

"MASTER" MARIE!

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of St. Jim's.

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Hoooley held out his hand. The pointer came down with a swish, but it slowed down as it reached Hoooley's grubby hand, and gave him a light tap, which would not have hurt a fly. Hoooley grinned cheerfully. "Now go back to your place, and be a good boy," said Miss Marie. (An amusing scene in our grand complete tale of school life contained in this issue.)

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COMPLETE STORIES
FOR ALL, AND EVERY
STORY A GEM!

"MASTER" MARIE!

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

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



A grinning face rose from behind the massive rustic seat in the summer-house. "Sorry to interrupt," said Wally. "But I had to tell you I was here, as you were going to see." Talbot laughed. "You are kidding, huh?" exclaimed Marie. "You bet," said Wally. "Good afternoon, Miss Marie!" (See Chapter 2.)

CHAPTER I.

Arthur Augustus Cannot Tell.

"**W**HAT'S that young rascal?"

Kildare, of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, looked into Study No. 6 as he asked that question in a very gruff voice.

Study No. 6 was surprised. Jack Blake looked up from the cricket bat he was using. Herriss and Digby stopped grilling him. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jumbled his

famous eyeglass into his eye, and turned a stony glare upon the prefect.

"That what, Kildare?" he inquired, with chilly politeness.

"That young rascal!" said Kildare.

"Wally, Kildare, I trust you did not expect to find any young wascal in this study. You have come to the wrong study, dear boy. Try the Sixth."

Blake and Herriss and Digby chuckled.

Next Wednesday:

"LEVISON'S DOUBLE!" AND "OFFICER AND TROOPER!"

But Kildare did not smile. He was not in the best of tempers.

"Don't be a cheeky little ass, D'Arcy!" he said gruffly.

"Are you hiding that young rascal in this study? If he isn't here, where is he? Mr. Selby wants him at once, and there will be trouble if he doesn't turn up."

Study No. 6 understood that. Mr. Selby was the master of the Third Form. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's younger brother, Wally, was in the Third. So it was clear that Master Wally was the young rascal alluded to.

"I trust my minna isn't in trouble again!" said Arthur Augustus, with a distressed look.

"Well, he is," said Kildare. "He was told to report himself in Mr. Selby's study for a whipping. He hasn't turned up. He's an hour ago. He's hiding somewhere, the young scamp! I'm looking for him. Where is he?"

"Not here," said Blake.

"I thought he might have come here," growled Kildare. "I'll give him a licking myself when I find him for giving me all this trouble. I've got something better to do than to hunt for tags: Do you know where he is, D'Arcy? He's your minna."

"You could hardly expect me to betray the whereabouts of my minna, Kildare, andah the circus," said Arthur Augustus stiffly.

"What?"

"I couldn't that very likely Mr. Selby was in the w'ing. He always seems to be going for my minna. I disapproved of it."

"Scamp!" murmured Blake.

"I wadna to shat up, Blake!"

"Where is that young scamp?" roared Kildare. "Tell me at once!"

"Wally, Kildare—"

"Don't you understand that I'm looking for him, and I've got no time to waste!" Kildare had an asphalt restor his arm, and he let it slip down into his hand. "Now, then, you young ass, where is your scamp of a minna?"

"I cannot—"

"You can't tell me, what?" asked Kildare grizzly.

"Certainly not. You see—"

"Then I'll help you!" said Kildare, striking across the study and aiming the swell of St. Jim's by the collar.

"Now, then?"

"Wew! Leggo! You are wumpin' my collar!"

"Are you going to tell me where D'Arcy minna is?"

"I cannot! I— Yawwooch!"

The asphalt whistled through the air and descended upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's beautifully-fitting "kags."

"Oh, crumbs! Oh, you howard brute!"

"Where is he?" roared Kildare.

"Gwosch!"

Whack!

"Yawwooch! Oh, crumby! Tah!"

"What on earth's the row?" exclaimed a voice in the passage; and four juniors who were coming along passed to look into Study No. 6. They were Tom Merry and Manners and Lewther and Talbot of the Third.

The Shell fellows stared in surprise at the sight of D'Arcy wriggling in the powerful grasp of Kildare. It was but very seldom that the good-natured captain of St. Jim's let himself go in this way.

"Now, then!" roared Kildare, as the asphalt whistled again. "I'm waiting, you cheeky young ass!"

"Wov-wov-wov!"

Whack!

"Yawwooch! Kildare, I wadna jee as a wotch! If you were not a prefect, I should strike you! Welcome me, you howard brute! Wow!"

"Will you tell me where your minna is, you silly young owl?" sneered Kildare, getting more and more exasperated.

"I cannot—"

Whack!

"Yov-wov-wov! I wadna to be twented in this howard manner! If you strike me again, Kildare, I shall hit you!"

"Will you tell me—"

"I wadna that I cannot do anything of the sort."

Whack, whack!

"Oh, crumbs! Woooo!"

Arthur Augustus struggled violently, but in the big Sixth-Former's iron grasp he was little more than an insect. Kildare's knuckles were grinding into his neck, and he was helpless.

"I—I say," exclaimed Tom Merry, "draw it mild, Kildare, you know—"

"Shut up!" said Kildare angrily.

"Why don't you tell him, Gassy, you silly idiot?" howled Blake.

"I cannot—"

"You young ass!" exclaimed Talbot. "Kildare has a right to ask you. Why don't you tell him?"

"He will tell me, or take the licking of his life," said Kildare, in a tone of concentrated anger. "Now, then, D'Arcy, I give you one more chance. Where is your minna?"

"It is quite impos. for me to tell you."

Whack!

"Yawwooch!"

"Tell him, you fathead!" yelled Digby.

"How can I tell him when I do not know?" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

The asphalt was coming down again; but Kildare stopped it in time.

"You don't know?" he exclaimed.

"Wew! No! Yes!"

"You said you did!" shouted Kildare.

"I did not say anything of the sort!" wailed Arthur Augustus. "I remembered that you could not expect me to betray his whereabouts andah the circus—even if I knew where he was, I cannot."

"Yov—you silly young ass!"

"I wadna to be called a silly young ass!"

"Then you don't know where he is?" demanded Kildare.

"Wov-wov! No, I don't, you awful brute!"

The captain of St. Jim's released the wriggling junior, bursting into a laugh.

"You young fathead! You should have said so when I asked you."

"I wadna lots of times that I could not tell you. Wow! Oh, deah! I am feelin' vovvy vovvunderful!"

Kildare, still laughing, quitted the study—to advise further his search for the scamp of the Third. Arthur Augustus gazed round at his friends in the expectation of receiving sympathy. He was disappointed. Blake and Horrie and Digby were yelling with laughter. The Terrible Three and Talbot stared on the verge of hysterics.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"What are you cockin' at? There's nothin' whastorah to gackle at."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wadna Kildare as a 'thunderin' idiot! He had no right to misapprehend my minna in that widelous way!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Shell fellows staggered from the study doubled up with mirth. And in spite of Arthur Augustus's excited objections, Blake and Horrie and Digby persisted in regarding the matter as funny.

"You'll be the death of me, Gassy!" almost sobbed Blake. "I know you will—I've said it before! You are too funny to live!"

"I wadna you as a thumpin' ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suppose I had bettah go and look for my minna, as he is in trouble again. As for you uttah deahs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, wata!"

Arthur Augustus retired from Study No. 6, and closed the door after him with a terrific slam. For once his manners were lacking in that respect which stamps the caste of Vere do Vere.

ANSWERS

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 OUR COMPANION "THE BOYS' FRIEND," "THE MASTER," "THE DRAGONNET," "THE PENNY POPULAR," "SHOOTER," &c.
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CHAPTER 2.

Wally is Hiding.

WRITE a number of individuals were looking for Wally of the Third as well as his justly-indignant major.

The scamp of the Third was in trouble again. Wally lived in an almost perpetual state of the wars. When he was not ragging with his chums, or rowing with the New House fags, he filled up time, as it were, by getting into trouble with his Form-master. Mr. Selby was too sharp-tongued and irritable a gentleman to appreciate Wally's ever-abundant energy and high spirits. The introduction of jumping crackers into the Form-room, and their accidental discharge in Wally's desk, did not appeal to his sense of humour in the least. He hadn't any sense of humour. On such occasions he would come down very heavy.

All the School House soon knew that Wally was in hot water once more. He had had two hundred lines, with strict injunctions to bring them to Mr. Selby's study after tea, under penalty of a severe caning. Wally had fully intended to do these lines, but he was booked for a four-handed mill in the beer-rooms with some of the heroes of the Third, and the import simply had to go. Then he received word that Mr. Selby was waiting for him in his study, and that the Form-master had been seen selecting a cane.

Then Wally had disappeared. Mr. Selby waited for him in vain, and naturally his temper did not grow any better. He had intended to give Wally a really exemplary licking. Mr. Selby's exemplary lickings were so painful to the recipients that it was not surprising that Wally was putting off the evil hour. His hide was still aching from the "pointer" in the afternoon. So he had disappeared.

Whereupon Mr. Selby called upon the prefects to find him. Hence Kilmare's visit to Study No. 3, which had been so exceedingly unpleasant for D'Arcy major.

Wally was not to be found, apparently. The prefects, in far from a good humour, sought him up and down the School House in vain. Knox of the Sixth called upon the Terrible Three and Talbot to help in the search, as he met them in the passage. The Shell fellows could not very well decline the order of a prefect. So they looked about the passage quite industriously, looking into every place where Wally was certain not to be found, till Knox was out of sight, and then they went into their studies.

It was tea-time, and they did not want to be bothered with doing Knox's work for him. The Terrible Three had kippers to cook, and that was much more important than looking for Wally. And tea was ready for Talbot in his study. Gore and Skimpole, his study-mates, had already started.

"That young ass found?" asked Gore, as Talbot came into the study.

"Not yet."

"The silly duffer! He'll only get it worse in the long run," said Gore. "I saw Selby as I came up; he was looking like a Hun on the warpath."

"Mr. Selby is an exceedingly irritable gentleman," said Skimpole, in his solemn way. "He poked me very rudely when I passed him. I simply remarked to him that it was delightful weather for the time of year, and he pushed me. I should have remonstrated with him, but—"

"But I yanked you away before; you could ask for a licking, you chump!" said Gore. "Pass the jam, and keep your silly feet out of the way. Do you want all the floor?"

"My dear Gore"—Skimpole blinked at Gore through his big spectacles—"I trust my feet are not in your way. I did not notice you collide with me."

"Well, I banged my foot against something!" growled Gore. "If it was your hoof, Talbot, you can keep your hoofs over your own side!"

"But it wasn't my hoof," said Talbot, laughing. The study door opened, and Knox of the Sixth looked in. Knox was looking very exasperated. Hunting for a recalcitrant fag was an occupation that did not please Knox in the least.

"Have you seen anything of that little villain?" he demanded.

"Nothing," said Talbot.

"My dear Knox, there is no occasion to lose your temper," remonstrated Skimpole. "As you possess the privilege of a prefect, it is strictly just to complain of the delinquent."

"Take fifty lines, Skimpole!"

"Eh? What for?"

"For being a silly idiot!" said Knox. "Are you sure that little beast isn't hiding in here? He's sneaked into one of the studies somewhere."

"Better search," said Gore.

"There'll be a row when the silly young ass is nailed," said Gore. "Skimpole'd like to be in his shoes when he sees Selby again. He won't turn up by bedtime, anyway. Skimpole, you blumping idiot, will you keep your enormous hoofs out of the way, or won't you?"

"My dear Gore—"

"If I collide with your skinny props again I'll kick!" growled Gore.

"But I assure you—"

"Oh, shove it, and pass the toast!" Gore stretched his legs under the table, and uttered an exasperated howl. "Why, there you are again! Take that!" Gore kicked out under the table.

"Yow!"

It was a yell of anguish, but it did not proceed from Skimpole. It came from under the table.

The three Shell fellows started to their feet.

"My hat!" exclaimed Talbot. "There's somebody under the table!"

Gore stooped, and jerked up the tablecloth. Under the table a dusky fag was sitting, among his leg, and scrambling furiously.

"You silly ass!" he shouted.

"My word, it's that fag!"

"Wally!" exclaimed Talbot.

"Don't yell!" snarled Wally. "That cad Knox may be looking in here any minute again."

"So you've been hiding there!" exclaimed Gore.

"What do you think I've been doing, you cow!"

"Well, I'm not going to have rotten fags hiding in my study!" growled Gore. "Get out!"

"Shan't!"

"Then I'll—"

"Hold on, Gore!" said Talbot quietly. "Leave him alone."

"Look here—" began the bully of the Shell warily. "He's going to get enough from Selby without your starting on him."

"Well, that's so," said Gore, calming down. "Selby will simply skin him. Serve him right, too, the chucky young sweep!"

"Wally, kid," said Talbot kindly, "you'd better clear, and go to Selby at once. It's bound to come, and it will be all the worse the longer you put it off."

"Kiss!" said Wally.

"But you'll have to turn up, you know."

"I won't!" said Wally determinedly. "I've been chased this afternoon already. I've had enough. I'm going to keep out of sight."

"It'll come to the Head."

"All the better. I'd rather deal with the Head than with Selby. Look at my paws; they're swollen now. Selby laid it in too thick. Why, it hurt me like anything when I sniffed young Jansson on the nose in the beer-room afterwards. I've had enough, and Selby can go and eat cake!"

"But you can't stay there all the evening, kid!" exclaimed Talbot.

"I'm waiting till the coast is clear to slip out of the house," said Wally. "I'm going to hide somewhere."

"You'd better—"

"Oh, rats!" Wally was evidently determined.

"I was going to say you'd better have some tea," said Talbot, with a smile.

"Now you're talking!" said Wally. "You can pass me something under the table if you like. I'm not coming out, thanks!"

"Look out!" said Gore, as a footstep stopped just outside the study.

The tablecloth dropped back into place. Wally, with THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 371.

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his mouth full of cork, held his breath under the table. The door opened; it was Tom Merry who came in.

"There's a regular kullabaloo," said the captain of the Shell. "All the studies are going to be searched for that young duffer. Selby has called the Housemaster into it, and Carrington is waxy. I wonder where he can be!"

"Shut the door!" said Talbot hastily, as Gore burst into a chuckle.

"Why—what—?"

Tom Merry jumped as Wally's tumbled head was projected from under the table.

"Going to watch the studios, are they?" grunted Wally. "The beast! I shall have to clear."

"So there you are, you young ass!"

"Yes, here I am, you old one!"

"Knox is in the passage," said Tom Merry. "The best thing you can do, Wally, is to give yourself up at once."

"Any more good advice going?" snorted Wally.

"None."

"Where are you going?" exclaimed Talbot, as the scamp of the Third made a dive for the open study window.

"Out!" said Wally concisely.

"Stop! You'll break your neck!" yelled Tom Merry. The Shell fellows rushed forward to collar the reckless fag; but Wally had swung himself out of the window before they could touch him. He hung to the window-sill, and grinned coolly at them.

"Keep your whiskers on!" he said. "Do you think I can climb down a drain-pipe, you duffers? Keep that door shut while I'm gone—and your heads too."

Wally "slithered" down the drain-pipe beside the window at a speed that made the juniors gasp. But he was as active as a monkey, and he reached the ground in safety.

There was a slight fog-scene in the quadrangle as he was slipping. Wally took to his heels like a startled rabbit and vanished.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Talbot.

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"The reckless young ass!" Halls, here they come!"

Knox and Baudies of the Sixth came into the study. All the junior studies were being searched for Wally; but they had come too late. The bird had flown!

CHAPTER 3.

Mr. Selby Takes a Header.

TALBOT of the Shell quitted the school house after tea, and amstered away towards the Head's garden.

"Kindest regards from me!" called out Monty Lawther as he went.

Talbot smiled, but did not turn his head.

He entered the garden by the little gate from the quad, and amstered down the path towards the summer-house. The garden looked very fresh and bright in the spring sunshine. There was a sound in the summer-house as the Shell fellow came up to the trellised doorway.

"Marie!" said Talbot.

He looked round him in surprise as he entered. The summer-house was empty. Talbot looked puzzled. He was almost certain that he had heard someone move there.

He had come there for a chat with his girl-chum, Marie Evans, the "Little Sister of the Poor," who had a permanent post now in the school sanatorium—with little to do now, as a matter of fact. There was a light step on the garden-path, and the girl came in as Talbot stood looking round him.

Marie's face was bright and smiling. "The knitting, which she never seemed to leave, was in her hands."

"You are here first, Tal?" Marie always called Talbot that old nickname, by which she had known him in the days long gone by, before either of them had seen St. Jim's.

"Miss Pisch has been helping me with my knitting. Do you know, we have fifty pairs of socks finished, all ready to send, and they are going of this morning."

"Good for somebody out there in the trenches," said Talbot. "Any news from your father, dear?"

"The Gun Lizard—No. 171."

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Marie's face clouded a little.

"Yes. His battalion has gone; they landed in France a few days ago. They will be in the fighting soon—in a few days now, perhaps."

"Your father is doing his duty, Marie," said Talbot. "Hope for the best, my dear girl. There was news from Mr. Hamilton—the Head had it posted on the notice-board. My old Housemaster is in it too. They were going to the front when he wrote. Some must fall to save Old England; but most of the brave fellows will come home. And what a time that will be, Marie, when we greet your father safe and sound!"

"Young! Will try to think always of that, Tal. When I think that he was—"

"Better ring off!" said a voice. "It's against my principles to listen to a private conversation."

Talbot and Marie started, and looked round them.

"That's Wally's voice!" exclaimed Talbot.

"Wally!" said Marie. "Where is he?"

"The young rascal! He's hiding away from his Form-master, who has a licking ready for him. Where are you, you young duffer?" called out Talbot.

A grinning face rose from behind the massive rustic seat in the summer-house.

"Sorry to interrupt!" said Wally. "But I had to tell you I was here, as you were going to jaw."

Talbot laughed.

"You are hiding here!" exclaimed Marie.

"Yes, but!" said Wally. "Good-afternoon, Miss Marie! I know you won't give me away. Old Selby is looking for my snail, and I came here because I thought it was a quiet spot. I'm going to dodge the beast as long as I can."

"You should not speak of your Form-master like that, Wally," said Marie, gravely.

"Well, he shouldn't be a beast, should he?" argued Wally. "Look at my paw! Do they lick it for another licking?"

Marie uttered an exclamation as Wally held out his hands for inspection. They were very grubby, and they showed the traces of a recent severe scolding.

