

FAMOUS FOR SCHOOL STORIES.

The GEM 1¹/₂

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LIBRARY

20 Pages.

Every Wednesday.

July 30th, 1921.



A WARM RECEPTION FOR GORDON GAY & CO.!

(An Exciting Incident from the Screamingly Funny Long Complete School Story Inside.)

EDITORIAL.

My Dear Readers,—

A very special programme is being put forward these days in the "Gem," and there is hardly any need for me to insist upon the value and interest of the yarns dealing with Ernest Levison, Miss Priscilla, and other characters who have come prominently into the limelight. I am sure you will like the new yarns as well as those which have gone, though it will be long ere the fun of the St. Jim's camping-out expedition is forgotten, with Solomon, the Donkey, and the cooking-stove which would not cook, to say nothing of the exploits of Herries' dog, Towser—who should be called

Trouser, since he is so partial to that item of raiment.

Poor Tom Mace, the scholarship boy, is putting up a good fight against fearful odds in the splendid serial, "What Have You Against Me?" Why should fellows be such snobs as Lundy and his ignoble company of cads? Unfortunately, it has to be admitted there is snobbishness knocking about the world. The only cheery thing about it all is that the out-and-out snob generally learns his lesson in the end.

Next week our splendid long complete story will be entitled "The St. Jim's

Swimmers," and there cannot be the slightest doubt that it is one of the first yarns which have ever appeared in our pages. The story deals chiefly with Tom Merry and Cardew, and for a time there is great trouble between these two popular characters. The climax of this magnificent story is a surprising one, and you must not miss reading it on any account. Indeed, next week's "Gem" will be a splendid one in every way, and as there is likely to be a big demand for it, every reader should get his copy early to avoid disappointment.

YOUR EDITOR.

ANSWERS TO READERS.

Editor's Note.—The following is a reply to one of the many letters which have been addressed to Ralph Rackness Cardew by readers of the GEM. (More letters next week.)

To "Miss Doreen B." Nottingham. From Ralph Rackness Cardew, Study No. 3, Fourth Form Passage, St. James' College, Rylombe, Sussex.

"My Dear Doreen.—Perhaps a few months later than I should have been, I feel I must write and thank you for that exceedingly flattering letter written to myself. I think you must possess a wonderful amount of energy, considering it has taken me over four months to write a reply to it. The chief reason for this thushness was due to the silly old postman, who brought your letter at the most inconvenient time. I was in the middle of a harmless game of snooker at one of Aubrey Racke's convivial smoking-concerts. Somehow or other your letter got lost, and it was not until Racke had his study re-decorated, a month or two later, that it came to light. So, with my cuffs turned up and an ice bandage round my head, I'm endeavouring to make up for lost time.

"You say I'm one of the most interesting boys at St. Jim's. Well, do you know, I find myself rather interesting at times. Particularly so when I ran a French nail into my finger at our woodwork classes. You go on to say you're a schoolgirl of fifteen, and 'leaving this summer, thank goodness!' I think fifteen's a nice age, though no doubt twenty-one'll be more interesting when I get there. From your remark I should imagine you don't much care about school. No doubt you've got good reasons. My grandfather is the Earl of Strathfrie. Your next question is rather a ticklish one. I shall not go on the films until a producer comes into Study No. 3 and pulls me off my sofa. He'll have to offer me a salary of seven hundred and fifty pounds a week, and promise to give me parts where I have to lounge about looking nice and handsome, and smoking Turkish cigarettes. Then, and not before, shall I 'go on the films.' Now you want to know if your humble is good-looking. Oh, rather! A regular Adonis! Bought after far and wide by fellows after my cash. I am sorry my hair is fair, and not dark. But it was black on

one occasion. Tom Merry used a tar-brush for the purpose!

"What are my feelings with regard to Doris Levison? Somewhat romantic at times, and precisely opposite at others. On the whole she's quite a decent little girl, and as for being old-fashioned—well, that's positive rot! I'm sure one of the dresses she wore the other Sunday, when we went for a boat trip up the Ryl, was exceedingly modern.

"I know it's the ordinary custom to write a short letter to a stranger as a kick-off; but I'm extraordinary, you see, and have to write a long one. Thanks again for your letter, but please write to the hard-working old Editor next time, because this apparently easily written effort has reduced me to a web rag, and I shall have to spend several nights in Racke's study, and smoke anything up to fifty fags before I can recover. Almost expiring, I remain yours as ever was, and always will be,

"RALPH RACKNESS CARDEW."



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WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS BE SURE TO MENTION THIS PAPER.

TOM MERRY and TIMOTHY

A Grand Long Complete Story of TOM MERRY & Co.
 at St. Jim's.
 By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

A Special Occasion.

"WELL, I'm blessed!" Jack Blake of the Fourth gave vent to that astonished exclamation.

He and his chums—Herries, Digby, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—had come along the Shell passage early one Wednesday afternoon. The heroes of Study No. 6 were dressed in flannels, and had their bats tucked under their arms.

They were going down to the nets for an afternoon's cricket practice. The Terrible Three were, of course, expected to go down as well. Jack Blake & Co. had come along to see whether Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther were ready. They expected to see them also in their flannels.

But on opening the door of Study No. 10, they received a surprise.

The Terrible Three were not in flannels. Very much the opposite, in fact.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, adjusting his famous monocle. "What evah are you chaps up to?" "Aren't you coming down to cricket, you burbling chumps?" demanded Blake.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Monty Lowther looked up. "Hallo, you chaps!" said the Shell captain cheerily. "You're just come along in time! Get this dashed collar fixed on to this dashed stud, will you, Blake? It's a dashed new collar, and the dashed buttonhole is too dashed stiff!"

"How does my tie set, Gussy?" inquired Manners anxiously. "Monty's commandeered the mirror, to see to brush his hair. The beastly tie feels as though the knot's at the back of my neck somewhere."

"Where's that brilliantine?" demanded Monty Lowther, looking round. "You were using it last, Tommy! Why, you—you burbler! You've mopped the lot!"

"Sorry, Monty!" grinned Tom Merry. "There wasn't more than half a bottleful, you know, and—I thought I might as well go the whole hog, and do my hair decently."

"Oh, you ass! How am I to part my hair?" howled Monty Lowther. "It's worse than ever now, since Figgins rubbed that treacle over my napper yesterday! Got any brilliantine, Gussy?"

"Bai Jove!"

Jack Blake & Co. stared at the Terrible Three in wonderment.

The heroes of the Shell were arrayed in beautifully pressed trousers, and their shoes had been well polished. Not an ink-stain was on their hands, not a spot of grease on their waistcoats. Various clothes-brushes, boxes of handkerchiefs and ties bestrewn the study table. Tom Merry & Co. were evidently taking great pains over their toilet.

"Look here, Tom Merry, I'm blessed if I understand this!" gasped Blake. "Why are you making yourselves up like a crew of Burlington Berties, when you ought to be in cricket clobber? What's the merry game?"

"Game?" said Tom Merry. "This is no game, I assure you, Blake. Now, come and shove this stud in for me, there's a good chap!"

"Gussy, be a sport, and lend us a drop of brilliantine!" implored Monty Lowther.

"Clear out of the way of that glass, and let me see how my tie sets!" said Manners, glowering. "Blow your rotten

hair, Monty! What matters how it looks—you're going to wear a topper, aren't you?"

"Yes; but what about when I raise my topper?" demanded Monty Lowther, with a glare. "Blessed if I ever ran across such a thick-headed duffer as you, Manners! I've got to raise my topper, haven't I?"

"Oh, bow-wow!"

Tom Merry sent up a sudden shout.

"Oh crumbs! I've dropped the stud! Don't tread about, you chaps, you might stamp on it! Ah, there it is, just by your boot, Herries!"

"Where?" said Herries, innocently stepping back.

Scrumch!

"You've trodden on it!" shrieked Tom Merry. "Oh, you—you big-footed idiot! You've smashed that stud to smithereens! The only stud I possess! I had no end of a job to find that, too! There isn't another in the study!"

"Sorry!" grinned Herries. "I'll run down to Mrs. Kebble, if you like, and borrow a safety-pin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll punch your nose!" roared Tom Merry, pushing back his cuffs. "Trust you silly Fourth Form idiots to come barging in and spoiling things when we're in a hurry! Out of the way, Blake!"

"Pax—pax, my infant!" said Blake chidingly. "Wherefore all this titivation? Is the Prince of Wales paying St. Jim's a special visit this afternoon? Or are you going down to the Rykcombe tin church rummage sale?"

Tom Merry glowered.

"We've half an hour in which to reach Rykcombe for the two-ten train!" he exclaimed. "Miss Priscilla Fawcett is coming, and we're going to meet her."

"Bai Jove!"

Jack Blake & Co. grinned. They always grinned at the mention of Tom Merry's old nurse and guardian, Miss Priscilla Fawcett. Not that they meant any disrespect to Miss Priscilla. Everybody at St. Jim's liked Tom Merry's nurse. But Miss Priscilla was such a queer lady, and her old-fashioned ideas and ways were always a source of amusement to the boys of St. Jim's.

"So Miss Priscilla is coming!" grinned Blake. "That accounts for the tailor's dummy stant! How long is she coming for, Tommy?"

"Not long," replied Tom Merry. "As a matter of fact, we've got to meet her at Rykcombe Station, have a jaw for a few minutes, and then leave her there. She's only snatching an hour to run over with a new boy for the Shell."

"A—a new boy for the Shell?" gasped Blake.

"Yes," replied Tom. "I had a letter from her at midday. She says that she's taken charge of an orphan boy named Timothy Duffe, and she's arranged with Dr. Holmes for him to come into the Shell. She's bringing him over this afternoon, and wants us to look after him and show him the ropes. That's all I know."

The chums of Study No. 6 looked astonished.

"Fancy Miss Priscilla becoming guardian to another idiot!" said Digby. "I thought you were enough, Tommy!"

"Why, you funny ass—"

"I hope, Timothy, you will not be jealous of this Timothy Duffe, or whatever his name is," said Blake, wagging his forefinger solemnly at Tom Merry. "You should treat him as a brother, you know, and be nice to him!"

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"Oh rats!" said Tom Merry, in exasperation. "Can either of you fellows oblige me with a stud?"

"Gussy, old chap, let's have some brillianine!" implored Lowther.

"Do you mind if I borrow your Sunday topper, Digby?" asked Manners. "Somebody has sat on mine, and I can't get the creases out. You take the same size topper, I believe?"

The Fourth-Formers good-naturedly obliged the Terrible Three with the various things they wanted. In ten minutes Tom Merry & Co. were dressed. They went down to the quadrangle with Blake & Co., passed out of the school gates, and made their way down the Rylcombe Lane towards the village.

CHAPTER 2.

Something New in New Boys!

"My darling Tommy!"

Miss Priscilla Fawcett bounded out of the railway-carriage on to the platform, where the Terrible Three were awaiting her.

The train was twenty minutes late, but that was tame for the railway that served Rylcombe. Tom Merry & Co. looked up and saw the bouncing lady come towards them.

Miss Priscilla was a vision of old-world loveliness, wearing a bonnet and a tightly-fitting coat and full skirt that were the fashion in the mid-Victorian era. She had an umbrella in her hand, and a large black leather handbag.

"Hallo, Miss Priscilla!" said Tom Merry, raising his hat. "Good-afternoon, Miss Fawcett!" said Manners and Lowther politely, also raising their toppers.

"My darling Tommy! How good it is to see you again!"

Miss Priscilla dashed up to Tom Merry, caught him in her arms, and hugged him fondly to her maidenly breast. She planted a kiss on each of Tom's cheeks, kisses that resounded in the air.

Manners and Lowther grinned. Tom Merry, at length released from his old nurse's fond embrace, blushed crimson. Not only were the other passengers and the porter laughing, but he could see Gordon Gay & Co., of Rylcombe Grammar School, grinning at him from the station barrier.

"How are you, my sweetest Tommy?" asked Miss Priscilla anxiously.

"Oh, full of beans, Miss Priscilla!" replied Tom, setting his necktie straight.

"Full of beans!" exclaimed Miss Priscilla, raising her cotton-gloved hands in horror. "Surely, Tommy, they are not feeding you on beans at St. Jim's! Beans are very indigestible. They are sure to lay on your poor chest, and give you indigestion! Beans! My goodness!"

The Terrible Three grinned.

"Oh—er—I didn't mean that I was full of beans literally, Miss Priscilla!" said Tom. "Full of beans is an expression that conveys that a chap is feeling quite fit and strong, you know."

"Oh, I see!" said Miss Priscilla, beaming. "Are you sure your chest is quite strong, Tommy? Have you been playing any more of those rough games, such as football?"

"No, Miss Priscilla," said Tom, solemnly shaking his head. "I give you my word, I haven't played football since April last!"

"There's a good little boy!" cooed Miss Priscilla. "And how are your friends, Manners and Lowther? I am pleased you and they are chums, my dearest Tommy—they are such nice, clean, neat little boys!"

Manners and Lowther received a kiss each from Miss Priscilla. It was Tom Merry's turn to laugh, and their turn to blush.

"What about the new boy, Miss Priscilla?" inquired Tom Merry. "Haven't you brought him with you?"

Miss Priscilla gave a start.

"Oh, Timothy, to be sure!" she exclaimed. "Yes, Timothy is in the carriage. I quite expected him to follow me! Timothy! My dear Timothy!"

She bounced back to the carriage she had vacated, and the Terrible Three followed.

"Better buck up and get him out, if he's there," said Tom Merry. "The train's just about to start."

"Here is Timothy!" said Miss Priscilla, beaming round. "The dear little fellow has quite forgotten we were at Rylcombe. Come along, Timothy dear!"

Miss Priscilla stepped into the carriage, and led forth a fellow whom Tom Merry & Co. looked at curiously. They looked, and they gaped. They almost fell down in their amazement.

"Mum-my only hat!" gurgled Tom Merry.

"What is it?" stuttered Manners.

"Is—that Timothy?" said Monty Lowther, in a faint voice.

The youth whom Miss Priscilla took from the carriage was certainly one to make all beholders stare.

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Tom Merry & Co. stared at him in utter, speechless astonishment.

He was a tall youth, very thin in the body, but with a large head and huge feet.

His hair was long and flowing, and of a sandy shade. Timothy's face was a sight to see and wonder at. The Terrible Three had never seen a more comical face in their lives before!

Timothy's eyes were large and blue, his nose long, his mouth wide, and his ears large and almost flapping. He wore a sheepish grin. Upon his long nose were perched a pair of huge horn-rimmed spectacles.

The garb of this strange fellow was as astonishing as the rest of him. He wore tight-fitting Etons, a top hat that seemed several sizes too small for his large head, a huge liner collar with a gigantic bow, striped trousers, and large shoes with fancy socks.

As Timothy stepped from the train, led by Miss Priscilla, he blinked at Tom Merry & Co.

"Say good-afternoon to the dear little boys, Timothy!" said Miss Priscilla coaxingly.

