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"The Grammar School's Great Jape!"

SOMETHING
NEW
THIS
WEEK!

THE EMPIRE $1\frac{1}{2}$

Every LIBRARY Wednesday.

Vol. 1. No. 32.
Sept. 24, 1910.

Long, Complete Tale of Gordon Gay & Co.



"I think this picture of mine ought to be hung in the Royal Academy," said Horace Tadpole, with a fond glance at his picture. "It is my ambition to be hung in the Academy. Don't you think I ought to be hung?" The three juniors grinned and nodded their heads.

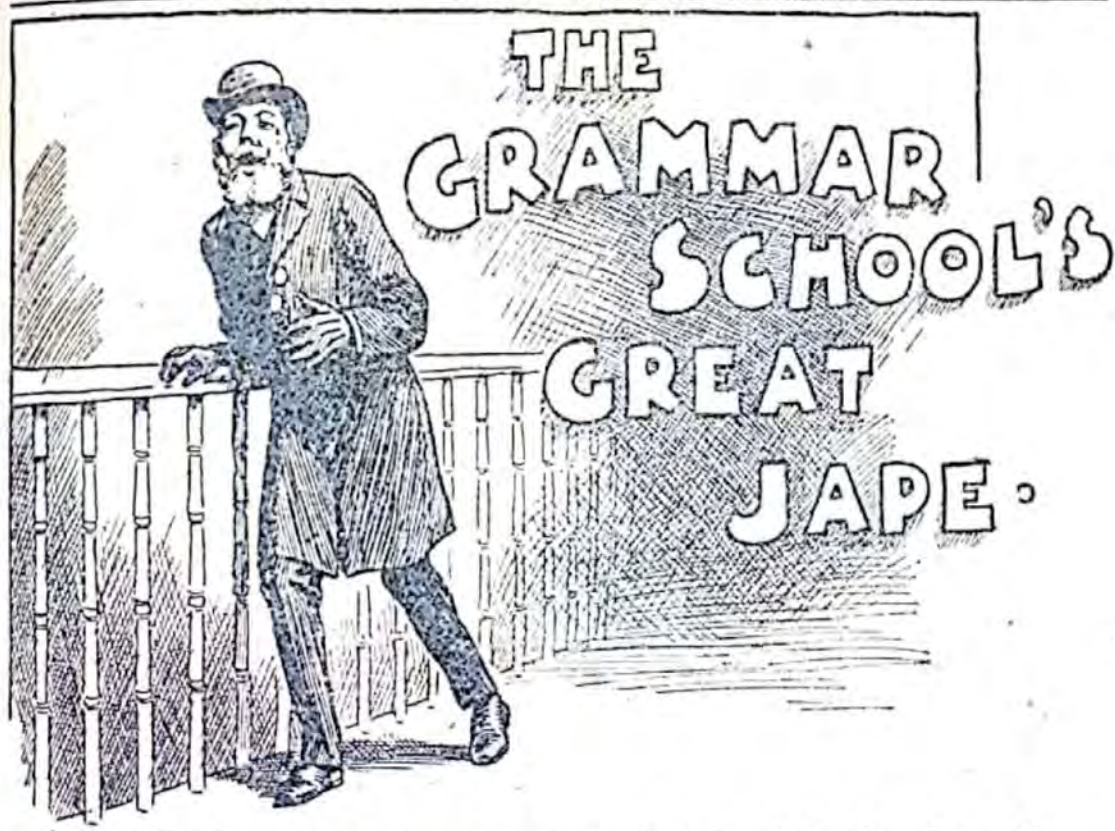
Next Wednesday's
Long. Complete Story:

"THE FIGHTING MIDDY."

Every
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A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Gordon Gay & Co.
By **PROSPER HOWARD.**

CHAPTER I.

Gordon Gay is Wanted.

FRANK MONK put his head into No. 13 Study, in the Fourth-Form passage at Rylcombe Grammar School, and looked round for Gordon Gay.
But Gordon Gay was not to be seen. Neither were his chums—Jack and Harry Wootton. The only occupant of Study No. 13 at the moment was a lank-haired, short-sighted youth, who was busily engaged in spoiling a canvas on an easel, though Horace Tadpole himself would not have said that he was engaged upon a masterpiece.
For Horace Tadpole was the amateur artist of the Fourth Form, and was generally engaged upon a masterpiece. He did not look round as Frank Monk, of the Fourth, put his head in. He heard him perfectly well, and he heard Lane and Carboy in the passage behind him. But Tadpole

knew that an artist who possesses the real artistic temperament is always absorbed in his work to the exclusion of everything else. And Tadpole had made up his mind that he possessed the true and genuine artistic temperament. Therefore, he did not look round.

"Hallo!" said Frank Monk.
Still Tadpole did not move.
He was daubing in a sky now, and Tadpole was very proud of his sky effects. They ran away with a great deal of paint, and paint costs money. And Taddy's pocket-money was not unlimited. But what of that? Art always demands sacrifices, as Tadpole explained to Gordon Gay many a time, when Gay objected to turning the study into a studio.
"Hallo!" bawled Monk.
Then Tadpole came out of his absorption with a start. He turned his head slowly.
"Anybody there?" he asked dreamily.

"Yes, aa!" said Frank Monk. "I am!"
 "Dear me! Please go away."
 "I—"
 "I should be obliged if you would clear out at once, Monk. I am in the mood now, and the mood does not always last."
 "What mood are you in?" asked Lane, grinning over Monk's shoulder. "Infinitive, indicative, imperative—"
 "Really, Lane, you mistake me. I was not speaking in a grammatical sense. I was referring to an artistic mood."
 "There isn't one!" said Lane emphatically. "You've got your grammar all wrong. There are five moods, and artistic isn't one of them. Infinitive, indicative, imperative, subjunctive—"
 "I tell you—"
 "And I tell you—"
 "What are you doing, Teddy?" asked Frank Monk, coming nearer to look at the picture. "By George! That's a jolly good haystack! I knew it was meant for a haystack at a glance."
 "That is a moonlit sea, Monk!" said Tadpole reprovingly.
 "Oh! Then, what is that reaper chap doing there?"
 "It is not a reaper chap; it's a fishing-smack in the distance."
 "Oh!"
 "I think this will be one of my masterpieces," said Tadpole. "I really think I shall try the Academy with this one."
 "My hat!"
 "I think it ought to be hung," said Tadpole, with a fond glance at his picture. "It is my ambition to be hung in the Academy. Don't you think I ought to be hung?"
 Monkey nodded.
 "Well, yes; I must say that anybody who paints a picture like that ought to be hung!" he admitted.
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lane and Carboy.
 Tadpole looked at them in surprise.
 "Really, you know—"
 "But where's Gordon Gay, Teddy?" asked Frank Monk.
 "We didn't come here to talk—ahem!—art. I hope you will be hung some day—I do, really. But where's Gordon Gay?"
 "I don't know, Monk."
 "Where are the other Wallabies, then?"
 "Really, I don't know."
 "Have they been gone out long?"
 "Long! I don't know."
 "Will they be back soon?"
 "Soon! I don't know."
 "Well, wake up, then, and think!" roared Frank Monk, shaking the youthful artist by the shoulder. "Wake up, fat-head!"
 "Oh! Oh, dear! Really, Monk—"
 "It's no good trying to get any census out of him," said Lane. "Teddy hasn't got the artistic temperament, but he's as big an ass as if he had!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You will change your tone some day, Lane, when I am a famous artist," said Tadpole, blinking at Lane. "When you see me hung—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I'm thinking of giving the Academy a look in," remarked Carboy, in a drawl he sometimes affected. "A titled friend of mine—"
 There was a bowl from Monk and Lane at once.
 "Chuck it!"
 "A titled friend—"
 "Cheese it!"
 "My titled friend—"
 "Ring off!" roared Monk. "We hear too much of your titled friends and noble connections and worm-eaten pedicures. Cheese it!"
 "Your plebeian minds cannot take a proper interest in matters appertaining to the aristocracy!" said Carboy loftily.
 "Exactly!" agreed Monk. "Therefore, ring off!"
 "But my titled friend said—"
 "Oh, kick him out if he won't shut up!"
 Carboy retreated to the door.
 "Don't play the goat. I—"
 "Shut up! Now, Teddy, we want to see Gordon Gay."
 "He is not here," said Tadpole, who was taking up his brush again.
 "Go home! I had observed that, and worked it out for myself in my head," said Monk. "What I want to know is, where is he?"
 "I really do not know."
 "Then we'll bump you till you guess," said Frank. "We want to fix up a cricket practice this afternoon, and there's no time to waste."
 "Splendid!" ejaculated Tadpole.
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Monk looked surprised.
 "Eh? You're not usually so enthusiastic about cricket," he remarked.
 "Cricket!" said Tadpole absently. "Were you talking about cricket?"
 "Yes, aa! And you—"
 "I was speaking of the sky."
 "The sky!" said Monk, glancing out of the study window. Most of the sky was shut off from view by the big, leafy branches of an elm-tree.
 "I mean my sky. Isn't that a splendid effect?"
 "Which?"
 "This rolling cloud."
 "It'm! Looks more like a rolling barrel to me."
 "Really, Monk, you pain me with your Philistine slang on art. That is an impressionist effect."
 Frank Monk looked at the picture.
 "Good!" he remarked. "I know it must belong to the impressionist school, because in impressionist work you're always left to guess what the picture is supposed to represent. And if that isn't a haystack, I wouldn't venture a guess what it is. But, to come back to our mutton, where's Gordon Gay?"
 "Really, I forget. He said something before he went out, but I was in the mood for painting, and—"
 "Well, I'm in the imperative mood now," said Monk.
 "Where's Gordon Gay, you aa?"
 "Really, I do not— Oh!"
 Three pairs of hands grasped the amateur artist. He was whirled round and bumped on the floor before he had time to blink. His brush flew in one direction, his palette in another, and the easel reeled.
 "Now, then, clump—"
 "Ow!"
 Bump!
 "Now, then—"
 "Yarrah!"
 "Bump him!"
 "What's the matter here?"
 Three sturdy youths looked into the study—Gordon Gay and Jack and Harry Wootton, known all over Rycombe School as the Three Wallabies.
 "Rescue!" gasped Tadpole.
 The Three Wallabies waited for no more.
 There was generally war between Frank Monk & Co. and the Three Wallabies, and both sides were generally ready for a row.
 "Come on!" exclaimed Gordon Gay.
 "What-oh!"
 "Sook it to 'em!"
 And the Three Wallabies rushed to the attack.

CHAPTER 2.

The Wallabies are a Little Hasty.

