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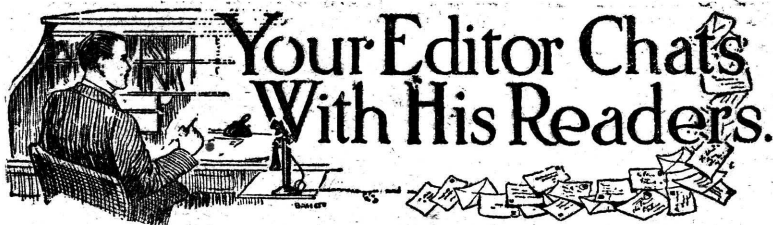
No. 976 Vol. XXX.—October 30th, 1926.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

# The **GEM 2!** LIBRARY



**READ ABOUT D'ARGY'S AND SKIMPOLE'S AMAZING DISCOVERIES!**



Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

### "WE HAD A GREAT FEAST—"

ONE of our Tuck Hampers evidently "went down" well in good old Ireland, for Arthur Ben-nison—the prizewinner—was good enough to write me a letter explaining what happened to the grub. He did things in style, did my Irish chum, and invited his pals to a record feed. They all enjoyed the contents of the hamper. This letter of appreciation prompts me to urge you other fellows to send your jokes along. After all, there's nothing very difficult to be done. You must have heard of a good joke. And, think of it, if your joke is published you receive a hamper of delicious tuck! Doesn't that make your mouths water? Why, it makes me feel peckish myself. Have a shot at this simple and fascinating contest this week. You'll find the necessary coupon on page 16.

### WHY IS—

A cheery letter reaches me from A. Manders of Liverpool. He tells me that he has persuaded several fellows to take the GEM regularly. He's very modest, this loyal chum of mine, for he says that the "persuasive treatment" only lasted while he was on the way to the newsagent with his chums. Once these fellows bought their first copy of

the GEM, they declared without exception that the GEM was going to be their paper every week. Good for you, my Liverpool chum! One of these news readers adds a conundrum to A. Manders' letter, which shows that already he's pretty keen about St. Jim's and its characters. Here's the conundrum: "Why is Baggy Trimble, on the river, like an aching tooth?" And the answer is: "Because he has to be pulled out!" Quite smart, you'll agree. Many thanks for your interesting letter, A. Manders, and please give my best wishes to your pal who sent the conundrum. Perhaps he will favour me with a letter one of these days.

### "COME ON, THE IRON!"

A London chum is mystified to account for the peculiar war-cry, "Come on, the Iron!" which he has heard on more than one occasion at West Ham's footer ground. I believe this quaint cry is a reminder of the time when West Ham Football Club was known as the Thames Ironworks F.C. This, of course, was before the club got into League footer.

### A STRONG SERIES!

Gemites ought to make a point of reading the fine dramatic series of Greyfriars stories appearing in our companion paper, "The Magnet." The

central figure is Bob Cherry, and poor old Bob, who is as much fitted for "swotting" as an elephant is for tight-rope walking, becomes a regular outsider in his Form because, at the request of his father, he gives up the time he usually devoted to footer to mugging Latin. Doesn't seem sufficient reason for Bob to get the cold shoulder everywhere, does it? But sufficient reason is given in this week's fine story to convince you that Bob Cherry is indeed "The Ishmael of the Form." Remember that title, and ask your newsagent for a copy of this week's "Magnet" to-day.

### KEEPING WHITE MICE.

I am indebted to "W. H. H.," of Gateshead-on-Tyne, for the following information regarding the keeping of white mice which may prove of interest to some of my readers.

### White and Other Mice.

White mice try to keep their cages clean, but without their master's help they cannot do so.

The cage should be divided into two apartments—a sleeping apartment and a day apartment. In the sleeping apartment sawdust should be sprinkled.

Food.—After cleaning the cage out a few beans and peas and a lettuce leaf should be given occasionally. A few pieces of bread sopped in milk should be given, but no cheese.

Mice should not be paired till twelve days old. Before delivering her young the doe should be given some cotton-wool to make a nest. She goes twelve days with young, and must not be touched during that time.

When the young appear some bran should be sprinkled over the sawdust, which serves a double purpose. The young mice will eat some, and the rest will serve to absorb moisture.

Bedding of hay should be provided in the sleeping apartment and renewed every day. The mice should have plenty of fresh air if they are to thrive. If well looked after they are a source of endless amusement.

### A CURE FOR CHILBLAINS.

G. E. S. wishes for a cure for chilblains. The following recipe may be of use to him. If the chilblains are in the first stages they should be well rubbed with spirit of rosemary, five parts; spirits of wine or spirits of turpentine, seven parts, used cold.

If ulcers form on the chilblains they should be poulticed with bread and water for a day, and then dressed with calamine cerate.

### FOR NEXT WEDNESDAY :

### "A SPLIT IN THE SCHOOL!"

By Martin Clifford.


An extra-long complete story of St. Jim's, with Jack Blake, Tom Merry, and Aubrey Racker well to the fore. Mind you read it, chums!

### "WHITE EAGLE!"

By Arthur Patterson.

Another ripping instalment of this serial story which will be well received, I'll wager. Look out for it. And don't forget those Tuck Hampers, boys. Cheerio,

YOUR EDITOR.



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FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

SEEING THINGS! Do the inhabitants of the moon—if any—eat rabbit pie? Do they wear Eton jackets? At any rate, these are the remarkable phenomena Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sees through—



# SKIMPOLE'S TELESCOPE!

An Amazing Long Complete Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, featuring Herbert Skimpole—Astronomer!

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD

## CHAPTER 1. Gussy is Too Good!

**T**AP!  
 "Wacke!"  
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form, tapped at the door of Racke's study in the Shell passage, and called.  
 He turned the handle, but the door did not open.  
 "Wacke!" repeated Arthur Augustus.  
 There was no reply from the study. If Aubrey Racke, of the Shell, was there, he did not seem disposed to take heed of the swell of St. Jim's.  
 Tap!  
 "Wacke!" said Arthur Augustus, for the third time.  
 "Weally, Wacke, you had better open the door."  
 "Oh, buzz off!" came Racke's voice at last, gruffly.  
 "Weally, Wacke—"  
 "Hook it! You're not wanted in this study."  
 "You uttah wottah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I should wufuse to entah your wotten studay undah any circumstances whatevah. I am perfectly well awah, Wacke, why your door is locked. You are smokin', and playin' bankah with Cwooke."  
 "Cut off!"  
 "Yes, cut off, D'Arcy!" came in Crooke's voice. "You're interrupting, you know. Cheese it and cut!"  
 "Weally, Cwooke—"  
 "Oh, go and eat coke!"  
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy breathed hard. But he did not cut off. It was very unusual for Gussy of the Fourth to have anything to say to Aubrey Racke, the black sheep of the Shell at St. Jim's. Usually, when Gussy came in contact with Racke, he passed him with lofty disregard, heedless of his unpleasant existence. But now he seemed particularly keen to speak to Racke—a keenness that was not at all shared by the blackguard of the Shell.  
 Knock!  
 D'Arcy's knuckles smote again on the locked door.  
 There was an angry exclamation in Study No. 7.  
 "Will you clear off?" shouted Racke. "What the merry thump are you botherin' me for? Can't you let a fellow alone?"  
 "Yaas, wathah! But—"  
 "Hook it, you ass!"  
 "You are playin' cards in this studay. Wacke—"  
 "Mind your own business. Take your sermons along to Tom Merry's study—he likes them."  
 "Weally, you wottah—"  
 "By gad! If you don't buzz off, I'll come to you with a cricket bat!" exclaimed the exasperated Racke.  
 "If you will open the door, Wacke—"  
 "Ring off!"  
 "I have somethin' to tell you—"

"Tell it to somebody else, then," retorted Racke. "I don't want to hear about your new waistcoat, or your latest necktie."  
 "Ha, ha, ha!" came from Gerald Crooke.  
 "It is wathah important to you, Wacke."  
 "Rats!"  
 "If you will not open the door—"  
 "Well, I won't!"  
 "You will be sowwy, Wacke. I have come heah to give you a warnin'—"  
 "Give it to somebody else, Cut off!"  
 "Yes, cut off, old bean!" chuckled Crooke. "Here endeth the first lesson, you know!"  
 "Bai Jove!"  
 The door of Study No. 9, further along the Shell passage, was open, and from that study Skimpole of the Shell blinked out through his big spectacles.  
 "Is that you, D'Arcy?" asked Skimpole genially. "Step into my study, my dear fellow. I'm glad to see you—"  
 "I am twyin' to speak to Wacke," said Arthur Augustus. "It is aw'ly important, and he has his door locked, and wufuses to open it."  
 Skimpole shook his head.  
 "I am afraid that Racke is engaged upon his usual surreptitious and disreputable occupations, my dear D'Arcy." Skimpole of the Shell was a learned youth, and he never used a short word if a long one would do. "You had better leave him to his own disreputable devices, and step into my study. Talbot and Gore have gone out, and I should really like a little chat on the subject of my astronomical investigations. Dear me! What are you grinning at, my dear D'Arcy?"  
 Arthur Augustus could not help grinning.  
 Skimpole was an extremely learned fellow; his bulging brain was simply stacked with all sorts of abstruse knowledge. What he did not know about entomology and conchology was not worth knowing. Skimpole was always willing, indeed, eager, to impart his knowledge to less learned fellows—but somehow or other, fellows did not seem so willing to have it imparted to them. Gore, of the Shell, was accustomed to tell Skimmy to shut up immediately he began; and Talbot, who was rather more polite, generally had a pressing engagement elsewhere when Skimpole got going. If Skimpole was in a mood for a little chat, Gussy was not surprised to hear that his study-mates had gone out. He would have been surprised to hear that they hadn't.  
 "I do not see anything of a comic nature in my observations, my dear D'Arcy," said Skimpole, with a perplexed look. "I am at a loss to account for your amusement. I have lately taken up astronomy as a study, and I can assure you that it is a subject of transcendent interest. The investigation of the illimitable regions of the ether—"  
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"Oh, deah!"

"Pray step into my study," said Skimpole cordially. "I really should enjoy a talk with you, D'Arcy. Every other fellow I have asked seems to be busily occupied this afternoon—dear me, you are grinning again! Is it possible that there is some unconscious and unintentional humour in my observations upon a serious subject?"

"Thanks vevy much, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, with a chuckle, "but I weally have got to speak to Wacke." He knocked at the door of Study No. 7 again.

"Will you hook it before I come out with a cricket bat?" roared Aubrey Racke.

"Weally, you wottah—"

"My dear D'Arcy, Racke does not seem really anxious for your company," said Skimpole. "I, on the other hand—"

"Yaas, but I feel bound to give him a warnin'," said Arthur Augustus. "Wacke is a fwrightful wottah, and a disgwace to St. Jim's, and I would not touch him with a barge-pole, of course. But I do not want to see him flogged, though he deserves it for his wotten conduct. I am goin' to warn him that a pwefect is comin' up to his study. It would be howwid for Wacke if Kildare of the Sixth caught him smokin' and playin' bankah—"

There was a startled exclamation in Racke's study. D'Arcy's words were audible in the room, and they caused quite a change in the mood of Aubrey Racke and Gerald Crooke.

"Great pip! Kildare's comin'!" ejaculated Crooke.

"Oh gad!" gasped Racke. "D'Arcy, you silly owl—"

"Weally, Wacke—"

"Why couldn't you tell us before, you howlin' ass?" roared Racke. "You blitherin' chump—"

"I was twyin' to tell you, Wacke," answered Arthur Augustus indignantly. "You are not worth savin' f'rom a floggin', but I thought I would dwop in and give you the tip that Kildare was comin'— Ow! Wow! Yawwooh!"

The swell of St. Jim's broke off, with a wild howl, as a finger and thumb fastened upon his noble ear from behind. He spun round, yelling.

Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, had come along from the staircase; and he had arrived on the scene at an unfortunate moment for Arthur Augustus.

"Ow! Wow! Welease, my yah!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Ow, wow!"

"You young rascal!"

"Weally, Kildare—"

"So you came along to warn Racke that I was coming, did you?" demanded the Sixth-Former.

"Ow! Yaas! I thought it was up to me to tip him a warnin', you know," gasped Arthur Augustus. "Ow, wow! Leggo my yah!"

Instead of letting go Gussy's noble ear, the pwefect gave it a twist that elicited a frantic howl from the swell of St. Jim's.

"Now cut!" he said gruffly.

"Oh, ewikey!"

Arthur Augustus cut; probably regretting that he had come up to the Shell passage to tip Racke that good-natured warning. And Kildare turned to the door of Study No. 7 with a frowning brow and knocked on it with a heavy knock.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Unexpected!

**T**OM MERRY jumped.

Really, it was enough to make any fellow jump.

Tom Merry was leaning idly against a stone buttress on the wall of the School House. Manners and Lowther, with their hands in their pockets, stood before him. The Terrible Three of the Shell were chatting.

It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and as there was no match on, Tom Merry's idea was to pick sides for a game to fill up the afternoon. Manners' idea was to take a quiet ramble through the woods around the school, and take a few photographs with his celebrated camera. Monty Lowther's idea was to drop in at the New House and jape Figgins & Co. of that House.

So the three inseparable chums were arguing the matter, when all of a sudden came the surprising incident that made Tom Merry jump.

Something smote him on the head.

It was a cardboard box; not a very heavy object in itself, but as it came whizzing down from a good height, and as Tom's head was protected only by a cap, the falling object landed with rather a hard knock.

No wonder Tom jumped.

Above him, as he leaned on the buttress, were a good many windows; but naturally he had not supposed that

fellows would be throwing things out of those windows. It was quite an unusual happening.

"Ow!" ejaculated Tom.

The cardboard box burst on Tom's unfortunate head, and its contents were scattered round the Terrible Three. There was quite a rain of cigarettes. Cigarettes flew to right and left, almost as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa of old.

Tom rubbed his head.

"What the merry thump—" he exclaimed.

"Great pip!" said Manners. "What the dickens—"

"Somebody offering us a smoke in a rather informal way!" grinned Monty Lowther. "But who—and what—" Lowther turned his face upward to stare at the windows of the Shell studies, which were high above.

The next moment he roared.

Another object came whizzing down; and it landed on Monty's upturned nose.

"Whooooop!" roared Lowther.

It was a little leather box this time, and this box did not come open; it was fastened with a catch. But it was much heavier than the cigarette-box. It rolled from Lowther's nose to the ground, and Monty clasped his injured nose and yelled.

"Oh dear! Ow, wow! My nose! Oh crumbs!"

"What thumping idiot is chucking things out of the window?" exclaimed Manners.

He, too, stared up, ready to dodge, while Tom Merry rubbed his head, and Lowther caressed his nose.

Several of the windows above were open; most of them, in fact, the afternoon being rather muggy, even although it was October. No face was to be seen at any window; and it was difficult to tell from which one the projectiles had come.

Evidently some Shell fellow had dropped the two boxes suddenly from his window; why and wherefore was a mystery.

Manners picked up the box that had smitten Lowther's nose. He slipped back the catch, opened it, and looked in it. The leather box contained a pack of playing cards.

Manners grunted as he snapped the box shut again.

"Cards and cigarettes!" he grunted. "That would be Racke's study, I suppose. But what the thump is he chucking his cards and smokes out of the window for? Might have dropped on a pwefect."

"That wouldn't have mattered," howled Lowther. "Look at my nose! I believe it's swelling."

"I believe I've got a bump on my napper!" grunted Tom Merry.

"I'll jolly well smash Racke—"

"It couldn't have been Racke," said Manners thoughtfully. "He wouldn't be chucking his own things away like this. More likely some fellow larking in his study."

"He shouldn't have such things in his study, then. I'm jolly well going to punch somebody," growled Lowther.

"Bai Jove! What's the wow, you fellows?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth, came gracefully sauntering up to the Terrible Three. He turned his eye-glass upon them inquiringly.

"I was lookin' for you fellows," he said. "Blake and Hewwies and Dig think that a game of— Gweat Scott!" D'Arcy stared at the scattered cigarettes.

"Bai Jove! I am surprised at you fellows!" he exclaimed. "I was not awah that you fellows smoked."

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Ass!"

"I wegard you as a disweputable lot, and no bettah than Wacke and Cwooke," said Arthur Augustus sternly.

"Idiot!" said Manners politely.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Cheese it!"

"I wefuse to cheese it, Mannahs. They say that evil communications covewupt good mannahs, and appawntly you fellows have picked up this wotten twick f'rom Wacke, of your Form. I am shocked at you."

"You frabjous dummy," said Tom Merry, in measured tones.

"I wefuse to be called a fwabjous dummay, Tom Mewwy. I am surprised and shocked at you," said Arthur Augustus, with great severity. "I am also surprised at your wecklessness in dwoppin' your filthy smokes a'round you on the gwound. Suppose a pwefect came by—"

"You silly chump!" bawled Manners. "This muck has just been chucked out of a study window on our nappers?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Now do you understand, fathead?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! I am glad to see that you youngstahs are not pickin' up Wacke's wotten ways," said Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove! Wathah deep of Wacke to dwop



"I was twyin' to tell you, Wacke," yelled Arthur Augustus through the closed study door, "that you are not worth savin' f'rom a floggin', but I thought I would dwop in and give you ths tip that Kildare was comin'— Ow! Wow! Yawoooh!" The swell of St. Jim's broke off, with a wild howl, as a finger and thumb fastened upon his noble ear from behind.  
(See Chapter 1.)

the things out of his study window before Kildare could see them, what?"

"Oh! Is Kildare after the cad?" growled Lowther.

"Yaas. I heard him speakin' to Dawwell of the Sixth, you know, and I went up to Wacke's studay to tip him a warnin'. He's a f'wightful wottah, but it would be wathah sewious for him, you know. Kildare came up while I was there, and had the cheek to pull my yah." Arthur Augustus rubbed his noble ear, which still felt a twinge from Kildare's vigorous thumb. "I left Kildare knockin' at the door. I suppose Wacke chucked these things out of the window as the only way of gettin' wid of them in a huwvy."

Arthur Augustus chuckled.

"Fancy you fellows bein' just undahneath the window!" he said. "That is wathah funny, isn't it?"

Monty Lowther and Tom Merry glared at the swell of St. Jim's. With a damaged nose and a damaged "napper," they failed to see where the fun came in.

"Funny, is it?" snapped Lowther.

"Yaas wathah! Awf'ly funny, you know!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "Ha, ha, ha! Your nose looks wathah wed, Lowthah! Did the things land on your nose?"

Lowther glared at the happy swell of the Fourth.

"So it was your fault, was it?" he ejaculated.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"You had to butt in, and warn Racke, and get these things chucked out on our nappers—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" roared Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha! It weally is vevy funny, you know, if

you look at it in the wight way!" chortled Arthur Augustus. "You must have thought it was wainin' cigawettes and things! Ha, ha, ha! Oh cwumbs! Yawoooh! Leggo!"

Arthur Augustus, suddenly grasped by two exasperated Shell fellows, was up-ended before he knew what was happening. He ceased chortling quite suddenly; the humour of the situation was now lost on him.

"Leggo! You wuffians—"

Bump!

