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TOM MERRY AT ST. JIM'S.

LONG, COMPLETE  
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TALE.

By  
MARTIN CLIFFORD.



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NO 11.

VOL. 1.

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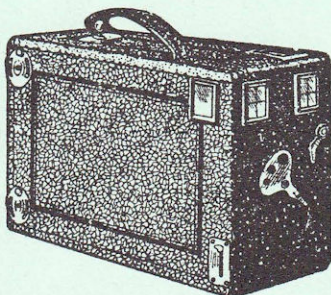
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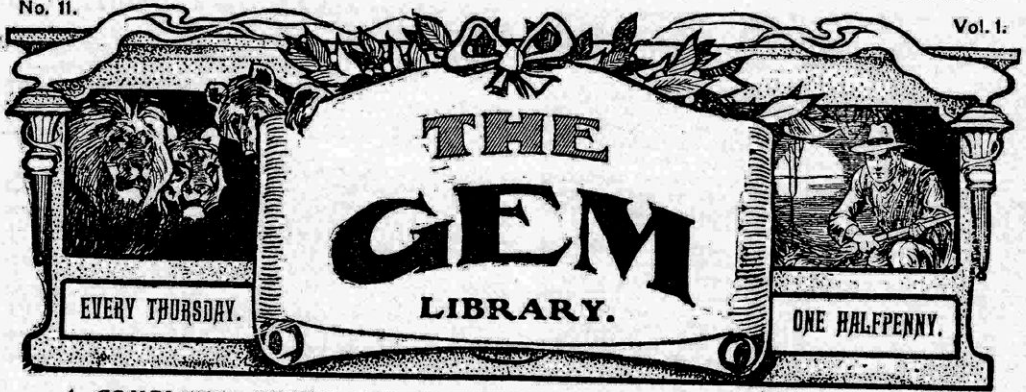


Next Thursday, "THE TERRIBLE THREE!"

A Tale of  
TOM MERRY.

No. 11.

Vol. 1.



A COMPLETE STORY FOR EVERYONE, AND EVERY STORY A GEM!

# TOM MERRY AT ST JIM'S



Grand Complete School Tale by Martin Clifford.

## CHAPTER I.

Herr Schneider Gets Leg-before-Wicket — Startling News.

"TOM MERRY again!"

Herr Schneider snapped his teeth over the words. The German master at Clavering School had just come out of his study with a cane in his hand, and a dark frown upon his face, and he stood for a moment in the passage listening.

There certainly was a terrific din proceeding from the the corridor above, where the studies of the young gentle-

men of the Middle School were situated. A peculiar bumping and crashing noise was followed by the stamping of feet and the shouting of voices, and loudest of all was the merry voice of Tom Merry.

"Bravo, old Manners! That's a wicket to you!"

"Now let's see what you can do, Tom!"

"Right-ho! Chuck me the ball!"

"Here it is!"

"Ass! I didn't say chuck it at me. Why couldn't you give me a catch? Never mind, here goes. Stand clear, you chaps!"

Herr Schneider's hair stood on end with wrath. He took

**DON'T MISS** the Long, Complete Tale, **TOM MERRY** next Thursday, by Martin Clifford, of

a firm grip on the cane and began to ascend the stairs three at a time. It was a rainy day out of doors, but the chums of the Shell were not to be done out of their cricket practice, and they were practising bowling in the upper corridor.

It was Tom Merry's way to make the best of everything, and that was what he was doing now, but the German master, whose study was underneath, was not likely to be pleased by indoor cricket practice just over his head. But, as Tom said, it was impossible to please everybody.

"Beastly close quarters for cricket practice," said Tom Merry, as he took hold of the ball. "Never mind, it saves the fag of fielding, anyway. Now I'm going to bowl a lob." He took a little run.

"I say!" exclaimed Manners, in alarm. "I think I heard—"

But the ball had already sped. Down the long corridor it went, just as Herr Schneider, crimson with wrath, came bouncing up the staircase and rushed into the corridor. The next moment he gave a fendish yell. The cans went one way, his spectacles went another, and Herr Schneider danced on one leg, clasping the other affectionately with both hands.

"Ach! Mein leg! Mein leg! Mein leg!" he hopped frantically.

The boys of the Shell gasped with alarm at the sight of the catastrophe, but the sight of the fat German clasping one leg and hopping on the other was too funny. A shout of laughter rang through the corridor. It added to the fury of Herr Schneider.

"Ach! Mein leg! It is broken! Tom Merry, you did tat on purpose!"

"Did the ball hit you, sir?" asked Tom Merry innocently. And the boys yelled again at the absurd question. It was pretty plain that the ball had hit the German.

"Ach! Mein leg, it is broken!"

"Then you're out, sir," said Tom demurely.

"Hein? Vat you say?"

"You're out, sir. Leg-before-wicket, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Manners.

Herr Schneider panted with rage. It was only Tom's fun, but to the Herr, it seemed like insult added to injury.

"Merry! I—I—vat shall I say? You are te worst poy in te whole school. I do not feel equal to dealing mit you meinself, so you will go to te Head. You will say tat you have trown ein cricket ball at your master."

"But I didn't, sir. I didn't know you were going to hop in on the pitch like that."

"You will do as I tell you, Merry."

"But—"

Herr Schneider hopped towards him, and Tom deemed it better to go.

It was hard lines, for although Mr. Railton would believe that the German's mishap was an accident, Tom was certain to "catch it" for bowling cricket-balls in the corridor. But there was no help for it, and so Tom marched off to the study of Mr. Railton. He tapped at the Head's door. There was no answer from within. Tom tapped again more loudly. Still no reply. The scamp of the Shell smiled to himself.

"The Head's not here," he murmured, "so I certainly can't report myself. I suppose I'd better look in, in case the old Dutchman asks me."

He opened the door of the study and carelessly glanced in. The next moment he gave a violent start. The room was not empty, as he had expected it would be. Mr. Railton was in his accustomed seat at the writing-table. But his attitude was such as Tom Merry had never seen before.

Both his elbows rested upon the table, and his face was sunk in his hands. Before him on the table lay a letter. His attitude was so plainly expressive of utter despondency, that Tom Merry could not help seeing that a heavy blow had fallen upon the popular Head of Clavering.

Mr. Railton was evidently so absorbed in his gloomy reflections, that he had not heard Tom's tapping at the door. Tom hesitated, wishing he had not entered, and at the same time wondering what could have happened to cause such a change to come over the usually strong and cheery Head.

Mr. Railton raised his head. He started at the sight of Tom Merry, but in a moment he seemed himself again.

"I knocked twice, sir," said Tom. "Herr Schneider sent me to you, sir."

Mr. Railton nodded.

"You may come in, Merry."

Tom walked into the study. Mr. Railton's handsome face was very pale, and he looked worn, but he was quite calm. He took up the letter from the table.

"Herr Schneider sent you to me, Merry. Why?"

"It was an accident, sir."

Mr. Railton smiled slightly. Tom's career at Clavering

School had been marked by unusual happenings, and the Head never knew what to expect next.

"Well—well, what was it, Merry?"

"I was bowling a lob in the upper corridor, sir, and Herr Schneider got leg-before-wicket—I mean, he came bolting into the corridor without warning, and stopped the ball with his leg, sir," said Tom ingenuously. "I was awfully sorry."

"I dare say you were. Do you assure me that it was an accident?"

"Certainly, sir, on my word."

"Then I will excuse you, Merry. It is wrong of you to bowl in the corridor—you might hit anybody, and you must never do it again. I do not wish to punish you, however. I do not wish the last act of my authority here to be the infliction of punishment."

And Mr. Railton sighed. He had spoken the last words more to himself than to Tom Merry, and hardly seemed to be aware that they were uttered aloud. But Tom caught them. And in his amazement he stared at the headmaster.

"Mr. Railton! You are not going away, sir?"

The distress in the boy's face touched the Head. He liked Tom Merry, in spite of his scapegrace ways, and it moved him to see what he did in Tom's look.

"Yes, Merry. I did not mean to mention it, but I may as well tell you now. I intended in any case to make an announcement to the school to-night. But it is not only I who am going, and probably we shall not part. Clavering School is to be closed."

Tom looked blank. He had been only a few months at Clavering, but he already felt quite at home there, and quite part of the institution.

There had been rumours abroad in the school lately—rumours vague and undefined, foreboding change of some sort; but Tom had never looked for this.

"Clavering to be closed, sir?"

"Yes, Merry," Mr. Railton nodded, "the school is to be closed. It is a heavy blow to me, as you may imagine, but there are reasons. But, as I said, we may yet be together. I am making arrangements for the transfer of the boys to another school; the two schools will be, in fact, amalgamated. That school is the famous St. James's—better known to you as St. Jim's. The school Clavering played a short time ago on the cricket-field."

"St. Jim's, sir! We are going to St. Jim's!"

"Yes, Merry. It is a grand old school, older than Clavering, and more famous, and you will be in good hands there, all of you. Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, is my oldest and best friend, and we are arranging this matter between us. I shall take a position at St. Jim's, and most of my boys, I think, will accompany me there. Their parents, of course, have all been communicated with, and their consent obtained. By the way, I think your governess, Miss Friscilla Fawcett, will be coming down to see you about it. She has written to me and seems a little anxious about the change."

The Head smiled slightly. "Now you may go, Merry. I depend upon you to keep the best of order for the last few days that we shall be at Clavering."

"Yes, sir," Tom hesitated. "Don't think it's an awful cheek of me," he broke out, "but—but can't anything be done, sir?"

"Nothing, Merry," said Mr. Railton quietly. "I need not conceal—it will soon be known to everyone—that money has been advanced upon the land Clavering stands on, and that the person who advanced it claims his strict rights. A seam of coal has been discovered on the land, and it extends right under Clavering College, and the moneylender sees a prospect of immense profit, and so he is not likely to make any concessions. As a matter of fact, I have here a letter from him, warning me that he is coming down to-day, and that no concession need be expected."

"The—the brute! I beg your pardon, sir. But—but it's rotten!"

Tom Merry went slowly to the door. It was not so much himself that he cared about. He liked Clavering, but he was quite ready to go to St. Jim's. He had met the fellows from that school on more than one occasion, and he knew that he could have a good time there. But he knew that this was a heavy blow for the Head. And he liked Mr. Railton.

He went out and closed the door, and went back to his own quarters looking less cheerful than usual. Monty Lowther and Manners were in the study, and they met their chum with glances of sympathy.

"Got it on both hands, Tom?" asked Manners. "Hard cheese!"

"Looks more like a flogging," said Lowther. "Did he lay it on awfully hard, kid?"

"I've not been licked," said Tom.

"You don't mean to say that he let you off?"

"Yes, he did."

"And you come back looking as solemn as an owl, and



cheating us out of our sympathy!" Manners exclaimed indignantly. "What do you mean by it?"

"I've had some news."

"Oh, is that it? Something awful going to happen? Is Miss Fawcett coming down to see you?"

Tom laughed.

"Yes, I think so, but that's not the worst. It's all up with Clavering."

"Don't rot! What are you talking about?"

Tom explained the news he had received from the Head. Monty Lowther and Manners gave expressive whistles.

"Well, my Sunday topper!" exclaimed Manners. "This is a go! I'm sorry for the Head, but I dare say we shall be able to dig up some fun at St. Jim's."

"It's all right if we all go together," said Monty Lowther. "We must write to our people, and give 'em their orders. You know there's two houses at St. Jim's, and they're always on the warpath against one another, and I've heard they squeeze a lot of fun out of that. We must all three go into the same house."

"Rather!" said Tom Merry. "But that's looking ahead. There's a matter in hand that wants attending to."

"What's that?"

"The beast who is going to grab Clavering is coming down to-day to see the Head. It's against my principles to let him go without scalping him for this. Suppose we lay a little trap for the rotter?"

"Bravo! We are on that."

"Good!" said Tom Merry, his eyes sparkling. "He ought to get something for the bother he's giving poor old Railton. We are the fellows to deal with the matter, and I think we can rig up a surprise for him. Shove your coats on, it's still raining, and we shall have to wait for him at the gate. The Head looked as if he was expecting him soon."

"Right-ho!"

And in a couple of minutes the trio were out in the rain and on the watch.

## CHAPTER 2.

### A Terrible Mistake.

THE station hack from High Clavering rolled into the Close, and stopped before the steps. The rain was still falling heavily.

A gentleman, with somewhat severe features, looked out of the window, and three boys in the shadow of the porch caught a glimpse of a face and a silk-hat.

Tom Merry nudged his companions.

"That's the horrid bounder!"

"Come on, then!" said Manners. "Let's go and do the polite."

"Right-ho, kid; come on!"

Tom Merry opened a huge and ancient umbrella, and hurried down the steps to the hack. Manners was with him, and he quickly opened the door for the visitor to Clavering to step out.

"Welcome to Clavering, sir!" said Tom demurely. "Will you come underneath the old umbrella? as the poet remarks. I think it was Browning."

The gentleman looked at him in a rather peculiar way.

"Thank you, my lad!" he said.

