

Grand Faciograph of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy Free *inside*

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Augustus,
The Comical
Chap!



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(How the Fool of the School arrived at St. Jim's. See this week's rollicking school story, inside.)



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THE FOOL OF THE SCHOOL!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, introducing something extraordinary in the shape of Angelo Lee — new boy!

BY

Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1. Not Taking Any!

"KICK-OFF at three!" said Fatty Wynn. "Ten minutes to three now!" said Kerr. Figgins, of the Fourth, coloured. Kerr and Wynn were looking into the study, in the New House at St. Jim's, and they looked surprised. They could not help being surprised.

George Figgins, junior captain of the New House, was one of the keenest footballers at St. Jim's. Ten minutes before the kick-off in a House match, Figgy might have been expected to be living, moving, and breathing football. At the very least, he might have been expected to be ready for the game.

Instead of which, Figgins was standing before the looking-glass in the study, trying on a necktie.

He had not changed for footer. But he had changed otherwise—his Eton jacket was so neat and nice, that it was, obviously, Figgy's best, and by no means the rather shabby jacket which Figgy considered good enough for the Form-room.

On the study table stood a topper. Figgy detested toppers, and never sported one if he could help it; only on special occasions was Figgy seen in a topper. And he was trying on a necktie, and watching the effect in the glass.

Such proceedings on the part of D'Arcy, of the other House, would not have been surprising. On the part of George Figgins they were very surprising indeed. Figgy never cared how his necktie looked. Indeed, according to

his chums, it generally looked as if Figgy had been trying to hang himself. Now he was giving his whole attention to the necktie.

No wonder Kerr and Wynn were surprised. Apparently George Figgins had forgotten all about the football match. That was amazing.

Figgins glanced round.

His rugged, ingenuous face was red. He was caught in the act, as it were, and the accusing glances of his chums made him blush.

"Oh! You fellows—" said Figgins haltingly.

"Kick-off at three!" repeated Wynn, with emphasis.

"Most of the School House chaps are on the ground already, Figgy," said Kerr. "You've not even changed."

"Hem!"

"You're not going to play Soccer in a topper, by any chance?" asked Kerr, with mild sarcasm.

"Nunno!"

"Or in an Eton jacket?"

"N-n-no!"

"Or a collar and tie?"

"You—you see—"

"Well, the sooner you get changed the better," said Kerr. "As you weren't in the changing-room, we came to look for you. Come on!"

Figgins paused and looked at his chums.

"The fact is—" he began.

"Well?"

"The—the fact—"

"Cough it up," said Kerr kindly. "Tell us what you've got on your little mind; unless you're thinking of cutting the House match. Don't tell us that, because we sha'n't listen."

"No fear!" said Fatty Wynn, staring at the junior captain of the House blankly. "I suppose you're not out of your mind, Figgy?"

"Look here, Wynn—"

"Well, if you're not, come along and change," said Fatty. "We don't want to keep Tom Merry's crowd waiting."

"You see—"

"Come on! We're wasting time."

But Figgins did not come on. He stood looking at his chums.

"I'd better tell you at once," he said. "The fact is, I sha'n't be able to play footer to-day."

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"Ill?" asked Kerr.
 "No."
 "Mad?"
 "No, you silly ass."
 "Then leave off burbling, and come down to the changing-room."

"A rather important engagement has turned up!" said Figgins.

"That's all right—let it turn down again," said Kerr.

"It's very important—"

"As important as a House match?" asked Fatty Wynn, with deep and withering sarcasm.

"More!" said Figgins.

"Why, you silly chump!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn, in astonishment.

"But it's all right," said Figgins. "I've asked Tom Merry to look in here—"

"Never mind Tom Merry," said Kerr. "We're waiting for you, Figgins."

"Let me explain—"

"No need to explain; besides, there's no time. You think you're going to cut the House match. You can think again—while you're changing. Don't talk any more rot. You're not leaving the team in the lurch for any reason whatever."

"No jolly fear," said Wynn. "We're not going to gather up a licking from the School House, Figgy, just because you've gone off your dot. Chuck up rotting, and come on!"

"I tell you—"

"Can it!" said Kerr. "I keep on telling you there's no time to waste. Will you walk down to the changing-room, or shall we carry you?"

"You silly owl!" roared Figgins. "I tell you—"

Kerr and Wynn came into the study. Their looks were quite determined. For the junior football captain to turn down a Soccer match at the last moment like this was absolutely unprecedented. It was one of the things that did not happen. They did not even want to know Figgy's reason—such reasons being unimportant and not to be regarded in any case.

Figgins backed away round the study table.

"Don't play the goat, you fellows—" he began.

"It's you that's playing the goat," said Kerr. "We're stopping you."

"I had a call on the telephone—"

"Never mind that now."

"I was rung up on Mr. Flatt's telephone, and he let me take the call—"

"Are you coming?"

"No!" roared Figgins. "When I explain, you'll understand. Give a fellow a chance to speak."

"There's no time," said Kerr. "Collar him, Fatty—he will come to his senses when he's got into football rig. Come on, Figgins."

George Figgins dodged again; but his devoted chums were not to be denied.

They collared Figgins unceremoniously, and whirled him towards the study doorway.

Figgins resisted desperately.

"You silly chumps! Leggo!" he bawled. "I keep on telling you—"

"This way!" said Kerr.

"Leggo!" yelled Figgins, struggling.

"Get a move on!"

Figgins was a sturdy, stalwart fellow, not to be handled with ease, even by two fellows who themselves were sturdy. He put up a terrific resistance, and the three juniors went whirling round the study, tangled together, gasping for breath, and knocking chairs right and left. They bumped into the table, and it rocked, and the shining topper went spinning into the fender. Figgy's best jacket was rumpled and ruffled, and looked rather more untidy than his old Form-room jacket. His spotless clean collar was reduced to a rag—his necktie was trampled under foot.

Finally, with a deadlift effort, as it were, Kerr and Wynn whirled him out of the study doorway.

The three juniors went out of the study in a clinging bundle, all together, into the passage, just as Tom Merry, junior captain of the School House, arrived there. There was a terrific collision.

ANSWERS

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"Oh!" roared Tom

"Ow!"

"Whooooop!"

And four juniors were strewn gasping in the passage outside Figgins' study.

CHAPTER 2.

Play Up, Tom Merry!

TOM MERRY sat up, gasping.

His reception rather surprised him. Tom had received a message that Figgins wanted to speak to him in the New House, before the match, and he had walked over to see Figgy. He had no idea what Figgy wanted, but supposed that it was something to do with the footer. Certainly, he had not expected to come upon George Figgins engaged in deadly combat with his two best pals, and to be floored by them as he reached the study door. He sat and gasped for breath, while Figgins & Co., also gasping, picked themselves up.

"What the merry thump—" ejaculated Tom.

"Sorry!" gasped Figgins.

"You thumping asses—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Fatty Wynn. "We're taking Figgins down to change. Come on, Figgy, you footling ass!"

"Look here—" roared Figgins.

"Figgy thinks he's cutting the House match," explained Kerr, as he gave Tom a helping hand up. "We think he isn't! Hinc illæ lacrymæ."

"Is that what you wanted to see me about, Figgy?" asked Tom.

"That's it. You see—"

"Can it!" roared Fatty Wynn. "You're not cutting the match, you ass! You're playing! Get a move on before we roll you downstairs with your silly head first."

Figgins jumped back into the study.

Kerr and Wynn followed him in, breathless but warlike. Tom Merry, laughing, went into the room after Figgins & Co. This difference of opinion among the chums of the New House struck him as rather entertaining.

"Look here, chuck it!" shouted Figgins, in great exasperation. "Let me explain, you chumps. I had a telephone call—"

"Come on, Figgy!"

"It was from—"

"Rats!"

"From—"

"Bosh!"

"I tell you—"

"Collar him!"

"From Cousin Ethel!" shrieked Figgins, as his devoted comrades laid hefty hands on him again.

"Oh!" said Kerr, pausing. "Right-ho! Is Miss Cleveland coming to see the game?"

"Good egg!" said Fatty Wynn heartily. "We don't mind putting off the kick-off a few minutes—even ten minutes, if Ethel Cleveland is coming to see us lick the School House."

"Ethel's never likely to see you do that, old man," said Tom Merry cheerily. "But I agree to holding on a bit, if Miss Cleveland wants to come along and see us lick the New House."

"Why, you ass—" said Wynn.

"Is that it, Figgy?" asked Tom Merry. "We can arrange that all right. Make the kick-off a quarter past—half-past, if you like. The fellows won't mind, though it's the first House match of the season. Everyone will be glad to see Ethel. So if that's it—"

"It isn't!" said Figgins.

"What is it, then?" asked Tom. "Anything to oblige; but it's getting near time for the game, you know."

"You—you see—" stammered Figgins.

"I don't see; but I'm waiting to see," said Tom politely.

"I'm forced to cut the House match—"

"You're not!" roared Fatty Wynn. "Do you want to give away the game to the School House, you dummy?"

"I'm putting it to you as a sportsman, Tom," said Figgins. "I've got to let the game slide—"

"You haven't, and you sha'n't," said Kerr.

"So I'm going to propose—" went on Figgins.

"To whom?" asked Tom innocently. "Hold on, you chaps; this is a serious matter, if Figgins is going to propose."

Figgins' rugged face assumed the hue of a freshly-boiled beetroot.

"You—you silly School House ass!" he gasped.

"You're going to propose?" said Tom genially. "And you're asking me to be best man—is that it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kerr and Wynn, greatly entertained by the expression on Figgy's speaking countenance.

WEDNESDAY, 1914



"This way!" said Figgins. The New House junior deprived Cousin Ethel of her bag, and led the way to the tea-room. In the distance, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy uttered an exclamation. "Sai Jove! There's Ethel!" Tom Merry glanced round. "So it is!" he said. "Figgins has found her. They don't seem to be coming this way, though." (See Chapter 3.)

"For goodness' sake, don't be a goat, Tom Merry!" exclaimed Figgins. "I'm going to propose—"

"We've had that," said Tom. "Who's the merry victim?"

"Shut up!" roared Figgins. "I'm going to propose to you to cut the House match, too. That will make it square."

"Well, my hat!"

"You see, if I stand out, it rather lets the New House side down," said Figgins. "But if the School House skipper stands out, too, that will make it all right. See?"

Tom Merry stared at him.

Undoubtedly Figgy's proposition would make the matter "all right," as Figgy said. If both the House teams lost their skippers, it would be fair all round. But Tom Merry was not at all keen to miss the first House match of the football season. He had been looking forward to the match; he had got his eleven into great form; he was intending to mop up Little Side with the champions of the rival House. And the prospect of cutting the game did not appeal to him at all—not a little bit.

"Well, of all the cheek!" said Kerr.

"Neck!" said Fatty Wynn.

Figgins looked uncomfortable.

"I know it's asking rather a lot of you, Tom," he said. "It is!" assented the captain of the Shell. "An awful lot! A fearful lot! Too much, in fact."

"Well, if you don't agree, it can't be helped," said Figgins. "I've got to go out this afternoon—can't be helped. I mean, I want to go, and these two duffers can talk themselves black in the face, and it won't make any difference. I'd like to take you with me—"

"No end of a pleasure," said Tom. "But not quite equal to a football match in the way of entertainment. Not quite."

"It's to oblige Cousin Ethel!" said Figgins, with dignity.

"Oh! That alters the case, of course," said Tom.

"Still—"

"Rot!" said Kerr decisively. "Ethel's a jolly sensible girl, and she wouldn't dream of upsetting a football fixture."

"She doesn't know there's a House match on to-day, ass!" said Figgins. "How should she know?"

"You could have told her, if you've been on the phone."

"Well, I didn't tell her," said Figgins. "Ethel phoned me on Mr. Flatt's telephone, and told me she was going to Lexham to-day, and had to change at Wayland Junction and wait there twenty minutes. As it's a half-holiday at St. Jim's, she said she'd like to speak to me if I could get across. She said if I couldn't come, she'd write—it's something or other she wants us to do."

"We'd do anything for Ethel, except chuck away a House match," said Kerr. "Why didn't you tell her there was a game on, and let her write?"

"Because—because—"

"Well, because what?" demanded Kerr warmly.

"Because while I was on the phone, I forgot all about the House match," confessed Figgins. "I said at once I'd come over to Wayland, and—there you are! Then I thought Tom might agree to stand out of the match, so as to make it fair for both sides. You can captain the New House side, Kerr; and Tom Merry can pick out a School House man for his team. But if Tom doesn't agree, of course—"

Figgy's face fell.

"Of course he doesn't!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn hotly. "Who the thump is going to cut a House match to hike over to Wayland?"

"You—you see—"

"Of course we see," said Kerr. "Like Figgy's cheek to ask you—only he never has any sense where Cousin Ethel is concerned. D'Arcy can go over—he's Ethel's cousin, and entitled to; he can explain that Figgy is captaining the New House side in a House match, and can't possibly get away."

"That's all right," agreed Fatty Wynn.

"Ethel told me to tell D'Arcy, and bring him," said Figgins.

"That will be another man out of my team," said Tom. "All right about Gussy, though—I can put in Cardew. But you see, Figgy, I happen to be captain myself, and—and—"

Tom Merry paused.

He was a good-natured and obliging fellow—good-natured almost to a fault. But really this was a big thing to ask of

a junior House captain, who had thought of little else for a week beside the coming Soccer match.

"It's all right," said Kerr. "Nobody expects you to cut the match, Tommy—fathead if you did! You can replace D'Arcy in the team easily enough; and he can hike over to Wayland. Come on, Figgy!"

Figgins' face set doggedly.

"I can't come!" he said. "I've got to cut the match——"

"Rats!"

"Collar him!"

"Hands off, you footling duffers!" roared Figgins, as his comrades collared him again.

Kerr and Wynn meant business. They liked Cousin Ethel, and admired that charming young lady immensely; but a House match was a House match. A victory or a defeat counted in the records of the House. So far as they could see, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the School House Fourth, could go over to Wayland quite as well as Figgins could, and explain the matter satisfactorily to Cousin Ethel. And they were not going to lose their skipper—the best footballer in the House team.

Figgins went whirling to the door again, on his way to the changing-room. In the doorway he rallied, and came barging back into the study, in a sadly rumped state, with his comrades clinging to him.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Tom.

The School House junior made up his mind. It was hard cheese—there was no doubt about that. But poor Figgins was in distress; and Tom Merry was not the fellow to refuse help to friend or foe in distress.

"This way, Figgins, you chump!" gasped Kerr.

"Hold on!" repeated Tom. "I'll do it, Figgy! It's a go! Chuck it, you chaps—Figgy and I will pair off, and that will be fair play all round. I'm your man, Figgins."

"Let go, you asses!" panted Figgins.

Kerr and Wynn released their rumped chum.

"You mean it?" asked Kerr.

Tom Merry nodded. It was a sacrifice, but he had made up his mind to it.

"I'll cut across and speak to the fellows," he said. "Talbot will captain the team in my place. It's a go."

"Oh, all right."

And the School House junior left the study. Figgins stood gasping for breath, and glaring at his too-devoted comrades.

"You—you—you—" he spluttered.

"Come on, Fatty!" said Kerr. "You'd better rub the ends off your topper, Figgins, and put on a clean collar—and fish out a new necktie from somewhere. You're a silly ass!"

"Fathead!"

Kerr and Wynn left the study; and Figgins proceeded to sort out collar and tie, and make himself presentable again. That was not an easy task to Figgins; he was not accustomed to giving much attention to personal adornment; and his tussle with his comrades had left him in a wildly rumped state. By the time he had finished the House football match was going strong—and Tom Merry and D'Arcy, of the Fourth, had been waiting ten minutes at the door of the New House.

However, George Figgins was ready at last; and he came out of his House newly swept and garnished, so to speak, in a cap instead of the shining topper. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass on him with approval, while Tom Merry grinned.

"Bai Jove! This is wathah a change for you, Figgins," D'Arcy remarked.

"Eh?"

"You look quite respectable, old chap."

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Figgins——"

"Come on!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

And the three juniors walked down to the school gates and took the lane to Wayland.

CHAPTER 3.

Cousin Ethel's Request!

COUSIN ETHEL stepped from the train at Wayland Junction and glanced along the platform.

A good many passengers alighted from the train; and there were a good many more waiting to take seats in it. So Wayland platform was rather thickly crowded.

At a distance, three St. Jim's juniors were watching for Ethel among the alighting passengers—one of them with the aid of an eyeglass.

D'Arcy's eyeglass, however, did not seem of much assistance, for he did not see Ethel immediately; while Tom Merry, keen as he was, failed also to spot the graceful form at the first glance.

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Some sort of instinct seemed to assist Figgins of the New House.

A stout farmer, an old lady in a red shawl with many bundles, a man in khaki, and a youth in tweeds, a porter and a trolly interposed between Figgins and Cousin Ethel. Yet Figgins made a bee-line for the graceful figure that had alighted from the train.

Really, Figgins seemed able to see through solid bodies when Cousin Ethel was on the other side of them. Figgins came streaking along the platform to the spot where Ethel stood. Several persons were made aware that Figgins was in a hurry. The porter with the trolly received one of Figgy's elbows, the youth in tweeds received the other. They glared at Figgins as he sprinted on. Not for his life would Figgins have shoved past the lady with the shawl and the bundles—he sacrificed a whole second in steering clear of that good dame. But he certainly did give the farmer a shove in passing, and the soldier just dodged a collision. Then Figgins reached Cousin Ethel, while Tom Merry and D'Arcy were still twenty yards away looking round them.

"Ethel!"

Miss Cleveland smiled sweetly and shook hands with Figgins.

"I'm so glad you could come," she said.

"Of course I came," said Figgins cheerily. "You can't imagine how jolly bucked I was to get your phone call."

Ethel smiled again.

Figgins looked bucked; there was no doubt about that.

"I hope you haven't waited long for the train," said Ethel.

"Only twenty minutes or so."

"Then you were early," said Ethel.

"Well, I wasn't likely to be late, was I?" said Figgins, with a cheery grin. "I say, there's a tea-room at this station, you know; shall we bag a table? You've got some time to wait."

"Yes; and I have something to say to you," said Ethel.

"This way!" said Figgins.

He deprived Cousin Ethel of her bag, and led the way to the tea-room. In the distance Arthur Augustus D'Arcy uttered an exclamation.

"Bai Jove! There's Ethel!"

Tom Merry glanced round.

"So she is," he said. "Figgins has found her. They don't seem to be coming this way, though."

D'Arcy looked rather puzzled.

Figgins and Cousin Ethel were heading for the tea-room, and had their backs to the two juniors. Tom Merry chuckled.

