

FOOTBALLS FOR 303 READERS! (See page 35.)

The **GEM**

2^D

**SO NEAR AND
YET SO FAR!**

An Amusing Scene from
the Gripping Long
St. Jim's Story Inside.



WINNERS WANTED THIS WEEK FOR 250 FREE FOOTBALLS

Send November "Footer-Stamps" Claims Now!

STOP! This is the end of the November "Footer-Stamps" Competition, and 250 Free Footballs are waiting to be given away to the readers who have not already won a football and who score the most "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" in the fourth month's competition.

First of all there are ten more stamps here, depicting six different actions on the football field. Cut them out at once, as there's another complete "goal" among them, and the odd stamps will, no doubt, fit in with others you may have left over from previous weeks (or even previous contests).

TO SCORE A "GOAL," remember, you must collect a complete set of six stamps (numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.** (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does not count as a "goal"; you must get a set of the stamps, 1 to 6, each time.)

If you want to score still more "goals" to swell your total, remember that "Footer-Stamps" also appear in other grand papers like **MODERN BOY** and **MAGNET.**

Now, when you have scored as many complete "goals" as possible with the stamps you have collected, write your total ("goals," NOT separate stamps) in the space provided on the coupon below.

Add your name and address to the coupon also, then cut it out whole and attach your sets of goal-scoring stamps only to it. Post in a properly stamped envelope to:

GEM "Footer-Stamps" (November), 1, Tallis House, London, E.C.4 (Comp.),

so as to reach there not later than **THURSDAY, December 1st, 1938,** the closing date.

OVERSEAS READERS—you are in this scheme also, and special prizes in cash are to be awarded for the best scores from readers outside the British Isles. In your case, send in 2s directed above, but note that the closing date is extended to **WEDNESDAY, March 1st, 1939.**

RULES: 250 Footballs will be awarded in the November contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties, and no reader may win more than one prize in "Footer-Stamps."

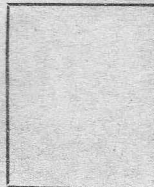
Each goal must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive. All claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (given this week). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated, or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout. (N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: *Modern Boy, Magnet, Boy's Cinema, Sports Budget, Detective Weekly, Thriller, Wild West Weekly, Champion, and Triumph.*)

**TEN MORE
"FOOTER-
STAMPS"
FOR
YOUR PILE!**



●●●●●●●● The "Gem" ●●●●●●●●
●●●●●●●● "FOOTER - STAMPS" (Nov.) ●●●●●●●●

Write in bold figures the number of "goals" you have scored with "Footer - Stamps" and attach your sets of goal-scoring stamps to this coupon.



I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

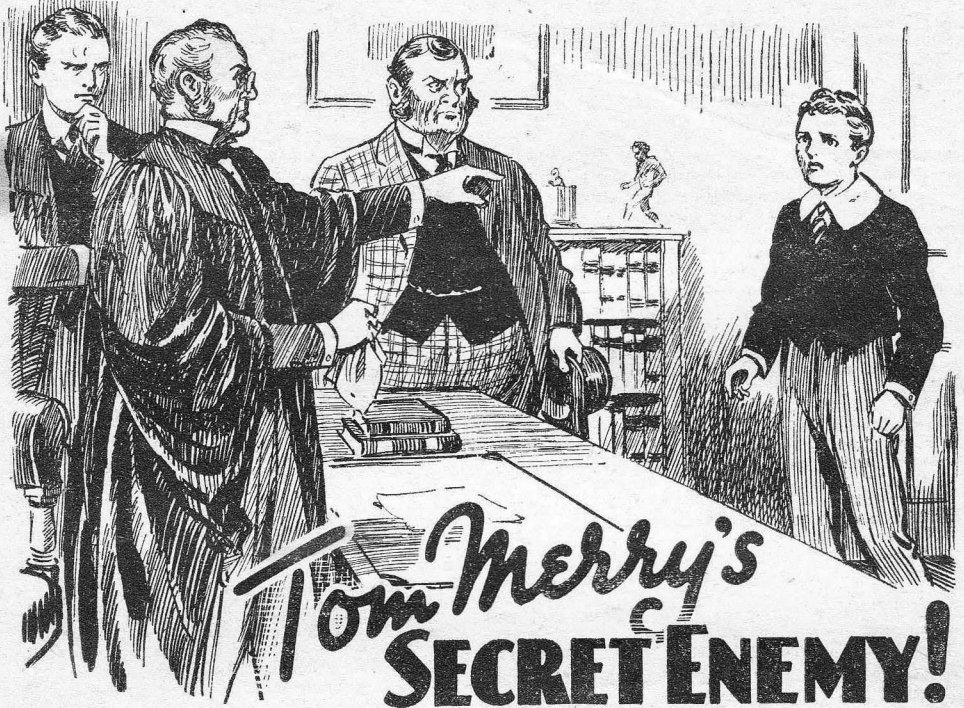
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Address.....

N.B.—No responsibility taken for incorrect totals.



Only One Thing Can Save Tom Merry From Being Punished For An Outrage Of Which He Is Innocent—The Culprit's Confession! But Who Is The Culprit? Where Is He?



"You may safely leave the matter in my hands, Mr. Grubb," said the Head. "Merry will be flogged to-morrow morning in the presence of the whole school."

CHAPTER 1.

Contributions Wanted!

TOM MERRY put his cheerful face into the doorway of Study No. 6 in the Fourth.

"Gussy here?"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the captain of the Shell.

"Good!" said Tom. "Have you written any articles for the 'Weekly' lately?"

"Yaas!"

"Several, I hope?"

Arthur Augustus nodded, looking rather flattered. It was but seldom that the chief editor of "Tom Merry's Weekly" showed such a keen interest in his contributions. As a rule, the editorial comments were not flattering. Gussy was often called upon to cut his articles down by half, and then sometimes the chief editor cut them down by another half, with the result that they disappeared altogether.

"Good long ones, I hope?" said Tom.

"Yaas, wathah! Several of them are wathah long," said Arthur Augustus, looking both surprised and pleased. "I twust you have plenty of space, Tom Mewwy?"

"Heaps!" said Tom.

Blake and Herries and Digby, the great Gussy's studymates in Study No. 6, had listened to the dialogue in amazement. Blake interrupted it at this point.

"Look here, what are you driving at, you Shell bouncer?" he demanded. "You told me there wasn't room for my serial in the 'Weekly.'"

"Quite so," agreed Tom Merry.

"And you're leaving out my article on dog feeding!" said Herries warmly.

"Can't be helped!"

"But you said you've got plenty of room for a heap of Gussy's piffle!" exclaimed Blake.

"That's a different matter."

"Why, you ass——"

"Weally, Blake," said Arthur Augustus rather

Why does Tom Merry suddenly begin to receive mysterious, blackmailing letters from someone unknown? Tom is far from guessing that he is the victim of treachery!

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD

reprovingly. "Tom Mewwy is quite wight. It is a weally good ideah to fill the papah with the vevy best stuff obtainable—"

"Fathead!"

"I wefuse 'to be called a fathead, Blake! Wely on me to woll up with my contwibutions, Tom Mewwy."

"Right you are!" said Tom. "Bring them along to my study, Gussy!"

"You're going to jam all that rot into the 'Weekly'?" roared Blake.

Tom Merry looked surprised.

"Eh? Who's talking about the 'Weekly'?" he inquired. "I was referring to the bags."

"Bags!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Of course. It's a paper-chase to-morrow afternoon—"

"A—a—a papah-chase—"

"Exactly; and we've got to get two bags of scent. So roll up with your articles—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake and Herries and Dig.

"And when you've brought them to my study, Gussy, you can sit down and help to tear them up."

Arthur Augustus' face was a study.

"You howlin' ass, I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort!" he shouted. "I was undah the impwession that you wequiahed them for the 'Weekly.'"

"What could have put that idea into your head?" asked Tom Merry, in wonder.

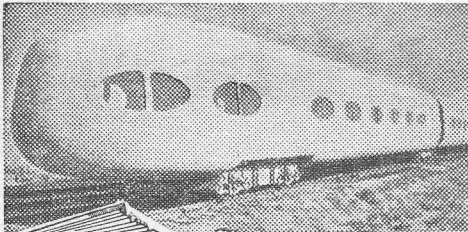
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatevah to cackle at, Blake! I weward Tom Mewwy as a howlin' ass! I considah—"

"Bring 'em to my study," said Tom, and he disappeared with a chuckle.

"I wefuse to bwing them, Tom Mewwy!"

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shouted Arthur Augustus. "I distinctly wefuse to do anythin' of the sort!"

But Tom Merry was gone.

The captain of the Shell looked into Study No. 5 next.

"Scent wanted for the paper-chase to-morrow, Julian."

"Right-ho!" said Julian.

"I understand you've been doing a poem for the 'Weekly,' Reilly, about banshees or something?"

"Faith, and I have," said Reilly. "Kerruish said there wouldn't be room for it."

"Lots of room," said Tom. "All's grist that comes to the mill when we want scent for a paper-chase. Bring your poem along. Tear it up first!"

"Ye howlin' omadhau!" roared Reilly.

Tom Merry chuckled and went on.

A quarter of an hour later there was a numerous party gathered in Tom Merry's study, tearing up paper for "scent." Study No. 6 had come along—though without Gussy's contributions for the "Weekly." Argument was wasted on Gussy; he distinctly refused to devote his brilliant literary efforts to the purposes of a paper-chase.

Figgins & Co. arrived from the New House with a bundle of old newspapers. Levison, Clive, and Cardew came along from Study No. 9 with a collection of old impots rescued from the waste-paper-baskets. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther had a good supply of rejected contributions which certain ambitious authors were hoping to see in the columns of the "Weekly." The Terrible Three agreed that the manuscripts could not be devoted to a better purpose.

"Who's going to be hare?" asked Cardew of the Fourth, as he ripped up the old newspapers industriously. "I shouldn't mind, if you like."

Tom Merry smiled. Cardew was quite a new fellow, and the junior captain did not know whether he could run or not. In any case, he was not likely to pick out a "new kid" for the distinguished post.

"Bow-wow!" said Figgins. "Better select a couple of New House chaps, Tommy. You see, we want it to be a good run."

"One each," said Tom, laughing. "You, Figgy—"

"Oh, good!"

"And Blake."

"Couldn't be better," agreed Jack Blake heartily.

"Blake and Figgins will give us a good run," remarked Levison. "It's a good idea, too; it will get us into form for the Rookwood match on Saturday. Where is it going to be?"

"Along the river to the wood, round by the old castle, then across the fields to Wayland Moor, and back by Rylcombe," said Tom Merry. "That's a good run. There will be a good many lame ducks at the finish, I expect."

"Pwobably the hares will be caught before the run has gone vevy far, Tom Mewwy," remarked Arthur Augustus thoughtfully.

"Probably you're a silly ass!" snapped Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Well, there's the bags," said Tom Merry. "Full up, thank goodness! I could still squeeze in your 'Weekly' articles, Gussy—"

"Wats!"

"Pity to waste them," urged Monty Lowther.

"As a mattah of fact, howevah, Lowthah, it would be a vevy good ideah to cut up your comic column, instead of puttin' it in the 'Weekly,'"

said Arthur Augustus. "Then the hares could wewfesh themselves with chestnuts on the wood!"

And with that Parthian shot Arthur Augustus retired in triumph from the study.

CHAPTER 2.

Hare and Hounds!

"RIPPING weather!" said Levison.

"Yaas, wathah! 'Toppin'!"

It was a keen, bright, frosty afternoon—ideal weather for a run across country.

The juniors of St. Jim's turned out in great force in the quadrangle for the run.

Quite a hundred fellows were going to start at least, though it was pretty certain that the number would be considerably reduced before the chase was half over.

Study No. 6 and the Terrible Three turned up first with Talbot. Then came Kangaroo, Dane, and Glyn, and Julian, Kerruish, Reilly, and Hammond. Levison, Clive, and Cardew joined them. Figgins & Co., from the New House, came along with Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence.

More fellows of the Fourth and the Shell crowded up, mostly in running costume. Wally of the Third came with Levison minor, Reggie Manners, Joe Frayne, and a crowd of others. There was an army of the Second; and some of the Fifth Form joined up.

"Three minutes' start, Blake," said Tom Merry, who, as whipper-in of the pack, carried a bugle.

"Right-ho!" said Blake cheerily. "Ready, Figgins?"

"Waiting for you," said Figgins politely. "Put your best foot foremost, old scout! I don't want to get home alone!"

"You New House ass!" roared Blake.

"You School House fathead!"

"Order!" said Tom Merry. "Now, then, Darrell's going to start us. Ready, Darrell!"

Darrell of the Sixth nodded with a smile, and took out his watch.

"Cut!" he said to the hares.

Blake and Figgins passed out of the gates. They gave one another a glare as they started. It was certain that there would be keen competition between the hares not to be left behind, for the honour of their respected Houses.

The pack waited impatiently for the signal to follow.

"You can start!" said Darrell at last.

"Tally-ho! Right away!"

And the pack started.

They came out of the gates with a rush. The hares had disappeared, but the trail of torn paper lay clear on the frosty road.

From the road it turned across the field to the river, and then by the towing-path along to Rylcombe Wood.

The hares were running well, and were out of sight. The pack kept up a steady trot; but the diminutive heroes of the Second were already trailing off behind. By the time the wood was reached most of the Third had followed their example, but D'Arcy minor & Co. still kept on the run. Wally was determined to show the juniors what the Third could do.

In the wood the paper trail wound among frozen underbush, following a wild and zigzag course, the hares kindly giving the pack all the trouble they possibly could.

Through the wood, however, the hounds went in

gallant style, and out upon the Wayland Road, and up the hill to the old ruins of the castle. Then Tom Merry's bugle rang out a clear note.

On the old masses of masonry that crowned the rise two figures could be seen—those of Blake and Figgins. The hares were taking a rest there, in full view of the pack as they came sweeping up the road.

Blake stood up and kissed his hand to the distant pack ere he plunged in among the ruins and disappeared, followed by Figgins.

"Bai Jove! The cheeky asses!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus

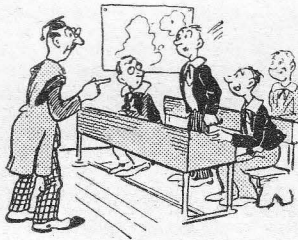
"Put it on!" said Herries.

The rise of the hill thinned down the pack, and Wally & Co., though still sticking it out, were hopelessly in the rear.

There were not more than twenty fellows with Tom Merry when the captain of the Shell eventually reached the ruins.

The hares had long gone, but the trail of torn paper led on the track. Avoiding the town, they were cutting through the fields towards the moor.

The pack came swooping downhill on the trail. Tom Merry came to a sudden halt on the bank of



"W h a t thought passed through Sir Isaac Newton's head when the apple fell on him?" "It's a good job bricks don't grow on trees!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to F. Tipton, 138, Dane Road, Sale, Manchester.

the stream flowing through the meadows. On the other side, fragments of the paper were fluttering in the rushes.

"They jumped this!" said Tom.

"Bai Jove! And we're goin' to jump it, too!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, rather!"

"About twelve feet," said Monty Lowther, eyeing the stream. "Come back and get a start."

"Not more than nine, ass!" said Kerr of the Fourth.

"I dare say it will seem like twelve in getting across," grinned Tom Merry. "There's a plank bridge about a quarter of a mile up, for anybody who wants it."

"Oh wats!"

Some of the pack, however, were already dashing up the bank for an easier crossing.

Tom Merry & Co. walked back for a start to jump it. Arthur Augustus took the lead, with the kind intention of showing the other fellows how easy it was.

"Keep your eyes on me, you fellows!" he called out.

He led off with a terrific dash, and sprang away over the stream that flowed deep down between the heavy, clayey banks. He rose finely to the jump, and cleared the stream—just to the mudbank on the other side. There his feet slid down through the mud, and there was a

terrific splash as the swell of St. Jim's landed on his back in the water.

Splash!

And a yell burst from the whole pack.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 3.

A Hard Run!

"GWOOGH! Yoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus rose from the shallow stream, scrambling on to the muddy bank.

He was barely recognisable. Mud was plastered on his natty running clothes, mud spattered his aristocratic features, and water streamed out of his hair.

"Gurrrrg!" was his remark as he dragged himself out.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gwoogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Clive. "Is that how we're to do it, Gussy?"

"Gwoogh!"

Tom Merry cleared the stream with a fine jump, and took up the trail again. After that came Kangaroo, who jumped with the activity of the animal from which he derived his name. Redfern was the next, and he cleared the stream. Clive followed, in great style, and then Kerr, and then Cardew of the Fourth, and finally Levison and Talbot. The rest of the hounds decided on expanding the time necessary to reach the bridge.

Tom Merry was still in the lead, with Kangaroo and Clive close up. Redfern, Talbot, and Kerr came next, then Cardew and Levison.

The numerous pack that had started out from St. Jim's was reduced to eight. A crowd of other fellows were coming on, but they had little chance of getting anywhere near the hares again. Arthur Augustus was on the right side of the stream, but he was too busy scraping off mud to think about running.

Eight fellows kept on steadily by a muddy footpath, where wet clay clogged their steps.

Levison was keeping up well. His powers would have astonished the fellows who had known him as a slacker only a term before. But he was trailing off at last.

"Put it on, old scout!" urged Cardew. "Clive's keepin' it up. Study No. 9's not goin' to be beaten!"

"I'm done!" said Levison. "I can't keep the pace to-day!"

And he dropped behind. He had done well. But only the stoutest runners in the Lower School were likely to be anywhere near the finish. The pace was hot now, as the run grew older.

Talbot of the Shell came to grief in clearing a stile, and hopped on with a bruised ankle.

Tom Merry paused for a moment.

"Hurt, old chap?"

Talbot smiled cheerily.

"Only a knock. But I'm afraid it puts me out. Keep on, Tom!"

Tom Merry nodded and ran on. In a cross-country run there was no stopping for lame ducks. Talbot dropped into a walk and joined Levison. Clive was the next to go, a tumble into a ditch putting him out of action.

