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NOT SUCH A FOOL AS HE LOOKED!

A Magnificent, Long Complete Story of Tom Merry & Co., the Chums of St. Jim's, introducing Angelo Lee, the new boy, who seems to ask for the sack "umpteen" times a day!

BY

Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1. Some Responsibility!

TOM MERRY wore a thoughtful look. Manners and Lowther, his chums and study-mates in Study No. 10 in the Shell, noted it, and smiled. It was time for junior "prep" in the School House at St. Jim's; in fact, more than time. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther had sorted out their books in Study No. 10, to grind through the section of the "Æneid" which was their task for that evening. Monty Lowther opened a dog-eared copy of the great classic poet; Manners presided over the dictionary. Tom Merry, looking very thoughtful, seemed to hesitate to join his chums at the study table.

Lowther closed one eye at Manners. He was quite aware of what Tom was thinking—not of classical studies or prep.

"Sit down, old man," said Monty cheerily. "We begin at 'Saepe fugam Danai Troia—'"

"I was thinking—" said Tom.

"About prep?" asked Monty affably.

"N-no!"

"Think about it, then," suggested Lowther. "Never mind football and House matches now."

"It isn't football," said Tom. "I was thinking—"

"About what Linton will say in the morning if we don't worry through our prep?" asked Lowther.

"No, you ass!"

"Better keep it in mind, all the same," grinned Lowther. "If you're called on to construe, it will be no use telling Mr. Linton that you were thinking about something else."

"Not a bit of good," agreed Manners.

"But—"

"Saepe fugam—" said Lowther. "Get on from that. This stuff probably means something. If it means anything, we've got to worry it out. Stands to reason Virgil must have meant something when he took the unnecessary trouble of writing it down. Well, then, let's get our teeth into it, and with luck we may hit on what he may have meant."

Tom Merry laughed.

"The fact is—" he said.

"Quite so," agreed Lowther. "The fact is we're late with prep, and there's no time to lose."

"I was thinking—"

"You're beginning to repeat yourself, old bean. Saepe fugam Danai—"

"Oh, don't rot, Monty!" said the captain of the Shell. "I was thinking about that new kid in the Fourth, Angelo Lee."

"My dear man, you needn't have told me that," said Monty Lowther. "You're always thinking about something that doesn't matter. Think about prep now. All hands to the mill!"

But Tom Merry shook his head.

"You chaps get on with it," he said. "I think I ought

to give Lee a look-up. Fact is, what with the meeting of the football committee and other things, I'd forgotten all about him. But I promised to keep an eye on him, and it's his first day at St. Jim's."

"It would be his last, too, if I were headmaster," remarked Lowther. "This school isn't a home for idiots. And of all the burbling, blinking, blithering idiots, Lee of the Fourth takes the bun!"

"He's got into plenty of trouble already since he came," said Tom, "and I dare say he's landed in more by this time."

"Not much doubt about that," said Manners. "The silly ass doesn't know enough to go in when it rains. If you're going to take him under your wing, Tom, you'll have all your work cut out."

Tom looked rather rueful.

"Well, I promised," he said. "Cousin Ethel asked Figgins and D'Arcy and me to do all we could for him, as he's the brother of her chum at school. We all promised. Of course, we didn't know he was such a giddy prize packet. I think he's not a bad sort—only a born fool. He will have his leg pulled no end at St. Jim's."

Monty Lowther's eyes glimmered.

"I've thought of that already," he said blandly. "No end of fun to be extracted from a merchant of that kind."

"No larks, Monty," said Tom warningly. "He's going to be trouble enough without that. Blessed if I know why his people sent him here, when he's such a crass ass; but he's here, and it's up to me to keep my word to Cousin Ethel. I think I'll give him a look-in before prep; I hear that he's

been put in Bates' study—in Study No. 3 in the Fourth—where Troope was last term. I think—"

There was a knock at the study door, and it opened, and the aristocratic face and eyeglass of D'Arcy of the Fourth glimmered in.

"Tom Mewwy—"

"Prep!" said Manners tersely, by way of a hint that visitors were not expected in Study No. 10 just then.

"Sowwy, Mannahs—"

"Good-bye!"

"Sowwy to intewwupt pwep," said D'Arcy, "but I want to speak to you, Tom Mewwy. That new chap, Lee—"

Monty Lowther gave a deep groan.

"Bai Jove! What's the mattah, Lowthah?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass on the Shell fellow.

"Lee!" explained Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Fed up with him," said Monty. "We had the born idiot here to tea, and he upset the table and smashed the crocks. He swamped me with hot tea."

"Bai Jove!"

"And now I never want to hear any more of him!" said Lowther. "Fed right up to the chin, old bean! See?"

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"I quite undahstand your feelin's, deah boy," conceded Arthur Augustus. "That chap Lee is a feahful ass and a wegulah wowwy. But I pwomised my Cousin Ethel to look afteh him at St. Jim's, and there you are, you know. I've just been into Bates' studay, Tom Mewwy."

"Why didn't you stay there?" sighed Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Go there again," suggested Lowther, "and this time, stay there!"

"Wats! I called in to see Lee, Tom Mewwy, and see whethah the howlin' ass was all right, and found he was not there. That fathead Bates has been pullin' his leg."

"What's up, then?" asked Tom, with a worried look. He realised that his undertaking to look after Lee at St. Jim's was likely to prove an onerous task.

"It's weally widiculous, you know," said D'Arcy, "but Bates told the sillay ass to go ovah to the New House, and plant himself in Figgins' studay there, and Lee was cwass ass enough to do so. Bates is gwinnin' ovah it like anythin'."

Tom Merry whistled.

Manners and Lowther chuckled.

"Is the fellow really soft enough for that?" said Manners. "Does he really think a fellow can change his study and his House if he chooses?"

"It appeahs so, deah boy."

"Well, let him rip," said Lowther. "They will kick him out of the New House at lock-up. Prep, Tom."

"It's up to me," said Tom, with a sigh. "Goodness knows what will become of that soft chump if he's not looked after. I'll come along with you, Gussy, and we'll find the blithering ass."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And what about prep?" bawled Monty Lowther, as Tom left the study with the swell of St. Jim's.

Tom did not answer that question; evidently prep had to go. Manners and Lowther grunted, and commenced work at "Saepe fugam Danai." Tom Merry went down the staircase with D'Arcy. On the middle landing they encountered Blake and Herries and Digby, of the Fourth, coming up to prep. The three heroes of the Fourth were grinning.

"Seen anything of Lee?" asked Tom Merry, perhaps apprised by the grinning of Blake & Co. that they had. Angelo Lee had caused much grinning in the short space of time that he had been at St. Jim's.

"Oh, yes!" chuckled Blake. "He's been looking for trouble in the New House."

"And finding it!" chortled Herries.

"Ratty's just brought him in," said Dig.

"Mr. Ratcliff?" exclaimed Tom Merry, in dismay.

If Angelo had woke up trouble with Horace Ratcliff, the sour-tempered Housemaster of the New House, the matter was likely to be serious.

"Yes," grinned Blake. "Ratty's got him by the collar. I fancy he's taking him to the Head! They've just come in."

"Oh cwumbs!" said Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry and D'Arcy waited to hear no more. Evidently the fellow whom they had undertaken to protect was in need of their protection—if that was likely to be of any use to him. They raced down the lower stairs.

"Head's corridor," said Tom.

They ran on to the corridor on which the Head's study opened. In that broad passage they sighted Angelo Lee, the new boy at St. Jim's, and Mr. Ratcliff.

The New House master, with a black, frowning brow, was marching Lee along with a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"Bai Jove, he's weally takin' him to the Head!" breathed Arthur Augustus.

Tom ran up hurriedly.

"Lee!" he exclaimed.

Angelo glanced at him, and Mr. Ratcliff frowned.

"Do not speak to this boy now, Merry!" he snapped.

"Excuse me, sir," said Tom meekly. "I was looking for Lee: he's a new fellow in the House, and—"

"That will do!"

"If—if he has done anything, sir—" stammered Tom.

"Nothing at all, old fellow," said Angelo calmly. "I don't know why this old bird is so ratty."

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Tom.

Referring to a Housemaster in his presence as an "old bird" was quite enough to make that gentleman ratty. Angelo seemed blissfully unconscious of the fact.

"Boy!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff.

"I asked Figgins who the old donkey was," said Angelo artlessly. "That seemed to make him cross. I don't know why."

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus faintly.

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Ratcliff.

And he jerked Angelo on towards the door of Dr. Holmes' study. Tom Merry and D'Arcy looked at one another helplessly.

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"The cwass ass!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

"The burbling chump!" gasped Tom Merry. "Hasn't he the sense of a bunny rabbit?"

"Appawently not, deah boy."

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"Cousin Ethel has given us a pretty steep order, Gussy. If we're going to look after that hopeless fathead and keep him out of trouble, we shall have all our work cut out."

"Yaas, wathah."

And the two juniors, in a troubled frame of mind, waited at the corner of Head's corridor for Angelo to emerge from his interview with Dr. Holmes.

CHAPTER 2.

The Fool of St. Jim's!

DR. HOLMES raised his eyebrows as Angelo Lee was marched into the study with Mr. Ratcliff's hand on his shoulder. A slightly grim look came over the old gentleman's face. It was Angelo's first day at St. Jim's; but this was the second time he had been brought before the Head. Angelo was giving more trouble than any new fellow was entitled to give.

His grim glance produced no effect on Angelo.

That youth's mild and rather good-looking face was quite innocent and confiding in its expression. If he did not know that he had done wrong, obviously he fully deserved the name the St. Jim's fellows had already given him—"the fool of the school." And certainly he did not look like a fellow who was conscious of having transgressed.

"Dr. Holmes!" Mr. Ratcliff almost gasped. His wrath was intense, though he strove to speak calmly in the majestic presence of the headmaster. "This—this boy—"

"Lee!" The Head's voice was deep. "This is the second time you have been brought before me!"

"Yes, sir," said Lee; "I'm so pleased!"

"What?"

"It's such a pleasure to see you, sir!" said Angelo.

"Lee!"

"You look such a nice old gentleman, sir," said Angelo, in his most artless manner.

Dr. Holmes stared hard at the boy. Mr. Ratcliff broke in: "That, sir, is a sample of this boy's unexampled insolence! I found him in my House, Dr. Holmes, in quarrel with a New House junior, and he applied an epithet to me, sir—an insulting epithet—an epithet that I will not repeat, sir—"

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the Head.

"I did not exactly apply an epithet to this cross old gentleman, sir," said Angelo mildly.

"This—this what?"

"Cross old gentleman! I merely asked Figgins who the old donkey was, sir!"

"That—that is the expression he used, sir!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff. "To me, sir—to a housemaster of this school!"

"Lee! You dared to speak in such terms to Mr. Ratcliff?"

"Not at all, sir."

"You have just admitted—"

"Oh, no, sir! I was speaking to Figgins, a boy in the Fourth Form, sir. I was not speaking to this cross old gentleman."

"You were speaking of Mr. Ratcliff in that insulting way, Lee? Have you no sense of propriety and respect?"

"I hope so, sir," said Angelo. "I thought this old gentleman looked very cross and very silly, sir, so—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"So I thought him an old donkey, sir. But I should not call you an old donkey."

"What—what? I—I trust not!" gasped the Head. "I trust not, indeed!"

"Not even if I thought you one, sir," said Angelo. "And I don't, sir—I don't, really!"

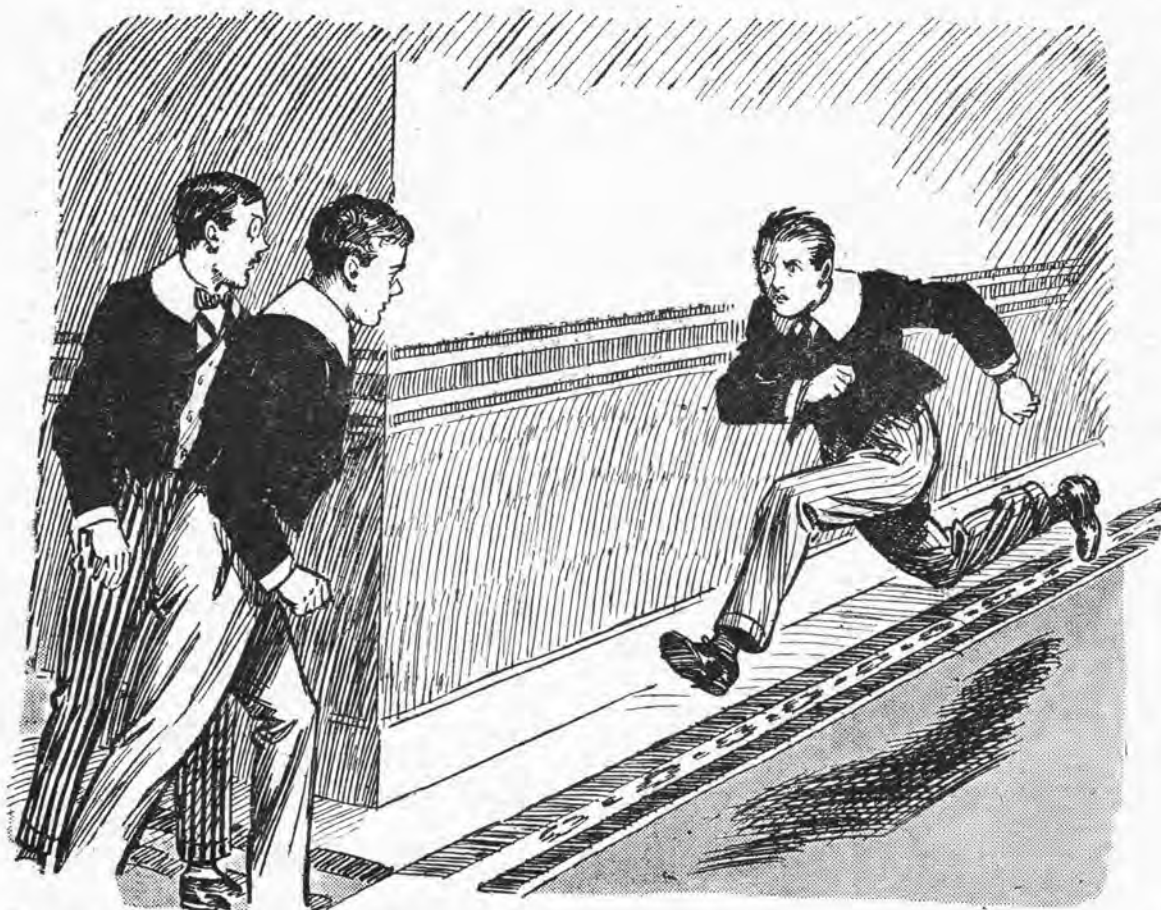
"Is the boy in his right senses, Dr. Holmes?" asked Mr. Ratcliff, staring at the hopeful Angelo.

"The boy is, I understand, a very clever lad in a somewhat unusual way, Mr. Ratcliff," said Dr. Holmes. "That, at least, is the impression I have received. I cannot believe that the foolishness he is now displaying is genuine. I suspect that it has some ulterior object."

Mr. Ratcliff looked puzzled as well as angry. Angelo was asking for a flogging, and Mr. Ratcliff found it difficult to suppose that that was his "ulterior object."

"If I believed that this boy was so simple as he would have us believe, Mr. Ratcliff, I should send him away from the school," said the Head. "This would be no place for him. But I have reason to suspect that he desires to leave the school, to which he did not wish to come. I shall certainly not gratify that desire as the reward of impertinence. Lee, I find it difficult to make up my mind whether you are, as you pretend, excessively simple, or whether you are very much the reverse."

"Oh, sir!" murmured Angelo.



Angelo found his way to the door of the Head's study now. He found it very rapidly indeed! He tore the door open and bolted into the passage as if he were on the cinder track. Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus started forward to meet him. "Lee, you ass——" began Tom Merry. "Bai Jove! What——" gasped Gussy, as the new boy fairly hurtled into them. (See Chapter 2.)

"In either case, you must learn to treat the masters of this school with the respect that is their due."

"Certainly, sir!" said Angelo. "Is any respect due to this cross old gentleman?"

"What?"

"As a new fellow, sir, I don't know anything about him," said Angelo meekly. "But you, sir, can tell me, of course." Mr. Ratcliff grew purple.

Dr. Holmes gazed hard at Angelo Lee. He suspected—he more than suspected—that the new junior was intentionally bent on making himself intolerable in the school, for the express purpose of being sent back to the home he had not desired to leave. But Angelo's face was so innocent and confiding that the Head was disarmed, in spite of himself. It was possible, after all, that the boy was an absolute simpleton. The Head was perplexed; and he had to give up the puzzle.

"Lee," he said, "you will immediately apologise to Mr. Ratcliff, in my presence, for the expression you used regarding him."

"Yes, sir."

"Very well; I am waiting to hear you do so."

"I am sorry I spoke of you as an old donkey, Mr. Ratcliff," said Angelo. "I seem to have made a mistake, sir, judging by appearances."

"What?" roared Mr. Ratcliff.

"I hope you are satisfied now, sir."

"Satisfied!" spluttered Mr. Ratcliff. "Why, I—I—I——" Words failed the indignant Housemaster.

"Lee!" thundered the Head. "You are making matters worse instead of better! Cease this insolence!"

"Oh, sir!"

"I shall cane you severely."

"Thank you, sir," said Angelo.

"What? What?"

"I'm sure it's very kind of you to take the trouble, sir," said Angelo. "My father told me always to thank people

who take trouble for me, sir. I'm very much obliged, sir."

Dr. Holmes rose to his feet, and selected his stoutest cane. Words seemed useless in dealing with this remarkable new boy; and the Head hoped that the cane might produce more effect.

"Bend over that chair, Lee."

"Certainly, sir."

Then the Head's arm rose and fell. The swishing of the cane could be heard by the two juniors waiting at the corner of the corridor. It was Angelo's second caning, on his first day at the school; and it was more severe than the earlier one.

Angelo roared.