He stepped from the hack. Tom was rather surprised at the look of him. He had expected to see a younger man, with features of a Semitic cast, and he had to admit that this gentleman did not look much like a moneylender.

But, Hebrew or not, he was the man who had foreclosed upon Clavering, and wrought so complete a change in the prospects of the school. And Tom was on the warpath.

He exchanged a quick look with Manners and Monty Lowther. As the gentleman stepped towards the house, Tom slipped, and dragged the umbrella down upon the visitor's head, knocking his silk-hat over his eyes.

"Dear me! What ever—"

Before the victim could get any further, or replace his hat, Monty Lowther's foot somehow got entangled with his, and he slipped and sat down on the steps.

Tom Merry, quite by accident, of course, stumbled over him, and the gentleman rolled off the lowest step to the ground.

As the paving there was much in want of repair, a great puddle of rain had collected, and into this the gentleman, with a little assistance from the boys, rolled with a splash. He uttered an exclamation of horror as the cold, dirty water splashed over him.

Then he made a desperate effort to get out of the puddle, but at the same moment, unfortunately, Manners fell on top of him, and jammed him right down into the mud.

"Help," gasped the unfortunate man—"help, help!"

Mr. Railton came running out.

The Head of Clavering was looking angry and annoyed.

"Boys! Merry, Manners, Lowther——"

"It's all right, sir!" said Tom Merry. "It's a little accident."

"Merry, I—I——"

"It's only the moneylender, sir!"

"The what?"

"That giddy Shylock, sir, who's coming down to collar the school!" said Tom. "A ducking won't do him any harm, sir!"

"Mr. Railton, help me! I——"

Mr. Railton ran to the side of the fallen man, and helped him to rise.

"Boys, you shall be soundly flogged for this! How dare you?"

"It's only the moneylender, sir!" remonstrated Tom.

"Moneylender!" cried Mr. Railton. "This is Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. James's College, and your future headmaster!"

"My only Panama hat!"

"What do you mean by that absurd exclamation, Merry?"

"I mean that we're awfully sorry, sir," said Tom penitently. "We don't mean any harm, sir!" he went on, addressing Dr. Holmes, who was being assisted up the steps by Mr. Railton. "We took you for Shylock, sir! I hope you'll forgive us."

The coolness of asking a man he had just drenched with rain-water for forgiveness tickled Manners and Lowther, and they could hardly help chuckling.

"You need not ask Dr. Holmes for forgiveness!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "You will all three be severely punished! Come, my dear sir, and let me get you a change of clothes! You are in a shocking state. How can I possibly apologise for this unspeakable outrage?"

They entered the hall. The three boys followed them in, looking very sheepish. Tom Merry had made "bloomers" before, but never such a terrific one as this.

Dr. Holmes squeezed the rain-water out of his eyes. He was, truly, in a shocking state, wet and muddy from head to foot, and his hat and clothes completely ruined.

Yet there was a twinkle in his kindly grey eyes.

"Don't trouble to apologise, Railton," he replied cordially. "It is evidently a mistake. As to punishing these young rascals, we will talk that over. At present I need a change of attire more than anything else."

"Come up to my room, Dr. Holmes!"

The Head of Clavering led his guest upstairs, and the heroes of the Shell were left alone. They looked at each other in a somewhat sickly way.

"Well, of all the howling asses!" said Manners. "I've come across some silly asses in my time, Merry, but you do really take the cake!"

"My Aunt Maria!" said Lowther. "You take the biscuit, Tom, and no mistake! You collar the lot! You buzz off with the giddy ghost, and that's my opinion!"

"What's the good of going for me?" demanded Tom wrathfully. "How was I to know that any beastly headmasters would come along, passing themselves off as moneylenders?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why couldn't he explain?"

"You didn't give him much chance to explain, did you?"

"Well, one of you ought to have guessed!" said Tom. "But don't talk about it; it's too sickening! Nice beginning this for our new start at St. Jim's, isn't it?"

"By Jove, it is!"

"We shall be called over the coals, and no mistake. I never saw Railton get his head off so much before. Why couldn't he tell us Dr. Holmes was coming, and prevent the possibility of a mistake?"

"I suppose you didn't mention to him how you were going to greet the moneylender? Ha, ha!"

The chums returned to their study in a decidedly disconsolate humour. They had made the worst possible impression upon their future headmaster, and it was certainly a bad start for their career at St. Jim's.

As they expected, it was not long before they received a summons to Mr. Railton's presence. But they would have felt more at ease in their minds as they approached the study if they could have heard what the Head of St. Jim's was saying.

"Nonsense, my dear Railton! Boys will be boys!"

"But such an unparalleled outrage, doctor!"

"They mistook me for the moneylender. And between you and me, Railton, it would serve Mr. Isaacson right to have a ducking!"

Mr. Railton laughed.

"You take it very kindly, doctor; but the young rascals certainly ought to be punished. Not that I wish to speak against them, because it is their attachment to me that is at the bottom of the affair."

"I thought so."

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"Then you really wish me to pardon them?"

"Yes; I should be very sorry to commence my acquaintance with them by causing them a flogging; and, besides, as I said, boys will be boys."

Tap!

"Come in!" called out Mr. Railton.

The three delinquents, looking very penitent, entered the study. Mr. Railton assumed a stern look.

"Merry, Lovther, Manners, you are aware that you have been guilty of a great outrage, and have treated Dr. Holmes in an unpardonable manner?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry, stealing a sly glance at Dr. Holmes's face, and drawing some encouragement from the twinkle in his kindly grey eye. "We are awfully sorry; but we thought Dr. Holmes was the moneylender bouncer."

"You mean that you would have treated Mr. Isaacson in this outrageous manner?"

"Yes, sir."

"Indeed! Then had the victim been Mr. Isaacson, I presume you would not have been sorry for your conduct? Am I to understand that, Merry?"

"Yes, sir."

Tom made that reply with perfect simplicity, and Dr. Holmes smiled. Mr. Railton gave a cough, and turned to his friend.

"Dr. Holmes, I leave you to deal with these boys."

"Thank you, Railton!" said Dr. Holmes. "My lads, you did very wrong, but, as it seems to have been a mistake, I shall pardon you, and Mr. Railton, at my request, is willing to overlook your offence."

"You—you're going to let us off, sir, after we smothered you with mud?" exclaimed Tom.

"Yes, Merry."

"Thank you awfully, sir!" exclaimed Tom. "We—we're grateful, sir! It's good of you!"

"Very good! I hope we shall see each other again at St. James's College, and that we shall get on well," said Dr. Holmes.

And the chums of the Shell left the room in a gleeful mood.

"Of all the jolly old boys," said Manners, "he's the jolliest! St. Jim's will be a decent place, I expect. Good old doctor!"

"I like that lad Merry, Railton," Dr. Holmes remarked, when the door had closed. "He has a fine frank face."

"I like him, too, Dr. Holmes. By the way, I wished to speak to you about him. He will be coming to St. James's, but he has a sort of old governess or nurse—Miss Fawcett—who is absurdly anxious and particular about his health and comfort. To do Merry justice, he hates being coddled, but Miss Fawcett refuses to understand that he is a growing boy, and not a pretty little infant. From her letter, I fancy it is her intention to visit St. Jim's, in order to satisfy herself that the school is in every respect satisfactory. You will try to be patient with her?"

Dr. Holmes smiled.

"Certainly, Railton. I have had to deal with a good many peculiar characters among parents and guardians since I was a headmaster."

There was a sound of wheels in the Close and a ring at the bell.

"That is Mr. Isaacson," said Mr. Railton, a shade crossing his face. "He is prompt to time for his appointment. Now for a painful interview."

And a few moments later a stout gentleman, with aquiline features and a fur-lined overcoat, was shown into the presence of the two headmasters.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### How Tom Merry Went to St. Jim's.

THE news was not long in spreading over Clavering. It was received with mingled feelings, partly with regret, partly with a relish for the novelty of the situation. The boys were curious to see how they would get on at St. Jim's, a school they had met more than once on the cricket and football field.

Some of the Clavering fellows were going home, but it was likely that the greater part would accompany their master to St. Jim's, when the grip of the moneylender closed finally upon Clavering, and the fine old buildings came down to make room for opening up the newly-discovered coal seam.

Mr. Isaacson had had a narrow escape. After the experience with the visiting headmaster from St. Jim's, Tom Merry did not feel exactly inclined to "go for" any more strangers who arrived at the school. So Mr. Isaacson came and went in peace.

Dr. Holmes departed that night, having made all arrange-

ments with Mr. Railton. And before bed-time the boys were called together in the hall, and the Head made a speech. It was a brief one, but to the point.

He explained the difficulties into which the school had fallen, touching very lightly upon that part of the subject, and then passed on to explain the new prospects of such of the boys as were permitted by their parents to accompany him to his new abode. The speech was received in grave silence.

It was broken by Wingate, the captain of Clavering, who stepped forward to reply for the school.

"We're all sorry to hear this, sir," said the captain of Clavering; "but we're glad to be able to go with you, and I expect most of us will do so. I shall, for one, I know."

"And I!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"And all of us!" came a general shout.

"Thank you, Wingate! Thank you, my boys!" said Mr. Railton. "We have, I am safe to say, done our best, and played a straight game while we have been here, and I hope we shall do the same in a new sphere. St. Jim's will not need to be ashamed of us, and I hope we shall lose nothing in being merged in a greater and more famous school; but I hope St. Jim's, in fact, will gain by it. Now, good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

And the boys filed out. The first post in the morning brought Tom Merry a letter from his old governess and nurse—Miss Priscilla Fawcett. It announced that the good lady was coming down to see him that day, in order to consult with him over the news Mr. Railton had written to her.

"You're in for it, Tommy!" said Manners, when Tom Merry showed him the letter. "See his going to fill you up to the chin with cod-liver oil, and see you change your socks before you start for St. Jim's. Mind you don't lose your chest-protector, or she'll start hunting for it. It mustn't be left behind."

"Oh, don't talk rot!" said Tom. "This is bad enough, without your chipping. I'd wire to her not to come, only it's too late now."

That was true. Miss Fawcett was at Clavering an hour after her letter. The news of her coming was brought to Tom in the Shell class-room, and he was permitted by the master to go out and see his affectionate governess.

"Dearest Tommy!" exclaimed Miss Priscilla, unfolding him in her embrace—"Dearest Tommy, how have you got on all this long time?"

"Why, you saw me only a fortnight ago!" said Tom.

"It seems such a long time, my sweetest!"

"Oh, please don't! Somebody may hear you!"

"Very well, dear Tommy. You know why I have come down," said the old lady, holding him at arm's length, and regarding him affectionately. "It's about this change Mr. Railton designs to make. It is a little unreasonable of him to decide to change the quarters of the school at such a short notice, before I have had time to fully inquire and inspect the new college; but I do not mean you to go there into danger—"

"Danger!" exclaimed Tom. "What on earth are you driving at, my dear nurse?"

"My sweetest boy, there may be draughts, or—or anything. The drains may be bad. They may put you into a draughty study."

Tom Merry grinned. It seemed funny to him that Miss Fawcett's principal concern in the catastrophe that had overtaken Clavering was whether he might be put into a draughty study when he took up his new quarters.

"I shall have to go over the school, of course, and examine things," said Miss Fawcett. "I have received an invitation from Dr. Holmes to do so, in fact. He seems to have written it from here last evening."

"The old boy was here last night," said Tom. "We gave him a proper doing, too, in mistake for a giddy Hebrew Shylock. It was a howling bloomer."

Miss Fawcett clasped her hands in horror.

"You—you are talking slang, dear Tommy!"

"Slang! My dear nurse, that's all right. You'll soon pick it up if you see much of me. I know you don't always tumble now, but you'll soon get the hang of it."

Miss Fawcett gave it up.

"Tommy, my dear boy, I have Mr. Railton's permission to take you away with me to-day."

Tom did not look overjoyed at this intelligence.

"What for—a holiday?"

"Yes, my dear child; and to-morrow you will come with me to see St. Jim's, and judge whether you like it, and whether you would like to live there."

"Oh, yes, I should. I want to go with Mr. Railton."

"But you must see it first, Tommy. I have heard things about the school—"

"It's one of the finest in England," said Tom hotly.



"They licked us at football once, and at cricket twice, and what more could you want to know? I've seen a lot of their chaps, and they are ripping. Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, is a regular ripper."

"What an expression, Tommy! But I have heard that there are two houses at St. Jim's—"

"So there are at lots of schools; five or six sometimes."

"Yes; but these, the School House and the New House, are always on bad terms with one another, and sometimes they fight," said Miss Fawcett, looking horrified.

Tom laughed.

"My dear nurse, if you think I've been all this time at Clavering without learning how to fight, you are a giddy old innocent!" he exclaimed. "You should have seen my slogging match with Gore. It was an eye-opener."

"Oh, Tommy!"

"Besides, there's always a certain amount of rivalry between two houses at a school," said Tom, who had learned much of public school life since leaving Laurel Villa, at Huckleberry Heath. "It does them good. Keeps them up to the mark in sports, and so on. And it's jolly good fun at St. Jim's. I've heard about it from the chaps. Why, that's what I'm looking forward to."