"It is wicked to cane a little boy so hard!" exclaimed Marie, with a fash in her eyes. "I am sure the Head would not allow it if he knew."

"Not so much of your little boy, please," said Wally, with a grimace. "I'm not such a blessed little boy as all that!"

"You are a very bad little boy, I should think," said Marie, with a smile. "You must have made Mr. Selby very angry."

"Ratty as a Prussian!" grinned Wally. "I think he must be a Prussian, really—he always acts like a Hun. How could I help the fireworks going off in my desk? I didn't do it on purpose. I was just getting a match to 'em under the lid, as a joke on old Frayze—so make him jump—and then they caught—"

"And then you were caught, I suppose?" said Talbot.

"Ow! Yes," said Wally. "Selby is quite athletic when it comes to laying on the pointer. And a pointer hurts more than a cane—it's header. And he piled 'em high, too. Now, how could I do my legs by line-time when I had to meet Jameson and Frayne and Carly for a mill in the box-room?"

"You could have put off that important engagement," suggested Talbot.

"Well, I didn't think of that in time," said Wally. "I chanced it. But it's no good chasing things with old Selby. He—"

Wally broke off as a footstep ground the gravel on the garden path. The girl vanished from his face as through the open doorway, he caught sight of the master of the Third.

Mr. Selby had strolled into the garden to soothe his irritated nerves, not in the least expecting to find Wally there—fags not being allowed in those sacred precincts. But just as Wally sighted him in the path he spotted Wally in the summer-house.

"My only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally.

He jumped out from behind the seat, and darted out of the door at the other side of the summer-house.

Mr. Selby was after him in a twinkling.

"D'Arcy niece! Stop! Stop at once, I command



"You! You New House waster—" "Heeh! You School House barber—" Crash! The combatants hurled on the desk where the dish, piled with herrings, resound. The impact of the dish on the floor divided it into a score of pieces, and the herrings were scattered far and wide. (See Chapter 4.)

you!" shouted Mr. Selby, breaking into a run in pursuit of the justice.

"Poor Wally!" murmured Marie, clasping her hands. Wally was speeding away down the garden. He did not make for the gate in the quad—there were too many enemies in that direction. He rushed down the garden towards the sheet of ornamental water. As he was much more active than Mr. Selby, he hoped to be able to dodge the master round that pond.

But Mr. Selby was in deadly earnest. He got on a really creditable speed, considering his age and condition, and the fog heard the heavy footsteps crunching behind him, and an outstretched hand just missed his shoulder as he reached the edge of the pond.

Wally acted then on instinct, without stopping to think. He threw himself down on his hands and knees, and the pursuer, rushing on, unable to stop, plunged headlong over his.

Splash!
There was a choking yell from Mr. Selby as he disappeared headlong into the water.

Wally started up—gaspng. He had done it now. Mr. Selby was floundering in three feet of water, his hat was floating away, and his red and ferocious face was puffing wildly above the surface of the pond.

"My sely Aunt Jane!" stammered Wally. "Who'd have thought it!"

"Ooock! Ooock! Help! Oh!"
Wally cut off at top speed in a new direction. He was anxious to get out of the garden before Mr. Selby got

out of the pond. He made a wild spring over the gate into the quad, and ran—and was suddenly stopped by a grip on his shoulder. He had almost run into Kildare's arms.

"Got you, you young sweep!" said the captain of St. Jim's grimly.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"You'll come with me!" said Kildare.

He marched Wally away towards the School House. The unfortunate boy had to go; there was no escape from Kildare's powerful grasp.

Meanwhile, Talbot had run down to the pond to help Mr. Selby out.

Shallow as the water was, the Form-master seemed unable to get out without aid. He splashed and spluttered and yelled for help, causing quite a sea of bubbles and foam round him in the peaceful pond.

"This way, sir!" called out Talbot.

Mr. Selby plunged towards him, and Talbot grasped him by the shoulder and dragged him out. He landed Mr. Selby on the bank, drenched and streaming and gasping like a fish. Mr. Selby lay in a pool of water pumping in breath.

"Oh, dear! I have been almost drowned! Ow! Oh! Where is that—that young criminal? Where is he?"

"Gone, sir," said Talbot cheerfully. "Hadn't you better change your clothes, sir? You'll catch cold."

"Yes—yes; you are right, certainly. Oh, dear!"
Mr. Selby squelched away to the School House, and the fellows who saw him coming in smiled—lewdly. With

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his hair plastered down on his head, his hat gone, his clothes limp and dripping, his gown a clinging rag, and water seeping out of his boots, the master of the Third looked a most deplorable object.

The School House master met him as he came in, and gazed at him in horror.

"Mr. Selby! What ever has happened?"

"I have fallen into the pond!" stammered Mr. Selby. "I was tripped—tripped up—by D'Arcy mison! Actually!"

Mr. Carrington frowned.

"Kildare has just bought the boy in, Mr. Selby. He shall be severely punished for the trouble he has caused. You may safely leave him in my hands. I guaranteed you to lose no time in drying yourself."

Mr. Selby nodded, and hurried up the stairs, leaving a trail of water behind. He was sorry to leave Wally's mistake in other hands—which he suspected might deal more lightly with the delinquent—but it was evidently necessary for him to get dried. He hobbled into his room, and fellows who passed near his door could hear him spluttering and sneezing as he rubbed himself down. And Mr. Selby was so extremely unpopular that few were sorry to hear those sounds of suffering.

Meanwhile Wally had been marched into the House-master's study, with Kildare's hand on his collar. Kildare waited there with him till the House-master came in. He did not seem to give the soapy of the Third another chance of hollering.

Mr. Carrington rustled into the study and fixed a stern frown upon Wally. Kildare retired, leaving the fog to his fate.

"How dare you give us all this trouble, and throw the House into an uproar in this way, D'Arcy mison!" exclaimed Mr. Carrington.

Wally did not reply.

"And Mr. Selby informs me that you tripped him, and caused him to fall into the pond," Mr. Carrington went on. "I am afraid that a coming will set next this case, D'Arcy mison. I must report you to the Head for a flogging."

"I didn't trip him," said Wally sulkily. "He fell over me."

"Mr. Selby's impression is that you tripped him."

"Well, I didn't! I forgot all about the water being there, and he tumbled over me, and fell into it."

"Ahem! That alters the case a little," said Mr. Carrington. "You have, however, refused to go to your master's study when ordered, and have given the prefects a great deal of trouble in finding you. Why have you done this?"

"I have been liked enough for one day," said the fog sulkily.

"That is entirely in your Form-master's hands," said the House-master severely.

"What about my hands?" said Wally.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"Look at 'em, sir," said Wally indignantly. "Do they look as if I wanted any more licking?"

Mr. Carrington stared at the grubby paws that were held out for his inspection. The plain traces of an unusually severe washing could be seen, and the House-master's face showed that he was shocked. The Australian gentleman was a very good-natured master, and seldom used the cane himself—and never to that extent.

"Ahem!" he said. "Ahem!" Certainly you appear to have been severely—ahem!—very severely—ahem!—punished. Under the—ahem!—circumstances, I shall not censure you now—ahem! You will take a hundred lines. You may go. I shall mention to Mr. Selby that the matter is—ahem!—closed."

Wally's eyes danced. He could scarcely believe in his good luck. Only a hundred lines, after his escapade, and after Mr. Selby's docking! True, that docking had been an accident, but it was a very happy accident, from Wally's point of view.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Wally.

Mr. Carrington waved his hand to the door, and D'Arcy mison promptly departed. He did not want to give the House-master time to change his mind. Mr. THE GEN. LANSBURY—No. 371.

Carrington shook his head very seriously when the fog was gone. The master of the Third had overstepped the limit, and Mr. Carrington intended to speak to him very plainly.

But, as it happened, Mr. Selby was not seen downstairs again that day. The news spread through the School House that the Third Form master was keeping his room with a bad cold, and the young rascals of the Third showed their sympathy by executing a triumphant dance in the Form-room when they heard the news.

CHAPTER 4.

A Third-Form Celebration.

THOM MERRY & Co. looked into the Third Form-room that evening. There were rejoicings going on in that apartment, and the Terrible Three were interested. At half-past seven the Third Form always collected there for evening preparation, under the cold, steely eye of Mr. Selby. But on this particular evening Mr. Selby was in bed, with a hot-water bottle at his feet, a sufferer round his neck, and his cold, steely eyes were watery, and his nose was inflamed, and he was generally in that state of mingled misery and fury that accompanies a bad cold in its early stages. Hence the unaccustomed freedom and rejoicing in the Form-room. The heroes of the Third concluded that there wouldn't be any prep that evening, and they rejoiced accordingly.

A strong smell of scorching herrings greeted the Terrible Three as they looked in. Wally was on his knees before the Form-room fire, which was piled up and blazing. He was cooking herrings.

Joe Payne was helping him. Curly Gibson was opening a pet of jam. Hobbs was making toast, dodging Wally and Joe at the fire. Jameson was sliding up a log of wood on a dock, with a larvik disengaged for the high price of bread.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry.

Wally looked round with a shily face.

"Hallo!" he answered. "What do you kids want?"

"We want to know how you got on with the House-master, you young boulder," said Mousy Lowther. "Your major has been anxious about you."

"Oh, that was all right! Carrington's a brick! Only a hundred lines," said Wally.

"Pretty cheap, when old Selby's had the docking of his life. And he's caught a bad cold. Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the Third, with one voice.

"Well, Wally," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who had followed the Terrible Three in, "it is wathah un-felish of you to rejoice in the unhappy condition of your master."

"Go ha!" said Wally.

"I bet that Mr. Selby is in a wathah shockin' state. Nurse Finch has been lookin' after him, and she was lookin' wathah cross. I feah that the old gentleman is in wathah a bad tempah."

"Let him rip!" said Wally. "He's got a cold—hurrah! There wasn't be any prep to-night—no prep and no Selby!"

"Hurrah!"

"We're going to have a feed instead of prep," said Wally. "You kids can stay if you like."

"I wathah to be called a kid by my misah."

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus! We've got herrings—keeps of 'em," said Wally. "I've cooked nearly the lot now. Old Selby always makes a fuss about a smell of cooking in the Form-room. He won't be able to make a fuss to-night. He's laid up—laid up—laid right up!" trilled Wally joyously.

"Might turn to pneumonia," said Curly Gibson hopefully. "you never know."

"Bai Jove!"

"Of course, or something," said Jameson. "Lots of things start with colds."

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Or housemaid's knee," suggested Mousy Lowther humorously.

"Well, whatever it turns to, I hope it'll be a long illness," said Wally. "Fanny old Selby in the sanatorium for the rest of the term!"

"Oh, slipping!" said Jameson, ecstatically.
 "No more prop and no more lessons!"
 "Harrak!"
 "I refuse to allow you discuss your Form-master in this unbecom' way, Wally," said Arthur Augustus indignantly.
 "How-how!"
 "You disrespectful young wascal—"
 "Oh, give him a herring, and shut him up!" said Wally.
 "H. h. h. h!"
 "I refuse to have a hewin', and I refuse to shut up!" said Arthur Augustus. "I have had a very painful dispute with Kildare over you, young scound. I disapprove entirely of your goings on!"
 "You are harassing those herrings, Wally!" roared Frayne. "What do you want to jaw to your silly master for when you're cooking herrings?"
 "It's Gasey's fault," said Wally. "Now, there's a herring spoiled. Do shut up, Gasey! You're like a sheep-head, you know—nearly all jaw!"
 "Turn that Fourth-Form boulder out!" said Jameson.
 "Yes, chuck him out!" said Wally. "It's bother enough to have a major, without having him bothering every minute!"
 "Why, you young wascal, I'll—"
 "Come on, Gasey!" said Tom Merry, slipping his arm through that of the swell of St. Jim's.
 "I refuse to cease on, Tom Merry! I'm going to thrash that young wascal—"
 "This way!" said Monty Lowther, taking D'Arcy's other arm. "Holly his behind, Manners!"
 "Certainly," said Manners.
 "Bai Jove! You woffuffels! Welasse me at once! Do you heah! I wufasso to wufire a step from this woom until— Oow-waw! Leave off, Manners, you wotch!"
 The Terrible Three walked away, taking Arthur Augustus with them. His voice could be heard in indignant expostulation all the way down the passage, as the Third-Form fags went on busily with their preparations for the feed in celebration of Mr. Selby's cold in the head.
 All the Third were there—New House and School House. They had assembled for prop as usual, when they received the news that Mr. Selby was confined to his room. Then the feed had been inaugurated instead of preparation.
 It appeared to the heroes of the Third to be a change ever so much for the better.
 The strong scent of the herrings—especially of the barring of them—filled the Form-rooms from end to end, but there was no danger from Mr. Selby that evening. The Third were messengers of all they surveyed.
 "This is a bit of all right," announced Wally, when the herrings were done. "Have you got all the crocks you can find?"
 "Hoaps of 'em," said Jameson. "Not enough to go round, of course. Still, what's the matter with crock-locks, if there ain't enough plates?"
 "Nothing," said Wally. "Trot out your exercise-books. You'll have to take it in turns with those cups. Hew's the coffee going on, young Frayne?"
 "O'right," said Joe Frayne, who had never quite lost the original pronunciation of Angel Alley, where his early years had been spent. "It'll be prime, Master Wally. I can miller coffee."
 "Don't spread that toast on the floor, Jameson, you New House duffer!"
 "Who's spreading it on the floor, you School House duncey?" demanded Jameson, as he picked up a couple of fallen rounds.
 "Well, it looks as if you are," said Wally. "I don't want any of your New House gas."
 "And I don't want any of your School House swank!"
 "If you want a herring in your chivvy—"
 "If you want a dot in the eye—"
 "Oh, shut up, both on you!" said Joe Frayne. "This 'ere is a feed, not a dorg-fight."
 "Well, then, let that New House boulder keep his head shut!"
 "Let that School House barber stop talking out of his peck!"
 "You're an ungrateful cod, Jameson!" said Wally

worthfully. "It's all through me that Selby's laid up with a cold. You might be decently thankful."
 "How-how!" said Jameson.
 "If you see how-how to me, I'll bang a herring at you!" roared Wally.
 "How-how!" said Jameson independently.
 "Whis! Wally thoughtfully selected the most overdone herring. It was not much good for eating purposes, but it made an excellent retort to Jameson. The New House fag gave a yell of wrath as he caught it with his neck. He promptly rushed on Wally, and they lugged one another in an affectionate embrace, each trying to get the other's head into chancery. It was but too frequently that Third-Form celebrations ended in this disastrous manner.
 "Yew! You New House waster!"
 "Book! You School House barber!"
 "Crash! The combatants bumped on the desk where the dish, piled with herrings, reposed. The impact of the dish on the floor divided it into a score of pieces, and the herrings were scattered far and wide.
 "Look wet you've done!" yelled Joe Frayne.
 "Goo! Take that!"
 "Yow! You take that!"
 "Bump 'em over, the pair of 'em!" howled Hobbs.
 "Shove the herrings down their necks!"
 "Har, 'ow!"
 "Oh crumbs! Stoppt!" shrieked Wally.
 Jameson was down now, and Wally was sitting astride of his chest, usefully bumping his head on the floor, when Frayne and Hobbs and Hooley collided him, and jammed spoiled herrings down his neck, as a punishment for speaking up!" the feed.
 Wally clattered out wildly at his assailants, and brought down Hobbs and Hooley across the unfortunate Jameson, who howled with anguish. In the midst of the festive scene the Form-room door opened, and a stately figure in cap and gown advanced into the room. The excited fags did not even notice him. They were crowded round the combatants, yelling and cheering.
 "Boys!"
 Joe Frayne gave a sort of relp.
 "Ow, my 'at! The 'Ead!"
 "The Head! Great pip!"
 The struggling fags separated instantly. They made a wild effort to look unscattered, as if a rag in the Form-room was the last thing they had been thinking of. Wally, however, could not resist trying to extract half a herring from the inside of his collar. It felt very uncomfortable there.
 Dr. Holmes regarded the dismayed fags with a stern glance.
 "What does this mean?" he inquired.
 The Third Form were silent. They really thought the Head ought to know what it meant, but they did not feel equal to explaining.
 "And what is this dreadful smell of burnt fish?" said the Head, puzzled.
 "F-4-oh-oh!" said Jameson. "Any—any of you fellows be—on bringing fish in here!"
 None of the fellows replied. The herrings were scattered almost at the doctor's feet; in fact, he was treading on one of them. He perceived it, and bent down, and turned his glasses curiously upon the slimy object.
 "Bless my soul! It is a fish—undoubtedly a fish of some sort," said the Head, in surprise. "What is that, D'Arcy-mince?"
 "It—it's a Yarmouth warrior, sir," stammered Wally.
 "A what?"
 "I—I mean a kipper, sir."
 "A kipper?" said the Head. "There is no fish of that name, D'Arcy mince. It appears to me to be a variety of herring."
 "Yes, sir," groaned Wally.
 He was admonished at the ignorance of his headmaster. Here was a scholarly gentleman who knew Latin and Greek and all sorts of weird things, and didn't know what a kipper was.
 "Collect up that disgusting rubbish, and remove it from the Form-room at once," said the Head.
 "Ye-e-s, sir."

"And then take your places. Mr. Selby will not be able to take you to-night in preparation."
 "No, sir—good—I mean, we're sorry, sir."
 "So I shall take the Third Form this evening instead of Mr. Selby."
 "Oh, my only Aunt Jane!"
 "What did you say, D'Arcy miss?"
 "I—I—I said—ahem, sir."
 "You may remove that rubbish, and go and put yourself into a somewhat cleaner condition, D'Arcy miss. You appear to be reeking—yes, reeking, with grease, and you have a smell of fish about you that is unpleasant—decidedly unpleasant. I am shocked at the conduct of this Form. The rest of you, kindly take your places at once."

The Third Form kindly took their places, in the lowest seats. There was to be prep, after all. And so Wally mournfully carried away the relics of the feed that had not come off, the Third settled themselves down to work. They could not grin, but they had to bear it.

CHAPTER 5.
 Nice for Messico!

THE next day the Third Form at St. Jim's were in a state of subdued excitement.

Mr. Selby was worse. He had been taken to the school infirmary, where Miss Finch, the nurse, was looking after him. He was the only patient there. But Miss Finch had her hands full with the irritable, insatiable master of the Third. Mr. Selby was never very fit—he was drowsy, and never spoke unless he was—~~and~~ and the result was that the odd girls knocked him over. He was on the sick list now, and it has been seen how much the Form sympathized with him.

