

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!

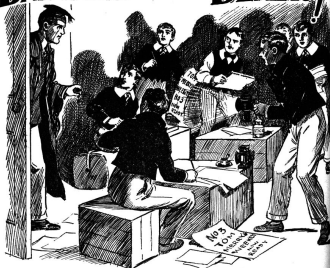
The GEM

2^D



**A SHOCK
for HERR SCHNEIDER!**

BANNED BY THE BEAKS!



Meet Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's in this Splendid School Story.

CHAPTER I.

Tom Merry & Co.—Publishers.

THE master of the School at St. Jim's tapped on his desk with his cane, and fixed a severe glare upon the lads whose Tom Merry, Masters, and Lowther sat.

The Terrible Three had been whispering together, apparently oblivious of the fact that they were in the class-room, and supposed to be devoting their attention to the lesson the master was imparting to them.

The tone of the whispering died away at the crash of the cane, and the Terrible Three looked as innocent as they could. But Mr. Linton could not be deceived.

"Merry,"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry meekly.

"You were talking to Lowther?"

"Yes, sir."

Tom Merry never told an untruth; but his cheerful assent to Mr. Linton's remark did not seem to please that gentleman, somehow.

"Merry, you have been whispering at intervals all through the lesson, and have paid me no attention whatever."

"I am sorry, sir."

"Some topics of unusual interest," pursued Mr. Linton, with heavy sarcasm, "has deservingly taken your attention from the less important subjects of Roman history?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry innocently.

The Gun Lizard.—No. 1,900.

Some of the class giggled. Mr. Linton turned red.
"Merry, I do not know whether you are stupid or impertinent. I fear the latter. You will kindly inform me what is the important topic which cannot wait till the class is dismissed. The eternal topic of football, I presume."

"No, sir, not this time," said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"Then what was it?" snapped Mr. Linton.

"The fact is, sir—"

"Go on!"

"The—the fact is, sir—"

"Speak up!"

"Well, sir, the fact is—"

"Merry, I command you to explain yourself!"

"Yes, sir. The fact is, that the—the second number of 'Tom Merry's Weekly' comes out to-day, sir," said Tom Merry meekly, "and—and we're a little bit excited about it, sir. That's all."

"Oh, that is all, is it?" said Mr. Linton witheringly. "This 'Weekly' is some sort of a school magazine, I presume?"

"Yes, sir; a real ripping good one," said Tom Merry eagerly. "It makes that sleepy old Sixth Form magazine into a cocked hat, sir—"

"Merry, I—"

"We're doing the second number in good style, sir," said Tom. "We are duplicating it, sir, and we shall have a dozen copies. We shall be very pleased to send you a few copies, sir, if you would like one."

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

There was a giggle in the class again. Mr. Liston looked severely and searchingly into the innocent face of Tom Merry. He had never been able to decide whether Tom was the simplest or the deepest boy in the Form.

"Er—Merry, I'm afraid that if this—er—magazine takes your attention from your work, I shall have to speak to the Head, and ask him to—er—suspend the publication," said Mr. Liston.

"Oh, sir!"

"So long that is mind, Merry. There is a time for work and a time for play. Upon the whole, you may send me a copy of this magazine, and I shall judge whether it will be proper for you to continue it."

"Yes, sir."

"And now, if it is really not asking too much of you, you will pay some slight attention to your lessons."

"Certainly, sir," said Tom cheerfully.

His eyes sought the clock as he sat down again.

Never had lessons seemed to him so long as they did that Wednesday morning. The second number of the "Weekly" was nearly ready, and an anxious circle of readers were waiting for it. And here he was digging in his Roman history. It was too bad.

Tom Merry's thoughts naturally wandered again, and when Mr. Liston suddenly asked him whom Romulus was, Tom hastily replied that he was the first editor of Rome, an answer which earned him fifty lines. But all things end, even a morning's lessons before a half-holiday.

The class, to their relief, and their master's, were dismissed at last, and, as it was the last lesson, they were free for the rest of the day, save for the evening preparation.

"Jolly glad we're out of that!" said Tom Merry, linking arms with Mansons and Lowther outside the classroom. "I thought it would never end."

"You got out of it well with fifty lines, Tommy," said Henry Lowther. "Liston is in a good temper this morning. Lessons are a bore, but we must put up with 'em. I would would like them to lessen—ahem!"

"Don't!" said Mansons. "Keep your rotten puns for the 'Weekly,' Henry, old son. Hello! Here's Study No. 4 in good time!"

The Terrible Three arrived at their study door, and found the doors of the Fourth—Blake, Herriss, and D'Arcy—already there. Tom Merry's study had been turned into an editorial office by the staff of the "Weekly."

"Hello!" said Blake, with a nod. "We're waiting for you, I suppose you haven't forgotten that the paper's coming out also dinner?"

"Better not!" said Tom Merry. "Glad to find you in the lido—"

"Who are you calling lido?" inquired the three Fourth-formers with one voice.

"Sorry—I mean odd," answered Tom Merry. "Come in."

"You mean what?" howled Blake and Herriss.

"Tom Merry, I object to that remark," said D'Arcy. "In my mind it means of madness."

"I mean chaps," said Tom Merry patiently. "Any old thing. Come in! Hello! Some silly joker has been at work here."

He pointed to the door.

It bore the inscription: "Editorial Office" ever since the "Weekly" had been started, but some practical joker had lately made an alteration, chalking out some letters and substituting others. The inscription now read:

"Editorial Assn."

Blake chuckled.

"That's done by somebody who knows you these," he remarked.

"Yess, wutah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It is wessly extremely suspicious of the character of you three boys, don't you know?"

Tom Merry jerked the easelboard upon which the notice was written off the door.

"Oh, come in!" he said.

They entered the editorial office. It was pretty full of the preparations for the publication of the second number. The first number of "Tom Merry's Weekly" had been written out by hand, and only one copy could be made, and when that copy fell into the hands of the youths who had been slated in it, it ceased to exist—suddenly. But with the second number the publishing firm had made a great advance. A number of copies were to be taken off upon galatins, and as there was really no limit to the circulation of the celebrated "Weekly" this time.

The staff were soon hard at work. They had promised the paper for that afternoon, and they did not want a delay such as had happened with the first number.

"I say, Piggins & Co. ought to be here leading a band," said Herriss, looking up. "I suppose they're not coming till after dinner. That's all very well."

"Yess, wutah!" said D'Arcy. "I am wessly greenin' quite exhausted with all this hard work. I have already stitched up three copies of the paper."

"That must have worn you out," said Tom Merry.

"Yess, wutah! I always find anything like work a fearful bore, you know."

"Keep it up, Gussy; it will do you good," said Lowther encouragingly. "You ought to be useful, if you can't be ornamental, you know."

"Or!"

"What's the matter with him now?"

"Oh, I have van this heady needle into my beautiful finger!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You should be more careful!"

"I wessly think I shall have to strike work now," said D'Arcy. "The pain is extreme, and a whole drop of blood has oozed from the wound. I wessly—"

"Oh, keep it up!"

"Impson! Wessly, it would be a much better plan if you fellows did all the work, and I just stood by diwintin' you and givin' you advice," said Arthur Augustus. "That is the proper occupation for a fellow of brains, you know."

"What I like about Gussy," said Tom Merry, "is his modesty. I say, Gus, keep on with that stitching, you know."

"You can't leave off yet."

"I have already sewn up three copies of the beautiful paper, Tom Merry, and I am feelin' extremely fatigued, to say nothing of this extremely painful wound."

"Oh, go on!" said Blake. "Don't be an ass, Gussy."

"I refuse to go on. I have sustained a painful injury, and I refuse to go on," said D'Arcy. "I refuse to be characterized as an ass, also, and—"

"If he's wounded," said Blake, with a wink at Tom Merry, "we ought to see to it. As he's not going to do any more work he may as well have his wound bandaged."

The Terrible Three sought on to the idea at once.

"That's so," said Tom Merry. "Come on and let's do our best for the poor chap."

"That is wessly kind of you, Tom Merry, and shows a very proper feeling," said Arthur Augustus. "I—Here! What! I say—"

He was seized and plunged into a chair, and Lowther and Mansons pinned him there. Tom Merry seized the wounded hand, and Blake picked up a tube of acetone.

"Wh-wh-what are you up to?" gasped D'Arcy. "I refuse to be handled in this extremely odd way! I protest—"

"My dear kid," said Blake, "we're afraid you'll bleed to death if we don't stop up that ghastly wound. We haven't any lint at hand, but fortunately there's this sticky stuff which will answer the purpose. Give me the wounded foot."

"I refuse! I distinctly refuse to—"

"But! It's all very well for you to bear pain and run risks in this heroic way, Gussy, but suppose the wound were to mortify—think how mortified we should be, too. Look, there's another whole drop of blood gushing from the

ghastly gash! Give me that finger. Now, steady while I turn up the gas."

"I refuse! I abjectly refuse!"

It was all very well for D'Arcy to refuse, but Blake had the wounded finger in an iron grip, and he squeezed hard the tube of acetone upon it.

"That's done," he said, with a gasp of relief. "Just in time to save a valuable life. Now we must bind it up before another drop of blood bursts forth in a torrent."

"Waddy, Blake, K—"

"Lion! Bandages! Quick, my kingdom for a duster!"

"Here's a giddy rag I clean my bike with," said Mearns Lowther, dragging it out from a cupboard. "It's quite of your service."

D'Arcy wriggled frantically.

"Blake, if you touch me with that extremely dirty rag I shall no longer regard you as a friend."

"My dear chap, I am determined to save your life, even at the cost of your friendship," said Blake harshly. "Give me a string, anybody."

He treated the dirty, oily rag round D'Arcy's gashy hand and fastened it there with a string. He gasped again with relief.

"Saved! The danger is past, kid. We can breathe again. Once more the shadow of death is averted from the noble Augustus!"

"Blake, I strongly object!"

"He must put his arm in a sling," said Tom Merry solemnly. "We have undertaken to cure this case, and we must neglect no precautions."

"I'll tear up his waistcoat to make a sling," offered Mearns Lowther.

Arthur Augustus wriggled.

"Don't you dare to touch my waistcoat!" he shrieked.

"Blake, as a friend, I appeal to you to make them leave my waistcoat alone. I can forgive anything but that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll make a sling of this bit of rope," said Tom Merry.

"Here you are. You'll be careful to keep this on, Gussy?"

"I shall do no such thing. I shall remove the ridiculous thing at the very first opportunity, Tom Merry."

"Ungrateful! We can't let him run such risks, chaps. We shall have to fasten it."

"And then his other bit," said Blake.

So D'Arcy's right hand was tied up in the sling, and his left fastened to his side. Then he was allowed to rise from the chair. The juniors looked at him anxiously.

"Feel better?" asked Blake, with great solicitude.

"I insist upon this absurd thing being removed at once!" said D'Arcy, with great heat. "I shall probably grow extremely angry if you do not do so."

"My dear chap, even your terrible anger will not move us," said Tom Merry solemnly. "We have saved your life, and we're going to go on saving it. Better go and lie down in your study for a bit, and give the ghastly wound a giddy rest."

"I refuse!"

"Better," said Blake; and they marched the wroth of the School House to the door and gently shoved him into the corridor. "Follows who don't work ain't wanted in a busy editorial office. Go and take a run."

"Waddy, Blake—"

Blake's foot came up behind D'Arcy and gave him a start. He reentered down the corridor disconsolately.

"My hat! What's that trunk?"

D'Arcy stopped at the well-known voice fell upon his ear. He looked up to see Figgins & Co. coming towards him.

CHAPTER 2.

The Presentation Copy.

FIGGINS stared at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in amazement. Kerr and Wynn, the owners of the great Figgins, known throughout St. Jim's as the Co., stared at the wroth of the School House also, and cackled loudly.

D'Arcy gave them a look of great indignation.

"I fail to see any cause for this extremely wrothful merriment," he remarked.

"My hat!" said Figgins again. "What is it! Where did it dig itself up?"

"I wonder!" said Patty Wynn. "Where did you dig yourself up, Frank?"

"I have been treated most disrespectfully by Tom Merry and Blake," said D'Arcy. "They have fastened me up in this ridiculous merriment."

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"Ha, ha, ha! Why?"

"Because I could not do any more work as I have pricked my finger," said D'Arcy. "It was wrothful merriment of them, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You will do me a great service by wrothful merriment," said Arthur Augustus. "Pity do so."

"Hardly," said Figgins. "If Blake thought it necessary to bandage your horrid wound, I'm not going to be hitting you by unbandaging them."

"I smash you that—"

"Nuff said! You're bandaged, and you're going to remain bandaged. It will probably do you good—if not one way, then in another."

"I retract you—"

"Can't be did. Travel along. Come on, kid."

"Then I regard you as a sort of extremely wrothful merriment!" said D'Arcy. "You are three and unbandaged, and I regard you with great contempt. You are three horrid New House captives!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When I am free of these wrothful merriments I shall give you a beautiful threnody!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins & Co. walked on to the editorial office.

D'Arcy, in a great state of indignation, wandered on a search of someone to release him from his bonds; and he last succeeded in hitting Frost of the Fourth, with a bit of unbandaged hair, to perform that service for him.

Mearns, Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn had arrived on the scene of the editorial labours. Tom Merry looked up at them covered with a snarl.

"We've done most of the work," he said. "You're late."

"We stopped to feed," said Figgins. "Haven't you finished?"

"No. Can't you see we're busy?"

"Yes, but if you miss dinner you will not get any, I know."

Tom Merry looked at his watch.

"My hat! I didn't know it was so late. Come a change. Figgys can go on with the work while we go to feed."

"Good idea!" said Lowther.

And the Terrible Three made a halt for the dining hall. Figgins & Co. looked after them.

"Stealing a timely place," said Figgins. "We manage things better in the New House. By the way, it was to be no matter a check that the editorial office should have to be in this beautiful School House. I never thought of it before!"

"Neither did I," said Kerr. "But, come to think of it, it is a check. There's Tom Merry, a School House chap, editing the rag. The office ought to be over in the New House. That would be only fair play!"

"Right-ho!" said Patty Wynn. "I don't see why we should be put upon. We'll insist that the next number published in the New House, and if the School House kit don't agree, we'll start a giddy opposition paper!"

"Good scheme!" said Figgins.

The New House trio set to work. There was plenty to be done, and they were industrious. They had made good progress by the time Tom Merry returned with his chin after a hastily belted dinner. Then the right wind it with a will. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came to the door and looked in, with his eyes fixed upon his eye. His looked roared at him.

"How is your horrid wound, Gussy?"

"Oh, don't wot, Blake," said D'Arcy. "The prick is my English hat stopped bleeding, and I am wrothful to do some more work!"

"Wroth in, then," said Tom Merry; "it's time the paper was ready. We shall have the chaps chivvying us soon!"

The hero of the Shell was right.

Ere long there were a good many fellows in the passage waiting to know whose the second number of the "Wrothful" was.

"Going to be a week late this time!" asked Melchior. "Or isn't the thing coming out at all?"

"Coming out in the New Year, I expect," said Gore.

"Why don't you call it 'Tom Merry's Annual'?" Frank wanted to know. "If you tried to bring it out once a year, you might manage it!"

To all which sniffs and jeers the editorial staff of the great "Wrothful" paid no attention whatever.

"Gussy," said Tom Merry, looking round, "you see you along to Mr. Linton's study with that free copy. Make a little speech, and present it to him with the compliments of the staff of 'Tom Merry's Weekly.'"

"Certainly!" said D'Arcy immediately.

That was just in his line. He took up the first completed copy and left the study. Some of the rest joined

in the passage tried to snatch it as he passed, but Gussy snatched them, and dashed away with it.

"After him!" muttered Goss. "Let's capture the giddy cove!"

The preceding juniors dashed after the scroll of St. Jim's. As many of them remained hanging round the door of the editorial office, Goss's little game was not noticed by the busy staff.

Arthur Augustus heard the pattering of feet behind, and looked over his shoulder. He gave a jump as he saw Goss, French, Mellish, and two or three more in hot pursuit. He sprinted along the passage as he had never sprinted before, and went down the steps three at a time. Of course, he lost his footing half-way, and rolled down the rest of them. There was a crack of a breaking eyeglass, but Gussy was on his mettle. He picked himself up and dashed on, with the frame of the broken eyeglass dangling behind at the end of the string.

"Woolly, Mr. Linton, you are laborious' ardash a great misapprehension!" said D'Arcy. "I did not mean to be truff or wade, I assure you! I came in—"

"You—you are what you have made me do?"

"I cannot sufficiently express my sorrow, sir. But, woolly it was not my fault. I was betri' chased by some extremely wuff boarders, and they nearly had me, woolly, sir!"

"What have you come here for?"

"To present you with a fresh copy of the great papah we have produced, sir," said D'Arcy, extending the copy of "Tom Merry's Weekly." "This copy, sir, is presented with the compliments of the editorial staff of the papah, and they hope you will gain both amusement and instruction from the perusal of it!"

Mr. Linton gingerly took up the copy of "Tom Merry's Weekly."

"It is the best complete copy," said D'Arcy. "I stitched



When Tom Merry & Co. had finished dressing Gussy's "wound," he was bundled out of the study, with a boot behind him to help him on the way.

Goss put on a spurt, and nearly reached him. D'Arcy felt a clutch behind barely miss him, and dashed frantically forward, and burst into Mr. Linton's study like a thunderbolt.

Goss stopped at the door, and dithered back in time to escape detection.

"My hat!" he gasped, as he joined the rest, and they hurried away. "I wonder what old Linton will say to Gussy coming in like that. Let's clear before there's trouble!"

And they promptly cleared.

D'Arcy almost fell on his haunchs in entering the study. He dashed at Mr. Linton's writing table and saved himself.

