



By
MONTY LOWTHER
(the humorist of the Shell.)

Have the "Talkies" affected St. Jim's?

The author thinks they have, but as he is a humorist, his remarks should not be taken too seriously.

OLD Boys visiting St. Jim's after many years of absence have been heard to remark recently that a subtle change seems to have come over the old school.

It is difficult to explain exactly what it is, they say, but something about St. Jim's is certainly different.

They'll give you instances of what they mean. When they run up against a fag carrying a toy pistol, they'll say that sort of thing wasn't done in their day. They'll shake their heads sadly over the spectacle of fellows sitting on a wall busily chewing gum, and tell you that gum simply was not chewed when they were at St. Jim's. When juniors greet each other by pulling their caps over their eyes and remarking "Sez you!" or "O.K., baby!" these same Old Boys will frown in a puzzled sort of way and mumble into their beards.

What is at the back of these various manifestations of a changed spirit? Let Professor Lowther unravel the mystery for you, dear readers! The cause is the popularity of the talkies!

Several people have asked me lately

whether I think the talkies have affected St. Jim's. On each occasion I have replied unhesitatingly: "Yes." If by chance I happen to have been eating a bullseye at the time, I have modified it to "Yeth," but the principle remains unchanged.

Only yesterday, the Head approached me, dressed in a long, black cloak by way of disguise, and bade me follow him to an unfrequented spot behind the woodshed.

When we got there, he looked to the right and to the left, not to mention north, south, east and west and fore and aft, then whispered:

"Are we alone?"

I nodded silently.

"It is well," said the Head. "I have a question of profound importance to put to you, Mont"—that's how he talks to me when we're on our own. "Have the talkies affected St. Jim's?"

"You betcha sweet life they have, doc!" I said. "And how!"

The Head chewed his lip thoughtfully.

"Yet it is difficult to see in what

way. I have observed no change in the mannerisms or speech of the boys."

"Kinder difficult to notice any change in the way we spill the beans, ain't it, doc?" I ventured.

"It is, indeed. You speak perfect English yourself, Lowther. Evidently you are one of those who are not affected by the talkies."

With that, he wrung my hand and turned to go back to his house, slipping over on a banana-skin in the process.

Inspired by that interview, I went round to one or two fellows, asking them what they thought about it.

Here are their replies, copyright by Rooter, Scentall News, "Tom Merry's Weekly," and other leading news agencies.

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HERBERT SKIMPOLE: "Professor Balmcyrumpet says—" (Five pages of closely printed matter omitted owing to lack of space.)

TOM MERRY: "Of course, it would be idle to say that the talkies have not affected St. Jim's. In a fag footer match which I refereed yesterday, I was surprised to notice that the teams took to the field armed with bludgeons. I found that they were playing American football, picked up from the talkies!"

GERALD CUTTS: "Beyond inspiring me to be a gangster chief, the talkies have made absolutely no impression on me!"

GEORGE FIGGINS: "I haven't noticed much difference myself since the talkies came. House scraps are carried on now with machine guns and armoured cars, but that's nothing much to talk about, after all, is it?"

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY: "I wegwet to say the talkies have had a wotten influence on me, givin' me a fwightful Amewican accent. I vewy often find myself usin' expwessions like 'wuffneck,' 'bootleggah,' 'speakeasay' and 'wight guy.' Yestahday, I even said 'Yeah, wathah!' Howwid, isn't it?"

TAGGLES: "Which it's no use for you to talk ease to me when I 'aven't 'ad a moment's ease since I came 'ere. Wot's that? You're not talking about ease; you're talking about *talkies*? Well, I can soon tell you wot I think about them—nothing at all. Which I ain't never been to a talkie in my life and ain't never likely to, neither."



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JACK BLAKE: "If the talkies affect other chaps like they affect me, their chief result has been to exercise imaginations in trying to connect up the sound with the action. I closed my eyes twice during a recent show at the Courtfield Cinema and tried to guess what was on from the sound. The first scene turned out to be Henry VIII eating, and the second Niagara Falls falling—but they both sounded just like a train to me."

I should like to say a lot more about the effects of the talkies on St. Jim's. Perhaps I shall, one of these days!