Timothy gave her a grin that spread literally from ear to ear. Then he turned to Tom Merry & Co., dragged the topknot off his head, and bowed low to the ground.

He then pulled himself up into a vertical position, and grinned expansively at the Terrible Three. He had not uttered a single syllable.

"Mum-my hat!" gaped Tom Merry again.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Manners.

"I shall wake up in a minute!" murmured Monty Lowther, rubbing his eyes.

"Dear Timothy! He is so eccentric!" said Miss Priscilla, beaming. "I am sure you and your chums will love him, Tommy. He has such lovable ways! Timothy, dear, shake hands with my darling Tommy!"

Timothy looked vacantly round the platform and grinned.

Tom Merry, wishing to please his old nurse, went up to the strange Timothy and held out his hand.

Whereupon Timothy stood on one leg, stuck his right forefinger into his mouth, and wobbled his lean body to and fro in the manner of a shy little girl who has been asked to give a recitation at a concert.

"Do not be bashful, Timothy dear!" said Miss Priscilla. "I want you to make friends with my darling Tommy."

Timothy grinned at her, and then took Tom's hand. He dropped it immediately afterwards, and stood on one leg again, leaning sheepishly at Miss Priscilla, as though he had accomplished something to be proud of.

The Terrible Three were more astonished than ever.

"He—he's bawdy!" muttered Manners.

"Properly off his onion!" said Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry did not make any comment, but he thought the more.

The train went out of the station, and Miss Priscilla led the way outside.

She walked with her left arm linked in Timothy's, and her right in Tom Merry's.

The Shell captain felt rather uncomfortable as Miss Priscilla pulled him out into the station yard. Manners and Monty Lowther followed, chuckling, and surveying the rear view of Timothy, with wondering curiosity.

"I must not stay long, my dear Tommy," said Miss Priscilla. "You see, I made a hasty journey over here to show Timothy the way. He does not know his way about much, poor fellow, and is not used to railways. I must catch the four o'clock train back to Huckleberry Heath. Let us go into the tea-shop and have some tea."

"Oh, certainly, Miss Priscilla!" gasped Tom.

Miss Priscilla Fawcett took her two wards into the village tea-shop, and Manners and Lowther followed. They went to the end table by the door.

The Terrible Three looked at Timothy, and then at each other.

Timothy appeared to be very interested in his own reflection in the mirror. He was leering at himself in the glass, wagging his head, and raising his topper to himself. In that occupation he seemed to be enjoying himself immensely.

Miss Priscilla beamed all over her face.

"Let me tell you all about my dear Timothy," said Miss Priscilla, pouring out the tea. "I am sure, when you hear, that you will agree that I am right in not allowing Timothy to return to the home."

"Has—has he been in a home, then?" gasped Tom Merry.

"Yes; since he was seven years of age!" said Miss Priscilla.

"Timothy is twenty-two now. Isn't it terrible?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry.

"Horrible!" said Manners.

"Simply awful!" said Monty Lowther, with much depth of feeling.

Miss Priscilla heaved a sigh.

"Yes; it is a shame to keep him in that shocking place, when he is not mad at all," she said. "I found him wandering on Huckleberry Heath one day last month, and took

him home. He had been ill-treated by the nasty people at Denton House, and had got loose. I could not bear to think of the poor dear boy being ill-treated, so I took him in and had him looked after. His nice, loving, tender little ways soon convinced me that Timothy was not mad, and I told the doctor at Denton House so when he came and demanded of me to hand Timothy back to him. I took a liking to the poor boy, and adopted him. The horrid Denton House people keep pestering me to let them have him back, but I refuse to believe that Timothy is mad. He isn't mad—only eccentric. Do watch him, Tommy! Oh, Timothy—Timothy dear! You mustn't pour your tea into your hat!"

Timothy, who was in the act of emptying the contents of his teacup into his toppler, looked up with a sheepish grin.

"Eh?" he squeaked.

"That's naughty!" said Miss Priscilla chidingly. "Remember, Timothy, you've got to wear that hat. You cannot go to St. Jim's with a wet hat!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gurgled Monty Lowther, with a sudden start. "Is—is Timothy really coming to St. Jim's, Miss Priscilla?"

"Yes; Timothy is going to be educated," said Miss Priscilla, gazing fondly at her ward. "You see, my dear Tommy, the poor boy has been kept in that horrible Denton House all these years, and they haven't educated him a bit. That is the reason why Timothy is so childish and eccentric. So Dr. Holmes has consented to let him enter the Shell Farm, and I am going to entrust Timothy into your care, Tommy."

"Into mum-my care!" stammered the Shell captain.

"Yes, my dearest Tommy!" gushed Miss Priscilla. "I am sure you and your chums will like him, and Timothy is bound to like you. He is going to share your study."

"Oh, Jemima!" ejaculated Monty Lowther, in horror, clutching the edge of the table.

The Terrible Three were dismayed and alarmed.

"Yes; Timothy is coming to share your room, Tommy," said Miss Priscilla. "Won't that be nice?"

"Oh—er—awfully nice!" gurgled Tom.

"We—we shall be only too delighted to have darling Timothy!" said Manners, with deep sarcasm, which Miss Priscilla did not notice.

"In fact, we'll take him to our bosoms and treat him as a brother!" said Monty Lowther cuttingly.

Miss Priscilla beamed.

"There's dear little boys!" she said. "I was certain you would do all you could for Timothy and please me!"

Tom Merry and Co. would not have offended Miss Priscilla for worlds. So, instead of saying what they wanted to say, they remained silent, and went on with their tea.

Timothy did not speak a word. He wired into the cakes and cream buns as though his very life depended upon it. He bestowed huge smiles at everybody in the bunshop, thereby creating quite a sensation.

The like of Timothy Duffe had never before been seen in the rural village of Rylcombe.

"I must be going now," said Miss Priscilla at length. "Now, Timothy dear, I am going to leave you with these nice little boys. You will be sure to behave yourself at St. Jim's, won't you, and always stay with my darling Tommy?"

Timothy gave her an expansive grin.

"Oh—oh, yes!" he said.

"There's a dear!"

Miss Priscilla rose, paid the bill, and then led Timothy and Tom Merry from the shop. Manners and Lowther grinned, and followed.

The Terrible Three went over to the railway-station, to see Miss Priscilla off. The train came in, and Miss Priscilla hugged Tom Merry to her, showering kisses upon him with much affection.

The captain of the Shell underwent this ordeal with heroic fortitude.

Timothy stood by, still grinning. Miss Priscilla kissed him upon each cheek, and, having presented Tom Merry with a pound-note, she climbed into the train.

"Next stop Abbotsford!" shouted the guard.

The Terrible Three crowded round the carriage door with Timothy.

They did not notice five lurking figures on the platform.

Those five were Gordon Gay, the leader of the juniors of Rylcombe Grammar School, and his chums, Frank Monk, Harry Wootton, and Jack Wootton and Carboy.

"You will be sure to wear your nightcap and cheet-protector, won't you, my darling Tommy?" Miss Priscilla was saying anxiously. "Although this is summer, I am sure your poor little chest needs to be looked after. And I do hope that you and Timothy will be the best of friends."

"Oh, I—I hope so!" said Tom dutifully.

"Stand clear!" roared the guard, and blew his whistle.

"Good-bye, Tommy!" said Miss Priscilla.

"Good-bye!" said Tom. "I— Oh! What the dickens is— Yarooooooh!"

"Yooooooh!" roared Manners. "Who the merry blazes—"

"Look out!" howled Monty Lowther. "Yah! Ow! Ooooooh!"

Gordon Gay & Co. had flung themselves upon the Terrible Three, just as the train was starting. Carboy opened a carriage door, and Gay, Monk, and the two Woottons bundled Tom Merry & Co. inside. The Terrible Three were too amazed to know quite what had happened, until they found themselves whirled through the carriage door, to land on the floor on top of one another. Gordon Gay slammed the door. The train was moving. Tom Merry, who had been sitting on Monty Lowther's chest, jumped up and went to the door.

They were in the carriage next to the engine, and the train had already left the platform!

They dared not jump out now. They were prisoners in the train.

Monty Lowther and Manners picked themselves up with many moans and grunts.

"Yooop!" moaned Lowther. "My back's broken! Oh crumbs! We can't get out!"

"Oh, those awful Grammarian cads!" gasped Tom Merry.

"They caught us napping properly!"

"The next stop is Abbotsford!" moaned Manners, mopping at his nose.

"What about Timothy?" said Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry ground his teeth.



The loud noise from Timothy's bugle sounded all over the quadrangle, bringing fellows from far and near to the scene. Timothy, having made himself breathless with the bugle, smiled expansively upon the amazed boys of St. Jim's. "My only sainted Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally D'Arcy. "If this isn't the giddy limit. Does the scarecrow mistake our school for a lunatic asylum?"

"Hang Timothy! We—we're stranded! Oh, won't I pay old Gordon Gay for this!"

The train was moving swiftly now. The hapless Terrible Three sat down and stared out of the window. And, breathing threats of battle, murder, and sudden death against the heroes of Rylcombe Grammar School, they contained their souls with as much patience as they could muster, whilst the train bore them to Abbotford.

CHAPTER 3.

Dupping the Duffer!

GORDON GAY & CO. chuckled. They looked at Timothy, and chuckled still more. Miss Priscilla's new ward blinked at the Grammarians through his huge eyeglasses and grinned expansively.

"Good-afternoon!" said Gordon Gay, placing a hand to his heart and bowing low.

"Good-afternoon!" said all the others, following suit.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Timothy, hugging himself with delight. "Good-afternoon! He, he, he!"

Gordon Gay & Co. surveyed the lanky Timothy in much the same manner as they would survey a specimen of some new animal from the Zoo.

"My word!" said Gay. "Isn't he a merry coughdrum?"

"What a wonderful figure!" breathed Frank Monk, shading his eyes. "What graceful limbs! What wondrous hair!"

"What a face!" said Harry Wootton. "What eyes! What gig-lamps! What a boko! What ears!"

"What, what!" chuckled Carboy.

Timothy stood on one leg and hugged himself.

"We are very pleased to meet you, Timothy darling!" said Gordon Gay solemnly. "Let us see, you are going to St. Jim's, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes—I'm going to St. Jim's!" Timothy said. "He, he, he!"

"What a voice!" said Gay. "Reminds me of a baby pig!"

Timothy dragged a paper bag from his pocket, and held it out to Gordon Gay.

"Have a jubube!" he said. "I'm so fond of jububes! I always have jububes! Please take some! He, he, he!"

"What generosity!" said Gordon Gay. "Really, Timothy, you exceed my comprehension! Thank you, darling. I will have a jubube!"

The Grammarians solemnly took jububes and chewed them. This afforded Timothy huge delight. He grinned literally from ear to ear.

Gordon Gay & Co. winked at each other.

"Well, Timothy, I suppose you must be getting back to St. Jim's," said Gordon Gay. "Those other horrid little boys won't be back for some time. Didn't Miss Fawcett tell you how to go to St. Jim's?"

Timothy Duffe shook his head.

"Well, we shall have much pleasure in putting you right!" said the Grammarian hero. "Every new boy, first of all, is supposed to take his own luggage to the school—just to show that he's not stuck up, and that he can be useful, you know!"

"Oh!" said Timothy, listening attentively.

"Furthermore," said Gay, winking at his chums, "each new boy is supposed to advertise himself, so that everybody will know who he is directly they see him. The usual thing is for a fresher to wheel his own luggage into the school, with a label pinned across his chest with his name on it, distinctly stating that he is a new boy."

"Oh!" said Timothy again. "I see!"

"That's not all," said Gordon Gay solemnly. "A new boy is usually supposed to announce his coming, so that all the school may come down and see him. The best thing to do—and it's the course which I very highly recommend—is to get a bugle, stand in the middle of the quadrangle when you get to the school, and blow that bugle till you've got the whole school round you. Then you'll take off your hat, bow, and tell them who you are. That introduces you to your new school and schoolfellows—see?"

"Ye-es," said Timothy, blinking. "But I—I can't play a bugle, you know!"

"Oh, that's easily got over!" said Gordon Gay. "Why, there's a bugle in that second-hand shop over there. We ought to get it cheap. Half a tick, Timothy; I'll see what I can do."

Gordon Gay went to the second-hand shop, and returned in a few minutes with an aged-looking bugle in his hand.

"Four-and-six!" he chuckled. "Here you are, Timothy. See if you can blow it!"

Timothy placed the bugle to his lips and blew. The noise he produced resembled the wheezy screeching of a steam-engine-whistle. Gradually, however, under Gordon Gay's tuition, the simple Timothy learned how to blow the bugle.

His blasts rang the whole length of Rylcombe High Street, bringing many tradesmen out of their shops, and small urchins to the scene.

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"Here's your luggage!" said Gay, as Trundle, the porter, wheeled a trolley into the High Street. Four large boxes were on that trolley.

"Here, Trundle, don't send them up by carrier," said Gordon Gay. "Master Duffe is going to take them to St. Jim's himself."

"My 'at!" gasped Trundle, pushing back his peaked cap and staring at Timothy. He gasped still more when that simple youth offered him a jubube!

"Carboy, old son, run and get a truck from old Specke, the greengrocer's," said Gordon Gay. "He'll hire you one for sixpence an hour. Timothy is going to wheel his luggage to St. Jim's."

"Right-ho!" grinned Carboy.

He went over to the greengrocer's.

Frank Monk, meanwhile, after a few words with Gordon Gay, went over to the stationer's, where he procured a large sheet of white cardboard and a black crayon.

Carboy came up a few minutes later, trundling a rickety handbarrow, such as cester-mongers use.

"Here we are, Timothy!" said Gordon Gay. "You'll wheel that all right, won't you?"

"Oh, yes! He, he, he!" said Timothy, standing on one leg and hugging himself again.

"Good egg! Pile on the luggage, boys!"

The Grammarians cheerfully piled Timothy's luggage on to the wheelbarrow.

Timothy stood by, looking at them through his huge spectacles with a look of deep gratitude on his funny face.

It did not occur to the simple-minded, guileless youth that he was being made the victim of a practical joke. Timothy had never been to a school before; he had never been the victim of such humorously inclined youth as Gordon Gay & Co.

He quite believed that they were doing him a favour. He stood upon one leg, then the other, and beamed.

"There you are, Timothy!" said Gay. "Now, I've written out a placard for you. Here it is!"

And Gay displayed the sheet of cardboard Monk had purchased at the stationer's shop. Upon this card were scrawled, in large, glaring black characters, these words:

"I AM TIMOTHY DUFFE,
The New Boy of St. Jim's.
PLEASE DON'T TEASE ME—I BITE!"

Timothy blinked at that legend through his spectacles, and smiled from ear to ear.

"He, he, he! That's splendid! He, he, he!"

"Let's pin it on your back, Timothy!" said Gay, and the guileless Timothy allowed the hero of the Grammar School to affix that placard to his back.

