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# BARRED BY THE STUDY!

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By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



"What is all this?" Mr. Ralton came striding through the crowd, with a frowning brow. "How dare you touch these young ladies? Why, bless my soul, who—who are they—what are they?" (See Chapter 14.)

## CHAPTER 1. Not Wanted!

"MY only aunt!"  
"What the merry dickens—?"  
"Wherefore this thushness?"  
The Terrible Three made those surprised inquiries all at once, in a sort of chorus. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were looking into Study No. 6. The three had intended to ask Blake & Co., of No. 6, to tea in their study. But they forgot all about tea as they looked into the celebrated apartment which was numbered "6" in the Fourth-Form passage in the School House.

Blake & Co. were all at home. There was nothing extraordinary in that, as it was nearly tea-time. It was the aspect of Blake & Co. that was extraordinary.

Jack Blake was sitting on the corner of the table, with a cricket-stump in his hand. Digby was in the armchair, with a cricket-bat resting across his knees. Herries had a dog-whip in his hand. Herries never used that dog-whip upon Towser, his bulldog; but his expression showed that he was quite prepared now to use it on somebody. D'Arcy had a Malacca cane in his hand, and he was making wild swishes with it in the air.

Study No. 6, evidently, were prepared for war. Their

Next Wednesday!

"IN THE KING'S KHAKI!" AND "COUSIN ETHEL'S SCHOOLDAYS!"  
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eyes were fixed on the open doorway; and as the Terrible Three appeared, the stump, the bat, the dog-whip, and the Malacca cane were all gripped and lifted—only to be lowered again as the visitors were recognised.

Evidently the Terrible Three were not the enemy.

"Oh, it's you!" said Blake.

"Little us!" agreed Tom Merry. "I hope those deadly weapons are not for our benefit. If they are, we'll get our cricket-bats out and start fair."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, you are vewy welcome," said D'Arcy. "Pway do not misundahstand. Pway twot in, deah boys."

"You're as welcome as the flowers in May!" assured Digby. "You may find it amusing, too; only keep out of the way."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But what's the little game?" exclaimed Tom Merry mystified. "Are you expecting Knox of the Sixth?"

"No!"

"Or Cutts of the Fifth?" asked Manners.

"Bless Cutts! No!"

"Or a New House raid?" asked Lowther.

"Blow the New House! No!"

"Then wherefore this thushness? Who the merry dickens is it you're waiting to slaughter?" demanded the captain of the Shell.

"Trimble!" said Blake.

"Trimble, the wottah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Trimble, the cad!" said Digby.

"Trimble, the bounder!" said Herries.

The chums of the Shell chuckled. Trimble, the rotter, cad, and bounder, seemed to be booked for a lively time when he came into Study No. 6. All four of the Fourth-Formers looked as if they meant business.

"What's he done?" asked Tom Merry.

"Done!" hooted Blake. "What hasn't he done, you mean? He's got himself planted in this study, and turned out such a rank outsider that we had to turn him out. This study has a reputation to keep up, and we can't have it disgraced by a rotter like Trimble. So we kicked him out, and told him never to put his fat chivvy into this study again!"

"I told him quite plainly that he was nevah to darken our dooah again, the feahful wottah!" said D'Arcy.

"Yes, Gussy put it in high-falutin language, and I put it in plain English," said Blake. "Gussy told him never to darken our doors again, and I told him I'd wring his neck if he ever crawled in here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Any fellow with a rag of decency in him would have changed into another study after that," said Blake indignantly. "But not Trimble. Of course, nobody wants him in his study; it's not to be expected. But we won't have him here—that's flat! He's a liar, and a spoofer, and a cad, and an outsider, and a lot of other things, too numerous to mention. But he says he's coming back. He's coming to tea, bless you! Coming to tea in this study. Well, it's tea-time, and we're waiting for him. I'm going to break this cricket-stump on him!"

"I'm goin' to thwash him with this cane!"

"I'm going to make him hop with this dog-whip!"

"I'm going to brain him with this bat!"

"Then we'll come in," said Monty Lowther. "You'll want somebody to collect up the pieces when you've finished."

The Terrible Three, grinning, entered the study. They took up a strategic position by the window, in order to be out of reach of the stump, the bat, the dog-whip, and the Malacca cane, when the warlike operations began.

"Coming here, you know!" said Blake, with growing indignation. "After we've kicked him out—so hard as we could, too. He's actually told Levison he's coming back; that he's not going to be turned out of his own study. His study, you know—a blessed new kid, who's not been here a week! We'll show him whether it's his study!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Look out; he's coming!" said Herries.

"Ready!" commanded Blake.

"We're weady, deah boy."

There were footsteps in the passage; the heavy tread

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of Baggy Trimble, the fat and flabby new boy in the Fourth. A fat and flabby face looked in at the open doorway.

Trimble paused on the threshold.

The sight of the bat and the stump and the whip and the cane seemed to discourage him.

He blinked at Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy in turn, and received only stony stares in reply.

"I—I say, is tea ready?" he remarked.

No answer.

"I—I say, I'm coming in, you know."

"You can come in," said Jack Blake. "What's stopping you?"

"I—I say, what are you going to do with that stump?"

"Brain you!"

Trimble grinned feebly.

"I—I say, this is my study, you know. You can't turn a chap out of his own study. Mr. Railton put me in this study."

"And we put you out," said Blake. "And you'll stay out!"

"I won't stay out!" hooted Trimble.

"Well, come in, and see what you'll get."

"Yaas, wathah! Twot in, you wottah!"

"I know you're only joking, of course," said Trimble, edging a few inches into the study. "I wouldn't think of deserting old chums like you. Gussy especially—"

"If you allude to me as Gussy, Twimble, I will thrash you like anythin'!"

"The fact is," said Trimble, "I'm willing to let bygones be bygones. I don't bear any malice. I can take a joke, too. Now, is tea ready?"

"Tea's ready," said Blake cheerily.

"Then I'm coming in."

"Do!"

Trimble hesitated a few moments, apparently unable to make up his mind whether Study No. 6 was in earnest or not. His eyes fell upon a cake and a jar of jam on the table, and apparently that decided him. He came in, keeping wary eyes upon the four juniors.

"Now the band begins to play!" murmured Monty Lowther.

It did!

The four Fourth-Formers made a rush at Trimble. The dog-whip curled round his legs, and the cane caught him across the shoulders, what time the cricket-bat bumped on his plump chest. Blake, unfortunately, had no time to get to work with the stump, for Trimble, with a terrific yell, made one wild bound into the passage and vanished.

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

"Bai Jove! He's gone!"

"And I didn't even get a lick at him!" exclaimed Blake wrathfully. And Jack Blake rushed out into the passage, flourishing the stump, in the hope of yet getting the missing "lick."

But Trimble was gone.

His footsteps died away down the big staircase, and Blake returned disappointed to Study No. 6.

"Well, he's gone!" grinned Tom Merry. "If you always receive him like that, he will get fed-up with this study in time."

"Yaas, I wathah think that lesson will settle the mattah, deah boys. He cannot weally wegard this studay as comfy quartahs!"

"Yes, I think we've done with him," said Blake, pitching the stump into a corner. "There won't be much left of him soon, if he don't keep out of this study. Now we'll have tea. Cousin Ethel has sent Gussy this cake, and you Shell bounders had better stay to tea."

"Well, we came to ask you—but the cake settles it," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Done!"

And Study No. 6 sat down to tea, satisfied that they were rid at last of the obnoxious Trimble.

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# ANSWERS

No. 10 "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD," 1/3<sup>d</sup>. OUT TO-DAY! BUY IT AT ONCE!

CHAPTER 2.  
Trimble's Great Wheeze.

"HALLO!"

"Trimble, by gum!"

It was an hour after the stirring scene in Study No. 6.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther had returned to their study in the Shell passage, after doing full justice to the feed in No. 6.

They were at work upon "copy" for the "Weekly," when the door was opened, and a fat face and form were insinuated into the study.

The Terrible Three looked up from their work. Tom Merry quitted his leading article, Lowther left his comic column, and Manners raised his eyes from his photographic article to stare at Baggy Trimble. They were surprised by his visit. They had supposed that they had made it quite clear to the new junior that they preferred his room to his company.

But Baggy Trimble was not easily repulsed. Probably no measures would be efficacious short of those adopted by Study No. 6.

Trimble nodded genially to the Shell fellows.

"Busy?" he asked, in the most amicable tone.

"Yes!"

"Awfully!"

"Good-bye!"

Those three replies ought to have disposed of Trimble. But they didn't. He came further into the study, smiling blandly.

"Sorry to interrupt!" he remarked.

"No need for sorrow," said Monty Lowther. "Leave off interrupting, that's all!"

"If you're doing the 'Weekly,' I could help you," observed Trimble. "I've seen the last number, and I don't think much of it. I dare say you'd like to get some really good stuff in that paper."

"My hat!"

"But I didn't come here to speak about that," added Trimble. "You see, I've been turned out of my study. You saw what those fellows did."

"Yes; we'd have lent them a hand if they'd needed it."

"Ahem! You see, I've got no study," explained Trimble. "I'm really awfully chummy with Gussy, but they've talked him round. They're up against me. The reason really is that they all owe me money."

"What!"

"I'm a generous chap, and being wealthy, I've always been free-handed with cash," Trimble explained. "They've borrowed of me right and left, and this is the result."

"You lying worm!" said Monty Lowther. "They haven't borrowed a cent of you."

"Ahem! You see, I'm always lending money to chaps," Trimble explained. "It leaves me rather short of cash sometimes, and at Trimble Hall I was accustomed to have all I wanted, and more. I'm short of money now."

"Nothing doing!" said Tom Merry tersely.

"What I was going to suggest was that I should share this study," said Trimble. "If you fellows would like to have me here, it could be arranged with the House-master, though it's unusual for a Fourth-Form chap to dig with the Shell. You could ask Mr. Railton as a special favour."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think it's a good idea," said Trimble fatuously. "I should be useful in a lot of ways. For instance, I could help with editing the 'Weekly.' I'm a humorous chap, and I could supply some good jokes, instead of the piffle you put in the comic column at present."

"What!" ejaculated Monty Lowther. Lowther was wholly responsible for the comic column. He looked at the new boy as if he would eat him.

"Then there's the leading article," said Trimble. "It's weak—very weak. I could take that on, too."

"Could you?" said the editor-in-chief grimly.

"Certainly. Then I should suggest a serial by me, in the place of those rotten photographic articles the fellows yawn over."

"You cheeky ass!" roared Manners.

"Look here, you know—"

"Get out!" shouted Manners.

"But I haven't finished yet," said Trimble. "Look here, you know, I've got a ripping idea to carry out, and I don't get any support in my own study. I suppose you fellows have heard of the Serbians."

Manners, who was picking up a ruler, put it down in surprise. The Terrible Three looked blankly at Trimble, who was rubbing his fat hands.

"The Serbians!" repeated Tom Merry.

"Yes. Don't you think they're awfully plucky, standing up to the Huns and those filthy, treacherous Bulgarians?"

"Yes, they are. But what the merry dickens—"

"Wouldn't you like to help them?"

"Help them!" repeated Tom Merry.

"Yes; that's the idea."

"Are you potty?" demanded the captain of the Shell, in perplexity. "Are you suggesting that we should go to Serbia with our cricketing-stumps and drive out the Bulgarians?"

"Nunno. We couldn't do that—"

"Go hon!"

"My idea is to help them with cash," explained Trimble. "Some people say that Britain rather left the Serbians in the lurch. Well, now the Huns have stolen everything there is in the country, and the Bulgarians are murdering them right and left. They're hard up. They've held a Flag Day in London some time back, raising tin to help them. I read about it in the papers. Well, my idea is to hold a Flag Day at St. Jim's!"

"Great pip!"

"Serbian flags, you know, at a bob each, and collections ad lib," said Trimble eagerly. "You see, a lot of money could be raised that way for the Bulgarians—"

"The which?"

"I mean the Serbians. Of course, the whole matter would be in my hands, from start to finish. With my organising ability—"

"Your whatter?"

"My organising ability. I should carry it through with tremendous success. We might raise five, ten, fifteen quids—who knows? This money would be absolutely in my hands—"

"Would it?"

"Yes; and I should forward it to the proper quarter."

"Dame Taggles' tuckshop?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Yes—I mean no, certainly not. What do you fellows think of the idea?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"The idea ain't a bad one," he said. "But you're not the chap to carry it out. I don't think any chap in the School House would trust you further than he could see you, Trimble."

"If you mean to insinuate—"

"I'm not insinuating, I'm talking plain English," said Tom Merry coolly. "You've been about a week at St. Jim's, Trimble. In that time, you've borrowed money right and left, and never repaid a single bob. You've told lies about fellows owing you money, and you've been ragged and kicked out of your study for it. I wouldn't trust you with a red cent."

"Not with a brass farthing," said Manners emphatically.

"No more than we'd trust the Crown Prince of Prussia with the key of the strong-box," said Monty Lowther.

"Look here, you know. I'm patriotic, if you fellows ain't. Considering the way the Serbians got dished through relying on this country, it's up to us to lend them a hand. I'm open to accept contributions now, at this very minute—"

"Bow-wow!"

"And if you fellows don't give me something, I can only consider you slakers and shirkers—"

"You want us to give you something?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Certainly," said Trimble. "Anything you like, you know—the more the merrier, but all subscriptions thankfully received."

"Anything we like?" said Lowther thoughtfully. "But then you mightn't like it."

"Oh, yes, that's all right. Hand over anything you like, and I'll take it as a beginning."

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

"Well, it's up to us," said Lowther, looking at his chums.

"Why, you ass——" began Manners.

"It's up to us," repeated Lowther. "We ought to give Trimble something, and I'm going to. Mine's a thick ear."

Biff!

"Yaroooh!" roared Trimble, staggering back towards the door. "Wharrer you at, you silly idiot?"

"Giving, you something," grinned Lowther. "Now, you fellows, play up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mine's a dot on the boko!" chuckled Manners, and he suited the action to the word, and Baggy Trimble roared again with a terrific roar.

"And mine's a goal-kick!" grinned Tom Merry.

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

Trimble was spun round in the strong grasp of the captain of the Shell, and Tom Merry's boot came into violent contact with his fat person.

The new junior shot out of the study like a stone from a catapult.

Bump!

"Oh, crumbs! Yooooo-hoop!"

"Come back when you want some more," grinned Lowther. "We'll always have something for you, Trimble, when you come into this study. Don't forget to call on us when you want some more."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Trimble sat in the passage and roared. Monty Lowther chuckled, and closed the door. The Terrible Three went on with their editorial work, uninterrupted. Baggy Trimble did not come back for anything more.

### CHAPTER 3. Checkmate!

"Gussy, old man!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not turn his head.

Evening preparation was over, and most of the School House juniors were in the common-room, when Trimble came in.

Trimble, as a rule, wore a fat and self-satisfied expression. Contempt, which it is said will penetrate the shell of the tortoise, had no effect whatever upon Baggy Trimble. His complete armour of self-satisfaction made him proof against such trifles. But at the present moment he had a somewhat forlorn look.

He had "planted" himself in Study No. 6 when he first came to St. Jim's, on the strength of a chance acquaintance with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Arthur Augustus, in his well-known chivalrous way, had stood by him at first. But Arthur Augustus, patient as he was, had become fed-up in the long run. To do Trimble justice, he couldn't understand why No. 6 could not stand him. He was undoubtedly an unscrupulous young rascal, but he was as obtuse as unscrupulous, and all his enormities appeared to him as trifles light as air.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face was frigid as Trimble addressed him. He seemed to be quite unaware of the existence of the unfortunate Baggy.

"Look here, you know, Gussy!"

D'Arcy gazed at him vacantly. Some of the juniors grinned.

"Gussy, old son!"

Arthur Augustus moved at last. He extracted his celebrated monocle from his waistcoat pocket, jammed it into his noble eye, and turned it upon Trimble with a withering stare.

"Are you addressin' me?" he asked icily.

"Yes, Gussy!"

"I am Gussy to my friends," said the swell of St. Jim's. "I will thank you not to address me as Gussy, Trimble!"

"Look here, you know——"

"Pway do not address me at all, Trimble. I decline to know you!"

"Yes, but look here——"

Arthur Augustus rose, turned his back upon Trimble, and walked across the room. Trimble blinked after him

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in surprise. Apparently he could not understand the Honourable Arthur Augustus' attitude at all.

"I say, Blake——"

"Don't talk to me, you worm!" said Jack Blake politely.

"Herries, old chap——"

"Do you want your silly head shoved into the coal-box?" asked Herries.

"Nunno!"

"Then don't call me Herries, old chap."

"Digby, dear boy——"

Digby picked up a cushion. Baggy Trimble beat a hurried retreat just in time. A chuckle followed him. The new junior halted at a table where the Terrible Three were playing chess. Tom Merry and Manners were playing, as a matter of fact, but Lowther was bestowing advice upon both sides, and seemed to be having most of the game. Trimble paused to look on, with a beaming and ingratiating smile.

"Knight to king's fourth, Tommy," said Lowther.

"Bow-wow!" said Tom ungratefully.

"You'll bag a pawn that way."

"And what about leaving my bishop uncovered?"

"Hum! I forgot the bishop."

"Better move the bishop," said Trimble. "I should recommend bishop to the rook's square."

"What on earth for?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Ass!" said Manners.

"Well, then, rook to the bishop's square," said Trimble cheerfully.

"You silly duffer!"

Tom Merry moved a pawn.

"That does it!" said Manners joyfully. "Mate in three."

"Rats! I don't see it."

"You wouldn't!" agreed Manners.

"Bosh! I've got you mate in four, I know that!" said Tom Merry warmly; "and you jolly well can't get out of it, either!"

The two chess-players wrinkled their brows over the game, and Monty Lowther mercifully forbore to give advice. But Baggy Trimble was not merciful.

"Bishop to king's fifth, Tommy," he said.

"Don't call me Tommy!"

"You fathead!" said Manners. "If Tommy puts his bishop on king's fifth, I nail him with my queen."

"Then I should suggest king to the rook's square."

"How's the king to get to the rook's square, when he's two squares off it?" howled Tom Merry.

"So he is," agreed Trimble. "Then why not move the bishop to the queen's third?"

"Because the bishop isn't a rook, and can't go sideways, ass!"

"Then I advise——"

"Shut up!"

"Look here, you know——"

"Will you dry up?" yelled the exasperated chess-player. "You know as much about chess as about footer! Cheese it!"

"Try the rook on the queen's square," said Monty Lowther, as Trimble was silenced for a moment.

"I'll try my knuckles on your nose, if you give me any more advice!" said Tom Merry. "You're as bad as Trimble."

Monty Lowther chuckled, and strolled away. Chess does not, as a rule, improve the temper, and both the juniors were getting a little excited over the game. Manners was certain that his opponent was mate in three, while Tom Merry was convinced that he had Manners mate in four, so the game evidently required care. Danger-point having been reached, Monty Lowther gave up the role of adviser; but Trimble was not so judicious.

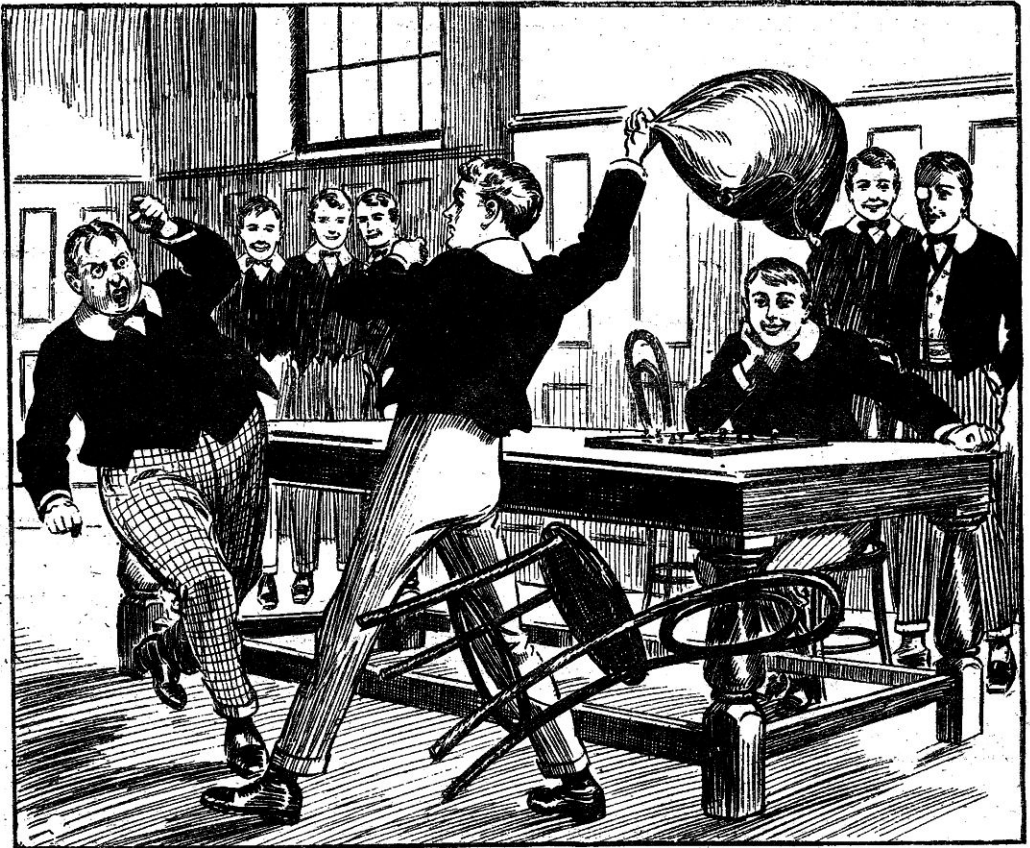
He continued to look on, and to give advice. His remarks had shown that what he did not know about chess would have filled a whole number of the B.C.M. But Trimble went on regardless.

