

PUBLISHED IN TOWN  
AND COUNTRY EVERY  
WEDNESDAY MORNING

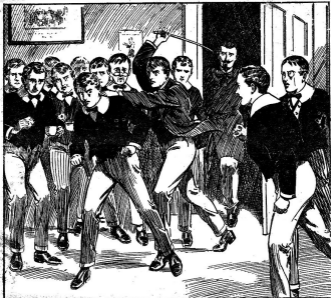
**GEM**  
LIBRARY

COMPLETE STORIES  
FOR ALL, AND EVERY  
STORY A GEM!

# LOOKING AFTER MOSSOO!

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



"Pile in!" roared Blake. The next moment there would have been an unexampled scene in study No. 6. But just at the moment a trim figure in a frock-coat appeared in the doorway, and the voice of Monsieur Moray exclaimed "Stop! stop vite vite au vance! Before, if you strike that boy, you find yourself in a trouble, isn't it?" (See Chapter 2.)

## CHAPTER I. Plenty of French!

"**M**ON Dieu! Mon Dieu!"  
Tom Merry jumped.  
Tom had just arrived at the door of the French master's study, in the School House at St. Jim's, with a newly-written imposition in his hand. He was about to tap at the door, to present the lines to Monsieur

Moray, when he heard that exclamation, in tones of anguish, from within the study.

And he passed.

"Mon Dieu!" went on the French master's voice, in the same diabolical tones. "Que faire! Que faire!"

"My hat!" murmured Tom Merry. "Something's up with Mossoo!"

Evidently something was "up" with the French

Next Wednesday:

"A SPLIT IN THE SCHOOL!" AND "OFFICER AND TROOPER!"

master. Tom could hear him pacing to and fro in his study with hurried footsteps, every now and then bumping on a chair or some other piece of furniture. It was clear that Moscoo was in a state of great agitation.

Tom Merry wondered whether he had better take in his lines. Monsieur Morry did not seem in quite the mood at that moment to receive impositions, even at the very moment he had ordered them to be brought to him.

So Tom Merry hesitated. He was still hesitating when an elegant junior came along the passage, also with an imposition in his hand. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form. D'Arcy looked at the Shell fellow hesitatingly.

"Done your impet, dash boy?"

"Yes," replied Tom.

"Same hash," said D'Arcy. "Why don't you go in? Moscoo ordered us to bring in the lines by tea-time."

"I think Moscoo's busy," said Tom, with a faint grin.

"Oh, wats!" said Arthur Augustus. "He told us to bring his daughter's lines by tea-time, and it's tea-time now. I am wathah disappointed in Moscoo. I always regarded him as wathah a sport. But he was so watty in class this mornin' that wathah— Bah Jove!"

Arthur Augustus finished with that sudden ejaculation as the voice of the disturbed Frenchman was heard from within the study.

"Mon Dieu! Que faire? Helas?"

"Good Scott!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"What's the matter with Moscoo? He is makin' use of wathah strong expressions—of course, they're not so strong in French as in English, but wathah— Hallo, here's Talbot!"

Talbot of the Shell joined them outside the study. He also had a hundred lines from the Muzriade, neatly written out. Talbot looked surprised as he found the two juniors waiting outside the study.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

"Listen," said Tom.

There was a bump in the study as Monsieur Morry evidently knocked over a stool in his hurried and agitated pacing to and fro. The juniors exchanged glances of amazement.

"What the deuce?" murmured Talbot.

"Something's up, dash boys. Prewags we had better not disturb him just now, aftah all," said Arthur Augustus considerably.

"Just what I thought," said Tom. "But he told us to bring the lines in by tea-time, and he's been so watty to-day."

"I thought something was wrong with him in class," remarked Talbot. "It's unusual for Moscoo to be so snappy. We get enough of it from Herr Schneider, but Moscoo is generally quite a little hash."

"Yess, wathah. I was surprised that he turned out so watty watty," remarked D'Arcy. "I was disappointed in him. Aftah the way we backed him up when he had a waw with Schneider, too, I considah—"

"Mon Dieu! Le pauvre vieux! Helas?"

"There he goes again, bah Jove!"

The three juniors stood in the passage, wondering and uneasy. With Monsieur Morry in that strange state of agitation in his study, they felt a natural reluctance to intrude upon him. But they had definite orders to take in their lines then. And Moscoo, usually so kind and gentle, had been decidedly ratty that day; and if his orders were not obeyed, there might be further trouble to come. Tom Merry and his chums were, therefore, on the horns of a dilemma.

"He wawt be wathah most," Arthur Augustus remarked, in a low voice, "the way he came down on us this mornin'—it was wathah wettah, and more like Schneider. We were simply talkin' football in class, and we're done that before and no honor broken. And he came down like a ton of bricks, and whacked out lines like anythin'."

"Hallo!" Morry Lowther came along the passage with lines in his hand. "What's the game? Is this a mother's meeting?"

"Wathah, Lowtherah—"

"Why don't you take your lines in?" demanded Lowther.

"There seems to be something wrong with Moscoo."

"I should jolly well think there was, from the way he

dropped on us this mornin'!" growled Lowther. "Let's go in— My hat!"

He broke off, as there came another distressed exclamation from the study.

"Helas! Ah! Les barbares! Les sauvages! Helas!" Lowther shrieked.

"My hat! He's calling us barbarians and savages—just because we jawed Foster in the class for once!"

"He can't be alluding to us," said Tom. "Belshazz and Mellish perhaps—"

"Hallo! What's that about Levison and Mellish?" asked a disagreeable voice, as the owners of these names came along, also with freshly-written impets.

"Moscoo's just talking about you," explained Lowther.

"Listen to him!"

"Les sauvages! Les Huns! Helas! Que faire?" went on the ranting voice in the study, and there was another bump, as the agitated French master biffed into the furniture in his hurried walk.

Levison of the Fourth whistled softly.

"Of his blessed rocks!" he remarked.

"Sounds like it," grinned Mellish. "Let's go in."

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry. "We were just thinking we'd better not go in now."

"Not!" said Lowther. "Didn't he order us to bring in the lines by tea-time?"

"Yes, but—"

"And wathah be as ratty as Schneider today, or rattier?" said Levison. "There will be more lines, or a licking, if we don't do as we're told, like good boys."

"Ye-yes, but—" said Talbot.

"Oh, rot! I'm not going to disobey my kind master," said Levison loftily. "I'm a good boy; so are you, ain't you, Percy?"

"I am—I is!" grinned Mellish.

"And we're jolly well going in," said Levison. "I want to see Moscoo now. He will be rather amusing if he's of his crumpet."

"You wettah, Levison!"

"Now now," said Levison. And he thumped loudly on the door of the French master's study.

The delivery of Tom Merry & Co. was not shared by the black sheep of the Fourth. Levison was exasperated by his lines, all the more so because Monsieur Morry seldom handed out punishments, and this time it had come as a surprise. As Levison said, they had enough toys from old Schneider, without Moscoo starting the same game.

There was a startled exclamation in the study. The thump on the door had interrupted the restless pacing and muttering of the worried Frenchman.

"Entrez! Come in via you!"

Levison threw the door open and marched in with Mellish, Tom Merry & Co. followed. As Levison had decided the question, they thought they had better deliver their impets too.

All the juniors looked very curiously at Monsieur Morry, and they started a little.

The French master was quite pale, and there were beads of perspiration on his brow. His little, pointed, black beard was quite untidy, as if he had been chewing at it in agitation. Probably he had. His dear little pointed moustache was far from being as orderly as usual. His career was still sticking up, but the other was drooping down, and the effect was decidedly odd.

Moscoo looked at the juniors absently and irritably.

"Est il le, ses? V'y you come here via you?"

"My lines, sir!" said Levison.

"Lines! Mon Dieu! Oui, oui, c'est bien! Put them on a table."

Levison and Mellish put their lines on the table, and Moscoo pointed to the door. The rest of the party proceeded to lay down their lines. Tom Merry & Co. would have retired at once, but Levison was not inclined to go in a hurry. He was ratty, and he liked the idea of worrying the little gentleman, as he was in such a state of agitation.

"I've done them all, sir," he said.

"Oui, oui, alles done."

"But I'd like to ask you about this, sir," said Levison, pointing to his impet. "You remember, sir, you told me I ought to be more careful with my French—"

"Est is no matter now."

"OUR COMPANION PAPERS: 'THE MAGNET' LIBRARY, 'THE DISCOVERY,' 'THE PENNY POPULAR,' 'SHUTTLES,' ETC.

Every Monday, Every Thursday, Every Friday, Every Saturday.

"Come away, Levison!" whispered Tom Merry.

Levison did not heed.

"But I always take notice what my kind teachers tell me, sir," said Levison; "and if you would tell me about this—"

"Answer time, Levison!"

"Yes, but—but look here. It begins, "Je charis de ce legs qui regne sur in France—"

"Zut you go, Levison."

"Et par droit de conquete et par droit de naissance," went on Levison calmly. "About the first 'et, sir'?"

"Now it is set I cannot talk to you, Levison. I am agitated. You call go."

"Oh, very well, sir," said Levison, in an injured tone. "Of course, sir, if you won't answer my questions, it isn't much use taking an interest in the lesson. After what you said to me, sir—"

Foot Moscoe clutched at his beard, still further disarranging it.

"Yes, yes—out, out—set is right, Levison. I will help you. Vat is it, sen? Oh, soon Dieu?"

"You see, sir— Let go my arm, Tom Merry; I'm asking Moscoe! Let go, you said!"

Tom Merry did not let go. He saw that the French master was almost beside himself with worry, for some unknown reason, and he did not intend to let the cud of the Fourth have the pleasure of rapping him just then. His grasp closed on Levison's arm.

"I'll explain that to you, Levison," he said. "Come on!"

"Look here—"

But before Levison could get any further he was whipped out of the study. Monsieur Mery did not speak. The rest of the juniors followed Tom Merry, and Talbot closed the door. In the passage Levison glared angrily at the captain of the Shell.

"You silly ass!" he growled. "Couldn't you see that the old boarder was simply cracked, and I could have pulled his leg a treat?"

"Just so," agreed Tom; "but this isn't a time for pulling Moscoe's leg. He may have had bad news or something."

"I don't care if he has!"

"But we do, my infant, and you're not going to be a beastly cad. You're too funny, Levison. A sense of humor is a dangerous thing. Nothing like bumping for an overdeveloped sense of humor. Collar him!"

"Look here— Oh, my hat!"

Bump!

Mellish, too—

But Percy Mellish fled. Levison jumped up from the floor in a rage.

"You rotters! Now I'll go in again, and—"

"Give him another!"

"Yess, wotah! Dump the wotah hard!"

Levison waddled off just in time. The tagging of poor Moscoe was "off." And Tom Merry & Co. went their way, somewhat concerned in their minds about Monsieur Mery, whom they liked very much, in spite of his sudden liberality with lines that day. It was evident that the French master was in some trouble, and the chums of the School House wondered what it was. Arthur Augustus made a rather vague suggestion that they should "back up" Moscoe, which was really noble, considering that Arthur Augustus had been fagging over lines instead of going down to footer practice. But as the woad of St. Jim's was unable to define exactly what form the backing-up should take, and what good it would do to Moscoe even if they backed him up, the suggestion met only with the disrespectful response of "Bow-wow!"

## CHAPTER 2.

### A Capture from the Enemy.

"WE shall lick them this time!"  
The Terrible Three were at tea in their study when Tom Merry made that remark. He made it in tones of satisfaction. And Manners and Lovelace chimed in "Hear, hear!" And Talbot, who had come in to tea with the Terrible Three, nodded his head.

It was a Heese match that was under discussion. A junior Heese match, of course. Senior Heese matches did not interest the juniors to a very great extent. Tom Merry & Co. often condescended to watch the senior matches, and to give old Kildare a cheer when he made a mighty swipe for goal. But from the point of view of the heroes of the Shell the junior matches were "it."

"Those New Heese wasters have been coming along," went on Tom Merry. "I suppose it's no good saying that we've got a goalkeeper on this side as good as Fatty Wynn. We haven't. And Kerr and Figgis are good forwards. And Redfern is a topping half. But, excepting goal, we can beat them all along the line."

"Hear, hear!"

"All the same, we've got to mind our P's and Q's," said Tom severely. "and you've jolly well got to knock up that camera for a bit, Manners, and stick to practice!"

"Bow-wow!" murmured Manners.

"Lucky we've got Talbot," added Tom Merry.

"Thanks!" said Talbot, laughing.

"But Figgins has been keeping his team up to it," said Tom, "and as it's the last Heese match of the season, we've simply got to pull it off, or we shall have those New Heese cuds making out that their mucky old barn is cock-house of St. Jim's."

"They make that out, anyway," said Lovelace.

"Of course, that's all rot! Hallo! What's that thumping row?"

Tom Merry stepped to the window as a roar of voices came from the quadrangle below. Indignation came into his face immediately.

"The cheery rotters!" he complained.

"What's the row?" asked Talbot.

"Look at them—New Heese cuds! On our side!"

The Shell fellows gathered at the window. Truly it was a sight to make any School Heese fellow indignant. Figgins & Co. of the New Heese were putting a footer about in the quad. The days were drawing out now, and it was still light after lessons. The old stims in the quad were showing the green of spring. Across from the New Heese came the long-legged Figgins, backed up by Kerr and Wynn and Redfern and half a dozen other New Heese juniors, and with unexampled cheek they were putting their footer about under the very windows of the School Heese. Blake and Herries and Digby of the Fourth had promptly rushed upon them, with the noble intention of bagging the footer as a punishment for the cheek of the New Heese punters. But Blake and Herries and Digby had been out of sprawling, and were left sorting themselves out in a rather mucky state, while Figgins & Co. continued their little game, actually banging the footer on the very wall of the School House.

"My hat! The nerve! Come on, you fellows!" shouted Tom Merry.

And leaving their tea untricked—what was tea at a time like that!—the four Shell fellows rushed out to take instant vengeance upon the invaders. They yelled to other fellows as they rushed along the passage.

"Back up! New Heese cuds!"

Kangaroo of the Shell and Glyn and Reilly, and Hammond and Lambey-Lansley, and half a dozen others were soon speeding after them. They came downstairs with a swoop, and out into the quad with a yell.

"Back up, School House!"

"On the ball!"

And the indignant School Heese fellows charged at Figgins & Co. There was a wild and whirling "scrap" at once, and the footer lay forgotten in the road. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gathered himself up out of a puddle, and, heedless of the mud that clung to his beautiful bags, he hurried himself into the fray.

"Wash the boards, dear boys! Back up!"

"Hurray! Give 'em socks!"

"Back up!" yelled Figgins.

But more and more School House fellows were pouring out, and the odds were against Figgins & Co. Back they went across the quadrangle, driven by numbers—right back to their own Heese, where they were driven into the porch.

"Victory!" howled Arthur Augustus. "And we've got the footer, dear boys!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 368.

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of

Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The School House band gave their defeated foes a final yell, and rushed back to their own side, and captured the neglected footer.

"We'll punt it under their windows, and see if they come out!" shouted Blake.

"Hurrah!"

Figgins & Co., breathless and infuriated, looked out of their porch, and saw the enemy punting their ball about within a dozen yards of them. It was a New House ball, and the School House were punting it about under their very noses. It was not to be borne.

"Go for 'em!" shouted Figgins. "We've got to get that ball!"

The New House rushed to the attack. A Sixth-Form football looked out of the door after them, and shouted.

"Stop that kicking, you fags!"

But Figgins & Co. did not heed Soften of the Sixth. They hurried a judiciously deaf ear to the New House protest. Their eyes were on the captured football. If the School House succeeded in carrying off that ball it was an indelible disgrace for the New House.

Tom Merry kicked the ball away towards his own House, and the whole crowd rushed after it. Figgins & Co. panted in pursuit.

"Yah! Give us our ball, you cads!"

"Yah! Come and take it!"

"Hurrah for us!"

Jack Blake seized the ball as Figgins & Co. made a desperate charge, and whipped up the steps of the School House and into the building. A minute later he appeared at the window of Study No. 4, dangling the ball triumphantly over the heads of the juniors in the quad.

Tom Merry & Co. packed the steps of the School House, and invited Figgins & Co. to charge. Figgins gasped with rage. Even the daring Figgins could not think of invading the rival house, and penetrating in force as far as the Fourth-Form studies. The number of his enemies did not matter to Figgins; only in case of such an invasion masters and prefects would have had something to say.

"Wot's your duck here? Hurrah!"

"Hallo! Who wants a footer?" roared Blake from the study window.

"Yah! School House cads!"

"How-wow!"

"Give us our ball!"

"Come and fetch it!"

Figgins was meditating a desperate charge right into the House when Mr. Carrington looked out of his window. At the sight of the Housemaster Figgins & Co. melted away across the dusky quad. There was no arguing with a Housemaster.

Tom Merry & Co., in great spirits, crowded up to Study No. 6. Blake furnished the captured footer.

"We'll stick that up in our study as a trophy," said Tom Merry.

"In our study, you mean," said Blake wrothly.

"What-rot! We captured it," said the captain of the Shell.

"Hats! Didn't I bring it in?"

"Yes; but if we hadn't come to the rescue they'd have walked all over you. In fact, I should say they did walk over you, by the state of your clothes!"

"Wablah! That's our ball!"

"Look here, you cheeky Fourth Form fags—"

"Look here, you silly Shell snobs—"

"I tell you—"

"And I tell you—"

It looked as if the House row would be followed by a Form row. It never had been settled whether the Terrible Three or Study No. 6 were the leaders of the School House juniors. It never was likely to be settled. But Talbot of the Shell chipped in and poured oil on the troubled waters.

"Gentlemen!"

"How-wow!"

"Wats!"

"Excuse my calling you gentlemen—only a figure of speech!"

"Why, you cheeky rotter!"

"You faithfully impertinent boundah!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 328.

"Gentlemen?"

"Yah! Get out!"

"Gentlemen, we have licked the New House, and scored a famous victory. Let not your angry passions rise. I suggest that whichever study keeps this ball stands a feed all round to celebrate the victory."

"Bravo!" shouted all the fellows who did not belong to either rival study.

"Faith, it's a topping idea!" said Rolly of the Fourth. "Passed unanimously."

"Also nem. con.," said Kerriak.

"Hear, hear!"

"That's all very well," said Tom Merry. "But our study is out of funds. We've only got three sardines!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But Jews! Three sardines wouldn't go very far among fifteen fellows. Gentlemen, I had a fish from my granmah this mornin'—"

"Bravo Guany's granmah!"

"And I am woady to stand a toppin' feed in honor of the victory."

"Done."

"Hear, hear!" said Blake. "The footer stays here. I'll hang it up over the mantelpiece, and you Shell bounders can come and look at it whenever your like. Volunteers to fetch the truck! Go with Guany and help him carry it home, some of you. I'm going to keep an eye on that footer. I don't trust these Shell Bounders."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, it isn't a bad idea. Our three sardines will keep."

"Will they?" murmured Soften. "I believe they've done all that sardines can do in that line already."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it's got to be a first-class feed," said Tom Merry. "Wely on me, dear boy."

It was a first-class feed, and Study No. 6 was crammed for the occasion. There was an overflow meeting in the passage. The captured football was hung up over the looking-glass, with a card stuck over it bearing an inscription in large letters.

CAPTURED FROM THE ENEMY! SCHOOL HOUSE IS COCK-HOUSE! HURRAY!