The Third wondered what was going to happen. Some very sanguine youths hoped that there would be no more lessons till Selby was on his pins again. But that was not at all probable. One of the other masters, or the Head, would doubtless take them at evening preparation. But who was going to take the regular lessons in the Form-room?

"Some rotten prefect, very likely," said Wally, with a grin. "The Head won't bother about getting a man in Selby's place, just for a few days. Well, if they put a prefect in charge of us, we'll give him a high old time!"

"We will, rather!" agreed Jameson. "Especially if it's one of your rotten School House prefects!"

Wally glared at his class.
 "If it's a School House prefect, you'll jolly well behave yourself, young Jameson. There's nothing the matter with old Kildare or Bushdon or Darrel. I was thinking it might be some New House worm, like Mastell or Softon."

"We'll jolly well pull his leg, whoever it is," said Carly Gibson confidently. "A prefect can't handle us. It's up to us to show him that he can't. Never mind which House he belongs to, we'll screw him!"

And this worthy sentiment was generally applauded by the heroes of the Third.

But, as a matter of fact, none of the prefects showed any eagerness for the task.

Perhaps they remembered the time when Knox had taken the Fourth, during an absence of Mr. Lathorn. Knox had had the time of his life. And the Third were more trouble than the Fourth. Neither School House nor New House prefects jumped at the chance of distinguishing themselves.

Perhaps their obvious reluctance prevented the Head from assigning the duty to one of them.

The Third, in fact, were not in great demand.

As no announcement had been made, the lads were beginning to hope that there would be no lessons that morning. But when the bell went, they trooped into the Form-room as usual, prepared to spend the morning in playing leap-frog if a master did not turn up.

But a master did turn up.
 Monsieur Morry, the French master, came in. He was not looking happy. He had had experience enough of the

Third in the French class, not to anticipate a happy time in taking charge of them entirely.
 "Bonjour, mes enfants!" said Monsieur Morry.
 "Bonjour, monco," said D'Arcy misce. "It isn't French this morning, sir."

Monsieur Morry smiled benignly.
 "Est is quite correct, et it is not French this morning," he agreed. "But as doctair have request me to take charge of us Form, owing zat Mr. Selby have an lamentable illness."

"I treat the Third glared.
 "Their vague hopes of 'no lessons' vanished at once. And they were indignant. It wasn't French that morning; and all schoolboys are conservative. A change in the established order of things did not recommend itself to them. Messico was, as Wally admitted, a good little man. But there ought to have been no French lesson that morning, and so the Third were rebellious. And Messico was such a kind and gentle little man that it was a safe pasture to pull his leg. He was very different from Mr. Selby, who had the lamentable illness."

"I hope zat we go on vir ourselves most pleasant vir you amouse," said Monsieur Morry. "I am vire zat you all try to be verree good vire zat your Form-master shall have no illness, s'et-co-pas?"

"We're always good, sir," said Wally demurely.
 "Sometimes a little misunderstood, sir."

Monsieur Morry coughed.
 "Oui, oui, zat is so. Ve vill now commence vir us."

First lesson passed off in an orderly manner; the Third were pulling themselves together, so it were. Monsieur Morry affected not to notice the incessant whispering from form to form. Messico's patience was wasted on the heady young rascals. The lads were not given to deep thinking. All they noted was the sign of weakness in the master, which was an encouragement to disorder. And they were held down so firmly under the thumb of Mr. Selby that they really felt themselves entitled to a little relaxation when the pressure was relaxed.

Second lesson was English history—a subject in which Messico might have been a little better posted than he was. He had Mr. Selby's books to guide him; but, as a matter of fact, he was very hazy about the past happenings in Angletierre. The Third spotted that at once. They prepared to enjoy themselves. This was ever so much better than Selby.

"'Tat is zat next lesson?" was Messico's first inquiry.
 "English history, sir," said Wally.

"Verree good. I find zat book in vire instant. 'Tat is se period zat you shall take?"

"Ay one you like, sir," said Wally liberally.
 "I mean, vere did you leave off vir Monsieur Selby?"

"'Tat were doing the reign of King Cole, sir," said D'Arcy misce.
 "Zank you, say boy?"

The Third Form heavily expated. Monsieur Morry began to search through a superficial volume for that celebrated monarch King Cole. He was so suddenly ignorant of Angletierre that he was unacquainted with the fact that such a monarch had never reigned in Merry England, even in the most remote times. He consulted the index without result. He could find Charles among the kings, and Caroline and Charlotte among the queens, but Cole was not to be found.

"You're not used to our books, sir," said Wally. "We had just started the reign of King Cole, sir. Of course, you know all about King Cole!"

"Parfaitement!" stammered Messico, who knew that it would be an end of all authority if he confessed ignorance.

"One of my national ballads is written about him, sir," said Wally, with an owl-like gravity. "You may have heard it, sir. It goes:

"'Old King Cole was a merry old soul,
 And a merry old soul was he, he, he!
 He called for his pipe, and he called for his glass,
 And he called for his fiddlers three—ee-ee!"

"'Zat is a verree prettie ballad, seon gawcoo," said poor Messico. "But you must not sing in se Form-room."

Vat time did the King Cole reign, D'Arcy misce?"

"Just after King Herbert, sir."
 "Verree good!" said Moscoe, giving up the volume in despair, and trusting for guidance to the information he gleaned from the Third as he went along. "You answer, Jameson. Was King Cole as son of King Herbert?"

"His grandson, sir," stammered Jameson.
 "Verree good. Now you, Gibson, you will tell me in which year King Cole he shall reign via himself."

"Oss wassh oar central!" said Carly Gibson.
 Monsieur Morry looked hard at Carly Gibson; but that youth's innocent face looked almost angelic in its simplicity.

"Yat was as name of as wife of King Cole, Hobbs?"

"Sally, sir," said Hobbs.
 "There's one of our national ballads about her, sir," said D'Arcy miser. "It's called 'Sally in Our Alley.' Shall I sing it, sir?"

"Non, non, non! How many little infants was sore to King Cole and to Queen Sally, Frayne?"

"Twenty-four, sir," said Frayne.

"Yat!"

"Twenty-four, sir."

"I sink not you must be mistakes, Frayne. Yat is a verree large family."

"They had large families in those days," said D'Arcy miser.

"Ahem! Ye will take a later period—as eighteenth century."

"Malplaquet, sir," said Jameson, "where we beat the French."

"Hurn! Tell me anoocher battle zat was later as zat."

"Quebec, sir," yelled Hobbs, "where we beat the French."

"Ciel!" murmured Monsieur Morry. "I do not like none boys. I sink zat ye will devote our attention to no nineteenth century. You, Frayne—"

"Waterloo, sir," howled Frayne, "where we beat the French."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monsieur Morry closed his book with a snap.

"You sail not lat like zat in class!" he exclaimed.

"Moreover, zat is tooching of rich fee to lat. Speak, you, of as battles on so sea. You, Hobbs."

"Tradaigar, sir, where we beat the French."

"Ha, ha, ha!" The expression on Monsieur Morry's face was too much for the Third, and they gave a howl of laughter.

"Taisez-vous!" shouted Monsieur Morry. "Silence via you, anrrly boys! I no like none manners. Every boy will take you hundred lines of as hearteds!"

"Oh arrnab!"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

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Some of the Third giggled, and Monsieur Morry looked a little suspicious. He went on hoastly.

"Yat King came after zie King Cole?" he inquired.

"Yes anoocher me, Hooley?"

"King Charles the Tenth, sir," said Hooley.

"Yat was as principal happenings of as reign of King Charles as Tenth, Hucker?"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Hucker.

"Yat shall you say, Hucker?"

Wally put up his hand.

"Please, shall I tell Hucker, sir?"

"Parfaitement. You may go on, D'Arcy miser."

"The reign of Charles the Tenth is celebrated for the great earthquake at Stockpoel," said D'Arcy miser, in a stag-arriv voice, as if he were reciting a lesson. "There was also the battle between the Bermoodsey Chickens and the Linzhouse Sloggers, and the civil war between Lancashire and New York, called the Wars of the Nones."

Monsieur Morry looked so hard at D'Arcy miser that the young rascal had the grace to lower his eyes. Moscoe took up his book again.

"I sink zat we take anoocher period," he said. "I will ask you for as dates of some of as famous battles. You shall tell me of a great battle in as Middle Ages."

"Creay, sir," said Wally at once, "where we beat the French."

"I sink zat I keep order, and zat you not for to lat for noising in zie class!" said Moscoe.

The Third exchanged furious glances. Matters had been going very nicely from their point of view, and they were enjoying themselves, and it was too bad for Moscoe to come down like this. As Wally murmured wrathfully, it was as bad as having Sally back again. The Third Form were wrothy, and they proceeded to make that fact known. From words they proceeded to actions.

Monsieur Morry felt a sudden sting on his cheek during the next lesson. He spun round, clapping his hand to his cheek, and then something caught him on the ear.

"Mes Dieu!" ejaculated Moscoe, clapping his ear. "I sink zat zere is a wasp, isn't it? It is verree early in se year for as wasp to come via himself. Ciel! Zere it is vuzee more, and I am stung anoocher time! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! It was not a wasp at all! Some wicked boy in zie class, he have a wicked catapult! Zat boy stand out!"

Nobody moved. The owner of the catapult had slipped it into his pocket, and sat looking as innocent as he could.

"No takers," murmured Wally.

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

"You shall all be wicked boys," said poor Moscoe. "I wish not to strike you—I mean, to cause you to lay stick—but as it is not set out I shall stand. So next boy not goes to lad I came him vis stick."

Monsieur Morry turned to the desk for Mr. Selby's case. Then he fairly jumped off the floor as a little ball, made of blotting-paper and ink, caught him in the neck. Moscoe clutched and rummaged inside his collar, gasping. He raved in French for several whole minutes, and then pointed a ferocious finger at the door. "Go out vis you! I takes you no more! Away vis you—avey! You are dummies!"

"Hurray!" ejaculated Wally. The Third, only too happy to find that they were "dummies," opened for the door without giving Monsieur Morry time to think twice. The Form-room was cleared almost in a twinkling. Monsieur Morry dabbed at the ink on his neck, breathing fury. He rushed away to his room for a clean collar. He rubbed down again with a spotted collar, but his temper still in the same state. As the Head came out of the Sixth Form-room Moscoe rushed up to him. Dr. Holmes regarded the excited Frenchman in astonishment.

"Monsieur Holmes—"
"My dear Monsieur Morry, what ever is the matter?" enquired the Head.

"I take you no more."
"What?"

"You have request me not I take you, and I do my best, remember, but I take you no more. Now not I ask, I believe not set out was a King Cole in Angletree—"
"—as do not. Is it set out was a King Cole?"

"—an entirely satisfactory personage," stammered the Head. "Selby's case?"

"Is it set he shall have twenty-down children?"

"How my case!"

"You say pull as feet, as you say in English—say have pull me as feet. I take you no more, vis air outtake and set air ink stings."

The Head's brow grew very stern.

"You mean that the Third have been disrespectful, Monsieur Morry? I will punish the whole Form most severely—"

"No, son!" exclaimed Moscoe, who was kind-hearted as he was capable. "I wish not set! I beg of you not to do set. But I wish not you excuse set I take you no more."

To which the Head assented at once; it was only too evident that Moscoe had not had success with the Third. Wally & Co. were pretty certain that Moscoe would set take them in the afternoon, and they rejoiced in their success. And the great question in the Third Form at St. Jim's now was, "Who'll be the next?"

CHAPTER 6.

Herr Schneider Takes Charge.

THOM MERRY & Co. found the heroes of the Third in the quadrangle when they came out after morning lessons. Wally & Co. were evidently in great spirits, from which the Sixth fellows could guess that the temporary master of the Third had not had a good time.

"What have you been doing this morning?" asked Tom Merry.

"Moscoe," said Wally cheerfully, "that blessed little Froggy had the cheek to take us! As if he could handle the Third! Why, we pull his leg in the French class sometimes. And to think he could handle us for a whole morning! Poof! I fancy he won't bother us again this afternoon!"

"You young sweep!" said Talbot. "Moscoe is a jolly good sort, and you ought to go easy with him. Don't you know we're allied with France now?"

"Ye—," said Wally. "Ehmed if I thought of that! Forget clean about the Oughting Cordials. Still, it was like his cheek to take the Third!"

"I should jolly well say so!" exclaimed Hobbs. "I'm up against anybody who takes the Third! We're entitled to a holiday till old Selby comes round. That's how I take the case."—No. 311.

look at it. We shall have to knuckle under then, but we're not standing anybody else. Down with 'em!"

"Why, you ferocious little scunt!" said Tom Merry.

"Down with 'em!" repeated Hobbs truculently. "Let 'em put a perfect oval us, that's all! We'll give him a high old time!"

"Hear, hear!" said the fags unanimously.

"I've been telling Miss Marie about it," said Wally.

"She was in the quad when we came out. Made big laugh like anything. She said that, if she were our Form-master, she'd box our ears. Like to see a Form-master boxing my ears!"

"Let's give the lanky little second-year a licking for Moscoe!" suggested Mussy Lowther.

"That's rather a good idea!" said Talbot, laughing.

"Oh, come off!" said Wally disdainfully. "You go and look through back numbers of 'Chuckles,' Lowther, for your comic column in the 'Weekly'!"

"I never do!" roared Lowther wrathfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You do!" yelled Wally, as he beat a strategic retreat.

"I've seen you! They're all out of 'Chuckles'—all the good ones, anyway! Yah!"

And Wally fled.

"Ehmed if I see anything to cackle at in that kid's book!" said Lowther crossly, as his cheeks flushed. "I tell you I never—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My comic column in the 'Weekly' is better than 'Chuckles'; and if there's a slight resemblance between some of the jokes—why—why—"

"These things will happen," agreed Tom Merry.

"These blessed coincidences are always occurring. Great minds go on together!"

"Oh, rah!" said Lowther seriously. "That lanky young villain wants a licking! I don't think Selby gives him enough. I jolly well hope they'll get old Schneider this afternoon instead of Moscoe."

"Ha, ha! That would be a sell for the Third!"

Such a dreadful possibility had not even occurred to Wally & Co. It did not occur to them till the afternoon when they went in for lessons, wondering who was going to "take" them. If it was a prefect, they were perfectly ready to prove to any prefect at St. Jim's that he was not equal to handling the Third Form. Their faces fell at the sight of Herr Schneider sitting at the master's desk.

Herr Schneider looked at them grimly. The fags filed into their places with dejected looks. Herr Schneider was evidently there to take them for the afternoon, and Herr Schneider was very different from Monsieur Morry. They knew that well enough from their experiences with him in the German class. Herr Schneider had to drive the elements of German into the heads of the Third, and his idea seemed to be that knowledge had to be driven in like a nail—with blows repeated ad lib. till it was driven home.

"Good-afternoon to you, my pops!" said Herr Schneider.

"It—it isn't German this afternoon, sir," said Wally feebly.

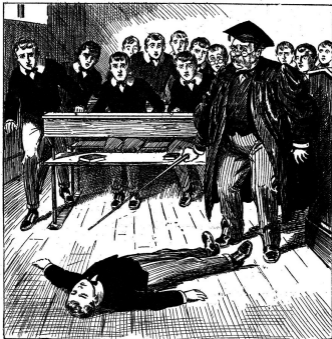
"That is what you are mistaken, Dicksy-minor. I have hear that you have trouble with Monsieur Morry this morning. I have hear about King Cole last morn' you, Ja, ja!"

"I think that there will be your change in die room die afternoon, nicht war? I think that if den is possible I make somebody sorry sorry for that. Die afternoon we done German, and nothing but German!"

The Third Form simply gasped. Herr Schneider was too cautious to trust himself among the quick-wits of the usual lessons, as poor little Moscoe had done. The whole afternoon was to be devoted to Herr Schneider's special subject—German. And, as German was the best-hated lesson the Third ever underwent, and Herr Schneider the best-hated master after Mr. Selby, their feelings may be imagined.

Herr Schneider began with a heavy hand. He was not averse to showing that he could handle the scrubby fags better than Monsieur Morry. He kept a pointer in his hand, and he used it on the slightest provocation, or sometimes without any provocation at all.

Before an hour had elapsed, there was not a set of knuckles in the Third Form at St. Jim's that was not smarting.



There was a gasp from the Third. The pointer had scudded on Wally's head with a loud crack. It had not hit him fair and square, or he would have been very much hurt indeed. It had slid off the side of his head—and Wally's head was remarkably hard. But he lay on the floor without sound or motion. Herr Schneider staggered back a pace, breathing stercorously. All his rages were gone now. What had he done? (See Chapter 4.)

But the show was very orderly. The slightest sign of disorder brought the pointer into play, and it hurt.

But, though they were orderly, the Third were boiling with rage. This was worse than Selby. Their dreams of license and liberty during the absence of their Form-master were over. If Herr Schneider kept them at German until Mr. Selby was well, there would soon not be a rag in the Third who would not be yearning for Mr. Selby's recovery. After an hour their heads were aching with German verbs, and their knuckles with the German master's pointer.

And the dreary lesson dragged on. Another hour of it, and Wally felt that German verbs and substantives, conjugations and declensions, were buzzing in his head like bees in a hive. He murmured to Jameson that, if the Herr didn't release it soon, he would let fly at him with the inkpot. And the moment he had delivered himself of that whisper, Herr Schneider's voice rapped out:

"D'Arcy minor, is it not tat I have told you tat you speak not in class?"

"Ow! Yes, sir," mumbled Wally.

"But you speak to Chamezon, isn't it?"

"No, sir."

"Vat! I see you speak! You tell me van big lie, D'Arcy minor!"

"I've told you the truth, sir," said Wally stubbornly.

"I don't know anybody named Chamezon."

"Vat! Tat poj best you is Chamezon?"

Wally shook his head.

"His name's Jameson, sir. I spoke to him, but I didn't speak to any Chamezon."

"Dry up, you fathered!" murmured Jameson. "You'll get scalped!"

"I don't care!" growled Wally. "What is the Prussian beast doing in our Form-room, anyway? Tain't German to-day."

"Vat did you say, D'Arcy minor?"

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"N-nothing, sir."

"I order you to tell me at once what it is that you have said to Chamsonee."

"I—I'd rather not, sir," stammered Wally.

"I order you, dummkopf!"