"It's a goner for you, Merry, unless you move the rook," he remarked.

"I'll jolly soon move you, if you don't shift!" said Tom Merry, and he pushed a knight into place.

"That's done it!" said Trimble. "You're licked!"

"Dry up!"



Tom Merry jumped up. There was a cushion on his chair, and he seized it, and smote Trimble with a mighty smite. "Yaroo!" roared the surprised Trimble. (See Chapter 3.)

Manners grinned, and moved a piece. Tom Merry wrinkled his brows over the game again. As a matter of fact, Manners was the better player, but Tom had a natural ambition to beat him at his own game. He gazed at the pieces and pawns with knitted brows; striving to think out that stunning move which Morphy or Casablanca or Kieseritski would have made.

"Mate in two!" murmured Manners, softly as a cooing dove.

Tom Merry grunted.

"I don't see that," remarked Trimble.

"Of course you don't," agreed Manners. "It wouldn't be much good, if a blinking idiot could see it!"

"My idea is, that Merry has got the game, if he moves his rook to the queen's knight's second," said Trimble confidently.

Tom Merry glanced at the suggested move, and discovered that it would leave him mate in one. Then he fixed a deadly glare upon the cheerful Baggy.

"Will you cut off?" he asked.

"Look here, you know—"

"You open your blithering mouth again, and I'll jam something into it!" said Tom Merry.

He returned to his survey of the board. Manners' patient smile was a little exasperating. Tom Merry was simply determined to discover that "Morphy move" which would knock his opponent's game sky-high. To discover it, he needed all his concentration of mind. Chatter from Trimble was unendurable under the circumstances. But the cheerful Baggy never knew when to stop.

"Try the rook on the king's square!" he suggested.

Tom Merry jumped up. There was a cushion on his chair, and he seized it, and smote Trimble with a mighty smite.

"Yaroo!" roared the surprised Trimble. "What the thunder—"

Crash!

"Look out!" shrieked Manners.

But it was too late! Trimble crashed into the chess-table, and the table danced on its four legs. Pieces and pawns went in a shower to the floor. Trimble sat down on them, gasping. Then he yelled—pieces and pawns were not comfortable to sit on suddenly.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Yaroo!"

"Hallo, game over?" asked Monty Lowther, looking round. "Who's won?"

"Tain't finished," howled Tom Merry. "That silly ass has upset the table."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Practically finished," said Manners. "You were mate in two, you know."

"You duffer, you were mate in three."

"Look here, Tom—"

"Look here, fathead—"

"Mate in two—"

"Mate in three—"

"Of all the asses—"

"Of all the chumps—"

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Trimble. "Help me up, you rotters! I'm hurt! Yow-ow-ow!"

Tom Merry and Manners ceased their warm dispute, and turned to Trimble. Who had won that game could not be told.

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NEXT  
WEDNESDAY:

"IN THE KING'S KHAKI!"

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of  
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never be settled now, but Trimble could be settled for "mucking" it up, and they proceeded to settle him. Baggy Trimble jumped up as a boot and a cushion smote him simultaneously, and fled. He made a wild break for the door, roaring, followed by a howl of laughter from the juniors, and rushed fairly into Kildare of the Sixth, who was coming in to announce bed-time.

Crash!

"Yow-ow! Leggo!" shrieked Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare staggered, but he grasped Trimble by the collar and shook him ferociously.

"You young ass, what the dickens—"

"They're after me!" yelled Trimble.

"Eh! Who are after you?"

Kildare cast a puzzled glance round the common-room. The Terrible Three were chatting together in a calm and unconcerned way, Tom Merry sitting on the cushion he had wielded with such effect. The captain of St. Jim's smiled a little.

"Cut off, you young ass! Bed-time, you youngsters."

"Right-ho, Kildare."

And the juniors marched off to bed. When lights were out in the Shell dormitory, and the Shell fellows were settling down to sleep, a still small voice proceeded from Manners' bed:

"I say, Tom!"

"Hallo!" said Tom drowsily.

"It was mate in two, you know."

"What?"

"Mate in two. Yaroooooh!"

A boot whizzed through the darkness, and Manners uttered a fiendish yell.

Tom Merry chuckled.

"Mate in one!"

## CHAPTER 4.

### Flag Day!

"WHAT'S the little game?"

Levison of the Fourth asked the question the next day, after morning lessons.

Levison was surprised.

Trimble of the Fourth was coming along the passage, presenting an extraordinary appearance. A French tricolour was pinned on his breast, about a foot square. Before him a tray was slung. It was an old tea-tray, and had apparently been rescued from a dustbin. Several holes had been punched in it and strings tied to it, which held it in a horizontal position in front of Trimble's tubby form. On the tray were arranged a number of tiny French flags. In Trimble's hand was a money-box. He rattled it as he saw Levison. There was a loud clink as the box was rattled.

"Buying a flag?" he asked.

"Buying a which?" ejaculated Levison in astonishment.

"It's French Flag Day!" explained Trimble. "I'm selling these flags for the benefit of the fund."

"My hat!"

"I thought of having a Servian Flag Day at first," said Trimble confidentially, "but, on the whole, I decided on the French flag. I've bought up these flags with my own money. I'm selling them at a bob each—"

"And I suppose they cost you about a farthing each!" said Levison.

"Well, I got the lot rather cheap," confessed Trimble. "But, of course, it isn't the value of the flag. The money goes to the—fund."

"What fund?"

"Oh, the fund, you know," said Trimble, somewhat vaguely—"the fund for the heroic French, you know. Don't you think they ought to be encouraged, after the splendid way they've been sitting down watching the Germans for a year or more? Are you buying a flag, Levison?"

"Not this time," grinned Levison. "Don't you know you have to have a licence for making flag collections?"

"Oh, rot! I think it's a ripping idea, backing up our Allies in this way. Look here, you know, as a special concession, I'll let you have a flag for a tanner."

"You can keep it," grinned Levison. "When I want

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to back up our Allies to the extent of a tanner, I'll get a postal-order and send it myself."

And Levison walked on, grinning. Trimble snorted, and, catching sight of Blake & Co. in the passage, he hurried up to them. Study No. 6 gazed at Trimble and his weird paraphernalia in astonishment.

"What does this mean, you chortling ass?" asked Blake.

"Flag Day!"

"Bai Jove!"

"St. Jim's Flag Day for the benefit of the heroic French. These flags are a bob each. All money guaranteed to remain in my hands—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Till forwarded to the heroic French, of course. Raily round!"

"Bai Jove, it's not a bad ideah, deah boys. I wathah think I will have a flag!" said Arthur Augustus, feeling in his pocket.

"Cheese it, fathead!"

"Weally, Blake, I twust you approve of waisin' funds to back up our Allies against the disgustin' Huns."

"Myes, but not Trimble's fund," said Blake. "It will get as far towards France as the school shop, and not a step further, I fancy."

"Bai Jove, I never thought of that! Are you authorised to make this collection, Twimble?"

"I suppose any chap can be patriotic if he likes," snorted Trimble. "Now, then, you're going to have a flag each: I've started the collection myself with a pound."

"Where's the pound?"

"In the money-box," said Trimble, rattling it.

Clink! clink! clink!

"Bai Jove, that is vey generous of you, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus. "You are not such a feakful wottah as I supposed. Undah the cires, Blake—"

"Under the cires, we'll see that pound," said Blake, jerking the rattling box away from the collector.

"Let that box alone!" roared Trimble, in alarm.

"Rats!"

There was a slit in the lid of the box, for coins to pass through, but the lid was easily removable. Blake jerked it open, and the chums of the Fourth looked into the box.

Two marbles, an old key, and the half of a disused spoon were revealed.

"Gweat Scott!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "Where's the pound?"

"Ahem! I mean I was going to put in a pound," explained Trimble. "I've lent most of my money to Grundy of the Shell, as it happens, and I'm short of tin. I'm going to put in the pound when Grundy squares up."

"You fearful swindiah—"

"Gimme my tin."

Blake, with a snort of disgust, banged the tin box on Trimble's head, and the chums of the Fourth walked away. Trimble rubbed his head and snorted, and jammed the lid on the money-box. Flag Day at St. Jim's was not very successful so far, but Baggy did not give up hope.

The Terrible Three came down the passage from the Form-room, and the enterprising collector intercepted them.

"Bobs for French flags!" he announced. "Flag Day, you know. Are you buying a flag, Tom Merry?"

"Not from you."

"Look here, you know, don't be mean. There's such a thing as patriotism!"

"Hallo, what's the little game?" exclaimed Kangaroo of the Shell, coming up with Dane and Glyn. "What's the name of that game, Trimble?"

"St. Jim's Flag Day for our heroic Allies!" said Trimble. "Bobs for flags, you know. Considering the way General Joffre came over and woke up our great statesmen when they forgot we were at war, it's up to us to do something, you know. Are you buying a flag, Kangy?"

"Ask me another," grinned Kangaroo.

"I say, Glyn, you're got lots of oof—"

"And lots of sense," said Bernard Glyn. "You're not bagging any of my oof, I know that."

"Dane, old man, as a Canadian, you're bound to be patriotic. Hand over a bob for a flag, to start the ball rolling."

Clifton Dane chuckled.



"I won't start the ball rolling," he remarked. "But I'll start you rolling, you cheeky young spoofer!"

"Oh, I say! Leggo! You rotter! I'll mop you up! Oh, scissors!"

Bump! Crash! Clink! Clink!  
Baggy Trimble went over, and his tray went over, and his money-box went over. French flags were scattered right and left. The Shell fellows, with loud shouts of laughter, dribbled the podgy junior along the passage to an accompaniment of terrific yells from Trimble.

When they left him, Trimble sat up and gasped.  
"Oh, dear! Yow-ow-ow-ow! Unpatriotic rotters! Oh, crumbs! Oh, my hat! Yow!"  
Flag Day had not started well.

### CHAPTER 5. Very Profitable!

**E**NTREZ!" called out Monsieur Morny.  
Monsieur Morny, the French master at St. Jim's, was in his study. He was reading the latest number obtainable of the "Figaro," when a tap came at his door.

Trimble of the Fourth came in, and Mossoo eyed him curiously.

Trimble was looking a little dusty and rumped, and he was breathing hard. His tray was dented in many places, and half the little flags had disappeared. But he was still going strong. Trimble had his weaknesses, but he was a stickler.

"Mon Dieu!" ejaculated Monsieur Morny. "Vat does zis mean, Trimble?"

"St. Jim's Flag Day, sir."  
"Vraiment?"

"Yes, sir, French Flag Day," purred Trimble. "In recognition of the tremendous courage and bravery of the French, sir, we are holding a Flag Day for the benefit of our magnificent Allies."

Monsieur Morny smiled with a beaming smile. He was not a suspicious gentleman, and he did not know Trimble.

"Zat is good—tres bien!" he said. "I shall hope zat you shall have ze great success, my young friend!"

"We hope so, sir," said Trimble modestly. "I'm the chief collector, sir. I've got some pretty good contributions." He rattled the spoon and the marbles in the money-box. "If you would care to make a contribution, sir—"

"Parfaitement!" said Monsieur Morny. "I am very glad to assist, mon garçon!"

Trimble's eyes glistened as Monsieur Morny extracted a half-crown from his pocket, and dropped it into the slit of the money-box.

It was a beginning.  
"Thank you, sir! Will you have a flag?"

"Zank you, my boy!"

Mossoo selected a flag, with a smile, and Trimble quitted the study, his fat face beaming. He had broken his duck, so to speak. Among the juniors Flag Day was not likely to be a success—in the hands of Trimble, at all events. But a half-crown was a half-crown.

Trimble paused in the passage. His thoughts wandered to the tuckshop. For days Trimble had been in a state of "stony" penury, and since he had been ejected from Study No. 6 he had not tasted a jam-tart. But he manfully overcame the temptation. It was wiser to strike while the iron was hot, and enlarge the collection. Trimble had decided to let the juniors alone; but the masters seemed likely to "pan out" better, and he directed his steps towards Herr Schneider's study.

"Gum in!" said a guttural voice, as Trimble knocked on the door.

The German master stared at Trimble, and blinked at the flags over his spectacles. The sight of the French flag did not seem to please him.

If Trimble had been a little more judicious, he would hardly have ventured into the German's study on such an errand. Herr Schneider was a respectable and law-abiding old gentleman, who never went more than five miles from his place of residence, or sought to discover military secrets, or wrote to friends in neutral countries

in invisible ink. He was, in fact, quite a unique specimen of a German, for he never plotted or schemed against the nation that gave him shelter. But his sympathies, naturally, were with his own country.

The sight of the French flag to Herr Schneider was a good deal like a red rag to a bull. Thunder gathered on his brow, but Trimble did not notice it. He was thinking solely of cash.

"If you please, sir, it's Flag Day!" rattled Trimble. "We're making a collection for our heroic Allies, sir, in recognition of the whackings they've given to the filthy Huns, sir!"

"Vat?"  
"I'm getting in contributions on all sides, sir," said Trimble, rattling the box. "Everybody wants to back up the French, since they licked the Germans on the Marne, sir!"

"Mein Gott!" gasped Herr Schneider.  
"Will you have a flag, sir?"

"Poy!"  
"We're asking a bob—I mean a shilling each for these flags, sir, the flags of our heroic Allies," explained Trimble. "But, of course, half-crowns would be taken, or half-sovereigns."

"Drumble!"  
"May I give you a flag, sir? One shilling—"

Herr Schneider fumbled on his table, and Trimble watched him gleefully, under the impression that the German master was looking for his purse. But it was not a purse that Herr Schneider was looking for. It was a pointer!

He turned on Trimble, with the pointer in his hand, and thunder in his brow, his very spectacles glittering with wrath.

"Hold out your—your hand mit you!" he rasped.  
"Et?"

"You sheeky poy! You sheeky young rasgal!" shouted Herr Schneider. "You gums here mit dose flags to insult me, isn't it?"

"I—I—I—"

"Vill you your hand hold out?"  
"But—but look here, you know!" stammered Trimble, in dismay. "I—I say, hands off, sir! I—I—I assure you—oh, my hat!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!  
As Trimble did not hold out his hand, Herr Schneider seized him by the collar, and the pointer came down across his plump shoulders.

Whack! Whack! Whack!  
The tray went in one direction and the money-box in the other, as the surprised Trimble wriggled in the German master's powerful grasp.

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Help! Yarooop!" he roared.

Whack! Whack! Whack!  
"Dere, you sheeky young rasgal!" panted Herr Schneider. "Now go mit you!"

"Oh, scissors!"  
Trimble made one bound for the door as Herr Schneider released him. The German master hurled his tray and his money-box after him, and they crashed in the passage. Then the door slammed.

"Oh, dear!" groaned Trimble. "The Hunnish beast! What did he get his rag out like that for, I wonder? Yow-ow-ow!"

The unhappy collector gathered up the tray and the money-box; but the flags were gone. They were strewn over the carpet in Herr Schneider's study, and Trimble was not thinking of collecting them. He would as soon have entered a lion's den as the German master's study at that moment. Trimble did not care to be a Daniel.

He limped away down the passage, groaning.  
"Wow, wow, wow!"

"Hallo, what's the matter with you?" asked Kildare, meeting him at the end of the passage.

"Yow-ow-ow!" groaned Trimble. "It's that German wild beast! He pitched into me! He ought to be sacked! What do they let Huns stay here for? Wow-ow!"

"If you're speaking of Herr Schneider, Trimble—"  
"Wow-ow! He pitched into me!" growled Trimble. "I only asked him to buy a French flag, and he got wild for some reason—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see where the cackle comes in!" growled Trimble. "I've a jolly good mind to complain to the Head! I say, Kildare, would you care to buy a flag? I've got just one left. A bob a time, you know, to assist our heroic Allies—"

Kildare stared at him.

"Are you asking fellows to give you a shilling for a halfpenny flag?" he exclaimed. "Are you off your rocker, you young ass?"

"It's Flag Day!" explained Trimble.

"Flag Day?" ejaculated the St. Jim's captain.

"Yes, that's it! All funds collected go to help the Bulgarians—I mean the Serbians—that is to say, the French. I'm getting subscriptions like wildfire. You don't want to be left out, Kildare. As an Irish chap, it's up to you to be patriotic—"

"You young rascal!" said Kildare sternly.

"Eh?"

"You can't make collections without the authority of the Head or the Housemaster!" said Kildare. "And, from what I've seen of you, I doubt very much whether the cash would be safe in your hands. So you're getting subscriptions like wildfire, are you? Open that box!"

"That—that box?"

"Yes; at once!"

"I—I meantsay I haven't got any collections yet!" stammered Trimble. "A—a slip of the tongue, you know—"

"Open that box!" thundered Kildare.

Trimble uttered a deep groan, and opened the money-box. Kildare stared as he saw the spoon, the marbles, the old key, and the half-crown.

"Well, that's a queer collection," he said. "Who gave you the half-crown?"

"I—I put it in myself—"

"Who gave it to you?" asked Kildare, taking Trimble's fat ear between his finger and thumb.

"Yow-ow! Mossow!" wailed Trimble. "I really meant to say Mossow—wow-wow!"

Kildare picked the half-crown out of the box.

"I'll take this back to Monsieur Morny," he said quietly. "You can please yourself about the rest of the collection. And if I catch you starting flag days again, Trimble, I'll warn you; remember that!"

Trimble blinked at Kildare in utter dismay, as he turned away towards the French master's study with the half-crown in his hand.

"I—I say, Kildare," he stammered, "that's—that's my half-crown! I say, hold on a minute. I'll tell you what, Kildare. Halves!"

"What!" ejaculated Kildare.

"Halves!" said Trimble eagerly. "That's fifteenpence each for the two of us— Here, I say, wharrer you at?"

"You young rascal!" shouted Kildare, shaking Trimble till his teeth rattled. "You unscrupulous little scoundrel! If I didn't think you were too big an idiot to know what a rascal you are, I'd march you in to the Head at once! Take that, you fat little beast—and that!"

"Oh, grooogh—hooh—grooogh!" gurgled Trimble.

"What's the matter? Oh, dear!"

Kildare gave him a final tremendous shake, and left him. Trimble staggered against the wall, and gasped for breath.

"Grooogh! Rotter! My half-crown! Oh, crumbs!"

St. Jim's Flag Day had come to a sudden end. The net result was a key, a spoon, and two marbles in the money-box—not to mention a bumping, a licking, and a shaking which Trimble had bagged for himself. The way of the transgressor was hard!

## CHAPTER 6.

### A Good Day for Study No. 6.

"B" AI Jove! Here's that wottah again!"

Study No. 6 were at tea.

They were in high good-humour, discussing a forthcoming visit from Cousin Ethel, when Trimble put his head in at the door.

He put it in doubtfully, somewhat like a tortoise putting its head out of its shell to see the lie of the land.

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Four distinct and ferocious glares were turned upon him.

It was some days since the drastic dealing with Trimble, which had been supposed to convince the new junior that his presence was not desired in No. 6. Since then he had steered clear.

Nobody else in the Fourth wanted the pleasure of Trimble's company. He was without a study.

He had to do his preparation in the Form-room or the common-room; which did not trouble him so much as it would have troubled most fellows, for he always "scamped" it in any case. He felt the loss of his study chiefly because of the feeds he missed. The cosy teatime in No. 6 was no longer for him; the lion's share no longer fell to his lot.