D'Arcy of the Fourth sat down in the quad. He sat down hard, and roared.

"Yawoooop!"

Handfuls of cigarettes were jammed down Gussy's noble back as he wriggled and struggled, and these were followed by the box of playing-cards. Then the Terrible Three strolled away, grinning, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gasping for breath, and making frantic efforts to extract broken cigarettes from the inside of his collar.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### The Benefit of the Doubt!

**A**UBREY RACKE, of the Shell, opened the door of Study No. 7 quickly as Kildare thumped on it—so quickly that the prefect did not even observe that the door had been locked. Thanks to Gussy's good-natured warning, the black sheep of the Shell had already disposed of the cards and the smokes in the study—they had been dropped from the window, regardless of what, or who,

might be below. It was the only way, with not a second to spare, and Racke could only hope that no master or prefect might be walking below. Having thus rapidly cleared away the evidence against him, Racke opened the study door at once, and Kildare of the Sixth strode in.

Racke and Crooke looked as innocent as they could.

The box of cigarettes, the box of playing-cards, were gone. They had had no time for more.

But there was a haze of cigarette-smoke in the study, and there were several cigarette-ends lying about. The black sheep had had no time to deal with these details.

"Oh, it's you, Kildare!" said Racke coolly.

"Yes!" grunted the prefect, with a stare round the study and a sniff at its aromatic atmosphere.

"Good!" said Racke. "Just the man I want to see!"

Kildare stared at him. As it was clear that smoking had been going on in the study, it was rather improbable that Racke really wanted to see a Sixth Form prefect just then. Crooke also stared at his companion. But he remained silent, leaving it to Racke to lie a way out of the scrape if that was possible.

"I've got a complaint to make," went on Racke before Kildare could speak. "Somebody's been smoking in my study."

"What!" ejaculated Kildare.

"You can smell it in the atmosphere," said Racke, while Gerald Crooke almost gasped, his breath taken away by his companion's cool nerve. "Look at these cigarette-ends, too! We found them here!"

Kildare looked grimly at Aubrey Racke.

"There's been smoking in this study before, Racke," he said quietly. "You have been caned for it. I had a strong suspicion that it was going on again this afternoon, and I came to look into it. And now—"

"Now I'm making a complaint, as I said," answered Racke calmly. "Mr. Linton has licked me for smoking, and warned me not to do it again, and of course I haven't."

"You haven't!" repeated the St. Jim's captain.

"Certainly not."

"Nothing of the kind, Kildare," said Crooke, taking his cue from his worthy associate. "I suppose it's not our fault if some cad smokes in our study while we're gone out?"

"We've got our enemies in the Form," said Racke. "A good many fellows would like to get us into a row. Tom Merry's always up against this study, for one."

"If you mean to imply that Tom Merry would play such a dirty trick as smoking in your study, you can save your breath, Racke."

"I don't say it was Merry—it might have been anybody," said Racke. "I know Blake and his friends were making a row some time ago about a fellow smoking in their study. Now somebody's played the same trick here. I think I've a right to complain."

"I think so, too!" assented Crooke.

Kildare stared hard at the two young rascals. With cigarette-haze floating about the study, and cigarette-ends lying about, the evidence really seemed to be overwhelming. Racke's rather peculiar line of defence took the prefect by surprise.

"I make a complaint to you, as head prefect of the House, Kildare," said Racke. "I think it ought to be looked into."

"It will be!" said Kildare grimly. "It's barely possible that you are telling the truth, Racke. I mean to be just. If you have not been smoking here, you will not be punished. If you have been smoking—"

"If I have, I deserve to be punished, of course, after the warning Mr. Linton gave me," said Racke meekly.

"Certainly," said Crooke.

"Turn out your pockets!" rapped Kildare.

"What for?"

"If you've been smoking, as I believe, you haven't smoked your last cigarette, I suppose. Turn out your pockets."

"Oh, very well."

Racke and Crooke turned their pockets inside out. Nothing in the nature of a "smoke" came to light.

"Very good," said Kildare. "I shall search the room. If I find a single cigarette I shall take it as proof that you have been smoking."

And the prefect proceeded to make a search of Study No. 7.

Racke and Crooke watched him in silence.

But for Racke's prompt action after receiving Gussy's warning, certainly plenty of cigarettes would have been discovered in Study No. 7, as well as a pack of playing-cards, which would have been more serious still.

But as the matter stood, Kildare had his trouble for his pains. Not a single unsmoked cigarette was to be found.

Racke and Crooke watched him, with grave faces. They did not venture to grin, much as they were inclined to do so.

Kildare gave it up at last. He was greatly puzzled. His suspicions were strong, and the evidence was fairly clear.

Yet it was quite possible that Racke was telling the truth; such a trick might have been played in his study by some ill-disposed fellow, and certainly there were plenty of fellows in the School House who disliked Aubrey Racke. Kildare put twenty minutes or more into his search, and he found nothing.

"I hope you are satisfied now, Kildare?" said Aubrey Racke, with great meekness.

Kildare gave him a grim look.

"I am not satisfied," he said. "But I'm bound, in the circumstances, to give you the benefit of the doubt."

He turned to the door.

"You get off this time," he said. "You may be telling the truth—I don't know. You get the benefit of the doubt, as I said. But an eye will be kept on this study, Racke, and I warn you to look out."

And with that the captain of St. Jim's left Study No. 7 and walked away to the stairs.

Racke grinned at Crooke when he was gone.

"What price that?" he said.

"A jolly narrow escape, though," said Crooke. "If that ass D'Arcy hadn't warned us, Kildare would have found the door locked, and then—"

"A miss is as good as a mile," yawned Racke. "I say, we'd better get out and bag the things I dropped from the window before they're picked up by somebody. We shall have to be a bit careful for a time."

"We shall have to chuck it, you ass. We've got out of this scrape, but Kildare will be watching this study like a cat."

"That's all right. We can carry on in the New House," grinned Racke. "We'll stick to Clampe's study for a bit, see? Clampe of the New House has been over here often enough. Now we'll give him a turn."

Crooke chuckled.

"Good! That will be safe enough."

The two young rascals left the study and the House. They walked round to the wall under the Shell study windows. The Terrible Three were gone, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy also had vanished. On the earth lay fragments of cigarettes, and the little leather box that contained Racke's pack of cards. Manners had thrown it down after looking at it. Aubrey Racke picked it up and slipped it into his pocket.

"Somebody's been at the smokes," he said. "I suppose the box burst when it fell. Tread 'em out of sight."

Then Racke and Crooke walked away cheerily to the New House. Their shady occupations were no longer safe in their own House, for a time at least; but Leslie Clampe's study in the other House was a safe refuge. Clampe of the New House was a member of the shady circle who followed the leadership of Aubrey Racke, and the precious pair were sure of a welcome there. Kildare's authority did not extend to Mr. Ratcliff's House.

A quarter of an hour later Racke and Crooke were smoking and playing banker again, with Clampe of the Shell as a companion. And Clampe's study in the New House was calm and bright, from the point of view of the black sheep of St. Jim's. But there was more trouble in store for the black sheep, if they had known it.

## CHAPTER 4.

### No Takers!

"OH dear!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy uttered that ejaculation in Study No. 6 in the Fourth.

Blake and Herries and Digby looked at him inquiringly.

Tea was over in Study No. 6, and it had been quite a nice tea. The golden sunset was deepening into dusky night. Three members of the celebrated study were feeling cheery and contented. But Arthur Augustus sighed, and said:

"Oh dear!"

"What's the trouble?" asked Blake lazily. "Thinking of prep? No need to worry about prep yet."

"What's the good of meeting troubles half-way?" asked Herries. "Worry about prep when it comes—not before."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Robert Arthur Digby, who was stretched in the armchair, with his hands behind his head and his feet on the table—an attitude of lazy comfort which seemed to agree with him that warm day. "Blow prep!"

"I was not thinkin' of prep, dear boys."

"Then what were you grunting for?" asked Blake.

"Weally, Blake, I was not gwuntin'—"

"Grousing, then," said Blake. "Worrying because Kerr of the New House knocked your topper off with a ball? Later on, we'll go and look for Kerr, and strew the hungry churchyard with his bones."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Dig again drowsily.  
 "I was not thinkin' about my toppah, Blake, though weally it is wathah damaged. I was thinkin'—"  
 "I knew you'd been doing something unusual, from your look," assented Blake. "It's given you a pain—what?"

"Weally, you ass—"  
 "Well, you shouldn't do these things," said Blake. "Members of really ancient aristocratic families like you, Gussy, should never think. It's well known that their intellects won't stand it."

"I wegard you as an ass, Blake. I was thinkin' about Skimpole—"

"Who's Skimpole?" yawned Herries.  
 "Bai Jove! You know Skimpole of the Shell—"  
 "Yes; I remember there is such an ass. The thumping duffer wanted to talk to me this afternoon about conchology, or astrology, or astronomy, or something of the kind," said George Herries. "I butted a hockey-stick into his ribs."

"Bai Jove! What did Skimmay do, Hewwies?"  
 "Sat down."  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Weally, Hewwies, that was wathah wuff," said Arthur Augustus chidingly.

"It's rather rough Skimmy buttonholing a chap, and jawing him blind," said Herries. "Let him keep it for the Shell. I hear that Gore chucked his entomological collection into the passage one day, and chucked his entomological books after it, and when Skimmy objected, he chucked Skimmy after the lot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Goah is wathah a bwute, Hewwies."  
 "Just that! All the same, I sympathise with him, being Skimmy's study-mate. Talbot stands it wonderfully well. But then, Talbot's a jolly good-tempered fellow, and can stand anything. I've seen him listening to your conversation quite politely."

"Weally, Hewwies—"  
 "But what about Skimpole?" asked Blake. "Don't say you've asked him to the study. I should be sorry to slaughter a guest within these giddy walls; but if Skimpole comes in, Gussy, there will be no alternative. Once his chin gets going, nothing short of that will stop it."

"Skimmay has asked me to his studay, Blake."  
 "Well, you needn't go."  
 "Unfortunately, I have pwomised to go."  
 "Hinc illae lacrymae!" chuckled Dig. "Hence these giddy tears."

Arthur Augustus looked round at his chums.  
 "The fact is, you fellows, Skimpole of the Shell is an awflly clevah chap," he said. "He knows all about a lot of things that end in 'ology.' He weads the most fwightful-lookin' books, with jaw-cwackin' words in them. He has taken up astronomy, you know."

"I know!" agreed Blake. "I've had some."  
 "It is a vevy intwestin' subject, Blake. Skimpole can tell you all the latest distances of the stars fwom the earth, and all that. He knows all about the fixed stars, and the movable ones—"

"The whatter?" ejaculated Blake.  
 "I suppose the stars that are not fixed are movable," said D'Arcy.

"I know there are two sorts, anyhow. It's a fwightfully intwestin' subject. Skimmay natuwallly wants to talk it over with a kindwed spiwit. Talbot and Goah do not seem to take to it, somehow, and fellows seem wathah shy of dwoppin' in for a chat with Skimpole. Somehow, I did not like to wefuse when he asked me."

"I know!" assented Blake.  
 "That's the sort of soft ass you are, Gussy. Bores take advantage of it."  
 "Yaas, wathah, I feah so," said Arthur Augustus. "But I have nevah wepwached you for borin' me!"

"Eh?"  
 "And weally it is only failh to let othah bores have a turn—what?"  
 Blake sat up and regarded his noble chum with a fixed stare. D'Arcy rattled on happily:

"The fact is, a chat with Skimmay about astwonomy ought not to bore a fellow. He's cwammed with knowledge, and it's weally worth acquiwin', you know. Skimmy doesn't specially care whethah I dwop in, so long as somebody does. How would you like to dwop in instead of me, Hewwies?"

Herries chortled.  
 "Not the least little bit in the wide world," he answered promptly.

"You may be losin' a lot of astwonomical knowledge, Hewwies."

"I don't mind, old chap."  
 "What about you, Dig?"  
 "Nothing about me," grinned Digby. "You're not palm-  
 ing Skimmy off on me, old bean."

"I was not exactly thinkin' of palmin' off Skimmay on you, Dig," said Arthur Augustus mildly. "I was thinkin' of lettin' you acquire a lot of astwonomical knowledge fwom him, instead of me, you know."

"Same thing. Forget it."  
 "Blake, old chap, I wondah whethah you would care to dwop in for a chat with Skimpole," said Arthur Augustus, turning his eyeglass inquiringly upon the chief of Study No. 6.

"You needn't wonder," said Blake. "I wouldn't."  
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked very thoughtful. In the kindness of his heart, he had consented to drop into Skimpole's study for a chat. Somehow, the prospect grew less and less attractive as it drew nearer. Skimmy's chats were lengthy; their length was in exact proportion to the powers of endurance of Herbert Skimpole's listeners. They were all one-sided, too; if a fellow made a remark, Skimmy did not hear it; at all events did not heed it. It was rather like listening-in than ordinary listening.

Heaps and heaps of knowledge were to be acquired from Skimmy, by fellows who had a taste that way. But undoubtedly there never was a rush to Skimmy's study of eager seekers of knowledge.

"You weally wouldn't care to go, Blake?" asked D'Arcy.  
 "Really and truly," chuckled Blake.

"Astwonomy is weally an entwancin' subject, when you get failhly into it," said the swell of St. Jim's seriously. "The distances of the stars fwom the earth, you know, are weally enormous, and worth knowin'. There is a star called What's-its-name, you know, at a distance of I-forget-how-many-miles fwom the earth, and the light takes, I can't quite wemembah how many yeahs to weach us. Fancy that!"

"Oh, my hat! Did you get that from Skimmy?" gasped Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Worth knowin', what?"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, I do not see anythin' to cackle at. Are you fellows suah you would not like to dwop in on Skimmay instead of me?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Quite sure!" chuckled the three.  
 "Then I suppose I shall have to go! Oh deah!" sighed Arthur Augustus, and he rose reluctantly from his comfortable chair.

Arthur Augustus left Study No. 6, Blake & Co. chuckling as he went. He walked along towards the Shell passage, but not with eager footsteps. He had told Skimmy that he would drop in for a chat, and Gussy was a slave of his word; if he could not find a substitute, he was going himself. But he was not in a hurry. The conversation of Herbert Skimpole would keep.

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At the corner of the Shell passage he came on Talbot in talk with Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther. He paused.

"Goin' to your studay, Talbot?" he asked.

Talbot of the Shell smiled and shook his head.

"No; Skimmy's doing his astronomical stunts," he answered. "I'm giving him a wide berth."

"I'm droppin' in for a chat with him."

"Bravo!" said Monty Lowther. "We'll come and take you home on a stretcher afterwards, if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's a fighbful lot of knowledge to be dewived ffrom a chat with Skimpole on astwonomy," said D'Arcy.

"If any of you fellows cared to go instead of me, I should not mind standin' out— Bai Jove! Where are you fellows goin'?"

The Shell fellows walked away to the stairs.

"Oh deah!" sighed D'Arcy again.

### CHAPTER 5. Astronomical!

SKIMPOLE of the Shell blinked at Arthur Augustus as he opened the door, through his spectacles, and grinned a welcoming grin. He was glad to see Arthur Augustus, and he welcomed him into his study. The swell of St. Jim's smiled his politest smile. He was for it, and it could not be helped now, and he made up his noble mind to endure it with fortitude.

"Trot in, old fellow," said Skimpole, beaming through his spectacles. "I am so glad, D'Arcy, to find that there is one fellow in the House with sufficient intellect to appreciate the acquisition of astronomical knowledge."

"Bai Jove!"

"Take a chair, old chap—not that one," added Skimpole hastily, as D'Arcy sat down. "Dear me! You have sat down on my astronomical chart, D'Arcy, and the ink is not dry. I am afraid that you have spoiled it."

Arthur Augustus jumped up as if he had sat on a tin-tack instead of an astronomical chart.

"Bai Jove! My twousahs—"

"Dear me! You have smeared it," said Skimpole, blinking at the chart. "You have smudged Sirius quite out, and I cannot distinguish between Jupiter and Saturn now."

"Is there any ink on my twousahs, Skimpole?"

"The ink is of no consequence, D'Arcy—I have plenty of ink. It is the state of the chart—"

"It is the state of my bags that I am wowwyin' about," exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Is there any ink on them?"

Skimpole blinked at the bags.

"Yes, indeed, there is something like a chart on the seat of your trousers, D'Arcy—you see, the ink was quite wet and—"

"Oh cwumbs!"

"You have taken quite an impression of it," said Skimpole. "I have no objection, of course, my dear fellow, to your taking a copy of my chart, but—"

"I have a vevy stwong objection to takin' it on my bags!" mumbled Arthur Augustus.

"It means the repetition of a considerable amount of painstaking labour," said Skimpole. "However, it does not matter."

"Doesn't it?" grunted Arthur Augustus, screwing himself round in a vain attempt to ascertain the precise amount of damage done to his hitherto spotless bags. "Nevah mind—go ahead."

Arthur Augustus sat down in the armchair, after carefully ascertaining that there were no more astronomical charts there.

Skimpole shook his head rather mournfully over his blotted chart, and laid it aside.

D'Arcy looked with some curiosity at Skimpole's telescope.

The genius of the Shell had an immense allowance of brains; his bony forehead fairly bulged with intellect. There was plenty of quantity, whatever the quality was like. But he did not have a very large allowance of pocket-money, and D'Arcy was rather surprised to see so large and evidently expensive a telescope in his study.

"A good instrument, D'Arcy," said Skimpole, with pride.

"With this telescope I am able to make very extensive investigations into the illimitable regions of space. I had some little difficulty at first in acquiring an instrument of which the cost was twenty-five pounds—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Several fellows declined to lend me the necessary cash," said Skimpole. "Although I explained to them that scientific investigation was a matter far more transcending in importance any mere sordid question of a pecuniary nature, they did not seem to see it, somehow. Even Talbot, who

is generally somewhat intelligent, and by no means parsimonious, declined to draw all his money from the bank for the purpose of purchasing this astronomical instrument.

"Did—did he?" gasped D'Arcy.

"He did, indeed!" said Skimpole, blinking at the swell of St. Jim's with the seriousness of an owl. "Why, I do not know!"

"Oh!"

"Fortunately, Blankley's Stores at Wayland have instituted a method of purchase which placed the instrument within my reach," said Skimpole. "It is called the hire-purchase system, D'Arcy. I am paying for this telescope at the rate of a pound every fortnight."

"I—I see."

"The first pecuniary consideration having been duly handed over, the telescope was delivered," explained Skimpole. "I trust that I shall be able to keep up the payments. It does not appear wholly probable, as I seldom have any money. I fear, too, that if the payments are not made, Blankley's may place sordid considerations of money before the interests of science, and may take the telescope away."

"I—I think that's vevy pwob," gasped D'Arcy.

"However, we must hope for the best," said Skimpole brightly. "Blankley's can scarcely expect me to withdraw my intellect from the contemplation of starry infinities, in order to solve so sordid a problem as that of payment for an astronomical instrument. Possibly I may borrow the money of you—"

"Oh!"

"Your gold watch, for instance, could be disposed of to raise the requisite sum."

"Bai Jove!"