"Where is Figgy takin' her?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Tea for two!" grinned the captain of the Shell.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "He hasn't told Ethel that we are heah, deah boy."

"Dear man, he's forgotten our existence!" chuckled Tom.

"Let's go and remind him of it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The two juniors hurried after Figgins and Ethel. Tom Merry was smiling, but Arthur Augustus had quite a serious look. Really, he found it difficult to account for Figgy's proceedings. As they followed the two into the tea-room they heard Cousin Ethel speaking.

"So Arthur was unable to come?"

Figgins gave a jump, thus suddenly reminded of the forgotten existence of the swell of St. Jim's.

"Oh!" he ejaculated. "No! Gussy's on the platform, and Tom Merry. I—I—I'd forgotten them——"

"Weally, Figgins——"

"Here we are, old bean."

Figgy's face was red as Cousin Ethel shook hands with her cousin Arthur and the captain of the Shell. Arthur Augustus bestowed a rather severe glance upon the New House junior. But Tom Merry cheerily found a vacant table, and tea and cakes were brought, and the three juniors and Cousin Ethel sat down to tea for four.

"I am so glad that you were able to come," said Ethel to the three, with impartial graciousness. "I have something to ask you—a favour."

"Any old thing, deah gal," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway considah us all at your ordahs."

"What-ho!" concurred Tom Merry.

"You've only got to give it a name," said Figgins, grinning delightedly at the bare idea of performing any service for Cousin Ethel.

"I may have spoken to you of a school friend of mine, Alice Lee," said Ethel. "Alice has a brother."

Figgins' delighted expression clouded a little. He had never seen Alice Lee's brother, and never heard of him before. What the thump interest did Ethel take in Alice Lee's brother? Figgins stared at his teacup.

"His name is Angelo," said Ethel.

Figgins' clouded brow grew more cloudy. He had a feeling that he would like to punch that utterly unknown youth.

INTO the Common-room
we flock
With flushed and eager
faces;
At seven precisely, by the
clock,
We troop into our places.
Tom Merry tries to speak,
but fails,
He's perched upon the
table;
A pandemonium prevails,
A perfect buzz and babel!

CAMEOS OF SCHOOL LIFE

By

THE ST. JIM'S RHYMESTER.

"THE FOOTBALL MEETING."

George Alfred Grundy rises
then,
His voice booms forth like
thunder:
"I wish to press my claims,
you men,
I am a living wonder!
My form at footer is
immense,
That I can safely vow;
And if you've got a grain of
sense
You'll choose me here and
now!"



"I say, you fellows, let me
speak!
I must demand a hearing.
The footer season starts this
week,
I'm glad to say—" (loud
cheering!)
"A junior captain, in hot
baste,
Forthwith must be
selected;
And if the voters show good
taste
I shall be re-elected!"

Figgins is on his feet at
once.
"Gentlemen, chaps, and
fellows,
We do not need a School
House dunce
To skipper us!" he
bellowed.
"Now, if you want a first-
rate man,
A sportsman keen and
nimble,
I trust you won't look
farther than—"
"Me!" chimes in Baggy
Trimble.

Alas for Grundy and his
aims,
And all his high ambi-
tions!
He always was a dud at
games,
Vain are his loud peti-
tions.
The table gives a sudden
tilt,
A sideslip most appalling.
And G. A. G. is promptly
spilt,
And on the floor goes
sprawling!

The arguments wax loud
and long
Between the rival fac-
tions;
And wordy warfare's going
strong,
And discords and distrac-
tions!
At length the balloting is
o'er,
And the result's expected;
From all the School House
Comes a roar:
"Tom Merry's re-elected!"



"I have never seen him," went on Ethel.
"Oh!" ejaculated Figgins.
He brightened.
"But Alice is very fond of him."
Figgins smiled serenely. He did not mind in the very
least if Alice Lee was fond of Angelo. Miss Lee might
have been fond of her brother, and all the brothers of all
the other Alices in the kingdom, without disturbing
Figgys's equanimity.
"Angelo is coming to St. Jim's," went on Ethel.
"Oh!"
"I understand that he will be in the School House, in the
Fourth Form," said Ethel.
"My House," said D'Arcy.
"My Form," said Figgins.
"Yes. And—and I wanted to ask you—"
Ethel paused.
"I quite undahstand, deah gal," said Arthur Augustus.
"You want us to look aftah the new kid a little, what?
New kids want some lookin' aftah in a big school. I
wembah a new kid who wore elastic-sided boots, and he
was wevah weally able to live it down aftahwards."
Ethel smiled.
"Angelo Lee does not want to come to St. Jim's," she
said.

"What an ass!" said Tom Merry involuntarily.
"Must be a bit of a duffer," said Figgins. "But per-
haps it's because he's going into the School House. Why
didn't his people arrange for him to come to the New
House?"

"Weally, Figgins—"
"I do not know much about him, of course," said Ethel.
"But it seems that he is unwilling to come to the school,
and Alice thinks he may have a hard time there. He has
been rather indulged at home, and may find a lot of difficul-
ties in his way. So, as I have some friends in the school—
I hope I have—"
"Yaas, wathah!"
"I—I thought I would speak to you about it," said
Ethel. "A new boy in a big school like St. Jim's can be
helped so much, if anyone cares to take the trouble."
"Of course," said Tom Merry cheerily.
"Yaas, wathah!"
"What-ho!" said Figgins. "If he were in my House, I'd
take him under my wing at once, to please you, Ethel.
Anyhow, I'll do anything I can."
"Same here," said Tom Merry. "He won't be in my
Form, but he will be in my House, and I can keep an
eye on him for the first few weeks and see him through."
"Wely on me, deah boy—I mean, deah gal, to keep a
fathahly eye on the kid," said Arthur Augustus. "In any
mattahs of dwess and personal deportment, which are
wathah important at school, I weally think he could not
have a bettah guide."
"I am so much obliged to you all," said Ethel gratefully.
"I believe Angelo is quite a nice boy, though I have never
seen him. I think he is a little unusual in some ways—"
"Oh!"
"But you will not mind that."

"Not a bit!" said Figgins loyally.

"My deah gal, I'll stick to him, even if he comes to St. Jim's. All three were looking rather thoughtful; Tom was ously. "I'll stand by him, even if he weahs a wolled-gold watchchain."

Ethel laughed.

"I knew I could depend upon you to be kind and good-natured," she said. Ethel glanced at her watch. "My train goes in four minutes—it is the other platform, so—"

Figgins jumped up.

"Don't you wowwy, Figgins, old man," said Arthur Augustus. "I will see my cousin to her twain."

"Oh!" gasped Figgins.

"I'll see the waiter," said Tom Merry gravely. "Good-bye, Ethel, and rely on us to do all we can for young Lee. Gussy, old man, help me with this bill, will you—you've got a head for figures."

"Bai Jove! I—"

"Good-bye, Arthur," said Ethel, shaking hands with her cousin with a sweet smile.

"Good-bye, deah gal, but—"

"Look at this, Gussy," said Tom. "I'm no good at figures—"

"Yaas, but—"

It was George Figgins who escorted Cousin Ethel to her train. When Tom Merry and D'Arcy left the tea-room the train was gone on to Lexham, and Figgins was standing on the platform staring after it with a rapt expression. Tom Merry found him, and woke him up with a slap on the shoulder.

The three juniors left the station, to walk back to St. Jim's. All three were looking rather thoughtful; Tom was thinking of the House match, and wondering how it had gone; Figgins was thinking of Cousin Ethel; and Arthur Augustus also had food for thought, which he proceeded to make known to his companions.

"Of course, we're bound to play up, as Ethel has asked us," he remarked. "But I wondah—"

"So do I," said Tom. "After all, Talbot's all right—I fancy the School House has won."

"Bai Jove! I was not thinkin' of the House match, for the moment, deah boy. I wondah what sort of a queeah fish that fellow Lee is? Appawntly he is some sort of a queeah fish."

"Looks like it," agreed Tom. "We'll play up, whatever sort of a queer fish he may be. We'll knock him into shape."

"Yaas, wathah! Pewwaps he dwesses queeahly," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "You wemembah Wacke of the Shell came to St. Jim's in a wed waistcoat. A thing like that can be set wight."

Tom Merry chuckled.

"Or he may be a dunce, and wequiah help with the Form work. A fellow can scowpe through an entrance exam, and still be flooahed by the Form work. If it's that, I will stand by him," said D'Arcy. "But I hope he is not a fellow with queeah ideahs like Skimpole of the Shell. It is vewy hard to tolewate a fellow with queeah ideahs in his head."

"He may not have any ideas in his head at all," suggested Tom. "In that case, you'll get on with him swimmingly—birds of a feather, you know."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"We've taken it on now, anyhow," said Tom. "Very likely he's some spoiled kid who will expect a lot of things that he won't get at school. School comes rather rough on a kid like that. You remember your own experience, Gussy?"

"Wats!"

"I think he's a good chap," said Figgins.

"Eh! Why?"

"Well, Ethel seems to think so."

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom. "Hem! Well, I suppose that clinches it."

And the three juniors walked back to St. Jim's, where they discovered that the House match had ended in a draw—goal to goal. Manners and Lowther, of the Shell, took Tom Merry to task for cutting the match, what time Kerr and Wynn told Figgins what they thought of him. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy strolled into Study No. 6 in the Fourth to tea, rather expecting similar reproaches from his chums, Blake and Herries and Digby. But he did not receive any. Blake & Co. did not seem to realise that D'Arcy's absence had allowed the New House to score a draw instead of a defeat.

"Sowwy, deah boys!" said D'Arcy.

"What are you sorry about?" inquired Blake.

"Missin' the match, old chap. But I weally had to go, you know—noblesse oblige, and all that. But it's wathah wotten that the New House got off so cheap. If I had been there—"

"It wouldn't have been a draw if you'd been there," agreed Blake.

"Wathah not!"

"Still, a draw is better than a licking," argued Blake.

"You saved us from defeat, at least, Gussy."

A remark to which Arthur Augustus disdained to reply.

CHAPTER 4.

Rally Round!

"WALLY wound!"

"Eh?"

"Wally wound!" repeated Arthur Augustus.

It was a few days later—Wednesday, to be exact. Wednesday was a half-holiday at St. Jim's; and as there was no football match fixed for that afternoon, Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were discussing how otherwise the half-holiday should be disposed of.

Tom Merry was in favour of a pick-up game, to keep his men in top form for the next junior House match, when the New House had to be beaten to the wide. Manners and Lowther agreed that the New House had to be beaten to the wide in the next House match; but on this special afternoon, Lowther was in favour of a visit to the Wayland Picture Palace; while Manners, pointing out that it was a fine, clear afternoon, suggested a walk with his camera.

Then Arthur Augustus D'Arcy weighed in.

The Swell of St. Jim's had a letter in his hand as he came up to the Terrible Three in the quad.

"Anything on?" yawned Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Jape on the New House?" asked Monty hopefully. Monty Lowther was prepared to give up the pictures, or anything else, for the sake of a jape.

"Not at all, deah boy. I've had a lettah fwom Cousin Ethel this mornin'. Lee is comin' to-day."

"Who on earth is Lee?"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"I told you about him," said Tom Merry. "You remember we saw Cousin Ethel last Saturday, and she asked us to—"

"I remember you cut the House match, and let the New House fozzlers draw."

"Oh, can it, old man!" said Tom. "We've had that, you know. So young Lee blows in to-day, does he, Gussy?"

"Yaas. I've asked Mr. Lathom, my Form mastah, and he says that the new kid is expected heah about four. That means the three-thirty at Wylcombe, I suppose."

"I suppose so," agreed Tom.

"Well, what does it matter?" asked Manners. "New kids in the Fourth aren't of much account, are they—or old kids for that matter."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"We told Cousin Ethel we'd look after the kid," said Tom. "We're bound to play up. Might ask him to tea in the study."

"He'd better tea with the Fourth, his own Form," said Manners. "That's up to Gussy."

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"Well, what about the pictures?" asked Lowther. "They've got a new picture at Wayland—British film; a change from the American rubbish they generally bung at the public. I think—"

"Pway allow a fellow to speak, Lowthah. I wepeat that I want you to wally wound," said Arthur Augustus. "My ideah is for a partay of us to go down to the station and meet young Lee."

"Well, you're the right party for that," said Lowther. "Go, and take my blessing, dear boy. Good-bye!"

"I mean a numewous partay—my ideah is to make much of him," explained Arthur Augustus. "I believe he is some sort of a queeah fish—"

"And you want to figure as a queer fisherman?" asked Lowther.

"Wats! I think if some of the best fellows in the Lowah School met him at the station, and walked him heah, it would make a wathah good impresson on him," said D'Arcy. "It appeahs that he doesn't want to come to St. Jim's at all!"

"The silly owl!"

"Well, he doesn't know the place yet," said D'Arcy tolerantly, "and if he bumped into fellows like Wacke, or Cwooke, or Twimble, at the kick-off, he would be confirmed in his bad impresson, see? While, if he is gweeted in a friendly way by the best set in the school, he will realise at once what a wippin' place St. Jim's is. So I want you all to wally wound."

"Rot!" said Manners tersely. "Catch me wasting a half-holiday on a new kid I don't know!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Oh, I wouldn't mind," said Tom cheerily. "We've undertaken to give the kid a helping hand at the beginning. I'll come, Gussy."

"Count me in," said Lowther. "You come, too, Manners, and give your camera a rest."

"Yaas, wathah! You must weally be a little fed-up with that camewah, Mannahs, like everybody else, by this time."

"Fathead!" said Manners politely. And with a nod to his chums, Harry Manners walked into the House for his camera.

"Figgins is comin'," said D'Arcy. "We thwee and Figgins will make four. He's asked Kerr and Wynn, but they don't seem keen on it. It's wathah decent of Figgins to want to oblige my Cousin Ethel in this way, isn't it? Weally as if Ethel was his own cousin, you know."

"Awfully!" grinned Tom Merry. "Figgins is an obliging chap—where Cousin Ethel is concerned, at least."

"We might ask Talbot to come, and Wildwake, and pewwaps Levison," said D'Arcy thoughtfully.

"My dear chap, we don't want an army to meet the new kid," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Four will be enough, if not too many."

"Well, we shall be a wathah wewpresentative body," agreed D'Arcy. "Two fwom the Shell and two fwom the Fourth Form—thwee fellows fwom one House and one fwom the other. Lee is bound to feel wathah bucked."

"He ought to," said Tom. "It's the first time on record that junior House captains ever cut a footer match on account of a new kid, as Figgy and I did on Saturday. Are we walking to the station, or are you getting a Rolls-Royce car for the distinguished youth?"

"A Wolls-Woyce is not available, deah boy; but I am goin' to telephone for a taxi!" said Arthur Augustus with dignity.

"Good man!"

Manners of the Shell passed the juniors in the quad with a wave of his hand and his camera slung over his shoulder. Tom Merry and Lowther and D'Arcy walked over to the New House to gather up Figgins. They found that cheery youth ready for them, and he stared a little when he heard that there was to be a taxi.

"Money burning a hole in your pocket, Gussy?" he inquired.

"It is a wathah special occasion, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "We are goin' to be awf'ly nice to the new kid."

"Gussy is going to fold him to his fancy waistcoat and weep over him," explained Monty.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Gussy thinks he's a queer fish, and, of course, takes a natural interest in him on that account. As the poet remarks, a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind."

Figgins chuckled.

"You uttah ass, Lowthah," said Arthur Augustus. "I believe in bein' wathah kind to youngstahs comin' fwesh to school. And as Cousin Ethel seems to think wathah a lot of this chap Lee—"

"What rot!" said Figgins.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass on the New House junior.

"Did you chawactewise my wemark as wot, Figgins?" he asked icily.

"Utter rot!" said Figgins. "Ethel doesn't even know the kid; she chums with the chap's sister, that's all. You're an ass, Gussy!"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"What about the taxi?" asked Tom Merry, laughing.

"Bai Jove! I will come and telephone for it now, deah boy."

And a little later four juniors left the school gates in a taxi, to greet the new kid, Angelo Lee, on his arrival at Rylcombe Station. Certainly, few, if any, new fellows at St. Jim's had ever had so much fuss made on their account, and it was to be hoped that Lee would duly understand and appreciate the same.

CHAPTER 5.

He Cometh Not.

B UZZZZZZZZZZ!

"That chap's flying jolly low," remarked Figgins. It was an aeroplane low over the Rylcombe road. The whirr of the engine sounded almost alarmingly close.

Tom Merry & Co. looked out of the taxi as it glided along the lane. The plane gleamed over them, seeming almost to brush the high tree-tops.

Figgins put his head out of the taxi window and looked back.

"That chap's landing in old Pepper's field," he said.

"Engine twouble, pewwaps," said Arthur Augustus.

"There's Manners," grinned Monty Lowther, looking from the other window. "He's got his camera put; he's going to snap the plane."

Tom Merry glanced out and smiled. Manners was focusing his camera on the landing plane in Pepper's field, and he did not glance towards the taxi. When Manners of the Shell was handling his camera, all things but photography ceased to exist for Manners.

The taxi glided on, and reached Rylcombe, and stopped at the station. There were ten minutes to wait for the train to come in, and the four juniors went on the platform.

When the train came in they looked

among the passengers for Angelo Lee.

They did not know the new junior by sight, but, naturally, expected to be able to pick out a new fellow for St. Jim's easily enough.

To their surprise, there was no passenger at all who could possibly be supposed to be Lee. The youngest passenger who alighted from the train was over twenty, and obviously not a junior schoolboy.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked surprised and disconcerted. Figgins looked puzzled, Monty Lowther grinned, and Tom Merry laughed. Apparently D'Arcy had rallied the representatives of the Lower School in vain. There was no new boy for them to greet at Rylcombe Station.

"Sold!" remarked Lowther.

"Bai Jove! This is vewy peculiah, you know," said Arthur Augustus. "Mr. Lathom said distinctly that the fellow was expected by four o'clock this aftahnoon. He must have intended to come by this twain."

"Lost the connection at Wayland, most likely," said Tom.

"Yaas, that's most likely."

"Next train half an hour," yawned Lowther. "I dare say the young ass will happen along sooner or later. Let's take the taxi over to Wayland, and drop in at the pictures."

"I wathah think we had bettah wait for the next twain, Lowthah."

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"What utter rot!" said Monty. "We've taken enough trouble, I think, over a silly new kid. If he can't catch trains he can't catch us. I'm not standing here for half an hour."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Well, Ethel asked us to look after the young ass," said Tom. "He seems to be a bit of a fool, and to need it, if he can't catch his train."