### CHAPTER 3.

#### Soften Chips In—And So Does Mosson!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was doing the thing in style. Arthur Augustus could always be relied upon to do that. The feed was topping, and the fellows came from all sides to join in it. The overflow meeting in the passage threatened to overflow further upon the stairs. But that joyous celebration was not destined to pass off with the harmony that might have been desired. The feast was in full swing when voices sounded in excited tones from the passage.

"No room!"

"You can't come by!"

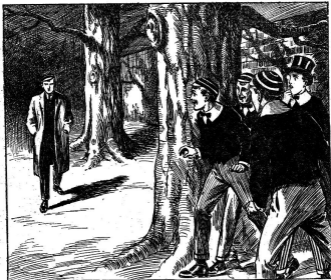
"What does a New House bounder want here, anyway?"

Tom Merry looked out of the study doorway. He guessed that Figgins had come for his ball. But it was not Figgins. A big Sixth-Former had come up the stairs, and Tom Merry recognised Soften of the New House. Soften had had to stop. The passage was crowded, in fact, crammed. Nearly all the Fourth and the Shell who belonged to the School House seemed to have gathered there. It was not every day that such a stunning feed was open to all corners, and the School House juniors were improving the shining hour, as good boys should always do.

True, Soften was a prefect of the Sixth Form, but the juniors were not inclined to put themselves out for a New House fellow. What did a New House prefect want in the junior quarters of the School House, anyway? And Soften was a bully, and unpopular even in his own House. So the juniors, strong in numbers, did not shift. They left Soften to guess how he was to get by.

"Let me pass, you cheeky young cads!" rapped out Soften.





"Shut up, you idiot!" whispered Blake. And as Sefton's footsteps were now audible on the path under the trees, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy corrected himself with an indignant snuff and shut up.

"No room?"

"Go round."

"What do you want, anyway?"

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" called out Tom Merry.

"Want anything, Sefton?"

"I want to come into that study," snapped the prefect.

"Not much room. We'll pass out some of the tuck to you there."

"I haven't come to your fag feed, you silly young ass!"

"Oh, my mistake! Anything else you want?"

"You young rascals have stolen a football belonging to the New House. I've come for it," growled Sefton.

Tom Merry started. There was a buzz of indignation from the juniors. They had never dreamed that that was Sefton's errand, though it was a puzzle what he wanted.

In all the little rags and rows between the rival juniors of St. Jim's it was a understood thing that they depended on their own resources, and never called in the aid of masters or prefects. To sneak was unpardonable. The rules of the game were kept with strict honour on both sides. Tom Merry could scarcely believe his ears now. It was rarely impossible that Figgins & Co. had asked their prefect to get back the captured footer, Sefton, who had a "down" on Tom Merry & Co., was very likely to have clipped in of his own accord to make trouble. He was not a pleasant person.

"Oh, shame!" howled Gere. "Has Figgins been stealing?"

"Rotten!"

"Caddish!" growled Levison.

"Shame!"

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry. "If Figgins wants his ball, why can't he come over for it himself, Sefton?"

"A pretty reception you'd give him, I suppose," said Sefton.

"Well, we should chuck him out, of course," admitted Tom.

"Exactly. That's why I've come. You've taken Figgins's ball, and if you don't hand it over to me immediately—"

"Look here, Sefton—"

"Stolen it would be a better word," said Sefton.

"And as I decline to see the juniors of my House put upon, I've come for it. Don't deny that you've got it. If you deny Figgins's statement—"

"Figgins's statement!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Do you deny it?"

"Nonsense. But did Figgins tell you?"

"Of course he did! I've come for that ball. If you kids don't get out of the way I shall tread on you!" added Sefton.

"Well, my hat!" said Tom Merry. "I—I don't half believe it. Figgins wouldn't sneak. It's jolly rotten if he has. Here, mind where you're going, Sefton!"

Sefton did not appear to mind where he was going. He shoved his way roughly through the feasters in the passage, with disastrous results to jam-tarts and cups of coffee and banks of cake, which were scattered on all sides as the juniors were tumbled out of the prefect's way. There was a buzz of indignation, and the juniors came very near to laying hands on Sefton, prefect as he

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 208.

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

was. The bullying senior reached the doorway of Study No. 6, and noted the hall hung over the looking-glass, with its triumphant inscription, and scowled.

"That's the ball, I suppose—Piggins's ball. Hand it over at once."

The juniors in Study No. 6 looked at one another grimly. They were not in the least inclined to hand over the trophy of victory. After their lustrous victory over their rivals of the New House that would be a little too much of a come-down.

Tom Merry thrust the matter over rapidly in his mind. Sefton was a prefect on his own side, but he had a motherly sympathy for the School House. Kildare and the other School House prefects would have been indignant at his interference. Tom Merry quickly decided that, under the circumstances, it would be expedient to stand upon his dignity as a School House fellow, and refuse to take orders from the New House. The looks of his comrades showed that they were ready to back him up. They were simply breathing indignation at this interference from the other side.

"Do you hear me?" rapped out Sefton, in his most bullying tone. He had a prefect's sashpant under his arm, and he let it slide into his hand, as if ready for use. The juniors glared at the sashpant, and glared at Sefton.

"Bal Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy, his voice trembling with indignation. "Bal Jove! You won't use that stick head, Sefton."

"He'll go out on his neck if he does," said Tom Merry.

"Yes, rather!"

"Are you going to give me that ball?" shouted Sefton.

"No!"

"Wallo!"

"You young thieves—"

"Better language, please," said Blake. "We don't stand that talk from the New House. You'd better go, Sefton. If Piggins has sneaked to you, go back and tell him it isn't any good, and I owe him a thump up."

"Yass, wathah, and I owe him a thump yab, too."

"I'll take it, then!" said Sefton.

He made a movement to push his way towards the mantelpiece. It was not easy, for the gasets of Study No. 6 were wedged in. And they wedged themselves closer between Sefton and the mantelpiece. The prefect had to stop.

"Will you let me take that ball?"

"No!" said Tom Merry determinedly.

"You know I'm a prefect—"

"Not on this side."

"Once for all—"

"Rats!"

Sefton was red with rage. He took a tight grip on the sashpant.

"Hand me that ball at once, Merry, or I shall thrash you!"

"Better not! You'll go out on your neck," said Tom.

"Yass, wathah!"

Sefton made a jump at the captain of the Shell, and seized him by the collar. Then the sashpant sang through the air.

"Put in!" roared Blake.

The next moment there would have been an unexampled scene in Study No. 6. But just at that moment a trim figure in a frock-coat appeared in the doorway, and the voice of Monsieur Morry exclaimed:

"Step! Step via you at vunce! Sefton, if you will strike at boy, you find yourself in no trouble, isn't it?"

CHAPTER 8  
Ordered Out.

SEFTON stopped. He lowered the sashpant, and glared round at Monsieur Morry. And the juniors, who had been about to close on him like a rising tide, held off. It was just as well for them that Moscoe had slipped in at that critical moment. For though undoubtedly Sefton of the Sixth was exceeding his authority, it was no light matter for junior boys to "handle" a prefect.

Monsieur Morry raised his hand in a commanding gesture. Moscoe was a little man, and his tight-fitting black coat made him look smaller than he was. But he could be very commanding. He had not forgotten the years spent in the Army in his youthful days, and he still "ported" a military air.

"Sefton, zis is verree wrong! You all not do zat."

Sefton almost choked with rage. To be called to account like this before the fags was too humiliating.

And Moscoe wasn't even a Form-master. He was only, as Sefton said afterwards, to his pal Crank, only a Froggy—a blooming French master.

Tom Merry, & Co. stood very quiet, trying to look as if buttor wouldn't melt in their mouths. Rather a startling change after their late warlike attitude.

"Sh!" spluttered Sefton.

"I hear a great noise here," said Monsieur Morry. "I come via myself along to say zat it bettair to make less of no noise via you. And I find you, Sefton, zat you bully, zat is wrong, Sefton."

"You're no right to interfere here, Monsieur Morry."

"Vat, vat?"

"You're not a Form-master! You can leave me to deal with these juniors!" exclaimed Sefton defiantly.

Monsieur Morry turned quite pink.

"Sefton, zat is not respectful," he said.

"You shouldn't interfere," said Sefton. "I've come over here to take away a football which these young rascals have collared from a junior in my House."

The juniors looked on with bated breath. They wondered how Moscoe would "play up."

They were not long left in doubt.

"Vat you shall say is true, Sefton," said Moscoe mildly. "I interfere not via no prefects. But in zis House you are not prefect. You are prefect in so other House. If you shall have complaint to make, you shall to ze House-master go, and you take not so law in your own hands, isn't it? You have no right here."

"But I tell you—" began Sefton, who knew very well that Moscoe's statement was quite correct. He had no right there.

Another commanding gesture from Moscoe.

"You tell me nozing, Sefton. It is I zat tell you. Zece are prefects in zis House/ze dead via so garious here. You have no right. I suggest to you zat you retire yourself from zis study."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Blake.

"Yass, wathah! Monsieur Morry, I regard you as standin' up for our rights in a weally wippin' mannah. Step trevadin' on my foot, Dig, you fathead!"

"I'm going to take that footer," said Sefton.

"You're jolly well not," said Tom Merry.

"Rats!"

"Get out!"

"Zat is a question zat I decide not, as I am not ze Form-master," said Monsieur Morry drily. "If you require sensing, Sefton, you speak via ze Heesemaster or via ze head prefect, zat is Kildare. But you yourself, you take nozing, and you gose out, isn't it?"

"I won't go without it," said Sefton.

"Then you won't go at all," said Louthar.

"You will go, Sefton," said Monsieur Morry. "I take you by ze arm, and I leads you out of zis study."

Sefton ground his teeth as the French master took his arm. His grasp closed almost convulsively on the sashpant.

For a moment the juniors thought he would lay it about the French master. If he did, they were prepared to go to Moscoe's rescue—rather! They would have wiped up the floor with Sefton in the most thoroughgoing manner.

Fortunately for Sefton, he restrained himself. He could easily have disposed of Moscoe. The big Sixth-Former was, as a matter of fact, considerably more than a match physically for the little gentleman. But he knew that it would not do. He did not want to be sacked from the school, which would have been the undoubted result of an assault upon Monsieur Morry.

But the humiliation of being marched out of the study, which he had entered in so threatening a manner, was almost too much for his temper.

He was pale with rage as Moscoe drew him gently towards the door.

The juniors were grinning now. To see the brazened bully of the Sixth led away like a lamb by the little Frochunge was too funny.

A chuckle ran through the study as Sefton was drawn out of the doorway, with Monsieur Morry's hand on his arm.

The Sixth Form bully cast a ferocious look behind him. He was mentally promising Tom Merry & Co. all sorts of things.

But Tom Merry & Co. did not mind. They smiled at Sefton, and kissed their hands to him by way of farewell. The juniors in the passage cheerfully made room, and the bully of the New House walked away, arm-in-arm with Moscoe. Loud chuckles followed them, and Sefton parted with rage. Moscoe was very quiet and very calm, but very determined. He led the foaming bully down the passage to the landing, and then down the staircase. Voices in the passage behind began to chant "Mary had a little lamb," and Sefton almost gnashed his teeth. He halted, gripping the banister.

"Venus done," said Moscoe calmly. "I see you down so stairs, mon garçon. Here is Kildare, to whom you shall speak so you shall complain of something."

And down the stairs they went, leaving the juniors howling with merriment. Never had an overbearing bully been so humiliated in their sight before.

Kildare was standing in the lower hall, talking to Darrel and Rushton. The seniors stared at the sight of Sefton being led along like a pet lamb—or a pet tiger would be a better description.

"Here," said Monsieur Morry, as they reached the lower hall, "I sink sat you mark me when sat you shall be more calm, my dear Sefton."

And with a graceful salute to the group of Sixth-Formers, Monsieur Morry walked away, leaving Sefton panting with fury.

"What on earth's the row?" asked Kildare.  
"I—I came over here—I—I—" Sefton stammered, with rage. "That old fool clipped in—I came—"

"What old fool?" asked Kildare quietly.  
"That French idiot!"

"Cut that out," said Kildare. "You can't talk of Moscoe like that, Sefton. If you speak like that again, I'll report you to the Head, by Jove!"

Sefton ground his teeth.  
"I suppose you've been wedging in, as usual," said Rushton. "What did you want up there with the juniors, anyway?"

"Your young cads have stolen a football belonging to our side," hissed Sefton. "I came to take it back!"

"And they wouldn't give it to you?" chuckled Rushton. "You ought to know better than to tackle a gang of juniors on their native heath. Why couldn't you ask Kildare?"

"Well, I ask him now," snarled Sefton. "Tom Merry and his friends have stolen Piggins's football!"

"Oh, don't be so odd!" said Kildare unceremoniously. "I suppose they've bagged it for a lark. Still, it shall certainly be returned. I'll get it."

Kildare ascended the stairs. He arrived at Study No. 6 just as the School House juniors were celebrating their victory, and seeing Moscoe a real trick. They quieted down a little as Kildare looked in.

"Make room for Kildare," said Blake hospitably. "Come in, Kildare, old chap. You'll like this cake. Give Kildare your chair, Dig."

"Here you are," said Dig. Kildare laughed.

"I've come for a football belonging to the New House," he said. "I see it there. You can keep the victorious inscription, but hand over the footer."

"Oh, but Jove!"

"I say, Kildare!"

"That's our footer now," explained Tom Merry. "It was a New House footer once, but it's ours now by—by right of conquest."

"I'm waiting," said Kildare.

"Weally, Kildare, I protest against a perfect chippin' in in this meanish! Oh! If you don't leave off dawggin' at my yah, Blake—"

Tom Merry took down the football. Amid a general gloom it was handed over to Kildare, who departed with

it. Sefton left the School House with the footer under his arm, satisfied that he had "done" the juniors to that extent, at least.

In Study No. 6 there was gloom and indignation. "Our own familiar captives bucking up against us," said Blake bitterly. "I wonder Kildare don't join the New House, and have done with it! I wonder what St. Jim's would come to if the seniors were left to look after the honour of the House!"

"Our own familiar friends!" answered Mosie Loveliver.

"A regular twitwit to the House, but Jove!"

"I must say I'm disappointed in Kildare," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head, "after the splendid way Moscoe backed up, too."

"Retten!"

"Perhaps Sefton asked him for it," suggested Talbot. "Kildare couldn't do anything else in that case?"

"Hear, hear!" said Mansons. "That's so. But Sefton's a cad! And what do you think of Piggins, dragging a disgusting protest into a House row?"

"Sneaks!"

The juniors gave a deep groan for the iniquity of Piggins. And as they proceeded—much less joyously—with the feed, it was agreed on all hands that on the morrow they should show Piggins & Co. of the New House precisely what they thought of them—which opened up a glorious prospect of rags and rows ad lib.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Under a Cloud!

THE next day Piggins & Co. of the New House were treated to a series of surprises which puzzled them very much at first.

The chorus of the New House came out before breakfast for their usual run in the quad, and found a good many School House fellows already out.

In spite of the perpetual state of warfare reigning between the two Houses, Piggins & Co. were generally on pretty friendly terms with their rivals—excepting when they happened to be on the war-path.

So their surprise was great when they said "Good-morning!" to Mansons of the Skull, and received a blank stare in reply. Their surprise increased when Henry Mansons turned on his heel, and walked away without a word. So surprised were Piggins & Co. that Mansons escaped without being collared and bumped.

Piggins, Kerr, and Wynns looked at one another. They did not understand. Kings and rows they could understand, but a coldly contemptuous demeanour was something new, and they did not "tumble."

"What does the silly ass mean by that?" said Piggins at last. "Has he got a bee in his bonnet, or is it a rag?"

"Here's Gussy. Let's ask him," said Kerr. Arthur Augustus was sensing himself in the early-morning sunshine. Piggins & Co. bore down on him.

"Top of the morning, Gussy!" said Piggins affably. "Then the conduct of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was so surprising as the conduct of Henry Mansons had been. He looked at Piggins & Co. with a frightful eye. Then he jammed his celebrated monocle into his eye, and looked at them again. His gaze started at their heads and descended to their feet; then it started upward again, and finished at their faces.

Having taken that comprehensive survey of the New House juniors—during which the three chums stood dumbfounded—Arthur Augustus turned and walked laughingly away.

"Well, my word!" said Kerr. Piggins rubbed his nose hard.

"Must be a rag," he suggested.

"Might be," said Paddy Wynns; "but I don't like that kind of a rag. I vote that we collar the next idiot who tries that game on us and bump him in a puddle!"

"Good!" said Piggins. "That'll make 'em explain, anyway."

The next "idiot" happened to be Blake of the Fourth. Piggins & Co. came upon him outside the tuckshop, and bade him "Good-morning!" in a decidedly ominous tone.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 369.

A Magnificent New, Large, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Blake stared at them and turned away. The next instant three pairs of hands grasped him, and he was backed up forcibly against the tuckshop. He struggled.

"Hands off, you cads! House, School House!"  
"What's the matter with you?" demanded Figgins indignantly. "Why can't you speak?"  
"I don't speak to sneaks!" said Blake loftily.

"What?"  
"Sneaks!" roared Blake. "Rotter sneaks who get pedants to get their footer back for them when they can't get it themselves! Yah!"

"Why, we haven't—we didn't—we—"  
"House, School House!"  
"Look out!" gasped Kerr.

The Terrible Three came up with a rush. Figgins & Co. went spinning. They turned furiously on their assailants, but School House fellows came up from all directions. The New House trio were hustled and hustled off towards their own House.

"Clear off, sneaks!"  
"Go and sneak to Sefton!"  
"Go and tell your blessed pedant!"  
"Funks!"  
"Sneaks!"

"I tell you—" roared Figgins. "I—we—grook—leggs—I didn't—we wasn't—I mean we hadn't—Yarook!"

"Kick 'em out!"  
"Shoo! Sneaks!"

Figgins & Co. were checked into the porch of their House in a breathless condition, and the School House crowd marched off, with a yell of contempt.

Figgins staggered to his feet, panting for breath.

"They—they're all gone dirty!" he gasped. "Calling us sneaks! Why, we'll slaughter 'em! We'll—"

But the juniors had to go in to breakfast before any slaughtering could be done. Later, in the Fourth Form-room, Figgins & Co. found the School House portion of the Form in the same mood. Arthur Argonath's D'Arce made at a snail's pace give them a glass of bromide-rose. Blake and Morris and Digby ignored their existence. Kelly and Lemley-Lemley put on sneers that almost disguised their contentment. Even Levison, whom Figgins & Co. heartily despised, shrugged his shoulders at them and looked contemptuous. That was the unkindest cut of all. To be despised by a person they despised was a little too much.

If they had not been in the Form-room there would have been assaults and batteries immediately; but in the presence of Mr. Latham Figgins & Co. had to restrain their feelings.

They found inwardly during morning lessons. When the Fourth was dismissed Figgins & Co. meant to have an explanation. But the School House Fourth-Formers cleared off at once, and left them in the passage. Figgins & Co. walked back to the New House in a state of suppressed fury.

Just before dinner Redfern cornered them, with a glare of indignation in his face. Redfern was in the Fourth and the New House, and his back was evidently up.

"What have you fellows been doing?" he demanded.

"Fied out!" snorted Figgins.

Figgy's temper was suffering, and he was not in a mood to be outwitted, especially by a fellow he regarded as a new kid.

"That's what I'm trying to do," said Redfern heatedly. "Do you know what they're saying on the other side?"

"I don't know and don't care!" snorted Figgins, departing a little from the straight path of veracity, for he did really care very much.