"Oh, very well, sir," said Wally, "What is the Prussian beast doing in our Form-rooms?"

Herr Schneider turned almost green. The fags chuckled; they could not help it. The chuckle died away suddenly as Herr Schneider's furious glance swept over the class. The fat Herr strode towards Wally, clatching the pointer. He looked so dangerous that Wally jumped up and backed away. He was quite alarmed.

"Gum haps!" roared Herr Schneider.

Wally did not "gum." He backed away as far as he could, and the German master, who had quite lost his temper, leaped over the desk and swiped at him with the pointer. Wally dodged, and unfortunately caught the pointer with his head. He gave a terrific howl, and fell on the floor.

There was a gasp from the Third. The pointer had sounded on Wally's head with a loud crack. It had not hit him fair and square, or he would have been very much hurt indeed. It had slid off the side of his head—and Wally's head was remarkably hard. But he lay on the floor, without sound or motion.

Herr Schneider staggered back a pace, breathing sternly. All his rage was gone now. What had he done?

Jameson gazed down at his chum, extended on the floor, in horror. The Third Form were silent and awe-stricken. Wally lay on the floor like a log.

"Wally!" muttered Jameson, bending down over the scamp of the Third. "Wally, old man!" Jameson's voice was husky.

To his astonishment, as he bent over Wally, one of Wally's eyes opened, and then half closed in a peculiar way. Jameson jumped. The hapless youth, who was apparently extended senseless on the floor, was winking at him. It was an instantaneous wink, and when Wally's eyes were closed again, and he lay to all seeming insensible, Jameson "caught on" at once. He leaped up excitedly.

"You've killed him!" he shouted.

CHAPTER 7. Completely Dished.

HERR SCHNEIDER trembled. The fat German master was so white as chalk, shaking like a jelly. Jameson's horrified words rang through the Form-rooms, and there was a horrified murmur from the fags. Only Jameson had seen that horrid wink.

"You've killed him!" wailed Jameson. "Boo-hooch! Wally's killed! Boo-hoo-hooch!"

"Senseless!" panted Herr Schneider. "Hold to tongue mit you, Chamsonee! Tat pay have fallen down mit himself. Let me tat I gum dere."

The fags crowded away from the form, and Herr Schneider bent over Wally, and lifted him up, and carried him off before the desks. Wally lay as stiff as a poker in the fat arms of the German master. Herr Schneider laid him on the floor, and blinked at him through his spectacles. There was a slight trickle of red under Wally's thick hair, where the pointer had barked the skin, and a bruise was forming. At the sight of that crimson trickle, Otto Schneider almost fainted.

"Ach! Mein Gott!" he gasped. "Mein Gott! Dis is dreadful! I tink tat tat pay he knock his head on te desk you tat he fall, isn't it?"

"You've fractured his skull with the pointer!" wailed Jameson. "Poor old Wally! He's killed! Boo-hooch!"

"Mein pay, vake up!" muttered Herr Schneider, bending over the motionless fag. "I did not mean to strike you on te Kopf—I mean te head. Tat was an accident. I say nothing more about your shock. I not punish you. Vake up, like a good pay."

Dead silence from Wally. But now there burst out a

chorus of lamentation from Curly Gibson and Joe Frayne and Hobbs, who had probably received some sign from Jameson. The four young rascals "boo-hooed" in chorus, till Herr Schneider trembled with the apprehension that some master might be attracted into the Form-rooms, and behold D'Arvy miser lying there like one dead.

"Silence mit you!" gasped Herr Schneider. "Hear me? I forbid you tat you make tat dreadful noise."

"Boo-hooch!"

"He's killed!"

"Let's go to the Head," said Hobbs. "The Head ought to know. There'll have to be an inquest!"

Herr Schneider shuddered. Bitterly he reported him of having struck that hasty, savage blow.

"I forbid you to leave te Form-rooms!" he exclaimed.

"Step vete you vas, all mit you!"

"Boo-hooch!"

"He's murdered him!" gibed Jameson. "Just like they murder the kids in Belgium! Boo-hooch!"

"Silence, Chamsonee!"

"I'm going to the 'Ead!" exclaimed Joe Frayne. "The police ought to be sent for. Let's call in the porters!"

"Will you hold to tongue!" gasped Herr Schneider. "Dere is nothing fer te police here. Tat pay he is simply stus."

"He's dead—murdered!" groaned Jameson. "Poor old Wally! Boo-hooch!"

"Call the 'Ead!"

"Shout for help!"

"Help—help!" yelled Healey.

Herr Schneider was almost at his wits' end. If the Head should come in, and see Wally stretched there, the inquiry into what had happened would most assuredly cost the German master his post at St. Jim's. And posts like that were not easy to obtain afresh, especially in war time. Herr Schneider's concern was for himself. He shouted to the fags to be silent, but he was not obeyed. And even Herr Schneider was not inclined to use the pointer again.

He dropped on his fat knees beside Wally, and felt the fag's heart with a trembling hand.

"Silence mit you! He is only stus," said Herr Schneider. "I tink tat he knock his head we he fall down."

"It was the pointer!" howled Jameson. "Boo-hooch!"

"Ach! Mein Gott! Dere, he moves!"

A deep groan came from Wally. Herr Schneider was more delighted to hear it than if it had been the sweetest strain of music on one of his beloved German bands. He simply pointed with relief. The janitor was coming to.

Groom!

"He lives!" exclaimed Jameson dramatically, in excellent imitation of an exclamation he had heard at Wayland Theatre Royal.

Groom!

"Mein dear pay, vake up!" murmured Herr Schneider. "It is not tat you are much hurt; it was pat a tap on te head. I am sorry tat I did tap you like tat."

Wally's eyes opened, and he gave a deep and hair-raising groan that thrilled the fags of the Third, and thrilled Herr Schneider still more deeply. If anybody should pass the door and hear that dreadful groan—

"I—I am dying!" said Wally faintly. "I forgive you, Herr Schneider."

"Mein pay, you are not dying—"

"I forgive you!" said Wally, who seemed determined to forgive Herr Schneider whether the German master liked it or not. "I forgive you. I know you Prussians can't help being beasts!"

"Mein Gott! I—"

"I forgive you! I hope the hangman won't get hold of you!" said Wally nobly. "Good-bye, Joe! I'm going!"

"Boo-hooch!" wailed Frayne. "P-p-poor old Wally! Boo-hooch!"

Wally's eyes closed again. Herr Schneider, almost in despair, shook him, and Wally's eyes came open again quite suddenly. It was not exactly the orthodox way to

restore a dying flag, but it seemed to be effective in Wally's case.

"Leggs!" exclaimed Wally involuntarily. "Oh! Help! Fetch the polios! Help!"

"Silence, D'Arny minor! Hold that tongue with you! You are not much hurt!"

"Let him go!" exclaimed Jameson indignantly. "Let him die in peace!"

"Hoak-hoak!"

"I tell you 'at he is not trying!" shrieked Herr Schneider. "Get me some water with you, and I will give him brandy faster 'an naffer 'as!"

Herr Schneider looked round desperately for some water to restore Wally. There was no water to be seen, and in his desperation he seized a bottle of ink to use for the purpose. But the dying youth had one eye on him, and he sat up as Herr Schneider rushed back with the ink.

"I—I feel better now," said Wally faintly. "Some of you fellows help me up!"

They helped him up, and Wally slung heavily to Jameson and Joe Frayne. His legs did not seem to be able to support him.

"Help me to the Head!" murmured Wally. "The Head must know about this. We're not safe with Herr Schneider!"

The German master suppressed a strong German word. He was in the hands of the scamp of the Third now, and he knew it. Wally had only to walk into Dr. Helmer's study, and show that out on his head, backed up by the evidence of the fags about what had happened. Herr Schneider sturpely squirmed at the thought of his interview with the Head afterwards.

"D'Arny minor, stop where you are, poy!"

"I don't feel safe here, sir!"

"I order you! I am sorry 'at I strike you on 'e head; 'at was an accident! Mein Gott! I disown to class. You go and bathe your head at vasser, D'Arny minor, and your friends may go with you. I will naffer, naffer take 'is Form again, Nefsky! Ask! I rader have Mr. Selby's cold 'an take his Form. Mein Gott!"

Wally closed one eye—the eye that was furthest from Herr Schneider.

"Very well, sir; I don't want to say anything more about it," he said. "I know you Prussians can't help this sort of thing."

Herr Schneider clenched his hands, and Wally came very near getting a harder one than the pointer had given him. But the Herr checked himself. He felt that it would not do.

"You may go, poys!" he said.

The fags marched out of the Form-room. Herr Schneider was anxious for Wally to get out of sight before the other forms came out. Wally proceeded upstairs, manfully supported on either side by Jameson and Frayne. They proceeded to the Third-Form dormitory, followed by the rest of the fags, all of whom by this time had tumbled to the fact that Herr Schneider's Prussian leg had been pulled.

Herr Schneider left the Form-room after them, breathing hard. He sought the Head in his study, and respectfully but firmly declined to take charge of the Third Form any longer. He had no "gumplains" to make, but he declined.

At the dormitory Wally staggered in weakly, but as soon as the door was closed he had a sudden and remarkable recovery. He jerked himself away from Jameson and Frayne, who were grinning now, and proceeded to dance a horrapo among the beds.

"Felled, diddled, diked, and dees!" trilled Wally.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh! My head aches! But didn't I sink him a treat, what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blissed if I didn't think you were brained, until you winked at me!" gasped Jameson.

"Oh, what a jape—what a thumping jape! Schneider was in a blue funk! He was thinking about policemen and handcuffs and hangings—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We've clipped the wings of the Schneider-bird!" cheered Wally. "He's not going to take the Third any more! Hurrah for us! I wonder who'll be the next?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no doubt whatever that the scamp of the Third had clipped the wings of the "Schneider-bird." And it was a very interesting question, who would be next? The heroes of the Third were very far from guessing.

CHAPTER 8.

What Larks!

TALBOT of the Shell came into Tom Merry's study, where the Terrible Three were busy with their preparation. There was a peculiar expression upon Talbot's face, which attracted the attention of his chums at once.

"What's the news?" asked Tom Merry. "The Third on the war-path again? I hear that Schneider is fed up with them, and has checked it."

"No wonder," said Talbot, laughing. "I've heard the story. I've just seen Miss Marie—Wally told her the story, the cheeky little scamp. He said he thought it would amuse her. I think it did, too. But that isn't the news. The Third have got a new master—and I don't think you'll guess who it is!"

"One of the prefects?" asked Tom.

"No. They haven't been keen to come forward."

"Shows their sense," remarked Mooty Lowther. "Whoever takes the Third will have his hands full, especially now they've been running wild. I'm beginning to think that Selby was a bit justified in giving them the mailed fist, after all. They need it."

"But who's the master?" asked Manners. "Not the Head? He wouldn't have time to take the Third."

"Not the Head," said Talbot, laughing. "Quite a young person."

"Blissed if I can guess who it is, if it isn't one of the prefects, then," said Tom Merry, puffed. "Surely not one of the Fifth! Not Catta?"

"Younger than Catta!"

"What! Not a junior?" exclaimed the Terrible Three with one voice.

"Not a junior," laughed Talbot.

"Who, then? This is getting interesting."

"Miss Marie!"

"Ha!"

"What!"

"Which!"

"It's a fact!" said Talbot.

"Miss Marie take the Third!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Gawson!"

"Oh, what larks!" trilled Mooty Lowther.

"I was surprised," grinned Talbot. "You see, Marie knew that the Head was bothered about it, as Selby shows no sign of mending just yet. And she's doing nothing just at present—there are no invalids excepting Selby, and Miss Finch is looking after him. So she thought she would make herself useful, and get the Head out of the difficulty. She has had experience with a class of kids long ago, in Angel-Alley—she's a good teacher—though, of course, the Angel-Alley kids were a bit different from the Third Form at St. Jim's."

"Ha, ha! I suppose so! Well, this takes the cake! And the Head agreed—"

"He jumped at it," said Talbot. "He was going to ask Kildare—put it to him on the grounds of duty and so forth, it seems—and Kildare couldn't have refused. But Marie's offer has got him out of the fix. He was surprised at first, but he got Marie through a viva voce exam, and found that she knew quite enough to deal with the Third—except Latin, of course. Latham is going to have the pleasure of driving the classics into their heads, and take them in prep in the evenings. Marie is going to be Form-master for the rest."

"Oh, my hat!"

"And—and the Head likes the idea?" ejaculated Manners.

"So he told Miss Marie."

Tom Merry rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"They've scragged Mosen, and they've scragged the Hax," he said. "How is a girl going to keep them in order?"

"I think the Head has an idea that chivalry will come

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into it, you know—sort of feel on their honour not to give trouble."

"Precious little chivalry in the Third Form," said Leuther, with a shake of his head. "More cheek than chivalry, I think. Why, it will be a regular bazaar for them. Miss Marie will be the good-natured to report the young beggars, and they'll do exactly as they like."

Talbot nodded.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I thought something of the sort," he admitted. "Miss Marie seems to think that she can manage them. It may work. I don't know. When she had a class in Angel Alley, in connection with the Little Sisters' Mission, she managed the grabby little rascals first rate. One of her present pupils was among them—that was before your uncle sent Frayne to St. Jim's, Tom."

"And how did she get on with Frayne?" asked Tom Merry.

"Topping, she says. And she expects Joe to hook her up in the Third Form room. He's a loyal little beggar, so I dare say he will. Wally has chizzed up with Marie, so I dare say he will be as civilized as a Third Form kid can be. But the best—"

"It will be a giddy beano!"

"A regular pandemonium!" grinned Messers. "I can see Miss Marie frowning in tears to the Head, to say she can't keep it up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hoised! If I shouldn't like a front seat in the Third Form-room to-morrow," chuckled Leuther. "They ought to give us a holiday to look on."

"But you Miss Marie—won't keep it up after to-morrow morning," said Tom Merry. "There'll be a new master wanted in the afternoon."

"I was thinking," said Talbot, "I suppose we got some of those young rascals, and talked to them like Dutch ushers. We could explain that it was up to them to be chivalrous, and make things easy for a lady teacher—I dare say they won't think of it for themselves."

"Good idea," said Tom Merry. "When we've done our prep we'll go and see Wally."

The Terrible Three hurried through their work. They were anxious to see what effect the news would have on the Third Form.

It was very interesting to see how Wally & Co. took it.

The worst of it was that, after dealing so successfully with Monsieur Merry and Herr Schneider, the heroes of the Third felt that it was up to them to keep on the way they had started. They had escaped all punishment for their unruly proceedings so far. That had encouraged them, of course. Moseo had been too tender-hearted to have punished—and Herr Schneider had been too anxious to keep that incident of Wally's injury strictly dark. So the Third had come off scot-free—and their success and impunity excited them to fresh endeavours. Indeed, it was quite probable that when Mr. Selby recovered, and returned to his duties, he would find his Form very considerably out of hand.

Prep finished, the Terrible Three accompanied Talbot to the Third Form room. Mr. Latham, the master of the Fourth, had taken the Third in preparation—and had found them very noisy and troublesome. Little Mr. Latham was very glad to get out of the Form-room when his kitchen duties were finished. He had called to or three of the boys, but the young rascals were hardened to that—Mr. Latham's coming was simply nothing in comparison with what Mr. Selby had accustomed them to. After the Fourth Form-master was gone, they chuckled and grinned gleefully, and Wally scratched his palms together to show how little his tough skin had been hurt.

There was plenty of noise in the Third Form-room.—No. 321.

Form-room when the Shell fellows arrived there. As they opened the door, they heard the Third roaring a chorus, apparently of their own composition.

"Old Selby's got a cold!

Old Selby's got a cold!

Harrah, harrah, harrah!

Old Selby's got a cold!"

"Topping!" said Tom Merry. "I didn't know there were poets in the Third. Is there any more at home like that?"

"There's a third verse," said Wally, with a snarl. "Go it, ye cripples!"

"Moseo has slung his hook!

Moseo has slung his hook!

Harrah, harrah, harrah!

Moseo has slung his hook!"

"You'd better let the Head hear that," said Meety Leuther. "You sure he will enjoy it. Or Selby! Go and sing it under the sanatorium windows, and give him a treat."

"We're not going to stand much more from Selby," said Wally disdainfully. "I can tell you, we've made up our minds about that. When Selby comes back, we're going to make him understand quite plainly that we don't want any of his old lark."

"And we're going to make everybody sit up who takes charge of us!" announced Hobbs proudly. "I expect it will be a perfect treat! Well, I'm sorry for that prefect, that's all!"

"That's what we've come to tell you," said Talbot, laughing. "I thought you'd like to know the news at once."

"You know who it's going to be?" asked Wally eagerly. "Get it off your chest, then! Is it Kildare, Mastoth, Darrel!"

"It's Miss Marie!"

"WHAT?"

The Third Form simply gasped.

"Gibson!" shouted Wally.

"Robert Injun!" said Talbot.

Wally stared at him incredulously. But when Talbot said "Robert Injun," it was "Robert Injun," Wally had to believe in. And when it fully dawned upon him that he would find Miss Marie in the Third Form, he said he would find Miss Marie in the Third Form.

"Miss Marie! Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my only Aunt Jane! What larks!"

"Oh, what giddy larks!" yelled curly Gibson.

The Shell fellows looked at one another dazedly. The realization that the news had given "the news" seemed to indicate what kind of reception they were likely to give their new Form-master.

"Oh, this is too good to be true!" gasped Jansson. "Why, we'll do just what we like. We won't do any lessons. I know that!"

"Not a giddy beano!" said Wally.

"We'll have hop-frog in the morning, and I'll bring in some herrings to cook."

"We can make some toffee on the Form-room fire," said Hobbs. "Ever so much better than toffee."

"Heer, heer!"

"I say, you young bouders," said Talbot seriously, "as you're going to have a lady in charge of you, it's up to you to play up, you know!"

"Well, we're going to play up!" said Wally, with a chuckle. "Oh, what larks!"

"Chivalry, you know," urged Tom Merry. "It's your plain duty to make everything go as smoothly as possible, and not worry Miss Marie more than you can help."

"Let me catch anybody worrying

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Splash! There was a choking yell from Mr. Selby as he disappeared headlong into the water. Wally started up-gasping. He had done it now. Mr. Selby was suspended in three feet of water—his hat was floating away, and his red and furious face was peering wildly above the surface of the pond. (See Chapter 2.)

her!" said Wally triumphantly. "Miss Marie is a jolly good sort. Any fellow worrying her will get a thick ear!"

