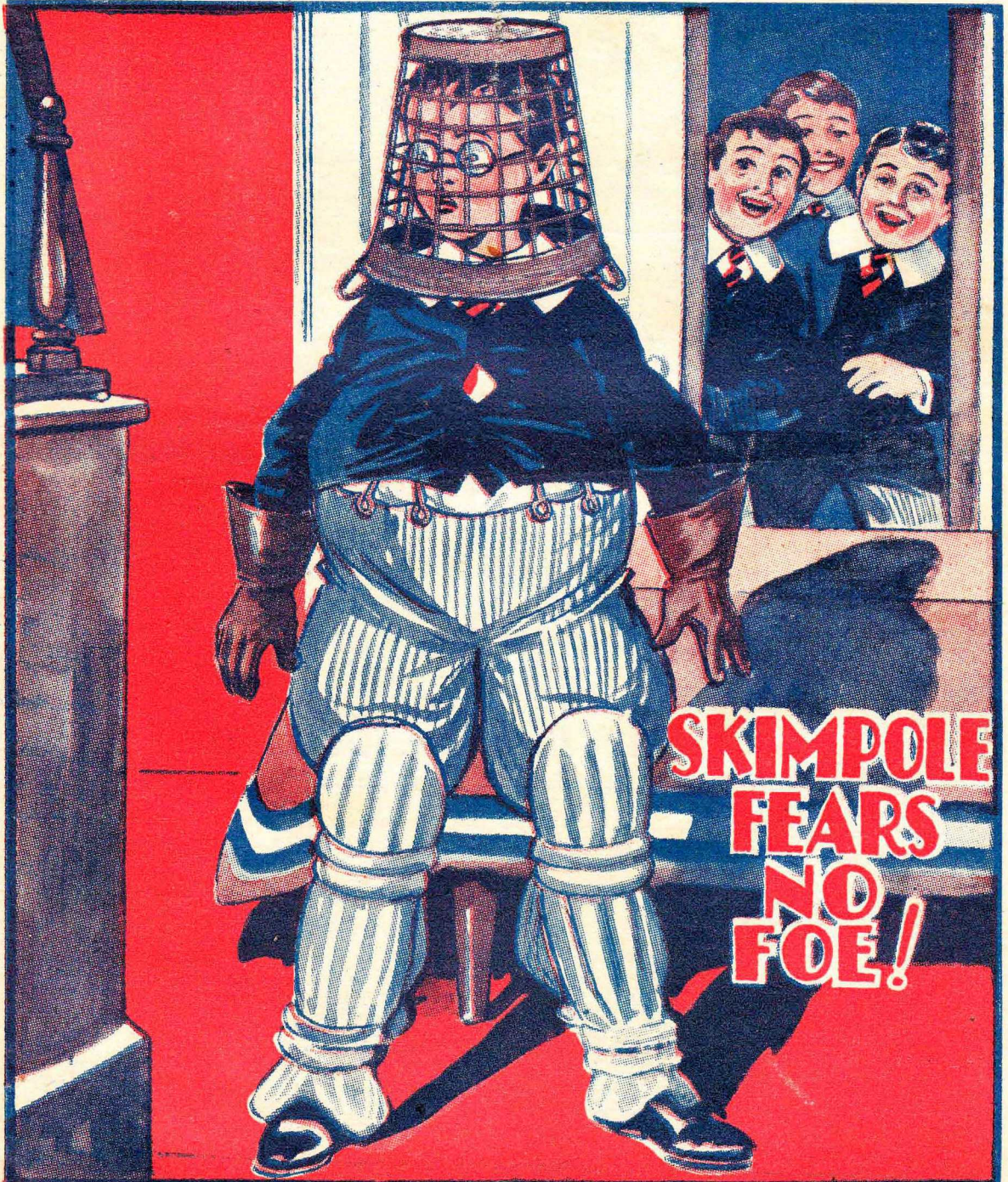


TERRIFIC BATTLE OF RIVAL SCHOOLS! SEE "INVADERS OF ST. JIM'S!" INSIDE.

# The GEM 2<sup>d</sup>



**SKIMPOLE  
FEARS  
NO  
FOE!**

# INVADERS



By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

The Grammarians come to St. Jim's determined to be "Top Dogs"—but all their efforts are washed out—when Tom Merry gets to work with a garden hose!

## CHAPTER 1. Startling News.

**T**OM MERRY jumped up in alarm as Monty Lowther came tearing into his study in the School House at St. Jim's.

Lowther's face was wildly excited, and he dashed into the study at top speed, hardly seeing where he was going in his haste.

Tom Merry and Manners were playing chess, and the game had reached a most interesting point. Monty Lowther did not see the chess table in time to stop himself, and he dashed right into it and sent it flying. There was a scattering sound of chessmen on the floor, and Manners jumped up in wrath.

"You utter ass!" he roared. "See what you've done!"

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"News!" shouted Lowther. "News! Have you heard of—"

"Confound your news! You've busted up our game of chess!"

"Yes, you utter duffer!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I should have had Manners checkmate in three moves!"

"Rats!" exclaimed Manners warmly. "I should have had you checkmate in two—"

"Now, Manners!"

"Now, Tom Merry!"

"News!" shouted Monty Lowther. "I tell you—"

"Bother your news!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Go and tell it to Blake in Study No. 6, or else go over to the New House and tell Figgins & Co. What you mean by saying that you'd have me mate in two moves, Manners, I can't understand. Why, your queen was—"

—AND THEIR ANCIENT RIVALS OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL!

# of ST. JIM'S!



"Now you know your king was——"  
"And as for your rook——"  
"With my bishop covering the king's second, and the rook guarding the queen's square, you must see perfectly well that——"  
"I can see that I had you mated in three moves!"  
"I tell you that in two——"  
"Blow your old chess!" yelled Monty Lowther. "I tell you it's news that will make you sit up! The Grammar School——"  
"Blow the Grammar School! I wish you were there, or at Jericho, before you had upset that table, you ass! Now Manners will always be maintaining that he would have had me mate in two moves, while I know perfectly well that I should have mated in three! You know——"  
"Well, it's Lowther's fault that we can't settle the point," exclaimed Manners. "I vote that we teach him a lesson about upsetting people's chess-tables when they're in the middle of a game—or, rather, nearly at the end, in this case, as I should have mated in two——"  
"Oh, dry up about your two moves! But your idea is a good one; Lowther ought to be snatched bald-headed——"  
"I tell you there's great news! The Grammar School have——"  
But Monty Lowther's incensed chums did not stay to listen. They grasped Lowther and rolled him over, in spite of his desperate struggles, and rubbed his features in the hearthrug and mixed ashes in his hair.  
Monty Lowther yelled like a lunatic, but he could not escape, and he was pretty thoroughly ragged before his chums let him go. Then he staggered to his feet, with his face showing crimson where the dirt did not hide it, and his hair like a tousled mop, and his collar hanging by one stud.  
"Well, you rotters!" he roared. "Catch me coming to you in a hurry with news again!"  
"Yes, let us catch you, that's all," said Manners. "We'll give you worse next time! Here I've been trying all the time to beat Tom Merry at chess, and now, when should have mated in two moves, you must come rushing in and upset the table!"

"Now, look here, Manners; I'm getting fed-up with your two moves!"  
"You'd have got beaten with them if Lowther hadn't——"  
"That's all very well to say now, but if——"  
"Oh, hang your ifs! Anybody can say 'if'! I tell you——"  
"And I tell you——"  
"Shut up!" roared Lowther, with all the force of his lungs. "Will you listen to me? I tell you it's startling news, and most important!"  
Tom Merry was picking up the chessmen.  
"Oh, you can go ahead, I suppose!" he said. "What is it? Have you been fighting with a Grammar School junior and come to tell us that he wiped up the lane with you?"  
"No, I haven't, Tom Merry; and if you think——"  
"Well, I do sometimes, when my thinking-box is in going order. But do get on with the washing and let us hear the worst!"  
"The Grammarians are coming here!"  
Tom Merry dropped the chessmen he had already gathered and jumped up.  
"What?"  
"What?" echoed Manners.  
"It's true!"  
Tom Merry and Manners stared at the bringer of the news. Monty Lowther was much given to practical jokes, and the chums did not quite know how to receive the information he had brought. The news, if true, was startling enough in all conscience.  
Ever since the new Grammar School had been opened at Rylcombe, a deadly rivalry had existed between it and St. Jim's. The latter had enough rivalries at home, with the feud between the School House and the New House, and the warfare between the Terrible Three and Study No. 6 in the School House itself. But all parties at St. Jim's naturally united against the Grammar School. The news that the Grammarians were coming to St. Jim's was startling.  
"You are rotting!" said Tom Merry suspiciously.  
"Frank Monk came here to play a trick on us once, but he

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got a reception which, I think, must have cured him of wanting to come here again! Now, what do you mean?"

"It's true!"

"Do you mean a gang of them are coming for a row?"

"No; I don't mean that!"

"Then what do you mean?" exclaimed Manners. "If you know anything, tell us what it is and how you know it!"

"I was in Mr. Railton's study—went there to take my impot—when I heard him tell Mr. Lathom—"

"What did he tell him?"

"That a number of Grammar School juniors, and a few of the seniors, were coming to St. Jim's to stay for a time. It might be a long or a short time. Something has broken out at the Grammar School—some fever or other—and a lot of the boys are going home; but Dr. Monk has arranged for some of them to come here and stay till it's all over."

Tom Merry's eyes sparkled.

"My hat! That is news, and no mistake!"

"By Jove, yes!" said Manners. "We've had rows enough with the Grammarians when we've met them, but to have them in the House—"

"It will lead to some more scrapping, rather!" Tom Merry remarked. "I wonder whether their leader—Frank Monk—will come with the lot who come here?"

"Certain to, if he can manage it. He wouldn't miss a chance of ragging us in our own quarters if he could help it!"

"You're right! I say, this means lakfs!" said Tom Merry.

"With a party of the Grammar School cads installed here—the enemy within the gates, as it were—we shall have a high old time! Of course, they will try to get the upper hand, to show that their silly old Grammar School is the better show of the two—"

"And they will have to be put in their place!"

"Exactly. But while they're here we shall have to make it pax with Study No. 6, and with Figgins & Co.," said Tom Merry seriously. "If we're all rowing with one another, Monk and his monkeys will get the better of us, as sure as a gun!"

"Right-ho!" said Manners. "Let's take a walk round now and explain things to those kids. Do you know when the Grammar rotters are coming, Lowther?"

"Mr. Railton said that the first lot would be here to-night."

"My hat; that's rather sudden! That means that there's no time to lose if you need it; and Manners and I will walk round. Come on, Manners!"

"I'm not going round the school in this state," growled Lowther. "I'm going to get cleaned up first! Wait for me!"

"No time to wait, old kid! You had better clean yourself up; you look as if you need it; and Manners and I will walk round. Come on, Manners!"

And the Terrible Three quitted the study, Lowther making for a bath-room, and Tom Merry and Manners directing their steps towards Study No. 6, the quarters of Blake, Herries, Digby, and—last, but certainly not least—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

## CHAPTER 2.

### The Failure of the Union!

"**H**AVE you heard the news, Merry?" asked Gore of the Shell, as Tom Merry and Manners came down the passage. There were groups of juniors in the passage, and at the doors of the studies, engaged in excited discussion, and everywhere the topic was the same; the news of the impending invasion had evidently spread.

"News," said Tom Merry languidly. "What news, Gore?"

"The Grammar cads are coming here!"

"Ages ago, my dear fellow," said Tom Merry. "Haven't you heard anything newer than that?" And he walked on, leaving Gore staring after him.

The chums of the Shell reached Study No. 6, and Tom Merry kicked at the door and entered. He found the chums of the Fourth Form at home. An argument was proceeding in the study, and the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, could be heard raised in assertion.

"I tell you, deah boys, that it's weally an absolute fact!"

"Rot!" said Jack Blake, with emphasis.

"Rats!" said Herries.

"Piffle!" said Digby.

There was a similar unanimity of opinion among D'Arcy's chums. The swell of the School House adjusted his monocle in his eye and stared at the three unbelieving faces.

"I regard your comments upon my news as wude and impertinent," he said. "I assuah you that it is an absolute fact. I had it ffrom Higgs of the Fifth!"

"Blow Higgs of the Fifth!"

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"I wefuse to do anythin' of the kind! Higgs assuahed me that it was an absolute fact, and I would not doubt a gentleman's word!"

"Higgs is an ass, and you're another!"

"I am not another. I assuah you that the news is quite twue, stwange as it appeahs," said D'Arcy, "the Gwammah cads are comin' here!"

"It would be more than their lives are worth!" said Blake darkly. "I tell you that they'd never have the nerve!"

"Weally, it does seem wathah a nerve, seein' the terms we are on with the Gwammah School, but it is an absolute fact, all the same."

"Can't be true!" said Digby.

"It is quite twue. Of course, we ought to take steps to keep them in their places, you know, when they come. My ideah would be to make peace with Tom Mewwy, and with Figgins & Co., and then we should be united, and you could elect me as a leadah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can see nothin' whatevah to gwin at in that remark, deah boys. We had a Co. called Tom Mewwy & Co., and I must say that Tom Mewwy, as a wule, made a muck of things. D'Arcy & Co. would be bettah, and would pwobably be more successful."

It was at this moment that Tom Merry kicked the door open.

But the chums of Study No. 6 were too interested in the discussion to look round to see who had entered their quarters.

"I can see us doing it!" said Blake. "But, as a matter of fact, I don't believe for a moment that the Grammar cads are coming!"

"Then you're wrong, as you usually are," said Tom Merry.

Blake turned round.

"Hallo, ass!" he greeted cheerfully.

"Hallo, duffer!" replied Tom Merry, with equal cheerfulness.

"What are you hooligans doing in a respectable study?" demanded Blake. "There's the door. Travell!"

"My dear chap, I've come to bring you tidings of great joy. The Grammarians are coming, and there will be lakfs."

"What did I tell you, deah boys?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus triumphantly.

Blake, Herries, and Digby stared in a dubious way at the hero of the Shell.

"Is that a fact, Tom Merry?" demanded Blake at last.

"Yaas, wathah! Didn't I tell you?"

"Shut up, Gussy! I'm talking to Tom Merry!"

"I wefuse to shut up. I was the first bwingah of the news, and you doubted the accuwacy of my information, and I considah—"

"Shut up!" howled Blake. "Now, Tom Merry, are you sure about this?"

"Certainly! Lowther heard Mr. Railton say so. The fellows are talking it over all through the House, for that matter."

"Well, I certainly thought that Higgs of the Fifth had been stuffing a fairy-tale into Gussy's empty noddle," confessed Blake.

"I wefuse—"

"You know the young ass will believe anything, as a rule."

"Nothin' of the sort. You told me you could play footah, Blake, but you could not impose upon my cwedulity."

"Oh, ring off, Gussy! If this news is correct, and Tom Merry says it is, there are some high old times in store." Blake rubbed his hands gleefully. "Of course, the monkeys will come here ripe for a row."

"Yaas, wathah, and—"

"They'll very likely try to run things their own way, and sit on us in our own quarters," said Blake; "and as likely as not they'll succeed, if we are ragging one another instead of uniting to face the enemy."

"Yaas, wathah! And that's where my gweat ideah comes in."

"Hallo, has Gussy got an idea?" exclaimed Tom Merry, in astonishment. "What is it, Gussy?"

"My own!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "It is an ideah that came into my bwain all of a sudden."

"Well, I don't see why that shouldn't happen," Tom Merry said, in a thoughtful way. "There's room for an idea in his brain-box—room for a good many ideas, as the thing is practically vacant."

"Pway be sewious, Tom Mewwy, at a sewious time like the pwesent. My ideah is to unite all parties at St. Jim's against the common enemy, the alliance to be known as D'Arcy & Co. And as I should be the leadah, there is no

doubt that we should wipe up the ground with the Gwamah cads. I am not the fellow to put myself forward in any way, as you all know; but what is wequiahed at a time like this is a fellow with tact and judgment, and—"

"And a jolly good opinion of himself," suggested Digby. "Well, I have some good gounds for havin' a good opinion of myself, you know, and you have a good opinion of yourself, Dig, without any gounds that I can discovah!" "Gussy's ideah is a good one," said Tom Merry, "excepting on one point."

"What is that, Tom Mewwy? I should be pleased to weceive suggestions—"

"Which must be written upon one side of the paper only," said Blake.

"Pway don't be funny, Blake. What is the point you wefer to, Tom Mewwy?"

"Why, about the leader. The Co. is a good idea, and

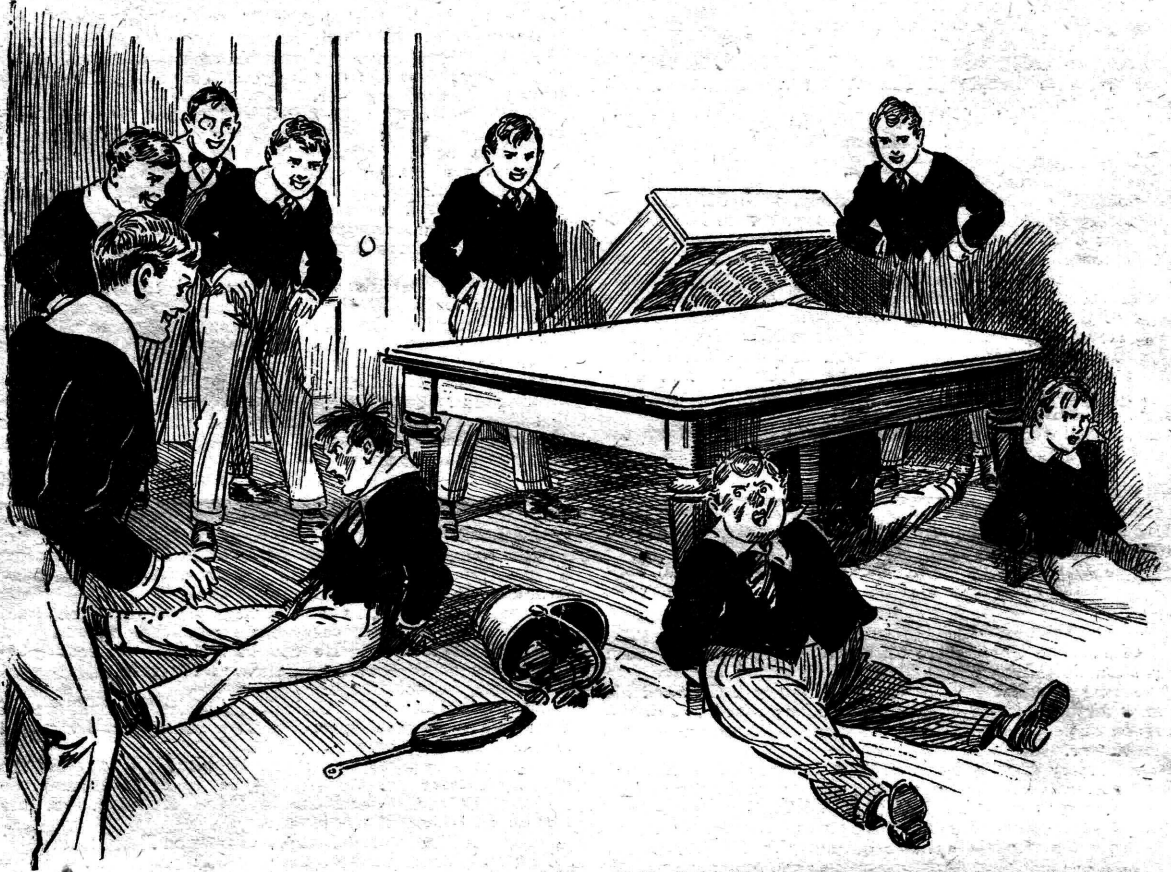
"Not without the other," grinned Blake. "But I think that between us we can manage to chuck out the whole of you. Lend a hand, kids!"

"Here, look here—"  
"Rats! If you're not going to submit to proper authority, your place is on your back in the passage!"