"He can go on needing it, as far as I'm concerned," said Lowther. "I'm fed up. Who's for Wayland Picture Palace?"

"Oh, I'll wait here with Gussy," said Figgins.

"Let's wait," said Tom. "No good chucking up a job half-done."

"You can kiss him on his baby brow for me," said Lowther, with gentle sarcasm. "I'm off!"

And Monty Lowther departed.

Tom Merry and D'Arcy and Figgins remained. They were not feeling very pleased. It was no jest to spend half an hour walking up and down the platform at Rylcombe on a half-holiday. All three of them were tempted to follow Monty from the station; but they had promised Cousin Ethel to look after the new kid, and they felt that they were "for it." So they made up their minds to wait for the next train in from Wayland Junction.

The train came in at four o'clock, and the juniors had no doubt that they would see the new fellow among the passengers.

But he did not turn up.

The passengers by the four train alighted, and there was no one among them who could possibly have been Angelo Lee.

The new boy had not arrived.

"Dash it all, this is too thick!" growled Figgins. "The fellow must be an utter idiot! Has he lost two trains one after another?"

"May have walked from Wayland, or taken a taxi to the school direct from the junction," said Tom.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that."

"You wouldn't!" said Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"But it's not likely," said George Figgins. "Rylcombe is the station for St. Jim's, and a fellow would naturally come here. The silly ass must have missed the train again."

"There's another at half-past four," said Tom, with a grin.

"Blessed if I want to wait here another half-hour!"

"Bai Jove! It's wathah thick, especially with our taxi waitin', and tickin' off, you know," said Arthur Augustus. "Could a fellow really be idiot enough to miss two trains?" asked Figgins.

"Well, I wathah gathahed that the chap is a bit of a queeah fish," said Arthur Augustus. "I wathah think I'll wait for the next twain. But you fellows can cut off if you like. I feel bound to oblige Ethel, you know, as she is my cousin; but that does not apply to you chaps. No reason why you should waste your half-holiday on Ethel's account."

"You footling ass!" said Figgins.

"I fail to see any cause for that wude and dispwagin' remark, Figgins. What are you cacklin' at, Tom Mewwy?"

"You, old chap," said the captain of the Shell. "Let's wait the other half-hour, and chance it."

It was weary work loafing about the deserted station for another thirty minutes. Only their promise to Cousin Ethel kept the juniors there. Towards Lee himself their feelings were not very pleasant just then. In fact, they were feeling inclined to bump him on the station platform when he did at last arrive.

But he did not arrive.

The half-past four train came and went, and there was no Angelo Lee among the passengers who landed from it.

"That does it!" said Tom. "Either there's some mistake, or else the young ass has gone to school another way. I'm done."

"Same here," said Figgins. "No good waiting any longer."

D'Arcy hesitated.

"I suppose he can't be comin'," he confessed. "It's wathah disappointin'. Pewwaps something has happened, and he's not comin' at all to-day. I—I suppose we may as well get off."

And the three juniors got off.

The taxi bore them back to St. Jim's without the new junior whom they had expected to take with them, and for whose behalf D'Arcy really had engaged the taxi.

At the school gates D'Arcy dismissed the taxi, with very nearly a whole pound to pay the driver.

The three juniors walked in, wondering a little what had become of Lee; feeling greatly inclined to bump him when they should see him, and at the same time, a little perturbed by the idea that the fellow might have met with some

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accident on the way to school. That, indeed, seemed the only way to account for his non-arrival.

They came on Cardew of the Fourth near the gates, and Tom Merry called to him.

"Seen or heard anything of a new kid, Cardew?"

Ralph Reckness Cardew nodded.

"A new kid blew in this afternoon," he answered.

"My hat! Know his name?"

"Lee!"

"Then he's come!" exclaimed Figgins.

"Bai Jove!"

"When did he come?" asked Tom.

"Oh, a long time ago—soon after three, I think."

"Great pip!"

Tom Merry and his companions looked at one another. The new fellow had reached the school—while they were still in the taxi heading for Rylcombe Station. He had been at St. Jim's all the time they had been waiting at Rylcombe!

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus again.

Tom Merry said nothing. Really his feelings were too deep for words.

CHAPTER 6.

The Amazing New Boy!

"WHO'S that ass?"

Jack Blake, of the Fourth, asked the question. Blake and Herries and Digby were strolling by the path under the elms in the quadrangle, when Blake's glance fell upon an unfamiliar face.

Herries and Dig glanced at the stranger.

"Some new kid," said Herries. "I don't know who he is, only that he's a howling ass. He looks it!"

"May be the new kid Gussy was burbling about," said Dig. "There's a kid named Lee coming this afternoon. This may be the merchant."

"Gussy's gone to the station with some other fellows to meet that merchant," said Blake. "Must have missed him, if this is the kid. Jevver see a chap who looked such a born ass?"

"Never!" agreed Blake's chums.

The three juniors regarded the new fellow with hilarious interest.

Lee—if the fellow was Lee—looked rather out of the common, for a new junior at St. Jim's. Certainly, many new fellows were a little out of the common, till the school had licked them into shape, as it were. Often they resembled lost sheep, troubled and worried at being far from the shepherd. A new fellow who mooned about helplessly, a new fellow who blushed when he was spoken to, even a new fellow who "blubbed," had come within the experience of Blake & Co. But this new fellow fairly took the biscuit, as Blake described it.

In the first place, there was his attire. It was a rule at St. Jim's—sometimes a little departed from, but never left out of sight—that fellows should dress in dark and inconspicuous colours. Instead of which, this fellow was dressed in tweeds—not common-or-garden tweeds, so to speak, but tweeds of a large chess-board pattern, with several colours in them, all bright. His clothes could have been seen from one end of the quad to the other. In a holiday crowd at Blackpool he would have been conspicuous. In the green old quad of St. Jim's he was absolutely startling, if not unnerving. His cap was of the same colour and pattern as his clothes, and his boots were a bright yellow.

In one hand he carried a large and heavy bag, in the other a big umbrella, with a rug over his arm. The rug looked warm and comfortable; but it was amazing in its colour scheme, being barred with black and bright yellow, after the style of a grate-polish advertisement.

In his jacket was a flower. St. Jim's fellows did not wear flowers in their coats; only D'Arcy of the Fourth had sometimes sported a tiny delicate rose. This fellow wore a sunflower.

Blake & Co. stared at him.

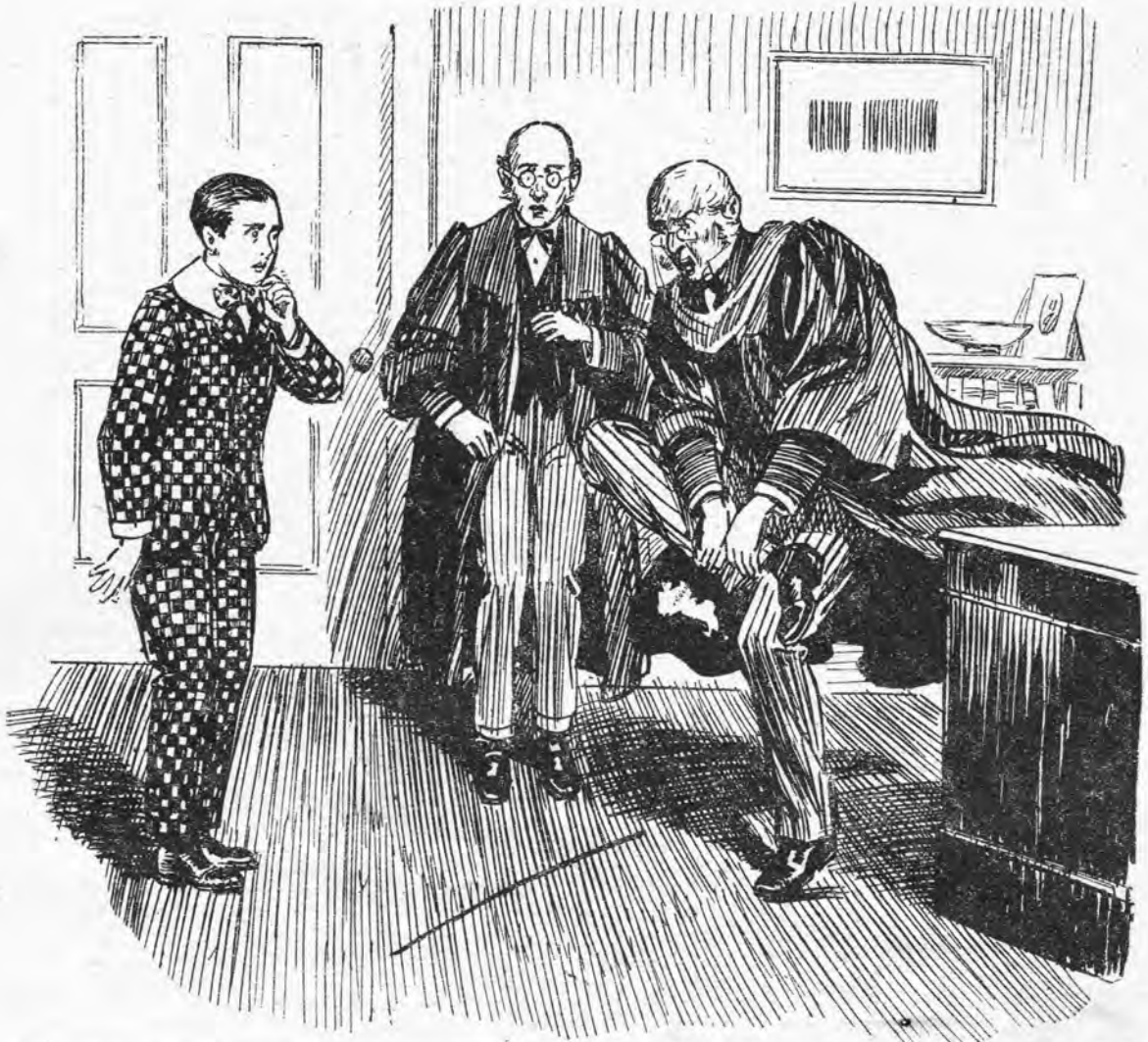
Unless he was a new St. Jim's man there was no way of accounting for his arrival in the quadrangle laden with his baggage. But if he was a new St. Jim's man, what did his clothes mean? It was impossible to suppose that a new "kid" could have dressed himself up specially for a jape on the school. But if not, either he was a born idiot, or a little wrong in the head; that seemed clear to the chums of Study No. 6.

"If that's Lee, they made a mistake in sending him here," said Blake. "A lunatic asylum was the proper place."

"Let's speak to him," said Herries. "If he's soft, we might give him a tip before he sees the Head. What on earth would the Head say if he saw him like that?"

"I think Dr. Holmes would have a fit," grinned Dig. "The fellow must be off his onion."

"Come on," said Blake. "We'll ask him who he is and what he wants, anyhow. If he's wandered in here by



Meeting with no resistance, Dr. Holmes' cane swiped down, and fairly rang on his own leg. "Oh! Good gracious!" he gasped. "Oh!" For the headmaster of a great public school to hop on one leg was really an extraordinary happening. Angelo looked on with a wooden face, while little Mr. Lathorn gazed at the scene with incredulous horror. (See Chapter 8.)

mistake we'll show him the way out before the fellows get round him and chip him."

The Fourth-Formers bore down on the stranger.

He was standing on the path, staring round him, with a sort of moon-struck expression, as if he did not quite know where he was, or what he ought to do.

"Hallo!" said Blake.

The stranger looked at him inquiringly.

"Hallo!" he answered.

"Who may you happen to be?" asked Blake, smiling. Really, he could not help smiling at the stranger's amazing aspect. "I've never seen you before. What might your name happen to be?"

"Nebuchadnezzar."

"What?" roared the three juniors.

"Or Absalom."

Blake & Co. stared blankly.

"Mean to say your name is Nebuchadnezzar?" asked Blake almost faintly.

"Oh, no! Not at all. My name's Lee."

"Then what the thump do you mean by saying that it is Nebuchadnezzar or Absalom?" demanded Blake.

"I didn't!"

"Eh?"

"You asked me what my name might happen to be," explained the new junior. "It might happen to be Nebuchadnezzar, just as it might happen to be anything else. Only it isn't, as it happens."

Blake drew a deep breath. It seemed to him that this born idiot was pulling his leg. But looking at the fellow's face he did not discern there the ghost of a smile; only moon-

struck seriousness. He exchanged glances with his chums. If the fellow had made such an answer in all seriousness, without intending a joke, what was the state of his intellect?

"So you're Lee?" said Blake at last.

"My name's Lee—Angelo Lee. What's yours?"

"My name's Blake," said the Fourth-Former. "If you're Lee, you're coming into the Fourth Form, that's my Form."

"Yes, that's right," said Lee. "I'm booked for the Fourth Form. I've been told that there are two Houses here, and I'm for one called the School House. Ever heard of it?"

"Well, I've heard it mentioned," said Blake sarcastically. "As I happen to be a School House man, I've just happened to hear of its existence."

The new boy looked puzzled.

"Did you say you were a School House man?" he asked.

"Yes, I did."

"But you're not a man."

"Eh?"

"You're a boy—no older than myself, I should judge."

"Well, carry me away to faint!" ejaculated Blake. "Did you fellows ever see or hear anything like this before?"

"Never!" chuckled Dig.

"Hardly ever!" gurgled Herries.

"Well, I don't understand you," said Lee, shaking his head. "I'm no fool, and you can't make me believe that you're a man when I can see jolly plainly that you're only a schoolboy."

"It's a way of speaking," gasped Blake. "You can say a School House chap, or a School House fellow; but we generally say a School House man. See?"

CHAPTER 7.

Quite Surprising!

"No, I don't quite see. It seems to be rather fatheaded."
 "Does it?" said Blake, breathing hard.
 "Yes. Rather funny, in fact," said Lee. "This seems a funny sort of place to me altogether."
 "Well, it ought to suit you, then," remarked Digby; "for you're about the funniest merchant I've ever struck."
 "But you have not struck me," said Lee. "If you strike me I shall strike you back, I warn you!"
 "My only hat!"

"Have you ever learned the English language?" inquired Blake. "Don't you know that Dig meant that you're the funniest merchant he's ever met?"

"If he means that, I don't see why he can't say so. But I say! Your name isn't Dig, is it?" asked Lee. "That's a jolly queer name!"

"My name's Digby!" snorted Dig.

"Oh, I see! Look here! I want to get to the School House," said Lee. "I've got to report to my Form master. His name's Fathom or something."

"Do you mean Mr. Lathom, ass?"

"Not Lathom-ass," said Lee. "It might be Lathom."

"Great pip! Did your people suppose that St. Jim's was a lunatic asylum when they sent you here?" ejaculated Blake.

"I think not. You see, my people haven't seen you."

"Eh?"

"If they had, of course, they might have supposed such a thing. But as they haven't—"

"He's trying to be funny," said Herries. "Bump him!"

Angelo Lee backed away a little.

"Oh, let him rip!" said Blake. "If he keeps on like this he will get enough ragging without any from us. There's the School House yonder, Lee, if you want it. But I'd like to tip you to change your clothes before you go to Mr. Lathom."

"I've changed them already."

"Eh?"

"You see, my people got me up in Etons just like you chaps," said Lee. "I bought these clothes later and changed into them."

"What on earth for?"

"Don't you like them better?" asked Lee.

"Ye gods!"

The three juniors simply stared at the fellow. With all their experience, they had never come across a new kid like this before. He almost took their breath away.

"How did you get here?" asked Blake at last. "A friend of ours has gone to meet you at Rylcombe Station."

"Gussy must have given him the go-by," said Dig. "Gussy couldn't walk to St. Jim's with those clothes."

"I didn't come to Rylcombe Station," answered Lee.

"You haven't walked from Wayland with that hefty bag, surely?"

"I didn't come to Wayland."

"Then how on earth did you come?" demanded Blake.

"Oh, I got a lift!" answered Lee. "A man I knew was coming this way, and he gave me a lift to a field near the school. I walked the rest. Did you say that that was the School House?" He pointed to the gymnasium.

"No!" roared Blake. "That's the School House. Look!"

Blake took the new boy by the shoulders and twirled him round, facing the great facade of the School House in the distance. The next moment Blake gave a fearful yell. Whether by accident or not, the heavy bag slipped from Lee's hand and crashed on Blake's foot.

"Ow, wow! Ow!"

Blake danced on one leg, and clasped his damaged foot with both hands. Lee stared at him.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Ow, wow! You've smashed my toe!" yelled Blake. "You wait a minute, and I'll smash your nose to match! Ow, wow!"

Lee did not seem to be a bright youth. But, apparently, he was a little too bright to wait just then. He grabbed up his bag and started for the School House at quite a good pace.

Blake leaned against an elm and nursed his damaged toe.

"Ow, wow! The dangerous idiot! Wow! Why, I'll mop up the quad with him! Ow, wow!"

Herries and Dig chuckled.

"Let him rip!" said Dig. "He's mad as a hatter, or jolly nearly! He won't be allowed to stay here. That stands to reason. As soon as the Head sees him, it will be the first train home for him!"

"Safe as houses," agreed Herries.

And Blake nodded assent, and decided to let the amazing new boy go—as it seemed pretty certain that he would have to go—with his nose undamaged.

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"WHAT'S the date, Levison?"

"The date?"

"It isn't the Fifth of November, is it?"

"No, ass!"

"Then it ought to be," said Cardew of the Fourth; "for here's another guy!"

Levison, Clive, and Cardew of the Fourth were coming out of the School House when the new boy dawned on them.

"Jevver see anything like that outside a peep-show?" asked Cardew. "Where did it spring from?"

"My only hat!" said Levison, staring at the fellow who was coming towards the House steps with his bag and his umbrella and his rug, while Sidney Clive chuckled.

A number of fellows in the quadrangle were staring towards the strange apparition, most of them grinning. Angelo Lee did not seem aware of it. He plugged on with his baggage and arrived at the House steps, and glanced at Levison & Co.

"Is this the School House?" he asked.

"Yes!" gasped Levison.

"Thank you! My House, then!" And Angelo Lee came up the broad stone steps.

"Great gad!" murmured Cardew. "Mean to say that you're a new kid for the school, young 'un?"

"Yes. My name's Lee."

"Lee! That's the name Gussy mentioned," said Levison. "He wanted us to rally round and march to the station for this merchant. Where on earth did you get those clothes, Lee?"

"In a shop."

"He got his clothes in a shop!" murmured Cardew. "I hope you didn't give more than tenpence for them, Lee! If you did, you were done!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on, kid!" exclaimed Levison as the new boy was passing into the House. "You can't go to Mr. Lathom like that. Where's your box?"