Tom Merry sighted the hares once more, on a knoll far ahead, and he blew on his bugle.

But there were few now to answer the call.

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The leaders of the pack were reduced to five, and the rest were so far behind that they were almost out of the running. Tom Merry, Kangaroo, Kerr, Redfern, and Cardew were the leaders. Tom Merry glanced rather curiously at Cardew. He had not expected to see the new junior keeping it up like this. Cardew caught his eye and laughed.

"Study No. 9 won't be left out!" he said.

"I hope not!" said Tom cheerily.

"Looks like a catch now!" panted Redfern. "They're only just behind the knoll. It's a straight run up the lane, unless they take to the fields again, and that means trouble with old Grubb!"

"Our win!" said Kangaroo breathlessly.

Five fleet runners went up the lane in great style, with a high wall on one side, and a wooden fence on the other. The fence bordered Mr. Grubb's farm, and Mr. Grubb was not a gentleman whose land could be intruded upon with impunity.

Ahead of the diminished pack, the two hares were seen in the lane, running hard. It was sight now instead of scent, and Blake and Figgins were being gained upon.

They looked back as Tom Merry's bugle sounded again.

"Caught before the moor!" chuckled Kangaroo. "They can't stick it out. Hurrah for us!"

"They're dodging!" shouted Kerr.

The two hares had clambered over a low gate and plunged into Mr. Grubb's fields. It was their only chance, for the lane ran uphill, and a break-away across the fields to the left gave them a chance on the level.

The pack swooped breathlessly up to the gate, and halted there.

"Come on!" said Cardew. "What are you stoppin' for?"

"That's Grubb's farm," said Tom Merry. "If he's out—"

"There he is, by gum!" exclaimed Kangaroo.

The two hares were vanishing across the field. From a distant farmhouse a burly gentleman had emerged, with a purple face, and a big cart-whip in his hand.

He glared at the hares, and then glared at the pack by the gate. He had no chance of getting near Blake and Figgins, who were already across the field. He came striding down to the gate.

"What rotten luck!" muttered Kerr. "We shall have to go round, and that means a quarter of an hour lost!"

"Haven't we got to follow the trail, according to the rules?" asked Cardew.

"Yes, unless it's impossible."

"We're not goin' to be beaten. Come on!"

Cardew clambered over the gate.

Tom Merry knitted his brows. He was the leader of the pack, and he did not care to have his leadership taken out of his hands by a new fellow in this manner.

"Come back, Cardew!" he rapped out. "You can't get past him!"

"I'm goin' on!"

"Silly fool!" commented Kangaroo.

Tom Merry & Co. looked on. There was no chance whatever of getting past the burly farmer, and it was a waste of time to try.

Cardew was running hard, but the angry Mr. Grubb cut across his path.

"Stop!" he roared.

Cardew had to stop. He eyed the farmer savagely.



Hoisting Cardew in a tight grip, the big farmer lashed him with the whip. Cardew's yells rang across the field as the whip rose and fell. Tom Merry & Co. made a movement to go to the rescue, but the farmhand's pitchfork was thrust fairly at them.

"Pete!" yelled Mr. Grubb.

"'Ere you are, sir!"

A seedy-looking man came up, with a sulky face, and a pitchfork in his hand.

"See that them young ribs don't get over the gate, Pete!" roared Mr. Grubb.

Pete came up to the gate, with an unpleasant leer on his beery face, and stared at the juniors across the gate, keeping his pitchfork well out to the fore.

"You keep out!" he said.

"Anything to oblige, dear boy!" said Kangaroo politely.

Mr. Grubb had seized Cardew by the shoulder. Cardew promptly kicked his shins and endeavoured to break away.

Mr. Grubb gave a roar of pain. Cardew did not get loose. The big farmer twisted him over, held him fast, and lashed him with the whip.

Cardew's yells rang across the field.

Lash, lash, lash, lash!

The juniors made a movement to go to the rescue, but Pete's pitchfork was thrust fairly into their faces, and they had to jump back.

"No, you don't!" grinned Pete.

"Keep them out, Pete!" roared Mr. Grubb, while he laid on the cart-whip. "There, you young 'ound, that'll teach you to kick a man's shins! Now, get off my land!"

He picked up Cardew bodily in his arms and slung him over the gate.

Mr. Grubb grinned at Tom Merry & Co. over the gate.

"You ain't comin' across 'ere!" he said.

CHAPTER 4.

Straight From the Shoulder!

"N. G.!" said Tom Merry curtly.

"Come on, and let's get round!"

Cardew staggered up. His face was aflame with rage.

"Why didn't you back me up?" he shouted.

"We couldn't," said Tom quietly. "And we shouldn't, either. You shouldn't have gone on the land. I called you!"

"You rotten funk!"

Tom clenched his hands, and stepped towards Cardew. Time had been wasted already by Cardew's folly, and this was a little too much. But Kerr tapped the captain of the Shell on the arm.

"No time for scrapping now. Let's get along."

Tom nodded, and unclenched his hands.

"Right you are, Kerr! Come on!"

Cardew was groping along the roadside. Mr. Grubb had turned back from the gate, grinning. Cardew rose, with a large, jagged stone in his hand and a savage gleam in his eyes. As he stepped towards the gate, Tom Merry ran in his path. He had seen the action.

"What are you going to do with that stone?" he demanded.

"Can't you see, you fool?"

"You're not going to throw it at Grubb, if that's what you mean, you spiteful, cowardly hound!" exclaimed Tom savagely.

"Let me pass!"

"Put that stone down!"

"I won't, confound you!"

"Then I'll jolly soon make you!" growled Tom, and he sprang at Cardew.

His anger was at white-heat now. The hurling of that jagged stone might have caused serious injury and serious results to Cardew himself; but Ralph Reckness Cardew was in too great a rage to think of that.

Tom thought of it, however. He gripped Cardew's arm and twisted it till he dropped the stone.

Cardew, with a howl of rage, drove his left fist full into the face of the Shell fellow.

Tom Merry staggered for a moment. The next he was upon the furious junior, hitting out. His right caught Cardew in the eye, his left on the nose, and the Fourth Former went down in the mud like a felled ox.

"Come on, Tom!" shouted Kerr.

Mr. Grubb had seen the incident of the stone, and he was coming over the gate, whip in hand, evidently to give Cardew some more.

"Come on, you fool!" muttered Tom, dragging the dazed Fourth Former to his feet.

Cardew shook his hand off savagely.

Tom Merry ran on, and Cardew followed, just in time to escape the lash of Mr. Grubb's big whip.

Mr. Grubb was soon left behind, but Cardew was in no condition now for keeping up a hard run. He dropped behind the rest, and was soon out of sight.

On the farther side of Mr. Grubb's land the hounds picked up the trail again. Four juniors now were keeping up the chase, and it led them away across a corner of Wayland Moor, the hares now heading for home.

"Ta-ra-ra-ra!"

Blake and Figgins were in sight again, running well; but the remnant of the pack were gaining once more. But the hares reached Rylcombe Lane, and headed for the school, still well ahead.

The last lap was keen and hard. Redfern was left behind, but the three hounds drew closer and closer to the panting hares.

St. Jim's was in sight when Tom Merry's grasp closed on Blake's shoulder from behind.

"Caught!"

Blake slowed down, panting and streaming with perspiration.

"Bow-wow!" he grunted. "Never mind; it was a near thing."

Figgins was still going strong. Jack Blake, caught and vanquished, sauntered up behind with Redfern, while Tom Merry, Kerr, and Kangaroo rushed on after Figgins, right up to the gates of St. Jim's.

There was a crowd of juniors at the gates, and they cheered the surviving hare as he came panting in.

"Go it, Figgins!" roared Fatty Wynn. "Only another dozen yards! Buck up!"

"Go it, New House!"

Tom Merry had paused only a moment over Blake, but it was enough to leave him behind in the final spurt. Kangaroo and Kerr were ahead of him and close behind Figgins.

The crowd at the school gates watched the exciting finish breathlessly. The school gates were "home," and Figgins was very near.

"Bai Jove! Figgay will do it!" said Arthur Augustus.

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Arthur Augustus had walked home after his plunge, a change of clothes seeming to him the supreme necessity of the moment, and he was as neat as a new pin—in all his glory, so to speak—at the gates.

"Go it, Figgay, deah boy! Make woom for him, you chaps!"

Kerr gradually overtook his chum.

As Figgins came dashing up to the gates, Kerr's outstretched hand dropped on his shoulder from behind.

One final burst would have done it, but Figgins had no energy left for the final burst. He was caught.

"Bai Jove! Hard cheese!"

"Well done, Kerr!"

Figgins staggered breathlessly in the gateway and looked round to see who his captor was. His Scottish chum grinned at him.

"Sorry, old scout! All in the game!"

Figgins grinned, too.

"All serene, fathead!"

And Figgins leaned on the gate and pumped in breath.

"Jolly near thing, though, Figgay," panted Tom Merry, as he came in. "Well done, old scout!"

"Cardew's not with you?" asked Levison.

He had rather expected Cardew to turn up at the finish.

"No," said Tom shortly.

"Where did you drop him?"

"Near Grubb's farm."

"With a dot on his nose," grinned Kangaroo.

"Oh!" said Levison.

Tom Merry & Co. went in to get a badly needed rub down. But after a change in the dormitory, they came down fresh enough, even after that tough run. In twos and threes the belated members of the pack came streaming in now, muddied and tired, and, in some cases, cross; but they cheered up on hearing that the hares had been caught.

Manners and Lowther were already in and changed, and Tom Merry found tea ready for him in Study No. 10.

"See the conquering hero comes!" said Monty Lowther, as he came into the study. "What's this I hear about Cardew, Tommy? Did oo lose oo's ickle temper, then, and dot Cardew on the nose?"

Tom Merry frowned.

"I can't stand that chap!" he grunted.

"Same here, and many of them!" said Manners, with a grin. "He's got his good points, though. Plenty of pluck."

"Yes, I know that; but—*Br-r-r-r!*" said Tom. "Shove the bread this way, and the rashers! I'm hungry!"

"But what did you punch his nose for?"

Tom Merry explained, with his mouth full.

"Well, he asked for it, and no mistake," commented Lowther. "What a rotten trick—bunging a stone at a man's napper! Old Grubb's rather a beast, but that's outside the limit, quite."

"I should jolly well think so!" growled Tom. "If there's trouble when Cardew comes in, I shan't be sorry to step into the gym with him and give him a thumping good hiding."

But there was no trouble when Cardew came in. He did not visit Tom Merry's study, and the Terrible Three saw no more of him that evening.

CHAPTER 5.

A Reckless Expedition!

LEIVISON and Clive were working at their prep in Study No. 9 when Cardew came in.

Cardew had not been there to tea, and he had arrived at the School House only just in time for call-over.

The new junior's handsome face was dark as he came into the study.

"Had your tea?" asked Leivison, looking up.
 "Yes. I went in to Wayland, and had it at the bunshop," said Cardew. "I didn't get in at the finish, after all."

"Better luck next time," said Clive.

Both the juniors in No. 9 had heard of Cardew's trouble with Tom Merry at Mr. Grubb's gate, but they did not allude to it. There was a very visible mark on Cardew's nose, reminiscent of Tom Merry's knuckles. But the new junior did not avoid the subject.

"I suppose you've heard there was a row?" he asked.

"Yes. I heard Kangaroo talking," said Leivison. "He was there."

"I don't mean about Tom Merry." Cardew's eyes glittered for a moment. "He punched my nose, but I punched his first, so we can call it square. I'm not worryin' about that."

"No good keeping it up," agreed Leivison.

"If you know what happened you know that I'm not goin' to let the matter drop," said Cardew.

"But you just said——"

"I don't mean about Tom Merry. He can wait."

"Oh, only wait!" said Leivison.

"Yes. I haven't forgotten what he did, but he can wait. I'm not worryin' about him now, hang him! It's about Grubb."

"What did Grubb do? I understand that you had some trouble with him," said Leivison.

"He laid into me with a cart-whip."

"Phew! That was rather thick."

"A little too thick for me," said Cardew, between his teeth. "I'm not goin' to take it lyin' down. I'm goin' for the rotter!"

"Blessed if I see how you will manage that!" said Leivison, with a stare.

"I'm goin' out to-night——"

"To-night!" echoed Clive, looking up.

"Yes, to Grubb's farm."

"And what are you going to do there?" demanded Leivison.

"I'm goin' to make him sit up! I'd like to lay a cricket bat upon him," said Cardew savagely. "I can't do that. But a big stone through his bed-room window about midnight will make him sit up a little, I fancy!"

"Why, you silly ass!" ejaculated Clive.

"And the Head would make you sit up afterwards, I fancy, when Grubby came along and complained," grinned Leivison.

"Grubb won't know. He'll know that a rock came through his window, and I hope that it may drop on his napper. Anyway, it will give him a jump. He won't know who did it. Are you fellows goin' to help me?"

"I'm not going to help you," said Clive coldly. "If you want my opinion, it's a rotten hooligan trick, and you'd better chuck the idea!"

Cardew sneered.

"If that means that you funk it——"

"It doesn't; it means that I'm not a hooligan," said Clive contemptuously. "Better not jaw to me, Cardew! I've asked you into the gym once,

and you didn't get the best of it. Better let me alone."

And the South African junior returned to his work, and did not speak again.

Cardew shrugged his shoulders and looked at Leivison.

"You'll back me up?" he asked.

"Better let it drop," said Leivison.

"That means that you won't come?"

"No, I won't come. I don't like the idea, and you might scare him into a fit with such a trick."

"All the better! Hang him!"

"Oh, rot!" said Leivison.

He set to work, and Cardew, with a frown, followed his example. Nothing more was said in the study until prep was finished, and Sidney Clive went downstairs. Then Cardew called to Leivison as he was about to follow.

"Just a word, Leivison!"

"Go ahead," said Leivison, turning back.

"You won't come with me?"

"No."

"Well, I'm goin' in any case," said Cardew between his teeth. "Do you think I'm goin' to be thrashed like a dog, and take it lyin' down?"

"I heard that you kicked the old fellow's shins."

"Well, he had me by the neck. Look here, will you come out and give me a hand over the wall? It'll make it less risky."

"I— I suppose I could do that," said Leivison slowly. "I wish you'd give up the idea, though."

"Then I'll call you when I'm goin'," said Cardew, unheeding the latter part of Leivison's remark. "Mum's the word! The less said about it the better."

(Continued on next page.)

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Levison nodded and left the study. He was not feeling comfortable in his mind. The one-time black sheep of the School House had chummed with the new junior, and there were some things about Ralph Reckness Cardew that he liked. But it was being borne in upon Levison's mind that, unless he slid back into his old ways, Cardew's friendship was likely to be a thorn in his side.

Cardew was very quiet when the Fourth Form went to their dormitory. Some of the Fourth-Formers regarded him rather curiously. Cardew's passionate temper was well known, and it had been expected that he would ask Tom Merry into the gym that evening. It was not like Cardew to forget an injury, deserved or undeserved. Cardew had not forgotten, by any means, but Tom Merry, as he said in the study, could wait.

Kildare saw lights out for the Fourth, and the juniors settled down to sleep, but there was one who did not close his eyes.

Cardew was still awake when eleven o'clock sounded faintly through the night. The big, dusky dormitory was very silent.

Cardew slipped softly from his bed, and bent over Levison.

"Awake?"

There was no reply, and he shook the sleeping junior by the shoulder.

Levison's eyes opened.

"Time!" said Cardew, in a whisper. "Get up!"

Levison gave an angry grunt.

"Better chuck it, Cardew!"

"Are you goin' to help me?"

"Oh, yes!"

Levison rose, and the two juniors dressed quietly in the darkness. Levison was in a somewhat savage humour. There was always a possibility that absent fellows might be missed, and Levison's old reputation would have stood him in ill stead if he had been discovered breaking bounds at night. But he had given Cardew his word, and Levison was a fellow of his word, whatever he had once been.

They left the dormitory without a sound. Levison led the way to the lower box-room at the back of the House, a way that was familiar to him of old. He seemed to know his way in the dark, like a cat. From the box-room window they reached the leads outside, and thence dropped to the ground.

A few minutes later they were under the shadow of the trees by the wall.

"You're goin' to wait for me, Levison?"

"I suppose so," granted Levison. "You couldn't get in without me. If you'd any sense you'd chuck it and go back to bed. I'm a fool to be here at all!"

"I'd do as much for you."

"I don't want you to do anything of the sort for me!" snapped Levison. "But enough jaw. Here you are!"

He helped Cardew over the wall.

"I'll whistle when I get back," whispered Cardew.

FUN WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

Have you seen the wonderful display of magical apparatus for practical jokes on page 29. These tricks and novelties are made by the Davenport Co., and are only a few of the amusing articles they make. Think of the fun you could have with these jokes among your friends and family. If you would like to have further particulars, you should send for their free catalogue. Just send your request to the address given in the advertisement.

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"All right."

The reckless junior dropped into the road. Levison heard soft footfalls for a moment or two, and then there was silence.

Levison waited within the wall.

He knew that he had more than an hour's vigil before him, at least, and he moved to and fro to keep himself warm. He could have kicked himself for being there at all.

Cardew had no right to ask him such a service. He had said truly that he would do as much for Levison; but Levison was never likely to want him to do it. It was bitterly cold, and a keen wind souged in the branches of the old elms.

Levison's face was dark and grim as he paced restlessly to and fro. Midnight tolled out in muffled tones at last.

He had waited an hour. His teeth were chattering with cold. What a fool he had been! His heart gave a sudden leap as he heard a soft whistle outside the wall.

He clambered up between the wall and the slanting oak and looked down into the road. A dim figure was visible there.

"Is that you?"

"Yes. Help me in!"

Levison bent down from the wall, seizing Cardew's extended hand, and gave him a help up the wall.

"You've been——" began Levison.

"Yes," Cardew's voice was husky. "Let's get in!"

"What have you done?"

"Nothin'. Come on!"

"Were you spotted?"

"Spotted!" Cardew gave a low laugh. "Of course not! Why should I be? Let's get in, and don't jaw!"

