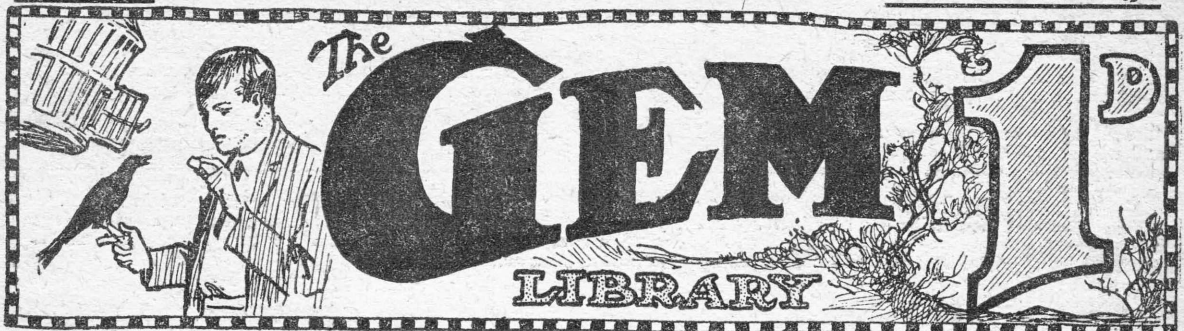


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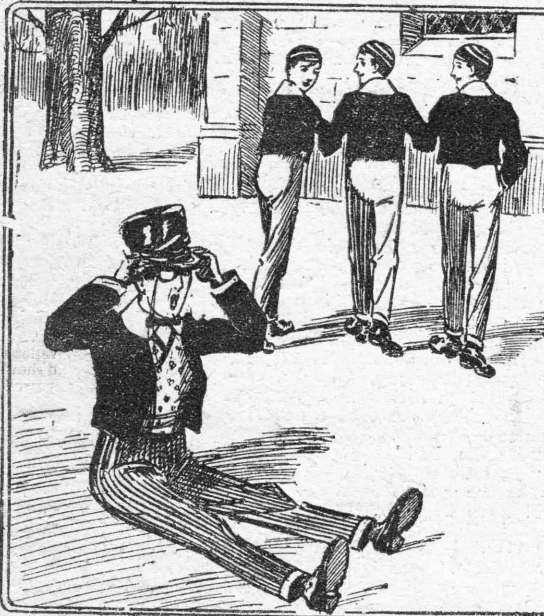
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# JACK BLAKE ON THE WARPATH!

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—  
EDITOR.

## CHAPTER 1.

### Tom Merry Has An Idea.

**T**OM MERRY burst into a sudden chuckle. Monty Lowther and Manners, who were walking, with their arms linked in Tom Merry's, across the old quadrangle of St. Jim's, looked at him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo!" said Lowther. "What's the trouble with you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Been swallowing a Chinese cracker, and is it going off?" asked Manners sympathetically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Lowther crossly.

"Explain, you ass!"

Tom Merry grinned.

"I've just been thinking—" he began.

"Oh," said Lowther, "that explains it! I admit that that's a jolly funny thing! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Manners.

"Look here, you asses—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther and Manners together, evidently determined to enjoy the joke.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Tom Merry. "I don't want everybody at St. Jim's to hear the wheeze. We've got to keep it dark from Blake and his lot, and from Figgins & Co., of the New House."

"Oh, it's a wheeze, is it?" asked Lowther.

"Yes."

"One of your little jokes?"

"Yes, that's it."

"Then I admit that it's nothing to be laughed at," said Monty Lowther, his face assuming an expression of owl-like gravity. "Sorry!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Tom Merry. "Look here, you know that on Wednesday the Grammar School seniors are coming over here to play the St. Jim's First Eleven."

"Yes, and our respected skipper is mucking up the school team by shoving a lot of New House bounders into it," said Manners.

"Well, Kildare's idea is to give a show to both Houses, you know."

"Rot, my son! We're cock-house of St. Jim's, aren't we?"

"We are!" said Lowther. "We is!"

"Well, then, if we put in one or two New House chaps, that's enough; but four or five—well, I call it rotten!"

"Hear, hear!" said Lowther.

"Well, it's Kildare's bizney, not ours," said Tom Merry. "Luckily, we don't have to run the first eleven. The junior eleven is trouble enough for me. But blow the first eleven! I was going to say that the Grammar School seniors are coming over here on Wednesday to play our first—"

"You weren't going to say that," said Monty, Lowther. "You've said that. Get on with something fresh."

"Don't interrupt," said the captain of the Shell severely. "Now, we've played the Grammar School juniors often enough, and Gordon Gay & Co. are a good team. But the senior match will be worth seeing—"

"I expect most of us will see it," said Monty Lowther.

"What on earth are you driving at?"

"The Grammar juniors will come over in crowds to see the match—"

"Most likely."

"There'll be hardly anybody left at the Grammar School—"

"Well?"

"Well, my infants," said Tom Merry serenely, "that's the

Next Wednesday:

**"THE RIVAL HOUSEMASTERS!" AND "BIRDS OF PREY!"**

idea. While Delamere, the Grammar skipper, and the team are over here, and Gordon Gay and Monk and the rest are over here watching them being licked by our first eleven, we're going over to the Grammar School—"

"Oh!"

"You remember the time when we had a visit from the Grammarians, and they fastened us up in our study?"

"Yes, rather."

"We'll do the same for them. While the game's going on here, we'll rag Gordon Gay's quarters till he won't know whether he's got into a lunatic asylum when he gets home—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How does that idea strike you?" asked Tom Merry.

"Ripping!"

"First chop!" said Manners. "But we shall have to miss the match here."

"Never mind that. As a matter of solemn fact," said Tom Merry, "I rather think that St. Jim's won't pull it off this time. It's not because there are New House chaps in the team, but because some of them are rotters. Sefton's one, and you know the kind of worm he is, though Kildare doesn't. He smokes too much to have any wind; and at least two of the others are off colour. We don't specially want to stay at home and see the first eleven beaten, that I know of."

"Might have picked a row with the New House cads on the footer ground," remarked Monty Lowther, in a reflective sort of way.

"Blake and Herries and Digby can do that, if it's strictly necessary. But even if a day passed without a ragging between School and New House, the universe might survive," said Tom Merry. "I don't say it would, but it might."

"So it might!" grinned Lowther. "Right-ho! We three'll do the trick. Better keep it dark; we don't want a crowd with us."

"No fear!"

"Bai Jove, you know, you fellows!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth, the swell of St. Jim's, joined the chums of the Shell, as they strolled under the trees. "Pway excuse me. I could not help heavin' that remark—"

"Don't mention it, Gussy, my son!" said Tom Merry.

"It appears that you are goin' to jape somebody, deah boys."

"Exactly."

"The New House wottahs?" asked the swell of the Fourth.

"Not this time."

"I twust," said D'Arcy, with dignity, "that you are not thinkin' of japin' Study No. 6. I should wefuse to allow anythin' of the sort."

"We shouldn't ask you, old son," said Tom Merry. "But Study No. 6 isn't the giddy victim this time."

"If it is the Gwammah School, you had bettah place the mattah in my hands, and follow my lead," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "What you wequire in a mattah like this is a fellow of tact and judgment."

"We've got one," said the captain of the Shell.

"Bai Jove! What's his name?"

"Tom Merry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"But I'll tell you what," said Tom Merry, becoming suddenly serious. "There's another little jape I've got in my mind, that you can take part in."

"Yaas?"

"You won't object?" asked Tom Merry, winking at Lowther and Manners with the eye that was away from Arthur Augustus.

"Certainly not, deah boy."

"You might be a little hurt."

"A D'Arcy is not afraid of gettin' hurt."

"No. I forgot that. You are sure you will not mind taking part in the giddy jokelet?"

"Quite sure, deah boy."

"And you'll be good friends with us however it turns out?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good! Pile in, you chaps!"

And before the swell of St. Jim's knew what was happening, the Terrible Three had seized him, and sat him down in the quad, and jammed his silk topper over his eyes.

"Yawooh!" roared D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Shell fellows fled. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made wild grabs at his silk topper, and succeeded at last in un-batting himself. He glared round in search of the Terrible Three.

"Ow! You wottahs! You uttah spoofahs! Ow!"

But the chums of the Shell had vanished, and the vengeance of the swell of St. Jim's for that little jape had to be postponed.

## CHAPTER 2.

### The Raid.

JACK BLAKE, of the Fourth, wore a glum look as he came out of the School House dining-room after dinner. Tom Merry clapped him on the shoulder.

"Looking forward to a licking for the first eleven," he asked, "or wherefore that worried brow, my son?"

Blake grunted.

"I shouldn't wonder if the first get beaten," he said. "With so many New House rotters in the team, and Monteith cutting up rusty with Kildare, it wouldn't be wonderful. The Grammarian seniors are a tough lot, too. But I'm not thinking of that."

"What is it, then? Thinking of the contributions you haven't got ready for the 'Weekly'?" asked Tom Merry.

Blake grunted again.

"No. My opinion is that 'Tom Merry's Weekly' is played out, and what is wanted in place of it is something a bit more up to date."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry warmly.

"But it isn't that," said Blake. "The Grammar School seniors are coming over to play the first eleven, and we've got lines to do, and they've got to be done. Lathon has been waxy this morning, all because a chap couldn't tell him which rotten king was kicked out of Rome. I made it Julius Caesar, and that ass Herries said it was George the Fourth—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we've got impots. to get done before we can get out to the match!" growled Blake. "The New House cads will have bagged all the front seats by the time we get there."

"Hard cheese!" said Tom Merry sympathetically.

"Rotten!" said Herries. "Look here, you fellows might get on the ground early and keep places for us."

The Terrible Three shook their heads.

"Impossible, old son!"

"Why?" demanded Herries.

"Got an engagement."

"You don't mean to say that you're missing the match?" exclaimed Digby.

"Yes. Have to, you know. Most important engagement."

And the Terrible Three grinned and walked away.

Blake looked puzzled.

"That boulder Tom Merry has got something on!" he growled. "What do you think he's got on, Herries?"

Herries looked after the Terrible Three.

"He's got his cap on," he said.

Blake gave him a withering look.

"Ass!" he said politely.

"Well, you asked me," said Herries, puzzled.

"Br-r-r!" said Blake.

And the juniors went up to Study No. 6 to do their lines. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther strolled out of the school gates and walked down in the direction of Rylcombe. The feud that raged between the two Houses of St. Jim's was only equalled by the strife between St. Jim's and the neighbouring Grammar School at Rylcombe. True, the strife was confined to the juniors, the seniors being too high and mighty to take part in it. Delamere, the captain of the Grammar School, and Kildare, of St. Jim's, often laughed together over the alarms and excursions of the fags. But the juniors took it in deadly earnest, and the chance of playing a jape on Gordon Gay & Co., of the Grammar School, was too good to be lost by the Terrible Three.

"There comes the brake!" exclaimed Lowther.

The brake containing Delamere's eleven for St. Jim's rolled down the lane. The juniors waved their hands to the footballers as they passed.

"We'll go by a roundabout way to the Grammar School," Tom Merry said sagely. "The Grammarians will be

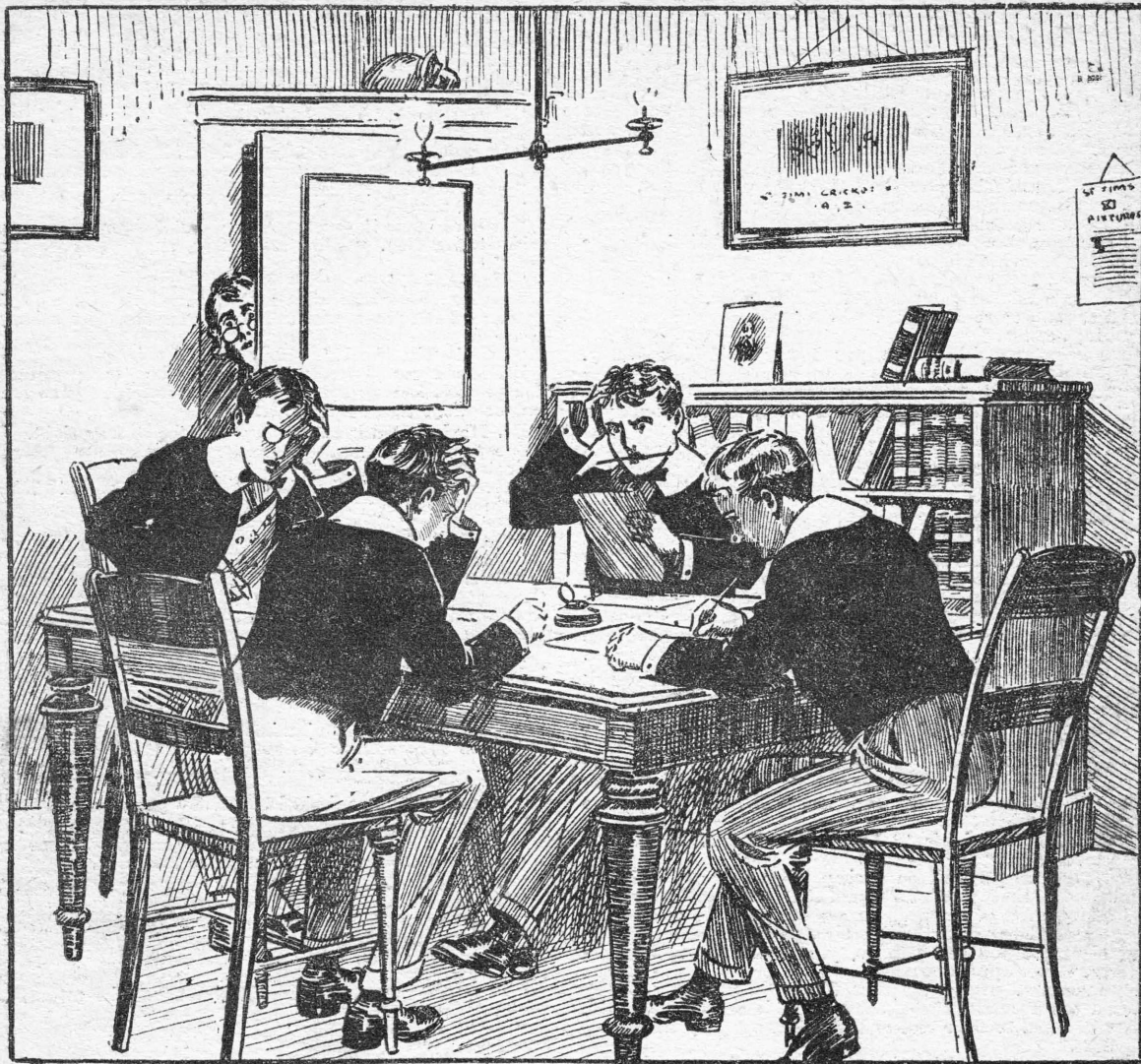
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(See column 2, page 27 of this issue.)

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When the disguised New House junior ventured to peep from the cupboard, he saw Blake & Co. hard at work on their precious new paper. "I rather think this will make Figgins & Co. sit up!" chuckled Jack Blake. (See Chapter 8.)

coming down this road in giddy droves. There's plenty of time, and we can stop for refreshment at Mother Murphy's in the village. Miss Fawcett sent me a postal-order this morning, and I want to change it."

"Hear, hear!" said Manners and Lowther heartily.

And the Terrible Three changed the postal-order at Mother Murphy's tuckshop in Rylcombe, and expended a considerable portion of it in refreshment—liquid and solid. Then they made their way by a devious route to the gates of Rylcombe Grammar School.

That a good many fellows had gone over to see the match at St. Jim's was certain. The Close was deserted as the Terrible Three looked into it. They strolled in, their hearts beating a little, and crossed towards the big, red-brick building, which was so different from the grey old stone pile of St. Jim's.

They entered the house, and were immediately greeted by a slim, somewhat sallow youth with a decidedly French look.

"Ha! It is ze garçons from St. Jim's!"

"Mont Blong!" grunted Monty Lowther.

The French junior grinned at them. His name was Gustave Blanc, and the Grammarians, who had started with calling him Monsieur Blong, had soon changed it to Mont Blong for short. He gave the St. Jim's trio his best Parisian bow.

"It is zat I am glad to see my shums," he said.

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Lowther. "Is Gordon Gay at home?"

"He is not in ze study now, my shums."

"All serene. We'll go up."

And pushing the surprised French junior on one side, the Terrible Three went upstairs and hurried to the Fourth Form studies. They had visited Gordon Gay before, and knew the way very well.

"That ass doesn't guess what we've come for," said Tom Merry, as they entered Gordon Gay's study. "But we'd better buck up, in case there are any more at home like him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Terrible Three bucked up.

In the noble art of ragging a study the chums of the Shell had few equals. In a very few minutes they made a great difference to Gordon Gay's quarters. The table was turned upside-down, the carpet pulled up and tossed over it, the bookcase emptied upon the floor, and the contents of the cupboard scattered far and wide. All the furniture was turned over, and the ashes from the grate were carefully spread over the study. Upon the glass, with a piece of charred coal, Tom Merry traced a message for the Grammarians:

"When this you see, remember me.—TOM MERRY."

"And now we'll slide," said Monty Lowther.

There was a chuckle at the door.

"I don't think!" said a cheerful voice.

The chums of St. Jim's swung round in alarm. The doorway was crammed with Grammarian juniors!

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CHAPTER 3.

Tarry!

GORDON GAY, of the Fourth Form at the Grammar School, grinned genially at the dismayed visitors from St. Jim's. Behind him were Wootton major and minor, his chums, and Mont Blong and Tadpole, and Frank Monk and Lane and Carboy, and several other Grammarian Fourth-Formers. The odds were too great, and the Terrible Three realised that they were caught.

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom Merry.  
Gordon Gay chuckled.  
"Did you think we had gone over to St. Jim's for the match?" he asked cheerfully.  
"Ahem! I had some idea of it."  
"Quite a mistake!" grinned Wootton major.  
"Oh, quite!" said Carboy.  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"We—we've finished here, you know," said Tom Merry.  
"We'll go now."  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"I zink zat not!" chuckled Mont Blong. "I zink zat you not go in ze such hurry!"  
"I don't think!" grinned Jack Wootton.  
The Terrible Three exchanged a glance.  
"Rush for it!" muttered Tom Merry.  
"Right-ho!"

And the three St. Jim's fellows made a terrific rush at the crowd in the doorway.

"Line up!" yelled Gordon Gay.  
Crash! Biff! Bump!  
In a second Tom Merry & Co. were struggling furiously with the crowd of Grammarians. The fight was terrific. There was a roar in the passage, a trampling of feet, and bumping of falling juniors. But the odds were too great. Tom Merry & Co. went down, with the Grammarians sprawling over them. Half a dozen Grammarians sat upon them to keep them down.

Gordon Gay staggered to his feet. The Australian junior caressed his nose, which seemed to have increased in size in the conflict.

"Ow!" he grunted. "We've got them!"  
"Oui, oui, my chum!" said Mont Blong. "Ve have zom!"  
"Groo!" grunted Monty Lowther. "Gerroff my chest!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Next time you call on a chap when he's not at home, make sure that he's out," said Gordon Gay cheerfully. "Luckily, most of the prefects are out, and the masters, so there won't be anybody to interfere. Bring them along!"  
"What are you going to do, you bounder?" asked Tom Merry, rather apprehensively.  
"You'll see. Bring 'em along!"

And the Terrible Three, each with his arms firmly held, were dragged to their feet and marched away by the Grammarians.

They were marched in triumph out of the house and round the building, and Gordon Gay called a halt at the wood-shed. Corporal Cutts, the porter of the Grammar School, had been lately engaged in tarring the shed. A bucket of tar with the brush in it stood just inside. Gordon Gay pulled out the sticky brush.

"Look here," roared Tom Merry, "keep that away!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Don't you touch us— Gro-o-oh!"  
"Tar and feathers is the sentence," said Gordon Gay calmly. "There aren't any feathers, but I suppose an extra allowance of tar will make that all right."  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Don't you dare to— Gro-o-oh!"

Gordon Gay interrupted Tom Merry with a dab of the tar-brush. Tom Merry closed his mouth quite suddenly.

"Now, keep still," said Gordon Gay, as he dabbed away. "If you wriggle, you'll get it in the ears and the neck. Otherwise, I shall attend only to your features. There! I told you so!"

"Gro-o-o-oh!"  
"Better take it quietly!"  
"Gro-hoooh!"

Tom Merry's face was as black as ink, or tar, in three minutes. Then Gordon Gay turned to Manners and Lowther, who had been watching the proceedings apprehensively. Their raid upon the Grammar School during the football match was not turning out quite so howling a success as they had expected.

"Look here!" began Lowther warmly. "I say— Yow!"  
Dab, dab, dab!

In a few minutes Lowther's face was as black as Tom Merry's.

Then Manners was treated to the same course of treatment. The three tarry juniors looked at one another. They looked

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utterly absurd, with their eyes gleaming from their blackened faces. The Grammarians roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Now shove the tar over their heads!" suggested Carboy.  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Ow! Don't!" roared Tom Merry. "Cheese it!"  
Gordon Gay laughed.

"'Nuff's as good as a feast!" he said. "I think they're feeling rather sorry that they ragged our study by this time."  
"Are you sorry?" demanded Frank Monk.

"Yow!"  
"I don't know if yow means yes, but I dare say it does," said Gordon Gay. "They look sorry, anyway. Kick them out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
The Terrible Three were rushed across the Close to the gates. Then there was a sudden yell among the Grammarians.

"Cave! The Head!"  
Dr. Monk was just entering the school gates. The crowd fled at once, leaving the three tarry juniors facing the headmaster of the Grammar School.

Dr. Monk halted in astonishment at the strange sight. He was somewhat shortsighted, and he pushed up his spectacles to look at them.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Bless my soul! Where did these three negroes come from?"

"Ow! Ow!"  
"Grooh!"  
"Yowp!"

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Monk. "They are evidently three negroes, and that apparently is their language. I wonder if they can speak English. My poor fellows, how did you come here?"