The master of the Shell, extremely startled, jumped up, snatching a glower of looks over the paper he had been writing on.

"What the—how the—I—how dare you, D'Arcy! I say, how dare you enter the room in that way! How dare you, sir!"

"Pray excuse me," gasped Arthur Augustus.

"You—young hoodlum—you—"

in myself, sir. We have taken orah a dozen copies on gelatine, and can take off more, so the papah will have a woolly extensive circulation. We have great pleasur, sir, in presenting you with this free copy!"

"Thank you!" said Mr. Linton.

He did not seem very grateful. He laid the free copy on his table, and took up his pen. The interview seemed to be over, as Gussy retired from the study.

The scroll of the School House returned to the editorial office. He found the publication in full swing. Copies of the "Weekly" were being passed from hand to hand, and every copy was being eagerly perused by groups of fellows.

Even the seniors of St. Jim's, though they affected to look down upon Tom Merry's editorial effort from the top of a very high pedestal, showed some curiosity to see the second number, and several copies were wanted for the Fifth and Sixth.

The edition was soon exhausted. But the seniors were not the only lefty persons to show some curiosity with regard to the "Weekly."

Mr. Bailton, the Housemaster of the School House, was curious, too. He looked into Mr. Linton's study a few minutes after Arthur Augustus had left it.

"Have you seen anything of this new paper, Mr. Linton?" he asked. "I couldn't see curious to see a copy, but I don't know whether it would have a good effect to ask the printers for one."

Mr. Linton smiled rather sourly.

"I have been presented with a free copy!" he said. "As the editor of the great journal is in my Form, I thought I had better look into it!"

"Quite right! It is very courteous of the staff to send you a copy so soon!" the Housemaster remarked, with a smile. "Have you looked at it?"

"No, I have not done so as yet!"

"Then allow me to make a suggestion. Bring it to the Masters' room, and we will all look over it together. We are all curious, and we will see what the young authors and artists of St. Jim's have to say for themselves without any imputation of our dignity!"

"Certainly, Mr. Bailton!"

Mr. Linton was really rather curious himself about the content of the second number of the "Weekly." The first number had met with so much a laud that little was known of it, but the masters had an idea that it had pleased everybody at St. Jim's mercifully, not even sparing the authorities who were objectionable to the boys.

The master of the Shell put the free copy under his arm, and walked with the Housemaster to the Masters' room. Mr. Lathorn, the master of the Fourth, and Herr Schneider, the German master, were there.

"Gentlemen, we have here the second number of the boys' magazine!" said Mr. Bailton. "I have no doubt you would like to see it!"

"Certainly!" said little Mr. Lathorn.

"Ach!" said Herr Schneider. "It is some more tat Tom Merry make mit himself after. Tat gay is so pad as oder was after!"

Mr. Bailton laid the paper on the table, and the four masters gathered round it.

"The title page is really got up very well," the Housemaster remarked. "I think this shows Tom Merry's artistic hand!"

The title of the page was done in old English, very neatly.

"TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

Then in smaller type underneath was written the edifying announcement:

"A Journal Devoted to the Amusement of the Juniors and the Instruction of the Seniors at St. Jim's."

"Ach!" said Herr Schneider. "Tat was very funny before!"

Mr. Bailton smiled.

"Contributions may be sent in by anybody resident at St. Jim's," went on the announcement. "An extra large W.F.B. is kept in the editorial office for their recognition. Poems are published in the 'Weekly' at ordinary advertisement rates."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Bailton turned the first leaf, and even Mr. Linton looked interested.

CHAPTER 3.

The Second Number of the "Weekly."

THE first page of the "Weekly" was filled by an article signed "T. M.," which caused smiles to dawn on the faces of the masters as they read.

"The first number of the 'Weekly' having been sold out within half an hour of publication—"

"Why, I understand that there was only one copy!" Mr. Lathorn remarked.

"That accounts for its being sold out so soon," replied Mr. Bailton. "But, to continue. The publishers determined to enlarge their premises and increase their plant, to be able to meet the large demand anticipated for the second number. The readers of the 'Weekly' will be pleased to hear that a printing press has now been established capable of dealing adequately with all demands, and of multiplying copies indefinitely. An improvement in the literary quality of the 'Weekly' will also be perceived, the editor having wielded the blue pencil more thoroughly. Personalities have been strictly prohibited, except in cases where references to them are calculated to do good to the persons concerned."

"Which covers as much ground as is necessary," the master of the Shell remarked.

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"Ah, here we have something!" said Mr. Bailton, glancing at the next page. "It is apparently a poem serial, a continuation of a previous installment."

"SIR PATRICK AND HIS FAYRE LADYE."

"A ROMANTIC POEM, by J. Blake."

"(Continued from last week.)"

"Not for now readers. The first installment of the grand serial described how Sir Patrick de Falsborough lost the baron's daughter, but was set on by our respected governor on account of his unkind condition."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathorn. "What can Blake mean by 'unkind'?"

"I fancy he means unscrupulous," said Mr. Bailton, with a laugh.

"Oh, I see! I am sorry we missed the first installment."

Mr. Bailton read the following touching stanza aloud, trying to keep a grave countenance the while:

"Though the later this pair did meet, they forgot not
each other never,

But exchanged sweet glances over when the lover met the
maid:

And at midnight's solemn hour he would stand bound
by tower,

And with lungs of wondrous power he would sing in
serenade.

"He would sing his loyal passion in a wide romantic
fashion,

With a voice like ball of Bashan to the maid above his
fan,

While the stars did shine and twinkles, or the rainbow
gently sparkling,

To the tinkle, tinkle, tinkle of his tinkling guitar."

Mr. Lathorn rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Can you tell me whether that is meant to be a comic
tragic poem, Mr. Bailton?" he asked dubiously.

"I cannot quite make out. Perhaps the next stanza will
tell us."

"And at times his love outpouring, while the baron sat
was weeping,

He would sing his song adoring and forgot the fight of
time,

In his ardour never heeding how the hours were fleetly
speeding,

Most pathetically pleading in most melancholy rhymes."

"Keeping on through early morning o'een until the day
was dawning,

While the homestead maid was yawning as she listened
high above;

Till one morn when day was breaking, the bold hero,
early waking,

Heard the din that he was making with his endless tale
of love."

"(To be continued next week.)"

Mr. Bailton laughed.

"I am quite disappointed," he remarked. "I should be glad to know what that bold baron did when he woke up and heard the serenader. I am afraid I cannot quite make up my mind as to whether it is comic or serious. Possibly Blake himself does not know."

"Here is some more poetry," Mr. Lathorn remarked. "What is this? 'An Ode to the Ancient College of St. James,' by Henry Mansons."

"Glorious ancient pile, thus standest as thou has stood for
a thousand years,

Defying the cruel touch of the weather;
Grand and imposing as ever thou wert in the long past
age,

Moved only by the addition of the New House to thy
ancient fabric.

So with thee stand in future ages, I trust,
A monument to the wisdom of thy respected founder."

"Ach!" said Herr Schneider. "Is that plunk verse?"

"I think it must be intended for blank verse," Mr. Bailton remarked. "There is a whole page of it, but I think we can be contented with that specimen."

"For goodness' sake, yes," said Mr. Lathorn.

"I do not think Mansons will ever shine as a great poet," the Housemaster observed. "Ah! What is this? An article by A. A. D'Arcy—'Latest Fashions.'"

"The general slovenliness of the juniors at St. Jim's."

and of a good many of the seniors, too. Has craved the editor of this paper to ask Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Esq., the well-known banker of London, to contribute a worthy column on this important subject. It is hoped that after carefully perusing this page the Third Form boys will take to washing their socks not only when watched by a monitor, but as a matter of habit; and also that they will see clean collars without being specially compelled to do so.

"Some of the Fifth and the Sixth, too, who dress in fustian lace, may well profit by the hints of Master D'Arcy, who will be pleased to grant a personal interview to any eager desirous of improving his personal appearance. It is a truism to say that most of them require some improving. We could give names, but refrain; and will not refer to the fact that Knox, Selton, Byles, and others look more like theologians than divines of so respectable a school—generally speaking—as St. Jim's."

"Ho, ho, ho! I am afraid that is an intentional slip," said Mr. Latham.

"I fear so. Let us continue the article by D'Arcy—'Wash! Socks! and studs should always be in good taste, however plain. It is better to have cheap plain ones than to sport horrid, shiny imitation gold things like those worn by Nelson of the Sixth.

"Knotties should be tied in the proper way. If a fellow cannot tie a necktie, let him buy a wash-up one, though these are not so fashionable. Anything is better than going about like Melville, for instance, looking as if one has been half-hanged, and the hangman left off in the middle of his work. The knot in no case should be allowed to travel up under the left ear."

There was a good deal more in the same strain; special attention being devoted to the proper cleaning of trousers, and the taste to be shown in selecting a fancy waistcoat. D'Arcy was in his element there, and he had run on to two full pages.

"Ah! Here is some more poetry!" remarked the House-master.

"THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

"By George Herries.

"On the eighteenth of June, in 1815,
The brave British troops in array could be seen;
They marched to the battle so dauntless and true,
To lick the French Army that day at Waterloo.
They played up like Trojans, they leave blood they shed,
And lots of them were wounded and dead;
They ended by winning the terrible gain,
And poor Nap and his followers were all put to flight.
And the Prussians came up at night.
And since then the Deutschers claim that they won
The battle, though they didn't arrive till it was nearly done;
Which is all rot, I trow. Was it they never could—
They were made in Germany, and weren't any good."

"Ah! Mein Gott!" said Herr Schneider, turning as red as a turkey cock. "That is not all true before after!"
Mr. Bailton turned the leaf hastily, without finishing Herr's great battle poem.

"Ah! What have we here?" he exclaimed, and went on reading hurriedly, to give Herr Schneider time to recover his equanimity.

"THE LADY ERMYNTRUDE.

"An Up-to-Date Novel.

"By Montague Lowther.

"The Lady Ermyntrude sat in the silk-cushioned chair in her gorgeous boudoir and sighed. All around her were the signs of unworldly wealth and luxury; but the Lady Ermyntrude sighed. Her father was the richest man in the United Kingdom, and the Lady Ermyntrude had the world at her charming little feet; but she sat in her gilt boudoir and sighed. And why did the Lady Ermyntrude sigh?"

"I don't think we will stop to inquire," Mr. Bailton remarked, turning the page. "Ah, here is something more thrilling!"

"THE RED CHIEF.

"By G. Figgins."

"Ah!" cried the Red Chief, as he fixed his glittering, black, brooding eyes upon the pale, pallid, shuddering form of the hapless maiden. "Ah, thou lovely lily of the prairie! Ah! Ah! but I have thee in my clutch!"
"Let me leave her in his clutch," said Mr. Latham. And the House-master nodded and turned the leaf.

(Continued on the next page.)



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OLD SWAN LIVERPOOL

"Ah, poetry again! This seems to be a parody of 'Who killed Cock Robin?' said Mr. Railton. "And as it seems to be a dog at the staff of the paper, it is really very honest of the staff to insert it."

"Who started the paper?
'I,' said Tom Merry,
'Twas bright of me very,
I started the paper."

"Who wrote the puffs?
The Terrible Three;
They were dotty, you see,
And they wrote the puffs."

"Who wrote the book?
Said Blake. "It was on,
With Herricks and Cox,
We wrote the book."

"Who wrote the rot?
It was Figgins & Co.;
They were silly, and so
They wrote the rot."

This effusion was signed by Francis. Mr. Railton smiled as he read it out.

"I'm afraid Francis forget the rule about personalities," he remarked. "But! This is a football column, edited by Blake."

"We are pleased to be able to report another victory of St. Jim's First Eleven in an away match, this time with Bodelyfe First. Kildare, our respected captain, and Eleventh of the New House, played up grandly. We still think, however, that the First Eleven would be improved by the introduction of a junior element, and the captain's attention is respectfully drawn to the undoubted fact that the Fourth Form football is of a far better class than that played by the Fifth or Sixth. In order to prove this, we of the Fourth are perfectly willing to put a team in the field against any team the seniors can get together, and we'll guarantee to beat them hands down."

The Housemaster laughed heartily. "Yes, I think I can see the seniors accepting that modest challenge," he remarked. "I hope they will have judgment enough to take this as a joke and not get angry, which, I am afraid, will please Blake very much. Ah! What is this? A sonnet." Mr. Railton wrinkled his brows over a sonnet signed "M. Lathorn." "Dear me!" he said. "It reads of very grammatically, yet for the life of me I cannot make any meaning out of it."

"Read it aloud," said Mr. Lathorn.
The Housemaster did so.

"Oh, lovely moon that shone in the sky,
And oft at midnight drew the lovers sigh,
On balmy ephraim horse beneath the moon,
And where the door, dear voice that should reply?
The moon sails on in more heavenly light,
But, oh, for that long-winded boon!
The glance no longer falls from that bright eye,
The moon sails on. But all is ended soon,
The morning sky, and then the Mass of noon."

"That is a very singular sonnet," the master of the Fourth remarked. "I am afraid Lathorn belongs to the school of poets who consider that anything will do so long as it is vague enough. Ah! The next item, I perceive, is by Wynn of the New House."

It did not need the signature to show that the next item was by Fanny Wynn:

"I WOULD I WERE A BIRD!

"I would I were a bird,
That I might fly away,
And in the workshop
Would perch, and there would stay.

"I'd feed upon the turfs,
I'd feed upon the cakes;
I'd pick the currier's bones,
The peardrops I would take."

"Ahem!" said Mr. Railton. "That is very characteristic of Wynn. We won't go through to the end. Ah, here are the limericks!"

There was rather an important announcement on this page:

"GREAT LAST-LINING COMPETITION!

"Send in your last lines, and huge prizes will be awarded to the winners."

The Gem Librarian.—No. 1,242.

"First Prize: One gilt-edged, double-back-action, brush-loading, non-slipping Thick Ear, to be applied for by a person by the winner.

"Second Prize: One first-class, unrivalled, extremely good-looking Black Eye, to be applied for at the office of the paper. Same as above.

"Third Prize: One really fashionable and well-fitting Swollen Nose. Awarded as above.

"Receipts of consolation prizes, too numerous to mention, to be awarded at the discretion of the editor. Every name will be expected to invest the staff of the 'Weekly' at its inception. Competitors entering the competition can do so only upon this understanding. The editor's decision as to the extent of the treat will be final.

"This week's limericks, to which the last lines are to be added:

"There's a fellow who don't care a pin
For whatever he cannot cream in.
He's a member, you know,
Of Figgins & Co.,
And the name of the gourmand is—"

"There's another about on a par,
Who hails from a country afar,
An unspokeable Scot,
More than half of his dot,
And the name of the founder is—"

"There's another who shares the same diggings,
Oh, to be more exact, the same puggings,
He's the chief of the Co.,
So I fancy you'll know
That the long, lanky freak's name is—"

Mr. Railton smiled, and Mr. Linton looked shocked.

"How extremely personal!" he said.

"Oh, I fancy Figgins and his friends take it in the right spirit," said Mr. Railton. "Yes, indeed, here are some more limericks, evidently a rejoinder to the editor's effusions:

"There's a chap who's impertinent very,
Whose poems we'd all like to bury,
When I say he's a freak,
With unparalleled cheek,
Then you'll know that his name is—"

"Ah, that is a return compliment for Tom Merry," Mr. Lathorn remarked. "By the fact of its appearance in the paper I suppose it is taken in good part."

"No doubt whatever about that," said the Housemaster.

"Ah, here's an announcement of the editor's resignation."

"An article on the subject of hygiene, by Miss Prindle Fawcett, which has been promised for the columns of the 'Weekly' has, unfortunately, not come to hand at the time of going to press. We hope to insert it next week."

Mr. Railton laughed.

"That is Tom Merry's former governor," he said. "A great authority, I believe, on the subject of the care of the health. I should be glad to see that article."

"Ah, here in the photographic page, conducted by Manzoni. Manzoni is an enthusiasm on that subject," Mr. Linton remarked. "Rather dull, I am afraid. What is this?"

It was a poem, in the style of "I give thee all, I am no more."

"I'll tell thee all about the mag,
Prodace in Study X,
Nine jansons write up the rag—
Nine intellectual wrecks.
At work in class or else at prep,
They're never known to rest
But their work like Trojans to produce
The 'Weekly'—weakly too!"

There were a dozen more stanzas, which Mr. Railton passed over. The last paragraph on the page caught his eye, and he glanced at it.

"NOTICE!—A certain freak at St. Jim's, having threatened to come down heavily upon the 'Weekly,' is hereby warned that the editorial staff regard him with profound contempt. He is such a rank outsider, and such an extremely despicable person, that we wonder to see the cheek to make his voice heard at all. This individual has had the nerve to threaten the staff of the 'Weekly'—as if we should take any notice of him! We shall pay no regard whatever to—"

The Housemaster had come to the bottom of the page.

and he lifted his eyes to the top of the nest to continue the paragraph. Then a dark shade went over his brow.

Mr. Linton, who was also reading, turned crimson. For this is how the paragraph went on:

"... Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, to whom a free copy of the magazine was dispatched immediately upon publication."

Mr. Bailton laid down the paper. There was silence in the Master's room. It was broken by Herr Schneider.

"Ach! Mein Gott! That was paid—too pointedly paid after!"

Mr. Linton was trembling with rage.

"I am sure, Mr. Bailton," he said, "that you will take proper steps to punish this astounding insolence to a Form master."

Mr. Bailton nodded.

"I leave the culprit entirely in your hands, Mr. Linton."

CHAPTER 4.

Suspended by Order!

TOM MERRY was looking and feeling extremely pleased with himself and with his staff. The publication of the "Weekly's" second number had gone off without a hitch.

