

Grand Christmas - Week Number

The GEM 2^d



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READ HOW THE FIRST ISSUE OF "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY" WAS—

TOM MERRY—



CHAPTER I. The Contributors.

"TOM MERRY!"
Thump!

"Tom Merry!"

Bang!

"Tom Merry—Tom Merry—Tom Merry!"

Bang, bang!

Half a dozen juniors were gathered outside the door of Tom Merry's study in the School House at St. Paul's, knocking and calling in an effort to attract the attention of those inside.

They had been knocking and calling for five minutes, but no reply had been vouchsafed from within.

Yet they knew perfectly well that Tom Merry was there. The door was locked on the inside, and they could hear an occasional movement on the part of the occupants of the study. Tom Merry was there, but he seemed to be afflicted with an unaccountable deafness.

"Tom Merry!"

Bang!

"Tom Merry!"

Crash!

"Tom Merry!"

Thump, thump, thump!

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"The water has been out!" exclaimed Gave wretchedly. "He must know that we are here!"

"My hat!" gasped Jenson of the New House. "If he doesn't he must be shockingly dumb. Never mind—knock a little harder."

"I'll kick the blessed door down if he doesn't open it!"

"Steady on!" said Melink. "You'll bring old Schneider on the scene if you make too much row."

"Hang old Schneider! Who cares for him?" growled Gave. "I'm going into this blessed editorial office, I tell you. Think I'm going to write out a heastly contribution, covering nine pages of manuscript, for nothing? Not much!"

"Certainly not!" said Jenson. "And I've got a little poem here, running to fourteen stanzas, and that's going into 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' or there'll be trouble!"

Each of the juniors loudly knocking for admittance at the door of Tom Merry's study had a roll of manuscript under his arm or sticking out of his pocket.

Several other fellows were coming along the passage now, and each of them was similarly equipped.

"I say, can't you get in?" asked Press of the New House as he arrived. "What's the matter?"

"The door's locked."

"Well, knock!"

"We've been knocking!" growled Gave. "They won't let us in!"

-EDITOR!

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

I'll read it to you, if you like, while we're waiting. This is how it starts:

"High on a boiling rock above the food,
& exchanging the wild deep so far below,
The ancient Castle of Grey stood,
Frowning defiance at every foe.
The great walls made a gulfant alle,
Built of material guaranteed good.
And on the keep—"

"What rot!" said Pratt. "I'm going in! I've got a poem in blank verse on the Spanish Armada for the first number of 'Tom Merry's Weekly.'"

"And I've got the first chapter of a ripping serial," said French, a Shell boy, belonging to the New House. "It's called 'Gary Dick, the Heroic Highwayman!'"

"Bang, bang, bang!
Thump, thump, thump!"

The juniors were getting transported. It was really too bad. Only a few days before the idea of starting a school magazine had been mooted, and had been discussed by the Terrible Three and Study No. 8 in the School House, owned by Figgins & Co. of the New House.

Tom Merry had been selected to edit the new paper, which was named after him as it was his idea. The idea had caught on. All the budding authors and poets in both the Houses at St. Jim's had immediately set to work to compose contributions for the new paper. The first number was to come out on Saturday, and this was Wednesday, a half-holiday at St. Jim's. After dinner the eager contributors had rushed up to the editorial office with the shewens of copy, and their state of feeling at being desired admittance may be imagined.

They knew that Tom Merry and his chums, Manners and Lowther, were to be busy that afternoon getting up the first number of the paper, and they had come along with their copy with the best intentions in the world.

But the door was locked, and no notice was taken from within of the clamour.

The words "Editorial Office" stared at them in sprawling letters from the closed door, and underneath was written in smaller characters, "No Admittance Except On Business." But the contributors were there on business, so, of course, the prohibition did not apply to them.

Indignation was growing in the passage.

"Thump! Bang! Crash!"

Core brought his feet into play, and though he could not get through the solid oak panel of the door, he made them crank and green.

"Hoo, I say, draw it mild!" said Jimson. "You'll have Schneider or else a heastly protect down on us!"

"I don't care—I'm going in!"

"No, too bad," said French. "I suppose Tom Merry doesn't want to be disturbed. Check! It's an editor's business to be disturbed, of course!"

"I should say so!"

Besides, some fellows have been let in," said Jimson. "Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther are there, and so is Blake, from Study No. 8, and Horrie, too!"

"Oh, they're in the game!" said French. "So is D'Arcy and Figgins & Co., from our House. These nine beauts are always consorting when they're not ragging one another. Still, we're not going to be left out, of course."

"I should say not," said Gore, with emphasis. "I've got six nice pages written out here, and do you think I'm going to see all that trouble for nothing!"

"Well, old fellow, I don't see how they'll make room for your nice pages, after putting in my first instalment of a serial," said French.

"Your serial can be left over."

"Can it?" said French warmly. "It beats your stuff below—I'll guarantee that." "Gary Dick, the Heroic Highwayman or, the Bloodstained Treasurer—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I fancy the Editor will bar that stuff," said Jimson. "The thing is going to be a bit better class than that. I've got a poem here—just a little thing of between stanzas of twelve lines each—called 'Castle Grey,'

"Bang, bang, bang!"

"Shoot up that row, Gore, while I'm reading my poem!"

"Shan't! I can't stand that poem. You oughtn't to do such things!"

"Look here, if you—"

"Yes, I think we've had enough of that poem," said French. "You couldn't possibly compare it with my serial. Listen to this: 'On a wild, murky, stormy, fearful night, while the lightning roared and the thunder bashed—I mean, while the thunder bashed and the lightning roared—I mean, while the thunder crashed and the lightning bashed—a dark, mysterious horseman might have been seen riding at full speed along a dark, gloomy road, where all was hidden and invisible in the dense darkness—'"

"Oh, my hat! How could they see him if he wasn't visible?"

"Oh, that's a detail! The description is splendid, and—"

"Crash, crash!"

"I tell you you'll have old Schneider here, Gore, if you—"

"And I tell you I don't care for old Schneider!" yelled Gore, transported. "Old Schneider can go and eat cake—Ow!"

A fat finger and thumb had struck upon Gore's ear.

"Yat you say before?" demanded the angry voice of Herr Schneider, the German master at St. Jim's. "Yat you say—heim?"

"I—I—I—"

"Old Schneider can go and eat to cake mit himself—heim? Gore, I—"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Gore combatively. "You needn't go—I-I mean that I'm sorry, sir. I didn't know you were there!"

"Yat is all that noise for perform?" asked Herr Schneider, retreating Gore's ear, after giving it a twist that made him wriggle. "Yat it all mean—hey?"

"We're trying to make Tom Merry hear, sir," said Melish solemnly. "We want to speak to him importantly, sir, and we can't make him hear."

"If Tom Merry not hear that noise, it is because he not want to hear it before," said the German master. "You will go quiet, or else I go on again, and if I go on again I bring six more after, sir!"

And Herr Schneider, with a warning wag of the finger at the juniors, went back to his study, from which the terrible disturbance had drawn him.

The disconcerted contributors looked at one another. Gary rubbed his injured ear, which was as red as fire, and growled:

"Why couldn't some of you tell me the old beast was coming? Look here, kids, we're going into the editorial office. We've got to bust in the door somehow."

"Hallo! Here come Figgins & Co., and D'Arcy!" exclaimed Pratt. "They're going in, and we'll get in at the same time. Quiet!"

CHAPTER 2. The Staff!

F IGGINS & CO. were coming up the passage. Figgins, the long-limbed chief of the New House juniors, had a roll of foolscap under his arm. Fatty Wynn and Koor, the porters in the Co., carried similar rolls in their hands. The New House trio were generally at war
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with the School House, but the establishment of "Tom Merry's Weekly" had brought about peace for the time, Figgins & Co. being absent in the country.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was coming along with them, belonged to Study No. 6 in the School House, where he disported with Blake and Herrick, now in the editorial office. He had evidently been over to the New House to fetch Figgins & Co.

"He looks looked curiously at the crowd of contributors waiting outside the door of Tom Merry's study.

"Hallo!" exclaimed the great Figgins. "What are you kids doing here? Have you been spending your term's pocket-money in fooling?"

"We've brought in our contributions," said French, with dignity.

"Oh, I see! You seem to have enough of them. But can't you see the notice on the door?—No admittance except on business!"

"Yaaa, wataah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, screwing his eyes into his eye, and averting the annoyed contributors through it. "Haven't you any eyes, deaf boys? You fellows are not admitted to the editorial office, you know. Walk away, now, and play! We're going to be awfully busy this afternoon."

"You tailor's dummy," said Gore, with a disparaging glance at D'Arcy's fancy waistcoat and sticky-stained trousers and kersey tie, "what have you got to do with it? You're no good, unless they have a comic front page, and put your photo on it."

D'Arcy's eye gleamed through the monocle.

"What did you call me, Gore?"

"I called you a silly tailor's dummy!"

"I'm sorry to quarrel with you, Gosh, but I must refuse to be characterized as a tailor's dummy," said Arthur Augustus. "I must request you to withdraw that offensive expression, or else I shall be compelled to give you a healthy thrashing."

"Ha, ha, ha! I can see you doing it!"

"You will find me doing it in a minute, Gosh, if you do not withdraw!"

"Well, I'm not—"

"Here, step up!" said Figgins, seizing Gore by the arm.

"You're not going to fight Gore when there's editorial work to be done."

"Foxy wobbles me, Figgins; I must thrash Gosh for his impertinence—"

"Rate!" Figgins tapped at the door. "Open the door, Tom Merry! It's us, Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, and Arthur Augustus Aubrey Augustus Plantagenet."

"Figgins, I have said before that I dislike such idiotic variations here's made on my name," said Arthur Augustus. "My name is Arthur Augustus, and I shall take it kindly if you will not call me Augustus."

"Sorry, Algy. I'll make a point of it, Aubrey. I won't forget again, Gustavus. You may rely upon me, Ticker Plantagenet."

"You are simply ridiculous—"

"Here, open this door, Tom Merry! We're in the line, you know; we don't belong to the silly rill-rill who have been making a row outside here!" called out Figgins.

"It's us!" shouted Kerr and Wynn.

There was a sound of the key being turned in the lock.

The door of the editorial office was opened, and Tom Merry's cheerful countenance came into view.

Tom Merry was looking very handsome.

He was in his shirt-sleeves, with a white apron on, which was physically smeared with ink, as were his hands and his sunny face.

Figgins stared at him.

"Hallo! Is that the editorial costume, or are you doing the office-boy act now?"

"Oh, come in!" said Tom Merry. "We've had at work. This silly lot of kids—"

"What's that!" exclaimed Gore.

Tom Merry looked at him severely.

"You've been making a row out here," he said, "and interrupting the editorial labours. March off!"

"We're coming in!"

"You've said it. Clear off!"

"We've brought our contributions—"

"All contributions have to be slipped under the door," said Tom Merry. "The sanctity of the editorial office cannot be broken in upon by any old contributor wandering in at odd moments. It's not to be expected. You ought to know better."

"That's all very well, but—"

"Clear!" said Tom Merry.

While he talked with Gore, Figgins & Co. and D'Arcy Tom Cus Lissang,—No. 1,245,

had entered the study. Tom Merry, as a matter of fact, was only talking to keep the contributors quiet while they did—

"Now he slammed the door.

Gore's face made a rush.

"The beast! Shows its open before he can lock it!"

He hurled himself against the door.

But it was too late!

The key clicked in the lock, and Gore kicked at the door in baffled exasperation. The editorial office was fast again against all intruders.

"Stop that kicking," said Mollish. "If old School comes again, he won't let you off so easily next time, Gore. Gore growled, but he desisted. His car was still awaiting."

"Well, what's to be done?" he snarled. "We're a going to be left out in the cold like this, I suppose. I'm getting fed-up with Tom Merry's nerve."

"So are we all," said French. "We've got to get someone. It's a point of honour now. Besides, it's only to the paper to let them have our contributions. Catch a shoving mine under the door."

"Or me mine! Might get overlooked!"

"I don't suppose Tom Merry would have sense enough to understand how good mine is, unless I was there to explain it to him."

"Very likely not. Of course we must go in!"

"Of course we must. Can anybody here pick a lock?"

There was a general silence. Apparently none of the contributors had ever understood Bill Sykes or Chas. Paine.

"Well, we're going in," said Gore. "If we can't pick a lock, we can't open the door, but there's the window!"

"The window!" exclaimed Mollish.

"Yes. You know how these kids borrowed Taggie's ladder the other day to get in at the window. Well, we do the same. It only means a tip to Taggie."

"I'm sorry," said Mollish.

"Oh, don't be mean! It will only mean a penny each to make up a lock, and that will be enough for Taggie. Be out, and come along!"

"It's a good idea," said French.

And after some discussion, the baffled contributors made the whip round to raise the tip for the school porter, and left the passage.

Meanwhile, Figgins & Co. were looking round the editorial office.

The whole of the nine members of the editorial staff were now in Tom Merry's study, and the work of producing a first number of "The Weekly" was about to commence seriously.

The Terrible Three—Tom Merry, Mammae, and Lovell, to whom the study belonged—had already been busy. It isky state of their faces and fingers showed that. Blake and Herrick, from Study No. 6, also showed signs of labour.

Arthur Augustus looked at the staff rather disparagingly. "I really hope that it is not strictly necessary to get that beastly ink state," he remarked. "I am afraid if it is the case, I shall have to resign my position on the editorial staff of 'Tom Merry's Weekly.'"

"Rate!" said Jack Blake. "You'll get just as inky you're wanted to, Gosh. Don't you start criticizing a fellow."

"I really don't want to be critical, Blake, but really—"

"Dry up!" said Herrick. "Take your jacket off and to work. Here's a lot of copying to be done."

Figgins looked at the table, which was littered with papers. The floor was pretty well littered, too, with paper and specked sheets.

"You've got a fearful mark here," said Figgins. "I do know much about editorial offices, but I should imagine it they've kept a bit tidier than this."

Tom Merry smiled superiorly.

"That's where you're wrong, Figg. Have you brought any contributions with you?"

The New House trio looked at one another, and no reply.

"Did you hear what I asked you?"

Still no answer.

Tom Merry looked at the three in amazement.

"Why don't you speak?" he exclaimed. "Are you de Figgins?"

"Oh, were you speaking to us?" asked Figgins, with interest. "You said 'kids,' so, of course, I didn't be you meant us."

"Oh, don't rot now, Figg! We're awfully busy!"

"Yes, you look it."

"It will be a bit of a pull to get the first number by Saturday," said Tom Merry. "And as we've assessed the forthcoming publication on the school notice-board, must keep up to time. There will be a howl if we don't."

"That's right enough. But we're in the dark at present

and Figgins. "What about the publication? Are we going to have the paper printed?"

"Not the first number, I'm afraid. It can't be done in time for publication. We might think about it for the second number. I think the 'Bygone Times' people would do it at a moderate figure."

"It was suggested to have a printing press somewhere in the club-room," said Figgins. "I thought that a good idea."

"Yes, but it's too heavily expensive," said Tom. "Then I would like such a fearful time to set up the type, and all the work would have to be done by hand."

"But it would be jolly to have a lot of copies."

"Yes, I know; but we must be satisfied with small beginnings," said Tom Merry. "You see, a paper that isn't charged for has a lot of disadvantages to start with. All the ink has got to come out of our pockets, and the reader gets his whack for nothing."

"But, wozzly, deah boy, I should be verry pleased to—"

"Rule! We're in this on equal terms, Gang. We'll see what we can do about the second number; but the first will have to be manuscript, written out by hand. We'll each do our share of the work."

"It will cost something for foolscap," said Figgins, looking round the littered floor.

"Where have you got all that ink from an your chivvy?"

"Must have come off my fingers. I've been making up the title page, and I've spested a good many. Must have something artistic, you know."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"There's an advantage in having a manuscript number," went on Tom Merry. "We don't know exactly to what extent the copy will run. If there's more than we expect, we can shove in some more paper."

"That's a good idea!"

"We must let some of the outsiders contribute," added Tom.

"Though I expect there will be a lot of awful pills for us to eat soon. But we want to encourage budding literary ability among the juniors of St. Jim's, of course. Besides, if we were to fill the number up with our own stuff, they would say we were sneaked."

"Ha, ha, ha! Very likely!"

"Yes, wuzzah! It is better to be moderate," said Figgins. "I shall only wozzish ten pages or so for my contribution this time, Tom Merry, though I may be able to do more for the next number!"

"Eh! How much will you want?"

"About ten pages, deah boy."

"Then you won't get them! The longest contribution is limited to one page," said the editor. "That will make the paper a jolly good size."

"I am sorry, Tom Merry, but I could not consent to have my contribution mutilated," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. "I have not taken the trouble to write a long complete story to have it chopped up, you know."

"We may be able to work it in as a serial," said Tom Merry peevishly. "We shall want a serial. I was going to write that myself, but I don't mind."

"But I do," exclaimed Figgins. "I'm the serial correspondent. I've got the first chapter here of a ripping serial, a hot-dust story of Red Indians, entitled the 'Black Chief of the Red Braves.'"

"That's the red!" said Monty Lowther. "A tribe of Indians wouldn't have a nigger for their chief, it stands to reason."

Figgins snifled scornfully.

"You don't understand. The chief is called the 'Black Chief' because of his fearful deeds, and is really red in colour, you know. He—"

"Don't his braves do any fearful deeds?"

"Yes, of course they do—awful!"

"Then he ought to be called the 'Black Chief of the Black Braves,'" said Lowther. "I'm blessed if I can see why one should be black and the others red."

"If you're going to make fun of my serial, Lowther—"

"I'm not; it's funny enough without any help from me. Why don't you call it the Red Chief of the All Blacks, and make it a football story?"

Figgins turned crimson with wrath. Tom Merry hastened to pour oil on the troubled waters.

"I expect the serial will do rippingly," he said. "It sounds a bit loris—"

"That can be altered easily enough," suggested Blake.

"Put the title in French—'Rouge-et-Noir'! That means red and black—"



Tom Merry rushed to the window, and immediately he was met by a terrific stream of water from the hose. He went flying near backwards, careening into Figgins and Mansers, who were following him!

"You'll get a black eye if you keep on, you see!" said Figgins. "I think—"

"Well, let's see the serial," said Tom Merry. "Hand over the manuscript. Listen, you cheap, and I'll read you a bit of it. It's understood that nothing goes into the paper without the approval of the whole staff. That's the only way we shall keep the pills out without hurting anybody's feelings."

"Good idea," said Figgins. "I don't want to brag about my serial, but I really think there are few stories about Indians that can beat it."