"Slings this bugle round you—so!" chuckled Gay. "Now you're all ready for entering St. Jim's, Timothy! Aren't you glad you met us, so that we could tell you just how to go on?"

"Oh, yes, indeed! He, he, he!" said Timothy, beaming again. "I am glad—oh, so very glad! He, he, he! Shall I wheel the barrow now?"

"Yes, rather!" said Gay. "The quicker you reach St. Jim's now, Timothy, the better."

Timothy dutifully grasped the handles of the wheelbarrow, lifted them, and pushed. He trundled the strange craft over the cobblestones of Rylcombe High Street.

Gordon Gay & Co. nudged each other and chuckled.

"Find it heavy, Timothy darling?" inquired Gay.

Timothy blinked round.

"No, I can manage, thank you!" he said, and grinned.

Timothy was recovering from his shyness, and was beginning to be more conversational. "He, he, he! It's all right!"

And Timothy trundled the wheelbarrow along the High Street, to the great amazement and amusement of all beholders.

CHAPTER 4.

Timothy Arrives.

"B AI Jove!"

"What the merry dickens—"

"Who the giddy thunder—"

"Why on earth—"

"Great pip!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Those were a few of the expressions heard when Timothy Duffe arrived at St. Jim's, wheelbarrow, luggage and all.

He stood in the Close as Jack Blake & Co. and Figgins & Co. came up. Hot on the heels of the Fourth-Formers came Wally D'Arcy & Co. of the Third, and a whole horde of fags. Cutts, Gilmore, and St. Leger, who had been lounging outside the gymnasium, gave a start when they saw Timothy in the distance, and hurried up. Kangaroo, Clifton Dane, Gore, George Alfred Grundy & Co., and Reginald Talbot followed.

They all gasped when they saw Timothy.

Jack Blake collapsed in the arms of Herries.
 "What is it?" he gurgled faintly. "Am I suffering with sunstroke, chaps? Do I see things?"
 "Look at the placard on its back!" howled Grundy of the Shell. "I am Timothy Duffe—the new boy of St. Jim's! My only hat! 'Please do not tease me—I bite'! Well, I'm blown!"

Great howls of merriment arose on the sunny air at St. Jim's.

Timothy seemed dazed by this ovation. He blinked through his eyeglasses, standing first on one leg, then on the other. Suddenly remembering Gordon Gay's injunction about the bugle, Timothy raised the bugle to his lips, inflated his cheeks, and gave a long, low, resonating blare.

Ta-ra-ra-roooooooooooh!

Figgins stuffed his fingers into his ears.

"Great pip!" he gurgled. "What on earth——"

Toooooooooooh! Ra! Roooooooooh! went Timothy's bugle. The loud noise sounded all over the quadrangle, bringing fellows from far and near to the scene.

Timothy, having made himself breathless with the bugle, smiled upon the amazed boys of St. Jim's, raised his topper, and bowed.

"Mum-mum-my only sainted Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally D'Arcy of the Third. "If this isn't the limit! Does the scarecrow mistake our school for a lunatic asylum?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled the juniors of St. Jim's.

Timothy blinked round upon them, standing first on one leg and then on the other. He had not expected this kind of welcome. It bewildered him.

"What's all this noise about?"

The stern voice of Kildare, the St. Jim's captain, interposed, and next minute the stalwart senior himself broke through the crowd, followed by Darrel, North, Rushden, and Monteith.

The Sixth-Formers fell back when they saw Timothy and the wheelbarrow and the placard and the bugle.

"Good heavens!" gasped Kildare. "Who—who is this fellow?"

"He must be the new kid for the Shell!" roared Blake.

"Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther went down to meet him at the station. Timothy has arrived here first."

"Well, I'm blessed!"

Kildare went over to Timothy and shook him.

"Is your name Duffe?" he asked sternly.

Timothy beamed.

"Oh, yes, certainly!" he said. "He, he, he! I'm Timothy Duffe!"

"Have—have you come to stay at St. Jim's?"

"He, he, he! I am the new boy for St. Jim's," said Timothy, hugging himself with delight.

Kildare gave him a peculiar look.

"What's the meaning of all this?" He waved a hand towards the wheelbarrow and at the placard. "Have you taken leave of your senses? You mustn't enter St. Jim's in this ridiculous way!"

"He, he, he!" chuckled Timothy.

"I have done right, haven't I? This is what they told me to do!"

"Who told you?" demanded Kildare, frowning.

"The nice boys who met me at the station."

"Oh! Do you mean Tom Merry and the others?"

"Oh, no! He, he, he! I mean the other nice boys!" said Timothy.

"Who are they?"

"Oh, I don't know! They were very obliging. He, he, he!"

Kildare and the others regarded Timothy in amazement.

The same thought passed through all their minds at once.

Monteith tapped his forehead significantly.

"The kid must be up the loop," he said.

Kildare looked grim. He tore the placard from Timothy's back, and told Taggles to take the barrow away and see to the luggage.

"Come with me," said the St. Jim's captain, grasping Timothy's arm.

"You'd better come along and see Dr. Holmes. I'd heard a new boy for the Shell was expected, but I—I——"

"You didn't expect this merchant, did you, Kildare?" said Figgins sweetly.

Timothy, grinning at the crowd, was led away by Kildare, across the quadrangle, up the School House steps, and indoors, leaving the quadrangle in an uproar.

"Did you ever see such a freak?" gurgled Blake mirthfully. "I wonder who put the daffidiot up to coming in like that?"

"It's certainly vewy extraordinary, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Pewwaps those howwid Gwammur School wotahs had somethin' to do with it."

"Gordon Gay & Co., by hokey!"

"You've hit it, Gussy!"

Figgins of the New House chuckled.

"Well, you've got another addition to your freak collection in the School House, Blake!" he said. "Blessed if I know what St. Jim's is coming to! Thank goodness, we haven't any prize scarecrows in our House, anyway!"

"Oh, rats!" grunted Blake.

Meanwhile, in the Head's study, Timothy Duffe was standing before Dr. Holmes.

The venerable Head of St. Jim's listened to Kildare's account of Timothy's arrival in amazement.

"Bless my soul! What an extraordinary youth!" gasped Dr. Holmes, surveying Timothy over the rims of his eyeglasses. "I had no idea that Miss Fawcett intended sending such a—ahem!—ridiculous boy! His stupidity is amazing! I understand that Merry of the Shell is to look after him. You had better take Duffe away, and leave him in Merry's study until he comes in. I will—ahem!—make further arrangements later."

"Very well, sir," said Kildare, with a faint grin.

He piloted Timothy away, and showed him to Study No. 10 in the Shell passage.

"Stay there till Tom Merry comes in," said Kildare.

"Mind, you mustn't leave this room."

"Very well. He, he, he!" cackled Timothy. "Won't you have a jujube? I'm very fond of jujubes. I always eat them. Won't you have a jujube?"

Kildare gave Timothy a peculiar look.

"I——" he stammered. "No, thanks!"

And Kildare hurriedly left the study.



The worthy P.-o. Crump bent down and shook the slumbering Timothy. The youth's large eyelids flickered open, and he blinked at the village policeman through his huge eye-glasses. "Get up!" roared P.-o. Crump. "Which you've been caught in the act." "Dear me!" gasped Timothy regarding the fishing-rod in great stupidity. "Wha—what's the matter?"

CHAPTER 5. Racke's Joke.

PERCY MELLISH of the Fourth chuckled. He tapped at the door of Study No. 10 half an hour later, when the curious juniors who had come to see Timothy had departed.

"Come in!" said a squeaky voice. The cad of the Fourth entered. Timothy was seated in the armchair, with Tom Merry's cricket-bat in his hand, regarding it intently, as though wondering what it was for.

"Hello, Timothy!" said Mellish, closing the door. "You must be awfully lonely in here."

"He, he, he!" giggled Timothy, looking at Mellish through his huge horn-rimmed glasses. "I am rather lonely, certainly. He, he, he!"

"Thought I'd come along for a while," said Mellish pleasantly. "What are you doing with that bat?"

"Oh," asked Timothy stupidly. "What is it?"

"A bat," said Mellish. "A thing chaps drive nails into for fun, you know."

"Really? He, he, he!"

"Yes," said Mellish. "Why don't you try it? It's great fun making patterns with nails on a bat. I'll get you some nails and a hammer."

Mellish opened Tom Merry's tool-box, and withdrew a packet of inch nails and a hammer.

"There you are, Timothy," said the cad of the Fourth. "Now fire ahead!"

"He, he, he!"

Timothy hugged himself with delight at the prospect of hammering nails into that bat. He grasped the hammer, held a nail in position, and brought the hammer down—

Whack!

"Yarocoooh!" wailed Timothy, jumping up and sucking his thumb.

Mellish grinned. "You are supposed to hit the nail—not your thumb, Timothy!" he said. "No, don't make such a noise over it! Have another shot!"

Timothy tried again, very gingerly, and succeeded. He hugged himself, and drove in another nail. Very soon he had driven half a dozen nails into the bat, much to his own and Percy Mellish's delight.

Mellish extracted a packet of cigarettes from his pocket.

"Look here, Timothy," he said, "have you ever tried smoking?"

The guileless Timothy blinked at the cigarettes with wide, wondering eyes.

"No," he said. "What are they?"

"These are cigarettes," said Mellish. "I found them in the quad, and thought you'd dropped 'em. Anyway, it doesn't matter. Have a smoke. Timothy. You'll enjoy it!"

"He, he, he!"

Mellish showed Timothy how to smoke, and placed a lighted cigarette into that youth's mouth. Timothy smoked away in huge delight, although coughing at frequent intervals.

Percy Mellish rubbed his hands with delight. This was his idea of a joke. Mellish had a peculiar and perverted sense of humour. He chuckled when he thought of what Tom Merry would say, when he came in and found half a dozen nails in his cricket-bat and Timothy filling the room with tobacco-smoke!

"Carry on, Timothy!" said Mellish, lighting the second cigarette for the innocent youth in the armchair. "It doesn't matter if they make you feel queer or dizzy—keep on smoking, and the effects will pass off! Are you enjoying it?"

"Groooh!" Oh, yes, certainly!"

Mellish chuckled, and departed. He joined Aubrey Racke and Luke Serope at the end of the passage, and acquainted them with the success of his scheme.

The black sheep of the School House were highly delighted. Ten minutes later the Terrible Three tramped in, hot, tired, and cross.

"They had had to languish at Abbotsford upon arriving there, until another train arrived to take them back to Rylcombe."

They heard from Jack Blake & Co. how Timothy had arrived at St. Jim's.

Tom Merry & Co. had ground their teeth at the manner in which Gordon Gay & Co. had japed them "all along the line."

"I wonder what the chump is up to?" said Monty Lowther, as they came along the Shell passage. "Hope he isn't breaking up the happy home!"

Tom Merry kicked open the door of Study No. 10, and the Terrible Three entered.

They staggered back, coughing and sneezing.

"Atchoo!" sneezed Tom Merry. "What the—Grooooooh!"

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"Ah-ti-shoo!" spluttered Manners. "The blessed study is full of smoke! Yerrugh!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

A blue haze of tobacco smoke came through the open doorway. Then to the startled ears of the Terrible Three there came a hollow groan:

"Yooohh! Oh dear! Yah! Ow-wow-wow-wow!"

"Timothy!" yelled Tom Merry, dashing farther into the study. "What the dickens have you been up to? My hat! Atchoo!"

Cigarette-ends were strewn all over the carpet and fender. Timothy himself was doubled up in the armchair, one hand clapping his head and the other rubbing the region of his waistcoat. His moans and groans were truly heartrending to listen to.

"Atchoo! Choo! Choo!" sneezed Monty Lowther, flinging open the window. "The mad ass has been smoking! Great Scott! Shut the door, for goodness' sake, Tommy, in case Knox comes along!"

Gradually the haze cleared, and the Terrible Three gazed round the room.

Tom Merry gave a sudden cry of horror.

"My hat! Somebody's been driving nails into my bat!"

"Oh Jeminy!"

"No need to wonder who did it," said Manners drily. "Here are the nails and hammer. This scatter-brained lunatic has been amusing himself, by the look of things."

Timothy raised a pair of hollow, watery eyes to the Terrible Three, and gave vent to a pathetic moan.

"Wow-wow-wow! I'm d-d-d-d-dying! Oooohh!"

"He's made himself seedy through smoking!" said Manners.

Tom Merry grasped Timothy by the shoulders, and shook him.

"Did you smoke all those?" he demanded, indicating the litter of cigarette-ends on the floor.

"Yow-ow! Ye-es! Groooh!"

"Why, the mad idiot might have done himself a serious injury," gasped Tom Merry aghast.

"Where on earth did you get them from?" asked Manners.

"I—yow-ow!—had them given—yawn!—to me! Yerrugh!"

"Who gave them to you?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Oogh! I don't know!" gasped poor Timothy, holding his waistcoat very hard.

Tom Merry looked round with a grim look.

"The idiot couldn't have brought them into the school with him from outside," he said. "In my opinion, some cad like Racke, or Serope, or Mellish has palmed these off on Timothy for a joke. My hat, won't I make it hot for the rotter, if I find out who did it!"

Tap!

"Come in!" said Tom Merry impatiently.

Aubrey Racke, the knut of the Shell, looked in.

"Hallo, dear boys!" he said pleasantly, and then sniffed.

"Who's been indulging in the fragrant weed? Getting doggy in your old age, Tom Merry?"

"Clear out if you don't want anything!" growled Manners, reaching for the poker.

Racke came in. He smiled when he saw Timothy.

"Timothy been havin' a fag—eh?" he chuckled. "Looks pretty sick on it, doesn't he?"

Tom Merry got behind Racke and closed the door.

"Yes, Racke. I should like to know who gave Timothy those fags," he said. "Unless I'm very much mistaken, you had a hand in the matter. It's just the sort of cad's trick you would do!"

Racke looked alarmed.

"Look here, don't make those accusations against me, Tom Merry!" he said gruffly. "I haven't given Timothy any fags—honest, Injun!"

Tom Merry picked up a cigarette that was lying on the table and looked at it. He smiled grimly.

"The Last Word Cigarette!" he exclaimed. "Why, these are just the same fags as we turned out of your pockets in the box-room last week, Racke! Now, you rotter, what have you to say? Bump him, boys, till he confesses!"

"Here, hands off—Yarocoooh!" howled Racke, as the Terrible Three grasped him and whirled him over. "Leggo! Yah! Ow! Yooop!"

Bump, bump, bump!

"Confess!" bawled Monty Lowther.

"Sha'n't!" roared Racke. "Let go, you rotters! Yowp!"

Bump, bump!

"Tell you what," said Monty Lowther pleasantly. "Let's whop him with this bat, Tommy! It's not fit for much else, with these merry nails in it!"

"Good egg!"

Racke blinked at the bat in horror.

"Here, don't you touch me with that!" he spluttered.

"I—"

"Yank him over!" said Tom Merry.

Racke darted away.

"Hold on!" he gasped, glaring at the Terrible Three.

