

"TOM MERRY'S DOUBLE!" GREAT ST. JIM'S SERIES STARTS INSIDE.

The GEM

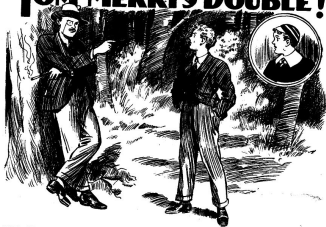
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TOM MERRY makes a **SPLASH!**

2
ACCUSED OF HIS DOUBLE'S CRIME, TOM MERRY FINDS HIMSELF IN THE SHADOW
OF EXPULSION!

TOM MERRY'S DOUBLE!



"If Tom Merry were discovered and expelled from St. Jim's," said Goring, "I should become a rich man!" "Oh, rot!" said Clavering. "I can't swallow that." "I've got certain information," leered on Goring, "and with your help as his double we can work it between us!"

CHAPTER I.

In the Hands of the Philistines!

TOM MERRY!

"Great Scott!"

"That takes the cake!"

Gordon Gay & Co. of Rykenside Grammar School halted in the bye: it cheer notwithstanding.

To say that they were surprised would be putting it too mildly.

It was Wednesday afternoon, a half-holiday both at St. Jim's and at the Grammar School. And at St. Jim's and Rykenside Grammar School were in a state of perpetual warfare—so far as the jasties were concerned, at least—Gordon Gay & Co. had determined to improve the shining hour by seeking a harmless and necessary run with the St. Jim's fellows.

As Gay remarked, with the hearty conviction of his comrades, how could a half-holiday be better spent than in ragging the St. Jim's fellows and proving to them beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Grammar School was now best? With that noble intention, the Co. came along the lane, their eyes open and alert for the enemy. So it was that they came to meet the jasties who were sitting on the stile half-way between Rykenside and St. Jim's.

They recognized him at once. There was no mistaking the handsome face.

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the merry blue eyes, and the curly hair, though, as it happened, the junior was not in Stone and was not wearing a St. Jim's cap.

That was not so much a matter of surprise as the way in which the jasties were occupied.

He sat on the stile, shaded by a big tree from the sunshine, with a sporting paper on his knee, and with a sporting paper on the columns of the paper he was smoking a cigarette.

No wonder the Grammarians were astonished.

They were in full view of the jasties on the stile, but he was so deeply engrossed in his sporting paper that he did not observe their approach.

Gordon Gay & Co. exchanged amazed glances.

"It's Tom Merry!" said Gay in a halting sort of way. "Tom Merry of St. Jim's, and—well look at him!"

"Blessed if I ever suspected he was that sort of a chap!" remarked Wootton major.

"What an awful ass, too!" said Frank Monk. "Why, a master or prefect from St. Jim's might pass at any moment and spot him!"

"And then he'd get it in the neck!" said Clavering.

"Yes, rather!"

It was not only that smoking was strictly forbidden among the juniors of St. Jim's, it was considered bad form also. "Botters" like Cooke and

Mellish and Cotte of the Fifth indulged in that kind of thing, but Tom Merry—never! And the sporting paper, too! The Grammarians could see what that was. It was an astounding revelation of a side of the junior's character they had never suspected or dreamed of suspecting.

"Simply asking for the neck," said Gay thoughtfully.

"Blessed if I understood it," said Wootton major. "He must be off his rocker! That's the only explanation!"

"Looks like it!"

"Not even keeping his eyes open," said Gay. "He hasn't seen us yet."

"He's going to see us soon!" grinned Frank Monk.

And the Grammarians checked. They had been seeking St. Jim's fellows for a rag, and here was the great chief and leader of the St. Jim's jasties right in their hands.

Gordon Gay glanced round at his fellows.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I think this is where we chip in."

"Hear, hear!" murmured the Co.

"That ally an is asking for the neck. We came out for a rag; but this is a serious blunder. It's up to us to see that that reckless young person from the detestable path and the road to ruin and things like that, and smash him like a golly board from the bottom. We're going to teach him better manners."

FIRST GRIPPING YARN OF A GREAT SERIES TELLING OF A TREACHEROUS PLOT TO RUIN THE CAPTAIN OF THE SHELL AT ST. JIM'S.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

CHAPTER 2.

Stalked!

"File in!" said Wootton major.
"It's asking for the sack, isn't he?" said Gay.
"Seems like it."
"Then I propose that we give him the sack!"

"As a warning of what he may expect if he doesn't mend his manners and become a good, nice little boy—like us!" said Gay loudly. "It's up to us. When we passed the Green Man just now I noticed a heap of flour sacks in the cart in the yard. They won't be wanted just yet. We're going to borrow two of them. Cut off, one of you, and get a sack!"

Wootton major hurried back along the lane towards the Green Man. The juniors knew the miller to whom the flour belonged, and Wootton knew that there would be no difficulty raised about borrowing the sack.

As Wootton departed, the Co. walked on towards the mill. The junior section did not raise his head from the sporting paper. He lit out clouds of cigarette smoke and read intently.

Over the trees, in the distance, one saw the grey old tower of St. Jim's. The rockface below was almost within sight of the school. His eyes were aching. It was really, as Gay remarked, as if he were deliberately asking to be sacked from the school.

"Hallo, Tom Merry!" exclaimed Gordon Gay, talking before the wind.

From the junior looked up. He did not seem to be taken aback. He held his cigarette, lit his finger and thumb and glanced cynically over the sporting paper at the Grammarian.

"Enjoying your little smoke?" asked Gay sarcastically.
"Yes, thanks."
"Don't expect to meet us?" asked Gay.

"No; why should I?"
"How are Messers and Lowther and D'Arcy and all the old folk at home?" asked Frank Monk affably.

The junior stared at him.
"I don't know what you're talking about," he said. "Isn't father too big rather heavy?"
The Grammarian exchanged glances. The junior seemed to have no suspicion that a rag was intended. And that was very odd, too, because Tom Merry was always the leader of the little alliance and excursions between the St. Jim's fellows and the Grammarians.

"Bump!" said Gordon Gay reflectively. "Looking out winners—eh?"
"Yes, if you want to know."
"Either a new departure for you, isn't it?"

"Not at all."
"Oh, you're used to this kind of thing—aren't you?" asked Gay in surprise.
"Certainly."
"You've kept it jolly dark, then. I never had any idea of it, for one," said Gay. "and I fancy the other fellows at St. Jim's don't know anything about it."

"I don't see how you could have any idea of it, as you've never seen me before and I don't know you," said the junior calmly. "I don't see what business it is of yours, anyway. Perhaps you're talking me for somebody else!"

"Oh, don't be fancy!" said Gay a little faintly. "I suppose you know you will sack Tom Merry!"
"Tom Merry!"

"Look here, I suppose you're not going to pretend that you're not Tom Merry!" exclaimed Gay, almost beginning to believe that the junior was out of his senses.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"What are you chucking at?" demanded Gay sharply.

"I remember now," said the junior faintly. "I was taken for a fellow of that name before by some fellows belonging to St. Jim's. Some one called Figgins, or Wagging, or something. I'm not Tom Merry!"

The Grammarian stared at him more blankly than ever. The whole affair was a surprise to them; but for Tom Merry of St. Jim's to deny his own identity to fellows who knew him perfectly well was the most surprising of all.

"Do you think we're going to realize that?" gasped Gay at last.

"I don't care whether you do or not," said the junior, reaching his cigarette. "I don't know you—and that's what it is."

"Well, we know you, Tom Merry," said Gay gently. "And I never thought you'd tell such whopping lies as to deny your own name. You can't expect fellows who know you to take that in; it's too thick."

"I suppose it's a joke," said Frank Monk. "but I'm blessed if I see where

In seeking to disgrace Tom Merry for the sake of a fortune, a scheming secondhand finds a willing accomplice in Reggie Clowster, Tom Merry's recently double!

the joke comes in. Are you going today, Tom Merry?"

"I tell you I'm not Tom Merry!"
"And I tell you you're an Arrogant, Manchester, and a rascal! all rolled into one!" said Gordon Gay. "Many, many, we have formed ourselves into a committee of public morality, for this occasion only, to deal with a real case of backsliding—yours, you know. These bad habits you are cultivating will get you the sack. Take warning in time, and—"

"Look here, you fool—"
"Keep down it!" said Gay, hitting a warning bang. "You're all like being called names like that, Tom Merry!"
"You care least!"

"You are going on the way that leads to the sack, and we're going to give you the sack—the sack—as a warning in time," said Gay immovably. "As the proverb says, a stitch in time saves you from getting it in the neck. Collar him!"

"Hands off!" yelled the junior. "I tell you— Yarcoob!"
Bump!
The sporting paper flew in one direction and the cigarette in another as the junior came down off the stile in the group of many hands and rolled on the ground.

"SIT on him!"
"Collar him!"
"Bump him!"
"My hat! Hold him, the least!"

The junior who had been an unconsciously collared by the Grammarian was fighting like a wildcat. There were fights going on among the Saints and the Grammarians, and head knocks were often given and received, but they always "played the game" in their most excited moments.

But the struggling junior seemed to have no idea of playing the game; he was kicking, tearing—even scolding; as he fought furiously in the grasp of the Grammarians. Frank Monk gave a yell of pain as nails scored down his face, leaving a red streak behind; and Gordon looked like a totem as his hand was bitten awfully.

"My hat!" yelled Gay. "It's a blessed wild beast! Hold him tight! And now bump him hard! Blessed if I ever expected Tom Merry to play the silly goat like that! Shows that you never know a fellow till you find him out! Bump him!"

The Grammarians were angry now. They had meant to rag their prisoner—but not of course to hurt him. But the savage resistance of the captured junior and the mobilities he exhibited provoked their anger.

They grasped him, lifted him clear of the ground, and bumped him hard. There was a roar of rage and pain from the victim.

"Ow, ow! You cads! Oh!"
"Give him another!"
Bump!

"Ow! Yarcoob! Help!"
"Now," pointed Monk. "perhaps you'd behave yourself, you cad! You'd scowled at us like a cat, you rascal!"

The junior was still struggling, but feebly. The Grammarians were too many for him, and they were not handling him gently, either. He did not deserve to be handled gently.

Gordon Gay drew a length of white cord from his pocket and tied the prisoner's wrists behind him; then he was allowed to rise to his feet.

His face was white with rage and his eyes were glowing.
"You rascals!" he snarled. "You brutes! I'll pay you out for this! Haug you!"

He was looking very dirty and dishevelled; his cap was gone, and his hair was wildly ruffled; his collar was torn, and his clothes were rumpled as if smothered with dust.

"Now give him the sack!" said Gay cheerfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The big flour sack was drawn over the head and shoulders of the junior, covering him from his head almost to his feet. A modified howl was heard from within the sack.

"Grough!"
Gordon Gay opened his pocket-book and slit an opening in the bottom of the sack. The head of the imprisoned junior emerged through the slit, the sack settling down over his shoulders. The Grammarians roared as they saw his face; it was smothered with the flour dust clogging the interior of the sack. Face, ears, and hair were snowy white; the junior as he was seized for treatment showed two little clouds of hair.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Gordon Gay.
"What a ghidly ghost!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, me go!" shrieked the prisoner.

"You bewilder! Let me go at once!"

"No hurry!" said Gay calmly.

"We're not quite satisfied with you!"

He took a length of whipcord round

the neck, knotting it tightly, and drawing

it into the prisoner's girths. With his

hands tied behind him as they were,

the prisoner had no chance whatever

of getting out of the sack.

Then the Grasscutters stood back

and regarded him with looks of

laughter.

The aspect of the captured junior

was certainly very funny.

Only his boots and trousers-ends

appeared below the sack, and above it

was the white and floppy hair, with two

eyes blazing with rage from amid the

coating of hair.

"I think he'll do!" commented

Gordon Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That sack won't be much use after-

wards," Fresh Monk remarked. "We'd

better call on the sifter and pay him

for it."

"Worth a couple of bob to give Tom

Merry this valuable warning about the

error of his ways!" said Gay.

"You, sifter! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I will pay, I'm not Tom Merry!"

shrieked the prisoner.

"And I tell you you are!" said

Gordon Gay.

"Let me go!"

Gordon Gay waved his hand airily.

"You can go!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha! March!" yelled Fresh

Monk. "It will cause a bit of a sur-

prise at St. Jim's. But you can explain

that, you met some hansom on the

road."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The prisoner panted with rage.

"Yes—you don't mean to leave me

like this?" he hissed.

"You've guessed it!"

"I—I can't go away like this! Let

me out!"

"Ha!"

"I'll make you suffer for this!"

"Any time you care to drop in at the

Grasscutter School, I'll be pleased to see

you, with or without glass!" said Gay

politely.

"Beware here!" said Monk, rubbing

the scratch on his face. "I'd jolly well

like to have the rascals on with you,

you and!"

"Guardmen," said Gay, "we have

done our duty. I suggest that we go

and pay the sifter for his sack, and

also allow to Mrs. Murphy's for

liquid refreshment. It's my treat!"

"Here, here!"

And the Grasscutters, rolling with

laughter, trooped off down the road,

leaving the junior struggling in the

sack.

It was about five minutes later that

an elegant figure came in view along

the road from the direction of St. Jim's.

This elegant figure was Arthur

Augustus D'Arcy, as he was familiar,

and as far from relaxed as when the

Grasscutters had left him. He glanced

at Arthur Augustus through the pocket-

ing of his ear.

"Help me out of this!" he panted.

"But Jove! Who are you, dear boy?"

asked Arthur Augustus.

"Help me out, will you?"

"Fwag, what have you fixed yourself

up like that for?"

"You silly idiot!" roared the un-

happy junior of the sack. "Do you

think I did this of my own accord? Help

me out of it!"

Arthur Augustus regarded him de-

spairately. He was offended. The wry

face of St. Jim's was quite willing, at any

time, to extend a helping hand to a

stranger in distress. But he refused to

be addressed with civility.

"What did you call me?" inquired

Arthur Augustus sternly.

"Ridiculous! Help me!"

"I refuse to take the slightest notice

of a fellow who addresses me in that

ridiculous, wretched and disrespectful

manner!"

"Will you help me? I've been tied

up in this sack by a gang of young

rascals!"

"I refuse to help you unless you

apologise for your common way of

addressing me," said D'Arcy rigidly.

"Oh, you fool! You chump!"

"Very well, I will pass on. I leave

you to reflect on the value of common

politeness to a stranger," said D'Arcy

laughing.

He was about to walk on, with his

eccentric gait a little higher than

usual in the air, when he passed and

looked more closely at the funny

features.

"But Jove! I seem to know you,"

he remarked. "Your voice sounds like

Tom Merry's, too!"

"Will you help me?"

"I cannot quite recognise you with

that dough on your chinny. Are you

Tom Merry?"

"You!" panted the boy in the sack

desperately. "I—I'm Tom Merry of St.

Jim's. Now help me out of the sack!"

"I recognise an apology first, Tom

Merry, for the wretched remarks you

have addressed to me!"

"You—you—"

"Great Scott! A man came sliding

down the footpath, and stopped over

the side into the road. "What on

earth—"

The junior in the sack turned quickly

at the sound of his voice. Evidently it

was a familiar voice to him.

"Oh, it's you, Goring!" he exclaimed,

in a tone of relief. "Come and get me

out of this!"

The man stood staring at him, Arthur

Augustus D'Arcy glanced at the man.

He was a tall, thin fellow, dressed

fashionably, though with a somewhat

dingy air about him. His face was

dark, as if from exposure in a silvery

fog," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"You might have been witness several

times ago," Tom Merry, if you had

been with us, always make it a point to

return to be treated with great dis-

respect."

The junior in the sack gave a start,

and made a sudden rush for D'Arcy.

The smell of St. Jim's jumped back.

"Here, keep off!" he exclaimed.

"You will smother me with that wretched

foam!"

But the incensed junior did not keep

off. He leaped right into D'Arcy, and

a shower of foam from the sack scattered

itself over the elegant person of the

smell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus

gave a start of horror and wrath.

"Oh! Keep off! But Jove, if you

weren't tied up, I'd give you a fearful

thrashing!" he howled. "You looked

worth—er!"

D'Arcy fairly took to his heels. His

slender clothes were in danger of being

quite spoiled. "The junior in the sack

grinned, as if contented since that he

was free of his many troubles. But he

was startled again as he

was turned to the man with the eyes.

"Help me out of this, Goring, do you

mean?"

Goring nodded, and came towards

him.

CHAPTER 2.

A Painful Misunderstanding!

"A NOTHER ginger, Maxson?"

"Whatcha?"

"Same here," said Morry

Lewther.

Tom Merry was standing front. The

Terrible Three of the Shell From at St.

Jim's were seated under the old tree

at Mrs. Minerva's little shop in the

High Street of Ryecroft village. They

were looking very cheerful.

It was beautiful spring weather, and

the gleams of the Shell had been for a

ramble by the river, and on the way

back to the school they had rested there

for refreshments in the shape of ginger-

bread, doughnuts, and jam-tarts.

Tom Merry had lately received a visit

from Miss Priscilla Fawcett, his old

governess, and the old lady had left

him several bottles of medicine, a great

deal of hygienic advice, and a handsome

tip. The medicine he had buried in

the garden at St. Jim's, the hygienic

advice he had promptly forgotten, but

the tip was being nobly expended to

the immense satisfaction of Maxson

and Lewther, his inseparable chums,

and himself.

"Three more gingers, please, Mrs.

Morphy," said Tom.

"Yes, Master Merry."

"And a dozen more jam-puffs," said

Morry Lewther.

"And had a dozen doughnuts!" said

Maxson.

"Yes, young gentlemen!"

Morry Lewther leaned lazily and

contentedly against the big, gnarled

trunk behind the seat.

"This is happiness!" he murmured

drowsily.

"First stop!" said Tom Merry.

"Gawson's coming, and the voice of

the hon-ours-school is heard in the

land! And we're going to look for the

New Form, and a cricket, and the

Grammar School, and everybody!"

"And this is how we are getting ready

for that?" grinned Maxson. "We

would to have been at practice this

afternoon!"

"Oh, no hurry—no good coming

at!"

"Gordon Gay said his crowd have

been at peering some time now," Monty Louthier remarked.

"Oh, they need it more than we do!"

"Ha, ha, ha! They wouldn't admit that!"

"Fact, all the same. Hallo!" said Tom Merry, straightening up in his seat. "Talk of angels and you hear the rattle of their girdle buckles. Here come the Grammar School boarders."

The Terrible Three lost all trace of business in an instant. They were on the alert at once. Six Grammarian juniors had crossed the village street, and were heading for Mrs. Murphy's shop.

As the rival juniors were always in a state of warfare, and as the odds were two to one on the side of the Grammarian party, the Terrible Three prepared for trouble. Monty Louthier carefully laid his hand on a soda-siphon that stood on the little round table. Tom Merry pushed back his cuffs in a nervous sort of way.

Gordon Gay & Co. halted at the little table. They did not show signs of hostility, as it happened. They showed signs of astonishment instead. Six pairs of eyes were fastened upon Tom Merry at once.

"Tom Merry!" exclaimed Gay.

"You!" ejaculated Frank Monk.

"Or his giddy ghost!" said Carboy.

"He doesn't look so much like a ghost as he did!" Woodton major remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three stared blankly at the new arrivals. They had expected chipping, or perhaps a frontal attack, but that charge of remarks amazed them, especially Tom Merry. So far as he could see, there was nothing surprising in finding him drinking ginger-beer outside the village drishkop on a half-holiday.

"Have you gone all your rockers?" Tom Merry demanded. "Why shouldn't I be here? Is this a new variety of Grammar School humour, or are you potty?"

"No reason why you shouldn't be here," Gordon Gay conceded. "But how did you get here—that's the queer thing! How did you get rid of that sack?"

"It isn't half an hour ago," said Linn. "We've only been to the miller's store."

"Changed his clothes, too?" remarked Woodton minor. "He's in bloom now."

