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ANOTHER TIP-TOP DOUBLE-LENGTH STORY OF ST. JIM'S!

The GEM 2^D



**PRISCILLA THE
PEACEMAKER/**

MISS PRISCILLA FAWCETT COMES TO ST. JIM'S INTENT ON—

PRISCILLA the PEACEMAKER!



By
**MARTIN
CLIFFORD.**

Miss Priscilla wanted the juniors of St. Jim's to be at peace. Her first efforts were not successful—the juniors were soon in pieces!

CHAPTER 1. Screwed In!

FOUR strokes boomed out from the clock-tower at St. Jim's, and Tom Merry jumped up with a start and threw aside the latest number of the "Magnet," in which he had been deeply engrossed.

"My hat! That's four!"

Monty Lowther, who was stretched in the only easy-chair, with his feet on the fender, looked up with a yawn.

"Hallo! What's bothering you, Tom?"

"It's four o'clock."

"I believe it generally is at this time of the day," said Lowther, in a reflective sort of way. "Nothing remarkable in that."

"Miss Priscilla Fawcett is coming down to-day."

"How nice! I hope she hasn't forgotten the cod-liver oil!" said Lowther, with solicitude.

Tom Merry laughed.

When his old governess paid him a visit at St. Jim's it was generally with a view to looking after his health, and the remedies she brought him for imagined ailments were fearful and wonderful.

"And the Purple Pills for Pink-faced People," said Manners, looking up from the photographic prints he was finishing. "I'm afraid you've been neglecting them lately, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,258.

Tom. You haven't touched the last box your old governess sent you."

"Haven't I?" said Tom Merry anxiously. "By Jove, she mustn't find it here! Where is it?"

"On the mantelpiece."

Tom Merry crossed to the mantelpiece, and the next moment the box of pills dropped unopened into the heart of the fire.

"That's settled!" said Tom Merry, with a sigh of relief. "Miss Fawcett is the dearest old soul in the world, but I do wish she wouldn't fancy I was ill and bring me those horrible things! I should be ill enough if I swallowed them. But I've got to cut off now, you kids. Miss Priscilla's train gets in at four-thirty, and four's just gone."

"Sorry I can't come!" said Manners. "If I leave these prints some ass will come along and spoil them."

"I'll come," said Lowther, "if you'll wait till I get my boots on."

"Can't wait. So-long!"

And Tom Merry picked up his cap and stuck it on the back of his curly head, and went to the door to open it.

It was Wednesday—a half-holiday at St. Jim's—and the three chums of the Shell had had some hard practice on the football field earlier in the afternoon, and were "taking it easy" in their study for a time, feeling that they deserved a rest.

—STOPPING THE FRIENDLY RIVALRY OF THE JUNIORS!

Tom Merry pulled at the study door, but it did not open. "Hallo, what's wrong with this door?" he exclaimed. Manners and Lowther glanced towards him in astonishment.

Tom Merry was pulling at the handle, but the door refused to budge.

"Got jammed?" suggested Lowther.

"Rot!" said Tom Merry. "It couldn't get jammed as tight as that. It's fastened on the outside."

"My word! Then it's a little game of some of those youngsters."

Monty Lowther referred, by the disparaging title of "youngsters," to the chums of the Fourth Form—Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy—who resided in Study No. 6, farther up the passage. The heroes of the Shell were, of course, a few months older than the Fourth-Formers, and equally, of course, they never allowed the latter to forget it.

Tom Merry's brow wrinkled.

"I believe you're right!" he explained. "Do you remember how we began to screw up the door of Study No. 6 a week or two back, and Figgins & Co. dropped on us? Blake and his lot have worked off our own wheeze on us."

"Let me try," said Lowther.

He came towards the door. Tom Merry stepped back to give him room.

"I've tugged as hard as I can," he said. "You'll never manage it."

"Oh, perhaps I can, you know!" said Lowther, taking hold of the handle of the door. "There is a knack in doing these things."

He gripped the handle hard, set his foot against the wall, and tugged with all his strength. He put on such a strain that something was bound to go. The screws outside held the door fast, and so it was the handle that went.

"I believe it's coming!" gasped Lowther. "I can feel it! Oh crumbs!"

It came. The handle flew right off, and Monty Lowther pitched backward and crashed against Tom Merry. Tom Merry sprawled on the hearthrug, and Lowther sprawled across him.

"You—you utter ass!" exclaimed Tom Merry, sitting up and rubbing the back of his head. "If there's a knack in doing these things the sooner you get out of practice the better."

"The handle's come off!" gasped Lowther.

"Only just discovered that?" asked Tom Merry wistfully.

"Well, of course, I couldn't guess the handle would come off."

Tom Merry jumped up, and picked his cap out of the grate. Then he went to the door and kicked on the panels.

"I say, out there!"

There was a sound of a chuckle in the corridor. If there had been any doubt before, there was none now that the perpetrators of that little joke were the chums of Study No. 6 in the School House at St. Jim's.

"I say!" shouted Tom Merry, kicking at the door.

"Hallo!" came the voice of Blake, of Study No. 6, through the oak. "Are you talking to me, Thomas?"

"Yes, I am, fathead! Have you fastened this door?"

"No, I haven't!"

"I can't get it open!"

"How singular! What can be the matter, Herries?"

"I think it must be the screws I put in," said the voice of Herries.

"What do you think, Digby?"

"I think it must be the screws Herries put in, Blake."

"What's your opinion, D'Arcy?"

"Weally, deah boy, I think it must be the screws that Hewwies put in that prevents Tom Mewwy openin' the beastlay door, you know!"

"You see how it is, Merry!" called Blake, through the door. "I haven't fastened your door. If you can't open it, I think that it must be due to the screws Herries has put in. I am not certain, but I think it's very probable."

"Open that door, you rotters!"

"Can't be done, deah boys! It's taken us ten minutes to drive in those screws!"

"I want to come out!"

"Good-bye!"

"Stop—stop a minute! It's important!"

"Hallo! What's the trouble now?" asked Blake,

realising from Tom Merry's tone at last that there was something seriously the matter.

"Listen to me!"

"I'm listening with all my ears, to say nothing of D'Arcy's, Herries', and Digby's."

"Miss Fawcett is coming down to the school to-day."

"How jolly for you! What you really want is a good, steady drink of cod-liver oil!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"She's coming by the four-thirty!" howled Tom Merry through the keyhole. "And I've got to meet the train, and it's nearly a quarter-past four now."

There was a pause in the passage.

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed Blake, after a moment. "That alters the case. But it's honest Injun, eh? You're not gammoning?"

"Honest Injun!"

"Then—my hat! I'm afraid you're done in. There are six four-inch screws in here, and it will take a dog's age to get them out again!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry tore his hair. It looked as if Miss Priscilla's train would be in before he could even escape from the study, let alone go down to the village station.

"Unscrew as fast as you can, Herries!" directed Blake. "You dodge off, and see if you can borrow another screw-driver, Dig."

"Tom Mewwy has a sewowdwivah in his study, Blake."

"He can't pass it through the keyhole, can he, fathead?"

"Bai Jove, you know, I nevah thought of that!"

"Buck up!" shouted Tom Merry.

"We're bucking up! It's a good joke spoiled; but polite-ness to a lady before anything," said Blake resignedly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Herries is working away like a Trojan, and Dig is scouting for a screwdriver. It's a lot of trouble wasted. You won't find me screwing up your door again in a hurry, Tom Merry."

"If I do," said Tom Merry, "there will be a mangled kid in the School House the next minute. What will Miss Fawcett think, if there's nobody to meet her at the station? Do be quick!"

"She will think Tom Mewwy is a wude boundah," said D'Arcy, after a pause for reflection. "But when she comes to know the true cires of the case, I am gweatly afwaid that she will think that we are wude boundahs—"

"Horrid!" said Blake.

"It is indeed howwid! I should not like to be considahed a wude boundah by any lady, especially by an old lady whom I esteem so highly as I do Tom Mewwy's respected governess. But I have an ideah—"

"Don't tell us about it now."

"Pway don't intewwupt me! It is necessawwy for Miss Pwiscillah to be met at the beastlay station, you know, and Tom Mewwy is a beastlay pwisonah in his study. I will buzz off and get to the station, and explain things to Miss Pwiscillah."

"Good egg!" said Blake approvingly. "But you couldn't get there in time."

"Oh, I'll wun like anythin'!"

"That's right!" called out Tom Merry. "Get off as quick as you can, and tell her I'm coming. Buzz! Bunk!"

"Yaas, wathah! I'll only stop to get a silk hat."

"Bother your silk hat! Go as you are!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Go as you are!" roared Blake, seizing D'Arcy by the collar, swinging him round, and starting him along the passage with a push. "Go as you are!"

"If you think I can go to meet a lady without a hat—"

"Here's a cap!"

"I could not weah your cap. It is too large by nearly a quath of an inch. And, besides, I do not wegard a cap as a pwopah head-geah for such an occasion. I am goin', Tom Mewwy, and it will take me only a few minutes to bwush my hair and get my toppah."

And D'Arcy scuttled off before Blake could kick him. At the same moment Digby returned with a couple of screw-drivers, and he and Blake set rapidly to work to aid Herries in getting the screws out.

But Herries, who was nothing if not thorough, had done his work well, and the removing of the screws was a tedious task. Tom Merry was looking like a caged animal inside the study.

"Patience, old kid!" said Lowther soothingly. "Can't be helped, you know, as you say yourself."

"But Miss Fawcett will arrive, and find nobody there."

"D'Arcy's gone."

"He'll never get there in time."

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"Well, she'll guess you've been delayed, and wait."
"Fancy keeping her waiting! I say, I can't stick it! I'm going out of the window!"

"Now, don't break your neck!"
"It's all right. I can get down the water-pipe."

"But I say—" exclaimed Manners and Lowther together.
But Tom Merry did not stay to listen. He threw up the window, and jerked himself out on the sill. The water-pipe was a good two feet from the end of the sill; but Tom Merry, who had a nerve of iron, swung himself to it, and caught it with a hard grip. Then he slithered down the pipe to the ground.

Manners and Lowther watched him, with their hearts in their mouths, so to speak, and gasped with relief when he was safely on the ground.

"Thank goodness you're safe!" exclaimed Manners. "I was—"

But Tom Merry was not listening. His feet had no sooner touched the ground than he was off, crossing the quadrangle to the gates as if he was on the cinder-path.

CHAPTER 2.

Marmaduke Is Not Good!

TOM MERRY was at the top of the School House juniors in the running line. His fame was great on the football field, and he had beaten Figgins, the chief of the New House juniors, by a foot in an historic race; and he fairly flew down to the gates of St. Jim's.

Four juniors were standing in the gateway, talking. One of them, tall and long-limbed, was the great Figgins, and the other three were Kerr, Wynn, and Marmaduke Smythe, known in the New House as the Co. Figgins was speaking as Tom Merry came tearing up.

"The young ass came bolting past," he said. "I knocked his silk hat off. I knew that would make him stop, if anything would. And what do you think he said?"

"Give it up," said Marmaduke.

"He said he would thrash me if he wasn't in a hurry to go and meet a lady," chuckled Figgins. "Before I could wipe up the ground with him he was off, with his silk hat in his hand. I watched him from the gate and saw him jam his hat on the back of his head. He was running like one o'clock."

"Meeting a lady, eh?" said Kerr. "Is Gussy in love again? You remember the time he met me in feminine attire in the Head's garden?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He didn't look in love," said Fatty Wynn reflectively. "He wouldn't go to meet his lady-love in such a flustered state. He—"

"Hallo! Where are you running to?" roared Figgins.

The four New House juniors were standing in the gateway, and Tom Merry came bolting right through them. There was no time to talk; and, besides, it was rather a joke to scatter the New House fellows, the deadly rivals of the School House.

Tom Merry sent them flying in all directions. Fatty Wynn and Kerr, shouldered off by the sturdy School House junior, rolled on the ground; and Marmaduke received an elbow on his chest which sent him reeling against Figgins, jamming the great Figgins against the gate.

Before the New House quartet could recover from the surprise, Tom Merry was gone.

Figgins gasped, and looked after him, and he was already disappearing down Rylcombe Lane.

"My hat!" exclaimed Figgins. "That's another maniac! Is Tom Merry going to meet a lady, too, I wonder?"

Before anyone could reply, Lowther and Manners came running down to the gate.

"Hallo! There's some more of them!" exclaimed Kerr.

"Where are you going, kids?"

"Has Tom Merry gone out?" asked Manners breathlessly.

"Yes, about half a minute ago."

"Right-ho!"

And Manners and Lowther ran out into the road.

Figgins stared at the Co. in amazement.

"I suppose there's something on," he said. "First D'Arcy, then Tom Merry, then those two School House wasters. I think we had better look into this."

"Hallo! Have those kids gone out?" exclaimed Jack Blake, coming up to the gateway, followed by Herries and Digby.

Figgins turned round to look at them.

"You're going out, too!" he exclaimed. "What's in the wind? Are you all going out to meet ladies this afternoon? There's Gussy in love again—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "He's not in love this

time. It's Miss Fawcett, Tom Merry's old governess, that he's gone to meet."

"Oh!" said Figgins.

"You see, we had screwed Merry up in his study, and then we found the lady was coming down, so Gussy started off as a deputy," exclaimed Blake. "It's occurred to me that those kids of the Shell may fall in with the Grammarians."

"That's very likely. They're always round Rylcombe on a half-holiday."

"So I was thinking we would follow," said Blake. "You kids can come along if you like. Of course, I know you New House fellows won't be much good if it comes to fighting, but you may be able to frighten them away with your faces."

"Right-ho," exclaimed Herries, "especially Marmaduke! He looks very pretty just now. What has ruffled our friend from Petticoat Lane?"

"I have," said Figgins serenely. "Marmaduke wants to come with us."

"No I don't!" snapped Marmaduke.

"Yes you do, old son. You don't know it, but you do. And I am going to make you. I'm going to stand by you like a chum."

"Well, are you coming?" said Blake. "I think there'll very likely be a row, and we may as well have a hand in the game. And you know the compact. Outside the gates of St. Jim's we're shoulder to shoulder against the enemy."

"Certainly! We're ready. Come on, kids!"

"I'm not coming!" said Marmaduke.

"Your mistake," said Figgins blandly. "Take his other arm, Fatty!"

"I tell you I don't want to come!"

"And I tell you I don't care a rap whether you want to come or not!" rapped out Figgins. "I'm your leader, and all you've got to do is to obey orders, and look pleasant. That's easy enough, in all conscience."

"But I say—"

"It's not necessary for you to say anything at all—"

"Look here, Figgins, I'm not going—"

"Bring him along!" said Figgins.

And Marmaduke, vainly protesting, was run out of the gateway. Then he had either to run or be dragged, and he chose the former. And the School House chums, laughing heartily, followed.

CHAPTER 3.

The Capture of Miss Priscilla.

MISS PRISCILLA FAWCETT stepped out of the train at Rylcombe Station. Tom Merry's old governess was looking very well, and the wonderful cut of her gown was only equalled by the antique shape of her bonnet. At Laurel Villa, in the village of Huckleberry Heath, Miss Fawcett led a very quiet life, and did not notice the years that slipped by. One result of that was that she persisted in regarding her ward, Tom Merry, as still a little boy, whose little aches and pains had to be carefully looked after. Another result was that her attire was always about fifteen or twenty years behind date. But her kind old face made you forget all about any little peculiarities she might have when you looked at her.

She looked up and down the platform, evidently expecting to see someone there. As there was no one in sight, excepting the porter, she advanced upon him, and startled him into alertness by digging him in the ribs with her umbrella.

"My good man—"

"Ow!" gasped the good man, turning round.

"My good man, is my ward here?"

"Hey?" said the Rylcombe porter.

Miss Priscilla, in the innocence of her heart, always seemed to take it for granted that everybody knew all about Tom Merry, but the Rylcombe porter evidently needed some further enlightenment.

"My ward, Tom Merry! Is he waiting here for me?"

"Oh, Tom Merry!" said the porter, who had heard of Tom. "That young limb—"

"What did you say?"

"That young limb!" said the porter, rubbing his side where he had been poked by the umbrella. "That young rascal!"

"There must be two Tom Merrys, then," said Miss Fawcett, with a puzzled look. "The lad I am inquiring for is a delicate little fellow with very gentle manners—"

"Then it hain't the Tom Merry I've seen, who turned my trolley over the other day!" growled the porter. "But, howsomever, I hain't seen any Tom Merry!"

"But he was to be here to meet my train."

"Well, he ain't here, is he?"

"Oh dear!" said Miss Priscilla. "Some terrible accident has happened. I feel sure of it. Have you heard of a



"WHOOOP!" The New House Co. scattered with a concerted yell as Tom Merry came dashing down to the gates and sent them flying when they tried to bar the way!

fearful accident in the streets of Rylcombe to-day, my good man?"

The porter grunted.

"There's only one street in Rylcombe, ma'am, and there ain't been any accident."

"Are you sure that there has been no runaway motor-car, or an accident to an electric tram—"

Even the stolid porter could not help grinning at the idea of an electric tram in the sleepy little village.

"It is no laughing matter," said Miss Fawcett severely.

"My dearest child may be lying somewhere terribly injured at this very moment—"

"Perhaps he's waiting outside the station, ma'am," suggested the porter practically.

"Ah, indeed, that is possible!"

And Miss Fawcett hurried off the platform and looked round the station entrance, and then into the street.

The ancient hack which served Rylcombe Station was there, but the old cabby was conspicuous by his absence.

Two lads in Grammar School caps were lounging round a penny-in-the-slot machine outside the station, and they glanced idly at Miss Fawcett. Seeing no sign of Tom Merry, the old lady approached the Grammarians.

"Excuse me, young sirs!" she said, in her old-fashioned way. "I dare say you are acquainted with my ward, Tom Merry—"

The Grammarians looked at one another.

