

"THE RIVAL SCHOOLS!" A RIPPING LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL YARN!

CONTINUOUS
VARIETY!
YOUR FAVOURITE
STARS -
TOM MERRY & Co
INSIDE!

The GEM

2^d



"DOWN WITH ST. JIM'S!" "DOWN WITH THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL!"

The RIVAL SCHOOLS!



The Grammarians gain a smashing victory when they break up a cricket match at St. Jim's, but Tom Merry rises to the occasion with an amazing scheme for revenge.

CHAPTER 1.

D'Arcy Is Kept Waiting!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY came into Study No. 6 in the School House at St. Jim's, looking a perfect picture in white flannels, with a bat under his arm.

Blake, Herries, and Digby, the chums of the Fourth, were talking somewhat excitedly, and they did not cease or look round as D'Arcy entered.

"I say, deah boys—"

The dear boys did not seem to hear. Arthur Augustus let the end of his bat slip down with a heavy clump on the floor.

Then Jack Blake looked round.

"Hallo! What's that row? That you, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, run away and play!" And Jack Blake turned to Digby and Herries again, and went on: "You see, kids—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"You see, kids, it's the old story. Ever since that chap Merry came to St. Jim's—"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Ever since he came there's been something of this sort. I don't say that Tom Merry hasn't his points—he has—but—"

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"I twust, Blake, that you have not forgotten—"

"Hallo! Are you still there, Gussy?"

"Yaas, I am still here, Blake," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. "I twust you have not forgotten that we are playin' the New House juniahs this aftahnoon, and that it is nearly time for the kick-off—I mean, nearly time for wickets to be pitched?"

"By Jove," said Jack Blake, "so it is! Run away and tell 'em I'm coming!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. If you don't come down immediately to the cwicket field, we shall have Tom Mewwy comin' for you. Pway follow me at once, deah boys!"

"That's all right, Gussy; there's heaps of time. As I was saying, Tom Merry has his points, and he can play cricket—and I've seen him kick a footer straight—but when it comes to taking the post of leader among us chaps—"

"Then it's time to call halt," said Digby.

And Herries nodded assent.

"You see, it's not only our little House rows with the New House at St. Jim's," went on Blake, apparently unaware of the marked impatience displayed by Arthur Augustus, as he stood, first on one leg, and then on the other, waiting, "it's when we come to dealing with the Grammar School that Tom Merry shows the enormous smallness—"

"The which?"

THE WAR-CRIES ARE HEARD IN THE QUAD OF ST. JIM'S AGAIN!

By Martin Clifford.

"The enormous smallness of his powers as a leader," said Blake, with emphasis. "It's on such occasions that I feel very strongly that what is wanted is a leader chosen from the Fourth Form—"

"Hear, hear!"

"And selected from this study—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"And so," went on Blake, "I've been thinking seriously—"

"Blake, I regard this discussion as out of place when it is almost time for the first oval to be bowled. I shall refuse to wait any longer. I'm off!"

"I know you are, old chap—off your giddy union!"

"If I were not about to engage in a contest with the New House," said D'Arcy, with a withering look at his chum. "I should regard it as imperative to give you a fearful thrashing for that wibald remark, Blake."

"Therefore," went on Blake, still looking at Digby and Herries, and exasperatingly unconscious of D'Arcy's wrath—"therefore, I consider—"

"I shall refuse to wait any longer for you wottahs!" said Arthur Augustus, and he turned to stride from the study.

As he strode from the doorway in great state, there was a pattering of rapid feet in the passage, and Tom Merry of the Shell came rushing into the study.

They met in the doorway with a terrific impact.

"Ow!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

His bat crashed on the floor, and Arthur Augustus followed it, assuming a sitting posture, with a prolonged gasp like escaping steam.

Tom Merry reeled back and caught at the doorpost to save himself.

"You—you ass!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"Bai Jove! You uttah ass, Mewwy! What do you mean by wushin' into the study like that just as I was comin' out?"

"You shrieking duffer! What do you mean by coming out of the study, just as I was rushing in, like that?" demanded Tom Merry, with equal indignation.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I came to tell you fellows to come down to the ground!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "You ought to be down there by now. Figgins & Co. are there, and I want you to go in first, Blake."

"I'm coming."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy staggered to his feet. He was very red and breathless, and his beautiful flannels had collected a certain quantity of dust. He dusted them carefully with his handkerchief.

"I regard you as a clumsy beast, Mewwy!" he said, in measured tones.

"Thanks! Are you ready?"

"I considah you an uttah ass!"

"Good! Come on!"

"I look upon you as a barbwous wottah!"

"Right-ho! Come on!"

D'Arcy gave it up. There was no disturbing the cheerful equanimity of the junior captain of the School House. D'Arcy picked up his bat and followed Tom Merry, and the chums of Study No. 6 followed him.

Outside in the wide quadrangle there was a blaze of sunshine. Manners and Lowther, Tom Merry's chums in the Shell Form, were waiting for him at the door.

They went down to the junior ground together.

On that bright sunny afternoon—a Wednesday, and a half-holiday at St. Jim's—nearly all the school had turned out for cricket.

The Sixth were playing away, with Kildare, captain of the school. The Fifth had a match on at home, with a team from Rylcombe. The playing fields at St. Jim's were of great extent, for St. Jim's was an athletic school. The junior ground was in excellent condition. On that afternoon

a regular fixture of the junior Forms was coming off—a match between the School House and the New House.

The rivalry between the two Houses at St. Jim's found its keenest expression on the playing fields. Which House led was a question it would not be easy to answer; and each House answered it in its own way. Statistics, it is said, may be made to prove anything, and certainly Tom Merry worked out a goal average in favour of the School House, and Figgins worked out one in favour of the New House; so that, if their figures were correct, both Houses were ahead as far as football was concerned.

In cricket it was much the same; each side imagined that it had made a huge majority of runs, and that the balance of victories were in its favour. And though there was certainly something wrong with the arithmetic somewhere, that was a mere detail that did not bother the juniors. They knew they were right—and that was enough for them.

The House rivalry gave an added interest to the cricket matches, though the game itself was interesting enough to healthy, athletic lads.

Tom Merry was captain of the junior School House eleven, and it included in its ranks such really creditable players as Blake, Herries, Digby, D'Arcy, Manners, Lowther, Reilly, Kerruish, Noble, and Harrison. Tom Merry was very proud of his team, and he hadn't the slightest doubt that it would knock the New House eleven sky-high.

Only Figgins, the New House junior captain, had exactly the same views. He led an eleven selected from New House juniors, each of whom looked upon the House match as something in the light of a walk-over.

Most of the cricketers were on the ground when Tom Merry & Co. reached it. They were most busily talking, but they were not talking cricket. As in Study No. 6, the talk ran on the subject of the Grammar School. The Grammarians had lately been showing what Figgins termed the "cloven hoof," and the general opinion was that it was time that the Grammarians were put in their place. Only the task of putting them there was not an easy one.

But Tom Merry's arrival was the signal to get to business. The stumps had been pitched, and the players were ready. Figgins, the long-legged chief of the New House juniors, strolled over to Tom Merry.

"We're waiting," he remarked.

"Right-ho! We're ready. I had to go and look for these Fourth Form kids," explained Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"No time to talk now, Gussy. Head or tail, Figgy?"

"Head!"

"Tail! We bat first."

Figgins whistled, and then ordered his men to their places in the field. The ball was given to Fatty Wynn, who had developed wonderful powers as a bowler.

Kerr was keeping wicket.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy nudged Tom Merry.

"I suppose, Tom Mewwy, that you intend to open the innings with me?"

"Something wrong with your supposing machine, then," said Tom Merry pleasantly. "I'm going to put Blake in first with Lowther."

"Of course, I do not wish to dictate to a cricket captain on the field of play, but it is a vevy good wule to open an innings with the best playah, in ordah to encourage the side."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I uttaly fail to see any cause for wibald laughtah in that remark, Tom Mewwy. As the best batsman in the School House side, I—"

"Oh, come off, old chap!" said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Of course," said Lowther, "there are some things in cricket you can do as well as any fellow in the Sixth."

D'Arcy looked pleased.

"I am vevy pleased to see that personal feelin' does not obscure your judgment, as it seems to do with Tom Mewwy, Lowthah."

"What-ho!" said Lowther heartily. "You can do some things as well as Kildare himself."

"Well, weally, I—"

"Such as putting the figures up on the scoreboard," went on Lowther blandly.

"Lowthah—"

"Or scoring in the tent—"

"Weally—"

"Or oiling a cricket bat, or setting up stumps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can do all those things, though I must admit you can't bat or bowl or field!"

"I refuse to listen to these silly remarks, Lowthah. If

only remains for Tom Mewwy to say whethah I am to go in first. Yes or no?"

"No," said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"Then the responsibility of a bad beginnia' wests entirely on you, Tom Mewwy! I wash my hands of it!"

"Good!" said the junior cricket captain, apparently quite undisturbed. "Get on your batting-gloves, you two. The game's waiting for you."

And Blake and Lowther went out to the wickets.

CHAPTER 2.

The House Match!

FATTY WYNN grasped the round red ball, and backed away from the bowler's wicket. Wynn—the Welsh partner in Figgins & Co.—was a fair batsman, but he had his faults in the field. He had so much weight to carry about that he could not be expected to dodge about after a cricket ball like Kerr, the slim Scotsman, for instance, or the long-legged Figgins.

But Wynn had taken to bowling like a duck to water. This season he had come on marvellously. Figgins and Kerr had watched him at practice with a blissful anticipation of working off his skill in the House match, to the destruction of Tom Merry & Co.

The batsmen were not looking for anything specially dangerous. They had heard about Wynn's form; but, as Blake said, the New House chaps were always blowing their own trumpets in one way or another. The batsmen confidently expected to knock Wynn's bowling all over the field, and Monty Lowther, who was to receive the first over, took his stance with a superior smile upon his face.

Arthur Augustus stood outside the tent, with his hand resting on his bat and an ominous look upon his face. The recklessness of Tom Merry in declining to open the innings with him appalled the swell of the School House. He didn't want the batsmen to go out with a collection of duck's eggs, but his expression showed pretty plainly that he expected something of the sort.

So did the New House fellows who were collected round the ground, looking on with suppressed glee.

As Fatty Wynn backed away to get room for his run there were ejaculations and cries of encouragement from the New House fellows:

"Go it, Fatty!"

"Put your beef into it!"

"Mind your eye!"

"Buck up!"

Fatty Wynn took no notice. He looked neither to the right nor to the left. He took a little jerky run, turned himself into a sort of catherine-wheel, and the ball whizzed from his hand.

Lowther played forward to it. How was he to know that Fatty Wynn had put a screw on that ball which Newman or Inman might have envied on a billiards table? In explaining the matter afterwards, Lowther worked it out to his own satisfaction, if to nobody else's, that the ball oughtn't to have slipped under his bat in that way, according to all the known laws of mechanics.

All the same, it did slip under the bat; there was a click as it whipped the middle stump out of the ground.

"How's that?"

It was a roar from the New House fellows.

And Lefevre of the Fifth, who was umpiring the match for the juniors, grinned, and said, with Spartan brevity:

"Out!"

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

Monty Lowther looked at the wicket, which had a curiously toothless look, and then put his bat under his arm, and with slow steps sought the seclusion of the tent. And Gore of the Shell asked as he went, in a decidedly audible voice, the market price of ducks' eggs, and Mellish of the Fourth ventured the opinion that they were cheap that afternoon.

Lowther did not reply. He hid his blushes in the tent, and a big round nougt on the board showed the score of the School House side so far.

D'Arcy looked at Tom Merry. Surely now was the time for the captain to send in the best junior batsman in the School House.

But Tom Merry did not look at him. He only made a sign to Digby, who walked down to Monty Lowther's place and clumped his bat on the crease with a determined air.

Arthur Augustus sniffed.

"Vewy well," he murmured, "we shall see!"

And they did see! Fatty Wynn was on the warpath with a vengeance. Again that curiously jerky little rim;

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again that semi-revolution of the plump body; and again that whizz of the ball—and again the clack of falling balls.

And the New House yelled.

"How's that?"

"My hat," said Gore, "this is getting a bit monotonous! Ducks' eggs are a drug on the market to-day!"

"I guess so!" remarked Buck Finn, the American chum in the Shell at St. Jim's. "I kinder reckon that fat galoot is up to snuff—some!"

"Bravo, Wynn—"

"Hurrah!"

"Make it the hat-trick, old son!"

And again Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked expressively at Tom Merry. Again Tom Merry seemed to be totally unconscious of the fact that he was leaving out the finest junior batsman in the side.

Herries went in next, and Herries had a grim look. He had a great reputation as a stone-waller, and that was what was wanted now. If he could keep his end up till the over finished it would give Blake a chance with the bowling. But alas for Herries!

There was a trickiness in Fatty Wynn's bowling which was miles above the reach of Herries. The ball came down like a shell, and before Herries knew where it was his balls were on the ground.

And the New House yelled with a yell that might have been heard in every nook and corner of St. Jim's.

"How's that?"

"The hat-trick!"

"Hurrah!"

It was the hat-trick right enough, and Herries carried his bat with a dismayed expression upon his face.

Figgins gave Fatty Wynn a sounding slap on the shoulder that made him stagger.

"Good old Fatty! Keep it up!"

Fatty Wynn wiped the perspiration from his plump face.

"It's good fun, isn't it, Figg?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes, for us!"

"There's only one thing about it—it makes a chap jolly hungry," said Fatty Wynn. "Exercise always has that effect on me, and I always get extra hungry, too, in this warm weather."

Figgins grinned.

"You young porpoise! You had enough dinner for an elephant before you came out."

"Oh, Figg, you know I only had the ordinary school dinner, with a steak-pie and some sausages and ham I provided myself, and—"

"Poor kid, you must be perishing!" said Figgins sympathetically. "Never mind, there's the cold mutton in the study, you know."

"No there isn't, Figg."

"Yes; you remember the cold mutton from last night?"

"Yes; but I had that after dinner. I thought I'd better have enough, in case I got hungry during the match."

"Well, of all the cormorants!" said Figgins. "Still, so long as you don't get hungry—"

"Only the trouble is, Figg, that I am hungry now," said Fatty Wynn pathetically. "You see—"

"I see Tom Merry's got his man in now, and it's time to bowl," said Figgins; and he went back to the slips without waiting for any more of Fatty Wynn's woes to be confided to him.

Manners of the Shell was next man in. Manners was a better photographer than he was a cricketer, but he could always be depended upon to play a steady game and keep his end up. And Manners was very much on his guard now.

He didn't hit any runs, but he stopped the rest of Fatty Wynn's bowling, and that was something to be thankful for, in the circumstances. With three men out, and a succession of nougts on the board, Tom Merry was glad to see his man keep the wicket up.

Figgins bowled from the other end to Blake, when the field crossed over. And Figgins waved his men back deep, for he knew that Jack Blake was a hitter.

Figgins was a first-rate bowler, and Blake had all his work cut out to deal with him. But Blake batted splendidly, and played up like a young Bradman. He stopped the first three balls, and then he began to smite. The fourth ball went into the long field for 2, the fifth to the boundary, and the sixth and last ball was knocked through the slips for a single.

Tom Merry clapped his hands.

"Bravo, Blake!"

It was a relief to have somebody start the ball rolling. Seven runs were registered to Jack Blake, and it was a good beginning. And the last single had brought Blake to the pavilion end, so that he still had the bowling. He had to face the Welsh junior, and Figgins tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn, with a grin.

"Do your best, Fatty."

"Yes, rather! Figgins, I say, old fellow—"

"Well, what is it?"

"Have you got any toffee, or anything, about you?"

"Not a bit."

"I say, Kerr, have you got any toffee about you?"

"No, I haven't."

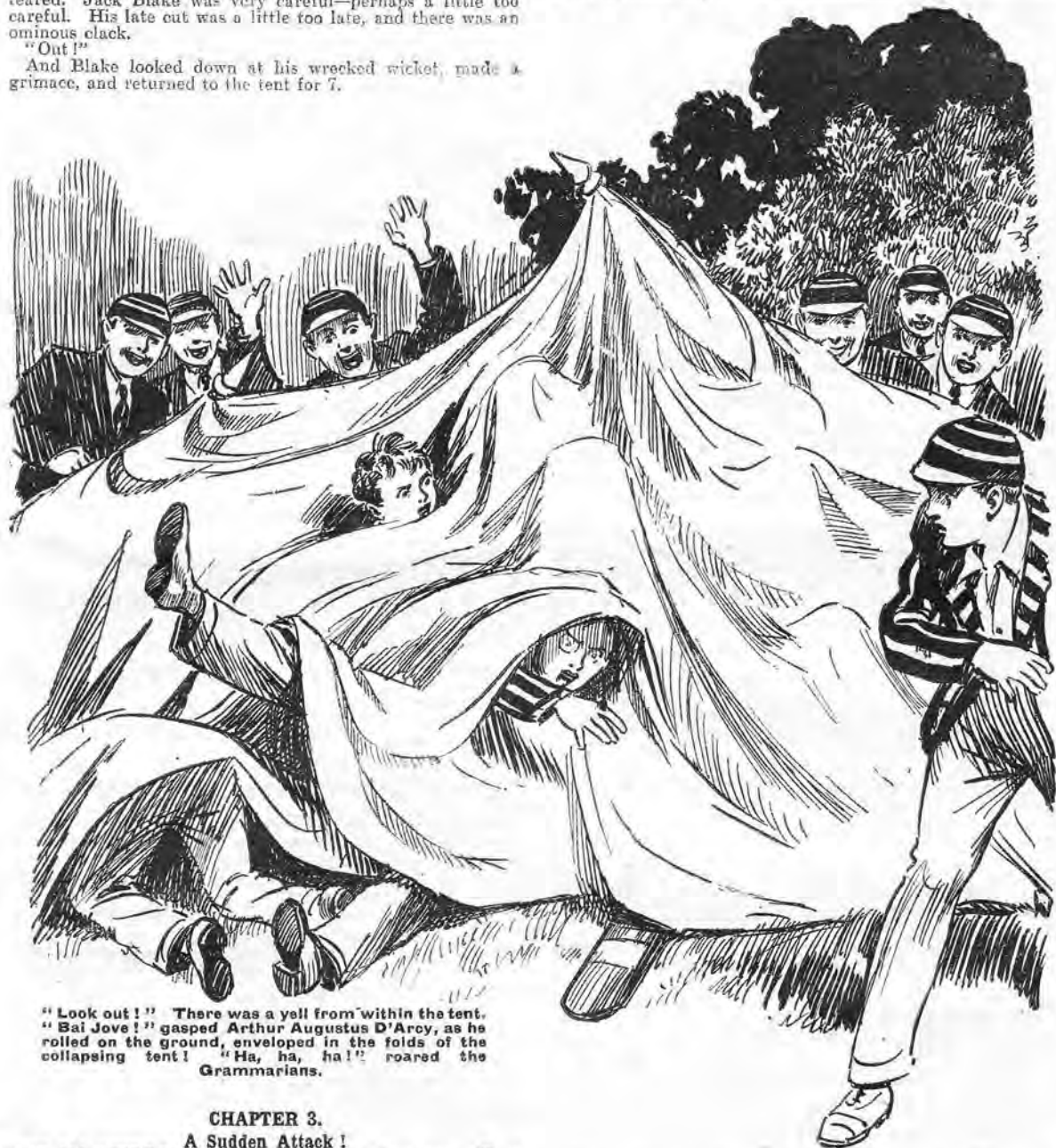
Fatty Wynn sighed. He was not ashamed to admit that he had a healthy appetite, though the other fellows declared that it was an appetite that would have done credit to a healthy rhinoceros.

