

The GEM

2^D

THIS WEEK'S BEST
SCHOOL STORIES!

"TOM MERRY EXPELLED!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"BURNT OUT OF SCHOOL!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

and

MANY FINE FEATURES
OF FUN AND FACT.



*Tom
Merry
Expelled!*



HOW'S YOUR LUCK THIS WEEK?

Read what the stars foretell,
by PROFESSOR ZARRO.

WHAT sort of luck do the stars prophesy for you this week? Here are horoscopes for every reader. Look for yours in the section in which your birthday falls.

January 21st to February 19th.—Other people will be thinking about you a great deal this week, and your parents and other adults will influence you more than usual. A lucky event on Friday, probably connected with the arrival of a letter. Best tendencies for team-games, sports, and meetings with friends.

February 20th to March 21st.—You are losing interest in a favorite pastime; now is a good time to change it. Trouble is liable to come to you through a task you had forgotten. Luck is coming to a member of your family—maybe dad is going to "click" in a football pool!

March 22nd to April 20th.—A quiet week, but you will be puzzled by an unexpected loss of something. A certain amount of luck connected with the color white. Travel is indicated, but probably an outing rather than a long journey. Your temper, which flares up and then dies down quickly, may lead to a misunderstanding with a friend.

April 21st to May 21st.—Anything connected with music will be lucky to you this week. (This does not apply to Rocking of Goodwives!—ED.) You will make a mistake by being optimistic, which is one of your faults. A meeting with someone you have not seen for a very long time, possibly of the opposite sex. An unexpected small present at the week-end.

May 22nd to June 21st.—An enjoyable week, free from those fits of the "blues" you sometimes get. The weather will cause an alteration in an important plan. You know, or will meet, someone whose birthday falls in this week, and who will be friendly towards you. Revision of plans or hopes may be necessary, because you have been too ambitious lately.

June 22nd to July 23rd.—A week that will bring several tricky problems for you to solve, but you will find the way out of them without difficulty. Anything to do with the sea or water will be lucky, and anything green. Green in color, I mean, not green like Stimpole!

July 24th to August 23rd.—You will need to concentrate if you want luck to come your way this week, but there are plenty of chances of good fortune if you will only recognize them. A friend has a secret to tell you. You took the getting into trouble through being outspoken and "cheeky," but I don't think there's any need to slip an exercise book down your pants just yet! Thursday will be your best day.

August 24th to September 23rd.—These born travelers the end of August have the best luck-forebodes of the week in this Virgo section. You others may find yourselves worrying about trifles, but they will all come right. A stroke of luck may arise out of someone asking you to do something for him. An exciting event round about the week-end.

September 24th to October 23rd.—Your best time will come when you are in other people's company; you are naturally popular. An especially lucky week for football and any other team games in which you take part. You have liked or disliked someone on sight; you will receive proof that your judgment was right during the next few days. There is a lucky number for you this week.

October 24th to November 23rd.—An important event connected with fire is predicted. One or two minor changes in your life, and they will be for the better. Maybe you're going to be moved up to a higher class at school, or, if at work, given a rise! Your persistence will overcome a difficulty. You will receive good news in mid-week.

November 23rd to December 22nd.—Endurance is not your strong point—you are more of a "sprinter," and, though being splashy, may miss some of the luck due to you this week. On the whole, a lively week, with something really exciting on Sunday. Best tendencies for anything in which you have to be energetic. A windfall is coming to you, but not necessarily one of money.

December 23rd to January 20th.—May for safety, rather than make important decisions and changes. You will get most of your fun this week from going to the cinema, reading books, going for walks, and things like that. You will be surprised by certain odd experiences and dreams.

BIRTHDAY INDICATIONS.

WEDNESDAY, January 26th.—This year will be an important milestone in your life. Health good, but you will have to fight against lack of self-confidence. Several journeys, maybe one of them connected with moving your home. Sudden turns of Fortune's wheel will make your life seem topsy-turvy for a bit, but will lead to better times and happiness.

THURSDAY, January 31st.—A year of big events in your family; probably births and marriages. Your luck is first-class, and many of the things you have wanted will come your way. You will find yourself getting about more than you have been used to, and making many friends and acquaintances. May is your best month.

FRIDAY, January 7th.—Anything connected with mechanical objects will prosper for you. An excellent year for the sporting type of older sex. You will receive an unexpected price. Your best times will mostly come on Fridays.

SATURDAY, January 8th.—A year in which you will have to work and fight to get the things you want. It will seem that things are against you, maybe, but you can beat every hindrance. An unusual holiday; good fortune with anything outdoors; money coming later in the year. Friendships count for a great deal to you this year.

SUNDAY, January 9th.—If you can avoid getting "out of your depth," a remarkably successful year lies ahead. Steer clear of bad friends, over-optimism, and trying to do too many things at once. A big change for one of your parents, or some other very close relation, will affect your life. A friend born in July will bring you luck.

MONDAY, January 10th.—A grand year for some people born on this day, though older ones would do & worrying. No sensational happenings, but everything will go off so smoothly that you'll be sorry when the year is over! Those with sporting or athletic ambitions will fulfil them. Luck connected with the numbers 17 and 19.

TUESDAY, January 11th.—Open-air interests prosper, but work will seem difficult. Possibly a slight illness. There are indications that you will go for a fight, or have some other connection with acceptance. A year for making future plans, and for anything to do with selling. I can see some of you chaps going round trying to get offers for bookshelves with broken blades, or model looms that won't work, after that!

PROFESSOR ZARRO.

IN SAYING BAGGY TRIMBLE FROM FOLLY, TOM MERRY BRINGS DISGRACE
UPON HIS OWN HEAD!

TOM MERRY EXPELLED!



The waiting juniors all started forward as Tom Merry came down the passage in the wake of Mr. Railton. "Aren't you coming, Tom?" "Coming!" muttered Tom. "No—I'm going! I'm asked!"

CHAPTER I.

The Little Party!

"PWAY give me my watch, deah boys?"

"Eh?"

"My gold watch, you know. I do not approve of those tricks on a fellow when he is discussin' for a party, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arvy severely. "Pway hand me my watch!"

Arthur Augustus fixed his eyeglass in his eye and looked with frowning severity at his study-mates—Blake, Herries, and Digby.

He was annoyed.

For an hour and a half Arthur Augustus had been dressing for the party. He was giving his toilet the finishing touches in the study. The result was really admirable. From his carefully parted hair to his gleaming boots, the swell of St. Jim's was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

Only the frown on his aristocratic brow marred the picture. But that was due to the discovery that his watch and chain were missing from his waistcoat. The car was waiting outside the

School House, and there was really no time for practical jokes.

Tom Merry, Lowther, and Manners of the Shell came along and looked into Study No. 5.

The Terrible Three were dressed very nicely. They also belonged to the little party bound for Glyn House.

"Here we are again!" said Monty Lowther. "You fellows ready? Glyn's waiting in the car."

"Ready—ay, ready!" said Blake cheerily. "Where's Talbot?"

"In the car with Glyn," said Tom Merry.

"Come on!"

"Weally, Tom Merry——"

"Wherefore that frowning brow, O Gustavus?"

"Pway don't wot, deah boy! Somebody has been playin' tricks with my watch."

"Have you lost it?" asked Blake.

"I have not lost it. I have been changin' my waistcoat, and some silly ass has abstracted my gold tickah—for a fatheaded jape, I presume! I insist upon its being returned to me at once!"

"Well, I haven't seen it!" yawned Blake.

"Same here," said Dig.

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By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

*The victim of circumstances, Tom Merry leaves
St. Jim's in disgrace—
judged guilty of a theft
which was never committed!*

"Have you abstracted my tickah, Hewies?"

"No, no!"

"I refuse to be called an ass, Hewies! Some Utah wotah is playin' tricks with my watch?"

"Come without it," suggested Blake.

"Wah!"

"Well, I'm off!" said Tom Merry.

And the Terrible Three walked down the passage.

"Come on, you chaps!" said Blaké.

"Hold on a minute, Blaké! Some ass has abstracted my watch——"

"Blow your watch!" said Blake crossly. "Go without one! I'll lend you my half-crown tickah!"

"I refuse to wash your half-crown tickah!"

"Borrow one, then!" shouted Blake. "If you must have a gilt-edged one, ask Cutts of the Fifth! He's got a whacker!"

"Cutts would probably refuse to lend me his watch."

"Ask the Head, then!"

"Pray don't be an ass!"

"Well, I'm off!"

"Wahly, Blaké——"

Jack Blake stalked out of Study No. 6. Herries and Digby followed him, grinning.

Arthur Augustus stared after them wrathfully. Apparently, it was impossible for the swell of St. Jim's to attend an evening party without a gold watch.

"How uttably wotah!" murmured Arthur Augustus, in distress. "Bai Jaws, I'll give the wotah japah a fateful thowshin'——"

"Car's starting!" yelled Blake, from the distance.

"Bai Jaws!"

Arthur Augustus ran down the passage. He joined his chums outside the School House breathlessly. Evidently the search for the missing watch had to be given up.

A large limousine belonging to Mr. Glyn, the millionaire, was waiting. Bernard Glyn of the Shell was seated in it, with Talbot and the Terrible Three.

Glyn was taking his chums to his home for an evening, and it was a very special occasion indeed, as the number of spotless collars and well-tied neckties in the party testified.

Blake, Herries, and Dig stepped in, and Kungaroo and Dana of the Shell came out and joined them.

Arthur Augustus hesitated, with his feet on the step.

"Are you coming in?" demanded Blake.

"My watch, you know——"

"How-wah! Kim on!"

"Yawwah! Leggo!"

Blaké and Dig suddenly seized the swell of St. Jim's by the neck and heaved him into the car.

Arthur Augustus plumped into an ocean of knees, and gasped.

"Oh, you feathal ass! You've wumped my collah!"

"All aboard!" sang out Blake. "Halls! Who's that!"

A tubby-looking junior, with a round fat face, belted out of the School House and jumped into the car just as it was starting. He shut the door after him.

"What the dickens——" began Bernard Glyn.

The car, large as it was, was pretty well filled. The late-comer looked round for a seat without finding one. Arthur Augustus was squeezed

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between Blake and Tom Merry, tenderly feeling over his collar.

"I don't mind standing," said the newcomer.

It was Baggy Trimble, the new boy in the School House.

"I didn't know Trimble was coming," said Tom Merry.

"I didn't, either," said Glyn dryly.

"I'll drop him out for you, if you like," said Kungaroo generously.

"Look here, you know," said Trimble. "I—I know you'd forgotten to ask me, Glyn——"

"I did?" assented Glyn.

"But I'm sticking to my chum, you know, on an occasion like this."

"Oh, my hat!"

The car was gliding out of the gates. Bernard Glyn looked very queerly at Baggy Trimble.

He had not seen much of the new boy of the Fourth, but what little he had seen had not made a very favourable impression on him.

That a fellow he hardly knew should add himself to the party in this way was a surprise. The cool cheek of it took Glyn's breath away.

Baggy Trimble had a fixed conviction that no party was complete without his estimable self. He would invite himself cheerfully to any study fest, even with fellows he had never spoken to. Whether Trimble was more fool than rogue, or roguer than fool, was a question the juniors had never been able to answer. His cool intrusions were sometimes taken good-humouredly, and sometimes he departed "on his neck."

But to "wedge" into the Glyn motor-car to visit Glyn House was the "limit," even for Trimble.

Bernard Glyn sat silent, almost overcome.

He was a good-natured fellow, and hated hurting anybody's feelings. But Baggy Trimble was very near at that moment to being dropped bodily in the muddy road. But Glyn refrained, and remained silent.

The car glided on down the dark road, with Baggy Trimble in it.

CHAPTER 2.

Borrowed Splendour!

TOM MERRY & CO. were grinding a little.

The cool way in which Trimble of the Fourth had planted himself on the little party was amusing as well as exasperating. Trimble was not a fellow who could be taken quite seriously at any time.

If Bernard Glyn accepted the addition to the party without demur, it was not for his guests to make remarks on the subject, and Glyn appeared to have resigned himself to it.

"You might make room for a chap to sit down!" said Trimble, after a pause.

Sudden deafness seemed to have descended on the juniors.

"I say, I'll sit on your knees, Tom Merry."

"Oh, do!" said Tom.

"Thanks!"

Trimble plumped down on the knees of the captain of the Shell. These knees promptly gave way, and Trimble sat down on the floor of the car with a bump.

"Yawwah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Trimble's offering himself for use as a foot-warmer," said Menty Lowther. "Shove your feet on him!"

"Good!"

"You-ow-ow!" roared Trimble, as a dozen shoes plumped on him. "Lemme gessup! Oh, you rotters! Glyn, you best, if this is the way you allow your guests to be treated you needn't ask me to a party again!"

"Well, I didn't ask you this time!" chuckled Glyn.

"Ahem! Lemme gessup! You-ow!" Trimble struggled up through a crowd of feet. His overcoat was decidedly darty when he emerged.

"You rotters!" he gasped. "You've spoiled this overcoat. You'll jolly well get into a row with Cutts, I know that!"

"Cutts!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "Has Cutts lent you that overcoat?"

"Certainly! I'm rather pally with Cutts." "Nothin' to be proud of in that," said Arthur Augustus. "Cutts is a smoky wolfish, and I do not approve of him."

"And it isn't true, either," grinned Monty Leather. "If Cutts has lent Trimble that coat, Cutts desan't know anything about it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why shouldn't Cutts lend me his coat?" granted Trimble. "I've lent him money lots of times. Don't tread on my feet, Herries! Rolly will be ratty if you spoil his shoes."

"Rolly's shoes!" gasped Tom Merry. "Oh, my hat!"

"You've torn my necktie!" growled Trimble. "Jolly lucky it wasn't my own, that's all!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Whose was it?"

"I borrowed it of Talbot—"

"Talbot?" yelled Tom.

Talbot of the Shell was in the car, but Trimble had evidently not perceived him yet.

"Yes, I'm awfully chummy with Talbot, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Talbot.

Trimble looked round quickly as he heard Talbot's voice. For a moment even Trimble was abashed.

"I—I say, I didn't see you there, Talbot, old chap—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As I was saying, I hope you don't mind my borrowing your necktie, Talbot. I was going to mention it to you, really, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, I don't mind," said Talbot, laughing. "You're welcome to the necktie, but for goodness' sake, don't tell our whooppers about being chummy with me, Trimble."

"Meanterry that—that— You see, I really mean—"

"Oh, dry up!" said Arthur Augustus. "You are a fearful fibbish, Trimble. And don't pake your silly hat as my eye," added Arthur Augustus, as the car bumped and Trimble staggered, "or I will knock it off, bai Jove!"

"You'd better not damage that topper, Gussy, or there'll be a row with Gore, I can tell you."

"Gore, bai Jove!"

"Gore's topper!" shrieked Leather. "Why, you borrowing beast, are you wearing anything of your own?"

"The fact is I am short of money—owing to lending fellows cash right and left. I've got a very extensive wardrobe at Trimble Hall, only my patter has forgotten to send the things on—"

"Oh, don't begin on Trimble Hall!" said Blake. "Trimble's Grocery Stores is nearer the mark, I should say."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The car turned out of the Rycomb Road into the lane that led up to the gates of Glyn House. It rolled in through the park gates, and the great facade of Glyn House came into view.

"Here we are!" said Glyn, as the car stopped.

Glyn & Co. poured out of the big car. Old Mr. Glyn received them kindly, and Glyn's sister Edith welcomed them in her sweet and smiling way.

A kind-faced old lady greeted Tom Merry affectionately; it was his old governess and guardian, Miss Priscilla Fawcett, who was on a visit to Glyn House.

"My dearest Tommy!" said Miss Priscilla, kissing the captain of the Shell on both cheeks. "How well you are looking! You are sure you have not got your feet damp!"

"Not in the car," said Tom, laughing.

"And your chest is well protected—"

Tom Merry coloured, and laughed.

Monty Leather chimed in:

"We're all looking after Tommy, ma'am," he said solemnly. "Tommy's health is the thing we

think about most, next to football. Every fellow in the Shell looks into his bed at night to see if his hot water bottle's still there."

Tom Merry glared at his chum.

"You silly ass—" he began.

"What dear, kind, thoughtful boys!" said Miss

Starting Next Week!

WHO'S WHO AT ST. JIM'S

Giving useful information about all the principal characters. Also, a plan of the places of interest around St. Jim's

DON'T MISS THIS GREAT FEATURE.

Priscilla, beaming. "I am not surprised that they are fond of dear Tommy!"

Dear Tommy shook his fist at Monty Leather over Miss Priscilla's shoulder.

The dear old lady never could realize that Tom Merry was a big and sturdy fellow, and probably the most thoroughly healthy junior in the Lower School at St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus suddenly.

The juniors had taken their coats off in the hall, trimble among the rest.

Trimble was in evening clothes—the only fellow who was.

Arthur Augustus, with an inward pang, had resigned the idea of appearing in evening clothes, because the other fellows were in Bionas. But his evening clothes were there, all the same. Trimble was wearing them.

"Hallo, what's hiling you, Gussy?" asked Blake, looking round.

"Nothin' is brin' me, Blake, you ass! Look at that wraith, Trimble!" whispered Arthur Augustus excitedly.

"Beastin' ass!" growled Blake.

"Looks like bursting his clothes," grinned Leather.

"It isn't his clobber!" said Arthur Augustus, in a suppressed shriek. "It's my clobber!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatsoev' to laugh at, you duffers! The uttah wotiah has had the fearful check to howev' my ownin' clobber!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trimble came up smiling.

"You follows in Etan's!" he remarked. "My idea was that a chap ought to do Glyn's little party credit, so I took the trouble to change."

"You're changed into my clobber, you uttah wotiah!"

Trimble did not seem to hear.

"Just about in time for dinner—what!" he remarked, taking out a handsome gold watch and consulting it.

Arthur Augustus stared in utter astonishment. It was the missing watch!

CHAPTER 3.

A Very Pleasant Evening!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY seemed in a distract mood that evening.

As a rule, the little parties at Glyn's were very enjoyable. Miss Edith knew how to make schoolboys happy and comfortable. But Arthur Augustus, for once, did not enjoy that evening at Glyn's.

His eyes were on Trimble all the time.

Trimble was evidently pleased with himself. Trimble was far from being wealthy, and his own wardrobe was strictly limited, and, as he was careless and slovenly with his clothes, he was never well dressed. But Trimble peided himself, all the same, on being a dressy fellow.

On the present special occasion he was certainly expensively clad, the only drawback being that the clothes did not fit him.