"HOLD ON!" roared Frank Monk.
 "Chuck it!"
 "Cheese it!"
 But Gordon Gay & Co. did not hold on, chuck it or cheese it. They piled on to the invaders of Study No. 11 in a twinkling.
 In a moment a furious combat was raging. Gordon Gay and Frank Monk, clasped in a loving embrace, went whirling round the study, staggering and tumbling wildly. Jack Wootton and Lane rolled under the table in what a novelist would describe as a deadly grip. Harry Wootton closed with the aristocratic Carboy, and got his head into chancery. His knuckles came into rough contact with Carboy's aristocratic nose.
 Tadpole jerked himself out of the zone of combat, and blinked on in amazement. He was not a fighting man, as a rule, and he was quite useless in a rough-and-tumble contest like this.
 Besides, he was not wanted. The loss was three to three. Tadpole, as a matter of fact, was thinking more about his picture than about either his assailants or his rescuers.
 The easel was in great danger as the combatants surged and reeled round the confined space of the study.
 "Go it!" gasped Gordon Gay.
 "Hurrah!"
 "Give 'em socks!"
 "Bash 'em!" roared Frank Monk. "Knock them out! Wreck the blessed study!"
 "Hurrah!"
 "Oh, dear!" gasped Tadpole. "Oh, dear! GAY, you have just trodden on my tube of blue, and I shall have to leave my sky unfinished until I get some more. It is really very annoying. Lane, you have trampled on my brush."
 "Go it!"
 "Lam 'em!"

Next
Wednesday:

A GRAND TALE OF H.M.S. TREMENDOUS.

A Complete
Story By

"You nearly knocked the easel over, Wootton I. Please be careful of the easel. If this canvas is spoiled it may mean that I shall not be hung this season."

"Blamp the rotters!"
"Yarrah!"
"Look out!" shrieked Tadpole.

But it was too late!

Crash!
Gordon Gay and Frank Monk staggered against the easel and fell over it.

O'er went the easel with a crash.
Tadpole made a wild spring to save his canvas.

Too late!
Frank Monk's head had bilged upon it with terrific force, and burst the canvas, and Monk's head had gone through the frame.

The picture was round his neck now, the canvas hanging in rags over his shoulders.

"Ow!" gasped Monk dazedly.
Gordon Gay exerted himself, and whirled the astounded Monk to the door.

With another whirl he sent him reeling into the passage, the dilapidated picture clinging round his neck.

Tadpole wrung his hands.
"Oh! Oh! I sha'n't be hung now! Oh!"

"Out you go!" panted Gordon Gay.
And as Frank Monk staggered into the passage, Gordon Gay lent a helping hand to Jack Wootton, who was getting rather the worst of it.

Lane was sent whirling out after his leader.
He crashed against the breathless Monk in the passage, and both of them rolled on the linoleum.

"Now then, out with Carboy!"
"Oh! Leggo!"
"Ha, ha! Out you go!"
"Chuck him out!"

"We—we'll give you rotters loans for this!" gasped Monk.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, come on!" growled Lane.
"Good-bye, Bluebell!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I'm going to leave them burbling like that!" growled Frank Monk. "Come on, and knock 'em into the study!"

"All right!"
And Monk & Co. charged.
Gordon Gay and the two Woottons met them steadily. They could not break through the defence, and they went whirling back into the passage in a heap, amid roars of laughter from the crowd.

Monk jumped up in great excitement, and was about to charge again, when there was a hurried warning from Nicky O'Donnell, at the end of the passage.

"Cave, ye gossoons!"
"It's Adams!"
But there was no time to escape.

The terrific uproar had brought Mr. Adams, the master of the Fourth Form, to the spot, and he was on the scene almost as soon as Nicky's warning was given.

"Boys!"
"Ye-e-es, sir!"
"What does this disturbance mean?"
The rival juniors blinked at one another.

It was a rather difficult question to answer, because they hardly knew what it meant themselves.

"N-n-nothing, sir!" stammered Gordon Gay, at last.
"You have been quarrelling."

"Oh, no, sir!"
"What! You have been fighting!"
"Fighting, sir!" exclaimed Gordon Gay, in tones of horror. "Oh, sir!"

NEXT WEDNESDAY!

GRAND, COMPLETE TALE OF
H.M.S. TREMENDOUS.
By F. ST. MARS.

"Yarrah!"
And Carboy was added to the struggling heap in the passage.

Gordon Gay and his comrades stood in the study doorway yelling with laughter as the three juniors sorted themselves out in the passage.

Keep your hoofs off my waistcoat, Lane, you ass!"
Gasped Carboy.

"Yah! Get your rotten elbow out of my eye!"
"What's this blessed thing round my neck—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Three Wallabies.
"You-you rotters—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The din had brought a crowd of juniors into the Fourth Form passage, and they joined in the loud laughter of the Three Wallabies.

Frank Monk & Co. certainly did look extremely dilapidated and dilapidated, and the ruined picture round Monk's neck, and the smudges of paint on his face, added to the comic effect.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The three misshapen juniors scrambled up at last, and flared at Gordon Gay & Co.

"Ready!" whispered Gordon Gay. "Hands to repel invaders!"

"Ha, ha! We're ready!"
But Frank Monk & Co. did not charge.

They knew they had no chance of getting into the study again, with the Three Wallabies lined up in the doorway, and Tadpole behind them.

Carboy was holding a handkerchief to his nose. Carboy was very proud of his nose, which was straight and a little prominent, and which Carboy declared indicated noble blood. A great deal of the noble blood was flowing from the aristocratic nose now, and Carboy was busy mopping it up with his handkerchief.

"Gay! Do you deny that you have been fighting!"
"Certainly, sir! Monk and I never fight. We're jolly good friends—aren't we, Monkey?"

"Yes, rather!" said Feunt.
"Then what is all this uproar?" gasped the surprised Form-master.

"It wasn't fighting, sir."
"Oh, no, sir!"
"Not at all, sir!"

"We wouldn't think of fighting, sir. This was just a little—a little scrap. No harm meant on either side, sir. Just a little scrap—no malice, of course, and—and no harm done, sir. We—we wouldn't fight."

"Of course not, sir!"
Mr. Adams tried not to smile.

"Well, you must not turn the Fourth Form passage into a bear garden, even if you are not fighting," he remarked.

"You will kindly stay indoors for the rest of the afternoon, you six, and each of you will write out a hundred lines of Virgil!"

"Oh, sir!"
And Mr. Adams waved his hand imperatively, and strode away.

"My hat! You're in for it!" said Carpenter.
"It's rotten for ye, mon!" said McDonald.

But the delinquents said nothing.
Frank Monk, Lane, and Carboy looked lugubriously at the Three Wallabies, and walked off up the passage.

Gordon Gay & Co. turned back into the study, and Jack shut the door with unnecessary violence.

"Rotten!" he growled.
"Beastly!" said Hurry.

"Unspeakable!" granted Gordon Gay. "It's such a lovely afternoon for cricket, and we'd just called in at Monkey's study, too, to see if he was wanting a game. By the way, what were they doing here, Taddy?"

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F. ST. MARS, entitled "THE FIGHTING MIDDY."

"My picture is spoiled!"
 "Blow your picture! What were Monkey and his gang doing here?"
 "They were treating me with violence!"
 "Yes; but what for?" roared Gay.
 "Oh, they wanted something—yes, let me see—they wanted to see you."
 "To see me!"
 "Yes."
 "What did they want to see me for?"
 "Let me see. It was for something or other. Oh, yes, they wanted to ask you to go and play cricket!"
 "What!"
 "Cricket!" said Tadpole.
 "Yes, you ass!" shrieked Gordon Gay. "And—and you let us go for them! You frabjous ass! Why didn't you tell us?"
 "Really, Gay—"
 "Why didn't you tell us, you burbling jabberwock?"
 "Really—"
 "Oh, bump him!" gasped Jack Woolton. "Bump him—hard!"
 "Really—Owl! Oh! Yaroo!"
 And Tadpole was bumped—hard, and that afforded some satisfaction to the exasperated Wallabies, though very little if any to Tadpole himself.

CHAPTER 3.

Noble Blood.

"LISTEN!" said Frank Monk.

Click!
 The study window was open, and the soft summer breeze came in from the fields. Borne upon it came a sound that was simply maddening to fellows shut up within doors for the rest of that glorious afternoon—the sound of ball on bat!

They were playing cricket out there, and Frank Monk & Co. were gated.

Lane growled.
 "What the dickens is there to listen for?" he said. "Better shut the window. If I hear them playing I shall do a bunk."

"Can't," said Lane. "Old Adams has his door open."
 "The beast suspects us," said Monk.
 "Ha, ha! He knows we'd bolt if we could."
 "Still, I think suspicion's rotten bad form. He's no right to suspect us. And if he'd only close his door we could slip past without his seeing us," said Monk unreasonably.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Can't see anything to cackle at, myself," said Monk, "unless it's Carboy's nose."

Carboy turned red.
 His aristocratic nose was very swollen just now, and crimson at the tip, and Carboy was feeling sensitive about it.
 "You let my nose alone!" he exclaimed warmly.
 "I'm not going to touch it, old chap."
 "It's a nose anybody might be proud of," said Lane, with a wink to Monk. "A nose with a shape like that shows noble blood."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Frank.
 "Oh, shut up!" growled Carboy.
 Lane looked surprised.
 "My dear chap, I'm only repeating your own words," he said. "You know you've told us often that a nose with a shape like that shows noble blood. We've never taken much stock of it before, but now we see it's true—don't we, Monkey?"

"Yes, rather! When a nose is that shape—the shape it is at present—it generally shows blood of some sort, noble or not."

"Carboy says that you don't often see a nose like his, and blessed if he isn't right, too!" said Lane. "You don't!"

"Very seldom, anyway."
 "Only in the case of a chap having his face trodden on, or anything like that."

"Just so."
 "Look here, you howling ass!" said Carboy, crimson now all over his face, as well as on his swollen nose. "Let my blessed nose alone. You can't help being a couple of plebeians, but you ought to have a proper respect for old descent. My family is one of the oldest in England—not one of your ruten upstart families that came over with the Conqueror. Who was the Conqueror, anyway—a blessed adventurer, with a crew of penniless rotters along with him—blessed thieves, the lot of them. I'll bet they left a jolly lot of bills unpaid in Normandy when they came over here. My family were settled in England in the time of King Alfred, and there was a Sir Guy de Carboy who fought in the time of King Arthur, too!"

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Next
Wednesday: A GRAND TALE OF H.M.S. TREMENDOUS,A Complete
Story By

Monk and Lane grinned.
 Carboy's noble descent was an inexhaustible topic with him, and he frequently bored his chum almost to tears with it. When in want of something better to do, Lane and Monk found amusement in chipping their chum on the subject; and at the present moment, shut up on a fine afternoon, with other fellows playing cricket outside, they hailed Carboy's noble descent as the only possible diversion.

"Sir Guy de Carboy," said Monk musingly. "Are you supposed to resemble your ancestor, Carboy?"

"My nose is very like his in his portrait," said Carboy.

"Ah! Then the story's true—he must have been a guy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"Tell us some more yarns about your connections, Carboy," said Lane, with a yawn. "They're amusing—I like fiction on a dull afternoon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You chaps don't understand matters of lofty lineage," said Carboy disdainfully. "When a certain document is discovered, my father will be an earl, and I shall be the Honourable Edward Carboy."

"My hat! The Honourable Teddy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle as much as you like," said Carboy warmly, and now fairly launched upon his favourite topic.

"That document will be discovered some day. My father has been thinking of employing a firm of pedigree hunters—chaps who look out things of that kind—to find it. If the marriage of Sir Fulke Carboy with—with somebody, could be clearly established, my father would be Earl of Scrapacres."