"Well, he is a quick-change artist, and no mistake!" commented Gay.

"Would you mind explaining what you mean?" asked Tom Merry pettishly.

"It sounds to me as if you've just escaped from a lyrical asylum."

"Grammar School—same thing!" murmured Monty Louthier.

"You know jolly well what we mean," said Gordon Gay. "Perhaps you haven't told your pals—they don't know how you got the sack, perhaps?"

"The sack?"

"My hat! First he was pretending he wasn't Tom Merry, and now he's pretending he doesn't know what the sack was!" ejaculated Gordon Gay.

"Tommy, my boy, you're going on the downward path with a steady rush. Smoking, reading sporting papers, and telling whoppers—oh, Tommy!"

"Oh, Tommy!" said all the Grammarians together, and six sorrowful frowns were shaken at the Shell fellow at once.

Tom Merry coloured angrily. "Look here, if you're not potty, what do you mean?" he exclaimed. "I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about, and if you say I tell whoppers I'll set you in the eye!"

"Don't you!" asked Gay, in surprise. "You know I don't."

"I jolly well know you do," said Gordon Gay, his own temper beginning to rise. "Didn't you deny that you were Tom Merry when we met you in the lane?"

"You didn't meet me in the lane."

"Well, my hat!"

"And if you had I shouldn't have denied my own name, I suppose?" snapped Tom Merry. "Why should I?"

"I suppose you had some idea of taking us in and stopping us from ragging you," said Gordon Gay. "I suppose that was your object, though it was the silliest and stupidest lie I ever heard told!"

"Yes, What else do you call it?" demanded Gay, "when a chap denies his own name! That's a lie, isn't it?"

Tom Merry jumped to his feet.

"I repeat that you didn't meet me in the lane," he said. "You may be making some idiotic mistake, and in that case I can excuse it—"

"Don't trouble about excusing it," said Gay dryly. "I suppose you know you when we see you. We've seen you often enough. I suppose you'll say next that we didn't rag you and tie you up in a sack!"

"You certainly didn't!"

"Well, that beats the band!" exclaimed Woodton major. "I must have some ginger-beer after that to take the danger away."

And he picked up the glass Monty Louthier had filled for himself and emptied it.

"Monty Louthier and Mammo could prove what I say if it were necessary," Tom Merry added, his eyes blazing.

"They've been with me all the afternoon."

"His lantern's been separated," said Mammo. "We've been up the river, and we've stopped here on our way back. We haven't been through the lane at all. We started by way of the byway-path."

"Does Louthier say the same?" asked Gay pettishly.

"Of course I do," said Louthier. "It's of no consequence that I can see, but it's quite true."

"Then I can only say that you are a good pair of crooks to Tom Merry in the Annetas lane."

"So you don't believe it?" exclaimed Tom.

"Of course I don't."

"No fear!" said Woodton major. "How can we believe fearful whoppers that we know are not true?"

"Nobody's going to call me a liar without putting his hands up afterwards," said Tom deliberately. "Are you quite ready, Gay?"

"Quite ready, my pippin!" said Gay.

"Leave him to me," said Frank Monk, pushing his leader aside. "I own the rubber one for the scratch he gave me."

"That scratch!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"You'll say now you didn't do it. I suppose?" Monk sneered.

"Certainly I didn't do it! Do you think I'm so foolish to scratch anybody in a hurry?"

"Well, I never thought so before, but now you've done it I can't help thinking so, can I?" said Monk.

"You notice?"

That was enough for Monk. He



The head of the imprisoned justice emerged through the sack, and the Grammarians roared with laughter as they saw his face. It was smothered with flour from the interior of the sack. "Let me go!" shrieked the justice. "You bound! Let me go at once!"

rushed to the attack. In a moment more he was striking to and fro in close combat with Tom Merry. Gordon Day and Wootton Taylor were engaged with Manners and Loveliter in a second scene. Mrs. Margely, in the doorway of the tuckshop, held up her hands in horror.

Young gentlemen—young gentlemen! she protested.

"Bump them!" shouted Lane. "They aren't worth hitting—made and hair! Give 'em a bumping and let 'em go!"

"Stand back!" paroled Gordon Day. But his followers did not stand back. Day was down, with Loveliter uppermost, and the other Gramscarians seized Loveliter and dragged him off and rolled him in the grass under the trees.

Tom Merry and Manners were rolled as promptly and rolled over, with two to one against them they had no chance.

"Fair play, you rotters!" shouted Tom Merry.

Lane chuckled.

"This isn't a fight—this is a ragging," he explained. "File in, you chaps. Here are the jaw tarts, all ready!"

"Hush!"

"You've got the facts and the ginger-lice!"

"Grough!" gasped the unfortunate juniors, as the jaw tarts were plastered over their consciences. "Gough!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Gordon Day, roaring with laughter. "It's time we got in to tea, and I decline to remain in such respectable company any longer. Those fellows don't look respectable."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you want an you chaps, you know where to find us, with or without gloves, just as you prefer," added Day.

And the Gramscarians trooped off, laughing, leaving the Terrible Three simply quivering, and dabbing frantically at the jam that clogged their eyes, their noses, their mouths, and their hair.

CHAPTER 4.

Doubts!

"GROOUGH!"

"Ugh!"

"Grou-ooogh!"

The Terrible Three sat up under the trees, dazed, bewildered and sticky. Everything about them was sticky. There was jam all over them—jam and ginger-beer.

"Oh, the rotters!" gasped Tom Merry.

"The brats!"

"The cat!"

They staggered to their feet. It was only a quarter of an hour since they had been feeling cheerful and contented, at peace with themselves, and with all the world. But what a change was there!

They looked round for the Gramscarians. But the Gramscarians were gone. Their yells of laughter had died away in the distance.

"Well, this takes the cake!" said Manners, wiping his face with his handkerchief. "I feel beastly—You!"

"You look beastly?" remarked Loveliter.

"Grough! So do you, for that matter."

"I think we all look beastly," said Tom Merry. "We'll make those cats all up for this! Not that I care much for a rag—only they called us liars!"

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"They started to think us, too—that's the curious thing!" said Manners. "I can't quite make it out."

"They made some idiotic remark, taking somebody else for you, Tommy. Manky Loveliter remarked, as he rolled away at the jam in his hair, 'That's the only way to accept for it. But they had no right to doubt our word.'"

"We'll make them sorry for it," growled Tom Merry.

"We shall have to get a wash somewhere," growled Loveliter. "All these jam curls washed, too! Grough!"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated a startled voice, as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came up. "What have you done here, dear?" with your teeth!"

D'Arcy fixed his gaze on his eye, and regarded the Terrible Three in great astonishment. Certainly their aspect at that moment was sufficient to astonish anyone that knew them.

"Oh, go and eat cake!" growled Tom Merry, whose temper was not improved by jam in his hair and down his neck.

"Really, Tom Merry—"

"Stop coming to a hand with the Gramscarians cats!" scouted Loveliter.

"I was washed busy, dear boy. I had to stop into Wig's shop for a brush down, which the usual way Tom Merry scolded me with dough," said Arthur Augustus.

"Another dirty deffen," said Tom Merry. "When did I cover you with jam, you am?"

"I refuse to be called an am!"

"When did I cover you with jam?" roared Tom Merry.

"About half an hour ago, dear boy, when I found you tied up in a sack in the lane."

"Tied as a March hare," said Tom Merry, leaning back in the seat at all, and I haven't been tied up in a sack."

"Great Bait!"

"You were dreaming, you deffen!"

"I was not dreaming, Tom Merry! And I decline to be called a deffen! If you were not so beastly sticky to touch, I would thank you for applying such wretched epithets to me!" said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. "As for your statement that you were not in the lane, that is a whoppah!"

"What?"

"A whoppah! A faithful oathswear!" And I refuse to reply to your ridiculous question. You certainly were in the lane, and you asked me to release you from the sack. You concluded me in jam—"

"I tell you I wasn't there!" yelled Tom Merry. "You mistook somebody else for me."

"What! I suppose I know your olivry. I didn't recognize you at first, as your face was smothered with dough, but I knew you when I looked at you. Besides, you told me you were Tom Merry when you asked me to help you."

"It was somebody else."

"What?"

"You mistook somebody else for me, as Gordon Day did, and if he believed me, so—"

"He must have been wrong, my eye, too," said Arthur Augustus dryly.

"Really, Tom Merry, I tell you your reasons for telling those ridiculous whoppahs."

Tom Merry did not reply. He was fed up with argument. He seized the semi-siphon from the table, and turned the nozzle upon Arthur Augustus.

D'Arcy. That elegant youth jumped away in great alarm.

Tom Merry, you wretch, don't— Oh, my dear! Oh! Bai Jove!"

Such a splash!

A flood of soda-water smote the wall of St. Jim's, and he staggered back with a yell.

Tom Merry grimaced through the jam and followed him up, keeping up the stream till the siphon was exhausted.

Arthur Augustus executed a series of frog-like hops in the attempt to escape the shower, but in vain.

"Oh! Grough! Yeh! Stop it, Tom Merry! Oh! I'll give you a faithful thwackin'! Oh! Yawwook!"

"Grough! I want the siphon, and Tom Merry advanced it on the table.

"There!" he panted. "That's come for you, and now for Gordon Day; only as he's gone now I welcome to the lot!"

"Grough!"

Arthur Augustus presented a shocking sight; his face was streaming with soda-water and his collar was quite limp; soda-water was running down in streams all over his once-elegant outfit.

"Oh, you wretch!" he wailed. "You faithful wretch! You have utterly ruined my clothes! Oh!"

"I'll spoil your silly jaw if you don't say good again!" growled Tom Merry, by no means appeased. "I don't allow myself to do that."

"Then you shouldn't tell whoppah! Oh! Hands off, you wretch!"

Tom Merry did not "bump off." His hands were on—said hard. He got the elegant junior's head into chaos.

"Now, you tailor's deffen," he said, "you're going to apologize, or I'll pass your olivry till your tailor won't know you!"

"Oh, oh! Welcome!"

"Are you going to apologize?"

"Certainly not! You have told whoppah!"

"Then I'll jelly you—"

Manky Loveliter grabbed his chain by the arm and dragged him back.

"Leave me alone!" panted Tom Merry, whose temper was at boiling-point now. "I'm going to lick the silly am."

"Hold on!"

"Bait! Let go!"

Arthur Augustus wretched himself away as Loveliter dragged Tom back. His noble face was as red with rage as it was wet with soda-water. He pushed back his soaking cuffs, trembling with excitement.

"Let him come on!" he shouted.

"You stink wretch! I'm ready for you! I'll give you a faithful thwackin' and—"

"Close it!" said Loveliter, waving him back with one hand and holding on to Tom Merry with the other. "No need to scold. There's been a mistake made, and I think I know how to explain it. I've jam remembered."

"What do you mean?" growled Tom Merry.

"Don't you remember?" said Loveliter, his face full of excitement now. "Last time you got into a row because a fellow like you was seen pok-harriering and playing the giddy goat apparently round this place. He was so like you that lots of folks took him for you. His name was Clavering. Well, it's the same fellow turned up again, that's all."

Tom Merry started.

He had forgotten that incident, which had caused him a great deal of trouble at the time it had happened—and had, indeed, placed him under a cloud for a time. But now that Loveliter recalled

It to his mind he remembered the rook-
ing young blackguard Reggie Claver-
ing, whose surprising resemblance to
himself had caused so much confusion
and misunderstanding.

"Clavering?" he inquired.
"Your double," said Lewtchak.
"That's it!" exclaimed Marmora. "I
remember him. You got into a row that
time, Tommy, because the cat was
taken for you. Don't you remember?"

"I remember now."
"And he used to do just such things
as Gordon Gay mentioned—speaking and
reading sporting papers and so on,"
said Minsky Lewtchak. "He's come back
to Rykoshka for some reason, that's the
trick of it. There can't be another
party in the world so like you. It must
be that cheap Clavering again."

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augus-
tus D'Arcy. "I remember now, Lewt-
chak, dear boy. I am quite surprised
that you should have thought of that.
I did not think of it myself."
"Go on!" said Lewtchak.

"That must be it!" exclaimed Tom
Merry. "And the Grammarian cad-
dars must have ragged him, taking him for
me. Some fine night if he was doing
what Gay said."

"But Clavering says the fellow gave him
my name."
"Yess. But I remember now it was
after I had introduced him as Tom
Merry," said Arthur Augustus thought-
fully. "Possibly he thought I should
be more ready to help him if he said
he was a St. Jim's chap. The awful
wretch to borrow another chap's
name!"

"I'll jolly soon stop him doing that
as soon as I get near him!" growled
Tom Merry. "He's caused me trouble
enough already without doing that. I
suppose that is the explanation."

"That's it!" said Marmora. "All the
same, Gay ought to have taken our
word."

"Yess, wraith! It's wrotten bad form
to doak a chap's word," said Arthur
Augustus D'Arcy, with a sage shake of
the head. "I regard Gay as being
acted wraith like an ostendish if he
wants to help your word, dear boy."

"We're so glad you see!" ex-
claimed Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! Above!" stammered
Arthur Augustus, taken aback. "Well,
you-you see, dear boy, I-I thought
you were telling chopsticks. I'm awfully
sorry. I take back all I said."

"Then I take back the soda-water!"
grinned Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy cast a rapid
downward glance at his disheveled
clothes.

"It was really a most unfortunate
misapprehension," he said apologetically.
"I have led to my usual form suit.
These clothes will serve for the same
again. I would give them to Toly, but
Toly isn't allowed to dress in flannel.
It is really very unfortunate indeed.
However, I am very glad the matter
is cleared up."

"Well, we want a wash," said Minsky
Lewtchak. "And after that there's
business to be attended to."

"Business," said Tom Merry.
"What business? Do you mean going
for the Grammar School cad?"

"That can wait! I'm thinking of
Master Reggie Clavering, who's got the
chance to have a hair like yours and
the same melodious voice, and the
soda serve to borrow your name
when he's speaking to a born idiot!"

"Wraith, Lewtchak—"
"That cheap cad's enough trouble



last term," went on Lewtchak. "I
think it's up to us to see that he
doesn't cause any more. I don't see
that he's got any business in Rykoshka
at all, and I suggest that we don't
allow him to stay here."

"Tom Merry started.
"That's rather high-handed, isn't
it?" he said. "I suppose he's got
some business here, or he wouldn't
have come here, would he?"

"Well, he can go and do his busi-
ness wherever it is, sometimes don't
said Lewtchak. "We're not going to
have him here spilling things for us.
If he was a decent chap, it wouldn't
matter his being here. No harm if he
was taken for you going into the
library or a bankshop."

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"But a jolly lot of harm if he's
taken for you going into the Green Man,
or the tobacconist's," said Lewtchak
sagely. "Therefore, we are justified
in taking such measures. I suggest
that we call all the G's together and
put it to them, and that every fellow
undertake to rag Master Reggie
Clavering wherever and whenever he
meets him, and to make it a point to
sweet him as often as possible. Then,
I fancy, Master Clavering will make
himself considerably scarce in the
neighborhood—what?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yess, wraith!" said Arthur
Augustus thoughtfully. "I regard
that as a good deal, Lewtchak, and I
must say am surprised at its prece-
dents' favor you."

"Done!" said Tom Merry.
And so it was settled. There was a
decidedly warm time in store for
Master Reggie Clavering, who had the
chuck, as Lewtchak expressed it, to be
so remarkably like Tom Merry.

The doors of the School House kept
their eyes open for Master Reggie as
they returned to the school, quite pre-
pared to begin operations as the spot,
if opportunity offered. But Tom
Merry's double was not to be seen.

CHAPTER 5.

THE PLOTTER.

THE man with the black moun-
tain and the crimson cap
a penknife, and cut the whip-
cord that secured the sack
round the imprisoned boy. Then he

jerked the floor sack off, taking care
to keep it clear of his own clothes.

"Now my hands!" grunted the boy
ungraciously.

"They seem to have made pretty
sure of you," said Gerald Goring, with
a smile, as he cut the cord.

"Yes, the rotten! I'll make them
sorry for it."

"Who were they?"

"Fellows belonging to the Grammar
School, I think, by their caps—that
red-brick building near the village."

"But why did they handle you like
that?" Goring asked, in surprise,
watching the boy carefully as he
dusted down his clothes. "They can't
know you."

"They took me for Tom Merry of
St. Jim's."

Goring started.

"Tom Merry?"

"Yes; I was taken for him before,
when I was staying here—the time I
was sacked from my old school. It
was some of his friends that time who
took me for him. The chap seems to
be very like me. Blessed if I know
what I don't suppose we're related in
any way. Those Grammar School fools
thought it was Tom Merry."

"Good!"

"The boy stared at him.

"Good, is it?" he started. "I don't
see anything good in it. I know I'll
pay them out somehow for the way
they've handled me."

"You let them think you were Tom
Merry?"

"No; I told them I wasn't, but they
wouldn't believe me. The chap is
really very like me. I've seen him."

"Yes, I know how like you he is."

"Do you?" said the boy, looking at
him. "Have you seen this fellow
Merry?" he asked, as you know him."

Goring laughed.

"Quite well," he said. "He doesn't
know me, but I know him. This is a
stroke of luck—the young ones taking
you for Merry."

"It wasn't lucky for me!" roared the
boy irritably. "I don't understand
you, and if that's all you've got to
say you may as well clear off, Gerald
Goring. You said you wanted to see
me on business. But it—"

"Keep cool," said Goring easily.

"I do want to see you on business,
Reggie—good business. But let's get
out of this. We don't want to be
seen."

"Why not?" grunted Clavering.

"I'm not afraid of being seen."

"But I am. Get into the wood!"

Goring climbed over the stile, and
the heavy boy followed him. Clavering
was looking puzzled and sulky.
He evidently did not understand the
necessity for concealment, and his
temper was at its very worst just then.
But he followed the man with the
black mountains into the wood.

Goring did not stop till they were in
a deep glade a considerable distance
from the road. He halted at last, how-
ever, and Reggie Clavering stopped,
too, looking rather uneasy.

The man leaned against the trunk of
a big tree and lighted a cigarette, re-
garding the sullen junior with thought-
ful eyes.

"Now what do you want?" de-
manded Clavering. "I'm getting fed-
up with him. I don't see any need
for all this dashed mystery!"

"I'll explain," said Goring. "Unless
you go putting up!"

"Oh! Green Man?"

"That's an awful hole of a place,
isn't it?"

"It suits me," said Clavering generously. "Besides, I'm not stopping long, I suppose?"

"No; you can't stop long in Rycombe. You must keep out of sight," said Goring. "That's a most important point."

"You don't see it?"
"You'll tell when I've explained."
"You're jolly long-winded about it," said Clavering. "Give me a cigarette. We can smoke while we talk, if you've got a long lay to get through."

Goring extended his case, and Clavering helped himself to a cigarette and lighted it.

"Now, what's the scheme?" he said. "Anything about the goose-pool?"

"Not this time. Something more important than that. It's because you are Tom Merry's double that I want you."

"Blissed if I see it!"
"Let me see," said Goring meditatively. "You were expelled from your last school, I think, because of your taste for smoking and horses, and hanging about with boozies?"

"You ought to know, as you helped to get me into that kind of thing," growled Clavering. "What are you taking that up for?"

"And since you were washed from school you've been living with an uncle?" Goring pursued, unobtrusively.

"Yes; and I've got a taste now, instead of going to school," said Clavering. "I make the tutor let me do as I like, though; and as uncle is away most of the time, I generally manage to do as I choose. Only it's rather dull at Clavering Lodge. If I could, I'd hook it."

"Then you'll be glad of something to fill up the gaps," said Goring—"something that will get money into your pocket, too. How are you off for tin?"

"Rather! I've had bad luck, and uncle doesn't shell out too much, either. I don't have any of my own money till I'm twenty-one," said Clavering wistfully.

"And you won't make it last long, then, I fancy?"

