

**"ALL ABOARD FOR THE SPANISH MAIN!"** EXCITING SERIES of the  
FLOATING SCHOOL  
STARTS INSIDE.

# The GEM

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## HAIR- RAISING!

—A humorous  
incident from  
"THE MIS-  
DEEDS OF  
MICKY!"—  
the full-of-fun  
St. Jim's story  
within.





# Blake Answers Back!

Jack Blake's here to answer your letters and deal with your queries. Write to him c/o The GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Be as candid as you like—Jack Blake likes a plain speaker, being by nature a John Blunt himself! But keep your letter SHORT, and enclose if possible a photo of yourself for reproduction on this page. No photos can be returned and no replies given by post.

"Hopeful," of Edmonton, N. 18, writes:  
Can you answer this question, please: WHO BUILT OLD SAINT PAUL'S?

ANSWER: *Though I have been accused by various readers of being fifteen, thirty, or more years old, I can quite honestly say I am not old enough to remember the Great Fire of London. This raged in 1666, virtually destroying the Norman building which preceded the present church designed by Sir Christopher Wren. The Norman building, Old St. Paul's, was erected on the site of the original St. Paul's, a Saxon church, which was burned in 1086. Old St. Paul's was probably one of the many cathedrals planned by Lanfranc, who became Archbishop of Canterbury after the Norman Conquest in 1066. Well, do I go to the top of the history class? I think I deserve it.*

Peggy Purkis, of E. Twickenham, writes:

I am a very old reader of the GEM, and I thought it was a wonderful idea when you started the "Answers Back" page.

A friend of mine said that there was not a St. Jim's, and we had an awful row, and he asked me to prove it, and that is why I am asking you to come to my help.

Thank you very much.

ANSWER: *Never shall it be said that a St. Jim's fellow failed to answer the cry of a damsel in distress! Well, there often are quite violent arguments as to the reality or otherwise of St. Jim's. I suggest you show your friend this answer, given under my hand and seal. If we were real, it would be silly to quarrel over us, wouldn't it? And if we weren't—well, it would be a waste of effort just the same. I got this from Mr. Lathom: Nothing is real unless you perceive it, real for you, that is. Tom Merry is more real, even in a story, than a little freckled boy named Timothy Pintos living in Giggleswick, whom you will never see, isn't he? Why don't you two get a hatchet, and, having shaken hands, solemnly bury it in the farthest corner of the garden?*

Thanks, both of you!

E. Williams, of Waltham Cross, Herts, writes:

I would like to know:

1. Who is the oldest boy at St. Jim's?
2. Who is the youngest?
3. Who is the cleverest?
4. Who is the best master?
5. How old is Monty Lowther?
6. How many boys are there at St. Jim's?

Thank you.

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ANSWER: *Glad to tell you:*

1. Taggles, the porter, is undoubtedly the oldest "boy" at St. Jim's, I should think, though he strenuously denies he has yet passed the one hundred mark. Kildare of the Sixth is the oldest scholar at St. Jim's.

2. Sorry I don't hobnob with the babes in the Second, so I couldn't say offhand who is the tenderest tenderfoot of them all.

3. Clever at what? Racke is pretty clever at avoiding the sack. Manners is very clever on a chessboard. In class, Tom Merry or Talbot would give you a run for your money. Glyn is a nifty inventor. Kildare, captain of St. Jim's, was clever enough to pass an exam which will eventually take him to a university. Take your choice.

4. Mr. Ruiton, the stalwart master of the School House, topped a popularity vote with a bang.

5. "Put down fifteen—eleven," said Monty Lowther. "Why?" I asked. "Because it's the score in this game of table tennis I'm playing; it's the result of the cup tie between Soapbuds United and Bubbington Tuesday in 1740, and finally, you can take it to be my age, if you like."

6. Round about 300.

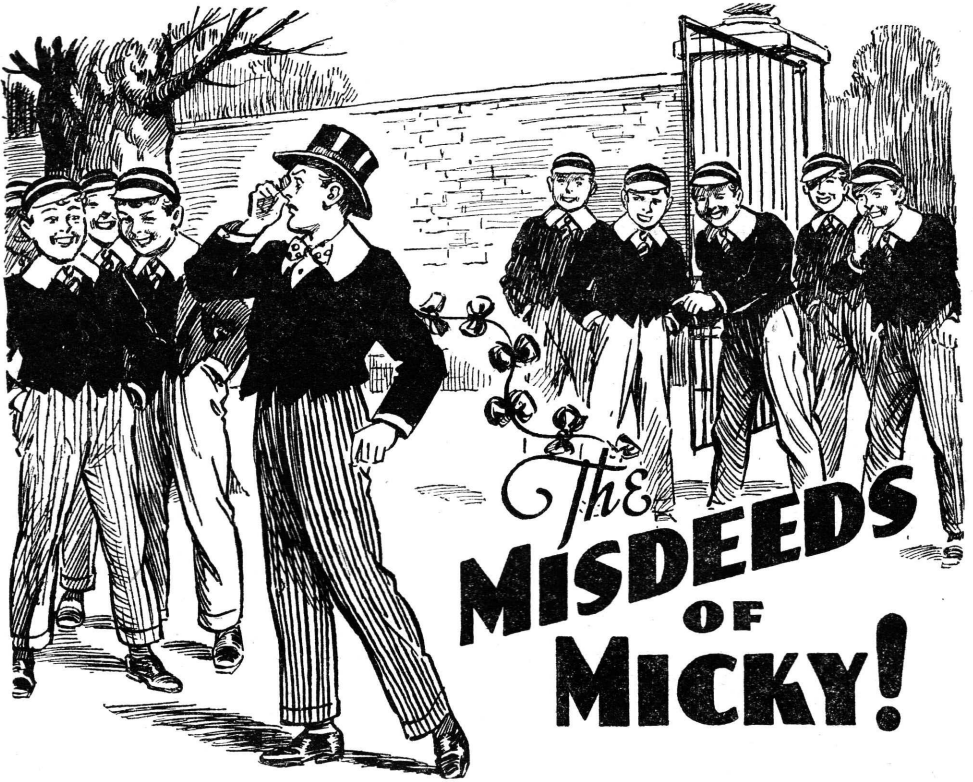
Don't mention it!

O.K., of Gravesend, writes:

I thought Yorkshiremen were tough? If you're anything to go by, they must be a set of weaklings. I notice the Terrible Three generally manage to mop up the passage with Study No. 6 when they meet you in a hand-to-hand encounter. Why don't you live up to your picture at the top of the page? I'm not sending mine for you to make cracks at. Rats!

ANSWER: *I'm glad you said the Terrible Three only generally manage. The exact score for "moppings up" between the Terrible Three and Study No. 6 this term is 1-1. The reason is that, as a rule, we pull very well together, in spite of the fact that Shell fogies, being older than us, have queer ideas at times. Strikes me you would fit in the Shell very well yourself. If you could join in time, we should be delighted to include you in our next mopping-up programme. Why not send your full name and address? Nervous or something?*

MICKY MULVANEY, THE IRISH JAPER OF THE FOURTH, MAKES THINGS HUM AT ST. JIM'S IN THIS SIDE-SPLITTING COMPLETE STORY.



# The MISDEEDS OF MICKY!

"Ha, ha, ha!" There were roars of laughter on all sides as Arthur Augustus, the kite-tail wagging behind him, marched across the quad. "Bai Jove!" he murmured. "Can there be somethin' unusual in my appearence to excite this wemarkable wisibility?"

## CHAPTER 1. Missing!

"D'ARCY!"

"Yaas, deah boy?" Mulvaney major of the Sixth Form at St. Jim's frowned. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth had answered with his usual urbane politeness, but a prefect of the Sixth did not exactly like being addressed as "deah boy" by a junior.

"You cheeky young ass—" began Mulvaney major.

"Bai Jove!"

"But never mind. Have you seen my minor?"

"Certainly!"

"Oh, good!" said the Sixth Former, in relief. "Where is he, D'Arcy?"

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"I weally do not know, Mulvaney. Sowwy!"

"Didn't you say you'd seen him?" roared Mulvaney.

"Yaas; but I see him ewevy day, as he is in the Fourth," answered Arthur Augustus, in surprise. "I could scarcely fail to see him in class to-day, you know, without bein' blind."

"Have you seen him lately?" snapped the Sixth Former. "Can't you understand?"

"I undahstand now that you make your meanin' cleah," replied Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"As you merely asked me whethah I had seen him, I weplied in the affirmative, as I certainly have seen him quite a numbah of times. Howevah, I have not seen him since lessons."

"Look for him, then, you young ass, and when you find him, tell him to come to my study at once!"

"If you do not mind my mentionin' it, Mulvaney,

*Against Micky Mulvaney's wish, his rich uncle comes to St. Jim's to take him back to Ireland. But before Uncle O'Toole has been at the school long, Micky makes him only too glad to go back to Ireland on his own!*

by

**MARTIN CLIFFORD**

I have a stwong objection to bein' alluded to as an ass——"

But Mulvaney major was striding away, unheeding.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "I must wemark that I do not think much of the mannaahs of the Sixth Form in this school. I weally think I could give Mulvaney majah some tips that would be vevy useful to him. Now I wondah where his dashed minah is?"

Arthur Augustus did not look pleased. He was going down to help his chums punt a ball about on Little Side, when the prefect dropped on him. However, even Arthur Augustus, the glass of fashion, and the mould of form in the Lower School, was called upon to fag at the order of a prefect, and he proceeded to look for Mulvaney minor of the Fourth.

As he came out into the quad he encountered his chums, Blake and Herries and Digby, all three looking wrathly.

"Bai Jove! I thought you were at footah, deah boys!" he remarked.

Jack Blake gave a snort.

"We're fagging," he said. "We've got to find a blessed fag who's been mislaid. Have you seen Mulvaney minor?"

"I am lookin' for him at this vevy moment."

"Bother him!" said Digby. "If Mulvaney major wants him, why can't he keep him where he can put his finger on him. Hallo! Here are those Shellfish! Let's ask them!"

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther of the Shell came up to the group of irate Fourth Formers.

"Seen Mulvaney minor?" was Tom Merry's first remark.

"You, too?" exclaimed Blake. "Is all the Lower School hunting for Mulvaney minor? I'll jolly well punch his head when I find him!"

"Old Mulvaney seems to want him very particularly," said Manners. "I dare say the young bounder has been up to his tricks again, and there's a licking for him."

"I hope so," growled Blake.

"He's not in his study," yawned Monty Lowther. "I've looked in there, and Tompkins says he's not been in since lessons."

"And he's not on the footer ground," said Digby.

"Keeping out of the way, most likely," said Tom, laughing. "I've noticed he's never anxious to meet his brother. It generally means trouble. Where are we going to look for him?"

"Hallo, you chaps! Seen Mulvaney minor?" called out Levison of the Fourth, coming along with Clive and Cardew.

"Ha, ha, ha! You looking for him, too?"

"Mulvaney of the Sixth seems very anxious to see him," answered Levison. "Some row, I expect. Seen him?"

"We're hunting for him."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Gone out of gates, very likely," suggested Clive.

"Most likely," agreed Tom Merry. "If he's out of gates, we can't find him. Let's go and tell old Mulvaney so."

"Hold on!" said Cardew. "Old Mulvaney's rather excited, and he'll only tell us to keep on lookin'."

"Can't be helped!"

"But it can be helped!" said Cardew. "I've got a brain-wave. Let's go and look for him in Mrs. Murphy's tuckshop in Rylcombe!"

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"Is he there?"

"Blessed if I know! He might be."

"What on earth's the good of walking a mile on the off chance of the young ass being there?" demanded Blake.

"Lots of good. I've heard from Trimble that Mrs. Murphy has a fresh lot of tarts in."

"Oh!"

"First come, first served, you know," said Cardew. "Let's look for him at the village tuckshop. We shall be carryin' out Mulvaney's instructions. It's our duty to obey a prefect, you know. And we can also sample the tarts. If young Mulvaney's there, we'll bring him home; if he isn't, we can explain to Mulvaney that we walked a whole mile lookin' for him. Nothin' like bein' dutiful; it makes the prefects feel pleased with you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! That is a wathah good suggestion," said Arthur Augustus. "We can't put in any footah if we've got to look for that young wascal. We don't want to waste time hangin' wound."

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry heartily. "Let's make for Mrs. Murphy's. After all, young Mulvaney minor might be there."

"He might. Ha, ha, ha!"

And with one accord the party of juniors made for the gates, and sauntered down the lane to Rylcombe, thus carrying out the instructions of the respected prefect of the Sixth.

At the village tuckshop they did not find Mulvaney minor; but they found the tarts, which was a consolation.

Mulvaney major, in his study, waited for the arrival of his minor. Having set so many juniors to look for him, he expected Micky Mulvaney to arrive in a very short time. But Micky Mulvaney didn't arrive, which rather puzzled the prefect; though he would not have been so puzzled if he had known where, and how, Tom Merry & Co. were looking for the missing junior.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Mulvaney Minor Turns Up!

"**R**ACKE, old chap!"

"Cut off!"

"I'm coming with you, old fellow," said Baggy Trimble affectionately.

Aubrey Racke paused on the narrow stair which led up to the top box-room, and scowled down at Trimble of the Fourth.

He did not look as if he wanted Trimble's company. But that did not matter to Baggy; he was not thin-skinned.

"Cut off, you fat frog!" growled Racke. "You're not wanted. Is that plain enough for you?"

"Look here, you know——"

"Oh, buzz off, you fat wasp!"

Racke turned to proceed up the staircase, where his chums, Scrope and Crooke, had preceded him. There was a meeting of the black sheep of the School House in that secluded spot, where cigarettes were to be smoked and banker played, and Baggy Trimble was not wanted in the merry circle. The impetuous Fourth Former could not pay his footing in Racke's select circle.

"Oh, all serene!" said Trimble, with a sniff. "I don't care to come. I'll just trot along and speak to Grundy."

Racke spun round.

"You fat worm—"

"No harm in speaking to Grundy, I suppose?" grinned Trimble. "He would like to know about your smoking-party, Racke."

Racke gritted his teeth. Grundy of the Shell, a lofty youth, sometimes took it upon himself to bring Racke & Co. up in the way they should go. It would be just like Grundy to "wade in" and mop up the smoking-party if he was told about it.

"You can come in, if you like," said Racke at last.

"My dear old chap, I'll join you with pleasure, as you're so pressing!" said Trimble politely.

Racke snorted, and stamped on up the stairs, followed by the grinning Trimble. They entered the top box-room together, Crooke and Scrope greeting Trimble with frowns.

"What's that fat slug crawling in for?" Gerald Crooke wanted to know.

"Oh, let him alone!" grunted Racke. "Shut the door, Trimble! Make yourself useful as you're here!"

"Certainly, old fellow!"

The door was shut.

"Better turn the key," suggested Scrope. "That beast Grundy might chip in, same as he's done before!"

"No key here," said Trimble, looking at the lock. "It's been taken away. Grundy, I expect. He knows you meet here for smokes."

"Meddling cad!" hissed Racke.

"Well, we can shove a trunk against the door if we hear him," said Crooke. "That blessed big trunk of D'Arcy's will do; it's nearly as big as a house!"

"All right!"

The big trunk belonging to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was used as a table for the present. The lid did not seem quite closed; but Racke jammed it down, and set a box of matches and cigarettes on the lid. As the four young rascals gathered round there was a sound of heavy footsteps below.

Crooke jumped up.

"What's that? Somebody's coming up!" he exclaimed.

"Grundy, by gad!"

George Alfred Grundy's heavy footsteps rang on the narrow stair. Evidently the great man of the Shell was on the warpath.

"Quick with the trunk!" muttered Racke.

The trunk was a huge one; but, as it was supposed to be empty, it should not have been very difficult to swing it to the door. But as the smokers grasped it, they found that it was very heavy indeed. It certainly weighed a good deal more than a hundredweight.

"Dash the thing!" gasped Racke. "All together, or that cad will be in here!"

The trunk rolled over towards the door.

There was a sound of bumping inside the trunk, as if something was rolling loose. Then, to the amazement of Racke & Co., there was a wild, muffled yell in the box-room.

"Arrah! Yaroooh! Oh, begorra!"

"What the thump—" stuttered Racke, staring round him in amazement.

"It's somebody in the trunk!" yelled Trimble.

"In the trunk! My hat!"

The trunk had rolled upside-down on its progress towards the door. Inside it there was a sound of hammering and roaring.

"Begorra! Lemme out! Sure, it's suffocatin' I am intirely! Howly mother av Moses!"

"Mulvaney minor!" gasped Scrope. "I know that howl!"

"Begorra! Let me out!"

Bump!

The trunk rolled over towards the door again, with Mulvaney minor inside it. But, as it came right way up a few feet from the door, the lid burst open, catching Aubrey Racke under the chin. Aubrey staggered back with a terrific yell.

From the interior of the trunk rose into view the shock head and crimson face of Micky Mulvaney of the Fourth.

"Oh, it's only you, bedad!" he spluttered, as he saw Racke & Co. "Faith, when I heard ye comin', I thought it was the major, and dodged into the trunk intirely! The baste is lookin' for me, you know! Only you, after all!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" came in a wail from Racke, as he clasped his jaw with both hands. "Groo-hoo-hoo!"

"Shove it against the door—quick!" shouted Crooke.

But it was too late. The heavy footsteps of Grundy of the Shell were outside, and the door opened even as the juniors heaved the big trunk towards it. Micky Mulvaney tumbled headlong out, and dodged behind Racke as the door opened, fully expecting to see his major, whom he was so sedulously dodging. He gasped with relief as he saw that it was only Grundy.

But Racke & Co. weren't relieved. Grundy was the picture of virtuous wrath.

"Caught you, have I?" he roared.

"Mind your own business, blow you!" exclaimed Crooke, backing away as he spoke, however.

"Smokes!" roared Grundy, pointing an accusing forefinger at the cigarettes scattered on the floor. "I thought so! I've been keeping an eye on you, my beauties! Smokes! Cards, too, I dare say! Aren't you jolly well ashamed of yourselves?"

"Get out, hang you!"

"I've come to stop this!" shouted Grundy. "You don't know what's due to the good name of this school! I'm going to teach you! I'm sorry to see you mixed up in a game of this kind, Mulvaney minor! I'd never have thought it of you!"

"You silly chump—" began Micky indignantly.

"Enough said! I'm going to lick the lot of you!" said Grundy.

The black sheep exchanged furious glances. There were four of them. But Grundy was so big and so muscular that he was probably a match for the weedy quartet together—if they cared to tackle him. But they didn't. Grundy's four-point-seven punch was not to their taste.

Trimble dodged out of the doorway, but Grundy was too quick for him. His heavy boot landed behind Trimble as he fled, and the fat Fourth Former went shooting forward, and there was a series of dismal howls, accompanied by heavy thumps, as he went rolling down the stairs.

"You next, Racke!"

"Keep off, you bullying fool!" shrieked Aubrey. "Bullying!" exclaimed Grundy. "Me? My hat, I'll teach you to call me a bully, you low-down rotter!"

He made a wild rush at Racke. There was an opportunity for Crooke and Scrope to display their friendship by rushing to their comrade's aid, but they didn't. They rushed to the door and bolted while Grundy was collaring Racke.

"Come back!" roared Grundy. "I haven't licked you yet!"

"Come and help me!" shrieked Racke. But Crooke and Scrope were gone.

Racke struggled savagely in Grundy's powerful grasp, but it was a good deal too powerful for the slacker of the Shell. He was swung to the door, and Grundy's boot was planted behind him forcibly. Aubrey Racke went down the narrow staircase at express speed, yelling.

Grundy turned back into the box-room. Mulvaney minor was sitting on a box, regarding him coolly. The junior had retired to that secluded spot to dodge his major, but he was not afraid of Grundy.