"But you would like to come home before going there, Tom?"

"Ye-es," said Tom, who, much as he had changed since leaving home, was very fond of his old nurse, and loth to wend her. "I'll come home for a day if you like, nurse."

But he had an inward uneasiness. Big boy as he was, Miss Fawcett had always dressed him in pretty velvet suits when he was at home, and made a baby of him generally, with feminine obstinacy refusing to recognise the fact that he was no longer an infant.

Tom did not intend to have anything of that kind again, if he could help it, and so his promised visit to Laurel Villa was not wholly a joyful prospect. But Tom Merry was always cheerful, and he was feeling in high spirits when he stepped into the cab with Miss Fawcett.

He would see his chums again at St. Jim's, and the parting was not to be for long. And when the train landed him at Huckleberry Heath, and he re-entered Laurel Villa after his long absence, he was made so much of that he spent a pleasant day, and retired for the night quite satisfied with himself.

There was a peculiar expression in Miss Fawcett's eyes when she kissed him for good-night, and if Tom had noticed it he might have guessed that a plot was brewing; but he did not, and when he went to bed he slept the sleep of the just, and did not wake till the sun was high up on the following morning, and glinting in at his window.

Miss Fawcett had told him that they were to start at ten o'clock for St. Jim's, and Tom, looking at his watch, found that it was nine, so he jumped out of bed.

After his bath he looked for his clothes; then he gave a whistle of dismay. There, placed ready for him, was a beautiful suit of velvet, with a handsome bow and a wide collar, the whole suitable for a boy of eight, though large enough for Tom, having evidently been made specially for him.

Of his own clothes there was no trace; but lying on the table was a little note in Miss Fawcett's handwriting. Tom read it, and gave a groan of disgust.

"Dear Tommy,—I want you to wear your own things just once more. I do so want you to look my own dear little Tommy again. You have changed so much since you left Laurel Villa that I fear you do not love your old nurse as you used to."

"Dear Tommy, I know you will not refuse. I do so want to see you look as you used to look. Be a good, dear boy, and do so for my sake."

"I have given your other clothes to a poor boy, so there are no others but these for you to wear. I know you will not mind.—Your affectionate nurse,

"PRISCILLA FAWCETT."

"Oh, my word!" said Tom, staring at the letter. "We've got to start for St. Jim's at ten, and these are the only clothes in the house for me. I won't wear them. I'll go in my giddy pyjamas rather!"

There was a tap at the door.

"Are you dressed, my dearest Tommy?"

"No!" shouted Tom. "Where are my toggs?"

"Tommy! Your what?"

"My duds—my clothes!"

"I have given them away to a poor boy. I am sure you will not grudge them, Tommy."

"Not a bit of it; but I can't wear these things."

"You will look so beautiful and sweet."

"I don't want to look beautiful and sweet!" howled the unfortunate Tommy. "If you don't get me an Eton suit, or at least something decent, I won't go, so there!"

"Dr. Holmes expects us, Tommy."

"Then I'll go in my pyjamas!"

"Tommy!"

"I can't wear these things! I can't! I sha'n't! Blow!"

"Tommy, just to please me. Dear Tommy!" Miss Priscilla's voice was shaky, and seemed to indicate that she was on the verge of tears. "Dear To—o—ommy!"

Tom Merry was alarmed.

"All right, nurse; don't turn on the waterworks!" he cried hastily. "I'll wear the beastly things. Don't—please don't!"

Tom was ready to consent to anything to avoid a pathetic scene; but the thought of his first appearance at St. Jim's in those clothes came to him like a cold douche.

He remembered the figure he had cut at Clavering under similar circumstances. It was too bad; but he had given his word now.

"That is noble of you, Tommy!" came Miss Priscilla's voice through the door. "Now, make haste and dress, my sweetest child. Your breakfast is ready."

Tom bundled into the clothes. They were really very pretty, and he looked beautiful enough when he had finished, as Miss Priscilla said, but he looked far from happy as he surveyed himself in the cheval-glass.

"Well, I suppose I'm in for it now!" he groaned. "I can't hurt the old lady's feelings; but the next time I come to Laurel Villa I'll watch it! Oh, hang—blow—bah! It's too absolutely rotten for anything!"

He descended the stairs. In the breakfast-room Miss Priscilla was waiting for him, and she uttered an exclamation of delight at his appearance.

"My sweetest Tommy! Now you are my own dear Tommy again!"

"Yes," grumbled Tom, "and I wish I was anybody else. No, I don't mean that. I'm all right. I'll stick it out somehow. If the fellows at St. Jim's grin at me I'll punch their giddy cocoanuts. Let's have something to eat."

In spite of the worry of those clothes, Tom made a good breakfast, and for Miss Priscilla's sake he assumed a cheerful air as they drove to the station. Once more, as of old, people looked at him as he passed, and smiled; but Tom was no longer the spoony he had been of old, and he felt his position acutely. The train journey down to Rylcombs was a martyrdom to him.

He was relieved when they arrived there, though he knew that the worst part of his ordeal was to come. When his box arrived from Clavering he would have a change of clothes, but before then he would have to run the gauntlet of hundreds of curious eyes.

The very-man who drove the ancient station cab grinned as he touched his cap. Miss Priscilla did not observe it, but Tom did.

But he had made up his mind to "stick it out," and he went through it all like a Spartan. He looked curiously at his surroundings as the old cab rolled slowly down the Rylcombe road towards the school.

There was the wood on his left, with the path leading to the ruined castle, where many a strange scene had been enacted in the history of St. Jim's. There, ahead of him, rose the school tower above the trees, and there soon afterwards was the grey old gateway and the big bronze gates.

Tom Merry had visited St. Jim's once before with a cricket team from Clavering, so the place was not quite strange to him. But now that it was to be his home he looked upon it with new interest. It was a far more extensive place than Clavering, covering something like four times as much ground, and dating centuries further back into the remote past.

As the vehicle stopped in the old quadrangle, four boys came down the steps of the School House, which occupied one side of the quad facing the New House, a more modern erection, on the other side. The four were evidently juniors. One of them nodded towards the hack.

"Hallo, a new kid!"

Tom Merry stepped from the vehicle. He knew what an effect his appearance would have upon the juniors, but he was hardly prepared for what followed. The boys stared at him for a minute as if petrified, and then fell into each other's arms, and rocked to and fro on the steps of the School House.

## CHAPTER 4.

### Tom Merry at St. Jim's.

JACK BLAKE, of St. Jim's, fell into the arms of Herries, while Digby collapsed into the embrace of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The chums of Study No. 6 in the School House seemed completely overcome.

"What is it?" murmured Blake, in tones of exaggerated faintness. "What can it be? I wonder if it has a name?"



"It's something new," said Digby. "I've never seen anything like it before off a Christmas-tree. Fancy meeting that!"

"It is weally too extwaordinary," said D'Arcy. He pushed Dig into a sitting position on the step, and solemnly adjusted his eyeglass, and through it took a survey of the wrathful Tom Merry. "It is alive; I can see its features move. What a swange object!"

"Look here!" exclaimed Tom Merry, looking warlike. "If you—"

Blake covered his face with his hands. "Don't!" he gasped. "Don't! Oh, don't!" "Don't what?" "Don't ask me to look! I can't really. I'm not strong, and I'm afraid it might be too much for me!" "Tommy! Dear Tommy!"

It was Miss Priscilla's voice from inside the hack. And Tom, with whom politeness outweighed everything else, turned to assist the lady from the vehicle.

"Take no notice of those rude boys," said Miss Priscilla. "Give me your arm, dearest Tommy."

Dearest Tommy turned scarlet, but he obeyed. Blake gasped with merriment. He hadn't seen anything as funny as this for a long time.

"Oh, my only hat!" he giggled. "Dearest D'Arcy, give me your arm. Don't take any notice of these common, rude bouncers. You vulgah people, get off the earth!"

And Blake, taking the arm of D'Arcy, followed Miss Priscilla and Tom Merry to the doorway of the Head's house. He walked in a graceful way, leaning upon the arm of the swell of the School House, and the sight was irresistible. Herries and Digby howled with laughter, and Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, looking out of his study window to see what was the matter, had to laugh too.

"Oh, that young rascal, Blake!" he murmured. "Blake! Blake!"

The chief of the School House juniors stopped. "Did you call me, Kildare?" "Stop that immediately!"

"Oh, I say, Kildare!" remonstrated Blake. "Mustn't D'Arcy and I take a little constitutional for our health after morning school in the quadrangle?"

"Weally, we require it for our livah," said Arthur Augustus.

But the door opening to admit Miss Priscilla and Tom Merry, sent Blake and D'Arcy scuttling off. They rejoined Herries and Dig.

"Well," said Blake, wiping the tears from his eyes. "Well, my pippins, we're not likely to go in want of a good cackle if that funny merchant is going to stop at St. Jim's!"

"I suppose it's a new kid," said Herries. "But if they put it in the School House I shall kill it. It's too funny to live!"

Blake looked alarmed. "Oh, they wouldn't dare!" he exclaimed. "The New House is the proper place for it. It was a bit of a wrench for us to stand D'Arcy when he came—"

"Oh, weally now, deal boy!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Then they gave us that howler, Marmaduke Smythe, but we shoved him off on to Figgins & Co.," went on Blake. "Figgins can have this merchant. We won't. If they stick it in here there will be trouble. But, my word, what a giddy velvet suit. Ha, ha, ha!"

Meanwhile, Miss Fawcett was shown into the presence of the Head of St. Jim's. Mr. Railton had somewhat prepared Dr. Holmes for the visit, but the Doctor had certainly never expected anything like this. He adjusted his gold-rimmed pince-nez and stared at Tom.

"Dear me! It is Merry." "It is my dear boy," announced Miss Priscilla, with a glance of fond pride at Tom. "I have brought him with me, Dr. Holmes. You will be very kind to him?"

Tom Merry gave a wriggle.

"Oh, very kind," said Dr. Holmes. "But what is the meaning of this peculiar attire? I—ah—" He paused, reflecting that it would be easier to deal with this matter after Miss Fawcett was gone. "Well, let it pass. Now, what is it you wish, my dear madam?"

"As I informed you, I believe, Dr. Holmes, I wish to make an inspection of the school, in order to fulfil my duties towards this dear boy," said Miss Priscilla. "Of course, I fully accept your assurance, but at the same time—"

"Exactly," said Dr. Holmes, touching a bell. "As Merry will go into the School House, I will ask Mr. Kidd, the housemaster, to show you over the building, Miss Fawcett. I am, unfortunately, very much occupied just now."

He turned to the maid who answered his ring. "Kindly request Mr. Kidd to come to me."

In a few minutes the master of the School House made

his appearance. He gave Tom Merry a very curious look as he bowed to Miss Fawcett. The doctor explained in a few words.

Mr. Kidd expressed himself as delighted to be of any service to Miss Fawcett, and he politely conducted her to the School House. The lady insisted upon taking Tom by the hand, and making him accompany her, so that he, too, should be satisfied by an inspection of his new home. It was a martyrdom to Tom. Fellows came to their study doors, or collected on the stairs, and in the corridors, to look at him.

Morning school was over, and all the School House seemed to be at liberty to devote its attention to the new boy. Mr. Kidd kept a face as solemn as a judge's, as he escorted Miss Fawcett over the building, and whenever he saw a grinning face he frowned at it. But chuckles and giggles followed the party wherever they moved. When they passed along the upper corridor, the chums of Study No. 6 were standing at their door, looking out with much interest.

"There it is again!" said Blake. "As large as life!" And as Tom Merry passed, they all four bowed low, with their hands upon their hearts, in the most respectful and graceful manner.

"Dear me!" said Miss Priscilla. "What nice, polite boys!"

But Tom was boiling inwardly. A little later, when Miss Fawcett went to inspect the dormitory, Tom contrived to slip away, and he returned to Study No. 6. He wanted to have a little talk to the chums there, a little talk which would probably have led to a little fight had Blake and his comrades been still there. But when Tom Merry opened the door the room was empty. The juniors were no longer in their quarters. Tom Merry glanced round the study, and a gleam of mischief darted into his eyes. He stepped quickly inside.

On the table stood a hat-box, which evidently contained a new silk topper, destined for one of the dwellers in Study No. 6. Near it were the books, papers, pens and ink belonging to the juniors, left where they had used them last.

Tom Merry's brain worked rapidly, and he owed the chums a little account which he now saw an opportunity of paying. Quickly opening the hat-box, he took hold of the hat, a gorgeous new topper, belonging to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's.

"My word!" murmured Tom Merry. "This will be a surprise for whoever wears this giddy hat. It will be one to me."

There was an inkpot of red ink on the inkstand. Tom picked it up and emptied about half the contents inside the leather lining in the hat. Then he returned it to the box.

There was a surprise in store for whoever wore that hat. Tom quitted the study and closed the door.