"Go on!"

"It will be found some day—that document. Then you'll see."

"The Honourable Teddy! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Lane.

"You know jolly well I've got noble blood—"

"You haven't as much now as you had half an hour ago," grinned Lane.

"Still, a nose that shape shows something—it shows—"

"That Carboy has been getting the worst of a scrap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Carboy rose to his feet.

"Oh, very well; if you want to jaw like that, you can do it without my listening!" he exclaimed angrily.

And he strode out of the study and slammed the door behind him.

Frank Monk and Lane looked at each other in dismay.

They had not meant to offend their chum, but in the dash and exasperation of being gated, they had perhaps been a little too liberal with their chipping.

"My hat!" said Lane. "Teddy's got his rag out now!"

"Hang it!" said Monk, jumping up. "I didn't mean that, you know—let's go and make it up. He'll come round if we let him talk about his ancestors."

"Ha, ha! All right!"

The chums hurried out of the study.

They looked up and down the passage, but Carboy had vanished. The passage was deserted, for everybody was out of doors on that glorious afternoon—with the exception of the detained juniors.

Monk and Lane went along to Gordon Gay's study and looked in, thinking that perhaps their offended chum had gone there.

Gordon Gay looked up lugubriously.

The Three Wallabies were dimly writing out their lines. Tadpole was daubing away at a fresh masterpiece. Carboy was not in the room.

"Hallo!" said Gordon Gay dimly.

"Seen Carboy?" asked Monk.

"No."

"We thought he might be here. He's gone off in a huff," said Monk, with a grin.

"What's the trouble?"

Frank Monk explained.

He could not resist telling the story of the missing document and the respective earldom, and Gordon Gay & Co. simply roared.

"Oh, dear!" said Gordon Gay, wiping his eyes. "The Honourable Teddy! You'd better go and look for the Honourable Teddy! Ha, ha, ha!"

And Monk and Lane chuckled, and went; but it was some time before they found Carboy. He was writing out his lines in the Fourth Form-room.

"Well!" he said grimly, as they came in.

"Oh, don't be an ass, old chap!" said Lane. "We— we want you to tell us about your—your ancestors!"

"Yes; we want to know about that giddy document!" said Frank Monk heartily.

Carboy frowned doubtfully. Gordon Gay looked into the fire.

"Will you chaps come and have tea in our study? And—will you like Carboy to tell us about that missing document?"

"Certainly!" said Carboy, getting up at once. "I'm glad to see you take an interest in a matter like that, Gay. You haven't any postigrines in Australia, I believe."

Gordon Gay grinned.

"Well, I'm descended from Adam and Eve myself," he remarked. "I suppose you've got chaps in this country whose postigrines go further back."

"Well, you see—"

"Come on," said Monk. "We'll have it over tea."

"All right."

And the juniors, who had been slogging one another heavily only an hour before, now joined just as heartily in a warty feed. Frank Monk clapped Gordon Gay on the shoulder.

"Good for you, Gay!" he whispered. "You've brought 'em round!"

Gordon Gay chuckled.

"Well, I don't want to see you fellows rowing with one another," he said. "You can have all your rows with us."

"Ha, ha! You're right!"

"Tea's ready," said Tadpole.

"Good!"

And they sat down to tea.

CHAPTER 4.

Carboy the Aristocrat.

TEA in Gordon Gay's study was generally a cheery meal, and the present occasion was no exception. The chief topic discussed was Carboy's postigrines, for it had been tacitly agreed that Carboy was to be given his head, so to speak, and allowed to talk himself into a good humour.

Carboy took full advantage of it, too.

He gave the Cornstalk chums a full history of his family from the earliest times, with a description of Sir Guy de Carboy, who lived—or did not live—in the stirring times of King Arthur, and was a famous knight of the Round Table.

Another famous Carboy, whom common or garden historians had forgotten to mention, was with King Alfred on the great occasion when that monarch allowed the cakes to burn. Still another followed the ill-fated Harold to the battlefield of Hastings, to fight against William the Conqueror.

Carboy was of opinion that if his ancestor had been in command that day, the Normans would have been licked, and probably the House of Carboy would have been reigning in England at the present day.

"My only hat!" said Gordon Gay. "How ripping that would be! What feeds you would be able to stand!"

Carboy looked at him sharply.

"But the Australian junior's face was quite grave.

"Go ahead, Carboy!" said Frank Monk hastily. "Tell us something about the Carboys since the Conquest."

"That was when we lost our lands," said Carboy. "The lands were confiscated by the Normans."

"That was awfully rough!" said Jack Wootton sympathetically.

Carboy explained, however, that the Carboys had been very much in the public eye in every succeeding reign, though historians seemed to have made a sort of conspiracy to keep their names out of the history books.

In the time of Queen Elizabeth a Carboy had commanded a ship in Drake's company, and had captured a Spanish galleon, and had been knighted. In the time of James the First took place the marriage which brought an earldom into the family.

—Only that missing document could be discovered!

Upon the subject of that missing document Carboy was in-
exhaustible.

Never before had he had so splendid an opportunity of expanding himself on the topic, for the juniors were deter-
mined to endure it this time, and give him his head, and they were curious, too, to see how far he would go on the subject.

There was no doubt that Carboy believed all he said.

The other juniors smiled.

The Three Wallabies held out with exemplary patience, till Carboy had traced the history of his family down to the present day.

Then they imagined that their sufferings were over.

But they were mistaken.

Carboy had, as a matter of fact, barely started.

He went back to the reign of King John at a jump, and explained how the head of the Carboys of that time had held a high command in the barons' war.

That over, the juniors expected relief; but Carboy switched

off to the reign of Henry the Fifth, and revolved in descriptions of the gallant Carboys on the field of Agincourt. Agincourt once more nobly fought and won. Carboy skated, as it were, into the reign of Queen Anne; and then the almost inexhaustible patience of the juniors gave way.

Jack Wootton jumped up.

"Was that somebody calling?" he exclaimed.

And without waiting for an answer to his question, he dashed out of the study.

"Lord Carboy was really Marlborough's right-hand man," said Carboy. "At the battle of Blenheim—"

"I wonder where Jack is!" said Harry Wootton, and he followed his brother from the study.

Gordon Gay wriggled in his chair.

He had agreed to stand it to the finish, and he was standing it; but his sufferings were intense.

Carboy rolled on, blind to everything now but that he had an uninterrupted field for the topic that to him was of ever-burning interest.

Even Tadpole slipped out of the study, completely vanquished by a greater bore than himself.

"Time we were moving," said Frank Monk, taking pity on himself and the others at last.

"I was just going to tell Gay about my ancestor who fought in the Parliamentary wars," said Carboy. "It's awfully interesting to a Colonial, you know."

"Good! We'll look in again later," said Lane.

And he hurried out of the study with Monk.

Carboy ran on endlessly.

Gordon Gay rose and walked about the study while he listened. Carboy turned to and fro in the chair to follow his movements as he talked.

Gay inwardly anathematised Frank Monk.

His politeness was hardly equal to the strain, though Carboy was his own invited guest in the study, and he had agreed to let him rip.

He could have fallen on his knees and given thanks when Nicky O'Donnell suddenly rushed into Study No. 13; so suddenly that he bumped into Carboy and knocked his chair over, and the aristocratic pedigree owner rolled on the floor.

"Oh, you ass!" roared Carboy.

"Faith, and I'm sorry," said O'Donnell, grinning. "Sure, and ain't ye coming? There's a fight on with the St. Jim's kids out in the lane."

Gordon Gay gasped with relief.

"St. Jim's! Excuse me, Carboy—"

"I say—"

"Come on, old chap," said Gay heedlessly.

"Faith, and they're goin' it hammer and tonge, begorra!"

"Buck up, Carboy!"

And Gordon Gay rushed out of the study on the heels of the excited Irish junior. Teddy Carboy followed him somewhat reluctantly.

He was ready for a row with the St. Jim's fellows certainly; but he would greatly have preferred to continue the sketch of his family history.

That row with the St. Jim's fellows was a godsend to Gordon Gay.

The Grammarian youths came in ten minutes later with many signs of the conflict about them. Mr. Adams met them in the passage. He had seen them rush out past his open door, and they had not even heard him call to them; and they found him with a very grim face.

"You have been out, Gay," he said. "And you, Lane, Carboy, Monk, and Wootton."

"We're sorry, sir," said Gay, wiping a streaming nose with a handkerchief that was already dyed deeply red.

"You were ordered to remain—"

"You see, sir—"

"It is inexcusable—"

"There—there was a row, sir, and our fellows were getting the worse of it," blurted out Frank Monk.

"Oh!" said Mr. Adams.

"But we made the Saints run, when we got at them, sir," ventured Gordon Gay.

The Form-master concealed a smile.

"Well, well, we will say no more about it," he said. "But you must be more thoughtful another time."

"Yes, sir!"

"Thank you, sir!"

And the juniors went to their studies to finish their lines, greatly relieved. Gordon Gay grinned at Jack and Harry Wootton as they gathered in Study No. 13.

"I don't care if it had been a licking," he said. "I'd have faced a dozen lickings rather than stay with Carboy another minute. The next time he gets on his dignity, we'll leave Monkey to bring him round by himself!"

"What ho!" said Jack Wootton feelingly. "Did you ever hear such a frajulous ass?"

"Never!"

F. ST. MARS, entitled "THE FIGHTING MIDDY." THE EMPIRE LIBRARY.—No. 32.

"Why, even Tadpole's an entertaining companion, beside him!"

"Really," began Tadpole, "I should like to argue that out. It stands to reason—"

"Don't begin now, Taddy; we can't stand you, after Carboy. But—Gordon Gay's eyes glimmered—"I wonder if we could die up some fun out of Carboy's giddy pedigree."

And the Wallabies chuckled at the idea. They felt that they deserved all the fun they could extract from the subject, after the way they had suffered at the hands of the aristocrat of the Fourth Form.

CHAPTER 5.

An Interrupted Rehearsal.

"I NEVER noticed before that that chap Gay was so intelligent," Carboy remarked, as he sat down to the table in Monk's study to do his prep.

Lane winked at Monk.

"He takes a jolly lot of interest in questions of pedigree. It's an interesting subject. Sir Guy de Carboy—"

"Choose it!" said Lane.

"What!"

"Nuff's as good as a feast."

"But really—"

"Let's talk about my ancestry, for a change," said Lane. "I belong to a very old family. There were Lanes in England before there were roads."

"Oh, don't be funny!"

"So do I," said Frank. "There were Monks in England from the very earliest times."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And very likely the name is a corruption of the great family name of our common ancestry, according to Darwin," went on Frank gravely. "One of my ancestors, Sir Monkey de Gorilla—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Carboy.

"But I thought you liked the subject of noble descent—"

"We've got to do our prep."

"Oh, all right, let's get on."

And the subject of pedigree was dropped, and preparation was attended to intently; a change that was very satisfactory to Lane and Monk.

Prep over, the three chums descended to the common-room, where most of the Fourth and the Third were gathered, most of them talking cricket.