"Your turn now!" announced Grundy.

"Go and eat coke, ye gossoon!" answered Micky disdainfully. "Do you think you can handle me like those spalpeens?"

"I fancy so! You're going through it!" said Grundy. "I'm surprised at you, Mulvaney minor, for joining in this kind of game!"

"Ye silly chump!" howled Micky. "I didn't come here to smoke!"

"I'm afraid appearances are against you," said Grundy. "Still, I'm ready to hear your excuses if you've got any. You can explain if you like."

Micky Mulvaney gave a snort of utter disdain. "Make excuses to you? Who are you, intirely?" he asked. "A silly, fatheaded, overgrown son of a bog-trotter, bedad! Go and eat coke!"

That reply was quite enough for George Alfred. He rushed at the junior from Tipperary and grasped him. But Mulvaney minor was made of different stuff from Racke & Co. He returned grasp for grasp with great energy, and the two waltzed round the box-room.

"Out you go, with my boot behind you!" panted Grundy.

"Begorra, I'll spoil yere features for ye intirely, ye howlin' idiot!" gasped Micky.

With a terrific effort Grundy swung him out to the landing. But Micky did not let go, and Grundy went with him. The landing was too confined for a battle royal, and the next minute the two were rolling down the stairs together. Racke & Co. had vanished, and the two had the staircase to themselves. With a series of loud bumps and louder yells they came down to the lower passage.

Half a dozen fellows came running up the passage to see what was going on. Grundy and Mulvaney, dusty and breathless, were still pommelling one another with great energy. Wilkins and Gunn, Grundy's chums, collared him to drag him off, and Tompkins did the same to his study-mate.

"Leggo!" roared Grundy, struggling. "I haven't licked him yet!"

"Let go!" howled Mulvaney minor. "I'm goin' to smash him!"

"Shut up!" said Wilkins hastily. "There's a prefect coming!"

"Blow the prefect!"

"Here comes Mulvaney major!" called out Dick Julian.

"Oh, tare and hounds!" ejaculated Mulvaney minor.

The din had brought a prefect on the scene, and it happened to be Mulvaney major. Micky broke away from Tompkins and fled up the passage.

"Stop!" roared the Sixth Former, recognising his minor as he fled. "Stop him! Come back, you young scamp!"

But Micky Mulvaney was deaf to the voice of the charmer. He rushed on, heading for the

nearest corner, but just as he reached it Racke & Co. appeared there.

"Stop him!"

Racke and Crooke collared Mulvaney minor at once. Micky was struggling to escape when his major arrived and clapped a hand on his shoulder.

"You young rascal!" exclaimed the prefect. "I've been looking for you everywhere!"

"Have you really, bedad?" asked Micky, with an air of great innocence.

"He was hiding in the box-room," said Racke.

"Ye sneakin' worm!" muttered Mulvaney minor.

Mulvaney stared at his minor.

"You young idiot!" he said. "What have you been hiding for?"

"Oh, go ahead!" said the junior resignedly.

"Sure, I'm in for it now! Have ye got yere ashplant? Or am I to come to yere study?"

"You young ass! I wasn't going to lick you!" roared the major.

"Begorra! Then what for did ye want me, intirely?" exclaimed the minor indignantly. "Phwat for did ye make me dodge ye a whole two hours, bedad?"

Mulvaney laughed.

"It's about Uncle O'Toole coming here tomorrow, you young scallawag!" he said. "Come along to my study!"

With an expression of utter disgust upon his face, Micky Mulvaney followed his brother downstairs. He had taken it for granted that a licking was in prospect, perhaps knowing what he deserved. As the two came downstairs Tom Merry & Co. came in from the quadrangle. They had finished looking for Mulvaney minor in Rylcombe, having finished Mrs. Murphy's tarts.

"Bai Jove! Here is the young boundah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"Sorry we couldn't find your minor, Mulvaney," said Cardew smoothly. "We went down to Rylcombe, but he wasn't there."

"Well, I've found him," said the prefect. "Never mind!"

And Mulvaney minor was marched off.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### A Peculiar Predicament!

"HAD it bad?"

Tom Merry asked that question sympathetically about half an hour later, as he came on Micky Mulvaney in the Fourth Form passage.

Micky's interview with his major was over, and he did not look happy. In fact, he looked doleful to the last degree.

"Oh! Ochone!" he said dismally.

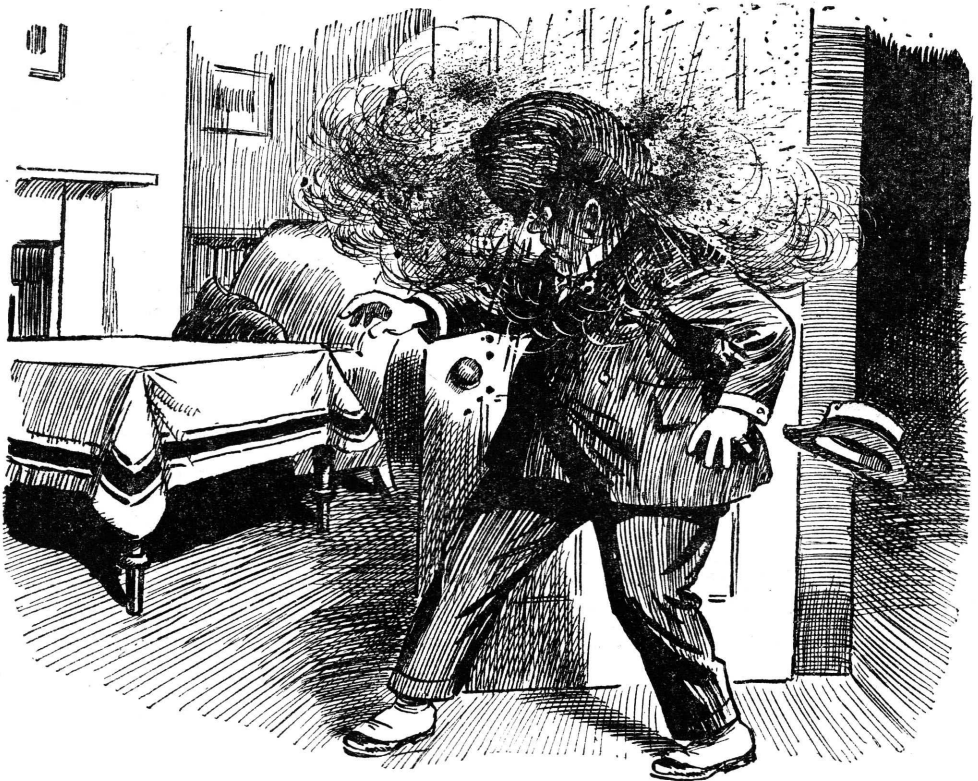
"Licked?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Ochone! Oh dear! Sure, it's too bad!" said Micky dismally. "It's too rotten intirely!"

"It's a disadvantage to have a brother in the Sixth," remarked Manners sagely. "Cheer up! Look here, we've got jam and cake for tea. Come in and help us."

But even that kind offer did not cause the clouds to disperse from Micky's brow. He seemed plunged into the depths of the blues.

The Terrible Three walked him up the passage to their study. They were sympathetic, and they considered that the unhappy victim would feel better after tea. Micky yielded gracefully, and he sat in the armchair in Study No. 10 while the



There was a swish of something falling from above, a thud as it landed on Uncle O'Toole's head, and a flood of black as it burst there. In a moment, Mr. O'Toole's ruddy face became as black as a Hottentot's!

chums of the Shell prepared an unusually handsome spread.

"Pile in, kid!" said Tom Merry hospitably.

"Pull up your chair! Feel a bit better now?"

"Sure, and it's a miserable baste I am!" said Micky. "It's too bad!"

"Still feeling the pain?" asked Manners.

"Eh? What pain?"

"What pain? Haven't you been licked?" demanded Manners in astonishment.

"Licked? No!"

"You—you haven't!" exclaimed the Terrible Three together.

"Not at all! I say, these pilchards are good," said Micky. "Thank ye intirely for askin' me to tay."

"If you haven't been licked, what are you groaning about, then?" asked Tom Merry.

"It's too bad intirely!" said Micky. "Sure, me Uncle O'Toole is comin' to St. Jim's to-morrow!"

"Nothing to groan about in that, I should think. I've seen your Uncle O'Toole, and he looks like an old sport."

"He's as good as gold!"

"Well, then—"

"He's fond of me!" said Micky lugubriously.

"No accounting for tastes! But if he's fond of you, and he's coming to see you, that's nothing to howl about, is it?"

"Sure, you don't understand! The ould boy is goin' to stay at St. Jim's for a few days as a guest of the Head!"

"Well?"

"And whin he goes back to Ireland he's goin' to take me with him!"

"For a holiday?"

"N-no! For good!"

"Oh, I see!" said Tom.

"Sure, he's a broth av a boy, he is intirely!" said Micky. "And I like him no end. But I don't want to lave St. Jim's. And how will Tompkins get on without me? He gets chivvied no end now; and, sure, his life won't be worth livin' with me gone! Racke's got a down on him. And what'll he do when I'm not here to punch Racke's nose? And—and—and I don't want to lave St. Jim's."

The Terrible Three were sympathetic at once. They could quite understand that any St. Jim's fellow would not want to leave.

"Your uncle sent you here?" asked Tom.

"No; me pater sint me, of course!"

"Then your uncle can't tak you away if you don't want to go, can he?"

"N-no! But he will expect me to want to go; and he's such a broth av a boy that a fellow won't like to refuse!" groaned Micky. "It's a case of 'noblesse oblige,' as Gussy says. You

see, Uncle O'Toole likes me no end, and I'm down in his will, and he's goin' to take me home and have a tutor for me."

"Oho!" said Lowther.

"But I don't want to go home; I don't want to have a tutor," went on Micky. "I don't want to lave St. Jim's."

"I see!"

"But afther all his kindness I can't throw his offer in his face!" groaned Micky. "How could a chap do it, intirely?"

"Suppose you tell him gently, but firmly, that you appreciate his offer no end, but you want to stay here," suggested Tom Merry.

Micky shook his head.

"'Twould hurt his feelings," he said. "You see, I often go to his place on holiday, and I like it well enough, and I get on with him rippingly. I can't tell him I don't want to come for good. I wouldn't wound him for anythin'. But—but, sure, I want to stay at St. Jim's intirely! I wish he'd ask my major, instead of me! But no fear! Me major's a solemn old fogey!"

The Terrible Three smiled. Micky Mulvaney was a cheerful youth, and probably it was his unconquerable high spirits that commended him to his uncle. Doubtless the happy-go-lucky youth brought a great deal of sunshine into the old bachelor gentleman's house when he was there.

"I'll tell you what," said Monty Lowther; "your Uncle O'Toole seems rather attached to you."

"Yes!" groaned Micky.

"Make him unattached, or semi-detached," suggested Lowther. "Put on sorrowful looks, look as miserable as a politician who has lost his salary. Your uncle will get fed-up with that before long."

Micky Mulvaney grinned.

"Sure, he would," he assented. "But I can't be miserable if I try. Sure, I can't help bein' jolly all day long. I couldn't be sayrious for more than five minutes at the most, and that wouldn't be long enough."

"What does your major say about it?" asked Tom.

"He's advisin' me to jump at it," said Micky. "Sure, it's a good thing for me, I know that. He's been warnin' me to be very careful and on me good behaviour and keep in nunky's good graces while he's stayin' here, in case he changes his mind. He says it may spoil it all if I play any of my tricks on the old jintleman."

"Why, you young scallawag!" said Tom Merry severely. "Do you ever play tricks on your uncle?"

"Well, I have," admitted Micky, "and his wig is a great temptation intirely. But I've always left his wig alone. But sure, Lowther, your idea's worth thryin'. I'll thry to be sayrious when Uncle O'Toole comes and put him in low spirits. Then he'll be glad to go away without me. But how can a chap be sayrious when there's nothin' to be sayrious about? I'll tell you what. Have you been doin' any more jokes for the 'Weekly'?"

"Eh? I've just finished my comic column," said Monty Lowther.

"Lend it to me."

"What for?"

"I'll pin it on my sleeve and look at it every now and then," said Mulvaney minor, "and every time I look at it, sure, it will kape me sayrious."

"You cheeky ass!" said Monty Lowther, jumping up, while Tom Merry and Manners chuckled.

"Thanks for the tay," said Micky, retreating to

the door. "You'll lend me that comic column, Lowther?" He opened the door.

"I'll lend you a thick ear!" roared Lowther.

Mulvaney minor hurriedly retired from the study.

## CHAPTER 4.

### A Rank Failure!

"**B**AI JOVE! Is anythin' the mattah, deah boy?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus in quite a tone of alarm.

It was the following afternoon, and Arthur Augustus had come on Mulvaney minor of the Fourth standing in the gateway with a most lugubrious expression on his face.

Micky Mulvaney seemed to be trying to look as utterly miserable as he possibly could.

"Do I look miserable?" he asked.

"Yaas, watah!"

"Right down in the dumps?"

"Yaas."

"Good!" said Mulvaney minor unexpectedly.

"That's what I want. Sure, I'm waitin' here for me uncle; he's comin' this afternoon."

"You want to look misewable when your uncle comes?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, in great astonishment.

"You've got it!"

"Bai Jove! That is a vewy extwaordinawy ideah! Is that your uncle?" asked D'Arcy, as he observed a stout, ruddy-faced, good-humoured-looking old gentleman walking up the road from Rylcombe.

Micky glanced out at the gateway.

"Yis," he answered. "That's me Uncle O'Toole." He composed his chubby face into as downcast an expression as possible.

"Bai Jove! You should weally twy to look a little bwigthah than that to meet your uncle, Mulvaney."

Micky shook his head.

"Bedad, what's that on yere jacket, D'Arcy?" he exclaimed.

"Is there anythin' on my jacket?" asked Arthur Augustus anxiously. "Pway bwush it off. I shall be vewy much obliged to you."

Micky Mulvaney passed his hand over the back of D'Arcy's beautifully fitting Eton jacket. There was nothing to brush off, as a matter of fact, and Arthur Augustus was blissfully ignorant that Micky attached a fishhook there, and that to the fishhook was attached the tail of a kite. The swell of St. Jim's walked away across the quadrangle with the kite-tail dangling behind him, unconscious of that extraordinary adornment.

There was a loud chortle from Figgins & Co. of the New House, who were standing at a little distance, as they spotted Gussy's adornment.

Arthur Augustus glanced round at them and walked on loftily. The kite-tail fluttered merrily behind him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from some fags of the Third Form.

D'Arcy looked at them.

His young brother Wally was among them, and roaring with laughter. The swell of St. Jim's frowned. He could see that the merriment was directed towards himself, though he could not guess why.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

After a majestic frown at the yelling fags Arthur Augustus walked on, his nose a little higher than usual.



There were roars of laughter on all sides as the kite-tail wagged behind him.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "This is weally extwaordinawy! Can there be somethin' unusual in my appearance to excite this remarkable wisibility? Tom Mewwy, deah boy!"

The Terrible Three had come out of the School House, and D'Arcy hailed them.

"Hallo, old top!" said Tom. "What's all that yelling about? Some joke on?"

"I weally do not know, Tom Mewwy. I am vewy surprised. Can you see anythin' about me to excite this diswespectful mewwiment?"

"Only your face," said Lowther blandly.

"Weally, you ass——"

"Blessed if I can!" said Tom, puzzled. "But everybody seems to be going off like an alarm-clock."

"I wegard it as wude and incomprehensible!" said Arthur Augustus warmly, and he walked on. Then the Terrible Three saw the kite-tail, and they roared.

Arthur Augustus spun round, the kite-tail whisking round with him.

"Bai Jove! What are you Shell boundahs yellin' at?" he demanded.

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

"You uttah asses!"

Arthur Augustus swung round again and walked on, the kite-tail whisking behind him, amid shrieks of mirth. As he came up to the House, with a very heightened colour, Mr. Railton's voice called from the study window:

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir?" said Arthur Augustus, turning towards the Housemaster's window, with another whisk of the kite-tail.

"What is that absurd thing attached to your jacket?" exclaimed Mr. Railton severely. "Surely, D'Arcy, you know that you should not be guilty of such absurdities!"

"Mum - mum - my jacket, sir?" stammered D'Arcy. "There is nothin' on my jacket, sir, that I am aware of."

"Oh!" said Mr. Railton, smiling slightly. "Doubtless it has been fastened without your knowledge. Take it off."

"B-b-but where is it, sir?" stuttered Arthur Augustus, scanning all he could see of his jacket in great bewilderment.

"It is fastened behind, D'Arcy," said Mr. Railton. And he retreated from his window.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus groped wildly behind him and found the fishhook first, and gave a howl.

"Yawoooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tom Mewwy, you cacklin' duffah, take this thing off my jacket, you uttah ass! I do not wegard this as fwiendly!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in great wrath.

Tom Merry, laughing, detached the fishhook and the kite-tail. Arthur Augustus jammed his celebrated monocle into his eye and stared at them.

"Gweat Scott! I compehend now!" he gasped. "That uttah wottah, Mulvaney minah, stuck that howwid thing to me when he pwe-tended to bwush my jacket!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is not a laughin' mattah, you duffahs! I am goin' to give him a feahful thwashin'!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in towering wrath.

He rushed away to the gates.

"Mulvaney, you wottah——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Micky, in great enjoy-

ment. "Kape off, ye gossoon! Only a joke, bedad! Ye'd laugh yereself if you knew how funny ye looked! Ha, ha, ha!"

Mulvaney minor was doubled up with merriment. He had forgotten all about his uncle in his enjoyment of Arthur Augustus' weird exhibition in the quad. The swell of St. Jim's pushed back his cuffs and advanced upon the disrespectful practical joker.

"You uttah ass! I am goin' to thwash you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Micky Mulvaney, still roaring, backed into the road. He backed into the ruddy-faced gentleman who had just reached the gates. Mr. O'Toole dropped his hand on his nephew's shoulder and stopped him.

"What's all this?" he asked, with a smile.

"Oh, begorra!" gasped Micky.

He remembered his uncle then. Arthur Augustus dropped his warlike hands at once.

"Nothin', sir," he said, raising his hat respectfully. "Only one of Mulvaney's little jokes, sir!"

Which was really very polite of the great Gussy.

Mr. O'Toole laughed.

"The same young rascal as ever, I suppose," he said, shaking his nephew playfully. "Always at his little jokes, and always as merry as a lark!"

Micky Mulvaney's face was a study for a moment. The dismal looks with which he had intended to greet his uncle had been a rank failure, owing to his irrepresible sense of humour. It was rather too late now to think of assuming a woebegone appearance. Uncle O'Toole had

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found him—as he generally found him—as merry as a lark; and Mulvaney minor gave up for good the idea of being “sairyous.”

### CHAPTER 5.

#### A Very Good Joke!

UNCLE O'TOOLE attracted a good deal of attention at St. Jim's during the following day or two. He certainly was a jolly old gentleman, and his hearty laugh was very good to hear. He was the Head's guest, but the juniors saw a great deal of him, owing to his affectionate interest in Micky and his youthful friends.

He came down to see the footer practice; he visited the studios; he looked in at the Common-room, and everywhere he was greeted with smiling respect. It was clear, as Jack Blake remarked, that Uncle O'Toole had been a boy himself in his time.

As a matter of fact, Uncle O'Toole was a good deal of a boy as yet, in spite of his sixty years. He liked to have young faces about him, which helped him to keep young. He was immensely tickled by his nephew's humorous turn, which led him to play practical jokes on his school-fellows.