"My dearest Tommy, wherever have you been?" exclaimed Miss Fawcett, a little later. "I have looked over the house, Tommy, and I think it is quite satisfactory.

Mr. Kidd has shown me the study, you are to have. You will share it with two companions."

"Manners and Lowther, or there will be a row," said Tom to himself. And he went to inspect the study.

It was a new room belonging to some additions that had lately been built to the School House. A pleasant room, though not over-large, and Tom liked it. His nurse had already made a long list of articles that were to be sent down to furnish it from London. Tom having expressed himself satisfied with his new quarters, the tour of inspection ended for the time. Miss Priscilla lunched with the Head, while Tom took his dinner in the dining-hall of the School House with the rest of the house.

Glances were continually cast in his direction, and the room, in spite of Mr. Kidd's frowns, was in a continual giggle. But Blake was worried. He knew now that Tom Merry was to come into the School House, and he knew that Figgins & Co. would make endless capital out of it. What was to be done? The juniors consulted about it after dinner.

"Kill it!" said Percy Mellish. "That's the only thing to be done. By Jupiter, I have an idea! My hat, rather!"

"What's the idea?" said Blake, with a growl. "Your ideas are not usually worth much, unless you bone 'em from somebody else."

"If you can't be civil—"

"Oh, rats! What's the wheeze?"

"You can see how particular the old lady is about his health," said Percy, grinning. "She coddles him like a baby."

"Yes, poor beast."

"Suppose we make her believe there was something awfully wrong with the School House—she would make them shift him into the New House at once."

Blake jumped at the idea.

"My word, that's all right! Lemme see; how can it be

arranged? Kids, we've got to put our heads together over this."

"The drains," suggested Digby; "could we get anything wrong with them?"

"A smell in his study," said Herries. "Something strong and nifty."

"That's the idea! And I know how we can make his room awfully whiffy."

Blake darted off to Study No. 6, and returned with a tin of carbide of calcium in his hand. He used it for his cycle-lamp, and he knew its odorous qualities.

"Come along, kiddies," he grinned, "this is a great wheeze!"

The chums hurried off to the new study allotted to Tom Merry. It was very barely furnished so far, and the old square of carpet on the floor was not tacked down. Blake jerked it up and spread a sprinkling of calcium carbide on the floor. Then the carpet was laid over it.

In every corner of the room, where it was not likely to be observed, Blake sprinkled the evil-smelling compound, and when he had finished, the room certainly had a smell that would have alarmed the least nervous of old ladies.

Satisfied with their work, the juniors hurried away. It was a half-holiday that day at St. Jim's, and the weather being fine, Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, intended to take the Lower Form boys for a walk, and the chums had to get ready.

Miss Fawcett was looking for Tom Merry, to say good-bye to him, and at sight of the old lady Blake and his companions exchanged a series of winks.

"It's hard lines on the new chap, and no mistake!" said Blake, in tones loud enough for Miss Priscilla to hear.

"Yes; I am sorry for Merry," replied Digby, looking perfectly solemn. "I'm very sorry for him. But it can't be helped!"

"Of course, not," exclaimed Herries. "He must take his chance. The old part of the School House is full up to the roof, so it is only in the new wing that there's room for new boys. And if the drains there are in a shocking condition, that can't be helped!"

Miss Fawcett had stopped quite still. The bait had taken. Blake and his comrades grinned at each other, with their backs to the old lady, apparently unconscious of her presence.

"Besides," said Blake, "the smell isn't always bad. You might go into Merry's study, for instance, sometimes, and never notice anything. Then, at other times, the sniff would be simply shrieking! She's off!" he whispered a minute later.

And the chums, choking with suppressed laughter, watched Miss Priscilla making a bee-line for the stairs.

Without losing a moment Miss Fawcett hurried to the study. The snatch of the juniors' conversation, which she had overheard, seemed to her like an interposition of Providence, and she was greatly excited. She found the room again, and opened the door, and the smell from within made her gasp and stagger backwards.

"Oh, my dearest Tommy! He would have died! My dearest Tommy!"

A minute later the Head of St. Jim's was startled by the news that Miss Fawcett insisted upon seeing him immediately. With a sigh of resignation, the Head submitted.

"My dear madam, I—"

"Dr. Holmes, I am not satisfied with the conditions of the School House! My dearest boy must be put into the other house! I insist!"

"My dear Miss Fawcett—"

"The room that has been assigned to him had a most dreadful smell!"

"Impossible!"

"I have just been there, Dr. Holmes. It was positively terrible!"

"My dear madam—"

"Can I see the New House, Dr. Holmes, or must I take my dearest boy away with me?"

"Certainly, madam, you can see the New House!" said the poor doctor patiently. And he rang the bell, and sent a message to Mr. Ratcliff.

The master of the New House soon made his appearance. He was a thin, sour man, very unlike Mr. Kidd; but Miss Fawcett, with that dreadful smell in Tom's study in her mind—and her nose—did not care for anything else.

Dr. Holmes explained, and Mr. Ratcliff gave his arm to Miss Fawcett, and politely conducted her upon a fresh tour of inspection, this time in the New House.

Blake was on the watch, and he saw them go. He fell round Digby's neck in ecstasy.

"Do you see that?" he gasped. "The dear old soul's going to the New House. We're not going to have that horrid bounder, after all! Hurrah!"

## CHAPTER 5.

## Figgins &amp; Co. are Annoyed.

"ARE you roady, boys?"

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form, peered through his big spectacles at the boys as they formed up in the quadrangle.

The Fourth Form and the Third were there, with the Shell, ready to be taken for a nice walk that sunny afternoon, all arrayed in their nice silk-hats, and their nicest smilies, to meet the master's eye, and all inwardly fuming at being compelled to waste an hour, which might have been devoted to cricket, in ambling round the country lanes behind a shortsighted old gentleman, who thought he was giving them a treat.

These afternoon walks were a horror to all the juniors of St. Jim's, excepting possibly Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was glad of the chance of sporting a silk-hat, the Lower Form boys not being allowed to wear shiny toppers at St. Jim's, except upon state occasions.

Indeed, there had sometimes been "ructions" at the good old school because the Shell considered they had a right to wear tall-hats on ordinary occasions as much as the Lower Fifth had. But of that, more anon.

Arthur Augustus had had a nice new hat sent from home that day. He spent a good deal in hats and waistcoats, and this new topper was a marvel, fresh from Bond Street.

Mr. Lathom glanced along the line of boys, and noted the absence of three juniors belonging to the New House. He noted something else—Tom Merry, still in that charming velvet suit. Miss Fawcett had not yet departed from St. Jim's, and until she went Tom did not venture to attempt to get rid of those herrid clothes.

"Boy, who are you? What do you mean by this absurd masquerade?"

Mr. Lathom stared at Tom Merry through his spectacles.

Poor Tom coloured to the roots of his hair.

"If you please, sir, I am Tom Merry, and—"

"Oh! Ah, yes! Dr. Holmes mentioned you to me. Very good! Where are Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn?"

"I dare say they're doing some rejoicing," murmured Blake. "Merry is going into their house, and I wish them joy of him!"

"Figgins! Kerr! Wynn!"

The next moment Mr. Lathom knew where Figgins & Co. were. The three juniors came with a rush out of the porch of the New House, and hurled themselves upon Jack Blake.

Figgins, long and lanky; Wynn, short and stout; Kerr, canny and sandy—three of the best, famous at the good old school as Figgins & Co., and leaders of the New House juniors in their alarms and excursions against the School House!

And at the present moment Figgins & Co. seemed to be on the warpath with a vengeance. Without a word of explanation, they hurled themselves upon Jack Blake, and he went down in the dusty quad on his back, with the three on top of him.

Mr. Lathom stared at the strange spectacle in amazement. Figgins seemed not to observe the presence of a master. He ground Blake's nose in the dust, in wild excitement.

"Jump on him!" he gasped. "Slay him! Massacre him! Scalp him!"

Blake, breathless, struggling frantically, squirmed under the weight of the New House juniors.

"I'll teach you to palm off your freaks on us!" bellowed Figgins. "I'll teach you to get howling lunatics shoved into our house!"

"Slay him!" panted Kerr. "We're in for it now! We've got the freak planted on us, but we'll make the beast wriggle!"

"Let me get at him!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn wildly. "I want to sit on his head. I— Oh!"

Mr. Lathom's finger and thumb closing on Fatty Wynn's ear interrupted him.

The chums of Study No. 6 had been taken by surprise by the sudden attack. But they quickly rushed to the rescue.

Herries, Dig, and D'Arcy rushed to Blake's aid, and Figgins and Kerr were dragged off the suffering chief of the School House.

Figgins gave D'Arcy a thump on the nose that laid him on his back; but then he went down under a slog from Herries, who promptly sat upon him.

"What does this mean?" cried Mr. Lathom. "If you dare to strike another blow, I will send you into the headmaster's study! Explain yourself, Figgins."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir!" exclaimed Figgins, at Herries allowed him to rise. "I didn't see you, sir."

"I should imagine not, Figgins," said Mr. Lathom drily. "And now tell me, please, the meaning of this unwarrantable attack upon Blake. Blake, I hope you are not much hurt?"



Blake was looking very dusty and crumpled, but he grinned cheerfully.

"No, sir; I'm all right! It's only a little joke of Figgins & Co., and I don't mind. It's only fun, sir; really. Don't mind old Figgins!"

"Indeed! I cannot approve of such fun. Figgins, Wynn, Kerr, you will each take fifty lines! Fall in, boys!"

And, something like order being restored, the boys formed up, and marched off. But there came another interruption. Tom Merry was keeping a wary eye open for Miss Fawcett, hoping to escape a public good-bye, but the dear old lady was not to be baffled. She came out into the quad and hugged Tom.

"I am leaving the school now, Tommy, and I shall not see you when you return," she said. "So, good-bye, my sweetest boy!"

"Good-bye, nurse," said Tom Merry hastily—"good-bye!"

But Miss Priscilla was not finished yet.

"I have inspected the New House, Tommy, and I am quite satisfied with it. For the present, until further arrangements are made, you will share a study with four boys, named Figgins, or Wiggins—no, I think it is Higgins—and I forgot the others; but I was assured by a very polite young gentleman named Monteith that they are nice boys."

Figgins & Co. glared at one another. Blake chuckled. He had guessed the cause of the sudden outburst of wrath on the part of Figgins & Co., but he had not known that it was so bad as that.

The new boy was not only going into the New House, but into the very study of Figgins & Co., and they owed that treat to Monteith, the head prefect of the New House.

"Mr. Ratcliff will introduce you to this Stiggins, I think the name is," went on Miss Fawcett. "Stiggins, or Wiggins, is a nice boy, and I am sure he will be kind to you, and pleased to have you in his study. The drains of the New House seem to be in perfect order, so far as I can ascertain, and there is no dreadful smell like in the room first assigned to you in the School House."

"Yes, yes; good-bye, nurse!"

"You will not forget what I told you about always wearing flannel on your chest, and the hot-water bottle—"

"Yes, yes."

"If you take the codliver-oil I have left for you every evening, a tablespoonful—"

"Yes; good-bye!"

"Pardon me, madam, but you are delaying us," said Mr. Lathom politely.

Perhaps he took pity on Tom, who was scarlet, while the rest of the column were giggling like lunatics.

"I beg your pardon, sir. Good-bye, dear Tommy! And, throwing her arms round Tom's neck, Miss Priscilla kissed him on the forehead, and at last he escaped.

Most of the juniors seemed to be in hysterics as they marched for the gate. Even Mr. Lathom was smiling, though he tried to keep a serious face.

Tom breathed more freely on the open road, safe from the terrible attentions of his fond nurse.

"Oh, chase me!" murmured Blake. "Kiss me on my baby brow, and call me Angelina!"

Tom glared at him.

"Do you want a thick ear, Blake?"

"Silence there!" said Mr. Lathom. "Step out! Dear me, D'Arcy, what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, sir," said Arthur Augustus, looking surprised.

"That fearful blow Figgins gave you has caused an effusion of blood. Do you feel no pain? Look at your face!"

It was hardly possible for D'Arcy to look at his face, but he put up his hand and felt it, and the effect was startling.

The red ink Tom Merry had so liberally placed under the band inside his hat was oozing through, and it had begun to trickle down his forehead. D'Arcy had felt the dampness, and imagined it to be perspiration, as the day was warm. As he felt over his face to see what was the matter, he smothered the streams of red ink over his features.

Mr. Lathom was too short-sighted to see what the juniors saw at once, that it was red ink oozing out under the brim of D'Arcy's hat. He fixed a horrified gaze upon the boy.

"D'Arcy! This is terrible! Come here, let me examine your injury at once."

"But I am not injured, sir!" exclaimed D'Arcy,

"Your head is bleeding terribly."

D'Arcy looked at his hand, which was crimsoned. He took off his hat and looked into it, and uttered an exclamation of horror.

"Some horrid beast's been sticking red ink into my hat!"

"Ink!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, greatly relieved, but very angry. "Who could have played such a trick? This must be inquired into at once!"

"My new hat!" bellowed D'Arcy. "It cost me a giddy guinea!"