His voice could be heard far beyond the end of the corridor as the cane whacked and whacked again. Mr. Ratcliff looked on with grim approval. Whether the boy was a born fool or not, Mr. Ratcliff approved of this method of dealing with him.

The Head was breathing rather hard when he ceased and laid down the cane.

"Let that be a warning to you, Lee!" he said.

"Yaroooh!"

"Cease at once to make those ridiculous noises!" exclaimed Dr. Holmes angrily.

"Whoooop!"

"You may go, Lee!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Angelo started; but he seemed in a dizzy state from his flogging, for he started across the study instead of going to the door. On the Head's writing-table was an electric reading-lamp, with a glass shade. From the lamp a flex ran to a plug in the wainscot of the wall. It was quite out of the way of feet—but not of Angelo's feet. Angelo, staggering away blindly, plunged over the trailing cord and caught his feet in it.

"Boy!" shrieked the Head. "Take care—what— Bless my soul!"

Crash!

"Oh!" roared Angelo.

The lamp was dragged from the table, and the glass shade smashed into a thousand atoms on the floor.

"G-g goodness gracious!" stuttered Mr. Ratcliff.

"Oh dear!" gasped Angelo.

The Head stood for a moment transfixed. Then he gripped his cane again, and started for Angelo. Seldom, or never, did the headmaster of St. Jim's lose his temper. But he seemed to have lost it now. The cane fairly rang over the shoulders of the new junior, and Angelo Lee hopped and yelled and dodged frantically.

He found his way to the door now. He found it very rapidly indeed. He tore the door open, receiving a final lick across the shoulders as he did so, and bolted down the passage.

He went down the corridor as if it were the cinder-path. Tom Merry and D'Arcy started forward to meet him at the corner.

"Lee, you ass—"

"Bai Jove! What—"

Crash! Bump!

Lee hurtled into the two juniors like a thunderbolt. Tom Merry reeled to the right, D'Arcy to the left. They measured their length on the floor, while Angelo rushed on and disappeared in the distance.

"Oh cwikey!" gasped Arthur Augustus, sitting up dizzily, and groping in a dazed way for his eyeglass. "Oh ewumbs!"

"Oh, my hat!" spluttered Tom Merry.

The two juniors picked themselves up, and glared round for Angelo. They had waited for him with friendly intentions. But if they had captured him at that moment it was improbable that they would have remembered that they were his friends and protectors. Fortunately for Angelo, he had vanished into space.

"I—I—I'll smash him!" gasped Tom Merry. "I—I—I—"

"The uttah ass! I—I—I—" stammered Arthur Augustus. "Weally, Tom Mewwy, that cwass idiot is too much for me. Let him wip!"

"Let him rip, and be blowed to him!" growled Tom Merry. "I'm going to prep, and he can go and eat coke!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the two juniors went to prep, and the remarkable new boy at St. Jim's was abandoned to his own devices.

CHAPTER 3.

Looking After Angelo!

JACK BLAKE yawned and laid down his pen.

Prep was over in Study No. 6 in the Fourth for three members of that celebrated study. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had come in late, and was still going it; but Blake and Herries and Dig were finished. Gussy looked up as his three comrades quitted the study table.

"Like some help, old man?" asked Dig generously.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Right-ho! Then I'll—"

"Not at all, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "I should like some help; but Mr. Lathom expects us to wowwy through pwep on our own."

"Fathead!" said Dig politely.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Let's get down, and leave old Gussy to worry on, then," yawned Blake.

"I'll tell you what, deah boys," said D'Arcy. "As you're finished, you might give that new chap a look in. I think I mentioned that I pwomised Cousin Ethel to keep on eye on him—"

"About a hundred times," agreed Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Did you promise to keep my eye on him, as well as your own?" inquired Blake.

"Weally, you ass—"

"I'm fed-up with that silly owl," said Herries. "Gussy was an ass to promise anything of the kind."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Well, Gussy always is an ass; that's nothing new," remarked Dig. "What beats me is, Ethel Cleveland asking him. She can't have known what a coughdrop Lee is, or she wouldn't have."

"I think that is so, Dig—you see, Ethel doesn't know the chap," said D'Arcy. "She only knows he's the bwothah of a gal she chums with at school. His sistah is wathah anxious about him heah."

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"No wonder—as he's such a prize ass!" said Blake. "But the fact is, Gussy, I was thinking of giving the new kid a look-in, before you spoke. You worry on and leave him to me."

"Thank you vewy much, deah boy. He is wathah a wesponsibility; and I weally think the studay ought to whack him out with me, you know."

Blake grinned as he quitted Study No. 6, followed by Herries and Digby. His comrades did not grin; they looked serious.

"Look here, what's this game?" demanded Herries. "We're jolly well not taking that idiot Lee on our hands, Blake!"

"No fear!" said Dig emphatically.

"Gussy and Tom Merry and Figgins of the New House have taken on the job, and they can keep it on till they get fed-up," went on Herries. "But a little goes a long way with me. I don't want any Lee."

"Leave it to your uncle," said Blake reassuringly. "We're not loading up Study No. 6 with the fool of the school, my pippins. But as Gussy has worried us with the crass ass, I don't see why we shouldn't dig up a little fun in that direction. Lee was born to have his leg pulled. And why shouldn't we pull it?"

"Oh, I see!"

"Good egg!" grinned Dig.

And the three Fourth-Formers moved along to the study which Angelo Lee shared with Bates of the Fourth.

They found Angelo there.

Harold Bates, with a very far from amiable expression on his face, was at prep. Bates disliked extremely being "landed," as he called it, with the fool of the school in his study, and he made no secret of the fact. Most of the Form sympathised with Bates. It was no jest to have a fellow like Angelo for a study-mate.

"Hallo! Here he is!" said Blake, eyeing the new junior rather curiously. "Anything the matter, Lee?" Angelo was wriggling rather painfully, and in a standing position; he did not seem to want to sit down.

"He's been licked," said Bates.

"Dear me!" said Blake sympathetically. "And what did they lick you for, Lee?"

"I don't know," said Angelo simply. "Mr. Ratcliff objected to my calling him an old donkey—perhaps it was that."

"Oh, my hat! Perhaps!" gasped Blake.

"It's barely possible!" chuckled Dig. "Housemasters are rather particular in these little matters."

"And the Head seemed annoyed at my knocking over his reading-lamp," said Angelo. "In fact, very cross indeed!"

"Accidents will happen," said Blake solemnly. "Accidents are bound to happen—especially when you're about, old bean. Do you know it's getting towards bed-time?"

"Is it?" said Angelo.

"Have you decided where to sleep?"

Bates of the Fourth looked up quickly from his prep. Lee, being in the Fourth, had a bed in the Fourth Form dormitory, as a matter of course. Bates, catching the glimmer in Blake's eye, dropped his own to his prep again, with a grin. Blake & Co. were welcome to pull Angelo's leg to their hearts' content, as far as Harold Bates was concerned.

Angelo seemed to ponder.

"I haven't thought about it yet," he said.

"Hasn't your study-mate told you?" asked Blake severely. "Really, Bates, you might have told Lee that his room has been got specially ready for him. But it's all right. Come along, old bean, and I'll show you the room. Did you bring a night bag with you?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"The page took it upstairs," said Lee.

"Well, well, we can fix you up all right if your things are not in your room," said Blake. "This way."

"Thanks!"

Angelo Lee followed Blake & Co., leaving Bates of the Fourth grinning over his prep. Bates did not know whither Angelo was to be guided, but he guessed that the destination of the new boy was not the dormitory.

Blake went down the stairs from the Fourth Form passage, and paused on the landing to consider. Herries and Dig watched him rather curiously. They were as yet in the dark as to their study leader's intentions, though they guessed them to be of a humorous nature.

"You two fellows wait here," said Blake at last. "I'll come back after I've shown Lee to his room."

"Right-ho!"

"This way, Lee, old bean!"

Jack Blake took Angelo's arm quite affectionately and led him away. Dig and Herries watched them go, and almost gasped as Blake led his victim into the Sixth Form passage.

"The Sixth!" murmured Herries.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Dig.

"And that goat is going like a giddy lamb to the slaughter! Jevver see such a born idiot?"

"Well, hardly ever!" chuckled Dig.

Angelo Lee was new to school, and he was supposed to be an ass. But even a new fellow and an ass might have guessed, in the opinion of Herries and Dig, that a Fourth Form junior would not have a special room prepared for him. Angelo seemed to guess nothing as he accompanied Blake along the Sixth Form passage. He did not even seem to observe that Blake rather hurried his steps in that majestic quarter of the School House and kept a wary eye about him. Blake did not want to run into any of the Sixth while he was engaged on his jape. But the coast was clear; he knew that there was a meeting of the Sixth in the prefects' room.

Blake stopped at the door of Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, and opened it.

"Hop in!" he said.

"Why?" asked Angelo.

"You're going to sleep here."

"And am I to hop in?"

"Yes, of course."

Angelo lifted one foot from the floor and hopped into the study on one leg.

Blake viewed that proceeding with amazement.

"What on earth are you up to?" he ejaculated.

"Hopping in!" said Angelo innocently.

"Great pip!"

"You told me to hop in, didn't you?"

Blake drew a deep breath. Angelo was judged the fool of the school. But really it was hard to believe that any fellow could be such a fool as this.

"Oh! All right!" said Blake. "Quite so!"

He closed the door.

The study was unlighted, and Angelo struck a match. Blake blew it out again at once.

"You'll have enough light from the window," he said. "There's a moon; you can see all right. You can't have a light here."

"Is that a rule?" asked Angelo meekly.

Blake coughed.

"You do as you're told, and don't ask questions," he answered. "I'm taking a lot of trouble about you, as you—hem!—you're a new kid and don't know the ropes."

"You wouldn't have brought me here if I knew the ropes?" asked Angelo.

Blake chuckled involuntarily.

"No! Not quite! Never mind that, though. Now, you see, there's a bed in the corner in that alcove. Turn in there. As it's your first night at St. Jim's you sleep in your clothes. See?"

"I see."

"Don't even take your boots off," said Blake. "There are a lot of rules in a school like this, and you can't expect to learn them all on your first day. Just do as you're told."

"Certainly!" said Angelo.

"Well, good-night!" said Blake. "If any fellow comes in and disturbs you, just heave a pillow at him."

"Right-ho! Good-night!"

Blake left the study and closed the door on Angelo. He paused a moment at the door, wondering whether even the fool of St. Jim's would really go to bed with his boots on in a Sixth Form room. But he heard the sound of a fellow throwing himself on a bed, and was satisfied.

There was a cheery smile on Blake's face as he rejoined Herries and Dig. They gazed at him inquiringly.

"Where have you put him?" asked Digby breathlessly.

"Kildare's room."

"And he's idiot enough!" gasped Herries.

"My dear man! He's idiot enough to go to bed in the Housemaster's room, if I put him there!" yawned Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth will Kildare do, when he finds that born idiot in bed in his room?" gasped Herries.

"I wonder!" said Blake meditatively.

And the three Fourth-Formers walked away cheerily to the junior Common-room, wondering what Kildare of the Sixth would say and do when he found a junior asleep in his room. Probably it would be something emphatic; which might have an enlightening effect upon the fool of the school. Blake & Co. charitably hoped so.

CHAPTER 4

Tom Does His Best!

TOM MERRY came down after prep with Manners and Lowther, and found a general smile encircling the junior Common-room. The chums of the Shell glanced round inquiringly.

"What's the merry jest?" asked Lowther. "Jolly old Angelo been up to some more?"

"It's too bad, really," said Levison of the Fourth, with a laugh. "Blake has been pulling that new idiot's leg."

Manners and Lowther smiled, while a worried look came over Tom's face.

"Look here, Blake, don't play the goat with Lee," said the captain of the Shell. "You know I'm looking after him."

"Same here," said Blake.

"Quite!" grinned Digby. "Why should you and Gussy and Figgy be the only Good Samaritans at St. Jim's? We're taking a hand in looking after Angelo. Why not?"

"Echo answers why!" chuckled Herries.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But where is he now?" asked Tom.

"Gone to bed," said Blake affably.

"That's all right, then," said Tom, with a rather suspicious glance at Blake's grinning face. "You haven't led him into the wrong dorm, I suppose, or anything like that?"

"Never thought of it," said Blake. "My hat! What a lark to have planted him in the Fifth Form dorm, in Cutts' bed!"

"Cutts would cut up rusty," grinned Cardew.

"Kildare won't be so crusty as Cutts would be," remarked Clive of the Fourth. "Still, it's rather too bad."

"Kildare!" repeated Tom. "Look here, Blake, where is Lee? Tell me what you've done with him?"

"Taken him to his sleeping-quarters, that's all," smiled Blake. "I'm always kind to kids who don't know their way about. I thought he mightn't like a crowd in the dorm; so I've given him a special room. Kildare's room in the Sixth Form passage, to be exact."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Monty Lowther. "Mean to say he was idiot enough to go to bed in a Sixth Form room?"

"He's idiot enough to go to bed in the pantry or the Form-room cupboard."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter in the room. Tom Merry could not help joining in it; but he was very soon serious again. His promise to Cousin Ethel was on his mind.

"You ass, Blake! It means a licking for him, when Kildare finds him there," said Tom.

"I've warned him to buzz a pillow at anybody who disturbs his balmy slumbers," chuckled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors. The bare idea of Angelo "buzzing" a pillow at the captain of the school made them shriek.

Tom Merry turned to the door of the Common-room. The jest on the simple Angelo might be a good one; but Tom was mindful of his word to Cousin Ethel. There was time yet to rescue Lee from his perilous position.

"Hold on!" roared Blake. "Where are you going?"

"I'm going to root him out, fathead."

"Don't spoil a good joke, old man," urged Monty Lowther.

"Chuck it, Tom," said Manners. "Let him rip."

But Tom Merry did not heed. Kildare was a good-tempered fellow, and might be merciful to the junior whom he found in his room; but it was very probable that Angelo would be licked before he could explain—even if he had sense enough to explain himself, which Tom doubted. Tom Merry hurried along to the Sixth Form passage, hoping that he would be in time to "root" out Angelo before the captain of St. Jim's came to his quarters.

But as he entered the passage sacred to the great men of the Sixth, Tom found half a dozen of the seniors in sight there. The meeting in the prefects' room was over. Tom—owing to his concern for Angelo earlier in the evening—was late down from prep; and he was too late for Angelo. Eric Kildare was standing at the door of his study, chatting with Darrell of the Sixth. He glanced at Tom, as the junior came scudding round the corner.

Tom halted abruptly.

With Kildare standing in his study doorway, evidently there was nothing doing. The door was wide open, and Tom could see into the room. The Sixth Form rooms at St. Jim's were study and bed-room combined; the great men of the top Form did not sleep in dormitories like the smaller fry. Kildare's bed was in an alcove, with a tall screen standing beside it to shut it off from the study. The screen was in its place, the alcove and the bed hidden behind it; and evidently Kildare, so far, did not know that his bed had been raided.

"Want anything, kid?" asked the captain of St. Jim's, rather puzzled by Tom's hurried manner, and his curious stare into the study.

"N-n-no," stammered Tom.

"Then cut."

Tom Merry faded away round the corner of the passage.

He found seven or eight other juniors there, who had followed him. They were all grinning cheerily. Nobody but Tom Merry seemed concerned about the fate of the hapless Angelo.

"Too late, what?" asked Cardew.

"Kildare's there," said Tom.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all right," said Blake. "Kildare will give him a lick with the ashplant; he won't wallop him as Knox of the Sixth would. I thought of putting the idiot in Knox's study first; but I gave it up out of sheer kindness of heart."

"It isn't cricket to play japes on a born fool," said Tom.

"Born fools shouldn't come to St. Jim's," said Blake. "There are special schools for idiots. St. Jim's isn't one of them."

"New kids always have their legs pulled, old bean," said Lowther. "But Lee is a record, even for a new kid. Of all the chumps—"

"Of all the fatheads—" said Manners.

Langton of the Sixth came along. He glanced at the group of juniors.

"What are you fags hanging about for?" he asked.

"Only to catch sight of your handsome chivvy, old bean," said Cardew. "It's such a pleasure to see you."

"Cut off," said Langton.

The juniors retreated. Most of them were laughing, but Tom Merry could not help feeling worried. It was getting towards bed-time now for the juniors, and there was not much time left to effect the rescue of Angelo. At half-past nine he would be expected to turn up in the Form dormitory with the rest of his form. Blake expected Kildare to discover him before then; but, so far, Angelo had not been discovered.

At a quarter past nine Tom Merry strolled along to the Sixth Form passage again, hoping to find the coast clear, and to get an opportunity of extracting Angelo.

The seniors were in their studies and there was a light under Kildare's door. It was possible that Kildare was in some other study, however, and Tom tapped at his door, hoping to find the room vacant.

"Come in!"

Kildare was at home!

Tom did not enter, however. Having discovered that the captain of the school was there, he beat a rapid retreat. He could not extract Angelo from Kildare's bed, under Kildare's eyes.

"Come in!" repeated Kildare.

Tom Merry turned the corner.

Kildare rose and opened his study door, and stared into the passage. It was empty. With a puzzled look, the Sixth-Former returned to his table, and sat down to Greek. Apparently it had been a runaway knock; an extraordinary trick for anyone to play on so great a man as the head-prefect and captain of the school. Kildare frowned over his Greek.

Tom Merry waited round the corner of the passage in a worried frame of mind. If Kildare left his study for only a couple of minutes it would be time enough for the Shell fellow to dash in, seize Angelo, and run him out of the room. Kildare was likely enough to drop in on Langton or Darrell for a chat. Tom was, naturally, not aware that the Sixth-Former had sat down to do a solid hour at Greek before bed.

After ten minutes, Tom resolved to try again. He glanced into the Sixth Form passage, discerned that it was vacant, and tiptoed along to Kildare's door.

Tap!

"Come in!"

Kildare was still there.

"Oh dear!" murmured Tom.

And he scudded back to the corner, and backed round it into cover.

Kildare of the Sixth opened his door.