The incident of the white rabbit in D'Arcy's Sunday topper, and the treacle in Mulvaney major's socks, made him roar, though those incidents had not appealed to the victims as particularly humorous. In fact, Mulvaney major was hardly to be restrained from slaughtering his merry minor when he put his feet into the treacle; and Arthur Augustus vowed dire vengeance when he found the rabbit in his topper. But to Uncle O'Toole the humorous side was evident—as a looker-on. A rabbit in his own hat and treacle in his own socks might not have seemed so funny to him.

That consideration occurred to Mulvaney minor. He was rather unfortunate in being his uncle's favourite to such an extent; the more the old gentleman saw him, the better he liked him; and without actually refusing Mr. O'Toole's kind-hearted offer, Micky was booked to leave St. Jim's when Mr. O'Toole's visit came to an end.

Much as he liked his kind uncle, that prospect did not please Mulvaney minor; and Tom Merry & Co. wondered, with some amusement, what would be the outcome.

Micky Mulvaney, with a grin on his ruddy face, looked into Tom Merry's study a couple of days after his uncle's arrival.

“Can you lind me some soot?” he asked.  
“I dare say there's some in the chimney!” answered Tom Merry. “But what on earth do you want soot for?”

“To please me uncle.”  
Micky took up the poker and began to rake in the chimney. A good deal of soot came down into the grate and some upon Micky himself. The Shell fellows watched him in surprise.

“I suppose your uncle doesn't want any soot?” said Manners.

“No; but he's goin' to get it! Sure, I'm goin' to fix up a booby-trap in his room!” explained Micky.

“To catch your uncle?” yelled Lowther.  
“'Yis!”

“Well, my hat!”  
“You see, me uncle's a humorous old gent,” said Micky. “He likes practical jokes no end.

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You should have heard him roar when he heard about the treacle in me major's socks.”

“He won't like practical jokes at his own expense,” said Tom Merry warningly. “Nobody ever does, however humorous he may be. The thing's quite different.”

“Think so?” asked Micky.  
“I'm 'rite sure of it!”

“But think how funny it will be—a bag of soot droppin' on his napper!” urged Mulvaney minor.

“Funny enough—but not for him! He'll cut you out of his will!” said Manners.

“Bow-wow!”

“I should think he would scalp you!” said Tom Merry.

“Not if I explain that I did it to amuse him,” said Mulvaney minor. “Sure, it's me duty to entertain the ould jintleman while he's here.”

“You young ass—”

“Thanks for the soot!” said Micky, collecting it into a bag. “I've got some from me own chimney and some from Talbot's, and I think there'll be enough to turn Uncle O'Toole into a nagger! Ta-ta!”

The Fourth Former left the study, leaving the Terrible Three staring.

“Well,” said Tom Merry, “if that young ass thinks that his uncle will appreciate humour of that kind he's making a big mistake!”

A few minutes later Arthur Augustus looked in, with a frown upon his aristocratic face.

“I weally think that young ass Mulvaney ought to be westwained!” he said. “He is in my study collectin' soot for his uncle. I have wemonstwated with him, and he only gwinned. Somebody ought to intahfere.”

“Oh, let him rip!” said Monty Lowther. “Perhaps the old gentleman will enjoy it—perhaps!”

“I wegard it as disrespectful! I have suggested to Blake to westwain him, and Blake only said ‘Wats!’ If you fellows will back me up, we will collah the young ass and stop him!”

“My dear kid, we've no time for teaching manners to the Fourth,” said Lowther. “They're a hopeless crowd, in any case!”

“Weally, Lowthah, you are aware that I am in the Fourth! I wegard your remark as dis-pawagin'!”

“Go hon!”

“And I weally think you should not encourage Mulvaney minah in these pwoceedings!” said Arthur Augustus sternly. “I would collah him myself and stop him, only I am afwaid of spoilin' my clobber. I wepeat that I think you fellows ought to collah him and stop him!”

“What about our clobber?” demanded Manners.

“Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that! How-evah, you are wathah untidy in any case, and it would not mattah vevy much.”

“Ass!”

“Weally, Mannahs!”

“Talking of jokes,” said Monty Lowther, “I've got some here that I'm putting into my comic column—”

“But we were not talkin' of jokes, Lowthah,” said Arthur Augustus, in surprise.

“Lowther means that he is going to tell us a joke,” said Manners resignedly. “Go ahead, Monty! Get through it!”

“Mercy!” murmured Tom Merry.

“Look here,” said Lowther warmly, “if you silly chumps—”

“Pway pwoceed, Lowthah!” said Arthur

# LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

**Did you know Baggly Trimble carries his own weather with him? Yes, there's always an cat wawe wherever Trimble goes!**

Some of the happiest people on earth are contortionists. They can usually make both ends meet.

**Then there was the chap who whistled in his sleep and woke up one morning to find six dogs in his bed. Bow, wow!**

Yes, and what about the business man who counts so many sheep at night that now he goes to bed with an adding-machine?

**Then there was the Scot who took an empty balloon to the dentist's because he heard he would be given gas.**

I know a man in Wayland who is making great strides in his business. He is a floor-walker.

**Irish story: "What's the date to-day?" asked one Irishman of another. "Look at the paper you're reading," replied the other. "That's no use," said the first Irishman; "it's yesterday's!"**

Remember, a fellow like Crooke never buries the hatchet unless he has an axe to grind.

**Try this: "Why, you're afraid of your own shadow," jeered Rache at Baggly Trimble, the fat junior. "Why shouldn't I be?" asked Trimble. "It looks like a crowd following me!"**

Story: "Do you want a large or a small picture?" asked the photographer of Grundy. "A small one," said Grundy. "Then will you please close your mouth?" asked the photographer.

**Of course, it's quite easy to do some things without money. You can get into debt, for instance!**

A Wayland business man says he is often so busy he has no time for lunch, and just takes a bite at his desk. Must be one of those roll-top affairs.

**An expert says not enough publicity is given to the food value of fish and chips. Yet newspapers are full of it.**

What would you do with a million pounds? asks a reader. Gosh, what a question to ask a fellow with just eight seconds to catch the post with his copy!

**On the same stand, fellows, next Wed.!**

Augustus, chipping in with his usual long-suffering courtesy. "I shall be vewy pleased to heah it."

"You've got some sense, Gussy," said Lowther, and he gave his studymates a sniff and transferred his attention to the swell of the Fourth. "It's really a good one, though I say it myself. You'll be able to see it; you've got some brains."

"Pway go on, deah boy!"

"Why should the Japanese make good hairdressers?" asked Lowther.

"I weally do not know, Lowthah."

"Because they're a barbarous race," said Lowther.

"Eh?"

"A barbarous race."

"I am quite aware that the Japanese are a barbauous wace, Lowthah, but I weally do not see why that should make them good hairdwessahs. Hairdwessin' is a vewy honouwable occupation."

Tom Merry and Manners chuckled. They had seen the joke, such as it was; but it had not dawned upon the mighty intellect of Arthur Augustus.

"Barbarous—barberous," explained Lowther laboriously "When they become hairdressers they become barbers, don't they?"

"I pwesume so."

"When they are barbers they barber us, don't they?"

"I should certainly not allow them to barbah me, Lowthah. I should uttably wefuse to barbahed by a Japanese."

"I mean, speaking in a general way," said the hapless punster "If you go to a barber, he barbers you, doesn't he?"

"Yaas, that is vewy twue."

"Well then, they become hairdressers because they are a barberus race," said Lowther.

Arthur Augustus reflected deeply; but, to Monty Lowther's relief, a smile broke over his aristocratic features.

"Bai Jove, it is a pun!" he exclaimed.

"Of course it is!"

"Barbauous—barbahus!" said D'Arcy. "Yaas, I see it, deah boy. I wegard that as funny, Lowthah."

"Oh, good!" said Lowther.

"Vewy fuuny indeed. I must tell Blake that," said Arthur Augustus.

And he left the study, leaving Lowther looking quite pleased, and Manners and Tom Merry grinning, though whether they were grinning at the joke, or at Arthur Augustus, was a question.

The swell of St. Jim's returned to Study No. 6, which Mulvaney minor was just leaving with an addition to his bag of soot. Arthur Augustus gave him a stern glance, and then dodged hurriedly into the study as Mulvaney made a motion towards him with the sooty bag. Blake, Herries, and Dig were there, and they seemed to be amused by Mulvaney minor's programme.

"Weally, deah boys, there is nothin' to gwain at in Mulvaney's diswepful conduct," said

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Arthur Augustus severely. "I wegard it as bad form, myself. Howevah, if you want somethin' to gwin at, I will tell you a joke. I have just heard it from Lowthah."

"Help!" said Blake, Herries, and Digby, all together.

"But it is weally a good one," said Arthur Augustus. "Lowthah's jokes are usually wathah wotten, though I wefwain fwom tellin' him so; but this one is weally a corkah."

"Oh, let's hear it!" said Blake. "If Lowther's made a good joke it will be worth hearing. It ought to be put on record, by Jove! Fire away!"

"Why should the Japanese make good hair-dwessahs?" asked Arthur Augustus. "It's a conundwum, you know."

"Give it up!" yawned Blake.

"Because they're a howwid, savage nation!" said Arthur Augustus. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake & Co. did not join in the laugh. They stared at Arthur Augustus blankly.

"Because what?" asked Blake.

"Because which?" ejaculated Dig.

"Because they're a howwid, savage nation! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is that the answer?"

"Yaas, wathah," answered D'Arcy warmly, "and a jolly good ansawah, too!"

The swell of St. Jim's had not quite remembered the answer, as a matter of fact, and, put in its new form, Lowther's little joke had quite vanished.

"And that's a joke?" said Blake, in wonder.

"Yaas."

"Ye gods!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Where does the joke come in?" demanded Herries.

Arthur Augustus reflected.

"Bai Jove!" he confessed. "It weally doesn't seem so funny now as when Lowthah said it, I admit. I thought it was awfully funny at the time. On second thoughts, deah boys, I don't think it is weally much of a joke, and I cannot help wegardin' Lowthah as a bit of an ass."

"And he's not the only one in the School House!" commented Blake.

To which Herries and Dig rejoined: "Hear, hear!" And Arthur Augustus said: "Wats!"

## CHAPTER 6. Not Pleased!

**C**RASH!

"Yurrrrrgggh!"

There was a sudden commotion.

Uncle O'Toole had come in from a walk and gone to his room, which was in the School House, near Mr. Railton's quarters.

The old gentleman's plump face had worn its usual ruddy, cheery look as he pushed open the door, which was ajar, and stepped in.

The next moment his aspect was completely altered.

There was a swish of something falling from above, a thud as it landed on Uncle O'Toole's head, and a flood of black as it burst there.

Mr. O'Toole's ruddy face became as black as a Hottentot's, and his clothes took on an aspect of deep mourning.

Mr. O'Toole gave a startled, gasping yell as he staggered back into the corridor smothered with soot.

"Groogh! Hoooop, hooop! Yoop! Groogh!"

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Those wild and woeful sounds rang up and down passages and staircases, to almost all corners of the School House at St. Jim's.

Mr. O'Toole gasped and spluttered, and spluttered and snorted and sneezed, in a state of utter and horrid bewilderment.

"Yaroooh! Grooooooh! Br-r-r-r-rrr! Grooooooogh!"

There were footsteps on the stairs at once. A startled maid shrieked and fled at the sight of the blackened gentleman gesticulating wildly in the corridor.

Mr. Railton came up the stairs two at a time. "What is this?" he exclaimed. "Who—what—who——"

The Housemaster jumped at the sight of the black and sooty figure waving frantic arms and scattering clouds of soot. He caught some of the soot and began to sneeze.

"Who—who—atchoo!—who—atchoo!—is it?" spluttered the Housemaster. "What has—atchoo—choo—choo!—happened?"

"Groooooogh!" Uncle O'Toole went on, something like an excited bulldog. "Grooogh! Yaroooh! Groo-ooch!"

"Is it—atchoo!—possible that this is Mr. O'Toole?" exclaimed the Housemaster, shocked and scandalised. "Bless my—atchoo!—soul!"

"Groooooogh! I am—groooooogh—smothered!" shrieked Mr. O'Toole. "Howly Moses! It's soot, and I'm smothered intirely! Look at me!"

"Bless my soul! Who can have been guilty of this—this unparalleled outrage?" gasped Mr. Railton, scarcely believing his eyes. "It is—atchoo!—incredible!"

"There was a booby-trap in my room!" spluttered the Irish gentleman. "Over my door, bedad! It fell on my—grooch—head! Look at me! Ooooooh!"

"The perpetrator of this outrage shall be severely punished!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "Pray—ahem—proceed to a bath-room, my dear sir. This way—really—really——"

"Gurrrrgh!"

The unfortunate gentleman was led to the bathroom, gurgling and guggling in a frenzied way.

Tom Merry's prediction was quite fulfilled. There was not the remotest appreciation on Mr. O'Toole's part of this first-class practical joke. It did not even strike him for a moment that it was humorous at all.

He breathed fury as he plunged in steaming water.

"Have you seen anyone enter Mr. O'Toole's room?" Mr. Railton inquired of the maid in the upper passage.

"Only Master Mulvaney, sir, the gentleman's nephew," said the maid.

"Was he carrying anything?"

"A bag, sir—it looked like a dirty paper bag."

"Thank you!"

There was no further doubt as to the delinquent, and Mr. Railton hurried downstairs in search of Mulvaney minor with a thunderous expression on his face.

"Merry!" He sighted Tom Merry on the lower staircase. "Find Mulvaney minor at once, and bring him to me."

"Yes, sir," said Tom.

The captain of the Shell guessed easily enough why Mulvaney minor was wanted. He ran to Study No. 4 in the Fourth. He found Mulvaney minor there, with his studymate, Clarence York Tompkins.

"Mulvaney, you chump——" gasped Tom.

Mulvaney glanced at him serenely.

"Anything up?" he asked.  
 "You young idiot! Didn't you hear the rumpus?"  
 "Sure, I thought there was a row," said Mulvaney, with a nod. "Has me uncle found the soot?"  
 "Yes; and Mr. Railton knows it was you, and he wants you in his study!"  
 "Bedad, and I'll go if he wants me!"  
 "Better put some exercise-books in your trucks," said Tompkins. "It will be a swishing, at least!"  
 "It's a duffer ye are, Tompkins! Sure, I'm not goin' to be swished for tryin' to please me uncle! Where's the justice of that?"  
 "You'll get a jolly good licking!" said Tom Merry. "And I must say it serves you right, fathcad!"  
 "Bedad, you'll see!"  
 Mulvaney minor was quite serene as he made his way to Mr. Railton's study downstairs. He found the Housemaster looking very angry.  
 "You sint for me, sir?" said Micky meekly.  
 "I sent for you, Mulvaney minor!" said Mr. Railton, in deep tones. "Someone has laid a trap for your uncle, Mr. O'Toole, in his room, and he has been smothered with soot. You were seen to go in there."  
 "Yes, sir."  
 "You admit your guilt, Mulvaney minor?"  
 "Certainly, sir."  
 "You played this audacious, this atrocious trick

upon your uncle, a guest of your headmaster?" thundered Mr. Railton.  
 "Yis, sir!" said Micky cheerfully. "I hope the ould jintleman is enjoyin' it, sir!"  
 "Is that meant for impertinence, Mulvaney minor?"  
 "Not at all, sir! Me uncle is fond of jokes, sir, and he's no end amused by a practical joke, sir. I'm sure he'll be no end plazed, sir!"  
 Mr. Railton stared at the junior blankly.  
 "You—you—you suppose that your uncle will be pleased at being smothered with soot?" he ejaculated.  
 "Bein' so fond of jokes, sir, and fun, he's bound to be!" said Micky. "You'll hear him laughin' over it no end, sir."  
 "Bless my soul!" said Mr. Railton, quite taken back. "I really hardly know how to deal with you, Mulvaney minor. Your uncle is naturally very angry."  
 Micky shook his head.  
 "That's only his fun, sir," he said confidently.  
 "Sure, he'll look on it as the joke of the sayson, sir! Ask him, sir!"  
 Mr. Railton eyed the junior coldly. But Mulvaney minor seemed full of cheery confidence.  
 "I will not punish you, Mulvaney minor, till I've spoken to your uncle on the subject," said the Housemaster, at last. "You will remain in this study for the present. I will ask Mr. O'Toole to come here when he has removed the soot."



The juniors roared with laughter as Mr. O'Toole struggled frantically to detach the camp-stool stuck to his trousers. "Come and help me, somebody!" shouted the excited Irish gentleman. "Phwat are ye cackling at intirely?"

"Very well, sir."  
 "You may sit down!"  
 "Thank you, sir!"

He sat down, looking as if he hadn't a worry in the world upon his mind. The puzzled House-master called in a fag, and sent a message to Mr. O'Toole. It was a good half-hour before the Irish gentleman presented himself in the House-master's study, looking newly swept and garnished, so to speak. His face was crimson with rubbing, but there were still traces of soot about his ears—not about his hair, for the excellent reason that the bald gentleman took an extra wig with him when travelling, in case of accidents! Which was very fortunate in the circumstances.

If Mr. O'Toole was enjoying the joke at his expense, his looks belied him. To judge by appearances, he was feeling quite tigerish.

"Mr. Railton," he exploded, as he came in, "this outrage—"

"The perpetrator is here, sir," said the House-master.

Mr. O'Toole jumped.

"Not Micky—not my nephew?"

"He has confessed it."

"Howly Moses!" ejaculated Mr. O'Toole. "I—I beg your pardon! I mean goodness gracious! Micky, you young scoundrel!"

"Sure, and ye're not angry with me, uncle?" asked Micky.

"What! You rascal—you omadhaun—you spalpeen!" spluttered Uncle O'Toole. "What do you mean by it? Smothering your uncle wid soot intirely!"

"Sure, it was a joke, uncle—"

"What? What?"

"Wasn't it funny?" demanded Micky.

"Funny!" gasped Mr. O'Toole. "Funny! Did you say funny?"

"Sure, and I did, uncle! As funny as puttin' the treacle into my major's socks intirely!" said Mulvaney minor. "Why don't ye laugh, bedad!"

"Laugh!" stuttered his uncle. "Laugh!"

"It's losin' yere sense of humour ye are, uncle," said Micky sorrowfully. "Sure, if it had happened to someone else ye'd have roared!"

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. O'Toole, perhaps struck by that remark. "You—you idiotic young rascal! Haven't ye any sense?"

"Sure, I have a sinse of humour, uncle, and it's often and often that you have complimented me on it!"

Mr. O'Toole breathed hard.

"The boy's a fool!" he said. "Fool intirely! Mr. Railton, if it is not asking too much, I'd like to beg the young rascal off on this occasion. He's a fool—a born fool!"

"As the injured party, sir, you have a right to ask that your nephew go unpunished," said Mr. Railton dryly. "It is as you desire!"

Mr. O'Toole turned to his nephew.

"Get out!" he said briefly.

Micky obediently left the study. But he turned in the doorway.

"Uncle, aren't you plazed?" he asked.

Mr. O'Toole made a movement towards him, with an expression that made Micky scud down the passage without waiting for an answer.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Sticking To It!

TOM MERRY & CO. were on the football ground the following day when Mr. O'Toole came along.

School House juniors were playing New House, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,621.

and Tom Merry had given Mulvaney minor a place in his team, partly on his own account, and partly to please the distinguished visitor. Micky was a very good back, and Herries cheerfully consented to stand out for him. Herries intended to take his bulldog, Towser, for a run. Micky rushed to meet his uncle, and conducted him to the ground in the most dutiful way. Uncle O'Toole had apparently forgiven, if not forgotten, the episode of the soot, and taken Micky in favour again.

"Don't let me keep you if you're in the team, me boy," said Mr. O'Toole genially.