They scudded away in the darkness to the House.

Ten minutes later they were in bed in the sleeping dormitory. Levison's eyes closed, and they did not reopen till the rising-bell clanged out in the frosty morning.

CHAPTER 6.

A Surprise for Tom!

"HOW much?"

Manners and Lowther asked that question simultaneously.

Tom Merry was standing in the quad with a letter in his hand on Friday afternoon.

The arrival of the letter had caused great satisfaction among the Terrible Three. Funds were low. And in the case of the chums of the Shell, a remittance for one was a remittance for three.

Tom Merry did not reply to the question.

He was staring blankly at the letter he had unfolded.

"This is jolly queer," he said. "I suppose one of you duffers hasn't sent me this letter for a fat-headed joke?"

"Not guilty, my lord!" said Lowther. "What the dickens is in the letter, then?"

"Read it!" said Tom.

Manners and Lowther read the letter together and blinked over it. It was a surprising letter. It was written in a cramped hand upon cheap, dirty paper, and it ran:

"Dear Master Merry,—Thank you for the ten shillings. I shall be obliged if you will send a pound to the same address, to reach me to-morrow morning.—Your truly,
"P. S.."

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

I hear they are going to issue stamps in America with photographs of film stars on them. But how will famous stars like being stuck in a corner?

As the report of a council meeting given in the "Wayland Gazette" puts it: "The chairman finally gummed up the proceedings with a few well-chosen words." A sticky end!

Over two hundred cars took part in a motor club run at Wayland. Quite a "toot" ensemble!

A Scandinavian artist has taught himself to paint with his mouth. Presumably he mixes his colours on his palate!

Interval for jokes: "Did the editor take any of those things you sent him?" asked one author of another. "Yes," sighed the first; "the stamps for return postage!"

Manners and Lowther stared at their chum, and he stared at them.

"Is it a Chinese puzzle?" asked Manners.

"Tommy"—Monty Lowther wagged a reproachful forefinger at the captain of the Shell—"you know the whole study's stony, and you go and send ten shillings to this critter, whoever he is! How could you?"

"But I haven't!" exclaimed Tom.

"You haven't!"

"No."

"But he thanks you for it."

"That's what beats me. I haven't sent anybody ten shillings, that I know of," said Tom, in bewilderment. "And I don't even know who 'P. S.' is—and, what's more, I don't know where his address is. I don't know anything about him!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Manners.

"'P. S.' must be a practical joker," said Lowther.

"It's awfully queer," said Tom, eyeing the curious letter. "It must be for me. There is my name on it. And there is my name on the envelope, right enough—Master Tom Merry, St. James' School, Rylcombe. No mistake about that. If it isn't a silly joke I can't make it out."

"Well, it must be!"

"But where does the joke come in, then? I can't see it, for one."

"Some jokes are too deep to be seen," grinned Lowther. "This may be one of them. Might be a New House bouncer."

"Well, it beats me!" said Tom. "I've never

"Trade is bad," complained the Rylcombe barber to Mr. Rateliff. "I'm thinking of closing and starting a butcher's shop." "And will you close this one?" inquired Mr. Rateliff.

"I mean to settle down here and open a jeweller's shop," said one burglar to another. "What, have you some capital, then?" inquired the other. "No," replied the first; "but I have a jenny!"

A motor-car can get you anywhere, states a gossip writer. Yes, no matter where you are, they get you!

They are looking for a fabulous beast called a Mamh in the snowy wastes around the Himalayas. No job for a mamh-y's boy!

Then there was the chap who rented a flat over a Tube station. So that he could continue living above his station.

Reflection: The chartered accountant's life is little more than putting two and two together.

News: A bird fancier is said to have appeared before more than fifty magistrates. But naturally he is accustomed to facing beaks!

A reader wants to know who gets time for writing nowadays? Forgers!

See you later, chaps!

seen the writing before. Hallo, Reddy! Do you know anything about this?"

Redfern was crossing to the tuckshop from the New House, and he stopped as Tom Merry called. "What's the rumpus?" he asked.

"Look at that! Is it a New House joke?" asked Tom.

The New House junior stared at the letter.

"No fear!" he said promptly. "That's School House spelling!"

"Why, you cheeky ass—"

Redfern dodged into the tuckshop in time, with a chuckle.

"Must be a silly joke," said Manners. "Tear it up, and let the merry letter-writer go and eat coke!"

Tom Merry tore the mysterious missive into a dozen pieces and threw the fragments into the fountain. The letter puzzled him utterly, but he could only conclude that it was sent to him as a joke, though where the joke came in was a deep mystery.

Redfern came out of the tuckshop with a big parcel. The Terrible Three eyed him in a warlike way. As the two Houses of St. Jim's were at war, raiding the enemy's supplies was quite permitted—and the Shell fellows had no tea in the study. But Redfern held up his hand.

"Pax, you Shellfish—"

Monty Lowther shook his head decidedly.

"My dear chap, we don't take any notice of peace offers from the enemy," he explained. "Collar him!"

"Hold on, fatha, d! I was going to ask you to tea."

"Friend of my youth!" said Lowther affectionately. "That alters the case. Did a little bird whisper that we were stony?"

Redfern laughed.

"No; I heard a silly cuckoo warbling it as I came by—a cuckoo by the name of Lowther!"

"You cheeky chump—"

"Pax!" said Tom Merry. "Reddy, old son, you're my long-lost brother! Lead on, Masduff!"

Redfern grinned, and led the way to his study in the New House, where Lawrence and Owen had the kettle boiling and the table laid.

They greeted the Terrible Three cheerily.

"What about Cardew?" asked Owen.

Redfern looked dubiously at the Terrible Three.

"I was going to ask Cardew," he said, "but—"

"Ahem! Don't mind us," said Tom.

"I'll leave him over for another time," said Redfern. "I suppose you don't want tea with him after punching his nose on Wednesday?"

That's all right; Cardew will keep. I'm sorry he cut up the way he did in the paper-chase. He isn't really a bad sort in a way!"

"I know," said Tom cheerily. "He's got his good points; but slinging a big stone at a man's head is rather too thick for St. Jim's!"

Redfern nodded.

"I haven't forgotten what he did last week, though," he said. "You remember how I sooted Ratty in the dark, and he collared Cardew for it. The Head told Cardew plainly that if he hadn't been a new boy, he would have sacked him for it. That meant that if Cardew had told on me I should have been sacked, and I should have lost my scholarship."

"Well, he would have been a rotten sneak to tell on you," said Manners. "He couldn't do that, you know!"

"That's right, in a way; but a flogging from the Head is no joke," said Redfern. "Cardew took the flogging rather than give me away."

"It was plucky of him," said Tom Merry. "He's a queer beggar—a decent chap one minute, and a howling cad the next. Ask him here, if you like, and we'll make it up over tea! After all, a punch on the nose isn't a thing to grouse about!"

"Well, if you put it like that, I'll ask him," said Redfern brightly.

"My dear chap, cut off and fetch him in, and we'll help get the tea while you're gone," said Tom.

"Good egg!"

Redfern hurried out of the study, and the Terrible Three piled in to help Owen and Lawrence. They had tea ready by the time Redfern returned; but Reddy was alone.

"Where's Cardew?" asked Lawrence.

Redfern coloured a little.

"He won't come."

"Because Tom's here, I suppose" said Manners.

"Well, yes. But never mind Cardew! Let's have tea."

Tom Merry frowned for a moment. He did not like sulkiness. It was evident that Cardew was still nursing resentment over the affair at Grubb's farm.

But the juniors were soon discussing the Rookwood footer match, which was to come off on the morrow, and they forgot all about Cardew and his sulks.

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CHAPTER 7.

The Plot Thickens!

"**W**OOKWOOD match to-day!" remarked Arthur Augustus the next morning.

"You'll have to put your best foot foremost," Gustavus," said Monty Lowther solemnly. "Talbot can't play, and we rely on you for goals."

"That's all right, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus unobtrusively. "You can rely on me. What are you cacklin' at, Blake? Oh, you are wottin', you wottah! I wegard you as a silly ass, Lowthah!"

The St. Jim's junior footballers were thinking a good deal of the Rookwood match that morning. Tom Merry, as football skipper, had plenty of food for thought, and perhaps it interfered with his lessons a little in the Form-room. Mr. Linton presented him with a hundred lines before the Shell were dismissed.

The Rookwood match was always a tough one at footer or cricket. Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, were a strong team.

And Tom Merry had been unlucky. Talbot of the Shell had not recovered from the damage to his ankle on the occasion of the paper chase. It was not a very serious injury, but it made football impossible for some days to come, and Talbot was one of the best wingers in the school.

To make matters worse, Figgins of the Fourth had crocked his knee, and Figgins always played in a match that meant a hard tussle. Figgy couldn't play now. Two of Tom's best forwards had to be left behind.

But Tom had already decided on Levison for the match, and, instead of making room for him somewhere else, he put him into Figgy's place at inside-right.

Monty Lowther, who usually played half, was a very good forward when he liked, and Tom put him in Talbot's place on the wing, and Sidney Clive took Lowther's post at half.

It was a good team, but it was not the very best that St. Jim's could have sent out, and Tom Merry looked forward to a tough struggle on the Rookwood ground.

The St. Jim's eleven were therefore composed of: Fatty Wynn; Herries, Lawrence; Redfern, Noble, Clive; Lowther, Levison, Tom Merry, Blake, and D'Arcy.

Tom Merry was pretty well satisfied with his team. Levison, the newest recruit, had shown remarkable form lately, and Tom looked for a good game from him; and Fatty Wynn in goal was a tower of strength to any side.

A crowd of fellows saw the team off, but there were no followers. It was a longish journey to Rookwood.

Cardew walked down to the station with them, chatting with Levison and Redfern.

He cast a curious glance several times at Tom Merry, who hardly noticed him. Cardew had said that Tom Merry could wait, but apparently the wait was to be for an indefinite time, for he had shown no sign of calling the captain of the Shell to account.

Levison supposed that his studymate had decided to let the matter drop, and he was glad of it.

Blagg, the postman, passed the juniors in the lane, and touched his old hat to the footballers. They stopped him.

"Any letters, Blaggy? Hand 'em over!"

"I got a letter for Master Merry," said Mr. Blagg, fumbling in his sack.

"Chuck it over, Blaggy!"

Mr. Blaggy handed over the letter, and stumped on his way.

Tom slid it into his pocket to read in the train.

"Buck up! Only three minutes for the train," said Blake.

The juniors hurried on to the station, where Cardew left them.

They crammed into the local for Wayland, and changed at the junction into the express for Latcham.

The express was crowded, and the footballers had to separate into twos and threes. Tom Merry and Lowther squeezed into a carriage together.

in the crowded carriage, puzzling as it was. The letter seemed to be that of a blackmailer, yet who "P. S." was, and on what grounds he was attempting to extort money from Tom Merry of St. Jim's was a mystery there was no solving.

There was no address on the letter. The writer apparently supposed that Tom knew his address. Whether the writer was a blackmailer, a practical joker, or a lunatic, Tom could not decide. He tore the letter into pieces and dropped them from the carriage window, and gave no more thought to it. He had the Rookwood match to think of now, and no thoughts to waste upon his mysterious correspondent.



Kerr gradually overtook his chum, and as Figgins came dashing up to the gates Kerr's outstretched hand dropped on his shoulder. The New House hare was caught on the post! "Hard cheese, Figgins!" shouted the juniors. "Well done, Kerr!"

When the express started on the long run, Tom took the letter out of his pocket.

He had glanced at it carelessly when he took it from the postman, but now that he looked at it again he started a little.

"The remittance this time?" asked Lowther.

"No; it's 'P. S.' again."

"My hat! This is getting interesting."

Tom, with a rather grim brow, opened the letter. The two chums read it together. It was the same crabbed writing as the previous letter, and it was as follows:

"Master Merry.—I have not heard from you, nor received the pownd. I suppose you don't want me to cum up to the school and see you. If you don't, you'd better bring the pownd this afternoon.
P. S."

"The merry plot thickens," said Lowther.

It was impossible to discuss the strange affair

CHAPTER 8.

The Rookwood Match!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. greeted the St. Jim's footballers cordially when they arrived at Rookwood.

The Rookwood team looked in fine fettle. There had been some changes in Jimmy Silver's eleven since the last match with St. Jim's. It consisted now of Conroy; Raby, Van Ryn; Rawson, Jimmy Silver, Doyle; Oswald, Lovell, Tommy Dodd, Pons, and Cook. It was a first-rate team, as Tom Merry could see at a glance.

"We shall have to pull up our socks, deah boys!" Arthur Augustus remarked, while they were changing. "We shall miss Talbot and old Figgy."

The St. Jim's team were soon changed, and they came out cheerily into the field. It was a fine mild afternoon, with little wind and a

bright sun. A crowd of Rookwooders had assembled to see the match, and there was a buzz when the ball was kicked off.

"Go it, Rookwood! On the ball!"

Rookwood were soon attacking hard, and in ten minutes there was a hot attack on the visitors' goal. But Fatty Wynn, calm and serene, saved three times in rapid succession, and Lawrence cleared at last. The ball went away to mid-field, but it returned, and for some time the struggle was all in the visitors' half.

It was not till close on half-time that the Saints were able to get away, and then they found the Rookwood defence very strong. But the St. Jim's forwards got through at last, passing the ball in great style. Tom Merry drove it in, but it glanced from the goalpost, and shot back into play. Levison pounced on the ball and trapped it.

He made a rush for goal, but the Rookwooders closed in on him, and as quick as lightning the St. Jim's forward passed the ball across to Blake.

Jack Blake, for once, was not quick enough. But Arthur Augustus had his eyes wide open. He rushed in and drove the ball into the goal without a second's pause. There was only the goalie to beat, and Conroy never had a chance. There was a buzz from the Rookwood crowd as the leather went in.

"Goal!"

Goal it was!

"My hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Tom Merry gave Arthur Augustus a sounding smack on the shoulder.

"Good man, Gussy!"

"Yawooh!"

"Good for you, Levison, too! That was a ripping pass!"

Levison nodded and smiled.

The whistle went as Conway turned the ball out. After all Rookwood's hard luck through the first half, St. Jim's had scored first.

"Good luck for us," remarked Lowther, as they rested. "But what I want to know is, who said the age of miracles was past? Gussy has scored a goal."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"And a jolly good one!" said Tom Merry heartily.

After the change of ends the Rookwooders had the sun in their eyes. But they attacked steadily, and again Tom Merry & Co. found themselves penned in their own half. Rookwood seemed almost too much for them, and it was fortunate that Fatty Wynn was between the posts. Again and again the Welsh junior was called upon to save, and again and again he did it without turning a hair. When the game swayed down to the Rookwood end, Conroy put up a sound defence of his citadel, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were soon attacking again. The Rookwooders were at the top of their form, and the visitors were held almost all the time. But Fatty Wynn, like the Iron Duke of old, "stood four-square to all the winds that blew," and, though the home team had most of the game, Fatty firmly declined to be beaten.

As time drew closer, Jimmy Silver & Co. made desperate efforts. Again and again they came sweeping on goal—Oswald, Lovell, Tommy Dodd, Pons, and Cook going together like clockwork. But the fat Fourth Former between the posts seemed equal to any test, and the best shot found a pair of hands or a hard boot ready

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for it. And the Rookwood crowd, who had come there to cheer the home score, found themselves shouting:

"Well saved, Fatty!"

"Good man!"

"Well saved, sir!"

Phweep!

It was the whistle at last.

"Bai Jove! We've beaten the boundahs, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "Or, to be more correct, Fatty Wynn has beaten them!"

"Good old Fatty!" said Tom Merry, thumping the Welsh junior on the back. "You're worth your weight in pork pies!"

"It's a New House win," grinned Redfern, "though Levison and Gussy got the goal very well between them. Better luck next time, Silver."

Jimmy Silver nodded and grinned.

"You've got a ripping goalie there," he said. "We had most of the game, and you've got the goal. Never mind, we'll mop you up at cricket."

The St. Jim's footballers changed in a very cheery mood. Football is an uncertain game, and, with the play against them most of the time, they had been lucky to win. But a win was a win, anyway.

Jimmy Silver & Co. saw their visitors off at the station, and the train bore them home through the winter dusk.

A dozen fellows were waiting for them at the gates of St. Jim's when they arrived at last.

"How did it go?" called out Talbot.

"A win for us, deah boy!"

"How many goals?" asked Figgins.

"Only one," said Tom Merry. "Gussy scored it, but Levison gave him the chance—a ripping pass. Fatty Wynn saved about a dozen against us, though. We missed you and Talbot. But all's well that ends well."

Manners met Tom Merry and Lowther as they came in, with a rather curious expression on his face.

"Letter for you, Tom," he said.

Tom Merry started.

"Not from—"

"It's the same fist," said Manners.

"That's the second to-day, then," said Tom, as he took the letter from his chum.

With a knitted brow he opened it in the Hall, and the Terrible Three read it together. It ran:

"Master Merry,—I waited for you this afternoon, and you ain't come. I give you one more chance. If you don't get the pownd Monday morning, look out!
P. S."

CHAPTER 9.

A Strange Meeting!

TOM MERRY drew a deep breath.

"Well, that beats it!" he said.

"What on earth can it mean?" said Manners. "It's a blackmailer right enough, but why should he suppose you'd send him a pound?"

"Goodness knows!"

"And how could you send it, when you don't know his name or address?"

"Ask me another!" said Tom, quite bewildered.

"I think it must be some lunatic. Bless him!"

"According to that letter, the chap'll come here on Monday unless you send him the quid," said Lowther.

Tom's eyes gleamed.



Detective Kerr Investigates

No. 19.

The Cheat!

AFTER the Shell had answered a paper on geography, an atlas containing a few vital pages from a geography book was found on the Form-room floor, as though it had been dropped by somebody while leaving. The name inside the atlas was that of Herbert Skimpole of the Shell. Though he could hardly believe that Skimpole had descended to cheating in an exam, Mr. Linton could draw no other conclusion. All the other fellows had left their geography books and atlases, by order, in their studies. Before Skimpole was punished, however, "Detective" Kerr decided to look into the matter.