"Yaas, wathah! It will be an instwuction to them always to submit to pwopah authority. Collah the wottahs, deah boys, and chuck them out!"

"Out they go!"  
Tom Merry and Manners were only two against four. They were promptly chucked out, and four faces grinned at them from the doorway of Study No. 6 as they picked themselves up ruefully in the corridor.

"You young asses!" exclaimed Tom Merry wrathfully. "You'll be sorry when the Grammar School cads are dusting that study up with you!"



The New House Co. were tied one to each leg of the table, and the School House Juniors surveyed the result of their handiwork with great satisfaction!

we've worked it before. But, of course, I'm the chap to lead."

"That's where you're wrong," said Blake. "I'm the man! I've been the head of this study for some time, and made it the top study in the School House."

"My hat! What price ours, then?"

"Yours? Twopence-halfpenny!" said Blake disdainfully.

"The nerve of some bounders really surprises me."

"And me, too! The New House would have been Cock House at St. Jim's long ago, but for us!" exclaimed Tom Merry warmly.

"Now you're talking rot, Tom Merry, and you know it!" exclaimed Blake, with equal warmth. "As head of the juniors of the School House, I claim—"

"As head of the juniors of the School House, I disallow your claim."

"I can just see how the matter stands, Tom Merry. You have come to this study looking for a thick ear."

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard Tom Mewwy's cheek as simply feahful. Fewwaps we had better thow them out, deah boys, and settle the matter ourselves about dealing with the invaders when they come."

"Perhaps you had," said Tom Merry. "Why, you couldn't throw one side of me out, Gussy!"

"When that happens," said Blake, "we'll come to you and ask you to lead us, Tom Merry. At present you can go and eat coke!"

"Yaas, wathah! I weally think you had better go and eat coke, Tom Mewwy, and Mannahs can do the same."

"If you want to lead somebody, I dare say you can get up a Co. among the Third Form fags," said Digby. "We're not being led just now."

"Asses!" said the Terrible Two; and they walked away down the corridor followed by the laughter of the quartet in the doorway of Study No. 6.

The first step towards the union of the warring elements at St. Jim's against the invaders had been a ghastly failure.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### Visitors for Figgins!

"**B**AI Jove, deah boys, that was wathah a come-down for Tom Mewwy, don't you know!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as the Terrible Two disappeared down the passage. "Of course, it was only what he might have expected for his feahful cheek in comin' here and talkin' about our followin' his lead, you know."

"Rather!" said Blake. "Those bounders in the Shell have altogether too much nerve. I don't mind them following, but blessed if they're going to lead. But, as it seems to be a fact that the Grammarians are coming, I think the Fourth Form ought to stand shoulder to shoulder."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And so the best thing we can do is to get up an alliance with Figgins & Co. before the Grammar cads arrive."

"Good wheeze!" said Digby. "House rows will have to be barred while the Grammarians are here. Let's go over and see Figgins."

"Wait a moment, deah boys!"

"Can't wait. What's the matter?"

"It's important."

"Well, what is it, you long-winded ass? Buck up!"

"I wefuse to be called a long-winded ass!"

"Oh, come along!" exclaimed Herries.

"Pway don't be so impatient, Hewwies. What I was about to wemarrk is that we are not yet agweed as to the question of leadahship."

"Yes, we are!" said Blake. "I'm leader! If anybody here wants to dispute it, I'm willing to argue the point, with or without gloves."

"But I weally think that Figgins will argue the point."

"We'll see about that. Come on!"

"But, undah the cires—"

"Blow the cires! Come along!"

And Blake hurried out of the study, with his chums at his heels. Blake was in rather a hurry, for he had a feeling that Tom Merry had probably gone over to the New House to enlist Figgins & Co. in an alliance, and he did not want to be second in the field.

The School House quartet crossed the quadrangle in the dusk of the March evening, and entered the porch of the New House. They were stared at by the New House fellows who saw them. The rivalry between the two Houses at St. Jim's was as keen as it had ever been. But the four were not easy to tackle when they were all together, and they entered the New House unmolested.

Blake led the way to Figgins' study. He held up his hand as a sign to his comrades to listen as they went along the upper corridor.

"They're there!" he exclaimed, under his breath.

The door of Figgins' study was open, and the light streamed out into the dimly-lit passage. The sounds of voices came out with the light.

Blake made a sign to his chums to be silent, and they halted at the open door and looked in. The inmates were far too excited to notice them. A scene of extremely warm argument was passing in the room.

The Terrible Three were all there. Blake had not been mistaken in thinking that Tom Merry would lose no time in seeking to enlist Figgins & Co. Lowther had joined his chums for the mission of peace to the New House. But the mission of peace seemed likely to turn itself into an expedition of war.

Tom Merry was trying to explain, but Figgins & Co. did not seem in a reasonable mood. Figgins, the long-limbed chief of the New House juniors, stood leaning against the mantelpiece. Kerr, the Scottish partner in the Co., was looking out a word in a Latin grammar, and he continued to do so in spite of the discussion that was going on. Fatty Wynn, the Falstaff of the New House, was frying sausages, and an earthquake would not have interrupted Fatty when he was thus engaged. Marmaduke Smythe, the fourth and latest member of the Co., was oiling his cricket bat. For the time was drawing nigh when King Football would make his bow and leave a clear field to King Cricket; and Marmaduke was ambitious of shining in the New House Second Eleven.

Tom Merry had evidently arrived at a busy moment, and only Figgins seemed to be paying him any attention, though he was speaking rather eloquently.

"The Grammarians coming here, are they?" said Figgins. "Yes, I heard somebody say so. Well, I don't see anything to make a fuss about."

"There will be a pretty good crowd of them."

"Not so many as there are of us, I suppose."

"Of course not; but Frank Monk is certain to be with them, and he'll start on the warpath at once, and they—"

"They will be wiped up."

"I don't know. If we're divided among ourselves, they might wipe us up."

"Oh, yes! I don't suppose you School House bounders will make much of a show," agreed Figgins. "I'm at one with you there, if that's what you mean."

"I don't mean anything of the kind," said Tom Merry wrathfully. "If we keep our end up against the invaders, it will be the School House that does it."

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"I don't know. You've never been able to keep your end up against the New House."

"Rats! Who's Cock House at St. Jim's?"

"Why, we are!"

"Why, you long-legged apology for a gorilla—"

Figgins turned red.

"What's that, Tom Merry?"

"Long-legged apology for a gorilla!"

"Here, you want a lesson in politeness, I can see. Are you going, or will you have your nose rubbed in the heartthug?"

"Whichever you like."

"If you don't bunk on the spot," said Figgins, "you won't have any choice left. Now, then, to shift or to be shifted—that is the question!"

"Oh, you couldn't shift me in a dog's age!"

"Couldn't I!" roared Figgins. "I'll jolly soon show you!"

And he fairly hurled himself upon Tom Merry.

The hero of the Shell, nothing loth, closed with him. They struggled furiously, and lunched against the table with a bump that sent it flying, and Kerr and his dictionary went to the floor together.

Kerr jumped up with a yell and rushed into the fray; but Monty Lowther was ready to meet him, and they were soon at it hammer and tongs. Marmaduke tackled Manners the next moment. Three couples were fighting desperately, trampling to and fro; and Fatty Wynn, frying-pan in hand, watched them in dismay.

"I say, you imbeciles, chuck it!" shouted Wynn. "We're just going to have tea. The sausages will be spoiled. Chuck it!"

But the combatants were too excited to heed. Fatty shouted in vain. At the open door Blake and his chums stood looking in, grinning. They found the scene amusing. Tom Merry's mission had not prospered; but Blake flattered himself that he would have more success.

There was a sudden hissing, and a stifling smell of burning fat. Fatty Wynn gave a yell. The frying-pan had become tilted as he held it, and half its contents had suddenly shot into the fire.

Fatty Wynn gazed at the ruins of his intended feed in wrath and dismay. Then he jammed the pan, with what it still contained, down into the grate, and rushed into the fray to avenge the loss of the sausages upon the chums of the Shell.

With four against three the tide of battle turned against Tom Merry. Lowther was on the floor, with Kerr sitting on him, and Manners was just holding his own against Marmaduke. Figgins and Fatty Wynn dragged Tom Merry to the grate to carry out Fatty's threat, and Tom struggled desperately. He caught sight of the four grinning faces at the door, and shouted for help.

"Rescue, School House!"

Blake started. He had looked at the discomfiture of his rivals with great glee, but Tom Merry's call changed his view of the situation.

A fellow had always to stand by his House against the other, whatever private disputes he might have, and the cry of "Rescue, School House!" left the chums of the Fourth no choice in the matter.

"Hang it!" muttered Blake. "Come on!"

And the School House four rushed to the scene.

## CHAPTER 4.

### Rough on Figgins & Co.

"RESCUE, School House!"  
Tom Merry's call startled Figgins & Co. who had no idea that there was any other School House boy near at hand. Blake and his companions rushed into the fray before the Co. could prepare for them. In a moment the tide of conflict was turned.

Figgins & Co. were simply nowhere. They were bundled and bundled all over the study, hurled to and fro, and generally made to feel as though a specially large-sized earthquake had broken loose in the New House at St. Jim's.

"Thanks!" gasped Tom Merry, scrambling to his feet. "Even you Fourth Form kids can be useful at times. Lend me a hand with Figgins."

"What's the idea?"

"Shove his napper into the cinders!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Good wheeze!"

"Hands off!" roared Figgins, struggling and hitting out wildly. "Rescue, New House! School House rotters! Rescue!"

The row in Figgins' study had already attracted attention. Answering voices came from the distance, and there was a pattering of feet in the corridor. Digby sprang to the door, slammed it shut, and locked it.

There was a heavy thump on the panels from without.  
 "Anything wrong, Figgy?"  
 It was the voice of Pratt of the Fourth. And Figgins yelled in answer:  
 "Yes, come in!"  
 "The door won't open. It's locked!"  
 "Get in somehow!" roared Figgins, struggling in the grasp of Tom Merry and Blake, who were dragging him slowly but surely to the grate.  
 "Can't! It won't open! Why don't you unlock it?"  
 "I can't! They've got hold of me!"  
 "Why don't you make them let go?"  
 Figgins' reply was a howl of rage. Pratt's question seemed to him simply idiotic.  
 "Bust it in!" he shrieked.  
 "How can I bust in solid oak with my fingers?" was Pratt's not unnatural question. "We'll bang on it, if you like."

And Pratt and the other juniors in the passage did bang on the door and made a terrific disturbance, but they might as well have hammered on a stone wall for all the impression their attack made upon the oaken door.

Meanwhile, matters fared very badly indeed with Figgins & Co. There were seven School House fellows against the four, and interference from the rest of the New House was impossible.

The School House fellows realised their advantage, and they made the best of it. Taking no notice whatever of the hammering on the door, they proceeded to deal in a really drastic way with Figgins & Co.

Figgins' head was rubbed in the ashes in the grate and the spilled fat from the frying-pan till it resembled nothing that human language can describe. Figgins' face was the hue of a beetroot with wrath and excitement. The Co. were not faring much better. Kerr was lying on his back, pinned down by Digby and Herries, who were daubing his face with ink. Fatty Wynn had retreated into a corner, and D'Arcy and Manners were pelting him with books. Marmaduke was being bound to his chair with the window-cord by Lowther and Blake. Tom Merry sat upon Figgins, keeping him down on the hearthrug, in spite of his spasmodic attempts to escape.

"I think," began Tom Merry, from his seat on Figgins' chest—"I think—Keep still, please, Figgins!"

"I'll—I'll be the death of you!"  
 "Quiet, bad boy! I think, chaps, that we have pretty well wiped out Figgins & Co.," said Tom Merry. "What do you think?"

"Yaas, wathah!"  
 "There doesn't seem to be much left of them, besides some wreckage," said Blake, looking curiously round the study.

"I'll wreckage you!" howled Figgins.  
 "Hallo! There's one of the wrecks talking! Have you had enough, Figgins? And do you acknowledge the School House to be Cook House at St. Jim's?"

"No, I don't! I—"  
 "Do you want some more ashes on your head?"  
 "You beast, I—"

"You'll want a currycomb on this job, I think," said Tom Merry, looking thoughtfully at Figgins. "Mind where you're shying those books, D'Arcy! You know what a cack-handed ass you are!" said Tom Merry. "And you'll do some damage yet!"

"That's all wight, Tom Mewwy. I am shyin' these books at Fatty Wynn. It is awfully amusin' to see him twyin' to dodge them, you know. I—"

A heavy lexicon flew from D'Arcy's hand, and Tom Merry gave a yell. It caught him fairly under the chin and bowled him over.

"You ass!" he roared.  
 "I weally beg your pardon, Tom Mewwy. That was quite an accident, and I am quite sowwy. I will be more careful with the next."

"If there's a next, I'll wring your neck, Gussy!"  
 "I wefuse to permit anythin' of the sort!"  
 "I—"

Figgins had jumped up, and was making a rush for the door. If he had succeeded in unlocking it, and letting in a flood of New House fellows, it would have gone hard with the School House chums. But Tom Merry knew that as well as he did, and he sprang upon Figgins, and brought him to the floor.

"Not this time, Figgy!"  
 "Lemme gerrup!"

"Some other evening, my dear fellow. Give me a strap, or a rope, or something, D'Arcy, and I'll tie him to the legs of the table!"

"I weally cannot see a stwap or a wope at the pwsent moment, Tom Mewwy."

"Your braces will do, take them off and—"  
 D'Arcy gave him a frigid glare.

"I wefuse to take my bwaces off, Tom Mewwy; and I am extremely surprisid at your havin' the feahful cheek to make such a wequest."

"Well, Figgins' braces will do. Come and get them off."  
 "Yaas, wathah. I am quite willin' to do so. That is a vewy diffewent mattah. But my bwaces—"

"Hang your braces! Buck up!"  
 Figgins' braces were soon off, and were tied tightly round his wrists, and then to the leg of the table. Figgins was a helpless prisoner.

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Blake, looking down at his old rival squirming like an eel on the floor. "We can't do better than serve the others the same."

"Yaas, wathah!"  
 And the Co. soon joined Figgins on the floor, one at each corner of the table, tied there by their wrists. The School House lads surveyed the result of their handiwork with great satisfaction.

Figgins spluttered with rage. Never had the great Figgins received such a crushing take-down within the walls of his own study, in his own room.

"You rotters!" roared Figgins. "You have the grin now—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "But wait till you try to get out of this room, that's all. The grin will be on the other side then."

"Yaas, wathah, Tom Mewwy, I think there is somethin' in what Figgay says, you know. Those New House wottahs out there sound quite wuff and fewocious."

The New House juniors certainly did sound rather ferocious. They had ceased the heavy hammering on the door, fearful that it might attract masters or prefects to the spot. But they were trying to force the lock, and the threats they hissed through the keyhole were really appalling.

Tom Merry laughed.  
 "I don't think those kids will get hold of us," he remarked. "You needn't lay that flattering unctio to your soul, Figgy."

"You can't stay here all night."  
 "Well, no, I shouldn't care to spend the night in such quarters," said Tom Merry loftily. "I'm rather particular on points like that."

"You—you rotter! You'll have to go out, and then—"  
 "Yaas, wathah! As a mattah of fact, Tom Mewwy, we had bettah be gettin' back to the School House. We shall have to win the gauntlet."

"They wouldn't leave so much of you as your eyeglass, Gussy. We're not running any gauntlets this evening."

"But we cannot stay here, Tom Mewwy, as Figgay vewy twuly remarks. If we are goin' to win the beastly gauntlet, deah boys, the soonah the quickah. I will lead you, as the bwavest person pwesent."

And D'Arcy stepped to the door to unlock it.  
 Tom Merry dragged him back just in time.

"We're not going out that way, fathead," said Tom Merry. "What's the matter with the window?"

"Bai Jove, I did not think of that, you know," said D'Arcy. "And I did not look for such a sensible suggestion from a person of your limited bwain powah. Tom Mewwy. Undah the circs, I will overlook your wude conduct."

"Thank you, Gussy! I was just getting palpitation of the pulsometer for fear of what you were going to do when you had sorted yourself out."

"Pway don't wot, Tom Mewwy. I weally think that the soonah we are out of the enemy's quartahs, the bettah. Pway open the window, Lowthah. We shall want a long wope, Mewwy. Wheah are you goin' to get a long wope from?"

"That's all right. You can go first, and we can all jump out on you, and that will break our fall."

"I decline to do anythin' of the sort."  
 "Ha, ha, ha! Then we shall have to find some other way. I imagine that Figgins & Co. have been out of the window themselves more than once, unless my memory

(Continued on the next page.)



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deceives me, and so there's probably a rope about here somewhere."

"Yaas, wathah; I nevah thought of that."

"The things you don't think of, Gussy, would fill a dictionary. Have you got a rope about the place, Figgy?"

"Find out!" grunted Figgins.

"That's what we're going to do. We'll look for the rope if you'd rather. Hunt for it, kids, and if you upset anything, remember you're in the enemy's country, and it doesn't matter."

"Ha, ha, ha! Right-ho!"

"Shove over the bookcase to start with, then go through the cupboard, and then empty the coal-locker into the middle of the carpet."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Figgins hastily. "The rope's coiled up at the bottom of the cupboard."

"Thank you, Figgins! That is kind of you!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

The rope was found, and fastened to the table, and the end dropped into the quadrangle. One by one the School House fellows slid down it. Tom Merry remained till the last. He took the key from the door and pushed it beneath to the crowded juniors outside.

For the moment the unexpected action passed unnoticed. The hammering and hacking at the lock continued.

"Anything more I can do for you, Figgy?" inquired Tom Merry blandly.

"Yes, get out of my sight!" growled Figgins. "Your face worries me."

"Ha, ha, ha! The key's under the door, if you like to call out to those silly kids," said Tom Merry. "Ta-ta!"

Figgins shouted to the juniors outside. Tom Merry swung himself out of the window and went swiftly down the rope. The door was unlocked, and Pratt and French and a crowd of New House juniors burst into the room. But they came too late for vengeance. The School House boys were walking quietly away across the quad to their own House, and as they went they laughed like hyenas.

## CHAPTER 5.

### The Grammarians Arrive!

"HERE they are!"

It was a loud shout at the gates of St. Jim's. In the early dusk of the March evening, the Saints were gathered at the gates, looking eagerly for the expected arrival of the Grammarians.

Excitement ran high at St. Jim's. This invasion on their own territory by the boys of the rival school was an unprecedented event. How long the Grammarians were to remain they did not know. But one thing was certain—there would be ructions at St. Jim's as long as they stayed.

The Saints—at all events, the juniors—had prepared for the reception of their visitors. Blake and his chums had provided themselves with squirts. Figgins & Co. had pea-shooters. The Terrible Three had thoughtfully laid in a supply of eggs. All was ready for the arrival of the Grammarians.

"Here they are!"

The shout from some juniors out in the lane put the waiting crowd on the qui vive at once. Tom Merry's eyes sparkled.

"Rather!" said Manners, feeling in his coat pocket. "Oh, my hat! One of these beastly eggs is broken!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Never mind, so long as the rest are all right!"

"I'm thinking of my coat; it's as sticky as—"

"Never mind your coat! Look out for the enemy!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Bothah your beastly coat, Mannahs! It isn't much of a coat, anyway, you know, and I have often wondahed where you got such a thing made, deah boy!"

"Oh, you dry up!" said Manners crossly.

"I wefuse to dwy up!"

"Here they come!" shouted Figgins.

There was a clatter of harness and wheels in the lane. A brake loomed up under the lamps at the gates of St. Jim's.

"Here they are!"

"Go for 'em!"

"Fire!"

"My dear boys, pray what is the cause of this excitement?"

It was a voice from the brake, as a little old gentleman with white whiskers and spectacles rose into view.

The hands that were raised to hurl missiles of various kinds dropped again.

"Dr. Monk!"

It was the Head of the Grammar School, who had come

over with the first party of Grammarians. Tom Merry gave a whistle of dismay.