The Terrible Three did not reply. They rushed past the headmaster to the Grammar School, and bolted out of the gates. Dr. Monk turned round, and stared after them in amazement.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated.  
And he walked on to the house in a state of great mental wonder. Behind the gym, the Grammarian juniors were shrieking.

The Terrible Three dashed out of the gateway, and fled. They halted in the road at last, panting. They were halfway to St. Jim's. But it suddenly occurred to them that they were in no condition to return to the school.

"Ow!" gasped Manners. "How shall we get this off?"  
"Godness knows!" grunted Lowther. "Yow!"

"It will want scrubbing off," groaned Tom Merry. "Ow!"  
"Oh, you ass! If you ever propose raiding the Grammar School to me again, I'll take you into a quiet corner, and suffocate you!" mumbled Manners.

"Of all the rotten wheezes, it was about the rottenest!" growled Lowther.

"Ow!"  
"Grooh!"

And the unhappy heroes of St. Jim's went in search of a wash. They rubbed and dabbed at their faces at a wayside stream, till their skin felt as if it were coming off, and their handkerchiefs were reduced to tarry rags. But with all their efforts their faces remained in a decidedly piebald condition.

They looked at their reflections in the water, and groaned.  
"We shall be grinned to death at St. Jim's," said Tom Merry lugubriously.

"Oh, dear!"  
"Grooh!"

"Well, we'd better get in," growled Lowther desperately. "If we get in before the finish of the match, we may be able to sneak in and get a scrubbing in hot water before the fellows spot us."

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"Ow! We're spotted enough already."

"Oh, buck up!"

And the disconsolate juniors hurried towards the school. They passed a good many people in the lane, and yells of laughter greeted them wherever they showed their pebbled faces. By the time they reached St. Jim's the Terrible Three were in a state of exasperation, and Manners and Lowther had expressed their opinion of Tom Merry and his wheezes many times, and with great emphasis, and in the most dreadfully plain English!

#### CHAPTER 4.

##### On the Football Field.

"THAT'S done!" exclaimed Jack Blake, flinging down his pen with a sigh of relief. "Nearly finished, Herries? Buck up, old son, or Figgins will have bagged all the front seats for the match!"

He jumped up, kicking his chair backwards with a crash, in his relief at having finished his lines.

Herries was still scribbling away industriously. Digby and D'Arcy were looking out of the window. It was a cold, bright winter afternoon.

"What an old nuisance Lathom was to detain us to-day," continued Blake, "when the Grammar fellows are coming to play the school. But it's just like him. Figgins & Co. will have been on the ground long ago. Aren't you nearly finished, Herries?"

"Nearly," said Herries absently. "Shut up a minute! 'Exanimunque auro corpus vendebat Achilles.' Hurrah! That's the last! I've done the beastly thing. Now, let's be off, and if the cads have collared the front seats, we shall have to shift them, that's all."

Blake stuck his cap on the back of his curly head.

"Right you are!" he exclaimed. "Come on, my infants. Follow your uncle!"

And the chums of Study No. 6 hurried out of the famous apartment, and left the School House, and raced each other down to the football ground, which was already crowded.

It was an important day at St. Jim's.

Rylcombe Grammar School were coming to play the school, and the match was one of the most important of the football season to the Saints.

The visitors were a very strong side, and St. Jim's generally had all their work cut out to hold their own against their rivals. And on the present occasion the home side were not up to their usual quality. Even the most sanguine of the Saints had lurking doubts about victory in the coming match.

The old rivalry between the two Houses at St. Jim's was really the cause of it. Kildare, head of the School House and captain of St. Jim's, had thrown himself heart and soul into the task of making up an eleven that would do the school credit. But Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, was far from backing him up as he ought to have done.

The first eleven was composed of six School House fellows and five belonging to the New House, and of late the friction between the two Houses had made itself felt in football matters. Kildare, who knew that in football, as in everything else, a house divided against itself was not likely to stand, did his best to smooth things over, but he awaited the match with a good deal of anxiety.

All St. Jim's was turning out for the match, both Houses being on the ground in full force. Long before the time assigned for the kick-off, the juniors thronged the field, and Figgins & Co. had ensconced themselves in the front seats in the pavilion. Figgins & Co. were the leaders of the New House juniors, deadly rivals of Blake and his chums, and they had arrived on the ground first. Blake and Herries had had the misfortune to be detained by their Form-master, and Dig and D'Arcy had remained in with them while they struggled through their lines, and so Study No. 6 were very late in turning up.

"Hallo! There's the bounders!" exclaimed Figgins suddenly. The long-legged chief of the New House juniors stood up and pointed towards the School House chums, who were coming up, red and puffing. "Look out, you chaps! I shouldn't wonder if the cads try to get these seats. We're going to stop here!"

"What ho!" said the Co. together. And Kerr and Fatty Wynn prepared for war.

Figgins was not mistaken as to the intentions of Study No. 6.

"They've bagged the seats!" said Blake. "I thought they would! We're going to shift them!"

"They'll be turned out, I expect, before the match, when the Head comes," remarked Digby.

"Perhaps, Figgy doesn't seem to think so. Anyway, we're going to shove them out now, just to show that we're cock-house at St. Jim's," declared Blake.

"Buck up, School House!" shouted Herries.

And a crowd of juniors rushed to oust Figgins & Co.

Bravely the New House juniors stood to their guns.

"Rescue, New House!" yelled Figgins, hitting out right and left.

But the School House were in greater force, and they rushed the mighty Figgins out, and hurled him ignominiously forth, and hurled the Co. after him.

Figgins & Co. rolled out on the grass, and the chums of Study No. 6 took their places, with a crowd of School House juniors round them to guard the position so gallantly won.

Figgins picked himself up, looking considerably ruffled, and glared wrathfully at the intruders who had ejected him.

Blake kissed his hand to the New House leader.

"Thanks for keeping our places warm," he called out. "Sorry we can't have you in here, Figgy. We ain't particular, but we bar you New House wasters. There's some things we can't stand, you know."

"I'll have you out of that before long," declared Figgy. And he busied himself with gathering the New House juniors for a grand attack.

But Figgy's luck was out, for as he returned, fairly on the warpath, a cheer announced the arrival of the captain of the school, and hostilities had necessarily to be postponed.

Figgins shook his fist at Blake, who replied with a smile of exasperating sweetness. The chums were loudly cheering Kildare, captain of St. Jim's. Very handsome and fit he looked, tall and strong and steady, a host in himself on the football field. There were cheers, too, for Monteith, who was with him, but much fainter.

The feeling between Kildare and the head prefect of the New House was one of dislike. Kildare had tried many times to get on better terms with the prefect, but he had never succeeded. There was too much envy and malice in Monteith's heart for friendship between them to be possible.

"Monteith looks sour, doesn't he?" said Blake. "He's been hunting for trouble lately. I wonder Kildare stands him. I wouldn't."

Monteith glanced towards the chums.

"What are you youngsters doing there?" he exclaimed. There was a glint in his eyes; he was always glad of a chance to come down upon Study No. 6. "Get out, at once!"

It was impossible to defy the order of a prefect, even of the rival House, but it went sorely against the grain to give up the position won by force of arms against the enemy. He ventured to expostulate.

"I say, Monteith, we ain't doing any harm here," he exclaimed.

"Get out!"

"Oh, rats! Why can't you ever let us alone? You're always pecking at somebody."

Monteith turned to Kildare with a sneer on his sour face.

"Are you going to let those kids remain there, Kildare?" The captain of the school signed to Blake to get out.

"Oh, all right!" said Blake. "Anything to oblige you, Kildare. You're a good boy, and I like to make you happy."

"Scoot!" said the captain laconically.

"That's all right. I suppose I may stop to tie my shoe-lace? I don't see where the giddy hurry comes in. Oh, all right, kid, I'm going!"

And Study No. 6 beat a retreat.

"Yah!" hooted the New House juniors. "Had to come out, hadn't you? Serve you right, for shoving yourselves in!"

"Oh, we've got to shut those cackling geese up!" said Blake. "Sock into them, and show Monteith we don't care a rap for him."

And with a good deal of struggling and scuffling the School House juniors hustled their foes further off, and packed themselves close to the ropes to get a good view of the ground.

"Keep quiet there, you youngsters!" called out Kildare, looking out of the pavilion. And again Figgins had to abandon a counter-attack and give the School House best.

"Hallo, here's Railton!" exclaimed Blake. "Cheer him!"

They cheered Mr. Railton heartily. He was the master of the School House, and a great athlete. He was to referee the coming match, and the boys gave him a ringing welcome.

Blake looked at his big silver watch.

"Time they were here," he exclaimed. "Hallo, that must be their brake! Hurrah! They look a fine lot, don't they?"

"I hope we shall lick them," said Digby.

"So do I, but I have my doubts, as Kildare has let so many of those New House wasters into the team. I ask you plainly, how can we expect to win with five of those horrid bounders in the eleven?"

Blake propounded this poser with due seriousness; chiefly, it must be confessed, for the benefit of Figgins & Co., who were close at hand. Figgy, of course, fired up at once at the aspersion cast upon his House.

"Oh, shut up!" he exclaimed. "If we pull off the match, it will be our fellows that do it. What do you School House kids know about football?"

"More than you could teach us, my son," said Blake

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A Splendid, Long Complete School Tale of the chums of St. Jim's. Order Early.

serenely. "Look at Monteith. I suppose you call him a footballer?"

"Better than any on your measly side!"

"I believe," said Blake, with an air of reflection—"I believe he did kick a goal once."

"Once!" howled Figgins. "You—you mongrel! I'll give you once!"

"Order! Order there!"

"Chuck it! Here's the Head!"

Dr. Holmes, Head of St. Jim's, was coming down to the pavilion. Mr. Ratcliff of the New House was with him. But the New House did not cheer their Housemaster. Mr. Ratcliff was a solemn gentleman, with a detestation of sports, and the New House juniors were not in the least proud of him.

And now the time for the kick-off was drawing nigh. Loud cheers greeted the appearance of the teams in the field—St. Jim's in red and white. Every eye was upon the two captains as they tossed for choice of goal, and the crowd cheered as Kildare was seen pointing to the end from which the wind was blowing.

Delamere, the Grammar skipper, kicked off, and the game commenced.

## CHAPTER 5.

### The Grammar School Match.

THE visitors were out for scalps, as they soon showed. The kick-off was followed by a rush into the home half, before which the red and white fell back. Delamere, manfully backed up by his followers, brought the leather right up to the home goal, and the enemy were quickly besieging the St. Jim's citadel.

"Hallo!" said Blake. "That looks lively. Why don't they clear—eh? Oh, my only Aunt Matilda, they're never going to let them score!"

It looked like it.

The attack was hard and incessant, and several times Rushden, in goal, had his hands full to save.

Rushden was a School House fellow, and so Blake and his chums cheered him vociferously; as, indeed, he deserved, for he was playing up nobly against great difficulties.

It was in backs that the Saints were weakest, as could be easily seen. But presently a full-back managed to send the ball out and give the forwards a chance. Figgins & Co. roared as Monteith was seen to take the leather up the field.

The whole forward line broke away, and, passing the ball skilfully one to another, brought it over the half-way line. Kildare was at centre-forward, and, receiving the ball, he made a fine run, and returned it to Monteith at inside-right as he was attacked. Monteith sent it out to Baker, who was speedily charged down, but not before he had got rid of the ball. Again Monteith had the leather at his feet, and he raced it goalwards.

The backs had marked him, and Kildare's brow was for a moment anxious.

"To me, Monteith—to me!" he cried.

The prefect took no notice.

Kildare had a good opening, and the ball should have been passed to him as a matter of course, but Monteith was rather bent upon making a coup himself than upon playing the game. He believed he could take the goal, and he rushed on, risking the backs, who were closing in upon him, and Kildare gritted his teeth.

The chance was gone. But, no! Before he could be tackled, Monteith, with a low, fast shot, sent the ball whizzing in, and it just beat the goalie.

"Goal!"

The leather was in the net, and the Saints round the ropes roared themselves hoarse.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

In spite of the inauspicious opening of the game, it was first blood to St. Jim's.

"Hurrah—hurrah!"

Loudest of all rang the stentorian tones of the lanky Figgins.

But Kildare's face was grim as he walked back to the centre of the field. Monteith's attempt had materialised, but it was only a fluke, and his success did not excuse the prefect for throwing away a certainty for a chance. But, in view of the goal that had been taken, Kildare could not very well say anything. Nothing succeeds like success, and the captain was almost certain to be misunderstood if he was down on Monteith just after the latter had sent St. Jim's one up.

But Monteith's example was not without result. His play had been purely selfish, and he was thinking a good deal more of getting credit for himself than of winning a victory for the school.

The others understood it, too; and, while Kildare's friends resented it, the New House members of the team were inclined to back up their chief through everything.

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The Grammarians kicked off again, and showed that they were determined to avenge their check. They attacked vigorously, and, as before, the home goal was quickly besieged. Again the failure of the home backs was apparent. The attack went through them easily, and this time Rushden in goal was not so successful. A whizzing shot from Delamere found the net, and the score was level.

Jack Blake shook his head solemnly.

"The defence is no good," he exclaimed. "It's rotten! What did I tell you? It comes through sticking those New House wasters in."

And this was, in fact, accurate. Three of the back line were New House fellows, and they were the three most conspicuous failures in the team.

Monteith and Baker, in the forward line, were splendid, and that could not be denied. But the three New House backs were utterly outclassed by the enemy.

"They can't play football for toffee!" went on Blake. "Kildare will kick them out after this, you'll see. If I'd been captain I'd have fired them long ago. But Kildare's so afraid of being thought to favour his own House."

"All the same, I fancy this is the last time they'll play for the school," said Herries sagely. "The match is a goner."

Kildare in his heart thought pretty much the same. But it is no business of a football captain to show discouragement, and the captain of St. Jim's played up with a determinedly cheerful face.

And, indeed, so far as forward play was concerned the Saints shone in the match. Whenever the forwards had a chance they made the most of it; but as the Grammar defence was sound the result came to little.

And towards half-time, in spite of all Kildare's efforts, the visitors put the ball into the home goal again, and the enemy were two up.

The score was still two to one when the whistle went for the interval.

The game had been a hard one, and both sides were in need of a rest. During the interval Kildare arranged a slight change in the team. If the home defence was no better in the second half than in the first, the captain knew that the match might as well be given away.

Baker and Drake were put into the half-back line, and Jones and Rake, of the New House, put forward. Monteith sniffed impatiently at the change.

"This is a nice time of day to be making alterations," he said, with a sneer.

"If we don't strengthen the backs we are done for," said Kildare. "I had no idea that Jones and Rake and Sefton were in such bad form."

"I don't see that they are in such bad form. This is the toughest team we ever tackled. That's why we don't make a better show."

"There's something in that; but—well, it's no good talking now."

Monteith's eyes glinted.

"You mean, I suppose, that if it wasn't too late you'd leave out some of the present members of the team."

"Of course I should."

"Belonging to my House, of course!" added Monteith, with another sneer.

Kildare looked him in the eyes.

"That's got nothing to do with it," he said. "Anyway, we needn't discuss it now. You are not going to draw me into a dispute in the middle of a game, if that's what you want."

Monteith bit his lip. But just then the teams had to go on again, and he had no time to make a rejoinder.

The whistle went for the resumption of hostilities, and Kildare kicked off. The Saints "bucked up" now for all they were worth. The wind was against them after the change of ends, and the enemy were already one up, so the home players had all their work cut out to hold their own. And it became gradually evident that the task was too big for them.

The changes made by Kildare had improved the team, and the defence was sounder, but the enemy were fairly on the warpath. They had most of the play, and were continually in possession of the ball, and their attacks were hot and heavy and incessant.

Bravely the Saints played up against them; but, though there were brilliant flashes of play on the home side, it was evident that on the whole they were outclassed. Even on the rare occasions when the home forwards got away with the ball the defence was sound, and refused to give way. And presently the ball went into the home goal again, making the visitors three up.

Faces were lengthening round the field. That St. Jim's would be licked seemed almost certain now, and that they would be licked with a wide margin of goals was very probable.

"Oh, it's all over bar shouting!" said Blake desperately.

"I never saw such a rotten show. Monteith don't back

Kildare up a little bit. He doesn't care if we lose the match. He's a howling rotter!"

"Rats!" exclaimed Figgins. "What do you know about it? Who kicked the goal—eh?—the only one we've taken?"

Figgins disliked Monteith cordially enough, but he felt bound to stand up for his House captain against his detractors in the rival House.

"A fluke!" said Blake.

"The only goal," taunted Figgins—"the only goal! You talk when your captain takes one, Mr. Clever Blake! Shut up till then!"

Blake opened his mouth to reply, but instead of doing so he yelled "Hurrah!" And the whole school was yelling, too. Kildare had penetrated the obstinate defence at last, and sent the ball whizzing in, beating the goalkeeper all the way.

"Goal!" yelled all St. Jim's, in relief and delight.

There was a chance yet. But the enemy were still a goal ahead, and seemed determined to remain so.

The game wore on with varying aspect, full of liveliness and excitement nearly all the time, but the score remained unaltered. And when at last it was altered it was by the enemy. With a fast, combined attack they wedged their way goalward, and rained in shots upon Rushden, who let one pass him at last.

Rylcombe were four up! After that St. Jim's gave up hope of either winning or equalising, and they were right. When the whistle finally blew the score was still four for the visitors and two for the Saints, and the visitors had beaten the home team hollow.

## CHAPTER 6.

### The Rival of the "Weekly."

STUDY No. 6 were busy. The four chums were roasting chestnuts and eating them, a very pleasant occupation on a cold winter's day. Their talk ran on the match and the defeat of St. Jim's by the visiting team. They were agreed that the loss of the match was due to the presence of New House players in the team, and that something must be done. Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy discussed the subject at length. Blake was unusually silent.

"What are you thinking about, you old image?" asked Herries at last, giving Blake a thump on the shoulder, which effectually roused him from his reverie.

Blake gave a yell.

"Ass! You've dislocated my shoulder."

"Never mind. It'll grow again. What are you puzzling your poor little brain about? You haven't spoken for nearly five minutes, and that's a sure sign that there's something wrong. Get it off your chest, my son!"

"Look here!" said Jack Blake seriously, "the school's getting in a bad state."

"Right-ho!"

"The School House is cock-house at St. Jim's, and it's us—we—who have made it so, when the seniors would simply have let our side down."

"Yes, rather!"

"The New House is altogether too cheeky, and they put on as many airs—as D'Arcy does fancy waistcoats."

"Weally, Blake—" protested Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Worst of all, old Kildare has let the New House rotters into the first eleven, and we've been licked on the football field."

"We have."

"Something's got to be done."

"It have—I mean, it has."

"And we've got to do it."

"Hear, hear!"

"Where," said Blake, getting warm—"where, I'd like to know, is there a bigger ass, a more absolutely howling cad and waster, than Monteith, of the New House?"

"Hear, hear!" said Herries.

Dig and D'Arcy giggled.

"What are you silly geese cackling at?" demanded Herries.

"Oh, nothing!" said Dig. "Go on, Blake! Herries has answered your question."

"Look here," said Herries wrathfully, "what are you getting at? I said, 'Hear, hear!' not 'Here, here!' If I had said 'Here—'"

"Here," said Blake, "chuck it! How dare you wrangle when your Uncle Blake is talking? Kids, your uncle is a great man, and he has an idea!"

"Spout it out, then," said Herries crossly. "You're so beastly long-winded. Cut the cackle and come to the hosses."

"Well, here is it," said Blake. "St. Jim's is getting into a general state of dry rot. We've got to do something, and I know how to do it. The juniors are altogether too much sat upon in this school. Our opinions ain't treated with the respectful attention they deserve. The doctor sometimes consults Kildare about things, and even Monteith. He never consults us."

"Nevah," said D'Arcy. "Weally inconsiderate of him, don't you know?"

"We are passed over," said Blake. "We think a good deal more about the honour of the school than our elders, who are mostly asses. Yet we are never listened to. We sha'n't be consulted about the football. If we went into Kildare's study to give him some advice, what would he do?"

"Chuck us out!" said Herries.

"Exactly! We are only juniors, liable to be chucked out. It's scandalous!—But, as somebody said once—I forget whether it was Solomon or Julius Cæsar—the pen is mightier than the sword."

"I don't see what that's got to do with it," remarked Herries.

"You never do see anything, my son, until it's pointed out to you," said Blake politely. "What is it that has always stood against tyranny, and voiced the rights of oppressed minorities? What is it that makes its voice heard in every home, in every street?"

"The phonograph?" hazarded Herries.

Blake gave him a withering glance.

"The Press," he said, with dignity.

The chums looked decidedly puzzled.

"The press!" repeated Herries. "What press are you talking about? If you mean a clothes-press—"

"Ass! To put it in plain and simple language, suitable to your intellect, we are going to start a newspaper."

They stared at him for a minute in amazement.

"A newspaper!" gasped Herries.

"Yes; a newspaper. Why not?"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "The idea is weally stunnin'. Blake, you are a clevah chap."

Blake put his hand upon his heart and bowed.

"D'Arcy," he said, "you do me proud. To be pronounced clevah by a young gentleman of your intellectual attainments is an honour I keenly appreciate."

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know!" said D'Arcy.

"Well, it does seem a good idea," said Herries thoughtfully. "But newspapers are generally printed, ain't they? How are we going to get it printed?"

"Herries, old man, your brain-box wants oiling, or something. We're not going to print it. It will be written, of course, by hand."

"Oh, I see!"

"Glad you do. We need only have one copy, which will be passed around to readers. Then it will come home to roost in the editorial office—otherwise known as Study No. 6."

"But 'Tom Merry's Weekly' is printed," said Digby. "I don't see—"

"Let me explain, my gentle youth. Those things cost money."

"Yes, that's so," said Herries, with a nod.

"Well, this is going to be a corker," declared Blake. "Nothing dull or heavy; no giddy reports of dull twaddle from the school debating society, and that rot. A really first-chop production, you know. And we shall go specially strong on football, and slating the New House cads."

"That sounds all right," said Herries. "Who's to be editor?"

Blake gave him a smile of condescension.

"I suppose there's not much doubt about that," he said.

"Whose idea is it?"

"Well, that's all very well; but you're the youngest kid here."

"Well, I've got most brains; you must admit that."

"Rats!"