There were few boys at Rylcombe Grammar School who did not know Tom Merry very well. In the rivalry between the two schools, Tom Merry was the enemy they had most to dread. Monk, Lane, and Carboy, the leaders of the Grammar School juniors, knew Tom Merry—rather, as they would have said. So did Hake and Lucas, the two

Grammar School seniors, whom Miss Fawcett was now addressing.

Hake winked at his companion. Hake was the bully of the Grammar School, and Lucas was a fellow of the same stamp. Their rubs with Tom Merry had been frequent, and they had generally got the worst of them.

"Tom Merry!" said Hake. "He's your ward, is he?"

"Yes. Do you know the dear boy?"

"Know the dear boy? Yes, I should say so!" grinned Hake.

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Lucas.

"I thought you must!" beamed Miss Fawcett. "You belong to St. James' Collegiate School, do you not?"

"St. James' Collegiate School?" said Hake slowly. "St. Jim's? Oh, yes, of course! We belong to St. James' Collegiate School, don't we, Lucas?"

"Oh, rather!" said Lucas.

"Tom Merry is our best chum," said Hake blandly.

"You'd hardly imagine how fond we are of him, madam!"

"Oh, yes I can!" said the gratified Miss Priscilla. "Everyone is fond of Tom. You see, he is such a dear, kind boy. Yes, and the darling boy was to meet me at the station, but he is not here, so I was going to ask you if you had seen him."

"Oh, rather!" said Lucas.

"Certainly!" said Hake. "He was called away on most important business just before your train came in. You know how fond people get of him—how they can't bear him out of their sight—"

"Oh, yes, indeed!"

"Well, that's how it happened. Dr. Holmes' brother, the Bishop of Shepherd's Bush, came down to the school

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to-day," said Hake, with a perfectly serious face. "He insisted upon taking Tom back with him in his carriage—"

"In his carriage?" ejaculated Miss Fawcett. "But I understood that Shepherd's Bush was a suburb of London. And surely the bishop would not come all that way in his carriage?"

"Oh, he never travels without it!" said Hake calmly. "It was put on a goods van in the train, you see. Well, he insisted upon Tom going back with him to his palace at Shepherd's Bush to teach him to play badminton."

"Dear me, how very singular!" said Miss Fawcett, who was astonished, but had not the slightest idea of suspecting Tom Merry's chums of telling untruths.

"Yes, wasn't it?" said Hake. "But that's the fact of the matter. Tom didn't like to refuse, so he asked us to come down and meet you."

"My only hat!" murmured Lucas.

"He said we should know you at once," said Hake. "He described a young lady in a fashionable bonnet, and so we hadn't a doubt the moment we saw you. Will you step into the hack, ma'am? We're to take you to the school."

"Certainly!" said Miss Fawcett. "It was very thoughtful of Tommy to send you in his place. But that is just like my darling Tommy. He is so thoughtful for others."

"Yes, isn't he?" said Hake. "That's why we all love him so, because he's so thoughtful for others. Lucas, old chap, will you go and hunt up the driver, and tell him he's wanted?"

"Certainly!" said Lucas.

"My luggage," said Miss Fawcett.

"I'll see that put on the hack," said Hake. "Pray, don't trouble! Have you tipped the porter yet?"

"No, I have not done so."

"Then, if you give me half-a-crown for him, I'll see to it."

Miss Fawcett, who was a careful old soul, thought half-a-crown a large tip, but she did not like to argue such a point with Tom Merry's friend. She explored in her purse and fished out half-a-crown, which she handed to Hake.

The Grammar School cad walked into the station.

"Here, you porter fellow," he exclaimed, "get the old lady's things on the hack—sharp! She's given me this tanner to give you."

He tossed sixpence to the porter.

The trunk and bonnet-box belonging to Miss Fawcett were placed upon the hack, and then Lucas returned with the driver.

"Are you kind lads coming to the school with me?" asked Miss Fawcett beamingly.

"Certainly!" said Hake, assisting Miss Priscilla politely into the vehicle.

He stepped towards the driver, who had mounted upon the box.

"Rylcombe Grammar School," he said, in a low voice.

"Yes, sir."

The driver gathered up his reins.

Lucas stared at his friend in amazement.

"What are you driving at, Hake?" he asked.

"Sh! She'll hear you!"

"But you told the driver to—"

"It's a little wheeze," said Hake, with an ill-natured grin. "This is a capture for us. We'll guy the old girl for all she's worth. It will be a shrieking joke if we can get her to the Grammar School, making her believe all the time she's going to St. Jim's."

Lucas chuckled.

"Good wheeze! But—"

"Oh, come on, or she'll get suspicious!"

The two Grammarian seniors entered the hack. The vehicle rolled out of the station yard and along Rylcombe High Street.

"Hallo, Hake!" sang out a cheery voice, as the hack passed the tuckshop. "You're doing things in style this afternoon."

Hake scowled as he looked out of the window. Three cheerful-looking Grammar School juniors were outside the tuckshop, and they kissed their hands to him. Monk, Lane, and Carboy were on the worst of terms with the Grammar School bully. Monk came down to the vehicle and coolly looked in.

"Taking a drive in your elegant carriage, Hake?" he asked. "I see you've got a lady there. My only pyjama hat! It's Tom Merry's governess!"

Monk stared into the hack in amazement.

What Tom Merry's governess could be doing in the vehicle with the Grammar School seniors was past his guessing.

"Miss Fawcett!" he exclaimed. "I beg your pardon, but—"

"Get away!" roared Hake.

"Rats! What's the idea game?"

"I'll wring your neck—"

"Nice language before a lady! Hakey—Hakey, how can you? After all the care I've taken with your education, too!" said Frank Monk severely.

The Grammar School senior turned red with rage.

"Drive on faster!" he shouted, fearful every moment lest Frank Monk should enlighten Miss Priscilla as to the true state of affairs.

The hack increased its pace. Monk, Lane, and Carboy easily kept pace with it, however. The idea was in Monk's head that Hake was playing a trick on Miss Fawcett, and, although he was at war with the juniors of St. Jim's, Monk was not the fellow to allow anything of that kind if he could prevent it.

"I'm sorry you should be annoyed like this, Miss Fawcett," said Hake, turning to the perturbed old lady. "These youngsters are Grammar School boys, and they hate Tom Merry like poison."

"Dear me! How shocking!"

"You see, it's a rival school, and they'll do anything they can to set down Tom Merry and his party," explained Hake. "That is why they are following the hack. But I'll soon get rid of them."

"Pray do not use violence!"

"Not at all. When I first came to school," said Hake solemnly, "my grandmother placed her hand in mine, and, with tears in her eyes, entreated me never to use violence. I promised her solemnly I would not. Whenever I am tempted to use violence, I always think of my grandmother and refrain. I have a lock of her hair, which I keep in a locket, to remind me of my promise never, never, never, to use violence!"

"How sweet!" murmured Miss Priscilla, deeply touched. "What a dear, good, kind boy! And what an invaluable friend for my darling Tommy!"

"I shall alight," said Hake, "and speak sweetly and kindly to these misguided lads, and point out to them that if they do not mend their ways their kind teachers will not love them. You will help me, Lucas?"

"Certainly!" said Lucas.

The two seniors alighted from the hack without stopping it. Monk, Lane, and Carboy ran right into them. The next moment the three juniors were flying in three different directions, hurled there by swinging right-handers from the two bullies.

As they reeled and fell in the dusty road Hake and Lucas ran after the hack, and jumped into it again. It had all passed before Miss Fawcett had had time to look out, and the old lady had no idea of what had really happened.

"Have they gone away?" she asked.

"Yes, madam," said Hake. "It did not take long to persuade them, you see. A word or two was sufficient to show them the error of their ways."

"We are leaving the road," said Miss Fawcett, as the hack turned out of the road into the lane leading up to the Grammar School.

"It's a short cut," explained Hake.

The next moment he gritted his teeth. Miss Fawcett was looking out of the window at the road they were leaving, and all at once she uttered an exclamation.

"My darling Tommy!"

At the corner of the road stood Tom Merry, flushed and breathless with running, gazing in astonishment at the hack.

"Drive faster!" shouted Hake.



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CHAPTER 4.

Taking the Stranger In.

"W EALLY, that is wathah surpising!"
Tom Merry turned his head as he heard the words.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was coming towards him, looking flushed and heated, and with his silk hat tilted at a rakish angle over his left ear.

"Hallo, Gussy!"

"Glad to see you, deah boy," said the swell of St. Jim's languidly. "I have been wunnin' like anythin', and I feel quite exhausted."

"You didn't get to the station in time?"

"No, deah boy; I was in the High Stweet when the station hack passed me, and I wecognised Miss Pwiscillah sittin' in it."

Tom Merry uttered an exclamation.

"Then I was not mistaken."

D'Arcy looked at him inquiringly.

"The hack just came along here," said Tom Merry, in explanation. "I thought I saw Miss Fawcett's face. But as the ancient vehicle dashed up to the gates of the Grammar School, instead of St. Jim's, I thought that I must be mistaken."

"It is a twick, Tom Mewwy."

"A what?"

"A twick. I saw two Gwammah School cads sittin' in the hack with Miss Pwiscillah."

Tom Merry started.

"Not Monk and Carboy?"

"Oh, no; two seniors—two beastly persons who have tweated me with extreme wudeness on several occasions, named Hake and Lucas!"

"Then it is a joke on Miss Fawcett," exclaimed Tom Merry, his eyes gleaming. "They're taking her to the Grammar School instead of St. Jim's, to guy her."

"Weally, that would be an extremely caddish action, but Hake is quite capable of it. He knocked my toppah off on one occasion and twod on it—twod on it deliberately. A fellow who would do that would do anythin'."

"I'm going after that hack."

"Yaas, wathah, and so am I. I cannot allow a lady to be tweated with diswesspect, especially a lady whom I esteem so highly as I do Miss Pwiscillah Fawcett."

Tom Merry was already running down the lane, and D'Arcy followed, holding his silk hat on with his hand.

But the hack was already at the Grammar School.

After catching sight of Tom Merry, Hake had urged the driver, and the old horse had done his level best, and the ancient vehicle dashed up to the gates of the Grammar School with quite a flourish.

Hake jumped out, with a grin on his face.

There was immediately a crowd of Grammar School boys round the hack, and a grin went round at the sight of Miss Priscilla.

The old lady looked out of the carriage window in surprise.

"But this is not St. James' Collegiate School!" she exclaimed, looking up at the mass of modern brickwork which comprised Rylcombe Grammar School.

"Oh, yes!" said Hake unblushingly, with a wink to the fellows crowding round. "This is St. Jim's, Miss Fawcett."

"But—but—"

"We have lately had extensive alterations," explained Hake. "The School House and the New House have been pulled down, and this modern building, with all the latest improvements, erected in its place. Do you like it better?"

"I—I really don't know," murmured Miss Priscilla.

"I shall have great pleasure in showing you over the school," went on Hake, assisting Miss Priscilla to alight. "Come on, Lucas!"

"Now then, Morton, what are you doing with that hat-box? That belongs to Miss Fawcett. Miss Fawcett is Tom Merry's grandmother, and must be treated with great respect."

Miss Fawcett coloured.

"Not his grandmother," she corrected mildly, "his old governess, and once his nurse."

"His nurse, I mean," corrected Hake. "Miss Fawcett was not Tom Merry's grandmother, she was his nurse, and I can tell you that she had an anxious time when he had the bubonic plague!"

"The measles—"

"Ah, yes; the measles, I mean! He never had the scarlatina fortunately. As Tom Merry is gone on a visit to the Bishop of Shepherd's Bush, we are going to do the honours in his absence. Bring Miss Fawcett's luggage in."

"But the driver—"

"Never mind him. He would refuse to accept payment from Tom Merry's suht—I mean, nurse—as he adores Tom

Merry as much as we all do," said Hake. "Pray come in, Miss Fawcett!"

"How sweet of him!" murmured Miss Fawcett.

She entered the gates with Hake. The Grammarians were giggling hysterically. Some of the better sort did not like the idea. But there was something really comical in the simple way in which Miss Priscilla swallowed Hake's astounding inventions.

"Dear me!" murmured the old lady, as she gazed up at the Grammar School. "Imagine those two historic old houses being pulled down to make way for that—that handsome edifice! Dear me! I am shocked—I mean, surprised. But there will be one circumstance to be thankful for in the matter."

"Indeed!" said Hake. "What is that, Miss Fawcett?"

"There has long existed, I hear, a rivalry between the two Houses at St. Jim's," said Miss Fawcett. "I have thought a great deal about it, and have come down to the school specially to compose that rivalry, and induce the lads to live upon better terms with each other."

"Ha, ha, ha!—I mean, how good of you, Miss Fawcett!"

"It is my duty, young sir! Of course, I do not disapprove of rivalry on the playing fields. That one boy should try to obtain more runs than another in a football match is very right and proper!"

"Is it?" murmured Hake. "And I suppose, ma'am, you wouldn't disapprove of one fellow trying to get more goals than another in a cricket match?"

"Certainly not," beamed Miss Fawcett, "though I do not like the terrible scrimmages I have heard about in those dreadful Rugby cricket matches! I do not know much about these matters."

"My dear madam, your knowledge of them is quite surprising!"

"Oh, no; not at all! But I hear a great deal of the boys' talk, you know, and I am not unobservant," explained Miss Priscilla. "Of the two games, I think football is the gentler, because in cricket there is a bat, which must often cause considerable hurt in the scrimmages. But, as I was saying, I do not disapprove of that kind of rivalry, but fighting is a terrible thing, and I have actually seen a boy named Figgins with a great swelling on his nose—"

"Have you really?"

"Yes, and then a nice, well-mannered lad named D'Arcy had his hat knocked down over his ears on one occasion, and—"

"Shocking!"

"Yes; and my desire was to make peace between the two Houses at St. James' Collegiate School; but, since they are both turned into one now, that will not, I suppose, be required," said Miss Fawcett, looking up at the Grammar School again.

Hake nearly choked.

"But there is still something for me to do," went on Miss Fawcett. "I hear that there is a great rivalry between St. James' Collegiate School and a Grammar School in the neighbourhood."

"Not really!" said Hake.

"Yes; I shall certainly make peace between these two schools, and induce the boys to shake the right hand of fellowship," said Miss Fawcett. "I cannot bear to think of them living in enmity, and causing damage to one another's features. It is too painful to my feelings."

"It's painful to their features, too, sometimes, ma'am," said Hake.

Miss Fawcett looked at him quickly, but his face was quite grave.

"Yes, I suppose so," she said. "But I shall not leave St. James' until I have made peace between the schools. Dear me, what was that?"

Miss Priscilla's hand went up to her bonnet as it was struck from behind. She looked round, and saw a dozen solemn faces. It was certain that someone there had pushed her bonnet awry, but for the life of her she could not guess which one it was.

"My dear boys," said Miss Fawcett mildly. "I hope no one here would be intentionally rude to an old lady!"

"Certainly not!" said Hake, winking round. "We would rather be rude to our own respected grandparents, really!"

He had hardly finished speaking when the rest of the Grammarians gave a shout.

"Tom Merry!"

"St. Jim's cad!"

"Go for him!"

Hake stared at Tom Merry. He knew that the hero of St. Jim's was following the hack, but he had not expected him to venture so boldly into the very midst of his enemies.

He did not know Tom Merry. Tom came right on, and shoved Hake violently aside; so violently, that the Grammar School senior reeled and fell on one knee.

"Tom!" exclaimed Miss Priscilla.

Tom reached her side the next moment. With his left arm thrown half round Miss Priscilla, and his right fist clenched and raised, Tom Merry faced the crowd, his eyes flashing fire.

"Stand back, you cads!" he shouted.

CHAPTER 5.

The Rescue of Miss Priscilla!

KNOCK him down!"

"Give him beans!"

"Sock it to him!"

The Grammarians crowded round Tom Merry with threatening looks. The better element of the Grammar crowd had drawn back to take no hand in the "guying" of Miss Fawcett, and the dozen or so fellows crowding round were of Hake's kind and ready for anything. It looked as if Tom Merry would be rushed on the spot, and he braced himself to meet it.

But there came a diversion the next moment. A figure came bolting in at the gates, with two gloves gripped in one hand and holding on a silk hat with the other. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He ran to the side of Tom Merry immediately, his eye gleaming behind his monocle.

"I am heah, Tom Mewwy!" he exclaimed. "You may wely upon me." He raised his hat to Miss Fawcett. "My deah and esteemed madam, I am extwermely sowwy I did not meet you at the station."

"Knock them over!" yelled Hake.

And he led a rush at the two juniors of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy's topper was sent flying, and his eyeglass strung out wildly at the end of its cord. But the swell of St. Jim's showed at that moment that, in spite of his curious little ways, he was made of the stuff that heroes are made of.

Gallantly he stood up beside Tom Merry, hitting out with all his strength. Hake received an upper-cut which made every tooth in his head ache as he caught it on the chin, and he went over backwards like a sack of coal. Lucas, at the same moment, dropped from a right-hander from Tom Merry. A couple more went over, knocked out by the chums of St. Jim's, and then Tom Merry and D'Arcy were on the ground. And the Grammarians, with angry shouts, scrambled all over them.

Up to this moment Miss Fawcett had seemed too amazed and bewildered to act in any way at all. She remained dazed and wondering. But as she saw Tom Merry go down under the rush of the Grammarians, she woke to life. Up went her umbrella, and she began to belabour the Grammarians, who were scrambling all over the Saints.

"Oh—ow!" roared Hake, as he received the umbrella across the shoulders.

"Oh, my word!" panted Lucas, catching it on the head.

Biff, biff, went the umbrella! But it was snatched away, and an eddy of the crowd bore Miss Fawcett away from her ward; and then it would have gone hard with Tom Merry and D'Arcy had not three fellows rushed into the fray to their aid.

They were Monk, Lane, and Carboy, who had just arrived; and, seeing how matters were, they rushed to Tom Merry's aid without stopping to think, hitting out right and left. This new reinforcement drove back the angry Grammarians.

"Rescue!" shouted Frank Monk.

