

SPLENDID FOOTBALLS and MONEY PRIZES AWARDED FOR READERS' JOKES!

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EVERY WEDNESDAY.

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An Amusing Incident From This Week's Lively St. Jim's Story, "RIVAL RAGGERS!"

THEY'RE AT IT AGAIN! IT'S SAINTS VERSUS GRAMMARIANS—

RIVAL RAGGERS!



Making an "eggsample" of Monty Lowther! There's no quarter asked or given when the Saints and Grammarians get to grips again, and ragging is fast and furious in this ripping yarn of the warfare of the rival schools!

CHAPTER 1.

Figgins & Co.'s Idea!

TOM MERRY, Manners, and Lowther, commonly known as the Terrible Three, were sitting in their study in the Shell passage at St. Jim's writing impositions at express speed.

Save for the scratch of their pens and an occasional mutter of a Latin or German word by a harassed translator, silence reigned in the famous study.

Suddenly Tom Merry threw down his pen with a whoop of satisfaction:

"Hurrah! I've done my blessed impot! Three cheers!"

Manners and Lowther gave a simultaneous yell.

"Chuck it, you ass! We haven't!"

"But I have, my sons!" grinned Tom Merry. "And I'm jolly glad!"

The opening of the study door interrupted Tom Merry. It was opened by the simple method of planting a sufficiently hard kick against the panels. It flew back with a jerk and a crash, and Figgins & Co. came in.

Tom Merry nodded a welcome.

Manners and Lowther looked up with a glare. Figgins & Co. came into the study, and Figgins closed the door in the same gentle way. Tom Merry looked at them curiously. Figgins, long-limbed and lean, Kerr, the canny Scotsman, and Fatty Wynn, the Welsh partner of the Co., were three of the best, and though they were always at loggerheads with Tom Merry and his chums, at bottom there was a real liking and esteem on both sides.

"We've come to talk—" began Figgins.

"You haven't!" said Manners aggressively. "Do you think I can construe Virgil while you are talking, Figgins?"

"Do you think I can write out Schiller by the yard while

you are talking, Figgins?" asked Lowther. "Don't, old fellow."

"It's an important matter."

"Rats! Come again another time! Scoot!"

"Can't be did!" said Figgins. "It's an important matter, and it's got to be settled. The fact is, I've thought of an idea—"

"Excuse me, Figgy," said Kerr, "but as the idea was mine—"

"Rats!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn warmly. "It was mine! Didn't I say to you, first of all—"

"Look here, Wynn! You're not going to claim—"

"I'm going to have—"

"I tell you plainly—"

Monty Lowther clutched his German dictionary, and turned a desperate eye upon the three disputants. Tom Merry was laughing like a hyena.

"Are you going to shut up?" bawled Lowther. "Go and settle the question in your own measly House—that rotten old casual ward you call a House! Get out!"

"Travel!" growled Manners. "How on earth can I—"

"I tell you it's an important matter!" exclaimed Figgins. "As Tom Merry is the leader of this study, I appeal to him. Do leave off laughing, Tom Merry, and attend to me. Am I or am I not to explain my idea?"

"My idea!" interjected Kerr.

"My idea!" hooted Fatty Wynn.

"Scissors!" gasped Monty Lowther. "I'm not going to stand this! Will you fellows clear out or shut up?"

"Dry up!" howled Manners.

"My only pyjama hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry, the tears of laughter running down his cheeks. "Shut up, some of you, or the chaps will think we've got Bedlam here on a visit!"

"Done!" ejaculated Monty Lowther, flinging down his

—IN THIS LIVELY YARN OF SCHOOL ADVENTURE AND RAGGING!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

pen. "That's the last of the fifty. I don't mind if you New House duffers chatter now!"

"But I do!" exclaimed Manners. "I'm not done! I——"
"Now, don't you be unreasonable, Manners," said Monty. "You ought to be finished by this time. If Figgins has got anything to say, let's hear it."

"I tell you——"
"I appeal to the majority," said Lowther. "Tom Merry, isn't Manners to shove that piffle away for a bit?"

"Yes, certainly!" said Tom Merry. "You're in a minority, Manners. Shove it away!"

Manners growled, but he realised that there wasn't much chance of getting on with his work under the present circumstances, and he put it away.

"That's right!" said Figgins. "Virgil is all very well in its way, but it's no good sticking to that sort of thing when there's something serious on the carpet. This idea I've got is really ripping, Al, first class——"

"It just occurred to me," Kerr explained. "We were talking about the Grammar School chaps, and——"

"We were talking about the Grammar School chaps," said Fatty Wynn, "and it occurred to me that it would be a good idea——"

"Shut up, both of you!" exclaimed Figgins, in the voice of authority. "How you can come into another fellow's study and show off your egotism in this way, I can't imagine! I shall never get my idea explained at this rate——"

"You mean my idea——"
"Never mind whose the idea is!" suggested Tom Merry. "You can fight over that in the New House, if you like. Let's hear the idea!"

"Well, you see——" began Figgins.

"It's like this——" said Kerr.

"I'll explain——" said Fatty Wynn.
Figgins gave the Co. a withering glance.
"Will you two conceited asses shut up?" he exclaimed.

"Who's the head of this firm, I'd like to know? If I'm interrupted again, there will be a row!"

"There has been a pretty good row already," Monty Lowther remarked. "Don't mind us, you know. We like to see you in your funny act. It's as good as a play, and——"

"Oh, ring off!" said Figgins. "Now, this is my——"
"Our!" corrected the Co. with one voice.

"Our idea," went on Figgins. "A long time ago, soon after the Rylcombe Grammar School was opened, and we got to fighting terms with the Grammarians, we formed a Co. against them——"

"Tom Merry & Co.," assented the hero of the Shell, with a nod.

"Well, we called it Tom Merry & Co.," said Figgins, rather disparagingly. "We let you be leader, because——"

"Because I was the only one that could lead."

"Nothing of the kind! But——anyway, the Co. busted up!"
"Yes; we gave the Grammarians the kybosh, and made them sign a paper acknowledging they were licked, and there wasn't any use for the Co. after that."

"That's all very well, but the Grammar School cads have got over it, and they're bucking up again. They're going to try their luck in the football field with us again before the season closes, and they're going to have that document of surrender back again. So they say."

Tom Merry laughed.
"Let them say it, then. They won't find it so easy to do it."

"I don't know. They've been ragging a lot of our fellows lately. There was D'Arcy, of your House—they captured him in Rylcombe yesterday, and marched him up and down the main street with a donkey's collar round his neck, and a bunch of carrots tied on his hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all very well to laugh, Tom Merry, but it's one in the eye for St. Jim's, and we ought to put the Grammar School rotters in their place. That's what I say!"

"Right enough," said the Co. "We ought!"

"Then you want to revive the Co.?" said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "It's a good idea. I have been thinking of it myself lately. The Grammarians have been getting up on their hind legs and putting on airs again. I don't mind leading you again."

"Perhaps you don't!" said Figgins, with emphasis. "But we do!"

"Oh, I see! You've thought of a new leader, have you? Now, we thrashed out that subject before, and settled that there was only one possible leader——"

"Rats! My idea is certainly to revive the Co.—you three and we three, and Study No. 6—and there'll be another in it this time——"

"Who is that?"

"Marmaduke Smythe, who used to be in our House a long time ago. You remember him, of course—the millionaire's son? He's coming down to St. Jim's for a few weeks while his father is abroad, and he's going to take his old place in our study. Of course, he'll be in the Co. But about the leader——"

"Yes—about the leader——" said the Co.

"Now, our idea is this," said Figgins. "We're not going to have any special leader all the time, but——"

"Take it in turns," said Kerr.

"The old Athenian method," said Figgins. "Why should one chap be leader more than any other? It's all very well to say that Tom Merry led us to victory over the Grammarians last time. But as leader of the alliance only Tom Merry had a chance, and I can't say that I think he did anything extraordinary."

"Not at all," said Kerr. "Far from that."

"Very ordinary," said Fatty Wynn, shaking his head. "Extraordinarily ordinary. I mean——"

"Oh, rats!" said Tom Merry. "I think Figgy's idea, or Kerr's idea, or Fatty Wynn's idea—whichever it is, simply rot. If there is to be a Co., of course, it will be Tom Merry & Co., the same as before, and I shall be leader. What do you say, Manners?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I'm rather inclined to agree with Figgy," was Manners' somewhat unexpected reply. "If every chap takes the lead in turn, it will give everyone a chance to show you what he can do. If we don't find it answer, we can go back to the old arrangement. What's your idea, Lowther?"

"Same here," replied Lowther. "It's a good wheeze and worth trying, with the amendment that an unsuccessful captain is sacked on the spot. But if Tom Merry doesn't like it——"

Tom Merry laughed.
"My dear kids, I don't mind in the least. If you like to try the idea, we'll try it, and I'll make as good a follower as I make a leader, at all events."

"Well said!" exclaimed Figgins heartily. "That's just what we should have expected you to say, Tom Merry. It's agreed upon then?"

"Certainly! But what about Blake and the others?"

"We'll have them in, and talk it over with them," said Figgins. He opened the door. A Third Form fag was coming down the passage, and Figgins called to him: "I say, young Gibson, cut off to Blake's study, will you, and say that Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy are wanted in Tom Merry's study on important business?"

"Right-ho!" said Curly Gibson; and he cut off. He came back, grinning, in a couple of minutes.

"Well, are they coming?" said Figgins.

"No, they're not. Blake says he's sorry; but they're having tea, and you can go and eat coke!"

And Curly vanished, chuckling.

The six juniors looked at one another.

"Well," laughed Tom Merry, "if the mountain won't come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain, so come on."

And Tom Merry led the way to Study No. 6 with the others at his heels.

CHAPTER 2. The Ballot!

STUDY No. 6 was looking unusually festive that evening. It was always rather cosy, for Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy, the occupants of the famous apartment, knew how to make themselves comfortable; but on the present occasion they had excelled themselves.

The fire burned brightly in the grate, and Arthur Augustus was sitting on a hassock before it making toast, of which the fragrant smell pervaded the study. There were chestnuts roasting on the bars of the grate, too, and D'Arcy was keeping an eye on them. Blake had just made the tea, and was standing the teapot on the trivet to draw. Herries was not in the study, but Digby was cutting bread-and-butter.

Blake, having arranged the teapot to his satisfaction,

turned back to the table. The table gleamed with a wonderfully white cloth, and there was an unusual array of crockery and cutlery, borrowed from half a dozen studies up and down the passage.

Tea in Study No. 6 was always a meal worth partaking of when the juniors were in funds, but seldom had the study seen such a spread as the present one.

The explanation was that Blake & Co. all found themselves in funds at the same time, by some extraordinary chance, and they had resolved to celebrate the joyful occasion fittingly.

"How jolly that toast smells," said Digby, sniffing appreciatingly.

"Yaas, wathah!" said the swell of the School House, turning a crimson face from the fire. "I am weally a wathah clevah chap at makin' toast, you know. It's beastlay warm, don't you know, deah boys!"

"Never mind, stick to it, Gussy!" said Blake encouragingly. "Another plateful will be enough. Hallo! Here's Herries!"

Herries came into the study. He had been down to the school shop, and the extent of his purchases had delighted the heart of Dame Taggles. He had bundles under each arm, and parcels were bulging out his pockets.

Digby gave a whistle.

"My hat! We're doing this thing in style! Ham, pickles, tongue, jam, and marmalade, steak pies, and currant cake! My word!"

"We don't all find ourselves flush every day. As a matter of fact, there's been famine in the land for a long time," grinned Blake. "Shove 'em on the table, Herries, old man. Here's Kildare's soap-dish for the jam; Dig has washed it. You can put some of the marmalade in that extra teacup. Open the pickles."

"All right. You pour out the tea; we don't want it stewing."

"I'm just going to. Hallo! What's that?"

Blake was pouring out the tea as he spoke. The door of the study opened, and Tom Merry looked in. His friends were behind him, filling the passage.

Tom Merry smiled with a pleasant expression.

"Tea!" he exclaimed. "Tea and toast! Ham and tongue! My hat! We're on in this act, chaps!"

"Rather!" came in a hearty chorus from behind him.

"Here, what do you chaps want?" grunted Blake. "Blessed if— Now, then, what's the matter with you, Gussy?"

A sudden yell had broken from the swell of St. Jim's.

Blake was pouring out the tea while he talked, and his eyes were on Tom Merry, and not on the teacup, with the result that he poured the tea, not in the teacup, but down the neck of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who had taken his seat at the table.

The unfortunate swell of the School House gave a terrific yell, and jumped up as if moved by a spring.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Blake started back in astonishment, and made a sweep with the teapot, and Herries gave a whoop as the hot tea came streaming from the spout over his legs.

"Ow! You clumsy ass! Ow!"

"My hat!" said Blake. "What's the matter? It was Gussy's fault, jumping up like that and startling me!"

"You howwid beast!" howled D'Arcy. "You have scalded the back of my neck!"

"You shouldn't put the back of your neck under my teapot, then," said Blake crossly. "There goes the tea, nearly all wasted, because—"

"My collah is wingin' wet, and my neck—"

"Oh, blow your neck! I'm thinking of the tea!"

"Ow, my leg!" groaned Herries. "My leg! Ow!"

"Your leg!" exclaimed Blake, exasperated. "I never heard such a fuss made over nothing!"

"You howwid wuffian!" moaned D'Arcy. "You have scalded my neck, and spoiled my collah, and ruined my necktie; and my waistcoat is wetted, too."

"Horrid!" said Tom Merry. "Go for him, Gussy! Give him a thrashing!"

"I have weally a good mind—"

"Oh, get a clean collar and shut up!" said Blake. "It was all Tom Merry's fault, really. If he hadn't come in, I shouldn't have—"

"Oh, rats!" said Tom Merry cheerfully. "We want to talk to you fellows, and, as you wouldn't come to us, we've come to you. I didn't know there was a feed on; but now we've come, we can't do better than stay, it seems to me."

"What-ho!" exclaimed Figgins emphatically.

"I should say so!" said Fatty Wynn, with a famished look at the table. "It's very nice and proper of you to ask us to this feed, Blake."

"But I haven't—"

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"So it is—very decent of him," said Figgins, pulling a chair to the table and sitting down. "That's what I like about Blake—he's generous."

"My idea exactly," Kerr assented, coming in cheerfully. "I like Blake's feeds. They're good, and you're always welcome."

"Look here!"

"We'll pass a vote of thanks to Blake," said Tom Merry. "I'll carve this pie to start with. Not a word, my dear fellow! The trouble's nothing!"

"Look here—" began Blake.

But D'Arcy, who had changed his collar by this time and was beaming again, interrupted him.

"Gentlemen," said the swell of the School House, laying his hand upon his gorgeous waistcoat, "you are all heartily welcome."

"Thanks!" said Tom Merry. "That's just like you, Gussy! Very much like you! No need to say more, Blake; we understand your feelings exactly."

"I dare say you do!" exclaimed Blake, laughing, in spite of himself. "You bounders! But now you're here, you may as well stay. What do you say, chaps?"

"Let 'em stay, by all means!" said Digby. "Jolly glad to see their chivvies round the festive board—ahem!"

"Good!" grinned Tom Merry. "Then that's settled. How's Gussy getting on after his little affair with the Grammarians yesterday, by the way?"

"So you've heard about that, have you?" chuckled Digby. "It's all over the school by now, I suppose. Well, it was funny. Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's no laughin' mattah," said D'Arcy, rather indignantly. "I am weally surprised at you, Digby. If you had been pawaded up and down the High Street of Wylcombe with a donkey's collah wound your beastlay neck, you would not have considered it funny."

"Perhaps not!" agreed Digby. "But as it is, I consider it awfully funny."

"But I say," said Blake, "what did you fellows come to talk about?"

"We've got a wheeze to put up," said Tom Merry. "It's an alliance against the Grammar School again, but on new lines. I suppose you chaps don't know anything about Greek history in the Fourth—"

"Eh? What's that?"

"Well, if you do, you know the old wheeze of having a lot of generals, who took the command turn and turn about—"

"Yes, and a nice hash they used to make of it. Of all the idiotic ideas—"

"That's what I thought, but the idea comes from the New House, so you can't expect much of a thing. Figgy proposes that we should organise a Co. on the same lines, and every fellow takes his turn as leader."

"Oh, I see!" said Blake, changing his tone. "That alters the case. I think it's a jolly good idea!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It doesn't take you long to change your views. Still, I don't mind. Our old chum Marmaduke Smythe is coming down to the New House for some weeks, and he'll be in the Co. and take his turn as leader. The captaincy lasts for one day, turn and turn about for all of us, but unsuccessful generals get the sack on the spot. You start with me as captain—"

"Excuse me," said Figgins politely, "you start with me as captain—"

"Come, no rotting!" said Blake warmly. "Of course, I take first turn as captain—"

"Weally, deah boys, I regard the proposal as extremewly impertinent. In the natuah of things, I must be captain first, because—"

"Oh, you take a run, Gussy!"

"I wufuse to take a wun! You must wequiah a fellow of gweat tact and judgment for a thing of this sort, and so I—"

"Dry up, Gussy!" said Kerr. "I don't like to disagree with the rest, but I think that any reasonable fellow will admit that if there's a Scotsman in the party he ought to take the lead first, to show the other fellows how—"

"Nuff said, Kerr. Don't be an unspeakable Scot, old chap!" said Lowther. "Of course, if you let the thing go by merit, I ought to take the first—"

Tom Merry burst into a laugh.

"Suppose we leave it to chance," he said. "Write all the names on slips of paper and shove 'em in a bag. Then the one pulled out first is leader."

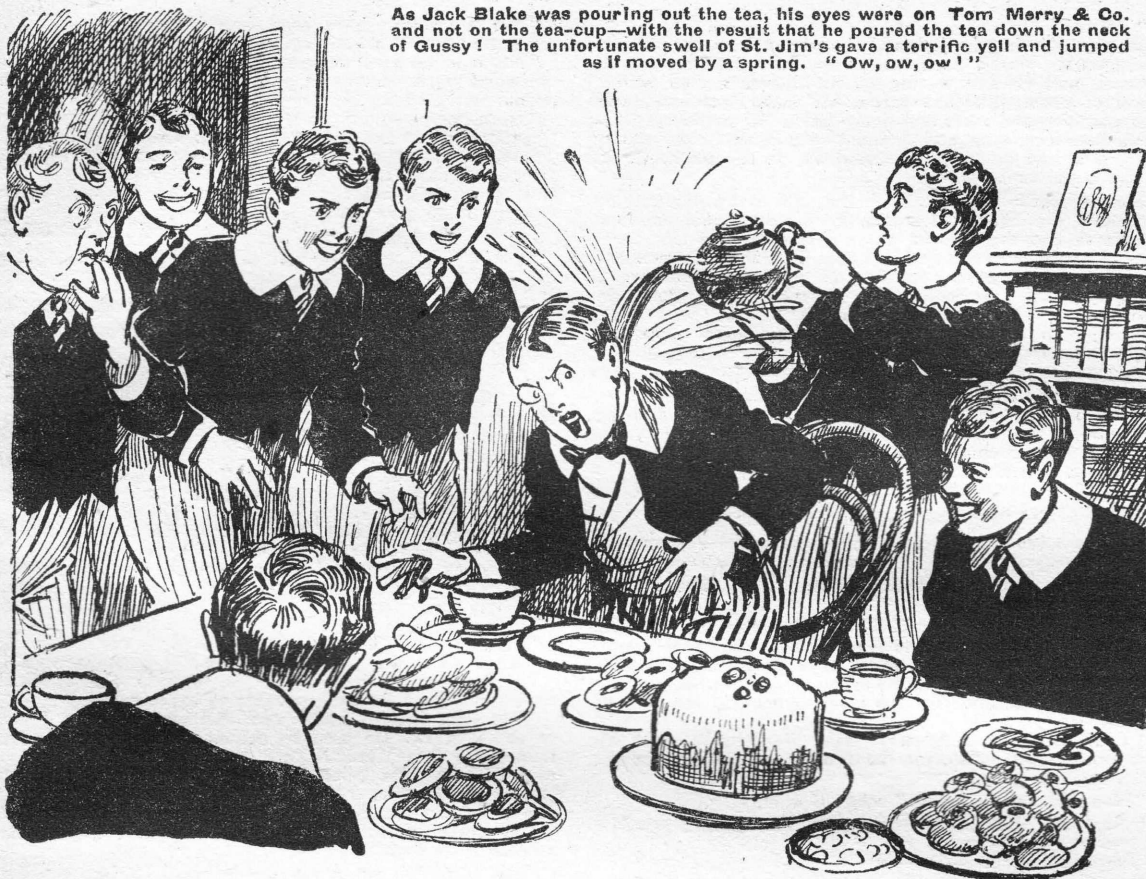
"Good!" said Figgins. "And he holds command for one day, and then another name is drawn. It's a good idea."

"Then we'll do it!" exclaimed Blake, with a wave of the hand. "That's settled! Gentlemen, the campaign opens to-morrow! Figgy, old kid, when do you expect the great and only Marmaduke down here?"

"By the afternoon train to-morrow," said Figgins. "He's made it Wednesday because that's a half-holiday."