Twenty copies had been issued and had been handed out of the editorial office to the eager crowd, and were now being perused by dozens of readers in every corner of St. Jim's. The editor and his staff rested from their labours.

"That's gone off jolly well!" said Tom Merry. "We're getting into the way of it now. I think the third number will be better still."

"I wonder what Linton thinks of it!" Mandy Lowther observed. "It was a good dodge to send him a presentation copy; sort of disguised his wrath beforehand. By the way, we ought to let Soffen have a copy."



As Tom Merry was replacing the jug in the basin, D'Arcy came at him like a mad bull. There was a crash of breaking china, and Tom went spinning on top of the wreckage.

to said. "You will deal with him, and with the publication, in whatever way you deem best."

"Thank you, sir."

"Very important and unpleasant," said Mr. Linton, as the Housemaster left the room, looking gravely amazed. "I cannot understand it of Tom Merry. But here it is, quite unmistakable."

"Quite!" said Herr Schneider. "Mein Gott!"

Mr. Linton set his thin lips hard.

"I shall stop this publication," he said. "It is certainly not fit to appear. The junior who wrote that paragraph deserves a severe flogging, but it might be hard to discover which one was guilty."

"Mein Gott! That is true; day will not stray van under before."

"I shall stop the paper," said the master of the Shell, "and I shall confiscate the copies already published."

He crumpled up the copy of the "Weekly" in his hand and strode from the room straight towards the editorial office of the "Weekly."

"I've seen to that," grinned Figgins. "I put a copy in his study, with the lid turned down at the paragraph referring to him."

Soffen, a senior of the New House, was at loggerheads with Tom Merry & Co. He never got on well with the juniors, being a great deal of a bully, and their references to him in the first number of the "Weekly" had been far from complimentary. The senior had heard of them, and had lost his temper and threatened fiercely to stop the publication of the "Weekly," to which Tom Merry had replied in an article in the present number expressive of the most professed contempt and scorn for the New House senior.

"We've given it to him strong," said Blake. "I hope it will do him good. If he likes to pay a visit to the editorial office to reconstrute, we're ready for him."

"Yess, wait!" said D'Arcy. "If the boundless attempts to restrain the freedom of the Press, we shall come down upon him very heavy, I really think—"

"Hallo! Herr's suddenly in a hurry!" exclaimed
THE GEM LITERARY.—No. 1296.

Figgins, as heavy and rapid footsteps sounded in the corridor. "That must be Selby."

"Stand ready!" exclaimed the editor of the "Weekly." "All hands stand ready to repel boarders! Man the ink-pots and press stamps!"

In a moment the staff of the "Weekly" were on the defensive. Cracked stamps and inkpots were to the fore, ready for the expected attack.

"The door of the study was being open.

"Give him a kick!" yelled Tom Merry. "Give him—Oh crumbs! Hold on! It's Linton!"

The staff lowered their weapons, all except Arthur Augustus, who was armed with an inkpot, and was too excited to notice that it was not Selby who had thrown the door open.

"Take that, you boarder!" he exclaimed. "Take that, you want curfew!" And he jerked the contents of the inkpot towards the newcomer.

"You are!" roared Blako.

He struck up D'Arcy's arm in time, and the ink splattered on the wall. Only a few drops went upon Mr. Linton, but those few drops were enough.

"You—you—you—the master of the Shell was stuttering with fury. "So this is the way in which you receive your master!"

"I am really sorry, sir!" said D'Arcy, tearing pain. "I thought it was that old Selby—I did really! I am extremely sorry, and I apologise profusely."

"I—I—"

"I assure you that I did not know it was you, sir, really. As one gentleman to another, I give you my word of honour!"

"Take five hundred lines, D'Arcy!" shouted Mr. Linton.

"But really, my dear sir, having apologised as one gentleman to another—"

"Take a thousand lines!"

"But really, as one gentleman—"

"Take two thousand lines!"

"But—"

"Five thousand lines!" roared Mr. Linton.

Arthur Augustus relapsed into silence. The lines were going up at such an alarming rate that his spare time would have been booked for whole terms ahead if Mr. Linton had gone on.

The editorial staff of the "Weekly" looked at one another in surprise and dismay. Mr. Linton's reception in

the study had been rather an awkward mistake, but, after all, D'Arcy had explained, and a few drops of ink were not such a terribly serious matter. What was the cause of the Firm master's evident temper?

Mr. Linton looked at the staff with a withering expression. "I have no doubt that you are proud of this production!" he exclaimed, holding up the crumpled copy of the "Weekly."

Tom Merry looked amazed. He did not know of anything in the paper on which Mr. Linton had a reason to take exception, and he seems strangely bad-tempered.

"Yes, sir," he replied respectfully. "We think we have turned it out pretty well, sir."

The Firm master appeared to chafe.

"And you think this paragraph is quite in good taste?" he speculated, pointing to the one which had caused so much remark in the Masons' room.

Tom Merry glanced at it.

"Well, you see, sir—"

"Yes, I see! I see insinuation, un-importance, blackguardism, and—"

"But—"

"Not a word! You can make no excuse—you can make no explanation."

"But—"

"Silence! Mr. Railton has left me to deal with the matter. I forbid you to keep on the justification of the paper!"

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Miss Dismayed, eyes simultaneously.

"If another number should be published in spite of the order the punishment will be severe. You understand? The 'Weekly' is to cease, and the copies already issued are to be brought to me to be destroyed!"

"But, sir, if—"

"Not a word. You will obey me. I will keep this copy. Merry—the extraordinary, unparalleled example of insinuation!"

"But I don't—"

"No more! Every copy must be sent to me, and all forthwith be destroyed. You understand?"

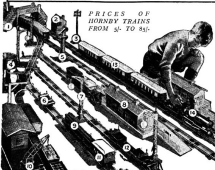
"Yes, sir, I understand, but—"

"That is enough. Obey me, or you will suffer!"

And the Firm master, with the crumpled copy of the

(Continued on the next page.)

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BRITISH AND GUARANTEED

"Weekly" slatched in his hand, turned and strode majestically from the study.

The editorial staff looked at each other in blank amazement and dismay.

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry at last. "What's the meaning of that?"

"Don't ask me," said Halse. "He's mad—mad as a hatter—mad as a whole stropful of March hares—mad as Gussy Birch and Bedlam rolled into one!"

"Right off his rocker," said Herbie, shaking his head.

"That's the only possible explanation."

"But he says that Mr. Liston is backing him up in this."

"Tom Liston's off his rocker, too."

"I can't understand it!" Missers exclaimed. "He must be wandering in his mind, Tom."

"Anyway, he means what he said."

"That we are to stop the magazine!" said Figgins, wrinkling his brows thoughtfully.

"Yes."

"Are we going to do it?" said Figgins, looking round.

"That was rebellion in every face."

"No," said Tom Merry; "we're not. We can't back against authority, of course, and we shall have to give in accordingly. But all the same—"

"Something will have to be done. It's unjust."

"Tyrannical?"

"Rotten?"

"Deadly?"

"Cobweb?"

"It's all that," said Tom Merry. "I'm not the chap to disregard a master if he's just. But to come down heavy on us for nothing at all—"

"Is it possible there's a mistake?" said Leather. "Let's let another look at the article."

"Here you are."

Tom Merry opened a copy of the magazine at page 12.

He put an finger on the bottom paragraph and read aloud.

"NOTICE.—A certain freak at St. Jim's, having threatened to come down heavily upon the 'Weekly,' he is hereby warned that the editorial staff regard him with profound contempt. He is such a rank outsider, and such an extremely despicable person, that we wonder he has the cheek to make his voice heard at all. This individual has had the nerve to threaten the staff of the 'Weekly,' as if we should take any notice of him. We shall pay no regard whatever to"—here the paragraph was continued on page 12—"—the idiotic threats and extremely impertinent remarks of Softon, and shall go on our way as if no such insignificant person existed."

"Well, that's rough on Softon," said Figgins. "But it's no business of Liston's. I don't see why he should get his rag out over that."

"Let's look at the paragraph on Liston himself," suggested Kerr. "Something may have gone wrong with that."

"That's page 12," said Arthur Augustus; "concluded on page 13."

Tom Merry turned to page 13 and read aloud.

"The publication of the 'Weekly' has caused great interest at the school, and we hope to extend the circulation amongst the Upper Forms, and thereby to bring about a useful improvement in many respects. Some of the powers that be have kindly taken an interest in the paper, including"—Tom Merry looked up to the next page where the paragraph was continued—"Mr. Liston, the master of the Shell, to whom a few copy of the magazine was deposited immediately on publication."

"Nothing wrong with that," said Figgins.

Tom Merry laid down the magazine.

"Nothing that I can see, here."

"Oh, the fellow is evidently right off his workah!" said B'Arcy. "He can't really expect us to take any notice of him."

"He was in deadly earnest, though," Figgins remarked.

"He shall have to keep up appearances, and if the 'Weekly' is published again it will have to be kept dark."

Tom Merry nodded.

"That's so. Meanwhile, like good little boys, we're going to give in—outwardly. I'll put a notice on the door to that effect."

And a little later the boys of St. Jim's could read the following announcement on the door of the editorial office:

"The publication of 'Tom Merry's Weekly' has been suspended. By order."

CHAPTER 8.

Leaving a Good Impression Behind.

"BY ORDER!" The words started in big letters from the door of the editorial office, and ere long there was a crowd of boys gathered round.

"Suspended, hey?" said Gore. "Jolly good thing, too."

"It was awful got, of course," Mollish observed. "But I wonder why the Head took the trouble to suspend it?"

"It wasn't the Head," said Jimmie, who had learnt some of the facts from Figgins; "it was Mr. Liston."

"The master of the Shell! What has he got to complain about?"

"Nothing that I know of."

"Like his cheek to interfere!"

"Right-ho! But Tom Merry won't kneuckle under, except."

Gore stared at Jimmie.

"What do you mean? He can't keep the paper on if it's forbidden."

Jimmie grinned.

"Mind's the word. I fancy next week's number will come out as usual. Wait and see."

"Well, he's got nerve enough for anything," said Gore. "I shouldn't wonder."

And the crowd, having satisfied themselves with staring at the notice on the door, dispersed. Questions were asked of Tom Merry & Co. by hosts of inquirers. They had no information to give.

"Are you really going to stop the paper, Merry?" Mollish asked bluntly.

"You'll see if you live long enough," was the non-committal reply.

"When will the next number be out?" Gore asked.

"When it's published," replied the editor.

"There is one coming out, then?"

"You'll see on Wednesday."

"Oh, you won't have nerve enough to do it, I know that, with old Liston hot on your track!" said Gore.

But even that did not move Tom Merry. He only smiled.

"Wait and see!" he remarked.

And the passers had to wait and see.

Mr. Liston happened to pass the door of Tom Merry's study and read the notice there, and smiled grimly. It did not occur to him that the prominent announcement might be simply a blind to disarm suspicion.

Tom Merry & Co. were busy. In a matter like this the rivals of St. Jim's pulled together like one man.

The Terrible Three and Study No. 2 forgot that the leadership of the School House was in dispute between them. Figgins & Co. never remembered that they were at deadly war with the School House.

Fences such as had seldom been seen before at St. Jim's reignited between School House and New House, for all the New House jammers backed up Figgins & Co., while even the Terrible Three and Study No. 2 were in accord, they were easily able to keep order on their side and put a stop to House rows.

As Tom Merry said, it was a time when all small disputes should be forgotten, and true Britons should stand shoulder to shoulder against tyranny. So shoulder to shoulder School House and New House stood, and the preparation of the third number went on apace.

The announcement on the door of the study having served its purpose was taken down, and the inscription "Editorial Office" no longer appeared there. But the staff were busy all the same.

They neglected their usual pursuits, everything except football, to put in their leisure time at the paper. There were no House rows, and hardly a row with the neighbouring Grammar School. They were too busy. That the third number of the paper was really coming out, in spite of the "By Order," was an open secret which gradually spread through the Lower Forms.

Of course, there was no one to give it away, and Mr. Liston went on in blissful unconsciousness of it. The master of the Shell had judiciously forgotten the five thousand lines he had in a moment of heat imposed upon B'Arcy. It was an impossible imposition, and hence left unheeded to. And, needless to say, the staff of the School House was only too willing to forget all about it, too.

Gore and his set showed great curiosity as to the progress of the third number, but the staff were not inclined to take the bait of the Shell into their confidence. There was, in fact, very little room for an editorial staff numbering nine in the study, and all questions were strictly barred.

"No room for us?" Tom Merry said, when Gore appeared at the door and looked in. "No admittance, except upon business. No hands required. Scat!"

THE GUY LAMBERT.—No. 1,244.

"You'd look pretty green if I let drop a hint to Linton,"
 assured Gore.

Tom Merry looked at him steadily.

"Even you couldn't be bad enough for that, Gore!"

"Don't be so beastly sure about it," said Gore.

"If you did, my poppin'," said Missy Lewther, "it would mean a Pomm kicking, and one you wouldn't get over in a hurry, Gore."

"Yess, wathah," said Arthur Augustus, looking up from the copying-press. "Yess, indeed. If you were to play the traitor in such an extremely treacherous way, Gore, I should take it upon myself to administer to you a fearful thrashin'!"

Gore sniffed.

"Oh, you couldn't thrash a white mouse!" he replied. "You're no good, ass!"

The smell of St. Jim's coloured with indignation.

"What did you refer to me as, Gore?"

"I refer to you as an ass," said Gore deliberately. "To be more precise, you are a silly ass—a most exceptionally silly ass—of the most astirine description possible!"

D'Arcy laid down the papers he had in his hand.

"Gore, I am extremely busy just now, but I cannot allow that remark to pass uncorrected. You have alluded to me in terms which I can only characterize as disrespectful."

"Go hon!" said Gore.

"Yess, wathah! I respiah you to withdraw those obnoxious expressions, as otherwise I shall have no alternative but to administer a fearful thrashin' to you on the spot!"

"What spot?" asked Gore.

"I ask you," said D'Arcy, with marked emphasis, "I request you, Gore, to withdraw those remarks. Are you givin' to do so, Gore?"

"No! I am not going to do so, ass!"

"Then I shall chastise you."

"Come on!" said Gore, pushing back his cuffs.

"Here, check it!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "You're not going to fight in my study. Gore, get out! Gussy, go on with your work!"

"I am awsey, Tom Mewey, that it is impos for me to continue my work until I have chastised Gore," said Arthur Augustus. "Undeh the cire, I have no alternative but to administer a fearful thrashin'!"

"Check it, I tell you! There's no room for fighting here! There's no room to breathe as it is! Stop it!"

"Go out into the passage and thrash him, Gussy!" said Lewther.

"Yess, wathah! I am willin' to do so. Gore, kindly step back into the passage, and I will chastise you there."

"Not much," said Gore, who was in a mood for mischief, and thought it would be funny to start a general scrap in the crowded editorial office. "I'm not going, and you can't shift me, Gus! You can't, really, Agy! You couldn't shift one side of me, Adolphus. You—"

"I will show you wathah I cannot shift you, you wude boundah!" said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "Fwepare to take a fearful hidde, you outside! I am goin' to give you a severe lesson."

"I'm waiting for it, Gustavus."

Gore was quite ready. As the smell of St. Jim's wafted at him, brandishing his fists, Gore closed with him, and they went reeling right and left through the study. A

.....

Potts, the Office Boy!



chair, laden with a stack of paper, went over with a nod and a table where two of the staff were writing labels and lists were the result. The staff were all on their feet, wretched, and bent on vengeance.

"Ho, ha, ha!" yelled Gore. "You're doing some damage, Gussy! Hallo, Lewther! Scorry!"

They staggered against Lewther, and sent him flying. "You wulf brante!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I'd put you out of the study, and administer the most fearful thrashin' you ever—"

"There you go, Gussy!"

Gore gave the rest of the School House a twist, and sent him flying. D'Arcy staggered blindly and helplessly as Tom Merry gave a yell of warning—too late.

"Look out! You're sitting in the gelatine!"

The last Arthur Augustus, thinking probably more of his "twosha" than the publishing firm of Tom Merry & Co., made a desperate effort to save himself, and, instead of sitting down, he fell upon his back full upon the gelatin.

Tom Merry gave a shout of wrath.

"Yes, ass! That's my title-page, and you've marked it up!"

"I really could not help it!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "It was the fault of that extremely woff and wude boundah, Gore!"

The editorial staff were already upon Gore. He was seized by half a dozen pairs of hands, and hurled forth into the corridor. At the same moment a bell began to ring. "Hang it!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "That's first class! Come on! Mr. old Schneider first this afternoon, and I mean a row if we're late."

And the staff, leaving their work just where it was, hurried away to the class-room. Herr Schneider was no meaner to be trifled with. He was taking the Shell and the Fourth together in German that afternoon, so the whole staff rushed off together. D'Arcy was the last to go to his place, and, as he did so, a giggle rose from the class.

D'Arcy, as it happened, was wearing a light jacket, and the impression had come off the gelatine surface with great exactitude upon the cloth. As D'Arcy walked to his place a dozen pair of eyes saw his back, and it was not surprising that the class giggled when they read on the back of Arthur Augustus' light jacket the curious announcement:

"TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

No. 2.

"Price Six. No reduction—"

Arthur Augustus, all unconscious of the cause of his general excitement, took his place, and Herr Schneider entered the room the next moment, and went to his desk.

CHAPTER 6.

Giving the Game Away!

HERR SCHNEIDER was in a good temper. The German master, as a matter of fact, was rather sorry for the staff of the great "Weekly," and as he thought there must have been some mistake about the disrespectful paragraph, he thought Mr. Lines had been rather hard upon the enterprising journalist.

"Now, boys, we will work hard dis afternoon mit our-selves," he said cheerfully. "I am glad to see tat you are all here before. Silence in de class!"