KERR: Well, Skimmy, old man, you appear to have got yourself into a bit of a jam?

SKIMPOLE: It would certainly appear so, Kerr. I am totally at a loss to account for the presence in the Form-room of my atlas and the pages from my geography book.

KERR: The loose pages, containing the answers to the chief questions you were asked, were actually torn from your book, then?

SKIMPOLE: Without doubt. Mr. Linton is under the impression that all my answers were written with the aid of a crib, though I assure you that they were not.

TALBOT: If Linton had any sense he'd know Skimmy didn't cheat. Only yesterday I lent him my book and atlas—the booksellers had sent Skimmy some old copies by mistake. For instance, some of the Chinese cities have different names since the war started, and so on.

"Let him come!" he said. "I'll be glad to see him. There goes his letter!"

Tom Merry tore up the letter as the chums went upstairs, and threw the pieces into the study fire-grate.

The Terrible Three thought the matter over a good deal during Sunday, but they could make nothing of it. They looked forward to Monday with some curiosity, but quite without uneasiness. And when Monday came they were quite keen about the postman, though it was not a remittance they were expecting this time.

There was a letter for Tom Merry when old Blagg came along in the afternoon. Tom recognised the crabbed hand on the envelope as he took it, and the three chums retired to the study to read it.

The letter was short, but to the point.

"Master Merry,—You ain't answered me. This is the finish. I'm coming to see you at six o'clock. I'll wait for you at the stile in Rylcombe Lain at six. If you come, and bring two pounds, all's

KERR: I see. And Skimpole, having looked them up in your books, gave the answers correctly?

SKIMPOLE: Indeed, I believe so, my dear Kerr.

KERR: Well, I can't promise anything—but I'll do the best I can for you, Skimmy.

KERR: I wonder if you'd regard it as a cheek on my part, Mr. Linton, if I asked you a few questions about the exam papers?

MR. LINTON: Not at all, Kerr. I understand you have acquired some small—ahem!—reputation among the juniors for solving mysteries. Perhaps you can find a fresh solution for this one—though I confess I hold Skimpole guilty.

KERR: Skimpole's answers were correct, I believe, sir?

MR. LINTON: Yes—largely owing, no doubt, to the aid he had from what I think is termed a "crib."

KERR: Were there any outstanding successes among the papers?

MR. LINTON: One or two. Talbot handed in a really satisfactory paper; and Merry's, too, was well done. I liked Manners'. Crooke's also reached a high standard. Oh, here is Crooke coming up the stairs! I must hurry down to see Mr. Railton about Skimpole's punishment. Oh, Crooke—

CROOKE: Yes, sir?

MR. LINTON: I am glad to see your knowledge of geography is much improved, Crooke. Your paper was quite a credit. But there was one little point—though your geographical knowledge was quite accurate, you should not have referred to Pekin, the old capital of China, by that name. It is called Pei Ping now, of course. Are there any further questions you wish to ask, Kerr?

KERR: Did Talbot call Pekin Pei Ping, sir?

MR. LINTON: Oh, yes! Is that all, my boy?

KERR: Not quite, sir. If you are going down to see Mr. Railton, perhaps I can come with you. I think I can tell you the name of the real culprit.

(Who is the cheat? And how has Kerr found him out? Turn to page 33 for the solution.)

well. If you don't, I come on and call on your headmaster.

"The price has gone up!" grinned Monty Lowther. "It's two pounds now."

Tom Merry looked at his watch.

"Quarter-past five," he remarked.

"You're not going?" exclaimed Manners.

Tom nodded.

"I'm going, and you fellows are coming, too. We'll see 'P. S.,' and if he's a harmless lunatic we can take him to the police station. If he's a blackmailer, we can teach him a lesson about trying to scare St. Jim's chaps into giving him money."

"Good egg!" said Lowther heartily. "We'll borrow Herries' dog-whip."

"That's a good idea! The rotter may have mistaken me for somebody else," said Tom. "Anyway, he's trying to extort money. He could be sent to prison for it. We don't want to worry about that, but we'll give him a lesson he'll—

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remember. He's woke up the wrong passengers, as it happens."

"He has—he have!" grinned Lowther.

Tom Merry put the letter into his pocket, and a little later the chums of the Shell strolled out of the school gates to keep the appointment.

Monty Lowther had borrowed the dog-whip from Study No. 6. He considered that it would come in useful in dealing with "P. S."

They sauntered down the lane, and came in sight of the stile half-way to the village.

It was not yet six, but a man was seated on the stile, smoking a short black pipe. He was a rough-looking customer, and his looks struck Tom as familiar as they came up.

"Is that the johnny, I wonder?" said Manners.

"Looks like a farmhand," said Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry scanned the man keenly.

"I've seen the man before somewhere," he said. "My hat! I remember now. He belongs to Grubb's farm."

"Oh, one of Grubby's hands?"

"Yes. He's the chap who kept us from the gate with a pitchfork that afternoon; you remember I told you. Cardew got over the gate, and old Grubb laid into him with a cart-whip, and his man kept us back with a pitchfork. That's the merchant."

"Then he can't be 'P. S.,'" said Manners, puzzled.

"Blessed if I know! I don't see why he should expect me to send him money," said Tom. "I don't owe him anything for lunging at me with a pitchfork."

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"By Jove! I remember now the farmer called him Pete," said Tom. "P's one of the initials on the letter."

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"Well, we'll soon see."

The juniors arrived at the stile. The man took his black pipe from his mouth, and slid from the top bar and scanned them.

"One of you Master Merry?" he asked.

"I'm Tom Merry."

"Then you're the young gent I want to see."

Tom Merry's lips set.

"Are you the man who's been writing to me?" he asked.

"You know I am."

"Well, I know it now," said Tom. "You signed yourself 'P. S.' What does 'P. S.' stand for?"

The man stared at him.

"You know wot it stands for. You know my name's Pete Snaggs."

"How the dickens should I know?"

"Because I told yer," said Mr. Snaggs.

"I don't remember the occasion," said Tom quietly. "When was it?"

Mr. Snaggs gave him another glare.

"Wot game is this 'ere?" he snarled. "You know well enough that it was last Wednesday. P'r'aps you thought that ten bob would settle the matter," the ruffian sneered. "I said ten bob at first, my buck, but I meant to 'ave more arter. You might 'ave knowed that."

"What ten bob?" asked Tom.

"You ain't forgotten you sent me ten bob?" sneered Mr. Snaggs. "You thought that would settle it, but you was mistook. You're a rich young gent, and you've got some dibs to spare for me."

"I did not send you ten shillings," said Tom Merry quietly, "and I don't intend to give you anything now. Why should I give you money?"

"Because if you don't I'm goin' to your 'eadmaster," grinned Mr. Snaggs, "and if that don't mean the boot for you, I'm mistook!"

"You can go to my headmaster if you like."

"You wouldn't mind 'im knowin' wot you did Wednesday night—eh?"

"Wednesday night!" exclaimed Tom, in amazement.

"Wot!" chuckled Mr. Snaggs. "When I caught you red-anded, my young rip! It means the boot for you at your grand school, if it don't mean a reformatory arter; and it might—and you know it!"

"My hat!" said Lowther. "He must be potty, Tom!"

"Mad as a hatter!" said Manners.

Pete Snaggs glared at them savagely.

"P'r'aps the young gent means to deny that I caught 'im on Grubb's farm on Wednesday night!" he sneered.

"Certainly I should deny it!" said Tom. "I was fast asleep in my dormitory at the school on Wednesday night. I haven't been near Grubb's farm since the paper-chase on Wednesday afternoon."

"Then wot did you send me ten bob for at the Peal o' Bells?" sneered Mr. Snaggs.

"I did nothing of the kind!"

"I see your game!" said Mr. Snaggs, with a nod. "You're goin' to deny the 'ole story! Well, we'll see wot your 'eadmaster says about that there, my pippin!"

"Wait a minute," said Tom, very quietly. "You say you caught me on Grubb's farm on Wednesday night last week?"

"You knows I did."

"What was I doing there?"

"Bashin' a brick through Mr. Grubb's winder," grinned Mr. Snaggs, "and scarin' 'im almost into

a fit! I caught you 'ookin' it, and you know it, and you begged me not to give you up; and, me bein' a good-natured cove, I let you off arter you'd give me your name and promised me somethin' andsome!"

"How could you be so sure of a chap in the dark?" asked Tom.

"You can't bamboozle me in that way!" smiled Mr. Snaggs. "You give me your name, and now you've howned up to your name. And you sent me ten bob to the Peal o' Bells, where I lodge. I knowed you was a kid from the school; I know the caps. And I wouldn't let you go till you give your name, and well you knows it!"

The Terrible Three looked very hard at Mr. Snaggs. It was clear that the man believed that he was recounting the facts.

"Now wot about the two quids?" asked Mr. Snaggs. "You wouldn't send me the one I asked for, and prices 'ave gone up. I don't say this is goin' to be the last, either. But you 'and me two quids now, and you don't 'ear from me ag'in for a week. 'Ow does that strike you, Master Merry?"

"I shall give you nothing!" said Tom contemptuously. "You are either lying or you have made a mistake!"

"You won't give me two quids?"
"No; but I'll give you something else!" said Tom Merry grimly. "You're a blackmailing scoundrel, and what you want is a thumping good hiding, and you're going to have it! Collar him!"

CHAPTER 10.

Mr. Snaggs Receives His Due!

MR. SNAGGS jumped back and grasped his stick savagely.

"Ands off," he yelled, "or——"
Before he could get further Tom Merry's clenched fist smote him on his stubby chin, and he staggered, the stick flying from his grasp.

The next moment he was pinned by the Terrible Three.

"Got the dear man!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"How lucky I thought to bring the dog-whip!"

"Let me go!" roared Snaggs. "I'll go to your 'eadmaster!"

"You're welcome!" said Tom Merry. "Among other things, you can tell him that I gaye you a good whipping!"

"Oh, my heye! Leggo!"

"Down with him!"
The ruffian was pitched over on the grass, face downwards.

Monty Lowther sat on his head, driving Mr. Snaggs' stubby face into the damp grass, and Manners stood on his legs. Mr. Snaggs was then very favourably placed for a flogging.

Lash, lash, lash, lash!
In Tom Merry's hand, the dog-whip rose and fell with great force.

The ruffian squirmed and howled and yelled in the grass, but he could not escape from the infliction.

"Great pip! What are you up to?"

Two cyclists came along from the school—Levison and Clive. They were riding down to the village, but they halted at the sight of the amazing scene by the roadside.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Mr. Snaggs. "Elp! Perlice! Mercy!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Tom Merry! What the dickens——" shouted Clive, in amazement.



PROFESSOR SKIMPOLE'S HOROSCOPE

This Week:

HARRY MANNERS.

DEEPLY interested in a chess problem which he was working out alone in his study, Manners had no ears for me. "I should like to include you in my series, Manners," I said politely. "I am playing a King and two Bishops against a King," explained Manners, without looking up. "It is really quite easy to checkmate, but as you see, Black's last move was King to Rook's Third. White must be careful not to stalemate the Black King, of course. You see that, Skimmy? You'll find my birthday marked on this pocket calendar, by the way. Now, White's next move is obviously Bishop to King's Third, isn't it?"

I agreed, though I really did not know. Manners is an expert at chess, and complicated moves are child's play to him. As a subject of Cancer, the Crab (June 22nd to July 22nd), under Jupiter and Mars, he is clearly one of iron will and great tenacity of purpose. He makes his own moves with craft and sagacity, and no set-back has the power to deter him. Manners is the type to have by your side in a tight corner. He would keep on steadily until he had checkmated the enemy.

"Bishop to Queen's Fourth—checkmate!" came Manners' voice, as I closed the study door. "Did you see that, Skimpole?" I am afraid I did not, but I should not have understood it like Manners even if I had.

Tom Merry paused, panting.

"All serene!" he said. "This merchant has been trying to terrorise me into giving him money! I'm showing him how much his threats are worth!"

"Oh!" said Levison. "More power to your elbow, then! Come on, Clive!"

"He looks as if he's had enough," remarked Clive.

"Well, I've finished now."

Lowther and Manners released the ruffian. He rolled over in the grass, wriggling with pain and fury.

"By gum, I'll make you suffer for this!" he howled. "You wait till I go to your 'eadmaster, Tom Merry!"

"Go as soon as you please!" said Tom contemptuously.

Levison and Clive rode on again, grinning. Mr. Snaggs had woke up the wrong passenger in the captain of the Shell, that was evident. The unfortunate blackmailer sat in the grass, and howled with anguish.

"Come on!" said Tom.

"Oh, you young 'ound!" groaned Pete Snaggs. "You 'orrid young 'ound! You'll be sorry for this! You wait till I come to your 'eadmaster!"

"Oh rats!"

Tom Merry turned on his heel, and the chums of the Shell walked away to the school, leaving the blackmailer groaning in the grass.

Monty Lowther glanced back as they reached the school gates and gave a whistle.

"He's coming, Tom!"

"Let him come!" said Tom Merry, without looking back.

The juniors went in. Far down the road, Mr. Snaggs was following them towards St. Jim's. A severe thrashing instead of the expected two pounds had exasperated the blackmailer. There

was no money for him, but revenge remained—at least, Mr. Snaggs appeared to believe so.

CHAPTER 11.

Called Over the Coals!

KILDARE of the Sixth looked into Tom Merry's study. The Terrible Three were having their tea rather late.

Kildare's face was very grave.

"You're wanted, Merry!" he said curtly.

Tom Merry had more than half-expected it, and he rose at once.

"So that merchant's come?" he said.

Kildare gave him a sharp look.

"You know something about that man Snaggs?" he asked.

"Only that I licked him with a dog-whip for trying to scare me into giving him money," said Tom.

"Oh, well, he's in the Head's study, and I'm to take you there at once!"

"Right-ho, Kildare!"

Tom Merry followed the captain of St. Jim's downstairs. He found a good many juniors in the Hall, all looking curious.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tapped the captain of the Shell on the arm.

"Nothin' w'ong, I twust, deah boy?" he asked.

"Nothing at all, old scout!" said Tom cheerily.

"A feahful-lookin' chawactah has just awvived," said Arthur Augustus. "He was howlin' out somethin' about you—"

"All serene!" said Tom, and he followed Kildare to the Head's study.

Kildare opened the door, and closed it again after the junior had gone in.

Mr. Railton was in the study with the Head, and both the masters looked very grave.

Pete Snaggs stood with his ragged hat in his hand. Even the impudent wastrel was somewhat awed in the presence of the stately old Head.

"Merry," said Dr. Holmes gravely, "this man has told me an extraordinary story. Were you out of school bounds after hours on Wednesday last week?"

"No, sir," said Tom steadily.

"That's a blinkin' lie!" said Snaggs.

Tom Merry's eyes gleamed, but he was silent. He could not deal with the ruffian as he would have wished in the presence of the Head.

"It appears from this man's story, Merry, that there was some dispute at Mr. Grubb's farm during a paper-chase. Kindly tell me what happened."

Tom Merry succinctly described the incident at the gate of Mr. Grubb's farm. He did not mention the stone episode. There was no need to drag Cardew into the matter.

"You did not enter Mr. Grubb's land?"

"No, sir; only one chap, and he was pitched out again by Mr. Grubb."

"Did you return to Mr. Grubb's farm on Wednesday night and hurl a large stone through the farmer's bed-room window?"

"No, sir."

"I could hardly think, Merry, that you would be guilty of such an action. But someone was certainly guilty of it. I have spoken to Mr. Grubb on the telephone and learned that the outrage occurred exactly as this man has stated. Mr. Grubb was quite ill from shock to his nerves, and he suspects that the outrage was committed

by one of the boys he stopped from entering his grounds on the occasion of the paper-chase. This man positively declares that he caught you there on Wednesday night, and you pleaded with him to let you go."

"It is false, sir."

"Why has this man kept silent so long, may I ask?" said Mr. Railton quietly.

Mr. Snaggs grunted.

"The young gent said he would make it worth my while to let 'im off," he said, "and I'm a pore man. 'E kept 'is word, and sent me ten bob."

"Yet you have come here to betray him," said the Housemaster.

"I come 'ere to show 'im up!" growled Mr. Snaggs.

"The man wrote to me demanding money, sir," said Tom Merry. "I refused to give him any. Manners and Lowther went with me to meet him, and we gave him a licking with a dog-whip for trying to extort money."

"Ah!" said the Head. "I understand now the man's motive in coming here. You say he wrote demanding money?"

"I have his last letter here, sir; I destroyed the rest."

"Give me the letter."

Tom Merry placed the letter on the Head's desk, and Dr. Holmes read it and passed it on to the Housemaster.

"You are probably aware, my man, that this letter is sufficient to earn you a term of imprisonment for attempted blackmail?" said Mr. Railton.

"I done my dooty in comin' 'ere to show that young scoundril up," said Mr. Snaggs doggedly.



"Let me go!" roared Snaggs. "I'll go to your other things, you can't

"If it gets into the papers it won't do this school no good."

"That will do!" said the Head sharply. "Merry, you deny this man's story?"

"Every word, sir."

"You did not leave your dormitory on Wednesday night?"

"No, sir; not from lights out till rising-bell."

The Head was clearly puzzled.

"It is possible that some other person committed the outrage and gave Merry's name, sir," suggested Mr. Railton. "The man could scarcely have recognised him on so dark a night."

Pete Snaggs burst into a scoffing laugh.

"Pr'aps the person 'ad the same initials as Mr. Tom Merry!" he sneered. "Anyways, he dropped his handkerchief under Mr. Grubb's winder, an' Mr. Grubb's got it now, and there's 'T. M.' marked in the corner."

Tom Merry started.

"Have you missed a handkerchief, Merry?" asked the Head, his voice growing grim.

"Yes, sir," said Tom slowly; "I lost one last week."

"Where did you lose it, Merry?"

"I—I don't know." Tom was breathing hard now. He realised what this might mean for him. "I suppose I must have dropped it in the paper-chase. I happened to miss it on Thursday."