"Give us a sample," said Mansers.

Tom Merry opened the manuscript.

"The Black Chief of the Red Braves. A grand story of the Wild West—"

"Well, I like modesty," remarked Monty Lowther.

"As!" said Figgins. "You always have to describe a story like that. The reader takes your word for it."

"I expect he'd have to in this case—"

"Dry up," said Tom Merry. "Chapter One. 'The Mansers!' Ahem! 'The wagon train was scrouged in the midst of the rolling prairie. The emigrants stood to their guns as the Redskins rushed to the attack—'"

"What Redskins?" asked Lowther.

"As!" said Figgins again. "A lot you know about literary compositions. The long description business has—"

gone out. You start a story now just as if the reader knew all about it. That won't do a bit of good."

"Oh, I see! It might lead to confusion!"

"In a brain like yours, perhaps. Go on, Tom Merry!"

"The Redskins rushed to the attack with blood-curdling yells. The noble defenders, prepared to die for their king and country, fired—"

"What king?" asked Monty Lowther. "What country?"

"I think that's a bit mixed," said Tom Merry. "This isn't a military story. The king and country business doesn't come in right here."

"Oh, go on with the yarn!" said Figgins.

"Fired again and again, and thousands and thousands of Indians lay gasping, dead, and dying on the ground amid pools of blood."

"I don't want to be critical," said Monty Lowther; "but I ask if anyone present has ever seen a dead Indian gasping?"

No one seemed able to supply the necessary information.

"I think we'd better stop that thousands into hundreds," Tom Merry remarked. "Thousands of dead and dying looks rather thick."

"Go on with the yarn!"

"Blood was everywhere. It soaked into the prairie and dyed the grass a brilliant red. In the midst of the horrible slaughter the Black Chief of the Red Braves rode on his black charger ankle-deep in blood—"

"My hat!" said Manners. "That chap must have had strong nerves, or perhaps he had been in the black-pudding business! I think we ought to take out some of the blood."

"Yes," Tom Merry assented; "it's the fault of a beginner to be too laud. Better have nobody killed at all, I think."

"What!" howled Figgins. "How is he to be called the Black Chief on account of his fearful deeds if he never killed anybody?"

"Call him the White Chief, on account of his kind heart," said Monty Lowther. "That will be just as good, and a lot more wholesome."

Figgins looked daggers at the playful Lowther. He stuffed his manuscript back into his pocket.

"I'm not going to have it altered!" he declared. "I'd rather keep it out of the paper. Let Gussy's story go in as the serial."

"I object to my story being treated as a serial. It is a long complete story, dealing with fashionable life, and describes the adventures of Gerald Fitztophams in the West End, you know. I'm not going to have it cut up. If there's no room in the paper, some of you fellows can let your contributions stand over till later—"

"Check!" said Kerr. "Catch us doing it!"

"For the good of the cause, don't say. But I am willing to stand or fall on the merits of my story," said D'Arcy. "Word stands if it cut, Tom Merry, and we'll see what the staff say about it."

"Oh, you read it, Gussy! You'll do it more justice than I could."

"Very well. Anything to oblige. Listen, dear boys!"

D'Arcy crossed his manuscript, and read:

"Gerald Fitztophams. A Woman of Fashionable Life. Chapter One. The New Waistcoat—"

"The what?" asked half a dozen voices.

"The New Waistcoat." Gerald Fitztophams entered his dress-making room at his luxurious chancery in St. James' Street, and surveyed his tall, aristocratic figure in the glass. He was dressed in a modern coat of the latest cut, and light trousers, beautifully creased by the loving care of John James, his faithful valetman. His patent leather boots were as bright as the sun at noonday, and fitted perfectly his nicely shaped feet. His socks were of silk and an exceedingly pretty pattern—"

"Did he wear his socks outside his boots?" asked Monty Lowther.

"No, of course not, Lowther!"

"Then how could anybody know what they were like?"

"Nobody would," said D'Arcy, "except the author, of course, who in describing the hero of the story, but to women. His shirt was of the finest linen, very white, owing to the care of his handmaid, who had been selected by John James, always deeply devoted to the latest interests of his master."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"His tie was of the latest shade, and tied with the exquisite finish only found in the most extremely fashionable circles. His collar was of the exact height acquired by good taste, and his sleeve-links—"

"My hat! Anything more about Gerald?"

"Lots!" said D'Arcy cheerfully. "His hazel monocle the

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had been carefully shaved off, and so was not to be seen—"

"Ha, ha, ha! How astonishing!"

"His hands, which were slim and white and extremely aristocratic, showed the loving care of the manicure. His waistcoat—"

"Ah, now we're coming to it!"

"His waistcoat," pursued D'Arcy, "was the only article of Gerald's apparel with which fault could be found. It was of the latest cut, but the pattern had been superseded, and the shocking discovery had only just come to the knowledge of Gerald Fitztophams. His usual impassive face was dark with anger. It was the duty of John James, his faithful valetman, to obtain the first bit of anything new in the way of waistcoats, and for so John James had failed his master. For once the faithful valetman had failed in his duty! Hence the rage which on the face of Gerald Fitztophams."

"He touched a bell as he turned from the glass. John James remained the room. Gerald turned a fearfully angry look upon him."

"Watch!" he cried. "Have I succeeded a stip in a

boon?"

"John James fell upon his knees."

"For several hours," continued Gerald gloomily, "I have worn a waistcoat that was half a day behind the fashion. Watch! I dismiss you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I really wish you would not laugh," said Arthur Augustus. "This is not a comic story, but a tragic one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When I describe how Gerald Fitztophams bears up under these very tragic" care, you will agree that—"

"We shall agree that that stuff can't go into the

"Weekly," said Fatty Wynn.

"What did you remark, Wynn?" asked D'Arcy, turning to the Editor of the New House with chivalrous politeness. "May I request you to repeat that remark?"

"Certainly!" said the obliging Fatty. "That silly stuff can't go into the magazine. The whole school would be a fit."

"Ferry hold this manuscript, Tom Merry, while I administer a slight correction to Fatty Wynn," said Arthur Augustus, with stately dignity.

"Come on!" said Fatty Wynn, rolling back his eyes.

"I can look any School House boarder in the place, and I'm not afraid of a girly tailor's dummy!"

"But Jerry, I see I shall have to threaten you fearfully."

"Hold that air back, Blake," said Tom Merry. "It belongs to your study, and I look to you to keep him's order!"

"Right you are!" said Blake.

"I refuse to be kept in order!" said Arthur Augustus. "I distinctly refuse to pass over the obvious woman's gauds by Fatty Wynn. I—"

"Dry up!" commanded Blake.

"I refuse to dry up!"

"You'll get checked out if you're not quiet!" said Monty Lowther. "Any dispute between different members of the staff has to be referred to the editor. That's one of the rules of the magazine!"

"Oh, very well! I always want to keep the wile," said Gussy graciously. "I will be Fatty Wynn's champion stand over to a certain occasion!"

"About the serial," said Tom Merry. "It won't do. The whole college will cackle over it. The Romance of the New Waistcoat! won't go down—"

"My dear Merry, that's only your bad taste, you know. I say that story is actually good, and I ought to know, I write it!"

"You ought," assented Tom Merry. "But apparently you don't. I leave it to the staff. Is Gussy's serial about a new waistcoat going in or not?"

"Not!" said seven voices in chorus.

"Oh, very well!" said the wail of the School House splits cheerfully. "I bow to the majority, of course! will write another!"

"Not quite so much clothes in the next," said Tom Merry.

"That's your bad taste again, Tom Merry. The serial is an actually important one, and I am very well qualified to speak upon it. There is a great deal of woman in it."

"H'm! I think I shall do the serial myself," Tom Merry remarked. "I say, Kerr, what have you got?"

"A poem about the Battle of Bannockburn," said Kerr, who was the Scottish partner in the Co., and ardent patriot, like every true Scotsman. "It's rather good, you know!"

"Read out the first verse!"

"Certainly!" Kerr cleared his throat and blushed as he recited his manuscript. "Here you are, chapel!

"It was in the early morning,
On Bancock's fatal plain,
The horsemen and the footmen,
Were peering in amain—"

"I say, I've heard something like those last lines before,"
said Tom Merry.

"Oh, rot!" said Kerr hastily, and he went on reading:

"The traitorish Southrons marched to war,
With banner and with drum,
But when they saw our bold array,
They wished they hadn't come!
For this—"

"Nuff!" said Tom Merry. "I'm not denying that you
dare beat you and up very well at the Battle of Bancock-
ham, but there's no need to be rude about it. You'll have
to come out the traitorish Southrons!"

"Shan'," said Kerr. "What do you know about poetry?
I'm not going to have a fine poem mutilated to spare your
feelings!"

"Then we'll spare the poem," said the editor of "Tom
Merry's Weekly." "Poetry isn't much worth, anyway. We
can't have the whole magazine filled up with bad rhymes!"

"Bad rhymes! Why, mine are first-rate! You—"

"Huff! Huff! What have you got with you, Patsy?"

"I haven't finished it yet," said Patsy Wyne modestly.
"It's a poem on a more important subject than battles and
ships like that. It's about grab!"

"About what?"
"Grab! It's a sort of parody of 'Beautiful Star,' you
know, and it begins like this:

"Beautiful grab, my heart's delight!
Crawling both by day and night!
How to get enough of it—there's the rub!
Grab of the tush-top, beautiful grab!"

"My lad! Ha, ha, ha!"
"I haven't finished it yet," said Patsy Wyne. "I'll
have it done in time for Saturday, though. The last verse
is very touching. It nearly makes me cry!"

"Yes! It's a pathetic subject. I think we can show
that in, if you think it up to the same high standard of
excellence," said Tom Merry solemnly.

"Good!" said Figgins, piqued by the praise bestowed
upon a member of the Co. "I think it's rather good, but
it sounds more comic than serious to me. That doesn't
matter, though!"

"Certainly not!" said Tom Merry. "Let me see. What
have you got, Herrick?"

"A poem, too!" said Herrick modestly, producing a
crumpled fragment of scribbled paper from his pocket.
"You know this kind of poetry is very popular nowadays.
Mine is called 'The Dicky-bird and the Spring Onion.'"

"Go on!"

"A dicky-bird sat on a garden wall,
A spring onion grew below;
And the dicky-bird sighed, as the onion he eyed,
As he watched it grow and grow,
"Oh, dearest spring onion," the dicky-bird cried,
"I love you—! I love you so!"

"Oh, my only prisms hat!" ejaculated the editor of
"Tom Merry's Weekly." "That makes me want to weep,
just as if I had the spring onion under my eyes!"

"I'll read you some more—there are twenty-eight verses,
and—"

"That's enough, Herrick, old man! I think we'll make
a serial of that. One stanza a week will be enough for any
reasonable person, I think!"

"More than enough," remarked Monty Lowther.

"Now, Blake, what have you to show?"

"I'm doing the football column," said Blake. "No need
to go into that now. Mansons is taking the photographic
column, I think!"

"That's so," said Mansons.

"I've got something written out," said Monty Lowther.

"I shall be glad to have your opinion of it!"

"Fire away!"

"It's a sort of sonnet, you know—a bit above the heads
of the kids, perhaps," Monty Lowther remarked. "But
we must something good to give the paper a tone, don't
you? We can't have it all lousy business like Herrick's
'Ode to a Dicky-bird.'"

"Yes, sir—sir!" said Herrick blitheringly. "That isn't
hard—that's serious!"

"My mistake," said Lowther wilyly. "Anyway, we
ought to have something in the real poetic vein, and that's
what I've tried to turn out. I dare say it will be a bit above
the fellows' heads!"

"Well, let's hear it," said Tom Merry.
"Get it off your chest!" said Blake. "The longer we have
to wait, the worse the agony is. It's like having a tooth
out, you know!"

Lowther, without taking any heed of Blake's remark,
preceeded to read out his composition.

"When in the dark, mysterious gloom of night,
I sit beside my easement oft and gaze,
And through the trees the glimmering, pale moonlight,
While in the court the silver fountain sprays;
In other times, in other happier days,
The past is dead and gone, nor will return.
Oh, list—oh, list, the nightingale's sweet lays!
The weary other sleeps amid the fern;
The night grows old, the stars all pale burn."

Tom Merry ran his fingers through his curly hair.
"That sounds awfully poetical," he said. "But I think
you were right about its being above the fellows' heads,
Lowther. Does it mean anything?"

"Of course it does!" said Monty indignantly. "It's a
sonnet, so it's bound to be rather vague, you know."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Tom Merry dubiously. "I
read some Browning once, and it read a great deal like
that."

"But if it means anything," said Blake curiously, "what
does it mean?"

"It means that a chap is sitting at his window," said
Figgins thoughtfully. "in the moonlight. He's thinking
about the past, when he used to hear the nightingale
beating the cover. Is that it, Lowther?"

"No, it isn't!" snapped Lowther.

"Then I'm bluffed if I can guess what it does mean!"
said Figgins. "I admit it sounds poetical, but I believe a
poem ought always to mean something or other."

"Well, that's not really necessary, perhaps," Tom Merry
said, with an air of reflection. "The rhymes are all right,
and so is the metre. If people can't understand it, they'll
think it's awfully deep poetry, I suppose, so that will be all
right. It can go in. Now—"

"Good!"

Tom Merry was suddenly interrupted. Crash went a
pane of glass in the window, and the head and shoulders of
Gore appeared through it. Tom Merry pumped up in
astonishment.

CHAPTER 2.

Trouble With the Contributors!

GORE had not intended to enter the editorial office in
that manner, but he had no choice about it. He had
succeeded in obtaining the ladder from Taggles, and
the band of determined contributors had planted it
under the window of Tom Merry's study, and Gore was the
first to ascend to the attack.

Mellish and Pratt and French followed him up the ladder,
while the rest held it from below. They had not held it
very securely, and as Gore reached the top, it slipped a
little, just as he was getting on the window-sill. The result
was that his head went through the nearest pane, and the
crash of the breaking glass announced his arrival to the
staff of "Tom Merry's Weekly."

Gore, more rattled himself than the staff were, gasped,
and drew his head back from the broken window.

"You see!" said French, behind him. "Upon the window,
quick!"

Gore gave a grovel.

(Continued on the next page.)

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"I've cut myself!" he snapped. "I'm hurt!"

"Well, you shouldn't be clumsy! Open the window!"
But there was no need for George Gore to open the window. It was opened from within, and Tom Merry, Blake, and Figgins looked out. The contributors on the ladder looked at them, and they looked at the contributors.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry. "Here you are again, I see. What do you want?"

"We're coming in!" said Gore.

Tom Merry laughed.
"Well, you may be," he said. "But I really think you are not. Are you going down, or shall I shake you off the ladder?"

"Look here," said Gore, "we've a lot of contributions for the paper, and they've got to go in."

"The editor of 'Tom Merry's Weekly,'" said Tom sensitively, "is always willing to consider contributions, which must be original and clever, and must be put under the door of the editorial office. No arguments can be entered into with a contributor. No pills can be published in the columns of the 'Weekly.' Every story is a gem."

"Look here, you lummox! If our stuff doesn't go in, there will be trouble!"

"Unless it is the usual way, and we'll do our best for you," said Tom Merry. "I can't promise more than that. Meanwhile, you mustn't disturb the editorial office. Get off that ladder, or else I shall have to check you off!"

Gore scowled. Behind him furious contributors were howling.

"Look here, Tom Merry—"

"Can't I be asking too much to want a chap to look at a piece like that? Now, if I shake you off the ladder it will shut your goose," said Tom Merry. "Travel, while you've got the chance, and don't come disturbing a busy editor again."

There was no help for it. The seething party descended the ladder, the staff at the window raising their hands to them gratefully. They pulled the ladder away, apprehensive lest Tom Merry might tumble it upon their heads, and laid it down. Then they held a council of war.

"As far as I'm concerned," said Mellish, "I wouldn't have my poem put in their old paper if they ask for it now."

"And they shouldn't have my serial," said French, "if they went down on their beaded knees and begged for it with tears in their eyes."

"As for me," said Gore, "I'm done with 'Tom Merry's Weekly.' I'm not going to write for it. But what I say it, are we going to stand this howling cheek?"

"Not if we can help it," said French. "But what are we to do? We can't burst in the door without old Schneider or Bailton catching us, and then we shall catch it hot. We can't get in at the window."

"No; Gore's settled that by sticking his head through the glass," Jimson remarked. "What did you do that for, Gore, old fellow?"

"You silly ass! Do you think I did it on purpose?" exclaimed Gore. "It was the fault of those stupid neckties not holding the ladder steady! But never mind that, I'm not going to get. Tom Merry and those bounders have got to be punished for their cheek, and we're going to do it!"

"But how? How are we to get at the rotters?"

"We can't—but I've got an idea! You see, they've closed the window, but they can't close that hole in the glass."

"No; but what is the use of that to us?"

"A lot," said Gore, "if we can get out Taggie's garden-hose, and start pumping water in on them!"

There was a general gasp of amazement and delight among the ladder-contributors.

"My only hat!" exclaimed French. "Gore, old man, you ought to have a tin medal—you ought, really! I don't think much of your brain-power as a rule, but this idea is really ripping!"

"First class," said Mellish. "But can we get the hose out and fix it up? That's the question. You see, it will have to be done without Taggie knowing it."

"Easy enough. Jimson can go and keep Taggie in talk while we do it. Start him telling you about the time he was in the Army, Jimson, and he won't leave off till he's dished. Keep him busy while we rig up the hose."

"Right-o!" said Jimson. "That's easily done. Rely upon me!"

And Jimson started off. The rest of the contributors chuckled gleefully.

"When the lot of water comes into the editorial office," said Gore to French, "the staff will wish they had been a bit more polite to their contributors. Since the MR, under the door, indeed! Catch us! Very lively got our ideas."

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pinched. I think that if I take the trouble to write for an old school rag I ought to be treated with consideration."

"Certainly! They're an ungrateful lot!"

"We'll make them sit up, though."

Unconscious of the treat in store for them, the staff of 'Tom Merry's Weekly' were busy. They had a heap of copying out to do, and as it was laborious work, not so better than writing out impositions, as Blake remarked, they was not a rush to do it.

In fact, each member of the staff found excellent reason why he himself should do more superintending than working and it was only by the exertion of the editor's authority that any work was done at all.

"I wish I wrote a better hand," Mincey Lowther remarked reproachfully. "I shall have to ask you to write out my page Mincey."

"With I could oblige you," said Mincey politely. "But I gave my wrist a nasty twist on the football field yesterday, and I was going to ask Tom to do my bit."