"It's coming on the railway, I think."

"Any clobber in that bag?"

"I think not."

"He thinks—he doesn't know!" murmured Cardew. "I say, young 'un, have you broken out of a lunatic asylum?"

"I think not."

"Great pip!"

"Look here, kid! Come along with me, and I'll lend you some clothes if you like," said Levison. "We're much of a size. You simply can't show up dressed like that!"

"Why not?"

"Well, it's not done, you know," said Levison of the Fourth. "Take a tip from an old hand, and don't do it!"

Cardew extended an elegant hand and tapped the new boy's jacket with a well-manicured forefinger.

"Pawn to king's fourth!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash!

Cardew jumped back just in time. Again there was an accident with the bag. But Cardew was more fortunate than Blake; his foot escaped the collision.

"Here, mind what you are doing with that bag!" ejaculated Cardew.

"So sorry!" murmured the new boy, and he stooped to pick up his bag; and as he did so the umbrella, which was stuck under his arm, caught Ernest Levison under the chin.

"Oh!" roared Levison, jumping back.

"You clumsy ass!" exclaimed Clive.

"So sorry—"

"Here, take your blessed bag and get off with you," exclaimed Levison crossly, rubbing his chin.

Lee walked into the House.

"Mad, I suppose," said Cardew.

"Mad as a hatter," said Clive. "What do his people mean by sending him here? This isn't a home for idiots."

Lee glanced round.

"Isn't it?" he exclaimed.

"No, you ass," said Clive.

"Then what are you doing here?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"But perhaps you are not an idiot," said Lee innocently. "I know it is wrong to judge by appearances."

And Lee went into the House, leaving Clive staring blankly, and Levison and Cardew chuckling.

Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, was in the hall talking to Darrell of his form. Juniors who passed near the two great men of the Sixth hushed their voices, and walked almost on tiptoe. But Lee, doubtless because he was a new-fellow, gave no sign of understanding the greatness and the importance of prefects of the Sixth Form. He barged into the two great men with his baggage.

"Here, mind where you are going, young 'un!" exclaimed Kildare. He stared at Lee. "Who are you?"

"Please, I'm Lee."

"Lee!" said Darrell, staring too. "A new kid do you mean?"

"A new boy," said Lee. "I'm not a kid."

"Not a kid?" repeated Darrell.

"No. A kid is a quadruped; I'm a biped."

The two prefects looked fixedly at the new fellow. His face was so serious that they could not suspect him of jesting. But what to think of him was rather a mystery to Kildare and Darrell.

"A—a kid is a quadruped, is it?" asked Darrell mechanically.

"Yes; the young-of-goats are called kids," said Lee.

"I remember being told so at my preparatory school."

"Ye gods!" said Darrell.

"I'm looking for Mr. Lathom," said Lee. "He is my Form master. Have you ever heard of Mr. Lathom?"

"You young ass!" said Kildare blankly. "Here, Toby, take this kid to Mr. Lathom's study."

Toby, the House page, came up grinning.

"This way, sir!" he said.

Angelo Lee followed the page into the masters' corridor. Kildare and Darrell, quite forgetting the football they had been discussing, stared after him blankly.

"Is that really a new kid for this school?" ejaculated Kildare. "What is St. Jim's coming to?"

"I give that up!" grinned Darrell.

Toby stopped at the door of Mr. Lathom's study. There was a grin on Toby's face as he looked at the new junior.

"P'raps you'd like me to take your luggage to the dormitory, sir?" he asked.

"You're very kind," said Lee. "Do you belong to my Form?"

"Eh?"

"I'm in the Fourth Form," said Lee. "What's yours?"

"Oh, my eye!" said Toby. "I'm the page, sir. You 'and me that bag, sir—you can't take it into Mr. Lathom's study, you can't really, sir—and that there brolly and rug, sir. My eye, what a pattern! Skuse me, sir! Anything else I can do for you, sir?"

"Thank you, no," said Lee.

"Always ready to oblige a young gentleman, sir," said Toby.

"That's a very proper spirit," said Lee.

Toby eyed him.

"Some of the young gents are very generous, sir," he remarked.

"I'm glad to hear that," said Lee. "Generosity is a very pleasing characteristic, isn't it?"

"Oh! Oh yes, sir!" gasped Toby. "What I mean is, sir, some of the young gents give a bloke a shilling, or even a half-crown, for taking baggage upstairs, sir."

"Do they really?" asked Lee.

"They does, sir," said Toby, making a motion with his hand. But the new junior did not seem to catch on.

"I hope you save the money," he said.

"What?"

"The Post Office Savings Bank is a good place for it," said Lee.

"My eye!" said Toby. "Thank you for your advice, sir."

"Not at all!" said Lee.

He tapped at Mr. Lathom's door, and opened it. Toby, laden with rug and umbrella and heavy bag, stared after him as if mesmerised; and finally departed with his load.

"My eye!" said Toby. "Of all the fools—my 'at! Of all the idjits—well, if he ain't a fair corf-drop! My eye!"

And a little later, below stairs, Toby confided to the cook that a "blooming loonytick" had arrived at St. Jim's. Meanwhile, Angelo Lee was interviewing an astonished Form master.

CHAPTER 8.

No Go!"

MR LATHOM, the master of the Fourth Form, was busy with papers that afternoon. The tap at his door, and the entrance of the new boy, drew his glance from the papers on his table; and the next moment he forgot Latin prose. He stared at Angelo Lee through his spectacles, in wonder. Never had a fellow like Angelo dawned on Mr. Lathom before.

In the quiet, dusky, book-lined study, Angelo's amazing garb looked more striking and startling even than in the quadrangle. The huge chess-board pattern of his clothes, in a mixture of light greens and blues and pinks, fairly jumped to the view—not to mention the fact that the clothes were a good deal too big for him, having apparently been

some may never solve it—never, that is, until they see the printed solution which will be given, together with diagrams, in the following week's issue of the GEM. This means you chaps will have a week to solve the puzzle off your own bat. It's an interesting affair, take it from me. Don't forget you'll find it in next week's GEM.

NEXT WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAMME:

"NOT SUCH A FOOL AS HE LOOKED!"

By Martin Clifford.

That title sums up pretty well the character of Master Angelo Lee, the new boy whose acquaintance you have made in this week's yarn. Mind you read next Wednesday's fine story, chums. There's plenty of sparkle in it!

"WHITE EAGLE!"

By Arthur Patterson.

How do you like this new serial? What do you think of young Tom stuck out on that ranch in far-away Mexico? But he's got a way with him, you will admit. You'll like next week's instalment, anyway. Look out for it!

THE TUCK HAMPER!

Aha! Mouths begin to water at mention of these things. Why, it makes me peckish myself, and I'm supposed to be beyond the tuckshop stage. However, what I want to remind you chaps of is that this feature will be in evidence in next week's GEM. For every joke published on our Tuck Hamper page I am awarding a delicious Tuck Hamper.

OUR POET!

The St. Jim's Rhymester gives us another natty little poem next week entitled: "Evening Prep." It's a very sparkling effort, and you'll enjoy reading it! Cheerio, chums, till next week!

Your Editor.

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Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

SOME tasks are rendered more pleasant than others by the circumstances attached to them, and it is with more pleasure than usual, which is saying something, that I tackle this week's pow-wow. By this time you have sampled the fun to be had out of the wonderful Faciograph of Arthur Augustus, which you found between the pages of this week's GEM. Indeed, there must be some of you who will be far more interested in this topping novelty than in any words appearing under the usual Chat heading. I can quite understand that; I've been a boy myself. Still, I must keep to our programme and "expand a bit," as they say; for I've something else to talk about in connection with Free Gifts. Returning for the space of a few seconds to this week's novelty. Isn't it top-hole? Doesn't it bring the smiles to your chivvies? I'll bet it does! And methinks your parents would find in that novelty something to laugh about. Anyway, I've laughed pretty heartily myself over it. Now for the

SECOND FREE GIFT!

This takes the form of a puzzle. No, no, there's nothing dry about it, as is the way with so many puzzles of to-day! It deals with certain prominent footballers. I should be speaking the literal truth if I called it "FUN WITH FAMOUS FOOTBALLERS." Of course, you are curious. You must be; for the above gives but a small idea of what's in store for you next Wednesday. That, however, is not detrimental to the puzzle. Indeed, you'll be keener than ever to possess it. Some of the extra brainy fellows will solve it quickly; others will take their time over it. Again,

made for a young man of twenty or more. A fellow dressed as a Red Indian could scarcely have startled Mr. Lathom more.

"Bless my soul!" said the little Form master, blinking. "Who—what—who are you?"

"Lee, sir."

"Lee! Do you mean that you are the new boy Lee?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, in great surprise.

"Yes, sir; Angelo Lee."

"I was not expecting Lee so early in the afternoon," said Mr. Lathom. "By what train did you arrive, Lee?"

"I did not come by train, sir. A friend of mine gave me a lift to the school."

Mr. Lathom looked at him hard.

"I presume, Lee, that someone saw you off when you started for the school?"

"Yes, sir; my father."

"Is it possible that Mr. Lee supposed that it was permissible for you to dress in that manner here?"

"I didn't ask him, sir."

"I am absolutely astonished," said Mr. Lathom. "Such clothes might be worn on a race-course, perhaps. I do not know. But that your father should send you here dressed in that extraordinary manner is—really—really incredible."

"I bought these clothes myself, sir," said Lee calmly.

"Bless my soul! And why?"

"I thought it rather a good idea, sir," said Angelo confidently. "I don't like Etons. Now, sir, these clothes are striking."

"Are you in your right senses, Lee?"

"I hope so, sir."

"In that case, Lee, I can only conclude that you have a misdirected sense of humour, which it will be my duty to correct," exclaimed Mr. Lathom angrily.

"You don't like the clothes, sir?" asked Angelo.

Mr. Lathom's hand strayed to his cane. But he did not pick it up. It was possible that the new junior was an absolute fool; in which case Mr. Lathom did not want to punish him for stupidity. His eyes searched Angelo's face keenly; but only an expression of self-satisfied obtuseness rewarded his scrutiny. Evidently, the boy was a fool!

"Has your box arrived, Lee?" he asked.

"Probably not, sir."

"Have you any other clothes with you?"

"No, sir."

"Really, really," said Mr. Lathom, "this is most annoying; most—most disconcerting! You have acted very foolishly, Lee!"

"Have I, sir?"

"Do you not understand, Lee, that it is extremely foolish to make yourself conspicuous in this ridiculous way?"

"No, sir."

"Bless my soul! Lee, you must change your clothes at once. You must not remain dressed like that. I doubt very much whether you ought to have been sent to this school at all. I shall speak to the Head on the subject."

There was a glimmer in the eyes of the new junior. Mr. Lathom noticed it, and wondered what it meant. For that second, the obtuseness seemed to be gone from Lee's face, and it was bright and intelligent. But it was only for a second.

Mr. Lathom gazed at him, and pondered.

The boy was a born fool—an absolute fool, that seemed certain. There were duffers and dunces in the St. Jim's Fourth—fellows like Trimble. But Lee was the limit. A fellow who could deliberately change his clothes after his father had started him to the school, and turn up at St. Jim's in this extraordinary raiment, was not an ordinary duffer; he must really be weak in the head. Certainly he did not seem at all suitable to take his place in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

"I think—" said Mr. Lathom, and paused. "I—I think—" He paused again. "I really think, Lee, that it was a mistake for you to come to this school. I think I had better take you to the headmaster as you are. Dr. Holmes can then judge for himself."

Mr. Lathom rose from the table. He moved to the door, and then glanced back at the new junior. Lee was grinning; but his face became serious at once as the Form-master's eyes fixed on him.

"What are you laughing at, Lee?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom acidly.

"Nothing, sir!" stammered Lee.

"Follow me!"

Mr. Lathom opened the study door, and Angelo followed him into the passage. To the Fourth Form master's surprise the passage was swarming with juniors. Masters' corridor was a quarter where juniors were supposed not to congregate; and where, as a rule, they had no desire to congregate. But three or four dozen fellows were hanging about now, whispering and chuckling. Evidently the news

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of the new boy had spread, and School House men wanted to see him.

Mr. Lathom glanced severely at the juniors.

"What do you boys want here?" he asked sharply.

"Only to look at Lee, sir!" said Reilly of the Fourth.

"Faith, he's worth looking at, sir!"

"Here's another guy!" chuckled Racke of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go away at once!" snapped Mr. Lathom. "This boy's incredible folly is not a laughing matter."

The Form master whisked away down the passage, followed by Lee. Apparently the juniors did not agree that it was not a laughing matter, for a shout of merriment followed them.

"Jevver see such a get-up?" chortled Kangaroo of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Must be off his giddy rocker!" said Julian.

"Right off, I should say!" grinned Kerruish. "Lathom's taking him to the Head. What on earth will the beak think of him?"

"Goodness knows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Lathom's face was red with annoyance as he reached the Head's study. He could scarcely blame the juniors for taking Angelo in a hilarious spirit; but it was very annoying. Before he tapped at the headmaster's door he had

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become convinced that St. Jim's was no place for Angelo Lee; and that the sooner that remarkable youth took the train for home the better.

Dr. Holmes glanced at the Form master as he entered; and then his gaze became fixed and frozen on Angelo.

"What—what—what—" he ejaculated.

"This is Lee, sir," gasped Mr. Lathom. "Lee, the new junior, sir—the new boy for my Form. He tells me that he discarded the clothes in which he was sent to school, and—and bought those—those dreadful-looking garments himself! He appears to be quite unaware of having acted in a—a—a very extraordinary manner. My own impression is, sir, that he is not a suitable boy for this school; and if your judgment agrees with mine, sir, I will conduct him to the railway-station myself, and telephone to his father to expect him home. He already appears to have become a laughing-stock in the House."

This came out with a rush; it was quite a long oration for Mr. Lathom. The Head listened in silence, his eyes fixed on Angelo Lee. When the Form master had finished Dr. Holmes beckoned to Lee to come forward.

Angelo approached the headmaster's desk. He seemed a little uneasy under the clear, steady gaze of the headmaster's eyes.

"Lee! Why have you done this?"

"What, sir?" asked Lee.

"Dressed yourself in this ridiculous manner for your arrival at the school!" rapped out the Head.

"Don't you like my clothes, sir?" asked Angelo innocently.

"Take that flower out of your buttonhole!"

"My sunflower, sir? It's a nice flower."

"Put it in the wastepaper-basket!"

"Very well, sir!"

"I have already been informed by your father, Lee, that you did not desire to come to this school," said Dr. Holmes quietly. "You had certain tastes and predilections, not unworthy in themselves, but of which he did not approve. I have been warned that you might prove troublesome, and that you would be greatly pleased to return home. From what I have heard of you, Lee, and from other things, I do not believe that you are the absolute fool you make yourself out to be!"

"Oh, sir!"

"Mr. Lathom considers that you should be sent back home at once," resumed the Head. "I should agree with Mr. Lathom if I did not suspect that your present line of conduct was a species of trickery."

"Oh!" said Mr. Lathom.

"In a word," said the Head severely, "my belief is that you have deliberately done this, Lee, in order to be refused admission to this school."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom.

"I trust that I do not do you an injustice, Lee," said the Head, taking up his cane. "If you are so excessively

Meeting with no resistance, the cane swiped down, and fairly rang on the Head's own leg.

"Oh! Good gracious! Oh!" gasped Dr. Holmes.

For the headmaster of a great public school to hop on one leg was really an extraordinary happening. But that is precisely what Dr. Holmes did.

Angelo looked on with a wooden face. Mr. Lathom gazed at the scene with incredulous horror.

"Bless my soul!" he stuttered.

Only for a moment did the Head hop. He was suffering rather severe pain; but his sense of dignity came to his rescue. His face was baleful as he fixed his eyes on Angelo. Seldom or never had such wrath stirred the headmaster of St. Jim's.

"Lee!" he gasped. "You—you impertinent boy! You—you young rascal! You—you did that intentionally!"

"Yes, sir!" said Lee.

"Mr. Lathom! Take the cane! This boy is in your Form! I request you to administer a dozen strokes, in my presence!"

"Very well, sir!"

Dr. Holmes sat down—nursing one leg. Mr. Lathom gripped the cane, and pointed to a chair.

"Bend over that chair, Lee!"

Angelo obeyed. The cane rose and fell on the loud-patterned trousers of the new junior. But Mr. Lathom did not strike hard. He was convinced that he had to deal with a fellow who was so incredibly stupid that he was scarcely responsible for his actions. Certainly, the strokes would have been heavier, had the Head been in a condition for administering a flogging. Even as it was, Angelo was wriggling very painfully before the twelfth stroke had fallen.

"Now you may go, Lee!" said Dr. Holmes. "Change your clothes immediately—if you are seen again dressed in that manner, I shall flog you. Bear that in mind! Now go!"

And Angelo went—wriggling.

CHAPTER 9.

Not an Easy Task!

TOM MERRY and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came into the School House, both of them feeling a little cross. They had given up a half-holiday on account of the new fellow—at least, on account of Cousin Ethel's concern for him. And it had been a sheer waste. Somehow—they did not know how—he had arrived at St. Jim's very soon after they had started for Rylcombe; they had waited at the station for nothing. It was annoying, to say the least. Still, they were prepared to be kind to him, when they found him, in accordance with their promise to Cousin Ethel.

They found a number of the School House fellows in a hilarious mood, and caught the name of Lee on many lips. Lee's arrival seemed to have caused some commotion.

"Hallo, you fellows, seen the new kid?" called out Julian, of the Fourth.

"No!" said Tom. "He got in all right?"

"Ha, ha! Yes; he got in."

"Missed him at the station, what?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"Yaas, wathah; he doesn't appear to have come by twain," said Arthur Augustus. "You fellows appear to be wathab entertained. What's the mewwy joke?"

"Lee!" said Blake, and there was a roar of laughter.

"What's the matter with Lee?" asked Tom.

"What isn't the matter with him?" chortled Herries.

"First of all, he's mad."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Mad as a March hare," said Digby.

"Madder!" said Levison, of the Fourth. "A March hare isn't in it with Lee!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus.

He looked, as he felt, a little uneasy. He had given Cousin Ethel his word to stand the friend of the "unusual" new boy. Gussy's word was his bond. It had to be honoured. But it was dismaying to discover that he had undertaken to befriend a fellow whose mere appearance seemed to have set the House in a roar.

"Where is he now?" asked Tom.