But, hungry or not, Fatty Wynn was a bowler to be feared. Jack Blake was very careful—perhaps a little too careful. His late cut was a little too late, and there was an ominous clack.

"Out!"

And Blake looked down at his wrecked wicket, made a grimace, and returned to the tent for 7.

Although the two schools had been at loggerheads ever since the Rylcombe Grammar School was founded, it was not an unusual thing for the fellows to look in at the football or cricket matches played on either ground, though these informal visits sometimes ended in rows. The Grammar School had not forgotten how, on one celebrated occasion, a crowd of St. Jim's juniors had invaded their football ground, driven them off, captured their football, and played a match there—on the Grammar School ground, within sight of the defeated and raging Grammarians.



"Look out!" There was a yell from within the tent. "Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he rolled on the ground, enveloped in the folds of the collapsing tent! "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Grammarians.

CHAPTER 3.

A Sudden Attack!

TOM MERRY was looking quite serious now. Four out for 7 was a serious matter. The New House crowd grinned gleefully over it, and during the pause that ensued before the next batsman came in they made remarks on the subject that were, in the expressive language of Truthful James, "frequent and painful and free." And the School House fellows had nothing to say.

During the play a number of fellows had strolled up to look on, without being particularly noticed. They were fellows who did not belong to St. Jim's, as their Grammar School caps showed. But the juniors were too keen on the House match to care whether the Grammarians were there or not.

If the Grammar School lads had been inclined to forget it, they would not have been allowed to do so, for the matter had become historic, and the Saints were never tired of alluding to it when they met their rivals, and that defeat had never been wiped out.

Three youths in Grammar School caps stood together, looking on at the game—Frank Monk, Lane, and Carboy, the leaders of the Grammarian juniors in their wars with the older school.

There was a mischievous expression upon Frank Monk's face, which would have warned the St. Jim's juniors of trouble to come, if they had been observing him.

But most of them were hardly conscious of the fact that the Grammarians were there at all, so keenly were they engrossed in the progress of the House match.

Monk looked round the field, and noted his followers, in groups of threes and fours, mingled with the crowd of spectators at various points.

"We're nearly all here now, I think," murmured Lane.

Monk nodded.

"Looks like it. Wait a bit, though, till they're batting again."

"My hat, they will be startled!" murmured Carboy. "They've never let us forget about that row on the footer field. This will give them something else to talk about."

"Yes, rather! You two get behind that tent, and when it goes down, that's the signal for the row. We're nearly all here, and it's no good waiting any longer. They may notice that there's a big crowd of us, and smell a mouse."

"Right-ho!"

Monk stood looking on at the game, while Lane and Carboy, with exaggerated carelessness of manner, strolled behind the scoring tent.

Little thought were the St. Jim's juniors likely to give them. The fall of Blake's wicket had produced a dismay among the School House fellows, and a corresponding elation in the New House ranks, that drove every other consideration out of their minds.

Arthur Augustus tried to catch Tom Merry's eye once more as Blake came out.

But Tom was thinking of other things. He put on his own batting-gloves, and picked up his bat, and took Blake's place at the wicket.

Then the attention of the spectators was redoubled.

There was not a batsman in the Lower School the equal of Tom Merry, and there were very few even in the Fifth and Sixth who were his superiors.

If anybody could stand up against Fatty Wynn's bowling, it was Tom Merry, and boys of both Houses looked on eagerly to watch the result of this battle of the giants.

Fatty Wynn forgot all about the toffee he had been unable to obtain, and gave all his attention to his bowling. He knew that Tom Merry would not be easy to dispose of. He delivered his next ball with his very best skill, but Tom Merry had the eye of an eagle, and, better than that, he had the unfailing instinct of the born batsman.

Click!

The willow met the leather, and the leather flew—away—away—away, and Tom Merry and Manners were running like deer.

To and fro—to and fro!

Four runs were made before the ball came whizzing in from the hand of Figgins, straight for the wicket. But Tom Merry's bat was clumping on the crease a second before the round red ball came whizzing in, and the clack of the wrecked wicket was followed by a shake of the head from the umpire.

"Not out!"

And the relieved feelings of the School House juniors found expression in a ringing cheer.

"Bravo, Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry, flushed and contented, took his stand again. He had broken the ice with a vengeance—4 for a start was decidedly good. Fatty Wynn's plump face wore an unusually determined look as he grasped the ball again. He meant to have that wicket if the power lay in his good right arm.

But apparently it didn't. For the next ball was cut away through the slips, and as the fieldsmen went in hot chase of the batsman crossed and recrossed.

Two more up—and the School House juniors yelled.

"Good old Tommy!"

"Bravo, Tommy!"

"Bravo, Merry!"

"Go it!"

And Tom Merry did "go it." The rest of the over gave him 3, and he retained the bowling when Figgins delivered the next over from the other end.

Figgins' bowling was hit all over the field in fine style.

Nine for the over was Tom Merry's record, and then again he faced Fatty Wynn. But Wynn could not take that wicket. A 2 and a 4 made the School House juniors cheer themselves hoarse, and made Figgins ruefully conscious of the fact that there was at least one batsman in the opposing side who was a full match for his champion bowler.

Another ball, swiped away into the long field, and the batsmen were running again.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, forgetful of his own unregarded claims, stood in the doorway of the tent, clapping his hands.

"Bravo, Mewwy! Wun, deah boys—wun like anythin'! Bwavo!"

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"Look out!" suddenly shouted Blake.

His warning did not refer to the play. At that moment the tent itself was seen to sway, as if the ropes had been cut and powerful hands were dragging on the canvas—

—as was indeed the case.

The Grammarians had done their work.

"Look out!"

"Bai Jove!"

"What's the matter?"

There was a yell from within the tent. It was echoed by Arthur Augustus as he rolled on the ground, enveloped by the crumpling folds of the canvas, and gasping for breath. Every eye was turned upon the collapsing tent, and at the same moment a shrill whistle rang through the air.

It was the signal from Frank Monk!

It was obeyed instantly by the Grammar School juniors, of whom more than two score had gathered on the ground.

There was a sudden rush, and then the scene of the junior cricket ground was of the wildest and most whirling description.

CHAPTER 4.

Routed!

"SOCK it to 'em!"

Frank Monk's voice rang out.

And the Grammarians obeyed it to the letter. There were, as a matter of fact, more Saints than there were Grammarians on the ground, but the surprise of the attack was so complete that they seemed helpless. It was some moments before they grasped the fact that there was an attack at all and in that time the invaders had worked havoc.

The tent was down, with a dozen of St. Jim's juniors struggling under the flapping canvas hors de combat for the time. The wickets were whipped up, and the cricketers rolled on the grass.

The astounded spectators joined in the struggle, but the advantage was everywhere with the Grammarians, and the St. Jim's juniors were knocked right and left.

Tom Merry was on his back, and Carboy was affectionately sitting on his chest and squeezing a squirt filled with red ink over his face, and Tom struggled and gasped and yelled in vain.

Figgins was rolling over and over on the pitch in a deadly embrace with Lane, while Kerr was sparring frantically with Frank Monk and another Grammarian.

Gore and Mellish led a retreat towards the School House, sprinting off at top speed, and some of their friends followed them, setting an example of flight that had a further disheartening effect upon the Saints.

Had the St. Jim's juniors had time, or a chance to rally, they would have given a better account of themselves.

But the surprise was too sudden.

They were scattered right and left, rolled over, chased, and knocked completely out of time, and their leaders, engaged in close combat with the Grammarians who had picked on them specially, could not call the scattering juniors together.

In a few minutes the Grammar School invaders were masters of the cricket field.

Tom Merry and Blake and Figgins, Kerr and Wynn and Manners and Lowther were prisoners, jammed down in the grass and held there by the victorious Grammarians, and under the flapping tent were still several more fellows.

The rest had been scattered.

The victory was, of course, a brief one. Frank Monk well knew that the defeated Saints would soon rally, and there were sufficient reinforcements at hand to eat the Grammarians if they liked.

He did not mean to delay on the field of victory. A masterly retreat was the next move, before they could be cut off.

Monk waved his cap in the air.

"Three cheers for the Grammar School!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Down with St. Jim's!"

"Hurrah! Down with St. Jim's!"

"Who's top school?"

"We are! Hurrah!"

"You—you beasts!" gasped Tom Merry. "I wish we'd known you were coming!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You unspeakable rotters!" gurgled Figgins, wriggling under the weight of a plump Grammarian. "Fancy stopping a game of cricket! Yah!"

"Almost as bad as stopping a game of football! Ha, ha, ha!"

And Figgins had no more to say. He had been the leader on that memorable occasion, though he had forgotten it for the moment.

"Let me get a chance at you!" gasped Kerr. "Lemme get up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Time we were going!" grinned Monk. "We've left our mark here. Don't forget the trophies of victory, Lane."

"What-ho!" said Lane, who had the stumps and a couple of bats under his arm. "I've got 'em! If you want these things back, you kids, you can come to the Grammar School for them!"

"Or send over a polite note, confessing yourselves licked, and we'll let you have 'em," said Frank Monk.

Tom Merry struggled desperately.

"Rescue!" he yelled. "School House! Buck up!"

"Rescue, New House!" shrieked Figgins.

"Come on, kids! Let's be off!"

And the Grammar School party marched off with shouts of triumph. They paused in the road to shout once more and wave the captured stumps in the air, and then they disappeared.

The defeated juniors sat up in the grass.

Tom Merry's face was drenched with red ink, a great deal of which had trickled into his mouth. Figgins rubbed a nose that had already swollen to nearly twice its usual size. Kerr tenderly caressed a black eye. From under the tent came a wailing voice demanding aid.

"Pway lend me a hand, deah boys!"

"My word!" gasped Digby. He dragged Arthur Augustus D'Arcy out from under the overturned tent. "This is a go!"

"Who'd have thought it?"

"Bai Jove! I feel nearly suffocated!"

"Where are those rotters?"

"They're gone!"

Figgins jumped up.

"Let's get after them!"

The St. Jim's juniors, recovering from the panic, were gathering on the field again. Some of them rushed after the Grammarians. But Frank Monk & Co. were gone. They did not mean to impair their glorious victory by a tussle against long odds afterwards. They were gone, and pursuit was evidently useless.

"Well, this is a go!" repeated Digby.

"Bai Jove! I have been thwown into quite a fluttah! Tom Mewwy! Gweat Scott! Look at Tom Mewwy! He is feahfully injahed!"

"It's all right—"

"My deah boy, your face is covahed with blood—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is no laughin' mattah, Blake! Wun for a doctah immediately, somebody—wun like anythin'!" cried D'Arcy, in alarm.

"Ha, ha, ha! It's all right!" gasped Tom Merry. "It's only red ink that that beast Carboy squirted over my face!"

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

Tom Merry mopped his face on his handkerchief. He reduced the handkerchief to a crimson rag, but he did not make much difference to his face.

"The—the rotters!" he said. "Fancy their having the awful nerve to come here, on our own ground, and mess up a cricket match! I never expected anything of the sort!"

"Of course you didn't!" said Blake sarcastically. "That's where we score in having such a jolly ripping leader. He never expects anything till it happens!"

"Yaas, watah! If Tom Mewwy feels inclined to wesign the leadership into my more able hands, I shall not wefuse!"

"I've said all along, and I say it again, that the junior leader ought to be chosen from the Fourth Form."

"Yaas, watah!"

"My idea exactly," said Figgins, rubbing his nose. "I don't want to sing my own praises, but I must say that I—"

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Blake. "Of course, the leader ought to be a School House chap!"

"Of course, that's mere rot!"

"Weally, Figgins, I do not wegard it as wot! I'm the last fellow in the world to put myself forward in any way, but what is wequired is a fellow of tact and judgment, and undah the cires—"

"What about this match?" asked Kerruish.

"You are intewwuptin' me, Kewwuish."

"I know I am! What about this match, Merry?"

"As far as I'm concerned," said D'Arcy, "I am too exhausted by this extremely surpwisin' occuwnence to be able to bat. I am also in a wumpled and dustay state. I am goin' in to change my clothes."

And the swell of St. Jim's started off towards the School House.

Tom Merry laughed.

"I don't think anybody here feels inclined to finish the match," he said. "With the pitch trampled on, and everything messed up, to say nothing of the state we're in—"

"Better put it off!" grunted Kerr. "I know I can't bowl straight with one eye closed up! By George, we'll make those Grammarians rotters sit up for this!"

And the cricketers slowly and seriously left the ground. The Grammarians had "messed up" the game, and carried off trophies of victory which it would be a difficult if not impossible task to recover, and for the time the thoughts of the St. Jim's juniors were turned from cricket to the prospect of avenging their defeat. And for the rest of that afternoon that was the one topic in both the School House and the New House at St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 5.

Tom Merry Thinks it Out!

TOM MERRY sat on a corner of the table in his study in the School House. Save for a tinge of redness about his face, he showed no signs of the outbreak on the cricket field. There was a thoughtful shade upon his brow, and he appeared to be immersed in reflection, while Manners and Lowther were busily engaged in preparing tea.

The kettle was singing on the fire, and Manners was boiling three small eggs in the gluepot, while Lowther washed teacups in the sugar basin. But Tom Merry was not lending a hand in these festive preparations. He sat on the corner of the table, his hands deep in his trousers pockets, and his legs stretched out, his brow wrinkled as if he were thinking out mighty problems.

"These eggs are nearly done," said Manners anxiously. "They've been boiling for three or four minutes, and they're not very big ones. Why doesn't somebody lay the cloth?"

"I'm busy!" grunted Lowther. "I can't wash teacups with one hand and lay tablecloths with the other."

"I say, Merry, get a move on!"

"Eh?"

"Lay the cloth!"

"Oh, yes, presently!"

"What is the image mumbling about?"

"Got something on his mind. I say, Tom, tea's nearly ready. Are you going to lend a hand, or are you not?"

"Not!"

"Look here—"

"Can't you shut up when I'm thinking out a wheeze?" demanded Tom Merry indignantly. "When I'm setting my wits to work—"

"Well, you shouldn't start these things at meal-times. And besides, the cloth isn't laid. Let the wheeze stand over!"

"It's a jolly good scheme for making the Grammar School sit up!"

"They can go on sitting down till we've had tea. I'm hungry!"

"You are an unpatriotic animal, Lowther! I tell you I'm thinking out a really ripping wheeze."

"These are really ripping eggs," said Manners. "And we know your wheezes of old. You've kept our end up against the Grammar School jolly well to-day—I don't think. Lay the cloth and we'll excuse you from thinking of any more wheezes."

"Just so!" said Lowther.

Tom Merry laughed, and slipped off the table.

"Right-ho! Where's the cloth? But, you see—"

"Yes, I see the eggs are done! Get out the egg-cups."

"There's only one!"

"Well, there's a broken salt-cellar, and the inkpot. Get a move on!"

"But about that wheeze—"

"Blow the wheeze! You can tell us while we're having tea if it's worth while—which I'll bet my Sunday socks it isn't."

Tom Merry laid the cloth. But he was still deep in thought, and a chuckle broke from him, apparently due to the unexplained wheeze. He threw out the cloth over the table to "lay" it, and knocked the eggs off the table, where Manners had just placed them.

"Hallo! Is that something knocked down?" he asked.

Manners gave a yell.

"Yes, you ass—it's the eggs!"

"What were they doing on the table? You asked me to lay the cloth."

"You utter duffer! I only laid them on there for a second because the gluepot was boiling over. Couldn't you look where you were shying that rotten cloth?"

"Couldn't you look where you were putting those rotten eggs?"

"Br-r-r! They're smashed now, of course!"

"This one isn't," said Monty Lowther, picking up one that had rolled to his feet. "The shell is cracked, that's all. Phew! It's jolly hard!"

Manners grunted.

"I suppose they're boiled hard. Jolly lucky, in the circumstances. There'd have been a nice mess if they had been soft. Where are the others?"

"Under the armchair, I think."

Manners scouted after the eggs. Tom Merry spread out the cloth, and Lowther set the newly washed crockery upon it.

"Anything else beside eggs?" he asked.

"There's bread-and-butter, if Tom Merry will take that grumpy look off his chivvy, and get 'em out of the cupboard."

"I wasn't looking grumpy."

"What do you call it, then?"

"Thoughtful."

"Well, stop it, anyway, and get out the grub. It's tea-time, and everybody ought to lend a hand instead of going about scowling like a demon in a pantomime."

"Oh, hold on, you know! I wasn't—"

"Well, don't then! Trot out the grub!"

Tom Merry laughed and trotted out the grub. The table was not groaning under good things, but there was a sufficient quantity for a good tea. There was jam to finish with, and it was none the worse for being in a soapdish. The soapdish, at all events, was scrupulously clean.

Lowther cracked his egg. It was pretty well cracked already, as a matter of fact, and so hard that he skinned it like a potato and laid it whole on his plate. This was meant as a silent reproof to Manners, but Manners made it a special point not to observe anything.

"About that wheeze—" began Tom Merry.

"Pass the salt, old chap."

"Here you are. I was thinking—"

"Pass me a spoon."

"Certainly! After what happened to-day—"

"Sugar this way."

"Look here—"

"Now you can go on," said Manners, being provided with everything. "Do you mind if I read the 'Magnet'?"

"I'm looking over Eutropius," said Lowther; "but it's all right; you can go on, Tommy. I don't mind a bit."

Tom Merry looked disgusted.

"Well, of all the rotten, unpatriotic mugwumps," he remarked, "I think you two take the Huntley & Palmer! I've got an entirely new, unheard-of, shrieking scheme for kyboshing the Grammar School—"

The door of the study opened, and four heads looked in.

"Busy?" said Jack Blake affably.

"Yes," said Tom Merry, scarcely looking round. "Shut the door after you."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"They're having tea," said Digby. "We've come the right time."