"They're not kickin' off for a few minutes," said Micky. "The referee's not there yet. It's Lefevre of the Fifth. I've got a chair for ye here, uncle—an illegant camp-stool I've brought for ye."

"It's a good boy ye are, Micky!"

Mr. O'Toole sat down on the camp-stool, where he had a good view of the junior ground.

Micky remained with his uncle till Lefevre of the Fifth hove in sight, coming down from the House.

He entertained Mr. O'Toole with a story of a joke which made the old gentleman chuckle with great amusement. According to Micky, on one occasion he had provided a sightseer with a camp-stool upon which he had carefully smeared secotine so that when the victim rose, the stool rose with him. That humorous incident struck Mr. O'Toole as very funny indeed, and he chuckled loud and long.

"Mulvaney!" shouted Tom Merry from the distance.

"Sure, I'm comin'!"

Micky cut off to join the footballers.

Mr. O'Toole looked on with keen interest from the kick-off, and he saw a good game, both School House and New House juniors being in high fettle. Figgins & Co. attacked hotly, but the School House held their own, and it was Talbot of the Shell who scored first. Close on the interval, however, Figgins put the ball in for the New House.

Then the whistle went, and the game stopped for a brief rest. Micky Mulvaney looked towards his uncle with a very curious expression. Mr. O'Toole was still seated where he had left him, in great good-humour, and Micky hurried to rejoin him.

"A good game, Micky—very good for junior football!" said Mr. O'Toole genially. "Ye played well yourself."

"Me little best," said Micky modestly. "You remember what I was tellin' you, uncle, about the sticky camp-stool—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes!"

"Don't ye think it was a funny trick, uncle?"

"Ha, ha, ha! You're a broth of a boy, Micky," said Mr. O'Toole. "It was too bad, but, after all, boys will be boys."

"And if you'd been the jintleman concerned, you wouldn't have been waxy intirely?" asked Micky.

"I hope I should be able to take a joke, my boy."

"Sure, I'm glad to hear it, uncle, because you are the jintleman concerned," said Mulvaney minor.

"What?"

"Sure, that's the stool ye're sittin' on now!"

"Wha-a-at!"

Mr. O'Toole's expression suddenly changed.

"This—that—what!"

"And sure the secotine will be set, and as



# Detective Kerr Investigates

No. 34.

## WHO SHOT "RATTY"?

WHEN Mr. Ratcliff, the master of the New House, received a spent pellet from an air-rifle in the small of his back while standing near his study window, he was more startled and outraged than hurt. Taking the pellet to the Head, Mr. Ratcliff demanded an immediate inquiry. Dr. Holmes asked Kildare to question the juniors, and it was found that Blake, Reilly, Gore, and Clifton Dane each possessed an air-rifle. Each said he was in his study at the time, however, and that he did not fire the shot. The authorities being nonplussed, "Detective" Kerr investigated.

KERR: Do you mind if I grill you first, Blake? I believe that is the proper term for a Third Degree examination.

BLAKE: Grill away, Kerr, and be blowed!

KERR: Keep your wool on! I wouldn't suggest you fired the shot that hit Ratty. Whoever did it was a reckless idiot. I suppose he fired out of one of the study windows, and the pellet entered Ratty's open window on the other side of the quad with just enough force to surprise him.

BLAKE: Sounds convincing. All you have to do now is to find a reckless idiot with an air-rifle.

KERR: You've never let yours out of your hands, Blake?

BLAKE: Never. Gussy did want to have a pot at a target with it the other day, but I said think of the pigeons on the School House roof! He might just as easily have hit one of them as the target!

D'ARCY: Weally, Blake, I am as good a shot as you are!

KERR: Thanks, fellows!

KERR: Hallo, Reilly!

REILLY: Sure, Kerr, it's glad I am ye called! Take a look at this gun. It's saying it's never been fired for two whole terms at least, I

hard as iron, by this time, and faith ye'll never get that stool off yez, uncle."

"You young scoundrel!" roared Mr. O'Toole.

The old gentleman leaped to his feet. The camp-stool leaped with him; the secotine had done its deadly work, and that camp-stool was so securely fastened to Mr. O'Toole's garment that it seemed as if it had been riveted there.

"Howly snoke, but I'll thrash yez till ye can't crawl!" roared the enraged old gentleman. "Ye born fool—ye blatherin' omadhaun!"

"But you said it was funny, and you could take

am. Look at it! The trigger is jammed, so I couldn't have fired the shot that peppered Mr. Ratcliff, could I, bejabbers?"

KERR: Well, no, not with that gun, agreed.

GORE: Come in, Kerr. I knew you'd want to see me. You've heard about my trouble with Mr. Ratcliff, I suppose?

KERR: No, I didn't know you'd upset him in any way. You've already told Kildare you didn't fire the shot?

GORE: Certainly I didn't. But Ratty knows I was sore with him because he reported me for cuffing a New House fag Young Jameson had the cheek to say to Gibson: "Here comes old clod-hoppers again!"—meaning my feet. I know they're big. But I wasn't standing that from a kid in the Third!

KERR: Quite. So Mr. Ratcliff thinks you shot him for revenge. But there's no truth in it?

GORE: Well, not actually. I admit when I saw him in his study across the quad and noticed the window was open at the bottom the thought did enter my head. I knew the pellet couldn't really hurt him at that range. But Skimpole grabbed the gun away from me. He seemed to think I was mad!

KERR: Skimmy wasn't far wrong. I should say. Well, I've found the reckless idiot I'm looking for. But apparently you didn't actually fire. What happened after Skimpole took the gun?

GORE: I felt like thumping the fathead, but he looked so genuinely alarmed that I just stamped out of the study. I haven't touched the gun since. Oh, here he is! Kerr to see you, Skimmy. Anything you say may be cooked up in evidence against you!

SKIMPOLE: If you have come about the shooting, Kerr, Gore did not do it. You will find his air-rifle in the corner. It is not loaded now.

GORE: You can't accuse Skimpole of anything, Kerr. He's as simple as they make them. He doesn't even know how to load or unload a gun. Do you, Skimmy?

DANE: I wish I could help you, Kerr. Oddly enough, I did hear a phut as though a gun had been fired out of a study window. I looked out, but saw nothing.

*(Who fired the shot? Can you tell from the information given to Kerr? The solution is on page 33.)*

a joke. Oh, howly mother of Moses!" ejaculated Micky, dodging his uncle.

"Bedad, there goes the whistle!"

Mulvaney minor rushed back to the footer field.

Mr. O'Toole rushed after him breathless; but the whistle was going, and the game restarting, and he could not rush among the footballers. He stopped, gasping with wrath.

There was a howl of mirth from the football crowd.

The sight of the camp-stool dangling behind Mr. O'Toole sent them into a roar. The old

gentleman made a furious clutch at it, but it was too well stuck to come off. He wrenched and wrenched, in vain.

"Bedad, I'll skin him!" he gasped. "I'll lather him—I'll disinherit him—I'll—I'll——"

Words failed Mulvaney's uncle.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from the crowd. For the moment the battle between the School House and the New House was forgotten; all eyes were upon Mr. O'Toole. The excited Irish gentleman, struggling frantically to detach the camp-stool, was the centre of attraction.

"Come and help me, somebody!" shouted Mr. O'Toole. "Phwat are ye cackling at intirely? Help me, I tell yez!"

Some of the fellows, breathless with laughter, rushed to his aid. Dick Julian and Durrance and Cardew grasped the stool and wrenched at it.

There was a sudden sound of rending, but it was not the camp-stool coming away from the trousers. The juniors ceased their efforts hurriedly.

"Better keep it on, and get indoors, sir!" said Julian hastily.

Mr. O'Toole, almost suffocating with wrath, realised that, in the circumstances, the camp-stool had better not be yanked off in public, and, with a blazing face, he started for the School House at a run. The sight of a crimson-faced gentleman sprinting for the House, with the camp-stool dangling behind, made the juniors shriek. Even the footballers were yelling.

"Uncle!" Mulvaney major of the Sixth met his uncle in the quad, and stopped dead in sheer amazement. "Uncle, what's the matter? What are——"

Mr. O'Toole brushed him aside and rushed on, leaving the Sixth Former gaping. But, as he looked after him, Mulvaney major understood. The Irish gentleman streaked into the House at express speed, and went up the big staircase three at a time.

On the first landing Racke and Crooke and Scrope were lounging by the big window, chatting, and the hurried Irish gentleman rushed fairly into them. Racke and Crooke and Scrope were scattered over the landing, with loud howls. But Mr. O'Toole did not pause to give them a glance. He sped away to his own room.

The camp-stool did not part company with Mr. O'Toole until he had removed the garment to which it was attached; and for a good ten minutes anyone within a dozen yards of his room might have heard a furious voice, with a pronounced brogue, making references to Mulvaney minor of the Fourth that were uncomplimentary to the last degree.

## CHAPTER 8.

### Poor Uncle!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY put his head in at Study No. 4 in the Fourth.

The football match was over, with a School House win, and most of the juniors were expecting to see Mr. O'Toole on the war-path. They were not disappointed. And Arthur Augustus, greatly as he disapproved of Mulvaney minor's practical jokes, had looked in to warn the merry Micky that his uncle was coming up to see him with a stick in his hand.

"Mulvaney, you young ass——" he began.

Then he observed that the study was empty.

Mulvaney minor was not there, waiting for the  
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wrath to come; he had prudently kept off the scene. The footsteps of Mr. O'Toole were audible in the passage now, and Arthur Augustus retired.

A good many juniors were following Mr. O'Toole at a distance with expectant looks. Mr. O'Toole had a big stick in his hand, and they knew what that stick was for. The old gentleman had forgiven the soot, but he had evidently not forgiven the secocotine. Micky Mulvaney was going to have a lesson, which, it had to be admitted, he was badly in need of.

"Now, then, you young scallawag!" exclaimed Mr. O'Toole, as he hurled open the study door and strode in.

The moment he was in the study Micky Mulvaney emerged into the passage from the next room.

He stepped along it quietly to the door of his own study and looked in.

"Oh, there you are!" exclaimed his uncle.

"Sure, I'm here, uncle! And there ye are, bedad!" answered Micky, as he jerked the study door shut.

The key was already in the outside of the lock. Before Mr. O'Toole knew what was happening the key was turned.

He jumped to the door and shook the handle.

"Have you locked me in, you young rascal?" he thundered.

"You've hit it, begorra!"

"Let me out at once!"

"Sure, it's a joke, uncle!"

"What?"

"It's a joke on ye!" chuckled Micky through the keyhole. "I'll let ye out when I come in! I'm goin' down to Rylcombe now."

Mr. O'Toole roiled.

"Let me out at once, or I'll skin yez!" he roared.

"Faith, and I think ye'd skin me if I let ye out, not if I left ye in!" chuckled Mulvaney minor.

And he put the key in his pocket and walked away.

There was a wild thumping on the door within. The juniors in the passage simply blinked at Mulvaney minor as he sauntered along to the stairs.

"You're not going to leave your uncle locked in?" shouted Tom Merry, catching Micky by the shoulder.

Mulvaney minor nodded.

"Why not?" he asked.

"You—you—you young rascal! Let him out at once!"

"Sure it's a joke on him!"

"He doesn't sound as if he likes it!" grinned Grundy of the Shell. "If I were your uncle, Mulvaney, I'd wallop you!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Let him out, you young ass!" exclaimed Talbot. "You'll have the prefects up here if that row goes on!"

"Sure, me uncle can tell them it's a joke!"

"Are you potty?" exclaimed Blake.

Micky Mulvaney smiled and walked on, and disappeared down the staircase. It was evident that he was in earnest, and that his extraordinary joke upon his uncle was to continue.

"Well, my hat!" said Tom Merry. "That young ass won't be Mr. O'Toole's favourite nephew much longer at this rate."

Thump, thump, thump!

"Here comes Kildare—and old Mulvaney, too."

Two prefects were hurrying up the stairs. The din made by Mr. O'Toole in his nephew's study



was deafening Kildare and Mulvaney major reached the door of Study No. 4.

"What's the matter in there?" shouted Kildare angrily.

"Let me out, you scallawag!"

"Is that Mr. O'Toole?" gasped Kildare.

"My uncle?" said Mulvaney major, in wonder.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Open this door! Let me out! My nephew's locked me in! I'll thrash him! I'll skin him! Oh, begorra, and let me get my hands on him!"

"Great Scott!" said Kildare. "The key's gone! Blake, have you seen Mulvaney minor?"

"He's gone out, Kildare."

"Gone out! Where?"

"Rylcombe, I believe."

"Has he taken the key with him?"

"Well, he had it in his pocket!" grinned Blake.

"My hat!" Kildare turned to his fellow-prefect.

"As Mr. O'Toole is your uncle, Mulvaney, I'll leave the matter in your hands."

And the captain of St. Jim's retired from the scene.

Thump, thump!

"Are ye not going to let me out at all, at all?" roared Mr. O'Toole.

"Be calm, uncle!" said Mulvaney major. "The young rascal's gone out and taken the key with him!"

"I'll skin him!"

"The door can't be opened——"

"I'll—I'll—I'll boil him!"

"Quiet, uncle! The Head will hear!" urged the Sixth Former, at his wits' end to know what to do.

"I'll have him flogged!"

"Yes, yes; but——"

"I'll disinherit him!"

"Uncle——"

The thumping on the door had ceased, however. Mr. O'Toole realised that it was useless, and that he could not be released till his nephew came in. As soon as he was quiet, Mulvaney major took his departure, looking quite dazed. He felt that his minor was quite beyond him.

In Study No. 4, Mr. O'Toole sat down in the armchair, to wait with what patience he could muster. He was not comforted by the sound of frequent chuckles from the passage.

It was nearly two hours later that he heard the sound of a key turning in the lock outside.

Then Mr. O'Toole rose, with a glitter in his eyes, and grasped his stick. His nephew was going to get something that he would remember for a long time as soon as the door opened!

Mr. O'Toole approached the door, ready to seize the junior before he could escape after unlocking it. As the key clicked back Mr. O'Toole tore the door open without waiting and sprang out. He grasped the junior outside by the collar, swung him round, and laid on with the stick.

There was a wild yell from the victim.

"Yow-ow-ooooo! Oh! Ah! Ah! Leave off! Are you—yarrooh!—mad?"

It was not Mulvaney minor!

Mr. O'Toole suddenly ceased to lay on with the stick as he realised that rather important fact.

Skimpole of the Shell wriggled away, and blinked at Mr. O'Toole through his big spectacles in amazement and indignation.

"Sir!" he spluttered.

There was a howl of laughter along the passage. Possibly Micky Mulvaney had foreseen the result when he asked the simple Skimmy to unlock that door. Micky was not in sight, however; he was prudently keeping at a distance.

"Bless me!" stammered Mr. O'Toole. "I—I thought——"

"How dare you assault me in this extraordinary and unprovoked manner!" howled Skimpole.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I am really very sorry, my boy!" gasped Mr. O'Toole. "I—I thought it was my nephew."

"I—I beg your pardon! Oh dear!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" said Skimpole.

Mr. O'Toole tucked his stick under his arm and hurried away. His feelings were too deep for words. He kept a very sharp eye open for his nephew as he went. But he did not see Mulvaney minor. That cheery youth was a little too wide to be sighted just then.

## CHAPTER 9.

### Walking Out With Uncle!

"MICKY, you young idiot!"

"Sure, it's polite ye are!"

Tom Merry glanced round, with a smile. Lessons were over the following day, and Mulvaney major of the Sixth was waiting for his young brother when the Fourth and the Shell came out together. The prefect was looking very serious and annoyed.

"I suppose you know that Uncle O'Toole is getting fed-up with you?" said Mulvaney major.

"Not really?" asked Micky.

"If he'd found you yesterday I believe he would have skinned you."

"Ochone!"

"You'll find yourself in Queer Street, I warn you, if you play any more of your fool tricks!" growled Mulvaney major. "A little more of that and Uncle O'Toole will leave you here when he goes, and your chances will be done for."

"You don't say so!" murmured Micky.

"Well, I do say so, and you'd better take it as a tip," said the Sixth Former. "Now go and get a clean collar on and try to behave yourself with uncle. He wants you to go down to the village with him. Wait here till he comes. He will be about a quarter of an hour; he's talking with Railton now."

"Sure, I'll wait."

"And mind you behave yourself," said Mulvaney major distrustfully.

"Don't I always?" demanded Micky in an injured tone. "Haven't I been cheerin' uncle up iver since he came, bedad?"

"Br-r-r-r-r!" said his elder brother, and he walked away, evidently without much hope that Micky would behave himself.

Micky closed one eye at Tom Merry as the Sixth Former departed.

"Tommy, me bhoy, I want to borrow somethin' of you," he said.

"Anything up to five bob," said Tom, with a smile.

"Not tin. Have ye got a bottle of marking-ink?"

"Yes," said Tom, rather surprised by that question. "There's a bottle half full in my study. You'll find it on the mantelpiece."

"Thank ye, old top! I'll borrow it then."

"Haven't you got to wait here for your uncle?"

"Sure, I'll come back; but if you see him tell him I'm comin'," said Micky, and he hurried away.

"That young bouncer is up to his games again," said Monty Lowther, with a shake of the head. "What does he want that marking-ink for, Tommy?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"For his uncle, perhaps," he said. "Hallo, here he is!"

The Shell fellows were waiting in the doorway for Manners, and they observed Micky Mulvaney coming downstairs.

"Did you find the bottle?" asked Tom.

"Hush!"

"Eh? What is there to hush about?" asked the captain of the Shell.

"Not a word!" whispered Micky mysteriously.

There were several hats on a stand near at hand, and among them was the Homburg hat favoured by Mr. O'Toole. Micky Mulvaney cautiously picked it up, glancing round as he did so.

He was busy with it for a few seconds, and Tom Merry and Monty Lowther watched him dumbly.

The contents of the marking-ink bottle were poured liberally under the inside band of the hat. Then Micky slipped the empty bottle inside his pocket and carefully pressed back the inside band.

A considerable amount of purple indelible ink, as yet invisible, was now oozing behind the lining of the hat. It was pretty certain that before the hat had been long on Mr. O'Toole's head the ink would ooze through and adorn his forehead and features.

There was a step in the corridor, and Micky hastily took up the hat-brush and began to brush the hat.

"Oh, here you are, me boy!" said Mr. O'Toole, as he came up. And it was noticeable that his manner to his favourite nephew was not quite so jovial as of old. Which was really not surprising.

"Here I am, uncle," said Micky cheerily. "Sure, I've brushed yere hat for ye, uncle."

"Thank you, Micky!"

Mr. O'Toole took the hat, and Micky took his cap, and uncle and nephew left the House together. Tom Merry and Lowther looked after them, and then looked at each other.

"My word!" murmured Tom.

"In about ten minutes that blessed ink will be streaking all over his chivvy!" murmured Lowther. "The young ass! That isn't the way to treat a rich uncle!"

"It's Mulvaney's way," said Tom, laughing. "I fancy I can see his little game, too. Mr. O'Toole won't want to take him home with him after a few more experiences of that kind."

"Oho!" said Lowther, and he burst into a laugh. "I see! The deep young villain!"

Uncle and nephew passed out of the gates, old Taggles, the porter, giving Mr. O'Toole a rather curious look as he passed his lodge, for a thin streak of purple was already showing on the old gentleman's forehead.

It was a rather warm afternoon, and Mr. O'Toole had a considerable weight to carry, so naturally he grew warm as he walked along the lane to Rylcombe. Little drops of perspiration ran down his forehead; but something else ran down as well, Mr. O'Toole being blissfully unconscious of the addition. The warmth of his head helped the marking-ink to ooze through the lining of his hat. Peculiar zebra-like markings began to appear upon the old gentleman's ruddy face and forehead, and by the time they drew near the village his appearance was very remarkable.