"Oh, Blake's editor," said Digby; "that's only fair. But we shall all contribute."

"Of course," said Blake graciously. "And I shall appoint all of you sub-editors. I don't know exactly how many sub-editors a paper has, but three won't be too many."

"All right," said Herries; "I'm agreeable. When shall we bring the first number out?"

"We'll start on it at once. There's no time like the present."

"What about letting the others into it?"

"We'll tell the House about it, but it's to be kept a dead secret from the New House, of course."

"But we shall have to let them see it, or they won't know how we've run them down."

"Yes; but not till we spring it on them suddenly. Now, here's plenty of foolscap, so let's make a start."

Blake drew the paper towards him, and picked up a pen. He gnawed the handle for some moments thoughtfully.

# ANSWERS

"I say, what shall we call it?" he asked.

The chums hadn't thought of that. They wrinkled their brows in deep reflection.

"The 'Anti-Now House,'" suggested Herries.

"Too clumsy."

"The 'Rough on Rats,'" suggested Digby.

"That's better, but it won't do. We don't want it to appear too partisan. We're going to represent the whole of St. Jim's, of course."

"Call it 'The Saint,' then," said D'Arcy.

"Ah, you've got it! 'The Saint' will do A1."

This was agreed upon, and Blake proceeded to draw up the full title.

"The Saint"; the Official School Magazine of St. Jim's. Edited by Jack Blake, Esq., S.S., and published in the cock-house at St. Jim's. No connection with 'Tom Merry's Weekly.'"

"Good!" said Herries. "But what does S.S. stand for?"

"Study Six, of course. Must have some initials after the name; makes it look more imposing, you know. Now for the contents."

And Study No. 6 were soon hard at work, with a deep thoughtfulness and attention which, we regret to say, they seldom bestowed upon their lessons. And they remained at work, quite contented with their new occupation, for a long time; till, missing them from their usual haunts, other juniors of their House came to look for them. Mellish put in his head at the door.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Swotting? What's come over you?"

"Git!" said Blake laconically.

"What?"

"Clear!"

"But——"

"Bunk!"

"Sha'n't! I——"

"Mizzle!"

"I——"

Biff! A cushion, deftly hurled, smote the intrusive junior upon the chest, and sent him out into the passage again in a heap.

"We must teach these disrespectful youths not to interrupt the editorial labours," said Blake. "How are we to write if we—— Crumbs!"

The sudden ejaculation was caused by the return of the cushion with a whiz. It caught Blake fairly in the neck, and he went over backwards with his chair, followed by the inkpot and most of the first number of "The Saint." Mellish looked in, and gave a yell of laughter.

"How's that, umpire?"

And then he bolted, before the chums could get at him.

Blake picked himself up. There was ink upon his face and his collar, and wrath in his eye.

"I'll slay him when I get hold of him!" he exclaimed.

"There's a bump the size of an apple on the back of my head. The howling rotter! Never mind, get to work."

But the editorial duties were doomed to more interruptions. Mellish had spread the astounding news of having seen all four occupants of Study No. 6 hard at work all at once, and other juniors came to see the phenomenon. They looked into the study as they might have looked into a cage at the Zoo, and many were the questions showered upon the unhappy editors.

"Hallo! They're really working!" exclaimed Kangaroo.

"All of them, by Jove!" said Lorne.

"They must be ill."

"Blake is—he's got black spots on his face."

"Tell us what the matter is, Blake, there's a good chap."

"Is it an extra long impo.?" asked Reilly.

"No; he's off his rocker—that's what's the matter."

"Look here," said Blake, exasperated, "if I come to you, there will be weeping and wailing in the School House, I can tell you."

"Well, why can't you tell us what the game is?" said Mellish. "What's the giddy secret, anyhow?"

"Well, it's up against the New House; and do you think you'd have sense enough not to let Figgins & Co. on to it if I told you?"

"Rather!" was the general exclamation.

"Then come in, and I'll explain."

The juniors crowded into the study. They were curious to hear the explanation of the unwonted industry of Study No. 6. As Mellish said, it wanted some explaining.

And Blake, who was really proud of his brilliant idea, was not upon the whole loth to enlighten the curious youths of the School House. So he explained, and the news that a newspaper was being started was received with many exclamations of wonder and admiration. But Blake began to experience upon the spot some of the worries of an editor.

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All the juniors offered to contribute, and they took it for granted that their effusions would all be accorded prominent places in the first number of "The Saint." One had a long poem in his desk; another had a story that was half finished, and offered to finish it that very evening. Gore had an essay upon "Kindness to Animals," which alone would have filled three numbers of the paper, and he wanted it all to go in. Mellish was ready to do the literary and dramatic criticisms. Blake did not show a very deep gratitude for all these generous offers.

"Sorry," he said, "but space is limited. Poetry is barred, and so is 'Kindness to Animals.' There won't be any literary or dramatic criticisms, Mellish. The editor is willing to consider contributions which must be short and crisp, and up-to-date."

"Hark at the rotter," said Mellish. "Where did you get that from, Blake? He's spouting some rotten advertisement at us."

Blake blushed.

"And it's a rule in this editorial office," he said severely, "that dogs and outsiders are not admitted; so travel, all of you!"

There was a chorus of grumbling.

"Well, I wouldn't have my poem stuck in your rotten paper, anyway," said Bishop, the poet. "Lot of rot, I call it."

"I say, Blake, you might find room for my essay," said Gore. "It's an important subject, you know, and——"

"What about cruelty to readers?" demanded Blake.

"There's that to be considered."

"Oh, rats!" said Gore crossly; and he marched off with the poet.

At last the chums of Study No. 6 were left to their editorial duties in peace.

"Some of them seem to be cross," remarked Herries, grinning.

"Yes; they want to dump down all their rubbish upon a long-suffering editor," said Blake. "We shall have to draw the line very tight. Now to work again."

And then the only sound that broke the silence of the usually noisy study was the scratch-scratch of four industrious pens travelling at a great rate over the paper.

## CHAPTER 7.

### A Stormy Meeting.

WHILE Study No. 6 were engaged upon the highly important business of producing the first number of "The Saint," a meeting was being held in Kildare's study. After the match, the captain of St. Jim's had made up his mind to take a decided step.

Kildare, as captain of the school, had a very delicate task to hold the balance even between the rival Houses at St. Jim's.

Being a School House fellow himself, he was easily suspected by the New House of wanting to favour his own side, and he was himself nervously afraid that he might unconsciously do so. This led to a scrupulous care on his part not to pit the School House forward on any occasion, a far too scrupulous care in the opinion of many of his House-fellows.

As a matter of fact, in his zeal to be fair all round, Kildare was inclined to be a little too considerate towards the New House, and not to insist strongly enough upon the claims of his own.

Thus it came about that the New House members of the college team had been retained in spite of the captain's doubts.

Under the rule of Monteith, the head prefect, the New House discipline was not nearly so well maintained as that of the School House.

The poor form shown by the New House players of late was proof enough that something was wrong somewhere.

But the captain's position was a difficult one.

The New House took it for granted that they should be represented in the school team, and grumbled a little because they now had only five players, while the School House had six. To make the eleven really efficient, it was necessary to "chuck" at least two, if not three, of the New House members, and put School House fellows in their places. But it was no wonder that Kildare hesitated to take such a step. He knew that it would be taken by the New House as an open declaration of war, and that trouble would immediately follow. Kildare had hesitated, and the match had been lost.

Now the captain bitterly blamed himself for not taking a more decided stand.

Had he done so, it was possible that the match might have been saved. He had hoped against hope, and had been bitterly disappointed.

He had made up his mind now, however. Some of the School House fellows who came to him to express strong



views on the subject, found him in the mood they wished to find him in. He was as annoyed and determined as any of them.

"You know why we were licked to-day, Kildare?" said Darrel.

"Yes."

"Well, are you going to fire out those broken-winded rotters?"

"Yes."

"You've made up your mind?"

"Yes," said Kildare again.

The others exchanged looks of satisfaction.

"It's got to be done," said Kildare. "The team as at present constituted will never pull off a match. Jones may improve in form, and I might give him another chance, but Rake and Sefton will have to go. It will mean a row in committee."

"It's bound to, for Monteith is sure to make a fuss; but that's got to be faced!" exclaimed Rushden. "We are not going to settle down to be licked in every match to please Monteith. It's a pity the New House was ever built at St. Jim's."

"If they want war," said Darrel, "let them have it. We could make up a better team by ourselves than we could with their help."

"I'm afraid that isn't quite correct," said Kildare. "Monteith himself is the best winger we have in the whole school, or would be if he wasn't so selfish in his play. And Baker is a first-rate man."

"Well, they're only two. They're not worth the trouble they give. If we play the return match with the same team, we are as good as licked to start with."

"I know that, and there's got to be a change. When we visit Rylcombe, we're going to pull off a victory, if we've got it in us," said Kildare, with a gleam in his blue eyes. "I hope Monteith will take it sensibly, but if he makes a fuss, I suppose we can stand it."

"Of course we can. He's been looking for trouble lately, and he won't be happy till he gets it."

"Well, I depend upon you fellows to back me up."

"Right-ho! You can depend upon the School House to stick to you! And if it came to a row, we'd back you up through thick and thin. We're glad to see that you're going on the warpath at last. It's time."

It must be admitted that most of the School House seniors looked forward with lively anticipation to the row with Monteith and the New House. Monteith had taken unscrupulous advantage of Kildare's anxiety to keep the peace, and his encroachments had been unending. They were glad of a chance to take him down a peg.

But Kildare looked towards the committee meeting with anxiety.

He knew what harm might be done to the school by an irreparable breach between the two Houses. The juniors were always at war, but that was mostly fun, and there was a right good feeling at the bottom of it. But if the seniors took it up, the matter would be a great deal more serious.

But Kildare was not one to shrink from duty, when he saw it clearly, and he went to the committee meeting with his resolve firmly fixed.

Monteith was there, of course, with Baker and Webb.

The New House members of the committee were evidently on their guard.

Webb and Baker were two very decent fellows, but they were under the influence of Monteith, and suspicious of the School House, and inclined to back up their leader blindly.

And so when the question of a change in the constitution of the team was introduced, the backs of the New House men stiffened perceptibly.

"I think it will be admitted," Kildare remarked, "that the team is in need of changes. We made a rotten show against the Grammar School."

"They are a tough lot," replied Monteith. "They out-classed us."

"We must not be outclassed next time. When we visit them for the return match, we have got to beat them."

"We shall do it if we can, of course."

"And to do it we shall want a stronger team."

"I don't see that the school can provide a stronger one."

"As far as the forwards are concerned, they can stand," said the captain. "But there must be a change in the backs. At least two will have to go."

Monteith smiled unpleasantly.

"Let us know whom you mean to fire out, by all means, Kildare."

"Rake and Sefton."

"Yes, I guessed it; two of our side."

"Sides have nothing to do with it. If they could play up I shouldn't ask which side they belonged to. But they can't."

"I don't see it."

"Well, I do. I'm willing to give Jones another chance.

But Sefton and Rake must make room for better men, and that's all there is about it."

"And which of the New House fellows," asked Monteith, "do you want to take in their places?"

"I'd take in any that could fill them but you haven't the men on your side, Monteith. The places will have to be filled by School House fellows."

The cat was out of the bag now.

Monteith's eyes began to glitter.

"Now we've got it!" he exclaimed scornfully. "It's the old story, the New House are to give way to the School House. Our men are to go, and yours are to come in. You might as well have said so at first, without beating about the bush."

Kildare's eyes flashed.

"Well, I've said so now!" he exclaimed. "If you choose to misunderstand me, you must, that's all. I've got to think of the school as a whole, and not of this or that House. We must have a team that can win matches, and to get that I'd take all the players from one House, if necessary. The question of this House or that ought never to enter into the matter at all."

"It is you who bring it in. We were willing to allow you the odd man in the team, for the sake of peace, but now you want the whole thing to yourself."

"I want to get the best team possible."

"Yes, so you say, but you can't expect the New House to believe that all the good material at St. Jim's happens to be collected in the School House!" exclaimed Monteith. "In my opinion the New House ought to be more represented than it is, not less."

"You are determined not to see reason, and so it's no good arguing. I am willing to put it to the vote."

Monteith laughed contemptuously.

"Because your side has the majority on the committee. If you are resolved to have your way, of course you can have it. But as head of the New House I protest against favouritism."

"Do you accuse me of favouritism?"

"Of favouring your own House, certainly."

"That's what you get for giving way to the brutes," said Darrel. "Never mind, let Monteith keep his opinion, and much good may it do him. Put it to the vote."

Monteith rose to his feet.

"Wait a minute. I do not intend to remain on a committee that refuses my side fair play."

"Withdraw, then, and be hanged to you!" broke out Rushden hotly.

"I'm going to. If we're to be bullied and outvoted every time, our coming here is only a farce. We may as well go."

He looked at Webb and Baker, who rose also.

"Better think it over," said Kildare quietly. "There's the Grammar match in a fortnight, and next Saturday there's the match with the Clifden fellows. If we are not to be licked we had better pull together."

"I am quite willing if you are. What do you suggest?"

"I will give Jones another chance in the Clifden match. Thus you will have three men in the team."

"And Sefton and Rake?"

"They must go in any case. They're hardly fit to play a junior team."

"Three New House men, and eight of the School House!" said Monteith, with a sneer. "Not good enough, thank you!"

"What are you going to do, then?"

"I shall consult with the fellows on my side, but one thing you may be sure of, we sha'n't submit to be dictated to and over-ridden by the School House!" exclaimed the prefect.

And the three New House members walked out of the room.

"Good riddance to bad rubbish!" said Darrel. "Now let's get to business."

But Kildare was looking worried.

"Monteith has a card up his sleeve," he said.

"I don't see what he can do, Kildare. He may object and protest as much as he likes, and so can his friends; but, after all, they're in a minority, and they will have to knuckle under. You are captain, and you can give orders. It rests with you to say who shall play."

"I know that; but suppose Monteith refuses to play unless the others are in the team, like he did before?"

The committee looked at each other dubiously.

"His House wouldn't back him up in that."

"They might."

"But you won't give way?" asked several voices anxiously. Kildare shook his head.

"No. I've given way too much already. Whatever happens, I intend to stand by my decision."

And there was an unanimous murmur of approval.

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CHAPTER 8.  
Kerr Makes Discoveries.

"THERE'S something up over the way," said Figgins. The chief of the New House juniors was looking thoughtful. There was evidently something upon his mind.

Kerr and Wynn looked at him inquiringly.

"Well, what is it, Figgy?"

"I don't know. But Blake and his friends are up to something, that much I am certain of. They are awfully mysterious over something. Now, what are the bouncers hatching?"

The Co. put their heads together and thought it out, and finally said that they gave it up.

"So do I," said Figgins. "But one thing's certain, and that is that it's something up against us. Blake is preparing some sort of a giddy surprise for us, and if we don't get on to it he's bound to score. We've got to find out what's on the carpet."

Fatty Wynn looked down in a puzzled way at the shabby square of carpet which adorned the study. Figgins called him an ass, and proceeded:

"I mean, we've got to find out what they're up to. It's something deep, and if we ain't careful they'll get the better of us. Now, how are we going to find out?"

Again the Co. gave it up.

"Well, we've got to," said Figgins decidedly. "I've noticed that there's no light in their study window just now. Now's the time. Whatever it is they're getting up, it keeps them awfully busy in their study, and so I suppose there will be signs of it there. One of us has got to go and scout."

"Jolly good idea," said Fatty Wynn. "You're the very chap, Figgy."

"I didn't say I was going. I said one of us."

"You could do it best, Figgy," said Kerr.

"Rats! The chap who goes may get caught by those bouncers."

"That's what I was thinking."

"Oh, were you? Well, we'll toss up for it. But, I say, you're the man, Kerr. You make up so beautifully that you could easily pass yourself off for one of those kids."

"Oh, I say!" said Kerr. He was flattered, but doubtful.

Kerr's father was an actor, and Kerr himself was the leading light in the St. Jim's Amateur Dramatic Society. He had more than once shown his delighted schoolfellows really excellent impersonations, and his fame was all over St. Jim's.

"Yes, you'll do," declared Figgins. "You are a born giddy actor, Kerr. You remember how you played off being a long-lost cousin of that bounder D'Arcy, and gave him a showing-up. You will be able to pull it off, there isn't the slightest doubt about that."

"Well, I'm willing to risk it," said Kerr, a little dubious inwardly, but unable to resist this torrent of praise. "How shall I fix it up?"

"Let me see. You must make up as a chap about your own size. Oh, I say, go as little Lathom! He's away this evening, you know, and it will be safe, and if they take you for a master, they won't dare to scrag you. You imitate Lathom beautifully."

Kerr grinned.

Mr. Lathom was the fussy, shortsighted master of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. He was a good little man, but extremely fussy. He wore glasses, and had a habit of peering before him, so that he had a comical resemblance to a tortoise poking its head forward. He had a habit, too, of speaking sententiously, with much hawing and humming, and of imparting wisdom in the form of aphorisms.

Kerr, for the amusement of the juniors in the New House, had often imitated Mr. Lathom, and had once made up as that gentleman with great success. Figgins's idea was really brilliant, for in the dusky winter evening it was a thousand to one that the imposture would never be detected. Kerr's "property" wardrobe was varied and extensive, and equal to the demand.

"Little Lathom's about your height," said Figgins, "and you can pad to get the breadth. You have his voice and gestures to the life. Come on, and we'll help you. We've got a clear hour without being worried by any of those beastly prefects."

And Figgins & Co. set to work.

With the assistance of Figgy and Wynn, Kerr was soon made up in his new character. Figgy called in some of the New House boys to see him when he was finished, as a test of the disguise.

"Come in here, Pratt, Redfern, Owen. Mr. Lathom wants you."

"No larks," said Pratt. "Old Lathom's gone off. I saw him go out of the gates myself, and he looked as big a guy as ever! Oh crickey!"

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He gasped in dismay as he saw the figure in the study. Kerr played the part to the life.

"Er—what did you say, Pratt? Repeat your remark, if you please."

"I—I beg your pardon, sir," stammered Pratt, frozen with terror. "I didn't know you were here, sir. I was only jo-jo-joking."

"You were jo-jo-joking, were you? How dare you jo-jo-joke upon so sacred a subject! Flip him over the ear, Figgy!"

Pratt gasped again on hearing such a command from the supposed Form-master.

"Dot him on the boko!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, with great dignity.

The stupefaction of Pratt was so ludicrous that the chums burst into a roar of laughter, and Pratt was enlightened.

"Oh, it's you, Kerr!" he exclaimed, panting with relief. "You beastly bounder! You nearly frightened me out of my wits!"

"You should learn to be a good boy, and to speak respectfully of your kind teachers," grinned Kerr.

"Oh, rats! What's the jape, anyway?"

"I'm going on a visit to the School House, that's all. Keep it dark."

Pratt grinned.

"What ho!"

And quite a number of New House juniors watched the pseudo-master of the Fourth as he crossed the quadrangle in the dusky evening.

"He's great," said Figgins—"he's simply great!"

"But if he's spotted," said Wynn, "there will be a howling row."

"Oh, he won't be spotted!"

Kerr entered the School House boldly, with Mr. Lathom's slow and solemn tread, his head poked forward, a pair of big glasses on his nose. A couple of Third Form youngsters, who were chasing each other in the passage, bolted at sight of him. He passed up the stairs with great dignity, and reached the famous No. 6 Study.

The fact that there was no light in the window showed that the chums were not at home. Kerr tried the door, and it opened readily. He grinned as he went in. He turned up the gas, and looked around.

The room presented its usual aspect, and except that it was a little better furnished, did not differ from the usual run of studies at St. Jim's. Kerr looked round the room, and nothing out of the common caught his eye.

Yet for days past the chums of Study 6 had been busy there hatching some plot or other, and surely there must remain some clue to the secret if he looked long enough for it. So Kerr said to himself, as he renewed his search.

A pile of manuscript on the table, under a book, came in for his attention, and he glanced at it carelessly. Then he started, and his look became riveted.

For this is what caught his eye:

"The Saint," the Official School Magazine of St. Jim's. Edited by Jack Blake, S.S."

Kerr gave a whistle.

The secret was out.

He was strongly tempted to open the pages of "The Saint," and ascertain just what they contained, but he thought it better to hurry back to Figgins with the news of the discovery he had made.

"What a go!" he muttered. "So that's their little game! What a go!"

He replaced the book on the foolscap, and turned towards the door.

At the same moment there was a trampling of feet in the passage without, and Kerr had just time to whip into the cupboard before the chums of Study No. 6 entered.

Kerr's movement had been quick as lightning, and he was out of sight and the cupboard door closed when Jack Blake and his companions entered the room.

"Hallo, the gas is alight!" exclaimed Blake. "You careless ass, Herries! Why didn't you turn it out? I told you to!"

"I did," said Herries.

"Stuff! It didn't light itself! Never mind, let's get to work. We've got to finish this number to-night, and we've only got twenty minutes. Buck up!"

The four juniors sat down, produced their pens, and began to write.

Kerr ventured to peep from the cupboard, and saw the quartette busily at work.

"I think my leader is all right," said Jack, with a grin of satisfaction.

"I say," said Digby, "do you spell 'conglomeration' with two r's or one?"

"I ain't quite sure," said Blake dubiously. "Put it in inverted commas. Then if it's wrong, it'll be supposed to be a joke."



Bob Cherry's eyes danced with glee as he shook hands again and again with his chums. "Hurray!" said Nugent, "here we are again!" (This incident is taken from the splendid, long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled "BOB CHERRY'S BARRING-OUT; or, The Downfall of Vernon-Smith & Co., by Frank Richards, which is contained in this week's number of "The Magnet" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

"Ah, that's a jolly good idea!"

"I've finished my article," said Arthur Augustus. "I think it is weally good."

"And I've given Figgins & Co. something," said Blake. "This will make them sit up. What do you think of this as a limerick?"

"There are three horrid bounders who go  
By the queer name of Figgins & Co.;  
They ought to be sacked  
From the school, that's a fact;  
They're a howling disgrace to the show."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not bad, is it? Hallo! What's that?"

"What's what?"

"I thought I heard something. Fancy, I suppose. Get on, and we'll get the thing pasted out, and it will be all ready."