"I—I'll confess, you rotters! I gave Mellich those fags to give Timothy. It was only a—a joke, really!"

"Well, let's have our little joke now!" said Tom Merry grimly. "Pull him over, boys! Get some soot, Monty; there's plenty in the chimney! And that tin of nasty treacle in the cupboard will come in handy, Manners! Good!"

"Oh, leggo, you rotters!" shrieked Racke, as the Terrible Three sat on him, and Monty Lowther proceeded to ladle out a horrible concoction of soot and treacle over his beautifully parted hair.

"Plenty of treacle!" chuckled Monty. "My, doesn't he look a dream!"

"Grooooooh! Ow! It's running down my neck and in my ears! Gerugh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

Racke struggled to his feet, presenting a horrible picture with the treacle and soot on his head.

"Kick him out!" said Tom Merry.

Racke was raised in three pairs of hands and whirled towards the door. Manners opened it, and Racke went sailing through, to land on the cold, hard linoleum in the passage with a terrific bump and a howl.

"Let that teach you not to be so funny in future, Racke!" said Tom Merry, and he slammed the door of Study No. 10.

Racke picked himself up, and limped painfully away to his own study. Five minutes later Percy Mellich came out, rubbing his ear.

Evidently Aubrey Racke had vented his feelings on his confederate! And when Mellich had departed, gasping, Racke crawled up to the bathroom, and spent nearly an hour there, in the operation of extracting the soot and the treacle from his head!

CHAPTER 6.

Revenge!

THAT Timothy Duffe was "off his rocker" in no little degree, was the universal opinion at St. Jim's, from the humblest fag in the Third to Kildare and the masters.

But he was harmless and highly amusing. The fellows loved to pull the guileless Timothy's leg, and he took all their jokes in such good part, that he became liked by all the decent fellows at the school.

The Terrible Three did not relish the idea of Timothy sharing their study with them, but as Miss Priscilla had placed Timothy under Tom Merry's personal care, they did not grumble.

Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, was at his wits' end to know how to manage Timothy, who was as innocent as the babe unborn, and knew nothing beyond being able to read and write and do simple sums in arithmetic. Latin, French, German, and Euclid were out of the question! Timothy's simple ways caused endless amusement in the Form-room, and hindered the usual lessons to an extent that was highly gratifying to the rest of the Shell.

"Timothy is the most extraordinary fellow I have evah met!" was the verdict of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I am afraid the Head is wathah sowwy he allowed him to come to St. Jim's. He must be a twemdowns responsibility for you, Tom Mewwy! But he's a funny young boundah, isn't he, deah boys?"

And that was what all the others thought of Timothy.

The sublime duffer made a hopeless attempt to emulate Tom Merry at playing cricket. When he did manage to hit the ball, Timothy sloped it with such vim that the leather went clean through Herr Schneider's study window. That brought the vials of the German master's wrath upon him, and Timothy did not attempt to play cricket any more that afternoon!

Timothy's consuming weakness seemed to be for jububes. He ate them till further orders and, as Miss Priscilla had given him a liberal supply of pocket-money, there was always a huge bag of jububes in Timothy's pocket.

Mr. Linton was exasperated when Timothy persisted in eating his delicacies in the Form-room, and confiscated them. But, as soon as classes were dismissed, Timothy went straight over to Dame Taggles' tuckshop, and procured some more. He kept the fags, and some of his Form-fellows, plentifully supplied with jububes!

Tom Merry & Co., and Blake, Herries, and D'Arcy took Timothy for a stroll to the village after tea on Friday afternoon.

Timothy was enjoying himself immensely at St. Jim's. He followed Tom Merry about with dog-like fidelity—indeed, Monty Lowther had gone so far as to call Timothy Duffe Tom Merry's little lamb.

"Mr. Bailton says we've got to buy you some new socks, Timothy," said Tom Merry, as they strolled through the Rylcombe Wood. "He won't allow you to wear those gaudy things any longer!"

"Won't he?" simpered Timothy, beaming all over his funny face. "Well, I never! He, he, he!"

The St. Jim's juniors walked into the village, and procured Timothy some socks.

They passed Aubrey Racke & Co. in the High Street. The black sheep of St. Jim's sneered at Tom Merry & Co., and went into the sports shop. Racke & Co. did not often have occasion to visit that shop, for smoking cigarettes and reading sporting newspapers were more pleasurable occupations to them than sports. But Racke did a little fishing; and he was calling for his fishing-rod, which had been left to be repaired.

Tom Merry & Co., passing Sands the grocer's, espied Gordon Gay & Co. turning a corner. The eyes of the St. Jim's juniors gleamed in a warlike manner.

"Now's our chance to get our own back!" said Tom Merry, rubbing his hands. "The bouncers haven't spotted us, so we shall be able to catch them on the hop. Why, here are just the things we want—at the greengrocer's. Two baskets full of over-ripe tomatoes, fit for nothing—except for pelting the Grammarians with!"

"Good egg!"

Tom Merry hastily purchased those tomatoes for a mere song and with the missiles in two borrowed baskets, the heroes of St. Jim's ran after their foes.

Gordon Gay & Co. saw the St. Jim's juniors coming—but too late. Ere they had time to flee, the air was thick with whirling missiles, and those juicy tomatoes burst in great profusion in the midst of the hapless Grammarians.

"Yarooooh!" yelled Gordon Gay, as a well-directed tomato struck him in the back of his neck, and the juice thereof disported itself down his back. "Oh crumbs!"

"Gerugh!" plattered Harry Wootton, claving at a tomato that had landed well and truly on his nose.

"Run for it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry & Co., giving chase to the fleeing Grammarians, and not relaxing their harassing bombardment of tomatoes. "This is where we smile, you bouncers!"

Whiz! Bang! Thud! Splosh!

Gordon Gay & Co. beat a very disorderly retreat along the High Street.

The St. Jim's juniors did not give up the pursuit until their stock of missiles was exhausted.

Then they stopped, and surveyed each other with many grins. Gordon Gay & Co. were nowhere to be seen. They had made themselves scarce!

"St. Jim's scores again!" chuckled Blake. "We—why, my hat! We've lost Timothy!"

"Bai Jove! So we have, deah boys!"

Tom Merry & Co. hastened back to the High Street with the baskets, and returned them. They looked everywhere for Timothy, but could find no trace of the innocent youth, neither did inquiries elicit any information as to his whereabouts.

"How the idiot doesn't lose himself, that's all!" said Tom Merry, with a worried look. "I understand from Miss Priscilla that certain people belonging to the home where he was kept are very anxious to get him back there. Timothy can go and eat coke, but I don't want him to get into any scrapes."

"No. Wathah not, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "Let's stowll back along the towin'-path, and keep a look-out for Timothy."

"Right-ho!"

And Tom Merry & Co. and Blake & Co., flushed with victory, walked off in the direction of the towing-path.

CHAPTER 7.

More Trouble for Racke & Co.

"BY Jingo!"

Aubrey Racke, Crooke, and Mellich had come out of the trees by the towing-path on the Ryl, attracted to a certain spot by heavy sounds of slumber.

They saw a long, recumbent figure lying on the river bank, and instantly recognised Timothy. Timothy Duffe was fast asleep!

"Well, I'm bothered!" said Racke. "It seems that this goggle-eyed freak is always having forty winks. He fell asleep in class this afternoon, and was snoring in the cloisters when Manners found him, just before tea. Here's a chance for some fun, you chaps."

"Ha, ha! Rather!" chuckled Crooke.

Timothy slumbered on, in blissful ignorance of the presence of Racke & Co.

The knut of the Shell pointed to a large notice-board that was erected on the bank.

"See that?" he said. "'No Fishing Allowed' Here's a lark, deah boys! I'll place my fishing-rod in the Duffer's hands, and make it look as though he's been fishing, and fallen asleep. Then we'll call old P.-c. Crump. I saw him coming this way along the towing-path."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Aubrey Racke was not long in putting his scheme into execution.

The fishing-rod was placed in Timothy's hands, so that it was poised over the river, and the line dropped into the water.

"Now to call old Crump!" chuckled Mellish. "Why, here he is!"

P.-c. Crump, the custodian of the law at Rylcombe, rolled upon the scene, looking very pompous and important.

He soon spotted the slumbering Timothy. P.-c. Crump's eyes opened wide when he saw the fishing-rod.

"Ho!" said P.-c. Crump. "Wot's this? Fishin'!"

"Arrest the rascal, Crump!" said Aubrey Racke, in his most respectful manner. "What better evidence do you require than that? You have caught him red-handed—right in the act of fishing in prohibited waters."

"Young rip!" growled P.-c. Crump, rolling forward. "Which it's my dooty to arrest 'im. Hi say, young fellerme-lad!"

The worthy policeman bent down, and shook the slumbering Timothy. That youth's large eyelids flickered open, and he blinked at the village policeman, bewildered, through his huge eyeglasses.

"Get up!" roared P.-c. Crump. "Which you've been caught in the hack, and anythin' you say may be used as evidence agin' yer!"

"Dear me!" gasped Timothy, struggling to his feet, and regarding the fishing-rod in great stupidity. "Wh-what's the matter?"

"Matter?" roared P.-c. Crump, clapping a horny hand on Timothy Duffe's thin shoulder. "Don't yer see that notice—'No Fishin' Allowed'—and 'ere I find yer, fishin' brazen as brass—and asleep over it, too!"

"But I—I haven't been fishing!" gasped poor Timothy. "I—I assure you, my dear sir, that this fishing-rod isn't mine!"

P.-c. Crump gave a scoffing laugh.

"Tell that to your grandmother, young fellerme-lad!" he said. "You can't talk me over! Which Hi arrests you in the name of the Lor!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Timothy.

Racke, Crooke and Mellish, in the background, were chuckling.

This was a situation they enjoyed.

Suddenly there came a clamping of feet, and Tom Merry & Co. and Jack Blake & Co. appeared behind Racke and his cronies.

The chums of the School House stared at the strange scene before them in astonishment.

There was poor Timothy, a look of blank dismay on his funny face, wriggling in the grip of P.-c. Crump.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry, hastening forward.

"What has Timothy been up to, Crump?"

P.-c. Crump snorted.

"Wot's 'e bin up to?" he said. "Why, fishin' aginst borders. 'Ere's the rod! I caught 'im red-anded!"

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry turned to Racke, who was grinning.

"Is this another of your funny little jokes, Racke?" demanded the Shell captain. "That's your fishing-rod!"

"Go hon!" sneered Racke. "Did you work that out all yourself, Tom Merry?"

Tom clenched his fists.

"You've been japing this poor duffer again!" he exclaimed hotly. "Look here, Crump, Timothy hasn't been fishing at all. Where are the fish he's caught? Where's the bait? It's all a joke, I tell you!"

"Don't you young ripps try to get hovever me!" said P.-c. Crump. "Which I s'pose I can believe my own eyes? I caught this little raskil asleep with the fishing-rod in 'is and—"

"Look here, Crumpy, be a sport," said Tom. "You'll only look an ass if you take Timothy down to the station and charge him. Of course, we all know you've been to a great deal of trouble, and you deserve a reward. Doesn't he, chaps?"

"Yes, rather!" said Blake. "We all like P.-c. Crump, and appreciate his great devotion to duty. There ought to be more policemen like him! He deserves to be rewarded, and let it never be said that we St. Jim's fellows did not give reward where it was due. Here's sixpence!"

"Bai Jove! I agwee, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Pway accept this shillin', Crump, deah boy!"

"Do me the honour of taking this bob, Crumpy!" said Tom Merry.

"A threepenny bit is all I have, but you are welcome, Crump, old chap!" said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"I am only capable of subscribing tuppence," said Digby, with great depth of feeling. "But take it, Crump, more as a token of the admiring spirit in which it is given, than as a sum of high monetary value."

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P.-c. Crump, with those jingling coins in his horny palm, was quite mollified. He even unbent so far as to smile.

"Which I'm very much obliged to you young gent's," he said, touching his helmet. "Of course, mistakes will 'appen. Wot I says is this 'ere—I allus likes to do my dooty, whether mistaken or hotherwise."

"And a very worthy spirit, too, Crump!" said Tom Merry approvingly. "You deserve promotion, and if it ever comes my way to help you get promoted, I shall certainly do so. Come along, Timothy! Come along, Racke, Crooke, and Mellish!"

"Look here, I—I'm not coming!" exclaimed Racke hurriedly, backing away. "I'm going a different way—"

"So am I," said Crooke. "I'm coming with you, Racke."

"Yes, rather!" said Mellish, looking alarmed. "We'n going back to the village, Tom Merry."

But Tom Merry & Co. closed round the ends of the school, and jostled them along. They entered the wood.

"Now, Racke!" said Tom Merry grimly, turning to the knut of the Shell. "This is where we pay you out for your little trick on Timothy. He wasn't sent to St. Jim's to be the butt of your funny ways. I've got a wheeze, chaps. Let's make 'em wallop each other!"

"Bai Jove! That's a wippin' ideah!"

"Yes, Gussy—it is going to be a whipping idea!" chuckled Tom. "This merry fishing-rod will serve as the whip. Now, you chaps, hold Racke down! Mellish, take this rod and give Racke a good thrashing with it! Mind, you've got to hit your hardest, or we'll whack you all the harder! Understand?"

Racke, threatening and struggling, was held down, and Mellish ordered to lash him.

The cad of the Fourth seemed nothing loth.

He raised the fishing-rod on high, and brought it down well and truly on the person of Aubrey Racke.

Lash, lash, lash!

"Yaroooooogh!" howled Racke, in agony. "Leggo! Stoppit, Yai! Ow-ow!"

Lash, lash, lash!

Mellish, seeing that he had to belabour his knuttish confederate, did not spare his swipes with the fishing-rod. Racke howled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Monty Lowther. "Racke's standing the rack-et, isn't he, boys?"

Lash, lash!

"That's enough!" said Tom Merry, with a chuckle. "Now hold Mellish down, boys, and, Crooke, you've got to whack Mellish!"

"I—I say, Tom Merry, let me go!" wailed Mellish. "I've whacked Racke, and—"

"Now you're going to get your whack!" chuckled Tom.

"Now, Crooke!"

Mellish, squirming and yelling, was held firmly by Jack Blake & Co., and Crooke commenced to belabour him with quite a good show of vim and vigour.

Percy Mellish awoke the echoes of the wood with his howls.

"Nuff as a good as a feast!" chuckled Tom, when Crooke had delivered several strokes of the fishing-rod. "Now, Racke, you may take this rod and lam into Crooke!"

Crooke was held, and Racke, still gasping, took the rod and commenced to belabour his confederate.

"Good!" said Tom Merry at length. "That's about all, Racke, thanks! You've walloped each other, and I think that will teach you a lesson not to meddle with our tame idiot in future! Buzz off!"

Racke, Crooke, and Mellish "buzzed" off, gasping and moaning, and muttering all sorts of uncomplimentary things concerning Tom Merry & Co.

The chums of the School House roared, and strolled on towards St. Jim's with the grinning Timothy in their midst.