There was silence for a few moments, while the German master opened his book.

But when he looked up again the juniors were giggling. The Russian announcement upon D'Arcy's back, and his consciousness of it, tickled the juniors immensely.

The German master looked puzzled.

"Tat is it tat you laugh at after?" he inquired. "Why are you not grave before in de class-room, mein papa?"

The giggling died away.

"Tat will now take to second book of Schiller's great poem. Tat you smile at, Fraut?"

Fraut started.

"Did I smile, sir?"

"Yes, sir, you did, sir. Vat you vas smile for after?"

"Smoothing, sir."

"Tat you take twenty lines for smiling at nothing, Fraut?"

The German master was looking very severe now. He did not quite understand his class. He put on his spectacles and looked at his book.

"Hör ester diese Falten haust uns," he commenced.

And the lesson proceeded, the class now and again breaking out into chuckles, instinctly suppressed as the master's eye wandered round towards the chucklers.

The state of Gussy's jacket was soon known to the whole class, the information being passed in whispers, only Gussy remaining in ignorance of it.

Tom Merry was a worried look.

He had seen the inscription on Gussy's back, and he knew that if the master saw it the secret would be given away at once.

It would be an unmistakable proof that the copying had been in use only a short time before, and that, in point of fact, the publication of the suspended "Weekly" was going on the same as usual.

Tom resolved upon a desperate attempt. Anyway, it was not what might matter worse.

While Herr Schneider's attention was otherwise occupied Tom scribbled a few words on the flyleaf of his Schiller, and quietly tore it out and folded it up. It was passed, with a chagrin exclamation, along the Frow.

But Herr Schneider was on the alert, as it happened, and watching Tom Merry out of the corner of his eye. He saw down upon the delinquents suddenly.

"Masters!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Tom had just received a note from Leather, who received it from Tom Merry."

"Ja, mein pap, Gif it to me at vider, please!"

Leather reluctantly handed over the note. Herr Schneider opened it, with a grim smile, and Tom Merry gave an inward groan.

Herr Schneider read the note.

"Mind you don't turn your back to Schneider when you have your hat. You've got the impression from the relations you is—T. M."

Herr Schneider smiled grimly.

"For whom was tat note intended, Merry?" he asked.

It was useless to boast about the book. There was no chance of keeping the secret now.

"For D'Arcy, sir," said Tom reluctantly.

"D'Arcy, you will kindly come out before de class after."

"Certainly, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, with his usual politeness; and he came promptly out before the class and stood before the German master.

"You will turn your back to me, D'Arcy!"

Arthur Augustus stared at him in amazement.

"Please pardon me, sir, but I do not think I fully comprehend," he said. "Did you request me to turn my back to you?"

"Ja, I did, so do so quickly, mein pap!"

D'Arcy stared at the master and then at the class, who were giggling. In spite of their dismay the staff of "Tom Merry's Weekly" could not help smiling at the expression of D'Arcy's bewildered face.

"Did you hear me, pap?" exclaimed Herr Schneider impatiently.

"Yes, vaitch!" said D'Arcy. "I mean, yes, sir. But I still fail to comprehend. It would be the height of disrespect for me to turn my back upon a master, and I wouid do not see—"

"Turn round, sir!" thundered Herr Schneider, in a voice that made Gussy leave off his remonstrance in the middle, and whirl round as if on a pivot.

The German master fixed his eyes on the back of D'Arcy's jacket.

Clear on the light grey cloth showed the impression of the title page of "Tom Merry's Weekly"—that part of it on which Gussy had promised when he fell:

"TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY.

No. 3.

Price Six. No Reduction!"

The German master tried to keep a grave face, but, in spite of himself, a slow smile crept over his fat visage.

"Ach! So you had been in at printing and at publishing business since it was forbidden, after!" he exclaimed.

"Eh, sir! I wouid do not comprehend!" said D'Arcy.

"Take off your jacket, D'Arcy, and look at it, after."

The bewildered D'Arcy removed his jacket, and gazed at the impression. Then he understood at last. His expression changed; but he was not thinking of "Tom Merry's Weekly," or of the discovery that had been made.

"My jacket! That lowrid ink has spoiled my jacket!" he exclaimed, in dismay. "Tom Merry, this is the last straw. I resign from the staff."

Tom Merry looked daggers at him.

"Shut up!" he said, in a stage whisper.

"Merry, you will not speak to D'Arcy! D'Arcy, you may replace your jacket. It seems tat tero is some more printing of tat paper, ain't it, posture?"

The staff of the famous periodical were silent.

As "No. 3" formed part of the impression upon D'Arcy's jacket, denial would not have been of much use, even if any of the juniors had been inclined to perjure, which they were not.

"Mein goodness! I must look into tat matter before," said Herr Schneider. "Now ve will go on mit to lesson, ain't it, after?"

The lesson was not long in finishing. After the class was dismissed, D'Arcy changed his jacket. That was the most important matter of the moment to the staff of St. Jim's.

The rest of the afternoon was a worrying one to the staff of the "Weekly." That the German master knew the truth was certain, and they could only expect the strong

An "Igh" Shot!



gram of authority to directed upon Study No. 20 and the half-prepared third number now reposing there.

"My hat!" murmured Tom Merry. "If the third number bump up over this we'll shay D'Arcy! We'll torture him! We'll toss him in jail!"

A proposition to which the rest of the staff heartily assented.

CHAPTER 7.
A Change of Quarters.

WHAT will Schneider do? That was the question that agitated the minds of the staff of "Tom Merry's Weekly," as they gathered again in the editorial den.

They could not shake up their minds about it. The German master had apparently said nothing, so far, either to Mr. Linton or the Housemaster, and the staff were in a state of suspense. What would Schneider do?

"He'll come along to the study himself," said Blake gloomily. "He'll demand to see all we've done so far of the third number, and he'll condemn it."

"That's it," Leathair assented. "We shan't give the papers up, I suppose?"

"We shall have to give up something," said Tom Merry; "but not all, of course. They may confiscate our machinery—ahem—but we'll get a new rig-out. We're going to stick to this."

"We've got all the things out of sight," said Figgins, looking round. "Nothing here to catch the eye. But, of course, he knows all about it, the beast!"

"Well——Hallo, here's the fairy footsteps of the one-and-only Schneider! I'd have that ten-ton tramp anywhere. Quiet!"

There was a knock at the door—the visitors always knocked at St. Jim's—and Herr Schneider came into the study.

The janitors all rose to their feet respectfully. They eyed the German master's face with keen anxiety. He had never erred on the side of being too lenient; but they knew he had a good heart underneath, though his temper was hard.

He had always been down on Tom Merry, yet certainly the scamp of the Shell had deserved it often enough. At the present moment there was a grim look on the fat face, but a twinkle of humor in the eyes.

"Mein gods, I haf come to speak to you."

"Thank you, sir," said Tom Merry. "That's very kind of you indeed, sir."

"Merry, I tink dat you have started worse wares to publish dat paper, ahn't it, which to Housemaster had forbidden."

"Set the Housemaster, sir. Mr. Linton."

"De haf to Housemaster's authority, and his order must be obeyed, ahn't it?" said the Herr severely. "I haf discover by accident dat you will do wat you must not do, and come to here mit regard to speak to you. I not like to see you all in game, but I not allow you to break to orders. You must stop dat paper, ahn't it?"

The janitors were silent.

It was not the German master's intention to give them away—that was something. But about stopping the paper—that was another matter.

"I say nothing," said Herr Schneider. "I say nothing; but to better must not be printed. I not wish to get you boys into trouble, ahn't it? I gif you dat warning, dat is all. Better take my advice from me, mein gods."

And the German master turned to go.

"Thank you very much, sir," said Tom Merry sincerely enough. "You are very kind."

"I mean to be kind, mein gods, I'ough some of to janitors do not like de Sherman master," said Herr Schneider.

"Oh, sir, we all like you, really!" said Tom Merry. "We respect you very much, sir, and we are very grateful to you for your goodness now."

"Dat is good. Take heed of to warning, Merry."

The German master left the study.

The staff of the "Weekly" looks into smiles of satisfaction.

"We've wot out of that," said Tom Merry. "It's unaccountably deep out of old Schneider to let us down so lightly. I dare say we've never done him justice. His bark is worse than his bite."

"He's like the egg in the story, good in parts," said Monty Leathair, shaking his head. "He's in a good temper to-day. Still, he's not a bad sort. Some matters would have made us promise not to print the paper. He hasn't."

"I never knew a better way to make a liar of a boy than to make him promise things he hates doing," said Tom Merry. "We're not bound by any promise. It's simply a
The Glee Linnet.—No. 1,28.

case of risking a licking, and I think none of us is afraid of that."

"Not much."

"We'll let Gussy off, as the Schneider bird has played up so decently," said Tom. "Gussy, your waistcoat and tin and silk hats are safe."

"I did not really believe you could be so brutal, Tom Merry——"

"Bare! Let's go on with the printing!"

"Hold on!" said Figgins. "Schneider will be bound to keep an eye on us now, even if he doesn't tell Linton. He must do something, for the sake of discipline, you know. Besides, something may get to Linton's ears about that job in the classroom. The whole school is talking about the suggestion on Gussy's jacket."

"Yess, walah! I was tellin' Gibson about it, and Kees heard me, and——"

"And! You see, kids, it won't be safe to carry on the publication in the study any more," said Figgins seriously. "It's no good running risks."

There was a long silence.

"Figger's right," said Tom Merry at last. "It would be like Linton to pay as a sudden visit to take us by surprise."

"And then all the fat would be in the fire."

"But what are we to do?" said Monty Leathair seriously.

"We're not going to give up establishing the 'Weekly'!"

"Not much."

"We shall have to find another editorial office, that's all," said Figgins, "and carry on the work of right."

"There!"

"It's the only plan."

"Yass, walah!" said Arthur Augustus. "And I've got a wondrous good, wippin' idea, kids; a wondrous good first-rate scheme!"

"Oh, we know your Figgins' ideas!" said Tom Merry suspiciously. "But out with it!"

"Let us meet in the wained castle at midnight," said D'Arcy, looking round. "It's only a few miles from St. Jim's, and it will be wondrous romantic, don't you know. We can all have our things there in the vaults, you know, and——"

"Well, of all the silly one ideas I ever heard of," said Figgins. "I think that's about the silly-est!"

"I must wouppen you to represent yourself more politely, Figgins. I woudly think dat my idea is a wippin' one, and I tink it shoud be adopted."

"If you think we're going to spend every night walking to and from the wained castle, Gussy," said Blake, "you must be a bigger fanatic than I ever took you for!"

"Dat it will be so woumanic, like a lot of romancers——"

"Gussy, your ideas are simply rotten, and you are requested to shut up!" said Monty Leathair. "All who are of that opinion, please signify in the usual way."

"Shut up!" said eight voices in unison.

"Oh, wess well!" said D'Arcy. "That's the last wippin' idea I shall waste upon you stupid brackles, so I wass you!"



Arthur Augustus, thinking more of desperate effort to carry out

"The question is," said Tom Merry, running his fingers through his curly hair, "where can we do the publishing business? We're all agreed that rammed castles are off, but where—where is the new editorial office to be found?"

"Oh, where, and oh where can it be?" said Mopsy Lovelorn thoughtfully.

"What price the dilapidated box-rooms on the top floor?" suggested Manners. "There are rats there, but we could have a look-up for the proprietor, and they couldn't get at the things if we took care."

Tom Merry's face brightened.

"Good idea!" he exclaimed. "The very place!"

"That here on going on with the work in the day-time, though," said Lovelorn. "The fellows would know where we were, and there would always be a lot of them coming up and down to and from the rooms, and the seniors would soon smell a rat. Some beauty perfect would be bound to come down upon us in noon to no time."

"Oh, we shall have to work after lights out!" said Tom. "That's settled. We must be prepared to make sacrifices in the cause of liberty."

"Yes, wotah!"

"But what about Figgins & Co.?" said Blake. "They'll

CHAPTER 8.

More Trouble for Gussy!

BOOM!

Tom Merry sat up in bed.

The clock was striking from the tower of St. Jim's the first stroke of eleven.

BOOM!

The second echoed through the silent night again and again, till the eleventh stroke had been toll'd. It wanted an hour to midnight, and St. Jim's was dark and silent, and most of its occupants safe in the arms of Morpheus.

Most, but not all. The enterprising editor of "Tom Merry's Weekly" was wide awake. Tom Merry had not closed his eyes since going to bed, and, at the stroke of eleven, the time seemed upon, he slipped out of bed.

The hour was late, and the bed warm and attractive, but Tom Merry was born and determined.

Publication of the "Weekly" had to go on, though the heavens fell, and a night's rest wasn't much to sacrifice in the cause of freedom of the Press.

"I say, Lovelorn, are you awake?"

"Grough!" was the reply of Mopsy Lovelorn.

Tom jerked the blanket off his chest, and Mopsy Lovelorn started up, shivering.

"Hallo! Grough! Ooooh! What's up?"

"I am, and it's time you were! Get a move on you!"

"What a determined beast you are, Tom! Wake up, Manners?"

"Manners, old man, it's time to get up!"

"Goo—goo—oooh!"

Tom Merry shook his chest by the ears, and Manners started out of his slumber. His first impression was that someone was playing a trick on him, and he lit out wildly, and caught Tom a rap on the nose that brought the water to his eyes.

"Ow!" gasped the editor of "Tom Merry's Weekly."

"Ow! What the dickens?"

"Hallo, is that you, Tom? Sorry! I thought it was one of those Fourth Form kids. Is it time to get up? I think I must have fallen asleep!"

"I think you must," growled Tom, rubbing his nose rudely. "Up with you! We've got to call those kids in the Fourth Form dormitory, and let in Figgins & Co."

"Right you are, Tommy. Hope I didn't hurt you," said Manners, jumping briskly out of bed. "Where are my top? Stan's keep you a minute!"

The Terrible Three were quickly dressed. None of the other boys of the Shell had awakened, and the three slugs stole from the dormitory without any questions asked. The corridor without was very dim and dark. The chains left their way along cautiously, and stopped at the door of the Fourth Form quarters.

"You two go and let Figgins in," whispered Tom, "while I wake up Blake. You know the window. Figgys was to be there sharp at eleven, and it's five minutes past now!"

"Good! We'll meet you on the landing!"

Manners and Lovelorn stole away in the darkness, and Tom Merry quietly entered the Fourth Form dormitory.

The long, lofty apartment was very dark and gloomy, only a faint light glimmering in at the high windows from the stars.

But Tom Merry knew his way about. He made his way directly to Blake's bed, and found the Chief of Study No. 2 fast asleep. He shook him by the shoulder, and Blake instantly awoke. He blinked up at Tom Merry.

"Hallo! Is it eleven? I didn't hear the clock strike?"

"I did!" said Tom Merry. "Up you go! Figgins & Co. will be waiting for us!"

"Right you are! Wake up Horrie and Gus."

Blake got up, and Tom Merry went to Horrie's bed. Horrie was always a heavy sleeper, and it required two or three vigorous shakes to rouse him. He yawned and stretched.

"Gee-ow-ow! Go way! Tain't rising-hell! Guff!"

Tom grinned and grabbed up a water-jug from a wash-stand. Then Horrie slowly opened his eyes and stared up at the head of the Shell.

"I say, Merry, tain't eleven yet. Tain't merch ten! Lemme alone!"

"Get up, lay-bones!"

"I say, it's jolly cold! I say, it's late in the year for this sort of thing, Tom Merry! I—I say, don't you think we'd better leave it until to-morrow night? I say, I—ow! Oooh!"

Horrie might have gone on with his "I say" for an indefinite length of time, but Tom Merry let some water trickle from the jug, and the contact of the cold water cut him short.

"Ow! Down! Oooh! If you do that again——"

THE GUY LUMBER.—No. 1, 2, 3.



Even from the printing press of Tom Merry & Co., made a cushion for his back in the middle of the gelatine!

have to get out of their House, and get into the School House if they're going to help."

"And we are, rather!" said Figgins emphatically. "We'll come out of our dormitory by ropes, and you fellows can let us in at one of your lower windows, or let a rope out for us from the dormitory window."

"It will be risky, Figgys."

"We don't care, do we, kids?"

"Not a bit!" said the Co. together.

"Then it's settled," said Tom Merry decidedly. "After lights out to-night we'll come out of the dormitory, and let in Figgys, and then take the things up to the old box-room, and get on with the work."

And the plan being unanimously adopted, the meeting of the editorial staff broke up.

"Get up, or I'll pass the jug over you!" said Tom Merry. "Now, then, one, two, three, and—"

"Stop! I'm getting up!"
Harris leaped out of bed. Tom chuckled as he set down the jug again. He crossed over to Arthur Augustus' bed. The swell of the School House was fast asleep, and appeared to be dreaming. He was muttering in his sleep. Tom grinned as he caught the words.

"Double-breasted, of course. Light gray—blue stripes—pink spots—pinked out with yellow and green!"

D'Arcy was evidently dreaming of the pattern of a new and gorgeous waistcoat.

Tom Merry shook him, and he opened his eyes and blinked.

"Light gray cloth, please," he said, "and I was not quite satisfied with the fit of the last one. It was a trifle tight in the back—Hullo, Tom Merry!"

"Get up!" said Tom Merry. "I'm not your giddy tailor, instead! Time to get up, we're waiting to be off to the editorial office!"

D'Arcy squirmed under the warm clothes. The night was chilly, and the draught from the open door was suggestive of cold and discomfort.

"Pray excuse me, Tom Merry," he said, pulling the clothes about his ears, "I have changed my mind, old fellow—"

"Well, that's a jolly good thing. Your mind was rather a wobbly one, and any change must be for the better," said Tom Merry heartily.