"But never mind that now—these, after all, are mere sordid details, unworthy of consideration," said Skimpole. "Let us proceed, my dear D'Arcy. I have fixed up my telescope, as you see, at the window, to cover the section of the firmament which I am now investigating. I have already formed certain theories of my own with regard to the motion of the planets, and on the much-discussed question of their inhabitants. Perhaps you would like me to explain them to you."

"Oh deah!"

"What did you say, my dear fellow?"

"Oh! Nothin'! Wun on, old chap!"

Skimpole of the Shell ran on.

It was a warm evening, and the dusk was growing deeper. Skimpole did not notice that D'Arcy's eyes had closed as he leaned back in the armchair.

The drone of Skimmy's voice had a soporific effect on Gussy.

He nodded off.

The theories Skimpole had formed, though no doubt far and away ahead of any common or garden theories on the subject, did not keep Arthur Augustus awake. In fact, they lulled him to sleep.

But really that did not matter to Skimmy.

When he was talking, he liked to have the only chin that was in motion; he really did not like interruptions. He was always prepared to do all the talking; all he needed was a quiet listener. He had a very quiet one now. For nearly an hour D'Arcy dozed peacefully in the armchair while Skimmy droned on and on and on.

He awoke suddenly. It seemed to him that somebody had called his name.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "All wight—I've heard ewythin' you fellows were sayin'—I—I mean—"

"My dear D'Arcy—"

"I—I— Oh! Yaas!" Arthur Augustus realised where he was, and realised, too, that Skimmy was not aware that he had nodded off. It was very dark in the study now, only a glimmer of starlight coming on from the sky.

"I am truly gratified, D'Arcy, to perceive that you were so deeply absorbed in this enthralling topic."

"Oh! Yaas!"

"I trust that my exposition of the subject has been perfectly comprehensible to you."

"Oh! I—"

"If not, I should have no objection whatever to explaining the whole thing over again from the beginning."

"Pway don't trouble, old chap!" gasped D'Arcy. "It—it—'s as cleah as— as anythin'!"

"Very good," said Skimpole. "Now shall we look through the telescope, my dear fellow? A little practical demonstration—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus was a little interested at last. Looking through a powerful telescope on a starry night was quite interesting. He rose from the armchair, and bent his head to the lower end of the long tube.

Skimpole blinked at him beamingly through his big spectacles.





D'Arcy of the Fourth sat down in the quad. He sat down hard and roared. "Yawwoop!" Handfuls of cigarettes were jammed down his noble back as he wriggled and struggled, and these were followed by the box of playing cards. Then the Terrible Three strolled away, grinning, leaving Gussy gasping. (See Chapter 2.)

"The telescope is now directed at the moon, my dear D'Arcy," he said. "Although it is not, of course, so powerful as the instruments in the great observatories, I hope to make discoveries hitherto hidden from less intelligent astronomers. And deficiency of the instrument may be compensated by additional intelligence on the part of the observer. Certain traces and aspects of the lunar surface have convinced me that the moon is inhabited, and I entertain every hope of ascertaining unquestionable facts in support of my theory. What do you see, my dear D'Arcy?"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus breathlessly. "Do you discern anything that appears to partake of the nature of motion?" asked Skimpole eagerly. "Yaas, wathah!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove! I can make out a face—a weal face—" "A human face?" gasped Skimpole. "Yaas, wathah! Two of them—no, thwee!" gasped Arthur Augustus, in great excitement. "Thwee faces—gathahed wound a table—"

Skimpole trembled with excitement. "Extraordinary!" he exclaimed. "I have already formed a theory, my dear D'Arcy, that in certain atmospheric conditions, the eye of the observer is enabled to penetrate to an undefined extent into the illimitable regions of the ether. This theory is as yet unknown to the scientific world—for, after all, what does the average scientist know? Nothing! Undoubtedly these desiderated atmospheric conditions are in actual existence at the present moment, and you, my dear fellow, are privileged to be the first to observe the actual inhabitants of the moon."

"Bai Jove!" "What do you see now?" gasped Skimpole, hovering eagerly over the telescope, to which Gussy's eye was glued. "The thwee of them— Bai Jove! They are quite young fellows—boys, in fact," stammered D'Arcy, greatly excited. "They wear Eton jackets, just as we do at St. Jim's—"

"Is it possible?"

"Yaas, wathah! Now one of them is turnin' wound— Bai Jove! He looks awfully like Figgins of the New House."

"It is probable that the inhabitants of the lunar world, D'Arcy, bear a close resemblance to the inhabitants of our earth," said Skimpole. "Let me see, my dear chap—let me see—should the atmospheric conditions change, the observation may be lost—"

"Wait a minute—"

"Please let me look—"

"Oh, vevy well!"

D'Arcy raised his head as Skimpole lowered his mighty brain.

Crash!

The back of D'Arcy's noble napper came into violent contact with the bulging forehead of the St. Jim's astronomer.

"Yawwoop!"

"Ow! Wow! Oh!"

And two juniors sat down suddenly on the floor, clasping their heads in anguish and seeing more stars than the most successful astronomer ever saw through the most powerful of telescopes.

#### CHAPTER 6. The Men in the Moon!

**T**OM MERRY stopped at the door of Skimpole's study and threw it open. Manners and Lowther stopped with him. The Terrible Three on their way to their own study for prep, were quite alarmed by the sounds they heard proceeding from Skimpole's room, and they stopped to investigate. There had been a crash, a thud, and a combination of anguished yells, and the latter were still going on.

"Ow, ow, ow! You fwightful ass! Yow-ow-ow!"

"My dear D'Arcy— Yarooop! Ocooh!"

"You feahful duffah! Ow, ow!"

"Really; I cannot avoid regarding your action as being the outcome of illimitable stupidity, D'Arcy. Wow!"

Tom Merry stared into the study.

It was dark there; but in the moonlight at the window, he discerned a large telescope reared up, directed out of the window at the sky; and on either side of the lower end a junior sat rubbing his head.

"Hallo! What's the row?" asked Tom cheerily. "Anybody killed?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"It's Gussy!" said Monty Lowther. "Skimpole's boring him to death, and we've arrived just in time to see him peg out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy staggered to his feet, still rubbing the back of his noble head. Skimpole was a brainy youth, and the full weight of his powerful intellect had smitten Arthur Augustus, and the result was painful.

"That ass Skimpole—" gasped D'Arcy.

Skimpole picked himself up, caressing his bony forehead. His mighty brain had received a shock.

"My dear fellow," he said, "your inexcusable and extraordinary obtuseness in suddenly raising your head while I was stooping down to the telescope was the cause of this unfortunate and disconcerting collision with my cranium."

The Terrible Three chuckled. Evidently the two astronomical investigators had knocked their heads together at the telescope.

"All serene," said Lowther, comfortingly. "You've only banged your heads; and there's nothing in either of them to be damaged."

"Weally, Lowthah, you ass—"

"It is an extraordinary, but far from uncommon circumstance," said Skimpole, "that an individual of extremely limited intellectual powers is prone to under-rate the intellect of others. In your case, my dear Lowther, the deficiency of mental power amounts almost to imbecility, if you do not mind my mentioning it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But, weally, you fellows," said D'Arcy, his keen interest in the inhabitants of the moon reviving as the pain in his noble napper abated. "We have made a wathah wemakable discovewy. I have actually seen the chaps in the moon through this telescope."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Which?"

"I believe this is the first time that the chaps in the moon have actually been seen," said D'Arcy. "Skimmay says it is owin' to peculiah atmosphewic conditions that the thing is visible this evenin'. I suppose that is the only way to account for it."

"My only hat!" said Tom Merry blankly.

The Terrible Three stared at D'Arcy. Skimpole, on his knees at the lower end of the slanting telescope, already had his eye glued to it. He had forgotten the shock to his bony forehead in his breathless interest in the proceedings of the man in the moon. Skimpole had had great hopes, in taking up the study of astronomy, of making discoveries as yet unheard-of. But he had hardly expected to succeed like this, and so soon. Actual observation of the inhabitants of the moon was something very much out of the common—very much indeed. The atmospheric conditions must have been peculiar—very peculiar indeed—if they really allowed the proceedings of the lunar inhabitants to be observed through the telescope at Skimmay's study window.

"What the thump do you mean, Gussy?" demanded Manners. "Mean to say you can see anything in the moon that hasn't been seen before?"

"Yaas, wathah! Can you see them, Skimmay?"

"Yes," gasped Skimpole. "The view is amazingly clear. I can see three persons—three youthful persons. One of them is a very plump youth, and he is eating what appears to be a pie."

"You can see that?" exclaimed Tom.

"Yes, yes; with absolute clearness."

"In the moon?" shrieked Tom.

"Undoubtedly, my dear Merry. The telescope is trained towards the moon. I have fixed it very carefully—in fact, with the most sedulous care."

"This will be great news for the Astronomer Royal!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "They never see these things at Greenwich."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's look," said Tom. "I've looked up at the man in the moon sometimes, but I've never seen him eating a pie before."

"Pray take my place, my dear Merry," said Skimpole. "Your absurd incredulity will soon evaporate under actual observation of this astounding phenomenon."

Tom Merry knelt down at the lower end of the telescope, and applied his eye to it. He wondered what he was going to see—though certainly he did not expect to get a near view of the manners and customs of the man in the moon.

But he started as he looked.

Three figures, apparently in a lighted room, came into view—three figures that were quite distinct.

One of them was seated at a table; one, a rather long-legged youth, was standing by the table, and Tom could see his lips moving in speech; and the third was tucking into a large pie.

For a moment Tom Merry was amazed. As Skimmay had said that the telescope was carefully trained on the moon, Tom naturally supposed, for the moment, that that was so. But the next moment it occurred to him that Skimmay had got the direction a little wrong.

The long-legged fellow had features that were familiar to Tom Merry. Tom Merry had never seen the man in the moon at close quarters; but he had seen George Figgins of the New House often enough.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he roared suddenly.

"My dear Merry—"

"Weally, Mewwy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Tom.

"Do you not see them, Merry?" exclaimed Skimpole.

"Ha, ha! Yes! Figgins is jawing, and Fatty Wynn eating a pie, and Kerr getting on with his prep!" roared Tom Merry.

"Figgins! Wynn! Kerr!" repeated Skimpole.

Tom Merry rose from the telescope, and wiped his eyes. Owing to a little error in direction, the telescope was trained on a high window in the New House, on the other side of the St. Jim's quadrangle. It was in Figgins' study, over the way, that Skimpole had made his remarkable discoveries.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus faintly.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Skimpole. "The telescope is directed towards the moon, my dear Merry—just over the roofs of the New House—"

"Let's look!" chuckled Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners and Lowther looked in turn, and chortled. They could see nothing of the moon through Skimpole's telescope. But they had a remarkably clear view of the interior of Figg's study in the New House.

Figgins & Co., quite unconscious of the fact that they were in full view from a School House window, sat down to prep. The naked eye could only make out the window, across the wide quadrangle; but the telescope brought Figg's study quite close to hand. The observers could even make out the beatific smile on the face of Fatty Wynn as he finished the pie; they could almost hear the grunt of George Figgins as he sat down to prep.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus in disgust. "Mean to say I was lookin' at a beastly New House window all the time, you fellows?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"I—I thought one of the fellows looked like Figgins," said Arthur Augustus. "I mentioned it to you, Skimmay."

Skimpole did not answer. The expression on his face was one of blank dismay. His disappointment was great. Instead of a discovery that was to make the Astronomer Royal hide his diminished head, Skimmay had only been observing the manners and customs of three New House fellows in a New House Study. It was a blow.

"I wegard you as an ass, Skimmay," said D'Arcy, as the Terrible Three went chuckling from the study. "You told me the telescope was twained on the moon. It was twained on Figgay's window across the quad. I wegard you as a fozlin' fathead, deah boy."

"My dear D'Arcy—"

"Bai Jove! It's high time for pwep," said Arthur Augustus; and he retreated to the door.

"Hold on, my dear fellow—never mind prep!" said Skimpole. "I will re-adjust the telescope, and make an observation of the lunar surface. If the present atmospheric conditions prove favourable, I entertain not the remotest doubt that— D'Arcy! D'Arcy! Dear me! He is gone."

Arthur Augustus had fled. Skimpole shook his learned head, and proceeded to re-adjust the telescope, and at length had a full view of the moon sailing over the roofs of the New House.

Long and earnestly Skimmay gazed at the orb of night; but apparently the atmospheric conditions were not so favourable as might have been desired, for the man in the moon did not come into view. Skimpole gave it up when Gore of the Shell came tramping into the study for prep,

and put on the light. Gore stared at the St. Jim's astronomer.

"Silly owl!" he ejaculated.  
Talbot of the Shell followed Gore in, and gave Skimmy a nod and a smile as he prepared for prep. But neither of the Shell fellows desired to share in Skimmy's astronomical observations; both of them turned deaf ears to him when his chin began its almost-perpetual motion. Skimpole sighed, and made an effort to bring down his own mighty intellect to the level of prep; Mr. Linton, in the morning, had to be considered. It was said of old that a prophet is unhonoured in his own country; and certainly in his own study the St. Jim's astronomer met with a plentiful lack of appreciation.

CHAPTER 7.

Figgins Takes a Hand!

"TOM MERRY!"

"Fire away, old bean," said Tom.  
The rugged face of George Figgins of the New House, was grim and grave. On that sunny Saturday afternoon, something seemed to have disturbed the usually cheery equanimity of Figgins of the Fourth.

"What's the jolly old trouble?" asked Tom.  
"That cad Racke," grunted Figgins.  
"Oh, bother Racke!" said Tom Merry. "What does Racke matter?"

"Nothing at all," said Figgy. "But I'm fed-up, and I'm not standing it. I'm speaking to you as junior captain of the School House, Tom. It's not a matter for House rags, so I want you to have a hand in it, too, see?"

"In which?" inquired Tom.  
"I fancy something's happened to scare that shady outsider in your House," said Figgins, with a grunt. "I suppose you know his little games, as he's a School House man?"

Tom Merry nodded. He was very far from being unacquainted with the little games of the black sheep of the Shell; though, as a rule, he bestowed very little attention upon Aubrey Racke. He simply disregarded him, with a more or less good-natured contempt, and certainly he was not proud of him as a School House man. Still, he wondered what Figgins was worrying about. The shady

escapades of a School House man had nothing to do with the junior captain of the New House.

But George Figgins proceeded to explain.  
"The rank outsider seems to have had a scare in his own House," he said. "He used to come over to our House occasionally, to Clampe's study in the Shell. But now he's always there."

"I see," assented Tom. "Kildare nearly nailed him a few days ago, I remember. I dare say he's got the wind up."

"Well, Clampe's a bird of the same feather—they're much of a muchness," said Figgins. "We're not proud of Clampe. Still, he's as much a fool as anything else—not such a rotter as Racke."

"I fancy Racke is leader," said Tom. "The fellow ought to be bunked from the school, as a matter of fact."

"He would be, if the Head knew what we know," said Figgins. "Only we can't sneak, even about a rotten outsider, of course. But I'm junior captain of my House, and I think it's up to me. Every half-holiday, and nearly every evening, Racke comes over to my House, sometimes with Crooke, and sometimes alone, for smoking and banker in Clampe's study. It's getting altogether too thick. I'm not a fellow to preach, I hope, or to butt into things that don't concern me. But there's a limit."

"There is," asserted Tom.  
"It means a row, too, if it comes out," said Figgins. "Mr. Ratcliff may spot them, and it would mean a flogging for Clampe, and perhaps the sack. I don't want to see a New House man bunked from St. Jim's."

"Why not speak to him?" asked Tom.  
"I've spoken to him, but it makes no difference. I want Racke to keep clear of our House."

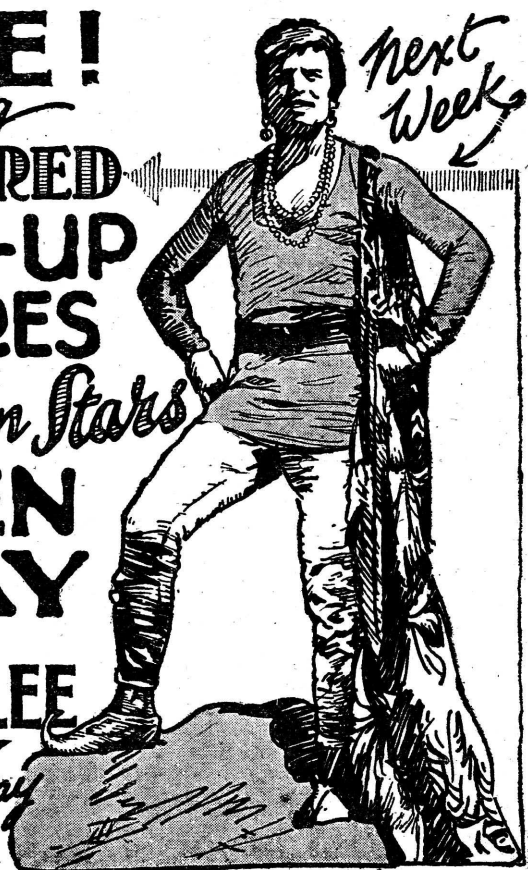
"That's all right. Kick him out next time he comes," said Tom cheerily. "Kick him hard, and give him one extra for me."

Figgins grinned.  
"That's all right," he said. "But he's a School House man, and it would mean a House row. We don't want that on such a subject, see? You're his House captain; I'm Clampe's. I think we ought to chip in together. Then Racke won't be able to make a House row of it."

(Continued on next page.)



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"Quite right," said Tom. "Racke's little games have been stopped in the School House, for the present, at least, and it's rather thick to carry on in your House. Next time he calls to see Clampe, give me the tip, and I'll join up, and we'll handle them together."

"He's there now!" growled Figgins.

"Oh, I was going down to the footer!"

"Come along to the New House first. If you'll root out Racke, I'll root out Clampe, and we'll make them play footer instead of banker. What?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"I'm your man," he said. "It's not compulsory practice to-day; but we'll make it so for those two shady rotters. It will do them good."

"Come on, then!"

And the rivals of St. Jim's walked away amicably together to the New House.

Tom Merry fully sympathised with Figgins, though it was seldom that the two junior House captains of St. Jim's saw eye to eye.

Since Aubrey Racke's narrow escape from Kildare, the blackguard of the Shell had been extremely careful—in his own House.

Indeed, some of the fellows had wondered whether Racke was treading the path of reform at last.

Tom realised now that the cad of the School House had simply transferred his blackguardism to the other House. Leslie Clampe's study, over the way, was now the headquarters of the black sheep of St. Jim's.

Naturally, Figgins did not like it.

There was risk of a discovery, and a disgraceful "row"; and as Figgins was junior House captain, it was very probable that his Housemaster, Mr. Ratcliff, would attach a good deal of blame to him if the thing came out. Apart from that, Figgy was very keen about the honour and good name of his House. The New House had its own black sheep, such as Clampe. That couldn't be helped. But Figgy did not see his House being made the gathering-place of School House outsiders.

Figgins was a good-tempered and patient fellow, and at first he had said nothing; but the sight of Racke butting into his House day after day had finally "got his goat," so to speak.