"Get enough of my own to do," said Tom Merry. "I'm writing up the editorial chat and the leading article."

"You don't have a leading article in a school magazine and Figgins."

"Yes, we do!" said Tom Merry, with emphasis. "The editor's decision must be regarded as final, and it is my opinion this condition that you enter into the competition means, that you contribute to the magazine."

"Oh, all right; have it as you like!" said Figgins. "Look here, I've written out a lot of my stuff. I've got a—well, in the wrist. Does anybody want to write some out for me?"

A chilling silence followed the question.

"Don't all speak at once!" said Figgins impatiently.

"Oh, don't be lazy!" cried Tom Merry. "It's worth a little trouble, I think, to produce a paper which will knock the Sixth Form magazine into a cocked hat."

"Yes, wotnot?" said Arthur Augustus. "I tell you what, Tom Merry, if you will put in the whole of a story of Gerald Fitzoslophine in the first number, I will write it all out myself."

"Can't be did!" said Tom Merry decisively. "We was to have the first number read, and you know nobody was read that pills."

"If you characterize my literary work as pills, Tom Merry, I am afraid there will be trouble in the editorial office," said D'Arny emphatically.

"Oh, don't argue!" said the editor. "I say, this is hot work. Write as small as you can, all of you, or the magazine will fill up about a room of paper. It looks to me as if we shall have a bit of a job to get the first number out by Saturday."

"If you don't bring the paper out to time, we'll job soon get a new editor who can, Tom Merry!" exclaimed Figgins.

"Yes, wotnot?"

"I'm going to do all I can," said the editor. "No one can do more. No good grumbling. There ought to be more half-holidays in the week, as a matter of fact. We can't very well have over the football practice, and the take such a fearful time. We can't very well publish a magazine with bits on it, or serials, and every bit means a new page to be written. Thus there's the one page. I'm not satisfied with the design yet, and I've finished."

"Better hand that over to me," suggested Kerr.

"Thank you, I think I can manage. When I want to retire from the editorship I won't forget you, Kerr. Enough talking now. Get to work!"

They got to work.

Since they fell in the study, save for the scratching of pen and the occasional restless movement of feet.

Tom Merry sorted over contributions and examined them with remarkable patience. A good many budding poets and authors had submitted their manuscripts in the prescribed way, by slipping them under the door of the editorial office, and these Tom Merry felt it his duty to read over.

Naturally, there were pages and pages of staccato "pills," as he termed it, and most of it scrawled in almost indecipherable writing. The lot of an editor who did his work conscientiously was not a happy one. It had not occurred to Tom Merry to appoint a reader, nor is it probable that he would have found an individual of the staff willing to undertake the risk.

"Well, we're getting on," Figgins remarked, looking up at last. "There's my little lot. How are you getting on, Kerr?"

"First rate!"

"I shall be able to shove in the whole of my poem at last," said Potty Wyan. "I've finished it now, and I want my I consider it pathetic. What are you up to, Guany?"

Guany was scratching his nose in a very thoughtful way.

Some idea had evidently taken possession of the great brain of the swell of the School House. He glanced at Fatty as he asked the question.

"I have been thinkin'," he said languidly, "it would perhaps be better for me to write up a fashion column than to contribute a story. Every self-respectin' magazine ought to have a fashion column."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think it's a good idea. You see, the fellows here dress very suitably, as a rule. They haven't the faintest idea of how to dress with taste," said D'Arcy seriously.

"As a matter of fact, I am the only really well-dressed fellow in the Lower Form, and there are only a few in the Sixth who know how to dress. A fashion column would be an eye-sore for the ragged little wretches in the Fourth and the Third."

"Good old Gony!" said Tom Merry. "It couldn't be worse than your serial, anyway, so you can shove it in if you like."

"I sincerely object to such a disparaging remark concernin' my serial. I am the last fellow in the world to brag, but I really think—"

D'Arcy was suddenly interrupted. There was a sudden bang sound, and a jet of water assailed the window of the study, and then down through the broken pane.

Right across the study it came in a stream, and it

"What does it mean?" gasped Blake. "Is there a fire, or what?"

Swish! Splash!

"It's the garden hose, in the quadrangle!" shouted Tom Merry. "Taggles must be mad! He's playing it on our window!"

"It can't be Taggles. It—"

Tom Merry dashed to the window. The jet of water was changing its position every moment, as the handle of the hose missed the mark, and as Tom Merry ran forward, the stream caught him in the face.

He was hurled rear like a rumpus. Backwards he went, crashing into Figgins and Maurice and knocking them both against the table. The table was not used to stand unage



Figgins seized D'Arcy by the nose, and proceeded to pull as hard as he could. Arthur Augustus fairly howled, while the rest looked on and roared with laughter!

caught the swell of the School House fall in his aristocratic countenance.

He sprang to his feet with a yell.

"Waddy, I— Great Scott! I— Ow! Ooooooh!"

Tom Merry jumped up.

D'Arcy had dodged out of the stream, and he played right across the study and splashed on the opposite wall, and thence scattered in all directions.

"What—what—what is it?"

Swish! Splash! Swish!

CHAPTER 4. Washed Out.

TOM MERRY was not often taken by surprise, but he was astounded now, and he stood for some moments rooted to the floor while the jet of water played through the broken pane and scattered splashes all over the study. The staff were all on their feet, most of them drenched already by the water. The table was swamped, and the valuable manuscripts of the "Weekly" soaked in a moment. The pages all ready for publication were swimming in water, and hopelessly blotted.

like that. It went rolling and turned over on its side, and the soaked manuscripts were deposited on the floor, amid the overturned inkpots.

The staff of "Tom Merry's Weekly" gave a simultaneous howl of rage.

"If that's Taggles, we'll kill him by inches!" spluttered Blake, springing to the window, in spite of the stream that entered at the broken pane.

The glass was thickly splashed, and he could not see through it. He threw up the sash and looked out into the quadrangle. Then he gave a yell of fury.

Down below were the contributors, with the garden hose in the hands of Gony. He was directing the stream upon the study window with a skillful hand. He caught sight of Blake's furious face at the open window, and instantly turned the hose upon him.

Blake was swept back before the rush of water.

Tom Merry sprang to the window. He shook his hat at Gony.

"Wait till I come down to you, you rotter!" he yelled. Gony grinned.

"Wait till you can get out of your study!" he replied. And he directed the nozzle upon Tom and swept him away from the window.

Soaked and dripping, the editor of "Tom Merry's Weekly" dashed to the door, to fly down to the quadrangle and take instant vengeance upon the destroyers. To unlock the door was the work of a second, and then he dragged at the handle. But the door refused to budge.

He tugged and tugged in amazement, but the door, after yielding about an inch, remained fast, and he could not open it.

"Why don't you get it open, Tom Merry?" exclaimed Figgins. "Do you want us to stay here and get drowned?"

"I can't get the beastly thing open. It's stuck, somehow."
"Not! Let me try."
"Try, then, foolhead!"

Figgins gripped the handle of the door and tugged, but the result was the same. The door would not open.

"They've fastened it, somehow," exclaimed Blake. "Ah, I know! They've tied a rope across to the handle of the door opposite."

"Yess, wathah! That is wessly a waxy deep trick to play!"

"Fuss! Swish! Splash!"

Here probably did not know how much water was in the study, or also he was determined that the editorial office should be thoroughly drenched. The hose still played on the window, and, as it was now open, the stream of water entered without let or hindrance.

The study and everything in it received a soaking such as it had never experienced before, and the valuable documents lying about were like limp, blotched rags.

The staff were furious. They too at the door in vain. It would not open. They rushed to the window, and the stream of water drove them back.

Suddenly the stream ceased to come. The staff crowded to the window again. The hose was lying on the ground, and not a single one of the contributors was visible. The only person in sight was the fat German master of St. Jim's, and his presence accounted for the disappearance of the jets.

Here Schneider came towards the hose and looked at it, and then looked round him.

"Keep out of sight!" whispered Tom Merry.

The nine juniors dodged back from the window.

Tom Merry continued to watch the German master from behind a corner of the curtain.

Here Schneider seemed amazed.

"Vat means all tat after!" the juniors heard him exclaim.

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"Dis is fery singular peform. Vat vas Taggion do mit to look here, ain't it, and vhy he run away, van I count? I hink I see more san van run. He hat been sending a water on to vall of his house, such is fery singular!"

The German master looked up at the wall of the School House. The broken pane in Tom Merry's window, and the soaked state of the window and wall around it, caught his eye, and a glimmering of the truth came into his mind.
"Mein Gott! Vat is a stroke of its juniors peform! I tink vat I haf looked to troost! Now, it is a stroke of its peform! Vat vill see!"

And the German master walked back with his ponderous tread into the School House, evidently with the intention of ascending to Study No. 10 to investigate. The seal of the school paper looked at one another in dismay.

"He's coming here," said Tom Merry. "I suppose it would have been impossible to keep the thing dark, with the study in such a state!"

"Yass, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "Quite imposs Tom Merry. Those young wassals ought to be punished—"

"But we can't speak on them!" said Figgins hastily.

"Of course not!" said Tom Merry. "We're going to make them sit up for this ourselves, but we can't speak to a master. And you may be pretty certain that Clare won't own up!"

"Yass, wathah! But I tink it quite poss that our wassalled master will be angry if we do not give him the name of the perpetrators of this outrage, such boys!"

"Very likely!"

"He can go and eat cake!" said Hink. "We're not going to give those brats away, but, by Jove, we'll make them wriggle! All the manuscripts have been spoilt!"

Tom Merry glanced at the drenched and soaked paper floating about the floor. The first number of the "Weekly" was severely ruined, and not a single page was of the slightest use. The whole thing had to be done over again from the beginning.

"It's a bit rough on us," said Tom. "Those jets might have driven a line at that. But we shall make them grin on the other side of their faces. My hat! the study is in a shocking state! I wonder if we shall ever get it dry again? Hink! What's that?"

There was a grumble and an accompaniment in the passage.
"Mein Gott!"

Misty Lovelock gave a chuckle.
"It's old Schneider! He's run into the rope across the passage!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a sharp tap at the door.

"Who is in the study?"

"We're all here, sir!" called out Tom Merry.

"Ha! Vee der is any mischief, I must know dat you do doze, Tom Merry," said the German master. "I shall look into tat matter peform!"

"Well, that's nice!" said Tom. "I don't see how even old Schneider can make out that I'm to blame for this. He can't imagine I got the study soaked like that for fun!"

There was a fumbling at the door. The German master unlocked the rope and threw the door open. His stare of astonishment at the condition of the room and its occupants.

"Mein Gott! Vat is all tat! Vat have you been doing, boys?"

"Somebody's been squirting water through the window, sir!" said Tom Merry obediently. "It's a bit rough on us. The room is quite wet!"

"Ach! I should say it is wet. Who vas it tat play to trick?"

Tom Merry was silent.

"I ask you who vas it tat play tat trick, Tom Merry?"

"I don't think I can give you his name, sir?"

"Do you mean to say tat you can not to know peform?"

"No, sir, I didn't know before he did the trick, or I should jolly soon have been on his track," said Tom Merry innocently.

The German master frowned. He knew in spite of Tom Merry's innocent expression, that the hero of the Staff was deliberately making a play upon his peculiar English.

"Tom Merry! I ask you vat is to name of to offend?"

"Do you know it?"

"Yes, sir?"

"You will tell me vat it vas, ten, tat he may be properly punished," said Herr Schneider.

"I can't, sir?"

"You will tell me vat it vas," said Herr Schneider.

"It would be speaking, sir!"

Herr Schneider stared at Tom in amazement. He had not expected a reply like that from a junior, and he did not respect the schoolboy sense of honour that decorated it. He did not understand boys. His only view of the matter was that the junior was impertinent.

"Fery well, Merry," said Herr Schneider, breathing hard.

"You refuse to answer me, your master. I will mention it to Mr. Bailton!"

And the German master stamped away towards the study of the Housemaster, leaving the nine janitors dismayed.

"Ill-tempered old beast!" said Figgins. "I'm afraid you're in for a row, Merry!"

"Oh, I generally am, so that doesn't matter," said Tom Merry carelessly. "Never mind that—I can stand it! Let's see if we can clean up some of this frightful mess!"

"Excuse me, dear boy!" said D'Arcy. "I am in a feebly wet and soiled state, and I really think I had better go and change my clothes and put on a clean collie before I attend to any other matters!"

And the swell of the famous House hurried away for that most important object.

The janitors did their best with the study, but the damage was great. It was finally decided to prevent Merry, the housemaid, with the sum of five shillings, accompanied by a request to do her best in the matter.

Then the janitors went to change their clothes. Most of them were soaked to the skin, and a change was essential.

"I'm afraid the date of publication will have to be put off a little," Tom Merry said sadly. "It can't be helped."

"Never mind," said Figgins. "We'll come over to tea, if you like, and we'll discuss a plan for making these little returns smart for spending our first number."

"Yes, do!"

And Figgins & Co. returned to the New House.

Binks and Harrow went to their own quarters to clean up, and the Terrible Three went up to the Shell dormitory.

"It's lovely!" Mervy Lewtler remarked. "The worst of it is that you've going to get into a row, Tom, for making up for that beast Goon, who's the cause of all this mischief!"

"That's the rub," said Mervyn. "I suppose it wouldn't be asked to give him away."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I can stick it out," he said cheerfully.

He had just finished changing when a leg put his head in at the door.

"Mr. Bailton wants to speak to you in his study, Merry."

"Right-o!" said Tom.

And he made his way to the study of the Housemaster.

CHAPTER 5.

Headed Over the Cash!

MR. BAILTON, the master of the School House at St. Jim's, was looking very stern as Tom Merry entered his study. Herr Schneider looked worried as ever.

He had evidently made the most of his complaint to the Housemaster, as Tom Merry saw by the expression of Mr. Bailton's usually genial face.

"You sent for me, sir," said Tom respectfully.

"Yes, Merry. I am sorry to hear that you have been impertinent to Herr Schneider."

"I did not mean to be so, sir."

"Herr Schneider tells me that you have refused to reply to a question put to you by him."

Tom Merry was silent.

"Mind your own business," said Herr Schneider. "I have never seen so much of you you call to me before after. To pay, I say, I say, I say, I say."

"Come, Merry, what have you to say?"

"It was a trick played on us by some of the fellows, sir," said Tom, colouring. "They washed us out of our study with the hose."

"Yes, I have looked at the study," said the Housemaster dryly. "It is in a shocking state, and such an act cannot possibly be allowed to pass unpunished."

"It was a bit rough, sir, but I don't think they meant to do so much damage really," said Tom Merry. "To be sure, we don't mind—really, sir."

The Housemaster passed his hand over his mouth to conceal a smile.

"Whether you mind or not, Merry, the person responsible for the damage must be severely punished. You have refused to tell Herr Schneider the name of the perpetrator."

"Not exactly refused, sir," said Tom Merry.

"But you did not tell him?"

"No, sir, I did not tell him."

"Although he commanded you to do so?"

Tom Merry did not reply.

"Then you have refused to tell him," said the Housemaster severely. "You have refused to answer a question put to you by a master."

"No, sir, I shouldn't put it like that. It would be

impertinent to refuse a master, and I couldn't be impertinent to Herr Schneider, sir. I respect him too highly. I wasn't exactly refusing—only—only I didn't like to answer, sir."

"That seems to me a distinction without a difference, Merry."

"Well, sir, I shouldn't like Herr Schneider to think me impertinent," said Tom Merry meekly. "I shouldn't like you to think me so, either, sir. You know the rules better than Herr Schneider does, sir. I know you yourself wouldn't ask me to speak."

Mr. Bailton compressed his lips.

It looked as if he were angry, but, as a matter of fact, he was hard put to it to keep from laughing.

"Merry! I really cannot permit you to speak like that. The perpetrator of such an outrageous action must be found and punished. The study is damaged, and you will have to account another till it is properly dried."

"We don't mind, sir. But when it's a question of giving a chap away, of course, we couldn't do it. Why, sir, if I were to tell you the fellow's name I should be sent to Coventry by the whole School House, and the New House as well."

"Ahem! But I repeat that the person must be punished—"

"That's all right, sir," said Tom Merry eagerly. "We're going to punish him, and when we're done with him he won't think life worth living."

This time the Housemaster could not help laughing.

"Really, Merry, I do not know whether to cane you or not," he exclaimed. "I cannot, of course, approve of your taking the law into your own hands. That is impossible. At the same time, Herr Schneider, upon second thoughts I consider it advisable to respect a sense of honour in a lad, even if somewhat mistaken."

Herr Schneider looked decidedly annoyed.

His dignity had been ruffled, and nothing but the exemplary punishment of Tom Merry would have satisfied him. To his mind, Tom had not made out a defence, as Mr. Bailton seemed to think, but he had only aggravated his guilt by his explanation.

"Of course, it is as you wish, Mr. Bailton," he answered stiffly. "I bow to your authority, of course."

Mr. Bailton looked rather uncomfortable.

"I don't mean, that, Herr Schneider," he replied. "Merry has certainly overstepped the mark in being impertinent to you, although I am sure that he did not mean to be so."

"Certainly not, sir," said Tom Merry at once.

"In the circumstances, I think the matter of the damage to the study can be left to itself," said the Housemaster. "If Merry, as the chief offender, can overlook the matter—"

"It was a trick with to young rascals they put themselves before," said Herr Schneider.

The Housemaster shook his head.

"I cannot think that Tom Merry could be foolish enough to be a party to the damage of his own study, and the injury of his own property," he said dryly. "It was evidently an unpleasant trick played upon him, and it is possible, at least, of him to wish to avenge the offender. I think that matter should be passed over. As for his refusing to answer your question, Herr Schneider, I admit that that was indefensible—ahem! I do not think it is a case for caning, but otherwise I leave the matter in your hands."

And Mr. Bailton picked up his pen as a plain hint that the interview was ended.

The German master was looking very angry.

To his ruffled mind it seemed that Tom Merry ought to have been awarded a second caning, and he hardly troubled to conceal his opinion.

"Very well, Mr. Bailton," he said. "It is as you wish, Merry, you see lot of that caning, but I shall expect you to bring me one hundred lines of Shewman this evening."

"Yes, sir," said Tom grimly.

The suggestion was a heavy one, and it meant that he would have to write some time that afternoon for "Tom Merry's Weekly," and that he would have to miss the football practice.

Mr. Bailton knitted his brow a trifle, but he had left the matter in the hands of the German master, and so he could not possibly interfere.

"You may go, Merry," said Herr Schneider grimly.