Two or three people they passed in the lane stared at Mr. O'Toole in what he could not help thinking was a rude way. Old Mr. Pepper was in his cottage doorway, and he burst into a rusty chortle at the sight of Micky and his uncle. Mr.

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"Begorra!" exclaimed Mr. O'Toole, halting suddenly at the sight of the purple streak on his forehead. "Who—who—?" He stood staring at himself, while everyone else stared at him, wondering at Micky's sense of humour.

O'Toole stared at Pepper and frowned—a purple frown that made Erasmus Pepper chortle all the more. With a heightened colour Mr. O'Toole walked on rather quickly.

"Haw, haw, haw!" followed him from Mr. Pepper's cottage.

"Bless my soul!" said Uncle O'Toole. "Who is that man, Micky?"

"Sure, he's old Pepper, the village miser, uncle."

"A very bad-mannered man."

"A regular old crust, uncle," said Micky.

Grimes, the grocer's boy of Rylcombe, was coming along from Mr. Sands' shop with a basket on his arm. He stopped as if rooted to the ground, and stared at Mr. O'Toole as if mesmerised. It was not polite, but Grimes simply couldn't help it. He had never seen a gentleman before with a complexion like a zebra. Mr. O'Toole frowned at him majestically, but the frown, on a face streaked with deep purple, had anything but a majestic effect. Grimes gasped.

"Oh lor'!"

"Cheeky ass!" said Micky Mulvaney indignantly. "Shall I dot him in the eye, uncle?"

"No, no!" said Mr. O'Toole hastily. "The boy is very rude. Really, I am surprised to see such manners in this village. It is not like this in Ireland."



At sight of his reflection in the mirror. "What—what—else in the bunshop grinned. The unfortunate victim was thunderstruck.

"Sure, ye don't carry about such a jolly complexion in Ireland!" murmured his dutiful nephew.

"Eh? What did you say, Micky?"

"N-nothin'. Bejabbers, here's the vicar!"

Even Micky felt a little dismayed as the portly vicar of Rylcombe came down the street. Uncle O'Toole had met Mr. Hutton before, and he knew him. The Irish gentleman saluted the vicar politely, but the vicar, instead of returning the salute, looked at him open-eyed. Mr. Hutton was so astounded that he stood with his mouth open, as if transfixed.

Uncle O'Toole's face grew crimson, where it was not purple. This fixed and astounded stare from the vicar put the lid on, so to speak.

"Dear me!" Mr. Hutton found his voice at last. "Is—is that Mr. O'Toole?"

"You remember me, I presume?" said Mr. O'Toole, quite snappishly.

"My dear, dear sir, are you ill?"

"Ill! Certainly not! Do I look ill?" said Uncle O'Toole testily.

"Upon my word, I think you do, sir!" said Mr. Hutton. "Really, I—I should certainly say so! I—I recommend you to see a doctor at once, Mr. O'Toole. It may be botulism—"

"What?"

"Or influenza," said the vicar, backing away

rather hastily. "Pray excuse me! An appointment—important—"

Mr. Hutton was gone without completing his remark.

"Goodness gracious!" said Mr. O'Toole blankly. "Is the vicar mad? Is it possible that the vicar of this parish is given to indulging in strong liquor? Otherwise, what can this mean?"

There was certainly no explanation to be had from Mr. Hutton. He was off to keep his appointment at great speed. The possibility that Mr. O'Toole's affliction was infectious was enough for him. The old gentleman blinked after him, and then blinked round as a sudden dry chuckle proceeded from Mr. Crump, the village policeman, who was passing. Mr. Crump coloured as he met Uncle O'Toole's excited eye, and passed on quickly.

From an urchin in the doorway of a shop came a howl:

"Hallo, funny face! Yah!"

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. O'Toole. "Is—is it possible that that dirty little boy is alluding to me?"

"Sure; I'll biff him, uncle!" said the dutiful Micky.

"No, no! Come on—come on!"

Mr. O'Toole walked on hurriedly, the burning flush in his face setting off to advantage the streaks of deep purple. His self-consciousness and discomfort increased as he proceeded, for every one he passed stared at him, and there were subdued chuckles and whispered remarks on all sides. The humorous Micky was feeling a little alarmed by this time. But there was nothing he could do. He had done a little too much already.

It had been Mr. O'Toole's kind intention to take his schoolboy nephew into the bunshop for tea. When he reached the bunshop he was feeling so extremely put out that he almost hesitated to enter. However, he marched in, and at the same time caught sight of himself in a large mirror just inside the shop.

Mr. O'Toole jumped at the sight of his reflection, not recognising it as his own.

"Begorra!" he exclaimed, halting suddenly. "What—what—what a very remarkable complexion that gentleman has? Why—what—who—who—why—" He recognised his own clothes, if not his own face, and jumped.

For a moment Mr. O'Toole stood staring at the reflection in the mirror, while everyone else in the bunshop stared at Mr. O'Toole and grinned. The unfortunate victim of the family sense of humour was thunderstruck. But as the truth dawned upon him he removed his hat, and found it thick and clogged inside with exuding marking-ink. Then his grip closed on his walking-stick and he turned to Micky.

But it was too late! Micky Mulvaney was fleeing from the wrath to come, and he was proceeding down the village street at a pace he had never excelled on the cinder-path. An interview with Mr. O'Toole was the last thing desired just then by his dutiful nephew.

## CHAPTER 10.

### Only a False Alarm!

"**B**AI Jove!"  
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy nearly fell down.

His eyeglass dropped, and his eyes remained wide open, fixed in amazement, as a hatless man  
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with a purple face came in at the school gates with a rush.

It was Mr. O'Toole, but he was hardly recognisable. His inky hat remained on the floor in the bunshop, and Mr. O'Toole had run all the way back bareheaded, save for the marking-ink.

He had hoped to overtake his cheery nephew, but he hadn't the remotest chance of that. Half-way to the school it had occurred to him that he would have done more wisely to get a wash somewhere in the village, but he did not feel inclined to run back. He pursued his way, breathless, perspiring, only anxious to get out of the public view and hide his blushes in the bath-room.

Rylcombe Lane was not a well-frequented thoroughfare by any means, but people seemed to start up from the earth to stare at Mr. O'Toole as he passed. He left the lane in one continual howl of laughter behind him as he fled.

He crossed the quadrangle of St. Jim's in a series of hops and leaps, for he was tired out, and had hardly energy enough left for a run. From all sides there was a roar as he was seen.

Mr. O'Toole bolted into the House, immensely relieved that he did not meet the Head or Mr. Railton on his way. He did not breathe freely till he was in his own room.

There he sank down in an armchair and gasped.

As soon as he had recovered his breath a little he used it to make remarks about his nephew, and he did it continuously for about five minutes. Only his remarkable complexion prevented him from seeking out Micky Mulvaney on the spot. But he dared not leave his room. He was only too glad to reach it without causing a general sensation.

His chief need was soap and hot water, and plenty of it. He rose at last, and pressed the electric bell. Then he waited impatiently for the arrival of the maid.

But the maid did not come.

Mr. O'Toole fumed and raged in the bed-room. Every minute that the marking-ink was left on his face made it drier and more difficult to remove—and it was not likely to be easy in any case. He pressed the bell again and again; and then, as there was no result, he kept his finger on it and kept the button down, so that it would ring continuously in the regions below.

That surely should have brought the maid upstairs; but it did not. There was no footstep outside; no sign of a maid. Mr. O'Toole panted with wrath. Hitherto he had found the School House a very well-managed establishment, and all his wants had been well attended to. Now he was left in the lurch when he needed attention most. It was exasperating.

He took his thumb from the bell at last, having kept it there for a good five minutes.

"The confounded thing must be out of order!" he gasped. "Otherwise they must hear. They cannot all be out. Bless my soul!"

He blinked furiously at the bell-push, and as there seemed nothing wrong with it, he pressed again and again. Then he thought of unscrewing it. And when he did so, he made the valuable discovery that the wire had been nipped through, thus cutting off the connection. Evidently the bell had not rung once during all the time he had pressed it.

That discovery caused Mr. O'Toole to execute a kind of war-dance in his room, calling down blessings on the head of his nephew. He did not need telling who had disconnected his bell.

As he could not ring, it was clear that if

he wanted to wash he would have to call for hot water personally, or get along to the bath-room. He put his head out of the door, and blinked cautiously along the corridor. Mrs. Mimms, the House dame, had been upstairs on some household errands, and she was returning along the corridor when Mr. O'Toole's em-purpled face looked up.

Mrs. Mimms stopped, with a loud shriek. "My dear madam," stammered Mr. O'Toole, "pray—pray do not be alarmed, I—"

Shriek!

"Madam, I beg you—"

Mr. O'Toole advanced towards the House dame in his anxiety to reassure her, and make her understand that he was not so dangerous as he looked. The frightened lady shrieked again, and bolted for the stairs.

"Madam," shouted Mr. O'Toole, "I assure you, I—I—"

"Help!" shrieked Mrs. Mimms, bounding down the stairs at a great rate. "Help! A dreadful Red Indian! Oh, help!"

"Madam!" bawled the infuriated Irish gentleman. "Begorra, it's not a Red Indian I am! Can't you see? Oh, howly Moses!"

"What ever is the matter?" came Mr. Railton's voice on the lower stairs.

"Help!" moaned Mrs. Mimms, throwing herself into the Housemaster's arms, and, in her confusion and excitement, clasping him round his neck. "Mr. Railton, save me!"

"Bless my soul! Mrs. Mimms! Madam!"

"A dreadful Red Indian, or Hottentot!" moaned Mrs. Mimms. "Save me! Oh, oh, oh!"

"Madam, calm yourself. Calm yourself, I beg!" gasped Mr. Railton, vainly trying to disengage himself from the terrified lady. "Madam, I—I—"

"Save me!"

"Madam, this is most—most disconcerting! In fact, improper!" gasped the Housemaster. "I—I beg of you—"

The sight of a purple face staring down the staircase cut short Mr. Railton's speech. He blinked at it over Mrs. Mimms, who was still clutching him, and sobbing round his neck.

"What—what—what—who—how—what—" stammered Mr. Railton.

"That dreadful Hottentot!" shrieked Mrs. Mimms.

"I am not a Hottentot!" roared Uncle O'Toole furiously. "Neither am I a Red Indian, you foolish creature! I am Phelim O'Toole! My face has been inked by a dastardly young rascal, that is all!"

"Mr. O'Toole!" exclaimed the Housemaster. "Bless my soul! Mrs. Mimms, pray release me! There is no occasion whatever to be alarmed! It is simply Mr. O'Toole! Bless my soul!"

The House dame released Mr. Railton at last, partially reassured. But she backed away, keeping her eyes on Mr. O'Toole as she retreated. The poor lady was quite faint when she reached her own stronghold below.

"Mr. O'Toole!" said the Housemaster. "Really, sir, this is—is—is very extraordinary! Very—"

Mr. O'Toole did not answer; he was streaking for the bath-room. The Housemaster shook his head seriously as he went away. What time Mr. O'Toole, fortunately reaching the bath-room without any further encounter with frightened females, was revelling in hot water and soap.

For an hour or more Mr O'Toole was rubbing and scrubbing, and scrubbing and rubbing, till his skin felt as if it were peeling off, and his complexion was like unto a newly boiled beet-root. And when from sheer fatigue he had to desist, there were still zebra-like streaks and stripes on his ruddy countenance, and he presented a mottled appearance that would have made him the cynosure of all eyes anywhere.

Tom Merry & Co. were not surprised to hear that Mr. O'Toole was confined to his room for the next couple of days by a slight indisposition. He was waiting for his complexion to wear off.

CHAPTER 11.  
The Last Straw!

**T**OM MERRY & CO. could not help smiling when they saw Mr. O'Toole about again. During his "indisposition" his elder nephew had looked in to see him several times; his younger nephew only once. On that occasion Micky had looked in for about two seconds; had just escaped a whizzing bolster, and fled. For the present, at least, Micky Mulvaney was not persona grata with his uncle, which, as he told his friends, was "harrd loines," after all the trouble he had taken to amuse the "ould jintleman."

But when Mr. O'Toole was seen in public again, he seemed to have recovered some of his good humour. Micky Mulvaney approached him rather uneasily, ready to dodge; but though Uncle O'Toole made a sort of instinctive movement with his walking-cane, he did not apply it to his nephew. But he eyed Micky very sternly.

"You young rascal!" he said.

"Oh, uncle!" said Micky.  
"How dare you play such tricks!"  
"Thricks, is it?" said Mulvaney. "Sure, and it's amusin' yez I was, sir, to make ye jolly during yere stay wid us intirely."

"By gad, I've a good mind—"  
Micky backed away a little.  
"But sure, uncle, haven't we laughed many a toime over me little jokes?" he pleaded.  
"Whin I come to live wid ye, aren't I goin' to keep yere house lively wid me high spirits and little jokes? Sure, sir, you'll have no rest—"  
"What? I begin to think, Michael, that I had better reconsider my intentions in that matter."

"Oh, uncle!"  
"I don't know what's come over you, boy!" exclaimed Mr. O'Toole sternly. "Unless you change your ways very much, I shall certainly inform your father that I have been compelled to reconsider my decision. You may take that as a warning. Now you may run away, as I am going out with Mr. Railton."  
"Shall I brush yere hat, uncle?"

"No!" roared Mr. O'Toole, so ferociously that Mulvaney retreated without any further remark.

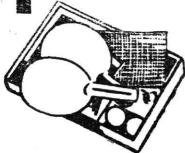
Micky Mulvaney was very thoughtful while his uncle was going for his walk. He looked in at Study No. 6 to borrow some fish-hooks, and he called on Mellish to borrow his fishing-rod. After that he might have been seen in discourse with Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

"Make it half-a-crown," said Baggy, after listening to Mulvaney for some minutes.

"It's a Shylock ye are," said Micky. "But sure, I'll make it half-a-crown. You get Uncle O'Toole out on the balcony. That's your part."  
"Leave it to me," grinned Baggy.

(Continued on the next page.)

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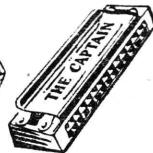
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And when Mr. O'Toole came back from his walk, Baggy Trimble was on the watch for him. Mr. O'Toole went to his room without noticing Trimble, however. He had to dress for dinner with the Head, and he went to his room at once. At the same time Racke & Co., sneaking up the upper stairs for a quiet place to smoke unseen, were surprised to spot Mulvaney minor at a passage window high up, with Mellish's fishing-rod in his hand.

"What the thump are you up to?" exclaimed Racke, stopping in astonishment.

Micky looked round.

"Sure, I'm goin' fishin'!" he answered.

"Fishing?" yelled Racke.

"Yes, old boy!"

"Fishing from a landing window?"

"Faith, and I hope to get a catch!" answered Micky, watching keenly from the open window. "It depends on me uncle comin' out on his balcony, and, bedad, it'll be a great catch intirely!"

And Micky Mulvaney, with the rod and line ready, watched like a hawk from the high window which overlooked the little balcony outside Mr. O'Toole's room.

Baggy Trimble was in the quadrangle below, looking about him very cautiously. Several juniors observed Baggy's extremely cautious look, and watched him with some curiosity.

Baggy had some gravel in his fat hand and a grin on his fat face. Suddenly he raised his fat paw and hurled the handful of gravel up over the little balcony at the panes of Mr. O'Toole's window. Next instant he bolted across the quad.

There was a crash at the window above, one of the panes being cracked.

The juniors looked almost stupefied.

The french window of Mr. O'Toole's room opened, and the old gentleman put out an astonished head. The crash of the gravel on the window, and the cracking of the pane, had made him jump—when he was shaving. There was wrath in Mr. O'Toole's ruddy face, and his hair would probably have been standing on end if it had been worn in the usual way; being artificial, it remained undisturbed.

"Phwat—phwat was that?" exclaimed Mr. O'Toole, stepping out on to the balcony and glancing down into the quadrangle.

He saw the astonished juniors below; and they, looking up, saw him—and beyond him. Beyond him, higher up, the grinning face of Micky Mulvaney looked down over the fishing-rod. The line and hook swung over Mr. O'Toole's unconscious head.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus faintly. "That awful young wascal—he is fishin' for his uncle's wig—"

"Great pip!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Phwat is ut?" shouted Mr. O'Toole. "Phwat for are ye breaking a window intirely? Phwat—Oh, howly smoke!" He broke off as he felt a jerk at the hirsute adornment on his bald head.

He clutched at it—too late! The wig, caught on the fish-hook, sailed up into the air.

Mr. O'Toole stared up at it as if mesmerised as it floated away.

The old gentleman had always looked as if he possessed a very good head of hair for his age, but the secret was out now. As the wig floated up a crown as bald as a billiards-ball, shining like a full moon, was revealed. And from the fellows in the quadrangle there came an irresistible yell:

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tare and 'ounds!" yelled Mr. O'Toole. "My hair—my illegant wig—ye blatherskite—ye spalpeen! Ochone!"

Mulvaney minor's grinning face looked down as the wig floated in the air, and Mr. O'Toole shook an infuriated fist up at him.

"I'll skin ye!" he roared. "Dhrop it down—give it to me, Micky, ye villain! I'll forgive ye if ye give it to me at once! Sure, I've got no other with me in the country, since ye sooted the other one. Micky, ye villain—ye gossoon!"

"Catch, thin!" called out Micky.

Mr. O'Toole, almost forgetting his wrath in his relief at the prospect of recapturing his wig, grabbed at it as it was lowered, heedless of the hysterical yells of the crowd below. But the playful Micky lowered it only within a foot of his outstretched fingers, and then suddenly jerked it away. Uncle O'Toole jumped nearly a foot in the air in a desperate attempt to grab it, and came down again gasping and furious.

"Micky, ye villain—"

"Catch, can't ye?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Micky, I'll—I'll—"

Uncle O'Toole shook his fists up at his nephew, and darted into his room and slammed the window.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar as he disappeared.

A minute later a bald-headed gentleman was scudding up staircases with a stick in his hand, in frantic search of a nephew and a wig. He found the wig, but not the nephew. The nephew had vanished.

Uncle O'Toole left St. Jim's on the following day, his visit having come to an end.

Whether Mr. O'Toole had exactly enjoyed that stay at St. Jim's was an open question. Certainly there had been no lack of humour on his nephew's part to cheer him up.

But the humorous nephew did not depart with his uncle. The prospect of having Micky Mulvaney as a permanent inmate of his house was not an attractive one to Mr. O'Toole after his late experiences. It was, in fact, a dismaying prospect, and one that the old gentleman did not care to face.

He was very kind to Micky when they parted, but he told him gently but firmly that he had altered his plans, and that Mulvaney minor was to remain at St. Jim's. Even Micky's sorrowful looks did not move him. Uncle O'Toole had had enough, and he did not want any more.

They parted good friends—but they parted.

When the train rolled away, with Uncle O'Toole in it, Micky waved his cap after his departing relative, and then walked back to St. Jim's in cheery spirits. He gave Tom Merry & Co. a cheery grin as he met them in the quad.

"So you're staying, after all?" said Tom Merry, laughing.