He was, as he said, fed-up, and he had resolved to put a sudden end to Racke's proceedings, in the New House, at least. And Tom Merry was quite ready to lend a hand in the good work. In the same circumstances, he would have taken just the same line.

The two juniors mounted the stairs, and went along the Shell studies in the New House, and stopped at Leslie Clampe's door. Figgins knocked.

"Hallo, who's there?" called out Clampe.

"I'm here!" growled Figgins.

"Cut off, then!"

Figgins turned the handle of the door. It was locked.

"Let me in, Clampe," he said quietly.

"Rats! I've got some visitors, and I don't want to add you to the number, thanks!" answered Clampe.

There was a laugh in the locked study. The unpleasant, jarring laugh of Aubrey Racke was easily recognised.

Tom Merry looked inquiringly at Figgy. He was prepared to deal with any junior of his House whom he found there. But in Figgy's own House it was for Figgy to take the lead.

George Figgins was quite prepared to take it. He had been rather a long time making up his mind on the subject; but now that it was made up, Figgins was quite determined. He rattled the handle of the door.

"Will you let me in, Clampe?"

"I've said no."

"You know that you're talking to your junior House captain, I suppose?"

"Oh, I know that! I don't worry about the Fourth, though," answered Clampe. "Go and play footer, and don't bother!"

"I give you one minute," said Figgins quietly. "After that I shall smash in the lock. If the row brings a prefect up here, that's your look-out. I've warned you!"

"Good man!" murmured Tom.

There was a stir in the locked study now. Crooke's voice could be heard in an alarmed whisper.

"Better let the cad in, Clampey. We don't want Monteith or Baker of the Sixth butting in. Old Ratty himself might hear."

The door was unlocked, and thrown open. Figgins strode into the study, and Tom Merry followed him in, and three young rascals round a table on which lay money and cards and cigarettes, stared at them inimically.

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## CHAPTER 8.

### Rough on Racke!

AUBREY RACKE had a cigarette in his mouth, and he blew out a cloud of smoke in the direction of the newcomers. That was to show them how little he cared for their opinion of his occupation that sunny half-holiday. Gerald Crooke looked rather uneasy, however, while Clampe was savagely angry and uneasy at the same time. Certainly no member of the shady trio was pleased to see the visitors.

"Well, what do you want, now you're here?" demanded Clampe savagely. "Butting into a man's study——"

"I want these two cads to clear back to their own House," said Figgins grimly.

"You cheeky rotter! They're guests in my study."

"They're smoky, gambling disreputable rotters, and they're keeping clear of the New House while I'm junior captain," said George Figgins. "And if you give me any back-chat, Clampe, I'll bang your napper on the table as soon as look at you!"

Racke and Crooke exchanged glances. Leslie Clampe breathed hard with rage. But he backed away a little. The weedy, seedy waster of the New House was not looking for a fistical encounter with so hefty a fighting-man as Figgins of the Fourth.

"You've no right to interfere in my study," said Clampe.

"That's rot, and you know it. You might jolly well get bunted from the school, and a pretty disgrace that would be for our House!" exclaimed Figgins hotly.

"Oh, rot!"

"Well, it's got to stop," said Figgins. "If it was once or twice, I don't know that I should chip in; you can go your own rotten ways. But you're turning the New House into a regular thieves' kitchen. Racke and Crooke, you can get out."

"Don't go!" said Clampe.

The two School House fellows eyed Figgins evilly.

"I'm not goin'," said Racke. "And if you rag us in this House, Figgins, you'll jolly well get it back from our side, with interest."

"I expected that," said Figgins scornfully. "You'd like to turn it into a House row. I leave those cads to you, Tom Merry."

Tom Merry stepped further into the study.

"I've nothing to do with you, Clampe," he said. "I leave you to your captain. Racke and Crooke will travel."

"I sha'n't," said Racke.

"On your feet, or on your necks, which ever you prefer," said Tom calmly. "I don't mind which. Take your choice. I can handle two seedy wasters like you two at the same time."

Crooke gave his comrade an uneasy glance, and then passed Tom Merry and left the study. His footsteps died away down the passage.

"Follow on, Racke."

"You cheeky rotter——"

"If you want to blow off steam, old bean, you can blow it off as you go. I'll come with you. You're going to change for footer."

"I'm not going to play footer, you fool!"

"You mistake; you are. You're going to have an hour's practice along with more decent chaps," said the captain of the Shell coolly. "It will do you good, and shake some of the filthy smoke out of your lungs. Get a move on!"

"Same with you, Clampe," grinned Figgins. "Football's the order of the day."

Leslie Clampe ground his teeth.

"It's not compulsory practice to-day," he said. "I'll be hanged if I will!"

"You'll be hanged if you don't!"

"Look here, Figgins——"

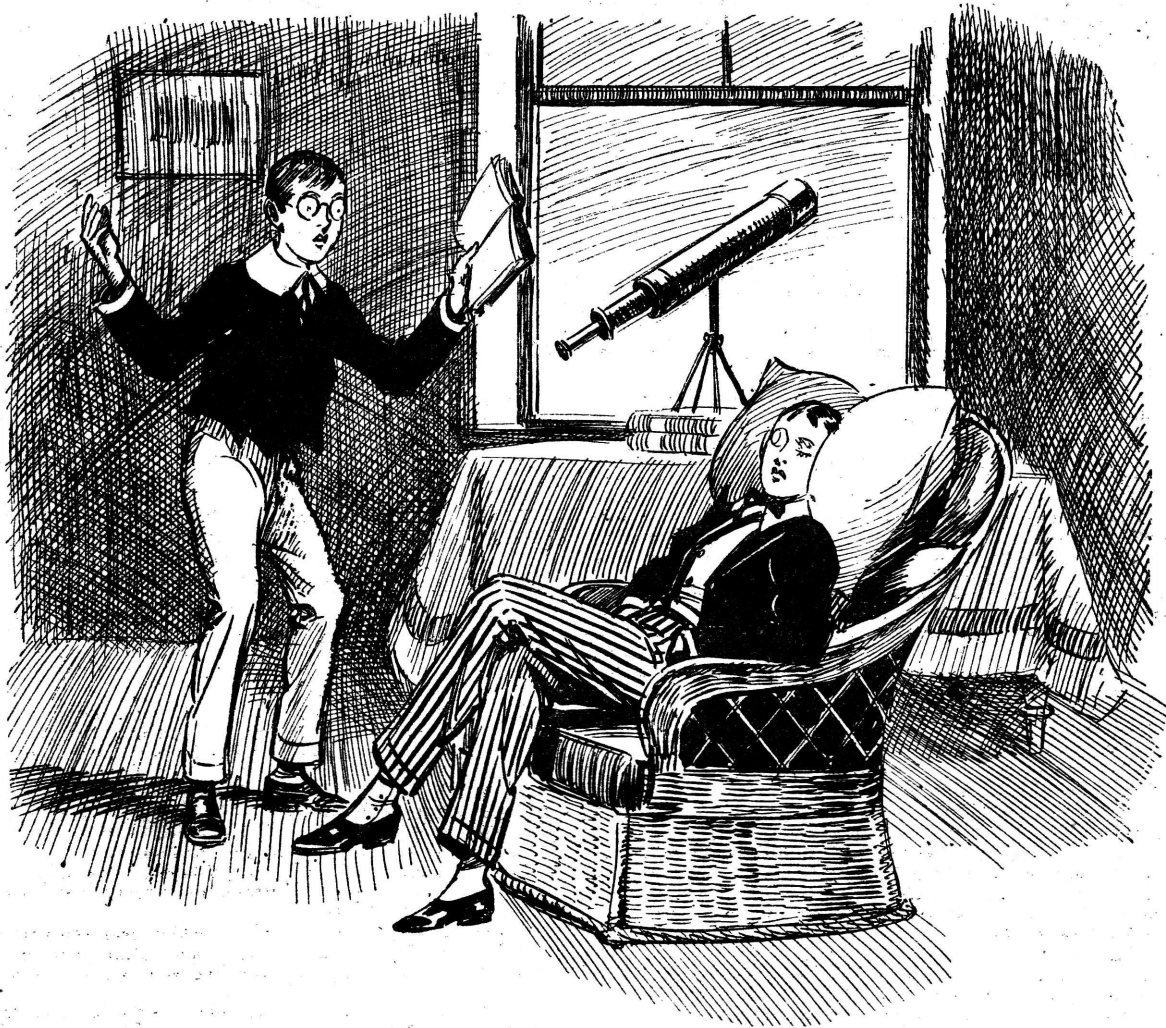
"Nuff said!" interrupted Figgins. "You're keeping me away from the nets with this palaver. Are you going, or will you put up your hands first, and then go?"

George Figgins put his own hands up, and advanced upon Clampe of the Shell. Clampe backed round the table—then to the door—then into the passage. With a face white with rage he tramped along the passage, with the grinning Figgins walking after him.

"I'm waiting for you, Racke," said Tom Merry politely.

"I'm not goin'," said Aubrey Racke, choking with rage. "Do you think you can order me about as you like, you meddlin' cad?"

"In this matter, yes," said Tom. "Figgins has spoken to me about your coming over to his House to smoke and gamble, and he has a right to ask me to put a stop to it. If I don't interfere, Figgins will, soon enough; but it's up to me as junior captain of the School House. I won't tell you that you ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself; you know that."



When Skimpole was talking, he liked to have the only chin that was in motion; he really did not like interruptions. He was always prepared to do all the talking; all he needed was a quiet listener. He had a very quiet one now. For nearly an hour D'Arcy dozed peacefully in the armchair, while Skimmy droned on and on and on. (See Chapter 5.)

"I don't want any sermons from you," said Racke savagely.

"I won't give you any," said Tom. "But if you don't get out of this study and this House sharp, I'll give you a thumping good licking."

"You bullyin' rotter—"

"Oh, cut it out!" said Tom contemptuously. "You know what you'll get if Kildare spotted you here, or Mr. Railton or Mr. Ratcliff. Are you going?"

"No!" hissed Racke.

"Then I shall shift you."

Tom Merry advanced on Racke, as Figgins had done on Clampe. But Racke was made of rather sterner stuff than his associate of the New House, and his fury gave him a little more courage than usual. His hands came up, and he faced Tom Merry savagely, hitting out.

"Go it, then, if you want it," said Tom.

And the next moment they were fighting.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

To and fro in Clampe's study they went trampling, Racke putting all he knew into the struggle. He was rather a bigger and heavier fellow than Tom Merry, and had he been in good condition he would have had a good chance. But the black sheep of the Shell was seldom in good form, and he was soon panting helplessly for breath, and his defence weakened. A crashing set of knuckles landed on his nose, and Racke went spinning across the study into the doorway.

He landed there on his back with a yell.

"Oh gad! Oh, you rotter!" he panted, as he sat up flizzily.

"Any more?" asked Tom cheerily.

"Hang you!"

Aubrey Racke staggered to his feet.

His nose was streaming red, and he dabbed it savagely with his handkerchief. He backed out of the doorway into the passage as the captain of the Shell advanced upon him.

Racke did not want any more. Very much indeed he did not want any more.

"Well, are you finished?" demanded Tom.

"Yes, you rotter."

"Get down to the footer, then."

"I—I won't!"

"Then you're not finished," said Tom Merry quietly. "I'm going to lick you, Racke, until you get along to the footer."

"Oh, you rotter!" panted Racke.

"You can take it as a warning for the future," said Tom. "I can't have my time wasted on a half-holiday rooting smoky cads out of the New House. I ought to be on Little Side now. The fellows are waiting for me. Get a move on; you're wasting time."

Racke dabbed his nose, and tramped along the passage to the stairs. He was boiling with rage, but there was no help for it. Savage thoughts of vengeance thronged in his mind as he tramped suddenly down the stairs and out of the New House. But vengeance had to wait. He did not intend to face the fists of the captain of the Shell again. Under Tom Merry's grim eye, in the School House, he changed for football, and walked down Little Side with Tom.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he spotted them. "Heah comes Tom Mewwy with Wacke. You're late, Tom Mewwy."

"I waited for Racke," said Tom, with a smile.

"Bai Jove! Is Wacke playin' on a day when it isn't compulowsy pwactice?" ejaculated D'Arcy in astonishment.

"Yes. Keen on it, aren't you, Racke?"

Aubrey Racke muttered something under his breath. He did not seem very keen on it; but, keen or not, he had to put in practice for an hour, with Leslie Clampe as a companion in misfortune.

When the practice was over, the two slackers slouched away from the football-field together, scowling.

"Now let's get back to your study and finish our little game," muttered Racke.

Clampe gave him a sour look.

"What about your study?" he asked.

"N.G. Kildare has his eye on me."

"Well, my study's N.G., too," snapped Clampe. "I'm not going to have any more rows with Figgins. Wash it out."

"If you're afraid of Figgins—" sneered Racke.

"Oh, chuck it!" said Clampe rudely. "Not so afraid of Figgins as you are of Tom Merry, and chance it."

Racke gritted his teeth.

"Then you don't want me in your study?" he asked.

"No more than you want me in yours," said Clampe sourly. "It's not good enough. We shall have to chuck it for a while, till those two meddling rotters find something else to thim; about."

"By gad!" Racke set his teeth hard. "I'll make both of them sorry for meddling with me!"

"Will you?" sneered Clampe. "What's the matter with your nose? Knocked it against Tom Merry's knuckles? Want to knock it there again?"

"There's more ways of makin' a fellow sit up than by punchin' his nose," said Racke between his teeth. "Lots of ways. We can put our heads together, and think of a way."

"Count me out," said Clampe, and he tramped away towards his own House, leaving Racke alone.

Racke tramped into the School House in a black rage. He tramped up to the Shell passage to his study. He was tired from his unaccustomed exercise on the footer ground, and he wanted a rest. Skimpole of the Shell met him in the passage, and peered at him benevolently through his glimmering spectacles.

"My dear Racke, your aspect seems to indicate that you have experienced some perturbation," said Skimpole.

"Oh, shut up!"

"Eh?"

"Cheese it, and let a fellow pass!" growled Racke.

"My dear Racke, I see no occasion whatever for this un-called-for ebullition of irritable temper," said Skimpole with mild reproof. "I was going to ask you, Racke, if you would care to step into my study—"

"You silly chump!"

"It would afford me considerable gratification to impart to you the result of my latest astronomical observations, and— Yarooooop! Whooop! Oh dear! Ow!"

Skimpole sat down suddenly as Racke thumped him on the chest. His spectacles slid down his nose, and Skimpole groped for them wildly, gasping for breath. Racke tramped into his study and slammed the door.

"Oh, my goodness!" gasped Skimpole, as he gathered himself up, gasping. "Oh dear! I shall certainly not ask Racke into my study again. Ow! He seems to be frightfully ill-tempered. Ow-wow!"

And Skimpole ambled away, still gasping.

## CHAPTER 9.

### Rotten!

"WOTTEN!"

"Your own fault," growled Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Come along to the gym, and chance it," suggested Dig.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy shook his head.

The state of affairs was indeed rotten, or, as Arthur Augustus described it, wotten.

It was evening, and on that special evening a boxing-match had been arranged in the gym; a foursome, with Study No. 6 on one side, and Figgins & Co. and Redfern of the New House on the other side.

It was quite an important affair, and a crowd of fellows of both Houses in the Fourth Form were going to see it. The New House Fourth-Formers were confident in a general victory for Figgins & Co., while those members of the Fourth who boarded in the School House were equally convinced that Study No. 6 would win all along the line. And it was exactly like Gussy, as his comrades agreed, to get an imposition at that very time, and to have to cut the boxing.

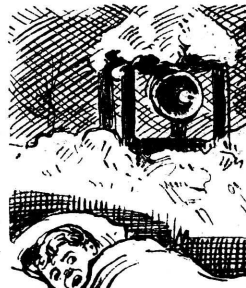
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D'Arcy had been unlucky. He had kicked Baggy Trimble of the Fourth. Every fellow in the House would have admitted freely that the more Baggy Trimble was kicked, the better it was for Trimble and the House generally. It was almost a bounden duty to kick Trimble.

But Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, did not see it in that light. Form masters had their own ways of looking at things.

Mr. Lathom had come on the scene while Trimble of the Fourth was roaring, and fleeing down the passage with D'Arcy's elegant boot helping him along. The swell of St. Jim's was fairly dribbling Trimble along the corridor, and the bellowing of Baggy was like unto that of the celebrated Bull of Bashan of ancient times.

Whereupon Mr. Lathom had called Arthur Augustus to order, and sternly imposed upon him three hundred lines, with the further order to repair to his study immediately and write them out, which was likely to keep Arthur



## CAMEOS OF SO THE RISING

When Taggles rings the rising bell  
On a murky winter morning,  
We quake to hear its solemn knell,  
Its rusty-throated warning.  
The frost is on the window-pane,  
And every prospect freezes;  
The slacker goes to sleep again,  
The early riser sneezes!

"It's cold!" says Manners, fresh from bed,

"It's perishing!" growls Merry;  
And Lowther's nose is flaming red  
Just like a ripe strawberry.  
And still the call-bell rolls and tolls  
On the keen and frosty air;  
It seems to say to lazy souls:  
"Defy me if you dare!"

Then big Kildare comes striding in,  
He's looking warm and cheery;  
"Turn out!" he orders with a grin,  
"I've come to wake the weary!"  
To Grundy's bed the skipper goes,  
While others watch him, quaking;  
He tweaks George Alfred by the nose—  
It is a rude awakening!

Augustus busy till time for prep, and completely washed out the boxing fixture.

"Isn't it just like Gussy?" said Herries. "He was bound to kick Trimble just when Lathom was coming round the corner."

"Weally, Hewwies, I did not see Lathom comin' wound the cornah!" said Arthur Augustus. "But had I seen him, I should have kicked Twimble just the same."

"Trimble would keep, fathead!" said Dig.

"Imposs, deah boy. Twimble was sayin' somethin' about my Cousin Ethel, a thing no fellow could stand."

"Fat little beast!" agreed Blake. "Still, you could have kicked him in the dorm after lights out."

"I felt bound to kick him at once, deah boy. He actually had the cheek to say that Ethel asked him to meet her at the Head's gate when she was stayin' at St. Jim's. He said it loud enough for several fellows to heah. I had no alternative but to kick him. I weally wish I had kicked him hardah!"

"You could have kicked him later on, fathead!"

"I will kick him latah or, as well, deah boy."

Blake grinned.

"Well, it's done now," he said. "But the New House men will be saying that you backed out of boxing Reddy."

"Wats! They must know that I should have licked Wed-fern all wight. I beat him a few days ago, you wemembah. What I am doubtful about is how you fellows will get on with Figgins & Co."

"Bow-wow!"

"I do not wegard that as an intelligible wemark, Blake. Pway put your beef into it. Figgins is weally a good man, you know, and Fatty Wynn is wathah hefty, though he's so fat, and Kerr is a deep card. You will have your hands full," said Arthur Augustus anxiously.

"Oh, you can leave those New House bounders to us," said Blake carelessly.

"It's feahfully wotten!" said D'Arcy. "Pwobably you will be licked."

"What?"

"And if I had met Weddy, it would have been at least one victowy for our studay, you see."