"Oh, rats, it's a frost, then!" growled Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! It would be beastly bad form to show disrespect to the Head of the Gwammah School, don't you know?"

The boys of St. Jim's all felt the same. They could not pelt the brake while Dr. Monk was in it. Even if they had been capable of such bad form the remembrance of the birch in the Head's study would have deterred them.

Dr. Monk beamed upon the crowd. The Grammarians in the brake—among whom were prominent Frank Monk, the son of the headmaster, and his chums, Lane and Carboy—grinned at the Saints, secure from attack, and made faces at them with perfect freedom, sheltered by the presence of the headmaster. Dr. Monk was not particularly observant, and he came to the conclusion that the crowd had gathered at the gates to do honour to the new arrivals.

"My dear lads," he exclaimed, rubbing his hands as he stood up in the brake, which had halted in the crowd—"my dear lads, this is very kind of you, and I take it as a personal compliment to myself!"

"You came jolly near taking something else," murmured Monty Lowther, slipping an egg back into his pocket.

"To turn out like this to give us a welcome," resumed Dr. Monk, "shows with what a hearty good feeling you greet the boys who are taking shelter for a time within the walls of this ancient college."

"Hear, hear!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Rats! Rats!" said Gore of the Shell.

"Bosh! Bosh!" said Mellish of the Fourth.

Tom Merry gave him a backhanded clump on the mouth which stopped his jeer in the middle, and Mellish gave a yell. Gore drew out of the way, for Tom Merry looked like bestowing a similar attention upon him.

"You'd better shut up, you two!" Tom Merry remarked.

"Look here," growled Mellish, "I—"

"Oh, shut up!"

And Mellish shut up, his eyes gleaming like a rat's. The unsuspecting speech of Dr. Monk had touched most of the juniors, and they gave him a ringing cheer. The old gentleman beamed upon them through his spectacles, and rubbed his hands.

"Thank you very much—thank you!" he exclaimed. "This is very gratifying—very gratifying indeed! I am certain that my boys will mingle with you on the very friendliest terms, and there will not be the slightest hint of a quarrel during their stay at St. James' Collegiate School. I—"

The Head of the Grammar School was suddenly interrupted by the brake moving on. The sudden jolt caused Dr. Monk to sit down, and he disappeared from sight for a moment. As he rose again the brake moved on and drove up to the door of Dr. Holmes' house. There the Head of St. Jim's came out to greet his friend, and all chance of a demonstration was over.

There was a great deal of disappointment among the juniors. They had counted upon giving the Grammarians a reception which would warn them what to expect while they remained within the walls of St. Jim's.

"Beastly rotten!" said Figgins, "after we took the trouble to bring our pea-shooters, too! We can't waste these peas, you know; better let the School House kids have them!"

"Good idea!" said Kerr.

And Figgins & Co., without the slightest warning, opened fire.

D'Arcy gave a yell as a stinging pea caught him under the ear.

"Bai Jove! What was that?" he howled.

"Hallo! What's the matter now?" exclaimed Blake. "What the dickens are you jumping about like a giddy kangaroo for, Gussy?"

"I felt a pain—"

"Ow!" ejaculated Digby. "Are there wasps about? I just got a sting on the ear! Why, it was a pea!"

"It's those New House rotters!" yelled Blake. "They've got pea-shooters! Ow! Here, where are those squirts? Return fire!"

The squirts soon came into play.

Figgins & Co. tried to dodge them, but it was little use, and they received the contents of the squirts. And then the chums of Study No. 6 made a dash for the fountain to refill them. Figgins & Co. pursued them, plying them with stinging peas.

Tom Merry grinned, and made a sign to his chums. "This is where we come in," he remarked. "No good taking these eggs back to the tuckshop, and I know they're too ancient to cook."



"Ha, ha, ha! Let's be generous and give 'em to the poor—I mean to Figgins & Co!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"That's the idea! Fire!"  
The Terrible Three fired. The eggs flew with deadly aim and burst all over Figgins & Co.

The New House juniors were taken in the flank by the new attack, and the eggs were all over them before they knew what was coming.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Figgins, as he rubbed a highly scented yolk from his face. "I—oh—ow!" he yelled, as a new egg caught him on the chin and broke there. "I've had enough of this!"

The Co. had had enough of it, too. They broke away in full flight, and Tom Merry hurled the last egg after them, with a shout of laughter.

Then there was a roar in the dusk of the quadrangle.

"Ow! Oooch! Who threw that egg?"

"My hat!" gasped Lowther. "It's Kildare!"

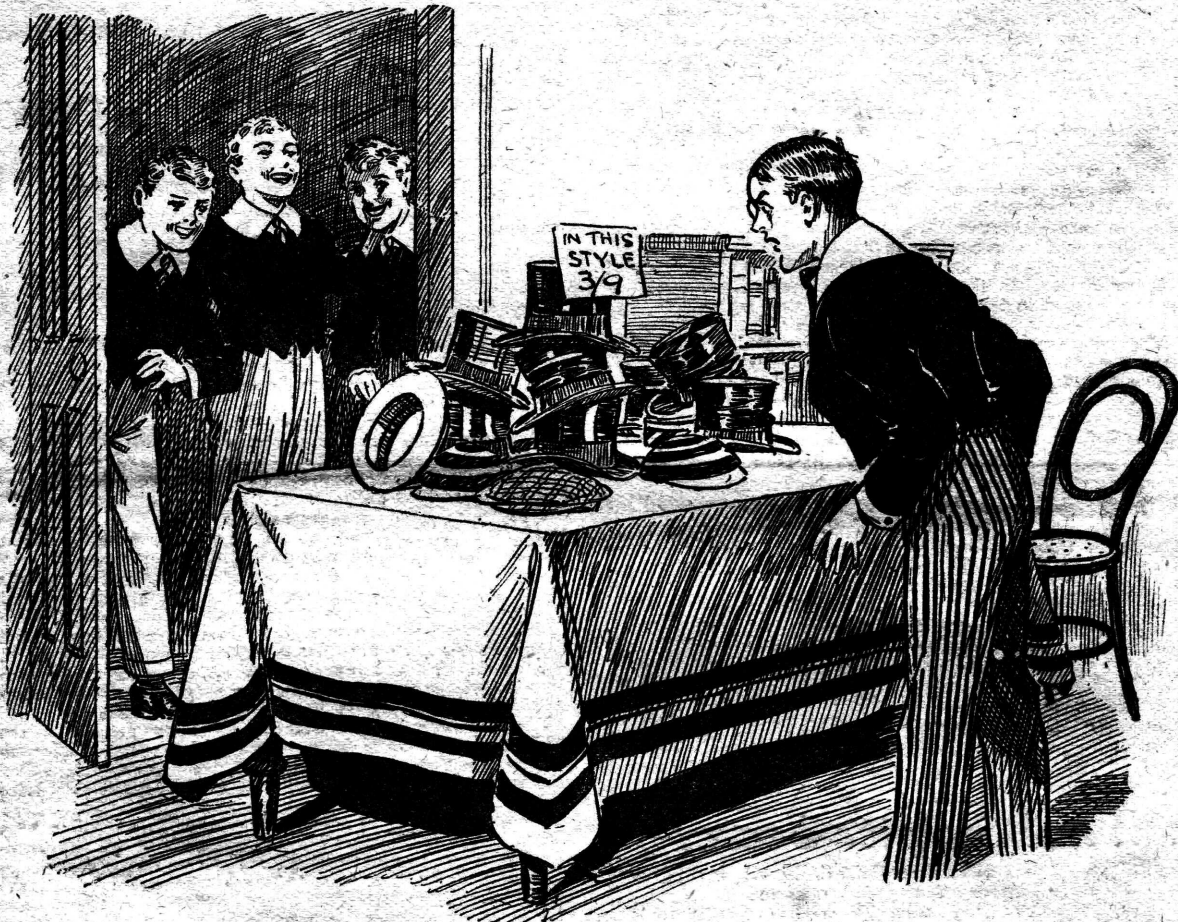
"Come on, kids," said Tom Merry, turning away, "the reception has turned out a frost; but we'll make the Grammarians feel at home, somehow, all the same."

CHAPTER 6.

The Invitations!

THAT evening was one long remembered at St. Jim's. The curious spectacle of a dozen Grammar School youths walking about the college as if they owned it was seen for the first time. Frank Monk and his comrades did not seem to be in the slightest degree awed by their new surroundings. They made themselves quite at home at once, and showed it by their manner.

They looked over the school, and sauntered along the passages, and peered into the class-rooms, with a sniffing, patronising air, which put the backs of the Saints up at once.



Several silk toppers and the rest of D'Arcy's hats and caps were arranged upon the table, with a notice: "In This Style, 3s. 9d.!" Gussy stood gazing at the pile with indignant amazement.

The juniors stood petrified.

The disturbance in the quadrangle had brought the captain of St. Jim's upon the scene, and he had arrived just in time to stop that last egg—with his face.

Kildare strode towards Tom Merry. The hero of the Shell met him with a fearless look, without showing the slightest desire to retreat.

"Did you throw that egg, Merry?"

"Yes, Kildare."

"At me?"

"Oh, no! You know I wouldn't do that, Kildare. I hope. That was an accident—I threw it at Figgins!"

Kildare hesitated for a moment. His anger never lasted long.

"Well, if you throw eggs about in the quadrangle again you will get into trouble," he said, and walked away.

The juniors burst into a cheer as he went. Kildare was always popular. And his temper had been sorely tried this time.

St. Jim's had determined that there would be no ructions if the invaders put on any sort of side, and the Grammarians had started by putting on "side" of the most pronounced description.

"I never saw a chap like Frank Monk for cheek!" Monty Lowther remarked, as he sat in the study later at prep. "One would think he owned the place by the way he swaggers about in it."

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes, they seem to have taken the place under their wing," he said. "But there will be a come-down as soon as we get a chance."

"They will have to be put in their place, of course."

"Yes; and it's unfortunate that we couldn't manage to make it pax with Study No. 6 and Figgins & Co.," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "But there's no arguing with those obstinate bounders. I—Hullo, come in!"

A knock at the door interrupted Tom Merry.

It opened, and the grinning face of Frank Monk  
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appeared. Behind him were the grinning faces of Carboy and Lane.

Tom Merry stared at the intruders.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "What do you want here? This isn't the monkey-house!"

"Isn't it?" said Monk, with an air of surprise. "Judging by the occupants, you know, I should have thought it was." Lowther giggled. The three Grammarians came into the study.

"But we haven't come in for a row," said Monk. "My idea is that we should make it pax for the first evening, and leave rows over till to-morrow. What do you think?"

The Terrible Three looked at one another.

"Well, it's not a bad idea, if you feel nervous," said Tom Merry.

"Nervous! Do I look nervous?" grinned Frank.

"I must say you don't; I never saw such a kid for cool cheek!"

Frank Monk laughed.

"Well, what do you think of the idea? My idea is to let you kids down lightly. We've come here, I don't know for how long; but, of course, we shall take the head of the Lower School while we're here. We shall expect you fellows to know your place, and to keep in it."

"Exactly!" said Carboy and Lane.

The chums of the Shell breathed hard.

"I dare say you know where we've been accommodated?" went on Monk.

"No, we don't. The coal-cellar would be good enough."

"We've got a room in Dr. Holmes' house," explained Monk. "A big room that overlooks the chapel garden; it used to be a class-room."

"Oh, yes; Class-room No. 10!"

"That's it. There isn't room for us in the studies, and I fancy the Head thinks there would be rows if we were distributed about in the rooms."

"He's right!"

"So we're going to do our preparation and so forth altogether in No. 10," went on Frank. "It's a good idea. Our sleeping quarters will be on the top floor of the Head's house, over No. 10. There are some more of us coming."

"My word; there are too many of you already!"

"You'll think so before we've finished. But no rows to-

night," went on Monk, with a wave of the hand. "We haven't come here to rag you; we're going to give a house-warming!"

"You're going to give a what?"

"A house-warming. Going to celebrate our installation in our new quarters, you know, by giving a feed. Will you come?"

"Well, that's very decent of you," said Tom Merry. "Of course, we are going to instruct you in the way you should go, and cure you of your fearful cheek; but there's no harm in having a friendly feed to start with."

"My idea exactly," said Lowther. "When is it coming off?"

"At eight exactly."

"Good! We'll be there," said Tom Merry. "We shall have our prep finished before then. Is anybody else coming?"

"Rather! We've brought a big hamper with us," explained Monk, "and we want to make a good feed of it. We're going to ask Blake and his lot, and Figgins & Co. Some of the other fellows will come, too. Then we're to expect you?"

"Certainly. We'll be glad to come."

"Right-ho!"

And the three Grammarians left the study. They made their way along to Study No. 6 and found the four chums there deep in their preparation. Blake received the invitation, however, with great cordiality, and promised to be on the scene on the stroke of eight, as also did Figgins & Co. when they were asked.

## CHAPTER 7.

### The House-Warming!

"PLEASE we've come!"

The Terrible Three made that remark together as they entered Class-room No. 10 in Dr. Holmes' house. The Head's house at St. Jim's was simply an off-shoot, as it were, of the School House, and was reached by a wide, flagged corridor. It had a door into the quadrangle, also, but that was only used by the Head and his family. Class-room No. 10 was a large apartment, with three tall windows looking out upon a stretch of garden, shaded by old trees, and bounded at the end by the chapel rails. The garden was now lying deep under the dusk, and the elm-trees loomed like spectres in the light that fell from the high windows of Class-room No. 10.

The room presented a rather festive appearance. Desks had been put back, and two large tables placed together in the centre of the room covered with white cloths, which Frank Monk had borrowed from Mrs. Mimms, the School House dame. The gaslight glimmered on the white cloth, and on all sorts and conditions of crockery ware. For the founders of the feast had been very short of those necessary articles, and had had to borrow them from all sides.

The fire blazed up cheerfully in the grate. The dozen Grammarians were looking very cheerful, too. Cooler invaders of an enemy's country had never been seen. They had been only a couple of hours at St. Jim's, but they were quite at home.

The Grammarian house-warming seemed destined to be a success. Frank Monk and his chums had thoughtfully provided a very extensive feed, and even Fatty Wynn was satisfied. Fatty, needless to say, came out very strong. His shining face and beaming smile showed how much he was enjoying himself. He made it a point of politeness never to refuse anything that was offered, and to take something from every dish that was passed, and by this means he travelled through a quantity of provender that would have meant severe dyspepsia to anybody else. But Fatty Wynn had a perfect digestion; perhaps because he gave it so much exercise.

As the inner-man—or, rather, the inner-boy—was gradually satisfied, and the more solid portion of the feed was disposed of, toasts were drunk in currant wine and coffee. The hilarity was at its height, when an unfortunate argument began at one corner of the table. Pratt of the New House was among the guests, and Pratt was, unluckily, placed next to a Grammarian with whom he had been in the habit of having a fight whenever they chanced to meet. The natural result was that they glowered at one another, and finally argued, and the argument gradually warmed up.

"Hallo! What's the row over there?" called out Frank Monk.

"Shut up, Hammond!"

"He says we can't play football!" exclaimed Hammond excitedly. "He says—"

"Never mind what he says!"

"He says we can't play footer!"

"Well, let him!"

"I tell you he says—"



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"Shut up, Pratt!" called out Blake. "What do you mean by disturbing the harmony of the feed? Just like one of you New House rotters!"

"Eh—what?" exclaimed Figgins, who had been going to jump on the offender himself, but naturally took the other side as soon as Blake spoke. "What's that, Blake?"

"I say that——"  
"Oh, shut up!" exclaimed Tom Merry anxiously. "Don't start a House row now!"

"Whom are you talking to, Tom Merry?"  
"To you, you ass!"

"Peace!" exclaimed Frank Monk. "It was all Hammond's fault! Hammond, if you say another word I'll drop on you!"

"He says we can't play footer for toffee!"  
"That's vewy wude of you, Pwatt. You know, you ought not to blurt out a painful twuth like that in the pwesent company."

"Truth!" exclaimed Carboy. "Ha, ha, ha! I like to see you chaps play footer, that's all. You get near the ball sometimes."

"Sometimes," said Lane, "but not often."  
"I weward that wemark as dewogatory to this coll——"

"Oh, shut up!"  
"Don't start rowing now!"  
"He says we can't play footer for toffee!"

"Well, as a mattah of fact, deah boy, you can't play footer for toffee, or anythin' else," said Arthur Augustus. "Weally——"

"Dry up, Gussy!"  
"I wefuse to dwy up."  
"Peace, I tell you!"

"He says we can't play footer——"  
"And you can't, either!" yelled Pratt. "The way you fellows play footer is enough to make a jackass laugh!"

"No wonder it makes you laugh, then!"  
"What do you mean by that, Hammond?"  
"I mean——"

"I mean that you want a thick ear——"  
"You mean that you couldn't give me one!"  
"Couldn't I?"

The next moment the two old foes, forgetful of anything else, were clutching at one another and fighting furiously. There was a rush of Grammarians and Saints to separate them. Unfortunately, Blake ran into Figgins and sent him staggering, and Figgins trod on Carboy's toe. Carboy shoved him off, and Figgins, who was getting excited himself, retaliated by giving Carboy a push which made him sit down in a hurry. Lane rushed to the rescue, and nothing more was needed.

The room was in an uproar in a moment.  
"Grammar cads!"  
"St. Jim's asses!"  
"Yah!"  
"Boo!"

"Hold on!" roared Frank Monk, vainly trying to establish peace. "This is a friendly feed, and——"

"And, it looks like one!" grinned Tom Merry.  
"If we hadn't made it pax, you bounders," yelled Monty Lowther, "we'd wipe up the floor with you!"

"Oh, don't let that trouble you!" exclaimed Frank. "If the pax is off we're quite willing to teach you a lesson!"  
"It looks as if it's off. But we came here as guests."  
"Then we'll let you off."

"We don't want to be let off, you cheeky Grammar ass! We're letting you off!"  
"Then don't!"  
"Do you want a prize nose?"  
"I want all the prize noses you can give me."

"Then pax is off!"  
"Yes, right off."  
"Good! Here goes!"

And the next moment Monty Lowther and Frank Monk were reeling about in a deadly embrace. Pratt and Hammond, the original disturbers of the peace, had rolled under the table, and were pommelling one another there. Hammond was underneath, and was getting decidedly the worst of it. In his frantic efforts to get loose he grasped the tablecloth and dragged it down by the corner, and there was a terrific crashing of crockery.

Crash, crash, crash!  
"My word!" gasped Digby, as the coffee-pot descended upon his head and spilt its contents over him. "What's that—another flood?"

"Ow!" roared D'Arcy, who had a shower of cups and saucers upon him as he rolled on the floor, catching hold of Carboy. "Stop that! Stop it at once, I say! How dare you pelt me, you wottahs!"

"Kick them out!" roared Frank Monk.  
"Pax is off, and it's time to give 'em a lesson! Kick them out!"

The Grammarians gave a cheer. All thought of pax was at an end. The feast was over, and pandemonium reigned. The odds were slightly on the Grammarians' side, and every adversary counted in such a desperate encounter. D'Arcy was dragged, struggling, to the door by Carboy and Lane and sent whirling forth, in spite of his struggles.

"Welease me, you wottahs!" he howled. "You are simply spoilin' my clothes! My collah will revah be weally stwaight again! Welease me! Ow!"

The Grammarians released him, and he shot into the passage. The next moment Blake went hurtling after him, and he fell on D'Arcy just as the swell of the School House was ruefully picking himself up.

Down went D'Arcy again, with Blake sprawling across him. The School House swell gave a yelp, and he heard his eyeglass crack on the floor.

"You clumsy ass!" he shrieked. "You have bwokeen my beastlay eyeglass! What do you mean by plumping into me like that?"

"What do you mean by getting in the way?" roared Blake.  
"You clumsy boundah!"  
"You howling ass!"

"If you call me a howling ass I shall stwike you, Blake!"  
"I'll dust the floor with you!"  
"Ow! What's that?" howled Arthur Augustus.

