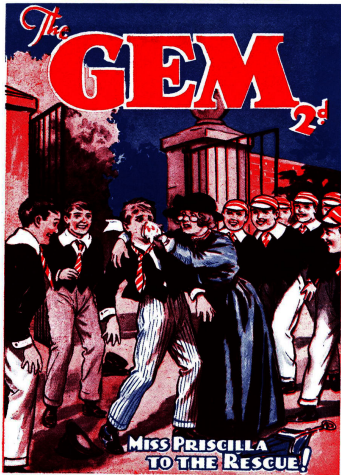


"TOM MERRY'S BODYGUARD!" and "HARRY WHARTON'S CHALLENGE!"  
GREAT SCHOOL YARNS INSIDE.

# The GEM 2d



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THE SCHOOLBOY WHO HAD A TEG TO GUARD HIM—  
ALTHOUGH HE WAS IN NO DANGER!

# TOM MERRY'S



Tom Merry strode swiftly along the passage with the energetic Mr. Tegg following closely behind. That gentleman, as Tom's bodyguard, was evidently determined to stick to him like a bloodhound in a trail. Whenever Tom cast the eye was sure to follow, and it made the justice shiver with laughter.

## CHAPTER I.

### The Very Best!

"SUNDAY toppers, I suppose!" said Monty Lowther.  
"Certainly!"  
"Best bags?"

"Oh course!"  
"And nice clean collars!" said Manners, with a sigh. "And spotless ties!"

"And flowers in your jackets," said Tom Merry.

"Oh crabs!" said Lowther.

"Oh crabs!" said Manners.

They looked rebellious. Sunday toppers and their best bags, clean collars, and new neckties, seemed quite enough to Manners and Lowther. But to wear flowers in their jackets was the last straw.

But Tom Merry was firm. When Tom Merry, the captain of the Shell at St. Jim's, did anything, he did it thoroughly. He was doing it thoroughly now.

The Terrible Three were in the Shell dormitory in the School House. It was a bright and sunny afternoon—a half-holiday at St. Jim's. On the playing fields some of the juniors were playing cricket. But Tom Merry & Co. were not to urge the Spring ball that afternoon. They were not to maul by the gleaming Rhyl, or to sip lemonade under the shady old trees outside the tuckshop. There was other and far more important business on hand.

This important business seemed to

consist in dressing themselves in their very best clothes, and making themselves as neat and clean as new pins from top to toe. And the Terrible Three, who had a schoolboy's hatred for best clothes, did not enjoy that process. But it had to be done, and they faced the necessity manfully.

Certainly they looked very smart when they had finished dressing. Only the flowers for their jackets gave lacking. Monty Lowther surveyed himself in the glass as he held his bright and shining topper in his hand.

"Oh crabs!" he remarked at once.

"Don't we look pretty!"

"We do—we do!" agreed Manners, with a grin as at his handsome reflection. "Where are we to get the flowers, Tommy?"

Tom Merry reflected.

"Must look them in the Head's garden," he said. "The gardener may let us have some when we tell him we're meeting a lady visitor."

"And if he won't—"  
"Then we shall have to help ourselves. Miss Fawcett likes to see dear little boys with dear little flowers in their dear little jackets," said Tom Merry, with a grin.

"I suppose Miss Fawcett will be here soon!" said Monty Lowther, glancing at his watch. "If she takes a cab from Wayland, she can't be much later."

"Well, we're all ready, excepting the flowers."

"How the flowers!" said Manners.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Come on! And, mind, no larks!

Don't give any of the fellows an excuse for billing us."

"That would spoil the effect," grinned Monty Lowther, and he and Manners followed Tom Merry out of the dormitory.

They walked sedately, as become young gentlemen dressed in their very best. They made their way down the passage and down the stairs, and walked out of the School House. Many eyes were turned upon them as they went. The Terrible Three were not, at all deviously in their way, but it was unusual to see them dressed to kill. Now, set the slightest speck of dust, not the faintest spot of ink, was to be detected on any of their immaculate persons.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form, was waiting himself on the steps of the School House. Arthur Augustus was an elegant and fastidious youth, the glass of fashion in the Lower Form. But for once the swell of the School House was equalled, if not outdone, by the charms of the Shell. He started as he saw them, and raised his famous eyeglasses to his eye and surveyed them. The three Shell fellows halted and submitted themselves for his inspection.

"Bai Zee!" said D'Arcy.

"Will we do?" asked Lowther politely.

"Yess, wathah! I am verry glad to see you fellows wespiciant! at last the great importance of one's personal attire. You really look quite respectable for once."

"Thanks, awfully!"



leap rag, and hang by one stud. The driver was gone from the coast, and lay crumpled up beside a dusty topper.

Manoos and Leather, in no better condition, slunk at Miss Fawcett, Figgins & Co., exchanging a horrified grin, and a sneer. They felt that they were no longer wanted on the scene.

The Terrible Three had to stand their ground. Tom Merry put up his hand to his nose, from which a thin, red stream was flowing.

"Oh!" he said.

That was all he could think of to say for the moment.

Miss Fawcett gazed at her beloved with a horror.

"Tommy!"

"Alone!"

"My dearest child, you are hurt! These dreadful young ruffians" gasped Miss Fawcett. "These—these dreadful hoodlums! Oh, my dearest child!"

Tom Merry's flushed face turned more red. Miss Fawcett seemed could understand that her ward, Tom Merry, was growing up, and that he was quite a big fellow in the Shell Form, an athlete, a born footballer and cricketer, and so healthy and fit as a boy possibly could be. To the kind old lady, Tom Merry was still the dear little boy she had brought home from India at a tender age, and when she had wept through all her indefinite illnesses. Tom Merry's health was the chief concern of her life now.

"My dear child, you are hurt! You are bleeding!"

"It's all right!" murmured Tom Merry, accompanied by the chivalrous Leather and Manoos were trying to suppress in vain. "I'm not hurt!"

"You are bleeding! Your darling little nose—"

"Only a pinch! It's all right!"

"Dearest Tommy, why will you fight with those dreadful rough boys?" said Miss Fawcett, almost tearfully. "Why do you not place yourself under the protection of your kind teachers?"

"It isn't exactly a fight!" stammered Tom. "Only fun, you know."

"Fun! It seemed to me a brutal attack!" said Miss Fawcett. "I shall ask the Head to punish those dreadful boys!"

"No, you jolly well won't!" said Tom Merry warmly. "It was only a House row, you know, we've always at it, and so what does it matter! Whenever you stop!"

Miss Fawcett had placed one affectionate arm round his neck, and with the other she stemmed the flow of blood with her own handkerchief.

"I'm staunching your wound for you, my dear child!"

"Oh!"

"Dearest Tommy, tell me the name of the wicked boy who assaulted you! I must complain to the Head about this!"

"Hate—I-I swear, I beg your pardon, but that's all set!"

"Dearest Tommy!" urged Miss Fawcett. "You know how delicate you are! Your health causes me great anxiety. You might suffer seriously from this dreadful laceration. You must tell me the wretched boy's name!"

Fortunately, in the excitement and horror of the moment, Miss Fawcett had not recognized Figgins & Co.

A circle of fellows gathered round, watching Tom Merry and his old governess with great interest—and smiling.

Tom Merry's face was crimson. He was very fond of Miss Fawcett, and he was very grateful for her notice and her unending kindness towards him.

Just Gem Lassard.—No. 1,401.

But to be hugged and consoled with like a small child, in the open quad, amid a crowd of grinning fellows, was a fearful ordeal for the captain of the Shell.

From the back of the crowd came laughter and humorous remarks, which Miss Fawcett did not heed or even hear. But Tom Merry both heard and heeded them.

"The effusion of blood has abated," said Miss Fawcett, with great relief. "But you must see a doctor, Tommy!"

"I—I—"

"But first tell me the name of that dreadful ruffian who was assaulting you. I insist upon it, Tommy darling!"

"Oh, crank!"

"Your little friends have also been awfully assaulted," said Miss Fawcett, with a commiserating glance at Manoos and Leather, who almost choked. "I am sure one of them will tell me the name of that wicked boy, so that I can inform Dr. Holmes."

"Shurrup, you shaps!" murmured Tom Merry.

"My dear, madame," said Monty Lovelace, in his blindest tone, "if you really insist upon knowing the name of the delinquent—"

"Indeed I do!"

"Shurrup, Monty, you see!"

"Thomas, my young friend, I am bound to give Miss Fawcett a name if she insists upon hearing one," said Leather solemnly. "I am surprised at you, Thomas."

"You—you are—"

"What is the name, my dear little boy?" asked Miss Fawcett.

"I was just thinking of the name," said Lovelace. "Lorenzo son. Fitzroggins; Christian name, Cadwalader. There is no name in Miss Fawcett calling the Head that you have been assaulted by Cadwalader Fitzroggins, Tom."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I will remember that name," said Miss Fawcett unconsciously. "I shall certainly report it to the Head. What Form does the wretched boy belong to?"

"The—Seventh!" said Lovelace.

"Dear me!" murmured Miss Fawcett in surprise. "I did not know there was a Seventh Form here—on, indeed, at my school. I understood that the Sixth was the highest Form!"

"Ahem!"

"However, I shall remember—Cadwalader Fitzroggins of the Seventh Form!" said the good old lady. "I shall certainly report it to the Head!"

There was a yell of laughter from the listening fellows. Tom Merry could not help grinning. He wondered what the Head would think when he heard that remarkable name of a boy belonging to a non-existent Form.

"Now, you must see a doctor, my darling," said Miss Fawcett. "Come in and make yourself tidy, and I will take you to see Dr. Short."

"Right!"

"Now, don't make any objections, Tommy dear. Your health is the first consideration," said Miss Fawcett firmly.

"While you are making yourself clean and tidy I will see the Head, and report this dreadful affair to him. Come with me, dear!"

Tom Merry gave his cheeks a glance of hopeless dismay, and submitted to be led away towards the School House.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Gore of the Shell. "This beats the band! Dear Tommy looks as if he were enjoying himself—I don't think!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a nice old relation to drop on a chap!" grinned Lovelace of the Fourth,

"Where does she live? Murray Department in the British Museum, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wendy, Lovelace," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I do not approve of speakin' of an old lady disreputably!"

"Go home!" said Lovelace.

"I regard it as a scandal!"

"Rats! The old girl!"

"If you repeat your disrespectful remarks, Lovelace, I shall hit you!" said Arthur Augustus, his eye gleaming behind his monocle.

And as Arthur Augustus was a great fighting-man, when he could forget the importance of taking care of his clothes, Lovelace judged it better to say no more.

Tom Merry had disappeared into the School House with Miss Fawcett. Manoos and Leather followed him in, and found him in the Head's study, bathing his nose. Miss Fawcett had gone to see the Head.

"Dearest Tommy, how does your little nose feel?" asked Lovelace sympathetically.

Tom Merry glanced over a wet sponge at his cheek.

"You silly chump—"

"Huh! Don't use such dreadful expressions, my little duck!" said Lovelace in a shocked tone. "Your pretty little lips should not form such words! You—"

The wet sponge flew through the air and caught Monty Lovelace under the nose. He sneezed.

"You—you lathered! Oh!"

"If you want the lather after it, you've only got to go on being funny!" said Tom Merry unphilosophically.

"Enough!"

Miss Lovelace decided to bathe a dazed eye instead of being funny any more.

"Where's Miss Fawcett?" asked Manoos.

"Gone to see the Head!" growled Tom Merry.

"And then you're going to the doctor?"

"I suppose so. I—I can't refuse, you know," said Tom ruefully. "Miss Fawcett is the kindest old soul in the world, and I wouldn't hurt her for anything! But—but it is horrid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to chuckle at, you see!"

"Never mind, Tommy. We'll come with you and see the doctor, too," said Manoos consolingly. "Hup up!"

"Next time your governess is coming to see you," said Lovelace, "for goodness sake send her a telegram to say you're ill, dead, or something! The fellows are all chucking like giddy lizzards!"

"Oh, let 'em chuck!" growled Tom.

And he resumed bathing his injured nose.

CHAPTER 3.

Not so Funny for Gem!

**D**R. HOLMES rose to meet Miss Fawcett as she was shown into his study.

That, the page, who conducted her there, was expressing a strong desire to grin. To-day knew how welcome Miss Fawcett's visits were to the Head of St. John's. Dr. Holmes had a great regard and concern for the kind old lady; but there was no doubt that her visits brought a worried look to his scholastic brow.

Her concern for Tommy's health was quite unfounded. Tom Merry was probably the healthiest boy in the school,

But there was no convincing her upon that point.

The Head greeted the good old soul with courtesy politeness.

Miss Fawcett was in a state of great agitation. She accepted the chair the Head proffered and sat down and fumed herself.

"I have received a great shock, Dr. Holmes!"

"Dear me! I trust you found your ward quite well, madam?" said the Head, with a lingering glance at the papers on his table. His time was valuable.

"Far from it!" said Miss Fawcett. "I found him suffering from a fearful wound, inflicted by a rough boy, upon his nose!"

"How my soul!"

"He was bleeding and certainly suffering considerably, though he tried to make light of it, like the dear, brave child he is!" said Miss Priscilla. "I dislike the idea of punishment inflicted upon children, Dr. Holmes, but I wish to ask you to inflict some slight correction upon the ruffianly boy who has assaulted my little one!"

"Yes, madam. Do you know his name?"

As a matter of fact, the Head had seen the scuffle from his study window, and he was perfectly aware that there was no damage done.

"Yes, fortunately I learned his name."

The Head frowned a little.

"You do not mean to tell me that Merry gave you the boy's name, and advised you to complain to me?" he said.

"Oh, no! My darling boy refused to give me the name, from a mistaken sense of loyalty," said Miss Priscilla.

"I obtained the name from another lad. The name is Fitzavaggis—"

"What?"

"Cadwalader Fitzavaggis of the Seventh Form."

"The—the what?"

"The Seventh Form, Dr. Holmes."

Dr. Holmes passed his hand across his mouth to conceal a smile. It was only too clear that Miss Priscilla's informant had been a humorist.

"Will you care that dreadful boy, Dr.?"

"If the boy can be found, madam, I will certainly ease him," said the Head, considering that a very safe promise to make.

"Thank you so much. It will not be necessary to ease him severely, perhaps," added Miss Fawcett, relenting somewhat. "Perhaps a few kind and gentle words would open his eyes to the severity of his conduct, and bring about a change in his character."

"Perhaps," assented the Head.

"I am about to take Tommy to visit Dr. Short in the village. I am very anxious about his health, especially after this terrible attack. You have an objection?"

"None whatever, madam."

"I have many times been anxious about Tommy's health."

"Perhaps it would be as well to take Merry to the medical man at once, madam," the Head suggested. "There is no need to lose time!"

"How very kind and thoughtful you are, Dr. Holmes," said Miss Fawcett, going. "You are quite right."

"I trust you will find all well, madam."

"I am very anxious about Tommy," said Miss Fawcett, as the Head escorted her to the door and opened it.

"Take, tell Master Merry that he is wanted."

"Yes!"

In a few moments the Terrible Three appeared in the passage, having met Toby as they were coming down.

"Here is your ward, madam," said the Head.

And he shook hands with Miss Fawcett and escaped into his study.

Miss Fawcett bore down upon the charms of the Head.

"You look much better already, dearest Tommy!" she said affectionately.

"Yes. Don't you think it really won't be necessary for me to see the doctor, after all?" asked Tom cheekily.

Miss Priscilla shook her head.

health," went on Gore calmly. "When he coughs in the night it makes some of us cry, really!"

"Cough in the night!" exclaimed Miss Priscilla in great alarm. "Oh, my darling child, you have never told me of your cough!"

"I haven't got a cough!" roared Tom.

"Dearest Tommy—"

"He won't let on to you, ma'am, because he doesn't want to frighten you about it," said Gore cheerfully. "He said to me only the other day—"

"George's—my—ma'am! George, you know, but Tommy always calls me George, and I always call him Tommy



Folly Wren took aim with the orange, then—while! Splash! The orange was decidedly ripe, and it burst as it struck Tom Merry's best topper. The topper flew off his head, with the squashed orange clinging to it!

"By no means. Please come with me, dear Tommy."

Tom Merry submitted to his fate.

The Terrible Three walked out of the School House with Miss Priscilla. In the quadrangle, grinning glances followed them on all sides. Gore of the Shell came up and raised his hat to Miss Fawcett. Gore's face registered a solemn expression.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Fawcett!"

"Good-afternoon, little boy!"

Gore made a grimace. He did not exactly like being addressed as a little boy.

"You will excuse my speaking," he said, "but we're rather nervous about Tom. I'm in his Form, you know, and we sleep in the same dormitory. I've often lain awake at nights thinking about Tommy's health."

Tom Merry gave Gore a glance that was almost homicidal. Miss Fawcett regarded him with affectionate interest.

"What a dear, kind little boy!" she exclaimed. "How pleasant for you to have such good, sympathetic school-mates, my dear Tommy!"

"We're all rather worried about his

—George, I must keep this dark, or Miss Fawcett will be worried."

"Fawcett, you mean Fawcett."

"Yes, my mistake. But I thought it my duty to tell you, ma'am, said Gore.

"When he coughs, it's simply heart-breaking. I said to him: Dearest Tommy, it's your duty to tell Miss Consett—"

"Fawcett!"

"Yes, Fawcett. So I've told you, ma'am," said Gore. "And then, the way he suffers from cold feet—"

"My poor suffering darling—"

"I don't suffer from cold feet!" shrieked Tom Merry. "The silly one is only cutting! Come on!"

"And pain in the back," went on Gore deliberately. "Sometimes I rub his back for him of a night with cycle oil—I mean, vasoline. He bears it like a mackerel."

"Oh, Tommy, you have never told me!" said Miss Priscilla reproachfully.

"It isn't true!" yelled Tom.

"And then the tired feelings he suffers from, especially when it's time to get up in the morning," said Gore.

Tom Merry looked at the ground.

"I think that's very serious. And the pain in his feet—where, and sudden pain—oh—oh—through—through!"

Tom Merry's patience was exhausted. He hit out, and Dave rolled along the ground, suffering from severe and sudden pains himself. The pains were in Dave's nose.

"Tommy!" screamed Miss Fawcett. "Come on!" said Tom Merry, and he grabbed Miss Fawcett's arm and plied her hurriedly across the quadrangle.

George sat up, with his hand to his nose, and gasped. There was a roar of laughter from the fellows who had been enjoying the scene. Dave had been very funny indeed, but the end of the little jape seemed the funniest part to the on-lookers. But the fun of it was quite lost upon George Gore. The things he said as he sat and held his nose indicated a total absence of a sense of humor.

#### CHAPTER 4.

##### The Fortune-Teller!

**T**OM MERRY & CO. were glad enough to get outside the gates of St. Jim's with Miss Fawcett.

The old lady was quite in a better of anxiety and astonishment after witnessing that outbreak on the part of her dear Tommy. She could only attribute it to a state of nervous tension, brought about by chronic ill-health, and she was more anxious than ever that her dear Tommy should see the medical gentleman at once.

Miss Fawcett and the juniors walked down the lane in the sunshine. Half-way to the village they passed a gipsy encampment, in an adjoining field. Two caravans stood there, and many horses were cropping the grass and dirty children playing among the vans and horses.

A brown-faced old woman was sitting on the stile, evidently on the watch for passing pedestrians. Her dark face, with its heavy black brows, looked pale from under a red handkerchief, tied about her hair. She slipped from the stile and came into the road as Miss Fawcett came by.

"Cross my palm with silver, pretty lady!" she began, in a whining voice. "I can tell your fortune."

Miss Fawcett stopped.