## SCHOOL LIFE! RINGING BELL

Between the sheets, so snug and warm,  
No fellow dares to linger;  
The bleak wind whistles through the dorm  
And numbs each foot and finger.  
Old Ephraim Taggles, puffed and red,  
Still tugs the bell-rope viciously;  
While luckier mortals, like the Head,  
Still doze and dream deliciously.

How jolly ripping it would be  
To "lay in" till eleven!  
With fags to bring us morning tea;  
Ye gods! it would be heaven.  
If we were granted such a boon,  
With rapture we'd be singing;  
But seven o'clock is much too soon  
To set the call-bell ringing!

The water's frozen in the taps,  
And all is cold and cheerless;  
But all the tough and hardy chaps  
Seem absolutely fearless.  
They dress themselves at lightning pace  
(Only the slacker straggles),  
Then down the stairs they grimly race,  
To deal with Ephraim Taggles!



"Ass!"  
"Weally, Blake—"  
"Well, you can get on with your dashed lines!" said Blake. "Just like you to bag an impot at this precise moment."

"Oh, just!" agreed Dig.  
"Gussy all over!" assented Herries.  
"Weally, you fellows—"

Blake & Co. left Study No. 6, leaving their hapless chum to settle down to three hundred lines from the Æneid. At the head of the stairs, Aubrey Racke of the Shell was loafing. He called to the three.

"I hear that you fellows are boxing Figgins & Co. in the gym presently," he said.

"You've heard aright," answered Blake curtly, and he walked on with his friends. He did not want to talk to Racke of the Shell.

Racke scowled.  
"I might give you a look-in," he called out. "When's it coming off?"

"Half an hour from now," said Blake, over his shoulder. And the three Fourth-Formers went downstairs.

Racke glanced after them with a sour grin, and then strolled along the Shell passage. He tapped at the door

of Study No. 10, which belonged to the Terrible Three. There was no answer from within, and Racke opened the door and entered. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther had gone to the club-room after tea, where there was a meeting of the Shell Debating Society, as Racke knew. He had tapped at the door only to make sure.

Racke was about five minutes in Tom Merry's study, and when he emerged he glanced this way and that way, like Moses of old, before he stepped out into the passage.

But there was no one in sight; the Shell fellows had not yet come up for prep, and the passage was deserted.

Racke walked hurriedly away.  
He was loafing on the stairs again when the Terrible Three came up. He gave them a sour grin as they came along.

"Not going to see the great doings in the gym?" he asked.

"What giddy doings?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Study No. 6 and Figgins & Co.," said Racke.

"My dear man, we don't take the stunts of these Fourth Form kids seriously," said Lowther. "The little fellows can amuse themselves without our assistance."

"Might give them a look-in, though," said Tom Merry, pausing. "No hurry for prep."

"Oh, come on!" said Lowther. "Too much honour for the Fourth—it will turn their infantile heads if we take notice of them."

Tom Merry laughed, and went on to his study with his chums. Aubrey Racke loafed on the stairs for some time, with his hands in his pockets, but he went downstairs at last, and out of the House. He looked in at the door of the gym, which was lighted up, and crowded with Fourth Form men. Blake and Herries and Digby were there, with Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, with Lefevre of the Fifth as referee.

Racke stared at them for a few moments. He noticed that D'Arcy was not with his comrades, but attached no importance to that circumstance—he was not interested in the School House fellows. For reasons of his own, it was Figgins & Co. in whom the cad of the Shell was interested.

Figgins & Co. were there, thinking of a boxing victory for the champions of the rival House; and certainly not wasting a single thought on Aubrey Racke.

Racke smiled sourly, and walked away. But he did not return to his own house.

It was to the New House that he bent his steps.

While Figgins & Co. were busy in the gym, Racke also was going to be busy in quite a different way—in Figgins' study. For many days had Racke nursed his vengeance; and now his hour had come.

### CHAPTER 10. Unexpected!

"MY dear D'Arcy!"  
"Oh deah!" groaned Arthur Augustus.  
Really, it was too bad!

Arthur Augustus was sitting in Study No. 6, grinding out lines for Mr. Lathom, instead of taking his appointed part in the boxing contest in the gym. That was bad enough; but it seemed that there was worse to come. As Shakespeare would have put it, "thus bad begins, but worse remains behind." The brainy forehead and big spectacles of Skimpole of the Shell loomed in at the doorway.

No wonder D'Arcy groaned. Missing the boxing was bad; grinding out lines was worse; but being bored, in addition, by the scientific genius of St. Jim's, was worst of all. Added to the rest, it was intolerable. Arthur Augustus was a polite and long-suffering youth. Fellows bored him as they never ventured to bore anyone else. But there was a limit. In spite of the manners and customs that stamp the caste of Vere de Vere, D'Arcy was powerfully inclined to hurl the inkpot at Skimmy.

Skimpole was usually deaf and blind to hints, but even Skimmy would have been bound to take a hint, if it came in the shape of a hurtling inkpot.

Arthur Augustus refrained, however. He expressed his feelings with a faint groan, and the inkpot remained where it was.

Skimpole blinked and peered at him.

"Are you ill, my dear D'Arcy?" he inquired.

"Nunno."

"I imagined that I heard you give utterance to a sound expressive of some kind of physical discomfort."

"Only bored, deah boy."

"Then you will be glad to see me, my dear fellow."

"Eh?"

"A little chat will relieve the monotony which has

(Continued on page 17.)

# SIX DELICIOUS TUCK HAMPERS AWARDED TO READERS THIS WEEK!

Do you know a good story, chum? Of course you do! Would you like a ripping Tuck Hamper? What-ho! Then send your joke along, as these other chaps have done. All efforts should be addressed: Special "Tuck Hamper Competition" No. 7, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

## HE KNEW SOMETHING!

The newly married wife was touched by the lamentings of the uncouth tramp. "Wait a minute," she told him. "If you are hungry I can help you." In a minute she returned with a tray of cakes. "These are home-made," she said, with a smile. "Take your pick." The tramp looked at the cakes doubtfully. "I haven't got one with me, lady," he said; "but if it's all the same to you, I'd rather have a piece of bread and jam!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to Reginald W. Edwards, 4, St. Annes Street, Grantham, Lincs.

## A READY RETORT!

A man came across two urchins fighting, and going up to them he said to the eldest of the two: "What are you knocking that little chap about for? You should learn to give and take." "Well," said the boy, "that's just what I did. I gave him a punch in the eye and took his orange away!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to W. E. Watts, 311, Cricklade Road, Gorse Hill, Swindon, Wilts.

Each Hamper contains:  
*An Iced Cake, Chocolates, Biscuits, Jam, Sardines, Honey, Sweets, Figs, Lemonade, Etc.*

## SOME BUS!

An American mechanic was describing to his pal an incident when trying out his new racing car. "Yep," he said, "I was touching thirty-five when one of them travellin' palace limousines came along behind. I went up to fifty and took another glim at the gol-darned car, and there it was sure slap at my tail, complete with nigger chauffeur in brown uniform with mother o' pearl fittin's. I hit sixty-five, but that travellin' bedroom wasn't left behind. Waal, I just opened out, and this little beaut touched ninety-five, when, believe me, that limousine came by me like I was standing still, and that chauffeur shoved his black face out, and said, sort of sympathetic: 'What's matter, bo—engine trouble?'"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to J. V. Watkins, 4, Frederick Street, Goole, Yorks.

*Owing to the interest taken by readers all over the world in this Weekly Joke Competition a Delicious Tuck Hamper will be awarded for EVERY joke published on this page. Cut out the coupon below while you are of the mind to win one of these NOVEL PRIZES.*  
Editor.



## COOL CHEEK!

Little Tommy wanted a pony very badly. One day while he was out with his father he happened to pass a field in which a young pony was grazing. "What would happen if I stole that pony?" inquired the little one. "Well," said the father, "you would have to go to prison." "Oh," said Tommy, "but you could look after it while I was away, couldn't you?"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to A. Waterman, 42, Hearnville Road, Balham, S.W. 12.

## HOW HE DID IT!

Father: "How on earth did you manage to tear your coat like that, Bob? Was it done at school to-day?" Bob: "Ye-e-es; I think it happened when I was—er—er—tearing myself away from my—er—studies!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to Miss H. Smith, 4, Bessborough Place, Victoria, S.W. 1.

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## NO NEED!

It was after a Junior League match in which the home side lost by thirteen goals to nil. Naturally enough, the goalkeeper was blamed for the disaster, and, overhearing that things were being said about him, he went straight to the captain and demanded grimly: "I say, did you tell Bill Bloggors that I was the worst 'keeper in the village?" "Good lor', no," was the reply; "I thought he knew!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to R. J. Murray, "Kerswell," Wexham Road, Slough, Bucks.

## TUCK HAMPER COUPON.

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## SKIMPOLE'S TELESCOPE!

(Continued

from

page 15.)

produced this undesirable effect upon your spirits," explained Skimpole.

D'Arcy smiled faintly. Evidently the ineffable Skimpole did not guess that he was the cause of the boredom.

"The fact is, I am wathah busy, Skimmay," he said. "I have to get these wotten lines done for Lathom before pwep."

"That is somewhat unfortunate, D'Arcy, as I was going to request you to join me in some astronomical observations—Why, you are groaning again, my dear fellow. You must have a pain somewhere."

"Oh deah!"

"Gore has knocked over my telescope," said Skimpole. "Both Gore and Talbot have declined to join me in the enthralling pursuit of investigating the illimitable ether this fine starry evening, and have gone to see some frivolous boxing affair in the gym."

"Eh?"

"Some foolish and frivolous boxing affair. Gore stayed behind a few minutes, to knock over my telescope. Gore is a very inconsiderate fellow. He seemed to think that there was something of a humorous nature in upsetting my instrument."

"I am wathah hard at work, Skimmay—"

"Yes; you mentioned that before, my dear fellow. Now, it is not easy to mount the telescope at my study window," said Skimpole. "Owing to a shortage of mere money, I have been unable to purchase all the apparatus required for astronomical work. Instead of mounting my telescope as such instruments are mounted in observatories, my dear D'Arcy, I am compelled to fix it up on a stack of books and things, and in these circumstances the adjustment to a correct focus is a matter of considerable difficulty. For this reason I should be glad of your assistance."

"Are you wound up, Skimmay?" groaned Arthur Augustus, his thoughts and his hand straying to the inkpot again.

"I scarcely perceive the purport of that inquiry, my dear D'Arcy," said Skimpole, with a puzzled look.

"Wun away."

"My dear fellow—"

"I've got to get these lines done before pwep!" howled Arthur Augustus. "You are wastin' time. Buzz off!"

Skimpole appeared to comprehend at last. It was not easy for his scientific intellect to grasp anything that was perfectly obvious—in that respect it resembled, perhaps, many more celebrated scientific intellects. But he could comprehend the meaning of a convulsive grasp upon an inkpot.

"My dear D'Arcy, if you do not care to leave the lines unwritten—"

"Cleah off, you ass!"

"Pray give me your attention, my dear fellow, and do not allow yourself to become excited," said Skimpole soothingly. "Although the matter is quite unimportant, in comparison with my scientific investigations, I fully realise that you do not desire to be subjected to castigation by your Form master. I will, therefore, help you with the lines, and then you can come along to my study and render me assistance in the adjustment of my telescope."

"Oh!" said D'Arcy.

"I trust, my dear D'Arcy, that that proposition meets with your unqualified approbation."

Arthur Augustus grinned and nodded. Really, it was quite a good idea. Mr. Lathom was a short-sighted gentleman, and on a good many occasions Fourth Form impots had been the work of many hands instead of one. It was no worse to be bored by the astronomical Skimmay, than by grinding lines—or not much worse.

"It's a go, old chap," said D'Arcy.

And Skimpole sat down to the table in Study No. 6, dipped a pen in the ink, and undertook a section of the Æneid. Two pens instead of one travelled over the paper; and the impot grew apace. Skimmay did not even talk during the rapid scribbling. This was not from merciful

motives; but because he was in a hurry to get back to astronomy. The sooner the lines were done, the sooner the genius of the Shell would be getting busy again on his hobby. So the two juniors worked in silence, save for the scratching of the pens, and for quite a long time Skimmay's chin had an unaccustomed rest.

The impot was finished at last. Arthur Augustus rose from the table with a sigh of relief.

"I'll wun down with this to Mr. Lathom," he said, "and then—"

"Then hurry up to my study, my dear fellow."

"Yaas," murmured Arthur Augustus.

The lines were duly landed in Mr. Lathom's study, and then Arthur Augustus' reluctant footsteps trod the Shell passage. Undoubtedly, Gussy would have preferred to get along to the gym, where the boxing was in progress. At least, he could have witnessed it, and encouraged his comrades by his presence. But a bargain was a bargain; he had finished his lines early with Skimmay's help, and he was bound to play up.

Skimpole blinked a welcome at him as he came into the Shell study.

He was already at work remounting the telescope at the study window. The long tube protruded over the window-sill, looking skywards.

"Weady, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, as cheerfully as he could, like a fellow resigned to his fate.

"Very good, my dear fellow. I desire to focus the glass on the lunar luminary—"

"The which?"

"The lunar luminary—"

"Oh! The moon! Yaas," said Arthur Augustus.

"As you will perceive, it is now rising over the chimneys of the New House," said Skimpole. "On a previous occasion we were deceived by an incorrect focus, inadvertently obtaining a view of Figgins' study instead of the lunar luminary."

Arthur Augustus chuckled.

"I do not see anything of a risible nature in that somewhat unfortunate misapprehension on our part," said Skimpole, in surprise. "However, to proceed. Pray kneel down at the lower end of the telescope and keep your eye to it. I will adjust the tube, and you will tell me when you get a clear view of the lunar luminary, and then I will secure it in position. You comprehend?"

"Yaas, wathah."

D'Arcy carefully laid a sheet of impot paper on the carpet for the protection of the knees of his trousers—a more important matter, to the swell of St. Jim's, than any astronomical observations, even than the discovery of a new star to add to the hundreds of millions already discovered.

Then he knelt down and put his noble eye to the lower end of the big telescope. Skimpole proceeded to adjust it.

"Now, my dear D'Arcy—"

"Yawoooh!"

"Eh! What is the matter?"

"Oh cwikey! You have jammed the beastly thing in my eye!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

"Dear me! Has it hurt you?"

"Wow! Yaas!"

"The momentary discomfort will probably pass away very soon, my dear fellow. It is a matter of little moment," said Skimpole. "However, I do not mind waiting while you rub your eye, if that will afford you any relief. Tell me when you are ready."

Arthur Augustus suppressed his feelings and rubbed his eye.

"Weady!" he said, at last.

Skimpole proceeded again. Arthur Augustus, taking more care this time to keep the telescope out of his eye, gazed through the long tube. Blackness met his view.

"Do you see anything yet, my dear fellow?"

"Nothin'."

Skimpole continued to adjust and re-adjust the telescope. Arthur Augustus uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Hold on!"

"Is that the correct focus?"

"I can see a light," said D'Arcy. "I don't think it is the moon, but—Bai Jove! Hold on a minute, Skimmay!"

D'Arcy stared through the telescope while Skimpole held on.

Evidently the tube was not sufficiently raised, for it was pointing at the front of the New House across the quadrangle, instead of over the roof of that building.

The Fourth-Form windows in the New House were all dark, the fellows being in the gym for the boxing-match there.

But suddenly a light had flashed in one of the windows.

D'Arcy had a fair view once more of Figgins' study in the New House. A junior had entered the room and lighted the gas. That was the sudden light that Gussy had seen.

With the light on in Figgins' study across the way, D'Arcy had a full view of the interior of the room, with the aid of the telescope.

To his amazement, he saw that it was Aubrey Racke of the Shell who had turned on the light.

What Racke, a School House fellow, could be doing in a New House study, with the owners absent, was rather a puzzle.

Racke had been a pretty constant visitor in Clampe's study there, but certainly he had no business in Figg's study; certainly he would never have ventured there if Figgins & Co. had been at home.

"The wottah!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "Playin' some twick on Figgay, I suppose. Wacke does not genevally go in for House wags."

"What do you see now, D'Arcy?" asked Skimpole.

"I can see Wacke of the Shell in Figgins' study."

"Dear me! We are wasting time!" said Skimpole peevishly.

"Hold on a minute, though. Wacke is up to somethin'."

Skimpole held on impatiently. He was not in the slightest degree interested in Aubrey Racke's proceedings in Figgins' study in the other House.

D'Arcy watched Racke cross to the window after lighting the gas. The Shell fellow drew the blind with a quick hand.

The study was at once blotted out from view.

Arthur Augustus grinned.

Evidently Racke was in the New House for a "rag"; and upon the whole, Arthur Augustus rather approved. Ragging the New House fellows was a better occupation than smoking cigarettes and playing banker in Clampe's study.

It did not occur to D'Arcy's mind, just then, that Racke was intending anything more than a "rag," such as often took place between the rival juniors of St. Jim's. He was not likely to guess the black and bitter thoughts of a mind like Aubrey Racke's.

"Go it, Skimmay," he said.

And Skimmay went it. The telescope was raised till it commanded a view of what Skimmay called the lunar luminary. Then it was fixed in position, and all was ready for Skimmay's astronomical investigations.

D'Arcy rose and shook out the knees of his trousers, and smoothed them carefully.

"That all wight, Skimmay?"

"Quite, my dear fellow. If you would care to remain and share in my observations—"

"Thanks aw'f'ly, old chap!" said D'Arcy hurriedly. "But I wathah think I will get along to the gym and see how Blake and Hewwies and Dig are gettin' on with those New House boundahs."

"If you really prefer to waste your time upon such frivolous and unthinking occupations—"

Apparently D'Arcy did so prefer; for he was gone before the learned Skimmay had finished.

Leaving Skimpole to watch the latest proceedings of the man in the moon, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked cheerily into the gym and joined the crowd of Fourth Form fellows there, in time to witness the finish of the boxing-match.

## CHAPTER 11.

### The Hands of the Enemy!

**F**IGGINS & CO. walked back to the New House from the gym, arm-in-arm, with cheery faces, in the midst of a crowd of New House juniors.

Figgins & Co. were quite bucked.

The boxing-match had finished, and on points the New House trio had had rather the better of it. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy attributed that result to the fact that he had not been present to tackle Redfern; in which case there would have been at least one sweeping victory to the credit of the School House, in Gussy's noble opinion. Figgins & Co. attributed it to the general superiority of their House. The margin had been narrow; but there had been a margin, and the New House rejoiced accordingly.

In the New House Figgins & Co. remained chatting with their friends for a time, fighting the battle over again; and then adjourned to their study for prep. It was, as a matter of fact, rather late for prep; and the heroes of the Fourth had no time to waste.

Figgins led the way into his study, groping in his pocket for a match as he did so. The next moment there was a howl and a fall. Fatty Wynn and Kerr stopped in the doorway.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Kerr.

Figg's voice came in sulphurous tones from the darkness.

"I've fallen over something! Some footling ass has been here japing! Wow!"

Kerr struck a match and lighted the gas, and Figgins picked himself up. Then, as the study was illuminated, the three juniors gazed round them in wonder and wrath.