And that was a serious miss, for Trimble was in a chronic state of hard-up. He had an allowance, but he always spent it immediately in the school shop in a huge "gorge," and the day after he would be as hard-up as ever. He had borrowed on all sides during his first week at St. Jim's; but since he had never repaid a single loan, naturally that resource soon dried up.

The school fare at St. Jim's was wholesome and plentiful, but it was not nearly enough for Baggy Trimble. He had an appetite compared with which that of Fatty Wynn of the New House was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine.

He had a cheerful way of inviting himself to tea, with fellows he hardly knew; and good-natured juniors sometimes let him "rip." But the most good-natured soon tired of seeing the greedy "bounder" scoff the best of everything on the table, and the lion's share at that.

Perhaps the agreeable scent of fried rashers had attracted Baggy to Study No. 6 just now, and he had resolved to risk a hostile reception. Hostile his reception was certain to be. One look at the Fourth-Formers was enough to show that.

Blake reached out for the poker.

"Look here, you know," said Trimble. "Don't be a beast, you know. This is my study, you know."

"I thought we'd cured you of that," said Blake. "But if you want some more, come in and have it. You're welcome!"

"Yaas, wathah! Where's my cane?"

Trimble hesitated on the threshold.

"Look here, if you don't let me come into my own study, I shall jolly well appeal to the Housemaster."

"Go ahead! That won't prevent us from squashing you whenever you come in," said Herries.

"You'll get licked, you know."

"We'll chance that, for the pleasure of licking you, you worm!"

"As a matter of fact, I've come here to do you a favour," said Trimble.

"How-wow!"

"Honest Injun!"

"Wats! We are quite awah how honest your Injun is, you boundah!"

"How would you fellows like to make a lot of money?" said Trimble.

"Hallo! Are you suggesting coining?" said Blake. "Just in your line, if you had brains enough."

"I don't mean that, fathead! Look here, I can tell you chaps how to make pounds and pounds," said Trimble eagerly. "I could do it, only the fellows don't trust me, for some reason."

"For some reason!" echoed Blake. "Now, I wonder what the reason can be?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But you fellows are trusted, and if you took up a Flag Day, the chaps would shell out like anything, you know."

"They might," said Blake. "But how should we make pounds and pounds out of that? All the money would go to the fund."

"It needn't, you know."

"Wha-a-at!"

Trimble came a step further into the study, and lowered his voice cautiously. The chums of Study No. 6 stared at him dumbfounded. That Trimble had come to propose

a scheme of dishonesty to them seemed too incredible for belief.

"You see, suppose we form a committee of this study," pursued Trimble. "We collect the money, and have it all in our own hands. Well, we send some to the fund, just to keep up appearances—"

"Appearances!" gasped Blake. "Only to keep up appearances!"

"Yes, it's always done, you know, in fund-collecting; a bit goes towards the object of the fund, to keep up appearances. Then we bag the rest for expenses."

"Expenses!"

"Exactly. Only as the fellows mightn't approve of that, we'd keep it dark, and say nothing outside this study."

"My word!" murmured Dig, overcome.

"You see what a ripping scheme it is," pursued Trimble eagerly. "You fellows being trusted, it would work all right, and we might have pounds and pounds to divide, as—as expenses. I should claim a good whack, as originator of the idea."

Blake jumped up with a roar.

"You beastly little scoundrel—"

"Here, I say, what's the matter? If I've said anything to offend you, Blake, I'm sorry."

"I—I'll slaughter him!" gasped Blake.

"Hold on, deah boy!" Arthur Augustus rose, and caught his excited chum by the shoulder, and dragged him back. "Pewwaps you had bettah let me speak to Twimble."

"He don't want speaking to; he wants smashing!" yelled Blake.

"Yaas, he is an awful wottah, but pway leave him in my hands. As a fellow of tact and judgment—"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Lemme go, ass! I'm going to scalp him!"

"Pway leave him to me," said D'Arcy firmly. "I feah that the wottah is off his wockah, or has a kink in his bwin, or somethin'. I'm goin' to talk to him and bring him to a sense of his howwid wottenness. Leave him to me."

"Leave him to Gussy," chuckled Digby. "A lecture from Gussy is worse than a whaling, any day."

"Weally, Dig—"

"Go ahead, then, you fathead!" growled Blake. "Only don't let the beast come near me. He makes me ill."

"Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, in his most stately manner, "you have made a shockin' wposition!"

"Blessed if I know what you're making a fuss about!" said Trimble indignantly. "I've come here to do you a favour, and show you how to make pounds and pounds, and you turn on me like this. I call it ungrateful."

"Bai Jove! Twimble, what you have wposed is dishonest!" said Arthur Augustus impressively.

"Oh, rot! If you have any insinuations to make against my honesty, D'Arcy, I'll ask you to step into the gym with me."

"I am perfectly weady—"

"Only, of course, I wouldn't think of licking an old pal like you, Gussy," said Trimble affectionately.

"You uttah young ass—"

"But to come back to the point," said Trimble calmly. "There's pounds and pounds to be made, if you fellows—"

"You shockin' young wepwobate!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Cannot you see that to make money by waisin' subscriptions is dishonest and howwid and infamous?"

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Trimble peevishly. "I'm patriotic."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Patriotic!" said Trimble scornfully. "I know you're not very patriotic in this study. But I am. I want to help our Allies in beating the Huns."

"You want to spend the money in the tuckshop, you podgy little beast!"

"The labourer is worthy of his hire," said Trimble loftily. "I'm entitled to a whack for my trouble."

"Twimble, I feah that you are even a biggah fool than wogne. I feel that I am bound to be patient with you, and wesist the inclination to give you a fealful thwashin'."

Pway, listen to me, deah boy. Keep your hands frowm pickin' and stealin'. Don't be a gweedy and dishonest little beast. If you should waise any money by a Flag Day, you would be bound in honah to send ewevy pennay to the fund. Now, Twimble, I trust you will wlect on this."

Trimble nodded.

"All right," he said.

"There, deah boys, I was suah that a good talkin' to would do him good," said Arthur Augustus triumphantly. "You can always leave it in the hands of a fellah of tact and judgment. Twimble sees the ewwah of his ways now, don't you, Twimble?"

"Oh, certainly!" said Trimble cheerfully. "But now, to come back to the matter in hand, will you fellows back me up? We might have pounds and pounds to divide—"

"What!"

"It would be a ripping good thing for this study. I should claim one quarter, as originator of the idea, and you chaps would divide the rest. What do you say?"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to laugh at, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, looking distressed. "I am afraid that Twimble is incowwivable."

"A beautiful mixture of idiot and rascal," said Blake, looking at Trimble's fat and self-satisfied face in wonder. "Blessed if I don't think he's got a screw loose. If you're done talking to him, I'm ready to begin with this poker."

"Look here, you know— Oh, my hat!"

Trimble made a bound from the study as Blake made a bound at him. The poker crashed on the doorpost with a terrific crash. Blake had not intended it for Trimble, of course, but Trimble heard the crash, and let out a yell of terror, and vanished into the Shell passage like a deer. Blake turned back grinning into the study.

"I fancy we've done with him this time." "He is an awful wescal," said Arthur Augustus reflectively. "But he is weally more fatheaded than anythin' else. He doesn't see things in the wpopah light."

Blake grunted, and sat down to finish his tea, and the chums of the Fourth resumed their discussion of the celebration which was to greet the arrival of Cousin Ethel. They soon forgot about Trimble. But Trimble had not forgotten them.

## CHAPTER 7.

### The Chopper Comes Down!

**K**NOCK!

"Come in, fathead!" sang out Blake.

The door of No. 6 opened, and Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, stepped in. The juniors jumped up, Blake with a crimson face.

Mr. Railton, however, did not appear to have noted Blake's words. Blake had not guessed that it was so awe-inspiring a personage as a Housemaster who was at the door.

Baggy Trimble followed the Housemaster in. There was a lurking grin on his fat face.

"Blake," said Mr. Railton severely, "it appears that you have turned Trimble out of his study, and refuse to allow him to share this room."

Blake looked daggers at Trimble.

"Yes, sir," he said firmly.

"We weally can't stand him, sir," said D'Arcy. "It was at your request, D'Arcy, that I assigned Trimble to this study," said Mr. Railton sternly.

"Yaas, sir; but—"

"There's more room in No. 8, sir," ventured Harries.

"Now Blenkinsop's left, there's only three in No. 9." "No. 8 is a smaller study," said Mr. Railton. "I understood from D'Arcy that he desired Trimble to be placed here, because he knew him."

"Yaas, but—"

"It is somewhat hard upon a new boy, D'Arcy, for you to change your mind in this way," said the Housemaster. "It is very fickle, and not what I should have expected of you."

Arthur Augustus turned red.

"I did not know what a feahful boundah he was, sir."  
 "I suppose you have had some trivial dispute," said Mr. Railton. "If Trimble should request me to change him into No 8——" He looked at Trimble.

"Bai Jove! The fellahs would object!"  
 "If you think they would object, you have no right to ask me to place him there. But if Trimble wishes——"

"Not at all, sir!" said Trimble cheerfully. "We've had some little disagreements in this study, sir, but I never bear malice. I'm not going to desert an old chum like Gussy. It will all blow over, sir."

"That is a very proper view to take," said Mr. Railton. "I trust, Blake, that you and the others will show the same conciliatory spirit towards Trimble. In any case, he shares this study, and if there is further unpleasantness, I shall look into the matter. In case of any violence being offered to Trimble, there will be severe punishment for the delinquent. He is to be allowed the free use of the study in every way. Remember that. Trimble, remain here. I trust that you will all strive to pull together, without any more foolish quarrels."

Mr. Railton quitted the study, leaving Trimble there. The chums of the Fourth looked at him with feelings almost too deep for words.

"You utter worm!" gasped Herries. "You've sneaked to the Housemaster."

"I felt bound to call Mr. Railton into the matter," explained Trimble. "I acted from a sense of duty."

"A—a—sense of duty!" said Blake dazedly. "You!"

"Certainly. Now, I don't mind you fellows cutting up a bit rusty, though I'm blessed if I understand why. My offer's still open, and if you like to go in with me, we can make pounds and pounds——"

"Shut up!" shrieked Blake.  
 "Oh, all right—it's your loss!" said Trimble. "I may as well have my tea as I'm here. I say, that cake looks prime."

"I'm going to smash him!" breathed Herries.  
 Blake jerked him back.

"You heard what Railton said!" he growled. "We can't back up against a Housemaster. We've got to stand it."

"We won't!" roared Herries.

"There must be some way of gettin' wid of the wottah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If we were sneakin' beasts like Twimble, we could tell Waitton about his wuposin' a swindle to us. But we can't do that."

"If you call me a saek——" began Trimble.

"You are a wotten sneak!"

"I won't quarrel with an old chum like you, Gussy. You might pass the rashers, will you, Herries?"

"No, I won't."

"Well, I can help myself; but this isn't what I call civil. Blessed if it isn't like being among Huns!" said Trimble peevishly.

"Let that grub alone!" roared Herries.

"It's tea-time," said Trimble. "I'm going to have my tea, I suppose. If you're mean enough to be thinking about the money, I'll pay my whack."

"Pay it, then, you lying worm!"

"I happen to be short of money at the present moment, owing to lending Talbot of the Shell a quid, but when he squares——"

"Hallo, who's taking my name in vain?" said a cheery voice at the door, and Talbot of the Shell looked in. Blake burst into a chuckle.

"You're just in time," he remarked.

"Good!" said Talbot. "Just in time for what?"

"To pay Trimble his quid."

Talbot looked astonished.

"Trimble's quid! What quid?"

"Trimble says he's lent you a quid."

"Does he?" said Talbot grimly, coming into the study.

"Look here, you know, I—I meant to say Gore!" stammered Trimble. "A—a—slip of the tongue—I meant a chap in Talbot's study—Gore, you know——"

"Gore's in the passage!" grinned Talbot. "Gore, come in a minute, will you? Trimble wants that quid he lent you."

Gore of the Shell came in, red and wrathful.  
 "Lent me a quid, did he?" he exclaimed. "So you lent me a quid, Trimble—what?"

"Nunno! I—I meant Skimpole. It was Skimpole——"

"Skimpole, was it?" said Talbot. "Well, I'll call Skimpole——"

"I—I meantersay it was Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth——"

"You mean to say any silly lie that comes into your head," said Gore. "And you've got to learn to leave me out when you're telling lies, my pippin. And here's a lesson for you!"

"Look here—hands off—stoppin'!" yelled Trimble, as George Gore seized him in his muscular grasp.

But nobody stopped Gore. They looked on. Gore grasped Trimble by the hair with his left hand, and with the right dabbed the plate of juicy bacon into his fat face. Then, taking the podgy junior by the back of the neck, he rubbed his face into the plate.

"Groooooogh!" gurgled Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yurrrrrggg! Help! Grooooh!"

"There!" panted Gore. "I've heard of your blessed lies before. You'll leave me out next time, perhaps."

And Gore quitted the study, followed by the grinning Talbot. Trimble dabbed furiously at his face.

"Grooh! You rotten funks, why don't you back up a fellow in your own study?" he hooted. "Grooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Blake & Co., somewhat comforted, left the study, leaving Trimble of the Fourth still dabbing.

## CHAPTER 8.

### Monty Lowther to the Rescue!

**T**OM MERRY looked sympathetic. Manners looked grave. Monty Lowther looked as serious as he could.

It was a council of war in Tom Merry's study.

Blake & Co. had come for advice.

Generally, Blake & Co. did not need advice; they were a law unto themselves. Pitt matters were getting desperate.

Trimble was planted in Study No. 6 again, under the special eye of the Housemaster. Drastic measures were forbidden. For three days now it had lasted. Herries had lost his temper once, and chased the podgy youth forth from the study with a brandished pair of fongs. And the feeing Trimble had rushed right into Mr. Railton, and Mr. Railton, spotting Herries and the tongs, marched Herries into his study, and caned him there and then, and gave him a severe warning as to the future.

Since then they had used no other, as Jack Blake expressed it. Trimble stayed.

"And it's made Railton think that we're bullying a new kid," groaned Blake, as he poured his troubles into the sympathetic ears of the Terrible Three. "Of course, old Railton don't know what a crawling worm he is, and we can't tell him."

"Yaas, wathah! And he thinks I'm a chap given to choppin' and changin', because I don't want the beast in my study," said Arthur Augustus dolorously. "It lowlahs me in old Waitton's opinion."

"And the horrid beast scoffs everything in the study!" snorted Herries. "He's found a key to fit the study cupboard. There's never anything for tea, unless we bring it in at the last moment."

"And then he mops up nearly all of it; and if we say anything, he says we're being mean and haggling over money!" said Digby ferociously.

"Hagglin' ovah money—us!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"And he gave us a lecture on being high-minded, and—and lofty-thoughted, like him——" stuttered Herries. "That was the time I went for him with the tongs."

"No wonder!" grinned Tom Merry. "It's a hard case. It's all through Gussy being ass enough to ask him to share the study in the first place."

"I didn't know what a beast he was, deah boy. I have wepented, I assure you."

"We've bumped Gussy for that," said Blake. "We'd bump him black and blue if it would do any good."

"Weally, Blake——"

"And the fellow's such an awful liar," said Digby: "and a dishonest beast, too."



"I'm getting in contributions on all sides, sir," said Trimble, rattling the box. "Everybody wants to back up the French since they licked the Germans on the Marne, sir." "Mein Gott!" gasped Herr Schneider. (See Chapter 5.)

"Why not send him to Coventry?" suggested Manners. "We've tried that. He doesn't mind. He talks nineteen to the dozen himself, and he likes it all the better if he's not interrupted."

"I have a wathah good ideal," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "If the othah fellahs pweessed him to come to his studay, he might go."

"Good! Get some fellow to do it!" said Tom.

"Pewwaps you fellahs wouldn't mind—"

"Us?" ejaculated Manners.

"Yaas," said Arthur Augustus innocently. "You see, he makes our studay fwithfully uncomfy—"

"And what about our study?" demanded Tom Merry warmly.

"Gentlemen," said Monty Lowther, "if Gussy has done talking out of his neck, I have a suggestion to make."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Oh, go ahead!" said Blake. "I don't suppose you can suggest anything useful, but pile in. Only I warn you that if you're-going to be funny, you'll get this cushion in the neck."

"Yaas, wathah; this feafhul extwemity is no time for humowous remarks."

"Serious as a judge!" said Lowther. "Or rather, more

serious than a judge, considering that judges are such humorous beggars nowadays. My idea is, that you should make the outsider glad to change out. Make Study No. 6 too hot to hold him. Railton is down on ragging him, but there are ways and means. F'rinstance, you could start Gussy singing his tenor solos—"

"You uttah ass!"

"I admit that would be a desperate expedient, as you would suffer as much as Trimble, and might even expire first," said Lowther. "That idea had better be left to the very last."

"Lowthah, you thumpin' ass—"

"But there's a good dodge," said Lowther, unheeding. "This Trimble-bird is a rank outsider, and a mean cad, and a funk, isn't he—especially a funk?"

"He'd let a Second Form fag pull his nose!" growled Blake. "Fancy that—in Study No. 6!"

"Good! Well, then scare him."

"We can't scare him without licking him, and Railton would be on our necks for that," grunted Herries.

"I'm going to tell you the way, fathead."

"Go ahead," said Blake, gripping the cushion. "Mind, none of your funny jokes!"

"Well, go mad!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Weally——"

"Go mad!" repeated Lowther. "That would be sure to scare him out of the study, as he's a funk—— Yah! Oh! You villain! Yoop!"

Bang!

The cushion whisked through the air, and caught the humerist of the Shell fairly under the chin. Monty Lowther shot backwards over his chair, which went to the floor with a crash.

"Yaroooh!" roared Lowther. "Yow-ooop!"

"I warned you!" said Blake grimly. "We came here for advice, not for scraps from the comic column in the Weekly."

"Yow-ow!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard you as havin' asked for it, Lowthah."

Monty Lowther scrambled up, and charged ferociously at Blake. Tom Merry and Manners dragged him back.

"Hold on, Monty——"

"Lemme gerrat him!" roared Lowther. "I've bumped my head! I've cracked my funny-bone! Lemme gerrat the silly idiot!"

"Well, you shouldn't be so funny, you know!" remonstrated Tom Merry.

"You silly ass, I wasn't being funny. I was giving good advice!" hooted Lowther.

"If you call that good advice, you fathead——"

"Weally, Lowthah, I wegard it as a wotten joke!"

"You burbling chumps!" shouted Lowther, rubbing his head. "I don't mean you to go mad really—not that you'd have far to go. But pretend to, and scare Trimble out of the study by making him think he's among lunatics. He's idiot enough to believe it, and funk enough to be frightened."

"Oh!" said Blake. "I sep!"

"Oh, you see, do you?" snorted Lowther. "Time you did!"

"My hat! It isn't a bad idea," said Blake thoughtfully. "Sorry, Lowther; I thought you were being funny, as usual. I withdraw that cush."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you withdraw this bump on my napper, you howling ass?"

"I leave you that as a make-weight. I say, you chaps, this is really a good weeze. We'll make Trimble's blood curdle, and he'll clear of his own accord. We'll all make out that we're dangerous potty——"

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the kind. I should wegard it as detwactin' f'rom a fellah's personal dig."

"Well, you needn't," said Blake. "You're potty enough already. We three'll put it on, and you can act quite naturally, so Trimble will think the four of us are off our rockers."

"You f'wabjous ass, Blake——"

"Come on!" said Blake, rising. "Thanks for the tip, Lowther. Perhaps you'd better keep out, after all, Gussy, as you'd be bound to muck it up."

"I wufuse to keep out, Blake. If you are resolved upon this wudiculous ideah, I had bettah see it through, I suppose. Othahwise you fellahs will make a muck of it."

"We'll try it, anyway," said Herries. "It may work. The fellow's an utter funk and a silly idiot. Come on, you chaps."

The chums of the Fourth quitted the study, leaving Tom Merry and Manners grinning, and Monty Lowther rubbing his head.

## CHAPTER 9. The Lunatics.

"TEA ready?"

Trimble came cheerfully into Study No. 6.

Blake & Co. were there, at the tea-table. The four juniors were fully prepared to carry out the scheme suggested by the astute Lowther, and they had arranged their plans.

Trimble stared at the tea-table in astonishment. Blake was busily engaged in mixing sugar with the sardines.

"I—I say, you're spoiling those sardines," said Trimble.

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"Sardines!" said Blake, looking up with an expression of astonishment. "What sardines?"

"Those sardines," said Trimble.

"These are not sardines, fathead."

"Eh! What are they, then?"

"Whales!"