"Good! We'll all go to meet him."

As Jack Blake was pouring out the tea, his eyes were on Tom Merry & Co. and not on the tea-cup—with the result that he poured the tea down the neck of Gussy! The unfortunate swell of St. Jim's gave a terrific yell and jumped as if moved by a spring. "Ow, ow, ow!"



"That's a good idea," assented Figgins, very pleased. "Marmaduke's a good sort, and we want to make much of him, you know."

"Yaas, wathah! Do you wemembah what a feahful wottah he was when he first came to St. Jim's—always talkin' about his gov'nah's millions, and puttin' on no end of side? We cured him—"

"You needn't talk," said Figgins. "We had to cure you, if you remember, Adolphus. Don't you recollect what an absolutely funny and screamingly idiotic ass you were?"

"No, Figgins! I weally do not wemembah anythin' of the kind," said D'Arcy, with stately dignity, "and I will thank you not to—"

"Rats! I say, we may fall in with some Grammar School cads to-morrow," Figgins remarked. "We ought to have our leader all ready in case of rows. Let's get that drawing lots business over."

Tea was finished, and the juniors proceeded to draw lots. Ten names were placed on slips of paper in a bag, and then one was drawn out by Tom Merry.

Nine heads craned forward eagerly to look at it.

"Jack Blake!"

Nine juniors read out the name in tones of disappointment, one in a voice of exultation. Needless to say, the "one" was the chief of Study No. 6.

"Well, it's all in the game," said Figgins, with a look of resignation. "Blake's leader for to-morrow, and I only hope that he won't make too bad a hash of it."

"Don't expect too much," said Tom Merry, shaking his head. "We must look for a bungle of some kind, and then—"

"Perhaps you are looking for a thick ear, too!" suggested Blake pleasantly. "You're mighty near getting one, the pair of you!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard these comments as bein' bad form. Blake is leadah, and we are bound to follow him to the bittah end—unless he feels the wespensibility too heavy; and in that case I should be perfectly willin' to undahtake the lead."

"I think I can manage the job," said Blake disdainfully. "Now then, I'm going to issue orders—"

"You're going to do what?" demanded half a dozen rebellious voices.

"Issue orders!" said Blake firmly. "You will kindly

listen to my instructions and remember them, or you will hear of it! What time does Marmaduke's train come in to-morrow, Figgins?"

"Three o'clock," said Figgins.

"Very well. You will all be ready at the gates of the school to follow me down to the village at half-past two," said Blake.

"Of all the confounded cheek—"

"Oh, play the game!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Blake is leader—for the time. We've got to take his orders."

"Yes, that's all very well; but—"

"No 'but'!" said Blake incisively. "All of you turn up at the gates at half-past two to-morrow afternoon, and mind you don't fail!"

And the Co., with some hesitation, agreed that they would.

CHAPTER 3.

Marmaduke Arrives!

"PORTER!"

"Yessir?"

"Take care of my boxes, please. Don't let them be banged about like that. I am very particular about my boxes."

"Yessir!"

"You need not grin, porter! If you do I shall probably not give you the half-crown I intended to give you. Let me see, I think your name is Trumble?"

"Yessir!" said the porter of Rylcombe Station, becoming as grave as a judge instantly on the mention of the half-crown.

"Perhaps you remember me," said the youth who had just stepped from the train in Rylcombe Station languidly. "I used to be at St. Jim's, you know."

Trumble stared at him.

"Yessir! I think I know you agin, sir. You are Master Smythe, sir."

"Exactly, Trumble! Is there a vehicle waiting for me from the school?"

"I don't think so, sir."

"Dear me! That is very careless of Dr. Holmes. Place my boxes on the hack, then, Trumble."

"Yessir!"

Marmaduke Smythe followed the porter from the station. Marmaduke was a well-fed youth, and extremely well dressed, and he had a ring on his finger, a gold watch-chain of great thickness across his fancy waistcoat, and diamond pins and studs and sleeve-links. He carried a gold-headed walking-cane, and the gold head of that cane usually reposed at the mouth of Marmaduke, as though he found it had a pleasant flavour.

Marmaduke followed Trumble out, and cast a disparaging eye upon the hack. It was a very ancient vehicle, and the horse had seen better days—a considerable time ago, too. The porter piled up the boxes, and the driver of the hack left off chewing a straw and climbed into his seat. "What an awful-looking turn-out!" Marmaduke remarked. "I suppose I must be content with it, though. It is very curious that at least Figgins & Co. have not come to meet the train."

As Marmaduke spoke, a quartet of schoolboys were approaching. They were Gordon Gay, Frank Monk, the son of the headmaster of the Grammar School, and his chums Lane and Carboy. They stared at Marmaduke, and Gordon Gay, catching sight of the address on the boxes, uttered an exclamation.

"Hallo, that's a new kid for St. Jim's!"

Monk & Co. fixed their eyes upon Marmaduke.

"Looks a funny sort of waster!" said Lane, loud enough for Marmaduke to hear. "Wonder where it was dug up?"

"Let's ask him?" suggested Carboy. "I say, freak, where were you dug up?"

Marmaduke stared haughtily at the Grammar School youths. The four were ripe for mischief, and, as a matter of fact, they had been in quest of some St. Jim's fellows when they fell in with Marmaduke. The chance of ragging a new "kid" destined for the rival school was too good to be lost.

"Pray do not talk to me!" said Marmaduke, with his nose in the air. "Porter, be quicker with those boxes! I desire to be gone."

"New kid for St. Jim's?" asked Gordon Gay.

"No," said Marmaduke haughtily. "I am not a new kid, as you vulgarly express it. I am an old boy returning to the school for a period—"

"Oh, so you've been there before, have you?"

"Yes, I certainly have been there before."

"Rotten sort of a hole, isn't it?" said Monk cheerfully.

"No, it is not a rotten sort of hole. But I shall not argue the point with persons of your description. Porter, here is your half-crown. Driver—"

"High and haughty, ain't we?" grinned Gordon Gay. "Shall we teach this youthful bouncer a lesson, Frank?"

"As a matter of duty, I think we ought to do so," assented Frank Monk. "He has evidently too much cheek, and it is only right and generous for persons of our description to give him a lesson."

"You will keep your distance," said Marmaduke. "Otherwise—"

"I like his waistcoat," Carboy remarked, giving Marmaduke a dig in the said waistcoat. "D'Arcy of St. Jim's goes in for fancy waistcoats, but this one beats him hollow."

"Hands off, you rude rotter, or—"

"His hat is too small for such a swelled head," remarked Lane, knocking the hat off Marmaduke's cranium. "Sorry, kid! What do you mean by putting your hat in the way of my fist?"

Marmaduke swung up his cane, crimson with anger.

"I will give you—"

"Hallo, he's getting dangerous!" exclaimed Frank Monk, in mock alarm, winking at Gordon Gay, and dragging Carboy and Lane back as he spoke. "Let us fly!"

And, followed by Gay, Frank raced off, and Carboy and Lane, as he had a firm grip on their arms, had to go with him. They disappeared in a moment, and Marmaduke gazed after them in surprise mingled with satisfaction.

"What are you running away for?" howled Lane. "You're not afraid of that image, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Gordon Gay.

"Then what are you running for?"

Frank stopped, out of breath, outside the Rylcombe tuckshop. Then he condescended to explain.

"My dear kids, I know who that chap is, now I come to think of it. He used to belong to St. Jim's, and his name's Smythe—Marmaduke Smythe, the son of the millionaire Smythe. He belongs to those three freaks who call themselves Figgins & Co. He used to be one of the Co. We're on the warpath now, and this is our chance! No good wiping up the ground with him. I've got a better wheeze than that."

"Oh, if you've got a wheeze—" said Carboy and Lane together, mollified.

"Of course I've got a wheeze!" said Frank Monk indignantly. "Do you think I would run away from that fat-faced whippersnapper in dead earnest?"

"Well, I suppose not; but you've given him that impression."

"He won't keep that impression long," said Frank, with a chuckle. "Come on, we're going to wait for that hack in the lane. We couldn't carry out the plan in Rylcombe, but in the lane there won't be anyone to interfere. Call two or three of our fellows out of the tuckshop, and let's be off!"

Two or three recruits were easily found. Half a dozen Grammarians hurried out of the village, and lay in ambush among the willows in Rylcombe Lane, half-way to St. Jim's. Monk kept a keen look-out, and the rattle of the old hack and the clattering of the ancient horse was soon heard on the hard road.

"Here they come! Mind you don't let the hack get past you."

"What-ho!" answered the grinning Grammarians.

The Rylcombe hack came clattering by. Marmaduke, leaning back upon the ancient cushions inside, was thinking of his coming meeting with his old chums at St. Jim's. Marmaduke had come to St. Jim's in the first place as a regular "bouncer," with his head filled with ideas of his own importance, and the thought of Smythe senior's millions never absent from his mind. The juniors of St. Jim's had reformed him, but it was possible that since leaving the school Marmaduke had somewhat fallen from grace.

The adulation a millionaire's son naturally received from toadies of all sorts, the spoiling by a fond mother, and the obsequiousness of a tutor, had perhaps revived in Marmaduke some of the faults which the boys of St. Jim's had ruthlessly knocked out of him while he sojourned among them.

Marmaduke was sucking the gold head of his cane and thinking of various things, when the hack came to a sudden halt. He looked out of the window with an annoyed expression.

"Driver, what do you mean by stopping? I told you that I was in a hurry to get to the school. You are actually causing me inconvenience—Dear me!"—Marmaduke broke off—"it is the Grammar School cads again!"

Two Grammarians were holding the horse; two more were bandying words with the driver, and warning him



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that he would be puffed down and ducked in the ditch if he used his whip on the boys at the horse's head.

Two—Monk and Carboy—were running to open the door of the hack. They had it open in a twinkling, and, before Marmaduke realised what was happening, they had jerked him out into the road.

"Hands off!" shouted Marmaduke. "Hands off, you beastly cads! I'll have you—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Driver, go on to the school, and deliver the property of the respected Marmy, and tell them he is not coming yet."

The driver hesitated. He didn't like to go on without his passenger, and yet he could certainly do nothing against six Grammarians. And it is quite possible that the trace of uppishness in Marmaduke's manner had put the driver's back up, and made him far from unwilling for the heir of millions to have a lesson.

"Look 'ere, I protest against this 'ere!" he said.

"That's all right; protest as much as you like," said Monk cheerfully. "Only drive on while you're doing it, or we shall turn your rattle-trap over into the ditch."

The threat was enough. The driver whipped his horse, and the hack lumbered on. Marmaduke made a frantic attempt to rush after it, but in vain. Monk and Carboy held him fast.

"Oh, come, don't be cruel!" said Monk pathetically. "You don't want to run away just as we are growing fond of you, do you, Marmy dear?"

"Let me go! I'll have you punished! I—"

"Nice sort of critter, isn't it?" said Carboy in tones of disgust. "Wonder how the chaps there can stand it! I couldn't. Beastly rotter!"

"All the more reason why nice fellows like us should give him a lesson," said Monk. "Go into the field there and catch Marmaduke's relation, Lane."

Lane looked puzzled.

"What are you driving at?"

"There he is—you can hear him."

"He-haw, he-haw, he-haw, he-haw, he-haw, he-haw!"

The musical notes of a donkey sounded over the hedge.

"That's Farmer Jones' donkey that he lets out for rides to the village kids," said Monk. "I've been on his back often enough. He's as easy to catch as this brother of his we've got here. Go and catch him."

Lane disappeared through a gap in the hedge. Mr. Jones' donkey was a very tame and quiet creature, and would eat out of anybody's hands. Lane had no difficulty in catching him and bringing him into the road. Meanwhile, Marmaduke, wondering what was to be done with him, was looking sullen.

Sullenness had been one of Marmaduke's failures in the old days, and it seemed to have revived during his life in the luxurious mansion of Smythe senior in Park Lane. That may have had something to do with his papa sending him back to St. Jim's for a time, though Marmaduke did not suspect it.

"Now," said Frank Monk, addressing himself to Marmaduke, while the eager Grammarians hung on his words, "I dare say you know we're at war with the fellows of St. Jim's; and I really wish it happened to be Blake, or Figgins, or Tom Merry that we had hold of now. But as it isn't, you'll serve our turn. We shall score over them just the same, and I fancy I can see their faces when you arrive at St. Jim's. I hope this lesson will do you good."

"If you dare to—"

"It's not a question of daring," said Monk. "We can do as we like. Mount him, kids!"

Monk's plan had dawned upon the Grammarians by this time. They chuckled joyously as they seized the vainly wriggling Marmaduke and swung him upon the donkey's back.

"Face to the tail!" exclaimed Gay. "That's right! Neddy doesn't seem to quite know what to make of it. He's never had one of his own race on his back before!"

"You impertinent ruffians—"

"Fasten his legs under Neddy's tummy," grinned Gay.

"We mustn't allow the dear boy to fall off. Now tie his hands. Do you think you are safe now, Marmalade?"

"My name is Marmaduke—"

"My mistake. Has anybody got any paint?"

There was a general murmur of regret. Nobody had any paint. The opportunity of adorning the countenance of Marmaduke had to be lost. Done in red and green, as Carboy remarked, he would have presented a unique appearance.

"But there's plenty of mud in the ditch," suggested Lane; "nice, thick, black mud, as good as black ink for ornamental purposes."

"Good idea!" exclaimed Monk.

Mud was promptly fetched from the ditch.

"That's right," said Monk, "plaster his face so that his dearest friend won't know him. They'll have to scrape that

off before they can kiss their dearest Marmaduke. Jump on his silk hat, somebody. As he's a millionaire he can easily get another. Make it as much like a concertina as you can and stick it on the back of his head."

"You—you beasts! I'll—I'll—"

"There!" said Monk, stepping back a pace and surveying the Grammarians' handiwork with great satisfaction.

"There, I think that's about as near perfect as we could possibly get! Are you satisfied, Marmaduke?"

"You—you—you horrid, rotten cad—"

"Nice way he has of speaking, hasn't he? The Saints will be pleased to see him. Lead Neddy on. We'll send him in at the gates of St. Jim's, and he can trot round the quadrangle and show the kids there that the Grammar School is on the warpath, and can knock spots off them any time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, I won't have it!" roared Marmaduke. "Release me immediately, you cads! Let me get off this brute! I'll give you a pound each—"

"Hark at the rotten money-monger!" exclaimed Monk in deep disgust.

"Let me go! I won't go to St. Jim's like this—"

"Seems to me you've got no choice in the matter. Forward, Neddy!"

The donkey, surrounded by the laughing crowd of Grammarians, trotted off in the direction of the school; the

NO SOFT JOB!



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Boy: "Lumme, gov'nor, and what 'appens when the door slams?"

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juniors kept pace with him, and Marmaduke's furious protests were lost in their yells of laughter. St. Jim's came in sight, and right up to the ancient college swept the Grammarians with their prisoner.

CHAPTER 4.

Rough on Mr. Ratcliff!

JACK BLAKE and his merry men were marching down to the school gates, when the Grammarians and their prisoner happened along.

As they reached them there was a roar from the road outside—yells and cheers and laughter.

Blake gave a jump.

"That's the Grammar School cads!" he cried. "What's up?"

"Let me go! I won't go in like this—"

"Marmaduke's voice!" yelled Figgins. "They've got him!"

"Marmaduke!"

The juniors of St. Jim's shouted out the name in a kind of chorus.

The donkey, urged on by the shouts and yells of the Grammarians, came careering up to the gates of St. Jim's. The figure seated upon its back, with his face to the tail, would never have been recognised as Marmaduke but for the well-known voice. When the movements of the donkey allowed the face to be seen by glimpses the thick coating of black mud upon it rendered the features indistinguishable. And the battered tile stuck on the back of the unfortunate rider's head did not look much like the headgear of the heir to millions.

The sight was so utterly ridiculous that some of the Saints could not help grinning. The Grammarians, catching sight of the crowd in the gateway, gave a yell of defiance. Monk rushed the donkey right up to the gates and gave him a smack that sent him clattering through the crowd, and the Saints, taken by surprise as they were by the whole occurrence, slithered to right and left, and the donkey and his burden tore through. That was just what Monk wanted—to send Marmaduke into the quadrangle and display his plight to all St. Jim's.

But Tom Merry and his chums knew as well as Monk did what a terrible blow that would be to their prestige.

In a moment Tom Merry recovered himself.

"Catch the moko—quick!"

The Terrible Three made a rush at the donkey. Figgins and Kerr were after them like a shot. Under ordinary circumstances, the catching of Neddy was a simple matter; but the rapid run and the wild yells of the Grammarians had startled Neddy almost out of his asinine wits, and for once in his career he was shy and skittish. He ran and dodged and trotted away at a pace the boys could hardly equal right towards the School House.

Tom Merry and his companions chased the donkey desperately. Marmaduke, terribly jolted in his uneasy position, was calling for help.

Blake and some of the Co. had issued from the gates to attack the Grammarians. But Frank Monk and his friends, as they were outnumbered, had retreated promptly, quite satisfied with the success of the jape. They tore off to the Grammar School to spread the tale and throw their school-fellows into hysterics with it. Blake and the rest hurried in at the gate, and a woeful sight met their gaze.

The donkey, with Marmaduke still sitting face to the tail, was careering wildly round the quadrangle. Tom Merry and half a dozen juniors were chasing him.

"Catch him!" shouted Blake. "Why don't you catch him?"

"Why don't you?" bawled Lowther. "It's more in your line. Talk to him in his own language. You can do it!"

"Head him off!"

"Collar him!"

"Now's your chance!"

"We shall have the Head out soon."

If the Head had been stone deaf he must have heard the terrific din. As a matter of fact, he was already looking out of his study window in wonder and annoyance. Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, came out, looking very exasperated, and Mr. Ratcliff, the head of the New House, put his head out of the door with a scowl upon his thin, sour face. The two Housemasters took the scene in different ways. Mr. Ratcliff's scowl grew blacker, while Mr. Railton, of the School House, burst into an involuntary laugh.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "What can this mean? Who can that strange-looking person be? Stop that donkey immediately, boys!"

"We're trying to, sir."

"Stop that brute!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff, coming out of the New House. "Do you hear? Who has dared to play this rascally trick? Stop that brute at once!"

The boys tried to stop him. But Neddy still eluded them in spite of their efforts.

Mr. Ratcliff, aflame with anger, rushed forth to stop the careering donkey himself. He planted himself in Neddy's path, and made a valiant clutch at him. What happened next he never quite knew. Something butted him somewhere, he thought, but it was not quite clear. What was clear was that he was sitting down in the quadrangle in a very dazed condition without knowing how he got there.

"Stop him, Kildare!"

Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, had come off the football field in his playing garb, and was running a neck-and-neck race with Neddy. He got a grip at last on Neddy's head, and by sheer force brought him to a halt. Then a crowd of boys closed up round the captured donkey, and he was easily secured.

Neddy stood panting and gasping and blowing and trembling in every limb.

Mr. Ratcliff, looking very dusty and ill-tempered, reached the spot. Kildare was soothing the frightened donkey, and Tom Merry and Blake were trying to unfasten Marmaduke. But that was not easy. The Grammarians had well secured their prisoner.

"What does this mean?" shouted Mr. Ratcliff. "Who are you, sir? How dare you come into the quadrangle of this college?"

It was a ridiculous question, for it was plain enough that Marmaduke had not come into the quad in that state of his own accord. But Mr. Ratcliff was too angry to be reasonable. Indeed, he seldom was reasonable.

"I'm Marmaduke Smythe—"

"Smythe! Do you mean to say that you are the boy who was coming to this school, whose boxes arrived half an hour ago? How dare you come here like this?"

"Do you think I could help it?" hooted Marmaduke.

"Don't address me like that! How came you in this state?"

"I was collared by a lot of beastly ruffians as I was coming to the school. They took me out of the hack and tied me up on the donkey."

"Infamous!" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff, his wrath taking a new direction. "Who were the rascals? Could you identify the dastardly scoundrels?"

"Yes, of course I could! I—"

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"It seems to me that this is some boyish joke," said Mr. Railton, coming up. "It is a rough sort of joke, but I think a mistake would be made in regarding it as an outrage."

Mr. Ratcliff looked at him coldly. There was no love lost between the two Housemasters of St. Jim's.

"I think it is an outrage!" said the New House master tartly. "If Smythe can give the names of the ruffians their punishment shall be secured."

"I can give you their names— Ow, ow, ow!"

"What do you mean by making those ridiculous noises, Smythe?"

"Tom Merry pinched me, sir."

"Take more care in unfastening that cord, Merry, not to hurt Smythe. Is it very tight?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry demurely.

"Now, Smythe, give me the names of the authors of this dastardly outrage!" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff. "They shall be found out and severely punished. Were they village boys?"

"No, sir; they belonged to the— Ow, ow, ow!"

"Is that impertinence, Smythe?" asked Mr. Ratcliff sternly.

"No, sir; that cord pinched me again!"

"Will you be more careful, Merry?"

"Yes, sir. I was very careful, sir—very careful indeed."

"Then, as you are so clumsy, step aside, and let Figgins unfasten Smythe. Now, Smythe, you were telling me—"

"Yes, sir. The brutes belonged to the— Oh, my eye! Oh!"