His face wore a portentous frown as he stared into the empty passage. Evidently—to Kildare's mind—someone was playing a trick on him. Tricks of that kind were not to be played with impunity on the head of the Sixth. Kildare closed his study door without re-entering the room. He stepped across the passage into the window recess opposite his study door. There he waited, with a grim expression on his face. If the unknown japer returned once more to give another runaway knock, Kildare was ready for him—and ready to make an example of him.

Tom Merry waited, in a troubled mood, round the corner. Minute followed minute, and it was just on bed-time. He could hear the juniors going up to their dormitories. He resolved to make one last attempt to extract Angelo; and once more, after a cautious glance into the passage, he tiptoed to Kildare's door and tapped. If Kildare was

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there still, the thing had to be given up, and Angelo left to take his chance.

Unfortunately for Tom, Kildare was not in the study, but in the window recess on the other side of the passage, watching. He had a full view of Tom tiptoeing to the door and tapping.

The next moment Tom gave a gasp as a heavy hand descended on his shoulder from behind.

He spun round and stared at Kildare.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

"You!" said Kildare grimly. "Come into my study."

"I—I say, Kildare—" stammered Tom.

"You needn't say anything."

The prefect marched the junior into the room and picked up his ashplant.

"Bend over!" he said laconically.

"I—I say—"

"Bend over!"

Whack, whack!

"Now cut," said the captain of St. Jim's. "And next time you play these fag tricks, Tom Merry, don't play them on the captain of the school. Get out!"

"Oh dear!"

Tom Merry got out. He wriggled rather painfully as he joined the Shell fellows on their way to the dormitory. Kildare had a hefty hand with the ashplant. Angelo had to take his chance now. There was nothing more that Tom Merry could do for the fool of the school.

CHAPTER 5.

Missing!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was finishing his belated prep when Blake looked into Study No. 6 to tell him that it was bed-time. The swell of St. Jim's joined the rest of the Fourth on their way to dorm.

"Where's Lee?" asked Gussy, glancing round the Fourth Form dormitory.

"Lee?" repeated Blake.

"Yaas. The new chap, you know. Where is he?"

"Echo answers where," said Blake.

"Bates, deah boy, do you know where Lee is?"

"Don't know and don't care," returned Bates. "I hope he's lost somewhere where he won't be found again, that's all!"

"Weally, Bates—"

Darrell of the Sixth looked into the Fourth Form dormitory. It was Darrell's turn of duty to see lights out for the Fourth.

"Turn in," he said.

"Lee hasn't come up, Dawwell," said Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps I had bettah go and look for him. He's a new kid, you know, and hasn't vewy much sense."

Darrell of the Sixth glanced over the juniors.

"Anybody know where the new kid is?" he asked.

No reply.

All the School House portion of the Fourth Form knew where Lee was, with few exceptions, but they did not intend to tell Darrell.

"Young ass!" growled the prefect. "You kids turn in while I look for him."

Darrell left the dormitory.

There was a chuckle when he was gone. Wheresoever Darrell of the Sixth looked for Angelo, he was not likely to look in a Sixth Form study. Arthur Augustus wore a worried expression.

"Bai Jove! Where can that ass have got to?" he said.

"I told him bed-time was half-past nine, you know. I was vewy particulah to tell him. I suppose he's got sense enough to tell the time, ass as he is."

"I wonder!" said Blake.

"He, he, he!" chortled Trimble.

"Do you know where he is, Twimble?" asked Arthur Augustus, turning his eyeglass on the fat junior.

"He, he, he!"

"Oh, he's about the House somewhere," said Blake. "He can't have gone back to the New House, after what he got from Ratty. I dare say somebody will find him by the time the Sixth go to bed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I twust that nobody has been playin' twicks on Lee," said Arthur Augustus.

"What a trusting nature!" said Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth turned in with many chuckles. They were all in bed when Darrell came back to the dormitory, accompanied by Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House. Blake began to feel a little misgiving as the Housemaster entered. He had taken it for granted that Kildare

THE person who invented
"prep"
Deserves our condemna-
tion;
A quite unnecessary step
Was evening preparation.
Why should we have to sit and
sweat
Until our heads are throb-
bing?
The whole idea is "tommy-
rot,"
It makes me feel like
sobbing!

CAMEOS OF SCHOOL LIFE

By
THE ST. JIM'S RHYMESTER.

"EVENING PREP."

When study fires are blazing
high,
And curtains drawn together,
We'd gladly be beneath the
sky,
However wild the weather.
But we must sit indoors and
slog
At Q. Horatius Fiacus,
And many another dull old
dog
Whose works torment and
rack us!

Or at the local picture-show
We'd like to take our leisure,
Sitting contented in a row,
Our faces bright with
pleasure.
We'd love to watch the Wild
West men,
The daring, dashing Mexi-
cans,
Instead of sitting in our den
And poring over lexicons!

And so with throbbing heads
we sit,
Steeping ourselves in know-
ledge;
Until we feel that we are fit
To rule St. James' College!
Why, even Solomon the Wise
Could not have gained such
learning
As we who sit with aching
eyes
And foreheads hot and burn-
ing!

But prep is laid aside at last,
We revel in our freedom;
With brighter books an hour is
passed,
It is a treat to read 'em!
Adventure stories, grand and
rare,
Supply our recreation,
And charm away the carking
care
Of evening preparation!

But evening prep must not be
skipped,
Its posers we must fathom,
Or in the morning we'll be
"tripped"
By questions put by Lathom.
Those who neglected overnight
To do their preparation,
Will feel the cane's tormenting
bite
And suffer castigation!



would discover Angelo in his study. It really was remarkable that the discovery had not been made before bed-time. It seemed extraordinary that Kildare could sit at work in his study, with a fellow sleeping within a few feet of him, without being aware of the fellow's presence. There was a screen round the prefect's bed, and perhaps Angelo did not snore. All the same, it was surprising that his presence there could remain unknown. As the Housemaster came into the dormitory with a grave face, Blake realised that the matter was getting a little serious. It was impossible for the absence of a member of the junior Form to be passed over.

"My boys," said Mr. Railton, "it seems that the new junior, Lee, has not come to bed. Does anyone know what has become of him?"

Silence.

"Bates, you are Lee's study-mate. Do you know where he is?"

"I haven't seen him since he left my study, before nine, sir," answered Bates, quite truthfully.

"The boy seems to be rather a fool, sir," said Darrell. "Is it possible that he has left the House again?"

"I suppose it is possible," said Mr. Railton. "The prefects had better search for him; and if he is not found in the House, I will go over to the New House and make inquiries. Perhaps the matter had better be reported to the Head, if he cannot be found in the School House."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Blake, in dismay.

Undoubtedly the matter was getting serious, with the

Housemaster and the House prefects, and even the Head, brought into it. Blake realised that he could not let the affair get as far as the Head. His little jest on Angelo bade fair to turn the whole House into commotion, which certainly was not what Blake wanted. The results were likely to be much too painful for the practical joker.

Blake sat up in bed.

"If you please, sir—" he said meekly.

Mr. Railton turned back from the door, and glanced at him inquiringly.

"What is it, Blake? Do you know where Lee is?"

"I—I think he's in a—a Sixth Form study, sir," stammered Blake.

"A Sixth Form study! How could he be in a Sixth Form study?" exclaimed Mr. Railton, in astonishment.

"I—I think he went to bed there, sir."

"You think that a Fourth Form boy went to bed in a Sixth Form room, Blake?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Ye-es, sir. I—I fancy that somebody was pulling his leg, sir, and—and put him into Kildare's study, sir!"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Mr. Railton looked very hard at Blake.

"Such foolish pranks should not be played upon a new boy, who appears to be very simple," he said. "I will not ask you the name of the boy who played this foolish trick on Lee, Blake; but if his name should come to my knowledge, I shall cane him severely. Darrell, will you go to Kildare's study, and bring Lee here at once?"

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"Certainly, sir!"

Darrell left the dormitory; and Mr. Railton waited there, with a frowning brow. Blake lay silent, feeling very glad that Mr. Railton had forbore to ask him the name of the practical joker.

There were footsteps in the passage at last, and Darrell of the Sixth came back. Kildare came with him; but to the astonishment of the Fourth, there was no sign of Angelo.

"Well, where is Lee?" asked Mr. Railton.

"He was not in Kildare's study, sir," said Darrell. "There was no sign of him there."

"He had not been in my study, sir, that I am aware of," said Kildare. "Certainly not while I have been there myself."

Blake gasped.

"My hat!" murmured Herries. "Where the thump—"

Mr. Railton turned to Blake again. His face was growing grim and angry. The Housemaster's time was of value; and he was wasting it.

"Blake!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Blake.

"Are you sure that Lee was in Kildare's study?"

"Yes, sir!"

"My bed looks as if someone had lain on it for a few minutes, sir," said Kildare. "But certainly there was no one there when Darrell came in to look for Lee."

"It is extraordinary," said Mr. Railton. "Some foolish trick seems to have been played on Lee. He must be searched for at once."

The Housemaster and the two prefects left the dormitory, leaving the light still burning. The juniors sat up in bed as soon as they had gone, and there was a buzz of voices.

"I wegard this as wotten," said Arthur Augustus warmly. "Some fwightful ass has been pullin' Lee's leg. You know who it was, Blake?"

"Yes, fathead!" growled Blake.

"Weally, Blake, I object to bein' called a fathead!"

"I object to your being one," grunted Blake.

"Wats! Of course, you cannot tell Mr. Railton who was playin' silly tricks on Lee, as that would be sneakin'. But you can tell me, Blake, so that I can give the pwactical jokin' ass a feahful thwashin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows, I fail to see anythin' to cackle at in that remark. Blake, I insist upon knowin' who played this trick on Lee."

"Fathead!"

"Do you know who it was, Hewwies?"

"Ass!"

"Do you know who it was, Dig?"

"Chump!"

"Weally, you cheekay wottals—"

"Where can the howling ass be?" asked Levison of the Fourth. "He seems to have cleared out of Kildare's study soon after he was left there. He must have been gone before Tom Merry started rooting after him there. But where has he got to?"

"Goodness knows!" said Blake crossly. "No accounting for what a footling fathead like that may or may not do. Blessed if it's worth the trouble of pulling such a born idiot's leg."

"Bai Jove! Was it you, Blake?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's guessed it!" said Cardew. "What a brain!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, cheese it, Gussy!" said Blake. "There'll be trouble enough if that footling ass doesn't turn up, without you wagging your chin. Give us a rest."

"I wegard you—"

"Do you want my pillow?" roared Blake.

"Pway don't wear at me, Blake. I have mentioned to you more than once that I dislike bein' woreated at," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "Considerin' that I have taken Lee undah my pwotection, I wegard your conduct—"

"Will you dry up?"

"I wegard your conduct as wepwchensible in the extveme," said Arthur Augustus severely, "and if you were not a fwend of mine, Blake, I should feel that there was no alternative but to give you a feahful thwashin'. In the cires—"

"Are you wound up?" hissed Blake.

"I feel bound to say— Yawooooop!" roared Arthur Augustus, as Blake's pillow whizzed through the air, and he caught it with his aristocratic features.

"Goal!" chuckled Wildrake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Bai Jove! You feahful wuffian—gwooooooh!"

"The bolster's coming next, if you don't ring off!" said Blake ferociously.

And Arthur Augustus D'Afey, in great wrath and indig-

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nation, rang off, while the Fourth continued to discuss the absence of Angelo, and to surmise what could possibly have become of the fool of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 6.

A Surprise for the Fifth!

"OH gad!"

Gerald Cutts, of the Fifth Form, uttered that exclamation.

Cutts of the Fifth had arrived at the door of the senior dormitory, with St. Leger and Prye and Gilmore, his pals. The rest of the Fifth were trailing along after them. It was the hour when the Fifth Form went to roost; and Cutts was greatly surprised to find the dormitory door fastened. He turned the handle, he shook the door; he rattled it, and still the door did not open. And Cutts ejaculated angrily.

"Some cheerful idiot has locked this door," he said. "We're locked out of our dorm, you men."

"Queer!" said St. Leger, leaning idly on the wall. St. Leger, the slacker of the Fifth, was willing to wait till the key turned up, and he leaned on the wall and yawned.

"Some fag lark, I suppose," said Cutts savagely.

"Here, what's the trouble?" Lefevre, the captain of the Fifth, came along. "Why don't you open the door?"

"It's locked."

"What rot!"

"Try it for yourself," sneered Cutts.

Lefevre tried the door, and looked a little sheepish when he found that it actually was locked.

"Who on earth has done this?" he exclaimed blankly.

"Some cheeky fag—one of those young cads in Study No. 10 in the Shell, very likely," growled Cutts.

"And taken away the key, by gad!" said Prye. "I say, what are we goin' to do. Hang on here till Railton comes up?"

"May as well go back to the studies," said Gilmore. "Somebody ought to cut off and tell Mr. Railton."

"Railton's busy hunting for a new fag they've lost," sneered Cutts. "Two or three prefects have been rooting along by the Fifth Form studies askin' after him. Let's go back to the studies—we're not to blame for stayin' up late in the circumstances."

"Oh, rot!" said Lefevre. "It's past ten o'clock. We've got to get the dorm open somehow. I wish I knew who'd bagged that key!"

"I'm goin' down," said Cutts.

"Oh, hang on!" yawned St. Leger. "Railton will be here soon—he turns out the glim for us, you know. Hang on an' save trouble."

"Here he comes!" murmured Jones major.

The School House master came along the passage with quick strides, his face frowning. Since the Fourth had gone to their dormitory, search had been taking place for Angelo Lee—without result. All the studies had been searched, and no trace had been found of Lee. Whither the new boy had disappeared was a mystery. There were endless places in the old, rambling School House where a fellow could have lain hidden, certainly; but it was not to be supposed that Angelo had deliberately hidden himself. What had become of him was an irritating puzzle.

Mr. Railton glanced at the seniors ranged along the passage, and raised his eyebrows. He had expected to find the Fifth ready for the light to be turned out in their quarters.

"What does this mean, Lefevre?" he asked, addressing the captain of the Form.

"Somebody's locked the door, sir."

"Upon my word!"

Mr. Railton tried the door of the Fifth Form dormitory. It did not budge. The Housemaster, already irritated, looked greatly disturbed and angry.

"I suppose this is some foolish, practical joke!" he exclaimed. "I shall have to use the duplicate key."

And the Housemaster went down the staircase again to fetch a key from his study.

Cutts grinned.

"Railton looks in a bate," he remarked. "Hardly ever seen him look so rattly. I wonder who bagged the key?"

"Hark!" exclaimed Prye.

There was a sound in the dormitory, as of a fellow turning in a bed. In the silence of the House, it was quite audible. The Fifth-Formers stared at one another almost in stupefaction, as it dawned upon them that the fellow who had locked the door was inside the dormitory.

"He—he—he's there!" babbled Prye.

"Gone to bed in our dorm!" exclaimed St. Leger. "My only summer hat! What lunatic have we got here?"

Cutts rapped on the door with his knuckles. His first

supposition—a natural one—had been that the key had been turned in the outside of the lock and then taken away by some mischievous junior. Now he realised that the door had been locked on the inside, and that the key was still there.

"Here! Open this door!" he shouted.
The seniors heard a long yawn.
"Do you hear?" bawled Cutts angrily.
"Eh?"
"Open this door!"
"Why?"
"We want to come in, you idiot!"
"Well, you can't!"
"C-c-can't!" stuttered Gerald Cutts.
"No, I'm gone to bed."
"Some blinkin' lunatic, you men," said St. Leger. "Stand ready when the door's open. He may be dangerous."
"I fancy I guess who it is," said Cutts. "There's a new kid in the Fourth, who's missing from his dorm, and can't be found. A footlin' idiot from what I've heard—a little weak in the head. That's the merchant who's locked himself in our dorm." Cutts of the Fifth rapped on the door again. "Is that you, Lee?"
"My name's Lee—Angelo Lee."
"You're in the Fifth Form dorm. Get out of it!"
"Can't!"
"You cheeky little scoundrel—"
"Would you mind being quiet out there? I want to go to sleep!"
"You can't go to sleep in a senior dormitory!"
"That's all right; I don't mind!"
"You—you—you don't mind!" stuttered Cutts. "Are you a blithering lunatic?"
"No: are you?"
"Why, I—I—I—"
Cutts broke off as Mr. Railton came hurrying up with a key in his hand. The Housemaster shoved it into the key-hole, but it did not go quite in. The key was in the lock inside.
"There's a kid in the dorm, sir," said Lefevre, "a kid named Lee—he seems to have locked himself in."

Mr. Railton started.
"Lee! That is the boy I have been searching for for more than half an hour. Are you sure he is in the dormitory, Lefevre?"
"He says so, sir!"
"Upon my word!"
Mr. Railton rapped sharply at the door.
"Lee! If you are there, open this door at once!"
"Go away!"
"What? What?"
"You're keeping me awake!"
"Kik-kik-keeping you awake!" stuttered the Housemaster.
"Lee, I command you to admit me instantly."
"Rot!"
"Bless my soul! D-d-did you say rot, Lee?" gasped Mr. Railton.
"Yes."
"The boy must be insane!" exclaimed the Housemaster.
"Lee! I am Mr. Railton—your Housemaster. I command you to unlock this door!"
"I'm in bed."
"Get out of bed at once!"
"I'm tired."
"I command you to get out of bed immediately, Lee. Do you understand that it is your Housemaster speaking?"
"Oh, go away and let a fellow sleep," came Lee's tired voice. "I'm fed-up with this, I can tell you."
Mr. Railton breathed hard. The Fifth Form fellows stared hard at one another. It was an absolutely unprecedented occurrence at St. Jim's. There were cheeky fellows in the Lower Forms—plenty of them. But this was the limit. No junior of St. Jim's had ever ventured to talk to a Housemaster like this before in the memory of the oldest inhabitant.
"Must be mad!" murmured Lefevre.
"Lee!" shouted Mr. Railton.
"Dry up!"
"What? What?"
"Cheese it!"
"Shall I fetch the Head, sir?" asked Cutts officiously.



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.

THE SOLUTION.