Kerr remained as still as a mouse in the cupboard. He had nearly betrayed himself when he listened to Blake's flattering description of the Co. to which he had the honour to belong; but he was on his guard now.

The chums finished their writing at last. It had not been a short or an easy task, for, beside their own compositions, they had to copy out the various contributions sent in by School House boys.

But it was done at last.

The method of "publication" hit upon by Blake was a very ingenious one.

To have the magazine printed was out of the question, and to make a number of written copies was too much like work, as Herries put it. So Blake had purchased a large sheet of cardboard, and the contributions being written on one side of the paper only, they could be pasted in proper order on the cardboard and read by all.

Blake had made a large pot of paste, about twenty times as much as he required for his purpose, and invested three-pence in a brush. He flattened out the sheet of cardboard on the table, and commenced to paste the sheets of foolscap upon it. The board was a "double imperial," so there was plenty of room.

Blake was finished at last, and the cardboard was left lying on the table with several books placed round its edges to weight it, it having shown a tendency to buckle under the influence of the paste.

"That's done," said Blake. "We'll leave it here to dry, and later on we'll post it up in the hall. Then we'll issue a special invitation to Figgins & Co. to come over with their pals and read the pretty things we've said about them."

And the chums quitted the study.

As soon as they were fairly gone, Kerr stole from his  
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A Splendid, Long Complete School Tale of the  
chums of St. Jim's. Order Early.

hiding-place. He turned up the light, and surveyed the first number of "The Saint."

There were many items that made him grin, and many that made him savage, but he did not empty the inkpot over the first number of Study No. 6's paper. He felt that it would not be playing the game. But he considered himself quite free to make any revisions he chose. And so, with Blake's pen and ink-eraser, Kerr proceeded to make some alterations, so neatly that they could only be noticed by actually reading through the lines. And as the chums had already finished the work of revision, they were not likely to read "The Saint" over again before posting it up in the common-room.

Kerr grinned when his work was completed. It satisfied him. He turned the light out and left the study. He was bursting with the news he had for Figgins and Wynn, but he was not fated to escape yet.

## CHAPTER 9. Spotted.

"TOM MERRY!"  
"Where's Tom Merry?"  
"And Manners?"  
"And Lowther?"

A good many fellows were asking those questions in the common-room. The Terrible Three had not been seen for some time.

"I saw them cut in across the quad, just before the finish of the Grammarians senior match," said Kangaroo, of the Shell. "They seemed to be in a hurry."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wemembah seein' them, too. They were wunnin' like anythin'."

"They've been keeping out of sight ever since," said Bernard Glyn. "Some jape on, I suppose. These bouncers in Study No. 6 have started the fashion, and Tom Merry's taking it up, I suppose."

"A rival newspaper, perhaps," remarked Gore. "Blake's starting a giddy paper he calls 'The Saint,' advertised as no connection with 'Tom Merry's Weekly.' Perhaps they're starting a new giddy paper in turn, advertised as no connection with 'The Saint.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Bai Jove! I would wegard it as a gweat cheek on the part of the Tewwible Thwee to start a newspapah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "They have the school magazine, and we have a wight to the school newspapah. Of course, 'The Saint' will beat 'Tom Mewwy's Weekly' hollow."

"I guess so!" remarked Buck Finn, the American junior. "I've got an article in it—"

"So have I!" said Bishop, of the Fourth. "I have—"

"Yaas, wathah! And I—"  
"I have offered Blake a splendid article on the subject of Determinism, and for some reason he has refused it," said Skimpole, of the Shell, the genius of St. Jim's. "I had already offered it to Tom Merry for the columns of the 'Weekly,' but he also has declined it!"

"Go hon!"  
"Might as well have put it in!" yawned Levison, of the Fourth. "It wouldn't have been much rottener than the rest. The best thing in 'Tom Merry's Weekly' was my aerostic in the Christmas Number!"

"Oh, rats!"

"I guess Blake will soon get tired of writing out 'The Saint' by hand," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "Papers can't be brought up by hand like kids!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But to come back to our mutton," said Kangaroo.

"Where are Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"They're not in their study," said Reilly, of the Fourth.

"Sure, I looked in for them, and they weren't there, intirely!"

"Can't be out now; it's past locking-up," remarked Kangaroo. "Old Lathom sometimes takes a kid for a walk, to jaw botany with him, but he can't have taken three."

"They're up to something."

"Let's have 'em out!" said Digby. "If they're jolly well starting a newspaper to rival 'The Saint,' they're jolly well going to stop it!"

"Hear, hear!" said Lumley-Lumley.

And quite a crowd of curious fellows started looking for the Terrible Three. As a rule, Tom Merry & Co. were sufficiently in evidence, and their disappearance was certainly very peculiar. They had gone out before the match with the Grammar School seniors, and they had been seen to dash into the School House afterwards in a very hurried manner.

That was all that was known; they had not been seen since.

And such a proceeding was so mysterious that the juniors wanted to know.

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RED-LETTER DAYS: "PENNY POPULAR" FRIDAY AND "MAGNET" MONDAY!

The Shell studies were drawn blank, and somebody suggested the Form-room at last. There was a light gleaming under the big oaken door.

"I guess they're there!" Lumley-Lumley remarked.

"What on earth are they doing, then?" said Jack Blake.

"Their prep., perhaps."

"Why can't they do it in their study, as usual?"

"Give it up."

Kangaroo opened the Form-door. Sure enough, there were the Terrible Three, with their faces bent over their work. They were doing their preparation, and they seemed very busy.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Kangaroo. "We've spotted you! What are you doing?"

"Prep.," said Tom Merry, without looking up.

"What are you doing it in here for?"

"To get it done!"

"I mean, why aren't you doing it in your study?"

"Because we're doing it here!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Can't you look up for a minute while you're speaking to a chap?" exclaimed Kangaroo, in astonishment.

The Terrible Three were keeping their faces bent close over their work.

"Oh, buzz off!" said Tom Merry.

"Look here—"

"Scoot!"

"But, I say—"

"Clear!"

"What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing!"

"What are you bending over your desks like that for?" asked Gore.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"There's something fishy about this!" said Kangaroo.

"I'm jolly well going to see your chivvy, Tom Merry!"

"What have you been doing to it?"

"Oh, clear off!"

Kangaroo rushed towards the desk, and caught hold of Tom Merry's curly hair. Tom Merry gave a yell, and perforce raised his head. Lowther and Manners jumped up at the same time.

There was a yell of amazement and laughter from the juniors as the faces of the Terrible Three were seen. In spite of their best efforts with soap and water, the tar was still only too distinctly visible. Their rubbing and scrubbing had made their faces red as beetroots, and the high colour did not seem likely to fade out; and where their faces were not crimson, they were black. The effect was extraordinary.

The School House juniors simply gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat!"

"My only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally D'Arcy, of the Third Form. "Where did you dig up those chivvies, you bouncers?"

"Weally, Wally!" said D'Arcy major severely. "I wegard chivvay as a wathah vulghah expression!"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!"

"Weally, you young wascal—"

"Piebald, by Jove!" yelled Kangaroo. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Where did you pick up the tar, Tom Merry?"

"Have you been investigating into a tar-pot?"

"Bai Jove! I wegard your appeawance as decidedly funny, deah boys!"

"That's what they've been keeping out of sight for!" roared Gore. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"How did you get it done?" gasped Clifton Dane.

Tom Merry snorted.

"We raided the Grammar School while Delamere's eleven were over here," he said, "and—and—"

"And got caught?" yelled Blake.

"Well, yes."

"And tarred?"

"Well, yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I like your giddy complexions!" grinned Kangaroo.

"How long do you think your complexions will take to wear off?"

"Weeks!" gasped Blake. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, clear out!" exclaimed Tom Merry, exasperated.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buzz off, you silly asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" roared Manners. "We're fed-up! Clear out! Scoot! Scat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three seized rulers, and rushed at the laughing juniors. The crowd swarmed out, gasping with merriment, and Tom Merry slammed the door shut after them.

"Silly asses!" growled Tom Merry, his face redder than

before, if possible. "As if a chap can't have a quiet evening in a Form-room without all this bother!"

From outside, in the passage, came a roar from the juniors.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Shell grunted, and settled down to their prep. again, in solitary state.

## CHAPTER 10.

### Mr. Lathom the Second.

"**H**A, ha, ha!" Jack Blake departed from the Form-room almost doubled up with laughter. Herries and Digby and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were just as mirthful. The tattered faces of the Terrible Three struck them as comical. Herries uttered a sudden exclamation:

"My hat! I nearly forgot!"

"What's that?" asked Blake.

"Towser!"

"Towser?" said Blake.

"Yes; it's time to feed my bulldog."

"Oh, blow your bulldog!" said Blake.

Herries grunted, and departed. Blake and Herries and Digby proceeded to Study No. 6. They had just reached the Fourth Form passage when the door of their study opened, and a familiar form came out.

Blake uttered an exclamation of surprise:

"Mr. Lathom!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Lathom went out," said Digby.

"He's here," said Blake, puzzled. "He's just come out of our study. What on earth did he want there? He can't have been looking at the first number of 'The Saint,' I suppose. I don't believe he's a regular reader of 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' anyway."

"Yaas; but a school newspaper is greatly supewiah to a school magazine, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sagely. "Pewwaps Mr. Lathom was cwicious to see the first number."

"I don't think!" murmured Digby.

"Weally, Dig—"

Mr. Lathom II. passed the juniors very hurriedly. He did not stop to explain what he had been doing in their study, and he kept his face turned away from them as much as he could as he passed. He hurried down the stairs, and the three juniors stopped, and looked after him in great surprise. They knew that Mr. Lathom was a somewhat absent-minded little gentleman, but they had never noticed his conduct to be so peculiar as it seemed at the present moment.

"What's the matter with him?" muttered Blake.

"Off his giddy wockah, I should think!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, fixing his monocle upon the retreating form of the Fourth-Form master.

"May be ill," said Blake. "Let's go down."

"Yaas, wathah!"

They descended the stairs after the Form-master. Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, met the little gentleman in the hall, and spoke to him.

"Ah, you have returned, Mr. Lathom!" he said.

"The 'spoo!" Mr. Lathom had to pause.

"Yes, sir," he said, keeping his back to the light. "I—I mean, yes, certainly, Mr. Railton."

"A very pleasant evening out, I think," said Mr. Railton.

"I—yes—I don't know—certainly."

Mr. Railton looked surprised.

"But have you not just returned from a walk?" he asked.

"Er—yes—no."

Mr. Railton looked at him queerly. He had never suspected Mr. Lathom before of being addicted to drinking. But he could not help the suspicion entering his mind now, the manner of the Fourth-Form master was so extremely peculiar.

Kerr was anathematising his luck inwardly. But for the unfortunate meeting with the Housemaster, and the fact that Mr. Railton happened to be in a chatty mood, he would have been clear of the House by this time, and well on his way to Figgins's study in the New House. But he could not rush away suddenly while the School Housemaster was talking to him without exciting suspicion.

"I—I should think I—I prefer to go to my room," stammered Mr. Lathom's double. "In fact, I—I am tired."

"Good-night, Mr. Lathom!"

"Good-night, sir—Mr. Railton!"

And the Form-master's double proceeded towards the door. Mr. Railton stared at him in blank astonishment. Mr. Lathom had said he was going to his room, and he went towards the door into the quad. Mr. Railton went into his study in a very puzzled frame of mind. He wondered what was the matter with Mr. Lathom. He was very far from guessing.

But Kerr's ill-luck was not over yet. He had not reached the doorway when a little crowd of seniors came out of Kildare's study, and came towards the door. They were Monteith, Baker, and Webb of the New House, leaving the footer committee-meeting. Monteith stopped to speak to Mr. Lathom. The unhappy impostor would gladly have fled, but the head prefect of the New House spoke to him by name.

"Mr. Lathom!"

Kerr groaned inwardly.

"Yes, Monteith?" he muttered.

"I ordered Kerr to bring you fifty lines of Virgil to-day. I thought I would mention it to you, in case he should omit to do so."

"Very well, Monteith," muttered the unfortunate Kerr. "I—I think upon the whole Kerr may be excused from those lines."

"Mr. Lathom!"

"Kerr is the best boy in my Form, Monteith," said the junior, regaining his nerve as he saw that the prefect had not the remotest suspicion. "I ask you, as a personal favour to me, to take back that impot—I mean imposition."

Monteith looked very sour.

"Oh, very well, sir!" he said.

"And really, Monteith, I wish you to be a little more careful in your treatment of Figgins & Co.—I mean, Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn. They are the best boys in the New House, or in the Fourth Form."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Yes, indeed. And they would be a credit to any school."

"I do not quite agree with you, sir," said Monteith drily.

"My impression of them is that they are mischievous young rascals."

"You are quite wrong, Monteith."

"Indeed, sir!" said the prefect again, biting his lips.

"Yes. You are an ass!"

"What!"

"I—I mean, a foolish fellow," stammered Mr. Lathom. "Kindly remember what I have told you. I do not approve of your bullying ways."

"Oh!" said the prefect, turning red. And he walked away with Baker and Webb without another word.

Mr. Lathom II. was very glad to see him go. He went out into the porch of the School House, and paused there a minute or two. He did not want to cross the quadrangle with the New House seniors. The less he saw of his own prefect, while he was in his disguise as Fourth-Form master, the more Kerr would like it.

He heard a muttering of words in the hall behind him. He did not catch the words; but if he had they would have alarmed him, for this is what Blake was saying:

"I saw his whiskers at the side; they were coming unstuck. They're false! It's not old Lathom at all!"

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

"I thought Lathom had gone out," said Digby, with a nod. "But who—"

"Who is it that's always japing somebody by impersonating people?"

"Kerr!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Jack Blake nodded.

"Yes, Kerr! The boulder came over here as Mr. Lathom, and went to our study to jape us, I suppose, and found we weren't there. Going to order us to do impots, or something, I expect."

"Bai Jove!"

"Lost his nerve when we met him in the passage, I suppose."

"But are you sure about the whiskers?" asked Digby.

"He looked exactly like Lathom."

"Let's speak to him, and see."

"Right-ho!"

The three juniors hurried out of the doorway.

"Mr. Lathom! I want—"

Before Blake could finish, the sham master of the Fourth bounded down the School House steps and dashed into the dusk of the quadrangle.

"After him!" muttered Blake.

And with a rush the chums of the Fourth were after him, and they were round him in a moment. And Mr. Lathom the Second had to halt.

## CHAPTER 11.

### The Real Article.

"**G**OOD-EVENING, Mr. Lathom!" said Blake, raising his cap.

"Er—good-evening, my boy!" Mr. Lathom adjusted his glasses and peered at Blake, and feeling as he did so that his whiskers were in the wrong place, he surreptitiously put them straight as well as he could. "You have—er—I perceive, just come from the—er—gymnasium."

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I am always pleased to see my boys indulge in—er—beneficial and healthful exercise."

"Thank you, sir. Will you see now the lines you gave me to do?"

"Another time, Blake—another time. I am—er—busy now."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Lathom coughed uncomfortably.

"Go into your House now, boys."

"There's something I wanted to say to you, sir."

"Another time, Blake."

"It's only a few words, sir."

"Well, well, be quick, then."

"It's about a mongrel, named Kerr. You must have noticed the tripe-hound."

The pseudo Mr. Lathom trembled with rage.

"Blake!"

"Yes, sir. Of course, you've noticed him. He is conspicuous, even among the New House cads, by his slovenliness and general untidiness. He has joined the Anti-Washing League, and—"

"Blake, I'll break your—I mean, you must not speak of your schoolfellow in this extremely reprehensible way."

"No, sir; but I want you to know the horrid bounder I am referring to, and I can't without describing him."

"I'll—Blake—go into your House at once!"

"But I've got something particular to tell you about this horrible cad of a Kerr, sir. The beast is in the habit of impersonating people for a joke, because he thinks he's a giddy actor."

Mr. Lathom started.

"And I've seen him got up as you, sir," said Blake mercilessly. "I've known him have the cheek to get himself up as the master of the Fourth, and poke himself into the School House, and come out three steps at a time because he was spotted!"

"I—I—I—"

"Yes, sir; if we find the horrid bounder masquerading like that, I suppose we ought to go for him, oughtn't we, and frog's-march him up and down the quad. as a lesson?"

Then Kerr realised that he was known, and he made a desperate bound to escape. In a moment the chums of Study No. 6 had fastened upon him.

"No, you don't!" said Blake cheerfully.

"Blake! How dare you!"

"Oh, come off! Do you think we don't know who you are? Think I should have said all that if I didn't know who you were, Kerr?"

Kerr affected to surrender, watching like a cat for a chance to break loose.

"We'll give him the frog's-march," went on Blake. "These New House kids are getting altogether too impudent. Prisoner, have you anything to say why sentence should not be passed upon you?"

"I'll break all your necks if you don't chuck it!" growled Kerr, in his natural voice.

"Hallo, he's getting ferocious!"

"Look out!" whispered Kerr suddenly. "Cave!"

For a moment the attention of the chums was taken from him. He made a sudden spring and eluded them, and the bounded away into the gloom.

"Taken in!" exclaimed Blake. "The horrid bounder! After him!"

Annoyed at being so easily hoodwinked, the chums gave chase. Kerr had dashed off towards the gates, the only way open to him. He intended to dodge among the elms and get round to his own House. The chums dashed after him, and Kerr, having swiftly done his dodging, they missed him.

Blake halted with a growl.

"He's gone!"

"No, he isn't!" muttered Herries. "Look, here he comes! Dodge behind the trees."

Blake could hardly believe his eyes.

There was Kerr coming directly towards them, as it seemed, from the direction of the gates. They dodged into cover in a twinkling. Not for an instant did it cross their mind that the real Mr. Lathom had returned to the school.

at this inopportune moment, had let himself in with his key, and was now going towards his House in blissful unconsciousness of the surprise awaiting him.

The chums could not be expected to guess all that, and, as a matter of fact, no doubts even came into their mind. They had not the slightest uneasiness that the individual coming towards them might not be the disguised junior from the New House.

"Ready?" whispered Blake.

"Right-ho!"

"Collar him!"

The chums rushed out, and in a second the master was collared and dragged to the ground. Mr. Lathom was so paralysed with amazement that he could only faintly gasp.

"Got you!" yelled Blake. "Got you, you bounder! Frog's-march him, kids!"

They seized the unfortunate master of the Fourth, and prepared to frog's-march him across the quadrangle.

"Dear me!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "What does this—er—mean? Let me go instantly!"

"Doesn't he do it well?" said Blake admiringly. "One would think it was old Lathom himself talking."

"Blake! How dare you! Let me go instantly!"

"Oh, chuck it! You know we know who you are."

"I am Mr. Lathom, your master. I—"

"That's right; keep it up!"

"I will cane you severely!"

"Go on!"

"You shall all be expelled from the school!" howled Mr. Lathom. "Are you mad to dare to treat your master with such—er—unparalleled insolence?"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say," said Herries uneasily. "There's no mistake, is there—"

"Rats! Pull his whiskers off; he'll own up then."

Herries filled his fingers with Mr. Lathom's whiskers and tugged. The unhappy master gave a fiendish yell.

"They won't come off!" gasped Herries, in dismay.

"What?"

"They won't come off."

"Oh, rot! Let me have a try."

"But—"

"Rats! Give me hold."

Blake tugged at the whiskers. Then he had to admit that they were genuine, and the whole horror of the mistake that had been made rushed upon him.

They let Mr. Lathom drop as suddenly as if he had become red-hot. He was upon his feet in a moment, boiling over with rage.

"Flogged! Caned! Expelled!" he yelled. "I'll have you all expelled. I—I—I— How dare you—how dare you?"

"We beg your pardon, sir!" gasped Blake.

"I—I—I—"

Indignation choked Mr. Lathom's utterance.

"We took you for somebody else, sir."

"Follow me instantly, all of you! Don't try to get away. I know who you are. Follow me immediately!"

And the outraged master of the Fourth stalked off to the School House, with the chums at his heels. They were nearly frozen with horror.

"What on earth shall we do?" muttered Blake hopelessly. "We can't give Kerr away. Hallo! There the image is; he's seen it all!"

They caught a glimpse of Kerr, still in his make-up, peering out from behind a tree. The New House junior watched the unhappy procession vanish into the School House.

"Go!" said Mr. Lathom sternly. "I will deal with you in the morning. I do not—er—wish to punish you till I have had time to reflect. But such an—er—unheard of outbreak of hooliganism can only be adequately punished by your expulsion from the school, and I hold out no hope of pardon to you."

And the chums went away disconsolately enough.