"Right-ho!" said Herries heartily. "Tom Merry isn't any good as a leader, but I don't mind having tea with him."

"We mind," said Lowther. "Travel!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Come in to tea by all means," said Tom Merry cordially. "There's three eggshells, half a stale loaf, a scratch of butter, and a whisper of marmalade. You're welcome; only don't overdo it on the rich fare."

Jack Blake grinned.

"We won't want the tea-table," he remarked. "They can keep their mouldy grub. We've come here to talk business, Tom Merry."

"Couldn't you do it in your own study?"

"We're going to avenge the honour of St. Jim's."

"Well, go on with the avenging. Don't mind us."

"We want to know if you kids are going to back us up."

"Well, no; but I'll tell you what," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "I've got a ripping, shrieking wheeze for sitting on the Grammarians."

"You can keep it," said Blake. "I can think of schemes enough, and we're getting fed-up with your wheezes. Are you going to back us up?"

"I don't think!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I regard it as unpatriotic of you in the extreme to refuse to back us up. We are goin' to make the Gwammawians eat coke."

"Well, go and do it, and take your features away with you. They worry me."

"Bai Jove, I—"

"Look here!" said Blake warmly. "You must acknowledge that you're utterly played out as a junior captain, Tom Merry."

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"Rats!"

"We're willing to take you into a scheme for avenging the honour of the school. If you don't back us up, we shall take it as an—unfriendly act," said Blake.

"Good! Now buzz off!"

"Not so fast. As this study has proved itself to be degenerate and unpatriotic, it is our bounden duty as—"

"Bounders?"

"As chief of the School House juniors," said Blake, unheeding, "to inflict an exemplary punishment—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"So go it, kids!"

And the four chums of the Fourth rushed into the study. If Tom Merry had not been so engrossed by his unspoken wheeze, he might have noticed, from the fact that D'Arcy had left his eyeglass behind, that he had come prepared for trouble. As it was, the rush of the four juniors took the chums of the Shell to a great extent by surprise.

They sprang to their feet; but in a moment Tom Merry and his chair were rolling over, and Lowther was clasped round the neck by the burly Herries, who waltzed him round the study. Blake upended the table, and Manners shrieked under a shower of teacups and tea. Digby caught Lowther by the legs, and brought him down, with Herries on him.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "That will do! Come on, dear boys!"

And the Fourth-Formers, shouting with laughter, rushed from the study, slamming the door after them.

Tom Merry staggered to his feet.

Manners sat up on the hearthrug, streaming with tea, and with the last fragment of the study butter clinging lovingly to his chin.

"The—the beasts!" gasped Tom Merry. "After them!"

"You can go after them, if you like," grunted Manners. "I'm going to change my beastly clothes! I'm soaked with tea."

And he marched out of the study. Monty Lowther rose to his feet, and rubbed his aching limbs.

"They took us by surprise," said Tom Merry apologetically.

"That's because this study has such a ripping leader," said Lowther.

"Oh, don't grouse, old man!"

"Br-r-r! Go and eat toffee!"

Tom Merry set the table to rights. But the tea was gone, and the bread was reposing in the ashes, and the butter had left the study on Manners' chin. Lowther surveyed the wreck, and grunted.

There was a clump of a boot at the door, and the chums of the Shell turned wrathfully towards it.

"Cheek!" muttered Lowther. "Coming back here like that."

He caught up the ashpans from under the grate. The door opened, and the ashes flew in a blinding cloud through the air, and there was a fearful yell.

CHAPTER 6.

A House Row!

"GROOOH! Gerooogh!"

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "It's Figgins & Co."

Lowther looked rather sheepish as he lowered the ashpans. He had jumped to the conclusion that the chums of Study No. 6 were returning to look upon their handiwork—a little bit of thoughtfulness that was rather rough on Figgins & Co.

Figgins had received most of the ashes, and he was a perfect picture. But Kerr and Wynn had had a fair share of them.

"You—you maniac!" roared Figgins. "What are you up to?"

"Sorry!" gasped Lowther. "I—I thought it was Blake!"

"Couldn't you look first? Of all the dummies—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"Well, what are you New House wasters doing in the School House, anyway?" demanded Monty Lowther.

Figgins coughed out the ashes that had gone into his mouth.

"We came over to propose to you—"

"You must ask mamma," said Tom Merry.

"Oh, don't be funny! We came to propose to you to join us in a little scheme we're getting up against the Grammar School—"

"Can't be did! But if you like to back us up, I've got a ripping wheeze—"

"Oh, blow your wheezes! I—"

"Kerr can help especially," said Tom Merry. "We're willing to take you into it—"

"We don't want to be taken in. We've been taken in often enough with your wheezes," said Figgins. "If you're going to help us—"

"We're not!"

"Then you'll jolly well be made to smart for chucking those ashes over us!" said Figgins darkly.
 "Hold on a minute!" said Kerr. "Let's hear the whoozy, and if it's a good one, we'll take it in hand, and—"
 "Not much! You follow, not lead—"
 "Of course, that's all rot!"
 "Then you can buzz off! I—"
 "Hold on another minute," said Fatty Wynn. "If Tom Merry is just going to have tea, I don't mind if—"
 "We've just had it, my son!"

"There!" gasped Figgins. "That's all right! Come on!"
 And the three New House juniors left the study, leaving Tom Merry and Lowther gasping on the ashy carpet.
 Lowther sat up in the ashes and yelled at the top of his voice:
 "Rescue, School House! Rescue!"
 Figgins & Co. broke into a run in the passage.
 "Buck up, kids!" muttered Figgins. "We don't want to get caught in here!"
 It would indeed have been serious for the New House trio



Lowther caught up the ashpan. The door opened, the ashes flew in a blinding cloud, and there was a fearful yell.
 "Grooooooh! Gerooooooh!" "My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "It's Figgins & Co.!"

"Then go for 'em!" said Fatty Wynn. "We'll teach the School House wasters to chuck ashes over their betters!"
 "Here, hold on, you asses—"

But Figgins & Co. were attacking.

They were three to two, and in a few seconds they had Tom Merry and Lowther on the floor, and were rolling them in the spilt ashes.

The two Shell juniors struggled desperately, and gave their assailants some hard work to do; but as Figgins & Co. couldn't get much more messed up with the ashes than they were already, they didn't mind.

The struggle was tremendous, and when Figgins & Co. released the Shell fellows at last the state of Merry and Lowther was indescribable.

to be caught in the School House in the midst of a raid. A ducking in a bath-room, or a frog's-march up and down the passages, would have been the lightest reprisal they could have expected.

Lowther's voice rang along the passage, and study doors were opening on all sides. The New House trio ran along at top speed, and only one Shell fellow was out quick enough to get into their way.

It was Skimpole, who dashed out of his study in hot haste, and without having any clear idea what was the matter. He got into the path of Figgins & Co., blinking round him through his big spectacles.

The New House juniors lifted him off his feet, and deposited him on his back, and left him lying there staring

at the ceiling through his spectacles, quite astounded, and not knowing in the least what had happened to him.

And other fellows, rushing out of their studies, fell over him, and there was a yelling and a shouting behind Figgins & Co. like Babel broken loose.

Figgins & Co. ran down the Fourth Form passage towards the staircase. Two or three Fourth-Formers dashed into their path, but receded as they saw the state Figgins & Co. were in. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy popped out of Study No. 6 and squared up to dispute their passage, too excited to notice that Figgins & Co. were shedding ashes wherever they trod, and leaving a trail of them behind in the passage.

"Stop!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "You New House wastahs, pway stop, or I shall have no alternative but to use violence!"

"Scoot, you ass!" gasped Kerr.

"I weseufe to be called an ass! Weseue, deah boys! New House wastahs!"

Blake, Herries, and Digby had rushed out of the study, and rushed in again as they saw the state Figgins & Co. were in. The New House trio closed round Arthur Augustus and hugged him. They shed their ashes all over his elegant clothes, they tore out his collar and tie, and rumbled and clusted him from head to foot, and left him sitting on the linoleum in a dazed condition.

Then they raced downstairs and flew into the quadrangle, and clucked as they sprinted towards their own House.

"Bai Jove! Weseue!" moaned Arthur Augustus feebly. "I am howwibly wumped! I am in a feahful state! Weseue, deah boys!"

"Faith, and where are the spalpeens?" shouted Reilly, racing along the passage in pursuit of the raiders. "Where are they entoirely? I—Ow! Ooooh!"

He fell over D'Arcy and rolled on the floor. Too excited to notice whom it was he had fallen over, Reilly curled

round like an eel, and seized Arthur Augustus and got his head into chancery.

"Faith, and I've got one of them!" he bawled. "Rescue, bhoys! I've got one of them! Take that, ye spalpeen! Take that, ye gossoon! Take that, and that, ye murderin' thafe of the worruld!"

"Ow! Woohoo!"

"I've got him! Rescue! I've got the spalpeen!"

"Wow! Weseue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jack Blake, nearly doubling up with merriment as he came to the rescue. "Stop that, Reilly, you ass! You—"

"I've got him!"

"That's not a New House chap! It's Gussy!"

"Howly smoke!"

"Dwag him off!" murmured the swell of the School House feebly. "Dwag the howwid wottah off! My clothes are simply wuined!"

"Faith, and it's sorry I am!" gasped Reilly. "Sure, I—"

"You howwid wottah! Pway assist me to wise, Blake. Thank you! I wegard you as a set of howwid wottahs for not comin' to the weseue. Weilly, I wegard you as an ass!"

"Faith, and sure I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway stop that silly cacklin', Blake. I am not sure whethah I can continue to wegard you as a fwiend."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy glared wrathfully at his chums, but the laughter was echoed by all the fellows crowding in the passage, and there was no stopping it.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

Arthur Augustus bestowed a withering glance upon the mockers and strode haughtily away, shedding ashes at every step, and the yell of laughter followed him down the passage; and, in fact, did not die away till a prefect came up with a cane to see what the noise was about.

CHAPTER 7.

Blake's Idea!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was not, as he had said, sure whether he would continue to regard Blake as a friend; but on the following day he recovered his good humour.

The scheme in which Blake had sought to obtain the support of the Terrible Three—without success—was to come off that day, and D'Arcy's assistance was wanted. In fact, Blake declared that the scheme was impossible without the co-operation of Arthur Augustus, and he added many more remarks of a complimentary nature, which might have made a more worldly minded fellow than D'Arcy a little suspicious.

"You haven't told me what the scheme is, deah boy," D'Arcy remarked. "Of course, I am willin' to give you any assistance in my powah. What you weally wequiah in a case like this is a leadah with tact and judgment, and I am quite willin' to offah my services."

"I am not exactly looking for a leader," said Blake blandly. "But we can't work the wheeze without you, Gussy, and that's a fact!"

"That is only natuwal, undah the circs."

"And you'll help?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"That's right!" exclaimed Blake, giving his elegant chum a slap on the back that made him stagger. "That's the right spirit, Gussy!"

"Ya-a-as, wathah! But pway don't be so beastlay wuff about it, Blake! You throw me into quite a fluttah, and wun the wisk of crumplin' my clothes, you know."

"My dear kid, you mustn't think of clothes on such an occasion as this—"

"I am afwaid, Blake, that I cannot imagine any occasion upon which I should not wegard it as important to take pwopah care of my attiah," said D'Arcy. "Howevah, pwocceed with the scheme, deah boy!"

"Well, this is how I have worked it out," said Blake thoughtfully. "I want you to dress in your very best things—"

"I shall be vewy, pleased to cawwy out that part of the plan!"

"Your best fancy waistcoat, toppet toppe, and oocasiest trousers, and nobbiest spats, you know—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

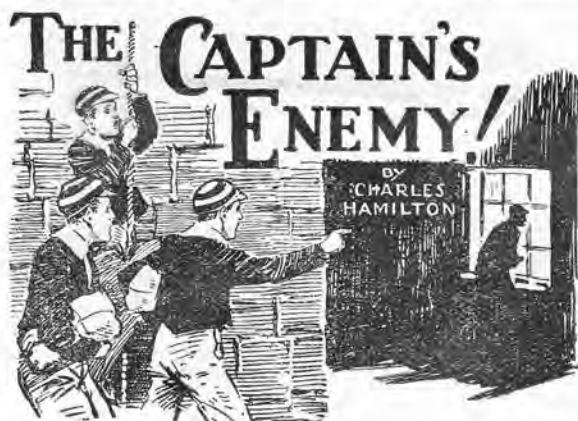
"Then you're to go to the Grammar School—"

"Eh?"

"And walk in at the gate—"

"What?"

"And, of course, the Grammar School cads, seeing you got up in that style, will go for you—"



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"I wathah think so!"
 "Then you bunk—"
 "Weally, Blake—"
 "And we'll all be waiting outside—heaps of us—and you'll lead them into the trap!"
 "Weally, Blake—"
 "And we'll all jump on 'em, and give 'em such an awful licking," said Blake, with great satisfaction. "Isn't it a ripping idea?"
 "Ripping!" agreed Digby.
 "Gorgeous!" said Herries.
 "Weally, deah boys—"
 "You don't look very enthusiastic about a really ripping weeze, Gussy."
 "I don't feel vewy enthusiastic about it, Blake. I wegard you as an ass! I do not know whethah you are wottin'—"
 "My dear kid, it's bound to work. The Grammarians will pile on you like anything, and then—"
 "Yaas, wathah! But where do I come in? I shall be tweated with uttah wuffness, and my clothes uttahly spoiled!" said D'Arcy indignantly. "I shall wefuse to do anythin' of the sort."
 "But you've promised."
 "Eh—what?"
 "You've promised," grinned Blake.
 "Weally, Blake, I did not compwehend—"
 "You shouldn't make promises without comprehending."
 D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and glared at Blake. His indignation was almost too deep for words.
 "Bai Jove! I wegard you as a wank wottah!" he said.
 "Howevah, you are quite wight. As I have made a pwomise, I suppose I must stick to it."
 "That's like a sportsman."
 "I am weady, then. And I shall weah my vewy oldest toppah."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I fail to see anythin' to laugh at, Blake."
 "Look in your pocket mirror then, old chap. On second thoughts, I won't hold you to the promise. Let this be a lesson to you, my son," said Blake, with a wave of the hand. "Never make reckless promises. Always taste before you buy."
 "Of course, I knew you were wottin' all the time."
 "Of course you did—I don't think!" grinned Blake.
 "Gussy, you are too rich for real life. You—you ought to be on a picture postcard."
 "I wegard that observation as fwivolous. I—"
 "To come to business," said Blake seriously. "We are going to raid the Grammarians. You know that now the weather's getting very fine, they're beginning their little after-school walks with a master, two and two, like good little boys, and I happen to know that they're going out this evening. Frank Monk doesn't like that walk any more than we do when we have to go through it; but he can't help himself. You know the route they take, and there's a high hedge on both sides in one place. What's the matter with laying an ambush?"
 "But they will have a mastah with them, deah boy."
 "I know that, ass!"
 "I wefuse to be chawactewised as an ass. And weally, Blake, I cannot agree to any scheme which involves tweatin' a mastah with diswepsect," said Arthur Augustus firmly.
 "We must dwaw the line somewhere."
 "Let me finish, kid. We're not going to touch the master. We should jolly well get a complaint from the Grammar School, and a licking all round from Railton if we did. We're going for the Grammar School kids. My idea is to ambuscade them in Low Lane, and lay in a supply of clods, and penashooters, and rotten apples, and things, and let them have a fusillade as they go through."
 "Bai Jove, that's a wippin' ideah!"
 "If you approve of it, Gussy, there's no more to be said," remarked Blake, with perfect gravity. "It's settled."
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Then all we've got to do is to beat up recruits," said Digby. "It's no good speaking to those Shell rotters on the subject. They won't back us up. Besides, better stick to our own Form."
 "Right-ho! We may as well give the New House a show, though. Figgins & Co. would like to be on this."
 "Yaas, wathah! Let's speak to them now, deah boy."
 Figgins & Co. were sunning themselves on the steps of the New House when the chums of Study No. 6 strolled over to speak to them. The New House juniors looked suspiciously at them, and evidently made ready for war, Figgins taking his hand out of his pocket, Kerr gripping the handle of a cricket bat a little harder, and Fatty Wynn hastily bolting a chunk of toffee that was in his mouth.
 But Jack Blake made a sign of amity.

(Continued on next page.)



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THE BIG GUN!

Club Bore (relating an experience for the umpteenth time):
 "Out there, of course, every man carries a shooter. I was out one night and I came face to face with a tiger. Out came my shooter—and what do you think?"

Weary Listener: "I know—you'd run out of peas!"
 J. GARBUTT, Newton House, 21, St. Olaves Road, York.

* * *

NOT SO LUCKY!

Tommy: "Dad, there's a black cat in the dining-room."
 Dad: "Never mind, black cats are lucky."
 Tommy: "This one is—he's eating your dinner!"
 MISS M. TODD, 42, Finsbury Road, Ramegate, Kent.

* * *

HEARD AND SEEN!

Foreman (testing wall of new house): "I'm speaking quietly, Bill. Can you hear me?"
 Bill (on other side): "Ear you? Why, I can see you in three places!"
 W. G. ROSS, 26, Howitt Road, Belsize Park, Hampstead, N.W.3.

* * *

MISLEADING!

Watchman: "Didn't you see that notice: 'Road closed'?"
 Cyclist (climbing out of excavation): "Yes; and I found it wide open!"
 MARY WALMSLEY, 41, Christ Church Street, Preston, Lancs.

* * *

OBVIOUS!

Fat Lady: "Excuse me, constable, but could you see me across the road?"
 Policeman: "Yes, ma'am; I saw you nearly half a mile away!"
 E. CHALK, 6, Dartmouth Park Hill, Highgate, London, N.

* * *

SNAPPY!

Father: "John Smith has a better school report than you have."
 Son: "Yes; but he's got clever parents!"
 T. BOLAM, 12 (back) Wood Terrace, Monkton, Jarrow-on-Tyne, Co. Durham.

* * *

A WASH OUT!

Customer: "You ought to call these 'Old Soldier' dyes."
 Shopkeeper: "Why?"
 Customer: "Because they never dye, they only fade away."
 WALTER P. TOLLETT, 45, Hayter Road, Brixton Hill, S.W.2.

* * *

THREATENING!

Fat (whose horse has suddenly sat down between the shafts):
 "Giddup, ye brute, or begorra, I'll drive right over ye!"
 E. SUMMERHAYES, Mandeville Hotel, Mandeville Place, London, W.1.

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"Pax," said Blake. "We're going to look for the Gramarians on their evening walk. Will you come?"

Figgins grinned.

"Curious! I was just thinking of the same thing."