Aubrey Racke & Co. were stamping through the bushes in the wood, glaring at each other, when two men stepped out from the trees ahead of them and stood in their path. One was a handsome, dark man, of medium height, and dressed fashionably. The other was an ugly-faced fellow, dressed loudly and far from stylishly.

"Excuse me, young gentlemen," said the dark-eyed man, regarding Racke & Co. with a half-smile. "I and my friend here have just witnessed the—er—painful scene you have just undergone with some of your schoolfellows. It was all over Timothy Duffe, I believe?"

Racke & Co. regarded the man in astonishment.

"What's that got to do with you?" demanded Racke insolently. "We'll pass on, if you don't mind."

"Not so much of a hurry, please!" laughed the handsome stranger. "Look here, my lads, it is easy for me to see that you are not on very good terms with this Tom Merry and his friends. Also, you would not be unwilling to play another harmless joke on Timothy Duffe, without any risk to yourself?"

"What are you driving at?" said Racke sullenly.

"This," replied the other, and he withdrew a large paper bag from his pocket. "I am the chief surgeon at Denton

House, where Duffe has been a patient for many years. As you know, Duffe is very fond of jujubes. He was always eating them whilst at Denton House—in fact, we used to supply him with them. Here is a bag of the jujubes we used to give him. I want you to take these and see that Timothy Duffe gets them—and eats them. Will you do that?"

"I—I don't know," said Racke. "What's the game, anyway?"

"There is no game at all," replied the other. "We merely find it necessary to get Duffe away from St. Jim's and have him back again at Denton House. These jujubes contain a substance which, though harmless in itself, will cause Duffe to become violent, and, apparently, insane. The headmaster of your school will not hesitate, then, to have him removed. Do you see my motive? All you have to do is to give these jujubes to Duffe. There is no risk attached to you at all."

Racke looked at Crooke and Mellish with glinting eyes. "What do you chaps say?" he asked. "Shall we do it?" "We might as well," replied Gerald Crooke. "We don't want lunatics at St. Jim's, and the sooner that fool Timothy Duffe is got rid of the better!"

"All right," said Racke, turning to the man. "Give us the jujubes. We'll do it."

"I trust you," said the other, and the bag of doctored jujubes changed hands.

The two men disappeared into the trees, and Racke & Co. were left alone, looking at each other.

"Well," said Racke. "Here's a go! We shall be safe enough, you fellows, so we'll go through with it. It will be rather funny to see Timothy go mad, won't it? And nobody will suspect us of giving him these jujubes."

"No fear!"

And Racke & Co. returned to St. Jim's feeling sore in body but quite cheerful at heart.

CHAPTER 8.

The Extraordinary Baggy.

IT was evening-time at St. Jim's.

Baggy Trimble was hungry. That was not an unusual state for Baggy Trimble to be in. The fat youth of the Fourth, although he ate more than twice as much as any other fellow at St. Jim's, with the sole exception of Patty Wynn of the New House, was always complaining that he did not receive sufficient sustenance to keep his body and soul together.

But Baggy, that evening, went on his hungry way complaining. While the others were in the Common-room he crept along the Shell passage, seeking what he might devour.

"Racke brought some tuck this afternoon," mumbled Baggy to himself, pausing outside the door of Study No. 7.

"I—I wonder—"

He cautiously opened the door, and, seeing that nobody was there, he entered.

Baggy went over to the cupboard, and pulled at the door. It would not budge.

"Boasts!" he muttered. "They've locked it, and done me out of a feed! Beastly suspicious. I call it! Cupboard doors ought not to be left locked! Br-r-r! Nothing in here!"

But next minute Baggy's eyes fastened on a bag that was on the study mantelshelf. It was a paper-bag, such as confectioners place sweets into.

Baggy stood on tiptoe, and his fat fingers closed over the bag of jujube that Aubrey Racke had brought in.

"My word!" muttered Baggy, looking at the contents with glistening eyes.

Jujubes! Fancy old Racke having jujubes! Timothy eats a lot of 'em, but I didn't think Racke went in for these sort of things. Perhaps he's pinched them from Timothy. In that case, I reckon I'll take 'em. He won't know."

And Baggy, thus satisfying his very elastic conscience, placed the bag of jujubes in his pocket, and stole softly from Racke's study.

He rolled downstairs, and went out into the quadrangle to devour the jujubes in the sequestered calm of the old elms, where he would not be seen.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther came out of the Common-room with Timothy a few minutes later, and made their way along to the Shell passage.

"Timothy, you'll be the death of me!" said Tom wearily. "Can't you conjugate the simplest French verb, like 'etre,' to be? Linton will go for you in the morning unless you buck up."

"I'll try very hard," said Timothy. "I don't like French verbs a little bit. But I'll try."

Timothy was still very "soft," as the juniors expressed it, but a noticeable change had come over him since his first day at St. Jim's. His simple, childish manner was departing, and, under the persevering Tom Merry, Timothy Duffe was beginning to show a great deal of common-sense.

They all went into Study No. 10, and Timothy took out his French grammar.

Tom Merry bent over him for a little while, and showed him how the conjugation should be done, together with numerous other "tips." Timothy did not giggle every time, as he had done on his first day, but showed a genuine earnestness to learn.

The Terrible Three watched him as he pored over his books, and exchanged glances.

"Timothy isn't such a prize ass as we thought he was!" muttered Tom Merry. "I reckon Miss Priscilla was right—he's not wrong in the head at all. He's been kept down in that rotten home, and his mind hasn't been given a chance to develop. He's making a wonderful improvement."

Manners and Lowther nodded. Timothy looked up with a smile.

"I've learnt it now," he said. "Isn't this right—Je suis, tu es, il est, nous sommes, vous êtes, ils sont?"

"Topping!" said Tom Merry. "You're getting on splendidly, Timothy! Now get on with the verb 'parler,' to speak. Linton will be pleased with you to-morrow!"

Timothy looked more than ever pleased, and was soon absorbed again in his work.

Tom Merry & Co. left him, and went out to visit Jack Blake & Co.

They saw Racke outside. The knot of the Shell was looking worried.

He scowled at the Terrible Three. They smiled sweetly at him.

"What's biting you, Racke?" inquired Monty Lowther. "Have you lost anything?"

"Somebody's been prying in my study and pinched a bag



Knox strode forward, and his heavy hand descended on Baggy Trimble. He whirled the fat junior round. "Now, Trimble, you little rascal," he said, "what are you—Oh! Ow! Yerrugh!" Knox gave a fiendish howl as Baggy's flat crashed upon his nose. A gasp of horrified amazement arose from the juniors looking on.

of—er—I mean, run off with something of mine!" said Racke. "I'll punch the chap's nose when I find him!"

Racke passed on, and the Terrible Three stared after him in considerable astonishment.

"He seems upset!" observed Tom Merry. "So he's lost a bag of something—cigarettes, most likely!"

"No wonder he's looking worried!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "I expect he's wondering whether Kildare or any of the other prefects discovered them."

The Terrible Three went on to the Fourth Form passage. As they turned the corner they heard a great commotion.

"My giddy aunt!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "What the dickens is the matter?"

"Baggy Trimble's gone potty!" exclaimed Alan Lorne, looking round with a scared face.

"Faith, an' the spalpeen's clean off his rocker entirely!" said Reilly.

"Great pip!"

Baggy Trimble, his face red and excited, was prancing round Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. His cuffs were pushed back, and his fat fists were doubled.

"Come on!" Baggy was roaring, in a warlike manner. "Come and take a licking! I'll mop up the floor with you, you—your blessed tailor's dummy! I'll teach you to call me a potty little poacher! Take that—and that—and that!"

Baggy, at each repetition of the word "that," jabbed Arthur Augustus heavily in the region of his fancy waistcoat.

"Yawwooh!" gasped the noble swell of St. Jim's, staggering back. "Bai Jove! What evah is the mattah with Twimble? Yow-ow! Ooooooop!"

Gussy uttered that wail as Trimble's fat fist smote him well and truly on the nose.

Jack Blake & Co. and the Terrible Three looked thunder-struck.

To see Baggy, the funk and coward, challenging D'Arcy to a fistic encounter was amazing. Usually, Baggy Trimble steered clear of doing anything that was likely to result in discomfort to himself. He never showed fight, unless it was to a puny fag in the Third. Yet, here he was, as truculent as a Hun, and he was actually punching Gussy's nose!

"Ye gods!" gasped Tom Merry, rubbing his eyes. "What's come over Baggy?"

"It's a case for the doctor!" said Ralph Reckness Cardew.

Baggy smote D'Arcy in the chest, and pranced like a war-horse.

"Come on!" he roared. "I'll fight you! I'll fight the lot of you! I've been downrodden long enough! You've treated me like a worm, and now I've turned! Come on, D'Arcy, you funk!"

"Gwast Scott!" gasped the aristocratic Gussy, pushing back his cuffs. "I have never been more brutally treated in all my life! I have no othah alternative but to give Baggy a fearful thwashin'!"

Next minute, D'Arcy and Baggy Trimble were fighting hammer and tongs!

Practically all the Fourth looked on, with a good sprinkling of Shell fellows. All were astounded. They could hardly believe their eyes.

Baggy Trimble pranced round D'Arcy, and ducked, and aimed heavy blows at him. Arthur Augustus, thoroughly indignant, retaliated, and simply rained blows all over Baggy's podgy person.

Baggy did not seem to care. His fat arms went like windmill sails. He attacked D'Arcy with the ferocity of a bloodhound.

"Go it, Baggy!" roared Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "Somebody must have grafted monkey glands into him. Mop him up, porpoise!"

"Buck up, Gussy!" roared Blake. "Don't let Baggy whack you!"

"Good heavens! What's the meaning of this row?"

It was Gerald Knox, the unpopular prefect of the Sixth. Knox pushed his way along the passage, and stood rooted to the floor in amazement when he saw the two combatants.

"Trimble! D'Arcy!" he thundered, striding forward, with lowered brows. "Stop fighting this instant!"

Arthur Augustus dropped his fists, and next minute gave a yelp of pain, for Baggy's fat fist thudded heavily on his chin.

"Yawwooh!"

"I don't care for Knox!" shouted Baggy, executing a war-dance in the Fourth Form passage. "I don't care for anybody! This is where I show what I'm made of! Come on, the lot of you!"

Knox strode forward, and his heavy hand descended on Baggy Trimble. He whirled the fat junior round.

"Now, Trimble, you little rascal," he said, "what are you—Oh! Ow! Yerrugh!"

Knox gave a fiendish howl as Baggy's fist crashed upon his nose.

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A gasp of horrified amazement arose from the juniors looking on.

Baggy, not content with punching Knox's nose, commenced kicking the prefect's shins. Knox howled, and hopped on one leg, clasping his other tenderly.

"I'll show you!" roared Baggy. "Don't bully me, any of you! I'll wipe up the floor with you!"

"Gwast gus!" ejaculated Blake. "He—he must be mad! Hold him, boys, before he does something desperate!"

The juniors, now thoroughly alarmed, surged forward to grasp Baggy and make him a prisoner. But Baggy Trimble tore his way through them, and dashed down the passage at top speed.

"After him!" roared Tom Merry.

A whole pack of juniors gave chase to Baggy. He tore downstairs, and into the quadrangle, upsetting Taggles with a pall of distemper on the School House steps.

Tom Merry & Co. jumped over Taggles, and trod through the distemper.

They were convinced now that Baggy Trimble had suddenly gone insane.

They must catch him, at all costs!

Baggy scuttled across the quadrangle, and met Mr. Ratcliff, the master of the New House, underneath the clock. Baggy barged at Mr. Ratcliff, his head struck that gentleman in the chest, and over Mr. Ratcliff went with a bump and a loud howl.

"Kildare—Darrel—North!" shouted Tom Merry, seeing the prefects crossing from the gates. "Catch Trimble! He's mad! Catch him!"

Kildare, Darrel, and North darted after Baggy as he pounded past.

Baggy ran as fast as he could, but was no match for the three prefects.

Kicking and struggling, he was made a prisoner, and carried over to the School House steps.

"Now, Trimble," said Kildare, giving the fat youth of the Fourth a peculiar look, "what's the matter with you?"

"Nothing!" howled Baggy. "Who says there's anything wrong with me? Lemme go! I'll wallop the lot of you!"

He landed out with his feet, and North gave a gasp as Baggy's boots cracked upon his shins.

"There's something very wrong with him," said Kildare. "We'd better lock him in the punishment-room till the Head returns. Upstairs with him!"

An amazed crowd followed Kildare & Co. upstairs. Baggy yelled at the top of his voice, and attracted Mr. Lathom and Monsieur Morny to the scene.

"Poor lad! Poor lad!" said Mr. Lathom, in distress. "The sun must have affected his brain! By all means, place him in the punishment-room, Kildare! That is a very proper thing to do! I—I think I'd better telephone for the doctor."

Mr. Lathom rustled away, and Baggy was simply dragged up to the punishment-room. He was shoved inside, and the door locked.

"My only hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "Hark at him! He'll kick the door down in a minute!"

Crash! Thud! Crash!

Baggy was pounding on the door with his fists and boots, and yelling to be let out.

"He's properly off his nut!" said Monty Lowther. "Poor old Baggy! I didn't think he'd got bats in the belfry as bad as all that!"

Bang! Crash! Thud!

"Bai Jove! It sounds as though he's smashin' up ewerythin' in the room!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, whose aristocratic features bore various marks of Baggy's attack.

"He wants a strait-jacket!" said Blake.

Kildare and the prefects cleared the passage, and the juniors went downstairs, all of them discussing Baggy Trimble and his sudden violent outbreak.

It was noticed that Aubrey Racke, Gerald Crooke, and Percy Mellich looked rather scared—especially when Ralph Reckness Cardew discovered that a number of jujubes had fallen from Baggy's pocket.

"How did he get those jujubes, I wonder?" said Tom Merry. "Baggy was broke, I know, and Mrs. Taggles doesn't sell these! They're not Timothy's, either. Anyway, I don't suppose they're anything to go by!"

But the doctor, when he arrived, and inquired what Baggy had been eating, and saw the jujubes, attached a great importance to them.

"These sweets have been tampered with!" he told Dr. Holmes, in front of a crowd of anxious schoolboys. "I can, even without analysis, detect a powerful drug in the gelatine, which takes effect on the human brain, rendering its victim temporarily violent and insane!"

The doctor gave Baggy a sedative, which sent him to sleep and dispersed the drug. When Baggy awoke he blinked round him stupidly.

"Wh-where am I?" he gasped. "Wh-what's happened?"

(Continued on page 19.)



"Well," said Lundy aggressively, "I want to know more about your pleasant little habit of knocking fellows down!" I suppose you thought I'd forget that crack on the jaw. You thought that because your mother was there I couldn't hit back. Well, I didn't. But I will now!" Tom set his teeth and made no reply.

"I—I don't want to," said Tom miserably, though within he choked with suppressed rage. Even now he did not realise that Lundy's courage was the outcome of Garnet's spying.