Monk had plenty of friends, especially in the Lower School. His call was answered from all quarters; and Hake, senior as he was, thought it best to draw back.

"You cheeky young hound!" he hissed.

"Oh, shut up!" said Monk. "You're a cad, and if I were Head of this school I'd kick you out!"

Hake turned crimson with rage.

"You whelp! You are free with your tongue because your father is headmaster, but—"

"Liar!" said Frank cheerfully. "You know that doesn't make any difference. I call you a cad because you are a cad—a rotten cad!"

"What is all this disturbance?"

A tall, thin gentleman, with sidewhiskers, came upon the scene. He was evidently a master in the school, and Miss Fawcett turned to him wildly.

"Save my darling-boy!"

"My dear madam—"

"Save my Tommy!"

"Madam—"

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"They are injuring him—my darling Tommy!"

"Who is this person?" exclaimed Mr. Quin. "What does all this mean?"

"It's nothing, sir," said Monk. "Only—"

Tom Merry and D'Arcy were scrambling to their feet. They both looked dusty and dishevelled and breathless. Mr. Quin looked at them in angry amazement.

"Hake, you are a senior. Explain this to me at once!"

"It's those young scoundrels' fault, sir," said Hake, pointing to Tom Merry and D'Arcy. "They belong to St. Jim's, and they've come here to make a row."

"Ah, I think that is the boy Merry—"

"I am Tom Merry!" exclaimed Tom indignantly. "But I did not come here to make a row. I came here because—"

"Hold your tongue, sirrah! Go on, Hake!"

"It appears that the old lady came here by mistake," went on the veracious Hake. "She thought she was going to St. Jim's and she came here."

"Impossible!"

"Well, ask her, sir."

"Is not this St. Jim's?" exclaimed Miss Fawcett, in bewilderment.

Mr. Quin's brows contracted.

"Have you visited St. Jim's before, madam?"

"Certainly!"

"Then how could you mistake this modern brick building for that old college?"

"But—but I was told that—that—"

"You see, it was a mistake, sir," said Hake blandly. "Of course, it's pretty plain that the old lady's eccentric—"

The cad of the Grammar School got no farther. Tom Merry could not reach him where he stood, but he had picked up his cap, and now he dung it with all his force in Hake's face.

The bully staggered back.

"Merry, how dare you!" exclaimed Mr. Quin.

"I would do the same to anyone who insulted my governess!" exclaimed Tom Merry passionately.

"Merry, you had better go! I regard this visit here as an outrage, and I shall complain to your headmaster about it."

"If you please, sir—" began Frank Monk.

"I did not give you leave to speak, Monk!"

"But Merry is not to blame—"

"Silence!"

"Yes, but—"

"Take fifty lines, Monk! Merry, go at once, and remember that I shall complain to Dr. Holmes. Miss Fawcett, I cannot understand the mistake you have made—"

"I was told—"

"But the vehicle which brought you is waiting there. Permit me to show you to it."

"I will do that, sir!" exclaimed Tom Merry disdainfully. And he drew his bewildered governess' hand within his arm.

"Very well, and kindly go at once."

Frank Monk hurried after Tom Merry as he moved to the gate with Miss Priscilla, D'Arcy walking on the other side of the old lady.

"I say, Merry, I'm awfully sorry this has happened," whispered Monk. "You know that we wouldn't have had a hand in it, don't you?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"I know that, old fellow. It was Hake and his set. You did your best, and we should have come off pretty badly if you hadn't chipped in."

"I can't say how sorry I am, Miss Fawcett," said Monk. But the old lady was too bewildered to hear him. Tom Merry placed her in the hack. Her luggage was still on the roof. Tom and D'Arcy entered, and the grinning driver set his horse in motion.

Monk, Lane, and Carboy stood hat in hand as the hack drove off.

"Well, really," said Miss Priscilla at last, "this has been a most surprising adventure! Then that person was not your friend, Tom?"

"Who wasn't my friend?" asked Tom Merry.

"The rude boy called Hake."

"Hake? Oh, he's a beast!"

"My dear child, that is a coarse expression!"

"Can't help it," said Tom. "He's a beast! Isn't he, Adolphus?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"A horried beast!" went on Tom. "He made you think the hack was going to St. Jim's, I suppose, didn't he?"

"Ye-es; he informed me that the two Houses at St. Jim's had been pulled down, and that modern structure built in their place."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But how do you come to be here, Tom?" asked Miss

Priscilla. "I did not expect to see you to-day, when I heard that you had gone on a visit to the Bishop of Shepherd's Bush."

"The—the what?" ejaculated Tom Merry, in amazement.

"Dear me! That must have been another of that wicked lad's fabrications!" said Miss Priscilla, looking very shocked. "I must find an opportunity of speaking to this lad seriously, and pointing out to him—"

"It won't be much good," said Tom Merry, with a grin. "You'll find Hake a hardened sinner, dear."

"All the more reason why I should try to show him the wickedness of his course," said Miss Fawcett. "A lad who begins life as a story-teller may end up in prison, or

first," announced Miss Priscilla. "I shall not be satisfied until you and Figgins have shaken hands—"

"But, my dear soul," said Tom Merry in dismay, "we're jolly good friends already! I like old Figgy, and he'd stand by me any day. Figgy's all right. Our little wars are only in fun, really."

Half-way to St. Jim's, Blake, Figgins, and the rest were encountered. Blake stared at the hack and at D'Arcy, who was seated beside the driver.

"Has there been a row?" he exclaimed. "What rot! And we were hurrying like fun to get into it."

"There!" exclaimed Miss Priscilla. "What a terrible desire for fighting and brutal encounters that speech shows,



Hake and Lucas jumped down from the slowly moving cab, and—in a moment they had set upon Monk & Co. The cheery Grammar School juniors were no match for the Senior bullies, and they bit the dust!

even worse than that. I shall certainly find an opportunity of speaking to him."

"I don't see how you will," said Tom Merry dubiously. "We're not exactly on visiting terms with the Grammar School, you know."

"It will be necessary for me to visit the Grammar School to carry out my mission," said Miss Fawcett.

Tom Merry looked at her in surprise.

"I—I don't quite understand," he said. "Your—your mission—"

"Yes," said Miss Priscilla beamingly; "I have been thinking over this dreadful rivalry which reigns between the two Houses at St. Jim's, and also between St. Jim's and the Grammar School. This occurrence to-day is an outcome of it. I am going to find a way of stopping it."

"Weally, Miss Fawcett—" began D'Arcy.

"I am going to make peace between your two Houses

Tommy darling! Do you not think it is my duty to make peace, and show these misguided boys the better way—the higher path?"

But Tom Merry only groaned, and he hardly spoke again till the hack rolled through the gates of St. Jim's. There, Miss Fawcett's luggage was taken off, and Mrs. Mimms, the dame of the School House, looked at it and at Miss Fawcett inquiringly. She had not heard that Miss Fawcett was coming to stay.

"I shall probably be staying a few days," said Miss Priscilla beamingly. "Now, Tommy dear, I must go and see the Head at once."

And the old lady was shown into the presence of Dr. Holmes.

Tom Merry thrust his hands deep into his pockets and walked away.

CHAPTER 6. The Peacemaker.

DR. HOLMES rose to his feet.
"My dear Miss Fawcett, I am very glad to see you!"

He shook hands cordially with the old lady. Miss Fawcett had caused the Head of St. Jim's considerable worry at times. Her anxiety for the health of her ward, Tom Merry, led her to pay somewhat frequent visits to the school, and once or twice she had caused frowns to shadow the plump face of Mrs. Mimms, the House dame, by criticising the fare provided for her darling boy.

Then her determination to regard Tom as a delicate lad, and to administer all sorts of fearful and wonderful remedies to him, was certain to cause bother.

But Miss Fawcett was a liberal subscriber to many charities connected with the college, and she had made a handsome donation to the Chapel Restoration Fund, and was, besides, so thoroughly kind and good-hearted that it was impossible for anybody not to like her.

Dr. Holmes both liked and respected her, and so he bore patiently with many little foibles which sometimes caused inconvenience.

"Pray, sit down," went on the Head of St. Jim's, offering Miss Fawcett a chair. "Have you had a comfortable journey down?"

"I have had a strange adventure, Dr. Holmes," said Miss Fawcett.

"Indeed!" said the Head.

"Yes, indeed!"

And Miss Fawcett detailed the hoax played off upon her by Hake, and the occurrence at the Grammar School. Dr. Holmes' brow darkened as he listened.

"Inexcusable!" he exclaimed. "I cannot pardon a trick of that kind. I know that in the rivalry between the two schools many incidents occur to which a wise master must close his eyes; but a matter like this is absolutely inexcusable. I shall certainly complain to Dr. Monk."

"No, no! Pray do nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Miss Fawcett.

"But, my dear madam—"

"Pray, Dr. Holmes! Any complaint in such a matter would have a tendency to embitter the relations between the schools."



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"Yes, that is very true."
"My object is to eradicate that bitterness, not to add to it, my dear doctor."

The Head looked rather curious.

"Your object," he repeated. "As you say, a complaint may cause bitter feeling, and I naturally would rather not have to make one. If you can excuse the rudeness of the boys who treated you so badly—"

"Certainly; I forgive them freely."

"You are very kind, Miss Fawcett. Then nothing shall be said about the matter."

"Thank you, sir! Whatever is said must be in the way of kind counsel and moral instruction, in my opinion."

"I—I do not think I quite follow, madam."

"I have a mission, doctor, in coming to St. James' Collegiate School. I trust that I shall not inconvenience you by staying some days."

"Oh, no, certainly not, Miss Fawcett!" said the Head politely, but with an inward sinking of the heart as he realised what Miss Fawcett's presence in the school for a few days might mean.

"Thank you, doctor! And my companion—"

"Ah, you are not alone, then?"

"I am alone now, but to-morrow Miss Cleveland will be here—with your permission, of course. I think you have met Ethel Cleveland, Arthur D'Arcy's cousin. She has her father's permission to come to the school to see a game of cricket that is to be played on Saturday—"

"Football, my dear madam—football!"

"Well, football. It is my intention to take charge of her."

"That is very kind of you."

"She is a dear girl," said Miss Fawcett, "and I hope to gain much support from her in my mission."

"Your—your mission?"

"Yes; I have come here, sir, to make peace between the School House and the New House," announced Miss Priscilla.

"Oh, really!" murmured the doctor.

"And then to put a peaceable end to the painful rivalry existing between the two schools, Dr. Holmes."

"Oh—oh—oh, really!"

"Of course, in such an object I shall have your hearty support?"

"Oh—er—of course!" stammered the Head, who hardly knew what to say. He would not have hurt Miss Fawcett's feelings for worlds, but really—

"And that of the masters here," continued Miss Fawcett.

"I—er—yes, of course."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Dr. Holmes. I—I was somewhat afraid that you might regard my mission somewhat in the light of an interference."

"Oh, my dear madam!"

"It is very kind of you to reassure me on that point, Dr. Holmes. I could not undertake my mission without your full approval."

"No, no, I suppose not."

"I shall feel that I have not lived in vain," said Miss Fawcett, with enthusiasm. "If I can know that I have established peace where discord reigned."

"Er—yes, of course. But—but how do you propose to set about this—this very laudable object?"

"By making an appeal to the boys," said Miss Fawcett—"an appeal to their higher nature. How pleasant it would be if, instead of striking one another forcibly on the nose, they were to walk about the quadrangle hand in hand, with gentle smiles upon their faces?"

"Aha, aha!—I mean—ha, ha, ha!—that is to say, the picture you draw is quite touching, Miss Fawcett!" gasped Dr. Holmes.

"Yes," said the kind old lady. "Think, when my dearest Tommy meet Figgins or Blake, how nice it would be to take him by the hand, or kiss him upon the forehead, instead of exchanging loud and defiant words with him, and perhaps proceeding to violent assault upon his person."

The picture thus conjured up of Tom Merry kissing Figgins upon the forehead in the quadrangle at St. Jim's was almost too much for the Head of St. Jim's.

He coughed so violently to prevent himself laughing that he nearly choked, and the water came into his eyes.

"But you are busy," said Miss Fawcett, with her usual kind consideration. "I am taking up your time. I will go to my room now, and—"

"The same room, Miss Fawcett," said the Head, recovering himself. "And I am sure Mrs. Mimms will do everything to make you comfortable."

"Oh, I am sure of that. Thank you so much, Dr. Holmes!"

"Oh, not at all!"
 "Yes, yes, yes! It is so pleasant to be welcomed with so hearty a greeting, and to have one's little efforts in the cause of peace and good will so keenly appreciated."

"Yes—er—yes, quite so."
 And Miss Fawcett left Dr. Holmes' study.
 A few minutes later Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, entered.

He glanced at the Head's worried face in surprise.
 "I hope nothing is wrong, sir."
 "No, no, nothing," said Dr. Holmes, rather dubiously.
 "But—but you are aware that Miss Fawcett, Tom Merry's guardian, has arrived?"

Mr. Railton smiled.
 "Yes; I have just had the pleasure of meeting her in the passage."
 "Well, she has come here to make peace between the two Houses."

The Housemaster elevated his eyebrows.
 "And when that is accomplished—"
 "When!" said Mr. Railton, with a smile.
 "Yes; when that is accomplished she is going to make peace between St. Jim's and the Rylocombe Grammar School."

"Miss Fawcett has set herself a long task, I am afraid."
 "And she is going to stay at the school until it is accomplished."

"Dear me! That is very—very—very—very—ahem!"
 "I would not wound her for worlds," said Dr. Holmes.
 "Yet—yet I think that there will be trouble, and probably some ridiculous contretemps, if she attempts to carry out this absurd project."

"I think that is very probable, sir."
 "But—but what am I to do?" said the distressed Head of St. Jim's.

"I should be inclined to point out, gently but firmly, that Miss Fawcett's mission is superfluous and quite unnecessary," remarked Mr. Railton.

"But that would wound her; and—besides, I was so taken by surprise that—in fact, I have agreed to everything."

"Dear me! That is bad."
 "And promised her my support!"
 "That is worse!"
 "And yours!"
 "Bless my soul, Dr. Holmes!"

"I only hope," said the worried Head, "that she will grow tired of her mission, and give up the task as hopeless. It is useless to explain to her that the rivalry between our two Houses makes rather for good than for bad, and that there is no real feeling of enmity at the bottom of it. It is futile to explain that to a lady who regards a blow on the nose to a boy as a kind of unheard-of barbarity. I really hope that Miss Fawcett will give up the idea."

But Dr. Holmes' hope was ill-founded.

CHAPTER 7.

First Results of the Peacemaking!

TOM MERRY'S face was very glum as, with his hands thrust deep into his pockets, he walked away after parting with Miss Fawcett. Monty Lowther and Manners stared at him, and then ran after him.

"I say, k.d., what's the matter?" exclaimed Lowther.
 "You didn't get hurt in that scrap with the Grammarians, did you?"

"Yes, a bit," said Tom. "But that's nothing."
 "Then what are you looking like a funeral for?" demanded Lowther. "How dare you go about with a face that would frighten a cowl off a chimney?"

Tom Merry laughed.
 "My dear chap, there's going to be ructions," he said.

"All the better," said Manners. "Don't we live and thrive on ructions? Don't we live, move, and have our giddy being in ructions?"

"Miss Fawcett has come to St. Jim's—"
 "Quite a superfluous bit of information, as we have seen her with our own beautiful blue eyes—"

"Oh, don't start rotting! I'm worried! She has come to St. Jim's with the intention of peacemaking—"

"Of whatting?"
 "Making peace between the two Houses."
 "My only hat!"

"And then between St. Jim's and the Grammar School."
 "Tommy, my boy, it won't do. You must point out to Miss Fawcett, in the most gentle way in the world, that her proper province is cod-liver oil and chest-protectors. Farther than that she must not go—"

"Now, look here, Lowther—"
 "I'm looking, and speaking, too, by the way, so don't interrupt. If anybody starts making peace with me there will be ructions—real, doubled-back-action, non-skidding, first-class ructions—"

"Bai Jove, there's the Tewwible Thwee quawwellin', deah boys!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, coming along the passage. "Stop a minute, chaps! I have nevah seen those three boundahs quawwellin' yet, and I think it will be wathah cuwious."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Keep it up, kiddies! Gussy thinks it will be curious—"

"Yaas, wathah!"
 But D'Arcy's words were enough to recall the chums of the Shell to themselves. All three had been growing rather excited, but the interruption had come in time to save them from their first quarrel.

Tom Merry turned very red.
 "I say, kids, I am sorry I spoke so hastily!" he exclaimed.

"Of course, you know that I didn't mean—"
 "Certainly!" said Lowther, grinning. "I was a bit too previous myself; and as for Manners, why he was a—"

"Never mind what I was," said Manners. "No need for us three to row. If people are going to make peace with us, there's no reason why we should quarrel."

"They have left off quawwellin' just as I have awvied!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I wegard that as wathah inconsiderate. It would have been cuwious and wathah funnay to watch them."

"I'll make you look funnay, as you call it, if you don't keep your head shut!" said Manners.

D'Arcy screwed his monocle into his eye and looked superciliously at Manners.

"I wefuse to keep my head shut!" he replied. "I distinctly wefuse to do anythin' of the kind. I wegard you as an ass, Mannahs!"

"I'll jolly soon show you—"
 "Here, keep the peace!" exclaimed Blake, pushing him back. "You can show us anything you like, without any demonstration of that kind."

"If you're looking for a black eye, Blake—"
 "I'm looking for all the black eyes any kid in the Shell can give me!" exclaimed Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "But, I say, what's the row?" asked Herries. "What were you three wasters ragging one another about, anyway? Anything gone wrong?"

"Not exactly," said Tom Merry. "As a matter of fact, Miss Fawcett, my old governess, has come down to St. Jim's with the idea of establishing peace all round, between us, and with the Grammar School."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "It's no laughing matter!"
 "Ha, ha, ha! Hear me smile!"

"My word!" exclaimed Digby. "And Miss Fawcett's mission of peace looks like making war in the camp, causing more rows, in fact, than there were before."

