found ourselves in top gear. If this had not happened before we could stop it, the gears would have stripped, and everything would have gone right through to the back axle, which would have cost us (our fathers) £175. How it happened we don't quite know even now. They say that Providence looks after two classes. I know we were not the one, so we must have been the other. All we cared for or knew was that we went sailing along in fine style. We drove around the Park for a bit, then out to school. I jumped off to enable Leather to keep the engine in top gear, and then he drove back to the city and put the car back where he got it from.

I was in time for school, and Tompkins was none the wiser. I am afraid this story hasn't a good moral, as we were neither found out nor punished, but I will mention, in case our friends feel anxious about their cars, that neither Leather or myself is likely to repeat the performance, as we prefer to use, in future, only those with whose gears we are familiar.



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a maximum war effort. But while many, either reluctantly or because heavy taxation has reduced their spending powers, have adopted the austerity plan, there are others who never previously had so much money to spend and who are spending it in a manner which indicates that they believe this sort of thing can go on for ever. And in spite of the advice given and certain restrictions placed on spending, some of the most harmful and wasteful channels still remain open, and many of those whose incomes have been increased because of war conditions take full advantage of them.

### Government's Example

"Still, when we consider the example set by the Government itself, we cannot wonder at this state of affairs.

"There is no need for me to go into details of lavish expenditure and extravagance of which there is abundant evidence in almost every quarter and on which most listeners have formed their own opinion. I do, however, wish to refer to one particular incident where bungling, and perhaps overlapping of authority, or lack of co-ordination, has resulted in shameful waste.

"Some time ago growers of potatoes were urged to help overcome the shortage of that commodity, and they responded well to the appeal. When the crop was dug many of them were instructed to rail their product to the seaboard for shipment. They worked all hours to comply with the order, only to find later that the potatoes were left standing in the trucks in the blazing sun for days. Naturally they were then not fit for shipment, and had to be picked over. I am informed that about one-third was thrown out at that stage and a further picking was made on arrival at port of destination in the East. Apart from the actual waste of potatoes thrown out, those that eventually reached the market were in such a state that they had to be sold at a much reduced price. As the

five defects from a consignment of nearly 2000 tons from W.A. intended to reach Melbourne early in December but were held up in transit. We might ask where they were held up—possibly on the truck in W.A. in the blazing sun?

"A few thousand, or even hundred, tons of potatoes handled in this way would involve the Government in considerable loss. You may say that after all it is only a small matter, but we are told in Government propaganda that every pound counts in the austerity plan, and it makes us wonder if such bungling on a larger scale is going on with other commodities. It also makes us wonder if this sort of thing is partly the reason for the proposed increased taxation. We all realise we have to pay for the war, but at least we are entitled to feel assured that the money provided, while not grudgingly spent, is not thrown away.

### No Gestapo in Australia

"I hear whispers in the tramways and on the street corners of extravagant spending, but it is only whispered as though it were a sin or punishable crime to mention such things to any but one's most intimate friends. Even influential citizens appear to refer to such matters in an undertone for fear that their voice will reach some high authority and they will be marked men. But surely we have no Gestapo to fear in Australia. We have won the right to speak our minds on the manner in which we are governed and to criticise where we feel there is room for improvement, and surely we are not losing that right in this war.

"I wanted to get that off my chest simply because I feel a little bit disgrusted with some of my acquaintances who reserve their criticisms for what might be called secret sessions of two or three in some secluded spot. They want to know what the political parties are going to do about it, but I ask: what are they doing about it themselves? When the elections come along many of those self-same critics will allow their ears to be tickled by those they now condemn and will be

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# POTATOES FROM

## PEOPLE ASKED TO EAT MORE POTATOES

THE potato, instead of being the highly prized vegetable it was a few weeks ago, is now a drug on the market.

Because of the present glut the Minister for Commerce (Mr Scully) has appealed to hotels, restaurants, and housekeepers, to serve more potatoes.

Mr Scully said it struck him as anomalous that hotels and cafes were still serving only a scrap of potatoes when by serving ample helpings they would be helping the growers and the Government, which had assumed a big financial liability to ensure potato supplies to the public by guaranteeing prices.