"Smythe!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. Mr. Railton concealed a smile.

"I couldn't help it, sir," mumbled Marmaduke. "That cord Figgins is unfastening pinched my leg horribly. It felt like a finger and thumb gripping my calf."

"Figgins, be more careful."

"I can't be more careful than I am, sir."

"Then leave it to Blake. Blake, unfasten that cord, please—"

"Pray what does this mean?"

It was the voice of the Head. The crowd parted respectfully for the Head of St. Jim's. He was looking very grave.

"This is Smythe, sir," said Mr. Ratcliff. "He has been tied up in this manner by some roughts, whose names he can tell us. I think—"

"Allow me," said Mr. Railton, quietly but firmly. "I think this is another outcome, sir, of the rivalry between this school and another in the neighbourhood, and that inquiry into the matter would lead to no good."

Dr. Holmes understood. He nodded his head slowly.

"I quite comprehend, Mr. Railton. I really think that this is carrying a jest much too far, but I know that my boys have not been blameless in the matter—and, in fact, have—have really—"

"Licked the Grammarians lots of times, sir," suggested Tom Merry.

"Ahem! I do not want to cause any ill-feeling between the schools. Unless, therefore, Smythe himself complains of ill-usage I shall not—"

Mr. Ratcliff bit his lip.

"But I do com—" began Marmaduke hotly. "O-o-oh!" It was a wail of anguish. "Someone stuck a pin in me!"

"Indeed," said the Head, who saw a pin in Blake's hand but affected to see nothing, and he looked very coldly at Marmaduke—"indeed, Smythe! Figgins, you had better undo Smythe and take him to the New House. He is to share your study there, as when he was previously at this school. Let him be cleaned as soon as possible. He is in a shocking state. If he then wishes to complain to me of the treatment he has received, he can come to my study."

"Certainly, sir."

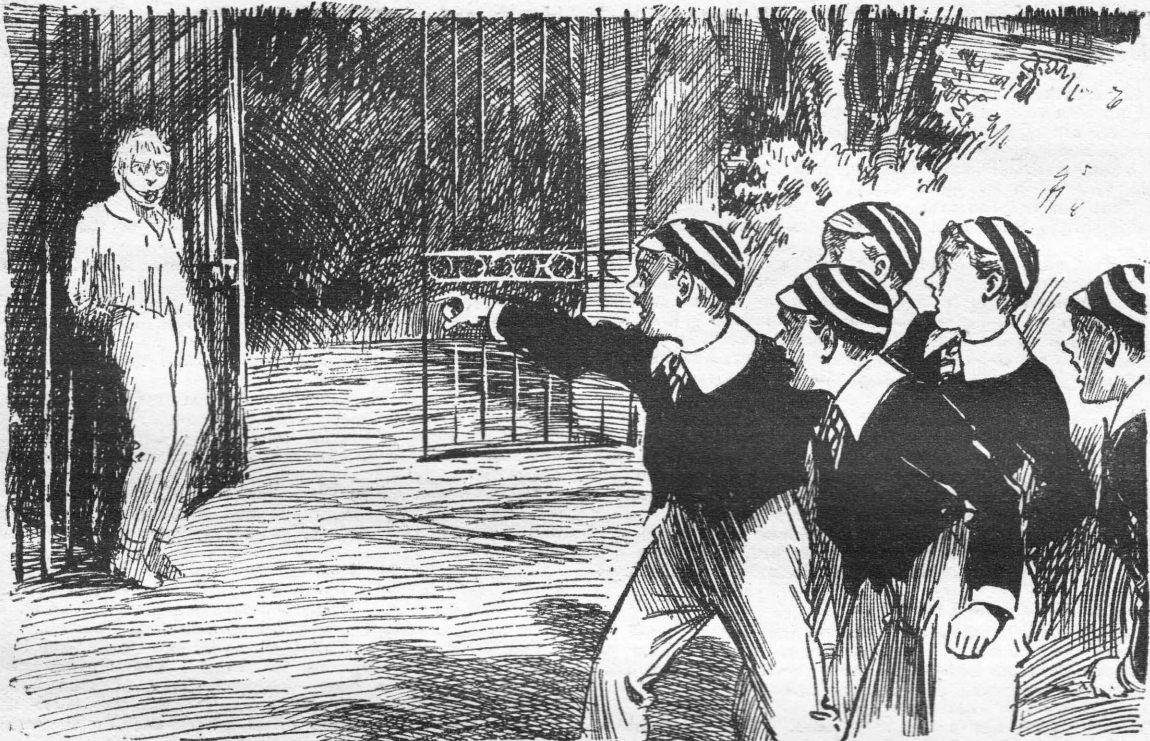
Kildare took out his pocket-knife and cut Marmaduke loose. The Head, with a sign to the two Housemasters to accompany him, left the spot. Mr. Ratcliff went very unwillingly. Marmaduke was jerked off the donkey's back. And while a couple of juniors rode Neddy away to take him back to his native pastures, Figgins & Co. escorted Marmaduke into the New House. They shoved him into a bath-room, and told him to clean himself, and when he had done so to come to the study—which Marmaduke did. He came into Figg's study ten minutes later, looking much more presentable, and he was greeted with a chilling silence and stony stares.

CHAPTER 5.

Rivals at Grips:

BLAKE and his three chums looked into Tom Merry's study in the School House. The Terrible Three had taken off their overcoats, and had just decided to go over to the New House to see Figgins, when the chums of Study No. 6 looked in.

"Hallo!" said Blake. "We'll get off to Rylcombe. Come along!"



"Look—look!" exclaimed Gore. "There's something there!" A figure of ghostly whiteness could be seen close up against the open gate, and not a sound or movement came from it. "My hat!" muttered Tom Merry. "What is it?"

"Eh?" said the Terrible Three simultaneously.
 "I said 'Come along,'" said Blake. "Are you deaf all of a sudden?"

"Yes, you said 'Come along' and it was like your cheek!"

"Cheek! What do you mean? Ain't I your leader, and isn't it my place to give orders?" Blake demanded rather excitedly.

"No, you're not our leader, and it's not your place to give orders," answered Lowther categorically. "You know the articles of agreement."

"Of course I do. Each chap takes command for one day—"

"Unless he proves himself incapable, and then he gets the order of the kick," said Manners. "That's the agreement, Blake."

Blake turned red.

"Do you mean to say that I—"

"Certainly," said Tom Merry. "We agreed that a defeat was to be accounted a proof of incapacity to lead, and haven't we been defeated by the Grammarians since you started in life as a general?"

"Well," said Blake, containing his wrath with a great effort, "I think you're a lot of silly asses, but I'm not going to kick against the rules. We'll see what Figgins says. Come on, and let's get to the New House."

The seven juniors crossed the quadrangle. Many glances, more or less hostile, were cast at them by the New House juniors as they entered the rival building. But they were not interfered with. When the Terrible Three were allied with Study No. 6 they made too strong a team to be lightly tackled.

Tom Merry announced his arrival by a thump on Figgins' door, and Blake backed it up with a kick, with the result that the door, which was on the latch, flew violently open.

"Sorry!" said Tom Merry, with his sunny smile, as he came in.

"I suppose you've come to decide who's to be leader," said Figgins.

"Yaaa, wathah!"

"You remember the rules of the Co., Figgy?" said Tom Merry. "A defeat counts as a proof of bad generalship, and a bad general is chucked out on the spot. We're agreed that Blake gets the order of the push. Are you?"

"Rather!" said Figgins & Co., with one voice.

"Oh, very well!" said Blake, with a sniff. "I don't mind. Let's get a new chief, and if I don't make him toe the line you can use my napper for a football."

"We'd better draw lots again," said Digby. "It's hard cheese on Blake, but the game's the game."

"I'll write out the slips," said Blake.

The names, as before, were put into the bag, and one was drawn. The name upon the lucky slip was Montague Lowther.

Lowther swelled visibly.

"Any orders?" asked Blake, with mock humility.

"Yes," said Lowther, with his nose in the air. "All of you be ready to come out in a quarter of an hour, and mind you're not late. Meet me at the School House steps."

"What's the game?"

"I'll tell you when the time comes," said Lowther.

"We're going on the warpath, that's all. Just you turn up. You know what will happen to your nose if you're late, Blake!"

And the meeting in Figgins' study broke up.

Lowther, as he came down the steps of the School House a quarter of an hour later, was accompanied by Tom Merry and Manners, and he found Study No. 6 and Figgins & Co. waiting for him.

"Glad to see you all here," said Lowther. "Come along!"

"Whither bound?" asked Digby.

"Follow your leader!" said Lowther haughtily.

They followed their leader. Lowther led the way out of the school gates, and took the road to Rylcombe.

"But what's the programme?" demanded Tom Merry.

The great chief of the Co. condescended to explain.

"We're going to get our own back on those rotters!" he said. "Although Marmaduke isn't admitted to the Co., still he's one of us, and that joke was one in the eye to all of us. We're going to get our own back."

"Yes, but how? We all want to do that," said Blake.

"But what's the wheeze?"

"We shall find them at the tuckshop."

"We may find twenty of them!"

"If you're afraid of the Grammar School cads, Blake—"

"Who says I'm afraid?" demanded Blake, looking warlike.

"Don't answer me back! I'm chief of this Co., and I'm going to maintain discipline," said Lowther, with a grin.

"If I have any insubordination, there's a dot on the boko waiting for the insubordinator—"

"For the—the what?" howled Blake.

"The insubordinator!" said Lowther defiantly. "I dare say you've never heard that word?"

"You're right—I haven't, and nor has anyone else!"

"Well, you kids in the Fourth Form have a lot to learn."

"More than you bounders in the Shell can teach us, I think!"

The juniors marched on, and soon came in sight of Rylcombe. There was a frown of thought upon the brow of Monty Lowther. Blake murmured to Herries that the chief had no idea of what to do, and was only leading them on with an air of solemnity to keep up appearances. And Herries nodded.

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, who had overheard the remark. "You are quite wight, Blake. In my opinion, Lowthah has not the faintest idea of the best thing to do, and is simply leading us on a wild-goose chase, don't you know."

Monty Lowther pretended not to hear the remark. He walked straight on towards the village tuckshop. Some of the Grammarians were pretty certain to be encountered there on a half-holiday; but whether Lowther had any definite plan in his mind was a secret. Probably he had none; but, having assumed the post of leader, he could not allow his term of generalship to pass without being signalised in some way.

They came in sight of the tuckshop, and Lowther grinned with satisfaction. Monk, Lane, and Carboy, the heroes of the Grammar School, were leaning against the big tree outside, talking, and not another Grammarian was in sight.

Lowther turned a triumphant glance upon his followers.

"Well, what do you say now?" he exclaimed.

"You didn't know they were here alone," said Blake.

"Rats! Here they are, and here we are, and we've got them in a cleft stick. We'll make them sing small now! Surround 'em!"

The St. Jim's juniors rushed on.

The Grammarian trio saw them coming, but betrayed no symptoms of alarm. Carboy picked up his glass of lemonade from the little table under the tree and sipped it. Monk went on eating chocolate creams.

Tom Merry was looking suspicious.

"Looks to me like a trap!" he said. "Do you think it possible—"

He paused.

"Think what's possible?" asked Blake.

"Well, it looks suspicious. I'm not leader, but if I were, I should suspect that they had had a scout out on the road, and knew we were coming, and—"

"And what?" demanded Lowther.

"And laid a little trap for us," said Tom Merry. "That's what it looks like to me. Those three bounders wouldn't be so jolly cool about it if they hadn't help near."

"Oh, rats!" said Lowther, unwilling, like most leaders, to confess that an inferior officer saw things more clearly than he did. "Rats to all that! Come on!"

The Co. obeyed. With a rush they came under the trees and surrounded the Grammarians. Monk nodded to them coolly.

"Good-afternoon!" he said. "Nice weather for this time of the year, isn't it? How's that old workhouse you call a school getting on?"

"Collar them!" shouted Lowther.

"Hallo! Got a new leader? My word, if you're not off! What have they given you the order of the boot for, Tom Merry? Here, hands off! Rescue!"

"Rescue!" yelled Lane and Carboy.

In a moment the door of the tuckshop was crammed with boys in Grammar School caps, pouring out to the rescue, under the leadership of Gordon Gay.

Tom Merry's suspicions had been well-founded.

It was a trap, and Monty Lowther had led them right into it in a way that the Grammarians must have regarded as extremely obliging.

Grammarians poured out of the tuckshop in a crowd. They had been lying low there; but, now that they showed themselves, their numbers were overwhelming.

In a few seconds twenty youths were rushing at the Saints, and Monty Lowther realised his mistake, and gave the order for retreat.

But it was too late!

Monk, Lane, and Carboy each seized a foe and Lowther himself, with Blake and Figgins, struggled in the grasp of the Grammarians. Then came the Grammarian rush, and the rest of the St. Jim's juniors were simply swept away.

Tom Merry stood his ground nobly, hitting out right and left, and several Grammar School juniors went rolling over; but he could not stem the tide of such odds.

The Saints were scattered like chaff, and each of them as he reeled or ran was pursued by two or three yelling Grammarians.

Figgins tore himself loose from Carboy, and ran, and Blake escaped from Lane. They fought their way through the Grammarians, who would have recaptured them. But Monty Lowther was not so lucky. Monk would not let

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him go, and several pairs of hands came to his aid. The unfortunate leader of the Co. was a prisoner!

"Keep him safe!" chuckled Monk. "He's their giddy leader and we'll make an example of him! Mind he doesn't get away. Line up! Here come those fellows again!"

The defeated and rough-handed Co. had rallied some distance down the village street. Dusty, dishevelled, defeated, they turned upon their pursuers. The Grammarians promptly fell back towards the tuckshop.

Tom Merry glanced round upon the defeated band. He noted the absence of Lowther. Only one of the Co. was missing, and that one was the leader.

"They've got Monty!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Come on! We've got to rescue him!"

Tom Merry, at this crisis, naturally dropped back again into his old position as leader of the Co. The juniors had no thought of disputing his authority then. He was the leader they needed at that moment, and they would have followed him anywhere.

Back they dashed, the nine of them, ready to try their fortune a second time. Several Grammarians who had ventured recklessly too far went flying, knocked aside like ninepins, and the St. Jim's juniors rushed in to the fray again.

But they met double their number of Grammarians, lined up and ready for them. Behind that line lay Lowther, with a couple of Grammarians sitting on him to keep him safe.

Gallantly the St. Jim's party attacked. But it was in vain. The odds were too great. Back they reeled, and the rush was stopped. Then the Grammarians advanced in their turn, and the Co. was driven helplessly back.

Tom Merry snapped his teeth as he saw Monk and Lane hustle Lowther into the tuckshop. The Grammarians crowded round the door, yelling defiance at Tom Merry & Co., and ready to repel a fresh rush. But there was less chance than ever now of an attack proving successful, and the exhausted juniors gathered on the opposite side of the street to consult as to what had better be done.

CHAPTER 6.

Monty Lowther Gives In!

FRANK MONK was laughing almost hysterically as he dragged Lowther into the tuckshop, aided by Gay and Carboy.

As many of the Grammarians as the shop would hold followed, the rest blocking up the doorway.

Mother Murphy looked on from behind her counter in amazement and alarm. Frank Monk hastened to reassure her.

"Don't be alarmed, Mother Murphy," he said. "It's only a little game. We haven't come to raid the tommy, you know. There's nothing to be worried about. You'd better go back into your little parlour. Now, Lowther, here you are!"

"Rats!" said Lowther, shaking himself free, and facing the Grammarians. He had certainly fallen into a very easy trap; but, whether he was a good general or not, he had plenty of coolness and pluck. "Rats to you! Go and eat coke!"

Frank Monk laughed.

"You're a prisoner. I understand that you're leader of that precious gang now. Is that the case, my pippin?"

"What if it is?"

"I'm going to explain. How would you like to be loaded up in an egg-box, and sent back to St. Jim's by carrier, this side up, with care?"

"You—you wouldn't dare—"

"That's all you know! But it's possible we may let you off. You're our prisoner, and if you're good we may be kind enough to hold you to ransom."

Lowther stared at the grinning faces round him.

"You—you don't mean to say that you want tin?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No, we haven't come to that yet. We don't mean that kind of ransom. You've got to buy yourself off, though, all the same, or else we shall put you through something that will turn your eyebrows grey. Suppose, for instance, we were to mop your head into that box of eggs—all warranted old and wheezy?"

Monty Lowther shuddered at the suggestion.

"Well, what do you want?" he said. "I know when I've had enough, and I give you best, if that will satisfy you."

"But it won't!" grinned Monk. "Not by long chalks! Do you remember a certain occasion, a long time ago, when Tom Merry & Co. had us cornered by the river, and made us sign a document of surrender?"

Lowther grinned and nodded.

"If you think I'm going to sign anything of that sort

you're mistaken!" he said. "I bar that! You can do what you like, but I won't—and that's flat!"

"I fancy we'd make you if we wanted to," said Carboy.

"But we don't," said Monk. "That wouldn't be any good from Lowther without the signature from all the rest, and we haven't got them here. By the way, what are they doing?"

"Talking on the other side of the street," said Lane from the door.

"Well, they can keep that up as long as they like!" grinned Monk. "That won't hurt anybody. They can't get at us here. Now, you, Lowther, you remember that document? I hear that after you got it there was a row in the Co. about who should have it, and it was torn into three and you divided it."

"Yes, Figgins & Co. had one bit; Blake had another bit; and we had the third!" grinned Lowther. "We've got them stuck up in our study, too."

"I thought so. Well, my buck, that's your ransom—your share of the paper. We're on the warpath, you see, to get that document back. A third part of it to start with isn't so bad. Will you hand it over?"

"Can't! It's stuck up in the study at St. Jim's."

"I didn't suppose you had it about you. We'll take your word to send it by post as soon as you get back to the school. You see, we trust you."

"I'm not going to do anything of the sort."

"Very well! Mother Murphy, what is the price of those eggs?"

"Fourteen a shilling, Master Monk."

"Rats! I mean, how much for the whole box? Make it as reasonable as you can, for they won't last long!"

Mother Murphy made a rapid calculation.

"You can have the whole box for six shillings, young gentlemen," she said, "and I will send them up to the school for you."

"Ha, ha, ha! We don't want them up at the school. To judge by that broken one, they're too whiffy. I'm not sure that I shall want them at all. It depends on this bounder. Lowther, are you going to ransom yourself with that document, or are you not?"

"It belongs to Tom Merry and Manners as much as to me, and they wouldn't agree," said Lowther, who quite understood the meaning of the negotiations for the eggs.

"We'll let you call to them if you like."

"Oh, rot! Of course, they would leave it to me."

"I thought so. Are we to have that document?"

"No!" shouted Lowther, and he made a wild rush for the door.

The Grammarians closed round him, and he was pinned up in a moment.

"Dub up, kids!" said Monk. "We've got to make up six shillings for Mother Murphy between us. A few pence each will do the trick."

"My dear young gentlemen—"

"Here you are, Mother Murphy! There's your six bob, and now the eggs are ours. Collar him by the back of the neck, kids, and let him have it."

"Stop!" yelled Lowther, struggling furiously. "Stop! I—"

"Are you going to pay your ransom?"

"No!" Lowther shouted. "No, I won't! I'll— O-o-o-ooch!"

At a sign from Frank Monk, the youngsters who were holding Lowther jammed his face down into the box of eggs.

It came up again, smothered! And from the smell that arose from the egg-box it was very evident that those eggs had seen better days, and seen them some time ago.

"Groooo—ooooch!"

Such was the remark Lowther made. It was very unintelligible, but his meaning was clear. He didn't like the eggs.

"Now, then," said Monk, "are you going to pay your ransom?"

"No!" spluttered Lowther. "No, I'm not! I— Oh, oh! Grooo! Don't! I'll send you the beastly thing by post to-night, I can't stand that again!"

"Honour bright?"

"Yes, confound you! Oh, I shall never get rid of this horrid niff! Beasts! Lemme go! Groooogh! Let me get out!"

"Here they come!" shouted Lane. "Look out!"

"Let them come!" grinned Monk. "Here's their giddy leader. They can have him now!"

The Grammarians parted to allow Monty Lowther to pass them. They gave him plenty of room, not from politeness, but out of respect for the great strength of the eggs with which his face was plastered.

Lowther, dabbing at the sticky stuff with his handkerchief, and crimson with rage, strode to the door of the tuckshop

(Continued on page 12.)



Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). Fine footballs are awarded every week for the two best jokes received and a half-a-crown is paid for every other joke that appears in this column.

BAIT FOR THE BOY!

Golfer (to little boy who has been following him): "Well, my little man, are you learning how to play golf from me?"
 Boy: "No, guv'nor, I'm going fishing, and I'm waiting for you to dig up a few more worms!"
 A football has been awarded to C. Hill, School Lane, Barkby, Leics.

NO JOKE.

Comedian: "How did my joke get across?"
 Critic: "I fancy it must have been smuggled across by William the Conqueror!"
 A football has been awarded to R. Pearce, 17, Crescent Road, Plumstead, London, S.E.18.

WELL NAMED.