"Gone up to the dorm, I think," said Blake. "The Head seems to have licked him for turning up as he did—dressed like a—a—blessed if I know what. Fancy a fellow in six-inch checks, red and blue and green, with a sunflower in his coat—"

"What?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Blessed if I know where he got such clobber," said Levison. "Must have hunted for them. He looks an idiot, and he acts like a lunatic. I hear that you chaps are taking him under your wing. You're welcome to him."

"You'll have your work cut out!" chuckled Herries.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus faintly. "I was dweadin' that he might turn up in elastic-sided boots, or a wed waistcoat. But—"

(Continued on page 17.)

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foolish as you have made Mr. Lathom believe, St. Jim's is no place for you. But I shall give you a chance, Lee. Instead of sending you away, as you doubtless hoped and expected, I shall cane you!"

"Oh!" said Lee.

"As you are a new boy here, I shall not punish you severely," said the Head. "You will hold out your hand!"

"But, sir—"

Dr. Holmes rose from his desk, and stepped towards Lee, cane in hand. Mr. Lathom looked on blankly. If the Head's surmise was well-founded, the boy was certainly no fool; but he was a cheeky and resourceful young rascal, in the Form master's opinion. But Mr. Lathom did not believe it. He was convinced that his own view was correct, and that the Head, for once, was mistaken—with all his knowledge and long experience.

However, the Head's word was law, so Mr. Lathom could only look on and keep his opinion to himself.

The cane swished in the air.

"Hold out your hand, Lee!"

Angelo held out his hand. The cane came down with a swish, and certainly it would have hurt Lee had it landed on his palm. But it did not. At the psychological moment Lee jerked his hand back, and the cane swept down through the empty air.

But it is said that every bullet has its billet! That swipe of the Head's cane was not wasted.

SEVEN DELICIOUS TUCK HAMPERS FOR READERS THIS WEEK!

Do you know a good story, chum? Of course you do! Would you like a ripping tuck hamper? What-ho! Then send your joke along, as these other chaps have done. All efforts should be addressed: Special "Tuck Hamper Competition" No. 1, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

A BIT TOO STIFF!

Young Murphy, eager to join the Police Force, came to London and applied at headquarters to be enrolled. After passing the medical examination, he was interviewed by a high official. "Well, my man," said the latter, "you look a promising young fellow! Where were you educated?" "Dublin, to be sure!" was the reply. "Ah, and you have some general knowledge, I hope? Now, I wonder if you can tell me how many miles it is from London to Manchester?" At this the recruit showed considerable agitation. "Look here, bejabs," he cried, "if you're going to put me on that beat I'm finished with the Force!"—A Tuck Hamper has been awarded to William Lewis, 76, Argyle Road, Custom House, E. 16.

BETWEEN SPORTSMEN!

Brown: "Any luck to-day?" Green: "One deer and two hares. And you?" Brown: "Six hares, twelve rabbits, nine geese, thirteen hens, and four ducks!" Green: "All with one gun?" Brown: "No! With one motor-car!"—A Tuck Hamper has been awarded to Sydney Lovegrove, 23, Leith Road, Wood Green, London, N. 22.

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HE GOT HIS JOB!

The manager of a big firm was interviewing applicants for the post of night watchman, but he was very hard to please, and found something wrong with each man. One was too short, one was too thin, another squinted, and another was too tall. Pat heard of this, and resolved to be prepared for anything. "Now," said the manager, "is your health quite sound?" "Well," replied Pat, "I have only one complaint." "What is that?" asked the manager. "Sleeplessness!" said Pat promptly. —A Tuck Hamper has been awarded to Arthur Cohen, Bona Vista, Tydraw Road, Roath Park, Cardiff.

A QUESTION OF BEARINGS!

Aristocratic Visitor (endeavouring to create an impression): "My forefathers have had the right to bear arms for the last two hundred years!" Scotch Host: "Hoots, mon! My forefathers have had the right to bare legs for the last two thousand years!"—A Tuck Hamper has been awarded to Arthur Bennison, 69, Wouldhave Street, South Shields, co. Durham.

Owing to the interest taken by readers all over the world in this Weekly Joke Competition a Tuck Hamper is offered for EVERY joke published on this page.

This week SEVEN are awarded—more offered next Wednesday.

The Editor.

A MATTER OF TIME!

An old lady wanted to back a horse, and the obliging book-maker was telling her what to do. "If your horse wins at ten to one you get ten pounds for your quid," he said. Old Lady: "Fancy that, now! And what do I get if it wins at one o'clock sharp?"—A Tuck Hamper has been awarded to Wilfred Norton, 6, Charles Road, Aston, Birmingham.

THE POINT!

The Society for Stroking Animals sent an official to see a man who was said to ill-treat his dog. The official found the dog-owner working in a field. Near him sat the dog, barking loudly. "What's the matter with him?" asked the inspector. "Just lazy," replied the owner. "But laziness does not make a dog howl like that." "Perhaps not. But he's sitting on a thistle!" came the reply.—A Tuck Hamper has been awarded to Harry Storey, 182, Goodshaw Lane, Crawshawbooth, Rossendale, Lancs.

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CANNY!

Englishman (at street accident in Scotch village): "Give the poor fellow some air!" Suspicious Native: "Give him some yersel', mon!"—A Tuck Hamper has been awarded to S. Heynert, Bowness, Weedon Road, Northampton.

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No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.



"THE FOOL OF THE SCHOOL!"

(Continued from page 15.)

"He's been told to change his clothes," said Blake. "As his box hasn't come, he will have to borrow some. And as he's a pal of yours, Gussy—"

"He's not exactly a pal of mine, Blake."

"Well, as you've taken him under your wing, I directed him to your box," said Blake. "You won't mind lending him a suit of Etons."

"Bai Jove! You might have lent him a suit of your own, Blake. He may damage my clothes."

"Well, mightn't he have damaged mine, fathead?"

"Yaas, but your clothes always look wathah damaged, Blake, so that wouldn't have matted. However, he is welcome to bowwow my clobber," said Arthur Augustus nobly. "He will be well-dressed, at least."

"He, he, he!" Baggy Trimble, of the Fourth, rolled up to the group of juniors. "I say, that new chap—he, he, he—"

"Has he got my clobber on, Twimble?"

"He, he, he!" roared Trimble. "He's turning out your box, D'Arcy. And Blake's—"

"Mine!" roared Blake.

"And Herries'—and Dig's— and Cardew's—"

"Great Scott!"

There was a rush for the staircase at once. Tom Merry was the first, and he went up the stairs three at a time. Fast on his track came the other fellows. There was a rush to the Fourth Form dormitory.

Angelo Lee was there.

The dormitory looked a good deal like a second-hand clothes shop. Half a dozen boxes had been opened, and the contents pulled out. They had not been taken out carefully. Sunday bags lay strewn recklessly on the floor—jackets and waistcoats, socks and ties, lay as thick as leaves in Vallambrosa of old.

On a bed lay the remarkable clothes in which the new fellow had arrived at St. Jim's. Tom Merry's glance rested on them for a moment, and they made him jump. Then he looked at the new junior.

Lee was dressed again now, in Etons. He was putting the final touch to his tie when the crowd of juniors burst in upon him.

"What's this game?" roared Blake. "What have you turned out my things for, you potty image?"

Angelo glanced round.

"Your things?" he asked.

"And mine!" shouted Herries wrathfully.

"I've been looking for things to fit me," said Lee simply. "I've found some things in each box."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! Weally, Lee, you might be a bit more careful with a fellow's clobber," said Arthur Augustus. "Weally, deah boy, you must be a fidgetful ass, you know."

"I'm jolly well going to punch him!" roared Herries. "He's not going to shove my things all over the dorm."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"My Sunday bags are burst!" shrieked Digby.

"My foot went through them," said Angelo gently. "So sorry!"

"Why you—you—you—" stuttered Digby. "I'll jolly well make you sorrier."

Dig made a rush at the new junior. Tom Merry interposed just in time, and pushed back the wrathful Dig.

"Hold on, Dig—"

"Lemme gerrat him!" roared Dig.

"The fellow's a born fool," said Tom. "Don't touch him. Blessed if I think he's quite all there!"

"Weally, you know, the chap must be pottay!" said Arthur Augustus. "Pway don't wag him, deah boys."

"I'll jolly well scalp him!" roared Blake.

"Bump him!"

"Oh, deah! You uttah ass, Lee!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry and the swell of the Fourth stalled off the angry juniors who would have collared Lee. Their promise to Cousin Ethel was in their minds, and they had to play up to it. Ethel had surmised that Angelo Lee might find difficulties in his way at St. Jim's. Undoubtedly that surmise had been well-founded. But Tom doubted whether Ethel was aware of what Lee was actually like. Certainly she had imposed a heavy task on her schoolboy chums, in requesting them to look after Lee and see him through.

"Chuck it, you chaps!" urged Tom Merry. "The fellow's a born idiot—let it go at that. Come with us, Lee."

And keeping back the angry fellows, Tom and D'Arcy marched Angelo out of the Fourth Form dormitory. They marched him down the stairs: Angelo walking between them with a simple, smirking face, as if he was quite satisfied with his remarkable proceedings. On the next

landing the juniors stopped, and Tom exchanged glances with D'Arcy.

"Well?" he said grimly.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "We seem to be landed into somethin' wathah hefty, deah boy, if we are goin' to look aftah this born idiot."

"He oughtn't to be here," said Tom. "A chap who is such an ass ought to be taken care of at home."

"Yaas, wathah."

"It's too thick," said Tom. "The fellow doesn't seem to know enough to go in when it rains. Have you seen your Form master, Lee?"

"Oh, yes," said Lee.

"How did you get on with him?"

"He seemed to think that I oughtn't to stay here," said Lee.

"Bai Jove! He was wight there," said Arthur Augustus. "Don't you think your people might be persuaded to let you go home, Lee?"

"I wish they could be!" said Lee. "But the pater doesn't see it. Still, I hope I sha'n't have to stay here. Rotten place, isn't it?"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Don't you think so?" asked Lee innocently.

Tom Merry breathed hard.

"I won't bang your head against the wall, Lee," he said. "There's nothing in it to damage, but I won't. You haven't had your tea, I suppose?"

"Not yet."

"It's up to you, Gussy. He's in your Form."

Arthur Augustus coughed.

"In the cirs, deah boy, I am afwaid that Blake and Hewwies and Dig might not be vewy polite if I had him in Studdy No. 6," he said.

"Very likely," said Tom, laughing. "Keep an eye on him for a bit, then, and we'll have him to tea in No. 10 in the Shell. You mind the silly ass for half an hour, and then I'll take him off your hands."

"Wight-ho."

Lee was handed over from one to the other, a good deal as if he had been a helpless baby. He did not seem to mind. He went down the lower stairs with Arthur Augustus. In the big doorway of the School House a long thin gentleman was seen: it was Mr. Ratcliff, coming over from the New House to see the Head. As the New House master walked in his jerky step, Lee stared over the banisters at him.

"Who's that queer-looking old codger?" he asked in a loud voice, quite loud enough for Mr. Ratcliff to hear.

Arthur Augustus fairly quaked.

"Dwy up!" he gasped.

Mr. Ratcliff undoubtedly heard. But he did not look round; perhaps it did not occur to him that he could possibly be referred to as a queer old codger. To D'Arcy's immense relief, the Housemaster walked on and disappeared.

"You uttah ass!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "Don't you know bettah than to pass wude wemarks about people in their hearin'?"

And he dragged Lee out into the quad.

CHAPTER 10.

Tea In Tom Merry's Study!

TOM MERRY came into his study, No. 10 in the Shell, and found Manners and Lowther there. Tom's usual sunny face was rather rueful in expression, but his chums seemed very cheery. They were getting tea in the study when Tom arrived, and they nodded to him cheerily.

"Had a good time, you chaps?" asked Tom.

"Oh, not so bad," said Monty Lowther. "There were some good pictures at Wayland. And Manners seems to have enjoyed himself with his camera."

"I've taken a good photograph," said Manners. "There was an aeroplane landing in Pepper's field. I got it nicely—rather a decent snap, you know. Man and a boy in it. I've been down in the dark-room developing my films. How have you got on, Tom?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Did you pick up the new merchant after all at Rylcombe?" inquired Lowther.

"No, he seems to have drifted in some other way; he was here soon after we started for the station, I'm told," answered Tom. "I've seen him now—he's a corker."

"What sort of a corker?"

Tom ran his fingers through his curly hair. Really, he did not quite know how to describe Angelo Lee.

"Well, he's the limit," he said.

"The limit?" said Monty. "Has Cousin Ethel given you the limit to look after at school?"

"Well, Ethel doesn't know the chap—she's chummy with his sister, you know," said Tom. "No wonder his sister is anxious about him, considering what he's like. Of all the born idiots—"

"The fellows were cackling over something when I came in," said Monty. "Was it Lee?"

"I suppose so. He seems to have set the House in a roar already," said Tom. "But you'll see him soon—he's coming here to tea."

"You've asked a born idiot, and the limit, to tea in this study?" exclaimed Manners.

"Oh, you fellows won't mind," said Tom. "After promising Ethel, I'm bound to look after him a bit. But of all the dummies—"

"What's he done?" asked Manners curiously.

Tom Merry described what Angelo had done, so far as he knew it. Manners stared, and Monty Lowther whistled.

"That merchant won't stay long at St. Jim's!" commented Manners.

"It seems that his Form master thought he ought to go at once; but the Head licked him instead. I can't quite make that out; he's such a silly fool that it seems a shame to lick him. I suppose the Head knows best—but—well, I agree with Lathom," said Tom. "St. Jim's isn't a place for a chap who hasn't all his seven senses. But let's give him a good tea—he will have a wild time at this school, I think, if he keeps on as he's begun; and I suppose he will, as he doesn't seem to have the intellect of a bunny rabbit."

"My hat! I'm rather curious to see him."

The Terrible Three prepared quite a nice tea in No. 10. Tom was willing to do all he could for the remarkable new boy, and his chums were willing to back him up loyally. Tom had handed Angelo over to D'Arcy for half an hour; but thirty minutes had barely elapsed, when Arthur Augustus' eyeglass gleamed in at the doorway of No. 10.

"Weady, deah boys?"

"Right-ho!" said Tom. "Push him in."

Arthur Augustus led Angelo into the study, and retired declining an invitation to tea himself. He felt that he was likely to have quite as much as he wanted of Angelo, if not a little over.

Manners and Lowther eyed the new fellow curiously.

Lee was rather a sturdy fellow, and his face would have been called good-looking. He had rather a square jaw, which indicated determination of character. Certainly there was nothing in his looks to indicate that he was not "all there." Tom Merry presented his chums, and they shook hands politely with Lee.

"Tea's ready," said Tom. "Sit down, Lee."

Lee sat down.

Manners' glance lingered on his face. Manners seemed a little puzzled.

"Haven't I seen you before somewhere, Lee?" he asked. Lee looked at him.

"Lots of fellows have seen me," he answered. "Nearly every silly ass in the House seems to have rolled up to stare."

"I mean, somewhere else," said Manners.

"Not that I know of," answered Lee.

"Well, your face seems sort of familiar," said Manners. "I fancy I've seen you before. Can't remember where, though." But Manners' glance still lingered on the new junior, and he still seemed perplexed.

"How did you get to the school?" asked Lowther. "I suppose you know that some fellows were waiting for you at the station?"

Lee grinned.

"Yes; I got a lift, you see, and never came by train. My box is on the railway somewhere, I believe."

"A lift in a car?"

"No; not in a car."

Lee did not seem disposed to explain the nature of the "lift" he had received on his way to St. Jim's, so the Shell fellows asked no more questions on that subject. The new fellow's reticence on the point was rather odd, but they were prepared for oddities in the new Fourth-Former.

"Like the place?" asked Lowther politely.

"No!"

"Oh!"

"I didn't want to come," explained Lee. "Now I've come, I want to go. I've no time for this rot."

"What rot?"

"School work, and mucking about with football, and so on. I told my pater so."

"Did he lick you?" inquired Manners.

"Oh, no!"

"Ah! That was a mistake! He should have."

"Hem!" murmured Tom Merry. "Like the poached eggs, Lee? Have another?"

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"Thanks! I'm jolly hungry," said Lee. "Are you fellows in my Form?"

"No fear!"

"Third?" asked Lee.

The Terrible Three glared. They were in the Shell, the next Form above the Fourth; and it seemed really incredible that Lee should imagine for a moment that they were in a Form below his own.

"We're in the Shell!" said Manners stiffly.

"In the Shell! Not hatched yet?" said Lee.

The Terrible Three stared at him.

"Is that a joke?" asked Lowther. "We've got hold of a funny merchant, you fellows. Shove the teapot this way, Lee."

"Certainly!"

Lee reached out and gave the teapot a shove. It spun over and rolled off the table on to Monty's knees.

There was a roar from Lowther.

The pot was half-full; and its contents were very hot. Lowther leaped up from his chair, his trousers drenched with hot tea.

"Ow! Oh, my hat! Whooooooh!" roared Lowther.

"You silly ass!" shrieked Manners. "What's that game?"

"Lee!" gasped Tom Merry.

"You—you—you—" Lowther spluttered, and mopped at his drenched trousers with his handkerchief. "You—you unspeakable idiot, what do you mean by bunging the teapot at me?"

"You asked me to," said Lee, in astonishment. "You distinctly asked me to shove the teapot that way."

"Why, you—you—you chucklehead!" gasped Lowther.

"You blinking, burbling image, did you think I wanted you to shove it over me?"

"You asked me."

"Why, I—I—I'll—" Lowther forgot that Lee was a guest in the study, and came round the table to him. Tom jumped up in alarm.

"Monty, old man—chuck it—"

"Do you think I'm going to let that burbling chump drench me with scalding tea?" raved Lowther.

"I told you he was a born fool—"

Lowther spluttered.

"Well, you can have your born fool all to yourself! I'm fed-up with him! I shall have to change my bags now!"

And Monty Lowther tramped savagely out of the study, leaving his tea unfinished.

Tom Merry and Manners exchanged uncomfortable looks. Lee stared after the departing Lowther, and then stared at the other two Shell fellows.

"That chap seems to be annoyed about something," he said.

"D-d-does he?" stuttered Tom.

"Jolly queer, isn't it, cutting up rusty like that, when I did exactly what he asked me."

"Oh!"

Tea finished rather uncomfortably in Tom Merry's study. Monty Lowther did not return; evidently he had had enough of the new junior, which was not surprising in the circumstances. Both Tom and Manners were relieved when Angelo rose at last.

"Thanks for the tea, you chaps," said Angelo. "Let me clear the table for you before I go."

"Oh, no," said Tom.

"Not at all," said Manners.