Clothes made to fit Arthur Augustus' slim and elegant figure were not likely to suit exactly the tubby, unwieldy form of Buggy Trimble.

How Trimble had crammed himself into them was a mystery.

But he had. They fitted him like the skin of a drum. How he could move about in them without a burst was another mystery. Arthur Augustus felt that his beautiful clobber would never survive the evening. Especially after supper, something was sure to go.

The swell of St. Jim's was an tenterhook.

His state of mind was perceptible to his chums, and instead of sympathising with him, they seemed to derive heartless amusement from his anguish. Every now and then Blake or Lowther would whisper to him to watch Trimble, avowing that the dandy dinner-jacket was on the point of parting, or that the handsome waistcoat was about to burst asunder.

Even when Arthur Augustus was rendering one of his celebrated tenor solos, to Miss Edith's accompaniment, he could not take his eyes off Trimble.

The consequence was that Gusey's solo, like the song of the famous Angus MacCuan, was varied and fitful, and wild as the breeze, and wandered around into several keys.

When he had finished, Monty Lowther solaced softly on the shoulder of Manners.

Arthur Augustus gave him a glare, and went to sit beside Trimble.

"Twinkle!" he whispered.

"Not so bad for you, Gusey," said Trimble.

cheerily. "If you like, I'll give you some tips on singing one of these days. I'm rather a dab at it!"

Arthur Augustus trembled with suppressed wrath.

"Twinkle, you wotiah!" he whispered.

"Eh?" said Trimble loudly.

"Don't waste your voice, Twinkle, you worm! You are wotiah!"

"What did you say?" asked Trimble, speaking quite loudly. "I didn't quite catch that, Gusey."

Arthur Augustus sat silent. He could not draw the attention of the general company to Trimble's insolencies. For the moment, at least, the cheerful Buggy held the upper hand.

"You were saying—" asked Trimble calmly.

"Nothin'!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Norah's mind."

At the supper table, Arthur Augustus' anguish increased. Trimble was a great trencherman, quite putting in the shade even Fatty Wynn of the New House. As his podgy face grew redder and shunter, and his breathing more laboured, Arthur Augustus' fascinated gaze was fixed on him.

Something was bound to go now—that was the dreadful thought in Gusey's tortured mind.

"You're not eating anything, Gusey," remarked Monty Lowther.

"All right, dear boy; I don't feel hangwy."

"What are you counting Trimble's mouthfuls for?" grinned Lowther.

"Wolly, Lowthah—"

"Pass the rabbit pie," murmured Trimble.

"Won't you try this ginger-beer, Trimble?" asked Monty Lowther blandly.

"Thanks!"

Lowther passed the ginger-beer, and somehow—perhaps by accident—the glass bumped on Trimble's podgy hand instead of going into it, and the ginger-beer swamped out of the glass. There was a howl from Trimble as it swamped over his knees, echoed by a gasp from Arthur Augustus.

"Grough!"

"Gusey Brett! Oh dear!"

"What's the matter, Gusey?" asked Talbot.

"My twosahs—oh dear!" moaned the swell of St. Jim's. "You uttah us, Lowthah!"

"But it hasn't gone over your bags, Gusey!" exclaimed Glyn.

Arthur Augustus crimsoned.

"I—I was thinkin' of Twinkle's twosahs," he stammered.

Trimble mopped the ginger-beer off his knees with a cambric handkerchief. Monty Lowther was grinning cheerfully, after apologising politely, but he suddenly ceased to grin as he spotted Trimble's handkerchief. The monogram "M. L." was visible in the corner of it.

"M—my handkerchief!" stammered Lowther.

"My hat! Trimble—"

He broke off, remembering where he was.

Trimble grinned, and went on mopping his knees. The handkerchief was soon reduced to a limp rag, with stains of jam and rabbit pie on it, as well as ginger-beer. Then Trimble let it fall under the table.

Monty Lowther followed it with his eye. It was one of a set of very handsome handkerchiefs that had been sent him by an affectionate aunt, and he did not want to lose it. But, in the present wet and dirty state, he did not care to touch it—



"Just about time for dinner—what?" remarked Baggie Trimble, taking out a handsome gold watch and consulting it. Arthur Augustus stared in utter astonishment. Not only was Trimble wearing his evening clothes, he had his missing watch, too!

even if he could have scrambled under the supper-table after it. Even Trimble, who was not particular, didn't care to have that ginger-beery, rabby, greasy, jammy "hanky" about him.

Monty Leather, no longer regarding the incident as funny, sat tight, mentally promising Trimble quite a lot of things later on.

When the time came to go, Trimble was helped on with Gerald Catis' coat over D'Arcy's evening clothes, and adjusted George Gove's hat. Whether Baggie had anything of his own on him, was a puzzle.

"Good-bye, Tommy darling!" said Miss Priscilla. "Take care of your dear little neck—it is so windy tonight. Where is your muffler?"

"Oh, never mind a muffler!" said Tom.

Miss Fawcett looked alarmed.

"Tommy dear, have you come out without a muffler—in the winter?" she asked.

"Ye-es!" It's all right!"

"My poor, reckless darling, you will catch cold! I am sure Bernard will lend you a muffler!"

"It's all serene!"

"Bernard, my dear child—"

"Right-ho!" grinned the dear child. "I'll slip up to my room for one, Miss Fawcett. Won't keep you a minute, Tom!"

"It doesn't matter, I tell you!" gasped the unfortunate Tom.

But Glyn scuttled upstairs, grinning.

Miss Priscilla's endless concern for her dear Tommy was a matter of never-ending merriment to Tom Merry's chums.

Tom bore it with infinite patience; not for

worlds would he have uttered an impatient word to wound the kind old lady. But it was a little trying sometimes.

Glyn came down with three thick woollen mufflers over his arm.

"Better have plenty, ma'am," he remarked.

"Look here, Glyn—"

"A dear, thoughtful boy!" said Miss Priscilla gratefully. "It may save you from a bad cold, dear Tommy."

Tom Merry stood with his ears burning while the kind old lady wound the three mufflers, one after another, round his neck, almost suffocating him. But he did not offer any resistance. He felt that he could stand it till the car started.

Then the juniors took leave of their kind host and clambered into the car.

"Feel warm enough, Tommy?" asked Manners, with great solicitude. "There's a rag you can have round your neck if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cheer it!" growled Tom Merry, dragging off the mufflers. "And, for goodness' sake, don't cackle like a barnyard full of old hens!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Would you mind stoppin' the cab for a few minutes, Glyn?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as they turned into Ryecroft Road.

"What on earth for?" demanded Glyn. "We haven't got too much time to get back to St. Jim's to bed."

"I am goin' to thrash Twamble, and it is too crowded in the cab!"

"Trimble can wait," grinned Glyn.

"Weally, you know—"

"You'll spoil your clothes if you thrash him now," chuckled Lowther. "To say nothing of Cutts' coat, and Gore's topper, and Talbot's tie."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I hope you're not going to cut up rusty about a trifle like that, Gussy," said Trimble loftily. "If you do, I can tell you that I shall decline to borrow anything of you again."

"Wha-a-a!"

"So far as I'm concerned, I'm willing to let the matter drop, and say no more about it," said Baggy generously.

Arthur Augustus' reply was inarticulate. Words were not equal to expressing what he felt.

CHAPTER 4.

After the Feast, the Reckoning!

TRIMBLE looked a little uneasy as he alighted from the car at the steps of the School House, and went in with the rest of the party.

The hour of reckoning had come.

Baggy never looked very far ahead—to his mind, sufficient for the day was the evil thereof. But now the hour had come! He was uneasy.

Tom Merry & Co. had had leave to stay out till bed-time that evening. It was bed-time when they returned, and the juniors were going up to their dormitories as they came in.

"Hallo, you chaps!" said Gore, as the returned party came up the big staircase. "Hallo! I didn't know you had Trimble with you."

"We didn't, till he came," said Blake.

"Have any of you chaps been larking with my topper?" asked Gore. "I've got to use it to-morrow, and I've been looking for it to give it a polish. I can't find it anywhere."

"I've found it," said Trimble. "I knew you'd missed it, Gore, and I—I looked for it. Here it is."

Trimble's companions caught their breath. The worthy Baggy's powers as an Ananias had often astonished them. But never had they seen him rise to the occasion with a tremendous whopper like this.

"Bad joke!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"Thanks!" said Gore, taking the topper, in some surprise. "Where did you find it, Trimble?"

"I—I found it," said Trimble.

"Somebody's been larking with other fellows' things," said Gore. "I've heard Cutts of the Fifth inquiring for a coat. Reilly says that somebody has pitched his shoes, and Kerruish says somebody's been rummaging in his collar-box."

Trimble looked slightly sickly. Monty Lowther and Arthur Augustus were both, evidently, waiting till he got up to the dormitory passage, where they would be able to deal with him.

Trimble waddled down the stairs.

"Hallo, where are you going?" asked Blake. "It's bed-time."

Trimble did not seem to hear. The rest of the juniors went on to their dormitories.

Monty Lowther lingered at the door of the Fourth Form dorm, however, waiting for Trimble. The question of the handkerchief had to be settled.

Darrell of the Sixth came along the passage. "Now then, cut off, you Shell kids! Bed-time!"

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"I want to speak to Trimble, Darrell!"

"You can speak to him to-morrow, then. Cut off!"

Monty Lowther reluctantly abandoned vengeance for that night, and followed his chums to the Shell dormitory.

Meanwhile, Trimble had gone to the Fifth Form passage. He had Gerald Cutts' handsome overcoat on his arm now.

The Fifth Form kept later hours than the juniors, and Cutts was still in his study, talking with St. Leger and Gilmore. Trimble tapped on the door, and opened it, and Cutts hastily put a cigarette out of sight.

"What the dickens do you want here?" he snapped. "Here, is that my coat?"

"Yes, I heard you were inquiring for a coat, Cutts," said Trimble meekly, "so—so I looked for it, and—found it."

"Thanks," said Cutts. "Where was it?"

"Ahem! You see—"

"By gad, it's dusty!" growled Cutts angrily. It was a handsome, new, fashionable coat, and Cutts was rusty. "Have you been wearing this, you young rascal!"

"Look here, you know—"

"By gad, I'll skin you—"

"I haven't!" roared Trimble desperately.

"Look here, you know, you might thank a fellow for finding a coat for you."

"Tell me who took it from my room, then!" growled Cutts.

"I'm not going to mention any names," said Trimble. "A chap may have taken it to sew up the sleeves, and he may not. I'm not going to give Tom Merry away, anyway."

"So it was that young scoundrel, Merry?"

"I'm not going to mention any names, Cutts."

"Oh, get out, you silly young idiot!" said Cutts, pushing him out of the study. "I'll warn Merry for this to-morrow!"

Trimble departed with a fat chuckle. The hat and the coat had been safely returned to the owners. But it was a question whether the remainder of the stolen property could be got rid of without trouble.

"You're late," said Kildare, as Trimble came into the Fourth Form dormitory. "Tumble in, Trimble!"

"It's all right, Kildare; I've been looking for Reilly's shoes," said Trimble. "Somebody took them from the study for a lark, and I've found them."

"Share, it's mighty kind of ye," said Reilly. "Not at all, old chap. Here they are. I've found a collar of yours, too, Kerruish." Trimble had taken off the collar and shoes in the passage.

"It's got your initials on, so I suppose it's yours. Looks to me as if somebody's been wearing it."

"By gure, somebody has," growled the Maxx junior, "and nearly burst the stud holes, too!"

"I'm glad I've found it for you," said Trimble.

"Tumble in!" said Kildare impatiently.

"What the dickens are you doing in evening clothes, Trimble?"

"I've been to a party," said Trimble. "Gussy lent me his clothes—"

"You wotah, I didn't!" shouted Arthur Augustus from his bed. "You borrowed it without permash, and I'm goin' to give you a fearful thrashin'!"

"Look here, you know—"

"Get into bed!" exclaimed the captain of St. Jim's. "Do you want to keep me waiting here all night?"

"Right-ho!" gasped Trimble.

He dragged at the tight-fitting evening clothes. Now that he had done with them, there was no need to be particularly careful—from Trimble's point of view.

Arthur Augustus sat up in bed and watched him with thrilling interest. At every moment he expected to hear a sound of roading. This time he was not disappointed. There was a loud tearing sound as Trimble wrenched at the tight trousers.

"Oh, you wottah! My trousers!"

"I think they've shrunk a bit from that ginger-beer," gasped Trimble. "Tisn't my fault, Gussy."

"You fearful beast!"

"I dare say you can get the legs sewn together again," said Trimble. "No harm done!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare could not help grinning. The trousers had come off in instalments, and it was pretty certain that the swell of the Fourth would never be able to wear them again. Trimble rolled into bed.

The prefect turned out the light and quitted the dormitory.

"Hallo? Who's that getting up?" asked Jack Blake, about a minute later.

"I'm gettin' up, deah boy. I'm gain' to thrash Trimble for mackin' up my evenin' slabbah. Trimble!"

Success!

"Trimble, you uttah wottah!"

Success!

"You won't be able to wake him," chuckled Levison of the Fourth.

"Bah! Jove, I will jolly well wake him!"

Arthur Augustus grasped for Trimble's bed, and laid violent hands upon that cheerful youth.

There was a heavy bump as Trimble rolled out on the floor, and a terrific yell woke every echo in the dormitory.

"Get up, you wottah!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I'm gain' to thrash you! You have winned my trousers. Where is my watch, you wottah? Get up!"

"Yah! Oh! Help! Burglars!" roared Trimble.

"Shut up, you ass!" shouted Lumley-Lumley. "Do you want to bring Kildare back here?"

Perhaps Trimble did, for he roared, unheeding.

The dormitory door flew open, and the light was exhibited on.

Kildare of the Sixth looked in, frowning.

"D'Arcy! Trimble! What does this mean? What are you doing out of bed?"

"I am gain' to thrash that fearful wottah—"

"Oh! Help! Burglars!"

"Silence, Trimble!"

"Burglars! Help!"

"You silly ass, it isn't burglars; it's D'Arcy!" exclaimed Kildare angrily. "Get into bed at once!"

Trimble rolled into bed.

"You will take two hundred lines, D'Arcy, for disturbing the dormitory!" said Kildare. "Now, turn in!"

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Do you hear me?"

"Yess; I am not deaf. But weally—"

Kildare strode towards the swell of the Fourth, and D'Arcy did not wait to finish. He turned in rather hurriedly.

"If there's any more row here I shall come back with the cane," said Kildare warningly, as he turned out the light and retired once more.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat up in bed.



"Boys, when I stand up again I shall expect you to have finished your essays."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss W. Conway, 55, Gospel Lane, Aspects Green, Birmingham.

"Trimble, you unspeakable boundah—"

Score!

"Trimble, you speekin' wottah—"

Score!

"I shall thrash you to-morrow, Trimble—"

Score!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatever to cackle at, you duffah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus sniffed and settled down to sleep.

It was pretty evident that if any further attempt was made to give Trimble that fearful thrashing he undoubtedly deserved, Trimble would mistake it for "burglars," and would bring Kildare back again to the dormitory. So Arthur Augustus was obliged to let vengeance stand over till the morning. He went to sleep and dreamed that he was thrumping Trimble, and that every thump was causing the evening clothes to burst in a fresh place.

CHAPTER 5.

Spotted!

"FOOTER!" said Tom Merry.

It was the following day, and the St.

Jim's juniors had come out of the Form-rooms after morning lessons. As a match with the Grammarians was due on Saturday, Tom Merry was keeping his team well up to the mark in practice.

"Hold on!" said Lowther.

"My dear chap, we've got time for half an hour's practice before dinner!"

"I'm going to look for Trimble—"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Never mind Trimble! Gussy's going to make mischief of him. Leave him to Gussy."

"Blow Gussy! He will get round Gussy!" said Lowther. "Gussy's an ass! He's taken one of my special handkerchiefs, and left it at Glyn's house— a filthy rag—"

"You'll get it back," said Manners comfortingly. "They'll know it's yours by the monogram, and send it home."

Monty Lowther gave a gasp.

"Oh, my hat! They'll think I had a handkerchief in that awful state—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't cackle at me, you silly asses!" roared the enraged Lowther. "It's not nice to be thought a dirty pig, is it? Why, I'll smash Trimble up into little pieces!"

"But the footer, old chap—"

"Bless the footer!"

Monty Lowther rushed away in search of Trimble of the Fourth.

Tom Merry and Manners kept on their way to the footer ground, grinning.

Trimble was not likely to be found easily when a licking was waiting for him.

As a matter of fact it was a quarter of an hour before Lowther found the cheery new boy. He ran him down at last in the deserted Form-room.

It was the last place he thought of looking in, but he found him there.

"Oh, here you are, you funky worm!" granted Lowther.

Trimble groaned deeply.

"Are you coming to the gym, or will you have it here?" asked Monty Lowther, pushing back his cuffs.

Green!

"What's the matter with you, you fat blunder? Been overeating yourself just before dinner?" scolded Lowther.

Green!

The Shell fellow grasped Trimble and yanked him off the form. Then he started. Trimble's face, as he turned it towards Lowther, was startling. There was a black ring round his left eye, and his nose was a brilliant red. From the corner of his mouth was a red streak over his fat chin.

"Ow!" groaned Trimble. "Ow, ow! Was?"

"My hat! You look as if you've been through it!" grined Lowther, his belligerent intentions fading away. "Have you been scrapping with a motor-car?"

"Ow, ow! You! It was Gussy—my old pal Gussy!" groaned Trimble. "Ow! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Green!

"Well, serve you jolly well right!" said Lowther unympathetically. "I came to give you the same, but you look as if you've had enough. Perhaps that'll be a lesson to you about pinching other fellows' things."

Green!

Lowther grinned and quitted the Form-room.

When he was gone, Trimble grinned, too, and winked at the ceiling.

He waited in the Form-room about five minutes, till from the window he could see Lowther join his chums on the footer ground. Then he came out into the passage, looking about him cautiously.

"Bai Jove! There you are!"

Arthur Augustus dashed up.

"You utha waitah! You've been sulkin' in the Form-room—what! You have uthaibly wained my swimin' clobber! I am goin' to give you a feathal thrashin'!"

Green!

"What's the matiah with you, you gwainin' beast? Put up your paws, so that I can thrash you, you waitah!"

Green!

"Bai Jove! What's the matiah with your eye?"

"Lowther!" groaned Trimble.

"And—and your silly nose!"

"Ow-sow-ow! Lowther! Yow-ow!"

"Bai Jove, you've been through it!" said Arthur Augustus, relenting. "On second thoughts, Trimble, I will not thrash you! Pevvaps you have had enough!"