Lundy stepped forward. There was doubt in his mind, and not a little fear in his craven heart, for he was not quite sure how much taunting Tom Mace would stand, nor how much that reluctant promise was worth. But he had his friends behind him in case of trouble.

"You're a funk!" he said, almost with a shout. "A low-down funk! Take that!"

With a sharp cry, Tom Mace fell back, his hand to his cheek.

"That's the coward's blow!" said Lundy, drawing back with an involuntary movement, for in Tom's eyes there was a look of fire, a look that looked ill for Lundy.

But, with an almost superhuman effort, Tom Mace held himself in check. His face had gone suddenly white, and his hands, unclenched, hung almost lifeless by his sides. His eyes, with the same glitter, stared at Lundy as though they would pierce him. His whole body yearned to spring forward and send the taunting, jeering cad to the ground; but Tom held himself back. He had promised not to fight. He was trying hard, perhaps too hard.

"My hat!"

Bob Peel staggered back.

"Tom!" he muttered, in a voice that was strangely altered, a voice from which all life had gone. "Tom, old man, you can't stand that! Go for him! Mop up the quad with him!" His tone was a pleading shout.

"I—I can't!" muttered Tom. "You—you don't understand. It's impossible! I can't do it. I can't, really."

"But, Tom—" Peel took a step forward, and stopped short. "Man," he cried, "that's a coward's blow! You must fight!" He gulped, and stretched out his hand. "Tom, you're not a funk! Show them you're not. Mop him up!"

"Funk!" came a joyous cry from the knuts. They clustered round outside the School House doorway, and it seemed almost miraculous that no master had appeared.

"After lessons this afternoon, you funk?" asked Lundy.

Tom shook his head firmly.

"No," he said; "I won't. But I'm not a funk."

"Ha, ha, ha! Funk!"

The scholarship lad ground his teeth together, and turned appealingly to his chum—his chum, who looked away with hurt eyes.

"Peel!" he gasped. "Peel, you—you don't think that I—"

His lips became suddenly dry, and there was a suspicious moisture about his eyes, for Bob Peel had turned away, and was even now walking across the quadrangle.

"See!" sneered Lundy. "That's what your precious pal thinks!"

But Tom did not heed Lundy.

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Bob Peel, his chum, had deserted him! It cut Tom to the quick. If only Peel understood, all would be well.

"Listen—" began Lundy.

Tom wheeled round so sharply that Lundy drew back.

"Get away!" he cried. "Run, fly, or I'll hit you even yet!" And Lundy & Co., deeming they had said enough, backed away.

Humiliation!

INTO the Fourth Form-room went Tom, as the bell for classes rang, not yet recovered from the first effects of Bob Peel's desertion. Yet he could not blame his chum. Nor could he explain. It would seem too feeble.

Lundy & Co. were obviously enjoying the situation. But Tom, of course, was unable to understand their elation. For he had not guessed that Garnet had overheard the promise that he had given his mother.

Mr. Mullins was there waiting, and the Form-master's expression was not pleasant. Apparently dinner had not agreed with Mr. Mullins' digestion, and Mr. Mullins in turn did not agree with the ties of school life.

"Mace," he said crossly, as Tom entered, "how long will it be before you realise that in a school such as this there are rules and regulations to which you must conform?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom. For really there was no other answer to make. Naturally enough, the scholarship lad was doing his best to learn as quickly as possible all the rules that existed at Millford, and certainly he would not purposely be late for lessons. That was a crime at any school.

So he walked quickly to his place, and sat down. Bradshaw had not yet appeared, but that apparently did not matter.

Five minutes after the lesson had started, in sauntered the languid Bradshaw. He glanced carelessly at the Form-master, and nodded in an insolent manner. Bradshaw had no fear at all about being punished. He had not yet been punished by Mr. Mullins.

And the other juniors merely looked up casually, quite used to Bradshaw's little "ways."

But the elegant youth had not passed more than three desks up the gangway, when Mr. Mullins rapped out fiercely: "Bradshaw!"

Bradshaw started violently with confusion, and stopped dead. He lifted his eyebrows with surprise at this sudden and angry exclamation.

"Yes," he replied insolently—"what?"

Mr. Mullins fairly fumed. His face went red, and he brought down his fist on the desk.

"Boy!" he thundered. "Boy! Come here at once, sir!"

Bradshaw gasped, and his hands twitched nervously. Shouting always flustered the dreamy youth, and, moreover, he was not used to being "rowed."

But he sauntered forward, compelled to move by the look in Mr. Mullins' eye.

"How dare you come in late!" raved the master. "And remember, I am sir to you—sir! Dye hear me?"

He blinked viciously, and Bradshaw started to tremble, for he was not greatly endowed with valour, nor, as it happened, with discretion.

"Y-yes, sir," he stammered. "I—I'm awfully sorry I'm late, but—but I was detained. The—the Head—"

"Oh!" said Mr. Mullins, slightly mollified. "Oh, that is different, of course. But another time, my lad, remember to apologise when you are late."

His tone had softened now, probably because he realised that he had lost control of himself rather. When he suffered from indignation, Mr. Mullins did many things which in cooler moments he was sure to regret.

He had no wish to offend Bradshaw—Bradshaw, whose father was an earl's brother, for Mr. Mullins could not rid himself of the entrancing dream of an invitation to Bradshaw's home.

The rebuked junior went to his place, sulky and defiant at having been humiliated in the eyes of his Form fellows, and more especially in the eyes of Tom Mace, the scholarship lad.

At the best of times Luke Bradshaw was not an especially bright youth, and, in his own peculiar way of reasoning, he blamed his humiliation on to the scholarship lad. He gave Tom Mace a very bitter look.

"Got it that time!" sniggered Garnet, not displeased at the reverse his "chum" had suffered.

Bradshaw went a deep, angry crimson, and feigned interest in his book of Euclid, although he hated the sight of the triangles that met his outraged glance.

"Now," said Mr. Mullins, clearing his throat. "We will deal with the next theorem. In this it is necessary to prove that any two sides of a triangle are longer than the third."

He looked up with a slight thin smile. "Perhaps Tom Mace would like to prove this to us. I suppose, my lad, you know something of the matter. You must have learnt something of triangles at your scholastic establishment, the—"

er—

"Council school, sir," put in Lundy. And there were sniggers.

"Exactly!" said the master. "Thank you, Lundy! The Council school."

"Yes, sir," answered Tom, flushing slightly at the gibe. He tried not to, but he knew that the others were laughing at him, and he felt confused. Actually, he knew that proposition inside-out, as it were.

He rose to his feet.

"Come to the board, my fine fellow!" said the master. "Here is some chalk. Now make a triangle, any triangle. Call it A B C."

Tom did as he had been told, then turned to the master.

"Shall I go right on, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, yes, of course. Prove it, my boy. It is very simple."

But Tom hesitated. The centre of all eyes, he was nervous and confused, and all knowledge of the matter fled from him. He knew not what to do or say.

"First of all—" he commenced, then halted lamely. There was no book to which he could refer, and somehow he got all mixed up.

Immediately there was a guffaw of laughter, in which Bradshaw joined, forgetting his grievance.

"My dear boy," said the master ironically, "you fail to realise the question. I want you to prove to me that added together any two sides of a triangle exceed in length the third. Surely that is simple enough?"

"Y-yes sir," stammered poor Tom. "I—I—"

"I quite understand," said the master. "You were not listening. No; you need not explain. Only this morning I had to rebuke you for the same fault. Please pay attention. Now, will you go to your place, and listen to me! As a slight reminder, you will write out this proposition ten times!"

"Ten times!" gasped poor Tom. "But, sir, I have already lines to do."

Mr. Mullins' lips tightened.

"I am well aware of that," he said. "And I expect those to be finished by ten-time. Go to your place!"

Tom, simmering inwardly at the injustice of the snobbish master, returned to his place. Surely it was enough that the juniors should taunt him! Were all schools the same, he wondered. Was not a scholarship lad ever given a chance?

Tom did not know that he was the first scholarship lad Millford College had ever known. It was the first year of the scholarship, and as yet the school was unaccustomed to scholars whose fees were paid by charity—by the bequest of an old scholar.

But for the rest of that lesson Mr. Mullins, feeling perhaps that he had punished the lad enough, left Tom alone. But not for a moment did Tom's attention to his lesson relax. He listened intently to every one of Mr. Mullins' words, as though they were gems of wisdom, of priceless worth.

And Mr. Mullins found no fault with him. From time to time, however, Lundy amused himself by flicking ink pellets at the lad, and although the master noted it, he passed no comment.

The pellets flicked on Tom's collar, leaving dirty stains, and once a pellet, wet with ink, caught him in the neck. Bradshaw sniggered unrebuked. But the master, with his usual tight-lipped smile, requested Tom to sit still, and not shift about in his seat as if he were on hot coals. Once again Bradshaw sniggered.

But at last the tension slackened, for a bell rang for the change of lessons, and Mr. Mullins, quite as glad as his Form that the lesson was over, snapped his book, and took his departure.

Poor Old Tom!

"SPORTS next," said Bob Peel, smacking his hands together, and throwing his Euclid into his desk.

"Hurrah!"

"Cricket?" asked Tom; but Peel looked away.

"Cricket? What do you know about cricket?" asked Gamet.

"Why, you blessed funk, you'd run away from the ball!"

"He, he, he!"

Before Tom could make a reply the door opened, and Mr. Gale, the new sports master, entered.

"Come, boys," he said, "the nets are waiting. Cricket, you know!"

Immediately there was a rush from the room, and Tom followed.

Mr. Gale drew close to him.

"Have you ever played cricket before, Mace?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," answered Tom. "I've played quite a great deal."

"Oh, I am glad of that. By the way, about that other matter. I suppose you haven't seen that man Meadows again?"

Tom shook his head.

"No, sir," he replied. "I promised not to, if you remember."

"Yes, yes, of course. But I wondered if you had seen him about anywhere."

"No, I haven't, sir. I don't think he'll be round here any more; at least—"

He paused, remembering that he had an appointment with Meadows—an appointment he had no intention of keeping.

But Mr. Gale had not noticed the hesitation, and passed out into the quadrangle, following the stream of juniors.

Already Tom could hear the pleasant click of bat meeting ball, and his eyes lit up. For Tom Mace was a very keen cricketer.

At last here was the chance to show them that he was worthy of the best Millford traditions. He would show them that about cricket, at least, he did know something.

Lundy & Co. were already at the nets, and Lundy, in his usual manner, was putting on the pads, so that he could get first "knock." Lundy always wanted to be first in everything.

Mr. Gale nodded as Lundy took his stance at the wicket. Lundy was a flourishing cricketer, playing to the gallery—but never for his side.

Bob Peel was better than he at bowling and at batting, but Lundy carried the captaincy by sheer weight of numbers.

Several juniors had gathered round the stump at the bowling crease, and one or two had a ball in their hands. Tom Mace stood to one side, away from the others.

"Now, who are bowlers?" asked the new master, looking round.

"I am!" The cry came from at least a dozen throats, and the would-be bowlers pressed forward.

The master smiled.

"Well, you can't all bowl," he said; "there aren't enough balls." He turned round to where Tom was standing. "Can you bowl, Mace?" he asked.

Tom nodded.

"Well, let's see what you can do against this man—what's his name? Lundy? Well, come on, Mace, send his sticks down!"

Tom Mace peeled off his jacket and tucked up his sleeves. For these afternoon practices the juniors did not change into flannels, but usually took off their jackets and tucked up their sleeves, just as Tom Mace had done.

Lundy tapped the crease with his bat, and winked at his cronies, as though to say, "Watch this one go!"

Tom Mace saw that look, and he gripped the ball hard.

"Play!" said the master, watching Tom keenly.

Tom took a run forward, and sent the ball spinning down the pitch. He was a left-handed bowler, and swerved in from the off.

Whether it was because he was nervous, or because he was not in form, his first ball pitched rather short, and Simon Lundy, to the delight of the other juniors, drove it well away.

"Not bad," said Mr. Gale to Lundy. "But take your time, man, you'll get home on it all the better if you do."

(Continued on page 20.)



Whiz! Lundy's ball pitched short—lamentably short—and rose. Next moment Tom dropped his bat, uttered a yell of pain, and before the astonished eyes of all, dropped to the ground. "My hat!" gasped Peel. "He's been hit!" Immediately there was a rush to the spot.



JOHN SHARPE.

INTRODUCTION.

John Sharpe, the great analytical detective, is engaged by Chief Burnett, of the Secret Service, to track down the band of organised and dangerous criminals operating under the guidance of Iron Hand—a fearless, clever man of dominating personality. Marna Black, one of the band of crooks, is captured, and Burnett induces Anne Crawford, a woman agent of the Secret Service, to assume Marna's identity and get into the confidence of Iron Hand.

She is instructed to keep her real identity a secret even to Sharpe; but she often assists him and sends him information concerning the movements of the gang, and he is puzzled to know just where it comes from.

Iron Hand has a number of hiding-places in different parts of the country, which are referred to as "Nests," the most important of which is Eagle's Nest, situated on a deserted cliff.

Trapped!

"I HOPE I can be of some use to you in our next scheme," Anne Crawford remarked, in order to open the conversation.

There was a certain tenseness in the air, and Anne desired to dispose of any suspicions which the gang might have had concerning her. Her real purpose to-day was to give the signal which she had promised to the police chief in order to assist him to carry through successfully the raid which he had planned.

She walked across the room in a casual manner, and unconcernedly took out her handkerchief. But so strangely enough Black Flag then took it into his head to also walk towards the window, and when she was about to carry out her plan she found herself staring into the grinning face of the outlaw.

It would have been madness for her to go through with her scheme then. Anne retraced her footsteps and walked towards the door. She decided to make a bolt for it, but here again she was foiled, for she found that Potsdam had inconveniently placed himself beside it.

That moment the truth of the situation dawned upon the unfortunate girl. She was trapped—a prisoner! The gang had somehow or other discovered her motive in coming to the hotel.

As she looked from one face to another it seemed that the men were gloating over her predicament. But the plucky girl was not beaten yet. She determined to bluff the matter out still, if it were possible.

Ignoring the members of the gang whose eyes were upon her, hoping to see her appeal for mercy, she walked out towards Iron Hand. Her idea was to

The INVISIBLE HAND

Vitagraph



IRON HAND.

engage him in conversation, and thereby throw him off his guard; but the leader was evidently feeling in a nervous mood, for the next moment he instructed the members of the gang to leave the hotel at once.

He ordered Anne to accompany him also, and she simply had to submit. Her courage did not fail her, but she was terribly disappointed at the turn of events, for she realised that the police would arrive too late to capture the gang.

Too Late!

THE chief of the police, failing to receive the promised signal from Anne, decided to act without further delay. Accompanied by a number of his men, he entered the hotel, and at once made a search for his prey, but he soon realised that he was too late, and that once again the quick-witted Iron Hand had flown.

