

DO NOT  
MISS THIS

OUR  
Weekly Prize Page.

SHILLINGS FOR  
STORYETTES

—  
—  
Stories  
for ALL  
and  
Every  
Story  
a  
GEM

# The GEM LIBRARY

—  
No.  
279.  
—  
Vol.  
7.  
—



Mollish ate his jam-tart slowly, to savourise the full Fourth-forenoon. "Mrs. Tangles can make tarts!" Fritz Worm remarked with his eyes languished homeward on Mollish's plate. "Awwful rotten to be sorry, isn't it, Mollish?" "I'm not sorry, thanks!" cried Mollish. (An amusing incident in this world's complete Complete School Tale.)



Every

Wednesday.



Complete Stories for All, and Every Story a Gem.



**TOM MERRY'S  
SPECIAL NUMBER!**

*A splendid, new, long, complete School Tale dealing with the further adventures of the chums of St. Jim's.*

**By MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

**CHAPTER I.**

**Very Pathetic!**

**M**ONTY LOWTHER laid down his pen and grinned. "I think this will do," he remarked.

There was an reply from Lowther's two companions in the study. Tom Merry and Manners were very busy. Tom Merry's pen was racing over the paper at express speed; and Manners was showing the end of his pen-handle in a deep effort of thought. Neither of them appeared to notice Monty Lowther's remark, and Lowther repeated it.

"I think this will do. It's really funny, you know—funniest thing we've ever had in the 'Weekly,' I think. And it will make Higgins sit up."

Scratch! Scratch! Scratch!

Tom Merry did not pause. Manners left off chewing for a moment, to cast a reproachful glance at Monty Lowther.

"Don't jaw for a minute, Monty," he said.

"Look here, Manners—"

"Don't! I'm doing my article for the 'Weekly,' see, and I'm thinking out a really good recipe for a combined tazing and fixing solution—"

"How your tazing and fixing solutions?" growled Monty Lowther. "I've got my liverick done. It's really good this time—"

"Well, that will be a change," agreed Manners.

"Listen to this, you chaps—"

"Oh, father, father!" cried the child!" said Tom Merry, speaking aloud as he wrote, in self defence. "Shut up, Monty! I'm doing my serial."

"Oh, father, father! I hear the church-bells from afar! I—"

"Blow the church-bells from afar!" exclaimed Monty Lowther irritably. "What's that stuff you're writing?"

"My serial for the special number, father. I've got to get an extra long instalment done, so some of the silly asses haven't turned in their copy, and it's got to go to the printers this evening. I'm just doing a tazing bit—simplify makes you weep. 'Oh, father, father!' cried the dying child—"

"Make it ducky!" said Lowther. "It sounds more the thing!"

Tom Merry sniffed.

"Look here, I know how to write my own serial!" he retorted. "You get on with your blessed livericks, and leave the pathos to me. 'Oh, father, father!' cried the dying child. 'I hear the church-bells from afar—'"

"Quite tazing!" growled Lowther. "The readers will be tazed—and they'll jolly well think the author was a little tazed, when he wrote that."

"Rate! Keep your blessed pens for the Agony Column in the 'Weekly,'" said Tom Merry. "Oh, father! I hear the—"

"Look here!" said Lowther. "I've finished my special liverick. Are you fellows going to listen to it, or are you not?"

"Not!" replied both the fellows together.

And Tom Merry dashed on with his pen; and Manners, having thought out his solution, proceeded to jot it down.

For the benefit of the readers of "Tom Merry's Weekly," who were photographically inclined, And Monty Lowther glanced at them. Monty Lowther was simply bursting with the extraordinary fassions of his latest liverick, and it was hard upon him to have to keep all that marvellous bottled up, as it were.

The editors of "Tom Merry's Weekly," were pressed for time. As usual, the "Weekly," had fallen much into arrears. Cricket had taken up



a great deal of time lately. Follows who had sent in copy weeks before had inquired anxiously whether Tom Merry was turning the school paper into an annual.

Blake, of the Fourth, had threatened to revive his opposition paper, the "Sain," if the "Weekly" did not soon appear. The Terrible Three had set to work in earnest at last, to turn out a new number—a Special Number, to console the readers for having raised the paper for some weeks. Mussy Lowther, in addition to his usual comic columns, was doing a column under the title of "Lowther's Limericks." Lowther was a great head at limericks—most of them being personal reflections on the other fellows—some or less funny, but all of them decidedly personal.

But Lowther, like all great humorists, did not like keeping his little jokes to himself. When he perpetrated a new one, he liked to impart it immediately to his friends, to share the enjoyment with them. His enjoyment was generally in excess of theirs.

"The church-bells of my childhood!" went on Tom Merry, the tears almost starting to his eyes, so pathetic was his aerial. "Oh, father, father—"

"That's four times that kid's said 'father!'" said Mussy Lowther. "Was he speaking about his ancestors?"

"Eh?"

"His forefathers, you know," explained Lowther.

Tom Merry started.

"It isn't a he, you foolhead, it's a she. Listen to this little line, and try to understand it. 'Her golden head lay upon the snowy pillow—'"

"Was she ill?" asked Lowther.

"Of course, she was, father; dying. 'Her golden head lay upon the snowy pillow—'"

"But was she having proper medical attention?" asked Lowther.

"Yes—you see! You don't get commonplace things like that into a pathetic aerial!"

"But it would be dangerous to have her golden head on a snowy pillow," objected Lowther. "She would be bound to catch a cold in the head!"

"Ah!" roared the indignant author. "That only means the colour of the pillow—it was spotted. Snowy white. Her golden head lay upon the snowy pillow, and her blue eyes were far away—"

"Blind, poor kid!" said Lowther.

"Blind! Who said she was blind?" demanded Tom. "Why, you did. If she'd lost her eyes, she must have been blind!"

"She hadn't lost her eyes!" shrieked the author.

"But you said her eyes were far away—"

"Idiot! That means the expression in them. Her golden head lay upon the snowy pillow, and her blue eyes were far away. There was no sound in the still room—"

"You don't mean to say that they had a sick kid in a still-room?" exclaimed Lowther, in astonishment. "That's a place where they keep ale and beer and things, not sick kids. Between you and me the proper place!"

"Yes—you—"

"Mussy's right these times, Tom," said Manners, looking up from his photographic album. "I must say a still-room is a queer place for a sick kid to be in."

"It wasn't a still-room!" growled the unhappy author of the pathetic aerial. "It wasn't a still-room—the room was still!"

"Oh, I see. Although the kid was saying 'Father, father!' the room was still still!" said Lowther.

"Oh, rats! There was no sound in the still room, save the snoring of the house, and the rustling of the trees, and the peeping of the cat on the hearth, and the breathing of the child, and the deep sobs of the stricken parent, and the ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece, and the soft footfalls of the nurse, and the—"

"No sound, excepting that he!" said Lowther. "Must have been a regular hubbub, with all that row going on!" Tom Merry jammed his pen into the inkpot with a force

that was dangerous to the rib, and went on writing, intending to read out any more to such an unappreciative audience. Mussy Lowther glanced at the limerick he had written, and gazed—Lowther had the keenest possible appreciation for his own little jokes.

"Now, you fellows, listen to this," he said. "It's a jolly good limerick about Figgins & Co. and the New House boundaries—"

"Oh, cheer it!"

"Look here, I've listened to your rat!" began Lowther, warmly. "You've got an awful sense of humor than old leg of mutton. Manners, old man—"

"The trouble is," said Manners, "whether there really is any satisfactory combined touting and faining solution at all. I've always found it better to keep the two jobs separate. At the same time—"

"In St. Jim's are two Hectors, you know,

And one is in a position old show.

These, they're all off their dot,

But the worst of the lot,

Are the boundaries called Figgins & Co."

"Ho, ho, ho!" concluded Lowther. Then he stared at Tom Merry and Manners. The two jokers were scriffling away, quite insensible to the funniness of that limerick.

"Did you hear me?" demanded Lowther.

"Couldn't help hearing you!" growled Tom Merry. "Now keep off, and let a chap get on with his work."

"Don't you think it's funny?" sneered Lowther.

"Oh, say old thing," said Tom Merry. "Simply a screw!" A regular shriek! Now dry up! "Oh, father, father!" cried the child—"

"I'm sick of that kid!" snapped Lowther. "Never ought stand crying children!"

"Shilly and! When I say she cried, I don't mean that she cried! I mean that she—well, cried!"

"Go on! I'll take my limerick round to Study No. 6 and read it to Blake," said Lowther. "I'll edit back when that kid's scolded crying 'Father, father—'"

"Be—be—"

And the exasperated humorist quitted the study and slammed the door.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Pleas of Editors!

**T**AP! "Come in!" said Tom Merry, resignedly. "I shall never get this scene finished, I know that!"

"Put it short and crisp," suggested Manners. "Why not just say: 'Died; aged six;' or something short and effective like that?"

"Oh, rats!"

"It was Levison of the Fourth who came into the study. Tom Merry and Manners did not give him welcoming looks. They did not like Levison of the Fourth. But Levison was looking very agreeable.

"I hear you're doing the 'Weekly' again," he remarked. "Yes," said Tom Merry, shortly; "and we're busy!"

Levison laughed.

"I suppose that means that I can get out?" he asked. "Well, yes, as a matter of fact, it does."

"Thanks! I've brought you a little contribution—"

"You can take it away again."

"Are you always as polite as that to editors?" asked Levison, gravely.

"I don't want your contributions. You're too full of rotten tricks!" said Tom Merry. "I put something of yours in a special number of the 'Weekly' before. You pretended it was a serious poem. It turned out to be a rotten acrostic, containing reflections on the editor-in-chief of the paper. Tricks like that are barred in well-regulated editorial offices. You can travel!"

"But it isn't an acrostic this time," urged Levison. "That was only a little joke, you know—"

"I don't trust you!"

"But just look at it—"

"I don't want to look at it!"

"But I say—"

Levison was interrupted. Four jokers came into the study at once. Blake and Hercules and Digby and D'Arcy, from Study No. 6, all editors of "Tom Merry's Weekly."

Each of them had manuscript in his hand.

"It's all right, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We've got our copy done in time. I've got a wippin' article here about turnip 'n' turnips. I'll send it out to you if you like—"

**G**

"THE GEM" Library  
FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE  
COUPON.

279

To be enclosed, with coupon taken from page 2, MAGNET No. 279, with all requests for correspondents. This may only be used by readers in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Canada, India, or other of our Colonies.

(See column 2, page 26 of this issue.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 279.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,  
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR"  
Every Friday.



"Have you any reason to believe that it was a New Home boy who perpetrated this outrage, Merry?" asked Mr. Railton sternly. "I'm sure of it, sir, because— There was a quick knock at the door, and in came Figgins, Kerr, and Lawrence, of the New Home. (See Chapter 20.)

"I'll read it when it appears in print—perhaps!" said Tom Merry.

"I've done an effective description of the cricket match with Greyfriars," said Blake. "I think it reads jolly well. Shall I read it out now?"

"Some other time?"

"Lorson doing something for the 'Weekly'?" asked Herring, with a suspicious glare at the end of the Fourth. Lovison was Herring's special abomination. Herring's building, Tower, did not like Lovison. That was quite enough for Herring.

"Yes," said Lovison. "I want the editor to look at it. It's a rather good little thing, I think, and I really think it might go in."

"You wretched little wretch trick you played with your last contribution, with a woman hidden therein!" in Lovison, said D'Arcy severely.

"This is all wrong!"

"I don't trust you!" growled Herring. "Kick him out!"

Lovison's eyes glowered.

"Look here," he said, "I think you ought to look at my copy, Tom Merry. If you find anything hidden in it, you can leave me out as fast as you like."

"Oh, hand it over then!" said Tom Merry resignedly. "Mind, if I find anything underhand in it like the last time, you'll go out of this study on your neck!"

"I tell you it's all right," repeated Lovison.

"Well, I'll look at it."

Lovison laid the paper on the table, and Tom Merry read it carefully. He knew Lovison's tricks of old, and he expected to find some composition of innocent appearance, in which some underhand reflection upon somebody was carefully concealed—to be made known later when it was in print, and it could not be helped. Lovison had played that trick on the schoolboy editor once, and Tom Merry did not mean to be caught a second time in the same way. Lovison glanced, though a little anxiously, as he saw the suspicious way in which Tom Merry was examining his verses.

"It's all right," he said. "Just a few lines of appreciation about old Kildare. We all agree that Kildare is the best skipper the school ever had, and it's only right to give him some mention in the 'Weekly'."

"Yes, wretched," agreed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Mention in the 'Weekly' will really give Kildare a leg-up, you know."

"That's all right," said Tom Merry. "I don't know

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 273.

whether this is laying it on a bit too thick though. Kildare doesn't like factory.

"It's all true what I've said," replied Levinson.  
 "You; but you don't like Kildare," said Tom Merry hastily.  
 "He's not your sort. He's the best fellow breathing, and a thorough sportsman, and you wouldn't like him."

Levinson snarled.  
 "I suppose I can advise a good footballer and cricketer, even if I don't play touch myself," he said. "Read it out, and let these fellows judge."

"Yes, read it out, Tom Merry!"  
 "All serene!" said the editor of the "Weekly." "I can't see any harm in it myself, and certainly it's all true about Kildare. Only I don't trust Levinson. You know the trick he played on us before. His poem turned out to be an acoustic, with a sotten gibe wrapped up in it that we didn't notice before it came out in print."

"Well, let's hear it!" said Blake.  
 "Here goes!" said Tom Merry. And he read out Levinson's effusion.

"Kildare, the captain of the coll,  
 Is always keen, and never slack;  
 A right it is to see Kildare,  
 When his way through halves and backs,  
 And beat these all, and kick for goal!

"We like to see our skipper lead;  
 All wickets fall when he is there!  
 Say what you will, he's just top-bat,  
 So give a cheer for old Kildare!"

"But Jerry, that's very well put together; and the metre is quite different," said Arthur Augustus. "I think that's very good."

"True, too," said Blake. "Kildare is a ripping footballer, and a first-class cricketer; only he's a better bat than bowler."  
 "Yes, it would have been better to put in something about the bat!" instead of the bowler, Levinson, dear boy."

"But doesn't rhyme with goal though," grumbled Digby.  
 "Can't that be mended?" said Levinson. "I think it's rather good myself. All the fellows think that of Kildare."

"Yes, wondrous!"  
 "And there isn't any trick in it?" asked Tom Merry abstractedly.

"Of course, there isn't!"  
 "Well, it isn't an acoustic, anyway," said Blake, reading down the initial letters of the lines. "K, I, A, W, A, W, A, S, S; that wouldn't mean anything."

"Acoustic are sometimes made with initials instead of initials," said Mamma.

Tom Merry read down the last letters of the lines. I, S, K, S, I, E, S, E, E. Evidently it was not an acoustic of such order.

"I suppose it's all right," said Tom. "You can't complain if we're unkind, Levinson. You played in a rotten trick once before."

"Oh, I don't mind!" said Levinson. "It goes in then?"  
 "Yes; it's quite good enough. Hallo, here comes the New Home bouncer! We'll read it out to Figgins!"

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, the foreman Co. of the New Home, came into the study, and they, like the charms of St. N. G., were armed with manuscripts galore. To judge by appearance, the special number of the "Weekly" was not likely to want for copy. The editors and sub-editors had rallied nobly to their task.

"Here we are!" said Figgins. "Ready to help you School House kids out of your troubles, as usual!"

"Listen to this!" said Tom Merry.  
 "What is it?" asked Figgins suspiciously. "I'm jolly well not listening to any poetry!"

"It's some verses by Levinson."  
 "I'll see 'em when they're in the paper," said Figgins.  
 "But I want you to judge them."

"Oh, I'm not a critic! I say, I've got a splendid chapter here about the Blood-Stained Brigand of the Balkan Mountains—my new serial!"

"Listen to this!" roared Tom Merry. "We want to know whether you can see any rotten trick in it, like the one Levinson played us before."

"Oh, and Figgins, 'right-ho! Get it over!"  
 Tom Merry read out the verses.

"Oh, good!" said Figgins. "It's all true, and very well put. I didn't think Levinson could do anything so good as that."

"Can't see anything unkindish in that," said Fatty Wynn.  
 "Let us look at it," said Kerr.

A trace of suspicion might have been seen in Levinson's face as Kerr took the paper. The bona, canny Scottish janitor was not so far from more than any other fellow there. If

there was a trick in Levinson's verses, it was not likely to escape Kerr's eye.

"Well, I think I'll be getting along," Levinson remarked carelessly, as he moved towards the door.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Wait till Kerr's looked at it!"

"I'm in rather a hurry! I've got to see Melish!"  
 "Melish can wait," said Tom Merry. "I'm beginning to think there is a trick in it, after all, and you're afraid Kerr will bend you out, because he is so jolly keen."

"Oh, no, nothing of the sort! I—"  
 "Then stay where you are!"

Levinson hesitated; but he had no choice in the matter, for Herries had put his burly shoulders against the door, and evidently did not intend to move for Levinson. The cad of the Fourth remained where he was, his eyes fixed upon Kerr's face, and, with all his nerve, Levinson could not wholly conceal his growing uneasiness.

CHAPTER 3.  
 Levinson's Little Trick.

KERR scanned the paper carefully. The other fellows watched him.

If there was a trick of some sort hidden in Levinson's verses, Kerr meant to unearth it. It was "up" to him to do so, to keep up his reputation for omniscience.

He read the lines through, and he read them backwards; he read the initials and the final letters, downwards and upwards. Then he uttered a sudden exclamation:

"My hat!"  
 "Well!" said all the juniors together.  
 Kerr grinned.

"Had you decided to put this in?" he asked.  
 "Great Scott, there would have been a row if you had!" said Kerr. "Jolly lucky we came over from the New Home just now!"

"Why?" asked Tom Merry. "Is there a trick in it, after all?"

"Whoo-ho!"  
 "Well, I couldn't see it! Hallo! Stop him!"

Levinson had made a spring for the door. Herries was on the watch, however. He caught the cad of the Fourth by the collar, and swung him back.

"You're going to stay here, my pippin!" he said. "We'll have this out before you leave this study!"

"Let me go! I—"  
 "Stay!"

Levinson wiggled in Herries's hand grip. Masters looked the door. Levinson stood amid the juniors, his face white now. He knew that he was discovered.

"Blessed if I can see where the trick comes in!" said Figgins, looking at the paper over Kerr's shoulder. "It reads all right to me. What is it?"

"It's an acoustic," said Kerr—"a kind of acoustic, that is."  
 "But I've read the initial letters downwards, and they don't mean anything," said Tom Merry.

"Have you read the first word of each line downwards?"  
 "No; I never thought of that."  
 "But I have!"

"That's one kind of acoustic," explained Kerr. "You read down the initial words instead of the initial letters. Read the first word of the lines, one after the other downwards, and see what you get."

Tom Merry caught the paper quickly from the Scottish janitor's hand. He glanced down the verses, and his face became crimson with anger. Now that it was pointed out to him, he wondered that he had not seen it before.

For the first words of the verses, read downwards, made up the sentence: "Kildare is a worm, and we all say so."

"Kildare is a worm, and we all say so!" repeated Blake.  
 "My hat! Does it really read like that?"

"Look for yourself!"  
 "By Jove, it's right enough! If Kerr hadn't spotted that, it would have gone into the 'Weekly' in print!" said Blake, again. "Somebody would jolly soon have pointed it out to Kerr—Levinson would see to that."

"Yes, wondrous! The awful wretch!"  
 "The unrepentable cad!"  
 "The beast!"  
 "The outsider!"

The juniors gathered round Levinson with black looks. Kildare of the Sixth was the most popular fellow at St. Jim's. And Levinson had very nearly caused them to point in their magazine an indelible insult to their captain. What would Kildare have thought if he had seen the verses, with their sad meaning exposed, printed by the juniors to whom he had always been kind and generous? What indeed?

"It—it was by chance the words came like that," stammered Levinson. "I—I never intended it, I swear!"

"Shut up, you cad!"

"Don't try to be yourself out of it!" said Tom Merry scornfully. "You were playing a cunning trick on us, and you would have succeeded but for Kerr."

"I tell you—"

"Don't lie! It won't do you any good!"

Levison grinned his teeth.

"Well, it was a joke then," he said. "No harm in a joke, is there?"

"Yes, there's a great deal of harm in a joke of that sort. You've called Kildare a worse, and made it appear that we were doing it."

"—I—"

"And now you're going to pay for it, you utter cad!" said Tom Merry. He tore up the verses into little pieces, and threw them into the grate. "It would serve you right to march you into Kildare's study, and tell him what you've done; but we won't do that. We don't want him to know there's a fellow in the School House bad enough to speak of him like that."

"Watch out!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Bethan put the watchman through it ourselves. How frightfully leaky that we found him out in time!"