"You still deny this man's story, Merry?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"Then how do you account for your handkerchief being found under Mr. Grubb's window?"

"I don't believe it, sir; I think Snaggs is telling lies."

A snort from Snaggs.



"You're welcome," said Tom Merry. "Among
ve you a good whipping!"

"That can soon be ascertained," said the Head. "Snaggs—if that is your name—you can hardly expect me to accept your word without proof. It was your duty to tell your employer what you knew at the time, as you know very well. You had better return to Mr. Grubb and tell him what you choose, and if Mr. Grubb has any complaint to make he can come here and make it. You may go."

"Mr. Grubb ain't my employer now," growled Pete Snaggs. "But I'll tell 'im right enough, you bet! And you can bet your sweet life 'e'll come 'ere when 'e knows that young gent's name and knows 'e belongs to this 'ere school. 'E's been fair ragin' ever since it 'appened!"

"You may go!" repeated the Head.

And Mr. Snaggs went, with a leer at Tom Merry.

The junior stood silent.

"This is a very strange affair, Merry," said the Head. "I shall take no action on that man's word. But if Mr. Grubb calls upon me, as I expect, the matter will be gone into thoroughly. You may go."

"Yes, sir."

Tom Merry left the Head's study.

Manners and Lowther were waiting for him in the Hall, with a dozen other fellows. Mr. Snaggs was gone.

"Well?" said Manners.

"What's the wov, deah boy?"

Tom Merry explained quietly. There was a buzz among the juniors. Tom went up to his study with his chums. In Study No. 10 the Terrible Three sat down to their unfinished tea.

But they were very grave now, and there was silence for some time. The matter had taken a serious turn, and they realised it.

"Somebody went to Grubb's farm that night, Tom," said Manners at last.

"Looks like it."

"And he had your hanky with him."

Tom nodded.

"Must have been a St. Jim's chap, then."

"Plain enough!"

"If somebody took your hanky, he took it on purpose," said Lowther. "It wasn't dropped there by accident. He meant it to be found. Who could be such an awful rotter? Tom, old man, if Grubb comes along, and it turns out to be your hanky, you're in Queer Street."

"I know," said Tom Merry quietly.

There was a dismal silence in the study till the sounds of a motor-car were heard in the quadrangle.

The chums hurried to the window in time to see Mr. Grubb descend from his car and pass into the house.

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"Now for it!" he muttered.

"The old beast is as spiteful as a cat!" muttered Lowther. "Oh, Tom—"

The door opened, and Mr. Railton looked in and beckoned to Tom Merry.

Tom followed him without a word. He followed the Housemaster into the Head's study. Mr. Grubb was there, and on the Head's desk lay a handkerchief.

"Is that your handkerchief, Merry?" asked Dr. Holmes, and his voice was hard as steel.

Tom looked at it.

"It is mine, sir."

"It was found by Mr. Grubb under his window

after the outrage that occurred on Wednesday night."

Tom was silent.

"I kept that!" said Mr. Grubb savagely. "I 'oped it might lead to me findin' the 'ound what sent that stone through my winder. I've a mind to go to the perlice about it, sir. But I leave it in your 'ands."

"You may safely leave it in my hands, Mr. Grubb," said the Head. "Merry will be flogged to-morrow morning in the presence of the whole school."

"I knowed you would see justice done, sir," said Mr. Grubb, and he took his leave.

"I am sorry for this, Merry," said the Head. "I cannot understand a lad of your character yielding to a revengeful impuse of this kind. Mr. Grubb was perhaps disagreeable, but such an outrage—"

"I did nothing, sir! I was in the Shell dormitory all Wednesday night."

The Head made a gesture of dismissal, and Tom left the study.

Five minutes later the school was agog with the news. Tom Merry, the captain of the Shell, was to be flogged in the morning before the school!

CHAPTER 12.

Levison Means Business!

LEVISON of the Fourth came into Study No. 9 with a pale face and gleaming eyes. He was looking for Cardew.

His minor was in the study waiting for him, with his books. He started at the look on Ernest Levison's face.

"What's the row, Ernie?" he exclaimed breathlessly.

"Never mind. Do you know where Cardew is?"

"No; he hasn't been here," said Frank, in wonder. "Not rowing with Cardew, are you, Ernie?"

Levison did not reply. He hurried out of the study and inquired for Cardew up and down the House, but the new junior was not to be found. Levison hurried over to the New House at last, and learned from Figgins that Cardew was in Redfern's study. Levison ran there breathlessly.

Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence were at work on their prep. Cardew had remained in the study after tea, however, and he was reading in Reddy's armchair. He laid down his book as Levison came in.

"Hallo! Is it a fire?" asked Redfern.

"I want you, Cardew. Come on!"

"In a hurry?" yawned Cardew.

"Yes."

"Right-ho! I'll come! Ta-ta, you chaps!"

Cardew sauntered coolly out of the study. He followed Levison down the stairs and out into the quadrangle. Levison did not speak till they were out of hearing of New House ears. Then he stopped.

"You know what's happened, Cardew?"

"Not at all. I've been with Redfern some time. What's in the wind?"

"Grubby and his man have been here. Somebody was caught bashing stones through Grubby's window last Wednesday night. The man swears it was Tom Merry, but—"

"Hard cheese on Merry!" yawned Cardew.

"Tom Merry's handkerchief was picked up

there by old Grubb. He brought it to the Head. Tom Merry's to be flogged to-morrow morning!"

"Hard lines!"

Levison gave him a fierce look. Cardew was perfectly cool and unperturbed, though his eyes were gleaming.

"You know who went there on Wednesday night, Cardew?"

"Yes."

"You know Tom Merry was not there."

"I don't know anythin' about him, of course."

"You asked me to help you!" muttered Levison. "Like a fool I did it. I didn't know you'd taken Tom Merry's handkerchief in your pocket—to fix it on him, like a sneaking, cowardly cad!"

"Draw it mild!" said Cardew quietly. "I never intended to fix it on him. I intended that if anybody was caught, it should be him—that's all!"

"And you were caught—"

"There was a sneakin', nosin' rotter there—"

"And you gave Tom Merry's name."

Cardew laughed lightly.

"The rotter wouldn't let me go till I'd given a name. I wasn't likely to give my own!"

"You left the handkerchief there—"

Cardew yawned.

"And now the Head thinks it's proved against Tom Merry, and he's going to be flogged in the morning."

"I told him he would be sorry for knockin' me down," said Cardew coolly.

"You hound!" shouted Levison.

"Oh, keep your wool on!" said Cardew. "I never intended to fix it on Merry—the hanky wasn't enough for that. I only meant that if anybody was bowled out for it, it shouldn't be me."

Levison clenched his hands almost convulsively.

"Do you think I'm going to stand it?" he exclaimed.

"Why not?" Cardew shrugged his shoulders. "I suppose you're not goin' to sneak about a pal?"

"Do you think I should hold my tongue, and see Tom Merry flogged for what you did?" shouted Levison.

"Yes, I do! You can't give me away; you promised not to, for one thing. I know what the whole school would think of you if you broke your word, and gave me away to the Head! Liar and sneak!" sneered Cardew.

"You've got to go to the Head and own up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you laughing at, confound you?"

"Your little joke," said Cardew, still laughing. "I didn't know you were such a humorist, Levison. You should do somethin' for the 'Weekly'."

Cardew turned away.

Levison sprang after him and caught him by the shoulder.

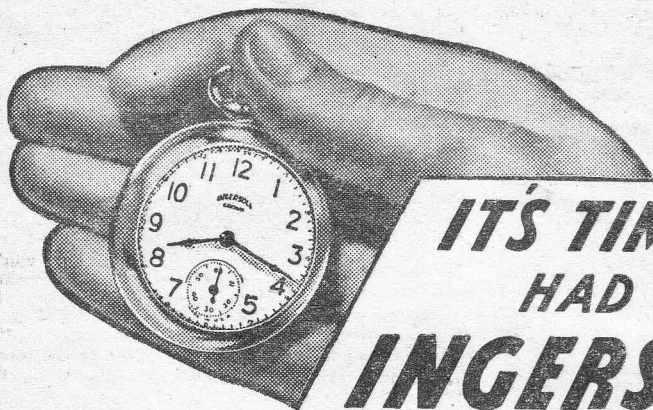
"You cur!" he said thickly. "You plotting hound! You've got me in a cleft stick, but Clive knows! He hasn't forgotten your gas in the study. You asked us both to go with you!"

"He can't sneak about me!" muttered Cardew savagely. "He can't give away a chap in his own study."

He shook off Levison's hand, and strode away to the School House. There was a shout as he entered.

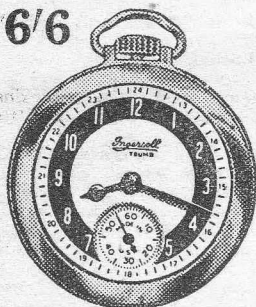
"Here he is, Clive!"

(Continued on page 22.)



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in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, The GEM, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Sidney Clive came up to Cardew. A dozen pairs of eyes were fixed on the two. Clive's eyes were flashing.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" asked Cardew, with deadly quietness.

"You were the chap who went to Grubb's farm on Wednesday night!" said the South African junior, between his teeth. "You're not going to put it on Tom Merry."

"Have you told the Head that?" sneered Cardew.

"No! You're going to tell him that!"

"Your mistake, I'm not!"

"Do you deny it?" shouted Clive.

"Oh, yes! Every word of it. You've been dreamin'," said Cardew pleasantly. "So far as I remember, I slept quite soundly last Wednesday night; never moved an eyelid."

Clive stared at him, utterly taken aback.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Are you sure you are not makin' a mistake, Clive, dear boy?"

"I only know what he said!" exclaimed Clive. "He told me he was going—"

"I was gassin'," said Cardew calmly. "You advised me to chuck the idea, and I chucked it. Lucky I did, as it turns out."

"Well, my hat!" said Clive. "I—I thought you—"

"You shouldn't, dear boy; your brain won't stand it," said Cardew, with a smile. "I take this opportunity of thankin' you for the good advice you gave me."

Levison had stepped in after Cardew. He listened to the new junior's mocking words, with a bitter smile. He came quietly forward.

"Listen to me, you fellows," he said. "Cardew went to Grubb's farm on Wednesday night. I helped him over the wall, and waited for him, and helped him in. I didn't know he had stolen Tom Merry's handkerchief to take with him. He told me nothing. I promised to keep it dark—from the masters. He's got me there. But if he lets Tom Merry get the flogging, you'll all know what to think of him!"

There was a yell from the juniors.

"Cardew, you hound! You've got to own up!"

"Own up, you rotter!"

"Yaas, wathah!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

Cardew stood with his hands in his pockets. His face was pale now, but as cool as ever. He gave Levison a bitter look, which was answered by one of scorn and contempt.

"What are you going to do, Cardew?" asked Jack Blake, with his hands clenched.

Cardew laughed.

"It looks like a fair catch!" he said, shrugging his shoulders. "You needn't tell me you're goin' to rag me if I don't own up—I can see that. I'm goin' to the Head; the game's up! Any message for the old sport?"

And Cardew, with perfect coolness, sauntered down the passage to the Head's study, tapped, and went in.

"Well," said Blake, with a deep breath. "He's as big a rotter as ever rotted, but he's got nerve!"

CHAPTER 13.

Facing the Music!

TOM MERRY was in his study. He was not working, and his chums were not. The Terrible Three did not feel in much of a humour for prep.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,696.

The Terrible Three, usually the cheeriest chums in the School House, sat in dismal silence. They hardly looked up as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eyeglass gleamed in at the door. The swell of St. Jim's was smiling.

"It's all sewene, deah boys!" he said.

Tom Merry started up, his face flushing.

"Gussy! You don't mean to say—"

"It's all wight!" trilled Arthur Augustus.

"The wottah's owned up, and the Head wants you at once, Tom Mewwy. It was Cardew all the time, and Levison made him own up! Wun along, deah boy; the Head's waitin' for you."

Tom Merry was out of the room with a bound. He rushed away to the Head's study, breathless and excited.

Cardew was there, and he gave the Shell fellow a cool nod and grin.

The rascal of the Fourth was game to the last.

"Merry," said Dr. Holmes, in a deeply moved voice, "I am more sorry than I can say. I could only come to the conclusion I did, on the evidence before me, but it is a great satisfaction to me to learn that you are innocent. Cardew has admitted the guilt. He has admitted that he took your handkerchief with him to Mr. Grubb's farm, so that if a discovery were made, the wrong person would be implicated. Cardew leaves the school to-night!"

"I—I'm glad it's come out, sir!" gasped Tom Merry. "I—I couldn't have done such a rotten thing."

"I know now, Merry. You are quite cleared." The Head turned to Cardew with a thunderous frown. "As for you, Cardew, you know what to expect. You will be expelled from this school!"

A curious smile hovered about Cardew's lips. Tom Merry gave him a quick look. He wondered whether the rascal of the Fourth was about to betray Redfern, in order to mitigate his own sentence.

But Cardew did not speak.

"You may go!" said the Head.

The two juniors left the study. In the passage Cardew gave the captain of the Shell a mocking look.

"Your luck's better than mine," he said.

"You are a treacherous hound, Cardew," said Tom Merry, "and I'm not sorry you're sacked. But it's decent of you to keep quiet about Reddy. I don't quite understand a fellow of your sort."

Cardew laughed.

"You wouldn't!" he said.

And he walked away whistling.

Tom Merry came down the passage with a bright face. He was surrounded by fellows to congratulate him at once.

Redfern of the Fourth was waiting with Lawrence at the foot of the stairs. Cardew gave the New House juniors a nod, and was passing on when Redfern caught his arm.

"I've heard all about it!" muttered Redfern.

"Is it the sack?"

Cardew nodded.

"The Head might have made it a flogging, you being a new fellow—"

"He hasn't!"

Redfern drew a deep breath.

"If—if he knew that it wasn't you, Cardew, who went for Ratty in the quad that time, he might. He's come down so heavy because this is the second time you've broken out, as he thinks."

"Exactly!"

"But if he knew—"

(Continued on page 36.)

The OUTCAST of CEDAR CREEK!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Having brought ridicule upon the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek, Kern Gunten now has to pay the penalty for his cowardly action—expulsion from the backwoods school.

Old Man Gunten Looks In.

"IT'S Old Man Gunten!"

There was a buzz of voices among the fellows standing near the gateway at Cedar Creek School.

A buggy came dashing up from the rough trail towards the school gates, and they looked very curiously at the buggy and its driver.

Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclerc were in the group, and they looked very curiously at the buggy and its driver.

Mr. Gompers Gunten, the Swiss storekeeper of Thompson Town, and postmaster of the section, was a quite important personage in the little world of the Thompson Valley.

He was a hard-fisted man of business, and reputed to be one of the richest men in the section, and not over-scrupulous in his dealings.

And he was the father of Kern Gunten, the blackest sheep at the lumber school of Cedar Creek.

The fat storekeeper's face was unusually hard and grim now. He was evidently very angry.

The buggy stopped at the school gateway, and Mr. Gunten jumped down.

He called to Frank Richards, who happened to be the nearest of the group of Cedar Creek fellows.

"Hold my horse, boy!"

"What?"

"Hold my horse!"

Frank Richards did not move.

"Do you hear me?" rapped out Mr. Gunten harshly.

"Yes, I hear you," assented Frank.

"Take the horse, then!"

"Did you ever come across the word 'please' in your dictionary, Mr. Gunten?" asked Frank Richards quietly.

"What?"

"I'll mind your horse if you ask me," said Frank. "I certainly shall not take any orders from you, Mr. Gunten."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclerc smiled. Chunky Todgers burst into a chuckle.

Mr. Gunten muttered something under his breath, and threw his reins over a post, and strode in at the gates, without another word.

With a quick, angry step he went towards the log schoolhouse, and disappeared into the porch.

"My word! Old Man Gunten's mad!" grinned Eben Hacke. "I've seen him in a temper before, but never quite so mad as this."

"Cheeky old duffer!" said Frank Richards indignantly. "Does he think he can order us about like his Chinese shopman at the store?"

"I guess he's found out that he can't," chuckled Bob Lawless. "The old sport has come here to bulldoze Miss Meadows about his precious son being turned out of the school. I fancy Miss Meadows will give him no change, though."

"Gunten doesn't seem to be coming back to the school," Vere Beauclerc remarked.

"Miss Meadows won't let him," said Tom Lawrence. "A jolly good thing, too! But Old Man Gunten's wild about it."

There was no doubt that Old Man Gunten was "wild."

He was breathing wrath as he strode into the porch of the lumber school, and his glare almost scared Black Sally when she came to see what he wanted.

"Is Miss Meadows here?" snapped the storekeeper.

"Missy here," said Black Sally. "Loramussy!"

"Show me in to Miss Meadows."

"Loramussy!" gasped Sally.

A door on the passage opened, and Miss Meadows looked out of her little study and sitting-room.

The face of the Cedar Creek schoolmistress was cold and severe.

"Kindly step in, Mr. Gunten," she said icily.

The fat storekeeper tramped into the room.

Miss Meadows did not ask him to be seated, and she did not sit down. She stood facing the angry man, with cold calmness.

Mr. Gunten was the richest man in Thompson, and what the cattelman called a "big bug" in his way, but his frown had no terrors for the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek.

"You wished to see me?" asked Miss Meadows quietly.

Mr. Gunten breathed like a grampus.

"Yes!" he snorted. "I came to see you, Miss Meadows, about my son."

"I explained the matter fully in my letter to you."

"I guess that doesn't go with me. You said that Kern could not be allowed to return to Cedar Creek School."

"Quite so."

"Well, I cannot agree to that."

Miss Meadows' lips hardened.

"I am afraid you have no choice in the matter, Mr. Gunten," she said. "I am headmistress of Cedar Creek, and I cannot allow your son to come to the school any longer."

"I guess a Canadian school isn't the property of a paid teacher!" snorted Mr. Gunten.

Miss Meadows did not reply to that.

"My boy must go to school," continued Mr. Gunten. "There is no other school near my home—and he must come here. You have no right to exclude him."