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "I wouldn't have her wounded for worlds!" said Tom Merry.

"Certainly not! If she wants rows to cease in the School House while she's here, why that's arranged easily enough."

"How do you mean?"
 "Why, you fellows will only have to acknowledge that the Fourth Form is top Form, and Study No. 6 top study, and—"

"Catch us!" said Monty Lowther.
 "No fear!" said Manners emphatically.

"Well, if you're going to be obstinate I don't see what you can expect," said Blake. "I propose a simple and suitable way out of the difficulty, and you get your backs up about it at once—"

"Talk about cheek—"
 "Well, you know, we are top Form and top Study—"
 "Cheeky young bounders!" said Manners.

"Hallo! What's that?"
 "Yaas, wathah! What did you say, Mannahs?" And D'Arcy sprang at Manners.

Tom Merry shoved D'Arcy back as he rushed at Manners. D'Arcy promptly tapped him on the nose and Tom Merry hit back. All the juniors were growing excited now, and Manners was rushing at D'Arcy, but Digby jumped in the way. A moment more, and the two parties were mixed in a wild and general scrimmage, nobody knew exactly how or why. Four Fourth-Formers and three of the Shell scrambled in the wild melee, with a gasping and trampling and scuffling loud enough to alarm the whole House.

And that was what Miss Priscilla saw as she came along the passage from Dr. Holmes' study.

CHAPTER 8.

Miss Priscilla Makes Peace!

MISS PRISCILLA uttered a scream. "My dear boys! My darling children! How can you fight in that dreadful way!"

The combatants instantly separated. The rivals of the School House were always ready for a scrap, but fighting in the presence of a member of the gentle sex was extremely bad form.

Looking somewhat sheepish, and very dusty and rumpled, the juniors separated. An athletic form came striding along the passage.

"What's this row about?"

It was Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's. He saw Miss Fawcett the next moment, and the frown left his brow.

"I'm sorry you should be annoyed by this rowing, Miss Fawcett," he said respectfully. "The youngsters get out of hand sometimes. They don't mean any harm; but there is a rivalry between two Studies in the School House—"

"Dear me!" said Miss Priscilla. "More rivalry! I see that I shall have to commence my mission in this House."

"Eh—er—I beg your pardon!" said Kildare, looking puzzled, and indeed, wondering what the good old lady was talking about.

"I have come to St. Jim's on a mission of peace and good will," said Miss Fawcett. "My object is to reconcile the two Houses and put an end to this absurd feud reigning between them and then to reconcile St. Jim's to the Grammar School."

"Oh!" said Kildare.

"I must begin here," said Miss Fawcett. "I believe you are a consul, or something—I forget exactly what, but some old Roman title—"

Kildare grinned.

"A prefect," he said.

"Ah, yes! I knew it was something like a consul, or something. You are a prefect. But will you, as a favour, leave this matter in my hands? Instead of punishing the dear lads, I should like to reconcile them with one another."

"By all means!" said Kildare, with a grin, pretending not to see the dismay in the faces of the juniors. "I leave the matter entirely in your hands, Miss Fawcett. You have my authority, as head prefect of the School House, to deal with it."

"Thank you very much!"

And Kildare walked away, thinking to himself that the noisy juniors were "in" for a punishment more severe than a licking all round, as was indeed the case.

The youngsters were looking absolutely dismayed.

Miss Fawcett, with the best intentions in the world, was about to make them look utterly ridiculous, they knew; and already they noted fellows looking towards them curiously from up and down the passage, and from some of the doors.

"Now, my dear children—" said Miss Fawcett.

"I say, you know," said Lowther, "we're not children!"

Miss Priscilla did not even hear him.

"I want you to make friends, my dear little ones," she said.

There was a cackle from Mellish and Gore, who were standing at the corner of the passage, looking towards the crimson-faced group.

"Dear little ones!" said Gore.

"Charming infants!" chuckled Mellish.

But Miss Priscilla was too intent upon the matter in hand to hear or heed the mockers. The visitor from Huckleberry Heath was in deadly earnest.

"Have you never thought," pursued Miss Fawcett, "how cruel and inconsiderate it is to strike one another with the clenched hand?"

"I say—" began Tom Merry, as red as a beetroot.

"Don't interrupt, darling."

"But really, I say, you know—"

"Let me finish, my dear, and then you shall speak as much as you like," said Miss Fawcett gently. "It is, not like you to be rude, Thomas."

Tom Merry groaned, and relaxed into silence.

"All of you," pursued Miss Fawcett, beaming round the juniors, "bear the signs of rough treatment in your faces."

"Nature hasn't been kind to them, I know," remarked Mellish. And there was a giggle up the passage.

"How much better it would be, my children, if you loved one another, instead of quarrelling!"

"We weren't really quarrelling, you know," said Blake. "We punched each other's nappers just—just—just to pass the time, you know."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Pray make friends!"

"But we're all jolly good friends!" said D'Arcy.

"My dear children, I shall not relinquish my task till you are all reconciled!" said Miss Fawcett. "Pray shake hands all round, and promise me never—never to quarrel again!"

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Tom Merry.

"My only Aunt Sempronia!" grunted Monty Lowther.

"What did you say, Lowther?"

"Oh, nothing, Miss Fawcett!"

"Now you will do as I ask—"

"Pray shake hands all round!" called out Gore, from the corner of the passage. "It will be worth seeing!"

Tom Merry looked daggers along the passage. There were a score of juniors round Gore and Mellish, all giggling away like a lot of hyenas. But Miss Priscilla did not seem to observe their presence.

"I say, do as she wishes," whispered Tom. "She won't be happy till we do. Oh, my hat! We shall be the laughing stock of the School House!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Now, my dearest children! Tommy darling, set the example!" said Miss Priscilla encouragingly. "Take Blake's hand!"

Tom Merry held out his hand in a shamefaced way to Blake. He was willing enough to shake hands, as far as that went; but the whole scene was so ridiculous that he felt the situation keenly. He knew, too, that it would be long before he heard the last of it from Gore and his set!

Blake, as crimson as Tom Merry, took his hand, and the rest of the juniors, seeing that there was no help for it, each gave and took a hand, so that they were standing in a circle, shaking hands all round.

"This is where you sing 'Auld Lang Syne'!" said Mellish.

There was a roar of laughter, followed by a roar of the well-known chorus:

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot—"

Potts, the Office Boy!



Tom Merry felt tears of vexation come into his eyes. He dropped Blake's hand as if it had suddenly become red-hot, and the rest of the juniors followed his example.

But Miss Priscilla, fortunately, was satisfied. "How sweet to see you make it up like this!" she exclaimed. "I hope that peace is now firmly established in the School House. To-morrow I must see if I cannot make it up between you and Figgins."

"My word!" said Digby; and he marched off with Blake and Herries, thinking that he had had quite enough of it.

"Don't you feel better now, my dearest children, now that you have become quite friendly and at peace with one another?" asked Miss Fawcett.

"Oh, yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy; and he followed his chums.

"Lots!" said Manners; and he incontinently beat a retreat with Lowther.

Tom Merry would gladly have followed, but he was the only one left, and he did not wish Miss Fawcett to feel hurt, so he stayed talking for a few minutes before joining the others.

CHAPTER 9.

D'Arcy's Peace-Offering!

THREE dismayed youths stood in stony silence, and stared at one another in the study—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther. The Terrible Three were not often taken by surprise, and very seldom floored—but floored they were now. Miss Priscilla was a little too much even for youths of their long and varied experience.

"What's to be done?" asked Monty Lowther at last. Tom Merry made a hopeless gesture.

"Blessed if I know!"

"The dear old soul has made peace between us and Study No. 6!"

"I'll knock their heads off!"

"They feel just as much inclined to knock ours off, I think. Gore and Mellish and their lot were killing themselves in the passage!"

"Wish they'd do it outright!"

"It will be the joke of the school!"

"I know it will!"

"What's to be done?"

"I don't know!" groaned Tom. "I say, Miss Fawcett told me in the hack that Cousin Ethel is coming down to-morrow. She's coming down really to see the footer match on Saturday; but Miss Fawcett depends upon her to back her up in this campaign."

"D'Arcy's cousin! She's a ripping girl! But—but what asses we shall look—"

"Rather! I say, isn't there any way of getting Miss Priscilla to go home, like a good girl, and not try to make peace any more?"

"Yaas, wathah; that's what we want to know, you know!"

It was D'Arcy's voice, and the swell of St. Jim's came in, followed by the rest of the chums of Study No. 6.

They were looking just as serious as the Terrible Three, and evidently felt the burden of Miss Priscilla's mission weighing upon their minds.

"I say, Tom Merry, this won't do, you know!" said Blake, wagging his forefinger at the hero of the Shell in a way Tom Merry found rather exasperating.

"Right-ho!" said Herries emphatically. "That's what we all think! It simply won't do—not at any price!"

"My word!" said Digby. "I should say not!"

"Yaas, wathah! You know, we are being made to look ridiculous asses!" said Arthur Augustus plaintively.

"Well, that's nothing new to you, at least!" said Lowther.

"I object to that remark, Lowthah! I—"

"You see," said Tom Merry, "it can't be helped. We've got to stand it! I'm only thinking of what will happen when Miss Fawcett visits the Grammar School on a peace-making mission. It will be rotten!"

"Yaas, wathah! They will guy her, you know, and we shall have to thwack them for their confoundedly beastly cheek, you know, and that will lead to—"

"To something very different from peace!"

"We are bein' made to look ridiculous!" said D'Arcy, with a glance at Lowther. "I feel it vewy much! And, you know, my Cousin Ethel is comin' down here to-morrow. She is a wippin' gal, you know, but she does smile so at a fellow. I weally don't know what there is about me to make a gal smile, but she always does. And if Miss Pwiscillah is makin' us look like a lot of silly asses, you know—"

"By Jove! It's rotten!" said Tom Merry. "But, I say, there's one thing we can do—we'll be careful not to have any more rows while Miss Fawcett is here, and so she won't have any more peace-making to do on our account."

"That's a good idea!" said Manners.

"Yaas, wathah! I shall expect Lowthah, howevah, to treat me with pwopah respect, if there are to be no more wows," said D'Arcy.

"Rats to you, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to— I mean, I will not have 'wats' said to me! I call upon you to withdwaw that remark, Lowthah!"

"More rats!"

"Then I shall have to administah—"

"Here, quiet!" exclaimed Blake. "Is this how you're starting the new rule? Both of you shut up, or we'll knock your heads together!"

"I wefuse to have my heads knocked togethah— I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean, Gussy. It's a good suggestion of yours, Tom Merry, and we'll take care to keep the peace until Miss Fawcett is gone, at least. If anybody starts a row we'll jump on him and give it him in the neck!"

"Yaas, wathah; but, weally, Lowthah—"

"Suppose we ask Figgins & Co. to make it pax, on the same ground?" suggested Manners. "We've often made pax with them for days at a time, you know; so we could manage it if they were willing. That would stop Miss Fawcett from making peace between us and guying us before the whole school."

Tom Merry nodded.

"Good egg! We'll talk to Figgins & Co. on the subject to-morrow."

"Yaas, wathah! I think we shall be able to make it pax with Figgins & Co., as I am goin' to make Figgins a wathah genewous offah."

"What are you going to offer him, fathead?"

"I object to that expression!"

"KNOT" CORRECT!



"What are you going to offer him, then?"

"You have noticed that Marmaduke Smythe has shown several signs of bein' a boundah since he came back to St. Jim's—"

"Yes; he's several sorts of a pig sometimes. What about it? It's no business of ours, I suppose."

"I offahed Figgins once to take him in hand and bwing him up bettah—"

"Ha, ha, ha! And Figgins dotted you on the nose, I remember. Serves you right, too!" said Monty Lowther.

"Pway do not weter to that extreme wudeness on the part of Figgins, Lowthah, or I shall weally find it difficult to make friends with him. I am goin' to wewen my offah to look aith Marmaduke—"

"You ass, you'll get their backs up at once—"

"No. You see, Figgins has had some experience of him now, so he will be willin' for him to weceive some instructions. I weally think it's a gentleman's duty to take a boundah in hand and teach him bettah, and the twouble is nothin' to me."

"My dear ass," said Tom Merry, "you'll only—"

"I distinctly wefuse to be called an ass, and I shall not argue with you on the subject, Tom Mewwy. I flattah myself that my judgment is all wight. You wequiah a fellow of tact and gweat bwain power in these mattahs, so it is no good leaving them to fellows of your desowip. And the swell of the School House marched out of the study."

"If he goes over to the New House, Figgins & Co. will wipe up the floor with him," Tom Merry remarked.

"The ass!" said Blake wrathfully. "I suppose we'd better go and see that he comes to no harm. But, really, he wants killing badly at times."

And the chums of Study No. 6 left the room.

The Terrible Three were left alone, but they did not remain long.

"I say, this looks like being a House row," said Tom Merry. "Figgins & Co. will never stand being cheeked in their own quarters. We must stand by our side against the New House, so I think we'd better toddle along after Blake."

And the chums of the Shell went downstairs. In the Hall they passed Miss Fawcett, who had her bonnet on.

"I am just going over to the New House, Tommy," she said, with a beaming smile. "I am going to speak to Mr. Ratcliff on the subject of my mission here."

Tom Merry groaned.

"You may see me across the quadrangle, if you like, Tommy darling."

And Tommy darling did so.

CHAPTER 10.

More Results of the Peacemaking!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY entered the New House, and coolly mounted the stairs to the passage upon which the Fourth Form studies opened, and walked along till he came to the famous apartment shared by Figgins & Co.

The door was half-open, and the light streamed out into the passage, and the sound of voices showed that Figgins & Co. were at home.

"Hallo, what's that funny thing in the doorway?"

The funny thing in the doorway was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He gave Figgins a glance of indignant disdain.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Oh, get off, old fellow! You mustn't come into the New House, you know. We're not what you'd call particular, but we bar freaks. Travel!"

"I object to bein' alluded to as a fwiek—"

"Are you going to travel along?"

"I have come here to speak to you, Figgins, and to make you what I wegard as a genuewous offah," said D'Arcy, with dignity.

"But we're busy."

"Yaas; but I'm going to speak on the same subject. When I heard that Marmaduke was coming back to St. Jim's you may wemembah that I offahed to take him in hand, and twy to make him a little less of a beastly boundah."

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes. That was kind of him, wasn't it, Marmaduke?"

The heir of the house of Smythe grunted.

"You wefused my offah," went on D'Arcy. "I may say that you wefused it wudely. I made up my mind not to wepeat that offah—"

"Now, that was cruel of you, Aubrey!"

"But cires have changed. I make that offah again as a sort of peace-offerin', you see. We want to make it pax between the School House and the New House."

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"Tired of getting licked?" asked Kerr.

"Certainly not! Miss Pwisecillah Fawcett has come to the school—"

"We've seen her!"

"And what do you think she has come for, deah boys?"

"To bring Tom Merry a new supply of cod-liver oil, I expect."

"Vewy likely, but something else, too. She has come to make peace between the two Houses, and between St. Jim's and the Gwammah School."

Figgins whistled, and the Co. stared. Marmaduke, who had worn a somewhat sulky expression, looked interested.

"You don't mean to say—" began Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah, you may wely upon it."

"But, I say, there will be ructions."

"There have been wuctions already. It nearly led to a quawwel between the Tewwible Thwee on the subject."

"Scott! Why, they never quawwel!"



"They nearly did this time, and I think they would have done so, only I came by. I thought it would be intwestin' and cuwious to watch them, but they left off quawwellin', which I wegard as extremely inconsiderate."

"Ha, ha, ha! And has Miss Fawcett started peace-making?"

"Yaas, wathah! She made peace between Study No. 6 and the Tewwible Thwee, and made us shake hands in a wing—"

"Eh?" ejaculated Figgins.

"What wing? Whose wing? What are you jabbering about?"

"I say she made us stand in a wing—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kerr. "He means a ring."

"Oh, I see! She made you stand in a ring and shake

hands!" grinned Figgins. "Ja comprends. What a set of giddy asses you must have looked."

"Yaas, wathah! And Goah and Mellish and the west were laughin' in the most wude and vulgah mannah in the cowwidor."

"No wonder! If I had been there," said Figgins, "I really think I should have smiled, perhaps in a rude and vulgar manner. Well, I'm glad you're at peace in the School House now. But what—"

"I'm comin' to that. Miss Pwiscillah is goin' to make peace between us, so we want you to make it pax till she is gone from the school, and then we shall not be made to look a set of ridiculous asses, you know."

"Good idea! We can't show Miss Fawcett any sort of disrespect, after the kind way she has treated us on more than one occasion."

"Rather!" said Fatty Wynn. "Do you remember the turkey at Laurel Villa at Christmas?"



In a moment half a dozen Grammarians had hurled themselves upon the unfortunate Gussy, while others dashed to the gates to hold them against the onslaught of the St. Jim's reinforcements!

"Yes, he got you by the ear."

"I don't mean that—I mean at dinner! I'd make peace with anybody who'd provide such ripping feeds as Miss Fawcett does."

"Yaas wathah! And now to come to the point. I pwopose that we leave off waggin' one anothah till our esteemed and respected old friend has left the coll, and in the meantime, I am quite willin' to wewew my offah, and take Marmaduke in hand."

"That is what I call really kind of you, Gussy."

"Well, weally, Figgins, my intention is to be kind."

"We'll leave it to Marmaduke himself to answer the generous offer," said Figgins, with a wink at the Co. "Marmy, old man, this is where you speak! Express to

Arthur Augustus Aubrey Fitzgerald de Vere your deep sense of obligation."

"Certainly!" said Marmaduke, grinning.

And he rose and walked up to Arthur Augustus, who met him with the beaming smile of confiding friendship. But Marmaduke did not beam back. He seized the swell of the School House by the shoulders, and twisted him over and sat on his chest.

Arthur Augustus gasped and wriggled.

"Weally, Marmaduke—"

"You image of a tailor's dummy!" said Marmaduke.