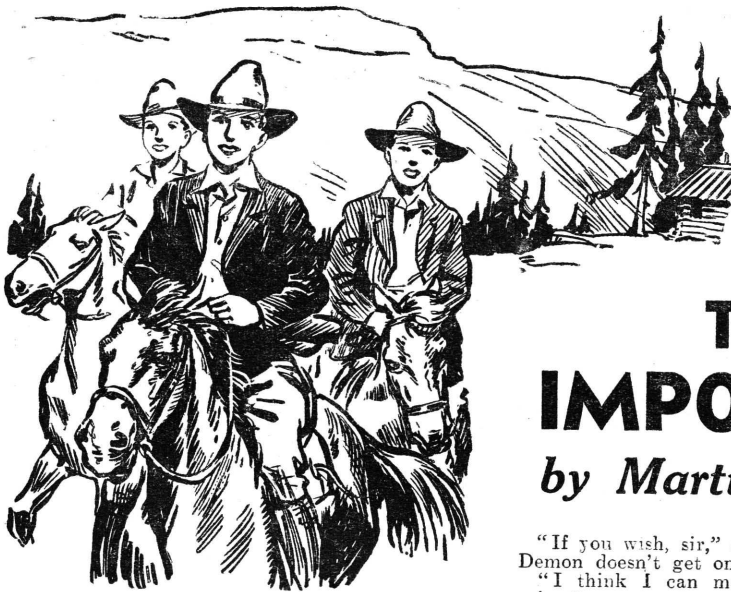
"Yes; me uncle's left me behind," said Mulvaney minor. "Me major says it serves me right, and perhaps it does. And sure I'll thry to bear it, somehow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And for a long time afterwards Tom Merry & Co. chuckled over the misdeeds of Micky!

Next Wednesday:

"THE SCHEMER OF THE SIXTH."



The newcomer to Cedar Creek is compelled to show his hand—revealing that he is playing for high stakes in masquerading as the new master!

## The IMPOSTOR!

by Martin Clifford.

### Buck-Jumping!

**T**HAT is a fine animal, my lad." It was Mr. Trevelyan, the new master at Cedar Creek School, who spoke.

Morning lessons were over at Cedar Creek, and Frank Richards & Co. had taken their horses from the corral for a ride before dinner. As the three chums led the horses out on the trail, the new master spoke to Vere Beauclerc. His glance dwelt admiringly upon Beauclerc's black horse Demon.

"A fine animal!" he repeated.

"Yes, sir, isn't he?" said Beauclerc quietly.

"He looks a rather high-spirited animal for a schoolboy to ride," continued Mr. Trevelyan.

Bob Lawless grinned.

"Beau was the only chap who could ride him, sir," he remarked. "They all tried him on the ranch at home, and gave him up. He's quiet enough with Beau."

"You must be a good rider, my boy."

"Yes, sir," answered Beauclerc in the same quiet tone.

Bob Lawless and Frank Richards glanced at their chum. They knew that Beauclerc did not like the new master, who had arrived only the previous day at Cedar Creek.

Mr. Trevelyan stretched out his hand to pat Demon's glossy head, and the black horse jerked his head back at once. Quiet as he was with Beauclerc, it was not easy for others to handle the high-spirited animal. Mr. Trevelyan's eye gleamed behind his eyeglass.

"He doesn't like being touched, sir," said Beauclerc hastily.

"It is hardly safe for you to ride such an animal," said the new master.

"I ride him every day."

"Safe as houses, sir," said Frank Richards. "Beauclerc could ride anything on four legs."

The new master smiled.

"Will you lend me your horse for a few minutes, Beauclerc?" he asked.

"If you wish, sir," said Beauclerc. "But—but Demon doesn't get on with strangers."

"I think I can manage him. Give me the reins."

Beauclerc obeyed. Mr. Trevelyan mounted the horse, taking Beauclerc's riding-whip from his hand.

"He doesn't need the whip, sir!" Beauclerc exclaimed. "He will get savage if he is whipped."

Mr. Trevelyan only smiled. The three schoolboys stood and watched him as he rode the horse down the trail. Chunky Todgers and Hacke came out to watch.

"That galoot can't ride for toffee!" remarked Bob Lawless in an undertone. "He sits the horse like a sack of wheat."

"I hope he won't use the whip," said Beauclerc, with a troubled look. "Demon won't stand it."

"By gum! There he goes!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers.

Mr. Trevelyan, apparently to show off his horsemanship, was making the black horse curvet in the trail. He gave Demon a sharp lash with the whip across the flanks. It was an unnecessary cut, and very sharp and cruel, and Beauclerc's eyes flashed as he saw it.

"Brute!" he muttered.

"That gee's going to give trouble, I reckon," remarked Eben Hacke.

Hacke was right. The black horse's temper was aroused, not unnaturally, by the lash of the whip, and he began to rear and plunge savagely. There was a loud thud of hoofs on the hard trail.

"This way for the circus!" grinned Chunky Todgers. "We're going to see some buck-jumping."

Whether Mr. Trevelyan could ride or not, he was not the man to deal with a buck-jumping steed. The black horse planted his forefeet on the trail and threw up his hind legs high in the air, and it needed a very good rider to keep the saddle then. Mr. Trevelyan did not keep it. He plunged awkwardly over the horse's mane, losing stirrups and reins, and rolled off into the trail.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was an irresistible shout of laughter from the schoolboys at the gate. The sight of such clumsy horsemanship tickled the young Canadians, born and bred among horses. But the next moment Frank and Bob ran forward to help the fallen man.

Beauclerc ran to his horse, which was pawing and plunging dangerously near the man in the trail. He caught the black horse and dragged him away from the master.

"Hurt, sir?" exclaimed Frank Richards as he bent over Mr. Trevelyan.

The new master lay in the grass, groaning.

"My—my leg, I think!" he gasped.

The schoolboys became grave at once. It looked as if the master was to pay dear for his folly in mounting a horse he could not ride. Mr. Trevelyan groaned again.

"By gum!" said Bob in dismay.

"Carry him in," said Frank. "Lend a hand, you fellows."

The schoolboys gathered round at once, and Mr. Trevelyan was lifted up and carried back to the lumber school, groaning faintly as he went. Miss Meadows met them in the playground.

"What has happened?" exclaimed the school-mistress anxiously. "Is Mr. Trevelyan hurt?"

"Fall from a horse, ma'am," said Eben Hacke.

"Please carry him into his cabin."

The schoolboys bore the injured man away to his cabin, where Mr. Slimmey, the assistant master, came in to attend to him. Bob and Frank and the rest left the new master to Mr. Slimmey, who was examining his injuries.

"It's too bad," said Bob, as he went back to the gate with his chum. "But really, the galoot was a duffer. He doesn't know anything about horses."

"He's a duffer right enough," agreed Frank. "I hope it's not serious, though."

Beauclerc was holding their ponies outside, with the black horse. He looked at them inquiringly as they came out.

"Anything serious?" he asked.

"I don't know; Slimmey's looking after him," said Frank.

"I can't feel sorry for him," said Beauclerc quietly. "Why did he whip the horse? It was brutal."

"Oh, he's a jay!" grinned Bob. "He doesn't know how to ride. I dare say he thought using the whip was part of the game."

Beauclerc smiled.

"Let's get off," he said. "He won't want to ride my horse again, and that's one comfort."

"Beau, old chap!" murmured Frank.

Beauclerc was generally kind-hearted enough, and Frank was a little surprised at his evident indifference to the new master's accident. The remittance man's son coloured a little.

"I don't like that man, Frank," he said. "I don't trust him. And I've got reason. But never mind him now—let's get off, or we shan't be back for dinner."

And the three chums mounted and trotted away down the trail.

### Dark Doubts!

**F**RANK RICHARDS inquired after Mr. Trevelyan when the chums came in from their ride.

"He's all right," said Chunky Todgers, with a disparaging sniff. "No bones broken. He's a soft tenderfoot. that's all."

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"Do you mean to say he's not hurt?" asked Bob.

"Well, Slimmey can't find any damage, I know that," answered Chunky. "He's got a few bruises, and he says he doesn't want the medical johnny. Slimmey offered to get the doc, but he refused."

"That doesn't look soft," remarked Frank.

"But he's laying up," said Chunky, with another sniff. "He's sticking in his cabin. I hear he's not going to take up his duties here for a day or two, till he feels better."

"Oh!"

"Miss Meadows is very sympathetic," grinned Chunky. "But I believe she thinks he's soft, too."

"Well, he's a stranger here," said Bob Lawless. "He's not used to roughing it, perhaps. New Westminster, where he comes from, is a bit different from the Thompson Valley."

"Oh, he's one of those softies from the Old Country, and he's hurt if the wind blows on him!" sniffed Chunky.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Frank Richards, rather warmly. "We're not all soft in the Old Country, you fat duffer!"

"Well, that galoot is," answered Chunky. "I tell you, he's not hurt, and he's only fancying himself ill. P'r'aps it's to get out of doing any work, though," added Chunky brightly.

"A master wouldn't be likely to play that game," said Frank, laughing.

Vere Beauclerc did not speak, but he looked very thoughtful. His brows were knitted when the schoolboys went into the lumber school to dinner.

After school Frank Richards & Co. rode away on the home trail together. They had not seen anything of Mr. Trevelyan during the afternoon. He was "laying up," and the date of commencing his duties in the school was indefinitely postponed. This was not exactly agreeable to Miss Meadows, who was to be relieved of some of her duties by the new assistant. But if the school-mistress shared the opinion of Chunky Todgers she gave no sign of it.

"Will you fellows come to supper with me?" asked Beauclerc, as they rode away from school.

"Certainly!" said Frank.

"You bet!" said Bob Lawless. "You're going to ask popper his opinion of the new pilgrim, eh?"

"Yes, and you'd better be there," answered Beauclerc. "I don't trust the man, as I've told you."

"You're making a mountain out of a molehill, Cherub."

"Perhaps."

Frank and Bob were both a little puzzled. They rode along the branch trail to the shack by the creek, where they found Mr. Beauclerc at work in the clearing.

The remittance man was much changed from what he had been when the chums first knew him. The one-time loafer of Cedar Camp, the habitué of the saloons of Thompson, seemed to have turned over a new leaf. Poker Pete's little parties at Gunten's store knew him no more, and his old associates seemed to have given him up in despair. Instead of loafing about the bars, and staggering home at two in the morning, the remittance man seemed to have settled down to steady labour, early to bed and early to rise.

Mr. Beauclerc joined them at the frugal supper



table in the shack, and when the meal was over, and he lighted his pipe, Vere approached the subject that was uppermost in his mind.

"I want to ask your advice, father," he began.

"Yes, my boy. Nothing wrong at the school, I hope?"

"No. It's about the new master there—a Mr. Trevelyan. You remember I told you yesterday how I found a man in the timber being attacked by 'Frisco Jo and two other rustlers. He called out to me his name—Philip Trevelyan—and called for help. I brought the cattlemen there and found the whole lot of them were gone. Well, it turns out that Mr. Trevelyan was the new master expected at Cedar Creek School."

"Then he must have got away from the rustlers, after all," said Mr. Beauclerc. "I thought it very odd that 'Frisco Jo should make a prisoner of him—kidnap him, in fact—as you suspected, my lad."

"Too steep!" grinned Bob Lawless.

"But I'm not satisfied, father," went on Vere quietly. "When Mr. Trevelyan got to the school he told Miss Meadows he was late because he had missed the trail from Lone Wolf, and never mentioned the affair with the rustlers. When I got there this morning I found him, and he made out the whole affair was a rough joke, and the rustlers had let him go, after having had their joke with him."

"He made out?" repeated Mr. Beauclerc. "The explanation is natural enough, Vere. Surely you do not disbelieve him."

"I do, father."

"But—" said the remittance man, puzzled.

"I did not recognise him as the man I had seen in the wood, father. Of course, I had only a hasty glance at the man struggling with the Mexican at that moment. He was tall, like Mr. Trevelyan, and dressed in exactly the same clothes, but I cannot think that their faces were the same."

"My dear boy!"

"I cannot believe he is the same man," said Beauclerc quietly. "He did not know me. It was not till after I had spoken that he alluded to the incident in the wood at all. But he knew all about it, for he alluded to it then. I think it was upon his lips to deny any knowledge of the affair. But, in that case, Sheriff Henderson would have been hunting for the man in the wood who was kidnapped by 'Frisco Jo and his gang."

Mr. Beauclerc looked hard at his son.

"My boy," he said, "do you mean that you suspect that your new master is not the Mr. Trevelyan you saw in the wood—that he is a confederate of the ruffians who attacked that man?"

"Yes; that is what I suspect, father," said Vere. "I could not swear that he is not the man I saw in the wood. But I do not think he is the same man. He was wearing the same clothes, though—exactly the same. He has the man's clothes, I believe."

"You think that some impostor has come to Cedar Creek School as Mr. Trevelyan, the new master, having got 'Frisco Jo to kidnap the real man?"

"Yes, father."

"Oh, Jerusalem!" stuttered Bob.

"Beau!" murmured Frank Richards incredulously.

Beauclerc did not answer. His face showed

how deeply in earnest he was, and for some time there was silence in the shack, while the remittance man smoked thoughtfully.

### Malingering!

"THAT is a very queer story, my boy," said Mr. Beauclerc at last.

"I cannot help thinking so, father," said Vere quietly. "I am sure that the rustlers in the wood were not playing a rough joke on a stranger. 'Frisco Jo called out to the others to seize me. They meant to take me away also, so that I could not tell what I had seen. But that is not all."

"Oh, more to come!" murmured Bob, closing one eye at Frank Richards. It was evidently Bob's opinion that Beauclerc was allowing his imagination to run away with him.

"Mr. Trevelyan is a teacher from a school at New Westminster," continued Beauclerc. "He is quite unknown in this section. If he could be taken away somewhere, there is nothing to prevent another man coming to Cedar Creek in his name."

"But the man would have to be a teacher also, Vere, or he would soon be discovered as an impostor. Such an unscrupulous adventurer as you describe would not be likely to be a member of the teaching profession."

"That is what I am coming to, father. This morning the new master asked me to let him ride my horse. He deliberately lashed the horse and gave himself a fall. He was not really hurt, but he is laying up as if it were serious, with the result that he has not taken up his duties in the school."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Frank Richards.

"I could not help thinking that the whole thing was put up, as an excuse for not teaching in the school, father."

"Pile it on!" murmured Bob.

"But," said Mr. Beauclerc, evidently puzzled, "why should a man play such a trick, Vere? The salary of a school teacher in this section is not high. It would not be worth while."

"I know, father. I cannot understand his motive."

"And if he is laying up to avoid taking up his duties as a teacher that could not last long. Next week it would all come out."

"I suppose so."

"So if he is playing such a game he cannot expect it to last longer than a week, or a fortnight at the most," said the remittance man, with a smile. "You think a man has committed a crime, and run great risks, for the sake of a single week's salary as a master of a backwoods school?"

Bob Lawless chuckled, and Frank Richards could not help grinning. Beauclerc coloured a little. Put in that way, it certainly did look as if he had made a mountain out of a molehill.

"It cannot be a few dollars he is after, father," said Beauclerc at last. "It must have cost him a dozen times as much to hire 'Frisco Jo and his gang to do their part. He has some other motive."

"But what?"

"I cannot guess."

"My dear boy, I am afraid you suspect too much," said Mr. Beauclerc. "Unless a man has a very powerful motive, he would not play such a part. I advise you to say nothing of these surmises."

"I shall do as you think best, father, of course."  
 "But for your satisfaction, my boy, I will make some inquiries. I have an acquaintance in New Westminster, to whom I will write, and I will ask him some questions about this Mr. Trevelyan, and a description of the man. That should set the matter at rest."

Beauclerc looked relieved.

"Thank you, father!"

The subject dropped with that.

Bob Lawless chuckled as he rode home with Frank to the ranch that evening.

"Fancy the Cherub getting such a bee into his bonnet Franky!" he said. "And he's generally so level-headed, too."

"It's queer," said Frank Richards. "Beau's about the last chap in the world to be suspicious, or to make a mystery out of nothing. But he seems quite set on this."

"You don't think there's anything in it?"

"Well, no; there can't be."

"Vere's popper doesn't think so, either."

"Of course, it's impossible!" said Frank.

And Bob agreed that it was. But the peculiar incident caused the chums to be very interested in the new master at Cedar Creek.

They did not see that gentleman the next day, however. He was still laying up. For several days after Frank Richards & Co. always looked out for Mr. Trevelyan when they arrived at the lumber school. But the new master was seldom seen.

Miss Meadows insisted at last upon the doctor being called from Thompson to see him. The medical man was puzzled, and he hinted at internal complications following Mr. Trevelyan's fall on the trail. That, apparently, was the only way of accounting for the master's indisposition.

Mr. Trevelyan expressed his regret to Miss Meadows several times, and informed her that he had no intention of drawing his salary until he was well enough to take up his duties.

Chunky Todgers became possessed of that item of information, and passed it on to the chums, and Bob pointed out that that fairly knocked Beauclerc's suspicion on the head. According to all appearances, the man stood to lose all along the line, and to gain nothing, if he were the swindling impostor Beauclerc believed him to be.

But the Cherub did not change his opinion. He did not pretend to be able to guess the man's motive for playing such a part; that was quite beyond him. But he was sure of the facts.

His chums looked on his suspicion with good-humoured toleration. But they were rather keen to hear what reply Mr. Beauclerc received from his friend at New Westminster.

It was a week or more before that reply came, and Frank and Bob came home with Beauclerc the day the remittance man received the letter.

"I have news at last," the remittance man told them, with a smile. "Here is a description of the genuine Trevelyan of New Westminster. Tall—"

"Right!" said Bob.

"Dark moustache."

"Right again!"

"Well dressed, with some elegance—"

"Correct!"

"And wears an eyeglass."

"The only one in Thompson Valley!" chuckled Bob. "That's the galoot to a hair."

"He left New Westminster to come to Cedar Creek two days before your new master arrived,"

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added Mr. Beauclerc. "Really, Vere, I think you must admit that this settles the matter!"

"If you think so, father, I will say nothing more about it," said Vere.

"But you do not agree with me?"

"No."

"Oh, come off, Beau!" said Bob in remonstrance.

"The man is still pretending to be ill at the school, father."

"But that pretence cannot last much longer—if it is a pretence. Vere."

"No; and that makes me think that whatever his object is it must soon be carried out," said Beauclerc quietly. "Father, could you come up to the school and see the man? I know you could judge him for what he is."

"To satisfy you, Vere, I will do so," said Mr. Beauclerc. "For the gentleman's own sake this suspicion ought to be dispelled. I will call upon him, as a neighbour upon a sick man, and talk with him. I warn you that I shall only do this in order to dispel your strange suspicion of him."

"Thank you, father!"

And the next morning Mr. Beauclerc, with a borrowed horse, joined the chums of Cedar Creek on their way to school.

— — —

### A Startling Meeting!

WHEN Frank Richards & Co. arrived at the school in the backwoods, Lascelles Beauclerc, after a brief conversation with Miss Meadows, went over to the cabin occupied by the new master and knocked at the door.

"Come in!" said a voice within.

Mr. Beauclerc threw open the door and entered.

A tall man, fully dressed, was lying on the bunk in the room, with a book in his hand. He glanced up with a weary air.

"Please excuse my not rising," he said. "I am far from well this morning. Please take a seat."

The remittance man did not answer. He stood as if transfixed, with his eyes upon the face of the man on the bunk. His breath came short and sharp.

Mr. Trevelyan glanced at him carelessly. The remittance man stood with his back to the cheery morning sunlight that streamed in at the open door. But the sunlight fell upon the face of the new master of Cedar Creek, showing up every line.

The visitor's silence and immobility seemed to surprise the master, as well it might. His look became searching.

"Will you be seated?" he said.

The remittance man, without speaking, continued to stare at him blankly.

"I do not remember to have seen you before," said Mr. Trevelyan, with growing surprise. "May I ask what is your business with me?"

"Good gad!" the remittance man murmured at last. He strode to the bunk, his eyes still fixed upon the face of the man there.

"Mr. Trevelyan?" he asked.

"That is my name."

"Good gad!"

"Really, sir, I do not understand you," said the new master sharply. "Will you kindly explain why you are here?"

"You do not know me?"

"I have never seen you before, to my knowledge."