"Wha-a-at?" stammered Trimble.

"Don't you know a whale when you see one?" demanded Blake scornfully. "Tell him what they are, Dig, if he doesn't know."

"Whales, of course," said Dig.

"Wippin' whales, bai Jove!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You ought to know all about whales, Twimble, as you are a wotten Jonah."

"I—I suppose you're joking," said Trimble, mystified.

"Joking! Where does the joke come in? Do you seriously mean to say that you take those whales for sardines?" demanded Blake. "It looks to me as if you're mad. You've got a look in your eyes, too, that I used to notice among the other patients when I was in the asylum."

"The—the asylum!" stammered Trimble.

"Didn't you know I was in a lunatic asylum before I came here?" asked Blake. "We all belonged to the same asylum. That's why they put us in this study together. We were all accustomed to the same padded room, you know."

"G-g-goodness gracious."

"Have some of these whales, old chap," said Digby. "Whales are very nice with preserved ginger."

"That isn't ginger—that's sugar."

"Don't be an ass, Trimble. I say it's ginger!" roared Digby.

"All right—all right—ginger, if you like!" said Trimble hastily. "But I say, I can't eat sardines with sugar."

"Have some of these cocoanuts, then," said Blake, pushing a plate of biscuits across the table.

"Eh! Those biscuits——"

"Cocoanuts, fathead. Don't you know a cocoanut when you see one?"

"Mum-mum-my word!" gasped Trimble. "I—I say, is it true about your being in an asylum, you know?"

"It was lovely there!" said Blake dreamily. "A beautiful padded room, you know. When a chap got violent, and banged his napper against the wall, it didn't hurt a bit. Now, when I bang my head on the study wall here, it does hurt. Of course, I don't get violent very often. You remember the time I went for you with the carving-knife, Dig?"

"The kik-kik-carving-knife!" stammered Trimble.

"I'm jolly glad Dig got out of the study that time," said Blake reflectively. "Have you ever been insane, Trimble?"

"Nunno."

"It's very curious to feel it coming on," said Blake reminiscently. "You feel a sort of queer feeling, and then you snatch up a carving-knife—like this!"

"Oh!"

"And spring at a chap, like that!"

Trimble bolted across the study and jumped behind the armchair.

"Keep off!" he roared.

"It's all right—I'm not violent now!" said Blake reassuringly. "It might come on any minute, but it's all right at present."

"Oh, dear!"

"Come and have tea, old chap."

"P-p-put down that knife."

"I'd rather keep it handy, if you don't mind, in case one of my attacks comes on!" said Blake.

Trimble stared blankly at the chums of Study No. 6. If they were pulling his podgy leg, there was no sign to indicate as much. Their faces were perfectly serious. Blake's expression was a little mournful, as if he found the burden of occasional insanity rather trying to his nerves.

"I—I say, I know you're only funning, you know!" murmured Trimble.

"Oh, come and have tea. We've been keeping these whales specially for you."

"You know they ain't whales, you ass!"

"Do you mean to say they're sharks?" exclaimed Blake in alarm, backing away from the table. "Lock 'em up in the cupboard, quick!"

"Look here, you know—"

"Lock 'em up!" shrieked Blake in terror. "Don't you know that sharks are dangerous. Look 'em up!"

Arthur Augustus seized the plate of sugared sardines, placed it in the study cupboard, and locked the door. Blake put the key in his pocket.

"Safe!" he gasped in relief.

"Yaas, wathah! safe now, deah boy!"

Herries was shaking pepper over the biscuits. Trimble watched that operation as if mesmerised.

"Have some of these cocoanuts," said Herries. "I've sugared them for you."

"I—I say, you know—"

"Don't you want any tea?" asked Blake. "It's quite safe now, now those sharks are locked up!"

Trimble blinked at the tea-table in dismay. There was nothing there to eat but the biscuits, which were now thick with pepper. Trimble had a good appetite, as usual, but he was not prepared for peppered biscuits.

"You've spoiled those biscuits," he exclaimed. "What's the good of putting pepper on biscuits, you duffer?"

Herries gave him a pitying smile.

"This isn't pepper—this is sugar," he said. "Smell it!"

He shook the pepper-caster over Trimble.

"Atchoo-choo-chooooooh!"

"Isn't it sugar?" demanded Herries. "Try some more."

Trimble fled wildly round the study.

"Choo-choo-atchoo!" he sneezed violently. "Atcho-choowwwww! Oh, dear! Oh, scissors! Yow-ow-ow! Choo-choo!"

"How do you like it, old chap?"

"Groogh! Keep off! Atchoo-choo-choo!"

"That's a waste of good sugar, Herries," said Blake evenly. "You shouldn't waste sugar like that. We were never allowed to waste sugar in the asylum."

"It isn't sugar," said Digby. "It's molasses."

"It's sugar!" roared Blake.

"It's molasses!" bellowed Digby.

"Sugar!"

"Molasses!"

Blake's eyes rolled wildly, and he seized a cup from the table and made a ferocious rush at Digby. Digby dodged round the table, with Blake after him, brandishing the cup in the air, and uttering bloodcurdling howls. Trimble stood rooted to the floor in terror.

"Save me!" shrieked Digby, grasping Trimble in fierce frenzy.

"Leggo!" stuttered Trimble. "Help! Rescue! Ow!"

"Get out of the way, Trimble," roared Blake. "Let me get at him! I'll teach him whether it's molasses or not!"

"It is molasses!" yelled Dig.

"Tain't! Come here and be slaughtered! Get out of the way, Trimble, or I may cut your head by mistake."

"Yaroooh!"

Trimble tore himself away from Digby and bolted for the door. But Herries was standing at the door, with his back to it. There was no escape for the terrified Trimble.

Blake and Digby closed, apparently in terrific combat, and rolled over on the floor. The cup crashed into the fender. Bump! Crash! Yell!

"Lemme get out!" shrieked Trimble, grasping Herries and seeking to drag him away from the door.

"Hands off!" shouted Herries in tones of alarm. "Don't touch me, you ass! Do you want to break me?"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Hands off! Don't you know I'm made of glass?"

"Yaas, wathah! Don't touch Hewwies, Twimble. He's made of glass."

"Good heavens!" stuttered Trimble, backing away.

"There is nothin' to wun away for, deah boy. Let's stand wound and watch Blake killin' Dig!"

"Gimme a knife!" roared Blake.

"Mercy!" gasped Dig.

"Rats! Don't you know I'm mad—as mad as the Kaiser! Blood must be shed!" said Blake hoarsely. "Get me a pickaxe! Blood must be shed!"

"What about Twimble's blood, deah boy?"

"I leave it to the study to decide. Blood must be shed. Hands up for Dig's or Trimble's!"

"Trimble's!" said Herries, putting up his hand.

"Twimble's!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Trimble's!" yelled Dig.

"Oh, all right!" Blake rose from his victim, and gathered up the bread-knife from the table. "Are you ready, Trimble?"

"Help!"

"Don't yell, you duffer! Haven't I told you that blood must be shed? Come here, and I will do it as mercifully as possible. Kneel down and close your eyes."

Trimble did not kneel down and close his eyes. He dragged Herries away from the door, tore it open, and fled wildly down the passage. The door slammed behind him. And the four lunatics of Study No. 6 burst into a terrific yell:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

## CHAPTER 10. No Go!

"HALLO!"

"What the dickens—"

"What's the matter?"

"Is he dotty?"

There were a dozen or more juniors in the Lower Hall, and they all exclaimed at once, as Trimble of the Fourth came tearing down the stairs.

Trimble's face was pale, and his eyes bulging, and he was panting for breath.

"Help!"

"Phwat's the row intirely?" demanded Reilly of the Fourth.

"Off his silly rocker!" said Kerruish.

"Help! They're mad!"

"Shut up, you ass; here's Kildare!"

"Help!" Trimble rushed up to the astonished Sixth-Former. "Help! Save me, Kildare! They're mad!"

"Hallo, what's the game?" demanded Kildare, taking Trimble by the collar and shaking him. "Now, what is it?"

"Yow! They're mad!"

"Eh! Who are mad?"

"Study No. 6!" gasped Trimble. "Oh, dear! It's awful! Blake is killing Digby with a pickaxe—I mean a bread-knife—and—and Herries says he's made of glass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare frowned, and grinned too. He shook the gasping Trimble vigorously, which made him gasp the more.

"You young ass, I suppose it's some joke," he said.

"Yow-ow! I tell you they're raving. They think the sardines are whales—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I want to change my study. I'm not going to stay there with those maniacs. My life ain't safe there!" shrieked Trimble.

"Hold your silly tongue!" said Kildare sharply. "Come with me! I'd better see into this, I suppose, you troublesome little idiot!"

Trimble resisted frantically as Kildare marched him towards the stairs.

"I won't go! They're mad! It's dangerous! Blake is raving! Oh, dear!"

"Come with me, and if you don't shut up, I'll lick you!" exclaimed the captain of St. Jim's angrily.

"Yow-ow! Leggo! I won't go! Yow-ow-ow!"

Kildare tightened his grasp upon Trimble's collar, and half carried him up the stairs. Trimble had to go. He was followed by a yell of laughter from the juniors. It was plain to everybody but Trimble that Study No. 6 had been pulling his leg. But the podgy junior approached that celebrated apartment in fear and trembling.

Kildare threw open the door of No. 6.

Trimble blinked with astonishment as he looked in.

There was no sign of lunacy in the study now. Four cheerful and smiling juniors were seated round the tea-table. Blake & Co. were beginning tea. They jumped up, looking a little dismayed, as Kildare strode in.

"Now, then, what does all this mean?" demanded Kildare gruffly.

"Bai Jove!"  
 "They're mad!" mumbled Trimble. "They're putting this on. Look out for his knife, Kildare!"  
 "Hold your tongue, you young idiot!" growled Kildare angrily. "Have you been playing an idiotic joke on this utter fool, Blake?"  
 "Ahem!"

"As a mattah of fact, Kildare—ahem!"  
 "Will you answer me, you young rascals?" roared Kildare. "This young idiot has come down shrieking, and trying to alarm the whole House. What have you been doing?"

"Oh, the silly beast!" groaned Blake. "The best jape is wasted on him. Why couldn't he keep his silly head shut?"

"Have you been japing him?"  
 "Well, perhaps we have—a little," admitted Blake cautiously. "But—but it was only a little joke, you know. No harm done. Trimble doesn't want to stay in the study now. Let him change out, and it's all right."  
 "Yaas, wathah, and the mattah can dwop."

Trimble understood, at last. His little piggy eyes glittered.

"Oh, you rotters!" he gasped. "So you were playing tricks to get me out of the study, were you? You rotters! After the way I've chummed with you, and lent you money, and stood nearly all the feeds—"

"Why, you lying worm—" howled Herries.  
 "We can't stand him here, Kildare," said Blake appealingly. "Why can't he be put into No. 8, now Blenkinsop's gone? He would get on rippingly with Levison and Mellish. They're his sort."

"That's not for you to settle," said Kildare. "It seems that you've been frightening this born idiot. You can't play tricks like that. You'll take two hundred lines each."

"Oh, deah!"  
 "And if there's any more trouble in this study, I'll report you to the Housemaster," said Kildare sternly.

"I say, Kildare—"  
 "That's enough."

The captain of St. Jim's strode from the study. Trimble remained behind. He was quite reassured now. He grinned at the discomfited chums of the Fourth.

"Rather pulled your leg, didn't I?" he remarked cheerfully.

"What?" roared Blake.

"Of course, I knew you were spoofing all the time."  
 "You—you knew!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"Yes, rather! Of course I knew; you can't take me in. I thought I'd play up, by pretending to believe it, you know."

"You lying toad!" yelled Blake. "You were frightened out of your silly wits, and you know it."

Trimble laughed.

"My dear chaps, you couldn't take me in," he said. "Now let's have tea. I don't mind a joke, especially as the laugh is against you chaps. What have you got for tea?"

The chums of the Fourth looked expressively at Trimble.

The great scheme, after promising the most satisfactory results, had been a ghastly failure. Trimble was still fixed in the study, and the four juniors were the richer by two hundred lines each. Their feelings were almost too deep for words.

Blake proceeded in silence to clear the table, and the provisions were placed in the study cupboard—a proceeding that Trimble watched in astonishment. Blake locked the study door.

"I—I say, ain't you going to have tea?" demanded Trimble. "It's too late for tea in Hall, you know."

Blake did not speak. He grasped Trimble, and jerked a key out of his waistcoat-pocket. It was Trimble's duplicate key to the study cupboard.

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"Come on, you chaps," said Blake.  
 "What about tea?" said Herries.  
 "We're not going to have any tea."  
 "Look here, you know—" began Trimble, in dismay. Blake led the way from the study, and his chums followed him. Baggy Trimble remained alone, blinking at the bare table.

"Oh, scissors!" he ejaculated.  
 "Well, what luck?" asked Monty Lowther, meeting the chums of the Fourth in the passage. "Did you try the wheeze?"

Blake looked at him.  
 "Yes," he said sulphurously. "We tried it."

Lowther chuckled.  
 "What result?" he asked.

"Two hundred lines each!"  
 "Oh!" ejaculated Lowther.

"But I think we ought to show our appreciation, all the same," said Blake. "Collar the silly ass!"

"Here, I say—"  
 Bump!

Study No. 6 went on their way, leaving Monty Lowther sitting on the floor and gasping.

Tom Merry and Manners looked inquiringly at Lowther when he came back into the Shell study. The humorist of the Shell was not looking humorous.

"Well, how did it go?" asked Tom Merry.  
 Monty Lowther snorted.

"If you ever catch me helping Fourth-Form kids out of a fix again, you can use my head as a football!" he said. And Monty Lowther vouchsafed no further information.

## CHAPTER 11.

### Kindred Spirits!

"O H, scissors!"  
 Baggy Trimble uttered that exclamation in disconsolate tones, as he looked into Study No. 6 at tea-time, two or three days later.

The study was empty. The table was like the cupboard of the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard—quite bare.

Trimble crossed over to the cupboard.

The lock was broken. Trimble had been unable to obtain another key to fit the lock. But necessity is the parent of invention, and, as the German Chancellor remarked, necessity knows no law. Trimble had opened the cupboard at last, with the assistance of a chisel from Blake's tool-chest.

The lock remained broken. Blake & Co. had ceased to use the cupboard. Every day, and several times a day, Trimble prowled in the study in search of provender, like a lion seeking what he might devour. But there was nothing to devour.

Blake & Co. had taken to having their tea in Hall.

It was a great sacrifice, and they missed the cosy tea in Study No. 6. But they stuck to their guns.

It was the last desperate resource. The chums of the Fourth had determined to starve Trimble out.

They missed tea in the study; but not quite so much as Trimble did.

Trimble was accustomed to bagging the lion's share; but he had never made any contribution towards the study funds. It was no wonder that Study No. 6 had become fed up.

He was still a member of the study that had barred him. But there was not much satisfaction in that, when there were no feeds in the study. Blake & Co. had even taken to doing their preparation in the Form-room, or in other fellows' study. They were welcome in any study they chose, for that matter. They, instead of Trimble, were without a study now. It was hard, but

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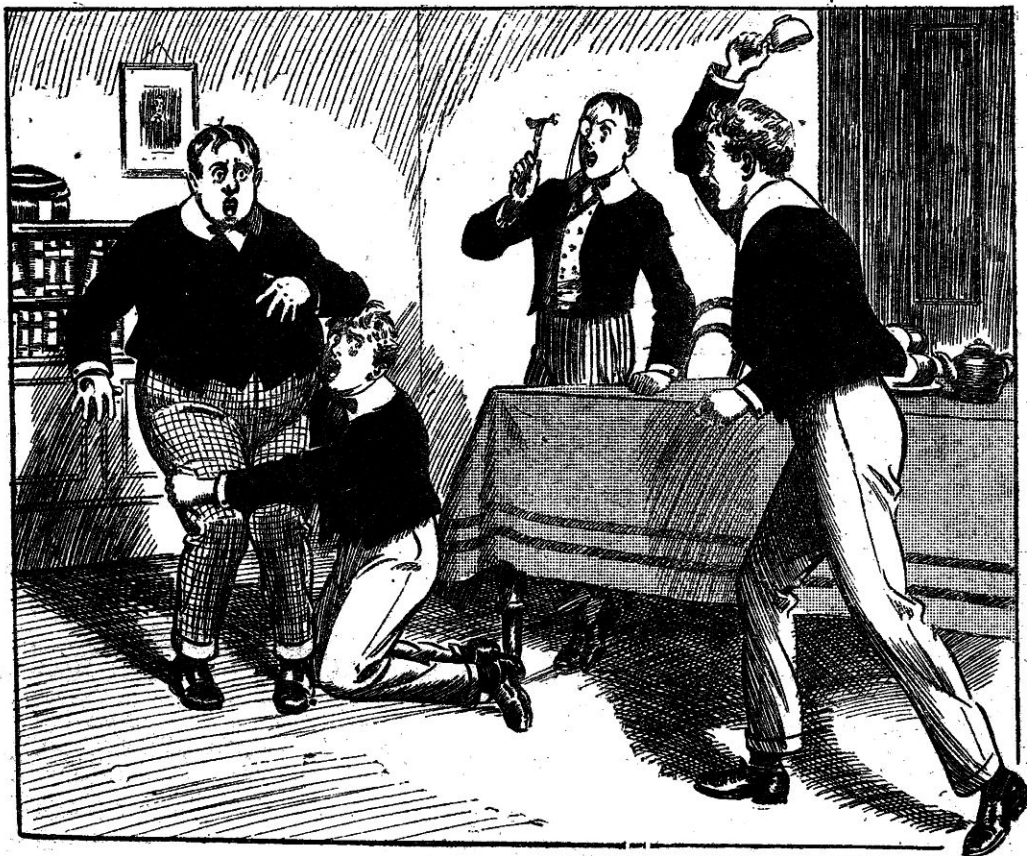
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Blake's eyes rolled wildly, and he made a ferocious rush at Digby. "Save me!" shrieked Digby, grasping Trimble as he went down on his knees in fierce frenzy. (See Chapter 9.)

it was better than "digging" with Trimble. So the study was not only foodless, but fireless, for Trimble was far too much of a slacker to look after the fire himself.

Study No. 6 had become, in fact, a very comfortable abode. Trimble found it so. Excepting when he was in funds, he was driven to tea in Hall. Tea in Hall, certainly, was ample enough, but not ample enough for Trimble. The fare was good, but plain. And, under Mr. Lathom's eye, Trimble could not over-eat himself to the extent he would have liked.

Trimble was sometimes in funds; but his funds never lasted long. They all went the same way—to Mrs. Taggles' little shop in the corner of the quad. And Study No. 6, hitherto a horn of plenty, had run dry. No wonder Trimble ejaculated, "Oh, scissors!" in tones of profound discomfort, as he stared into the study he had rendered desolate.

He had already had tea in Hall, but he was far from satisfied. And his latest remittance had vanished. He scowled into the study, and turned away.

In the next study Kerruish and Ray and Reilly were at tea. They all looked round as the door opened, and Trimble's fat face looked in.

"Shut that door!" said Reilly.

Trimble came in, and shut the door behind him.

"Ye silly geseon, put yerself on the other side of it!" said Reilly.

"Look here, you know—"

"Are you going out on your feet or your neck?" exclaimed Kerruish.

"The fact is, I'm rather hard up," said Trimble. "But

if you fellows like, I can put you on to a dodge for making pounds and pounds—"

"And phwat's the dodge, ye spalpeen?"

"It's a jolly good idea!" said Trimble eagerly.

"Having a Bulgarian—I mean, a Belgian Flag Day, and—"

Trimble had no time to get further. Kerruish picked up the poker, and made for him. The door slammed, and Trimble's footsteps died away down the passage.

"Oh, scissors!" groaned Trimble. "Oh, dear! What the dickens am I going to do for tea? Rotters!"

He stopped at No. 8; and looked in. Levison and Mellish were there. Lumley-Lumley, their study-mate, was at tea in Tom Merry's study. Trimble came in, and Levison and Mellish gave him unpleasant looks.

"Nothing doing!" said Levison at once.

"Nothing at all!" said Mellish. "This isn't an institution for free feeds for the poor, you know!"

Trimble blinked at them. The idea of a Flag Day, of which he was to pocket the proceeds, was still running in his mind. To do Trimble justice, he was really too stupid to realise the dishonesty of his precious scheme. But, by a sort of instinct, he knew that Levison and Mellish were more likely to regard it favourably than the other Fellows in the Fourth.

"I—I haven't come to tea, you know—" he began.

"Good-bye!"

"Still, I'll try that cake as I'm here—"

"Let that cake alone!" roared Levison.