There was a trace of superstition in the kind old lady, and in India she had seen wonderful things performed by the native fakirs. She did not want her own fortune told, but she would have been pleased to be enlightened as to Tom Merry's prospects, especially regarding his health.

She felt in her purse for a piece of silver and placed it in the gipsy's dusky and not-over-clean palm.

"She shall tell your fortune, Tommy dearest," said Miss Fawcett. "Of course, I—I do not exactly believe in such things, but—but I should like to have your fortune told. It may help to guide me in taking care of your health."

"Oh, rot!" said Tom.

"My dearest Tommy—"

"I can tell the past and the future," said the gipsy, fixing her glittering black eyes upon Tom. "If the young gentleman crosses my palm with silver I—"

"My government has done that already," said Tom harshly.

As Miss Fawcett had given the old gipsy a two-shilling-piece, and as he knew that the fortune-teller was all honesty, he considered that the transaction had been quite well enough paid for.

"The young gentleman must cross my palm with silver himself if I am able to tell his fortune," said the gipsy.

The two-shilling piece had already disappeared into some recess of her rags.

"Please do so, Tommy."

"But it's all silly rot!" said Tom, uneasily. He did not by any means relish the idea of having his fortune told by one who knew no more about it than he did himself. It was quite possible that the old gipsy would frighten Miss Fawcett with a prediction of some disaster or other, as fortune-tellers sometimes do.

"Let's get on!" murmured Maister.

But Miss Fawcett was firm.

"You know I am very anxious about your health, Tommy, and you know you

run dreadful risks, playing rough games like cricket and football," she said reproachfully.

Supposing that good person were able to warn you that you will have an accident playing cricket, then you'll be able to avoid it."

"I jolly well wouldn't!" said Tom.

"But it's foretold—"

"It's all piffle! I don't believe a word of it!"

The gipsy's eyes glittered.

Although she was, of course, perfectly aware that her pretended art was hanging from beginning to end, she did not like that opinion expressed by others. She had already made up her mind that, if she did tell Tom Merry's fortune, it would not be a very cheering one.

"Never mind, let her tell your fortune, to please me," said Miss Fawcett.

"Oh, all right!" said Tom Merry assiduously. "Of course, it's all piffle! But I don't mind if you want me to."

"Cross my palm with silver," said the gipsy.

Tom Merry granted. As the whole thing was a swindle he thought it had gone far enough. He had a three-penny piece in his pocket, however, and he grinned as he handed it in the gipsy, and the black eyes glittered again.

"Give me your hand, young gentleman."

Tom Merry unwillingly extended his hand.

The gipsy took it and bent her head over it, her black eyes gleaming with malice. She made a solemn show of examining the lines in the palm.

Then she shook her head sorrowfully. Miss Fawcett watched her with growing alarm.

"Illness—danger—death!" murmured the gipsy.

"Oh dear!" said Miss Fawcett.

"It's rot!" said Tom.

"Piffle!" remarked Lawther. "Let's get on!"

Tom Merry drew his hand away.

"No, no! let her finish!" exclaimed Miss Fawcett, in an agitated tone.

"I must know the particulars, as much as possible, in order that the danger may be guarded against."

"But really—"

"Give her your hand, Tommy darling."

Tom yielded his hand again to the hard, horny, dirty fingers, the touch of which was by no means pleasant.

"Now, what do you read, my good woman?" asked Miss Fawcett anxiously.

"Danger—danger—death!" crossed the gipsy spitefully.

"There is thousands of illnesses—long and painful."

"Oh dear!"

"It's all boob!" said Tom angrily.

"And a sudden accident. Ah, I see a round red ball! I see a form stretched on the earth, stiff and stark."

"Good gracious!"

"Hah!"

"That must be a cricket accident," said Miss Fawcett, in great distress.

"You must be careful not to go near a cricket field, Tommy dear."

Tom Merry smiled.

"I see great unknown danger," pursued the gipsy—"a dark pool that threatens the young gentleman, a stranger from across the sea—"

"I've heard that rot before," remarked Lawther.

"A dark man—"

"Some old dark man," murmured Lawther.

"Constant danger threatening the young man," pursued the gipsy. "Only by watchfulness can the danger be escaped. The line of life is broken. It will be death, or a narrow escape."

"My darling boy—"

## BUNTER THE LION-TAMER!

FRANK RICHARDS



Walk up, walk up, and meet him!

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## EVERY WEDNESDAY

"Give her a couple of loaves and have a letter sent, Tom," suggested Lowther.

"Shall I tell your fortunes, young gentlemen? Cross my palms with silver, and—"

"No fear," said Manners generously. "Not unless you make me a millionaire and a country cricketer."

"Ho, ho, ho!"

The gipsy bobbed back to the stove.

Miss Fritella Favovett's face was clouded with anxiety. All her fears for the safety of her ward were magnified now. The lassos she had feared—they were hurled by the gipsy. And the unknown danger—the dark rear—the stranger from across the sea? The good old lady was in a state of great mental distress as she walked on slowly towards the village with the justices.

Tom Merry was feeling exasperated. The miserable future predicted for him did not trouble him in the least, as he had no belief whatever in the gipsy's powers of reading the future. But the distress in his old governess' face worried him; and he was worried, too, at the thought that he was going to be looked after now, to avoid all those imaginary dangers.

"It's all silly rot, you know," he assured Miss Favovett.

Miss Fritella shook her head.

"There is no telling, Tommy. What does Shakespeare say? There are more things in something-or-other than are dreamt of in your what-do-you-call-it? I have often thought that those lines are very true," said Miss Favovett seriously.

"I fear that the future is very dark for you, my dearest child."

"Oh, it's all piffle!"

"But I shall be here to guard you," exclaimed Miss Favovett. "From this moment I will devote all my thought and care and attention to your safety, my dear Tommy."

Tom Merry groaned.

"You shall always be my first thought. I will take every precaution. You shall not play rough games, or expose yourself to any risks. Careful eyes shall watch over you, and if this unknown danger comes, we may escape it."

"My hat!"

Tom Merry was quite glad when they arrived at the village doctor's. He hoped that by the time that visit was over, Miss Favovett would have forgotten about the gipsy and her predictions. But he was destined to be disappointed.

## CHAPTER 5.

## Looking After Tom Merry!

DR. SHORT did not waste very much time over Tom Merry. He knew Miss Favovett very well. When they left the doctor's Miss Favovett shook her head wretchedly. The medical gentleman's failure to find anything wrong with Tommy somewhat shook her faith in the wisdom of the medical profession generally.

Miss Fritella was very silent and thoughtful as they walked back to the school.

The gipsy's prediction was weighing heavily upon her mind.

Tom Merry did not feel very cheerful.

The prospect of being watched over and looked after to an unlimited extent was not a cheering one.

Manners and Lowther were sympathetic, but they could not help giving a laugh.



"An unknown danger—a dark rear," Miss Fritella murmured several times. "My dearest Tommy, we must be very careful."

Tom Merry granted. Respect for the kind old lady forbade him to express too plainly his opinion that her belief in the gipsy's fortune-telling powers was absurd. Besides, Miss Fritella would not have been influenced by his opinion, anyway. She was worried and disturbed by the dark prospect threatening her beloved ward. It was only too clear that she was thinking out plans for safeguarding him from all sorts of imaginary dangers.

When they reached the school Miss Fritella asked to see the Head again. The Terrible Three remained standing in the Hall, Tom Merry looking the picture of dismay.

"Well, this takes the cake!" he observed at last. "What the dickens are I going to do? She is going to speak to the Head about it."

"Nice for the Head," murmured Mandy Lowther. "He must be—ahem!—delighted with these confidential chats."

And Manners checked. That was, indeed, Miss Favovett's intention. Dr. Holmes was approving the shining knee that afternoon, he working upon the great, new edition of "Kochygar," which occupied all his leisure moments, and which was to make a great sensation in the academic world some day. He growled inwardly when Miss Fritella was announced for the second time. But the distress in her voice touched him.

"Surely the doctor—" he began.

"I am afraid Dr. Short does not fully understand my ward's constitution," said Miss Fritella. "He can find absolutely nothing the matter with him."

The Head smiled.

"In that case, my dear madam, you may have every confidence. Dr. Short is a most capable man."

"It is not only that," said Miss Favovett, sinking into a chair. "My dear boy is threatened with a great danger."

"Danger!" repeated the Head, puzzled.

"Yes. An unknown danger threatens him—"

"Dear me! If the danger is unknown, how can you possibly be aware that it threatens him, my dear Miss Favovett?"

"It has been foretold by a gipsy!"

"Oh!"

"I have great faith in such things," said Miss Fritella. "I remember that in India I often found that the fakirs were able to foretell happenings in the future."

"Surely, my dear lady, it is difficult to believe such things!"

"But I can give you instances, Dr. Holmes. On one occasion, I can remember that my purse was stolen, and a fakir was able to describe the exact spot where it was hidden. I had offered a very liberal reward."

The Head smiled again.

"My dear Miss Favovett—"

"I hope I am not taking up your time, Dr. Holmes, and I should be sorry to cause you any trouble as you are probably a very busy man," said the good lady. "But I am very anxious about my ward. The gipsy has foretold misadventure and danger, and an accident on the cricket field."

"Dear me?"

"May I ask you, therefore, that Tommy may be very specially looked after? Will you see that he does not play cricket, and does not go outside the school gates? I cannot think of any other precautions at present, but if I do, I will write to you. I am sure you will respect my wishes."

Dr. Holmes looked very grave. He was somewhat inclined to laugh at the pleased suggestion of the old lady; but it was evidently a very serious matter with Miss Fritella, and he looked very grave indeed.

"But that will be somewhat hard upon the boy, Miss Favovett," he said. "Of course, if you make this request, I shall regard your wishes, as he is your ward. But it will be a great disappointment to him not to play cricket."

"Better than a terrible accident, sir!"

"And to be confined within gates will be very unpleasant for him."

"But to avoid a dreadful danger, Dr. Holmes, a little restriction of liberty is better than falling into a fearful danger!"

"Ahem! Yes; but if you are resolved upon this—"

"Yes, yes!"

"Then I shall do as you wish, madam, certainly!"

"I shall think over what other precautions can be taken," said Miss Fritella. "I think that perhaps it may be best to employ a private detective to watch over his safety. Could you possibly accommodate such a person in the school, Dr. Holmes? Of course, I am prepared to delay all expenses."

"Bless my soul! I—I really think that is quite unnecessary, madam!" stammered the Head. "I do really think that that is going too far!"

"But in so dreadfully serious a matter, sir—"

"Ahem!"

"However, I will consider further upon that point and write to you," said Miss Fritella.

"Very well."

"I shall go away to-day with a very heavy heart," said Miss Favovett, rising. "In case of anything happening to my ward, you will, of course, communicate with me at once by telegraph!"

"Oh, certainly!"

"You will also keep him under your special attention, I hope?"

"Ahem!"

"And perhaps you might speak to all the masters on the subject, so that they can take a special interest in him and his health," said Miss Priscilla.

Dr. Holmes tried hard not to smile. "And the other boys, who are in authority—outside, you call them, I think."

"The prefects," suggested the Head. "Yes—the prefects. Perhaps you could call them together and explain to them that clear Tommy requires very special care."

The Head pictured to himself a prefects' meeting for such a purpose, and he almost gaped at the idea. "But—But I assure you, masters, that—that everything shall be done that is necessary for your ward's well-being," he said faintly.

"Thank you so much, Dr. Holmes. I was sure that I could depend upon your kindness," said Miss Priscilla gratefully. And she took her leave of the Head.

Tom Merry was touched by her troubled look when she rejoined him, and he suppressed his intense exasperation with a manful effort.

"You're going to have tea in the study?" he asked.

"Yes, my dear."

And Miss Priscilla was escorted to the study in the Shell passage, and Blake, Hevies, Digby, and D'Arcy, the owners of Study No. 4, came along to tea. But it was not the usual merry meal. Miss Priscilla was grave and preoccupied. Her talk ran upon Tom Merry's supposed danger, and she exhorted the Fourth Formers to help in keeping a watchful eye upon him. Blake & Co., astonished as they were by the peculiar request, promised that they would.

"Thank you so much, my dear boys," said Miss Priscilla. "I have asked the Head to guard you, Tommy."

"My hat!" said Tommy.

"Or what!"

"What cry?"

"Kil!"

"Or go outside the school gates!"

"Great Scott!"

"And I am going to engage a private detective to look after you!"

"Holy smoke!"

"And perhaps this dreadful danger may be escaped," said Miss Priscilla.

Tom Merry said no more. Words failed him. He was plunged into the deepest depression of spirits during the remainder of the tea-time, and his face was far from being as sunny as usual when he walked to the station with Miss Fawcett to see her off.

When he came back to the school he found the Co. waiting for him, smiling.

Tom Merry did not smile. He did not feel like smiling. He glared.

"Well, what's the joke!" he demanded gruffly.

"You are," said Blake cheerfully.

"Oh, Tommy!"

"Poor old Tommy!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"We're going to watch over you like—like the giddy apple of our eye!" grinned Digby.

"Would you like me to set Trevor to keep guard over you?" asked Hevies kindly.

"We'll get a special bandage to keep him in," suggested Monty Lowther.

"The title up with care, you know,"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You dilly dally!" roared Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry's long-pent-up exasperation broke out at last. He charged at the grinning jokers, hitting out right and left. They scattered before the

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charge, still laughing like hyenas, and Tom Merry strode away to his study in a state of great wrath.

## CHAPTER 6.

### Something for Tommy!

TOM MERRY did not look cheerful the next day.

Tom Merry, as captain of the junior eleven, was naturally quite as keen as the rest. But cricket was barred for him.

The Head had called him into his study, briefly told him of his government's wishes, and informed him that, for the present, he was not to share in the game, or to go outside the school bounds.

There was no help for it.

Tom was intensely exasperated, but he could only obey the Head's orders. Indeed, the Head had mentioned the matter to Killdare, the captain of St. John's, and Killdare was to see that Dr. Holmes' orders were carried out.

When the juniors went down to cricket practice after lessons that day, Tom Merry went with them, but not to play. He stood leaning moodily on the pavilion wall, while the other fellows were at practice, watching them.

If this kind of thing continued he would have to resign his place as captain of the junior eleven, and that would be a heavy blow. Jack Blake was quite willing to take it on, as he kindly explained, but that was no comfort to Tom Merry. He wanted to captain the eleven and he wanted to play cricket. In spite of his deep affection for his old governor, and his gratitude to her for her many kindnesses, for once he was almost angry with Miss Priscilla.

He watched the cricketers at practice with a moody brow, and their conclusions afterwards did not console him; they rather added to his exasperation.

He walked back to the School House with Manners and Lowther and Kangaroo, the latter being in their flannels, and ready and cheery from the cricket field.

"Poor old Tommy!" said Manners sympathetically. "I know this is rotten for you!"

"Oh, don't call me poor old Tommy, or I shall punch your head!" growled Tom crossly. "I'm getting fed-up with it!"

"What about the cycle spin we're going to have on Saturday?" asked Lowther. "Won't you be able to come, Tom?"

Tom snorted.

"Of course I can't come! I'm asked!"

"It's rotten!"

"Oh, rotten isn't the word! I don't know how I'm going to stand it," said Tom miserably. "I feel fed-up, right up to the chin!"

"It's all kindness, you know," grinned Kangaroo. "Miss Priscilla is like Harriet. I must be cruel, only to be kind," you know."

"Oh, rats!"

"That had begun, but worse remains behind," said Lowther, finishing the quotation. "There's the private detective to come yet. I wonder what he'll be like!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle!" said Tom.

"There's a parcel for you at Taggles' lodge, Merry," said Levinson of the Fourth, meeting the stream of the Shell as he came out of the School House. "Looks like a consignment of teak."

Levinson's manner was unusually agreeable. Any fellow who received a hamper from home was sure of receiving at the same time police attention from Levinson.

"Oh, good!" said Monty Lowther. "Just in time for tea, too!"

"We'll come and help you to open it, Tommy," said Kangaroo generously.

Tom Merry brightened a little.

"Good! Come on!" he said.

And they directed their steps towards the porter's lodge, Levinson accompanying them.

They found Fatty Wynn of the New House outside Taggles' lodge, and he took them to the parcel. Fatty Wynn had almost as much to say for hampers. He grinned most agreeably at Tom Merry, having apparently forgotten the trouble of the previous day.

"Big parcel for you, old chap!" he said.

Tom Merry looked at him.

"Old chap, ha!" he remarked.

"You was punching my nose yesterday afternoon. Look at it now!"

"Well, look at my eye, if you come to that," said Fatty Wynn agreeably. "No nothing worse for a House rep, I suppose! We were bound to rag you when you were dressed up to the nines, you know."

"Good! And we're bound to rag you, though you're not dressed up to the nines," said Tom Merry. "Bump him!"

"How, I say! Hold on—"

"We're holding on, aren't we?"

Shook Monty Lowther, catching Fatty Wynn's plump ear.

"You-ow! Choose it! I say—"

Bump!

"Yak!" roared Fatty Wynn, as he descended upon the ground. "I say—"

"Yak! Leggo! You-up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bump him again," said Tom Merry.

"If I can't play cricket, it's some satisfaction to bump somebody. Give him another!"

"Hee, hear!"

Bump!

Fatty Wynn wriggled out of the hands of the School House jokers and fled.

Tom Merry & Co. entered the porter's lodge, a large and carefully wrapped parcel was lying on Taggles' table, addressed to Tom Merry. Tom recognized the handwriting of Miss Fawcett.

"It's from my guardian," he said.

"Good old soul!" said Manners.

"She's a good sort. Rather too strong on medicine and looking after a chap, but her heart's in the right place."

"Yes, rather," said Levinson. "Some of her home-made jams, perhaps. I suppose you'll hand a jar or two round, Tom Merry?"

Tom Merry was silent.

A dreadful suspicion had flashed into his mind as he looked at the parcel.

The jokers had concluded, as a matter of course, that it contained teak, but Tom Merry had his doubts.

Miss Priscilla had told him before she left that she would send him several things for his health, and he wondered whether these things for his health were contained in the parcel.

"Not going to keep the whole chunk for yourself, I suppose?" demanded Levinson, mistaking Tom's silence.

"Oh, rats!"

"Well, I call you a greedy rotter if you do!" said Levinson warmly. "It's the home-made jam, it's ripping! I've had some before."

"Some that you hosed out of our study!" growled Manners.

Levinson did not appear to hear the remark.



"Open it, Merry," he urged. "Let's have a look, anyway."

"Oh, look! There's no heavy!"  
If the parcel contained medicine, ointment, pills, and so forth, Tom Merry did not want to open it in the presence of Levison. He did not want to have the matter made a standing joke in the School House.

"Well, I think—" began Levison, "Never mind what you think!" said Tom brusquely. "You clear off!"

Levison glanced at Tom Merry.  
"Outside!" said Monty Leowler, pushing Levison towards the doorway. "You are too numerous. Get!"

"You retiers!"  
Biff!  
Levison retired from the porter's lodge on his neck. He landed outside with a yell, and poked himself up, black with rage. Then he hurried away in the direction of the New House.

"What's the little game?" asked Manners in surprise, looking at Tom. "Why don't you open the parcel, Tom? And why shouldn't Levison see the look? No harm in giving the blessed outsider a pot of jam."

"There isn't any healthy jam in it!" growled Tom. "I believe it's only doctor's muck for my health."

The juniors' faces fell.  
"Oh, crumb!"  
"What notion look!" said Kamparoo. "I'm off!" And the Cornstalk junior walked away. He did not want any medicine.

"Better look in and make sure," said Levison. "It might be toxic, you know."

Blegg, the postman, came in at the gate, and he stepped at the lodge.  
"Letter for you, Master Merry!" said Blegg.