"That" was Herries, who came headlong out of Classroom No. 10 and bumped into Blake and D'Arcy and sent them both sprawling. The next moment Pratt came out head first, and Digby followed him in the same unceremonious way.

"Bai Jove! I——"  
"Come on!" shouted Blake. "Let's get in again and snatch those Grammar School cads baldheaded! Follow your leader!"

He rushed towards the door, but there was no getting in. The doorway was crammed by the Terrible Three, fighting desperately to withstand a rush of the Grammarians, who were bent on kicking them out. The odds were too great, and Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther came flying out, staggering over Blake and sending him flying, too.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Grammar School juniors.  
"Now the rest of them!" shouted Frank Monk.  
Figgins & Co. were holding their own gallantly, but the Grammarians were too many for them. The New House juniors were hurled forth after the others, and fell about like ninepins in the passage.

The room was cleared of all but Frank Monk and his followers. They packed the doorway, ready to resist a rush if one should be made, and howling with laughter.

"We're not going to stand this!" howled Tom Merry, red with excitement. "Follow me, kids!"

He rushed to the attack undauntedly. The rest followed, excepting D'Arcy, who was hunting for his broken eyeglass. But they were exhausted, and the Grammarians had the advantage of position. The attack was repulsed, and the grinning Grammarians still crammed the doorway, yelling defiance at their assailants.

"Yah!"  
"Go home!"  
"Boo!"

"Go home!" murmured D'Arcy. "Yaas, wathah, that's about the best thing we can do, deah boys! I feel how-wibly dirtay and wumped, and I must weally go and change my clothes."

And he went. And the rest of the Saints, feeling that the game was up for the present, followed, leaving the Grammarians victorious.

## CHAPTER 8.

## "In This Style, 3s. 9d.!"

THERE were very plain traces of the conflict in the Fourth Form and the Shell the next day. Swollen noses, discoloured eyes, and cut lips were abundant. But the masters judiciously failed to see these signs of battle. There were times when it was wisest to be a little blind, and this was one of them. And truly the fighting men of the Lower Forms had been punished enough in the conflict itself. Scarce a participant in the fray who had not some bruise or cut to show.

"There's no getting away from the fact that we had the worst of it last night," Tom Merry remarked to his chums during morning school.

Manners nodded gloomily.  
"Yes, but the Grammar School cads had the advantage in numbers, you know. The next time we meet them it will be on more equal terms."

"We must see to that," said Lowther. "It was beastly."  
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bad form to finish a feed with a row, as a matter of fact; but I suppose it was bound to come about. We gave them a run for their money, anyway."

"It's all due to the disunion among ourselves," said Tom Merry, with a decided nod of the head. "If all the fellows had followed my lead and backed me up—backed us up, I mean—there would have been a different tale to tell."

"You are talking, Merry," said Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell.

"Yes, sir."

"Take fifty lines."

"Ow! I mean, yes, sir."

And the discussion of the serious state of affairs at St. Jim's was postponed till the class should be dismissed. Tom Merry had been thinking very seriously about it. So long as the Grammarians were united and the Saints divided, Frank Monk was bound to have the advantage. Tom Merry determined to try the effect of a remonstrance and argument on Blake and Figgins.

The Shell came out a few minutes after the Fourth Form and Study No. 6 were standing on the steps of the School House chatting when the Terrible Three joined them. Blake looked rather suspiciously at Tom Merry. Blake had a black eye, which was matched by a dark bruise on Tom Merry's cheek.

"I want to speak to you, Blake."

"No law against that that I know of," said Blake, "if you've come to tell me that you've been thinking it over."

"That's exactly what I have been doing."

"Good! So have we. You mean you see clearly that it's no good our ragging one another while the Grammar School cads are here."

"That's it. I'm glad to see you take such a sensible view of the case!" said Tom Merry. "We must unite under one leader if we are to hold our own on our own ground."

"Glad to hear you say so," said Blake heartily. "Can you answer for your friends as well as yourself?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Good! When Figgins & Co. know that you are following my lead, I dare say they will come into the combine, too."

"Eh—following what? What are you talking about?"

"Following my lead."

"My word! I wasn't talking about following your lead. What I meant to say was—have you realised that we can't succeed unless you follow mine?"

Blake stared at the hero of the Shell with the most withering expression he could screw up into his features.

"Do you mean to say that you've got nothing more sensible than that to propose?" he demanded. "Haven't you buried that stale old idea yet?"

"You know very well that—"

"I know very well that if anybody leads this combine, his name is going to be Jack Blake," said the chief of Study No. 6, with emphasis.

"Now, you know you're talking rot, Blake."

"Yaas, wathah! My opinion is that the leadah ought to be selected from Study No. 6, but I weally am the pwopah person. What you weeah is a fellow—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Blake. "I suppose we shall never agree on that point, Tom Merry. You fellows in the Shell are so confoundedly conceited!"

"And you Fourth Form kids are so silly."

"Who are you calling kids?"

"You young duffers!"

The Fourth-Formers looked aggressive. But just then Mr. Railton, the master of the School House, looked out, and the dispute was cut short. The juniors assumed extremely innocent looks under the Housemaster's eye and strolled away.

Arthur Augustus went upstairs to Study No. 6. As he opened the door his chums below heard him give a startled exclamation.

"Hallo! Something's up!" exclaimed Blake.

Blake, Herries, and Digby ran quickly upstairs and along the corridor after D'Arcy. The chums of the Shell followed, curious to know what was happening. As they came along they saw Blake, Herries, and Digby in the doorway of Study No. 6, screaming with laughter.

"Hallo! There's some jape on there!" murmured Tom Merry. "Let's go and see what it is! Can't be a Grammarian jape, I think, or Blake wouldn't be killing himself over it."

"Gussy seems to be annoyed," chuckled Lowther, as they ran along the passage.

The voice of the School House swell could be heard raised in tones of indignation.

"Bai Jove! The impertinent wottahs! The feahful cads! Blake, if you insist upon that idiotic cacklin', I shall be tempted to swiike you. Hewwies, pway stop laughin' like a beastlay hyena! Digbay, I wegard your gigglin' as offensive."

The Terrible Three arrived upon the scene. They looked past the Fourth-Formers into the study. Then they burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy was staring in indignant amazement at a pile of hats erected on the study table. D'Arcy rather fancied his hats, and his commonest extravagance was a new silk topper. He generally had two or three on hand, and his hat-boxes were a continual bother in the study. The practical jokers who had visited Study No. 6 evidently knew of the little foible of Arthur Augustus.

Several silk hats were arranged on the table, and the rest of D'Arcy's hats and caps were arranged round them. They made a goodly pile. And on the top was pinned a card bearing the following inscription:

"In This Style, 3s. 9d."

Tom Merry laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. It was evidently a joke of the Grammarians, and it appealed to the School House boys, excepting D'Arcy. The swell of the School House evidently regarded it as anything but comic.

"I weally fail to see what you silly asses are gwinnin' and cacklin' at!" he exclaimed. "There is nothin' funny in pilin' a fellow's hats on the beastlay table and stickin' a silly placard on them. 'In This Style, 3s. 9d.' Bai Jove, I wegard that as an outrageous insult! Fancy me weavin' a beastlay hat that only cost three-and-nine! Can you imagine such a thing, deah boys?"

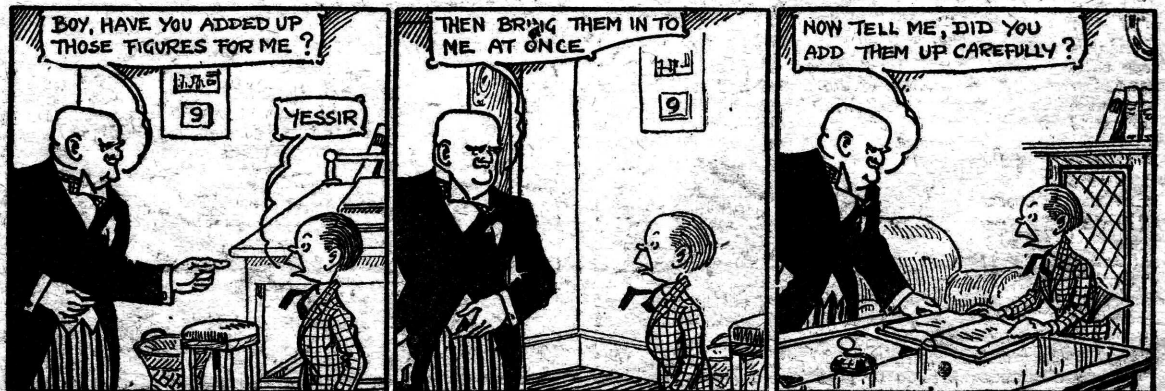
"Certainly not!" said Tom Merry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway cease this untimely mewwiment!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is a joke of the Gwammah School cads," said D'Arcy, taking the offending placard off the hat. "Bai

Potts, the Office Boy!



Jove, they have stuck a beastlay pin wight into the hat! I shall give Fwank Monk a feashful thwashin' for this! I don't mind the damage to the hat so much, but to insinuate that I pay only three-and-nine for my beastlay hats—Bai Jove, I regard that as a beastlay insult! Yaas, watah!"

And D'Arcy made for the door, with a vengeful gleam in his eye.

Blake caught him by the arm.

"Where are you going, Gussy?"

"Pway welease me, Blake! I am goin' to find Fwank Monk, to thwash him!"

"Don't be an ass! You know—"

"I insist upon your weleasin' me at once, Blake!"

"Now, look here—"

"I wefuse to look there!"

And D'Arcy jerked himself away, and strode off in search of the Grammarians. He left the juniors shrieking with laughter. The Terrible Three were still chuckling as they walked away to their own study. But a surprise was waiting for them there.

CHAPTER 9.

A Slight Mistake!

**T**OM MERRY was the first to enter the study. The next moment he gave a wild yell as his foot caught in something and he pitched forward headlong.

"Look out!" he shouted.

But there was no time for his chums to look out. They were following him in, and their feet caught in the same cord stretched across the study, and they followed Tom Merry headlong to the floor.

There was a creak and a crash. The end of the cord was fastened to the bookcase, and the jerk on it had been too much for the stability of that article of furniture. The bookcase went over crashing, and the books scattered in a shower upon the Terrible Three.

"Ow!" roared Lowther, as Liddell and Scott caught him upon the head. "Ow! Oh!"

"My hat!" gasped Manners. "What is it? What's happening? Is it an earthquake?"

He stared at the fallen bookcase and the scattered books, and then looked round the study with a wrathful eye.

The room was in a state of shocking disorder. The table had been turned upon its side, and the drawer had fallen out, and all sorts of articles were scattered on the floor. The fender was standing on end against the window-ledge, and the ashes and cinders had been kicked all over the room. The chairs were overturned, the contents of the cupboard scattered on the floor. The coal from the locker had been distributed with a liberal hand in every quarter.

The chums of the Shell looked at one another as they picked themselves up.

"The Grammar School cads!" muttered Lowther.

"Wait a tick!" said Tom Merry. "What's this?"

He picked up a school cap which lay among the wreckage.

"A New House cap!" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry nodded.

"No good jumping to conclusions too quickly," he remarked. "Figgins & Co. have done this in return for the doing we gave their study."

"By Jove, and we might have gone for the Grammarians over it!" exclaimed Lowther. "I say, we're not going to

take this lying down, you know! Let's go over to the New House and make them sit up!"

"Good! It's about time the rotters had a lesson!" exclaimed Manners wrathfully. "It will take us hours to get this to rights!"

"Come on, then!"

Equally wrathful and bent upon prompt vengeance, the Terrible Three hurried out of the study. As they went down the passage a Shell boy came along and tried to stop them. It was Skimpole of the Shell—a youth with a head so large that it seemed certain that he must have at least twice the average amount of brain power. Skimpole himself was certain of it.

"I say, Tom Merry, I want to speak to you; it's most important!" he exclaimed, catching the hero of the Shell by the coat button.

"Can't stop now!"

"But it's most important!"

"Lemme go, you ass!"

"I say, it's a most important matter!"

"Look here, I've no time to listen to chin-wagging on Determinism now!" yelled Tom Merry. "Let me go, or I shall biff you!"

Determinism was one of the subjects which Skimpole's mighty brain led him to take up. He talked in season and out of season, and bored everybody who would listen to him almost to extinction with it.

"But really, Tom Merry—"

"Let go, you ass! I don't want to break your neck if it can be helped!"

"It's about the Grammarians. Now they are here—"

"Scoot!"

"I can't; it's a question of duty with me! As a Determinist I cannot sit down idly while—"

"Why not try, then?" said Tom Merry. And he gave the amateur Determinist of St. Jim's a playful tap on the chest, which instantly placed him in a sitting posture.

Skimpole sat there, bewildered, staring after the chums of the Shell as they vanished.

Tom Merry and his chums ran on.

They caught sight of Figgins & Co. as they crossed the quadrangle. They entered the New House, and ran up the stairs. An invasion in broad daylight was not a thing the New House juniors were likely to look for; and, as a matter of fact, the Terrible Three did not encounter a soul.

They dashed into Figgins' study.

"By Jove, fancy leaving the door unlocked, after what they've been doing in our quarters!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "There's carelessness for you!"

"Let's get to work!" panted Tom Merry. "They may be in any minute, and then we shall get chucked out!"

"That's so; we can't fight the whole House! Fortunately, it doesn't take long to wreck a study!" chuckled Lowther.

It did not take the Terrible Three long!

They set to work in a really scientific manner. They upset everything that could be upset. They overturned everything that could be overturned. They scattered ink and cinders to right and left. They put the provisions from the cupboard into the coal-locker, and the coal from the locker into the cupboard. A few minutes made a wonderful difference in Figgins & Co.'s study!

"By Jupiter!" exclaimed Tom Merry, looking round with an air of satisfaction. "I fancy Figgins & Co. will have as big a job to get this cleaned up as we shall have over in our quarters."

"ADDING" INSULT TO INJURY!



"Ha, ha, ha! I think they will. Hallo, they're here!"

There was a shout of fury at the door. Figgins & Co. had come in, and they were staring at the School House trio and the wreck they had made as if they could hardly believe the evidence of their own eyesight.

"You—you—you—" gasped Figgins. "Oh, my hat! Go for 'em! Break 'em up into little bits! Sock it to 'em!"

Figgins & Co. didn't stop to ask questions. They rushed to the attack, and the Terrible Three met them with equal spirit. A wild and whirling fight raged in the wrecked study.

Trampling over the scattered articles and amid the overturned furniture, the combatants fought fiercely, making a terrific din, which they were far too excited to notice.

Figgins & Co. were four to three, but the three were the pick of the School House, so the fight was not so very unequal, and the chums of the Shell were simply furious.

There was a shout in the passage, which the juniors did not even hear, and then a heavy footstep, which also passed unheeded. Then Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, looked angrily into the study.

"Stop that row at once, you young demons!"

Figgins extracted himself from the grip of Monty Lowther. Lowther staggered back, gasping for breath.

"Were we making a row, Monteith?" gasped Figgins.

Monteith smiled in spite of himself.

"I should say you were, you young hooligans!" he exclaimed. "What do you mean by it? What are those School House youngsters doing here?"

"Blessed if I know! We found 'em—"

"We came to wreck the study, Monteith," said Tom Merry calmly. He glanced round at the disordered room.

"And I think we've done it!" he said triumphantly.

The New House prefect laughed.

"Yes, I think you have, too!" he remarked.

"Let me get at him!" howled Figgins. "I'll teach him to wreck this study!"

"Stand back, Figgins!"

"I tell you, Monteith—"

"It's tit for tat, Figgy!" grinned Tom Merry. "Surely you didn't expect us to take it lying down, did you?"

"Take what lying down, ass?"

"What you did to our study."

Figgins gave him a glare of astonishment.

"What have we done to your study?"

"Wrecked it, and left your cap there to tell the tale. You should really have been more careful, Figgy, if you didn't want a Roland for your Oliver!"

"My cap!" howled Figgins. "I've lost my cap! Frank Monk snatched it off my head in the quadrangle and ran off with it, and got into the School House before I could collar him!"

Tom Merry gave a jump.

"Do you mean to say that you haven't been to our study, Figgy?"

"Of course I haven't!"

"And you didn't wreck it?" gasped Manners.

"Ass! How could I wreck it without going there?"

"He couldn't," said Monty Lowther. "But is that honest Injun, Figgins? Haven't you or the Co. been over to our quarters since morning school?"

"No, I tell you!"

"Then," said Tom Merry in bewilderment—"then we—we've made a mistake! We found our quarters wrecked, and your cap among the ruins, and, naturally, we jumped to the conclusion that it was a New House raid!"

"And we came over for vengeance!" said Lowther.

"And we've had it!" added Manners.

"You utter asses, you ought to have guessed! Do you think I should leave my cap there if I had really done it?" hooted Figgins. "It was the Grammarians, of course!"

"And they shoved the cap there to make you go for us!" said Kerr.

"And you fell into the trap like a lot of silly geese!" Fatty Wynn remarked.

Monteith laughed and walked away. The row was over in the study, and the prefect's interference was not required. But seven juniors were waxing wild with wrath. The Terrible Three and the New House quartet had suffered equally from the little game played by the Grammarians, and they wanted vengeance—and wanted it badly.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "We've been taken in all along the line! Let's go and give the Grammarians a warning!"

"Good wheeze!" exclaimed Figgins & Co., with one voice.

"Come on, then!"

And School House and New House lads, forgetful of their late encounter, rushed off at once to visit the quarters of the common enemy. They entered the School House and dashed along the passage which led to the Grammarians'

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room. They found the door of Class-room No. 10 shut, and when they tried it it proved to be locked.

Tom Merry hammered on the panels,

"Open this door!"

There was no reply from within.

"Open this door!" roared Figgins. "We've come to scalp you! We're going to make you sit up! Open the door!"

Still no reply. Whether the Grammarians were within the room or not it was impossible to tell. If they were there they kept very quiet. Tom Merry hammered at the door till an angry prefect came tearing along the passage, cane in hand, and then the juniors scattered.

In the quadrangle they gathered again, still wrathful and very disappointed. Dinner was nearly ready in the big hall, and the boys were trooping in. Among them went a party of Grammarians, keeping together, and among the Grammarians the chums saw Monk, Lane, and Carboy. They had not been in No. 10 at all. Monk caught the furious looks turned upon him, and kissed his hand to the juniors as he walked into the dining-hall.



There was a forward charge of the Grammarians, but it continued a continuous stream of

"My hat!" said Figgins. "He can tell from our looks that we've been slogging one another, and he's enjoying it!"

"All the fault of you kids!" growled Lowther. "The Grammarians are getting the best of it all the time, and it's all your fault."

"How do you make that out, ass?"

"Why, we ought all to come into line and make common cause against the enemy, and you New House kids insist upon sticking out of the combine!"

"We're ready to form a Co., with ourselves at the head of it!"

"Not good enough!"

"It's you School House fellows who are obstinate asses."

"Oh, come in and feed!" said Tom Merry. "Good-bye,

Figgins. When you want to join the combine, in a properly subordinate position, you can let me know."

"Rats!" said Figgins. And they separated.

CHAPTER 10.

Trouble in the Class-room!

"I SAY, Tom Merry!"

Skimpole leaned over his desk and whispered to the hero of the Shell. Tom Merry did not look round, but he made a movement of his shoulders as a hint to Skimpole to shut up—a hint the amateur Determinist of St. Jim's was far from taking.

Tom Merry had worries on his mind. In the first place, the success of the Grammarians since their arrival at St. Jim's had been complete, and it was a blow to the prestige of the old school. To be defeated on their own territory by a small party of invaders was too bad. The Grammarians were not disposed to take their success modestly, either, or to hide their light under a bushel.



changed to a backward one as Tom Merry played the nose upon them!

They grinned at the discomfited Saints, bragged very audibly of what they intended to do, and generally made themselves obnoxious.