Levison cast a wild look towards the door. But there was no escape for him. The angry juniors were round him, and Levison had to pay the penalty for his unsharpened stick.

Tom Merry & Co. did not approve of ragging, as a rule. But there were times when rags had to be suspended, as Blake remarked. The only way to deal with a fellow like Levison was to rag him—and they ragged him!

They ragged him with thoroughness.

The end of the Fourth struggled valiantly, with a strong grip upon either arm. The juniors devoted their attention to him for the next ten minutes. They mixed ink with his hair, and rubbed it in with liquid glass. They kneaded water-cake into his face, and poured ashes and gum down his back. They put treacle into his boots, and got pockets, and his waistcoat. By the time they had finished, Levison fervently wished that he had never thought of that ingenious trick for causing trouble between Tom Merry & Co. and the captain of the school.

"There!" said Tom Merry, at last. "I think that will do! You can cut, Levison—and the next time, you fool, inclined to play a cunning trick, take my advice—and don't!"

"Yess, walkah! Kick him out!"

Master's unlocked the door, and Levison, ink and sticky and ragged, was ejected forcibly into the passage.

The cad of the Fourth picked himself up. He felt horrible—and he had hours of cleaning before him, before he would get rid of the traces of that effective ragging. He was in an almost murderous temper.

He ground his teeth as he staggered away down the passage. Mellich of the Fourth met him at the corner, and stared at him blankly.

"Gentle Scott! Is that you, Levison?" Mellich gasped.

Levison shoved him savagely aside, and stamped away to a bath-room. Mellich checked. Levison was his class; but a cynical philosopher has declared that there is always something agreeable to us in the misfortune of our friends—and certainly that was true enough of Percy Mellich.

And for hours, Levison was cleaning off ink and treacle and glass, and raging—and planning vengeance!

## CHAPTER 4.

### Figgis Objects!

THE schoolboy editors were very busy for some time after that. They had wasted time on Levison—though they really did not regret it. But last time had to be made up for. The copy for the "Weekly" had to be taken down to the printers, and Blake was to take it on his bicycle, before locking-up. In the crowded study, the staff shaved away at getting the finished number ready for the press. Mooty Lowther entered to the fold, and lent his aid, and Kamran of the Staff, and Reddy of the Fourth, came in to help. There was a terrific smattering of news, and mattering of busy authors and poets, in the editorial office. It was done at last. Figgis looked over the finished copy, made up ready for the printer, and uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Hallo! What's this set?"

"Some New House stuff!" asked Blake.

"No, not! It's headed Lovether's Limericks—"

"We're giving Mooty an extra column, as it's a special large-size number," Tom Merry explained.

"What's this set, then, 'New House'?" demanded Figgis, glancing at Lovether's latest limerick. "That can't go in, you know!"

"Can't it?" said Mooty Lowther, looking wistful. "Why can't it?"

"We've not going to have rotten jokes about our House in the 'Weekly'!"

"It isn't a rotten joke—it's true!"

"Look here—"

"You can put in a limerick about the School House, if you like, Figgis," said Tom Merry, patiently.

"It's out of order to be personal," said Kerr. "I think Lovether's stuff ought to be passed. He calls the New House a rotten old show—"

"Well, even in limericks, a chap ought to stick to facts," said Lovether. "What is there wrong in that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" snarled Figgis. "I'm not having it. You'll take that rotten limerick out of the number!"

"My dear chap, it's done and finished with now," said the unhappy editor. "It fills up the column just right—"

"Yess, walkah; it's all right, Figgis?"

"It's not all right. I've given you some lines instead. Fiddlesticks! There's a silly one called Mooty Lowther, a bigger one than any other!" suggested Figgis.

"Is that poetry?" asked Blake, in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can't put in knock-kneed lines like that, Figgis. It's all right—you shall have a go at Lovether in the next number—"

"Oh, rags. Take it out?"

"Wah!"

"Put it to the vote!" said Mooty.

"Fiddlesticks! That's fair strictly!" said Reddy. "Put it to the vote!"

"Yess, all you School House rotten will vote for putting it in?" growled Figgis. "I don't want to put it to the vote. Take it out!"

"Hush up in favour of taking it out!" said Tom Merry. Figgis, Kerr, and Wynne put up their hands. But the School House fellows only grinned.

"You see you've outvoted, Figgis!" said Tom.

"Hush! Take it out!"

"Hush!" and Lovether. "It's going in!"

"I protest—as a sub-editor—"

"I insist—as a sub-editor—"

"Yess, walkah, and I consider it's all right—as a sub-editor!"

It looked as if war would break out among the staff of "Tom Merry's Weekly." But Tom Merry possessed of the troubled waters.

"We're going to have tea as soon as this is sent off," he said. "We've got a ripping spread—and we're late—"

"Yes, hungry!" remarked Mooty.

"You, let's have tea," said Fatty Wynne. "It's all right, Figgis. Everybody knows that the New House is cook-house of St. Jim's, so it doesn't matter what Lovether means!"

"Well, you New House men—!" began Lovether.

"Let's have tea," said Fatty Wynne. "I've had hardly anything to eat since dinner—only some sandwiches and a few sweets and some tarts and a pound cake."

"Poor chap, you must be famished," said Tom Merry, sympathetically. "You can buzz off with the copy, Blake. It's ready!"

"Right ho!" said Blake.

"Look here—!" began Figgis, as Blake fastened up the copy. Kerr nudged his leader.

"Shut up, Figgis," he murmured. "It will be all right."

Figgis looked up at him. Kerr half-closed one eye, and Figgis understood. His Scottish charm had some idea working in his mind, which he could not explain before the School House fellows. Figgis nodded, and let the subject drop. Figgis placed great reliance upon the Scottish member of the Co. Indeed, many fellows said that Kerr had nearly all, if not quite all, the brains of the Co., and that he could have been junior captain in the New House if he had liked—not that Kerr would ever have dreamed of supplanting his class.

"Two's the word!" said Fatty Wynne. "I've laid a hand with the cooking, you fellows, if you like—if there's any cooking to do."

There was—and the fat Fourth-former was soon busy with it. Jack Blake left the study with the copy for the printers, and was soon cycling down to Mr. Trew's in Richmond village. In Tom Merry's study, a happy editorial staff gathered round the leisure board. Funds had been for lately in the study; but Tom Merry had received a generous remittance from his uncle in America, and for the present he was rolling in money. And a champagne feast in the study was the best result of it.

Figgis's good-humour was completely restored, and he left the School House Co. on the best of terms. But he had not forgotten the limerick, and he mentioned the matter as soon as the New House train left the study.

"Look here, Kerr," said Figgis, as they went down the passage. "I shut up when you told me; but I'm not putting the passage."

TOM MERRY.—No. 279.

up with having that rotten Liverick about us in the 'Weekly,' you know?"

Kerr grinned. "I've got an idea about that," he said. "I thought you had—but I'm blessed if I can see what you're to do," said Figgins. "Blake has taken the copy to the printers, ain't it?"

"That's all right—we got the proofs before the paper appears."

"You Merry gets the proofs."

"Yes, and corrects them, and they have to be sent back to the printer. That's where we come in—hallo!"

Kerr broke off short.

Levison of the Fourth was coming down the passage. He had changed his clothes, and his face was red from scrubbing, and his hair was still sticky. He had guessed as he saw the New Heuse juniors, and it occurred to them at once that he had been listening to what they said. They knew Levison!

"Hallo!" said Figgins. "Got the glass off?"

"Go and set out, you New Heuse cat!" growled Levison, and he went into his study and slammed the door.

The New Heuse juniors chuckled, and went on their way.

"Do you think he heard what I was saying?" asked Kerr, as they left the School House, and went out into the dusky quadrangle.

"I shouldn't wonder. But he can't have tumbled. I don't know yet what you were getting at," said Figgins.

"Levison's a bit keener than you are, though, Figg, old chap," remarked Fatty Wren.

"Hate!" said Figgins. "Pile in, Kerr, and let's hear the dodge."

Kerr lowered his voice.

"When Tom Merry's corrected the proofs, we'll get at them somehow—and make a bit of an alteration," he said. "It will go down, with the printer, as part of the proof-correcting, you know. We'll make up something about Lowther, and put it in, in the place of the Liverick, without those boudiers knowing. We can work it—if we're careful!"

Figgins chuckled.

"My hat! Fatty Lowther's face when he sees it in print—when he's looking for his own gibberish!" he exclaimed.

His, he, he!

The New Heuse juniors laughed merrily as they walked on in the dusk to their own houses.

Levison, in his study, was not laughing. His eyes were gloaming, and his brows wrinkled in thought.

"So those New Heuse rascals are going to play some game with the proofs of the 'Weekly,' when Tipor sends them to Tom Merry?" he murmured. "That's where they come in—is it? Perhaps it's where I shall come in, too!"

And Levison's lip curled in a sneering grin.

CHAPTER 5.  
The Call of Duty!

**B**ALL JOYE! What a wippin' aftahnoon for crikket, deah boys!"

Arthur Augustus was quite right.

It was a couple of days after that busy editorial scene in Tom Merry's study; and it was a half-holiday. And Nature seemed to be doing her best to make that half-holiday an agreeable one for the juniors of St. Jim's. Bright sunshine streamed down upon the green turf of the playing fields, and a cool soft breeze rustled the foliage of the old elms. The fields were dotted with white-clad figures. On the senior ground, the Sixth were playing the Fifth, and a great many lads had gathered round to see Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, knocking away the Fifth Form bowler. D'Arcy senior—Wally of the Third—was perched on top of a fence looking on, and cheerfully offering good hits by Kildare, with a "Heera, he!" cheerfully calling the captain of the school by his Christian name, in the confident knowledge that Kildare could not leave the cricket-pitch to box his ears.

Tom Merry & Co. would have been watching the senior match, too; but they had more important business on hand. School House juniors were playing New Heuse juniors that afternoon; one more test to prove which House was cock-house of St. Jim's—a question that probably never would be satisfactorily settled.

"Wippin' aftahnoon, deah boys," Arthur Augustus remarked. "So sorry you won't be able to play, Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry stared at the stool of St. Jim's.

"Nothing to be sorry about, Gussy," he replied. "I'm playing all right. I'm not likely to leave your fellows to be walked over by the New Heuse."

"I should wadise to be walked over by the New Heuse, for one, Tom Mewwy. But you can't possibly play this aftahnoon, and I was givin' to suggest that I should captain the team in your place. I'm not a fellow to get myself forward in any way—I wadise don't want to be forward—"

"Forward are not any good at cricket," said Monty Lowther. "You're thinking of footer."

"Pshaw! don't be funny, Lowthah! I have already suggested you to keep those wrotten jokes for the 'Weekly.' I do not wish to be forward, but I wadise certahly that I should skipkap the team wavy well indeed. It requires a fellow of tact and judgment."

"But I'm not looking for a new skipper!" exclaimed Tom Merry pointed. "I'm going to captain the School House team myself, inhaad!"

"I wadise to be called a fathhead!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Jack Blake, coming out of the School House in spotted flannels, with his hat under his arm. "You fellows getting ready? As you can't play this afternoon, Tom Merry, I was going to offer to take your place as skipper."

"But I can't play!" roared Tom Merry, in bewilderment.

"What do you mean?"

"Now, be reasonable," urged Blake. "Since circumstances prevent you from playing, I think I ought to captain the team. After all, I am the captain of the School House juniors before you came, and I wadise don't know why I let you have the job—any honest modesty, I suppose. But now—"

"Oh, chouse it, Blake!" interrupted Kangaroo of the Shell. "I was just going to suggest to Tom Merry that I should captain the team, as he is standing out."

"Oh, rats!"

"Wally, Kangaroo—"

"I'm not standing out!" roared Tom Merry.

"Yes, you are!"

"Yes, wadise!"

"The call of duty, you know," explained Blake. "You leave the proofs of the 'Weekly' have just come in, and they've got to be corrected this afternoon, and sent back to the printer. There's a jolly lot of correcting to do, as it's a special double number. As editor-in-chief, it's up to you, Tomsey. Fellow can't leave the name without the gasp. I've offered to be chief editor myself, and you've declined. Go and do it!"

"Yess, wadise! It's up to an editah to set an example to his sub-editahs, you know."

"Yes, you pile in as the proofs, Tomsey, and I'll captain the team," grinned Kangaroo.

"What other rat!" said Tom Merry warmly. "The proofs can wait. I'm not going to raise a cricket match for the sake of a rotten paper."

But the juniors all shook their heads. They couldn't have their chief editor neglecting his duties in that way. They all felt the same, especially the fellows who wanted to captain the eleven.

"It's up to you, Tomsey," said Blake solemnly. "If the proofs aren't corrected to-day, the paper won't be out this week. We can't have you turning it into a hardy annual!"

"No feah!"

"Is thy duty, Thomas!" said Kangaroo.

"Out, out, fates wavy deaher," said Digby of the Fourth, who was a great French scholar.

"Shot up!" roared Tom Merry. "Keep that for the classroom, you see! Look here, the proofs can wait!"

"Impudent!" said Blake. "We'll put it to the vote of the sub-editors, if you like."

There was a general grin at that. Nearly all the sub-editors who were School House fellows were in the junior team.

"Look here—" said Tom Merry.

"I wadise do not see what you have to grumble at, Tom Mewwy. I am quite willing to captain the team in your place. You need not have any doubt about the woad."

"These woads'll be any doubt about the woad!" roared Tom Merry. "But I don't want the side to be led, you see."

"I did not mean that, you see! I meant—"

"Figgins & Co. are waiting on the ground!" Monty Lowther reminded. "I'll tell you what, Tom. The team couldn't be skippered by any of those Fourth-Form kids. But if you want to correct the proofs very badly, I'll take your place."

"But I don't want to correct the proofs very badly!" yelled Tom Merry.

"You'll probably correct them very badly whether you want to or not!"

"He, he, he!"

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Tom Merry. "I'll

ANSWERS



appoint Blake temporary chief editor, with full powers to correct proofs?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That you jolly well won't!" said Blake emphatically. "I'm not missing the House match. To-morrow, my son, it's up to you. Do your giddy duty, and set an example to your schoolfellows and your teachers, same as they do in the study-books. You remember how good little Figgins set an example to a whole school by staying in and writing lines, while bad little Willie went out, and was eaten by a mad dog?"

"Oh, choose it! The proofs can wait!"

"The proofs can't wait! Impossible!"

"Quite impossible, dash boy!"

"It really isn't a chief editor's business to correct proofs either," said Tom Merry argumentatively. "Chief editors don't do it. Besides—"

"A awful thing to see a fellow trying to get out of his heady duty, allow the fearful example of bad little Willie, who was eaten by a mad dog!" said Blake, with a shake of the head. "Come, Tom, put a cheerful grin on it, and go and correct the proofs. You can look out of the study window every now and then and see any knocking up boundaries."

"And you can see no woman's like anything!"

Lambey-Lambey of the Fourth came out of the House. He was in fustels, too, and he had his bat with him.

"Choose for me this afternoon, I guess!" he remarked.

"You're not in the eleven," said Blake.

"No; but as Tom Merry is standing out—"

"I'm not!" yelled the unhappy editor of Tom Merry's

"Weekly."

"I guess you are; the proofs have come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry grinned, in spite of himself. He didn't want to miss the cricket match. It was not that he specially feared for the result if he stood out; but he wanted to play. It was an ideal afternoon for cricket, and cricket was an ideal game for that sunny afternoon. But Tom Merry yielded to the pressure of public opinion, and, after all, a secret inward voice told him that he really ought to attend to his duties as editor.

"Well, upon the whole I'll stand out; and do the proofs," he said cheerfully. "But about a slipper in my place?"

"I regard that as settled already."

"Yes, rather," said Blake pompously, "that's settled. Couldn't be anybody but me."

"Woolly, Blake—"

"Kangaroo is vice-captain," said Tom Merry. "I leave it to Kangy. And if you let the New House beat you, I'll put a special note in the 'Weekly' about a team of silly asses who thought they could play cricket."

"Oh, we'll beat the New House!" said the Cornstalk.

"Come on, you fellows, and look lively! Figgins & Co."

"waiting."

"If you would care to resign the place to me, Kangy—"

"But I wouldn't," grinned Kangy.

"I mean I've a point of view of the good of the team."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kangaroo & Co. strolled away towards the cricket ground. Tom Merry went back into the School House. It was very much against the grain to spend that bright and sunny afternoon in his study; but the call of duty had to be obeyed.

The package from the local printer was lying on the study table. Tom Merry did not open it immediately. He stood at the study window looking out. Tom Merry's window commanded a view of the cricket ground. Very cheerful and merry the juniors looked as they gathered there. Figgins and Kangaroo tossed, and apparently Figgins got the best of it, for the New House went out to bat. Figgins and Hilders of the New House opened the batting, and Kangaroo led his merry men out to field.

Tom Merry turned back into his study with a sigh. He unwrapped the package on the table, and took out the proofs of the "Weekly." There was quite a pile of them, owing to the fact that the "Weekly" was a special double number. Tom Merry sat down to the table, and was some time with the proofs. There were many corrections and revisions to be made, and he had some hours of work before him. He was busily engaged when there was a tap at the door, and Kerr of the Fourth looked in. Tom Merry glanced at the New House juniors in surprise.

"Hallo! Aren't you playing cricket?" he asked.

"Yes, nodded."

"But fit for bat was in, and I shouldn't be wanted yet. There'll keep your headless boy for a long time, I expect. Got the proofs there?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry, with a sigh. "Heaps of 'em."

"We're going to have tea in our study after the match,"

said Kerr. "You can come along. When will you be finished this little lot?"

"About five, I suppose."

"Good! I—"

Kerr was interrupted by a shout from the direction of the cricket ground. Both the juniors jumped to the window at once. Figgins's wicket had gone down, and the School House juniors were cheering Jack Blake, the bowler. Kerr looked astonished.

"My hat, Figgins's out!" he exclaimed.

"What did you expect?" grinned Tom Merry.

"Well, I didn't expect a Blake like that," said Kerr.

"Blake?" said Tom Merry wearily. "Wag, Blake could bowl your head off!"

"Rab!"

"Fisthead!"

"Champ!" said Kerr.

"An?"

And with this exchange of compliments they parted. Tom Merry was left alone to his task. But he did not stick at it with steady industry. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. About every five minutes he rose from the table, and stationed himself at the window to watch the progress of the cricket. And he remained longer at the window than at the table each time. The correcting of the proofs dragged its weary length through the sunny afternoon, and it was past six o'clock when the tired editor finished his task.

Then he wrapped up the proofs in the same paper in which they had come from the printer's, and hurried out of the study. Lewison sat in his room with the door open, and his eyes were on the passage, and he grinned as he saw Tom Merry pass. But the Shell fellow had an eye for Lewison; he was only thinking of seeing the finish of the cricket match.

## CHAPTER 6.

### Twice Revised.

THE New House had been all down for seventy. School House were bettering now, and they were near the end of their innings. They had knocked up sixty for eight wickets. Fatty Wynn was bowling, and he was in great form.

The New House fellows in the crowd excitedly expected to see the remaining wickets knocked over before the School House had obtained the eleven runs that were necessary for a win. Herries and Reilly were at the wickets.

"Hallo, here you are!" said Blake, as Tom Merry arrived on the pitch. "Finished the giddy proofs?"

"Yes," granted Tom Merry. "How many down?"

"Eight. Dig's got to go in yet. That the bowler is in great form; he's taken two in this over already."

"And three goes another!" grinned Lawrence of the Fourth.

"Chik!"

Herries's wicket was knocked over, and Herries came out. Dugby went in in his place, and the New House juniors cheered Fatty Wynn. Kerr, who was fielding at cover-point looked round, and noted that Tom Merry was on the ground, and he made a sign to Lawrence. Lawrence was not in the team, as he had been watching the match. The finish promised to be a close thing; but apparently Lawrence had seen enough, for, after receiving that sign from cover-point, he strolled away from the ground. If Tom Merry & Co. had not been so occupied with the match they would probably have noticed it, for Lawrence's close cousins, Rodden and Owen, were in the New House junior team, and he might have been expected to be severely interested in the game.

But Tom Merry & Co.—those who were playing, and those who were not playing—were all too busy about the match to have any eyes for Lawrence.

Lawrence strolled away with a careless air, his hands in his pockets, and his straw hat on the back of his head.

But when he was at a distance from the cricket ground his consciousness left him, and he quivered his pen, and hurried into the School House.

Lawrence's House was the New House; but apparently he had business in the rival House. Everybody, or nearly everybody, was out of doors, and Lawrence had as far as being watched or interrupted. He did not know that as he entered the House, Lewison of the Fourth was watching from a window.

Lewison grinned to himself. The few words he had caught between Figgins and Kerr had apprised him that the New House Co. meant to play some trick with the proofs of Tom Merry's "Weekly," on account of Lewison's obnoxious line-lick. Lewison had laid his own plans, and he was on the watch. He understood what it meant when Lawrence entered the New House.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 229.