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"Help me to my study!" groaned Trimble.

"I—I can't walk!"

"Oh wait!"

Green!

Arthur Augustus' tender heart smote him, and he gave Trimble his arm. He piloted the podgy youth up the big staircase and into the Fourth Form passage.

Trimble leaned heavily on his arm, moaning at intervals.

He tottered into his study, still leaning on D'Arcy's arm, and sank into a chair with a groan. Levison, who was in the study, stared at him.

"My hat! What a cheivy!" he ejaculated.

"Don't be brutal, Levison!" said D'Arcy reprovingly. "Trimble has had a feathal thrashin'. He asked for it, but really I think that Lowbah might have gone a little easier, considerin' that the silly ass is more fathead than wogus. Can I do anythin' for your eye, Trimble?"

Green!

"I should recommend a beefsteak, Trimble."

"I'm sorry," said Trimble faintly. "I—I could get one by tipping Toby a bob; but I'm short of money."

Arthur Augustus had been looking for Trimble to bestow upon him a terrific licking. Instead of which, he extracted a shilling from his pocket and pressed it into the podgy hand.

"There you are, dear boy! I'm sorry you are so awfully crooked. Pevvay don't moowey about my clobber any more! The matiah is swapped!"

Green!

Arthur Augustus quitted the study.

As the door closed behind him, Trimble sat up in the chair and grinned.

Levison of the Fourth regarded him with astonishment.

"Hallo! You seem pretty cheivy for a fellow with a black eye and a swollen nose!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" asked Levison. "The best thing you can do is to get that beefsteak for your eye— Oh, my hat!"

Levison almost staggered as Trimble wetted his handkerchief and proceeded to rub away the black eye.

"Wh-what was it?" gasped Levison.

"Soot!" said Trimble cheerfully.

"And—and your nose?"

"Red ink!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Trimble cheerfully wiped the supposed signs of conflict from his face.

Levison looked at him curiously. Levison prided himself upon being a deep fellow. But the cunning of Buggy Trimble left Levison far behind.

"Well, my only chapeau!" said Levison. "Blessed if it didn't take me in as well as Gussy! You speedin' beast!"

Trimble chuckled. When he appeared in the Form-room that afternoon, there was no sign of combat about his face.

Arthur Augustus regarded him in astonishment. Never had he known a black eye to disappear with such marvellous celerity.

"Bai Jove, that beefsteak's done you good, Trimble!" he said.

"It still pains fearfuly," said Trimble pathetically. "I owe you a bob, Gussy."

"Nevah mind that."

"Bai I'd rather settle up."

"Oh, very well!"

"When I get in some money I've lent Levi-son, I mean. Perhaps you can lend me another bob till then?" suggested Trimble.

A suggestion to which Arthur Augustus D'Arcy replied briefly:

"Wah!"

CHAPTER 6. The Limit!

TOM MERRY came along the passage, whistling cheerily.

It was Saturday, and a fine cold afternoon.

Saturday afternoon was always a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and that particular half-holiday was to be devoted to a football match with Rycombe Grammar School, the old rivals of St. Jim's.

Tom Merry's team was at the top of its form. Talbot on the wing, Kangaroo and Redfern in the half-back line, Beilly at back, and Patsy Wynn in goal, were towers of strength, and the rest of the team was fully up to the mark.

Tom was looking forward to wiping Gordon Gay & Co. off the face of the earth on the Grammarians' ground that afternoon. So he had cause to feel cheerful, and his face was very bright.

"I say, Merry—"

Trimble's study door was open, and he called out as the captain of the Shell passed.

Tom Merry generally treated Trimble with good-natured tolerance, and this afternoon he was particularly good-tempered. Moreover, he was in funds, owing to a "tip" from Miss Priscilla, who was staying at Glyn House, and had visited him at the school.

Tom had no doubt that Baggy Trimble was about to make one of his usual demands for cash, accompanied by a promise to repay it when he had gathered in some of the loans he had made other fellows—Baggy's usual excuse for being short of money. As a matter of fact, Trimble's allowance was small, and he generally spent it in the tobacshop the day it arrived, as he was in an almost perpetual state of being hard-up. But Tom was good-naturedly prepared to "shell out."

"Hallo! What is it?" he asked, stepping into the study.

He looked rather curiously at Trimble.

The podgy junior was evidently going out that afternoon. He had a clean collar on, and a necktie, that was probably not his own, neatly tied. A handsome overcoat that certainly did not belong to Trimble lay over a chair back.

Trimble was alone in the study, Lamsley-Lamsley being with the footballers, and Levi-son and Mellish gone to some secluded corner for one of their little smoking parties.

"Hallo!" said Tom, looking at the coat.

"Isn't that mine?"

"Ahem!"

"Look here, you fat boulder—"

"I thought you'd like to lend it to me, as I'm going out on a special visit, you know," said Trimble.

"You cheeky ass!" said Tom wrathfully. "That's my best coat, and you'll most likely treat it as you did Gussy's bags."

"If I damage it, I can pay for it," said Trimble loftily.

(Continued on next page.)

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody! A chap can become very much attached to a dog, says Horrie, thinking of Yousse. And a dog can become very much attached to a chap, too! Growl!

Did you hear about the Aberdeen doctor who sees so many he couldn't even find his patients?

I hear Wayland Wanderers are giving their forwards a special bonus for scoring goals. Not profits!

A shipowner claims to have the most powerful fog in the world. He doesn't know his dentist. War!

Figgis complains that Mr. Esteliff, his Housemaster, is always poking his nose into things. An inferiority complex.

Stop Press: I have just received a note from Cohen, of *Cruphiture*, who says he still cannot see one of the jokes I made in the November 6th issue. But think what a laugh you are going to have when you do see it, Buzzer!

Overheard at the Wayland Empire: "You gave that attendant a good tip, Jones?" "Well, he gave me a good coat."

Oh, and if you must bite your finger nails, a good thing for it is sharp teeth.

I am asked to deny the story that when young Gibson of the Third had measles he asked the doctor what it was worth to spread it all over the school.

A motorist in Rycombe describes pedestrians as being weak, long-suffering and patient. How nice, when everybody seems to be running them down!

Glyn, who has turned sculptor, tells me he has made a statue of Mr. Linton, but he is not satisfied. The arm is eleven inches, but Glyn thinks it should have been twelve. Oh, no! That would have made it a foot!

The careman, we read, is still popular on the screen. That's the tough to give 'em.

It is stated that the day is becoming longer at the rate of .0037 seconds per century. Classes will soon longer than ever!

Did you hear about the heavyweight who gave the ring the best ears of his life?

Chin, chin, chaps!

Tom Merry sniffed.
"Have you paid for Gussy's bags yet?" he asked sarcastically.

"Ahem! Look here, Merry, I really want that coat—"

"You may want it, but you're not going to have it!" said Tom, pecking it up. "What's the matter with your own coat?"

"Well, it's got pickles spilt on it."

"You won't have a chance to spill pickles on this," said Tom grimly, putting the coat over his arm. "Anything else to say?"

"The fact is, I'm going home with Brooks this afternoon," said Trimble. "I'm going there to tea, and to see his mother and sister. You might lend me that coat, and—a few bob."

Tom Merry whistled.

Brooks, the day-boy of the Fourth, was about the last fellow in the school to chum up with Trimble.

"Has Brooks asked you?" grinned Tom.

"Ahem! A—kind of sort of general invitation, you know."

"You cheeky brunder!" said Tom, in disgust. "You're going to please yourself on Brooks for the afternoon, same as you did on Glyn the other evening. Suppose Brooks beats you out?"

"He'll be jolly glad to have me. I should think," said Trimble, with a sniff—"a fellow who works for his living."

"Well, that's a thing you'll never do, anyway," said Tom, with a curl of the lip.

"Not likely. At Trimble Hall—"

"Oh, ring of Trimble Hall, for goodness' sake!" said Tom, turning to the door.

"Hold on! I haven't told you yet what I called you for!"

"Oh, it wasn't about the coat, then? You weren't going to ask me about that?" said the captain of the Shell warmly.

"Ahem! There was something else, too," said Trimble. "I—I'm rather hard up, you know. Not exactly hard up—I mean, for small change, that's all."

"But you've got a pocketful of banknotes, of course!" said Tom, laughing. "You surely don't want the trouble of changing them?"

"Exactly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, I've got lots of banknotes, you cheeking rater!" exclaimed Trimble angrily. "My father's rich—awfully rich! We simply roll in money at Trimble Hall! I've got fivers—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll jolly well show them to you!" howled Trimble.

"Do, and I'll lend you five bob!" said Tom, chuckling.

"Done!"

Trimble extracted a Russia-leather wallet from his pocket.

Tom Merry regarded him in amazement. If Trimble really had any banknotes, it showed that there was something in what the School House fellows had always regarded as "gaa."

Tom Merry was prepared to believe in the banknotes when he saw them.

His eyes opened wide as the wallet was opened.

Inside was a wedge of banknotes.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Fivers," said Trimble carelessly. "Might be a tenner or two. I don't really count my money, you know. I've so much of it."

"Well, if you've got all that tin you don't want my five bob."

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"Yes, I do. I mean, I—I don't want to change those banknotes," said Trimble eagerly.

"Oh, spoof notes—Bank of Elegance! I understand. Swank!" said Tom Merry.

"Isn't spoof! Look at them yourself!"

Tom Merry took the banknotes from the wallet and looked at them.

There were four of five pounds each. And they certainly were not "Bank of Elegance" notes carried for "swank." They were real, genuine fivers.

The captain of the Shell whistled expressively.

"Well!" grinned Trimble.

"I give you best," said Tom. "They're all right. There must be something in your get, after all."

"You owe me five bob!" grinned Trimble.

Tom Merry counted out five shillings.

"I'll keep my word," he said. "Blessed if I can see what you want my bobs for when you've got twenty pounds in your pocket!"

Trimble grinned, and slipped the five shillings into his pocket.

Tom Merry turned to the door, and then turned back again.

His handsome face had suddenly become very grave.

"Let me see that wallet again, Trimble," he said quietly.

"Look at it, then. Rather an expensive wallet—Russia-leather," said Trimble. "My father always gives me expensive presents."

"I've seen a wallet like that before," said Tom. "It belonged to Cuts of the Fifth. Why, look here, you spoofing idiot!"

Tom Merry held up the wallet. On the leather was engraved a silver monogram, "G. C."

"Gerald Cuts!" exclaimed Tom. "It's Cuts' wallet!"

"Give it to me!" shouted Trimble.

"You utter idiot!" said Tom, against. "Have you taken this from Cuts' study?"

"Give me my wallet!"

"It isn't yours; it's Cuts'! Are you a thief, as well as a liar and a fool?" said the captain of the Shell.

"Look here, you know, if you call me a thief—"

"What else do you call yourself, when you've taken twenty pounds belonging to another chap?" asked Tom fiercely.

"I've only borrowed it, you silly ass!" growled Trimble. "I'm not going to spend the money. Didn't I tell you I wasn't going to change the banknotes?"

"Oh! That's why you won't change them—because they're Cuts'! But what are you doing with them, anyway?"

"That's my business!"

Tom Merry looked hard at the duffer of the Fourth. It seemed astounding that even Barga Trimble's stupidity could be carried to this extent—of taking another fellow's banknotes to "swank" with.

"You unspeakable idiot!" said Tom. "What do you think Cuts will say when he misses the money?"

"I'm going to put it back presently!" growled Trimble. "I happen to be hard up, but—a fellow doesn't like to look hard up, especially when he's really rich, you know. It doesn't hurt Cuts if I carry his wallet about for an hour or two."

"If he misses it, he'll think it's stolen."

"What rot!"

"What else could he think, you duffer!" said Tom Merry, exasperated. "Look here, you're to

take that wallet back at once to Cutts' study!"

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"Because I want it this afternoon."

"You silly ass!" roared Tom, losing patience. "If Cutts finds this wallet gone, he'll raise Cain about it. Everybody in the House will think you're a thief when it's found on you. You may be expelled from the school."

"That's all very well, but—"

"But what?"

"Brooks will be starting by this time, and I want to go with him—"

"I think you're dotty," said Tom, with a deep breath. "You hadn't take the wallet back—I'll take it back myself."

And the merry footballers closed round Tom Merry and swept him off his feet, and rushed him headlong down the stairs, in the midst of loud laughter.

CHAPTER 7.

Theft!

"YOU'LL have to see us through this afternoon, Cutts, old man!"

St. Leger of the Fifth spoke.

Cutts nodded genially.

The dandy of the Fifth had just entered his study, followed by two of his cronies, St. Leger and Gilmore.



As Tom Merry staggered to his feet, considerably winded, Mr. Ralston gave a sudden start. On the floor where Tom had sprawled lay a Russia-leather wallet—the wallet stolen from Cutts!

"Give it to me, you rotter!" howled Trimble, starting forward.

Tom Merry, out of patience, pushed the podgy junior forcibly back, and Trimble collapsed into a chair, gasping.

The captain of the Shell strook out of the study. He strode right into a crowd of juniors who were coming along the passage.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Lowther. "Keeping us waiting, you ass—"

"Collar him!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Tom. "I can't come for a minute—"

"Can't you?" yelled Blake wrathfully. "We've been waiting, and we're nearly due at the Grammar School. Bring him along!"

"Just a couple of minutes—"

"Just a couple of rats! Collar him!"

"Look here—"

"Bow-wow!"

The "blades" of the Fifth were bound upon a merry excursion that afternoon. A car to a distant raccourse, and an exceedingly merry time there, had been planned by the Fifth Form "sports." Needless to say, not a word was uttered on the subject outside their own select circle. That would have been asking for the "snack." But Cutts & Co. were in great spirits.

"You've had all the luck lately, Cutts!" said Gilmore enviously.

Cutts shrugged his shoulders.

His speculations on "geese" generally had the result of disposing of his supplies of ready cash. But—miraculously—after a succession of dead certs that had turned out extremely uncertain, a win had come along; and Cutts, instead of being stony, as he generally was after his sporting ventures, was in funds.

St. Leger and Gilmore, between them, had lost

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more than their claim had won, but that did not worry Cutts. In betting and blackguardism generally, it was every man for himself.

"That's all right," said Cutts. "I'm standing the axes to-day, and I've got a bit of the ready for both of you if you want it."

"Good egg!"

"With what I've won, and what I didn't lose," grinned Cutts. "I got twenty of the best. We'll have a good time this afternoon, my infants."

"What-ho! Let's get off!"

Cutts opened the table-drawer, and put his hand into it. Then he looked into it, and uttered an exclamation.

"Hallo! Where's that wallet?"

"In your pocket, perhaps," said St. Leger.

"It isn't! I put it here when I went up to change my things," said Cutts, with a worried look. "I've been half an hour at fuster practice, and I couldn't take it on the fald with me, and I didn't want to leave it in my pocket in the dems. What the dickens has happened to it?"

"May have got among the other things——"

Gerald Cutts turned the drawer out hastily.

He pitched its contents on the study table, and fumbled over them. But it was soon clear that the Russia-leather wallet was not there.

Cutts' brows came together in a grim frown.

"That rather mucks up our little run, begad!" said St. Leger.

"Somebody's taken it," said Cutts. "I know I left it there. It's been stolen!"

"Phaw!"

"I'll make the thief smart for it. I'm not going to lose twenty quid!" said Cutts, between his teeth.

"I—I say, that's a bit thick," said Gilmore uneasily. "I—I can't believe there's a thief in the School House, Cutts."

"It's not so jolly now!" snapped Cutts. "Treham was kicked out for stealing last term, wasn't he? He's left an imitator behind. Who could it have been? Anybody might have got into the study while I was down at fuster."

He turned his keen, glittering eyes sharply round the study, in search of some sign that might be a clue to the unknown perpetrator of the wallet. Cutts was less anxious for the discovery of the thief than for the prompt recovery of the money in time for the little excursion planned for the afternoon.

"Hallo! What's that?" he exclaimed sharply.

He stooped and picked up a handkerchief under the table. It was a clean, nice handkerchief, but not of the extremely expensive kind that the dandy of the Fifth favoured.

"That's not yours, St. Leger!"

"No fear!"

"And it's not mine!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Gilmore excitedly. "The thief may have dropped it here! See if there are any initials on it?"

"There's bound to be," said St. Leger. "It's a rule of the school for all linen to be marked with initials."

Cutts examined attentively the corners of the handkerchief.

He uttered a gasping ejaculation, and held it up.

"T. M."

There it was—a monogram worked carefully. The Gem Library—No. 1,560.

evidently by a skilled hand, for it was done exceedingly well.

"T. M.," said St. Leger. "What's that stand for? Myers—no, his front name is James. Manners, perhaps."

"Manners' other name is Henry," said Gilmore. "Merry!" said Cutts, between his teeth. "Tom Merry!"

"Tom Merry! Oh, great James!"

"It can't be!" said St. Leger, with a shake of the head. "Tom Merry isn't a thief. I don't like the young sub, but—but—dash it all, I can't swallow that."

"I can't, either, all at once?" grinned Cutts. "More likely, to my mind, that the thief pinched this lanky, and dropped it here on purpose. A dirty trick to turn suspicion in another direction, very likely. That points to it being a Shell chap, though, as he was able to get at Tom Merry's handkerchief. I'll take this to Mr. Railton at once. You fellows had better come with me. It looks as if we may get the money back in time for our little run, after all."

The three Fifth Formers hurried out of the study and descended the stairs.

Gerald Cutts tapped at his Housemaster's door.

"Come in!" said the deep, pleasant voice of Mr. Railton.

Cutts entered, followed by Gilmore and St. Leger.

Mr. Railton was chatting with Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell. He looked slightly surprised at the sight of Cutts' disturbed face, and the handkerchief in his hand.

"What is the matter, Cutts?"

"A very serious matter, sir," said Cutts. "My wallet, containing banknotes for twenty pounds, has been stolen from my study!"

"Bless my soul!"

"I have the numbers of the notes, six—four five—six—and if the thief hasn't parted with them yet, they can easily be identified."

"You are sure of what you say, Cutts?" said Mr. Railton very gravely. "This is a terribly serious accusation to make."

"I am quite sure, sir. But I have something else to tell you. This handkerchief was lying under my table."

He passed the handkerchief to the Housemaster.

"Whose property is this? Do you know, Cutts?"

"Tom Merry's, sir, by the initials."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Linton.

The Housemaster and the Form-master exchanged quick glances.

Mr. Linton flushed a little. The honour of his Form was a very great deal in his eyes.

"I should require much stronger proof than that before I believed Merry capable of a dishonourable act!" he exclaimed. "He is one of the best boys in the Shell, Mr. Railton—a lad with a very high sense of honour."