Gordon Gay grinned at the three as they came in. Tadpole came over to Monk with an air of solicitude.

"I hope you have recovered," he said.

Monk stared at him.

"Recovered from what?"

"From the violent way you were ejected from our study."

"Why, you see—"

"I was very much annoyed at the time," said Tadpole. "You ruined my masterpiece. But I have started on another one, which I think will be an even greater success. Upon the whole, I overlook your boogianistic conduct."

"Go home!"

"And I hope you were not really much hurt when we chucked you out."

"Chucked us out! You couldn't chuck us out in a week!" exclaimed Lane excitedly.

"Well, you crawled away, and—"

"We whatted?"

"Crawled away, and—"

"Ass! We buzzed off because Adams put his finger in the pie—"

"I should like to argue that out—"

"Oh, don't bother!" said Monk, and he gently tripped up Tadpole, and left him sitting on the floor, looking dazed, as he walked away with his chums. Nicky O'Donnell joined them at the window.

"Faith, and your nose looks bad, Carboy," he remarked sympathetically. "The Wallabies did give you a jolly licking, didn't they?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Carboy.

"Faith, and I—"

"Shut up!"

The three chums walked away, leaving O'Donnell considerably surprised at this cavalier reception of his well-meant sympathy. They encountered Carpenter near the door. Carpenter grinned at them.

"Sorry you were licked so badly," he said.

"Rats!"

"Well, you were, you know."

"Oh, get out of the way!"

The irritated chums pushed Carpenter aside, and walked out of the common-room. Hanks nodded to them in the passage.

"Rough time you had this afternoon," he remarked.

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Next
Wednesday. A GRAND TALE OF H.M.S. TREMENDOUS,

A Complete Story. By

To Hanks's astonishment, he was being bumped on the floor the next moment, and the three chums walked on and left him stranded and staring.

"This is nice—I don't think," growled Frank Monk, as they entered the Fourth Form passage. "The whole school seems to have got hold of a silly idea that we've been licked by the Wallabies, just because we had to stop on account of Adams."

"Rotten!" said Lane.

"Beastly," agreed Carboy. "We ought to do something to avenge that defeat. One of my ancestors—"

"Never mind your blessed ancestors now," growled Lane.

"We've got to take the Wallabies down a peg or two."

"Yes, rather," said Monk. "We shall have the whole blessed coil singing out that we're licked and done for, if we don't take them down somehow."

"Then it's got to be done."

The Three Wallabies passed them in the passage, going towards their study. Frank Monk & Co. looked at them grimly. Gordon Gay and his chums went in Study No. 13, and a few minutes later the sound of a deep dramatic voice was heard proceeding from behind the closed door.

"To be or not to be, that is the question—

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles—"

"That's Gordon Gay," grunted Frank Monk. "They're rehearsing again—and Gay's doing Hamlet. He generally has a fat part for himself."

"They can't be thinking of playing 'Hamlet.'"

"Oh, no, it's rotten practice!"

Heedless of the critics in the passage, Gordon Gay, the schoolboy actor, declaimed his lines.

The Gordon Gay Dramatic Society was a great success, and Gay kept himself, and most of the members, up to the mark by continual rehearsing.

Frank Monk burst into a sudden chuckle, and went into his study. He took a sheet of paper and a pen, and printed the word "NOTICE" in large letters.

"What's that for?" demanded Carboy.

"What's the game?" said Lane.

"Watch, and you'll see, my sons."

Under the word "NOTICE" Frank wrote, in large printed letters, the following announcement:

"Members of the Third Form are invited to take part in a rehearsal of 'Hamlet,' in No. 13 Study, where a feed will take place after rehearsal."

Lane whistled.

Monk slipped downstairs, and pinned up the notice on the board. A few minutes later Lane strolled by the board, as if by chance, and uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Well, my hat!"

"What's the row, Lane?" asked Carpenter.

"Look at that notice!"

"Phew!" exclaimed Hanks. "Why, Gay doesn't want me in his dramatic company, and now he's inviting Third Form fags."

"Rotten!" said Jim Preston.

"Shows his sense!" exclaimed Tabb, of the Third Form, reading the notice. "I'm jolly well going."

"And I! And I! And I!"

The Third Form gathered as if by magic at the news. They had never been asked to participate in Gordon Gay's rehearsal before; such an idea was beyond their wildest dreams. They admired the schoolboy actor from afar. But they had never dreamed of being taken in like this into the bosom of his dramatic society.

"Come on," said Tabb. "This is too good to be missed. There's a feed after the rehearsal, too!"

"Ripping!" exclaimed Higgs of the Third. "This is awfully decent of Gordon Gay."

"Well, I'm going," said Slater.

"So are we all!"

"Come on!"

And a horde of fags invaded the Fourth Form passage. Frank Monk & Co. hugged themselves with glee.

Tabb, Higgs, and Slater knocked at the door of Study No. 13, and Tabb opened it. Gordon Gay was in the midst of a ringing declamation. He broke off as the door swung open.

"All the swarms of fags poured in.

"Hallo! Get out!"

"What!"

"What do you want?"

"Well, I like that!" exclaimed Tabb indignantly, with equal wrath.

"Yes, rather," said Higgs, "We don't want a lot of inky fags in here. We're rehearsing."

"Outside!" exclaimed Jack Wootton. "We're going to rehearse, too."

"We're going to rehearse, too."

EVERY
WEDNESDAY.

"Rats!"
"Get out!"
"Look here—"
"Outside, you inky duffers!" roared the exasperated Tabb.
"Well, of all the cheek!"
"Look here! We don't mind missing the rehearsal, but we're not going to miss the feed."
"Rather not!"
"Where's the grub?"
"Trot it out!"
"Hand over the tinning!"
"You're off your rockers!" exclaimed Gordon Gay, in black amazement. "What do you mean? There isn't any feed!"

"Stuff!"
"Bosh!"
"He's changed his mind!"
"Mean beast!"
"Sneaky worm!"
"We're not going to be done!" roared Tabb.
"Rather not! Go for 'em!"
"Get out!" shouted the Fourth-Formers, lining up.
"Yah!"
"Down with the Fourth!"
"It's a swindle!" yelled Tabb. "Wreck the blessed feed!"

"Hurrah!"
Gordon Gay & Co. were among the most athletic fellows in the Fourth, and they were equal to at least twice their number of Third-Form fellows. But the fags were there in swarms—there were a dozen in the study already, and a score more behind in the passage, crowding in.

Carboz & Co. were at a disadvantage.
"Kick them out!" shouted Gay.
"Yah!"
"Cads!"
"Wreck the study!"
"Hurrah!"
There was a wild and whirling combat at once. The exasperated fags, disappointed of both a rehearsal and a feed, were not to be denied, and their numbers made them irresistible.

A dozen or more of them went rolling over one another on the floor under the doughty blows of the Wallabies, but then Gordon Gay & Co. were down. The fags swarmed over them. They sprawled on the Cornstalks, crushing them down by their weight.

"Get 'em!" shrieked Higgs breathlessly.
"Hurrah for the Third!"
"Bag the rotters!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Tabb turned the table over, shooting its contents upon the unfortunate Wallabies. The bookcase was upset, the books falling down upon the three juniors. The coal scuttle was emptied upon them, and then the milk jug and the ashpan. The Wallabies struggled wildly.

But they had no chance.
"There! I think that will do!" said Tabb, at last. "They'll know better than to swindle the Third again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Next time you put up a spoof notice on the board, Gordon Gay, you'll know what to expect!"
"You lunatics!" roared Gordon Gay. "I haven't put any notice up on the board!"

"What!"
"Rats!"
"Didn't you put up a notice asking us to a rehearsal of 'Hallelujah' and a feed to follow?" demanded Tabb.

"Of course not!"
"Great Scott!"
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Frank Monk & Co. at the door.
Gordon Gay turned a furious look upon them.

"You rotters!" he yelled. "You're at the bottom of this!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"And Frank Monk, Lane, and Carboz almost staggered away down the passage, weeping with laughter, and as the cause of the uproar in Study No. 13 was explained, the rest of the Fourth howled with laughter, too.

"We—we've been a little bit hasty!" stammered Tabb. "Better get out."
And the dishevelled fags scrambled out of the study. Gordon Gay & Co. staggered to their feet.

The study was a wreck—so were they!
"My hat!" gasped Gordon Gay.
"Oo!" groaned Jack Wootton. "We've been done by those bouncers! But we'll make the Third wriggle for this!"
"Blow the Third! We'll make Monkey wriggle!"
Mr. Adams looked in at the open door with a frowning brow. He started as he saw the state of the study.

"Dear me!" he ejaculated. "What a terrible state of dis-

order! Gay, there is altogether too much noise at this end of the Fourth-Form passage. You will take another hundred lines each."

"Oh, sir!"
Mr. Adams shook his head portentously, and walked away, leaving the Wallabies standing in the midst of the wreck, and regarding each other dismally.

CHAPTER 6.

Something Like a Wheeze.

FRANK MONK & CO. chuckled loud and long over the invasion of Study No. 13 by the fags. The Third Form chuckled over it, too. So did the rest of the school—even the high and mighty seniors of the Sixth deigned a chuckle when they heard of it from their fags. Gordon Gay and his comrades were the only ones who did not chuckle. They bore it, but they did not grin.

And they plotted vengeance. Exactly how to get even with Frank Monk & Co. was not at first clear, but Gordon Gay caught at a suggestion from Harry Wootton like a drowning man catching at a straw. "What price Carboz?" said Wootton minor.

"What about him?" said Gay.
"Well, you suggested digging up some fun out of his pedigree yesterday."
Gordon Gay started.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.
And he gave Harry Wharton a sounding slap on the shoulder as a sign of appreciation. Harry staggered halfway across the study, and roared.

"You fearful ass!"
"That's all right!" said Gordon Gay jubilantly.

"Is it? You've dislocated me!"
"Never mind! I've got it!"

"Get what?" growled Harry, rubbing his shoulder. "The jim-jams?"

"Ha, ha! No; the wheeze!"
The two Woottons were all attention at once. Tadpole blinked up from the armchair, where he had been sitting in deep thought for the past ten minutes.

"I've got a scheme for taking down those rotters!" he said. "They ought to be severely japed, as my second masterpiece was ruined by the fags last night."

"Dry up, Tadly!"
"Nonsense, Gay! I have a good idea—"

"So have I, so cheer it!"
"I should like to argue it out—"

"Well, I shouldn't! Ring off, there's a good chap!"
"My idea," pursued Tadpole, unheeding, "is to place an electric battery in Monk's study, with the wires so arranged that when they enter the study they will step on them and receive a fearful shock—"

"Have you got a battery?"
"No, that's a mere detail."

"Would you be able to fix it if you had?"
"I suppose I could learn. Electricity is not a difficult subject, and I could learn it up easily. I have never tried, it is true."

"And we're to put off the jape till you've bought a battery and mugged up the subject of electricity?" ejaculated Jack Wootton.

"Well, you see—"

Gordon Gay took the genius of the Fourth Form by the arm and gently led him to the door.

"Go and take a run, Tadly," said the Cornstalk lad gently.