"Then come along with us. My idea is to ambush them in Low Lane."

"Well, I hadn't planned that exactly," said Figgins cautiously, "but I suppose I should have thought of it."

"I suppose you wouldn't," said Blake. "But we needn't argue over that. Will you come along and back us up?"

"We'll come along and let you back us up."

"Now don't be funny, Figgins."

"I'm speaking seriously. As it's my idea—"

"Your idea!" shouted Blake indignantly. "Why, I—I like that! Why—"

"Well, if you like it, what are you yelling about? It's practically my idea, and if we let you come in it, we shall expect you to keep your places," said Figgins.

"Of course," said Kerr. "It's only on that condition that we can let you in."

"Let us in!" said Blake dazedly. "You—you cheeky villains!"

"That's how the case stands," said Figgins, with an air of finality.

"Well, you New House wasters," said Blake, "I've a jolly good mind to wipe up the ground with the three of you!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We're ready for the wiping up to begin," said Figgins amiably.

As there were a score of New House juniors within easy call, it would hardly have been a safe proceeding for the School House youngsters. Besides, Blake had other matters to think of then.

"It's pax," he said. "There's only about time to get to Low Lane and get ready for the Grammar School cads. Are you coming with us?"

"Yaas, that's the question, Figgins, deah boy."

"I'm not going to follow the lead of any School House waster unhung!" said Figgins flatly. "That's settled! But I'll tell you what. I'll bring my fellows along, and we'll do it on our own. There's plenty of clods to chuck, and we can do it without interfering with each other."

"Well, the more the merrier," said Blake. "Will you be ready in ten minutes?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then it's a go!"

And the rivals of St. Jim's parted. When the chums of Study No. 6 united with Figgins & Co., it was easy enough for them to get the whole Form to follow. As Jack Blake went into the School House to call up his recruits, he passed the Terrible Three, who were just strolling out.

"Hold on a minute, Blake!"

"Can't! I'm in a hurry!"

"About that wheeze I was speaking of—" said Tom Merry.

"My dear kid, I haven't time for any of your old, mouldy wheezes. We've got a plan on that is better than anything you Shellfish could think of in a month of Sundays!"

And Blake hurried on, leaving the Terrible Three considerably curious.

But their curiosity was not to be satisfied, for not a word did Blake & Co. say on the subject of their scheme. They

were content with the fame that would follow when they returned, covered with the glory of great victory to St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 8.

On the Warpath!

"HERE'S the place!" said Blake.

The crowd of juniors stopped. There were a good two score of them belonging to both Houses of St. Jim's, and they were all looking very war-like and determined.

In the golden evening they had arrived at Low Lane, a turning off the Rylcombe Road near the Grammar School. It was a somewhat narrow lane, and, as its name implied, it lay low between banks of earth.

The high earthy banks were patched with shrubs and roots, and crowned with thick hedges. A more excellent spot for an ambushcade could hardly have been desired. Even Figgins, though little disposed to give credit to a School House suggestion, admitted that the spot was well chosen.

"That is, of course, if the Grammar School cads come this way," he added.

Blake snorted.

"I tell you they are coming this way."

"How do you know?"

"Because their walk is round by Oakwood Farm, and they must come through here, or else go round an extra half-mile."

"Well, I rely on your information. I shouldn't wonder if you've got it wrong."

"I shouldn't wonder if you got a thick ear, if you keep on wagging your chin!" said Blake darkly.

"If any School House waster can give me a thick ear—"

"I jolly well can—"

"Then come on and—"

"Hold on, deah boys! It would be wathah wotten if the Gwammah School cads came along and found us in the middle of a House wow—"

"Well, if Figgins won't shut up—"

"If Blake won't shut up—"

"Faith, and suppose ye both shut up entirety?" suggested Reilly.

"Bai Jove, that's a good ideah!"

Jack Blake sniffed.

"Look here, we've got to ambush behind this hedge," he said. "We can get up the bank on this side of the road, and there's openings in the hedge that we can chuck things through. Come on."

"Follow your leader!" said Figgins, clambering up the bank.

The juniors swarmed up eight or nine feet of sloping, clayey earth, and plunged through the gaps in the hedge at the top. Beyond the hedge was a field, recently turned up by the plough, and so it was easy enough for the juniors to obtain clods of earth, and break them up into the required handy sizes. A recent fall of rain had made the earth soft enough, and, as D'Arcy remarked, the clods more resembled pats of mud. But they looked as if they would answer the purpose, and that was enough.

With heaps of ammunition at hand, the juniors looked through the gaps in the high hedge for a sign of the approaching enemy.

Potts, the Office Boy!



If the procession of Grammar School boys marched along the Low Lane under the hedge, they would certainly be exposed to a withering fire of mud pats and peas from the shooters, and the juniors waited with gleeful anticipation. The defeat on the cricket field at St. Jim's was about to be avenged.

Jack Blake thought it best to come amply early, in case the Grammarians should come upon the scene before the ambush was quite prepared. Perhaps he had been a little bit too early. The juniors waited ten minutes, and still there was no sign of the Grammarians.

Naturally enough, they began to grow restive. Boys are not the most patient animals in the world, and a long, enforced wait, crouching among puddles on a soft soil, was not wildly exciting as an occupation.

The ambushers shifted their position, moved and twisted, and grumbled and mumbled. Figgins inquired, with an air of irritating patience, whether Blake was, after all, quite certain of his information. Kerr observed that if he had been brought out there for nothing, somebody would get a thick ear presently. Fatty Wynn pathetically referred to the fact that he was hungry, and growing hungrier every minute. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy set to work rubbing the mud-spots off his trousers, but as fast as he rubbed them off more of them came on. He finally announced it as his fixed opinion that it was impossible to keep clean in such a place, and suggested a retreat "if the Grammarians did not appear very soon." And as Blake was getting restive and uneasy himself, it may be imagined that he did not hear all these remarks with the fortitude of Job.

"Bai Jove, I'll have a look to see if they're comin'!" said D'Arcy, making a motion to pass down the lane.

Blake grasped him just in time and dragged him back. The swell of the School House sat down in muddy earth with a squelch.

"Ow! Wow! My twousahs!"
"Blow your trousers! Can't you keep out of sight?" granted Blake.

"You have ruined my twousahs!"
"Oh, scat!"
"You—you uttah ass! I—"
"Give him a dot on the boko, Gussy!" said Figgins encouragingly. "We want something to pass the time! It looks as if we're going to wait here till lockin'-up at St. Jim's."

"You needn't wait if you don't want to!" growled Blake. "Well, I was thinking it was about time we made a move."

"Clear out, then, if you're afraid of the Grammarians!" Figgins jumped.
"Who says I'm afraid of the Grammarians?"
"Oh, go and eat coke!"
"I'll jolly well—"
"No, you won't!"
"Look here, you School House ass—"
"Look here, you New House rabbit—"
"Faith, and shut up entirely!" exclaimed Reilly.
"Hould that duffer Figgins, Kerr—"
"Who are you calling a duffer?" demanded Kerr.
"Faith, Figgins is a duffer and you're another, and—"
Ow! Begorra, and it's wiping up the mud with ye I'll be doing!"
"Hold on, there!" exclaimed Digby, as Reilly and Kerr rolled in the mud in a desperate scramble. "You New House rotter—"

"School House cad!"

"Look here—"

"Yah!"

"Rats!"

Exactly how it happened it is hard to say, but Figgins and Blake, in trying to separate Kerr and Reilly, found themselves punching one another's heads instead. Herries and Fatty Wynn rushed towards them and came into collision, and rolled on the ground, fighting.

A few seconds more, and School House were at it hammer-and-tongs, tramping in the mud, and pommelling away like demons.

The trampling, the shouting, the gasping, made a din that was audible enough to a procession of youths in Grammar School caps who were entering the end of the lane.

Frank Monk grinned at his friends.

"Hallo! You hear that, kids?"

"It's the cads from St. Jim's."

"Yes, a House row out here."

"Let's lend a hand."

"Ha, ha, ha! Come on!"

Mr. Spicer, the master in charge of the Grammar School juniors, was a little, spectacled gentleman, of the faintest disposition. He stopped as he heard the sound of lively conflict from beyond the hedge, with an expression of amazement upon his face.

"Dear me!" he said. "That sounds as if—as if some persons were assaulting one another with their fists in a—
a violent manner!"

"Shall we see what it is, sir?" asked Monk demurely.

"I—I hardly know!"

"We may be able to stop them, sir, and—and restore peace," said Monk.

"Yes, it is possible. But—"

But without waiting for more, the Grammarians scrambled up the sloping bank and burst through the gaps in the hedge upon the scene of action.

CHAPTER 9.

Not Quite a Success!

THE combatants had quite forgotten the existence of the Grammar School and the Grammarians by that time. It was a "House row" of the most outrageous description, carried to a much more riotous excess than would ever have been possible within the walls of St. Jim's.

The two parties, wildly excited, were fighting as if their lives depended upon the result of the conflict—and as they were about equally matched in point of numbers, they were not likely to leave off fighting till they were fagged out, or interrupted.

As it happened they were interrupted. The Grammarians, whom they had come there to ambush, interrupted them.

"Go for 'em!" muttered Frank Monk, as the Grammar School youths burst up through the hedge. "Knock 'em into the middle of next week! They came here to lay for us—I'm pretty certain of that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Grammarians rushed to the attack. The rush came utterly by surprise, and the St. Jim's juniors were sent simply flying. Then the heaps of missiles that had been

HOT STUFF!



prepared for the Grammarians were turned against the makers. The Grammar School youths clutched up handfuls of the muddy clods and poured in a deadly volley upon the broken and confused juniors of St. Jim's.

The latter scattered in all directions.

Some of them were still fighting—all of them, as soon as they realised what was happening, felt too disorganised to face the new foe.

They scattered right and left, and the few who tackled the Grammarians were overcome by force of numbers, and had hard work to break away and escape. But only one prisoner remained in the hands of the victors.

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arey.

Arthur Augustus had put on his oldest topper, in case of accidents, but even his oldest topper was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. It rolled off his head in the scuffle, and he rushed to rescue it before he fled. He recaptured the hat, and the Grammarians captured him.

Arthur Augustus struggled desperately in the grasp of half a dozen pairs of hands.

"Welease me, you wottahs!" he gasped. "I ordah you to welease me immediately! Otherwise, I shall lose my tempah and stwike you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Welease me, you howwid boundahs!"

"Hold him!" cried Monk, gasping with laughter. "He's a giddy prisoner of war! Give me that topper!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort!"

"Hand it over, ass!"

"I uttaly wefuse— Oh!"

Carboy jerked away the hat, and handed it to Monk. The chief of the Grammar School juniors stooped by a deep puddle and filled the topper with oozing mud.

D'Arey watched him with apprehension. It was his oldest topper fortunately; but what was Monk about to do with it? It was half full of slimy mud, as black as ink.

"Now, Gussy—"

"Keep that howwid thing away fwom me, Fwank Monk!"

"Don't you want your hat?" demanded Monk, apparently in great surprise.

"No, I don't, you wottah!"

"Oh, stuff! You don't know what you want! I suppose you chaps came here to ambush us, didn't you?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha! A nice mess you have made of it! I suppose you were going to pelt us—give us a high old time generally?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Well, it's only worked out the other way round—you've had the high old time! Here's your hat!"

"Ow—oh! Wow! Gwoo!"

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

Frank Monk had placed the silk hat on D'Arey's head. The mud ran over his face in thick streams, and the piebald appearance of Arthur Augustus' face was comic in the extreme.

The Grammarians roared with laughter.

The voice of Mr. Spicer came from beyond the hedge.

"Boys! Monk! Come back immediately!"

"Yes, sir," said Monk. "We've stopped the fighting, sir. They were a lot of naughty youngsters from St. Jim's, sir."

"Very good! But now, come back!"

The Grammarians obeyed. Blake and several other juniors, finding that Arthur Augustus had been left in the enemy's hands, were rushing back recklessly to the rescue. D'Arey turned towards them as his captors left him alone, and was greeted with a roar of laughter.

His chums could not help it.

The swell of the School House rubbed the mud from his eyes and jammed on his eyeglass.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as uttaly wottahs!" gasped D'Arey. "I am in a shockin' state! Ow! I feel as if I shall nevah be clean again, and my toppah is uttaly wuined!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It's a sell this time, and no mistake!"

The Grammarians were marching off. It was too late to gather the juniors again for a renewal of the conflict. By different paths, and all of them gloomy and muddy, the unfortunate raiders made their way back to the school.

The Terrible Three and several other Shell fellows were standing in the gateway as the Fourth-Formers came in in the dusk.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry, staring at them. "Have you been out collecting mud, kids?"

"Oh rats!" grunted Blake, pushing past and going in.

"They've been carrying out Blake's ripping schemes!" chuckled Lowther. "This is the result! Bravo, Blake!"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My word!" said Manners. "Here comes Figgins in the same state!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Figgins crossly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go and eat coke! Come on, kids, don't stop here to listen to those Shell duffers going off like cheap German alarm clocks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That unflattering description of their laughter did not stop the Terrible Three. They laughed more than ever as Figgins & Co. strode grumpily away. And the shouts of merriment drew fellows from all quarters to see the plight



The Grammarians rushed to the attack; the heap of missiles makers. Frank Monk & Co. clutched up handfuls of the mu

of the retiring raiders. Even fags in the Third Form came along to cackle at them. Arthur Augustus D'Arey especially caused a sensation.

"My only Aunt Jane!" exclaimed D'Arey minor of the Third. "Here comes the wild man from Borneo!"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Why, it's Gus!" exclaimed the younger brother, in apparent astonishment. "Fancy Gus turning himself into a mudlark in his old age!"

"You impertinent young wascal—"

"I've heard of chaps collecting queer things," said Wally. "But to think of Gus going out and collecting mud in a silk hat—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wefuse to submit to this wibald laughtah, Tom Mewwy! As for you, Wally, I shall have no alternative but to administah a feahful thwashin' if you do not tweat me with the respect due to an eldah bwothah!"

"Oh, go and wash!" said Jameson of the Third.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort—I mean, I am about

to do so," said D'Arcy, somewhat flurried. "I wegard you as a set of little beasts, and you Shell fellows as a set of big beasts!"

And the swell of St. Jim's walked out haughtily towards the School House, followed by a roar of laughter.

It was just D'Arcy's luck that he should meet Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, in the Hall as he went in. Mr. Railton was, naturally, surprised. D'Arcy was usually most careful of his appearance, and his appearance now was past all words.

"D'Arcy! Is it really you, D'Arcy?"

"I'm sure I don't know, sir," said D'Arcy. "I have nevah been in such a shockin' state in my life, sir. I weally do not know for certain whethah it is I or not!"



on prepared for use against them were now turned against the poured a deadly volley upon the broken and confused juniors

The Housemaster smiled.

"How did you get into this state, D'Arcy?"

"It was an-an-an—"

"Ann!" said the Housemaster, mystified. "Do you mean to say that a girl—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I mean—sowwy, sir!—no! I was goin' to say an accident!"

"Oh, an accident! It is very shocking! Go and clean yourself at once, and please take care that you do not have any more of these accidents, D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, wathah, sir."

"Dear me! Here is another!"

Herries had just come in, and he almost ran into Mr. Railton as he darted for the stairs. The Housemaster stopped him.

"Herries! How did you come into this state?"

"It was an accident, sir."

"Ahem! Dear me! Here is Digby in the same state! Have you had an accident, Digby?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"H'm! There seems to have been a great many accidents just now," said Mr. Railton severely. "Really—"

"We didn't get like it on purpose, sir," said Digby meekly.

"No; I suppose it was an accident in that sense. However, you may go."

Mr. Railton went into his study, and the juniors gladly scuttled away. There was soon a terrific splashing in the bath-rooms. When the Terrible Three came in there were tears of laughter on their cheeks. The Fourth Form campaign had ended ingloriously, and it remained for the Shell to avenge the honour of St. Jim's—if that could be done at all.

CHAPTER 10.

Wally Takes the Matter in Hand!

THERE were cross looks in the Fourth Form that evening. The juniors had to explain away their defeat—to an unbelieving public.

It was easy for Figgins to declare that it was all due to School House bumpiness. It was equally easy for Blake to explain that if the New House wasters had understood the elementary rules of discipline the disaster wouldn't have occurred.

The disaster had occurred, and the other fellows stuck pertinaciously to that fact, and ignored the explanations.

Figgins had maintained that he had done everything humanly possible, and offered to fight, with or without gloves, any fellow who undertook to maintain the contrary, which, of course, was an unanswerable argument.

"I can't say fairer than that," said Figgins.

And the Co. agreed that he couldn't. And as the challenge wasn't taken up in the New House, the opposition was considered to be convinced.

But in the New House Figgins & Co. were the head of the juniors; in the School House it was different. There the supremacy was disputed between the chums of Study No. 6 belonging to the Fourth Form, and the Terrible Three, who belonged to the Shell. And the defeat that had fallen upon Study No. 6 certainly seemed to give Tom Merry & Co. the lead.

Blake had a chastened look for a whole day after the defeat. Even Arthur Augustus left off explaining how he could have crushed the enemy at one fell swoop if his generalship had been trusted. Study No. 6 took a back seat for a little till it blew over.

But the juniors of both Houses were extremely excited about it.

The excitement did not soon die away, either. The Grammarians were victorious, and at chance meetings they alluded to the fact, and made affectionate inquiries about the health of the juniors they had licked, which exasperated the Saints more and more, till it was pretty clear that the Lower Forms were on the verge of an explosion.

Wally & Co. of the Third declared their intention of taking the matter into their own hands—a piece of cheek that made the Middle School gasp. Since Wally had come to St. Jim's the Third Form fags had grown more and more lacking in respect for the Fourth and the Shell, and the latter were of opinion that something ought to be done about it.

"You see, deah boys, the youngstahs ought to be kept in their places," Arthur Augustus observed, when the subject came up one evening after prep in Study No. 6. "I wegard it as most important for youngstahs to be kept in their places. I have seveal times lately turned it ovah in my mind whethah I ought to give that young bwothah of mine a feahful thwashin'!"

"I say, they're holding a meeting in the Third Form Room!" said Digby, coming into the study, grinning. "Young Wally is getting up some scheme for going for the Grammar School. Fancy the cheek of those Third Form fags!"

Jack Blake's brow darkened.

"This is more than a joke," he said. "We can't allow the Third Form to chip in this."

"Wathah not!"

"We've put our foot down on the Third Form joining in House rows," said Blake, looking round. "We can't have them joining in this row with the Grammar School, either. It wouldn't do. They'd mess everything up."

"Yaas, wathah! It's a question of dig with us."

"Of course," said Blake magnanimously. "They can follow us. We don't mind them backing us up. As for anything else, it's—"

"Imposs, deah boy!"