"My own opinion of him is very high, Mr. Linton," said the Housemaster very quietly. "I hope that investigation will clear Merry of every suspicion."

"May I speak, sir?" said Cutts.

"Speak of what you know, and not of what you surmise, Cutts. I have not failed to observe that you are on the worst of terms with Merry!" Mr. Linton exclaimed, with warmth.

Surprises in Your Stamp Album

Study your stamps carefully. You'll be surprised at the interesting facts they reveal.

IT'S astonishing the out-of-the-way facts you discover when you examine stamps closely.

Who, for example, would expect moths to appear on stamps? They do, however—as certain Dutch Colonial specimens prove. The moths depicted are probably hawkmoths, gorgeous specimens, which inhabit Holland's luxuriant American and East Indian possessions.

As a matter of fact, borders and similar designs probably provide more fun for the curious than the stamp subjects proper. Artists generally have to show more originality in designing them, you see.

A NAUTICAL NOVELTY.

Flags have been a frequent border subject, but they've seldom been so ingeniously employed as on the Greek stamp illustrated here. At first glance most people would take the series of horizontal lines above the picture of the battleship to be merely an artistic border. A second, more careful glance—which should be habitual to every keen stamp-collector—reveals them as a couple of Greek naval ensigns—a highly appropriate design for a nautical stamp.



Naval Ensign form the top border of this Greek stamp showing the cruiser *Avrofi*.

In 1933 Swaziland started issuing stamps of her own, and, as our illustration shows, a handsome series they were. Their designer was determined to lose no chances of keeping the protectorate well in the public eye, for beneath the figure of the value he inscribed a skeleton map of Swaziland, complete with rivers.

Could you mention stamps from two truly different parts of the world which both bear the

Royal Arms of England? The two countries the writer has in mind are Newfoundland and Hanover. The first Hanoverian stamps all show our Arms, complete even to the familiar lion and unicorn supporters—a reminder of our own Royal Family's one-time close connection with Hanover.



Puzzle—Can you find the map of Swaziland? It's hidden under the penny.

THE BOY SCOUTS' EMBLEM.

The Newfoundland example occurred in the series commemorating the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Colony's discovery by Sir Humphrey Gilbert. Here the Arms are quartered by the French fleur-de-lis. Every Boy Scout is familiar with this emblem, for it is the symbol of the movement.

Mention of Scouts calls to mind the Chief Scout. Do you know that Lord Baden Powell's own portrait has appeared on a stamp? This was a while before Scouting had been thought of. He was world famous even then, though as the enterprising and resourceful defender of Mafeking. His stamp, which bears the words "Mafeking Siege 1900. Postage Threepence," has another claim to fame. It is probably the first frank to be produced photographically.

Had Lord Baden Powell a hand in testing the powers of observation of stamp-collectors, he would probably choose the 2 pesos stamp of Honduras, issued in 1881, as one of the test-pieces. If you have a copy, study it hard, then compare it with one of its low-value counterparts. If you've keen eyes you'll discover that on the 2 pesos item the Honduras President shown is wearing his tunic buttons up the wrong way. The truth is that the portrait on the high value was reversed, so producing this novel error.

CHAPTER 8.

Stolen Goods!

"LEGGO!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly asses! Yaroo! I tell you,

I'll come in a minute—"

"So you will—this giddy minute! Yank away!"

"Yaaa, watah! Ha, ha, ha!"

Down the stairs came the St. Jim's footballers, with a rush and a roar of laughter. Tom Merry's arms and legs wildly flying in the midst of them.

Tom clutched at the banisters half-way down, and there was a tussle. He was jerked away from the banisters and rolled down, wildly clutching at the yelling juniors.

"Bar Jove! Look out!"

"Boys!" thundered a well-known voice.

"Cave!"

"Look out!"

It was rather too late to look out,

Tom Merry rolled down, claspng Blake round

THE GUY LIPSON.—No. 1,550.

Cuts fashed a little.

"You mistake me, sir. I was going to suggest that Merry's handkerchief had been deliberately placed in the study to throw suspicion upon him, and screen the real thief. I do not believe Merry guilty."

"Oh!" said Mr. Linton, somewhat taken aback.

"It is possible—quite possible," said Mr. Railton. "Merry must be sent for at once, if he is in the school. I understand that the juniors are playing a football match away this afternoon. Bless my soul, what is that?"

Bump, bump! Crash! Trample! Yell!

The Housemaster started to his feet—

Bump! Crash!

"Leggo, you asses!"

"Bring the duffah along, doah boys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Railton strode to the study door and threw it open, and strode out into the passage.

The junior footballers were bringing their captain downstairs—not quietly.

the neck and Lowther round the waist. They rolled together in a gasping heap fairly to the Housemaster's feet.

"Groogh!" gasped Blake.

"De-waw!" mumbled Lowther.

They rolled away, and Tom Merry sat up, breathless and panting. His jacket was over his ears, and his waistcoat had lost some of its buttons. His trousers were jerked up over his knees. He looked a wreck—and felt one!

Mr. Linton and the three seniors were looking out of the study, the latter grinning and the Form-master frowning. Mr. Linton did not approve of horseplay.

Mr. Bailton stared down at Tom Merry. The crowd was melting away.

"What does this mean?" asked the Housemaster. "Stay, all of you, and explain yourselves! What is the meaning of this riot?"

"Groogh!" came from Tom Merry.

"Aham! You see, sir—" stammered Blake.

"Just so?" murmured Lowther. "You—you see—"

"Pway leave it to me, dear boys! You see, Mr. Bailton—"

The juniors were rather nonplussed. As a matter of fact, they had not expected Tom Merry to resist so warmly, and, in the excitement of the moment, they had forgotten all about Housemasters and other masters. Their spirits were high, and they had been a little thoughtless.

"Merry, why are you being carried about in this absurd manner?" demanded the Housemaster.

Tom Merry strove to recover his breath.

"It—it's all right, sir. The—the fellows were ready to start for the Grammar School, and I kept them waiting. Groogh!"

"Only fun, sir," ventured Blake. "Tommy wasn't in a hurry, and—and we were. So—so we yanked him along, sir."

"Only a little joke," put in Lowther.

Mr. Bailton's stern brow relaxed a little.

"You should not indulge in such horseplay within the House!" he said severely. "You will take a hundred lines each!"

"Oh, sir! Yes, sir!"

"We are vewy vewy to have disturbed you, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "It was vewly vewy thoughtless. I recognize that now."

"I am glad you recognise it, D'Arcy. Merry, kindly get to your feet. I have a very serious matter to speak to you about."

Tom Merry staggered up. He was still considerably winded.

Mr. Bailton gave a sudden start. On the floor where Tom Merry had sprawled lay a Russia-leather wallet. It certainly had not been there when Mr. Bailton came out of his study.

Evidently it had dropped from Tom Merry's pocket.

Mr. Bailton's brows came grimly together.

"Merry, did you drop that wallet?"

Tom Merry blinked at the wallet, and picked it up. His cheeks flushed a little redder—they were red already. It was distinctly awkward that Cutts' wallet should have been seen in his possession. He had intended to return it to Cutts' study without a word being said about Trimble.

"Is it your wallet, Merry?"

"No, sir."

"But it was in your pocket?"

"Ye-es, sir! I—"

"Take it into my study!" said Mr. Bailton.

"Very well, sir; but—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,560

"Do as I tell you, Merry!" rapped out the Housemaster.

And the captain of the Shell went into the study.

Mr. Linton gave him a peculiar look as he came in.

Cutts, Gilmore, and St. Leger stared at him and exchanged glances.

"By gad!" murmured Cutts. "So it was he?"

Mr. Bailton made a gesture of dismissal to the footballers.

"You may go," he said. "You had better not wait for Merry. He will be occupied for some time."

"But Tom Merry's captain of the side, sir!" said Figgins of the New House.

"Then you had better select another captain. Merry cannot come."

Mr. Bailton strode into his study without further explanation, and the door closed behind him.

The juniors looked at one another in a very uncertain way. There was evidently something very wrong; Mr. Bailton's look was proof enough of that. But what it was they could not fathom.

"There's somethin' up, dear boys," said Arthur Augustus sagely. "Look here, I could captain the team vewy well—"

"Rats!" said Keer.

"Wewly, Kerr, I repeat that I could captain the team vewy well—"

"Blow the team?" growled Lowther. "We're not going till we know what's the matter about Tom! I'm not, anyway!"

"The Grammarians will be waiting," remarked Figgins.

"Let 'em wait!"

"Yess, wathah! I was about to remark that I could captain the team vewy well in 'Tom Mewey's absence—"

"Cheese it!" roared Lowther wrathfully. "Don't be in such a hurry to jump into a chap's place—not that you could captain a team of white rabbits!"

"You utiah see, Lowthah! I regard you as an insultin' beast! I repeat that I could captain the team vewy well—"

"Dry up!"

"But that, in the sires, I recommend waitin' till Tom Mewey comes out, even if we have to miss the match—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther's face relaxed into a grin.

"Of course, I might have known you were only talking out the back of your neck!" he remarked.

"I say, what the dickens can be the matter, you chaps?" Bailton was looking as black as thunder.

"Looks like a row," said Patty Wynn. "Perhaps he's been raiding the larder. I did once when—"

"Fathad! It's something jolly serious," said Blake. "Linton's there, and that cad Cutts and his pals. We're not going till we know!"

"Yess, wathah!"

In a very uneasy mood, the footballers waited, their bikes, all ready for the journey, standing idly outside. It was clear that Tom Merry was in trouble, though why they could not guess.

CHAPTER 9.

A Startling Accusation!

"MERRY!"
Tom Merry straightened up, still breathing hard. He was recovering now from the rough-and-tumble on the stairs.

The note of sternness in Mr. Railton's usually kind voice startled him.

"Yes, sir," he said quietly.

"That wallet was in your pocket?"

"Yes, sir. I—"

"That is enough! Cutts, kindly examine that wallet, and tell me whether it is the one you have missed from your study."

"Certainly, sir. It is mine," said Cutts, taking the wallet. "You can see my monogram on the outside, sir."

"It is Cutts', sir," said Tom Merry.

"You admit that, Merry?"

"Of course, sir. I—"

"You may keep your explanation, if you have one, for a few minutes. Give me the wallet, Cutts."

Mr. Railton took the wallet and opened it.

"There are four five-pound notes here," he said. "I understand that this is the amount you had in the wallet, Cutts?"

"Precisely, sir."

"You have the numbers of the notes?"

"I always enter numbers in my pocket-book, sir. I have that here."

"Read out the numbers, please."

Cutts quietly read out the numbers.

Tom Merry opened his lips again to speak, but a sharp gesture from the Housemaster silenced him.

"00125, 00642, 00038, and 00036," Cutts read out.

Mr. Railton scrutinized the numbers on the notes.

"These are your notes, Cutts. Was there anything else in the wallet?"

"A currency note for ten shillings, sir, in the compartment on the other side."

"It is here," said Mr. Railton. "Your property seems to be intact, Cutts."

"It's less than half an hour since the theft was committed, sir," said Cutts, taking the wallet.

"I'm very glad I found it out before the thief had time to pass or hide the notes."

"Theft!" repeated Tom Merry. "Theft! Are you mad, Cutts? You're not fool enough to accuse me of stealing that wallet, are you?"

Gerald Cutts shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't accuse you," he said. "The facts speak for themselves."

Tom Merry's eyes blazed.

"You bound, Cutts!" he exclaimed. "You dare to say—"

"Silence, Merry!" rapped out the Housemaster.

"Silence while that villain calls me a thief, sir!" exclaimed Tom Merry hotly.

Cutts bit his lip hard.

"Silence!" said Mr. Railton sternly. "Merry, kindly restrain yourself. I may tell you that Cutts scouted the idea of your taking his wallet from his study, and declared his belief that someone else had done so. Your handkerchief was found in his study!"

"My handkerchief!" exclaimed Tom, in amazement.

"Is not this your handkerchief?"

Tom Merry looked at it. In the corner was the well-known monogram, worked with such great care by the affectionate fingers of Miss Priscilla.

"Yes, sir, that is mine."

"How did it come into Cutts' study?"

"I—I don't know. Does Cutts say he found it in his study?"

"St. Leger and Gilmore both saw me pick it up," said Cutts, with a sneering smile. "Mr.

Railton can witness that I suggested that it had been placed there by someone else to screen himself. I did not believe you were the thief until I saw my wallet in your hand."

Cutts was speaking sincerely enough. His old dislike of Tom Merry was as keen as ever, and he could scarcely conceal his satisfaction at having him on the hip, as it were, in this way. But he was speaking the truth. It had never even crossed his mind to bring a false accusation.

Cutts was a pretty thorough rascal in many ways, but he was not quite a villain.

Tom Merry gazed blankly at the dandy of the Fifth. He realized that Cutts really believed him guilty.

"You—you fool!" he exclaimed.

Another shrug from Cutts.

"Merry"—Mr. Railton's voice was deep and stern—"this wallet was taken from Cutts' study."

"I know it, sir."

"Your handkerchief was found there. That in itself was not proof. But now the wallet itself



"So you're in for smash-and-grab, eh? Well, grab this hammer and smash these stones!"

Hull-a-crown has been awarded to R. Howarth, 57, Mid-dleton Street, Brock, Glasgow S.W.3.

is found in your possession. What have you to say?"

"I say that I'm not a thief, sir, and I can prove it!" exclaimed Tom Merry indignantly.

"But I shouldn't think it needed proving—that is all, sir."

"I do not understand this, Merry. The wallet was stolen—"

"It wasn't stolen, sir."

"Merry!"

"It was taken from Cutts' study, sir, but not to be kept," said Tom Merry.

"Come, Merry, you cannot be so foolish as to tell me that you took Cutts' banknotes without intending to keep them."

"I did not take them, sir."

"My hat!" murmured Cutts, in astonishment. "Of all the young liars—"

"Silence, please, Cutts! Merry, kindly explain yourself. I am willing to listen to you patiently. If you did not take the wallet from Cutts' study, how did it come to be in your pocket? You do not accuse anyone of having placed it there?"

"Certainly not. I put it there myself," said Tom. "I was going to take it back to Cutts' study when these chaps collared me."

"You had changed your mind, you mean."

"You don't understand, sir."

"Certainly I do not. Your statements are simply extraordinary, and I should be very glad if you would make yourself a little clearer," said Mr. Railton, softly.

THE GUN LINGER.—No. 1563.

"It was another fellow who took the wallet," said Tom. "He's a silly ass, and never had any money, but he likes to swank about as a rich fellow. He took the handkeress to pretend they were his, for the afternoon, intending to put them back afterwards."

"Merry, you ask me to believe that there is a boy so incredibly stupid in this House?" Mr. Railton exclaimed.

"There is, sir. He's an utter ass, and I know perfectly well that he never meant to keep the notes."

"That doesn't explain how they came into your pocket," said Cutts maliciously.

"I'm coming to that," said Tom, with a contemptuous look at the dandy of the Fifth, but addressing his words to the Housemaster. "I found the silly idiot—I mean the fellow—with the notes, sir, swanking with them, and I told him Cutts would make a fearful row if he missed them, and perhaps think he had stolen them. I told him to take the wallet back to Cutts' study immediately, and he wouldn't, so I stuck to it, to take it back myself."

"You told the boy you were taking it back, Merry?"

"Yes, of course, sir."

Mr. Linton stroked his chin. Mr. Railton searched Tom's face with his eyes, and the three Fifth Formers exchanged derisive glances. Certainly it was a most extraordinary story the captain of the Shell had told.

"Merry," said Mr. Railton at last, "this is—I can only say that it sounds incredible to me. Neither have you accounted for the fact that your handkerchief was found in Cutts' study."

"I suppose the duffer dropped it there, sir. He's always borrowing fellow's things," said Tom. "I know he had my coat this afternoon, and I dare say he had my handkerchief, too."

"What is the name of the boy you allude to, Merry?"

The captain of the Shell hesitated.

"He's a silly ass, sir," he said at last. "He can't help being a born fool, and he didn't mean any harm. I don't want to get him into a row."

Mr. Railton's brow grew sterner.

"Merry, unless you name the boy, and he bears out your statement, you will be expelled from the school as a thief."

"Mr. Railton?"

"The proofs of your guilt are conclusive. I doubt whether I am not wasting time in going into this extraordinary story you have told. I wish, however, to give you every chance, in consideration of the excellent character you have hitherto borne. Name the boy immediately, or I shall take you to the Head, and you will leave St. Jim's in disgrace this very afternoon."

Tom Merry's lips quivered.

The grim faces round him, the glowing gleam in Gerald Cutts' eyes, warned him of the terrible seriousness of the situation. He drew a gasping breath.

"If you put it like that, sir, I must tell you the boy's name. It was Trimble of the Fourth."

"The new boy?" said Mr. Railton.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know where he is?"

"I left him in his study ten minutes ago."

"Shall I fetch Trimble, sir?" asked Cutts, with a mocking smile at the captain of the Shell.

Mr. Railton shook his head and crossed to the door and opened it.

The Gem Library.—No. 1,562

Round the big doorway the group of footballers still waited.

"Talbot!" called out the Housemaster.

"Yes, sir."

"Kindly find Trimble of the Fourth Form as quickly as possible, and bring him to me. You may find him in his study."

"Yes, sir!" said Talbot.

Mr. Railton stepped back into the room, quiet and grim. There was a tense silence in the study as the actors in that strange scene waited for Trimble.

CHAPTER 10.

Guilty!

BROOKE of the Fourth was crossing the quadrangle to the gates when Buggy Trimble joined him.

Trimble was looking somewhat discontented, but he had not given up his idea of going home with Brooke.

The day boy looked a little surprised as he found Trimble trotting by his side. He hardly



"You heard, Cutts!" exclaimed Tom Merry, his eyes fixed out Mr. Railton. "Silence while that"

knew the new boy, and Trimble's company was more flattering than agreeable.

"Hallo!" said Brooke.

"Just spotted you," said Trimble cheerily. "Going home?"

"Yes," said Brooke, pausing.

"I'm coming with you, old chap."

"Oh!" said Brooke.

"The fact is, I've got nothing else on this afternoon," said Trimble confidently, "so I'm coming with you—see!"

Brooke laughed.

"You're too flattering, Trimble," he remarked. "Not at all."

"The fact is, Trimble, I'm going to work this afternoon," said Brooke. "You won't find it very amusing at my place. I shall be hard at it."

Trimble sniffed.

"Oh, I know all about it! You're the only St. Jim's chap who works for his living, aren't you?"