MY readers have, by this time, seen the topping little puzzle presented free with every copy of this week's GEM. Doubtless they are already doing their best to solve it. Then again, some may perhaps have found the trick of putting those footballers in their right places without difficulty. It just depends on the kind of start one makes. But in any event, it will be agreed on all sides that our Free Gift is certainly worth having. Now those of you who find this puzzle too strong for you can look forward to a full solution of it in next week's number, together with explanatory diagrams. So don't destroy your puzzle, even if you do get out of temper with it a bit.

TRY IT ON YOUR PAL!

Here's a suggestion that may be of interest to some of you. If you have succeeded in solving the puzzle it would be a good idea to try it on your pals. To do that it would, of course, be advisable to erase the marks made by the various folds. This can be done by damping a piece of blotting-paper, slipping the puzzle between the blotting-paper, and ironing it with a warm iron. The creases in the puzzle will disappear, and your pal will be able to concentrate his powers on solving the puzzle without having any lines left by you to guide him. It's worth doing, I consider.

"THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY."

I have not been able to give very much prominence to this stunning library of ours just recently owing to our talks on Free Gifts, Annuals, and other matters of interest to my large body of readers. But I feel that now's the time to jog your mind about the two numbers of this Library which will appear on the bookstalls Friday, October 1st.

No. 37 is a fine yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, and is entitled, "The Outsider of Greyfriars." No. 38 is of special interest to you, for it deals with Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. The title you can look for is, "One of the Best." And you'll agree when you've read it that that phrase aptly sums up the quality of the story apart from its title. Don't forget—Friday, October 1st. Give an order for these Libraries now!

NEXT WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAMME:

"THE SCAPEGRACE OF ST. JIM'S!"

By Martin Clifford.

Angelo Lee, the new boy at St. Jim's, is certainly making the fur fly. He's simply asking for the sack. Next week's grand long complete story will keep your interest at a high pitch. Note the title above, and be prepared for something extra good, chums.

"WHITE EAGLE!"

By Arthur Patterson.

There will be another ripping long instalment of this amazing story of New Mexico. How do you like Hunks? Isn't he a friendly sort of fellow; just the dog most of us pine to possess? Well, you'll read more about young Hunks in next week's GEM, and you'll be saying at the end of the instalment that Tom Holt is indeed a lucky chap to have a pal like Hunks.

THE TUCK HAMPERS!

The full page display of readers' jokes I have been featuring for the last two weeks will be well received, I have not the slightest doubt, likewise the delicious hampers full of wholesome tuck which I am awarding to every reader whose joke appears on our Tuck Hamper page. Now, you would like a Tuck Hamper, wouldn't you? Well, then, pile in with that coupon on page 16 "foot sweet." Chin, chin, chums!

Your Editor.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 971.

"Certainly not, Cutts! I cannot have the headmaster disturbed to deal with a foolish junior boy. The door must be opened. Lee, I command you to open this door without further delay!"

Snore!

"Do you hear me, Lee?"

Snore!

"Upon my word! The boy has actually gone to sleep!" said Mr. Railton, agast. "This is—is—extraordinary."

The Housemaster was nonplussed. With the key jammed in the lock inside, the duplicate key was useless. Forcing the door was hardly to be thought of; it was of thick oak, and the lock was strong. Such an uproar at that hour of the night was not to be contemplated.

"What are we to do, sir?" asked Gerald Cutts, with a subdued grin. "Shall we go back to the studies?"

"No; no! I hardly know—"

"What about the windows, sir?" asked Lefevre. "I could get a ladder from Taggles, sir—"

"Yes; a very good suggestion, Lefevre!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "Pray do so as quickly as you possibly can."

"Very well, sir!"

The captain of the Fifth hurried away.

Mr. Railton waited—the Fifth Form waited. The search for the missing Angelo was over now—he was found, though he was still out of reach. What Mr. Railton was thinking of the extraordinary occurrence, the Fifth-Formers did not know; but his expression boded trouble to the happy Angelo when the door should be opened.

But there was a long wait. Many long minutes were occupied in rousing out Taggles, and getting the ladder and conveying it to the window of the Fifth Form dormitory. Mr. Railton waited, his brow growing darker and darker, the Fifth-Formers subduing their smiles. Never had they seen Mr. Railton so disturbed, and they found it a little entertaining. But there was a sound at last in the dormitory. The light came on and gleamed under the door; then the key turned in the lock.

The door was thrown open by Lefevre in the dormitory. Mr. Railton strode in, with the Fifth Form at his heels.

CHAPTER 7.

Asinine Angelo!

ANGELO sat up in bed.

He was surprised.

But he was quite calm; and a cheery and confiding smile played over his artless face as he looked at the angry Housemaster and the staring seniors. He had selected Cutts' bed for his accommodation; and Cutts, noticing the fact, made an enraged stride towards him. But the Housemaster waved him back. The matter was not for Cutts of the Fifth to deal with.

"Lee!" thundered the Housemaster. "Get out of that bed at once!"

Lee blinked at him.

"I'm quite comfortable here, thank you, sir."

"Lefevre, remove him from that bed."

The captain of the Fifth removed Angelo from the bed, promptly and effectively. He grasped Angelo with a hefty grasp, and sent him rolling out on the floor. There was a roar from Angelo.

"Get up, boy!" snapped the Housemaster.

"Ow! Wow! Wow!"

Angelo scrambled to his feet.

"What do you mean by going to bed in a senior dormitory, Lee?" demanded Mr. Railton. "Answer me! What did you mean by it?"

"I meant to go to sleep, sir."

"What?"

"Sleep!" said Angelo innocently.

"Boy!" gasped Mr. Railton. "If this is meant for impertinence—"

"You asked me, sir," murmured Angelo.

"Possibly you did not know that this was a senior dormitory," said Mr. Railton, eyeing him. "You are new here. But you cannot fail to be aware that you must obey the orders of a Housemaster. I commanded you to open the door, and you disobeyed me."

"Are you a Housemaster, sir?"

"Certainly!"

"What is a Housemaster?"

"Eh?"

"Oh, gad!" murmured St. Leger. "The jolly old innocent doesn't know what a Housemaster is. Potty, of course!"

Mr. Railton looked at the new junior long and hard. He had heard a good deal already about the fool of the school. Mr. Lathom, of the Fourth, had told him of Angelo, and of his fixed opinion that the boy was an idiot, and ought to be sent away from the school. Angelo's present line of conduct assuredly seemed to confirm Mr. Lathom's opinion.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 971.

"Lee! I hardly know what to say to you," said Mr. Railton at last. "If you really are as stupid as would appear, I scarcely care to punish you. But in that case, this school is no place for you. I shall speak to the headmaster about you to-morrow. In the meantime, follow me."

"Thank you, sir!"

"Put on your clothes first, you stupid boy!"

"Very well, sir," said Angelo meekly.

The new junior dressed himself, and followed Mr. Railton from the dormitory, leaving most of the Fifth laughing.

The Housemaster led him to the Fourth Form dormitory, where the light was still burning, and the Fourth wide awake.

"Bai Jove! Here he is!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"The giddy prodigal's home at last!" murmured Cardew.

"Railton looks no end pleased—I don't think!"

"There is your bed, Lee!" The Housemaster pointed to the vacant bed in the dormitory. "Get into it immediately."

"Yes, sir."

Angelo plunged into bed with his clothes on. Mr. Railton watched that proceeding with almost a dazed look.

"Lee! Undress yourself before you go to bed. Are you an utter idiot?"

"I hope not, sir," said Angelo. "You told me to get into bed immediately, sir. My father told me always to do as I was told, sir."

"I—I meant, undress yourself and get into bed immediately, you obtuse boy!" snapped Mr. Railton.

"Oh, very well, sir."

There was a chuckle along the row of beds in the Fourth Form dormitory. Mr. Railton glanced round, and the chuckle died away. The Housemaster, at least, was not entertained by Angelo's amazing stupidity. From his point of view, it was not a laughing matter. On that point, the Fourth took the liberty of disagreeing with him, but they realised that they had better not chuckle till Mr. Railton was gone.

Angelo was in bed at last; and Mr. Railton, still frowning grimly, turned out the light and left the dormitory. As soon as the door had closed behind him, every fellow in the Fourth was sitting up in bed, and there was a buzz of voices. All the fellows wanted to know where Angelo had been, and what he had been doing, and they all seemed to want to know at once.

"Lee, you frabjous ass—"

"Where have you been?"

"Why didn't you stay where I put you?" demanded Blake.

"You footlin' chump, what have you been up to?"

"Pway tell us what has happened, Lee, deah boy?"

Angelo yawned.

"I've been in bed," he said. "I was disturbed by a lot of fellows—and that man Railton. Like his cheek to wake me up, wasn't it?"

"But you didn't stay where I put you?" exclaimed Blake.

"Did you tumble to it that it was a prefect's study?"

"That chap isn't such a fool as he makes out!" commented Cardew. "He knew jolly well you were pulling his leg. Blake, in putting him into Kildare's room, and he cleared after you'd left him there."

"Blessed if it doesn't look like it," admitted Blake. "But if he isn't a silly fool, what is he pretending to be one for?"

"Did you know it was Kildare's study, Lee, deah boy?" inquired Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Never heard of Kildare," said Angelo. "But I didn't like the bed, and didn't like the room. I went out to look for better quarters; and I seem to have got into the wrong dormitory. Does it matter which dormitory a fellow goes to sleep in?"

"Ha, ha! Just a few!" chuckled Lumley-Lumley.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"That accounts for it, then," said Angelo. "The Fifth Form fellows seemed rather excited—"

"You went to bed in the Fifth Form dormitory?" yelled Cardew.

"Yes."

"Oh, gad! Didn't they scrag you?"

"Why should they scrag me?" asked Angelo innocently.

"Bai Jove! The poor chap is weally the biggest ass that evah was," said Arthur Augustus. "I used to think that Twimble was the cwassiest ass that evah was, but he is quite bwright to this chap."

"Yah!" from Baggy Trimble.

"It is a fact, Twimble, deah boy. Compared with Lee, you are weally quite bwright," assured Arthur Augustus.

"You cheeky ass—"

"Weally, Twimble—"

"Mr. Railton says he is going to speak to the headmaster about me in the morning," said Angelo. "That's very kind of him, isn't it?"

"Oh, awfully!" chuckled Blake. "It means that he's going to tell Dr. Holmes that you're too footling an idiot to stay here, and that you had better be sent to the home for idiots where you belong."

"Pway don't wub it in, Blake. A born fool can't help

bein' a fool, you know," said Arthur Augustus. "Tempah the wind to the shorn lamb, you know. And I wepeat that it is wathah wotten to pull the leg of a sillay ass like Lee. I considah—"

"But is he such an ass?" asked Cardew. "He seems to have had sense enough to clear out of Kildare's room when Blake planted him there. Looks to me as if he's some sort of a peculiar humorist more than a born fool."

"My deah chap, he doesn't know enough to go in when it rains. That's why I'm lookin' aftah him, because he is such a sillay chump."

"A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind!" murmured Cardew.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Cardew, you duffah—"

"My opinion is, that that fellow is pullin' our leg," said Cardew. "Goodness knows why; but that's how it is, and the Head knows it, too."

"Rot!" said Blake. "He's the champion idiot; and my belief is that he will be sent home, and, in my opinion, the sooner the better!"

"Do you really think that I ought to be sent to a home for idiots?" inquired Angelo gently.

"I jolly well do!" said Blake, with emphasis.

"Will it be different from this school?" asked Angelo.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Why, you cheeky chump! I—"

"Bai Jove, you know, the fellow is hopeless!" said Arthur Augustus. "Do you think St. Jim's is anythin' like a home for idiots. Lee, you ass?"

"I may be mistaken," said Angelo mildly. "But I certainly did think so. Of course, I know that a fellow ought not to judge by appearances."

"Why, you littah ass—"

The dormitory door opened.

"There is a great deal of noise going on in this dormitory!" came Mr. Railton's severe voice. "Kindly be silent and go to sleep!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

And the discussion of the fool of the school ceased in the Fourth Form dormitory.

CHAPTER 8. Outrageous!

MANNERS of the Shell looked out of the window in the Shell dormitory, while the rising-bell was still clanging in the morning. Manners had a satisfied expression on his face.

"It's sunny!" he said.

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "Looks like keeping fine for the footer."

Manners grunted. He was not thinking of footer.

"I shall be able to do some printing this morning," he said. "I told you I got a good photograph yesterday."

"Did you?" murmured Tom, rather guiltily.

Tom Merry, like a true chum, took a more or less deep interest in photography—that being the hobby of Harry Manners. But his thoughts ran more naturally to football.

"Don't you remember?"

Tom Merry made a mental effort.

"Of—of course, old chap! You went out with your camera yesterday, while I was gone to the station with Figgins and

THIS IS WHAT THE "GEM" FOOTER PUZZLE —GIVEN AWAY FREE WITH THIS ISSUE— SHOULD LOOK LIKE IF YOU SOLVE IT CORRECTLY!



Those of you who find our FREE GIFT PUZZLE a bit of a teaser can look forward to the solution of it in NEXT WEEK'S "GEM," where instructions, complete with diagrams, will show you just what to do.—Editor.

D'Arcy, to meet that new fathead Lee. I hope you had more luck than I had."

"The born idiot never turned up!" said Monty Lowther. "I left those three asses to it, and went to the pictures. You might as well have come, Tom, as it turned out."

"Quite—wish I had," said Tom. "We hung up at the station for two or three trains, and that blinking chump Lee was at St. Jim's all the time, bless his silly head!"

"How did he get here, then, if he didn't come to the station?" asked Kangaroo of the Shell. "I've heard Blake say that he found the footling ass wandering in the quad with a bag and an umbrella. He didn't come in a car?"

"No; he seems to have walked in," said Tom. "He told us that he got a lift to the school, but never said what sort of a lift. Some motorist may have picked him up and dropped him near the school, I suppose. Anyhow, he didn't come by railway."

"And you were waiting at the station for him most of the afternoon!" chuckled Racke. "What a game!"

"I think I'd have punched his silly head, wasting a fellow's half-holiday like that!" said Grundy.

"Oh, his head is too silly to punch!" said Tom cheerily. "Besides, he didn't know we were at the station for him."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 971.

Manners gave another grunt. He had begun talking of his photographs, but the talk turned to the fool of St. Jim's. Tom Merry noticed the grunt, and came back to the original subject.

"You bagged some good pictures, Manners, old man?" he asked amicably.

"Well, I got one good one, at least," said Manners. "An aeroplane landed in Pepper's field, and I snapped it landing. Pepper's field isn't exactly the place for a plane to land; the pilot must have had some nerve. I got a good picture of it; in fact, I blew three of my films on it. I developed them last evening in the dark-room, and they're all ready for printing out. I shall get some good prints this morning if the sun keeps bright."

"Good!" said Tom cordially.

"Ripping!" said Monty Lowther.

Manners grinned. He knew that Tom Merry was thinking of football prospects, and Monty Lowther of japing the fool of St. Jim's. But they took as deep an interest as they could in his camera.

The Terrible Three went downstairs together, and Manners dropped in at Study No. 10 for his printing outfit and films. Then they walked out into the sunny quad before breakfast. Manners cocked a critical eye at the sun, which was fairly bright for the time of year.

"It will take some time," he remarked. "I fancy I'll plant out the printing-frames, and leave them while we take our trot round the quad—see?"

"Good idea!" said Tom heartily. "Let's watch you doing it."

"Let's!" assented Lowther.

Manners looked out for a favourable spot. He was very particular in printing out his negatives.

"Hallo, there's the prize idiot!" remarked Lowther.

There were few fellows out of the House so early. But Angelo Lee, it seemed, was an early bird. He was standing near the school flagstaff, his face upturned, his eyes on the fleecy sky.

Tom Merry followed his gaze, and observed an aeroplane, a mere spot in the distance, cleaving its way through the clouds. Angelo seemed interested in the flight of the plane; he watched it till it disappeared in the direction of Abbotsford Camp.

"Never seen an aeroplane before?" called out Monty Lowther.

Angelo looked round.

"Well, I've heard them spoken of," he said simply.

"Oh, my hat!"

Angelo glanced at the outfit in Manners' hands. The amateur photographer of the Shell was selecting a spot for his printing, and he decided on an old oaken bench near the flagstaff. There he carefully arranged the printing-frames with the films exposed to the sun.

"Might a fellow ask what you are doing?" inquired Angelo meekly.

Manners chuckled.

"An ass like you wouldn't understand," he said. "I suppose you've never gone in for photography?"

"I—I've heard about it," murmured Angelo. "You have a thing like a box or something, and you press a button or something, or turn a handle or something, and then there's a photograph. It seems quite simple."

"You've got it exactly!" said Manners, with deep sarcasm. "Perfectly simple! Any fool could do it, so you really ought to go in for it, Lee!"

"Do you think so?" said Angelo, with a cheery smile. "I should be so glad. You can lend me your camera."

"I don't think!" said Manners.

Angelo glanced at the printing-frames, and then stared. Something in the films seemed to attract his attention.

"Is that an aeroplane?" he asked.

"That's an aeroplane," said Manners. Even to an ass like Angelo, Manners was willing to talk about his hobby. "I got it in Pepper's field yesterday afternoon. A man landed there in a plane."

"Is it near this school?"

"Quite near."

"How very interesting!" said Angelo. "That looks like a boy standing beside the plane in one of the pictures."

"That's what it is," said Manners. "A boy got out of the plane after it landed."

"Some visitor for old Pepper, I suppose," said Lowther. "Rather a new thing for that old codger to get visitors by aeroplane."

"Forced landing, perhaps," said Tom Merry. "Pepper's field isn't the place a pilot would choose, if he could help it. I should think—unless he'd got a lot of nerve, anyhow. Might have bumped into old Pepper's barn, or into his cottage."

"What about that trot round the quad?" asked Lowther.

"Ready!" said Manners.

Angelo Lee sauntered away in one direction, while the

Terrible Three proceeded at a trot in another. They lost sight of the fool of the school, and, in fact, forgot his existence in a few minutes.