Tom left the study, and the German master followed him out and closed the door.

"You have escaped easily, Merry," remarked Herr Schneider, when the door was shut. "Mr. Bailton is very lenient with you. I myself would thrash you severely, if you do not bring me that hundred lines of Shewman, after tea I will see that you have to caning for your doings."

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"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry, "but—but—"

"Not a word more! My!"

"Will it do if I bring the lines to-night, sir, before bed-time? I can do them then, and I shouldn't have to miss the school—"

The German master frowned.

"You will do some lines, Merry, and bring them to me immediately after tea," he said, with emphasis. "If you do not, I shall come you severely."

"But, sir—"

"Not a word more! Go!"

And Tom Merry went, with a gloomy face. The German master stalked away majestically to his study. He had not succeeded in getting Tom Merry carried, but he had spoiled his half-holiday, so he was satisfied.

"Hallo! Going to a favour!" asked Blake, meeting Tom Merry in the passage. "What's the trouble? Has Schneider been to Berlin?"

"Yes," Tom explained. "I've got to do a hundred lines of German this afternoon, and take them in after tea."

"Rotten!" said Blake. "But I'll tell you what, old chap. We'll help. We'll all do some, and get the impost over in no time."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"That won't do, Blake. It's all very well with Latham, and even with Reilten sometimes, but old Schneider's too keen. He's bound to spot the wince, and he'd make me do the lot over again."

"Yes, wotsh!" said Arthur Augustus. "I've tried that trick on him once, and he gave me two hundred lines down Faust to write out in consequence. It was a wretched awful ordeal, dear boys. But I say, Tom Merry, has the bewild boondah specified what lines you are to write out?"

"No," said Tom, looking at him. "Only St's German. I suppose I shall have to dig into Schiller, or something."

"No, don't. I have an extremely funny idea in my head," said Arthur Augustus. "It will be a wiggle' joke on our respected teacher, if you have the nerve."

"I've got nerve enough for anything to take that horrid old boonder down a peg or two," said Tom Merry. "I asked him if to-night would do for the imposition, so that I needn't miss the footie, and he wouldn't have it. He's glowing over my missing the footie."

"Yes, he is really an extremely unpleasant old person," said D'Arcy. "Now, you can write out any lines you like."

"Yes, so long as it's in German."

"And you can write with the same line over again, if you like, a hundred times!"

"Of course!"

"Then I can suggest a line," said Arthur Augustus. "I came upon it when I was doing Faust in the original, and I really think that it fits the case. As it is a line that Goethe really wrote in that great poem, it will be impos for Herr Schneider to find fault with it, don't you know?"

"Get it off your chest," said Tom Merry. "What's the line?"

"It's what Faust says to Mephistopheles, you know, when that nice chap wants him to sign the giddy document, making himself over to Mephisto," explained D'Arcy. "It was thereby: 'Ach was Geschickliches fordert die, pedant!' Savvy?"

Tom Merry scratched his head.

"And what does it exactly mean, Gussy?"

"It means, 'And what writing do you demand of me, pedant?'" said Arthur Augustus, with a blinzel smile. "That's just what Schneider does, doesn't he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Blake. "Fanny calling old Schneider a pedant to his face!"

"It's you calling him a pedant," smiled Gussy. "You see, he hasn't specified what lines Tom Merry is to write, and a line from Goethe must be all right. If it happens to fit his case, that's only an accident."

"Of course," grinned Tom Merry. "Gussy, you're a genius."

"It will be a wack in the eye for the old boondah," said D'Arcy complacently. "He won't be able to do fault with a line from Goethe, but he'll know jolly well that you're calling him a pedant. Savvy him wight?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I don't mind writing out an imposition like that."

"Come into our study and do it," said Blake. "You won't be able to inhibit your own again for some time. You'll have to take up your quarters in the empty study where we hold the Hobby Club meetings, for a few days, except."

Tom Merry was soon seated at Blake's table writing out the imposition. The lines grew under his caped pen, and though the task was a long and weary one, it was finished by tea-time. Figgins & Co. came over to tea in the School House, and Figgins burst into a roar as he saw the finished imposition.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he chuckled. "That will tickle old Schneider. I think we ought to be there when you give it to him, Merry, and watch his face."

"Right-ho!" said Tom. "I'll give it to him in the Hall after tea before the other masters, and if he makes a face they'll catch on to the joke."

"Good wotsh!"

And with this admirable object in view, the staff of the "Weekly" descended to the Hall together after tea.

CHAPTER 4.

The Herr Gets a Shock!

HERE SCHNEIDER was standing in conversation with Mr. Latham, the master of the Fourth, as the boys left the Hall after tea. It was permissible to mix that noon at St. Jim's, and some of the boys had it in their own study, among them being our nine friends.

Nine sixteen-faced juniors appeared in the doorway, and Tom Merry left the rest and came into Hall with the last soap in his hand, covered with struggling German characters.

Herr Schneider looked at him out of the corner of his eyes. He had rather hoped that Tom Merry would walk to bring that imposition in time, so that he might have an excuse for administering the avowed caning, after all, but the sight of the paper in Tom Merry's hand dispelled that hope.

The German master had just been detailing to Mr. Latham the silliness of Tom Merry, and the master of the Fourth had listened with polite attention, though, as a matter of fact, he was far from agreeing with Herr Schneider.

"Ach!" said Herr Schneider, giving a glance of disavowal

Potts, the Office Boy!



you the hero of the Shell. "You have written out tat imposition, petter, ain't he?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry. "I wrote it out before he, sir."

Mr. Latham smiled. Herr Schneider took the foolcap and adjusted his spectacles, and read the first line. He seemed to find fault if it were possible.

"Ach! Vat it call! Vat!"

The German master's fat face went purple with rage. "Vat it call!" he roared. "Vat! You call use ein pedant, ain't it! Vat!"

"I, sir?" exclaimed Tom Merry, in astonishment. "I call you a pedant, sir—I, sir? Oh, sir, I respect you too highly, sir, to call you a pedant, sir!"

"Vat it tat don't?"

"That, sir! That's the imposition, sir."

"You vat call use ein pedant! Mein Gott! I have notor heard of such imposition before afore, ain't it? Ach, himmel! Ach!"

The German master was stuttering with wrath. Mr. Latham looked at him in amazement. The mild, little master of the Fourth never lost his temper, and he was actually surprised by the violent rage of the stunted German.

"My dear Herr Schneider, what is the matter?"

"Look at tat petter!" shouted Herr Schneider. "Look at in vat hat you have dared to write van hundred times, and bring to me afore!"

He held up the offending sheet to the Form master. Little Mr. Latham adjusted his spectacles and looked at the imposition. Tom Merry remained perfectly grave and serious-looking, while the eight juniors in the door were shaking themselves loose.

"Ach was Goethe's Federst du, pedant?" read out Mr. Latham. "Ah, it is a line from Goethe's 'Faust'!" And what writing comendest thou, pedant?" The exercise seems to be very well written, Herr Schneider. I wish the boys in my Form wrote their impositions out so clearly as this. I cannot see any fault to find with this."

The German master checked with wrath. "No fault to find with ein petter calling his master a pedant!" he exclaimed.

"Oh!" said Mr. Latham. "Is your usual write tat line on purpose, ain't it? It is vat reflection upon his master—a new piece of tat impertinence!"

"Oh!" said Mr. Latham again. "Merry, you have vance again been impertinence!"

"I've only done what you told me, sir," said Tom respectfully but firmly.

"Himmel! You tink I tell you to call me a pedant?"

"You told me to write out a hundred lines in German, do, and you didn't say what lines. I've done what I was told, like a dutiful and obedient scholar. It is always my ambition, sir, to be regarded as a dutiful and obedient scholar by my kind teachers."

Mr. Latham coughed violently. The German master became more furious than before, if that was possible. He looked as if he were on the verge of apoplexy.

"Come mit me!" he roared. "I need deal mit you. I will see that vat Mr. Railton be have to say about tat, ain't it, cher?"

"After what, sir?"

"Come mit me, you pad petter!"

He laid a heavy hand upon Tom Merry's shoulder, and reached him off. He left a giggling crowd behind him. The juniors at the door gave way, giggling, too. Tom Merry maintained a perfectly demure look as he accompanied the German master to the study of Mr. Railton.

The Housemaster was there, and he looked up, surprised and a little annoyed, and set down his foolcap. Mr. Railton was having tea in his study, and he did not like being disturbed.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "Is anything wrong again, Herr Schneider? You seem to be very unfortunate to-day."

"That petting did not pour oil on the troubled waters, Herr Schneider sniffed sadly at the Housemaster's injustice, as he regarded it.

"Mr. Railton, look at tat paper before, please!"

"Give it to me, then."

Mr. Railton patiently took the famous imposition and looked over it. A slight wrinkle came into his brow.

"What is this, Herr Schneider?"

"I give Merry van imposition," said the German master. "I toll him to take van hundred lines, and—tat is vat he vas writ mit himself afore."

"The lines seem to be very well written, and there are no faults," said Mr. Railton, with a perfectly grave face.

"What fault do you find with it?"

"He vas call me van pedant!"

"Where did you get this line, Merry?"

"It's a line from Goethe's 'Faust,' sir," said Tom Merry, looking as if he were wouldn't meet in his march. "As Herr Schneider didn't specify what lines I was to take, I thought I would take a line from Goethe, sir. I admire Goethe very much, and often read him in my leisure time, sir. And one line is as good as another for an imposition, ain't it, sir?"

"Ahem! Yes. You did not specify the lines that were to be written, Herr Schneider?"

"No. I do not always pedant. But tat impertinence!"

"You may go, Merry."

"Thank you, sir!"

"Hut!"—began Herr Schneider, in angry surprise—"but, Mr. Railton—"

"Pree wait a moment, Herr Schneider! You may go, Merry."

Tom Merry went out of the study and closed the door.

"Mr. Railton, tat petter have been impertinent vance more, and you not punish him!"

"I think no notice should be taken of the matter!" said the Housemaster, with emphasis.

"No notice, mein herr! Mein Gott! You be—"

"Listen to me, Herr Schneider. In my opinion you were unnecessarily severe upon this lad in the first place, but I did not interfere with you. The boy evidently considers that he had been treated with undue severity, and this joke is the result. You have no fault to find with him, and you would have acted more wisely in not seeing the reference that this line bears to yourself."

"But—but— Mein hennel! But—"

"Let me finish. Merry has undoubtedly chosen a line that contains an expression which may be taken as a reference to yourself. Yet, as the line is a line from a standard German work, it is impossible to find fault with it. You should not have taken that reference to yourself. You must permit

Scarf Ace!



me to say that if you had acted judiciously, you would have ignored the suggestion that the line could have any reference to yourself. Then the joke would have fallen flat. Now, I am afraid that it will become the talk of the school; while at the same time it is impossible to punish Merry with any show of justice."

Herr Schneider's face during this little lecture was not pleasant to see.

"The best course now," pursued the Housemaster, "is to let the subject drop. If no further notice is taken it may be dropped by the others. That is all I can say."

Herr Schneider did not reply. He was too annoyed to trust himself to speak, and he went silently out of the study, leaving the precious imposition on Mr. Raubon's table.

The Housemaster picked it up, glanced at it again, and smiled. Then he threw it into the wastepaper-basket, and gave his attention to his tea.

That the joke would spread over the House was certain. It was already spreading, and scorners and jokers were chuckling over it, and some of the masters, too.

As the German master walked down the passage, after leaving the Housemaster's study, a voice floated to him from the distance.

"Auch was Geschriebenes fortout da, pedant!"

The German master gave a start of rage; but the offender was not in sight, and he walked on, breathing fury. He went into his own study and slammed the door. Then he uttered an exclamation of rage.

There was a looking-glass over the mantelpiece, and across the looking-glass were written the words—evidently by a finger dipped in his inkpot:

"Auch was Geschriebenes fortout da, pedant!"

Muttering German words which will not bear translation, Herr Schneider took a duster and wiped the inscription off the glass.

As he did so there came a knock at his door.

"Come in!" growled Herr Schneider.

The door did not open, but the knock was repeated.

"Come in, aber!" shouted the German master angrily.

Still the door did not open. He stopped to it and tore it open savagely. No one was there, but a card was attached to the handle of the door, and on the card was written the familiar sentence:

"Auch was Geschriebenes fortout da, pedant!"

Herr Schneider slammed the door with a clam that rang through the School House.

CHAPTER 7.

Tit for Tat!

THE staff of "Tom Merry's Weekly" gathered in Study No. 4 in high glee. The joke on the German master had fully compensated them for the trouble he had given them, and Tom Merry nobby said that he didn't mind spending half a half-holiday writing out an imposition for so good an object.

"We've scored off Schneider," said Tom, with an air of great satisfaction. "The whole House has got hold of the joke, and he won't be allowed to forget it in a hurry. I heard some kids of the Third chanting that sentence in the quad under his window just now. They gave it a pronunciation peculiar to the Third Form, but I've no doubt he understood."

"Good!" said Blake. "He's been asking for trouble for a long time, and now he's found it. It was a real, ripping, good idea of Gansy's!"

"Yes, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I think you will notice, dear boys, that most of my ideas are 'weally wipin' ones. You know I'm an awfully deep fellow."

"Yes, you are," agreed Tom Merry. "Fearfully deep, we all know that. But this idea was really a good one, and it's worked out well. If Schneider had had sense enough to protest and to notice the joke in the inkpot, it would have fallen flat. He delivered himself into our hands like an uncoiled hen to the slaughter. I've just posted a postcard to him in the school letter-box, and you can guess what's on it. It will please him when he gets it this evening."

The jokers chuckled ghastly.

"We must always aim at pleasing our kind teachers," said Moxey Lovelace solemnly. "I know it, because I read it in a book my uncle sent me on my birthday, called 'Frostful Teasery.' No relation to Tom Merry?"

"Here, draw it mild!" said Tom Merry.

"Did you read it?" said Blake, with interest.

"Yes," said Lovelace. "I read three lines. There were sixty pages, but I never got any further. Frostful Teasery, or the boy who never told an untruth, was a little bit too thick for me. The chap who wrote it must have been an awful rascal when he was a boy. At least, he seems to

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think it's a remarkable thing for a boy not to tell a lie. As if my dozens below would tell one! But, I say, now we've pulled the plums of the Schneider bird, it's time to deal with the chap who made such a ghastly mess of the first number of the 'Weekly.'"

"That's so," exclaimed Figgins. "I've been thinking of that. I saw them in the quad as we came in—the chap leaders—Mollish, Green, Fruit, and French. The other don't matter. We must make an example of those four."

"That's the wisest," said Blake. "Of course, we don't hear any more, though it was a rather tough sort of a joke. But these kids have got to be kept on their pins, or else they'll be getting up on their hind legs and growling crosky."

"Exactly!" Tom Merry remarked. "They've got to have their lesson. They've desecrated our study and got us into a row. I think that if they have a drubbing themselves it will do them good—especially the New House kids, who are bound to want a washing."

Figgins jumped up.

"If the editor of 'Tom Merry's Weekly' is looking for trouble—" he began.

"Peace!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "That was a slip, and I withdraw the remark."



One after another the rascals were flung into the pond, where they arose one by one, covered with mud and water, and looking extraordinarily sorry for themselves!

"Yes, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am weally surprised at you, Tom Merry. The great Figgins is my guest, and this is not the time to tell the unpleasant truth about the New House contents. I weally think—de w!"

Figgins had taken hold of the somewhat prominent nose of Arthur Augustus between a thumb and forefinger that closed together like a vice.

"Oh! Loggo! What are you up to?" spluttered Arthur Augustus.

"Who are you calling rascals? Hey?"

Arthur Augustus jerked his nose away. He was crimson with wrath.

"Figgins, I no longer regard you as a guest. I will give you one such a fearful thrashing that you will—"

Blake jerked the indignant snout of the School House back into his seat.

"Quiet, Gansy! No rowing allowed during an editorial meeting!"

"Welcome me! Figgins has taken liberties with my nose!"

"Oh, blow your nose!" said Figgins.

"I refuse to blow my nose. I limit nose use wathah!"

me, Blake, while I chastise Figgins. I shall lose my touch and strike you!"

"Fuss, lubber!" said Tom Merry, raising his hands. "Figgins being a guest, and you having made a disparaging allusion to the New House kids as rotters, I adjudge Figgins to be the aggrieved party. You have been rude, Gussy."

"Tom Merry! Woe! Gracious woe! I woe!"

"Ye, rube. Woe! All distressed of you!" said Blake solemnly.

"Ashamed of you!" repeated the rest of the staff. D'Arcy was greatly distressed. To be considered rube was about the most painful thing he could possibly imagine.

"My dear boys, I woe! did not mean to be woe to Figgins," he said. "Figgins, I withdraw my woe that



may have given you pain, and I will refrain from characterizing the New House wretches as wretches in the future. I am extremely sorry to have failed in the treatment resorted towards an honored guest!"

"I am satisfied," said Figgins, with a bow. "Your apology is accepted."

"Thank you, Figgins. It would be most painful to my feelings to be considered woe. You are sure that you are satisfied with my apology?"

"Oh, quite!" grinned Figgins. "That's all right, Gussy!"

"Because I assure you upon my honor as a gentleman that I woe! interested—"

"Nough said!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Let's come back to the subject. It was saying that the kids who spoiled our first number ought to be drowned, to show them how nice it is. What do you think of the idea?"

"Good!" said Herrick. "But they won't stand up for you in drench them, and you won't be able to get hold of them at the house. Figgins will take care of that!"

"I've not thinking of that. We don't want any old laws. There's a pond in the Head's garden, and what's the matter with that?"

"But will they go to the pond?"

"Yes, if we escort them with a gentle grip on the back of their necks."

"Ho, ho, ha! Let's go and give 'em a bath!" said Figgins.

"Vasa, wai-hah!"

The plan was adopted. It was necessary to give Gore and his friends a lesson; that was admitted on all hands, and a better plan could not be devised.

The nine juniors sallied forth into the quadrangle in quest of their foes.

They found the four juniors together. Gore, Mellish, French, and Pratt looked decidedly alarmed when the nine members of the staff of "Tom Merry's Weekly" suddenly bore down upon them and surrounded them before they could escape.

"Hallo!" said Gore, assuming a rather sickly smile at a hasty glance showed him that his escape was cut off.

"Nice afternoon, ain't it?"

"Jolly nice!" said Tom Merry. "Will you come for a walk?"

"Oh, a walk!" said Gore, rather taken aback. "Where?"

"Oh, in the Head's garden!"