The police chief was wondering whether the "mysterious Miss Roberts" was a member of the gang after all, when his attention was attracted by the sound of approaching footsteps. He gave his men a swift order to be ready, and they crouched down expectantly as the door of the room slowly opened.

"Hands up, everybody!" A firm voice rang out, as a man entered and stood in the doorway with his revolvers levelled.

It was Detective John Sharpe. The next minute he recognised the police, and realised that there was no need for drastic action on his part. He put away his revolvers and walked into the room towards the chief.

"I traced the gang here. How did you find this place, chief?" asked the detective.

For a moment the officer was lost for a reply. Then he answered hesitatingly:

"Her—followed Miss Roberts! She escaped again."

Sharpe looked at the man incredulously. He did not believe the chief, and he knew it.

"Who and what is this girl?" he asked pointedly.

The officer shook his head. He was unwilling to give the information which he had been told in confidence.

"Find her, and she'll tell you—or I will," he replied. "The great point is that these crooks have got her—and also given us the slip."

Sharpe listened, and it was evident that he felt this deeply, and that he would do everything in his power to get her away. He commenced to examine the room without delay, and presently picked up the stump of a cigarette.

"Iron Hand's favourite brand," the detective remarked. He looked carefully all over the floor, and then walked towards the fireplace. His eyes quickly wandered towards the letter which Iron Hand had placed there, and, producing a piece of paper from his pocket he slipped it under the charred pieces of the letter. A small part of the letter had been untouched by the fire.

Sharpe carried his valuable find over

to the table. The chief watched him with great interest. The detective placed the burnt letter down with extreme care, and examined it through his powerful magnifying-glass.

The words "gold ing—" were visible to him. The police chief and his men bent over the table, deeply interested in this important clue. But just then a tragedy happened.

One of the policemen took it into his head to sneeze violently, and the burnt paper crumbled up, and blew away in fragments.

Both Sharpe and the police were naturally highly annoyed at this incident, but the damage had been done.

The detective bent down and picked up the remainder of the unburnt portion of the letter, and he was able to make out the letters S.T.A. CAL.

18 19.

"This unburned scrap may tell me the whole story!" exclaimed Sharpe excitedly. "One of you get me a gazetteer of California and a telephone directory." The alert detective again turned his attention to the clue, and he looked very thoughtful as he waited for the man to return with the required books.

A moment or two later the policeman re-entered with the reference book desired by John Sharpe. The detective opened it eagerly, and ran his fingers up and down the columns.

After a while his search was rewarded, and the name of Alta Vista, California, was disclosed to him. Sharpe next looked at the reference number which appeared opposite these words, and he read "Map 74, G. 3. Page 47."

He turned to the page indicated, and, in addition to some other information, the particulars stated that Alta Vista was the station for the Royal Gold and Silver Mining Company, on the Los Angeles Railway.

A look of intense interest entered the detective's eyes. He felt that he was on the track of a good thing. Sharpe turned round and spoke to the policeman.

"Ring up the Los Angeles office of the Royal Mining Company, and find out if they intend to make a shipment to-day," he ordered.

The constable saluted, and walked to the end of the room to the telephone.

While they were waiting for the reply the police chief expressed his amazement that Sharpe could have discovered so much from such a slight clue.

The detective smiled at this. "I suppose you wonder how I managed it?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply. Sharpe pointed to the half-burnt paper.

"Iron Hand held the paper here," he explained. "I'm reasonably sure of his finger-prints. I saw the word 'gold' on

the burned portion, and this piece tells a plain story."

The detective held up the piece of burnt paper, but the chief was still very sceptical.

The policeman had now finished speaking on the telephone, and he walked over to Sharpe.

"They report that the mine is shipping gold ingots to the value of over a million dollars," the man said.

Sharpe listened to his statement with evident interest.

"You were right, then, in your deduction," put in the chief.

But Sharpe's mind was concentrated upon something else.

"Connect me with the Royal Mining Company at Alta Vista," he said to the telephone-girl.

Sharpe received no reply for several minutes, and he grew very impatient at the long delay.

"It's no use!" he said at length. "I can't get the mine or the railway. Iron Hand's too smart. He must have interfered with the wires in some way!" Disappointment was registered upon the faces of all present, and they looked inquiringly at the detective in order to see what suggestions he had.

"What is the quickest way to Alta Vista?" inquired Sharpe.

"By horseback over the range!" replied one of the policemen, who was well acquainted with the district. This was good enough for John Sharpe. He was far from being a beaten man yet.

"Get Captain West on the telephone, and tell him to report here with three of his best men, and two spare horses for the chief and myself," ordered the detective.

Sharpe had recently heard from his old friend, and he knew that he would be only too delighted to take part in the round-up of Iron Hand & Co, especially if there was some good stiff horse-riding to do.

The Gold Robbery.

THE station at Alta Vista was quite an unimportant one.

At the present moment some railway-men were busy getting the train ready which was to carry the valuable gold consignment to its destination. A fairly lengthy passenger train was standing in the station. The engine had been detached, and was moving a "box" compartment from a siding to the rear of the train. This was coupled, and then the engine took its place at the front.

Iron Hand & Co., who had already arrived on the scene, were interested spectators of what was taking place.

They had left their motor-car a short distance away from the station, and in it was Anne Crawford, in charge of one of the gang.

The leader and his party were watching the proceedings from a carefully-concealed hiding-place behind a row of empty goods waggons.

Presently a couple of armed men arrived on the scene, and the work of loading the gold into the compartment began.

The work did not take very long, and at last the two armed guards entered the car. The door of the compartment was then carefully locked, and the train moved off.

This was the signal for the gang to commence their operations.

Iron Hand, Potsdam, Black Flag, and another member of the gang had stealthily left their hiding-places, and made their way to one side of the compartment containing the gold, and

directly the train moved off, they sprang on and swiftly climbed to the roof.

While this was going on, Anne thought she would like to take a hand in the game also, and, taking advantage of the interest of her guard in the proceedings, she picked up a large wrench which was lying upon a seat in the car, and brought it down heavily upon the head of the outlaw.

He sank back immediately, stunned by the determined blow delivered by the plucky girl.

Then, although the train had well started, Anne rushed towards it and took up a position underneath the compartment.

The train, which quickly gathered speed, had a long journey in front of it, and the two armed guards settled down to make themselves comfortable. They were in the act of lighting their pipes when they were surprised to hear a noise coming from beneath the floor.

Instantly the two men were on the alert. They listened again, and still the noise was repeated. Then one of the men smiled.

"It must be a tramp taking a free ride beneath the compartment," he ventured to suggest.

This idea was not taken into serious consideration by his colleague, though. If it were really a tramp, he reasoned, the fellow would desire to keep his presence a secret, and remain as quiet as possible until he reached his destination. But the knocking was repeated, and this time louder than before.

The men decided to investigate without further delay. One of them picked up a stout iron bar and commenced to pry up the planking of the floor.

Strangely enough, the men on the roof of the compartment, who, of course, had not heard the knocking owing to the noise of the train, selected that moment to begin their operations.

Black Flag dropped down between the cars and uncoupled the compartment containing the gold, with the inevitable result that the train pulled on ahead, and the car gradually slowed down.

The two guards had now succeeded in forcing up enough planking in the floor of their compartment to admit the passage of a body. They looked through the opening, and were astonished to see a woman there. The men immediately dragged her up.

Anne explained as briefly as possible how she came to be in such a dangerous position, and then she exclaimed breathlessly: "Iron Hand's gang! They're after the gold!"

She pointed towards the roof. But there was another sensation for the two guards.

"The train's stopped!" one of the men shouted in alarm.

They drew their revolvers in readiness, for they realised that there was a dangerous significance in this for them, and they were prepared to fight for the gold.

After separating the compartment containing the gold from the rest of the train, Iron Hand and his party jumped to the ground. The leader rapped on the door with the butt of his revolver.

"We want that gold!" he demanded.

"Open the door, and you will go free!" Anne and the guards heard the summons to surrender. The men looked at the girl to see if she was nervous, and she shook her head.

"We don't intend to give way without a fight," replied one of the guards, and in order to show their determination, they started firing rapidly through the side of the car.

The gang did not expect this, and they had to dodge pretty smartly in order to

evade the bullets. Then they returned to the car.

"All right, we are going to blow you up with dynamite!" Iron Hand yelled out. This was for the benefit of the guards.

Turning to Potsdam, he said quietly: "Make a bluff under the car."

The second in command grinned, and crawled underneath the waggon. It was then that, to his astonishment, he saw the hole in the bottom. Drawing his revolver, he poked his head through.

"Hands up!" he yelled.

The men were completely taken by surprise, and they had to obey. "All right, break open the door!" Potsdam shouted up to his leader.

This work did not take very long. Iron Hand soon succeeded in breaking off the padlock, and when the door was opened, the two guards and Anne were disclosed. He was surprised to see the girl there.

"You?" he asked, in astonishment.

The Secret Cave.

IRON HAND looked at Anne with amazement, waiting for her to say something. The girl felt that she could not hope to fool the leader any longer. The time for pretence was over. She met his gaze with a frigid look, and answered defiantly:

"You seem surprised to find me in this compartment. Well, you see, I preferred riding in the company of honest men!"

The chief had not expected such a retort as this from the girl, and he burned with hatred towards her.

During this time, the outlaw who had been placed in charge of the motor-car regained consciousness, and he set off in pursuit of the train. In a short time his car drew alongside.

The driver expected an onslaught of heated words from Iron Hand for allowing Anne to go free, but the leader was too busy to spend time now in reproving the man for his neglect of duty.

He gave his men orders to tie up the two guards, and when they were bound up to his complete satisfaction, he had them thrown unceremoniously into the bush alongside the track.

Then the work of unloading the gold commenced.

Anne was forced to do her share.

The gold was transferred from the train compartment into the gang's motor-car, and then the vehicle drove off with the valuable booty. But Iron Hand, while inwardly rejoicing on the success, did not know that the enterprising and energetic John Sharpe was once again on his heels.

The detective, accompanied by the police chief and his old friend Captain West and three troopers, had managed to gather information in respect of the direction taken by the train, and they set their horses galloping hard in pursuit. In due time they arrived on the scene of the robbery.

The looted compartment was still standing where the gang had left it.

The party dismounted, and made an examination of the car.

A short distance away Sharpe came upon the two unfortunate guards, who had been bound up and left in the bushes until they were lucky enough to be discovered and released.

Sharpe and the others hastily released them, and then the men related their story.

There was no time to be lost, and leaving the guards to look after themselves, the detective and the party remounted and galloped off in the direction taken by the motor-car.

In the meantime, Iron Hand & Co. had arrived at their destination. It was a very lonely, desolate spot, and the gold was at once lifted out of the motor-car by the gang. Here, again, Anne was made to do her share.

When the car was empty the driver turned it citywards, and drove back.

The task before the gang was now to carry the gold into their secret cave.

A couple of the men moved a large-sized boulder, which disclosed a hole large enough for one person to enter at a time. This led to a passageway to the cave.

(To be continued.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 703.

HOW ERNEST LEVISON CAME TO ST. JIM'S.

(Continued from last week.)

Then suddenly the mysterious "Nobody's Study" was plunged into darkness! Nobody had touched the gas. It simply appeared to go out on its own accord. The fags fled in terror.

After listening to their explanation Kildare made for the apartment. D'Arcy minor had left the door wide open on leaving, but when Kildare got there it was firmly shut, and, furthermore, when he opened it the room was ablaze with light.

These mysterious occurrences continued, and at last Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, who had deeprooted suspicions as to the cause of all the trouble, took a hand.

A few nights previous Levison had volunteered, as if to show what pluck he had, to spend a night in the desolate study. In the morning the juniors went down to see if Levison had kept his word, and really stayed the whole night there. To make sure that he would not be able to leave, Lowther had tied the study door handle from the shell and fourth, together with Lumley-Lumley. After a few minutes a chair was pushed back from the wall, and across the study dashed Levison!

But when they crowded inside no sign of Ernest Levison was to be seen. All that remained to show that he had once been there were his clothes. These were spread out neatly on the floor, just as it was fabled the old monk had done!

At length Lumley-Lumley tried a clever ruse to determine Levison's presence. A false fire alarm was sent through the whole school, and Nobody's Study was filled with smoke from burnt rags. The study was crowded with the leading lights from the Shell and Fourth, together with Lumley-Lumley. After a few minutes a chair was pushed back from the wall, and across the study dashed Levison!

As the smoke cleared away it was possible to see how the junior had entered. A large block of stone had rolled back, moving on some hidden slide. It was a secret such as the juniors suspected, but had been unable to find. The gas had been turned out at wish by a plug operated from the other side. The secret apartment, very similar to Nobody's Study, was Levison's den. It was snugly smothered with rugs and cushions, together with food for a week, and numbers of magazines and periodicals.

A short while after the discovery the Head walked in, attracted by the cry of fire. On leaving the apartment he took Ernest Levison with him, and the scamp received the biggest

flogging he has had since he has been at St. Jim.

Levison was almost as prominent a figure as Talbot himself in the splendid stories dealing with the schoolboy cracksmen. Talbot saved Levison from disgrace once, but on another occasion Levison saved Talbot, at a very great risk to himself.

Levison was never a fellow like Racke, who is awfully thick-skinned about most things, and caused contempt like a blind bat. Contempt always hurts Levison.

Perhaps his very first step towards reformation was when he changed from Study No. 2, which he shared with Melish and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, into Study No. 9, with Sidney Clive, who had just arrived. Some time afterwards the great Cardew blew in, and was assigned to this study, but he is a very recent edition. His next step was when his younger brother, Frank, came. The smaller boy had always held a very high opinion of his elder brother, and it came as great shock to him when he ran bang into him playing cards with several other fellows. Aubrey Racke had carefully arranged all that, of course. But young Frank reasoned it out that his brother was being led by these other bad spirits, and he tried his very best to keep him out of danger.

Even at his "bushest" periods, Levison never had very much money, so the object of Aubrey Racke in trying to keep Levison from turning decent could have only been from vicious self-amusement. If Racke and Crooke had left him alone, Levison's task of reformation would have been far easier. But Racke played on all the weakest parts of the junior's nature, and time after time Levison broke out afresh.

One of Racke's vilest schemes against him was to ring up Mr. Bailton on the phone and inform him that a Fourth Form junior was playing cards at the Green Man. He despatched Kildare to investigate; but Tom Merry took Frank on his bicycle, and they there first. The other occasion was in that famous 3d. Library, "After Lights Out." This story told how Racke, through countless lies, brought Levison under the shadow of expulsion. Before he was expelled, Cardew

helped him to escape from the punishment-room and get away to the woods. But it was young Frank who played the greatest part, and established his brother's innocence. Racke felt rather sick of life when things came out, after having shone as a hero.

It was a very bitter day for "Young Moneybags" when Levison refused to associate with him again. And it was a great day of triumph for young Frank, and also for Gussy, who must be given credit for the whole idea.