Kangaroo and Bernard Glyn came out of the House and joined them in their trot, and then Blake & Co. of the Fourth. They trotted past the New House, and exchanged chipping with Figgins and Kerr and Wynn who were in the doorway of Mr. Ratcliff's House. But Manners had not forgotten his outfit.

He headed for the flagstaff at last, and the other fellows trotted with him. It was close on time for prayers, and Manners hurried to the bench near the flagstaff. Then there was a roar.

The photo that gave Angelo's game away!



"I can see that born fool, Angelo, being allowed up in a photo!" said Manners dramatically, and he held up the photo. "The plane was there in Pepper's field, and standing beside D'Arcy. That's Lee!"

"What's this game?"

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" asked Tom.

"Some silly owl has lifted my frames!"

"Great Scott!"

The juniors gathered round the oaken bench in great surprise. Manners had left three printing-frames there, each with a negative exposed to the sun's rays, to print the photographs. All three printing-frames had vanished now. Evidently someone had come along and removed them. Why, was a mystery. Manners had often used that bench before for printing-out, and nobody had ever meddled with his things. Indeed, it was well known in the School House of St. Jim's that it was really safer to come between a lioness and her cubs than between Manners and his photographs. Manners was a fellow who took his hobby with seriousness—deadly seriousness.

"Bai Jove! What's happened, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Manners raved.

"My photographs! I left them here—three! Some blithering idiot has come along and lifted them!"

"Rotten joke!" said Blake.

"Joke!" said Manners. "It isn't a joke—it's an outrage! If they're exposed too long, they're done for. Waste of time and money."

"You can pwind out again from the same negatives, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I don't know vewy much about photography, but I think that is the case."

"Fathead!"



in an aeroplane," said Blake scornfully. "Tell me an easier one." "Up the photographic print. The juniors gathered round. "Beside the pilot was Angelo! "Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus "Lee!" (See Chapter 12.)

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Do you think I don't know that?" snorted Manners. "But I don't want to waste three prints. And where are the negatives?"

"Echo answers where!" murmured Glyn of the Shell.

"I suppose none of you fellows saw any silly ass mooching about here?" demanded Manners.

"The answer is in the negative," said Lowther.

Manners glared. He was in no humour for Monty Lowther's playful puns at that tragic moment.

"You ass!" he exclaimed. "Look here! I want my negatives! If this is a joke, I'll jolly well hammer the joker till he doesn't want to play any more jokes. Meddling with a fellow's photographs! Why, I—I—I—"

"There's the bell for prayers!" said Blake. "Come on!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"My negatives!" roared Manners.

Tom Merry caught his excited chum by the arm.

"All serene, old man. We'll find them after prayers. Can't be late, you know. Rotten bad form to be late for prayers. Come on!"

Manners breathed fury. But he realised that there was no help for it, and he went with his chums. But the expression on his face was one that a Prussian Hun, in his most Hunnish mood, might have envied. If some playful jester had handled Manners' negatives and spoiled the prints, as was very probable, there was a high old time in store for that jester when Manners of the Shell laid hands on him. Manners' ferocious expression left no doubt whatever on that point.

CHAPTER 9.

Amazing!

"F IGGIN'S!"

George Figgins of the New House came out after breakfast, with a big book under his arm. Figgins walked across the quad in the direction of the School House, book under arm, glancing round as if in search of someone. That was how he happened to come into contact with the Terrible Three, and was hailed by Manners of the Shell.

Figgins glanced at the three School House fellows. Tom Merry and Lowther had serious faces—Manners was red and wrathful. His hail to Figgy was in a by no means friendly tone. In fact, he scowled blackly at the New House man as he hailed him.

"Hallo!" said Figgins genially. "Anything up, old man? Rolled out of bed on the wrong side this morning—what?"

"Look here—"

"At present I'm looking for Lee, the new kid in your House," said Figgins. "I've got something belonging to him that I want to hand over. Seen him?"

"Blow Lee!"

"Blow him as hard as a hurricane, if you like," said Figgins genially. "He's the biggest idiot in the School House—present company excepted, of course!"

"Oh, don't be a funny ass!" snapped Manners. "Have you been playing fool tricks with my negatives?"

"Not guilty, my lord!" said Figgins.

"Somebody's pinched my printing-frames. I left them on the bench near the flagstaff!" hissed Manners. "Most likely it was some New House dummy playing fool tricks!"

Figgins smiled.

"Are you always as polite and civil as this early in the morning?" he inquired. "How your friends must enjoy your company, if you are!"

"Look here, collar him!" exclaimed Manners. "Bump the New House rotter, anyhow!"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Tom, with a worried look. "Don't mind him, Figgy! You know what Manners is like if anybody touches his photographs. He's insulted about a dozen fellows already over the blessed things!"

"I don't mind," said Figgins, laughing. "I haven't seen the things, really, Manners. If you've lost them, I'll help you look for them, if you like!"

"I haven't lost them! They've been lifted!" said Manners savagely. "Some blithering ass has taken them from where I left them to print. The prints will be spoiled; but that doesn't matter so much. It's the negatives I want back. They were taken off before brekker. I've got to find them before class, or—or—or—" Manners broke off, with dire threats unuttered. Words seemed to fail him.

"Too bad!" said Figgins sympathetically. "Some ass playing a practical joke, of course. Very likely you'll find them in your study, or in your desk in the Form-room, after you've got your wool off about it."

Manners started for the School House at a run, apparently to search there on Figgy's suggestion. Figgy looked after him with a grin.

"Poor old Manners!" said Lowther. "Best-tempered chap in the school; but he does get his rag out on this subject. What are you carting about that hefty volume for, Figgy?"

Figgins grinned, and held up the book. It was a large volume, and a heavy one, and evidently not a school book.

"That's why I'm looking for Lee," he said. "He left this in my study last evening. I suppose you know that some japer sent him over to the New House and told him to stay there—and he did. I was turning him out, for his own sake, you know, at lock-up, when Ratty came down on us, and he called Ratty an old donkey. I thought he would be barked for insulting a Housemaster; but it seems that he's still here."

Tom Merry laughed.

"He's such an idiot, I dare say he got off lightly for that (Continued on page 17.)

SIX DELICIOUS TUCK HAMPERS AWARDED TO 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. 2, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

EASY!

There were twin boys in the Murphy family, and at six months they could not be told apart. The neighbours used to wonder how their own mother knew which was which, and one afternoon Mrs. Murphy was asked how she managed to distinguish between the two youngsters. "A foine pair of boys you'll be having, Mrs. Murphy!" said the visitor. "But how do you lver tell them apart?" "Faith, and that's aisy, Mrs. O'Flaherty!" answered Mrs. Murphy. "I just put me finger in Dinnis' mouth, and if he bites, it's Moike!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to D. McCloy, 71, Thrale Road, Streatham, London, S.W. 16.

HOT LUCK!

Two tramps were sitting by the wayside when one of them said to the other: "I say, Bill, there was a time when I was better off, you know." "When was that?" asked Bill. "When I sat on a hot stove by mistake!" replied the other.—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to George Box, 325, Cooksey Road, Small Heath, Birmingham.

Each Hamper contains:

An Iced Cake, Chocolates, Biscuits, Jam, Sardines, Honey, Sweets, Figs, Lemonade, Etc.

HIS AMBITION!

Lady (to tramp): "And are you really content to spend your life walking round the country begging?" she asked severely. "No, lady," answered the ne'er-do-well. "Many's the time I've wished I had a car!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to G. Bayley, Old Eagles Hotel, Whitechurch, Shropshire.

A BUSINESS CALCULATION!

Motorist (to innkeeper who had charged an extravagant price for stabling his car for the night): "But, my good man, there must be some mistake here, surely! What's this eighty shillings for?" Innkeeper: "Well, sir, not 'aving 'ad a motor stop 'ere before, I don't know exactly what to charge. And as you were saying that it were forty horse-power, I charged two shillings for each horse!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to Alex. McFarlane, 294, Cumbernauld Road, Riddrie, Glasgow.

Owing to the interest taken by readers all over the world in this Weekly Joke Competition a Delicious Tuck Hamper will be awarded for EVERY joke published on this page. Cut out the coupon below while you are of the mind to win one of these NOVEL PRIZES.
Editor.

THREE TIMES TRIED!

Three boys entered a sweetshop. First Boy: "Pennyworth of aniseed-balls, please!" The shopkeeper fetched a ladder, and laboriously climbed to the top rung for the required article. Then he put the bottle back, took away the ladder, and asked the second lad what he would like. "A pennyworth of aniseed-balls, please!" said youngster No. 2. Angrily the shopkeeper again fetched the ladder and got the sweets; but before taking the ladder away, he asked the third boy if he wanted the same. "No," was the answer. The shopkeeper once more took away the ladder, and then asked what his third customer required. "A halfpennyworth of aniseed-balls, please!" replied the boy.—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to Eric Higgins, 2a, North View, Westbury Park, Bristol.

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VERY HEALTHY!

Visitor in remote Western village to cowboy: "Do many people die out here?" Cowboy: "I'll be blowed if they do! Why, we had to shoot two people to start a cemetery!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to Stanley Dean, 21, Buile Street, Higher Broughton, Salford.

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Not Such A Fool As He Looked!

(Continued from page 15.)

reason," he said. "We saw Ratty marching him in to the Head. He was licked. But you don't mean to say he was reading that book in your study?"

"He was reading it when we found him there," said Figgins, "and it was dropped when I helped him out. I'm looking for the silly ass to give it back to him. Some volume—what?"

Tom and Lowther stared at the bulky volume in astonishment. The title was, "The Theory of Flight," and evidently the book dealt with aerostatics. That Angelo, the fool of the school, should have been perusing such a volume, was simply amazing.

"I say, is this a jest?" asked Lowther. "Lee couldn't even begin to read that stack of giddy wisdom!"

"He was mugging it up like billy-ho when we found him in our study," said Figgins. "I picked up the book later, and it fairly knocked me out when I saw what it was. No mistake about it—his name's written in it."

Figgins opened the volume at the title-page. There was, as he said, no mistake about it. Across the page was written, "To Angelo Lee, a present from his Cousin Peter." Figgins turned some of the pages. The book was obviously a very advanced work on the subject of aerostatics, and the diagrams it contained were, in themselves, as Lowther remarked, enough to give any ordinary fellow a headache.

That some unthinking relative might have given Angelo such a volume was possible; most fellows had received inappropriate presents in their time. Tom Merry himself had a beautiful gilt-edged edition—with leaves still uncut—of "Good Georgie," a present from kind old Miss Priscilla. Lowther had a gigantic edition of the "Origin of Species," given him by an unreflecting aunt on a birthday, which came in useful as a footstool in Study No. 10. So it was not, perhaps, surprising that some unscrupulous relative had presented Angelo with "The Theory of Flight," by Professor Pooter. The surprising thing was that Angelo had ever opened it; still more surprising that he had been found reading it.

"But it's all gammon," said Lowther blankly. "Angelo Lee couldn't touch this stuff. I believe it would beat Glyn of the Shell, and he's got a napper stuffed to the top with scientific fizzle. If Lee can read 'Little Herbert's History,' it's about all he can assimilate."

George Figgins nodded.

"That's my idea," he assented. "Still, he was reading it—deep in it."

"Pulling your leg?" suggested Monty.

"No. Look at it, and you'll see it's marked all through on the margins. Somebody's read this book jolly carefully, worked out the stuff in it, and made notes. Look here; here's a margin with algebra splashed all over it. Lee must have done it."

"Well, my only hat!" said Tom.

The juniors simply stared at that hefty volume. Glyn of the Shell, perhaps, might have perused it without a headache. Certainly no other junior at St. Jim's would have undertaken the task. That Angelo Lee, the fool of the school, was capable of tackling that abstruse volume, of making marginal notes on its contents, and working out calculations in algebra, seemed absolutely incredible.

"Will you take it along and hand it to him?" asked Figgins. "I was bringing it over to your House for him."

Tom Merry put the volume under his arm.

"I'll take it to him," he said. "But—but what does it mean, Figg?"

"Blessed if I know," confessed Figgins. "Unless Lee is pulling our leg, making out that he's a born idiot, when he's nothing of the kind. Kerr thought of that."

"But why should he?"

"Oh, ask me another."

"I've heard of chaps trying to make out they're cleverer than they really are," remarked Lowther. "Never heard of a fellow whose ambition it was to pass for a born fool."

"Same here," chuckled Figgins. "But that's what it looks like. Fellow who reads that book and understands it is no fool, anyhow."

With a nod to the Shell fellows, Figgins walked back to his own House. Tom Merry and Lowther walked away to the School House in a very puzzled frame of mind. They had hardly known what to make of Angelo hitherto; now they knew less than ever. They met Manners in the doorway of the House with a brow like thunder.

"Seen Lee?" asked Tom.

"Bother Lee! I haven't found my negatives."

"Oh dear!"

"Of course you're fed-up!" grunted Manners morosely.

"Not exactly fed-up, old chap," said Tom; "but I'm sure they'll turn up."

"Somebody will squirm if they don't," said Manners darkly, and he tramped away, still in search.

"Lookin' for Lee, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy cheerily. "He went up to his study after bwekkah."

"Thanks, old bean! What do you think of this giddy volume?" asked Tom, holding it up.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass on it and shuddered. The mere sight of algebra and diagrams seemed to give him an ache in his aristocratic intellect.

"Howwid!" he said. "That's the kind of stuff that Glyn weeds."

"It's Lee's!" grinned Tom.

"That duffah's?"

"His! He left it in the New House last night. Looks a bit deep for a born fool, what?"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, quite mystified.

"Cardew, of my Form, says that Lee isn't weally a born idiot, as he pwetends, but is only puttin' it on for some weason."

"I wonder!" said Tom. "Kerr of the New House thinks so, and he's jolly keen. Can't make it out."

"I've got it!" said Lowther. "All those marginal notes must have been made by Cousin Peter before he gave the book to Lee—see?"

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"That's Lee's fist," he said. "I've seen his w'itin'—he's scwibblin' in his study now, and I looked in for him. He's got sheets of scwibble on his table. I don't know what it is. He can't have lines to do yet. But that's the same fist."

"Oh!" said Lowther.

The two Shell fellows went up to the Fourth Form passage and looked in at No. 3. Angelo had the study to himself. Bates was not likely to be there in the morning.

Angelo was seated at the study table, with a pen in his hand and a block of paper before him. There were several written detached sheets on the table. Apparently the new junior had been busy. He looked up with a sedulous, thoughtful face as the two Shell fellows stopped in the doorway. Lee did not look much like a born fool at that moment. If he was playing a part at St. Jim's, he had forgotten it for the moment.

"Don't butt in!" he said tersely. "I'm busy!"

"What on earth are you busy about before classes?" demanded the captain of the Shell.

Angelo seemed to recollect himself. The artless grin the juniors knew so well returned to his face; he looked the old Angelo.

"Oh, nothing," he said. "Is it time for class? Thank you for coming to tell me."

He gathered up the sheets. He gathered them up unostentatiously, but at the same time concealed what was written on them from the eyes of the Shell fellows. Tom Merry and Lowther exchanged glances. Lee did not want them to see what he had been writing, being aware that they were more observant than the guileless Gussy.

Angelo put the sheets into a little cabinet, and locked it. Tom Merry and Monty Lowther watched that proceeding, deducing therefrom that Angelo's mysterious script was not to be allowed to meet the eyes of Bates, his study-mate. The Shell fellows exchanged glances again. As Angelo turned from the cabinet, Tom Merry held out the big volume to him.

"This yours, Lee?" he asked quietly.

Angelo coloured.

"Oh, yes! Thanks!" he stammered. "I—I left it—I was going over to the New House for it after class. I—I—"

"Figgins gave it to me for you," said Tom. "Looks fairly hefty stuff for a kid of your age, Lee—especially for a fellow who makes out that he is a born fool. May a fellow inquire what you are playing this idiotic game for?"

"Game?" repeated Angelo.

"You've made yourself a nuisance to the whole House, and the other House, pretending to be a soft ass!" exclaimed Tom sharply. "My belief is that you are pulling our leg. What's the game, then? Do you want people to believe you a silly fool when you're nothing of the kind?"

Crash!

"Yaroooh!" roared Tom Merry.

The heavy volume dropped from Lee's hand, and it dropped fairly on Tom Merry's foot. The captain of the Shell gave a wild howl and jumped almost clear of the floor.

"Oh! Oh, dear!" ejaculated Angelo. "So sorry!"

"Ow! Ow! You—you clumsy chump! I—I—I'll—"

gaped Tom.

Angelo dodged from the study and fled.

CHAPTER 10.

Angelo in Class!

MR. LATHOM, the master of the Fourth, wore a worried look that morning.

Angelo had taken his place in the Form.

As a new fellow, Angelo had little to do in class; his first day was naturally an easy one. But it did not prove easy to Mr. Lathom.

In the first place, Angelo had forgotten to bring any books into the Form-room, and had to be sent to fetch them.

When he brought them in he passed close to Mr. Lathom, and dropped two of them on the Form-master's toes.

Mr. Lathom's startled exclamation made Angelo jump; and he jumped into collision with the blackboard.

There was a terrific crash, as blackboard and easel went over together on the Form-room floor.

That was the beginning.

The Fourth Form settled down to enjoy their morning, with the fool of the school in class.

D'Arcy, certainly, was feeling rather concerned about Angelo, and so was Figgins; these two juniors, having taken Angelo under their protection at the request of Cousin Ethel. But they could not protect him from his own clumsiness and stupidity. The rest of the Fourth Form looked on with grinning faces, enjoying the commotion.

Any fellow but Lee would have been caned for his extraordinary clumsiness. But Mr. Lathom, convinced that Lee was simple to the point almost of imbecility, could not find it in his heart to punish the boy. His conviction was that St. Jim's was no place for Angelo Lee, and that it was cruelty to keep so stupid a lad at school with normal boys. He had stated that view to the Head, who had not assented to it. But Mr. Lathom, naturally, kept to his own opinion instead of adopting the Head's opinion. And he foresaw a trying time for himself, with the fool of the school in his Form.