Trimble jumped back, in alarm.

"Oh, all right! Don't get ratty, you know! The fact

is, I can put you fellows on to a dodge for making pounds and pounds!"

"Whose pounds?" grinned Mellish.

"It's a simply ripping scheme! You see, we hold a Flag Day for the benefit of the Russians, or the Belgians, or anybody, you know. Then we keep ninety per cent. of the takings for expenses. Of course we should have lots of expenses—time we put into it, and—and necessary refreshments, and all that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you think of the idea?"

"Rotten!" said Levison. "The fellows would all guess that we had an axe to grind, and they wouldn't shell out twopenny!"

"Yes, that's the worst of it!" confessed Trimble. "I wanted the chaps in my study to take it up, because the fellows trust them. But they won't, for some reason. D'Arcy actually said I was dishonest—me, you know! I'd have knocked him down if he hadn't been such an old chum!"

Levison looked at him curiously.

"Still, we might try it!" said Trimble. "I jolly nearly made a success of it when I tried it last time. It would have been all right, but for that beast, Kildare! Besides, I've thought of a dodge. The chaps in my study were saying that Cousin Ethel is coming on Wednesday. Well, I'm going to ask her to help."

Levison jumped.

"Ask Cousin Ethel to help?" he ejaculated.

"Yes. Why not? They generally have girls as collectors on Flag Days, you know. Pretty girls can collect lots of tin. I'm going to ask her. I don't think she'd refuse me." Trimble smirked. "I've got rather a way with girls, you know, and they generally like me no end."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see where the cackle comes in! If you fellows like to help me, we'll whack it out—pounds and pounds very likely!"

A thoughtful expression came over Levison's face. He was quite rascal enough to adopt Trimble's plan, if it promised any chance of success, and he had not the excuse of Trimble's stupidity. Trimble's mention of Cousin Ethel had put a new thought into his mind. That D'Arcy's cousin would lend herself to such a scheme was, of course, impossible. Levison was not thinking of that. But a cunning idea was evidently working in his brain. Mellish watched him curiously, wondering what rascally scheme was in the process of formation.

"By gad, it could be worked!" said Levison at last. "Three girls—collecting for the Belgian flag—good!"

"Three girls?"—exclaimed Mellish.

"Yes. The fellows wouldn't hand us a cent, and Raitlon would be down on us, too. But three girls—"

"What girls?" demanded the puzzled Mellish.

"Us—in girl's clobber."

"Oh, my hat!"

"We could hire the clobber in Wayland," pursued Levison, evidently very much taken with the idea. "We could dress up there, and make up our chivvies, and put on wigs. I'm a dab at that sort of thing, better than any of the silly asses in the Junior Dramatic Society, anyhow! I could work it; the fellows wouldn't know us from Adam! Oh, my hat! What a wheeze!"

"And suppose we got bowled out?" demanded Mellish.

"How could we get bowled out, fathead, when nobody would recognise us?" said Levison impatiently. "We're hard up, ain't we? I've been stony for weeks—"

"The giddy geegees?" grinned Mellish.

"Well, I'm stony, and I owe some money I've got to pay pretty soon, or there'll be trouble. We might make quids out of it—a dozen quids, I shouldn't wonder!"

Mellish's eyes glittered greedily. He was impecunious, too, and the mere thought of a dozen "quids" roused all the cupidity in his nature.

"It could be worked!" said Levison decidedly. "We'll try it next half-holiday. If anything came out, we'd say it was a jape!"

"Oh, good!" said Mellish.

"Look here, you know, it's my idea!" said Trimble.

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"I should claim half the profits, you know, as originator—"

"Equal whacks," said Levison curtly. "And don't give me any of your rot. And mind you keep your silly head shut. If a whisper of it got out, the fellows would rag us baldheaded."

"That's all right," said Trimble. "I'm an awfully cautious chap. I say, this is jolly good cake!"

"Let that cake alone."

"I suppose we're pals now," said Trimble, taking another slice of cake. "Upon the whole, Levison, I think I'll come into this study. I really can't stand those fellows in No. 6. They're not quite my class, really."

"You won't plant yourself in here, I can tell you that!" growled Levison.

"If we're not pals, Levison—"

"I don't pal with born idiots."

"Oh, very well, you know. On second thoughts, I don't quite approve of this idea of disguising yourself as a girl and collecting funds. It seems to me to savour of deception."

"What!" ejaculated Levison.

"I'm a rather particular chap, you know. There are very few fellows in this school so particular as I am. Upon the whole, I don't think I could descend to it."

"You spoofing worm!" shouted Levison.

"If you call me names, Levison, I shall refuse to share this study with you. And I'm sorry to say that I feel in duty bound to ask advice about this scheme of yours."

"Of mine?" hooted Levison.

"Yes. If it's all right, all serene. But I feel bound to ask a prefect's advice about it."

Levison stared blankly at Trimble. He knew what would be the result if a prefect became acquainted with the precious scheme.

"You spoofing, humbugging rotter!" said Levison, in measured tones. "If you say a word outside this study I'll skin you."

"Of course, I shouldn't say a word if I belonged to the study. Otherwise I feel bound to ask a prefect's advice."

Levison set his thin lips tight. His mind was set on that cunning scheme, which promised relief from the financial troubles his own rascality had brought upon him. Trimble held the upper hand.

"You can come into the study if you like," he said, at last.

"Good!" said Trimble cheerfully. "That's settled, then. When I've finished the cake, I'll go and speak to Raitlon."

"If you finish that cake, I'll—"

Levison picked up a toasting-fork.

Trimble eyed him grimly.

"I hope you won't force me to go to a prefect for advice about that scheme of yours, Levison."

Levison gritted his teeth, and laid down the toasting-fork. Trimble cheerfully finished the cake, and rolled out of the study.

"Are we going to have that beast planted on us, then?" demanded Mellish.

"Can't be helped. I tell you there's quids and quids in this idea, if we work it properly. We can get rid of him afterwards," said Levison.

"They've been trying to get rid of him from Study No. 6; but he's a stickler!" grumbled Mellish.

"We'll get rid of him fast enough when he's served our turn," snapped Levison. "Besides, he's no worse than that idiot Blenkinsop in the study. And Lumley-Lumley will be wild, too."

Mellish chuckled. The idea of making Lumley-Lumley wild reconciled him to the prospect of having Trimble in No. 8.

## CHAPTER 12.

### Luck at Last!

"COME in!" said Mr. Raitlon.

Trimble entered the Housemaster's study. Mr. Raitlon looked a little impatient. He had heard enough of the troubles in No. 6.

But, as it happened, Trimble had not come with a complaint of his study-mates.

"If you please, sir, can I change my study?" he asked.

Mr. Railton elevated his eyebrows.

"Certainly, Trimble, if you wish."

"I do wish, sir."

"Have your study-mates been exerting any undue pressure upon you?" the Housemaster exclaimed, frowning a little.

"Oh, no, sir" said Trimble cheerily. "The fact is, Blake begged me to stay, almost with tears in his eyes, and D'Arcy is looking awfully down in the mouth about it. But I really can't stand those fellows, sir—I can't, indeed! I've been accustomed to very much nicer friends, and really—"

"Which study do you wish to enter, Trimble?" asked the Housemaster abruptly.

"No. 8, sir. I've got chums there, and they're anxious to have me."

Mr. Railton looked at the new junior very doubtfully. He had had a wide experience of boys, but he had never encountered a fellow exactly like Trimble before, and the worthy Baggy puzzled him considerably.

"Very well, Trimble, you may change into No. 8."

"Thank you, sir!"

Trimble retired from the study grinning. Blake & Co. were chatting with the Terrible Three in the hall, and Trimble paused to address them. He shook a podgy forefinger at Jack Blake.

"I'm done with you!" he announced.

"Are you?" said Blake. "I only wish we were done with you."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Trimble sniffed disdainfully.

"You won't see me in that mouldy old study again in a hurry," he said. "I've got pals who want me to come into a better study than that—where fellows aren't so mean with the grub, either!"

"You're changing!" ejaculated Blake.

"Yes, I am."

"Hurrah!"

"Hip-hip-hurway!"

"And I sha'n't come back in a hurry, either," said

Trimble impressively. "I've stood you fellows long enough."

"But who on earth's taking you in?" asked Tom Merry, in astonishment.

"I'm going to dig with my chum Levison," said Trimble loftily.

"Levison! My hat!"

"What's Levison's little game?" exclaimed Blake, puzzled. "You haven't any money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I expect to have plenty of money shortly," said Trimble, with a sniff.

"Some of those enormous loans you've made coming home?" asked Monty Lowther, with a chuckle.

"You'll see. Pounds and pounds, I expect," said Trimble, "and I warn you plainly that you're not going to have any of it."

"Weally, you wottah—"

"You've treated me rottenly, because I happen to be short of money sometimes, owing to my own free-handed generosity. Well, when I'm rolling in oof, you won't see any of it, so you can take my tip about that."

"Whom are you going to rob?" asked Manners blandly.

"I know what I'm going to do," said Trimble mysteriously. "It may be connected with a Flag Day, and it may not. That's telling. It may amount to dozens of quids, or it may not. I'm not telling you anything."

"So it's the same old swindle!" exclaimed Blake. "I warn you that if you start any of your blessed Flag Days again, you'll get it in the neck."

"That's all you know!" chuckled Trimble. "I'm not going to tell you anything. We may get in dozens of quids on Wednesday afternoon, and we may not. It's my business, not yours."

"And Levison's in it, is he?" said Tom Merry. "He's having you in his study, because he's going to be a partner in your spoofing!"

"I'm not going to tell you anything. I've promised Levison not to say a word outside the study—my study—and I'm not going to. I'm rather particular about a promise. Not like some chaps."

"You fat idiot—"

"You needn't call me names because I won't stay in the study with you, Blake. You can't expect it, after the way I've been treated there."

"Look heah, you duffah—"

"I decline to listen to you, D'Arcy. You should have thought of all that before. Now it's too late."

"You uttah ass—"

"Nuff said!" said Trimble, with a lofty wave of the hand. "Once and for all, I've done with you. I've shaken the dust of Study No. 6 from my feet, metaphorically speaking. I shouldn't come back if you begged me on your bended knees."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You will kindly not address me again," pursued Trimble, still more firmly mounted on the high horse. "I decline to know you. I regard you as mean—stingy, in fact. For the future I shall decline to take the slightest notice of any of you."

Trimble walked away, with his pug-nose in the air, leaving the chums of Study No. 6 simply gasping. The Terrible Three chuckled joyously. Trimble's farewell to the study struck them as funny.

"My only Aunt Sempronias!" ejaculated Blake, at last. "That fellow does take the cake! Did you ever hear of such a blithering idiot. But he's out of the study—we're done with him, and that's a comfort. My hat, we'll celebrate this!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Looks as if Levison has taken up his idea of a swindle," said Digby. "It ought to be stopped!"

"It jolly well will be stopped!" said Tom Merry, frowning. "Let me catch 'em flagging!"

"Levison isn't such an ass," said Lowther. "He knows he would be stopped. If he's taken up the wheeze, he's got something awfully deep on hand. He ought to be watched."

"We'll keep an eye on him, dear boy, and frustwate his knavish twicks," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But isn't it wippin' to have no more Twimble. Studay No. 6 will be like home again. It is vevy fortunate that I

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"IN THE KING'S KHAKI"

have had a remittance to-day. Gentlemen, may I request the pleasual of your company in the studay, to a little celebration in honah of Twimble's departure?"

And all the gentlemen said enthusiastically:  
"Hear, hear!"

## CHAPTER 13.

### Flag Day!

LEIVISON of the Fourth received many curious glances from the chums of the School House during the next day or two.

That the rascal of the Fourth had some scheme on foot they were assured; Baggy Trimble's fatuous remarks had revealed as much, and, besides, they knew that Levison would not have taken in Trimble as a study-mate without an object.

But that so acute and astute a youth as Levison would take up Trimble's absurd idea of a "spoof" Flag Day seemed incredible. Baggy himself had made a ghastly failure of it, and Levison would know that it was no use.

It was impossible to guess what Ernest Levison had in his mind; but whatever it was, Tom Merry & Co. were prepared to nip it in the bud.

Meanwhile, Trimble was installed in No. 8.

Levison and Mellish, who were very keen on the new scheme, received him there with a good grace. Lumley-Lumley was not quite so gracious. In fact, he was wrathly when he found that Baggy was his new study-mate. But he was outwoted on the subject, and Trimble was there, anyway; and Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders and put up with him. He steadily declined to lend him any money, much to the disappointment of Trimble, who knew that Lumley-Lumley was a millionaire's son, and had expected quite a harvest.

Trimble passed Study No. 6 with nose upturned; he was quite at home now in No. 8—at least till Wednesday. And if, after that, Levison should seek to get rid of his new chum, he was likely to discover, as Blake had discovered, that Trimble was a stickler.

Certainly, Trimble had no chance of getting back into No. 6. Blake & Co. were extremely determined on that. They had not been able to get rid of the intruder; but now that he has gone of his own accord, they were quite within their rights in keeping him out. If Trimble had presented himself in Study No. 6, he would have had the warmest of warm receptions.

But Trimble was quite comfortable at present with Levison and Mellish.

He did not find those youths quite so indifferent to considerations of a financial nature as Blake & Co. had been. The first time he presented himself at tea in the study, he was met with a demand for his "whack."

Trimble explained that he was short of money, and would pay his whack when he had collected in certain loans which his generosity had led him to make to certain persons unknown.

Levison and Mellish had heard of those loans before, and they informed Trimble that they weren't taking any.

To which the podgy junior rejoined that his conscience was troubling him a little on the subject of the precious Flag Day scheme, and that he really felt that he had better have a prefect's advice about it.

With the result that Trimble was given the free run of the tea-table, as the only way to keep his mouth shut—Levison mentally promising him all sorts of things at a more convenient time.

Lumley-Lumley was not often in the study, as he did not pull with his study-mates, and the precious trio generally had the room to themselves. They discussed the Flag Day with great keenness, and Levison went ahead with his preparations.

The rascal of the Fourth had planned the scheme carefully from beginning to end, and he was quite satisfied. On Tuesday, after lessons, he conveyed a bag to a secluded spot in Rylcombe Wood, all ready for the imposture on Wednesday afternoon. Wednesday, as it happened, Tom Merry & Co. had little attention to bestow on Levison, as Cousin Ethel was expected. D'Arcy's cousin was coming on a visit to Mrs. Holmes, and, of course, there was to be tea in No. 6, and the

chums of the School House congratulated themselves on having rid that famous apartment of its bugbear before Ethel's visit.

Early after dinner on Wednesday, Arthur Augustus appeared on the steps of the School House in his best tie and glossiest topper. His chums joined him there, to walk to the station. Figgins came-over from the New House, with a gorgeous necktie and a topper, to be greeted by a somewhat frigid glance from Arthur Augustus, which Figgins did not appear to notice.

"All ready?" he asked cheerily.

"Ready, aye, ready!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Lots of time to walk to the station. Come on!"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Come on, my infant!" said Blake jovially, slapping Arthur Augustus on the back.

"Wow! You wuff ass, you're wumplin' my jacket!"

"You're keeping us waiting, Gussy. Put that pocket-mirror away, and trot!" said Blake severely. "You look beautiful—a thing of beauty and a joy for ever!"

"Wats!"

And the party started. Levison, Mellish, and Trimble were going out of the gates together, as Tom Merry & Co. came down. Trimble glanced at them, and chuckled.

"You fellows going out?" he asked.

"Yes," said Blake quite amiably. He could feel quite amiable towards Baggy, now that Baggy was no longer desolating No. 6 with his obnoxious presence.

"Coming back soon?" asked Trimble anxiously.

"Yes; why?"

"You mustn't miss the— Yow-ow! Leggo my arm, Levison; you're pinching me!" howled Trimble.

"Come on, you fathead!"

"I was only going to tell Blake not to miss the— Yarocoooh! All right, I'm coming!"

And Trimble went.

"What the merry thunder does that mean?" ejaculated Blake, gazing after the three in wonder.

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"Trimble was going to let something out," grinned Lowther. "Levison shot him up fast enough. There's some game on this afternoon."

"Can't be that giddy Flag Day; they're going out."

"Goodness knows!"

Tom Merry & Co. sauntered down the lane. Levison and Mellish and Trimble were ahead of them, on the way to the village. They turned off into the wood, however, and disappeared from sight.

The chums of St. Jim's arrived at the station in good time for the train. They soon forgot about Levison & Co.

"Heah's the twain, deah boys!"

There was a rush across the platform to the carriage from which a pretty girlish face looked out.

"Heah you are, deah gal!"

It was Figgins who helped Cousin Ethel to alight. Figgins always seemed to be first on these occasions.

Ethel gave the juniors a bright smile.

"How good of you to come and meet me!"

"Wats—I—I mean, don't mench, deah gal!" said Arthur Augustus. "Awf'ly glad to see you. I will cawwy that bag, Figgins."

"It's all right," said Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

Figgins settled the matter by marching off with the bag. Cousin Ethel left the station with the juniors; D'Arcy remarking to Blake in a sulphurous whisper that that bouncer Figgins always seemed to regard Ethel as his cousin, and not D'Arcy's at all—a remark which only caused Jack Blake to chuckle.

It was a clear, cold afternoon, delightful for a walk. Cousin Ethel & Co. started for the school in great spirits.

As they arrived at the gates of St. Jim's, they met with a surprise. Taggles, the porter, had come out of his lodge, and he was regarding with a most peculiar expression three young ladies. Tom Merry & Co. paused to regard them also.

The three young ladies had evidently just arrived. They were somewhat short and stout, and had heavy features for the feminine gender. Their complexions were high, and their hair golden and long and fluffy. They were dressed in skirts and blouses of quiet colours, and adorned with French tricolours passed round like bandoliers. Each of them had a tray, which was loaded with small French flags.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 415.

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

NEXT  
WEDNESDAY

"IN THE KING'S KHAKI!"

"Hallo!" said Blake. "There's going to be a Flag Day, after all!"

"Bai Jove!"

"What a good idea to make a collection at the school!" said Cousin Ethel brightly. "I will buy a flag to begin."

"Yaas, wathah, we'll all do the same."

"Hear, hear!" said the Co. heartily.

The three young ladies were deeply veiled, though their florid complexions showed through the veiling. One of them, much fatter than the others, emitted a fat chuckle as the juniors came up. One of the others stamped on her foot, and the chuckle changed into a gasp.

"I s'pose there ain't nothing agin it!" said Taggles, rubbing his nose perplexedly. "I don't hold with these 'ere Flag Days myself. And you'd better ask the 'Ead'!"

"Tres bien!" said the thinnest young lady.

"Don't know what you mean with your tray be hanged, ma'am!" said Taggles. "But you can go in. Only arsk the 'Ead's permission!"

"Merci!"

"I ain't goin' to 'urt you!" said Taggles, in astonishment. "No need to arsk me for mercy!"

"It is zat I zank you!"

"Oh, I see! All right! In you go!"

"Hold on, ma'm'zelle!" said Tom Merry. "May we have some of the flags?"

"Oui, oui, monsieur. Vun shilling for each vun, and all ze money it sall go to help ze brave soldiers of France!"

"Right-ho!"

The whole Co. purchased flags, including Cousin Ethel, and the three merchants walked on into the quadrangle.

The sight of the three beflagged young ladies attracted general attention at once, and they were soon surrounded by a-crowd in the old quad. And business was brisk.

CHAPTER 14.  
Nipped in the Bud!

C OUSIN ETHEL took leave of her chums on the steps of the Head's house, after promising to come to tea in Study No. 6. Blake generously invited Figgins to come, and bring Kerr and

Fatty Wynn, a generous invitation, for which Figgy gave him a deeply grateful look, though it was not the feed George Figgins was thinking of.

"Somethin' wathah extwah special!" Arthur Augustus remarked, as they walked away from the Head's house.

"We must do honah to the occasion, deah boys! How awfully lucky that Twimble is out of the studay—what?"

"Awfully!" said his chums fervently.

Tom Merry chuckled.

"It will be rather a surprise to Trimble & Co. to find a Flag Day going on, when they come in!" he remarked.

"The girls are doing a jolly good trade."

"Yaas, wathah! It's a good cause, you know."

"Might spring another bob or two," said Manners thoughtfully. "After all, it's up to everybody to lend a hand. It's a good cause!"

"I don't mind," said Tom. "Come on, Monty! What are you looking like a boiled owl for?"

Monty Lowther seemed plunged in thought.

Manners slapped him on the back.

"Wake up, fathead! We're going to buy some more flags!"