Unwanted Guest: "That's a strange clock you have in the hall."
 Host: "Yes, we call it 'The Guest'."
 Unwanted Guest: "Why?"
 Host: "It won't go!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to F. Faulks, 96, Robin Hood Chase, Nottingham.

A DIFFERENT MATTER.

Joe: "Percy is going crazy over his new car."
 Jim: "That's strange—every time I've seen him he's been going crazy under it!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to F. Buxton, 30, Oakwood Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, 11.

BITTER MEDICINE.

Bill: "So the specialist put restrictions on you, did he? Which of the things he made you give up do you miss most?"
 Sam: "The two guineas he charged me!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Howell, 24, Milson Road, W. Kensington, London, W.14.

NEEDLE(SS)!

"No," said the shopkeeper, "we can't take a gramophone back after a customer has had it a year. Anyway, what's the matter with it?"
 "Weel," answered the Scot, "the needle broke last night!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Johnson, 84, Camberwell Road, London, S.E.5.

CHEQUEMATE.

"Excuse me, sir," said the bank cashier, "but what is your name?"
 "Hang it," answered the client brusquely, "can't you see my signature on the cheque?"
 "Yes, that's why I asked!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to S. Westwood, 18, Engine Lane, Lye, nr. Stourbridge, Worcs.

TRY, TRY AGAIN.

Angry Sergeant: "You be a sniper? You've nearly killed me twice with your wild firing!"
 Recruit: "Aw, give me another chance, sir!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Wallace, Lavender Cottage, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.

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and passed out, followed by a yell of laughter from the Grammarians, who were almost in hysterics.

Tom Merry & Co. had indeed made a rush towards the tuckshop, determined not to stand idle while their leader was in the enemy's hands, though they could not hope to effect his rescue.

They had almost reached the door when Monty Lowther came staggering out, dabbing at his face, and only half recognisable.

They halted and stared at him. Blake sniffed. Manners sniffed. They all sniffed. Monty Lowther joined them, and they drew away from him.

"Hallo, they've given him an egg-bath!" said Blake. "Don't come too close, Lowther; you are not nice!"

"Nice lot you are, to leave a chap in the enemy's hands!"

"We did our best," said Tom Merry. "We couldn't do much against such odds, and we've all got something to show for our pains."

"Yaas, wathah! I have a gweat, painful bump on my head, deah boys, and it weally twoubles me vevy much. I am extremely doubtful whethah my silk hat will sit stwaight till that feahful bump has gone away."

"Well, they've let you off lightly," said Figgins. "They might have rolled you in the eggs, you know. Did they make you pay for 'em?"

"No," growled Lowther. "And they'd have done worse if I hadn't caved in."

"Here, come along!" said Herries. "They're coming out! We've had enough fighting for one afternoon!"

And the St. Jim's juniors drew off, leaving the Grammarians in possession of the field of battle, and followed by hoots and catcalls from the victorious foe.

"What do you mean by caving in?" asked Tom Merry. "How did you get off?"

"I've agreed to the ransom they've fixed."

"The what?" ejaculated the astonished Co.

"They knew about that precious document of theirs being divided into three and stuck up in the studies at St. Jim's. Our third of it—"

"You don't mean to say they had the cheek to ask for that!" said Tom Merry, in astonishment.

"Yes, they had," said Lowther. "And I promised to send it by post to-night. That's the ransom."

"You couldn't promise to give away our property!" said Manners rather excitedly. "Like your cheek! We're not going to give it up!"

"It's rather hard cheese on us," Tom Merry remarked.

"Oh, rats!" said Lowther. "Perhaps you'll lead better when your turn comes."

"I hope so," said D'Arcy. "He weally could not lead worse—that is one beastly comfort, you know. I have a feahful bump on my head—"

"We must stand by what Lowther has promised," said Tom Merry. "No good growling, Manners, old chap. The word of one binds all three. That's the old rule, you know."

"Oh, yes, I know!" said Manners. "But— Well, Lowther's not leader any longer, thank goodness. I think anybody would soon get fed-up with his generalship. The Grammar School cads can have that card, for all I care. After all, two-thirds of it will remain at St. Jim's—enough to show anybody and everybody that we really did lick them hollow that time."

"And we'll take care of our bit," Blake remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And we ours," grinned Figgins. "Let's get back to the school and clean up. I feel as if I have been used for a duster."

Most of the juniors felt the same. They were glad to return to St. Jim's, and they left the Grammarians victorious for the second time since the new campaign had opened.

That evening the share of the precious document belonging to the Terrible Three was posted to Frank Monk at the Rylcombe Grammar School, to the huge delight of the Grammarians when they received it.

CHAPTER 7.

Marmaduke Asks For It!

FIGGINS & CO. sat in their study at the New House at St. Jim's.

Twenty-four hours had elapsed since the encounter with the Grammarians, and as the dusk of evening spread once more over the quadrangle at the old school Figgins put on the light in the study and sat down at the table again.

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn were working. Marmaduke was in the study, sitting a little apart from Figgins & Co., and doing his prep. In the old days he had been a member of the Co., but those days were gone. Marmaduke was in disgrace for attempting to sneak on the Grammarians.

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Matters were rather uncomfortable in the usually cheery study.

Figgins & Co. had looked forward very keenly to the return of Marmaduke, and their disappointment was in proportion to their anticipation.

Marmaduke felt the coldness of the Co. towards him, though the three juniors were scrupulously polite and as kind as they could be.

They didn't dislike Marmaduke, but he was impossible! They didn't want to hurt his feelings, but the magic circle of the Co. was closed to him.

But Marmaduke's obstinacy was as strong as ever, and it was tinged with sullenness. He would not admit himself to be in the wrong, although old associations were already waking old ideas in his mind, and he realised how wrong he had been. Marmaduke had not quite learned his lesson yet.

Figgins put his books away at last with a sigh of relief. "That job's jobbed!" he remarked. "How are you getting on, kids?"

"Nearly done," said Kerr, without looking up.

"Done!" grunted Fatty Wynn. "Where are the chest-nuts? I'll roast 'em while you finish, Scotty. You can lend a hand, Figgy."

"Right you are! I say, Smythe, are you getting on all right?"

He had always been Marmaduke or Marmy, but now he was Smythe, and the change of appellation showed how widely he was estranged from Figgins & Co.

"I'm getting on all right!" he said sulkily.

"I'll help you if you like, you know."

"I don't want you to."

Figgins sniffed. He helped Fatty Wynn roast the chest-nuts at the cheerful fire in the grate, and when Kerr had finished his work they ate them. Marmaduke was asked to join in, but he declined, and, having at last put his books away, he left the study.

Figgins wrinkled his brows a little as the study door closed behind the heir to millions.

"Quite his old self," he remarked. "I can't stand that much longer, I'm afraid. Yet he has the makings of a decent chap in him, if he wasn't so spoiled. I'm sorry. But to come to business. What about the Grammar School chaps?"

"We haven't elected a new leader yet," remarked Kerr. "I should think it is time the post came to one of us. Have you an idea?"

Figgins shook his head.

"Not the ghost of one yet. I think we ought to give the Grammarians another football match; but licking them on the football field isn't everything. I hear that their team is a great deal stronger than it was last time, and, naturally, they will play on the home ground, which will make things easier for them. But I suppose we should lick them."

"Of course we should," said Fatty Wynn; "but that isn't everything. The kind of wheeze I should like to work off on them would be collaring their grub some time—as we've often done to the School House kids."

"Yes," said Figgins, with a sniff, "that's about your mark—always grub! Let's take a turn in the quadrangle and see if we can think of something."

The three New House juniors went out, and in the dusk they saw Marmaduke Smythe, with his coat on, going down to the gates. Locking-up was not yet, and it was clear that Marmaduke was going out. Figgins called after him:

"Hallo, Marmy! Where are you going?"

"Out!" remarked Marmaduke, without turning his head.

And he walked on.

Figgins wrinkled his brows.

"The ass!" he muttered. "He's in a sulky temper, and he's going out alone. If he falls in with the Grammar School cads he'll have a lively time, and serve him right!"

Figgins & Co. went into the gym. They found Study No. 6 and the Terrible Three there. The juniors indulged in a little exercise, and Figgins was just showing what he could do on a horizontal bar when there was a buzz in the gym.

"Look there!"

"What's the matter with Taggles?"

The juniors turned towards the door, whither every eye was directed. Taggles, the school porter, was looking in from the gloom, and the face of Taggles was as pale as a sheet, and his eyes seemed to be starting from his head.

Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, ran towards him. Others crowded round, Tom Merry among the first, eager to know what was the matter.

"What is it, Taggles?" asked Kildare. "Has anything happened?"

"The—the-g-g-gh—"

"What is he talking about?" exclaimed Monteith, the head prefect of the New House. "He's frightened out of his wits, I think. Has he been drinking?"

(Continued on page 14.)

STEP INTO THE OFFICE FOR MORE NOTES FROM—



Let the Editor be your pal! Write to him to-day, addressing your letters: The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, chums!—Now that our ripping new feature, "Tom Merry's Weekly," is going strong, I should like to hear your opinions of it. As I have said before, many readers have been asking for this feature, so I feel firmly convinced that, so bright and interesting is the St. Jim's chums' paper, it will be no end popular. Don't forget, chums, drop me a line some time, and let me know what you think of the "Weekly," and other features of the GEM.

"WHAT PRICE VICTORY?"

Having read the grand St. Jim's yarn in this issue, you are all probably itching to get next week's story to see how matters pan out between Tom Merry & Co. and their rivals of the Grammar School. It cannot be said that the St. Jim's juniors have had much success under their new system of selecting a new leader every time the Grammarians score over them; in fact, they have had the unusual experience of being beaten all along the line. Nevertheless, in "What Price Victory?" the Saints stick to their system, and Tom Merry, who has always been the acknowledged leader of the junior school, is the next member of the Co. to get his turn to lead. Tom promptly gets busy on a daring scheme to wipe out in one fell swoop all the Grammarian victories—with what success you will discover in next Wednesday's sparkling story of fun, footer, and adventure.

"TREASURE ISLE!"

In the next gripping chapters of our great serial Nelson Lee and his companions get busy, too, in an attempt to spring a surprise on Doc Haynes and his mutinous gang, and rescue the St. Frank's juniors from captivity. So whatever you do, chums, don't miss reading about the further exciting developments on Tao-Tao Island.

There will, of course, be another snappy number of "Tom Merry's Weekly," our usual batch of readers' prize-winning jokes, and, lastly, your Editor will be with you once again on this page.

SOMETHING FOR YOU!

I've something really GOOD to pass on this week—news of the offer of a 1934 Model "James" MOTOR-CYCLE as First Prize in a FREE Competition in our companion paper, "Modern Boy."

Of course YOU would like to have a shot at winning that topping prize. Well, get this week's "Modern Boy" (dated week ending March 3rd), now on sale, price 2d. That issue contains the first

TWO sets of puzzle-pictures, and you can start on the winning trail right away.

Twenty-four "Ingersoll" MICKEY MOUSE WRIST-WATCHES are being offered as Consolation Prizes! Get "Modern Boy" to-day!

A GIANT DOG.

William Henderson, of Fulham, writes to ask me what is the largest dog. Well, William, I should say that the answer is a St. Bernard, though it may rather depend on whether you mean largest in height, length, or weight. At any rate, there was a St. Bernard in America which stood eight feet high on its hind legs and weighed sixteen stone! I should think that that answers your question fairly well, but if any reader knows of a bigger dog than that I shall be very pleased to hear about it.

DUNCE.

George Goodson, of Newcastle, wants to know the origin of the word "dunce." It so happens that the word has a very interesting origin, as it is derived from the name of an extremely clever man! The man was John Duns Scotus, who is said to have been the most learned man of his day. He was born in 1265 and died in 1308. The reason that the word "dunce" was taken from his name was that Scotus started a school of learning, but many people regarded his new methods as being foolish, and consequently his name became associated with fools.

SOME PET!

Queenie is a lioness, and until recently she lived in a Bootle garage. Now the police have decided that she is not safe there and must be removed. Mr. Quayle, the owner of the lioness, bought her with the intention of having her trained for a performing troupe. However, Queenie became something of a pet with the family, and especially with Mr. Quayle's thirteen-year-old son, who used to feed the animal every day. Queenie was a nice, quiet, lady-like creature, and the boy used to put his hands through the bars of the cage and roll her over on to her back and play with her. Personally, I shall stick to white mice.

HARD LUCK!

For a year eight Welsh miners had been saving all the money they could, with one great end in view. What they wanted to do was to hire an aeroplane and fly to Edinburgh to see the Rugby match between Scotland and Wales at Murrayfield. All over Wales the great ambition of these eight men was known, and special arrangements had been made for their reception in Edinburgh. They

were to be welcomed by thousands of Welsh Rugby fans, and a song, specially composed for the occasion, was to be sung.

The great day arrived and the miners were almost national heroes. They were almost more important than the match itself. The plane took off and set out for Edinburgh, but—it ran into fog! By the time Stafford was reached the fog was so thick that the pilot was forced to turn back. He landed at Bristol and the miners then decided to fly to Portsmouth to see the Soccer match against Sheffield United. Are they downhearted? No! They are already saving up for the hire of an aeroplane to take them to Dublin for next year's match with Ireland!

FLYING FEATS.

Tom Dawson, of Bexleyheath, wants to know quite a lot of things. They are all about flying, and all concerned with the first time certain flights were made. Well, Tom, here are the answers. The first flight across the Channel was made by Louis Bleriot in 1909. The first Schneider Trophy race was in 1913, and was won by a Frenchman named Maurice Prevost. 1919 was a very big year in aviation, as it saw the first flight from England to Australia. This was done by Sir Ross Smith and Sir Keith Smith. Later in the same year the first air crossing of the Atlantic was made by the British airship R34, and later still came the great triumph when Alcock and Brown flew the Atlantic in an aeroplane, from West to East. They were both made Knights of the British Empire for this wonderful flight. And that, I think, Tom, answers all your questions.

AIR LUCK.

Luck plays such a big part in the hazards of an airman's life that perhaps it is not surprising that many pilots carry lucky charms. But it amazed me to hear from an airman-friend the other day what strange objects are sometimes carried by pilots because of their luck-bringing properties. My friend told me that one pilot in his squadron during Great War flying days pinned his faith in a sack of bricks carried aboard his plane; another never "went aloft" without his walking-stick; while a third took a pet cage bird with him on all dangerous missions.

The skipper of the giant German flying-boat, Do.X, is also a believer in mascots. His particular one, which is hung on the wall of his cabin on the Do.X, is a horse-shoe supposed to have been shed by a British cavalry charger at Mons, in 1914.

GREAT SNAKES!

It's only a few months since the world was startled by the first news of the Loch Ness monster, the gigantic prehistoric amphibian which many people have since sworn they have seen in the Scottish loch. And now comes word of a rival monster—a sixty-five feet sea serpent which two officers of the Cunard liner Mauretania claim to have seen during a cruise in the Caribbean Sea.

These officers set down a description of the serpent in the ship's log, a book in which everything of importance that takes place during a sea voyage is recorded.

"Sighted sea monster," the entry runs. "The head, which was about six feet out of the water, was fully two feet across. About 45 feet of the body could be seen in curves on the surface, and, judging by the commotion, there was another 20 feet below. The monster was shiny jet-black in colour." These facts are accompanied by a rough ink drawing of the serpent.

THE EDITOR.

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Rival Ragers!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Speak out," said Kildare; "you're safe here, whatever it is."

The porter was casting frightened glances into the dusk behind him.

"What has happened?"

The captain of St. Jim's shook the porter by the shoulder. Taggles seemed to gain courage from the touch of his strong hand.

"It's — it's — the — g-g-g-ghost!" he stuttered.

"The what?" cried a dozen voices.

"What is the idiot talking about?" exclaimed Sefton. "He's gone balmy in the crumpet, I think! Give him a shake!"

"It's the g-g-ghost!" gasped Taggles. "I saw it when I went to close the gates—"

"Oh rats!" said Sefton. "He's drunk!" Kildare laughed.

"Better go and have another look, Taggles," he said. "I dare say you'll find the ghost gone by this time."

But Tom Merry & Co. had already slipped out of the gym. That Taggles had seen a ghost they did not, of course, believe, but they were curious to know what he had seen. And so were several other juniors who hurried along with them.

It was very dusky in the quad. As a matter of fact, Taggles had left the locking-up later than he should have done. It was quite dark at the gates. One side of the big bronze gate was closed, the other stood open. Gore was the first to come in sight of it, and he gave a jump as he caught a glimmer of white.

"Look! L-l-look!" he stammered. "There's—there's something!"

There certainly was something, and even Tom Merry was startled.

Dimly through the dusk a figure in glimmering white could be seen close up against the half-open gate, silent and motionless.

It seemed to be the form of a boy, but the head was bare, and the face and hair were of the same ghostly whiteness as the clothes.

Not a sound or a movement came from his lips.

"My hat!" muttered Tom Merry. "What is it?"

"It's some jape!" muttered Figgins. "Some bounder playing a practical jape on us. Shy something at it."

"Good wheeze!" exclaimed Gore, picking up a stone.

Tom Merry put out his hand to stop him, but too late. The stone flew, and struck hard on the body of the "ghost." It fell to the ground with a clink, and still no sound came from the figure.

The boys looked at each other in a rather scared way. The stone must have hurt the figure if it had been human, yet there had been no sound, hardly a movement.

"Here, I'm off!" muttered Mellish, and he scuttled away, followed by several others.

Tom Merry stood his ground, and, after a few moments' reflection, he advanced closer to the mysterious figure.

As he drew nearer he could see that it was a boy, and also that he was bound to the gate with a rope.

"Who are you?" exclaimed Tom Merry, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,359.



No. 3. Vol. 1 (New Series.)

Flying Squad Reports

THE "RED KNIGHT"

Unknown plane raided Study No. 10 and dropped leaflet "Beware the Red Knight!" The "Red Knight," Von Richtofen, was killed in Great War. Who was impersonating him? Flying Squad flew over New House; Figgins & Co. declared innocence. Further raid on Study No. 10 in Flying Squad's absence. Study wrecked! Clue—a letter dropped accidentally. Addressed to George Gore, Shell passage. Flying Squad swooped on Gore's study. Gore unrepentant. Admitted taking name of "Red Knight." Intended putting Flying Squad out of action. Flying Squad indulged in bombing practice. The "Red Knight" left gasping amid wreckage of his hangar!

LION ROUNDED UP!

Lion reported escaped from circus near St. Jim's! All Saints gated. Emergency meeting of Executive Council of Flying Squad. Flying camouflaged planes, Squad left St. Jim's by masters' gate. Zoomed over Wayland Moor. Circus in uproar; lion rampaging round countryside. Flying Squad circled over police, represented by P.-c. Crump. Reconnoitred a wide area of the moor. Chief Air-Marshal Merry spotted lion in old quarry working. Lion had slipped in, unable to climb steep sides; trapped. Flying Squad reported to police. P.-c. Crump led circus rescue party. Flying Squad observed by authorities returning to St. Jim's—but commended on happy result of flight!



Cut out the Flying Squad badge and mount it on cardboard. This makes you a full member of Tom Merry's Flying Squad, and entitles you to carry out flights and organise a squadron.

When you have got three of your chums to become members of the Flying Squad, you rank as a Squadron-Commander, and to signify it you are entitled to colour the centre of the badge yellow.

When you have got four chums to join, you rank as an Air Commodore, and you are entitled to wear the badge with the centre coloured green.

When you have got five of your chums to join, you rank as an Air Vice-Marshal, wearing the badge with the centre coloured blue.

When you have got six chums to join, you rank as a full-fledged Air Marshal, and you are entitled to colour the centre of the badge red.

All members of the Flying Squad greet each other with this salute: Raise the right arm, bent, so that the hand comes level with the head. The hand should be presented edgewise to your fellow member, parallel with the side of your head, and should be brought into position smartly. Try it!

The unbreakable rule of the Flying Squad is:

Be ever ready to fly to the assistance of your friends.

(Signed) TOM MERRY
(Air Marshal in Chief.)



LOOK THROUGH OUR TELEVISOR

HARRY MANNERS SPEAKING

Jolly glad to meet you all. Seeing's believing, isn't it? Now you know what I look like and we're properly introduced, if that was necessary!

I'm particularly interested in this televisor stunt, because, as you probably know, I'm a very keen amateur photographer. I have a stunning reflex camera, and I make a speciality of getting "action" snaps of my fellow footballers on Little Side. The other day I got a beauty of Kildare scoring a goal for St. Jim's against Rookwood, and I'm having it enlarged at Kildare's request. I could do the enlarging myself, but there isn't room in a junior study at St. Jim's for the apparatus—and if there were some silly ass would be sure to knock it and smash it! Why, only yesterday that fathead Lowther mucked up some prints I was fixing—but let that go. Monty isn't a bad sort—just a bit careless, that's all!

As I was saying, there's very little I'm not interested in if it relates to photography. I'd like to do a spot of filming, and I've experimented with a small cine camera in the vac. It's great fun, and they're not nearly so expensive as they were. A moving picture of some exciting escapade is so much more graphic than a "still." I've got a jolly good "shot" showing Monty slipping on a slide and coming a cropper—but Monty threatens to assassinate me if I dare to show it in public! Not that I would. But it's no end funny, really!