"I wefuse to be chawatewised as a tailor's dummy!"

"I'm going to teach you not to come into the New House with your cheek, you boundah! Give me the liquid blacking, Kerr!"

"With pleasure!" said Kerr.

D'Arcy wriggled in horrid anticipation.

"Marmaduke, I wegard this weception of my genewous offah as wottenly wude and ungwateful!"

"Buck up with that blacking!"

"But if you do not care to accept the offah I am willin' to withdraw it, and wethah fwom this study I wequest you as a gentleman not to use that blackin' upon me!"

"Hand it over, Kerr!"

"Here you are!" grinned Kerr. "I've taken the cork out!"

"Marmaduke, you howwid wuffian!" gasped D'Arcy, as a thin stream of liquid blacking descended upon his nose.

"You—you will stain my collah! Yow—ow! Help!"

"Rescue! School House!" shouted Blake, dashing in at the door of the study, followed by Digby and Herries.

"Yaas, wathah! Wescue!"

Marmaduke was hurled off D'Arcy in a twinkling. The bottle of liquid blacking was upset over his own waistcoat. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn rushed forward, and the chums of Study No. 6 met them gallantly. In a second the study was the scene of one of the fiercest combats ever seen at St. Jim's.

D'Arcy staggered to his feet and at once went for Marmaduke.

Smythe, whose humour had not been improved by the blacking, met him willingly, and they clasped each other and reeled about the study in a deadly embrace. The table went flying, with books and papers and inkpots, and D'Arcy and Marmaduke fell into the midst of the heap. Figgins and Blake, wrestling wildly, fell over them.

"Rescue, New House!" roared Figgins. "School House bounders! Rescue!"

The junior studies in the New House fairly hummed with voices. An attack from the rival House in such an open manner was an insult to every denizen of the New House. Juniors came rushing up the passage to lend a hand in expelling the intruders. Pratt and French and Jimson came tearing into the study, and then the odds were against the School House four.

But the Terrible Three were on the spot now.

They rushed into the fray without stopping to ask questions.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther were three of the best fighting men in the Shell Form, and they made a diversion in favour of the School House juniors. But reinforcements for Figgins were coming up every moment.

The study was crammed with struggling forms, and the interior was simply wrecked. It would have gone hard with the School House seven if all the enemy had been able to get at them. But there was no room for the New House juniors to come in. The study was crammed, and they could only stand in the passage and yell, which they did with great energy.

CHAPTER 11.

Figgins & Co. Catch It Hot!

MEANWHILE, Miss Priscilla Fawcett had called upon Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster of the New House. Even the thin, sour-faced Mr. Ratcliff could not help being polite to the kind-faced, beaming old soul; but he had had a hint of her mission, and he was prepared for Miss Fawcett's attacks.

Without making any definite promise, Mr. Ratcliff discussed the matter for some time.

"And now if you would care to go to Figgins' study."

Miss Fawcett bowed silently, and rose. The idea of her well-meant efforts leading to the punishment of any of the juniors concerned was very painful to her, and Mr. Ratcliff had not been too reassuring.

In a rather troubled frame of mind, and, feeling vaguely that Mr. Ratcliff was not taking her mission seriously,

Miss Fawcett accompanied the Housemaster up the broad staircase. As they mounted, the sound of a din in the upper corridor fell upon their ears.

Mr. Ratcliff's brows contracted.

"There is some riot going on in the Fourth Form studies!" he explained. "Excuse me, madam, I must see to this!"

And the Housemaster's long, thin legs made good speed along the passage.

Outside Figgins' study a crowd of excited juniors, belonging to the Fourth Form and the Shell, were shouting and yelling, too excited to notice the approach of the angry Housemaster. Within the study a terrific combat seemed to be going on.

"What is all this?"

Mr. Ratcliff's cold voice seemed to cut the din like a knife.

The shouting died away at once, and the crowd of abashed juniors parted for the Housemaster to pass through to the study.

Mr. Ratcliff stood in the doorway, and looked in.

BIGGER & BETTER

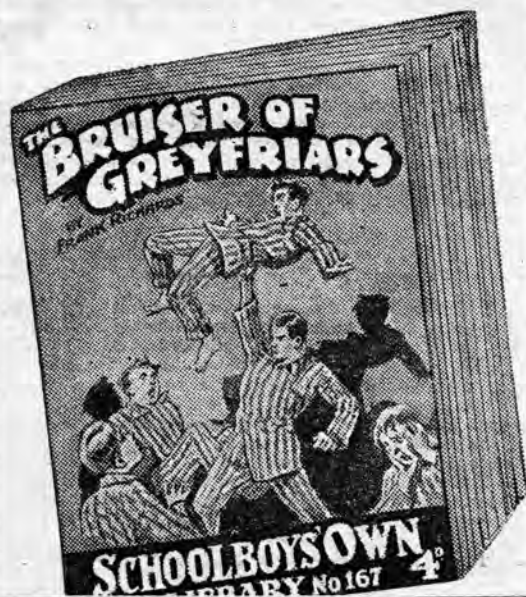
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A dozen or more juniors were crammed in the study, wrestling and punching and yelling in wild excitement. The furniture was wrecked.

"Stop!"

But in the excitement of combat even the Housemaster's voice was not heard.

Mr. Ratcliff snapped his teeth, darted into the study, and seized the nearest boy, who happened to be Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Stop this, I say!" he cried savagely, shaking D'Arcy till his teeth seemed to rattle. "Will you stop this disturbance instantly?"

"Dear me!" exclaimed the voice of Miss Priscilla, at the door. "What a scene—what a dreadful scene! Tommy darling, have you been quarrelling?"

"Certainly not," said Tom Merry, "only having a row!"

"Having a row! What an expression! Ah, this is an outcome of the dreadful rivalry between your Houses!"

"It's an outcome of your blessed peacemaking!" murmured Monty Lowther, sotto voce.

"My dearest children—"

"Pray allow me, madam!" said Mr. Ratcliff, in his hardest tones.

"But, my dear sir—"

"But, my dear madam—"

"Pray allow me—"

"Please allow me—"

"I wish to speak a few words."

"I am afraid I cannot allow my authority in this House to be interfered with, Miss Fawcett!" said the master harshly. "I shall cane severely every New House boy concerned in this riot, and shall report the School House boys to their Housemaster."

"May I beg of you—"

"I am afraid I have no time to attend to you now, madam! Pratt!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Go to my study and fetch the cane you will see upon the table."

"Ye-e-es!"

Pratt went.

Miss Priscilla looked dismayed. What was to be done? The juniors were not looking overpleased, either. The old lady ventured one more appeal to the Housemaster.

"If you would allow me to speak a few words in season to these misguided youths, Mr. Ratcliff, I am sure that I could establish peace between them."

"You are at liberty to do so, madam."

"Then you will not punish them?"

"I shall certainly punish them severely!"

"May I make one appeal to you?"

"Certainly not upon that topic!"

"Cad!" came a mutter from behind the Housemaster.

Mr. Ratcliff turned round with a face full of fury.

"Who said that?"

There was no reply.

"Who said that?" roared the Housemaster.

"Blessed if I know, sir!" said Monty Lowther.

"You must not speak to me like that."

"No, sir; certainly not, sir. How shall I speak to you, sir?"

"You will speak to me respectfully."

"Certainly, sir. I will always try to show how much respect I feel for you, sir," said Lowther blandly.

Mr. Ratcliff gritted his teeth. There was a double meaning in Lowther's remark, but he could not very well take notice of it.

"Who—who used that opprobrious expression just now?" he demanded, searching the faces of the juniors with a severe glance. "Was it you, D'Arcy?"

"Weally, Mr. Watchiff—"

"Was it you, sir?" roared Mr. Ratcliff.

"I cannot regard it as wight to ask a fellow to accuse himself," said D'Arcy, looking round. "It is not accordin' to law, nor accordin' to justice."

"Did you use that expression, D'Arcy?"

"Notwithstanding the respect I feel for you, sir, I am compelled to refuse to answer a question which I regard as—"

"That will do, D'Arcy. I shall not fail to report this to your Housemaster. You shall be taught not to apply expressions of that kind to your master. Pratt, you have been a long time. Now hold out your hand!"

"If you please, sir—"

"Hold out your hand!"

"This is no place for me," said Miss Fawcett, with dignity; and she turned quietly and withdrew from the study, the boys, who appreciated her well-meant efforts to avert the inevitable punishment, making way for her with great respect.

CHAPTER 12.

The Two Housemasters!

"AND now," said Mr. Ratcliff, "we will go to the School House."

The miscreants of his own House had received their punishment.

"With pleasah, sir," said Arthur Augustus.

"Silence, D'Arcy!"

"Certainly, sir I do not desiah to speak to you if—"

"Hold your tongue!"

"Yaas, wathah! But, weally, Mr. Watcliff—"

Tom Merry caught D'Arcy's arm and hurried him out of the study. The School House juniors descended the stairs and followed the tall, thin figure of Mr. Ratcliff across the quadrangle.

Straight to Mr. Railton's study they were marched.

The Housemaster of the School House started up in surprise as Mr. Ratcliff entered with his train.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed, noting the dishevelled appearance of the juniors. "Is anything the matter, Mr. Ratcliff?"

"Yes," said Mr. Ratcliff, "something is very much the matter, I am sorry to say."

Mr. Railton compressed his lips. There was no love lost between the two Housemasters, and their methods differed widely. Mr. Ratcliff was constantly seeking some excuse for interfering with the School House, and that, of course, was keenly resented by the School House master.

"Well, what is it?" asked Mr. Railton abruptly.

"There is a difference in our methods, Mr. Railton," said the New House master. "We agree, I think, on hardly any point of discipline."

"This is hardly the place to discuss that, sir," said Mr. Railton, with a glance at the silent juniors.

"The question has raised itself," said Mr. Ratcliff. "I try to keep my House in order, and leave yours to the state of riot you seem to prefer."

"Mr. Ratcliff!"

"I am speaking plainly," said the New House master, flinching a little from the clear, steady eyes of Mr. Railton.

"You are, indeed. May I ask you to be brief as well?"

"But," continued Mr. Ratcliff, "when I see the order of my House disturbed by an invasion of a gang of unruly juniors from your House, it is time, I think, for me to represent to you that something ought to be done."

"Do you mean that my juniors have been making a disturbance in your House, Mr. Ratcliff?"

"Yes, I do; they have been fighting like wild beasts in Figgins' study."

"Oh, weally, Mr. Watcliff—"

"Silence, D'Arcy!"

"But weally, Mr. Wailton—"

"Silence, I say! Go on, Mr. Ratcliff!"

"That your juniors were the aggressors is proved by the fact that the disturbance took place in the New House," resumed Mr. Ratcliff. "I have severely punished Figgins and his companions, and these juniors have witnessed the punishment."

"I have no doubt about it," said Mr. Railton dryly.

"And now, sir, I demand—"

"That is not a pleasant word to use."

"I am not here on a pleasant errand. I demand the punishment of these juniors, as severely as my boys have been punished, for this unexampled act of hooliganism; and especially D'Arcy, who added the most amazing insolence to his ill-conduct by applying a most insulting expression to me—by calling me a cad, sir," concluded Mr. Ratcliff, biting his thin lips with rage.

The School House master looked very grave.

"Did you apply that word to Mr. Ratcliff, D'Arcy?"

"Weally, Mr. Wailton—"

"Answer me at once. Do you know that this is a serious—very serious matter?"

"Yaas, wathah, sir! I wegard it as extremely sewious, and if you will let me explain my point of view—it will not take a quartah of an hour—"

"I am afraid I cannot listen to you, D'Arcy."

"But weally, sir—"

"Answer my question directly. Did you, or did you not, apply to Mr. Ratcliff the word he accuses you of having used?"

"No, sir; certainly not," said Arthur Augustus.

"It is false!" exclaimed the New House master hastily. "I say—"

But Mr. Railton, with a gesture there was no disobeying, stopped him.

"I cannot permit you to say that in my study, Mr. Ratcliff. Whatever D'Arcy's faults may be, I know him

to be scrupulously truthful, and I will not have him accused of falsehood in my presence."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Silence, Merry!"

"The boy as good as admitted it in the New House when I taxed him with it," cried Mr. Ratcliff.

"Pway allow me to explain, sir! I did not intend to admit anything of the kind, as it was not I who used the word."

"You said, boy, that it was not right to ask a fellow to accuse himself when I asked you if you had used that expression."

"Yaas, I wemembah perfectly. But that was only a we remark, sir, which anybody might have made," said D'Arcy innocently. "I did not mean that I did not want to accuse myself. I meant that, weally, you were actin' in a wathah silly way."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

And then he suddenly stopped and tried to look unconscious, as Mr. Railton's eye turned upon him.

The School House master himself could scarce repress a smile at D'Arcy's way of explaining things to the incensed Mr. Ratcliff. But he summoned up a severe expression.

"D'Arcy, you must not speak like that!"

"No, sir. But Mr. Ratcliff asked me, and, as one gentleman to another, I could not wefuse him an explanation when he wequested it."

"That will do, D'Arcy. I think you will admit, Mr. Ratcliff, that D'Arcy is guiltless of using that expression you objected to?"

"I am far from satisfied upon that point; but if D'Arcy did not utter the word himself, he must know who did, and I call upon him for the name of the person."

D'Arcy's face set obstinately.

"I cannot wegard that as a gentlemanly position to take up," he said. "It is impos for a fellah of honah to betway anybody, and—"

"Quite so," interrupted Mr. Railton. "I really think you are requiring too much of D'Arcy, sir. The matter had better be passed over, as it is really impossible to discover who used that expression—possibly a New House boy."

"Quite poss, Mr. Wailton."

"But as for this raid into the New House, if you ask for the juniors to be punished, I have no alternative but to accede to your request."

"I demand—"

"It is sufficient to ask," said Mr. Railton mildly. "Before I punish you, my boys, have you any explanation to offer?"

"None, sir," said Tom Merry; "only that we never meant any harm, and that Figgins & Co. never meant any harm, either. We've had a row, but there's no ill-feeling left behind, and we're none the worse for a thump or two."

"Yaas, wathah! I considah—"

"There is something in what you say, Merry. But you must remember that you have disturbed the order of the New House, and that Mr. Ratcliff objects to anything of that kind very strongly."

"May I have the gweat honah of pointin' out to Mr. Watcliff that weally—"

"And so I have no alternative but to punish you, Merry. I shall cane you all in turn, and commence with you."

"Certainly, sir! I know you are just."

Tom Merry accented the word "you" rather emphatically, so that his sentence implied that there was somebody else who was not just, and Mr. Ratcliff knew very well whom that unjust somebody was.

Mr. Railton frowned a little, but took no notice of the remark. He selected a cane, and the juniors advanced in turn to take their "gruel."

Mr. Railton was a kind master, and believed very little in the efficacy of corporal punishment but on this occasion, with the jealous eye of Mr. Ratcliff upon him, he laid on the strokes pretty well. Each of the juniors in turn received three on each hand. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy coming last. The swell of the School House looked a little apprehensive.

"Hold out your hand, D'Arcy!"

"Pway excuse me a moment, sir! I should take it as a gweat favah, sir, if you would wefwain fwom canin' me, as I do not feel vewy stwong just now."

"Come, D'Arcy!"

"I have a gweat objection to pain, sir. And I have heard that it is much easiah to twain youth by example. And I will pwomise to take example by the canin' you have given Tom Mewwy, if you will wefwain fwom—"

"Come, come—hold out your hand!"

(Continued on page 19.)

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WELL, chums! And what do you think of this week's double-length yarn? Isn't it the goods! What-ho! Well, I can promise you another treat with

"THE VENGEANCE OF 'NOBBLER JIM'!"

That's the next story on the programme, and it is thundering good, too. There is no writer of school yarns in the wide, wide world to come up to Martin Clifford. We are all agreed on that, and next week's double-length yarn goes to prove our opinion more than ever. Don't miss this treat whatever you do, boys. Another item of news that will buck you up concerns the opening chapters of a grand new serial story, entitled

"CHUMS OF THE FIGHTING FLEET!"

which will appear in next Wednesday's bumper issue. David Goodwin is the author of this story and he needs no introduction from me. Of course Potts the Office Boy will be up to his tricks again next week, and finally you will be able to turn to this page of gossip for all the latest news. Order your copy of the GEM in advance, then do me the favour of telling your non-reader pals what a good boys' paper it is and persuade them to give it a trial. Thanks!

THE CAGED MAN!

If you are wandering across a golf course look out for the super golf ball finder. He'll make you look at him twice if he is really up to date, for he will be wearing a cage of "armour"—consisting of a network of metal which protects his head and shoulders, although it permits him to see quite normally and enables him to go about his work even when the golf course is at its busiest. Regardless of flying golf balls—they are nasty things to run into when they're in flight—the cage man pokes about looking for what he can find! Should a stray ball hit him it only bounces harmlessly off the cage. Quite a good stunt, what?

A SCHOOLBOY'S FAME!

Holder of fifty-two silver challenge cups, other valuable trophies, and winner of more than two hundred money prizes—that is the amazing record of Iwan Davies, a seventeen-year-old youngster who has sung his way into fame. But perhaps the crowning point of this youngster's career so far was when he was recently commanded to sing before the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace. Their Majesties

were so delighted with his performance that he was asked to sing several songs. He came away from the palace feeling—and quite rightly, too—very bucked with life. Yet Iwan Davies' voice is due to break in a few months, and it is impossible to tell what his voice will be like after that. Close upon his performance at Buckingham Palace a famous London restaurant began negotiations with Iwan and offered him an engagement at twenty-five pounds a week, whilst gramophone and talking film companies strove to secure his services. Such is fame! It is to be hoped that when Iwan's voice does break it will break, so to speak, in the right direction!

SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF!

After forty-eight years' service with the L.M.S. Railway, Mr. George Wilsdon has retired. He leaves a hefty record behind him, for this hardy veteran has driven over three million miles without an accident. How's that for good work?

ACCURACY COUNTS!