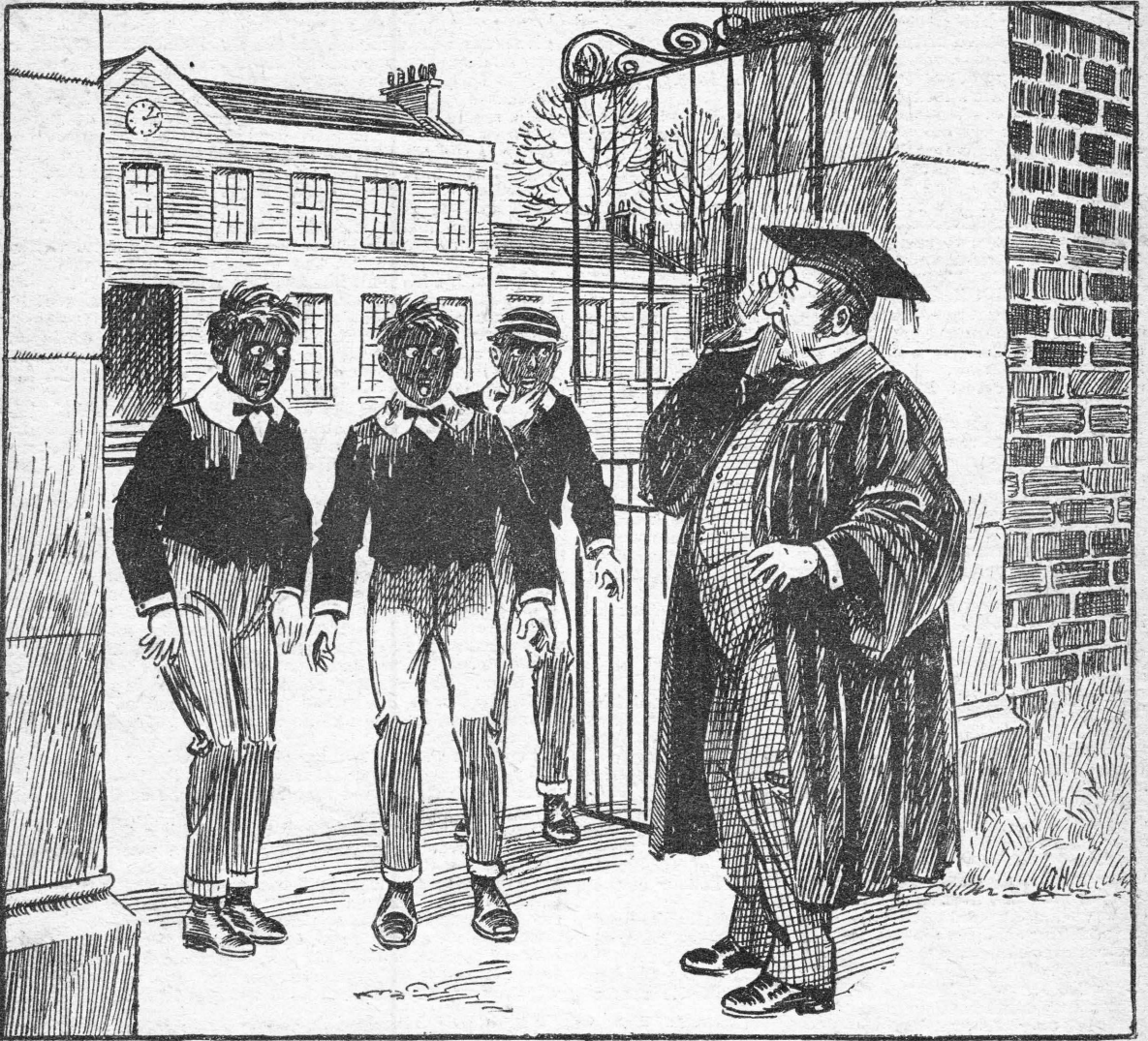
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The three tarry juniors stood facing the head-master of the Grammar School. Dr. Monk halted in astonishment, and pushed up his spectacles to look at them. "Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Bless my soul! Where did these three negroes come from!" (See Chapter 3.)

There came a tap at Mr. Lathom's door, and Kerr opened it. Kerr was himself again now, though there were traces of the make-up left on his face.

"What do you want, Kerr?" asked Mr. Lathom angrily.

"I—I want tell you something," faltered Kerr. "I heard you say you were going to expel Blake for tackling you in the quad, sir, and—"

"What do you know about it?"

"It was my fault, sir."

"Your fault—how?"

"He took you for me, sir."

"How could he take me for you—a boy? Don't be absurd!"

Kerr falteringly explained.

"You—you dared to impersonate me!" spluttered Mr. Lathom. "You—you—"

"It was a joke, sir."

"I'll teach you to play such jokes!" shouted Mr. Lathom. He took up a pen. "Take this note to your Housemaster, sir."

He scribbled a note and handed it to Kerr.

"I'm awfully sorry, sir," said Kerr contritely.

Mr. Lathom, who was a good-tempered little man at heart, was already calming down.

"You may return me the note, Kerr. Hold out your hand, sir!"

Kerr obeyed. He received six stingers on each hand, and he went out of the study fairly doubled up, but satisfied, upon the whole, to have got off so cheaply.

Mr. Lathom sent for Blake later, and explained to him that the facts were known, and the chums of Study No. 6 pardoned. The chums went their way rejoicing, and voted Kerr a brick, as indeed he was.

## CHAPTER 12.

### The Order of the Boot!

"WHAT are we going to do about it?"

It was Monteith who spoke.

A number of New House seniors had met in the head prefect's study to discuss the question of the football team, and they were all looking angry and incensed.

"This is how the matter stands," went on the prefect. "We are practically ousted from the college team. As it is, we are five against six of the School House. If Sefton and Rake are turned out, we have only three members left. The team will be practically a School House side. Are we going to stand it?"

"No!" was the general reply.

"But what can we do?" asked Baker. "Kildare is captain, and the captain's word is law upon the question of making up the team."

"That's so," said Monteith. "Kildare has the power to leave out whom he pleases; but we have a way of bringing him to reason."

"How?"

"By refusing to play with the eleven, as we did before, and

leaving him to make up a whole side from the School House. It would puzzle him to do it."

The seniors looked at each other doubtfully.

"That would be a serious step," said Baker. "It might easily lead to the defeat of the college on the football field."

"That's Kildare's look out."

"It's ours, too. We don't want the college beaten. Hang it all, we can't put our personal feelings before the game. I've told you that before, Monteith."

"I see, you mean to back up Kildare in dictating to us."

"Nothing of the kind!" said Baker hotly. "I don't back him up. I think he's rough on the New House, and I'm for using any legitimate means to bring him to reason. But when it's proposed to risk getting the school licked for the sake of scoring off Kildare, I must say I think it's time to draw the line."

Monteith set his lips. He had not expected opposition on his own side, and it annoyed him deeply. But Baker was one of those quiet, obstinate youths who have decided opinions and stick to them. He would not see reason—from the prefect's point of view. And a murmur from the meeting showed that the rest were to a great extent in agreement with Baker.

Monteith saw that he would have to trim his sails carefully if he was to remain a trusted leader of his House. He was willing to sacrifice the interests of the school to his revenge upon Kildare, but the others were made of manlier stuff. He swallowed his rage and changed his tack.

"That was only a suggestion, of course," he remarked. "I don't say that we should be driven to do it. Kildare would see reason, I mean, and realise that he must make some concessions to our House. He couldn't spare us from the team."

"But if you used that as a threat, you'd have to stick to it if he defied you."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Then it would come to getting the college licked, as I said," replied Baker.

"I want to take the sense of the meeting," said Monteith, looking round. "I don't want to impose my own views upon anyone. Kildare has laid it down that we are to have only three men in the college team, Baker, Jones, and myself. If you fellows are agreeable, I've got nothing to complain about."

There was a discussion, and very divergent views were expressed. Some were for defying Kildare and withdrawing wholly from the football team if he refused to concede their demands. But they were a minority. Most of the New House seniors shared Baker's views—that the honour of the school must come first.

It was finally put to the vote, and the majority declared for accepting Kildare's terms, and Monteith gave in with the best grace he could.

"That's settled, then," he said. "We play in the Clifden match to-morrow. Whether we shall play in the return Grammar match I have my doubts."

"What do you mean?" asked Baker.

"I mean that if we surrender now, Kildare will be encouraged to make further demands. He says already he is not satisfied with Jones's play. I fancy there'll be another New House man turned out of the team soon."

"I don't believe Kildare will go any further."

"But what if he does?"

"Well, if he does, I'll agree that it's time to put our foot down. But, so far, I think we ought to play, and do our best for the school," said Baker.

"Very well, I'll tell Kildare we play to-morrow, and that's settled."

The meeting broke up. Monteith took the first opportunity of paying a visit to the captain of St. Jim's to acquaint him with the determination arrived at by the New House.

Kildare had been considerably worried lately as to what course the New House prefect would take, and Monteith had purposely kept him in suspense. But the captain had no idea of receding an inch from the position he had taken up. He looked at Monteith with cold inquiry as the prefect entered his study.

"I've come to speak to you about the Clifden match," said Monteith icily. "I've talked it over with the fellows on my side, Kildare, and I may as well tell you that we were strongly inclined to withdraw altogether, and leave your side to run the team alone. It appears to me that that's what you want."

"I want nothing of the kind," replied Kildare. "I hope that your side have not determined upon such a step?"

"No. We want the college to win as much as you do, or more, and so we've decided to take it lying down. We are willing to play only three men to your eight, for the sake of peace, but we want it distinctly understood that that ends our surrendering."

"I don't understand you."

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Monteith gave a disagreeable smile.

"Very well. You'll bear in mind what I've said. We've given way all we intend. If there is further friction, the responsibility is on your shoulders, not mine."

And he quitted the study.

Kildare gave a sigh. It was not all pleasure to be captain of a school like St. Jim's, with two rival Houses pulling different ways. His path would have been a great deal easier if the New House prefect had shown the least desire to pull with him, but that was not to be expected of Monteith.

Kildare had recently had hopes that his trouble with Monteith was at an end.

After the match with Mexborough, when the St. Jim's team—with Monteith left out—had gained a splendid victory, the New House prefect had appeared to come round. He had admitted his fault like a sportsman, and cordial relations had once more been established between the captains of the two houses at St. Jim's. Kildare had been only too ready to believe in the genuineness of Monteith's new cordiality, but he was undeceived now. The New House prefect's ill-nature had got the upper hand again, and the trouble had broken out afresh, apparently worse than before.

The next day was the day of the Clifden match. The Clifden fellows were an average team, nothing like the Grammarians in form, and Kildare could afford to take some risks with them. That was his reason for giving Jones another chance.

Had not Kildare been so concerned about his immediate worries, he would have noticed that something was agog in the junior portion of the School House that Saturday. There was much whispering and chuckling among the juniors. As a matter of fact, the first number of "The Saint," prepared for publication, as we have seen, the previous evening, was to be given to the public that afternoon. Blake, after mature consideration, had decided to let the hour of publication be immediately after the football match, when all the School House would be at liberty to enjoy the rare treat prepared for them. Meanwhile, "The Saint" reposed in the cupboard in Study No. 6. Blake had put it away without, of course, examining it, and he had no idea of the revisions Kerr had made upon it.

Figgins & Co. said nothing of their knowledge of the secret. They were willing to let the number be published, with Kerr's amendments, but they intended to be on the spot with some friends to see it.

The afternoon was cold and windy, with a thin, wet mist hovering over the ground. It was not a pleasant day for football, but that made no difference to the teams. The Clifden fellows arrived in due course, and the two elevens turned out for the match. Round the field the spectators stood wrapped in coats and macintoshes.

St. Jim's won the toss. Clifden were given the wind to kick off against, and it was stiff. As soon as the teams got to work, the most prejudiced observer could not fail to see what an improvement had been wrought in the team by the changes Kildare had made.

The Saints' forward line had always been good, but the backs had failed to do what was required of them. Now that the two worst failures were gone, and two sturdy School House fellows were in their places, the home defence was much sounder. But there was still a weak spot, and that was Jones, at centre-half. Jones had been a good player in his time, but he had gone off form of late. His wind was not what it had been, and he was not quick or steady. An emergency took him by surprise, and a charge bowled him over like a ninepin. He was slow and clumsy, and it seemed to Kildare that he had got worse even during the last week, since the visit of the Grammarians.

Clifden were the first to score. They brought the ball goalward with a rush, and Jones was nowhere, and as it happened the brunt of the attack fell on centre-half. The ball went in, and Kildare snapped his teeth.

"For goodness' sake buck up, Jones!" he said, as they walked back to the centre of the field. "What's the matter with you?"

Jones scowled. He knew that he had failed lamentably, but he was not inclined to admit it.

The game was resumed, and the college attacked vigorously, and their efforts were loudly cheered, especially when they materialised in a goal, and the score stood level. The goal came from Monteith's foot, and it was really well shot, and his name was shouted with loud cheers by the boys of St. Jim's. There was no further scoring in the first half.

When the whistle went again, the home team started with a powerful attack, which drove the visitors back towards their goal. But with a strong wind behind them, Clifden recovered and began to gain ground. They put all their "beef" into a big effort, and came on with a rush that for the moment staggered the Saints.

The Clifden forwards brought the ball on with a fine burst, and went through the red-and-white team, beating the halves



finely. The Clifden captain had the ball, and he was opposed by Jones. He dribbled the ball fairly round Jones's feet, and rushed on with a quiet grin on his face. Jones snapped his teeth, and, forgetting himself in his annoyance, charged the Clifden skipper and brought him heavily to the ground.

It was a charge of the roughest description from behind, and the Clifden man went down with a crash. The foul was undeniable, and a yell rose round the field, in the midst of which the referee's whistle was heard shrilling. Play was immediately stopped, and the players gathered round the fallen skipper, and he was helped to his feet. He had gone down right within the penalty area, and he was not slow to claim the kick.

Kildare was pale with rage. It was not only the advantage gained by the enemy, through the penalty-kick, that annoyed him. It was the blackguardly action of the back in charging the Clifden skipper foully, and bringing disgrace upon the side he belonged to. Kildare strode up to Jones with a look upon his face that made the New House fellow extremely uneasy.

"Get off the field, Jones!"

Jones glared at him.

"Do you hear? I order you off the field."

"I—I didn't mean—"

"I don't know and don't care what you meant. I know what you did. You're a disgrace to any decent team. Get off the field!"

Jones ground his teeth. His eyes were blazing. He had expected to be "slanged"; but the public humiliation of being ordered off the field was maddening.

"Sha'n't!" he ground out. "I—"

Kildare came nearer to him, his hands clenched, his eyes on fire.

"Are you going, or shall I shove you off?"

Jones receded a pace. He turned an appealing glance upon the referee—the master of the School House. But Mr. Raiton's face was cold and stern.

"Get off the ground, Jones," he said. "I uphold Kildare's decision, and should have said so myself if he had not spoken. Get off!"

There was no disputing the referee's order. Jones, with hanging head, and his nails digging into his palms, turned and slowly made his way off the field, greeted with groans by most of the spectators.

"I protest!" exclaimed Monteith, his brow dark with anger. "I protest!"

"Hold your tongue!" said Kildare roughly. "There's been too much time wasted already."

Monteith gritted his teeth. He was inclined to walk off the field himself, there and then, and leave Kildare to finish the match as best he could. He was angry with Jones for having placed himself in the captain's hands by his folly, and still more angry with Kildare. But to leave his side in the lurch in the middle of a match was too serious a step to be taken in a hurry, and so he controlled himself.

"Very well," he muttered thickly—"very well. You'll hear more of this."

The Clifden fellows were looking at each other rather queerly. It was very patent to them that there was a split in the school at St. Jim's. All this washing of dirty linen in public was extremely annoying to Kildare, but Monteith was too angry to care. But the referee put a sharp end to the scene. The penalty-kick was awarded to the Clifden team, and their skipper took it with a care and calculation which were well rewarded. Rushden, in goal, was all eyes and hands, but the kick was a little too much for him. The ball went into the net, and Clifden were a goal to the good.

The Saints resumed play a man short, and the Clifden men were not slow to take advantage of it. Monteith, too, was too passionately angry to play up to his usual form. He simply "walked" through the game, and did not improve a single chance that came his way. The wind, too, was increasing in force, and was blowing raindrops in the faces of the Saints; so the difficulties they had to contend with were almost hopeless.

Kildare played up splendidly, and most of his men backed him up as well as they could, but the task was too big for them. With the centre-half gone, and the best winger playing listlessly, the side were too heavily handicapped. Had Clifden been a strong team they would have walked all over the Saints. As it was, Kildare succeeded in holding his ground, though the Saints never looked like scoring again.

When the final whistle went the score was unaltered. The Clifden team had won by two goals to one. And the Saints went off the field in the worst of spirits; some of them in the worst of tempers.

"Rotten!" said Tom Merry, in disgust. "What is St. Jim's coming to, I wonder? I never saw such a poor show. Look here, kids, if the seniors don't buck up, we shall have to petition the Head to let a junior eleven represent St. Jim's."

"Well, a junior eleven couldn't do much worse than that," said Lowther. "It wasn't so bad being licked by the Grammarians. But to let a third-rate team like Clifden walk over us—well, it's simply sickening."

And Lowther's opinion was very generally shared by seniors and juniors alike.

## CHAPTER 13.

### The First Number of "The Saint."

"HALLO, Figgy! You're the very chap I want to see." "How curious," grinned Figgy. "I was just coming over to see you."

"Come in," said Blake. "We've got something to show you."

"Curious again! I thought you had."

"Did you? You'll never guess what it was. Come on; it's in the common-room."

"So you've posted it up?"

Blake stared.

"What! How do you know anything about it?"

"Oh," said Figgins, "a little bird told me! That's what we've come over for. Come on, chaps; you're all invited to read the first number of 'The Saint.'"

A dozen New House juniors, including, of course, the "Co.," were at the heels of Figgins. They followed Jack Blake into the juniors' room in the School House. Shrieks of laughter were proceeding from that apartment. Jack Blake had hung up the big cardboard sheet, upon which the pages of the magazine were pasted in careful array, in a prominent place.

The news that the first number of "The Saint" was published had flown like wildfire, and the room was crowded. Seniors as well as juniors had come to see this latest production of Study No. 6. The howls of laughter made Blake grin with satisfaction. He knew that the paper was a success, and its reception was very pleasing. But the laughter exceeded even his rosiest anticipations as he entered the room with Figgins & Co. A yell greeted him.

"Hallo, ass!" shouted Tom Merry.

"You've described yourself well, Blake!" grinned Lowther.

"It's the giddy truth," said Manners.

"Fancy Blake growing so candid in his old age!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Somewhat mystified, Blake pushed his way to the front. Mellish kindly pointed out to him the cause of the uproarious laughter. Herries was standing by glowering, yet half grinning, too. Blake coloured as he read. The title of the paper had been altered by the addition of a single letter, so that it now read:

"The Saint"; the Official School Magazine of St. Jim's. Edited by John Blake, Esq., A.S.S."

Kerr had put in the "A" very neatly before the "S.S."

The effect was comical in the extreme.

"Who did that?" demanded Blake wrathfully. "Herries, you ass, I left you in charge of the thing while I went for Figgins, and I haven't been gone two minutes! Why didn't you—"

"It hasn't been done now," said Herries. "It must have been got at in the study."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins.

A light dawned upon Blake. The unexpected knowledge of Figgins & Co. was now explained. Somehow or other they had discovered the project of Study No. 6, and had got at the first number of "The Saint," and the chums had never noticed it.

"I smile!" yelled Figgins. "Hear me smile! Ha, ha, ha!"

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

Blake ran his eyes swiftly over the magazine. Ready fingers pointed out more of the improvements Kerr had made upon it. The limerick, for instance, in which Blake had described Figgins & Co. in terms the reverse of complimentary, had been woefully changed. Now it ran as follows, and Blake could hardly help grinning as he read:

"There are three jolly fellows we know,

By the title of Figgins & Co.,

They are all of them bricks.

And they've whacked Study Six,

And they don't give the School House a show."

"Hear me smile!" chirped Figgins. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins.

"Never mind," said Blake. "Read the rest, you bounders, that's all."

Digby had gone to Study No. 6 for a bottle of ink and a brush, and he now returned, and the alterations were carefully blacked out.

But they had caught on, and the juniors began to address Blake with the addition of initials after his name, and

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A Splendid, Long Complete School Tale of the chums of St. Jim's. Order Early.

Figgins & Co. set Kerr's limerick to a kind of chant, and began to sing it.

This was not likely to be stood by Study No. 6, and it looked as if a general row was coming, but just then Kildare came in, and the sight of the captain restored order.

"Hallo, Blake!" said Kildare good-humouredly. "I hear you have started in the editorial line. Is this your effusion?"

"That's it," said Blake modestly. "I wish you'd read it, Kildare. Good literature is always improving to the mind, and this beats 'Tom Merry's Weekly' hollow."

"Thanks, I will."

And Kildare stopped before "The Saint," and began to read.

He grinned in some places, and frowned in others. The editors had not spared the New House, by any means.

Digby's article was funny. It was supposed to be written by "The Offis Boy," and was, of course, a hit at the New House. Dig hadn't been very clear where the stops ought to be put, and being of a liberal turn of mind, he had sprinkled them freely over his composition after he had finished it, determined that at all events there should not be too few. The result was peculiar.

"We are informed; that there is a plaig of rats at St. Jim's?; These nocksious animals generally live in old houses, but in the present; case they inhabit a New House. They are nasty little animals, very unpleasant to look at, and very troublesome! to decent people. The New House is; simply a conglomeration of rat holes, where the little bruits live in swarms; They sometimes come out and are cheeky, and then the young gentlemen of the School House; have to; chase them back? to their dens again?"

There was more in the same strain, and the punctuation was decidedly the funniest part of Dig's crushing article.

Kildare's grin grew broader when he came to Herries' contribution, which was in a more serious vein. The chief editor had declared that there ought to be some serious writing in the paper, it couldn't be all fun, and Herries had produced a poem, but its effect upon most of the readers was the reverse of solemn.

It was entitled "Ode to a Perishing Sparrow," and commenced thusly:

"Poor little sparrow, I see thee lie,  
And a tear of sympathy comes into my eye,  
Some cruel boy with a catapult  
Has slain thee in the prime of life.  
Never more wilt thou chirp or fly home to thy nest,  
Poor little sparrow!"

The poem had originally contained twelve stanzas, but space was limited, and Blake had only been able to squeeze in four and a half, so that the poem ended rather abruptly, which Herries said spoiled the effect.

Kildare did not seem to think that the effect was spoiled, however, for he laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. Herries watched him in amazement and some indignation.

"There's nothing funny in that poem," he said. "It's a serious one, Kildare."

Kildare gasped.

"Is it? I mistook it for humour. I beg your pardon, Herries."

"Poor little sparrow," giggled Figgins—"poor little perishing sparrow! Perishing rot, I say! Ha, ha, ha!"

The rest of the first number of "The Saint" we need not describe in detail, but it was about on a par with what we have quoted.

The New House were slated right and left, and the School House exalted, as was only to be expected.

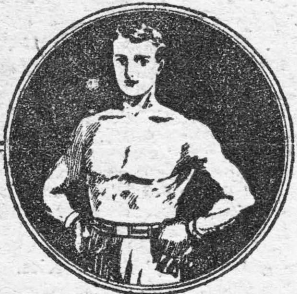
Under the head of "Football Notes" appeared the following:

"The St. Jim's First Eleven is going to the dogs. They can't play footer for toffee. The editor of 'The Saint' has a suggestion to make. That is, that all the cads shall be forthwith kicked out, and their places filled by School House chaps, who will uphold the honour of the old school. If this is not done, the captain of St. Jim's is hereby warned that the juniors of the School House wash their hands of the result."