That was Tom Merry's chief worry—the success of the Grammarians and the apparent hopelessness of forming a "combine" among the Saints to oppose them. But he had others. His nose was swollen and red, and hurt him considerably—a result of the fight in Figgins' study. His left ear was bruised and burning. One of his eyes was threatening to go purple in hue. Then the Shell was being taken in German by Herr Schneider, and, with so many troubles upon his mind, Tom Merry was not in a humour for cramming Herr Schneider's beautiful Deutsch.

It was an unlucky moment for Skimpole to tackle him, for it was never safe to talk in class when Herr Schneider

was the master present. But Skimpole was not to be deterred by considerations of that kind.

"I say, Tom Merry!"

"Shut up, you ass!" murmured Tom Merry, without turning his head.

"I beg your pardon, Merry—I did not quite hear what you said."

"Shut up!"

"I cannot very well do so, as I have a most important matter to speak to you about. I tried to do so before, and you pushed me over in the rudest possible manner."

Tom Merry chuckled.

"I wish old Schneider weren't here," he murmured. "I'd push you over again, and jump on you!"

"I conjectured something of the sort, Merry, and that is partly the reason why I have chosen this moment for speaking to you."

"You ass! Schneider will spot us talking, and we shall be detained, or get an impot, and I've got to write up the 'Weekly' leading article to-day."

"Herr Schneider is attending to Gibbons at the present moment, and is not looking this way. I say, Merry, it's a most important matter."

"Oh, go on, then, and get it over!"

"The Grammarians are here now—"

"Don't I know it?"

"But has it struck you what a splendid opportunity we have now, if we take it, while the Grammarians are here, of—"

"Of what?"

"Of explaining to the Grammarians the advantages of Determinism?" said Skimpole eagerly.

Tom Merry could not help giving a chuckle, which made the alert German master turn his head at once.

"I tink I hear someting," he said. "Ach! Vich poy vas it tat laff mit hisself pefore?"

Silence!

"Vich poy," went on Herr Schneider with emphasis—"vich poy laff mit hisself pefore? I tink I bunish tat poy after. Answer me!"

No one spoke. The German master's fat, red face grew redder.

"I tink I have said sometime," he remarked, "tat I vill have order in te class. I vill not have you to talk and to laff while te lessons progresses itself pefore. I demand te poy who laff!"

But the boy who had "laffed" did not speak up.

"Mein Gott! Vill you answer me after? I order te poy who laff to come out and receive te caning!" shouted Herr Schneider.

But apparently even that inducement was not tempting enough, for the boy who had "laffed" did not come forward.

"Fery well," said Herr Schneider. "I vill keep order in dis class somehow. I vill not have te talk and te laff while te lesson progresses mit hisself pefore. Te whole class vill be detained half an hour—"

Tom Merry rose in his place.

"If you please, sir, it was I."

The German master fixed his eyes upon the handsome, cheery face of the hero of the Shell. He smiled grimly.

"So it vas you, Merry! You laff when you hear your master pronounce te peautiful Sherman, hein?"

"Oh, no, sir! I wasn't laughing at you, sir. I never laugh at you in class, sir."

Tom Merry put the slightest emphasis on the words "in class," which was not lost upon the Shell, and a suppressed giggle followed his speech. Herr Schneider was not slow to detect the cause of it, and he turned redder.

"Ach! I tink tat you vas mean to be impertinent after, ain't it?"

"Impertinent, sir! To you, sir! Oh, sir!"

The class giggled again.

Herr Schneider wagged a warning forefinger at Tom Merry.

"Te class vill not be detained, but you vill write out vun hundred lines from Schiller, Merry, and bring tem to me pefore you go mit yourself to ped to-night pefore. You vill not forget tat, ain't it?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Te lesson vill proceed," said Herr Schneider. "I do not tink you vill laff again, Merry, pefore."

CHAPTER 11.

No Backers!

"COMING out to practice, Merry?"

Blake asked the question as he met the Shell coming out after school. Tom Merry shook his head dolefully.

"Can't!"

"Why can't you? What's the matter?"

"I've got one hundred lines of Schiller to write out."  
 "My hat! Old Schneider has been going it, hasn't he?"  
 "It was all Skimpole's fault. He would talk in class. He's got an idea of converting Frank Monk and the Grammar School cads to Determinism."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "My only hat! What a wheeze!"  
 "So I've got to write out one hundred lines from Schiller. I shall have to cut everything else. Schneider was in deadly earnest, and the lines have to be shown up before bed. I'm going to begin them now."

"Sorry! Somebody ought to suffocate Skimpole!"  
 Tom Merry laughed ruefully and walked away. Blake strolled towards Study No. 6, and a few minutes later he felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned, to see Skimpole.

"I say, Blake, I want to speak to you."

Blake looked suspicious.

"About Determinism?" he asked.

"Well, yes."

"Then I'm off!"

And Blake darted off. Skimpole looked after him more in sorrow than in anger. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came along and paused to brush a speck of dust from his immaculate trousers.

Skimpole seized the opportunity.

"D'Arcy, wait a moment!"

"Yaas, deah boy, what is it?" drawled the swell of the School House.

"I know you have a tender heart—"

"Yaas, wathah! If you want to bowwow some tin, deah boy, you've come just at the right time, as I've just changed a firah I had fwom my govornah this mornin'."

"You're a decent fellow, D'Arcy."

"Yaas. How much?"

"I don't want money—"

"Bai Jove! Don't you? What do you want, then?"

"Only a few words."

"I'll give you them with pleasuah."

"I mean I want to speak a few words," said Skimpole. "While the Grammarians are here at St. Jim's, don't you think it a ripping opportunity to—"

"To dust up the ground with them? Yaas, wathah, if we can form a combine, and stop wovin' among ourselves for a bit. They have insulted me feashfully by hintin' that I give only thwee-and-nine for my beastlay hats, you know."

"I don't mean that. What I mean is—"

"Bai Jove! I weally must be goin'!"

"Stop a minute, D'Arcy!"

"Quite impos, deah boy; important engagement."

And the swell of the School House hastened away. Skimpole looked disappointed, but just then he spied Digby and Herries coming along arm-in-arm, and he hastened to plant himself in their way. They had to stop.

"I want to speak to you chaps!"

"Please don't!" said Herries.

"It's a rather important matter."

"Oh, go on and get it over!" said Digby, taking out his watch. "We'll give you a minute. Go on, and I'll time you."

"The Grammarians are here at St. Jim's—"

"Yes, I believe I've noticed something of the sort!"

"While they're here there's a grand opportunity to convert them to Determinism. You see—"

"What is he talking about?" asked Herries.

"Blessed if I know!" said Digby. "What are you talking about, Skimmy?"

"I'm talking about Determinism."

"What's that?"

"Listen to me, you fellows!"

"Can't be did! I gave you a full minute, and timed you. Time's up! Come on, Herries! As a matter of fact, you had a second over time, Skimpole."

"Just listen to me for a minute!"

"You've had your minute; come on, Herries!"

And Digby gently, but firmly, pushed Skimpole out of the way, and the chums walked on.

The freak of the Shell scratched his tufts of light-coloured hair in a thoughtful way. A new idea had come into his mind.

"I think I had better go over to the New House," he murmured. "A prophet is never properly honoured in his own country. Figgins is a sensible fellow, and I dare say I shall be able to persuade him."

And Skimpole went forth in search of Figgins, but his mission was not successful.

## CHAPTER 12.

### Skimpole Takes Precautions!

TOM MERRY was looking very thoughtful as he lifted the steaming kettle from the fire in his study in the School House and poured a quantity of water into the teapot to warm it—an indispensable preparation for making tea. Lowther was laying the table, and Manners opening a tin of sardines.

Manners was sitting in the easy-chair near the fender, the tin between his knees, wielding the tin-opener with great energy. Tom Merry put the kettle on the fire again, and slowly and reflectively swished the hot water round the teapot.

"What's the worry?" asked Monty Lowther, looking across at him. "Thinking of that beastly German imposition?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I've got an idea about that," said Lowther. "Suppose we capture Skimpole and stand over him with a cricket stump while he writes out the impot? That would be very fair, and it would be a lesson to him!"

Tom laughed.

"Good idea; only Schneider would know it wasn't my hand! Never mind the impot; I wasn't thinking about that!"

"What are you wrinkling your manly brow about, then?"  
 "I was thinking of a wheeze for bringing the Grammarians to their senses," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "I think I've hit on a scheme."

"Good! It's about time!"

"Oh, we should have knocked them into a cocked hat already, Monty, if we had combined against them as we ought to have done!"

"Only we haven't," said Monty Lowther; "and the combine looks as far off as ever, to my mind. We shall have to go it alone."

"That won't do. This is rather a big scheme, and we shall have to be all in it. I think Figgins and Blake, and the rest will come into line when they know I've got a plan in my head."

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"If you tell 'em the plan they'll pinch it!"  
 "I shan't tell 'em till they agree to come into the combine and follow our lead," said Tom Merry sagaciously—"not much!"

"Ow!" roared Manners. "Ow! Oh! Stop it!"  
 Tom Merry stared at him.  
 "What's the matter, Manners?"  
 Manners had jumped up suddenly, yelling, and the half-open sardine-tin went with a crash to the floor.

"You ass; you're pouring that hot water 'all over my legs!" roared Manners, hopping on one foot and then on the other.

Tom Merry glanced at the teapot in his hand. He had absent-mindedly turned the spout towards Manners, and the hot water had poured out over his unfortunate chum's trousers.

"By Jove! I'm sorry, Manners! I didn't notice—I was thinking—"

"Ow! You'd better give me a wide berth when you start thinking again!" growled Manners, mopping his trousers with his handkerchief. "There's the sardines spilt now, and a nice muck the hearthrug is in!"

"Can't be helped! I've got a ripping wheeze!"  
 "Oh, blow your ripping wheezes!" said Manners crossly, as he picked up the tin of sardines. "Make the tea and never mind the wheeze!"

"Keep your wool on, old chap!" said Tom Merry good-temperedly. "I tell you it's a wheeze that will make the Grammar School cads sing small all the time they're at St. Jim's, and they'll never be able to crow again if it comes off all right!"

"Well, what is it?" asked Lowther.  
 "My idea is to catch them when they're all in the room—Class-room No. 10, you know—"

"That's easy enough, as they'll be doing their prep there every evening after tea," said Lowther, with a nod.

"Exactly! Then we can fasten the door on the outside—"

"Well, that's a stale old wheeze, and no mistake!"  
 "Ass; that's not all!"

"What more is there?" asked Lowther, as he proceeded to cut bread-and-butter. "I expect you're raking up some old gag, but we'll give you a hearing; go on!"

"You know the windows of Class-room No. 10 look out on the garden?"

"Yes, with the elms all round and the chapel rails at the bottom," said Lowther; "a nice, solitary spot for settling any little affairs of fisticuffs! But you're not thinking of challenging Monk to have the gloves on, are you?"

"No, ass!"  
 "Well, why can't you explain what you're thinking of, then?"

"I'm trying to!" howled Tom Merry; "but you keep on interrupting me! As you say, the garden under the windows of No. 10 is a solitary spot, and it's so shut in by the elms that it can't be observed from the other windows; not very much, at any rate. Now, it would be easy to smuggle Taggles' long ladder round there—"

Lowther looked interested at last.

"Ah, you're thinking of attacking the Grammar School cads through the windows?" he asked. "But they'd push us out, you know."

"I'm not—Hallo, what do you want, Gore?"  
 Gore had just opened the door of the study. He was grinning.

The chums of the Shell looked at him inquiringly.

"It's Skimpole!" said Gore. "He's on the warpath again! My word!"

"What's the game now?"  
 "He's going to convert the Grammarians to Determinism," grinned Gore. "He says he can't get anybody to back him up, so he's going to Class-room No. 10 to preach to them alone, while they're doing their prep!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "They'll snatch him baldheaded," said Lowther, "the giddy ass! I say, Tom, we oughtn't to let him go!"

"Oh, you couldn't stop him," said Gore; "he's made up his mind! He's as obstinate as a mule! But he's getting ready for business; it's too funny for anything! Do come and look at him! I shall burst something, I think!"

And Gore went off with a scream of laughter.

"What on earth is he doing, then?" asked Tom Merry, in wonder.

"Getting ready for the fray!" gasped Gore. "Come and look! A thing like this has to be seen to be appreciated."

The Terrible Three glanced at the tea on the table regretfully, and then followed Gore. They wanted their tea, but they were concerned for Skimpole.

Skimpole had curious ideas, some of them sensible and some the reverse, but all a little unusual. But he was such a harmless, good-natured, obliging fellow that no one could help liking him. Even Gore, the bully of the Shell, who

shared his study with him, could not help having a half-scornful liking for Skimpole.

"The confounded ass!" muttered Tom Merry. "The Grammarians will eat him if he goes into their quarters and starts preaching to them."

"Oh, we'll stop him!" said Lowther.

"Bet you won't!" grinned Gore. "Wild horses wouldn't stop him, I think. Here you are! No charge for admission, and the funniest freak on earth."

"You forget yourself, Gore," said Monty Lowther.

"Oh, none of your stale old chestnuts for me!" said Gore. "Keep them for the 'Weekly.' Now, look at that animal!"

The chums of the Shell stared curiously into the study, and they burst into a simultaneous, irresistible roar of laughter.

Skimpole was certainly preparing for the fray. He seemed to have borrowed the idea of arming himself for the fray from some crusader of old. His face and head were covered and fully protected by an inverted waste-paper basket, and his jacket was buttoned tightly over some bulging stuffing, probably pillows, one at his back and one on his chest. His trousers were similarly stuffed, and his legs were protected by an enormous pair of cricket pads.

He was surveying himself with great satisfaction, when the laughter at the door made him look up, and he saw the Terrible Three in convulsions.

Skimpole's face remained quite grave. He was taking what seemed to him to be fully justifiable precautions, and he could see nothing to laugh at.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry, with tears in his eyes.

"What's all that for, Skimmy?"

"I'm going to make a speech to the Grammarians in their own quarters," said Skimpole. "Determinism—"

"Oh, don't let's have that all over again!" said Monty Lowther. "I advise you to leave the Grammarians alone."

"I have taken precautions in case the Grammarians should prove at all rough," said Skimpole; "but I hope that by appealing to their better nature I may be able to soften them, and induce them to give me a hearing."

"Well, if you hope that, you're the most sanguine idiot I've come across for a long time," said Gore. "I'll come along to see you slaughtered. When are you going?"

"I'm going now," said Skimpole, making for the door.

"I really hope that all the precautions I have taken will prove superfluous; but it is always well to be prepared for emergencies. If you fellows like to come along, and back me up—"

"Thank you," said Lowther, "we've got a pressing engagement."

"Very well. Later on I hope to convert you, but at present the benighted state of the Grammarians claims all my attention."

And Skimpole walked away.

A strange figure he made as he went.

Gore, giggling, followed him, eager to see the fun.

Lowther passed his arm through Tom Merry's and dragged him away.

"Come on, Tommy; the tea will be cold."  
 Tom Merry hesitated.

"Come on, I tell you! What are you thinking about?"

"I say, we can't let that silly ass go into it alone," said Tom Merry. "Let's go along and see fair play."

Monty Lowther gave an expressive grunt.

"That's just like you, Tom; and tea will get cold."  
 "Blow the tea!"

"That will only make it colder," said Lowther, who never lost the opportunity of making an irritating play upon words. "You blow your hands to make them warm, but with tea it's a different matter. You—"

"Oh, cheese it! Come with me."

"I suppose we must give him his head," said Lowther, as Tom Merry followed in the track of the freak of the Shell.

"Come along, Manners!"  
 "It means a row instead of a feed, I suppose; but I dare say we shall see some fun."

And the chums of the Shell followed their leader.

CHAPTER 13.

Skimpole Does Not Get a Hearing :

THERE was an air of busy work about Class-room No. 10, where the Grammarians were doing their preparation for the morrow. The invaders of St. Jim's had to do their "prep," in the room in company, and they had had their tea in Hall, as it had been impossible to assign them studies in either the School House or the New House. But this arrangement was quite agreeable to the Grammarians. In the midst of the enemy's

(Continued on page 19.)

## SEE WHAT'S IN—



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

**H**ALLO, chums! How do you like this week's long complete St. Jim's story? Great, isn't it? Next Wednesday's school yarn is even better. Make a note of this title:

**"MELLISH, THE MISCHIEF-MAKER!"**

and prepare for something extra-special. Martin Clifford shows himself to be in tip-top form. Fun, thrills, and adventure—these three "ingredients" are to be found in full measure. Look out, too, for more chapters of David Goodwin's stirring story of the sea:

**"CHUMS OF THE FIGHTING FLEET,"**

and another hearty laugh with Potts, the Office Boy. When you've enjoyed these items on the programme, you can wind up with another collection of news pars in this special Editorial page. Chin, chin, chums!

**THE CHARGE OF THE SWORDFISH!**

Wallop! No one aboard the forty-foot vessel, named the Little Jim, which was ploughing its peaceful way towards Cape Rooney, New Zealand, expected any trouble—until their vessel shivered from stem to stern, just as if a giant's hand had smitten it. Round about was no sign of any dangerous floating wreckage which the ship could have struck; no sign of any other ship, either. That "wallop" was a deep mystery until one of the crew, going below, found eight inches of "something" protruding through the double thickness of planking. The "something" turned out to be the "sword" of a swordfish which must have charged headlong at the boat in a fit of frenzy, pierced the planking, and escaped only because its "sword" had broken off!

**CHASED BY A TORNADO!**

"Step on the gas!" The motorist and his companion were travelling at a reckless speed; the car rocked from side to side and ate up the miles at a terrific rate. But it wasn't a joy-ride, not by a long chalk. Behind the fleeing car came the "twister," the name Alabama folk give to a tornado. And that tornado, looking like a long, continuous line of smoke, was ravaging the countryside and killing all who stood in its path. The motorist and his companion quoted above drove to safety just in time. But it was one of the narrowest shaves they had ever had and the most anxious ten miles race for which they had ever entered!

**BRADMAN'S EASTER EGG!**

King Cricket hasn't come to reign in England yet, for football is still in season, *The GEM LIBRARY*.—No. 1,262.

but "down under" the Australians have been wielding the willow for some months past. All eyes have been focused on young Don Bradman, the super-batsman who gave the British bowlers such a gruelling time in the last series of Tests. Yet bowlers can take courage—Don Bradman can be bowled, if the ball is "wicked" enough. More than that, he can be bowled for a duck! Oh, yes! On March 22nd, to be precise, Don walked in and out with only a large, round nought standing to his credit in the memorable match between South Australia and New South Wales. That "duck" makes the fourth Bradman has "scored" in his first class cricket career. Incidentally, in the match mentioned above Wall was the bowler, and as it was the third ball he had pitched down to Bradman, this was a case of third time being lucky.

**THE EAGLES WON!**

*She was a lady pilot and in one of her flights over the Rocky Mountains she suddenly saw two eagles attacking a flock of sheep. Out of consideration for the terrified sheep, the lady pilot dipped the nose of the plane and roared down on the eagles in an endeavour to scare them away. But these eagles were not easily scared. They resented the intrusion of the "large bird," thinking, doubtless, that it was out to snaffle the grub they themselves wanted, so they promptly gave battle to the aeroplane and dived, screaming, to the attack. One of the eagles narrowly escaped fouling the propeller; the other "ran" into the lady pilot, who, for a few moments, lost control of the plane. Down it roared in a nose-dive, through several hundred feet of space before the controls answered to her touch again. Overhead circled the triumphant eagles—screaming their defiance. And so dangerously reckless had been their initial attack on the plane that the lady pilot wisely decided to leave them the victors of that encounter, for another attack, although it would possibly have meant the destruction of the eagles, would more than likely have resulted in the destruction of the plane as well.*

**A SCHOOLBOY'S LUCK AND LOCK!**

X, Y, Z were three very experienced cracksmen, but—like many more of their colleagues—they had gone too far and were now "doing time" behind the walls of a grim prison. One day X, Y, Z were summoned into the governor's presence and asked to try their skill at picking a lock. X, Y, Z smiled. Pick a lock—why they had picked hundreds in their time! This job was simplicity itself! They were doomed to disappointment, however. The

lock refused to be picked. All their skill and experience was for naught. They looked somewhat crestfallen when they had to admit their failure, and matters were not improved when they learned that the burglar-proof lock was the invention of a thirteen year old schoolboy! Still, there was consolation in the fact that expert locksmiths—outside the grim walls of the prison—had failed, too. The school-boy's lock defied them all!