"I believe so," said Brooke quietly. "And I work on most half-holidays; and, excuse me, Trimble, you'd be rather in the way. Good-bye!"

He started for the gates again. To his surprise,

Trimble trotted on with him. It was not easy to rebuff the cheery Baggie.

"That's all right, old fellow!" said Trimble. "You see, I'm coming. I've declined to go over to the Grammar School with the footballers, though Tom Merry pressed me like anything to come in the coach. Gussy begged me, almost with tears in his eyes, to go, but I told him it couldn't be done. You needn't mind about entertaining me at your place. I don't expect it to be like Trimble Hall, you know. Besides, I'll talk to Amy."

Brooke halted again, his eyes beginning to gleam. He did not like the exceedingly free-and-easy way in which the pedigee junior spoke his sister's name.

"My sister is Miss Brooke, excepting to her friends," he said pointedly.

"Well, I'm going to be her friend, aren't I?" said Trimble amiably. "She'll like me, you know—girls always do. I'll take her to a cinema."

"You'll do what?"

"Take her to a cinema," said Trimble cheerfully. "That's all right, old chap. I've got lots of money. Look here—ahem! I mean, I had lots of money, only Tom Merry took away my banknotes—"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Brooke, in astonishment. "How could Tom Merry take your banknotes away—if you ever had any, which I don't believe."

"Look here, you know! I can tell you I had twenty quids—"

"Twenty rats!"

"Four fivers," said Trimble. "That beast, Merry, borrowed them. Still, I don't mind making old Tommy a loan; we're very pally. Don't walk so fast, Brooke. I'm coming with you."

"You're not coming with me," said Brooke bluntly. "Sheer off!"

That was plain enough, even for Trimble. He blinked angrily.

"Well, I don't want to come with a fellow who works for his living," he said with a sniff. "I don't see why I should take the trouble to recognize you at all. My idea is that you oughtn't to be allowed here. I call it rotten—"

Brooke clenched his hand for a moment; but he unclenched it and walked away, leaving Trimble sniffing.

The worthy Baggie's design of planting himself at Brooke's for the afternoon being thus frustrated, he turned back discontinuously into the quadrangle and headed for the tuckshop for comfort and consolation. He had Tom Merry's five shillings in his pocket. But that five shillings did not find its way into Mrs. Taggles' till so soon as Baggie intended.

Talbot of the Shell hee'd down on him in the quad.

"You're wanted, Trimble!" he called out.

"Wanted in the team?" asked Trimble. "Well, if I'm asked civilly I don't mind playing. But I—"

Talbot laughed.

"No, you see! You're wanted in Mr. Bailton's study."

"What does Bailton want?" asked Trimble peevishly. "Look here, you know, I'm just going to have a snack—"

"You'd better come at once," said Talbot.

"I'm jolly well going to have a snack first! Largo my shoulder, Talbot! Do you want me to lick you?"



ing. "You dare say——" "Silence, Merry!" rapped out calls me a thief!" said Tom hotly.

Talbot smiled, and walked Trimble away to the School House with a fast grip on his shoulder. Trimble grumbled, and submitted.

"Look here, you know, what's the matter?" he demanded. "Is anything up?"

"I don't know what's-up, only Mr. Railton sent me to find you. I've been looking for you everywhere."

"Is it a licking?" asked Trimble uneasily.

"I don't know. Come on!"

"Is it—is it about Cutts?" stammered Trimble, with a dim recollection of what Tom Merry had told him in his study.

"Cutts is in the study," said Talbot.

"Oh, my hat!"

Trimble entered the School House in a state of dismay. He had no doubt now that Cutts had missed the wallet containing the banknotes. Even his obtuse brain realized that the matter might be serious. Tom Merry's warning was still in his mind, and it gave him food for thought.

Talbot led him to the door of the Housemaster's study, and tapped, and opened it. He pushed Trimble into the room and retired, closing the door.

Trimble stood in the study quaking inwardly. The sight of Cutts and Tom Merry in the Housemaster's study showed what the matter was. And the grim expression on the faces of Mr. Railton and Mr. Linton made him feel cold all over.

"You sent for me, sir?" he stammered.

"Yes, Trimble," said Mr. Railton quietly. "I have been waiting for you. Were you not in your study?"

"No, sir," said Trimble promptly. "I haven't been in my study since dinner, sir."

Mr. Railton started a little.

"Be careful what you say, Trimble. Do you declare seriously that you have not been in your study since dinner? Silence, Merry! I desire to hear what Trimble has to say, without prompting from you?"

Tom Merry closed his teeth hard.

He could see that the obtuse junior, anticipating trouble, was beginning to lie in his usual way, without stopping to think.

Gerald Cutts' smile was very smocking now. He had not believed a single word of Tom Merry's explanation. His disbelief was confirmed by Trimble's statement. If he had not been in his study since dinner, certainly the scene Tom Merry had described could not have taken place.

"Think before you speak, Trimble," said the Housemaster.

"Certainly, sir," said Trimble. "I always do, sir."

"Have you been in your study since dinner?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Linton.

Tom Merry's face was growing pale now. It came into his mind like a flash what terrible consequences Trimble's falsehood might bring upon him.

"Have you spoken to Tom Merry since dinner, Trimble?"

"No, sir."

"You are quite sure?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"Have you borrowed a handkerchief belonging to Tom Merry?"

"Never in my life, sir. I despise fellows who are always borrowing things."

"Have you visited Cutts' study to-day?"

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"I don't know Cutts, sir."

"I am alluding to Cutts of the Fifth Form, here present."

"I know him by sight, sir, of course; but I don't claim with Fifth Formers," said Trimble.

"Naturally; but did you, or did you not, enter Cutts' study to-day?"

"No, sir."

"Did you take a wallet belonging to Cutts, containing banknotes, from his room?"

"I couldn't do that without entering his study, could I, sir?"

"Answer me, you or no?"

"No, sir."

"Did you hand this wallet to Tom Merry so that he could take it back to Cutts' study?"

"Oh, no, sir! If Merry says—"

"Never mind what Merry says. I am questioning you, Trimble. Someone stole a wallet containing banknotes from Cutts' study. In a word, did you do so?"

"I'm not a thief, sir!" said Trimble indignantly.

"You deny any talk whatever with Merry on the subject of a wallet taken from Cutts' study?"

"Absolutely, sir."

"Very well, Trimble. You may go."

"Thank you, sir!" Baggy Trimble, much relieved, started for the door.

"Mr. Railton!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Let me speak to him. Trimble, you young rotter, tell the truth—you know I took the wallet from you in your study—"

"I don't know anything of the sort," said Trimble obstinately. "It's no good trying to put it on me, Tom Merry. I call it mean. The best thing you can do is to give Cutts his wallet back and ask him to say nothing more about it."

"You may go, Trimble," said Mr. Railton.

"Yes, sir."

Baggy Trimble quitted the study, and closed the door, gasping with relief at finding himself outside.

Mr. Railton fixed his eyes upon Tom Merry. His face was like iron now.

Tom Merry's glance moved round the study from face to face. There was condemnation in every face—mockery, too, in that of Gerald Cutts.

The captain of the Shell felt his senses in a whirl. Trimble had lied, as he always lied himself out of a scrape—not realising, probably, what his lying meant for Tom Merry. Trimble's only thought had been to escape himself.

"Well, Merry?" Mr. Railton's voice was hard, unpitiful. "What have you to say now? Every word you uttered with respect to Trimble has been proved to be an invention."

"I told you the truth, sir," said Tom Merry huskily. "Trimble was lying. He only wanted to get out of the scrape himself."

Mr. Railton made a gesture of impatience.

"You had one witness to call, Merry, and that witness has contradicted point-blank every statement you have made. The matter is clear—indeed, it was clear enough before Trimble was called, but I wished to give you every chance. You have yielded to a base temptation, and taken money that did not belong to you—"

"I—"

"You will now come with me to the Head, Merry. I understand that your guardian is now staying at Glyn House. She shall be communicated with by telephone, and asked to take you away this afternoon."

"Take me away!" stammered Tom Merry.

"Undoubtedly. You do not expect to remain at this school, I presume, after this discovery!" said the Housemaster dryly.

"But, sir, I—I tell you—I repeat——"

"Follow me, Merry!"

Mr. Railton left the study, and Tom Merry, his face white as a sheet, followed him.

Mr. LEMON gave a deep sigh.

Cutts & Co. quitted the study, and sauntered out into the quadrangle.

"Still time for our little ran!" said Cutts cheerily. "The car will be waiting at Wayland. Get a move on!"

The blades of the Fifth walked away in a cheery mood.

CHAPTER 11.

The Shadow of Shame!

"TOM!"

"Aren't you coming, Tom?"

The waiting footballers all started forward as Tom Merry came down the passage in the wake of the Housemaster.

Tom looked at them almost wildly.

"Coming!" he muttered. "No—I'm going. I'm sacked!"

"Sacked!" exclaimed Leather. "What do you mean? Are you dotty?"

"Bai Jove! Tommy, dear boy——"

"I'm accused of stealing, and I'm being taken to the Head to be sacked," said Tom, almost hysterically. "That's all. It's a lie, of course!"

"Yess, wathah; we know that!"

"Follow me, Merry!" rapped out Mr. Railton.

"But, sir, there must be some mistake!" exclaimed Talbot of the Shell, utterly aghast at this astounding happening. "It's impossible!"

"My boys," said Mr. Railton, not unkindly, as a loud murmur rose up among the excited juniors. "I understand your feelings, and I'm sorry your faith in Merry is not better deserved. Unfortunately, there is no possibility of a mistake. The matter is proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. Come, Merry!"

His hand dropped on Tom's shoulder, and the captain of the Shell, with unsteady steps, went with him.

They disappeared into the Head's study.

The juniors gazed at one another, dumbfounded.

"What uttah wot!" said Arthur Augustus at last. "Wathion must be mad!"

"What on earth can it mean?" said Manners. "It's all rot, of course. Cutts has somethin' to do with it; he was in the study."

"Let's ask Cutts; he's just gone out," said Talbot.

The footballers ran out into the quadrangle, but Cutts & Co. were already gone.

"What about Trimble?" asked Blake. "He was in the study, too. He's mixed up in it somehow."

"Yass, wathah! Find Trimble."

But Trimble was not to be found, either. The worthy Bagg was keeping in cover. On most occasions Trimble was fond of keeping in the public eye, but just at present he was very anxious to avoid the limelight.

The footballers, angry and disappointed, returned to the School House. They were anxious to see Tom Merry.

In a very short time the story was all over the

House, and it soon spread to the New House. St. Jim's was in a buzz with it.

The facts were not known; only the one startling fact that Tom Merry had been adjudged guilty of theft, and that he was to leave St. Jim's that afternoon.

Monty Lowther and Manners made their way to the Head's study. They were determined to know what was to be known, at all events.

Lowther lapped at the door and opened it.

The Head was alone there, and he was at the telephone. He did not look round, and the juniors paused awkwardly. The Head was speaking into the transmitter.

"Is that Miss Fawcett? Very good. Could you possibly come to the school this afternoon. A matter concerning your ward—ahem!—ahem!—bad news, yes! No, he is not ill—ahem! Kindly come if you can. Very good; then I shall expect you in an hour. Thank you, madam?"

Dr. Holmes hung up the receiver.

Monty Lowther and Manners exchanged startled glances. The Head had telephoned to Glyn House for Miss Fawcett; they could guess for what.

The Head frowned as he turned and saw the two Shell fellows in the doorway.

"What is it?" he asked sharply.

"About Tom, sir——" began Lowther.

The Head interrupted him with a gesture.

"Merry is leaving the school to-day," he said. "He has been guilty of an act of dishonesty——"

"He hasn't, sir!" said Lowther grimly.

"What! Lowther, how dare you?"

"I dare to say to anybody that Tom Merry is straight as a die," said Monty Lowther steadily. "There's been some horrible mistake!"

"Do you think, Lowther, that I should expel a

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boy from this school under a mistake?" rapped out the Head.

"You must have done so, sir, because I know—"

"That will do, Lowther! Leave my study! I will not punish your impertinence, as I realize that you are concerned for your friend. I advise you to forget him as soon as possible, and I certainly forbid you to hold any communication whatever with him when he has left St. Jim's. You may go."

Lowther and Manners stood their ground.

"Mayn't we know what Tom is accused of, sir?" said Manners quietly. "We know that Cutts of the Fifth hates him, and has tried to injure him before."

"You have no right to say anything of the kind, Manners!" said the Head sharply. "In this case Cutts spoke up for Merry, as Mr. Railton tells me, until indubitable proof was produced. In order that there may be no misapprehension I will tell you the facts. Merry abstracted a wallet containing banknotes from Cutts' study, and the wallet was found on him. He endeavoured to screen himself by incriminating a younger boy, and failed, as he deserved to fail. That is all. Now you may go."

Dr. Holmes pointed to the door.

There was nothing more to be said. Almost stunned, Tom Merry's chum quitted the study.

Talbot joined them in the passage, his face pale and strained.

"Tom's in the dorm, packing his box," he said. "Come on!"

The Shell fellows hurried upstairs to the dormitories.

Tom Merry was there. Some of his friends were there, too, looking utterly miserable.

Arthur Augustus was the picture of woe. He was helping Tom Merry to pack his box, but in his agitation he was not much use. He was cursing woe; and ties into a collar-box absently, evidently scarcely conscious of what he was doing.

Tom's face was pale, but it was calm.

"Tom!" muttered Lowther.

"It's all up, old chap!" said Tom quietly, rising from his box. "I hope I needn't tell you fellows that it's all rot—that I never touched Cutts' wallet—I mean with the idea of keeping it."

"You needn't tell us you're not a thief," said Lowther. "But—but how did the wallet come to be found on you, Tom? I—I suppose it was that wallet we saw in the passage?"

"Yes. It was Cutts', and it had twenty pounds in it."

"Tom!" Lowther faltered. "You—you don't mean to say that Cutts planted it on you for—this?"

Tom Merry smiled faintly.

"No, no; it's nothing of the sort. Cutts believes it. He's a suspicious ratter, but no worse than that. It's a horrible mistake. But I think it will all come out, Monty. I believe it will. I—I only hope I can keep it from Miss Foxwell till the truth comes out. It will break her heart." Tom Merry's voice faltered. "She's old, you know, and—and a thing like this would upset her fearfully. It might make her seriously ill."

It was very like Tom to be thinking of his old governess at that moment instead of himself.

"The Head's telephoned for her," said Manners. "She'll be here in an hour."

Tom Merry groaned.

"If it wasn't for her I could stand it better," he said.

muttered, "and—and I feel sure it will come out."

"Tell us exactly what happened," said Talbot.

"It's a queer story," said Tom, colouring. "I—I'm not surprised that Railton didn't believe it when Trimble denied it all."

"Was Trimble the thief?" asked Arthur Augustus.

The juniors looked dubious. If Cutts had been accused of a plot it would have been "steep." But Trimble—he was a cadger, a liar, a spoiler, a boaster, but—but surely not a thief!

"There wasn't any thief at all," said Tom quietly.

"What?"

"Then what the thunder——" exclaimed Figgins.

"You know how Trimble took Gussy's watch the other day. Well, when Gussy missed it he never thought of saying it had been stolen."

"Watch out," said Arthur Augustus. "I should have been warned to let such a rotten idea catch my head, dear boys."

"Cutts isn't exactly like Gussy," said Tom.

"He missed his wallet, and jumped to the conclusion at once that his banknotes had been stolen, and he went to Mr. Railton about it. Trimble had taken it simply to screw about with banknotes, and make out that he had plenty of money, intending to take the wallet back to Cutts' study afterwards."

"Oh, the silly fatherhood!"

"He showed the notes off to me in his study, and I recognised Cutts' wallet, and told the young idiot to take it back. He wouldn't, so I was taking it back when you fellows collared me in the passage."

"But Jove!"

"That wouldn't make any difference, as it happens, for Cutts had already gone to the House-master and reported the theft, as he supposed it. He found a handkerchief of mine in his study. Of course, that duffer had borrowed it and dropped it there. Not on purpose—I don't mean that—for the young idiot never even thought he would be suspected of stealing. He borrowed my coat, too. I found it in his study."

"Then what's the trouble?" asked Blake, mystified. "You've only got to explain that you took the wallet from Trimble."

"Don't you see? Trimble got scared, and denied the whole business."

"Oh!"

"The awful wretch!"

"So, as the matter stands, the money was found on me, and my hanky was found in Cutts' study, and my explanation is laughed at. Trimble denies even that he was in his study since dinner. Of course, Railton can't know that Trimble is lying."

There was a grim silence in the dormitory. But for their firm faith in Tom Merry, the juniors would hardly have known what to think. But they trusted the captain of the Shell, and they knew Trimble. His proceedings on the night of the party at Glyn House showed what the chiseled junior was capable of.

Tom Merry looked round wistfully at the faces about him.

"You believe me?" he faltered. "You—you don't think, like Railton, that—that I've made that up? You can't——"

"Of course not," said Lowther, almost roughly. "Don't be an ass! Look here, Trimble will have to own up!"



"We know Trimble's lie and we're going to make him tell the truth!" roared Lawther angrily. "Stand aside, Killdare!" "What!" ejaculated the prefect. "You're not going to interfere here!" said Lawther; he was so furious he did not care what he said.

"That's the last hope," said Tom quietly. "Trimble doesn't know yet the harm he's done, and when he does know he may own up. And he's such a fool, too, that he's very likely to blurt out the whole history without intending to. Find him and talk to him."

"The beast has disappeared!" growled Manners.

"He told me he was going home with Brooke, and—"

"I'll cut off to Brooke's on my bike," said Figgins, anxious to do something. "I'll bring him back by the scruff of the neck, if necessary!"

And Figgins hurried out of the dormitory.

Tom Merry, in silence, finished packing his box. Hope was by no means dead in his heart.

Rotten as Trimble was in many ways, Tom Merry could not believe that the new boy would keep silent, and allow him to be expelled in disgrace from the school.

Trimble was more foul than racial, and surely he would not be capable of such baseness.

The captain of the Shell was under a cloud, but the cloud was passing. More than of himself, he thought of poor Miss Priscilla, and the terrible shock that awaited her when she arrived at St. Jim's. His only hope now was to keep it from her knowledge till his chums had had time to extract the truth from Trimble.

"Where are you going, Tom?"

"I'm going to meet Miss Fawcett on the way here," said Tom quietly. "I'm going to keep this from her as long as I can. I can't believe Trimble will really let me be disgraced like this, when I was only trying to keep him out of a scrape. If he owns up, Miss Fawcett needn't know anything about it."