The yarns which dealt with his reformation were:

"Levison Minor" (Gem No. 451); "A Surprise for St. Jim's" (No. 456); "Levison Minor's Luck" (No. 462); "For his Brother's Sake" (No. 464); and then "The Wisdom of Gussy" (No. 466). This brought us to the end of Levison's reformation, and from then onwards he never looked back.

Levison was he is To-day.

Deep down in his heart Levison always wanted to be a fellow like Tom Merry, Noble, or Jack Blake. When he turned over a new leaf sports came naturally to him, and he found Tom Merry only too willing to include him in the team. In cricket his prowess as a bowler is too well known to require mention, while his knowledge of Soccer has won more than one match for St. Jim's. As a boxer there were several bouts, but he never beat School House and New House, Shell and Fourth, who could beat him on points and were it to be an out-and-out tussle without gloves, one thinks there would hardly be six!

After having read through every story in which Levison appeared, one finds it quite possible to make allowances for his bad days.

He was apparently born with a mischievous nature, and instead of having it stamped out he was sent to a school—the school he attended before he appeared at Greyfriars—where this nature was developed to the highest degree. We have no actual record, but there is little doubt that this "delightful" place must have been crammed full of objects who April-fooled" each other 365 days in the year.

For his worst actions, Ernest Levison is genuinely sorry, and he wishes they could be forgotten. He has a minor to occupy part of his thoughts now, and with the errand Cardew and the Form's cricket and football, Ernest finds life far more enjoyable than he did in the days of "coventry," and dingy games with the cads. One can say that Ernest Levison will never be heard of as a black sheep again!

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TOM MERRY AND TIMOTHY.—(Continued from page 12.)

"Compose yourself, my dear lad!" said Dr. Holmes, bending over him. "There is nothing the matter! You have been ill for a little while, that is all! By the way, Trimble, do you remember eating some jujubes a little while ago?"

Baggy Trimble sat up and blinked round the dormitory. "I—I didn't mean to steal them, sir!" he said. "Really, I thought they were Timothy's when I found them in Racke's study, and—"

"You found them in Racke's study?"

"Yes, sir—on the mantelshelf. I only had one or two, and then I—I felt ill."

Dr. Holmes looked round at Kildare, who was standing near by.

"You had better inquire of Racke where he procured those sweetmeats, Kildare," he said.

Kildare strode away. He met the Terrible Three in the Shell passage, with Timothy. The captain of St. Jim's stopped.

"Hold on, you fellows," he said. "I understand that Duffe is always eating jujubes. Have any been missing?"

"Oh, no," said Timothy, shaking his head. "Nobody has stolen any of mine."

"Do you know where Racke is?" asked Kildare, looking into Study No. 7 and finding nobody in.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"What has Racke to do with the Kildare?" he said. "We don't mean to be nosy, you know, but if anything is the matter—"

"Trimble says he ate some jujubes he found in Racke's study this evening," replied Kildare. "Those jujubes, as you know, were drugged. We've got to find out where Racke got them from."

The Terrible Three looked at each other in astonishment as Kildare walked away.

"What do you make of it, Tommy?" asked Manners.

"Goodness knows!" said Tom. "Unless—unless—My hat! I wonder?"

"Wonder what?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"Whether those sweets were intended for Timothy, and Baggy stole them before Racke had time to give 'em to Timothy?" said Tom Merry.

"Great pip!"

"Here's the Mellish!" said Manners. "We'll ask him."

Percy Mellish backed away as the Terrible Three bore up to him.

"Wh-what's the matter?" he stammered.

"Come into our study for a tick, Mellish," said Tom Merry grimly. "We want to have a little chat with you."

"I—I can't stop—"

"Come on!"

The Terrible Three fairly dragged Mellish into their den. "Now, Mellish," said Tom Merry, looking the cad of the Fourth squarely in the face. "We want no beating about the bush. We know you're in the swim with Racke. Where did you get those doped jujubes from?"

Mellish turned pale.

"How—how did you know he—"

"Never mind that! Out with it, Mellish!" said Tom threateningly. "Were those jujubes intended for Timothy?"

"Yes!" quavered Mellish. "Racke had them given to him by a man in the woods this afternoon."

"Whew! Tell us all about it, you cad!"

Mellish, seeing that he dared not hide anything now, told the Terrible Three all that had happened in the wood that afternoon.

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"By gum, I see it all now! It's a plot to make Timothy mad, so as to get him back to that home! The rotters must have kept him continually doped while he was there—he's a great deal more sensible since he's been here. They haven't

had a chance to give him the doped jujubes. So they made use of Racke & Co! The cads!"

Tom Merry took Mellish straight to the Head's study. Racke was there with Kildare and Mr. Railton. The knut of the Shell was looking sullen.

"You still deny any knowledge of the jujubes, Racke?" the Head was saying. "Then it comes to this—whether you or Trimble has been talking falsehoods. Ah! You want me, Merry?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom. "I've brought Mellish along to clear up this matter. Tell Dr. Holmes all you've told me, Mellish."

The Head, and Mr. Railton, and Kildare listened to Mellish's story in amazement. Racke's face went black with rage.

"Good heavens! Then it is a plot against poor Duffe!" exclaimed Dr. Holmes. "Racke, you miserable boy, I can hardly credit you with such malice towards a lad who has done you no harm. You shall be punished severely for this. I am only too thankful that we have got to know of this plot. I will wire Miss Fawcett immediately, so that her solicitor can make further inquiries. Boys, you may go."

Tom Merry, Racke, and Mellish went.

The news caused a great sensation at St. Jim's. Two men were plotting against Timothy Duffe! What was the motive underlying their anxiety to get him back to the home from which Miss Priscilla had taken him?

Next morning Miss Priscilla arrived. She was with Dr. Holmes and Timothy all the morning. Tom Merry, Blake, and Talbot were chatting outside the school gates after lessons when they saw two men stroll up and glance in at the gates.

"Those two look like the men who gave Racke those sweets—according to Mellish's description," whispered Tom Merry to Blake. "Are you willing to risk making a mistake and nab them?"

"I'm game!" said Blake.

"So am I!" said Talbot.

"Come on, then!"

The two men were amazed to find themselves suddenly attacked by the three sturdy juniors. Tom Merry, Blake, and Talbot dragged them down and sat on them. Monty Lowther, Digby, Figgins, and Levison came up and lent a hand.

"You young rascals!" gasped the handsome stranger, glaring up. "What is the meaning of this outrage? I—"

"Come in and explain to our Head!" responded Tom Merry cheerfully, dusting himself down. "Unless we are very much mistaken, he would like to see you on a little merry."

The men were dragged into the school, and forced to go upstairs to the Head's study. Miss Priscilla was there. She gave a little cry of amazement when she saw the two men.

"Goodness gracious! They are those horrible people from the home where my darling Timothy was kept!" she exclaimed, raising her gloved hands. "Tommy, my sweetest boy, where have they come from?"

"We caught them prowling round the school," replied Tom in explanation. "These are the two men who gave Racke the doped sweets to give Timothy, sir. We recognised them from the description given us and have brought them in."

Dr. Holmes smiled.

"That was a very right and—ahem!—useful thing for you to do, my lads," he said. "Now, perhaps, we shall be able to probe this very mysterious matter to its depths. It appears to me that those two men are extremely anxious to keep Duffe in Denton House for a motive. By what I have seen of the lad, and am able to judge, he is quite normal except for the fact that his imprisonment in the home has left him rather—er—simple. It seems that that was the definite purpose of these men. Probably, they were in the habit of administering the drug that was contained in the sweets that found their way into this school yesterday in order to keep the poor lad always in a state of mental worry. If what I think is true, then this is a very serious matter, and will have drastic consequences for those concerned, for I now fully intend that exhaustive inquiries shall be made on this lad's behalf."

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TOM MERRY & TIMOTHY!

(Continued from page 19.)

The dark, handsome stranger gave a laugh and shrugged his shoulders.

"If that is the case, sir," he said, "you might as well know all now. The game, so far as I and my companion here are concerned, is up. I am Dr. Beverley Randle, the surgeon in charge of Denton House, and have had this lad, Duffie, under my charge for the last fifteen years. He was handed to me as a young boy by Lord Maurice Wethersby, with instructions that the boy should be kept mentally deficient, so that, when he attained the age of twenty-one, he would not be entitled to the estate of his late father, the Marquis of Hartedown. A year ago, this lad was certified mentally deficient, and the marquis' estate went into the hands of Lord Maurice Wethersby who, of course, is the one at the bottom of this affair. In reality, of course, Timothy is quite normal, but to satisfy the authorities, he has been occasionally treated with a drug to inflame the brain. I and my friend here, who manages Denton House, have received our pay from Wethersby, and now that you know the truth, shall have nothing further to do with the matter. I now rest with you to prosecute this lad's brother-in-law for what he has done. We shall, of course, get into trouble as confederates, but I think the money we have received has been worth it—eh, Kimber?"

The other gave a hoarse, cackling laugh.

Dr. Holmes, Miss Priscilla and the juniors had listened in amazement.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head of St. Jim's. "Then that is the explanation! What a sordid, miserable plot, to keep an innocent lad from his lawful inheritance and, at the same time, cause him this heartless suffering and confinement. Miss Fawcett, you are to be congratulated on your kindness and ingenuity in keeping this lad, and refusing to send him back to Denton House. Of course, you will communicate with your lawyers at once, and have this rascally Lord Wethersby arrested?" he said.

"Most certainly, my dear Dr. Holmes," said Miss Priscilla. "And what about these horrid creatures?" She looked scornfully at Dr. Randle and Kimber, his confederate.

"Having confessed everything to us, they are at liberty to return to Denton House," said Dr. Holmes. "They will hear further from the authorities. I am not empowered to detain them. It would be well for them not to abscond, for I am sure the more assistance they give with this case, the better will be their chances of leniency."

"Very true, sir," said Dr. Beverley Randle smiling. "It will mean a lot of bother for me, but I can stand it. I wish you all a very good morning!"

With that, he and Kimber departed.

The machinery of the law was soon put into operation. Miss Priscilla telephoned her lawyers all details of the affair, and Lord Wethersby was apprehended that very day.

Timothy Duffie and Miss Priscilla stayed at St. Jim's all day, and had tea in Study No. 10 with Tom Merry & Co., Blake & Co., and a few chosen guests.

Timothy had to leave with Miss Priscilla, and the chums of St. Jim's saw them off at Rycombe Station.

Returning to the school, they discussed the strange affair of Timothy Duffie.

"It's the most amazing affair I've ever heard of!" said Tom Merry. "But I'm glad Miss Priscilla had faith in Timothy, and acted as she did. I thought he was dirty at first, but I got to like him."

"Yes, he was an interesting chap," said Blake. "I'm jolly glad, for his sake, that things have panned out as they have. He'll be a full-blown marquis in a few weeks, by Jove! But I don't suppose he'll return to St. Jim's."

"No," said Tom Merry, shaking his head. "He's right out of place at a school like this. He'll probably have a private tutor, and be quite all right in a couple of years or so. Poor old Timothy! I'm sorry, in a way, he's not coming back. Whenever I see jujubes in a tuck-shop, I shall think of him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the heroes of the Lower School returned to St. Jim's in the best of spirits.

(Look out for next week's grand, long story of the chums of St. Jim's. Mr. Martin Clifford has written of his best in this rollicking fine story. Avoid disappointment by ordering your copy EARLY!)

"WHAT HAVE YOU AGAINST ME?"

(Continued from page 15.)

Lundy scowled, and slammed his bat on the crease. He glared at Tom, and his teeth clenched as he waited for the next ball.

Down the pitch it came, singing through the air. And out at it went Lundy, eager to smite it far away. But too late he realised he should have stayed back. His hesitation lost him his wicket. Down with a rattle went the off-stump, and the ball went flying high up into the back of the net.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Peel. "How's that, sir?"
"Out," smiled the master. "But try that again, Mace. That was a good ball and would have beaten most men. You, Lundy, take your time, as I said before. Don't rush out blindly at every ball. Cricket does not merely consist in slashing at the ball."

This to Lundy, who deemed himself a stylish bat! He ground his teeth with rage. For he could not help observing his friends' sniggers. To tell the truth, they were not displeased to see their lofty leader shaken on his perch.

All eyes watched Tom as he ran to the stump. Lundy waited for that ball. He knew quite well what he should have done before—and he would make no mistake this time.

Sad to say, however, this ball was different from the other. Beautifully pitched, it beat him "dead." It touched the ground and leapt up from it as though it were alive. Right between his bat and his pads it went, and Simon Lundy, with a sickening feeling within him, closed his eyes, and heard the clink of the stump.

Bob Peel could scarce restrain a cheer as the cad's middle stump, uprooted by the spinning ball, shot up high, and fixed itself in the meshes of the net.

"My word!" said the master, with a slight whistle. "Let's see you bat, Mace."

Everyone was looking at Tom now, wondering the same as the master—if Tom could bat.

Tom nodded, and walked down the pitch. Lundy's eyes were almost starting out of his head as he handed over the bat to Tom.

But Tom paid no attention to the cad—the Fourth, and took his stance at the wicket.

Mr. Gale handed Lundy the ball.

"Perhaps you can bowl better than you can bat," he said. Lundy scowled, and snatched at the ball. Back he went for a long run. In the ordinary course of events, he was not a fast bowler, but Simon Lundy had a little plan.

Forward he rushed, a wild look in his eyes. A little skip, and down the pitch went the ball. It pitched short and bounced up. Tom ducked his head, only just in time. A second later and he would have been stunned.

"Come, come!" said Mr. Gale, rather irritably. "That's not bowling. Hit the stumps, not the man, you know."

Lundy scowled, and gritted his teeth.

He took a shorter run this time, deeming it better to be careful.

The ball went down fast, and it pitched just a little short. Out stepped Tom, and drove the ball under the net, hugging the turf in a beautiful carpet drive.

"Well hit, sir!" cried the master. "Well hit!"

There was nothing the master could have said that would have annoyed Lundy more.

Peel was grinning quite openly, and Mr. Gale was frowning with annoyance. He had sufficient perception to see that Lundy was annoyed, but he intended to wait just one more ball.

Whiz! It was a lightning delivery, such as Lundy had never bowled before. It was a "loose" ball, very loose, and Tom went out to smite.

But it pitched short—lamentably short—and rose—No moment Tom dropped his bat, uttered a yell of pain, and before the astonished eyes of all, dropped to the ground.

"My hat!" gasped Peel. "He's been hit!"
Immediately there was a rush to the spot, while Lundy, with a strangely white face, stood by, watching, fear gripping at his heart.

Mr. Gale was already bending over the prostrate form.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "He's stunned!"

Lundy's jaw dropped, and beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead. Tom Mace was stunned—perhaps killed—and he was responsible!

(This splendid story of Milford College will be continued in next week's "Gem.")

SPECIAL NOTE!

A magnificent portrait study of the great favourite, TOM MERRY, will appear in NEXT WEEK'S issue of the "GEM LIBRARY" - - LOOK OUT FOR IT.