"Then you've going to behave yourself?"

"Don't we always behave ourselves?" demanded Wally.

"Aha! Yes. But a little better than usual."

"Certainly. Every chap will be on his best behaviour; I'll see to that! Nice and polite, of course," said Wally.

"And you'll do your work—same as for Selby?"

"No jolly fear!"

"But Miss Marie is coming here to teach you," urged Talbot.

"I'll teach Miss Marie how to make coffee; that will be more interesting," said Wally. "What does she care about silly things and quoms that have been dead for thousands of years? What does she care for vulgar fractions? But! We shall be quite a happy family here to-morrow. Of course, we sha'n't do any work!"

"Ear, ear!" said Frayne.

"Miss Marie depends on you, Frayne, as an old friend," said Talbot.

"Well, I'm gom' to be good, ain't I?" said Frayne. "I'm gom' to do exactly wot Master Wally does!"

"Then you'll be awfully good!" said Monty Lowther sarcastically—"good beyond the dreams of Little Eric!"

"Oh, don't you be funny here!" said Wally. "Keep that for the comic column in the 'Weekly.' You can put

your own little jokes in there, when you forget to buy 'Chuckles'!"

"You cheeky little beast—"

"Here, shove those Shell fah outside!" said Wally.

"What are they doing in a respectable Form-room anyway?"

"Hear, hear! Chuck 'em out!"

The fags advanced upon the Shell fellows in truestilet array, and Tom Merry & Co. hastily retired from the Form-room. They had not come there for a dust-up with a horde of inky little rascals.

"Looks a jolly prospect for Miss Marie to-morrow," grinned Monty Lowther. "She is going to enjoy herself—perhaps!"

"Well, if they don't behave themselves, suppose we give 'em an awful whooping all round after lessons," suggested Tom Merry.

"Good idea!" said Talbot, laughing. "But perhaps it will be all right."

Judging by the looks and the remarks of the Third-former it was probable that it would be all right.

"Miss Marie!" said Wally, when the Shell fellows were gone. "A girl in charge of the Third Form! Oh, crikey! What larks!"

And Wally's loyal and inky army echoed ecstatically: "What larks!"

CHAPTER 9.

Marie Takes the Third.

"GOOD-MORNING, Miss Marie!"
A crowd of fellows raised their caps as Miss Marie came up to the School House in the morning sunshine.

Early chapel was over, and morning lessons were about to begin; and the new Form-mistress of the Third was punctual.

Marie nodded and smiled as she passed into the House. Wally squeezed Jameson's arm gleefully.

"What larks!" he murmured.

"Oh, my hat!" said Jameson.

Tom Merry & Co. overheard those remarks, and they turned their severest glances upon the scraps of the Third.

"Now, remember, Wally——" began Tom Merry.

"No larks!" said Talbot.

"Bow-wow!" said Wally independently. "Think we don't know how to treat a lady? What do you take us for?"

"There's the bell," said Curly Gibson. "Don't waste time talking to those Shell besidess. Mustn't be late with a lady taking the class."

And the Third marched off cheerfully to their Form-room. They never looked particularly cheerful when they were going into Mr. Selby. Evidently they regarded the change as one for the better.

But just as they reached the Form-room a sudden idea seemed to occur to D'Arcy minor, and he quitted his companions and cut off without a word.

The rest of the Form marched in. Miss Marie was seated at the master's desk, looking quite business-like. She had Mr. Selby's books before her, and was looking at them. The pointer was also there, but, probably only to be used in connection with the blackboard. The idea of Miss Marie using the pointer as a knuckle-rapper, in Mr. Selby's style, made the fags grin. They were not expecting anything of that sort. Everything was going to be nice and friendly.

Wally dashed into the School House breathlessly, and almost ran into his major, who was on his way to the Fourth. Arthur Augustus caught him by the shoulder and stopped him so suddenly that Wally, who was going at full tilt, spun right round his major, and sat down in the quad.

"You see!" shouted Wally.

"Where are you going?" demanded Arthur Augustus sternly. "The bell has rung for classes, and Miss Marie is takin' you this mornin'. I refuse to allow you to play truant this mornin', you young beast!"

"Come on, Gussy!" shouted Blake from the House.

"I am attendin' to my missh, Blake!"

"Lathem will attend to you if you don't buck up, fat-head!"

Wally scrambled up as Jack Blake disappeared in the direction of the Fourth-Form-room. Arthur Augustus promptly collared him.

"Leggo, you see!" howled Wally. "I shall be late!"

"I refuse to allow you to be late, Wally. I am goin' to take you in myself."

"You thumping chump——"

"Come on, you young wascal——"

"You silly see, you'll be late yourself!"

"That does not matter, so long as I prevent you from actin' disrespectfully towards your Form-mistress, you cheeky young wretch! I am surprised at you!"

"Look here——"

"Wats! Come on!"

"I won't, you fathead! I——"

"Wubblak!"

Arthur Augustus exerted himself, and rushed Wally towards the School House. They had the quad to themselves now; all the other fellows were in their Form-rooms. The scamp of the Third struggled desperately; but his major was too much for him, and they staggered into the School House in a brotherly embrace.

"Now will you go quietly?" panted Arthur Augustus.

"You—you—your image!" gasped Wally. "I'm going to get a bouquet for Miss Marie, you blithering jabber-wook!"

"Bad Jove! Why did you not tell me that before, you THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 371.

young man? I quite approve of that, Wally. Your misshs are impovvish."

"Fat lot I care whether you approve or not, you burbling duffer!" growled Wally, as he jerked himself away and bolted from the School House once more.

"Bad Jove!"

Arthur Augustus hesitated, not quite decided whether to go to his Form-room or to pursue Wally and give him a fearful thrashing. Fortunately, he decided in favour of the Form-room, and trotted off there, to receive an imposition for being late.

Meanwhile, Miss Marie had commenced her duties with the Third. They all bade her good-morning in the most affectionate manner, and Hobbs proceeded to remark that it was ever so much better than having an old ratter like Selby there. To Hobbs' surprise, Miss Marie's pretty brow contracted in a frown at that very natural remark.

"Hobbs—your name is Hobbs?" said Miss Marie.

"Yes, Miss Marie!"

"Well, Hobbs, you must not speak disrespectfully of your Form-master, especially to me. I will not give you lines this time——"

"Lines!" ejaculated the astounded Hobbs.

He had never thought of lines in connection with Miss Marie.

"Not this time," said Miss Marie; "but if you speak of Mr. Selby in that manner again I shall have to punish you."

"P-p-punish me!"

"Certainly!"

"But he is an old ratter!" exclaimed Hobbs indignantly. "Why, you know he is, Miss Marie! You must have noticed it," argued Hobbs.

"Shut up, 'Obbs!" said Joe Frayne.

"Shan't!" said Hobbs.

"Look 'ere——"

"Oh, rats! Go and look for your h's!" said Hobbs.

"Why, you cheeky little 'orser——"

"Fathead!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Miss Marie, rapping the desk with the pointer. "Don't you understand that you must not quarrel here?"

"Which I ain't quarrellin', Miss Marie," said Joe Frayne. "I'm only tellin' this cheeky little 'orser——"

"I'm only telling this silly chump——" began Hobbs.

"Go to your places at once!"

"Oh, all right!"

"You must not say that to me," said Miss Marie, trying not to smile. "You must not say 'Oh, all right!' to your Form-master!"

"Well, I can't say 'Yes, sir!' to you, you know," said Hobbs; "you ain't a sir."

"Yes, Miss Marie!"

"Yes, Miss Marie!"

"Now go to your places."

"Oh, all right!" said the inextinguishable Hobbs.

The Third Form went to their places, smiling cheerfully. Miss Marie had noted the absence of Wally. He had not come in yet, owing to the delay his major had caused him.

"D'Arcy minor is not here," said Miss Marie, frowning again.

"He 'ooked it all of a sudden, Miss Marie," said Frayne. "He'll come 'oppin' in in 'arf a me'."

"Don't say 'arf a me'," said Miss Marie gently.

"Try to pronounce the aspirate, Joe."

"Then aspirates is a Mooring assessor!" said Joe.

"He can't do it, Miss Marie," said Curly Gibson; "we always let Joe drop 'em. We give him his head—I mean his 'ead."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You must not laugh in class."

"Certainly not, ma'am!" said Hobbs. "Shut up your heads, you kids! Don't you know better than that? I'll keep 'em in order, Miss Marie. Shall I take the pointer?"

Miss Marie declined that kind offer of Hobbs'; what these sulphurous threats were whispered on all sides of Hobbs, as to what would happen to him if he did take

the pointer. Then the Form-room door opened, and Wally appeared. Miss Marie gave him a severe look.

"You are late for lessons, D'Arcy miser."
"Yes; a few minutes," said Wally carelessly. "I've brought you something. Look here!"

Wally, with the air of a fellow who knew that he had done a ripping thing, triumphantly laid the bouquet on the Form-master's desk. He had raided the Head's garden remorselessly for that bouquet, and had apparently not spared the hothouses. He had not delayed to "fix" it very elegantly, and Miss Marie looked in some surprise at the disorderly heap of various blossoms that he laid on the desk.

"What is that?" she asked. "Is it botany this morning?"

"Botany," said Wally. "We don't do botany!"

"Then what are those flowers for?"

"They're a bouquet," said Wally a little indignantly.

"A what? Oh, a bouquet!"

"For you!" said Wally impressively.

" Bravo, Wally!" sang out the Third, much impressed by that grandissima politeness on the part of their leader.

Wally was looking very pleased with himself. He felt that it wasn't every day at St. Jim's who would have thought of that delicate bit of courtesy—it was really quite nice and refined, just like a girl's school.

"Thank you very much!" said Miss Marie.

"Shall I put 'em in water?" asked Wally eagerly.

"H'm! There isn't anything here to put them in!"

"That's all right! I'll get a jam-jar—"

"No—no—you must get go—"

"I was to be a tick," assured Wally; and, before Miss Marie could make any rejoinder, he had bolted from the Form-room.

Miss Marie pursed her lips a little. If the Third Form had been rebellious, they would have been easier to deal with. This excessive friendliness made it very difficult to establish order.

Wally was more than a "tick"—but he was back very quickly with the jam-jar. The inside of the jam-jar was still sticky with its late contents. Wally had filled it with water, and it had been full to overflowing, but on his way to the Form-room he had stopped a considerable quantity of the water over his trousers. That was a trifle the fog cared nothing about—a little jammy water did not hurt his "bags," in addition to the ink and toffee already adhering to them.

"Here you are!" said Wally, planting the jam-jar on the desk, and beginning to stick the flowers into it.
"There! That looks a treat, doesn't it? I'll tell you what I'll do, Miss Marie—I'll stick foreign stamps outside that jam-jar, all round, and turn it into a handsome ornamental vase!"

"Thank you, Wally! But—"

"It won't be any trouble. Besides, we'd take no end of trouble for you, wouldn't we, you chaps?"

"Yes, rather, Miss Marie!" said all the Third, with one voice.

"We'll do it this morning instead of lessons," said Wally. "All you fellows cut off and get all your old stamps—and you get some gum, Joe—"

"Stop! Stop!" exclaimed Miss Marie, as the fags rose at once. "Keep your places. D'Arcy miser, please go to your place at once!"

"But what about the jar?"

"Never mind that! We are here to do lessons."

"Lessons!" said Wally, in astonishment. "Lessons!"

It seemed that lessons was the very last thing Wally had been thinking of for occupying that morning.

"Yes, certainly! I have taken Mr. Selby's place, and everything must go on just the same as if Mr. Selby were here."

"Oh, my only Aunt Jane!"

"Please go to your desk, Wally."

"I—I, say, Miss Marie, you ain't going to be a bean!" remonstrated Wally.

Marie laughed. She could not help it. Wally grinned, encouraged, and all the Third laughed too. They were getting on quite nicely.

"That's right!" said Wally. "I knew you wouldn't

be a bean, Miss Marie. We have enough lessons with old Selby. Now, about those stamps—"

"You must go to your place at once, Wally. I am waiting to begin lessons."

"Oh, draw it mild!" protested Wally.

"You must not speak like that!"

"Why not?" asked Wally, in surprise.

"And you must not ask me questions. You must do as you are told, or I shall have to cane you!" said Miss Marie as severely as she could.

"Co-o-ome me!" stammered Wally. "Why, I'd—I'd—ahem!—no, I wouldn't! I say, this ain't playing the game, you know. I can't punch a girl's head!"

"Go to your place, D'Arcy miser!" said Miss Marie, quite sharply, rapping the pointer on the desk.

And Wally, with an indignant grunt, went to his place, and first lessons commenced.

CHAPTER 10.

English History.

FIRST lesson passed off quietly.

The Third, realising that Miss Marie expected them to work, were astonished at first, but expected to take it as a joke.

So, with that humorous intention, they adopted an attitude of almost preternatural gravity, and addressed Miss Marie as "sir," just as if they had been speaking to Mr. Selby.

Miss Marie, however, was determined not to see the joke. Her manner was quite grave, and by the time the lesson ended the fags were getting restive. They were willing to keep the joke up for half an hour, but not longer.

For second lesson, however, Mr. Latham came in to take the Form, and that lesson was gone through in the usual way, the Third bottling up their exuberant spirits till the Form-master was gone.

Mr. Latham's departure was the signal for a general movement. Wally rose and stretched his arms, and Joe Frayne yawned loudly. Hobbs and Hooley strolled away to the fire and warmed their toes. Corby Gibson sat on his desk, showing his admiring Form-fellows how he could balance a pen on his nose.

Miss Marie rapped on the desk.

"Take your places!"

"Oh, I say, I'm tired," said Wally. "Latham's as awful better. I say, wouldn't you ask the Head to let you take us all the time?"

"I cannot teach you Latin," said Miss Marie.

"That's all right—we don't mind," said Wally.

"Not a bit!" said Jameson. "We'll let it slide."

"What's the good of it, anyway? I always said it was rot."

"Awful rot!" said Hooley.

"Silence in the class!" said Miss Marie. "Take your places at once."

"I'm warming my feet," said Hobbs rebelliously.

"If you do not go to your place at once, Hobbs, I shall give you fifty lines."

Hobbs stared.

"Me! Fifty lines!"

"Yes."

"I jolly well shouldn't do them," said Hobbs.

"Shut up, Hobbs!" shouted Wally. "Haven't I told you you're not to speak Miss Marie. Do you want a thick ear?"

"Yes, if you can give me one," retorted Hobbs.

"I'll jolly soon show you!"

Wally streaked across the Form-room in the direction of Hobbs. Miss Marie was almost in despair, between her champion and the rebel. Hobbs's head was in chancery in a twinkling, and his nose sang through the Form-room. The Third crowded out of their places and made a ring round them, cheering them on delightedly.

"Oh dear!" murmured Marie. "Oh dear!"

Trump! Trump! Trump!

"Take that, you cheeky worm! I'll teach you to cheek Miss Marie!"

"Yes! No! Yaroooh! Yes! All right!" cheered

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the anguished Hobbs, as Wally started again like a steam-hammer. "Oh, my hat! Oh, my eye! Oooogh!"

Wally released his victim, pushing him triumphant. Hobbs sat on the floor and roared.

"All right now, Miss Marie," chuckled Wally. "I'll keep 'em in order! You leave it to me. I'll back you up!"

"D'Arcy miser, take a hundred lines for fighting in the Form-room."

Wally jumped.

"Me!" he gasped.

"Yes. Take your places, all of you!"

"But I was backing you up!" roared the aggrieved Wally.

"You must not do anything of the sort."

"Well, ain't that just like a girl!" said Wally, appealing indignantly to his Form-fellows. "There's no pleasing 'em whatever you do."

Hap! Hap!

"Will you take your places?" exclaimed Miss Marie.

"Oh, I don't mind!" said Wally, sitting down again.

"But I say, you were joking about those lines, weren't you, Miss Marie?"

"Certainly not!"

"I've got to do 'em!"

"Yes."

"Well, I call that rotten. Blessed if I will!" said Wally.

"Yah!" roared Hobbs. "Do your lines, you said! I'm going to do mine."

"That's different," said Wally. "You're a disrespectful little beast!"

"Ear, ear!"

"Silence!" exclaimed the distressed Form-mistress. "The next boy who speaks will be caught!"

"Oh!"

At that dreadful threat the Third relaxed into amazed silence. They began to perceive that Miss Marie was really going to do the Form-master's work, and their indignation knew no bounds. After all their friendliness and politeness this was their reward. They concluded that it was just like a girl. It was not to be a case of "what larks" after all.

Silence and something like order having been restored, Miss Marie proceeded to the next lesson, which was English history—not dealing with the reign of the famous King Cole, however. Hobbs sat dabbling his nose with his handkerchief. His punishment had been severe, and he was inwardly rejoicing over Wally's hundred lines. Wally was burning with indignation. After that hard-earned bouquet—after the gift of the jam-jar, and his generous offer to stick foreign stamps round it and turn it into a handsome vase—after the way he had backed up authority by punishing Hobbs—he was the recipient of a hundred lines. And they were going to work. It was a state of affairs that was hardly to be borne by the enterprising youth who had succeeded in "confusing" Monsieur Morry and Herr Schneider in turn. It began to look as if Miss Marie would have to be kept out too.

"Where did you leave off at last lesson?" inquired Miss Marie.

There was no reply from the Third. They looked grim, and held their tongues. Miss Marie looked at them.

"Do you hear me?"

Silence!

"D'Arcy miser, answer me at once!"

Wally did not speak.

"D'Arcy miser, will you answer me?"

"Certainly!" said Wally at last. "We're only obeying orders."

"What?"

"You said that the next boy who spoke would be caught," said Wally.

The Third-Formers grinned. Miss Marie looked vexed for a moment. The young rascals had caught her.

"That did not refer to the lesson, of course," she said.

"You understand that very well, D'Arcy miser."

"Please, we like to do just as we're told," said Wally breezily.

"Now answer my question," said Miss Marie, changing the subject. "Where did you leave off, please?"

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"Last line?" asked Wally.

"Yes, yes."

"Last time was when Mowse was taking us. We did the reign of King Cole," said Wally.

"What! Really, Wally—"

"Well, you asked me," said Wally. "I'm trying to be exact."

"Where did you leave off with Mr. Selby?"

"Oh, that's a different matter! Reign of Charles II.," said Wally. "Just got past him."