"Pray don't wot, Tom Merry. It's too cold to creep out that ideal about the box-room, and I wearily wish to be excused. I have no objection to you fellows going if you like. But I prefer to stay in bed. Tom Merry, I

insist upon your leavin' off shakin' me in that wude and wuff manner!"

"I'm not going to leave off shaking you, Gussy, till you're got up," said Tom Merry. "So the sooner the quicker, you know!"

"I weep, Tom Merry, that I have changed my mind, and that I do not desire to get up now," said Arthur Augustus, with emphasis. "I must weep you to leave me in peace, or I shall get angry and provoked, and then I shall lose my temper!"

"Hoored! Are you going to get up?"

"Certainly not! I refuse to do so! I am very comfy where I am, and unless the moon I prefer to remain here! If you shake me again, Tom Merry, and force me to win, I shall instantly proceed to give you a fearful thrashing!"

"Do you prefer to get up wet or dry, Gussy? You can take your choice. If you're not out of bed in two seconds, this jug goes upside down over you!"

Tom Merry lifted the jug out of the basin of the wash-stand beside Gussy's bed. The swell of the School House gave him a glare.

"Tom Merry, I refuse, I utterly refuse to win. It is now a question of dig, and I must consider that. I refuse to win!"

"Then here goes!" said Tom Merry cheerfully, and he turned the jug a little on its side, so that a thin stream of water descended upon the countenance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Say when!"

Gussy did not say when. He gave a gasp of fury, and leaped from the bed, unfortunately knocking his head against the jug and getting a splash that wetted him to the skin.

"Clumy!" said Tom Merry.

"I will thrash you fearfully," howled D'Arcy, and he skipped over the bed and plunged headlong at Tom Merry.

Tom was just replacing the half-sprung jug in the basin when D'Arcy came at him like a mad bull. The base of the Shell dropped the jug into the basin, and there was a crash of smashing china. Tom fell on top of the wreckage, but D'Arcy soon dragged him off again, and got his head into chancery.

Tom was taken by surprise, which was how Gussy gained such an advantage, but in a few moments he jerked his head free. But Gussy still clung to him, pommeling away with all the energy imparted by ruffled dignity. The crash had awakened every boy in the dormitory, and they stood in amazement at the struggling figures. Exclamations were heard on every side.

"You—you are!" gasped Tom Merry. "You'll have the reasons down on us. I say, some of you get hold of this idiot, or I shall have to beat him!"

Hake and Harris dragged D'Arcy off.

"My hat!" exclaimed Lowther, coming into the dormitory with Mansson, followed by Figgins & Co. "What's the row? Do you want to wake the House?"

"It's that am, Gussy," gasped Tom Merry. "You howling idiot, be quiet!"

"I refuse to be quiet! I distinctly refuse to be quiet! I will not be quiet until I have administered a fearful thrashing to Tom Merry!"

"You cuckoo! You will wake the House!" hissed Hake, dragging D'Arcy back, as he made a frantic effort to treat himself loose and rush at Tom Merry, who was nearly doubled up with laughter.

"I shall be extremely sorry to wake the House," said D'Arcy, "but I cannot allow such an insult to my dig to be passed unpunished. I insist—"

"Look here! We shall have Linton or Schneider up here in a minute—"

"That is a wretched notion, compared with a question of personal dig. Hake, I shall no longer regard you as a friend if you do not welcome me at once."

"Better kill him," gurgled Harris. "He won't be happy till he gets it. Better knock him on the head with a cricket bat, and have done with him!"

"I refuse to be knocked on the head with a cricket bat. I distinctly refuse. I request you to welcome me, in order to administer a thrashing to Tom Merry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Tom Merry. "He'll be the death of me, I know he will. We shall have to slay him; he's too funny to live."

"Welcome me! I—"

The staff of "Tom Merry's Weekly" fell upon the swell of the School House and pinned him down. Figgins picked up a jug of cold water.

"Now, Gussy, promise me to make it pay, or this little jet goes over your physiognomy," said Figgins.

"I refuse to do anything of the kind—I refuse—Ouch! If you throw that wash over me, Figgins, I shall thrash you when I have thrashed Tom Merry! Ur! Don't!



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"I-I promise—I'll make it par! Oh! Leave off! I promise!"

About a pint of water had trickled over D'Arcy's upturned face, sufficient to make him not wait any more.

Figgins took the jug away, grinning, and the staff followed the limp and wet smell of the School House to rise. He wrung his hair.

"I regard this conduct as well and unobjectionably," he said. "I am seriously inclined to cut the acquaintance of all you wads, woff beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Care!"

It was a sudden whispered warning from Blake. He had caught a glimmer of light under the door of the dormitory, which Figgins had closed after entering.

For a moment the juniors were stricken with dismay.

It was evident that the noise had caught the ears of some master who had not yet gone to bed, or who had perhaps been awakened from his sleep by the disturbance, and that he was coming with a light to investigate.

"My hat!" muttered Tom Merry. "We're in for it this time! But there's a chance! Under the beds, quick, kids!"

Never was an order obeyed more promptly. The six visitors to the Fourth Form dormitory disappeared into the gloom beneath as many beds in a twinkling, and at the same time, Blake, Herries, and D'Arcy jumped back into bed and pulled the clothes over themselves.

The door opened, and a lamp glimmered into the dormitory, Tom Merry venturing a peep from under Blake's bed, recognised Mr. Bailton standing in the doorway, looking into the room. He was fully dressed.

"Boys!" The Headmaster's voice was low, but very clear, and it penetrated to every part of the great room. "Boys, are any of you awake?"

Several voices answered from different quarters. Mr. Bailton smiled. Perhaps these noaves sounded a little too emphatic to be quite genuine.

The Headmaster advanced into the dormitory. The swamp of spit water on the floor could not fail to catch his eye, and almost immediately afterwards his glance alighted upon the broken jug and basin on D'Arcy's washstand.

"Ah, some skylarking after lights out?" he murmured. "After all, boys will be boys. I am afraid you are only desiring to be asleep, my lads, he went on aloud. "You know you must be quiet after lights out. Pray do not let there be any further disturbance."

And Mr. Bailton walked to the door and went out, closing the door behind him.

Tom Merry came out from under the bed, with a gasp of relief. The rest of the invaders of the dormitory followed suit.

"Well, that was a narrow shave!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"What an awfully decent chap Bailton is, kids! He remembers that he was a boy once himself; and that's a thing a master will never do, as a rule. I approve of Bailton."

"That's nice of you," said Blake. "He would feel awfully good if he heard that. Lucky he never thought of looking under the beds. He just took it to be a dormitory row. Gang will have to pay for that crockery, but as he has heaps of money, that doesn't matter, and if it prevents his buying another new waistcoat, why, that will be a good thing!"

"We'dly, Blake—"

"Oh, don't talk, Gang! You've nearly spelled everything, as it is. We'd better wait a bit till Bailton settles down again, kids."

"Really luck that he should be sitting up late," said Figgins. "I hate a fellow who never knows when he's had enough work. We shall have to wait."

The editorial staff of the "Weekly" waited till the half-hour chimed out from the school tower, and then Tom Merry opened the door, looked forth, and listened.

All was quiet and still. Not a sound broke the silence of the night, save for the rustling of a mouse behind the washstand.

"All serene!" said Tom Merry, looking round. "Come along—and don't make a noise! Mind how you carry your feet, Herries."

"You let my feet alone!" growled Herries.

"I'm not going to touch 'em—they're a bit above my weight. Don't get waxy, kid, but come along. Follow the man from Cook's."

And Tom Merry led the way up the dark, deserted stairs to the top landing, and then into the musty, dimmed box-room, the former scene of the editorial labours of the staff of the "Weekly."

CHAPTER 9.

Gang in the Act!

TOM MERRY passed in the doorway of the large dark room, and bent his head as if to listen.

"What's the matter?" muttered Blake. "Have you seen a g-g-ghost?"

"I believe I heard something."

"In the room?" asked Blake, peering into the blackness before them, which was broken only by the glimmer of starlight in all the uncurtained windows of the dimmed room.

"No, downstairs," said Tom Merry. "I fancied I heard a sound like a door opening or shutting. I suppose it was only fancy."

"Of course it was! Get on, and let's get a light; this darkness makes me creepy," said Blake. "I've got a lamp ready. Let's get inside."

The nine juniors crowded into the box-room. Figgins closed the door, and then Blake scraped a match and lighted the lamp he carried. It was a bicycle lamp, and he fluted the rays over the box-room as soon as he had lighted it.

Save for a few old, useless articles of furniture, the box-room was quite empty—except for a leather-bound trunk that had lately been placed there. This trunk had been carried secretly to the box-room by the juniors, and it contained all the paraphernalia used in the publication of "Tom Merry's Weekly."

Several articles of the party carried bicycle lamps, so that there was seen a good illumination for the work to be done.

Blake glanced rather doubtfully at the window.

"I say, there's no blind or curtain to that," he said. "The light will shine right out over the quad. I never thought of that."

"What does it matter?" said Kerr. "I suppose nobody will be taking a constitutional in the quadrangle at a quarter to twelve at night."

"And the light couldn't be seen across in the New House," said Figgins confidently. "The trees are in the way, even if anybody happens to be up in our House; and I believe they were all asleep. There wasn't a single light to be seen when we slipped out of the dormitory, I know that."

"Oh, I suppose it's safe enough!" agreed Blake. "Anyway, we've got to risk it. Let's get to work! We couldn't stay here more than an hour or so. We shall have to get some sleep, or we shall be nodding in class to-morrow."

"An hour every night will do the trick, I think, and we shall be ready for publication on Wednesday," said Tom Merry. "Wire it!"

The staff wired in, and they were soon very busy.

The old boxes in the room served as tables and chairs, and the juniors had not forgotten anything that was required for the work, and so the business of preparing the third number of the "Weekly" went forward without a hitch.

With earnest faces and ink-y fingers the staff laboured, the atmosphere broken only by an occasional remark.

Suddenly Tom Merry gave a violent start.

"Hark!"

The others suspended their work in alarm, and looked at him. Tom Merry raised his head, and the juniors all listened intently.

Upon the stairs leading up to the box-room the sound of footsteps were clearly audible.

"Somebody's coming!" whispered Blake tensely.

The staff were stricken with utter dismay.

It was not likely to be a boy coming up to see them. Besides, the footsteps were too heavy. Was Mr. Bailton on the prowl again? Was it Herr Schneider or, worst of all, Mr. Linton?

"What was to be done?"

"Close the gim," muttered Blake.

The advice was promptly acted upon. It was not likely to be of much good, but there was a chance. The lamps were blown out, immediately a fearful smell pervaded the box-room. One of the lamps was of the acetylene variety, and, on being blown out, the evil-smelling carbide gas escaped, and proceeded to fill the room with odour.

Blake sniffed, and Figgins sniffed, and the others sniffed in chorus. In the midst of the sniffs the door of the box-room opened. The juniors left off sniffing, and sat or stood quite still in the darkness, with beating hearts.

"Dear me, what a terrible smell!" It was the voice of Mr. Bailton, the master of the School House. "Ah, it is the smell of calcium carbide. Boys, you may light your lamps again. I am perfectly aware that you are here."

Tom Merry growled. He struck a match and lighted his lamp, and the other juniors disconcertedly followed suit.

The smell of the carbide died down as the lantern was lighted again.

Mr. Bailton stood revealed. He looked round the room with a grim smile.

The persons looked at one another, and at the Housemaster. They did not know exactly what to say. Even Tom Merry was at a loss.

"Good-evening," said Mr. Bailton calmly.

"Good-evening, sir!" said Tom Merry, proffering some of his goodness. "It's—it's a cold night for the time of year, sir."

Figgins gave a slight chuckle. But he became as grave as a judge again as the eye of the Housemaster turned in his direction.

"I see you are busily employed," said Mr. Bailton. "I am sorry to interrupt your labours. I see that some New Home boys are here. This is rather an unusual departure, I think."

"An—an unusual arrival, sir," ventured Figgins.

Mr. Bailton did not appear to hear.

"Please explain yourself, Tom Merry? I suppose you are at the bottom of this, as usual? Is this the first time you have played this extraordinary prank?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom dimly. "The first, and, I suppose, now the last."

"You may be quite sure of that," said the Housemaster. "It was quite by chance that I have discovered you. I have been working late, and I took a turn round the quadrangle before going to bed. That was how I saw the glare of light from the window. I fancied it must be laughter at first, till I saw your shadows on the window. It was really a little reaction of you, Merry. Now, what are you doing here?"

"Editing, sir. Preparing the third number of the 'Weekly' for publication."

Mr. Bailton's brow darkened.

"But the publication of this periodical has been forbidden, Merry."

"Has it, sir?" said Tom Merry meekly.

"You know perfectly well that it has, Merry?" exclaimed the Housemaster, raising his voice a little. "Mr. Linton told you so plainly enough."

"Well, you see, sir, we— That is— I—I mean— That is to say—"

"I am afraid that I cannot regard that explanation as either valid or satisfactory, Merry," said Mr. Bailton, as Tom halted. "If you cannot give a better one—"

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POPULAR WIRELESS

Every Thursday 3d

"Pussy allow me to speak, sir!" said Arthur Argentin, who had been looking very thoughtful. "I really think I could satisfactorily explain the circumstance."

"What up, now?" came in a fierce whisper from the rest of the staff.

"They were certain that Gussy would, as usual, make a 'muck' of it."

"I refuse to shut up!" said D'Arcy. "I really think that I can convince Mr. Bailton—"

"If you have anything to say, D'Arcy, I will hear it. But you must be quick!"

"Certainly, sir! The fact is, Mr. Linton suspended the publication of the magazine under a misapprehension. He seemed to fancy that we referred to him disrespectfully, which, of course, would not have been good form, and, therefore, we did not really do so. If Mr. Linton had allowed us to explain—"

"I do not understand you, D'Arcy. I myself read—"

"Pussy allow me to finish, sir. We actually referred to Mr. Linton, except with greatest respect. And, as we considered that the paper had been suspended unjustly, we determined to continue the publication in the second issue of freedom. That is our excuse, sir," said D'Arcy, with a graceful bow.

Mr. Bailton's features relaxed a little.

"If it was really the case, D'Arcy I might be inclined to pardon even this gross infraction of the rules," he said. "But I myself read the publication, and came upon terms of the grossest disrespect applied to Mr. Linton."

"The staff of the 'Weekly' explained plans."

"There is a mistake somewhere," said Tom Merry. "I give you my word of honour, sir, that we said nothing of the kind. It would have been foolish, as we sent a copy of the paper to Mr. Linton, as well as being bad taste."

"But I tell you, Merry, that I read the article myself."

"There is some mistake. In the first number of the paper Gussy mixed up an article, and made it sound as if it had been written by himself."

"Oh, really, Tom Merry—"

"Something of the sort may have happened again," went on Tom. "I don't see how, as the pages have all been printed off from the same copy. But it may have happened. Will you look at the paper, sir—we have a copy here—and tell us what it was Mr. Linton objected to?"

Mr. Bailton was looking decidedly puzzled himself.

He had never known Tom Merry tell a lie, and yet he had the evidence of his own eyes to go upon. He looked across at Tom Merry produced a copy of the second number of the "Weekly," and opened it at page 10.

"There is the article, Merry," he said, pointing to the paragraph headed "Notice." "Can you deny that it contains expressions that ought never to be even thought of towards a master?"

Tom Merry looked astounded.

"But that paragraph doesn't refer to Mr. Linton!" he exclaimed. "It's about Sifton of the Sixth."

"Impossible! Impossible! Mr. Linton's name is mentioned."

"It isn't, sir—really! It's a mistake. We stated Sifton in the first number. You know he's an awful bad, sir," said Tom indignantly. "He got into a fearful way, and threatened to put a stop to the paper, and this paragraph was written to show that we didn't care a button for him, sir. And we don't: Mr. Linton pointed out this paragraph when he came to our study that day, but he never said anything about imagining it referred to him."

"His name is mentioned in it, Merry," said Mr. Bailton sternly.

"Impossible, sir! Read it for yourself!"

Mr. Bailton looked through the paragraph, and its conclusion on the next page. The name of Sifton was there; but the Form master's name did not appear.

"Has there—has there been any alteration made here?"

"None at all, sir. You can see for yourself that all the numbers were taken off the same copy, sir," said Tom Merry.

Mr. Bailton was quite able to see that. He was distinctly puzzled. It was clear enough to him that the juniors were telling the truth, yet—

"The paragraph closed in a very different way, as I remember it," he said. "Something like this, 'To Mr. Linton, the master of the Sixth, to whom a free copy was sent.'"

Tom Merry gave a jump.

"That line occurs in the paragraph on Mr. Linton?" he exclaimed. "Let me show it to you, sir!" He opened the magazine at page 12, and pointed out the paragraph in question. "You see, sir, it begins on page 12, and finishes on 13, in the words you say. But there's nothing in that paragraph for Mr. Linton to complain of."

TAKE A LOOK INSIDE—



Address all letters to: *The Editor, The G.M., The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fantasy House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*

HALLO again here we are again with the best programme of stories it a possible to get anywhere. "Isn't the Gun just great?" writes a reader from Liverpool. "I'll say it is—and here! What did you think of this week's special page of Tom Terry & Co.'s Topping? Yes, we are all agreed. Well, next week's "Isa, complete," featuring your favourite schooling characters, is equally so good. Take a special at the title.

"LOVE-GES GUEST!"

and stand by us a large dose of laughs. Poor old George is true! Oh, say hat! He's a regular scream on any one! But when he's in the throes of courtship—well! That's been rather one on next week's novel programme. Hang next to it is another fun Hookwood yarn, entitled:

"HANDSON DOES THE HANDSOME!"

in which Owen Gwynne contrives to give all his readers a ripping mixture of fun and suspense with Jimmy Bivore & Co., of Redwood. To wind up the story "Items" there will be another powerful complete yarn of

THE PUNCHER PALS!