A REPRODUCED, LONG COMPLETE TALE OF TOM MERRY & CO. BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEDNESDAY,

"THE SCAMPS OF THE SCHOOL I"

All the School House janitors were on the cricket ground, and as Higgins & Co. were fielding, they naturally could not suspect these enterprising youths of playing any jape on them. Whatever it was that Higgins & Co. had planned, was to be carried out by the hands of Lawrence of the Fourth.

Levison grinned with satisfaction at his own astuteness. He left his study, and hurried along to Tom Merry's room before Lawrence had begun to ascend the stairs. Levison entered Tom Merry's study, and slipped behind the screen in the corner. He knew that Lawrence was coming there; but the New House junior, of course, would have no suspicion that there was anybody concealed in the study.

The end of the Fourth stood close to the wall in the corner, concealed by the screen. That morning a present to Tom Merry from his old governor, Miss Farnsett. It had once been a very handsome mahogany desk furniture had a way of getting knocked about in a jocular study, and there were now several holes in it. One of the holes Levison applied his eye, and he had a clear view of the whole study, while remaining completely hidden himself.

Two minutes later the door was softly opened, and Lawrence stepped in. The New House junior glanced quickly round the study, and then closed the door behind him. Levison almost held his breath.

Lawrence grinned as he stepped to the table, and began unwrapping the packet that contained the proofs of the "Weekly" with rapid fingers. He turned over the sheets till he came to Monte Lowther's page, where the comic columns and Lowther's illustrations were printed. The sketch that had so bothered Higgins was there in clear type under his eye, and Lawrence chuckled as he read it. He took a slip of paper from his pocket, whereon was written in Ker's hand the correction that it was necessary to make in the proof of that sketch. He chuckled again, dipped Tom Merry's pen in the ink, and corrected the proof. When it was corrected by the New House junior, it read somewhat differently.

"At St. Jim's are two Houses, you see,  
And one is too rotten for me.  
There they're all off their dot,  
But the worst of the lot,  
Are the change called the Terrible Three."

Lawrence read the revised lines aloud, and grinned gleefully over them. He could imagine the snickers that would be heard when that sketch was read in the printed number of the "Weekly" in Lowther's special column.

"I fancy this is where the New House comes," chuckled Lawrence.

He stepped to the window. Digby and Reilly were still at the wickets, and had just taken a three, and Redfern was bowling now. The crowd were all busily watching the exciting finish of the House match. It was not yet over. When the finish came the janitors would be sweeping into the stables for tea, but, until then, there was no danger of interruption.

Lawrence returned to the table, put the sheets in order, and wrapped up the same as when he had entered the study. There was no doubt that Tom Merry would dispatch it to the printer's without a thought that it had been interfered with. Lawrence chuckled again, and left the study, and a minute later he was strolling down to the cricket ground. The deed was done, and when the number was circulated at St. Jim's, the laugh would be up against the Terrible Three.

Levison stepped out from behind the screen, his heart beating pathetically.

He looked from the window to ascertain that the cricket match was not over yet. The trick he intended to play was not a harmless "jape" like that planned by Higgins & Co. Levison's tricks were seldom harmless or good-natured. He would not have cared to be caught in Tom Merry's study.

But the cricket match was still going on. Digby and Reilly were making a gallant stand at the wickets, in a noble endeavour to get the bats who were wanted to win for their House. Nobody was likely to return to the House yet. Levison returned to the table, and unwrapped the proofs that Lawrence had so carefully wrapped up. He had just turned over the first page, when a step in the passage fell upon his ears.

He started, his heart thumping. It could not be one of the Co.; it was not likely to be anybody coming to Tom Merry's study. But— If he should chance to be seen there— He acted quickly. In a second he had stepped to the door, and turned the key softly and silently in the lock.

But his heart thumped harder as there came a tap at the door. The handle turned, but the door, of course, did not

"Dear me," Levison heard a voice utter in the passage—"dear me! Tom Merry, will you kindly open the door! I have an article for the 'Weekly.' As you are correcting the proofs, you will be able to put it in."

Levison closed quite sternly. He knew the voice—that of Skinslope of the Shell. Skinslope of the Shell was a most learned youth, and he was a voluminous contributor to the "Weekly"; only it happened that his voluminous contributions found their way chiefly into the wastepaper-basket. Skinslope wrote upon the most abstruse subjects—cosmology and scientific research and evolution, and other things like that, very interesting to the learned Skinslope and to nobody else. If Tom Merry had still been in the study, concealing proofs, he would probably have looked at the door when he heard Skinslope coming, to save appearing. Evidently that was what Skinslope suspected, had he guessed how he to be tapped at the door again, and called through the keyhole.

"My dear Merry, I know you are there, you know. Pray open the door. I have an article here upon the subject of evolution which will, I firmly believe, cause quite a sensation. You must really find room for it in the 'Weekly,' my dear Merry."

Levison was alert, his teeth hard set. He would gladly have opened the door, and stepped up the passage with the troublesome genius of the Shell. But he dared not betray his presence in the study.

Skinslope tapped again impatiently.

"Tom Merry, please open the door! I will read you my article, and you will then perceive that you cannot possibly leave it out. It is an epoch-making article, my dear Merry. If you have not sufficient space, you can leave out some of the other contributions. Lowther's page, for instance, which you skip tomorrow, and look at my article!"

Levison ground his teeth. He wondered if Skinslope would ever go. Skinslope tapped again, and then apparently gave it up as a bad job. Levison held his footsteps outside the passage.

The knock at the Fourth began again. Skinslope was gone. But had he gone now? He looked down the window. Digby was still bowling to Reilly. Reilly's bowling, and it did not look as if the Fourth House would succeed in taking his wicket in the forty. There was time. Levison bent over the desk. He drew a pen over the lines of the revised sketch, and wrote a new line under each, making an entirely new illustration. In Levison's composition there was no reference to School House or New House. Levison had chosen a more serious matter than that for his verses.

It was done at a few minutes. Then he hunted the lines, and stepped up the passage, if, as in such cases as Lawrence's had done to make it look as if it had not been touched. He unlocked the door softly, and peered out into the passage. The passage was empty. As he stood there, looking and listening, a green light was cast in through the open window of the study.

"Well, done, Farty!"

The last wicket had fallen; the match was over. In a few minutes near the junior stables would be swarming. Levison stepped quickly out into the passage and closed the door behind him, and hurried down to his own study. He entered quickly, and closed the door behind him, and Percy Melish was just sitting in the armchair, jugged up.

"Levison! What are you looking scared about?" he asked. Levison forced a laugh.

"I'm not looking scared, that I know of," he said.

"You are quite pale."

"Oh, not!"

Melish regarded his study mate very curiously. He could see that Levison had been "up" to something—that was quite certain. But it was evident that Levison did not intend to confide in him. Two minutes later there was a thump of feet in the passage. The study door was thrown open, and Gerald Lumsley-Lumsley came in, ruddy and breathless, and tossed his hat into a corner. He regarded Levison and Melish with a glance of disfavor. He regarded Levison as a "fellow who was skulking here all the afternoon," he asked. "Why didn't you come and see the match?"

Levison yawned.

"Too busy," he said. "You been playing?"

"I guess so," said Lumsley-Lumsley. "Tom Merry was standing out, and they wanted another man, and Kangaroo put me in. I've made some runs."

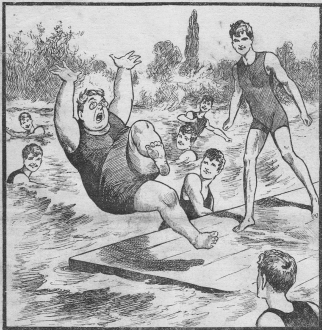
Levison yawned again.

"How jolly interesting!" he said.

"Not in the least," said Lumsley-Lumsley, with a snarl. "Rotten match! Fancy stinking fellows on an afternoon like this! Snacking, I suppose?"

"Yes! I've had a cigarette or two the last hour or so," said Levison.

"Be-ove!" said Lumsley-Lumsley. "You make me ill!"



"I say, Buster, what would you do if you fell off the raft suddenly?" asked Bob Cherry. "Swim like a fish," said Buster. "Good! So it!" and Bob Cherry playfully hooked away one of Buster's fat legs, and the Owl of the Remove fell over the edge of the raft with a tremendous splash. *A fun swimming incident in the spirited, long, caught-up tale of Harry H. Harris & Co. of Dagenham, entitled "His Own Boatman," by Frank Richards, which appears in this week's number of our companion paper "The Magnet" Library. Now on sale. Price One Penny.*

Mellich looked very curiously again at his chest. It was evidently Levan's wish to give an impression that he had been in the study some time. And Mellich wondered again what the rest of the Fourth had been doing.

#### CHAPTER 7. No School

TOM MERRY & Co. came in to see in a cheerful crowd. The last wicket on the School House side had fallen when the scores were level, so the match had ended in a draw.

As both sides considered that with ordinary luck they would have won, both sides were pretty well satisfied.

Arthur Augustus DAVEY, whose hat ever from his schoolmaster was not yet appended, was standing a least in Study No. 5. Figgins & Co. were also holding high revel over in the New House. But Tom Merry was not with the banders. It appeared to be a chief editor's duty to take the proofs back to the printer's, and Tom Merry did the parcel on his hands, and cooled down to Ryton. Skimpole of the Staff

visited him as he was whetting his bicycle cut, and ran after him to the gates, and Tom Merry mounted in a great hurry and started. He did not intend to be outwitted by the most terrible bore at St. Jim's if he could help it. Skimpole stood in the gateway, blinking after him through his spectacles, and making a roll of manuscript in the air. Tom Merry did not look round. He cycled away at top speed, leaving Skimpole to wear his precious manuscript.

Mr. Taper, the printer, received the proofs, and promised most faithfully that the finished production should be delivered the day after the next. Tom Merry returned to St. Jim's with a comfortable sense of duty well done.

Figgins & Co. met him as he came in. Figgins & Co. were smiling broadly.

"Get the proofs back to the printer!" asked Keer.

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "that job's jolled. Housed if I don't think we'd better turn the 'Weekly' into a weekly, after all."

"When do we get the copies?" asked Figgins.

"Fifteen abreast."

"Oh, good! We'll come over for them!"

The Gem Library—No. 272.

NEXT  
WEDNESDAY

"THE SCAMPS OF THE SCHOOL!"

A Realistic, Local Comical Tale of Tom Merry & Co.  
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Tom Merry walked, and wheeled his bicycle in. He wondered what Figgins & Co. saw to come at; but he did not guess. Figgins & Co. were waiting broadly as they returned to the New House, and met Rodgers and Owen and Lawrence. Figgins & Co. were sometimes on terms of warlike with the New Firm; but just now the great Co's of the New House were on the best of terms. They had succeeded in working off a jape on the School House, and they were well satisfied with themselves and with one another.

"The proofs have gone back to the printers, and Tom Merry doesn't need a second," said Figgins. "I wonder what Leather will say when he sees his revised *Weekly*?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
And the New House jokers laughed loud and long at the prospect.

Tom Merry, with assistance of Figgins & Co.'s glue, returned to the School House after putting up his bicycle, and looked in at Study No. 5. Tom was over there, and Leather and Manners were helping the Fourth Formers to finish up with their chestnuts.

"Well, you might have saved a chap a soreline," said Tom. "My dear kid, we've saved you here and hand-boiled eggs and tarts," said Blake. "Never shall it be said that the staff of an important periodical allowed its chief editor to go hungry—especially after he's saved a cricket match by carrying out of it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
And Blake produced from the study enclosed the fragments of the feast, and Tom Merry gazed into them at once.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was humming music, which was a hint that he considered it a good idea to finish up the feast with a little song; but the other fellows seemed blind to the hint. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could sing tenor solo in Italian; but there was no great demand for them in the School House.

"I've been thinking, you shape—" D'Arcy remarked.  
"Go home!" said Leather, in surprise. "Why didn't you tell me that before? I should have mentioned it in the *Weekly*," under the title of—

"Woolly, Leather—"  
"Under the title of 'Latest Unexpected Happenings—'"

"I regard you as an *ex*, hearties. I've been thinking that it would be a good idea to finish up with a solo—"

"By Jove!" said Manners. "I forgot my lines. I've got to get them ready for putting out to-morrow. So-long, you chaps!"

And Manners took his departure.  
Arthur Augustus gazed after the retreating form of Manners, through his eyeglass, and then cast a severe glance upon his remaining chums.

"If you chaps would care for a solo—" "  
"Our notes are not so low!" said Leather, haudly.  
"Woolly, Leather!"

"And you sing a solo to high," went on Leather, who had apparently not worked off all his latent humoriveness on the special number of the *Weekly*. "Now—"

"Oh, pray choose it. I have had 'La Donna è Mobile' transposed into my own key—"

"Keep it there, old chap," said Blake, "or put the key on the outside of the door—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"You chaps haven't noticed cynic," said Arthur Augustus, severely. "I regard it as my duty to educate you on the subject. Listen to this. La donna è mobile, soft vocal of voice—" and Arthur Augustus began to croak.

Merly Leather staggered out of the study as it was sung, and closed the door. Arthur Augustus did not stop. There was a knock at the door as he finished the first verse, and Skimpole of the Shell looked in, and blinked round the study through his spectacles.

"Ah! I thought you were here, my dear Merry," he said. "Pray excuse my intrusion. I trust I am not interrupting you."

"Not you are interrupting me, Skimpole—" "  
"It's all right," said Blake. "You can stay Skimpole—talk evolution and origin of species if you like—anything so long as you keep Skimpole quiet."

"Woolly, Blake—" "  
"I trust it is not too late to write the proofs for the printer," said Skimpole. "I have here a splendid article for the *Weekly*, and you simply cannot afford to leave it out, my dear Merry. It deals with the subject of the evolution of the human species."

"Oh, good!" said Tom Merry.  
Skimpole beamed.

"I am glad you regard it as good, Merry—" "  
"You've cooked splendidly."

"Cooked!" said Skimpole, in surprise. "What are you alluding to, my dear Merry?"

"The Great Librarian,—No. 223.  
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY.  
Every Monday.

"This rather," said Tom, innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha?"  
"My dear Merry, I was speaking of this article—" "

"And I was speaking of this article," said Tom Merry, indicating the savory rather with his fork.

"In donna è mobile, and please of course—" "  
"Dear me, I trust you are not ill, my dear D'Arcy?" said Skimpole.

"Ill? What do you mean, you say?" demanded Arthur Augustus, breaking off indignantly in his solo.

"You were shrieking so loudly—" "  
"You attack me—" "

Tom Merry finished his rather and rose.  
"Thanks awfully for the food!" he said. "Sorry I didn't have all the solo, Gomer. Merry I can't stay, Skimpole!"

And Tom Merry escaped from Study No. 5. But the genius of the Shell was not to be easily shaken.

"My dear Merry!" he exclaimed, catching the captain of the Shell in the passage. "You should really look at my article. It will enlighten you, and you cannot deny, my dear Merry, that that is very much needed. If you had admitted me to your study this afternoon, I am sure you would have inserted the article in the paper—it is sure to make a sensation. But it is not yet too late."

"Much too late," said Tom Merry. "The proofs have gone back to the printers, Skimpole. Bring it along next Christmas, or next year, or next century, and we'll see."

Skimpole shook his head sadly.  
"The loss is yours, my dear Merry—" "

"I'll try to bear it," said Tom Merry, with great fortitude.

"The loss is also your readers'. If you had not looked me out of your study—" "

"Oh! I didn't look you out of my study, Skimpole!" said Tom, in surprise.

"My dear Merry, when I brought you my article this afternoon—" "

"But you didn't bring it, Skimpole!" "  
Skimpole blinked at him.

"I came to your study when you were correcting the proofs, my dear Merry, and you had locked the door, and you declined to open it. I regard that as—" "

"You're dressing!" said Tom Merry. "The study door wasn't locked while I was there. Did you knock?" "

"Yes, certainly, and I explained to you through the key-hole, and you did not answer. I regard it as—" "

"You're dressing, Skimpole, or else someone was japing you," said Tom Merry. "The door certainly wasn't locked while I was in the study. But it would have been the same if you had found me there—no use for articles on evolution in the *Weekly*. Try to do a description of a cricket match next time, instead, and we'll see."

And Tom Merry walked on, leaving Skimpole quite flabbergasted at the idea of bringing down his mighty head to so trivial a matter as a cricket match.

Tom was looking puzzled as he went into his study. If Skimpole had come there and found the door locked, it must have been after Tom had gone down to see the fish of the cricket match, and some japes must have been in the study.

Tom glanced round the room, looking for some sign of a jape, but the study presented its usual aspect. Manners and Leather had started their preparation.

"Lost anything?" asked Leather.

"No. But somebody's been here, that's all. Skimpole says he came to see me, and found the study door locked," said Tom Merry. "I don't see what a fellow should lock himself in here for, unless it was to jape us. But I can't see anything amiss."

"Nothing wrong that I've noticed," said Manners.  
Tom Merry gave a start.

"The proofs of the *Weekly*—can anyone—please? Was that what Figgins was prying about? My hat! They can't have done anything in the proofs—oh!"

"Figgins & Co. were playing cricket, indeed!" "  
"Why, so they were! Skimpole's talking out of his hat, I suppose," said Tom Merry. And he dismissed the matter from his mind, and settled down to his preparation.

CHAPTER 8.

An Astonishing Discovery!

THE St. Jim's janitor was on duty on Friday afternoon, when a bulky package arrived from Mr. Tip's. To-day, the house jape, took it up to Tom Merry's study, and left it there, and advanced him at it when the clock came out of their purses.

"The parcel's arrived, you chaps?" said Tom Merry, who's in my study."

And quite a crowd of fellows, School House and New

House, followed Tom Merry in his study to see the paper. The packet was unlocked, and copies were handed out on all sides. Every fellow who sat under the expense of the "Weekly," was entitled to certain number of copies—and needless to say, all the contributors were among the subscribers. Levison of the Fourth was one of the first in the study, coming in with Gore and Crooke of the Sixth. Gore was a subscriber, and he took three copies, one each for his friends.

"You'll find a rather good paragraph on hitting in this number," Gore remarked, in a careless sort of way, as he handed the copies to Crooke and Levison.

"Yes," said Levison. "What's it by?"

"Here coughed."

"Ahem! I wrote it!" he said.

"Then I'm sure it must be good, old chap!" said Levison, cordially. "I must see I don't want to read Levison's funny business, or Tom Merry's scribble. But if you've got an article, I'll read it with pleasure. Can I keep this copy?"

"Certainly!" said Gore, highly satisfied. "With pleasure!"

"Thanks very much!" said Levison.

And he took the copy away to his own study.

The fellows started off their copies of the "Weekly," Figgins & Co., and Rodgers & Co. grinned hugely as they reached their numbers. Figgins glanced back as they were leaving the study.

"By the way, you fellows might look at the linerick page—your friend it interesting!" he remarked.

"My linericks, do you mean?" asked Levison.

"Yes—ha, ha, ha!"

"You didn't seem so pleased with them when we were making up the copy," said Merry Levison, suspiciously.

The New House jokers chuckled in silence.

"May be a bit of difference there then!" chuckled Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the New House fellows hurried out.

The Terrible Threes exchanged glances.

"Oh, the bounds!" said Tom Merry. "They must have got at the proofs after all our steps. You remember Sidney saying there was something looked in my study that afternoon and it must have been after I went down to the cricket ground—"

"But Figgins & Co. were selling," said Marston. "You know that! Rodgers and Thren were in the game, too!"

"Lawrence wasn't!" growled Tom Merry. "and I remember now that he went off the general the minute I got there. He was waiting for the coast to be clear!"

"Oh, the corner!"

"If he's marked up my linericks there will be a row!" exclaimed Monty Lawless, wrathfully.

"Let's see 'em!" exclaimed Bernard Glyn of the Sixth, opening his paper eagerly.

There were a score of fellows in the study and the passage outside, and they all opened their papers at the same page, to see what had happened to Levison's linericks.

Tom Merry looked at the linerick column, reading Levison's effusions one after the other, hurriedly. His face suddenly changed as he came to the last in the column. An expression of amazement and incredulity came upon his face, and then of horror and dismay.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. And there was a chorus of exclamations from the rest of the fellows.

"Great Scott!"

"My hat!"

"But Zow!"

"Figgins must be read!"

"He ought to be marked for this!"

"The silly ass!"

"The fellow!"

The jokers could scarcely believe their eyes as they saw the cold print of the revised linericks looking them in the face. For the linerick which Levison had written to make fun of Figgins & Co., and which Lawrence had succeeded to make fun of the Terrible Threes, was, in its final state, not funny at all—but simply heartily. It ran:

"In the School House they give me the hoop,  
Every chap is a bit of his hoop!  
The masters are daisy,  
The prefects are potty,  
And the Head is a giddy old trump!"