"Very well. Who came after Charles II.?"

"Cromwell."

"What?"

"Cromwell," repeated Wally firmly. "Otherwise called the Lord Protector. He came after Charles II. It was at the battle of Worcester. He came after Charles II., but couldn't catch him."

"You must not make absurd jokes in class, D'Arcy miser. Hobbs, you will tell me which king reigned after Charles II.?"

"George V.," said Hobbs.

"Nonsense! Think before you answer."

"Well, he did, and does," said Hobbs. "You mean to say that George V. reigned before Charles II.? Why, he's still doing it."

"Quite right, Hobbs," said Jameson.

"I mean, which king succeeded Charles II.?" said Miss Marie, with a worried look.

"Ah, that's better! That's how Selby puts it," said Wally approvingly.

"You need not make remarks, D'Arcy miser. You answer my question, Jameson."

Jameson rubbed his nose thoughtfully. He was not a diligent scholar, and history was one of his weak points. He had many weak points.

"Come, come," said Miss Marie encouragingly.

"King Alfred!" hazarded Jameson. "The chap who let the cakes burn, you know, and when they rounded on him, he said, 'Kiss me, Hardy! England expects every man to do his duty.'"

Jameson felt quite pleased with that reply, which was really circumstantial, and contained quite a lot of information. Miss Marie did not seem so pleased.

"You are an absurd boy, Jameson," she said. "It was Nelson who said 'Kiss me, Hardy! Thank Heaven, I have done my duty!'"

"Well, I knew it was somebody," agreed Jameson. "I was sure of that."

"Now, think again!"

"Wasn't it King Alfred?"

"Certainly not!"

Jameson rubbed his nose harder, and made another effort.

"King William, otherwise called Rufus, from his red hair," he announced. "It was he who made the celebrated remark that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of St. Jim's."

"Dear me!" said Miss Marie. "You must think once more, Jameson."

"King Henry VIII.," said Jameson, who was evidently trying to make a guess after research till he came to one who would do. "He dissolved the monasteries, and after the dissolution of the monasteries, he was known as a dissolute monarch."

"You will write out twenty times, Jameson, that Charles II. was succeeded by his brother, James II."

"Sure?" asked Jameson doubtfully.

Miss Marie did not answer that remark; which apparently she did not hear.

"How long did James II. reign, Hooley?"

"Twenty years," said Hooley.

"Nonsense! James II. ascended the throne in 1685, and abdicated in 1688. Now, how long is that?"

"Wait a minute while I work it out," said Hooley. And he extracted a strip of pencil from his pocket, and started calculating on his exercise-book. In a minute he triumphantly announced the result.

"Three thousand three hundred and seventy-three years."

"What!" shrieked Miss Marie.

"That's right," said Hooley, consulting his figures

again. "I've done it as a sum, and proved it. Three thousand three hundred and seventy-three years, please!"

"You ridiculous boy! How could a king reign three thousand years and more?" said Miss Marie distastefully.

"It does seem an awful time," admitted Hooley.

"Wait a minute! I've added 1000 to 1000 instead of subtracting it. My mistake! It was only three years."

"Quite a big difference," murmured Wally.

And the Third Formers chuckled. Miss Marie looked miserably at Hooley. She was beginning to wonder whether Hooley had really made that absurd mistake.

"Did the reign of James the Second end before his death, France?"

"Yes, please," said Frayne. "He 'oked it!"

"What?"

"Did it slide," explained Frayne.

"Was abdicated," said Miss Marie.

"Yes: I mean he abdicated," asserted Joe. "I couldn't remember the word. But who's dropping his jaw, Miss Marie?"

"What?"

"You said abdicated."

"There's no 'h' in that word," said Miss Marie.

"Ah! There!" said Joe, in surprise.

"Certainly not! Now, what else can you tell me about the reign of James the Second, Brown minor?"

"There was a civil war," said Brown minor. "The Duke of Monmouth landed somewhere—"

of the "larks" so gleefully anticipated, they had been made to work—not very hard, certainly, but it was very nearly as bad as having "old Selby" back again. In the quiet Wally gloomily reflected that he had been mistaken in Miss Marie. Politeness and courtesy seemed to be wasted, and at this rate the Third would derive no benefit whatsoever from Mr. Selby's illness. Mr. Selby might just as well recover, in fact.

And the Third Form agreed, without a dissentient voice, that it wouldn't do. It was unanimously decided that that afternoon they should make it quite clear to Miss Marie that the Duke was bound to stay.

CHAPTER 11.

An Ovation THAT DID NOT COME OFF!

"L END me a quid, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was laying down the law on the subject of cricket—Blake and Harries and Dig being the victims—passed in his instructions on the great summer game, and turned his notice upon his minor. Wally had requested that staggering loan as he might have asked for twopenny.

"What did you say, Wally?"

"Lend me a quid," said Wally. "Not getting deaf in your old age, are you?"

"Do you mean a sovereign?"

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"Yes; go on."

And King James was deserted by all his pals—"

"His what?"

"His friends, who went over and joined the enemy."

"That was when William of Orange landed. You are confusing the two. Gibson, can you tell me what happened in the Duke of Monmouth?"

"He never smiled again," said Carly Gibson at once.

"William Rufus shot him dead with an arrow in the New Forest, and he never smiled again."

"You will write out twenty lines, Gibson, that the Duke of Monmouth was executed by order of his uncle, James the Second."

"Well, there's an uncle for you!" said Carly Gibson.

"That's not what I call an affectionate uncle. I call it unfeeling."

"You will take fifty lines, Gibson! Now—"

"Please—" said Wally meekly.

"What have you to say, D'Arcy minor?"

D'Arcy minor pointed eloquently to the clock. Miss Marie closed her book.

"Dismiss!" she said.

Morning lessons were over, and the Third Form marched out. Miss Marie sighed a little. Her first experience with the Third could not be called wholly a success. As for the Third, they were far from satisfied, too. Instead

"I mean a quid."

"I disapprove of the use of slang by small boys, Wally."

"Not so much of your small boys!" growled D'Arcy minor. "Will you lend me a quid, you see, or won't you lend me a quid?"

"If you mean a sovereign—" said Arthur Augustus freely.

"Well, a sovereign will do, if you'll lend me one," said Wally, yielding the point in the hope of getting the sovereign.

"I am sorry that I am unable to do so, Wally."

"You fathead!" roared Wally, consoled. "Why couldn't you say at once that you were stony, instead of talking out of your neck?"

"I refuse to have my remarks characterized as talkin' out of my neck! Pray what do you want a sovereign for? I might manage half-a-sovereign."

Wally brightened up.

"Oh, good! I could do it on half-a-quid. You see, it's rather special. We're going to give Miss Marie an ovation. We feel that it's up to us to show Miss Marie how we appreciate having a girl Form-master."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy smiled hesitantly. He was quite pleased with his minor.

"There you are, dear boy!"

"Thanks!" said Wally, clutching the half-sovereign. "You can mention this in your next letter home, and ask the pater to settle. Ta-ta!"

Wally rushed off, and ran down the Terrible Threes and Talbot in the gym. The four Shell fellows asked him at once how morning lessons had gone off.

"Oh, so-so!" said Wally. "We expect it to go a little better this afternoon. We're all going to do our very best, and we're going to give Miss Marie an ovation. You fellows like to help?"

"Oh, rather!" said Tom Merry. "Lead the ten bob, then."

"Eh?"

"It will cost money; it takes the form of a feed," said Wally, in explanation. "No other help required. Lead me ten bob."

The chums of the Shell exchanged smiles, and each handed out a half-crown into Wally's somewhat grubby palm. Wally looked very satisfied.

"Thanks! I'll settle this next week," he said. "If I don't get any tin, I'll squeeze it out of Gumpy. Ta-ta!"

"Hold on!" said Talbot. "What about the ovation—I mean, the feed? Are you going to leave us out of it?"

Wally chuckled.

"You can come if you can get off," he said. "But you'll be at lessons, you know, this afternoon."

"Eh? You'll be at lessons all the time we're at lessons," said Tom Merry. "The Third haven't an extra half-holiday, have they?"

"Nonsense! but we've got a Form-master a bit different from yours. We're going to have the feed in lesson-time, you see."

"Why, you young scoundrels!"

"Look here, Wally—"

"You young villain!"

But Wally was scudding away at top speed. Having obtained the loan of ten shillings, he had finished with the Shell fellows, and he had no time to waste listening to their observations.

"Well, this puts the lid on!" said Monty Lowther. "A feed in the Form-room in lesson-time! I wonder what Miss Marie will do!"

Talbot laughed.

"I think perhaps she will resign the Third after to-day," he remarked. "These young Huns would wear out any Form-master. I should think. It's a wonder that Selby has stood them so long. I'm rather thinking his salty temper has a certain amount of excuse."

A little later a happy crowd of fags might have been seen in the school shop making purchases. Wally & Co. were good customers there; but Dame Tappin was a little surprised when Wally produced a half-sovereign, four half-crowns, and several shillings and coppers. The shillings and coppers had been contributed by the Third. The whole sum was laid out in tack of the most tempting varieties.

It stood to reason, according to Wally, that Miss Marie's heart would be touched by this new move. If they showed that they forgave her for the happenings of the morning, and were prepared to be perfectly friendly, she could hardly resist, so Wally said. He was firmly convinced that Miss Marie would not be able to resist that enticing array of tarts, cream-puffs, meringues, and bialises and ginger-buns, even if she could resist the blandishments of the Third.

This afternoon everything was going to be nice and friendly and happy. Instead of Miss Marie "playing the Form-master," she would join the Third in a lesson-time feed, like a sensible kid. And the Third, instead of worrying about English grammar, with its boring and troublesome commitments of cases and moods and tenses, would enjoy the spread—all the more because it was in lesson-time. The mere thought of what Mr. Selby would think if he could see it would be enough to make them happy.

So the provisions for the feed were selected with great care, entirely from a point of view of what Miss Marie would like best.

"This will be better than the booky," averred Wally. "We'll get into the Form-room before bell, and have it all ready when she comes in. And when she sees these

lovely meringues on her desk she won't think any more about beastly English grammar. It stands to reason."

"I wonder if she likes bialises?" said Jameson thoughtfully.

"Better have some, in case. And some taffee, and some mackerel-pate, and some Turkish delight. She most like Turkish delight, you know."

"And some of them sugary bialises," said Frayne.

"Far, 'ear!" said Hobbs sarcastically.

"Wot do you mean, 'Obbs?"

"Shut up, Hobbs!" said Wally sternly. "Joe can't help his h's any more than you can help your face."

"What's the matter with my face?" demanded Hobbs warmly.

"Oh, don't ask me!" said Wally. "It's only a quarter of an hour to lessons, and I shouldn't have time to tell you."

"Ere, border?" said Joe Frayne, shoving between the two fags just in time. "You'll speat the grab. Let's get bod with it!"

Wally and Hobbs glared at one another, and the "grab" was carried off. The fags succeeded in smuggling it safely into the Form-room, and there they got it out in the most tempting manner. A table was dragged out of a corner, and simply loaded with good things, close to the master's desk, which was also loaded. If Miss Marie was not pleased when she came in it would show that she was very hard to please, so Wally observed emphatically. He had no doubts himself.

The bell started, and Miss Marie came in peacefully. She greeted the Third with a pleasant smile.

"You are quite early," she remarked.

"What about my lesson for to-day?" said Frayne.

"Why, what—that is this!" exclaimed the girl, as she caught sight of the tremendous array of tack.

"It's an ovation," said Wally.

"A—what?"

"An ovation," said D'Arcy minor firmly. "We, the members of the Third Form at St. Jim's, feel obliged upon to show our appreciation of our new Form-master—"

"—I mean, Form-inistress. We have decided upon an ovation. This is it."

"This 'ee," said Joe Frayne, with a nod.

"And we hope that you will do the honours of the feed, and that everything will be nice and friendly," pursued Wally.

"Hear, hear!"

"But it is time for lessons," exclaimed Marie.

Wally gazed at the Form-inistress more in sorrow than in anger.

"Now, you're not beginning that again, Miss Marie, are you?" he asked, in a tone of petulant remonstrance. "Look at those meringues! We got them specially because you like meringues. They're quite fresh," added Wally anxiously. "You needn't be afraid of 'em. And those bial'-eyes—look! Shall I open some ginger-beer for you, Miss Marie?"

With a great effort Marie resisted a strong inclination to laugh, and continued to frown.

"Certainly not!" she said. "But all these things away at once!"

"We're going to," said Wally, deliberately misunderstanding "send them away," and giving it a meaning closest to the Third Form. "Hobbs is getting away the tarts as fast as he can already. Hobbs is a pig, you know. Here's your chair, Miss Marie."

"Put these things into the cupboard," said Miss Marie. "You may have them again after lessons."

"After what?"

"Lesson."

"You don't care for meringues?" asked Wally, concluding that the choice of the feed was not so much to Miss Marie's taste as he had hoped.

"Yes," said Marie, "but not in lesson-time."

"Suppose you try these tarts—real good jam—all two-penny ones!" said Wally. "We've taken a lot of trouble with this, you know. We've tried to get the things you would like. I thought you were fond of meringues."

"If you do not get all these things into the cup-

board immediately, D'Arcy minor, I shall call in the page to take them away to the dust-bin."

"Oh, cranks!"

The Third-Formers gave one another helpless looks of indignation and disappointment. Miss Marie was evidently in earnest. That splendid whoopee of D'Arcy minor's was a ghostly, hopeless front. The Form-mistress of the Third was clearly bent upon keeping up the joke of giving them lessons.

With scornful and indignant looks, the fags cleared away the good things into the cupboard. Wally cast reproachful glances at Miss Marie—glances that might have melted a stone statue of a Prussian Huss—but the Form-mistress seemed quite impervious to them. The good things being stacked away out of sight, the Third-Formers went grumpy to their places. But there were very dark looks among the fags now.

They were exasperated. Wally declared in a furious whisper that he had done his best—they had all done their best. And if Miss Marie, out of feminine obstinacy, was determined to "come the Form-master" over them, then it was up to them to show quite plainly that it couldn't be done. It was their bounden duty now to prove the clearest possible manner that Britons cover should be slaves, and to cause Miss Marie to go the way Monsieur Moray and Herr Schneider had gone.

And in that promising humour the Third Form began afternoon lessons.

voice was when you were singing, and the passive voice was when you weren't.

Miss Marie understood that the young rascals were acting in concert in giving those ridiculous answers, and that it was a "rag," but she kept her sunny good temper. The Third were trying to tire her out—perhaps in the hope that the girl would see reason, and let the estates be discontinued from the cupboard.

But this kind of thing could not go on. When Hooley was asked to define the moods of the verbs, and stated that they was an angry mood and a friendly mood, Hooley was ordered to stand in the corner of a naughty boy. That, as Wally would have said, put the lid on. KOs in the Second might be called naughty boys, but the heroes of the Third jibbed at such a term. Hooley set tight, speechless with indignation.

"Do you hear me, Hooley?" exclaimed Miss Marie.

"Yes, sir," said Hooley.

"Then do as I tell you."

"Shu't!" said Hooley.

"Oh, dear!" said Miss Marie.

"Shut up, Hooley!" exclaimed Wally. "That isn't the way to speak to a lady."

"Do you think I'm going to be called a naughty boy?" shrieked Hooley.

"Shall I lick him, Miss Marie?" asked Wally obligingly.

"Yes, come on—do!" said Hooley. Both the fags

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CHAPTER 12.

Victory!

MISS MARIE was kind but firm. The struggle was that the Third Form did not take her seriously as a Form-master. How to induce them to do so without inflicting punishments was rather a puzzle. And that was a resource Miss Marie did not wish to resort to.

Already her popularity in the Third was at its lowest ebb. After such a display of black ingratitude over the feed the Third felt that they had been mistaken in her. And if she was going to be as big a bother as Messers de Herr, it was only just that she should be treated like Messers de Herr. The fags, therefore, were in the most intractable mood. Already there had been news that Mr. Selby was better. Their brief respite from their Form-master would be totally wasted unless Miss Marie could be brought to reason.

English grammar, therefore, proved a mere trying experience than English history. Wally, asked how many cases there were, replied that there were twenty-seven. Jameson, asked to name the cases, named them thus—"watch-case, pencil-case, letter-case, violin-case," and drove on. "Hobbs, called upon to distinguish between the active and passive voices, declared that the active

would have been very pleased to turn English grammar into a rough-and-tumble on the floor.

"Certainly not!" said Miss Marie. "Hooley, if you do not go into the corner at once I shall send you to the Head."

"Shu't go!" said Hooley.

"Oh, drop it will!" said Joe Frayne. "That ain't the way to speak to Miss Marie. You say that again and I'll bash you in the knee!"

"Silence, Frayne!"

"Oh, my 'at!" said Joe.

"Hooley, I shall call the Head here myself."

"Oh!" said Hooley. The throat was enough. The resolute Hooley did not wish to interview the Head. He rose sulkily to his feet and went to the corner of the room.

Miss Marie proceeded with the records. A loud clack from the Third caused her to look round towards Hooley's corner. That cheerful youth was passing the time merrily by standing on his head.

"Hooley!" shrieked Miss Marie.

Hooley came to the floor with a crash, and sat up, blinking.

"Hallo!" he said.

"How dare you stand upon your head!"

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

"I think better standing on my head, please," said Hooley wearily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Hooley, I shall have to ease you. Come here!" Miss Marie took the pointer from the master's desk with a very determined air.

Hooley approached her, grinning. He did not think that Miss Marie's coming would hurt very much. The Third looked on with deep interest.

"Hold out your hand," said Miss Marie.

"Which hand?" asked Hooley.

"The right hand."

"But which is the right one?" further inquired Hooley.

"I don't want to hold out the wrong one by mistake."

"You are a very bad boy," said the distressed Form-master.

"Hold out your hand at once!"

Hooley held out his hand. The pointer came down with a swipe, but it slowed down as it reached Hooley's grubby hand, and gave him a light tap which would not have hurt a fly. Hooley grinned cheerfully.

"Now you may go to your place, and be a good boy," said Miss Marie.

Hooley looked his head under his arm and twisted himself almost double, as if in great agony, and limped to his place. The Third Form chuckled roistically.

English grammar finished at last, and Miss Marie was glad of it. The next lesson dragged through somehow, the faces vying with one another to give as much trouble as possible, assuming an impenetrable stupidity that was proof against the most lucid explanations.