"Yov-ov!" Monty Lowther came out of his deep reverie. "I say, you chaps, doesn't this look rather suspicious?"

"What does?" asked Tom Merry, puzzled.

"To-day's Wednesday—"

"Yes, it's in the calendar," assented Blake.

"Don't be funny! It was on Wednesday, according to that babbling ass Trimble, that Levison was going to work that Flag Day wheeze."

"He's dropped it," said Manners. "The three of them went out before we did, and I don't see them about now."

"Sure you don't?" asked Lowther.

Manners looked round the quadrangle.

"They're not here," he said. "They may be indoors. What are you getting at, Monty?"

"I told you that if Levison took up that swindling scheme, he would work it in some awfully deep way, so that he couldn't be spotted," said Lowther.

"But he hasn't done it!"

"That's what we're jolly well going to find out!" said Lowther. "I've got my suspicious—tons of 'em! Look at that fat girl's feet!"

"Lowthah, it is uttably bad form to allude to a lady in that mannah!"

"Go hon! But look at her feet! Ain't they a size?"

"I wefuse to look at her feet!"

"They're a good size, certainly!" assented Blake, in wonder. "But she's French, you know; at least, I suppose she is! The one who does the talking is French."

"Only one of them does the talking," said Lowther.

"The only one who can speak English, I suppose."

"H'm! And Taggles told them to ask the Head's permission to make the collection, but they haven't done so."

"It is weally quite unnecessawy, Lowthah!"

"Bow-wow! Let's go and have a look at them!"

Lowther walked towards the three flag merchants, and his chums followed him in astonishment. Tom Merry & Co. were quite prepared to stop any flag-selling by Levison & Co.; but, so far as they could see, the three precious young rascals were not within the school walls at that moment.

Lowther stopped in front of the fattest young lady, and looked at her.

"Vous parlez Anglais, mademoiselle?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"Parlez-vous Anglais?"

"Look here, you know—"

"Bai Jove!"

"My sistair, she no speak English!" exclaimed the thin young lady hurriedly, at the same time tramping on the fat young lady's foot.

"Doesn't she?" said Lowther, with a grin. "But I'm speaking French. Take off that veil, Trimble!"

"Trimble!" yelled the juniors.

"Oh, dear! I'm not Trimble!"

"What?"

"I—I assure you that I'm not Trimble!" yelled the fat young lady, as the juniors closed round her. "I've never heard the name before! Look here, Lowther, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! It's Twimble!"

"Trimble, you spoofing cad!"

"I'm not!" shrieked the flag merchant. "I'm French! I can't speak a word of English!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm Levison's sister—I mean, I'm her sister—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You swindling young villain!"

"Collar them!"

Crash went the trays of flags to the ground. Two of the flag-merchants started to run, but they were promptly collared. Many hands dragged off the veils. High-complexioned faces were revealed, and so skilfully was the make-up applied that even then it was impossible to recognise the impostors. But a jerk at the fluffy hair settled the matter. Three wigs came off, revealing three heads of short dark hair.

"Gweat Scott! The swindlahs! So that was Levison's ideah!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "Wag them—wag the wottahs!"

"Bump them!"

"Oh, dear, look here, you know, only a joke!" shrieked Trimble. "It was Levison's idea, and I never meant to



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No. 10 "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD," 1<sup>d</sup>. OUT TO-DAY! BUY IT AT ONCE!

keep any of the money. I hadn't the faintest idea of making pounds and pounds. Ow-wow!"

"Leggo!" roared Levison, struggling in the grasp of Reilly and Kerruish and Figgins. "Hands off, you duffers! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Let me go!" raved Mellish. "Only a joke. Yarooop!"

Bump! bump! bump!

"What is all this?" Mr. Railton came striding through the crowd, with a frowning brow. "How dare you touch these young ladies? Why, bless my soul, who—who are they—what are they?"

"Yow-ow-ow! Only a joke!" yelled Trimble. "I meant to pay up every penny, excepting my expenses—I mean including my expenses. Yarooop!"

"Trimble!" exclaimed the astounded Housemaster.

"Oh, no, sir, I—I'm not Trimble, and those chaps ain't Levison and Mellish. We're French girls, sir, and—and we can't speak English!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Trimble, Levison, Mellish, what does this ridiculous masquerade mean?" demanded the Housemaster sternly.

Levison pulled himself together. His heart was black with rage, but there was danger of expulsion looming before him, and he had need of all his wits.

"If—if you please, sir—" he stammered.

"It was Levison's idea," whined Mellish. "I—I never meant—"

"Levison, explain yourself at once!"

"Certainly, sir." The rascal of the Fourth was quite cool now. "It was my idea, sir, to hold a Flag Day in aid of the—the French. So we got ourselves up as French girls, sir. As it was a very good cause, we—we felt that it would be all right."

"And you intended to forward all the money you collected to the proper quarter, Levison?" asked Mr. Railton, with a very searching glance at Levison's made-up face.

"Certainly, sir," said Levison promptly. "I hope I am honest."

Mr. Railton coughed.

"I hope so, Levison. I will take your word for it, as I should be very sorry to think that a St. Jim's boy could be guilty of the detestable dishonesty of keeping money

collected for a charitable purpose. Understand, however, that you are not allowed to play such tricks, and each of you will take five hundred lines. The money you have collected may be brought to my study, and I will see that it is despatched to the proper quarter. You will be expected to account for every farthing. Follow me!"

With feelings too deep for words, Levison & Co. followed the Housemaster to his study. Flag Day at St. Jim's had begun and ended, and it was likely to be a long time before Levison & Co. started another.

"The awful wascals!" said Arthur Augustus, with a deep breath. "They were goin' to keep the tin, you know. It's howwid, but I am suah it is the case."

"Go hon!" grinned Blake.

"I don't think there'll be any more Flag Days in a hurry," chuckled Lowther, "and, but for your Uncle Monty, they'd have made a regular harvest. Gentlemen, I suggest a vote of thanks, with notes of admiration, to Montague Lowther, my esteemed self! Passed unanimously—good! Gentlemen, I thank you!"

A couple of hours later, there was a merry tea-party in Study No. 6—Cousin Ethel, and all the Co. The door opened to reveal the fat and insinuating countenance of Baggy Trimble. The juniors stared at him in astonishment. It seemed incredible that even Trimble would have the astounding nerve to present himself again in the study, but evidently he had. Trimble was astute in his way. He calculated upon the presence of Cousin Ethel to save him from the order of the boot.

"Tea ready, old fellows?" he said cheerfully. "All right. Sorry I'm a bit late. Mind if I take you chair, Blake—thanks! Pass the cake, Figgins. For goodness' sake, don't scoff all that cake, Fatty Wynn."

Arthur Augustus rose, and picked up the poker.

"Ethel, will you excuse me if I bwarn Twimble for your pwenesce?" he asked.

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"Certainly!" she said.

Trimble did not stay to be brained. His estate calculations were evidently off-side. He made one jump into the passage as Arthur Augustus flourished the poker, and that merry tea-party went on without the assistance of the rank outsider, who was Barred by the Study.

THE END.

**NEXT WEDNESDAY:**

# IN THE KING'S KHAKI!

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School Tale of TOM MERRY  
& Co. at St. Jim's

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### UNDER THE DOCTOR.

Lady of the House: "What caused you to become a tramp?"

Ragged Alfred: "The family physician, mum. He advised me to take long walks after my meals, and I've been walking after them ever since."—Sent in by John Ferth, Sheffield.

### MAKING AN IMPRESSION.

The young lawyer had opened a new office, and the paint was scarcely dry. A step was heard outside, and presently a man's frame was silhouetted against the ground-glass of the door.

Hastily the legal fledgling stepped to the brand-new telephone, and, taking down the receiver, gave every appearance of being engaged with an important business conversation. "Yes, Mr. B.," he was saying as the man entered; "I'll attend to that corporation business for you, although I'm very rushed with cases just now." Then followed a slight pause, after which he continued: "Yes, yes; I'll attend to that. Good-bye!"

Hanging up the receiver, the young man then turned to his visitor, having, as he thought, duly impressed him.

"Excuse me, Mr. Young," said the caller, "but I've come from the telephone company, and have been sent to connect up your instrument."—Sent in by W. Rogerson, Carlisle.

### A MISFIT!

Money was none too plentiful in the Jiggins' household, so Jimmy, the son and heir, was generally garbed in the clothes that once belonged to his father.

Jimmy didn't exactly relish this arrangement, as his father stood over six feet high, and he himself was only four and a half; while mother, who had to effect the transformation of the garments, was but an indifferent tailoress.

One day Jimmy was found by his father fumbling and grumbling about a waistcoat he had just taken over.

"What's the matter now?" growled Jiggins senior.

"Why, this here pocket ain't got a bottom to it!" murmured Jimmy peevishly.

"Pocket be hanged!" exclaimed the father. "That's a buttonhole!"—Sent in by J. Lawson, Thornaby-on-Tees.

### WORTH ENGAGING.

Into the office of a business man rushed a bright-faced youth. For three minutes he waited, and then began to show signs of impatience.

"Excuse me, sir," he said at length. "I'm in a hurry."

"Well, what do you want?" asked the business man.

"A job, sir."

"But why the hurry?"

"Got to hurry," replied the lad. "Left school yesterday, and haven't struck anything suitable yet. The only place where I can stay long is where they pay me for it."

"How much do you want?"

"Ten shillings a week for a start."

"And when can you come?"

"Don't need to come; I'm here! Could have been at work five minutes ago if you had only said so."—Sent in by Sidney Morgan, Canton, Cardiff.

### DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

It was Christmas Day, and the guests at a certain party were showing their prowess at after-dinner tricks. One trickster produced a pack of cards, and exclaimed:

"I am willing to wager any amount that I will cut the ace of diamonds first time."

"Right!" said an onlooker. "I take on the wager for a shilling!"

Going to the kitchen, the trickster borrowed a sharp knife from the cook, and then returned, and cut the pack of cards clean in half.

"There!" he cried. "Hand over the shilling. The ace of diamonds is cut at the first attempt!"

"No!" protested the man who had accepted the wager. "You are wrong there. I removed the ace of diamonds from the pack, and placed it in my pocket while you were borrowing the knife."—Sent in by Miss Amy Smith, Cleckheaton.

### PAT SCORES.

An Irishman went to fetch a certain doctor to his wife; but as Pat already owed him a big sum, the doctor at first refused to attend.

"Do come," pleaded Pat; "and I will pay you this time, kill or cure!"

So the doctor eventually decided to administer his help to the patient; but it proved of no avail, and the poor woman died.

Pat, however, could not be persuaded to pay the medic's account, and he was, therefore, summoned before a magistrate.

Addressing the doctor in the court, Pat remarked:

"Didn't I tell you I would pay, kill or cure?"

"Yes," admitted the doctor.

"Did you cure her?" was Pat's next query.

"No," said the doctor.

"Then did you kill her?" said Pat.

But the doctor was discreetly silent.—Sent in by B. O. Boon, North Shields.

### AN EVERYDAY OCCURRENCE.

The man sat moody and silent. Although there was a crowd of chattering, jovial people about him, he felt gloomy and lonely. Suddenly he became conscious that she was near him—she for whom he waited and longed. He watched her with eager eyes. Would she stop and speak to him? Just one word was all he wanted. One little word—"yes!"—and he would be satisfied.

Suspense and doubt were becoming too great to be borne. How he craved for an opportunity to speak to her of his own yearning wish! Would the sight of him bring remembrance, or had time wiped out all recollection of him from her mind? She was coming nearer—nearer! Ah, she had passed! His heart sank in a sea of despair.

Then suddenly she was at his side. Gently she bent over him, her head meekly lowered.

"Yes," she breathed faintly.

His heart sang a song of thanksgiving; his eyes shone.

"Apple-tart, please, miss!" he said.—Sent in by Driver A. C. Harvey, Cambridge.

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## OUR GREAT SCHOOL SERIAL STORY!

# COUSIN ETHEL'S SCHOOLDAYS

A Magnificent Serial Story dealing with the adventures of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's and their Girl Chum. Specially published at the earnest request of readers of the "Gem" Library.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The Previous Instalments told how:—

ETHEL CLEVELAND, a pretty English girl, and cousin to ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, the swell of St. Jim's, goes to St. Freda's to continue her education.

On the first day of her arrival at the school, she is attracted by the personality of DOLORES PELHAM, a high-spirited girl of Spanish descent. Subsequently, Ethel saves Dolores from disgrace, and the two girls become firm friends.

D'Arcy, in order to brighten up matters for the girls at St. Freda's, arranges for them to have a dormitory feed.

The refreshments arrive in a large hatbox, addressed to Ethel; and Milly Pratt, a girl with a very healthy appetite, on seeing the box, exclaims:

"Do let me look at your hat! I love new hats!"

(Now read on.)

## Too Many Tarts.

"You see—" began Ethel.

"Oh, do come to the dorm and show it to us!" said Milly. Ethel, with a troubled brow, carried off the hatbox to the dormitory. She took it into her own cubicle, and Dolly and Milly followed her in, and the hatbox was set upon a chair, and Milly unfastened the string.

"What kind of hat is it?" Dolly Carew asked.

"Oh, it isn't a hat!" said Ethel desperately, at last.

Dolly stared.

"Isn't a hat?" she exclaimed.

"No."

"But it's labelled a hat."

"I can't help that."

"But what is it, then?"

"I'm not sure—jam-tarts, I think."

Dolly Carew gave quite a jump, and Milly's fingers worked faster than ever in unfastening the string. Milly might like new hats, like other girls, but jam-tarts touched her heart more nearly.

"But how does it happen that you're getting jam-tarts sent you in a hatbox?" exclaimed Dolly Carew, in amazement. "It's never happened to me."

Ethel laughed ruefully.

"It's from my Cousin Arthur."

"Oh!"

"He has an absurd idea that we like dorm feeds, the same as they have sometimes at St. Jim's, and he's smuggling these things in to me."

"Pshaw!"

"My word!" said Milly.

She dragged the lid off the box.

Great piles of tarts, fresh and flaky and jammy, were inside, wrapped in tissue-paper, and the smell of them was really delicious.

Milly Pratt's eyes danced.

"Oh, splendid!" she exclaimed. "I wish Arthur were my cousin! What a splendid fellow, and what lovely tarts!"

"I wish he had not sent them," said Ethel. "There will be trouble if Miss Penfold sees them; and there are more things coming."

"Do you want to get rid of them?" asked Milly.

"Yes, indeed!"

"Then it's perfectly easy. I'll eat them for you."

"Rely on Milly," said Dolly Carew, laughing. "She will eat anything for anybody. Won't you, Milly?"

Milly did not reply. Her mouth was stopped with the first of the jam-tarts. It was surprising to see how fast her jaws could work.

"My word, though, they look nice!" said Dolly. "I will have one, if I may, Ethel?"

Cousin Ethel nodded.

"Certainly!" she said. "Have as many as you like."

"Won't you have some yourself?"

Ethel smiled, and took one. The jam-tarts were very nice, and she took another. Dolly managed four, and Milly Pratt was already at her sixth, and still going strong.

"They'd better be put away out of sight somewhere," Dolly suggested, regarding the box of tarts when she had finished. The mass of pastry in the box did not seem to be at all diminished so far.

"Yes," said Ethel. "Where can I put them?"

"Groo!"

"Dear me, Milly! Are you choking?"

"Groo!"

"You shouldn't eat so fast," said Dolly, thumping Milly Pratt on the back. "There! Is that better?"

"Owl! No! Leave off! Yowl!"

"You were choking."

"I wasn't!" exclaimed Milly indignantly. "I was only trying to speak, and my mouth was full. I'll scratch you if you punch me in the back again!"

"Now, don't be ungrateful, Milly—"

"Groo! I was going to say, Ethel, that you needn't trouble about putting the tarts away. I'll look after them for you."

"In fact, Milly will put them away for you," said Dolly sarcastically.

"Certainly!" said Milly unsuspectingly. "You leave them to me, Ethel. I'll take proper care of them."

Dolly made a sudden movement.

"Somebody's coming!"

Ethel started nervously. She hated feeling guilty, but she could not help it now. If the great consignment of tarts should be discovered in her cubicle there would certainly be trouble.

The dormitory door was heard to open.

As all the cubicles were open at the end, one had only to walk down the dormitory to see into each one; so if the new-comer came along, the three girls and the hatbox could not fail to be discovered in Ethel's cubicle.

Ethel stepped quickly out of the cubicle, making a sign to Dolly to get the box out of sight.

Dolly grasped it and pushed it under the bed. But Milly Pratt's jammy mouth and sticky fingers remained to betray them if they were seen.

A trim maidservant had come into the dormitory. She stopped as Ethel hastily advanced towards her.

"Mrs. Filby wants to see you, miss," she said.

"Mrs. Filby?"

"Yes, miss. There's a parcel come for you."

Ethel's heart sank.

It was evidently the second of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's consignments.

But she nodded calmly, and took her way with as tranquil a face as she could muster to the housekeeper's room.

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

NEXT  
WEDNESDAY

"IN THE KING'S KHAKI!"

"Soap!"

"Miss Cleveland, there is a parcel here for you!" said Mrs. Filby, as Cousin Ethel came in; and there was a very curious expression upon the housekeeper's face. "Were you expecting any soap?"

"Soap?" said Ethel.

"Yes."

"Is—is it here?"

"There is a large parcel for you, labelled 'Soap,' said Mrs. Filby, indicating a huge package. "It weighs a great deal, and it was quite a trouble to the man to carry it in. What ever possessed you to order such a quantity of soap, Miss Cleveland?"

Cousin Ethel did not reply.

She gazed at the huge package. It was evidently a case wrapped on the outside with brown paper, and she judged it to contain the ginger-beer.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had not done things by halves. When the swell of St. Jim's was magnificent, he was magnificent, and on this occasion he had expended his five quite royally.

But what Cousin Ethel was to do with the ginger-beer she did not know.

She could see, too, that Mrs. Filby was very curious. After a hatbox delivered in a confectioner's van, the arrival of a great consignment of soap was naturally more surprising than it would otherwise have been. And Arthur Augustus had really not been happy in his selection of labels. Soap was not a thing that a girl at St. Freda's would be likely to order by the half-hundredweight.

"The school provides soap for the girls," went on Mrs. Filby kindly. "Of course, as you are a new girl, you might not have known."

Ethel nodded.

"But, in any case, what could you want with so much soap as this?" went on Mrs. Filby. "My dear child, there must be enough there to last the whole school for a month!"

"It was very thoughtless," said Ethel.

"Yes, indeed. Why did you order it?"

"It—it was ordered for me," said Ethel.

"Oh, a mistake, I suppose?"

"Yes, indeed, a very great mistake."

"Then it can be sent back," said Mrs. Filby. "If it is a mistake, it would be absurd for you to pay for a great heap of soap you do not want."

"It is already paid for," said Ethel hastily.

"Oh, that alters the case, of course. But it will be useless to you," said Mrs. Filby. "I had better have it placed in the housekeeping stores, and Miss Penfold will allow you the value of the soap in money."

It was really the most natural suggestion to make, and it was kind and considerate of Mrs. Filby to suggest it; but it was not exactly what Ethel wanted.

She could imagine the look upon Miss Penfold's face when the box was opened, and instead of packets of soap, bottles of ginger-beer came into view.

At all costs the box must be got away from the housekeeper's room unopened. But how? Ethel certainly could not carry it; she could not even lift it from the floor.

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Filby—" she began.

"Not at all, my dear child. You may leave the box here, and I will speak to Miss Penfold about it," said the housekeeper.

"Thank you, but—but I would rather take the box, if you don't mind," said Cousin Ethel, flushing a little.

Mrs. Filby regarded her in astonishment.

"But, my dear child, the soap will be useless to you!" she exclaimed. "There must be between a quarter and a half hundredweight of it!"

"Yes, but—"

"You had better let me use it, as I said, and Miss Penfold will return you the money for it," said Mrs. Filby.

"But I did not pay, myself."

"You can return the money to the person who did pay, of course, if you wish," said Mrs. Filby, with a smile. Ethel felt almost cornered.

"But—but I would rather have the packet taken to my room," she said.

"My dear child—"

"I think I had better take it."

"Oh, very well!" said Mrs. Filby. "It is extraordinary, but you may certainly have the packet if you like. I will call the porter."

"Thank you so much, dear Mrs. Filby!"

The school porter was called in.

The old corporal looked at the package in surprise; but he was used to obeying orders without making remarks. He shouldered the box, and marched off with it, followed by Cousin Ethel, who was only too relieved to get the thing

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out of the housekeeper's room without any more questions being asked.

"Where shall I take it, miss?" asked the corporal, after a minute.