The jokers looked at one another in horrified silence. That Figgins, of any other fellow could be stupid enough and reckless enough to put such a composition into print, was astounding. The fellows simply could not speak; the lines took their breath away. The fellow who had written them, if he came to the notice of the masters, was as certain of a flogging as he could be of anything in this world, if not of being expelled from St. Jive's.

Tom Merry was the first to find his voice.

"The ass! The utter ass! A giddy old trump! Figgins must be mad! Suppose the Head were to see that—"

"He'd mark Figgins!" said Blake.

"Vaux, vaux! and serve him right!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, indignantly. "No chap has a right to allude to his headmaster as a giddy old trump. It is a vulgar expression!"

"The Head would get his hair off if he saw it!" said Harris.

"He won't see it," said Tom Merry, quickly. "I can't understand Figg being cast as utter idiot; but it must have been Figg—you heard what he said as he went out—"

"Vaux, vaux!"

"No doubt about it, though I can't understand it!" said Jack Blake. "But goodness! take keep this day. Figgins would be flogged, if not marked. The utter idiot!"

"Fidd, and he must be off his rocker entirely," said Roddy.

"It isn't like Figgins to do this at all, at all. He's had enough about the prefects, but the masters—and the Head! Sure, Figgins must have gone off his dot!"

"We shall have to suppress this number," said Tom Merry. "Our goodness! take don't let any of the prefects get hold of it!"

"What about the copy we always give Kibbure?" asked Dealy.

"We can't give him one of these—unless we tear this page out," said Tom Merry. "That might make his suspicions, too, that there was something in it that we haven't let a prefect see. We shall have to suppress the whole number."

"Vaux, vaux!"

"We'll jolly well make Figgins sit up for it, then!" growled Levison. "It will cost a pretty penny to have this lot printed over again."

"We'll make Figgins pay for it," said Marston.

"Good idea!"

"And wrap the silly ass, into the bargain!" said Kangaroo.

"Hiss, hiss!"

"It won't be so jolly easy to suppress the number," said Bernard Glyn. "Half the copies have been taken away already."

"It's about collecting those up, you fellows," said Tom Merry. "It would be frightfully wrong for the author of that sort of thing into a master's hands."

And the jokers hurried away to collect up the scattered copies of the "Weekly"—not an easy task, as Glyn had remarked, and soon to prove impossible!

## CHAPTER 9.

### Tom Laid!

"GOOD heavens!" Levison of the Fourth uttered that exclamation Mr. Railton, the Headmaster of the School House, was coming out of his study. Levison was standing in the passage, with the open number of the "Weekly" in his hand. He was reading the columns of linericks, and he had turned his startled exclamations just as he heard the Housemaster opening the door of his study.

Mr. Railton stopped and glanced at him. Levison did not appear to see him. He had his eyes fixed upon the linerick, with an expression of amazement and horror.

"The silly ass!" he murmured aloud. "Funny talking about the Head like that! I wonder who wrote this stuff?"

"Levison!"

Levison gave a dramatic start at the sound of the Housemaster's voice. He spring round, putting the paper behind him at the same moment, with the very obvious intention of concealing it.

"I heard you speak, Levison," said Mr. Railton severely. "What are you reading?"

"Reading, sir," stammered Levison. "N—something, sir."

"Be not so quiet, Levison," said the Housemaster, frowning. "I hate had to speak to you on that subject before. What book is that you have?"

"It's—it's Tom Merry's Weekly," sir," stammered Levison.

"Give it to me at once."

"If you please, sir—"

"Give it to me."

"It doesn't belong to me, sir—it's Good's—"

"Do you hear me, Levison?"

With a great show of reluctance, Levison handed the paper to the Housemaster.

"Now kindly point out the place where you were reading," said Mr. Railton. "Your words implied that this paper contains some reflection on the Head. If that is the case, it is my duty to investigate. What is the paragraph?"

"I—'d rather not tell you, sir—"

"It is not a case of what you would prefer, Levison, but of obeying my orders."

"The—the fellows won't like it, sir. You—you could read The Gem Library—No. 278."

the paper without my pointing it out, sir, if you wouldn't mind."

Mr. Bailton paused for a moment.  
"Very well, Levison, that is what I will do," he said. "I do not wish you to get into trouble with the other boys through my actions."

"Thank you, sir,"  
Mr. Bailton went back into his study, with the paper in his hand. Levison moved away, breathing hard. He had succeeded in the exciting time had been reserved in the register, and he had brought them to the notice of a master before the schoolboy editors had a chance of collecting the papers and suppressing them. He had succeeded, but he was trembling a little. He had brought now Tom Merry & Co. with a storm as had never fallen upon their devoted heads before, but he knew that in doing so he was playing with edged tools. If any detail of his scheme should have gone wrong, if he should be discovered himself! The thought made him shiver. Yet how could he be discovered? His hand in the matter could not be traced. It would come out that a New House fellow had gone into Tom Merry's study and allowed the friends in the prefects. That another person had altered it again afterwards was not likely to appear. Even if it were suspected, how could it be proved? Upon the whole, Levison felt that he was secure.

"Seen the 'Weekly'?" he asked, as he met Percy Mellich in the playground.

Mellich shook his head.  
"Don't care for the lot," he said.  
"It's interesting this time," said Levison. "Some one has written a letter to it, calling the Head an old tramp!"

Mellich jumped.  
"Rumour!" he said.  
"I've seen it," said Levison.  
"Show it to me," said Mellich, unconcerned. "I'll bet there isn't a chap in the school who'd be able enough."  
"I haven't got it now."

Mellich glanced at Levison.  
"I have your own manuscript," he said. "Nobody at St. Jim's would risk it. Why, it would mean the sack for anybody, or a flogging at best."

"Somebody has stolen it," said Levison. "I can't show you the paper, because Bailton found me reading it, and took it away from me. He'll find it himself, and there will be a row."

"I'll jolly well bet you let him see it on purpose, if it's true," said Mellich. "But I don't believe it. Hallo, here comes D'Arcy, looking as if he'd lost something."

Arthur Augustus came up panting.  
"We're none looking for you, Levison," he exclaimed. "You had a copy of the 'Weekly,' didn't you, dash boy?"

"Yes, I had one," said Levison.  
"Please give it to me. We're collecting the copies, as the school officers in general have expressed and requested," said D'Arcy. "You must have a copy of the new edition. There's a letter in it, written to the Head, and we were to be sent by word of mouth to let it be seen by any of the prefects."  
"Who put it in?" asked Mellich, catching some of the excitement of Levison's statement.

"One of the New House boys—who it appears to have been shown in which the pencils were concealed on Wednesday," said D'Arcy. "One of the New House boys who must have got into the study and done it. Where is the paper, Levison?"

"Sorry, I haven't got it now."  
"All right—where did you give it to? I'll find the chap."  
"I don't know."  
"Who was it?"  
"Mr. Bailton," said Levison, calmly. "He saw me reading the paper, and he asked me for it. I had to give it to him."  
"Oh, ho, Jerry!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's athletic leg was the picture of energy.

"You attack me?" he ejaculated. "It's enough to get fingers the sack! Oh, yes, ha!"

"Well, it's not my fault," said Levison. "I couldn't refuse to give Bailton the paper, could I?"

"No, I suppose not—but it's a damned nuisance. But Jerry! There will be trouble if Bailton comes across that letter!" said Arthur Augustus, in great distress.

"I suppose the chap who wrote it expected it to be seen, didn't he?" asked Levison. "Some of the masters always see the papers. Tom Merry wrote about complimentary notes, doesn't he?"

"Yes, but we were quite to suppress this rubbish. Fingers must have been sent off his work, you see, when he wrote that," said D'Arcy. "I can't understand it, but we wanted to move him, before the consequences."  
"Well, it can't be helped now."  
"I suppose not. It's written!" And the swell of St. Jim's The Gift Library—No. 273.

walked disconsolately away. Mellich eyed his companion very intently when D'Arcy was gone.

"Very queer thing for Fingles to do, wasn't it?" he asked.  
"Sure as a gun," agreed Levison, carelessly.

"Got at the proofs, did he, and put up something reflecting on the Head, that he might be sacked, too?" said Mellich reflectively. "Must have known the masters would see it, as they'd get to see the paper. Looks as if he were going to be sacked."  
"Yes, doesn't it?"

"Not like Fingles, either—he's a sensible chap, as a rule. Levison says—must have been done after Tom Merry had corrected the proofs on Wednesday, and before he took them to the printer's," said Mellich, following out his train of thought. "After Merry had gone down to the cricket—about the time you came into the study where I was, Levison."  
"Did I?" said Levison. "I forget."  
"Oh, you can't forget, you know—you remember Levison Leamy came in a few minutes afterwards, and you pretended so that you'd been in the study a long time," said Mellich calmly. "I understood what you were taking him in for. I think I know you."  
Levison became a shade paler.

"If you talk any more rubbish about me, Mellich—"  
"Why should I?" said Mellich. "It's not my business. If all that crowd got flogged and sacked, I should like it. No business of mine, to give away a pal. Besides, you're a good pal to me—I can always depend on you for a little loan when I'm hard up, and I couldn't if you were booted out of the school!"

Levison set his lips hard.

"Which reminds me," went on Mellich pleasantly. "I'm stamp now. I wonder if you could lend me half a crown. Levison?"

"No!" said Levison, between his teeth.

"No?" repeated Mellich. "Don't if you don't want to, of course. But—think it over, old chap, and see whether you can or not."

"There were some moments of tension," then Levison inserted his finger and thumb into his waistcoat pocket, and produced a half-crown, which he placed in Mellich's palm.

"Thanks!" said Mellich affably. "You're a good chap." Levison walked away.

Meanwhile, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had rejoined his class, with the news that the effort to collect the copies of the 'Weekly' had come to nothing, and that a copy was already in the hands of the master of the School House!

CHAPTER 10.  
Called Over the Coals.

TOM MERRY and Manners and Levison were busy in the study when Arthur Augustus rejoined them. Tom Merry had lifted a fire in the grate, and the "Innocent page" from the column of the 'Weekly' was being fed to the flames. Monty Levison was in a state of great exasperation at this destruction of his hazardous column. But there was nothing else to be done. As far as the scattered members of the 'Weekly' were brought in, the Innocent page was torn out and put into the fire. Manners and the rest were very busy making the collection, and out of the hundred numbers provided by Mr. Tupper, more than fifty had already been disposed of. Barring accidents, there was no reason why the whole edition should not be successfully suppressed, and that unfortunate Innocent resigned to oblivion. There it came Arthur Augustus with his bad news.

"You can let that one out, dash boy," said D'Arcy demurely. "It's too late! Mr. Bailton has got a copy of the 'Weekly'!"

"Oh, you snubbed Jerry!" said Levison. "Then all the fat's in the fry—instead of the 'Weekly'."  
"Yess. I thought I'd switch some and tell you at once. I suppose Bailton is bound to see that written Innocent!"

"Sure so," growled Tom Merry. "Everybody always sees just the thing you don't want him to see. What rotten luck! But how on earth did Bailton get hold of a copy so soon? He's not generally specially keen about our glibly magazine."  
"Levison happened to be reading it, and Bailton saw him, as Levison says."

"That's an excuse why he should catch it," said Levison. "You can bet that Levison had noticed the Innocent, and he managed to get Bailton to see it. I know Levison."

"But Jerry! I never thought of that! But now you speak of it, dash boy, I suggest it as a necessary proof," said Arthur Augustus, with a doleful shake of the head. "I'm afraid there will be a fearful row. Bailton will be gentle for the moment, so ask him to explain my warning."  
Tom Merry set his lips.

"I suppose so. What on earth can I say? I can't give Figgins away."

"You can't take the responsibility for that rotten Liverpool journal, Tom!" Leather and Masters exclaimed together.

"Put it on the greatest of editorial privacy, and refuse to answer," suggested Arthur Augustus. "Edwards always refuses to reveal the names of contributors before a committee of inquiry, you know—I remember words that in the paper. Alas! all you are an editor, you know, and you must have some regard for professional etiquette."

Tom Merry smiled faintly.

"Master Merry—Edley put his head in at the door—

"Master Merry, please Mr. Railton wants you in his study."

"The janitor looked at me another glance."

"He's over it," said Masters.

"Now to get it in the neck," said Henry Leather, in a role of Job's comforter.

"Nevertheless professional etiquette, Tom Merry, don't say, and don't reveal the name of the contributor," said Dr. Jecx.

Tom Merry left the study, and went slowly downstairs.

His position was decidedly an uncomfortable one. As editor of the schoolboy magazine, he was responsible for what appeared in the paper, and was held responsible. Thus, he could make his explanation ready enough—that the proofs had been tampered with without his knowledge. But that would mean denouncing the New House fellows. Professional etiquette as an editor did not trouble Tom Merry very much; but he did not want to "sneak." Yet it was impossible to allow it to be supposed that he had permitted the publication of that wretched Liverpool, containing an insulting reference to the respected and venerated Head himself.

Mr. Railton was waiting for him, his brow very shiny. When Tom Merry presented himself in the House-master's study, he had the copy of the "Weekly" open in his hand, and it was open, of course, at that unfortunate Liverpool page.

Mr. Railton fixed his eyes sternly upon the junior.

"This is the latest number of your junior magazine, I understand, Merry?" he said.

"Yes, sir."

"You act as editor, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"In that case you must be held responsible for what appears in the paper?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry again.

"You are, then, responsible for those wicked and scurrilous verses?" said Mr. Railton, laying his finger upon the Liverpool.

"No, sir," said Tom Merry. "I did not know that that Liverpool was in the paper. I was shocked when I found it there."

"It was put in without your knowledge then?" asked the House-master, his brow relaxing somewhat.

"Most certainly, sir."

"In that case, you must have been very stupid, Merry. It was your duty to see that there was nothing in the paper displaying bad taste and bad manners, and reflecting upon the authorities of the school."

"I know that, sir," said Tom Merry, hanging his head.

"I can't say how sorry I am, sir. I only hope the Head won't see it. You can't think that I would allude to the Head in that way, sir, or say of any friend either."

"Do you read over everything that is printed in the paper, Merry?"

"Certainly, sir. I have to be careful, of course."

"Then how did this escape your attention?"

Tom Merry hesitated.

"You had better tell me all, Merry. If it is an ill-considered trick, you will be censured from blame, and the author will be severely punished. But the matter must be stated to the bottom. I may tell you that, if this comes to Dr. Habers' knowledge, the author of those scurrilous lines will be expelled from the school. But as the offence had occurred in my House, I am entitled to deal with it as House-master, without consulting Dr. Habers; that there is a log in the school who draws allude to him in such an insulting manner." Tom Merry breathed more freely.

"I know the Head would feel it, sir," he said. "I only hope he won't know."

"As this has occurred in the School House, Merry, I shall take the matter into my hands, and deal with it myself, if possible. Every copy of this paper must be immediately destroyed—that is the first step."

"We were doing that already, sir. As soon as we found that Liverpool in the paper, we started collecting the copies. We've been burning them in the stove."

"I am glad to see that you realize the seriousness of the matter. How many copies were there of this paper?"

"One hundred, sir."

"How many have you destroyed?"

"Over fifty. We've keeping copies of them, and we shall

know when they're all destroyed, sir. All the fellows are just as keen as I am to get them done in—I mean destroyed."

"Very good, so far. Now, to discover who wrote those wicked lines. You tell me that this Liverpool was inserted in the magazine without your knowledge, and yet that you read over all the contributions. How can that be?"

"It was put in after I'd corrected the proofs, sir," said Tom Merry reluctantly. "I left the proofs in my study while I went down to the printer, and somebody must have gone into the study and opened the packet, and put that Liverpool in on the proof-sheet."

"And you sent the proofs back to the printer without knowing that they had been tampered with?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. I believe your statement, of course, and that someone tampered. Do you know who tampered with the proofs?"

Tom Merry flushed.

"I see that you do know, Merry. Who was it?"

"It-it-wasn't I—a School House chap, sir," stammered Tom Merry.

"A New House boy?"

"I—I think so, sir."

"You mean that you know it was a New House boy?"

Mr. Railton scolded sharply.

"Well, yes, sir."

"His name?"

Tom Merry was silent.

"Do you know his name, Merry?"

"No, sir, I don't. I was on the cricket ground when it was done, and I only guessed afterwards that a New House chap had tampered with the proofs."

"Had you reason to believe that it was a New House boy?"

"Yes, sir; from something some of them said—about a surprise for us on the Liverpool page, though I can't understand how downy fellows came to play such a trick."

"If the New House boys are concerned in the matter, Merry, I am afraid that I shall have to outside it to Mr. Bessell, if not to the Head himself. You are quite sure the author of those lines did not belong to this House?"

"I—I am sure, sir, because—"

There was a quick knock at the door, and it opened, and Figgins, Kerr, and Lawrence of the New House came in without ceremony. Mr. Railton raised his eyebrows.

"Excuse me, sir," said Figgins breathlessly. "I've just had it from Leather that Tom Merry was here, and—"

"Do you know anything about this matter, Figgins?" asked Mr. Railton sternly, pointing to the open page of the "Weekly."

"Yes, sir; but not much."

"You'd better explain, Figgs," said Tom Merry. "How you could be such an ass as to get those lines in those I can't understand."

"I don't," said Figgins indignantly. "Do you think I'd speak of air blind to that way? I should deserve to be kicked out of the school if I did."

"But—but—"

"Explain to me what you know, Figgins," said Mr. Railton quietly. "I should be very inclined to suppose you the author of those lines. I am anxious to keep this disgraceful matter from troubling the Head. But the truth must be discovered, and the author of those lines severely punished."

"I don't know who it was, sir," said Figgins.

Tom Merry stared at Figgins blankly.

"You don't know?" he stammered.

"No, if I did, I'd jolly well wallop him!" said Figgins.

"One thing I'm certain of—it wasn't a New House chap."

"Whom?"

"That it jolly well wasn't!" said Lawrence.

"But—but you said in my study—" stammered Tom Merry, in amazement.

"Yes, I know what I said. We altered the Liverpool, but we didn't alter it like this. It was altered again by somebody after Lawrence left it."

"Yes, rather!" said Lawrence.

"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry.

CHAPTER II.

By Whose Hand?

MR. H. HAILTON listened quietly. He broke in now.

"Kindly tell me, as concisely as you can, what you know about the matter, Figgins," he said.

"Certainly, sir," said Figgins. "You see, we're all subscribers of the 'Weekly,' and when we were getting this special number ready for the press, I found a rotten Liverpool in it by Mottley Leather, getting at the New House. I objected; but it was put in, and we made up our minds to put at the proofs afterwards and alter the Liverpool, so that

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 278.

it would be a joke up against the School House. No harm in that, sir."

"None at all," said Mr. Bailton.  
 "I've got the original here, sir," said Figgins. "Kerr read it over, and wrote out a new likeness very much like the others, but up against Tom Merry & Co. Kerr can do those things. It was really his idea from the first. Here they are, sir. The first one is Louther's likeness, and the other is the likeness after we had altered it."

Figgins laid a scribbled paper on the table before the Housemaster. Mr. Bailton read the lines, and smiled slightly. He read first Louther's original version:

"At St. Jim's are two Houses, you know,  
 And one is a rotten old show;  
 There they're all off their dot,  
 But the worst of the lot,  
 Are the boasters called Figgins & Co."

"This is somewhat personal, but there is no harm in it," said Mr. Bailton. "This, then, is the original likeness that appeared in that column?"

"Yes, sir. The other one is Kerr's version," said Figgins. Mr. Bailton read Kerr's version:

"At St. Jim's are two Houses, you see,  
 And one is too rotten for me,  
 There they're all off their dot,  
 But the worst of the lot,  
 Are the clumps called 'the Terrible Three.'"

"You see, sir, it was only a bit of an alteration; but we made it up against the School House," explained Figgins. "When the number came to day, we told them to look at the likeness they, and they'd find it interesting. We thought they'd find that likeness there. But when we opened our own eyes over in the New House we found those new lines about the Head, sir. We were simply finished over. We hadn't expected anything of the kind. We hadn't the faintest idea—"

"Not the faintest, sir," said Kerr. "We came over here to see Tom Merry about it, and Louther told us you'd want for him, sir, so we came here."

"Quite right," said Mr. Bailton. "Explain how it was that you contrived to insert these lines in the paper without Merry's knowledge?"

Figgins grinned a little.  
 "You see, sir, Tom Merry was standing out of the Tower watch to look over the proofs; but when he'd finished the proofs, he came down to the ground to see the finish of the match. We were holding, as we couldn't get off, but we'd put Lawrence up to it. Lawrence had Kerr's likeness in his pocket all ready, waiting for a chance. As soon as Tom Merry got to the ground, Lawrence slipped into the

House. There was nobody about, as it was a half-holiday, and he worked the machine—I mean he put it in."