"But—"

"Buzz off!"
"But my idea—"

"You can take it with you!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Tadpole was pushed out of the study in a state of considerable amazement, and the door gently but firmly closed upon him. Then Gordon Gay turned to his grinning chums.

"I've got a jolly good wheeze!" he remarked. "It flashed into my mind— But I can think out the details. We'll spoof Carboz to the very top notch."

"How!" exclaimed Jack eagerly.

"On the subject of his giddy pedigree. What price discovering the original document—the valuable document that makes him the Honourable Teddy?"

The Wallabies roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"We can easily mug up something to take the chump in—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"And— My only hat!"

"Well, what now?"
Gordon Gay yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Explain!"

"What is it?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Explain, you ass!" roared the two Woottons together, and they rushed at Gordon Gay and brought him against the wall with a thud. "Now, then—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Explain, you ass, before we damage the wall with your head!"

"Hold on!" gasped Gordon Gay. "Oh, it's ripping! You remember that cheerful idiot talking about the Historical Investigation Society, which his governor is thinking of employing to discover that document—or which Carboy thinks he thinks of—"

"Never mind what Carboy thinks. Get ahead!"
 "Well, suppose a representative of the Historical Research Society called on Carboy—"

"What?"
 "To take him on a hunt for the missing document—"

"Plew!"
 "And Monk and Lane with him—"

"Eut—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"But the representative—who's that?"
 "Gordon Gay, Esquire," replied the owner of that name, gasping with merriment, "the schoolboy actor, who has acted more difficult parts than that."

The Wallabies simply gaped.

"Well, what do you think of it?" demanded Gordon Gay.

"Ripping!" gasped Jack Wootton.

"Stunning!" gasped Harry.

"But can you do it?"

Gordon Gay sniffed.
 "Do it? Haven't I impersonated Sir Hilton Popper—and Dr. Holmes of St. Jim's, and D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, and heaps of other people, taking in the chaps they know best? Then I should think I could take the role of a man who's a stranger to Carboy."

"Yes, rather!"

"And the document—"

"We'll let them discover a box, or something, with the document in it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we'll fix it somehow so that they have to open it in the presence of the whole Form—"

"And—and what's to be on the document, when they bring it to light?"

"Ha, ha! A message from us!"

The Wallabies roared.

Tedpole put his head in at the door.

"Dear me, what a fearful noise! Have you decided to adopt my idea?"

"No, ass!"

"It has occurred to me that I could go over to St. Jim's and borrow an electric battery of Glyn, of the Shell."

"Rats!"

"With a brain like mine, I could mug up the subject in half an hour, and—"

"Buzz off, Taddy, or you'll get an ache in your brain!"

exclaimed Jack Wootton, picking up a cricket stump and brandishing it.

And Tedpole blinked at him, and hastily withdrew, shutting the door with a slam. He had concluded that his idea was wasted upon the obtuse brains in No. 13 Study, and he abandoned them to their own devices.

Which was just what the Three Wallabies wanted.

They roared with laughter over Gordon Gay's plan, and then they set to work to think out the details, and reduce it to operation.

"We can use a typewriter in the village to write a letter from the Historical Research Society, so that our lists won't give us away," grinned Gordon Gay. "Then I'll show on the dispuise in the village, and come here openly in Cope's trap, as bold as brass."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And if Carboy isn't taken in—and Monk and Lane along with him, I'll eat my hat—and you can take my word for it, my sons, that the jape will be the funniest that's ever been japed since Rylcombe Grammar School had a local habitation and a name."

And the Wallabies yelled again at the prospect.

CHAPTER 7.

News for Carboy.

"LETTER for you, Carboy," Frank Monk remarked on Friday morning, before school, glancing up at the letter rack.

"Hallo, is there a crest on it?" asked Carpenter, with a grin. Carboy's noble connections and titled friends were a standing joke in the Grammar School.

"Hardly," remarked Hanks, as Carboy took the letter down with a haughty look. "It's typewritten; and I don't believe noble earls use the giddy typewriter."

"Oh, it's only a common or garden dunning letter!" said Jim Preston.

"Hix, ha, ha!"

Carboy opened the letter. It was addressed to him in neat typewriting, on an oblong envelope, and was pretty evidently a business communication. The postmark was London, and Carboy wondered who his correspondent was.

But as he glanced at the letter, he started.

There was a plain printed heading to the sheet—"The Historical Research and Investigation Society, 22, Northampton Row, London."

Under that was a typewritten communication.

"Master Carboy, 4th Form, Rylcombe Grammar School, Sussex.

"Dear Sir,—As you are doubtless aware, we have the pleasure of undertaking the investigation of the claim of the Carboy family to the Earldom of Serapacres. In the course of our investigations, we have had our attention directed to the old castle of Rylcombe, in the neighbourhood of your school. There, we have every reason to believe, will be discovered a sealed box containing a document of great interest to you. As you are doubtless well-acquainted with the locality, we venture to ask you for your assistance in the matter. Our Mr. Walker will call upon you this Friday afternoon, at 5 o'clock, p.m., when we trust you will have the great kindness to lend him your aid in investigating the ruins.—We are, dear sir, yours faithfully,
 "The Historical Research and Investigation Society."

Carboy drew a deep breath.

Then his eyes simply danced.

It had come at last.

Only a couple of days ago he had been telling unbelieving juniors all about that earldom that belonged to the Carboy family, and they had been jokingly calling him the "Honourable Teddy" ever since.

Now they would see!

Help—of course he would help! He was eager to start. How the fellows would stare when that mysterious document was discovered in the ruins of the old castle, and the claim to the earldom of Serapacres was made out and clearly proved!

The Honourable Edward Carboy!

The junior with aristocratic tastes was intoxicated at the thought.

He knew only one honourable, as a matter of fact, and that was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

D'Arcy made nothing whatever of his distinction, and it was seldom or never referred to; but perhaps that was because he was born to it, and had had time to realise that a word added to one's name was little in itself.

But to Carboy, who wasn't born to it, the title of

(Continued on page 20.)

NEXT WEDNESDAY!

GRAND, COMPLETE TALE OF

H.M.S. TREMENDOUS.

By F. ST. MARS.

THE NEW "HA, HA!" SERIES.

Messrs

P.C. DEWDROP & CO
UNLIMITED.

A TERRIBLE BLUNDER.

By "ALGY."

P. C. DEWDROP had not always been a policeman. When he left school, by special desire of the headmaster, he obtained a very good position at the local milkshop, but as there seemed to be a very strong suspicion that his personality turned the milk, he graduated into the abandoned line, then learned the rudiments of the grocery trade, tried his hand at catching flies for a postman (san department), and then obtained a job as a painter; but, fearing promotion in those walks of life would be extremely slow and tedious, he came to the conclusion that the police force was the place for him, so into the policeman he went.

The desire to make a name for himself was for ever burning in his bosom. He daily rambled over his beat, but sometimes his heart sank, and horrible attacks of depression would visit him at his poor outlook; attacks that, had they been described in the Press, would have made the fortune of any ordinary advertisement writer.

One day, while hanging about, first on one leg and then on the other, doing nothing, an extra large-sized sigh escaped him, which caused several leaves to fall from the trees nearby, and attracted the attention of a shabby genteel man named Wilbur Allwright Sunday, a distant relation of the famous American flying man. He was leaning against a fence lazily thinking out a scheme for aviators that would make the earth softer to fall on. Looking round quickly, he anxiously inquired whether anything serious was the matter, and if so, whether he could be of any assistance.

"No, I fear not," gloomily replied Dewdrop. "Then, dash it all, why look so peevish?" he exclaimed, taking a partially-smoked cigarette from his ear and lighting up. "Have you done anything wrong?"

"Well," said Dewdrop, raising his eyebrows with his hands in his pockets, "between you and me, the cause of my dejection is this. I'm a disappointed man, I'm not occupying the position in this world that I ought to occupy, and that's a fact."

"More an I," said Wilbur. "I ought to be in prison, but I'm not. We all have something to put up with, you know, so cheer up."

"Well, I've been thinking," said Dewdrop slowly, "Good for! Then no wonder you've got the hump!"

"I've been thinking," said Dewdrop, unheeding the unwelcome interruption, "that I'm a much smarter fellow than you give credit for, and if only I could drop across some chance, fame and fortune would be mine and theirs, too."

"If that's the case, then I'm your man!" exclaimed Wilbur, tapping his feet on the ground to the tune of "I Let's both put our heads together at once. A moment's delay may be dangerous. Is there anything in the clue line?"

"Well," said Dewdrop, shrugging his shoulders, with a sad smile, "from information received two years ago, a burglar was committed at that large house over there on the right, and I've been following the case up ever since. I've got my eye on the man that's done it, I feel certain; but he's a wily sort of cove, and keeps slipping through my fingers. If I can rely upon your services, I shall probably get promoted next week, and I'll see you lose nothing by it, and you can have the fifty-pound reward that's offered. I shall be content with the honour and glory."

"Right! That's good enough for me!" exclaimed Wilbur. "What sort of a man is he?"

"Well, he's a fellow of medium height, takes rather a

large-sized waistcoat, has a strawberry mark in the middle of his back, and always wears boots that are very clean in front, but very dirty at the back."

"I'll have that fifty pounds in my pockets before dinner-time!" muttered Wilbur, with suppressed excitement. "I think I can lay my hands on the very man."

The two then arranged several small details as to their plan of action, and parted.

The position Wilbur had received instructions to take up commanded the view of four streets and a defile, and he had not been watching very long before a man passed who answered the description given by Dewdrop except for the strawberry mark, but as no opportunity then offered itself of viewing that, he decided to track the man and chance the consequences.

He followed him up fourteen streets, across two squares, and saw him hesitate outside a down licensed house. Suddenly he seemed to have an idea that he was being watched, for all at once he cast furtive glances to the right and to the left, and then ran like one possessed. Wilbur followed with the reward in his mind.

After a stern chase he saw the man climb a garden-wall with a hop, skip, and a jump, and creep into a solitary dustbin. Instantly Wilbur rushed forward, jammed the lid of the bin down and sat upon it.



Wilbur Allwright suddenly discovered that the man was none other than P.-C. Dewdrop in disguise.

A sudden startled shout came from the inside. A moment later, the captured man, who was struggling violently for air, forced an opening. The two men hit out blindly at one another, and several bystanders were struck by mistake. Over and over they went, but at last the superior tactics of Wilbur gradually wore his opponent down, and he collapsed with a swollen ear, a very thick lip, and with four of his false teeth lodging in the back of his neck.

While waiting for a doctor to have these extracted, Wilbur stooped down to discover the strawberry mark, but no sooner had he caught sight of the wretched man's face than he had his whole frame shook, and his eyes rolled about in a most shocking manner, for he suddenly discovered that the man was none other than P.-C. Dewdrop in disguise.

THE END.

(Another "Ha Ha!" next Wednesday.)
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The Grammar School's Great Jape

(Continued from Page 8.)

honourable was a vision of joy. His eyes danced at the thought.

He forgot that a crowd of juniors were watching him. His changing expressions amazed them, and they gathered round and stared the more.

"Faith, and his pater's sent him a big postal order!" said Nicky O'Donnell, with conviction.