The object of all these new television experiments is, of course, to bring the thing into every home, just as the radio is now. I only hope it will be made practicable soon. As soon as I can get the hang of the affair I'm going to try to assemble a television set.

St. Jim's News Reel

Mr. Victor Raiton, the Housemaster of the School House, distinguished himself on active service during the Great War, and still carries a piece of shrapnel in his arm—a grim souvenir!

Herbert Skimpole never hears of a new scientific theory without eagerly studying it. He has now assimilated Einstein's Theory of the Fourth Dimension—and as Monty Lowther says, Skimmy is now ready for the Fifth Dimension!

Toby, the School House page, is "on the go" all day long, and estimates that he averages twenty miles a day up and down stairs and along passages. Toby looks fit on it, anyhow!

(Continued at foot of next column.)



Week Ending March 3rd, 1934.

ROOKWOOD v. SAINTS — GAME PLAYED IN GALE

For the game at Rookwood the wind blew up very strongly.

The tall elms around the ground were swaying and moaning as St. Jim's took the field against Jimmy Silver & Co., and it was obvious that accurate football would be an impossibility.

Tom Merry won the toss and elected to kick with the wind—or rather, with the gale! It was practically impossible for the Rookwooders to force the ball into their opponents' half, so strongly did the gale blow against them. Nevertheless, the Saints found the leather equally hard to control, a pass nearly always overshooting the mark and going to a member of the defence.

The Saints were the first to settle down to the conditions, and Tom Merry netted with a smart cross shot which whizzed through Rawson's hands into the rigging. Rookwood rallied, and by dint of much struggling, forced their way to the St. Jim's goal for the first time. Fatty Wynn saved neatly from Silver at close range, and a few moments later he again saved the fort by robbing Mornington of the ball by diving at his feet!

Half-time found the Saints leading 1—0.

In the second period the gale increased in violence so much that Bulkeley, who was refereeing, could hardly stand against it in mid-field. The players were blown hither and thither, and finally an extra strong blast lifted the ball clear of the ground and deposited it over the school buildings in the quadrangle! A fag speedily recovered it and the game continued. Tom Merry & Co. had the hurricane against them now, and they were hard put to it to defend their citadel against the determined Rookwood assaults. Jimmy Silver's head flashed up and popped the ball past Fatty Wynn—and the scores were level!

With ten minutes left St. Jim's made a heroic effort against the wind, and Jack Blake, dribbling through a maze of players on his own, tricked Rawson and wound up with a well-directed daisy-cutter which found the far corner of the net!

The final whistle came as a relief to both sides—though Jimmy Silver & Co. were eager to admit that St. Jim's deserved their hard-won victory!

(Continued from previous column.)

Eric Kildare's enthusiasm has made the St. Jim's First XI second to none among rival schools. In a stirring game against Greyfriars, Kildare netted a "hat trick," thus enabling his side to win 5—3.

Miss Fawcett, Tom Merry's guardian, still imagines that her "darling Tommy" needs frequent instructions regarding his health, and she recently sent him a foot-warmer! Gore made a humorous remark about it—now Gore nurses a swollen nose!

Fatty Wynn is a first-class cook, and at New House feeds his services are greatly in demand!



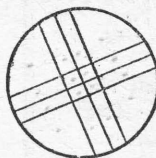
MONTY LOWTHER CALLING

Hallo, everybody!
The other day Skimpole asked Blake whether he should go to a palmist or a mind-reader. Blake said:

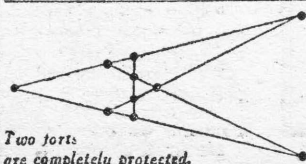
"Try a palmist, old chap—we do know you've got a palm!" Never mind. Ugh! Buck Finn tells me that "out West" they have very efficient scarecrows of a superior design. When they tried one out recently the birds were so scared that an old black crow brought back some corn it had stolen three days before! All right, ask Buck! As the brick-layer said when he dropped a brick on the passer-by's head: "Don't bother to throw it up again. I've got plenty up here!"

A complaint has been made by the inhabitants of Wayland who say that the High Street has been opened up seven times in the past year. May we suggest a zip-fastener? A film producer offers two pounds a week to anybody who can bark like a dog, squawk like a parrot, and howl like a cat. For two pounds a week he can have Gore's home-made radio set! Gore's radio is pretty flat! Talking of "flat" things, Crooke and Mellish are very interested in "flat" racing. After a little flutter they are very often "flat" broke! A lecturer in Rylecombe said that singing is strengthening for weak backs. Local football teams keep writing in to ask if it is any good for the rest of the team! Things have been moving in Rylecombe lately. Three fires have broken out in local confectioners' shops. The St. Jim's fags are applying en masse to join the fire brigade! Skimpole couldn't sleep, so Tom Merry told him to count imaginary sheep going through a hedge till he dropped off. Next morning Skimpole was laying wide awake, mumbling: "One trillion, seven billion, eight million, four hundred and seventy-two thousand, six hundred and seventy-one!" Oh, well—you don't have to believe me!

CALIBAN'S PUZZLE CORNER



Wally D'Arcy had a large flat circular cake and offered to divide it up among the fags by cutting across it six times in various directions, making as many pieces as possible. The illustration shows how he could have made sixteen pieces. This, of course, can easily be beaten. How many can you make?



Two fags are completely protected.

Solution of last week's puzzle.

catching the stranger by the shoulder.

"How on earth did you get like this?" There was a faint gasp from the prisoner, but no word.

"It's all right, you fellows!" called out Tom Merry. "It's only a kid, and some cads have tied him to the gate. I don't know why he doesn't speak."

"I do!" exclaimed Figgins. "Look here!"

In the glimmer of a match the prisoner's face could be seen. An apple was jammed into the mouth and held there by a handkerchief knotted round the prisoner's head. It was too large for the unfortunate fellow to chew away, and it gagged him effectually.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Flour!"

There was no doubt about it now that the match was struck. The boy was smothered from head to foot in flour, and that was what imparted to him his ghostly appearance. Figgins was peering into the stranger's face by the light of the match, and he, too, uttered an exclamation.

"Marmaduke!"

"Marmaduke!" echoed a dozen voices.

Tom Merry pulled off the handkerchief and extracted the apple. The unfortunate Marmaduke spluttered and gasped.

"Is it you, Marmy?" exclaimed Figgins. "Poor old chap! I suppose this is the last lark of the Grammarians. Taggles took you for a ghost! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can't see anything to laugh at!" growled Marmaduke. "Can't you untie me, some of you, instead of standing there, cackling like asses?"

Tom Merry opened his penknife and began to sever the cords.

"How did it happen?" asked Figgins curiously.

"Those rotters met me in the lane!" growled Marmaduke. "The miller's cart was waiting outside the Plough and Horses, and they must have dodged behind it when they saw me coming. They rushed out and collared me, and I kicked—"

"You did what?"

"Kicked," said Marmaduke sullenly. "They were four to one—Monk, Gay, Lane, and Carboy. I hurt Lane's shin, and then they—"

"Whatever they did, dear boy, it serves you wight," said D'Arcy. "I weally think we should express our wegwets to the Gwammawians for the disgwaceful occurwence!"

"Oh, you shut up!" snapped Marmaduke. "Then they opened one of the miller's sacks and emptied half the flour over me, and brought me here and fastened me up! The beasts!"

"I suppose they were going to jape you," said Figgins, "and you were spiteful, and they gave it to you stronger in consequence. Serve you right!"

"Serve you right!" echoed the Co.

"Yaas, wathah! Serve you awfully, feahfully wight!"

Marmaduke growled. Tom Merry finished cutting him loose. The hero of the Shell had not said a word. Marmaduke looked round for sympathy, and found none.

"I suppose you all blame me?" he said shortly.

"You acted like a cad!" said Tom Merry.

Marmaduke made no reply to that. He swung away and strode off towards the New House to get the flour cleaned off. The juniors followed more slowly.

"There it is!" It was a sudden yell from the gloomy quadrangle in the voice

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of Taggles. "There's the awful hobject I saw at the gates. It's comin' towards us!"

Taggles was leading a party of seniors towards the gates to discover the terrible object that had scared him so much, and he was startled almost out of his wits by seeing the ghost coming swiftly towards him.

Some of the fellows scattered, but Kildare and Monteith and some others stood their ground. Taggles jumped behind the captain of the school.

"Stop!" exclaimed Kildare. "Who are you?"

"I'm Smythe. I've been covered with flour by a lot of cads!" growled Marmaduke. "Do you think I'm a ghost, you silly asses?"

"That's not the way to speak to Sixth Formers!" said Kildare sternly.

"I'll speak how I like. My father could buy up this place, and all of you, too, if he chose! I don't care for any of you!"

And Marmaduke stalked off towards the New House. Monteith made a movement to follow him, but Kildare tapped him on the shoulder.

"Leave the young brute alone," he said. "I fancy he's been roughly handled; and if that's the tone he takes the juniors will be hard enough on him."

Monteith nodded. The heads of the two Houses in the Sixth were on the best of terms. They returned to the gym, and Marmaduke stalked on to the New House.

As it happened, the excitement in the quad over the supposed ghost had brought Mr. Ratcliff, the New House master, out of the House to see what was the matter. He was coming towards the gate with a cane in his hand, when he caught sight of a figure in white advancing upon him.

Mr. Ratcliff was not a brave man. The quadrangle was dark and lonely; the ghostly figure seemed to be rushing

upon him from the gloom. Mr. Ratcliff's knees knocked together, and he stood staring hopelessly at the strange form. And Marmaduke, who did not see him in the darkness, ran right into him and sent him flying.

The rough contact was a sufficient proof to the New House master that he had flesh and blood to deal with. He regained his balance, and sprang at the ghostly figure. Marmaduke, who was dazed by the concussion, had no time to escape. He was seized by the collar by the angry Housemaster.

"Who are you? How dare you——"

"I'm Smythe! Let me alone!"

"You—you young scoundrel! Come with me!"

Straight into the New House Mr. Ratcliff marched the culprit, and into his study. There, slamming the door, he fixed an angry glare upon Marmaduke.

"Now," he thundered, "explain yourself! What does this mean?"

Marmaduke was silent. His painful experiences had roused all his sullenness, and he would not speak. An absurd object he looked in the flare of the gas, covered with flour from head to foot, though he was not quite so floury as before, as a considerable quantity of it had come off on the Housemaster's clothes when they met.

Although they did not know it, there were eyes upon the two. From the darkness of the quadrangle Figgins & Co. looked into the lighted window of Mr. Ratcliff's study. The blind was not drawn, and the New House trio saw clearly into the room.

"My hat!" exclaimed Figgins. "Marmaduke is in for it! He——"

"He'll complain about the Grammarians," said Kerr.

"He'll give them away to save himself a licking, anyway," Fatty Wynn remarked.

Figgins' brow darkened.

"He can't! He shan't! Nice things the School House would say about us—and the Grammar School cads, too! Come on! Ratty's window is open, and we may be able to chip in if the fellow starts saying too much."

It did not seem very feasible. But Figgins & Co. cut across to the open window of the study, and reached it in time to hear the angry words of the Housemaster:

"Smythe, answer me! I may excuse you if you tell me who put you into this state. Was it Merry of the School House?"

And Mr. Ratcliff's eyes glinted spitefully. He would have been very glad to find so fair an excuse for complaining of Tom Merry to the master of the School House. But it was not to be.

"No!" growled Marmaduke.

"Ah, I understand! I suppose you have been the victim of the Grammar School boys again? Is that so, Smythe?"

Figgins & Co. held their breath for the reply. Was Marmaduke going to sneak? They waited and waited; but the reply did not come.

"Answer me!" thundered the master of the New House, amazed and exasperated by the obstinacy of the junior.

But Marmaduke Smythe did not speak. And Figgins & Co. hugged themselves outside the window. Marmaduke would not disgrace them, after all!

CHAPTER 8. True Blue!

"SMYTHE!"

Mr. Ratcliff thundered out the name.

Marmaduke set his lips hard together, and a gleam of defiance was in his eyes. The obstinacy, which was his chief fault, was turned into a right channel this time, and he was not going to be bullied into acting as a sneak.

"Smythe, am I to understand that you refuse to answer my question?"

Marmaduke was still silent.

"Will you give me their names?"

"I can't."

"Hold out your hand!"

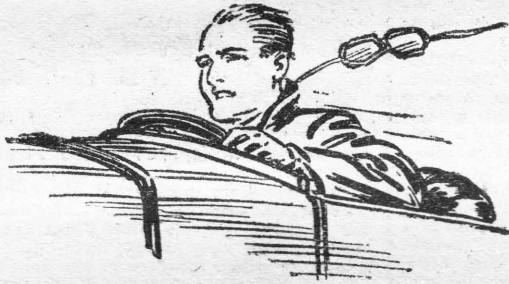
Marmaduke took a quick look at the Housemaster, and held out his hand. He thought he had better. The cane came down upon it with a fearful slash, and Marmaduke gave a howl of pain. It was a blow such as no master ought ever to have dealt; but Mr. Ratcliff was too furious to care how much he hurt the junior.

"Will you answer my question now?"

"No," howled Marmaduke, hugging his hand to his breast. "No, I won't! I won't sneak! And you can cut me to pieces first!"

Mr. Ratcliff looked as if he would gladly have cut the obstinate junior to pieces. But as he could not proceed to the extremity, he ordered him, in a voice of thunder, to hold out his other hand.

Marmaduke obeyed, and the cane went up with a whiz,



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and came down with a terrific slash. But Marmaduke did not leave his hand there to receive it. He drew it away quickly, more by instinct than by intention, and the cane swept the empty air. And there was no stopping its force. Before Mr. Ratcliff could think of arresting his descending arm the cane had crashed on his own shin.

He gave a howl of anger, and dropped the cane to the floor.

"Ow! Oh, heavens! You young villain!"

He clasped his injured leg, hopping on the other. A sour grin came over Marmaduke's face as he watched his antics.

But Mr. Ratcliff recovered himself in a moment. He seized the cane with his right hand, and Marmaduke's collar with his left.

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

Figgins sprang to his feet.

"I'm not going to stand this!" he exclaimed.

And in a moment he was climbing in at the open window of the Housemaster's study.

Mr. Ratcliff, who had his back to the window, and, moreover, was too excited to see anybody or anything but the boy he was thrashing, did not notice him.

Figgins had had no very clear idea in getting in at the window; he only knew that he wasn't going to stand by quietly while Marmaduke was used so brutally. But as he slid in at the window an idea flashed through his mind.

He reached up to the gas and turned it out. The study was immediately plunged into darkness, and the next moment, as the astonished Housemaster's blows ceased, Figgins gripped him by the shoulders, and swung him away from Marmaduke Smythe.

Mr. Ratcliff went reeling in the unexpected grip, and before he could recover his balance he crashed against the table and rolled on the floor.

Marmaduke was as much amazed as Figgins by the sudden fall of darkness and the cessation of the attack. A whisper in the gloom enlightened him.

"Bolt!"

He knew the voice of Figgins. The advice was too good to be neglected. He stumbled to the door and escaped from the study. Figgins followed him, and, catching his arm, hurried him up to their study.

Mr. Ratcliff staggered to his feet in the darkened room. Exactly what had happened he did not know—only that someone had somehow gained admittance to the study, turned out the light, and dragged him away from his victim.

He was murmuring with fury, and he felt blindly for the matches, and knocked over an inkstand, and sent a pile of books crashing to the floor before he found them. By the time he struck a match and lighted the gas, Marmaduke and Figgins were far away.

"Who was it? Who could it have been?"

The Housemaster glared out of the open window. But the Co., of course, were gone by this time. He was strongly inclined to raise a hue and cry through the New House for the delinquent. But he remembered that he had gone a little too far already. The thrashing Marmaduke had received must have left marks upon him.

If the Head of St. Jim's knew what had happened during the last few minutes, Mr. Ratcliff would have had an uncomfortable time before him, and an inquiry would make the affair noised through the school.

It was better to let sleeping dogs lie, the Housemaster reflected. But he mentally vowed to find out, in a quiet way, who his assailant had been, and to make him suffer for what he had done.

Meanwhile, Figgins had led Marmaduke to the juniors' study, where they were joined by the Co. Marmaduke, as white as a sheet, his face drawn and haggard, staggered into the easy chair. Mr. Ratcliff would have been alarmed if he could have seen the victim of his cruelty at that moment.

Figgins & Co. were certainly alarmed. Figgins loosened his collar, and Kerr filled a tooth glass with currant wine, and placed it to his lips. Fatty Wynn wildly snatched out a plateful of sausage rolls from the cupboard, with a vague idea that they might be of use.

Marmaduke drank the currant wine, and it seemed to do him good. He sat up in the chair and tried to grin. It was a very watery grin.

"My dear chap," said Figgins, "how do you feel?"

"Rotten!"

"Did he hurt you very much?" asked Kerr.

It was rather a superfluous question, but Kerr only meant to be sympathetic. Marmaduke grinned faintly.

"Rather!"

"Will—will you have a sausage roll, Marm?" said Fatty Wynn.

"Not just yet, Fatty," chuckled Marmaduke.

"Fatty thinks a feed is a cure for all evils," said Figgins.

"They're jolly good sausage rolls!" said Fatty anxiously. "A fellow would feel all the better for one at any time."

Figgins stared at the red marks across Marmaduke's bare shoulders. He pulled down the shirt, and saw that his back was scored in the same way. His eyes blazed with indignation.

"Get your jacket on, Marmy!" he exclaimed.

"I feel more comfy without it."

"You've got to come with me!"

"Come with you—where?"

"To the Head!" said Figgins, with blazing eyes. "Come along! We'll see what Dr. Holmes has to say when he sees those marks on you. The cowardly brute!" Figgins was referring to Mr. Ratcliff. "The cruel beast! This will mean the kick out for him, I should think, and serve him jolly well right! Get your jacket on and come."

Marmaduke did not stir.

"Do you hear, Marmy?"

"Yes, Figgy, I hear; but I'm not coming!"

"I tell you—"

"Not good enough, Figgy. I'm not going to sneak!"

Figgins & Co. stared at the heir of millions. This was rather a new and surprising line for Marmaduke Smythe to take.

"Not going to sneak!" said Figgy. "But this isn't sneaking. The hound ought to be shown up. You know he has no right to wallop a boy like that, and the Head would be wild if he knew about it."

"I dare say he would, but I can take my medicine without complaining. After all, it must have annoyed Ratty when he got that out on the shin."

"Serve him right! He ought to be kicked out of the school."

"Very likely. But I'm not going to have anything to do with it. Go easy, Figgy! No good losing one's temper over a little thing like this, you know."

Figgins calmed down somewhat.

"Perhaps you're right," he said slowly. "But—but this is a bit of a change in you, Marmy. I shouldn't have exactly expected you to take this line."

Marmaduke coloured so deeply that his blush showed through the powdering of flour upon his face.

"I suppose not," he said, in a low voice. "I—I know I was in the wrong that time, Figgy, and—and—I'm glad I didn't give the Grammar School kids away, now. I know I'm a sullen beast," said Marmaduke, with astonishing frankness. "It's my nature, I suppose; but—but I'm going to play the game in future, I assure you."

Figgins raised his hand to give him a hearty slap on the shoulder, but he remembered himself in time, and shook hands with him instead.

"Good old Marmy! That's all right! I knew you were true blue. I knew what Ratty licked you for, too, and I know you mean it."

"Did you see—"

"We were outside the window all the time. That is how I came on the scene just then," Figgins explained. "Ratty seems to have let the matter drop. Knows what's good for him, I suppose—the cad! Marmaduke, old chap, you're a member of the Co., if you like!"

"Right-ho!" said Marmaduke. "I won't disgrace you!"

"You've done us proud this time," said Figgins, "and we're proud of you; and so will the rest of the Co. be when we tell 'em how you stood up to Ratty."

"Oh, there's no need to go talking—"

"Rats! Come and get some of that flour cleaned off! You're in a shocking state. Then we'll go over and see Tom Merry and explain to him that Marmy is a partner in the Co."

CHAPTER 9.


Figgins Takes Charge!

TOM MERRY came out of the Shell class-room after morning school the next day with a cheerful countenance. Manners and Lowther were with him, and they looked at him with mute inquiry, guessing that something was working in the active brain of their leader.

"I say, you kids," said Tom Merry. "I want to hold

(Continued on the next page.)

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a meeting of the Co. in the woodshed, and expound an idea I've got in my head."

"Thought you had," said Manners. "Well, that's easily done. Monty can go and call in Study No. 6, and I'll pop over and see Figgins & Co. I hear that Marmaduke is in the Co. again now, and those New House fellows are as thick as ever."

"Yes; he seems to have stuck it out when Ratty got hold of him, and redeemed his character," said Tom Merry. "I'm glad of it. I know it was a blow to Figgy, Marmaduke turning out so rotten. Get them to the woodshed as quick as you can. I'll be there."

Figgins & Co.—the four of them—were going down to the football field when Manners found them, but they gave footer up at once to come to the meeting. They repaired to the woodshed with Manners, and when they arrived they found Tom Merry waiting for them. Study No. 6 came in a few minutes later, and the meeting was complete.