**HEARD THIS ONE?**

Old Gent (on the morning of a mid-week replayed Cup-tie): "Ah! Mr. Greatheart, I believe? My nephew Albert works for you."

"Quite right. He went to your funeral a couple of hours ago!"

**SAFETY FIRST!**

*Seen the latest stunt in the safety first line for pedestrians, hikers, and others that use dark, country roads at night? No! Well, at first sight you'll think someone has been playing a practical joke. The "stunt" takes the form of small, circular patches of leather, enamelled in white, which are stitched on to the backs of shoes. The great idea is that a motorist's headlights will pick out these moving dots of white at a distance of forty-five feet, on the darkest of nights, long before a view is granted of the pedestrian wearing the safety first shoes. It is a new fashion, but at the moment of writing this par it hasn't been exactly a huge success.*

**BRAVO!**

From England to Cape Town in four days seventeen hours and nineteen minutes is now the new record for aerial travel between these two countries; and to Mr. J. A. Mollison, a twenty-six year old Scotsman, goes the credit of establishing it. This plucky airman flew the long, tedious journey of 6,255 miles practically without sleep, and one section of his route lay across a stretch of desert 2,000 miles in extent. He had to come down in this desert for a "breather," as he could hardly see his instrument board. But after a brief rest he continued his flight, determined to beat the record set up by Miss Peggy Salaman a short time ago. He succeeded—although he made a forced landing on the beach close to his goal, which was due, indirectly, to the blinding glare of the lights at the Cape Town aerodrome—by fifteen hours eighteen minutes. He was taken out of his wrecked machine uninjured, weary and dazed, but triumphant. Bravo!

**A CHALLENGE FROM FRANCE!**

When Sir Malcolm Campbell recently added another few miles per hour to the world's land speed record the majority of people applauded and told themselves that 253.968 miles per hour was a record that would remain for a very long time. Yet a certain Frenchman merely smiled to himself. In his workshop at Chatou he is completing a super car which, he maintains, will attain a speed of 375 miles an hour all out! In appearance this super car is a mixture of steam engine and rocket. Its large rudder is one of the first things that "hit" the eye. Three 800 horse-power engines supply the power for this racer, and a small 60 horse-power engine does the work of starting the three "big 'uns." The weight of the car, complete, is something like three tons! Experts reckon that this car is beyond the control of any human being. But its inventor thinks differently. He is determined to bag the world's land speed record for France, and reckons to make his attempt at Daytona some time in May.

**YOUR EDITOR**

## INVADERS OF ST. JIM'S!

(Continued from page 17.)

country, as it were, they felt safer together, and they made Class-room No. 10 a stronghold to which they could always retreat for security.

So far, excepting for the row at the house-warming, they had not been disturbed in their own quarters.

Frank Monk lifted his head from his desk with a sigh of relief, and threw down his pen. He pitched his books on either side of him, and jumped up.

"Hallo, you're lively!" said Carboy.

"Come, aren't you finished yet?" said Monk. "Get a move on you. I've got something to tell you fellows."

"Go ahead!" said Lane, laying down his pen.

"Hammond was telling me that he heard Figgins and Blake talking over a little scheme they've got in mind for taking us down a peg."

Lane and Carboy chuckled.

"What's the scheme? It's time they had a look in," Carboy remarked. "All the same, I fancy they won't get it."

"That's so. It can't be denied, I think, that we've kept our end up nobly since we've been in this school," said Frank thoughtfully.

"More than kept it up. St. Jim's has been beaten all along the line."

"That's so," said Lane. "Every wheeze they've tried has been beaten, and we've never tackled them without licking them."

"Yes, I think we've got reason to be rather pleased with ourselves," assented Frank Monk. "We needn't be afraid of anything that Figgins and Blake can do; and as for Tom Merry, either he's lying low, or he's done in. We're the masters of the situation, and we can remain so if we keep things moving. St. Jim's are not going to be allowed a look in. But to come to business. Hammond says Figgins and Blake have made it pax, and they're going to have a try at rushing us in our own room."

"Ha, ha, ha! Anything more?"

"No, that's all Hammond knows; but it's enough to put us on our guard," grinned Monk.

"If they try that little game they'll find us ready, that's all. If we can get Blake and Figgins in here, and keep the rest out, we can make a good jape of it. You see—Hallo! What on earth's that?"

Monk broke off suddenly at the sight of a weird figure that had opened the door of Class-room No. 10, without the preliminary of knocking, and entered the room.

It was Skimpole, in his extraordinary array. The Grammarians stared at him, and broke into a yell of laughter. Skimpole appeared to be quite unmoved by it. He walked gravely into the room, unheeding the merriment of the Grammar School youths.

"What is it?" gasped Lane.

"The wild man from Borneo," Monk suggested. "What's that he's got on his napper?"

"A waste-paper basket. And shinguards!"

"His jacket looks as if it's stuffed with pillows."

"So it is! I suppose he knows what he's got to expect, coming into our study like this. Hallo, he's talking!"

While the Grammarians seemed too amazed to interfere with him, Skimpole mounted a chair in the centre of the room, and waved his hand to the staring juniors.

"Gentlemen—"

"My hat! He's going to make a speech!"

"Kick him out!"

"Roll him over!"

"Gentlemen—"

"Boo! Shut up! Kick him out!"

"Hold on," exclaimed Frank Monk, coming forward, "let's hear what he's got to say. Now, then, ass, what's your little game, and how did you get out of the Zoo?"

"Gentlemen, I have a few words to say to you on an important subject."

There was a howl from the Grammarians; but Frank Monk waved the excited youths back.

"Let's hear what he's got to say. Plenty of time to jump on him."

"Something in that," agreed Carboy. "Keep quiet! I suppose the kid's off his silly rocker! Go on, ass!"

"When I call you gentlemen I do not mean that I regard you properly as such. I regard it as polite to apply the word gentleman to everyone, however rough, uncouth, or brutal he may be. That is why I call you—"

"Why, you cheeky rötter!"

"Please do not interrupt me. These interruptions are a proof of rough, heckling disposition. However, I cannot blame you for this, knowing that it is not due to any fault inherent in your natures, but to the base and sordid surroundings of your childhood."

"Chuck him out!"

The Grammarians made a rush, and this time Frank Monk did not stop them.

Skimpole struggled desperately in the midst of the surging crowd. His defensive armour saved him from many hard knocks as he was dragged off the chair and bumped along the floor.

"Out with him!"

"Kick him out!"

"Please do not be so rough. I must explain to you—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Bump him along!"

Skimpole was bumped along the floor, vainly struggling, and still trying to make himself heard. The laughter of the Grammarians drowned his voice.

"Frog's-march him along the passage!" said Frank Monk. "and leave him in the School House for his keepers to find."

"Good!"

Skimpole was rushed out into the passage. And the frog's-march he certainly would have had but for the fact that three sturdy figures came upon the scene with a rush, and the Grammarians, taken by surprise, dropped their prisoner and crowded back under the sudden attack.

The Terrible Three wasted no time in words. They hit out right and left, and the Grammarians reeled away, and before they could recover from their surprise Tom Merry, Lowther, and Manners had picked up Skimpole and were rushing him off to the School House at top speed.

They were safe in their own quarters before the Grammarians could pursue. They bumped Skimpole down upon the floor, and he lay there gasping like a newly landed fish.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "Nice-looking ass you are, aren't you? Have you had enough speechifying for a bit, Skimmy?"

"Certainly not!" gasped Skimpole. "I am rather out of breath now, but I shall return to the attack later. Thank you very much for coming to my rescue. How fortunate it was that I put on these things. I should have been severely hurt otherwise. As it is, I am quite breathless and very much knocked about."

Leaving Skimpole to get back his wind, Tom Merry & Co. made tracks for their study.

### CHAPTER 14.

#### Caught in the Trap!

**S**CRATCH—scratch—scratch went Tom Merry's busy pen.

He was alone in the study, working his way through his German imposition—a task which seemed to lengthen out before him as he advanced—as impositions have a way of doing. His pen travelled over the paper with a ceaseless scratching, and he did not hear a tap at the door, nor see a face that looked in upon him, till a stamp on the floor attracted his attention and also had the effect of making him jump and scatter a variety of blots over his paper.

"Hallo, Blake!" he said. "You startled me. What the dickens do you mean by popping in like this, like a demon in a pantomime?"

Blake grinned.

"What the dickens do you mean by swotting away like this when I want to speak to you?" he demanded.

"I'm not swotting; this is a beastly Schneider impot!"

"Oh, well, you can leave it now, if you like."

"Thanks! But it's got to be shown up this evening."

"Never mind that! You'll only get an extra fifty—"

"I don't want an extra fifty," said Tom Merry. "I'm not greedy, but one hundred lines from Schiller are as much as I really want at any time."

"But there's something on," said Blake, coming farther into the study and lowering his voice mysteriously. "We were not going to let you into it at first as you Shell bounders are so awfully cocky; but, upon the whole, we are going to give you a chance."

"That's really kind of you, Blake, and I appreciate it sincerely. But I don't think I'll take advantage of your generosity—I've got to get my impot finished."

"Shut up a tick and listen to me. It's up against the Grammarians."

"Well, go ahead," said Tom Merry resignedly. "I'll listen as long as it takes me to scratch out these blots, anyway."

"We're going to rush them in their own quarters and

lick them on their own ground, and muck up Class-room No. 10 generally," said Blake, with a grin. "Figgins & Co. have come into the plan with us."

"And who's leader?"

"We've agreed there's to be no leader."

"If you want me to lead you—"

"We don't," said Blake promptly. "But we're willing to let you in on equal terms—you and Lowther and Manners. After all, there's no special need for a leader in a case like this. We've simply got to take the Grammarians by surprise, and rush them, and snatch them bald-headed."

"Suppose you find them on their guard?"

"I don't see how they can be on their guard when we've kept our plans a dead secret. But, anyway, we shall be man to man, and I suppose we can give as good as we get."

"Oh, certainly! Is that all?"

"Yes, that's all," said Blake, rather aggressively.

"Good! Buzz off, and let me finish my impot."

"Aren't you going to join?" shouted Blake.

"Not unless you are looking for a leader."

"Look here, Tom Merry, you're altogether too bumptious!"

"Not at all. But there must be some leader or things will go wrong; and as the person naturally fitted for the post, of course, I—"

"Oh, rot! You can go and eat coke!"

"Thanks! I've had my tea. But I tell you what, Blake—I've got an absolutely ripping wheeze for putting the Grammarians in their place!"

"What is it?"

"That's my secret," said Tom Merry coolly. "You'll fail, I expect, in this little idea of yours—you're not up to their weight. Then, if you like to come to me—"

"No fear!"

"If you and Figgins like to follow my lead I'll show you how to get the upper hand of the invaders. Till then, I'm mum!"

"You can keep mum as long as you like!" said Blake wrathfully; and he marched out and slammed the door.

Tom Merry laughed, and went on with his imposition.

The chums of Study No. 6 met Blake in the lower passage. They met him with inquiring looks in answer to which Blake shook his head.

"They won't come into it?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"I regard that as wathah wotten of them, you know."

"Tom Merry's got some wheeze up his sleeve," said Blake.

"He's waiting for us to be licked so that we shall be willing to follow his lead."

"Like his cheek!" said Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'll show him whether we shall fail or not," said Blake emphatically. "Hallo! Here's the New House Co.!"

Tom Merry's not in it, Figgy."

"We can do without him," said Figgins easily. "I've brought French and Pratt as well as Wynn, Kerr, and Marmy. How many of you are there?"

"Walsh and Gore are going to join. We shall be a dozen in all."

"Good! Now for the plan! We've got to take care that the Grammarians don't get their door shut."

"Right! If we're locked out, we may as well give up the wheeze."

"We agreed that there was to be no leader."

"Exactly!"

"But, under the circumstances, I suppose I had better—"

"No," said Blake, with emphasis. "Under the circumstances, I suppose you had better not."

Figgins grinned.

"Well, somebody must go in first and keep the Grammarians in talk, so that the rest can have a chance to rush in before the door can be slammed and locked."

"You and I can go in first together."

"Very well. You other fellows stand ready to rush in when I whistle."

"When I whistle, you mean, Figgy."

"Oh, rats! When we both whistle," said Figgins. "Is that understood? When you hear a whistle you rush in, and smite the Grammarian cads, hip and thigh!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"That's settled, then. Come along, Blake! We're all here now, and there's no need to waste time. We go in together, mind."

"That's right."

"You'd better leave the talking to me, or the Grammar School cads may get suspicious that there is something on."

"How curious! I was just thinking that you had better leave it to me for the very same reason."

"Bai Jove! You will nevah agree. Suppose you both take a back seat and leave it to me, deah boys! In that case you would have the great satisfaction of knowing that the mattah was in able hands, and likely to be dealt with in a more intelligent mannah than if you awanged it yourselves."

"Oh, shut up, Gussy!"

"Undah the circs, I must wefuse to shut up. I think—"

"Come along, kids," said Blake.

And the juniors marched off, leaving Arthur Augustus still talking.

"Is it settled who's to do the speechifying?" whispered Figgins, when they had almost reached the door of Class-room No. 10.

"Yes, I, of course."

"Not at all."

"Do it together," said Digby impatiently. "Figgins can take top voice, and Blake can sing seconds, and you can both be happy."

The two leaders chuckled; but there was no time for further argument, as they were now at the door of Class-room No. 10.

Blake opened the door, and he and Figgins entered the room, the rest of the juniors remaining carefully out of sight.

Blake expected to find the Grammarians peacefully occupied with their prep, and did not know that a scout had been watching, and had brought Frank Monk news of the intended invasion in good time, and that the approaching footsteps along the passage had been listened to just inside the door.

"I say, you fellows—" began Blake.

"I say, you fellows—" began Figgins.

Neither of them got any farther.

There was a rush of feet, and Blake and Figgins were swept away by a tide of Grammarian juniors, and then the door was slammed and locked in a twinkling.

For a moment Blake and his comrades hardly realised what had happened. They struggled desperately in the

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Manners and Lowther were following Tom Merry into the study and their feet caught in the rope. They followed Tom headlong to the ground, and the bookcase, to which the end of the rope was attached, went over with a crash!

grasp of the Grammarians, and yelled to their friends for aid, and the truth dawned upon the juniors in the passage.

"Bai Jove, it's a twap!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

Kerr hurled himself upon the door.

But the lock was strong, and the stout oak did not budge. The other juniors backed up the Scottish partner in the Co., and the door shook and groaned under crash after crash. But nothing short of a battering-ram could have opened it.

"Bai Jove, they've captured Figgins and Blake!" said D'Arcy. "Do you know, deah boys, I weally think that they must have been on to the little game, and were prepared for us all the beastlay time."

"That's pretty plain," grunted Kerr.

"Yaas, wathah, now that I point it out."

The Co. hammered at the door. They made plenty of noise, but no other result came from their efforts. They could hear the sound of conflict within the room, and the sounds made them wild. Their leaders were fighting against hopeless odds, and they could lend no aid.

"Bai Jove, it's too beastly bad, you know!"

The noise within died away. The two Saints had evidently been overcome, and were prisoners in the hands of the Grammarians.

Kerr hammered furiously at the door.

A voice came from within, in reply to the knocking—the voice of Frank Monk, accompanied by a gleeful chuckle.

"Hallo, out there! Do you want anything?"

"Yes!" howled Kerr. "We want to come in!"

"Sorry; no dogs admitted!"

The juniors gave a howl of rage, and battered the door again. From within came a howl of laughter from the victorious Grammarians.

"If you want to see Blake and Figgins again," called out Frank Monk, through the keyhole, "you had better go round to the garden. We don't want to keep your rubbish here, and we'll chuck it out of the window to you."

"You—you—"

"You'd better go round and pick it up."

"Bai Jove, you know, it's a long way to the ground, Fwank Monk, and you will pwobably bwreak their beastlay necks if you thwow them out of the window!"

"I can't bother over little things like that," replied the voice through the keyhole. "You can go and gather up the pieces."

"I wegard that wemark as bwutal. But how extwemely fortunate, deah boys, that it was not I who entahed that woom first," said D'Arcy. "I might have been in the hands of those wuff wottahs now—"

"I wish you were!" growled Kerr. "Come on, kids, let's get outside!"

It was evidently useless to attempt to pass the door. That remained hermetically sealed against all attacks. The juniors left the House, and in a few minutes were gathered in the garden under the windows of Class-room No. 10, looking up curiously.

## CHAPTER 15.

### A Study in Black and Red!

"GOT them!" grinned Frank Monk. He nodded pleasantly to Blake and Figgins, who were writhing in the grasp of the Grammarian juniors, and looking anything but pleasant.

"Got them—rather!" said Carboy. "They walked into the little trap like good little boys."

"It was so kind of them," simpered Lane. "They knew we should be disappointed if they didn't come, and so they came."

"And they didn't know we knew," smiled Frank. "And they didn't think we were ready for them, and heard them coming, and were quite on the qui vive. Oh, no!"

"What nice, innocent kids they are!"

"How simple and unsuspecting!"

Blake and Figgins writhed. The chaff of the Grammarians was hard to bear. It was true that they had walked into the trap unsuspectingly, but it was very galling to be reminded of it. They wriggled and glared at the Grammarians, and at each other.

"You see what's come of your confounded obstinacy, Figgins!" Blake growled.

"Mine!" exclaimed Figgins. "Yours, you mean! If you had only had common hoss-sense enough to follow the lead—"

"If you had only been sane enough to know that you were bound to make a muck of it if we gave you your head—"

"If you—"

"If you—"

"Listen to them!" said Monk. "This is rather amusing! Go on, Figgins; it's your move!"

Figgins shut his teeth hard.

"Haven't you any more to say, Blake?"

"No, hang you!" grunted Blake.

"Then we may as well get to business. Open the window, Lane, my boy—the middle one. Get out the rope, Carboy."

Monk's orders were quickly obeyed.

Blake and Figgins, resisting in vain, were tied together side by side, Blake's left arm to Figgins' right, and their other arms were bound down to their sides. Then they were drawn to the open window and forced out of it, sitting together upon the window-sill, held by the Grammarians from behind, so that they should not slip off.

The St. Jim's juniors were in the garden below by this time. There was a sheer drop of twenty feet under the window, and it was impossible for the Co. to make any attempt to effect a rescue. They could only stand and watch what passed above, and hurl threats at the grinning Grammarians.

Frank Monk kissed his hands to the juniors in the garden. Kerr and Digby shook their fists in return, and Herries hurled an apple. Blake gave a roar as the badly directed missile caught him under the chin, and the Grammarians roared, too.

"Now, then," said Frank Monk, with a business-like air, "get tight hold of the rope, kids, and don't let them slip. It would be a pity to break their poor little necks. Have you got the soot ready?"

"Here it is," said Carboy, placing a huge tin can half full of soot on the broad sill beside the helpless prisoners.

"Mix some treacle with it—you'll find some in the cupboard."

"Right-ho!"

"And mix it up well."

Carboy obeyed. The prisoners watched him in sickening apprehension as the horrible mess in the basin was mixed up. It was soon done.

"Good!" said Frank Monk. "Give me the brush. Now, then, if you're ready, Blake and Figgins, I am!"

"Don't you dare to put any of that stuff on me!" gasped Blake.

"Don't you touch me with it!" yelled Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha! Why, I've had it mixed up for your especial benefit. Which of you two is to take the lead?"

It was clear enough what Frank Monk meant by taking the lead. He had a brushful of the black paste ready to lay on. Blake and Figgins had been disputing for the leadership only a short time before, but now both of them had a sudden attack of diffidence.

"Oh, Figgins!" said Blake promptly.