"They say you've been sneaking to a pedant—Oh, don't clutch your fists at us, Figgins! I could lick you!"

"Come on, then!" roared Figgins, exasperated beyond measure by this ranting in his own House. "I'll whop you!"

Kerr interposed just in time.

"Hold on!"

"Get out of the way! I'm going to lick that cheeky cad!"

"Bow-wow!" said Redfern disrespectfully.

The GAZ LIBRARY.—No. 269.

"Let's hear what they say first," said the canny Scottish junior. "I fancy there's been some mistake."

"Well, I don't say I believe it," said Redfern, relenting. "But how can a chap speak if Figgins jumps out the first word?"

"Look here—"

"I had it from Digby," said Redfern. "He says you fellows sneaked about them getting our footer last evening."

"It's a lie!" roared Figgins.

"Tain't a lie!" said Redfern. "You know they don't tell lies in Study No. 6. If it ain't true it's a mistake. But they say that Sefton went over there and collared the footer, and made out that you had asked him to—"

"The rotters! We didn't!" howled Figgins.

"But Sefton brought the ball back," said Redfern.

"I saw him, and I wonder—"

"He chucked it into our study last night," said Kerr.

"He simply said it had been given back to him by the fellows who took it. We supposed they had lost their nerve, and were afraid to keep it."

"And you didn't ask him to chip in!" demanded Redfern.

"Let me get at him, Kerr!" yelled Figgins. "I'll teach him to ask me whether I've sneaked, the pug-nosed bender!"

"Well, I like that!" said Redfern. "What price that thing you call a nose? Do you call it a nose, though? It doesn't look like one!"

"Order—order!" said Kerr. "Shut up, Reddy! Figgy, old man, keep your temper. No good ragging with Reddy. That cad Sefton has been making trouble on purpose. We've got to set ourselves right with the School House chaps."

"We've got to lick 'em!" bellowed Figgins.

"We'll lick 'em afterwards," said Kerr soothingly.

"But we've got to set ourselves right first. They wouldn't help thinking that if Sefton came in for the ball and told them you had asked him to come for it. It's just like that cad to make trouble. Just come up to the study—"

"I'm going to—"

"You're going to take my advice, Figgy. Come on!"

And Figgins, giving way to his canny chaps, as he generally did in the long run, went up to the study, and immediately after dinner a messenger was despatched to the School House.

## CHAPTER 6.

### Righting a Wrong.

"**B** AI JORE, there's the footah!"

Tom Merry & Co. were admiring the steps of the School House with their persons after dinner, when Jameson of the Third, a New House fag, was spotted coming across the quad. Jameson had a

football in one hand, and a note in the other. The School House juniors watched him in some surprise.

Footballs are much alike, but they thought they recognised the ball which had been the cause of so much dispute.

Jameson handed the ball and the note to Tom Merry, and disappeared without a word. The chaps of the School House looked on in astonishment.

"It's the ball!" said Blake.

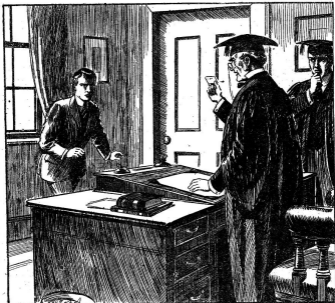
"Yas, wathah?"

"What's in the note? Open it, fathhead!"

Tom Merry opened the note and unfolded it. The School House fellows crowded together to read it. It was written in Figgy's sprawling hand, with one or two little originalities of spelling, which showed that, if Kerr had helped to dictate the words, he had not supervised the orthography.

"Here's the footer. Keep it as long as you can, you rotters! I promise you it won't be for very long. If Sefton said we asked him to fetch it, Sefton is a beauty blo!"

He never said a word about it to Sefton. He just checked it into our study, and said you'd given it to him. I thought you were afraid to keep it, and very likely you were, only you won't own up, like School House rotters, which you are, and you know it. And if you say



"You have come here, sir, to play a ridiculous prank on your headmaster?" inquired Dr. Holmes. "How dare you, sir! I say, how dare you!" Saffron stammered helplessly. "It—it—that isn't the ticket," he gasped. "I— I've made a mistake. I—I thought—" He dived his fingers into his pocket in search of the real ticket. But his pocket was empty. (See CHAPTER 12.)

we are sneaks you are as big a liar as Saffron. So we send back the ball herewith, as it was given back under a misapprehension." (This word had apparently presented considerable difficulties, for it was crossed out twice before the writer had achieved that final, happy result.) "You just see how long you can keep that ball, you School House cads. And we the under-sized are ready to lick any School House cad who has enough pluck to come round behind the jim after lessons.

"(Signed) GEORGE FIGGINS,  
GEORGE KERR,  
DAVID WYNN.

"P.—Kats!"

The School House juniors read through that touching missive, which, to judge by the number of blots and smears on it, had been a task of some difficulty to Figgins of the Fourth. The fierce indignation of George Figgins seemed to breathe through the scrawl, the blots, and the smears. Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another rather sheepishly when they had finished.

"And here's the footer!" said Tom.

"Foot odd Figgins!" said Blake. "That letter must have made him fairly perspire. He isn't a brilliant letter-writer."

"What I like best," observed Lowther thoughtfully,

"is the way he spells misapprehension. But under-sized runs it very close."

But the juniors did not smile at Mooty Lowther's little joke. They were feeling worried. They realised that they had done Figgins a wrong.

"We were ones," said Tom Merry. "It's plain enough that Saffron only pretended they had sneaked to have an excuse for chipping in."

"Yess, wathah! You fellows weally ought to have wealled that at once," said D'Arcy.

"You didn't!" snapped Blake.

"Ahem! Poorwaps not, but—"

"Saffron didn't exactly say they'd asked him that, I remember," said Manners; "but he meant us to think so."

"He implied it, anyway," said Dig.

"Sure, the cad as good as said so!" exclaimed Reilly indignantly. "But we ought to have known old Figgins better. We all know Saffron is a rotter."

"There's only one thing to be done now, deah boys."

"And what's that?" demanded Tom Merry, a little gruffy.

"Apologies!" said Arthur Augustus Sraley. "An apology from one gentleman to another sets anythin' right."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 368.

NEXT  
WEDNESDAY:

"A SPLIT IN THE SCHOOL!"

A Magnificent New, Large, Complete School Tale of  
Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"They've challenged us to come round behind the gym," granted Herries. "If we don't go and lick them they'll think we're funks."

"Whatever they think, Herries, it's up to us to do the right thing. We owe them an apology, and it's due to ourselves."

"Oh, get off the the high horse, for mercy's sake!" said Blake peevishly.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Gussy's right, though," remarked Talbot. "Figgy's got his back up, and it's no wonder. What price letting them have their footer back as a peace-offering."

"Oh, by Jove!"

"It's a giddy trophy, you know, and those New House worms couldn't get it back in a dozen terms."

But Tom Merry nodded assent.

"It's up to us!" he said heroically. "Let's do the decent thing. If they crow over us we'll lick them afterwards. Come on, and let's strike the iron while it's hot. We'll say we're sorry; after all, we are sorry, I suppose."

"I—I suppose so," assented Blake, after some thought.

"Well, let's say so, and give 'em their footer back as a makeweight."

"Yes, but—"

"Come on, and don't be a biased Prussian!"

"Oh, all right!" said Blake, convinced by that last argument. Exactly what the Prussian had to do with the matter was not very clear, but nobody wanted to act like a Prussian. So the whole party trooped over to the New House, and not seeing any sign of Figgy & Co. downstairs they ascended to Figgy's study, and tapped very politely at the door before they opened it. Figgy's voice could be heard.

"Look here, Herr, I let you make me write the letter. That's enough. I tell you there is a 'y' in misapprehension. And I don't care whether the School House cads think I can spell or not. I know I can lick any man they bring round behind the gym."

"About?"

"Talk of cads, and you hear 'em snorting," said Figgy, reviving an old proverb to suit the occasion as he glared at his visitors.

"What do you worms want crawling over here?" demanded Fatty Wynn. "Which of you has pluck enough to come behind the gym?"

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Oh, don't jaw!" said the fat Fourth-Former. "If old Ratty wasn't as sharp as a rat I'd lick you now, you tailor's dummy!"

"You uttah weittah!"

"Get back to your own side!" roared Figgy. "What do you mean by wedging into a decent House, I'd like to know!"

"Well, I like that," said Blake. "If you call this cowardly old been doct—"

"Queue Meas of decency some chaps have," said Rigg. "Why, I wouldn't be found dead in this wretched old casual ward!"

"You'll be found damaged in it, anyhow!" howled Figgy, doubling his fists.

"Pax!" said Talbot.

"Rats! Bosh! Toth! Rabbish!" said Figgy categorically.

"We've come over to apologise," Talbot hastened to add; for the mission of apology seemed likely to end in a free fight.

"Oh, bad attack of funk—what!" snorted Figgy.

"Why, you are—"

"Pew! leave it to me, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus, with lofty dignity. "We can lick those persons afterwards!"

"Lick your great-grandmother!" snorted Figgy.

"You couldn't lick our smallest dog, you glass-eyed monkey!"

"Oh, hai Jove!"

"Order!" said Talbot, trying to keep the peace. "Do listen and be reasonable, Figgy. Sefton told us—or made us believe, anyway—that you fellows had told him about the footer, and asked him to get it back. We know now you didn't, and we apologise."

THE GYM LEMASST.—No. 305.

"Yess, weittah! I apologise most sincerely. But if Figgy's thinks—"

"I'll say I'm sorry," said Blake. "But I could lick any—"

"I'm sorry," said Tom Merry. "But, with or without gloves, I'd—"

"And we've brought the footer back as a peace-offering," said Talbot. "Now, don't be a beast, Figgy. We're sorry for the mistake, but you must admit that it was your own prefect that caused the trouble. And instead of going for one another, suppose we put our heads together and make Sefton sit up!"

Matters were looking very threatening; but there was a general rolling-by of the clouds, at that suggestion. All the faces cleared. Talbot had succeeded in pouring oil on troubled waters. He placed the footer on the study table.

"Well, that's reasonable," said Blake. "It was all Sefton's fault."

"Well, I'm willing to admit that," said Figgy.

"And we're willing to admit that we ought to have known you chaps better," said Tom Merry, making a concession in his turn.

Figgy relaxed still more.

"Well, if you put it like that, I'm sorry I didn't speak a bit more cordily," he said. "But no chap likes to be called a sneak."

"Yess, that is verry national. I weally think we can excuse Figgy's indignation, andah the crows, deah boys. And we give up the footer."

"You can keep it," said Figgy.

"No. We've brought it back."

"I'd rather you kept it," said Figgy.

It was a contest of generosity, now. The clouds had quite rolled by.

"No," said Tom Merry firmly. "We fine ourselves a football for making such a mistake. We ought to have known better."

"Hear, hear!"

"Well, it's jolly decent," Figgy conceded. "I—I take back the things I said to you chaps. I was rather sorry."

"Hush, hush!" said Arthur Augustus. "That is the right spirit, Figgy. Now there remains only one important matter to be settled."

"What's that?"

"Wynn weddered to me as a tailor's dummy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothing to laugh at, deah boys. Although I came over back with verry friendly intentions, I uttably refuse to be called a tailor's dummy, and I call upon Wynn to withdraw that expression, or else—"

"Or else what?" demanded Fatty Wynn trustfully.

"Or else," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity—"or else, Wynn, I shall characterize you as a person whose manners have much to be desired."

Fatty Wynn seemed almost overcome for a moment. If Arthur Augustus had uttered threats, Fatty Wynn would have maintained throughly thick and thin that he was a tailor's dummy, but, under the circumstances, Fatty felt that he could make a graceful concession.

"I take back the tailor's dummy," he said solemnly.

"Gentlemen, I beg to state that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Esquire, bears not the slightest resemblance to a tailor's dummy, or at least, that the resemblance is merely external."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally Wynn—"

"And now that's settled," said Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Merry, it is not quite settled."

"Your mistake, Gussy; it is. Sit on him, somebody! Now Gussy's left off jawing—"

"Yess; but I—"

"My hat! He hasn't left off yet! Take him away, Blake, he belongs to you."

"I refuse—"

"Now that's settled," roared Tom Merry, "we'll have a council of war, and decide how to deal with that cad Sefton. And I propose that all House rows are barred until the cad aforesaid is made to feel properly sorry for himself."

"Hear, hear!"

Arthur Augustus, who was not quite finished yet, was

jected violently from the study, and then the rivals of St. Jim's, all animosity banished now, put their heads together to concert plans for the discomfiture of the bully of the Sixth; and they were still laying plans when the bell rang for afternoon school. And as lessons could not be postponed, even for the most important enterprises, Sefton of the Sixth had to be granted a respite.

## CHAPTER 7. Mossoo's Trouble.

"ROT!"

"I tell you I saw him!" chuckled Levison.

"I don't believe a word of it, for one," said Kangaroo of the Shell; "and you're a rotten cad to go spying on poor old Mossoo, anyway!"

The Terrible Three heard these remarks as they came into the common-room a day or two later. The chums of the Shell were discussing the promised vengeance upon Sefton of the Sixth—which had not "come off" yet. But the juniors were very determined, and the cod of the Sixth was, as Blake put it dramatically, doomed. Meanwhile, the rivals of St. Jim's were loyally keeping the truce, and, for the present, House rows were a thing of the past. But the Terrible Three forgot all about Sefton as they heard Noble's remark.

Levison of the Fourth was in the midst of a crowd of juniors in the common-room, to whom he was apparently retelling some item of news. Levison was grinning, and some of the fellows were grinning, too, but some looked incredulous and some contemptuous. Ernest Levison's statements were not always reliable.

"I was spying!" said Levison, angrily, in reply to the Australian junior's remark. "I happened to see him. How could I help seeing him, when I was outside Mossoo's place when he came sneaking out?"

"But!" repeated Kangaroo. "I don't believe a word of it!"

"What should Mossoo be going into a pawnshop for?" said Gorb. "He gets a jolly good salary here. The Head would be waxy if he knew."

"Quite right, too!" said Levison. "I tell it disgraceful! I never did think much of old Merry."

"You wouldn't!" broke in Tom Merry bravely. "What's the latest?"

"It isn't a lie!" asserted Levison.

"Oh, stuff!" said Levison. "If it isn't a lie, how did you come to tell it? Now, answer that, Levison!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you can believe me or not," said Levison; "but I saw Mossoo sneaking into old Mossoo's pawnshop in Wayland."

"You said you saw him coming out!" said Lamsley-Lamsley.

"He came out afterwards, fatted!"

"And did he stay long?"

"About a quarter of an hour."

"And after that you say you were not spying on him?" exclaimed Lamsley-Lamsley. "You must have waited a quarter of an hour for him, or your own showing."

Levison bit his lip. He had given himself away.

"Well, anyway, I don't see why I shouldn't see what was up to it," he growled. "I call it disgraceful—and I know the Head would be waxy if he were told."

"He wouldn't be likely to believe you," said Tom Merry contemptuously.

"It's true!" yelled Levison.

"Rats!"

"It's a whisper!" said Hissners. "But, even if it were true, you wouldn't repeat such a thing, if you had any decency. If poor old Mossoo is hard up, it's no business of ours. I hate a spy and a tell-tale myself!"

"Oh, I don't claim to be spotless, like the Three Eric's!" asserted Levison.

"If you call me Eric, I'll punch your head!"

"Look here!" said Kangaroo. "Either Levison is telling lies about Mossoo, who is really a good sort—or—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Or else he is telling tales, which is just as bad, and has been spying. I vote that we give Levison the tongue for spying, lying, or tale-telling, whichever it is."

"Carried unanimously," said Tom Merry.

Kangaroo promptly picked the tongue out of the grate, and Levison simultaneously made a strategic movement towards the door. But the Terrible Three collared him promptly, and two or three others lent a hand, and Levison was dragged sprawling across the table, face downwards.

There he was held, struggling and squirming, while the Australian applied the tongue, using them by way of a birch. The dust rose from Levison's trousers, but, in compensation, these garments received a good deal of soot from the tongue. And the voice of Levison was raised on its very top note.

"Loope! Yaroooh! Help!"

"Whack! Whack! Whack!"

"See parsons!" said a gentle voice, as Monsieur Merry looked into the common-room. "Vat for you shall whack so parvre Levison, im't it?"

"Ahem!"

The castigation ceased, and Levison squirmed off the table, his face red and furious.

Monsieur Merry shook his head sadly at the juniors.

"It's all right, sir," said Tom Merry awkwardly. "Levison asked for it."

"Mon Dieu!" said Mossoo, in astonishment. "Zet is verree strange, zat Levison he ask you to smash him like zat vin ze tongue."

"Ahem! I—I mean, he deserved it, sir. We—we were really doing it for his own good, mossoo."

Monsieur Merry shook his head again and walked away. Levison promptly squirmed out of the common-room. He had had enough of the tongue.

"Now, if that cad had any decency at all, he'd hold his tongue about Mossoo, after that, I should think," said Levison.

But, apparently, Levison had no decency at all—at all events, he did not hold his tongue about Mossoo. That evening all the School House knew from Levison that Monsieur Merry had been seen "sneaking" in and out of a pawnshop in Wayland.

And Mossoo found himself the centre of a good many curious glances after that, though he did not suspect the reason.

Tom Merry & Co., though they would willingly have disbelieved Levison's statement, on reflection, felt that it was probably correct. Ill-natured as he was, Levison was not likely to have wholly invented it.

And it was in accord with the fact that Mossoo had some trouble on his mind. They had not forgotten that peculiar scene in his study. And ever since then Mossoo had been going about looking gloomy and preoccupied. The juniors had known that trouble of some sort had come to the French master, and now, by means of Levison, they could guess its nature—poor old Mossoo was hard up.

They did not see very well why he should be hard up, as they knew he had a handsome salary, and he had never seemed hard up before. But if Mossoo had been sneaking into pawnbroker's shops, it was evident that his troubles were of a financial nature.

In the French class, it was only too evident that Mossoo was worried. On that one occasion, which had led to such a harvest of impositions, his worry had affected his temper, much to the general indignation. But since then Mossoo had kept himself well in hand. He had shown by many little kindnesses that he was sorry for that outburst of irritability, and he had been unusually good-tempered since, though very absent and preoccupied. The French class made regular verbs irregular, and irregular verbs regular, and declined and conjugated almost as they liked, without Mossoo being quite aware of it. And Tom Merry & Co., who had quite forgiven Mossoo for his outburst, which was only remembered mildly by Levison and Mellish and one or two fellows of their sort, felt quite concerned about the little Frenchman. But as Arthur Augustus remarked, it was impossible to back him up, if he was stony. Blake, indeed, humorously said that he had twopenny, which was quite at Mossoo's disposal—but he did not say it to Mossoo.

"The poor old chap's fairly up against it," said Tom Merry, as they came out of the French class one afternoon. "That cad Levison was pulling his leg like any seen."

Tom Merry & Co. No. 289.

thing, and he never noticed it. I wish you could help him somehow."

"Perhaps Levison was lying, after all," suggested Manners.

"But there's something wrong with Mossoo. He's not like his old self at all."

"Yes, that's so."

That Levison had not, for once, been lying, the chums of the Shell soon had proof. For after lessons that day they cycled over to Wayland to do some shopping, and Tom Merry looked after the cycles while Manners and Lewther were in Manassy's shop. And as Tom Merry stood there, holding the three bikes and whistling while he waited for his chums, a striking figure came out of the side-doorway of Mr. Mossoo's establishment, two doors further on.