"Glad you're all here," said Tom Merry. "I've got something to say, and so let's get on to selecting the giddy chief for the Jay; unless you would like to select me for the post, and make it Tom Merry & Co. once more."

To which, ten voices in unison replied:

"Rats!"

"Very well," said Tom Merry, quite cheerfully. "Get on with the drawing of lots, then, and if I'm captain for to-day, I'll expound my wheeze."

The slips of paper containing the names of the candidates were put in the bag, and Monty Lowther groped for them. There were only nine names, Blake and Lowther having already had their turn in the generalship.

"Here you are!" said Monty Lowther, drawing out a slip at random, and holding it up to the light. "G. Figgins! Figgins takes the cake."

Figgins gave a cheerful grin.

"Hurrah!" he exclaimed. "Now I'll show you bouders what generalship is like. I'll make you stand up to the Grammarians this time, and don't you forget it!"

"Right you are!" said Tom Merry. "What are the orders? We're all ready to take your lead, Figgy, if you've got anywhere to lead us!"

Figgins wrinkled his brows for a moment.

"I suppose I'm not supposed to get a wheeze in my head instanter!" he said. "A chap must have time to think, you know."

"Oh rats!" said Blake at once. "Think of something or resign! When I was leader I thought of something on the spot."

"And so did I," said Monty Lowther.

"Yes; and a nice old muck you made of it, didn't you?" said Figgins.

"That's not to the point. You're not going to waste our time like this. Just you work out a wheeze, or resign the job to somebody who can handle it," said Tom Merry.

"Oh, that's all right! What was the wheeze you were speaking of yourself, Tom Merry?"

"That's my business!"

"Now then, no insubordination! Who's captain of the Co.?" demanded Figgins.

"You are—of a sort!"

"Well, then, I order you to assist your leader with advice. Tell me that wheeze, or take the punishment of a giddy mutineer!"

"Oh, I say, that's not playing the game, you know!"

"You'll do as you're told, Tom Merry! Do you expect to have your orders obeyed when you become captain? Well, do as you're told, then!"

"Oh, very well! I suppose you can't be expected to think of anything yourself!"

"My dear chap, a great general never takes the trouble to think for himself if he can get it done," said Figgins serenely. "Under my leadership the wheeze will be a great success, and that's enough. Now, get it off your chest!"

Tom Merry was fairly caught, and he made no further demur.

"Well," he said, "you may or may not know what to-day is—"

"Yaas, wathah! It's Fwiday," said D'Arcy.

"Ass!" said Tom Merry. "What I mean is—"

"I wufuse to be called an ass!"

"Shut up!" said Figgins.

"I wufuse to shut up if I am chawactewised as an ass! I distinctly wufuse—"

"Shut up!" howled eight or nine voices.

And Arthur Augustus, finding the majority against him, relapsed into indignant silence.

"What I mean is," went on Tom Merry, "that I happen to know that to-morrow is Frank Monk's birthday, and that there are certain to be some festivities at the Grammar School. Monk has lots of pocket-money, and he always does things in style. My idea is that Monk, Lane, Gay, and Carboy will be giving a dormitory feed. I know they did

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when it was Gay's birthday, for I heard about it from Gay himself."

Figgins nodded thoughtfully.

"You know there's no school-shop at the Grammar School as there is here," went on Tom Merry, "and Dr. Monk is very strict in the matter of allowing kids to get in extra supplies after school from Mother Murphy's tuckshop in Rylcombe; but I haven't the slightest doubt that they will do something of the sort to-night."

Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened.

"My aunt!" he exclaimed. "That's the cheese! That's what I call a whipping wheeze! Collar their grub—that's it!"

"Good old Fatty!" said Blake. "Always thinking of grub, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't rot, Blake!" said Fatty Wynn. "There isn't a better wheeze you can work off on the Grammar School kids than to collar their grub."

"Well, we'll do them for a feed this evening, I think," grinned Figgins. "I'm obliged for the information you have given, Tom Merry. Your idea is rather good!"

"Rather good!" exclaimed Tom Merry indignantly. "What the dickens do you mean with your 'rather good'? It's the best idea that has been mooted since we started ragging the Grammar School."

"My dear chap, it's rather good, and I've said so, and that's all the commendation you're entitled to, and you won't get any more. Under my guidance, I have no doubt that we shall be able to knock the Grammar School cads into a cocked hat, and collar their tommy, and give a royal spread within the ancient and honourable walls of this college."

"To tell the truth, Figgy, I've my doubts about it. The idea is good, I admit, but I can't say much for the leadership we're going to have," said Tom Merry, shaking his head.

"Yaas, wathah! That's the considewation that twoubles my mind, don't you know. I weally think Figgins would be wise to gwacefully wetiah, and leave the mattah in my hands, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus.

"I'll gracefully dot you on the boko if you don't shut up," said Figgins. "Now then, kids, the giddy plot is laid, and it only remains to carry it out—"

"And bury it!"

"And knock the Grammarians into the middle of next week, or as far along the calendar as we can make it. Gentlemen, the meeting is over!"

"And now let's get down to the footer," said Kerr. "We've got to put in some practice yet before we meet the Grammarians on their own ground."

"And we haven't sent them the challenge yet," said Tom Merry. "Never mind, there's still time for that. By the way, as there are just eleven of us here, we'll make up the whole team amongst ourselves. It won't be a match for the regular junior team, but for the new Anti-Grammarians Co."

"Good!"

"Yaas, that is a good ideah. Have you decided yet, deah boys, whethah I am to be captain on the beastly football field, you know?" said Arthur Augustus.

"Yes," said Tom Merry, "we've decided—you're not! As a matter of fact, I think you're rather out of place on the football field at all, Gussy. Your proper place is on the front page of a comic paper."

"I object to that wemark, Tom Mewwy! I shall be sowwy to bweak up the harmony of this meetin', but I must insist upon your withdwawin' that obnoxious wemark. I—"

"Oh rats!" said Tom Merry.

And he walked out of the woodshed with Manners and Lowther, while Blake, Herries, and Digby, with some difficulty, prevailed upon the swell of the School House not to follow and exact summary vengeance.

The meeting broke up. During afternoon school Figgins, the new leader of the famous Co., thought a great deal about the plan, and he had to admit that Tom Merry's idea was a good one. It was the kind of joke that the two rival Houses at St. Jim's had often played on one another, but it was a new departure in the warfare with the Grammar School.

Figgins thought more about the coming expedition, in fact, than he did about his work, and, easy-going as Mr. Lathom was, he dropped on Figgins at last. When Figgins declared that the successor of William the Conqueror on the throne of England was Frank Monk, and that the reign of Queen Elizabeth was chiefly famous for the dormitory feed given by King Philip of Spain on the bowling green at Plymouth, the little master of the Fourth thought it time to complain.

"You are not thinking of your lesson, Figgins," he said severely, as if that was about the heaviest charge that could possibly be brought against anybody.

"Yes, sir," said Figgins. "I mean, no, sir—yes, sir!"



"Help!" gasped Fatty Wynn as, clinging to the tuck basket, he shot up to the overhanging branch of the tree. Fatty did not mean to lose that feed! Marmaduke jumped forward to help him—and received Fatty's foot in his chest for his pains!

"Will you kindly tell me what you are thinking about, Figgins?" asked Mr. Lathom, with heavy sarcasm.

"Certainly, sir," said Figgins, to gain time.

"Very well, then. What is the subject of these intensely interesting reflections which keep you from bestowing proper attention upon your work, Figgins? You may tell the class and myself, and I have no doubt that we shall be extremely edified."

"Certainly, sir. I was thinking of—of—"

"Go on, Figgins."

"I was thinking of a plan for giving a little surprise to some friends of mine in Rylcombe Grammar School, sir," said Figgins demurely.

Mr. Lathom beamed through his glasses.

"In that case I can excuse you, Figgins. I am very pleased to hear that you have such a friendly feeling towards the boys of the Grammar School, especially as I understand that there has been much mutual bickering. But laudable as this object is, you must not think about it during lessons. Not a word, Figgins. You are excused, and you will now go on construing."

So Figgins construed Virgil, and the class chuckled.

But when Herr Schneider took the Fourth in German later in the afternoon, he did not let the preoccupied chief of the New House off so lightly.

"Bin ich alls edler Junker hier," said Herr Schneider. "Vat is tat, Figgins?"

"German, sir," said Figgins thoughtfully.

"Ach! I tink I know tat! Vat does it mean in to English, foolish poy?"

"Mean, sir?"

"Ja! Do you not understand your own language after pefore?"

"Yes, sir. Certainly, sir. I understand your English, sir, because you speak it so beautifully, Herr Schneider."

But Figgins' soft answer failed to turn away Herr Schneider's wrath.

"Vat is tat like pefore, Figgins?"

Figgins scratched his head. He had heard the line only imperfectly, and he knew that it was no use to ask the Herr to repeat it, as Schneider had specially picked upon him because he was not listening as he should have been.

"It means, sir—it means— Do you want me to construe it, sir?"

"Ja, Figgins, ja, mein poy."

"Easily done, sir. It—it means— For mercy's sake tell me what the old ass said, Mellish?" Figgins whispered to the junior next to him.

"Oh, it's from 'Faust,'" said Mellish spitefully. "Das ist die ewige Gesang—"

"Thanks! That is the eternal song, sir."

Herr Schneider picked up his pointer.

"Figgins! You translate tat line like tat, ain't it! Bin ich als edler Junker hier—tat is vat I said—and you say it means—"

"I—I didn't hear you, sir," said Figgins, with a wrathful look at the grinning Mellish. "You—you rotten cad, Mellish."

Mellish only grinned. He did not like Figgins.

"Mein gootness!" said Herr Schneider. "Tat line mean 'I am here as a noble cavalier,' Figgins. Tat line vich you say comes later in te poem, and tat show tat you not listen but answer at random, ain't it. You will write both dose lines vun hundred times, and pring dem to me to-morrow afternoon, ain't it, pefore."

"Yes, sir," said Figgins, considerably troubled by the imposition, but glad at the same time that he was not detained after hours the present afternoon. "Certainly, sir."

Herr Schneider kept a watchful eye on Figgins for the rest of the afternoon, and Figgins, fearful of detention,

gave his very best attention to the lesson, and escaped further calling over the coals.

It was greatly to his relief when the class was dismissed at last, and the boys poured out into the quadrangle.

CHAPTER 10.

Figgins' Expedition!

FIGGINS went over to the School House after tea to tell Tom Merry his plans.

"Ready for us?" asked Tom Merry. "We're only waiting for the word, you know."

"Not quite," said Figgins. "What do you think will be the best time for catching the Grammarians on the hop?"

"Well, of course, it's impossible to be certain," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "But I suppose they will go down to the tuckshop after tea, to get in the grub?"

"From what I hear about them, the masters there are likely to be on the watch," Figgins remarked. "I remember hearing that Gay was nearly spotted last time. My idea is that Frank Monk is more likely to leave it till after locking-up time and calling over, so as to be quite safe from interference."

Tom Merry nodded.

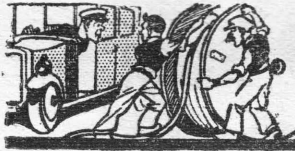
"That's right, Figgy. I think it's very likely. But in that case it makes it pretty difficult for us to lay for them."

OH YEAH!

In the middle of the street a gang of workmen were slowly unrolling a large electric cable from its drum, and traffic was considerably congested in consequence.

"Hoi!" shouted a taxi-driver. "Why can't yer take your yo-yo into a side street and play?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Wood, 11, Cowper Street, Hanwell, London, W.7.



"If there's eleven juniors missing from St. Jim's at call-over, there'll be a row," grinned Monty Lowther.

"I've thought of that," grinned Figgins. "That won't do, of course. My idea is, cut off directly after call-over, and get out of the school by the old place on the wall."

"Good! If your idea about the time the Grammar kids will do the trick is correct, it's the only thing to be done."

"Then I want you all to come down to the old spot as quickly as you can get away after calling over," said Figgins. "You'll pass the word to Blake and his lot."

"Right you are!"

And Figgins left Tom Merry's study.

"He won't be a bad leader after all," Tom Merry remarked. "Of course, I'd rather the matter were in my hands—"

"Or mine," remarked Manners.

"But Figgins will manage it pretty well, I dare say. Anyway, we'll back him up for all we're worth," Tom Merry declared. "We'll make it a success if we can."

"Oh, yes, we'll play the game."

Promptly to time the Terrible Three turned up at the familiar spot where the juniors of St. Jim's had more than once crossed the wall into Rylcombe Lane.

Figgins was already there with Kerr and Wynn, and Study No. 6 arrived almost at the same time.

"Nobody missed you?" asked Figgins.

"No; we've been very careful," said Tom Merry. "We're not missed, and shan't be till bed-time, I expect. How about you, Blake?"

"Same here," said Blake. "I was careful."

"Yaas, wathah, so was I," said D'Arcy. "Mellish had the feahful cheek to ask me what I was gettin' into my ovahcoat for, and I told him that it was a great secwet, and not to be cwivious about it, you know."

"So he won't be!" said Kerr sarcastically. "Oh, Gussy, you ought to have a tin medal for your sagacity, you ought really!"

"Pway do not address me in this dispawagin' tone—"

"Shut up!" said Figgins. "Over the wall with you, kids!"

"Give us a bunk up, then!"

The juniors, aided by the oak-tree, clambered over the wall. They gathered in Rylcombe Lane in the darkness, and took the road towards the Grammar School.

A huge black mass looming up through the night warned
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them that they were near their goal. Dark and silent was the Grammar School, and the big gates were fast closed.

"Do you think you fellows had better keep back while I do some scoutin'?" asked D'Arcy. "We can't be too beastly careful, you know!"

"I think you had better dry up," said Figgins, "or else I think you will probably get a thick ear, Gussy."

"If there's any New House wottah who can give me a thick yah I shall be extwemely pleased to weceive it," said Arthur Augustus disdainfully.

"Now, then, no House ragging now!" said Tom Merry. "I'm surprised at you, Gussy! Why don't you play the game?"

"Yaas, wathah, I withdwaw my wemark," said D'Arcy gracefully. "If there is any New House wottah who can give me a thick yah I shall not be pleased to weceive it. I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean," said Figgins. "Dry up! I heard something just then."

"So did I!" whispered Digby.

The juniors crouched in the dense shadow of a great tree that overhung the wall from inside the Grammar School grounds. The trunk grew close to the wall inside, and the branches spread far over the road.

There was certainly some sound audible in the darkness, but exactly what it was the juniors could not at first determine. It was a sound of scraping or scratching. But the voice that followed was unmistakable—that of a human voice.

"Let go my ankle, Lane, you silly fathead!"

The juniors nudged one another.

It was the well-known voice of Frank Monk. And in reply came another voice they knew well.

"It nearly slipped, Frank. It's all right now."

"Is it? You nearly had me down."

"A miss is as good as a mile."

The voices were silent again, but the scraping sound continued.

The juniors of St. Jim's knew what it was now.

The scraping was made by the juniors inside forcing a way upward to the top of the wall by squeezing themselves between the wall and the tree-trunk that grew close to it.

Evidently the Grammar School chums were just about to leave the place, and it was pretty certain that Tom Merry's surmise as to their movements was quite correct.

They were going to Mother Murphy's tuckshop to obtain supplies for a little birthday celebration. The Saints were in good time.

Figgins nudged his companions, and they drew away from the spot. Crouching there in the shadow of the tree, they were invisible; but they might have been dropped on—literally—by the Grammarians from above. Three dim forms came into view on the top of the wall.

Monk sat astride, while Lane dropped into the road. Frank Monk's voice was audible again in tones low and cautious, but which reached plainly to the ears of the St. Jim's juniors only a dozen paces away.

"You know what you've got to do, Carboy. Don't leave the place. I know it's a bit cold sticking out of doors for half an hour, but it's the only way."

"That's all right, Frank, I don't mind."

"Keep in sound of our whistle. There's no reason why you shouldn't take a run to keep yourself warm, you know. But you must be on the spot to help us in, especially with the grub, and I can't say exactly how long we shall be."

"That's all right. You'll find me ready."

"When we whistle get into the tree and lower the rope for the grub. The basket will weigh pretty heavy, you know. There's no other way of getting it over the wall."

"I understand. I shall watch for you, and I expect I shall see you coming and have the rope ready. Better not whistle if it can be helped; we don't want to run risks."

Frank Monk dropped into the lane.

A rope came dangling down after him, with a big hook on the end, to which a large basket was hung. Frank unhooked the basket, and the rope was drawn up again to the top of the wall by Carboy.

Quite unaware of the proximity of the St. Jim's juniors, Frank Monk and his companion stole away towards Rylcombe village.

Carboy slung the rope to the inside of the wall, and looped it over a branch of the tree to be in readiness. Then he dropped into the close to take a little exercise to keep himself from freezing while he waited for the return of his comrades.

CHAPTER 11. The Ambush!

FIGGINS drew a quick, deep breath.

"Got 'em!" he whispered.

The St. Jim's juniors drew over to the farther side of the wide road, where they could speak without fear of being overheard by Carboy. They were chuckling silently with satisfaction.

"The game's ours," said Tom Merry. "We've only to wait for Monk and Lane to return, then collar them and their precious basket."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What do you think of me as a captain?" said Figgins, grinning. "Of course, it was plain all along that a New House fellow would have to take the lead if we were to make any headway against the Grammar School."

"Wait and see," said Digby. "We haven't got the grub yet, Figgy!"

"We've only got to wait for it and collar it."

"And, anyway, it was Tom Merry's idea!"

"Oh, rats! I'm captain, and I've led you into this, and it's about the best wheeze we've ever worked off on the Grammar School," declared Figgins.

"I say, deah boys, it's awfully cold waitin' here! Suppose we have a game of leap-frog to keep ourselves warm, you know?"

"A good idea—I don't think!" said Lowther. "Carboy will hear us. We've just got to lie low and say nuffin'!"

"That's it," said Figgins. "A wheeze like this is worth a bit of waiting!"

The juniors agreed to that, but they found the waiting weary work. The night was bitterly cold, and a mist was creeping up from the direction of the Rhyl.

They stamped and exercised to keep their blood in circulation, and listened eagerly for the chimes from Rylcombe Church, telling the hour.

"Half an hour," said Figgins at last in a low voice. "They ought to be somewhere near about by this time."

"Yaas, wathah! Do you know, deah boy, my extwemities are weally almost fwozen!"

"Never mind," said Fatty Wynn. "Think of the feed we are going to have when we get that grub back to St. Jim's!"

"I am not such an extwemely gweedy person as you are, Wynn, and I fail to find solace in that weffection for my fwozen feet," said D'Arcy.

"Who are you calling greedy?"

"I natuwallly chawactewise you as gweedy, my deah fellow. I appeal to Figgins if the descwription is not quite cowwect."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Figgins.

"I wefuse to go and eat coke. I wefuse——"

"Shut up!" said Marmaduke in a whisper. "I can see somebody on the wall."

"I wefuse to——"

Marmaduke's hand was on D'Arcy's mouth, effectually stopping him. In the dimness the form of Carboy could be faintly seen on the wall. The rope—a thick and strong one; probably the same that the Grammarians had sometimes used for descents from a dormitory window—was dangling over a branch of the tree that overhung the road. The end with the hook on it touched the road; the other was in the hands of Carboy.

"Silence!" whispered Figgins.

Even Arthur Augustus understood the necessity of silence. It was evident from Carboy's preparations that he had seen from the top of the wall the two Grammarians returning from Rylcombe with the basket of provisions for the dormitory feed.

"Ready!" Figgins murmured.

Two forms loomed up in the shadows of the school wall carrying between them the big basket.

"Forward!" shouted Figgins.

And the St. Jim's juniors rushed on.

Prompt as had been the action of the Co., Frank Monk was not caught napping. He was well on the alert, although he had no special suspicion of foes being near at hand. And Carboy, too, saw the rush of the Saints.

"Pull up!" yelled Frank Monk instantly, placing the handle of the basket over the big hook at the end of the rope.

The basket swung off the ground, and Monk and Lane turned desperately to stem the rush of the Saints before they could seize it.

They faced the odds gallantly, hitting out with all their strength, and for a moment the Co. were checked, Tom Merry and Figgins going down under the blows.

But it was only for a moment.

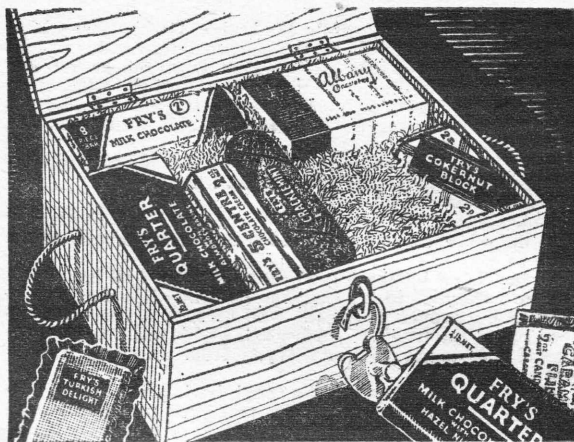
The two Grammarians were literally swept away and hurled to the ground by the heavy odds against them.