**Milly Feels Bad.**

"To my room, please," said Ethel, hesitating; and then it occurred to her that her room was by no means a suitable place. The big box would hardly be hidden in the little cubicle, and it would surely attract general attention if the porter carried it there.

"Werry well, miss."

"No, don't take it there," said Ethel hastily. "Take it to the—wood-shed."

"Yes, miss."

"And—and hurry, please."

"Yes, miss."

Corporal Brick changed his direction, and bore the parcel away in the direction of the wood-shed. It was the best place Ethel could think of for depositing the box.

Some trees interposed now between the corporal and the house, and shut him off from view from the windows.

"Bless us!" exclaimed Claire Pomfret, meeting them.

"What is that, Ethel?"

"Only a—a box," said Ethel.

"But what is in it?"

"Oh, things!"

"Which it's soap," said Corporal Brick. "And cavy it is!"

"Soap!" shrieked Claire.

"Yes, miss."

"Oh, dear! Ethel, what—"

But Ethel could not explain. They passed on with the box, leaving Claire staring.

The corporal bore the box into the wood-shed at last, and dumped it down.

There was a sound from within, and the corporal started.

"Which it sounds more like stone bottles than soap," he remarked.

"Thank you so much!" said Ethel.

"Not at all, miss. That ain't the heaviest weight I've carried, by many a one. I remember when I was in South Africa with them Bores—"

"And please accept this sixpence," said Ethel, who was not anxious just then to hear the African reminiscences.

"Thank you kindly, miss."

The corporal retired.

Cousin Ethel threw a number of faggots on the box, to conceal it for the present, at least, and then, with a heightened colour, she left the wood-shed.

As she returned to the garden to seek Dolores she encountered Milly Pratt. Milly was looking very white, and her face and hands were sticky.

She gazed at Ethel with a lack-lustre eye.

Ethel looked alarmed.

"What is the matter, Milly?" she exclaimed.

"N-n-nothing," muttered Milly.

"But you look ill."

"I—I am feeling a little—little queer."

"Oh, dear, it was the tarts!" exclaimed Ethel, with real concern.

Milly shook her head feebly.

"N-no, it wasn't that," she murmured. "I—I didn't eat more than nineteen."

Ethel stared at her, aghast.

"Nineteen!" she ejaculated.

"Well, not more than twenty, at the most."

"You—you silly little thing!" said Ethel. "You must be feeling dreadfully ill. You should not have done it."

"I—I shall feel all right presently," mumbled Milly.

"I—I leave me alone for a little while."

She sank down upon a seat.

"I am so sorry!" said Ethel.

"It's all r-right."

Ethel went on into the garden. Before she reached Dolores, however, a voice was heard calling, and Corporal Brick came puffing up.

"If you please, miss—"

"Yes?" said Ethel. "What is it?"

She looked quickly and anxiously at the old soldier. The corporal's manner made her think for a moment that the packet in the wood-shed had been unearthed. But it was not that.

"If you please, miss, Mrs. Filby—"

"Yes?" said Ethel.

"Mrs. Filby says as how there's another parcel for you, miss," said the corporal. "A werry large parcel of books, miss."

Cousin Ethel stood speechless for a moment.

"Books?" she said at last.

"Yes, miss."  
 "Oh, dear!"  
 "Which if you'll come to Mrs. Filby's, miss—"  
 "Yes, I'll come at once," said Cousin Ethel.  
 And she went.

### More Parcels for Ethel.

"Another parcel for you, Miss Cleveland," said Mrs. Filby. "You are getting quite a large number of parcels to-day."

"Yes, indeed," said poor Ethel.  
 "Books this time," said Mrs. Filby.  
 "Where is the parcel, please?"  
 "Here it is."

Cousin Ethel looked at the parcel. It was wrapped in thick brown paper, and tied with string, and labelled "Books, With Care."

The parcel was a large one, but quite easy for Cousin Ethel to carry. It weighed only about five or six pounds.

"I suppose they are school books," said Mrs. Filby.  
 "School books?" repeated Ethel.

"Yes. Other books the young ladies are not allowed to have without Miss Penfold seeing them," said Mrs. Filby. "The same with newspapers. There was a young lady 'ere once who used to read the serial story in a penny newspaper, and there was great trouble when Miss Penfold discovered it."

"Indeed!" said Ethel.  
 "Yes, indeed, Miss Cleveland. Perhaps you wouldn't mind opening the parcel 'ere—"

"Oh!"  
 "Or giving me your word that it does not contain any books of that sort," said Mrs. Filby—"no six-shilling novels or newspapers?"

"Oh, certainly!" said Ethel. "I assure you that it does not contain anything of the kind, Mrs. Filby."

"Then you may take the parcel," said the housekeeper.  
 "Thank you."

Cousin Ethel left the housekeeper's room with the parcel in her hand. From its bulk and weight, she knew that it must contain the cake sent by her Cousin Arthur.

Ethel was beginning to feel exasperated.  
 It was really too bad.

If the parcels continued to arrive there was certain to be comment and inquiry sooner or later, and then the whole story would come to light.

"Books!" said Dolly Carew, as Cousin Ethel went towards the dormitory with the parcel. "How awfully studious we are!"

Cousin Ethel laughed.  
 "Poor Milly is quite ill," went on Dolly cheerfully. "She gorged the tarts in the greediest way, and she will be ill presently."

"I am very sorry for that," said Ethel.  
 "Oh, it will be a lesson to her!" said Dolly. "Don't worry about Milly. But what are you doing with all those books?"

"I'm taking the parcel to my cubicle."  
 "Anything interesting to read?"  
 "Oh, no!"

"You don't mean to say they're dry school books?"  
 "Well, no."  
 "Then what are they?" asked the persistent Dolly.

"Well, as a matter of fact, it's a cake," said Cousin Ethel.  
 "It's another gift from my absurd cousin."  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is growing to be a great bother."  
 Dolly Carew laughed heartily.  
 "Are there any more things to come?" she asked.

"Yes, I think so."  
 "Oh, dear! What fun!"  
 "It will not be fun if Miss Penfold finds it out."  
 Dolly became grave.

"No, you're right there," she said. "Keep it dark! Quiet!"

She made a sign for silence as Enid Craven came round the corner.

Enid looked very suspiciously at the two, and at the parcel in Ethel's hand. She lingered for a moment, and then passed on slowly.

It was evident that the Paul Fry of St. Freda's was very curious and very suspicious.

"Do you think she heard you?" asked Cousin Ethel uneasily.  
 "I don't know."  
 "Because she might—"

Dolly shook her head.  
 "Oh, no; even Enid Craven would not sneak to the mistresses," she said. "Even Enid would stop short of that."  
 "Well, I hope so," said Ethel.

She carried the parcel into her cubicle, and opened it. There was a huge plum-cake in the box. Ethel, half laughing and half exasperated, wrapped it in the paper and placed it in her trunk, putting it under some clothes for safety. Then she carried away the box it had come in to a box-room, and deposited it among some lumber.

Somewhat relieved in her mind at having disposed of the body, so to speak, the girl went down into the garden again. But her troubles were not at an end. A maid with a smiling face met her on the path, with an announcement that a consignment of ink had arrived for her by van, and that it was waiting for her in the housekeeper's room.

"Ink?" said Ethel.  
 "Yes, miss."

"Very well; I will come."  
 Poor Ethel hardly dared to show herself in the housekeeper's room again. But there was no help for it—she must go.

As she entered, the sound of a calm voice struck her with dismay.

Miss Penfold, the headmistress of St. Freda's, was in the room, speaking to Mrs. Filby. Ethel drew back; but it was too late.

"Come in, my dear!" said Miss Penfold, with a smile and a nod to Cousin Ethel. "Come in, Ethel!"

"I—I came for a parcel," said Ethel, blushing, as she entered.

"Yes. Is there a parcel for Ethel Cleveland, Mrs. Filby?" Mrs. Filby gave a slight sniff.

"There seems to be nothing else this afternoon, ma'am," she said, "what with hats, and soap, and books, and such 'ere, here's the ink!"

"Ink?" ejaculated Miss Penfold.  
 "Yes, ma'am."

Mrs. Filby pushed forward a large brown-paper parcel. Miss Penfold looked at it in amazement.

It was labelled "Ink," but it did not bear the remotest resemblance to the shape of an ink-bottle.

"Dear me!" said Miss Penfold. "Have you been ordering a large quantity of ink, Ethel?"

"N-no!" stammered Ethel.  
 "There must be a large quantity here—at least a gallon jar," said the headmistress of St. Freda's. "It is very extraordinary."

"May I take it, please?" said Ethel timidly.  
 "Stay a moment. If you did not order a quantity of ink, there must be some mistake," said Miss Penfold, with a puzzled look. "It cannot be for you."

"Miss Cleveland's name is written on it, ma'am," said Mrs. Filby.

"Yes, but there must be some mistake, as Ethel has not ordered the ink. Indeed, what use should a gallon or more of ink be to a girl? You had better open the parcel here, Ethel, and let me see what it contains."

Ethel's heart sank.  
 But there was no help for it, and with unsteady fingers she began to remove the cord from the parcel.

Miss Penfold watched her quietly. The headmistress of St. Freda's was not suspicious. She was surprised; but she thought that some mistake had been made, which could be rectified when the parcel was opened.

Ethel's fingers worked slowly.  
 She knew that as soon as the wrappings were undone boxes of sweets would be revealed, which it was against the rules for the girls to smuggle into St. Freda's.

She was hoping against hope that something would happen to call Miss Penfold away before the contents of the packet were finally revealed.

But nothing happened.  
 "Do you find the knots difficult, Ethel?" said Miss Penfold.

"Mrs. Filby will lend you a pair of scissors."  
 "Here they are, miss," said Mrs. Filby.

"Thank you," stammered Ethel.  
 She cut the string desperately. There was no help for it now. She threw open the brown paper, and disclosed two large cardboard boxes.

One of them was labelled "Chocolates," and the other "Mixed."

Miss Penfold looked at them, and her eyes seemed to grow large and round with amazement. She signed to Ethel to open the boxes.

The girl obeyed.  
 "Sweets!" ejaculated Mrs. Filby. "Bless my soul!"

Miss Penfold looked at Ethel. The girl was silent, with crimson cheeks.

### Very Cautious!

"Dear me!" said Miss Penfold. "This is not—er—ink!"  
 "N-no!" stammered Ethel.

"Why have you had sweets sent to you in this way, Ethel?"  
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asked Miss Penfold quietly. "You must know that it is not right to have things smuggled into St. Freda's in this way. You are allowed to make purchases to a certain extent at the school shop, but anything of this sort is quite forbidden."

"I—I know," stammered Ethel.

Miss Penfold's face grew very severe.

"But you have done it, all the same, Ethel."

"But—"

"Please explain."

"It—it was not I who ordered these things," said Ethel, seeing that the whole story must come out now. "They were sent to me."

"Oh, I see! Without your knowledge, Ethel? That alters the case completely, of course."

"Without my knowledge at the time they were ordered, certainly," said Ethel. "I was told they were coming, that is all, when it was too late to stop them."

"Ah!"

"They were sent in kindness, but very thoughtlessly," said Ethel. "I did not know what to do when I heard they were being sent. There were other things, too—ginger-beer and cake."

"And who sent them?"

Ethel was silent.

"You see, Ethel, this is really a smuggling trick, and if a relation of yours has been so foolish as to smuggle things to you here, it amounts to setting all authority at defiance," said the Head of St. Freda's. "I must write to the person, whoever it is, and point out that this cannot be continued."

"It is a boy, Miss Penfold," said Ethel, scarlet. "He—he imagines that things can be done here the same as in a boys' school. But he meant no harm, Miss Penfold."

The Head's face broke into a smile.

"Ah, I think I can guess what boy, too! Your Cousin Arthur?"

"Yes," said Ethel, hanging her head.

"The lad I saw in the train the day you came to St. Freda's, who recommended you, if I remember rightly, to put rats in my hatbox if I should not meet with your approval as a headmistress?" said Miss Penfold.

"Ye-es."

"Well, I am sure the lad had no intention of being disrespectful to me, either in that case or in this," said Miss Penfold. "I shall not take any notice of the matter, Ethel; but you must write to him and tell him that there must be nothing of the sort again. Or, if you are seeing him soon, you may tell him."

"Thank you so much, Miss Penfold!"

"Not at all."

"And the—the sweets!" said Ethel hesitatingly. "Shall I leave them here?"

"They must be confiscated," said Miss Penfold, with a nod. "You may leave them here, Ethel."

"Yes, Miss Penfold."

And Ethel, glad to escape so cheaply, left the house-keeper's room.

Dolores met her in the passage.

"What is the matter?" she asked, noticing Ethel's flushed cheeks.

Cousin Ethel explained.

Dolores laughed softly.

"The ridiculous boy!" she exclaimed. "But he has a kind heart, Ethel. I like your cousin very much."

"He has a very kind heart," said Ethel. "But he will get me into trouble here if he is not more careful. I shall write to him."

"No need to do that—you can see him."

"How do you mean, Dolores?"

"Look!"

Dolores unclosed her hand and showed a stone with a note tied round it. "Miss Ethel Cleveland" was scrawled on the outside in pencil.

Cousin Ethel looked at it in amazement.

"Where did you get that, Dolores?" she asked.

"It was pitched over the wall into the garden from the road."

Ethel looked distressed.

"Oh, dear! The foolish fellow!"

"He is very mysterious," agreed Dolores. "I came to look for you, when I picked it up. It is fortunate that Miss Tyrrell did not find it. She might have imagined that you were receiving messages from a boy outside the school."

Ethel looked startled.

"Surely none of the girls of St. Freda's do anything like that, Dolores?"

Dolores gave a curious laugh.

"This is your first boarding-school, Ethel, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Well, there is a great deal for you to learn, then, that is all."

"But, Dolores—"

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"Read your note," interrupted the Spanish girl, changing the subject. "It means that Arthur wishes to see you, no doubt, and if you do not come, he may throw over another message."

"Oh, dear!"

In the quadrangle, Cousin Ethel unwrapped the paper from the stone and spread it out, and read the message scribbled on the inner side.

"Am waiting by the side gate.—ARTHUR."

"The foolish fellow!"

Dolores' eyes sparkled.

"What fun!" she exclaimed.

### D'Arcy is Surprised.

"Miss Penfold would be angry if she knew," said Ethel.

"Bother Miss Penfold!" said Dolores recklessly.

Ethel looked really shocked, as she felt.

"Oh, Dolores!"

"Oh, it's fun!" said the Spanish girl impatiently. "I'm tired of doing exactly as I'm told, and saying, 'Yes, Miss Penfold,' and 'No, Miss Penfold.' Bother!"

"My dear Dolores—"

Dolores placed a pretty little hand over Ethel's mouth.

"No, I won't be lectured this afternoon!" she exclaimed. "Let us go and see Arthur. I am dying to see somebody!"

"But—"

"Take me with you, Ethel. I'm bored to extinction!"

"Oh, very well!"

Ethel's tone was not so gracious as usual; but Dolores did not appear to observe it.

The two girls made their way to the side gate—a postern that was used, as a rule, only by the mistresses. It was half hidden by the masses of ivy that grow on the walls. The gate was not barred, and it was too high to see over. But as the girls came up to it, the sound of their footsteps probably reached the ears of someone waiting on the other side, for a pair of hands appeared between the spikes on the top of the gate, and a face rose into view, surmounted by a silk hat.

It was the face of the swell of St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy.

He let go with his right hand to raise his hat, but he did not seem equal to the strain of supporting his weight, for he suddenly disappeared.

Dolores laughed softly.

In a few moments, however, the hands were seen on the top of the gate again, and Arthur Augustus looked over with a flushed face.

"Jolly glad to see you!" he exclaimed. "And you, too, Miss Pelham! Did you find either of my notes?"

"Either?" exclaimed Ethel.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I found one," said Dolores.

"You did not throw any others?" exclaimed Ethel, in dismay.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Yaas, wathah! You see, I thwew ovah one, and waited a bit, and then thwew ovah the cthah, in a different place. Then I waited here. If you hadn't come soon, I was goin' to thwew ovah another."

"Oh, Arthur, you silly fellow!"

"Weally, Ethel—"

"Someone else will find the other note, and it may fall into my Form-mistress's hands!" Ethel exclaimed, in distress.

D'Arcy's face fell.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that, you know."

"You would not," agreed Dolores. "But it is all right. It is great fun! Miss Penfold has discovered the sweets you sent in."

"Gweat Scott!"

"And Ethel has had a lecture—haven't you, Ethel?"

"Bai Jove! That's wotten!"

"It was all right," said Ethel. "Miss Penfold was very kind. She realised that it was a ridiculous cousin of mine who was to blame."

"Oh, weally, Ethel—"

"I am very angry with you, Arthur! You must never, never do such a thing again!" Cousin Ethel exclaimed.

"But, my deah gal—"

"Hush!" exclaimed Dolores, suddenly holding up her hand.

"Weally, Miss Pelham—"

"Hush! Someone is coming!"

"Bai Jove!"

There were footsteps behind the shrubbery near the gate. Arthur Augustus dropped out of sight in a moment, and Cousin Ethel and Dolores turned to face the new-comer.

## Caught!

Enid Craven came down the garden-path, with a keen, suspicious look upon her face.

She glanced inquiringly at Cousin Ethel.

Dolores was perfectly cool, and showed no sign of being disturbed in any way; but there was a blush on Ethel's cheeks. She hated being put into a position of keeping a secret and making concealments.

But there was no help for it now.

Enid Craven halted.

"I thought I heard someone talking here," she said.

"We were talking," said Dolores.

"Wasn't there anybody else?" asked Enid.

Cousin Ethel was silent.

"Why should you think there was anybody else?" asked Dolores coldly.

Enid's narrow eyes glittered.

"I believe there was!" she exclaimed.

To that the only reply of Dolores was a shrug of the shoulders.

"I believe I heard a boy's voice," said Enid.

No reply.

"Will you tell me?"

Silence.

"Miss Penfold would have something to say if she knew that you were meeting boys in secret, Ethel."

Ethel flushed scarlet.

"How dare you say that!" she exclaimed.

"Isn't it true?"

"You have spied upon us!" said Dolores contemptuously. "Then you know that there is no harm in what Ethel is doing."

"I know there is a boy here somewhere," said Enid, with a suspicious glance among the shrubberies. "I know—"

"Bai Jove!"

Enid Craven started as a handsome face, adorned with an eyeglass, rose into view over the top of the gate.

She stared blankly at the aristocratic countenance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The swell of St. Jim's contrived this time to hang on to the gate with his left hand while he raised his silk topper with his right. Practice makes perfect.

"Pway do not misundahstand the posish, my dear young lady!" he exclaimed. "I am Ethel's cousin, and am meetin' her by my own ordah. Ethel had no choice in the mattah, as I diwected her as her eldah."

Ethel smiled.

"Oh, it is D'Arcy!" said Enid.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Miss Penfold would not allow Ethel to meet anybody in secret, even her cousin," said Enid spitefully.

"The fault is entially mine," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Pway do not misundahstand the mattah, you know. I have been so jolly cautious, that I wondah vevy much how you came to know anythin' about the mattah."

Enid laughed.

"I found a note," she said.

"Bai Jove! She's found the othah note, Ethel!" D'Arcy looked puzzled. "But the note was addressed to Ethel."

"Yes, I know that."

"Then how could you possibly know what was inside it?" asked Arthur Augustus, looking vevy puzzled indeed.

Enid turned red, and Dolores burst into a laugh. It evidently did not occur to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy that anybody could be mean enough to open and read a letter addressed to another person.

"It is vevy wemakable!" D'Arcy observed.

"I read the note!" said Enid angrily.

"Gweat Scott! But it was addressed to Ethel!"

D'Arcy's astonishment was more cutting than any blame could have been. Enid's face was crimson. She gave Ethel and Dolores a bitter, furious look, and turned away and disappeared through the shrubberies.

Dolores laughed lightly.

"She had what she deserved!" the Spanish girl said. "You are really a hard hitter, Arthur."

D'Arcy looked amazed.

"I? A hard hittah? Bai Jove!"

"Yes, indeed. Ha, ha!"

"You must go now, Arthur," said Ethel hurriedly. "Enid will tell about this. And perhaps my Form-mistress will come here."

"Bai Jove, that would be wotten!"

"Run away at once. I am vevy much obliged to you for your good intentions, Arthur, but I must ask you never, never to do anything of the sort again."

"Weally, Ethel—"

"And now do run away!"

"But—"

"Lose no time, Arthur!"

The swell of St. Jim's shook his head decidedly.

"You are quite wong, deah gal. You think that that young person will tell your Form-mistress about your meetin' me heah?"