"No trouble," said Lee. "I'd rather!"

He took hold of the tablecloth with both hands, and before the Shell fellows could guess what he was about to do, he dragged it from the table. Every article on the table was swept to the floor along with the cloth, with a terrific crashing and smashing.

Crash! Smash! Clatter! Crash!

"What the thump—" roared Manners.

"Why, what—what—what—" stuttered Tom Merry.

"There you are!" said Lee cheerily. "No trouble at all!"

And he walked out of the study, leaving Tom Merry and Manners rooted to the floor, staring blankly at the wreckage.

CHAPTER 11.

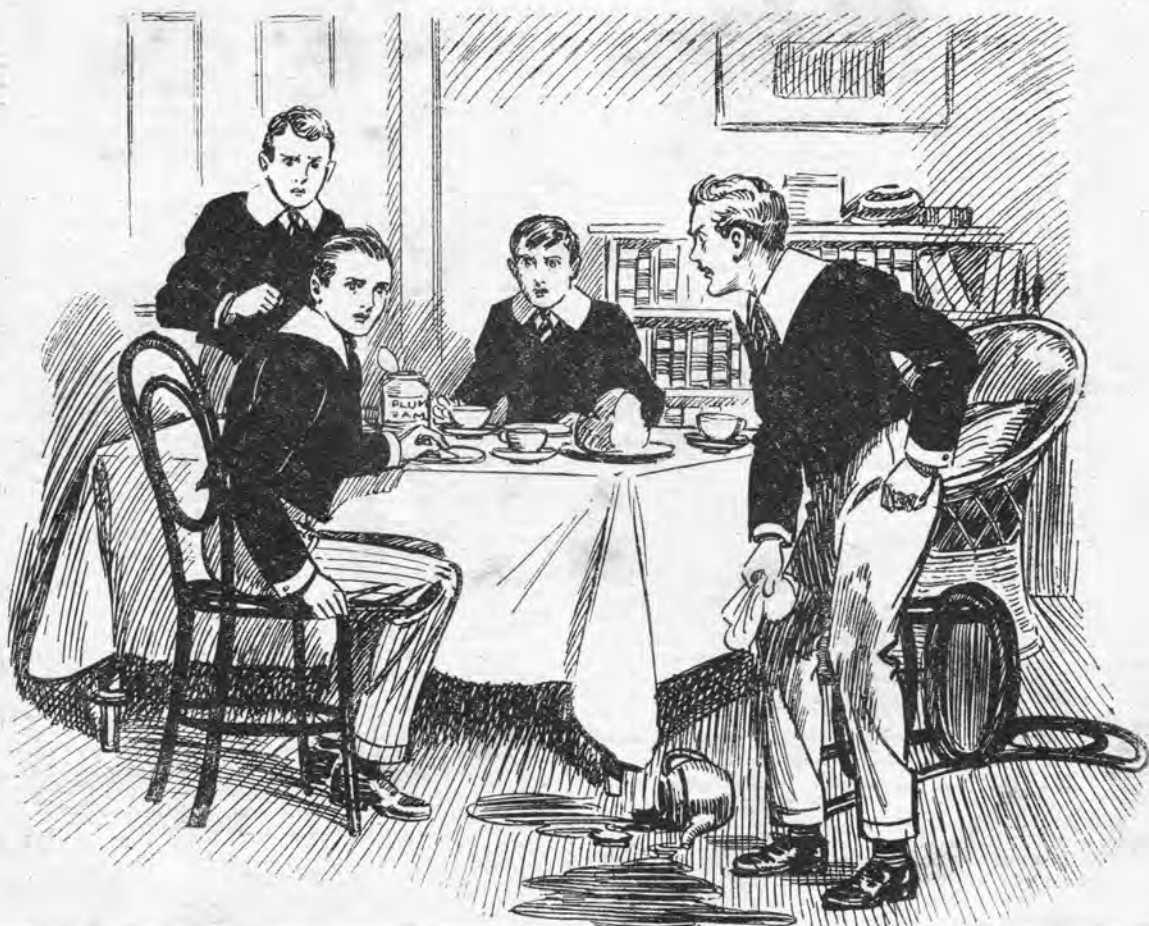
Nice for Eates!

HAROLD BATES, of the Fourth Form, wore a worried look.

Bates of the Fourth was the happy occupant of Study No. 3 in the Fourth Form passage in the School House.

It was a small study, and generally had two fellows in it; but since Troop of the Fourth had left the last term, Bates had had Study No. 3 to himself.

Bates was not specially keen on having a study to himself; he did not want to be the Robinson Crusoe of the Fourth Form passage. He was prepared to welcome any new fellow



"Lee!" gasped Tom Merry. "You—you—you—" Lowther spluttered, and mopped at his drenched trousers with his handkerchief. "You—you unspeakable idiot! What do you mean by bunging the teapot at me?" "You asked me to," said Lee, in astonishment. "You distinctly asked me to shove the teapot that way." "Why, you—you chucklehead!" gasped Lowther. "Did you think I wanted you to shove it over me?" (See Chapter 10.)

who was assigned to the study; provided that the new fellow was at all tolerable. And it was certain that any new fellow who came into the Fourth would be assigned to Bates' study; and there was room for him there. Almost any new fellow would have been welcome to Bates. But there was a limit.

Angelo Lee was the limit!

Bates of the Fourth had no desire whatever to share his study with a born fool; a howling ass, a potty image, a blithering cuckoo. All these names, and more, were applied to Angelo Lee. Seldom or never had a new junior at St. Jim's drawn so much attention to himself. The arrival of Angelo had made quite a furor in the House. He was already regarded on all sides as the fool of the school. Indeed, Cardew had told Trimble of the Fourth that he, at least, ought to be glad of Lee's arrival. Cardew explained that hitherto Trimble had been the biggest fool at St. Jim's. Now he wasn't!

But Bates was "for it." The order had gone forth, as was only to be expected, that Angelo was to be quartered in Study No. 3. Hence the worried look on the countenance of Harold Bates. Bates had laughed as loudly as anybody at the new junior and his amazing manners and customs. Now he no longer laughed. To be study-mate with the fool of the school was not an attractive prospect.

Bates sat in his study and groused when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked in. Bates gave him a grim look. But the manner of the swell of St. Jim's was very agreeable. In his determination to keep, in word and in spirit, his promise to Cousin Ethel, Gussy was capable of welcoming the new fellow into his own study—No. 6. He had even made a mild suggestion to that effect; but undoubtedly he had been relieved when Blake and Herries and Digby sat on it promptly and emphatically. Blake & Co. promised that if he brought Angelo to Study No. 6 they would slaughter him first and Gussy afterwards.

So Arthur Augustus ambled along to Study No. 3 to see Bates, and to speak the good word, as it were, for Angelo. Bates did not seem in a humour to hear the good word.

"I heah that the new fellow is diggin' with you, Bates, old chap," said Arthur Augustus amiably.

"So I hear!" said Bates dimly.

"Where is he now?"

"Don't know, and don't want to know."

"Hem! I believe he is wathah a nice chap, Bates."

"Like him in your study?" asked Bates, with a gleam of hope.

"Hem! I was thinkin' of it, deah boy. But we are wathah a ewowd in No. 6 already, and Blake won't heah of it."

Grunt from Bates.

"But I am suah you will get on all wight heah," said Arthur Augustus encouragingly. "Figgins says that he would have the kid in his study if Lee belonged to the New House."

"Safe to say so, as Lee belongs to the School House!" growled Bates. "Figg's welcome to him."

"He seems wathah a corkah in some wespects," admitted Gussy. "But, aftah all, a fellow who is a fool can't help bein' a fool."

"You ought to know!" assented Bates.

"Bai Jove! Weally, you cheekay ass—"

"What did they want to send him here for?" demanded Bates warmly. "Isn't there a lunatic asylum he could be sent to?"

"He is not exactly pottay, Bates—only a ewass ass," said Arthur Augustus. "I twust you will make him welcome in the studay. His sister is a vewy nice gal, and a fwied of my Cousin Ethel's."

"His sister can come into my study, if she likes!" grinned Bates. "I draw the line at his sister's brother."

"My Cousin Ethel asked me to keep a fwiedly eye on the chap—"

"Well, she didn't ask me," said Bates. "I'm not going to stand it. Why should I have a fool landed on me?"

"Well, you ought weally to have a fellow-feelin' for him, Bates; you are not vewy bwight yourself, you know."

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Bates stared at Arthur Augustus. That noble youth prided himself on his tact and judgment. But really he was not putting it very tactfully to Bates of the Fourth. Harold Bates did not answer. He picked up a ruler, and came towards the door.

"Where will you have it?" he inquired.

"Woolly, Bates—"

Arthur Augustus retreated along the passage; he did not want the ruler anywhere. His intervention probably had not made matters any better for the new fellow in Study No. 3. Bates slammed the door.

A few minutes later there was a knock, and the door opened. Bates glared round, expecting to see D'Arcy again. "You silly chump!" he roared. "Oh, I—I—I beg your pardon, Kildare!"

Kildare of the Sixth gave him a look.

"This is your study, Lee," he said. "Bates, this is the new boy, Lee, who will share the study with you."

"Oh, yes!" gasped Bates.

Lee stepped into the room. Kildare of the Sixth walked away, taking no notice, to Bates' relief, of the discourteous greeting he had received. Bates had narrowly escaped the ashlant, a circumstance that did not improve his temper.

He gave the new junior a surly look.

"So they've landed you on me, have they?" he growled.

The new junior did not heed. He was looking round the little study, with an expression that was obviously disparaging. He looked at the shabby carpet, at the shabby curtains, which had been quite bright and new when Bates' aunt sent them, but which now showed many signs of wear and tear; at the cracked glass, and the clock that did not go; at the table which had a slant, and the chairs which lacked legs. Bates' study was really not an abode of luxury; but it was quite nice in Bates' eyes; "A poor thing, but mine own!" he might have said of it. Anyhow, it was good enough for Bates; and if it was good enough for Bates, obviously it was too good for the fool of the school.

The expression on the new junior's face made the wrath of Bates rise higher and higher. He began to glare.

"Good heavens!" said Lee at last. "Am I landed in this hole?"

"This what?" gasped Bates.

"Hole!"

"Why, you—you—you cheeky cad!" roared Bates. "Ain't you satisfied with the study?"

"No jolly fear! Nor with you!" added Lee, looking critically at the owner of the study. "I don't like your manners—"

"You—you don't like my manners?" gurgled Bates.

"No; nor your looks."

Bates breathed hard and deep. Under the Housemaster's direction, Lee was assigned to the study, and there was no getting out of that. But Bates, in his wrath and indignation, forgot all about the Housemaster and his authority. He clenched his fists and advanced on the new fellow.

"Get out of it!" he said.

"Eh?"

"I don't want you here!" roared Bates. "And, what's more, I'm not having you, see? I hear that you've got friends in the school. D'Arcy's cousin put them up to looking after you. Well, they can look after you, and stand your company into the bargain. They don't seem keen on it. Tom Merry can't take you in, as he's Shell, and D'Arcy won't. You'd better buzz over to the New House and land yourself on Figgins."

"Who's Figgins?"

"Who's Figgins?" repeated Bates, in tones of utter contempt. "Never heard of Figgins? Figgins is junior captain

of his House, and he's pally with Ethel Cleveland, and she asked him to look after you here."

"I never knew," said Lee, colouring a little. "I don't want to be looked after. In fact, I won't have it!"

"Don't you worry," jeered Bates. "Fellows will very soon get fed-up with looking after you, I can tell you. Anyhow, you go and land yourself on Figgins, as he's soft enough to let himself be let in for looking after a silly chump. See?"

"All right."

Lee turned to the door.

Bates stared after him. Was it possible that the fellow was so asinine, so absolutely idiotic, as to suppose that he could change his House at his own sweet will? Bates wished it were possible; but he knew that it was not, and Lee's simplicity astounded him. Still, he would get rid of the fool of the school for a time, that was something. He chuckled at the thought of Figgins & Co.'s surprise when a School House man arrived to plant himself in their quarters in the New House.

Angelo glanced round.

"Hallo, what's the joke?" he inquired.

"You are!" grinned Bates. "Good-bye. Take your face away with you; it worries me."

Lee moved through the doorway, and Bates was tempted to help him into the passage with a drive of his boot. The fellow had exasperated him; his mere existence—in Bates' study—was an exasperation. He had dared to turn up his nose at the study, which was miles too good for him; he had even turned up his nose at Bates. The fellow couldn't help being a fool, perhaps; but there was a limit, and he needed kicking. Bates fell to the temptation, and he jumped after Lee and landed out with his boot.

What happened next astounded Bates.

Properly speaking, Angelo Lee should have shot into the passage like a bullet from a rifle, hurled there by Bates' hefty drive.

But he didn't! It really seemed as if the fellow had eyes in the back of his head.

For somehow—Bates never knew how—instead of the kick landing on Angelo, Angelo's grip suddenly fastened on Bates' ankle as he drove out his foot, and all Bates knew was that his foot was jerked high into the air, and that he came down on his back with a crash.

Crash!

"Oooooooooop!" roared Bates.

He lay on the shabby study carpet, breathless, winded, dazed. Angelo Lee looked down at him, with a smile.

"I won't ask you whether you've hurt yourself," he said gently.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Because I know you have," said Lee.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Lee smiled and walked out of the study, leaving Harold Bates still stretched on the floor in a dazed and dizzy state, gasping for breath.

CHAPTER 12.

The Limit!

GEORGE FIGGINS walked cheerily into the New House with his chums, Kerr and Fatty Wynn.

Most of that half-holiday had been wasted on the new School House junior; and Kerr and Wynn did not wholly conceal their opinion that Figgy was a good deal of an ass to have bothered his head about the fellow.

That did not disturb Figgy.

A request from Cousin Ethel was like a Royal invitation; it amounted to a command—at least, so far as Figgins of the Fourth was concerned.

Ethel had asked him to give the new fellow a helping hand; and Figgy had done his best. He was prepared to give him a helping hand on any occasion that might arise. But, at the bottom of his heart, Figgy was very glad that Angelo Lee had not come to the New House. Certainly, this would have given Figgins much ampler opportunities for looking after him. But since his return from Rylcombe Figgy had heard a great deal of Lee—in fact, the St. Jim's fellows were nearly all talking of Angelo that afternoon. Figgy wanted to play up; but he did not want the fool of the school in his House.

"The fellow seems to be absolutely off his rocker," Kerr was remarking as the three entered the New House.

"The biggest fool that ever struck St. Jim's at any rate," said Fatty Wynn. "Some of the fellows over the way think he's quite mad."

"He's soft, from what I hear," agreed Figgins.

"Soft isn't the word; make it balmy."

"Jolly lucky he's not in our House," said Kerr. "We should get chipped about it. The other House will."

"His people shouldn't have sent him here," said Figgins.

"What beats me is the Head letting him stay. He will

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"You—you—you dare—call me a donkey——" Mr. Ratcliff seemed scarcely able to articulate. "You—you insolent boy! You—you dare—I shall take you back to your House! I shall take you to the Head! I—I—I——" Words failed Mr. Ratcliff in his wrath. He grasped Angelo by the collar. "Come with me!" he thundered. George Figgins watched them go down the lower stairs, and out into the dusky quadrangle.

have a rough time at St. Jim's; and, as Ethel asked me——" He paused. "I'm not surprised that his sister is anxious about it, and it was jolly decent of Ethel to put in a word for him with us, wasn't it?"

"Oh, no end," said Kerr, a little sarcastically.

"Look here, Kerr——"

"Thank goodness he's School House, anyhow," said Kerr. "We sha'n't have much to do with him."

"If a chap's silly, he can't help it," urged Figgins. "I dare say he'd rather be a clever chap like you, old man."

Kerr grinned, quite disarmed by Figgins's reply.

"Well, keep an eye on him, if you like, old fellow," he said. "We'll help all we can, won't we, Fatty? We won't let the New House men rag him, for one thing."

"He will get enough of that over the way, if he stays," said Fatty Wynn. "But the Head won't let him stay the term. You'll see."

"I'm bound to see him through as long as he stays," said Figgins. "You fellows will help, I know. I—I'd like to be able to tell Cousin Ethel that he's getting on all right. He seems to have kicked up some sort of a shindy in Tom Merry's study—and Gussy's pals are fed up with him. But I'm going to keep an eye on him. I dare say he's a good chap enough—in his own way, of course."

The three juniors went up to their study. As the evening had closed in, they expected to find the study dark. Rather to their surprise, it was lighted up.

Kerr threw open the door and stared in.

"You here!" he ejaculated.

"Hallo, it's Lee!" said Figgins.

"That's Lee, is it?" grinned Fatty Wynn. "He's changed his clobber, then. I saw him in the quad when he came, looking as if a fellow could play chess on him."

Angelo was in the study.

He was seated in the armchair, with a book on his knee, reading. Kerr noticed that his expression was quiet and

concentrated, his face quite intelligent, at the first glance. But that expression vanished as he looked up and met the eyes of the New House trio.

"Giving us a look-in, what?" asked Figgins genially.

Whether he was pleased or not at finding the unexpected visitor in his study, Figgins was going to be genial. Tom Merry and Gussy might or might not fail to stay the course, as it were; but Figgins was going to carry out the wishes of Cousin Ethel.

"Who are you?" asked Angelo.

"I'm Figgins," said the junior captain of the New House. "This chap is Kerr, and the plump chap is Wynn. Glad to see you."

Angelo eyed them critically.

"All in this study?" he asked.

"Yes."

"It will be rather a crowd."

"Eh?"

"Four fellows is rather a lot for a room this size," said Angelo.

Figgins & Co. eyed him.

"I don't quite catch on," said Figgins gently.

"No, you don't look very bright," said Angelo, with a nod.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Where's my Greek paper?" asked Kerr suddenly. Kerr was looking over the study table. "Have you shifted a Greek paper, Lee?"

"Yes."

"Well, where is it?"

"I had to have something to light the fire with," said Angelo. "The fire was out. Was the paper any good?"

Kerr stared at him. Kerr, who was a whale on Greek, had put two solid hours into the paper.

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"You—you—you lighted the fire with my Greek paper?" the Scottish junior breathed.

"Yes."

"You cheeky, fatheaded chump! What do you mean by it, then?" roared Kerr.

"How was I to know it was any use?" asked Angelo innocently. "You'll be telling me next that the stack of foolscap I used was some use, though it only had lines from Virgil scribbled on it."

"My lines!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

Fatty glared over the table and round the study. Fatty Wynn had written out two hundred lines for Mr. Ratcliff that afternoon; they were to be taken in to the House-master before prep. There was no sign of them in the study now.