"I'd rather not, if you don't mind, Merry. I—I—"

"But I do mind," said Tom, linking his arm in Gore's and marching him off. "Come along, you chaps. Follow the man from Cook's!"

"Right-ho!" said Figgins, putting his arm through Pratt's. "Come along, Pratt."

"I—I don't want to come, Figg!"

"Can't be helped. I want you, and that settles it."

"Oh course it does," said Leather, taking Mellish's arm. "Nice evening for a walk, Mellish! Come and have a turn round the Head's garden. What are you wriggling for? I say, Manners, take his other arm, will you?"

"Certainly!" said Manners.

"I—I don't want to come! Let me alone!" said Mellish, struggling.

"Ungrateful person!" said Monty Leather. "We're taking all the trouble to take you for a walk, and you don't want to come. Shocking!"

And Mellish was marched off between the Terrible Two, French made an attempt to dodge away, but Blake and Herrick seized him, and he was walked off in a similar manner. It was useless for the quartette to struggle; they had to go, whether they liked it or not.

"Hallo!" said Jimson, when they passed en route. "Where are you going! What's the joke?"

"Guller that chap?" asked Tom Merry. "He was one of them."

Jimson realized his danger, and tried to run; but it was too late. Kerr and Faily Wynn were upon him in a twinkling, and as he struggled, Arthur Augustus came to their assistance.

Jimson was quickly secured.

"Don't be so woff, Jimson," said the woe! of the School House. "There is woe! nothin' to be alarmed about. We are only goin' to give you a little bath in woe! for your kind favour this afternoon, deah boy!"

"I don't—I won't—I shan't! I—I—I—"

"Don't get excited. It's woe! had form, you know."

The unhappy five were marched into the Head's garden and right along to the pond. The wrens looked at the intruders and swam away, as if guessing that there was going to be a disturbance.

"Here we are, Gore," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "That was an awfully ripping joke of yours to-day, and we're so grateful we think one good turn deserves another. In you go!"

"I won't! I— Help! Help!"

"In you go!"

Gore's struggles were in vain. With a powerful twist Tom Merry sent him splashing into the water. It was shallow, but Gore went right under, and when he rose to his feet the water was up to his armpits.

"You beauty!" he yelled. "I'll— Oh! Oh!"

Mellish came whirling in, and the splash he made sent Gore flying. After Mellish went Pratt and French, right under the surface.

"Ho, ho, ha!" howled the staff of "Tom Merry's Weekly" in chorus. "How do you like that, kids?"

Four drenched and soiled heads rose from the water. Four faces steaming and dimy with mud glared furiously at the avenging staff.

"You beauty!" roared the four.

"Now in with Jimson! What are you kids dawdling for?"

"He is strugglin' in a verry woff manner!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "The digustin' woff beauty has outwangled my valiantest!"

"Shoo him in!"

Jimson struggled, but it was of no use. He went flying into the water.

the pond, and the four already there went reeling in the water. Now five heads rose above the surface.

Five half-dressed juniors scrambled towards the bank. They were met with floods of earth raining upon them, and were glad to recede.

"Let us get out!" said Mellish pleadingly. "We shall catch our death of cold!"

"Would that matter?" asked Blake.

"Let us get out! Please!"

"I don't think they ought to be allowed out," said Arthur Augustus, "until they have made the requisite acknowledgments. Do you apologize, you gentlemen?"

"No!" roared Goro furiously. "I don't, for one!"

"Then my advice is to let them remain there, dead boys!"

"We, we do, we do apologize!" exclaimed Mellish. "Goro can stay in here if he likes. I apologize in the most copious way, any way you like. Can I come out?"

"Yes, wretch!"

Mellish crawled out. One by one the delinquents emerged their contrition, and were allowed to follow. Goro was the last; but the water was cold, and he soon gave in.

"Now," said Tom Merry, with a lordly wave of the hand, "you may consider yourselves let off lightly. Instead of punishing you, we have given you a bath free, gratis, and for nothing. In future, mind you keep off the grass and leave the editorial office of 'Tom Merry's Weekly' severely alone!"

And the recipients of the free bath crawled away.

"We've taken a lot of trouble with those kids," said Blake; "but I don't regard it as time wasted, as they've been taught a valuable lesson."

"Just so," said Figgins. "It's the place of leaders of

public opinion like ourselves to bring them up in the way they should go."

"The first number of the 'Weekly' wasn't come out till Monday or Tuesday now, I expect," Tom Merry remarked thoughtfully; "but I think we shall be able to get on, with the editorial work now without so many interruptions."

And he was right.

CHAPTER 8.

"Tom Merry's Weekly," No. 1.

WEDNESDAY had come round again, and the youths went rejoiced at St. Jim's. It was the day of publication of the first number of "Tom Merry's Weekly." Owing to the destructive attack upon the editorial office, the date of publication had been advanced, and Wednesday had been fixed for the first appearance of the great paper.

Besides the staff, outside contributors had had a good deal of stuff put in, so there was quite a number of fellows eager to see their own efforts in print. It was not exactly in print, as the contributions were copied out on foolscap pages by one or another of the regular staff, but it amounted to the same thing.

Seniors as well as juniors took a great interest in the forthcoming publication. It was rumoured that the last paper contained a good many shits and jokes about the Upper Forms, and some of the seniors were keenly alive to ridicule.

After school on Wednesday the editorial office was besieged. Goro and his friends were there, ready for mischief if a chance offered, though the lesson they had had in the Head's pond had not been wholly lost, as they, Knooks resembled upon the door of the editorial office. It was opened at length by Tom Merry. The editor of "Tom Merry's Weekly" was looking as sunny and cheerful as usual, and the staff, who were all on the scene, were in high spirits.

"Hello!" said Goro. "Is that paper of yours coming out, Tom Merry?"

"Certainly, Gentlemen of St. Jim's, the first number of 'Tom Merry's Weekly' is now published," said the hero of the Staff. "It—"

"Where is it?"

"Give us a copy!"

"Hand it out!"

"Gentlemen, I regret to state that owing to our limited facilities for producing this important periodical, it has been found only possible to issue one copy, which will be read in turn by the subscribers," said the editor.

"Well, hand it out!" said Goro.

"I hope you put my poem in," said French. "Perhaps you've left it out because it was one up against you."

"Not at all. Your poem is in."

"Good! Let's see it."

"Gentlemen, there being only one copy of the 'Weekly,' and there being no numerous a crowd of eager persons, that copy will be placed in a position to be read by all at once," said Tom Merry. "All who are eager to read the first number of 'Tom Merry's Weekly' are requested to adjourn to the quadrangle."

"What the dickens for?" asked Goro.

"You'll see."

"Oh, come on, kids!" said Goro; and he marched off with the rest.

Then the staff issued from the study, Tom Merry carrying the bulky manuscript periodical under his arm. Monty Lowther followed with an oar on his shoulder, and then Manners, carrying a board. Blake had a pointer in his hand, and Figgins & Co., Hoovers, and D'Arcy, for some curious reason, carried cricket stumps.

A crowd, growing larger every moment, watched the setting up of the case in the quad. The board, which bore an invitation to all, was placed upon it, and the "Weekly" was put on the board. The editor's object was now clear. By displaying the "Weekly" on the case, as many as wished were enabled to read it at once.

Tom Merry took the pointer from Blake, and handled it like a showman. The rest of the staff gathered round the editor on either side. In front of the case gathered the crowd, looking over one another's shoulders at the title-page of the "Weekly."

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "it is requested that the smaller boys be allowed to stand in front, the taller ones farther back. The seniors will oblige by keeping in the rear. I am very pleased to see so many of the Upper Form fellows present, as it shows that they are not above appreciating the literary efforts of the Lower Forms. If they are able to obtain any hints from the 'Weekly' as to how to improve the Sixth Form magazine, they are quite



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welcome. It must be admitted that that stodge publication has been improved.

"Go on," said Kiblers, the captain of St. Jim's, laughing. "Let us see the paper, Merry."

"Here you are! Look, and frame your eyes on it."

The title page of the paper bore the inscription:

"Tom Merry's Weekly. A Journal devoted to the interests of sport, literature, and art. Published weekly by Tom Merry & Co., Study No. 15, School House, St. Jim's. Price nothing. No reduction for quantities."

Tom Merry turned over the first leaf.

"Gentlemen, before reading commences," he remarked gravely, "I may mention that the staff of this journal are ready for trouble, and are armed for the fray. If any gentleman presents taken exception to anything published, and attempts to do any damage to the paper, he will probably get hurt."

"You, watah!"

"Oh, go on with the penny reading!" said Gore.

Gore's eyes scanned the first page of the magazine. It contained the opening chapter of a great new serial, by G. Figgins, entitled: "The Red Chief; a Realistic Romance of the Wild West."

It was the Indian story improved, Figgins having refused on that point. The bloodshed had been taken out, and certainly the story was all the better for it. There was an illustration by Kerr, who drew very well, depicting the Red Chief on his mantang. Tom Merry left the front page open for the crowd to read.

"Say wiah," he remarked facetiously.

"Wiah!" shouted Gore.

"When?" echoed thirty or forty voices in chorus.

"I say, you haven't read it!" exclaimed Figgins wrathfully.

"And we're not going to," said Gore. "Turn over, Tom Merry. These who want to read that puffin can do it afterward. We want to get on with the wating now."

That was not complimentary to Figgins' serial. But it was pretty generally endorsed by the crowd standing before the magazine.

"Well," said Tom Merry, "we shall be here all the afternoon if you read every contribution, word for word. The magazine will pass from hand to hand afterwards, and then every fellow can go thoroughly into whatever pleases his taste."

"That's right enough," said Figgins.

And Tom Merry turned over. The second page contained more serial, but the third was devoted to poetry. And here the audience showed more attention.

The first was a poem by French of the New House, and it elicited much laughter. It was a parody of a song of Gilbert and Sullivan, and it referred to the postponed publication of the magazine. The first verse ran as follows:

"Then the enterprising editor is not editing,
And the magazine does not appear to date,
He gives explanations we are far from crediting,
About some jokers making him so late,
Some excuse his being to have—this, that, or 'tother,
When the editorial work's as slowly done,
Taking one consideration with another—with another—
A contributor's lot is not a happy one."

Lead laughter followed the reading of this effort, and French looked very pleased.

"A contributor's lot is not a happy one," sang Blake—especially when he gets dacked in a pond. Next item, please."

Tom Merry turned over.

The football column, signed J. Blake, was awarded general attention. It contained football news and notices, and some personal paragraphs. Opinions from readers were invited upon the following important question: Whether the St. Jim's First Eleven would not be materially improved by having some juniors included in it, instead of being composed wholly of seniors. Some of the seniors turned red, while the youngsters checked loudly.

"It will be remembered," the article went on, "that a leader has on one occasion played in a First Eleven match for St. Jim's, with great success and credit. If some of the seniors could be induced gracefully to retire and make room for Blake, Merry, and Figgins—to name only three juniors—we consider that the team would be much better than. This point is earnestly recommended to Kiblers for consideration."

Every eye turned upon Kiblers. Some of the seniors were looking annoyed, but the captain of St. Jim's only laughed.

"ucky young beggars!" said Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, laughing, too.

Then followed a "Football Song," by Tom Merry. It began with:

"Play up, play up, for the good old coil,
Play up, and play the game!
Play hard, play fair, and play to win!
Play up, for money and fame!"

There were several verses, of which the sentiment was excellent, whatever might be said of the versification.

An article on fashions, by Arthur Augustus D'Aarcy, was received with a good deal of guffing, and the audience said "Wiah!" promptly.

Next came the serious poetic effort of Herries, and its reception rather passed the poet. It was written in the well-known style, and was meant to be serious, but the readers seemed to see something decidedly humorous in it.

"A dicky-bird sat on a garden wall,
And spring onions grew below,
And the dicky-bird sighed, as the onion he eyed,
As he watched it grow and grow,
'Oh, charming spring onion,' the dicky-bird cried,
'I love you, I love you so!'

He sat on the wall, and he sang his song
Of love for that onion rare;
But his words were lost on the broccos tined,
And wasted on desert air.
He sang in vain, in his love and pain,
For the spring onion did not care.

And the summer passed, and then at last,
In his love and pain and woe,
Did the dicky-bird fall from that garden wall
By the side of the plant below,
And he slowly died by the careless side
Of the onion he worshipped so."

Herries thought that that little poem was pathetic enough to bring tears to the eyes of a French (sage), but apparently the St. Jim's boys did not take it in the right spirit. They laughed till the tears ran down their cheeks, and Herries looked indignant.

"I can't see what all this cackling is about," he said stiffly.

"You wouldn't," said Gore. "Ha, ha, ha! Poor little dicky-bird! Poor little beast! Ha, ha, ha! Charming spring onion! Oh, my hat! Turn over, Tom Merry, before I have a fit!"

The editor of the "Weekly" turned the leaf. There was nothing comic on the next page. It was devoted to photography, and was written by Henry Mansers, and it was serious, not to my Harry.

The audience requested Tom Merry to turn over, showing little interest in the work of Mansers, and less still in the article of the "Antiquities of the Collegiate School of St. James," by William Pratt, which followed.

Then came the teaching poem by Fatty Wynn, on a subject dear to the schoolboy heart, and especially dear to the heart of Fatty himself.

"Beautiful grub—my heart's delight!
Charming look by day and night,
How get enough of it—there's the rub!
Grab of the tuckshop—beautiful grub!

Beautiful breakfast—who would scorn
Bacon and eggs at early morn!
Hungry and fresh from the morning tub,
To grab of the morning—beautiful grub!

Beautiful dinner—when at last
The weary waiting hours have passed,
If it is late we could almost blub—
Grab of the assembly—beautiful grub!

Beautiful tea—we sally need
A rather more substantial feed;
But still we manage along in rub,
Grab of the evening—beautiful grub!

Beautiful supper—never doubt,
The best feed's when the lights are out,
To stand the tummy our cash we dub,
Grab of the night-time—beautiful grub!"

Fatty Wynn felt decidedly fattened at the notice taken
(Continued on page 18.)

YOU'LL FIND IT IN—



Address all letters: *The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*

THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK.

HELLO, chums! Your editor is telling you I'm simply bursting to tell you all about the splendid complete story of Tom Mervy & Co. at St. Jim's which is on the programme for next week, but too much "telling" here will spoil your treat for next Wednesday. Suffice it, then, that Martin Clifford continues with the journalism course at St. Jim's in his next story. The title is—

"BARRED BY THE BRAKES!"

So keep an eye open for it and read unweary to advance that it is a top-notch Green Champion also contribution. His quest to next week's enjoyment in the shape of a snappy, complete story, entitled—

"MONEY COMES A CROPPER!"

which, of course, features Jimmy Silver & Co. of Woodford, Potts, the Office Boy, supplies a comic "strip" of humor, which

"THE PUNCHER PALE!"

when you read this work, give their full share of adventure, thrills, and laughter-making episodes. This coming week's number makes a fitting start to the year 1933; don't on any account miss it.

Now let's see what lines of interest can be culled from the notebook.

THE TRAVELLING DENTIST!

"How! Yousp!" Should you be unprepared in that part of the country which is under the jurisdiction of the late of Sir George Council, and not just an ordinary-looking, blue-pointed motor-car, and here he's coming from the interior, don't jump to the conclusion that someone is being swindled. If you wait long enough you will see a scintillating concept from the back of the van, and it's his chance to see that he will be nursing his jaw. When you catch him what's the matter. It's quite likely he'll glare at you, and say:

"Can't you see I've just had a tooth out?" You'll stare in bewilderment at this information, but on hearing you will find it to be correct. That innocent-looking man is in reality a travelling dental surgery. A pop inside and you will see a compartment which does duty as a waiting-room; very likely you will see a mirror, and still further in the van you will come across the real "tooth-chamber," complete with chair, dentist, and racks of horrible-looking instruments. The tip idea is to save lives. This counsel controls THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,243.

11,000 school children, belonging to unprivileged schools. But you can bet your next ginger-wisp that a sight of this can't be very popular with the majority of them, for boys or girls, young or old, have an instinctive horror of the dentist, despite all the good work he does in the interests of our health. My way of contrast, in America the really up-to-date dentist has a moving picture theatre on a screen just in front of his "vicinity." So while that troublesome corner you try and laugh at the antics of Mickey the Mouse, and his fellow creations of the screen, perhaps the Sir Council will adopt this "stunt" in due course—it would certainly afford distraction to attractions!

A WHALE OF A FELLOW!

He lived to be two hundred years old, he weighed sixty-five tons, and was seventy feet long. A special lorry was built to carry his corpse from place to place, and policemen conducted his funeral remains through the City of London. No, this is not a conundrum; it's merely the matchless history of Eric, the giant whale, recently embalmed and brought from America to be exhibited at Olympia's circus. As the captain above states, Eric was a real whale of a fellow. If you get the chance, have a look at him—it's a sight you will never forget.

HEARD THIS ONE?

School Examiner (to dunder): "Can you tell me, my boy, who built the Ark?"

Duuder: "Er—no—er—"

School Examiner: "Correct!"

FIRST SLIDER LOOP!

The scene was the "upper sphere" over Holborn, near Brighton, the attraction was a Mr. G. J. Longmore, who was riding the horses in his air-glider. Suddenly the glider dipped the nose, covered up again, and, to everyone's amazement, performed a perfect loop. Somebody had said that a loop in an airplane was impossible, so Mr. Longmore's spectacular effort gave it the lie. Now if it is discovered Mr. Longmore holds the distinction of being the first man to do this trick in Britain. More power to his elbows—and his glider!

NEW LIGHTS FOR OLD!

To it possible, writes "Experiments," of Exeter, to roll a used torch battery so that it will be of service again! It is. If my Exeter correspondent tries into his nearest chemist and purchases about

half a pint of a strong oil-soluble solution on his way home from school today, he will soon be ready to step in another experiment. Now, he should take his used battery, from his torch, piece a dozen or so holes in its casing with a sharp instrument, and the place it in the oil-soluble solution for three or four hours. After that it should wipe the battery dry, fill up the holes he has made with some soft wax, then replace the battery in the torch. Yes, it will light up first time! Don't throw your solution away. "Experiment!" Keep it well-stoppered, for it will still retain sufficient strength to recharge three or four more batteries.

FELIX KEPT ON WALKING!