"I should not have done so if I had not the right," said Miss Meadows coldly. "Kern Gunten cannot return here."

"What is your complaint against him?"

"I have told you. He inserted an advertisement in the 'Thompson Press,' with my name attached, which was intended to cover me with ridicule. In a mean and cowardly manner, he made me believe at first that another boy—Richards—had played that wretched trick."

"Moreover, I have never been satisfied with him. I have found him gambling and inducing other boys to gamble with him. That kind of thing cannot be allowed at Cedar Creek."

Mr. Gunten grunted.

"If he has done wrong he can be punished. I will give him the cowhide if you wish. But he cannot be sent away from school. What is he to do?"

"My concern is to see that my school is kept in a proper state of order," said Miss Meadows. "Gunten has deliberately defied all authority. He knew what he was doing."

"He will express his sorrow——"

"He will speak falsely, as he has done many times before."

"You appear to have a bad opinion of my son, Miss Meadows."

"I am sorry, but that is so."

"It is a slight to me!" Mr. Gunten exclaimed heatedly. "What is this school? A lumber school of the backwoods! I am the most prominent citizen of Thompson. And you calmly propose to turn my son out of this backwoods school! It is an insult! I shall be laughed at by all Thompson!"

"I am sorry; it cannot be helped."

"You mean that you will not allow Kern to return?"

"Yes."

Another snort!

"Well, he must return, Miss Meadows! I am not a man to be trifled with. Kern must and shall return to this school!"

And the angry storekeeper emphasised that statement with a heavy stamp on the floor which almost made Miss Meadows' desk dance.

The Boot for the Bulldozer!

"**B**Y thunder, the old galoot's going it!"

"Cheeky old ass!"

Outside the lumber schoolhouse the fellows were gathering with excited and angry faces.

Mr. Gunten's bull voice could be heard easily outside the house, and, in fact, half way across the school grounds.

The angry storekeeper did not care who heard him.

The idea of their schoolmistress being "bulldozed" in her own study by the fat storekeeper from Thompson naturally made the fellows angry.

"Say, let's go in and chuck him out," suggested Eben Hacke.

Frank Richards grinned.

"Miss Meadows wouldn't like it," he said.

"I guess we shall chip in if he bulldozes Miss Meadows!" exclaimed Bob Lawless indignantly.

"Hark! There he goes again!"

"Cheeky rotter!" growled Frank Richards.

"You hear me, Miss Meadows? Kern must and shall return! I cannot put up with this slight! Punish him if you like, but he must return to this school, and that is settled!"

Miss Meadow did not reply. She stepped to the door and opened it.

"Sally!"

"Yes, missy?" said Sally, who was in the passage, with a scared expression on her ebony face.

"Please show Mr. Gunten out."

"Yes, missy."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—NO. 1,606.

"What?" thundered Mr. Gunten. "My interview with you, Miss Meadows, is not yet over!"

"You are mistaken, Mr. Gunten. I have no more time to waste."

"Madam!"

"Good-afternoon, sir!"

"I am not going yet," said Mr. Gunten, while Black Sally stared at him helplessly.

The old negress was quite unable to show out Mr. Gunten if that irascible gentleman refused to go.

"I have to take the afternoon class in a few minutes, Mr. Gunten," said Miss Meadows quietly. "Will you oblige me by retiring?"

"I guess not."

"Then I shall leave you here!"

Miss Meadows, at a loss how to deal with her obstreperous visitor, made a movement towards the doorway, where Black Sally stood blinking.

The storekeeper stepped to the door, slammed it in Sally's black face, and put his back to it.

Miss Meadows started back.

The storekeeper was purple with wrath, and so enraged that he did not think or care what he was doing.

"Will you allow me to pass, Mr. Gunten?" exclaimed Miss Meadows, her voice trembling with anger.

"No, madam, I will not until this matter is settled!" shouted Mr. Gunten.

"Are you out of your senses, sir?" exclaimed the schoolmistress, in mingled anger and consternation. "Let me pass at once!"

"I will do nothing of the sort!"

The door behind Mr. Gunten's broad back was suddenly opened—so suddenly that it crashed on him, and sent him reeling forward towards Miss Meadows.

In the doorway there appeared the flushed face of Frank Richards, with Bob Lawless and Beauclerc just behind him, and behind them a crowd of the Cedar Creek fellows.

Mr. Gunten spun round in fury.

"Get out!" rapped out Frank Richards.

"Richards!" ejaculated Miss Meadows.

"Leave him to us, ma'am," said Frank. "Mr. Gunten, Miss Meadows has told you to go. Are you going on your feet, or on your neck?"

"Sharp's the word!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "Now, then!"

"Kick him out!" roared Chunky Todgers.

Mr. Gunten, instead of replying to Frank Richards, made a rush at him, lashing out savagely with a heavy fist.

Frank Richards knocked his blow aside, and was upon him like a cat.

Bob and Beauclerc were not a second behind.

In the grasp of the three schoolboys, the fat storekeeper went to the floor with a crash and a yell.

"Hurrah! Out with him!" yelled Tom Lawrence.

"Boot him out!"

"Fire him!"

"Good gracious!" gasped Miss Meadows.

A dozen fellows were swarming round Mr. Gunten now.

In the clutch of many pairs of hands, the prominent citizen of Thompson Town was whirled through the doorway.

He yelled and spluttered as he was whirled away into the porch, and then out into the open air, heels uppermost.

"Out with him!" roared Bob Lawless.

"Hurrah!"

"Yank him along!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pitch him into his buggy!"

"Head first! Ha, ha!"

In a terrific roar, Mr. Gunten was whirled away to the gates, hardly knowing what was happening to him.

He came up to his buggy with a rush, his arms and legs flying wildly, and the shouting schoolboys heaved him into the air, and he landed inside the vehicle with a crash.

The horse started and reared.

"Cast him loose!" chuckled Lawrence.

Frank Richards dragged the reins from the post. Then the horse was turned and sent up the trail at a run.

Mr. Gunten was on his back in the buggy, with his legs sprawling over the seat. Only his boots could be seen as he went down the trail.

The horse trotted away, with the reins on his back, and the buggy disappeared round the timber.

A roar of laughter followed him as he departed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Lawless wiped his eyes.

"Oh Jerusalem!" he gasped. "I reckon Old Man Gunten won't come here to bulldoze Miss Meadows again in a hurry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The school bell began to ring. The schoolboys streamed towards the house, still chortling.

Miss Meadows' colour was heightened as she came into the school-room to take her class.

Frank Richards & Co. judiciously set the example of being extra quiet and respectful that afternoon. They had chipped in for Miss Meadows' sake, and the schoolmistress could scarcely reprimand them. But it was just as well to be very quiet and orderly afterwards.

School passed off that day without the attendance of Kern Gunten.

Neither did Mr. Gompers Gunten return. The storekeeper of Thompson had had enough of the Cedar Creek fellows.

The Outcast!

BOB LAWLESS was chuckling as he led his pony down the trail after school.

Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc wore smiles.

The incident of the afternoon had tickled them immensely.

"The cheeky jay!" said Bob. "As if we'd stand his bulldozing at Cedar Creek, you know! What a nerve!"

"Well, I don't see how Miss Meadows could allow Kern Gunten to come back after what he did," said Frank Richards.

"And it's a good riddance to bad rubbish!"

"You bet!"

"Hallo! Talk of angels!" exclaimed Bob Lawless suddenly.

As the three chums came up to the fork of the trail their eyes fell upon the fellow they had been discussing.

Kern Gunten was standing there, leaning on a tree, and he seemed to be waiting for them.

The Swiss did not look happy. His heavy face was morose in expression, and he had a generally unquiet and troubled look.

The three chums stopped at the fork of the trail, where Beauclerc usually left his companions to go his different way home.

As they stopped, Kern Gunten came towards them, greeted by rather grim looks.

"Hold on a minute, you chaps!" he said.

"Well?"

"Has my popper been to the school this afternoon?"

Bob grinned.

"I guess so."

"What's the verdict, then?"

"You haven't been home since?" asked Bob.

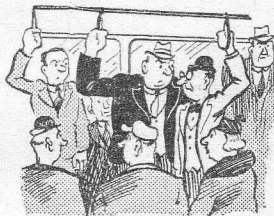
"Nope. I want to know how it turned out before I see my father," said the Swiss. "He's not got a good temper, and he's rather fond of using the cowhide when he's mad. What happened at Cedar Creek?"

Bob Lawless explained.

He did not want to score over the fellow who had been turned out of the school, and he put it as gently as he could.

As a matter of fact, the chums were feeling rather sorry for Gunten.

He was a rogue and a rascal—there was no denying that—and he had played a cruel trick on Miss Meadows, and very nearly succeeded in



"I've been standing on one foot for the last mile!"

"I know—it's mine!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to T. McCabe, 15, Harewood Drive, Edinburgh 9.

getting the blame thrown upon Frank Richards' shoulders.

But he was down on his luck now, there was no doubt about that.

"I suppose you fellows are pretty glad I've been turned out?" said Gunten at last, with a sneer.

"Can't say I'm sorry," said Bob Lawless candidly. "Cedar Creek won't be any the worse for missing you. Still, I'm sorry for you personally."

"It doesn't look as if Miss Meadows will let me come back."

"I guess not."

"You really can't expect it, Gunten," said Frank Richards quietly. "You knew what you were risking, I suppose?"

"I didn't think I was risking anything," muttered the Swiss.

"No," exclaimed Bob hotly, "because you worked it to get the blame put on Frank Richards!"

"Never mind that now," said Frank. "That's all over. I'm sorry it's happened like this, Gunten, but I don't see that there's anything to be done."

"I guess I don't feel like facing my father," muttered Gunten. "He takes this as a slight to himself. People in Thompson will be chipping him about it. He's not popular. I—I wish I hadn't made that bad break."

The schoolboys were silent.

Gunten's repentance was only too plainly caused by the serious consequences he had to suffer, not by any regret for his wrongdoing.

"You don't think there's any chance for me?" asked Gunten.

"I'm afraid not," said Frank.

"I—I guess the popper will be mad about it. He says that I'm to go to school, whether Miss Meadows likes it or not."

"You can't do that."

Gunten made a restless gesture.

"I guess I've got to do as popper says. He's got a heavy cowhide at home to back up his orders."

"But what the dickens!" exclaimed Frank in astonishment. "He can't send you to school when the schoolmistress won't admit you!"

"You don't know my father. He's obstinate. He's a big bug in Thompson and the whole section. A lot of the farmers are in his debt, and they're very civil, and it's got into his head. He fancies he can override everybody and everything. But I can't argue with his cowhide!"

"By gum, you've brought a lot of trouble on yourself, Gunten!" said Bob. "I'm blessed if I see any way out for you! But I'm pretty certain Miss Meadows won't let you into the school if you come there again."

"I guess popper will make me come."

Gunten gave the chums a short nod and strode glumly away.

"Poor brute!" said Vere Beauclerc. "He seems to be between the devil and the deep sea. He brought it on himself. Miss Meadows stood a great deal before she turned him out."

"Can't help feeling sorry for him, though," said Bob.

The chums parted, Beauclerc striding away towards his home, and Frank and Bob trotting off on their ponies to the Lawless Ranch. They were very thoughtful.

They did not like Gunten, and his baseness had disgusted them, but they felt compassion for the wretched fellow.

But there was nothing they could do to help him if they wanted to.

The decision rested with Miss Meadows, and she had decided.

Fired Out!

FRANK RICHARDS and his chums were thinking of Gunten when they arrived at the lumber school on the following morning.

That even the high-handed and arrogant Gompers Gunten would send his son there, against the express orders of the schoolmistress, seemed incredible.

But Kern Gunten evidently thought so, and they were curious to see what would happen.

Keller, Gunten's chum, met them as they came in at the gate. Keller was looking very serious.

"Have you seen Gunten?" he asked.

"Not since last evening," said Bob Lawless.

"He's coming here to-day," said Keller.

"Phew!"

"His father's ordered him to."

"Silly old donkey!" commented Bob.

"Well, he is an old chump, and no mistake!" said Keller. "But Gunten dare not disobey him. He'll come right enough. I'm expecting him."

"My hat!" murmured Frank.

Most of the Cedar Creek fellows were on the look-out for Kern Gunten after that.

And a few minutes before the school bell rang for lessons the outcast of the lumber school rode up, turned his horse into the corral, and came in.

He was surrounded at once.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,603.

"What's this game, Gunten?" asked Eben Hacke.

"I've come to school," said Gunten doggedly.

"But you don't belong here now," said Dick Dawson.

"Popper says Miss Meadows hasn't any right to turn me out," said Gunten in a sullen tone.

"He's made me come, anyway."

"Well, my hat!" said Frank Richards. "But—but—you can't come, Gunten. It's all rot!"

"I've got to do as popper says, I guess. He's too hefty with the cowhide for me to argue with him."

The bell rang, and Kern Gunten slipped into the school-room in the crowd of fellows, and took his former place.

There was deep, subdued excitement among the boys and girls in Miss Meadows' class.

Most of them felt sorry for Gunten, in his peculiar circumstances.

He fully deserved his punishment, but certainly he was in a most unenviable position.

What Miss Meadows would do when she found the Swiss in her class was a very thrilling and interesting question.

Mr. Slimmey, the assistant master, came in, and he caught sight of Gunten in the class and started.

Mr. Slimmey took the younger class, and had nothing to do with the others. But on his way to his class he paused and spoke to the Swiss.

"Gunten!"

"Yes, sir!" said Gunten, very respectfully.

"Has Miss Meadows given you permission to be here?"

"No, sir!"

"Then why are you here, Gunten?"

"My father sent me, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Slimmey.

He went on to his class; it was not his business to deal with Kern Gunten.

That problem was left to the schoolmistress, in whose class he was.

But he glanced round several times at the sullen face of the Swiss, evidently in a perplexed mood.

There was a hush in the class as Miss Meadows came into the school-room.

Expectancy was at its height.

The schoolmistress did not notice Gunten for the moment among the crowd of others, and the Swiss made himself as small as possible.

But as she caught sight of him she started abruptly.

"Now for it!" murmured Bob Lawless.

Miss Meadows came towards the desks. Her lips were set and her eyes were glinting.

"Gunten!"

Gunten stood up.

"You should not be here!" said Miss Meadows sternly.

"My father sent me, ma'am."

"Indeed! Your father has no right and no authority to do anything of the kind, Gunten! You will leave the school at once!"

There was a breathless pause.

Kern Gunten's hard face paled a little, but he did not move.

"Do you hear me, Gunten?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Kindly obey me, then."

Still the Swiss did not move.

"You surely cannot suppose, Gunten, that you can remain here without permission!" said Miss Meadows severely. "Unless you immediately



Mr. Gunten was whirled up to his buggy with a rush, his arms and legs flying wildly. Then the Cedar Creek fellows heaved him into the air, and he landed inside the vehicle with a crash!

leave the school-room, I have no alternative but to have you removed by force!"

Gunten licked his dry lips.

"Popper's told me to stay here, Miss Meadows," he muttered.

"Your father has no authority in this school, as you very well know. For the last time, will you leave the school-room, Gunten?"

The Swiss did not answer; but he did not move.

Miss Meadows compressed her lips.

"Todgers!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

"Fetch Washington here at once!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

Chunky Todgers left the school-room.

Washington, otherwise known as Black Sam, was the handy-man of Cedar Creek School, and performed many duties.

Among his duties, that of "chucker-out" had never yet been included. But the negro servant was the only resource in this case.

There was a grim silence in the school-room, till Chunky Todgers came back, followed by the burly negro.

"You want me, Missy Meadows," said Black Sam. "Here I is, missy."

"Gunten is here without permission. Please take him away, and leave him outside the school gates."

"Yes, marm."

Black Sam made towards Gunten, coming among the desks.

"You come with me, Mass' Gunten," said Sam. Gunten panted.

"Hands off, you confounded nigger!" he

hissed. "Don't you dare to touch me, you black hound!"

Sam grinned and "touched" Gunten fast enough.

Gunten struck out savagely. He had a good deal of his father's arrogance, and he was enraged at being handled by a nigger.

But the nigger did not mind. He received a savage blow on the chest from Gunten's fist, without heeding it, probably without feeling it much.

Then his powerful grasp closed on the Swiss, and Gunten was whirled out from the desks.

"Let me go!" shrieked Gunten, struggling fiercely.

"Take him away!" said Miss Meadows.

"I'se taking him, missy!"

Grasped in the powerful arms of the negro, Gunten was carried out of the school-room like an infant.

He kicked and struggled, but it did not avail him.

The two disappeared from sight, out of the doorway, and Gunten's furious yells were heard dying away in the direction of the gates.

Black Sam deposited him on the trail outside the school gates, with a bump.

"Now, you vamoose, Mass' Gunten!" he said. "You come round here agin, and I lay my stable mop round you!"

He went in and closed the gates and locked them.

Gunten stood in the trail, panting with rage. In the school-room lessons commenced.

But the Cedar Creek fellows could not help thinking of Gunten, and wondering whether this was the end of his career at the lumber school.

Missing !

THERE was a rush out of the gates when morning classes were dismissed at Cedar Creek.

The fellows were anxious to see whether Kern Gunten was still hanging about the school.

The Swiss was not to be seen, however. "I guess he's gone home," remarked Tom Lawrence. "I don't envy him when he got there. But it's his own fault."

But, as it happened, Gunten had not gone home.

Frank Richards & Co. strolled down the creek, and, at some distance from the school, they suddenly spotted Kern Gunten.

The Swiss was standing by a tree, leaning on it and staring at the creek with a morose and gloomy face.

He looked up at the sound of footsteps, and a sneering, sullen expression came over his hard face at the sight of Frank Richards and his chums.

"You've not gone home?" asked Bob Lawless. "Nope!"

"You're going, I suppose?" asked Frank.

"I guess not," said Gunten. "It only means another row, and I've had enough of the cowhide, I reckon."

"What on earth are you going to do, then?" asked Frank.

"I'm going to stick it out in the woods."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I'm not going home to the cowhide," said Gunten sullenly. "I've got plenty of money, and I'm going to get somebody to take me in. Rube Bailey will take me into his shack if I ask him."