Bang! The shell whizzes from the ground battery and explodes half a mile away from the target. Up aloft a pilot in an observation plane merely moves a pointer on his "electrical" map and then presses a button. Immediately the officer in charge of the ground battery sees by his map, which works in automatic conjunction with the pilot "spotting" above, just how near he has been to the target and alters his range accordingly. This is a vast improvement on the method used by artillery "spotters" during the Great War, who had to gauge where the shells fell by complicated map work and then had to signal to the ground battery by means of the Morse code. The invention is the work of a Britisher, who offered it, incidentally, to the British Government. The powers-that-be rejected it, and the end of the story is that this automatic range-correction device has been used by the Japanese in their war with the Chinese.

SAFETY FIRST!

A Paris inventor has been turning his activities to making aircraft passengers absolutely safe even when a crash with death at the end of it looks a certainty. And his safety device is novel itself. The cabin of the aeroplane is detachable and mounted on a set of double rails, and attached to it is a very special parachute. If anything goes wrong with the plane up aloft all the pilot does is to pull a lever, then—hey presto!—the parachute flutters out bravely and carries

the entire cabin backwards along the set of rails and so away from the main structure of the stricken aeroplane. After that the parachute cabin floats gently to earth and lands its passengers without injury. Tests so far prove the invention to be a winner—a circumstance that will popularise air travel more than ever.

FATTY WYNN'S RIVAL!

If you fancy yourself a champion at putting away quantities of tuck, and if you can't manage to pack away with comfort six plates of jelly and blancmange, fourteen plates of bread-and-butter, ten cakes, three cups of tea, a coconut, sweets, and fruit, steer clear of the winner of the eating contest which was recently held between three choir boys of Trinity Church, Southend-on-Sea. He managed this little lot quite comfortably, and to show how happy he was he attended choir practice afterwards and sang as lustily as any of his colleagues. Why, the extent of the above menu would give even Fatty Wynn something to think about, wouldn't it?

LUCK!

He had heard a rumour that he had won a hefty prize in a football competition and being mighty keen to get to his home at St. Maxime to prove it—he was then in Cannes—he jumped into his car and put his foot down hard on the accelerator. In his hurry he drove clean over a ravine about forty feet deep, and there he would doubtless have lingered but for the fact that the headlights of his car had remained alight and so attracted the attention of passing motorists, who rescued him. The unfortunate man was taken to hospital, and one of the first things he heard when he regained consciousness was that he had won a big prize—one thousand pounds, to be exact!

GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY!

Can you solve this teaser? He has had only twenty-one birthdays, yet he has eleven children still alive, five of whom have seen many more birthdays than he has; he has thirty-three grand children and three great-grandchildren. He was born as far back as 1848. Give it up? Right! The answer is, he was born in a Leap Year—February 29th, 1848—and because of that he has seen only twenty-one actual birthdays in eighty-four years. Pretty tough, isn't it! Think of the birthday cakes you miss if you happen to be born on February 29th!

HEARD THIS ONE?

Tom: "If you had five shillings in your pocket, John, what would you think?"
John: "I should think that I'd got somebody else's trousers on."

SIX SUPER STORIES.

Do you like really good adventure yarns? If you do, the "Ranger" is the paper for you. For twopence the "Ranger" offers six tip-top yarns of thrills, mystery and adventure. In addition there is a sparkling column of jokes sent in by readers, who in return are awarded handsome prizes. Have a look at our companion paper to-day, chums. Next to the GEM, it's the best boys' paper obtainable.

YOUR EDITOR

Priscilla the Peacemaker!

(Continued from page 17.)

"Vewy well, sir. Of course, I cannot wufese if you insist," said D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity.

And he held out his hand. But Mr. Railton, who was smiling now, laid on the strokes a little more lightly than usual.

The juniors filed out of the study.

"Well, Mr. Ratcliff, I hope I have satisfied you?"

"Hardly, sir. I should have expected a punishment much more severe, considering the outrageous conduct—"

"The punishment was severe enough in my opinion, but if you feel aggrieved at all, I am willing to take the matter before the Head and abide by his decision."

"As Dr. Holmes is much more your friend than mine, I—"

"He is just, at all events. But I feel that it is useless to prolong this discussion. And, as a matter of fact, I am somewhat busy."

Mr. Ratcliff compressed his lips. Without another word he turned and left the Housemaster's study, and Mr. Railton, with a slight smile, settled down to his writing-table again.

CHAPTER 13.

Miss Fawcett Is Pleased!

SEVEREN disconsolate juniors came along the upper corridor in the School House to Tom Merry's study. They were twisting their hands, or squeezing them, or sucking the palms of them, or hugging them under their arms. It was evident that they had not been having a good time.

"Come in!" said Tom Merry. "Let's have some coffee and roasted chestnuts and warm our tootsies at the fire, and we shall feel better."

"Good idea," said Blake dismally.

"Yaas, wathah!"

There was a bright fire in the study. Manners soon had the chestnuts roasting, and Monty Lowther jammed the kettle on the glowing coals and started cleaning out the coffee-pot, while Tom Merry hunted for cups and saucers.

The chums of Study No. 6 sat down before the fire, very glum at first, but gradually their countenances assumed a more cheerful expression. There was nothing "soft" about the St. Jim's juniors, and they could take a licking without feeling either very sulky or very damaged. D'Arcy, who had suffered least, was naturally the first to recover his spirits.

"I say, deah boys, you're lookin' wathah a gwumpy lot of owls, you know," he remarked, glancing round.

"Oh, shut up!" said Herries.

"I wufese to shut up, Hewwies! We haven't had it half as bad as Figgins & Co. What an uttah boundah that old Watty is! I should weally like to administah a feahful thwashin' to him, you know."

"I say, this is the outcome of Miss Fawcett's peace-making," said Blake. "If the dear old soul makes much more peace, she'll set everybody in the school by the ears."

"My word!" said Digby, rubbing his hands. "If this is the beginning, where will it end? We shall have to make it pax with Figgins & Co. till she's gone."

"I say, I'm sorry, kids!" said Tom Merry. "It's good of you to take it so patiently. And I know it's rotten—"

There was a tap at the door.

"Oh, come in, fathhead!" said Lowther irritably.

The door opened, and Miss Fawcett appeared. Lowther turned crimson.

"I—I beg your pardon!" he exclaimed. "I—I did not know it was you, Miss Fawcett. I—I thought it might be Gore, or one of those rotters."

"I quite understand, Lowther," said Miss Fawcett. "May I come in?"

The juniors were all on their feet at once. In spite of the trying experiences they had gone through, they were unflinching in politeness to a lady, especially an old lady, and there was quite a harvest of chairs for Miss Priscilla's acceptance.

She sat down with a sweet smile.

"I am afraid you have been punished, my dear boys," she said.

"Oh, that's nothing!" said Tom Merry. "You'll have a cup of coffee, won't you, dear?"

"Yes, certainly, my dearest Tommy. Are you sure you're not in pain?"

"Quite sure," said Tom Merry hastily. "How are the chestnuts getting on, Manners?"

"All right," said Manners, with a grin.

"You'll have some wosted chestnuts, Miss Fawcett, won't you?" said D'Arcy.

"Certainly, my dear child."

Arthur Augustus winced.

"I am very sorry you have been punished," went on Miss Fawcett. "But that moment is really appropriate for making an appeal to you. Would it not be better for you to make friends with Figgins and his comrades, as you have made friends with one another? Is anything the matter, Blake?"

"N-n-no, only something in my neck, Miss Fawcett."

"You coughed very much; you must take something for it," said Miss Priscilla anxiously. "You really look as if you were about to choke for a moment."

"I felt like it," murmured Blake.

"I will get you some of Dr. Bones' Terracotta Tabloids for Children's Chests," said Miss Priscilla kindly. "I will send you a large packet immediately upon my return to Huckleberry Heath."

"Thank you so much," murmured Blake.

"They are to be taken four before every meal, and six just before going to bed, and whenever you feel inclined during the day you may take one or two."

"I will remember."

"And now, as I was saying," resumed Miss Priscilla, "does not your adventure this evening, and its unfortunate consequences, show to you that it would be better to make friends with Figgins & Co.?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I am glad to hear you say so, D'Arcy."

"Weally, Miss Priscilla, we shall have much pleasuah in cawwyin' out your wishes, and we'll make it pax with Figgins & Co. to-morrow mornin'."

"That is very good news to me, my dear lads. Are you all of one mind?"

"Oh, yes, certainly, Miss Fawcett!"

"Very well. I should like to see you all embrace Figgins & Co. in the quadrangle, with the eyes of all the school upon you, as an example—What is the matter, Lowther?"

"Nothing, madam."

"Your face was curiously twisted—have you a pain?"

"No, no, nothing!"

"It was probably a spasm. Are you subject to spasms?"

"N-n-no," mumbled Lowther, whose facial contortions had been caused by an heroic attempt to keep back an almost irresistible giggle; "not at all, I assure you."

"A person may be subject to them without knowing it," said Miss Fawcett, with a wise shake of the head. "Have you ever tried Dr. Bones' Pale Pellets for Spasmodic Subjects, my dear lad?"

"N-n-no," Lowther mumbled, turning red.

"Then I will send you a box when I send to Blake. They will do you good. Dissolved in a glass of lukewarm water, they are to be taken in doses eight times a day, the patient at the same time taking care to keep his feet warm and his chest well protected. Do you wear flannel next to your skin?"

Lowther mumbled something, and Tom Merry came to the rescue, drawing Miss Fawcett's attention away to himself.

"What time is Miss Cleveland coming down?" he asked.

"By the morning train," said Miss Priscilla. "I will not forget those pellets, Lowther. Now, you have promised me to make it up with Figgins & Co.?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then I am satisfied. I shall go over to the Grammar School to-morrow, and take Ethel with me. I am sure her influence will be useful in accomplishing my mission. Good-night now, my dear boys! Have you sufficient clothing on your beds in this cold weather?"

"Quite, thank you!"

"I would speak to Mrs. Mimms about it. I have already pointed out to her some improvements in the diet of the House that I think would be advisable. She does not seem to see it exactly as I do, but I shall convince her. Good-night, dears!"

And Miss Fawcett kissed each of the juniors in turn, and retired from the study.

Tom Merry looked dolefully at the rest.

"We're in for it," he said. "The only thing is to make peace with Figgins & Co. early in the morning, before she has a chance of making us look a set of silly asses."

"We can't prevent her going over to the Grammar School," Blake remarked.

"I suppose not."

"And she's going to take my Cousin Ethel with her!" D'Arcy remarked. "I say, the whole thing will be ridiculous, you know."

"We shall have to go along in a body to see that they come to no harm," said Tom Merry determinedly. "The peacemaking will probably lead to a row, as usual; but we can't help that. Monk and his set would treat Miss Fawcett well, but Hake—"

"Yaas, Hake would be bound to act like a wottah. He knocked my toppah off once and twod on it, and a fellow who would do that would do—"

"Exactly!" said Blake. "We must go over, and take Figgins & Co. along so that there will be enough of us, and see that the Grammarians keep off the grass, as it were. No good telling Miss Fawcett, though; she'd not let us come."

"We shall have to arrange it, then, for her to go some time when we're able to get away," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "You see, masters are inconsiderate, and they won't let us stay away from lessons even for the most important reasons."

"No, that's wathah wotten of them—"

"I know," said Blake. "We'll ask Cousin Ethel. She's going with Miss Fawcett, and she'll fix it."

"Yaas, wathah! Ethel is a wippin' gal, you know, and I will ask her," said D'Arcy.

"She's more likely to see the point if I explain to her," said Tom Merry. "Don't you think so, Blake?"

"No, I don't," said Blake. "I'm the fellow to explain to Cousin Ethel; we understand each other very well."

"That's your beastly conceit," said Lowther. "Cousin Ethel would be much more likely to see just how the matter stands if I—"

"I wegard you all as asses!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "Ethel is my cousin, and I claim the right to explain things to her. I wofuse to discuss the mattah further."

And the swell of the School House walked out of the study. And the coffee and the chestnuts being finished, the meeting broke up.

CHAPTER 14.

Cousin Ethel!

MISS PRISCILLA had already made her mark at St. Jim's. And on the following morning her peace-making mission was the joke of the school. The seniors grinned over it in their studies, the juniors joked over it in their class-rooms. All were curious to know how the expedition to the Grammar School would turn out.

During the morning a stranger was seen to enter the gates of St. Jim's, whom some recognised as Mr. Quin, the master of the Grammar School. His expression showed that he had come to make a complaint. He was shown into the Head's study, and what passed there was not known to the boys of St. Jim's; but Mr. Quin's expression was decidedly discontented when he was shown out.

It was probable that the Head had pooh-poohed his grievance, and as the matter was not mentioned to the boys, it was clear that Dr. Holmes did not think it worth troubling his head about.

Figgins & Co. received the overtures of the School House chums in a very cordial spirit. As Figgins nobly said, the row of the previous evening had been gorgeous enough to satisfy anybody, and would last them for some time.

Besides, the caning the New House juniors had received had been very severe, and they were not anxious for a second dose for some time to come.

But the chief reason for Figgins & Co.'s acquiescence was the desire to avoid a ridiculous scene, with Miss Fawcett as the chief actor.

To be appealed to as good little boys was rather humiliating to fellows of fifteen, or thereabouts, who looked upon even the masters at the school with a good-humoured toleration, and upon the prefects with positive patronage.

It was impossible to request Miss Priscilla to reserve her kind offices for use solely at Huckleberry Heath, so the only alternative was to make it quick, and pax was accordingly made, the truce to last until Miss Fawcett left St. Jim's.

Miss Fawcett was a little disappointed at missing the touching scene she had pictured of Tom Merry embracing Figgins in the quadrangle before all St. Jim's, but her kind heart was delighted to know that peace was established at last.

Having established cordial relations at St. Jim's, Miss

Fawcett, like Alexander, sighed for fresh worlds to conquer, and turned her attention towards the Grammar School.

Ethel Cleveland, D'Arcy's charming cousin, came down to the school in time for lunch with the Head, and so was there when the boys were at liberty after morning school. The juniors were glad enough to renew the old acquaintance. They had not seen Ethel since Christmas, but she had not forgotten them.

Tom Merry was the first to meet her. The cap came off his curly head as he sighted the graceful figure of the girl in the quadrangle, and he came dashing across to meet her. Ethel greeted him with a bright smile, and gave him her hand.

"It's jolly to see you again," said Tom Merry, in his cheery way. "You are going to stay as long as my governess, I believe?"

Ethel nodded.

"Yes. I am going to see the football match on Saturday before I return," she said demurely. "Miss Fawcett has promised that I shall see you take nearly all the runs."

"Ha, ha, ha! What Miss Fawcett doesn't know about football would fill a book."

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, joining them. "I say, Ethel, you look weally wippin', you know! Here comes Figgins. Do you wemembah Figgins?"

"Of course I do," said Ethel, shaking hands with the chief of the New House juniors, "and Kerr and Wynn and Mar-maduke, too. How do you do? But I must not stay long, as I am going in the car with Miss Fawcett."

"To the Grammar School?" asked Tom Merry anxiously.

"Yes."

"I say, Ethel," said D'Arcy, "it won't do, you know. We want Miss Fawcett to go at a time when we can follow on to see that—"

"To see all safe, you know," said Tom Merry. "We're anxious—"

"About you, really," said Figgins. "They are a rough lot at the Grammar School, though some of them are ripping fellows."

"That's so," chimed in Blake. "We've got to come along, and so we want you to persuade Miss Fawcett—"

"To go at a time when we can be on hand."

"After afternoon school will be best."

"You see—"

"Yaas, wathah, you see—"

Ethel laughed.

"My dear friends, the car is already ordered, and Miss Fawcett is going," she said. "I am to join her in ten minutes, to go with her. I really don't think you will be needed. You are more likely to break the peace than to keep it."

"Oh, weally, Ethel—"

"But—" began Tom Merry.

"It's only half an hour to school," said Lowther, looking up at the big clock in the tower. "We might manage it."

"We must wisk it," said Arthur Augustus. "If Miss Fawcett takes Cousin Ethel to the Gwammah School now, they will awwive when the gwound is full of Gwammah cads, and they are certain to chivvy our esteemed old friend."

"But, really—" said Ethel.

"You know why Miss Fawcett is going, don't you?" said Tom Merry.

The girl smiled.

"Yes, on a mission of peace."

"You know, it's all rot, but we can't tell Miss Fawcett so."

"Scarcely. The object is very—very laudable."

"Yes, but the idea is all piffle!" said Manners. "I beg your pardon. I should have said, all rot—I mean, nonsense."

"I must go now," said Ethel, looking at her watch. "I really think it would be better for you not to come to the Grammar School."

And she ran into the House.

The crowd of juniors looked at one another dubiously. "There's something in what she says," Tom Merry remarked. "If we go, it may make a row, when otherwise the thing might go off quietly."

"But welflect, Tom Mewwy, how they tweated Miss Pwis-cillah yestaday."

"Yes, that's true enough."

"They will pwbably be extwemely wude. I weally think that we ought to go in force, and stand by the ladies in case we are needed. It's only the polite thing, deah boy."

"D'Arcy's right, for once," said Digby. "I say—"

"I object to that remark, Digby. I'm not the kind of fellow to blow my own twumpet, but weally I must say that I am usually wight in a mattah of this kind."

"If we're going," broke in Figgins, "the sooner we start, the better. We stand more chance of getting away without

being seen; the car will travel faster than we do, and we want to be there by the time Miss Priscilla is."

"True. Let's get a move on."

"Wait for me a minute, deah boys."

"Can't! Come along!"

"I must wun into the House and fetch my hat!"

"You've got your cap."

"Yaas, but on an important occasion like this a toppah would be au fait, I think," said D'Arcy, shaking his head.

"Look here, you ass—" began Blake

"I wefuse to be—"

"Look here! I'm getting fed-up with your hats. I've had enough of them—too much, in fact. You'll come as you are!"