"Thanks!"  
The letter was from Miss Fawcett. Tom Merry opened it, and then silently handed it to his change to read. It ran:

"My darling Tommy,—You will receive a parcel from me to-day. It contains the medicines I promised you, and some ointment for your poor little toe, and some embrocation for that dear, kind boy Gave to use when he rubs your back next time. I hope you are well and taking great care of yourself. I am seeing about engaging a detective to-day. There are instructions upon the boxes and bottles for taking the medicines and pills. Take care of your dear health, my darling child.  
"Your affectionate nurse,  
"PATRICIA FAWCETT."

"F.S.—Take care you do not get your feet wet!"  
"P.P.S.—Tell Gave that your back would be rubbed gently."

"Oh, my only sainted aunt!" said Monty Leowler. "May I write, Tom?"  
"If you do, I'll punch your silly head!" said Tom Merry.  
"Thanks! I'll go outside and write, then," said Monty Leowler cheerfully, and then his wails could have been heard across the quadrangle.  
Manners was grinning; he could not help it.

"What are you going to do with the giddy parcel, Tommy?" he asked.  
Tom growled.  
"Leave it here. Taggles can have it. Perhaps the medicines will do him good. Or he can give them to his dog, Berr! Come on!"  
The chorus of the Shell left the porter's lodge, leaving the big parcel



"Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Terminus, 130, St. John's Road, Tooting, Surrey, Wanda, Kent."

lying on the table. Manners was grinning, but Tom Merry's brow was clouded. He was, as he had said, fed-up—right up to the chin! But the end was not yet.

CHAPTER 7.

Levison Takes His Medicine!

"A REGULAR spread!" said Fatty Wyan. He addressed Figgins and Kerr.

The chorus of the New House were in their doorway. Fatty Wyan was consulting to Figgis and Kerr his account of the spread of a share in the compartment of tack from Hackberry Blain. Fatty Wyan had had only a bumping, and he felt injured—and hungry. He was distinctly annoyed.

"No chance of seeing it, I suppose!" said Figgins.  
"Oh, they'll have got it to the School House by this time!" said Fatty dolefully. "No chance of getting at it, the beast! If you fellows had been there before they came, we might have collared it."

"Hallo, what do you want?" asked Figgins, as Levison of the Fourth came into the New House. Levison, being a

School House fellow, had no business on that side of the quadrangle, and Figgins & Co. prepared to bump him for his cheek in presenting himself uninvited in their quarters.

"Fatty!" said Levison.

"Fay be blotted!" said Fatty Wyan. "They've been bumping me at W.C. level, in o' him!"  
"I didn't bump you!"

"Well, the others did, and it's the same thing. Collar him!"

"Hold on!" said Levison hastily, as the three New

House juniors made a movement towards him. "I've got a good thing on me, and I've come here to let you fellows into it. It's a raid."

"File in!" said Kerr.

"You've seen that big parcel in the porter's lodge for Merry?" said Levison eagerly. "It's crammed full of tack! You know the ripping things that Tom Merry's guardian sends him—cake and home-made jam, and things like that. Well, it's still there. They haven't taken it away yet. I suppose they're leaving it for Taggles to carry to the School House; but Taggles is in the woodshed now. If you fellows care to join me—"

Fatty Wyan's eyes glistened.  
"No loots!" asked Figgins solemnly.

"Honest Injun!" said Levison.

"That's all very well, but I want, with a searching glance at the end of the Fourth. I don't like a chap looking up against his own House. Look to me as if Levison is trying to pull our leg, somehow."

"Come and see!" said Levison. "If the parcel isn't still there, you can bump me so hard as you like!"

"So we jolly well will!" said Figgins.

"Come on, you chaps!"  
"Mind," said Levison. "Four shares—see for me, and you promise to hand it over."

"That's only fair. It's a go!"

And Figgins & Co. left the New House, with Levison, and hastened to the porter's lodge.

Taggles was still absent, and Mrs. Taggles was in the school shop, so there was no one to say them nay. The Terrible Threes were not to be seen. There were some School House fellows in sight, but they did not take any special notice of Figgins & Co. The coast was clear.

"Looks like a soft thing," remarked Figgins. "Anyway, here's the giddy parcel! Lay hold!"

The Co. whisked the parcel off the table and fled.

In three minutes they were back in the New House, and there had been no pursuit. For once, evidently, the Terrible Threes had been caught napping. Levison followed them into the House, his eyes glittering. He was as pleased to play a trick on the Terrible Threes as to receive his anticipated share of the tack.

"Got it up to the study!" said Figgins. "Come on, Levison, you're going to have your 'wick'!"

The parcel was carried up to Figgins' (Continued on the next page.)

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study and set upon the table. The four juniors gathered round it eagerly.

"They'll be surprised if they go back for their giddy parcel now!" grumbled Figgins. "We'll send them over the empty jam-jars later, as a souvenir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get it open!" said Fatty Wynn, almost feverishly. "I am frightfully hungry. I had hardly any dinner. Old Matty looked at me when I had my third helping, and I had to stop. I've been peckish all the afternoon. I've had nothing since dinner, excepting the mussels and the cake and the apples and a few jam tarts."

"You must be famishing!" said Figgins. "Here goes!"

He cut the cork—there were many cords round that carefully wrapped parcel, and the juniors' eager fingers began to unravel the thick brown paper. There were many rolls of it round the contents, whatever they were. Evidently Miss Franklin considered the assignment a very valuable one, and wanted to run no risks with it. Indeed, there was so much wrapping that the juniors began to wonder whether the assignment was really worth unrolling, after all. The contents were certainly not so extensive as they had anticipated.

"Hallo!" said Figgins suddenly.

The first object to come to light was a cardboard box. It contained a bottle, and in the bottle was a thick, brownish liquid. They looked at the label on the bottle, and, with queer feelings, read:

"Dr. Stobber's Pink Potion for Royal Persons."

"My dear!" said Kerr.

"Medicine!" said Figgins.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Must be some grub as well," said Levinson abruptly. "Get it all out!"

Kerr grabbed up another cardboard box. It was full of little boxes, and as the lid of each little box was a label:

"Dr. Stobber's Purple Pills for Chronic Coughs."

Figgins & Co. were looking less happy by this time. Levinson was looking furious. The juniors dragged out the rest of the contents of the parcel, and they were scattered over the table. There were bottles galore, each carefully packed in cardboard. There were pills of all sorts and kinds, there were various kinds of ointments; there were some thick wooden socks, and a chest-pain-bender. There were some more articles of the same sort, but there was no sign of grub.

Fatty Wynn groaned.

"What a rotten beastly swindle!"

Figgins turned a deadly glare upon Levinson. Levinson was as annoyed and angry as the New House juniors. But the latter knew Levinson, and they knew that he was as full of tricks as a monkey. They, not ungenerally, suspected that he had deliberately planted this assignment of medicines and pills upon them as a joke.

"So this is one of your jokes, is it?" said Figgins. "Awfully funny thing to pull our leg like this—what!"

"What!" exclaimed Levinson, taken aback by that unexpected accusation.

"I didn't know—"

"Rate!"

"Any more than you did?"

"Boah!"

"I swear I didn't—"

"Cheese it! Stop him!" roared Figgins, at the end of the Fourth being for the door. Kerr caught Levinson by the collar and whirled him back.

"Levinson knows that he can do the New House," said Figgins. "I think it's up to us to get that idea out of his head. It might get him into trouble."

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sooner or later. We've agreed to give Levinson his whack out of the parcel. I propose that we forthwith proceed to give him his whack."

The Co. shuddered.

"Look here—" began Levinson, in great alarm.

"We promised him a fourth part of this giddy grub," said Figgins. "It's up to us to keep our promise."

"Yes, rather!"

"He can have the lot," said Fatty Wynn generously. "Give him the lot!"

"Let me go!" roared Levinson. "I tell you I didn't know—"

"Shurrup! We'll begin with the pills," said Figgins. "There seem to be four dozen boxes. Levinson is entitled to one dozen, as a fair share—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Each box contains twelve pills," went on Figgins. "There's a hundred and forty-four pills for Levinson. Do you feel equal to taking one gross of pills now, Levinson, or will you reserve some for future occasions?"

Levinson trembled almost green at the thought. A hundred and forty-four of Dr. Stobber's Purple Pills taken in one dose would certainly have caused him serious inward disturbance.

"You—you rotters!" he gasped. "I tell you—"

"Try one and see how you like it," said Figgins, taking a purple pill from a box. "Open your mouth and shut your eyes, you know."

"Yes! I won't!"

"Open his mouth!" said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn and Kerr opened Levinson's mouth. The end of the Fourth struggled in their grasp, but he was powerless against the two sturdy New House juniors. His jaws were forced open, and Fatty dropped the pill into his mouth, and he was compelled to swallow it. He gasped and spluttered wildly.

"Have some medicine to wash it down!" asked Figgins.

"Keep that bottle away!" shrieked Levinson.

Figgins shook his head.

"You've got to have your whack!" he declared. "Now I'm going to pour this medicine down your neck, inside or out, just as you like."

And he poured.

Levinson dodged and wriggled his head violently. The result was that the greater portion of the medicine went down the outside of his neck. It was probably better outside than inside, but it felt decidedly uncomfortable. Enough of it trickled down Levinson's throat, however, to show him what the taste was like. It was not nice.

"Had enough?" asked Figgins.

"Tuck—uck! Yes!"

"Take the rest outside or inside?"

"Yes!"

"Or you've got to take it," said Figgins. "But we'll give you choice of outside or inside! Now!"

"Oh! Outside!" gasped Levinson.

"Right-ho!"

Figgins cheerfully emptied the bottle upon Levinson's head. It was a thick, sticky medicine, something like cod-liver oil in consistency. It matted Levinson's hair, and ran down his neck, and stuck to his collar and the inside of his shirt.

"Have some more!" asked Figgins, taking up another bottle.

"Grough! No! Leggo!"

"You haven't had all your whack, then?"

"Lessen go!"

"Well, as he doesn't want his full share, he can clear off," said Figgins.

"Let the rotter go! Perhaps this will

put him up to a wrinkle about playing little jokes on the New House. Soot!"

Levinson was released, and he staggered out of the study, gasping, leaving Figgins & Co. roaring with laughter.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Figgins' Whom!

"GREAT Scott! What's the messah with Levinson?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyes upon the end of the Fourth in great astonishment as Levinson came into the School House.

Levinson did not look well.

"I trust you are not ill, Levinson, dear leg!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Go and eat cake!" was Levinson's grateful reply.

"Waddy, you haave—"

"Oh, shut up!"

Levinson stamped away upstairs in a fury. He met the Terrible Three in the upper passage, and they stared at him.

"What the deuce has happened to you?" asked Monty Lovelace.

"You rotters!" hissed Levinson.

"Eh!"

"You know there was only fifty medicine in that parcel—"

"Why, he's soaked with giddy medicine!" explained Tom Merry, in amusement. "I know the riff of it. Ha, ha, ha!"

The shame of the Shell parod. Levinson rushed away to the Fourth Form dormitory to clean himself. The Terrible Three, who had just come in from the taskshop with supplies for tea, went, grinning, into their study. They had laid the tea-table and were busily engaged in making toast, when Toby the page put his head in at the door.

"Hallo, Merry!"

"Hallo," said Tom Merry.

"Parrot for you, sir."

And Toby laid a parcel on the table. It was the case the juniors had left in Tappin's lodge, but it was opened, and bundled together in some confusion.

Master Figgins gave it to go to give to you, sir," said Toby, with a grin. "He said I was to tell you it had been opened in mistake—it is made for grub," was Master Figgins' words, sir. And he returns it with thanks, sir, and opens as Master Levinson enjoyed the pill and the pink potion, sir."

And Toby vanished, still grinning. "Well, we've got it after all," said Tom Merry, surveying the conglomeration of leucine medicines with great disfavor. "I suppose those New House boys took it for grub, and ridid it. Rather a sell for them, anyway. Now, what are we going to do with the beastly things?"

"Directions on the labels," said Monty Lovelace. "You take the pills three at a time before going to bed."

"Ha!"

"And the pink mixture is one large tablespoonful after meals."

"Am?"

"The advertisement in For Core is rub your back with it."

"Shut up, you silly fellow!" roared Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry seized the parcel and buried it into a corner of the study. There was a crash of medicine bottles.

"That settles that!" he growled.

"The maid can clean it away in the morning. Let's have tea, and if you say 'medicines' again, I'll hit you!"

And the Terrible Three sat down to tea in the study.



The gipsy took Tom Merry's hand and held near it, making a solemn show of examining the lines in the palm. She shook her head sorrowfully. "Stress—danger—death!" she murmured. "Oh dear!" said Miss Fawcett. "It's all rot!" exclaimed Tom.

Tom Merry wore a worried look. He had disposed of the medicine and the pills—not internally. But he could not dispose of the restrictions on his liberty, and he would not be able to dispose of the private detective when he arrived.

You could imagine the howls of laughter that would go up from the whole House when that great of Miss Pringle's soliloquy appeared. It would be a standing joke in the House, and in the New House, too. The New House fellows, certainly, would not miss such an opportunity for chipping. Tom Merry was naturally sensitive to ridicule, and he simply withered at the prospect.

After tea the classes of the Shell strolled down to the cricket ground, where some practice was still going on. Figgins & Co. were there, and they gazed affably at the School House fellows.

"Get your medicine?" asked Figgins. "Shut up, you foolhard!" "Well, I only want to know, you know. By the way, is it a fact about the private detective?" asked Figgins with great interest.

Tom Merry reddened. "What private detective?" he growled.

"Well, the fellows are saying—" "How what they are saying?" "Certainly! How anything you like!" said Figgins excitedly. "But the chaps are saying that your old governess has employed a private detective to look after your health."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "There was a yoll of laughter. Massers and Lawther joined in it; they could not help it. Tom Merry's face became crimson.

"You silly chump!" he snapped. "It's not to look after my health, and you know it. Miss Fawcett has been

frightened by a silly gipsy fortune-teller about some silly danger, and the silly detective is to be my bodyguard."

"Then he's really coming?" asked Kerr. "I suppose so!" "Well, that beats the band!" said Figgins. "Where is he going to be put? Will he sleep in the dorm, to watch over your giddy stamens—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Or are you going to keep him in the lake-bed, or chain him up with Tommo?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Tom Merry did not reply—he rushed at Figgins. His temper was too sorely tried. Figgins & Co. fled, laughing.

Tom Merry turned to his classes with an exasperated look. "I'm not going to stand it!" he shouted.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Why, you—your silly fatheads, what are you snickling at?" "Alum! I—I didn't mean to snick!" said Monty Lovelock. "I—ha, ha, ha!" "I'm awfully serious. It's a serious—ha, ha, ha—matter. When the detective comes—ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, go and eat cake! Look here!" said Tom Merry, lowering his voice. "I can't stop Miss Fawcett scolding the detective. But I'm going to make him sick of his job. When he gets here, you fellows keep got to stand by me, and we'll make him sit up to such an extent that he'll get sick of it and bunk."

"Hely on us!" said Massers. "It's the only way. But fancy having a private detective shadowing you across the quad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Tom Merry snorted, thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and strode away. He was feeling more fed-up than ever. His own classes persisted in looking upon the matter from a humorous point of view, but it did not seem at all

humorous to the unhappy victim of Miss Pringle's affectionate soliloquy. And Tom Merry would have been still more exasperated if he could have heard the remarks that passed among Figgins & Co. Figgins was gazing ecstatically over a brilliant idea that had come into his head.

"I've got it!" he announced. "Get what?" asked the loyal Co., seeing that a great silence was coming.

"Tom Merry's expecting a giddy detective—"

"Well?"

"He may arrive this evening—"

"Well?"

"But he hasn't arrived yet—"

"No."

"Well, why shouldn't he arrive?" asked Figgins. "Ek—what? You remember playing the detective in our sketch—Sherrinot Hobson, Kerr, old fellow? You can play it again—what—"

and call upon Tom Merry and present your card—what!"

A yoll of laughter rang through Figgins' study. The Co. wore "on" to that idea at once. For the next half-hour Figgins & Co. were very busy.

#### CHAPTER 4.

##### According to Instructions!

**T**OM MERRY was at the study table doing his preparation. Massers and Lawther were similarly engaged.

There was silence in the study. Tom Merry's brow wore a gloomy frown. Massers and Lawther were as serious as they could be.

Tap! Tom Merry looked up with a grunt. He expected to see some junior with humorous remarks to make upon the subject of the patent medicine or the private detective.

"Come in, fathead!"

The door opened.

A little man in a black frock coat that was shiny at the seams stood in the doorway and blinked into the study through a pair of large, black-rimmed spectacles. The Terrible Three rose to their feet in surprise. They had not expected a visitor from outside at that hour, and the little man was a stranger to them. Was he was, or what he was, they could not guess.

He looked somewhat like an undertaker's assistant, and they certainly had no business with undertakers. He wore a drooping moustache of a mouse colour, and his hair was of the same hue and rather long. His face had a sort of scholarly pallor, save for the tip of the nose, which was decidedly red, and seemed to hint at a propensity for strong drink. His hands were covered with black gloves, and in one of them he carried a rusty-looking silk hat. General poverty seemed to be the chief characteristic of the unexpected visitor. He blinked at the Shell fellows through the big spectacles, and they stared at him.

"Hallo!" said Monty Lowther. "You've come to the wrong shop, sir. Do you want to see the Head or the Housemaster?"

"I expected to find Master Merry here," said the stranger in a somewhat wheezy voice. "I understand that this is his study."

"I'm Tom Merry," said the captain of the Shell. "But—"

The gentleman in black smiled gently. "You do not know me, of course."

"No."

"Please allow me to present my card!" The little man fumbled in the tail-pocket of his frock-coat. "Dear me! I have left my card case in my office. I came away in rather a hurry on receiving Miss Fawcett's telegram."

Tom Merry started.

"Miss Fawcett's telegram?" he said. The little man rubbed his black-gloved hands.

"Yes, sir. You were surely expecting me?"

"Expecting you?"

"Yes. Did not your aunt—I understand that Miss Fawcett is your aunt—"

"She isn't," said Tom. "She used to be my governess, and is my guardian now."

"Ahem! Quite so! Did not your guardian inform you that a private detective would arrive here shortly, to take care of you?"

"Yes, but—"

"My name is Tagg—J. Tagg, private detective," explained the little man. "Quite at your service, Master Merry."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I have had great experience in the service of the nobility and gentry!" Mr. Tagg further explained. "Missing with discretion, never need be hands watched, evidence on any side of any question collected at the shortest notice—"

"Oh, cough!"

"But my present business is to guard you from danger, my young friend," said J. Tagg. "I understand that you are threatened—ahem!—with some terrible peril."

"Oh, that's all rot!"

"Ahem! May I take a seat? Thank you!" said J. Tagg, taking Tom Merry's chair. "Now, tell me all about it."

"There isn't anything to tell," said Tom Merry, suppressing his cooperation. "Miss Fawcett has been frightened by a silly old gipsy, that's all."

"Ahem! My instructions are that you are threatened with some deadly danger, and it is my duty to watch over Tom Gem Lassan—No. 1,431.

one day and night," said J. Tagg impulsively. "I am compelled, of course, to carry out the instructions received from my employer."

"But—I tell you—"

"I shall not leave your side for a single moment," promised J. Tagg. "When this fearful danger comes, there shall be two of us to face it."

"There isn't any danger!" howled Tom Merry.

"Oh, you young gentlemen are busy now, I still sit quietly here while you play—or work, whichever it is," said Mr. Tagg, imperturbably. "Perhaps you could oblige me with a little supper, so I am hungry!"