"Well, it's about time they washed their hands, some of them," said Figgins.

Kildare finished his perusal and walked away, leaving the juniors in possession of the room. Figgins & Co. began to chant their limerick again, and Blake and his chums, getting

(Continued on page 19.)



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out of patience, charged them out of the room, and ejected them ignominiously from the School House.

From time to time, however, New House boys came in in twos and threes to look at the first number of "The Saint," and all the time one or other of the chums of Study No. 6 mounted guard over it, in case any of the enemy should be tempted to damage the interesting publication.

Monteith heard of "The Saint" in due course, and of its uncomplimentary references to himself, and he came over to see it.

Digby happened to be on guard just then, and he eyed the New House prefect rather uneasily. Monteith finished his reading, and then grabbed the big cardboard sheet.

"Here, I say, what are you up to?" demanded Dig, in alarm.

Monteith gave him a cuff that sent him reeling.

Then he crumpled up the cardboard, tore it, and scattered the fragments round the common-room, amid cries of indignation from the juniors present.

Then the incensed prefect stalked out of the School House, followed by loud groans and hisses.

"Never mind," said Blake, when he was told of the untimely fate of the first number of "The Saint"—"never mind, my infants. We've made them sit up, and that's what we wanted. I never thought Monteith would show how much we had ruffled him, the ass! We've made those New House wasters wriggle, and that was what we wanted. And let them wait till the next number comes out, that's all!"

## CHAPTER 14.

### Monteith Puts His Foot Down.

**A**FTER the Clifden match, Kildare had quickly made up his mind as to the course he would pursue. Whatever might be the views of the New House, whatever the action taken by Monteith, he was determined that Jones should not play in the first eleven again.

This exclusion would reduce the representation of the New House in the team to two members, Monteith and Baker. But it could not be helped. Jones was not fit to play, and the New House could not supply his place so well as the School House could. With a strict eye to the efficiency of the team, Kildare was compelled to increase the number of fellows from his own House in the team to nine.

The news was received in the New House with boundless indignation.

The seniors met as usual in Monteith's study to discuss the situation, during the week. The question was whether Monteith and Baker should turn up to practise with the team.

The New House fellows were much more inclined to follow the prefect's lead to extremities now than they had been before.

Monteith's prophecy, a very easy one for him to make, knowing Kildare's views as he did, had come true. The New House surrender had been followed by the exclusion of another New House player. Still, even Monteith could not uphold Jones's conduct on the field.

"I admit that Jones forgot himself," he said. "He acted badly, but we all lose our tempers at times, and Jones says that he was worried and nervous through knowing that Kildare was watching for a chance to pick faults in him."

"That's so," said Jones. "That's just how I felt. I should have played all right if it hadn't been for that."

"I don't know how you'd have done it then," said Baker. "I don't believe you've got it in you, Jones, and that's plain English."

"I hope you don't intend to back up the enemy, Baker?" said Monteith savagely.

"Certainly not. Still, facts are facts. Jones disgraced us in the eyes of the Clifden fellows, and Kildare was quite right to order him off the field."

"The question is, not about Jones, but about the New House generally. Suppose Jones ought to leave the team, haven't we a right to insist upon another fellow of our House being put on in his place?"

"Yes, yes; of course!" came a chorus in reply.

"Do you agree with Kildare that the only material for strengthening the team is to be found in the School House?"

"No, no! Never!"

"Well, then, we'll agree to Jones being left out, if Kildare will put on a New House chap in his place."

"He won't," said Baker. "He's already said he won't."

"Then my opinion is that we ought to wash our hands of the business altogether!" exclaimed Monteith. "If Kildare wants to have it all to himself, let him have it."

"That means losing the Grammar match on Saturday."

"It will be Kildare who loses it."

"It will be a rotten come-down for the school to be licked both at home and away by the Grammar School."

"It's Kildare's fault. Suppose you and I, Baker, play on Saturday? The Grammar match is the toughest before us, and after that Kildare will be able to dispense with our

services. Then we shall get the order of the boot to make room for School House fellows."

"I don't believe it."

"No; you want to back up Kildare against your own House."

"No I don't," said Baker, reddening. "I'm ready to stand by my House, and to do just what the fellows think best. It ought to be put to the vote."

"And you'll stand by the vote?"

Baker hesitated.

"Yes," he said, at last; "I'll stand by it."

"Good enough! It would be useless for us to attempt anything if we were not united. If we are going to stand up for our rights we must all stand up together."

"Put it to the vote," said Webb.

The vote was taken, and it was almost unanimously in favour of breaking entirely with Kildare unless he would allow at least three New House players in the eleven.

"Very well," said Baker, "I stand to it. Some of us had better go and tell Kildare what he's to expect. Or perhaps it would be better to write."

"Yes, I'll write," said Monteith, "and send my fag over with the note."

After a good deal of discussion, the following letter was agreed to, and written:

"Dear Kildare,—It is impossible for the New House to agree to your decision to play a team composed almost wholly of School House fellows. If you want the whole thing in your hands, say so plainly, and we will withdraw.

"Unless at least three New House fellows are to be played on Saturday, Baker and myself will have no alternative but to resign our places in the team.—Yours sincerely,

"JAMES MONTEITH."

Figgins was called, and entrusted with the note.

"Take it to Kildare," said Monteith, "and wait for an answer. And buck up!"

"Right you are, old sport!" said Figgy.

And he hurried over to the New House. He found Kildare in the seniors' room talking to several School House fellows on the topic of the Grammar School match.

"Letter for you, Kildare!" said Figgins. "I'm to wait for an answer."

"Very good."

Kildare read the letter, and then read it again aloud, so that those who were with him could hear the precious epistle.

"He means business," said Darrel. "Well, all the better. Now we shall have done with the cad for good and all."

"You won't give in, Kildare?" Russhen asked anxiously.

The captain of the school shook his head decidedly.

"Impossible!" he replied. "I could not give in."

He took out a pencil, and wrote a reply on the back of Monteith's note.

"Dear Monteith,—I am sorry you take this view. If the New House could provide efficient players I should be very too glad to play them. I have given your side every chance, and the result has been two matches lost to St. Jim's. I cannot change my decision, and the team for Saturday stands as I have already decided. I hope you and Baker will think better of it, and decide not to leave the school in the lurch at a critical time.—Sincerely yours,

E. KILDARE."

Back went Figgins with the captain's note.

It was opened by Monteith in the presence of his friends, who all waited eagerly for him to read out the answer. Monteith gritted his teeth and read.

"He won't give in," he said. "There's only one answer to be made to this."

He scribbled a note, and handed it to Figgins. Again that long-legged Mercury sought the captain of St. Jim's in the School House.

Kildare's face set grimly as he read out Monteith's reply:

"Dear Kildare,—Please scratch my name and Baker's from the list for Saturday. We resign.—J. MONTEITH."

"Any answer?" answered Figgins affably. "I don't want to grumble, but you'll make me tired between you. Think you could squeeze all the rest into one letter?"

Kildare made no reply. He wrote the briefest of answers to Monteith, and gave it to Figgins.

There was a growl in Monteith's study when the answer was read out by the prefect:

"Dear Monteith,—Resignations accepted.—E. KILDARE."

"So that's settled," said Monteith, setting his lips. "Our resignations are accepted, and we don't play for the school on Saturday. I shall be glad to see how they get on without us. We shall see."

"Any more messages?" inquired Figgins.

"No. Get out!"

And Figgins got out.

The meeting broke up gloomily. Kildare's prompt acceptance of the gage of battle had taken some of the New House seniors by surprise, and some of them had doubts as to the wisdom of the course they had taken. If St. Jim's won the

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match now, it would be an intolerable triumph for the School House and the bitterest humiliation for their rivals.

On the other hand, the New House fellows could hardly hope that St. Jim's would lose. They were, in fact, placed in a false position; but there was no retreat now. They could not retreat without making themselves look ridiculous. They had taken up a position they were bound not to recede from.

Even Monteith, though he affected a certain jauntiness of manner, was secretly uneasy, and wondered whether he had not gone too far at last.

## CHAPTER 15. Figgins's Coup.

THE news was soon all over St. Jim's. Kildare had scratched the names of the two New House players, and, after consulting with his friends, he selected two School House fellows to take their places. Both the latter were good, reliable players, but with nothing whatever brilliant about them, and Kildare himself acknowledged that they were not a patch on the men they displaced.

But there was no help for it. It was simply a question whether the captain of the team should have authority, or whether Monteith should have it, and there was only one possible decision for a skipper who was worth his salt to come to. That decision Kildare had taken, and he stood by it.

The New House had chosen to withdraw from the team, and he let them go. He filled their places, and kept the team assiduously at practice. It was evident that he had not abandoned the hope of pulling off the Grammar match, in spite of the defection of two of his best players.

"Hang him!" muttered Monteith, as he watched the eleven at practice one afternoon. "Hang him! He can't possibly expect to win. He can't win. By George, I hope the Grammarians will wipe up the ground with them!"

But Monteith could not deny that the eleven shaped very well. They were playing a scratch team picked from the Sixth—all School House boys, of course, for the New House let them severely alone—and the first eleven was doing very well.

Kildare and Darrel in the forward line, Drake at centre-half, and Rushden in goal, were brilliant, and, though they were the only stars in the team, the rest were good, steady, reliable players, who could be depended upon to do their best.

"The team's improved, hasn't it?" exclaimed Tom Merry, coming up with his chums to watch the practice. He pretended not to see Monteith. "I told you it would be all right as soon as those New House wasters were kicked out. If Kildare had taken my advice he'd have fired them long ago!"

Monteith scowled and stalked away. An uneasiness was growing up in his breast that the college might pull off the match, after all, and he ground his teeth at the mere thought of this crowning triumph of the rival House. If it indeed turned out so, the move he had made with the intention of injuring Kildare would recoil upon himself with a vengeance. How the School House would crow if they, unaided, beat the Grammarians, who had walked over the side composed of players from both the houses!

Kildare meant to leave no stone unturned to win. He kept his men at practice without mercy, even at the risk of over-doing it. By the time the eventful Saturday came round they were very fit, and worked together splendidly.

Figgins & Co. viewed the new state of affairs with dismay. They blamed Monteith whole-heartedly, and broached dark projects for getting rid of their head prefect and finding another chief for the New House.

"He simply lets our side down," said Figgins. "If Kildare wins the match, think of the crowing! If he loses it the college will be licked, and it will be the fault of the New House. Either way we stand to lose over it. Monteith is a silly ass and a cad, and ought to be scragged!"

"Well, we can't scrag him," said Kerr. "I wish we could, but we can't. The only thing we can do is to see that we get the best of the juniors over there. We can't help the seniors making fools of themselves, but we can make the kids squirm."

"That's right," agreed Figgins. "So long as we keep our end up, that's all we can do. Now, I suppose you know Blake and Tom Merry are going over to-morrow to see the match?"

"Well, I suppose they would," said Wynn. "We're going, aren't we?"

"We are, my son—we are. We are going in a way that will astonish Blake. Lend me your ears, my infants, while I whisper a deadly secret."

"Oh, cut the cackle, Figgy! What's the giddy game?"

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"We are going to spoil the Egyptians, infant."

"Go ahead!" said Kerr tersely.

"I have been doing some giddy scouting. Blake and his fellow-bounders are going to do the thing in style. They have hired a trap from Rylcombe, and it's coming up to fetch them to-morrow. I stalked Blake in Rylcombe, and found out all about it. They're taking a lunch in a hamper, which will come up from the village in the trap."

"Jolly nice for them, but I don't see where we come in. They're not likely to ask us to go in the trap, or to invite us to their feed."

"My dear fellow we are going to invite ourselves!"

The Co. grinned joyously as they caught on to Figgins's plan.

"You see," explained Figgins condescendingly, "when the trap comes up for Blake, what's to prevent us from rushing it? It's going to wait for them outside the school gates. All we've got to do is to trick the driver out somehow, and collar the trap."

"Ripping!"

"You know Potter's trap the one he lets out on half-holidays, when the chaps want a drive. I can manage his giddy old horse first rate; and I dare say we shall know how to manage the hamper."

"What-ho!" ejaculated the Co. together.

"Mum's the word, you know," warned Figgins. "Don't breathe a whisper to a soul. Blake doesn't know we're up to the game, or he'd be on his guard. It will be a pleasant surprise to-morrow for our dear schoolfellow, and will be a bit of our own back for the things he said about us in that giddy newspaper of his!"

And Figgins & Co. kept the deadly secret well.

The next day St. Jim's was in a state of subdued excitement. The return match, of course, was the subject uppermost in every mind.

The School House were looking forward to the match with a grim determination, not unmixed with doubt as to the result, but quite hopeful.

The New House had very mixed feelings upon the subject. However the visit turned out, there would be no credit to them, and whether St. Jim's won or lost the result could not fail to be humiliating to the New House.

They all knew it, and Monteith knew it, and Monteith knew as well that his influence in the New House had never been tottering so near its fall. He had gone too far—he realised it now—and his hold upon the fellows he had led into a painful and ridiculous position was weakening. But the prefect concealed very well his secret misgivings.

"Are you going over to see the match, Monteith?" asked Baker, after morning school.

Baker was looking very worried. He felt his exclusion from the team in which he might have played very keenly indeed. He bitterly regretted having allowed Monteith to prevail upon him to resign, but, having done so, he felt bound in honour to stand to his guns.

"Yes," said Monteith. "I am going to see them licked!"

"I hope they won't be licked. It's a beastly business."

"All Kildare's fault. Of course, I couldn't foresee that he would be so obstinate. Not that I'm sorry. We have acted in the only way we could have acted with dignity."

"Well, I can't see much dignity in loafing around while other fellows play the game," said Baker. "Perhaps I'm dull, but I really can't. I think I shall go over to see the match. I feel a bit anxious about it."

Monteith sneered savagely. Baker evidently hoped that the School House would win, in spite of the humiliation that meant for his own house.

"I am going in the brake," said Monteith. "After all, I am vice-captain, and have a perfect right to go. We may as well see them make asses of themselves!"

And when the brake that was to convey them to Rylcombe drew up in the quadrangle, Monteith and several of his friends climbed into it, along with the team.

The New House fellows were looking for trouble, but they did not get it. The players did not take the slightest notice of them. Only Tom Merry & Co. gave them a long, unmusical groan.

But Blake had no time even for that, for it was time for him to start himself. As the brake was set in motion, the chums of Study No. 6 started for the gates, where it was time that the trap was in waiting. They had arranged for it to arrive at the same time as the brake.

Blake was in high spirits. He did not allow himself to doubt that Kildare's team would beat the Grammarians hollow, and the fact that Monteith would be there to see it was gratifying. After that victory, which Blake was certain would come to pass, the New House would have to sing small. Even Figgins & Co. would hardly be able to deny that the School House was cock-house of St. Jim's.

RED-LETTER DAYS: "PENNY POPULAR" FRIDAY AND "MAGNET" MONDAY!

Study No. 6 were, as Figgins had said, doing the thing in style to-day. A big hamper, well packed, had been sent in the trap from the best confectioner's in Rylcombe, and, as the keen, winter air would sharpen appetites, which were certainly already very good, Blake and his chums anticipated the enjoyment of a first-class feed. And to drive over in a trap, instead of "hoofing" it like most of the juniors, or pedalling along the muddy lanes on their cycles, was a treat.

But alas for Study No. 6!

While the chums had been watching the footballers taking their place in the brake, Figgins & Co. had not been idle. The long-legged chief of the New House juniors had been on the alert for some time watching for the trap from Rylcombe, and when it came along and halted in the road outside the school gates, Figgy immediately signalled to his friends.

"Hallo, Potter!" said Figgins affably to the driver, who was looking at the three rather suspiciously. He was a Rylcombe man, and knew Figgins & Co. "Hallo, old fellow! Nice afternoon, ain't it?"

"Um!" grunted Potter.

"Did you drop that shilling, Potter?"

Figgins pointed to a shilling lying in the dust close beside the trap. Potter's eyes lighted up a little.

"I must have," he said, with an air of reflection. "And it up to me, Master Figgins."

"Now, look here, Potter, you must not be lazy," said Figgins, wagging his finger at him. "I haven't any objection on principle to handing you up that shilling, but I can't aid and abet a man of your years in idleness. You shock me, you do really."

"And it up!" growled Potter.

"Not at all. If you want it you must pick it up."

Now, Potter knew perfectly well that he had not dropped that shilling, but he had no objection in the world to picking one up, and so he descended from the trap.

He stooped to take possession of the shilling, and Figgins charged him behind, and he gave a wild yell and went down on his hands and knees.

In a moment Figgins was in the trap, the whip in his hand, and grabbing the reins.

"Buck up!" he shouted. "In with you!"

Kerr and Fatty Wynn swarmed in behind.

Potter, with a growl, picked himself up, and rushed to stop them. He gripped Fatty Wynn by the legs to drag him out, but Fatty kicked out spasmodically, and Potter received his foot in the region vulgarly known as the bread-basket. Potter sat down in a hurry, with a shock that jarred all his bones, and sat there in the middle of the road gasping.

Figgins gathered up the reins and cracked the whip. Kerr scrambled in over the back of the trap and lent a hand to Wynn, who, by reason of his stoutness, was not quite so agile.

It was at this moment that the chums of Study No. 6 reached the gates. They stopped for a moment in sheer stupefaction as they saw Figgins & Co. in possession of the trap. But it took Blake only a second to recover himself.

"At 'em!" he yelled, and he rushed forward to the attack.

Figgins was cracking the whip frantically, but he did not like to hit the sleepy old horse, which put itself into motion in a very leisurely way.

Blake, with a desperate spurt, reached the trap just as Fatty Wynn rolled inside it, and Blake caught at the back and clung on.

"Buck up, Figgy!" yelled Kerr.

Herries, Dig, and D'Arcy were racing to join Blake. Blake hung a dead weight on the back of the trap. Herries made a fine burst and joined him. He caught hold beside his leader. Figgins gave the horse a touch of the whip, and it started on at a greater speed, and Dig and D'Arcy dropped hopelessly behind. Kerr and Wynn turned their attention immediately to Blake and Herries. The chiefs of the School House juniors were hanging on like grim death. The speed of the trap was increasing, and their feet rattled noisily along the road.

"Thieves!" gasped Herries. "Give us our trap!"

"Sorry," said Kerr, "I can't give you the trap, but I've got something else for you. Here it is, my dear school-fellow."

He took an orange from his pocket and began to squeeze it down Herries' neck. Herries had to hold on with both hands, or drop into the road, so he was defenceless. Kerr squeezed the orange with a firm hand, and Herries wriggled and writhed.

"You beast! Leave off!"

"Not at all. You're welcome to all of it, my dear Herries."

"Beast! Chuck it!"

"Anything to oblige," said Kerr politely, and he "chucked" it, though not in the sense that Herries meant. The orange flattened on the School House junior's face, and Herries lost his hold and dropped in the muddy road.

Blake was still hanging on. He had got both arms over the backboard, and was making desperate efforts to drag himself into the trap. To his surprise Kerr gripped hold of his shoulders and helped him in. He rolled into the bottom of the trap head-first, and Kerr and Wynn immediately sat upon him and pinned him down.

Figgins turned round and grinned at his fallen enemy.

"Hallo, Blake!" he said. "You want to come, too? All right, keep him there. Sit on him. Don't let him get up." "You beasts!" gasped Blake. "You are suf-suf-suffocating me!"

"Sorry; but chaps who shove themselves in where they're not wanted have to take the risk of getting suf-suf-suffocated."

"Let me get up, you cads!"

"Not much."

The trap bowled on. Blake's chums had vanished far behind, and he was a helpless prisoner in the hands of the Co. The trio were roaring with laughter, but Blake could not see anything humorous in the situation.

"Lemme get up!"

"Will you make it pax if we let you go?"

"No!"

"All right. Squeeze an orange down his neck, Wynn."

"Right-ho!"

"Chuck it!" exclaimed Blake hastily. "Pax, pax!"

"Thought you would," grinned Figgins. "Now, you admit that you're licked, don't you? And you make us a free present of all that grub in that hamper. Can we have it?"

"Yes," said Blake, with a wry face.

"Do you hope we'll enjoy it?"

"Ye-es."

"Right. Now we'll forgive you and let you go. Go back to the other wasters, and I'll tell you what, Blake. When you arrive we'll invite you to lunch with us."

"I'll invite myself to break your neck!" growled Blake.

"Ha, ha! Shove him out!"

Figgins slowed down, and Blake was dropped into the road.

"Ta-ta!" said Figgins, and he drove off.

Blake stood looking after the trap, and the Co. kissed their hands to him as they went.

"Well, this is a rotten sell!" growled Blake.

He sat upon a stile to wait for his chums to come up. The St. Jim's brake passed him with the footballers on board. Later on Herries, Dig, and D'Arcy came up.

"They've done us," said Blake. "We've got to hoof it; but never say die. We'll make Figgins & Co. wriggle for this some time."

And with this comforting reflection he trudged on. The chums stepped out briskly, taking their defeat cheerfully, as they did everything.

It was close upon time for the kick-off when they arrived at Rylcombe Grammar School.

They found the trap tied up to a hedge, empty. Figgins & Co. were gone, so was the hamper. The raiders were seen soon afterwards. They were close to the ropes for a good view of the ground, the hamper at their feet. Blake and his chums made their way towards the group, and Figgins greeted them with an amiable grin.

"Don't forget it's pax!" he exclaimed. "We can't row on other people's ground; and that invitation to lunch still holds good."

Blake grinned.

"Right you are, old Figgy. No more rows till we get back to St. Jim's; and we'll share the hamper, you giddy raider. Hallo, there they are!"

The teams were coming into the field. Immediately the attention of the rivals of St. Jim's was turned to the football-field, and they joined heartily in the ringing cheer which greeted the appearance of the opposing teams.

Louder still rang their "Hurrah!" when Kildare was seen pointing to a goal, and they knew that the St. Jim's skipper had won the toss. And now commenced the Grammarians match, the result of which was awaited with such varied feelings by the rival houses of St. Jim's.

## CHAPTER 16.

### The Winning Goal.

THE whistle went. Delamere, the Grammarian skipper, kicked off. There was a big crowd round the field. The Grammar School had turned out in full force, and at least fifty boys of all Forms had come over from St. Jim's.