"His nice, new hat!" said Figgins. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Figgins, did you play this absurd trick upon D'Arcy?"

"I, sir? Oh, no, sir. I respect D'Arcy too much to play a trick upon him."

"Where did you leave your hat, D'Arcy?"

"It came down from London to-day!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "It was left in the box on my study table. Some beastly bounder—"

"It must have been one of your study mates," said the master of the Fourth sternly. "Now, Blake, Herries, and Digby, you will each of you take fifty—"

"Pardon me, sir," said Tom Merry, with his best bow.

"May I speak, sir?"

"Certainly, if you have anything to say connected with this matter."

"I happen to know who played that trick, sir, and I think I ought to tell you."

A hiss came from every boy within hearing.

"Sneak! Sneak!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, though he looked far from pleased. "Speak, Merry."

"Shall I tell you his name, sir?"

"You had better do so."

"I don't want to get him punished, sir."

"It would have been better if you had not spoken. Tattle-telling is not approved of in this school, Merry. I shall not punish the perpetrator of this practical joke, because I should not consider myself justified in doing so under the circumstances. Now you may tell me his name."

"Very well, sir. I did it."

There was a moment's silence, then the juniors howled with laughter. Mr. Lathom stared at Tom Merry for a moment, and then caught him by the ear.

"Hold on!" cried Tom. "You said you wouldn't punish me!"

"I said I—you—well, well." The master of the Fourth released Tom's ear. "I will keep my word, Merry, though you have certainly tricked me. D'Arcy, you may return to St. James's, and get that terrible mess cleaned off, and you had better go, too, Merry. Boys, march on."

And the afternoon's walk proceeded without Tom Merry or the swell of St. Jim's.

## CHAPTER 6.

### A Little Joke on Figgy.

FIGGINS & CO. were looking hostile. Blake had succeeded in planting the peculiar-looking new boy upon them; for Figgins & Co. knew well that Blake was at the bottom of it. It was some trick proceeding from Study No. 6 that had disgusted Miss Fawcett with the School House, and sent Tom Merry across the way to his new quarters.

But to have the new boy planted upon them in their very own study was the unkindest cut of all. The study was not a large one, but it was cosy. It had done very comfortably for Figgins and the original Co. The addition of Marmaduke Smythe had made the quarters somewhat crowded. Now to have a fresh arrival, and that arrival a freak, thrust upon them, was simply too bad.

"There's only one consolation," said Figgins, sitting on the study table that evening. "As he belongs to the next Form above ours, they can't leave him long in this study, I should imagine. It's only a question of how long they take to shift him out, though I suppose we shall have to put up with him in the house."

"Rotten!" said Kerr and Wynn.

"It's just the old game over again," said Figgins. "Blake was at the bottom of planting Marmaduke on us—"

"Oh, I say, Figgy!" said Marmaduke.

"Well, that's ancient history now," agreed Figgins. "But you know you were a frightful bounder at the time, Marmaduke, before we reformed you."

"But we don't want that freak here," said Marmaduke, changing the subject.

"No, and the sooner we make him clear the better. Hallo, here he is!"

Tom Merry walked in. His face was as merry and good-tempered as ever, and but for his ridiculous clothes he would not have made an unfavourable impression upon the chums.

"Hallo, freak!" said Kerr. "Why don't you get back into the monkey-house?"

"Please I've come," said Tom Merry.

It took Kerr some seconds to see the point of that remark, and when he did he turned red with wrath.

"Look here, you howling spooney—"

"Oh, dry up," said Tom. "You don't want me in this study?"



"Oh, my Aunt Mary Ann Jackson!" gasped Blake. "This is simply horrid! Won't I make that howling brute Merry sit up for this some time!" (See page 14.)

"No, we don't," said Figgin & Co., in chorus.

"Then the feeling is reciprocated, for I don't want to come here. I don't want to be in your measly old house at all."

The four occupants of the study looked at each other in amazement. This was decidedly an unexpected line for the new boy to take.

"I made up my mind to go into the School House," continued Tom Merry calmly, "I'm going to get back there somehow. I wouldn't be found dead in this house."

Figgins & Co. gasped.

"You'll be found dead in it if you're not more civil," said Figgins darkly.

"Oh, rats to you!"

Figgins jumped off the table.

"Did you say rats to me?"

"No, I said rats to you."

Figgins waited for no more. He went for Tom Merry like a mad bull, and the two gripped each other and went staggering round the study in deadly strife. It was not in accordance with the laws of fair play for the Co. to interfere, so they contented themselves with dodging the combatants, who tramped and reeled right and left, first one way and then another.

The study table went flying, and the bookcase was knocked over on top of it. Figgins kicked the coal-box out of his way, and Tom Merry tramped on the fender. Still, neither having gained any advantage, they struggled.

"Here, I say, chuck it, the study will get wrecked!" exclaimed Kerr. "Pull 'em apart, kids!"

Kerr laid hold of Figgins, and Wynn and Marmaduke gripped Tom Merry. They came apart with a tug, and stood glaring and panting. Figgins was the first to recover himself.

"Well, my hat!" he ejaculated. "There's more in you than I thought, Spooney. You know how to wrestle, and you've got some muscle, too!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"It's not my fault that I'm in these clothes," he said. "You shouldn't judge by appearances. As soon as my box comes from Clavering I'm going to change into Etons, and make a bonfire of these silly things."

"Well, in that case I'll let you alone," said Figgins magnanimously. "Look here, you belong to the Shell, don't you?"

"Yes, I'm not a kid."

"If you call the Fourth kids," said Figgins, looking war-

like again, "there will be ructions, Mr. Awfully Clever Merry."

"Oh, that's all right! I'll call you goats if you like, and perhaps that would be nearer the mark," said Tom Merry. "Now, take it calmly, because I sha'n't be longer than I can help in this beastly hole you call a study."

The door opened and a number of juniors stared into the room. Pratt was at their head.

"Hallo, Figgy! I hear you've been catching freaks? Ah, there it is! I say, Merry, are there any more at home like you?"

"Oh, go away and play!" said Tom. "Your face gives me a pain!"

"Well, you funny animal, of all the cheek—"

"Oh, get home!"

And Tom Merry gave Pratt a push that sent him staggering against his followers, and as they obligingly got out of the way, Pratt measured his length in the passage. Tom Merry closed the door.

"Now, Figgy, you chaps must be quiet," he said, "I've got some preparation to do."

Figgins & Co. looked at one another. To have a new boy taking the upper hand of them like this was an unexpected experience for them, and they did not like it. It looked as if there would be war again, but just then came a call from up the passage.

"Fag! Fag-a-a-ag!"

"That beast Monteith!" exclaimed Figgins. "I've got to go!"

And he left the study. Tom Merry sat down at the table. The Co. looked at him dubiously, and then looked at one another. Then they left the study after Figgins.

Tom Merry had some preparation to do for the morrow's lessons, and the master had told him that he would be able to borrow some books of Figgins till his own arrived. He looked round the study for what he wanted, found the same, and settled down to work, borrowing pen, ink, and paper from the supplies of Figgins & Co.

He was busily occupied, when there was a sound of bumping on the stairs, and the door of the study flew violently open. Tom Merry jumped up. Taggles, the school porter, came into the room with a grunt, carrying a good-sized parcel on his shoulder. He thumped it down on the floor.

"Which I says," said Taggles, glaring at Tom as if he had mortally offended him in some unknown way—"which I says that I won't carry it no further."

"Don't, then," said Tom politely.

"Which I'm an old soldier, and I'm not going to carry



that blessed parcel up those blessed stairs to the blessed dormitory to please any blessed kid in this blessed school!"

"My word!" said Tom. "What a number of blessings flying about. Who's the parcel for?"

"It's for Master Figgins," grunted Taggles. "Which it's the clothes from the tailor's, and Figgins not here to give me a tanner even for my trouble."

"Would it do if I gave you the tanner?"

Taggles looked at him suspiciously.

"Yes, it would do just as well, sir," he replied, with unusual civility.

"Then, I'm sorry, I've not got one about me," said Tom. Taggles stamped to the door.

"Which I says," he remarked, "that any blessed kid who comes to a blessed school dressed up like a blessed guy, ought to have his blessed neck wrung."

"That's rude, my dear fellow; here, catch. I haven't a tanner about me, but I suppose a bob will do."

Taggles caught the shilling as it spun in the air.

"Which you're a gentleman," he said. "A real gentleman, though you do look like a blessed guy. You're a gentleman, you are."

"Thanks," said Tom. "Who wouldn't be a gentleman at the low price of one shilling?"

Taggles looked at him as if he did not quite catch on, and left the study. Tom Merry stood regarding the parcel with a twinkle in his eye. His box had not yet arrived from Clavering, and might not arrive till the following day. The clothes he was wearing were getting on his nerves, and seemed to be getting on everybody else's. Figgins had insisted upon a change at the earliest possible moment. It seemed only fair that Figgins should provide the change.

"My aunt Mary Ann Jackson!" murmured Tom. "It's a ripping idea, and if I can get a quick change done before those bounders come back, it's a go! Stop—I'll buzz the parcel off to the dormitory, I sha'n't be interrupted there."

He picked up the parcel and hurried upstairs with it. At that hour the dormitory was, of course, deserted, and Tom Merry had it to himself. He laid the parcel on a bed, and unfastened the string. He opened it, and disclosed a brand-new suit of clothes, made to the measure of the great Figgins.

Tom's eyes danced at the sight. With a little squeezing, Figgins's clothes would fit him very well. They were much of a build, only Figgins was leaner. Tom unfolded the clothes, and discarded his own, and made the change in record time.

The nice, new Eton suit really looked very charming. The trousers were rather tight round his legs, and the jacket close across the shoulders, and the waistcoat met with some slight difficulty; but the fit wasn't bad, considering. Tom Merry was satisfied. Whether Figgins would be satisfied was another question.

Tom looked at himself in a glass, and was pleased. He folded up his own clothes and placed them in the parcel, wrapping it up very carefully and tying the string. The outside bore the name of Figgins, so there would be no mistake about its delivery.

Then Tom descended the stairs to the study. He found Figgins & Co. in their quarters. They looked up when he entered, not knowing him at first.

"Hallo! Who are you?" said Figgins. "Why—what—it's the new kid!"

"Large as life!" said Tom cheerfully. "I've got a change of clothes at last."

"What have you done with the others?"

"Wrapped them up as a present for a silly bounder I know!"

"Well, that's the kind of fellow they're suitable for. You look better—much better," said Figgins, surveying the changed Tom Merry with a critical eye. "But, I say, you've got a rotten bad tailor!"

"Think so? Well, the chap who made these clothes makes things for some awfully low cads," said Tom blandly.

"I dare say. The trousers are like pipe-stems. Must have been made for a chap who hadn't any calves to speak of, I should say."

"Very likely," said Tom, with a glance at Figgins's extremities. "In fact, I think you're right. To tell you the truth, Figgy, these clothes were not made for me, but I got them for nothing, so I can't grumble."

"The dickens! Do you have your clothes given to you, then? You seem to be a funny animal, anyway. Still, they're rotten-looking things, but they're better than the horrors you've been wearing. Next time you get any clothes on the cheap, don't take any that were made for a skinny scarecrow, if you can help it."

"I'll remember," said Tom, inwardly bubbling with mirth at Figgins's unflattering description of his own lanky person. "You're right, Figgy, I admit, that the chap these clothes were made for must have been a howling specimen

of a scarecrow, and no mistake. The kind of chap you wouldn't see at all if he stood sideways. But I'm glad you think I'm improved. I attach a lot of value to your opinion, Figgins—I do, really. And I especially wanted to have it on the subject of these clothes."

Figgins looked at him suspiciously.

"You seem to be pleased with something," he remarked.

"What's the joke?"

"Oh, you'll know soon, so that's all right. I say, I see you're making preparations for tea. Good! Of course, you want me to join you?"

"Rats! Still, as you're here, you may as well tuck in."

"Figgy, your hospitality is only equalled by your pleasant manners."

"Look here," exclaimed Figgins, exasperated, "if you call me Figgy again, I'll stick some of this marmalade down the back of your neck!"

"All right, Figgy! I won't call you Figgy if you don't like being called Figgy, Figgy. But really, Figgy, Figgy is a pretty name, and, if you don't mind, Figgy—"

That was too much for Figgins. He seized the pot of marmalade, and went for Tom Merry. Tom dodged, and the marmalade, instead of going where Figgins had threatened he should have it, smothered the back of the Eton jacket.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins. "That will improve your clothes, and no mistake!"

"May as well improve them a bit more," said Kerr; and he poured the contents of the milk-jug over Tom's legs with a light sweep of the hand.

"Good wheeze!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "He can have some coffee on his waistcoat, too. It will give the thing a flavour."

And a coffee-cup deposited its contents on Tom Merry's manly chest.

"Don't leave me out!" exclaimed Marmaduke; and his contribution was a pat of butter, which slopped on Tom's trousers.