The Terrible Three exchanged glances. Marmion and Lowther were grinning, and Tom Merry was in a state of mind approaching fury.

"Look here," began Tom Merry. "I'm not going to stand this, Mr. Tagg! I won't be watched! I won't be looked after! Savvy!"

"My instructions—"

"Now your instructions!" said Tom Merry fiercely. "I don't want to be rode, but I won't have it—no! If you follow me about there will be trouble!"

"In that case," said Mr. Tagg sternly, "I shall have to appeal to your Housemaster, sir. It must go my way."

"Better take it quietly, Tommy!" growled Lowther. "If he speaks to Radford, Radford will order you to put up with it. Can't be helped!"

Tom Merry set his teeth. It certainly looked as if it could not be helped; but he did not mean to submit to such a state of affairs, all the same.

However, he was hospitable, angry as he was, and he opened the study cupboard to find some supper for Mr. Tagg. The request fell over from the table a very good supper, and Mr. Tagg disposed of it with avid satisfaction, while the Shell fellows finished their preparation. When prep was over they rose to go into the Common-room.

Mr. Tagg rose also.

"You'd like to stay here and rest a bit!" Tom Merry suggested.

J. Tagg shook his head.

"I must come with you wherever you go," he said.

"Now, look here—"

"I have my duty to do. Please do not compel me to appeal to your Housemaster!" urged Mr. Tagg. "My instructions—"

"Oh, rats!"

Tom Merry stamped out of the study, followed by his grinning chums, and the calm and imperturbable Mr. Tagg. Mr. Tagg's appearance in the Shell passage drew some attention.

Several fellows wanted to know who he was, and when it was learned that he was the expected private detective came to watch over the safety of Tom Merry, there was a ripple of chaffing from one end of the passage to the other.

Tom Merry's face was crimson as he went downstairs, the private detective keeping beside him as close as his shadow. Kidlare of the Sixth spotted him at the foot of the stairs, and he glanced at Mr. Tagg in surprise, and came towards them.

"Who's this merchant?" Kidlare asked without ceremony. "It's late for receiving visitors, Merry."

"It's Tagg," growled Tom.

"Tag! What Tag?"

"A detective!"

"Oh, my hat! Miss Fawcett's detective?" ejaculated Kidlare.

"Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Kidlare retreated, laughing. Cotts of the Fifth and some more Fifth

Forms were chatting in a group close at hand, and they burst into a roar of merriment.

Tom Merry's eyes were gleaming, and his cheeks were burning. He had never felt so ridiculed and so angry in his life before. He walked furiously into the Common-room, and the little man in black followed him, and there was a buzz among the juniors there.

"How comes the giddy bodyguard!"

"Tom Merry and Sexton Blake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

## CHAPTER 10.

### Follow Your Leader!

TOM MERRY glared at the hilarious juniors.

A roar of laughter ran through the Junior Common-rooms.

Mr. Tagg seemed a little surprised at it. He blushed round at the juniors through his enormous spectacles, apparently at a loss. Tom Merry's face was as firm as iron. The news of the detective's arrival had spread, and fellows were peering in from all quarters to see him. Fags of the Third Form came swarming in, as well as the Fourth Formers and Shell fellows. The Common-room was crowded.

"Well, this beats the band!" exclaimed Kangaroo. "How do you do, Sexton Blake?"

Mr. Tagg blinked at him.

"Excuse me, my name is not Sexton Blake!" he wheeled. "My name is Tagg—J. Tagg. I am here to guard Master Merry from danger!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Should danger threaten this young man," continued the private detective, with a dramatic gesture, "I, Tagg, will have to throw myself into the breach."

"Heave!"

"Suppose two dangers threatened?" suggested Monty Lowther. "I suppose you would be ready to throw yourself into a pair of breaches?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall defend my client with my life!" pursued Mr. Tagg. "Let this secret, and hidden enemy come forth!"

"You're ready to deal with him if he comes forth!" asked Jack Blake.

"Yes, ready at any moment!"

"But suppose he comes fifth?"

"Ahem!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But Jerry, this is really a very remarkable state of affairs!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyes upon the shabby gentleman in black. "I have never heard of a chap being watched about in school by a private detective. But, of course, the gentleman must be allowed to do his duty. Alah! all, he will keep you out of bits of soap, Tom Merry!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Ahem, it is rather funny!" grinned Goo of the Shell. "It's as good as the picture, and cheaper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry hung himself into an armchair. Mr. Tagg wheeled another chair up beside him and sat down. The sight of the shabby detective in black sitting beside the captain of the Shell, watching him, made the juniors shriek again.

Tom Merry could not stand it. He jumped up and strode out of the Common-room, leaving the juniors yelling. But he did not leave Mr. Tagg. That gentleman followed him out of the Common-room and down the passage, evidently determined to stick to him like a bloodhound in a trail.

At the end of the passage Tom Merry turned upon him fiercely.

"Look here, keep away!" he exclaimed. "I tell you I won't stand it!"

"My dear young gentleman—"

"I'm fed-up! If you follow me again, I'll punch your silly head!"

Mr. Tagg backed hastily away.

"My dear Master Murray—"

"Clear off!"

"I have my duty to do. If you offer violence, I shall have no recourse but to appeal to your Housemaster!" said Mr. Tagg firmly. "Pray try to realize how matters stand, and allow me to do my duty. You are in terrible danger!"

"I'm not! There isn't any danger!"

"I have my instructions—"

"Hang your instructions! Leave me alone!"

Tom Merry strode to the stairs. Mr. Tagg followed him resolutely. Tom Merry was evidently not to be allowed to go out of his sight. Tom turned savagely upon him. Perhaps it was fortunate that Manners and Lowther came hurrying up at that moment.

Lowther grasped his irate chain and held him back.

"Hold on, Tommy! Don't get away!"

"I'm not going to stand that silly idiot following me about the House!" roared Tom Merry.

"He's only doing his duty!" urged Manners.

"Hoi! Bosh! Rishish!"

"You see, Tommy," whispered Lowther, "he would only bring Baitton here. The Head must have given Miss Fawcett permission to send the detective. It's no good kicking over the traces, old chap. Take it quietly!"

"I tell you—"

"And I'll get rid of him for you," murmured Lowther, in Tom's ear. "We're only got to make him feel fed-up with his job, you know, and he'll clear!"

Tom Merry calmed a little. That was a resource, certainly.

"Come on, Tommy," said Lowther, in a leader voice. "Follow on behind, Mr. Tagg—do your duty, you know! Don't lose sight of Tommy!"

"Certainly, I shall not lose sight of him. I have my instructions to keep him constantly in sight!"

The Terrible Three went upstairs, and Mr. Tagg followed, and a dozen or more juniors followed. Mr. Tagg, eager to see the fun, they all suspected Tom Merry's temper to break out sooner or later, and a "strap" between the captain of the Shell and the private detective would be worth watching.

Tom Merry passed in the Shell passage, but Lowther led him on. They ascended the upper stairs, and passed the dormitory, and went still higher. Tom and Manners were puzzled, but they allowed Lowther to guide. Higher upstairs they went, and Lowther stopped at the door of the top bed-rooms.

It was an apartment used as a lumber-room, and was half-full of old boxes, and disabled chairs, and articles of that kind. As the room was never used or visited, it was considerably dusty, and spiders had made their homes there in large numbers, and huge webs were extended in all directions. Lowther opened the door, and his chains rattled.

"Come in!" said Lowther, dully changing the rusty key to the outside of the lock, screwing that action carefully from the view of Mr. Tagg behind.

The juniors understood there, and they grumbled. They walked into the old, dusty room, and Mr. Tagg walked in after them. Outside on the landing, a crowd of fellows collected, wondering what was going to happen. The general impression was that Tom Merry had

## JUST MY FUN

### Monty Lowther Calling!



Hallo, everybody! What's the date? You don't know! It's a very wholesome truth!

What is better than a promising young chap? A chap who pays!

Of course, a showman has remarkable powers of endurance. He holds on to the last!

They say pilchot riding isn't so popular in America. You stand risk of being "knocked off"!

Reply to Correspondent: The way to prevent your hands becoming rough through gardening is to employ a man to do the work!

Olga tells me he is trying to produce a liquid which will dissolve anything. He doesn't say what he is going to keep it in!

An American paper says coloured children should usually wash their soap past before sunrise. The cleric's hour is just before the dawn!

Tip from Fatty Wynn: The taste of coconut is greatly improved if a little roast beef and Yorkshire-pudding are added!

led the unsuspecting detective to that retired spot in order to "bill" him. But there was no sound of "biling" in the old room.

Mr. Tagg remained near the door. Perhaps he was not suspicious, after all. Manners and Lowther stepped out of the room, but Tom Merry remained in it, and Mr. Tagg remained in the doorway, watching him.

"What's the little game?" demanded Kangaroo of the Shell, in wonder.

"You'll see!" murmured Lowther.

He made a sign to Manners. The two juniors made a sudden rush and Mr. Tagg was shoved from behind and went staggering into the box-room. Tom Merry was ready to receive him. He gave him another shove, and the private detective sat down among the lumber with a grunt.

In the twinkling of an eye Tom Merry was outside the box-room, and the door was shut, and the key turned in the lock. Monty Lowther calmly and cheerfully extracted the key and put it into his pocket.

There was a roar of laughter. The private detective had certainly been very neatly trapped. A sound of falling furniture could be heard as the unfortunate gentleman scratched up among the lumber.

There came a loud knocking on the inside of the door, and the handle was wrenched from the inside—in vain!

"Let me out! Open this door at once, Master Merry!"

"Not this evening—some other evening!" said Tom Merry.

"I shall complain to your Housemaster! I shall—"

"You've got to get to him first, Mr.

I hear that down at Brighton, Fatty Wynn took all ten wickets against a scratch side on the sands. He had them all "side-up!"

Then there was the old lady who heard the magic call "Owe"—and went home.

I hear there's a complete correspondence at Weyland. They would have found that exchange to be ordinary!

A tiger has a more injurious bite than a lion, says a professor. He must have gone to great pains to find that out!

Henry: "Did you order ham and eggs?" asked the waiter. "No," replied the patient diner. "I humbly requested them."

Storyville: It took Care ten minutes to take "centre," the other afternoon at the wicket. And it took Fatty Wynn ten seconds to take Care's "centre" stamp! "Cent" straight back!

News: Prisoners are to be much improved. The idea, no doubt, is to attract a better class of convict.

"I think you are very funny indeed," writes a reader. And in word, too, I hope!

Wally: "Are you eating a plum, D'Arcy miss?" demanded Mr. Selby, noticing a suspicious bulge in Wally's cheek. "No, sir," replied Wally. "I'm just making a groan, ready to eat during break!"

All the best, chaps!

Tagg! You're going to stay there all night, and all to-morrow, too, unless you promise to leave Mr. Jinx's at once?"

"Impossible! My instructions—"

"Then you can stay there! Good-night!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Master Merry! Boy! I shall shout for help—"

"Shout away!" said Monty Lowther, with a chuckle. "Nobody will hear you from here, Mr. Tagg. That's why we brought you to the top of the House. Go it!"

"My dear young friend—"

"Good-night!"

Tom Merry & Co. departed, going cheerfully downstairs. The imprisoned Mr. Tagg hammered furiously at the door; but the wicket of the hammering died away as the juniors descended after eight o'clock. Tom Merry went back in the Common-room to a more cheerful frame of mind. He had disposed of the private detective for the time, at least. He wondered what Mr. Tagg was thinking, as he remained shut up in the box-room among the dusty lumber. He little guessed.

## CHAPTER 11.

### A Surprising Discovery!

LEVINSON of the Fourth knocked at the door of Mr. Railton's study, after a glance up and down the passage to make sure that he was not observed. He did not wait for the School House master to tell him to come in, but entered immediately after knocking.

Mr. Railton, who was smoking an

steering pipe, glanced round at him from his comfortable easy-chair.

"Well, Lewison?"

Lewison closed the door. He did not want to be observed in Mr. Railton's study. Knocking in a Housemaster was not approved of at St. Jim's, and Lewison would have been in great danger of a durastory nagging if he had been spotted.

"If you please, sir," said Lewison, "there's something going on that I think you ought to know about."

Mr. Railton raised his hand.

"You know that I do not approve of tale-bearing, Lewison," he interrupted coldly.

Lewison flushed.

"Yes, sir, I know; but this is serious."

"I do not think you need continue, Lewison."

"Then the man will stay shut up in the box-room all night, sir," said Lewison.

And he turned to the door.

As he fully expected, these words caused a change in the Housemaster's manner.

"What is that, Lewison? A man shut up in the box-room? What do you mean?"

"They've shut him up, sir, and they're keeping him there. I thought a master ought to know about it, sir, in case—"

"Who is shut up in the box-room?"

"The detective, sir."

"The detective?" said Mr. Railton, in astonishment. "What detective? What are you talking about, Lewison?"

"Miss Fawcett's detective, sir—a Mr. Tagg. Miss Fawcett has sent him here to watch over Tom Merry. You remember, sir?"

Mr. Railton started.

"I have heard something of this, but do you seriously tell me, Lewison, that a detective has arrived?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he has been shut up in the box-room?"

"The top box-room, sir. He's hammering at the door now, but he's too far off for anybody to hear him. Lewison's taken the key away, or I should have let him out. They're going to keep him shut up there all night."

"Blow my soul!" said Mr. Railton, rising. "This must be seen into at once. I hope you told me this merely from a sense of duty, Lewison. I do not approve of tale-bearing, but it is certainly a serious matter. I shall see into it at once. You may go."

Lewison vanished, satisfied that he had got a spoke in the wheel of the Terrible Three. Mr. Railton could hardly fail to punish them for trapping the detective and shutting him up in the lumber-room—and, in any case, Mr. Tagg would be released, and would begin shadowing and carrying Tom Merry again.

The School House master ascended the stairs. The School House was an old, rambling building, and the top box-room was in an exceedingly out-of-the-way place. Mr. Railton was a little out of breath when he reached it.

There was no doubt that there was a prisoner in the room. Loud knocking fell upon the Housemaster's ears as he came up, and it proceeded from the interior of the box-room. A voice was calling through the keyhole.

"Let me out, you rascals! You rascals! Let me out!"

"Dear me! That does not sound like a detective!" he murmured. "And the voice sounds quite boyish, too. I wonder if—"

"Open this door, will you, your honors?"

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Mr. Railton tapped on the outside of the door, and coughed.

"Oh, you've come back, have you, you rascals!" came the voice from within. "Open this door, will you? You been here an hour?"

"Who is there?" called out the Housemaster.

He heard a gasping exclamation. The knocking on the door inside died away. A startled voice inquired from within:

"Who's that?"

"I am Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of this House."

"Oh sorry!"

"What?"

"I—I mean, will you kindly request Tom Merry to let me out, sir. I've been—the victim of a practical joke. No harm done, but I should like to be released—ahem!—as quickly as possible."

"I will speak to Merry at once."

Mr. Railton descended to the Shell passage and knocked at Tom Merry's door.

"Oh, clear off, whenever you are, can't you?" came Tom Merry's exasperated voice.

Mr. Railton opened the door.

The Terrible Three and Blake & Co. were there. They jumped up as they saw the Housemaster, and Tom Merry turned very red.

"Oh, sir! I—I beg your pardon!" he stammered. "I—I didn't know it was you, sir."

"It appears that someone is locked up in the top box-room," said Mr. Railton quietly.

"The—the top box-room, sir?"

"Yes."

"Indeed! I—I wonder when it can be, sir?"

"The key has been taken away," said Mr. Railton grimly. "I have an impression that the key is here. Perhaps you know where it is, Lewison?"

"I, sir?" ejaculated Lewison.

"Yes! Have you the key about you?"

"Ahem! It's—"

"Kindly answer my question, Lewison."

"As a matter of fact, sir, I—I have," said Lewison.

"And as a matter of fact, you juniors locked this man up in the box-room—is it not so?" Mr. Railton demanded.

The Terrible Three exchanged glances. It was only too clear that some tall tale had been at work, and that they were discovered.

"Ahem! You see, sir, we—"

"Is it so, or is it not so?" asked the Housemaster.

"Ahem! Yes, sir."

"Very good. Follow me!" said Mr. Railton.

The Terrible Three followed the Housemaster from the study and up the noisy flights of stairs. The box-room was quite quiet when they reached it. Mr. Railton inserted the key in the lock and turned it.

He threw the door open. The light was switched on in the box-room, and by its light the private detective could be seen. He was sitting upon an empty trunk, and he blinked at them through his big spectacles as they entered.

"Who is this man, Merry?" Mr. Railton asked, his searching glance resting

upon the speckled face of the prisoner, who rose to his feet, still blinking.

"Mr. Tagg, sir," said Tom Merry reluctantly.

"A really detective, sir—I mean, a private detective," said Lewison.

"We only shut him up to keep him quiet, sir," said Messers. "He was worrying us like—like anything, sir."

"Mr. Tagg, if that is your name, will you kindly explain who you are, and what you are doing here?" said Mr. Railton, his eyes still searchingly fixed on J. Tagg. "When I came upstairs, you were speaking in a manner more suitable to a schoolboy than to a well-to-do man. You may also explain how it is that your hair grows all on one side of your head and over one ear."

Mr. Tagg's hand went up to his hair, and he dragged it straight instinctively. He realized that the wig must have been disarranged when he was shoved over in the box-room, and as there was no looking-glass there, he had not observed it. The Terrible Three uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"He's got a wig!"

"I—I—" stammered Mr. Tagg.

"You may remove that wig, my boy," said Mr. Railton calmly. "I think I am aware of your real identity."

"Boy?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"The voice I heard proceeding from this room was remarkably like that of Kerr of the Fourth Form," said Mr. Railton.

"Kerr!" yelled the Terrible Three.

"I suppose this—ahem—detective did not show you any credentials," said Mr. Railton, his face breaking into a smile.

"None, sir! We—we took his word for it!" stammered Tom Merry.

"Take off that wig and moustache, Kerr, also the spectacles."

Mr. Tagg obeyed.



Hold in the firm grip of Kerr and Fatty Wynn, Lewison made the resolution down his throat. The result was the same!

Then, in spite of the make-up on his face, the chains of the Shell knew him.  
 "Kerr!" gasped Tom Merry.  
 "Spotted!" said Monty Lowther.  
 "I thought I knew your color, Kerr. Also I am aware of your peculiar talent for impersonation," said Mr. Railton.  
 "What is the meaning of this absurd trick, Kerr?"

Kerr grinned involuntarily.  
 "Well, sir, Tom Merry was expecting a detective, and as the chap didn't seem to come, we thought it a pity he should be disappointed, so—so—it was only a lark, sir."

"A very absurd joke," said Mr. Railton. "I suppose these boys sent you up here believing you to be really what you presented yourself to be."

"I suppose so," grinned Kerr. "I—I was getting alarmed, as it's nearly bedtime, and I've got to get back to my house."

"You had better go back to your house at once," said Mr. Railton dryly. "I shall not punish you for a joke. You may go."  
 "Thank you, sir!" said Kerr.

The Terrible Three looked at Kerr as if they would eat him as he walked cheerfully out of the bar-room. Kerr winked one eye at them pleasantly as he passed, waving in the presence of Mr. Railton, and they longed to charge him over and hang him, but it was not to be done.

Kerr disappeared down the stairs, and Mr. Railton had a stern glance upon the Terrible Three.

"I shall excuse you, as it turns out to be only a peculiar joke," he said. "But if this had really been Miss Forester's detective, I should have punished you severely. Take care that you do not play such a trick upon the genuine detective, if he should come."

I shall be very anxious with you if you do. You may go."

And the Terrible Three went, Mr. Railton following them downstairs with a stern look. But in the privacy of his own study the Housemaster indulged in a hearty laugh.