"What did you do, Lawrence?"  
 "I got into Tom Merry's study, sir," said Lawrence. "The proofs were in a packet on the table. I opened the packet, and wrote Kerr's likeness over Louther's, crossing out the words I wanted to alter, so that the printer would take it just as an ordinary proof correction. Then I fastened up the packet again and handed it over. I never went out. The School House boys never noticed."

Mr. Bailton's eyes twinkled very keenly upon Lawrence's face while the younger was speaking. Lawrence's frank face and fearless blue eyes inspired confidence. It seemed hardly possible to doubt that he was telling the truth.

"Then when you left the proofs, Lawrence, Kerr's likeness was written over Louther's," said Mr. Bailton.  
 "After that, according to your statement, some unknown person must have reopened the packet, and made a further alteration, putting in the lines that have appeared in the printed column."

"That's it, sir, exactly."  
 "You know nothing of these mysterious lines?"  
 "Nothing at all, sir, till I saw them in Figg's study ten minutes ago."

"The Housemaster collected for some moments.  
 "You left Tom Merry's study—where did you go?"  
 "Back to the cricket, sir."  
 "What time was that?"  
 "Just before the match finished, sir. The last wicket was down about ten minutes afterwards."  
 "Did you return to your study after the end of the match, Merry?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry. "Of course it is for the proofs. The other fellows went to tea in Study No. 4, and I took the proofs down to the printer's."

"Without examining them again?"  
 "Certainly, sir. I had fastened up the packet all ready, and I found it just as I left it. It never occurred to me that it had been opened."

"Then this alteration, if it was made at all, was made during the short time between Lawrence's departure from your study, and your return to it—a period apparently of about a quarter of an hour?"  
 "I suppose so, sir."

"This is a very, very difficult matter," said Mr. Bailton, slowly. "I am disposed to believe Lawrence's statement. But all we know for certain so far, is that Lawrence admits opening the proofs and making an alteration in them. You accuse me, Lawrence, that the alteration you made is as you have stated, and that you know nothing of these lines re-appearing upon the Head?"

"I give you my word, sir," said Lawrence. "I hope you don't think I'd touch the Head in such a way. I should be a fool to do it, too, for it was bound to come out and cause an awful row."

**NUMBER 3.**  
**"THE GEM" LIBRARY**  
**PORTRAIT GALLERY.**



2



1.

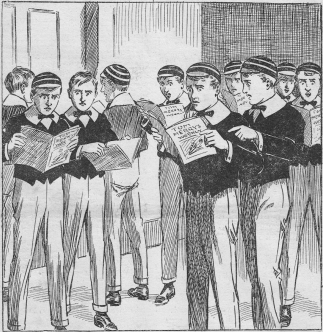


3

1. REDFERN.  
 2. OWEN.  
 3. LAWRENCE.

**No. 7. NEXT WEDNESDAY.**  
**Mr. Ratchiff, Rully, Taggles**





Tom Harry opened the "Weekly" and turned at once to the literary column. An expression of satisfaction and interest came over his face, and then of horror and dismay. "Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "disgrace must be mine! It might be asked for this!" And there was a chorus of similar horrified exclamations from the rest of the fellows. (See Chapter 15)

"That is very true. It remains, then, to prove that someone else tampered with the proofs after you had left them, and before they were taken to the printer's," said Mr. Ballton.

"We will find out, sir," said Tom Meyer. "Most of the fellows were out of doors. We shall be able to find out who was in the House at that time."

"You believe Lawrence's explanation, Meyer?"

"Every word, sir; I know he wouldn't tell a lie."

"Very well. Lawrence's confusion convinces you, and you are free from blame. Unless a third party can be discovered, however, I am afraid it will rest upon Lawrence to prove that he did not insert those lines in the paper when he altered the literary."

"Oh, sir!" said Lawrence, in dismay.

"I form no judgment now," said Mr. Ballton. "I leave it to you to discover a third party in the case, if you can—and I will give you three. Meanwhile, every copy of this paper must be destroyed."

"Oh, certainly, sir."

"Very well; now run go!"

The jinks fit the snuff. They went quietly down the

passage, and then they paused, and regarded one another grimly. The rest of the G's joined them there.

"Well, this is a ripping kettle of fish," said Kerr. "It all comes of Monty Lawther being too funny in the first place."

"Yess, wuhah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I have conversated with Lawther on that subject a good many times."

"Oh, run!" said Lawther. "It all comes of you New House duffers trying to jess the School House, and making a blunder of it. Why couldn't you let the proofs alone?"

"And it's up to Lawrence to prove that he didn't put those lines in," said Mansers.

Lawrence flaked hotly.

"Can't you take my word?"

"Has Mr. Ballton taken it?"

"Well, he says he gives us a chance to find the third party."

"Exactly. In a case like this, it's not a question of taking a fellow's word. If we found the right party, he would deny doing it—and if we took his word—"

"If you mean that I'm the right party, Messers, you'll jolly well get a thick ear!" bawled Lawrence, indignantly. "Dretch!" said Arthur Augustus. "Dretch, dretch boys. We can't settle this matter by punches; one another's heads!"

"Messers isn't going to hit—"  
"I wasn't hitting," said Messers. "I was speaking right out. I say it's up to you to prove that you didn't do it, as you were the last fellow handling the goods. You haven't told us all that happened, and I don't see why you're keeping anything back!"

"I'm not keeping anything back!" bawled Lawrence. "I've said you all, and Mr. Ralston, too, everything—every single detail!"

"You haven't mentioned about locking yourself in the study, for one thing," said Messers.

"Lawrence snarled.  
"I haven't mentioned that, because I didn't do it," he said. "It happens to know that Skimpole went in the study, thinking that Tom Merry was still there using the goods," said Messers. "Skimpole found the door locked, and whatever was in the study wouldn't let him in."

"Nobody came to the study while I was there," said Lawrence. "I didn't lock the door—and nobody came there."  
"Skimpole says—"

"Blow Skimpole! You know Skimpole's pony—the most of you School House chaps, for that matter!"  
"Look here—"  
"Oh, rats!"

"Hark on!" broke in Blake. "You're roving over nothing, you sees. Skimpole went to the study and found the door locked. But that doesn't prove that Lawrence locked it. It may have been after Lawrence left. The third party—the fellow who put those rotten lines in—would have talked himself in the study to do it. The right party was there when Skimpole was knocking at the door."  
"Oh!" said Messers.

"But how? Blake's got it!" said Arthur Augustus if any, suddenly. "The wretch was in the study, and Skimpole nearly caught him by accident!"

"Oh!" Messers said again. "I didn't think of that. I suppose that's so; of course, the ratter would naturally lock himself in. I'm sorry, Lawrence!"

"All wrong!" said Lawrence. "I say, that gives us a clue, as they say in the detective stories. May get something out of Skimpole."

"Skimpole didn't see anybody—he simply found the study door locked—"

"He might have seen somebody afterwards. We've got to find out who was in the house at the time. Skimpole was in the house—and he might have seen the chap after he came out of the study!"

"Yess, wretched!"  
"Let's hunt Skimpole up, and see if he knows anything!" said Tom Merry.

"Good egg!"  
And the worried jinkers set out in search of the genius of the Shell.

CHAPTER 12.  
On the Track.

SKIMPOLE was seated upon one of the old wooden benches under the elm in the quad. He had a huge volume on his knees, and was reading it attentively. It was the famous volume by the great scientific authority, Professor Halkensworth. The genius of the Shell was deep in the volume, following the great professor's theory of the evolution of the human race from a fragment of jelly floating in a primordial sea. He was so deeply occupied to see Tom Merry & Co., till Blake came him up by gently kicking the great volume out of his hands. Then Skimpole raised his watery eyes, and blinked at the jinkers through his big spectacles.

"We've been looking for you, Skimpole," said Tom Merry. "We want you to give us some information."  
Skimpole frowned.

"My dear Merry, I should be delighted. You have favored at last an interest in the great and important question of the evolution of the human race. You are quite right to come to me for information. I have studied the subject, and I may say that I have completely mastered the theory of Professor Halkensworth!"

"Oh, ring off, Skimpole—"  
"The proofs are complete," said Skimpole. "It is made perfectly clear in this wonderful volume, that man developed from a speck of jelly floating in a primordial sea. His last cause to be a land animal is clearly explained here. The real theory, that the human race found its origin in a softening vegetation on the banks of a tropical stream, is quite disproved. THE GENIUS OF THE SHELL—No. 272."

All the evidence goes to show that the theory of a speck of jelly in a primordial sea is the correct one, and the professor is even able to fix the exact date within seven or eight million years—"

"Shut up!" roared Tom Merry. "We've come to you for some information—"

"But I'm giving you information, my dear Merry," said Skimpole, in surprise. "Information upon the most important subject in the world. Consider how your mind will be set at rest when you know exactly what happened seven or eight million years ago!"

"We don't want to go quite so far back as that," said Tom Merry, laughing. "The day before yesterday is the strongest look for the present matter!"

"My dear Merry—"  
"You want to say study on Wednesday afternoon with a rotten article about some faddies—evolution or something—"

"Skimpole shook his head."  
"Not at all, my dear Merry!"

"You didn't" demanded all the jinkers together.  
"Certainly not!"

"Oh, dear, we're off-side again!" groaned Figgins. "No information to be got out of that chap after all."  
"But you told me you did!" bawled Tom Merry. "Don't you remember—when I came in after the cricket match—you told me—"

"You do not remember very clearly," said Skimpole, with a shake of the head. "I certainly said nothing about bringing you a rotten article about faddies. Evolution is not faddies, though I admit that a great many persons seem to think so. This great theory—"

Tom Merry passed him by the shoulder and shook him. "Oh, dear!" gasped Skimpole. "My dear Merry—"

"But you told me you did!" bawled Tom Merry. "Don't you remember—when I came in after the cricket match—you told me—"

"Yes, certainly. You were incorrect in saying that I took with me a rotten article. I took a very specially good article upon the subject of—"

"You want to say study!" said Tom Merry, breathing hard.  
"Yes. And Evolution—"

"You found the door locked!"  
"Yes. I remember—"

"Did you try to open it?"  
"I did. And I remember that—"

"You spoke through the keyhole?"  
"Yes, I explained to you that I had an important article for the 'Weekly,' and that the key would be yours if you did not publish it in the magazine. And I remember—"

"Did anybody answer you from the study?"  
"No. You were quite alone—I might say quite; and I—"

"I wasn't there, faddish, I had finished 'the proofs' and left. Somebody else had locked himself in my study."

"How are you?" said Skimpole, "then accounts for your not replying to me, if you were not there. It is a scientific explanation to which no objection can be taken."

"Where was in the study you some lines in the proofs of the 'Weekly,' about the Horn, and there is going to be a row about it," explained Tom Merry. "We want to find out who the ratter was. You didn't see him?"

"It was impossible, my dear Merry. In years to come, when the theory of the X-ray has been scientifically developed, I have no doubt that it will be possible to construct spectacles which will enable a person to see through an opaque door. But at present it is quite impossible!"

The jinkers glared at Skimpole. But the genius of the Shell was not being humbugged. He was quite serious.

"I didn't ask you if you could see through the door, faddish!" said Tom Merry, bitterly patient. "I asked you if you'd seen anything of him. Where did you go after you found you couldn't get in?"

"I returned to my own study, Merry. I gave my article some finishing touches—especially developing the theory that not less than seven million years, and not more than eight million, could possibly have elapsed since—"

"Did you shut your door?"  
"I really do not remember," said Skimpole, in mild surprise at being bothered about so trivial a matter. "I was thinking of the evolution of the human race, and not of the door."

"But you say anybody you in the passage afterwards?"  
"Yes; but I never thought of it. I did. And the fact that I saw him would imply that I did leave the door open, as I could not have seen him through the door. That, I could scientifically demonstrate, would have been impossible, as the opacity of wood—"

"Who was it?"  
"It was Knut of the Shell. I remember he glanced into the study, and called me on what. You know how perfunctory Knut always is."

"Knox?" looked the janitor together.

"Yes, I saw Knox pass in the passage."

"Did you see anybody else pass?"

"No, I recall now that after Knox's unpleasant remark I rose and closed the door, in order not to be disturbed again while contemplating the wonderful theory that—"

"Knox," said Tom Merry, "we're on the track."

"Yess, wathah!"

The same thought had come into all the janitors' minds at once. Knox, the prefect, was very unpopular with the janitors. He had a special dislike for the "Weedle Thers." It seemed rather "stupid" to suppose that a prefect would have written those lines about the Head. But the janitors were convinced that there was no reason Knox would stop at in order to get them into trouble.

"You remember the time we japed you about a hidden treasure in the old castle," said Figgins. "Knox practically stole the paper. It was only good, but he thought it was real, and he stuck to it. A fellow should do that would do anything."

"It seems rather thick—a prefect, too," said Kerr thoughtfully.

"Well, we know he's a mean beast!"

"Yess, wathah!"

"And we know he's up against our study," said Monty Leather. "There was a stiff on Knox in the last number of the 'Weedle,' and he was very sorry about it. He'd be glad of a chance to get the 'Weedle' suppressed."

"And he will be approached, if we don't get at the truth about that lark!" said Blake. "No look about that."

"It's Knox," said Lawrence. "Of course it is. What was he doing in the House at all, when everybody else was on the cricket field?"

"Well, he's a shaker. He doesn't play cricket now."

"Oh, it was Knox?" said Mizzers. "We all know Knox. There isn't the slightest doubt in my mind that it was Knox. I believe he's the only chap in the School House who's rotter enough to do it."

"We don't know yet that it was a School House chap," said Blake.

"Oh, yes, you do!" said Figgins warmly. "How could a New House chap possibly do a rotten thing like that, Ed like to know?"

"Wadly, Figgins—"

"Don't argue, you ones!" said Tom Merry. "It was Knox. There isn't a tick cricker about it, but what evidence there is, is against Knox. The question is—how are we to bring it home to him? He won't confess."

"No fear!"

"You had better leave it to me, deak boys. You are aware that I have watch an instinct for detective lines, and I'll hold him out. You wathah that once I helped Fewsah Lohke, the detective, to win down a criminal."

"There isn't much evidence, and he's not likely to confess," said Tom Merry. "There's only one plan that I can think of. We shall have to surprise him into admitting it. I don't exactly like the idea, but detectives do it in dealing with criminals, and Knox is a criminal in this case. Suppose we go to his study and charge him with it—mentioning that Skinsap saw him? He won't know that Skinsap caught him in the passage. Knox is a head, you know, and if he's guilty, ten to one he'll lose his nerve and blurt it out. I think it would be justified, because if we don't find on the real party, Lawrence will most likely get it in the end."

"Yess, wathah! Unbek the crew, I consider it would be justified. I will subject Knox to a vigorous cross-examination."

"No, you won't," said Leather. "you'll fry up. You never open your mouth without putting your eye in it."

"Wadly, Leather—"

"We can't all go to Knox," said Tom Merry. "We want to catch him by himself in his study. Two or three fellows will be enough."

"Yess, wathah! I'll take you, Tom Merry, and Blake."

"Now, look here, Guzz—"

"I shall hater upon you, Tom Merry! What is required in a matter of this sort is a fellow of tact and judgment."

And it was finally arranged that Tom Merry and D'Arcy and Blake should visit Knox in his study, and surprise him into an admission of his guilt.

### CHAPTER 13. GUILTY AND NOT GUILTY.

KNOX of the Sixth was in his study talking to Catts. Catts was a Fifth-Former, but he was very "thick" with the black sheep of the Sixth. They were kind of a feather. There talk ran on the loud talk ending, the clock struck by Mr. Griggs the bookkeeper, and other matters

which the Head of St. Jim's would have been very surprised to hear two senior boys discussing. The name of Mr. Griggs was Catts's lips as there came a tap at the door, and it opened. Catts of the Sixth was never taken by surprise. He went on without changing a muscle.

"And the Grammarian seniors are in good form," too, I fancy the St. Jim's First will have a big task to look after in the match. Still, I hope Kibbree will pull it off."

Knox stared at the Fifth-Former, and then he understood that that sudden change in Catts's conversation was for the benefit of the three juniors who had presented themselves in the study doorway. Tom Merry and Blake and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were looking in. Knox winked at them.

"What do you like most here?" he demanded.

"We want to speak to you, Knox," said Tom Merry quietly. "It's important."

"Well, it can wait."

"It can't wait!"

"Why, you shewky young cub—"

"I'll get out," said Tom Merry. "I'll see you later about arranging for the cricket practice, Knox."

And the Fifth-Former sauntered out of the study. He judged from the look of the janitor that there was going to be trouble, and he did not want to be asked up in Knox's room with the janitors. It was no business of his. Tom Merry & Co. allowed Catts to pass, and then came into the study, and Tom closed the door. Knox glared at them angrily. He was quite taken aback by that invasion of his study by three juniors without permission. His hand wandered to a cane on the table.

"What you cub's come here to ask for a talking?" he demanded.

"Wadly, Knox—"

"No," said Tom Merry, very quietly. "We've come here on business, Knox—serious business."

"Yess, wathah! You're found out, you wathah—completely bowled out! Leave me to talk to him, you chaps! I can put it better than you. You are deceived, you wathah!"

"What?" roared Knox.

He caught up the cane. But Arthur Augustus regarded him fearfully through his farses spectacles.

"You are deceived," he repeated. "It's no good trying to involve it out, Knox. You are bowled out."

"Here you game mad!" said Knox.

But he let go the cane. Knox had too many little warts, not to be continually afraid that some of those might come to his hand.

"The fact is, we've found you out," said Tom Merry.

"Found out what, you young fool?"

"You were seen on Wednesday!"

Knox started.

"On Wednesday?" he stammered.

"Yes."

"I was—was seen?"

"Yess, wathah!"

"You—you spying cub!" hissed Knox, his face pale with rage and fear. "You've been watching me—spying on me, have you?"

"I refuse to be called a cub!"

"We've not been spying on you," said Tom Merry. "But you were seen by a Sixth fellow, and we've got it from him, Knox. We don't want to speak, but unless you can make the matter right, we shall have to tell Mr. Radlow."

"Knox can't face his duty."

"Tell Mr. Radlow!" he repeated.

"We can't do anything else."

Mr. Radlow fell it in to be found out who the chap was," said Blake. "Now, we've found him, we shall have to report to him. It isn't speaking; it's too serious a matter to think of that."

"What not?" said Knox. "Whether you saw me or not, I know very well that Mr. Radlow never sent you to find out anything."

"You can please yourself about believing that," said Tom Merry. "Still, you're bowled out now, and you may as well own up."

"Who saw me?" stammered Knox.

"One of the Sixth."

"Which one?"

"I'm not going to tell you. You would be deaft on him. But he saw you, and is prepared to say so to Mr. Radlow, if necessary."

"A junior's word would not be taken against a prefect," said Knox, recovering his courage a little.

"That wouldn't be all. If you deny being there, you'll have to prove where you were; and you can't prove an alibi, under the circumstances."

Knox, pale again.

"I'll with I'd known there was a junior spying on me!" he blurted. "I'd have made it warm for him! Look here, Tom Merry—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 120.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

what do you fellows want? You're found out something, and I don't want it shattered about! Mind, I don't admit anything! But I don't want you to cackle about my doings! Have you come here to ask me for money?"

The juniors crimsoned.  
"You utter wretch!" ejaculated D'Arcy. "Do you regard us as wretched blackguards?"

"Only a cad would say that, Knox," said Tom Merry angrily. "We don't want to touch your filthy money! If you're not apt, you get it by gambling on horses, and I wouldn't touch that kind of money, if I wanted it!"

"Then what have you come here for?" growled Knox. "If you think you're going to have a pocket under your thumb, because you think you've found out something about him, you've made a mistake!"

"It isn't that!"

"Then what is it?" snapped Knox. "What do you want?"

"We want you to own up to Mr. Radford."

"What?" gasped Knox. "Are you mad? I should be asked from the school!"

"I can't help that! If you can think of any way of setting the matter right without carrying us over, we're agreeable. But we're not going to have it put on another fellow."

Knox looked bewildered.

"Another fellow?" he repeated.

"Yes. Unless the right party is found out, it will be put on the wrong party, and we're not having that."

"Hutah roo!"

"I—I don't understand you," said Knox. "Do you mean to say that another fellow is supposed to have been seen where I was seen?"

"That's it," said Tom Merry. "Another fellow will be supposed to have done what you did, unless it's explained. You can explain it how you like, so long as the other fellow is cleared. That's all we want!"

"What other fellow? Who is it?"

"Lawrence of the Fourth—a New House chap."

"But—ah! I don't understand. Do you mean to say that Lawrence is suspected of having played cards at the Green Man?"

It was the juniors' turn to be astonished.