The Co. were prepared for war to follow; but, to their surprise, the new boy took the assault in good part, and could not contain his laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins & Co. at the spectacle Tom presented.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom, in reply.

Figgins & Co. were taken aback.

"Why, the lunatic seems to enjoy it!" ejaculated Figgins.

"He must be right off his silly rocket!"

"He's rotting!" said Kerr. "Ha, ha, ha! Hear me smile!"

"Hear us smile!" chorused Figgins & Co. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom.

He was wriggling with mirth, and the amazed Co. had to admit that his mirth seemed quite genuine, and his evident enjoyment of the situation rather took the edge off the joke.

"Oh, let him cackle!" said Figgins. "Let's have some tea."

And they sat down to tea, and Tom, in spite of the terrible state he was in, was quite at his ease, and enjoyed the meal. His occasional chuckles at the humour of the situation struck him further amazed the Co.; but Figgins was destined to be enlightened in a way that was far from pleasant; and Tom Merry serenely anticipated the moment when the chief of the New House juniors would discover the terrible truth.

## CHAPTER 7. A Hot Chase.

"YOU'RE in our dormitory to-night, Merry," Figgins remarked at bed-time. "Monteith has just told me so. I fancy you're not going to stay in the New House, after all, or you'd be fixed up with your own Form. For this relief, much thanks!"

"Same here!" said Tom. "Measly, rotten, old place, this house, isn't it?"

Figgins looked inclined for war at this aspersion upon his beloved house, but the moment was not propitious. Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, was there, to "chivy" the juniors up to the dormitory, as Figgins put it. Monteith stopped at the sight of Tom Merry, and stood staring at him.

"Hallo, you new kid! What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing," replied Tom cheerfully.

"What have you been doing to your clothes?"

Tom looked down at the sticky, horrible-looking garments. "Some things got spilt over them," he replied. "Accidents will happen. I don't mind."

The prefect looked at him curiously.

"Are you the funny merchant who came here dressed up like a baby?" he asked. "Yes, I see you are. You look a bit more sane now, but you have spoiled that suit of clothes."

"That doesn't matter; they're not mine."

Monteith laughed.

"I see, you've borrowed a change of clothes."

"Yes."

"Well, I hope the owner will be pleased when he sees them again," grinned the prefect. "Whom do they belong to?"

"Figgins."

"Ha, ha, ha! Off to bed, now, kids."

Figgins nudged Tom Merry as the juniors went upstairs. "What did you mean by telling Monteith that crammer, Merry?"

"I didn't tell him any crammer."

"You said the clothes belonged to me."

"So they do."

Figgins knitted his brows.

"Do you mean to say that you've collared a suit of my clothes without asking my permission, you outsider?"

"Yes, Figgy, that's exactly what I mean."

"You're rotting. You couldn't get at them without the key, and I've got it in my pocket. Lucky for you, too, you spooney!"

Tom Merry grinned. A surprise was waiting for Figgins in the dormitory.

"Hallo, Figgy! Here's your togs come!" said Fatty Wynn, nodding to the parcel lying on one of the beds. "Taggles has stuck it on my bed."

"Good!" said Figgins. "I was expecting them to-day."

He cut the cord of the parcel.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Tom Merry. "Hear me smile!" Figgins looked at him quickly; then he looked at the parcel again, and then again at Tom Merry.

"Merry, do you mean to say—"

"Hear me smile! Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins, with a terrible anxiety tugging at his heart, tore open the parcel with feverish fingers. Every eye in the dormitory was fixed upon him. The clothes came to light.

Figgins held up the beautiful velvet knickerbockers, and gave a howl of rage.

"Hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Pratt. "Somebody been sending you a present, Figgy? Ha, ha! You'll look nice in those—as nice as Spooney himself."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from Tom Merry. "You're welcome to them, Figgy. I wonder if you are getting sorry now about slopping that marmalade over me?"

The full hideousness of the truth burst upon the unhappy Figgins. That was why Tom Merry had taken the joke in the study so cheerfully. Figgins had been spoiling his own brand-new suit of clothes.

"You—you howler!" roared Figgins. "I'll make mince-meat of you!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You said the clothes were made for a skinny scarecrow, Figgins. About right, weren't you, Figgy?"

Figgins did not waste breath in words. His feelings were too deep for words, and the strongest words ever invented would not have done justice to them. He simply went for Tom Merry like a raging bull.

Tom dodged and eluded his tackle with the neatness of a Rugger three-quarter, and went up the dormitory in full flight, with the furious Figgins behind. The boys stood round shrieking with laughter at the sight.

Away went Tom Merry, running well; but the angry Figgins's long legs seemed to move like lightning, and he rapidly gained ground.

"Look out, Spooney!" yelled Pratt. "He's got you! Dodge over the giddy bed!"

Tom took the hint. He dodged Figgins round and over the last bed of the dormitory, and started back the way he had come, leaping from bed to bed with the activity of a mountain goat.

Opinionous creaks came from some of the beds as he alighted upon them, and after him came Figgins, still in a white heat of fury.

"Buck up, Figgy!"

"Dodge him, Tom Merry!"

"Go it!"

"Bravo!"

"Hurrah!"

The juniors were in ecstasies. Tom Merry was fully enjoying the joke, though Figgins was in deadly earnest. They reached the end of the dormitory, and Tom Merry wriggled under a bed with the quickness of an eel, and started off again before the slower Figgins could get hold of him.

There was a fresh burst of cheers as the chase went up the length of the great dormitory for the third lap. In the

midst of the excitement the chase was terminated by a sudden mishap. Tom Merry had jumped on Fatty Wynn's bed, and thence to the next. A second later Figgins alighted on Wynn's bed, close on the track; but the bed, though it had stood the weight of Fatty for a long time, was not built to stand this sort of usage.

There was a fearful crash, and the bed went through, and Figgins plumped down in the midst of the ruins.

Figgins gave a yell, and the rest of the juniors gasped; and as the loyal Co. rushed to help their chief from his uncomfortable position, the door opened, and Monteith looked in.

"What's all this confounded noise about?" demanded the prefect sourly. "Figgins, what have you smashed up that bed for? I don't know whose it is, but you'll sleep in that bed this time. Do you hear? Now, three minutes before lights out!"

And the prefect withdrew and closed the door. Figgins was dragged out. The affair had to end where it was. Monteith was not the kind of prefect to be trifled with. Figgins gave Tom Merry a glare of wrath.

"Oh, won't I make you sit up to-morrow!" he growled.

And he began to put the wrecked bed to rights as well as he could.

Tom Merry, panting, exhausted, more with laughter than the running, began to undress.

"Don't get chippy, old Figgy!" he exclaimed. "You can't deny that it's a howling joke, now can you? Next time you want to stick marmalade on a chap's togs, make sure he hasn't borrowed your best Sunday suit! Ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha!" roared the juniors, who could see the joke if Figgy could not.

And Figgy's face gradually relaxed into a grin.

When Monteith looked into the dormitory three minutes later the juniors were all in bed; but Figgy's bed was extremely uncomfortable, threatening to give way every moment beneath his weight. He had to lie along the edge of it to secure himself from falling through.

The prefect grinned as he turned out the light.

From the darkness came the cheerful voice of Tom Merry:

"Hallo, Figgy! Can you see the joke yet?"

Figgins snored.

## CHAPTER 8.

### A Tale of Treacle.

THE next day Tom Merry's box arrived from Clavering, and he was able to effect another change of clothing, which he very much needed. Clad in everyday raiment, he ceased to be the conspicuous object he had been on his first arrival at St. Jim's, but the juniors did not soon leave off chipping him. But Tom Merry stood all that cheerfully.

Figgins had decided to take the previous evening's occurrence as a joke, and to let it end there—a very wise decision. Tom Merry still found relations rather strained in the study, but open hostility was gone. Indeed, there was one member of the Co. who was willing to extend the olive-branch with all his heart—on conditions.

That member was Fatty Wynn. Fatty was the Falstaff of the New House. The school meals always left him unsatisfied, and the feeds in the study seldom quite filled the aching void he complained of. The arrival of a new boy was an event of great interest to Fatty, for that event generally meant a spread of some kind.

And it was with the thought of a study brew in his mind that Fatty began to show signs of friendliness towards Tom Merry.

"Like me to help you with your German, Merry?" he asked.

Tom Merry looked at him with all the dignity of a youth removed one degree above the Fourth Form.

"A fellow in the Shell doesn't usually get help from a Lower Form kid!" he replied. "Thank you, all the same, youngster!"

That word youngster nearly dispersed all Fatty's friendly intentions to the four winds, but the thought of the possibility of a feed calmed him again.

"All right, Merry," he said. "I only wanted to be friendly. I say, your box has come from home, hasn't it?"

"No; it's come from the school I came from."

"Ah, yes! I hear they're closing Clavering," said Fatty loftily. "Not much of a school, was it? St. Jim's always licked Clavering at cricket."

"There's a Clavering chap who will lick you if you don't be civil!" said Tom Merry.

"Oh, you're not Clavering now; you're a Saint!" said Fatty. "No offence. I say, I suppose you have got a lot of tommy in your box?"

Tom Merry laughed.





gether. There was a fearful crash. Bottles and jars came down in a shower, mostly smashing as they fell, and over them the combatants trampled furiously.

"Cave!" shouted Tom Merry. "Look out!"

The warning came too late. Mrs. Trotter, in bonnet and shawl, arrayed for going out, had been drawn to the nether regions by the din, and now she burst upon the scene, screeching with wrath.

"You dreadful boys! My jams! My pickles! My preserves!"

"Oh!" roared Fatty, as the stout matron caught him a terrible box on the ears. And "Oh!" came from Pratt the next moment for the same reason.

"My pickles and preserves! My jams!" cried Mrs. Trotter. "Take that, and that, and that!"

Common danger made the foes make common cause. As the stout lady blocked the way of escape, they charged her together, and Mrs. Trotter staggered out of the way. The two juniors raced away for the stairs.

The incensed lady was after them in a twinkling, a broom in her hand. Fatty Wynn yelled as he received a crack across the shoulders, and Pratt gasped with the shock of a dig in the small of the back. Then the head of the broom caught in Wynn's legs and he tumbled over.

Mrs. Trotter held hold of him in a moment.

"Rescue!" shrieked Fatty, as the good lady commenced to spank him with all the force of a muscular right arm, and a hand almost as large as a pancake. "Help, Pratt!"

But Pratt was flying upstairs as fast as his legs could carry him.

"Rescue! Don't! I won't do it again, Mrs. Trotter! Oh, crickets!"

Slap, slap, slap!

Tom Merry heard the sounds of strife and woe. He could not come to Fatty's help, but he thought he could cause a diversion. He leaned in at the window as far as he could and began to knock the jars off the shelves. Crash on crash followed with a terrific noise; and Mrs. Trotter, hearing the havoc among her treasures, left Fatty and hurried back to see what was the matter.

Fatty was off like a shot, and as soon as he caught sight of Mrs. Trotter's excited face, so was Tom Merry. Five minutes later he entered Figgins's study, calm and smiling as ever. Fatty was there, squirming and rubbing the injured parts of himself, and smothering treacle over everything he came in contact with.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Tom Merry looked in at the door. "Hear me snarl! This is going to cost two or three weeks' pocket-money!"

And then he departed. Fatty Wynn was not quite safe at close quarters just then.

## CHAPTER 9.

### After the Feast the Reckoning!—Rivals, but Friends.

M R. KIDD, the master of the School House at St. Jim's, sniffed suspiciously. He had entered the study in the new wing of the School House, which had been assigned to Tom Merry, and which Miss Priscilla had insisted should be his domicile. The Head had patiently acceded to Miss Fawcett's wishes while the good lady was at St. Jim's. But he had no intention of altering his arrangements to please the old soul's whims.

Tom Merry had been put into the New House temporarily till his old governess was gone. The Head had asked Mr. Kidd to look over the new building and see if there was any ground for Miss Priscilla's uneasiness.

Mr. Kidd visited room after room, but there was nothing wrong to be detected until he came to the study that was to be Tom Merry's. Then he stopped and sniffed. He sniffed again in a very suspicious way. There was certainly a very strange and unpleasant odour in the room, one suggestive of dead rats under the floor, or rotten vegetation in a cupboard.

What could it be? There seemed to be nothing wrong with the room, and that it was not due to the drains was certain from the fact that the smell was confined to the one room. The housemaster noticed that it was strongest when he stood in the centre of the room, and, a thought striking him, he jerked up the corner of the square of carpet. Then he sniffed again, and a smile broke over his face.

"A trick. I thought as much."

He could see the carbide of calcium which Jack Blake had distributed so carefully now. He let the carpet fall with a laugh. The smell was certainly bad, for the calcium was not of the improved kind which has only a faint smell. It was the old shocking kind, and Mr. Kidd did not wonder that Miss Fawcett had been alarmed. Naturally the old lady was not a cyclist, and knew nothing about the chemical. But Mr. Kidd knew.

"Ha, ha! Evidently the juniors did not want Merry in the School House. This smacks of Study No. 6. I must speak to Kildare."