The Terrible Three returned to their own quarters, Blake & Co. were still there.

"Well!" said the Fourth Forester together.  
 "Spotted!" growled Lowther.

"It was Kerr!" snorted Manservant.  
 "Kerr!" yelled Blake.  
 "Yes, Kerr!" growled Tom Merry. "We've been taken in, but Railton spotted him. He was going to be let out. He was afraid of losing face for both, it seems."

"But Jove! Then it was only a New House joke, dash boys!" said Arthur Kangaroo D'Arcy in wonder.

"Yes; that's all."  
 "Gossip! Scott! You fellows are wathah easy to take in, and so mine," said the woad of St. Jim's.  
 "What a pity I wasn't here when the boardah came!"

The Terrible Three bestowed a far from favorable glance upon the cheerful Gossip.

"What difference would that have made, hawdah?" Lowther demanded.

"Oh, I should have spotted him at once, you know. He would find it wathah hard to take in a fellow of judgment—a fellow like me—"

"Am!"

"Waddy, Tom Merry—"  
 "You would have been spotted just the same as we were, you frabjous jay! Besides, you saw him in the Communion-room, and didn't spot him!" said Tom Merry excitedly.

"Yes; but I was waddy takin' your word for it that he was all wessaw, you know. If I had been here—"

"Chump!"

"Waddy, you wathah—"  
 "Railton's ordered us to let the real 'ee alone when he comes," said Tom Merry. "We're not to touch a hair of his giddy head. I think you fellows might undertake to handle him, though. Duck him in the river, or something, and make him glad to get away from St. Jim's."

"Rely on us," said Blake heartily. "He can't be coming to-night, though. Merry I wasn't here when Kerr came."

"What difference would that have made?" howled Lowther.

"Oh, I should have spotted him, of course."  
 "Silly ass!"

"I think I should have spotted him, too," said Digby, with a thoughtful shake of the head.

"I'm sure I should," said Horrie, with a nod. "But these Shell chaps are not up to snuff. Fancy letting a New House boarder take them in like that!"

"Yes, wathah! I wogard it as wathah widdy."  
 "You—you—you—"

"Hallo! Bed-time!" said Blake, rising. "We'll be off. Next time Kerr comes along playing the giddy goat, Tommy, we'll be on

hand, and you can rely on us to spot him."

"Yass, wathah!"  
 The chains of Study No. 4 took their departure. The Terrible Three sneered. They were firmly convinced that Blake & Co. would have been equally deceived in the same circumstances. But Blake & Co. were not disposed to admit that, in this case.

The Terrible Three made their way to the Shell dormitory, and found that the story of Kerr's impersonation was known to all the Shell. A howl of laughter greeted them, and their frowning brows only made the laughter the louder, and the Shell fellows roared, till Kildare came in to put the lights out.

After that, for a long time, chuckles were heard proceeding from many beds, while the Terrible Three lay in silent wrath, only too painfully conscious of the fact that they had been utterly, completely, and helplessly "done."

CHAPTER 12.

Not To Be Taken In!

THINKING was a letter for Tom Merry in the morning. It was from Miss Fricilla Forester. It expressed the hope that the medicine and pills had done him good, and informed him that the good lady had succeeded in engaging a reliable detective—a Mr. Blum—and that Mr. Blum would arrive at St. Jim's that day.

Tom Merry grinned dimly as he showed the letter to his chums.

"The genuine article at last," grinned Monty Lowther. "Poor old Tommy! Anyhow, he won't be quite so bad as Mr. Tapp. Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what are we going to do with him?" growled Tom Merry. "The fellows will all simply howl."

"I suppose they will. We can't drown him, or hang him, or beat him in oil, or take him out and lose him," said Lowther thoughtfully. "Blessed if I know what to do with him! Better grin and bear it."

"I've got an idea," said Manservant. "Suppose you find that old gipsy, and tip her to tell you another fellow—a better one. They don't mind what fortunes they tell, so long as they get the tin, you know. Miss Forester is coming here again on Saturday afternoon, and you can have the gipsy all ready with a new party."

Tom Merry shook his head.  
 "The blessed old cat paid it on her gipsy, because I didn't believe in her or it," he said. "I don't think she'll do it. Besides, it's no go. The gipsies have moved on. I heard Kangaroo say they had gone when he went down to Relevance yesterday."

"Hi! That's rather knocked it on the head," agreed Manservant. "It was a jolly good idea. Blessed if I know what's to be done, excepting to get the chaps to rag Mr. Blum till he's glad to clear off."

"That's the only way, I suppose."  
 And the Terrible Three went into the Forester-room that morning, resolving in their minds various schemes for dealing with Mr. Blum, private detective, when he arrived.

Jack Blake & Co. were also thinking about the private detective. Blake had an idea that Figgins & Co. had not fished with their wheezes yet. It would be quite easy for Kerr, who was a postmaster in the art of impersonation, to make himself up in a



scowled his head victoriously as Figgins tried to pour a portion of the medicine over down the outside of his coat and trousers. "Through it!"

different manner, and writes as the real detective.

After being spooned once, the Terrible Three would never suspect that the second arrival was also a spooner, and they would take him at face value, as Blake put it.

"It's easy enough to spoon those Shell kids," said Blake, with a wise shake of the head. "Figgins & Duncan fool them all along the line, you know, as easy as falling off a log. It's up to this study to keep our end up. If it wasn't for this study, the School House might as well go to the giddy howevers at once."

"Yes, wathah!" agreed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Of course, any of us would have spooned Kerr at once."

"Of course we should," said Herries. "And we'll jolly well spot him at once, if he tries it on again."

"That's the idea," said Blake. "Of course, we want to be careful not to make a mistake. When the new detective comes lapping along we'll look him over, and if there's anything suspicious about him, we'll jump on him and show him up—what?"

"And the chums of Study No. 5 were very much on the qui vive that day. Relations were a little strained between them and the Terrible Three owing to the Fourth Farmer's capriciousness as that subject, and Tom Merry had not spoken to them that morning, as they knew nothing of Miss Fawcett's letter."

After morning lessons Lovelace and Manners went down to the cricket field to practice, and Tom Merry went with them to watch.

Tom's state of exasperation was growing. He wanted to be on the cricket pitch, and it was intensely irritating to have to stand there and watch the other fellows at practice without being able to touch a bat or ball himself.

Blake & Co. entered in the quadrangle, with their eyes very much open. They encountered Figgins and Fatty Wynn outside the bookshop, and grinned as they noted the absence of Kerr.

The three New House fellows were generally inseparable, and Blake & Co. were convinced at once that Kerr's absence meant something.

"Hallo!" said Blake affably.

"Where's Kerr—not detained?"

"Lines," replied Figgins, with a chuckle. "He spooned you fellows beautifully last night; but Ratty's given him lines for being late in the House."

"He didn't spoon us, Figgins!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "He spooned the Shell chaps; but we should have spotted him at once."

"Now-wo!" said Figgins derisively; and he went into the bookshop with Fatty Wynn.

Blake winked at his comrades.

"Where's Kerr?" he murmured.

"What?"

"Figgins said he was doing lines," said Herries.

"He didn't say he was doing lines. He simply said 'lines,'" replied Blake sagely.

"Fiddy doesn't tell whoopers."

He left us to jump to conclusions, as he liked. Of course, he wants us to think that Kerr is in the study printing out lines for Mr. Hatchell. But he isn't—not half!"

"Wathah not?"

"It was to account for Kerr being out of sight," Blake went on, with a chuckle. "My idea is that a chap about Kerr's size will turn up in a

new rig, calling himself something or other, to spoof the Shell chaps over again."

"Shouldn't wonder," agreed Dig.

"My dear kid, it's a dead cert. You listen to your Uncle Blake," said the chuff of Study No. 5 patronizingly.

"Kerr could spoof the Shell chaps every day in a week, but he can't spoof your uncle. Not much!"

"I should certainly wish to be spooned. Let's keep an eye on the New House, dear boys, and spot the scortak when he comes out in his new wig."

"He won't have a new wig," said

A little man in a blue serge suit was coming up the road. He wore a bowler hat, which did not wholly conceal spiky hair of a sandy colour.

"Looks as if he's coming here," remarked Digby.

"You bet! He's coming here, right enough. Just about Kerr's height" grinned Blake.

"I should like to see an inch or two taller than Kerr," said Herries, after a careful survey of the approaching stranger.

"Eloaves in his boots, of course," said Blake. "I've seen Kerr, when he's made-up, looking a good three inches taller than usual."

"Yes, that's so."

"I bet you that's the man," said Blake. "Anyway, we'll soon see by what he says."

"Yes, wathah!"

The junior, while apparently interested only in the landscape, kept sharp eyes on the stranger as he came up. Blake was inwardly feeling a little anxious. He had so confidently pronounced the sandy stranger to be Kerr in disguise that it would be rather a blow if the man passed on without stopping. Unless the sandy stranger stopped at the school gates, announcing himself as Miss Fawcett's detention, Jack Blake would have to sing very small indeed.

But Blake was not disappointed. The sandy gentleman stopped at the gates and addressed the janitor.

"Is this St. James' School?" he asked.

Blake exchanged a glance of triumph with his comrades.

"Yes, sir," he replied. "Do you want to see someone here?"

"Yes—a boy by the name of Merry. Perhaps one of you leads him?"

Blake could not help grinning. Fully convinced that the sandy gentleman was Kerr of the New House in a new disguise, he felt that it was really too rich for the impostor to pretend to take one of them for Merry.

"No, he isn't here," said Blake. "I'll find him for you, sir, if you like. What name shall I tell him?"

"Blum—Mr. Blum!" said the stranger.

"Oh, good! Perhaps you are the detective?" Blake suggested, with another wink at his chums.

The stranger nodded.

"Exactly. Miss Fawcett has sent me here, as you seem to know all about it."

"Good! You are going to look after Tom Merry, Mr. Tagg—I mean Blum?"

"Yes."

"Guard him from all sorts of dangers, and shadow him up and down, and report about!" Blake went on cheerily. The sandy gentleman looked a little puzzled.

"My instructions are to look after him," he said. "If you will let me pass, I—"

The Fourth Formers had lined up in the stranger's way. He was looking considerably perplexed, and the janitor could not help thinking how well he did it. But they were not to be taken in—yet they.

"Shall we take you to Tom Merry?" Blake asked politely.

"Thank you very much."

"Good egg! We'll take you! Collar him!" shouted Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth Formers rushed upon the sandy stranger. He was utterly unprepared for that sudden attack, and he was howled over at once. He went

### MISUNDERSTOOD.



"Oh, Sandy!" exclaimed Jack. "Let's go in here. Three solid hours' eating for eightpence!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Hanson, 22, Bradby Street, Eastington Colliery, Co. Durham.

Herries, with a shake of the head.

"More likely to have an old one. It would look more natural."

"Wendy, Herries, I did not mean a wig. I meant a wig—a new wig—not, you know."

"Gang means his new rig!" chuckled Blake. "It's only his hair that's a gang. But we're not going to watch the New House. That's too good. Kerr won't come out of his own House disguised as a giddy detective, you daffie. He'll come up to the school gates as bold as brass. Of course, he's gone out, and he's showing on his disguise outside the gates, as it's daylight now. My idea is that he'll come walking up to the gates. Perhaps he'll come in a cab—just like his nose."

"Perraps you are wight," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully.

"No 'perraps' about it. I am right," said Blake calmly. "No good watching the New House. We'll just hike down to the gates and keep our peepers open there."

"Wight-ko!"

The four chums stammered down to the school gates. There they lounged idly, watching for something to turn up. If Kerr's absence from his usually inseparable chums meant that he was playing a new trick, it could not be long delayed, for in less than half an hour the dinner-bell would ring, and Kerr would have to turn up in the New House then.

The Fourth Formers could not have long to wait. And, as a matter of fact, before they had been ten minutes on the watch, Blake uttered an exclamation, and pointed along the white road in the direction of Howlands.

"Look there!"

(Continued on page 18.)



# The Editor's Chair

Let the Editor be your pal!  
Drop him a line to-day,  
addressing your letters:  
The Editor, The GEM,  
Fleetway House, Farring-  
don Street, London, E.C.4.



**H**ALLO, Chums! The Boy Scout movement, started many years ago by the Chief Scout, Lord Baden-Powell, was never more popular than it is to-day. Its growth has been rapid, and long since it has become a movement of international interest. Tens of thousands of boys all over the world are to-day enrolled in the ranks of the Boy Scouts, and there's no letter or more enjoyable pastime for teaching self-reliance, self-control, and all-round usefulness to the youth of the world.

All readers, particularly Boy Scouts, will be delighted to know that something in the theme upon which Martin Clifford bases his next gripping yarn of the St. Jim's chums. It is called:

## "THE CURLEW PATROL WINS THROUGH!"

A big Scout contest is due to be held in the district to determine the most efficient patrol, and all the troops around Weyland and Rylocabe enter for it, including, of course, the St. Jim's troop. Naturally, there is no little rivalry between the various St. Jim's patrols and the Grammarian Scouts, and the japing is fast and furious while the janzers are practising for the all-important contest.

Gordon Guy & Co., of the Grammar School, prove themselves a very wily troop, and in the matter of japing they are one too many for Tom Merry & Co., much to the discomfort of the latter. But the St. Jim's janzers are determined to retrieve their prestige in the great contest. At the all-events here, however, the Curlew Patrol, led by Tom Merry, are the victims of foul play, and they find themselves up against it to reach the scene of the contest in time to compete.

'I'm sure this special yarn, which is full of fun, exciting adventure, and thrills, will be given a hearty welcome by every reader.

## "HARRY WHARTON'S CHALLENGE!"

In this number you have read how Harold Singh, in unusual circumstances, has made his debut at Greyfriars. In next week's chapter the French and German boys of Beverdown Purvis Academy, from which school "Inky" has come, also join up with Greyfriars. Their arrival at the school causes something of a sensation, due to no small measure to the efforts of the chums of the Reserve.

The high spot of this exciting instalment, however, comes when Harry Wharton and Delatrade face each other for the third time in a fight—a fight

which marks an epoch in the history of the Reserve at Greyfriars.

Look out for this grand number next Wednesday—and give all your pals the tip that it contains a wonderful scolding and school yarn.

## SOMETHING NEW IN LESSONS!

In years to come the boys of the Jews' Free Boys' School in the East End of London should make good husbands! For as the result of their headmaster's brain-ware, they have been instructed in the art of equipping, furnishing, and decorating a home. Under the guidance of their headmaster, they have constructed this home in the school, and it is complete with all the latest improvements. The paneled dining-room, for instance, has a glass ceiling, above which the electric light is installed, so that there is no light suspended from the ceiling by unsightly dex.

The house is also fitted out with a bedroom, bath-room, and kitchenette, and all the decorating, colour-schemeing, and furnishing, very artistic and modern, have been carried out by the boys themselves. Tiling and parquet floors, too, are among the home-making tasks at which these boys have proved themselves adepts. And, of course, no modern residence is complete nowadays without its refrigerator, telephone, wireless, and vacuum cleaner, and all these appurtenances of the modern household have been added.

The boys of this East London school are proud of the home they have made. In the words of their headmaster, "it will serve as a model for their own homes in later years." Home-making is certainly a novel, useful, and interesting lesson, and might well be copied by other schools.

## THE BATSMEN'S NIGHTMARE!

"Who is or was the fastest bowler in cricket?" asks Jack Phillips, of Mitcham. I think this is a matter of opinion, Jack, but I should say that a bowler named Maroon, who was a night-mare to batsmen in the days of W. G. Grace, the Grand Old Man of cricket, was by very nearly the fastest bowler ever.

The fast bowlers of to-day would soon modern-paced beside this speed merchant. His bowling was so fast that every batsman took up a position behind the wicket. The wicket-keeper

stood fifteen yards back from the stumps, and fifteen yards behind him was a longstop. The ball hurtled down from his hand at such a terrific pace that the batsman had no time to play a forward stroke. The only way to score off him was to edge the ball away through the slips, and this wasn't easy because his deliveries never pitched in front of the batsman. The ball either crashed straight into the wicket without touching the ground, or went flying past. And it is recorded that nearly every time he hit the wicket he smashed a stump! On one occasion an extra fast ball knocked the bat out of the batsman's hands, and bat and ball both crashed into the stumps!

## THE FELINE WEATHER PROPHET!

Next time you're out in asleep, note whether he is lying on his side or his stomach. If he's an reliable a weather prophet as Napoleon, a famous feline of Baltimore, U.S.A., who has just died, his attitude will tell you what the weather is going to be. If he sleeps on his side it's a sign that a dry spell is due, but if puss is sleeping on his stomach rain may be expected.

Napoleon, who was nearly nineteen, earned a big reputation as an accurate weather prophet. In 1800, when the States experienced a big drought, he slept on his side for days, and after that Napoleon's owner received inquiries daily from people desiring to know what sort of weather might be expected. Now Napoleon's services are lost to his country, but he will always be remembered as the weather cat.

## THE ALTITUDE RECORD.

The altitude record for an aeroplane, J.D., of Southampton, is 49,500 feet. It is held by Donati, an Italian aviator, whose machine was fitted with a British "Bristol" air-cooled engine. An attempt on this record is shortly to be made by an R.A.F. plane, and the pilot will wear a special seat made for flying in very high altitudes. It is a kind of diving-belt, which will enable the pilot to breathe freely in rarified air, thus counteracting the very low air pressure in the atmosphere. The pilot will fly a monoplane with an air-cooled engine.

## TAILPIECE.

Tingling: "I say, is it right that Jones is married?"

Tingling: "I should say he is. When he's out he takes his own transport, and when he's at home he plays second fiddle!"

THE EDITOR.  
THE GEM LONDON—No. 1,441.

Going to pleasure of some, readers' Pan Pal weeks have been unaccountably bad for the wicket. They will appear again, together with the Pan Pal column, next Wednesday.

down with a wild yell, and the four juniors grabbed him, swung him into the air by his legs and shoulders, and raked him into the quadrangle.

"Leggo!" roared the stranger. "Are you mad? What does this mean? Release me at once! What—what—what—oh—yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "We know you, you see! Did you think you could spoof us a second time? Ha, ha, ha!"

"What—what—"

"Bring him along, deah boys. We'll take him to Tom Merry!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And, heedless of the sandy stranger's wild struggles and frantic expostulations, the juniors rushed him away heading towards the cricket field.

## CHAPTER 12.

### The Genuine Article!

**T**OM MERRY was leaning against the pavilion, watching his chance at practice.

He was not looking very cheerful.

The merry clack of bat and ball rang over the playing fields, and the shouts of the juniors; but Tom Merry was out of it.

A sudden yell from the fellows round the field drew Tom's attention away from the pavilion.

"Hallo, hallo!"

"—What the dickens—"

"—What's the little game?"

Four juniors were rushing at top speed towards the cricket field, and in their midst was what appeared to be a waving mass of arms and legs. The cricketers ceased play in astonishment, gazing at the curious scene.

Tom Merry detached himself from the pavilion. There was a general shout of astonishment.

Blake & Co. came pasting up to the pavilion. The little sandy gentleman was struggling wildly in their grip, and they had had some little trouble in transporting him bodily from the school gates to the cricket field. But they had arrived at last. They dumped him down before Tom Merry, and he lay gasping like a newly landed fish.

"There he is!" gasped Blake.

"Yess, wathah! We've brought him to you, Tom Merry!"

"We spotted him far you," Digby explained. "He would have taken you chaps in again, but he couldn't take us."

"No fear!" said Herries emphatically. Tom Merry stared at the juniors and at the gasping stranger. The latter was apparently trying to get his second wind, and he could not speak.