"I mean to have a good time, anyway."

"But at present—?"
"I'm jolly nearly stony now, and I'm in debt. If you've got any tips for making a buck, I'll be jolly glad to hear them," said Clavering, looking a little more good-humoured.

"I can help you to make a good deal, and you can help me. You've met this fellow Merry of St. Jim's, you say. Did you like him?"

"No, I didn't."

"Why not?"

"He handled me, the cad! There was a girl—Betsy, I think they called her—sent me for him, and I danced up with her, not knowing she'd made a mistake, you know. She didn't like the way I talked—"

"I'm not surprised at that!" commented Goring dryly.

"Well, I thought she had picked up with me, a stranger, you know; and then we ran into the very fellow himself! He'd taken me for, with some of his friends. He went for me."

"And kicked you?"

"Well, I—I didn't have much chance, and—"

"And you don't like him?"

"I hate him! If I ever get a chance to do him a bad turn, I'll make him sorry that he laid his paw on me!" said Clavering viciously.

"Good! I'm going to give you the chance?"

"You are?" ejaculated the junior.

"Yes, I've got something up against Tom Merry, too!"

"You! What has he done to you?"

"Nothing."

"How do you know that?"

"No."

"Then how can you have anything up against him?" asked Clavering irritably.

"I mean what I say. It's a question of money—a big sum of money," said Goring. "If I succeed in what I've been planning, I shall be a rich man. Instead of putting with a few quids on horses, I shall be able to run horses myself, if I choose. I shall be the richest chap you know, Reggie, if all goes well. It all depends on how this works out. What would you say to a hundred quid in your pocket?"

Clavering opened his eyes wide.

"A hundred quid!" he repeated.

"Yes; and more to follow whenever

information. I've seen it down in black and white."

"Where?"

"Never mind where?"

"Look here, if you can't trust me to—"

"began Clavering, whose eyes were gleaming with curiosity now.
"I trust you as far as I can see you," said Goring steadily. "We're old pals, Reggie, but I'm not going to put it in your power to give me away and stop my little game for ever, if it should fall this time. You see, I'm talking plainly to you. I am going to sell you just enough to make it possible for you to help me. And if you help me I'll make it worth your while—more than that worth your while. You have an eye to grind yourself, too. You don't like the fellow who's got to be glad to see him scolded."

"Jolly glad!" said the astute Reggie.

"Then it's a go!"

"But how on earth are you thinking of working it?" demanded Clavering.

"How can I possibly have any influence on what happens to a fellow I hardly know? I shall probably never see him again."

"You've forgotten how like his his you are. No need for you to see Tom Merry; all you've got to do is to let people see you and take you for him."

Clavering started.

"That's easy enough," he said. "I've been taken for him several times already. But even then, what—"

"In circumstances that will lead to his being disgraced," continued Goring. "Don't you understand?"

"That happened before," grinned Clavering. "I was squally once, and some of the St. Jim's fellows took me for him, and were in an awful way about it."

Goring frowned.

"It's unfortunate that they discovered that Tom Merry had a double," he said. "But it's some time ago, and the matter's probably forgotten by this time. You must be careful never to be caught in his company; he must never be seen at the same time as you. That would spoil everything. And when you are playing your little game it won't be at a time when he could prove an alibi. But if you are seen riding out of a pub at eleven o'clock at night—Merry will be in bed then—they'll hear about it at the school the next day, and he won't be able to prove that he was in bed."

"I see!" said Clavering slowly.

"And then there's St. Jim's Grammar School fellows," said Goring thoughtfully. "Something may be done through them. They are at a distance from St. Jim's, but they all know Tom Merry well, and have already taken you for him. Suppose Tom Merry should turn up there and do something awfully outrageous? Squally, for instance, and insult one of the masters—there would be complaints to the head of St. Jim's, and the chopper would come down—what?"

Clavering grinned.

"That would be the safest way," he said. "I shall have to keep away from St. Jim's, anyway, or the fellows would soon spot the fact that there's a chap just like Tom Merry hanging about the place. But at the Grammar School they won't have any suspicion. I should be glad to go for those matters, too, after the way they've handled me."

"Good, then?" said Goring. "Look here! Are you able to stay away from Clavering Lodge for some time?"

"My uncle's away. He won't be back for three days. He never asks me what I've been doing."

"Your uncle—?"



"Oh, boy, a four-leaf clover! Something's coming my way!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to P. Jackson, 22, Lawrence Street, St. Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

"Rolling in money!" repeated Clavering, his eyes opening wide.

"Yes?"

"Yes," said Goring coolly.

"Well, it sounds all right, if you're not getting my leg," said Clavering suspiciously. "Is this what you wanted me to meet you in Rycombe for—to tell me this?"

"Exactly?"

"Well, pile in! How are you going to get rolling in money?"

"With your help—and Tom Merry's. Your help will be part of the game; Tom Merry's will be quite unobtrusively given," said Goring, with a peculiar smile.

"There's no need for me to give you all the particulars—now, at all events—but if Tom Merry were disgraced and expelled from St. Jim's I should be a rich man."

"Careless?"

"It's a fact!"

"Oh, no!" said Clavering. "I can't realize that. How could Tom Merry's being disgraced put money in your pocket?"

"No need for you to know that," said Goring coolly. "But it's a fact—a solid fact! I shall roll in quids if that can be brought about. I've got certain

"I can manage him; I lead him away," sneered Clavering.
 "Then that's all right. You mustn't stay in Rybombe; it's too near, when I come to think of it. Besides, I'm staying there myself, and we mustn't be seen together. You must keep in some quiet place."

Clavering granted discontentedly.
 "I don't like quiet places. I'll stay in Wayland if you like."

"That would be wiser. The St. Jim's fellows are often there, and you would be spotted sooner or later."

"Look here, where do you want me to stay?" demanded Clavering rebelliously.
 "In some lonely place where you can't possibly be spotted," said Goring freely. "Look here, Reggie, it's worth while. It means a fortune to go and a handsome check for you. You know Wayland Moor, I suppose?"

"There are some cottages on the moor where visitors from London come down sometimes in the summer for a quiet stay, and for the air. You can put up at one of them. I know one, kept by a dead old woman—a Mrs. Holt. You can stay there. It's a mile away from any other building, and quite safe."

"Do you think I'm going to be buried alive in a lovely cottage with only a dead old woman to talk to?" shouted Reggie.

"You must! You can get off to the moon sometimes. I'll call for you," said Goring cheerfully. "It's necessary, Reggie. It means a hundred quiet, well-earned shillings."

"How do I know it does?" asked Reggie. "I've only got your word for that. And suppose the plan fails after all? Why do I come in?"

"There'll be something done."

"How much?"
 Goring took two five-pound notes from his pocket-book and handed them to the junior. Clavering looked at them in surprise.

"Ten quiet!" he said.
 "Yes. That's good enough—what!"
 "Well, you, that's good enough," said Clavering quite good-humouredly. "I shall be able to have a bit of a plunge with this. I'll do as you like."

"Agreed, then! I'll take you to the cottage now—"

"My bag's at the Green Man."

"You can have it sent. Better not go back there. I'll pay your bill there and have the bag sent on—no matter. I'll bring it myself. I know the landlord. What name did you give there? I told you not to use your own name in this place."

"Montgomery," said Reggie.
 "You young son! What did you give a name like that for?" said Goring irritably. "Why couldn't you call yourself Smith or Jones—some name that wouldn't attract attention?"

"I'm not going to call myself Smith or Jones," said Reggie solemnly.

Goring made an angry gesture.

"Well, it can't be helped now. Let's get along."

Reggie Clavering lighted another cigarette and followed his precious friend through the wood.

CHAPTER 6.

Figgins' Friends!

FEGGINS of the New House at St. Jim's whistled.

He was standing on the steps of the New House with a card in his hand.

(Continued on next page.)



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That card had just been handed to her by Toby, the School House page, who had then departed, grinning. Figgins of the Fourth looked at the card in surprise, and then he whitened. The card bore the inscription, in Tom Merry's clear hand:

"I hereby request the pleasure of the company of G. Figgins to join in Study No. 2. In Figgins is invited to bring his friends. Seven sharp. "Well, my last!" said G. Figgins. "Those School House boundaries are beginning to do the thing in style! To go or not to go—that is the question. We've got a good tea in the study ourselves, and if we go and feed with the School House boarders, we can't eat there; and I was planning a rag."

And G. Figgins departed by his study to consult the Co. on the subject.

Kerr and Wynn, the famous Co., were in Figgins' study getting tea. The latter was sipping on the fire, and the cloth was laid. But there was not the usual appearance of harmony in the study. Kerr was looking annoyed, and Fatty Wynn's plump face bore a somewhat grimy and commiseration look.

"Hallo!" said Figgins, surveying them as he came in, and in hand. "Anything good going?"

"Yes!" growled Kerr.

"Ham's all right, isn't it," said Figgins anxiously, "and the mutton?"

"Fatty's found them all right!" growled Kerr. "He's scooped the lot."

"What?"

"Nothing but an egg each left for tea," said the exasperated Kerr, "and bread-and-butter! I came in just as he was finishing the whole shoot."

"Fatty, you beat!"

"I—I'm sorry, Fatty!" faltered Fatty Wynn, looking more commiseration than ever. "I really didn't mean to scoop the lot. But I was famished. You see, I had hardly anything to eat at dinner."

"I saw you scoop three helpings of beef-steak pie!" growled Kerr.

"And three of pudding," said Figgins.

"Well, what was that to a chap like me?" said Fatty Wynn. "I get awfully hungry in this spring weather, you know."

"Is there any kind of weather you don't get hungry in?" asked Kerr sarcastically.

"You fat boarder, you ought to be scooped!" said Figgins.

"And we're going to scold him!" said Kerr. "I'm hungry, aren't he's wolfed all the food, and we haven't any tea."

"I'm really sorry, you know," said Fatty Wynn.

"We'll make you sorry," said Kerr.

"Collar him, Fatty!"

But Figgins shook his head.

"We'll be him off," he said kindly.

"It's all right, Kerr."

"All right!" bowled Kerr. "I tell you I'm famished, and there's next to nothing to eat. I'm going to scold the fat boarder."

"It's all right, I tell you. I've got an invitation to be here."

Fatty Wynn's face brightened up.

"Oh, good!" he exclaimed. "I hope it's a decent spread."

"It's from Tom Merry."

"Oh, good!" said Fatty Wynn, with great satisfaction. "Tom Merry always stands a good feed."

"Only I was thinking out a rag on those School House chaps," said Figgins. "I had a scheme for making them sit up. Only if we feed with them—"

"I think those House chaps can be carried too far," said Wynn, with a

Tom Gem Library—No. 122.

shake of the head. "I really think, Fatty, that—that sometimes we ought to go better than that, after all, we're all St. Jim's chaps, School House and New House alike, and covered thro—the right kind of fellowship."

"At tea-time?" asked Kerr.

"Well, what better time for extending the hand of friendship?" demanded Fatty Wynn warmly. "No good extending it in the Form-room, I suppose, or while we're doing our preparation!"

"We'd better accept the invitation, if it's for all of us," said Kerr.

"Why, of course," said Fatty Wynn.

"Oh, it would be a sin to let a good feed go begging. Tom Merry is a good feed too. And he's been ragged by the Governor School since to-day. I really think it's up to us to show our sympathy."

"Here-her!" said Kerr.

"The invitation's for all of us," said Figgins, holding up the card. "Look at that! They're doing it in style!"

"My hat, they are!" said Kerr. "You are obligated to take your friends. It must be a good feed if they put on so much side as all that."

Fatty Wynn rubbed his plump hands. Apparently his appetite was still in good working order, in spite of the ham and the mutton.

"This is like corn in Egypt," he said.

"I don't say," said Tom Merry, who was a very decent chap. "I wish we had him in the New House. He's wanted in that House. Let's get off."

"Hold on!" said Figgins, with a grin.

"T. Merry requests G. Figgins to bring his friends."

"Well, we're your friends, aren't we?" demanded Fatty Wynn.

"Yes; but I've got some more—in fact, every fellow I show this card to will turn out to be a boson pal, I fancy," grinned Figgins. "As they're getting on so much style over in the School House, I think it's up to us to play up to it. In the circumstances, I think I'll take a party, to do justice to an imposing invitation."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come along!" said Figgins. "We'll gather up ourselves as we go."

And the Co., grinning, followed him from the study. They bent their steps in the direction of Rodfern's study.

Rodfern, Owen, and Lawrence were ritish of Figgins & Co. in the New House, just as Duke & Co. were the chief of the Terrible Three over in the School House. But rivalry was forgotten on an occasion like this. Figgins looked open the door of Rodfern's study and marched in with the Co.

There was a smell of frying herrings in the study. Rodfern, Owen, and Lawrence were scholarship boys, and not overburdened with money, and tea in their study was generally of a frugal nature.

Rodfern, who was cooking, turned a pink face from the fire, and regarded Figgins & Co. inquiringly.

"Come to tea?" he asked. "Well, luckily there are enough of the Yearmouth warblers to go round. Spout down somewhere."

"Hurry them!" replied Figgins.

"We've come to take you to an important social function."

"Hats!"

"Fatty! Tom Merry is giving a feed in great style. Are you my friend, Roddy?"

Rodfern looked puzzled.

"Your friend?" he repeated. "Well, I don't hold with you considering yourself cock of the walk in the House, and

I think it is my duty to keep you in your place a bit."

"Look here—"

"But it's all done by kindness," said Rodfern lamely, "so you can consider me a friend."

"You cheeky—"

"You long-legged geeble!"

"I'm really well."

"Hold on!" said Kerr, interposing. "Explain what your sense is for, Fatty."

"Yes; but that cheeky one's asking for a drink now."

"A drink, if you like," said Rodfern promptly. "If you can hand them out, you know."

"I'll show you—"

"Dance on!"

"Stop it!" roared Kerr, pushing between the two belligerent juniors.

"Tom Merry has asked Fatty to bring his friends to an extra-special feed."

"Oh," said Rodfern, "that alters the case! Fatty, I'm your friend for life."

"Same here, old scout!" said Lawrence promptly. "I never let go friendly towards anybody as I do towards you, Fatty."

"Just what I was going to say!" exclaimed Owen heartily. "Fatty, I'm your old pal—your affectionate old pal!"

Figgins grinned.

The atmosphere of hostility had cleared with wonderful rapidity. Owen had picked up a cricket stump, but he did it behind him as he spoke.

"Well, come on," said Figgins. "You can keep those giddy lavings for pepper and we'll help you to finish them."

"Done!"

And Rodfern, Owen and Lawrence joyfully joined Figgins & Co. and the whole party went down the passage together. They met a dusky junior in the passage. It was Kessel Hoo, the Jam of Kensington, a precisely youth from India, who had been much surprised at first to find himself a portion of no consequence whatever at St. Jim's.

Figgins slapped him on the shoulder.

"Are you a friend of mine, Jimmy?" he asked.

"While the sun shines and the sea flows there is no need to the friendship of Kessel Hoo for his friend Figgins!" said the Indian youth impressively.

"Well, that's putting it, generally, I suppose," said Figgins. "But if you mean that you're a pal, come on."

And Kessel Hoo came on.

The party descended the stairs and ran into Thompson's of the Shell in the doorway. Thompson was sometimes "up" against Figgins & Co. regarding it as a shock of mere Fourth Formers to get up as leaders of the House juniors. But Figgins clapped him gently on the back.

"Are you a friend of mine, Thompson?" he asked.

Thompson stared.

"Oh, your rodder?" he inquired politely.

"No. I asked you if you were a friend of mine—an old pal?"

"I don't pal with lads in the Fourth," said the Shell fellow loftily.

"Sorry!" said Figgins. "I'm asked to take my friends to an extra-special feed."

Thompson's lofty expression faded as once. Thompson was, as a matter of fact, expecting a commutation, and until that commutation came he was doomed to have tea in the Shell. The Shell fellow hesitated upon Figgins.

"Of course, I—I was only speaking generally," he said hastily.



Swish-ah-ah-ah-ah! A flood of soda-water sprays the wall of St. Jim's in the face and he tugged away. "Oh! Cough! Stop it, Tom Merry!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I'll give you a faithful Swedish! Yawwagh!"

"Sorry you're not my pal," said Figgins regretfully. "Never mind, it can't be helped. Come on, you fellows!"

"But I—I say—"

"Never mind, Thompson, it can't be helped. Good-bye!"

"But I—I feel awfully friendly, you know," said Thompson, catching Figgins by the sleeve. "I'll come, with pleasure. In fact, I've been thinking that we ought to pull together here, Figgie, old chap—Shall we? Won't you consider to shoulder, you know, for— for the good of the House."

Figgins chuckled.

"Come on, then," he said. "I think we've about enough now—enough to surprise Tom Merry, at any rate. I dare say I could find a lot more friends if I showed this card round; but eight of us will do. Come on!"

And the eight juniors quitted the New House and wandered across the yard—single, Figgins & Co. chucking glibly at the anticipation of Tom Merry's looks when he found what an army had accepted his kind invitation to come to tea.

CHAPTER 7.

Standing Room Only!

TOM MERRY'S study in the Shell passage in the School House was already pretty well packed.

The Terrific Threes were there, of course, and Talbot and Kargerson, Clifton Dano and Bernard Glyn, and Binky of the Fourth. The chance of Study No. 4—Bink and Horries, Dicky and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—aroused in a body, to find eight juniors already in the study. However, they came in smiling.

The Shell passage was one of the latest additions to the buildings of St. Jim's, and the rooms were larger than the junior studies in the Fourth, but twelve juniors certainly taxed the capacity of the study.

"Waikah a crowd—what!" Arthur Augustus remarked good-humouredly. "Nervah mind. The more the merrier!"

"Squat down where you can," said Tom Merry cheerily. "If you can't find room to squat, stand up. Only look happy!"

"Yess, waikah, old chap!"

"Rather enjoyable, crowding a bit," said Kargerson blandly. "Only don't tread on my foot, Horries. Your feet are a bit heavy. In your size eight or nine?"

"Over your foot," said Horries.

"Fray don't wag, dear boy!"

"We shall have to get a Standing Room Only notice outside, I think, Micky Lovelock remarked.

"Any more coming?" asked Jack Black.

"Yes, Figgins & Co."

"My hat! Where are you going to put them?"

"They can sit on one another's knees," said Micky Lovelock. "or stand on one another's feet. I'm not particular."

" Luckily, there are only three of them," said Talbot. "We'll keep the door open and make room somehow. Those who can't get near the table can have things passed to them."

"Yess, waikah!"

"The eggs are done to a turn," said Tom Merry, passing a rocky face from the fire, "and I think we'll let the fire go down now. It's warm."

"Not to say hot!" murmured Glyn, stopping a gasping knee with his

handkerchief, and in doing so drove his elbow into Clifton Dano's neck.

"There was a howl from the Canadian junior.

"Oh! Mind my neck, you see!"

"You mind my elbow!" said Glyn.

"Look here—"

"Peace, dear boys! Micky's used little formalities like that," said Arthur Augustus soothingly. "Fray take it easy, and don't complain. Oh! Wow! However, you wretch, wag your silly great head off my foot! Oh!"

"Take it smiling," grinned Clifton Dano.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You have certainly wained the polish on my foot, however, you wretch duffah!"

"Bow-wow!" said Horries.

"Open the jam," said Tom Merry loudly. "Three jars of jam—different kinds—and two whole ginger-biscuits and currant. Likewise, ginger-beer cakes and jam tarts without number. Goodness, this is an important occasion. I have pushed forty eggs—"

"Well, you're a giddy wholesale preacher, and no mistake!" said Dicky. "We could stand a song with this little lot. But what is there important about the occasion, besides the food? Oh, excuse, that's important."

"I've got a communication to make."

"Something up against the New House?" asked Binko, with interest.

"No; they're coming to the food, but—"

"Hullo, here they come!"