"What rot!" said Figgins. "Blake, of course!"

"Well, if you can't settle the point I'll start alphabetically," said Monk. "B comes before F, so here goes!"

He drew the sooty brush gently down Blake's countenance, from the middle of the forehead over the nose and mouth, over the chin, and finished at the collar. The effect was startling. The black line divided Blake's face into two halves, and even his friends below could not help grinning at the curious effect it produced.

"You—you—you beast!" gasped Blake. "Just you wait till—Ow! Oooch!" The end of the brush had come into his mouth, and he gasped and shut it quickly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Grammarians.

And from below came a cackle.

"Bai Jove, that is vevy wuff on Blake, you know, but it looks vevy funny. I am wathah intewested to see how Figgins will look."

"Oh, are you?" growled Kerr.

"Yaas, wathah! Pway don't push me in that wude mannah, Fatty Wynn. You incommode me, and I am afwaid you will disawwange my tie."

"I'll disarrange your features if you don't look out!" grunted Fatty Wynn.

There was a fresh yell of laughter from the Grammarians.

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Frank Monk had divided Figgins' countenance into two equal halves in the same way, and the effect was quite as comical as in Blake's case.

Frank Monk appeared now to be warming to his work. He painted in transverse lines, and then laid down the brush. Another brush and a bottle of red ink was next forthcoming, and Frank filled in all the spaces left unblackened with red.

Arthur Augustus couldn't resist another cackle at the result.

"Bai Jove, that is weally artistic!"

Blake and Figgins were writhing with rage.

"Are you done?" asked Figgins, in a choked voice.

"Yes, nearly," said Monk cheerfully. "I've only got to mix a little of this sticky black paste in your hair, Figgins, and then I shall be finished."

"If you—if you—"

"Don't you like the idea?"

"I'll break you into little pieces if you—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Here goes! I'll risk it!"

And soot and treacle were mixed freely with Figgins' rather lengthy locks, and then the same kind office was done for Blake.

"Bai Jove!" came D'Arcy's comment from below. "That looks funniah than evah! Do you know, deah boys, I weally considah that Fwank Monk has a sense of humah. I do weally!"

The next moment the swell of the School House gave a yell.

In his interest in the proceedings he had advanced incautiously near the window, and Monk, being now finished with the mixture of soot and treacle, suddenly hurled the remainder of the contents of the basin over D'Arcy.

Arthur Augustus received the shower full upon his head, and was transformed with startling suddenness into a very good imitation of a nigger minstrel.

The juniors burst into a roar.

"Ow!" gasped D'Arcy. "Monk, you howwid bwute, I will give you a feahful thwashin' for that! Bai Jove, I will bwreak evvey bone in your boday!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kerr. "Do you think that's funny, you ass?"

"No, I don't! I wegard it as a wude and beastlay joke, and I shall give Fwank Monk a feahful thwashin'—"

"He's got a sense of humour, though, hasn't he?" grinned Digby.

"No, I fail to see anythin' of the kind."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus, gasping with wrath, dashed away in search of a wash and a change of clothes. Frank Monk waved his hands to the juniors below the window.

"We've done with these old things now," he said. "You can take your rubbish away. Lower the young asses down, kids."

The Grammarians gently pushed Blake and Figgins off the sill, and lowered the rope, and the juniors descended swinging to the ground.

There they walked awkwardly away, still tied together by their arms. The affair had attracted attention by this time, and fellows were crowding into the garden to see the fun, and the sight of Blake and Figgins raised roars of laughter on every side. From the windows of Class-room No. 10 the Grammarians yelled their merriment, and the Saints could not help joining in.

"Oh," gasped Blake, "I shall never get over this! Can't some of you cackling idiots get us loose?"

"Untie me, somebody!" groaned Figgins. "Oh, do stop that silly cackling, and set a fellow loose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you untie me?"

"It's a pity to spoil a good joke!" grinned Gore. "Don't untie them, kids. Let 'em walk round St. Jim's like that, and give the school a treat."

But the Co. were not likely to adopt Gore's suggestion. Kerr and Digby opened their pocket-knives and cut the ropes, and Blake and Figgins stood free. They dashed off to escape the ridicule of the crowd, but the fellows were not easily eluded. A laughing crowd followed them, and Blake and Figgins found no relief till they got into a bath-room, and locked themselves up there.

It was some time before they were seen again, and then their countenances bore visible traces of hard scrubbing.

## CHAPTER 16.

### Tom Merry Takes the Lead!

TOM MERRY threw aside his pen, with a sigh of relief. He had finished the long imposition, and he jumped up to stretch his legs. The door of the study opened the next moment, and Lowther and Manners came in. They were chuckling.



"My dear chap," said Tom Merry, "as soon as you're willing to follow our lead we'll undertake to put the Grammar School cads down!"

"That's what I've come here to speak about."

"Go on, kid."

"Have you really got a wheeze for getting the better of the Grammar School cads, or were you only gassing?" demanded Blake.

"Would you rather have a thick ear or a black eye?" was Tom Merry's polite counter-question.

"Well, you've got a wheeze, then?"

"Yes, of course I have."

"What is it?"

"A secret," said Tom Merry blandly.

Blake could not help grinning.

"Well, what I want to say is that if you can undertake to give the Grammar School cads the kybosh, we're ready to follow your lead, that's all."

"Good! That's settled, then."

"Let us know when you're going to start, that's all," said Blake, and he nodded and went down the passage.

Tom Merry laughed.

"I thought they would come round in time," he remarked. "I wonder whether Figgins & Co. will look at the matter in the same light?"

"If they don't, we'll do it without them," said Monty Lowther. "We ought to work the wheeze to-night while the Grammar School cads are off their guard. After what they've done they won't be looking for a fresh row."

"That's so. Hallo! Here's Figgins."

The chief of the New House juniors came into the study. He was looking rather sheepish, and his hair was in great disorder.

"I say, Tom Merry—" he began.

"Well, my son, what is it?" asked the hero of the Shell cheerfully.

"What's that I've heard about you having a wheeze up against the Grammarians?"

"I really don't know what you've heard, Figgins; you ought to know that better than I do," said Tom Merry.

"Oh, don't rot! Have you really got a plan?"

"Yes, really."

"A ripping one?"

"A good one!"

"And you think you'll be able to give the Grammar School cads the kybosh if we back you up?" said Figgins eagerly.

"I'm sure of it!"

"Then you can count upon us—the New House Co. and myself. We're with you all the way. Anything to stop those confounded Grammar School cads from crowing over us!"

"It's a bargain! Mind, you come into the Co. as followers!"

"That's understood."

"Then be in the garden, under the windows of Classroom No. 10, in a quarter of an hour," said Tom Merry. "We'll join you there, and the circus will begin."

Figgins looked puzzled.

Tom Merry looked at them inquiringly. Something had evidently happened to amuse the chums of the Shell highly.

"Well, what's the news?" asked Tom. "Have Blake and Figgins been tackling the Grammarians and got the worst of it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Lowther. "You've hit it! I wish you could have seen Figgins a little while back; his face was a study in black and red—a mixture of black soot and treacle and red ink."

"Frank Monk has some rather good ideas," observed Manners. "He must have known they were coming, and he had everything ready for them!"

"But what has happened?" demanded Tom Merry.

With many a chuckle, the chums of the Shell explained. Tom Merry was chuckling, too, before they had finished. The door of the study opened as the Terrible Three were shouting with laughter, and Blake looked in.

"Hallo! What are you chuckling about?" he exclaimed.

"You," said Monty Lowther.

"Oh, haven't you done grinning over that story yet? You fellows haven't made so good a show against the Grammar School cads that you can afford to cackle at our—our little accident!" said Blake crossly.



The Grammarians gently pushed Blake and Figgins off the sill, and lowered the rope. The two juniors descended swinging to the ground.

"In the garden! What are we going to do there?"

"That's for your leader to decide," said Tom Merry loftily. "A follower's place is not to ask his leader questions, Figgins."

"Oh, don't you begin to put on side, you School House rotters!"

"Is that proper language to use to your leader?" said Tom Merry severely.

"Oh, rats! I mean that's all right; I'll be there with the Co., though I'm blessed if I can see what you're going to do!"

"You'll see soon enough, my sons!"

And Figgins departed, looking mystified.

"Now then," said Tom Merry, "there's no time to be lost. We've got to make sure, first, that Monk & Co. are in Class-room No. 10, then get the door fastened on the outside. You can see to that, Lowther, while Manners goes and gets Taggles' long ladder, and I see to the hose."

"Right-ho!"

And the Terrible Three hurried out of the study. There was plenty of work to be done. There was little doubt that the Grammarians would remain in their own quarters for a while. After the defeat of the combined juniors, both School House and New House were eager for vengeance, and Frank Monk was pretty certain to keep on the safe side of the door of No. 10 till the excitement died away.

In a quarter of an hour Figgins & Co. came into the garden, under the windows of Class-room No. 10. The dusk was deepening over St. Jim's, but there was light enough for Tom Merry's purpose. The Terrible Three were already on the spot. It was darker indoors than out, and the blinds of No. 10 were drawn and the light gleamed through them. No one, naturally, was looking out, and the Grammarians remained in blissful ignorance of the fact that enemies were gathering below.

Study No. 6 were already on the ground. D'Arcy had bathed himself, changed his clothes, and put on a clean collar, and looked as neat as a new pin again. But the swell of the School House was in an exasperated state of mind, ready for anything. One of his favourite waistcoats had been quite spoiled by the shower of soot and treacle—and a thing like that was not to be easily forgotten or forgiven. D'Arcy was in a mood for vengeance.

"Blessed if I know what the game is!" Figgins remarked to Blake. "Do you?"

Blake shook his head.

"No; but if it ends in smoke I shall have something to say to Tom Merry, that's all!"

"So shall I," said Figgins—"something emphatic!"

"Hallo! What are you going to do with that ladder, Lowther?"

"I'm not going to eat it!" said Lowther. "Look, and you'll see!"

Two or three fellows gave a hand with the ladder, and it was reared up against the middle window-sill. Lowther ascended it quietly and fastened the top with a cord to a staple, which he drove into the wall just below the sill with a single blow of a mallet. There was a sound of an exclamation within the room; the blow of the mallet had been heard. Lowther slithered quickly down the ladder.

"Quick, Tom!"

"I'm ready!" said Tom Merry quickly.

He came towards the ladder at a run. He was trailing a garden-hose behind him, and the juniors gazed at it in amazement.

"My word!" ejaculated Digby. "Is that the little game?"

"Bai Jove! I regard that as wippin'!"

Tom Merry, with his thumb over the nozzle of the hose, ascended the ladder quickly. Manners ran up behind him to lend him aid. Lowther looked triumphantly at Figgins & Co. and Study No. 6.

"Well, what do you think of that?" he demanded.

"You're going to give the Grammarians a wash?"

"That's the idea!"

"Is the water on in the hose?"

"Of course it is, fathead!"

"Oh, I don't know about of course; it would be just like you fellows to forget a thing like that! But are you sure the Grammarians are in the room?"

"We made sure of that first."

"But they'll soon slither out when the water begins to play on them," said Blake; "it won't be much of a jape!"

Lowther chuckled.

"They'll find it pretty hard to slither out of Class-room No. 10 in a hurry," he remarked—"that is, unless they go up the chimney!"

"Why can't they go out of the door?"

"Because it's fastened on the outside."

"Who fastened it?"

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"I did—with a couple of screws they can't possibly get loose."

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Figgins. "It's a jolly good wheeze, and no mistake—unless they chuck Tom Merry off the ladder!"

"They won't do that in a hurry, while he's got the hose-pipe!" said Blake. "My hat; this is a really good jape for you Shell bounders!"

"I'm going up the ladder to lend a hand," said Figgins. "Tom Merry will want holding on if they get near enough to push him."

And Figgins ascended the ladder after Manners.

"Hold on the ladder, some of you," said Lowther. "They'll try to shift it, so put your weight on it!"

"What-ho!"

And some of the Co. crowded on the ladder to make it weighty, and others held tightly to its sides. There was not much chance of the Grammarians dislodging the ladder.

Meanwhile, the Grammarians had opened the window.

They wondered what had happened outside, and Carboy had come to investigate. The blind shot up, and the window was opened; and at the same moment Tom Merry removed his thumb from the nozzle.

Swish!

A powerful jet of water smote the amazed Carboy under the chin and fairly hurled him backwards.

He gave a yell as he tumbled over, and the other Grammarians jumped up in amazement, and Frank Monk rushed to the window.

"What the—"

He got no further.

The jet of water splashed in his face, and he staggered back and went over. There was a forward rush of the Grammarians, but it was soon changed into a backward one. But retreat did not save them.

Tom Merry was fairly on the warpath now!

The water came in from the big hose in a continual stream, and there was no escaping it. The Grammarians rushed hither and thither like scared rabbits, but there was no eluding that deadly stream of water.

"My word!" gasped Frank Monk, staggering to his feet. "Let's get out!"

He sprang to the door and tore at the handle. But the door did not budge. Monk dragged at it, and dragged at it again; and the handle came off in his frantic dragging; but the strong, oaken door remained firmly fixed.

He reeled back in dismay.

"We can't get out!"

"They've fastened it on the outside!" shrieked Carboy. Monk gritted his teeth.

"Then let's rush the window!"

"Come on, then!"

There was evidently nothing else to be done. The Grammarians, angry and excited, followed their leader, and dashed desperately to the window, through which a stream of cold water played ceaselessly upon them.

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## CHAPTER 17.

## Tom Merry Wins!

**T**OM MERRY did not flinch. He did not turn a hair as the Grammarians rushed forward. He knew the power he had in his hands. Keeping back a little from the sill, he directed the full force of the water upon the advancing juniors.

The powerful flood dashing in their faces forced the most determined of the Grammarians to halt. It simply knocked them over, and they went staggering back in confusion. They rallied and rushed forward again, only to be driven backward once more by the force of the torrent.

Yells and threats and gasps filled Class-room No. 10, and the Grammarians, most of them losing their heads by this time, were running to and fro helplessly.

Even Frank Monk was at a loss. Twice again he tried to face the storm, and each time the rush of water hurled him backward. He was soaked to the skin, and the water was running from his hair in streams.

"Stop it!" he gasped.

Tom Merry shut off the water.

"Keep your distance, then!" he exclaimed.

The Grammarians were not likely to fail to do that. They kept as far as they could from the middle window.

The juniors below were chuckling gleefully. Figgins and Manners were laughing so much that they came near falling off the ladder. Blake had climbed an elm to get a good view of the interior of Class-room No. 10, and he clung to the branches, laughing hysterically. The tables had been turned upon the Grammarians completely. They were quite at the mercy of Tom Merry.

"Stop it!" howled the Grammar youths. "We make it pax!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Do you?" he said. "We've got something to say about that?"

"Yaas, wathah!" exclaimed D'Arcy indignantly. "Aftah spoilin' a fellow's waistcoat, I wegarid it as feahful cheek to talk about making it pax!"

"You've got to toe the line, my infants!" said Tom Merry sternly. "Keep your distance, please, while your uncle is talking to you!"

"What do you want us to do, confound you!"

"I give in, first of all?"

"You suppose so!" growled Monk. "We're drenched to the skin. You've about flooded the room. Is this what you call playing the game?"

"Yes, rather! Quite as good as making up a fellow's face in black and red!"

Frank Monk laughed.

"Well, I suppose it is. Go ahead!"

"Do you give in? No supposing; but yes or no!"

"Ye-e-e-es!"

The answer seemed to be torn from Monk. It went sorely against the grain with him to give in. But there was nothing else to be done.

"Good! Do you all give in?"

"No!" growled two or three obstinate youths.

"Very well!"

Swish!

Tom Merry turned the water on again. The flood sought out the Grammarians in every corner.

Monk gave a roar.

"Stop it! We give in!"

"All of you?"

"Yes, yes, yes!"

And this time there was not a dissentient voice.

"Good!" Tom Merry shut off the water. "Now, then, we're willing to make it pax on one condition, and on one condition only."

"Oh, go on! What's the condition?"

"You've got to admit yourselves hopelessly licked—"

"We won't!"

"Eh—what?"

"Oh, shut up! Yes, we'll admit that, if you like!"

"Good! And you've got to promise to be good little boys—"

"We won't!" yelled a dozen voices.

"Yes, you will. You'll promise to be good little boys, and always to behave yourselves nicely while you remain at St. Jim's; always treat us with great respect, and never, never to have the cheek to jape anybody belonging to this school."

"We won't!"

"Is that final?"

"Yes, you rotter—yes!"

Tom Merry wasted no more time in words. He let the water go again, and the flooding of Class-room No. 10 recommenced. Monk, Lane, and Carboy made a desperate rush to the window.

The jet of water hurled them back. Blinded and breathless, they had to give it up. But the water did not stop.

It followed them. The room was almost swimming, and a flood was running out under the door into the passage. There was pretty certain to be a terrible row over the affair. But Tom Merry did not care. He was on the war-path, and he had his reputation to sustain. The results could be thought of afterwards.

"Oh, stop it!" yelled Monk, at last. "We can't stand this!"

"Is it surrender?"

"Ye-e-es!"

"Good! Open the window on the right, and address your remarks to the respected members of St. Jim's below, and repeat what I tell you."

Frank Monk hesitated for a moment. But there was no alternative, and he slowly opened the end window, and the St. Jim's juniors below greeted him with a delighted yell.

"Now, then!" said Tom Merry. "Start! Repeat after me what I tell you!"

"Oh, go on, confound you!"

"Respected Saints—"

"Respected Saints," mumbled Frank Monk.

"Louder, please!"

"Respected Saints!" bawled Frank Monk.

And the delighted juniors below shouted:

"Hear, hear!"

The crowd in the garden was increasing in numbers now, and half the Lower Forms of St. Jim's were there to hear what the Grammarian leader had to say.

"We are only a set of silly Grammarian asses—"

"I won't!"

"You know what you'll get if you don't!"

"Hold on! We are only a set of silly Grammarian asses!" yelled Frank Monk furiously.

And the juniors of St. Jim's yelled:

"Hear, hear!"

"And we know it's like our cheek to set up to jape anybody belonging to St. Jim's—"

Frank Monk writhed and repeated the words.

"And we know it's like our cheek to set up to jape anybody belonging to St. Jim's—"

"And we deserve the licking we've got, and we promise in future to be good little boys, and very respectful and obedient to our superiors, the juniors of St. Jim's," went on Tom Merry calmly.

"I—I—I— All right! I'm going on!" And Frank Monk repeated the words, and the crowd in the garden yelled again.

"And we hope you young gentlemen of St. Jim's will kindly allow us to exist, and not be too hard on us while we stay here," said Tom Merry.

"I—I won't! Yes, I will! And we hope you young gentlemen of St. Jim's will allow us to exist, and will not be too hard upon us while we stay here," growled Frank Monk.

"Hear, hear!"

"Anything more, Tom Merry, you beast!"

"No; that's about enough. Do you fellows say the same?"

"No—yes. Yes!"

"Good! Now you can dry yourselves, if you can. We make it pax," said Tom Merry graciously. "We are letting you down lightly."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry unfastened the ladder at the top and descended. The Grammarians crowded into the window, hurling yells and catcalls after him.

The juniors of St. Jim's yelled with laughter.

"By Jove, there will be a fearful row over this!" said Figgins, chuckling.

"Who cares?" said Blake. "We've licked the Grammarians!"

"Yaas, wathah! I weally considah that they will nevah be able to wipe out a defeat like that, deah boys. They have suwwendahed publicly, and they can't get ovah that. Tom Mewwy, I congwatulate you. This mattah has been cawwied out almost as well as I could have done it myself, bai Jove!"

There was a row over the occurrence; but the juniors who had to face the music faced it bravely. They did not care. They had licked the Grammarians, and made them own up to it, and during the remainder of the Grammarians' stay at St. Jim's the strangers within the gates were noticeably less bumptious. Tom Merry had won at last, and St. Jim's had, indisputably got the better of the invaders.

THE END.