"She will contrive to let Miss Tyrrell know, at all events."

"Bai Jove! I should wag her, then! We always wag tell-tales at St. Jim's."

"Yes; but go now."

"There's no huwvay, deah gal."

"Yes, yes, yes—there is a hurry! Do go!" urged Ethel.

"Not at all. You see, if your Form-mistress questions you, you will be in a jolly awkward posish. I had bettah be heah to speak up for you."

"You?"

"Yaas, wathah! I shall have to explain to Miss Tywwell, you know."

"Arthur—"

"I assure you that I am quite wight, deah gal. You can always twust a fellah of tact and judgment, you know."

"My dear Arthur—"

"It's all wight. I'm comin' in!"

And the swell of St. Jim's swang himself over the gate with great agility.

Ethel uttered a little cry of dismay.

She was far from sharing D'Arcy's own unbounded faith in his tact and judgment, and she was more than afraid that his proposed explanation to the junior mistress of St. Freda's would only make matters worse.

But it was too late to stop him now.

Arthur Augustus was in the garden. His silk hat had rolled on the ground, but the swell of St. Jim's recovered it, and brushed it carefully with a cambric handkerchief, and placed it on his head.

Then he smiled at Ethel in a reassuring way.

"It's all wight, I assure you."

"Really, Arthur—"

"Weally, Ethel—"

"You foolish, foolish fellow! There will be trouble at once if Miss Penfold should find you in the grounds."

"But I am going to explain."

"You are going to do nothing of the sort!" exclaimed Ethel, while Dolores laughed. "It will only cause more trouble."

"Weally, Ethel—"

"You must go away at once!"

"It's too late!" exclaimed Dolores, catching Ethel's arm.

"Here they come!"

"Bai Jove!"

Cousin Ethel pushed Arthur Augustus into the shrubbery, where a great bush of laurel hid him from sight.

"Stay there!" she whispered breathlessly.

"But—"

Ethel did not wait for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's "but's." She ran across the path with Dolores and into the shrubbery on the other side.

A few moments later Miss Tyrrell and Enid Craven came down to the gate. Miss Tyrrell's face wore an annoyed expression.

It was quite easy to see that she did not feel pleased at Enid's conduct in telling tales to her, but, at the same time, she considered it her duty to look into the matter. She stopped near the gate and glanced round.

"There is no one here!" she exclaimed.

"There was a few minutes ago, Miss Tyrrell," Enid said tartly. "I suppose they have gone. There was a boy talking over the gate—one of the St. Jim's boys."

"Are you quite sure?"

Miss Tyrrell's tone implied a lurking doubt of Enid's veracity, and Enid felt it, and turned red with anger.

"Yes, I am quite sure."

Miss Tyrrell looked over the gate. She was tall enough to see over it to the path beside the wall outside. There was no one in sight.

"There is no one here now, Enid."

"Then he has gone."

"And you are quite sure?"

"Yes, Miss Tyrrell. I thought it my duty to tell you," said Enid. "I know how wrong it is to receive notes from boys outside the school."

(Another long instalment of this splendid school serial in next Wednesday's "Gem." Order your copy in advance.)

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NEXT WEDNESDAY!

"IN THE KING'S KHAKI!"



# THIS WEEK'S CHAT



Whom to Write to  
**EDITOR "THE GEM" LIBRARY.**  
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 OUR · THREE · COMPANION · PAPERS!  
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 "LIBRARY" · "POPULAR" · 1/2"  
 EVERY MONDAY · EVERY FRIDAY · EVERY SATURDAY.

For Next Wednesday:

**"IN THE KING'S KHAKI!"**  
 By Martin Clifford.

The popular "Gem" author excels himself in next Wednesday's grand, long, complete story of St. Jim's, which introduces such popular favourites as Talbot, Mario and John Rivers, Colonel Lyndon, and, of course, the inimitable Terrible Three. Disconcerting news comes to hand that John Rivers—alias Corporal Brown—has been wounded, and the Head agrees to let him be nursed back to health at St. Jim's by Marie Rivers, Crooke, the cad of the Shell, recognising in "Corporal Brown" the one-time cracksmán, resolves to show him up, despite the fact that he has fought and bled for his country. The matter is brought to the notice of Colonel Lyndon, who, for reasons of his own, champions the wounded warrior; who won undying honour when a soldier.

**"IN THE KING'S KHAKI!"**

### A RIDDLE FOR CLEVER READERS!

One of my many Welsh chums writes to me as follows:

"Glamorganshire.  
 Dear Editor,—Some months ago I picked up a magazine that had this old riddle in it, supposed to have been invented by an old bishop, who died before giving the answer. I have often puzzled over it, and, possibly, if you can spare some of your valuable space in the 'Gem' Library, some of your readers may be able to give me the answer.  
 "I remain,  
 "A sincere reader,  
 "T. A. F."

Here is my chum's riddle:

"I'm the sweetest of voices in orchestra heard,  
 And yet in an orchestra never have been.  
 I'm a bird of bright plumage, and less like a bird  
 Nothing in Nature has ever been seen.  
 Touching earth I expire, in water I die,  
 In air I lose life, yet I swim and I fly,  
 Darkness destroys me, and light is my death.  
 You can't keep me alive save by stopping my breath.  
 If my name can't be guessed by a boy or a man,  
 By a girl or a woman it certainly can."

Come along, boys! Put your heads together to fathom this extraordinary riddle, and send in your solutions as soon as possible.

### A STUPENDOUS SENSATION!

The "Boys' Friend" Comes of Age!

On Monday next our hoary and venerable companion paper, the "Boys' Friend," will celebrate its twenty-first birthday, and the occasion will be marked with a red letter. It is proposed to produce the

### GREATEST PENNY BUMPER NUMBER ON RECORD,

and amongst the contributors are such old friends as Arthur S. Hardy, Duncan Storm, Maurice Everard, Owen Conquest, and Captain Patrick Carruthers.

There will be a grand coloured cover; but the greatest

feature of all, which is alone well worth the price of the entire paper, is a

MAGNIFICENT PRESENTATION PLATE,

entitled

**"HIS DEED FOR THE DAY!"**

It behoves every "Gemite" who is a lover of sound, wholesome reading matter to place an order at once with his newsagent for

### THE "BOYS' FRIEND" BIRTHDAY NUMBER!

### A SOUTHSEA GIRL CHUM'S PREDICAMENT.

Some weeks ago, I inserted in the "Gem" Library a kind offer from Lillian E., one of my staunch Southsea readers, to send a copy of "The Boy Without a Name" to "Olive," of Five Ways. Miss Lillian now informs me that Olive failed to write; instead, she was bombarded with letters from fellow-readers all over Great Britain.

"As there were between twenty and thirty letters and postcards, Mr. Editor," writes Lillian, "you will agree that it was impossible for me to answer them all. Will you please come to my rescue, and, through the medium of your Chat Page, convey my thanks to all who wrote. I should like to acknowledge their kindness somehow, but to write to each one personally is a bit beyond me.

"I must add that they were all very nice letters, and there were none from the Malpas breed, who, by the way, are about the most contemptible set of cads I've ever heard of!"

I feel sure that those "Gemites" who wrote to Miss Lillian will understand the position, and I am only too pleased to "come to the rescue" in the matter.

### REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"Satisfied" (Port Natal).—Your cheery Christmas greetings were highly appreciated by Mr. Martin Clifford, Mr. Frank Richards, and myself. I wish you the best of luck during the present year.

Fred H. (Stoke Newington).—The replies to your questions are as follows: (1) Master F. Stephens refrained from giving his full address. (2) The issues of the "Boys' Friend" 3<sup>d</sup>. Library mentioned in your letter are now out of print.

T. Allap (Dundee).—Many thanks for your letter and loyalty!

"Five Newcastle Chums."—Your criticism is quite puerile. You say that D'Arcy could not possibly be bumped when he possesses so many new suits. That's all the more reason why he should be bumped, as he can always get a change of clothing.

"M. de Ath" (Queen Anne's Gate, London).—I was very pleased to hear from you. Best wishes to your Gémite brother.

W. V. G. (Near Bude, Cornwall).—You have the honour of having written me the longest letter I have received for many months. The answers to your queries are: (1) Yes, Mont Blanc played for the Grammarians in "School and Sport." (2) More stories dealing with the character mentioned will appear shortly. (3) Dick Brooke is still at St. Jim's. (4) Koumi Rao will always bear the stamp of an

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## REPLIES IN BRIEF—continued.

Indian, and it will be impossible for him to shake off his old habits. (5) It was impossible to give every character a good show. (6) Lynn is still at St. Jim's, but as he is a character of minor importance, he is not given much of the limelight. (7) I am unable to tell you the fate of Gussy's cabbages. (8) The underground passage in question is still in existence. (9) The St. Jim's vacation occurs at the same time as in other schools. (10) Although games at St. Jim's are more or less compulsory, weaklings of the Skimpole type are excused. (11) Grundy's age renders it necessary for him to be as high up as the Shell. (12) D'Arcy drove a car at his own risk. (13) If your brother is ignorant enough to suppose that the "Gem" is a "blood-and-thunder" paper, and refuses to read it and give it a fair trial, there is nothing more to be said. (14) The threepenny books referred to in your letter are long since out of print. This is unfortunate, as "The Pride of the School," by Henry St. John, was a magnificent tale. There, W. V. G.: I have answered all your questions to the best of my ability, and I hope that in sending along another batch you will give your full address, so that I may reply through the post. Space is valuable in the "Gem" Library.

"Mrs. Merry" (Birmingham).—Very many thanks for your appropriate gift. Martin Clifford, Frank Richards, Owen Conquest, and Pro-per Howard are all distinctive gentlemen.—Grace E. C. (Cricklewood).—Glad you enjoyed "The Boy Without a Name" and "School and Sport."

"A Carlisle Reader."—I am afraid you would not be authorised to start a fund on the lines you mention. A special licence has to be obtained.

Jessie S. (Haverstock Hill).—Thank you very much indeed for your delightful gift. It is inadvisable for the character you mention to undergo a complete reformation.

F. T. (New Cross).—Many thanks for your letter and for your continued loyalty to the companion papers.

G. Marsden (Greenwich).—We never acknowledge unsuitable storyettes. Such a task would be both superfluous and impossible.

Jack M. Warrenner (Melbourne).—Many thanks for a most interesting letter.

J. H. S. (Birmingham).—Glad to hear you were successful in reforming the anti-Gemite.

Bernard B. (Johannsburg).—Your previous letter must have been lost in transit. The replies to your questions are: (1) At St. Jim's the Shell Form is equivalent to the Greyfriars' Remove. (2) Tom Merry and Bob Cherry are both first-class boxers, and it would be unfair to say that one outclassed the other. (3) The school tales in the "Penny Popular" deal with the early schooldays of Tom Merry & Co., hence Talbot does not appear.

Alex. Crawford (Ayrshire).—You will have seen by this time my comments concerning the projected publication of "Tom Merry's Weekly." Storyettes not quite up to standard. Have another go!

Hector M. P. (Glasgow).—I will do my best to remedy your grievance. You had better consult your physician on the other matter you mention.

"Moggie" (Highgate).—In reply to your letter, I should say that the nicest boy at St. Jim's was Tom Merry, the worst boy Levison, the cleverest Dick Brooke, and the dullest George Alfred Grundy. Of course, I am referring to the junior section of the school. Many thanks for your good wishes, which are cordially reciprocated by myself and staff.

Elsie P. (Fulham).—Your family has a fine fighting record, and I congratulate you, at the same time expressing the hope that your brothers will come through unscathed. Very best wishes!

A. W. (Brixton Hill).—Many thanks for pointing out error. I hope you will long continue to read and enjoy the jolly old "Gem."

James Robert Chamberlain, 50, Spink Hill, near Chesterfield, Derbyshire, is starting an amateur magazine, and is anxious to enlist the services of a sub-editor, an art editor, a sports editor, and a fighting editor! James Robert tells me that the fellows who fill these posts will receive five shillings weekly. I reckon the fighting editor will earn it!

G. F. C. (Stoke Newington).—I am sorry, but no members of the staff of the Amalgamated Press are allowed to compete in any contest controlled by this firm.

"Judy."—As Kildare is still a schoolboy, and only seventeen years old at that, he is not called upon to serve his country.

"Talbot's Australian Friend" (Hindmarsh).—Many thanks for your letter. Your spelling is certainly a great improvement on Grundy's! The character you mention in your letter is fictitious.

"The Terrible Two" (South Australia).—I am much impressed by your unwavering loyalty to this journal. The verses you sent me were excellent, and I join with you in the time-honoured expression: "Advance, Australia!"

"A Scotch Gemite" (Melbourne).—Tom Merry and Bob Cherry are both first-class boxers, and as they have each

beaten the other in the past, honours are easy. "Tom Merry's Weekly" will come on the market as soon as the "Greyfriars Herald" touches a certain figure in circulation. That's official!

"An Australian Reader" (Victoria).—Many thanks for your letter and good wishes.

J. D. (Glasgow).—The replies to your queries are as follows: (1) The suggestion has been thought of before, and sooner or later I hope to put it into effect. (2) See reply to "A Scotch Gemite." (3) The "Gem" Library has never been issued in volume form. Your good wishes are cordially reciprocated by myself and staff.

Bertie W. (Hamilton, New Zealand).—I read your letter with pleasure. No, it is not too late for you to join Chuckles Club. You should write at once to the President, enclosing the names and addresses of two of your chums. You will then receive the magnificent certificate, which has delighted many thousands of my chums in the Homeland.

James C. (Larkhall).—I was glad to receive your appreciative comments concerning "School and Sport."

W. E. (Perth, West Australia).—The two characters you mention are both excellent boxers, but I think the palm should be awarded to Dick Russell. Your storyette was not quite up to standard. Try again!

F. S. (Rotherhithe).—Smoking is undoubtedly a bad habit in a young boy, and you should exercise your will-power to the utmost, in order to rid yourself of it. You might also try sucking an acid-tablet when the craving to smoke comes over you.

Connie M. (Wirrabara, South Australia).—Yes, yours is the first letter I have received from Wirrabara. I am glad to hear you find the "Gem" stories entirely to your liking.

Hubert M. (Victor Harbour, South Australia).—Many thanks for your enthusiastic letter!

Tom Martin (Wapping).—The story in which Bob Cherry defeated Tom Merry in the ring was entitled "Sportsmen All." Since that tale was published the St. Jim's hero has won back his laurels.

"The Council of Four" (Glasgow).—I should not care to predict the possible result of an encounter with the gloves between two such Trojans as Tom Merry and Talbot. It would be a great fight, anyway. If you experience any difficulty in obtaining a copy of "School and Sport" locally, send four penny stamps to this office, and the book, of which there are still a few copies left, shall come on to you by return.

E. H. (You seem to be a very funny merchant, and I am recommending your Anti-Gem organisation to the notice of the Kaiser, whose fate you will probably share.

"Tommy" (Glasgow).—Your suggestion shall receive my careful consideration.

E. G. (Victoria, Australia).—I am unable to give you the information you require. Sorry!

"Friar T." (Australia).—See my reply to the "Council of Four" (Glasgow), printed above.

"South Australian Gemite" (Adelaide).—Many thanks for your most interesting letter!

"A. B. C." (Limerick).—I am doing my best to remedy your grievance, and am indeed sorry that you have not yet had an opportunity of perusing the "Greyfriars Herald."

C. H. G. (Anfield).—The boys seated on the school wall on the cover of "School and Sport" represent no particular characters. The better boxer of those you name is Harry Wharton. With regard to Tom Merry's failure in the great Marathon Race, you cannot expect Tommy to win all along the line. The stories would speedily become monotonous.

"Two Loyal Gemites" (Glasgow).—I think a clear conscience is your surest safeguard. If anyone openly accuses you of having written the anonymous letters, just refer them to me.

F. M. E. (Nottingham).—I note all the criticisms of yourself and seventeen chums, and will do my best for you.

Harry W. (Newcastle-on-Tyne).—Many thanks for your letter and good wishes!

A. F. C. and Chum (Barnsbury).—More will be heard of Phyllis Howell in future "Magnet" stories.

E. R. M. (Montreal).—I am glad your pater at the front thinks such a lot of the "Gem" Library. Most of the Tommites are enraptured with our bright little journal.

Harold H. (Montreal).—Many thanks for your letter!

"Some Guy" (Australia).—It is a great pity that you omitted to disclose your full name and address, as I should have been pleased to write to you direct.

"A Bromptonian."—I am much indebted to you for your loyalty.

Jean W. (Cheltenham).—I will instruct Mr. Martin Clifford to moderate his transports in the direction you name. It is not difficult to tell from your letter that you are one of the athletic sort of girls. Good luck to you!

N. S. (Cape Colony).—I am afraid it would entail too much time and trouble to do as you suggest.

(Continued on the next page.)

## REPLIES IN BRIEF—continued.

"A Reader" (Near Wigau).—I should say that Jimmy Silver would be able to knock Gussy into a cocked hat. This assertion will probably enrage some of the lovers of Gussy, but it's a fact, all the same. Glad you enjoyed "School and Sport."

C. and H. (Southport).—I am sorry your last letter to me was overlooked. Your suggestions shall receive due consideration.

Roy Holmes (Swansea).—Thank you very much indeed for your delightful letter.

Bernard B. (Ladylwell). The most reliable firm I can recommend for the article you name is Messrs. Straker Brothers, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.

Private Max Farleigh (Carmarthen).—I was very pleased to hear from you again. "Tom Merry's Weekly" will be published as soon as there is a substantial increase in the circulation of the "Greyfriars Herald." Best wishes!

"A Loyal Irish Reader."—I am afraid you will experience considerable difficulty in obtaining the early numbers of the "Gem" Library, and I cannot help you from this office, as most of the copies are out of print, and therefore unobtainable. "Alias" (Market Harborough).—I shall be happy to consider your kind suggestion.

"A Gemite" (Glasgow).—Congratulations upon having in your possession such an early issue of the "Gem" Library as No. 7. I should hang on to it with both hands, if I were you, as in years to come it may be a priceless treasure. Back numbers are becoming scarcer and scarcer.

G. A. G. (Bradford).—The persons you mention do not exist, to my knowledge.

D. C. and G. B. (Dundee).—I have passed on your letter to Mr. Martin Clifford.

"A Faithful Reader."—I shall be happy to carry out your suggestion at some future date.

Three Wolverhampton Brothers. —Happily, grumbler are rare animals in your town. I thank you for your letter, and trust you will always be loyal to the companion papers.

A. D. D. (Dublin).—Thank you for pointing out errors, which are, however, quite trifling. You must remember that we are working at top pressure, and with a sadly depleted staff, too.

"Flapper" (Southampton).—Thank you, Miss Flapper. Your kind suggestion shall be carefully considered.

R. Spence (Victoria, Australia).—The fellows you mention are both splendid boxers, and a contest between them might end either way. Best wishes!

James Cuthbert. Many thanks for your letter and loyalty! C. J. O. (Newquay).—I have not sufficient space at my disposal to put your suggestion into effect. Thank you for it; all the same.

R. C. and H. L. (Battersea).—When Mr. Martin Clifford has time he will undertake a threepenny-book story dealing with the chums of St. Jim's. But do give the poor man a little breathing-space!

"A Yorkshire Reader."—I agree with your sentiments to a T. Best luck to you!

Valerie K. (New South Wales).—I am sorry, but the "Gem" Correspondence Exchange has been temporarily disbanded.

"A Tipperary Reader."—The suggestion shall be carried out later on, but I'm afraid we've a long, long way to go!

A. K. K. and Numerous Chums (Manchester).—Any book binder will bind your "Gems" for you. I shall always be pleased to hear from my Grammar School chums.

"A Loyal Gemite" (Bolton).—I am sorry that lack of space precludes me from publishing your loyal letter.

W. Reginald Golder (Melbourne).—Later on, perhaps I may be able to organise a competition confined solely to Colonial readers, but I can make no definite promise.

"An Enthusiastic Southern Cross Gemite."—Very many thanks for your entertaining letter.

Marie Evelyn Rivers (Montreal).—How extraordinary that your name should be identical with that of the St. Jim's heroine. I was delighted to hear from you, and hope you will write many a time and oft. Best wishes!

"A Loyal Gemite on Aircraft Service."—Many thanks for your letter and good wishes, which latter I cordially reciprocate.

Maurice L. I am glad to hear your parents approve of the "Gem" stories. Good luck to you.

W. H. B. (Pittsburg). I hope soon to put the suggestion concerning the amalgamation of Harry Wharton & Co. with Tom Merry & Co. in the "Penny Popular" into effect.

Your Editor

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