"Exactly!"

"I wathah think we ought to explain that to the young wascals," remarked Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "Perwaps if we went to see them, and ordhahed them to stop

their ridiculous meetin' they would see reason. Othah-wise, we could call in the fellows and thwack them."

"That's what I was thinking."

The chipping Blake and his friends had received, had left their temper a little "edge-wise" on the subject, and the cheek of the Third Form was really passing all bounds. A severe lesson to the fags seemed to be called for by the circumstances—at least, in the opinion of Study No. 6.

The four chums walked along to the Third Form, and the terrific noise that proceeded from it showed that the meeting was in full progress. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were passing the door, and they stopped their ears as they did so. The Terrible Three grinned cheerfully at the Fourth-Formers.

"Hallo! Are you going to the meeting?" asked Tom Merry.

Blake frowned darkly.

"No, we're not. We—"

"Oh, I hear they're holding a meeting on the subject of going for the Grammarians, and as you chaps are so successful in that line—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Manners and Lowther.

"Weally, Tom Merry—"

"Oh, don't take any notice of these wotten Shellfish!" said Digby. "Come on!"

The four Fourth-Formers stalked on and kicked open the door of the Third Form Room and entered. The Terrible Three stared after them in surprise.

"They're not going to the meeting," said Tom Merry; "but they've gone in. What's the little game, I wonder?"

Monty Lowther chuckled.

"They're going to bust the meeting, perhaps."

"Ha, ha, ha! They're more likely to get busted if they go in among that horde of inky fags."

Tom Merry was right; but the chiefs of the Fourth Form were too incensed to think about that. They strode into the Third Form Room, which was crowded with fags. Wally was standing on a chair and addressing the meeting, but as nearly every member of the Third Form was talking at once, little could be heard of the observations of D'Arcy minor.

The four Fourth-Formers glared at the meeting, and the buzz of talk ceased, and the fags turned round to glare at them. The speaker ceased his speech.

He looked across at the intruders, and made an emphatic sign with his thumb towards the door.

"Outside!"

"Weally, Wally—" began Arthur Augustus.

"Now, don't you begin, Gus! Outside!"

But the Fourth-Formers did not go outside. They strode into the crowd of fags.

Blake waved his hand imperiously.

"Cut!" he said.

There was a roar of indignation.

"What!"

"Cut, I say!"

"We're in our own room, you Fourth Form rotter!"

"Catch us cutting for you!"

"Cut yourself!"

"Yah!"

"You'll get warmed if you don't," said Blake darkly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Rats!" exclaimed Wally indignantly. "We're in our own quarters, you cheeky bounders, and it's a meeting."

"We've come to break up the meeting."

"Eh—what?"

"You've got to cut!"

"Boo! Yah!"

"Are you going?"

"No!" roared two score fierce voices.

"Call the chaps in, Herries, and we'll clear them out!"

"Yaas, bai Jove!"

"Will you?" said Wally. "You'll get cleared out yourselves first! Collar them!"

"Hurrah! Give 'em socks!"

Numbers made the fags bold. They crowded round the Fourth-Formers menacingly.

Blake put up his fists, and frowned.

"Now, then, keep off! We shall hurt you! Line up, you chaps! Rescue, Fourth!"

"Sock it to 'em!"

"On the ball!"

"Hurrah! Down with the Fourth!"

The fags swarmed to the attack. They were in crowds, and in spite of a gallant resistance the four Fourth-Formers were rushed off their feet. The floor was carpeted, so to speak, with fags that were bowled over in the struggle; but still, numbers told. The quartet were rushed to the door.

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tumbling and struggling, and rolling and gasping, and hurled forth into the corridor.

A roar of laughter greeted them there.

The Terrible Three were looking on, and the sudden and inglorious exit of the chums of Study No. 6 made them yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Breathless, untidy, gasping, and dusty, the Fourth-Formers rolled in the passage, and the fags, after a parting yell of derision, slammed the door and locked it on the inside.

Arthur Augustus sat up and groped for his eyeglass. Jack Blake staggered to his feet and held dazedly on to the wall and blinked at the shrieking chums of the Shell.

"Wh-wh-wh—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I feel an uttah week!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake gathered his strength and hurled himself upon the door. But the strong oak held true. He reeled back, and murmured something.

"We can't get in!" said Digby.

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"Cackling asses! We—we'll deal with the Third Form later!" said Jack Blake hesitatingly. "Come on, kids!"

And the chums of Study No. 6 took their slow and painful departure, leaving the Terrible Three shrieking. And in the Third Form Room, amid a babel of voices all going at once, the meeting continued triumphantly.

CHAPTER 11.

Many Interruptions!

TOM MERRY entered his study and took out his books. The Terrible Three had been in the gym, and had left their prep unusually late.

If it was not done that evening there was likely to be trouble with the Form master on the following morning. Mr. Linton was not a gentleman to be trifled with on such points. The chums of the Shell were in a humour for anything but work, but there was no help for it.

"We've got an hour," said Manners. "We can manage all right if no idiots come in to interrupt us! Oh, of course, the inkpot's empty, now we're in a hurry!"

"I want a new nib for my pen," said Lowther.

"They're in the drawer. You can fill the inkpot at the same time!"

"You can get me a nib as I'm sitting down!"

"Well, so am I, ass!"

"Now, don't be a lazy beast, Manners!"

"Look here, I—"

"Peace, my children!" said Tom Merry, taking a box of pen-nibs and a bottle of ink from the drawer. "Here you are!"

He shot a stream of pen-nibs into Monty Lowther's collar, and a stream of ink upon the shoulder of his other chum.

Manners yelled and jumped up.

"Ow! You ass! Look what you're doing!"

"My hat! How was I to know the cork wasn't in the bottle?"

"Of all the utter idiots—"

"Now, there's half the ink wasted!"

"Ink! What about my jacket?" hooted Manners.

"Oh, never mind your jacket!"

"But I do mind it!" Manners roared. "How could you be ass enough to put the bottle of ink in the drawer without a cork in it, anyway?"

"I didn't! It must have been Lowther!"

"Bosh!" said Lowther. "I shouldn't have been such an ass! It must have been Manners, in one of his absent-minded fits!"

"Look here, Lowther—"

"Well, it's no good arguing about it! Let's get to work. or there will be a row with old Linton in the morning. If anybody comes in, kick him out! I—"

The door opened, and a big bumpy forehead, adorned with a big pair of spectacles, with a beaming smile under it, projected itself into the study. It was Skimpole, the brainy man of the Shell, who beamed upon the Terrible Three. They did not beam back. They glared. But the genius of the Shell was exceedingly short-sighted, and he did not see it.

"I have been waiting for you fellows to come in," he said.

"Where have you been waiting?"

"In the next room—my study."

"Well, go back and wait there again till we go out!" said Lowther. "Then you can come back!"

"Really, Lowther—"

"Shut the door after you!"

(Continued on page 19.)

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PEPPY PARS FROM—



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HALLO, chums, what do you think of this week's GEM? Good, isn't it? Of course it is! Next week's GEM will be even better. I have got a very special yarn for you called:

"ST. JIM'S FOR EVER!"

Having read this week's yarn you will know just what Tom Merry & Co. are up to, and next week Martin Clifford tells you all about Tom's adventures when he arrives at the Grammar School as a new boy, with Kerr posing as his brother. In the enemy's camp—with a vengeance! Believe me it's real good stuff this yarn, packed with fun and thrills. However, for those who like unlimited thrills, there will be still more in the chapters of our great story of war in the air!

"THE SPY-FLYERS!"

For news interest, just take a look at the page from my notebook, while laughter will be supplied by the imitable Potts: in addition, you will find another column of jokes sent in by readers, for each of which I pay half-a-crown. If you know a good joke, send it along!

A HORSE GOES SHOPPING!

All sorts of people go into the "three-penny and sixpenny" stores these days, but the customers in one got something of a surprise the other day when they heard a loud clattering noise and a large cart horse came galloping down the centre aisle of the shop! He didn't stop to buy anything—he just went straight on and out the other end! It appeared that he didn't like the noise of the traffic through which he was being led, so he went into the store, but he found that so crowded, too, that he decided to look for somewhere quiet!

THE MOST EXPENSIVE MEAL EVER?

Talking of horses reminds me of cows. I dare say you have heard of some pretty expensive meals before now, given by very rich men and women, but I doubt if many of them have ever given so costly a meal for its size as a few cows enjoyed the other day. These cows ate £600 in banknotes! The notes had been hidden in a cowshed by bandits, and the cows found them and made short work of them!

BRAVO, HAMMOND!

Cricket will very soon be in full swing here, but perhaps the biggest thing of the year has already occurred. I refer, of course, to Hammond's marvellous innings of 336 not out in the second Test Match against New Zealand. By this effort he beat the previous record for a score in a Test Match, which was previously held by Don Bradman, who made 334 against England at Leeds in 1930. Hammond's was a remarkable innings.

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and in it he hit ten sixes and thirty-three fours! He made his last hundred runs in under fifty minutes, and just to keep things going merrily, immediately after passing Bradman's record he was caught—off a no-ball!

JONAH AND THE WHALE!

Some fishermen spotted a large dolphin off Messina not long ago, and set out on the job of harpooning it. They succeeded in doing this, and having landed the huge creature were delighted to find that it weighed as much as two tons! The dolphin was still alive when they reached the shore, but the fishermen killed it and then set to work to cut it open; imagine their surprise when inside it they found a large tunny fish which weighed two hundred-weight! Those fishermen had certainly killed two fish with one-harpoon!

POCKET MOVIES!

The latest invention in the film world is a new movie camera which can be carried in the pocket, and which has a film twenty-five feet long in it. Each film will take 4,000 pictures, and each of the pictures is only one-twenty-sixth of the size of a postage stamp! The completed film can be shown with ease on an ordinary home screen. Recently a test was made of a film taken by the M.C.C. team on their Australian tour, and pictures were shown perfectly on a screen 42,800 times the size of the film itself! Actually this new invention was an accident! Research workers at a famous film factory at Harrow discovered the substance which coats these tiny films when they were working on something else.

AN ALL-STEEL YACHT.

For the first time in this country, a giant all-steel racing yacht is being built. The yacht, which is being constructed at Gosport, will have luxurious living accommodation, but it is hoped that she will be one of the fastest yachts afloat. Being of two-hundred tons, and with every nut, bolt, and girder made of British steel, this new wonder ship will be lighter than a similar vessel built of wood! Her steel mast will be 155 feet high, her water line length will be 83 feet, her beam 21 feet and her draught 15 feet. Her sail area will be 7,500 square feet—well, she certainly sounds as if she ought to be able to get a bit of a move on!

NO MORE WAR-PAINT!

The Ottawa House of Commons has decided that in future Red Indians must not wear their war-paint or their picturesque war dance costumes at rodeos or other "Wild West" shows, unless they obtain

special permission to do so. The trouble is that when they go to rodeos and start dancing in full war-paint and all that sort of thing, the Red Indians sometimes forget for a little that they are supposed only to be playing at war dances, and the result is—riots! It may seem to you that it is a bit hard on the poor Red Indians that they should be ordered about like this, but then you see Canadian Indians are wards of the Government, and live tax free! Lucky fellows—believe me I would promise never to wear any war-paint or fancy dress at all—if the Government would let me live tax free!

HE'S NOT ALL-IN YET!

Siddi Wastad is a wrestler in the Central Provinces of India, and he is stated to be more than 130 years old, but he has never yet been to a doctor and he always prepares his own medicines. Now Siddi has no teeth, so you might imagine that he was a very weak old man who just sort of mumbled about the place, but not a bit of it. Siddi eats a great deal! His chief meal of the day consists of six pounds of wheal flour, vegetables, rice, mutton and eight pints of milk. It may seem rather a lot—but it takes him three hours to eat it!

HURRAH!

Everest Conquered! For the first time in history man has been over the top of Everest, the mountain known as the "roof of the world"! This great feat was achieved by the Marquis of Clydesdale and Flight-Lieut. D. F. McIntyre, who piloted the two machines which accomplished the feat, and had for their observers, Colonel Blacker and Mr. S. R. Bonnett respectively. The planes rose to a height of thirty-one thousand feet, two thousand feet higher than the peak of Everest, but they actually crossed the mountain with only a hundred feet to spare! Well done! Three cheers for them all—but don't let us forget Lady Houston who financed the expedition!

"THE TYRANT OF ST. FRANK'S!"

Have you met the cheery chums of St. Frank's? If you have, meet them again. If not, get to know them in the sensational long complete story that appears in to-day's super number of the "Nelson Lee Library." Nipper and his fellow Remorites are up against a tyrant Housemaster, who tries to rule them with a rod of iron. They are punished unjustly, cricket is banned, and nearly all their freedom is taken away. But the St. Frank's fellows are not standing it much longer, for already they are on the point of rebellion! You'll thoroughly enjoy this magnificent yarn, and I recommend you to read it. Try it to-day.

IN 1937!

If present plans are carried out, visitors to the great Exhibition in Paris in 1937 will be able to drive their cars up a "hill" three and a half miles long and 1,640 feet high! The "hill" will be a huge concrete tower, with a spiral roadway running round the outside of it, and up this the cars will be driven. In order to obviate any danger from falling brakes on the downward journey, descent will be made on a kind of mono-rail to which the car will be attached. The driver will still have to steer his car, but the speed will be regulated by the mono-rail. The top of the tower will be 2,300 feet high, and as it is to be built on Mount Valerien, which is 500 feet above Paris, the complete tower will top the city by 2,800 feet.

YOUR EDITOR.

THE RIVAL SCHOOLS!

(Continued from page 16.)

"I am not going yet. I am sorry about the ink. I borrowed some, as I had run out of it, and I must have forgotten to replace the cork."

"You ass!" growled Manners. "I have a great mind to pour the rest of the ink down your silly neck!"

"Are you going, Skimmy?" demanded Lowther, picking up a round ebony ruler.

"Certainly not, Lowther! I have been waiting for you to come in, to speak to you upon an important subject. There is a great deal of feeling rife upon the subject of the Grammar School—"

"Go and talk to Blake about it!"

"I have done so, and he has repulsed me quite rudely! I have been thinking of a splendid idea for stopping this warfare between the two schools, for good and all, at a single blow," said Skimpole.

"Oh dear! Can't you go and tell Reilly or Glyn?"

"I want to tell you—"

"If you're under the absolute necessity of telling somebody, go and shout it out of your study window! We're busy!"

"My idea is this," said Skimpole, unheeding. "You are aware that I have been carrying on a great deal of Deterministic propaganda work at St. Jim's. Suppose we were to extend this to the Grammar School—"

"Eh?"

"That is my great idea—to propagate Determinism among the Grammar School youths," said the learned member of the Shell. "They would then want to live in concord with everybody, as all sincere Determinists do. I have mapped out a course of lectures, each occupying about two hours, and I want you fellows to make some arrangements by which I can deliver them to the Grammarians. That is all you have to do. I shall charge nothing for my time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to laugh at," said the brainy man of the Shell, looking puzzled. "If you can suggest any improvement in the scheme, I shall be glad to— Ow! Ow! What are you up to?"

"I am poking you with a ruler!" said Monty Lowther, jabbing away at Skimpole's bony person. "I am going to keep it up till you bunk!"

"I have not yet—ow!—explained—wow!—my—idea—Oocoh!"

"Keep it up!" said Lowther. "Don't mind me!"

"Ow! I— Oh, oh! Really—wow!—I must say—Groooh! I think I may as well go, Merry, as Lowther is— Ow! Wow!"

And Skimpole went.

Lowther grinned and flung down the ruler, and the Terrible Three settled down to their prep. But that prep was fated to be interrupted. Like many youths who leave their work till the last possible moment, the chums of the Shell found that the fates conspired to prevent them from getting it done.

About five minutes later there was a tap at the door, and it opened. Four faces looked in, and, as they belonged to the chums of Study No. 6, it was a surprising fact that they were all very quiet and unusually civil. Lowther uttered an exclamation of annoyance.

"More duffers!"

D'Arcy turned a gleaming monocle upon him.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"We're busy!" said Tom Merry. "Do cut!"

"We've come to speak to you," said Jack Blake. "We've been turning it over in our minds, and we've come to the conclusion—"

"Thank goodness! Good-bye!"

"We've come to the conclusion that if you've really got an idea for getting even with the Grammarians, we'll help you to carry it out!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Can't you see we're busy?"

"But I suppose you want us to back you up?" said Jack Blake, growing rather excited. "When we've taken the trouble to come to you—"

"Yaas, wathah! Aftah turnin' the mattah ovah in our minds for a considerable time—"

"Leave it to me, Gussy! You see, Tom Merry—"

"Weally, Blake, I considah that I could put it bettah to Tom Mewwy! You see, Tom Mewwy—"

"I can see four silly asses," said Tom Merry cheerfully, "and they're interrupting my prep. Good-bye!"

"Look here!"

"We're doing our prep. Good-bye!"

"Your prep ought to have been done long ago, ours is."

"Yaas, wathah! Weally, you Shell fellows ought to do your prep in the pwesence of a mastah, like the Third Form fags!"

"Will you travel along?"

"What about the idea? I suppose you were only gassing!" demanded Blake.

"Not a bit of it!"

"Then explain it, and if it's good, we'll back you up!"

"I'm busy! I'll explain it to-morrow, if you like—meeting in the woodshed at 12.30 p.m.," said Tom Merry. "Now bunk!"

"Yah! I suppose it was all wind!"

"You can suppose what you like, my son, so long as you do your supposing in your own study! Cut!"

The chums of Study No. 6 glared, and looked greatly inclined to rush the Terrible Three. But they restrained themselves, and withdrew.

Arthur Augustus stopped in the doorway to hurl back his opinion of Tom Merry & Co.

"I weward you as thwee wottahs!" he said, jamming his eyeglass into his eye, and bestowing a withering glare upon the juniors. "I considah that you have failed to tweek us with wopah respect—"

"Good-bye!"

D'Arcy tried to find words to express his feelings, but they would not come; and in the midst of his mental struggle Lowther kicked the door shut, and he jumped out of the way just in time.

Tom Merry grunted expressively as he returned to his work.

"I wonder if we shall ever get this done?" he said.

"Doesn't look like it!" growled Lowther. "It all comes of leaving it till the last minute."

"Why, it was your idea to stay in the gym, and—"

"Oh, don't begin arguing when we're in a hurry!"

"Yes," said Tom Merry indignantly; "but—"

Monty Lowther leaned back in his chair with an air of martyr-like resignation.

"Oh, go on!" he said. "If you want to talk, I'll let the work stand over, and risk Linton to-morrow morning."