Sooner or later, he felt sure, the headmaster would see that Lee ought to be sent away—certainly he intended to leave no stone unturned to that end. While the obtuse youth remained Mr. Lathom felt it his duty to be kind to him. But he felt that Angelo was likely to have a very disturbing effect on his nervous system.

First lesson passed off, with no further trouble than the upsetting of Angelo's inkpot over Trimble's trousers.

Trimble had to be sent away to change his trousers—a task which he prolonged half through school lesson, to his own satisfaction.

Second lesson was English history, and in that lesson Angelo came to the fore. Mr. Lathom, having asked his class in what reign the Spanish Armada sailed, Angelo supplied the answer.

"Oh, I can tell you, sir!" exclaimed Angelo before any other fellow had a chance of speaking.

Mr. Lathom glanced at him. If Angelo knew anything about history, or about anything else, the Fourth Form master was prepared to be surprised and pleased. From Angelo's general manners and customs, he supposed that the junior was a hopeless dunce, and he had wondered how the fellow had scraped through the entrance examination—which was doubtless easy, but surely too hard for a youth of Angelo's peculiar gifts.

"You may tell me, Lee," said Mr. Lathom.

"King Cole, sir," said Angelo brightly.

"Eh?"

"King Cole, sir."

"King Cole!" repeated Mr. Lathom dazedly. Mr. Lathom, of course, knew all about kings and queens without number; and perhaps in his youth he had heard of King Cole, who was a merry old soul. But that fabulous monarch had never been mentioned in history class before at St. Jim's.

"Yes, sir; old King Cole," said Angelo.

"Is it within the bounds of possibility, Lee, that you really believe that there ever was such a monarch as King Cole?" stuttered Mr. Lathom.

"He was a merry old soul, sir, and a merry old soul was he," said Angelo innocently. "He called for his pipe—"

"What?"

"And he called for his glass—"

"Lee!" gasped Mr. Lathom.

"And he called for his fiddlers three, sir."

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

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "Lee, I—really—Bless my soul! The stupidity of this boy—"

"I know all about King Cole, sir," said Angelo brightly. "He perished in the Crusades, sir, and said, 'Kiss me, Hardy!'"

"Upon my word!"

"And after that, sir, he never smiled again!" said Angelo.

"Bless my soul!"

"That was after he had let the cakes burn in the neat-herd's hut, sir," said Angelo.

"Boy! This crass—crass stupidity—"

"Oh, sir!"

"Be silent! I do not blame you, Lee—you should never have been sent here. But be silent! Say no more."

"No more!" said Angelo.

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"What? What?"

"No more, sir."

Mr. Lathom gazed at him.

"What do you mean, Lee?"

"You told me to say 'No more,' sir," said Angelo innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Lathom gasped for breath.

"Silence! The next boy who laughs will be caned! Lee, you will kindly be silent; do not say another word."

Even Angelo could not misunderstand that injunction; and he sat silent during the remainder of second lesson. Mr. Lathom was glad to dismiss his class for morning break at eleven. He felt that if it had gone on Angelo would have been too much for him. Angelo walked out of the Form-room with the other fellows, with an innocent smile on his face, apparently unconscious of having worried his Form master.

"Bai Jove, Lee, you weally are a corkah, you know," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, joining his protegee in the passage. "You are a weguhah coughdwop, old chap. I suppose you were weally born a fool, poor old chap, and can't help it."

"No more than you can, old bean," assented Angelo.

"Weally, Lee—"

"Did you think that Mr. Lathom was fed-up with me?" asked Angelo.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I'm pwetty certain that he will put it to the Head that you oughtn't to stay here, old chap. Wathah hard cheese for you; but weally, you know—What are you gwinnin' at?"

"Your face!" said Lee cheerfully.

And he walked away, leaving Arthur Augustus staring.

"Bai Jove!" said Gussy.

The swell of St. Jim's had intended, as in duty bound, to bestow his company on Angelo for a time. Now he changed his mind, and joined Blake and Herries and Dig—who had no intention whatever of inflicting themselves with the fool of the school. Angelo went to his study—where, apparently, he had occupations that did not require company.

CHAPTER 11.

Manners Makes a Discovery!

"MANNERS, old chap."

"Scat!" growled Manners.

In morning break Manners of the Shell was still seeking his missing negatives; and Manners of the Shell was like unto a bear with a sore head. He was in no mood to waste politeness on anybody, least of all on Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

"But, I say—" persisted Baggy.

"Buzz off!"

"Oh, all right!" jeered Baggy. "If you don't want to find your giddy negatives—"

Manners sat up and took notice, so to speak, at once. On that topic he was willing to listen to anyone.

"Was it you?" he exclaimed.

"Eh?"

"You bagged my negatives this morning, you fat fraud!" Manners grasped the podgy Fourth-Former by the shoulder and shook him. "Where are they?"

"Eh, what?" gasped Trimble. "I—I didn't—I wasn't—I never—Leggo!"

"Shake! Shake!"

"What have you done with them?" demanded Manners.

"Yaroo! Leggo, you ass! I never touched them, you silly chump!" howled Baggy Trimble.

"Oh!" said Manners. He realised that perhaps he had been a little hasty. He released Baggy Trimble, but eyed him suspiciously. "What do you know about them, then?"

"A fellow might have seen a fellow—" gasped Trimble.

"Out with it!" snapped Manners.

"If that's how jolly civil you are when a fellow's doing you a favour you can jolly well find the rotten things for yourself!" exclaimed Trimble warmly.

Manners controlled his feelings.

"I'll be glad if you'll tell me what you know about it, Trimble," he said, with a great effort.

"That's better!" said Baggy. "Civility costs nothing, does it? I say, Manners, I know where the things are. But, I say, one good turn deserves another, what? If you could lend a fellow a bob—"

"You fat rotter—"

"Look here, you know—"

"Here's a bob!" snapped Manners. "Now tell me where to look for my negatives, and who's got them."

Baggy Trimble pocketed the coin with much satisfaction. All was grist that came to the fat Baggy's mill.

"It was Lee," he said.

Manners jumped.



"Lee!" thundered Mr. Railton. "Get out of that bed at once!" Lee blinked at him cheerfully. "I'm quite comfortable here, thank you, sir," said the new boy calmly. A gasp of amazement went up from the Fifth-Formers behind Mr. Railton. (See Chapter 7.)

"Lee! The fool of the school?"

"Yes," grinned Baggy. "He's got them in his study now. He, he, he!"

Manners stared blankly at Trimble. The name of Angelo Lee was about the last name he would have expected to hear. He remembered that Angelo had been on the spot that morning when the negatives were placed on the bench to print out in the sunshine, and that the fool of St. Jim's had asked questions about the photographs. But why should Lee have taken the printing-frames away? That was really inexplicable.

Some fellow who knew Manners' little foibles was likely enough to remove the things, in order to make him "wild" by way of entertainment—some fellow with a misdirected sense of humour. But the new junior knew nothing about Manners' little weakness, neither had Manners supposed that so absolute an ass had practical joking proclivities. The Shell fellow eyed Trimble very suspiciously.

"Look here, you fat fraud, if you're pulling my leg——" he began.

"He's got them in his study," assured Trimble. "He's there now. I looked in to see what he was up to—no fellow sticks in his study in morning break, you know—I—I mean I looked in to speak to Bates—of course, I wasn't curious about that new fellow——"

"You saw them——"

"He had them in his paw," grinned Baggy. "He put them out of sight fast enough when I opened the door; but I saw them, you bet. He chucked a cushion at me, the cheeky cad! I'd have licked him, only—I had mercy on him, you know, as he's a new kid!"

Manners started for the House at a run. Tom Merry and Lowther, observing his excited haste, joined him, Lowther bestowing a private wink on the captain of the Shell.

"On the track, what?" asked Monty, with great gravity.

"Trimble says he's seen my negatives in Lee's study."

"What rot!" said Tom. "Why should Lee touch them?"

"Why should anybody, if you come to that?" answered Manners. "It's a fool joke—and Lee's a fool, anyhow. I'm

going to see; and if they're there, I'll jolly well smash Lee. If they're not, I'll kick Trimble."

The three Shell fellows hurried up to the Fourth Form passage. Tom Merry and Monty judged, from Manners' expression, that his friends would be needed there to save Angelo from serious damage if the fool of the school really had bagged the negatives and printing-frames.

Manners burst open the door of Study No. 3 and rushed in. Angelo was at the table.

The big volume which Figgins had handed over to Tom that morning was open on the table before him, and Angelo, with his elbows on either side of it, his eyes glued to the page, was reading with deep attention.

He uttered a startled exclamation as the three Shell fellows appeared. He gave them an irritated glance.

"Look here, what the thump are you butting in for?" he demanded. "Can't a fellow have a few minutes' quiet?"

"I want my negatives!" roared Manners.

Angelo started.

The look on his face was enough for the Terrible Three. Trimble's information was well founded.

"You've got them!" howled Manners.

"I—I—I——" stammered Angelo.

Manners made a rush; and Tom and Monty grasped him just in time and dragged him back.

"Leggo!" roared Manners. "I'm going to smash him—meddling with a fellow's photographs."

"Hold on!" said Tom. "Remember the poor chap is a born fool, and hardly responsible for his actions. Lee, you ass, give Manners his things at once!"

Angelo hesitated.

For some reason which the Shell fellows could not even begin to guess he was unwilling to hand over the negatives.

But there was no help for it. The Terrible Three were quite prepared to root through the study in search of them, and to give Angelo the hiding of his life if necessary. Whether Angelo was a fool or not, he realised that quite clearly, and understood that Manners' property had to be

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handed over. He crossed to the locked cabinet, unlocked it, and drew out three printing-frames, and in silence handed them over to Manners. Manners received them with an angry snort.

"The prints are spoiled, of course!" he snapped.

"Are they?" murmured Angelo.

"Can't you see they're over-exposed, you idiot?"

"What on earth did you take them for?" asked Tom Merry, in perplexity. "Are you setting up as a practical joker as well as a born fool?"

"I'll pay for the damage done if you like," said Angelo mildly.

"I don't want you to pay for the damage, you footling fathhead!" said Manners. "It's only a few pence. I'm going to hammer you for meddling with my photographs!"

"Easy does it, old man!" said Tom soothingly. "The fellow's a fool; he didn't even know he was spoiling the prints. Come away!"

"I'm going—"

"If you buck up you'll have time to take fresh prints in break, and it's sunny now," said Monty Lowther.

That argument prevailed on Manners. He gave Angelo a glare and left the study with his friends.

Tom and Monty went in a puzzled mood, quite perplexed by Angelo's inexplicable conduct. Unless he was absolutely irresponsible, there seemed no explanation of what he had done. But Manners was not thinking of that; he was thinking of printing out his photographs.

In a very short time the amateur photographer of the Shell had removed the ruined prints, replaced them with fresh sheets, fastened up the printing-frames, and exposed them to the sun. His friends remained with him during the operation, and Manners this time did not leave his precious prints till the operation was completed. Then he vanished into the School House with them, and Monty Lowther gave a deep, deep yawn.

"Manners is a good chap, Tom," he said. "But has it ever occurred to you that a fellow might get fed-up with a fellow's hobby?"

Tom Merry laughed.

Manners did not reappear until third lesson. He came into the Shell Form-room a couple of minutes late, and received a severe glance from Mr. Linton. Tom noted that there was some excitement in Manners' face. As soon as the master of the Shell turned his back he whispered to his chum.

"Prints all right, Manners?"

"Right as rain!"

"Oh, ripping!" said Tom.

"I've got something to tell you!" whispered Manners.

"I can tell you it made me jump. That fellow Lee—"

"What about Lee?"

"You remember he told us he got a lift to the school yesterday, and never told us what sort of a lift?"

"Yes," said Tom, with his eyes on Mr. Linton's back. Conversation in class was strictly against rule.

"I've found out how he came."

"Eh?"

"From the photographs."

"What?"

"Guess how he got to St. Jim's."

"Can't!"

"By aeroplane!" breathed Manners.

"What?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

Mr. Linton glanced round.

"Someone is talking in class!" he said severely.

And no more was said.

Tom Merry, utterly astonished by Manners' extraordinary communication, stared blankly at his chum. Manners nodded vigorously in confirmation. Third lesson seemed very long to the chums of the Shell that morning.

CHAPTER 12.

Light at Last.

TOM MERRY & CO. hurried out of the Form-room when the Shell was dismissed. Manners was still considerably excited by the discovery he had made, and Tom was deeply interested and greatly puzzled, as was Monty Lowther.

"I'm blessed if I understand this," said Tom. "How could you find out anything about Lee from the photographs, Manners?"

Manners grinned.

"He's in them," he said. "You remember I snapped the aeroplane landing in Pepper's field yesterday afternoon. I told you a man and a boy got out of the plane after it landed."

"I remember. But—"

"The boy was Lee of the Fourth!"

"Impossible!"

"Fact!" said Manners. "When we had him to tea yesterday, do you remember I said to him that I thought I'd seen him before somewhere? Well, so I had—in the negative when I developed it."

"My hat!" said Lowther.

"Only, you see, in the negative the lights are dark and the darks are light," said Manners. "That's how it was that I didn't recognise him then. I saw something familiar in his face, that was all."

"But—but," exclaimed Tom Merry, utterly perplexed. "You mean to say that that idiot—that born fool—that dummy—travelled to the school by aeroplane? As if any pilot would let such a born fool go up with him!"

"Not likely!" said Lowther. "Why, he wouldn't have sense enough not to step out a thousand feet up!"

"That's what happened, all the same," said Manners. "The camera doesn't deceive. It made me jump, I can tell you. Now you know why Lee bagged my prints. You know he was asking me about them this morning; and, of course, when I told him I had photographed the plane landing in Pepper's field, he knew that he was in the picture. He's keeping it dark that he travelled by plane; that's why he bagged the negatives. He didn't want us to see the finished prints."

"But—but—"

"I've got the prints here," said Manners. "Lee comes out in one of them as clear as daylight, standing by the plane, talking to the pilot. He's got a coat and a cap with flaps on, in the picture; but his face comes out as clear as daylight. You'll see."

The Fourth Form were coming out as the Shell fellows went into the quad. Manners called to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Gussy, old bean!"

"Yaas, deah boy?"

"I've got something to show you about your precious idiot Lee," chuckled Manners. "Come and squint at it."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"What has the fool been up to now?" asked Blake.

"Nothing now; but yesterday he travelled to St. Jim's by aeroplane!" answered Manners.

Blake grinned.

"Yes, I can see that born fool allowed up in an aeroplane!" he said. "Tell us an easier one."

"Look!" said Manners dramatically.

He held up the print.

Study No. 6 gathered round, and Tom Merry and Lowther stared at it. It was a good photograph, well printed and finished, like all Manners' work in that line. The plane was there, in Pepper's field, the pilot standing beside it; and clearest of all was the figure of a youth in coat and

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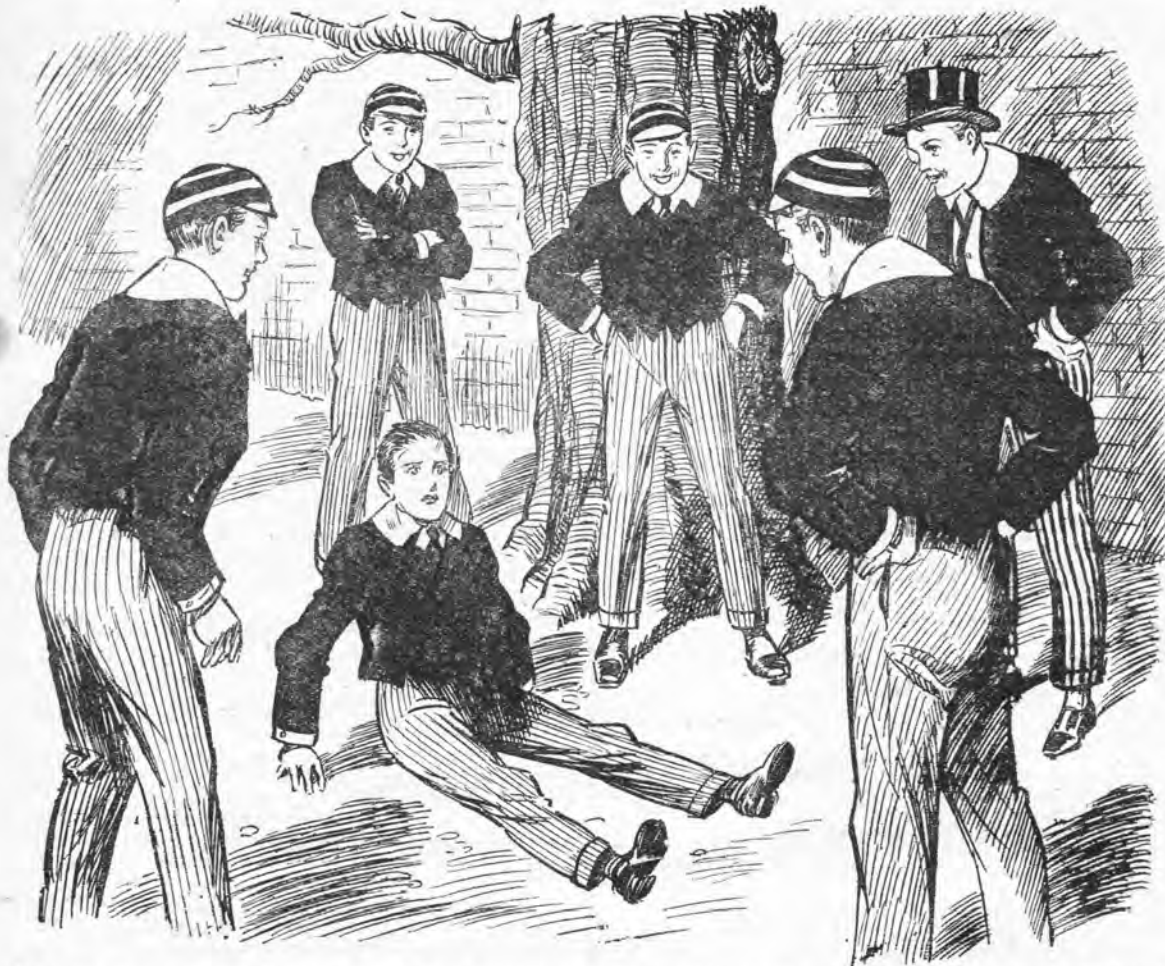
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Bump! Angelo smote the earth, with a loud concussion. "Yaroooooooooop!" he roared. "Give him another!" Bump! "Ow! Oh! Leggo!" yelled Angelo. "Now are you going to own up?" inquired Blake. Angelo sat dazedly on the ground and blinked up at the grinning juniors. "Hold on!" he gasped. (See Chapter 12.)

cap, with the well-known face perfectly distinct. It was the face of Angelo Lee, the new junior in the St. Jim's Fourth; on that point there was not the slightest shadow of a doubt.