"Rube Bailey—that blessed horse-thief?" exclaimed Bob.

Gunten shrugged his shoulders.

"I can't camp out in winter," he said. "If it was summer, I'd take a trip down the valley and stay away till my money was spent. I guess I'm not going home, anyway."

Keller came along the creek and started as he saw Gunten.

Frank Richards & Co. walked on and left the two Swiss together.

"What a kettle of fish!" said Bob Lawless. "Gunten's down on his luck, and no mistake! Poor brute!"

"He can't stay away from home like this," said Frank Richards uneasily.

"He can't go home if the old man hands out the cowhide at every meeting, I guess."

Frank nodded.

Gunten's position was not a pleasant one, and he wondered how it would all end.

When Cedar Creek turned up for afternoon lessons, Miss Meadows' glance swept sharply over her class.

Frank Richards guessed that she would not have been surprised to see Gunten there again.

But Gunten was not there, and nothing more was seen of him that day at Cedar Creek.

The next morning, as Frank Richards and Bob Lawless trotted up the trail to school, they caught sight of two figures in the wood.

They were Kern Gunten and Rube Bailey—the latter a decidedly shady character, more than suspected in the section of being a horse-thief.

Gunten had a gun under his arm, and was evidently out looking for game with his new acquaintance.

Bob hailed him from the trail.

"Hallo, Gunten!"

The Swiss looked round and nodded.

"Been home?" asked Frank Richards, drawing rein.

"No."

"I say, won't your people be anxious about you?"

"Let them," said Gunten coolly.

The chums rode on.

Vere Beauclerc joined them on the trail, and they arrived at Cedar Creek School together.

From the direction of Thompson a buggy came in sight.

"Old Man Gunten!" grinned Bob.

It was the Swiss storekeeper again, driving to the school. The juniors watched him curiously.

Mr. Gunten left his buggy at the gates and strode in.

Frank Richards & Co. followed him to the schoolhouse with most of the Cedar Creek fellows.

Miss Meadows was in the schoolhouse porch, and the Thompson storekeeper stopped, and actually raised his stetson hat as he saw her.

The schoolmistress gave him the slightest inclination of the head.

"Miss Meadows, is my son here?" exclaimed Mr. Gunten.

Miss Meadows raised her eyebrows.

"No; certainly not."

"I sent him to school yesterday."

"I am aware of that," said Miss Meadows coldly. "I had him removed from the school."

"Has he not returned?"

"He has not."

Mr. Gunten gnawed his thick lip.

"Then what has become of him?" he exclaimed.

"He did not come home last night, Miss Meadows."

"Indeed!"

"I—I thought you would have some news of him here!" exclaimed Mr. Gunten. "He did not come home, and I have not seen him this morning."

"I cannot understand why he has not come home, Mr. Gunten. Perhaps it is due to your severity towards him."

"Nonsense!"

Mr. Gunten stood for some minutes, scowling, evidently at a loss.

Then he strode away towards the gates. He called to Keller as he saw him among the schoolboys.

"You were my son's friend," he said. "Do you know where he is?"

Keller shook his head.

"Do any of you know?" exclaimed Mr. Gunten.

Frank Richards & Co. did not speak.

"I guess I don't," said Eben Hacke. "Pr'aps he'll turn up to home, Mr. Gunten, if you chuck up lambastin' him. I guess you shouldn't have sent him here against the schoolmarm's wishes."

"Don't give me any impudence!" rapped out Mr. Gunten.

"Oh, come off!" said Hacke. "You can't skeer a free American with your black looks, Mister Swiss!"

Mr. Gunten was evidently in need of something, or somebody, to wreak his wrath upon.

He made a sudden cut at Hacke with the whip, and the American schoolboy uttered a wild yell.

"Yooop!"

"Go for him!" shouted Bob Lawless.

Mr. Gunten jumped into the buggy as the schoolboys made an angry rush, and lashed the

(Continued on page 36.)

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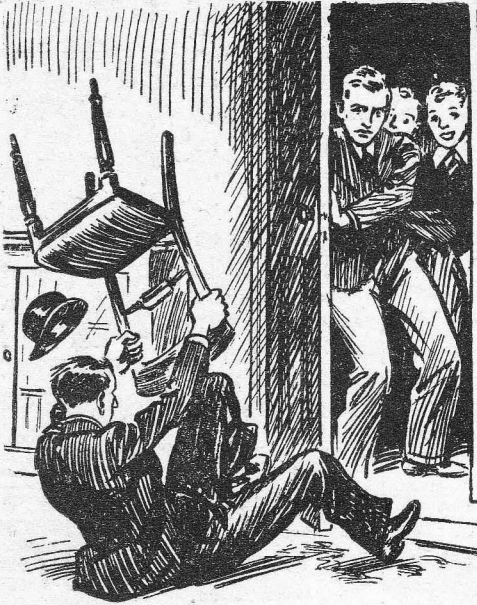
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As Lovelace hurled open the study door it crashed into Mr. Stuckey just as he was swinging back the chair for another bump. Chair and Mr. Stuckey went to the floor together.

Visitor for Tuckey !

“**W**HOS that merchant?” Daubeny & Co. of the Shell were lounging by the poop of the old Benbow, when they spotted the “merchant” who had just stepped on the gangway from the shore. Not only the knuts of the Shell, but a good many other St. Winifred’s fellows glanced at the visitor with interest.

Tuckey Toodles of the Fourth, who was leaning on the rail, regarding the swift-flowing waters of the Chadway with a dolorous expression, glanced up and stared at the gentleman who had stepped on the gangway after exchanging a few words with Coote, the porter, at the gate. “Oh crumbs!” muttered Tuckey Toodles, in dismay.

Tuckey’s eyes became glued on the merchant. Evidently Tuckey Toodles had seen the gentleman before.

The visitor was a young man, with a sallow face and a rather prominent nose, and very bright and watchful black eyes. He was clad in shiny boots, and a shiny bowler hat, with a very tight-fitting blue serge suit, which was also a little shiny here and there.

The young man trod lightly and nimbly across the gangway to the side of the Benbow, and stepped on board, still with Tuckey Toodles’ dismayed eyes fixed upon him. But Tuckey Toodles had retreated from view, taking up a strategic position behind the mainmast.

The young man glanced round him with perfect self-possession, not at all daunted by the

**TUCKEY
IN
TROUBLE!**

By Owen Conquest.

stares and insolent smiles of Daubeny & Co. He advanced towards the group of Shell fellows, who happened to be nearest to him.

“Excuse me, young gentleman——” he began.

Daubeny shook his head.

“Nothin’ to-day,” he remarked. “We don’t sell our old clothes.”

Torrence and Egan grinned.

But the young man was not disconcerted.

“Oh, I see!” he remarked. “You are making a slight mistake. I do not deal in gentlemen’s cast-off wardrobes. I am in the furniture business.”

“Oh!” said Daubeny, rather at a loss.

His insolence seemed to slide off this self-possessed merchant like water from a duck.

“Goggs’ Repository, Chade,” explained the young man. “Name of Stuckey. I’ve called to see a young gentleman by the name of Toodles.

When Tuckey Toodles is called upon to meet the instalments due on twenty pounds’ worth of furniture he finds it’s a case of pay up—or face the Head!

Perhaps you would be kind enough to tell me where to find Master Toodles?”

“Oh, Toodles!” said Daubeny, with a grin. “I think I see light. Toodles refurnished Study No. 8 a week or two ago.”

“We have done business with Master Toodles,” said Mr. Stuckey. “I have called to see Master Toodles on that account. Can you direct me to him?”

“Toodles!” called out Daubeny.

“Oh dear!”

“Come out, you fat duffer!”

“Ow!”

Sawyer major of the Fourth took Tuckey Toodles by one fat ear, and jerked him out from behind the mainmast.

Mr. Stuckey glanced round and saw him.

“Good-afternoon, Master Toodles!”

“G-g-good-afternoon!” stammered Tuckey.

“I have a little account——”

“I thought so,” grinned Daubeny. “I wondered how the fat boulder did it. On tick, of

course. Toodles, old scout, the furniture man has called for his money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say," gasped Toodles, "will you—hem!—call to-morrow? To-morrow morning—"

"I am afraid the matter cannot be put off any longer, Master Toodles," said the young man politely, but firmly. "The terms of our easy-payment system were explained to you in full—"

"Yes, yes; but—"

"The first payment was not made—"

"B-b-but—"

"The second weekly payment has now lapsed, and—"

"I—I—"

"And, according to the terms of the agreement, the whole sum now becomes due—"

"Oh dear!"

"As stated in the letter sent you by our firm," continued the young man calmly and urbanely, "you are indebted to Goggs & Co. for the sum of twenty pounds. I have called to collect the amount."

"Ow!"

"I am, however, authorised to accept the amount now in arrear on the weekly payments—the sum of four pounds—"

"Oh!"

"On receiving that sum, and a promise that future payments shall be kept up regularly, Messrs. Goggs & Co. are prepared to allow the agreement to stand."

"Mmmmmmm!"

"Otherwise, application will be made to your headmaster—"

"Wow!"

"And in the event of refusal of payment the furniture will be removed, and an account presented for the expenses of the transaction."

Tuckey Toodles groaned.

The St. Winifred's crowd chortled. But the young man did not seem to notice either the groan or the chortles. He was there on business, and he kept his attention strictly fixed on business.

"I need not point out that this is a generous offer," he said. "Messrs. Goggs & Co. are never hard upon their customers. They have a reputation to keep up. I trust you will kindly hand me the payments in arrear—"

"I—I say, Daub, old chap," gasped Toodles, "lend me four pounds, will you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Daubeny. "Make it four hundred. You'd be just as likely to get it."

"Egan, old fellow—"

"Go and eat coke!" said Egan politely.

Mr. Stuckey took on a sterner expression.

"It seems that this very reasonable demand cannot be met," he said. "Very well. Perhaps one of you young gentlemen will show me where to find the headmaster?"

"Certainly!" said Daubeny, with great delight.

"Hold on!" gasped Tuckey Toodles. "I—I'll pay up!"

"Oh, very good! Four pounds, please!"

"S-step down to my study, will you?" groaned the unhappy Toodles. "My—my pal Drake's got the money. I—I mean, I'm going to ask Rodney—I—I mean, come into my study!"

"Certainly, Master Toodles!"

And Mr. Stuckey followed Master Toodles down to Study No. 8 in the Fourth.

A Masterly Stratagem!

TUCKEY TODDLES looked a good deal as if he were going to his own funeral as he led the self-possessed young man from Goggs' to his study.

There was a roar of laughter on deck as they disappeared. All the Lower School of St. Winifred's had been surprised when Study No. 8 was magnificently refurbished by Tuckey Toodles, who was known to be the most impecunious fellow in the school. Jack Drake and Rodney, his study-mates, had no excess of cash to spend on new furniture. They had been astounded when Tuckey Toodles provided what was required—and, indeed, more than was required—in the most lavish manner. They had not understood till the demand came from Messrs. Goggs & Co. for payment. Tuckey Toodles had refurbished Study No. 8 on the easy-payment system, and in his usual happy-go-lucky way had trusted to luck for the payments.

Luck had not befriended him. Not a single payment had been made. It was not surprising that Goggs & Co. had grown restive, in the circumstances. They were not in the furniture line simply for their health!

Tuckey Toodles heard the roar of laughter on deck as he went down to the study with Mr. Stuckey, but he was not feeling merry himself. He had not the faintest idea how to meet this dreadful emergency.

His only thought had been to get the young man into his study out of sight. It was only by happy chance that he had not yet been spotted by some master.

But once the young man was in the study, Tuckey did not seem to be much "farrarder."

"Sit down, will you?" he said, with eager hospitality.

The young man sat down in the armchair provided—on the weekly payment system—by Messrs. Goggs & Co. Tuckey Toodles stood and blinked at him.

"I have no wish to waste your time, Master Toodles," said the young man briskly. "The sum of four pounds—"

"M-my old pal Drake is on the footer ground with Rodney—"

"Has Master Drake the money?"

"Nunno."

"Then the fact that he is absent does not seem to affect the matter," remarked Mr. Stuckey dryly. "I will trouble you—"

"The—the fact is, I'm rather short of money, and—"

Mr. Stuckey rose.

"You need not have brought me down here to tell me that," he said. "I had better see the headmaster at once—"

"S-sit down! I—I will call Drake—"

"Once and for all, Master Toodles," said the young man sternly, "are you prepared to make the payments?"

"N-not quite!"

"Then I will at once—"

"Sit down a minute!" spluttered Tuckey Toodles. "I—I'll get the money."

Mr. Stuckey sat down again, looking very suspicious. It was, in fact, only too clear that the hapless Tuckey Toodles was simply trying to gain time.

"Just a minute!" gasped Tuckey.

"I will wait two minutes!" said Mr. Stuckey calmly. "I will not wait one second longer!"

"All right! Just a tick!"

Tuckey Toodles turned to the door. He removed the key from the lock, keeping his back to the impatient visitor, and slipped it in outside the door. Then he quickly stepped out, drew the door shut, and turned the key.

That proceeding seemed to petrify the young man from Goggs'. He sat dumbfounded for a moment or two. Then he leapt to his feet.

"Master Toodles—"

"All right!" came Tuckey Toodles' voice through the keyhole, in quavering accents. "I—I'm going for the money!"

"Unlock the door at once!"

Tuckey Toodles did not reply. He was gone, with the key in his pocket.

The young man from Goggs' tugged at the handle and rattled it. Then he sat down again, with a very grim expression on his face. It was very clear to him that he was locked in to prevent him from going to the Head.

Leaving the visitor locked in the study, Tuckey Toodles hurried on deck.

Headless of the general chortle that greeted his reappearance, he ran to the side and scuttled across the gangway.

On the football ground, by the bank of the Chadway, a number of juniors were at football practice, making the most of what light was left. Jack Drake and Dick Rodney were among them, and they had been too busy with the leather to observe the arrival of the young man from Goggs'.

Tuckey Toodles panted on to Little Side.

"Drake—"

"Buzz off, you silly ass!" shouted Jack Drake, as the fat junio. came spluttering among the footballers.

"I—I say, old chap—"

Crash!

Rodney was sending the ball to Drake, but Drake was not able to bag it; Tuckey Toodles interposed. Toodles bagged the ball with the back of his fat knees, and he sat down upon it with startling suddenness.

Bump!

"Yaroooh! Wha-a-at—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jack Drake caught Toodles by the collar and jerked him to his feet impatiently.

"You silly chump!" he exclaimed. "Get out of the way! What the dickens are you up to?"

"I—I say, old boy— Ow!"

"Buzz off, you fat chump!"

"He—he's come!" spluttered Toodles.

"Who's come?"

"The man from Goggs'!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Drake.

"Kick that fat idiot off and let's get on!" exclaimed Rawlings.

"Hold on, though," said Dick Rodney quietly. "Do you mean that a man has come from Goggs' for the money, Tuckey?"

"Yes," groaned Toodles.

"Pay him, then!" grunted Drake.

"Oh dear! You know I can't!" mumbled Toodles.

"You ought to be kicked for ordering stuff you can't pay for!" growled Drake.

"Well, I like that!" said Tuckey Toodles indignantly. "I did it for your sake—yours and Rodney's. I'm always doing these generous things, and never get any thanks. I must say I'm used to it!"

"Tell the man to take his rubbish away, and be hanged to him!"

"He—he's going to the Head!"

"Let him!"

"You ass!" yelled Tuckey Toodles. "The Head will be in an awful wax. I—I've locked him in the study."

Drake jumped.

"You—you've done what?" he gasped.

"Locked him in—so that he can't go to the Head, you know. I—I thought that rather masterly."

"You thundering idiot!" gasped Rodney. "What on earth's to be done now? Let's get back to the Benbow, anyhow!"

"You chaps can pay him," suggested Tuckey Toodles. "You can borrow the money somehow, you know. I've done my bit. It's up to you fellows now, you know."

"Ass!"

"If you are going to be a thankless rotter, Drake, I shall think jolly seriously before I do anything for you again— Yaroooh!"

The exasperated Drake seized Toodles by the shoulders and sat him down on the football field with emphasis. Then he hurried off the ground with Rodney. Tuckey Toodles sat and gasped, till Rawlings helped him up with a football boot. Then the hapless Tuckey ambled off the field on the track of his studymates, and the Fourth Formers resumed their practice.

Trouble in Study No. 8!

"H A, ha, ha!"

"Go it!"

"Oh, my hat!"

There was a sound of steady thumping from the interior of Study No. 8 in the Fourth. Outside that study a crowd of fellows had gathered in the passage. Daubeny & Co. were there, and a crowd of the Fourth and Shell, and Sawyer minor and a horde of fags. They were roaring with laughter. The thumping on the door had revealed the fact that the young man from Goggs' was a prisoner in the study. It had drawn St. Winifred's fellows to the spot from near and far.

Mr. Stuckey had evidently lost patience. He was thumping away on the inside of the door at a great rate. There were shouts of encouragement from the juniors outside as the young man thumped and thumped.

"Go it!"

"Put it on!"

"You're nearly through!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That was the scene that greeted Drake and Rodney as they arrived breathless from the football ground.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Drake. "Let's pass, you fellows—give a chap room—"

He shoved his way through to the door.

Thump, thump, thump! came from within, and now the voice of the young man from Goggs' was heard:

"Let me out! Call the headmaster! I insist

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upon being released immediately! This is an outrage! This will be reported to the police!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Stop that row!" shrieked Jack Drake through the keyhole. "You'll have the Head here in a minute!"

"I want the Head to come here!" roared the young man, in tones of the greatest exasperation. "Unless I'm released immediately, I shall bring an action against you!"

"Oh, my hat! Where's the key?"

"Toodles has got it, I suppose!" gasped Rodney.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you cackling asses!" howled Drake. "It's all right, you in there—we'll get the key in a tick and let you out. Rodney, cut on deck and see if that fat idiot is there—get the key off him. Chuck him into the river when you've got it!"

Dick Rodney raced off.