Tom Merry snorted, and turned to his books again. There was silence in the study for about ten minutes, and then there was a knock on the door.

Monty Lowther sniffed savagely.

"Don't come in!" he called out.

But, in spite of that inhospitable remark, three juniors entered cheerfully. They were, of course, Figgins & Co. from the New House. They grinned amiably at the Terrible Three, who were looking terribly worried.

"Hallo!" said Figgins. "We've come to give you a look in—"

"Could you manage to make it a look out instead?"

"Busy?" asked Figgins, in nowise disturbed.

"Yes, awfully. Good-bye!"

"Never mind; leave it over."

"We can't; it's the prep for to-morrow morning."

"It ought to have been done before," said Kerr. "It will only serve you right to get a wiggling. We've come over—"

"Good-bye!"

"We're willing to hear that wheeze you were jawing about the other day," said Figgins. "If there's anything in it, we'll back you up."

"Meeting in the woodshed 12.30 to-morrow," said Tom Merry, speaking very rapidly. "Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" said Manners and Lowther.

Figgins & Co. stared at them, and then at each other, and grinned.

"Oh, all sereno!" said Figgins. "We'll come!"

They moved to the door. Fatty Wynn gave a look round the study, as if half expecting to see something to eat, and then followed his comrades out. Tom Merry politely closed the door after them.

"Just our luck!" he said. "Thank goodness they've gone quietly! A House row now would have messed up our work nicely."

Exactly three minutes had elapsed when the study door opened again, and the cheery, ruddy face of Reilly, the boy from Belfast, looked in.

Lowther picked up the ink-bottle.

"Faith, and I thought I'd find ye at home," said Reilly.

"I hear ye've got a wheeze against the Grammarians, and I want to say— Groooh!"

The ink flew in a stream, and it caught the astounded Irish junior under the chin. He stared dazedly at Lowther.

"Holy smoke! Why, and what—who—"

Lowther brandished the ink-bottle.

"Off with you!"

"Phwat? He's mad—mad—"

Lowther hurled the bottle, taking care not to let it go.

within a yard of the Irish junior, and it smashed to pieces on the door.

Reilly made one bound out of the study.

"Ochone! He's mad! Mad as a hatter!"

Monty Lowther sat down with a grin.

"Got rid of him jolly quick!" he remarked. "Hear him? He's spreading the news that there's a lunatic here—"

"So there is," said Manners.

"Br-r-r! We shan't be disturbed again."

But Lowther was not quite right. Reilly, in great alarm, was relating his experience to a startled crowd in the passage. The Irish junior was greatly excited, and fully convinced that Lowther had suddenly taken leave of his senses. Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, came along in time to hear his excited words, and in some surprise he determined to look into Tom Merry's study and see whether anything was the matter there. Reilly called after him anxiously as he went to the door:

"Sure, he's dangerous, Kildare! Take care of yerself!"

Kildare laughed, and tapped on the door. Head of the Sixth as he was, Kildare always tapped even at a junior's door before entering. On the present occasion, however, it had an unfortunate result. For the chums of the Shell naturally supposed that it was another junior who was bent upon interrupting their work, and already they were so far behind that it was impossible to get finished before bed-time.

Lowther rose angrily, and ran to the door. Instead of saying "Come in!" he dashed out to wreak blind wrath upon the interrupter. Kildare staggered back from the impact, but the next moment he grasped Monty by the collar and shook him.

"Ooooooh!" gasped Lowther, finding himself unexpectedly in the grasp of a senior. "Ow! Ooooooh! Loggo!"

Kildare dragged him into the study.

"What does this mean?" he demanded. "What do you mean by rushing out at me like a madman?"

"Kildare!"

Lowther was too dismayed to do more than gasp out the captain's name. Kildare shook him again, and he stuttered breathlessly instead of explaining.

"Will you explain, you young duffer?"

"I-o-c-c-c-cant—while—you're—"

Kildare gave Lowther a twist that laid him face downwards upon the table. Then the senior's heavy hand rose and fell, and the dust rose from Lowther's garments. He wriggled spasmodically, and the table jerked and jolted. Tom Merry and Manners were shouting with laughter now, but Lowther did not feel like laughing.

Three times the open hand of the school captain smote him with a crack like a pistol-shot, and then Kildare left him wriggling.

"There!" he exclaimed. "Now you'll have more sense than to pretend to be mad again, I hope."

And he strode from the study.

Lowther twisted over, and all the juniors' work that was not already on the floor with the spilt ink, went there then.

Monty gasped for breath.

Tom Merry and Manners roared.

"I—I can't see anything to laugh at!" gasped Lowther. "Ow! I'm hurt! And—and look at our prep!"

He squirmed off the table.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"Oh, shut up! If anybody else comes to this study—"

"Ha, ha, ha! You'd better look before you leap next time!"

But there were, fortunately, no more interruptions. The work was done—after a fashion—but there were strained relations between the Terrible Three and their Form master the following morning.

CHAPTER 12.

The Meeting!

TOM MERRY wore a smile that morning. He had received fifty lines from Mr. Linton, but that did not weigh on his mind.

He was thinking of his wheeze. That wheeze had been kept back till the other fellows had tried their hand at tackling the Grammar School and had failed. Tom Merry was in no hurry. He was quite content to wait, knowing that when he was wanted he would be asked for. Now the other fellows had asked for him, and the time had come.

The idea he had in his mind was—in his own opinion, at least—a really ripping one. It was at least a startling one, and he chuckled as he imagined how the juniors of St. Jim's would gasp to hear it.

It was time, however, that something was done. With Wally and the fags of the Third taking the matter up, it behoved the Middle School to hustle. The seniors, of

course, were of too lofty a dignity to take any interest in the rivalry of the two schools—at least, so they said. At all events, active warfare was left to the juniors. But the Upper Form fellows did not fail to make sly jokes about the defeats the Shell and the Fourth Form sustained at the hands of the Grammarians. Lefevre of the Fifth was heard to say that such matters had better be left to the fags, as the Fourth Form of the Shell were no good.

His saying was repeated in the Third Form quarters with enthusiasm. And the Fourth Form very nearly made up their minds to wreck Lefevre's study for saying it.

But Tom Merry's time had come. He was asked to explain his idea, and was offered the backing-up of his rivals if it was a good one. And Tom Merry knew it was a good one, so he had no doubts.

After morning school he strolled along to the woodshed—the appointed place of meeting, with Manners and Lowther. A great many other fellows followed.

The news of the meeting had spread through the Lower Forms, and the Fourth and the Shell had resolved to turn up en masse.

The Third Form had heard something of it, and they intended to come, too, but the fiat had gone forth that no fags were to be admitted. Their discretion could not be trusted, and they were to be barred from the meeting in the woodshed.

Tom Merry entered the shed, and found a crowd already there. The chums of Study No. 6 had come along as soon as they were dismissed from their class-room, and Figgins & Co. had come in with them.

The Terrible Three were greeted with a loud buzz. There was a scuffle at the door as Wally strove to force his way in, with Jameson and Dudley and Curly Gibson of the Third backing him up.

"No admittance for fags!" called out Lowther. "Sheer off!"

"Rats to you!"

"Don't let those kids in there!"

"Bosh! We're coming in!"

But Lowther and Figgins and Blake and Reilly formed up at the door, and the Third-Formers were pushed out. They returned to the attack, and tried to rush the juniors, but they did not succeed. They were out once more—on their backs this time. Then they rose and dusted themselves, and left off attacking.

But Wally, if he was not equal to his adversaries in physical force, was at "slanging." He took up his stand outside the door of the woodshed, and greeted all the fellows that came along with remarks that were personal and stinging.

Twice or thrice he was chased away by indignant Fourth-Formers, and then he made his observations from a safe distance until it was prudent to draw near again.

They let him alone at last, and pretended to ignore him.

"Walk up, gentlemen!" said Wally, as Pratt and French of the New House drew nigh. "This is the monkey-house, and there is no charge for admission to any members of the monkey tribe, so you can go in free!"

French made a dash at him, and Wally retreated. Then the New House juniors went in, and Wally sent a piercing catcall after them.

"Young wascal!" said D'Arey, looking out of the woodshed. "Wally, I regard you as a young beast!"

"Is that you, Gus? Get your hair cut!"

"I refuse to do anything of the sort. I regard you as a young wottah, and if you do not cease your personal remarks I shall give you a fearful thwashin'!"

"Come on, then!"

"Bai Jove! I shall have to thwash that young wascal! Hold my hat, Blake, doah boy!"

Blake held Arthur Augustus instead.

"You stay where you are," he said. "This is a junior meeting, not a dog-fight! You stay here!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Stand where you are, kid. The meeting's just beginning!"

"Upon reflection, I will chastise Wally aftah the meetin'. You see—"

"Exactly. Fasten the door, you chaps, or those fags will be poking their heads in and interrupting!"

Figgins bolted the door. The woodshed was an extensive place, and the juniors had taken the liberty of clearing back all the lumber that Taggles, the school porter, kept there. But the place was pretty well crowded. Tom Merry had mounted upon a wheelbarrow as upon a rostrum, and from this coign of vantage he surveyed the meeting.

"Gentlemen—"

Crash!

It was a ferocious attack upon the door. The juniors

looked round wrathfully, but Monty Lowther, chairman of the meeting, called them to order.

"The meeting is requested to take no notice of the noise made by young hooligans outside," said Lowther. "Get on with the washing, Tommy!"

"Hear, hear!"

Crash! Bump! Bang!

The meeting, as requested, took no notice of the noise. And it was heard no more. The fags did not want the trouble of bumping a stool at the door unless it had the effect of making Tom Merry & Co. open it.

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "this meeting has been called—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Of course, it's been called here!" said Monty Lowther, who never could resist the temptation to pun, in season or out of season.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep your idiotic puns for Tom Merry's study, then!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Order!" roared the chairman. "The next ass who laughs will be turned out! Order for Tom Merry's speech!"

"Gentlemen, this meeting has been called—"

"Faith, and we know that!"

"Silence in court—in the woodshed, I mean! Shut up, Reilly! This meeting has been called to discuss the plan of campaign against our ancient and hereditary enemy, the Rylcombe Grammar School."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hold on!"

"Don't interrupt!"

"Hold on! There's a chief among us taking notes!" exclaimed Digby. "Look there!"

He pointed to the window. It was open, and at the



"Off with you!" yelled Lowther, brandishing the ink bottle. "Phwat!" stammered Reilly. "He's mad—mad—!" The ink-bottle flew, but Lowther aimed well wide of the Irish junior, and the bottle smashed to pieces against the door.

Figgins jumped up from the bundle of faggots he was sitting on, and raised his hand.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "Before the honourable speaker proceeds I want to speak a word to the honourable chairman."

"Go it, Figgins!"

"I want the honourable chairman to pronounce whether it is in order for the proceedings to be interrupted by idiotic puns!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther looked cross. He was chairman, and he didn't want to have to decide that question.

"Oh, ring off!" he grunted.

"I demand an answer from the honourable chairman!"

"Answer! Answer!"

"Hear, hear!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"The chairman is bound to answer that question," he said.

"No," said Lowther, with a wry face, "it is not in order."

opening appeared the cheerful face of D'Arcy minor. Wally was grinning, and drinking in every word.

There was a roar at once.

"Turn him out!"

A dozen juniors scrambled towards the window. Wally disappeared promptly, and from a distance hurled remarks at the wrathful faces in the window. The window was closed and fastened, and Wally's remarks died away.

The chief of the Third Form growled.

"The cheek!" he said. "They're going to keep us out—keep us out of the meeting! The cheek of it, you know!"

"Yes, rather!" said Jameson. "We could manage the matter better than they could, I fancy. They're jealous of us, I suppose. But we're done in now! We can't hear a word!"

Wally looked very determined.

"Not half!" he said. "I haven't been a Boy Scout for nothing. As they shut us out of the meeting, we are justified in looking on them as enemies, and discovering their giddy plans, ain't we?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Well, I'm going to do it. There's the loft over the woodshed—"

"Good egg! I didn't think of that!"

"I think of these things," said Wally. "We'll get a ladder, and I can get in at the loft window without being seen by those rotters. There's a trapdoor into the loft from underneath, and without opening it I can hear all that they say in the shed."

"Ripping! I'll come with you!"

"No, you won't! You'd make a row, and give us away. I'll go alone, but you chaps can help me get in."

"Oh, all right, then!"

And Wally carried out his scheme with the promptness which made him so successful as a captain of fags. Meanwhile, the meeting was proceeding, and the juniors were far too busy to have any time to think of what the fags might be doing.

CHAPTER 13.

An Amazing Scheme!

TOM MERRY waited till order was restored, after the fastening of the window. The fags did not reappear, and out of sight was out of mind in this case.

The juniors gathered eagerly round the hero of the Shell.

"Go ahead, old son!" said Blake. "We're giving you a chance. If there's anything in the wheeze we'll back you up."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But for goodness' sake get to business!" urged Figgins.

"How can I get to business with so many interruptions?"

"Oh, get on with the washing!" said Kerr.

"Look here, Kerr—"

"I appeal to the chairman whether it is in order for the speaker to argue."

"No, it isn't," said Monty Lowther. "Go ahead, Tommy, and don't leave off to answer these New House wasters."

"New House—what? Look here—"

"We'll jolly well—"

"Order! Shut up!"

"Ordah—ordah, deah boys!"

"Very well, if the meeting has done kicking up a row I'll go ahead. Gentlemen, I have a wheeze for giving the

Grammar School juniors the kybosh, and knocking them into the middle of the next century."

"Hear, hear!"

"I have been requested to explain this wheeze. The requests have come from both Houses, and I am assured of general support in case this wheeze is deemed a good one, and likely to effect its purpose—that of kyboshing the Grammarians!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, I am going to explain—"

"Go it!"

"We have had many encounters with our ancient and hereditary foes in the open field, but though we have undoubtedly had the balance of victories on our side, we must admit that of late the fortune of war has been against us. Now my idea is to carry the war into Africa."

"My hat!" said Figgins. "What on earth have you got to do in Africa? Are you going abroad again?"

"Don't be funny, Figgins! This is a term meaning to carry the war into the enemy's country."

"Thanks very much! Go ahead!"

"We are going to carry the war into Africa," said Tom Merry, with a severe glance at Figgins—"right into the Grammar School."

"Hear, hear!"

"Excuse me a moment, Mr. Chairman!" said Figgins. "I protest against this being considered a new idea. We've been in the enemy's country before, and played a game of footer on their ground. That's what gave Frank Monk the idea of raiding our cricket field here. It was a New House wheeze."

"Yes, rather!"

"The honourable gentleman is making an honourable mistake," said Tom Merry politely. "Without bragging, I think I may say that no School House fellow would demean himself by borrowing any mouldy old wheeze from the New House."

"Certainly not!" said Herries; and the School House crowd cheered.

"My idea is quite different from Figg's. I propose to carry the raid into the Grammar School itself—into the House, the class-rooms, and the dormitories."

"Phew!"

"Talk sense!"

"Rats!"

"Gentlemen—"

"I move that the meeting absconds—I mean adjourns," said Figgins. "The honourable speaker is off his honourable rocker, and it's no good staying here to hear him talk honourable piffle."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Order!" roared Lowther. "Order!"

"Yaas, wathah! Give the fellow a chance, you know!"

Tom Merry waited patiently for silence. As the fellows were curious to know what he really had to suggest, silence was at last restored.

"My idea is to get at the Grammarians in their own stronghold, and knock them into a cocked hat there!" said Tom Merry. "I do not propose marching on the Grammar School, and capturing it by force of arms and burning it to the ground."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go hon!"

"No! My idea is to use a stratagem, and it is in that that my scheme consists. I propose to enter the Grammar School in disguise."

"Phew!"

"Through my old governess, Miss Fawcett, I can get a few days' holiday. I propose to adopt some simple disguise, and in that I should have the assistance of Kerr, whom you all know as the shining light of our Amateur Dramatic Society."

"Hear, hear!"

Kerr bowed. The fellows listened with redoubled attention as Tom Merry proceeded. The scheme might be a wild one, but it was certainly novel.

"In some disguise, and under a new name, I shall present myself at the Grammar School as a new boy."

"What!"

"My only hat!"

"And take my place there," said Tom Merry calmly. "During a couple of days in the Grammar School, I leave you to imagine what a high old time I can give the Grammarians, to say nothing of letting in raiders after dark."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

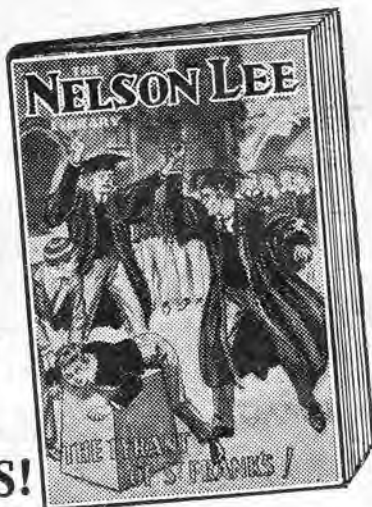
"I can put the Grammarians through it in a way that will make them sit up, and when I've finished I think they will have to acknowledge themselves done."

"Unless they spot you," said Blake, "then you'll be the one that'll get done—done brown!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'm willing to take the risk of that. What do you fellows think of the idea?"

THE TYRANT OF ST. FRANK'S!



A tyrant of the worst type—such is the new Housemaster of St. Frank's. Under his tyrannical rule the juniors suffer many injustices. Cricket is banned, extra lessons are ordered, and drastic punishment is meted out for the most trivial offences. But not unnaturally there are murmurings of rebellion in the Remove! Here is a sensational, unusual school story, that is much too thrilling to be missed. It appears in to-day's grand number of

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"You'd never have the nerve," declared Figgins.
 "I undertake to find the nerve. The question is, whether this meeting approves of the wheeze, and whether you all agree to back me up."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hurrah!"

"Gentlemen, one moment!" said Figgins. "We agree that it is a ripping idea, though the perpetrator will get slaughtered if the Grammar School cads spot him. But Tom Merry can't be allowed to go alone."

"Bai Jove, you're wight, Figgins! I had bettah go with him—"

"You? Rats!"

"Weally, Figgins, what is wequiahed is a fellow of tact and judgment to back up Tom Mewwy, and—"

"Oh, go and eat coke! I—"

"I refuse to do anything of the sort. I could disguise myself wippingly, and—"

"You couldn't disguise your beautiful accent," grinned Blake. "You ring off, Gussy. Of course, I am the proper person to go with Tom Merry."

"Faith, and it's off the thrack ye are! I'm the bhoys—"

"Come, don't talk rot, all of you!" said Figgins. "Of course—"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Look here!"

"Order!" bawled the chairman. "It must be left to Tom Merry to decide whether he takes anybody with him, and whom the party is."