"We'll come with you, Tom."

"What about the Grammar School match?"

"The Grammar School match? Hang the Grammar School match! I'd forgotten it."

"They'll be waiting," said Tom. "You'd better send some sort of a team over there. Pick out an eleven, anyway, and send it over, if you don't feel inclined for the game yourselves. And—and look for Trimble, and get the truth out of him, if you can. I'll go and meet Miss Fawcett."

"And go back to my pater's with her," said Bernard Glyn. "Stay there till we get the truth out of Trimble, Tom."

Tom hesitated.

"But your people——" he said.

"That's all right. I'll explain to the pater. I'll come with you," said Glyn. "Come on! It's all serious!"

Tom Merry quitted the dormitory with Glyn.

CHAPTER 12.

Miss Priscilla is Pleased!

"STOP!"

A car was bowling along the lane towards St. Jim's, and Tom Merry ran out into the road, and lifted his hand. The chauffeur brought the car to a halt.

Miss Priscilla Fawcett was seated in the car. Her kind old face showed the agitation under which she was labouring.

But it lighted up at the sight of Tom Merry. "My dearest Tommy!" she exclaimed, as Tom came to the door of the car. "You are not ill!"

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Tom forced a smile.

"Not a bit of it," he said. "I'm all right."

Miss Priscilla scanned the handsome, healthy face closely and anxiously.

"You are not looking as usual, Tommy," she said. "I have no doubt the Head was alarmed very much, my dear. I could not think what-
ever was the matter. How kind and thoughtful of you to come and meet me, my dear. Jump in, and come on to the school with me."

"I was thinking of going home with Glyn," stammered Tom.

"But the Head asked me to call—"

"That—that was only about me," said Tom, flushing. "The—the fact is, I've come to meet you instead. I—I knew what Dr. Holmes was going to say."

"Then you can tell me, Tommy dear. Was it about your health?"

"Oh, no, no! About—about— I—I—"

Tom Merry stammered. He could not tell the kind old lady a falsehood, and yet she must not know the truth. If the worst came to the worst, she would know it soon enough. "The Head thinks I had better leave St. Jim's—for a time, of course—and—perhaps I may be coming home with you, dear."

Miss Priscilla smiled brightly.

"That is very sensible of Dr. Holmes," she said. "He is a very sensible man. I think very probably you have been overworking, Tommy—especially at cricket."

Tom Merry laughed—quite his old laugh. Cricket at that time of the year appealed to his sense of humour.

"So now we're going to Glyn House," he said.

"Come on, Glyn, old chap!"

"You think that it will not be necessary for me to see the Head?" asked Miss Priscilla doubtfully.

"Not at all."

"But as he telephoned—"

"Dr. Holmes has been very much disturbed this afternoon, ma'am," said Bernard Glyn. "Suppose you—ahem—telephoned from my place?"

"That will be just as well," said Miss Priscilla, quite satisfied. "Let us get back, then, my dear boys. It is very, very thoughtful of Dr. Holmes to think of giving you an extra holiday, Tommy, and I hope he will decide to do so."

The car turned back, with the two juniors in it.

Miss Priscilla was quite easy in her mind now, and Tom Merry breathed more freely.

If only the miserable truth could be kept from that kind old soul until—until he was cleared, or until it became certain, at least, that he could not be cleared. His news can never be told too late.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Glyn, as the car ran on. "Here's Figgis. He's got Brooke with him."

"Brooke? Br Jove!"

Two cyclists had turned out of the rutty lane that led to Wayland Moor. They were Figgis of the Fourth, and the day-boy.

They stopped as Tom Merry waved his hand.

"Hold on!" said Glyn to the chauffeur, and the car came to a halt.

Tom Merry jumped out quickly.

Figgis' face was ablaze with excitement, and Dick Brooke was looking excited, too. They had been riding at a terrific rate, and were red and breathless.

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Tom Merry's heart beat faster.

"What is it, Figgis? You look as if you've found something out."

"I jolly well have!" said Figgis, gasping. "Brooke's a giddy widge—"

"Was Trimble there?"

"No, he didn't go; but when I told Brooke, he knew something about it!" panted Figgis. "Trimble told him about the bookies."

"My hat!"

"I think it will be all right, Tom," said Brooke, in his quiet way. "I was fairly knocked over when Figgis told me what you were suspected of. Does your guardian know?"

"Not yet."

"Don't let her know, then."

"If—if it turns up trumps, phone us at Glyn House," said Tom.

"Right you are!"

"Is anything the matter, Tommy dear?" called out Miss Priscilla.

"No, no!"

Tom hastily returned to the car. Figgis and Brooke jumped on their machines and scorching away towards St. Jim's.

The car rolled on towards Glyn House.

Tom Merry chatted cheerily with the old lady, keeping Miss Priscilla's mind occupied. His heart was lighter now. It seemed as if light were breaking through the clouds.

"The pater's in the city," Glyn remarked, as they dismounted from the car at the house. "Edith's about, but no need to talk yet, Tom, if you like. You've come over with me because it's a half-holiday. Savvy?"

Tom Merry nodded.

Innocent as he was, innocent as he believed his friends would believe him to be, he shrank from telling the miserable story. Even to those who had complete faith in him, he did not like to say that he was suspected of a base and despicable action.

If only Trimble would confess—and soon!

Tom remained with his old governess, listening, with a smile, to Miss Priscilla's gentle prattle of what should be done at home if the Head decided upon that idea of giving her dear boy an unexpected holiday.

Little did the kind old lady dream that if Tom went back with her to Hackleberry Heath, it would be in black disgrace, and never again to revisit St. Jim's.

She did not know that, and if Tom Merry could help it, she should never know.

But while he chatted, smiling cheerfully, with his old governess, Tom Merry's heart was heavy, and hope and doubt alternated in his breast.

Would that telephone call come from St. Jim's?

"Dear me! I have not telephoned to the Head, my dear boy!" said Miss Priscilla presently.

"I—I think the Head's going to ring us up, dear," said Tom. "In—in fact, I'm expecting to hear the bell ring any minute—hoping, anyway."

"That is very kind of Dr. Holmes!"

"Yes, isn't it?"

"You have a very kind headmaster, Tom. If he decides upon this holiday for you, you must thank him very nicely."

Tom suppressed a groan. If that "holiday" was finally decided upon, he would not feel in a thankful mood.

But he nodded and smiled.

How was it to end?

CHAPTER 13.

Brought to Book!

"**B** Al Jove! Here's Figgins!"

"And Brooks?"

"Where's that beast Trimble?"

The chums of St. Jim's gathered round the two breathless juniors as they came in.

"Trimble wasn't with me," said Brooks. "He was coming, but I shooed him off. But it's jolly lucky Figgins came over, all the same."

"Brooks knows!" chorled Figgins.

"And I'd have spoken up soon enough as soon as I heard the story," said Brooks. "But I shouldn't have been here again till Monday if Figgins hadn't come over."

"But what do you know about it?" asked Monty Leather anxiously.

"I know that Trimble had banknotes to-day for twenty pounds," said Brooks. "I know, at least, that he bragged to me of having them, and said Tom Merry had taken them away. Then he put it that he had lent money to Tom. I took it for his usual silly gas; but when Figgins told me—"

"Hawwah!"

"But where's Trimble?" asked Brooks. "The rotter's got to be found, and made to own up!"

"He's keeping out of sight," said Leather, between his teeth. "I suppose that he knows that we shall make it warm for him for lying about Tom. Scouter and find him, you fellows! He must be somewhere!"

Quite an army of juniors were going in search for Baggy Trimble.

A message was sent to the Grammar School that the match was off, and making excuses. In the circumstances, none of Tom Merry's chums felt inclined for football. Neither were they inclined to trouble about making up a fresh team. There was only one business in hand now—clearing Tom Merry of the black suspicion that rested upon him.

Trimble was carefully keeping out of sight. But he was bagged at last.

Baggy Trimble had money in his pocket, and with money in his pocket, he was not likely to keep away from the tuckshop for long.

Kerr of the Fourth thought of that with his keen Scottish head; and while the other fellows searched far and wide for the elusive Baggy, Kerr kept watch on Dame Taggles' little shop. And before very long he had the satisfaction of observing Trimble's podgy figure stealing away from the tuckshop cautiously.

Baggy Trimble looked very dandy, and Kerr guessed that he had been hiding in the room. He bore down upon the elusive Baggy at once.

"You're wanted, my fat infant!" said Kerr grimly.

"I—I say, Railton doesn't want me again, does he?" stammered Trimble, in alarm. "I—I—I told him all about it, you know."

"You'll h've to tell him a little more!" remarked Kerr. "Stop, you podgy bouncer! Stop, I tell you!"

Trimble was running.

Kerr started in pursuit, and in a couple of minutes ran him down. He took a firm grip on Trimble's collar, and marched him off to the School House.

"Here he is!" shouted Arthur Augustus, from the doorway.

"Good egg! Got him!" yelled Blake.

The Co. gathered from all quarters.

Baggy Trimble, wriggling in Kerr's strong

grasp, stared round uneasily at the angry and threatening faces.

"I—I say," he mumbled, "what's the matter, you know?"

"Where have you been all this time, you skulking rotter?" demanded Blake.

"I—I've been exploring the ruins, you know. I—I'm awfully interested in ruins. Leggo my collar, you Scotch beast!"

"Bring him to Mr. Railton!" said Leather.

"I—I'm not going to Mr. Railton!" howled Trimble, in alarm. "I've been to him, haven't I? If Tom Merry says—"

"Come on!"

"I—I say, if Cutis says—"

"Blow Cutis! You're coming to Railton to own up!" said Leather.

"You-oo! Leggo! I won't!" roared Trimble.

"I don't know anything about it! I haven't seen



"What have you got in your mouth, Jones? Give it to me at once!"

"I wish I could, sir—it's a gumboll!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Mr. Needham, Chesterfield Road, Two Dale, Matlock, Derbyshire.

Cutis' notes! Tom Merry knows I wasn't going to keep them! You?"

"Oh, we're getting at it!" said Figgins. "So you admit that you had them?"

"No, I don't!" said Trimble promptly. "I don't even know whether Cutis had any banknotes or not! How should I know?"

"Spying, I suppose, as usual!" said Figgins.

"You jolly well took them out of Cutis' study, we know that!"

"I didn't! I never knew they were in the drawer of Cutis' table!" wailed Trimble. "A chap oughtn't to keep banknotes in a table drawer; it isn't safe!"

"Not with you about!" grinned Blake.

"You-oo! Leggo! I tell you I won't go!" roared Trimble.

"Stuff his hanky into his silly mouth!" growled Leather. "We're going to make him own up before he goes to Railton. He'll alarm the whole blessed country at this rate!"

"Gurrig!" gurgled Trimble, as Blake jerked a handkerchief from his pocket and jammed it, not gently, into his open mouth. "Yurrig!"

"Bring him into the Common-room!"

"Gurrig!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Leather suddenly. "Look at that hanky, by George! It's one of Tom Merry's!"

"Bai Jove! There's Tom Merry's monogram in the corner!"

"What are you doing with Tom Merry's hanky, Trimble?"

"Groogh!" Trimble roared and spluttered. "Gurg!"

"What's the row here?" Kildare of the Sixth came up, frowning. "Are you ragging Trimble? Let him go at once!"

"We're going to make him own up!" shouted Lowther.

"Let him alone!"

Kildare shoved the angry juniors aside, and reached Trimble.

The unfortunate Baggly clung to him, and jerked out the gag.

"I say, Kildare—groogh!—keep 'em off—the beasts! I don't know anything about it! You-or-our!"

Kildare stood between Trimble and the threatening crowd, and turned a stern glance on the juniors.

"What are you ragging Trimble for?" he demanded.

"We're not ragging him yet!" said Lowther savagely. "But we're going to, if he doesn't own up! He's got to tell the truth about Cutts' banknotes."

"He has already told Mr. Railton——"

"Lies!" said Lowther.

"Collar the cad!" shouted Manners.

"Stand back!" exclaimed Kildare angrily.

"I tell you, he's going to own up!" roared Lowther furiously. "We know he's lied, and we're going to make him tell the truth. Stand aside, Kildare!"

"What?" ejaculated the prefect.

"Stand aside! You're not going to interfere here!" Lowther was furious, and he did not care what he said. "No, and not Railton, either——"

"Lowther!" It was a deep, quiet voice, and the angry words died on Monty Lowther's tongue. The habbub had reached the Housemaster's ears, and Mr. Railton came on the scene with a grim brow. "Are you aware of what you are saying, Lowther?"

There was a hush.

But Monty Lowther faced the Housemaster undauntedly.

"Trimble has told you lies, sir," he said.

"Nonsense!"

"We can prove it!"

"Nonsense, I say!" said Mr. Railton.

"Speak up, Brooks!" exclaimed Figgins.

Brooks of the Fourth was pushed forward by the juniors.

"May I speak, sir?" he said respectfully. "Trimble did not tell you the truth, sir, and I can prove it."

CHAPTER 14.

The Clouds Roll By!

MR. RAILTON paused, looking hard at Brooks.

"If any fresh evidence in the matter has come to light, I am more than willing to hear it," he said quietly. "I will listen to what you have to say, Brooks. Kindly be brief."

"Very well, sir. Trimble denies that he had Cutts' banknotes in his possession at all this afternoon. Just before I left for home, he told me he had twenty pounds in banknotes. He said he had lent them to Tom Merry—after saying first that Tom Merry had taken them away from him. He's always bragging, like an ass, about having lots of

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money, so I took no notice of his rot till Figgins told me what had happened here."

"If this is correct, it certainly puts a new complexion on the matter," said the Housemaster. "Trimble!"

"Yes, sir," mumbled Trimble.

"It appears that you told Brooks you had twenty pounds in banknotes. Were you alluding to Cutts' notes, or to some money of your own?"

"My own, sir," said Trimble promptly.

"Indeed! Twenty pounds is a very large sum of money for a junior to have, and the coincidence is very singular, too."

"You see, sir, my people are awfully rich," said Trimble. "At Trimble Hall——"

"Never mind that, Trimble. You have twenty pounds of your own money?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Kindly show me the money."

Trimble's jaw dropped.

"The—the money?" he stammered.

"Yes. If you possess banknotes of your own to the value of twenty pounds, kindly show them to me at once. That will satisfy me and your schoolfellows."

Some of the juniors grinned.

Trimble was as likely to have twenty thousand pounds as twenty.

"I am waiting, Trimble," said Mr. Railton, his voice growing ominous.

"I—I—the fact is, sir, I—I haven't the money now," stammered Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, boys! This is not a laughing matter. Trimble, it is perfectly clear that you are telling falsehoods!"

"I—I never tell falsehoods, sir," groaned Trimble. "I—I'd scorn anything of the sort, sir. Now—now I come to think of it, I was mistaken, sir. I—I didn't have twenty pounds. It—it was a slip of the memory, sir."

"Then the sum you mentioned to Brooks must have been the money belonging to Cutts?"

"I—I didn't mention it to Brooks, sir. Brooks's mistake."

"But you have admitted it, you utterly ridiculous boy!"

"I—I really didn't mean to," stammered Trimble.

"The fact is, I—I should have had twenty pounds, sir, only that beast Merry took it away——"

"What?"

"I—I mean to say—that is, he didn't, sir."

"Trimble!" Mr. Railton's voice resembled thunder now, and Trimble jumped with terror. "It appears clear now that Tom Merry's statement was true, and that he found you in possession of Cutts' banknotes. You purchased them from Cutts' study."

"No, I didn't!" gasped Trimble. "Certainly not, sir. I told Tom Merry plainly that I wasn't going to spend them. Ask him."

"You dealt, in my study, having said anything at all about them to Merry!" thundered the Housemaster.

"Didn't I?" gasped Trimble. "I—I must have forgotten, sir. I—I hope you don't suspect me of—of—of telling a whopper, sir?"

"The Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, quite exasperated. "That boundah takes the cake—he does really!"

The Housemaster looked almost blackly at Trimble. The cheerful Baggly was quite a new character in his experience.

"Trimble, I begin to suspect that you are



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too stupid to understand what you are saying. I—"

"I—I'm generally considered rather a clever chap, sir," murmured Trimble.

"You ridiculous boy, tell me the truth. I exaggerate you from any intention of stealing Cuts' money, but tell me the precise facts at once. I shall not be hard on you if you tell me the truth."

"Well, sir," began Trimble cautiously, "just to put a case, sir, I might have borrowed Cuts' wallet, and I mightn't I might have wanted some banknotes in my pocket, and I mightn't. Tom Merry may have taken them away to put in Cuts' study, and then again, he mayn't, you know. I may have dropped Tom Merry's handkerchief in there, but—that was all D'Arcy's fault."

"My fault!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, yours," growled Trimble. "I'd rather have had your handker, but you've been keeping your things locked up since I happened to borrow your watch the other night, so what could a fellow do?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is this boy in the habit of borrowing articles without permission?" asked Mr. Railton.

"Yess, wiah, sir! My ercin' clobber—my watch—"

"Sure, and my shoes—"

"And my necktie—"

"And my collar—"

Mr. Railton held up his hand and stopped the chorus.

"The matter is quite clear now," he said. "I cannot say how glad I am that Merry is

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Y. T. Lee, 27, Immigration Bld., Penang, Straits Settlements; film, stamps, postcards, sports.

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PEN PALS COUPON

8-4-38

exaggerated, yet I can hardly blame myself for failing to plumb the depths of this boy's stupidity. Trimble, are you aware that Merry of the Shell has been ordered to leave St. Jim's, wholly through your false statements with regard to Cuts' handkeres?"

"I—I didn't know," blinked Trimble. "I—I'm sorry, sir. But it was all his own fault. I told him plainly that I was going to take the handkeres back when I had done with them. I told him as plain as anything."

"You utterly stupid boy, come with me, and explain to Dr. Holmes," said Mr. Railton, taking Trimble by the collar. "My boys, Merry's name is cleared. You may tell him at once that there is no stain of suspicion upon him. Come, Trimble!"

The unhappy Buggy was marched off to the Head's study, with the Housemaster's grip on his collar.

"Hurrah!" roared Figgins.

"Now for the giddy telephone!"

There was a rush of the delighted juniors to the Housemaster's study. They did not wait for permission.

Monty Lowther took up the receiver and rang up Glyn Home.

"Tom Merry there? St. Jim's speaking. Tell Tom Merry. Hallo, is that you, Tom? It's all right—right as rain! Trimble's owned up. It's all serene. Come back as fast as you can, old chap! Hurrah!"

And along the wires came like an echo:

"Hurrah!"

(Continued on page 28.)