Miss Marie gradually assumed a more and more worried look, which the Third Form watched with secret and growing satisfaction. They felt that it would not be long now before Miss Marie did the sensible thing, and ceased to "ease the Form-master," and let them have their way, and then everything would be nice and friendly. They were prepared to be as nice as possible if Miss Marie would only do the sensible thing.

Arithmetic, seemingly, was a rock upon which the Third Form split hopelessly. Wally made two and two, added together, reach the extraordinarily total of three thousand two hundred and forty. Hobbs defined vulgar fractions as Prussians that had been blown to bits. According to Jamieson, division was the result achieved by adding up a column of figures, and taking away the number you first thought of. And Hooley got the lid on by declaring that a divisor was a man who lived in Devon.

"You are bad boys!" said Miss Marie, almost tearfully. "I-I shall not try to teach you any more."

"That's right," said Wally, in great relief; "that's right, Miss Marie. Shall I get out the prep?"

"You deserve that I should go to the Head and tell him how bad and disrespectful you are," said Marie.

"Oh, be a sport!" said Wally.

"I am very angry with you."

"Well, you don't mind," said Wally, after some thought.

Miss Marie was silent. She felt that the Third were too much for her, and it was a disappointment. She had hoped to be able to take some of the trouble off the doctor's hands during Mr. Selby's illness by relieving him of the Third. And to confess a hopeless failure after a single day's trial was very disappointing. To Wally's suspect and horror he saw two glistening tears well from Marie's eyes.

"I-I say, Miss Marie—" stammered Wally.

The Third Form sat petrified.

Miss Marie was crying!

It had been a harassing afternoon for poor Marie, and she was tired and worried, and that, with the addition of the disappointment and failure, was too much for her. She could not keep back her tears.

"Oh, I-I say!" mumbled Wally. "D-d-don't blub, see how. There—there isn't anything to blub about. We—we didn't mean it."

Marie turned quickly to the door.

"I-I say, are we dismissed, sir?" stammered Jamieson.

"Yes. You must—must—may go!" said Miss Marie. "I shall not speak to you any more!"

And Marie hurried from the Form-room.

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FOR SUBSCRIPTION "THE BOYS' FRIEND," "THE MAGNET," "THE BEADROBBER," "THE PINKY POPULAR," "BUCKLES," IN PRESS: "The Boy's Weekly," "Every Monday," "Every Thursday," "Every Friday," "Every Saturday," "Every Saturday."

The Third-Formers looked at one another in utter, blank dismay. They had not foreseen anything like this. They were struck with dismay and horror. Wally found a refuge from his own conscience in turning upon the faithful followers who had backed him up only too well.

"I hope you're satisfied now, young Hooley!" said Wally witheringly.

"Me!" gasped Hooley, in surprise and indignation.

"Well, I like that!"

"Yes, you, and the others. You satisfied, Jamieson, making a girl cry!" said Wally, with biting contempt.

"Why, it was you!" howled Jamieson.

"Don't you try to put it on me," said Wally angrily.

"I'm not having that. Didn't I tell you to behave yourselves?"

"You've been the worst of the lot," shouted Hobbs—the very worst. I was surprised at you myself. I thought all the time that you ought to remember that it—I mean she—was a girl, and stop it."

"I said so all along," chimed in Brown miser. "I said it was too thick. I said it was rotten—blackguardly, in fact. At least, I thought it. Now you've done it, Wally!"

"I've done it!" roared Wally. "You've done it, you disrespectful, bad-mannered, rowdy young hooligans! Can't you remember how Miss Marie looked after you when you had the flu, and then to treat her like this, and make her cry. I'm ashamed of you!"

"You jolly well ought to be ashamed of yourself!" shrieked Hobbs. "You put us up to it. I was against it all the time."

"So was I," said Hooley. "I thought it was rotten—low, in fact. My opinion is that Wally's disgraced the Form. What will Miss Marie think of us now, I wonder? Wally ought to be ragged. He's a cad!"

"Why—why—I—I—" stammered Wally. "It was you all along. I've been trying to hold you in!"

"Rats!"

"Look here, young Hobbs—"

"Don't talk to me!" said Hobbs. "I'm not going to talk to a fellow who rags a girl and makes her cry!"

That was too much for Wally. He made a wild rush at Hobbs, and embraced him round the neck, and brought him to the floor with a bump. For the next ten minutes or so the argument was hot in the Third Form room. Wally and Hobbs were rolling on the floor, and the rest of the Third were indulging in mutual recriminations, which proceeded to hostileities as they grew more excited. When the argument ended, which was not till the Third were quite breathless, Hobbs sat on a desk and napped his nose, and Wally caressed his eye, and they glared at one another. It had not been settled yet who was to blame, but a considerable amount of damage had been done.

"I don't know what you hooligans are going to do," said Wally at last. "Perhaps you're glad of what you've done."

"What you've done!" roared Hobbs.

"Perhaps you're pleased at having made Miss Marie cry, after she looked after you so rippingly when you were down with the flu."

"You made her cry!" shrieked Hobbs.

Wally did not deign to take any notice of the interruption.

"But I know what I'm going to do," he went on. "I'm going to tell Miss Marie I'm sorry, just that I've got anything to be sorry for; it was all your rotters!"

"It was all you!" howled Hobbs.

Wally strode away to the door. Like one man the



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Third Form followed him. There was no mere thought of a "rag." They were only anxious to set themselves right with Miss Marie now. The energy with which they hurled accusations at one another was a measure of their repentance.

They trooped out of the Form-room. It was nearly time for the whole school to be out, but the other classes were not quite over yet. Wally marched into the quadrangle, disdaining to notice the fags who trooped at his heels. There he paused, wondering where Miss Marie was. If she had gone back to the Head's house it would be very awkward explaining to Mrs. Holmes what they wanted, to see her for. Wally decided on trying the garden first, and he marched away to the gate, still with the repentant Third at his heels.

Wally uttered an exclamation of satisfaction as he caught sight of a figure in the little summer-house. Miss Marie had stopped there; she wished to remove all trace of her tears before going into the house, or there might have been painful results for the heroes of the Third. She looked up in surprise as Wally appeared in the doorway with an army of dusty and untidy fags fresh from their dust-up in the Form-room behind him.

"Go away, please!" said Miss Marie.
 "I—easy, please speak a word," said Wally eagerly.
 "We're sorry—awfully sorry. We were only joking, really—I mean those young cads were only joking; they—they didn't understand, you know. Thought they were dealing with old Schneider, I suppose," added Wally witheringly.

"It was all Wally!" shouted Hobbs. "We're awfully sorry, Miss Marie, and we won't do it any more, but it was D'Arcy mixer all the time, and he knows it!"

"We won't go far to do nothing of the kind never no more, so help us!" said Joe Frayne. "We give you our davy, Miss Marie. Give us another chance."

"If Miss Marie takes my advice she'll report the whole gang of you to the Head!" said Wally.

"I shall not do that," said Marie, with a smile. "I am glad that you are sorry; now you may go away."

"But—but you'll take us to-morrow," said Wally.

"You'll take us till old Selby—I mean Mr. Selby—those I—till Mr. Selby is on his pins again!"

Marie shook her head.

"Oh, I see!" murmured Frayne.

"You see what you've done, you young brats!" said Wally bitterly.

"What you've done!" shrieked Hobbs.
 "I won't quarrel with you, young Hobbs—not in Miss Marie's presence," said Wally loftily. "I've got some manners, I hope. I can only say I'm ashamed of the lot of you, and I'm not surprised that Miss Marie won't have anything more to do with us. But—but I say, Miss Marie, you might overlook it for this once; those kids don't really know any better. I'll jolly well keep 'em in order after this, if you'll keep on taking the Third."

"Will you keep in order yourself?" asked Miss Marie.
 "I'll ejaculated Wally, somewhat taken aback. "I— I— Well, I like that! I mean, yes, I will; I'll be as good as gold—gooder than I am with Selby—I mean, Mr. Selby—there!"

"We'll all be as good as anything," said Joe Frayne distressfully. "Do overlook it just this 'ere once, and you'll see, Miss Marie!"

"Do!" chorused the Third.

"Very well," said Miss Marie. "I will try again to-morrow."

"Bravo!" roared Frayne.

"Come away," said Wally loftily. "Don't bother. Miss Marie kicking up your fags here. Thank you, Miss Marie. I'll see that the young brats play up after this. You can see they're ashamed of themselves, and—and," burst out Wally, in an outbreak of repentance, "and—and so am I! There!"

And Wally marched his dusty army out of the garden. They left Miss Marie smiling now.

The next day the Third Form at St. Jim's were a marvel to behold.

Tom Merry & Co., when they heard how beautifully things were going in the Third Form room, could scarcely believe their ears. Miss Marie was happy and satisfied, and the fags were as good as gold. Mooty Louther declared that he would write a special article upon it for the next number of the "Weekly." Manders declared, in accents almost of awe, that he hadn't seen a single soiled collar in the Third that day. When the Third Form were clean collars all at once on a week-day it was evident that they were in an unusual state of exaltation.

Wally, it is true, had promised all the Third that if there were the slightest sign of a rag in the Form-room he would slaughter the ragger after lessons. Hobbs, on the other hand, had promised Wally that if he started any more of his tricks he—Hobbs—would manure him. But inside the Form-room all was peace—boastful peace—and lessons went off like clockwork. Having settled down to take their Form-mistress seriously, the Third made the discovery that a charming and sweet-tempered Form-mistress was much more agreeable than a crusty old Form-master, and they realised that they were in luck.

Indeed, as Wally remarked, there was only one cloud on the horizon. In the long run Mr. Selby was bound to get well, and then the Third Form would have to say good-bye to their Form-mistress. But, meanwhile, everything went on quite swimmingly with "MASTER" MARIE.

THE END.

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HE FORGOT THE DATE.

There is a telephone in the office of Timothy Jockins & Co., and this conversation once took place:

"Is that Mr. Jockins—No. 6812?"
 "Yes. Who is that?"
 "Oh, I'm the telephone inspector. There's something wrong with your 'phone, so I want to make some tests. Will you stand a yard to the right and shout 'Hallo!'"
 Jockins complied.
 "Thank you. And now will you stand a yard to the left and shout again?"
 Jockins again complied.
 "Very nice. And now will you stand on your head and whistle!"
 As Jockins slumped the receiver down, it slowly dawned on him that it was the first of April.—Sent in by F. Codrington, Bristol.

MORE IRISH.

Pat had just joined a cavalry regiment, and was undergoing the necessary practice in the riding-school.

After a particularly desperate attempt on the horse's part to unseat its rider, the animal managed to get its hind hoof in one of the stirrups. Pat, observing this, was heard to exclaim:

"Begorra! If you're aither coasin' or, then I'm gettin' off!"—Sent in by Fred Byrne, Leek, Staffs.

TOO SMART.

"Now, can any of you give me an instance where a rooster is used as a verb?"

Young Spark: "I can, sir. 'I gazed through the kitchen door and saw the kitchen sink.'"

Teacher: "Has anyone seen my case?"—Sent in by Geo. Warburton, Douglas, I.O.M.

WANTED THEM BACK.

A Yorkshire poacher, whose tackle had been found near the scene of his capture, pleaded that the things were not his, and his lawyer, adopting this plea, won the case.
 "I suppose I can go for good!" asked the poacher, turning to the magistrates as he left the dock.

"Certainly!"
 "And I can't be hovev up agin for this 'ere offence!"

"No," said the magistrate.

"Then," said the poacher, "I'll trouble yer Worship to kindly give me back my lies and secret."—Sent in by J. Cherry, Swarminoor, near Ulverston, Lancashire.

BRAIN-PAG.

"Fatho, what is the meaning of 'to cleave'?"

"It means 'to separate,' my son."

"Do friends separate when they cleave to each other?"

"If'n! It means 'to stick together.'"

"Does a man stick wood together when he cleaves it, then?"

"For goodness' sake, child, don't ask such silly questions!"—Sent in by S. Young, Seaboard Harbour, S.O.

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EXAMPLE.

Little Leonard was reading the war news. When he had finished, he came over to his mother:

"Mamma, how do wars begin?" he asked.

"Well," replied his fond parent, "supposing the Germans hauled down the Austrian flag, and—"

Here Leonard's father interposed:

"My dear," he said, "the Germans would never—"

"Excuse me," she retorted, "it is quite possible that—"

"Now, dear, who ever heard of such a thing?"

"Pray don't interrupt!"

"But you are giving the boy a wrong idea."

"I'm not!"

"You are. Don't be silly!"

"Don't you call me silly!"

"I'll call you what I like!"

"I'm sorry I ever saw you, you brute! I'm going—"

Little Leonard made a movement towards the door.

"It's all-right. I think I know how wars begin," he said.

—Sent in by Robert Clark, North Shields.

ACCORDING TO CONTRACT.

"A shilling will bring you a pair of socks which will never wear out." So ran the advertisement which caused James to spend a shilling on a postal-order.

When the socks arrived, James surveyed them in horror.

"Socks received," he wrote to the advertiser; "but the pattern is vile. I wouldn't be seen dead with them on!"

Next day he received a letter, saying:

"What are you making a fuss about? Didn't we guarantee you would never wear 'em out!"—Sent in by S. Drayton, Willenden Green, N.W.

HE KNEW.

In a certain training-camp there is a private who is the despair of his drill-sergeant.

One day the colonel's nose round to inspect the men, and, as it was feared, fixed his eagle gaze on the private referred to straight away.

"Now, my man," said he, "what do you know about your rifle? How many cartridges does it hold?"

"Ten, sir," answered the recruit hesitatingly—"nine in the part made of black tin, and one in the stock!"—

—Sent in by A. Neale, Bromthwick, Birmingham.

ALL MUSICAL.

"Are there any musicians in your family?"

"Father! Why, my father is an adept at blowing his own trumpet, and mother is equally expert at harping on one string; ma-o-law has to play second fiddle; grandpa gives a solo on his nasal organ every night without the stop; uncle spends his time waiting his whistle; Harry is fond of his pipe; and Gertie is for ever fingering the changes on her lovers; and I'm a bit of a lyce singer!"

—Sent in by Jack Cooke, Bolton-on-Deane, Yorks.

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SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.

Bob Hall, a fine, strapping young fellow, succeeds in joining a famous Hussar regiment, known as the Dis Harde. After Bob has been in the regiment for some time, his never-do-well cousin, Captain Lascelles, joins also. Bob finds that, so far from being friendly, Lascelles is constantly endeavouring 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 proposes to have investigations made. It transpires that Bob is heir to a large fortune, of which Lascelles is in enjoyment. Bob's villainous cousin is just about to begin the process of his paragonage when they are joined by a book-maker named Brand, who harries 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. While in the open one day Bob follows Captain Lascelles to a house, where he observes him plotting with two men. Through the oversteering of a lamp the house catches fire, and Bob, who gets out safely, seizes and rescues Lascelles, who was unable to escape. On Bob's return to the barracks the men arrange a big reception. Lascelles appears, and orders the men to disperse; but the troops, having grown desperate by reason of Lascelles' long-continued persecutions, refuse, and Private Cole, who had been his accomplice hitherto, struck out at his superior officer, who fell to the ground like a log.

[Now go on with the story.]

Bob Speaks His Mind, and Lascelles Resigns.

Bob had hardly bent down, and he lifted Lascelles' head on to his knee. The face was featureless, the eyes closed, the arms limp; he gave no sign of life. Cole still swayed as he clung to Hesty for support. The man seemed but half conscious, and wholly ignorant of the terrible consequences of his act. Hesty tried to hold him up and bring him back to his senses, whilst all the other troopers, now forgetting all else in the terrible tragedy that seemed to have so rapidly followed as the heads of retribution, gazed with bated breath upon the wretched face.

"A good job too!" Cole laughed hysterically. "I'm done with him, anyhow! I can lie in bed at nights without waking with a yell as if a hundred devils were at my throat. I needn't start at every footfall I hear when on guard. His voice won't send a shiver through me. He—"

Hesty wrenched Cole's shirt-bud open to give him air, whilst Bob touched Lascelles' eyeballs with a twig.

"He's alive, that's about all!" Bob whispered solemnly. "This is an awful business! Lift him up, and let's march him at once to barracks. Steady there, chaps, and keep close. The least shake might do for him."

The troopers lifted Lascelles from the ground, and with measured tread they strode quickly back to barracks. The tramp of so many feet in unison brought many faces in various expressions to the doors, and all gazed with surprise and consternation.

Gravely and strictly Bob and the private hurried across the square, ignoring all questions, their lips compressed, their

faces full of a dull foreboding and horror, and behind the sad procession Hesty helped along Cole, who stumbled every step he took, and swayed from side to side.

"What's the news?"
It was Bob who spoke, and he was standing at the foot of the stairs leading to the room in which Lascelles lay betwixt life and death.

"He's regained consciousness. The doctor feared that he was suffering from congestion of the brain; but it's not as bad as that. How did it happen, Hall? Folks say so—"

Sergeant Baxter stopped abruptly, and looked curiously at the young lance-corporal.

"I suppose, Captain Lascelles will explain how he got lost when he fell," Bob replied cautiously. "Well, sergeant, I can't be sure. There goes the lounge call, and I must get round to stable."

The trumpet was still ringing out on the crisp air as Bob hurried away; but so soon as he was out of sight of Baxter then he ran up the stairs and into the barracks-rooms over which he had charge. Cole was lying on his back, and he started up when he saw who had entered.

"Feeling better?" Bob inquired.

The private rubbed his forehead wearily.
"Yes, I'm all right," he granted sheepishly. "How's Lascelles? I've been waiting for the guard to come along. But I s'pose everyone's too interested to bother about me yet. I don't want to make me hit him on the head; but I couldn't stay my hand. I wanted to wipe him out, and—"

He shivered from head to foot.

"Lascelles is coming round. He won't be the better of the deed you gave him for many a long day; but I've glad to say it wasn't as serious as we thought. Now, Cole, we're alone, and I want to talk to you. What have I over done that you should care to run me?"

Cole's face flushed crimson as he partly hid it in his big, rough hands. He didn't dare to look at Bob; he felt he was guilty. He sat still, and Bob was quick to notice his change.

"We're comrades, and we both belong to a crack regiment, and we ought to pull together," Bob said generously. "Put your hand in mine, Cole, and let bygones be bygones. I'll not ask you any more questions. Just shake, if you feel that you and I can be pals."

With an odd catch in his voice, the private grasped the extended palm of the young lance-corporal and wrung it convulsively.