"You—you—you've burnt my impot!" stuttered David Llewellyn Wynn.

"Was it any use?" asked Angelo simply.

Kerr and Wynn made a simultaneous movement towards the new junior. Figgins interposed, with a distressed face.

"Hold on, you chaps! You know the fellow's a fool—"

"Let him keep his foolery in his own House, then!" roared Fatty Wynn in great wrath. "I've got two hundred lines of Virgil to grind out again. Why, I'll smash him!"

"Keep cool, old chap!" urged Figgins. "Lee, you shouldn't have done that. Haven't you any sense at all?"

"Has he used anything else to light the fire?" asked Kerr in a sulphurous voice.

"Only a chair," said Lee. "I had to have some firewood. And a book—I think it was called the 'Holiday Annual.'"

"My 'Holiday Annual'!" murmured Figgins.

"Look here, kick him out!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "I won't hit him, Figgy, but I'm not going to stand him at any price. Let him buzz, and keep on his own side of the quad. Do you hear, Lee?"

"I'm not going."

"Not going" ejaculated Wynn.

"No; I'm staying in this study. Bates told me to."

The three gazed at Angelo Lee.

"Who's Bates?" asked Kerr.

"That must be Bates of the Fourth, in the School House," said Figgins, with a worried look. "I heard from Blake that Lee had been put into Bates' study. You can't change your study, or your House, Lee. Have a little sense. Mean to say you've come over here—"

Figgins paused. Really, the obtuseness of the new fellow was monumental.

"Bates told me I could come to this study," said Angelo.

"On the whole, I like it better than his. I'm staying here."

"But you can't stay here; this isn't your House," explained Figgins laboriously. "You'd better cut back now; the Houses will be closed for the night soon."

"That's all right; I'm staying."

"Do you think we'd have you in this study, even if it was allowed?" snorted Fatty Wynn.

"No fear!" said Kerr emphatically.

"Be civil, you chaps," urged the distressed Figgins. "The fellow hasn't the sense of a bunny rabbit. Of course, he can't stay here. I'll take you back to your House now, Lee."

"You won't!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, don't be an ass," said Angelo. "The fact is, I'm reading; and if you fellows are going to stay in the room, I want you to shut up and be quiet. Bad enough to be sent here among a lot of babbling kids, without the silly kids babbling in my ears all the time."

Figgins choked down his wrath. Kerr and Wynn glared. Only the influence of their chum kept them from collaring the new fellow and hurling him bodily out of the study.

"You'll have to answer to your name at the House roll, Lee," said Figgins. "You can't stay here."

"Are you a parrot?" asked Lee.

"Wha-a-t?"

"You seem to keep on cackling the same thing over and over again. For goodness sake, chuck it!"

Figgins breathed hard and deep.

He had told Cousin Ethel he would do his best for this fellow. Now it began to appear to Figgins that the best thing he could do for Angelo Lee, was to give him a good

thrashing for his cheek. Angelo certainly was asking for it with great earnestness.

"That's enough, Lee," said Figgins sharply. "Come out of it."

"Rats!"

"I'll take you down—"

"Cheese it!"

"Look here, are you walking out of this study, or do you want to be run out by the neck?" bawled Figgins, his patience quite failin' him.

Kerr and Wynn grinned. For the moment, George Figgins seemed to have forgotten even Cousin Ethel.

Angelo did not answer; he turned his eyes on his book again. The next moment, he was out of the armchair, in Figgy's grasp, and whirling across the study towards the door.

"Chuck him out!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

Angelo went whirling out of the study, in George Figgins' powerful grasp. Figgins went whirling out with him. They whirled along the passage to the stairs; and there they lost their footing and rolled down to the next landing. Figgins picked himself up rather dazedly.

"Now, you cheeky fathead!" he gasped.

Angelo sat up.

"I'm not going! I—"

"What is this disturbance?" Mr. Ratcliff, the House-master, came up the lower stairs with a frowning brow. "Figgins—what—who—"

Figgins gasped.

"I—I—I was—was taking Lee back to his own House, sir," he stammered. "We—we slipped on the—the stairs—"

"Lee? A new boy? I have heard of him!" rumbled Mr. Ratcliff. He peered at Lee, who rose to his feet. "He should be in his own House at this hour. What is the boy doing here?"

"He—he doesn't know his—his way about yet, sir," stammered Figgins. "I—I'm going to take him to the School House, sir—" He gave Lee an imploring glance. All was yet well if the new fellow held his tongue. But the new fellow did not hold his tongue.

"Who's that old donkey?" he asked.

Figgins almost collapsed.

To Mr. Ratcliff's face, Lee had alluded to him as an old donkey! It was time for the skies to fall!

Mr. Ratcliff almost staggered. He could scarcely believe his ears.

"What—what—what did you call me, Lee?" he articulated faintly.

"Old donkey!"

"My only hat!" murmured Figgins, and he waited for the storm to burst.

"You—you—you dare—" Mr. Ratcliff seemed scarcely able to articulate. "You—you insolent boy—you—you dare—"

"I—I shall take you back to your House—I shall take you to the Head—I—I—I—" Words failed Mr. Ratcliff in his wrath. He grasped Angelo by the collar. "Come with me!" he thundered.

Figgins watched them go down the lower stairs, and out into the dusky quadrangle. He limped back to his study. He had promised Cousin Ethel to look after this fellow—he had meant to look after the fellow. Had he not given up a House football match on his account, and after that a half-holiday? But it was clear that the fellow was not to be looked after. In Figgy's opinion, his number was up at St. Jim's.

"Well?" said Kerr and Wynn, as Figgins came back into the study.

"Ratty's got him!" said Figgins. "He's called Ratty an old donkey!"

"Great pip!"

"Ratty's taking him to the Head."

"Phew!"

"He will be bunked, I suppose."

"Sure to be!" agreed Fatty Wynn, "and the best thing that could happen to him—and to St. Jim's. We've seen the last of the fool of the school."

Figgins & Co. had little doubt about that. But, as a matter of fact, St. Jim's was to see a great deal more yet of the "fool" of the school.

THE END.

A SCREAM FROM BEGINNING TO END!!!

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By **ARTHUR PATTERSON.**

CHAPTER 1.

Stranded!

"CYAN'T go a step further—not a little one! We'll jest unload!"

The speaker descended from the spring seat of the wagon, making every board groan, and with two powerful swings of his fat arms, pulled Tom Holt's suit-cases out and dropped them on the grass. Tom himself followed; there was a transfer of certain dollar-notes from his hands to those of the driver of the wagon, and then the latter, uttering a sharp "Git up, you Punch and Judy!" to his horses, remounted to the spring seat and drove away at a rattling pace, without even a farewell.

Tom, with his luggage at his feet and a rug over his arm, stood and stared after the man.

In all his life—he was only seventeen, but felt as old as Methuselah just then—he had never known, heard, or read of such an experience as he had passed through that day. Here was he, invited by Job and Sam Todd, sheep ranchmen, Servita, Southern New Mexico—old friends of his father's, too—to come out to them from England; preliminary arrangements made for a partnership when he had learned the business—arriving at the place to find no one to meet him and not a soul in the town who knew anything about the men. That is to say, they said they didn't. But Tom, who was not a fool, had doubts on the subject; for he found they knew the name of the ranch, and where it was. Not a word, however, would they say concerning its owners. The Doggett Ranch was twelve miles south, and after great difficulty, the man with this wagon had been persuaded by Tom to convey him to the place because he lived somewhere (he would not say where) in the neighbourhood. So the boy had at last got to his destination, or, rather, near it. For, to cap the whole thing, no sooner had they arrived within a hundred yards or so of a house built of logs—which the driver said was Doggetts—with another and smaller erection of the same kind farther away, than the wagon had been pulled in and the baggage dumped on the prairie as aforesaid.

Tom by this time was in a royal rage. He wanted to shout insults after the retreating wagon. He wanted to hit somebody, particularly one of the Todd brothers. But all he could do was to sit down upon the biggest of his suit-cases and make remarks to the prairie grasshoppers. This he did for five minutes, and as he had served before the mast on a sailing-ship to and from Australia when he was fifteen, he knew how, and a string of nautical expressions poured from his lips which would have done credit to the bo'sun of a man-o'-war.

This made him feel better, and taking a suit-case in each hand and his rug over his shoulder, he plodded slowly and laboriously to the log-hut.

A shabby, forsaken looking place it was. The walls were rough and untrimmed. The roof, which was flat and made of earth, was cracked in many places, and seemed to be crumbling away. The one window to be seen—he was

approaching it from the back—had two great cracks across it and one pane of glass out, while all around, on the black, soft earth near the house, the short, brown, curly grass farther away stretching for miles on every side, there was not a living creature to be seen.

It was April, and a warm April, too, and Tom was damp all over with perspiration when he reached the place. And, stumping heavily round the back of the house, he dumped his bags and his rug down upon the wooden porch in front. He dumped them hard, and stamped hard, too, and his boots were of thick-soled English make. The result was a volume of sound calculated to waken the Seven Sleepers. But it wakened nothing except an echo.

At this Tom's mood began to change. He was a healthy, hearty creature. He had been a good forward in the second fifteen of University College School, London, before he went abroad, and one of the best all-round men in the second eleven.

Life on board ship for eight months and some roughing it in between in the Bush had toughened his muscles to whipcord and his nerves to steel wire; but this hollow echo, and the sight of two doors fast shut and two more broken windows in between, made him shiver all over.

The place was deserted. Everyone had gone. He was utterly alone.

Just for one moment he stood staring, with the creepiest of crawling shakes curling up his back; then he set his teeth and laid his hand upon the latch of the door. It was unlocked, and he went in and entered a smallish, square room, with a stove in it, three chairs, and a table—and a smell. It was a very queer smell. Tom sniffed hard. What was it like? A rather nasty chemist's shop, and there, on the table, were bottles half-full of medicine. There was nothing else, except a pile of dirty plates and cups and saucers in a corner of the room. He saw another door, crossed to that, and found a second room opening out of the first. This was larger. It also contained a table, covered with a ragged red cloth; a bedstead of sorts, with a heap of sheepskins upon it, and two rocking-chairs. On the walls were nailed prints from picture newspapers, the most conspicuous of which were a portrait of Abraham Lincoln; an American trotter in harness, and a ballet-dancer. The window of this room was larger than the one in the front, and it was not broken. As a consequence—for it was close shut—there was a worse and much nastier smell in it. Tom passed quickly through to another door opening upon the third and smallest room of the lot. This was the most interesting to him; for in the middle of it was a rough stool and upon it a piece of paper stuck down by a rusty knife jabbed into the wood. The room was as empty as the other, but it had no smell. And by the way the one chair in it was set at a table, and the crumbs on the floor, he could see that it had been occupied quite recently.

Tom jerked up the knife and spread the paper out, and read the following letter, written in faint, green ink:

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"To Tom Holt, Britisher, England.

"Dear Friend,—Old man Job Todd told me last night before he passed in his checks and died that you was on the way here, and that he could not stop you, so I pen these lines for him and his brother Sam, who is laying buried up under the stones down by the crick, where Job will be put to-morrow. It is the small-pox done it. Some skunk of a Mexican brought it, and most of the boys has died. But I ain't, having had it when a kid. I nursed them best I could, but it was no use. So I am leaving. There is no chance of you finding me, so don't hunt. What I have took was due for wages not paid; but I ain't mean, and have left you food. It is locked up in the cupboard, with a small axe and a knife and fork. But take my advice and go back home smart. This is a hard country. No one will tell you of the small-pox, as they don't want any to know it has been here. But what I say is treth.

"Hoping this will find you as well as I am at present.

"Respectfully yours,

"HUNKS."

The writing of this epistle was crabbed, and there were many blots and smudges, and it took Tom some time to get at the meaning of it all. But he did at last.

He was, as we have said, a hearty chap; moreover, he had been to sea. It did not frighten him to find that he was in a house where two men had died of a loathsome, infectious disease. But things were bad enough without that.

At one fell swoop of Fate every hope he had in the world, and all his future prospects, were smashed to pieces. He had not a friend to turn to. He had just ten pounds, a present from an uncle before he left home—fifty dollars in American money—between him and starvation.

If he had known anything about life out West, or possessed any experience in farming or raising stock, it would not have been so bad. But he knew nothing whatever. He was the youngest son of a large family. His father, a doctor, had died when he was a baby. His mother had brought them all up by dint of great economy and the help of relatives. His brothers were in business; his sisters at work, or married. He, a restless, adventurous soul, had been to sea for one long voyage, and now, after scraping together enough to pay his passage and railway fare, he had expected to become an apprentice to the Todd brothers, and work his way to fortune on the prairies of New Mexico.

It was an awful blow, and for a while the boy—for he was nothing more—stood still and white in the lonely room, a big lump rising in his throat, ready to sit down and cry.

He might have done it, for he was very tired and hungry after his long journey, and now felt desperately home-sick as well, when he heard a familiar sound—the agonised wail of a puppy. Until Tom went away from home he had never been without dogs of some kind. They were of no particular breed, generally strays which were brought home out of pity, but he loved them all; and when, in the midst of his loneliness, there came to his ears the appeal of a creature as badly off as himself, if not worse, all thought of repining or knocking down fled from his mind, and he sallied out of the house to find and comfort his fellow-sufferer.

The howl came again as he reached the door. It was from the stable, and there, in an old loose-box, with a litter of mouldy straw all round him, was a wriggling mass of black-and-tan wool, a curly tail, big-jointed limbs, and a queer head, with great ears and a blunt, square nose.

They were in one another's arms in a moment, and for a time remained there more or less, for the dog had been alone in a confined space for days, and went nearly mad with joy. He was a part collie, part bull—a strange cross. Loose, sprawling, clumsy, and extremely uncouth in appearance, but with promise of great strength before long, and a broad, underhung jaw, which had a grim look even now. The animal was not in bad condition, though violently thirsty, by which Tom concluded that "Hunks," whoever he might be, had not been gone very long.

"You're a Hunks yourself," Tom remarked severely to the pup, as the creature, in his ecstasy of delight at freedom and good company, incontinently seized his deliverer's coat and hung on till the lining tore. Tom named him that on the spot.

Water, that was the first thing to be got, for Hunks' tongue was hanging out some six inches, and he was panting convulsively. This was found easily, and by the dog himself; for, after another caress, he started off at a gallop down a slope in front of the ranch, and brought Tom to a shallow stream a couple of hundred yards away. While the animal quenched his thirst, Tom examined the place, and found on the bank at the other side a spring, by which were a couple of old pails. The water from the spring was deliciously cool and sweet. The boy drank there, filled the pails, and

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returned to the ranch, Hunks careering round him, the happiest dog in the world.

How different the place looked now! Indeed, how different everything seemed with this cheerful creature bobbing all over the shop. In less time than it takes to tell Tom had stripped off coat and waistcoat and got to work. He had not been a sailor for nothing, and any sort of job with his hands came easy.

First of all he opened all windows and doors, threw the medicine bottles on to a rubbish heap, and spread the sheepskins on the grass. Then he unlocked the cupboard mentioned in the letter, which was a sort of box-room out of the kitchen, and found that Hunks, whatever he might have done with the bulk of the property of the dead ranchmen—and Tom suspected much—had been as good as his word here.

The place was full of food. Four sides of dried bacon hung from the ceiling. There was a shelf full of tins of canned peaches and tomatoes; two sacks of flour; a big tin of baking-powder; a barrel of molasses; a large sack of green coffee berries, and another of Mexican beans. In a corner were kitchen utensils, a broom, a frying-pan, an iron pot for boiling meat, knives, forks, and spoons, a hand coffee-mill, and a large tin can which Tom rightly surmised had been used to wash clothes in. Last, and best of all, there was not only a hatchet but a long-handled axe.

Three months in the Australian bush is not much of an experience for ranch life, but it was invaluable to Tom at this juncture. He could do rough cooking, handle an axe, and manipulate an ordinary kitchen stove. Outside was a good pile of dry wood, cedar and pine.

In half an hour he had swept out the whole place. In another hour he had baked bread, roasted, ground, and boiled his coffee, fried bacon, opened a tin of tomatoes and another of peaches, abstracted molasses from the barrel, and, having washed the cups and plates, was able to spread an excellent meal upon the kitchen table.

The pup did not come off so well; but his tastes were catholic, and he managed quite decently on new bread served in bacon fat, with a tasty admixture of rinds and a rasher or two cut up for his especial benefit.

By that time it was dark, and Tom had lighted a couple of candles taken from a bunch he had also discovered in the store-room, both boy and pup were extremely well satisfied with themselves, and Tom felt ready to face the future without fear. As for Hunks, having a full belly and an adopted master who met every requirement a dog might desire, he had nothing left to worry about, and straightway curled himself up and went to sleep.

Tom had no inclination to sleep, but he had now thoroughly recovered. That moment of weakness before he heard the cry of the pup made him shudder with self-contempt when he thought of it. Nevertheless, he had a big problem to face, and had not the ghost of a notion how he was going to solve it.

One thing he had discovered which he now proceeded to investigate. Under the bedstead in the centre room of the house was an old tin-trunk. It was securely strapped up, and looked as if it had not been opened for a long time. Evidently it had escaped the eye of the original Hunks. There might be something in it which would cast light on a situation which was still sufficiently mysterious.

Tom, though without experience, was not lacking in common-sense, and while at work he had been thinking. This was a sheep-ranch. But there were no sheep. On the other side of the stream, at the top of a rise of ground, was a great sheep-pen—what they had called in their letters a corral—made of the trunks of cedar-trees, dug into a trench side by side, and held together with long saplings bound with strips of raw cowhide. He had examined this before he started the cooking operations; and though the sheep smell was keen enough, it was stale. There had not been any animals in the corral for weeks. Taking this fact into consideration, the lively condition of the pup, and the fresh appearance of two mounds of stones near the stream, which he concluded were the graves of his friends, Tom became certain that this Hunks fellow had not, at least, gone off with the flock. It would be surely a risky thing to do even in this lonely country, for a man could not dispose of other people's stock without awkward questions being asked.

But, if not, what had become of the animals? They must have been a valuable property.