"Vewy good! Of course, Tom Mewwy will select me!"

"Of course he won't!"

"Weally, Pwatt—"

"Gentlemen, on second thoughts, I think it would be advisable for me to take a chap with me. Two heads are better than one. And I think it would be only fair to take a New House fellow."

"Right-ho!" shouted the New House.

"I should be glad to select Figgins, but I think Figgy's chivvy is a bit too well known to the Grammar School cads; and, besides, his long legs and big feet would give him away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You let my feet alone—"

"My dear chap, I wouldn't touch 'em. But I think the choice should fall upon a member of Figgins & Co., as leaders of the little House—"

"You mean the Cock House at St. Jim's?"

"I don't mean anything of the sort. I mean that rotten old casual ward."

"Order—order!"

"Withdraw! Yah!"

"Very well, gentlemen. I withdraw the casual ward," said Tom Merry gracefully. "To resume, Figgins is too long and Wynn too fat to escape undetected, so I shall select Kerr. Kerr is a jolly good actor, and he will be useful."

"Bravo!"

"Good old Scottie!"

"Right you are!" said Figgins immediately. "I'd just as soon that Kerr went, and I really think that he'll do as well as I could. So long as there's a New House chap there it will be all right."

"I'll come with pleasure," said Kerr modestly.

"Kerr's the man," continued Tom Merry. "He's always explaining to us that a Scotsman is required wherever there's any brainwork to be done, so this is just the job for him."

"That's right," said Kerr. "You can cackle, but that's the solid truth. We provide you with Prime Ministers and Leaders of the Opposition. We build your railways and edit your newspapers and run your banks. Wherever you find a Scotsman, you find him at the top. A Scotsman can—"

"Ring off!"

"No, he can't," said Fatty Wynn. "That's the one thing he can't do."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It being settled that the affair couldn't be managed without a Scotsman, Kerr is the unspeakable Scot I select," said Tom Merry, amid laughter. "The matter is now settled, except for details; but keep it dark. If the Third Form get hold of it, they might jaw it outside the gates, and the Grammar School cads might get hold of it; then all the fat would be in the fire."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But when is the wheeze to be carried out?" demanded Jack Blake.

"This week. I know that Dr. Monk is away, and is not returning till next week. You see, now's the chance, while the headmaster of the Grammar School is away. The second master, Mr. Slinger, is in charge, and he will naturally think Dr. Monk knows all about it when two new boys present themselves at the school."

"Bai Jove, you will want some nerve, Tom Mewwy!"

"That's all right."

"Pewwaps, on reflection, you will recognise the undoubted fact that I ought to come—"

"If I do I'll let you know, Gussy. Gentlemen, the meeting is at an end. Further details will be settled in private."

And as the dinner-bell was sounding the meeting willingly broke up.

After the excited juniors had cleared out of the woodshed the trapdoor of the loft above opened, and a grinning face appeared. It belonged to Wally. The scamp of the Third Form was in possession of the whole of Tom Merry's great idea!

CHAPTER 14.

A Question of Disguise!

THE scheme propounded by Tom Merry at the mass meeting in the woodshed was discussed in all its bearings by the juniors of St. Jim's.

The more they thought of it, the more harum-scarum it appeared to some of them, and the more attractive to others.

Some were of the opinion that the hero of the Shell would never have nerve enough to carry it out; others declared that he would be detected the moment he presented himself at the Grammar School; but some, whose faith was great, regarded it as the best wheeze that had ever been devised against the enemy, and were ready to back Tom Merry up, through thick and thin. And all agreed that it would be an interesting experiment.

If Tom Merry came home defeated and licked, the laugh would be up against him; but if he triumphed, the triumph would be great. As for wanting nerve, neither Tom Merry, nor Kerr showed any sign of that as the time drew nearer.

The first step was to get leave for a few days. That was not difficult for Tom Merry. He had already interested his governess in the matter. Miss Priscilla Fawcett, to whom Tom Merry was still as dear as when she had brought him home from India a baby, would have done anything for her ward.

Tom did not, of course, confide the fact to her. Miss Fawcett would hardly have understood the warfare that raged between the two schools. He had simply told her that he wanted a few days' holiday to go to stay with some acquaintances—which was the exact truth—and leave to take a friend with him. He asked her to use her influence with the Head of St. Jim's, and Miss Fawcett willingly did so.

And as Miss Fawcett was a personal acquaintance of Dr. Holmes, and a liberal subscriber to various charities in connection with the school, and a generous donor to the chapel restoration fund, the Head was not likely to disoblige her without good reason.

As a matter of fact, Tom Merry stood so well in his class

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"ST. JIM'S FOR EVER!"



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that his Form master had no objection to raise, and that was sufficient for the Head.

The required permission was given, and Tom Merry and Kerr were free to leave St. Jim's on Wednesday, and not to return until the following Saturday unless they liked.

Tom Merry was called into the Head's study and told that he had leave, and he hurried away to communicate the good news to his chums.

Monty Lowther and Manners cheered when they heard it, and so did the chums of Study No. 6. Although they were left out of the scheme, they were keenly interested in its success.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy still thought that his presence was necessary to make the thing really go; but, although nobody else thought so, he was quite placable about it. He only asked them not to blame him if the scheme fell through, and they promised that they wouldn't.

Figgins & Co. were equally delighted. The first step had been taken successfully; it now remained to carry out the daring scheme.

The question of disguises was a difficult one. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy suggested false beards in a council held in Study No. 6, and was immediately howled down. He put up his eyeglass, and surveyed the meeting calmly while they howled, and resumed his suggestions as soon as silence was restored.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I wegard a false beard as a wippin' ideah," he said. "I weally considah that a false beard would completely altah the appearence of your face, and they always weah false beards in detective stowies."

"Ye-es; but this isn't a detective story," said Tom Merry, laughing. "I'll wear as many false beards as you like when I start in life as Sexton Blake the Second; but just now—"

"I wathah think a false beard would make Kerr look absolutely different."

"You shrieking ass—" began Blake.

"I wufese to be alluded to as a shwiekin' ass!"

"What would you think of a fellow in a beard joining the Fourth Form?" yelled Blake.

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

"I vote that Gussy is gagged and put under the table," said Monty Lowther; "then we can get to business."

"I should uttaly wufese to be gagged."

"Oh, give us a rest!"

"I wufese to give you a west, Digby. I—"

"We shan't be able to wear any elaborate disguise," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "You see—"

"You are intewruptin' me, Tom Mewwy."

"Yes, I know that, Gussy. You see, we shall have to wash and eat and sleep with the Grammar School cads, and we can't have anything elaborate. Besides, elaborate disguises are only possible in romances. The idea is to make some slight change—colouring the nose and eyebrows, and so on, and perhaps staining the cheeks, wearing the hair a different way, and wearing different clothes, and a different coloured tie, and speaking in a different voice."

"That's so," agreed Kerr. "You know, my father's an actor, and I've heard him say that a good disguise consists in strict attention to details. Nobody but Gussy, of course, would think of a kid of fifteen wearing a beard."

"Weally, Kerr—"

"I've got enough paint and props to get us up in good style, and I'm pretty certain we can take in the Grammar School cads," went on Kerr; "but it won't do to adopt disguises here. We can think it out, but we shall have to be far enough away from St. Jim's before we put anything on, in case we are spotted. If the Head guessed what we wanted that holiday for, I rather think he would rescind it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We're leaving on Wednesday, so the rest of you fellows could come along, if you liked, as it's a half-holiday, and we could all meet somewhere away from the school and fix the thing up."

"That's a good idea," said Figgins; "and, meanwhile, a telegram ought to be sent to the Grammar School, announcing that the two new boys are coming."

"And from London."

"That's all wight. I can get somebody in my governah's house to send the wire," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You can leave that to me."

"Good!"

"The wire will be sent all wight. As it is now the last moment for deciding, you had better think out wethah you will say in the wiah that three new fellows are comin' to the Gwammah School, and—"

"Rats!"

"I'm givin' you a last chance—"

"Thanks! We don't want it."

"Then don't blame me if it all falls through."

"We won't! What are you wrinkling your chivvy for, Kerr? Are you thinking out something specially brilliant, or getting hungry?"

"I'm getting hungry," remarked Fatty Wynn. "There's

something in the weather at this time of the year that makes me awfully peckish."

"Oh, we know you're hungry—that's no news."

"I've got a good idea," said Kerr, "a good wheeze for the disguise! You remember that chap Bunter we saw with the Greyfriars cricket team that played us?"

"Bunter! Yes—what about him?"

"I was thinking of his spectacles. When he had them on and when he had them off he looked a different chap. Then there's Skimmy, too—it's the same with him. It's marvellous how a pair of spectacles alters the look of a face—especially the big, heavy kind. If Tom Merry and I go as chaps in spectacles—"

"Bai Jove, that's a good ideah!"

"Here, draw a line!" cried Tom Merry, in alarm. "I can't wear glasses! You can't see through them unless your eyes are rocky!"

"Ass!" said Kerr. "Of course, you can have 'em made with plain glass, and then you see as well as if you weren't wearing them!"

"H'm!" said Tom Merry. "I suppose I can wear 'em. Let's have Skimmy in and try his glasses on, and see how they look."

"Call Skimmy in, somebody!"

Digby went to look for Skimpole, and brought him to the study. Skimpole was busily engaged upon the four-hundred-and-fiftieth chapter of his wonderful book on Determinism, but he willingly left it to come to Study No. 6. Digby simply told him they wanted him, and Skimpole, whose ideas naturally ran on his own hobbies, jumped to the conclusion that he was wanted to give information on Determinist subjects—information which he often offered without finding any takers.

"I will come with pleasure, Digby," he said. "Wait a moment while I get my volume of Professor von Krakpate's wonderful works on—"

"Never mind that—come on!"

And Skimpole was dragged off to Study No. 6 minus the great volume.

He found the study full of juniors all waiting for him.

"Here he is!"

"Shove him in!"

"You need not shove me," said Skimpole mildly. "I shall be very pleased to enter without any rough impetus being applied to my person. I am very glad you fellows have sent for me, and I shall be very glad indeed to help you in this matter."

"Good old Skimmy!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard Skimmy as an obligin' sort of an ass, you know!"

"Not at all. It is my duty to help my brethren in all things in my power," said Skimpole benevolently. "Will you commence with the lines laid down by Professor von Krakpate—"

"Eh?"

"Or shall I instil into your as yet untrained and ignorant minds the first principles of—"

"He's raving!"

"I am not raving, Manners, I assure you. Take the question of—"

"Ring off!"

"Bai Jove, yaas! We should take it as a special favah if you would wing off, denh boy!"

"A sincere Determinist never rings off. Suppose—"

Tom Merry seized Skimpole by the back of the collar, and squashed him into a chair. Lowther relieved him of his spectacles, and the brainy man of the Shell blinked blindly to any fro.

"Really, my friends—"

"Dry up!"

"I understand that you wished me to come here and give you some first-hand information on the subject of Determinism—"

"We didn't! We want to borrow your spectacles to see how Tom Merry's chivvy looks in them."

"Really, Lowther—"

"You needn't talk, Skimmy! Sit in that chair and be quiet—that is all we want."

"Pray take care of my spectacles, Lowther! It is extremely annoying when a foolish and inconsiderate person takes one's glasses, and— Ow!"

"Not so much of your foolish and inconsiderate person!" said Lowther. "Shove them on your boko, Tom!"

"They're too big for me."

"Well, they are bound to be, as your napper is only half as big as Skimmy's. But they will show the effect."

Tom Merry put the glasses on. They were strong glasses, and they made him blink and screw his forehead, and the faces and forms of his chums were strangely distorted to his view.

The glasses altered his aspect greatly.

He was still Tom Merry, but a very different looking

(Continued on page 28.)

Tom Merry, and it was clear that, with one or two touches added, a pair of spectacles would render his face unrecognisable to his nearest relative.

"That's all right!" said Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Now you try them, Kerr."

Kerr put on the spectacles, and the difference in his aspect was even greater than in the case of Tom Merry.

"Ripping!" said Digby. "They make him look a bit higher, but I don't suppose that will matter. The Grammarians are not particular, judging by their own chivvies!"

"Besides, he can't go very far in that direction," remarked Lowther. "Nature gave him a good start!"

"Weally, Lowthah, I wegard that wemark as personal—as hintin' that our friend Kerr is wemarkably lackin' in good looks. Now I——"

"Here's your glasses, Skimmy."

"Now I wegard Kerr as——"

"Ring off, old chap! Kerr knows what his chivvy is like!"

"You don't know what yours is like," said Kerr, "or you'd bury it!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I wegard that as wathah funnay!"

"Order! Personalities are barred!" said Tom Merry.

"I'm surprised at you, Gussy! Now——"

"At me!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Order! You can bunk, Skimmy! We don't want any information, thank you! Good-bye!"

"Really, Lowther——"

"Yaas, weally, Lowthah, and weally, Tom Mewwy, I insist——"

"Order, order!"

"I refuse to ordah—I mean——"

"What you mean is not in order. Silence!"

"Shut up!"

"I absolutely wefuse to shut up till this mattah is satisfactorily settled. Tom Mewwy has accused me of makin' personal wemarks, when it was Lowthah——"

"You're only making matters worse," said Tom Merry gravely. "You had better shut up, D'Arcy. This language——"

"Language! What language?"

"You had better go and lie down for a bit."

"I wefuse—I uttably wefuse to go and lie down! I considah you a wottah! I wegard you all as a set of gwinnin' dummies!"

"Order!"

"That is my firm opinion—gwinnin' dummies——"

D'Arcy, having delivered his firm opinion, is called upon to shut up. Let's get on with the washing!"

D'Arcy remained loftily silent, and the juniors proceeded to settle the details of the scheme. Tom Merry and Kerr were to present themselves at the Grammar School in spectacles as cousins and new boys, and D'Arcy's final offer of making a third was finally declined. All was arranged, and it remained only to put the amazing scheme to the test.

CHAPTER 15.

In Deep Disguise!

ON Wednesday afternoon a party of juniors, wearing very mysterious and important looks, and some of them carrying bundles, left the gates of St. Jim's.

It was a fine summer's afternoon, and the green-sward seemed to cry aloud for bat and ball, as Digby, in a rather poetical vein, remarked. But it cried in vain.

Cricket was cricket, but the juniors of St. Jim's had something even more important than cricket to think of.

Tom Merry and his friends went out with Figgins & Co. on the best of terms. The unusual harmony between the chiefs of the rival parties at St. Jim's was a suspicious circumstance in itself, and Kildare, the captain of the school, noticed it, and remarked upon it as he met the party at the gates.

The big Sixth-Former stopped, and as he raised his hand they stopped, too.

"What's the little game?" said Kildare.

The juniors looked at one another in astonishment, of course, far too innocent by nature to dream of ever having anything to do with any little game—at least, that was what their looks expressed.

"Weally, Kildare——" began Arthur Augustus.

"I suppose you are going to some quiet corner for a fight?" said the captain of St. Jim's grimly.

"Not at all, Kildare!" said Tom Merry promptly. "We don't look as if we were going to fight, do we?"

"There's no trusting your looks. Still, if you give me your word, that's enough."

"We're not going to fight, Kildare."

"Honest Injun, deah boy!"

"Then, if you're friends for the afternoon, it's some mischief!" said the captain of St. Jim's, laughing. "Mind, I've got an eye on you!"

And he walked on, leaving the juniors greatly relieved at not being questioned more closely.

Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, cast an eagle eye upon them a little later, and beckoned to them to stop.

"What's this?" he demanded.

Lowther looked about him.

"Are you alluding to Gussy? We've been asked before what it is, and——"

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"I am not alluding to Gussy," said Monteith, with a laugh; "I mean, what's the game! Where are you off to?"

"We're going through Rylcombe."

"Oh! Looking for the Grammar School kids at the tuck-shop, I suppose?"

"Oh, no, really, Monteith!"

"Well, I've got an eye on you!"

"My hat!" said Tom Merry, as they walked on. "The prefects seem to be specially wide awake this afternoon. One would think they had a suspicion!"

"Imposs, deah boy; we've kept the secret!"

"Yes, we've kept it dark enough, unless Gussy has let it out," Blake remarked. "We all know Gussy's way of keeping a secret."

"I wefuse to be weferred to in that dispawagin' way——"

"Hallo!" said a cheery voice, as the juniors came in sight of a stile by the wayside. "Going home to the menagerie?"

It was Wally D'Arcy, of course.

Wally, Jameson, and Curly Gibson were seated in a row on the top bar of the stile, and they regarded the passers-by with mocking grins.

Herries turned towards them, with the intention of sweeping them off the stile.

In a second the heroes of the Third were off it, on the safe side, and, with their hands to their noses, were making ungraceful signs of defiance to Herries.

"Oh, come on!" said Figgins. "We've got a lot to do before the new boys arrive at the Grammar School."

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes. Come on!"

Leaving the three fags chuckling, the party hurried on. They turned from the lane by a path that led to a barn in a lonely spot, where they designed to make the change in the appearance of Tom Merry and Kerr.

Having ascertained that the coast was clear, they set to work.

The St. Jim's clothes were taken off, and, the bundles being unrolled, the new clothes prepared for the occasion were donned by the two juniors.

It was a rule at the Grammar School that all boys should be dressed in black, or dark colours, and the "brothers" had selected two suits of a quiet brown cloth, very dark and unnoticeable. It was a complete change from their usual Etons. They donned ties of a different cut and colour, and boots of a different make; and, in short, there was nothing whatever, except their faces, to identify them with Tom Merry and Kerr of St. Jim's.

"Good, so far!" said Jack Blake with satisfaction. "I shouldn't wonder if the bouders pull it off, after all."

"Yaas, wathah! Though I should feel more certain about it if I were with them. It is not yet weally too late——"

"Rats! Hallo! What was that?"

Blake looked round suspiciously. He had heard a slight sound, and he was suspicious of eavesdroppers at once. Any curious fellow from St. Jim's might have followed them.

Blake and Digby and Lowther ran quickly out and looked about the building, but there was no one in sight, with the exception of a solitary ploughman in a distant field. It did not occur to them to climb up and look on the roof of the barn, and they re-entered the building, satisfied that it was all right.

"Nobody about," said Blake.

"I didn't hear anythin', deah boy."

"Rats! Let's get on with the washing. We can't be too careful. If the Grammar School cads got scent of this the whole game would be up."

"Where's the paint, Kerr?"

"Here you are."

"And the glasses?"

"I've got them."

Kerr was an artist at the work. With a few touches his practised hand could effect more than any other of the fellows could have done in hours.