Tom Merry started, as he caught sight of it, and instantly looked in another direction. And Monsieur Morry, mindfully believing that the junior had not seen him, hurried away down the street.

Manners and Lewther joined their chum, and found him red and frowning. Tom Merry was bitterly annoyed with himself for having seen the Frenchman, when Mossoo so evidently did not wish to be seen; but, really, he could not have helped it.

"What's the trouble?" asked Lewther, noticing Tom's look at once.

Tom hesitated a moment.

"Keep it dark," he said. "What Levison said is true, but we don't want to back up that cad's yarns."

Manners and Lewther had caught sight of the Frenchman disappearing down the street, and they understood.

"Not a word, of course," said Manners.

The juniors rode home to St. Jim's in a thoughtful frame of mind. Even the forthcoming Heese match, and the campaign against Sotton of the Sixth, did not banish from Tom Merry's mind the remembrance of that striking, shame-stricken figure sliding out of the pavement's edge, and his kind heart was full of concern for poor Mossoo.

## CHAPTER 8.

### Levison is Too Fussy!

LEVISON, you disgustin' wretch!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy whispered fiercely to the cad of the Fourth. Monsieur Morry was taking the Fourth in the French class, and Levison was among himself, in his usual way, by baiting poor old Mossoo.

The French class had matters all their own way, if they chose. Monsieur Morry was more absent-minded than ever. He came into the room looking like a man in a dream, and was overheard to mutter "Les Boches! Les savages! Les coquins!" Evidently he was thinking of the Prussian invaders of his native land. And the state of worry he was in was only too clear.

Now, the heroes of the Fourth Ferns, Blake and Figgies & Co., and the rest, were not shining examples by any means. They had their faults, and plenty of them. It was far from unknown among them to break rules, pull a master's leg when occasion offered, and in various ways to show that they were human boys, and not good little Georgies. But there were limits.

Monsieur Morry was a kind and considerate master, and they liked him. At any other time they might have been willing to "slack" and to "jape" Mossoo a little, in a gentle way.

But now that the poor little gentleman was almost ill with worry, as could plainly be seen, the chums of the Fourth felt that it was not the game to worry him any further.

Study No. 6 had laid down the law on the subject. So long as Mossoo was in this sad and troubled state, there were to be no larks in the French class.

Figgies & Co. had scolded heartily. So had all the decent fellows. They were not likely to forget that Mossoo had ordered Sotton the bully out of the School House, for one thing. They knew, too, that Sotton did his best to bother Mossoo, when Mossoo had the doubtful pleasure of imparting knowledge of French classics to the

The Gem Library.—No. 300.

New House prefect in the senior class. All things considered, it was "up" to them to be very nice to poor old Mossoo.

But Levison and Mellich could not see that.

They saw a chance for stacking and for making themselves unpleasant, and that was all they cared about. Hadn't Mossoo, only a week ago, dropped on them with impetuosity, when they had hardly deserved it? So he had on Blake and the rest, but the decent fellows had forgiven that exhibition of temper, which was the outcome of worry. Mossoo had made it quite plain since that he was sorry he had broken out like that.

But Levison wasn't of a forgiving nature. He had a long memory for injuries, however slight, and a short memory for benefits.

So he took full advantage of poor Mossoo's distracted state to worry him as much as he could in the French class, and he succeeded remarkably well.

Levison was very deep. He was taken with a thirst for knowledge, and he made Mossoo explain things, and tried to catch him out, as it were; and in the present confused state of Mossoo's mind, it was not difficult.

His thoughts were continually wandering from the French lesson, and several times he contradicted himself, and Levison never lost an opportunity.

Levison's Fern-fellows glared at him, and made signs to him, and whispered to him. Levison turned a blind eye and a deaf ear.

He was gradually reducing Mossoo to a distracted state of nerves, in which the poor little gentleman hardly knew what he was saying, and that was what the cheerful cad of the Fourth wanted.

"You cad!" Blake whispered to him. "If you don't leave off ragging Mossoo, I'll lick you after class."

Levison was deaf.

"Yess, wathah," said Arthur Augustus, in a sulphurous whisper. "You wotten cad, Levison. Haven't you any decent fellahs?"

"You talk via you in class," said Mossoo, waking up to the fact that talk was going on. "Levison, is it you and talk?"

"No, sir," said Levison calmly. "D'Arcy and Blake spoke to me, sir, but I assure you I did not answer."

D'Arcy and Blake looked daggers at him. Monsieur Morry gave them a stern look.

"D'Arcy and Blake, you will take forty lines of no Heeseide, isn't it, sat you for to have talk in so class?"

It was too bad, considering that Blake and Gassy had been talking for Mossoo's special benefit. But they took it meekly.

"Yes, sir," said Blake.

"Yass, Mossoo Morray."

"I wish sat you keep so ordair in so class," said Monsieur Morry, clapping at his beard. "I try to do my duty via you, my boys. Levison, sat is it sat you write so sat papale?"

"Only a French sentence, sir," said Levison. "You told me to; sir."

"Is sat so?" said Mossoo, who had forgotten. "Yat non is it sat I call tell you, mon garcon?"

"You told me to make up a sentence with the verb chercher in it, sir."

"I do not remember him," said Mossoo, who had, in fact, told Levison nothing of the kind. "However, you show him to me."

"Yes, sir! Shall I read him out?" asked Levison calmly.

"Oah, oui!"

Levison read out his sentence.

"Sa cherche un croqued pour manger!"

Some of the Fourth-Ferners grinned. Monsieur Morry frowned. If he had told Levison to make a sentence with the verb chercher—to seek—there was no fault to be found with the junior putting it in that form. "I seek a frog to eat." But Mossoo knew very well that the impertinent junior was making a cheeky allusion to that peculiar form of diet so popular in France.

"Levison, I sink sat you intend to be impertinent."

"I sir!" said Levison, in surprise. "Oh, no, sir. They do eat frogs in your country, don't they, sir?"

"'Eet is true, Levison, and sat animal he is verree good to eat, but here is great ignorance of sat in order



countries. But if you not mean to be impertinent, I say so more."

"Not at all, sir," said Levison. "In fact, sir, I was thinking of going out next half-holiday, sir, to catch some frogs for you."

"Levison?"

"There are lots of frogs about this part, sir," said Levison innocently; "and I always like to please my kind masters, sir."

"You will be silent, Levison."

"Very well, sir. Don't you want the other sentence?"

"Yes, sentence, Levison?"

"You told me to make a sentence with the verb 'aller,'—to go, sir," said Levison.

This was another invention; but Moscoo was in so absent a state of mind that he did not remember whether he had told Levison that or not: Levison was evidently making up little sentences for his own amusement.

"Verree well, Levison, you say him to me."

"Certainly, sir! Je vais—that's the first person of aller, isn't it, sir?"

"Je vais—I go! Kat is right, Levison."

"Je vais au Mont-de-Piété!" said Levison.

Monsieur Morry jumped. The class sat dumb. They had never expected this hardihood even of Levison. "I go to the pawnbroker's," was the translation of Levison's little exercise in French.

For a moment or two Monsieur Morry seemed transfixed. His eyes almost started out of his head as he gazed at Levison. It was the first hint he had received that his visits to Mr. Moscoo at Wayland were known among the boys.

"Yes!" he gasped, at last. "You shall say vat, Levison?"

"Isn't that a good sentence, sir?" asked Levison. "I'm not quite sure whether pawnshop is masculine or feminine in French, sir. Is it masculine or feminine, sir?"

Monsieur Morry did not impart any information as to the gender of pawnshop in French. Instead of that, he suddenly grasped Levison by the collar, and yanked him out from his form. Levison roared as he was whirled out before the class.

"Ow! What's the matter? Leggo!"

"You sneaky rascal!" gasped Monsieur Morry.

"Several times in six class I have caught you are sneaky, Levison, but I not like to zink a boy shall be sneaky vis his master for nothing."

"He's a rotten cad, sir!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"Pxy don't think that we have anythin' to do with his beastly cheek, sir. We regard him with contempt."

Monsieur Morry did not hear. He had taken a case from his desk, and Levison eyed it with apprehension. It was almost unknown to Moscoo to administer punishment with a case. Herr Schneider was much addicted to the use of the pointer; but Moscoo had always been too tender-hearted.

"Hold out as hand, Levison, vis you!"

Levison set his teeth.

"What am I going to be caned for?" he demanded.

"Zat you are sneaky."

"You told me to make a sentence," said Levison sulkily. "What's the matter with the sentence? If you can't see I shall appeal to the Housemaster."

"Will you hold out as hand, Levison?"

"No," said Levison, feeling that he was strong in the fact that he had committed an offense that could be explained to his Housemaster. "Take me to Mr. Carrington, sir. I shall appeal to him."

But Monsieur Morry was fed up. As Levison did not hold out his hand, he grasped the junior by the collar again, and the case came down across Levison's shoulders. The junior roared and wriggled, but the case rose and fell half a dozen times. The Fourth Form looked on and grinned. Levison was getting his deserts at last.

"Now go back to ze place," panted Moscoo; "and if it is not you are sneaky rascal more, I canse you harder san zat viz you."

Levison crawled back to his place. He was not "sneaky" any more during that lesson. He sat with a face like a demon. He had been severely licked, and after that lesson he intended to be revenged. An appeal

to the Housemaster was always open to the juniors in case of injustice, and Levison intended to make that appeal. And when the matter was brought before Mr. Carrington, there was no doubt that Moscoo would be sorry he had used the cane. For, although he knew that Levison had intended to check him, he had not the slightest evidence that Levison's previous sentence was intended as an allusion to his private affairs. And Levison's appeal would be a means of acquainting the Housemaster with the fact that Moscoo frequented pawnshops. Moscoo would have to admit that to make out that Levison had committed a fault at all.

So Levison sat and nursed his injuries, and brooded revenge, and poor Moscoo, who knew what was in the sally boy's mind, was more worried than ever, though he did not speak to Levison again. But the chance of the Fourth had their own ideas about it, too, and they intended to keep an eye on Levison.

## CHAPTER 9.

### The Right Thing.

THE Fourth were dismissed at last, and Levison started at once for the Housemaster's study. Monsieur Morry walked away to his own quarters, his brow gloomy and troubled.

Levison had taken about a dozen steps down the passage, when he was surrounded by a crowd of the Fourth. Study No. 6 and Figgins & Co. had exchanged a hurried whisper, and then they headed off Levison.

Levison glared at them fiercely.

"Let me pass, you cads!"

"Where's the hurry?" smiled Blake.

"You know where I'm going."

"Yes, we guessed," said Figgins; "and that's what we're going to talk to you about, Levison, my boy."

"Yam, wathah!"

"No need to talk," said Levison, between his teeth.

"Yes, can talk for a month, but I'm going to appeal to the Housemaster. I'll see whether that frog-ester is going to cane me for nothing."

"It wasn't for nothing, you cad," broke out Digby.

"You checked him, and only a rotten worn like you would have done what you did."

"Only an uttiah cad!" said Arthur Augustus.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, the Housemaster can decide," he replied.

"Moscoo can explain what he caned me for. If he was in the right, he needn't object to that."

"You know he can't explain without letting Carrington know that he goes to pawnshops, you worts!"

"He shouldn't go to pawnshops if he doesn't want it known. It's disgraceful, and the sooner the Housemaster knows the better."

"Wrealy, Levison, if the poor chap is hard up—"

"What is he hard up for?" answered Levison. "What has he been doing with his money? Putting it on horses, perhaps. He gets a good salary, I know that. I know what the Head would think, too, if he knew that a St. Jim's master goes pawning things to raise money."

"The Head's not going to know," said Kerr.

"I dare say Carrington will mention it to him," sneered Levison.

"Carrington isn't going to know."

Levison laughed.

"I don't see how Moscoo will explain that caning, without letting him know," he remarked. "I can't see anything, of course; but Moscoo will have to own up to it, or else admit that he caned for nothing."

"Yes, we know the little game," said Blake. "But, you see, you're not going to the Housemaster at all."

"Who's going to stop me?" said Levison fiercely.

"We are!"

"Lay a finger on me, and I'll yell to Carrington now," said Levison. "He can hear me from here if I shout."

It was a ragging that Levison was expecting. But as it happened, it was not a ragging that Blake & Co. intended.

"So you're determined to go?" asked Blake smoothly.

"Yes, I am."

"And nothing will stop you?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 98.

A Magnificent New, Large, Complete School Tale of Tom Morry & Co. by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Nothing," said Levison.

"Right! Come on, you chap! We'll all go together."

"Yass, wathah!"

Levison paused.

"What the dickens do you mean?" he exclaimed. "You've got nothing to do with it."

Blake chuckled.

"We've got a lot to do with it, my pippin. You're going to make Carrington believe that you wrote out that previous sentence without meaning to allude to Mossoo, and you're going to make Mossoo own up about the parashop. But, just see, if you talk to Carrington, we're going to talk too. It will be quite a conversation."

"Yass, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"In the first place," resumed Blake, "we can mention that Mossoo never told you to make that sentence at all. That was a lie of yours, Levison."

"Which will prove that you did it to check him," remarked Herries.

"In the second place, we can explain that you did it because you knew about poor old Mossoo going to Mr. Mossoo, because you spied on him."

"Yass! wathah!"

"And when Mr. Carrington knows that you spied on Mossoo, and found out something that you used for the purpose of checking him in class, I fancy there will be a hopping for somebody," Blake remarked, in a reflective sort of way.

"I'm jolly sure of it!" said Figgins.

"Come on," said Keer. "We're waiting for you, Levison."

But Levison did not come on. The appeal to the House-master, under these circumstances, was no longer attractive to him.

"You mean that you're going to speak?" he started.

"Yes, you can put it that way if you like," agreed Blake unmoved. "We mean that if the House-master hears anything about the matter at all, he's going to take the whole sheet—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, you meanly cad!"

Levison gritted his teeth. He was in a tight kick. He dared not go to the House-master of Blake & Co. carried off their throat. And they evidently meant to do that.

"Come on," said Blake invitingly. "Carrington will be quite interested to hear about you spying on Mossoo, and laying plans to rag him in class."

"I'm not going," sneered Levison.

"Changed your mind?" grinned Figgins.

"Yes, you cad!"

"Good!" said Blake. "I thought you would. But don't go yet, Levison; we're not finished. Lay hold of his ear, somebody."

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Before you amble away," continued Blake, "you're going to apologise."

"Catch me!" snarled Levison.

"We've caught you, my tulip! You're going to Mossoo's study now, and you're going to tell him you're sorry, or you'll get such a ragging in the dorms to-night that you won't have a bone without an ache in it!"

"I'll speak to Kildare—" began Levison, held with rage.

"Good! And we'll speak to him too, and tell him what it's for—and you can have it from Kildare instead of from us."

Levison was almost foaming with rage by this time. His excellent sickness were going away in the most disconcerting manner. The captain of St. Jim's was not likely to have much mercy on him if he learned the whole story.

"Yes—you rotters!" snarled Levison.

"What are you sticking up for that French rotter for? What does it matter to you?"

"We've taken Mossoo under our wing," said Blake imperturbably. THE CHURCHMAN.—No. 36.

"Haven't you ever heard of the Hotgate Cordials? This is our little bit towards it."

"We're waiting for you, Levison," said Figgins, "and we're not going to wait long."

"I—I—I—"

"Are you going to apologise to Mossoo, or are you going to be bumped, lobbed, and frog-marched?" asked Keer.

"Yass, wathah! That's the choice, dear boy."

"I'll—I'll go to the limit!" snarled Levison.

"Right! We'll cope with you."

And Levison, almost gnashing his teeth, was marched off to the French master's study. He stood panting while Blake, tapped at the door.

"Estree!"

Blake opened the door. Monsieur Morry was sitting at his table with a letter in his hand. He looked in surprise at the juniors.

"Excuse us, sir," said Blake. "Levison is sorry that he was a cheeky cad in class this afternoon, and he wants to apologise."

Monsieur Morry's face cleared.

"That is verree right of Levison," he said. "I did not expect it."

"Pile in, Levison."

Levison ground his teeth and piled in. There was no help for it. He was in the hands of the Analekites.

"If you please, Mossoo, I—I—I'm sorry!" he jerked out.

"I thank you for it, Levison. That does show a verree proper feeling," said Monsieur Morry magnanimously.

Blake whispered to Levison, emphasising his whisper by pinching his arm; and the cad of the Fourth went on, faltering with rage:

"And I won't ever be cheeky again, sir, if you will forgive me."

"My good boy," said Monsieur Morry, beaming, "that is all right. I forgive you from no heart, and I hope that all be forgotten."

"T-thank you, sir!" stammered Levison.

And the juniors retired from the study. In the passage Levison glared at his companions with an expression Blake likened to that of a demon in a post-mortem.

"Feel better for it?" asked Figgins.

"Surely you feel better for havin' done the wight thing, Levison!"

"I'll make you sorry for this!" snarled Levison, between his teeth. "And I'll make that rotter sorry, too!"

"Go ahead," said Blake. "But bear this in mind—you check Mossoo once more, or do anything at all to worry him, and I'll start on you without gloves."

"Yass, wathah, and you can weaken with me, too."

"It's agreed," said Figgins. "The first time Levison does anything or says a word to bother Mossoo we'll thrash him within an inch of his life!"

"Hoor, hoor!"

"Now you can go, you cad. Better kick him!"

Levison did not wait to be kicked. He scudded off at once. And the rival juniors, who had waited for that worthy purpose, adjourned to the turkish in the friendliest possible manner. They felt justly that they deserved well of their country. As for Levison, he was far from sharing their satisfaction. The cad of the Fourth was feeling more revengeful than ever, and Mossoo was the chief object of his bitterness; but how to wreak revenge upon Mossoo without drawing down upon himself the vengeance of Blake & Co. was a problem Levison, with all his cunning, found it very difficult to solve.

FOR NEXT WEEK:

## A SPLIT IN THE SCHOOL!

Another Splendid  
Long, Complete  
Story of Tom  
Merry & Co. at St.  
Jim's.

—By—

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order in Advance.  
PRICE ONE PENNY.



Figulus waited; he hadn't time to wait. Bang! Bang! "My hat!" Bang! "Great Scott!" Bang! Bang! Bang! (See Chapter II.)

### CHAPTER 10.

#### Levison's Prize.

"A DOLPHE MORNY. Ten pounds!"

Levison started.

It was the day following his apology to the French master, and Levison had not forgotten. The cat of the Fourth, having seen Tom Morry and Elnke and the rest safely on the football field for practice, had come quietly to the French master's study. He had listened curiously outside to ascertain whether Monsieur Morry was in his quarters, and, not hearing a sound within the study, he had opened the door stealthily. If Morry was not there, it was Levison's amiable intention to fill his slippers with ink and his inkpot with gum, as a kindly reminder that he was not forgotten.

But even as he opened the door Levison heard the muttering voice of the French master. Levison stood with his hand on the door, staring at him.

Mosso was standing by the window, with his back to the door. He was reading something he held in his hand; and Levison could see that it was a little oblong ticket.

Levison's eyes glistened.

He knew what that ticket was. It was a pawnticket. Some article of Mosso's had gone "up the spout," and

that ticket was all that remained to record the fact that he had been lent ten pounds on the article. Poor Mosso was engrossed in his dolorous thoughts, and he did not notice the half-open door or the stuffed face looking in.

"Ten pounds!" he went on muttering miserably. "C'est la troisième. En tout, j'avrai cinque cent francs—cinque cent francs pour mes pauvres parents! C'est tres peu, mais c'est quelquechose. Les parents!"