"I'm mortal sorry I ever turned against you!" he cried tremulously, as he rose to his feet, still clinging to Bob's hand. "I don't rightly know how it ever began—that is, I can't say why I ever got such a down on you. I was just with jealousy—you, and had to get on. And I'm a good soldier, and I've worked hard, and I reckoned on promotion. And you came along, and you looked as if you meant business, and could cut me out. And I thought of the wife and the kids, and—"

"You're married, then?" Bob cried.

"Yes, I'm married," Cole said slowly and sadly. "I'm married off—the strength."

"Ah!"
Bob knew and understood all that conveyed. A soldier tremulously, as he rose to his feet, still clinging to Bob's hand.

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who marries without the consent of his commanding officer must support his wife out of his pay as best he can. Only four per cent. of the troopers in the cavalry are allowed on the married roll, which carries with it furnished quarters, fuel and light. Those who will not wait their turn are not recognized as entitled to any consideration from the Government.

"My wife got ill, and I couldn't help her," Cole confessed bitterly. "It fair drove me mad to see her dying by inches. That was bad enough. But then we left Aldenport, and, of course, she had to remain behind. Lascelles knew, and he worked on me that way, as well as otherwise. I danto rightly what he didn't promise—that is, when he didn't bully. And all the time I saw more and more the-wart you were, and it made me more bitter and desperate to be mixed up in anything against you. And I thought at first to finish the job, and get some money, and sometimes I said I'd have no more to do with it; and then would come a letter from my wife, and Lascelles would threaten me with what he knew about me, and— But it's all over now, and I'm glad—yes, I'm glad. I'll save my time in speech, and if they don't drive me desperate, I'll try and run straight when I come out."

He stopped, and, crossing to the wash-basin, he began to wash his face and make himself presentable. All trace of passion had died away, and he spoke wearily. Bob watched him, and wondered. Could this be the trooper, the lad paraded, in whom Haines had had seen nothing but evil? Verily, all here a spark of goodness, and Cole was human like the rest. He had begged his troubles selfishly, and showed the worst side of his nature always to his comrades, and yet there were those for whom he toiled and longed and wept.

"You're looking better already!" Bob remarked cheerily at last.

"Yes, I'm a sight better," Cole agreed, as he slipped into his tunic. "What are I to do, though? Why don't those chaps come and hand me off? This suspense is worse for what can happen. If only—"

"We must hope for the best. Keep your own counsel, Cole, and go ahead as if nothing had occurred—that is, nothing in which you had a hand. Who knows? Perhaps Lascelles will be ashamed to tell. And even if he does— Well! There's someone coming upstairs. Spout out of that

door. It wouldn't pay if we were seen together just now." As Cole vanished through the far door Haines came through the barracks open to the wash-basin.

"Hell, you're wanted!" he cried. "Captain Lascelles is anxious to see you!"

The saboteur's face was dark and gloomy, yet there was also an expression of curiosity in his eyes. Bob pretended not to notice Haines' anxiety to lose some repatriation of the extraordinary condition in which Lascelles lay. He kept his lips compressed, and, saluting the officer gravely, he followed him at once without uttering a word. Finding that the lance-corporal was so disposed to be communicative, Haines led the way to Lascelles' quarters in silence. Outside the room, the colonel, the adjutant, and the doctor were standing in a small group. The doctor beckoned to Bob to enter the room alone.

"Be very careful not to excite the patient," he whispered. "He insists on seeing you, and I don't think it would be wise to refuse his request. Don't let him talk too much, and don't stay long."

Bob entered the room and closed the door. The blind had been drawn, and the light in a far corner lay Lascelles, a bandage to his head, and his arms lying limply outside the coverlet. The lad approached the bed and sat down in a chair.

"You sent for me?" he began quietly.

Lascelles lay motionless for several seconds without answering the question, and Bob could hear the loud ticking of the clock in the tense silence.

"Am I dying?" Lascelles asked at last.

"No; you will recover."

"All right, I thought. I don't feel as if I was going to peg out. I'll live—yes, I'll live to run you!"

A hoarse chuckle followed from the sick-bed, a bitter laugh so full of malice that Bob felt his heart hardening. What had been the crimes of Cole, Bob thought, compared to the depravity of the edified, and polished corporal?

"Was it to tell me this that you sent for me?" he asked quietly.

"No; I want to hear what happened. Does the colonel know that—did you tell anyone what you overheard the other night?"

"Yes; I told Hainsford and Haines. What's more, I suspect that villain Bragg, and made him confess about the crime. Haines knows that you wanted him, and the adjutant is going to stay on in the regiment."

Lascelles, despite his weakness, lifted himself on an elbow and glared savagely at the lad.

"You can!" he gasped.

"This is not the time for a row," Bob explained, still speaking coolly. "Call me what names you like, they don't hurt. There's one thing, though, I want to point out, and that is that you can't be cashiered from the Service without any evidence."

"Ah, that's true!" Lascelles cried. "You'll stick to me, Hell, won't you? I'm your cousin, you know. We haven't been friends, but still—"

"My mind is quite made up as to what I mean to do, and nothing that you or anyone else can say will alter my resolution," Bob replied firmly. "I'm going to do the straight thing, and—"

"But I promise, that I won't act towards you as I have done. I'll help you on all I can. I'll—"

"I'm not afraid of what you can do to injure me. You've tried hard so far, and not with much success. I'm not thinking of myself at all," Bob continued quietly. "It's for you to decide as to whether you'll agree to my terms or not."

"Your terms? What do you mean? If you try to drive a hard bargain because you fancy you've got me in your power, you'll find you're mistaken, my fine fellow!" Lascelles scoffed contemptuously. "I know what you're up to. You want me to sign away my rights to that property which you claim. You think I'm such a pup as to—"

"I wasn't thinking of the property. If it just belongs to me it will come any way, in spite of all you can do to rub me!" Bob continued, still speaking calmly. "No; it's not about myself I wish to speak, as I told you before—it's about Cole."

"Cole! The infernal scoundrel! Whatever happens, I mean to make it hot for him!" Lascelles growled hotly. "He dared to strike me, and, even if I was cashiered out of the Service to-morrow, yet I was his superior officer when he assaulted me, and there's no getting behind military discipline." He laughed bitterly. "What do you hope to get from Cole?" he inquired. "You haven't much cause to love him!"

"Never mind. I don't bear malice, like you do. See here. If you hold your tongue about Cole, you can leave the regiment without disgrace."

"What do you mean?"

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"Send in your papers in the ordinary way, and your resignation will be accepted as a matter of course. If you dare to reveal on Cole, I'll give evidence against you, and you'll be cashiered, and the world will know that you were kicked out of the Die-Hards for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. If you resign you can remain a member of your club in London, and your old friends will still pal with you. On the other hand, if you're kicked out, everyone will shun you. Now, which do you choose? I must leave my answer before I leave the room."

Lascelles lay back on the bed and thought hard. His face was as black as thunder.

"I must have time to decide!" he growled.
 "Not a minute! I can't wait you! How do I know what you'd do as soon as my back was turned? Refuse, and I go at once to the colonel, and tell him everything! He's standing outside the door."

"You've got the whip-lash over me; but, though I leave the regiment, I'll pay you out yet!" Lascelles hissed. "Mark my words, you see, this is the worst day's work you ever did, and before long you'll rue the part you played! Get! I'll send in my papers, and when I'm no longer an officer I'll have the more time to compass your ruin! Go!"

Lascelles rose, and with a look of determination on his face, he opened the door and stepped out. "I've saved Cole, though you tried to ruin him. With that I am satisfied. Good-bye!"

Four days later Lascelles drove through the barracks-gate on his way to the station, and the sentry on duty did not even salute him, for he was no longer in the service of the King.

Promotion and Disgrace.

Once more Bob was popular in the regiment, and his friends made no secret of the fact that they considered he had well earned his promotion. The officers, too, showed their appreciation of his conduct; and his career promised to be bright and successful. The Die-Hards were keen to do their work with military interest, and Hester, the adjutant, though he said little, was well pleased that Bob should get promotion at the first opportunity. All ranks were glad that Lascelles had departed, and the men were well pleased that the scandal had been hushed up.

There was general rejoicing in the barracks-room when one morning Sergeant Baxter entered, and, with a merry laugh, flung a sob over Bob's shoulder. The lad coloured with pride, and his comrades trooped round and warmly congratulated him.

"You're appointed to lance-sergeant!" Baxter cried. "Welcome to the sergeants' mess, Heil! Come along, till we introduce you formally!"

Bob took a last look round amongst his chums. It was hard to part with Doot and Hoety, and Cole showed clearly how much he felt the loss he would sustain by Bob's departure. But the troopers were all gallant fellows, and Bob had been tested, and had proved himself a man, and they took care to emphasize their goodwill in one last roasting cheer, as, following Baxter, he left the room.

It was pleasant once again to find comfortable quarters, where one could sit and lounge when not at work. A barracks-room in the troopers' bed-room and living-room; a sergeants' mess in one of the same lines in an officers' hall. It consists usually of three rooms—two small ones, which serve as a kitchen and a bar, and a large, wide, lofty apartment, with a billiard-table, dining-table, easy-chairs, books, papers, and portfolios, pictures on the walls, regimental trophies on the sideboard, and a general appearance of comfort and refinement. The man who cannot be contented with a sergeant's mess in a crack cavalry regiment must be hard to please. It has all the attractions of a home.

So far, now the routine of Bob's life was largely changed. No longer had he had pruned himself a good soldier by learning how to march; from this on he had to show his capacity for responsibility. His duties were many and varied, and a slip would speedily bring retribution. Naturally, he worked hard to acquire a knowledge of his duties, and for some weeks from morning to night he was busy continually with "orders," "tattoo reports," "check roll-calls," "regimental parades," "orderly-room duties," and the dozen-and-one unnumbered demands upon his time which say come at any moment during the day.

He took care, of course, to show his old friends that possession had in no way lessened the esteem in which he held them; but it was necessary for him to choose new comrades from amongst his new companions. No man, even, can chum with those of lower rank; such conduct would be unbecoming, and is, therefore, severely disapproved in the Service.

Amongst those in the sergeants' mess was a man named Bryant, of whom Bob had seen but little when in the ranks,

but who now welcomed him with great cordiality, and taught him much that he had to learn. Bob had never cared for Bryant in the past; but, like the generous-hearted fellow he was, he had now retroached himself for his former opinion of the sergeant, in face of the kindness he now showed him. He and Sergeant Bryant were soon together, and their friendship grew as time went on. It was a fatal mistake as Bob's part, as he was shortly to learn.

As Bob knew, Bryant was shortly gone on furlough, so he was not much surprised when the latter one day peeped in to lead him to the sergeants' mess-room and cheerfully introduced him.

"Hello, Heil! I'm off!" he cried out cheerily. "I've been eastern-angust, as you know, and the officers' committee say as you've to take over the duties whilst I'm away. Cooke sling and get your head in. I'll put you up to the ropes."

"Hope you'll have a jolly time!" Bob cried, as he threw down the book he was reading, and rose to follow Bryant. "If I'm ordered to take over the caution, I suppose I must, but that sort of thing is not much in my line."

"You'll have to take over the money, so you'd better check the account before signing it as correct," Bryant explained. "Forty-seven pounds eighteen and fourpence, I make it. Cooke's all, and I'll put the grid back in the box. You, what do you want?" A little of loose-coin? "Right!"

Bryant served the soldier who had come into the caution, and then, as Bob slowly checked the account, Bryant teased the sovereign into the machine. The caution was filling rapidly, and Bob, in the midst of his reckoning, had to answer many questions from his old chum.

Laughing and cracking jokes, Bryant assisted Bob, put the cashbox away, showed and explained the nature of the books, got a receipt for the money in hand, bade Bob farewell, left the caution, and hurried away. Twenty minutes later he was in the train and on his way to London.

The evening passed, whilst Bob, accustomed to the work, was fully occupied in giving change, attending to orders, and supervising the conduct of the soldiers. Everyone was in good humour, glad to have the lad back once more, and the evening was as pleasant as Bob could wish. He was nervous, however, as to his responsibilities; and so, when the caution closed, he checked the takings again.

His figures came out right for the hours during which he had been on duty; so, opening the books, he proceeded to examine the system by which the accounts were kept. Before leaving the Service he had an office experience, and his knowledge thus acquired caused him to start with surprise before he had been dealing with the ledger for long.

Heardly examining the other books, and comparing them with the ledger, he found some serious mistakes, and his face grew stern. Bryant had cooked the accounts, and had been guilty of perjury.

Thoroughly alarmed, he turned from the books to the money, and again began to count over the amount by which he had made himself responsible by his signature. It was wrong by twenty pounds!

At first he could not believe his senses. He had counted the money carefully, and had seen it put in the cashbox, yet Bryant's sovereigns were missing—that was a certainty. Ah, Bryant it was who had put the cashbox away! Then it was clear he had stolen the money, and, instead of going on furlough, he had fled from the regiment for ever. Bob saw the whole truth as it was played.

The recently sergeant's prior packages were bound to come out before long, so he had applied for leave, and at the last moment had stolen sufficient to take him from Edinburgh, leaving the weight of his crime to fall on innocent shoulders. He had been able to do by reason of Bob's inexperience what he dare not have attempted with any sergeant who had acted as caution-steward before.

Hastily looking up the money and closing the caution, Bob hurried away. Bait, swift and deadly, seemed to stung him in the face. What was he to do? Who could he seek for advice? How could Bryant be arrested and exposed? If the scandal succeeded in making his escape good, how could Bob clear his name? He had not twenty sovereigns in the world, nor was there any way by which he could obtain them.

Out on the barracks-square, where the cool wind played upon his throbbing temples, the lad passed in a struggle to collect his scattered thoughts. Something must be done, said at once. But what—what? For the life of him Bob could see no way out of the dilemma. He could not reason soberly, he raved around in a whirl, his nerves were raw with horror and apprehension.

(Another instalment of this fine yarn next week. Order your copy of the GEM now.)

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For Next Wednesday—

"LEVISON'S DOUBLE!"

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Next week's magnificent story of the charms of St. Jim's is one of the finest and most ingenious tales which has fallen from the pen of popular Martin Clifford. Levison of the Fourth, whose brief reform was a nine-days' wonder at St. Jim's, evolves a cunning scheme whereby he can return to his childish escapades in Rylands, and at the same time make it appear that he has not broken bonds at all. The end of the Fourth spreads the impression abroad that he has a "double," who is impersonating him in the same way that Tom Merry was impersonated in a previous story. Delighted at the immediate success of his ruse, Levison oversteps the bounds of discretion, and his whole previous scheme comes tumbling about his ears. Tom Merry & Co. are not slow to detect that

"LEVISON'S DOUBLE"

is only an imitation of the end of the Fourth, and the latter is made to bitterly rue his rascally deception.

CONFLICTING OPINIONS

As I have remarked on my Chat Page many a time and oft, it is a sheer impossibility to produce a paper which will give every reader infinite satisfaction. Some consider the stories of Tom Merry & Co. are too long; others declare that they err on the side of brevity; and so diverse and contradictory are those opinions that if I tried to meet the demands of both sides at one and the same time I should speedily be worried into an untimely grave.

The following letters—both of which came to hand this week—afford a very good example of what I mean:

"Dear Editor,—We have read your two papers, the 'Gem' and 'Magnet,' for the past two years, and they are first—at least, they were fine! As a matter of fact, dear Editor, the 'Gem' and 'Magnet' have not been so very good of late.

As soon as England declared war on Germany you put a jolly old war serial in the 'Gem,' and cut down the school stories to allow for it. (Excuse our being plain-spoken, won't you?)

"We don't want to discourage you, but can't you see our point? Give us what you gave us before the war—leave the war out of it altogether—and make the school tales longer and brighter, with plenty of jokes; and don't forget the Chat Page—an important feature in any boy's paper. We are sick of 'war-jaw.' In every paper we pick up it's 'War, War, War' and a change from the eternal topic would do everybody good.

"Wishing you and your paper every success,

"We remain, yours faithfully,

"Six Jolly Butterflies."

"P.S.—One of our number has to walk a good many miles to get your papers, so you ought to give us a little attention. There have also been occasions when we had to use our fists to back up our opinion of your papers."

Here is another letter which arrived by the same post as the foregoing:

"Dear Editor,—It's all very well for you to say that you intend to keep off the grass as much as possible so far as the present war is concerned. My shares and I think the 'Gem' would be vastly improved if you introduced

some roasting war stories. The usual japes, etc., performed by the St. Jim's fellows, are not suitable to read in these days. Unless the tone of the 'Gem' is improved in this direction I am afraid I shall be compelled to discontinue taking the paper in forthwith.—Yours truly,

"INDIGNANT."

I could, if I chose, fill quite a volume with grievances of this kind. They must of necessity be certain features in a paper which do not meet with universal approval. The man yet remains to be born who can acquire the art of pleasing everybody.

Most of my shares, I am thankful to say, are quick to realize that their wishes are studied as closely as possible; and they place sufficient confidence in their Editor to leave that he will leave no stone unturned to provide for them the best possible fare.

If there happens to be a feature in the 'Gem' which a certain boy does not like, it is only playing the game on his part to wait for better times.

If circulation is to count for anything, I fancy the majority of my shares are well satisfied with the paper as it is at present; and at the risk of losing a possible supporter in "Indignant," I have made up my mind to make no drastic alterations in the style of the 'Gem.'

EARLY ROUND YOUR EDITOR.

As most of my readers are aware, "The Boys' Friend" is now under my control, and after consulting with the best authors of the day, I decided to place upon the market the

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All my shares should at once secure the issue of "The Boys' Friend" which is now on sale, for it is packed with the finest features human brains can devise. Among its manifold attractions are:

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I feel sure that if I am supported in this great venture by every loyal reader of "The Gem," "The Boys' Friend" will spring at once into universal favour. Do your Editor the greatest service you can render him; then, by rallying round him NOW!

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

To the following readers, who have given me their loyal assurance of support, I express my sincerest thanks:

"E. Bennett (Portsmouth), Miss H. M. Hall (Leicester), "A. Pearson (Manchester), Miss H. M. Hall (Leicester), "A. Legal Gold Reader" (Bristol-on-Sea), "A. Legal Irish Reader" (Portland), "Navar Miss Goo," "M. H. Dorothea," "A Friend of the 'Gem,'" Miss Alice Brooks, J. Pearson (Manchester), and Alfred Morris.

THE EDITOR.

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