The study had not been exactly tidy when they had left it. Junior studies seldom were. But its present state was not untidy—it was in a condition of havoc.

If a cyclone had struck the room during Figgins & Co.'s absence it could scarcely have done more damage.

Not a thing was in its place. Hardly a thing that could be broken remained whole.

The three juniors gazed at the wreck, aghast.

Evidently some determined ragger had been hard at work, and the outcome of his labours was almost unnerving.

The table lay on its side, with one leg wrenched off it. The looking-glass lay in the fender in three pieces. Ink and jam and other things soaked in the carpet, and splashed the walls. Broken crockery littered the floor, with smashed ink-pots and pens and torn books.

For a moment or two, Figgins & Co. were silent, their breath quite taken away by what they saw.

"My only hat!" stuttered George Figgins, at last.

"The—the—the rotters!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn. "Look—my pie—the steak-and-kidney pie we were going to have for supper! Smashed on the floor—trodden on! My pie!"

Kerr gritted his teeth.

Study raggings were not uncommon among the St. Jim's juniors; but there was a limit. It was an understood thing that no real damage was done on such occasions.

The utmost possible damage had been done on this occasion. The study looked as if some utterly reckless hooligan had wreaked his rage upon it.

"Somebody's got to pay for this!" said Kerr. "This isn't a rag—this is a rotten outrage! Who can have done it?"

"A House raid, of course," said Figgins. "No New House man would do it. Some of the School House cads came over while we were busy in the gym. All the studies were empty—it was a chance for the rotters."

"But who?" said Kerr, wrinkling his brows. "Blake and his gang were in the gym with us. Tom Merry's lot have been gassing about raiding us, but they wouldn't do a thing like this."

"No fear!"

Fatty Wynn gasped with wrath. In the general wreck of things, the ruined state of his pie was worst of all, from Fatty's point of view.

"Rotters!" he gasped. "Ruffians! Hooligans! Mucking up a fellow's pie! My hat! We'll smash 'em!"

"We'll jolly well give 'em toco, when we find them out!" growled Figgins. "Why, this means a new outfit of furniture for the study. Hardly a leg left on any of the chairs."

"Look at the clock—smashed in pieces!" said Kerr.

"Look at my pie!"

"Hallo! What's this?" exclaimed Kerr suddenly.

The Scottish junior's keen eye was roving round the wrecked study, in search of a clue to the perpetrators of the outrage. He stooped and picked up a handkerchief.

"Good!" exclaimed Figgins. "If that was dropped here there might be a fellow's initials on it—"

"Look!" said Kerr, pointing to the corner of the handkerchief.

"T. M."

"Tom Merry!" breathed Fatty Wynn.

The New House trio stared at the handkerchief. Evidently it had been dropped by the raggars; it was soaked with ink and sticky with jam. They knew those initials well—they had seen that monogram before, which was carefully worked into most of Tom Merry's things by the loving hands of old Miss Priscilla Fawcett.

"That does it!" said Figgins, between his teeth. "I half expected to see those chaps in the gym—now I know why they weren't there! They were ragging our study."

"The rotters! My pie—"

"It's too thick!" said Kerr. "We've had rows enough with Tom Merry's gang, but we've always played the game on our side. This sort of thing isn't playing the game."

"No fear!"

"Tit for tat!" said Figgins. "We're not letting this keep! I'm going over to the School House now. You fellows coming?"

"You bet!"

Prep, with the study in that state, was out of the question. Prep could have been done in another study, certainly; but the chums of the New House were not thinking of prep now. They were thinking of vengeance. Any ordinary rag they could have taken good-humouredly, to be repaid in kind at a convenient time. But wrecking a fellow's room like this was not a matter to be taken with good-humour. It was an outrage that had to be avenged; and Figgins & Co. did not intend to let the grass grow under their feet.

They hurried down the stairs, and but into the quad, with set faces.



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy knelt down and put his noble eye to the lower end of the big telescope. Skimpole proceeded to adjust it. "Now, my dear D'Arcy—" "Yawwooh!" "Eh! What is the matter?" "Oh cwikey!" groaned the swell of St. Jim's. "You have jammed the beastly thing in my eye!" (See Chapter 10.)

They fairly raced across the quadrangle. It was time for all juniors to be in their Houses; but Figgins & Co. did not think of that now. They intended to see the Terrible Three.

"Hallo! What do you New House bounders want?" asked Levison of the Fourth, meeting the trio as they came into the School House.

Figgins & Co. scudded up the staircase without answering, leaving Levison staring after them.

"Bai Jove! New House boundahs!"

In the passage above, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass on the New House trio. Blake and Herries and Digby—not yet at prep—stared at them.

"Time you fags were in your House!" said Blake. "You'll have old Ratty on your track."

Figgins did not heed.

"Is Tom Merry in his study?" he asked.

"I think so," answered Blake. "Time we were in ours, you chaps, or we sha'n't get any prep done to-night. What's the trouble, Figgins? If you've come over here on the giddy war-path—"

Figgins & Co. ran by, heading for Study No. 10 in the Shell.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Those New House boundahs are lookin' wathah excited. I suppose they haven't come ovah for a House wow at this houah."

"Looks like it!" grinned Herries. "We didn't punch them hard enough in the gym; they want some more."

"Let's go and give them some more, as they've come over specially to ask for it!" suggested Dig.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Blake. "Listen to that!"

From the Shell passage came a terrific uproar!

Crash! Bump! Yell!

Study No. 6 stared at one another.

"Sounds like giddy war!" grinned Blake. "Let's get along, and lend a boot to kick out those cheeky New House cads!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Blake & Co. headed for Tom Merry's study, towards which the terrific din was attracting a crowd of other fellows.

## CHAPTER 12.

### Something Like a Shindy!

**T**OM MERRY and Manners and Lowther were at prep, thinking of anything but New House raiders, when the door of Study No. 10 was hurled suddenly open and Figgins & Co. rushed in.

The three Shell fellows looked up in surprise. They were surprised to see fellows from the other House so late in the evening, and still more surprised by that unceremonious entrance. But they had no time to ask questions.

They had barely time to jump up from the table before the three invaders were upon them.

"Collar the cads!" roared Figgins.

"Down them!" panted Fatty Wynn.

"Pile in! Give the rotters jip!" roared Kerr.

Crash! Bump!

The Terrible Three of the Shell were at least a match for Figgins & Co. But the sudden hefty rush of the enemy fairly hurled them spinning.

The three of them went sprawling, right and left, and Figgins & Co. went sprawling over them.

They were taken so utterly by surprise by this sudden and terrific attack, that they hardly resisted for a minute or two. Crash! Bump! Crash!

"Oh, my hat!"

"Gerroff!"

"What the jolly thump— Yoop!"

"Give 'em jip!" roared Figgins. "Bang their heads! Knock 'em out, and then we'll wreck the study!"

"Yes, rather!" panted Kerr.

"What's this game?" roared Tom Merry, struggling in Figgins' grasp. "My hat! I'll jolly well lick you! Lemme gerrup!"

Bang!

Tom's head smote the study carpet, Figgins having a grip on both his ears. There was a fearful yell from Tom.

"Yaroooooooh!"

"Take that!" gasped Figgins. "And that!"

Bang!

"Yow-ow-woop!"

Tom Merry took them; he couldn't help it. But he twisted up on Figgins, got a grip, and whirled him over. It was Figgins' turn to bump on the floor, and the two juniors rolled over, struggling. Meantime, Lowther was wrestling furiously with Kerr, and Manners resisting breathlessly under the squashing weight of Fatty Wynn. Half a dozen dogfights all at once could hardly have produced the terrific uproar that raged in Tom Merry's study in the Shell.

Shell fellows from the other studies crowded round the door. Talbot and Gore looked in from the next room; even Skimpole was drawn away from his astronomical stunts. Racke of the Shell was the next who came along, and he stared into the study at the fighting juniors, with a malicious grin on his face. Aubrey Racke, so far, was the only fellow who knew the cause of the commotion. Racke had expected it, and he had come along to enjoy it.

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Talbot of the Shell. "Separate them, you fellows!"

"Oh, let 'em have it out!" grinned Gore. "My hat! What a rumpus!"

"A termination of this extraordinary ebullition appears to me to be eminently desirable," remarked Skimpole.

"New House cads!" exclaimed Kangaroo of the Shell. "Shall we lend you a hand, Tommy?"

"Keep off!" roared Figgins. "These cads have wrecked our study, and we're going to mop them up!"

"Bai Jove! They're goin' it!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, arriving breathless at the door of the study with his comrades.

"What-ho!" grinned Blake. "Go it, ye cripples!"

"You'll have the Housemaster up here at this rate!" shouted Glyn of the Shell. "Chuck it!"

Crash! Bump! Yell! Whoop!

The struggle in Study No. 10 was going strong! Furniture flew all over the room, right and left. Books and papers were scattered far and wide, and the dust rose from the carpet.

Seldom or never had so terrific a scrap been witnessed in a junior study. The crowd thickened at the door.

"What is it—a dog-fight?" drawled Cardew of the Fourth, coming along with Levison and Clive.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

## FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!

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"Stop it!" shouted Talbot. "You'll have Mr. Railton or the prefects here. Lend a hand, you chaps!"

"What-ho!" assented Blake. "Collar those New House cads, you fellows. They can't come kicking up a shindy in a respectable House."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Talbot led the rush into the study, and Blake & Co. followed him, and several more fellows. The excited combatants were so mixed and mingled that it was not really easy to separate them. Utterly ignorant as they were of the cause of the fierce attack, Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were wildly excited now, and in a fighting mood, and they were giving Figgins & Co. as good as they handed out.

But the School House fellows grasped the fighting juniors on all sides—some of them receiving a punch or two in the process—and at last the Terrible Three were rounded up on one side of the study, and Figgins & Co., grasped by many hands and securely held, were prisoners on the other side.

The din of combat died away. Six panting juniors glared at one another, and gasped for breath. Six noses streamed with crimson.

"Now, what on earth is this about?" exclaimed Talbot.

"Goodness knows!" panted Tom Merry. "Those New House hooligans rushed in here all of a sudden, and started. Let go! We're jolly well going to thrash them now we've begun!"

"Let them come on!" shouted Figgins. "Let go my arms, you School House cads! Let go, I say!"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"You dummy!"

"If you chawactewise me as a dummay, Figgins, I shall give you a feahful thwashin' myself!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus warmly.

"You footling chump—"

"Let us go!" bawled Fatty Wynn. "We're man to man, and those cads aren't going to sneak out of a hiding after what they've done!"

"Stand aside, you duffers!" howled Lowther. "I suppose we can lick these New House cads, can't we?"

"Hold on!" said Talbot. "You can't keep up this shindy. You'll have the Housemaster here. If you want to scrap, the gym's the proper place, with the gloves on!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Rot!" bawled Figgins. "We're going to lick them now, the rotters!"

"You're jolly well going to be kicked out of the House!" exclaimed Blake indignantly. "What the thump do you mean by rushing into a School House study like a lot of hooligans?"

"Kick them out!"

"Kick those New House cads out!"

"Yah! Funks!" shouted Fatty Wynn. "If we'd caught you in our study you wouldn't have had a crowd of rotters to help you."

"You fat idiot!" snapped Manners.

"Let me get at him!" shrieked Fatty Wynn, struggling; but Levison and Clive had his arms, and they held on, grinning.

"But what is the wow about?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Before you kick the cheeky wottahs out, let them explain what they are makin' this fearful disturbance for? What have you done to the sillay asses, Tom Mewwy?"

"Nothing that I know of," said Tom. "I haven't the faintest idea why the silly idiots butted in here!"

"That's a lie!" roared Figgins.

"What?"

"You know what you've done all right. And these chaps wouldn't back you up, if they knew what you'd done, you rotter!"

"Bai Jove! What—"

Tom Merry controlled his wrath. He realised now that there was some mistake.

"You footling ass!" he said. "I've done nothing that I know of. But if I've done anything, give it a name!"

"Oh, cheese it!" snorted Figgins. "I dare say you're ashamed of it now, but I suppose you're not going to deny it?"

"Deny what?" roared Tom.

"Wrecking our study while we were in the gym!"

Tom stared at the New House junior captain blankly.

"Wrecking your study!" he repeated.

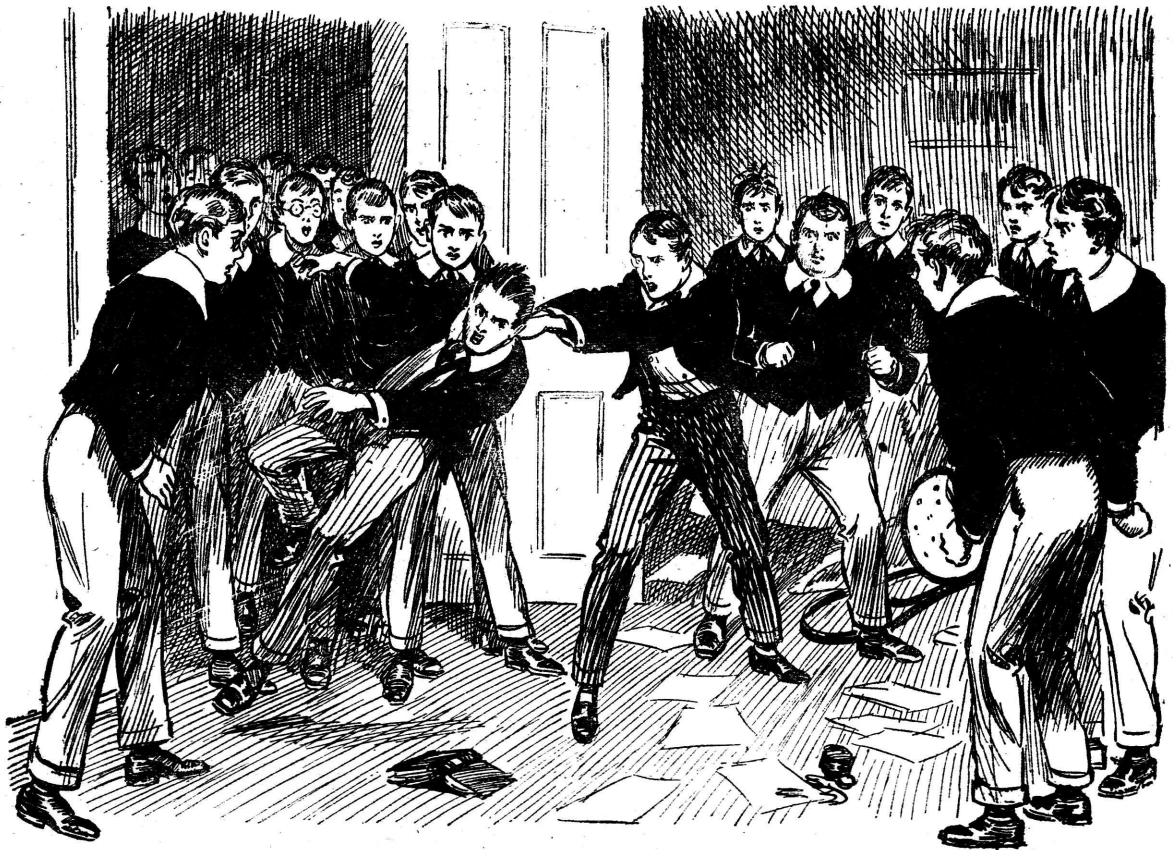
"Yes, you rotter!"

"You've been ragging in the New House, you fellows?" asked Blake. "Even if you have, that's no excuse for a shindy like this. There have been rags before, without all this fuss."

"It wasn't a rag!" hooted Figgins. "I tell you the place is wrecked—everything smashed up—even the furniture smashed—"

"And my pie—"

"Everything wrecked, and even our school books torn up!"



"Bai Jove!" It was a sudden startled ejaculation from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He stared round at the crowd at the door, and fixed his eyes upon the grinning face of Aubrey Racke. "Wacks!" he exclaimed. "Eh! What about Racke?" "Wacke's the wottah!" And before the startled Racke could back away, Arthur Augustus made a jump at him, grasped him by the collar, and dragged him headlong into the study. (See Chapter 12.)

said Kerr savagely. "That's not what I call a rag. I call it hooliganism."

Blake whistled.

"That's a bit over the limit, you chaps," he said.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You silly chump!" roared Tom. "We haven't done it! We haven't been in the New House at all."

Figgins gave a scornful laugh.

"Well, I was surprised at your acting so rottenly, but I never expected you to tell lies about it," he said.

"You silly chump!" exclaimed Tom, his cheeks crimson. "We haven't been in your rotten House, or your measly study. But we're ready to wipe up the floor with you. Get out of the way, you chaps!"

"Hold on," said Talbot quietly. "Don't be a fool, Figgins. If Tom says he hasn't been in your study, he hasn't been there."

Snort from Figgins.

"Then how does he account for that?" he exclaimed, holding out a pocket-handkerchief. "Whose is that?"

"Mine!" said Tom, looking at it.

"We found that in our study among the wreck," said Kerr. "It was dropped there when the study was ragged."

"By the rotter who ragged it!" hooted Figgins. "Now will you say again that you haven't been in the New House this evening?"

Tom Merry stared blankly at the handkerchief.

"It's mine," he said. "I suppose I must have dropped it somewhere, as you seem to have picked it up. But I never dropped it in the New House—I haven't been in your House since the day I came over with you to root Racke out of Clampe's study."

"Oh, draw it mild!" sneered Fatty Wynn. "That won't wash."

"Weally, Wynn, if you doubt a School House man's word—"

"Dash it all, it's queer," said Kangaroo of the Shell. "How the thump did your hanky get there, if you haven't been there, Tom?"

Tom laughed contemptuously.

"Perhaps the fellows who wrecked the study left it there, to make these silly fools think I had done it," he answered. "If Figgins really picked it up in his study that's the only

way I can account for it. Certainly I haven't been in his study."

"Oh!" said Figgins.

"Gammon!" growled Fatty Wynn.

But Kerr gave a nod.

"Our leg's been pulled!" he said. "You can't blame us, Tom Merry, finding your hanky there—after a House raid. But—"

"You silly chump!" exclaimed Manners. "Are we the kind of fellows to do what you say has been done to your study?"

"Well, somebody's done it," growled Figgins. "If it wasn't this study, we want to know what School House rotter it was."

"Find out, and be blown to you!" said Lowther, mopping his streaming nose. "Anybody but a born fool would ask questions before he started punching heads."

"Look here—"

"Oh, shut up! Get out of our study, and to-morrow we'll jolly well thrash you all round!" hooted Lowther.

"You're jolly welcome to try," said Figgins. "I don't half believe that it wasn't you, either—the hanky was there—and it was dropped—"

"Chuck it!" said Talbot quietly. "Somebody has done this to make a row between you fellows. You ought to try to find out who it was, instead of slanging one another."

"Oh, rot! It's too thick," snapped Figgins. "Want me to believe that some fellow ragged my study and left Tom Merry's hanky there to put it on him? It's too thick."

"That's how it stands," said Tom Merry. "Anybody who wanted one of my hankies could bag one—there's some here in a box in this study, for that matter. But you can jolly well believe what you like, Figgins. I'll make you swallow all you've said, and a little more."