Levison, though not particularly careful with his lessons, understood the French that Monsieur Morry was murmuring. It was his third pawnticket; and altogether he had raised five hundred francs—or twenty pounds—for his poor relatives. It was little, but it was something—that was what Mosso was saying. So it was for poor relatives that Monsieur was pawnting his goods and chattels. A bitter snarl came over Levison's hard face. Poor relatives! What was a master at St. Jim's doing with poor relations? If he'd had any sense he'd have given them a wide berth. That was Levison's noble and charitable thought. Anybody else's heart might have been softened by the discovery that it was for unfortunate relatives that Mosso was making those sacrifices. But Levison's heart was quite leathery—it was not easy to soften it. Once or twice he had shown

glimpse of good in his nature, but those glimpses were few and far between. At present only spite and dislike and all uncharitableness fumed a lodging in his breast.

"Les barbares! Les Boches! Les acrobates!" Moscoe went on, apparently referring to the Fransians by those pretty names, not to his relations, as Levinson guessed. "Quand je pense a cela, je deviens feroce—je veux—"  
He broke off suddenly. The door had creaked.

Monsieur Morry swung round, and stood facing Levinson, the toll-gate pawn-ticket still in his hand. Levinson was taken aback for a moment.

But Moscoe was still more taken aback. He hastily thrust the ticket into the drawer of his table, and slid the drawer shut.

"Levinson, est you snaf? Vous n'avez pas frappe—you no knock, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir, I knocked," said Levinson calmly, though his heart was beating. "I suppose you didn't hear me, sir."

"You hear vat I say, hein?"

"No, sir. Did you say anything?"

"Vat is it zat you vant?" asked Moscoe, with a suspicious look. "I sink zat you are sometimes sly, Levinson. Vat is it, sen?"

"Would you mind lending me your French dic., sir? One of the fellows has hidden mine," said Levinson.

"Certaintment. Franco-hi."

Levinson came in and picked up the French dictionary from the table. Monsieur was looking very confused and red. But Levinson gave no sign of having seen the pawn-ticket, and he thanked the French master and left the study with the dictionary, and Moscoe was relieved in his mind.

Levinson's eyes were gleaming as he went down the passage.

"If I could get hold of it!" so ran his thoughts. He was referring to the pawn-ticket. "If I could be so it! If the Head could see it, it might mean the sack for the rotter. Dr. Holmes would be awfully ratty, anyway, and Moscoe would simply squirm at having to own up." "Tote anything to a master's crossin' the boss's relations, too. The Head would be warty. If I could get hold of that ticket, and—~~and~~ get it somehow to the Head, without letting out that I'd done it—or those braudly cads would take it out of me!"

Levinson grinded his teeth at that thought.

Certainly such a scheme would be a very complete revenge upon poor Moscoe. The Head could hardly be pleased at the discovery that a St. Jim's master was a frequenter of pawnshops. The ticket, if it could somehow be conveyed to the Head, would be a proof that there was no denying.

Moscoe would be called upon to explain, and, even if the Head did not "drop" on him, it would be a most humiliating experience for the French master. And it would not improve matters much to let out that he had a swarm of poor relations for whom he was pawing his personal possessions. Poor relations didn't reflect credit on anybody.

"Hallo!" said Gore of the Shift, meeting Levinson in the passage. "What are you grinning at? What dirty trick is it this time?"

Levinson stopped.

"I say, Gore, you don't like Moscoe any more than I do!"

"If it's up against Moscoe, I'm your man," said Gore at once. "He jumped on me this morning because I didn't know that table was feminine in his fatheaded language! Why should a table belong to the feminine gender—eh? I call it silly. I'd have the rotten language abolished, if they won't have the sense to have a norter gender! That's what I'd do. How was I to know?"

"I've got an idea for making him sit up," said Levinson.

"Could you get him out of his study a few minutes?"

"What's the wheeze?"

"No time to jaw now," said Levinson.

He did not care to explain his "wheeze" to Gore. Gore was not very particular, but he would probably have natched the cad of the Fourth down if he had known the exceedingly dirty trick for which his assistance was required.

The Gem Library.—No. 250.

But Gore shook his head.

"I'm not going to bid, Levinson. I know you, you see. Some of your little japes don't appeal to me at all."

"I've got some gum to put in his slippers," whispered Levinson, departing from the truth without scruple.

Gore grinned.

"Oh, all screw! I'm on. I'll manage it for you. You sneak in as soon as I've routed him out, the blessed froggy!"

"Good egg!"

Levinson dodged into an empty study, and George Gore boldly proceeded to the French master's door and knocked loudly.

"Entreez donc."

Gore opened the door.

"Would you mind waiting a minute, sir? Levinson and Blake are fighting like anything down the passage, and I'm afraid there'll be some harm done."

"Certaintment, my good boy!"

Monsieur Morry simply ran out of the study, in his haste to prevent Blake and Levinson from hurting one another. Gore followed him, grinning, down the passage. The moment they turned the corner Levinson whipped out of his hiding-place, and darted into the French master's study. He jerked open the drawer of the table where he had seen the French master drop the pawn-ticket. Doubtless Moscoe intended to keep it in a safer place, but it was only a few minutes since Levinson had left him, and the cad of the Fourth was pretty certain that he had not had time to put it away yet. He was right, for there, before his eyes, lay the toll-gate ticket.

Levinson grabbed it up, closed the door, and dashed out of the study. He ran breathlessly into the empty room, and closed the door softly behind him.

Meanwhile, Monsieur Morry and Gore had reached the spot where Levinson and Blake, according to Gore's account, were fighting so desperately. But there were no combatants to be seen.

"Why, they're gone!" exclaimed Gore, in surprise. "I suppose they knew I was coming for you, sir. I hope you'll excuse my disturbing you, Moscoe."

"Certainly, my good Gore! It was verry. You to call me. You are ben gawon."

And, with a kindly nod to Gore, Monsieur Morry returned to his study, little dreaming why he had been called away from it. As soon as Levinson heard his door close, he came out of the room where he was lying low and scurried off. Gore hurried after him.

"Did you have time?" he asked.

Levinson shook his head.

"No fear. He was back in a jiffy. Another time will do."

"Well, you are a fathead!" said Gore. "Catch me helping you another time! Why—"

But Levinson did not stay to listen. He had accomplished his object, and he strolled out into the growing dusk of the quadrangle to examine his prize in safety. Tom Merry & Co. were coming in from the football field, but they took no notice of Levinson. They were on the worst of terms just now with the black sheep of the Fourth.

Levinson scuntered away under the eaves, and there he looked at his prize. He grinned over it with great glee. It was plain enough—Monsieur Morry's name in full, with the amount that had been lent him on a gold watch. Poor Moscoe was probably unacquainted to that mode of raising money, and it had not occurred to him to give an assumed name to the pawnbroker. There it was—Adelphi Morny, a gold watch, and the date.

Monsieur Morry would claim the ticket sooner or later, that was certain. But he would not be able to guess that Levinson had taken it. He would know that someone had done so, if, indeed, he did not, in his absent-minded state, conclude that he had himself dropped it somewhere. Anyway, he was not likely to make a public inquiry after it.

Levinson chuckled at the thought. A St. Jim's master inquiring up and down the House for a lost pawn-ticket would be rather "thick." Instead of that, Moscoe would probably be only too glad if it never came to light. He would certainly rather leave his watch per-

mentally "up the spot" than set the whole school talking on such a subject.

But the ticket was coming to light; Levison was quite determined on that. Moscoe's loss was not to be permanent by any means. But when Moscoe received his missing ticket back it was to be from the hands of Dr. Helms. That was Levison's little game. The only difficulty was to accomplish that without appearing personally in the matter. He knew what to expect from Tom Merry & Co. if they found him out. But that difficulty did not trouble long the cunning mind of the end of the Fourth. After some cogitation on the subject Levison beat his steps in the direction of the New House, and from the smile on his face it was evident that he had solved the problem to his satisfaction.

## CHAPTER II.

### Figgins Makes a Third.

"I'm going," said Figgins.

"Better leave it to me," said Kerr pertinaciously.

"Rats!"

"I'll get tea while you're gone," said Fatty Wyns.

"Mind that Sefton doesn't spot you, that's all."

"That's all right," said Figgins. "Sefton's out. We'll strike while the lion's hot. Of course," added Figgins thoughtfully, "we arranged with those School House chaps to let them have a hand in rugging the cad, but they haven't thought of anything."

"They can't," said Kerr, with a shake of the head.

"It's up to us, Figgys. We'll tell them about it afterwards. They're coming over to tea, and if we tell them they can't say that we left them out. As sensible chaps they'll admit that it was really better for them not to have a hand in it. They'd have mucked it up."

"I don't know whether they'll admit it," grinned Figgins, "but it's a fact. You fellows keep here. Leave it to me."

"Well, be careful," said Kerr. "Sefton may come in."

"You trust your uncle," said Figgins reassuringly.

And Figgins left the study—on the warpath. He sauntered, with a very careless air, into the Sixth Form passage. Fortunately, there were no perfects hanging about, and Figgins slipped quietly into Sefton's study and closed the door after him.

It was days and days since Sefton's deers had been possessed by the heroes of the Lower School, but the bully of the Sixth had not yet suffered for his size. Though the School House and New House had dropped their private feuds, and united for the purpose of bringing Sefton to book, nothing had been accomplished. But that the bully of the Sixth should pass unscathed wasn't to be thought of for a moment. Hence the great Figgins's surreptitious visit to his study.

Figgins's object was simple. He had a pocketful of jumping crackers, which were to be arranged in Sefton's grate, where the fire had been neatly laid by his fag. When Sefton put a match to the fire, Sefton would meet with the surprise of his life. Figgins chuckled to himself as he proceeded to arrange the crackers in among the sticks and paper, so carefully piled up by Sefton's fag. In order to make his hideous arrangements without leaving anything suspicious in sight Figgys had to be very careful. But he was done at last, and he rose to his feet with the feeling of satisfaction that comes of a good work well done.

"About time I closed," murmured Figgins. "Oh, my hat!"

Steps came down the passage outside. Probably it was Sefton coming home, but Figgys did not want to take risks. He knew what would happen if the bully caught him in his study, especially when the fire came to be lighted. And Figgins promptly "dithered" out of sight behind the bed. There were curtains round the bed in the alcove, and Figgins was well hidden. He waited for the footsteps to pass.

But the footsteps did not pass. They stopped at the door of the study, and the door opened. It was Sefton, after all.

Figgins thanked his lucky stars that he had had the

feet thought to get out of sight. As it was only tea-time, Sefton couldn't be going to bed, so he was not likely to discover the justice in his hiding-place. There would probably be some confusion after he had lighted the fire—very probably, in fact—and Figgins hoped to get a chance of dodging out of the study unseen. Meanwhile, he understood how Fox, and lay low. Then he made the disconcerting discovery that Sefton was not asleep.

"You can come in," he heard the prefect say. "What do you want, Levison?"

"Just a word or two, Sefton," said Levison's voice.

"Well, look up!"

Levison came into the study and closed the door carefully behind him. Sefton watched the proceeding in surprise.

"What the deuce do you mean, Levison?" he demanded gruffly.

"I've got something to tell you," said Levison.

Figgins, behind the bed-curtains, gritted his teeth. The cad of the School House was coming sneaking to a New House prefect, then.

"No good talking to me," said Sefton, still gruffly.

"I can't chip in over on your side, whatever it is. If you want to speak, try Knox."

"It isn't that."

"Well, what is it, then? Sharp; I want my tea!"

"It's about Moscoe!"

"Hang Moscoe!" growled Sefton.

"I'd hang him with pleasure!" said Levison. "Look here, Sefton, you don't like Moscoe. He ordered you out of the School House, and made you look a fool before all the fellows."

"You cheeky young cad!"

"They're still chucking over it," said Levison, with a grin. "Binks and Lowther were giving an imitation last night of the way the Froggy marched you off, and the fellows simply roared. Ow—ow!" Levison himself simply roared as Sefton took hold of his ear. "Legs! I'm not getting at you. I've come to tell you how you can get even with Moscoe!"

"Don't jaw to me about any of your fag japes," said Sefton contemptuously.

"That's a fag jape. It might get Moscoe the sack."

"What?" Sefton was interested now, and he released Levison's ear. "I know you're a deep young scoundrel, Levison, but that's all rot."

"I'll tell you," said Levison, rubbing his ear. "Have you heard the talk about Moscoe going to pawnshop?"

"No, I haven't! And I don't believe any such rot now I've heard it."

"It's true," said Levison. "I saw him myself, sneaking out of Moscoe's place in Wayland. But I can prove it," he added, as Sefton shrugged his shoulders, implying very plainly that something more than Levison's word was wanted. "I've got the ticket."

"You've got what?" ejaculated Sefton.

"Look at that!"

Sefton took the ticket.

"My only hat!" he ejaculated.

"Looks like business—what?" grinned Levison.

"You've pinched this!"

"I—I picked it up in the quad," said Levison.

"Moscoe is frightfully careless with his things, you know. Must have dropped it."

"More likely pinched it out of his study," said Sefton.

"Well, it doesn't matter how I got hold of it. There it is. What would the Head think if he saw that?"

Sefton whistled.

"My hat! He would be down on old Merry. A St. Jim's master raising the wind at the pawnbroker's, and dropping the tickets about! My word! It's enough to make a regular scandal. I don't suppose it would mean the sack for him, but I shouldn't like to be in his shoes when the Head asks him about it."

"Well, then," said Levison, "suppose you take it to the Head? You needn't mention me, or Moscoe may think I took it out of his study."

"As you did?"

"Well, suppose I did? Moscoe doesn't know. It might have been anybody, and whoever took it might have checked it out into the quad. You picked it up in the quad, and you take it to the Head."

"Whoever found it ought to take it to old Morry, as his name's on it."

"Yes; but that isn't the game," said Levison eagerly. "If it goes to the Head it means a frightful wiggling—at least, for Moscoe."

"By George, rather?"

"As a—as a prefect, you know, you can go to the Head. As a New House chap, you couldn't be expected of bagging it from old Morry's study."

Sefton's eyes glimmered. He had been simply yearning for a chance to "get his own back" on the French master, for the humiliation he had suffered in Study No. 4. The chance had come.

"But the head would ask me why I hadn't taken it to Moscoe, as his name's on it," he said slowly. "I can't let the Head think I want to down Moscoe."

"That's easy enough. You can say you don't believe it's a real pawn-ticket, and that you think some fag had made it up for a joke on Moscoe. Of course, you're not supposed to know anything about pawn-tickets. Finding that in the quad you feel it your duty as a prefect to bring it to the notice of the Head as a disrespectful joke against a master whom you respect highly."

Sefton gazed at the end of the Fourth admiringly. "You'll end up in prison, Levison," he said, with conviction. "Blessed if I know how you've kept out of a reformatory so long. That year of yours about having a double never took me in, and I came near catching you in the Green Man."

"Oh, cheek all that!" said Levison angrily. "You're not after my scalp now, but Moscoe's. I tell you he'll be so disappointed when the Head gives him he'll very likely check up his job here and give himself the sack."

"I'm on," said Sefton. "After all, he's no business to go pawing. It's disgraceful. He must have been getting himself into some rotten scrape, to have to raise money like this. It's his duty to think of his position as a master in a public school. The Head will be waxy, there's no doubt about that. He'll know it's a genuine pawn-ticket. Still, there's no reason why I should know; the Head won't even know that I've ever seen one before."

"Don't mention my name, of course," said Levison anxiously. "That would spell all. It would give it away that you're up against Moscoe."

"That's all right. I picked it up in the quad," said Sefton. Figgins, peering out through the curtain, saw the pocket slide the ticket into his waistcoat-pocket.

"You're going to the Head, then?" said Levison. "Yes, I'll cut across after tea. You'd better clear off—no need for you to be seen here—and mind you keep your mouth shut."

"You bet!"

"You can light my fire before you go," said Sefton, "and call my fag for me as you go out—yong Dibbs."

"All right!"

Levison struck a match and knelt before the fire. Figgins waited breathlessly in his hiding-place. The crash was coming now, and Levison was going to get the chief benefit of it instead of Sefton, but after what he had just heard Figgins was not sorry for that. The paper in the fire-grate flared up, and Levison used the bellows to blow up the fire. Figgins waited; he hadn't long to wait.

Bang! Bang!

"My hat!"

Bang!

"Great Scott!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

## CHAPTER 12.

### Backlog up Moscoe!

BANG! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Levison jumped up from the fire with a yell. Sefton yelled, too, as a mass of crackling crackers came jumping from the grate, with a scattering of sticks and coal hurled right and left by the explosion.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Yarook! Oh crumbs!"

"The Gen Library—No. 36.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS:

"THE MIGHTY" LIBRARY,  
Every Monday.

"THE OUTLOOK,"  
Every Thursday.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"  
Every Friday.

"CRACKLES,"  
Every Saturday.

"M-m-my hat!"

Levison staggered away from the grate. His face was black with coal-dust. Sefton was dodging a jumping cracker that had fallen at his feet. It was one of those ferocious crackers that explode a dozen times in succession. It exploded between Sefton's boots, and Sefton jumped, then it banged behind him, and he jumped again, and jumped right on it. Then bang, bang, bang! under his very feet.

"What the thunder—"

Oh! Oh! Oh dear! Yow!"

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

"What on earth's the row?" shouted Monteth of the Sixth, throwing open the door, and looking in in amazement. "My hat! Oh!"

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Yarook!"

"Great Scott!" gasped Monteth. "What a mill of gunpowder! Really, Sefton, you ought to have more sense!"

"What!" spluttered Sefton.

"Letting off fireworks in your study like a silly fag!" said Monteth. "Really, you know, it's rather too thick!"

"You silly idiot!"

"Eh—what?"

"Some young cad has filled my firegrate with crackers!" yelled Sefton. "Do you think I should make my study in this state, you fathead? Look at it!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Well, it does look rather in a mess," grumbled Monteth. "I think I'll be off; I don't like the smell of your study, Sefton."

The room was filled with smoke and the reek of gunpowder. Scattered sticks and coal lay over the carpet. Sefton threw open the window. Levison dodged out, and his early appearance as he hurried down the passage elicited yells of laughter from the fellows who had been attracted to the spot by the explosion.

The reek in the study was a little too much for Sefton. He stomped out furiously into the passage, breathing wrath and indignation.

That was Figgins's opportunity.

He whipped out from behind the bed, scudded across the study, and swung himself out of the window. In a moment more he had dropped into the quad, and was walking toward the door with a perfectly calm and unconscious look. Kerr and Wynn had joined the crowd in the Sixth-form passage, and Figgins joined them there. The three chaps exchanged a joyous grin.

"Who did this?" Sefton was yelling. "Dibbs—where's your Dibbs? Dibbs, you young villain, you put crackers in my grate when you laid my fire?"

"That I jolly well didn't!" exclaimed Dibbs in alarm.

"The fire was all right when I laid it, Sefton."

"Then who did?" roared Sefton.

"Blessed if I know—Yow! Leggo my ear!"

"Let him go, Sefton!" exclaimed Figgins indignantly.

"Dibbs says that he hadn't anything to do with it. Monteth, don't let him bully yong Dibbs!"

"Draw it mild, Sefton," said the head prefect, catching the bully's arm, and jerking him away from the unfortunate Dibbs. "Better find the right party before you hand out the licking, you know."

"I didn't do it!" roared the outraged Dibbs. "But I'm jolly glad—Yah!" And Dibbs fled down the passage with that defiant yell.