Quite recently a year-old cat was taken for a ride—not in the American sense of the word—but through-air traffic. In short, its owner, by using it, was going to a wedding. All through the ceremony the cat sat on the arm of the chair of the bride. It was delivered to the new home, whilst the former owner stood away, doubtless thinking all was well. But Felix did the astounding act the next day—he had vanished like a burst bubble. Nothing more was heard of him for six weeks. Then, when he was this first owner's quarters, started that up completely, and went to sleep. Like the Felix of the film, this "harmless" necessary had travelled the through-air traffic with-out leaving a hair—without making a performance of the road. He did it having the way home? 6,000 readers are invited to answer this puzzle.

HOW'S THIS FOR A HEAL?

Outlines are released to the perfect picture at world-wide old rusty and such-like, but there's a human touch about in the person of a native boy of Kharatun, who can give the biggest catch points and a beating in the direction. Without turning a hair, the amazing young fellow at one string swallowed a hotkey, seventeen rats, made a metal ring, a stack of resistance (not hollow), several inches of wire, and a number of screws. Unlike Oliver Twist he didn't eat his meat, but you can call him a tank for that. The officer has just asked that this Kharatun native ought to have a constitution of iron. Do we agree? We do! We do!

EGG-A-TOONS!

"Eggs! Fragile! With care!" If you should receive a small parcel from some friend in America with that inscription on the label, don't be surprised when you open it to find a miniature head and shoulders cartoon of the sender, but no sign of an egg. If you examine the cartoon carefully, you will find that it is in reality the shell of an egg upon which has been painted the sender's name. The orange of the cartoon hair and realistic eyebrows, nose, are carefully and artistically added to the "Siamese," which is then mounted on a base according to the taste of the "artist." This egg-a-toon comes in all the eggs in New York just now, and the creator of this "fad" is doing a roaring business. I should have stated earlier on that the egg is first "blown" before the artist starts to paint the Siamese, but there is no need for me to give the recipe here. It speaks for itself.

YOUR EDITOR,

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

d in poem. Some of the fellows began chanting the verse in choruses to the well-known case. Tom Merry was laughing as he turned over the page.

Marcy Lowther's second verse next, with several stanzas added to it, which was need not reproduce.

The readers wrangled their brows over it, striving to make out what it meant; and some thought they had succeeded.

Some called on Marcy Lowther for an explanation, but he did not vouchsafe one, and Gore declared his conviction that Lowther did not know what the poem meant any more than anybody else.

An epic poem in blank verse by Mellish followed. It commenced:

"I sing of the glorious days of old, when William the Conqueror reigned,
And the brave barons opposed the invader on the battlefield of Hastings;
When Harold held, and all his knights were slain or wounded,
And the modest invader triumphed over his foes."

There were a hundred lines, all on a par with the simple yet terse verse, and Mellish regarded them with an eye of pride, but the readers called loudly on Tom Merry to turn over the page.

"Next time!" came a dozen voices.

The next item was an article signed "T. M." It was an article on natural history, and some of the audience cried loudly for the lead to be turned, until it was discovered that the lead consisted of in the article was known as the Schneider-lead. Then they wanted to read it. It led off as follows:

"The peculiar bird known as the Schneider-bird is found in my study where it is especially well treated at the moment. It is a peculiar-looking object, the head being shaped somewhat like a cannon-ball, and quite as dark. The upper surface is bare, but dotted with a few ragged tufts of hair. The look is long and pointed, and is being continually stuck into affairs which are really no concern of the Schneider-bird at all. This unpleasant creature is made in Germany, and it is the wish of everyone who comes in contact with it that it should be caged and taken back to its native habitat."

There was a good deal more in the same strain over which the jokers giggled jejeunely and the serious tried a run to keep serious faces.

"I say, that won't do, you know!" said Kildare.

Tom Merry tossed the lead.

Kerr's poem on "Barnackobren" followed. Kerr had commenced to take out the "Innocent Southrons," and so he had been allowed to fill a page with his patriotic effort.

The next page was devoted to advertisements.

They announced a great deal of chucking among the readers. Some of them were comical.

"WANTED.—A kind nurse to look after the Third Form and see that they wash their socks in the morning—or, at least, once a week."

The Third Form legs colored and looked uncomfortable. The next advertisement was written by a Shell boy, and contained a hit at the Fourth Form.

"FOUND.—A Euclid, with leaves uncut, presumably belonging to a Fourth Form boy. Name can be had by applying to X Y Z, office of this paper."

The post was evidently the work of a Fourth-Former, and written as a reply to the above:

"FOUND.—An exercise book, covered with finger-marks, and thereby presumed to belong to some kid in the Shell. The owner can have same on submitting finger-prints to be compared with the numerous specimens on the exercise book."

Another one had evident application to the wail of St. Jim's.

"LOST.—A brain-box, with contents. Anybody finding same is requested to restore it to its owner, A. A. D.A., who is sadly in need of it."

There were many more in the same strain. Later on came a poem in the serial form, by Blake, of which we give a specimen. Whether it was meant to be comic or tragic the readers could not for the life of them decide.

"It was in the Middle Ages, in the days of hard and
ages,

Whom we read of in the pages of the chroniclers of old,

In the time of war and travail, in an ancient feudal castle,

Thronged by many a valiant vassal, dwelt a noble baron bold,

And this baron had a daughter, as all noble barons ought,

And the young men came to court her from the north, south, east, and west;

And among her many suitors, crowding together toilers,

Young Sir Fatted de Fimbreston was the one she loved the best.

"Now Sir Fatted was a chappy who might make any chappy laggie,

But his herbage was scrappy, and his back balance was nil;

He could sing and dance most lightly, he could sing and make most lightly,

He could amuse her nightly, but he couldn't pay his bill;

And the baron had vast riches, and despised poor suitors, which is

Very wrong, abut—but such is life in times of new or old.

He avowed that Lady Fiera should accept a rich adorer,

As her mother had before her when she wed the baron bold."

After the second verse was written "To be continued."

"Well, that's a fine go thing," said Gore. "There's no more of it now. But I say, Blake, you won't really go on doing a really wicked thing like that, will you?"

"Oh, go and cut coke!" said Blake.

The next page occasioned a good deal of surprise among the staff as well as among the readers. The fact was that this page, although not at the end, had been left till last, and had been written in at the last moment. The task had been entrusted to D'Arcy, and Tom Merry had not had time to look over it.

D'Arcy had written in the page from notes scribbled on different fragments of paper, and had somehow got them mixed, and so the article was a little mixed also, the wail of St. Jim's being in too great a haste to notice that the thing did not make sense.

He had, in fact, mixed up three articles together—a football article by Blake, a gardening paragraph by Jimson, and a paragraph dealing with the falling off of the subscriptions of the hobby club by Mansers.

The result was as follows, and it was read out amid screams of laughter from the audience. The staff looked very uncomfortable.

"The present football season promises to be one of the most successful ever known at St. Jim's. Of the games played so far, five eleven matches, the School have won seven, lost one, and drawn one—a very creditable result. In one of the matches a junior played, as the team were a man short, and he kicked the winning goal—which men of the juniors consider a good reason why at least one junior should always be placed under a glass and kept in the full sunshine, and, being kept moderately damp—but not too much so—the growth would be rapid. The greatest care will have to be exercised if this experiment is to be a success, for the least carelessness may spoil all, and instead of a healthy growth the specimens will very probably show a decrease in the subscriptions during the current season, which we hope is rather due to an increase in the interest taken in fester than to a diminution of the interest taken in the indoor hobby."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the audience. "That sounds mixed!"

"You see, Gony!" growled Tom Merry. "That's because I hadn't time to read over the proof—I mean the page! Nice sort of an act you are, aren't you?"

"I object to hold's characterised as an act, Tom Merry."

"Well, you are see! Let's get on!"

"Here, I say, I'd like that read over again!" said Gore.

But Tom Merry turned over. They now came to the penals and commendations.

"Why is a Third Form kid like a monkey?—Because he was born so."

"Why is Knox, the prefect, like a twofigit?—Probably early training."

(Continued on page 22.)

A MYSTERY SOLVED!

SILVER'S

COMPLETE STORY.

SPOOK!

By
OWEN CONQUEST.CHAPTER I.
Christmas Eve!

"IT'S a bit thick!"

Tubby Muffin of the Beakwood Fourth made that remark in tones of great seriousness.

The fat junior was standing in the deep porch of Jimmy Silver's home, the Fetory. He was spending Christmas as a guest—an unwanted guest—of Jimmy Silver; but, judging by the discontented expression on Tubby's podgy face, he was not widely satisfied with the experience.

"It's a bit thick," repeated the fat junior, as the Fistical Four, who had just returned from a trip to the village, displayed no signs of having heard him. "Just a bit too thick—that's my opinion."

"Hallo! Hallo! Bill here, then, Tubby?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell, with a grin. "I must say, I agree with you, for once."

Tubby Muffin smiled a gratified smile.

"Glad you see the point, Lovell! You think it's a bit thick, too, do you?"

"Oh, thick! doesn't describe it," said Lovell seriously. "I should say that the way you've landed yourself on us this year is the thickest thing I've ever heard of."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tubby Muffin's podgy face turned a shade redder than usual.

"Why, you chucky rotter, didn't you invite me here for Christmas, months ago, Jimmy Silver? Didn't you beg and pray of me, only a week ago, not to let you down?"

"I jolly well didn't, old bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blast!" sniffed Tubby. "Anyway, the fact remains that it's a bit thick. Here have I declined a dozen invitations for Christmas to come here, and now that I'm here, it turns out that I'm in danger of being turned out to-morrow—on Christmas Day, of all days!"

"But you're not the only one who's affronted, old chap," chuckled Baby. "If old Dowling carries out his threat to end Mr. Silver's lease to-morrow, we shall all be in the same boat."

Tubby Muffin nodded.

"Very probably. But the rest of you don't matter much. You're all accustomed to a poverty-stricken kind of Christmas, anyway. The chap I'm thinking about is myself."

"We'll now hear a little dust omitted 'Me and Myself'?" grinned Newcome. "Sung by the Twin Brothers Muffin?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE GUN LEASER.—No. 1, 245.

"Oh, really, Newcome! I don't see anything funny in it. My idea is that it's a jolly serious matter."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"It is—for my people and me."

"Me, too," said Tubby gravely. "You've invited me here as your guest, Jimmy Silver, and I think it's up to you. I suggest the least you can do is to put me up at a decent country hotel somewhere in the district, and pay the bill."

"Great pip!"

"Can't be did, I'm afraid," said Jimmy Silver, with a chuckle. "But I'll tell you what I will do—I'll give you your fare home on condition that you go now, and promise not to come back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tubby Muffin asserted.

"Blast! What do you think's going to happen, then? Are you going to allow that old rotter Dowling to check me out, when to-morrow comes?"

"Remains to be seen," answered Jimmy Silver, with a shrug. "I'd like to check him out, personally; but the paper insists on our being polite to him, in case he changes his mind at the last moment and reneges the lease, after all."

Tubby Muffin's little eyes glowered sardoniously.

"I say, you chaps, I've got an idea! At the least won't you renew it willingly, why not get him to renew it against his will?"

"Eh?"

"How the thump do you propose to do that?" asked Jimmy Silver.

The fat junior checked.

"Easy! First of all, we'll waylay him—masked, of course, so that he won't know us—and tie him to a stake down in the cellar?"

"My hat?"

"Then we'll leave him down there for a day or so, with the rats running all over him and so on, and try to starve him into submission."

"Money wanted, aunt!"

"If that fails," said Tubby, warning to his tank, "we can start using force."

"Oh, great pip!"

The Fistical Four suddenly found themselves blinking at the open doorway of the house, through which they had just spotted the unpopular Mr. Dowling coming out on to the porch. Tubby Muffin, having his back to the door, did not observe the new arrival, and went on, quite cheerfully—

There once was a ghost that did right,
For it wandered about in the night,
And ruined the rest
Of an unwelcome guest
Till he fled from the house in a fright!

"Dawling's a pig-headed old coter! He may take a bit of drifting, but once we've got him in our clutches in the cellar, it'll be easy. What are you making faces for, Baby?"

"You—you fat ass!"

"You can torture him, you see," went on Tubby brightly. "I've read a lot of books about torture, and you'll find me awfully good at it. I can show you how to rig up a rack and make a thousand. Torture'll soon bring him to bed, mark my words! Why, he'll reveal the lease or anything else you want concerning it—Yeep!"

Tubby Muffin suddenly felt himself swung round by the snout of the rack. He fairly jumped as he recognized his captor.

"You young scoundrel!" roared Mr. Dawling. "So you are planning to torture me—eh?"

Tubby emitted a terrified yelp.

"Ow! Not at all, sir! Nothing of the kind! I was just telling these chaps what a nice chap you are, and how I admire and respect you."

"Oh, ye gods!"

"Fat young villain!" boomed Mr. Dawling, shaking Tubby Muffin like a cat shaking a mouse. "I distinctly heard you planning to imprison me and starve me, and—"

"Oh dear! That was somebody else with your name, sir!" gasped the fat junior. "An' awful roger, sir—not a bit like you! Stop sh-sh-shaking me! Whoooop!"

Mr. Dawling stopped, with the result that Tubby Muffin lost his balance, and collapsed on the floor of the porch with a howl.

"Try to put your miserable scheme into effect and see what happens to you," said Mr. Dawling, with a scowl at the Bookwood justices. "I may tell you before you start, though, that since I was visited the other night by that alleged ghost, I keep a revolver in my bedroom—a loaded revolver!"

"Oh!"

"Since I have had time to think it out," said Mr. Dawling, with a curl of his lip, "I am more than inclined to suspect that that so-called ghost was one of you young wretches, trying to frighten me away from the house. Well, you may as well know that the next time I get a ghostly visitor, I shall not hesitate to fire."

"You're wrong there, anyway, Mr. Dawling!" said Jimmy Silver sharply. "I can answer for it that none of us had a hand in anything of the kind."

"Hear, hear!"

Mr. Dawling shrugged.

"So that's it, may. I shall shoot the next ghost, and we'll see what effect a bullet has on it. Take careful note, also, that I shall use it in self-defence if I am attacked, wherever the attackers may be."

"Oh dear! I wouldn't think of attacking you, sir!" gasped Tubby Muffin, as he recoiled to his feet again.

"As I just told these fellows, I wouldn't dream of attacking anyone so nice as you, even though I was paid to do it."

"You are wise," said Mr. Dawling, with an unpleasant smile. "See that you remain so."

He bestowed a curt nod on the juniors, and went inside again.

"Nice chap—I don't think!" remarked Jimmy Silver, with a grin. "Well, he's under no illusions as to what Tubby thinks of him now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, crikey! D-d-do you think he means what he said about using his revolver on the ghost?" asked Tubby Muffin. "Because, if he did—"

"Scared as if he did, anyway," grinned Baby. "What about it?"

Tubby scopped his fat brow which, for unfathomable reasons, had broken out in a perspiration.

"Oh, n-nothing!" he replied. "Excuse me, you chaps, but I've just remembered I want to talk to that butler chap, Jenkinson."

And Tubby rolled into the lounge at express speed, leaving the Fintal Four staring after him in mystification.

CHAPTER 2.

The Ghost Hunter!

JENKINSON!

"Sir!"

"A cushion!"

"Yes, sir!"

The Fintal Four started.

It was morning, bed-time, and they were in the lounge. Tubby Muffin had just rolled in from the kitchen, which he haunted as much as the ghost of the Priory was alleged to haunt the corridors of the old house. Having arrived,

he was now proceeding to make himself comfortable—with the assistance of Jenkinson, the butler.

It was not surprising to see Muffin ordering Jenkinson about like a chattel-slave; Muffin had a habit of treating servants like that. What was surprising was to see Jenkinson obeying the orders with the same amount of deference as he might have given to a foreign potentate.

"Another cushion, Jenkinson!" said Tubby Muffin. "Hurry up!"

"A thousand thanks, Master Muffin! Here you are, sir!"

"And don't lunge into me, man!" said Tubby Muffin, with a lolly froon, flicking an imaginary speck of dust from his arm where the butler had brushed against him.

"So more careful, Jenkinson; I have noticed that you are very careless."

Jenkinson bowed.

"I am very sorry, sir!"

"The Fintal Four gasped.

"What's the idea, Jenkinson?" asked Jimmy Silver. "I haven't noticed you behave like this when Muffin's been here other holidays."

Jenkinson made a depressing gesture.

"Really, Master Jimmy, I trust that I am always respectful to my superiors!"

"I'll hope so, too!" agreed Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "But I was talking about Muffin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Haat!" roared Tubby Muffin furiously. "Jenkinson treats me with respect because he knows he's only a blooded rascal, while I'm obviously of aristocratic blood. That's so, sir, is it, Jenkinson?"

"Exactly so, sir!" said Jenkinson gravely, with a deep bow. "If I might say so, sir, you took the words out of my mouth!"

"Great pip!"

"Now perhaps you'll believe me!" said Tubby, with a triumphant look at the astonished Fintal Four.

"Jenkinson!"

"Sir!"

"I am thinking of going to bed. Are my slippers ready?"

"I have them here, sir."

"Take 'em shoes off, then!" ordered Tubby.

The Fintal Four gasped.

They gasped still more when Jenkinson solemnly came forward and bent down to obey.

Tubby sat back, loftily surveying the others, while the butler unlaced his shoes.

Jenkinson, having performed the unending operation, glanced up inquiringly at his lord and master.

"You wish the shoes removed, sir?" he asked.

"Of course; take them off at once! Don't be a fool, Jenkinson!" snapped the amateur aristocrat.

Tubby Muffin had an iron that grays, blue-blooded aristocrat addressed the lower orders like that. He looked at the others again with considerable pride.

But pride goeth before a fall, and Tubby Muffin's fall was almost due now.

As Jenkinson bent down again and grasped Tubby's foot in both hands, Jimmy Silver took a pin from the lapel of his jacket and leaned forward.

Jenkinson tugged. At that same moment Jimmy Silver jabbed the business end of the pin into the rear portion of Jenkinson's anatomy.

About a tenth of a second later there was a crash. Jenkinson leaped into the air. Tubby's feet, having no option, leaped with him, and the fat and hardy aristocrat shot out of his chair and hit the carpet a terrific blow with the back of his neck.

"Crash!"

"Yoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Wooo! Whoooop!" howled Tubby Muffin, rolling over on the carpet in a manner most embarrassing for an aristocrat. "Jenkinson, you fool! I beg you, sir!"

"Oh! Ah! Oh! I'm here, sir! I beg your pardon, sir. I'm sure! One of the young gentlemen inserted a pin into my back, I fancy. Oh!"

"Like your clock to let it affect me, then!" howled Tubby Muffin furiously. "You're a fool, Jenkinson!"

"Yes, sir."