The juniors gazed at it and were convinced. They had to be convinced, amazing as it was.

"That's Lee!" said Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Lee, right enough," said Digby. "So that's how you fellows missed him at the station. He came along by plane."

"He said he'd got a lift to the school," said Blake blankly. "Then he got a lift in a plane. My hat!"

"Who'd have thought that silly idiot had the nerve to go up in a plane?" ejaculated Monty Lowther.

"Who'd have thought any pilot would take him up?" said Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! It weally beats me, you fellows."

"It's jolly plain to me," said Manners. "Lee isn't the fool he makes out to be. A fool doesn't study such a book as that hefty volume 'The Theory of Flight.' A fool doesn't make marginal notes on difficult subjects, and work out problems in algebra, and a fool doesn't travel by plane. Lee is pulling our leg."

"But why?"

"Well, he's got some reason, but the fact's clear enough. He's trying to make the whole school believe that he's a born fool, goodness knows why. Perhaps he doesn't want to stay here."

"Bai Jove! He was gwinnin' like anythin' when I told him that Mr. Lathom was vewy likely to go to the Head and tell him that Lee ought to be sent home, you know!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"He was playing the goat in-class this morning," said Herries. "Cardew thought he was pulling Lathom's leg. It looks like it now."

"He's certainly made Lathom fed-up with him," said Blake. "Lathom said out plain in the Form-room that Lee ought not to be here."

"I remember Cousin Ethel told us that Lee didn't want to come to St. Jim's," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And he's working up this stunt to get sent home again," said Manners. "He's taken us all in, all along the line. For some idiotic reason he wants to be sent away, and that's his game."

"Cheeky ass!" growled Blake. "Isn't St. Jim's good enough for him?"

"It is vewy remarkable that any fellow should want to be sent away from St. Jim's!" said Arthur Augustus. "That weally argues that Lee is a silly ass, aftah all."

"Figgins!" called out Manners.

Figgins & Co. of the New House came up to the group in the quad. Manners held out the print for their inspection.

"Lee!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn.

"He came here by aeroplane yesterday," said Manners.

"Great pip!" exclaimed Figgins.

Kerr smiled.

"I jolly well knew he wasn't the fool he made out, after I'd looked at that book he left in our study," said the Scottish junior. "We've called him the fool of the school, but he's made fools of all the school. You fellows have been taking him under your protection; and, as a matter of fact, he's deeper than the lot of you put together!"

Tom Merry and Figgins and Arthur Augustus looked at one another expressively.

They could not help feeling that Kerr was right.

It was not a flattering thought that while they were bothering about a helpless new fellow, a fellow they supposed to be a born fool, that same fellow had been taking them in, and laughing in his sleeve all the time.

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"We'll jolly well talk to him about this," said Tom Merry abruptly. "Where is the cheeky ass?"

The juniors proceeded to look for Angelo.

That cheeky youth was discovered in a secluded spot under the old elms. He was sitting on a bench, deep in the perusal of "The Theory of Flight." He started, and closed the book hurriedly, as the crowd of juniors came up and surrounded him.

There was a rather uneasy expression on Angelo's face.

Probably he had wondered what would be the outcome of the discovery in the photograph. Now he was going to learn.

"You cheeky rotter!" began Blake.

"You cheeky, leg-pullin' ass!" said Arthur Augustus.

"You're found out!" said Tom Merry.

"What do you mean by it?" demanded Figgins.

Angelo raised his eyebrows mildly.

"Have I offended you fellows in any way?" he inquired.

"If so, I'm so sorry. I am afraid I am not very bright, you know."

"Bai Jove!"

"Still keeping it up?" grinned Manners.

"Can't you see that that chicken won't fight now?" asked Monty Lowther.

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand you," said Angelo, with mild regret. "Perhaps I am a little dense—"

"Weally, you cheeky ass—"

"You've been pulling our leg all round," said Tom Merry.

"You've made yourself a general worry to all the fellows, and the prefects, and the masters—the whole of the school, in fact. And it's all gammon. And we want to know what you mean by it, see?"

There was the ghost of a grin on Angelo's face, but he became serious at once.

"Hem! You see—" he began.

"Well, what?"

"I'm afraid I'm rather simple," said Angelo artlessly. "Not at all clever like you fellows."

The juniors looked at him. Undoubtedly, Angelo had taken them in. But they were not to be taken in again by Angelo's assumption of stupidity. They did not answer him; but they closed in on him, grasped him, and jerked him off the bench. They all seemed to realise, all at once, that it was a time for action, not for words.

Bump!

Angelo smote the earth.

"Yarooooop!" he roared.

"Give him anothah!"

Bump!

"Ow! Oh! Leggo!" yelled Angelo.

"One more!" grinned Figgins.

Bump!

"Yoooooooop!"

Angelo sat dazedly on the ground, and blinked up at the grinning circle of juniors.

"Now are you going to own up?" inquired Blake.

"Ow! Wow!"

"Give him another!"

"Hold on!" yelled Angelo.

"The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the giddy truth!" said Monty Lowther. "Out with it!"

Angelo picked himself up, gasping for breath. It was borne in upon his mind that, so far as Tom Merry & Co. were concerned, at least, the game was up. It was, as Lowther had said, a chicken that would no longer fight.

"I—I don't mind telling you—" he gasped.

"Especially as you can't help it," said Blake. "Get on with it, you fraud!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard you as a fwaud, Lee."

Angelo grinned.

"Well, what was a fellow to do?" he demanded. "I didn't want to come here. My Cousin Peter—the chap who gave me a lift yesterday—is an airman. I want to be an airman. I'm going to be an airman, Peter's willing to take me in hand and make an airman of me. He's an inventor—he's got his own aerodrome—I've helped him a lot—he's keen on teaching me, and I'm keen on learning. I've got no time to peddle around with Latin and stuff at school. But the pater won't hear of it. The pater thinks it's dangerous—dangerous to be an air-pilot, you know."

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"So it is!" said Blake.

"Well, perhaps it is—but where should we be, if fellows let that count?" said Angelo. "The pater wants me to take to the law. The law! Catch me! Of course, a fellow must obey his father. That's why I'm here. Only if I get sent away from St. Jim's, see, the pater will think again. And I'm jolly well going to be sent away. Why, I've thought of a lot of gadgets for planes, that I want to work out—and Peter gives me the chance. I suppose you fellows know that some day there will be planes without wings? Simplification! That's what I'm working out. So is Peter! And to let all that slide—and mug up Latin—groogh! Hanging round a Form-room, and saying 'Yes, sir,' and 'Oh, sir,' and 'Please, sir,' and 'No, sir.' Catch me! I'm not staying here. I'm going! Only the pater won't hear of it. So I'm going to get turned out, see?"

The juniors stared at him.

"Well, my hat!" said Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

"You fellows keep it dark," said Angelo. "I've begun well. Mr. Lathom thinks me a born idiot—I know he's going to try to persuade the Head to send me away—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The Head's a downy old bird, and he was suspicious at first, but I think he's coming round. A few days more, and it will be all right. See?" said Angelo eagerly. "Once they're all fed-up with me, I'm sent home—then the pater will come round, and let me start with Cousin Peter. They don't want a born fool at St. Jim's."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"It won't do," he said. "I sympathise to some extent—but it won't do! You can't keep it up."

"Wathah not!"

Angelo looked dogged.

"I thought of this stunt," he said. "It seemed to me a good one. But if it doesn't work, there are others. I'd rather be sent away as a simpleton. But if it won't wash, I'm not staying. I shall be sacked."

"Sacked!" repeated Tom.

"Yes. That's the next item on the programme. I suppose a fellow can get sacked—easy enough if a fellow sets his mind to it. Playing cards—or smoking—or punching a prefect—"

"Great Scott!"

"I'm going to be an airman!" said Angelo. "That's settled. Other things will have to fit in to that. See?"

And Angelo picked up his book and walked away, leaving Tom Merry & Co. staring after him blankly. Whatever they thought of Angelo—and they hardly knew what to think of him—on one point there was no further doubt: they could no longer think him the fool of the school.

THE END.

(Mind you read the next story in this amazing series, chums. It is entitled: "The Scapegrace of St. Jim's!" You'll find it in next week's GEM.)

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Hunks Comes up to the Scratch!

TOM was not a skilled boxer. He was good at a rough-and-tumble; he did not lose his temper easily and had a reputation for lasting out; but the intricacies of the science of self-defence, which are only acquired by long study and special training in professional hands, were beyond him.

On the other hand, White Cat had not the smallest idea of what boxing meant, or what the human fist, directed by a cool head in unison with a healthy body and quick feet, could do. But, then, Tom was equally ignorant of the danger of knife-work in quick hands—which was worse for Tom.

At first White Cat circled round Tom on tip-toe out of reach, the lithe, red boy stripped to the waist, bent nearly double; his knife held close to his side almost out of sight; his eyes on the ground, watching Tom's feet. Tom was erect, his right arm guarding low, every muscle of him taut, his eyes fixed on White Cat's face.

The Indian boy made the first attack, darting in sideways, as a wolf leaps, to strike at Tom's shoulder. He was very quick, but not quick enough. Tom's fist shot out just in time and struck him heavily on the cheek-bone, knocked him off his feet, and landed him full length on the floor.

The shock of the fall was considerable, and had Tom followed it up, as he was perfectly entitled to do, the fight would have ended then and there. But the British instinct not to hit a man when he was down was too strong for Tom; and the amazed Indians saw him step back after the blow, while White Cat, little the worse, picked himself up with a shake.

He was much more cautious now, and though he made a feint once or twice, he was out of the way before Tom could touch him. Tom began to take the offensive, and the space of the room being limited, he got in a jab under White Cat's chin which threw him into the arms of one of his friends. But it was paid for immediately afterwards by a lightning stroke of the knife in Tom's thigh. The wound, from an Indian's point of view, was a mere scratch, but it was painful and an unpleasant warning to Tom of his opponent's tactics. White Cat, he saw, was making use of his inferior height and size to strike low.

The smart of the wound quickened Tom's action. He gave White Cat no rest, but putting forward all his energy, chased him as a greyhound chases a hare; and though the little Indian doubled and twisted and ducked with marvellous swiftness and skill, another blow caught him fairly between the eyes, and he went over like a shot rabbit.

This time the Apaches thought all was over for their man. Tom had by no means escaped punishment. Both his arms were bleeding; he had received a cut in the side, and the wound in the leg was proving a nasty one. Every Indian, therefore, including White Cat himself, fully expected to see him kneel plump down upon the wriggling body he had struck to the floor, and pound its face to pulp.

Tom, it is to be confessed, could have done it. He was smarting all over. He knew he was losing blood, and though he was not in the least tired, the inevitable nervousness which an unarmed man must always feel when tackling another who has cold steel in his hands, was beginning to tell upon him. Yet, as he stood over White Cat, the utter helplessness of his hunched little figure, he simply could not smash him any more, so he stepped back, while the Indians looked at each other with gestures of ineffable contempt, and White Cat, with a hiss like a little snake, drew his limbs together and sprang away.

The moment the Indian was out of reach, Tom repented. The little beggar was not really hurt in the least. His face, though he had one eye closed and a nose like the handle of a door, was vicious as a rat's. He was as quick on his pins as ever, and while Tom felt his own wounded leg stiffening and knew that loss of blood was telling on his

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WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE!

TOM HOLT, a sturdy young Britisher of seventeen, lands in New Mexico—at the invitation of some friends of his father's—to start business on the Doggett Ranch.

He finds the place in a deserted and dilapidated condition, and from a letter, left by a former employee, learns that his two friends have died. Tom's in a quandary, for he knows nothing about ranching, but he buckles to and makes the ranch-house shipshape. In the course of this general clean up he comes across a dog, with whom he makes friends instantly. Hunks, as he names the dog, proves a real friend, and it is the dog that discovers and warns his master of the presence of a crowd of Apaches in the shanty. Tom extends the hand of friendship to Black Hawk, the chief of the Apaches, but he falls foul of his son, White Cat, who, with the rest of the Indians, is amusing himself by torturing Hunks. This sets Tom's blood a-boiling. He wades into the Indians and rescues his dog. In a moment he has a fight on his hands with White Cat. The chief's son declares that he will fight with his knife. Tom, who prefers the good, manly British way of fisticuffs, prepares himself for the tussle of his life.

(Now read on.)

strength, the little beast's hands were moving like a monkey's paws. He was fresh as paint.

Tom's teeth met and his jaw hardened. It was coming to the last lap. He was certain, from the look in White Cat's one remaining eye, that he was bracing himself for a special onslaught, and that if his knife got in it would be no flesh wound. While, as far as he was concerned, Tom determined that if his foe went down, he should never have the chance to get up again.

Grimly now they crouched round each other, White Cat keeping well away and moving swiftly; Tom standing almost still, reserving his strength, only pivoting round as the other swung to right and left, seeking an opening. Then White Cat sprang in, but not as he had done before. This time he stooped so low that it looked as if he were falling on his hands and knees. Tom stepped back to get a fair blow, slipped sideways on a patch of his own blood and came down on his back.

A whistling cry of triumph went through the throng of Apaches. On the instant, White Cat leaped bodily upon his foe. His sinewy little legs twined themselves round Tom's hips; the weight of his body pressed upon his stomach. With the left hand he seized his neck, in the other a knife poised in the air, above the heart. Tom was helpless. He had fallen on his left shoulder, and that arm was caught underneath him. He tried to push White Cat off with his right hand, but could get no proper hold. He could see the malignant, grinning face, bruised by his own blows, and the raised knife about to strike home—an ugly bit of blue steel. It was all over, and he set himself to meet the fate coming to him manfully. After all, it had been a square fight. He had done his best, but the little beggar had done better. So he smiled up at the snarling lips, and said grimly:

"Go it!"

He wanted badly to close his eyes. But pride forbade. He just drew a sharp breath and kept still.

The knife descended, but very slowly, and Tom wanted to yell. The little brute was grinning from ear to ear at his triumph. Torture! That was it. All Tom had read of Indians gloating over helpless prisoners came into his mind now. This little fiend was going to kill him by inches, and during the operation hoped to make him squeal. But he would not squeal for nuts! With all his might he nerved himself to bear the pain, though he felt beat out and most miserably weak. A queer memory came of a day at school in the playground, when a bully had caught him alone and twisted his arm. He had borne that pain without squealing. He would bear this. The knife point touched his neck, went in below the skin and turned slowly round. This was ghastly, and nothing but Tom's stubborn pride, the toughest thing in the tough make-up of British boys and men, kept his tongue between his teeth and his mouth shut. But not a moan came from him.

Now the blade was withdrawn and wiped upon Tom's shirt. The grip of the fingers which held his throat slowly relaxed, and he saw White Cat, with a curious wriggle, sit up straight. Then he let go his hold and rose to his feet.

Tom lay and stared. All the time that the little beggar did this, he held his knife clenched as if ready to strike. Was it a further refinement of the torture-business? Whatever it was, Tom determined that in another second he would start it again. He would not be cut up like cold meat. Then White Cat spoke.

"Stranger!" he said, folding his arms, though he kept his knife in his hand all the time, "you are a fool! A man who would fight to save a dog has no sense. But you

are brave. White Cat"—touching his breast with his finger—"son of Black Hawk, likes you. Will you be his friend? If not, get up and we will fight until we die. Huh?"

The question ended with a harsh grunt, characteristic of all Apaches when they finish a harangue. Tom's answer was equally characteristic. He rolled on to his feet—he was too stiff to spring—and thrust out both his hands.

"Friends, White Cat!"

There was a spice of calculation in the act, though it was genuine enough. If the Indian were in earnest he would have to put away his knife. That would be the test. But White Cat never hesitated. The knife went to sheath; the red hands advanced to meet the white; the fingers of the boys' closed, and by a common impulse they smiled into each other's eyes.

"That is good!" said a deep voice from behind—Black Hawk's. "White and Red men brothers. You both fight well. Now you play. Good boys. Yes!"

He gave a hoarse chuckle of satisfaction, and the reconciliation would have been quite a dignified affair if it had not been for Hunks. What the puppy suffered, smothered in that blanket, and sat upon heavily by two Indians—the only way to keep him down—is past conceiving by anything but a dog. But it is the bulldog's temperament to endure the worst in a fight without complaint; and Hunks possessed that quality. So, after choking violently for a few minutes over mouthfuls of rug, he forced himself to be still. At the end of the fight, as White Cat got Tom down, Hunks' gaolers, forgetting him in their excitement, stood up. Thereupon the pup, feeling the relief, cautiously rose; very gently wriggled himself free, and, just as Black Hawk pronounced the paternal blessing, came upon the scene. He had, of course, only one object in life—to close his teeth on the tenderest portion of White Cat's body. He made no announcement of his coming, either, and the next instant would have achieved his purpose, and ended his own short life, had not his master seen him just in time. Tom made a swift grab and caught him by the neck. Hunks struggled, but he was helpless in fingers which for twelve months had handled ropes. Meantime, White Cat had drawn his knife and was no longer smiling. The only person unmoved was Black Hawk, whose shrewd eyes were fixed upon Tom's face.