## Minister's Statement

The Minister for Agriculture (the Hon E. J. Hogan, MLA) stated yesterday that the recent importation of potatoes from Western Australia was arranged by the Australian Potato Controller (Mr Foster) without reference to the Victorian Potato Advisory Committee.

MR HOGAN said that the order was placed with a view to the potatoes arriving in Melbourne early in December (before the 10th), at which time there was a shortage in Victoria. Difficulties in obtaining shipping occurred, and although Mr O'Brien (Deputy Potato Controller) frequently made inquiries, he was informed that it was thought a boat would soon be available. The potatoes remained in store in Western Australia, and were so late in being shipped that they did not arrive here until Christmas week. 4,400 bags arrived on December 22, and 29,000 on December 24.

of 4,400 bags were in very bad order, and there was no possibility of the inspectors passing any without them being picked over.

In regard to the second consignment, 29,000 bags, the Superintendent of Agriculture (Mr Brake) visited the wharf and looked them over, and although many of the potatoes were rotten, it appeared possible for the inspectors to pass quite a large number of bags at the wharf, so obviating the work and expense of picking them over.

There was a strong breeze blowing over the Christmas weekend, during which time the bagged potatoes were on the wharf, and this breeze was instrumental in drying out the bags and the potatoes, so that the outside ones in the bags generally appeared to be in good condition. When the inspection of the potatoes by the departmental inspectors commenced, however, the inspection of bags of apparently sound potatoes showed that they very frequently contained rotten tubers in the centre of the bags which the drying breeze did not reach, and that it would be quite unsafe to release any of the consignment without being picked over first.

The whole consignment was condemned by the departmental inspectors, and the deputy controller was informed that the potatoes would have to be moved to suitable stores for picking over, and that the picking over must be carried out under the supervision of the inspectors. The potatoes were removed to 7 stores in the metropolitan area. All the figures are not yet available, but at one company's store 1,600 bags were picked over, and 388 bags were rejected. At 2 other depots Mr Renton, the departmental inspector, reported that it was impossible to accurately estimate the amount of loss, but considered it would be between 30% and 40%.

### DISPOSAL

Owing to the difficulty in obtaining experienced labour, considerable difficulties were experienced by the Deputy Potato Controller in making arrangements for the picking over and disposal of the potatoes, and one officer of the Australian Potato Committee was specially deputed to follow the arrangements through.

While some of the potatoes were so rotten that they were useless for any purpose and were sent to the dump, approximately 2,000 bags were sold to a factory for manufacturing starch, and the good ones were sold to the military authorities, local trade, and for export to Sydney and Brisbane.



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there was any obstacle being placed in the way of new licenses being issued for the coming season. If not, it might be the solution for the working of big properties by being leased to share farmers.

It was decided to have the matter clarified.

### AUSTRALIAN WHEAT BOARD.

The General Secretary reported that a deputation had waited on the Assistant Minister for Commerce (Senator Fraser) requesting him to use his influence to see that Western Australia was not discriminated against in the payment for storage and handling of wheat.

Correspondence from South Carolina and Kodj Kodjin branches and the Mt. Marshall Zone Council, regarding the removal of Messrs. J. W. Diver and J. S. Teasdale from the Australian

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## Government's Waste in War's Austerity

### W.A. Potatoes Rot in Sun

#### Hundreds of Tons Dumped in Victoria

"Austerity is a word that has been very prominent in Australia for some considerable time," said the General Secretary of the P.P.A. (Mr. H. J. Prater) in an Association broadcast on Sunday last, "and I believe most of us agreed with the Prime Minister that the times called for a curb on needless and wasteful spending in order to assist in providing funds for a maximum war effort. But while

#### Hundreds of Tons Dumped

"A press telegram from Melbourne on Thursday disclosed that potatoes sent from W.A. to relieve the Victorian shortage at the end of last year have been dumped by hundreds of tons at a tip during the last few days, and they are in such a state that even the rats scorn the offering. It is explained that these potatoes are rejects from a consignment of nearly 2000 tons from W.A. intended

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