There was a tramp of feet in the doorway, and Figgins appeared in his coat, hat and worn looking over his

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shoulders. There were others behind—
quite an army.

"Invitation kindly accepted," said
Figgins. "Please, w'y'te come?"

"Walk in, old chap?"

"Ahem! Where am I to walk over?"
asked Figgins innocently.

"Oh, anywhere in anywhere?"

"Or! P'raps don't, shove into me in
that wuff manseah, Figgins!"

"Jolly glad to see you New House
chaps!" said Tom Merry hospitably.

"Glad to see you, Merr. Come in,
Wynn! Hello! Is that Roddies?"

"It is!" said Roddies. "It is?"

"Ahem! Try to find yourself room to
stand," said Tom Merry, with a
slightly worried look. "All welcome—
welcome as the giddy Gowers in May!
And Lawrence and Gwyn, ahem!
Come in!"

"The way is 'Still they come!'"
murmured Blake.

"You told me to bring my friends,"
said Figgins blantly. "There are only
eight of us, though."

"Eight! Ye gods! I—I mean, all
around!"

"Hah! Jove! That makes twenty
fellows altogether," murmured Arthur
Augustus D'Arcy, "and there certainly
isn't room for a dozen!"

"Come in, Thompson!" said Figgins
affably. "Tom Merry's glad to see
you. Come in, Kossow Koss! Come in,
Bent! Lots of room, if you can find
it."

"Put some chairs in the passage!"
said Tom Merry desperately. "Sorry
the room isn't any bigger, you fellows.
You can sit round the doorway!"

"I'd like to be round the table, if
you don't mind," said Fatty Wynn,
with a leagery eye on the piles of
vegetables. "I will pass things, you
know."

"Open your neck—ah!" said Blake
gruffly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty did not reply. It was no time
for arguing, or clapping. He tried on a
sufficient number of ties to clear a
passage to the table, and sat down there
and started. There were two acres of
poached eggs to start with, but under
Fatty Wynn's rapid operations the
number was quickly diminished.

Fortunately, good humour reigned
upon the tea-party. A multitude of
chairs outside the doorway accommodated
the juniors who could not squeeze
into the study. Good things were
passed out to them, and the food
started in earnest. Fatty Wynn was a
good starter, and a good carver, as
usual on such occasions, he was, so to
speak, first man in and not out at the
table.

"By the way," Talbot remarked, as
if struck by a sudden thought, "did
you say you had something to say,
Tom Merry?"

The Terrible Three had been kept
pretty busy waiting on their numerous
guests. Now there was a speaking
down, as the keen edge of appetite was
taken off. The piles of goodly viands
on the table had greatly diminished.

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "I have
something to say."

"Pile in, old chap!" said Blake,
aring himself with a wedge of cake.

"After a food like this, you can say
anything you like. Even if it's one of
your walloos, we'll give you a hear-
ing."

"This generous attitude was much
appreciated.

"Hear, hear!"

"Pile in, Merry, old man!"

"And pass the tart."

"The Gem Librarian.—No. 1,324.

"It isn't a walloo," said Tom Merry,
as the voices died away, to be succeeded
by the steady sound of clattering jaws.

"It's a very important matter!"

"Yes, without a doubt, you had
better let me explain to the fellows.
Tom Merry, as I know all about
it—"

"This is how it is," went on Tom
Merry, apparently deaf to Arthur
Augustus' kind offer. "You chaps
remember last term there was a cutter
case to Hylomans who was mistaken for
me, and caused a lot of trouble!"

"I remember him," said Figgins.

"I am here spritely once, and took care
of him believing it was you."

"His name was Clavering, I believe!"
said Blake.

"That's it. Well, he came back to
this neighbourhood, I understand,"
rejoined Tom Merry. "I haven't seen
him, but Gump has."

"Yes, wathak! I encountered the
votak."

"The Grammar School chaps seem to
have dropped on him this afternoon,
and found him smoking, and mistook
him for me, and tied him up in a sack."

"I remember you," said Tom Merry. "We had a rive with
Roddies. Guy afterwards. He wouldn't
believe me when I said I hadn't been
there. Now, I don't know what that
fellow Clavering has come back here
for, but we've talked it over, and we've
decided that it's not good enough."

"Wathak said I could—"

"Like his cheek to come back here,
after the trouble he gave us!" agreed
Kangaroo. "I remember you chaps
pinned him up to the school, and
showed him to the Head, to prove that
it wasn't you who'd been put-hanging,
Merry. I think he might have had
the decency to keep away!"

"I'm afraid he's a same business
here!" suggested Blake.

"He'd hardly come to a quiet village
like Hylomans for nothing!"

"Remember, wathak, he's not going to
stay here," said Tom. "He's already
been mistaken for me this afternoon.
It doesn't matter this time, as it is only
the Grammar School chaps, but it
might cause trouble next time. He's a
regular blackguard of a fellow, up to
all his old games. Another thought of
the scheme, and I think it's a good one,
and I want you chaps to help us!"

"Hear, hear!" said Figgins. "We'll
back you up!"

"Yes, rather," said Roddies heartily.

"What can we do?"

"The idea is to look for the cutter
and rag him on sight, and make the
place too hot to hold him," Tom Merry
explained. "I want all you fellows to
look for him, meet him as often as you
can, and go for him. Punch his head,
dig him in the eye, duck him in the
river, bang him in the ditch—any-
thing you like. I'm not particular how
you rag him, so long as you do rag
him. He is bound to get hot up—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When he gets hot-up, he'll clear off,
and we shall be rid of him, and there
won't be any more trouble such as
there was last time," said Tom. "I
think we're justified in handling him
how we like, because he's an utter and
an outsider. You remember he was
sent to Combe Ethel when he was
here before. Anything is good enough
for a cutter like that!"

"Yes, wathak! I regard it as a
downed fellow's duty to give a football
player to anybody who is wathak to
a lad!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We'll back you up, Tommy!"

"Hely on us!"

The Terrible Three exchanged glances
of satisfaction.

There was no doubt that Monty
Lowther's bookish fellows were security
plenty of backbone. There were several
juniors, the leading spirits of both
houses, prepared to go almost to any
length in making Raggie Clavering's
life a burden to him. If Master Raggie
threwed himself near St. Jim's, he was
certainly likely to experience a high old
time.

"One thing more—" said Tom
Merry.

"Of course, if you like!" said Roddies.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No; only one more!" said Tom,
laughing. "The rotter pretended to be
me to-day. He gave his name to Gump
as Tom Merry."

"The rotter speaks!"

"By the rotter may call himself mem-
Tom Merry—to get out of being ragged.
If he does, take no notice of him. Go
for him, all the same, and squash him!"

"Right-ho!"

"Depend on us!"

"My dear chap, you leave it to us!"
grinned Blake. "We'll make rags of
him—anything short of willful murder I
fear the jam!"

And while the famous food progressed
towards a blissful conclusion, the
crowd of juniors discussed with much
animation the intended hunt for
Raggie Clavering, and the things that
were to happen to him every time he
was caught.

It was agreed that the hunt was to
begin the following day, and there was
no doubt that the juniors were very keen
about it. The scheme was, perhaps, a
little lawless, but the juniors did not
think much about that. And if they had
known what the purpose Master
Clavering was upon in the neighbour-
hood of St. Jim's, they would certainly
have thought less still of it.

CHAPTER 8.

Tom Merry Makes Inquiry!

THE campaign started the next
day.

After morning lessons a score
of juniors wheeled out their
bicycles, with the laudable intention
of looking everywhere for Master Raggie
Clavering.

They rode up and down the lanes
round about St. Jim's; they searched the
Wayland road and the Abbotford road;
they looked into passages and back-
shops; they looked everywhere.

But they returned disconsolate to St.
Jim's in true for dinner.

They had seen nothing of the young
rascal.

If he was staying in the village or
in the neighbourhood, he certainly
wasn't abroad just at that time, or they
would have spotted him. The intended
ragging had not, therefore, come off
yet. But the juniors were not without
hope that they would drop on him soon.

Several more fellows, besides the
original twenty had heard of the state
of the case, and signified their readiness
to join in the campaign. Tom Merry &
Co. made no secret of the matter.

Indeed, Monty Lowther had explicitly
observed that the more it was talked
about the better. It was good for the
whole school to know that Tom Merry
had a double, and that he was in the
neighbourhood, and that he was a black-
guard. That made it less probable than
any other of the usually feasible
would be set down as Tom Merry's
accout. When the latter became a

topic of conversation at St. Jim's, such a mistake was not likely to arise.

Killcare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, called Tom Merry into his study after school that day. The story had reached his ears.

"What's this I hear about your having a double, Merry?" Killcare asked, giving the Shell fellow very curiously.

"You've seen him," said Tom. "It's the chap who was absent here last term—or last, I conclude it is. There's not likely to be two chaps in existence looking like my twin brother, and he's the same kind of fellow as that chap Clevering—a waster!"

"Rather awkward for you."

"Yes, that's why we're going to—"

Tom Merry paused in time. It was quite possible that Killcare, as head prefect of the School House, might not approve of the measures the conspiring juniors intended to take.

"Why you're going to—what?" asked Killcare.

"Sleep! Nothing!"

"You've seen this chap?" Killcare asked.

"Not this time, but Geley has. And the Grammarians caught him yesterday in mistake for me," said Tom.

"Well, it's a good thing it's known," said Killcare, "and a good thing your double has been seen, too, otherwise it might have been suspected that you started the story to cover up something or other!"

"What?"

"Well, if you were seen in any place out of bounds, it would be useful to have a double to lay it on!"

Tom Merry flushed crimson.

"Killcare! Hardly you don't think that—"

"Of course I don't!" said Killcare, laughing. "I know you too well to think you would do anything rotten, I

hope. But that might have been suspected, all the same; only it luckily happens to be known that you have a double. It's all right for you now. If the fellow gets up to any tricks, it will be known that it is he, and not you; we shall all know what to think. In fact, I'm going to mention the matter to the Housemaster, in case there should be any mistake made."

"Thanks!" said Tom gratefully. "You're a good chap, Killcare. I hope the matter won't stay in these parts though."

He quitted the St. Jim's captain's study and rejoined Leather and Maxton, who were waiting for him in the School House doorway.

Brooks of the Fourth, the day-boy at St. Jim's, passed them, and nodded pleasantly. Leather called to him:

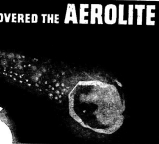
"Hold on, Brooks!"

Brooks halted.

(Continued on next page.)

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"We'll put Brooks up to it," said Louther. "He goes a long way home—over Wayland Hill—and he may happen to see the chap. One never knows."

"I've heard about it, if it's the drinks you mean," said Brooks, with a smile. "I'll keep my eyes open for him. Not that I'm likely to see him—my house is in a rather lonely place. But if I spot him I'll tell you."

"Right-o!"
And Brooks went his way.
"I've got at it," said Tom, as he left the School House with his chums.
"The last time Clavering was down here he put up at the Green Man—that awful pub in Kilmorie. I dare say he's there again. Why not go and see if he is?"

"Out of bounds!" said Louther.
"I'd like to see it if it's seen in the Green Man."

"Yes, I know; but to get at that locker it's worth the risk," said Tom. "It's more likely to be there than anywhere else—the reasons there are just his mark. No need for the three of us to go in, either. I'll go in, and you fellows can wait for me down the street."

"Well, we may as well try it," said Manners.

And the chums of the Shell walked down to Kilmorie. Manners and Louther walked on in the bushes, and Tom Jerry after a glance up and down the street—for he did not want to be seen entering such a place as the Green Man—went in.

Mr. Jolliffe, the headmaster, met him with a surprised look. Mr. Jolliffe had regular dealings with some of the "blades" of St. Jim's—the Duke of the Fifth and King of the Sixth—but he had never expected to see Tom Jerry within the precincts of his formidable house. But all he said that came to him, Mr. Jolliffe's smile, and he was ready to welcome a stray sheep into the fold.

"A-welcome, Master Jerry!" he said cordially. "Come into the parlour!"

Tom Jerry shook his head.
"Thanks, no! Only want to ask you a question, Mr. Jolliffe. Is there a chap named Clavering staying here?"

Mr. Jolliffe looked at him curiously. Tom Jerry was evidently, after all, not a sheep for his field.

"No, there ain't!" said Mr. Jolliffe heartily.

"Been here lately?" asked Tom.
"I ain't got anyone of that name here at all," said Mr. Jolliffe. Mr. Jolliffe, as a matter of fact, had been given the name of Montgomery by his late guest, and he remembered his previous visit perfectly well. He knew that his right name was Clavering. But he was not disposed to place the blame of the disposal of Tom Jerry. "Friend of yours?" he asked.

"Oh, no!" said Tom. "Only a chap I want to find."

"Well, you won't find him 'ere," said Mr. Jolliffe.

"I suppose it can't be known."

"Very well! Good-evening!"

And Tom Jerry turned on his heel and walked out of the Green Man. Tom Jerry did not know that from a window of the inn a pair of keen eyes watched him as he went. Gerald Goring, in an adjoining room, had seen him come in, and had heard his talk with the headmaster.

"Can he know Clavering is in the neighbourhood?" Goring muttered. "Or does he only suspect it? At all events, I've got I got rid of Reggie from here, and Tom Jerry leaves.—No. 1,528.

he will have to give St. Jim's a wide berth. The game can be played out at the Grammar School. That's the idea."
And Gerald Goring smiled and lit a cigar, and walked away in search of a whisky-and-ode.

CHAPTER 9.

Mistaken Identity!

"GREAT Scott!"
"Hallo, Gussy! What's hitting you?"

"Nothing is hitting me, Blake, you silly ass! Only I've spotted him!" explained Arthur Augustus D'Arvy excitedly. "The man's wotah; he's even been a St. Jim's cap from somewhere! Look!"

The chums of Study No. 6 were just entering the village—out of the lower end.

The Green Man was on the outskirts of Kilmorie, and the four juniors were about to pass it, when Arthur Augustus's eagle eye spotted a junior coming out of the building.

The noble forefinger of Arthur Augustus was raised to point. His eye was gleaming with excitement behind his spectacles.

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake. "What's in 'er!"

"Get him!" said Manners, with satisfaction.

"Fairly snapp!" grinned Eighy.

"Hold on!" murmured Blake. "Wait till he's fairly out. Don't give the end a chance to dodge back into the house—we can't follow him there; it's out of bounds. Wait till he passes the horse-rough, and then follow your work!"

"Yess, wotah! Fancy the chap having the cheek to sport a St. Jim's cap?"

"That's awful nerve!"

Eighy nodded assent.

"There can't be any mistake this time," said Blake.

"The fellow is simply the living and breathing image of Tom Jerry!"

"His blessed double, and no mistake!" said Harrison.

They watched the junior loomily, keeping back behind the big elm-tree that grew before the public-house.

The way he was coming he had to pass close to the tree, and then they could have him. There was no doubt that he was exactly like Tom Jerry. He was Tom Jerry to the life, and he was dressed in blue, and wore a cap that bore the unmistakable badge of St. Jim's. And he was coming out of the Green Man—walking out of that detestable public-house in the full light of day!

"Now, then!" murmured Blake.

The junior had passed the horse-rough, and was in a line with the tree. Blake sprang out suddenly into full view, with his comrades at his heels. With a whoop, they surrounded the startled junior.

"Hallo!" said the junior, staring at them. "All right—your own men—what's the blazes going on?"

"But Jerry, he's a cool

baggal, and no mistake!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Nothing to get excited about, is there?" asked the others. "What's the little game, Blake, old man?"

Blake stared.

"Oh! You know my name, do you?"

"Of course I do!" said Tom Jerry, staring. "Least he's—"

"You want to know what the little game is?" grinned Blake. "Well, we've the little game, our pipes, and we're going to play it!"

"I don't quite see—"

"You will soon. Collar him!" shouted Blake.

Four pairs of hands grasped the Shell fellow on all sides. Tom Jerry struggled furiously and unavailingly in the grasp of his captors. But they were too many for him. He was helpless in the grip of the four. They jammed him against the big tree, and held him there, gasping and panting.

"Favourite of war!" said Arthur Augustus. "Now, you wotah, this is where we was, 'was! What!"

"Hag me!" gasped Tom Jerry.

"What for, you mean?"

"If you call me an ass, you wotah—"

"I'll explain," said Blake blandly, while his handkerchiefs were grinding into Tom Jerry's neck. "We're fed-up with you!"

"What?"

"You're too common about here. You've got to get out."

"That will!" repeated Tom Jerry.

"You mean, you know? You see," said Blake, "you resemble a chap in our school and he's got into trouble once or twice through you being seen



Before a hand could be raised to interpose, the junior had slipped past the headmaster's head. There was a gap of horror from the Green

coming out of pots, and so on, and being mistaken for him. So you've got to leave the neighborhood. Now! If you've got any business here you'll have to transact it by post—we can't have you in Hylowood. We're going to keep you half-dead until you starve. Why what are you laughing at, you imbecile?"

Tom Merry had listened with a blank stare as Blake began, but before the Fourth Forester had finished he understood, and he burst into a roar of laughter. The chance of Sturdy No. 3 gazed at him in some consternation. It was not a time or place for Tom Merry's double to be laughing, considering what they were going to do to him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Shell fellow.

"You wish and! What are you laughing at?"

"We'll give him something to chuckle at!" said Blake. "Yank him over to the horse-trough, and we'll duck him in to begin with."

"Blimey, wathah!"

"Hold on!" rapped Tom Merry. "I say—ha, ha, ha—would you mean to say (but you take me for Maggie Clavering?) Ha, ha, ha?"

"That's exactly the individual we do take you for," said Blake. "I suppose you're not going to tell any lies about it?"

"I am Tom Merry—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Blake contemptuously.

"Don't be funny!" rapped Nigby. "This isn't really a funny business; you'll find that out when you get into the trough!"

"Yank! yank! don't tell whoppers, Clavering!"

And Tom Merry was propelled towards the horse-trough, in the grasp of the four juniors. Mr. Jolliffe was standing in his doorway, looking on with a grin. He had no intention of interfering to save Tom Merry from being drowned. He rather enjoyed it. Two or three village youths gathered round to look on with interest.

Tom Merry cast a wild glance up the street in search of Blanche and Leather. But they were in the busshop waiting for him, and discussing luncheon while they were waiting.

"Looze!" rapped Tom. "I tell you I am Tom Merry! How can you be silly asses enough to take me for Clavering?"

"Silly asses, are we?" said Harrier. "Well, in you go! We're not silly asses enough to believe that you're Tom Merry, anyway!"

"Wathah, wathah! It is simply shocking! You say you will cut me, Clavering! You told me yesterday afternoon that you were Tom Merry, and I believed you then; but this time—"

"I am Tom Merry!" yelled Tom.

"Wathah!"

"Hoops of rain, old sport!" said Blake. "Better not wriggle—you may get bumped on the trough; and you're going in, anyway!"

"Looze, you silly idiots! I am Tom Merry! Can't you see that I'm wearing St. Jim's cap?" yelled the unfortunate junior.

"Yes; and I think it's like your awful check to put on a St. Jim's cap, Clavering; when you don't belong to St. Jim's!" said D'Arcy scornfully.

"Take it away from him!" said Blake. "He's no right to it! He must have got it as especially to be taken for Tom Merry!"

The cap was jerked off Tom's curly head and tossed away. He gave up of his struggles. He was whirled up to the horse-trough. Mr. Jolliffe's grin was very wide now. Tom Merry was getting desperate. He had himself warned the juniors not to be taken in by Clavering should pretend to be him, and evidently they were prepared to bear such a statement and to disbelieve it.

"In with him!" roared Blake. "Blamed if I thought he had it in him to put up a game like that! But we'll cure him! Shove him in!"

"I tell you I'm Tom Merry!" shrieked the Shell fellow, shaking at the edge of the trough, and holding on to dear life. "I tell you—"

"Chum, it! Do you think we believe that Tom Merry would be doing out of that tub?" said Blake impatiently. "Dry up!"