"Who's talking about the Green Man?" said Blake.

"Why, you are. You said I was seen—!" Knox broke off, realising that he was admitting too much. "Look here, didn't you say that a Shell fellow was somewhere on Wednesday? That's what you said!"

"Yes," said Tom Merry.

"Where was it then?"

"In the Shell passage."

"The—the Shell passage?" gasped Knox. "How is this, Richard House, do you mean?"

"Yes, on Wednesday afternoon."

Knox looked very queerly at the juniors. He went to his feet, and his expression showed that a weight had been taken off his mind. Quite unknown to the juniors, the black guard of the street had been engaged upon one of his little secret nocturnal expeditions on Wednesday night, and he had jumped to the conclusion that he had been seen gambling with the sporting set at the Green Man. His fears were relieved now.

"So I was seen on Wednesday afternoon in the Shell passage?" he demanded.

"Yes. Do you deny it?"

Knox laughed.

"No, I don't. I don't remember where I was. I might have been there. What does it matter whether I was or not?"

The juniors exchanged angry glances. Knox's carelessness could hardly be accused. They began to realize that they were not quite on the track after all.

"It does matter," said Tom Merry. "You were seen there. I may as well tell you that it was Nicholas who saw you, as you looked into his study and spoke to him."

"I remember now," said Knox, with a nod. "I'd been to the bedroom, and I saw that slot in his study as I came down. I told him he was an idiot. So he is. So are you, too that matter. What does it all matter? I believe you are going pretty. Is anybody interested in the question whether I was in the Shell passage or not on Wednesday afternoon?"

"Yes, wretch!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy firmly.

"It's no good your trying to humbug it out, Knox."

"Grown what out?" yelled the prefect.

"What you did, you wretch! You went into Tom Merry's study, and meddled with the papers of the 'Wobblies'!"

Knox's look of astonishment was so utter that the juniors could not doubt that it was genuine. The Sixth-Formers burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! So suddenly he's been playing tricks with your precious wits, and you suspect that I did it!" he roared.

"Yes, you wretch, you know you did!" said D'Arcy.

"You attacked the prefect, and introduced an insidious reference to the Head, so as to get us into trouble."

"Oh," said Knox, "that's it, is it? You've been printing something about the Head, and making up a plot to make out that I put it in. Is that it, you young scoundrels? I'll teach you to come to a prefect's study and touch him!"

Knox caught up his cane, "Hold out your hands, one after another."

The juniors stood silent. It was evident now, even to Arthur Augustus, that Knox was innocent of the trick in Tom Merry's study. He was guilty of a good many things, probably wrong, but of that particular crime he was guiltless. The juniors were on the wrong track, it was only too clear. Knox strode towards them.

"Hold out your hands!" he thundered.

"You're not going to cane us, Knox," Tom Merry said quietly. "We've made a mistake, I can see now, but we shouldn't have suspected you if you hadn't been a rascal."

"You dare to call me a rascal—me, a prefect? I'll thrash you within an inch of your life!" hissed Knox.

"Hands off!" said Blake going. "It seems that you didn't do what we supposed on Wednesday afternoon, but it is so repeated what you've been saying, somebody would want to know where you were, and what you were doing, on Wednesday night."

Knox started. He realized that he was a great deal wiser in the power of the juniors than they were in his, owing to his insouciant admission. There was a long pause, and then the prefect threw down the cane.

"Get out of my study," he said.

And the juniors got out.

# CARAVAN CHUMS!



The merry and smiling adventures of "The Caravan Chums" will cause you many a hearty laugh and give you many a thrill. Don't miss them. They appear every week in

## COMIC CUTS

Out TO-DAY. One Halfpenny.

## CHAPTER 14.

## Knox Does His Duty.

**T**OM MERRY & CO. had failed—so far, at least. The only clue they had obtained had led them on a false scent, and they were as far as ever from discovering the true culprit.

The linerack was known all over St. Jim's by this time. The clerks had done their best to gather in the copies of the paper and destroy them. The greater part of the edition of Tom Merry's special number had been consigned to the flames. But, though most of the fellows were willing to help them in their endeavors to suppress that unucky number, there were others who were not by any means willing. Levinson of the Fourth, and Crooke of the Sixth, were eager to spread the trouble further. That linerack was more than enough reason for the suppression of the school magazine, and the punishment of the janitor who produced it. And the success of Tom Merry & Co. did not lose the opportunity.

And the visit to Knox's study had unfortunate results. The prefect was on the track again. Knox appeared into the matter. He issued orders quite willing to give him information. Levinson and Mellish explained it all to him, and then Knox sought for a copy of the paper. Most of the copies had been destroyed by this time. But Crooke of the Sixth was guarding one copy like the apple of his eye. Crooke of the Sixth did not mean to give it up. Crooke meant that copy to reach the eyes of a master, or of a prefect who could be relied upon to bring it to the notice of the masters. And so, when Knox of the Sixth inquired of Crooke, the end of the Sixth produced his copy of the "Weekly," and the prefect carried it off in triumph.

Knox took it into his own study first, to read the linerack. When he had read it, his eyes gleamed with satisfaction. It was better—or worse—than he had hoped.

"My only hat!" said Knox, between his teeth. "This is a chance to pay off old scores for those young scoundrels! They had a yarn about somebody altering the proofs, but they were guessing—that was all business. I don't believe a word of it. They put this in, and now they're seeking up a yarn to get out of it, because they're afraid of what they've done. It's as clear as daylight. Masters' alterations—produces all points, and the Head a giddy old frump! My hat! I'll take this direct to the Head, and we'll see how he likes to see himself described as a giddy old frump! Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox started for the door. Then he paused. It occurred to him that if he denounced the janitor they might also have something to say about his unucky admissions as to where he had been on Wednesday night. That linerack in the "Weekly" meant the sack "for somebody, and the fellows sacked might take some pleasure in getting Knox sacked, too, if they could. Knox did not want to have investigations turned upon his proceedings on Wednesday night. It would be better for him not to appear personally in the matter.

He thought it out. He was determined not to let slip that chance of revenging himself upon Tom Merry & Co. But it was necessary to be careful.

He left the study at last, and went to Kildare's room. The captain of St. Jim's was having tea, with Darrel of the Sixth, when Knox came in. Both of them looked at Knox. They were not on very friendly terms with the prefect. But it was necessary for appearances' sake for prefects to be civil to one another, so Kildare and Darrel were civil to the end of the Sixth.

"Have you seen this, Kildare?" asked Knox.  
"No; what is it?"

"That precious rag the janitor produces—Tom Merry's Weekly, they call it."

"Oh, a new number—ah!" said Kildare carelessly. "No, I hadn't seen it. They generally send me a complimentary copy, but I haven't had one this time."

"Jolly good reason for that, I fancy," said Knox grimly. "They wouldn't want you to see what they've put in it. I came across it by chance, and now it's a funny thing would be best seen by the prefects if they could manage it."

"Nothing very awful in it, I suppose?" said Darrel. "If there are any little jokes about the prefects, it would be the sensible thing to take no notice."

"Just what I think," said Kildare. "Taking notice of anything in that way only gives it a sting. I don't suppose it's anything very bad."

"You'll think differently when you see it," sneered Knox. Kildare yawned.

"I'll read it out to you, if you like," said the prefect spitefully. "I've brought it here for you to deal with, Kildare. You've accused me more than once of having a grudge against the janitor. For that reason I've decided not to oppose in the matter at all. I shall leave this paper in your hands, for

you to deal with, and you can please yourself about what you do. Now listen." And Knox read out the linerack:

"In the School House they give out the lamp.  
Every chap there's a bit off his chump.  
The prefects are dotty;  
The masters are petty;  
And the Head is a giddy old frump!"

"What do you think of that?" demanded Knox triumphantly. "Is that a harmless joke?"

Kildare and Darrel looked at each other.  
"That isn't in Tom Merry's Weekly!" exclaimed the captain of St. Jim's.

"Look for yourself."  
"I should certainly have to see it before I believed it," said Kildare dryly.

Knox handed him the paper, with a sneering grin. Kildare read the linerack with staring eyes. He could hardly believe his eyes, as a matter of fact.

"What idiot put that in!"  
"Kildare frowned darkly.  
"It's scandalous!" he said. "The fellow who did this will be flogged, if not sacked. Is this paper being circulated in the house, Knox?"

"I've heard that they're trying to suppress it now," said Knox. "They're afraid of what they've done. No wonder! I was going to take it directly to the Head, but, after thinking it over, I decided to place it in your hands, as best prefect. I suppose you are going to take notice of it?"

"Certainly," said Kildare. "This is serious. But I shan't take it to the Head. I'd rather not be the fellow to show him lines like those—a rotten, cowardly insult. I'll take it to Mr. Bailton. Excuse me, Darrel."

And the captain of St. Jim's left the study.  
"I fancy some of those young crows will be pretty well licked over this, Darrel," said Knox, with a grin.

Darrel did not reply. He was surprised and shocked himself, but he did not enter into the ill-natured speculation of the prefect.

Kildare's face was very crossed as he went to Mr. Bailton's study. "Cuts of the Fifth grinned at him in the passage.

"I hear they're going to order steel-jackets for the prefects," Kildare, he remarked, casually inaudibly.  
Kildare stared at him.

"What do you mean, Cutts?"  
"Haven't you seen the junior paper?" checked Cutts. "The prefects are dotty—or petty—which is it! We have it on the authority of Tom Merry—"

"Oh, both?" said Kildare.  
He frowned, and walked on, leaving Cutts chuckling. Kildare entered Mr. Bailton's study, and found the Housemaster there. Kildare held out the paper.

"Have you seen this, sir?"  
Mr. Bailton nodded.

"I have seen it, Kildare. The matter is being inquired into. I suppose, from your bringing me the paper, that it is common knowledge in the House now?"

"It appears to be so, sir. Knox brought me this paper. It is an infamous thing, and the boys responsible for it ought to be severely punished. I don't know what the Head will think if he sees it."

The Housemaster paused.  
"The fact is, Kildare," he said slowly, "I wish to keep that article very close from the Head's knowledge, if possible. It would wound him deeply."

"I am sure it would, sir. It is infamous."  
"I am empowered to deal with such a matter, as Housemaster. I am always making endeavours to find out who wrote those lines, and I hope you will help me."

"Certainly, sir. But we know who produces the paper."  
Mr. Bailton explained what he had learned from Tom Merry & Co., and Kildare listened attentively, and in great relief.

"I'm glad it wasn't Merry," said Kildare. "It was a shock to see to think so. I can't think it was Lawrence, either. I suspect that somebody saw Lawrence tampering with the proofs, and inserted this afterwards, hoping that it would be put down to the New House boy, if an investigation followed."

"That is how it appears to me. The writer's object seems not only to have been to insult the Head, but to place the onus of it upon the shoulders of Tom Merry and his friends. What boy could have been wicked enough to do so?"

"One name at once came into Kildare's mind, but he hesitated. It did not seem fair to mention a name without an accusation of proof."

"The janitor are inquiring into the matter," said Mr. Bailton. "Unless it can be proved that a third person tampered with the proofs, the punishment will fall, I am afraid."

"The Gem Library.—No. 270.

upon Lawrence—all the evidence so far is against him; though personally, I am very much disposed to believe his account."  
 "So an I, sir. I will look into it, with your permission. I can't help thinking of a certain party, who came near being expelled save for a rotten trick—"

"You are thinking of Lovison of the Fourth?" said Mr. Hatton, quietly.

"Well, yes, sir?"

"There seems to be nothing whatever to connect him with the matter."

"True; but I think inquiries should be made in that direction."

"Make them, by all means, Kildare."

"Very well, sir."

Kildare left the study. He found Knox in his own room when he returned. Knox watched him as he thrust the copy of "Tom Merry's Weekly" into the fire, and stirred it into flame with the poker.

"What's going to be done?" asked Knox.

"There's going to be an investigation," said Kildare, coolly. "It's proved that those lines were put in the paper without Tom Merry's knowledge, after he had corrected the proofs."

Knox sniffed.

"I don't believe a word of it!" he exclaimed.

"You can please yourself about that."

"I suppose the Head's going to be told!" said Knox, angrily.

"No. Mr. Hatton's dealing with it."

"Look here!" exclaimed Knox. "I think the Head ought to be told. It concerns him, and he ought to know about it."

"Mr. Hatton wishes it to be left in his hands. If you choose to tell the Head, you can do so. I can't prevent you."

But that was exactly what Knox did not choose. He did not relish the prospect of being confronted with Tom Merry & Co. in the presence of the Head. Too many matters might come to light which Knox wished to keep secret. Knox wanted the meddling lines to be shown to the Head; but he wanted Kildare to do it. And in that, Knox was to be disappointed.

"I think you ought to go to the Head, Kildare!" he growled.

"You can think what you like; I've my own opinion about that."

"You are trying to shield those young scoundrels, after they've insulted all of us, and insulted the Head?" said Knox savagely. "You're failing in your duty as a prefect!"

Kildare opened the study door.

"Will you walk out, or be thrown out?" was his reply to Knox.

Knox decided to walk out.

## CHAPTER 15.

### Lansley-Lansley Takes a Hand!

EVISON was disappointed.

Matters were not going quite as the end of the Fourth wished.

He had succeeded in inserting the insulting lines in "Tom Merry's Weekly" without discovery. He had succeeded in covering up his own tracks. But the result had not been what he had anticipated. He had expected the matter to be taken before the Head at once. Tom Merry & Co. would then have been called before the Head—and they could only have defended themselves by accusing the New House juniors. The guilt would have been upon one of the parties—anonymous or other would have been severely punished—and bitter feeling would have been caused between William Milborne and friendly rivals. Tom Merry could never have forgiven Figgins & Co. for such a trick. Figgins & Co., knowing that they were innocent, would justly have regarded the accusation as false, and would have considered it malicious—perhaps a job against them. With passions thus kindled—perhaps the Head deeply wounded by the insult, and friendly fellows all set upon fighting terms, and the "Weekly" suppressed, Lovison would have had cause for complete satisfaction.

But it had not worked out like that—not yet, at all events. Mr. Hatton was keeping it from the Head. Tom Merry & Co. had succeeded in deceiving themselves without ceasing the enmity of Figgins & Co. Juniors of both houses, instead of respecting one another, had formed the true explanation—that a third party was in the business, and they had joined forces to search for him, and find out. That was not at all according to programme. Lovison was annoyed and disappointed—and a little nervous. Convinced as they were that a third party, an enemy to both, had intervened in the matter, it was probably only a question of time before the juniors suspected him. Yes, they could prove anything.

THE GUY RANSLEY—No. 223.

THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY,

Every Monday.

But it meant trouble—perhaps danger! Lovison thought it out with a silent bow as he sat in his study.

Mellish had just borrowed five shillings of him and gone down to the book-shop. Mellish was making frequent little loans now. Lovison happened to be in funds—but he was not likely to remain in funds for long at this rate. And he dared not reuse Mellish's exactions. Mellish had only to drop a hint, for the whole matter to cease to light. There was the Guy in Lovison's armour.

Lansley-Lansley was at the study table, writing out lines. He glanced up curiously from time to time at the closed leaves of the end of the Fourth. Lovison did not notice it; but he started as his study-mate spoke at last.

"Fenny for 'em!" said Lansley-Lansley.

"Oh! What?" said Lovison.

"What have you been scowling about for the last half-hour?" asked Lansley-Lansley.

"Mind your own business!"

"Something on your conscience, I guess," said Lansley-Lansley, calmly. "Are you wondering whether Mellish will pay you?"

Lovison started again.

"What do you mean? I—"

"I saw you hand him five bob," said Lansley-Lansley. "I suppose you must be ill! Mellish is a regular scold, but I never knew him to get any money out of you before."

"Oh, shut up!" said Lovison, irritably.

Lansley-Lansley laughed, and went on with his lines. There was a knock at the door, and Kildare of the Sixth came into the study. Lansley-Lansley gave him a friendly nod.

"Come to tell me I needn't do my lines, Kildare, old man?" he asked.

Kildare smiled.

"No. I've come to speak to Lovison. Lovison, you've heard, I suppose, about the lines that were published in "Tom Merry's Weekly"?"

"I saw them," said Lovison.

"Do you know how they got into the paper?"

"I suppose Tom Merry put them there."

"Tom Merry says he knows nothing about them. They were put into the proofs, after he had wrapped them up to go to the printer."

"Oh, that's all rot," said Lovison. "I don't believe it. I don't see how anybody could get at his proofs, if he didn't want them to."

"He left them on his study table when he went down to the cricket ground. Where were you at that time on Wednesday afternoon, Lovison?"

"If there occurs any—"

"No one has mentioned your name," said the captain of St. Jim's, quietly. "But I can't help remembering the rotten trick you played on Brooke of the Fourth, and I thought of you at once when I heard of this matter. Can you tell me where you were at that time on Wednesday afternoon—just before the junior cricket match finished?"

"I don't know what time that was. I wasn't watching the match."

"I came into the study just after the finish," said Lansley-Lansley.

"Oh, yes, I remember," said Lovison. "I was here, with Mellish. I remember you made a remark about our sticking in the study."

"I guess so?"

"You had not been to Tom Merry's study?" asked Kildare.

"Certainly not!"

"Had you been in love for a considerable time when Lansley came in, or only for a few minutes?"

"I don't know how long, I think," said Lovison, calmly.

"If you had been here half an hour, you could not have been the person who went to Tom Merry's study and tampered with the proofs," said Kildare. "Will Mellish bear out your statement that you were here?"

"Of course he will!"

"Very well!" The captain of St. Jim's gave Lovison a long, keen look, and quitted the study.

Lansley-Lansley rose to his feet, and left his lines unfinished. Lovison also rose, and moved to the door.

"Going yet?" asked Lansley-Lansley, with a peculiar intonation in his voice.

"Yes," said Lovison, shortly.

"Going to see Mellish?"

"Mind your own business!"

Lovison's hand was on the door. Lansley-Lansley stepped forward, caught him by the shoulder, and jerked him back into the study. He closed the door again. Lovison stood with clenched fists and glaring eyes, his breath coming thick and fast.

"What—what do you mean, you cad?" he gasped. "How dare you lay hands on me?"

"You're not going out just yet, I guess!" said Lansley-Lansley, coolly.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR"  
Every Friday.

"Do you dare to stop me?" yelled Levison.

"I guess so!"

"You said! Get out of the way!"

Levison made a furious rush to the door. Lamsley-Lamsley met him grimly, and they closed and struggled savagely.

Trump! Trump! Trump!

To and fro they whirled in desperate struggle. But Lamsley-Lamsley, if not the stronger, was the more fit of the two. They parted—Levison going to the floor with a crash. Lamsley-Lamsley stood regarding him, breathing hard, and on the alert. Levison staggered to his feet.

"What do you mean, Lamsley?" he stammered, thickly.

"What do you want to keep me in the study for, you fool!"

"I guess I smell a large-sized mouse," said Lamsley-Lamsley.

"I've been thinking of you all along in connection with that trick on 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' but I couldn't quite work it out. But now I reckon I can see light."

Levison forced a laugh.

"Do you think I did it?" he exclaimed.

Lamsley-Lamsley nodded.

"I guess I do."

"You—you fool! I knew nothing about it till I saw it in the 'Weekly' to-day," said Levison, his hands trembling a little.

"What do you want to fix it on me for?"

"I don't want to fix it on you, unless you did it, I guess. If the matter isn't cleared up, it will come before the Head— and that means trouble for Tom Merry and the New House chaps. I guess that's not good enough. If you did it, you're going to be bowled out, my ink— and I guess I've the giddy suspicion that's going to bowl you out. Tom Merry's not going to be flogged for pointing an ink-bottle to the Head in his paper—when you put it there without his knowledge?"

"I didn't! You know I was here when you came in—"

"But I don't know how long you'd been here. You were here—only a dozen steps from Tom Merry's study—I know that! Mellich can prove how long you'd been in the study."

"That will see me clear," said Levison, with a confidence he was far from feeling.

"All the better for you. But what have you been giving Mellich money for?"

"I made him a little loan—"

"You're not the chap to chuck your money away, as a rule. Mellich won't pay you, and you know it."

"Mind your own business!" said Levison, nervously.

"I guess I'm making this my business. What are you in a hurry to get out of the study for, since Kildare's been here?"

"I've got to see Crooke—"

Lamsley-Lamsley checked.

"I guess it's Mellich you want to see, to press him ready for being questioned by Kildare," he remarked. "And I guess you're not going to do it."

Levison breathed hard. Lamsley-Lamsley had read his intention quite easily. Mellich, under the stern eye of the captain of the school, and afraid of himself, would be only too likely to blurt out something, and Levison knew it. He wanted to get to Mellich, and to press him with what he should say—so stiffen him up, as it were, with promises of future benefits if he stood by Levison in this emergency. And if he did not get to Mellich, and the latter were suddenly

questioned—the thought of it made Levison shiver. His carefully-built house of cards was tumbling about his ears. His plan—how so many of his cunning schemes—had a flaw in it, and the flaw was telling! Levison glared at Lamsley-Lamsley with almost unendurable rage in his eyes.