Thump, thump!

"Will you stop that row?" hissed Jack Drake through the keyhole. "I tell you we're getting the key—"

Thump, thump! Bang!

"Will you stop it!" howled Drake.

"No, I will not stop it, not for one moment!" shouted the exasperated young man from Goggs'. "I have called here to collect an account, and I have been locked in this room! Release me at once!"

"I tell you—"

Thump! Bang! Crash!

The young man from Goggs' had been thumping on the door with his fist. Now apparently he was using something more solid for the purpose.

Crash, crash!

"Go it!" yelled Daubeny, in great glee. "The door won't stand much more! Two to one on the Goggs' bird!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat! We shall have the prefects down here soon!" muttered Sawyer major. "They can hear this thundering row all over the ship!"

Crash! Bang!

"Stop that row!" shrieked Drake desperately. "The key will be here in a tick or two! Can't you shut up for a minute?"

Crash! was the reply.

Evidently the young man from Goggs' was disinclined to listen to reason. It was not perhaps surprising that he was wrathful. Toodles' masterly method of dealing with the situation could not be expected to placate any young man in the furniture line.

"Where's that idiot Toodles—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jack Drake rushed desperately on the deck. Tuckey Toodles was just crawling off the football ground, and Rodney was racing towards him.

Lovelace, the captain of St. Winifred's, strode towards Drake.

"What's that row down there?" he demanded gruffly.

"That—that row—" stammered Drake. "I—I think it's a—a chap got shut in a study somehow—"

"I'll jolly soon see!"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Drake, as the captain of St. Winifred's tramped angrily down the steps to the Fourth Form quarters. "Now all the fat's in the fire!"

It was evidently too late to release the young man from Goggs' before discovery, now that a

prefect was on the scene. Jack Drake made a step after Lovelace, and then paused. He decided that it was just as well to be off the scene.

Crash! sounded from below as Jack Drake jumped on the gangway and scudded away. The voice of Lovelace followed.

"Who's that? What's that? What the dickens—"

Then Drake was out of hearing. At the end of the gangway he met Tuckey Toodles—being hurried on with Rodney's grasp on his collar. Drake seized him by one fat ear.

"Go and unlock the door at once, you fat chump!" he said.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Do you hear? That bouncer is kicking up a row—you'll have the Head there if you don't hurry up—"

"Yow-ow! Leggo my ear!" howled Tuckey Toodles. "Look here, you can go and let him out, and—settle the matter. Here's the key."

"Why, you—"

"Better pay him, I think," said Toodles.

"What?"

"Better pay him; it would really be more satisfactory to all concerned," said Toodles. "That's my opinion, anyhow. You can do as you like, of course."

And Tuckey Toodles jerked himself away and fled, leaving Drake staring, with the key in his hand.

"I—I—I'll burst that fat bouncer one of these days!" gasped Drake.

And he ran on board the Benbow again, key in hand.

All Clear!

THUMP! Bang! Crash!

The crowd of juniors made way for Lovelace of the Sixth, as he strode on the scene with knitted brows. The young man from Goggs' was still making himself heard in the study with growing emphasis.

"Stop that row!" shouted Lovelace angrily. "Who's in the room, Sawyer?"

"A representative from Goggs', I think!" grinned Sawyer. "Somebody's locked him in."

"What on earth is he doing here?"

"Trying to bust the door, I think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I came here to collect an account!" roared the

DETECTIVE KERR INVESTIGATES.

Solution:

KERR: The unusual accuracy of Crooke's geographical knowledge suggested that he might have employed a crib—and Mr. Linton's statement that Crooke had referred to Pei Ping, the former capital of China, as Peking, its old name, proved it. The only member of the Shell known to possess an atlas giving the old names of the Chinese cities was Skimpole—Talbot had told me that. Skimpole himself had learned the new names from Talbot's atlas. So it was Crooke who had "borrowed" Skimpole's old atlas—cunningly leaving it in the Form-room to incriminate Skimpole and distract attention from himself! But as Crooke was the only examinee to refer to Pei Ping as Peking, that settled who had been using a crib!

young man from Goggs'. "I have been locked in this room by Master Toodles. I will have the law on you if I am not immediately released!"

"Great Scott! Where's the key?"

"Toodles has got it," grinned Daubeny. "Hallo, here's Drake!"

"Here's the key!" gasped Drake, arriving breathless.

Lovelace jerked it from his hand, jammed it into the lock, and turned it. He hurled the door open angrily.

It was hurled open at an unlucky moment for Mr. Stuckey. He was thumping the door with a chair, and the door crashed on the chair as it was swinging back for another thump. Chair and the young man went to the floor together with a terrific crash. There was a fearful yell from Mr. Stuckey, and a howl of laughter from the passage.

Lovelace strode into the study and fixed a glare upon the sprawling young man from Goggs'.

"Now, who the thunder are you, and what the thunder do you want in this school?" he demanded.

Mr. Stuckey scrambled to his feet.

"I have called to collect an account from Master Toodles!" he shouted. "This furniture was supplied by my firm on the easy payment system. The payments are in arrear. I demand to see the headmaster."

"You'll see the headmaster fast enough!" growled Lovelace. "Come with me!"

The young man from Goggs' collected up his bowler hat and followed Lovelace from Study No. 8, amid merry chortles from the St. Winifred's fellows. The urbane politeness of the young man had vanished now. He was in a towering rage, and he did not disguise the fact.

He followed Lovelace aft, and disappeared down the steps towards the captain's cabin—now the study of the Head of St. Winifred's.

Sawyer major wiped his eyes.

"What's going to happen now?" he gasped.

"I wonder!" grinned Daubeny.

The juniors followed aft as near to the Head's study as they dared to venture. They were not near enough to hear the Head's voice, but they plainly heard the raised voice of the young man from Goggs'.

"Nonsense, sir! We had every right to supply the young gentleman—a well-dressed young gentleman, apparently respectable. We are perfectly prepared to take our property back—indeed, instructions will be given for its removal to-morrow morning. We shall demand the expenses of the transaction, and, if necessary, we shall bring an action in the law courts. You need not frown at me, sir. I assure you that I am not to be frowned down. I called here, sir, to collect an account, and I have been locked in a room, sir! You will hear of this, sir, from Messrs. Goggs & Co.'s solicitors. I am prepared to accept the sum of four pounds, and to remove the furniture. I will accept nothing less than this, sir! Not one jot, sir—not one tittle!"

"Isn't he eloquent?" murmured Sawyer major.

A murmur of voices followed, but from the fact that the tones of the young man from Goggs' were subdued it could be guessed that he was on the way to being satisfied.

He reappeared on deck at last, with an aspect which proved that the storm had blown over—so far as he was concerned, at least. He stepped on the gangway, and strode away to the shore.

Lovelace followed him up, looking very grim.

"Toodles is wanted! Where's Toodles?"

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"Echo answers 'where?'" murmured Sawyer major.

"Look for him, the lot of you!" growled Lovelace. "He's wanted in the Head's study at once!"

"Poor old Toodles!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tuckey Toodles was looked for, but he was not to be found. Apparently the fat junior was keeping out of the way, hoping that the storm would blow over. He did not turn up to tea—the first time on record that Rupert de Vere Toodles had missed a meal.

It was not till evening call-over that Toodles reappeared among the St. Winifred's fellows. He was looking uneasy, but hopeful.

"Is it all right?" he whispered to Drake, catching him by the sleeve.

"Ass!" was Drake's reply.

"Did you pay him?"

"Idiot! How could I pay him?"

"D-d-did he go to the Head?"

"Lovelace took him to the Head."

"Oh dear!"

Mr. Packe was calling the roll. When it was finished he beckoned to Tuckey Toodles.

"Toodles, come with me. Dr. Goring wishes to see you."

Tuckey Toodles almost crawled behind the Fourth Form master to the Head's study.

PEN PAL NOTICES

Owing to pressure on space readers' notices have had to be withheld from this issue. But another big batch will appear next Wednesday.—Ed.

Drake and Rodney were at prep in Study No. 8 when he returned. Tuckey Toodles came wriggling in, rubbing his fat hands, with a dolorous expression on his plump face.

"I—I say, I've been through it!" he groaned. "I've been caned!"

"What did you expect?" growled Drake.

"I—I say, the Head's paid the beast four pounds, and he's going to send the bill to my pater."

"Serve you right!"

"The pater will kick up a shine!" groaned Toodles. "And—and the furniture is going back—"

"Let it!"

And Tuckey Toodles, in great indignation, departed from Study No. 8, and slammed the door.

The next morning, while the Fourth Form were at classes, they were aware of a considerable amount of tramping and bumping on the deck of the Benbow. Mr. Goggs' furniture was going home!

When Jack Drake and Rodney looked into their study again, it was as bare as the cupboard of the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard. Once more the chums of the Fourth sorted out lumber from the hold of the Benbow, and damaged chairs, and a still more damaged table, were hammered and nailed till they were more or less serviceable. Certainly Study No. 8 did not look luxurious when they had finished, and Tuckey Toodles' grousing was loud and long. He even urged upon his studymates the advantages of the easy payment system; but his urgings fell upon deaf ears. Study No. 8 had had enough of easy terms.

Next Week: "CAPTAIN'S CUNNING!"

303 READERS WIN FREE FOOTBALLS!

SEPTEMBER "FOOTER-STAMPS" RESULT!

There was another fine entry for the second "Footer-Stamps" (September) prize-giving, and readers are to be congratulated on the many good scores of "goals" made.

Actual winning scores proved to be all those of 38 "goals" and over, and their senders' names are given here. A Prize Football was sent off promptly to each of these winners.

We are now getting ready for the October prize-giving, and that list of winners will be given in our earliest possible issue.

R. Addison, Flixton; R. Adkins, Wallington; D. Allen, Urnston; J. Anorith, Burnley; G. Appleton, Leeds; F. Archer, Crayford; H. G. Armitage, Hitchin; H. W. Ashford, Birmingham; K. B. Ashton, Wembley; C. Athay, Weston-super-Mare; J. Atkins, Merstham; F. Ayling, Portsmouth; R. G. Baker, Croydon; R. N. Baker, Pulborough; W. Baker, London, W.; D. Ball, Bristol; E. Banks, Sheffield; A. Barber, Rochdale; R. Barker, Harrow; R. Barton, Wootton, I.O.W.; A. Batten, Ipswich; W. Beecham, Northfleet; H. Bennett, Edgware; J. Bennett, Barnet; C. Berry, Twickenham; E. F. Bianchi, Orpington; D. Bird, Birmingham; R. M. Blakeman, Whitley; R. Blinman, Bristol; L. Blogg, Sutton; O. Borrow, Barmoor; J. M. Bray, King's Lynn; W. Braybrook, London, W.; H. Briggs, Nottingham; G. W. Bromage, Staines; A. Brooker, Reigate; C. C. Brown, Warboys; D. W. Brown, Whiteley Bay; H. Brown, London, W.; P. S. Budge, Canterbury; G. Buxton, London, N.W.; S. Byrne, Liverpool; R. Campbell, Swansea; A. S. Carey, Leeds; D. Carter, London, S.W.; D. Carter, Uppminster; G. Chapman, Northwich; J. Chapman, Bugbrooke; H. Chapple, Penzance; D. Charles, Plymouth; G. H. Clark, London, S.W.; L. Clark, London, E. 2; R. Clark, Edinburgh; D. Cohen, Airth; J. Collins, Worcester; L. Collins, Enfield; J. M. Connock, West Byfleet; G. Constable, Willenhall; E. Cooper, Gt. Missenden; R. Cooper, Newton Abbot; F. Cother, Moreton-in-Marsh; L. Court, Croydon; J. W. Cox, Pontefract; P. W. Cracknell, Feltham; F. Crawley, London, N.; H. Creed, Sheffield; W. Crew, Chard; P. R. Cusack, Manchester; P. Dare, Honiton; F. Davies, Bushey; S. A. Davies, Llanelly; K. Davis, Hastings; R. J. Davis, Swindon; D. Dean, Hemel Hempstead; K. R. Denton, Clacton-on-Sea; V. Dicker, Newmarket; A. J. Dilley, Sheffield; S. Dockett, London, S.W.; G. K. Dodson, Newton-le-Willows; R. Downie, Liverpool; D. Dumphy, Epsom; W. H. Dymond, Shillingford; S. Eastment, Wolverhampton; K. Edge, Ashton-under-Lyne; R. Elkins, Birmingham; J. Elliott, Torquay; D. Elton, Basingstoke; M. Elvidge, Huddersfield; W. Evanson, Mansfield; R. Farnell, Sevenoaks; B. Farrer, Silverdale; G. Ferrin, Slough; L. L. Ferris, Devizes; O. D. Fern, London, E.4; L. Fierstone, London, E.; R. Fisher, Rugby; V. Fleming, Reading; D. Foyle, Wimborne; D. S. Gale, Birmingham; D. Garside, Huddersfield; K. Gaskill, Manchester; P. H. George, London, N.W.; P. Gherardi, Hersham; J. Gill, Neath; R. Gillmore, Poplar, E; K. Graham, Netherpton; R. Grant, Carshalton Beches; A. Grattidge, Manchester; E. Gray, Borchurch; T. Green, Crickwood, N.W.; H. Greene, Elmham; W. H. Greenhough, Leeds; M. Griffin, Combe Martin; N. Guest, Wrexham; R. Hamer, Leicester; G. Hammond, London, S.W.; K. Hankins, Thornton Heath; G. Hardy, King's Lynn; P. Harrington, West Croydon; R. A. Harrison, Bristol; A. Harvey, London, E.; G. Hayes, Sheffield; E. Heggs, Loughborough; D. Heley, Luton; E. Herber, Gloucester; T. Hickman, Birmingham; J. H. Higgs, Tickhill; C. Hill, Sheffield; S. Hill, Camberley; T. A. Hillyer, London, S.E.; N. Hodgson, Hull; T. Hogg, West Hartlepool; J. T. Holland, Oakworth; E. Holmes, London, S.W.; T. Horton, North Weald; J. D. Hough, London, S.E.; M. Holmes, Narberth; C. T. Hucker, Wolverhampton; E. Humm, Colchester; W. Hunter, Falkirk; R. Hutchings, Midgham; W. Hutchins, Hanwell, W.; D. Ibbetson, Hull; J. Impey, Luton; F. Ineson, Huddersfield; S. Isborne, Brentwood; L. Jackman, Brentford; C. Y. Jenkins, Neath; J. Jennings, Welling; N. D. Jones, Liverpool; P. Jones, Swansea; N. Kablean, London E.; H. Keates, Kingsley;

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Good "shooting" if you are a winner of a football; if not, see what you can do this month. 250 more Footballs are waiting in the November contest on page 2.

TOM MERRY'S SECRET ENEMY!

(Continued from page 22.)

"He doesn't know," said Cardew.

"He will!" said Redfern quietly. "Come on, Lawrence!"

"What about your scholarship?" said Cardew.

"Can't be helped."

"More fool you!" said Cardew, shrugging his shoulders.

But his face was lighter as he watched the two New House juniors go to the Head's study. He waited where he was, leaning on the banisters, unmoved by the grim looks he received from the juniors in the Hall. A few minutes later Lawrence came out and beckoned to him.

Cardew followed him into the presence of the Head.

Dr. Holmes' eyes fixed upon him with a curious expression.

"It appears, Cardew, from Redfern's statement, that you were guiltless of the attack upon Mr. Ratcliff, a fortnight ago, for which you received a flogging," he said slowly.

"I told you so at the time, sir," said Cardew calmly.

"You knew that Redfern and Lawrence were the guilty parties?"

"Yes, sir."

"You should have told me, Cardew."

"I'm not a sneak!"

THE OUTCAST OF CEDAR CREEK!

(Continued from page 23.)

horse and went bowling away down the trail. But he did not escape quite scathless.

The schoolboys stooped to the snow beside the trail, scooped it up in hurried handfuls, and pelted the buggy as it went.

Snowballs whizzed into the buggy in volleys, amid loud shouts and laughter, the Cedar Creek fellows pursuing the vehicle along the trail and still pelting.

The storekeeper turned in his seat and shook his whip furiously at the pursuers.

As he did so a snowball from Frank Richards caught him fairly on the nose, and he collapsed amid his rugs.

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The Head coughed.

"As it appears, after all, that this is your first offence, Cardew, and as you have already received punishment under a mistake, I shall rescind your sentence. You will not be expelled from the school. You will be flogged, instead, and I can only hope that it will be a warning to you."

"Thank you, sir!"

"As for you, Redfern and Lawrence, I hardly know how to deal with you. Had I known of your conduct at the time, I should certainly have expelled you both. But I am bound to take into consideration the fact that you have come here of your own accord to tell me the facts, for this boy's sake. I shall cane you both very severely."

Cardew left the study; but it was some minutes before Redfern and Lawrence left. When they came out they were apparently trying to shut themselves up like pocket-knives. They limped away to their own House in considerable pain. But, upon the whole, they were very well satisfied that the matter had turned out so well for them.

The next morning St. Jim's assembled after prayers to witness a public flogging.

Cardew was the victim.

The punishment was severe. Cardew was looking very white in the Fourth Form Room that morning.

Tom Merry had little cause to concern himself about the rascal of the Fourth; but he was glad that he had not been sacked.

Ralph Reckness Cardew had another chance. It remained to be seen what he would make of it.

Next Wednesday: "OUT OF BOUNDS!"

"Well hit!" shouted Beauclerc.

"Ha, ha!"

Whiz! Whiz! Whiz!

The Cedar Creek fellows rushed on at top speed, hurling snowballs with deadly aim.

The storekeeper lashed his horse, and the buggy, rocking with its frantic speed, vanished out of range at last.

Bob Lawless chortled breathlessly as the grinning crowd returned to the school.

"That's enough for Old Man Gunten," he remarked. "I guess he won't visit us again in a hurry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Old Man Gunten" was gone—and the younger Gunten did not reappear.

And though some of the fellows wondered what had become of the Swiss schoolboy, it could not be denied that Cedar Creek School was all the better without him.

Next Week: "THE LUCKY ROGUE!"

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