"What on earth's the game?" asked Tom Merry, astounded. "Who's that?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Can't you guess?"

"Blasid if I can, unless—" Tom Merry stared harder at the sandy stranger. "Unless it's the detective."

"It's Kerr, you see, playing the same old game."

"By Jove!"

"Kerr!" exclaimed Monty Leather, coming off the field. "Do you mean to say he's got the cheek to try to spoof us over again?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Blake, grinning. "And he'd have spoofed you, too, only we kept an eye open. It's up to us to see that the School House isn't spoofed. As for you, that's chaps—"

"Grough, grough!" came from the *Tom Coo Librarian*.—No. 1,482.

shoored gentlemen. "Oh, I will complain to the headmaster of this! Grough! You shall be punished—over this outrage! You!"

"Still keeping it up, Kerr, old man?" said Blake. "Go it! Perhaps you'll convince us you are not yourself presently—perhaps!"

"P—p—p—p!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"Ow! I have been assaulted!" gasped the sandy gentleman. "I shall—ow—complain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who are you?" demanded Tom Merry.

"My name is Blum. I am a detective.

Grough!"

"Mr. Blum?" exclaimed the Terrible Three, with one voice.

"Yes, Grough!"

"My hat!"

"Were you expecting a detective named Blum?" asked Blake, looking puzzled.

"Yes," said Tom. "And you—"

"How did Kerr know? That's the name he gave us when he came up to the gate," said Blake. "He got the name right, anyway. How did he know?"

"He didn't know!" roared Tom Merry.

"But he must have known. He gave us that name when he came," said Digby. "Blum was the name he gave, right enough."

"Grough! My name is Blum—"

"Oh, don't keep it up when you're bowled out, Kerr!" exclaimed Herries. "Don't you understand that we've spotted you, and we know who you are! You may as well own up now, you fathead!"

And Herries grasped the sandy hair, and tugged at it fiercely. There was a bit of anguish from the sandy stranger. The hair did not come off.

"Great Scott! How on earth has he fixed it on?" scolded Herries, in astonishment. "It's as tight as if it were growing on his napper, by George!"

"Ow, ow! Let go!" shrieked Mr. Blum. "Ow! Ow! You! Leggos!"

He hit out furiously at Herries, and Herries rolled over in the grass, letting go. Mr. Blum rubbed his disarranged hair ruefully. He seemed to feel hurt.

The juniors were shrieking with laughter now. It was only too clear that hair was Mr. Blum's own hair, and was growing on his head. Study No. 2 had made a little mistake.

"See Jove, that's his own hair, you know!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in dismay.

"Then he's Jove's!" said Herries, getting up. "Kerr hasn't sandy hair—and that's sandy!"

"It isn't Kerr!" yelled Tom Merry, staggering against the pavilion wall, almost in convulsions. "Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha! It's not Kerr, you chump!"

"Oh rats!" said Blake uneasily. "Of course it's Kerr! Didn't he come up and say he was a detective?"

Monty Leather grasped Blake by the shoulders, turned him round, and pointed to three juniors who were hurrying towards the spot, evidently attracted by the disturbance. They were Figgins & Co. of the New House—Figgins, Kerr, and Wynns. Blake stared at them, his jaw dropping.

"Kerr!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Kerr!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"By Jove!"

Figgins & Co. came up smiling. Kerr was evidently there in the flesh. Stains of ink on his fingers seemed to

indicate that he had really been doing lines.

"Hallo! Who's that?" asked Figgins, starting at the sandy stranger, who was sitting on the grass and gasping away as if for a wager.

"I—I—I thought it was Kerr!" stammered Blake, realising at last that there had been a mistake. "Kerr, you beast, where have you been?"

"I've been in my study doing lines," said Kerr, in surprise. "Ratty gave me lines for being late last night. I got in after the House had been locked up, and—"

"Was, I told you Kerr was doing lines," said Figgins. "Don't you remember?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bad Jove! There seems to have been wathah a misapprehension, deah boys!"

The sandy stranger staggered to his feet. He was still gasping. He smoothed down his rolled garments, and brushed back his rolled hair, and looked round for his hat.

Monty Leather picked it up and presented it to the stranger—in a somewhat damaged condition. Mr. Blum pushed it into shape, and set it on his sandy head. His face was very angry, which was not surprising, considering the way he had been handled.

"I shall complain to your headmaster of this!" he said.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "If you are really Mr. Blum—"

"I am certainly Mr. Blum! I gave my name to these boys, and they promised to take me to Master Merry. I did not anticipate—"

"I am Tom Merry. It was all a mistake," explained Tom, shaking back his moustaches. "They thought you were speaking them, you know. We were speaking last night by a chap who pretended to be a detective. They'll apologise."

"Yess, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus immediately. "I understand that we owe the gentleman an apology, deah boys. Pwey pardon us, ah! We acted wathah an entire misapprehension. We took you for quite another wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sorry, Mr. Blum!" murmured Blake. "It—is it a mistake?"

"I do not quite understand how such a mistake can have arisen," said Mr. Blum indignantly. "However, I am willing to try to make about the matter, if you wish to, Master Merry."

"Thanks!"

"I wish to see the headmaster," said Mr. Blum, with considerable dignity. "I have to present my credentials."

"Come with me," said Tom.

And he led the detective away towards the School House. Blake & Co. looked at one another in a sickly manner. The rest of the juniors were yelling with laughter. Figgins & Co. were almost in hysterics.

"Oh, stop cackling!" said Blake crossly. "Come away, you chaps! I'm not going to stay here and listen to a set of silly goose cackling!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The hat of Study No. 6 beat a retreat from the cricket field, looking very red and very sheepish. The cackling followed them till they were out of hearing. When they were in the School House, Jack Blake found himself the centre of three distinct and deadly glares. Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy agreed that it was all Blake's fault—and, indeed, Jack had been just a little careless from the beginning.

"You see!" said Herries, in measured tones.

"You chump!" said Digby.

"You twaddlers duffah!" said D'Arcy.

Blake started.  
"You were an idiot when I was, you silly chump!" he said indignantly.  
"As a matter of fact, now I come to think of it, I didn't feel quite sure it was Kerr at all—"

"What?"  
"That says!"  
"Only you fellows seemed so certain about it?" went on Blake.

That was too much for Study No. 4. With one accord Blake's three followers fell upon their leader and grasped him, and bumped him on the floor. Then they walked away, somewhat relieved in their minds, but leaving the unfortunate chief of Study No. 4 in a frame of mind to which more words could not possibly give expression.

## CHAPTER 14.

## Kerr to the Rescue!

**M**R. BLUM, private detective, was installed at St. Jim's. Dr. Holmes had, as Lowrey put it, swallowed him whole!

What the Head thought about the matter the juniors did not know. He did not confide in his retention, naturally, to fellows in the Shell. It was pretty easy to guess that he didn't like it; but the great respect he had for Miss Fawcett probably made him conclude that he could not refuse her request, and doubtless he hoped that she would soon come to see the absurdity of it, and would release the man.

Meanwhile, Mr. Blum was provided with a room. He was a quiet and inoffensive man, certainly, and not in the way. He did not undertake to shadow Tom Merry about as the facetious J. Tang had done. Probably he knew that he owed his present "job" to the sheer force of a nervous old lady, and he was willing to give as little trouble as possible.

Mr. Blum was, indeed, so inoffensive that Tom Merry resented from his sense of making his life a burden at St. Jim's so that he would clear off. He was receiving a good fee for doing nothing at all, and it was a job that suited him.

He did not bother Tom in any way—so far as that went. It was the utter absurdity of the matter that bothered the Shell fellows. As soon as the School House knew that there was a private detective in the House watching over Tom Merry, there was a general roar of uncertainty, which seemed as if it would never die away. It was a standing joke, and Tom Merry was chipped on the subject till he was sore and angry.

The matter had to end somehow, Tom Merry felt that; but how to end it was a mystery.

He was still gated—still debarr'd from cycling and playing cricket. The position was growing intolerable. On Saturday afternoon, too, Miss Priscilla Fawcett was coming down to the school again to spend the half-holiday there. She was nervous and anxious, and she had informed Tom that she would keep her own eye on as much as possible, and come down to the school very often, at any amount of inconvenience to herself.

Inconvenience to Tom Merry did not enter into her consideration. His disregard of the supposed danger Miss Priscilla Fawcett attributed to their room determined to take every care of him.

On Saturday morning Tom Merry spotted Mr. Blum taking his constitutional in the quadrangle, and he

stared wrathfully at the sight. The sight of Mr. Blum always made the other fellows chuckle, but it roused Tom Merry's wrath. Mr. Blum nodded to the captain of the Shell as he passed. That was the full extent of his keeping guard over Tom Merry.

Figgins & Co. came sauntering across the quad, and they chuckled at the sight of Mr. Blum, and chuckled again when they saw Tom Merry's gloomy face.

"How's the giddy bodyguard going?" asked Figgins affably.

"Oh, go and eat cake!" said Tom Merry impolitely.

"Does he give you your medicine of a night?" asked Kerr.

"Oh, shut up!"

"And rub your back?" asked Fatty Wynn.

Tom Merry clenched his hands.

"Look here, you New House voters,

—"

"Fax!" said Figgins amiably.

"Tozmy, my son, we feel for you! We know it's rotten!"

"It is rotten!" said Tom Merry, unclenching his hands. "Can't you fellows give me some advice? I don't know what to do, but it can't go on. It's too utterly ridiculous! I shall be obliged to think about. And I'm gated for all half-holidays! Look here, Kerr, you're a real Scotch heart; can't you think of something?"

Kerr grinned.

"I have thought of something," he answered.

Tom Merry's face brightened. It was well known that Kerr was the brains of the New House Co., and Tom Merry had great respect for his keen wit. If anybody could think of a way out of a difficulty, Kerr could.

"File in!" said Tom Merry. "If you

can help me out of this awful business, I'd—I'd stand the biggest feed you've ever seen! Honest, I mean!"

"Good egg!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn.

"It's a go! File in, Kerr!"

"We've been thinking it over," said Kerr. "We feel for you—we do, really! Miss Fawcett has been scared by a silly old gippy telling her not about your fortune—don't that so!"

"That's it," said Tom indignantly.

"She believes in that silly stuff, you know?"

"You can't tip the gippy to tell another fortune—"

"Manners suggested that, but they're gone," said Tom. "Besides, I don't suppose the old spoiler would have done it, anyway."

"You could dig up another gippy to tell a new fortune."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I've thought of that, too," he said.

"But there isn't another gippy in the neighbourhood. These blasted spoilers come and go; and that gang are gone, and goodness knows when some more will come along! That's no good."

"Suppose we find one to see your governor this afternoon, and prime her with a good pair to tell!" suggested Kerr.

"That would work the circle, but it can't be did! I tell you, there aren't any more gippies in the district. I've inquired."

"We can make one," said Kerr calmly. "There's no reason why Miss Fawcett shouldn't take me for a giddy gippy fortune-teller!"

Tom Merry jumped.

"Oh, my hat!"

"See the scheme?" grinned Figgins.

"We've thought it out—or, rather, Kerr's thought it out—for your benefit, Tommy, my boy. Kerr can make up as anybody. Making up as a gippy would



Harris grasped at the unfortunate Mr. Blum's hair, and tugged at it furiously, and there was a yell of surprise from the rest. But the hair did not come off! It was only too clear that that hair was Mr. Blum's own hair, and that he was not Kerr in disguise!

be as easy as calling off a farm to Kerr. Of course, you School House chaps couldn't work it; but Kerr—

"My only bid!" said Tom Merry breathlessly. "What a thumping whomp! You—you really think you could do it, Kerr?"

"Don't you think I could?" said Kerr.

"Well, yes; you can do these things," admitted Tom Merry. "I've always said that there was one chap in the New House who could act. Only one, of course."

"Look here—" began Figgins. "That's all right," said Kerr. "I'll do it. When is your government coming?"

"Three trains at Rykoonbe this time," said Tom Merry. "You meet her at the station and walk here with her. In the lane she meets a gipsy who tells fortunes!"

"I've got all the things among our theatrical props, and we can take them out in a bag; and I'll make up in the wood, and be ready for you at the stile."

"Oh, ripping!" gasped Tom. "You are a good chap, Kerr—a giddy fellow in need! If you pull this off, I'll never forget it!"

"And you won't forget the feed, either," asked Fatty Wynn, rather anxiously.

Tom Merry laughed. "No fear! You fellows went along to my study at tea-time. Miss Fawcett is going to have tea with us, and she says we are a good remittance today. We'll fairly make things here this time—of you pull off this scheme!"

"Only an us?" said Figgins. "The New House don't make mistakes! Bring Cook House of St. Jim's, you know—"

"How-woe!" said Tom Merry good-humouredly.

He didn't mind if Figgins called the New House Cook House of St. Jim's, so long as the Co. received him from his trouble.

Manners and Lowther looked at Tom in surprise when he came in to breakfast. Tom Merry's face had completely lost its worried look. He was looking decidedly cheerful—quite his old self, in fact.

"Hallo! Somebody left you a fortune!" asked Lowther. "Or has the giddy bodyguard slipped downstairs and buried his neck?"

"Neither!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "But Kerr's found a way out!"

He explained, and Manners and Lowther burst into a roar. The Terrible Three went in to breakfast in high good humour. Blake & Co. observed their unusually high spirits, and after breakfast they wanted to know the reason. Tom Merry cheerfully explained.

"Good scheme!" said Blake. "I am not quite sure that I approve of it, dear boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his attention thoughtfully upon the Terrible Three. "I am not at all satisfied, weally!"

"Go on!" murmured Minty Lowther. "Of course, that knocks the whole thing on the head at once—I don't think!"

"You see, it might be regarded as deceiving," you know—"

Tom Merry rejoined. "It isn't deceiving—it's deceiving! That old case inside Miss Fawcett had caused by telling her a pack of lies! All Kerr's going to do is to undecieve her!"

"But Jove, you are wright!" agreed Arthur Augustus. "In the class, I approve!"

Thus everything in the garden is lovely!" said Minty Lowther. "Without the approval of Gray, of course."

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nothing could be done! You are quite sure that you approve, Gray?"

"Yes, dear boy!"

"For this relief, much thanks!" And he gently knocked Arthur Augustus' silk topper off and walked away.

Arthur Augustus made a rush to rescue his topper, which Manners had kindly kicked about a dozen yards away, and then he glared round in wrath.

"You stink wotsah! I will give you a fabled thrashing! all wowed! Where are those wotsahs gone?"

They were certainly gone.

## CHAPTER 15.

### All Scenes in

**M**ISS PRISCILLA FAWCETT alighted from the train in Rykoonbe Station.

Two juniors came across the platform to greet her. Manners and Lowther raised their hats simultaneously and very politely.

Tom Merry was not there. He had not been allowed to come. The "gating" was still in force. Tom Merry could not leave St. Jim's. He Manners and Lowther had come to the station alone to meet Miss Fawcett and escort her to the school, quite unconscious of what was in store for her.

"Is my dearest Tommy quite well?" was Miss Fawcett's first question, as she shook hands with the juniors.

"Quite well, ma'am," said Lowther.

"Has his cough been better?"

"It's quite gone, ma'am."

"Dear me! That is indeed good news! It must be due to taking regular doses of the Purple Pill and the Pink Powder," said Miss Fawcett. "I suppose Tommy has not finished the medicine yet?"

"Ahem! I think they're quite finished!" murmured Minty Lowther.

"Aldely! Then he must have been taking a great deal!" said Miss Fawcett, a little surprised. "However, Dr. Blobber says that the more that is taken, the more certain the patient is of recovery. Dear Tommy! I am so anxious to see him! Of course, he has not come out. I specially requested the Head—"

"He wanted to come to the station, ma'am, but he was gated," explained Lowther. "So he's waiting for us at the school gates."

"I am so anxious to see him!" said Miss Fawcett. "It is very kind of you dear boys to meet me at the station. Let us lose no time."

"This way, ma'am!"

As the Shell follows escorted Miss Fawcett past the station. They walked down the High Street of Rykoonbe, and came out into the lane. Miss Fawcett was not a fast walker, but she made all the speed she could. She was very anxious to see her darling Tommy, and to ascertain with her own eyes the effect of Dr. Blobber's medicines, pills, and powders upon his youthful frame.

"And no danger has befallen my dearest Tommy?" Miss Priscilla asked, as they walked on towards St. Jim's.

"Nothing at all, Miss Fawcett," said Minty Lowther solemnly. "Of course, Mr. Blass is looking after him in toppling style. So are we at the school in taking an interest in the matter, ma'am," said Manners, with equal solemnity. "There isn't a fellow in the School House, or the New House, either, who hasn't spoken to Tom on the subject."

Miss Priscilla beamed.

"What dear, good, kind boys!" she

exclaimed. "Of course, they all like Tommy, and take an interest in his health. That is only natural."

"Ha, ha, ha! Gooah—gooah!"

Miss Fawcett looked anxiously at Lowther.

"Have you a cough, my dear little boy?"

"Ahem! No!" gasped Lowther. "Only a sort of— It's all right. There's St. Jim's, Miss Fawcett!"

Minty Lowther had very nearly burst into a roar of laughter, but he had changed it to a cough just in time. The idea of all St. Jim's taking an interest in Tom Merry's health struck him as funny.

St. Jim's was in sight now. As they came up towards the gates they caught sight of Tom Merry standing there with Figgins and Fatty Wynn. They were chatting with a somewhat weird-looking gipsy woman.

Miss Fawcett glanced at the gipsy with interest.

She bent almost double, and leaned upon a knobby stick. Her face was the colour of a berry, and her thick black hair was in heavy ringlets about her head, covered with a red handkerchief artistically twisted.

"Cross my palm with silver, pretty lady!" murmured the gipsy in a winning voice. "Let me tell the fortune of your little boys!"

Manners and Lowther stared blankly at the gipsy. If she was not a real gipsy, certainly the get-up was perfect. They looked at Figgins—and Figgins closed one eye for a moment. Then the two Shell fellows spoke.

"Oh, well!" said Tom Merry, playing his part well. "I've had my fortune told the other day. Don't wait another. How are you, dear?" And he kissed his old governess. "Come in, and never mind the fortune-teller!"

"Cross my palm with silver," whined the gipsy again. "I can tell the future—I can tell the past!"

"Oh, rats!" said Tom. "Chuck it!"

"My dearest Tommy," said Miss Priscilla mildly, "you should be polite."

"Oh, all right!" said Tom, with an air of resignation. "Let her tell my fortune again, if she likes, Head on, though. Suppose she tells the past first—then we can be sure she knows something of the future."

"That is really a good idea," said Miss Priscilla.

"Cross my palm with silver—"

Tom Merry played a sly game in the brown hand.

"Now she's in!"

"Your hand, young Georgia!" Tom extended his hand, and it was taken in the brown fingers. The gipsy bent a devious glance upon it.

"The past is to me an open book!" the gipsy said slowly. "I see a strange far country—palm-trees—jungle—a burning sun!"

"Dear me!" said Miss Priscilla, much impressed. "You remember that you were born in India, Tommy, and I brought you home a mere child."

"Marvelous!" said Minty Lowther.

"I see a great ship—a rolling ocean—great expanses of blue water," the gipsy went on. "A little child with his name on the deck of a great ship!"

"Wonderful!" said Manners. "You came in a ship from India when you were a kitten, Tom. You didn't walk, anyway!"

"Shurrup!" said Tom. "This is a serious matter. What more can you tell me about the past, old lady?"

"I see a house amid green gardens, crossed the gipsy. "A wide bank, with hills in the distance. I see a little child

playing in the garden. All this I read—about—in your hand. A little boy is growing up under the loving eyes of his old nurse, who has become his guardian. Do I tell you true?"