Very fit looked the Saints in their red-and-white, and equally ready for good work their opponents appeared. The teams, as a matter of fact, appeared well matched, and if Kildare had doubts about any of his men, he did not allow his face to show it.

The Grammarians had evidently not forgotten their victory at St. Jim's, and were inclined to underrate their opponents.

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The Saints, on the other hand, addressed themselves to their task seriously, knowing well that it was a difficult one. The Grammarians had the wind in their faces as they kicked off, but that did not prevent them from invading the visitors' half with a rush.

The red-and-whites fell back before the attack, and Delamere came on with the ball at his feet, well backed up by his forwards. He remembered how weak the St. Jim's defence had been last time, and he was a little over-confident in his powers. But he soon learned that the St. Jim's second and third lines were now made of sterner stuff.

Drake, centre-half, tackled the skipper and took the ball fairly from his foot, and skied it, and it came down in mid-field just where Kildare wanted it. Off went Kildare with the ball, leaving the home forwards staring, and the backs rushed in vain to stop him.

He was going like lightning, and when a full-back, in desperation, charged him off the ball, Darrel was ready to take it and slam it into the goal. The home custodian just missed the leather, which whizzed in and lodged in a corner of the net.

The air rocked with the yell that went up from the Saints round the ropes.

"Goal!" roared the Terrible Three, with one voice.

"Goal!" shrieked Kangaroo.

"Hurrah!"

The Grammarians were in a more chastened mood now. The game was not to be the walk-over they had fancied, and it was clear that if they were to win, they would have to put their best foot foremost.

They attacked more steadily now, but still they attacked, and their onslaught drove back the Saints, and ere long the Grammarians were massed before the goal, and Rushden had all his work cut out to save the whizzing shots that were sent in.

The rush was irresistible, and the Saints' right wing crumpled up before it, and the enemy, working their way down the field, forced the St. Jim's back to concede a corner.

Instantly Delamere claimed the kick.

With eager faces the players stood while it was taken.

The instant rush of the Saints followed, but in vain. The Grammarians had not failed to make the most of their advantage, and in a second the ball went in from the foot of Delamere.

This time Rushden was beaten.

The ball was in the net, and the home crowd cheered loudly the success of their champion.

The score was now level—one to one—and thirty of the first forty-five minutes had ticked away.

Kildare was in high good humour now.

The enemy had been fighting hard, and yet his team had held its ground. They had been put to a stern test, and had not been found wanting.

Hope of victory was strengthening in the captain's breast.

His confidence was shared by the rest of the team.

They played up for all they were worth, and for a long time they held the Grammarians, and all Delamere's efforts to get goalward were frustrated.

Play went on for a long time in midfield, and the ball frequently went into touch, and it was close upon half-time when the enemy fairly got going again.

A prolonged tussle was waged almost on the touch-line, the home players working their way down the field with irresistible determination, and the red-and-white team obstinately contesting every foot of ground.

The struggle was watched with the keenest interest by the spectators, Saints and Grammarians.

Back went the red-and-white, and the black stripes were massed before the goal, and Delamere, of the Grammar School sent in a tearing shot.

Rushden grabbed at it, but, unfortunately, his foot slipped on the turf at the same moment, and he fell upon one knee.

The ball whizzed over his head into the net.

"Goal!" yelled Gordon Gay, in wild delight.

A few minutes later the whistle went for the interval, and the rival teams stopped for a much-needed rest.

The change of ends brought the wind against St. Jim's, and Kildare kicked off in the teeth of it.

There was a quiet look of confidence on the Grammarian skipper's face.

His momentary doubts at the beginning of the first half were dispelled now.

He was quite certain that the home side would prove victorious. They had scored two goals to one in the first half, with the wind against them. It was pretty certain, he considered, that they would do better in the second half, with the wind, blowing harder than ever now, behind their backs.

So it certainly seemed; but the Saints evidently did not

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consider the result a foregone conclusion, for they threw themselves into the game with grim earnestness.

The home team attacked vigorously, but somehow they could not get away, and as fast as the ball was sent forward, the visiting backs sent it back again, and play was more in the home half than in that of the enemy.

And now the St. Jim's contingent roared as the red-and-white were seen going in spanking style, and the cheers were deafening when Darrel sent the ball into the home goal with a lightning-like shot that gave the goalie no earthly chance.

The score was level.

Kildare's eyes were flashing now.

Two goals all, and ten minutes more to play.

To and fro swept the tide of conflict, and minute followed minute, and the deciding goal seemed as far off as ever from either side.

"Time's nearly up!" groaned Tom Merry. "My hat! It ain't going to be a ghastly draw after all, is it?"

Figgins gave a yell.

"Look—look! Kildare's away!"

Kildare was streaking goalward like a racer, the ball at his feet.

He made a feint of passing to Darrel, and deceived the backs and the goalie, too. Then he kicked for goal—a long kick from a distance that was decidedly risky; but the risk had to be taken.

Kildare kicked, and the next moment he staggered and fell under the charge of a home half. But every eye was watching the flight of the ball. They saw the goalkeeper fling himself at it with a frantic clutch, they saw him miss it by an inch, they saw the sphere of leather drop into the net.

And then they yelled!

"Hurrah!"

"Goal!"

The whistle went with a shrill blast.

The game was over. The match was won. The Saints trooped off the field, winners of the great match by three goals to two.

Blake turned to Figgins, and hugged his old enemy.

"Hurrah!" he shouted. "Yell, you beggars, yell!"

And they yelled.

The Grammarians were cheering, too. They were sportsmen, and liked to see good play, even against themselves. And the winning goal, taken on the stroke of time, deserved a cheer.

As Kildare went off the field, he passed between two rows of St. Jim's boys, who were yelling themselves hoarse, and waving their caps in the air.

There was only one bitter heart in the field.

It was Monteith's.

The prefect of the New House left the ground as quickly as he could, and returned to St. Jim's. Baker did not go with him. He joined the crowd that was cheering Kildare, and his voice rang out heartily with the loudest.

Tom Merry & Co. cheered the St. Jim's victory till they were husky. Blake and the chums of Study No. 6, and Figgins & Co. and Redfern & Co., of the New House, all joined in it with tremendous lung power. All home rivalries were banished now, in the glorious victory of St. Jim's First Eleven over the Grammar School Seniors. That the First Eleven had been composed wholly of School House fellows was an additional feather in the cap of Tom Merry & Co., but they generously forbore to rub it in.

The chums stayed to tea with Gordon Gay after the match. The Terrible Three had quite forgiven him the tar by this time. All traces of it were gone at last, though it had clung to them lovingly for very long. Gordon Gay and Wootton major and minor and Frank Monk and Mont Blong entertained the St. Jim's juniors right royally, and they parted on the best of terms.

Tom Merry & Co. walked home to St. Jim's in great spirits.

And that evening at St. Jim's there was another celebration; and when Kangaroo proposed the toast of "Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's and the finest footballer in the wide world," the toast was drunk with enthusiasm by New House and School House juniors alike.

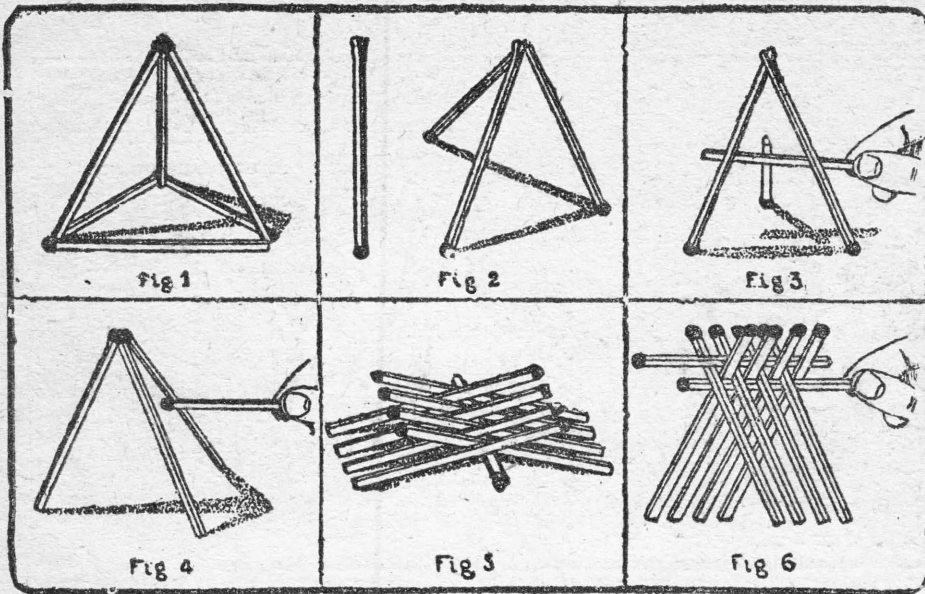
And after that happy evening, the morning found School House and New House juniors on the warpath again. But that was only what was to be expected!

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete tale of the chums of St. Jim's next Wednesday, entitled: "THE RIVAL HOUSEMASTERS," by Martin Clifford. Order your copy of "THE GEM" LIBRARY in advance. Price One Penny.)

RED-LETTER DAYS: "PENNY POPULAR" FRIDAY AND "MAGNET" MONDAY!

# A PAGE OF SIMPLE TRICKS!



## MATCH TRICKS.

Match tricks are, as the saying goes, as old as the hills; nevertheless, they are as fascinating to-day as they were in the days of our ancestors. Here are a few good ones. Lay three matches on the table to form an equilateral triangle; then ask your friends, with the aid of three more matches, to form four such triangles. This will appear almost an impossibility until you fix the matches upright, as shown in Fig. 1.

### The Split Match.

Next split the end of a match with a penknife, and press another match into the opening formed; then take a third and fix them up, as shown in Fig. 2. The puzzle is to raise the third with a fourth match held between the finger and thumb. Your friends who are unacquainted with this trick will probably meet with but little success until the method is explained to them. Press back the two united matches until the third match falls upon the one you hold, as shown in Fig. 3. Now gently raise and allow the free match to look beneath the other two, and then the combination may easily be raised.

### The Fused Matches.

The next trick looks rather more difficult at first sight, but it is quite easy when you are told how it is done. Set three matches up with their heads together, as shown in Fig. 4, and raise them with a fourth match. Should you find any difficulty in making these three keep their upright position, just breathe for a moment upon the heads; then they will hold together more readily. To accomplish this trick, you must strike the fourth match and fire the heads of the other three as they stand, blowing them out immediately after. You will then find that the three heads have stuck together.

### The Ten Matches.

If you were to ask any person to lift nine matches with a tenth, it would be considered impossible, but a glance at Fig. 6 will show how it can be done. You simply lay nine matches out, as shown in Fig. 5, place the tenth match on top, and lift them all with the one underneath.

## A COIN SURPRISE.

A threepenny-piece, when seen a short distance from a penny, looks as if it was more than several diameters smaller. Request anyone to guess how many threepenny-pieces can be placed flat upon a penny—one deep only—without the silver coins projecting over the edge of the bronze coin, when the answer will likely be four or even five; and great will be the surprise when they find it is impossible to put more than one on the penny, as the diameter of a threepenny-piece is more than five-eighths of an inch, and that of a penny under one inch and a quarter.

## TO SPLIT AN APPLE INTO TWO EQUAL PARTS WITH THE FINGER.

Take an apple off the dish, and exchange it at the most convenient opportunity for a prepared apple, which have in readiness on the knees. To prepare the apple, take a needle and stout thread. Insert the needle in the side, and take a stitch of about half an inch, reinsert the needle where it came out, take similar stitches all round the apple, cross the two ends of the thread, and pull them carefully, when the thread will cut through the apple, leaving scarcely a trace on the skin. A smart blow of the fist on the apple will divide the apple as if it had been cut with a knife.

## THE FIFTEEN MATCH TRICK.

Take fifteen matches, bunch them up so they cannot easily be counted, lay them on a table, and tell some friend that you will allow him to start the game by drawing from the pile either one, two, or three matches—but no more. Tell him that you also have the same privilege of drawing up to three matches at a time, and that you intend that he shall draw the last match.

If you play your turns in a certain way you will be able to do this with ease—unless, of course, your opponent is acquainted with the system himself.

Now if your opponent begins by drawing one match away, you draw one. If his second draw should be three, you draw one again.

Observe now that there are six drawn. In order to assure yourself of winning, make certain that this is the case either at your first or second draw; get six matches off the board. This leaves nine remaining in play. The next time you draw, let it make four with what he draws, leaving five still to be drawn. Now, if he draws three, you take one; if he draws two, you also take two, while if he draws one, you take three. Thus the last match will be left for your opponent to draw.

After the first game has

resulted just as you foretold,

your opponent will be certain to propose another game. This time you can begin the drawing by taking one, just as he did at first, making a remark to that effect as you do so. Now, whatever number he takes, it cannot make the six.

But should he follow your example, and take but one match, you must play very carefully.

Take only one again on your second draw, which will make three off. The chances are that he will not take off three matches at once at his next turn. If he does, it is a sign that he is

"tumbling to the game,"

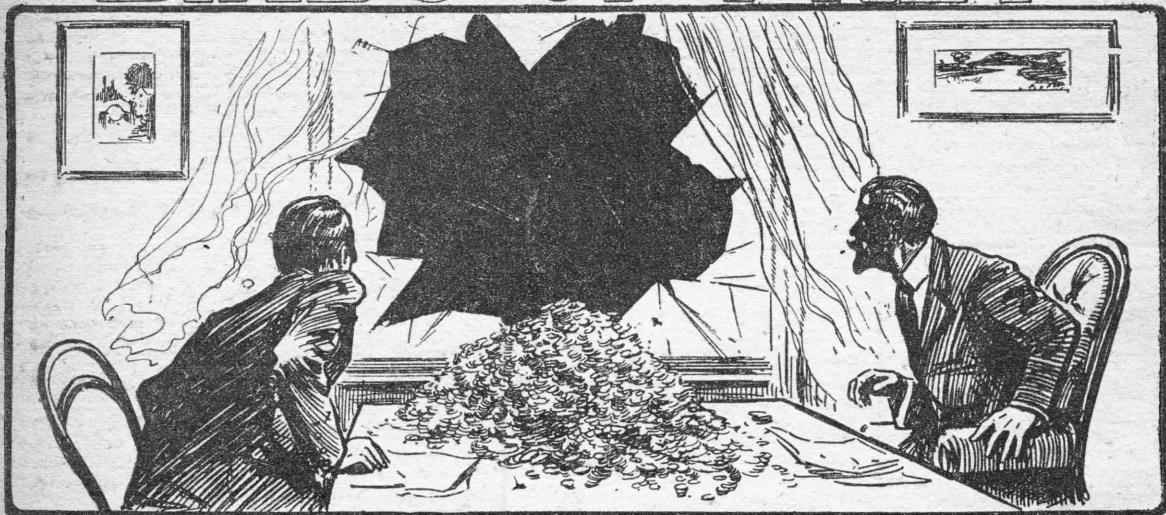
and he may possibly—but not probably—manage to beat you.

Whether he does so or not, let him start another game, and make your moves again according to his lead. Nine times out of ten you will beat him, without having to resort to the one absolutely "safe" method which can be worked when it falls to your turn to make the first draw. Begin by drawing two; he cannot then defeat you, for, whatever number he draws, he must still leave from one to three matches for you to draw to make the "six off." Once this is accomplished, the rest is easy. If you put off the adoption of this "safety" play until your opponent is quite certain that he has discovered your method, you will put him all at sea again, and puzzle him mightily.

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OUR SPLENDID SERIAL.

# BIRDS OF PREY



A Thrilling Story Dealing with the Adventures of Nelson Lee, Detective.  
**By MAXWELL SCOTT.**

## WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR.

Nelson Lee, the world-famous detective, is devoting all his energies to the task of breaking the power of a gigantic criminal organisation, known as the Order of the Ring. The infamous secret society is under the leadership of a man who is known to all the members as "The Chief," but who also passes under the name of Mr. Stephen Meredith. His principal lieutenants are known as "The Squire," "The Doctor," and "Lady Ursula"—a beautiful young girl with the heart of a tiger.

With the intention of forcing him to join the Order, the Chief kidnaps Jack Langley, a young engineer, and Miss Aylmer, his fiancée. Jack proves obdurate, and so the two young people remain the captives of the Order. Their only

hope of release comes from Nelson Lee, who is hot on the track of the Chief and his associates.

The detective is reconnoitring in the neighbourhood of Elstree one night, having temporarily lost track of his quarry, when he becomes caught in a man-trap in the grounds of an estate. While he is held helpless, four men rush up and secure him. To his surprise, however, the detective discovers that the captors are not emissaries of the Order of the Ring, but an eccentric old retired colonel and his friends.

On hearing Nelson Lee's story, the colonel makes him welcome, and he stays the night at his house.

(Now go on with the story.)

### The Chief's Escape.

Early next morning, arrayed in one of the colonel's suits, the detective bade his host farewell, and resumed his search for the hiding-place of his foes. Before leaving, he questioned the colonel as to the situation and general character of all the likely houses in the neighbourhood; but, as the colonel himself had only recently come to live in that part of the world, his information was altogether too vague and indefinite to be of any practical use.

As events turned out, however, the detective's search was not destined to be of long duration. About two hundred yards beyond the colonel's house, branching off at right-angles to the main road, was a red-brick villa, with a narrow strip of garden in front. As the detective had determined to have a look at every house in the neighbourhood, big or little, likely and unlikely, he turned into the lane, and presently came to the garden-gate of the villa already described. The lower half of the gate was of wood, the upper part of iron rails; and, on peering cautiously through these rails, he saw that his search was ended.

Lady Ursula and the Doctor were sitting in one of the front windows of the house, reading the morning papers, and absorbed in the perusal of a highly-coloured account of the sensational events which had occurred at Chesham Place the previous night.

Quivering with excitement, the detective crept away from the gate and started off for the colonel's house. He would borrow the colonel's trap; he would drive to Scotland Yard and report his discovery to the police; he would return with a posse of plain-clothes constables, and in four hours' time, at the very most, the three notorious leaders of the Order of the Ring, together with Lady Ursula, would be safely under arrest.

Alas for his hopes! Just as he reached the end of the lane, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 254.

where it joined the road, two men walked rapidly round the corner, and almost ran into his arms. Both he and they pulled up and stood for a moment face to face, with less than a couple of yards between them. For the same brief space of time they stared at him in speechless stupefaction; then three sharp, startled cries rang out.

For the two men were the Chief and the Squire, returning to the villa from an early morning stroll.

The detective was the first to recover his presence of mind, and with lightning-like rapidity, he lashed out with his fist, and caught the Chief a blow on the point of the jaw that bowled him over like a ninepin. At the same instant, however, the Squire swung round his left, and dealt the detective a sledge-hammer blow on the back of the head. Half-stunned by the blow, the detective stumbled forward, and before he could recover his balance, the Squire darted after him, and dealt him a second blow that sent him down on the top of the Chief.

The Chief, who was lying on his back in the gutter, had been more or less dazed by Nelson Lee's blow; but, in spite of this, he had wit enough to fling his arms round the detective's neck, and cling to him with grim and desperate tenacity.

"Quick! Your knife!" he panted. "I can't hold him down much longer—"

The sentence ended in an inarticulate gurgle, for at that moment the detective succeeded in fastening his hands on the scoundrel's throat. For a moment or two they writhed and rolled in each other's embrace, first one and then the other uppermost. Then Nelson Lee, with a superhuman effort, hurled his opponent off, and scrambled to his feet.

In the meantime the Squire had whipped out his knife—none of the three had a revolver with him. As Nelson Lee rose to his feet, the Squire leapt upon him from behind, and

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struck midway between his shoulders. With a choking cry, the detective once more stumbled forward and fell on his hands and knees. Once more the Squire darted after him, but even as he did so the rumble of carriage-wheels was heard coming down the road from the direction of Elstree.

"Run—the house! He's dead right enough!" gasped the Chief, in a hoarse, excited voice. "Quick, before we're discovered!"

He snatched up his hat, which had fallen off in the struggle, and raced away towards the red-brick villa. The Squire lost no time in following his example; and a second or two before the carriage arrived at the end of the lane, a second or two before the horrified occupants saw the detective's rigid form, the two men dashed through the garden-gate, and vanished into the house.

The Doctor and Lady Ursula saw them rush up the garden-path, and hurried into the hall to meet them.

"What's the matter?" they cried, their faces aglow with anxiety and excitement.

"Matter enough!" retorted the Chief, as he led the way into the sitting-room. "Whom do you think we met as we were returning from our walk? Nelson Lee!"

Lady Ursula's face turned deathly pale, and the Doctor rapped out a startled oath.

"Nelson Lee!" he gasped. "Has he traced us here?"

"Evidently," said the Chief.

"Then the sooner we clear out of here, the better!" said the Doctor.

"I agree with you," said the Chief. "But don't misunderstand me: I agree with you that we must leave this house at once, but not because of Nelson Lee. We've nothing to fear from Nelson Lee."

"How's that?" demanded the Doctor.

The Chief glanced at the Squire, who silently held up his bloodstained knife.

"You've killed him?" asked the Doctor, in an awed whisper.

"Yes, he's dead!" said the Squire laconically.

The Doctor heaved a tremendous sigh of relief.

"That's the best bit of news I've heard for months!" he said.

"Think so?" growled the Chief. "For my part, I'm sorry!"

"Sorry that he's dead?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because sudden death was too good for him. I wanted to torture him! Think what he has cost us! The Firefly and the Dolphin are now at the bottom of the sea—thanks to Nelson Lee! For years and years I've schemed and toiled to build up a position for myself as Mr. Stephen Meredith, a respectable, law-abiding citizen. All that has now gone by the board—thanks again to Nelson Lee! We purchased Dashwood House, and the house in Belgrave Square, and spent thousands of pounds in constructing that underground passage. Both these houses are now in the hands of the police—thanks once more to Nelson Lee! We built this house as a harbour of refuge in time of trouble, and we stocked it with the finest collection of disguises in the country. And now we've got to leave it, to abandon it for ever, and all because of Nelson Lee!"

"But I don't understand what you mean," said the Doctor, with a puzzled air. "If Nelson Lee is dead, why have we got to leave this house?"