"A big cheque, I should think, from his chivy," said Harke.

"It's a tip from his uncle, the Duke of Birmingham," said Carpenter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Carboy waved his hand in a lordly way.

"Clear out, you kids!" he said; he very nearly said "You pobbies!"

"I say, Monk, old chap—and you, Lane—

come into the study!"

"Eh? What for?"

"I want you to read this letter."

"Oh, all right!"

The three chums went into their study. Gordon Gay & Co.

came down the passage, and looked in surprise at the excited

Fourth-Formers.

"Anything on?" asked Gordon Gay.

"Faith, and Carboy's had a letter!"

"Nothing remarkable in that, that I can see!"

"But he's making a giddy mystery about it," said McDonald. "He's taken Mooker and Lane into the study to read it, after looking as if he had a bonknote for a hundred pounds in it."

Gordon Gay laughed, and strolled on with his chums. In the quadrangle they stopped to look at one another and chuckle.

"It's caught on," said Gordon Gay.

"What ho!" agreed Jack Wootton.

"I knew it would," said Harry.

"It will be ripping," Gordon Gay rubbed his hand. "It's cost us five bob for printing, a bob for typewriting, and two-pence for stamps—as I had to enclose the letter in one to a chap in London to get it posted there. Total, six-and-two-pence, for the giddiest jape that ever was japed."

"Cheap!" grinned Harry Wootton.

"Yes, rather! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith and pshaw are you fellows laughing at?" asked O'Donnell, coming up.

"Sure, we were admiring the colour of your hair," said Gordon Gay.

And the Three Wallabies laughed again.

CHAPTER 8.

A Case of Swelled Head.

CARBOY marched into the study with the manner of one treading on air. He might have had a coronet on his noble brow, and an ermine robe sweeping behind him, from his manner. It was the grand manner to the life.

Monk and Lane looked at him in considerable surprise.

They were accustomed to little flights of fancy on their chum's part, and they knew that he was sometimes inclined to put on a little side; but they could not understand him at all now.

"What's the matter?" asked Monk.

"What the deuce are you turning your nose up for?"

queried Lane.

Carboy coloured, and came down to the earth again.

"I—I wasn't," he said. "But read that letter."

He handed it to Monk.

Frank Monk looked at the letter, with Lane reading over his shoulder. They uttered loud and simultaneous exclamations of astonishment.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Monk.

"Great pip!" said Lane.

Carboy smiled loftily.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he asked.

"I can't understand it."

"Can't you read typewriting, or do you want it printed in big Roman type?" asked Carboy sarcastically. "The meaning's clear enough to me."

"But—hat it's very curious."

"I don't see anything curious about it. I told you my pater was going to engage the Historical Research and In-

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A Complete
Story By **LEE**

vestigation Society to take up the matter of the Carboy raidism. Well, he's done it. They've followed the clues in our old family papers—the pater had holed the stores in they've got on the track. They have discovered that the missing document is most likely to be found in the old castle at Rycombe—"

"But—"

"I remember now one of my ancestors, who fought for King Charles in the Civil War, is supposed to have had the document in his possession," said Carboy. "Now, you know that Rycombe Castle was ruined in the Parliamentary wars, don't you?"

"Yes, I know that," said Monk.

"It was besieged by Cromwell's troops, and battered to pieces with their blessed cannon," said Carboy. "I think it's very likely that my ancestor, Sir Francis de Carboy, was among the Royalists who were besieged there. You see, the rotten Roundheads captured the castle, and what could be more natural than for Sir Francis to conceal the document somewhere so that it should not be lost?"

"About the best way of getting it lost, I should think," said Lane.

"I mean, so that it should not fall into the enemy's hands," said Carboy. "However, I'm going to help Mr. Walker, of course. I shall assist him to find the document. I was wondering if you fellows would care to come with me."

"Yes, rather!" said Monk. "It must be grand."

"Genuine!" said Carboy, in pained surprise.

"Yes, I mean, these research societies are mostly swindles, you know, and these chaps may be daddling your governor," explained Monk.

"Boss! Anyway, I shall soon see."

"That's true enough."

"If it were not fully genuine, why should they want me to help in investigating the ruined castle? They can't possibly get anything out of that."

Frank Monk nodded. Certainly he could not see how the H. R. and I. Society could possibly get anything by making Carboy go over the ruins.

After all, why mightn't there be something in the Carboy claims? There was nothing surprising in Carboy being an honourable. And now they came to think of it, neither Monk nor Lane was invincible to the honour of having the only titled fellow at Rycombe School in their study.

"My hat!" said Monk, with a sudden gleam in his eye. "This will be a big score over those Wallaby boundaries."

"Yes, rather!" said Lane.

"They've always maintained that Carboy was gawking about his giddy noble blood," said Monk, rather forgetting that he had always taken exactly the same view, too; "but this will be a come-down for them."

"They'll have to sing small, and no mistake."

"Yes, rather!" said Carboy, with a drawl in his voice which made the words sound very like the "Yaas, wathah!" of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy over at St. Jim's. Carboy had already mentally determined to take D'Arcy as his model.

"They'll have to sing smallah! What!"

Monk gasped.

"Oh, Carboy, old chap!"

"Let him rip!" said Lane.

"Really, dear boys—"

The breakfast-bell summoned them at this point, before Lane and Monk had time to choke.

Carboy walked down to breakfast like a duke, and turned up his nose in the most aristocratic manner at the plain fare of the breakfast-table.

"I don't see how I can stand this," he murmured.

Gordon Gay, who was next to him, stared.

"Stand what?" he asked.

"This commonplace grub," said Carboy, with a sniff.

"There ought to be some distinction made for the nobility," Gordon Gay nearly swallowed his egg-noon.

"For—for what?" he gasped.

"The nobility," said Carboy, with a frown.

"My only hat!"

Carboy snorted, forgetting for the moment that a snort was not one of the manners and graces which stamp the caste of Vere de Vere.

"You can corkle!" he remarked. "I may tell you that circumstances have come to light which clearly prove the right of the Carboys to the earldom of Serapence."

"I think I've heard that before," grinned Gordon Gay.

"But there has been a fresh discovery."

"Good! Let's hear it!"

"You'll know all about it to-night," said Carboy. "I can't tell you before then. I may say, though, that the Historical Research and Investigation Society have discovered un-

deniable proofs."

"I should like to see 'em!"

"You shall see them this evening."

"A's bargain, kid," said Gordon Gay. "I won't begin to till you've seen 'em, though."

And the Wallabies chuckled.

When the Fourth Formers went into their class-room that afternoon, Carboy seemed to be walking on air still. He paid attention to the lessons, being engaged in a mental struggle to work out the threefold connection between the old castle of Rykombs, and the earldom of Winton.

Mr. Adams, who didn't know what Carboy was thinking about, and also didn't take the slightest interest in family genealogy, kindly bestowed upon him a couple of lines as a hint that work was to be attended to in the Honourable Edward Carboy care for lines?

Mr. Adams noticed them. He left the class-room after the lesson two hundred lines the richer, but with a light on his face that shared his satisfaction to a great extent. It is true they had almost persuaded themselves that they had looked up their chum's aristocratic claims all the time, and they were looking forward with great satisfaction to the dinner in store for Gordon Gay.

"It will show those blasted Wallabies not to be such giddy fellows," said Lane indignantly. "They've made a thing all along!"

"Of course, they don't understand such matters," said Monk.

"That's it, dear boys," said Carboy loftily. "That's it, that's it."

The "Bai Jove" almost crushed Monk and Lane. Unfortunately, Jim Preston, the Lancashire lad, heard it, and he was at all crushed. He only stared.

"My only summer bonnet!" ejaculated Preston. "What's the matter with you, Carboy?"

"Me, my lad!" said Carboy. "Nothing, dear boy."

Preston stared against an elm.

"Mum!" he asked. "Is he dangerous?"

"Pay don't bother, my lad," said Carboy. And he walked away with his thumbs, his nose very high in the air.

Preston stared after him blankly, and then staggered away to carry the startling news that Ted Carboy was mad, and that Monk and Lane appeared to be sharers of his sudden insanity.

"Do you know what's the matter with the image, Gay?" asked the Cornstalk. "He's saying 'Bai Jove,' and 'Dear boy,' and he called me 'My lad'!"

Gordon Gay chuckled.

"Perhaps he was dreaming," he suggested.

"Dreaming!" said Jim, staring.

"Yes, day-dreaming."

"What on earth—"

"You can keep a secret, kid—honour!"

"Honour bright," said the Lancashire lad, much mystified.

"Ten later, and I will a tale unfold," said Gordon Gay dramatically.

"Oh, he larks! Go ahead."

And Gordon unfolded a tale—in whispers—and Jim Preston laid himself down on the grass and kicked up his feet in an attack of hysteria.

CHAPTER 9.

Our Mr. Walker.

GORDON GAY came out of the schoolhouse immediately after classes were dismissed that afternoon, and went down to the bicycle-shed. As he came past the house again, wheeling his machine, Frank Monk & Co. were standing on the steps. The Cornstalk had stopped and called

"Coming out for a spin, you kids?"

Frank Monk & Co. grinned at one another.

As they were expecting a call from Mr. Walker, of the Historical Research and Investigation Society about five o'clock, and it was more than half-past four already, there was not much likelihood of their going out for a spin with the Wallaby.

"No, thanks," said Monk.

"Some other evening," said Lane affably.

"It's a jolly nice afternoon," said Gay. "As nice as an afternoon in Australia almost. Better come."

"Anything on?"

"I require elsewhere," said Monk blandly.

"It, it, it!"

"Will you come, Honourable Teddy?"

"I require elsewhere."

"You don't be impertinent, dear boy," he said.

"It, it, it!" roared Gordon Gay.

Carboy turned laughingly upon his heel. Gordon Gay chuckled as he wheeled his machine down to the gates. He mounted in the lane, slung a bag upon the handle-bars, and scorching away towards Rykombs.

Jack and Harry Wootton remained within gates. It had been agreed that the Wedsbies should avert the possibility of suspicion by not going out together. Besides, the Woottons wanted to keep an eye on Carboy. The absurdities of the budding Earl of Scorpairs were infinitely amusing.

If Carboy had really turned out to be an earl's son, like the hero of a six-shilling novel, it is to be feared that he would have suffered from a tremendous attack of swollen head. For, though he was not yet an honourable by any means, his head was what Sam Weller would have described as "swellin' widdly."

He treated his chums with kind friendliness, and that was one point in his favour, but to the rest of the Fourth he was growing as brightly as a French noble of the ancient regime.

Jim Preston saluted him after school with a slap on the shoulder, and Carboy gave a sort of exhausted gasp.

"Pray don't be so rough, dear boy!" he ejaculated.

"Oh, my lad!" gurgled the Lancashire lad.

Carboy looked at him, and took out his handkerchief, and deliberately wiped his jacket where the saluting hand had fallen, and walked away, leaving Jim Preston staring. For some minutes the Lancashire lad stared, till he collapsed into a helpless giggle.

Carboy was looking very thoughtful as the hand of the school clock neared the hour of five.

"It's pretty dark in the old castle," he remarked.