Fatty Wynn, who had had an eye on the basket from the instant it came into sight, sprang to seize it as it swung. He clutched at the basket and caught it.

Carboy set his teeth. He was quick to act, and his presence of mind was the only thing that could have saved the situation.

The rope passed over a branch of a tree, and Carboy had only to throw his weight on it to pull the basket into the air.

(Continued on the next page.)



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As Fatty Wynn hung on to the basket, Carboy threw himself from the wall inside the school grounds, and his weight and the impetus of his fall dragged both the basket and Fatty Wynn into the air at the other end of the rope.

Fatty gave a gasp as he shot up into the air. He did not even think of letting go the basket, which meant the loss of the provisions.

Fatty Wynn did not mean to lose that feed, into whatsoever perils the pursuit of it might lead him.

"Help!" he gasped faintly.

And, clinging to the rope with one hand and the basket with the other, he shot up to the overhanging branch of the tree.

Carboy knew by the tug of the rope what had happened, and he was quick to take advantage of it. The moment he touched the ground inside the wall he took a turn with the rope round the trunk of a tree, and by his swift action prevented the weight of Fatty Wynn from dragging it back again.

The grip of the rope on the rough bark prevented it slipping, while Carboy knotted it, and thus made assurance doubly sure. Then he was free to think of his comrades.

The sudden flying away of Fatty Wynn naturally amazed his chums of the Co. Marmaduke jumped valiantly after him, and received Fatty Wynn's final kick on the chest, and dropped into the road with a bump and a loud gasp.

Tom Merry sat up, rubbing his nose, which had been rather flattened by a terrific right-hander from Frank Monk.

"Where's the grub?" he exclaimed.

"Look!" said Kerr. "They've got the grub and Fatty Wynn, too!"

Tom Merry leaped to his feet.

High up against the branch of the tree swung the big basket and Fatty Wynn, the legs of the latter flying about spasmodically.

"Hold on!" shouted Tom Merry.

Fatty Wynn did not need telling to hold on. He was thinking only of the endangered feed. But, as a matter of fact, he would have been considerably hurt if he had let go the basket at such height from the ground.

"Great Scott!" gasped Figgins. "We must get him down. Hold on, Fatty! You'll break your giddy bones if you fall!"

"Help! I'm holding on! Help! They'll have the grub!"

"I say, you fellows, let him down!"

Carboy reappeared on the top of the wall.

"Rats!" he replied cheerfully. "He can let go if he likes."

"Where are those other rotters?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"There were two of them here! Where are they?"

"Where, indeed, were they?"

Frank Monk and Lane had lost no time in making themselves scarce. Scarcely had a minute elapsed since they were bowled over, and already they were out of sound and sight.

"They're gone!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You asses, to let them go!" howled Figgins.

"You ass to let them go!" retorted Monty Lowther.

"What sort of a leader do you call yourself? Whose business is it to look out for things like that? If I were leader—"

"You'd act the giddy ox, just as you've done now!"

"Lowther's right!" exclaimed Digby warmly. "It's your business as leader to lead. Figgins. If you find the job too big for you, chuck it up!"

"Just so!" said Blake. "Dig's right. And, as I always said—"

"Oh, rats to what you always said!" snapped Figgins.

"Look for those bounders! They mayn't be very far away."

Tom Merry was already looking for them. But the Grammarians were gone. The search was soon over, for the voice of Frank Monk was heard on the top of the school wall. It was evident that Monk and Lane had found another way into the school grounds.

The juniors of St. Jim's gathered again under the tree; Frank Monk and Lane were on the wall beside Carboy, chucking with glee. It had not taken them long to get into the Grammar School grounds after escaping from the enemy.

"Oh!" growled Figgins. "So you're there!"

"Yes, here we are!" said Monk cheerfully. "I say, what's that curious-looking object hanging on to our basket? Is it a porpoise, or a baby walrus?"

"A sorter cross between the two, I think," said Carboy. "It's a thing called Wynn, otherwise known as Fatty, and it's from a rotten place called St. Jim's—or anywhere where there's any grub going."

"Help!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "I can't hold on much longer!"

"You'll be hurt if you fall," said Frank. "Better get on the wall here. I'll lend you a hand, Fatty. There you are."

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Fatty Wynn was close to the wall, and his wagging feet had kicked it several times. Monk seized him and dragged him on the wall, where he was promptly collared by Lane and Carboy.

"Let me get down, you beasts!"

"Not so fast," said Frank Monk coolly. "You're a prisoner of war, my beautiful Falstaff. We're too fond of you to let you go."

"Let him come down!" howled Figgins angrily from the road.

"Go and eat coke, Wiggins! Or is your name Higgins?"

"Figgins, you cad! Let him come down!"

"Sorry, Piggins, but I couldn't think of it! You're rather unreasonable, Biggins. We're too fond of this fat oyster of yours to part with him, Diggins!"

Figgins gasped with fury. Some of his followers were grinning, which did not help to calm him.

"We'll jolly soon rescue you, Fatty!" he exclaimed. "Come on, chaps! We've got to get over that wall!"

And Figgins retreated across the road to get a start.

"Don't be an ass, you know!" remonstrated Blake. "We can't get over a wall twelve feet high, and especially with those rotters on top ready to knock us down!"

"If you're funky—"

"Br-r-r-r! Lead on, Macduff, and I'll show you if I'm funky!"

Figgins was not in a mood to listen to reason. His captaincy had opened so well, and was ending so disastrously, that he had lost his coolness. He was determined to get the better of the Grammarians and rescue Fatty Wynn—and to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat, as it were.

But it was not easily done. He took a rapid run and sprang up the wall; but his hands failed to reach the top, desperately as he sprang, and he dropped down into the road with rather a shock.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Frank Monk.

And Lane and Carboy joined in.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Saints gathered wrathfully under the wall. It was evidently impossible to get at the Grammarians, though Figgins was loth to give up the attempt. Fatty Wynn was a prisoner in the enemy's hands, and rescue was out of the question.

Frank Monk reached out to the still swinging basket, unhooked it from the rope in the sight of the furious Co. beneath it, and slung it inside the wall.

Fatty Wynn gave a hollow groan as he saw it go. He cared little what happened to him now; the feed was evidently gone for good.

"Well, are you going to keep us waiting here all night?" asked Figgins, at last. "Don't you think this jape has gone on long enough?"

"Oh, certainly! We're satisfied, if you are."

"Then let Fatty Wynn down."

"Not a bit of it, unless you ransom him."

Figgins' heart sank.

He knew what was coming now.

"What are you driving at?" he asked uneasily.

"You know what I'm driving at," said Frank Monk cheerfully. "You've got a third part of that cardboard sheet that has the surrender written on it!"

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Only this—that's Fatty Wynn's ransom."

"Beasts! You shan't have it!"

"Right-ho! We'll tie Fatty to the tree here, and sit on the wall and wait till you make up your minds to it," said Monk.

"You—you beasts—"

"Don't lose its little temper," said Monk. "All's fair in war, you know. You had us at a disadvantage when you made us sign that paper, you know, and now we've turned the tables on you. We're going to have it back, or bust something."

"No good kicking, Figgins," said Kerr, with a heavy sigh. "They've got to have it, and we may as well own up to it first as last."

Figgins grunted.

"What do you fellows say?" he inquired, looking round at the Co.

"Nothing," answered Blake politely. "We've got nothing to say. You're the giddy leader in this Co., and you can decide for yourself."

"That's only fair," said Digby. "We may as well give in. You've got to, you know, unless you want to leave Fatty there all night."

Figgins seemed to gulp something down.

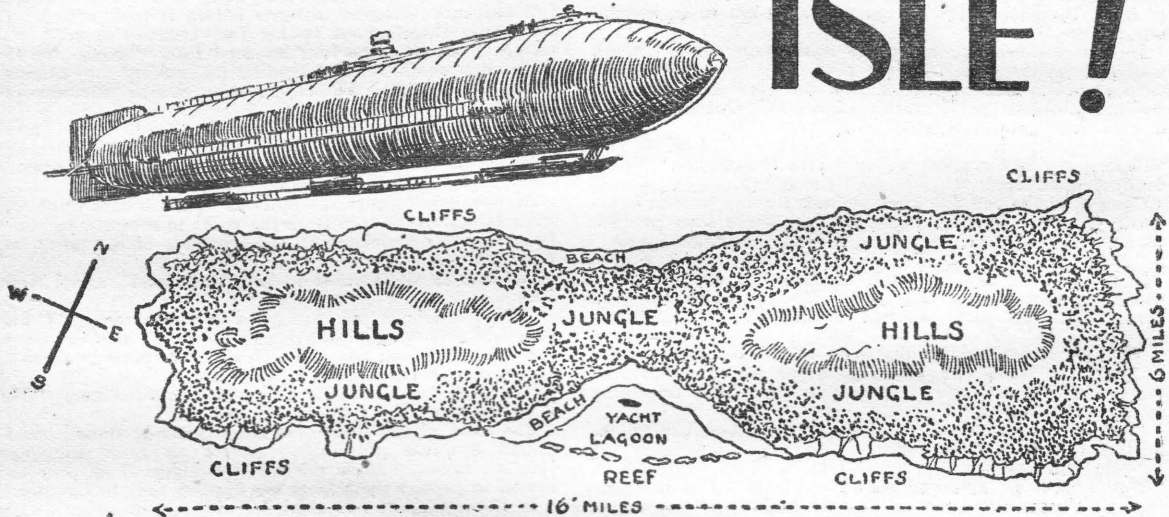
"All right," he said. "I agree. You shall have the rotten document by the first post in the morning, young Monkey!"

"Right you are, Figgins!" chuckled Monk. "I know I can take your word. Here's your prize oyster."

(Continued on page 23.)

ST. FRANK'S CHUMS ON THE TREASURE TRAIL!

TREASURE ISLE!



THE OPENING CHAPTERS

The *Sky Wanderer*, the airship school of the St. Frank's chums, lands on Tao-Tao Island, in the Pacific, in response to a message for help from Mr. Beverton, an explorer treasure-seeking on the island. It transpires that Doc Haynes and most of the crew of the explorer's yacht have mutinied to seek the treasure. To ensure his own safety from the airship school, Haynes, who is friendly with the cannibals, captures twelve of the St. Frank's boys. But Handforth and his two chums escape and hide in a secret cave. They discover that a tremendous cavern leads from the cave, and, when it is explored, they are amazed to see four figures ahead of them.

Surprising Discoveries!

AS Handforth and his chums stood staring into that great cavern, it came as a big surprise to see the four human figures lying on the rocks in the distance. "They're white men," muttered Church huskily. "No, one of 'em's black—"

"My only sainted aunt!" gurgled Handforth. "The black one must be Umlosi! They're members of our party, you chaps! Mr. Lee, perhaps—and Dorrie—"

Without another word, they dashed forward. So great was their excitement, that they gave no thought to their amazing discovery. As they blundered recklessly across the uneven rock floor, one of the reclining figures leapt actively to its feet, gun in hand.

"Hurrah! It's Mr. Lee!" yelled Handforth, his voice echoing and re-echoing astonishingly.

At that sound the other three figures aroused themselves; they rose to their feet with almost comie bewilderment.

"Well, Handforth, you were always a fellow of surprises," said Nelson Lee calmly.

The thought which flashed through his shrewd brain at that moment was the obvious fact that there was another exit to this great cavern. The very presence of Handforth & Co. proved it.

"Mr. Lee! What's happened? What are you doing here?" panted Handforth, staring at the bedraggled figures. "Great Scott! Dorrie, too—and Umlosi! Well, I'm jiggered!"

"You're not the only one who's jiggered, my son," said Lord Dorrimore. "We're just as jiggered as you are. How in the name of all that's mysterious did you get into this cavern?" He waved a hand aloft and glanced upwards. "Ye gods! An' what a cavern!" he added blankly. "I hadn't noticed it before!"

The boys transferred their gaze from the men to the cavern roof, far above. Now that full daylight had come, the illumination within the cavern was considerable; and the roof was a fairyland of dazzling beauty. Stalactites of

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

all shapes and sizes hung downwards, and they glittered with a thousand fires. There were facets of all colours, gleaming and winking and shimmering.

"Diamonds! Rubies! Emeralds!" gasped Handforth. "Look at 'em! Thousands and thousands! The treasure of Don Manuel!"

"I hate to disillusion you, Handforth, but what you are looking at is nothing but coloured quartz—probably quite valueless," said Nelson Lee dryly.

"Oh!" said Handforth, suddenly sobered.

"Forget the coloured quartz," went on Lee. "I am very glad to see you three boys, and I want to know how it is that you are here."

"And we want to know how you are here, sir."

"Very likely; but we'll have your story first, if you don't mind," said the great detective. "What of Nipper and the other boys? Are they safe?"

Thereupon, Handforth, eager enough to tell of his exciting adventures, related the story. He took a pride in doing so, for he rather felt—not without justification—that he had acted with astuteness and commendable presence of mind in a difficult situation.

"Well done, boys!" said Lee at length. "It was a pity that you took the wrong path when you escaped from the native village. Nipper's plan was a good one—but, unfortunately, it misfired. You don't know what happened to Nipper and the others?"

"I think they were grabbed by that blighter, Haynes."

"I am glad they are with Haynes, and not with the savages," said Lee. "Haynes is a rascal, but I don't think he'll do any harm to the boys."

"Now it's your turn, sir," hinted Handforth. "How did you get into this cavern?"

The story was soon told, and the boys were breathless with wonder as they listened to it.

"There is no exit this way," concluded Lee. "The rock channel through which we were forced by the whirlpool is under water—even at low tide."

"And the only other exit is through that freshwater pool, sir," said McClure, in a startled voice. "That's queer, isn't it? I don't see that we can do anything, because that pool is right in the centre of Doc Haynes' camp. If we get out that way we shall be in a hornets' nest."

"We have not yet explored this cavern, neither have you exhausted all the possibilities of the great fissure," replied Lee. "For all we know, there might be a dozen other exits."

"Let's look!" said Handforth eagerly.

"Plenty of time," smiled Lee. "The first thing we must consider is food. We can't expect to do much in the way of

rescuing the other boys until we have attended to the requirements of the inner man."

"By George! That's true, too, sir!" said Handforth. "I'd forgotten all about it until now, but it's a fact that I'm famished."

"This is all very entertainin'," said Lord Dorrimore, "but where's the food comin' from, Lee? We haven't got so much as a meat cube between the lot of us!"

"But countless tides have brought a lot of driftwood into this rock pool," replied Lee, pointing. "And I shall be very surprised if the pool does not contain quite a large variety of fish. Catching a few specimens ought not to be beyond our powers, Dorrie."

In a very short time a big fire was blazing; and Umlosi, wading into the waters of the pool, used his trusty spear with complete success. As Nelson Lee had said, the pool was a veritable trap for countless fish which had been sucked down through the maelstrom.

"A monotonous diet, but, at a pinch, such food as this will keep us fit for many a day," said Nelson Lee. "It is comforting to know that we shall not starve."

Cooked on the red hot wood embers, the fish proved appetizing enough. The four men and the three boys partook of a substantial meal, and they felt all the better for it.

"Now we can do some exploring," said Lee, at length. "By all that the boys have told us, Dorrie, it seems evident that this cavern and the great fissure are unknown to Haynes and his men—perhaps unknown to the islanders themselves."

"That gives us a big advantage—eh?" said Dorrie, with satisfaction. "We can penetrate right into the heart of Haynes' camp, an' we've still got our guns. I'm beginning to smell excitement."

"Wau! Wondrous words, N'Kose!" rumbled Umlosi, as he lovingly fondled his spear.

"You two are just as bloodthirsty as ever," smiled Lee. "Well, you'll be disappointed, I'm afraid. I'm not proposing to make any spectacular raid on Haynes' camp just yet. We can't afford to take the risk; we don't want Haynes to whisk the other boys out of our reach. First, let's see what other secrets this cavern has in store."

A discovery of some importance was quickly made. Lee was not interested in the tunnel through which Handforth & Co. had emerged from the fissure. Exploring the fissure would have been a waste of time, for the boys were already aware of its possibilities. Lee wanted to know whether there was any other exit.

It was, in fact, very important; for Lee did not forget how Handforth & Co. had been obliged to squeeze and push their way through the narrow sections of the tunnel. It was likely enough that they were too small to admit the passage of the men.

So the explorers broke up into pairs, each pair going in a different direction. The cavern's sides were honeycombed with rocky openings, with jagged, jutting masses which stuck out at all angles. Within five minutes a shout from Dorrie announced a discovery: the others came hurrying up.

"Take a look through here," said Dorrie calmly. "It strikes me as bein' promisin'."

There was a big gap, half hidden by projecting rocks; but when the rocks were rounded, a wide tunnel was visible. It stretched for fully a hundred yards, its sides irregular, rugged, its floor uneven with massive boulders. But in the distance dazzling sunshine lighted the tunnel's darkness.

"Hurrah!" yelled Handforth excitedly. "It's a way out."

He prepared to dash forward, but Lee checked him. "There's no hurry, young 'un," he said. "There might be pitfalls along this tunnel."

So they advanced slowly, their torchlights showing the way. True enough, they soon came upon ugly crevices—chasms, apparently—without bottom. A fall into such an abyss would mean death or grave injury. But all the dangers were easily avoided by progressing slowly and cautiously.

"Glad you pulled me up, sir," said Handforth gratefully. "You can't be too careful!"

"We must be just as careful when we reach the exit," said Nelson Lee. "We must not show ourselves until we

know what lies beyond. Always remember that this island is the home of a highly dangerous tribe of savages."

Thus, when they neared the sunny exit, it was Lee who led the way. He emerged with great caution, keeping back in the dense shadows at first, and crouching low. Then he walked boldly out into the blazing sunshine, and beckoned his companions on.

When they joined him they were struck, at first, by the appalling heat, and then by the character of their surroundings.

They were in a narrow rocky defile which stretched for a full half-mile into the distance before it took a turn; the sides rose sheerly, not twelve feet apart—two rock walls towering for three or four hundred feet, with the sun in a direct line overhead, and sending its slanting rays blazingly upon the rocks. To climb the smooth surfaces was impossible.

"Phew! A queer sort of canyon this," commented Dorrie, as he stared upwards. "Reminds me of Wall Street, in New York. Gad! What's the temperature? About a hundred an' twenty, I should think!"

After the coolness of the inner cavern, the heat was indeed suffocating, and it rose from the rocks in shimmering waves. In a very few moments all the members of the party were wet with perspiration.

"Is this at all familiar to you, Beverton?" asked Nelson Lee.

"Good gracious, no!" replied the explorer. "I know practically nothing of the island—certainly nothing beyond the two recognised beaches. This canyon must be some distance inland—or, at least, it leads inland."

"It leads somewhere, at all events," nodded Lee. "We'd better advance."

The floor of the defile was comparatively smooth, and it sloped upwards gradually. Acting on Lee's suggestion, they all removed their shirts and fastened them over their heads, to protect them from the blazing rays of the sun.

In this way they advanced, but a disappointment awaited them.

For when they approached the end of the canyon they found that it ceased abruptly, not twenty yards farther on. At first, indeed, they thought that it was merely a cul-de-sac. Owing to the turn they were now in welcome shade, and they redonned their shirts. But even here the heat was terrible.

"Well, it's a fizzle," said Dorrie, in disgust. "We've got to go back, I suppose."

"Not yet," said Lee. "There appears to be a narrow opening. Yes! Look at this!"

He disappeared round a face of rock, but there was no room for the others to follow. Round the angle, however, Lee had discovered a tunnel which was roughly two feet wide by about five feet in height. Daylight showed at the other end, thirty yards distant, and a strong wind was blowing through.

"My only sainted aunt!" breathed Handforth excitedly. "There's a way out, after all!"

"We'll take this in single file," said Lee briefly.

He plunged in, and when he neared the exit he became cautious. For where the sunshine lapped the rocks there was no floor—nothing but empty air.

With a word of caution to the others, Lee dropped on his hands and knees, and when, at length, he could see out through the opening, he was glad he had displayed such caution.

For he found that the exit was but a hole in a sheer rock cliff. Above him towered the rocks for several hundred feet; and below the precipice dropped sheer, without a ledge, for three hundred feet. Stretched out before Nelson Lee's eyes was a great valley—and in that valley there was tremendous activity.

The Treasure Hunters!

DOC HAYNES sat on the veranda of his bungalow, and two Tao-Tao blacks, at his back, were engaged in fanning him with palm leaves. The sunshine of the tropic morning was blazing relentlessly down on the white sands of the beach. Beyond stretched the lagoon, with the yacht lying at anchor. The beach, fringed with graceful palms, was a scene of peacefulness.

"All set, Doc," said Red Harker.

"O.K.!" nodded Haynes, removing the long cigar from his mouth. "Bring the big buzzard along."

Thus he disrespectfully alluded to no less a person than K'bili, the chief of the Tao-Tao Islanders.

Haynes had sense enough to keep himself at arm's length from this savage chief. Their meetings, at all times, were full of ceremonious formalities. For there was not only K'bili's dignity to consider, but Doc Haynes' own kingly importance. He had sent word during the night that he desired an immediate conference with Chief K'bili, and here was the chief himself.