"It was somebody," panted Sefton.

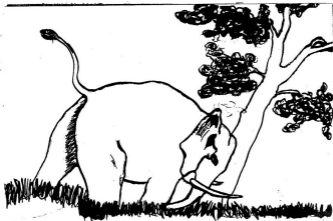
"Well, it was somebody, of course," said Monteth. "Find out the somebody, if you want to lace him. A School House kid very likely. There was a School House fag in your study when it happened."

"It wasn't him," growled Sefton. "He was lighting the fire for me when it happened."

"What was he doing here, then?" sang out Figgins. Sefton did not appear to hear that question, which would have been a very awkward one for him to answer, as Figgins was well aware. He combated himself with ordering Figgins & Co. into his study to clear it up.

"I say, we've got visitors in our study, you know," said Figgins meekly.

"Do as I tell you!" roared Sefton.



## THE ELEPHANT AT HOME.

was no room in our library, and struggled on step by step. (See the magnificent long magazine tale of the East India Company entitled "Fighting the French" in this week's issue of our magazine paper "The Best Friend.")

"Oh, all right! Always a pleasure to do anything for you, Sefton."

Figgins & Co. proceeded to clear up Sefton's study. There was a great deal of soot about, and many things were sooty. Many more things were sooty by the time Figgins & Co. had finished clearing up the study. It was not greatly improved by their ministrations. Sefton stamped angrily away to Craik's study to have his tea. His own study was not inviting just then.

"I think we're finished here," said Figgins, at last.

"Nothing much left to clear soot on, is there?"

"Ha, ha! No. And I've broken half the crocks," remarked Kerr.

"And that clock won't go again, I'll bet you," said Fatty Wynn.

"Then we may as well be off," said Figgins. "Besides, we've got no more time to waste here. I've got something to tell you chaps, and the School House fellows, too. Come on!"

Figgins & Co. returned to their own study. They found quite a crowd of guests waiting them. The Terrible Three and Study No. 4 had come over to have tea with Figgins & Co., and discuss the plan of campaign against Sefton of the Sixth.

"Kept you waiting?" said Kerr. "Sorry!"

"I say don't march, don't boy."

"We've been delayed," explained Figgins. "Somebody seems to have put crockery in Sefton's grate, and there has been lots of trouble."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll have tea ready in a jiffy now," said Fatty Wynn.

"Hold on," said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn stared at his leader.

"Hold on!" he repeated. "What do you mean? We're late for tea as it is."

"No time for tea now," said Figgins sarcastically.

"No time for tea!" gasped Fatty. "Don't be funny, Figgins. Why, I'm simply famished. I've had nothing since dinner except—"

"Except enough for a hippopotamus," growled Figgins.

"Look here, I've had a couple of cakes, and a few jammers, and a bun or two, but—"

"That will keep you from perishing for a few minutes," said Figgins sarcastically. "No time for tea, I tell you."

"We came over to tea," remarked Blake, in a casual sort of way.

"You later," said Figgins. "We've got to hold a council of war now."

"After tea, Figgins," urged Fatty Wynn. "I've always noticed that it's better to hold a council of war after a meal. Nothing like laying a solid foundation, you know. After tea, I shall be able to make a lot of suggestions—"

"Anything wrong?" asked Tom Merry.

"Jolly wrong," said Figgins. "Shut the door, Kerr. Look here, you fellows, this is awfully serious."

Fatty Wynn suppressed a groan. It was certainly awfully serious, from his point of view, if tea was to be postponed.

"That old Lovison has been over here," said Figgins.

"We passed him in the quad," said Tom. "He looked as if he'd been sweeping a chimney."

"Yess, waiwah! He was black, but not cooely," remarked Arthur Augustus.

Figgins grinned.

"He lighted the fire for Sefton, and got the full benefit of the soot," he explained. "The cad! You do grow some ratters in your House, I must say."

"Weally, Figgins, Levison compares very favorably with your wotter prefect Sefton."

"March of a muskoon, I think," said Figgins. "But to come to the point. Sefton came into his study before I could clear, and I took cover behind the bed. Then Levison came in, and I couldn't help bearing their jaw. That awful cad has tenced a pawn-ticket belonging to Mossoo—snatched it out of his study."

"But how?"

"How does it to Sefton," went on Figgins. "I saw Sefton put it in his waistcoat-pocket. I watched on purpose, because we've got to get hold of that ticket somehow. Sefton is going to take it to the Head after tea. He's going to pretend that he found it in the quad, and took it for some made-up ticket—a kind of joke on Mossoo. But, of course, the Head will know it's a real article. That's so that the Head won't know Sefton is trying to get Mossoo into a scrape—see?"

"The awful cad!"

"We've got to stop it somehow," said Figgins. "Mossoo would be ready to drown himself, almost, if the Head called him in and asked him if the ticket were his. You saw how rotten he looked yesterday in class when that cad chopped him about it. I don't know why he's done those things. But he's not going to be shown up to the Head to please those two cads."

"Walkah net!"

Tom Merry set his teeth.

"We'll make Levison sorry for this," he said.

"But how are we to handle Sefton?" said Figgins.

"That's the question. He's going over to the School House after tea with the ticket, to take it to the Head. He said so. That's what we've got to settle; if Fatty won't mind waiting tea a bit," added Figgins, with crushing sarcasm.

"I—I didn't know all that," mumbled Fatty Wyns.

"I don't mind waiting. Besides, I'll just have a bun while you fellows are talking."

The juniors all looked very serious. Even Fatty Wyns looked serious enough, though he did eat cream operations on the bun. Figg's accidental discovery came to the shock of Tom Merry & Co. They had supposed that the threat of a ragging would keep Levison within bounds. But instead of that, he had resorted to the cunning device of taking his vengeance through the New House prefect, who was equally incensed against poor Mossoo. And the matter was serious enough for Monsieur Murray. The pawn-ticket placed in Dr. Holman's hands meant trouble for the French master. The Head could not fail to be annoyed; and even if Mossoo had an adequate explanation to make, his humiliation would be terrible. They knew the little gentleman's extreme sensitiveness. Probably he was already in a frenzied state over the loss of the ticket.

"We've got to get that ticket back," said Blake at last. "They sha'n't down poor old Mossoo if we can stop them, the cads!"

"But how?" said Maxxess.

"We've got to handle him," said Tom Merry. "Anything's justifiable against a cad who would play a dirty trick like that. You say he's going over to the School House after tea, Figg?"

"Yes; and he's having his tea now. May be finished soon."

"Then there's no time to lose. He will have to go through the class to get to the School House; and it's as dark as a bat in the quad. You New House chaps stay here. As he's your prefect, you'd better keep out of it, and swear to us will be enough to handle the cad. We'll collar him in the quad, and have that ticket, if we have to strip him to the skin."

"Yess, walkah!"

"It's a bit risky," said Figgins. "But I suppose that's the only thing. He sha'n't take it to the Head. I saw him put it into his right-hand waistcoat-pocket. I don't know whether you School House chaps could manage it, though."

"Oh, how-how!" said Blake. "Leave it to us. If seven of us can't handle a cad like Sefton, you can call this wottery old place cock-house of St. Jim's, and welcome."

"Hold on!" said Monty Lowther, with a sudden chuckle. "Anybody got a bit of cardboard and a pair of scissors?"

"What on earth for?"

"Suppose we handle Sefton so that he don't miss the ticket?" grinned Lowther. "And suppose we slip another into the place? Easy enough while we're clawing him. It'll be in the dark. What a lark to let him go to the Head with a blank bit of cardboard in his pocket!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yell of laughter at the idea. Kerr hurried to get out a sheet of thin cardboard, which he used for his pen-and-ink sketches, and Monty Lowther cut out a little oblong. But he was not finished yet. Lowther was quite brilliant to-night. He took a pen, dipped it into the ink, and inscribed on the new ticket, in prominent letters:

"How-wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Tom Merry & Co. were grinning as they slipped out of the New House, to lay that little ambush for Sefton in the quadrangle.

## CHAPTER 13.

### Sefton Has No Luck!

SEFTON of the Sixth came out of the New House and stammered across the quadrangle. And from the window of Figgins's study a light gleamed, as the blind was drawn back for a moment and then replaced. It was the signal to the School House juniors ambushed under the eaves.

"Ware cads!" muttered Tom Merry.


"Right-ho!"

"Shush!"

"Weally, deah boy—"

**TOM MERRY'S RIVALS.**

**H. WHARTON'S CHUM**



**HURREE SINGH,**  
**THE NABOB OF BANIPUR.**  
**INDIAN JUNIOR**  
**OF**  
**GREYFRIARS.**

FREE WITH NO. 1. OUT ON WEDNESDAY. 10.



"Shut up, you idiot!" whispered Blake.

And as Sefton's footsteps were now audible on the path under the trees, Arthur Augustus D'Arvey contented himself with an indignant sniff, and shut up.

Tom Merry & Co. had been waiting half-an-hour, and the vigil had been somewhat weary. But they comforted themselves with the thought that they were there to defeat a cowardly trick on poor old Moscoe. Only their intervention could save Monsieur Morry from the humiliation, and perhaps serious trouble, that Sefton was about to bring upon him. So they cooled their heels under the eaves in the darkness with resolute determination. But they were very glad when Sefton came.

The footsteps sounded closer. It was pitchy dark under the eaves. The ambushed juniors had to trust wholly to their hearing for guidance. The footsteps came abreast of them as they stood silent on either side of the path.

Tom Merry made a sudden spring, his hands closed on a shoulder, and Sefton, taken utterly by surprise, was hurled over in a twinkling.

Before the end of the Sixth could struggle, the juniors were all piling on him. Three of them crawled on his legs, one sat on his chest, two of them held his head, and a couple of hands were jammed over his mouth, choking back his startled yell.

He wriggled in the grasp of the juniors, and the mass swayed, but he could not possibly release himself. And as he sprawled under the swaying swarm, Tom Merry's hand glided into his waistcoat pocket, and his fingers closed on the ticket there.

Tom jerked it out quickly. In the dark he could not see it, but he had no doubt about it. He thrust it hastily into his pocket.

"Grough!" came in muffled accents from Sefton.

"Owwwwwwwwwgghh!"

There was a faint chuckle in the darkness, but the juniors were careful not to speak; they did not want the prefect to recognize their voices. Tom Merry did the same paw-ticket into Sefton's waistcoat pocket, from which he had taken the genuine article.

Then the end of the Sixth was suddenly dragged off the ground, in the grasp of seven pairs of hands, and hurled down hard.

"Yow!" roared Sefton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors fitted away through the elms, leaving the breathless Sixth-Former sprawling on the ground.

Sefton sat up as the footsteps died away in the distance. It was a full minute before he rose to his feet. He was panting with rage.

"The young villains!" he muttered furiously. "Bumping a prefect, by Jove! Who were they, I wonder? I'll grovel his teeth. The assailants had had time to get back to their House now, and it was not of much use hunting for them. Sefton slid his fingers into his waistcoat pocket to make sure that the pawn-ticket was still there.

He could not, of course, suppose that that was what the assailants had been after, as he believed that no one but himself and Lovell knew about it. But he wanted to make sure that it had not been dropped in the struggle. He gave a grunt of satisfaction as he felt the slip of cardboard in his pocket.

"That's all right! I'll deal with those young villains later!" the prefect muttered savagely, as he walked on. "I'll find them out—Piggins and his gang, what likely." He came into the light of the School House and passed a few moments to dust down his clothes before going in, and put his tie straight. Then he walked into the School House.

He did not receive welcoming looks. Sefton was more unpopular there than in his own House. But he cared little for the looks he received.

He caught sight of Monsieur Morry in the hall. Moscoe was speaking to Kildare, with an air of distraction. He walked away, leaving Kildare looking surprised. Sefton thought he could guess what was the matter with the French gentleman.

"Anything wrong with Moscoe?" asked Sefton curiously.

"Can't make it out," said Kildare. "He says something was taken from his study, and asked me if I've heard anything about it; but he didn't say what it was.

I don't quite see how he's to find it unless he says what it is."

Sefton laughed and passed into the Head's study. Moscoe was seen to get awed of what he was saying, and which he didn't care to describe.

"Come in!" said Dr. Holmes's voice, in response to Sefton's tap.

The prefect entered the study. Mr. Carrington was there, chatting with the Head. The two masters glanced at Sefton.

"Well, Sefton?" said the Head.

"Excuse my disturbing you, sir," said Sefton respectfully. "A matter has come to my knowledge that, I think, ought to be reported to you. It is a very unpleasant joke, with Monsieur Morry as its subject."

The Head frowned.

"Go on, Sefton," he said.

"I picked up a ticket in the quadrangle, sir. It looks like a pawn-ticket, and has Monsieur Morry's name on it. Of course, it cannot be a real one, as, of course, Monsieur Morry does not go to pawnshops."

"I should imagine not," said the Head dryly.

Sefton felt inclined to chuckle. The Head's dry tone hinted pretty plainly that Monsieur Morry would have a very uncomfortable ten minutes in that study if it turned out that there really was a pawn-ticket with his name on it. But the prefect remained quite steady and respectful. The Head was not to be allowed to suspect his real purpose in bringing that precious ticket to him.

"Of course, sir, I concluded at once that it was a manufactured ticket, done for the purpose of bringing ridicule upon Monsieur Morry," explained Sefton. "I thought it better to place it in your hands, and leave you to deal with the matter, sir. It is probably a joke of some foolish junior."

"Quite right, Sefton. Give it me, please."

"I have it here, sir."

Sefton whisked the slip of cardboard out of his pocket and handed it to the Head. Dr. Holmes took it. Sefton did not get even back at it as he passed it over, but as the Head's fingers closed on it, it struck him that the title card did not look exactly like the one he had put in his pocket.

Dr. Holmes looked at the card, and a really extraordinary expression came over his face.

"What does this mean, Sefton?" he asked, in a grinding voice.

"What, sir?"

"How dare you play such a foolish trick on me, your headmaster?" exclaimed Dr. Holmes, his face quite red.

"You—a prefect of the Sixth—"

"I—I—I don't understand, sir."

"You have given me this. No—no!" exclaimed the Head, holding up the ticket.

Sefton stared blankly at it. Instead of Moscoe's name, and a figure, and the description of a gold watch, it bore simply the word, in large letters:

"BOW-WOW!"

Sefton almost fell down. His knees knocked together, and his eyes were glued upon the card. He wondered whether he was dreaming.

"Yes, utterly stupid boy," said the Head. "I made you a prefect, Sefton, on Mr. Radford's recommendation. I can see that F made a mistake. You—"

"I—I—I—"

"You have come here, sir, to play a ridiculous prank on your headmaster!" thundered Dr. Holmes. "How dare you, sir? I say, how dare you!"

Sefton stammered helplessly.

"I—I—That isn't the ticket!" he gasped. "I—I've made a mistake! I—I thought—"

He dived his fingers into his pockets in search of the real ticket. But his pocket was empty. It seemed to the unfortunate schemer that the study was swarming round him.

The Head's thunderous brow loomed up before him in the most terrifying manner.

"A mistake!" snapped the Head. "What do you mean?"

"I had another ticket—a pawn-ticket," gasped Sefton. "Moscoe's pawn-ticket."

"What! How dare you say such a thing! You stated only a minute ago that you had an imitation of a pawn-ticket."

"Ye-es; but-but— Yes, sir! Of course. I—I meant to say that. Of course." Sefton hardly knew what he was saying in his confusion. "It—it must have been taken out of my pocket, sir—oh dear!—and that card put in, instead. Oh, those young villains!" gasped Sefton, understanding at last why he had been collared in the quadrangle. "I—I—I was assaulted in the quad as I came here, sir, and—and they must have put that in my pocket, and I never noticed it."

The Head's frown relaxed a little.

"Oh! The same person who manufactured the sham ticket, I suppose," he said.

"Ye-es, sir," groined Sefton. "I—I suppose so."

It was evidently useless to start a new story that it had been a real pawn-ticket now that it was missing.

Dr. Holmes threw the card into the fire.

"Very well, I excuse you, as it appears that you have been the victim of a practical joke," he said. "You had better make an inquiry as to the persons who seized you in the quadrangle. Anyone who had treated Monsieur Moray in the disrespectful way you describe shall certainly be severely punished."

"Ye-es, sir," gasped Sefton.

"That wasn't what he wanted at all; but the game was evidently up, and there was nothing for Sefton to do but to depart. And Sefton departed, and he recrossed the quadrangle gridding his teeth.

He thought he knew where to look for the fellows who had collared him in the quad, and he was not without hopes of recovering the missing ticket. And—after feeling an ash-plant from his room in case of need—Sefton proceeded to Figgins & Co.'s study.

## CHAPTER 15.

## All Scenes!

"HILAS!"

"Tap!"

"Mon Dieu! Que faire maintenant! Ah, helas!"

Monsieur Moray uttered these despairing exclamations, and did not even hear the tap at the door of his study. The little Frenchman was shaving his beard, and almost tearing his hair. His usually waxed and graceful moustache was in wilder disarray than ever. Monsieur Moray was in despair.

He had missed the pawn-ticket, and he had inquired after a missing "something," but he did not venture to disclose the fact that it was a pawn-ticket that was missing. And Mossoo was not likely to recover "something" he had lost without giving a description of it, or at least giving it a name. And he felt that the pawn-ticket had been taken by some ill-natured fellow, and that it would turn up in public and cover him with disgrace. Poor Mossoo was trotting about his study like a caged wild animal.

The door opened, after a second tap, and Tom Merry came in and shut the door after him. Monsieur Moray tried to pull himself together.

"Yat is it, Merry—yat, sez?" he asked, raising his fingers through his hair. "Ask me not questions now, mon good boy—je sais—je sais!"

"Please, sir, I've found something with your name on it," said Tom.

Monsieur Moray's face lighted up.

"My good Merry! You have found—"

"This, sir."

Tom Merry handed over the pawn-ticket to its owner. Mossoo gave almost a whoop of joy as he pounced on it.

"Zat is mine?" he gasped.

"I thought so, sir."

"Merry, you find him? Mon garçon, zat billet was taken from my study. I am sure zat you did not take his."

Tom flushed.

"Certainly not, sir. We—we happened to find out that a rotten cad had taken it, sir. He gave it to another rotter, and we—we collared him, sir, and I found the ticket."

"You found it?"

"In the rotter's pocket, sir."

"Oh!"

There was a pause. Tom Merry made a movement towards the door.

"Van moment, Merry," said the French master.

"Yes, sir."

"You—you know vat it is, zat billet?" hesitated Monsieur Moray, his face crimson with shame.

"Yes, sir," said Tom honestly. "I know: But it's no business of ours, sir; we shan't speak about it. And as for the chap who took it, we know how to keep him from jawing. We—we can persuade him not to talk about it."

Tom did not think it judicious to describe the method of persuasion that was to be applied to Levison of the Fourth; but the unsuspecting Mossoo was satisfied.

"I thank you, Merry. But since you have seen him, zat billet, I think zat I explicate to you—"

"It isn't my business, sir," said Tom.

"Mais, j'espique quaud neces. Vous voyez, mon garçon—excusez moi, je suis tout bouleversé—I mean to say zat I am all upset wit me, and I speak in French; but you savez—comprehend, isn't it?" said Mossoo incoherently.

"Like zat it is, Merry. I sell zat like you to zink zat your master he go pawing sings. Excuse! Zom vicked Franzois—ssez Boches—ssez vile Sherman peeps, say have invade my country, as you know, and se Anglais and se French not yet to drive you out. In a petite ville—in vus of sem small town near Arras, I have pawents—not, zat parents, zat in English is your father and mother—"

"Relations!" suggested Tom Merry.