"Yes, we'd better take a lantern," said Monk.

"Ahem! I was thinking that—ahem!—I might need an eyeglass."

Even Monk and Lane were gashed at this. They staggered away, and stared blankly at their chum.

"A—a what?" gasped Lane.

Carboy coloured a little, but he replied firmly:

"An eyeglass."

"A—a monocle!" murmured Frank.

"Yess," said Carboy.

That "yess" finished it.

Monk and Lane staggered away, lagging one another in a helpless sort of way. Carboy looked at them severely. But Monk and Lane could not help it—they roared. They roared and shrieked and yelled—while the Honourable Teddy's face grew redder and redder.

"Blessed if I can see what the joke's about," said Carboy at last. "I think you're a pair of rude boudlers, and if you don't behave yourselves I shall really have to be a little more careful in the selection of my friends."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop that cackling, do! You shock my nerves!"

"He never used to have any nerves!" wailed Monk. "Oh, Teddy—Teddy! Draw it mild!"

"Really, dear boys—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sound of wheels at the gate interrupted the scene, which was growing dangerous—for Carboy's newly aristocratic temper was not likely to stand so much mirth patiently.

Mr. Cope's trap from the village rolled into the drive.

Cope himself was driving, and in the trap sat a little gentleman in a suit of rusty black, with black gloves, and a very white collar, and a black bowler hat. His face was somewhat pasty in complexion, and his chin was quite hidden by a thick, grizzled beard, and he wore side-whiskers and a grey moustache. His forehead was very wrinkled, as if he had done a great deal of thinking all his life. Altogether, he looked like a very painstaking and trustworthy confidential agent—a little short-sighted, apparently, as he was blinking through gold-rimmed glasses. The chums of the Fourth gazed at once who it was.

"There he is!" ejaculated Monk.

"It's Walker!"

"Our Mr. Walker!"

"That's it," said Carboy, with an aristocratic inclination of the head. "I have no doubt that this is—er—the person."

The trap stopped before the great red brick pile of the Grammar School, and the little gentleman alighted in a slow and gingerly way. A number of juniors gathered round at once, and they were greatly interested in the movements of the little gentleman. As O'Donnell remarked:

"He looked as if his joints would creak at every movement, begorra!"

The little gentleman looked round through his gold-rimmed glasses. He was no taller than any of the juniors on the steps, though he looked old enough to be their father or grandfather.

Monk stepped forward.

"You wish to see someone, sir?" he asked.

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"Ah, yes, yes!" said the little gentleman, in a quick, staccato voice. "Is there a Master Edward Carboy here?"

"Here he is!" exclaimed Jack Wootton. "Next man in, Carboy!"

And there was a laugh.

Carboy cast a glance of haughty round, and strode forward with a most aristocratic lounge.

"I'm Carboy," he said.

"Very good, sir," said the little gentleman; and the boys were greatly impressed as they saw the immense respect the stranger paid to Carboy. "I unfortunately have not my cardcase with me, but you were expecting me, I think—Mr. Walker, of the Historical Research and Investigation Society."

"Quite so."

And Carboy looked round proudly upon the crowd of fellows, who were increasing in numbers, and all looking extremely interested.

The two Woottons and Jim Preston were grinning, but the other fellows were serious enough now. Carboy was going up in their estimation.

"The long and arduous search is now nearing its termination," said the little gentleman, apparently unconscious of the fact that twenty fellows were drinking in every word.

"The document will be discovered to-day."

"Good!" said Carboy. "Then there is no further doubt."

"None at all about the existence of the document, and its presence where we are going to search for it," said the little gentleman. "Are you prepared to accompany me?"

"Certainly; and my friends, too."

"Ah! Is the castle far from here?"

"A couple of miles."

"Ahem! Perhaps we can go some distance in the trap," suggested Mr. Walker. "I am not so young as I used to be, sir."

The fellows looked at one another. It was something to hear a respectable old gentleman like this addressing Carboy as "sir."

"Yes; we can do half of it in the trap, Mr. Walker," said Monk.

"Very good."

"Wouldn't you like some tea before we start?" asked Lane.

"Thanks, no. I think the search had better be made by daylight."

"Right ho!"

"But what on earth is it all about?" exclaimed Carpenter, as the chums made a movement towards the trap. "What are you going to look for, Carboy?"

"I don't mind telling you," said Carboy loftily. "It's the document I've told you about."

"What, the missing document?"

"Yes; the one that proves that we are entitled to the earldom of Scrapacraea."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"And this chap is going to find it?" demanded Lisle incredulously.

"Yes."

"Where are you going to look for it?" asked Morgan.

"In the old castle of Rylcombe. It was hidden there by one of my ancestors during the Civil War," said Carboy indifferently.

"By George!"

"It's really true, then?"

"Looks like it."

"I say, Carboy, may we come?" exclaimed Hanks.

"Well, we're going in the trap," said Carboy. "You can follow, if you like."

"Oh, you'll bring the document back here, won't you?" asked Jack Wootton.

"Certainly!"

"Let's all see it," said Lisle, with a grin. "I'll be jolly glad to, for one."

"Then we shall know it isn't spool, begorra!" said Nicky O'Donnell.

Carboy smiled.

"Oh, I'll satisfy you all!" he said. "Of course, there's a chance that the document won't be found—"

"Not at all!" interposed Mr. Walker. "I have absolutely certain information. It is concealed in the ruins in a box."

"Then we'll jolly well bring it back and show you," said Carboy.

"No objection at all to that," said Mr. Walker. "Shall we start now?"

"We're ready."

And Frank Monk & Co. clambered into the trap with "our Mr. Walker," and it rolled out of the gates of Rylcombe again. It left the juniors excitedly discussing the strange happening.

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CHAPTER 10.

A Thrilling Discovery.

MR. WALKER was very silent during the trap drive. Doubtless a long railway journey had tired the little gentleman, who naturally was not so young as he used to be, as he had remarked. Or perhaps he was simply disinclined to talk.

At all events, he hardly said a word while the trap drove to the nearest spot to which it was possible for wheels to reach at the end of a footpath leading through Rylcombe Wood, and Cope was told to wait.

"It's a short cut through the wood, Mr. Walker," said Carboy.

"Very good!" said the little gentleman. And they set off along the footpath.

Old as he looked, the little gentleman proved to be a good walker, keeping the Grammarians at a good pace through the wood.

In fact, they had to step out to keep up with him. The ruined castle loomed into view, with the sun setting behind it, and showing up the great masses of masonry and the shattered towers and broken casements.

Mr. Walker glanced at it through his glasses.

"Hal! This must be the place!" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, that's it," said Carboy.

"I suppose the document's hidden underground, sir?" said Lane.

"Yes; in the vaults."

"Well, I've brought a lantern," said Monk, taking a Jack lantern out from under his jacket. "That's all right."

"Very thoughtful of you, my lad, though I have such clear directions to the spot that I think I could have found it by the aid of a match."

"How did you get the information, sir?" asked Lane curiously.

Mr. Walker shook his head.

"You must not ask me to give away professional secrets, my young friend," he said. "Enough that the information is certain and reliable."

"Quite enough," said Carboy.

They ascended the slope of the hill, towards the towering masses of the ancient gateway. The arch was broken in, but most of the gateway was intact. The way was cumbered up with masses of masonry, just as they had lain for hundreds of years, with the moss growing over them.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Walker. "This place must have been besieged at some time."

"It was attacked by Cromwell's soldiers, sir, in the Parliamentary wars," said Monk. "So was St. John's, or, rather, the building which used to be there. They battered most of it down, I believe. Cromwell was a thoroughgoing sort of chap."

"My ancestor, Sir Francis, defended this castle against the Roundheads," explained Carboy, who had gone decided by this time that Sir Francis de Carboy had been there. "It was in—in command of the Royalist troops."

"My hat!" murmured Lane.

"There was a desperate fight, and my ancestor distinguished himself awfully," said Carboy, with a disdainful glance at Lane. "I have no doubt that it was he who concealed the document in the castle."

Mr. Walker was taken with a sudden attack of coughing at this moment. He quickly recovered, however, and they entered the castle.

The confidential agent of the Historical Research and Investigation Society blinked round him through his gold-rimmed glasses.

"Ah, this is the place!" he exclaimed.

And he led the way towards the great office in the largest floor, where the stone steps led downward into the vaults.

Monk lighted his lantern, and descended first.

The lantern gleamed eerily into the gloomy vaults, and a chill, damp breath of air came up from below.

Mr. Walker followed Monk down the steps without hesitation, really like a man who knew the way, and Lane and Carboy brought up the rear.

In the vaults Mr. Walker paused to look about him.

It was a dark and sombre place, and the juniors felt an eerie sensation creep over them as they peered round in the light of the lantern.

"The third vault," muttered Mr. Walker.

"This way," said Monk.

They trod along to the third vault. Mr. Walker moved towards the wall on the left, and signed to Frank Monk to flash the lantern there.

The light moved up and down the wall.

"Ah, here it is!" exclaimed the agent.

He put his hand to a small gap in the wall, and knelt out a loose stone that closed up the opening of it.

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"Gentlemen," said the disguised Gordon Gay, indicating the folded paper in the broken box, "that is the mysterious document!" (See page 15.)

Then he thrust his hand into the aperture. Frack Monk held up the lantern to show him light, and the three juniors watched him with breathless expectation. Carboy was quite pale.

It was a great moment for the aristocratic Fourth-Former. At last the proofs of his noble descent were coming to light. In a few minutes more it would be clear to all that he had a right to style himself the Honourable Edward Carboy.

The thought was almost intoxicating. Mr. Walker groped in the aperture with irritating slowness.

"Is it there, sir?" asked Carboy at last, his voice trembling with eagerness.

"Yes; it is here."

Mr. Walker drew out a box. It was a square wooden box, about the size of a cigar-box, but evidently made of much thicker wood, and it was locked. The lock was rusty, though not so rusty as one would have

expected under the circumstances, and there was no sign of a key.

Carboy uttered an exclamation of delight.

"That's it, sir!"

Mr. Walker smiled indulgently.

"That's it, my boy."

"Hipping! Let's get it open."

Mr. Walker shook his head.

"There is no key—"

"The key may have fallen out here," said Carboy, groping in the hole. But he groped in vain. There was no key, and he drew forth his hand again, very dusty.

"We could break it open," suggested Lane, who was as eager as Carboy now.

Mr. Walker shook his head again.

"We must not open it here," he said.

"Why not, sir?"

"It must be opened in the presence of witnesses, and the more the better. I should suggest taking it back to the school, and opening it there with as many persons present

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as possible—unless you would prefer me to take it to London just as it is."

"Oh, no, sir!" exclaimed the three juniors at once. "Very well; we will take it back to the school, and open it there," said Mr. Walker.

Carboy hesitated. He wanted to break open the box at once, and examine the document within. But Mr. Walker cut short the matter by slipping the box into the inner pocket of his coat.

"Let us return," he said. "You must not spoil the matter by over eagerness, Master Carboy. There must be a sufficient number of witnesses to make the thing undeniably."

"I suppose so," assented Carboy reluctantly.

"Oh, yes, rather!" agreed Lane and Monk. "Let's buzz off."