St.
Frank's
STAMP
WHOS
WHO



H. Conroy J. Owen, C. Fellows.

(Three more portraits next week.)

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"Stand back!" said Nelson Lee briefly, and then he charged. As his shoulder struck the rock, it gave way suddenly, and Lee went staggering through into blackness! Had he discovered the secret hiding-place of the Tao-Tao Island treasure?

He emerged from the forest belt surrounded by a dozen of his headmen. The only thing which distinguished him from the other Tao-Tao blacks was his repulsive cast of countenance. His black face registered cunning, treachery, and bestial savagery. Haynes was the only white man who had ever been known to make peace with this bloodthirsty cannibal. And Haynes knew—better than anybody else—that he retained his supremacy on Tao-Tao Island only by reason of his tact in dealing with K'bili.

The "big buzzard" himself approached the bungalow's veranda and gave the tribal salute. Haynes responded with dignity.

"I have presents of tea and sugar and salt, Chief K'bili," he said, in the native tongue. "Peace be with you, and may our friendship be everlasting."

"We have made search for the three white boys," said K'bili, after acknowledging Haynes' greeting. "My tribesmen have gone everywhere, and the boys are not in the forests."

He went into further details of the hunt—a hunt which had lasted for many hours. Hundreds of the blacks had participated. Haynes watched the chief closely, ever ready to detect lies. At the back of his mind, Haynes feared that the three missing boys had been captured by K'bili and were being held in secret for some hideous tribal sacrifice later.

But Haynes knew these blacks as well as he knew the palm of his own hands; he could tell when they were lying and when they were telling the truth. He knew that K'bili was truthful now.

"The kids seem to have done the trick," he said, addressing his own men in English. "I reckon they must have doubled back somehow, and got to the other beach."

"Unless this black devil has hidden them up somewhere," said Bill Button.

"No; he doesn't know where they are, and he's disappointed," replied Haynes. "Still, we've got to make certain, and later on to-day I'll go round to that airship and have a talk."

K'bili was speaking again; he was demanding to be enlightened as to the monstrous vessel which had flown over the island yesterday.

Haynes reassured him. He declared that the men of the airship were helpless, that they would give no trouble whatsoever. Everything, in fact, was to go on just as before. He—Haynes—could be trusted to take good care of the unwanted intruders. K'bili was warned, at the same time, that neither he nor his men must make any hostile demonstration against the white party on the northern beach. Haynes, in fact, was desperately anxious to protect these people whom he had made his enemies. For he had enough

common sense to see that if any harm came to them, his own position would be dangerous. In any case, he had trouble enough as it was, and he did not want any more. The treasure of Tao-Tao Island obstinately eluded him, although he had spent weeks in searching; and, even if he secured the treasure, his future was uncertain.

But this modern buccaneer was a man who refused to cross bridges before he came to them; it would be time enough to think of ways and means after the treasure was found. Until then he must mark time—he must keep Mitchell Beverton and his new friends at armslength. He wanted no warfare on the island, for this treasure hunt was more than sufficient to keep him fully occupied.

So, after some more formalities, and a lot of useless talk, Chief K'bili was graciously given leave to depart, which he did with due ceremony. His personal bearers carried away sacks and cases of presents—all very kindly given by Doc Haynes out of Mr. Beverton's stores.

"Glad that's over, Red," said Haynes, as he took a stiff drink within the bungalow. "It pays to be polite to these blackamoors. Handle 'em gently—that's my motto." He donned his wide-rimmed hat. "Now we'll go along and set them kids to work."

"What about the three what's missin', boss?" asked Buttons.

"They're either dead or back with the main party," replied Doc. "But I'll make sure of that later. You'd best fix the motor-boat, Bill. We'll be needin' it this afternoon. I'm going visitin'."

He strode out into the glaring sunshine, crossed a stretch of the white beach, and unlocked the door of the store-hut which held his schoolboy prisoners.

"All right, kids—you can come out," he said pleasantly.

The nine St. Frank's juniors were glad enough to emerge, for the heat within the hut was suffocating. They were dazzled at first by the blinding sunshine. They expected to find a number of grim, armed men about them. But Doc Haynes was apparently alone and weaponless. His big face wore a wide grin.

"See that hut over there?" he said, pointing. "That one with the open side? There's grub there, kids. Go and help yourselves. Better eat hearty, because you're going to work hard."

"Good gad!" murmured Archie Glenthorne, in dismay. "Work? In this frightful heat? Absolutely imposs!"

Nipper was looking fixedly at their captor.

"What's the idea of this, Haynes?" he demanded bluntly.

"Manners, kid—manners," admonished Haynes. "Say 'mister' when you speak to me."

"You're piling up a whole lot of trouble for yourself, Mister Haynes," said Nipper, with conviction. "This high-handed behaviour is all very well—but you won't get away with it in the long run. My gov'nor will hand you over to the authorities—"

He was interrupted by a burst of hearty laughter from Haynes.

"Where's the authorities?" he demanded, his eyes twinkling. "You don't realise, young shaver, that we are thousands of miles from the nearest land. We're on Tao-Tao—and no ship comes within miles of us. We're cut off from the world, and I'm boss here."

"Distance is nothing to an airship, Mr. Haynes," said Vivian Travers. "As soon as we are on our way again—"

"Ay, mebbe," interrupted Haynes. "But you ain't on your way—and you won't be just yet. While I keep you boys with me, the airship can't move. And them with it can't move, neither. They're watched day and night by my blacks, and I know just what's doing."

Haynes then indicated the hut with the open side again, and strode off. The boys paused uncertainly for a few moments, and then drifted towards the hut. They were hungry—and thirsty.

"Hi, Mr. Haynes!" shouted Nipper.

Doc Haynes turned.

"Spill it!" he invited.

"What's become of Handforth and his two pals?"

"I don't know their names—but they've given me the slip," replied Haynes frankly.

"You're not trying to fool us?" asked Nipper.

Haynes laughed.

"Reckon they're back with the airship," he replied. "Best get them eats, sonny. You're going to work mighty soon."

"He's a queer sort of crook," said Nipper, frowning, when he joined the others. "In some ways I rather like him. I mean, he's open enough, and he's not a bully. I believe what he says about Handforth & Co., too. Yet I can't understand how the bouncers got away."

"Does it matter?" asked Buster Boots. "We haven't got away—and it doesn't look as though we'll have the chance. Let's get some grub."



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F. W. Minde, Hon. Sec. of the Imperial Film Club, 100, Dalton Lane, London, E.8, will be glad to hear from readers who would like to join the Club. The I.F.C. is giving a dance next Saturday, March 3rd, at the Portman Rooms, Baker Street, London, W.1, and tickets, price 3s., may be had from the Secretary at the above address.

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They found plenty of rough food in that hut. Bill Button was there, and Bill made himself quite pleasant.

"Doc's all right if you rub him the right way," he confided. "Best do as you're told, young mateys. I don't want to see you get into no trouble." He ladled out enamel pans filled with cold baked beans, and chunks of canned meat. "Tain't what you're used to, like enough, but it's 'olesome. We ain't baked this morning, so there's no bread, but you can 'elp yourselves to them biscuits."

The food tasted good, and it was washed down with draughts of deliciously cold water.

Before the meal was over Red Harker arrived.

"You ain't been lettin' these kids eat our biscuits, have you, Button, you old fool?" he demanded, with an oath.

"You ain't safe to be trusted nowhere! Now then, you young cubs! Line up!"

"Any reason why you can't be civil?" asked Travers mildly.

But Harker only repeated his harsh orders. He was of a different type from Button—a coarse, bullying brute of a man. The boys, rather than cause trouble, lined up as they were ordered. Then they were marched off. At the jungle's edge a couple of dozen blacks formed up as an escort.

"Where are you taking us?" asked Nipper.

"Where you won't give no trouble!" retorted Red. "Mebbe it ain't a bad idea of the Doc's to make you kids work."

"They plunged into the steamy, insect-infested jungle, where the heat was like that of a forcing-house. They walked in double file along a rough forest path—which Nipper at once saw was fairly new. The trees and the undergrowth had been cleared recently, and the dead and dying debris lay in heaps in full sight. The direction taken was in the rear of the rocks which jutted up so unexpectedly on the beach—the rocks which contained the fresh water pool.

With the high spirits of youth, the juniors were eagerly attentive; if they were not enjoying their experience, they were certainly interested in it. And, as Travers truthfully and cheerfully remarked, they were getting out of morning lessons very nicely.

The jungle path ended abruptly, for scarcely half a mile had been covered when the party emerged into bright sunshine, and they looked about them in astonishment. They were now in a valley of strange formation.

Immediately facing them a wall of rock arose—a precipice as sheer as the windowless side of a house. Its summit was a mass of uneven crags, scorched under the eternal sun glare. Both ends of the valley were inaccessible—blocked with immense boulders. And the side opposite the frowning cliff was the dense jungle. The actual floor of the gully was barren of vegetation—a sun-scorched arid waste of multi-coloured rocks with patches of reddish sand.

In various places gangs of blacks were at work, each gang under the supervision of a white man. They were labouring with picks and shovels, and the whole floor of the valley was pocked with deep excavations.

"Great Scott! They're digging for the treasure!" exclaimed Tommy Watson.

"You said it, kid; and that's what you're going to do," said Red Harker, with a sour grin. "Ever tried diggin' under a tropic sun?"

Doc Haynes himself came striding up, the inevitable cigar jutting out of his mouth.

"All set?" he asked cheerily. "Had plenty of grub, kids? Good! Bring them this way, Red. We'll start 'em off under the cliff where it's shady."

Nipper and his fellow prisoners appreciated this unexpected mark of consideration. They were taken out of the sunlight glare into the welcome shade cast by the great cliff. Here they were given picks and spades and shovels, and Haynes indicated a rough circle with his finger.

"Dig here, kids, and keep on digging," he said. "That's all."

There was nothing else for it, so they set to work. One or two of them felt like rebelling, but Nipper, with a warning glance, stifled this. Rebellion would be no good—it would only worsen their lot.

"Haynes has proved that he isn't all bad," muttered Nipper, when Doc was out of hearing. "But if we make trouble he'll show his teeth. He'll probably put us to work in the open—with the sun on us."

From a distance Doc Haynes watched the boys with satisfaction.

"We can do with this extra labour, Red," he said. "That treasure is in this valley somewhere. The old chart says so clearly enough. But, unless we're lucky, it looks like being a long job."

"Them kids ain't working so hard," grunted Red. "Best let me pep 'em up—"

"You leave 'em alone," interrupted Haynes. "Can't expect 'em to work too hard at fust. They ain't used to it. But it'll tire 'em out," he added complacently. "Keep 'em goin' all day long, Red, but don't drive 'em. When night comes they'll be all in and give no trouble."

"Just as you say, Doc," admitted Red Harker, grinning. Unknown to them an invisible figure in the cliff far above was crouching. For it was upon this scene of activity that Nelson Lee gazed.

The Pointing Arrows!

NELSON LEE was aware of a quiet sense of satisfaction. This was a discovery, indeed. The narrow canyon had led him to the very heart of Doc Haynes' activities. The working parties below were treasure hunters. They were performing the work which Mr. Mitchell Beverton himself had come to Tao-Tao Island to undertake.

Another reason for Nelson Lee's satisfaction was his sight of the nine schoolboys working in a lone party, almost immediately below. He would have liked to give Nipper an indication of his close proximity, but such a thing was impossible. He was obliged to crouch very low so that Haynes and his men would not see him.

"Good!" he muttered. "The boys are safe, then—all nine of them. And Haynes is making them work. Well, it won't hurt them. Better for them to be here than in the hands of the blacks."

He moved back a little, and, at the same time, with a heavy "plop" something soft and furry fell on the back of his neck. Like lightning Lee swept up a hand and brushed the thing away. On the hot rock, close against him, an incredibly large spider dropped. It was golden brown in colour, hairy, and its eyes were venomous. One bite from such an insect might mean death.

The next moment the horrid insect leapt, and at the same moment Lee used his only weapon of defence, for there was no time for him to bring his hand round again. He expelled his breath with all his force, blowing full at the spider. The sudden breath caught it almost in mid-air, and it rolled over and over and fell into space.

Lee breathed hard, and glanced up at the rocks of the tunnel roof. For it occurred to him that there might be a nest of spiders, and he had no wish for the other members of the family to drop on him. His attention was suddenly arrested, and his eyes took on a gleam.

For Nelson Lee saw no nest of spiders; but embedded in the rock was a great iron hook. It was almost hidden in the shadows, and it was, indeed, only a ghost of its original self; for it was obviously hundreds of years old, rusted, eaten away. Lee's mind worked rapidly, and he found himself thinking strange things.

"An iron hook, driven into these age-old rocks," he muttered. "Why? If I know anything at all, it's an old ship's hook—that was never fashioned by natives. White men fixed the hook here, and the obvious inference is that a pulley and tackle was suspended from it. Heavy objects were raised up the cliff face, and drawn into this rock tunnel."

He was thinking of the long-lost treasure of Dom Manuel Alvarez—stolen by seventeenth century pirates, and buried on Tao-Tao Island.

Nelson Lee backed into the tunnel, intent upon returning to his companions. Well back in the tunnel he turned, and as he did so he caught sight of something on the hard rock close against his face. An arrow, crude and irregular, hewn in the face of the rock. The arrow was pointing back towards the canyon.

"By gosh!" muttered Lee. "I wonder! The significance of that hook is unmistakable. And now—this arrow."

As he went along the tunnel he used his electric torch. It was safe enough to do so, for the light could not be seen. Sure enough, fifteen yards away there was another arrow—and at the very entrance, where Dorrie and the rest were waiting, there was yet another hewn in the solid rock.

"Well?" went up a chorus as Lee appeared.

"We're not so unlucky, after all," replied Lee calmly. "Make your mind easy about Nipper and the rest of your friends, Handforth. They are within sight—digging for treasure, in fact."

"Lucky beggars!" said Handforth indignantly.

"Not so lucky," replied Lee. "Digging for treasure may sound picturesque, young 'un—but, actually, it is nothing but useless hard work."

He told them of what he had seen, and Dorrie was jubilant. Mr. Beverton fairly bubbled with excitement.

"Why, yes, of course—Death Valley!" he exclaimed. "That's what you've seen, Mr. Lee. Death Valley is clearly marked on the chart—it's where the treasure is buried."

"What is this chart exactly?" asked Lee.

"Oh, it's quite authentic—a chart left by the old pirate

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hundreds of years ago," said Mr. Beverton earnestly. "It was discovered in seventeen hundred and something, and since then it has passed through countless hands. Many parties have been to Tao-Tao Island, determined to search for the treasure, but the blacks have always beaten them off. There's no doubt, however, that the treasure is buried here; I can give you many proofs of it."

"Judging from the fact that Haynes is digging in many parts of the valley, the chart does not give the exact position," said Lee.

"That is the unfortunate point," agreed Mr. Beverton. "The valley itself is marked—but nothing more."

Lee was thoughtful, whilst his companions talked eagerly. Handforth & Co. were boisterous in their excitement, and they wanted to go into action at once. So did Dorrie.

"Why not?" he asked. "We've got guns—bombs, too. The gas bombs weren't hurt by their immersion—"

"My dear man, what could we do in full daylight?" interrupted Lee. "No; we must lie low until darkness. Then, perhaps, we might be able to spring a surprise on Mr. Haynes. In the meantime—What do you make of this, Dorrie?"

He walked forward, and flashed the light of his torch on the last of the roughly hewn arrows.

"That's queer," said his lordship. "Who could have carved it? A pointin' arrow! An' it points into the canyon."

"There are other arrows in the tunnel," said Lee calmly.

And he told them of the hook—and of its significance.

"But this is amazing!" exclaimed Mr. Beverton excitedly.

"Is it possible, Mr. Lee, that we have stumbled upon a real clue?"

Dorrie roared with laughter.

"By the Lord Harry! That's rich!" he chuckled. "There's Haynes down there, working with his gangs, an' diggin' up the floor of the valley! We come into this thing by chance—we get sucked down by a whirlpool and find ourselves in a cavern—an' we hit upon this clue. What do you think of that for an exhibition of Fate's tricky little habits?"

"We mustn't count on anything, Dorrie," said Lee, shaking his head. "The hook and the arrows may have nothing to do with the treasure. But I will admit that we might as well follow up the clue—for what it is worth. We'll see if these arrows continue down the canyon."

Handforth & Co., in particular, were bubbling with animation. Suddenly, unexpectedly, they were in this treasure hunt themselves! It was almost too good to be true.

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true. There was something fascinating in the thought that those pointing arrows, carved in the rock centuries ago, might lead to the long-lost treasure. Until one looked for them with closely searching eyes they were more or less invisible.

"Wait—wait!" gasped Beverton suddenly.

They were in the defile now, moving along, eagerly searching for another arrow. And the explorer was standing stock-still, his face tense with the emotion which filled him.

"What is it?" asked Lee sharply.

"The chart!" gasped Beverton. "I remember now. In the centre of the place which is marked as Death Valley there is a crudely drawn pointing arrow."

"What!"

"As a clue it seemed useless," continued Beverton. "For the arrow points vaguely across the valley—it might indicate any spot within two or three hundred yards."

"On the other hand, it might indicate a hole in the rock cliff," said Nelson Lee shrewdly. "A hole, moreover, which is practically invisible from the floor of the valley. This is certainly beginning to look interesting."

"Here's another arrow, sir!" yelled Handforth, his voice cracking with excitement.

Like the others, it was carved in the rock wall of the canyon, and it pointed straight down that narrow defile—which was now completely in shadow, for the sun had passed from directly overhead, and the depth of the canyon allowed no further sunlight to enter.

Lee took the lead now. Once on the right track, there were no difficulties at all. The next arrow was found twenty yards farther on—and then another—and another. One of them was nearly worn away—perhaps by the influence of rainstorms.

Then at length an arrow pointed into a shallow cave in the side of the defile. But there was no opening there—no tunnel of any kind.

"Hallo! This seems strange," said Lee tensely. "There's another arrow quite close—and it points to the rocks at the back of this little cave. Is there another arrow the other side, Dorrie?"

"Not a sign of one," said his lordship, searching the rock-face.

"Can it mean, then, that this ends the trail?" asked Lee.

"By Jove! Look here! I wonder—"

He broke off. At first sight it seemed that the rock at the base of the cave was unbroken. But this was not so. On close inspection Lee saw that a big slab of the rock had cracks all round it, as though it were loose, or jammed into position. He pressed on it with his hands, but there was no movement.

"Stand back!" said Lee briefly.

He charged at the rock hard, knowing that he would feel the slightest quiver if there was any sign of movement. But that which happened was startling.

For as Lee's shoulder struck the rock it gave way suddenly, falling flat amid a clatter of fragments. And Nelson Lee himself went staggering through into blackness!

(What has Nelson Lee discovered? Is it the hiding-place of the treasure? Don't miss next week's gripping chapters.)

RIVAL RAGGERS!

(Continued from page 22.)

And Fatty Wynn was slung off the wall by the Grammar School chums, who lowered him by their hands and let him drop.

Monk, Lane, and Carboy disappeared within the wall. They went off to the dormitory feed in great glee. The defeated Co. were decidedly glum as they took the homeward route to St. Jim's.

Not a word was spoken till they separated in the quadrangle to go to their respective Houses. Then D'Arcy aired his opinion.

"My word!" said the swell of St. Jim's. "We've had two weally wotten leaders, Figgins, but I weally think you are the wottenest of all. Weally, how a fellow like you could have the feaful nerve to set up to lead a fellow like me—"

The swell of School House broke off there. He had intended to go on for some time; but Figgins, whose patience had been sorely tried, dotted him on the nose just then, and Arthur Augustus staggered away.

Figgins & Co. marched off to their own House. D'Arcy recovered himself, and made an attempt to rush after Figgins. Blake and Digby caught him by the arm and jerked him back.

"Wease me!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "Figgins has stwuck me! He has stwuck me on the nose, you know. Wease me at once!"

"Oh, come home!" said Blake. "It's too late to make a row to-night. You'll have a lot of prefects jumping on you!"

"I do not desire to make a row; but—"

"Oh, do what your uncle tells you!" said Blake. "Come home."

And the indignant swell of St. Jim's was dragged away by his chums. As the seven School House juniors tramped across the dusky quadrangle towards their home a gloomy silence settled down upon them.

As they reached the School House entrance, Tom Merry paused a moment, and broke the silence.

"Chaps," he exclaimed, in a low, earnest whisper, "chaps, we've been done—done brown by the Grammarians, and it won't do! We can't stand it! And I for one am not going to rest until we've won back the prestige of St. Jim's!"

"And so say all of us!" came the fervent murmur out of the darkness from six throats simultaneously.

"Then it's Saints versus Grammarians!" exclaimed the hero of the Shell, in thrilling tones. "It's war—war to the knife between the rival schools!"

THE END.

(Another great yarn of Tom Merry & Co. and their Grammarian rivals next week, telling how the St. Jim's chums fare when they attempt to avenge their defeats. Read all about it in "WHAT PRICE VICTORY?")



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