"To save our necks!" said the Chief grimly. "We met Nelson Lee at the corner of this lane, and the Squire stabbed him in the back. Just as he had finished his work, we heard a carriage coming down the road, so that by this time, no doubt, the body has been discovered. What will happen next do you suppose?"

"The body will be identified."

"Exactly. And as soon as the body has been identified we shall have all the detectives in London here. As the body was discovered at the end of this lane, this house will be the first to be regarded with suspicion."

"But they can't prove anything against us!"

"They may not be able to prove that we murdered Nelson Lee, but if once they see us, they'll recognise us as the leaders of the Order of the Ring. All the disguises in the world will not avail us if once their suspicions are aroused, and they set a watch on the house. We should be caught like rats in a trap. We should never dare to show ourselves outside the house, and, because we never went out, we should be regarded with greater suspicion than ever, until at last we should wake some morning to find a detective at the front door with a search-warrant. You can stay and risk it, if you like, but I'm going to clear out before it's too late."

"And so am I!" said the Squire.

"Then I suppose the rest of us will have to follow suit," said the Doctor. "We shall have to disguise ourselves, of course?"

"Of course," said the Chief.

"And where shall we go?" asked the Doctor.

The Chief reflected for a moment or two before he replied.

"You and the Squire and Ursula must go to the Squire's," he said at last. "The Squire had better disguise himself as a pedlar, you as a groom, and Ursula as a hospital nurse. You must leave here separately, and make your way by different routes to St. Pancras. You must each take a ticket for Sheffield, but you must travel in separate compartments, and you must hold no communication whatever with each other until you are safely inside the Squire's house."

"But aren't you coming with us?" asked Lady Ursula, in a disappointed voice.

"Not at present," said the Chief. "I will join you later."

"And where are you going in the meantime?" asked the Squire.

"To the club," said the Chief. "I haven't seen Jack Langley since we parted at Southampton, you know, and I'm anxious to take stock of him, in order to see whether three months' imprisonment has broken his spirit. I shall disguise myself as a clergyman, and go to the club, and as soon as I've interviewed Langley I shall come down to the Squire's, and interview Miss Aylmer."

"And what am I to do?" asked the secretary, who had joined them whilst the Chief had been speaking.

"You?" said the Chief, wrinkling his brow. "Oh, you'd better rig yourself out as a Frenchman, and go to our bank-note factory at Dieppe. I'll give you some money and a letter of introduction to our manager there, and you can remain in hiding there until I send for you."

For a few minutes longer they continued to discuss their future plans, then the Chief led the way to a long, low room at the top of the house. The walls of this room were lined with cupboards, and the floor was packed with boxes, and in these cupboards and boxes was a varied and extensive assortment of suits of clothes, ladies' dresses, uniforms, liveries, wigs, beards, make-up boxes, and disguises of every conceivable description. As the Chief had truly said, it was the finest collection of disguises in the country.

Lady Ursula opened one of the boxes, and selected a nurse's uniform, with bonnet and cloak complete. The men followed suit, each selecting the disguise which had been allotted to him, and adding a wig or beard as his fancy dictated. Then all of them retired to their respective bedrooms.

Half an hour later Lady Ursula left the house by the back door, in the guise of an hospital nurse. She was followed, ten minutes later, by the Squire, who was disguised as a hawker of buttons and tapes. Shortly after his departure, the Doctor strolled out in the character of a groom, and sauntered away in the direction of Elstree. Then a dapper, grey-haired Frenchman, who was really the secretary, boldly emerged from the front door of the house, and strutted off in the same direction.

The Chief, clean-shaven, and disguised as a clergyman, waited until his accomplices had left, then he went out into the yard at the back of the house, and presently returned with an armful of shaving.

"We shall never be able to make use of this house again," he muttered to himself, as he laid his burden down on the sitting-room floor. "The police, no doubt, will be smelling around before many hours are past, and when they find there's nobody here, they'll probably break in and examine the place. I'm not afraid of them finding any clue to our identity, either here or in Chesham Place, or in Belgrave Square. But I don't see the fun of making them a present of the contents of the house, and of all those splendid disguises in the room upstairs. Since we can't use them, I'll take good care that nobody else does!"

He left the room, and came back with a large tin of paraffin. Having drenched the heap of shavings with a portion of the contents of the tin, he sprinkled the rest of the inflammable oil on the carpet and the curtains. Then he applied a lighted match to the shavings, and as soon as they burst into flame he left the house, locking the door behind him, and started out on his fifteen-mile walk to London.

### In Durance Vile.

It is high time now that we returned to Jack Langley, whose capture by the Order of the Ring, coupled with his subsequent attempt to escape, was the means of furnishing Nelson Lee with his first real clue to that terrible league of murderers and thieves.

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NEXT  
WEDNESDAY:

**"The Rival Housemasters!"**

A Splendid, Long Complete School Tale of the chums of St. Jim's. Order Early.

It has already been described how Jack and Ethel Aylmer were rescued from the wreck of the Dolphin, and afterwards taken to Southampton on board "Mr. Meredith's" private yacht. And it has also been described how they were drugged with hashish and removed to separate places of concealment—Ethel to the Squire's house, and Jack Langley to "the Club."

"The Club" was the headquarters of the Order of the Ring, and was a large and somewhat sombre-looking building, standing at the corner of two short streets on the west side of Tottenham Court Road. In reality, it was two dwelling-houses knocked into one, which had been purchased by the Order of the Ring, and converted into a club under the name of the Raglan Club.

Every member of the Order of the Ring was a member of the Raglan, and every member of the Raglan was a member of the Order of the Ring. That is to say, when a man was admitted into the Order, and took the oath of membership, he became at the same time a member of the Raglan. In the eyes of the public and the police the Raglan was simply an ordinary social club, neither better nor worse than scores of similar institutions in the metropolis. According to the printed rules, anybody was eligible to join who could get himself proposed and seconded; but, as a matter of fact, if a man wished to join who was not a member of the Order of the Ring, he was either blackballed by the committee or told that there was not a vacancy.

The caretaker, who was a bachelor—and, of course, a member of the Order—was the only person who resided on the premises. During the earlier part of the day he was also, as a general rule, the only man in the club, for few of the members called at the club in the daytime, and the waiters and billiard-markers, who were all members of the Order, of course, did not come on duty until six o'clock in the evening.

The caretaker's apartments were situated in the basement. On the ground-floor were a reading-room, a billiard-room, and the lavatories. On the first-floor were a smoke-room, another billiard-room, and a large, well-lighted room in which the general meetings of the Order were held. On the second-floor were a number of smaller rooms, some of which were used as committee-rooms, and others as writing-rooms or card-rooms. And on the third-floor, immediately beneath the roof, were the three large attics.

It was in one of these attics that Jack Langley was imprisoned. An iron band was riveted round one of his ankles, and to this was attached a strong steel chain, the other end of which was fastened to a staple in the wall. This chain was too short to permit him to reach either the door or the window—which was boarded up on the inside—and the only exercise which was possible to him was the three-yard walk between the rough deal table on which he took his meals and the heap of straw which served him as his bed.

For over three months—that is to say, from the end of November to the beginning of March—he lived in this attic without ever seeing a single human being except the caretaker, who was a swarthy-faced Italian giant, known to his associates as Black Bruno. On the day before the Chief returned from abroad, however, the Squire called at the

club, and had an interview with Jack, and after his departure an incident occurred which raised Jack from the depths of despair to the dizzy heights of hope.

It happened in this way. A few minutes after the Squire had left the club Black Bruno brought the young engineer his evening meal. He set it down on the rough deal table already mentioned, and as he turned to leave the room he caught his foot in the chain, and measured his length on the floor.

As he fell his pocket-knife flew out of his jacket-pocket, and fell on the heap of straw. By a lucky chance this fact escaped his observation, and after picking himself up he treated Jack to a choice selection of Italian oaths, and limped away.

It need scarcely be said that Jack lost no time in securing the coveted pocket-knife. To his inexpressible joy, he found that it contained a perfect arsenal of useful implements—a screwdriver, tweezers, a corkscrew, a picker, and, best of all, a tiny file.

The sequel may be guessed. For the rest of that night and for the whole of the following day, except when Bruno brought him his meals—he devoted all his time and energy to filing through the link of chain which was nearest to his ankle. When the file gave out he notched the biggest blade, and scraped along with that.

When the big blade failed him, he continued his work with the little one, and, as a last resort, he fell back on the screwdriver.

It was a long and tedious task, but in the end his perseverance met with its reward. At the end of sixteen hours one side had an ominous notch which extended halfway through its thickness. By noon the following day—which was the day on which Nelson Lee was stabbed by the Squire—the link was completely divided, the chain was cast off, and Jack Langley was free.

Quivering with suppressed excitement, he rose to his feet and walked to the door. It was locked, and whilst he was examining it he heard Black Bruno coming up the stairs with his dinner.

Quick as thought he glided back to his own corner of the room and snatched up the heavy wooden stool upon which he had spent so many weary hours. Then he stole back to the door and took his stand beside it, with the stool upraised and the next moment it had descended on Bruno's head.

With a stifled groan Black Bruno dropped the plate and pitched forwards on his face. For the second time Jack raised the stool above his head, but as Bruno made no attempt to rise, he lowered his arm and cautiously approached him. Then he tossed the stool into the corner again. He had no further use for it. Black Bruno was insensible.

Scarcely daring to breathe, the young engineer stole softly from the room, locking the door behind him and pocketing the key. At the head of the stairs he paused to reconnoitre, and even as he did so he heard the sound of footsteps on the landing below. For a moment he was undecided how to act, and whilst he was considering what was best to be done, the man below called out in a somewhat angry voice: "Bruno! Bruno! Where the dickens are you?"

At the sound of that well-remembered voice Jack's heart stood still, and his blood seemed suddenly turned to ice. For the voice was the voice of the Chief!

**A Terrific Struggle.**

A moment later the Chief began to ascend the stairs. Jack could not see him, for the staircase was enclosed between two walls, and had a right-angled turn in the middle. But he could hear him—could not only hear his footsteps on the stairs, but could even hear his softly-muttered curses at Black Bruno's non-appearance.

Trembling in every limb, the young engineer glanced dumbly round with the helpless and despairing air of a hunted animal at bay. Concealment was impossible. To advance was to meet the Chief; to retreat was to give up all hope of escape. There was not even time to unlock the attic-door and secure the stool as a weapon of defence, for before he could accomplish that the Chief would have reached the top of the stairs, would have grasped the situation, would have whipped out his revolver.

All this flashed across Jack's mind in the merest fraction of a second. And in the same short space of time he decided that his only possible chance of escape was to take the Chief by surprise, to fall upon him the instant he made his appearance, to hurl him aside, and make for the street. With which design in view he stationed himself on the top-most stair in the attitude of a panther crouching for a spring.

Nearer and nearer came the ascending footsteps of the Chief, till at last the turn in the staircase was reached, and the man himself came into view. The moment his eyes fell

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# Dreadnought

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 21, 1918



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**RED-LETTER DAYS: "PENNY POPULAR" FRIDAY AND "MAGNET" MONDAY!**

on Jack his face turned suddenly pale, and a hoarse cry of alarm burst from his lips. Instinctively his hand flew towards his revolver-pocket, but at the same instant the young engineer took a flying leap, and in less time than it takes to tell the two men were rolling down the narrow staircase, locked in each other's arms.

Both of them were badly bruised in the course of their headlong descent, and both were more or less dazed by the oft-repeated collisions between their heads and the stairs. But both of them were far too excited to care for such trifles as these, and almost before they reached the foot of the stairs they were pounding away at each other like a couple of infuriated bulldogs.

Under ordinary circumstances, the Chief would have had no chance whatever with the stalwart young engineer, but the latter's long confinement in the stuffy attic, coupled with insufficient food and lack of exercise, had robbed him of the greater part of his strength, and had left him, if not inferior to the Chief, at least no more than equal. Notwithstanding this, for the first two minutes of this rough-and-tumble scuffle, Jack more than held his own; but at the end of that time, the effects of his long imprisonment began to tell upon him; the advantages he had gained began to slip away, and slowly but surely the Chief began to assume the upper hand.

Gamely, doggedly, despairingly, Jack strove to regain his lost advantage. But it was all in vain. Little by little his adversary wore him down, till at last, with a ringing shout of triumph, he forced the young engineer on his back, planted his knee on his chest, and fastened his hands on Jack's throat.

Up to this point the din of their struggle had drowned all other sounds; but now, as the din died down, another and even more violent uproar fell on their startled ears. Both men heard it at the same moment, and both men guessed its origin. It was Bruno, who had recovered from his stupor, and was battering down the attic door with the very stool with which Jack Langley had stunned him.

"It's all up now, my young friend!" said the Chief exultantly. "I may not be able to secure you single-handed; but, at any rate, I can hold you down till Bruno arrives, which won't be very long, judging by the row he's making."

Jack made no reply to this taunt, for the simple reason that the clawlike hands of the Chief made speech impossible. But although he could not speak, though breathing itself was a matter of the utmost difficulty, no trace of fear betrayed itself on his handsome face, no thought of surrender crossed his mind.

Finding that he could not shake his captor off, he decided to resort to strategy. For half a minute longer he made a show of struggling; then he uttered a gurgling moan, stiffened his limbs, and lay rigid and motionless.

The Chief, as was only natural, concluded from this that he had strangled Jack into submission—that the latter had become unconscious from want of air—and as he had no desire to kill his prisoner outright, he promptly relaxed his grip on the engineer's throat. This, of course, was exactly what Jack had reckoned on; and the moment the Chief relaxed his grip Jack shot out his arms, seized him round the waist, and with one prodigious effort dragged him down. Then, ere the Chief had time to regain his presence of mind, Jack rolled himself on the top of his foe, and clutched him by the throat.

And even as he did so the attic door flew open, and Black Bruno bounded out with the stool in his hand.

It was not a time to be scrupulous. Clenching his fist, Jack dealt the Chief a couple of blows on the side of the head that momentarily stunned him. He then sprang lightly to his feet, and made a dash for the stairs which led to the landing below. At the same instant, however, Black Bruno leaped to the foot of the attic stairs, and, without even pausing to recover his balance, he swung the stool above his head, and sent it hurtling through the air.

The missile struck the young engineer in the middle of his back, and caused him to fall forward on his hands and knees. Before he could pick himself up the Italian was upon him. Claspng Jack to his brawny arms, he raised him from the ground as easily as though he had been a child. Whilst a man might count five he held his struggling prisoner in an ever-tightening grip; then an agonised cry rang through the house.

Then silence fell. Black Bruno loosed his hold, and Jack Langley slid to the ground unconscious!

*(There will be another long and thrilling instalment of this grand adventure serial in next Wednesday's issue of "THE GEM LIBRARY." Order a copy in advance. Price One Penny.)*

## A NEW FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.

*The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns will be from those readers living in any of our Colonies who desire Correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.*

Colonists sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondent is required—boy or girl, English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two coupons, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two coupons will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertisers direct. No correspondence with advertisers can be undertaken through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

Miss A. Menkhorst, Rosedale Avenue, Glenhuntly, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a reader living in England.

A. Polanse, c/o Mr. Harris, hairdresser, 102, Park Street, South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy or girl reader living in England.

E. Hanna, 258, Church Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, would like to correspond with a boy reader, living in any part of the British Isles, age 15.

G. G. Atkinson, 96, Courtney Street, North Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers living in England, of about 14 or 16 years of age.

Miss A. Keen, Wallaroo Mines, South Australia, would like to correspond with a boy or girl reader living in England.

H. S. Saddler, Montrose, Denman Street, Exeter, South Australia, wishes to exchange postcards with readers in Great Britain and Ireland.

H. J. Barnes, 160, Gower Street, St. John's, Newfoundland, wishes to correspond with a schoolboy reader, age 17 to 18.

A. Kent, 261, Amess Street, Carlton, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader living in England, age 15-16.

C. Clark, Murray Bridge, South Australia, wishes to correspond with girl reader of about 15 or 16 years of age.

K. Fairey, 1, Mount Street, North Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with girl readers of "The Gem" Library, about 17-18 years of age.

H. R. Dunn, Walkerville, Adelaide, South Australia, wishes to correspond with a few boy and girl readers.

Miss Daisy Luke, 20, Alexandra Street, South Yarra, Melbourne, Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy or girl reader living in England, age 16.

W. Jones, 53, Long Street, South Yarra, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with some Gemites living in England and Ireland.

J. Adamson, Box 1297, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 15.

H. E. Roughton, Roycroft, Malvern Grove, Malvern, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 15, living in England.

A. J. Hill, 9, High Street, Rozelle, Sydney, Australia, would like to correspond with a girl reader, age about 16 to 20.

C. Kingsley, care of Central Blue G.M.C. Ballarat Street, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the United Kingdom, of about 15 or 16 years of age.

C. A. Kruss, H.M.A.S. Tingira, Rose Bay, Sydney, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers of "The Gem" Library.

*The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.*

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



# THIS WEEK'S CHAT.

For Next Wednesday.

## "THE RIVAL HOUSEMASTERS!" By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In next week's magnificent, complete tale of St. Jim's, the strained relations which have existed so long between the Housemasters of the School and New Houses at the old college, give place to something very like open enmity.

Weighed down by a mysterious trouble, Mr. Raiton is unable to resist with his usual vigour the bitter attacks of Mr. Horace Ratcliff, the sour New House master, who rejoices in his rival's misfortunes. Needless to say, the St. Jim's juniors take a great interest in the contest between

## "THE RIVAL HOUSEMASTERS,"

though their interference in the matter does not always have the required results.

## A Cheery Letter from Canada.

I recently received the following cheery letter from a Canadian girl reader:

"Prince Albert, Sask.,  
Canada."

"Hello, Central,—Give me the Editor of 'The Gem,' Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, England. Hello! Hello! That the Editor? Why, how do you do? I've been wanting to speak to you for a long time, but have not had time before. Say, Editor, I've taken your papers, 'The Gem' and 'Magnet,' ever since they were only a half-penny each, and instead of going down as most do, they have grown world-wide. But, say, why don't we hear more of Inky or Wun-Lung in 'The Magnet'? My father, when I was home, found me reading one of your papers. He asked me what I was reading. I told him, and he asked me to read him one—you see, he can't read. But, believe me, after hearing one, he bought the papers for me every week, and I used to sit up at night and read to him. However, I left England nearly three years ago, and now only read them to myself. However, I pass them along to a boys' club here, and I know they appreciate them. Well, good-bye, and good luck from a staunch reader,—Yours,

"HARRIETTE H. B.

"P.S.—Say, Editor, there's only one thing about your 'Penny Pop'—it's not big enough!"

Very many thanks, Miss Harriette, both for your jolly letter and the very charming photograph which accompanied it. I am glad to hear that the only fault you have to find with "The Penny Popular" is not such a very serious one, after all!

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

I have lately received many very nice letters, some of which contain helpful suggestions and ideas, which I should like to answer separately in this column. Unfortunately, lack of space altogether precludes this, so that I must content myself by a brief acknowledgment of some of the best of these letters. To the following readers my best thanks are due for their interesting and welcome communications:

- J. Eric Slater, Hyde; W. Dean, Forest Gate, E.; M. H., Ayrshire; "A Constant Reader," Cork, Ireland; "A Loyal Reader," Purley; "Flip," Liverpool; W. V. Tagwell, near Bude; L. Thorne, Toowoomba, Queensland; A. H. Green, Victoria; C. Markby, Melbourne, Australia; J. Leader, Carshalton; Miss Maggie F. R., Corsham; "Jumbo," Johannesburg; H. Gifford, Oldham; "A Welsh Reader," Anglesey; Miss M. Macdonald, 22, Llanlleidian Gardens, Oathays; Miss M. C., Salford; "An Australian Reader," G. M.; Miss B. M. Langford, Sydney; J. Stevens, Melbourne; D. O'Donoghue, Carlton; Mrs. L. Carlton, Dublin.

## Replies in Brief.

G. C. (Northampton).—I am sorry I cannot supply you with the address of any person who is likely to have the numbers you require.

L. Turner (Bristol).—Thank you for your letter. The benefits to be derived from smoking, if there are any, are so small as to be hardly worth mentioning; smoking affects the heart, lungs, and eyes, and generally undermines the constitution. The answer to your question is that you are probably "out of training." I should advise you, therefore, if you wish to turn out fresh and early each morning, to take up physical culture.

W. Norman (Great Forrington).—An article appeared a few weeks back dealing with the subject you mention.

"E. G., of London," would very much like to hear from Miss E. D. G., of Birmingham, again.

## FOR THE FAMILY CIRCLE. MAGIC TRACINGS.

Most boys have all seen those advertisement papers which, when a light is applied to a certain spot, burn out the name of the article wanted to be known. Capital amusement is to be got by an application of the principle on which these are manufactured. Get some sheets of tissue-paper, and with a strong solution of saltpetre trace upon them the names of yourself or friends, the forms of animals, and so on; thoroughly dry, and then apply the end of a red-hot wire to a part of each tracing. The fire will do the rest.

## SHADOWS.

This is a capital game to introduce forfeits, and one that grown-up people enjoy at the festive season quite as much as children. Get a tall, three-fold clothes-horse, and stretch a sheet tightly across it. About half a yard from the horse at the back set a couple of candles. One person sits in front of the screen, while at the back the others walk past it, disguised to the best of their ability.

For each one she cannot guess, the one in front is fined a forfeit, but her place is taken by the first person whose identity she names correctly.

## TO TELL A NUMBER THOUGHT OF.

Ask a member of your audience to think of a number. For example, we will suppose he thinks of 5. Tell him to double it. Then to add four, then to multiply the result by five, to add twelve, to multiply by ten, then to subtract 320. Then ask for the result, from which you must mentally knock off the two ciphers. You will then say the number 5 was the number thought of. Here are some other methods of doing this:

	(Another Way.)	
Think of a number, say	...	5
Multiply by	...	3
		15
Add	...	1
		16
Multiply by	...	3
		48
Add the number thought of	...	5
		53

Ask for this sum, which must always end in 3, and mentally striking off the figures beside the first one, say the latter is the one thought of.

## HEARTY CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

TO ALL MY CHUMS!—THE EDITOR.