"I want in there to ask about Clavering."

"Garnose!"

"I tell you—I am, Mr. Jolliffe!" shouted Tom Merry, as Mr. Jolliffe stepped on the horse and disappeared.

"Now, off!" said Blake. "In with him! All together!"

With a snarl, the four juniors were whirled into the trough, and plumped fairly into the horse-trough.

CHAPTER 10.

Very Wet!

SPLASH!

Tom Merry descended into the middle of the full-flowing trough, and the water rose an all-asked of him from the occasion. It was like a waterfall, and there was a yell from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he received a splash on the chest. All the persons were splashed, but D'Arcy's state was woeful. He staggered back, regarding his waistcoat with dismay and avails.

"Oh, wathah! Look at my waistcoat!"

"Better your waistcoat!" granted Blake. "I've got blessed water down my neck! The best! What is he getting on all this trouble for?"

"Like his cheek!" rapped Harrier, snapping water out of his eyes. "Give him a good dunking while we're about it!"

Tom Merry struggled up into a sitting position in the trough. He was drenched from top to toe, and the water came up to his armpits as he sat up shuddering. Snows were raining down his face. He made a jump to get out of the trough, but the Fourth Forester caught him promptly, and jerked him down again. There was another mighty splash!

"Keep him in!" said Blake. "Let him keep his derry over the water, though. We don't want to drown him. Now, Clavering, we're going to talk to you like a Dutch uncle."

"I'm not Clavering, you howling idiot!"

"Shove up!" said Blake, shaking the prisoner in the trough, and ducking his head under again. "Martin's call us every name!"

"Grough!" spluttered Tom Merry, as his face emerged again. "Oh-oh-oh! I'll make you sit up for that! Yew-oo?"

He struggled to release himself, but it was in vain. The four juniors held him by main force inside the trough, and only his face showed above the water. He glared at them with malignant rage, but they did not mind that.

"Now," roared Blake, "are you going to concur to get out of Hylowood at once?"

"Grough!"

"Will you promise, however bright, to take the next train away and not come back?"

"I'm not Clavering! Owd! Owd!"

Tom's head went under! He came up once more, and he parted violently.

"Every time you tell a lie we're going to duck you under!" said Blake cheerfully. "We'll keep it up as long as you like. No trouble at all."

"Owd!"

"Will you promise to travel off—"

"Owd! Owd! Help! Rescue!"

"Nobody here to rescue you," said Blake, with a glance round at the gathering crowd of village wretches and others who were looking on with interest. "We don't let anybody interfere. Will you promise?"

"How can I, you silly idiot, when I've got to go back to St. Jim's?" roared Tom. "I tell you I'm Tom Merry—Owd!"

His head went under again. Blake was in deadly earnest. Tom Merry felt half-drowned when his face emerged from the water once more.

"Oh, you silly chumps!" he gurgled. "You stare, fatuous idiots! I've got"

The Great Lesson—No. 1, 188.



With a sudden, strange cry, and it tumbled upon Gordon's head, and they both lay a few feet and fell heavily to the ground.

you all round! I'll wallop you bald-headed!" "Ow! Manners! Leather!"

"Silly fellow! Up!" grinned Blake. "Blamed if I ever saw such an obstinate one! But we'll teach him manners, if we have to drown him! Now, Clavering—"

"I'm not Clavering! Yarnoo!"

"Dunder again!"

"Hi! Jack! Don't quote Brown him, dear boys!" said Arthur Arganous.

Tom Merry's head was dragged up again, streaming with water. He had almost ceased to struggle now. He had swallowed a good deal of water, and he was exhausted. He blinked with a watery blink at the ruggers.

"Oh, you foolish chumps!" he gurgled.

"Hallo! What have you got there!" asked Mopsy Leather, coming up with Manners.

The two Shell fellows had grown tired of waiting for Tom Merry, and they had come out of the boat. The sight of the crowd outside the Green Man drew their attention, and they came along to see what the matter was.

"We've got Clavering," said Blake.

"Yarn, wathah! Caught him coming out of the gate, you know, and the wathah boundah has the frightful shock to prevent that, he's Tom Merry!"

"I am Tom Merry!" shrieked the junior in the trough. "Leather, tell the silly idiots I am Tom Merry!"

His head went under again. Mopsy Leather gurgled.

"I—I say, I think you're making a mistake, Blake, old man."

Blake dragged Tom Merry's head up again and scouted contemptuously. He was quite sure that he was not making a mistake.

"Hah!" he replied. "We caught him coming out of the gate. I suppose that settles it. Tom Merry wouldn't be there."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Leather.

"Yes, he was there."

"What?"

"He went in to inquire after Clavering."

"Oh crooks!"

"We were waiting for him!" gasped Manners. "Oh, my hat! You've woken up the wrong passenger! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Make them let me go!" gurgled Tom Merry. "I'm nearly drowned! Oh, I'll make you silly chumps wreat for this!"

"I—I say, Leather, are you sure it's Tom Merry?" stammered Blake, quite taken aback.

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes."

"Hi! Jack! What a very unfortunate wathah! Of course, we could not know Tom Merry would be silly, or enough to be got into the Green Man."

The Fourth Formers released their victim. It was evident now that a mistake had been made. Tom Merry crawled out of the trough and stood shivering in the centre of a pool of water formed by the streams that ran down his clothes.

Manners and Leather ought to have been sympathetic; but they could not help seeing a humorous side in the matter. They roared, and Tom Merry glared at them.

"Grough! I'm wet! Ow! My clothes are spoiled! You silly chumps, what are you making at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hi! Jack! If you are really Tom Merry—"

"Mowzy, I'm awfully sorry for the mistake," said Arthur Arganous handsomely. "I apologise."

Blake grinned.

"Well, you shouldn't have been looking around this park," he said. "You warned us yourself that Clavering might pretend to be you when we called him."

"Yarn, wathah!"

"I'm not so jolly sure that he isn't Clavering, after all," growled Manners. "There's no telling by his looks, anyway."

"Fathnah!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Awt! Billy chump!"

"Look here—"

"Frank don't get watty, Howwies! If he's really Tom Merry, he's some reason for feeling wathah anyway, and D'Arcy wathah."

"He's Tom Merry all right," grinned Leather. "Tommy, old man, you'll catch cold if you stand there in your

laughes from the village arches followed him.

Blake & Co. looked at one another in some dismay.

"Well, you've done it this time!" said Dicky. "Of course, it was his fault! I don't see that he was to blame."

"Well, no," said Blake. "I don't see it, either. We couldn't have done otherwise, and he ought to have proved somehow that he was really Tom Merry! I suppose he really is Tom Merry, as he's letting these chaps take him to St. Jim's."

"Yarn, wathah! It is very fathnah, but really, we were not to blame. And when he is called I want Tom Merry will thank us for having done our best, anyway."

Blake grinned. He did not think it likely that Study No. 6 would receive Tom Merry's thanks for what had happened.

"Well, we've done our best, anyway," said Manners. "I can't see that Tom Merry's got anything to grumble at. But your chaps are marvellous!"

Tom Merry certainly wasn't satisfied, as he squinted his way homeward to St. Jim's. He was very far indeed from satisfied. In the Shell dormitory he rubbed down and changed his clothes to an accompaniment of sneezing and sniffing. Blake & Co. had, as a matter of fact, a little headache, and Tom Merry had caught a cold. That was not surprising, in the circumstances.

"Feel better?" asked Leather sympathetically, when Tom had finished changing.

"Awtah! Yes. But I've got a cold," growled Tom. "Oh, these silly asses!"

"Well, it was really a natural mistake to make—"

"Oh, rah!"

"Every cloud has a silver lining," said Leather comfortingly. "You've got a cold."

"I don't see any silver lining in that, fathnah!" gurgled Tom.

"And Clavering hasn't!" Leather exclaimed. "So long as your cold lasts we shall all be able to spot the difference between you. You see, you sneeze now, and Clavering doesn't, so we can't mistake one for the other, unless Clavering catches a cold, too, and that really isn't likely."

"So, you see, it's really rather lucky, after all," said Manners.

But Tom Merry didn't see it. He refused to be consoled. When he met Blake & Co. he glared at them—between two sneezes—and showed no disposition whatever to thank Study No. 6 for having done their best.

CHAPTER 11.

On the Sick List!

MR. LINTON, the master of the Shell, glanced at Tom Merry about his juniors' cases into the Form-room the next morning.

Tom Merry's case was very red, and his eyes were a little watery, and he seemed to have some difficulty in breathing. He had made heroic efforts to keep his cold in check in dread of being sent into the school sanatorium.

He had drenched himself with all of eucalyptus to such an extent that he became offensive to all the noses in the Shell, and then he had rebalanced himself with one de Cologne to drown the scent of the eucalyptus. Fortunately, D'Arcy had a good supply of one de Cologne, and Leather knew where he kept it, so there was no difficulty about that.

Between the eucalyptus oil and the (Continued on page 19.)



Long-distance Swimmer: "Is this England?"
 Fisherman: "No, Ireland."
 Swimmer: "Hang it, I must have taken the wrong turning!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. MURPHY, 25, David Street, Maxwelltown, Dublin.

not chibbal. Datter come home and change."

"I'm going to smash those silly idiots!"

"Oh, I like that!" exclaimed Blake indignantly. "We were only doing it for your sake. It was your own wathah. It isn't our fault that you look like Clavering, and that you hang about just where we might expect to find him."

"No doubt! No good leah! Your cough, Tom Mowzy. We were only wathah!" and gave our instructions, death-hay."

"You cross me!"

"I wathah to be called a wathah. I consider—"

"Come on, Tommy!" shrieked Leather, taking his chest's arm. "You'd better run and get warm, or you'll catch a cold. Come on!"

Leather's advice was good. Tom Merry was certainly in danger of catching cold. He wore the Fourth Formers a final glare and allowed himself to be led away. He started for St. Jim's at a run, with water squelching out of his boots at every step. Manners and Leather, nobly controlling their merriment, accompanied him. A sheet of

The Editor's Chair

Let the Editor be your pal.
Drop him a line to-day,
addressing your letters:
The Editor, The GEM,
Fleetway House, Farring-
don Street, London, E.C.4.



HELLO, chums! How do you like the first year of the "Tom Merry's Double" series? Great, isn't it? When I was preparing this issue I thought to myself: "Here's a story that our readers will simply read up." And I'm sure you have, I'm equally sure also that readers are eagerly awaiting next Wednesday's number. I know I particularly enjoyed reading the second story of the series. This bears the exciting title:

"TOM MERRY—KIDNAPPED!"

and tells further of the plot to dispossess Tom Merry.

Having failed to get Tom expelled from St. Jim's, Goring and Clavering with a fortune at stake, are compelled to try a more daring and desperate scheme. In the night they enter St. Jim's secretly and kidnap Tom Merry from the Shell department, Clavering then taking Tom's place. Thus everything is set for Tom Merry's double to bring disgrace upon the Junior's name by falsely bearing and Clavering certainly does his worst.

St. Jim's is amazed at the sudden change in Tom Merry's behaviour, yet not even Tom's chums suspect the amazing manoeuvre which is going on under their very eyes. Can the impostors succeed? It would seem that there's nothing to prevent it, with Tom Merry a prisoner miles away from St. Jim's.

Martin Clifford has once more read the hell ring with this powerful story, and I can imagine the great enjoyment with which Geminis will read it next week.

"BUSTER THE HYPNOTIST!"

Frank Richards, too, is in splendid form with his next page of the early school days of Harry Wharton & Co. Billy Baxter plays the leading part, and, believe me, chums, he was never more funny than when he takes up hypnotism. Readers will rear with laughter when they read how Buster tries to hypnotise Mr. Quetch, the Hemmets master. But the high spot of the amateur hypnotist's adventures is when he tries to bring the tickle-games under his spell to get a lead on the chump!

Made sure you don't miss this laugh-a-line yarn. The safest way is to order your Gem in advance.

Now I have a very large pile to deal with, and so I must get down to my weekly batch of

take the Gem, and that you will read it for many years. Sorry, I cannot award you half-a-crown, and help you in your financial difficulty. Send along another job.

Miss E. Sheeriff (Toronto, Canada).—Thanks for your letter. Your "Pen Pal" notice will be published as soon as possible. I cannot tell you when, so I think you had better send me your new address, in case your notice doesn't appear before you move.

C. Opie (Hilgong, Cornwall).—Thanks for your letter. I'm glad to hear that you think the Gem is the goods. Sorry, your job was not quite suitable.

"Stoneman Reader."—The Greyfriars stories in the Gem feature the early school days of Harry Wharton & Co., when Stone was young. Thanks for your selection of the best 1830 stories. I will pass your letter on to Martin Clifford.

J. Taylor (Ardrossan, Ayrshire).—So you are following your father's footsteps and reading the Gem. I'm very pleased to hear it, and I hope you will always look forward to the old paper with great excitement.

R. Stedon (Maidstone).—Thanks for your letter and selection of the best 1830 stories. I am sorry I cannot accede to your request regarding the "make-up" of the Gem.

N. Brown (Manchester).—The "Popular" ceased publication in 1891 and no copies are now obtainable. At present Frank Richards is too busy on the extra-long "Magnet" stories to write about the adventures of the Grim-lack chum. I will try to win it, tho'.

H. E. (Woodford, Essex).—The master of the Second Form is Mr. Pooey Carrington. Mr. Radford takes the Sixth Form. The average ages of the St. Jim's Forms are: Second, twelve years; Third, thirteen and a half; Fourth, fifteen; Shell, fifteen and a half; Fifth, seventeen; Sixth, seventeen and a half.

J. Gordon (Ips, Bucks).—Thanks for your suggestion. I will think it over. Glad you like the "Toll" series and the Greyfriars yarns. The ages you want are: Skippole, fifteen years (see month); Talfet, sixteen and one month; D'Arcy, fifteen and three months; Lewis, fifteen and a half; Cherry, fifteen and two months; Buster, fifteen and one month; and "Isky," fourteen and seven months.

G. Callaghan (Blackheath, S.E.3).—See above for Talfet's age. The Gem was first published on March 23rd, 1887.

H. Horner (Coventry).—The St. Jim's

characters you mention will probably be featured in stories in due course.

Miss J. Watson (Pretoria, Orange Free State, South Africa).—Ernest Levison went to Greyfriars first. He was later expelled, and then went to St. Jim's.

R. Cook (Bristol).—Glad to hear that you are now a regular reader of the Gem. I hope you have fully recovered from your poisoned feet. The job you sent in was published some time ago. Try again.

Miss J. Fallon (Liverpool, 10).—Thanks for your congratulations. Your "Pen Pal" notice will be published before long. There is still a waiting list, but it has been greatly reduced. Glad, Jane is fifteen years one month. No, Marjorie is not his twin.

J. Bates (Middleborough).—Sorry to hear you've been laid up with flu and a bad fever. I hope you have now fully recovered. Arthur's detention is fifteen years three months. No, Mr. Clifford has never written any other stories about Herbert Roper. Pleased to hear you liked the "Toll" series.

H. W. Godfrey (Cockham Village, Berks).—I am sorry your "Pen Pal" notice have not yet been published, but they will appear as soon as possible.

D'Arcy (Hilgong, Cornwall).—D'Arcy is fifteen years and three months; Figgles, fifteen and three months; Cuth, seventeen; and Harwood, fifteen. Your job failed to make the Junior grade. Have another shot.

G. H. Walker (Hoxby Hill, N.E.W., Australia).—Mr. Clifford sends his thanks for your sincere letter, and is pleased to know that his stories have made such a deep impression on a reader "Down Under." We all hope your author's hand will never lose its cunning.

E. Pearce (Reading).—Blake is fifteen years four months. Figgles' Christian name is George, and he is fifteen years and three months. D'Arcy is the same age. See reply to "Stoneman Reader" about Greyfriars Stone. Your job was a real "choconut." Send in another.

J. Birchrich (Leip.-on-Sa.).—Thanks for your letter. I am glad to know you have never been disappointed with the old paper since 1887. I would like to accede to your request regarding the Gem type, but it would mean shorter stories, which, I think, readers would object to.

Miss D. Loftum (Auckland, New Zealand).—Glad to hear that you enjoy the Gem. I am never bored in reading letters from Geminis. It's a job I always look forward to. Thanks for your praise of Martin Clifford, Frank Richards, and myself.
Chin, chin, chums!

THE EDITOR.
THE GEM LITERARY—No. 1,824.

REPLIES TO READERS.

L. Sedgum (Johannesburg, South Africa).—Pleased to hear that you saw

PEN PAL'S COUPON
1-6-37

was do. Colgate there wasn't much danger of the other fellows catching the cold from him—the combined agents were strong enough to kill the microbes without mercy; indeed, some of the janitors thought they were strong enough to kill Tom Merry himself. Quite an aroma floated round him as he entered the Fore-room, and there was a general sniffing.

"You have a cold, Merry, I think," Mr. Linton remarked.

"Just a touch, sir," said Tom.

"Have you taken anything for it?"

"Oh, you, sir."

"Keep on the cold form by yourself. The other boys must not run the risk of catching it," said the master of the Staff. "If it gets worse I will mention it to the Housemaster, and you may be sent into the sanatorium."

"I think it's getting better, sir," informed Tom.

"Very good; we shall see," said Mr. Linton. "I am glad, at all events, that you do not wish to leave your lessons, Merry."

That wasn't exactly Tom's idea. He would have had an impossible objection to leaving his lessons; but he did not want to be made an invalid of.

He kept his coat out of sight as much as he could by keeping to his study when he was not required in the Fore-room. His general idea when he built up a big fire in the study often became that day, and Tom Merry sat before it in the armchair and sniffed.

"Keep in the same temperature all the time, and a cold can't last long," said Lovelace sagely; "and we'll play chess up here with you this evening."

Just then Toby knocked at the door, and put his pimple face into the study. He had a telegram in his hand.

"For Master Merry," he said.

"Hand it over!"

Tom Merry opened the telegram, and gave a groan of dismay.

"Hallo! What's the news?" asked Manners.

"No blessed chance of nursing this blessed cold!" said Tom. "I've got to go out."

"Oh, no! You can't go out!" said Lovelace warmly.

"Must! Look at it!"

Manners and Lovelace read the telegram. It ran:

"Dearest Tommy,—I am coming down to see you, and shall arrive at Wayland Station at six o'clock. I wish you to be there to meet me, as I have to make some purchases for you. Come alone.—FLORENCE FAWCETT."

The chance of the Staff locked dismal. Miss Fawcett Fawcett, Tom Merry's old governess, could not be disregarded. Miss Fawcett was tenderly attached to her pupil, and the long telegram was very like her. She did not count the journey when sending messages to Tommy.

"Wine for you're ready," said Lovelace.

"No good. She must have left Hockleberry Heath by the time the telegram was sent."

"Yes, she's on her way now," Manners remarked thoughtfully. "I say, those purchases in Wayland will be for a treat, of course. She's a good girl."

"But if she sees me with a cold, I shall never hear the end of it!" groaned Tom Merry. "She will scold the Head and the Housemaster, and make them send me into the sanatorium; very likely engage a special

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carriage, and drive me pretty nearly dotty, and worry myself more than she does yet! What rotten black!"

"Really?" agreed Lovelace. "And you wouldn't go out, either, with that cold. Going to Wayland will really make it worse."

"I don't mind that, if only Miss Fawcett doesn't spot it."

"She says you're to come alone," said Lovelace, glancing at the telegram again. "Don't I want our devoted company this time?"

"Wants to talk to me about my health?" guessed Tom Merry. "I shall get that all the way back to St. Jim's in the taxi!"

"Look here, you're too ready to go," said Lovelace. "I'll go and explain to her. She can talk to me about no length, if she likes. I'm fit, and she said so."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"If you go instead of me, she's bound to think I'm at death's door," he said. "You see, if I'm well, there's no reason why I shouldn't go; and if I'm not well, she'll make a blessed invalid of me, and want to doctor me. I think I'd better go, and keep the cold dark if I can."