"Will you let me pass?" he hissed.

"I guess not."

Levison wanted no more than his words. He caught up a chair with both hands and rushed at Jerrold Lamsley-Lamsley.

If Lamsley-Lamsley had been a little less alert he would have been swept out of the way by that savage attack. But Lamsley-Lamsley was looking out. As the chair struck down upon him he dodged, shaken the wayward, and caught Levison guard the waist. In a second the end of the Fourth was swept off his feet. The chair crashed to the floor, and Levison crashed into the fender, where he lay breathless and dead.

Lamsley-Lamsley changed the key to the outside of the lock and stepped out of the study, closing the door behind him. Levison staggered up, and lurched himself at the door; but it was too late!

(Click)

The key had turned in the lock, and Levison dragged at the handle in vain. He was a prisoner in his own study. And, with rage and terror in his heart, he heard Lamsley-Lamsley take his steps in the direction of the Shell passage, and heard him call:

"Tom Merry!"

## CHAPTER 16.

### Cleared Up!

PERRY MELLICH was enjoying himself. He was sitting on a high chair in the little tea-shop, and Durne Taggles was handing out her tartest confections at his order.

Mellich was not, as a rule, overflowing with pocket-money; but he had been quite in funds lately. Levison's funds were at his disposal, and Mellich had not scrupled to draw upon them. Levison was his friend, certainly. But what was the use of a friend if you did not get anything out of him?

That was how the amiable Mellich looked at it. And he was doing very well out of Levison lately. He intended to keep it up, too. The more ill there was about the mystery of the 'Weekly,' the more necessary it would be for Levison's secret to be kept.

"Jam-tarts, please," said Mellich, laying the last shilling on the counter, "and ginger-beer."

And Mellich washed down jam-tarts with ginger-beer with great satisfaction. Fatty Wynn of the Fourth came in, and regarded Mellich with an unusually cordial eye.

"Standing yourself a little better—eh?" he said.

"Yes," said Mellich. "And nothing for New House leanders either?"

"Jolly good tarts those," said Fatty Wynn, cycling the new supply on Mellich's plate.

"Good enough!" said Mellich.

"Mrs. Taggles can make tarts," Fatty Wynn remarked, in a reflective sort of way. "Awfully rotten thing to be doing, isn't it?"

"I'm not sorry, thanks!" said Mellich.

"I ain't," said Fatty, with a sigh. "I blazed my last bob on tarts. I was so hungry after dinner. Taggles doesn't seem to think there's any a-tart in 'em. He's got that blessed 'Weekly' affair in his head, and can't think of anything else. I looked in on Rocky and Owen and Lawrence, and blazed if they weren't jawing about it, too—nothing but that giddy 'Weekly,' and the Rowick about the Head! I've fed up with it! But there isn't much chance of being fed up with anything else!"

Mellich grinned. He ate his jam-tarts slowly to tantalize the fat Fourth-Formers. Fatty Wynn's eyes lagged on the plate. When Fatty was in funds he would have shared his proceeds with his worst enemy; he could feel for a chap who was hungry. But Fatty Mellich was not both the same way.

There was a sudden crowding in the doorway of the tea-shop. Tom Merry & Co. came in, and Mellich and Fatty Wynn looked round. Mellich felt a momentary uneasiness, he hardly knew why; but Fatty Wynn brightened up.

"Hallo, you chaps!" he exclaimed. "You're just the fellows I wanted to see. Have you been getting reasonable?"

"Wain!" said Arthur Angustin.

"I say, Lamsley-Lamsley—"

"I guess we're not coming here for a feed," said Jerrold Lamsley-Lamsley. "We're looking for Mellich."

"What do you want?" asked Mellich, nervously.

"We want you," said Tom Merry quietly. "Lamsley-Lamsley tells us that you know something about the affair of that Rowick in the 'Weekly.' We want you to tell us."

The Gem Library.—No. 273.

## Rudge-Whitworth Britain's Best Bicycle

### The Holiday Bicycle

The holiday season is a time for fun and frolic. A Rudge-Whitworth is an "Seven League Foot" bicycle that will give you the most enjoyable and healthful ride ever. Its design is simple, its construction is sturdy, and its ride is smooth and easy. It is the perfect bicycle for the holiday season.

By Appointment to the Royal Family and the British Navy and Air Force. Rudge-Whitworth is the only bicycle manufacturer in the world who has been so honored. Our latest Patent System makes it a bicycle that will give you the most enjoyable and healthful ride ever.

Rudge-Whitworth, Ltd., Dept. 2114, Cannon Street, London, E.C. 1. 222 Tottenham Court Road, Oxford Street, Lond. W. 1. Sole Importers for the Straits Settlements and F.M.S.



Mellish's face blanched.

"What—what should I know about it?" he stammered. "I suppose you don't think I made up the Liverpool, and put it there, do you?"

"No; you wouldn't have pluck enough, if you had brains enough to think of it," said Jack Blake. "But you know who did."

"I—I don't know anything about it."

"Now, listen to me," said Lansley-Lansley. "When I came in after the study on Wednesday, I found you two in the study. Levinson said something to make me believe he'd been there all the afternoon, and I was taken in; but I guess now that he was pulling my leg. He wanted you to believe that he had been there a long time. You were in the study, Mellish, and you know whether Levinson had just come in or not when I arrived."

"He—he had been there some time!" stammered Mellish.

"How long?"

"I—I didn't notice; nearly all the afternoon," said Mellish.

"Nearly all the afternoon—oh!" said Lansley-Lansley quickly. "Say, more than two hours?"

"Quite two hours," said Mellish.

"Good! You chaps see that I was right to look Levinson in the study while you got at Mellish by himself. I reckon," said Lansley-Lansley. "You've all heard Mellish say Levinson had been in the study two hours?"

"Yess, wathah!"

"And when Kildare was questioning Levinson, Levinson said that he'd been in the study half an hour," said Lansley-Lansley.

Mellish bit his lip hard.

"It's pretty clear," said Tom Merry. "Levinson said half an hour, because most likely somebody had seen him somewhere else during the afternoon. Mellish says two hours, because the longer he makes it, the better for the yarn he's telling. Dale the two yarns don't agree; and we know they're both lying."

"Yess, wathah!"

"Now, Mellish, you're going to tell us the facts," said Blake. "It's jolly clear to us that you know Levinson had played that trick, and that he's been giving you money to keep your mouth shut."

Mellish blanched. He could see that the juniors were in earnest. And he knew that, under the stern eye of the Housemaster, he would learn out all he knew. So much was known already that he had no chance of keeping the rest a secret, even if he had had the nerve and coolness for such a venture being, which he had not. He did not intend to risk getting expelled from the school for Levinson's sake. Levinson shouldn't have played the trick if he didn't want to face the music—that was the way Mellish looked at it. He had kept the secret as long as he could.

"Well," said Tom Merry sternly.

"Levinson came into the study only a few minutes before Lansley-Lansley," faltered Mellish weakly. "I know he had been up to something by his look, and when he lied to Lansley, I was sure of it. But he didn't tell me anything. That's all I know."

"But you know he played that trick with the proofs of the 'Weekly'?"

"I—I suppose he did. But I didn't see him, and he didn't tell me."

"That settles it," said Tom Merry. "Levinson told Kildare that he had been in the study half an hour at that time, and now Mellish can prove that he had only just come in. If he hadn't been playing that trick, why should he lie about the case he got back to his study? There wouldn't have been any motive."

"Well, now we know it was Levinson—" began Lawrence.

"Here's Kildare!"

The captain of St. Jim's entered the tuckshop with Darrel. There was a frown upon Kildare's handsome face.

"I was looking for Mellish," he said. "I came here to see him; but as I found that his cross-examination was in such skillful hands, I left it to you. But I've heard it all. It's clear now that Levinson was the fellow. You state that he had only just come into the study when Lansley came in that afternoon, Mellish?"

"Yes," stammered Mellish, covering his face with the sleeve of the captain of St. Jim's. "But I—I—"

"Very well," said Kildare, "Levinson will have to explain to Mr. Rathton."

"Better take this," said Lansley-Lansley, holding out the key of the study door.

Kildare smiled and took the key. The two prefects left the tuckshop. Mellish turned back to the counter, remembering his facts. It was the last food he was likely to have at THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 279.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR" Every Friday.

Levinson's expenses. But those facts were no longer there. There was a sneer of jeer upon Percy Wynn's face, and that was all.

Levinson clenched his teeth as the key turned in the lock. He had been taping in the study like a trapped animal, a prey to fury and terror. While he was shut up there, the juniors would be extracting the truth from his weak and cowardly accomplice; he knew that, and he could not interfere. He ground his teeth with helpless rage, and leaped to and fro in the study; but he halted, facing the door, as the key turned. He expected to see Tom Merry & Co., but his eyes fell upon Kildare and Darrel of the Sixth. And his flushed face paled.

"Kildare's look was very grim.

"Come along!" he said.

"You—you want me?" stammered Levinson.

"Yes."

"What for?"

"I am going to take you to Mr. Rathton."

"What for?" yelled Levinson.

"To answer for getting that Liverpool in 'Tom Merry's Weekly'."

"I didn't—I didn't! I was here when it was done—I've told you so."

"And Mellish has told us differently," said Kildare coldly.

"Mellish has confessed that you were not here—"

Levinson clenched his hands.

"Mellish has!"

"Yes."

"Oh, ho, the cad—the cad! The rotten fiend! I—I—"

"You had better shut up, and come along," said Kildare.

"He's confessed, has he?" shrieked Levinson. "Has he confessed, too, that he's been getting money out of me ever since Wednesday, for keeping the secret?"

"No."

"Well, it's true—he's had nearly a pound from me—black-mail—to keep his mouth shut!" howled Levinson. "If I'm going through it, he can go through it, too—black-mail—as bad as writing lines about the Head."

"Come!" said Kildare.

He dropped a heavy hand upon the shoulder of the victim (justice), and marched him away. With Kildare's hand upon his shoulder, Levinson was marched into the Housemaster's study. Mr. Rathton guessed what it meant, as Kildare brought him in.

"It was Levinson, sir," said Kildare. "He's been found out, and he has confessed."

Mr. Rathton fixed his eyes steadily on the cad of the Fourth. "You confess to having inserted those lines in 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' Levinson, without his knowledge?" asked the Housemaster.

"Yes, sir," stammered Levinson. "It—it was only a joke, of course. I—I didn't mean any disrespect to the Head."

"You not only meant disrespect to the Head, but I am convinced that you wished to have better boys than yourself punished for that disrespect," said Mr. Rathton coldly. "I may tell you, Levinson, that if those insulting lines had come to Dr. Halsey's knowledge, you would have been expelled from the school. I do not desire to bring such a disgraceful matter to his notice, and shall therefore punish you myself. All the copies of the paper have now been destroyed, and your punishment will end the matter. Your punishment will be severe. But you have the choice, if you wish, of appealing to the Head—though I warn you that in that case you will be expelled from the school. Take your choice."

"If—if you please, sir, I—I'd rather be punished by you," faltered Levinson.

"Very well. Remove your jacket."

And Levinson stood there and those a thrashing that he remembered for a very long time.

Mr. Rathton ran no risk of spoiling him by spicing the rod. And when Levinson staggered from the study at last, white with rage and anguish, he had reason to be sorry that he had tampered with 'Tom Merry's Weekly.'

The number of the "Weekly" had been cleared up, and the threatened suppression of that famous page did not come off. And for the next few days the juniors—editor and sub-editor—were busy in producing a new and improved edition of that special number. The special number was a great success, and, needless to say, it contained no contribution from Levinson of the Fourth!

THE END.

(Another splendid long, complete tale of Tom Merry and Co. at St. Jim's next Wednesday, entitled 'The Scamps of St. Jim's,' by Martin Clifford. Please Order our copy of THE GEM in advance. Price One Penny.)



# Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE!

## HE SCORED!

"Jinks," I say, Jinks, if you were not the head of an ass, and the tail of an ass, what would you be?"

Jinks: "I give it up."

Binks: "No end of an ass!"—Sent in by I. T. H. Dostworth, Wreakstone.

## A DRY JOB.

Pat had got a place as a driver. He was going down for the first time, and he had not been under the water for many seconds when the men about got the signal to pull him up. When he had almost ceased, they asked him why he had wanted to come up.

"You had only been down a few seconds," said the foreman.

"Shure, and I don't care! D'you think I'm staying down there? Why, I can't spit on my hand, begorra!"—Sent in by W. Mullin, Liskern, Ireland.

## TAKEN LITERALLY.

"I think that baby has your hair," said nurse to the mother.

"What?" exclaimed the mother. "Baby has my hair?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"What will that child do next! Run up to the nursery and take it away from him at once! My hair, indeed!"—Sent in by L. G. Kison, Bradford, Yorks.

## LUCKY FOR THE THIEF.

Jim: "We had burglars last night."

Bill: "Did they take anything?"

Jim: "Yes; they took a valuable marble clock."

Bill: "You have a dog, haven't you?"

Jim: "Yes; but he's only a watch-dog."—Sent in by F. Wilson, Aberystwyth, S. Wales.

## FOLLOWING THE DIRECTIONS.

Noticing that his friend was getting on three or four coats, Bill asked him what he was doing.

"It's like this, 'ee," he replied. "I'm going to point my finger, and it says on the tin, 'To obtain good results, put on three or more coats.' And that's what I'm doing!"

And he remembered what made Bill laugh!—Sent in by S. E. Gregory, Elsecrow.

## SAV THIS QUICKLY.

Theophilus Thistle, the unsophisticated thistle-sifter, sifted a sieve full of scuffed thistles. If Theophilus Thistle, the unsophisticated thistle-sifter, sifted a sieve full of scuffed thistles, where is the sieve full of scuffed thistles Theophilus Thistle, the unsophisticated thistle-sifter, sifted?—Sent in by F. A. Sanders, Herne Hill.

## TWO OF ONE AND ONE OF THE OTHER.

It was a very cold night, and the two old Scots who had called at the inn for a wee drappie, stayed just a little longer than they ought to have done. The consequence was that when they got outside they had a slight difficulty in keeping to an absolutely steady gait.

"Donal!" said Sandy. "I'll walk ahead, and then ye can tell me if I am walking straight!"

Donal watched him for a few seconds, and then said:

"Men, ye are walkin' feise! But who that drooves leader with ye—ay!"—Sent in by A. W. Harrison, Bath.

Next Wednesday: "THE SCAMPS OF THE SCHOOL!"

A Week-End, Long Complete Yale of Tom Merry & Co. by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

## CHEERING HIM UP!

"Bill," said the invalid's friend, "I've come to cheer you up a bit. I've brought you a few dahrs. I thought that if I was too late, they'd come in handy for a week!" Don't get down-hearted, mate! Laffney, don't you look glumly! But, as I see to myself as I was a-corning up, 'Bess an' orkard staircase to get a couple, dahs! Well, good-day, Bill! Open an' 'ee 'ee cheer'd yer up a bit!"—Sent in by J. Goodison, Spalding.

## THE DIFFERENCE.

The young bookbinder had been brought up to court for the third time for playing football in the street. The magistrate, in remonstrating sentence, said:

"I am sentencing you to a fortnight in the second division."

"Please, sir," said the prisoner diffidently, "couldn't you make it three weeks in the Southern League?"—Sent in by A. H. Webber, Bodminster.

## OW!

Gibbs: "I went on a railway journey the other day, and took a box of cigars with me. But when the train had started, and I wanted to smoke, I found I hadn't got any matches."

Nibber: "Poor chap! I suppose you had to go all the way without a crack!"

Gibbs: "Oh, no! You see, when I opened the box and took out one that made the box a cigar lighter!"—Sent in by A. Gough, London, N.

## REVENGE IS SWEET.

A little boy, with a pained expression of countenance, sat on the public seat.

"Are you awed?" a sympathetic inquirer asked.

"No."

"Have you lost anything?"

"Never had anything to lose!"

"Then what is the matter with you?"

"I'm sitting on a soap!"

"Good gracious! Why ever don't you get up!"

"I'm thinking that maybe I'm having that soap quite as much as he's having me!"

And the sympathetic inquirer moved on.—Sent in by D. Nash, Canterbury.

## A CLOSE SHAVE!

"Mamma, do men ever go to barbers?" asked the little girl.

"Why, of course! What makes you ask?" said her mother.

"Because I never see pictures of angels with whiskers!"

"Oh, that's because they only get there by a very close shave!"—Sent in by E. Kerr, Canada.

## WHAT PUZZLED HIM!

A young Irishman went to a London motor school to be trained for a chauffeur. After he had attended regularly for a month, his tutor asked him if he understood the engine thoroughly.

"Perfectly," answered the Irishman. "But there is one thing I should like to know."

"What is that?" queried the tutor.

"How does it go along without horses!"—Sent in by H. E. Wright, Walthamstow.

The Gem Library—No. 278.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

## MONEY PRIZES OFFERED!

Readers are invited to send ON A POSTCARD Storyettes or short, interesting Paragraphs for this page. For every contribution used the readers will receive a Money Prize.

ALL POSTCARDS MUST BE ADDRESSED The Editor, "The Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

THIS OFFER IS OPEN TO READERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

No correspondence can be entered into with regard to this Contest, and all contributions enclosed in letters, or sent in envelopes than on postcards, will be disregarded.



## SIR BILLY, OF GREYHOUSE!

A Splendid Serial Story  
dealing with Public-  
School Life.

By R. S. WARREN BELL.

### READ THIS FIRST.

Sir William Percival Travers, Bart.—to give him his full title—is a slight, fair lad of twelve when he is first sent to "Fighting Greyhouse" by his guardian, His Forno-follows in the Lower Fourth are considerably older than "Sir Billy," as the youngster is soon nicknamed, and he has to put up with a good deal of bullying. His great hero is Woadsdr, the captain of the school, while his principal chum is Carrow, otherwise known as Parsnip.

(Read on from here.)

### Quits!

I regret to say that Charles Henry Carrow, Esq.—who generally answered to the less aristocratic name of "Parson"—had a good deal of the vindictive in his nature. He always remembered a good turn, but, on the other hand, he never forgot a bad one. This, at any rate, was his character when at school. At Greyhouse he never won much popularity, didn't shine in class-room or playing-field, and failed to attain any sort of distinction except in the art of swimming. Every fellow can do something rather well. Parsnip could swim—I was just going to add "like a fish." Not quite like a fish, perhaps, but a good deal better than any other fellow either of his size or age.

But of that soon. Parents must have had a lot of good stuff in him, or Sir Billy would never have been his friend. Sir Billy was clever—not a doubt of it—and earned the approval of all his masters; he was very popular—never said ill-natured things, or performed unwholesome tricks; was shaping into a very pretty bit, too, and could bowl a bit. Not much good at "footer," perhaps, but showed promise of getting into the cricket eleven some day. Billy, moreover, had given proof, in more than one game, of grit and pluck. He had dropped his man, and taken a disbeliever—in a word, he had graduated at Greyhouse as "a decent sort."

And he was Parsnip's chum. Well, folks couldn't quite understand that; but so it was.

"Can't understand what a real white man like Billy can see in an out-and-out boaster like Parsnip," you'd often hear a fellow say.

More than a few fellows among the juniors of his house would have liked to be Billy's best friend; but Billy stuck to Parsnip, defended Parsnip when, in his absence, hard things were said about Mr. Carrow; fought a fight or two in Parsnip's behalf—as a starship chase has not infrequently to do—and thoroughly proved that there was nothing of the fake or the dissemblable in his friendship. You know old Shakespeare's line! Well, Billy was all that.

One sweet summer day, some five weeks from the term end, Hodges, having buckled on his pads and buttoned his gloves, went forth to practice at the nets. Meeting Parsnip and Sir Billy as they emerged from the Lower School changing-rooms, Hodges told them that they might come and bowl on him.

"But I've got a bad finger, Hodges," said Billy.

"Oh, yes," said Hodges, "that tale will do for your granddaddy. I know those bad fingers."

"His finger's beastly bad—I've seen it," chimed in Parsnip.

"Hold your tongue!" said Hodges gruffly; "and come on both of you. No shirking."

So the two lads obediently trotted after Hodges, who, walking a few yards in front of them, swaggered along with THE GUN LEADER.—No. 278.

"THE MIGHTY" LIBRARY, Every Monday.

about a mile of "side" on to every square inch of his body. Hodges knew he was what Greyhouse termed "big leg" at cricket, and so considered himself quite as famous a man in his own sphere as a crick county bat in his. He was not exactly a bully, but he was fit and hard himself, and so keen on his game, that he would take no excuses such as Billy had offered, and punished anything like fustling with Spartan severity.