The black horse planted his forefeet on the trail and threw up his hind legs high in the air. It needed a good rider to keep the saddle then—and Mr. Trevelyan did not keep it! He plunged awkwardly over the horse's mane.

"Look!"  
The remittance man turned his face to the light, and as the sunlight streamed upon it, Trevelyan scanned it, with searching uneasiness. But he shook his head.  
"I do not know you," he said.  
Mr. Beauclerc laughed grimly.  
"I have the advantage of you, then," he said, "for I know you very well."  
"Indeed!"  
"It is ten years since we met," said Mr. Beauclerc, with a grim smile—"in very different circumstances. This beard has changed me, I suppose—and other things. Probably I am not much like the man you knew in London ten years ago."  
The master smiled.  
"Apparently you mistake me for someone else," he said. "I was not in London ten years ago."  
"Indeed!"  
"No. I left England when quite a boy. And now, may I inquire why you have honoured me with this call, and what your name may be?"  
"My name is Lascelles Beauclerc."  
"Ah!"  
"You remember the name?" smiled the remittance man.  
"Not at all. I have heard the name of Beauclerc as that of one of the pupils in this school."  
"My son," said the remittance man.  
"I presume so. And you called—"  
"I called as a neighbour on a sick man," said Mr. Beauclerc. "My real object, however, was to satisfy my son that he had made a mistake in suspecting that you were not what you appeared to be."  
The master compressed his lips.  
"Indeed! Is it possible that your son regards

me with distrust?" he exclaimed. "What can his reason be?"  
"You are, then, the man he saw in the wood in the hands of 'Frisco Jo and his gang, Mr. Trevelyan?"  
"Certainly."  
"You did not get 'Frisco Jo to put the man in a safe place, and borrow his clothes and his name, and come here as a school teacher?"  
"You are jesting, surely?"  
"You did not get the rustlers to waylay Philip Trevelyan on his way up the valley and kidnap him?"  
"If your intention is to insult me, Mr.—er—Beauclerc—"  
"To clear up the matter," smiled the remittance man, "perhaps you will tell me who and what you are?"  
Mr. Trevelyan was sitting up on the bunk now. His illness appeared to have gone. His hand had slid into a pocket behind his back, and the remittance man smiled as he noted it.  
"If such suspicions are entertained by anyone it may be as well to dispel them," said the new master. "I left England when I was a boy. I did some ranching in California, and afterwards in Canada. I had always felt an inclination towards the teaching profession, however, and I trained at a college in Toronto. I secured a post at Edmonton, and afterwards at New Westminster. I accepted the offer of a position here, as I believed that the mountain air would be better for my health, never very good. That is all my history—a very simple one, Mr. Beauclerc."  
"And you are able to undertake your duties here as a teacher?"

"Decidedly."

"You are not shamming illness because you are certain to be found out as an impostor as soon as you take charge of a class?"

"Sir!"

"Having had no training in that line at all, or any line but horse-racing, confidence trickery, and cardsharpping?" continued the remittance man grimly.

"I can only conclude that you are mad or drunk!" said Mr. Trevelyan coldly. "You will oblige me by leaving my cabin."

The remittance man laughed.

"I do not desire to linger," he said. "But before I go I want an answer to one question: What are you doing here, Gerard Goring, and what game are you playing?"

### The Tempter!

THE man on the bunk sprang to his feet. There was no sign of illness about him now.

His face was white, his eyes gleamed under his bent brows, and his teeth came together.

"What—what name did you call me?" he panted.

"Gerard Goring."

"That is not my name."

"Haven't I told you that I recognise you?" said the remittance man impatiently. "I am Lascelles Beauclerc. Ten years ago you helped me to become what I did become. You plied me with drink till I signed my father's name on a piece of paper he had never seen, and you bolted with the profits of that transaction. I do not bear malice; I was nearly as bad as you were. But I want to know, Gerard Goring, what you are doing here."

The new master was silent, save for his hurried breath. His eyes gleamed like a wild animal's as they were fastened on the bearded face of the remittance man.

"You think I am someone you have known?" he exclaimed at last.

"I do not think—I know."

"And what is your intention?"

"You need not ask that question. My intention is to find what you have done with Philip Trevelyan of New Westminster. He must be a prisoner somewhere, and he must be released."

"How does it concern you?"

The remittance man shrugged his shoulders. There was a silence, the new master of Cedar Creek biting his lip with ill-concealed rage and uneasiness. Mr. Beauclerc turned towards the door.

"Stop!"

"Why should I stop?" said Mr. Beauclerc coolly. "I have to call on the sheriff at Thompson's this morning."

Trevelyan's hand whipped out from behind him, and a revolver glittered in it.

Lascelles Beauclerc laughed lightly.

"Put that toy away," he said contemptuously.

"You dare not use it. If you dared risk your worthless neck, you would not have taken the trouble to kidnap Philip Trevelyan; it would have been safer to shoot him in the wood. Don't play the fool, Gerard Goring."

There was hate in the eyes of the impostor, but he realised the truth of what Lascelles Beauclerc said. He slipped the weapon into his pocket again.

"I give in," he said. "I never dreamed of

meeting an old acquaintance here. But sit down. Fill your pipe and I will tell you the game."

Mr. Beauclerc smiled and sat down.

"As for the past," said Goring, composing himself, "that is over and done with, ten years ago. No need to rake that up. Perhaps I did not treat you well, but I was hard pushed. What I did to you others had done to me. I was not always what you had known me."

"Quite possible. I do not bear malice. I have too many sins of my own to answer for. But I am not quite what I was, and I shall not allow you to play out your game here, whatever it is."

"I'll be plain with you," said Goring quietly. "Since hearing your name I have made some inquiries about you, in a quiet way, wondering whether you might be any connection of the Lascelles Beauclerc I knew in the past. You are a remittance man, and your reputation is bad all along the valley. Your money, when it comes, is spent on drink and gambling—you alternate between a drunken roysterer and a loafer cadging for a drink."

The remittance man nodded, unmoved.

"You want money," continued Goring. "Well, in this game I am playing there is money."

"I could guess that much."

"There is a fortune to be made. I am willing to let you in."

"Because you cannot help it?"

"No need to deny that. There is a fortune at stake."

"But now——"

"I'll give you the whole yarn," said Goring quietly. "I need not conceal anything now, as you can spoil the whole game with one word. Three months ago I was hanging around Saskatoon, and I came across a man from the Old Country—an inquiry agent sent out from England to find a fellow who had emigrated when a boy—twenty years ago."

"Philip Trevelyan?"

"Exactly. Philip Trevelyan had been brought up among poor folk, but he was a distant relation of a wealthy baronet in Cornwall. He had never seen his rich relations, who did not appear to have had much affection for their poor relations. But a series of fortunate accidents happened. The baronet's two sons were killed in India, his nephews died, and his brother broke his neck in the hunting field. By the sheerest chance, Philip, the poor relation, was left heir to the baronetcy and twenty thousand a year."

"Ah!"

"Sir Gwynne Trevelyan was broken up by his misfortunes. He died, and the lawyers were left with the task of finding Trevelyan. They had a description of him, and that I obtained from the inquiry-man, who took me on to help in the search. I could have put my finger on the man he wanted in a moment, for I had met Trevelyan, and heard from him all about his rich Cornish relations. I did not choose to do so."

"I think I understand."

"Naturally, the idea came into my head," said Goring coolly. "Roughly speaking, I resembled this man Trevelyan—I was tall like him, at least—and his features were not known to those seeking him. I had been friendly with him at one time, and knew all his history. We were on bad terms later, owing to some discoveries he made about me."

"I understand that, too."

"Well, it struck me that a man about my size had a good chance of getting back to England

as Philip Trevelyan," said Goring coolly. "I pumped all I could from the detective. Later, he was unfortunately hurt in an overturned sleigh, which I was driving at the time. He broke his leg, and gave up the business he was on; but, of course, there were a good many others seeking this man Trevelyan."

"I suppose so."

"I laid my plans to get hold of Trevelyan's papers, and anything he had to prove his identity, and to get him out of the way. I returned to New Westminster, and kept an eye on him while debating my plans. He knew nothing of his good fortune so far, and I found that he had accepted a post at this school, and was soon to leave for Cedar Creek. That gave me my chance."

The remittance man listened, without interrupting him.

"On his way here some friends of mine disposed of Philip Trevelyan, and I turned up in his place," resumed Goring. "Trevelyan is in a safe place; he will not give me away. I am here—waiting to be found. It cannot be long before the detectives learn that Trevelyan had a post at a New Westminster school. They will learn that he transferred to Cedar Creek, and they will come here to find him."

"And they will find you?"

"Exactly. I shall receive the news with surprise and delight," grinned Goring. "There can be no suspicion—I shall make no move myself. I shall simply be found by the men hunting for Trevelyan. I have his papers. I am as like him as is needful. I shall start for England at once, taking care to keep out of the way of anyone at New Westminster. Any day now the discovery must come, and until then I must be too ill to teach in the school. Beauclerc, old man, it's a game after your own heart. Stand in with me and share the plunder."

He fixed an eager look on the remittance man's face.

There was a long silence. Mr. Beauclerc's look showed that a struggle was proceeding in his breast. The temptation was a strong one. After all, why should the remittance man, the loafer and gambler, be particular? he asked himself bitterly. A couple of months before it is probable that he would not have hesitated. But he hesitated now. His new life, though it had only lasted a few weeks, had not been without its effect on him.

And before his eyes there rose up the face of his son—the son who would shrink from him in horror if he should learn that his father had trodden the path of dishonour and crime.

"I—I can't do it!" muttered the remittance man. "My son—"

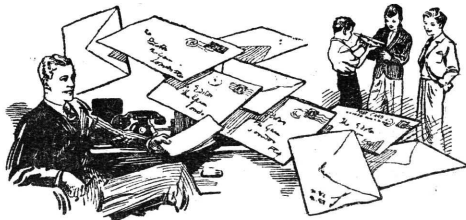
Goring gritted his teeth.

"Your son," he said quietly. "What are your son's prospects now, and what will they be if you share a fortune with me? It means wealth, ease, all the things you desire. London again, the clubs instead of the Canadian backwoods. Isn't it worth while?"

The remittance man rose unsteadily to his feet. The dream of wealth dazzled him. The vision of his old life danced before his eyes. The great city, the ease, the comfort, the luxury—all that he had lost, and missed, and longed for, within his grasp at last. The temptation was too strong.

And yet the thought of his son stayed in his mind, like a sheet-anchor that he clung to.

(Continued on page 36.)



## THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

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

**H**ALLO, Chums! I am eagerly awaiting the arrival of the special new St. Jim's series which Mr. Clifford is busily engaged on at the present time. When I heard from our author some days ago, he said he would be dispatching the opening story in a week or two, and so I expect it to arrive any day now. As I said last week, Martin Clifford has promised that this new series will be his best ever, which means that readers can look forward to some magnificent yarns in the near future. Watch out for further news—I hope to be able to tell you next Wednesday when the new series will commence.

Meantime, the GEM marches on to its thirty-second birthday—March 23rd, to be exact—with another great programme next week. Topping the bill is:

### "THE SCHEMER OF THE SIXTH!"

It's some time since we heard from our "dear friend" Knox of the Sixth. He's been singularly quiet of late, which does not indicate, however, that he has seen the error of his ways. Knox is still the overbearing bully, the black sheep; and in next week's story he shows himself to be something worse—a scheming rogue.

Not for the first time Knox is up against it financially. This time he must get ten pounds to keep Banks, the bookmaker, quiet. Thereupon he sets his wits to work, and hits on a very cunning scheme for robbing Arthur Augustus of ten pounds. Using Wally D'Arcy as a "lever" for extracting the money from D'Arcy, Knox carries out his scheme successfully. All that remains is for D'Arcy to pay up the money to save his brother from trouble. Will Knox's scheme succeed? I will leave you to find out the answer when you read this great yarn.

### "A FORTUNE AT STAKE!"

This is the title of the third gripping story of the "Cedar Creek Impostor" series. Having been forced to show his hand to Beauclerc's father, Gerard Goring is now dependent on the remittance man falling in with his scheme to swindle Philip Trevelyan out of a fortune. But much to Goring's surprise and anger, Mr. Beauclerc turns down his offer, and gives the impostor twenty-four hours to clear out. But that's where Vere's father makes a mistake, for Goring can do a lot in a day—silence the only one who stands between him and a fortune, for one thing! You'll enjoy every word of this powerful tale.

Last on the programme comes "The School at Sea!"—the second story of the exciting series dealing with the boys of the Benbow on a grand cruise to the West Indies. The Benbow puts to sea, but all is not calm aboard her. Most of the juniors have a ghastly time before they get their sea-legs. A sinister, one-eyed seaman named Peg Slaney comes into the picture, too, in this yarn—a character who is to have a big bearing on the further adventures of the chums of the schoolship.

As usual, Lowther, Blake, and Kerr will be on parade again.

Chin, chin!

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"The Benbow is going to be fitted out for going to sea!" shouted Toodles. "And those whose people will let them go are going on the voyage. We're going to the West Indies!"

#### Toodles Wants to Know!

"IT'S about us," said Tuckey Toodles dismally. To which Drake and Rodney replied simultaneously: "Fathead!"

The chums of the Fourth were sitting on the bowsprit of the old Benbow, their legs dangling over the water, enjoying the fresh breeze and sunshine on the river. But Tuckey Toodles was evidently not enjoying himself that fine afternoon. His fat face was very lugubrious.

"I tell you it's about us," persisted Tuckey Toodles. "There's a meeting of the governors in the Head's cabin at three. Raik thinks it's about us. He says we're going to be called in before the governors—"

"Bosh!"

"And sacked!" said Tuckey Toodles impressively.

"Raik's pulling your leg, you ass!" said Drake. "Nobody knows who swamped the poor old Head with water last week, and if the Head knew, he wouldn't call a meeting of the governors to deal with us. Besides, how do you know that there's a meeting at all?"

"I heard Mr. Packe mention it to old Vava-sour. He said—"

"Oh, bother what he said!" interrupted Drake. "If you didn't listen to what people say, Tuckey, you wouldn't have so much to worry about. Run away and play."

Tuckey Toodles glared wrathfully at the two juniors on the bowsprit. He was in a state of mortal funk, and the cheery carelessness of his two studymates had an exasperating effect upon him. Ever since that memorable occasion when Tuckey had swamped the Head from the main-top, in mistake for Ransome of the Sixth, the

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# ALL ABOARD FOR THE SPANISH MAIN! By Owen Conquest.

fat junior had been on tenterhooks. The Head had caught a cold, and undoubtedly it was a very serious matter to cause Dr. Goring to catch a cold. But the facts had not come to light, and Drake and Rodney declined to be scared.

"Now, look here, Drake old chap!" said Tuckey persuasively. "It looks to me as if the Head knows, and he's going to make an example of us. The best thing to do is to go to the Head and own up in a frank and manly way. Don't you think so?"

"Well, go ahead and do it! I don't mind!"

"I don't mean me. I mean that you should go to the Head and own up in a frank and manly way," explained Toodles.

"But I didn't swamp the Head. You did!"

"I did it on your account," said Tuckey. "It comes to the same thing. You can own up that you did it, in a frank and manly way—"

When Tuckey Toodles spreads the wonderful news that the Benbow is going to sea, the juniors find it hard to believe him. But for once Tuckey is telling the truth!

"I don't think it's specially frank and manly to tell whoppers, old top!" said Drake, laughing. "If you get called up on the carpet, we'll come along and take our whack."

"Well, look here," said Tuckey Toodles, "if you're not going to own up, suppose you sneak into the Head's cabin—"

"What?"

"And you can hear what they're talking about when they come, and see whether it's about us," said Toodles. "You could hide under the table, or behind the Head's desk in the corner, and listen—"

"You awful rascal!" exclaimed Jack Drake. "Do you want to be dipped in the river?"

Drake and Rodney scrambled off the bowsprit, but Tuckey Toodles did not wait for them. He scuttled away along the deck before they could get to close quarters.

Toodles ran down into the Fourth Form quarters, and there was a crash as he collided with Pierce Raik in the passage. Raik spun against a study door, and Tuckey Toodles sat down with a bump.

"You silly chump!" gasped Raik. "Where are you running to?"

"Ow! Those beasts are after me!" spluttered Tuckey.

"There's nobody after you, you dummy!" growled Raik. "I've a jolly good mind—"

"I—I thought they were after me!" gasped Toodles, regaining his feet. "I—I say, Raik, do you really think it's about us—the meeting of the governors, you know?"

"Certain," answered Raik, with a grin. "I noticed Mr. Packe looking at you very queerly in class this morning."

"Oh dear!"

"And the Head was speaking to him about you on deck after class. I caught your name—"

"Ow!"

"I'm afraid it's all up with you, Toodles," continued Raik, with an air of great commiseration. "I'm sorry. You might have got off with a flogging; but as the Head has called a governors' meeting it's pretty certain that you're going to get the sack."

"Wow!"

"You'd better go to him and own up, and mention Drake and Rodney," went on Raik. "That's my advice."

Tuckey Toodles shook his head, and rolled away with a dismal look. He was not inclined to do the owning up personally. Daubeny of the Shell was lounging in the doorway of Vane's study, and he spoke to Raik as the fat junior disappeared.

"What's that about a meetin' of the governors, Raik? Anything in it?"

Raik grinned.

"There's a meeting right enough," he answered. "It isn't about that fat idiot, of course. I've been pulling his silly leg. He's let out that he mopped the water over the Head the other night, and Drake and Rodney were in it. It would be rather a joke for the silly duffer to march in to the Head and give them away."

Daubeny laughed. That kind of joke was quite after Daub's own heart.

"But what's the meetin' for, I wonder?" he said. "There hasn't been a governors' meetin' here since the school came on board the Benbow."

"Blessed if I know!" answered Raik. "I shouldn't wonder if we're going back to old St. Winny's. The rebuilding must be getting towards finished by this time. The governors might come here about that. Or perhaps they're going to hold an inquiry into fellows getting out of bounds, and going down to the Lobster Pot to play billiards," he added satirically.

Daubeny frowned and turned away. Raik went on deck to look for Tuckey Toodles, with the amiable intention of further harrowing that fat youth's feelings. But he did not find Toodles.

While Raik was looking for him, Tuckey Toodles was ensconced in a shadowy corner behind the Head's desk, in the Head's cabin, having sneaked unseen into that sacred apartment. Tuckey was determined to know whether the governors' meeting was concerned with his important self, and funk had driven him to take a risk which bolder fellows might have hesitated to take. Curled up in his hiding-place, palpitating, Tuckey Toodles waited in trepidation for the meeting, which was now nearly due.

### What Toodles Knew!

"THE merry old governors!" remarked Drake. The great men were coming on board the Benbow. Some of the juniors gathered round—at a respectful distance—to watch them.

There was a good deal of surmise among the St. Winifred's fellows as to what the august meeting was specially about. It was more than two whole terms since St. Winifred's had been shifted to the old warship anchored in the Chadway, while the rebuilding went on at the school. It was understood that when the rebuilding was complete the school would return to its old quarters, but exactly when that would happen nobody knew. But a good many of the fellows, as well as Raik, surmised that the governors' meeting had something to do with that matter.

The great men, as they arrived, were shown down to the Head's cabin, all of them watched with interest by the St. Winny's fellows. At the other end of the shore gangway was a collection of cars, waiting for the dispersal of the august assembly.

"Where's Toodles?" asked Rodney suddenly.

"Give it up," answered Drake carelessly. "What does it matter? Let's go and get some cricket. We don't want to waste a half-holiday."

"But Toodles—I haven't seen him since we chased him an hour ago," said Rodney uneasily. "He couldn't be idiot enough—"

He paused. "What the thump does it matter about Toodles?" asked Drake, in surprise.