"Oul, sez. I have parents, zat you call relations, in zat pretty town, vee vee come se Boches. Zey burn, sey destroy; and mon oncle et mon frere—zat shall be my uncle via my aunt—comprehend—say fy. All is burat, and the poor uncle and the poor aunt, sey fly without any money in zeur pocket, and sey get to Paris vianet any—vat you say?—grab."

"Food, sir."

"Zat is it. Zey write—I am in despair. I send se money zat I have—not is not enough. Mes pauvre parents! Que faire, alors? I would say, what to do. In English you express it so—what to do? What to do, helas? Zey have meeting, by reason of se Boches zat burn everything."

"I understand, sir," said Tom. "It's a rotten shame!"

"Ah! Ze Boches, sey have no shame," said Mossoo.

"Ze pauvre old persons—zat you call in English se old folks at se home, isn't it?—I must help zem, isn't it? Zere is only vus ray—I go to Mon-de-Piote—as pawn-broking shop, as you call him. All not I have zat is for much money, I put him in se spout. Zent I send zat cash to my pauvre parents in Paris, isn't it? But zat is a secret, for because I perish of se shame if it shall be known to all zat I to pawnshop go via myself. I am humiliate. I am ashamed."

"I understand, sir," said Tom, deeply touched. "You needn't be afraid of it's being talked about, sir—not a word."

"I thank you, Merry! You are one good boy."

And Tom Merry quitted the study, leaving poor Mossoo immensely relieved in his mind by the recovery of the tell-tale ticket, and the assurance that it would not be talked about.

Tom Merry hurried over to the New House, where his classes were awaiting him in Figgins's study. They looked at him inquiringly as he came in. Tom had already started. Patty Wynn was not to be restrained any longer.

"Given it to him?" asked Blake.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes; and he jumped for joy. I've persuaded him that it won't be talked about. We know how to keep Levison quiet."

## ANSWERS

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 268.  
OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, Every Month. "THE GREENBOUNT," Every Thursday. "THE PUNNY POPULAR," Every Friday. "CHOCOLATE," Every Saturday. 2

"Yess, wathah."

"And what do you think?" said Tom, with a quiver in his voice. "Mossoo's told me why he had to raise money. He'd rather you fellows know, as you know about the pawn-ticket. His uncle and aunt have been burnt out of house and home by the Germans, and they've escaped to Paris without a cent in the world, and poor old Mossoo's sent them all his tin, and then started pawing his things to send them some more."

"Hal Jove! What a swell trick!"

"Jolly decent chap!" said Figgins. "I always said Mossoo was decent. He's got his funny ways, and the way he talks English would make a wolf cackle; but he's simply top-hole—the real thing!"

"Passed unanimously!" said Messy Lewther.

"Hallo! What the—!" The study door was flung open, and Sefton of the Sixth strode in, with a scowl on his face and an air of being in his hand. The crowd of juniors rose to their feet with grim looks. They weren't afraid of Sefton. As a matter of fact, they held the whip-hand this time, though the bully of the Sixth was not yet aware of it:

"Hallo!" said Figgins. "Nice evening, Sefton? Been indulging in any nice Brock's Benefits in your study?"

Sefton merely choked.

"You young hounds! I want to know which of you snatched me in the quad, and I want what you stole from me."

"Go hon!"

"If you mean Monsieur Morry's property, I have taken it back to him," said Tom Merry quietly. "You had no right to it, Sefton."

"Yes—yes—!" stammered Sefton.

"And if you want to know who bumped you in the quad," said Figgins deliberately, "they're all here. And if you say a word about it, I'll say something, too—something about what I heard you talking to Levison about in your study—something about a dirty scheme between a young thief who stole a pawn-ticket and a cowardly car who took it from him to use against a master!"

Sefton staggered. It was a drive right from the shoulder, and it staggered him. The juniors grinned. Figgins's plain language delighted them. Sefton had never been slugged like that since he had been a junior himself.

"Yes—you heard?" stammered the prefect. "You—you were in the study?"

"Yes. I'd just finished putting the fireworks in your grate when you came in with the other cad," said Figgins affably.

Sefton stared at Figgins as if he would bite him. He could not speak.

"Rather an interesting story for the Head, don't you think?" asked Figgins. "I wonder whether he would approve of stealing pawn-tickets? And the receiver is as bad as the thief, I believe, in law. Shall we go to the Head together, Sefton?"

Sefton did not reply to that. Without a word he strode out of the study. Figgins could have got him sacked from the school if he had cared to betray him, and Sefton knew it. The bully of the Sixth had to choke down his rage, and take his many injuries "lying

down"—consume his own smoke, as it were, lest a worse thing should befall him. And though his feelings towards Figgins & Co. were almost homicidal, the bully of the New House was careful after that to give the dunstons three a wide berth till the affair should have had time to blow over.

"Rather a face for Sefton!" grinned Figgins, as the door closed behind the bully. "I fancy he came here for giddy vengeance. Might have been a kicked puppy-dog by the way he was kicked out. Who cares for Sefton's prefects?"

"Not Sefton's sort, anyway," grinned Kerr.

"Gentlemen," said Figgins, "I think we can say that we have won all along the line. We've rescued poor old Mossoo, and frustrated Levison's knavish tricks, and given Sefton the thumping kybosh! To-morrow's the House match, and we're going to give you bounders socks! Fill your glasses—oops, anyway—and drink to the health of the cock-horse of St. Jim's; and long may she wave!"

"Hear, hear!"

And the merry party drank that toast—to their respective Houses. And when the cheery meeting in Figgins's study broke up, Tom Merry & Co. returned to their own quarters, and proceeded to interview Levison of the Fourth. The interview was stormy, and when it was over Levison could not possibly have any doubts left that the way of the transgressor was hard. And as he lay gasping on the floor of his study after justice had been done, Tom Merry explained to him that Figgins's evidence was enough to prove that he had stolen the ticket from Mossoo's study, and that Figgins would relate the whole story to the Housemaster if Levison so much as uttered the word "pawn-ticket" again during the term of his natural life. And Levison, when he was left alone to groan over his bump, wisely decided never to utter again that obnoxious word "pawn-ticket," and to give up the disastrous attempt to get his "own" bark off Mossoo. Levison had had enough.

The next day came the House match; and the heroes of St. Jim's, having settled other matters fully to their satisfaction, were able to give their whole minds to that great and important event.

And what a match it was! School House and New House were at the top of their form; and even Elders of the Sixth came down to watch the second half—an honor that made the juniors play up almost like Internationals. It would require a Homer at least to describe adequately that tremendous tussle—how Figgins took the first goal, how Tom Merry equalized, how they went at it dig-dog almost till the whistle blew, and it looked like a draw; and how Talbot of the Shell, at the last moment, charged Patty Wyns back into the net with the ball in his hands, and scored the winning goal. And how Tom Merry & Co. rejoiced over their famous victory, even Homer could not have described!

THE END.

(Another grand tale of the chums of St. Jim's, entitled "A Split in the School," will be published in next Wednesday's "THE GEM" Library. Order in advance at your newsagent's, and make sure of getting it!)

If you have enjoyed this splendid tale of Tom Merry & Co. you should now read

## "FOR THE HONOUR OF THE HOUSE!"

A magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of St. Jim's, contained in

# THE PENNY POPULAR.

NOW ON SALE AT ALL NEWSAGENTS.

NEXT  
WEDNESDAY!

"A SPLIT IN THE SCHOOL!"

A magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of  
Tom Merry & Co. by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 363.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF OUR GRAND NEW SERIAL STORY.

## OFFICER AND TROOPER.



An Enthralling New  
Story of Life in the  
British Army.

Specially Published for  
Patriotic British Boys.

By  
**BEVERLEY KENT.**

## SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.

Bob Hall, a fine, stepping young fellow, succeeds in joining a famous Hussar regiment, known as the Die Hards. After Bob has been in the regiment for some time, his no-account cousin, Captain Lancelotti, joins also. Bob finds that, so far from being friendly, Lancelotti is constantly endeavoring to get him into trouble, with the object of having him dismissed from the Service in disgrace. Bob, however, with the help of his many friends, is successful in defeating the villain's schemes. Bob comes into contact with the Earl of Dalroy, who finds that Bob is some connection of his family, and promises to have investigations made. It transpires that Bob is heir to a large fortune, which Lancelotti is in enjoyment. Bob's villainous cousin is just about to lose the proofs of his parentage, when they are seized by a book-maker named Beard, who harras away with them. News is brought that the regiment is to be drafted to Edinburgh, where Bob is promoted to the rank of lance-corporal. The troopers are jealous of this distinction, and become rebellious. Bob, however, quells the disturbance by thrashing the ringleader, who, in revenge, induces those in sympathy with him to cut their horses' saddles. Such an act is one of the greatest crimes of which a cavalry soldier can be guilty. It means that he has struck work, and refuses to go on parade!

(See go on with the story.)

## A Decision to Leave the Regiment.

Bob Hall went pale with shame and anger. He knew the cause of the outrage; he knew that it was leveled against himself. Trouble, swift and severe, was certain to follow. Would it be confined to D Squadron, or would insubordination spread throughout the regiment? The lance-corporal's duty was clear, however; he was bound to report the crime without delay to his superior officer.

Leaving the stables, he started in search of Haines, and found him in the company of the adjutant, Hamshaw. The lad stood to attention and saluted.

"Well, Hall, what's the matter?" Haines inquired.

"I'm sorry to have to report, sir, that the saddlery in No. 25 has been cut."

"What's that?" he cried. "Who's done it?"

"I don't know, sir."

Without a word the adjutant strode on ahead, followed by the subaltern and Bob. He stepped into the stables, and glared around.

"All of you stop here!" he thundered. "It's been just reported to me that the saddlery has been cut. Whoever did that is a scoundrel, and a disgrace to the Service; I don't intend to show him any mercy, and even if you keep silent I'll find him out before long. For your own sakes, though, you'd better give me his name; he's not fit to be a corporal, and he doesn't deserve to be promoted. If you refuse I'll place you all under arrest!"

He passed, and a tense silence followed.

"Are you going to own up?" the adjutant demanded.

No one spoke.

Lance-Corporal Hall, go for the guard!"

Bob hurried away, and Hamshaw, standing by the door, barred all possibility of escape. Soon the measured tramp of feet was heard, and a dozen troopers, armed with carbines, and commanded by a sergeant, formed up at the word of

command in two files outside the stable door. From all quarters men came hurrying, their faces white and passionate, their paws set, their hats clonched. Low, angry murmurs rolled along the square, the ever-gathering crowd pressed closer and closer in a body. Four hundred pairs of eyes glanced wrathfully at Bob.

Hamshaw, too, was in a towering passion. He faced the excited troopers as if they and there he was prepared to smite them, despite their number, by force of his own power and personality. With a scornful smile full of bitter contempt he beckoned to the troopers to leave the stable and step as prisoners between the soldiers of the escort. They hesitated, and the adjutant, taking one long stride, seized the man nearest to him, and pitched him, staggering, across the threshold. Again he beckoned to the others, and one by one they fled sulkily past him, and submitted to arrest. The escort closed in, and the sergeant looked at the adjutant.

"To the guard-room!" he directed curtly. "Now, you men, clear off to your work!"

A dull, muffled growl, rising to a loud and prolonged roar, was the unexpressed answer to the adjutant's command. Pressing forward, the troopers swept down towards the stable door where Hamshaw, Haines, and Bob stood in a group. Those in the front strooked out their hands as if they and there to sense the young lance-corporal and drag him into their midst.

"Stand back!" Hamshaw yelled. "Don't dare—"

"The cut! The cut!"

The men moved closer, and Hamshaw, smothered by their action, cast one swift glance at Haines and Bob.

"What does it mean?" he cried. "The men are wild with Hall."

"Dunno!" Haines replied quickly. "We'll have to stand all together anyhow; they've lost all control over themselves. There'll be mischief if— Ah, here come some of the chaps!"

Half a dozen subalterns and a small body of men, come, had heard the uproar, and now came riding to the scene. They sprang in amongst the troopers, breaking them into groups, swearing, expostulating, hurrying them back to work. The men, no longer united in one large body, and without anyone to lead them on to further action, sulkily passed and then drew away, and Hamshaw, seizing his opportunity, nodded to Haines and Bob to follow him round a corner.

"This is deplorable," the adjutant began grimly. "Something altogether out of the common must be the cause. That our regiment should disgrace itself as woefully is about the last thing I ever dreamt of. What's the cause? How long has this saddlery been beweing?"

"I'm afraid it's all on account of my promotion, sir," Bob explained dejectedly. "That seems a trifle, but still I think it's offensive to the lot."

"How? Don't talk rubbish! Your promotion, indeed! You don't mean to say that the Die Hards think so much about you one way or the other that they won't stop at revolt just because you've got your first stripe? I don't know you were such a succeeded man?"

"They don't think I got it straight, sir."

"Oh! What's that? Explain yourself!"

"They know I'm a relation of Captain Lancelotti, and they fancy it's on that account I've been given a lift."

Hamshaw and Haines stared at one another.

"What idiotic nonsense!" the adjutant growled. "Seems

to me, Hall, you'd better clear out of the regiment altogether if this sort of thing is to happen on your account. It's quite ridiculous that a soldier in your position should be the cause of such an appalling disgrace as this. Still, I find it hard to believe you. Why, the promotion was as straight as possible. You're a steady young fellow, and your time had come for a step. The *Die Haris* must be going to the dogs! The old spirit went with the last batch who had served their time with the colours."

Bob had gone pale. Harnshaw's threat to have him transferred to another regiment had been delivered in a tone that meant business. At that moment Greaves hurried up.

"The colonel wants to see you," he cried hurriedly to the adjutant. "He's fair wild. He says he'll make an example of everyone who's in any way concerned with this wretched business."

All the officers withdrew, and Bob was left alone. He walked back to the barrack-rooms, and found it empty. Sitting down in his bunk, he let his head sink on his hands whilst he pondered dependently on the turn events had taken. At all costs the honour of the regiment must not be further tarnished the lad determined. Would it not be better, therefore, if he asked for an exchange?

He got up and strode away to the colonel's quarters. Without difficulty he gained admission, and he sat in his name, requesting the permission of his superior officer to see him. In reply to the message, Haines came out and beckoned to the lad to enter a room. The colonel was standing there, grim and severe, and so also was Harnshaw.

"Well, Hall, what do you want?" the colonel inquired, in an odd voice.

### Bob Makes a Discovery.

"I hope you'll excuse me, sir," said Hall, "but I've come to see you that as I'm unpopular in the regiment, and as I'd sooner die than that this should have happened in the *Die Haris*, I should be glad if you'd let me clear out."

"It's absurd!" the colonel cried wrathfully. "This is the sort of thing that comes from having a ranker and an officer of the same family in the one regiment. It's monstrous! I've never been so humiliated in my life! That the man should go into such a state bordering on a general mutiny about the promotion of a non-com! Are you sure there's not some mistake? Have you made investigations, Harnshaw, as to the cause of the row?"

"It's as I say, sir," Bob continued sorrowfully. "There's no mistake about that."

"Then you'd better go," the colonel rapped out. "Clear off to-day. Take a week's furlough; meantime, I'll see that your exchange is effected. Nice sort of time I'll have when the general makes his inquiry! Harnshaw, you'd better take steps at once to prevent any repetition of the disgraceful scene we've had already this morning!"

Bob saluted, turned on his heel, and left the room. Slowly he walked back to the barrack-room and mounted the stairs. So his life as a soldier was ruined! He'd have to serve the remainder of his time, of course, in some other regiment, but he need never hope for promotion now; and, in any case, his heart had gone out of the life when he had to part with the regiment in which his interests were centred. He felt that there was nothing left that was worth living for as he packed a small box with his few civilian belongings.

Grasping the box by the strap, he took one last look round the barrack-rooms. It seemed to the lad, who had not known a home since childhood, that he was parting with all he held dear. His breath came with a sudden gasp, he gripped the bar more tightly, for a second he shivered, and his head bent, whilst a dry sob came from his parched throat. Then, with a supreme effort, he pulled himself together, raised his head proudly, squared his shoulders, and, staring straight ahead, stepped towards the door. And at that moment a tall form appeared on the threshold, and Bob saw that he was facing the adjutant.

"Hall a soo, Hall!" Harnshaw cried. "Steady there, lad! We don't mean to part with you!"

As Harnshaw spoke, the termite in the square suddenly died away, and a great silence fell over the barracks. Bob was so much agitated, however, to notice the change. He had laid down his box, and now he gazed questioningly at the adjutant.

"The colonel doesn't mean that I've to go? He's changed his mind, eh? I'm to stay on in the old regiment? I'm—"

"Yes. You're to live this thing down. If you left, the men would think that they had conspired; and no soldier will ever be permitted in the British Army to get his way through a breach of discipline. The colonel was too angry at first to look at the question in the right military light; but he sees now the mistake he nearly made. Go on with your work, and keep a stiff upper-lip. There'll be a good

deal of trouble before the regiment settles down properly again."

Harnshaw wheeled round and left the room, and Bob, walking to the window, gazed down on the square. His old comrades were valiantly moving about, going actively to their duties. The old spirit seemed dead; instead of the alertness and cheeriness which had been heretofore, listlessness and indifference were evident everywhere.

Now and then a troop passing by caught sight of the young lance-corporal, and scowled fiercely. Bob knew that at that moment he was probably the most unpopular soldier in the King's service. His pride and indignation rose to the surface at such scornful treatment, and strengthened his resolve to face his enemies. Without hesitation he snatched his cap and strode down to continue his work.

The day passed, and a week, and a month. The ringleaders had been punished, and order had been restored. Gradually the troops threw off their sulkiness, they laughed and joked, and, eventually, at least, the *Die Haris* were as of yore. But beneath the surface discontent was still rife; all pride in the regiment seemed to have gone.

The feeling against Bob still remained, and the lad was left without a friend. Even Dent and Hooty seemed to avoid him, and he was too proud to make the first advance. He knew he had done what was right, and he resolved to prove to the regiment that he could go his own way if they chose.

One afternoon he was returning to barracks when he met Haines, pale and anxious, hurrying into Edinburgh. The young subaltern did not return the salute Bob gave him, but strode along without seeing him, and the lad, stopping, gazed after him curiously.

"Something's gone very much wrong with Haines when he doesn't recognise one of the *Die Haris*," Bob murmured. "I wonder what it can be! Heigho! I guess everything is turning topsy-turvy, and that there's some trouble afoot. Haines don't look upset, too. I never saw him anything but bright and merry before."

The lad walked on, and entered the barracks-square. There he saw Harnish, who addressed to speak to him. The soldierly suggestion was one of the few who had remained friendly with the young lance-corporal.

"Heard the news?" Harnish queried. "Harnshaw is leaving the regiment?"

"Bob's done it, ain't it?"

"The adjutant?" he guessed. "Why, we'll never be able to get on without him. He's the only man who can pull things round. He's the best officer we've got, and all ranks thank the world of him. There must be some mistake, sergeant. Harnshaw's not the man to clear out when there's a big work to be done."

"He's going, all the same, though," Harnish replied grimly. "Harnshaw took the adjutant on account of the extra pay. He's not flush of money, as are most of the other officers, and now I hear he's broke. It was Swains, his batman, as told me; but Swains is close, and he wouldn't say crooked. Harnshaw has been helping a friend, who's left him in the lurch."