The Gem Library—No. 1,585.

WANTED URGENTLY—LODGINGS FOR THE REMOVE FORM!

Burnt Out Of School!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

Returning to Greyfriars after the Christmas holidays, Harry Wharton & Co. plan a big feed to celebrate the opening of the new term. Billy Bunter takes on the task of cooking the food, but, owing to his carelessness, he sets fire to Study No. 1. Scared out of his life, Bunter rushes from the room.

The alarm is soon raised, and the boys are all ordered into the Class. The prefects try to put out the blaze, but it spreads rapidly through the Remove quarters—which, fortunately, are separated from the rest of the school.

In the Close it is discovered that the Head's young daughter is missing, and Wharton is started to hear from Bunter that Molly Locke was in the Remove passage prior to the outbreak.

The janitor rushes into the burning building, and, after a life-and-death struggle, succeeds in saving the Head's daughter. Burned and exhausted by his efforts, Wharton then leaves carelessly.

(Now read on.)

Fighting the Fire!

HARRY WHARTON came to himself in a few minutes. He was not the kind of fellow to succumb for long. He opened his eyes and looked about him. He was lying on a sofa that had been dragged out into the Close to save it from the flames, and Nugent was supporting his head, while Bob Cherry was bathing his forehead with cold water. There was a group of fellows round him. Harry struggled up into a sitting position.

"Hallo! What's the matter?"

"It's all right, old chap," said Bob Cherry. "You've only fainted."

"Did I?"

Wharton passed a hand over his forehead. It was grimy with smoke. His skin was smarting in a dozen places; his clothes were burned into holes.

"My hat," he said, "that was a narrow shave, and I wouldn't like to go through it again!"

"Precious few chaps would like to go through it once," said Haazebone, grinning. "You ought to hear what the Head said. It would make you blush."

Wharton coloured uncomfortably.

"It was nothing to make a fuss of—and someone had to save Miss Molly. Have the firemen come yet?"

"Somebody says they're in sight."

"Good! Hallo, Bunter! You've got a jolly lot to answer for, you young sweep. We shall be turned out of our study over this."

"Oh, really, Wharton, I don't think you ought to blame me! I was cooking a feed to oblige you fellows. Isn't it awful?"

"The fire? Yes, rather!"

"I don't mean the fire—I mean the feed. All that grub wasted! Why, we had enough in the study for a record feed, and now——"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to laugh at," said Bunter crossly. "I know I'm jolly hungry."

"Go and eat cake, then!" said Bob Cherry. "There won't be anything left but the wall of the passage in the Remove quarters. The whole place will have to be rebuilt. What are we going to do for studies?"

"And for bed-rooms," grinned Haazebone. "The Remove dormitory has fallen through into the studies."

"My hat!" said Harry Wharton, getting up. "There'll be a bill for somebody to pay. This will use up all Bunter's postal orders for a long time to come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"I feel pretty dirty," said Harry. "Do I look black, Bob?"

"Ha, ha! Something like a chimney sweep after an exceptionally hard day's work."

Harry rubbed his face; but that only made matters worse. His skin was as black as coal with the grime of the smoke. His chums could not help grinning at his looks.

"I think I'll go and wash."

"Rats! Here comes the fire brigade! You can't miss this!"

There was a shouting at the gates of Greyfriars. The fire brigade had arrived.

"Here they come!"

"Thank goodness!" exclaimed Dr. Locke, hurrying to the spot. "I am glad you have come, gentlemen. I do not think there is much danger of the fire spreading now, but it shows no sign of dying out."

"We'll soon have it under, sir," said the captain. "Back up with those lasses, there!"

The lasses were soon run off, and mighty jets of water were turned into the windows of the corridor, and there was a tremendous splashing and hissing. Flames died down, and huge columns of smoke rose and rolled across the Close.

The burning portion of the building was swamped with water; but it was over an hour before the fire was got under. When the last spark had been extinguished, and the blackened embers were dripping with water, the firemen ceased their efforts, and the fire-engine went off back to Friar-dale.

New Quarters!

DR. LOCKE was looking very worried as he sat in his study with Mr. Quidd. The fire was out and the firemen gone at last. But now the Head's worries were only beginning.

Greyfriars had gathered in force for the beginning of the term, and there were a number of new boys, too. There had been none too much space to spare at any time. But now——

"The Remove students are galled," said Dr. Locke. "That is not so serious, as the Lower Fourth can do their preparation in the class-rooms

NOWHERE TO SLEEP! NO STUDIES TO WORK IN! THE GREAT FIRE AT GREYFRIARS LEAVES HARRY WHARTON & CO. HOMELESS!

until the rooms are rebuilt. But the dormitory is gone. Where are they to sleep?"

Mr. Quelch looked thoughtful. "They could be put in the Upper Fourth dormitory, sir," he said.

Dr. Locke smiled slightly. "But you know what terms the Remove is on with the Upper Fourth. What would be the result if the two Forms were put into the same dormitory?"

The Remove master smiled, too. "You are right, sir."

"Of course, if nothing else can be thought of, we must adopt that plan," said the Head slowly.

"It would make matters worse to put them in with the Fifth, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "There would be endless disturbances, I'm afraid."

"True, I think— Come in!" The Head broke off, as a tap came at his door.

The door opened, and a stout little German gentleman presented himself. The Head rose, with a smile of welcome, and shook hands with him.

"I am glad to see you, Herr Rosenblau. I did not know you had returned."

"I return mit meinsel to-day, ain't it," said Herr Rosenblau. "How did you vas, mein friend? How did you vas, my dear Mr. Quelch? I think tat I comes over to speak mit you about te fire, ain't it?"

"Pray at down, Herr Rosenblau. Yes, we have had a fire, and it has placed us in a serious difficulty."

"I think tat I knows him. I think tat I come over to help you."

The Head smiled. Herr Rosenblau had a

curious way of expressing himself in English, but there was no doubt that his heart was in the right place.

"Thank you very much, Herr Rosenblau."

"No tanks," said the head, beaming. "I think tat I does all I can. I think I remember tat you lend me te cash to build te New Academy—"

"Erly do not speak of that!" said the Head hastily.

"I think I speaks of him, ain't it. I thinks I opens te New Academy, and I owes it all to you before, I think I make it pay, too. Te money come in."

"I am very glad to hear it."

"But I not yet fill him up with poyas," said Herr Rosenblau. "Dere is a lot of space tat is not fill before."

"It will fill up in time."

"Ja, ja! But shoot now, I put your boys in dere, hein?"

The Head started. It had not occurred to him that his homeless Form might find shelter in the New Academy, "over the way."

"My dear Herr Rosenblau—"

"Main poyas not commence te new term till to-morrow," explained the head. "Te hoose all empty now. Ven tey come pack, te pads not all full, as I say. Plenty of room to put up te Remove mit a little squeezing. Te poyas not mind squeezing, hein? Fetter tey sleeping in te passages mit demselves?"

"This is very kind of you, Herr Rosenblau," said the Head, looking very pleased and relieved.

"I did not think of this; but it is just the way out of the difficulty. If you could put up the Remove for a couple of days, that will be splendid.



French and German juniors combined to attack the boarders of their dormitory. But the Removites were ready for them. In a compact mass they met their foes, hitting out right and left with pillows and bolsters.

The classrooms are still intact, and it will only be a question of sleeping accommodation."

"That is arranged!"

"Yes—and thank you very much. Mr. Quetch will you inform the Remove that they will sleep in the New Academy to-night, and direct Mrs. Kibbly to supply them with what they will require? I am afraid most of their things have been destroyed in the burning of the dormitory."

"Certainly, sir."

And Mr. Quetch left the study. The Remove soon learned of the new arrangements, and they received the news in surprise, at first, and then with something of hilarity.

"Hullo, hullo, hullo, here's fun!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, when Mr. Quetch was gone. "You remember the lively times when the aliens were at Greyfriars, you chaps. There were rags galore."

"The ragfulness was terrific!"

"One good turn deserves another, and now we're going to invade their quarters. We'll be established there before they come back for the soy term."

"Looks like ructions to me," grinned Nugent. "And to me, my son. We'll be in possession, and I think we shall give the aliens a high old time when they arrive."

And the Remove, always ready for a rag, grinned over the prospect.

After supper Herr Rosenblum looked into Greyfriars to burl his new look across the Close to the New Academy. The snow was falling in light flakes, and the boys put their hats and coats on. Each fellow carried a bag containing the things he needed for the night. Mr. Quetch watched them start, with a somewhat anxious face.

"Of course, you will do your best to keep up the reputation of your Form for—er—orderly conduct and good behaviour," he remarked.

"Yes, sir," said Bob Cherry. "We shan't allow aliens to come any nonsense over us, sir."

"I did not mean that," said Mr. Quetch. "I meant—well, never mind. Good-night, boys!"

"Good-night, sir!"

And the Remove marched off.

Across the Close and through the ancient old Cloisters went the Removites. Then through the iron gateway into the newly laid out grounds of the New Academy. The huge square red-brick building, which offered so startling a contrast to Greyfriars, loomed before them.

The New Academy was quite a modern building, and perhaps had a beauty of its own; but to the eyes accustomed to the grey old stones of the ancient Greyfriars, it appeared as an ugly red-brick monstrosity. Yet when the boys were inside, they realised that modern buildings had some advantages, whatever they lacked in appearance.

The passages were all wide and airy, and led somewhere. In Greyfriars, passages frequently led to nowhere, and odd little rooms were poked away in corners where a stranger would never have expected their existence. The arrangements in case of fire were perfect, and the whole building could have been flooded from the top in five minutes. A steady fire would have no chance of spreading.

Yet, in Wharton's eyes, at least, the conveniences did not compensate for the oppressive nearness. But he wouldn't have betrayed his opinion for worlds. Herr Rosenblum had gone over and over the plans of the academy before,

and while it was being built, and the finished edifice was the pride of his heart.

His face beamed as he ushered in the Remove. The place was strangely silent without the usual occupants. The foreign lads who tenanted the New Academy were a noisy crowd, and excited voices could always be heard jabbering away in French or German somewhere about the place, in term time. But now the school had the stillness of the tomb.

"Ach, mein peys!" said Herr Rosenblum. "Das seem like older times, ain't it? I teach you Sherman vunce, at Greyfriars, now I welcome you as guests in mein school. Tat is a change, before. You fellows me up to te dormitory."

And the fat little German led the way.

The stairs were very broad, and edged with leams, upon which the shoes of the Removites clanked and rang.

Herr Rosenblum switched on electric lights as he went, and the progress of the juniors was through a continual blaze of illumination, which contrasted strangely with the dusky shadows of the old passages at Greyfriars.

There were two dormitories in the New Academy—a small one occupied by the senior boys, who were few in number, and a large one in which the younger lads had their quarters. This was divided in the middle by a rail, and on one side were the German beds, on the other side the French. The dormitory was very large, and very bright and clean.

"Ach, and tat is your quarters before," said Herr Rosenblum, beaming. "I tink tat you goes to ped mit yourselves, and tat I comes and put te light out—after, ain't it?"

"Yes, sir."

And the boys left the juniors to themselves.

"Nice quarters," said Bob Cherry, looking round. "Clean as a new pin. And the beds look comfy."

"Jolly quiet here," said Handkens.

"There will be row enough when the aliens come back."

"Ha, ha! Yes."

And the juniors of the Greyfriars Remove, being pretty thoroughly tired out with the events of the first day of term, turned in, and were soon asleep in their new quarters.

Welcoming the Aliens!

IN the winter sunshine the next morning the gutted portion of Greyfriars looked dismal enough. The last trace of smoke had died away, and the charred ruins were covered with a light coating of snow. It was possible to trace where the rooms had been by the remains of the strong stone walls; but with the exception of the solid stone, nothing was left.

Study No. 1, in which the chums of the Remove had spent so many jolly times, was gone—gone for ever!

The Remove dormitory, the scene of many a rest and pillow fight, had disappeared.

The juniors looked at the ruins with grim faces.

"It's rotten," said Bob Cherry.

"Really," agreed Harry Wharton. "It won't take them long to rebuild the place, I suppose, but it won't be the same."

"And there's all our property destroyed, too. My books—"

"And my bat—my football boots—our clothes."

"My camera!" growled Bulstrade.

"The place was insured," said Hazeldens. "I suppose the things will be paid for. But it will be rather rotten having to hang about in the class-rooms till the studios are rebuilt. It's all very well for the Third to do their prep in a Form-room. It's a comedown for the Remove."

"I say, you fellows, where are we to have any leads, now that the studios are burnt down?"

"Oh, hang you and your leads, Bunter! It was your fault the place was burnt!"

"Oh, really, Hazeldens—"

"If it hadn't been for your uncharitably appetite—"

"It was really Wharton's fault. I was cooking the food for Wharton. Of course, if there's any inquiry, I shall expect Wharton to own up."

"Well, my hat!" said Harry. "I must say I like that!"

The boys went into breakfast. Before morning chapel, it became clear that there would be an inquiry into the cause of the conflagration. Billy Hunter was called into the Head's study. That Bunter had started the fire was generally known, and so Dr. Locke had decided to question him. The Head looked at him with a searching glance.

"There appears to be an impression, Bunter, that you were the cause of the fire in the Remove passage," he said. "Will you explain how it came about?"

"I don't want to give anybody away, sir."

"Nonsense! If you did not start the fire, and you know who did, you ought to tell me at once, and I command you to do so," said the Head sternly.

Bunter shifted uneasily on his feet.

"Well, sir, Wharton would be waxy, and—"

"Do you mean that Wharton was the cause of the outbreak?"

"I'd rather not say anything, sir. It amounts to sneaking. Of course, it was Wharton's idea to have the feed, and the fire was banked up for the cooking. Then the chimney caught. I don't blame Wharton; he couldn't foresee that the chimney would catch alight, sir. I think it has wanted sweeping for some time."

"You may go, Bunter. Send Wharton to me."

"Thank you, sir," said Bunter, in great relief.

"I hope you won't let Wharton think I've been sneaking about him, sir. He couldn't help it—"

"You may go."

Bunter went, and Harry Wharton presented himself a couple of minutes later. He did not quite know what the Head wanted, but he was afraid he was to receive praise for the rescue of Miss Molly the previous evening, and so he was feeling a little awkward as he came in.

"Wharton, I cannot understand from Bunter how the fire originated. He appears to think that you were the cause of it."

Wharton could not help smiling.

"We were going to have a feed in Study No. 1, and Bunter banked up the fire a little too high. The chimney caught."

"Was that all?"

"Well, I think he upset a frying pan of grease."

"Then why does he assume that it was all your fault?"

"I was partly standing the feed, and so I worked it out that I was at the bottom of it. But, of course, sir, we were all in it. Bunter happened to be doing the cooking, but any one of us might have been doing it, and we're equally responsible all round."

"I don't think it probable that anyone but Bunter would have been so careless. I shall have

to consider what to do in the matter. But for what has happened last night I should certainly forbid all occupants of Study No. 1 the use of a study again."

Wharton coloured and remained silent.

"You certainly ought to have exercised a sharper supervision over a foolish boy like Bunter; but you saved my child's life at the risk of your own, and so it is impossible for me to say anything further on the matter. But while you are here, Wharton, I wish to thank you for what you did," said the Head earnestly. "I had no time to speak as I felt yesterday. You did a thing that has few parallels in heroism, and I am proud of having such a boy in my school. Your name will be put down on the Greyfriars roll."

"Thank you, sir!"

And the Head shook hands with the junior as he dismissed him. Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Harrow Singh were waiting for Wharton anxiously in the passage.

"Well," said Nugent, "are we to have a study again?"

"Yes, I think so. He's letting us off because I fetched Molly out of the fire."

"Lucky for us, then," said Bob Cherry. "I heard from Mrs. Keeble that Molly is to stay in bed for a few days—shock to the system—otherwise she's all right."

"Good!"

School was rather slack that morning. The excitement of the fire was so recent, and the Remove, too, had lost many of their books.

But Mr. Quelch was very lenient. He had noticed the traces of burns on Harry's skin, and had offered the captain of the Remove remission of morning lessons; but Harry cheerily replied that he was all right, and went in with the rest.

The Remove-room had been flooded by the Friarlane fire brigade, and there were thick traces of smoke on the ceiling, and of damp on the desks

(Continued on next page.)

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and floor. Many of the desks had been flooded, and books and papers were stuck together.

After lessons the juniors trooped out into the open to look for the aliens.

The foreign youths were expected to arrive at the New Academy about the middle of the day, and the Removites were anxious to greet them.

The snow was thick on the ground, so, as Bob Cherry remarked, there were plenty of means of giving the aliens a hearty and seasonable welcome.

It was about two o'clock when the aliens came in sight, marching up the road from Friardale.

Almost opposite the gates of Greyfriars the path branched off the road, where the aliens had to turn along the river-bank to get to the front entrance of the New Academy.

At the turning Harry Wharton & Co. had spent the last half-hour constructing a barricade of snow, stretching across the lane from side to side.

The aliens came in sight, saw the barricade, and stopped in amazement. The Removites crouched on the inner side of it, and the aliens, from the high road, could not see anything of them so far.

"That is funny mit itself," said Fritz Hoffman.

"I tink tat te way is ploeked."

"I zink zat is correct," assented Adolphe

Monnier.

"I tink it is te wock of te Engleesh pounders."

"I tink so."

"Tey tink tey make us go round. I tink tat ve

climbs ofer," said Limburger.

"Ach! Follow me! Ve soon gets ofer."

And the aliens marched up to the barricade to clamber over it. All was silent; not a sound hinted at the fact that the Greyfriars juniors were in ambush behind the snow barricade.

"My hat!" murmured Nugent. "They're coming!"

"Snowballs ready!" muttered Harry Wharton.

"What-ho!"

The crowd of Removites clatched their snowballs and waited.

The aliens came up to the barricade, and Fritz Hoffman, catching sight of the crouching juniors, gave a yell of alarm.

"Look out mit yourself!"

"Ciel! Zey are here!"

"Give 'em socks!" shouted Harry Wharton.

Up rose the Removites, snowballs in hand, and a blinding volley swept upon the aliens, smashing on them right and left.

Back staggered Hoffman, Monnier & Co., with wild shrieks and yells.

"Ach! Te pounders!"

"Mon Dieu! Ze boasts!"

"Give 'em socks!"

There were heaps of snowballs ready, and the Removites did not want for ammunition. Showers of snowballs poured upon the aliens, and they were fairly driven away from the road by the swift volleys.

Bob Cherry jumped on top of the snow barrier and waved his cap.

"Hurrah! Locked! Ow-wow!"