"Kick him, Jenky!" advised Jimmy Silver. "I can't make out why you're bothering him up! But, anyway, you have my permission to kick him!"

"Oh, sir! I couldn't think of doing anything as disrespectful to Master Muffin!" said the butler, in tones of gentle reproach.

"May I now take off your shoes for you, Master Muffin?"

Tubby Muffin started.

"No; I'll jolly well take 'em off myself now! Yah?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Boo!" said the fat juniper; and, having changed his shoes for slippers, he rolled up to bed—without even wishing his Hookwood colleagues a merry Christmas for the following day!

"Sh-sh!"

"Quiet!"

"Lead on, Marshall!"

Four shadowy figures tiptoed across the landing on the first floor of the Priory, and started stepping cautiously down the broad staircase.

It was some hours later. One o'clock had just chimed out from the big grandfather clock in the hall. The residents of the Priory were usually abed and fast asleep at such an hour. But four, at least, were exceptions to that rule.

The four in question were the Fictorial Four of Hookwood. Jimmy Silver and his chums had made up their minds that on Christmas Eve, the favourite night of the year for the appearance of ghosts, they would remain awake as long as possible on the chance that the ghostly manifestations which they had recently experienced at the Priory would be repeated.

Muffled round a small electric fire in Jimmy Silver's room, they had waited in vain for a yell of alarm like that which had aroused the house on the first night of Mr. Dowling's arrival.

No noise of that kind had so far been heard. But, in the still night air, the junipers had suddenly heard a muffled sound from the direction of the general floor of the house. That sound had decided them, and they had trooped silently out to investigate.

They wondered, as they crept down the stairs, whether the sounds emanated from the library, where mysterious rappings had been heard on a previous occasion. But as they reached the foot of the staircase and moved slowly across the hall, all four heard a movement which came clearly from the dining-room.

With hearts beating rather rapidly, the Fictorial Four stopped outside the door of the dining-room.

"Come from here, right enough, you chaps!" whispered Jimmy Silver. "I suggest we all step in together and see what there is to see!"

"All agree, Jimmy?"

"Ready, then?"

"Ready for anything!"

"In we go!"

And Jimmy Silver opened the door and led the way in.

Instinctively the eyes of the Fictorial Four turned first to the panel which led the way to the secret passage they had explored several times since their arrival for the vase. They gazed at what they saw.

The moon was shining, and its light, reflected from the snow outside the house, illuminated every corner of the room. So clear was the light that there was no chance of their seeing an optical illusion.

They saw the panel leading to the secret passage slowly closing!

Fascinated, they watched till the aperture closed completely. Then Jimmy Silver turned to the others, his eyes opened wide with excitement.

"See that?" he asked.

"Couldn't miss it!" said Lovell. "Someone's on the prowl, that's a fact. I wonder who?"

"That remains to be seen," answered the leader of the Fictorial Four. "We can see first not if we follow him. Are you all game?"

"What do you say?"

"After me, then!"

Jimmy Silver strode across the room and put his thumb on to the hidden spring which controlled the movement of the panel.

The panel opened again. Jimmy ducked and stepped into the secret passage, and his three chums followed capably after him.

For a moment the darkness of the passage deprived them of their powers of vision. Then, as their eyes grew accustomed to it, they saw ahead of them a faint, fishery light.

Jimmy Silver gave a gasp, and started treading swiftly though cautiously in the direction of the light. The others followed suit.

A few steps brought them up to it. They saw that it was a beam of light coming from a torch in the hand of someone who was creeping his way along.

"Callar him!" said Jimmy Silver suddenly.

The Fictorial Four sprang simultaneously. The unknown Tom Cox Library.—No. 1,245.

prober, taken completely by surprise, went over like a tomcat.

"Get him!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "Let's have a look at his chimney!"

And then, from underneath them, came a gasping voice which they all recognised.

"Oo! Yoong! I say, you fellows—"

"Tabby!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

CHAPTER 3.

A Shock for Mr. Dowling.

"TUBBY!"

"What the merry thump—?" Jimmy Silver & Co. released their captive and eyed him with looks of utter amazement in the light of the torch.

Tabby Muffin staggered to his feet, puffing and blowing like a grampus.

"Ow! Poo! What d'you think you're doing, you silly asses? Go!"

"You—you fat idiot!" scattered Jimmy Silver. "Who is the name of goodness are you prowling about for a this hour of the night?"

"—I—I say, you fellows—"

"What's all this clothing on the floor?" demanded Lovell before Tabby could go on with his explanation. "Look like—Well I'm dashed!"

"It's Jenkinson's jacket and waistcoat!" gasped Newcomb.

"Just what I thought! What an earth—"

"I say, you chaps, is that really what it is?" demanded Tabby Muffin. "Oh ho! There's going to be trouble now!"

"What is the name of all that wonderful does it a' mean?" asked Jimmy Silver. "If you know anything about it, Tubby, for goodness' sake explain!"

"Oh ho! I do!" gasped the fat juniper. "Look here, you chaps, if you want to avoid bloodshed you'll have to do something quick!"

"Bloodshed?"

"Just that!" gasped Tabby. "You know what this means—this clothing! It means that Jenkinson has dressed up as a ghost again!"

"What?"

"Fact!" said Tabby, almost tearfully. "I've kept it from you up till now, just to oblige Jenkinson; but it'll have to come out. Jenkinson has been running around this passage ever since you arrived, rattling on the walls and wandering out into the house as a ghost!"

"Jenkinson?" asked Jimmy Silver, almost dazedly. "Why the thump did he do it?"

"To scare away old Dowling, of course, so that he'd get the idea the place was haunted, and let your pass round the house!" was Tabby Muffin's surprising reply.

"That's the queer lark playing now, I came down because I heard him going down the stairs and wanted to stop him."

"Great pip!"

"This passage leads in some way up to Dowling's bedroom, where there's another panel that opens," explained Tabby. "I know all that—but I've kept it dark for Jenkinson's sake."

"You mean because you could get him under your thumb and get snacks and service at all hours of the day and night," grinned Newcomb. "Now we understand why Jenkinson was so nice to you."

"My hat! You!"

"I say, you fellows, don't ret!" gasped Tabby. "This is serious. You heard old Dowling say this morning that he'd shoot the next ghost he saw! Well, he stands by to do so! I saw him putting out his revolver by his bed as I passed his room on my way up!"

"Oh, wipers! Then you mean—"

"That Jenkinson's on his way to give Dowling a fright, and that Dowling's going to shoot! Just that!" scathed Tabby.

"I warned him this morning, but he only laughed and said he could take care of himself. When I heard him go downstairs just now, I thought I'd warn him again. But if I'm not quick I shall be too late now. Oh dear!"

"Good heavens! Then it's urgent!" said Lovell. "Do you know how to get up to the bed-room this way, Jimmy?"

"Didn't you ever know it led upstairs," Jimmy Silver replied.

"There's only one thing to do, fellows—we must go up to the bedroom and stop it happening that way!"

"Come on, then!"

Filled with sudden anxiety for the safety of the terrified ghost, the Fictorial Four tossed back and raised for the cut that led into the dining-room.

They scrambled through the aperture.

Then, at the very moment when they reached the dining-room door, came a sound from the floor above that made every heart miss a beat.

It was a shout, in a voice which they all recognized as Dowling's, and it was followed immediately by a sharp, loud explosion.

Dowling had fled!

"Quick!" said Jimmy Silver hoarsely.

He wrenched open the door and fairly flew up the stairs, the rest streaming after him.

As they ran, came the sound of another shot. Jimmy Silver, with a desperate spurt, reached Dowling's bed-room and burst through the doorway. The others entered close on his heels.

The sight that greeted them palmed them up with a jerk, almost paralyzed for a moment.

In the moonlight that was streaming through the windows they could see Dowling sitting up in bed, a revolver in his hand. Opposite him, by the wall, was a gray, spectral figure, hooded and shrouded, with a face that seemed to be the face of a skeleton.

"Has it gone!" he asked tremulously. "Tell me it's no longer here, for Heaven's sake!"

"All serene, sir! You're all right now!" said Jimmy Silver. "It certainly did look weird—gave me quite a turn!"

"You saw it, then?" gasped Mr. Dowling. "Then I am not losing my reason! For a moment I thought that must be the explanation. But the explanation must be that it was a—"

"A ghost!" suggested Lovell.

Mr. Dowling shuddered.

"I cannot bear to think about it, Mr. Silver, may I ask a favour of you?"

"By all means, my dear sir!" said the bewildered Mr. Silver. "What is it?"

"Can I have the loan of your car and chauffeur to take me to the nearest hotel to-night? I do not wish to remain another hour in this dreadful house!"

"By all means, if you wish it," replied Mr. Silver. "But I do not yet understand—"

"Nar de I; and I do not seek to understand," said Mr.



Dowling was sitting up in bed, a revolver clamped in his hand, firing wildly at a spectral figure which stood at the foot of the bed.

There was a spurt of flame from the revolver, and another sharp explosion, then another and another.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The junction started blankly. Instead of collapsing under the rain of bullets Jenkinson—if Jenkinson it was—continued to stand up by the wall, apparently unharmed.

The revolver, emptied of ammunition, fell from Dowling's nervous hand. He uttered a howl of sheer terror.

"Help! Help! I'm haunted! Help!"

Jimmy Silver made a dash for the electric light switch. As he did so there was a movement on the part of the dim, gray figure of the "ghost." Before the light went on the weird spectre had vanished as if into thin air.

The light came on, and the junction crowded into the bedroom. After them came others from other bed-rooms—Mr. and Mrs. Silver and servants—all looking decidedly nervous at the sensational night alarm.

Mr. Dowling, his nerves completely gone, was leaning back on the pillow, his face ghastly.

Dowling, shuddering again. "You still want to remove the book in the Priory?"

"I must certainly do it. Are you, then, willing to remove it?"

"Very willing indeed!" gasped Mr. Dowling. "I will sign the document before I go, if you like!"

And he did.

Less than half an hour after Mr. Dowling was sitting back in Mr. Silver's car, on his way to the nearest hotel.

He felt very glad to be leaving the house he had come to take over for himself. But he felt no more glad than the inhabitants of the Priory felt to see the back of him.

"And now for Jenkinson!" said Jimmy Silver, when the car had vanished down the snow drive. "How he dodged those bullets passes understanding."

"That is, assuming it was Jenkinson," said Lovell. "If it wasn't, then—"

"Pardon me, gentlemen—did I hear my name mentioned?" came a respectful voice from the hall.

It was Jenkinson himself.

CHAPTER 4.

Jenkinson Explains.

"JENKINSON, you old faddist!" "Thank goodness you're safe!" exclaimed Mr. Silver. "Is it possible, Jenkinson, that there is any truth in this amazing story my son has told me?"

"If Master Jimmy has suggested that I have been in any way disrespectful, sir—"

"He has suggested that you have deliberately turned this into a haunted house so as to frighten away Mr. Dowling and get him to renew the lease!" said Mr. Silver sternly. "Is this true, Jenkinson?"

"Really, sir! It is a most extraordinary suggestion." "It is, but you haven't answered my question," said Mr. Silver, his eyes twinkling. "Come now, Jenkinson, own up!"

"Really, sir, it would be very painful for me to have to admit that I had so far forgotten myself—"

"Well, of all the blazes!" said Tabby Muffin indignantly. "Didn't I find you one night crawling out of the secret passage into the dining-room, dressed up as a blessed ghost? And didn't I agree to help you by keeping silent?"

Jenkinson permitted himself the luxury of a slight smile. "Not quite, sir. The exact circumstances of your remaining silent, I believe, were that I should treat you with great deference, and supply you with large stacks at regular intervals during the day!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Why, you cheeky beast—" gasped Tabby.

"That is true!" said Mr. Silver, with a nod. "Jenkinson! For a better, I mean say you've done the most original thing I have ever heard of. In ordinary circumstances it would be irreparable, but the circumstances were perhaps a little—"

"Doubtful, sir?" suggested Jenkinson. "That was what I thought. Because of that I took the liberty of acting without authority in a somewhat irregular fashion. I trust that you will be able to overlook the matter, sir?"

"Overlook it!" exclaimed Mr. Silver joyously. "Why,

you have given us all the best Christmas present imaginable! But the revolver shot, man—how on earth did it happen that they failed to hit you?"

"Oh, that, sir? The explanation is that Master Muffin warned me that Mr. Dowling was likely to shoot the one ghost he saw. I accordingly took the precaution of substituting blank cartridges for those already in the revolver in Mr. Dowling's bed-room!"

"My hat! So that's it!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Jensie, you're a golden marvel! As to you, Tabby, you'll have a large party indeed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All's well that ends well," said Mr. Silver. "Thanks to you, Jenkinson, we shall continue to live at the Priory. I can promise you that I shall not forget this service. And now for bed!"

Tabby Muffin passed and looked round at Jenkinson. "Being me up a screw to my bed-room!" ordered Tabby—"something substantial, while you're about it?"

Jenkinson smiled. "I'm afraid you must excuse me, Master Muffin. I am on my way to bed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tabby's dream lasted!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "Never mind, old fat man! You've done your bit in the little affair, if you never did anything before in your life! Come along with me to the kitchen, and we'll see what we can find!"

"Thanks, old chap!" said Tabby promptly.

He accompanied his host to the kitchen, and managed to find sufficient to satisfy all his needs, extensive though they were. And when Christmas Day dawned, the bright winter sunlight that streamed through the windows of the Priory revealed Tabby sleeping soundly, with his face wearing a happy smile that told of joys that had gone, and new greater joys that were to come!

(Good old Jenkinson, he's done the trick all right! Next week's grand New Year's party is entitled: "Merry Goggles a Cropper!"—and he certainly does it!)

EASTWOOD SHIELD LEAGUE.

RESULTS OF MATCHES!
 INCLUDING GO TO THE TOP!

By "OLD BOY."

Greycliffe.

SEVERAL extra matches were played early in the week, the most important of these being the visit of Greycliffe to St. Frank's. I made the somewhat lengthy journey, and was well rewarded. It was a hot struggle from the first kick, and the Priors contrived to give the league leaders a nasty shock! A brilliant save goal by Harry Wharton decided the issue late in the second half, and though Nipper and his men fought doggedly, they found the visiting defence too good for them. Squiff in goal was super.

It can easily be understood that after that stirring success on foreign soil, Harry Wharton & Co. were more than ready for their encounter with St. Jim's. I travelled over with Tom Merry and his team, and there was no doubting the spirit of cool determination in which the Saints faced the most critical game of the season to date.

Wharton won the toss, and kicked with the sun.

The Priors wanted no cheer. An advance on the St. Jim's left was readily foiled by Bob Cherry, and the leather sped to Wharton. From Wharton to Nugent, and from Nugent out to Harry Singh on the wing. The match really ground, drew Kerr, and passed inside again to Nugent. With Herrie dashing across to intercept, Nugent acted coolly and skillfully. He waited for Herrie, then tipped the ball to Harry Wharton's feet, and went down under the left

Heiric's charge. Next moment there was the flash of a splendid object, low down to Emily Wynne's left, and the net bulged!

The Faldett picked the ball out, looking the picture of misery. This was his return to the team after two weeks' absence with a damaged wrist—and he had been beaten in the first minute!

"Good!" "Oh, good man, Wharton!" "Up, Priors!"

On a foreign ground, with most of the cheering urging on the Priors, things looked black for St. Jim's. But in a

right corner, a good team side and eight every inch of the way—and St. Jim's fought magnificently during the ensuing quarter of an hour.

At half-time the score was unbroken. It was plain that Priors, who have been experimenting with their goalkeepers, trying first Baskette, then Haxelton, and now R. Q. I. Field, otherwise Squiff, have found a good man at last, and they should stick to him. For the Saints it would be difficult to pick out a man to individual praise. The Saints' steadiness alone saved them from a further deficit.

But time was on, and though the Saints were now giving as good as, and even more than, they took, the score was still out of all account then.

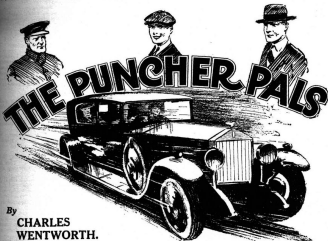
Thus, like a deer, D'Arcy went through and better being bowled over, managed to centre squarely to Tom Merry. Though surrounded, Tom did not hesitate. He tripped, sidestepped, and hit the leather hard through a sudden gap. Squiff dived, but he was a fraction too late—and something like a gap of dismay went up from the Greycliffe's supporters round the ropes.

It was a fitting result to a great fight. There was no weak link in the Saints' armour, and their exemplary steadiness in the face of the Greycliffe's brilliance unadmittedly saved the game for them. The Priors are a great side, but they rely mainly on dodging their opponents with unexpected ruses. The Saints, on the other hand, are an invulnerable as stone rocks, and it is, I believe, impossible to "rattle" them. It will be very exciting to see which of these teams is appointed as the finish of the season, and we must not forget that there is a return match yet to be played between them.

| RESULTS. | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| GREYCLIFFE .. 1 | ST. JIM'S .. 1 |
| Wharton | Merry |
| ANNESFORD .. 1 | RYEGOMBE .. 2 |
| Foss | GLASS, FOR. |
| BANNINGTON .. 0 | GLAY (2), MACK (2), |
| SHAM, FOR. | Wootton, and |
| CLAREMONT .. 2 | CLAREMONT .. 0 |
| Kerr, Nugent, Herrie, | Wootton |
| SHIGLEFFE .. 2 | BAUGHOT .. 0 |
| Wharton (2) | |
| WYNN, WYNN .. 4 | ST. JIM'S .. 0 |
| EMERYWOOD .. 4 | ST. FRANK'S .. 2 |
| Silver, Lovell, | For, Nugent |
| Shed, Wynn | |

Results of Extra Matches played during the week.

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| ANNESFORD .. 1 | EMERYWOOD .. 2 |
| Wynn | Shed (2) |
| BANNINGTON .. 0 | BAUGHOT .. 2 |
| SHAM, FOR. | Forley (2) |
| CLAREMONT .. 2 | ST. JIM'S .. 2 |
| Kerr, Nugent, Herrie, | For, Baskette |
| RYEGOMBE .. 1 | SHIGLEFFE .. 2 |
| GLAY, FOR. | Jernock |
| For | |
| ST. FRANK'S .. 0 | GREYCLIFFE .. 1 |
| | Wharton |



By
**CHARLES
WENTWORTH.**

CHAPTER I.

Wanted: A Fighting Shaver!