Bob's honest face flushed with indignation.

"More shame on the cur?" he cried. "Borrowing money off a chap as can't afford to lose it, I suppose. It's a—"

Bob paused in some confusion. Harnshaw had emerged from the guard-room unseen, and the lad felt that the adjutant must have heard his remarks. Harnshaw, however, did not appear to resent the outspoken opinion about his difficulties, if, in truth, Bob's surmise was correct. He looked quietly at the train.

"Either of you seen Lieutenant Haines?" he asked.

"I met him just now on his way towards Edinburgh, sir," Bob replied.

The adjutant's face flashed a dusky hue. On the moment he became strangely agitated.

"Oh, then I wish you'd go after him at once, Hall," he urged quickly. "You'll find him most likely at a Mr. Spriggs, in a little tenement off Prince's Street. Spriggs is a little knave, and you'll have to difficulty in finding him. It's Haines to come to me at once—that I forbid him to carry out the job he intended to do. He will understand what the message means. Now, cut along, like a good chap, and be as quick as you can."

Bob saluted and hurried away, only delighted to be of service to Harnshaw, who had always treated him fairly and squarely. As he tramped into Edinburgh his mind was busy pondering over this new development in connection with the *Die Haris* which threatened to be the last blow to the dominance of the regiment. The *Die Haris* could not hold together without Harnshaw. Bob felt certain of that. The men were almost ready to mutiny, and needed a firm but considerate hand to pull them together again.

The same Spriggs seemed to be as well known as Harnshaw had stated, but men stared indignantly at the lance-corporal

inquired if they could direct him to his address. All professed to know about him only by hearsay, and the lad was much surprised when at last he reached the office at which Springs did business. It was a dilapidated building, with gummy windows, and doors of which the paint was peeling in flakes, giving a most disagreeable appearance to the street in which it stood.

Bob mounted the creaking stairs and knocked at a door. A shrill voice bade him enter, and the young lance-corporal obeyed the command, and found himself in the presence of a shock-headed, stovely lad, who was seated on a high stool chewing a toothpick. Apparently that seemed to be his sole occupation, for his desk was free of papers of any sort, nor were there any pens, ink, blotting, or other evidence of work in the despatch room.

"Mr. Springs in?" Bob rapped out, resenting the hostile air with which his presence had been received.

"No, Mr. Springs ain't in; but I've been," the youth replied, swinging his legs round and slipping to the floor, where he stood with his hands in his pockets, and resting for support with his back against the desk.

"It's Mr. Springs I want to see," Bob began, with thirty-fold contempt for the bilious-looking youth with his consequential air. "I'm—"

"I'm his confidential clerk," the other grinned. "Nothing as old Springs does ain't known to me. He's a thick 'un; but, all the same, he'd get left if it wasn't for Joe Slaven, as is standing before you. What's the time—oh! The quid! I dangle as we can let you have an advance at all, unless you give some thing with things to jump up behind you on the bill. We ain't fair, and we know the public."

"Then Springs is a money-lender?" Bob asked disgustedly.

"What-ho! Not half! I guess he owns more of Edinburgh than folks reckon, anyhow. He's a sharp 'un, is Ebenezer Springs. Them as does business don't forget him in a hurry. Ill, hi, hi!"

The bilious youth cackled loudly, and Bob, who remembered his own experiences before he had joined the Service, turned sick as he realized the depths of degradation to which the callous youngster before him had sunk. He half turned to leave the room in disgust; then he remembered the reason he had called.

"Has Lieutenant Haines been here?" he inquired.

"Oh, young Haines—yes, he's called, an' a cheeky sort of bouncer, and no mistake. He—"

"I said Lieutenant Haines!" Bob rapped out, as he gripped his republican case. "Lieutenant Haines is my commanding officer, and I'd have you to remember that. Seems to me you'd be seen the worse for a lesson in manners, my friend, and I'm just the one to give it, if you don't take a pull on yourself! We're alone."

Bob looked so terrifying as he spoke, in righteousness indignation at the other's insolence and ill-manners, that the party youth seemed to shrivel up into half his size, and his cheeky face stiffened out into one of alarm and fear. At once he became humble and apologetic.

"No offense meant, guv'nor," he whined. "All in the way of business, don't you know. I ain't a-speakin' badly of anyone. Lieutenant Haines is a top; but still, he oughtn't to talk so big, when we've got him in a vice, in a manner of speaking."

"What do you mean?" Bob thundered.

Slaven's eyes grew round.

"Ye don't know a fat lot!" he murmured. "I thought you Haines as head in barracks twiggled all as was going on amongst yourself. Them's Lancelot's, the profession. Big spoken covs as talks about as if he owned the blessed universe—why, he knows all this 'ere game! And Haines doesn't as much as suspect. Hi, hi, hi!"

Bob's mouth came quickly.

"Haines is in trouble, then?"

"Not half! He lost a thousand quid to Lancelot's a month ago, and the guv'nor advanced him the money. Now it's due, and the guv'nor is coming down on another blacked called Hamshaw, who backed the bill. The guv'nor can go for whichever of 'em he likes, and he's chosen Hamshaw. And Haines was here to say that wasn't fair. Hi, hi, hi! If I was in a fix I wouldn't grumble if the trouble fell on another cov's shoulders—not much!"

"No; you've just the sort that thinks only of yourself, and doesn't care what happens to a pal who helps you!" Bob retorted scathingly as he turned to leave.

"You're an ill-bred, ill-conditioned, spiteful, spiteful, and—yes—and I wish there was a bath handy, and I'd chuck you into it neck and crop!"

Slaven rose, and flinging the door open, the young lance-corporal proceeded down the gloomy staircase two steps at a time, and colliding with a man ascending to Springs's office, both stumbled and rolled to the landing.

THE GUY LIBRARY.—No. 568.

As Bob picked himself up he got a smart blow across the face, and a passionate voice shouted hotly:

"You insolent cur! You awkward mooncaker! Yes—"  
Bob's fist flew out, and he hit the speaker across the ear. Both closed and wrestled, and the young lance-corporal, with a desperate twist, shot his assailant down the next flight, and into the full light of the hall.

"That'll teach you to behave yourself!" Bob laughed lightly, as he proceeded to leisurely follow his victim. "I guess you'll do well to curb your temper in future. It was an accident I knocked against you, and if you'd given me time I'd have been glad to express my regret. But, since you took the law into your own hands—"

He stopped in amazement.

The man slowly rising from the door was Lancelot, and a small crowd of boys, attracted by the sound of the fall, had already gathered on the pavement outside. For an instant Lancelot looked as if he'd return and finish the fight. Then suddenly he changed his mind, and hurried out of the doorway, as the crowd grew larger. Evidently he didn't want to be recognized carrying on a scuffle in a money-lender's office, nor did he know by whom he had been fang down the stairs.

"Lancelot!" Bob gasped. "He's supposed to be as fat as a pig, and in London. He's not due back for another fortnight. Why has he come here? He's up to no good—Ah, now I think I know!"

### A Noble Deed.

Looking neither to the right nor to the left, Lancelot strode away, and Bob, after a moment's hesitation, decided to follow him. The rascally captain dived down some side streets, passed irresolutely, thus giving Bob time to hide in a doorway, and then, pushing open a door, which yielded at the touch, he disappeared into a ramshackle building.

Bob followed close on his heels, quickly realizing, from his past record and his present action, that Lancelot was up to mischief. As Bob climbed the stairs, he heard a door banged and looked, and the next moment Lancelot's voice rose in angry conflict. The lad passed on the stairs, then swiftly mounted another few steps, got out on the roof through a trapdoor, and crossed the stairs.

Under the shelter of a chimney he looked down through a skylight. Yes, he was in luck! There was Lancelot standing in the room below, in company with two desperate-looking ruffians. "Remove this," he would hear the conversation.

"The sooner you understand that I'm not to be bullied, the better we'll serve!" Lancelot thundered to a strong, bull-necked man, who stood facing him, as Bob bent down and listened. "I got your letter, and I've come here to let you know at once that I'll pay you when the job's over, not before."

"That's all very fine talk, mister; but folks can't live on air," the other growled. "I want a bit to go on with, and I mean having it. You get a thousand out of that young shaver, so Springs told me, and I know it to be true. Let me have fifty, and I'll wait for the rest."

"I tell you I haven't got fifty myself," Lancelot retorted. "Every silver I can lay my hands on, by hook or by crook, goes to stave off my creditors. We have to get the young cub out of the way before I can grab the pile, and that's not an easy job. But things are beginning to brighten a bit, and before long we'll be able to strike."

"Talk! That's what you always say!" the other scoffed.

"What's happened lately then? My mate here and I have been here from the start to chase our luck. We'd pelish him out in less than a week if you gave us the word!"

The other ruffian had lighted a lamp whilst his confederate spoke, and by its light Bob now could see Lancelot's face working with reason and greed.

"Do you think I'd hold you back if the time had come?" he asserted. "Haven't I everything to lose and nothing to gain by doing? But we must make deadly certain. Everything is going our way now, though. He's hated in the regiment. Cole has kept the man at white heat about him. Hamshaw and Haines would stick to him, but now I've fang them up. Hamshaw must clear out; that's why I've fang Springs against him. I owe that cur Hamshaw one for some time past, and now I'll pay him out. I'll kill two birds with one stone, for I'll ruin him, and also get him out of the way before I finish young Hall!"

"An' you want us to wait till then? I tell you—"

"Listen to me, Briggs," Lancelot urged. "I can't pay you a silver now, but at a straight, but at any—"

"I won't wait! I've had enough of it!" the second interjected hotly. "Just you lay your hands on the money and bring it here. If you don't, I'll see Haines, and I'll tell him as it was I as sold you the cards with which you fooled him. So there!"

Lascelles gripped Baggis by the shoulder, and, bending down, he spoke so low into his ear that Bob could not hear the conversation that ensued. The ruffian's face seemed to brighten, and a look, half of pleasure, half of an evil admiration, came into his eyes as the morally upright captain continued to talk. Knowing that every word was of vital consequence, and understanding the danger in which he stood, Bob dragged himself further forward, in the hope that he might be able to catch even a stray sentence which would give him a further clue as to his villainous cousin's designs.

He started as he felt the south-easter woodcock head beset his sight. He stretched out his hands, and struggled to back up against the slates. There was a rindling of wood, a crash of splintering glass, and in a heap he hurtled through the ceiling, and crashed partly on to Lascelles and partly on to the table. The leap fell with a clatter to the floor. Hoarse cries of surprise and terror arose; the room was plunged in darkness. Strong hands gripped him, ferry and swung him off Lascelles, who lay motionless beneath, and a pungent, stifling smoke arose, followed by a crackling blast.

The lad struggled desperately in the darkness. His fall on Lascelles had broken the shock, but his ribs ached where he had hit the table. Shaking off his assailants, he wrank out with both into, though his head began to swim. He gulped eagerly for air. He heard the door bang open and the rush of feet down the stairs. Around him the smoke curled, and the fire hazily pierced the gloom. Bob realised that his enemies had fled, and that if he was to save his own life he must follow quickly in their footsteps.

He shuffled down the stairs, dashed against a wall, rushed forward again, and sailed down a second flight, and, turning as he picked himself up, he saw the muddy road glistening markedly in the hallway beneath. He dashed down into the passage and out into the street.

#### "Fire! Fire!"

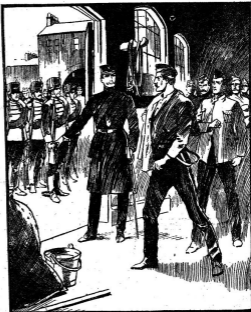
The shout, which startles all who hear it, rose and gathered in volume. From all quarters, down from the wide thoroughfares, from the courts and alleys, men, women and children came flocking as if by magic. Cries answered call. The panting of feet and the gasping of hoofs gave leader and leader. In twenty seconds the roadway was crowded, and all eyes were fastened on the smoke-laden air.

A policeman, rushing at full speed, pushed his way to the front. He blew his whistle for assistance. Then he turned to those about.

"Stand back! Keep away there! Make room for the engine when it comes. You'll be trampled to death if you don't. And folks in the house still? Who lives there? Can anyone tell?"

"Tain't used. It's been condemned long ago as unwholesome, and was shooed." "It was coming down next week, in my own town let out in tenements, but all the folks had notice to quit a month ago."

"Ah, then there won't be any loss of life, anyhow! Stand



Scarcely the measured tramp of feet was heard, and a dozen troopers armed with carbines and commanded by a sergeant, formed up in two lines outside the door.

back—stand back! Ay, that's better. Now we'll get to work."

Half a dozen more policemen, in answer to the whistle, were passing their way to the front, and others were still struggling to get through the crowd. At a sign they drove into two lines, and whilst one drove back the soldiers to the right, the others swept them away towards the left. Presently there was a scuffle, and a policeman's voice was raised in angry argument.

"Get back! None of your nonsense! You'll have to do the same as the rest. You want, would you? Here, look, look on to this chap, and last him off!" "Call answered call. And as the crowd surged forward again, to see the cause of the commotion, the soldier flung his captor to one side, but was seized by a couple more guardians of the peace. The soldier was Bob.

A terrible fear had seized him. Half dead as he had been when he had fallen through the roof, he had thought naturally of his own safety only. Now, in the fresh air, his senses had been sharpened, and he remembered distinctly that he had knocked Lascelles down, and that the latter had remained motionless. Could he be still in the room? Was he rescued, and unable to help himself?

"Another instalment of this fine yarn next week. Order your copy of THE GEM now."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 369.

A Magnificent New Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Herry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



# THIS WEEK'S CHAT



Whom to Write to —  
**EDITOR "THE GEM" LIBRARY.**  
 THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON ST. LONDON, E.C.  
**OUR — THREE — COMPANION — PAPERS!**  
**"THE MAGNET," "THE PENNY CHUCKLES,"**  
**— LIBRARY — — POPULAR — — 1/2 —**  
**— EVERY TUESDAY — EVERY FRIDAY — EVERY SATURDAY.**

For Next Wednesday—

## "A SPLIT IN THE SCHOOL!"

By **Martin Clifford.**

All "Gem" readers interested in the great winter game—and there must be very few who are not—will experience a rare treat on reading next Wednesday's exciting football story by Martin Clifford. A vacant place cropping up in the St. Jim's soccer eleven, Kildare decides to include Talbot in the team for a forthcoming match against Brookwood. This is, of course, a tremendous honour for the handsome Shell hero; but Kildare's action is hotly resented by certain New Hope prefects. However, Talbot signs out all the same, and, with his old chum Marie Rivers looking on, he plays the game of his life. It proves a happy inspiration on Kildare's part to play Talbot, for the Shell fellow fully justifies his inclusion in the eleven, and is given good cause to remember the day when he succeeded so splendidly in winning his laurels during

## "A SPLIT IN THE SCHOOL!"

## TO ALL LOVERS OF TALBOT.

I have a very welcome announcement to make to all Gemites this week, and I expect many of my more remote chums are beginning to think that it is high time I imparted the following glorious news.

Arrangements are now in full swing for a splendid

### SPRING DOUBLE NUMBER

of the good old "Gem" Library.

This is stunning news, is it not? And here I should like to thank my thousands of readers for the kindly forbearance and patience which they have shown in this matter.

Although I have said nothing on the subject in my Chats, I quite realize that it must have been incessantly galling to my chums to find that, although "Magnet" readers had been catered for to the extent of several double numbers, Gemites had, to all intents and purposes, been left out of the reckoning. But I determined to repair this seeming injustice whenever opportunity offered, and as the supply of paper for printing purposes is now as adequate as of yore, there is nothing to prevent my giving "Gem" readers a long-promised treat in the spring.

The question now arises—Of what shall this magnificent Double Number consist? Taking up a letter from E. J. W., a staunch Chirwick chum, I find the following remarks:

"You have often had a double number of the 'Magnet,' leaving the poor old 'Gem' in the shade. Is that not so, dear Editor?"

"Do you not think an extra long story of Talbot of the Shell would go down all right? I do. I consider that if you published a double-length story about Talbot, Marie, the Professor, and Hooley Walker, it would be a really ripping boon to all Gemites. I reckon if Martin Clifford could be persuaded to write such a story, it would be well worth your time and trouble to do as I suggest."

"If you want to know how a story of Talbot would catch on, ask your chums in the Chat page as soon as you can."

I think E. J. W. is not very wide of the mark when he says that my readers would derive nothing better than a really first-class tale of the ever-popular Reginald Talbot; and this being the case, it seems an almost superfluous proceeding to ask Gemites to send in their opinions.

I have had a long consultation with Mr. Clifford, and he assures me that he will readily undertake the task of writing

this great story to the satisfaction and delight of our host of "Gem" readers. "I will put my best into the job and the famous "Gem" author; and everybody knows Martin Clifford's best is. It is something about unobtainable."

For the present, then, I will leave my chums to shew the splendid news, and appeal it abroad among all to boy and girl friends—your readers in particular.

More details as to the forthcoming Bumper Number appear on my Chat page very shortly.

### REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Mim J. I Burns (Melbourne, Australia). "Two 7 (Buckhead)," "A Faithful Reader" (Belfast).—Tom & Co. are not, of course, real, live boys, but are pure invention of the author, as is the school—St. Jim's.

The Misses M. O'Brien and P. St. Justice (Cork). Many thanks for your championship of your favourite "The Gem." Glad you were able to convince your 2 of its worth.

"Mak" (Carlisle).—Mr. Richards is so busy at present, and the suggestion of a double in Liverpool, Lancashire, is a little "Madden" (Wighton).—Both St. Jim's and G. friends, and purely the invention of Mr. Richards, and therefore, non-existent.

L. B. (Australia).—Many thanks for your kind letter. To know you enjoy reading "The Gem" and its comp. papers.

H. Booth (Freskfield).—Stories concerning the earlier days of Tom Merry are now appearing in our comp. paper, "The Penny Popper." Wingate is captain at Ipswich, and there are thirty-three boys in the First Form.

"An Early Gemite" (Westminster).—I am sorry I cannot supply you with the list of terms you ask for. But will H. Whiting (Dovercast).—The issue of "The Boy's Library" you mention is out of print.

"A Girl Guide" (Macclesfield).—Thanks very much for your cheery letter. If you will let me have your full name and address I will be pleased to write you on the subject mentioned.

M. H. Baber (Dromperth).—Garnage, Editors, Lou should supply you with an inexpensive lease telephone. should write for their catalogue.

Mastrijo Wood (Croydon).—"The Gem" has been in circulation since the beginning of 1908. Many thanks for good wishes.

"The Dandies" (Australia).—Your request is extraordinary, and I must plead ignorance on such an exotic subject. However, I can commend to your notice Harry Talbot's Guild, Harry Court, Strand, W.C., who first in the field with regard to the latest fashion catalogues on receipt of a postcard, would be pleased to send you a catalogue.

"Three Regular Readers" (Croydon).—I am very sorry cannot do as you desire. Such a suggestion was put forward some time ago, but the rules were infringed on, and I had no recourse but to close the feature down.

A. T. Mack (Quebec).—Very many thanks for your list and statistics, proving Master Carlisle's attack on the adulation of Strayettes to be false and ill-founded. But will

I should also like to thank the following readers for letters and helpful suggestions:

Miss Maud Knightler, C. Watson, "Eric" (Victor), Hector E. Battage, F. V. Parks, Teddy Moggan, D. E. (Motherwell), Miss M. Davies, Cassville Bennett, and H. K. (Saville) (Sydney).

THE EDITOR.