"Bai Jove!"

It was a sudden startled ejaculation from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

He stared round at the crowd at the door, and fixed his eyes upon the grinning face of Aubrey Racke, of the Shell.

"Wacke!" he exclaimed.

"Eh? What about Racke?"

"Wacke's the wottah!"

And before the startled Racke could back away, Arthur

Augustus made a jump at him, grasped him by the collar, and dragged him headlong into the study.

## CHAPTER 13.

## Thanks to Skimpole!

**T**OM MERRY & CO. stared. Racke roared. The cad of the Shell came sprawling headlong into the room, overturned by the sudden grasp on his collar. He rolled on the carpet, and roared in wrath and astonishment.

"Wacke's the wottah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"What—"

"Gussy—"

"What the dickens—"

"I wepeat, that Wacke is the wottah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus excitedly. "Own up to it, Wacke!"

Aubrey Racke sat up quite dizzily.

"You silly owl!" he gasped. "What the thump do you mean? I'll jolly well lick you—"

The juniors stared at D'Arcy. Blake & Co. wondered whether their noble chum had suddenly gone off his aristocratic rocker.

"Look here, Gussy—" began Blake.

"Pway do not intewwupt me, Blake! That feahful wottah Wacke has done this," said Arthur Augustus. "Own up, you cad!"

Racke staggered to his feet.

He gave the swell of St. Jim's an evil look.

"You burbling dummy!" he hissed. "I know nothing about it. What do you mean?"

Racke spoke boldly enough. He knew that he had not been seen entering Tom Merry's study to purloin the handkerchief. He knew that he had not been noticed stealing stealthily into the New House. He had finished his ruffianly work and cleared before Figgins & Co. had returned to their House. Even if he should be suspected, there was absolutely no jot or tittle of evidence to connect him with the rag in Figgins' study. Even his pals, Crooke and Clampe, knew nothing of it—Racke had not breathed a word to his closest associates. D'Arcy's accusation came like a thunderclap to him, but he was quite prepared to brazen it out.

Figgins & Co. had calmed down now. Kerr's keen Scottish brain had grasped the facts at once, when Tom Merry explained he knew that there had been a cunning scheme to set the two studies by the ears. Figgins and Fatty Wynn were still rather dubious, but open to conviction, as it were.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy raised an accusing forefinger, and pointed it at Racke's sullen, evil face.

"That's the wottah!" he said.

"Do you mean to say that Racke wrecked our study, and left Tom Merry's handkerchief there to fool us?" demanded Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's a lie—a rotten lie!" snarled Racke.

"Bai Jove! If you venture to chawactewise my wemarks as lyin', you unspeakable wottah—"

"Go easy, Gussy!" said Blake. "If you know anything about it, cough it up instead of blowing off steam."

"Weally, Blake—"

"What do you know about it, Gussy?" demanded Tom Merry impatiently.

"That uttah wottah, Wacke, is the man," said D'Arcy. "I suppose he has done this in wevenge, because you and Figgins wooted him out of Clampe's studay, and put an end to his wotten games there."

"I dare say he would," said Tom, with a glance at Racke. "It's like one of his dirty tricks. But—"

"It's a lie!" snarled Racke. "I've been nowhere near the New House. I never knew anything had happened till I came here, hearing the row that was going on."

"Give a fellow a chance," said Crooke from the passage. "D'Arcy jolly well doesn't know what he's talking about."

"Weally, Cwooke—"

"Well, I'm dashed if I know how you know what happened in the New House, Gussy," said Herries. "We left you in your study doing lines, and then you came down to the gym."

"Yaas; but—"

"Have you been oyer to our House this evening?" asked Kerr.

"Not at all."

"You didn't follow Racke there, then?"

"Certainly not. I should not be likely to walk in the same diwection as that wottah, if I could help it."

"Then what the thump are you talking about?" demanded Figgins. "You can't know anything about what happened in our House, if you haven't been there."

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Do you mean that you saw Racke going over to the other House?" asked Blake.

"Not at all."

"Then what the dickens do you mean, if you mean anything?" inquired Cardew.

"Weally, Cardew—"

Aubrey Racke backed to the doorway.

"I'm getting out of this," he said. "I'm fed-up! If you fellows like to listen to that ass talking out of the back of his neck, I don't!"

"Stay where you are, Wacke—"

"Rats!"

Aubrey Racke sought to push out of the study. But three or four fellows blocked his way.

"Not yet, old bean," said Blake agreeably. "We'll have this out first. Gussy may be talking sense—he doesn't often, but he does at times."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Let me pass!" exclaimed Racke furiously. "I've told you I know nothing about the matter. If there's any bullying I shall go to my Housemaster, I can jolly well tell you!"

"Hold on, Racke," said Tom Merry quietly. "We've got to have this out. If you really know anything about it, D'Arcy—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Come to the point!" bawled Blake.

"I weally wish you would not wear at a fellow, Blake. I have mentioned a lot of times that I dislike bein' woared at!"

"You—you—" gasped Blake.

"Pway lend me your yahs, deah boys, and I will explain," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "Wacke says that he has not been in the New House this evenin'."

"I repeat it," growled Racke. "I'll sing it to a tune if you like!"

"He says that he has not been in Figgins' study—"

"And I haven't," said Racke. "If any fellow can say that he's seen me anywhere near the New House, or anywhere near Figgins' study, let him say so. I've been in my own House all the time."

"That settles the mattah, deah boys."

"How does it?" shrieked Blake.

"Wacke's denial that he has been in Figgay's studay is a wevy plain pwoof of what he did when he was there, you see."

"But was he there?" roared Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"How do you know, ass?"

"I wefuse to be called an ass!"

"You—you image—"

"For goodness' sake, explain, Gussy," said Talbot, laughing. "Where were you this evening? You've already said that you never went over to the New House."

"Yaas, wathah! I was doin' lines in my studay," explained D'Arcy. "Owin' to Lathom gettin' his wag out about my kickin' Twimble—"

"Yes, yes; but—"

"I kicked Twimble wathah hard, but he asked for it—"

"Never mind Trimble now," said Tom Merry. "If you were in your study doing lines, how the thump can you know anything about what happened in Figgins' study on the other side of the quad?"

"You see, Skimpole came in—"

"Bother Skimpole!"

"Really, my dear Merry, is not that observation somewhat uncalled-for, and indeed inconsiderate?" said Skimpole mildly, blinking into the study with his big spectacles. "You will acknowledge, my dear fellow—"

"Can it!" interrupted Tom impatiently. "Look here, Gussy—"

# ANSWERS

Every Saturday.....PRICE 2:

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"Skimmay helped me with my impot, and I helped Skimmay with his telescope in return," said D'Arcy. "One good turn deserves another, you know. Then I came down to the gym. I was too late for the boxin'—"

"Never mind the boxing now. Is that chap ever coming to the point?" asked Blake, in despair.

"Weally, Blake, I have come to the point," exclaimed Arthur Augustus warmly. "I have told you how it happened now, and you know that Wacke was the wottah who wagged Figgay's studay in the New House."

The juniors stared at D'Arcy. Apparently the swell of St. Jim's was satisfied that he had made the matter clear.

"You fooling idiot!" said Racke.

"Weally, Wacke—"

"But what are you driving at?" roared Tom Merry. "You say you were doing lines in your study, and then fooling around with Skimmy's silly telescope in Skimmy's study—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then you were nowhere near Racke at all?"

"Not at all, deah boy. I object vewy much to bein' anywhah neah Wacke. I wegard him with disgust."

"You—you—" gasped Blake. "Are you going to tell us how you know that Racke was in Figgins' study—if you do know it?"

"I suppose I can believe my eyes, Blake."

"Your eyes?" stuttered Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I saw him there."

"You saw Racke in my study?" yelled Figgins.

"Yaas!"

"When you hadn't left this House at all?"

"Exactly."

"Mad!" said Racke. "I'm not stayin' here to listen to a lunatic wanderin' in his mind!"

Blake grasped Arthur Augustus by the shoulder and shook him forcibly. There was a howl from Gussy.

"You uttah ass! You have made me dwop my eyeglass! Mind you don't twead on my eyeglass, you fellows—"

"Will you tell us what you mean?" shrieked Blake. "Are you trying to pull our leg, you chump?"

"I have told you, Blake."

"How could you have seen Racke in Figgins' study in the New House, you frabjous ass, when you were in this House?" raved Blake.

Arthur Augustus started.

"Bai Jove! Haven't I mentioned that I saw him through Skimmay's telescope?" he asked innocently.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Through Skimpole's telescope?" repeated Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! I ought to have mentioned that first, of course," said Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to cackle at, deah boys. You see, Skimmay was fixin' up his telescope to look ovah the woorf of the New House, and I was helpin' him. I was just lookin' through it while Skimmay fixed it. I saw Figgay's studay window, just as you fellows did the othah night, you know, when Skimmay fancied that he had spotted the man in the moon—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, the telescope was lookin' wight at Figgay's study window, and I saw Wacke come into Figgay's study, and light the gas and dwaw the blind," said Arthur Augustus. "Aftah the blind was dwawn I could not see any more, of course. But as Wacke has denied goin' into the New House at all—"

Aubrey Racke made a rush to escape.

He understood now: as all the fellows did. With all the care he had taken, with all his cunning caution, he had never dreamed of this—he had never given a thought to Skimpole's astronomical stunts, and assuredly never dreamed for a moment that he had been spotted from the telescope at Skimmy's study window.

But he understood now—and he rushed for the doorway. Half a dozen hands grasped him and dragged him back.

"We've got it at last!" said Blake. "Even Gussy comes to the point at last, if you let him run on long enough."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"So it was Racke!" said Tom Merry, with a grim look at the cad of the Shell.

"Racke!" said Figgins, with a deep breath. "This is the rotter's revenge, I suppose, for what he got the other day—setting us to punch one another for nothing."

"Setting you, you mean," grunted Tom. "If you'd had the sense of a bunny-rabbit—"

"Look here—"

"Well, you look here!"

"Oh, don't begin again!" exclaimed Blake. "You've given Racke enough entertainment as it is, I should think."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, that's so," said Tom, with a laugh.

Figgins & Co. looked very contrite. Their leg had been pulled; and they were sorry; but their regret did not mend the damaged noses and other features of the Terrible Throe. Neither did it mend their own.

"We—we're sorry, you chaps!" stammered Figgins.

"We were taken in," said Kerr. "We really ought to have known that you fellows wouldn't rag a man's study in that way. Sorry!"

"We take it back!" said Fatty Wynn. "After all, you've given us as much as we've given you."

"Let it go at that," said Tom Merry. "But as for Racke—Racke, you unspeakable toad—"

"Leave him to me!" said Figgins. "You fellows stand round and see fair play, and leave him to me."

"Done!"

Aubrey Racke, during the next ten minutes, had the time of his life. It was a fight with Figgins, or a ragging from all the fellows present; and Racke chose the lesser evil.

But by the time George Figgins had finished with him, Racke was wondering dizzily whether it was, after all, the lesser evil of the two.

Seldom had a fellow been so thoroughly licked.

When Figgins was finished, Aubrey Racke lay on the study floor, gasping for breath, and feeling that life was scarcely worth living.

"We'll call in at Racke's study as we go!" said Figgins.

"Do!" grinned Tom Merry.

"I say, that's my study, too, you know," said Crooke, in alarm. But Crooke was not heeded.

There were sounds of havoc in Racke's study, when the New House trio got busy there. Probably Crooke's property suffered a good deal, as well as Racke's. That could not be helped. Certainly, by the time Figgins & Co. went back to their own House, the study looked quite as dismantled as Figgay's. And Aubrey Racke, when he crawled dismally into his wrecked study, realised—as he had sometimes realised before—that the way of the transgressor was hard.

"It was Skimmay, weally, you know!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy told his chums.

And the fellows admitted that really it was Skimmy. Skimpole's astronomical stunt had been the cause of the facts becoming known. But for Skimpole and his telescope Racke indubitably would have been successful in his cunning scheme, and would have escaped, scot-free.

That Skimpole, or any of his stunts, could ever by any possibility be of any use was a matter of great surprise.

But there it was.

Certainly, Skimpole himself did not attach any great importance to the incident. He dismissed it from his powerful mind as frivolous and unworthy of his attention, and returned to his astronomical observations. Skimmy was still in hopes of discovering a new star, or spotting the personal habits of the man in the moon. Possibly he might have done so; but for a trifling shortage of cash when the instalment on the telescope was due to Messrs. Blankley.

In great Skimmy could only regard as a spirit of sordid greed, Messrs. Blankley took away the telescope upon which the genius of the Shell had not paid the instalments; which put an end to the career of Skimpole as an astronomer. No new star had been discovered; the habits of the man in the moon remained a mystery; but Skimpole returned to entomology and found solace therein.

THE END.

NOW LOOK OUT FOR—

**"A SPLIT IN  
THE SCHOOL!"**

*By Martin Clifford.*

Next week's remarkable EXTRA-  
LONG story of Tom Merry & Co.

**ONLY A REDSKIN!** For an Indian to "draw" on a white man is tantamount to courting sudden death. But White Cat cares little about his own life; he has saved his paleface friend Tom Holt from a gunman's vengeance!



**White Cat Intervenes!**

**T**HE stable was at the back of the main street from which the sound came, and Tom had some little way to go to get to the scene. As he came out of the door he saw White Cat running, and half-way between, waiting for him anxiously, was Hunks.

Man and dog ran together, and when they turned the corner Tom saw a sight which made him mad with furious anger. In the middle of the road were a crowd of men on horseback, driving before them a big Texan bull. The animal was all over sweat, and bleeding in some places, his eyes glaring with wild rage, his mouth a mass of foam. He was a "scrub," which, in the language of the plains, means that he was of little value and a "Maverick," or ownerless.

Such bulls, like rogue elephants, live solitary lives, and as they grow old become morose and dangerous. This beast was at his worst. The boys had picked him up somewhere, got him into the town, and were now plying their stockwhips mercilessly for a purpose Tom saw at a glance.

The Apaches held each day a sort of fair in the street opposite the store, hanging their skins upon rude palings of saplings which they had constructed to display their goods to as much advantage as possible, and offering them for sale to all who passed through the town. Straight for this little market the cowboys had driven the bull.

As Tom came up he had just caught his horns in the first lot of skins, and was tossing and trampling right and left. It was a piece of sheer, malicious, mad mischief, the result of which would be the loss to the Apaches of half their summer's work. The Indians themselves were in danger, for as some tried to save their property the cowboys lashed the bull towards them, and an animal in that condition will gore anything he sees moving except a horse.

At the moment Tom reached the place an Indian fell. He was the one with the scar on his side. The bull saw him, lowered his head with a bellow, and charged. Nothing, it seemed, could save him. No cowboy made the least effort to interfere; the Indians dared not. In another moment he would have been tossed heavily, and then gored and trampled to death. But when the bull was within two yards a black body dashed in between. There was a scuffle, a cloud of dust, a loud yell from the boys, and, with hardly a foot to spare, the bull came down on his knees, Hunks pinning him by the nose.

A terrific struggle now took place. The dog had chosen his hold well. His teeth were buried to the root in the tenderest portion of the bull's great lower lip. Hunks had as powerful a grip as any of his bulldog ancestors and twice the weight of most of them. But none of them, it is probable, ever had such an antagonist to hold. The bull, a relic of the old Spanish breed, was a foot taller than an English one, and powerful as a buffalo. It was mad with rage, and this surprise attack was the climax of all its woes. It knew, too, as it felt the dog's teeth, that this would be a fight to the death, and with wild strength and fury it set itself to destroy its enemy.

Hunks knew this. He was lifted into the air and dashed to earth with a force which made every nerve and muscle crack. He knew that, compared to this struggle, his bear fight had been puppy play. Even the mountain lion was

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# WHITE EAGLE!

A Grand Story of a young Britisher's Adventures with a Tribe of Apache Indians in New Mexico.

Told By

**ARTHUR PATTERSON.**

less formidable, since his master had been able to intervene. Some instinct told him now that he must carry this bull-fight through alone by his own strength.

But Hunks needed more than strength. He saw this, too, in a flash. The bull was in such a condition that it felt no pain, and again and again raised its head, in spite of the great weight upon it, and swung the pup a couple of feet into the air, and tried to crush him on the ground.

A bulldog, in such circumstances, would have had every rib in his body broken. But Hunks' quick brain had anticipated this, and as he fell he spread his legs out wide, preserved his balance, and alighted on his feet.

The bull, finding this policy useless, began to shake him to and fro. This was worst of all. The power of the beast's neck was tremendous. The dog became sick and giddy, and his teeth seemed to be coming out under the strain. It became an open chance whether he could possibly hang on. Once he nearly gave way. The pain of the wrenches was frightful, and his own great weight, since he was off the ground again swinging like a pendulum, made it ten times worse. But at the critical moment he heard his master's voice:

"Well done, lad! Stick it!"

And Hunks stuck. He clamped his jaws afresh with every scrap of obstinacy that was in him. He forgot everything else, and let his limbs go lax to force the bull to carry his full dead weight. The strain of it all now began to tell upon the bull. He was losing blood fast. By degrees his great head drooped, then its motion ceased, and he sank slowly to his knees with exhaustion.

The first person to see that the end was near was Tom. Regardless of a surrounding circle of excited cowboys, equally excited ponies, and the danger of the bull itself, he kept within a few feet of the combatants. He felt a strong impulse at first to shoot the bull out of hand, and had Hunks' life been in the balance he would perhaps have done so, though he knew it must almost certainly be fatal to himself, for the boys were drunk with the lust of blood, and interference from anyone would have meant death.

When Tom saw that Hunks was winning the fight, however, and the great wild creature was now helpless in his grasp, he determined to stop it at any cost. He could see that the bull's eyes had lost much of their ferocity. They were full of terror, and blood was pouring from his nostrils in a stream. At this Tom could stand it no longer. With a wave of his hand to the cowboys he sprang forward, caught Hunks by the shoulders firmly, and ordered him to let go.

There was a yell of protest from a proportion of the men, but others were with Tom and cheered him lustily. These cheers made one spectator furiously savage. Mick Mander had engineered the whole thing from the beginning. He had seen the Maverick, and worked up the boys with drink to drive him in. He had calculated cunningly that Tom would be certain to come to the rescue of the Indians, and all that followed had given him the utmost satisfaction. He was certain that the dog would be killed, and that Tom would rouse the fury of the boys by shooting the bull.

Now, however, that neither of these things was going to happen, and it seemed only too likely that Hunks again would be the hero of the day, the man lost all control of himself. He had suffered much rough chaff over Tom's victory a week ago; he was determined that nothing should prevent him from getting his revenge, and to him the only revenge worth having was Tom's death.

Now he saw a chance and snatched at it. Hunks, of course, did not want to let go. He thought it very hard he should not be allowed to enjoy his victory and kill this bull. Therefore, though he heard his master's voice, he still held on,



and Tom had to seize him by the throat and press his wind-pipe hard with his thumbs to make him loose his grip.