They're great, guys, aren't they? Bungle knock-outs in fact! Look out for 'em next Wednesday. Don't forget, either, to take your weekly dose of laughter from Potts, the Office Boy. He's "on parade" again with a vengeance. Ready for the notebook? Right! Here goes! We'll have a job first!

HEARD THH ONE?

Short-sighted old lady being shown over Nelson's Remains, the Victoria. "By an affirmative 'reaffirmation,'" said the guide, pointing to a bronze ring in the dock, "is mine the patient Nelson fell!"

Old Lady: "I've not surprised, either, poor fellow. If any I meant fell over the lovely thing again!"

THE BIG SISTER!

"Birdman," of Manchester, wants to know if the famous German air liner Dornier DO-X, is really the largest flying-boat in the world. If my information is correct, the answer is "No." It is not generally known that a sister ship to the DO-X has been built in Germany and is recently based over in Italy. This monster, the I.B.R.D.L., of which I have seen a photograph, is reckoned to be a trifle larger than the DO-X, although it appears to be almost an exact copy of it. So "Birdman," of Manchester, you'll tell your class to go easy before he starts to bet you a week's pocket-money that the DO-X is the largest.

EKKING COURTESY!

He was a brother mine to the French Northlands and the strange manner and customs of the Eskimos. Thus he got the shock of his life when he paid a visit to the Northumberland tribe, with steel laden with goods for the purpose of barter. Immediately upon his arrival the members of the tribe gathered together and stood at a fair distance among from him. At first, the observers discovered that only mothers were allowed to greet and lead him in a chief's household. It took the brother some time to recover from the shock and he found that these Eskimos were absolutely friendly disposed towards him, and that the women's dinner was an open-air custom. According to legend, the circular track made by the ladies of the tribe encompasses the real spirits that have journeyed with the winds across the ice. Once the "circulating" ceremony is over, the real spirits are destroyed, and set in jagged the male members of the tribe then embrace and offer forth hospitality to the stranger.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WHALE!

Two born readers from Manchester are mighty anxious to hear my view about the Biblical legend of Jonah and the whale. One declares that the story is based on fact; the other states that it is impossible for a whale to swallow a man. (Could I, etc. Well, my records show that the whale as we know it today, could not possibly swallow a man unless he were as small as another legendary figure everyone knows as Tom Thurst. The throat of a whale is particularly small; but the mouth which sets in the fashion of a sieve is, of course, large. The diet of a whale consists of very tiny fish and sea animals, but a herring, small as it is, would not pass along a whale's throat comfortably. It is hoped that my Manchester chums don't come to blows when they read these few words of mine.

CRASH-PROOF AEROPLANES!

Imagine you're flying at a height of three hundred and seventy-five feet. Still further, imagine that in your hand is an ostrich egg inside which you have placed an ordinary chicken's egg. You drop the ostrich egg to earth, make your landing, and just along to see what's left of the ostrich egg and its "passenger." On arrival you discover that the chicken's egg has made that aerial descent through space and emerged unscathed. Wants a bit of believing, what? Yet this is only one of the experiments of a French aviator who has recently patented an aeroplane with a double casing which he declares will stand a real "out of control" crash to earth just as well as did the chicken's

egg mentioned above. The basic idea of the invention is that the outer structure takes the sudden force of the crash, whilst the inner casing will suffer nothing worse than a shaking. The Frenchman in question proposes to put his invention to the acid test by setting fire to his aeroplane while at a height of three thousand feet, and crashing to earth. He is thoroughly confident it is alleged, that he will emerge from the near-catastrophe of his special aeroplane unscathed.

TRY THIS QUESTION ON HIM!

When you see a businessman in a coat of patterned cloth, ask him if you dare! Why be wiser with a garment. It's his chance to see that he won't know. Really it's a survival of an ancient custom which forbade such to be seen on their own clothes except with the permission of the King. Thus, at distance to the King, he was the market trader of the Crown to show in his own world that he was a faithful servant of his own king. The custom survives, but, like many another, the reason is buried under a mass of tradition.

WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER!

The wholesalers of Northern Africa are shocked, if a scientific theory strikes out in practice, for it is calculated that high-frequency radio waves would stream through an advancing band of three miles and would not stop for all time to their wholesale concerns. The theory is based on the accidental discovery made between two submarines that were recently operating in the Mediterranean. The high-frequency waves sent out by each ship in an effort to establish radio-phonetic communication, lifted off large quantities of fish. The radio bands returned after that wholesale slaughter of the innocents that the over-multiplying wholesalers of Northern Africa, who naturally follow, would be very much needed. Needless to say, the harassed inhabitants of that part of the world are mighty thankful, for up to now there has not been any really successful method of fighting the pests.

"ANYBODY SEEN MY TRAIN?"

The signal faded the usual warning of an approaching train at Marlow Station, and the officials stood ready to "see it in and see it out." Then they rubbed their eyes. A puffing engine came to a halt, but of the train that should have been behind it there was no sign! The driver scratched his head as well as he might. Only six minutes earlier he had distinctly heard and seen his guard's "right away" signal, and had started out of Bourne End Station. In the meantime, the passengers who had boarded the train at Bourne End for their short six-minute journey, naturally wondered why they were so long in starting. Their explanations came along. By some extraordinary mistake the coupling between the train and the engine had not been made secure. Several people who saw the engine steaming out of the station on its lone course, bawled to the driver to stop, but it isn't a driver's job to take his orders in that fashion; his signal told him everything was O.K., so he settled on nervously to the next station. Then, of course, to know what the people had been assuming about. The end of this true story is seen at Bourne End Station, packed up its train, with a proper coupling this time, and did the journey back to Marlow.

YOUR EDITOR

The G.M. Linnart.—No. 1,246.

MORNY COMES A CROPPER!

By
OWEN CONQUEST.

CHAPTER I.

Getting Back on Greely!

"DON'T!"

That was Jimmy Silver's advice—and Uncle Jimmy's advice was usually worth taking. But Marmington of the Fourth was not in the mood for taking advice from anyone.

"I'm dain' it!" he said coolly. "Greely got me an undeserved lickin'." It was Lovell who banged that marble at old Greely—

"Right enough," admitted Jimmy mildly. "It was an accident, though; Lovell was aiming at that precious ass, Hanson of the Fifth. It was just bad luck that Greely happened to poke his silly head in at the gateway just then and get it on the back. Still, Lovell swung up like a good little man and got licked, too—"

"No reason why Greely should report me to Dalton and get me a stiffer lickin', though," insisted Marmington stubbornly. "Lovell got four stripes, and I got six of the best!"

"Well, you checked old Greely, and Lovell didn't," grumbled Rany. "You called

Greely a pompous old woman, and went out enough to let him hear you. What did you expect?"

"Justice!" said Morny calmly. "I didn't get it. Therefore I'm gone to make Greely sit up. It was Dicky Dalton's fault. He had to come down heavily after the way Greely poked him about me. Well, Greely's on now, and I'm gone!"

"Don't! Listen, Morny, old man—"

"Don-woe!"

Morny walked away without listening. He went straight to the sacred study of Mr. Harney Greely, master of the Fifth at Rookwood. His eyes were glinting now as he entered the study and closed the door after him.

A more cautious fellow might have looked the door after him, considering his object. But Morny always was a reckless, headstrong youth, and he never glanced at the key. The study was empty, and Morny went to tug it softly—and thoroughly.

He never got the chance, however. For scarcely had Morny had time to glance about the room when he heard a heavy, dignified tread in the corridor without.

There was no mistaking that familiar, stately tread. Mr. Greely was a big, plump gentleman whose walk was like himself—dignified and leisurely. Apparently Mr. Greely had not gone over to the Modern Club to let Ministers as Morny had believed. Here he was, and Morny was nicely trapped.

THE CUE LESSON.—No. 1246.

"Oh gad!" gasped Morny.

He was not caught yet, however. There was a chance Mr. Greely had only returned for something. So Morny leaped for the door and slipped nimbly behind the light screen which stood between the door and the desk, and made himself look small there.

The door opened, and Morny heard Mr. Greely plump into his chair, humming softly to himself. Then to his ears came the rattle of paper, the jingle of keys, and then the clink of money.

Morny took a cautious peep through a chink in the old screen. Mr. Greely had a small, cheap cushion on the desk before him, also an account book and a list of names.

"A disgraced rascal!" he heard Mr. Greely mumble in disgust. "That boy Hanson is a fool! Treasurer—bah! Alward!"

Again came the clink of money, and Morny saw Greely counting a pile of silver and coppers, and then consult the list and the account book. Presently he filled and lit his pipe and resumed work again. Evidently he was settling

down in earnest to the job.

"Oh gad!" growled Marmington.

Morny groaned, not so much at the fact that he was evidently booked for a long wait, but because Mr. Greely smoked rather strong tobacco—too strong for Morny, who

felt a suddenly irresistible desire to sneeze as the smoke entered his nostrils.

Morny grabbed his handkerchief, and sneezed frantically to stop it. But the threatened sneeze refused to be stopped. It came suddenly—with a ruck.

"At—the—noo!"

Though muffled somewhat by the banky, the sneeze was like sudden explosion of a bomb. It fairly shook in the quiet room, and it made Mr. Greely nearly leap out of his skin.

"What—what— Bless my soul! Someone—what—who—"

Morny didn't wait to allow Mr. Greely to find out who had sneezed. He made a frantic leap for the closed door.

But his frantic leapt was his undoing. As he leaped he caught his toe against the screen and came a fearful plover. Only his head reached the door, and that reached it with a bang which brought stars and fireworks before Morny's eyes.

That was the result as regards Morny. Greely got it in another way. The screen flipped over on top of him. At the moment Greely was leaning over the desk as he jumped from his seat. The screen banged his august head down on

the desk just as a stream of ink, jerked from the inkpot, shot upwards.

Greedy's features met the stream in its flight, as it were. He splashed in his plump face and over his shirt-front. Winking his hanky, and wiping his face desperately, Mr. Greedy staggered backwards blindly.

"Goodness!" he mumbled.

It was a splendid chance for Morry to make his getaway. He, unfortunately, Morry was not in a position to make it. He was half-started, in fact; he sprang on the floor piping and with drier, whirling brass. By the time Morry had recovered, Greedy had also recovered—at least, quite sufficiently so to stop Morry's getaway!

As Morry staggered up, Greedy's eyes, glaring over the top of his rinky hanky, spotted him.

"Ah! So, then, indeed, in the morning— Stop! Stop this instant, sir!" bawled Mr. Greedy.

Not only did Mr. Greedy bawl, but he acted as well. With surprising speed and agility, considering the weight he carried, Greedy leaped and grabbed.

Morry was half-way through the doorway, but his luck was out. Greedy—the plump, podgy, leasurly Greedy—was to quick for him. A plump hand grasped Morry's shoulder, and Morry obeyed the order—he had to. He was hauled like a sack of coke back into the room, and Mr. Greedy, breathing like a grampus, closed the door with a mighty slam.

"Now, sir!" boomed Greedy. "Now, sir! Ah, it is you, I perceive, Morington! Fook! You—you see what you have done, you reckless young rascal! Look at me, sir!"

Morry looked. Mr. Greedy's face streamed with ink—ink which he had smudged over nearly every inch of skin with his hanky. Mr. Greedy looked like a well-fed nigger muzzled. He held out two rinky, podgy palms for Morry to see.

Any other fellow would have been agast, shocked at the sight of the sagged Greedy in such a state. Morington just grinned.

"Only ink, sir!" he grinned coolly. "It'll wash off! Accidents will happen—"

"Nonsense, sir! How—how dare you grin at me in that insolent manner, you abandoned young rascal!" thundered Mr. Greedy. "This—this is too much! I have no doubt you were hiding in my room for an unlawful purpose, Morington. You have added to your offense by causing me grievous bodily harm and—and discomfort, sir! Fook! I will not request Mr. Dalton to come you at this occasion, Morington! I will cure you myself, so—unusual as such a course may be. Remain here, sir! Do not dare to move an inch until my return, sir!"

Giving Morington a ferocious glare, Mr. Greedy hastened off—evidently for a wash-needed brush and wash-up before licking Morry. That youth checked as he went.

"What ho!" murmured Morry.

He stared for the door. Mr. Greedy had no right to lick a fellow belonging to another Form; it was his duty to report an offender to the fellow's Form master. The justices were, usually, very particular about such matters—though many of these would have preferred a licking from the podgy, good-natured Mr. Greedy to a licking from the athletic Mr. Dalton! On this occasion, Morington meant to be very particular, however. He had no intention of submitting to a licking from Mr. Greedy—possibly he had a suspicion that, in his present state of mind, Mr. Greedy would wield a hotter cane than Dicky Dalton.

So Morry quickly made for the door. But before he reached it his eyes fell, on the desk, and he paused, a glimmer coming into them.

The cabinet, with the little pile of cash scattered over the desk now, was still there, likewise the account book, spattered with ink. And by the pile of cash was—a five-pound note.

"Gad!" murmured Morry. "How jolly careless of Greedy—might get wafted away and lost! I'd better put it in a place of safety."

The harkness, like everything else on the desk, was spattered with ink. Morry picked it up, and slipped it, anyhow, in between the leaves of a pile of exercise books standing on the desk. Then, with a soft chuckle, Morry left the room.

CHAPTER 2.

Morry Keeps It Up!

OUT in the corridor, Morington almost humped into Hanson of the Fifth. Hanson stopped back just in time to avoid a collision.

"Hills o'ee!" said Morry, staring at Hanson. "What the thump are you up to—squinting through old Greedy's keyhole?"

Hanson coloured. He seemed strangely disturbed and surprised.

"Eh? Oh, no—don't be an ass, young Morry," he gasped. "I—I say, is old Greedy in there?"

Morry shook his head, and checked.

"Nonsense, old bean! What's the game, Hanson—out to rag Greedy?"

"Eh! Oh, no!"

"Then what's the matter? You're all of a feather, old bean!" grinned Morry. "Oh gad! I have it! You're going to ask him to be best man—what?"

"Look here—"

"We've heard all about it in the Fourth, old chap," said Morry solemnly. "Congrats, old bean—"

"About what?" boomed Hanson, red in the face.

"About your best' speec' on the girl in the village post office," smiled Morry. "But we didn't think the gridy wedding would be so soon, Hanson. If you're going to ask Greedy to be best man, I don't wonder you're nervous, old man. Better put some exercise books in your bags before—"

Oh gad!

Morry didn't finish—he got no chance. It happened in the time that Hanson was "speec'ing" on the girl from the post office. But as the secret had leaked out, and the whole Fifth were chattering about it, the subject was, naturally enough, a sore subject to Hanson. Red with wrath, he rushed at Morry.

That humorous justice, expecting such a move, merely stopped to one side, hooked a deft leg out, and pushed. The big, straggled the fatness Hanson up, and the push did the rest. Hanson whirled round and sat down with a bump and a yell. Morington walked on with his hands in his pockets, and went for a stroll in the yard.

He knew Mr. Greedy would be wanting him soon, and he didn't want to meet Greedy until that gentleman's wrath had cooled a notch. Jimmy Silver & Co. found him still straddling there twenty minutes later.

They eyed him with seriously grim looks.

"Bo here you are, you born ass!" said Jimmy.

"You stily owl!" said Raby. "D'you know Greedy's hunting for you, Morry?"

"And he's awfully raging," said Jimmy seriously. "What the dickens have you been up to, Morry? There's something jolly wrong on me, Morry. We heard Greedy jawing to Dicky. He's raving about a blasted fever, or something—says there's a fever coming, and he wants to see you about it, Morry. What's it mean, you fatpuss about?"

Morry checked.

"What's he say?" he asked. "Does he think I've heated the fever, or merely hidden it?"

"Then—then you know something about it, Morry?" gasped Jimmy, in great alarm.

"Sure a lot, old bean!" said Morry calmly. "I was going to rag his son, but the old fruit barged in and stopped that. So I've got another whomer to make him sit up. I've hidden his fever—"

"But it ain't his fever, you reckless ass!" gasped Jimmy. "It belongs to the Fifth footer club! Hanson's treasurer, and he's got the accounts into a fearful muddle, I believe, and Greedy's offered to straighten 'em out. That money—"

"Doesn't matter what it is, old bean!" yawned Morry airily. "All the better, perhaps. You see, my idea is to make that old ass Greedy create a tremendous fuss about it, and charge me with having pinched or destroyed it. Then, when all the school's buzzing with the yarn, and I'm just about to be expelled like the innocent lad in the story-book, I shall drop a hint as to where the fever's to be found—anywhere I saw it last, you know. See the wuzzer?"

"Oh, you—you born—"

"I showed the fever between the leaves of a book, you see," said Morry, lowering his voice. "Mum's the word, of course! It's mister' you chaps! But you see the job? When it's found there, Greedy'll look sick and be the laughing stock of the school. And he'll get a round tucker' off from the Head for his carelessness. Sound scheme—what?"

"Well, of all the potty ideas!" breathed Jimmy Silver.

"Morry, you hopeless duffer—"

"You chaps don't understand the idea yet," yawned Morry. "Wait until the whole school's talking about the scandal—wait until I'm about to be expelled! I tell you that a good dig like that at Greedy's dignity will hurt him more than a good dot on his nose! He'll look an awful fool charged a chap with theft, or then—"

"Morry, don't do it, for goodness' sake!" said Jimmy Silver anxiously. "It's serious' playing the game for one."

thing, and for another—well, you're raising a thundering big risk—"

"My dear man, don't worry about me," drawled Mornington. "Hello, this sounds like his real name. Good! Yes, you shape," he added, purposely raising his voice, "I know where that gorgeous old man's liver is. H—"

"Mornington!"