The lock of the tin box was old, and Tom soon prised it open with a chisel. First of all he came across clothes—queerly-made, old-fashioned garments. They had evidently been treasured; and Tom had another lump in his throat as he thought of the poor old boys who kept them so carefully and would never wear them any more. Beneath these clothes were white linen shirts and other underwear, and then papers. These were tied in bundles, mostly receipted bills and of no interest. But at the very bottom



TOM FINDS A NEW FRIEND! A wriggling mass of black and tan wool, a curly tail and big-jointed limbs came at Tom. In a moment they were in one another's arms. (See Chapter 1.)

there was a leather case, a heavy wallet such as were used for despatches in Government offices. It bore the initials of the oldest Todd, Job, and was locked. The forcing of this lock was impossible, for it was a very good one, and Tom had finally to cut the leather. Inside he came across a paper written by Job. It was in a long, blue envelope addressed to Tom himself, and was in the form of a will, and stated that the writer, being stricken with small-pox, and not likely to recover, had disposed of his stock for the sum of seven thousand dollars, now lying at the Bank of Southern New Mexico in the City of Santa Fe. This money, together with his ranch, wagon, buggy horses, and all other property, he left to Tom Holt, to be duly claimed by him on his arrival in this country.

So this was the explanation! The dear old fellow, his brother already dead, had made provision for the son of his old friend. Dying, he had kept his word and fulfilled the bond.

"Hunks" had obviously never seen this letter. He had only gone off with the horses and all he could lay his hands upon. The money, however, would be safe in that bank. He, Tom, had only to prove identity—provision was made for this—and the seven thousand dollars were his own.

This discovery affected the boy deeply. He was not penniless. As far as money went he was infinitely better off than if the Todds had lived. But he had not a friend. He had been coldly treated by the men at Servita. He would not trust one of them. He would rather trust Hunks, if he could come across him. The man was a thief, certainly, but he was a good chap to have left that food. The fact was that Tom felt intensely lonely again. He shut up the tin box, thrust it under the bed again and went out. Immediately the pup struggled up and followed him. There was no moon, but the stars shone brightly, and Tom went down towards the creek to look at the graves. He had a solemn feeling that it was his duty to do it.

The pup followed willingly, but all at once became uneasy, and when they were about half way stopped and whined. Tom turned and called him by his new name. The pup responded at once, but when Tom patted him he found the dog trembling all over. The boy wondered, but with his thoughts full of his discovery, and of what he had better do, did not trouble, and went on, leaving the dog to follow or not as he pleased. Hunks did follow, though

most unwillingly; then of a sudden, just as they reached the place where the mounds were, and Tom paused, reverently doffing his hat, he gave a sharp yap of terror and made a scoot for the ranch at express speed. Tom looked round in surprise. What on earth? Then he, too, had a shock. In front of the graves, a few yards away, ran the creek. The stars were reflected in the stream, and by their dim light Tom saw something at the water's edge, on the other side—a body, low and long and snaky. It was a great beast, flattened on the ground, but one part of it moved, with a twisty jerk and a rustling sound like a light broom sweeping leaves.

Tom felt uncommonly queer, and if, with safety, he could have followed the pup, he would have done the bunk of his life. But it was out of the question, for just as he had discovered that the brute was a puma, the "mountain lion" of the Rockies, the animal raised its head, and two great pale green eyes stared Tom in the face.

When we talk of the fascination of birds by snakes, we laugh at the birds. Tom had often done it. After that night he never did it again. The air was very close; there was not a breath, not a sound. The swishing of the "lion's" long tail had ceased. The creature just crouched and stared while Tom, twenty yards away, with the stream between, stared back, as numb as any mouse under a cat's paw.

The nastiest part of it was that he was acutely conscious of his own feebleness. Though his body and nerves seemed quite out of control, his brain was active and his senses sharp as knives. The green eyes grew more intent and the long body seemed to close up and shrink together. Was it going to spring upon him? He had nothing in his hands, not even a stick. He was utterly alone—it was no good yelling. The only thing to do was to run away, and he could not run away. But now he heard the lap of the great cat's tongue in the water, and his rigid nerves and muscles slowly relaxed. Creatures about to tear you into bits do not waste time in drinking. The only thing was—what might happen when it had quenched its thirst? He dared not move, for the brute never took its eyes off him. It seemed to have an awful thirst, lapping on and on and on; and all the time those pale green eyes kept watch. Once when Tom moved his arm the lapping stopped, and only started again after what seemed about five minutes.

But at last its head was raised slowly from the stream. The beast even sneezed in quite a companionable way, and then the lights, so to speak, went out. It had turned away. Tom had taken a deep breath of relief, when out of the stillness came a most extraordinary and uncanny sound—a bubbling, wailing cry as if a baby were being slowly strangled. If Tom had not been close to the puma and known that the sound came from its jaws, he would have sworn himself black in the face that a child was being eaten somewhere, and he would have gone to look for it, too. The wail died away, to be followed by a harsh scream, like the miouw of forty tom-cats, which stiffened every hair in Tom's head. Then silence, complete and unbroken. The great beast had gone.

CHAPTER 2.

The Invasion!

TOM'S first encounter with a mountain lion did not interfere with the soundness of his slumber that night. The puppy came to meet him with joyous tongue and tail, and when the doors of the ranch were closed, and he had fixed up a bed of sheepskins, quite oblivious of the possibility that they might still be seething with small-pox germs, and with his coat for a pillow, wrapped himself in the rug he had brought from home, all thoughts of the prowling beasts of the wild vanished from his mind, and he slept the sleep of the just.

It was perfect April weather, and when the night passed, the morning star rose clear and high; the pale gleam of coming dawn followed it; there was a twitter of sleepy birds and a faint rustle in the prairie grass of little stirring creatures and—the pup woke up! He woke with a start and a shiver. A foolish, feckless young thing was Hunks, with very little experience of life; his reasoning powers as undeveloped as his legs; but within him, unconsciously, was the inheritance from countless generations of ancestors of two remarkable breeds. Hunks was not a mongrel. He was a cross between a pure-bred collie father and an equally well-bred bulldog mother. And so, within his ugly head, with its absurdly cocked ears and its broad barrelled nose, there lay the keen nervous sensibility of the guardian of sheep, combined with vigilance and jealous carefulness of the guardian of property and person since the days of Queen Elizabeth and before. The result of all this was that as the light of dawn put out the stars one by one, and a wind which always blows over the prairie at that time stirred grass and sage brush, cedar, pine, and oak scrub, Hunks began to wriggle like a worm. He could not have told you why. He did not know himself. There was not a sound that the keenest collie ear could distinguish. There was no smell nor was there anything to see. Yet Hunks knew something was about to happen. He woke up completely, blinked both eyes, shook his ears, suppressed a sneeze, raised his little snout in mid-air, kept quite still and listened anxiously. He looked at his master. Nothing doing there! He arose unsteadily upon his splayed feet, stretched his ungainly limbs, felt for a flea, and demolished it, and then softly and very gently whined. Then he shook himself all over, head, tail, ears and body, as much as to say he must really be a fool. Then he walked round the room slowly on tiptoe, and as he moved the big wide-open nostrils he inherited from his mother, with the squat square nose, quivered like the antennae of an insect, and his whine gave place to a long growl. His hair was bristling now. He had heard no sound yet, but across the window pane he had seen a shadow, and his keen senses, with the instinct which heredity had given him, analysed the nature of what was there.

Meanwhile Tom slept. He began to dream he was on board ship again. They were having Sunday service in the saloon. The skipper was reading a lesson, when suddenly the whole of the watch on deck burst into the place, dressed as they had been when they crossed the Line and Neptune came on board. There were the bears, and the barber with his wooden razor, and the chap with a red nose and top hat to represent a policeman, and Neptune's wife in a crinoline; and, without a sound, they all began dancing round the captain, who shouted at the top of his voice—and the old man could shout—and threw a hymn-book at Neptune. It missed him, and hit Tom in the chest, knocked him off his seat, and— He woke, to find himself on the floor, with Hunks on top of him, yelling like a pack of wolves.

Tom was sleeping in the centre room, and as he sprang up noticed that the doors leading from both the other rooms

were wide open. He had shut them the night before. But there was nothing to be seen. Stay! There was something at the window like the face of a large monkey. It disappeared when Tom looked at it, but reappeared an instant later with two others. In the meantime Hunks had made a leap at the kitchen door, where Tom now saw two crouching figures, then the pup retreated as swiftly to dash at the entrance to the small room. A queer whistling sound came now, and, as if by magic, the place was filled with men. Were they men? Little fellows, with flat, square, wrinkled faces, narrow squinting eyes, high shoulders, short necks, and bowed legs. Two things about them were most uncanny. The first, their colour—bright, hard, brick red; the second, their silence. Not one uttered a sound.

Then their dress. When Tom had time, later on, to examine it in detail, he came to the conclusion that they looked as if they had raided a big marine store-dealer's shop down at the docks, and put on their bodies the whole of the clothes there, without choice or discrimination. Some were in blue shirts, others in pink, and a great many in no shirts at all. Some had coats without waistcoats, and some the other way round.

There were fellows with trousers of cloth and others with breeches of leather, and a lot with nothing but a towel tied round their middles, and their hard red legs bare. Some wore shoes, and some boots, and some had rags wrapped round their feet and legs like bandages. There were chaps in hats; others in caps, and more than one had on a woman's bonnet wrong side before, with the strings cut off. Never, outside a dream or a pantomime, could Tom have conceived such a crew with so comical an appearance or so madly attired.

Yet the general effect was not comic at all, and the last thing in the world he felt inclined to do was to laugh.

He did not, indeed, lose his head like the puppy which, when the room filled up with the silent crowd, retreated to the farthest corner of the bed behind his master and barked himself sick, but a nasty prickle went all over the boy's skin, and he was as speechless as his visitors. He could not imagine for a minute what they were. He had read adventure stories by the mile about the "Far West," but no writer had described such beings as these. Mexicans? No! Mexicans were half Spanish, and brown or yellow in colour. These fellows were brick-red. Indians? They could not be. He had pictured Indians as fine-looking, with head-dresses of eagle's feathers, hooked noses, and tall, slender figures. These little beggars might be fierce, but only one had any feathers in his hair, and they were dirty ones, and certainly not eagle's. The noses of the whole lot were flat, and as for their figures—why, they looked like crooked dolls.

But wait! That fellow with the feathers, though as small as the rest, had something about his appearance which suggested dignity and even command. He was as erect in carriage as a soldier, and while the creatures around him peered about, moving their feet and arms and hands from side to side with the stealthy restlessness of animals, he remained motionless as a bronze, his head well back, his eyes still and steady.

A conviction came to Tom that they must be Indians, and that this little man with the feathers—he had three fastened somehow to a long, snaky plaited lock of hair—was a chief. What an idiot he was not to have known it at once! But the Todds had never mentioned such beings in their letters, and Tom had believed Red Men to be practically extinct in these days. He had played the fool, anyhow, and something was due from him to them.

So Tom, his pale face suddenly becoming very red, took action, and that action was to step forward with a broad smile, and offer his hand to the man with the feathers, and bid him a hearty "How d'ye do?"

The Indian, for just one second, made no response, and in that second Tom's life, though he did not know it then, hung by a thread. For as he moved, the men to right and left swung forward; he was ringed round, and those behind him drew something from their belts. But the Indian in

WORTH NOTING!

2 New Numbers of

SCHOOLBOY'S OWN

are

NOW ON SALE!



Black Hawk came quietly up to Tom and stood beside him. "That is White Cat," he said, with a gesture towards the crouching boy. "My son. Why you hurt him?" "Sorry," Tom replied grimly. "He hurt my dog!" (See Chapter 2.)

front made a sign, and four bared knives went back to sheath. At the same time a hard, red hand met Tom's, and a low, guttural voice, with a sing-song intonation, said, "How do, boy?"

There was no smile on the queer face, no warmth in the touch of those fingers. The man did not move his head one inch forward, but rather seemed to hold it back. Still, it was a beginning, and Tom was the sort of person who, having made up his mind, did nothing by halves.

"Welcome to my house, chief!" he said heartily, shaking the impassive hand. "You are just in time for breakfast. Hunks, you fool, shut up!"

He turned swiftly to get his coat, so that he might begin hospitable preparations, and thereupon came up against the Indians who had intended to stab him in the back. But Tom, utterly unconscious, smiled in their faces, shouldered them cheerfully out of the way, took his coat from the bed and smacked Hunks gently on the head.

The dog submitted to the correction, and his yelling bark fell to a whimpering growl. Not a step, however, would he take from that bed, but as Tom slung on his coat and went off to the chief, lay there, teeth bared, body shaking, and his soul filled with mixed fear and rage.

"I don't know how many you have with you," Tom remarked genially, as he reached the Indian's side and led the way to the store-room, "but I hope there will be enough food to go round."

He was beginning to enjoy himself. These chaps were human beings; he was very lonely, and for the first time in his life he was master of an establishment and able to dispense hospitality.

The chief made no response, and whether he understood the words is uncertain, but he caught the spirit which prompted them, and as he followed Tom through the doorway, gave one comprehensive glance round at the men behind, which prevented their immediate appropriation of Tom's property, and, incidentally, saved Hunks' life. Yet he said nothing. But, as Tom was to learn before long, primitive men express more in a look than civilised people do in a long speech.

The contents of the store-room were a great surprise to the chief. It had been locked up, and the key was in Tom's pocket; therefore the Indians who, as their custom is, had poked their noses already into every nook and corner of the ranch before addressing its owner, knew nothing of this food.

The sight of it, and the suggestive way in which Tom unhooked a side of bacon and handed it to the men nearest to him, swung out a bag of flour, and followed that by presenting them with several tins of peaches and tomatoes, did more to bring about an understanding than a hundred addresses of goodwill.

A subtle change came into the atmosphere. Indians, whose fingers, in spite of their chief's unspoken command, were itching to deal drastically with this defenceless enemy of their race, transferred their attention to the larder. They made no attempt, however, to enter it, and when they saw that they were to share in its contents, even to the molasses and the coffee-berries, they trooped out of the house as well behaved as boys who, having come to rob an orchard, have been welcomed by the farmer and presented with a keg of apples.

Tom now went further still. Laying a hand on the chief's arm he pointed to the table.

"Stay here and breakfast with me."

He drew up a chair, patted the seat, and tried to push the chief into it.

But the little man stepped back, and put Tom's hand aside.

"Me Black Hawk, chief in the Apache Nation," he said, with a dignity which was not to be mistaken. "Boy cook—yes! Me eat with him—yes! White Cat will eat too. Three eat together—yes!"

Tom flushed. He had been guilty of a liberty, and felt decidedly foolish. But at least the man spoke English after a fashion, and now he knew his name. But who was White Cat?

He was about to ask when a sharp puppy scream of pain came from the other room. Tom dashed in to find a small group of Indians standing round the bed. One of them was holding Hunks by the neck, another by the tail and hind legs, while a third was inserting the point of a knife into the tenderest portion of his stomach. The dog had already been stabbed once, and there was a trickle of blood on the poor little body.

The sight drove all thoughts of hospitality and everything else from Tom's mind. He did notice, as he sprang to the rescue, that the wound was slight, and that it was a case of mischievous giving of pain, not dog-murder, but his anger was not the less for that. With one bound he was upon them, drove his left fist into the face of the Indian holding the pup's head; hit the one who was holding the tail a square punch on the nose, and seizing the chap with the knife with both hands, shook him as a terrier shakes a rat.

The attack, of course, was completely unexpected, and the Indians Tom had hit rolled over like ninepins, and they got themselves well out of the way, while the one he held, who was no match for his assailant in size or strength, and had dropped the knife in his surprise, hung limp in Tom's fingers and took his punishment without resistance.

At this Tom let him go, with a shake that deposited him heels up on the floor, and then turned to comfort Hunks.

(Continued overleaf.)



(Continued from previous page.)

Bob Hinks wanted no comfort. Pup though he was, his blood was up, and as far as his strength would go he was ready now to fight all the Indians in the United States. As the one who had stabbed him was thrown down by Tom, Hinks leaped at him like a small tiger, and catching him by the front of his shirt and coat, buried his teeth in the stuff, and, with the trick of his bulldog ancestors, threw the whole of his weight upon chest and stomach and pinned him to the ground.

Tom was not at all sorry for this, but he saw that Hinks was now dangerous; so he sprang after him, caught him by the scruff of the neck, pulled him off with a jerk and threw him backwards on to the bed.

By this time the Indians had crowded into the room again, and there were now at least fifteen of them watching the fray.

"That was a beastly cruel thing to do!" Tom exclaimed, as the Indian he had shaken, a youth of his own age, reached his feet in a decidedly tousled condition. "Serve you right if I had choked you."

While he was speaking Tom remembered that Black Hawk, though a chief, had only spoken English brokenly, and that it was not in the least likely that an Indian boy would know any. He was much surprised, therefore, when the fellow answered:

"Dirty black cur, that dog! I will kill him! You, too!"

He retreated a step and made a motion with his hand. An Indian behind him put a knife into it. The next moment the youth was slowly circling round Tom with obvious intent to spring. But before he could do it the chief, Black Hawk, came quietly into the room and stood beside Tom.

"That is White Cat," he said, with a gesture towards the crouching boy. "My son. Why you hurt him?"

"Sorry," Tom replied grimly. "He hurt my dog."

Black Hawk looked from the snarling dog on the bed to the tall figure and flushed face of his master.

"Ugh! You think dog worth a fight?"

He spoke with a slow drawl which contained a world of meaning. Tom set his teeth.

"Yes! But not with knives."

The young Indian, White Cat, gave a harsh exclamation.

"Huh! His fist like tomahawk. Let him fight with that."

The Indians who had been struck by Tom grunted a hearty assent to this remark. Black Hawk touched Tom's shoulder.

"Apache warriors fight with the knife," he said. He drew one from his own belt. "You boys shall fight. Take this cuchio."

He held the weapon out to Tom, and the rest of the Indians, obeying a wave of his hand, stepped back, leaving as much space as possible in the centre of the room. At the same moment the rug on the bed was suddenly thrown over Hinks, and two Indians rolled him up in it out of harm's way.

These preparations were made as quietly as if this were to be an ordinary boxing match, but Tom, glancing round the ring of faces, felt to the marrow of his bones that it would be a struggle to the death. Yet a knife was out of the question as far as he was concerned, for that boy, White Cat, hardly came up to his shoulder.

"Thanks," he said to Black Hawk, pushing the weapon away. "I will use my tomahawks."

He tried to smile, but in truth he was feeling rather sick. It was an absurd, rotten business, yet he could not funk the challenge. He must go through with it.

He stripped off his coat, rolled his sleeves up to the elbow, and took a pace forward.

"Come on, young White Cat," he said coolly.

The Indian boy lowered his head and began to creep forward. Tom took up a defensive position, clenching his fists. The Indians about them kept utterly still, and there was no sound in the room now, but the muffled remonstrances of Hinks under the blanket.

(This is a pretty tough start to young Tom Holt's career in a strange country, but he's real grit right through as you will learn from next week's spunking instalment, chums. Don't miss it!)

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