"You remember what the fathead was saying," said Rodney. "If he's been idiot enough to sneak into the Head's study—"

"Phew!"

Drake looked aghast at the suggestion.

What would happen if Tuckey Toodles were found hiding in the Head's cabin during the august conclave of the governors was hardly to be imagined.

"He wouldn't be idiot enough, Rodney."

"He's idiot enough for anything. Let's see if we can find him."

"Right-ho!"

The two juniors hurried away in search of their studymate. Tuckey Toodles was not to be found in the canteen—his usual lurking-place when he had any cash. He was not in the Common-room, nor in the study. Neither was he to be seen anywhere about the Benbow, and fellows who were asked shook their heads.

"I saw him sneaking round the Head's study about half an hour ago," said Sawyer major of the Fourth. "I haven't seen him since."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You didn't see him go in?" asked Rodney.

"He was peering in; the Head couldn't have been there," answered Sawyer.

"He's done it!" said Drake. "The utter idiot is eavesdropping again—at the governors' meeting!"

Sawyer major whistled.

"What a nerve!" he remarked. "If they find him there—my hat! I wonder what will happen if they find him?"

Sawyer major chuckled, apparently finding something entertaining in that question.

"Well, we can't rout him out if he's there," said Drake. "Let's go down to the cricket, Rodney."

And the chums of the Fourth took their bats ashore.

Tuckey Toodles was not to be seen on the playing fields, or anywhere along the bank of the Chadway, and Drake had no further doubt that he had concealed himself in the Head's cabin, in order to ascertain whether the governors' meeting was concerned with his precious self.

The juniors were thinking a good deal about him while they were at the nets, and when a stir

in the line of vehicles at the gangway announced that the governors were departing, they came back on the Benbow.

They ventured as near as they could to the Head's cabin; but if Toodles was there he was still a prisoner. The governors were gone; but apparently their meeting was to be followed by a meeting of the masters. Mr. Packe and Mr. Vavasour, the masters of the Fourth and Shell, came along and entered the Head's study, and they were followed by the other masters.

"Poor old Tuckey!" murmured Drake. "He's getting more than he bargained for, I think. Serve him right. But I hope the fat duffer won't be caught. The Head would give him an awful licking."

The masters' meeting was fortunately brief. In ten minutes the staff emerged, and Drake and Rodney noticed that there were unusual signs of animation about them as they walked away. Mr. Packe and Mr. Vavasour passed near where the two juniors were standing, and Drake caught the words "West Indies" as they passed.

"West Indies!" Drake repeated, when the two gentlemen were gone. "They haven't been holding a discussion on geography, have they?"

"Here comes the Head," murmured Rodney.

Dr. Goring came out of his cabin, and ascended to the poop, doubtless to take a little fresh air after the discussion below.

"Now there's a chance for that fathead to clear," muttered Drake. "Why doesn't he come out?"

"Perhaps he doesn't know they're gone," grinned Rodney.

"Wait here for me," muttered Drake. "I'll give him the tip. He's got to get out while he's got a chance, the howling idiot!"

Drake tiptoed to the Head's door and opened it. The cabin was vacant. He glanced round the room and called softly:

"Tuckey! Are you here, you dummy?"

"Oh! Is that you, Drake?"

A fat figure crawled out from behind the desk in the corner.

"Hook it while you've got a chance," whispered Drake. "I guessed you were here, you burbling chump!"

"I say, Drake, I heard them——"

"Hook it!"

"What do you think the meeting was about?"

exclaimed Tuckey Toodles breathlessly. "I——"

"Don't jaw, ass—get out!"

Drake scudded away. He had no desire whatever to hear what Tuckey Toodles had learned by eavesdropping, and he was very anxious to get clear before the Head returned.

"I say, Drake——"

But Drake was gone.

Tuckey Toodles rolled out of the cabin, very red and flustered. He had found it very hot and close in his hiding-place behind the desk, during the long confabulation of the governors. He joined Drake and Rodney on deck breathlessly.

"I say, Drake, I heard——"

"Shut up!" growled Drake. "Don't tell me what you heard. You'd no business to hear anything."

"But it's awfully exciting!" gasped Tuckey. "I was never so surprised in my life. I'm going to tell you, in strict confidence——"

"You're not going to do anything of the kind," said Drake.

"Of course, you fellows will keep it a secret," said Tuckey, unheeding. "It's not going to be

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generally known till the Head makes the announcement to the school——"

"Dry up!"  
"And he's got to let our people know, and see what they think," continued Toodles. "It's a ripping idea, and no mistake! I shall be jolly glad to see the West Indies."

"The West Indies?" repeated Drake, remembering Mr. Packe's words. "What about the West Indies?"

"That's what they were talking about. They said——"

"Rats! Let's go and have tea, Rodney."

"But I say——" howled Tuckey.

"Bosh!"

Drake and Rodney went down to their study for tea. But Tuckey Toodles followed them at once. The fat junior was almost bursting with the tremendous importance of his discovery, and he was determined to impart the secret—in strict confidence.

But his studymates were equally determined not to hear it. They were, as a matter of fact, rather curious; but they did not mean to share in Tuckey's eavesdropping. As soon as the fat junior opened his mouth Jack Drake picked up a loaf from the study table and poised it in the air.

"You say one word about what you heard in the Head's cabin, and you'll get this—on the boko!" he said.

"You silly ass, don't you want to know that——"

"Shurrup!"

And Tuckey Toodles, with a mighty effort, shut up. During tea he sat in a state that was very near to bursting. His mouth opened wide a dozen times to impart the news that was bubbling up within him, and each time a threatening gesture from Drake stopped it. For once in his fat career Tuckey Toodles did not linger over a meal. He jumped up before Drake and Rodney were finished.

"You silly asses!" he gasped. "I won't tell you now! I'll tell somebody else."

And the indignant Tuckey rolled out of the study, in search of somebody else.

### Startling News!

"HA, ha ha!"

A roar of laughter greeted Drake and Rodney as they strolled into the Common-room after tea. The Fourth Formers of St. Winifred's seemed to be in a high state of hilarity.

"Something's on," remarked Drake. "Oh, it's Toodles!"

Tuckey Toodles was the centre of attention in the Common-room. He was standing on a chair, where he had mounted to make his amazing announcement, whatever it was. But the juniors refused to be either amazed or impressed; they were howling with laughter.

"I tell you——" roared Toodles.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's this game?" asked Rodney.

Sawyer major wiped his eyes.

"It's Toodles—good old Toodles! Ananias was a baby to him! This is the biggest whopper he's ever whopped!"

"I tell you it's straight!" shrieked Tuckey Toodles. "The Head was talking it over with the governors——"

"Go it!"

"They all agreed. In fact, it was old Admiral Plummy's idea—he's chairman——"

"Pile it on!"



"It was old Plummy that made the governors buy the Benbow, when we had to shift out of St. Winny's. And now he's got the wheeze——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you it is so! The Benbow is going to be fitted out for going to sea——"

"What?" exclaimed Drake and Rodney together.

"And those whose people will let them go, are going on the voyage!" howled Tuckey Toodles.

"We're going to the West Indies——"

"Keep it up!"

"And Florida and Trinidad and South America——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And—and up the Orinoco River——"

"And after that to the moon, I suppose?" chortled Raik. "And when we've done the moon, a trip to Mars?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you it's true—every word!" exclaimed Toodles. "I heard them talking it over, I tell you. And after the governors had mizzled the Head told the masters all about it."

"Bow-wow!"

"If you can't take my word——"

"Ha, ha, ha! Give us something easier!"

"It's too rich, Toodles, old man," chuckled Daubeny of the Shell. "The governors haven't sense enough to think of such a jolly good wheeze."

"It does sound rather startling," said Dick Rodney, laughing. "Is that what you were bursting to tell us in the study, Toodles?"

"I wasn't bursting to tell you. I've just mentioned it to these fellows in confidence. It's not to go any further—the Head will be waxy if he knew that it was out——"

"Well, if there's anything in it, the Head will jolly soon be waxy," said Drake. "He can't fail to hear of it now."

"Oh, I say——"

"But it's only one of Toodles' yarns," said Sawyer major. "They grow bigger every time."

"Are we going to work the ship, Toodles?" asked Raik, grinning. "I can see us doing it!"

"No; there's going to be a crew, of course," said Toodles. "Old Plummy is engaging a sea captain to take command. I can tell you his name, too—Captain Topcastle."

"What?" ejaculated Drake. "I know a Captain Topcastle; I've met him at home. He commanded one of my pater's ships."

"That's the man, then!" exclaimed Tuckey triumphantly. "Old Plummy mentioned that he had been in the merchant service."

Some of the juniors looked a little more impressed at last. It really looked as if there might be something in Tuckey's amazing communication.

"And the Head said the father of one of the boys—one of us, you know—was offering to bear a big part of the expense of the voyage," resumed Tuckey. "He said it was a gentleman who had employed Captain Topcastle——"

"My pater, then!" ejaculated Drake.

"Just what I thought," said Tuckey Toodles. "I thought of that at once, because your pater's rolling in money, Drake, through his blessed tin mines in Nigeria."

Drake whistled.

"Blessed if I don't think there's something in it!" he said. "I had a letter from my pater yesterday, and he said I should soon be receiving some news that would please me. He wouldn't tell me what it was, because the details hadn't been settled."

"Is Tuckey telling the truth, then?" ejaculated Sawyer major, in astonishment. "Blessed if I ever thought a miracle would happen on the old Benbow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I told you it was straight," said Tuckey Toodles reproachfully. "The Head's going to make an announcement to the school in a few days. Of course, he mustn't know we know. I've told you fellows in confidence——"

There was a roar of laughter again. Tuckey Toodles had told about half the Lower School in confidence, and certainly the news was likely to be talked about from stem to stern of the Benbow before an hour had passed.

"We're not all going, you know," continued Toodles. "The Head said that St. Winifred's was ready now to take back part of the school; it can't accommodate the lot. Those that don't go on the voyage will go back to school. I'm going on the voyage, you bet! I only hope the Head won't come—or old Packe! I don't think they ought to let our Form-master come. It won't be a holiday if old Packe comes along——"

"Toodles!"

It was a terrific voice in the doorway. Tuckey Toodles spun round in dire alarm as he recognised the voice of the gentleman he had just been describing as "old Packe."

Mr. Packe was looking in at the doorway with a look that the fabled basilisk might have envied.

"Toodles!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Toodles.

He stumbled off the chair and fell with a bump to the floor. Mr. Packe advanced into the room. There was sudden silence. The expression on Mr. Packe's face deprived the juniors of any inclination to laugh now.

"Toodles, you—you—you——" spluttered Mr. Packe.

Tuckey sat up breathlessly, and blinked at the master of the Fourth. Mr. Packe glowered down at him.

"Were you alluding to me, Toodles?" he thundered.

"Oh! Oh, no, sir!" stuttered Tuckey.

"I distinctly heard you refer to me as 'old Packe'!"

"Not at all, sir! I—I wouldn't! I—I was referring to another beast, sir——"

"What?"

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KERR: I could find only one fellow with a motive for shooting at Mr. Ratcliff, and that was Gore. It seemed clear, however, from Skimpole's testimony that Gore had not fired the shot, though he had thought of doing so. Then Skimpole's statement struck me. Skimpole assured me the gun was unloaded, yet Gore said Skimpole did not know how to load or unload it, and Gore had not touched it since the night before. So Skimpole had "unloaded" it somehow. I asked him how, and gasped when he calmly explained that he had just fired it out of the window at the night sky. Such was Skimpole's faith in his own aim, it had not occurred to him that he might have been the deadly marksman himself! This was one mystery that, having solved, I decided to keep under my hat. Skimpole's intentions were good. But would Mr. Ratcliff have believed him?

"I—I mean, another old Packe, sir!" babbled Tuckey.

"Get up, Toodles! I require to know how you have learned anything regarding the Head's intention of sending the Benbow to sea. So far, the matter has not been mentioned outside the Head's study, yet I find you discussing it here."

The juniors exchanged glances. Mr. Packe's words were a confirmation of Tuckey's amazing news.

"I—I—I—" burred Tuckey Toodles helplessly.

"How did you know anything about it, Toodles?"

"I—I didn't, sir! I—I never heard a word! I—I wasn't behind the Head's desk when the governors were there—" babbled the fat junior.

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Packe. "You—you were concealed in the Head's study during the governors' meeting?"

"No!" howled Toodles. "I—I've just told you I wasn't, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! This is not a laughing matter. Toodles, follow me at once! The Head will deal with you!"

"Oh dear!"

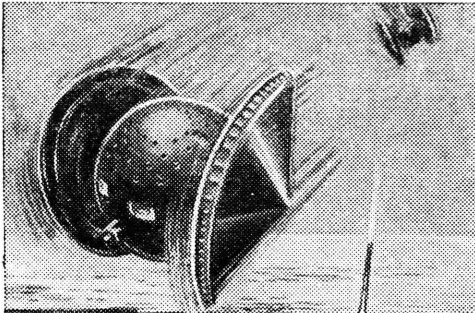
Tuckey Toodles limped out of the room after the angry Form-master, with a dismal countenance.

Shortly afterwards loud sounds of woe were heard proceeding from the Head's study—which seemed to indicate that Dr. Goring's cane was getting some exercise!

When Tuckey Toodles was seen again, he was crawling to his study in a series of contortions, groaning deeply.

That evening the juniors of St. Winifred's were

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excitedly discussing the new prospects that opened before them—with the exception of Rupert de Vere Toodles. Toodles was not in a mood of happy anticipation, like the rest. He was groaning dismally in his study, in the lowest of spirits.

### All Aboard!

ST. WINIFRED'S had heard the news, owing to Tuckey Toodles, earlier than had been intended. But the next day the official announcement came.

Needless to say, no other topic was discussed on the Benbow, and the fellows who were going on the voyage were in the seventh heaven of delight. Not all of them wanted to go, and not all that wanted could go, but it was likely that a very considerable proportion of St. Winifred's would go to sea with the old Benbow.

There was a great deal to be done to the Benbow before she could be ready for sea, and that could not be done while the school was on board.

A few days later, therefore, St. Winifred's dispersed from the old warship, Captain Topcastle coming on board to superintend the ship being towed down the river to Chadport, where she was to be refitted.

The fellows who were booked for the voyage went to their homes, to wait until the Benbow was ready to sail; the rest returned to St. Winifred's School, which was now able to accommodate their number.

With them went the Head and all the Sixth Form, as well as the Third Form fags, who were considered too youthful for the school at sea.

But most of the Fourth and Shell were booked for the voyage, among them Jack Drake and Rodney and Tuckey Toodles, and Daubeny & Co., and some of the Fifth were also in the number.

Dick Rodney and Tuckey Toodles went home with Jack Drake for the unexpected holiday while the Benbow was being refitted at Chadport.

There was a good deal of shopping to be done for the voyage, and Tuckey Toodles found it advantageous to do his shopping in Jack Drake's company. Drake had plenty of money now, and Tuckey Toodles certainly hadn't. And undoubtedly Tuckey obtained a better outfit than would have been the case if he had done his shopping alone.

"But what about arms, you fellows?" said Tuckey Toodles suddenly one evening. "We ought to take arms with us."

"Well, we're going to," said Drake. "We're not going to have our arms amputated, I suppose?"

"I don't mean arms—I mean arms," explained Tuckey lucidly. "Weapons, you know—guns and things. Do you think your pater would spring another twenty quids, Drake?"

"I know I'm not going to ask him!" grinned Drake.

"I might do it on ten," said Tuckey reflectively. "You see, we're bound to be armed. I intend to shoot lions and tigers in South America—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We ought to bring home their skins, you know; that'll make the stay-at-home fellows at St. Winny's green with envy," said Tuckey Toodles. "We'll have a tiger-skin rug in the old study at St. Winny's when we come home, old scout."

"Not if you look for the tiger in South  
(Continued on page 36.)



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R. Baty, 133, Reigate Road, Ewell, Surrey; age 9-13; Royal Air Force, photos, etc.; U.S.A., Germany, Italy, and Gibraltar.

S. Henderson, 27, Thorpe Crescent, Walthamstow, London, E.17; age 13-15; stamps; anywhere except British Isles.

J. Cuddy, 34, Keswick Road, Blackpool; age 13-15; sport, general topics; anywhere but England.

Miss B. Plunket, Copt Heath House, Knowle, Warwickshire; girl correspondents, age 17-20; anywhere abroad or in Scotland.

Miss C. Smith, 32, Cons. Main Reef, Maraisburg, Transvaal, S. Africa; girl correspondents, age 17-25; stamps; anywhere except England and Scotland.

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## ALL ABOARD FOR THE SPANISH MAIN!

(Continued from page 34.)

America!" said Rodney, laughing. "There aren't any lions or tigers there, fathead!"

"Well, elephants, then—"

"Or elephants, ass!"

"Well, I suppose there's something to shoot," said Tuckey Toodles peevishly. "I mean to take a gun. Do you mind if I ask your pater to stand me a rifle, Drake?"

"You can ask him," grinned Drake. "I don't think my pater will help you to commit suicide."

Tuckey Toodles did ask him, but apparently met with refusal, for certainly a rifle was not part of Toodles' outfit when he went on board the Benbow at last, at Chadport.

It was a great day for Jack Drake & Co. when they met once more on board the old warship, wonderfully altered since they had last seen her. Captain Topcastle was in command, with a

smart crew. The old ship had been refitted and painted from stem to stern, and there was a good deal of alteration in the junior quarters. The old ship rocked to her anchor in the harbour, and Tuckey's expression changed suddenly as he felt a motion beneath his feet.

"I—I say, I hope we shan't be seasick, you fellows!" he said.

"You will!" said Rodney cheerily. "You won't be able to eat anything for about a week, old chap. Think of that!"

"I—I think I'd better have a jolly good tuck-in to-night, then, as we're sailing to-morrow," said Tuckey Toodles thoughtfully. "Come along to the canteen, Drake, old chap, will you? Lucky you've got plenty of money."

Tuckey Toodles did lay in a good supply that evening, and to judge by his complexion when he went to bed, he was likely to feel the effects on the morrow, whether he was seasick or not. Tuckey's slumbers were very uneasy that night, while the other fellows slept soundly in their hammocks, and dreamed of tropic seas and woody islands and the Spanish Main.

Next Wednesday: "THE SCHOOL AT SEA!"

## THE IMPOSTOR!

(Continued from page 29.)

"I—I can't decide," he muttered. "I must think over this—"

"Think as long as you like," said Goring. "Decide to stand in with me and you are rich for life. Your old life is yours again. But if you decide against me, let me know before you speak. That is only playing the game. Give me twenty-four hours to clear out before you betray me, if you decide against me."

The remittance man nodded.

"That's fair," he said. "I—I shall decide against you, Goring, but I must think."

"Good enough!"

Without another word the remittance man left the cabin. With knitted brows he strode away towards the gate, where his horse was tethered.

There was a patter of feet and Vere Beauclerc ran from the direction of the schoolhouse.

"Father!"

Lascelles Beauclerc started violently and bent his brows at his son.

"Why are you not at your lessons?" he exclaimed harshly.

"Miss Meadows gave me leave to come out and speak to you before you went, father," said Vere.

"Well, well—go back!"

"But have you found out anything about Mr. Trevelyan?"

"Don't ask me questions! Go back!"

Vere Beauclerc turned quietly and went back to the schoolhouse in dismayed perplexity. What had happened in the cabin to change his father like this? he asked himself miserably.

The remittance man mounted his horse and rode away. He hardly saw where the animal bore him. He was thinking—turning the temptation over in his mind—dallying with the crime which, in his heart of hearts, he knew that he had not the courage to spurn from him.

Next Week: "A FORTUNE AT STAKE!"

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