Mr. Greely's deep voice did not startle anyone. The Fiscal Four had also heard that familiar, steady tread. They groined in dismay, but Mornington, who had the nerve of a regiment, merely chuckled softly.

"Oh! Oh, you, sir!" he said, making a pretense of being startled. "I—I didn't see you, sir. Oh, good!"

"You may well show your gratitude, Mornington!" thundered Mr. Greely. "I was just in time to overhear your insolent, humiliating statement, sir!"

"Healty, sir!" said Morry coolly.

Mr. Greely's agitation increased, and he eyed the cool-faced Morry in shocked amazement. He was a kindly man at heart, and up to now he had not dreamed of suspecting Mornington of anything criminal in respect of the missing five. Now, however, his suspicions came with a rush. And he was shocked, amazed.

"Mornington," he gasped, "this is far, far more serious than I had supposed, than I had dreamed. I—I was looking for you to question you in regard to a five-pound note which has disappeared from my room. When I left you in my study recently, the note was on my desk. When I returned some minutes later, the note had vanished, and you, Mornington, had destroyed my order and had gone."

"Are you charged?" he asked, raising a five-pound note, sir?" asked Mornington. "If so, then I appeal to go before the Head!"

"If I supposed that you had taken the note, Mornington, I should have no other course open than to take you before Dr. Chisholm," said Mr. Greely. "I do not believe anything of the kind, however. Yet it is clear you know something about it. If you have hidden the note as a foolish prank, Mornington, you will be well advised to confess at once, sir. You have your chance now to prevent this distressing matter being taken before the headmaster."

Jimmy Silver eyed the cool, unshaken Morry appealingly. In his view Greely was being very decent in giving Morry such a chance.

"Morry—!" he breathed.

Morry winked at him.

"I appeal to the Head!" he said. "I believe the whole school is already talking about the fever. If I'm suspected in connection with it, then it's no use to lash anything up. I'm willing to go before the Head."

"You refuse to make any statement to me regarding the matter?" boomed Mr. Greely, his anger rising at Morry's cool impudence.

"Certainly, sir! If a fellow's honour's at stake, then it's up to him to fight for it."

"Very well—oh, very well!" said Greely grimly. "You shall have your wish, Mornington! I am convinced now that it is not a case of a foolish, boyish prank. Out of your own mouth you have condemned yourself! Though I do not claim you have stolen the note, I do claim that, believing the note was mine, you have destroyed it in a mean, spiteful desire for revenge. Come with me."

"Certainly, sir!" jawned Mornington. "It's rather a lark, sir—but I'll come."

Mr. Greely went crimson at that, and his lips set hard. But he made no reply. Clapping a plump hand on the reckless, impudent Mornington's shoulder, he walked him away—to the Head's study.

There was a buzz of excited voices in the quad. At least a score of staring fellows had seen and heard. The general opinion was that Mornington was asking for the sack—and going to get it! Tobby Miffin, the fat henbody of the Fourth, came rushing up to the Fiscal Four, beaming with excitement.

"I—I say, you fellows, what's happened?" he gasped. "I just missed hearing it, you know. I've heard about Morry pinching the five, but—what did Greely say? Has he taken Morry to the break? I just missed—"

"Well, you won't mind that, old far man!" said Jimmy, and he planted a heat behind Tobby's pants.

"Nor that?" added Raby, also planting a holly boot in the same spot.

Tobby jumped away with a heave, just missing Narcosme's contribution, and with his curiosity unquenched. The Fiscal Four went indoors, and Jimmy Silver's face was awfully. He didn't like Morry's subtle revenge at all. Nor did he think that, under the eagle eye of Dr. Chisholm, Mornington would get away with it.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,796.

CHAPTER 3.

A Shock for Morry!

LIKE a prisoner, Mornington of the Fourth was led into the House, with the plump hand of Mr. Greely on his shoulder. There was a group of fellows round the doorway, and they stared with lusted heads. Clearly the news had got round; sensational news, indeed! Greely had lost a five, and Mornington of the Fourth—of all fellows—was suspected in connection with the loss!

From their startled faces Morry knew that his little scheme was working better than he had hoped for. That old man, Greely, had fairly fallen for it. The punter's face was red and self-possessed, but tremorily he was chuckling. Alarmed at the scene, the fellows manifested at his conduct, and marvelled still more when Morry winked at them as he passed on to the Head's study.

But once before the Head, Morry's expression changed to one of deeply injured innocence. Even the Head's keen, penetrating glance did not make him turn a hair.

But it certainly appeared to do more than that. The moment Mr. Greely's hand left his shoulder Mornington changed. As if overcome by sudden fright, he turned tail slily and lolled back through the open doorway.

The Head jumped.

"How is that! What—what—?"

"Good heavens! The boy—the wretched boy has run away!" scattered Mr. Greely, jumping to the door again.

"Boy—stop that boy!" he boomed.

There was a shout in the passage. The staring crowd scattered with startled yells as Mornington went through them like a knife through butter.

If Mr. Greely had doubted Morry's guilt before, he did not doubt now. Mornington was running away, terrified at the consequences of his criminal act!

"Good heavens! Stop that boy!" howled Mr. Greely excitedly.

But there was no stopping Valentine Mornington.

Talboys of the Fifth did his best, but Morry went on, leaving Talboys sitting dumbly on the passage floor. In the hall doorway Bulkeley of the Sixth made a stand for law and order. Next moment the Headroom shipper was rolling down the steps outside, clapping Morry tight like a leaping brook.

As they banged to a stop in the quad, Morry tore his coat and looked round the quad.

"After him!" apostrophized Bulkeley.

Red in the face with fury, Bulkeley scurried up and went in pursuit. Knewles of the Modern Sixth happened to be crossing the quad with Franques and Garsley, and the trio also gave chase.

Fellows peered out of the House to stand on the steps and watch the sensational pursuit round the quadrangle.

"Oh, the aerial act!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "He's gone stark staring pretty!"

"He's pulling Greely's leg, you mean?" grinned Raby. "Oh, crawling! Isn't Morry the absolute lion—! Hello, there you go!"

By spreading out the prefects managed to trap the fleeing jester as he rounded the tuckshop beneath the ancient beeches. A moment later Mornington was being lashed back to the House by the irate prefects.

There was a rush, and the crowd soon surrounded the prefects and their prisoner. If the reckless Mornington wanted to create a sensation, he was certainly succeeding.

Even Jimmy Silver & Co., who knew what Morry's object was, were quite scared by this time. They got no chance to speak to him, however. The prefects hustled him into the House and along to the Head's study like a sack of oats.

He was almost carried into the Head's study and the door closed upon the gasping crowd.

Breathless and considerably rumpled and dishevelled, Morry was placed down at last in front of the Head's desk. At a nod from the grim-faced Dr. Chisholm, Knewles, Franques, and Cately departed, leaving Bulkeley to guard the prisoner.

Both the Head and Mr. Greely were looking greatly agitated. Mornington himself looked as cool as a cucumber. The Head eyed him in shocked uncertainty.

"Mornington," he exclaimed at length, "how dare you behave in this manner, you foolish boy? Why did you run away just now?"

"I—I suppose I was frightened, sir!" said Morry. "I—I must have lost my head. You see, sir, Mr. Greely has charged me with theft—with stealing a five-pound note! Any fellow would be desperate in the circumstances."

"Nothing of the kind, sir!" boomed Mr. Greely indignantly. "I do not charge the boy with theft, Dr. Chisholm. But the five-pound note is missing and everything points to the fact that this boy is responsible. I have already

sisted my reasons for this belief to you, Dr. Chisholm. The note has undoubtedly gone—"

"You are quite certain that it is not in the room, Mr. Greely? You have made a thorough search—"

"Extremely thorough, Dr. Chisholm! Bulkeley and I have searched every inch of the room!"

"And this boy was left alone in the room at the time?"

"Quite alone, sir!" said Mr. Greely, eyeing Mornington's sad face grimly. "I do not claim that he has taken the note—far from it. But I do claim that he is fully aware of the fact that has befallen it. I submit, sir, that Mornington has wistfully destroyed the note in a spirit of revenge, believing it was my property."

"This is very serious, Mr. Greely," said the Head quietly. "The boy's attitude and behaviour certainly supports that suggestion. You overheard Mornington state that he knew what had happened to the note?"

"In words to that effect, and in most disrespectful terms, Dr. Chisholm!" said Greely heatedly. "The boy was most insolent throughout."

"Mr. Greely shouldn't have jumped to conclusions, sir," said Mornington. "I haven't stolen his note—"

"You—you've searched through those exercise books, Mr. Greely?" he gasped.

"Most decidedly! The note was not there, sir."

"Oh, god!"

Mornington began to feel suddenly apprehensive. He had expected Mr. Greely to admit that he hadn't thought of looking through the exercise books. It was his moment of triumph—or should have been. But something had gone wrong.

"I—I swear I haven't destroyed it," he stammered. "It must be there—among those exercise books, sir."

Dr. Chisholm was eyeing Mornington sharply now.

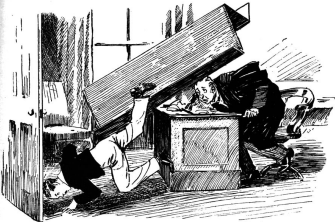
"You say you saw the note there, Mornington?"

"Oh, yes, sir! It should be there now!"

"Another search must be made, Mr. Greely," said the Head firmly. "Kindly ask Mr. Dalton to help you to subject the whole room to a thorough examination."

"Very good, sir."

Mr. Greely walked out, looking far from pleased. He was away nearly a quarter of an hour, and Mr. Dalton was with him when he returned.



As Merry leaped, he caught his feet in the screen and came a fearful puster. The screen crashed forward and Mr. Greely's face made contact with the inkpot!

"Silence, Mornington!" said the Head angrily. "Mr. Greely is not suggesting that the note has been stolen. He charges you with having destroyed it, which is a far different matter. None the less, if you are guilty of that offence your punishment will be very severe indeed. Bookwork is certainly no place for a boy guilty of such a spiteful, disgraceful crime. Mornington, I order you to tell me at once what you have done with that banknote!"

"I suppose it's where I saw it last, sir—on Mr. Greely's desk," said Merry readily. "If Mr. Greely had troubled to search instead of dragging me here an' tryin' to ruin my character before the whole school he might have found it."

"Mornington—"

"Has Mr. Greely searched through the exercise books I noticed on his desk?" asked Mornington meekly. "I suggest that it might have got among them—"

"Dear me! Mr. Greely—"

"That suggestion occurred to me at once, sir!" boomed Mr. Greely. "Both Bulkeley and myself searched through every page of the exercise books in question. The note was not there."

"Oh, god!"

Mornington started.

Quite abruptly some of his self-possession left him.

Mornington eyed him anxiously, apprehensively. His apprehension was justified the next moment.

"You have searched again, Mr. Greely?"

"Yes, sir—most thoroughly! The note is not there! Every leaf, every page of the books on my desk has been carefully examined. Every inch of the room subjected to a thorough search. The note has vanished."

"Oh, god!" breathed Mornington.

He felt as if the earth was dropping away from him.

Quite suddenly he realized what a serious position he had landed himself in. The note was gone, and he had admitted knowing what had happened to it. Mornington's iron nerve failed him.

"It—it must be there, sir!" he stammered. "I saw it there!"

"Mornington," exclaimed the Head slowly and deliberately, "where is that banknote? Unless you can produce it unharmed, you will leave Bookwork to-morrow."

"It must be there," repeated Mornington desperately.

"I—I'll own up, sir—I did touch the banknote. I picked it up and slipped it among those exercise books. I did it for a joke—a lark, sir. That is the truth."

"I regret that I cannot believe you, Mornington," said

the Head curtly. "No boy in his senses would play such a foolish trick. You were left alone in the room, and Mr. Greely overheard you saying that you know what had happened to it. Can you produce it, Merrington?"

"No, sir. But it must—"
 "Then you leave Bookwood in the morning!" snapped the Head, raising his hand. "If you will confess and express regret for what you have done, you will leave quietly, without publicity. If, however, you refuse to do that, you will be publicly expelled."

"I've already confessed, sir. I've told 'em the truth—"
 "Enough! Take him to the punishment-room, Mr. Dalton."

"But, sir—"
 The Head motioned, and Mr. Dalton grasped Morry firmly and led him out.

Outside the door Jimmy Silver & Co. were waiting. Merrington's white face told them the worst.

"Morry—" gasped Jimmy, catching his arm.
 "I'm asked!" said Morry, with a bitter laugh. "Asked for playin' a joke. I asked for it, an' got it."

He passed on with Dirty Dalton. Jimmy Silver stared after them, and then his lips set and he tapped at the Head's door and went in. The Head raised his eyebrows.

"It—it's about Morry!" gasped Jimmy. "He—he's expelled, sir—"

"Yes. But why—"
 "It was only a joke, sir!" said Jimmy earnestly. "He told us all about it. He just hid the note to annoy Mr. Greely. We're witnesses that—"

"Have you come here just to repeat his scoundrel errors, Silver?" thundered the Head.

"Yes, sir. But it's the truth—"

"Silence! I do not believe any boy would be so foolish as to play such a trick. Merrington has destroyed the bookcase in a mean, revengeful spirit, and for that he will leave Bookwood in the morning. You may go, Silver."

"Has please listen, sir—"

"Go! How dare you argue with me, boy? Go!"

And wisely Jimmy went. One look at the Head's stern, unyielding face told him it was useless—and dangerous—to persist.

Morry was asked. He had had his revenge upon Mr. Greely, and it had resulted upon his own head. But where was the bookcase! That Morry had destroyed it actually, Jimmy did not believe. Yet, if it did not turn up before morning, if the mystery was not cleared up before then, Merrington was to leave Bookwood for ever!

"Something has got to be done," said Jimmy: "we can't let old Morry get marked like that! But we shall have to wait till we get a chance to speak to him in the detention-room."

And so it had to be left for the time being.

THE END.

(What has happened to that first? Don't miss the amazing developments in next week's ripping Bookwood yarn?)

EASTWOOD SHIELD LEAGUE.

LEAGUE LEADERS BOTH HIGH—BUT SAVERS AS US!

By "OUR BOY."

Classroom,
 Wednesday.

WITH Highcliffe and Belmonte Grammar School above them at the top of the league, St. Jim's travelled to Classroom to win a second determination to annex two points or do in the attempt!

At Classroom the Saints had a cheery greeting from Teddy Baxter and his men, and it was plain to see that they were ready to put up a tough fight for the spoils. One of the drawbacks of being near the top of the league is that all the weaker teams are apt to make a special effort to beat you, and if enthusiasm counted for anything, this match looks fair to resemble a cup-tie! Classroom had, with a composed side, won 3-0 at Danington in their last match, and they were obviously out for blood.

Ernest Levison was in again, and Fergus returned to his old position of right-back. St. Jim's began steadily against a strong wind, while around the edge there were wild cheers for Classroom.

"Classroom! Classroom!"

"Go in, Baxter!"

Teddy Baxter has quite a reputation this season as a goal scorer, and the Saints watched him carefully. Kangafoote at centre-half made it his special duty to keep Baxter as much as possible "in his pocket."

A raid in which D'Arvy figured prominently promised friction. But Peters in goal was equal to the occasion. Baxter favored on the ball, and swung a dazzling path through the defence, winding up with a drive that Fatty Wynn just touched with his finger-tips. The ball glanced up and sped just over the bar! Fergus the resolute corner-back there was a marker, and danger threatened continually until the full-time, shaking out, grabbed the leather and booted it into touch.

St. Jim's got going again, but Baxter's shot went wide. The game larked spirit so far, but it was due to waver up suddenly. Baxter came into the picture

again—trapping a pass from Weston, and dribbling through all on his own. Fergus Figgins failed to stop his man, and Baxter found the net at his mercy. Fatty Wynn leaped sideways, but no goalkeeper could have stopped the drive that Baxter sent in.

The net quivered, and all Classroom rose to the goal.

"Goal!" "Oh, good man!"

"Classroom! Classroom! Classroom!"

Tom Merry & Co. lined up looking

Belmonte Grammar School, entertaining Bookwood, had an exciting match, each side scoring four times! St. Jim's are now level with the Grammar on points, and ahead of them on goal average. Greydians, as I predicted, are still coming up, having won 4-0 away at Bagshot.

RESULTS.

CLAREMONT .. 1	ST. JIM'S .. 2
Goals: ..	Goals: Marsh, D'Arvy.
Form:—CLAREMONT: Jones, Torrey, Trevelyan, Kennedy, Morrison, Baxter, Weston, St. Clair, Ky. Jim's: Wynn, Fergus, Kerr, Boulton, Soble, Lovell, Talbot, Levison, Morry, Mac, D'Arvy.	Peters, Logan, Marsh, St. Clair, Fergus, Kerr, Boulton, Soble, Lovell, Talbot, Levison, Morry, Mac, D'Arvy.
BAGSHOT 0	GREYDIANS 4
	Goals: Wynn, Boulton, Peabody.
EVLORSH	BOOKWOOD .. 4
GRAN SCHOOL 4	Goals: ..
407 (2), Wootton, under 00	Goals: ..
ST. JAMES' .. 1	BROOKLEIFF 0
Goals: ..	Goals: ..
ST. FRANK'S .. 0	REARLYFFE .. 0
Goals: ..	Goals: ..

LEAGUE TABLE TO DATE.