(Now look forward to next Wednesday's great school yarn, entitled: "MELLISH, THE MISCHIEF-MAKER!" and stand by for thrills and excitement.)

OUR SMASHING NAVAL ADVENTURE YARN.

# CHUMS OF THE FIGHTING FLEET

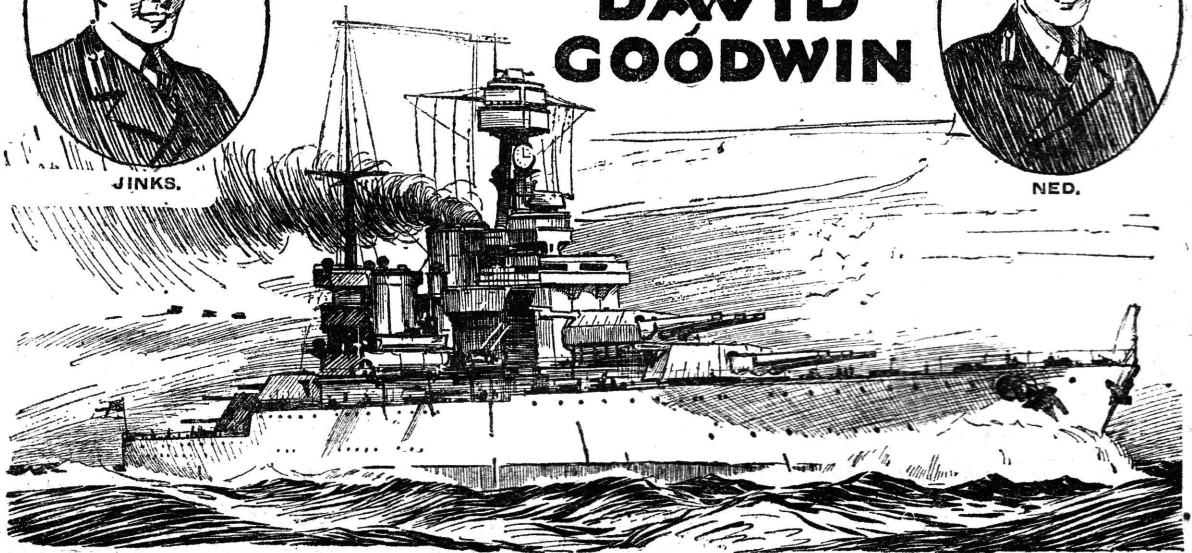


JINKS.

by  
**DAVID  
GOODWIN**



NED.



*Ned Hardy, the only middy in the Navy who has won the D.S.C., which he got for his part in the capture of a Russian spy, has recently returned to the Victorious, from a secret visit to his brother Ralph. Ralph, formerly a lieutenant on the Victorious, was dismissed the Service after a robbery on board. Ned believes his brother innocent and thinks it was the work of spies. In a boxing match Ned defeats another middy, Wexton, the cad of the Victorious, and Wexton plans revenge!*

Enter the "Chatham Chicken"!

IT was about twenty minutes after his defeat by Ned that Wexton, having carefully avoided the school-room and its combatants during that time, went aft, looking as dangerous as a dog about to bite, and came across Sub-Lieutenant Grimshaw in the deserted steering-flat.

"Hallo! You don't look particularly bucked with yourself," said Grimshaw. "What's the row?"

Wexton, almost bursting with vexation, told him what had happened.

"Well," said Grimshaw grimly, "your attempt to pull the kid off his perch seems to have been pretty feeble. He'll be made more fuss of than ever now. You can't knock him out, that's a certainty!"

"Maybe I can't. But, by Jove, I know how to get it done!" snarled Wexton. "This just puts him into my hands. I've been thinking it over. He reckons he can box, does he? Well, if I can't out him, I know somebody who can. I'll have him hashed up small—in front of the whole mess, too!"

"How?" said Grimshaw.

"Have you heard of the 'Chatham Chicken'?"

"No. What are you driving at?"

"Listen, and I'll tell you what I mean to do! It'll take a bit of doing, but I'll back myself to pull it off."

He moved closer, and spoke in a whisper for some minutes. Grimshaw's face showed doubt, and then wonder. Finally he grinned ominously.

"You're an ingenious young demon, Cecil. It sounds all right. It certainly means a bust up for that confounded kid if you succeed. Only if you fail, don't bring me into it."

"Of course I won't! But you'll give me a little help on the quiet?" said Wexton. "I shall need some money."

"I'll go as far as a ten-pound note," said Grimshaw, who had a good allowance besides his pay. "And I'll see that

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things are made easy for you, if there's any trouble afterwards."

"That's good enough for me. But there won't be."

"All right, then. Get right on with it!"

On the morning of the day following, Mr. Midshipman Wexton was chafing like a chained dog because he could not get shore leave before the afternoon, which he very badly wanted for the carrying out of his plan. It seemed to him especially unfair that Jinks should go, and himself be kept on board.

Jinks was in luck, for learning that his "best girl," as he called the maiden of his affections at Sheerness, was away at Aldershot with her people he decided to visit his other best girl at Chatham, which was within easy reach, eight miles or so up the river. One of the Victorious' pinnaces was going, and Jinks with his usual cheek contrived to get a passage on her.

Wexton was bound for Chatham, too, but no pinnace was leaving when his time came, and he had to land at Sheerness and go up by train, which took some time.

Wexton seemed strangely familiar with the most unsavoury places in Chatham. He left the more respectable streets behind, and made his way through some decidedly shady-looking resorts in the direction of New Brompton, and finally went to ground in a small public-house of retiring appearance next to a slaughter-house. Behind this inn was a large wooden building or barn, with skylights in the roof. The landlord of the inn, standing at the door, gave Wexton a nod of recognition, and received from him the sum of sixpence as entrance money.

It was a queer sight that met Wexton inside. Quite sixty or eighty people were present, and a rough-looking crowd they were. The place reeked of beer, gin, strong tw'tst tobacco, and stronger language. In the middle on a raised platform was a roped-off ring, in which two brawny young men in vests, shorts, and shoes were hammering each other vigorously with three-ounce gloves.

The resort was evidently not new to Wexton, and he took in the company with a swift glance round the building. But one thing he did not see, and that was Mr. Midshipman Jinks' back just disappearing through the door on the other side.

"Hallo, young sir!" said a red-nosed man to Wexton, who, by the way, was in tweed clothes and not in uniform. "Come to 'ave another look at us? It was you an' your pal put up the purse for the Chicken last March, weren't it? He's coming on next match."

Wexton pushed forward just as the fight between the two men in the ring ended amid applause and cat-calls, and after the decision had been announced the master of the ring called for silence.

"Gents!" he shouted in a voice like a trombone. "The next match is for light-weights under the age o' twenty, for a purse o' thirty shillin's cash an' a silver cigarette-case presented by the landlord. I present to your notice those two promisin' young pro's whom we expect some day to be stars o' the ring—the Chatham Chicken an' the Bromley Basher!"

There was more hoarse applause and chaff, and the two combatants, dressed for the fray, entered the ring amid the encouraging shouts of their backers. The Chatham Chicken was a burly ruffian of eighteen, big and powerful for his age, the very picture of a budding professional "pug." He was bullet-headed, flat-nosed, bull-necked, with muscular arms, and thighs like young tree-trunks. A pair of deep-set eyes twinkled cunningly in his head. The Bromley Basher was about twenty, rather bigger than his opponent, but carrying more flesh. The two shook hands warily, and the referee called "Time!"

There is no need to describe that fight. It was short. The Basher was a powerful boxer, but none too fit. The Chicken proved not only a furiously hard hitter, but a real scientific sparrer, who knew the game backwards. In two rounds the Basher was on his back and was counted out by the timekeeper. He did not want any more.

"Here," said Wexton quietly to a youth who stood close by, and into whose hand he slipped a shilling, "get word to Bert Grundy that somebody wants to see him in the stable."

The messenger departed, and Wexton made for the stable. In five minutes' time Bert Grundy, otherwise known as the Chatham Chicken, with a greatcoat over his fighting kit, came in.

"Allo, young sir!" he said familiarly to Wexton. "Goin' to put up another purse for me, eh? You an' your pals did well out o' that last one. I shall want a bit more this time."

"I've got a better job for you, Grundy," said Wexton, shutting the stable door. "Are you on to join a little plant and make a ten-pound note?"

The Chicken's eyes glistened. In the third-rate country meetings where he boxed, as yet, a pound or thirty shillings was the average purse for his class and age.

"I know you're a close chap and can keep your head shut," said Wexton "and you like a bit of sport. I'm offering you something dead easy. Now, look here. We've a competition in our gun-room to-morrow night. There's a midshipman there who fancies himself at the game, and I want him properly pated." Wexton paused. "We only allow middies, of course. But my plan is to put you in uniform, introduce you as a visitor—a midshipman from the Triumphant—and you'll take this chap on and smash the conceited brute into a jelly."

"Wot?" cried the Chicken, staring.

"He's only an amateur. Nowhere near your form, of course. You could knock out any three of us."

"Crumbs!" said the astonished Grundy. "Me a Navy officer! D'yer think I should pass?"

"Certainly, I'll have a full uniform ready that'll fit you, and all you've got to do, remember, is to keep your head absolutely shut. Don't give yourself away. They'll never suspect anything. Even if they did it would make no odds; they could do nothing. A dead easy job, and a rare piece of sport, too. The fellow's a swell. Just the sort of chap you hate, Bert. Now, then!"

"Gosh! What a Barney! But I don't think it'd go down, guv'nor."

"Leave all that to me," said Wexton impatiently. "I'm arranging it all to the last detail. I'll meet you, see you into the kit, and put you up to every move in the game. I'm working it. I generally know what I'm about, don't I?"

"Yes, and no error. You know your way about. No flies on you!"

"Here's the money," said the midshipman, cracking two five-pound notes temptingly. "You know I'm safe to pay up, Grundy, and you'll get these as soon as the job's done. Here's a quid in advance for you. Is it a deal?"

The Chatham Chicken pondered. Then a broad grin spread slowly over his face.

"I'll take this on," he said, with a wink. "It's just about my mark. You'll put me up to the ropes, guv'nor. Who's the mug?"

"A fellow called Hardy—the swankiest cad on the ship. I'll arrange that he is to take you on. Mind, I want a job made of him. He's not merely to be licked. Play with him first, and then beat the head off him. The more you damage him the better. Gloves won't save him!"

"Leave that ter me!" said the Chicken, unctuously rubbing his hands together.

"Meet me at the Sun at Sheerness, four o'clock sharp, to-morrow."

"Trust me!" said the Chatham Chicken.

"I say, you fellows," announced Keppel, as the middies began to clear the school-room for the boxing competition on the following evening, "I've got word that a stranger wants to see what we're made of, and asks the favour of a turn-up with our best man. Rather sport, eh? We can't refuse, as by our rules the competition's open weekly to any visiting snottie from the battle cruisers."

"Who wants to refuse?" said Acland, as they crowded round to hear the news. "Who is the fellow, and who introduces him?"

"He's from the Triumphant, and his name's Beaufort. He sent the challenge through Wexton, who says he doesn't know much about him, but has heard he's tolerably hot stuff."

"I hear he's arrived and on deck now," said Sub-Lieutenant Hart, who was a most popular referee at the middies' competitions. "Who are you putting up against him?"

"Hardy. He's about our best man now."

"Me?" cried Ned.

"We've all chosen you, old chap. You've shown us what you can do."

Ned protested, though he was secretly on fire to be given a chance at the visitor, but did not like to thrust himself forward. They all insisted, however, and at that moment the stranger came down, with Wexton close behind him.

"This is Mr. Beaufort, of the Triumphant, gentlemen," said Wexton. "I present him as an honoured guest."

The gun-room mess of the Victorious was civil and hospitable to all middies who visited it. That was one of its laws. But the assembly in the school-room were rather taken back when they saw "Mr. Beaufort."

The Chatham Chicken, despite the smart uniform he wore—it had once clothed the biggest middy in the Nore Division—looked rather a queer fish.

"Welcome to the Victorious, Mr. Beaufort!" said Hart, looking at him curiously. "Won't you come into the gun-room and have a Marsala, or—"

"He says he'd rather get ahead with the boxing. He's only got short leave," broke in Wexton hastily.

"Come on, then," said Keppel. "This way, Beaufort. We're very glad to—er—to meet a sportsman from the Triumphant. Shall we—er—"

"Cut the cackle an' put up your man!" growled "Mr. Beaufort." "Let him put his dukes up. I've got to get back to my ship!"

Some of the middies glanced at each other as the visitor spoke. They were surprised, too, to see how he peeled.

"Queer sort of bounder!" murmured Mayne aside to Acland.

"Glad I'm not on the Triumphant. But the fellow's a rare fighting sort. Look at his arms and chest!"

"I've heard they're a tough lot on that ship."

"Seconds out of the ring!" said Hart.

A proper roped square, used for the competitions, had been set up, and was cleared. Ned Hardy had quickly set himself in fighting trim—vest, drawers, and shoes, and looked his rival over with inward wonder.

"Who on earth can this chap be?" thought Ned.

"I say," cried a voice from the steps, "Jinks is on duty on the foredeck, and can't come till eight bells. He says he'll drown himself if you fellows don't wait for him!"

"Very sorry, can't wait for anybody," said Hart, watch in hand. "Now, then, are you ready? Queensbury rules. Navy time, twenty three-minute rounds, to be decided on points or the first knock-out. Time!"

The two boxers faced each other, their guards up, and their lefts went out. The pair was a great contrast. The visitor, thick-set, built like an ox, his head looking as if a sledgehammer would not hurt it. Ned Hardy, more finely formed, broad in the chest, but lighter at the hips, muscled with watch-springs, and with the sailor's quick eye and light step.

*(Ned is up against a pretty tough proposition! How will he fare against the professional pug? Don't miss next week's thrilling instalment!)*

# EASTWOOD CUP FINAL.

TRIUMPH FOR ST. JIM'S!  
FAIRLY AND SQUARELY WON!

By "OLD BOY."

Rookwood, Wed.

**B**OTH Greyfriars and St. Jim's brought large contingents of supporters to the Rookwood ground, which had been chosen for the Final of the Eastwood Cup. Jimmy Silver & Co., were also present in force, and the crowd was the largest I have ever seen at a junior football match.

The pitch was firm, but not too hard, and the sun favoured the occasion by shining brilliantly. Saints were anticipating an equally brilliant victory, and the Friars, too, seemed of the same opinion regarding their own heroes!

"Friars! Friars! One, two, three, four—five!"

As that chant echoed around the ground, reaching the Saints in their dressing-room, Monty Lowther grinned.

"If the Friars score five against us, I'll eat my football boots!" he offered generously.

"Don't count the chickens, Monty!" warned Tom Merry. "And remember, you fellows—the Friars will start with a rush, as they always do; but if we can hang on and wear them down, the Cup's ours!"

Wharton won the toss, and had the sun at his back.

Tom Merry kicked off, and a volley of yells, embodying all manner of advice, burst from the juniors round the ropes. But each side had its plan of attack, and the Friars, as Tom Merry had predicted, led off with a rush. Bob Cherry neatly checked D'Arcy on the wing, and passed through to Nugent. Nugent gave to Hurree Singh, and the dusky junior made ground before centring to Wharton. Tackled instantly by Kangaroo, Wharton had just time to swing the leather out to the opposite wing, where Vernon-Smith, trapping in his stride, went away like an arrow from a bow. He drew Figgins, suddenly swerved close in, and let fly from an almost impossible angle, while Fatty Wynn was only just shaping for the shot. Fatty grasped at something which whizzed over his head—and a shout from a hundred Greyfriars throats announced first blood to the Friars!

St. Jim's, undismayed, gave "Squiff" in the Greyfriars goal a warm period, but failed to pierce a sound defence. The play swayed back to the other end, and there was a groan as Kerr miskicked and let

Harry Wharton through at close range. Fatty Wynn threw himself desperately out of goal, but Wharton's shot sped past him even as he dived.

Two down against a side of the calibre of Greyfriars was a situation which would have cowed any team but the Saints. They set to in grim and untiring manner to reduce the lead—and in spite of Squiff's splendid goalkeeping, he found a shot from Levison too hot to hold—and the ball dropped dead on the line. Like a stone from a catapult, Jack Blake leaped on to it, and both the ball and Blake hurtled into the back of the net.

"That's one, anyway!" gasped Blake, as Tom Merry helped him up.

The equaliser was not long in coming—D'Arcy breaking clean through and finishing with a smashing drive that beat Squiff completely. The Saints began to breathe a little easier, but their anxiety was stilled only to be awakened again. Greyfriars swept down on goal, and only Herculean efforts by Fatty Wynn kept them out. Even Fatty could not hold out for ever, and he plunged into a fracas in front of goal only to go down beneath a heap of fellows, and to hear rather than see the third goal for Greyfriars. As Fatty scrambled up, he beheld Bob Cherry shaking hands all round and Figgins picking the ball out of the net.

There remained five minutes to half-time, and the Saints made full use of them. An advance on the left gave Tom Merry an unexpected chance, a desperate race for the ball with Johnny Bull pounding along just behind him. Tom got to it first; but there was no time to shoot. Even as Johnny Bull charged, Tom Merry managed to tip the leather out to the right, where Talbot, fastening on it, darted in and fired a crackerjack of a shot well to Squiff's right, while Tom Merry and Johnny Bull rolled dazedly on the ground together. Three all—and half-time!

Both defences had been inclined to wild

kicking, a thing only to be expected under the stress of cup-tie excitement; but it was obvious on the resumption that they were determined to turn over a new leaf. Opportunities, which had been frequent during the first period, were now rare, and Figgins and Kerr at one end, and Bull and Redwing at the other, were swift to avert danger. It seemed that the backs had at last subdued the forwards, and for a while both goalkeepers had little to do.

Wharton went very close with a snap shot that whizzed just outside the upright, and Tom Merry was unlucky with a drive that grazed the cross-bar with Squiff full length on the ground. Kerr, making amends for his miskick earlier in the game, saved a certain goal when Nugent broke away, and after a fruitless corner-kick Fatty Wynn cleared with a long punt.

Beside the touchline could be seen the glittering Eastwood Cup, and with only a few minutes remaining, both sides girded themselves for tremendous efforts. The Friars were first to show fire, and they came through on the right in a way that seemed to bode a certain goal. Kerr was left on the ground, and Wharton was shooting from two yards out when Kangaroo fairly hurled himself in the path of the leather and deflected it outside the post with his body. The corner-kick dropped right in the goalmouth, and Fatty Wynn leaped high in the air to punch it clear. But he missed, and fell under a swarm of fellows. The whistle shrilled—but only to award a goal kick, as Penfold shot just past the post!

Fatty Wynn placed the kick perfectly, right to Levison's feet at inside-right. Levison was away on the instant, and he and Talbot, passing and re-passing, had the Greyfriars defence well beaten. Peter Todd, desperate, dashed across to intercept Talbot's centre, but he jumped a fraction of a second too late. In the middle, Tom Merry shaped and shot without penalty—and before Squiff could even attempt to save, the ball was spinning in the far corner of the net!

There was one wild roar from the crowd, and then the shrill of the final whistle. The Cup Final was over—over and won—and the Eastwood Cup was the undisputed property of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's!

"You licked us fairly and squarely, Merry!" gasped Wharton, as the crowd surged exuberantly on to the playing field. "Congratulations, old man!"

"It was tough and go!" responded Tom Merry. "We'll give you another chance next year!"

## FINAL

of the

### EASTWOOD CUP.

Played at Rookwood.

ST. JIM'S ..... 4      GREYFRIARS ... 3  
Blake, D'Arcy,      Vernon-Smith,  
Talbot, Merry.      Wharton, Cherry.

Teams.—ST. JIM'S: Wynn; Figgins, Kerr; Redfern, Noble, Lowther; Talbot, Levison, Merry, Blake, D'Arcy. GREYFRIARS: Field; Bull, Redwing; Cherry, Todd, Linley; Hurree Singh, Nugent, Wharton, Penfold, Vernon-Smith.

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