"I wefuse to come as I am. I shall be only ten minutes in—"

ground was crowded with the Grammarians, and there was a rush at once at the sight of Miss Priscilla Fawcett.

The gravel drive leading up to the big brick buildings was thronged with grinning boys to such an extent that the vehicle had to stop. Miss Fawcett looked benignly at the crowd. Ethel was looking a little frightened.

"My dear boys," said Miss Fawcett, "pray allow the vehicle to proceed."

"Get out of the way!" shouted Frank Monk, coming up at a run.

He took off his cap to Miss Fawcett and Ethel.

"Mind your own business, young Monk!"

"Get out of the way, I tell you!"

"Get back yourself!"



In a flash Tom Merry was by Miss Priscilla's side. "Stand back, you cads!" he shouted, as Hake and Lucas advanced upon them.

"Come along, kids, and leave him behind, then."

"I wefuse to be left behind!"

The juniors started towards the gates, and D'Arcy hesitated for a moment, and then jammed his cap down on his head and followed.

Out in the road the juniors broke into a trot, and they got over the ground in good style.

They were nearly at the gates of the Grammar School, when there was a buzz on the road behind them, and they dodged into the trees to let Dr. Holmes' car pass. In the car sat Miss Priscilla and Ethel. A couple of minutes later the vehicle dashed up to the Grammar School.

CHAPTER 15.

D'Arcy is Frog's-Marched!

"HALLO! What's this?"

It was Hake who uttered the exclamation, as the car drove in at the open gates of the Grammar School.

It wanted yet twenty minutes to afternoon school, and the

"If you don't clear off the drive this instant," said Frank, "I'll go straight and fetch the Head."

"Sneak!"

"Sneak or not, that's what I'll do; so take warning."

Hake and his set crowded back from the drive. The car proceeded, Ethel giving Frank Monk a grateful glance.

"I should like to address a few words to those young lads," murmured Miss Priscilla. "I think the chauffeur had better stop—"

"Another time, dear Miss Fawcett!" whispered Ethel hurriedly.

"But a word in season—"

"They are so excited now."

"My dear child, they do not mean any harm. It is only boyish fun, and I'm sure that an appeal to them—"

"Would it not be better to make your call upon Dr. Monk first, dear Miss Fawcett?"

"Well, yes, perhaps you are right, Ethel."

And Miss Fawcett alighted at the door of the School

House, and was at once shown in with Ethel to Dr. Monk's study.

Meanwhile, the shouting in the Grammar School grounds had been heard far along the lane, and it reached the ears of the juniors of St. Jim's, who were hurrying along in the track of the car.

"My word!" gasped Digby. "They've started, you see!"

Tom Merry compressed his lips. He put on a spurt, but D'Arcy, as it happened, was ahead in the race, having gained a start after the halt that had been made to let the car pass. The swell of St. Jim's dashed up to the gates of the Grammar School, and rushed in. A yell greeted him.

"Gussy!"

"Collar him!"

There was a rush of Grammarians at the bold intruder. "Here's more of them coming!" exclaimed Hake excitedly. "Shut the gates and keep them out, and then we'll give Gussy the frog's-march."

There was a roar of approval. Hake, Lane, and Carboy jammed the gate shut just as the juniors of St. Jim's came racing up. Monk would have stood up to defend Miss Fawcett from insult, but against the St. Jim's juniors he was at one with Hake. He fumbled with the bolt as the enemy hurled themselves against the bars.

Half a dozen Grammarians threw themselves upon D'Arcy, who was, unfortunately, alone of his party within the gates.

The swell of St. Jim's was collared in a moment. He hit out with all his strength, and two or three Grammarians rolled on the ground, but there were too many for him.

He was pinioned and held fast, a helpless prisoner; while the crowd of Grammar lads held the gate shut against the Saints.

Tom Merry was first to reach the gate, and he simply hurled himself at it. Manners and Lowther were only a minute behind. They shoved and pushed madly, and Figgins & Co. were soon lending a hand, backed up by Herries, Digby, and Blake.

Ten stalwart juniors made a good weight, pushing with all their strength, and the gate swung back a few inches before Monk could secure it.

"Push here!" yelled Carboy.

"Shove!" shouted Frank Monk. "All together!"

And a score of Grammarians rushed to back him up. "Stick it out!" gasped Figgins.

The St. Jim's juniors put forth all their strength; but the enemy were too many. The gate clanged shut and Monk fastened it.

Then the Grammarians let go, jeering and hooting at the Saints between the iron bars of the gate.

"The frog's-march!" exclaimed Hake.

"Right-ho!" said Frank Monk. "Mind, you're not going to hurt him!"

"I'm going to do as I like."

"Not a bit of it. Line up here, kids. This is our business—"

"Stand back, Frank Monk!"

"I won't!"

"That's wight, Frank Monk," yelled D'Arcy, wriggling in the grasp of Lucas and two or three other Grammarians.

"I object strongly to bein' hurt—"

"Will you get out of the way, Monk?"

"No!"

"That's wight, wufuse—distinctly wufuse!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Get back, Monk! This matter is in our hands! Now, Gussy, you're going to have the frog's-march!"

"I object to havin' the frog's-march—"

"Well, you're not expected to enjoy it, you know. If you like to go down on your knees," suggested Carboy, "and confess that the Grammar School is top school, and that St. Jim's is no class and nowhere, why, then we might let you go."

"Good!" exclaimed Monk heartily. "They're the conditions, D'Arcy."

"I wufuse!"

"Don't do it!" yelled Blake, through the bars of the gate. "If you say anything of the kind, Gussy, we'll boil you in oil!"

"And wring your neck afterwards!" said Digby.

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Now, then, own up!" exclaimed Frank Monk, pushing Hake back and taking the lead in the affair. "Down on your knees, Gussy!"

"I uttably wufuse!"

"Obey orders! Own up that we are top school—"

"Mind you don't!" yelled Tom Merry, shaking frantically at the bars of the gate till it creaked on the iron hinges.

"We'll boil you if you do!"

"Stick it out, Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah! You ought to know me well enough, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,278.

deah boys, to know that nothing could induce me to forget my dig, and that the dig of the coll I belong to—"

"Bravo, Gussy!"

"Good old Adolphus!"

"I'll jolly soon make him do it!" exclaimed Hake, pushing his way forward. "Give me hold of his wrist!"

"That's the style!" cried Lucas. "A twist of the wrist, and he'll own up to anything you like!"

"You are quite mistaken, you wotten boundahs—"

"Give me hold of his wrist—"

"Rats!" said Frank Monk contemptuously. "You may be a senior, Hake, and a monitor, but I tell you plainly that if you begin any of your bullying tricks here, we'll wipe up the ground with you, and that's flat!"

"I'm going to give him a twist—"

"You're going to do nothing of the sort!"

"Stand out of my way!"

"Line up, you fellows!"

Frank Monk had almost unbounded sway over the Grammar School juniors. Hake was generally disliked, too; for there were few youngsters present who had not experienced his bullying at times. The bully saw that he would have a big fight on his hands if he pushed his point. He could have tackled any two of the juniors easily, but a dozen would, as Frank Monk put it, have wiped up the ground with him. He growled and retreated.

A jeering yell from the juniors followed him. The Saints outside were shaking the bars of the gate frantically, but without being able to move it.

"Now then, D'Arcy, are you going to own up?"

"Wathah not!"

"Then we shall give you the frog's-march!"

"Pway do not be so wude and wuff—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Collar him!"

"I wufuse to be collahed— Ow!"

Caught up in a dozen pairs of hands, D'Arcy was dragged off, and experienced the pleasures of the frog's-march in the sight of his exasperated friends.

"Ow! Welease me! You are wuffing my jacket! You are soilin' my collah! I insist upon bein' immediately weleased! Ow!"

Round and round the grinning Grammarians went, with the swell of St. Jim's in their merciless clutch. They did not really hurt him, but never was there seen such a rumpled, dusty, and dishevelled figure as D'Arcy was when they set him on his feet again close to the gate.

Even the exasperated Saints looking through the bars could not help grinning at the spectacle he presented.

D'Arcy looked round him in bewilderment, as if rather uncertain whether he was right end upwards.

"Weally," he gasped, "I object to this!"

"Ha, ha, ha! He objects!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard you as a lot of feahful wuffians! You haven't the least wespect for a fellow's clothes!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Are you going to own up that we are top school, and that St. Jim's is nowhere?" demanded Frank Monk.

"Certainly not!"

"Bravo, D'Arcy!" shouted Tom Merry. "Stick it out!"

"Yaas, wathah, Tom Mewwy! I weally wish you were here stickin' it out instead of me; but weally I wufuse to say anythin' dewogatory to the honah of the coll—"

"Round he goes again!"

Round went D'Arcy again in the frog's-march, but this time there came an interruption. Miss Priscilla ran out in high excitement.

"Pray, my dear boys, how can you— Oh dear!"

A graceful figure followed the old lady.

"Will you please release my cousin?" said a soft, sweet voice.

Frank Monk turned very red.

"Stop it, chaps!" he exclaimed. "I say, you know, it's only fun! But there you are!"

D'Arcy was placed upon his feet, gasping like a fish out of water. His collar was hanging by one end, his hat was gone, his hair resembled a mass of okum, his clothes were rumpled and dusty. The dimples deepened at the corners of the girl's mouth as she tried not to smile.

"Thank you very much!" she said sweetly.

CHAPTER 16.

Miss Priscilla Explains!

Cousin ETHEL was perfectly composed as she faced the mob of Grammarians. They fell back before her glance as they would never have fallen back from the heaviest charge of Tom Merry & Co.

Frank Monk was crimson, and Carboy and Lane did not raise their eyes. But they stood their ground, while the rest of the Grammar School juniors slowly melted away.

"Weally, I feel vewy dirty and distwessed!" said Arthur Augustus. "I believe you are laughin' at me, Ethel—"

"Dear Cousin Arthur!"

"It is weally no laughin' mattah, Ethel! I have been used very wuffy, and my clothes will nevah wecovah ffrom it, I believe."

"It is too bad—"

"Yaas, wathah! I shall considah it my duty to administah a feahful thwashin' to these howwid wuffians at the first opportunity—"

"Oh, draw it mild, Gussy!" said Frank.

"I wefuse to dwaw it mild! I wegard your tweatment of me as distinctfully wuff and diswespectful!"

"I say, we didn't know he was your cousin, you know!" said Frank Monk, looking repentantly at Ethel.

The girl smiled.

"That would have made a difference, of course?"

"Well, er—yes—you see—"

"Exactly. Dear Cousin Arthur, if you are to drive home with Miss Fawcett and myself you had better get a little— a little of that dust off—"

"Yaas, wathah! I feel too feahfully exhausted to walk home, and weally I am not fit to appeah in the pwesence of a lady—"

"True enough!" said Monk. "Come along, and I'll take you to my quarters."

D'Arcy looked at him rather doubtfully.

"Honah bwight?" he asked. "No twicks, you know!"

Frank Monk laughed.

"No, no tricks; honour bright, kid!"

"Come along!"

"Vewy well, I shall have pleasuah in acceptin' your kind offah, and I will wejoin you latah, Ethel."

The Grammar School juniors raised their caps to Ethel and marched D'Arcy off.

The girl turned to Miss Fawcett with a smile upon her fair face.

"They are nice boys, you see, after all," she remarked. "I told you they were not really hurting Augustus."

"Yes, indeed!" gasped Miss Priscilla. "You are right,

but—but I was greatly alarmed. Dear me! What will Dr. Monk think of us leaving his study just as he was coming in to it? Come with me, my dear!"

Dr. Monk was standing by his study window when the old lady re-entered with Ethel. He wore a puzzled look. He could hear an unusual noise in the distance, but his window did not command a view of the gates.

"Pray excuse me for leaving you so suddenly, sir," said Miss Fawcett. "I was alarmed by what I saw from the window."

"Pray sit down, madam. I do not think I—er—yes, I think I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance at St. Jim's when I called to see Dr. Holmes."

"Quite so, Dr. Monk. This is Miss Cleveland, who, I hope, will be able to assist me in my mission here—"

Dr. Monk looked puzzled, and Ethel coloured.

"Your—er—mission, Miss Fawcett?"

"Yes. You may be aware that for a long time a rivalry has existed between the two Houses at St. James' Collegiate School—"

Dr. Monk smiled.

"Yes, I am certainly aware of that, Miss Fawcett; but, really, I do not see how—"

"I have fortunately been able to compose that rivalry and put an end to it," said Miss Fawcett. "I came down to St. Jim's for that special purpose, and I am glad to say that I have succeeded."

"Ahem—ah—I am pleased to hear it, but—"

"And now, sir, I wish to establish the same concord between the Grammar School and St. James' Collegiate School as I have succeeded in establishing between the rival Houses of St. Jim's."

A light dawned upon the Head of Rylcombe Grammar School. He stroked his grey beard in a rather troubled way.

"Indeed, Miss Fawcett! And your visit here—"

"Is in pursuance of my object. I have received every support from the masters of St. Jim's, with perhaps one exception, and I trust that I shall receive the same here."

(Continued on the next page.)



Goal!!!

The score's now even, 2 all . . . the whistle blown for half-time. Half-time for a brief rest and a refresher. That means Wrigley's . . . of course. Nothing like a piece of Wrigley's to refresh you during the game. It keeps the mouth fresh . . . makes you feel alert. Wrigley's helps the digestion, too, and cleanses the teeth. Use it "after every meal."

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E.M. 33.

"Oh—er—yes, but—"

"Think, sir, how extremely gratifying it will be if the boys of the two schools meet with gentle and kind words instead of mutual defiance. I have just seen a nice little boy from St. Jim's given what they call the toad's-march—"

"Frog's-march, dear Miss Fawcett," said Ethel gently.

"Well, the frog's-march, then, Ethel. I have just seen that curious and altogether objectionable form of punishment inflicted upon a nice-mannered boy, and it was very dreadful for me to see."

"I will inquire—"

"Not at all, pray. I should be very much pained if I thought that my efforts in the cause of peace should cause any lad here to be punished," said Miss Priscilla.

The doctor stroked his beard.

"But—but how do you propose to set about this—this laudable object, my dear Miss Fawcett?" he inquired.

"I should like you to call a meeting of the whole school," said Miss Priscilla modestly. "I could address them—"

"Ahem! I am afraid—"

"Hear me out! I trust you will not throw cold water upon a plan which will lead to the establishment of perfectly peaceful relations between the two schools."

"Far from it, my dear madam. But—but such a step as you contemplate would, I am sure, be regarded as—somewhat ridiculous by the boys."

"I should appeal to their higher feelings."

"Unfortunately—"

"What I request is—"

"My dear madam, I—I will consult with Dr. Holmes on the subject," said Dr. Monk, struck by a bright idea. "That will be—be best, I think. We will consult together on the point. And now I am afraid I—I must beg you to excuse me, as afternoon classes are about to commence."

Miss Priscilla rose to her feet.

"Thank you very much, Dr. Monk," she said. "I am sure that, upon reflection, you will see what an excellent plan it is."

"Yes—yes. I am quite sure. Permit me to show you to your car. I am quite sure that—yes, exactly. Remarkably cold weather, is it not?"

Dr. Monk did not breathe freely until Miss Fawcett was in the car. Ethel's face was quite expressionless as she sat beside Miss Priscilla. She felt keenly the absurd side of the situation, but she was too loyal by nature to let Miss Fawcett dream for a moment of what was in her mind.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, looking a great deal more clean and respectable, came quickly up, and climbed into the car beside Ethel. The girl looked him over, with a smile.

"I feel wathah better now, Ethel. Those young wuffians weally used me most diswepctfully, you know. But Fwank Monk is not such a bad sort. He has lent me a clean collah. Lane has lent me a necktie. It is not so tasteful as I am accustomed to wear, but it was a decent thing to do, you know."

"Oh, very! I see your friends are still here!"

The girl smiled as the gates were opened, and Tom Merry & Co. drew back to make room for the car to pass.

Miss Priscilla looked at them in amazement as they stood, cap in hand.

"My dear boys, surely you ought to be at your lessons at St. James' Collegiate School at this hour!" she exclaimed.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, yes; but, you see—"

"Surely you have not played truant, like naughty little boys!"

Tom Merry & Co. turned uncomfortably red. The glimmer of fun in Ethel's blue eyes troubled them as much as Miss Fawcett's mode of address.

"We came along to see you safe," Monty Lowther ventured. "We thought you might get into hot water at the Grammar School."

"My dearest child, now could I possibly get into hot water?" exclaimed Miss Priscilla, in astonishment. "You surely do not mean that you thought the Grammar School boys could be so rude as to throw hot water on me?"

"No—no!" stammered Lowther. "I mean, we thought you might catch a Tartar there and bump up against trouble."

"Bump up against trouble!" murmured Miss Priscilla. "What an exceedingly curious expression! Can you tell me, Ethel, what is meant by bumping up against trouble?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" giggled Blake involuntarily. And then, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,253.

all of a sudden, recollecting himself, he became as grave as a judge.

"It means getting into an awkward situation, I think," said Ethel calmly.

"Oh, I understand! It was very kind and noble, my dear lads, for you to come to our aid in this way, and risk getting punished for missing your lessons."

"Yaas, wathah! But we were bound to do the polite thing, you know, Miss Pwiscillah," said D'Arcy. "My friends here are wathah a feahful set of boundahs, but they—"

"Ring off, Gussy!" said Monty Lowther. "We thought we ought to come, Miss Fawcett. If you think we did right—"

"It was very kind of you."

"Then you might speak to Dr. Holmes on the subject, and get him to let us off for cutting the first lesson this afternoon."

"Bai Jove, that is wathah a good idea, though it is yours, Lowthah!"

"I shall certainly do so!" said Miss Fawcett.

And the car passed on, the relieved juniors waving their caps after it.

Miss Fawcett was as good as her word, and the delinquency of Tom Merry & Co. was overlooked on their return to St. Jim's. They were careful to turn up in time for the second lesson, and their absence was not commented upon, owing to Miss Fawcett's kind offices. Peace with the Grammar School had hardly been established by Miss Fawcett's visit there, and the juniors wondered what the next step was to be. But an idea was working in the brain of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 17.