Mr. Kidd left the room, and on his way back to his own quarters, looked in at Kildare's study. The captain of St. Jim's was there.

"Kildare, I suppose you know whether any of the juniors in this house uses an acetylene bicycle lamp?" said the housemaster.

"Yes," said the captain, looking surprised; "Blake does."

"Blake! I thought so."

And the housemaster continued his way to Study No. 6. The door was ajar, and the cheerful voices of the four chums could be heard.

"I saw the boundah to-day"—it was D'Arcy's voice—"and he weally looked quite decent, don't-cher-know. He had changed his clothes."

"Time he did," said Blake. "Still, we don't want him in the School House. He's too funny a sort of fish for us."

"Right-ho!" chimed in Herries. "The New House is nearer his mark. He's a funny merchant, though I admit he looks all right to-day. I saw him in the quad. But there's a look in his eye that shows there would be trouble if he came into the School House. My opinion is that he'd want to boss."

"I'd like to see him doing it," said Blake. "Things are looking like war already. Some of the chaps in the Shell think they ought to take the lead in the tussles with the New House, and think the Fourth Form ought to be glad to follow their lead. Which, of course, is all rot!"

"Rather! We know the Shell is a step above the Fourth. But, bless you, they haven't got our brains! And how many are there of them exactly?"

"My idea exactly! We're not going to take a back seat for anybody, if I know it! So, if that's the kind of kipper the new kid is, it'll save trouble for him to be stuck in the New House. He—Hallo! I didn't see you, sir!"

A cough had interrupted Blake. Mr. Kidd was standing in the doorway, looking into the study with a smile upon his face. The four juniors jumped up quickly.

"I want to speak to you, Blake," said Mr. Kidd, as if he had heard nothing of the discussion, though the juniors knew he must have heard most of it. "I believe you are a cyclist, Blake?"

"Yes, sir," said Blake wonderingly.

"What kind of lamp do you use?"

"An acetylene one, sir."

"Have you lost any carbide of calcium lately?"

Blake understood at once.

"No, sir."

"Perhaps you have mislaid some?"

"No, I don't think so, sir."

"Then, I suppose it is your usual custom to keep your calcium sprinkled over the floor under the carpet in a new boy's study?" asked Mr. Kidd blandly.

Blake coloured under the housemaster's keen eye.

"No—yes, sir!" he gasped. "I—that is—"

"I have just found some there," said Mr. Kidd. "It conveyed quite an erroneous impression to a lady who was looking over the School House, leading her to suppose that the sanitary conditions of the building were not exactly as they should be. Of course, when you placed your calcium carbide in that safe and handy place, you didn't foresee anything of that kind."

Blake's blushes deepened under the housemaster's banter. For once in his life he did not quite know what to say.

"The study is about to be occupied, as the new scholars are coming over from Clavering School to-morrow," went on Mr. Kidd, still quite blandly. "It is therefore necessary for you to find some other place to keep your chemical in, Blake."

"Yes, sir," stammered Blake.

"So you will please remove it, Blake! Every bit, mind, so that there is not even a smell left behind. Have you noticed that it smells somewhat strongly?"

"I—I believe I have, sir."

"Good! I have noticed it, too. The room will probably want scrubbing out to remove the smell, and Mrs. Clyne will give you some sanitary soap for the purpose."

"I—I—I—"

"I am sorry if you do not like the task, Blake, but you must admit that it is due to your carelessness in selecting such a strange place to keep your carbide of calcium. You won't forget to see to that to-day, will you?"

"No, sir," said poor Blake.

# DAILY MAIL

DON'T MISS the Long, Complete Tale, TOM MERRY next Thursday, by Martin Clifford, of



And the housemaster left the study. The chums heard him chuckle as he went down the passage. Blake looked the picture of dismay.

"This," he said, looking round, "is absolutely rotten! Oh, my Aunt Mary Ann Jackson! Fancy scrubbing out a rotten study! What the dickens are you laughing at?"

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

"You silly, cackling geese—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you make me tired!" said Blake crossly. "Who's going to help me get that beastly study cleaned out?"

"You must really excuse me," said Herries; "I'm afraid I should get housemaid's knee."

"I'd do it like a shot," said Digby, "but I've promised to play fives with D'Arcy directly after school."

"And I'd jump to do it, weally," said D'Arcy, "but I've promised to play fives with Dig immediately aftah school, deah boy."

Blake grunted.

"Nice lot of chums you are for a chap to have. There's nothing nasty in just scrubbing a floor. It's good exercise, really, and will save you the trouble of whisking about the Indian clubs or punching the ball."

"Right-ho! It's a good exercise, and good exercise is just what you want," said Herries. "We wouldn't deprive you of it for worlds, would we, chaps?"

"Not for continents!" said Digby, grinning. "I've been rather overdoing the exercise business lately, but you want some to keep you fit, Blake. Go in and win, my boy!"

"Oh, go and eat muffins!" said Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha! Suppose you ask Percy Mellish; it was his idea, you know."

"By Jupiter! So I will!"

And immediately after afternoon school, Blake button-holed Percy Mellish as he came out of the Fourth Form class-room.

"I say, Mellish, old chap, I want to speak to you!" he said, in an extremely hearty way.

"Well, there's no law against it that I know of," said Percy suspiciously. He was always suspicious, especially of Jack Blake. Blake was not usually so cordial.

"Of course not!" agreed Blake. "That was a ripping idea of yours the other day!"

"What idea?" asked Percy, beginning to thaw.

"You know—about sticking that calcium carbide in Merry's study, so that the old lady would shift her darling boy into the New House."

Percy grinned.

"Yes, jolly good wheeze, wasn't it?"

"Awfully good, old chap! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha! But really you thought of the calcium yourself, Blake. I only suggested making out that something was wrong with the place," said Percy modestly.

"Oh, no, I won't have you denying yourself the credit in that way, Mellish. It was your idea, from start to finish, and a jolly, ripping good idea it was, and no mistake! Ha, ha, ha!" giggled Blake.

"Well, of course, it was really my idea," agreed Percy.

"Funny, too! Ha, ha, ha!"

"But after the feed comes the reckoning, you know."

"How's that?" said Percy uneasily.

"Why, Kidlets has smelled the carbide, and he wants it cleaned up."

"Oh, he does, does he?"

"Yes, I didn't let on to him that it was your idea—"

"Look here, Blake, I—"

"Of course, I wouldn't give you away."

"That's all very well, Blake, but—"

"In fact," said Blake heartily, "as soon as old Kidlets began to talk I made up my mind that I would help you clean up the stuff."

"Did you?" said Percy rebelliously. "Well, let me tell you—"

"Oh, don't mention it! You'd do as much for me, I'm sure. The house-dame will give us some sanitary soap and a pail of water. Come on, old fellow!"

"I tell you I'm not going to—"

"That's all right! Come along!"

And Blake linked his arm in Mellish's, and hurried him off, willy-nilly, to the house-dame's room. But at the door Percy Mellish, having waited till Blake had knocked, twisted himself loose, and darted off like lightning.

Blake turned to pursue, but the door opened. The house-dame smiled at the sight of Blake. Evidently she knew all about the matter from Mr. Kidd.

"Ah, you have come about the cleaning, Master Blake?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Blake, inwardly boiling. "Mr. Kidd wants me to do it, and I don't like to refuse."

"Ha, ha! Molly will give you the things. I have told her."

Molly was smiling, too, when she handed Blake a pail of steaming water, a scrubbing-brush and soap, and a broom.

Blake took the pail in one hand, the soap and broom in the other, and let the scrubbing-brush float in the pail.

Thus accoutred, he marched off to the room.

Percy Mellish had mischievously spread the news, for he knew pretty well how matters stood, and a big crowd of juniors had collected in the passage to watch Blake come.

The chief of the School House juniors turned as red as fire as he saw that he was to have an audience.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Mellish. "It will be funny to see Blake doing some washing. He hates soap and water as a rule."

Blake set down his burden inside the room.

"I suppose you like it, Mellish?" he said, as he picked the floating brush out of the pail of steaming, hot water.

"Yes, rather. I—"

"Then, take some!"

A slop of water from the brush went over Percy Mellish, and he jumped back.

"You beastly rotter, I'll—I'll—"

Splash! A second dose cut short Mellish's threats in the middle, and he thought it better upon the whole to beat a retreat.

Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy looked in at the door. Blake had turned back the carpet, and was sweeping up the sprinkled calcium.

"Getting on all right?" asked Herries, grinning.

"Rats!" said Blake.

The chums laughed. Under ordinary circumstances they would have taken a hand and helped Blake, but they made it a rule to let their leader bear the whole weight of his own failures. The idea had been his, and he had carried it out, and it was fair play to let him pay the piper. That was one of the responsibilities of a leader.

"Glad to see you're getting on, Blake!" said Digby.

"I'd help you, really, only I want it to be a lesson to you. A giddy chief has no right to have silly ideas that get people into fixes. Better luck next time!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Good-bye, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, taking a very interested survey of Blake through his eyeglass. "Join us later, as soon as you can; but don't come with any of that beastly, howwid smell about you, deah boy. I don't like it, weally."

"See if you can get used to it, Adolphus," said Blake; and he lifted the broom, and jerked a cloud of dust and chemical into the face of the swell of the School House.

D'Arcy jumped, and began to sneeze and cough violently.

"Oh, you howwid boundah! Ow—oh—ow—oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" giggled Herries. "That's funny! Yah, you horrid beast!"

The broom had whisked into his own countenance, and he began to sneeze and snort, and the joke did not seem half so funny as before.

Blake turned towards Digby, bent upon fair play all round; but Digby had taken warning, and was going down the corridor at full speed.

Herries and D'Arcy, coughing and snorting, followed him, and Blake returned with a chuckle to his work.

He swept up the dust, and took it out of the room, and then rolled up his sleeves for the scrubbing. He was dusty from head to foot, and getting tired. He had always thought that housemaids had a pretty easy time of it, but he changed his opinion now.

The smell of the calcium had grown more pronounced, owing to the disturbance of it, and though Blake had opened the window wide, the room was hardly endurable.

The task which the housemaster had so genially imposed upon the offender was about the best punishment he could have devised. Blake was not likely to sprinkle carbide of calcium about for a long time to come.

Down went Blake on his knees, and he stopped a splash of water on the floor, and began to soap and scrub. He was not used to that sort of work, naturally, and it was surprising how easy it was to slop water accidentally over his knees and up his sleeves, and to get splashes of soapy foam in his eyes.

"Oh, my Aunt Mary Ann Jackson!" gasped Blake. "This is simply horrid! Won't I make that howling brute Merry sit up for this some time!"

"Hallo!" said a voice at the door.

Blake looked up grumpily. Tom Merry, cheerful and smiling, as usual, was looking in at him. Blake took a tighter grip on the brush. Tom Merry looked at Blake in amazement for a moment or two, and then burst into a ringing laugh.

"Hallo, Blake! Didn't know you had turned housemaid!"

"Oh, get home!"

"What's the game, anyway? Don't chuck any of that

water at me, or I'll kick all this giddy dust into the room again, and give you the job over again!"

"Here, I say, don't be a cad!"

"Right-ho! Then make it pax!"

"Pax it is," snorted Blake. "Now you can clear out!"

"But what does all this mean? What makes the room niff so of carbide? My hat!" exclaimed Tom. "Nurse made me go into the New House because of the smells here. Was it you playing a little game with that niffy stuff?"

Blake grinned.

"Yes, it was, kid!"

"And now you've got to clean the ghastly mess up! Ha, ha! Well, it serves you right!"

"Oh, go and cackle over in the New House!" said Blake crossly. "Anyway, it's a cheap price to pay for getting rid of you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're fixed in the New House now, anyway, and the School House is rid of you," snorted Blake, "so it ain't so bad, after all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth are you cackling about now?"

"Nothing," grinned Tom; "only I've come back."

"What!" howled Blake.

"I was only put in the New House temporarily. I've just been told to come back here. I'm a School House kid now, old son."

Blake sat down on the half-washed floor, and groaned.

"Well, of all the rotten, horrid sells!"

"Hear me smile! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up! So you're coming into the School House. Rotten—beastly! Hang—blow—bah! If you put on those giddy clothes I shall take you into the garden and kill you!"

"Oh, that's all right. They're gone for ever. I've given 'em to Figgins."

"Eh—what's that?"

Tom Merry explained. Blake chuckled over the story of the joke on Figgins, and he began to look upon the newcomer with a more kindly eye.

"Well, I suppose you shall have to put up with you in this house," he said. "You don't seem such a silly cuckoo as you did at first, I admit; but, mind, you'll have to learn your place, and keep it."

"Good! I've learned it already, and I mean to keep it."

"What's that?"



READ  
THIS  
FIRST

### Jim and Bob Pay a Visit to Rex.

"Which shows you the doc. is practical," observed Jim. "I shouldn't be surprised if he has muzzled Rex to prevent him eating any food we send in to him. Still, he's a downright jolly old buck. I consider he treated us in the most lenient manner."