Lovelace grinned as he surveyed Tom's reddened nose and watery eyes.

"You jolly well ought to keep her from spotting that," he said.

"Well, I'll try! Anyway, if I don't go, she'll be frightened to death about my giddy health, and it will be worse than ever."

"But you're ready—"

"Oh, no! Only a touch of a cold! I'll get it done to stick in the room like a blessed invalid, anyway."

And Tom Merry rose to his feet.

"You really oughtn't to go out," said Manners.

"Oh, it'll do me good!" said Tom cheerfully. "Nothing like fresh air, you know. I'll put a coat on. I wish you shape would come with me; but Miss Fawcett says I'm to go alone, and I suppose I'd better."

And Tom Merry left the School House in coat and cap, with a muffer round his neck. Brooks of the Fourth was coming out, with a couple of books under his arm, and he nodded cheerily to Tom Merry, and he nodded cheerily to Tom Merry.

"Cold any better?" he asked.

"Yes, it's flourishing," said Tom Merry grimly; "getting on quite nicely—very strong for its age!"

Brooks laughed.

"Not going out?" he asked.

"Yes, I've got to go over to Wayland Station to meet Miss Fawcett."

"When I'll too along with you as far as Wayland, and go home."

"Oh, good!" said Tom.

The day-boy left St. Jim's with him, and they walked through the wood together. Brooks's home was a rambling old house on Wayland Moor, and he walked to and fro every morning and evening, having his midday meal at St. Jim's with the other fellows.

Brooks was a hard worker, for besides his school work, he did other work to earn money, being chiefly dependent on his own efforts, and that work to and from the school was the greater part of the earnings he ever had. Brooks chatted, and Tom Merry smiled, as they walked through the wood and came out on the moor.

"By the way," Brooks remarked, "have you seen that chap yet?"

"My double?" Tom asked. "No; he seems to have gone, after all. He's not at the Green Man, and the fellows have been looking for him everywhere, and haven't caught sight of him. I suppose he was only down here for the day, after all."

Brooks shook his head.

"He's here," he said quietly.

"Here?" said Tom Merry, in surprise. "You've seen him?"

"This morning, as I was coming to the school," Brooks explained. "You know, I cut right across the moor to save time; it's a very lonely path, and hardly anybody ever sees it, excepting the people who live in the cottages and cottages—artists and chaps like that, who come down here for the summer."

"Too early for them yet," said Tom.

"One of the cottagers has a better story," said Brooks. "I passed Mrs. Holt's cottage an usual, and saw a chap there that I took for you. I wondered what you were doing so far from St. Jim's before morning lessons, and called out to you, and the chap went into the cottage at once. Then I remembered your double."

Tom Merry's face was a little excited.

"Sure of him, Brooks?" he asked.

"Well, he was exactly like you, only he wasn't in bloom," said Brooks. "Of course, it wasn't you, by any chance?"

"No, hear! I was cultivating this giddy cold this morning, not standing on the moor," said Tom Merry. "By Jove! Then you know where he lives. That's good! What can he be doing there? It isn't the place you'd expect to see a chap like that. More likely to put up at a pub, I should say."

"So I thought," said Brooks, with a laugh. "Looks as if he's bringing low. I understood that he was sick from his school days, he was down here before. Perhaps he's in trouble again, and keeping dark. Anyway, you know where to find him if he should have the cheek to give you any more trouble."

"Thanks awfully," said Tom. "I'm jolly glad to know where he is, though if he really keeps out of sight I don't know that I want to drop on him. Well, here we are."

Brooks walked on over the moor, and Tom Merry turned into Wayland Road. Ten minutes later he was at the station. It was not yet six, and he had some time to wait, but the train from Hockleberry Heath came in at last.

Tom Merry waited at the exit from the platform as the passengers passed; but, to his great surprise, his old governess was not among them.

The platform was cleared, and Miss Fawcett Fawcett had not appeared.

"My hat!" Tom Merry ejaculated. "Isn't she coming?"

He could not help feeling pleased at the idea. Fond as he was of his old governess, he did not want her to see him just then. As he discovered that she had a cold—and she was pretty certain to do so if she was down here—there would be no end to her anxiety and her care for him. He shuddered at the prospect of being made an invalid of, and went up to the sanatorium, and physicked and bed on "slop."

If Miss Fawcett did not come, it was a lucky escape for him. And evidently she had not come by that train, and there was no other train that evening from the remote quarter of Hockleberry Heath.

Tom Merry searched along the platform, and looked in the waiting-room, and waited for nearly half an hour, but there was no sign of Miss Fawcett. Evidently she had changed her mind about coming. If the good lady had had one of her attacks of rheumatism, that was not surprising; and, doubtless, he would find another telegram waiting for him at St. Jim's. So he walked back to the school.

"Well," said Manners and Lovelace

together, as he came into the School House, "where is Miss Pivovitch?"

"Isn't come, after all," said Tom.

"Is there a suit for me?"

"Haven't heard of you."

Tom looked puzzled.

"Miss Pivovitch's board to wire and explain," he said.

"Well, I'll inquire for you."

Leontie, inquired, but came back empty-handed. There was no telegram from Haskelberry Board.

"Come later," he suggested. "Come and have tea. It's jolly late, but we've waited for you, my son."

"Ateebow!" said Tom. "All right—ateebow!"

And they went up to the study to a late tea.

CHAPTER 12.
Struck Down!

GORDON GAY came down to the cricket field at the Grammar School, with a sunny, cheerful expression on his face. The Corvetail Grammarian was in high good-humour. He intended that the Grammarian team should go ahead that season, and hit St. Jim's juniors into a second heat, and he was keeping his team well up to practice.

But, as it happened, Gordon Gay's game was destined to be interrupted on that particular afternoon. He had joined the other fellows when a justice in Ekoon came in at the gates of the Grammar School and looked about him, like one new to the place. He sighted the cricket field, and the crowd of Grammarians there, and walked towards it, and there were exclamations from several of the Grammarians.

"Tom Merry!"

"St. Jim's blunder!"

Gay had been about to go down to the wicket, but he passed as the new arrival leaped upon him. He nodded in a friendly way. He was feeling very friendly to the world in general just then, under the combined influence of spring sunshine and cricket, and he was quite willing to target all about the ragging in the lane, and the row outside the tuckshop in Ryebomb. Indeed, as that ragging and that row had turned out, the Grammarians for their part would easily afford to let bygones be bygones.

"Hallo, Merry!" he said cheerily.

The justice in Ekoon did not return either his nod or his friendly greeting. There was a scowl upon his face.

"I came here to see you," he said.

Gordon Gay scowled haughtily at once, but it left him quite unmoved. He shrugged his shoulders carelessly.

"Well, here I am," he said. "You can see me. No extra charge for a good look."

"You can see us all, if you like, Tom Merry," added Frank Monk liberally.

"Look away. You don't often see each other here."

"Hardly ever," said Wootton major solemnly. "And after you've done seeing us you can see how we play cricket, and pick up some tips."

"Good idea!" chimed in Wootton minor. "You need 'em at St. Jim's."

The justice's scowl deepened. The chipping of the Grammarians seemed to add fuel to his irridant wrath.

"You made 'em," he began.

Gordon Gay held up his hand.

"Don't call us 'em," he said quietly. "We don't like it. And you needn't bear malice for that bit of a ragging. You fellows have ragged us often enough, I suppose."

"I'm going to lick you."

"Is that the way the cat jumps?" said Gay calmly. "Well, if you're looking for trouble, I'll keep it on top."

"And I'll make you sorry for the way you handled me, as sure as my name's Tom Merry."

"Eatin'! Come into the gym."

"Look here, we're going to play cricket," interrupted Frank Monk. "If Tom Merry wants a licking, he can have it presently. You can fight after dark in the gym."

"Yes, that's so," agreed Gordon Gay. "Suppose you stay to tea, Merry, and we'll have the scrap afterwards."

"I'm going to lick you now!"

"Oh, bump him!" said Wootton major. "Somebody say no him."

"Yes, I think you'll have to wait," said Gay. "Patience, my son."

"I'll fight you here!"

"Now, talk sense!" said Gay. "The court's right here on the open without gloves. Any of the grammar might spot on, Old Bunker the Fifth Form master, often catches the cricket from his window; and DeLanoue, our captain, is somewhere about. We should be stopped if we started here."

"Fank!"

"Look here, you silly duffer—why—what—why here!"

Smack!

The justice in Ekoon had made a sudden step forward, and struck out, and his open palm came across Gordon Gay's cheek with a crack like a pistol-shot. The Australian junior staggered back with a cry. The attack had been utterly unexpected.

"You ruster!" shouted Wootton



"Get of friendly towards me St. Monk has consented to act instantly," said St. Justice. "He will be satisfied if you are stopped and expelled from St. Jim's. That is your sentence, Merry!" Tom Merry almost choked. "I am innocent, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Coward!"

"What?" Gordon Gay's handsome, confident face flushed crimson. "What did you say?"

"Coward!" repeated the boy in Ekoon tranquilly. "I'm not going to wait. If you're not a fank, you'll stand up to me now."

Gay set his teeth. He pitched away his hat at once.

"If you get it like that, I'll handle you on the spot," he said sagely.

"Come on, and let's get the gloves."

"I'm not going to have the gloves on."

"Oh! You want your hourly spelled, do you?" said Gay, staring at him.

"Well, I don't mind. Hissed if I understand you quite. You're not much like the chap we always thought you. I'll do my best to knock some sense and manners into you, Tom Merry. Come on, and we'll try it without the gloves!"

major, springing forward with fists clenched.

Gordon Gay recovered himself at once.

"Leave him to me!" he said, between his teeth.

He threw off his blazer and his cap, and came towards the scowling justice. His eyes were gleaming like cold steel now.

"You're a mad and a ruster!" he said. "I'll fight you here, if you like, or anywhere. Put up your hands, you cad!"

"Go it, Gay!"

"Fink it!"

"Give him socks!"

The cricketers had all abandoned the game now. They gathered round in a ring, peering the two lads as much as possible from view from the School House. Gordon Gay stood facing his adversary, who put up his hands.

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willingly enough. In a moment they were fighting furiously, with a savage determination that was seldom or never seen in the combats between the Grammarian and the Saints.

Gooden Gay and Tom Merry were pretty well matched, and the Grammarian had expected a tough and close fight. But according to their surprise, and greatly to their delight, Gordon Gay had this fight all his own way from the start.

The junior in Brown fought hard, with an almost ostentatious ferocity, but he seemed to lack strangely in science, and he was flurried, and wavered from time to time, as if his pluck was failing him. Yet all the Grammarians knew that Tom Merry had boundless pluck.

The junior was down at last, stretched on the ground by a mighty right-handed, and he lay panting and sweating at Gooden Gay's feet.

Gay waited for him to rise. But the fallen junior seemed short of wind, and he still lay panting and gasping.

"Down to a turn!" grunted Woodton.

"Gay wins! Hurray!" cheered the Grammarians.

"Have you had enough?" asked Gooden Gay calmly, though he was breathing hard after the bout. "I don't want to go on if you don't, Tom Merry."

"How comes, Delmore," added Frank Moor hurriedly.

The fallen junior did not speak. He leaped suddenly to his feet and sprang at Gooden Gay. His hand had gone to his pocket—it came out with a thick, short stick in it, and before Gay could guard against the unexpected weapon, a savage blow was struck. Gay caught the blow on his arm, and the arm snapped back to his side. Before a loud wail could be raised to interrupt, a second savage blow was struck, and it landed upon Gooden Gay's curly head. Gay gave a low cry, and fell heavily to the grass, and lay still.

There was a gasp of horror from the Grammarians. For the moment they were paralyzed by the sudden and terrible happening.

In that moment the junior who had struck the blow broke through the ring and ran for the gate.

Moak and Woodton and several others rushed towards Gordon Gay to raise him up. Two or three fellows dashed after the fleeing junior.

"Don't let him get away!" yelled Woodton aloud.

He led the pursuit, and the fellows dashed after the fugitive. But fear lent the latter wings. He dashed out of the gate, sped across the road, leaped the ditch, and scrambled over the palings into the wood beyond. In a few moments he was lost to sight in the thick vegetation, and the Grammarian juniors, looked on and furious, returned to the cricket field.

Gordon Gay lay upon the grass, his face deadly white, and supported by the arm of Woodton major. Delmore, the captain of the Grammar School, had arrived on the spot.

"What has happened?" he asked. Gordon Gay groaned. He had been struck for the moment by the brutal blow, but his reason was unshaken. Woodton major raised a face, which was white with rage towards the captain of the school.

"It was Tom Merry of St. Jim's?" he enquired in a choking voice.

"The said! The villain! He came here to fight Gay, and was licked—"

"I saw it; but—"

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"Then he jerked out a short, heavy stick and hit Gay over the head! Oh, the villain!"

"It—it's all right," muttered Gay feebly. "Don't make a fuss! He'd be asked for this—don't say a word, you fellows!"

"Don't say a word!" growled Woodton. "You jolly well going to say a good many words! Let him be asked!"

"Help Gay into the house, and get him to bed!" said Delmore. "I must report this to the Head."

"Don't!" gasped Gay. "The—the chap must have been out of his senses, I think. Don't get him asked from his school, I—I don't mind—"

"Never mind what you mind!" said Delmore. "You has got to be seen to. The young ruffian ought to be dealt with. But that kid looks, you fan!"

Gay groaned as he was raised up. There was a huge bump on his head; the blood was flowing down under his thick, curly hair. Moak and Woodton supported him on either side as he staggered weakly towards the house. He was put upon his bed in the dormitory, and in a few minutes Dr. Hooken, the Head of the Grammar School, was by his side, with a startled and anxious face.

"How are you?" he exclaimed, in horror. "You tell me it was Tom Merry of St. Jim's who did this. It seems incredible!"

"We all saw him, sir," said Harry Woodton.

"I will telephone at once for a doctor," said the headmaster. "Meanwhile, keep quiet still and quiet, Gay. You have hurt your arm. Do not be quiet, I will send the matron—"

"If you please, sir—" gasped Gay feebly.

"Well, what is it, my boy?" asked Dr. Hooken kindly.

"Don't say anything about this at St. Jim's. I don't want Tom Merry to get into trouble for it."

Dr. Hooken about to visit Dr. Holman, to tell him the whole circumstances of the case, he said sternly, "I shall write upon Merry being both flogged and expelled from the school."

"Hear, hear!" murmured the Grammarians. They fully agreed with their headmaster.

Half an hour later, when the medical man had seen Gordon Gay, and he was in bed with his head bandaged, and the matron in attendance, Dr. Hooken ordered his car and drove over to St. Jim's to see Dr. Holman, with a grim expression upon his face that looked so good to Tom Merry.

CHAPTER 13.

The Show Falls:

TOM MERRY! D'Arcy minor of the Third put his head in at Tom Merry's study. The Terrible Three were just finishing their late tea and drinking of prep.

Though we cannot all have a chance to fly so we learn his about it from the "Frog" first. It interested me so much. It is a real model of an H.A.F. plane, with adaptations to which it responds just the best plane. This model only costs 10, and if you wish to have the best specimen you can see up Liberty Road and in an advertisement for this on the "Frog" Aeroplane at Merwin. You can have particulars of the "Frog" B.L. 10. The best time to get started, and I'll let you know if you want to be a "Frog" instead of being a Lion. See, Ltd. Dept. 678, Bedford Road, London, E.W.10.

"Hallo!" said Tom. "Alcock! What do you want, young shaver?"

"The Head wants you."

Tom Merry groaned as he rose to his feet.

"It's come!" he said. "He's heard of my blessed odd, and he's going to pitch me into the matronist! What rotten luck!"

"Wally D'Arcy looked at him curiously.

"It isn't that?" he remarked. "Those's going to be trouble of some sort. Dr. Moor from the Grammar School is with the Head."

"Old Monk!" exclaimed Tom Merry in surprise. "What does he want?"

"I didn't ask him," chuckled Wally. "But he seems to want you. What have you been doing over there?"

"I haven't been there, you young ass—I've been at Weyland. Perhaps I haven't got to go into matronist after all."

And he left the study and went downstairs, puzzled to know what he was wanted for in the presence of the Grammar School headmaster. There had been no rage lately between the two schools, excepting that one in Hylowton, which certainly wasn't one for the Grammarian to complain about. Besides, Gordon Gay & Co. were not the sort to complain.

Tom Merry was feeling very perplexed as he tapped at the Head's door. Dr. Holman's voice, seeming stern and deeper than usual, bade him come in.

Tom Merry entered the Head's study. Dr. Holman was looking very grave and stern, and the Grammar School master's face looked like iron. He glanced over his spectacles at Tom Merry with an expression of contempt that made the junior blush.

"You sent for me, sir," said Tom, fixing his eyes upon his own headmaster.

"Yes, Merry," said Dr. Holman, regarding him intently. "I have heard a most extraordinary statement from Dr. Hooken. Unless you can give some explanation, I shall expect you from the school immediately, and you will be severely flogged before you go. You are aware, of course, of what Dr. Hooken has told me."

For a moment it seemed to Tom Merry that the study was cooling round him.

He gazed liberally at the Head. Was he dreaming or had the Head suddenly gone mad?

"Well, Merry," said Dr. Holman sternly, "what have you to say? Have you the slightest excuse to offer for your ruffianly conduct?"

"Ruffianly conduct?" repeated Tom.

"Yes, ruffianly and outrageous."

"But what—what—what have I done, sir?" gasped Tom Merry, trying to pull himself together. "What does Dr. Hooken say I have done? There must be some mistake."

"There is no mistake," said Dr. Hooken, rising and fixing his eyes scornfully upon the astounded junior. "You know perfectly well what I have told Dr. Hooken."

"I haven't the faintest idea, sir. I know I've done nothing to deserve being expelled from," said Tom Merry, with spirit.

"Your attack on Gordon Gay, of the Fourth Form at my school—"

"What? How? Gay complained—"

"Gay is in a state of complaint—"

"and as a matter of fact, it was his wish that I should not come here—but I have done my duty," said Dr. Hooken. "You insolent and ruffianly assault upon that boy—"

"What! I—I don't understand! Gay

HARRY WHARTON'S ENEMY!

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

Harry played a double-headed trick on Billy Baxter, and landed him a thrash with Mr. Quirk. Ernest Levison refused to come up to the Remorse master. The warty Baxter (from Queensland), however, Harry Wharton explains matters to Mr. Quirk, without giving Levison away.

Levison next plays a trick on Mr. Quirk in the *Palm-rooms*, but is found out and severely punished. Thinking Wharton has given him away to Mr. Quirk, he warns the Remorse captain that he will fight him later.

Meanwhile, Balstrode, the Farm belly, suggests to Levison a devious scheme for getting his own head on Wharton; but Levison flatly refuses to have anything to do with it.

Billy Baxter has overheard their conversation, and he rolls away to the cricket ground to tell Wharton about it.

(Now read on.)

Billy Baxter's News!

WELL, hi!"
Bob Cherry rubbed the words as the ball flew from Harry Wharton's bat. And the Nalab of Blainpore chimed in:
"The wellings are great and the hilliness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Baxter, coming up to the cricket pavilion. "I want to speak to you. Call him out of the field, will you, Cherry?"

Bob Cherry grinned.
"Yes; I think I can see him coming off for the pleasure of a chat with you, Baxter," he remarked. "Play up, Harry!"

Harmony was bowling. But his bowling did not trouble Harry Wharton. Clark went the last against the ball again, and the leather went to its journey.

"Well hi, Harry!" yelled Bob Cherry.
"I say, Cherry, I want to speak to Wharton on a most important matter."
"Oh, shove it, Baxter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry!" said Baxter. "Perhaps you'd be more interested in the matter if you knew that Levison and Balstrode were plotting to make out that Wharton is a thief, and to get him expelled from Geyfrians!"