Pax!

"I SAY, Ethel, you know—"

The girl turned towards her cousin with a smile.

Afternoon lessons were over, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was coming from the class-room with a book under his arm, and he met Ethel among the elms.

"I hope you don't feel worse for your rough experience at the Grammar School. Arthur?" said Ethel.

"Yaas, wathah! I must say I do, weally, Ethel. I came home in a state of complete exhaustion, and since then I have been compelled to listen to the feahful bore we have for a German mastah. I am feelin' quite fagged, you know. But while I was doing the German this afternoon I thought of a brilliant ideah."

"Did you, really? An idea for improving your German?"

"Oh, no!" said D'Arcy. "Something more important than that, you know—a brilliant ideah of puttin' an end to this beastly peace campaign!"

The girl held up her finger warningly.

"You must not say anything wanting in respect to Miss Fawcett."

"I should be the vewy last person in the world to do so, Ethel. I wespct Miss Fawcett vewy highly; but, you know, she has given us a feahful amount of twouble, and all the vows we have had lately have beer caused by her makin' peace between us."

"Well, what is the idea, Arthur?"

"Why, she is determined to make peace between us and the Gwammah School, which is, as a mattah of fact, quite imposs—"

"Then Miss Fawcett will have to remain at St. Jim's for ever, for she is determined not to go until she has accomplished her mission," said Ethel, with a demure smile.

"Yaas, wathah! And that's the howwid part of it. She is a vewy nice old lady, but she is vewy much nicah at Hucklebewwy Heath than at the coll. You see, she makes a fellow feel such an awfu' ass, you know."

"Yes, I know."

"So I've been thinking, and I've thought out a plan for making it pax between St. Jim's and the Gwammah School for one aftahnoon, and then we may be able to persuade Miss Pwiscillah to catch the evenin' twain before we start wovin' again."

"Ha, ha, ha! And the plan?"

"We are meetin' Wynwood in a gweat football match on Saturday, you know. We might invite a select party of the Gwammawians ovah neah to see the match, and stand them a picnic, and Miss Fawcett will see then what jolly friends we can be. And of course, Miss Fawcett will foot the beastly bill, you know."

"Well, that is a good idea, Arthur, in some respects," said Ethel, laughing.

"It's a weally brilliant ideah in all wespects, I think,"

said Arthur Augustus. "I want you to propose it to Miss Fawcett."

"I think you had better do that, Arthur."

"Well, you know, you could put it to her in the wight way."

"Not so well as you could, I think," said the girl, shaking her head. "Only you could do justice to an idea like that, Arthur."

"Well, pewwaps you are wight, Ethel," said D'Arcy. "Pewwaps I had bettah put it to Miss Fawcett. Do you know where she is?"

"Yes; on the seat under the elms by the School House."

"Thank you! I will go to her at once."

D'Arcy soon found Miss Fawcett under the elms, and the old lady greeted him with a sweet smile.

gym. The Terrible Three listened to his explanation with interest.

"Good wheeze!" said Manners. "But who's going to foot the bill?"

"Miss Pwiscillah has offahed to do so."

"That's very kind and thoughtful of her."

"Yaas, wathah! And it was wathah thoughtful of me, too, as I suggested it to her."

"You young ass!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "You suggested to her to stand a feed to a hundred fellows. Why, it will cost no erd of tin."

"Well, you can't make peace, or anything like that, without bein' put to some expense," said D'Arcy. "My ideah is that it will cost five pounds, at least; but by judicious arrangement we might make it cost more—"



A terrific fight ensued in the quad. But suddenly Miss Priscilla came dashing to the rescue, and began to belabour the attackers with her umbrella!

"I have an ideah, Miss Fawcett," D'Arcy explained at once, "for bwingin' about the peace with the Gwammah School."

"My dear little boy, what a kind heart you must have!" D'Arcy winced.

"I think we ought to invite them to a picnic on Saturday aftahnoon to show there's no ill-feelin'," went on the swell of St. Jim's. "We could have a wippin' feed aftah the football match. Would you be willin' to stand a picnic, Miss Fawcett, for the sake of establishing peace?"

"Should I be required to stand?" said Miss Fawcett doubtfully. "Surely camp-stools, or something of that sort, could be provided?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I mean, will you be the foundah of the feast, you know?"

"Oh, I understand! Yes, I should be very happy!"

"Vewy good! I will see Tom Mewwy about it, then, and we will awwange the details. It is weally a good ideah."

D'Arcy found Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther in the

"What on earth do you want it to cost more for?"

"Why, you see, that's part of the plan!"

"I don't catch."

"No; I suppose a bwain like yours wequiah a lot of explanation. You see, aftah making peace on Saturday aftahnoon Miss Fawcett will, in all pwob catch the twain back to Hucklebewwy Heath. But she might stay ova the week-end to make sure that the good work is quite done. If she does—"

"Well, what then?" asked Tom Merry suspiciously.

"If she does," said D'Arcy, with a satisfied smile, "that's where my plan comes out atwong. The School House can stand the New House a feed to make it pax, and Miss Fawcett can pay the bill."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther; while Tom Merry glared at the swell of the School House in great indignation.

"If the dear, good soul does not then return to Hucklebewwy Heath you thees fellows can stand a feed to our study, for the sake of promotin' peace, and Miss Fawcett

can stand the wacket," went on D'Arcy. "I think by that time she will be bound to be weally satisfied that all is goin' well. But if not—"

"Well, if not?" chuckled Marners.

"Why, then we can stand a big feed and invite all the Upper Forms to it, for the sake of promotin' genewal good feelin' throughout the coll," said Arthur Augustus. "That will cost Miss Pwiscilla about twenty pounds."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Tom Merry could not help laughing at the ingenious project of the swell of the School House. But he shook his head.

"Well, I'm not going to allow anything of the kind!" he declared. "You can have this picnic on Saturday, if you like, and if it isn't efficacious you'll have to try some other plan."

"Now, weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I've made up my mind on that point, D'Arcy."

"Weally, don't be an obstinate ass, you know."

"Rats! It's settled."

And the Terrible Three walked off.

D'Arcy polished his eyeglass in a thoughtful sort of way.

"I weally hope the picnic on Saturday will settle the mattah, then!" he murmured. "I weally do not see what is Tom Mewwy's objection to a weally excellent plan; but I know it's no use twyin' to make him altah his beastly mind. If Miss Pwiscilla makes peace much longah here I believe it will turn my hair gwey."

And D'Arcy sought out the chums of Study No. 6 to impart to them the news.

Blake, Digby, and Herries jumped at the idea. So did Figgins & Co., when they heard of it.

The football match on Saturday was a junior game, and most of the leading lights of St. Jim's were in the eleven to meet Wynwood Juniors on the St. Jim's ground. There were likely to be a good many of their friends present to see the match, and it was an excellent opportunity for a picnic.

The weather was too cold, doubtless, for a feed in the open air, but Figgins at once suggested the gym, which could be comfortably warmed, and permission to use it for the feed was asked and obtained.

"It's a good idea," Figgins declared. "And as originator of the scheme, D'Arcy had better go over to the Grammar School and invite the kids there."

Arthur Augustus shook his head in a very decided way.

Here is the Cover of next
week's gripping yarn

"The Vengeance of 'Nobbler Jim'!"

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"I'd wathah not, Figgins, thank you!"

"But the idea is yours."

"Yaas; but I do not care to visit the Gwammah School again just now. I have too vivid a recollection of the twog s-march. I might meet Hake or Lucas before I meet Monk, and the result might be serious. Hake once knocked off my toppah, and twod on it delibewately, and a fellow who would twead on a toppah is capable of—"

"Anything," said Figgins. "We'd better write them, then."

"You mean, I'd better wite," said D'Arcy. "The ideah is mine, I believe."

"Ha, ha, ha! You'd better write then, Gussy."

And Arthur Augustus wrote a polite note of invitation to Frank Monk at the Rylcombe Grammar School. He explained the circumstances of Miss Fawcett's peace mission, and asked Monk, as one gentleman to another, to do his best.

There was a great deal of chuckling at the Grammar School over D'Arcy's letter; but Monk and his friends were quite willing to accept the invitation.

"We had a good feed at St. Jim's a week or so back," said Frank Monk. "This looks like being a bigger thing still. We'll go—rather!"

"He wants us to take at least thirty fellows to prove to that dear old lady that we're on good terms generally," grinned Lane. "We'll pick out the chaps who know how to be quiet, you know. There mustn't be anything like a row."

"Rather not! We'll make peace with St. Jim's, and enjoy the feed," said Carboy. "They are a cheeky lot of youngsters. But I rather like them, in a way, you know, and I'd do more than this for them—especially with a feed thrown in."

And it was easy for Frank Monk to pick out a score and a half of guests for the feed who could be trusted to keep the peace, and be generally discreet.

Saturday came at last—a bright and sunny day, and after morning school a hasty dinner was snatched, and then the boys of St. Jim's began to gather round the football field.

Then the Grammarians began to arrive.

Pax was firmly established, and Frank Monk and his friends were greeted with cheers and handshakes.

Miss Priscilla beamed upon Frank as she shook his hand.

"I am so glad to see you!" she said. "It is a pleasure to know that my efforts have been crowned with success. Is it not pleasant, Ethel, to see Master Monk paying a friendly visit to Tom, never again to fall out or dispute at all?"

"Very," said Ethel.

"Jolly nice!" said Frank Monk. "Tom Merry and I will always be jolly good friends, I hope, whatever happens."

The Wynwood Eleven arrived a little later, and then came the football match. And a fine match it was. All St. Jim's crowded the ground to see it, and the Grammarians crowded there with them, and cheered heartily at every bit of good play.

And when Tom Merry, in the last five minutes of the game, broke through the Wynwood defence, and beat the backs hands down, and kicked the winning goal, in spite of all the efforts of the Wynwood goalie, the cheering was deafening, and Frank Monk's voice was as loud as any in the hurrahing.

And after the match, when the players had changed, came the feast in the gym, presided over by Miss Fawcett, ably seconded by Ethel.

Kildare and Monteith, and some more of the seniors, had consented to join the feasters, and the party was a large one, including most of the Shell and the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, the Wynwood Eleven and their friends, and nearly two score of the young Grammarians.

Miss Priscilla's speech was rapturously applauded. The dear old lady congratulated St. Jim's on the peace that now established where warfare once had reigned, and congratulated herself upon having been the means of bringing it out. The juniors winked and cheered with equal energy.

And when the feast was over, and the time came for Miss Priscilla to catch her train, the old lady and Ethel were escorted to the station by Tom Merry & Co. and Frank Monk and his comrades, and they departed amid a hurricane of cheers.

And thus peace was established, and the mission of Miss Fawcett had been a great success. But how long was it likely to last?

THE END.

(Next week's GEM contains another rip-snorting, extra-long yarn of Tom Merry and Co., as well as the opening chapters of a breezy adventure story of the Navy)

EASTWOOD SHIELD LEAGUE.

BATTLE ROYAL WITH ST. FRANK'S!
ST. JIM'S SNATCH A VICTORY!

By "OLD BOY."

St. Jim's, Wed.
"WE'RE going all out to-day!" said Tom Merry to me, as his men changed for the game with Nipper & Co. of St. Frank's. With Rookwood, the league leaders, entertaining Greyfriars, a match which might go any way, the Saints saw their chance. By defeating St. Frank's they might easily regain their old position at the head of the table. All depended on how Rookwood dealt with Greyfriars—and on the form of Nipper and his men! St. Jim's looked very fit after their strenuous cup-ties, and were at full strength excepting for Talbot, who had received a nasty kick on the shin the week before. Cardew deputised for him, yawning as usual, but none the less determined to forget his eternal "tired feeling" and play the game of his life for his school. "Buck up, Cardew!" sang out Sidney Clive, from the touchline. "Yes, buck up, old man!" urged Levison, his partner on the right wing. "Rely on me, dear man," grinned Cardew.

St. Frank's had the advantage of the sun, but from the kick-off St. Jim's swept all before them in dashing style. The ball sped out to Cardew on the wing, and Cardew fairly flew. The crowd gasped as Cardew, cutting in, feinted as though to pass, and then drove hard for the far corner of the net. Handforth leaped, but his finger-tips only scraped the ball, and a terrific cheer betokened first blood to St. Jim's!

"Goal! Goal! Good man, Cardew!" One swallow, however, does not make a summer, and one goal does not always win a football match. St. Frank's, under Nipper's determined leadership, rallied strongly, and soon Fatty Wynn had all his work out in the home goalmouth.

Pitt shot, and Fatty Wynn saved at full length. The ball was hardly in play again ere Nipper shouldered his way through and flashed the leather well out of Fatty's reach. Level!

St. Frank's, warming to their work, came again and again, and it was only a few minutes before De Valerie streaked through and crashed the ball home—giving the visitors the lead.

"Wally, deah boys!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as St. Jim's lined up.

It was easier said than done. St. Frank's were playing marvellous football, and they swept through once more like a

well-oiled machine. Figgins, in attempting a big kick, missed the ball completely, letting in Nipper right in front of goal. Nipper's foot moved like a flash of lightning, and St. Frank's were leading 3-1. This was the half-time score.

RESULTS.

Matches Played Wednesday.			
ST. JIM'S ..	5	ST. FRANK'S ..	4
Cardew, Blake,		Nipper (3),	
Merry (2), Redfern		De Valerie.	
Teams: ST. JIM'S: Wynn; Figgins, Kerr; Redfern, Noble, Lowther; Cardew, Levison, Merry, Blake, D'Arcy. ST. FRANK'S: Handforth; Burton, McClure; Watson, Christine, Yorke; Pitt, De Valerie, Nipper, Grey, Tregellis-West.			

BAGSHOT ..	3	ST. JUDE'S ..	1
Pankley (2), Patter		Raleigh.	
BANNINGTON ..	2	RYLCOMBE ..	6
Denver, Bird		Gay (3), Wootton	
		minor, Monk,	
		Tadpole.	
CLAREMONT ..	3	ABBOTSFORD ..	3
St. Clair, Baxter,		Williams, Fane (2)	
Merrivale			
REDCLIFFE ..	0	HIGHCLIFFE ..	1
		Courtenay	
ROOKWOOD ..	3	GREYFRIARS ..	4
Silver, Dodd (2)		Penfold, Wharton	
		(2) Vernon-Smith	

Matches Played Saturday.			
ST. JUDE'S ..	0	ST. JIM'S ..	4
		Levison, D'Arcy,	
		Merry (2)	
GREYFRIARS ..	1	ABBOTSFORD ..	1
Wharton		Edwards	
HIGHCLIFFE ..	0	ROOKWOOD ..	2
		Dodd, Lovell	
RYLCOMBE ..	3	CLAREMONT ..	2
Monk (2), Gay (4),		Weston, Baxter	
Carboy (penalty),			
Wootton ml.			
ST. FRANK'S ..	4	BANNINGTON ..	0
Nipper (2), Pitt (2)			

LEADING GOAL SCORERS:

Wharton ..	28
Merry ..	27
Gay ..	23
Courtenay ..	20
Dodd ..	18
Nipper ..	16
Baxter ..	13

LEAGUE TABLE TO DATE:

	P.	W.	D.	L.	F.	A.	Pts.
St. Jim's ..	16	11	3	2	60	19	25
Greyfriars ..	16	11	2	2	56	17	24
Rookwood ..	16	11	2	3	50	32	24
Rylcombe ..	16	10	2	4	49	23	22
St. Frank's ..	15	10	1	4	46	25	21
Highcliffe ..	15	9	2	4	37	21	20
Redcliffe ..	15	6	2	8	24	30	12
Bagshot ..	15	4	3	8	19	33	11
Abbotsford ..	15	1	6	9	23	63	8
St. Jude's ..	15	1	6	8	18	46	8
Claremont ..	15	1	5	10	25	44	7
Bannington ..	16	1	2	13	10	57	4

On resuming, Tom Merry and his men waded into the fight with invincible optimism, and their efforts began to be rewarded—at long last! St. Frank's had run themselves almost to a standstill in the first half, and they were a little slow in getting up steam again. During that slow period, Jack Blake netted with a great drive from thirty yards out, and Tom Merry shot a wonderful equaliser from a difficult angle on the left of the goal.

With the score three all, St. Frank's returned to the attack with redoubled frenzy, and a breakdown in the Saints' defence let Nipper through to beat Fatty Wynn with a shot that went up into the top of the net—a gallant but somewhat fortunate effort.

"Up, Saints!" snapped Tom Merry.

And the Saints answered nobly.

But even Handforth could not stem that tide for ever, and he found himself lying prostrate after a brilliant save when Redfern flashed the ball over him and into the net.

With five minutes to go, St. Jim's stormed the visitors' goal, and Handforth was busier than ever. He is a great goalkeeper, but no keeper could have stopped the drive that Tom Merry sent in. The ball came over from Cardew on the right, and Tom trapped and swung round to face the goal. He caught the leather fairly and squarely, and though the angle was awkward, Handforth was beaten to the wide, and a mighty roar proclaimed the last-minute victory over St. Frank's!

ST. JUDE'S UNLUCKY DAY!

St. Jude's, Sat.

Cup-ties having delayed league fixtures, St. Jim's worked off their match with St. Jude's on Saturday, Cardew again being at outside-right, and Sidney Clive taking the place of Kangaroo at centre-half, Kangaroo having caught a chill.

Levison and D'Arcy netted during the first half, and Tom Merry scored twice during the second. There was considerable jubilation when it was learned over the telephone that Greyfriars, at home to puny Abbottsford, had only managed to draw 1-1. It appeared that Abbottsford had been thoroughly outclassed, but in the face of a Greyfriars eleven depleted by injuries they had packed their goal, and somehow kept the Friars at bay! Their own goal was a piece of pure luck, the result of an unexpected random shot, so I was told. Which goes to show the unexpectedness of football!

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