The snow was hardly substantial enough to stand his weight. Bob's feet plunged into it, and he sank up to his armpits.

"Ow! Help me out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You grinning duffers! Help a chap out, can't you?"

And the laughing juniors dragged him out. The aliens did not return. They had had enough, and they went round the longer way to reach the

New Academy. It was the first row of the term, and the Removites had had the best of it.

Unable to Agree!

"**C**HEIL! Vat you zink?"

"I tink tat ve goes for te Greyfriars pounders at te soonest possible time," said Fritz Hoffman, as Adolphe Monnier burst into the Common-room of the New Academy with that excited question. "I tink tat ve lik dem hollow, ain't it?"

"I mean, zere is great news!"

"I have not hear him pedore."

"Ze Engleesh rotaires are coming!" said Adolphe Monnier excitedly. "Zey are coming here!"

"Himmel! You say tey come here!"

"I explain. I have just hear ze news. Zere was a great fire at Greyfriars yesterday, and last night ze Removs sleep in our dormitory here."

"Vas dat so?"

"Zat is correct. Zey sleep here, and six night zey come again."

"Py Chove!" said Hoffman. "Tat is great news. Va shows dem te hospitality of te place mit ourselves. Va puts dem trough it, after."

"I tink zat ve call upon te be polite, and show ze Engleesh rotaires how te behave vis ourselves."

"Ach, ja, if tey keep teir place!"

"Zat is correct—if zey keep zeur place. If zey not keep zeur place—"

"Va shelly soon puts dem into it!"

"Zat is vat I zink."

And the aliens were soon excitedly discussing the matter. It was the evening of the first day of the term at the New Academy.

The idea of having the Removs lodging in their dormitory was an exciting one to the foreign youths. They were torn between two feelings—the desire to be overpoweringly polite, and thus show the Greyfriars fellows that chaps from the Continent knew how to behave, and the still stronger desire to take advantage of the peculiar circumstances to avenge their defeat of the mid-day.

And they talked it over with an endless flow of French and German and broken English that would have put the Tower of Babel to the blush. They came to the decision that if the Removites kept their place, they should be treated with great politeness and hospitality. But the question was, what was their place, and how were they to be kept in it!

"Zey must treat us vis great respect," said Monnier.

"I tink tat tey should take off teir hats and bow ferry humbly when tey come in," suggested Hoffman.

"Zat is correct."

"Perhaps it better if ve goes ofer to explain to dem."

"Good! Come vis me."

And Hoffman and Monnier promptly crossed the Cloisters and the Close, and entered Greyfriars, and presented themselves at the door of the Common-room.

The room was unusually crowded, and the juniors were not pleased. They missed their studies. Small enough had been the rooms, but they had been cosy, and they had been their own. Fellows were masters of all they surveyed within the narrow domain of their own studies. In the Common-room it was different.

Wan Lung and Hurree Singh were playing chess amid a babel of tongues. Several members of the operatic society were practising a new part song, and their dismal attempts to keep in time and tune simply exasperated other fellows, who yelled at them all kinds of threats across the room.

Then Ogilby was going over a Highland dialect song, and Elliott was trying to get the bottom notes in the King's song, from "Lohengrin," with the aid of a tuning-fork. Altogether, the room was not the place for a nerve rest.

Hoffman and Meunier looked in, and the Remove greeted them with a yell. They thought it was a raid at first, and they welcomed it. They were in the humor for a row.

"Here are the aliens!"

"Cluck 'em out!"

Hoffman and Meunier advanced into the room holding up their hands in sign of amity. Wharton pushed back two or three excited Removites who were rushing forward to commence the "clucking out" process.

"Hold on! Give 'em a chance! What do you want, Hoffy?"

"Ve comes to speak mit you. You comes to sleep mit us in te dormitory in te New Academy to-night; after."

"Zat is correct, I think!"

"Right-oh!" said Wharton. "Sorry if it puts you out, but I don't see how it can be helped. We've had a fire, you know."

"Ve welcomes you—"

"Zat is correct."

"On condition tat you keeps your place."

"Exactly!"

"But how can we keep our place when we're coming into your place?" asked Bob Cherry innocently.

"You do not understand. You adopt te humble and meek manner, like boys who visit their superiors."

"And can ve welcomes you via te open arm."

"You takes off your hats and poses humbly."

"And can you asks politely te be allowed te stay in te dormitory via te young gentlemen of te New Academy?"

"And don you apologise for te rough way you smother us."

"And ve forgives you and welcomes you."

"Otherwise, ve makes you sit up."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Any more conditions?" he asked.

"If ve sink of any more, ve tells you."

"H'm! We're not going to apologise, we're not going to be humble and meek, and we're not going to eat humble pie in any way at all. We'll let you sleep in the same dormitory—"

"Yet!" shrieked Meunier. "It's our dormitory!"

"Well, we'll let you sleep in it," said Harry, "so long as you don't make a row, of course. We can't have a lot of jabbering in French and German going on when we're trying to go to sleep."

Hoffman and Meunier stared at him with feelings too deep for words.

They had been prepared to welcome the Removites in a lofty and patronising way, providing that the Removite also a sufficient quantity of humble pie, so to speak. To have the Removites saying what they would do and what they wouldn't do in their new quarters, was a decided shock to the owners of those quarters.

The expressions on their faces made the Removites roar.

"That's how it is," went on Wharton imperiously. "If you chaps keep quiet, and behave yourselves, we've no objection to your sleeping in the same dorm."—

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Mein himmel!" murmured Fritz Hoffman dazedly. "Ve have no objection to our sleeping in our own dormitory if tat ve do not make a noise!"

"Ceil! Ze sheek—ze fearful sheek!"

"That's all at present," said Harry. "If there's any other rule we want you to observe, we'll let you know later on."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two aliens gesticulated wildly.

"Engleesh Duffair! Bostair! Feeg! Ve teaches you!"

"Himmel! Ve gives you vun lesson!"

And the two excited aliens darted off to inform their comrades of the spirit in which the Removite were accepting the hospitality of the New Academy.

The Remove Hits Out!

THE Removite were feeling somewhat excited when bed-time came, and they prepared to march across the Close to the New Academy. Herr Rosenblum did not come for them this



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time, but Mr. Quelch saw them as far as the door of the new school. He did not mean them to have any skylarking on the way. Having watched them enter the academy, the Remove master returned, satisfied that he had done all he could, and content to leave the rest to the academy masters.

The Remove adopted their meekest manners as they passed the inspection of Herr Rosenblum, and the German headmaster grinned at them amiably as they went up the broad staircase.

"Good-night, boys!" he said. "I hope you had comfortable night."

"Thank you, sir! Good-night, sir!"

"Mein boys are already gone up before. I comes up te turn out lights in a quarter of an hour."

The Remove marched upstairs, and went along the wide passage upon which the dormitories opened.

"Here you are!" exclaimed Hasselberg, opening the door of the dormitory they had occupied the previous night.

He stepped in, and the next moment started back with a yell.

The door had been a couple of inches ajar—just ajar enough for a tin can to rest on the top, ready for the first corner.

The can was open at the top, and it was crammed with cayenne pepper.

Herr Rosen gave a wild yell as the stinging cloud settled about his head, and his yell trailed off into a furious scream.

"Ow!" yelled Bob Cherry, who was just behind him. "Oh lor'!"

"Help!"

"My hat!"

"At-choo-choo-choo!"

"G-r-r-r!"

A yell of laughter greeted the sneezers. The aliens fairly danced with joy. They had laid that booby-trap for the Removites in great hopes, and their hopes had been fully realized.

The Removite crowded in, sneezing and coughing and weeping, and the aliens roared with laughter.

"Tat vas funny before, ain't it!"

"I sink I never stop falling! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotters!" roared Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites were greatly inclined to go for the aliens on the spot. But Herr Rosenblaum was soon coming up to see lights out, and they didn't want the kindly German master to find a free fight raging.

So they bore it, though they could not grin, and, sneezing frantically, they proceeded to undress.

The foreign juniors shrieked over the joke till some of them seemed in danger of going into fits.

When the laughter died down, someone would begin cackling again, and that would start the rest.

"Blessed if it ain't like being in a farmyard!" granted Elliott. "Cackle, cackle, cackle! Yah!"

"Sing to them!" said Bob Cherry. "Sing them the King's song from 'Lohengrin,' old chap, and serve 'em right!"

"Better than the way you could sing it, anyhow!" growled Elliott.

Billy Bunter was the first to be undressed, and he plunged his little fat legs into bed, and then drew them out again, with a shriek.

"Oh, that up!" growled Bob Cherry. "You're always making a row!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"What's the matter?"

"There's something in my bed! Ow! It stings! Ow! They've been putting something prickly in my bed!"

The aliens shrieked again. Wharton flung back the bedclothes and revealed a heap of thistles. All the beds had been served alike, but Bunter's discovery had saved the others from an unpleasant experience.

Hoffman was doubled up with laughter, yelling with all the force of his lungs. Bunter turned a wrathful blink on him. He seized a sponge from a washstand, dipped it in the jug, and hurled it at the German junior.

Hoffman was clad in pyjamas, and the sponge landed on the back of his neck. The icy water ran down his back, and he gave a fiendish roar.

"Aeh! Vat is tat? I am yet before!"

"Wet behind, you mean!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I caught him a treat, didn't I?" said Bunter, much pleased. "I—Oh! Ow! What's up? Drag him off!"

Hoffman had rushed at Bunter and bumped him *Tux Gex Luvvay*.—No 1,570.

over his bed in a moment. Bunter's fat limbs came down on the thistles, and he wriggled.

"Help! Fire! Drag him off!"

"Oh, man!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, perpetrating a shocking pun as he seized Fritz Hoffman by the hair and yanked him off. "He 'offman!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hoffman caught hold of Bob, and Bob grasped the German junior, and they rolled on the floor. There was a sudden yell from Russell:

"Care!"

The footsteps of Herr Rosenblaum were heard on the stairs.

In a moment the combatants separated, and the juniors made a rush for bed. Dressed and undressed alike tumbled in, and all was peace as the German master opened the door of the dormitory.

Herr Rosenblaum looked up and down the dormitory, with a smile of satisfaction.

"Tat you vas all in bed, ain't it?" he remarked.

"I links tat you sleep peacefully mit friendly feelings, and 'all vas calm and bright,' as to English poet says. Good-night, mein pops!"

"Good-night, sir!"

The stout German gave another contented glance up and down the dormitory, and then went out and closed the door. The click of the electric switch in the passage outside followed, and the dormitory was plunged into darkness.

Herr Rosenblaum's footsteps died away down the passage, and then most of the boys sat up in bed.

"If you want to finish that little scrap, Hoffy, you've only got to say so!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"I links tat I links you!"

"I sink zat ve goes for zem!"

"Hats to you, Froggy!"

"I sink zat I vipes out zat insult in ze gore!"

"More rats!"

There was a sound of scrambling out of bed. Removites and aliens turned out in force. They were not sleepy yet. They were excited, and ready for a row. And each side, too, suspected the other of intending to play some trick under cover of darkness, and thought the matter might as well be settled on the spot.

Hoffman and Meunier got out of their beds, and both had the same idea of getting hold of Bob Cherry and starting with him. They reached Bob's bed at the same time, and each grasped a form in the darkness. It was impossible to see clearly, and Hoffman did not know that he had hold of Meunier, and Meunier did not know that he had grasped Hoffman.

And the two aliens, grasping each other fiercely, rolled on the floor in deadly combat. Bob Cherry heard their gasping breath, and, guessing what had happened, remained quite quiet, save for a subdued chuckle.

Hoffman and Meunier rolled on the floor and bumped against the washstand, and brought down a clatter of crockery upon themselves, and bumped against the legs of the bed and yelled, and punched each other furiously.

"Aeh! I links you, I link!"

"Aeh! Is zat you, Hoffman?"

"Himmel! Is tat you, Meunier?"

"I links zat you vas Sherry!"

"I links tat you vas Sherry also!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Mein goodness!" Hoffman released Meunier and sprang up. "You silly French pounder! Why for you gets in to say!"

"Why you gets in ze way, you Sherman fisthead!"

"Ach! I sink——"

"I sink——"

"Go for 'dem!" shouted Limburger. "Go for 'em, boys!"

"Zut is correct! Go for 'em!"

And Hoffman and Meunier, leaving off their quarrel in the middle, made a dive for Bob Cherry's bed. But Bob was out of it, and he was grasping the sponge on his wasteband. He caught a glimpse of dim figures, and squeezed the sponge with a sweep through the air.

Hoffman and Meunier yelled as they were drenched with icy drops.

"Up with you, you chaps!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Pillows and bolsters!"

"Buck up, Remore!"

Harry Wharton grasped his way to the door, opened it, and felt outside for the switch of the electric light.

He found it in a moment, pressed it, and the light flooded the long dormitory with a sudden glare.

The juniors blinked in the electric light, and Wharton closed the door again quickly. He seized his pillow, and the others soon followed his example. In the glare of the electric light the juniors could see what they were doing. The aliens cornered the English lads, but the latter did not shrink for a moment from the fight.

Hoffman and Meunier had made plans to unite their forces against the Remore, and French, Germans, and Belgians combined to attack the invaders of the alien dormitory.

The Removites were ready for them. In a compact mass they met their foes, and the rushes of the aliens broke on them like water breaking on stubborn rocks.

Pillows and bolsters make effective weapons at close quarters, and the Grayfriars boys made active play with their weapons, and they knocked the aliens right and left.

The yells and shrieks that arose from the foreign youths were deafening, and it seemed certain that in spite of the thickness of the walls the din must be heard in the lower quarters.

But the boys, Removites and aliens alike, were too excited to think about that.

From the first the aliens had the worst of it. They were knocked to and fro, and all the time there were at least half their number on the floor.

As fast as the fallen ones sprung up, others were swept over to take their places, and they sprayed and yelled, while the Removites went on sweeping, with yells of laughter.

"Turn 'em out!" shouted Bob Cherry. "We're not going to have a crew of cheap aliens in our dormitory!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Kick 'em out!"

"Hurrah!"

"Giel! Stand firm, my shuns!"

"Zat you fight like anything, ain't it?"

"Hurrah! Down with the aliens!"

The Remore made a furious rush, sweeping right and left, and the foreign youths were driven pell-mell to the door.

They were jammed against the door, and in a disordered crowd, they strove to resist the attack of the Grayfriars Remore. But they were in vain. The Famous Four swept a way through them and dragged the door open. Then, with an irresistible attack, the Removites sent the aliens surging through.

In the doorway the French and Germans stood as long as they could, resisting heroically; but it was of no avail.

One by one they were hurled through, till the last alien had been flung into the cool air.

Then the Removites seized the door and jammed it shut, in spite of the resistance of the foreign youths outside.

Meunier thumped on the door from outside. The aliens were filling the corridors with shrieks and yells.

"Zat you open 'e door!" shrieked Meunier through the keyhole.

"Go and eat coke!" retorted Harry Wharton. "You can come in when you're willing to admit yourselves licked and eat humble pie."

"Zat will never be!"

"Then you can sleep in the passage!"

"Giel! Open 'e door!"

"Rats!"

Thump, thump, thump!

The thumping and yelling suddenly died away in the passage. There came an imperative knock on the door.

"Zat you opens 'e door!"

"Rats!" retorted Bob Cherry. "We're not going to open it for any giddy German that ever germied!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on!" gasped Harry Wharton. "I believe that's Herr Rosenblaum's voice."

"Great pip! I thought it was Holly or Limburger."

"Zat you open!" roared the voice again, and this time it was unmistakably that of Herr Rosenblaum. "I tells you zat you open 'e door 'edore!"

Harry dragged the door open.

Herr Rosenblaum stood there majestically, in the midst of a scared crowd of aliens—quiet

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enough now. He looked at the Removites, who immediately assumed expressions of conviction that somewhat softened the German headmaster.

"I think it is you makes you run, sir," he said. "I think that you perhaps yearning mit a treadful nose, sir?"

"We're not, sir," said Harry penitently. "We—we were a little bit excited."

"I think that I offer to gift you shelter for ten nights, but I not have my school turn into a bear-garden, ain't it? I think I sends a master to sleep in here and keep you boys in order after."

"It's all right, sir. We were only having a little fun."

"Ack! I think that it was a lumber-room."

"We won't make any more row, sir," said Harry Wharton.

The German looked at him.

"I takes your word, Wharton. You promise me that here be no more row, and I not punished any of my boys. I think that you have a great temptation to make a row."

"We promise, sir."

"Good! Mein boys, you promise also?"

"Oui, oui, monsieur!" chorused the French boys; while the Germans chimed in with "Ja, ja, mein herr!"

"Ferry good!" said the placable German. "I trusts you after. Go to bed."

The aliens crowded into the dormitory. The word of honour they had given was enough for the boys, and there was no more rowing.

But that was the last night the Remove spent in the New Academy. Herr Rosenblum had been very patient, but Dr. Locke would not try his patience any longer.

Other arrangements were made for the Remove the next day, and they bade farewell to their quarters in the foreign academy—though, as far as their old quarters were concerned, they were still burnt out.

(Remember us they are, Harry Wharton & Co. are certainly having a lively time. They're still going strong to meet such a great pun, when they find themselves up against a building new-comer. Look out for "BULLY AND DANDY!")

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TOM MERRY EXPELLED!

(Continued from page 27.)

"Dear me!" said Miss Priscilla. "Then the Head has decided, after all, not to give you that extra holiday, Tommy! I am sorry. But really, my dear, you are looking very well—much better than when I met you in the lane. Well, if you must go, good-bye, my darling Tommy, and mind—mind, my dear, you do not get your feet wet!"

And Tom Merry and Bernard Glyn started for St. Jim's in great spirits.

At the gates of the school a cheering crowd met them, and Tom Merry, hoisted on the shoulders of his chums, was borne in triumph across the quadrangle to the School House.

Mr. Ralston met him there, and he held out his hand.

"I am sorry, Merry," he said quietly. "I am sure you believe that I intended to be quite just, but I was deceived."

"It's all right, sir," said Tom Merry brightly, as he shook hands with the Housemaster. "But, if you please, sir, if I might ask a favour—"

"You may ask anything you like, my boy."

"I'd like to ask you not to be hard on Trimble. He didn't understand the harm he was doing!"

Mr. Ralston smiled.

"It is very generous of you to think of him, my boy. Trimble has been severely cared, but the matter ends there. No suspicion of theft attaches to him, but I think he will reflect before he reaches property again that is not his own."

There was a merry celebration in Tom Merry's study shortly afterwards.

The clouds had rolled by, and all Tom Merry's friends—and their name was legion—gathered to do him honour.

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