Bob Cherry started.
"What's that you're saying, Baxter?"
"Oh, nothing!" said the Owl of the Remorse, making a show of turning away. "It doesn't matter."

Bob Cherry gripped him by the arm and jerked him back.
"Now then, you say—"
"Jempe above!"

"Explain what you said just now!" exclaimed Bob.
"Hallo! What's the matter?" asked Nugget, coming off the field with a hat under his arm. "Anything wrong, Bob?"

"Yes. This young one has been talking sense not about Balstrode and Levison plotting against Harry—"

"Let 'em plot!" said Nugget cheerfully. "They won't hurt anybody!"

"That's all you know!" said Billy Baxter.
"He says they're plotting to make the Owl Lazzar—*Exp.* 1,234.

By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long series of Geyfrians appearing every Saturday in our companion paper the "Magpie.")

Harry cut a thief, to get him expelled from Geyfrians.

"Not! How could they do it?"
"Oh, very well!" said Baxter. "Let 'em run on, what's all, and you'll see. Don't say afterwards that I wasn't willing to warn you!"

"The watchfulness is good and the facilities in getting," said the Nalab of Blainpore. "But I'm thinkingly persuaded that the returned Baxter is making up the yarn out of his fat head."

"You'll see jolly soon!" said Billy Baxter.
"You can tell us all about it, anyway."

"What about that five bob?"
"Oh!"

"If I put you up to a plot like this, you ought to stand on the far look to get Professor Fossilson's book on hypnosis. You don't discover a plot like this every day, you know."

"Oh, it's all bunkum!" said Nugget.

Ernest Levison is not looking in black when he forces a fight upon Harry Wharton to avenge an imagined grievance. But, as he discovers, it's more than black he needs to beat the best fighter in the Remorse!

"My opinion is necessarily that of my returned class."
"I suppose you're right," said Bob Cherry. "You can go and take a little run, Baxter, and tell your yarn to anybody who will listen."

"I'll tell it to Wharton when he comes off the field," said Baxter. "Now what about that five bob you were going to lend me?"
"Oh, well!"

"How come Harry," said Nugget. "Perhaps it would be better to let him hear Baxter's yarn. There may be something at the bottom of it."
"I say, you fellows—"

"Come here, Harry, will you?" Wharton came towards the group.
"What is it?" he asked.
"Harmony has a yarn to tell, as usual," replied Nugget. "and you can judge for yourself if there's anything in it."

"Go ahead, Baxter!" said Harry Wharton tersely.
"Oh, I don't know that I've got anything to say," said Baxter lightly. "If you say I'm parading, that's enough. If you want to be expelled from Geyfrians, you—"

Wharton started.
"What?"
"I'm quite willing to put you up to this plot, if you like, only—"

"Where plot?"

"Balstrode and Levison."
"What are they plotting?"

"I found them talking under the shed," explained Baxter. "They didn't know I was there."
"You young ruffian!" growled Bob Cherry. "You oughtn't to have listened!"

"Well, perhaps I oughtn't, now I come to think of it; but I never crossed my mind till this moment," said Baxter.

"Oh, get on with the wadding!"
"Well, Balstrode suggested to Levison to do some of his rotten conjuring, you know. He said I had been made to look like a thief, and it would be easy to make Wharton look like one, and get him expelled from Geyfrians."

"Are you telling the truth, Baxter?" asked Harry Wharton.

Billy Baxter looked extremely injured.
"Well, I say, Wharton, that's a rotten question to ask a fellow, you know. It implies that you doubt my word."

"You see such a confounded little conscience," growled Wharton. "Well, I suppose you're telling the truth. Dad Levison agrees to what Balstrode proposed!"

"He didn't exactly agree," said Baxter. "He did a lot of jawing; but I haven't the least doubt that he's going to do it. After the trick he played on me, he's good enough for anything."

"That's not clear enough. What were his exact words?"

"How could I possibly remember his exact words, Wharton? Levison said he was going to fight you, because you wouldn't be quiet about him—"

Wharton coloured angrily.
"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes, I'm sure," said Baxter obstinately, and Balstrode said you could hit him, and that it would be easier to follow his plan, and then they would be both out of you. Levison simply jumped at the idea when Balstrode suggested that you could be expelled from the school."

Billy Baxter had a bad memory, and had never been particularly veracious. He did not mean to be untruthful, but he would relate the parts of a story that remained in his mind, or that suited his object, and forget the rest. But there was evidently something in his story.

"I say, this is rotten," said Bob Cherry. "I'm not so much surprised at Balstrode, but I didn't think Levison was such a cad."

"I don't quite know what to do," said Harry Wharton slowly.
"It's perfectly simple," said Baxter. "You will lend me five bob and I shall be able to get Professor Fossilson's book."

"Oh, shut up a minute!"
"But I've got a brilliant suggestion to make," said Baxter eagerly. "You can't very well question these rotters about it, because they would be certain to tell whoppers to get out of it. But I could make them sworn up before the Farm, and give the whole game away from start to finish."

"How could you?" asked Nugget.
"By hypnotising them. When I've got Professor Fossilson's book, to set me on the right track, I shall be able to hypnotise anybody."

"Oh, ring off!"
"Well, it's a splendid idea!"



Levison leaped against the tree, his face white save where Levison darkened it, his eyes hateful. "I—I'm done," he stammered. "But—but I'll make you sorry for this yet, Wharton!"

"Take a little run, Bung. We want to talk this over."

"What about my fee book?" Wharton made an impatient gesture. "Oh, let me have five-hundred for me to have Professor Pender's book that I can criticize it. I'm sorry if you can't spare the tin. I'm going to repay you when my postal order comes this evening, so I really don't see what there is to make such a fuss about."

"These you are. Now get!" Bunter flung the five shillings in his pocket. "Thanks, you chaps!" "And don't say a word about this," said Harry Wharton, frowning. "Mind, if Halsebrode hears you have been talking about him, he'll lick you, and serve you pretty well right, too! Not a word to anybody."

"Just as you like, Wharton. But about my postal order. It'll be for ten bob, and if you'd like to cash it for me in advance, you can have the postal order as soon as it comes. I wish you wouldn't push me like that, Chery! Well, I'm going. Bye-bye here, I'll tell you what I'll do. Make it up to eight bob now, and you can have the whole of the postal order when it comes. That will be five shillings interest—Oo-oo-oo-oo!"

Bob Chery, losing all patience, gave the fat junior a shove behind with his foot, and Billy Bunter took his departure in a very hurried manner.

The chairs of the Remorse were left to discuss the matter in peace, but the discussion brought them little light. Nobody went to do they could not do, and dinner-time came before they had come to any decision.

Forced to Fight!

HARRY WHARTON wore a troubled look during afternoon lessons. Levison glanced at him once or twice, and grinned quietly to himself.

He had not the faintest idea that Harry knew anything about the talk with Halsebrode under the elm, and he fancied that Wharton was looking nervous for a very different reason.

"He doesn't want to meet me," Levison said to himself. "He's carried matters in the Remorse with a high hand, but it's all gone. I've never seen any of his great exploits, I know that. He's afraid."

And this thought afforded much satisfaction to Levison. He was fully determined to force matters to a climax with the captain of the Remorse after school, and he had informed a good many fellows of his intention.

Although Harry was generally popular in the Remorse, there were a good many fellows who would have been glad to see him pulled off his "pouch," as they put it, and Levison found plenty of backers to encourage him in his project.

Levison did not venture upon any more conjuring tricks in class. The lesson he had received had been severe enough even for his obstinacy.

Afternoon school passed off very quietly for the Remorse, but there was a general expectancy among the juniors, which reached its height when the Form was dismissed at half-past four.

Harry Wharton, who had almost forgotten Levison's threats, walked out with his chums, and they went down towards the cricket field.

But Harry was not thinking at that moment of cricket. What Billy Bunter had told him was weighing on his mind. "It's so good worrying about it," said Nugent, with a side glance at Harry's

face. "It's pretty rotten that a Greyfriars chap should fall so low, but thinking about it won't alter it."

"It's rotten!" said Harry.

"Still, there's no good poking," Bob Chery remarked. "We don't be taken by surprise now, whatever happens. If that peevish pair try to carry out their scheme, we shall know how to deal with them."

"Ratherfully," said the school. Wharton nodded.

"Yes, I'm not afraid of anything they can do. It's not that. But to think that a fellow is plotting such a piece of treachery! I can't get that out of my mind! I don't like Levison, but I should never have thought he was such a cad as that."

"A fellow might do his good," suggested Bob Chery.

"No, I'll let him alone. It's no good saying a word about this affair. Let's keep it dark. If they try on the scheme—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here comes Levison, and he looks as if he means business!" exclaimed Bob Chery.

Levison was coming up, with a crowd at his heels. The juniors were all looking excited and expectant. Harry Wharton's brow darkened, and he walked on towards the cricket field.

Levison quickened his pace and planted himself in Wharton's path, a sneering smile upon his lips.

"Stop!" he said. Wharton had no choice but to stop. He halted, and the juniors gathered round.

Wharton and Levison faced one another, and half the Remorse loomed a single point there.

"Well, what do you want?" said Harry quietly. "Is no time to waste on you, Levison!"

Levison shrugged his shoulders. "You'll have to waste some time on The Gun Lizard.—No. 1,324.

you, whether you like it or not?" he said. "I've got a hank to pick with you!"

"Got to the point?"

"Very good. I've had a licking today from Quack, because you gave me away to him."

"I did nothing of the kind!"

"Anyway, you put him on the spot, so that he jumped on me, you know that. I'm not the fellow to take a licking lying down. I owe it to you, and I'm going to pay my debt! Are you ready?"

"Ready for what?"

"To stand up like a man and answer for what you've done."

"I've done nothing to answer for, and I won't fight you, Levison! You're not fit for a decent fellow to soil his hands on."

Levison flushed crimson.

"You'll either fight, or take a licking without it," he said.

Wharton did not reply.

Levison walked for a moment, and then stepping forward, struck out.

Bob Cherry knocked his hand aside with a sharp blow.

"Nuff of that!" said Bob gruffly. "If you're looking for trouble, you'll find it. If Wharton doesn't lick you, I will!"

"Ho's afraid?"

"Come on, Wharton," said Skinner. "You can't refuse a challenge. If you're going to remain captain of the Remove you can't allow a new boy to go round saying that you're afraid of him."

"That's so?" chimed in Russell.

"What's the matter with you, Wharton? You used to seem to be always wanting to trouble, and now you're showing the white feather."

Wharton colored.

"Very well," he said spiritedly. "I don't want to fight Levison because he's no match for me, for one thing, and because he's a rotten card for another. You can see that I'm driven to this. Follow me over here by the class, Levison, and I'll let you have your war."

"I'll follow you fast enough!"

The Removees walked over to a shady spot, screened by the back trees from the view of the school windows, and partly shut off from the Close. There they halted, and Harry Wharton stepped out of his jacket and waistcoat and handed them to Bob Cherry.

"Back up, old top!" said Bob. "This won't mean more than a round or two for you."

"I know that, Bob."

The Removees formed a ring round the adversaries. Skinner acted as Levison's second. The new boy in the Remove took off his jacket and waistcoat, and pushed back his collar. There was an expression of stern determination on his face.

Nugget was to keep time, and he had taken out his watch.

"We ought to have a basin of water and a sponge here," Skinner remarked.

"We shall get a perfect boy about the same time, I suppose," said Nugget.

"Let's get to business. You can map your man with your hands!"

"That's right—put to business!" exclaimed Russell. "Go it!"

And the two principals faced one another and did "go" it!

Levison's Licking!

LEVISON led off with a sharp attack, but before he had been engaged a minute he realized that he had greatly underestimated his adversary. Not one of his

blows reached the face—for which they went unavailing aimed.

Wharton's defence was strong, and Levison's knowledge of boxing was indifferent. He could not touch his foe, and that knowledge added to the latter's rage that he felt.

Harry's countenance came home, moreover, and Levison received sharp blows, which did not hurt him very much, but served to infuriate him.

When Nugget called "Time!" at the end of the round neither combatant showed any signs of having been engaged in a fatal encounter. There was a slight smile on Wharton's face, and he had taken his enemy's measure, and felt that he could deal with him.

"Better knock it!" said Skinner, as he fancied he had principally with his hands. "He's better than you in an even point."

Levison gritted his teeth.

"Don't talk now!" he growled savagely.

"My dear chap, every fellow on the ground but yourself can see it plainly. You have bitten off more than you can chew."

"Mind your own business!"

"Oh, keep on if you like! But look here, your only chance is to get to close quarters and get through his guard. Fetch him as hard as you can."

Levison nodded and stepped up at the call of time.

In the second round he took Skinner's advice, and crossed Harry hard. It surprised some people to do it, for Harry put upon his defence, hit out again, and again, and Levison received near blows. But he pressed on, with a savage determination, and now some of his blows came home.

Harry Wharton's nose showed red and swollen at the end of the round, and there was a trickle of and from the corner of his mouth.

Levison had received far severer punishment. Harry rubbed his mouth as he looked at Bob Cherry.

"You're all right," said Bob; "but it's no good paying with him. He's getting better, and he's dogged enough for anything. You don't want this to last an hour. Go for him and finish it!"

"I will."

And Harry did.

In the third round he threw all he knew into the fight, and Levison found that the lightning was in deadly earnest at last.

He scarcely got in a single blow, and he received a shower that shook his confidence. Twice round the ring he went, noting under the many drives, and almost on the call of time a terrific right hander laid him on his back with a bang.

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath as Nugget called time.

Levison did not rise. Skinner raised him up, and made a knee for him, and wiped his red and perspiring face, and fanned him. The brief interval ticked away.

"Time!"

Levison made an effort to rise, but sank back again on Skinner's knee.

"You can't go on," said his second.

"I'm going to try."

"Well, try."

Levison did try. He stood up and staggered, and leaned against a line for support. He was completely knocked out, and he had to realize it.

"Time!" repeated Nugget.

Skinner threw his handkerchief into the air in lieu of a towel.

"We're done," he said.

Levison leaned back against the tree, his face white, and where bruises darkened it, his nose swollen.

"I—I'm done!" he stammered.

"But—but I'll make you sorry for this yet, Wharton."

Harry Wharton smiled contemptuously.

"You forced me into this," he replied. "and you've got a licking, as you deserve."

"Oh, choose all that!" said Russell. "You've the good of bearing malice! You've had it out, now shake hands and be friends."

"I can't shake hands with Levison."

"Why not?"

"Because he's a cad, and not fit to shake hands with a decent fellow," said Harry Wharton quietly. "I don't bear malice, either. I only want him to let me alone."

"You needn't bother," said Levison angrily. "I don't want to shake hands with you, and I wouldn't be your friend at any price. As far what you've said about me, it's a lie!"

Harry Wharton drew a quick breath.

"It's safe for you to say that just now," he said.

"It's a lie! Wharton has nothing up against me except that trick on Buster, and I was going to come up over that if Buster really wished getting a caning."

"You can't think of anything else, can you, said Wharton scornfully.

"No, if there's anything else, say it out yourself."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't want it repeated all over the school, and it's not the kind of thing to jaw about," he said. "I dare say you know what I mean. Anyway, it doesn't matter. Only before you begin say of your treasury here in mind that I am on the ground now."

And Harry Wharton put on his waistcoat and jacket and walked away.

Levison stared after him. Skinner gave a low whistle.

"What's all that about?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"I mean, what has Wharton got up against you that he's so mysterious about?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, you can tell that to the marion!" said Skinner, walking away.

Levison slowly put on his things and turned away from the spot. He crossed the Close towards the House, and unfortunately encountered Mr. Quack on route. He covered his face and hurried along, hoping to pass unnoticed. But his loose white shirt. The master of the Remove called to him.

"Levison, what is the matter with your face? You have been fighting?"

"Yes," said Levison sulkily.

The Form-master frowned.

"That is not the way to speak to me, Levison. You will take fifty lines for fighting, and fifty more for impudence to a master. You will bring them to me to-morrow morning. You may go."

Levison hurried on, with his heart full of bitterness.

It seemed to the boy that he was like an elephant at Greyfriars, and that everybody was handed against him. His thoughts, as he baited his sacking face under a bath-room tap, were full of anger on Harry Wharton. Yet the cowardly scheme Balthazar had proposed to him did not occur to his mind.

Wharton had been very little damaged in the fight. He went down to cricket practice, and the change came back to Study No. 1 in time for tea.

An appealing smell of cooking bacon

and ships was wafted from the study as the Famous Four approached it.
 Bob Cherry said approvingly:
 "Buster's getting a good thing for this time," he remarked. "I wonder if I know where he's got the grub from! There wasn't much in the cupboard."
 "Perhaps his postal order's come," said Nugent.

"Perhaps he's discovered a hidden treasure—it's just about as likely!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.
 "The unlikelyness is terrific."
 "Well, a swell jolly good, anyway. Hullo, hullo, hullo, Buster! How did you manage it?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, entering the study, and looking in admiration at the table, covered with excellent comestibles, and then the frying-pan, in which Buster was cooking tempting rashers over the fire.
 "Buster leaped through his spectacles.
 "It's my treat, you fellows."
 "I suppose it is. But whom have you been robbing?"
 "Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The amount would be great if the honorable postal order had come this time," remarked Hurroo Singh.
 "Has the postal order come, Buster?"
 "No; I don't really expect it till this evening's post," said Billy Bunter.
 "There, the doctor's done and you can begin. The kettle's boiling, and I'll have the tea made in a jiffy."

Billy Bunter was too busy to talk, but the hungry juniors were not inclined to waste time on inquiries. They had healthy appetites, and the fumes leaped that was spread with a tempting food. That was enough for them.
 "My hat," said Nugent, "this is all right! Buster is a genius! Fall to!"
 And the chains of the Romance fell to with a right good will.

A Discovery!

BILLY BUNTER made the tea, while Nugent was serving the bacon, eggs, and marmoset. The Owl of the Romance leaped round on the chairs of the Romance as he poured the tea out.

"How do you like the bacon?"
 "Ripping!" said Bob Cherry. "Pass the marmoset this way, Nugent."
 "First rate!" said Harry Wharton.

"There's some bananas and raisins for you, Inky. I know you don't like bananas. Though why a chap shouldn't like 'em," said Buster reflectively, "puzzles me."

"Get on with the washing, Bunter, and don't stop to think."

"Certainly, Nugent! Pass up your cup, Wharton. This is ripping tea, and has stood nearly long enough to make it perfect. I really think this is a decent spread."

"The discomforts is terrific."
 "And now, Bunter, where did it come from?"

Billy Bunter grinned.
 "I say," broke out Harry Wharton abruptly, "there's nothing larky about it, is there?"

"No, there isn't."
 "Hurroo Singh, Bunter!"
 "Hurroo Singh! I've stood this treat because I've saved five bob to-day."
 "Expended five bob, you mean?" grinned Nugent.

"Saved it, I said, and that's what I mean. You know I was going to send for Professor Foculson's famous book on hypnotism?"

"Layton's you?"
 "I found that young Clagg of the Third was interested in hypnotism, and he had had a recommendation from home, and was thinking of sending for

Professor Foculson's book. It was no good getting two copies of the same book, of course."

"So you told Clagg you were getting one, and advised him to save his five bob?" suggested Nugent.

Buster blinked at the speaker.
 "No, I didn't, Nugent. It never occurred to me. I told him it would be a jolly good book to get, and that I would help him to go through it, and learn up the subject, if he liked. I went with him to get the postal order and send it off."

"You young sharper!"
 "I don't see anything sharp in that, Bob Cherry. He wanted the book, and it would have been stupid to have two copies when one was enough. I'm going to learn hypnotism from young Clagg's book, and so I've saved my five bob. I thought I couldn't do better than stand treat with it, and here you are."

"Well, as the money was devoted to a noble purpose, perhaps we can forgive you," said Bob Cherry. "It's a good spread."
 "The gratification is great, but the selfishness of the rascalled Bunter is terrific."