IN recording the remarkable history of Percy Vere, Sprouts Martin, and Skid Collins, two men and a boy who came to be known as the Puncher Pals, it would be best, perhaps, to start with Percy Vere—which at once brings us to Percy's father.

Percy's father, when a young man, started in a small business behind the tiny villa in which Percy was born to sell and otherwise make the sweets he called "dumps." Peppermint dumps, pineapple dumps, toffee dumps, chocolate dumps, strawberry dumps, raspberry dumps—in fact, every kind of dumps you can think of were made in the little out-house, and afterwards sold by Mrs. Vere in the shop she managed for her husband down in the town.

When Percy's father died the little out-house had grown into five large factories, the shop had become a store, and the fame of Dumps had spread all over the world. Later, Percy and his brother Alf turned Dumps into a limited liability company, in which they figured as joint managing directors. And soon after, feeling the need of a long rest, Percy put an advertisement in the "Dunstable Times."

By a process of elimination a basketful of letters gathered in by Box N.K. 12825 was reduced to one, and twenty-four hours later Sprouts Martin strode into Percy Vere's private abode, twirling a letter and his cap in both hands. He laid out the letter.

"I've come after this. Are you Dumps?"

Percy Vere arranged his tie and read the letter.

"Why—er—yes," he admitted. "You are Sprouts Martin, I believe?"

"Sprouts Martin, ex-middle-weight champion of England. I understand you want a fightin' shaver?"

"Yes, I am going on an extended winter holiday, Sprouts. I have no settled place. I don't know where we shall go when we leave Dunstable. You shall drive. But I shall want you to put on the gloves—the mittens, I

believe you call them—and box with me whenever I ask you to do so. There will be no regular hours. The pay, of course, will be adequate—"

Sprouts Martin held up his hand.

"Now, waiter minute," he cried. "I'm not takin' this job on under five pound a week."

"I intend to pay you eight pounds a week, and everything will be found," said Percy Vere. "I think"—he studied Martin's scowled face, setting cheek bones, and cauliflower ears with undiminished approval—"you're just the man I have been lookin' for. But if you take the job on I shall want you to be ready to start on Monday."

Sprouts, recovering from the shock of the remuneration mentioned by his future employer, nearly crushed Percy Vere's hand in an iron

"You're on," he said, with a deep-throated laugh. "Con! I'd have cause for five pound, and glad to." His eyes travelled up and down the lean and bony frame of the toff. "An' don't you be afraid, sir. When we give the mitts on I'll take care not to 'urt yer."

In this way the association between Percy Vere and Sprouts Martin began. Skid Collins was waiting for them far away in Chesterbrook Town.

CHAPTER 2.

On the Road!

"SHOVING" an outside Holly-Royce for a toff in a wheel game; but after a week of aimless roving about the country Sprouts reached that stage of general dissatisfaction best described by the words "fed up." Not once had he slept in a bed. Every night a fold-up tent was dragged out and set up, bedding thrown upon the ground, and on it he would sleep, while his master stretched himself out on a converted bed inside the car. Wet or fine it was the same. They saw their food in farm-

THE GEM LITERARY—No. 1285.

Readers, meet the Puncher Pals—
Percy, Sprouts, and Skid!
Here's a record of the three
And the things they did!

houses, in cottages, or in country mans, and they drove on steadily through the green lanes or along the arterial roads of England. Last night Percy Vere had pulled up beside a cart shelter with tiled roof, opposite which there was a big black pond, and Sproats was now unburdening his load to a jockey of uncertain age, who leans upon his stick, bent double, as he listened to the tirade.

"An' it ain't as if 'e's mad," Sproats grumbled, "though I reckon 'e's pretty near loney. 'E's Dumps, you know—coffee Dumps. When he engages me, 'Sproats,' 'o jee, 'I shall want you to 'ave the matts on with me regular.' Don't see 'is shorra' around the broad shores of England for ten blinkin' days, and not once 'ave 'e 'ad a Right, Len' night." Sproats shook his fat at the shelter in which the £2,000 car repose—"I made me put up there. 'I 'ad to sleep on a mattress banged down on a better flint stigon. Right good a week 'I came, and up to date not as much as 'art a pint of beer," as 'e allowed to pass me lips, 'ere, 'e see, 'ere 'in transit.' 'Trains!' 'Jammin' white milk! 'I'll be a bad day for 'em, 'I tell you, mister, when 'e puts the matts on with me!"

Sproats' voice boomed down the road. You could have heard it fifty yards away. But Percy Vere was nothing like so far away as that, for he stopped out drive behind the glowering car, clad only in trousers and shirt. Passing a pair of boxing gloves to Sproats, he pulled on the other pair.

"I have delayed sparring with you, Sproats," he said, "until you were in what I may—or—were the right humour. 'I heard every word you said. You have sunk into a rut. Now, let me see if I can jerk you out of it."

Off went Sproats' coat and vest and collar, and on he drew the gloves. The jockey, watching with a grin of delight, gave them room, and Sproats astidly manœuvred the gu'nor to the lower ground, which sloped downward from the grass verge to the duck pond. His eyes, shut so pin-point, gleamed evilly. His lips tightened to a thin line. Sproats was out for trouble.

Watching in, he crowded the gu'nor down the slope, and then, landing a stinging haymaker, hit him clean off the bank into the middle of the water. Splash!

Percy Vere spat duckweed out of his mouth; a frog leapt off his sodden hair, and an unattended tadpole wriggled out of his ear. Finding the bottom, he scrambled out, while the jockey stamped his aged thighs and roared.

Percy gave his gloves a hitch, and walked across the road. But as soon as he had passed Sproats he wheeled and sprang towards his man. The tables were turned, and it was Sproats who now had his back to the duck pond.

"My turn, 'I think," Percy said, as he crowded Sproats down the bank.

A glove stabbed Sproats' nose, and, as he struck wildly at the bobbing square of the gu'nor, who showed an astonishing knowledge of distance, a right jabbed him below the small ribs, and slid upwards to the chin. Left and right assailed him on each side of the jaw, his smashing apparatus hit the ear, his left hook grazed the gu'nor's now soddy hair, and a bang over the ear caused the fighting shaver to lose his balance. Throwing up his arms, he tried to steady himself on the sloping bank when—which—a right hook got him on the nose and—splash—Sproats Martin did a backwards dive among the duckweed.

He climbed ashore with the weed clinging all over him like green confetti.

"Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!" roared the jockey, stepping his thigh again. "That was prime! Bang into the pond 'e go—right bang into it! Ha, ha! Ha, ha! Darnie necessary me!"

Sproats threw away his gloves, and picking up the laughing jockey, hoisted him among the wriggling tadpoles. Splash!

"Better try the duckweed yourself, as you seem to like it," howled Sproats Martin.

While the jockey mowed his way ashore and propped his ruffled feathers, Percy Vere shook his "shorra's" hand.

"Quite, 'I think," he said. "Get down that luggage and look out some new clothes for both of us."

Together they carried a leather trunk to a cottage along the road. They cleaned themselves at a pump, and changed in a sweet-smelling bath. Then, giving the extended cottager who had granted permission a pound for himself, Percy Vere helped Sproats to carry the trunk back to the car.

Breakfast eaten, they started along the road, and a mile and a half away overtook a soldier jockey, who was heading directly for home.

As Sproats stopped the car, Percy Vere leant out of the window and gave the countryman a one pound Treasury note.

It was worth the money to watch the change upon the jockey's face.

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"He, mister," he shouted, as he waved his note. "If you like, you can drive me back along the road and throw it in the pond again for another pound!"

"Where to now, gu'nor?" asked Sproats.

"'I think," answered Percy Vere, "'we'll make 'is Chesterford." And it was in Chesterford's that he beat Skid Collins, the boy.

CHAPTER 2.

SKID!

SKID COLLINS lived with his uncle, Thug Taylor, a Sunshine Court—so named, perhaps, because sunshine entered its gloomy cell so rare. Skid's aunt or visiting, and his uncle was in one of his ugly moods.

"Skid," he bellowed up the stairs, as he rattled a tin stick against the broken banisters, "if you don't come down I'll skin you alive!"

Cautionally, Skid showed himself.

"Get the can," ordered his uncle, "and fetch me a couple of bits from the Pack Horse, then go to the fried-fish and send get me two middle bits an' a piece or two, an' the pommeth of potatoes!" Thug Taylor tossed a two-shilling piece into Skid's capped palm. "You come back—quick, be wised, 'or I'll skin you!"

Bringing the beer can, Skid dived along the coast. It was a little feller, fighting weight 7 at 10 lbs. His bit had been hard ever since he could remember, but he never realized it.

Pushing his way along the crowded High Road, Skid dived into the Pack Horse and got the beer. Then he joined the crowd at the counter of the fried-fish shop and secured the fish and chips.

Carrying the food and drink, he went back into the High Road, and was about to dive among the stream of cars when Cook Martin, his enemy, who had been hiding not deep down, came up behind and gave the beer-can a kick.

"Splash!" Bled the contents of the can sprayed the pavement.

Bound wrong Skid, and down he put the can and the paper containing the fish and chips. Before the way Cook could get away he had him, and, swinging him round, started a fight which drew a running crowd from all directions.

Cook battled desperately, but he seemed to bats into a dozen flying bats and wounding ones, aimed his blows at, seemingly, a dozen bobbing heads without ever hitting one of them, while Skid Collins, mad with rage, for he knew what the loss of that beer meant when he got home, slapped Cook all over the face and body, and at the end of five hectic minutes laid him gasping on the pavement.

"Next time," he threatened, as he bent over his fallen enemy, "I'll double the dose, you crawling worm!"

Then he picked up his coat and cap, and, diving among the crowd, saw Mike O'Leary, a High Road leader, holding the fish and chips in one hand, half the fish having been already eaten, and tilting the beer-can to his lips with the other.

"Here," howled the panting Skid, "you put that down!"

Mike dodged him, and started on the second piece of fish. The empty beer-can he had tossed along the road. Clanking with rage, Skid rushed after him, and then Mike, afraid of the crowd, dodged among the traffic. Skid dashed after him. He did not see the great, black Bull Boyce which came flushing right at him; he did not hear the warning blazes. Only when it was too late did he see the diving metal of the bonnet right on top of him, and saw the car swerve as the four-wheeled brakes gripped.

Beads of perspiration stood out on Sproats' forehead.

"Shorra, gu'nor," sneered the fighting shaver, "it was a bid dived right under the skidder's wheels, and I've killed him!"

Percy Vere, who had felt only the jar of the gripping brakes, opened the door and jumped out. Stepping in, he saw a boy wriggling along on the wet road blades.

"Keep quite still, Sproats!" he ordered. "Now, my boy, give me your hand. That's it. How are we now?"

"All right, mister."

A dash closed the pallor from Skid's cheeks, and he forced a grin. Percy Vere nodded understandingly. Never, he thought, had he seen a nicer little face than this boy's. The lips were firm, the eyes were bright with courage. Percy lifted him into the car, and Sproats urged it close to the curb. Jerkily yet loyally Skid told his story.

"So that's it, is it?" said Dumps, with a nod and a smile. "And the man who stole the beer and the fish go away! What are you going to do now?"

Skid shrugged his shoulders miserably.

"Got back and tell me uncle, 'I suppose," he said, "and he won't half wallop me—if I give him the chance!"

Percy Vere pulled at his chin, and, thinking rapidly, made up his mind. He spoke through the tube to Sproats.

"Dyke on," he said, "and follow the boy's directions. Skid," he smiled at the boy, "I intend to explain to your uncle and put things right."

"Garn!" answered Skid. "You don't know uncle—you'll never."

"At least," replied Percy Vere, "I can try."

The arrival at the end of the big Rolle-Royce created a big sensation in Sunshine Court, and as Percy Vere pushed his way among the crowd with his hand on Skid's shoulder windows went up and heads popped out. A blubbing lot was explaining to a group of listening kids, and Percy Vere noticed that his face was puffed and brained.

It was Cook Harris pouring forth his woes.

Farther along the court Skid's uncle stood at his door with a big stick in his hand. He had heard the news, and was ready.

"Hi, you Skid," he roared, "come and take your licking."



As Thug Taylor swung round, Percy Vere speared him under the chin, and Thug dropped flat as a pancake—right in his own doorway!

Slipping away from the tiff, Skid beared himself to face the inevitable; but to his surprise the gentleman took him gently by the shoulder and stood him aside. Then he turned to Thug Taylor.

"It was not the boy's fault," he said, "I must ask you not to punish him. Now will you do so if you are a man?"

Thug gulped, his eyes stuck out, and he laughed as he looked the tuff up and down.

"Hallo!" he croaked. "Wat 'ave we got 'ere? A dummer out of a tailor's window? Hi, mates, look at 'im!"

They prepared to spring, and, darting forward, nearly hurled Percy Vere on to his back, and then, with a wild dive, seized the boy. One blow with the stick nearly broke Skid's leg. But Thug did not strike another, for Percy Vere seized hold of him and hurled him half-way across the alley.

Then he swung Skid into the arms of Sproats Martin, who had followed the gov'ner along the court.

"Look after him, Sproats," he said. "I shall need both my hands."

Coddling the boy up close, Sproats watched the battle

between the gov'ner and the heeligan, shifting his feet as the beam shifted his, jabbing the air with his clenched right hand, and wishing that he had got Thug's dial on the end of it.

The crowd hemmed them in. Silently they watched Thug pool off his coat and edge towards the wall. For Thug had been the bully of the court. It was his first and kick afterwards with him as a rule, and one or two smart sentences had only added to his lust for fighting. Truth to tell, he was glad this dilled-up stranger had interfered, for the sympathy of the crowd would have been Skid's. Besides, he could bash up a man and be proud of it. He was going to bash up a tuff. Great! The dilled-up swell would be a limp rag when he had done with him.

With a heave of rage, Thug swooped in, his mighty arms racing in and out like giant pistons. Thug was a giant of a man. He even dwarfed the hairy Sproats.

"Which way will you 'ave it?" howled Thug, as he stuck out his lever jaw and shook his huge fists in Percy Vere's face.

Dumps stood warily watchful, his lean body nicely balanced.

"Supposing," said Percy Vere, whose hands were held low but ready, "we have it this way?"

His left shot through Thug's guard as he spoke, jabbing Thug's head back, and the right which followed to the chin drove the heeligan back upon his heels. With a roar, Thug launched a smashing right-hand blow at Percy Vere's jaw, but even as the fist swung the tuff slipped away and moved his head. The dull thud of the fist striking the brick wall was followed by a howl of agony. Thug swung round also for

number, but even as he spun Percy Vere's fist socked him on the chin, and he stumpled backwards. The back of his thick skull hit the jamb of the door, and, sinking from it, he dropped flat as a pancake in his own doorway.

Percy Vere stepped into the car.

"Let her rip," said he.

"Skid"—Percy Vere was smiling now—"you are coming with me. There were two of us, Sproats and I. Now we are three. I have enough for all of us," he said. "I think I am going to like you, Skid."

Back at home, the slowly recovering Thug Taylor was telling all the neighbors what he was going to do when Skid came back. But Skid was never coming back. That night he formed an alliance with Sproats Martin and Percy Vere, the three-two men and a dog—who were soon to become famous as the Pancher Pals.

(The Pancher Pals are more complete and all out for adventure? Don't miss next week's ripping yarn? It's a Smash-out!) The Gem Lumber—No. 1283.

TOM MERRY—EDITOR!

(Continued from page 18.)

"Why is Gore of the Shell a pig?—Because he can't help it."

"What is the difference between Sotter of the Sixth and a Backward?—None at all."

"If not," said Kildare, "The Blue pencil is wanted there, I think, Tom Merry."

"And, slapping his head, the captain of the school walked away, and most of the writers followed him."

"The younger portion of the audience continued to read and chuckle."

"There's a capital boniface named Gore, Who's always a bit of a bore, He writes a lot of books, And I get a few smacks, And I dare say, could do with some more."

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Pratt. "That's your character, Gore."

"Perhaps you'd like your own better," sneered Gore.

"My own? What do you mean?"

"Look there!"

"There's a kid in the New House named Pratt, Who always talks out of his hat, We should think it shameful, If he ever talked sense, But there isn't much prospect of that."

Pratt turned red.

"Ho, ho, ho!" chuckled Jimson. "You've got it in the neck this time, Pratty!"

"Oh, you're there, too?" said Gore. "Look!"

"If I what do you mean?"

"Look at me!"

"There is Jimson—you know him, I s'pose, Who writes most delightful prose; But his writing is worse, When he puts it in verse, So we wish he would put it in prose."

Jimson turned scarlet with wrath. Gore and his friends were whispering together while he uttered these or words. The imbecilic jocosities were looking dangerous. So were the Third Formers, who had

been the subject of the little jokes. Mischievous had twice been the subject of "Tom Merry's Weekly," once too interested in the chatter to be glad to notice it.

"Hallo, Mollich, you're in it, too?" exclaimed Jimson as he saw Mollich chuckling away over the last stanza.

"Look there, my son—there's something for you to read over!"

"There's Mollich, whose verse, to be plain, Is the cause of less pleasure than pain, He has written a lot, Of most absolute rot! Oh, Mollich, don't do it again!"

Mollich read that fiercely and made a dash at his magazine. Tom Merry springing in his way, and they clung. The staff rushed forward with cricket-stumps, ready to defend the "Weekly," but, unfortunately, the two magazines tumbled against the crowd, and it went down with a crash to the ground.

"Tom Merry's Weekly" fluttered down, and Gore was on it like a shot. One powerful kick sent it sailing through the air, out of reach of the staff, and there was each of the aggrieved jocosities upon it.

French was first to reach it, with Tom Merry and Figgis hot after him, and the rest of the staff rushing on. Figgis took a running kick at the magazine, and passed to French again to Jimson as he was tackled by the staff.

Jimson kept on again the quad with the "Weekly," his feet, the excited staff led on the track after him. He Jimson was rapid, and he covered a score of yards before Tom Merry closed up behind him.

As he felt the editorial hand falling on his shoulder Jimson took a flying kick, and the volume sailed into the air and landed in the bosom of the fountain with a splash.

"Never mind!" said Tom Merry cheerfully, as he stood round looking at the dilapidated paper. "Never mind, it's been published and circulated in a way, and that's the end of it. We'll have the next number out in better style—got up better and really printed, so that we can lay an sturdy copies as we like. I tell you, kids, that 'The Merry's Weekly' is going to be a success!"

And the staff, with one voice, said: "What ho!"

THE END.

(We mark for the first number. And there is now possible to order for "Tom Merry's Weekly," in one volume's Pippin game, "Marked by the Month!")

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