"Couldn't he have done better, unless he had asked us to have cake and wine," declared Bob. "But then, you can't expect a fellow to ask you to have that when you've rammed sausages in his mouth, and smashed scalding hot pork-pieces over his noble noddle. Did you notice he never instructed us to tell the other fellows what had happened?"

"Yes. But you can bet they will never learn. Not that it's anything against him. I wouldn't like anyone to know that he had been treated in an undignified manner, although it was an accident. No. He has behaved like a brick to us, and we have got to behave decently to him."

"My place is leader of the School House juniors against the New House," said Tom Merry innocently. "Of course, you youngsters will be glad to follow the lead of a chap in the Shell."

Blake fairly bristled all over with wrath.

"Ah, yes, I don't suppose!" he said witheringly. "If that's your idea in coming into the School House, Merry, I can warn you to look out for trouble."

Tom Merry smiled blandly.

"That's what I thrive on," he replied. "Anything to make things lively. But we needn't start rowing each other now. We're rivals in private, but shoulder to shoulder against the New House. And now let me lend you a hand with that scrubbing."

His jacket was off and his sleeves rolled up in a moment. Blake, who was tired, willingly took a rest while Tom Merry slopped and scrubbed.

"Well, you're not a bad sort," said Blake cordially. "I dare say we shall get on all right. And—and you're welcome to the School House."

The next day Monty Lowther and Manners, and a good many of the Clavering boys, arrived. Tom Merry was glad to see his chums again, and they quickly fell into the new state of affairs.

"Study No. 6 are awfully decent fellows," Tom remarked to Manners and Lowther; "but, of course, they've got to follow our lead. I fancy there will be ructions."

At the same time Blake was speaking on the same subject in Study No. 6.

"Tom Merry is an awfully decent chap, kids," said Blake; "but, of course, these new fellows will have to follow our lead. I shouldn't wonder if there were ructions."

Tom Merry and Jack Blake were both quite right. There were ructions—with perfect good feeling on both sides, but distinctly ructions. Matters had always been pretty lively among the juniors at St. Jim's. The prospect was that they would be livelier still now; but of that, with your permission, we will tell next week.

THE END.

("The Terrible Three!" is the title of next Thursday's Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry's School-days. Please order your "Gem" in advance.)

# Stormpoint

A School Tale. By MAURICE MERRIMAN.

Rex Allingham, Jim Fisher, and Bob Bouncer are three well-known chums at Stormpoint College. Hal Trehearne, the captain of the school, favours them; but they are bullied by Jardon and Symes, two Fifth-Formers. One day the three chums borrow cooking utensils from Jardon's study, and have a good "feed" in the school stove-hole. They are surprised by the two Fifth-Formers and Parker, the school porter, and a general fight ensues. Dr. Andale, the Head, stops it, and has Rex put into the school hospital because of a very bad cut on the head. Jim and Bob lower a pork-pie and some sausages from the roof down to Rex's open window. Unfortunately, Dr. Andale put his head out of the window and received the pie on the head. The chums are not punished. (Now go on with the story.)

Which showed that Dr. Andale understood the natures of boys, and how to appeal to their feelings; but they would have been rather surprised had they known the doctor and Mr. Salmon had had a good laugh at the unfortunate incident.

For the next few days Jim and Bob were really model boys, and now the doctor let them see how Rex was fairing.

"It's the funniest system you ever heard of!" exclaimed Rex, who was eating roast fowl in the little private sitting-room. "They just give me whatever I ask for; in fact, they ask me what I'll have, and if it suits their fancy, I have it. I believe if I were to ask for roast turkey to-morrow I would get it. I say, don't say a word about what happened. I wouldn't like the doc. to get laughed at for our fault."

"We agreed that straight away. He is jolly good," exclaimed Jim. "But, look here, Rex, when are you coming out?"

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**STORMPOINT** (continued).  
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"I'm free of the medical man to-morrow. He is going to pay his last visit, I'm thankful to say. There's been nothing the matter with me, but he has made up his mind that I've been awfully ill, and if he gets an idea into his head, you can't possibly drive it out, though he is a decent old chap. First of all he nearly starves you, then he says 'feed him up,' and they have been stuffing me just as if I were a chicken waiting for table. Look here, custard-pudding coming up now. You fellows had better lap that up, for I can't. That's the worst of getting well. Take my advice and don't get a crack on the head like I did—"

"I'm not going to, if I can help it. But when are you going to get well?"

"I'm perfectly well now. I'm getting up to-morrow. It's the birthday of the doctor's daughter, and she is inviting some of the chaps to a spread. She has got one or two lady friends coming as well. She wrote me a note, and I have written back asking her to invite you two. The worst of it is that bully Jardon is coming, so is his chum Symes; but as the doctor and his wife will be there, the two beauties won't dare to upset things. I rather fancy he has invited them to force them to make friends with me, and show them the error of their ways."

Jim and Bob were not allowed a very long interview, and they went away looking forward to the morrow; but when Jardon and Symes learnt from the housekeeper that the chums were coming, they arranged a charming little plot between them.

About ten minutes before the invited time, the two bullies went across and waited till Porker was out of the way; then, while Jardon kept watch, Symes slipped into the lavatory, which was on the ground floor.

"It's all right, old chap. My eyes, there will be some fun!"

"Did you turn out the gas?" inquired Jardon anxiously. "It wasn't lighted, and—ha, ha, ha! I've shovled some soap into the burner, so there's no chance of it being lighted."

"All right! Leave the rest to me. If we don't make the meek little villain look an idiot it's a caution!"

When the chums entered the room, Mrs. Andale and her pretty little daughter Lily were there to receive them. Lily was a year younger than the chums, but she received them as though she were two years older, while Rex spoke to her as though he were her elderly uncle. This annoyed her rather, and she became particularly friendly with Jardon and Symes, glancing at Rex from time to time to see how he took it.

The guests soon arrived, then they all went in to supper. All went well until Rex used his serviette, and then he got a black smudge on his face. No one appeared to notice it at first, but before they had got far through the supper, Rex's face got into an extraordinary state of smudginess, and it made Lily smile.

"I say, Rex," growled Bob, across the table. "Have you been sweeping chimneys?"

"Can't say I have. Why?"

"I thought you had, by the look of your face; and you look as if you had been sweeping them with your head."

Rex rose and looked in the glass.

"I wonder how I did that, now?" he exclaimed. "My! Seems to be on my serviette."

"You will find some warm water in the lavatory, my lad," said the doctor, smiling, although he had no idea it was a joke. "Lily, my dear!"

Lily was laughing, but Jardon, who sat next to her, never so much as smiled. Anyone would have thought he was concerned for Rex, and the doctor was rather pleased to see it.

"Thanks, if you will excuse me, sir. Funny where I could have got it from, too!"

"Go and wash it off, old chap!" growled Bob. "You look like a piebald white rat."

"I fail to see how a white rat could be piebald, Bouncer," observed the doctor.

"No, sir! Surprising things do occur. You would never have thought Rex would get into that state of smudge. Now, if it had been me; well, I ain't so particular with my personal appearance as Rex."

"No; and I fear you are not quite so grammatical. Just wash your face, Rex."

Rex went into the lavatory and turned on the hot water tap. He needed no light because he knew the place well, and he could feel where the soap was. Having given his face a scrub that he felt confident must have removed the black smudges, he went into the hall, and Porker, who was bringing in some glasses, nearly dropped them, then he burst into roars of laughter. Rex, considerably surprised, entered the room, then a shout of laughter burst forth. Rex's face was as black as midnight. He had been washing it in a bottle of ink, with a little warm water mixed with it. He had merely turned on the hot water, and when he found it did not run away, had commenced his ablutions in the dark.

"Is there anything wrong?" he inquired calmly.

"Wrong!" roared Bob. He felt sorry for his chum, but he was in such an awful state, that it was impossible to help laughing at him. "Just look at your dial in the glass. Ha, ha, ha!"

Rex did so, and would not have known himself, that ink made him look so extraordinary. He had looked funny with the black smudges, but now that he was black all over, he looked funnier still. Most boys would have rushed from the room, or have flown into a state of fury. Rex did neither.

"Look at that, now!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha! It's worth looking at!" roared Jardon, who laughed with the rest now.

"I think it is a shame!" declared Lily. "Father, you won't allow tricks like that?"

"Certainly not, my dear! Come Rex, sit down and finish your supper!"

"Well, sir," exclaimed Rex, "I would have liked to get this off, but I rather think it is ink, and if that's the case it isn't likely to come off for a day or so!"

"Please don't go, Rex!" exclaimed Lily. "It's a shame! I think boys are horrid. They are always playing tricks. Come and sit this side, and then you won't get any blacker."

"Well!" exclaimed Rex, still gazing at himself in the glass. "I really don't think I could get blacker about the face!"

"Jardon will change places with you."

"But I don't want to get black, Miss Andale," said Jardon.

"No one will play such a trick on you," said Lily. "May Rex sit here, mother?"


"Certainly, my dear. It is your party, and I am only sorry at what has happened."

"It doesn't matter," said Bob. "Rex won't mind. I don't suppose he likes it, but you can't upset him. You don't look pale now, old chap. The ink has given you a better colour than the doctor could bring to your face. It's lucky you haven't got very curly hair."

Dr. Andale had left the room to investigate matters, and he soon returned with a very good idea of what had occurred. Jardon looked rather uncomfortable, especially when Bob, referred to Rex's injury. The fact is, Bob made a pretty shrewd guess as to who had played the trick, and more than once he saw the two bullies exchange glances. As for Rex, he chatted away with the guests with perfect calmness; while Bob would keep referring to Rex's accident, as he called it, and each time he did so, Lily glanced at Jardon, whose face flushed with shame.

(To be continued in next Thursday's "Gem," Please order it in advance.)

*How do you do?*



WHO TO WRITE TO: The Editor, "GEM" Library, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, who will be pleased to hear from you.

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**THE EDITOR.**

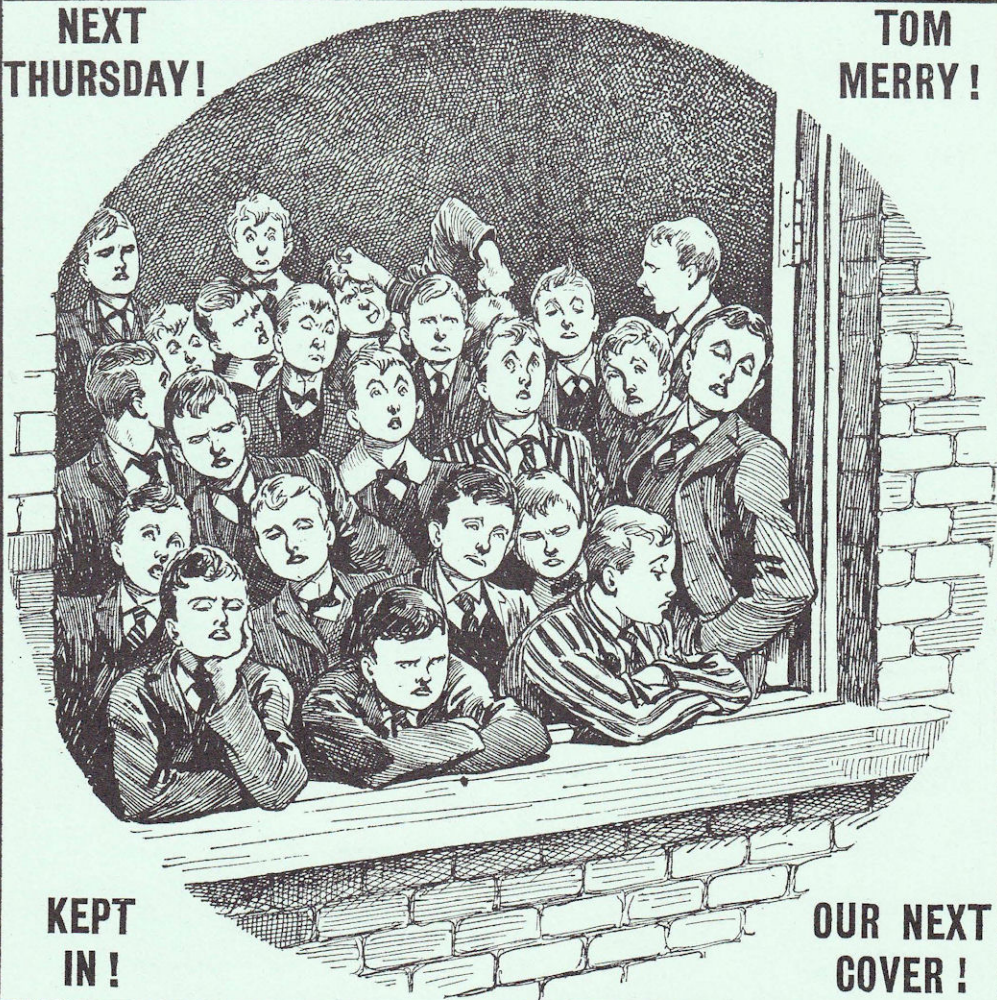


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