"Down, Hunks!" Tom roared. "White Cat's a friend now—a friend!"

Then a sudden purpose, born of his knowledge of dogs, came to him. He addressed the little Indian.

"White Cat, you are brave. Show your courage and pat this dog here on the head. He will not bite you. He shall be your friend, too!"

The Indian's small eyes narrowed suspiciously, and he shook his head. But his father said a word in Indian, and his face cleared.

"I have no fear," he said, with the distinctness of one who was to persuade himself of the fact, as well as other people. "But if he bite, he die."

"All right!" Tom replied recklessly, though he had no intention of allowing that. "Do it, then, and we'll see."

White Cat advanced, though with caution. At the same time Tom passed a gentle caressing hand over Hunks' excited face and spoke to him.

"Gently, boy!" he whispered. "Be a man, now. Play the game for me."

The dog licked the caressing fingers, ceased to struggle, raised his head, cocked both ears, and stared intelligently into White Cat's face. The Indian came a few inches nearer, and Tom let go the pup's neck, and stroked his muzzle.

"Come on," he said. "Try him now, if you are not afraid."

At the last words all White Cat's hesitation vanished. He boldly stepped forward and put his hand upon the puppy's head. The Indians about them gathered close to watch. Hunks was quite free, for Tom had stepped away. Hunks raised his muzzle and smelt the red hand. White Cat kept still, and the dog's nose travelled over all his fingers. Then the unexpected happened, and Hunks licked them with a friendly little whine.

Breaking a Bronco.

THE breakfast in Doggett's Ranch, following these adventures, was a remarkable event to Tom. Perhaps not less so to his guests, though, being Indians, they did not show their feelings. Apaches do not go short of food, and, contrary to popular report, are nowadays quite as well acquainted with civilised fare as anybody else; but it does not often fall to their lot to sit at their ease and watch a white man prepare their morning meal.

Black Hawk and White Cat enjoyed this position to the full. The rest of the party had retired with the provisions

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White Cat's legs clasped the animal like steel wire, and he held the reins with a grip there was no withstanding. The mare could not lower her head an inch. She reared instead, only to receive a blow from the boy's fist between the ears, which brought her down in haste. (See page 26.)

Tom had distributed to the creek, where Tom, to his astonishment, saw a cavalcade of some twenty tethered ponies, a fire, and a regular camp outfit. But these two, as privileged guests, remained at the ranch.

Indians are, on the whole, remarkably intelligent people, and Apaches, though supposed to be the least civilised and the most savage of all the tribes, have shrewd, long heads, and Black Hawk, as second chief in the Nation, was a clever man. He knew well that the conditions of life of his dwindling race must depend more and more upon their relationship with the increasing myriads of settlers crowding into the country which had once belonged exclusively to the Red men; and, unlike most of his tribe, he had made a special study of the paleface folk, from the rough Texan cowboy, who would shoot a Redskin with as much pleasure as he would kill a wolf, to the officials in charge of the reservations, whose business it was to carry into effect the treaties made between the Nation and the United States Government.

Unfortunately, the more Black Hawk saw of white men the less he liked them; and though, with the object of preserving his own people from harm, he had hitherto used his influence in the councils of the Nation for peace, this year he had given way to the more war-like spirits, and the party now under his charge, though outwardly peaceable, was secretly scouting through the country with a view to a raid upon the settlements the following summer.

This morning, however, as Tom bustled about fetching wood from the pile, heating up the rusty stove to a red glow, slicing bacon, putting green coffee berries on to roast, kneading flour into dough, well-mixed with baking-powder, and laying upon the kitchen table dishes full of canned fruit, all for the benefit of two Indian visitors, Black Hawk came to the conclusion that there existed a kind of man belonging to the white race whom he had not met before.

The discovery did not awaken any friendly feelings on his part. White Cat, who was only eighteen, and had been educated in a mission school in the reservation, liked Tom, though infinitely puzzled at his ways. But old Black Hawk only looked upon the boy as something he could use for his own purposes; and his contentment, as he sat and watched him, was a very selfish one, for he began to see how he might carry out a certain cunning plan. Tom's fate, which would be a very cruel one if the plan matured, did not trouble him at all.

It took Tom a good while to prepare the meal, for he was not an expert cook, and he received no help at all

from the Indians as he would have done from white guests. An Indian will wait for anything as long as you please, but he will never exert himself, except to fight, unless he must. It was a true breakfast when it came, and Black Hawk, whose mind was now made up, was emphatic in his praise.

He began, in his quaint English, to ask questions, and by the time he had smoked several pipes of good North Carolina tobacco, some sacks of which had been discovered tucked away in the larder, he had picked up more information about Tom than the boy had the least idea he had given.

The meal and the smoke over, Black Hawk woke up to the duties of hospitality on his account. They went down to the creek, and Tom was shown the Indian ponies, which he privately thought to be the sorriest specimens of horse-flesh he had ever seen. They were thin and undersized. Their coats were as shaggy as bears, and they appeared to have no spirit or liveliness at all. Tom, it may be remarked, knew nothing about horses. But there was an exception. This was a mare, with a big white star on her forehead; a sturdy beast, not so thin as the rest, with bright, intelligent eyes, and something about the carriage of her head which Tom felt meant character. He expressed his feelings on the subject to White Cat, who then spoke to his father. Black Hawk showed interest at once.

"The pony is mine," he said. "You ride him—yes?"

Tom laughed.

"I can't. I tried in Australia, and looked an awful fool. I hope to learn, though."

"Learn now," Blake Hawk said gravely. "Men must ride all times in this country. If not, they starve."

At his order the mare was led up and bridled. But there was no saddle.

"I say," Tom protested to White Cat, who was handling her. "I can't ride without something to hang on to. I shall roll off like the White Knight."

"That man great fool!" was the sharp rejoinder. "None but fool-man ride saddle-ways."

This was boasting, but Tom did not know it. He was feeling far too uncomfortable. Until he went to Australia he had never been astride anything but a donkey. In the Bush he had managed to hold on to a very mild beast and ride twelve miles to church. But he had not enjoyed the sermon! What the dickens he was to do now with no saddle, no stirrups, and all these confounded Indians crowding round to watch his performance, like children at a Christmas circus, he did not know.

"Look here," he burst out, "I can't even get on. Let me see you do it."

White Cat was quite ready to oblige. Though wild horses would not have drawn the confession from him, he was acutely aware that had not Tom been merciful this morning he could have been easily victorious in the fight. An opportunity to show superiority in something was by no means to be missed. So, with a word to the rest, he led the mare a pace or two away, drew the bridle tightly in his left hand, caught a wisp of mane in his right, and, with a little movement of limbs and body that reminded Tom of a skilful runner leaping a hedge, he slid on to the mare's back.

The animal's response to this was to thrust out her forelegs as straight as pokers, bend her body like a bow, and attempt to get her head between her feet. But White Cat's legs clasped her loins like steel wire, and he held the reins with a grip there was no withstanding. The mare could not lower her head an inch. She reared instead, only to receive a blow from the boy's fist between the ears which brought her down in haste.

Thwarted both ways, she proceeded to indulge in a series of jumps like a gigantic sand-hopper, her back bent first outwards then inwards, her feet alternately close together and flung into the air.

Finding this made no impression at all upon her rider, the mare suddenly ceased her antics, and dashed away at a swift pace, like a bird, returning in a few minutes under White Cat's guiding hand, and at a mere touch of the rein pulling up at the place from which she started.

"Nice pony!" the Indian boy remarked, with an air of calm ease, which did not conceal the fact that he was panting hard. "She much too strong, though, for tender-foot like you."

It was the first time Tom had heard the name all newcomers receive out West, and there was something in the manner in which White Cat said it which he did not like at all. As a result, whereas a minute ago he had determined to refuse the honour—and the agony—of trying to mount that mare, upon the excuse that he had not recovered from the effects of the fight of that morning, he now changed his mind. "Tenderfoot," was he? He could not ride. He had said so. But, after White Cat's words, hanged if he wouldn't try!

So Tom, asking for the mare to be held—for otherwise he would never reach her back at all—braced his muscles and screwed up his courage and began his first riding lesson.

He never forgot it to the end of his life, nor did the mare, nor those who witnessed the exhibition. After three bad shots he got on, whereupon White Cat let go—and so did the mare. It was just a mild little buck-jump, nothing more, but it propelled Tom into the air like a stone from a sling and sent him straight to the ground upon his head.

The Indians expected this and showed no interest; but when they saw the Englishman, after feeling his neck tenderly, and shaking his head to find out whether it was still there, proceed to mount again, they began to be curious.

This time Tom got on first go, and, by intense effort, managed to hold his seat while the mare bucked three times. But his end was as certain as his fate, and at the third time of asking over her head he went in a beautiful parabolic curve, swash on his face, burying his head in a bed of prickly cactus. He rose, with skin punctured by thorns, and bleeding; and this time everyone was sure that he would have had enough.

But all of them, except perhaps Black Hawk, had something to learn. Tom's head might ache and his bones feel as though they had been pulled out of their sockets and put back again the wrong way round. The beastly cacti might burn like a furnace, and both cheeks be puffed out as if he had the mumps; but give in before Indians, or knuckle under to that mare, he would not while he could stand, sit, or crawl. The pain he suffered only made him more obstinate, and when White Cat, with quite good intention, took his arm and said, "That enough, friend; you hurt," he shouldered the boy out of the way, almost roughly, took the bridle into his own hands, and sprang upon the mare's back without aid.

This action had a curious effect upon the animal. The Indian pony has sharp wits. If he has not he would die. Malinka, as the mare was called, had her full share, and, besides, like most of her sex, possessed a personality of her own. This was one reason why she was in better condition than the other ponies. Also, she belonged to Black Hawk. She had the temper of a fiend when she was roused.

Before she was broken in she had thrown some of the best riders in the tribe, and attacked them afterwards with heels and teeth.

Black Hawk, however, had tamed her, and now she allowed White Cat to handle her at any time, though no other man came within reach of her heels, if he were wise; and her fellow cayuses gave her a wide berth.

It was this temper of hers which had made White Cat utter his warning to Tom, and he had been very much surprised when his father picked the mare out for this clumsy Englishman to mount. But Black Hawk saw deeper than his son. And now, as Tom mounted the mare again, and, with bleeding face and hands, clung to her back with dogged courage, Malinka changed her mind. She did not buck at all, but, as she had done with White Cat, threw her head forward, threw her limbs into the full lope, and carried her rider away.

Tom had not the least command over the reins. It was all he could do to remain where he was. But he did remain, and the pony knew exactly what she was going to do.

She went straight for a mountain side two miles away, and with so gentle a motion that Tom found her easier to ride every minute. The relief to his aching limbs and body was exquisite; the refreshment of the air rushing through his lungs invigorated him beyond anything. He might be going to his death, for all he knew; but it was sheer joy to be carried like this. The air grew cooler as they reached the mountain. A wind blew the scent of cedar and pine into his nostrils. The trees and great grey rocks threw a long shadow across his path. It was a lovely spot, and, best of all, as the mare's gallop slackened to a trot and then to a walk, Tom heard the sound of running water and beheld a spring torrent, shooting like a tiny Niagara, in a small ravine ahead, plunging into the ground in the valley below.

At this spring Malinka stopped. Tom slowly slipped off her back, and together horse and man drank their fill at the stream.

Tom's attitude towards the mare altered entirely. He was stiff and sore beyond expression. Every movement was a jerk, and every jerk an agony. But he had not been defeated, and the mare had brought him to this mountain side and proved herself after all to be a friend. When she raised her head from the water Tom stroked her. She started away at first, for she had never been caressed in her life. But, after sniffing his hand and listening as he spoke gently to her, submitted to his touch and finally rubbed her nose against his breast.

This response on the part of a wild creature affected Tom deeply, and a sudden desire to possess her seized him. He might, of course, be thrown again as soon as he remounted. He had not the ghost of a notion yet how to hold on. But if she allowed him to ride her back as they had come, he determined that he would buy her from Black Hawk, if he had to draw money from the bank at Servita.

Tom had no trouble at all on the way home. When he had mounted slowly from a rock—he was thankful White Cat was not there to see—Malinka paced away with greater gentleness than ever, and Tom's bruised bones were rested all the way home. He had a great arrival at the creek.

Indians never express themselves noisily, as white men will do on occasion. But they knew how to give vent to their feelings in their own way. The one sure key to the heart of an Apache is fearlessness, and to-day, for the second time, this long-legged, pink-and-white-cheeked paleface had shown courage and mettle in a way they all understood. When Tom ambled up, Malinka pacing with the decorum of a hackney in Rotten Row, the warriors crowded round with a murmur of appreciative grunts, while White Cat, smiling all over his face patted Tom on the shoulder and Black Hawk solemnly shook hands.

"My young brother has done most well," he said. "He shall take Malinka to himself. A present from his friends Black Hawk and White Cat."

Tom flushed to the roots of his hair. He could hardly believe his ears. So generous a gift from a stranger would, in any case, have been astonishing enough, but from these Indians it was astonishing. They looked utterly poverty-stricken. The whole of their property appeared to be their weedy ponies and a few packs. Their dress could hardly be shabbier, for even Black Hawk, though he had fringed buckskin shirt and breeches, wore a hat which looked as if it had come out of the Ark.

But it was clear that the words were spoken in serious earnest. The chief's close-set, inscrutable little eyes were grave and determined in expression. His voice was more

abrupt than usual; while White Cat grunted and nodded a vigorous assent.

"What am I to say?" Tom exclaimed, rolling off the pony. "I have done nothing to deserve such kindness!"

"Do you wish for Malinka?" the chief said.

"Of course I do, but—"

"Then it is settled. Go, put your horse in your stable. I would then have your counsel, Tom."

It was the first time the boy had heard his name spoken since he was at home. And if you have ever been right away from all your people and friends, with little chance of seeing them again for years, and find yourself alone amongst strangers, you will find that it means a great deal when a man calls you by your name, even though he be only an Indian chief. Tom did, and thanked Black Hawk and White Cat in the strongest terms he could think of, vowing to himself that he would find a way of cementing this new friendship by doing something for them without delay.

When he returned to the camp Black Hawk led him away from the others, and they sat down alone together on the ground.

"Friend, I will speak my mind," the chief said, after smoking a pipe filled with Tom's tobacco for some five minutes in silence. "You are alone—huh?"

"Not a friend in the country," Tom replied.

"Not one friend—no?" the chief repeated, his eyes growing small and very cunning. "Do you think we your friends—White Cat and me?"

"I believe you are," Tom said innocently, wondering what was coming.

"Then listen to this, friend. You have no sheep"—pointing to the corral. "You know no business. White men in this country not want boys who know nothing. Now, Apache Indians know everything—to hunt, to ride, and to rope the cow, to track the feet of all animals and to shoot guns, to use the knife and the axe, and to kill enemies. Why not leave your home and come away with your red brothers on the trail this summer, and learn my business—huh?"

It took Black Hawk a long time to make this speech. An Indian never says anything twice over. When he makes a proposal he remains perfectly silent until he has received his answer. So he always speaks deliberately. By the time the Indian had finished, with many gestures, Tom had fully time to make up his mind.

He did so without hesitation. Much of what Black Hawk said he knew to be true. It was essential that he should gain experience before applying at the ranches for employment. He was sure that he could gain it from these fellows. Besides, the thought of hunting, learning to trail and to understand woodcraft, fired his soul with enthusiasm.

Black Hawk puzzled him, certainly. But to the open-natured boy the gift of this mare and his manner from the beginning proved that he was a friend. He believed that he had nothing to lose and everything to gain by the proposed arrangement.

"I will come gladly," he said. "But I must pay my way."

He counted out twenty-five dollars.

"You will take this in advance," he said.

The sight of the money made Black Hawk intensely avaricious. It was more than he had looked for. But Tom saw nothing in the Apache's countenance, for the chief gravely accepted the notes as if they were of no value.

"That shall be so, if you wish. It is yourself I need. It will be a good contract, Tom."

They were to start in two days' time for the mountains, as the Indians were going to hunt bear and mountain lion. Before they went it was agreed that Tom should go to Servita to buy a rifle and other necessities, a list of which he decided upon under Black Hawk's advice; and it was a very happily excited youth who rolled himself up that night, Hunk at his feet, to dream until morning of chasing an enormous grizzly, which he never caught.

What Black Hawk dreamed of we do not know; but his last words to White Cat, before they stretched themselves out by the dying embers of the camp-fire, would have spoilt Tom's anticipations of the summer if he could have heard them.

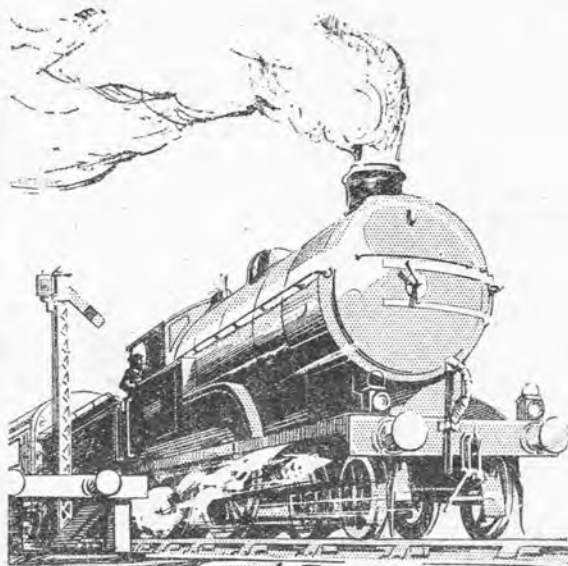
"It is this way, son. I have promised Badger Head, the chief of our nation, that I will count the number of white men in all this country, and find where there are good horses and fat stock. That boy shall help to get this knowledge. We can never do it for ourselves. He thinks we are peaceful people, and he will tell all whites. While they talk to him we will watch and spy all round, and become wise. It is a good scheme, for when we come next year we will kill them all."

"But not Tom!"

"That will be seen," Black Hawk answered lazily, and fell asleep.

White Cat did not sleep for a long time.

(Continued overleaf.)



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