He darkened Tom Merry's eyebrows and his own; he gave a slight tint to the nose, which changed the whole expression

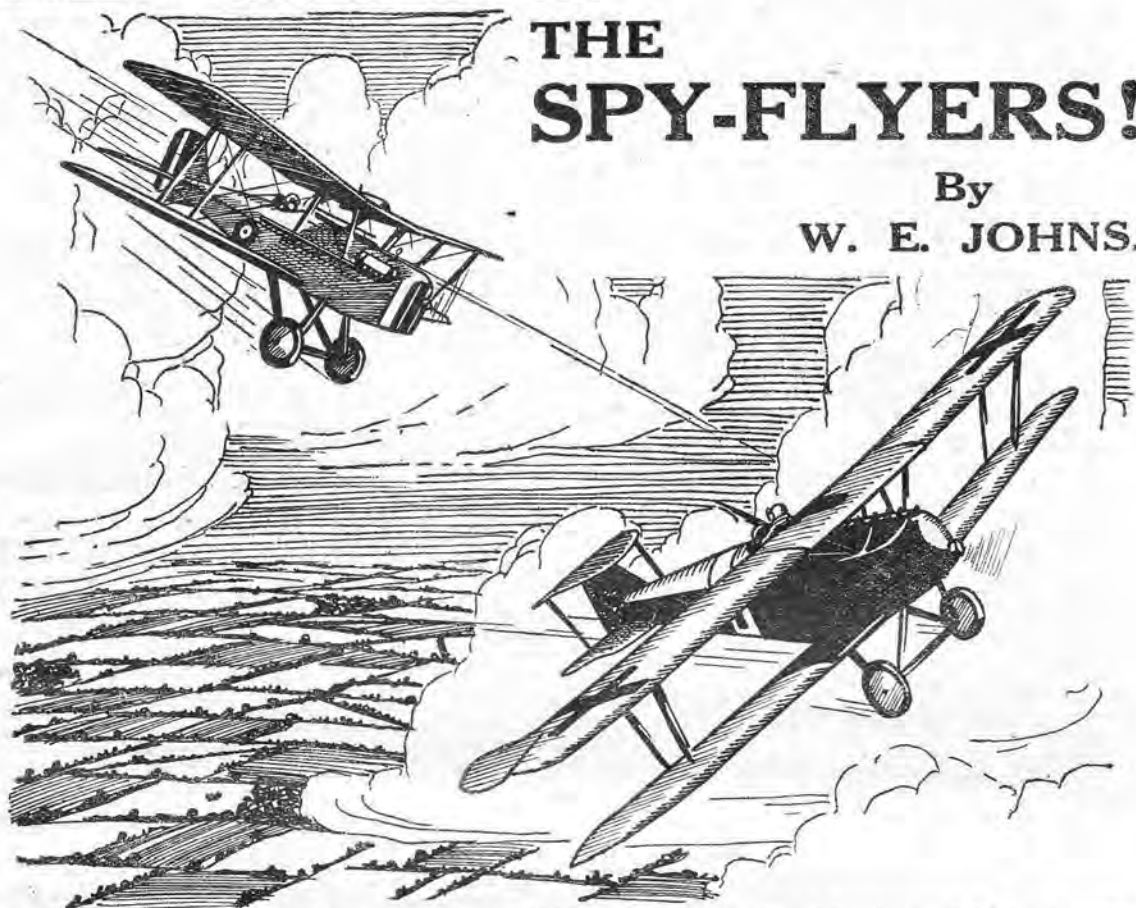
(Continued on page 28.)

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THE SPY-FLYERS!

By
W. E. JOHNS.



REX LOVELL and TONY FOSTER are chosen by MAJOR TREVOR for Secret Service work in the air. Rex and Tony become suspicious of CAPTAIN FAIRFAX, and by a ruse secure a set of his fingerprints. They take the prints to be examined. "These prints," says the sergeant-major in charge, "belong to the most dangerous German spy living!"

Shot Down!

A SLIGHT sound made them all look round. Captain Fairfax was standing in the doorway! For a moment Rex stared unbelievably, and then dashed at the door; but he was too late.

Before he could reach it the door was slammed in his face; there was the sound of a key being turned in the lock outside, and Rex tugged at the handle in impotent rage.

"The window," cried Rex—"the window!"

It was the work of a moment to fling up the sash and slither through the narrow opening. For a moment they all stood hesitating, and then:

"Hark!" cried Rex.

The sound of an aero engine ticking over was borne to their ears from the direction of the hangars, and even as Rex started off towards them the sound became a roar, and he stopped with a gesture of dismay. An SE 5 soared into view above the roof. It made a graceful turn, dipped towards them in a mocking dive, and then zoomed high into the sky.

"There he goes!" said Rex bitterly.

"The Hannoverana—let's go after him in the Hannoverana!" cried Tony.

Rex laughed ruefully.

"Don't be a fool, Tony," he said, "he'll be half-way home before we can start the engine! The bird has flown—but we happen to know where his roost is!"

"The more I see of this the more I see that the major was right," observed Rex gloomily. "It is a deep game we are playing. You can't trust anybody; even that sergeant-major might have been a spy."

Tony looked at him incredulously.

"Why not?" said Rex, with a shrug of his shoulders. "I'm ready to believe anything. Why look surprised? If you read your history you will see that generals have been traitors before to-day."

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"If that is so we might as well pack up!" muttered Tony. "We can't go about arresting generals."

"I didn't say we could, you ass!" retorted Rex. "But there, it is no use kicking ourselves now. We acted for the best. How on earth were we to know that Fairfax was coming over to Wing H.Q.?"

"He wasn't," observed Tony dryly. "He followed us over, if the truth was known, to see what we were doing. He didn't believe our tale about dropping in casually this morning."

It was Rex's turn to stare.

"Of course," he muttered. "What a fool I was! Fairfax is an expert at the game, and we're just a pair of doddering amateurs."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to fly over in the Hannoverana once more to see if I can spot anything. We may catch the SE 5 on the move again. That chap's got nerve enough for anything; it wouldn't surprise me if he flew over here and landed at Maranique this afternoon!" said Rex bitterly. "When I come back we had better go and lay the whole case before the major. It's only fair to do that—it's getting a bit too big for us," he concluded.

"All right. Well, let's go and change and get the Hannoverana," agreed Tony. "Our fellows should have finished their overhaul by now."

Ten minutes later they were in the sky, dodging the usualarchie bursts from the British guns as they raced across the lines. A lot of heavy, cumulous cloud was swinging majestically across the heavens, and Rex headed towards it with the object of taking cover until they were well over German territory.

For some minutes they picked their way among the cloud banks as they edged their way cautiously towards Varne. A large detached cloud was immediately above them, and Rex watched it suspiciously. Was it—or was it

not? Had it been a trick of the imagination—or had he seen a dark grey shadow flit across a thin place in the opaque mist?

Even as he swerved away, something solid detached itself from the cloud and hurtled down at them. It was an S E 5!

A double stream of flame was blazing from the two guns mounted on the engine cowl, and, with a wild yell of warning, Rex flung the big machine over in a half-roll, to escape that devastating hail of lead.

As he came out of it he looked around swiftly for the attacking machine, and saw it pulling up in a terrific zoom under his elevators.

Tony, hanging on like grim death in the rear cockpit, was trying to see if there were any markings on the S E that he could recognise. If it was Fairfax he would shoot him down without hesitation, but if it was not then he was helpless. He could not shoot down one of his own side who was behaving fairly and courageously, according to the rules of the game, even in self defence.

Unfortunately, the machine was head-on to him, and he was, therefore, unable to see any identification marks, except the black stripe on the centre section, which was useless as a guide—for he knew that it would be on Fairfax's machine, as well as on every S E along that sector of the front.

Pale with excitement and apprehension, he pumped a shower of lead from his Parabellum guns in the direction of the S E, in the hope that it would drive him off, but without effect. He saw Rex's face turn pale with anxiety as the S E's bullets began zipping through the Hannoverana. Something struck his gun-mounting with a loud whang-g-g! and a fragment of metal scored the side of his face. Spang-g-g—flack-flack-flack! went the bullets through the black-crossed machine.

Tony dropped his gun and struck Rex violently on the shoulder.

"Down!" he screamed. "Down—down! Go down! It's our only chance!"

But the S E pilot was evidently an old hand at the game, and had no intention of allowing his victim to escape. The German gunners on the ground, seeing the perilous plight of one of their own machines, sent up salvo after salvo of frantic signals to attract any other German aircraft in the vicinity, but in vain. They dared not shoot at the S E, for fear of hitting their own machine.

With his face set and white, Rex flung the Hannoverana into a steep sideslip, straightening out and stunting—as far as that was possible with such a big machine—when the S E's fire became too hot.

Burst after burst poured into the Boche machine at almost point-blank range, and Rex knew that they were being literally shot to pieces. The S E pilot, finding that his opponents made no attempt to return the fire, came in closer and closer with every burst.

The German plane was in a terrible condition. One inter-plane strut was hanging by a piece of wood no thicker than a finger; lacerated fabric streamed out behind, and the instrument board was a ruin of mangled glass and metal. The engine gave a choking splutter, and a cloud of white vapour swirled away aft. A bullet ripped through the gravity-tank, and a shower of petrol swept over Tony. Metal spanged against metal. Something slashed against Rex's goggles, with a force that nearly stunned him, and he tore them off mechanically and flung them away. He could still hear Tony's guns stuttering their little staccato bursts, and he wondered if his observer was at last deliberately shooting at the S E, and why the flash of his guns did not set fire to the petrol which was over everything. He knew the end had come, and glanced down to see where they would crash.

The sound of shooting suddenly ceased, and a lightning glance over his shoulder revealed the S E 5, dangerously low for so far over enemy country, climbing for height for all it was worth, pursued by a veritable maelstrom of raging archie.

Rex's propeller had stopped, and the only sound he could hear besides the thunder of the guns on the ground was the wind screaming in his wires.

"Tony!" he yelled frantically. "Tony!"—and breathed a deep sigh of relief as he heard Tony's answering: "Hallo!"

"I'm going to crash!" he shouted. "Strap in! Lift up your knees and cover your face—hold tight!"

The Hannoverana lurched drunkenly as the pilot sideslipped steeply over the trees that bordered the field, in a praiseworthy attempt to make a landing, but it was an impossible task.

The pilot fish-tailed frantically to lose height as he flattened out, but the trees at the far side of the field rushed towards him. He aimed the nose of the machine between two of them so that the wings would absorb some of the

shock; it was better than hitting one head on. At the moment of impact he lifted his feet to prevent them being trapped, and buried his face in his arms.

There was a tearing, rending, splintering crash as the machine folded up around him. He was up in an instant, clawing his way like a madman out of the wreckage.

"Tony! Tony, where are you?" he cried wildly as he fell clear.

"I'm here!" gasped the observer breathlessly.

He was hanging upside-down on his belt, but he got the safety-strap undone and fell head-first among the tangle of wood and fabric.

"Quick!" yelled Rex, seizing him by the collar and dragging him out backwards.

They were just in time. There was a dull "Woosh!" as the petrol-soaked mass took fire, and, with their hands over their faces, they raced away from the blazing inferno. A troop of Uhlans were galloping across the field towards them.

"Well, it looks we're out of the fire into the frying-pan!" muttered Rex, aghast. "We are in Germany now, with no way of getting out of it, and if Fairfax has blabbed—But don't let's worry about that, we aren't dead yet. We've got to play German as we've never played it before, and watch for a chance to make a bolt for it. If we can get into the woods and get rid of these uniforms it might not be so bad even if we are caught later on. If we can get far enough away from Varna they might take us for two ordinary airmen who have been shot down." He swung round on his heel. "Where is the nearest aerodrome?" he demanded gruffly of the Unter-Offizier at the head of the Uhlans.

"Varna, lieutenant; not far away," replied the German. "Are you all right? We saw the fight and thought you must have been killed."

"Yes, we're all right," replied Rex irritably.

He was thinking swiftly, for he had no idea that they were so close to the place which, above all others, they were anxious to avoid.

"Nein—nein," he said again to the sergeant-major who was mumbling something about fetching an ambulance. "We are only shaken—that shweinhunt Engländer!"

He broke off, to stare at another group of men hurrying across the field. It consisted of five or six officers in the uniforms of the German Flying Corps, who had apparently just alighted from a big car that was standing near the gate. Rex recognised them at once as pilots he had seen at Varna. Von Henkel was among them, and his heart sank.

"Are you hurt?" Von Henkel cried, hurrying up. "We saw the scrap from the aerodrome and rushed over to see who it was. But, to tell you the truth, we did not expect to find anything but cinders. You're lucky to be alive, you two. Well, nothing much can be done with that," he added, pointing to the flaming wreckage behind them. "We may as well be going." The whine of bullets exploding in the heat of the flames hastened their departure.

Rex's brain was working at lightning speed as they plodded slowly towards the gate, and but for one significant glance at Tony he had no opportunity of conveying his impressions at this new development, for the German pilots crowded around and plied him with questions concerning the combat. Rex heartily cursed the British pilot in fluent German, which made the others laugh, but his outburst was not altogether acted. It must, of course, have been Fairfax, but, if not, the fellow had placed them in a frightful predicament. As they entered the car, on the pretence of looking at the slight flesh wound in Tony's face, he managed to whisper:

"Keep close! If Fairfax is over here the game's up. If not, stand by to make a bolt for it in one of their machines!"

He took his place in the car, and they were whirled away to the aerodrome to meet whatever Fate held in store for them. The next ten minutes seemed the longest ten minutes Rex could ever remember. The anxiety of not knowing whether Fairfax was on the aerodrome waiting to denounce them the moment they put in an appearance was almost unbearable.

They arrived at last, and, still chatting apparently unconcernedly, they entered the officers' mess. One glance, and their worst fears were realised; several officers were seated at the table, drinking coffee after a late lunch. At the head of the table, facing them, was Fairfax. Rex never forgot his sensations at that moment; time seemed to stand still as he awaited the inevitable exposure. Fairfax was stirring his coffee with a quiet air of composure as he listened to another officer of the party speaking. He glanced up casually as they entered the room, and, as their eyes met, Rex saw the other's gleam curiously; but the sign of recognition passed instantly, and he was talking to the man on his left, still stirring his coffee as though nothing had happened.

THE SPY-FLYERS!

(Continued from previous page.)

Rex felt his knees go weak from shock and reaction. As in a dream, he heard the voice of the mess waiter, and reached mechanically for the glass of cognac held out to him by the station medical officer, who had hurried to the scene when he heard of their arrival.

"Take that, my boy," he said kindly; "you need a bracer."

Rex certainly needed something at that moment. He threw the fiery liquid back into his throat, with a grimace and a word of thanks, and looked around to see how Tony fared. To all intents and purposes he was thoroughly at home, recounting their adventures for the benefit of the officers who had not seen the combat. Hauptmann von Rasberg hurried up, with a gruff word of congratulation on their narrow escape.

"What squadron do you come from?" he said. "I must ring them up and let them know you are safe."

Taken aback for a moment, Rex did not lose his head.

"Ninety-seventh Truppenflieger-Abteilung (Army Corps Squadron), sir," he replied, without hesitation. "But I'd rather ring up myself, if you don't mind."

"Certainly!" replied the German C.O., to his unutterable relief, for he knew, of course, that if the German once got in touch with the squadron he had named the cat would be out of the bag with a vengeance. "You will find the telephone in my room there," went on Von Rasberg, pointing to a door in the corner of the room.

Rex hurried to the telephone and put a call through to the Army Corps Squadron.

"Is Lieutenant Adolf Grosbach there?" he asked, as he was switched through, and as the name was one of his own invention it did not surprise him to hear the telephone orderly reply in the negative. "Very good," he said. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a faint shadow move on the floor near him, and he stiffened in his chair. "Yes, exactly," he went on, without a pause. "No, neither of us was hurt. Koepler has got a scratch on the face—nothing to speak of—but the machine is burnt out." Ignoring the orderly's frantic demand to know what he was talking about: "Very good, sir! To-night, sir! Good-bye!" he concluded, and hung up the receiver.

He rose to his feet and turned round. Hauptmann von Rasberg was standing in the doorway, watching him.

"Did you get through all right?" asked the German.

"Yes, thanks," replied Rex easily, wondering how much he had heard.

The Hauptmann nodded.

"You had better stay and dine with us, and then I'll send you home by car," he said. "Leave me now, I have work to do."

Rex returned to the mess and caught Tony's eye. He noticed that his partner was beginning to look anxious, and he strolled across the room to join him.

(Rex and Tony are living on the edge of a volcano! At any minute they may be arrested as spies! Look out for thrills in next week's amazing instalment!)

THE RIVAL SCHOOLS!

(Continued from page 25.)

of the face. Then the glasses were donned. They were of plain glass, and, though exceedingly uncomfortable at first, they did not impede the view after a time.

And Wally, extended at full length on the roof and watching all that passed through a hole in the old thatch, could hardly restrain a chuckle.

The juniors stood round looking at the disguised pair and they expressed their admiration in emphatic chorus.

"Splendid!"

"Ripping!"

"Absolutely the thing, dear boys!"

Tom Merry grinned cheerfully, and the effect of the grin on his altered face made the juniors bust into a roar.

"My hat!" gasped Blake. "I think it's too funny for words! If they have the nerve to carry it out—"

"Oh, Kerr will be all right!" said Figgins confidently. "I'm a bit doubtful about any School House chaps having a hand in it, but as it was Merry's idea—"

"Oh, ring off, Figgy! I shall be all right," said Tom Merry.

"So will Kerr. But look here, we mustn't call one another Merry and Kerr, you know. That won't do. We're brothers, and our name is— Blessed if I remember what our name is!"

"Jimson—that means a son of St. Jim's, though the Grammarians won't guess that."

"Ah, yes, that's it—Jimson major and Jimson minor. I'm major as I'm the elder."

"You're precious little the elder!" said Kerr. "And I ought to be major as I've got more sense."

"Rats! Don't begin to argue about precedence at this time of day," said Tom Merry severely. "I'm Jimson major, and you're my minor. We don't know any of you fellows—you're St. Jim's cads!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Keep out of sight till we've got clear," said Tom Merry.

"We've got to cut across here to Wayland, and arrive at Rylcombe by train so as not to excite any suspicion. The wire was delivered there at the Grammar School this morning, and I shouldn't wonder if there was somebody at the station to meet us. I think we've done the lot now. I'll take this bag, and the boxes can be supposed to be coming on later."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then we're off. If we meet again, we meet as deadly foes, mind!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Jimson major and minor left the barn and took the short cut through the wood to the market town of Wayland, where they took the train for Rylcombe.

THE END.

(You simply must read next week's great yarn—"ST. JIM'S FOR EVER!" Will Tom Merry's amazing scheme succeed? Can he dupe the Grammarians? You'll know next Wednesday!)



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