	P.	M.	D.	L.	P.	A.	Pa.
					Goals.		
Highcliffe ..	0	0	1	1	22	20	10
St. Jim's ..	0	0	0	1	22	20	12
Belmonte ..	0	0	0	0	22	15	12
Greydians ..	0	0	1	0	22	8	11
St. Frank's ..	0	0	1	0	22	11	11
Bookwood ..	0	0	1	0	22	21	11
Rearlyffe ..	0	0	2	4	14	14	6
St. James' ..	0	0	1	0	7	14	6
Classroom ..	0	0	1	0	14	22	2
Bagshot ..	0	0	1	0	1	22	2
Wootton ..	0	0	1	0	1	22	2
Atkirk ..	0	0	0	0	0	21	0

rather give. But, try as they would, the ball was against them, and the high wall made progress difficult. Terrie Tom Morry was almost through, the first time to be hindered by the wind, which carried a pass just out of his reach, and the second time to be laid low by a lucky change from one of the backs. But Tom came again, and just prior to the interval he found his opening. A shot from D'Arvy hit the upright and bounced back into play. There was a rush for it, and from the make the ball was tipped to Tom Morry. The St. Jim's captain swung round a full back, evaded a man from another defender, and sidestepped Peters as the goalkeeper dashed out. The leather flew, and the scores were level!

In the second half the Saints had the wind behind them, and against it Classroom found themselves hard pressed. Nevertheless, that saving quality of St. Jim's football had enabled them to keep a eye on the game in the first half; now Classroom were tested and they did not find it easy.

The ball went in again and again, and the Classroom defence began to kick wildly. Still push would not come, and St. Jim's put on pressure. A movement of the whole forward line swept the defence almost off its feet, and Blake found himself under the bar unmarked. Fergus punched out, but Blake leaped up. A twist of the neck, and his head met the ball, sending it well out of reach.

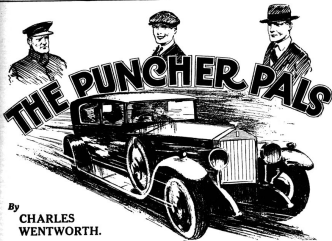
This time Classroom observers were compensated by their absence!

Teddy Baxter & Co. still fought gamely, but they were in dire straits, and before long D'Arvy crossed a brilliant run by crossing the ball past Peters for the visitors' third.

The final whistle found Teddy Baxter and his men puffing hot air. The Saints thoroughly deserved their victory, having given Classroom an object lesson in football.

On the phase I learned that Highcliffe had had a bold day at St. Joda's, winning 8-1. Frank Courtney scoring a hat-trick! Highcliffe are the dark horses of the league, and stand at the head of it for the second week in succession. St. Jim's are due to meet them the week after next, and then I shall hope to witness a battle royal!

SPLENDID COMPLETE ADVENTURE YARN!



By
**CHARLES
WENTWORTH.**

CHAPTER 1

Sprouts Martin Does a Grouse!

THE big black Rolls took the top of the steep hill outside Selisbury like a swallow, and as he drove it down the slope beyond, Sprouts Martin took a peep at the gas'ner, and saw him falling fast asleep in the back seat of the saloon.

Sprouts pursed his lips decisively, and started on his usual early morning groouse.

"It's all very well for 'im," he said, jerking his thumb over his shoulder. "E can take it easy. I've got to drive the Miskin' car!"

Skid, who occupied his favourite seat in front beside the driver, gave his cap a hitch that nearly covered his left ear and looked sideways at Sprouts.

"It's what you're paid for, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes," Sprouts gave the steering-wheel a yank to keep the car on the right side of the safety-line at a bend.

"An' I'm well paid for it. But ever since we took the road in this bus an' what 'e calls a 'death toor' we've slept out in the fields, an' the moon-'in' an' the 'oolin' of those cows and dratted ewls where we parked last night nigh drove me crazy! 'E sleeps—I've gotta drive!"

An electric beamer dinned his car, and a voice came to him through the speaking-tube:

"Not the main road, Sprouts. I have told you—keep to the green lanes!"

Sprouts turned. The gas'ner still seemed to be asleep.

"An't we gonn' to Wiltinton?" he howled.

"We are not."

"Where are we goin' then?"

"Take the lane to the left and keep straight on."

"Where to? It's startin' to rain."

"Let it rain. It does not matter. I'll tell you when to stop."

The rain was coming straight down, and the air was blowing as the day closed, when two great stone pillars leaped up in a dip in the road ahead. A great iron gate yawned

As if he knew the gate was there Percy Vane sat alert, bright eyed, astive.

"In there!" he ordered.

"But ain't it a private 'ouse?" objected Sprouts.

"In there!" Still muttering to himself, Sprouts obeyed.

"Turn sharp left. Among the rhododendron bushes. That's right. The trees will keep the rain off. Stop!"

"Ain't we goin' on to the 'ouse?" asked Sprouts.

"I am—you are not!"

"We gonna sleep out agin'?"

"We are going to sleep out."

"What about bringin' the tea in a portidge!"

Percy Vane dozed a moment and a door-walker laid one of those old-fashioned cloth things. His white teeth flashed in a friendly smile, but his words cut like a razor.

"I pay you eight pounds a week to take orders, not to give them! Get the grub ready! We sleep here," he said.

Unable to overcome their curiosity, Skid and Sprouts stuffed the gas'ner through the opening rain, saw him knock and ring at the front door, watched him try the side door, and then go to the big porch attached to the mansion and try the doors there, too, making noise enough to wake the dead. Nobody came. No lights shone inside the house.

When he came back to the car Sprouts had got going the electric cooking apparatus with which the huge black car was fitted, and was preparing the dinner.

CHAPTER 2

The Interfering Butler

THE roughbirds awakened the sleeping traveller. Percy Vane stretched himself and climbed out of his bed in the saloon. Skid eased himself out of his sleeping-bag in the little tent which had been rigged up on the grass near by, and Sprouts, aware that

The Cox Lancers—No. 1,246.

Skid Collins packs a punch that would put an elephant to sleep. In short, he's a regular knock-out!

the man was sitting, dived his chauffeur's coat and crawled outside.

As he emerged a stick smote him behind, and as he leapt up he saw a scar-faced giant of a man and a slant-faced-looking female glowering at him.

"Put that tent up on the car and get out of this pronto!" roared the scar-faced man. "I'll give you trespassin' in my park! Out of it and make it snappy, or I'll send for the police!"

Sproats had fought many a battle on the middle-weight in the boxing-rings of England, and there was nothing he liked better than a scrap. And so, when the scar-faced man rapped him on the shoulder with the stick stick, he snatched the weapon away from him, along it among the bushes, and with a smack on the chin sent the giant after it.

These days Sproats weighed fifteen stone. The scar-faced man was both bigger and stronger. Picking himself out of the golden game-bush, which hid him as many bushes as a hedgehog, he closed with Sproats, and up and down the grassy space they went in a heaving, lurching struggle in the mystery, Sproats every now and again losing his right arm to drive a punch into the ribs of the scar-faced man, who would retaliate by clipping an uppercut on Sproats's chin, or else take him by the throat and try to throttle him.

"Emma," panted the scar-faced man, "run to the 'ouse and telephone for the police!"

As the female ran screaming up the drive Percy Vere, immaculately dressed even to his spats, emerged from the car and joined Skid.

Taking out a Frodsham's gold chronometer, for which he had paid two hundred and fifty guineas, Percy Vere timed the battle and called the fighters to a halt.

"Take your time, Sproats," he advised. "Throw him off before you hit him. Let us have a clean, straight fight of it."

The scar-faced man's nose had been battered, his left eye was nearly closed and ringed with black.

They were both breathless. Both of Sproats' jutting cheek-bones had been skinned, his mouth was swollen, his right ear was twice its normal cauliflower size, and his left eye was running like a waterfall.

Skid, who had been raised on street fights ever since he was a boy, was enjoying every minute of it.

They fought like charging bulls until the female came rushing from the house and a police car sped in at the gate. As the new arrivals reached the scene of action the scar-faced man drove his knee into Sproats' middle, and sent him rolling over, doubled up with pain. Then he leapt at Percy Vere.

"Now for the toll!" he panted. "I'll give you trespass!"

The police tumbled out of the car. The scar-faced man drove left and right at Percy Vere's smiling face.

Percy still had his watch in his hand, and seemed quite detached. But his short stop back was made so quickly that the blow missed his chin by inches, and as the staggering giant recovered his balance Percy's right fist swung up from his hip just as Carpenter used to sling it, and the scar-faced man fell, limp and lifeless, into the arms of a police-sergeant, who promptly dropped him.

"I give those villains in charge!" screamed the woman. "I'm Mrs. Corcoran. My husband is better at the house. You see that man attack him. They're trespassers—bin 'ere all night!"

"I'm afraid," said the sergeant, as he stepped up to Percy Vere, "you'll have to come with me to the station, sir."

Skid noticed that the gunner kept on smiling. He saw Percy Vere whisper in the sergeant's ear, saw the sergeant grin, then step back and salute.

Mr. Corcoran arose.

"My boy and your wife four pounds a week and everything hand," said Percy, "and it would serve you right if I were to dismiss you without a moment's notice! I found the house deserted when I rang the front-door bell last night. I know I haven't lived in it for a year, but my instructions were that the house should never be left. You have neglected your duties, Corcoran, but since my chauffeur seems to have given you a pretty good pasting, I intend to give you one more chance."

Putting a stick of tobacco out of his pocket, Percy gave it to the police-sergeant.

"If you are fond of assets," he said, with a smile, "I feel sure you will like that." Then: "Help Sproats to pack up," he said, turning to Skid. "I'll drive myself. I can't have a chauffeur with a black eye!"

Corcoran, the butler, propped open an eye to watch the car as it ran smoothly past the gates into the road.

"It's not fit in my time!" growled the chastened servant.

"Or was I to know 'e owned the 'ouse? 'Who'd 'ave thought 'e'd come! It's damge!"

The sergeant sampled a pipe of the tobacco as the police car followed the Rolls through the big gates.

"Fine!" said he, passing the bar to the men.

CHAPTER 2.

Skid Meets an Old Enemy!

Sproats was lying in the luxurious back seat of the motor, but he was far from satisfied. Nothing ever went right with him. And now that he had the steering-wheel in his own hands—such is the perversity of human nature—the gunner left the winding green lanes and was striking the big Rolls-Royce straight along the big, wide, new main road to Willington.

Sproats banged loudly on the glass screen between, and bawled down the speaking-tube.

"Listen," he howled, "you're on the main art-aerial road, skipper!"

"That," cooed Percy Vere, "is where I want to be."

Patience and quietly Percy Vere explained.

"Skid has been telling me," he said, "that Shifty Harris, the brother of Cook Harris, Skid's enemy back in Chesterboro", is started to box the handsome-weight star boxer, Stone, in a fifteen-rounds fifty pounds contest at the Artillery Boxing Hall at Willington to-morrow night. We are going to see the fight. That is?"—Sproats was deaf to the sarcasm—"if you don't mind, Martin."

Night had come when Percy Vere covered the big black Rolls through the lighted streets and, with that waggish knowledge he showed about almost everything, ran it down a narrow alleyway and turned it on to a big square flat of waste ground heeled with puddles, and pulled it up there.

Over against a wall a small fleet of cars was parked, and on the opposite side of the ground they could see two garages whose lighted windows blished brightly in the dark.

Percy Vere carefully selected his spot, and ran the splendid car against a wall, where the ground was comparatively dry. The wood and glass screen was removed and stowed away, the front seats of the car were swung round, a table was brought up like magic from the floor, and the evening's menu was prepared and cooked in a trice, hot coffee and milk, fresh toast automatically cooked on the table in an electric toaster, eggs done in the same way, ham and tongue and green salad prepared, and the "dirties" washed in electrically heated water afterwards. Then the table and the stools and cookers were stowed away beneath the floor of the Rolls, and the table was heaved back with it and covered with a rug, some boards were laid upon the ground, a tea-croquet, and their beds now prepared for the night.

Then Skid walked over to look at a huge poster which had covered the bare brick wall of the Artillery Boxing Hall. It showed two fierce-looking boxers fighting at no boxes ever fought, and above the picture big, bold type announced the fight: "Shifty Harris v. Sam Stone. Fifteen rounds for a £50 purse."

Suddenly a man pushed against him, nearly knocking him down, and, swinging sharply round, he saw Shifty Harris grinning at him.

Eighteen months ago Shifty had lived in Sunshine Court, back in Chesterboro, where Skid had lived with his uncle, Thag Taylor.

Shifty and his brother, Cook Harris, had always been Skid's enemies. Then Shifty had become a fighting-man, and people said that he would become handsome-weight champion of England. Shifty laughed as Skid rocked back on his heels.

"Hi, Cook," he said to his brother, "didn't you tell me that Skid kicked you in Chesterboro' the other day? Fought foul, did he?" (Skid's recollection of the fight referred to was that Cook had tried every foul trick he knew before he took his licking.) "All right, watch me get 'em!"

Skid was half on his guard when the savage punch came over, and, quick though he was, it knocked him flat in a puddle. He felt the drive of Shifty's boot at his hip, and it reminded him Shifty was bigger and taller and stronger than Skid. He had fought and won many battles in the ring, and was in hard training. But Skid forgot all that as he scrambled up and dodged away, and as Shifty came after him, laughing loudly, Skid, who had ducked, straightened and launched a shower of lightning punches at Shifty's swifty face. They thudded against the astonished boxer's jaw, against his ear, smack upon his nose. Shifty covered up and looked away towards his pals.

He ducked, but, catching a pile-driver, scrambled in a heap just as Sproats emerged from the tent and Percy Vere stepped out of the car. Down the steps of the boxing hall some men came running. Percy Vere flooded the arena with a spreading light from a patent electric lantern.

Shifty, whose face was cut and bruised, lay limp and

blows in a paddle. A big red-faced man from the hall picked him up.

"Be Shifty!" he roared. "What about his fight with Sam Stout? He can't go into the ring to-morrow night with a cut lip and a split cheek. And look where the back of his head's hit out on the stones!"

The ring of silky-faced boxes remained silent.

"Who did it?" the red-faced man demanded.

Skid's answer, Cank Harris, pointed at Skid.

"E did."

"What? This little fellow? Don't kid me!" He swung his monstrous fists over his shoulder and marched towards the boxing hall.

"A nice lot of swags you all are!" he almost shouted.

"How many more times must I teach you fellows that the place for a fighting-man to fight in is the boxer-ring, and there's only a little free trouble to be got outside!"

CHAPTER 4.

Skid Takes the Ring!

JIM WALK, who ran the Artillery Hall at Wellington, came down to the ground early in the morning.

He found Percy sitting on the step of the big black

Roll, reading a newspaper.

"Now, listen!" he said. "That smart kid of yours

"I don't mind," Skid answered back cheerfully.

As soon as the gong went he crowded on to Sam and belted him. With arms whirling, fists flying in and out, and body moving this way and that on easily shifting feet, with head bobbing and swaying and ducking, he outpointed Sam by a mile in the first round, and Mr. Corcoran, the butler, who had come to see the fight, recognizing the substitute, offered £5 to £1 on Stout. Percy Vere heard him and took the bet.

But it wasn't £5 to £1 on Stout. It wasn't anything in one. Skid, working at an incredible speed, with arms and fists flying in and out, had Sam gasping at the end of the second round, he had him dizzy by the third, he dropped him in the fifth, and the referee waved Sam back in the seventh.

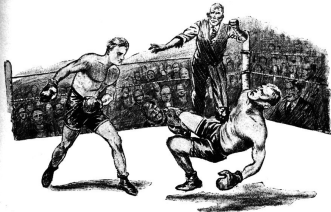
"That'll do, Stout," he cried. "Collins is the winner!"

Sam Stout, who could scarcely stand, tore off his gloves and along there in the water-bucket. Mr. Corcoran, beside the ring, folded up his tent and fided away. Percy slipped Sam two tenners and one five-pound note.

"We don't want the money," he said, with a beaming smile. "I only wanted my boy Skid to get a chance."

"Thank yer, gov'ner," said Sam, brightening up. "I've got his chance all right. I wouldn't 'ave fought 'im if I'd known. Skid! Why, that kid Skid—'s a champ!"

And Sam Stout was quite right in what he said. Skid



Skid here is, arms and legs working at incredible speed. Sam could not withstand the rain of blows, and in the fifth round he went down!

knocked out Shifty Harris last night, and it was Shifty's fault. But I've billed Sam Stout for a fight, and I've got to get somebody against him. What about Skid?"

"The terms to be the same you offered Shifty Harris!" asked Percy Vere.

"Slaves! I've seen Sam. He's willing. It's a bet, then? Right! I want your kid to be ready to enter the ring at 8.30 sharp."

All his young life Skid Collins had hoped that he might some day develop into a boxing champion. He was a natural fighter, and he had had a lot of practice in the streets around Stambitz Alley, and so when he donned the boxing gloves and socks and there and body seal which Percy Vere purchased for him in the town, he was so excited he couldn't keep still.

And when Skid flung under the ropes and faced the crowd, blinking in the glare of the swinging arcs above him, he looked so small and white and thin that the boys began to sneer. Stout, in the opposite corner, stared at Skid against. Why, Skid couldn't touch St. M.!

"I won't hurt yer, kid," he whispered as they shook hands.

certainly was a champion, and he had fought like one. The time he doubt would come when Skid would earn further honors for himself in the ring.

That night the Puncher Pals slept in their tent, and in the morning they were up and on the open road again. Once more Sprouts Martin was grumbling about his job, not that he was really dissatisfied with it, but just because Sprouts was the type of person who is never happy except when he is grumbling about something.

As for Skid, he was as happy as a sandfly as he sat beside Sprouts in the front seat of the car. He had fought in the ring at last—and he had won.

And in the back of the car, Percy Vere was his usual calm self, and if he appeared to the inexperienced to be sleeping, he was not, for Percy was always alert.

(Skid was in a champion! But not only so a boxer. He makes a first-class feller in next week's thrilling adventure of "THE PUNCHER PALS.")