It was unlikely that Sir Billy would have laid claim to a sore finger had the whole of his hand been in a good state of repair. The nail of the forefinger of his right hand had been badly smashed in a House match a few days previously, and it was not possibly for him to get a tight grip of a cricket-ball without experiencing considerable pain. So, although he clenched his teeth, and did his level best to bowl straight, he soon exasperated Mr. Hodges.

"This is absolutely rotten stuff you're sending down, Travers!" he shouted. "You're not trying!"

"Yes, I am, Hodges!" blustered Billy.

"Rats!" muttered Parsnip. "Good! I hit him on the wrist then."

He had, and uncomfortably so. It didn't improve Hodges' temper, either. Shortly after, much to the bowler's satisfaction, a fast ball from Parsnip got up neatly, and introduced itself to Hodges just above the great man's belt.

Hodges, snarling in two places, cursed, verbally. He couldn't do anything to Parsnip, as Parsnip could hardly be held responsible for the ground being hard and nobbly. However, a little later, Billy sent down a really dreadful ball—a bad wide on the off—which broke away still further as Hodges made a farious lunge at it.

"You did that on purpose, young Travers!" he shouted.

"Come here!"

Sir Billy meekly obeyed the order, and stood before Hodges in certain expectation that he was in for a licking.

"First you make a mean about a finger, and then you turn sally and bowl wide. What do you mean by it?"

"I bowled as best I was. My finger would let me, Hodges."

"Howling! I've heard from several fellows that you are a very decent slow bowler, with a leg break. Precious little leg break you've given me today! I suppose you and Carrow wanted to go and gouge yourselves at the footer instead of coming down here. I'll teach you to turn sally. Bowd'ee!"

Sir Billy obeying, Hodges administered to him punishment with the flat of his bat, and put so much energy into it that it took the victim all his time and teeth to keep himself from slubbing. His eyes were filled with tears as he returned to Parsnip's side.

"You can set now, both of you," said Hodges angrily, walking away. "I believe the smallest brats in the school could bowl better."

Billy and Parsnip slunk off, but as Parsnip went he turned and gave Hodges a peculiarly unpleasant look out of his small, pug eyes, and when Parsnip treated anyone to a look of this sort it meant that the person so favored had been allotted a place of distinction in Parsnip's back ledger.

Parsnip trudged doggedly along by Billy's side.

"Biting up!" he muttered.

"Oh, a bit!" said Billy carelessly.

"Beastly odd!" observed Parsnip. "I should like to get even with him. How could he expect you to bowl with that finger?"

It was clear that Parsnip considered that, by licking Billy, Hodges had also licked him. That was the view Parsnip took of the matter, at any rate. Billy had told Hodges that he had a bad finger, and Hodges had chosen to deal him a bit. This was an insult in his chain which Parsnip could not overlook.

So he again observed, in a low and menacing tone: "I should like to get even with him!"

It was Sir Billy's way to be silent while others chattered. Parsnip continued to mutter uncomprehending things about Hodges as they crossed the lower playing-field, but Sir Billy said never a word. These two understood one another—

"THE PENNY POPULAR" Every Friday.

Our Companion Papers.

Parson was quite content to talk and let Billy listen. A queer thing, this friendship; but it was a friendship. There was nothing half-and-half about it.

When they reached the upper playing-field, Parson asked Billy what he was going to do.

"Oh, I think I shall get a book and have a read!"

This freedom for reading on Billy's part sometimes annoyed Parson, who didn't care a hang about books, and was forever exclaiming to him Sir Walter Scott "a dry old rascal!" And Sir Walter was Billy's hero. However, on this occasion Parson simply said "All right!" and they parted in the quad. Billy went off to his classroom for a book, and Parson made his way to the backshop.

Billy, holding "The Antiquary" affectionately under his arm, presently passed through the quad, and sought a shady spot in the upper playing-field, where he laid himself down, and, reclining on an elbow, began to look for the place where he had left it.

But he was feeling sore in mind and body, and found it difficult to settle himself to his reading. Billy was still somewhat given to brooding—now and again he got a fit of melancholy, and then he liked to be all by himself, and leave it out with himself.

It was so on this occasion. He gazed at the page before him without taking in the sense of the printed words. The crowd of the afternoon was ranking in his mind. The injustice of the punishment he had received came up before him, and brought the hot blood again in his face. Till to-day he had regarded Hodges as a jolly rascal. Hodges was one of the fellows who used to linger behind after evening chapel on Nassau, and listen to Kit's playing.

Billy had often stood at Hodges' elbow—there was a mutual bond of sympathy between the big fellow and the small one. And yet, in spite of this, Hodges had lashed him for not bowling straight. He couldn't help bowling crooked with that finger. Why couldn't Hodges take his word? Hodges was, as Parson had declared, a beastly one.

Sir Billy was not in the habit—even in thought—of

"I don't mind," said Billy.

"Then come on; there's still an hour before tea!"

Sir Billy closed his book, rose from the grass, stretched himself and followed Parson, who, as I have said, whatever else he thought of, could swim.

The Greyboon bathing-place was ingeniously sited "The Hole," being a portion of the river stretched off for the use of the school. Greyboon possessed swimming-baths, but nobody cared to dabble about under cover in the warmer term, when the Hole was available.

Having prepared their towels, Billy and Parson set forth, somewhat to their discomfiture, on turning into the dressing-shed, they almost ran into Hodges, who was bound on the same errand as themselves. Other fellows were knocking about there, in all stages of dress and undress, and some had just come down to look on.

Parson's small, pug eyes followed Hodges' every movement. Parson's slow brain was working in its own slow way. He well remembered that Sunday night when he had let Sir Billy, and Sir Billy had refrained from lashing him back. Parson felt that he was in his claim's debt, and that he ought to find a way of paying him back before term ended.

There seemed to be a bit of an opening here. Hodges had lashed Billy without cause. Billy couldn't pay Hodges out, but he—Parson—could, and would!

Now Hodges was a fine lot, but a poor swimmer. Parson knew that. Hodges didn't care much for the water, but took a dipper in the Hole every day because it was the lozier. He didn't care to be out of anything of this sort; but he hated not the water. Parson knew that, too.

There were two diving-boards—one stationary, supported by piles fixed into the bed of the river; the other a spring-board, which Parson and all good—and some bad—divers used.

Having divested himself of his jacket, Hodges headed for the stationary board, and manœuvred skilfully along it until he reached the end. Arrived there, he took a look at the river, and submitted his legs and arms to a gentle chafing, in the common manner of the hesitating bather.

\*\*\*\*\*

**GRAND NEW SERIAL STORY!**

**Special Announcement next Wednesday! Look out for it.**

\*\*\*\*\*

labelling people with names of this sort, and a moment after he had—mentally—used Parson's expression, greater reflections prevailed. He recollected that, after all, Hodges was awfully keen on cricket, and detested slackness, and often had tales of spite fingers and bruised thumbs told him by kids who had nothing the matter with these whatever, but just wanted to get off "holding," and didn't mind encouraging to do so by inventing a neat even concerning a physical event of some kind. Perhaps, decided Sir Billy, it was quite natural that Hodges should have disbelieved him. After all, it didn't matter. The lying was over and done with—why make such a song about it?

Then it struck Billy that Parson seemed to be very bitter against Hodges. Of course! He remembered now. It wasn't only because he—Sir Billy—had been lashed unreasonably that Parson was so wild. No. Only a few Sundays ago Parson had interrupted Kit's playing, and had had his ears boxed by Hodges for his pains. And Sir Billy had been—indirectly and unintentionally, of course—instrumental in getting Parson's ears boxed. It all came back to him. Parson had hit Billy, and he had not hit Parson back; and a week later they had made it up.

So Parson had not forgotten that smack on the head—leave his animosity against Hodges.

Such were Billy's reflections as he lay on the grass. Suddenly there was a rattle of approaching feet, and directly afterwards a bottle of ginger-beer was quietly put down by Billy's elbow. Billy didn't say anything—he knew Parson wouldn't like him to—then when a minute or so had elapsed he took a pull at the ginger-beer, and found it refreshing.

When he looked off his book again—he was lying in such a way that he was unable to see anything except the brick wall in front of him—he perceived a large chunk of cake reclining invitingly on the open page. Billy, without looking round, polished off the cake and finished the ginger-beer.

Then he felt distinctly better—quite himself again, in fact. Of course he knew Parson had brought the ginger-beer and cake. Parson—the unpopular, the looked-down-on Parson—liked to present offerings to his class in this off-hand way.

"I see, feel like a bath?" inquired Parson.

Hodges was thus occupied when there was a shout behind him of "Look out in front!" and a figure shot past him. The figure was Parson's. But so clearly did Parson know, for some unaccountable reason, had used the stationary board of the spring-board—shoot past Hodges, that he fairly upset the big fellow's balance, with the result that, as Parson dived neatly into the water, Hodges toppled after him and fell in with a most ignominious splash!

He rose to the surface spluttering, his mouth full of water, and his brain overflowing with fury. He had recognized Parson's voice, but, when he looked round for Parson, Mr. C. H. Carver was a considerable distance off, leaning on the crowd on the bank to a little fat exhibition swimmer.

Hodges' absurd tumble off the board had given a good deal of amusement to the crowd, not because Hodges was unpopular, but because any mishap of that kind was welcomed as a sort of relief to the regular routine of bathing. The smaller fellows curried out Parson's generosity, and chuckled as they thought of the lying he would get when he came out.

"That's a bit of Billy's work," thought Parson, surveying Hodges from a safe point of vantage. "I expect Hodges will let me something terrific when I'm drying, but I don't care much. It's worth a kernal to have finished him over the top that—ho, ho!" And Parson gurgled at the remembrance.

He stayed in the water as long as he could—for some time, in fact, after Hodges had clambered out and gone to the dressing-shed. At last Parson was the only fellow left in The Hole, although a good many chaps were still idling about on the bank. Judging that it must be getting near tea-time, Parson at length left the water, and went to dress.

Hodges grabbed him roughly as he entered the shed.

"Now, then, you cherry young fool!" he exclaimed, "something to say before I lick you!"

Parson decided that action would help him more than speech. Why not take refuge in the water again?

So, with a sudden jerk, he freed himself from Hodges' detaining hand, and dashed out of the shed. Hodges followed hot after him. The crowd yelled. This was good sport, indeed! The laddy Hodges was actually underdressing in chase a mere fat!

Parsnip's naked form could be seen dangling and gliding along in front of his pursuer, who several times made fruitless lunge at the runaway. Once he clutched his shoulder, but Parsnip, to whose terror had lent extra strength and speed, shook him off and dashed forward more swiftly than ever, gained the wooden bridge which spanned the river at a narrow point, and sped across it.

"Quite forgetting that he was a great historian, and, in short, a person who ought to have been above this sort of child's play, Hodges turned and stared as he ceased despatching after his fugitive. In point of speed, of course, he was vastly superior to Parsnip, keeling himself to the utmost, but overtook Parsnip again just as the runaway had got round the rail of the bridge, and arrived at the river's edge.

"Stop, my son! D'you hear?" Parsnip did hear, and did stop, but not exactly as Hodges imagined he would, for he flung himself down on the grass, with the oath that Hodges tripped over him, and fell into the river.

Parsnip heard the splash, and rose to his feet with an air of relief. Time to stop on his things and get away now.

But wait! Looking towards the water to see how his pursuer was faring, Parsnip could see nothing of Hodges.

"The crowd on the bank rushed up to the bridge, white-faced with apprehension.

"Where is he?" inquired Parsnip, in his slow way.

"He's drowning! He only came up once. Quick, Parsnip!"

It was Billy's voice.

"Where?" asked Parsnip.

"There—in the deep water by the tow. Quick!"

No need to urge Parsnip further. Clean as a whistle he was over the bank, and making for the tree-trunk part that had remained water always varied to avoid.

He dived once, then rose to the surface, took in a fresh supply of breath, swam a little way on, and dived again.

Nothing could now be seen of Parsnip—nothing of Hodges—just a big, ever-widening circle where Parsnip had disappeared.

The fellows held their breath. Would Parsnip find him? Hodges must have been smothered by the cramp.

"They ceased forward. The suspense was horrible. It was all a matter of seconds, but it seemed like hours, like weeks.

Hallo! Look! Parsnip's head—right over there on the far side of the tow, the very worst place a fellow could get into.

Parsnip's head—his shoulders! Had he found him? Look! Had he? No! Yes—yes—yes!

"Hurray! Bravo, Parsnip! Well done, sir! Bravo, Parsnip!"

Other fellows, who had been waiting for Parsnip's reappearance, now jumped in, and swam to his assistance. And came too soon, for he was quite senseless. But he had found Hodges.

"Here you are—take him, you fellows! Hurry up!"

They relieved Parsnip of the dead weight he was heaving at, and Parsnip, paddling feebly to the bank, was helped ashore by a dozen friendly hands.

The others towed Hodges in, and, having first laid him for a moment on his face to let the water run out of his mouth and nose, turned him flat upon his back, jerked his jaws apart, and gulped his tongue out. Then one, kneeling by his head, worked his arms to and fro, and at length succeeded in setting the legs going again. Then others briskly rubbed his feet, legs, arms, and body to restore his circulation. With consciousness returned, they bore him away to the infirmary.

Late that night Parsnip turned to the occupant of the bed next to his own.

"Awake, Billy?"

"Yes, rather."

"I say, Billy, d'you think Hodges will die?"

"Of course not! He'll be all right by to-morrow—everybody says so."

"Oh, I say, I am glad!"

There was a brief spell of silence. Then:

"I say, Billy?"

"Yes, Parsnip?"

"You know why I shoved Hodges off the board?"

"Yes," said Billy, "I think I know."

"You remember that Sunday, and the Sunday after—well—"

"Oh, that's all right," said Billy hastily, "never mind that."

"Yes, but I—I wanted to get quite with you."

"You did, so-day," said Billy. "Thanks for wanting to," he added simply.

So then, being that all was square between himself and Billy, Parsnip heaved a deep sigh, and fell asleep.

*(Another splendid long instalment of this grand school serial next Wednesday. Order your copy in advance.)*

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 272.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR" Every Friday.

## A NEW FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.

The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns are those of readers living in any of the Colonies who desire Correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.

Colonists sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondent is required—boy or girl, English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two coupons, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of the companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two coupons will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertisers direct. No correspondence with advertisers can be undertaken through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

Miss Cox, 2, Cavendish Street, North Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, age 28 and over.

H. Walker, Box 5, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers in Africa interested in stamps.

Ping Kwong Chan, care of J. S. McKinnis, Esq., 22, Paul Street, Hong Kong, China, wishes to correspond with British readers of all ages.

J. G. Hanning, High School, St. George's Terrace, Perth, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England, age 14-15.

S. Crawford, 13, Curdie Street, Fairview, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with girl readers living in England.

C. Wilson, De Lisle Street, North Fremantle, West Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, living in Canada, age 14.

B. Blake, care of Bolding, Parc Cortesado, Ltd., 91a, York Street, Sydney, and New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with girl or Great Britain or Canada, age 17.

H. La Roche, Box 525, Bloemfontein, South Africa, wishes to correspond with an Irish girl reader, age 15-16.

C. Neve, 38, Second Street, La Rochelle, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the British Isles, age 23-24.

C. J. Flint, P.O. Box 404, Bloemfontein, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England or Scotland, age 15-16.

S. W. Evans, 8, Timour Villa, Main Road, Phamstead, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England, age 14.

E. Fotheringham, P.O. Box, 182, care of Mr. G. Knight, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers living anywhere outside South Africa interested in postcards.

H. L. Cooper, 77, Cambridge Terrace, Wellington, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a girl reader in the Colonies, especially India and Africa, age 18.

A. Hawkins, care of G. Hawkins, P.O., West Kensington, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers living in England or Ireland, age 15-17.

E. Meeks, 65, Seventh Street, La Rochelle, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with girl readers in Australia or America, age 17-20.

G. Bassett, 46, College Hill, Auckland, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 16-17.

T. H. Siggsdale, P.O. Box 3351, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England, age 13-22.

A. H. Roberts, 125, Francis Street, Collingwood, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 16.

*The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.*

# FAMOUS FIGHTS FOR THE FLAG. No. 6



Specialty drawn for "THE GEM" Library, by C. H. Bink.

We have here depicted a battle-incident where British troops showed their sterling value as gallant fighters. During the Battle of Klusina, on June 13th, 1873, during the Ashantee war, a force of sailors and marines were being badly attacked by the ferocious Ashantees, when the officer in command leapt over the barricade, almost up to the heads of the enemy and cried to his men to follow. In a moment Jack Tar and Marine responded, and swept the natives before them with no wasteful charge!

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



For Next Wednesday,

"THE SCAMPS OF ST. JIM'S!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In next Wednesday's long, complete tale of the janitors of St. Jim's, Tom Meyer & Co. turn their attention seriously to "getting even" with Mr. Ratcliff...

"THE SCAMPS OF ST. JIM'S!"

only to find that he has unwittingly delivered himself into their hands, after all!

A SIMPLE CIPHER CODE.

One of my Sheffield readers writes me a very nice letter in which he refers to a simple code he has thought of which he wishes to call "The Gem and Magnet Cipher Code."

Table showing cipher code mappings: Instead of A write X, B write Y, C write Z, D write W, E write V, F write U, G write T, H write S, I write R, J write Q, K write P, L write O, M write N.

"Gem," therefore, is written XYN in the code, and "Magnet" NRTMVB. At first sight my Sheffield chum's code would to doubt appear very puzzling...

OVERWHELMED WITH CORRESPONDENCE.

I have recently had many almost identical letters from Colonial readers who, having taken advantage of "The Gem" Free Correspondence Exchange, find themselves simply overwhelmed with letters and postcards from fellow-readers...

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

R. Courbridge (Chesham).—I am afraid I cannot undertake to supply the badges you mention in your very interesting letter. A 12-year-old Girl Reader.—I am sorry to say that in

our companion paper "The Penny Popular," there is no room for a reader's page.

The half-farthing mentioned by one of my readers—who, by the way, omits his name and address—is worth practically nothing; it is really only a curiosity.

Will Mrs. Curzon accept my best thanks for her further efforts to increase the popularity of our three companion papers?

G. S. (Carrwell).—Thank you for your letter. Yes, your friend has written to me, and I was very pleased to get the letter.

"A Dundonian."—I am afraid I cannot advise you, as you do not send me any details.

C. E. Brown (N. S. Wales).—Very many thanks for your interesting letter.

HOW TO WRITE A PICTURE-PLAY.—No. 8.

By a Successful Photo-Playwright.

Different Types of Plots.

If you are going to write picture-plots—or scenarios, as we may now call them—the first thing you have to decide is: Am I going to write drama, comedy, or music? These being the three main divisions of modern motion picture stories...

EXPOSURE.

As the word implies, serves to introduce to the audience the characters who are to work out the plot; and here let me impress upon you to centre the interest upon one character—your leading character—and keep the interest centred there, so that the audience is attracted towards the lead immediately.

CLIMAX.

As a rule, the climax is its place somewhere near the de-escalator, which follows it. The climax is the apex, or height, of the ever-passing interest excited by the incidents following the introduction, which have culminated, or real, is some big dramatic action, decisive in form, and entirely shaping the future course of events.

DESCENDER.

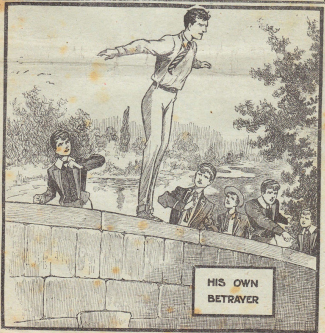
takes various forms, according to the style of the photo play, but generally speaking, it either tends to unravel the plot, or plain things which have apparently puzzled the screen, and hold the interest of the audience to the last, or shows the issue or outcome of the climax.

(These technical terms will be further explained and illustrated by an example in next week's article.)

YOUR EDITOR.

The Latest Issue of our Companion Paper—Now on Sale, Contains:

**A LONG, COMPLETE SCHOOL TALE.** BY FRANK RICHARDS.  
& SIDNEY DREW'S GRAND SERIAL STORY, 'MYSTERIA'



**BUY THIS NUMBER OF OUR COMPANION PAPER**

Now on Sale at all Newsagents.

The **1<sup>D</sup>** POPULAR  
 No. 25 Vol. 2  
 EVERY FRIDAY.



An Exciting Incident in our Complete Story of Great Detective entitled: **"THE LONG LANE MYSTERY!"**



A Great Scene in our Complete School Tale entitled: **"THE TERRIBLE THREE'S FIND!"**



One of the Most Exciting Incidents in our Complete Adventure Story, entitled: **"THE BEDOUIN CHIEF'S REVENGE!"**