"Quite true,"

"Amazing!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "It is indeed most extraordinary and amazing," said Miss Fawcett. "I am very glad we have encountered this gipsy. She may be able to tell us precisely what dangers you have to expect in the future, Tommy darling!"

"I hope so," said Tom. "Go on, old man, ma'am!"

"The gipsy went on in crooning tones. "The child grows older—he is sent to school. First to one school, and then to another. He becomes captain of his Form!"

"Tom Merry is captain of the School," said Figgins. "You see, she knows all about it."

"His health causes his kind guardian great anxiety," went on the gipsy. "She sends him large quantities of medicine, which are disposed of immediately."

"Exactly the facts!" said Monty Leather.

"Can you tell us something more?" asked Miss Priscilla, with bated breath. She was hanging on the gipsy's words by this time. Certainly the old woman was showing a marvellous knowledge of Tom Merry's past.

"I can tell you much more, lady. The boy—this boy—has rivals in the school—friendly rivals in another House. He wishes his old Home to be Cook House, but it is that he fails. His rivals in the other House beat him hollow all the time, and give him the lytooth!" said the gipsy.

"Quite true!" said Figgins and Fatty Wynn simultaneously; but the Towells Three glared in wrath at the gipsy.

"That's all set, of course," said Messers both.

"Pure piffle!" said Leather.

"Of all the silly ones—" began Tom Merry.

"Hush, Tommy! You must not speak like that to her!" said Miss Priscilla indignantly. "Where are your manners, my dear child! Go on, please—go on, my good soul! Tell us something of the future now!"

"Yes, get on with the washing!" growled Leather.

"The gipsy clasped Tom Merry's hand with great attention.

"I see a danger threatening," she crooned—"a great danger!"

"Ah!" said Miss Priscilla breathlessly. "This agrees with the prediction of the other gipsy. Can you say precisely what the danger is, my good lady?"

"The boy is in danger of losing his health!"

"Ah! It is as I feared!"

"There is no other danger. The danger from over the sea—that is disease; the dark man—that is death; but both may be avoided!"

"How avoided?" asked Miss Priscilla eagerly. "That is what we wish to know."

"By taking plenty of exercise exercises, and playing all sorts of games," said the gipsy, still scanning Tom Merry's palm. "The young gentleman must play cricket in the summer, and football in the winter."

"Oh, dear!"

"He must cycle and run and swim and play games as much as possible. The more he spends outside the school hours, the better."

"Oh!"

"And then the danger will pass.

But there is no other way!" said the Gipsy.

"Good gracious!" said poor Miss Priscilla. "I have been taking entirely the wrong means to safeguard you, Tommy darling."

"One more thing!" said the gipsy. "The young gentleman must not be specially watched. No one must be employed to watch or look after him. That is likely to bring about the very trouble you would wish to avoid."

"Blow my heart! I will dismiss the detective at once!" exclaimed Miss Priscilla, agitated. "How very fortunate to discover that! But is there no sign of a cricket accident, my good person? The other gipsy foretold—"

"The line of accident is mixed with the line of cricket," murmured the gipsy, with eyes still fixed on Tom Merry's palm. "But the accident can only come through not playing cricket. If the young gentleman gives up playing cricket the accident may come, but not otherwise."

"My dearest Tommy, you must play cricket regularly. I hope you will be

But the gipsy drew back.

"Madam, I cannot accept that. The young gentleman has crossed my palm with silver, and that is enough. Farewell!"

And the gipsy hobbled away, stamping along with the stick.

"The dear good soul!" said Miss Priscilla, quite touched. "How very honest! Tommy darling, my mind is very much relieved!"

And Tom Merry, who had been feeling some inward compunction, was relieved at the happiness that was unmistakably in the old lady's kind face. The little device was surely justifiable to relieve the terrors and anxieties caused by the real gipsy's lying predictions.

"Let us go in," said Miss Fawcett. "I will speak to the Head at once. I will also write letters with Mr. Blain, and send him away. Come, my darling Tommy!"

Having Tommy came most willingly.

Miss Priscilla Fawcett visited the Head's study, and the Head groaned inwardly when she was announced. But he looked very much relieved when he heard what she had to tell him. And he was decidedly glad to hear that Mr. Blain was to depart from St. Jim's.

After the departure of Mr. Blain, who went away quite satisfied with a handsome fee in his pocket, Miss Priscilla came to Tom Merry's study.

Great preparations were going on there.

Tom Merry had promised a tremendous fee if he succeeded in getting out of the trouble the gipsy's prophecies had brought upon him, and he was keeping his word.

The study table gleamed with a new tablecloth and coxery that had been hoveered up and down the passage, and the trestle board groaned under the weight of good things, as a trestle would say.

The chairs of Study No. 4 were there, and Kangaroo and several more fellows, and Figgins and Fatty Wynn. None came in later, his face presenting a newly washed appearance and a cheery grin.

The game of St. Jim's set down to tea in great spirits, and the merit of all was Tom Merry, perhaps with the exception of Miss Priscilla. That good lady was very happy indeed. Fatty Wynn was in the seventh heaven. There was a cheery buzz of talk over the well-spread tea-table.

And when tea was over, and Miss Priscilla rose to leave, she beamed sweetly upon the juniors, and once more impressed upon Tom Merry the stern necessity of devoting himself to the rough game of cricket.

And Tom Merry promised faithfully that he would devote himself to the summer game, and never neglect an opportunity of playing it, a promise which he carried out in the most faithful manner.

The juniors saw Miss Fawcett off to the station in great spirits. When she came back to St. Jim's cricket pavilion was going on on Little Side, and Tom Merry simply jumped into his harness, and joined his chums there.

The worry caused by the gipsy's prediction was never more, and it was the end of the trouble for Tom!

Next Wednesday: "THE CROWN PRINCE HANS THIRSKING" Every reader will revel in this game of school and scouting adventures, featuring Tom Merry & Co. and their circle of the Governor School. Look out for it!

THE GUN LINGER.—No. 1,481.



able to accustom yourself to playing that rough game!"

"I'll try," said Tom Merry heroically. "I'll do my best to please you, sir! I'll play cricket every chance I get through the summer."

"That is my own dear, devoted boy! You need not accustom, my dearest Tommy, if it takes up your time on a half-holiday when you might be improving your mind by reading some instructive book about geography," said Miss Fawcett. "You must remember that it is for the sake of your health and safety."

"I won't complain," said Tom Merry promptly. "Not a bit of it. I—I dare say I shall get to like it in time."

"It is for the sake of your health," said Miss Priscilla gently. "I hope you will become a very keen cricketer, Tommy, and get large numbers of goals and things. I think you call them goals! Can you tell us anything more, my good woman!"

"I have done," said the gipsy.

"Thank you so much! You have relieved my mind," Miss Priscilla selected a parcel from her purse.

"Pray take this—"



## THERE'S NOT A DULL MOMENT IN THESE LIVELY CHAPTERS OF THE EARLY ADVENTURES OF HARRY WHARTON & CO.

"You had better give it to me, then," he said.

But Nugent, the peace-maker—and a peace-maker was very frequently required among the ill-assorted occupants of Study No. 1—pushed Harry Wharton back into his chair.

"Keep your soul on, Harry!"

"Let me alone, Nugent!"

"Hate!" said Nugent cheerfully. "What's the good of a row? Bulstrode's bark is worse than his bite any day; and I don't believe he will be cut enough to go for a new kid just because he's an Indian!"

"You'll see," said Bulstrode wearily.

"I say, you fellows," broke in Billy Barber, the fourth occupant of Study No. 1, looking at the disputants through his big spectacles, "it's no good having a row; it would be a much better idea to have a feed!"

"Good old Barber!" grinned Nugent. "Are you going to stand one?"

"Well, I can't at the moment," said Billy Barber. "My postal order hasn't arrived yet. I was expecting it this morning, you know, but there's been some delay in the post. But that is all right. Wharton has plenty of money, and he can stand it. The Indian will feel down in the dumps very likely at being alone in a strange place, and a feed is just the thing to set him up—and all of us. I offer you the suggestion for what it's worth."

"And that's nothing," said Bulstrode. "You can keep your suggestions until they're asked for, Buster!"

Bulstrode broke off as a tap came on the door and it opened.

The four Removians looked towards it, and their gaze became fixed upon the individual who entered.

It was certainly a striking-looking

He, in complexion, of the deepest, richest olive, showed him to be a native of an Oriental clime, and though he was clad in the ordinary Eden garb of a school-boy, there was a grace and suppleness about his figure that betrayed the Hindu.

Slim and graceful as he was, however, there was strength in the slender form, and although the lips and the dark eyes were smiling, there was resolution in the chin.

The four seniors stared at him, and he made a deprecating bow.

"Have I accidentally found the study of which I was in search?" he asked, his English perfect as far as accent went. "Is this the Number First?"

Nugent grinned.

"This is Study No. 1 in the Remove," he replied. "Are you the new kid—Harroo Singh?"

The Indian bowed again.

"Harroo Jansett Ram Singh, my esteemed acquaintance," he replied politely.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "What sort of a giddy lunatic have they sent us? I say, Blacking, you're in the wrong shop. You ought to have taken the other turning for the lunatic asylum."

"If I have made a mistake, the apology is terrible," said the Indian junior, in his soft purring voice. "But if this is not a lunatic asylum, what are you doing here, my esteemed friend?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Billy Barber. "Harry Wharton smiled. In spite of his extremely soft appearance, it was

possible that the youth from the Far East had all his wits about him.

Bulstrode turned red with rage.

"You confounded nigger!" he roared.

"Shut up, Bulstrode!" said Harry Wharton sharply.

"Suppose you make me shut up!" roared Bulstrode.

Harry Wharton sprang to his feet.

"And I jolly well will!"

"Come on, then, and take another licking!"

"My worthy friends, do not fight on my behalf!" exclaimed Harroo Jansett Ram Singh, looking distressed. "It would cause me the extreme painfulness—"

"I will cause you some extreme painfulness if you don't get out of this study, you nigger!" roared Bulstrode.

The dark eyes of Harroo Jansett Ram Singh had a look of anger in them now.

"Did you call me a nigger?" he asked quietly.

"Yes, I did call you a nigger!"

"It is impossible for the Nabob of Bhasseer to allow anyone to treat him with the great disrespectfulness," said Harroo Singh. "If you will express your regretfulness—"

"Catch me!"

"Otherwise I shall become angry!"

*Having found his feet at Greyfriars, Harry Wharton is proving a serious challenger to Bully Bulstrode, skipper of the Remove. Meanwhile, the advent of Harroo Jansett Ram Singh, Nabob of Bhasseer, doesn't improve the position of the Remove bully either!*

"That will be really terrible," roared Bulstrode.

"And eyed you roughly from the department."

"Ha, ha, ha! I'd like to see you do it!"

"Shut up, Bulstrode!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You know he's no match for you, and I tell you I won't have you picking on him like this!"

"Get out of my way, Wharton!"

"I will not!"

Harry had glared himself directly before the bully of the Remove, his lips clenched.

"Are you going to get aside and let me get at that nigger?" roared Bulstrode.

"No!"

"Then I'll jolly soon shut you!"

And the bully of the Remove rushed furiously at Harry Wharton.

Harry faced the attack coolly, but he was not allowed to meet it. A hand on his shoulder from behind twisted him aside, and the Indian stood in his place and faced the bully.

Before Harry could interfere further Bulstrode was upon the Oriental.

Harroo Singh went backwards in the curly Removian's grasp, and it seemed as though he would be but an instant in the grasp of Bulstrode.

But that was only for a moment.

The Hindu straightened up suddenly, and somehow Bulstrode's feet left the floor. He was whirled round like a sack of coal, and the next moment he was

lying headlong through the study doorway. He dropped in the passage with what a novelist would describe as a dull, sickening thud.

Harroo Singh, breathing quickly, but showing no other sign of undue exertion, turned to the juniors with a sweet smile.

"I hope you will forgive me for creating the disturbance in the sacred apartment of a study," he said in his soft, purring voice. "If I have embarrassed you the apology is great."

### Making Himself at Home!

THE juniors of the Remove could not reply. They could only stare at the amazing Indian, and wonder where, in that slim graceful form, the strength came from which he had displayed.

Bulstrode picked himself up in the corridor. There was a dazed expression on the face of the bully of the Remove, and he glared into the study in an uncertain way.

It was clear that for the moment he could not realize what had happened, and could scarcely believe that the slim youth from the Far East had really hurled him forth bodily from the study.

Harroo Singh turned to him with a deprecating smile.

"I am really hopeful that you are not hurt, my esteemed friend," he said. "I had great satisfaction in throwing you out of the sacred apartment, but it was your own blameworthy mistake. But if I have hurt you in any part of your respectful and esteemed person, the apology is sincere."

"My hat!" murmured Nugent. "We've got a curious customer this time."

Harry Wharton nodded, with a smile. The politeness of the Hindu was almost overpowering, but he had shown as plainly as possible that he was no milkop, and it occurred to the champions of the Remove that in Harroo Singh, the sleek and graceful youth from the Orient, they had a valuable addition to the study.

Bulstrode was still glaring at the Indian.

It was clear that he was inclined to rush upon Harroo Singh and try conclusions a second time, and equally clear that the bump on the hard floor in the passage had left him feeling a little nervous about a renewal of the conflict.

Finally, with an expressive grunt, he strode away down the passage.

Harroo Singh still wore his deprecating smile.

"I hope I have not succeeded in offending the nabob," he said, looking round. "If I have the apology is—"

"Verdick!" suggested Nugent.

"That is quite correct!"

"It's all right," said Harry Wharton.

"If you hadn't handled Bulstrode so well yourself some of us would have done it."

"Your kindness overpowers me," purred Harroo Singh. "May I shake hands with you?" And he extended a small, olive-skinned hand.

Harry Wharton smiled and shook hands with the Hindu. Nugent followed suit.

"You're welcome to the study," said Nugent. "Sit down. Have you had your tea?"

"Not yet, nabob."

"Are you hungry?"

"Yes, please."

"The Gen'leman.—No. 1, 4B1.

"I have a slight feeling of emptiness in my interior."

Nugent grinned.

"Then we'll fill up the emptiness for you, kid. Bunter, you can lay the table, and treat out all three in the cupboard."

"Certainly, Nugent. I'll run down to the shop if you like, and get you anything you want."

"Don't bother."

Nugent was in the state known as "stony," and Harry Wharton was much the same, and so it was impossible to kill the latted call for the newswoman.

Billy Bunter, who was always putting his feet in it, so to speak, was bound to draw attention to the uncomfortable fact. He was called the "Owl" in the Remora on account of his shortsightedness, and certainly he never saw anything.

He looked into the cupboard, while Nugent made up the fire and jammed the kettle on it. Wharton cleared the books and papers off the table.

"I say, you fellows, there's not much here," said Bunter, turning round. "Only half a loaf, and that's jelly stale, and a little bit of butter. I'll go down to the backshop for you, if you like."

"Good! You can stand treat!"

"So I would if my postal order had arrived, but as a matter of fact, I'm stony. I was going to ask you fellows to lend me a shilling."

"You'd better go and invite Bob Cherry to tea," said Nugent.

Harry Wharton stared. There were already four to tea, with nothing but half a loaf and a few scones of butter on the festive board.

But Nugent knew what he was about. "Go and ask Bob Cherry to come to tea," he said. "Say it's a special invitation from me, and I've got a special guest I want him to meet. Mention to him to call in at the backshop on the way here. He'll understand."

"Right-ho, Nugent!"

And Billy Bunter departed. Harry Jamset Ram Singh was resting his feet on the fender, looking at the cheerful fire in the grate, while the discussion went on, and appeared to hear nothing of it. But there was a tinkle in his eye.

"You'll soon be ready," said Nugent cheerfully. "We must wait for Bob Cherry. You haven't told us where you come from, Harry Singh."

The Indian looked up.

"I shall be very pleased to give the ablest the correctest information," he replied pleasantly.

"Have you ever been to school in England before?"

The nabob grinned.

"What-ho!" he replied.

"Oh, you have?" said Nugent curiously. "And where do you spring from now, and who is the fat old German who came here with you?"

"I will explain. I was at Notbridge School first," said the nabob. "There was an epidemic at the school, and it broke up and has not reopened yet. I was sent to Beechwood, and have stayed there until to-day. But now—"

"But why have you left?"

"The school is closed now," said Hurree Singh, with a shake of the head.

"It was a curious place. Herr Rosenblum, the nice fat gentleman who came here with me, was the headmaster—"

"A German headmaster?"

"Yes; and the second master was a Frenchman. It was a foreign academy at Beechwood, and the boys were mostly French and Germans, with only a few English. I have heard that it was started as an experiment for foreign

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boys to be sent there to learn to speak the beautiful English language, and the English boys to perfect themselves in the speakableness of French and German. But it was not a financial success. Herr Rosenblum had to give it up, though I think he hopes to reopen it one day. And in the meantime he is coming here."

"Is he going to stay here?"

"Yes, as German master."

"And the boys?" asked Nugent curiously. "Any of them coming here besides yourself?"

The nabob nodded gleefully.

"Yes, rather! I came with Herr Rosenblum; but others are coming to-morrow with Monsieur Morry, who is to be French master here. The boys who are coming are French and German, and there will be five or six of each."

Nugent gave a whistle.

"My hat!"

"There will be a revolution, I expect," went on Hurree Singh, with a sweet smile. "At Beechwood there were frequently rows between French and Germans and English as to which should take the headmastership of the school."

"Naturally."

"The foreigners will not have so much chance here, being in a minority, but they will not be set upon," said Hurree Singh.

"Are they all in your Form?"

"Yes, all of them."

"My hat! We shall have a queer mixture in the Remora at Greyfriars now!" said Nugent. "There's one thing, if the foreigners put on any side here they will get set upon so heavily that they will get hurt."

"There will be rows," Harry Wharton remarked. "Still, we don't want to come down too heavy on them at first."

The opening of the study door interrupted further conversation.

Bob Cherry of the Remora entered, with a cheerful grin upon his good-humoured face and various parcels under his arm, and helping out in his pocket.

Billy Bunter followed him, similarly laden.

It was evident that Bob Cherry had understood that curiously worded invitation to tea, and had come prepared.

Nugent gave him a welcoming grin. "Come in, Cherry! You're as welcome as the flowers in May. Put your parcels on the table, and you can open them, Bunter."

"Certainly, Nugent!"

"Allow me to introduce you to our esteemed friend and study-mate, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh," went on Nugent, grinning.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, interjected the Indian.

"Oh, that's near enough, you know! You'll be pleased to hear that Hurree Jamset has fired Balstrode out of the study, so he's not such a linner as he looks."

Bob Cherry grinned as he shook hands with the nabob.

"I'll make the tea," said Nugent. "You're a friend in need, Bob. Here's a seat for you, Hurree Singh—a place of honor as the guest of the evening. There isn't much room, but you don't expect to find a palace in a Remora study at Greyfriars."

"That is quite correctful. I know what a Public school is like," beamed the nabob.

"Four out the tea, will you, Harry?" said Nugent.

"Right-ho," said Harry Wharton.

"Ach! You seem very curly here, mein papp!"

The juniors of the Remora looked up. A fat, good-natured looking German

was standing in the doorway, regarding them with a benevolent expression.

"Herr Rosenblum!" exclaimed Hurree Singh, jumping up. "Respected instructor siddi, it is full of kindness for you to come and see if I am happily bestowed in my novel quarters. Companionable friends and fellow-Formers like in Herr Rosenblum, the former Head of the Beechwood Foreign Academy, and now the respected German master at Greyfriars."

The juniors nodded respectfully to Herr Rosenblum.

"We are happy to make your acquaintance, sir," said Nugent.