"It wasn't selfishness," explained Bunter. "It was only business. Clagg wanted the book and he's going to have it. We wanted a feed, and we've got it. We're satisfied all round."

Harry Wharton laughed.
 "Well, Bunter, it's a good feed, anyway, and as you say, it was no good having two copies of the same book. Not much good having one either, so far as that goes."

"Oh, you. It will be very useful to me, as I want to learn the technique of the thing, so to speak. As far as

natural gifts go, I'm all right already. The wonderful power of my eyes—"

"Don't spoil the wonderful power of your tongue," Bob Cherry remarked.
 "Pass the marmoset."

"Certainly, Cherry! I shall be able to do you a service, too, Wharton, when I'm a practised hypnotist, so I shall put Bultrode and Layton under the fingers and make them own up before the whole Fours about that plot of theirs. I'm jolly sure Layton was going to plant something on you, as Bultrode suggested, for all his rot."

Harry Wharton looked at Bunter quickly. The last words had struck him.
 "For all what?" he asked.

"For all his rot," said Bunter. "Of course, I could go through that, I know no man to do it all along. I'm sharper than most fellows, you know."

"Do you mean to say that Layton refused to do as Bultrode suggested?" asked Harry quickly.

"Oh, he refused some lark about it, you know. But he didn't really refuse. I could see through him, though Bultrode couldn't."

Wharton laid down his knife and fork.
 "You didn't tell us this before, Bunter."

"Yes, I did," said the Owl of the Romance. "I told you I was jolly certain from what I heard, that Layton meant to carry out the scheme, didn't I?"

"Something of the sort, but you didn't say that Layton refused."
 "That was only gas, you know."
 "How do you know it was?"
 "Oh, I'm a pretty sharp fellow. It wouldn't be easy for any chap to take me in."



"Make it up to eight bob," said Bunter, "and you can have the whole of the postal order when it comes. Oh—now you see!" Bob Cherry, seeing all this, gave the lad just a drive behind his boot, and Bunter took a hurried departure!

The claims of the Bunker exchanged places. They did not think so much of the sharpness of Bunker as the Bunker himself did. Wharton looked worried as the thought struck him that through Bunker's stupidity he had been led to do Levison an injustice.

"Bunker, will you explain exactly what Levison said?"

"I can't remember. What does it matter?"

"I want to know."
"Blissed if I can remember! You see, I didn't take much notice. I know he was only hounding, especially when he said he would go to Mr. Quetch."

Wharton started.
"Did Levison say he would go to Mr. Quetch?"

"Yes, if Balstrode talked him, you know."

"What was Balstrode going to talk him for?"

"I can't remember— Oh, yes! It was because Levison was protesting that he wasn't going to carry out the scheme."

"How do you know he was protesting?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, I'm jolly sharp, and—"

"You young man—"

"Really, Nugent—"

"So Levison told Balstrode he wouldn't be a party to the scheme?"

"No, he didn't."

"But you just said—"

"He didn't use those words. So far as I remember he called Balstrode a quid, or something of the sort. Of course, it was all hounding!"

"You don't know it was hounding. Suppose he was in earnest?"

"Of course, he might have been. You see, I couldn't see his face, and I don't really know anything about it," said Bunker, helping himself to another sausage. "It doesn't matter much, does it, anyway?"

"Yes, confused you, it does!" said Wharton angrily.

"Then I'm sincerely sorry if I was mistaken; but I don't see very well how I could have been, because I'm jolly sharp, and—"

"What else did they say?"

"I don't remember."

"The likelihood with the honorable cricket stump might respectfully assist the concerned Bunker's memory," suggested the nabob.

"Look here, look—"
"The young tabernacle!" said Nugent.

"This is a very different yarn from the one he told us before."

"I say, you fellows, that's getting it too strong. I can't see any difference myself. I don't see that—"

And Levison threatened to tell Mr. Quetch about it if Balstrode touched him!

"Yes; though, of course, he didn't swear it."

"But if Balstrode was going to lick him that shows he thought that Levison was in earnest in his refusal."

"I suppose it does. But Balstrode's not very bright, you know."

Harry Wharton cast a troubled look at his claims.

"We've been in the wrong," he said quietly—at least, I have. I can't exactly blame myself—it was all Bunker's fault—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"But ought to have known better than to stretch such importance to what Bunker said. I ought to have known him better by this time."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Levison refused to do what Balstrode asked. It wasn't hounding. If he had intended to carry out the scheme he would have done it with Balstrode's assistance, and he couldn't have any possible motive for throwing dust in Balstrode's eyes."

"I never thought of that," said Bunker. "Never mind. He deserves the licking you gave him, you know, for playing that trick on me with the watch."

"I've done him an injustice," said Harry Wharton. "There's no getting out of that. Levison seems to have acted as a doctor, and given the medicine, and we set him down for a completely rascal. Bunker ought to be licked."

"I say, you fellows—"
"But that wouldn't alter the circumstances, and the fact can't help being a silly one, I suppose."

"If you call a fellow a fool and a silly one when he's standing a treat, Wharton, I don't think much of your manners."

"I can't call you anything else, Bunker; and it's lucky for you that you are a silly one. If I thought you had got me into this position from anything but stupidity, I'd wipe up the study with you!"

"I don't see anything wrong with the position. Levison deserved a licking, and you gave him one."

Harry Wharton rose to his feet.

"Where are you going?" asked Bob Cherry.

"To see Levison and apologize. I can't do less, after what I've said to him."

"I say, you haven't finished your tea," said Bunker anxiously. "Leave it till after tea, anyway."

Wharton crossed to the door.

"Bunker think over it, Harry," said Nugent quickly. "Levison isn't a pleasant chap to make an apology to. He's certain to misunderstand and misjudge your motive."

"Very likely. I must explain to him, anyway."

The prospect was not a pleasant one to Harry Wharton. It was not gratifying to his proud nature to confess himself in the wrong, but he felt that he could do no less. He left the room and went slowly along to Levison's study.

Harry Wharton's Resolves!

LEVISON was doing his inspection when Harry Wharton entered at the door and entered the study. What a new look in the Bunker's did not look very happy. One of his eyes was closed, his nose was swollen, and his face bore plain traces of the fight in the Class.

He looked up with a smile from the lines though which he was wearily travelling.

"What do you want?"

"The words were not polite or inviting. Wharton flustered a little, but he came on like the steady."

"I want to speak to you, Levison."

"I want to have nothing to say to you. I'm busy, too! I'm doing the lines I got for fighting," said Levison curtly.

"I didn't know you had an impet."

"Well, you know now. You haven't got, of course, I know you're one of Quetch's associates."

"Nothing of the sort. Mr. Quetch doesn't happen to know that I was fighting, that's all. I don't—"



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Wharton paused.
Levison laughed apologetically.
"Oh, go on!" he exclaimed. "You don't throw me many signs of it as I do—that's what you were going to say. It's true enough. Perhaps the next time you may not come off so well."

"I hope that there will be no next time."
"I dare say you do, but you'll be disappointed. There'll be a next time as soon as I feel up to tackling you again. Meanwhile, I've got my lines to do, and I'd be glad if you'd leave me to do them."

"I must speak to you, Levison," said Harry Wharton. "I've come here to do so."

Levison started.
"What are you talking about? Is this some more of your raving?"

"No," said Harry quietly. "I owe you an apology. You didn't understand some of the things I said to you to-day."

"You needn't trouble to explain them."

"I must explain them. I was speaking under a misapprehension. As a matter of fact, your talk with Balducci to-day was prearranged and reported to me in the morning."

"I suppose you mean you were listening yourself and jumped to a wrong conclusion?" stammered Levison.

"Harry's hands lifted to be at the troubling door, but he kept himself well under control.

"No," he said. "I didn't listen. Your words were reported to me by one who believed that you meant to carry out the scheme Balducci suggested. I thought you meant it, too. I've since learned—"

"If you think I believe all this—"
"I've since learned that you refused Balducci's suggestion—"

"From the same source?"
"Yes."

"Two different parties from the same tale-bearer—oh!"

"He was wrong in the first place—"
"I don't know what you mean by all this guttering," said Levison. "But I don't impose on me a little bit. I suppose you know something about Balducci's suggestion, or you wouldn't mention it to me. But I rather think you were listening yourself, and it misled you to believe what you did. Now you've changed your plans for some reason—a reason I don't know. I'd be glad to hear what size you have to grind by all this."

"Amazing as it may seem to you, I have no use to grind," said Harry softly. "I've come to tell you this from a feeling of simple justice—"

Levison laughed heartily.
"Oh, dear if it isn't!"

"I owe you an apology for having misinterpreted you, that is all," said Harry Wharton, still keeping his temper. "I've come here to make it."

"And now what do you want of me?"

"Nothing."

"Then I don't see what all this fussing is for."

"Yes—you can't" looked out Wharton. "Ah, you've come to that at last!" accused Levison. "That sounds a little more candid, and a little more like your real feelings. I'd rather have it set open and honest than any of your hypocrisy."

"Then you can't give me credit for being sorry for a mistake?"

"Levison shrugged his shoulders. "I don't seem to have been in a right way. You'll take your mistake. But I'm not a dirty trick that you can't think of for

a moment. You might have given me credit for refusing it."

"I didn't know—"
"The chap you learned all this from seems to have known all the facts, as you say he's told you the truth now. You might have inquired a little more closely in the first place."

Wharton colored.
"Perhaps I might. I can only say I'm sorry."

"Well, if you're sorry, that's all right," said Levison, with a sour grin. "My belief is that you're hoodwinking, though for what reason I can't imagine. I suppose that you and your chums have been planning to take a pie-out of me somehow. Well, you won't succeed; you can count on that."

"I don't quite know what to say to you."

"Don't say anything. Leave me to study and let me get on with my lines," said Levison. "That's about the best thing you can do, I think."

Wharton stood looking at him. Never had he been so inclined to give Levison a licking. Considering the hasty and passionate temper which had often brought trouble to Wharton, it was surprising how well he held himself in hand.

"I'm sorry for this, Levison," he said, somewhat thickly. "—I thought you would understand—"

"I do understand," said Levison impatiently. "and for the last time, I tell you—"

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you that I'm not to be taken in with this gas. It's just plain enough for you!"

Harry Wharton's eyes blazed, and he made a step forward, his hands clenched. Levison half-started to his feet, his hands tightening, his neck set.

But Wharton restrained himself in time.

"You're not worth it," he muttered, and his hands dropped to his sides.

"Are you going?" said Levison, much high.

"Yes, I'm going. I'm sorry I came here."

Levison laughed.
"Yes, it wasn't much good, was it? Shut the door after you."

Harry quitted the study and shut the door. His face was clouded as he walked slowly back towards his own quarters.

Bob Cherry and Hunter Singh had gone out with Billy Barrow after finishing tea, but Nugent had stayed to wait for Harry. He looked indignantly at his chum as he came in.

Harry's gloomy look was sufficient to indicate how matters had gone in Levison's study. He forced a smile as he met Nugent's glance.

"It wasn't much good," he said. "I shall never get on with that chap, Nugent. He suspects double-dealing at every word—he seems incapable of reading anybody for a moment."

"Suspicious," he said. "Nugent—"
"Yes there are good points in him, too," Wharton nodded thoughtfully.

"That's what I was thinking; that's why I went to him. He was in a hoarse temper about what happened with

Quelch, and Balducci showed him an easy way of revenge. Yet he refused it as the risk of quarrelling with Balducci. That shows that he's not such a rotter as he makes himself out to be by his wags."

"Oh, I dare say he has his good points, but they won't getting at," Nugent remarked. "If somebody took him in hand and gave him a course of education, and too gently, it would improve him and might make a deserving fellow of him yet."

"I thought of that, too," Nugent laughed.

"You're not thinking of taking it on, Harry?"

"Why not?"

His chum stared at him.
"Why not? A thousand reasons! You're not going to waste time trying to learn to read the secret languages and ill-natured notes in the Bazaar, I suppose?"

"He's shown that he has good qualities in him. If someone could get through the outer crust, as it were, he might turn out a decent chap. I think he would."

"Not an easy task, nor a very profitable one," said Nugent, with a careless shrug of the shoulders.

"I can't help remembering, Nugent, that there was a time when I was a difficult subject," said Wharton abruptly.

"There was a time, then, who stood a lot of nonsense from me, and never lost patience, and put up with a lot more than was expected of him?"

Nugent turned red.
"Oh, you're talking rot now, Harry?"

"I'm talking facts. Now that I look back, I can see that I should never have got on at all as long as you had your head on me, like the brick you were. I've met more of a fellow, Frank, but there were some things I shall never forget—and that's one of them."

"That's all right, Harry."

"And that's what's put this into my head," went on Wharton slowly. "What you did for me, why shouldn't I do for him? I'm going to try, at any rate."

Nugent smiled in a dubious way.
"But—but I'm an outrageous sort of chap, you know," he said. "It was natural to me to be good-tempered, and I never lose patience. You'll fly into a temper a dozen times a day as Levison's teachers if you start taking him in hand."

Harry's lips set firmly.
"I can do a thing if I make up my mind to it, Frank."

"What I mean is, he'll provoke you sooner or later, and there will be a row and another fight," said Nugent. "Then the last state of affairs will be worse than the first. Better than that would be to have nothing to do with him at all."

"I know; but I can keep my temper better than you think, Nugent. I've seen up my mind."

"It will red to a row."

"You think I won't be able to keep up my good resolution?" said Harry, with a faint smile.

"To be quite frank, old chap, I know you won't," said Nugent. "It was different with me. You could never stand it."

"We shall see."

"Well, I'll back you up, at any rate," said Nugent, "and, as you say, we shall see."

"If you like a good laugh—and who doesn't?—make certain you read our weekly magazine Georgetown's Magnet—"

"SEND THE FIVE DOLLAR IN P. O. ORDER."

TOM MERRY'S DOUBLE!

(Continued from page 21.)

"But those is six," said Leather. "He's been seen here!"

"Yes, my man! D'Arny has seen him, sir, last Wednesday afternoon. And he has got his hands full of it. He ought him smoking in the bar, and took him for Tom Merry and begged him, sir."

Dr. Holmes held up his hand. "That may be true," he said, "but it never matters. All the Officers School boys are convinced that it was Tom Merry who spun those old stories about Gordon Gray. Also, Dr. Meek has informed me that the boy left his cap behind him when he fled. It was one of our school caps. This points Leather would not be likely to be wearing a St. Jim's cap, I presume?"

"That's true," said Leather. "I'll go to the school, sir, and tell them that the boy who was wearing the Grammar School cap to talk him for Tom Merry."

"And stop!" said the Head miffed. "Why should a boy, a stranger to Merry, commit such a wicked plot against him?"

"But I've got good, sir!" exclaimed Leather. "Look at Tom Merry. You can see that he's got a cold, sir."

"That is plain enough for anyone to see," I suppose," said the Head, frowning. "But what has it to do with the matter in hand?"

"I mean, if Tom Merry was at the Grammar School only a couple of hours ago, with that bad cold, the fellows must have seen that he had a cold."

"I presume so. It could be generally possible to regard it," said the Head, with a glance at Tom's red-nosed nose and watery eyes. "But what—?"

"Well, sir, ask the Grammar School chap who saw him whether the fellow who visited Gray had a bad cold or not," said Leather triumphantly.

Tom Merry's face brightened up wonderfully. He saw his own point now, and he passed Leather's arm gratefully.

Dr. Holmes went to the telephone. He took up the receiver and rang up the Grammar School. The juniors watched him with broadest excitement. "Hello!" said the Head. "Yes, this is St. Jim's. That is Mr. Bender, Grammar School. Thank you; I will try to speak to some boy who saw the attack upon Gray as eye witness."

"There was a person the Head wanted. There was something wrong in the study. Then the Head went again."

"That is Meek—Frank Meek? You saw the attack on Gray?"

"Yes, sir," came back Frank Meek's voice over the wire.

"Did the boy you saw show any signs of having a bad cold in the head?"

"A bad cold in the head!" repeated Meek. "Not at all, sir. He was as fit as a fiddle, so far as I could see. Dr. Holmes drew a deep breath. "You are sure of this, Meek?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"Tom Merry is suffering from a bad cold, which he has had all day. His face shows the signs of it in an unmistakable manner. You could not have failed to see it, if you had seen him to-day."

"Well, that beats it!" came back Frank Meek's astonished voice. "It was Tom Merry right enough, but he hadn't any cold in the head when he was here a couple of hours ago."

"There is known to be a boy in the neighborhood very much resembling Tom Merry," the Head went on. "They are so alike that they have been mistaken for one another. I am sure that you met this boy on Wednesday, and saw some girls—and perhaps him for Merry."

"Oh, my hair!"

"Now you know this, Meek, are you of opinion that it was Tom Merry, or the other boy who resembles him, who made that attack upon Gray?"

"The other fellow, I suppose, sir. We were all surprised at it—it wasn't all like Tom Merry, so we knew him."

"The fellow who came here certainly hadn't a cold—he was as fit as a fiddle. I mean, he was quite well, sir."

"Thank you, Meek!" Dr. Meek, you may care to speak to your son, and he will answer you that the boy who came to the Grammar School was not Tom Merry."

"Then my word," continued the Grammar School master. "He went to the telephone, and after the making of a few sentences with Frank he put down the receiver."

"It is very contradictory," he said. "Of course, I had never heard of this other lad who resembles Meek. But it seems to be quite clear that a mistake has been made. Merry, I beg your pardon!"

"It—it's all right, sir," Tom stammered. "I hope you believe now that I wouldn't do a rotten thing like that. I am sorry Gray is hurt."

"I am very sure you were surprised," said Dr. Meek. "As for this other boy, he shall be found, and charged with what he has done. He can be found—"

"I know where he can be found, sir," said Tom eagerly. "Brooks called him this morning and told me. He's staying at Mrs. Hall's cottage on Wayland Street."

"Thank you!" said Dr. Meek. "I shall drive to the police station before I go back. He shall not escape punishment."

And the Grammar School master took his leave.

Dr. Holmes turned to Tom Merry. "I see, my boy, your garden, Meek," he said. "But for Leather's quick wit, I fear very much that a great deal of trouble would have been done. You'll remember me to your mother; she who could have suspected that boy, a stranger to you, of such an act, is an unexampled wickedness! However, it is a police matter now, and I'll not occupy your time. You may go to the Terrace Three walked out of the study. In the passage Tom Merry thanked Leather as the boys' "Good old Meek!" he said. "You'll have it this time—yes, and those old ones in Study No. 3. They gave us this one, they are and tell them."

Study No. 3 resumed the lesson with attention, and with satisfaction. Arthur Augustus D'Arny was quite brightly satisfied.

"Didn't I tell you, dear boy, that Tom Merry would come around and thank us for having done so well?" he demanded, his eyes twinkling. "Of course, it didn't work out so exactly as we intended, but I really think no man may that Study No. 3 has saved the situation."

And Study No. 3 secretly agreed, and the Terrace Three cheered the point.

Reggie Clavering was not found at the cottage on the moor. The man in blue who went there to look for him found that the bird had flown. But further details of the strange plot passed to light—the old cottage gave evidence that Clavering had been away from the moor. Clavering was at the Grammar School, and had some talk with his cap, and packed his bag, and hurriedly departed.

The school officials, in particular, thought that he had been sent out to a young woman whom he had supposed to be Tom Merry that very morning. And Miss Frencilla Farnwell denied all knowledge of the telegram that had been sent from Hackberry Heath to her home.

Tom Merry & Co. had a goodly stock of it—why that plot had been formed, and what was the unknown object of it—by they had to give it up.

"Anyway, Clavering won't dare to come here again," said Tom Merry, with satisfaction. "We've finished with him for good and all."

And he always agreed with him. They had no doubt that they were done with Tom Merry's double for good, but they little dreamed of what other stunts they would see him make.

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