In doing so his body and the pup's were close together, and Mick Mander, trusting to the concentration of everyone's attention upon the struggling pair, and the failing strength of the bull, stealthily drew his pistol. He was a first-rate shot, and knew that at close quarters, if he drew the bead straight, the heavy ball of his ten-inch-barrelled Colt would go through two bodies. He could pretend afterwards that he was only aiming at Hunks, and that the rest was an accident. His calculations were correct, but he had left one thing out of account. This enemy of his had friends, and those friends were Apache Indians. One of these had been watching Mander himself for days, and when an Indian watches anyone he allows no other interest whatsoever to interfere.

The Indian was White Cat.

He had been the first on the spot, and had seen Hunks save the hunter's life. But while everyone else watched the struggle and nothing else, his eyes never left Mick Mander. He saw Tom's danger. He saw, too, that there was only one way to save him, and though to take this would mean the sacrifice of his own life, he did not hesitate. As Mick drew his weapon, White Cat, light on his feet as his namesake, leapt at him from behind, and when the stockman's arm straightened to fire, and his finger was about to touch the trigger, a knife flashed in the sun, entered the side between the ribs, and the would-be murderer threw up his arms and fell from his horse with a cry.

The cowboys nearest to him heard it, and turned to find White Cat standing, calmly triumphant, looking down upon the wounded man, and wiping a bloodstained knife on his sleeve. At the same moment Hunks let go his hold and the bull was free.

The animal raised his great head with a bellow, shook it violently, as if to assure himself that his agony was really over, and then, with a splutter of feet and a heave of his great flanks, wheeled round, and, knocking one cowboy and pony clean over and scattering the rest, fled away down the street as hard as he could gallop.

The excitement of this end to the fight saved White Cat's life for the moment. The bull dashed by close to where he was standing, and the boys had to look to themselves. Before they had recovered, Tom saw what had happened, and was at White Cat's side. His first action was to examine the wounded man, whispering to the boy to keep still and attempt no escape. He found to his relief that Mick was not dead, nor seemed likely to die. The stab had been delivered upwards, and was not deep. The wound was bleeding freely, but from the appearance of it, Tom was sure it had reached no vital spot.

He shouted this out, and by good fortune the two men nearest to him were friendly, and had been well impressed by his mercy to the bull. They saw his distress, and as half a dozen others cocked their revolvers, and were on the point of shooting White Cat where he stood, they intervened.

"Steady, you!" one exclaimed. "Don't be so durned impulsive. Mick's stuck, but he's alive. We've to get to the bottom of this. Here, you, Buck"—addressing White Cat—"why'd ye do it? Answer sharp, now!"

The Indian pointed at Tom.

"Him my friend. Man there"—indicating Mick—"go to shoot him. So me stab—to kill."

White Cat spoke with cool self-satisfaction, and said the last two words with a relish fatal to his chances. The cowboys had gathered round in a stern circle. Now one seized the Indian's wrist and wrested the knife from him; another

caught him by the throat, while a third unloosed a lariat from his saddle-horn.

"Hear the skunk!" he cried. "He meant straight murder. If Mick's alive, it ain't the Redskin's fault. He must hang for it, boys! Let's take him to the cotton woods at the creek."

There was a shout of approval. But the man with the lariat had counted without Tom. He caught the noose before it could be thrown, tore the rope out of the man's hand, and flung off the cowboy who had collared White Cat.

"You will give him a fair trial!" he shouted. "Or you can take me, too!"

It was the turn of a coin what would happen. Then Hunks intervened. He was so exhausted by his fight that he could hardly move, but he had struggled after his master, and now, standing grim and bloody at White Cat's side, he licked his hand.

"Good for you, Snarleyow!" a big cowboy cried with a guffaw. "Blamed if you ain't got more sense than humans. Come, boys, give the buck a chance."

Others shouted agreement, and though the majority were unfavourable, they were not good for a fight just then, and kept silence.

"But make no mistake," the big cow-puncher whispered to Tom. "He's a goner, either way. Why? 'Cos he's a Redskin, boy."

**Craft!**

**M**ICK MANDER did not die, but it is very questionable whether this was any advantage to White Cat. Tom, in a few hours, held a very strong opinion on the subject.

Everything went wrong from the start. There was no prison in the town, so a company of volunteer gaolers was formed—Mander's particular friends—and White Cat thrown into a small, one-roomed log-hut belonging to Pim Bolland. The place was surrounded by men fully armed, and no Apache was allowed to approach it under any circumstances, not even Black Hawk. At the same time, with an irony which Tom thought was particularly abominable, the chief was forced to pay Pim in advance a rental of ten dollars a week for White Cat's accommodation.

During the afternoon a jury was empanelled to try the case; the whole of these men, with the exception of the big cowboy who had taken a fancy to Hunks, was composed of the worst drinking and anti-Indian crowd in Servita. The judge was Pim Bolland, and when Tom sought permission to visit the prison before the trial, the little American intimated that if any leniency were to be expected for the prisoner, the sum of five hundred dollars must be paid into his account at the bank that day.

Tom said nothing in reply except to repeat his request for access to the prisoner. This was granted, but with a sly intimation that so strongly was the feeling running in the town against White Cat, and Tom himself, that there was more than a possibility that if he once got into the hut he might be kept there until all was over. The fate of the Indian Pim Bolland took for granted.

This attitude on the part of a person in judicial authority made Tom desperate. He asked bluntly how, if the money required were paid, the release of White Cat could be obtained.

Pim Bolland winked.

"Easy Street, that. I hev arranged that the trial comes off to-morrer, noon. There's no moon to-night. Them boys are almighty sound sleepers sometimes. I'll arrange it with Billy Punt, when the money's in my account. You pass word to the old buck and his men, and by morning,

**WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE!**

*TOM HOLT, a sturdy young Britisher of seventeen, lands in New Mexico—at the invitation of some friends of his father's—to start business on the Doggett Ranch.*

*He finds the place in a deserted and dilapidated condition, and from a letter, left by a former employee, learns that his two friends have died. Tom's in a quandary, for he knows nothing about ranching, but he buckles to and makes the ranch-house shipshape. In the course of this general clean-up he comes across a dog with whom he makes friends instantly. Hunks, as he names the dog, proves a real pal.*

*Shortly after his meeting with Hunks, Tom falls in with a wandering tribe of Apache Indians. Their chief is Black Hawk. Unknown to Tom, the chief cherishes the hope of wiping out the "whites" in the country, and to help him to collect the necessary knowledge before a successful raid can be made on the white settlements, he offers to take Tom on the trail and show him how to become a successful rancher.*

*Knowing nothing of the sinister motive underlying all this, and keen to learn the ways of the country, Tom accepts the offer. He proves a most efficient pupil. Then, to further his scheme, Black Hawk tells*

*Tom that he hopes one day to make him a chief—perhaps the greatest honour that could be paid a paleface. In return Tom is requested to tell the white men that the Indians are their friends; that he himself has lived with them for months and found them hardworking and peaceful. It is then that Tom begins to feel suspicious, but he undertakes the job of "ambassador" for all that. Astride Malinka, a fine upstanding mare presented to him by Black Hawk, and accompanied by the faithful Hunks, Tom sets out for Servita. On route Hunks falls foul of a pet spaniel belonging to Miss Sadie Chapin. The spaniel squawks, and Sadie's horse bolts. Acting to Tom's orders, however, Hunks heads the terrified animal off and in consequence saves Miss Sadie's life. Tom finds Servita a hot quarter, and very soon earns the enmity of Mick Mander and his cowboy cronies for conversing with a "greaser" in public. But with true British grit Tom stands up to Mick Mander and thus gets on the right side of the cowboys. In consequence the Apaches are treated well on their arrival.*

*Trouble is in the offing, however, and Tom is being warned of the fact some time later by Bill Punt, the inn-keeper, when the bellowing of an infuriated bull, accompanied by the shouting and yelling of a crowd of men, sends Tom rushing out to see what is happening.*

(Now read on.)



Unsuspectingly the two policemen sat down on the pails. Then, in a flash, Tom's pistol was out, and he covered them both. "Hunks," he said quietly. "Hold 'em!" The dog sprang at the word, and crouching two feet from the biggest man, bared his teeth and growled. (See Page 28.)

when the court meets, I reckon there'll be no prisoner to try. It's happened before," he added cheerfully.

Tom turned cold, but he kept a serene countenance, and asked innocently what would then happen to the property of the Apaches—the skins which were still unsold.

The storekeeper looked mildly surprised.

"Didn't know there was any. Ah, now I come to think, there's a lot of pelts lyin' in the store locked up somewhere. The boys who'll act as jury to-morrow located the stuff, rounded it up, and asked me to hold the lot. It will be sold to-morrow. They reckon it belongs to Mick Mander."

"I see," Tom said quietly. "Now I'll thank you for a note to take me through those boys guarding the hut."

Pim assented cordially. Tom's politeness led him to believe the matter of the bribe settled. He even went so far as to take the boy to the hut himself and see him safely in, with a word to the guard to be sure he was let out again, and Tom, somehow, found breath to thank him. This was very difficult, because he was in a boiling rage.

He found White Cat entirely hopeless.

"White men hang me!" He jerked his fingers round his neck suggestively. "Not because of that fat Mander. Oh, no! They just want kill Apache warrior. You ask Black Hawk, my father. All white men the same, but one. Not one, though—not you!"

His manner changed, and his hard face broke into a quaint smile.

"Tom, look not so sad. White Cat not care much. Black Hawk not care at all, because he come, next summer, perhaps before, and kill, kill, kill!"

The boy gritted the words out between his teeth with slow relish. Then he touched Tom on the shoulder.

"Now you go. These white skunks kill you if too long with me. Pat old Hunks for me. Good Hunks! He is black devil. Ah, that bull think so. But I say, good pup. Will you see me hang to-morrow?" He asked the question as casually as if they were lunching together. "I like you to. I shall be very quiet. No squeal. Me Black Hawk's son, remember. Now you go, my dear Tom!"

He said the last words very slowly, yet so self-controlled are Indians that there was not a note of feeling in them.

As for Tom, he tried to answer, but found that he had such a lump in his throat that in the end he wrung White Cat's hand, and went away without getting out a word. He went to plot and plan. Not for a moment would he admit defeat.

He saw Black Hawk first, but found the chief as pessimistic as his son, and full of the grim, stoical fatalism which can bear almost any misfortune, provided it is able to brood as well upon revenge. All that the storekeeper had said about the robbery of the skins was true. The Indians were stripped of all they possessed.

Tom then hunted up his friendly cowboy on the jury, and told him of the suggestion of a bribe, and in order to draw him asked his advice. It was brief and to the point.

"Good business," he exclaimed, "since you've the greenbacks. But put up a hundred extry for the jury. I'll place that for ye. I take none myself, mind. But I'll make 'em give a verdict of acquittal, all signed and sealed, so that the little buck can't be arrested another time. Yes, we must fix that."

"But what about Mick Mander?" Tom asked shortly. He was more sick than ever. This man, entirely sincere and a good fellow, was in no way troubled by bribes.

The cowboy wrinkled his brows and scratched his head a moment. Then a grim, hard look came into his face.

"Mick's a skunk!" he replied. "He sure drew a bead on you. But you are slick yourself with a gun, ain't ye?"

Tom nodded, and the cowboy grinned.

"Then take him on soon as the doc has pieced him up. Git him drunk one night. Hit him on the jaw, or somewhere, and make him pull on ye. Then plug him. I swear to you here and now no one will weep for Micky Mander!"

He ended with a loud guffaw, and sent his love to Snarleyow. Tom left him, and went on to Billy Punt. Here he had a very different reception.

The saloon-keeper took him into a private room, locked both doors, and set a negro to watch.

"You are up against it good and plenty," were his first words. "Yes—yes," he added, when Tom had told him all. "I know the whole darned thing. Are you putting in that money?"

"No!" Tom said decidedly. "Not a cent. I don't believe the offer is genuine. They mean to hang White Cat, anyway."

The saloon-keeper chuckled until he choked. "I hoped ye'd say that!" he wheezed painfully, mopping his face, "though I weren't too sure. Ye're a Britisher, ye see, and I've heard they're mostly fools. But I guess now some ain't. Boy, ye've struck the right trail. It's nothing but a feint to make ye throw up your guard so that they can whip in a perishin' body smasher, and double ye up by sayin' ye've tried to defeat the ends of justice. Lord, you don't know—though ye're learnin'—the graft of these swine! Why, they've had their claws on ye since the moment they knew ye'd seven thousand dollars in the bank. Didn't guess I knew that, did ye?"—as Tom started. "Gosh! There's a lot ye have still to learn. If the bank men weren't straight goods, you'd lose every cent in less than a week."

Tom went very white. "Do you mean they are down on White Cat, and the rest of it, to fleece me?"

The saloon-keeper swore a deep oath. "Just precisely what I do mean, young Eagle. You said a while back them bucks drank my stuff too free. Ay, and who gave 'em the money to drink? Not old Black Hawk. His hand is tight as wire that way. Why, it come from the store, if you want to know. Pim Bolland has a long account with me. Not a cent passes over the bar when a Indian wants drink. By playin' that game he's got all the news about your turning Indian yourself—or something. It's all bein' worked up agin' ye, and when the show-down comes it'll be your life, or seven thousand dollars to pay—and you'll have to pay it."

Tom's teeth gritted against each other. "I don't mind paying," he said. "But it will not be just that way."

Bill Punt chuckled again. "I don't reckon it will myself. I told Pim when he made his deal with me he'd the wrong lamb by the tail. But that's his funeral. Now to come to business. What will you do?"

Tom looked the saloon-keeper squarely in the face. He could see honesty of purpose in those eyes, and somewhere, round and about the maimed, coarse mouth, a queer touch of tenderness, as of a strong creature's pity for a helpless one.

"I don't know quite what I shall do," he said in answer to the question, "except fight. That I will to the last stitch. But I want your advice, and"—he held out his hand—"I'll follow it, Billie, if I can. I know you'll not let me down."

The big prizefighter straightened his back—he had been leaning forward with his elbows on the table—then he got on his feet and solemnly took Tom's hand.

"That's a perishin' punch for me!" he growled. "I'd never come up to the count, Young Eagle, if I played you false. No! I'll say this, though. Fust moment we met I saw ye were game, and I cottoned to ye. Advice? Pshaw! I gave it this morning, though now I must put it a different way. Saddle that mare, and git, hard as the pony can step, to Colonel John Chapin, of Calumet Ranch, on the Chiquita River. Tell him I sent ye, and let him know all, down to the last word. Then ask him to take holt. If he gets movin', things is goin' to happen. Bet your bottom dollar and your boots the band will play! He's the only one they'll fear."

Tom sighed. He knew Billie meant all he said. He felt that the advice was good, and that for White Cat's sake he must follow it. But how he hated the idea!

It was ridiculous, of course. Tom admitted that, and had no mercy on himself for his weakness. But from the bottom of his soul he loathed the notion of appearing at that ranch as a suppliant for help or protection.

As Tom drew near the stable he saw two men in front of it whose appearance he did not like. He recognised both of them as particular friends of Mick Mander.

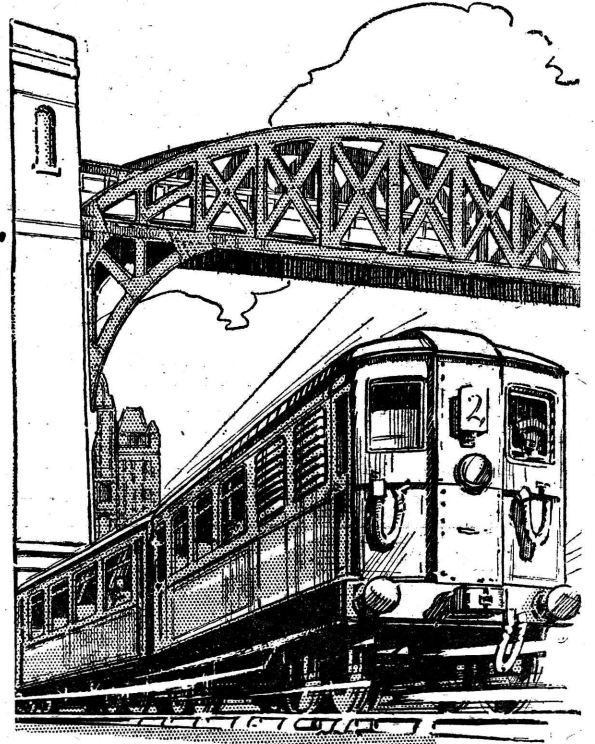
"How d'ye do?" one said as Tom reached them. The other leaned against the stable wall and played carelessly with his pistol-belt. "Jest the man we want. We've come from the sheriff—for you."

As he spoke he pushed his coat open as if by accident, and on his breast was a brass star, the badge of a sheriff's officer.

The man's tone was scrupulously polite. But Tom

(Continued overleaf.)

—correct in every detail

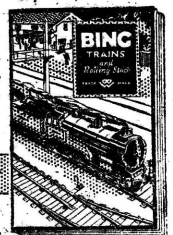


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# WHITE EAGLE!

(Continued from previous page.)

scented danger. He had not forgotten Pim Bolland'socular warning. Were they going to arrest him?

Nodding a reply, he passed them and opened the stable door. Inside, saddled and bridled, stood Malinka, and leaning as usual, against her forefeet, was Hunks.

As Tom expected, this unusual sight interested the cowboys. They were not trained policemen, though they had undertaken that job for the moment, and when Tom went quietly to the mare's head, they took no particular notice. Nor, the stable being dark, did they perceive that he slipped the halter which tied her to the stall.

Then Tom, without touching the reins, began walking out of the stable. He had trained Malinka to follow him everywhere, and she came now, while Hunks, who liked the visitors even less than his master did, shrank to one side against the wall. The pup was stiff and sore, but he had enjoyed a good meal and some three hours' rest in the stable, and was nearly himself again.

The cowboys, seeing Tom's intention, blocked the doorway.

"No thoroughfare!" said the one who had spoken. "Take her back. You come along with us."

Tom pretended great surprise.

"Want me? That's quite a mistake. I saw the judge."

"Blow the judge!" was his rough rejoinder, while the

second man began to finger his six-shooter. "I come from the county sheriff."

Tom started—or seemed to—and retreated a step.

"That's different," he said humbly. "But I would like a word about it. Just let me tell you what the judge said."

He turned away, pushed Malinka gently to one side, but not back into the stable, and sat down easily upon an up-turned pail, motioning the men to two pails near the wall a little farther inside. These pails were used as the chairs of the establishment.

The men came in. Tom had made a good point, for, as it happened, they had a great curiosity to know what Pim Bolland was after. He was not trusted in the least, and every man in the place knew that Tom had money at the bank. So they sat down on the pails quite unsuspectingly. Then, in a flash, Tom's pistol was out, and he covered them both.

"Hunks," he said quietly, "hold 'em!"

The dog sprang at the word, and, crouching two feet from the biggest man, bared his teeth and growled. It was a complete surprise, and the men saw that resistance was out of the question; for, to make matters worse, Malinka, anxious as Hunks to do her share, gave a savage snort, and approached with her ears back and the whites of her eyes shining wickedly.

(Next week's instalment of this magnificent serial will be brimful of exciting incidents, so don't miss it, whatever you do, chums.)



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