"Rather, sir!" said Bob Cherry.

"Won't you come in to tea, sir?"

The German's fat face beamed with good-nature.

"Ach! Certainly! Mit blesse, mein papp!"

A place was found at the table for the German master. A napkin was placed in front of him and his plate was liberally filled.

Herr Rosenblum beamed round the table. The tea in the study commenced, and it promised to be a very pleasant meal.

But it was destined to be interrupted.

#### Balstrode Apologues!

"A NOTHER cup of tea, sir?"

"Certainly, mein papp!"

The tea was progressing famously. The juniors all felt at home with the German master, and Herr Rosenblum certainly had a knack of making the juniors feel quite free and comfortable in his presence.

The German master was raising his fourth cup of tea to his lips, when the door of the study was flung violently open.

Balstrode rushed in, with half a dozen of the wilder spirits of the Remora at his heels.

"Whoer's that nigger!" roared Balstrode.

Hurree Singh jumped up.

"Come out, you black boonder! Oh, my hat!"

Balstrode broke off as he caught sight of the German master. His jaw dropped, and he retreated a few paces, staring open-mouthed at Herr Rosenblum.

His followers silently stepped back out of the study. None of them had expected to find a master there.

The frown on the German's fat face was awe-inspiring.

"Was did you say mit yourself?" he inquired in a calm voice, so calm as to be menacing.

"N-nothing, sir!" stammered Balstrode.

"You was call to Napoc of Bhanipoc van nigger, sir's it?"

"I—"

"You was going to pull to new pop, sir's it?"

"I—"

"Speak is troot, pop!"

"I didn't know you were here, sir."

Herr Rosenblum smiled grimly.

"I can quite believe tat, pop. Vat is your name?"

"Balstrode, sir."

"Vell, Balstrode, I tink you was pulli out a proat."

"Yes, sir."

"You was tink to ill-use to new pop because he was a foreigner und a dark popoc. You call him van nigger."

"Only in fun, sir," said Balstrode.

"Very vell. You vill apologize to him in fun also."

Balstrode's mouth set obstinately.

To apologize to the "nigger," with all



his special friends and acquaintances looking in at the door to witness his humiliation, would be a come-down for the bully of the Remove—a blow his prestige would never recover from.

But the German master was in deadly earnest.

"You was hear me, Palstrode?"  
"Still the bully of the Remove did not speak."

"Aah! Very well, Palstrode, you will come with me to the Head of Greyfriars, and we will see what he has to say about it."

Palstrode felt uncomfortable. He knew what it would mean to be marched before the Head of Greyfriars by the German master, with a charge of direct disobedience to answer.

"I—I—if you please, sir, I will apologise to Harrow Singh."

"Make quick, den!"  
Palstrode glared at the Indian junior.

"I apologise, Harrow Singh," he said thickly.

The Nabob of Bhanipur wared his head gravely.

"The apology is accepted," he replied. "I have great regretfulness that the honorability of your conduct rendered it necessary."

"Can I go now, sir?"  
"Yes, you may go, and remember in the future, Palstrode, but I shall haf an eye on you, so I observe that you are a bad boy."

Palstrode gritted his teeth and strode from the study. He slammed the door after him, and was met with a chuckle from the Removarian in the passage.

The bully of the Remove glared round him angrily, and then strode angrily away.

Meanwhile, the German master brushed his tea in the study.

"I thank you all very much for your kind entertainment," he said, as he rose. "I think dat we shall get on very well together, ain't it?"

"I hope so, sir," said Wharton.

The German looked round at the juniors with a keen glance.

"I think you know, mein boys, dat none of my eyes from Bismarck are going home," he said. "Does any Sherman and Poleschansky among dem?"

"Harrow Singh has told us, sir."

"I want to ask you to gif dem a welcome, and not to quarrel mit dem too much, because dey are foreign."

"Certainly, sir!"  
"Does any dat disturbs, but dat cannot be helped. But you will do vat you can to make dem feel at home at dem?"

"Rather!"  
"I thank you. If I remember vat to Head has told me, dere is a half-holiday at dis school to-morrow, ain't it?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "We always have a half-holiday on Wednesday."

"Good! To-morrow afternoon to rest of de boys arrive at Greyfriars. It would be an act of kindness for some of you to go agt to be station to meet dem and bring dem to de school."

The juniors looked at one another.

"We shall be glad to, sir," said Harry Wharton, speaking for the rest.

"Good! I'm very glad!"  
And the German master took his leave.

A few minutes after he had left the study, Palstrode looked in.

"Has that fat old catter gone?" he asked.



Powerless in the grasp of Harry Wharton & Co., the Bismarck boys were passed to the horse-rough, and their heads plucked into the water. "Aah!" exclaimed Fritz Hoffmann. "Ooooh!" "Wah hoo!" exclaimed Adelphi Mauder. "Poooo!" "This will cost their war-like ardour!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Please use more respectfulness in your manner to me," snarled Harrow Singh. "It is unpardonable to be insolent to the Nabob of Bhanipur."

"Nabob of rats!"  
Harrow Singh's eyes flashed.

"If you speak rudely to me—"  
"Boh! You've had the cheek to lay your dirty nigger hands on me! You have got to apologise and keep your place, or else you will have to fight me on equal terms."

The juniors looked rather perplexed.

Although Harrow Singh, by an Indian wrestling trick, had got the better of Palstrode, it seemed quite impossible that the slim, graceful Singh could hold his own in a stand-up fight with the burly bully of the Remove.

Yet it was impossible to stand between the nabob and a fair challenge.

Harrow Singh did not seem alarmed.

He fixed his dark eyes on the angry face of the bully, with a roset smile on his dusky countenance.

"I have no desire to meet my esteemed student in a fatal encounter," he began.

Palstrode sneered.

"But you've got no choice in the matter," he replied.

Harrow Singh bowed graciously.

"Then I shall accept the challenge with pleasure."

"Good! To-morrow's a half-holiday, and we shall be able to get outside Greyfriars and settle the matter without interruption," said Palstrode, with an extremely ugly look, "and after I've thrashed the nigger, Wharton, I'll thank you, if you care to come along—and dare to."

Harrow Wharton's lip curled.

"I shall be there," he said. "I shall

act as Harrow Singh's second if he will allow me."

The Indian bowed again.

"It will afford me terrific pleasure!" he exclaimed.

"Then it's settled," said Palstrode, with a grin. "I'll give you some terrific pleasure, and a terrific hiding, too!"

"My esteemed and worthy friend,

"Oh, cheer it!" said Palstrode.

"But—"  
"I don't want to jar by a nipper!"

"Look here, Palstrode," said Harry Wharton quietly. "There's been enough of this. You were always a bullying cat, but there's a limit."

"Are you going to interfere with me?" sneered Palstrode.

"Yes, I am. There are four of us here who are not afraid of you, and I tell you that if you assault Harrow Singh again, we'll dragmark you down the corridor and pitch you down stairs!"

exclaimed Harry.

"Nather!" said Bob Cherry emphatically.

"Good!" exclaimed Nugent.

The Indian showed his white teeth in a grin.

"And it would afford me radiant pleasure to land the head," he said. "An your English proverb declares, 'every little helps to spoil the brook.'"

Palstrode glared round at the four determined forms, and, like most bullies, finding himself in a difficulty, he grow in.

"Oh, you can keep your wool on!" he said. "I don't want to rag a chap I'm going to lick to-morrow. Let it go at that."

And the objectionable word "nigger" was not heard in Study No. 1 again.

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## No Joke for Balstrode!

BY the next morning all Greyfriars was talking over the news.

New boys were not rare at Greyfriars, every new term usually bringing a crop; but the new boys who were now expected were a little out of the common.

The Nabob of Bhaniper, who had arrived with the new German master, was not exactly the kind of Foreign Fop who came every day; and there were other curious pupils to follow.

The nabob was indeed a character, and before he had been a dozen hours at Greyfriars, he had become a well-marked figure there.

His peculiar English furnished endless food for fun to the Greyfriars Remove. Hurree Singh had studied English under a native master in Bengal, and, although he had since been to an English Public school, he had never lost the beautiful variety of English his Bengal instructor had imparted to him.

His good-nature was as boundless as the fluency of his language, and the fact that he received a fabulous sum of pocket-money from his guardians, did not diminish his growing popularity.

Billy Baxter, especially, extended to him the heartiest of welcomes to Study No. 1. Any fellow with plenty of money to spend was an object of veneration to Baxter.

"I say, I feel rather inclined to chum up with Hurree Singh," Nugent remarked to Harry Wharton. "What's your idea?"

Wharton nodded.

"He seems a decent enough fellow."

"You like him?"

"Yes, rather."

"If we could only shift Balstrode out, and get Bob Cherry in in his place, everything in the garden would be lovely."

Harry Wharton was silent. He had had his rubs with Bob Cherry since the latter had come to Greyfriars, and, although they had been friendly since, Harry was slow to forget. Nugent looked at him quickly.

"Do you want Bob Cherry here, Harry?"

Wharton coloured a little.

"Yes," he said, after a pause. "I should like him here. We are going to be friends, I suppose. But Balstrode won't change out. He knows we should like him in, and that's reason enough to make him stick."

Nugent nodded thoughtfully.

"He might be made to go to get out."

"If Hurree Singh likes him this afternoon that may make a difference."

"Hurree Singh won't," said Nugent. "He's good at wrestling, and I dare say he can use his fists; but it stands to reason that he could never keep his end up against a fellow like Balstrode, head and shoulders above him."

"I was thinking so, too."

"We shall be on the spot luckily, and we must see that it doesn't go too far," said Nugent. "It's plucky of Hurree Singh to face him at all, and I'm not going to stand by and see him knocked about."

"I shall see to that."

"Good! You have been coming on lately with your boxing, and I've an idea that Balstrode wouldn't find you so easy to tackle again," Nugent remarked.

"I know you have been thinking all along of trying conclusions with him a second time."

"Mean decidedly?"

"Well, you are good enough now, and if you knocked him out it would be a

good thing for us in the study, and the Remove generally. There's too much of Balstrode, and he wants taking down a peg."

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Baxter, peering at them through his big glasses. "I say, are you going to have the fight before or after the food?"

"What food?" asked Nugent.

"Why, the food the nabob is going to give! I suggested to him—"

"Trust you for that, you young porker!"

"Oh, really, Nugent, I only made a natural suggestion to Hurree Singh. It's a proper step to take—to stand a feed to pay his footing at the school. I would have stood one myself, only my pocket-order hasn't come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suggested it to him as a good idea, and he caught on at once. He's going to order the things in the village when you go down there this afternoon."

"Well, it's not a bad idea. Who's cooking?"

"All the new fellows, the French and the Germans," said Billy Baxter. "And I think he's going to have about half the Remove, too."

"Well, that's doing it in style, at all events."

"Come on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "There's the bell."

The janitors hurried down to morning classes.

Hurree Jannet Ram Singh took his place in the Remove with the rest, and sat at a desk next to Harry Wharton, with Balstrode on the other side of him.

The bully of the Remove had not forgotten his animosity towards the gentle stranger, as the look with which he greeted Hurree Singh proved.

Mr. Quetch, the Form-master, looked rather curiously at the Indian, but otherwise took no special notice of him.

Balstrode's face relaxed into a grin all of a sudden as an idea came into his mind. He leaned towards the Hindu.

"I say, Jannet?"

Hurree Singh looked at him.

"My name is not Jannet," he replied. "Well, Marrahaladep, then, or whatever it is?"

"It is Hurree Jannet Ram Singh."

"Oh, draw it mild! I want to tell you, Jannet—"

"Jannet—"

Mr. Quetch turned his head towards them.

"Were you speaking, Hurree Singh?"

"Yes, sir," said the nabob.

Mr. Quetch coughed slightly.

"You must not speak in class."

"I have great seriousness—"

"That will do."

Mr. Quetch turned away.

Balstrode waited until he was not observed, and then he whispered to the Hindu again.

"I say, Jannet, you ought to speak to Quetch—"

"He says that I mustn't speak, and I know that in my former school I was not allowed to speak in class, although it was really somewhat tall of indignity for a prince to remain silent when he wished to conversationalize."

"Ha, ha, ha! But, I say, you ought to speak to Quetch out of politeness, and tell him you're glad to be in his class and hope that you'll get on well together. New boys at Greyfriars are always supposed to do that."

"Are they really?" asked the Indian innocently.

"Of course."

"That is a peculiarly funny."

"It's a way we have at Greyfriars. Quetch thinks you have neglected him,

and that's why he speaks sharply to you just now."

The nabob looked very concerned.

"Do you really think so, Balstrode?"

"Of course I do. You can rely on me to know the customs of the school, and to tell you the truth."

"I could not suspect any sally of departure from the straight line of the seriousness," said Hurree Singh.

"I am surprised I do. I have omitted the customary greeting to the master of the honourable and respectable Remove."

"Then get up on your hind legs and talk."

"Certainly!"

And the Nabob of Bhaniper rose in his place. Mr. Quetch looked round.

"If you please, sir—"

"You wish to speak, Hurree Singh?"

"Yes, sir. The apology is terrible for the inconsiderate neglectfulness I have displayed towards the esteemed master of the Form."

Mr. Quetch stared at him in amazement.

"I am truly gladdened," said Hurree Singh, "to be in the honored Remove, and under the respectable charge of the successful and ludicrous master."

"Hurree Singh!"

"I hope we shall get on with great and mutual usefulness, and here to prize one another in the highest of the great value," said Hurree Singh. "I am ungrateful that we may drag together—"

"Pull together," whispered Balstrode. "Pull together, you fool!"

"I mean, pull together, you fool!"

"Hurree Singh!" roared Mr. Quetch, in a voice of thunder.

"Pray do not allow the angry feelings to arise in your respectable bosom, sir—"

"Silence! I do not believe that you are guilty of this insolence of your own accord, Hurree Singh. Some ridiculous boy has been telling you these absurdities."

"I do not see the absurdity!"

"Who has been telling you that?"

"I have received valuable and advanced advice from Balstrode on the subject, sir. He told me—"

"The Indian broke off with a howl as Balstrode pinched his leg as a hint to keep silent. Mr. Quetch's brow was dark with anger.

"Hurree Singh, how dare you make that ridiculous noise in class!"

"It was a sudden pain, sir," said the nabob.

"Balstrode, did you pinch Hurree Singh?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"Stand out here, Balstrode!"

The bully of the Remove sulkily stepped out before the class. Mr. Quetch fixed a cold, stern glance upon him.

"It is evident to me, Balstrode, that you have been taking advantage of the simplicity of this new boy," he said.

"It—"

"The Remove class-room is not a fit place for jokes, Balstrode," said Mr. Quetch. "Do you think it is a fit place?"

"I—I suppose not, sir."

"I am glad to hear you say so. You will stay in an hour this afternoon, and write out a hundred lines of Virgil."

Balstrode's jaw dropped.

"This afternoon, sir!"

"Yes, this afternoon. Not a word more!"

"But, sir—"

"Go to your place!" thundered the Remove master.

And Balatross sulkily returned to his seat. He gave Harrow Singh a savage glance. The nabob gave him a laughing smile in return.

### French and German!

"NOW, then," said Bob Cherry, as the Removes came out of the dining-hall after the midday dinner. "How many of us are going down to the station to meet the foreigners?"

"Four," said Nagent. "Wharton, Harrow Singh, yourself and I."

"Good!" Harrow Singh can introduce us, and Wharton can speak to them in German, while I tackle them in French."

"Ha, ha, ha! Are you ready, Harry?"

"Quite."

"Where's Harrow Singh?" said the paring voice of the nabob. "I am happy to accompany you on this pleasant walking."

"Come on, then!"

And the four juniors walked down to the gates, and passed out into the long, winding lane. It was a beautiful spring afternoon, and the hedges were bursting into green. A keen but pleasant breeze blew from the Bois de Wood, with the sweet of spring on it. The juniors, with cheerful looks, stepped out on the road to the village. There was more than enough time to meet the train, but, as Bob Cherry observed, there was no need to get there too early. So long as they found the foreigners at the station, it was near enough.

And the juniors were curious as to the new arrivals, and asked Harrow Singh many questions on the subject of the boys of Beechwood, all of which the Indian politely answered.

The juniors soon left the lane behind, and came out into the quiet, old-fashioned High Street, and then they quickened their pace towards the railway station.

As they approached the station, the mouth of a wild uproar from within came to their ears.

Voices were shouting, and there was a wild trampling of feet.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Something's going on there, you chaps."

"A row of some sort," said Harry Wharton. "We may as well go and look into it."

"What are they shouting?" said Nagent, perplexed. "It sounds to me like a mixture of French and German."

Harrow Singh grinned ghastly. "It's the Beechwood boys," he murmured.

"By Jove! Is it?"

"Yes, sahib. The French and Germans are coming down together, and they were certain to have the rowfulness. I suppose the master is not coming down with them, and so they have broken loose!"

"Come and have a look at them, anyway," grunted Bob Cherry.

The Greyfriars quartet hurried on to the station.

A terrific uproar was proceeding from within.

Almost a dozen lads were engaged in a free fight, and a porter and a stout old stationmaster stood gazing at the scene helplessly.

It was easy to see that the boys were of different nationalities.

Six of them were German, and there were as many French, and each was shouting in his own tongue as he scrambled and fought in the wild melee.

The leader of the Germans was a big, broad-shouldered, fair-haired fellow, whom Harrow Singh pointed out to his companions as Fritz Hoffman.

The French leader was a wiry, active lad, with a keen, determined face, and his name, the Greyfriars juniors learned, was Adolphe Meunier.

Meunier and Hoffman had just roared at one another as the Greyfriars juniors arrived, and they closed in deadly embrace and waded about, struggling violently.

"Hurd!" gasped the German boy.

"Cochon!" spluttered Meunier in reply.

And they fought ferociously.

The other lads were scrambling and posturing away for all they were worth. The stationmaster gasped out to the porter to go and fetch the police, and the old porter hurried out of the station.

"Here, this won't do!" exclaimed Harry Wharton decidedly. "The young ones may get run in if they go on kicking up this row."

"Right—ho!" said Bob Cherry. "But how are we to stop them?"

"Speak to them in French."

"Right—ho! I saps, you chappies, shuter were up!" shouted Bob Cherry, in his excitement speaking of a remark of the kind of French.

"Droppees this row and behaves yourselves, or we'll jump on your necks and wipes the road with you."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nagent.

"What are you chucking at, Nagent?"

"Your giddy French!"

"What's the matter with it?"

"Nothing. It's more original than the kind they speak—"

"Shupper was!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Taisee-voos, voos idiots! You'll have the policemen down on you in a tick. Stop it."

But the boys from Beechwood took no notice.

Their rivalry was evidently of old standing, and they were not to be stopped now that they had broken out.

"We'll have to stop them," said Harry Wharton.

"Speak to them in German."

"Better punch their heads in English!" said Nagent.

"Ha, ha! Come on, then."

"Collar the leaders," said Harry Wharton. "We'll drag them away and duck their heads in the horse-droagh; that may cool them a bit."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good wheeze."

"Come on, then."

"It is a ripping old wheeze," gurred Harrow Singh. "That is the only way to cool the heads of the excited and respectable foreigners."

And the four Greyfriars juniors rushed to the attack.

Hoffman and Meunier were collared by four pairs of strong hands and yanked out of the station in a twinkling.

"Vat is dat, vat is dat?" roared Hoffman. "Vat is dat, vat is dat?"

"Gee! Vat is dat and you do vit me?" shrieked Adolphe Meunier.

"Shutter were up," said Bob Cherry.

"We're going to ducken voos, that's all, to cool your silly head—voos tote, you know."

"Hizzud! Let—"

"That's all right, Dutchy. Come along."



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