And they left the ruins.

A quarter of an hour later the trap was bearing them rapidly back towards the Grammar School, the valuable prize still in the possession of "our Mr. Walker."

CHAPTER II.

Carboy is Very Popular.

RYLCOMBE GRAMMAR SCHOOL—or, at least, the junior portion of it—was in a state of intense excitement.

That Carboy had long claimed to be of inexpressible noble lineage everybody knew—that he considered that the earldom of Scrapacres rightfully belonged to his family was no secret.

But hitherto his claims had furnished only food for laughter to the irreverent Lower School.

Now, there evidently was, as Morgan remarked, something in it.

His father might have engaged the Historical Research and Investigation Society to look into the affair, and the Lower School would have smiled still. But when so extremely respectable and almost venerable a gentleman as Mr. Walker appeared upon the scene, and took Carboy away with the certain assurance of discovering the missing document, then the most obstinate of the doubting Thomases could not but be convinced.

Doubt, perhaps, lingered in some minds. But most of the fellows wanted to be on what looked like being the winning side, and Carboy's was the winning side now.

The Woottons grinned, and Jim Preston cackled without end, but they found few to grin and cackle with them.

Some of the fellows held their opinions in abeyance, as it were, but most of them were growing firm believers in Carboy's claims. Some, in fact, had turned right round, and declared that they had believed in Carboy all along.

"He'll be jolly rich now, if his pater turns out to be an earl," Carpenter remarked covetously. "It's like a blessed novel. But I always thought there was something in old Carboy—something superior."

"So did I," remarked Hanks. "A sort of noble bearing, that—that distinguished him from the ruck. He's bound to have piles of money now."

"Heaps, I should think," said Tracy.

"What a fine chap he's always been."

"Ripping!"

"I always liked him."

"Yes, I think there never was such a popular chap," remarked Hanks. "We all liked him, and I know I've spent some happy hours listening while he told me yarns about his ancestors."

"Yes, he's awfully interesting on that subject," observed Tracy.

By which it will be seen that Carboy stood, so to speak, was rising in the market.

Needless to say, the juniors waited eagerly for Carboy's return.

Long before he could possibly have got back from the castle, a crowd of them gathered at the gates to welcome him home.

"We ought to show old Carboy some attention," Carpenter said. "There's been a lot of fuss made of Gordon Gay. Is he a patch on old Carboy?"

"Hardly!" said Hanks disdainfully.

"Carboy can play his head off at cricket, can't he?"

"Of course he can, and at foorer, too."

Even some of the seniors heard of the affair, and took an interest in it. Pelham, of the Shell, a youth of aristocratic tendencies, which showed themselves chiefly in an extraordinarily high collar and a gold-headed cane, rather took the side of the Carboys.

Pelham never resigned the Fourth; but he joined the crowd to wait for Carboy. So did some of the Fifth—real seniors.

So did the Wallabys, grunting still.

But, as Carpenter remarked with a sneer, pretty soon

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they would be grinning on the other side of their noses. And Gordon Gay, too!

"By the way, where is Gordon Gay?" said Morgan.

"He went out on his figger after school," said McDonald.

"A pity he's going to miss this."

"It'd be a surprise for him when he comes to," chuckled Tracy.

"He's been calling old Carboy the Honourable Teddy! It will be a come-draw for him to learn that Carboy is really the Honourable Edward Carboy. He is!"

Whereat Jack and Harry Wootton chuckled more frantically than ever, and Jim Preston assumed on the verge of going into a fit.

There was a sudden shout as the noise of wheels was heard in the lane.

"Here he comes!"

"Hurrah!"

The trap dashed up to the gate. It rolled in, and rolled up to the house amid a regular triumph for Carboy.

The three juniors jumped out, smiling with satisfaction. Mr. Walker followed them more slowly. He paid Gops, who drove away with the trap.

"Want you want it to take you to the station, or?" asked Monk.

"Oh, no!" said Mr. Walker.

There was a surge of juniors round them.

"Have you found it?"

"Got the giddy document?"

"Carboy, old chap, is it all right?"

"Yass," said Carboy.

"Good egg!"

"Hurrah for the Honourable Edward Carboy!"

"Hear, hear!"

Carboy smiled a smile of complete satisfaction.

"Thanks, dear boys," he said languidly. "Much obliged to you. Of course, I shall always be glad to see old friends at Scrapacres Hall."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Carboy!"

"I shall be very rich now, and—and titled," said Carboy modestly. "But I assure you, on the word of a—Scrapacres, that it won't make any difference to me."

"Hear, hear!"

"But do let's see the document!" exclaimed Jack Wootton.

"Shut up, Wootton!"

"You get out, you hounders!"

"None of your cheek now!"

"But he's right, dear boys," said Carboy indulgently.

"You shall see the document. It shall be opened in the Form-room, with everyone present. It's sealed up in a box. We shall want a hammer."

"I'll get one, old chap," said Carpenter.

"Good! All of you who care to see the document, follow me into the Form-room," said Carboy negligently.

"What ho!"

"I should like Gordon Gay to come, too."

"He's out," said O'Donnell.

"What a pity! Never mind; come on."

And Carboy & Co. marched into the Fourth Form room in a regular triumphal march.

CHAPTER 12.

The Mysterious Document.

MR. WALKER placed the wooden box on a desk, and the Fourth Form, who were there almost to the last boy, gathered round with awestricken gaze.

"Is that the box, Carboy, old fellow?" said Tracy.

"Yass, that's it."

"And the document's in it?" asked Hanks.

"Yass, walsh!"

Carboy's eye absent passed unnoticed in the general excitement. Or, rather, it appeared quite appropriate to Carboy now. Monk and Lane did not even grin.

"Do open it!" exclaimed half a dozen voices eagerly.

"Where's that hammer, then?"

"Here you are!" exclaimed Carpenter, hurrying into the room.

He handed the hammer to Mr. Walker.

That gentleman grasped it, and approached the box solemnly.

The Fourth Form stood crowded round with bated breath.

Pelham of the Shell tapped Carboy on the shoulder.

"Jolly good luck to you, old fellow!" he remarked.

Carboy blushed with pleasure. To be tapped on the shoulder and called "old fellow" by the dandy of the school was a new experience to him.

"Yass, rathsh!" he said.

A Complete Story By

STREET
WEDNESDAY.

"Congratulations, my boy!" said Cook, of the Fifth.
"Thanks awfully!" said Carboy.
Mr. Walker possessed the hammer.
"Yes," murmured Jack Wootton, "we're just going to
begin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"What up, you Wallaby rosters!"

"O'er!"
"O'er!"
The lid of the box split under the doughty blow Mr. Walker dealt it. Crash! again, and the lid popped off in
pieces.

The box was open!
Within was seen a folded paper. He had expected to see
Carboy's face changed a little. He had expected to see
a roll of parchment, or something of the sort, but it was
a common paper, and looked quite modern.
"Gentlemen!" said Mr. Walker, "that is the mysterious
document!"

"Bravo!"
"I request Master Carboy to take it out of the box him-
self, and show it to all of you," said Mr. Walker. "His
are the proper hands to do so."

"Go it, Carboy!"
"Let's see it, Teddy!"
Mr. Walker stepped back, and Carboy approached the
box.

"Had it out, Teddy," said Frank Monk encouragingly.
Carboy drew the paper from the box.
He unfolded it with fingers that shook in spite of himself.
The paper was spread out at last. A dozen heads were
turned to read it over Carboy's shoulders.

Too there was a sort of hysterical giggle in the room.
Carboy jumped, and the other fellows giggled.
For this was what was written on the paper, in quite
modern English:

"Sold again.—GORDON GAY!"

Carboy stood holding the paper, looking quite petrified.
The giggle rippled through the crowd.
"What is it?" exclaimed a score of voices, from fellows
who could not see the paper. "Isn't it all right! What's
the joke!"

"Sold again!" roared O'Donnell.

"Gordon Gay!" yelled Morgan.

"What!"

"It's a giddy jape!"

"It's a jape of Gordon Gay's!"

"Gay wrote the mysterious document."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sold again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all a jape!"

"Puffed, by thunder!" ejaculated Frank Monk, staring
at the tell-tale paper as if his eyes would pop out of his
head.

"Sold!"

"Oh!" stammered Carboy. "Oh! My hat! Where's
the paper?"

"Where's Walker?"

"Our Mr. Walker" had evidently lived up to his
name. In those few seconds of amazement, while no one
noticed him, Mr. Walker had slipped out of the room.

"Walker had walked!"

"Walker" roared Carpenter. "Good name, too! Ha,
ha, ha!"

"Our Mr. Walker" gasped Lane. "Of course, it was a
very good one!"

"But who can it be?" gasped Carboy dazedly.

"It's a wonder! He doesn't come from the Historical
Society and Investigation Society at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jack Wootton. "There isn't such
a society in existence, you know!"

"What?"

"It's a Wallaby jape. That letter had the heading
found in Rycomb's."

"And the typewriting was done on the machine in the
owner's office."

"Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But who's Mr. Walker?" shrieked Carboy.

"Ha, ha, ha! Gordon Gay!"

"WHAT!"

The Wallabies yelled.

And as the truth dawned upon the Fourth Form, they

stood, too.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But who's Mr. Walker?" shrieked Carboy.

"Ha, ha, ha! Gordon Gay!"

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"But who's Mr. Walker?" shrieked Carboy.

"Ha, ha, ha! Gordon Gay!"

"WHAT!"

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And as the truth dawned upon the Fourth Form, they

stood, too.

Frank Monk & Co. stood petrified.
Never would they have suspected it.
But the disappearance of Mr. Walker could only have one
meaning.

"Come and have him out!" muttered Carboy wildly.

"Right-ho!"

Frank Monk & Co. rushed from the room in search of the
elusive Mr. Walker.

The Fourth Form, shrieking with mirth, streamed out after
them. Pelham, of the Shell, strode away with Cook, of the
Fifth, sneering largest-sized snouts. Carpenter & Co. forgot
that they had always believed in old Carboy, and Hank's
allowed to slip from his memory the happy hours he had
passed in listening to yarns of the Honourable Edward's
ancestors.

They were loudest of all in their merriment at Carboy's
expense, and in ridiculing the absurd "side" the hapless
claimant to aristocratic honours had put on, on the strength
of that spoof letter from a non-existent society.

"He won't forget his old friends at Scrapaces Hall!"
gasped Hank.

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

"He'll still be the same to us common chaps, though he's
the Honourable Edward Carboy, giddy son and heir of the
Earl of Scrapaces!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! What's the matter?"

"They've found him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Monk & Co. had discovered Mr. Walker. They
found him in the passage, holding on to the banisters, and
gasping with mortification. Mr. Walker was in no state to
defend himself. The indignant juniors grasped him and
rolled him over, and yanked off his venerable beard and
whiskers, and bumped him on the floor.

"You spoofing rotter!" gasped Carboy.

"Oh, carry me home to die!" wept Gordon Gay. "Don't
be too rough, Honourable Teddy! As you are noble, be
merciful! Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is Gay, and no mistake!" panted Monk. "Bump
him!"

"Ha, ha! Bump!" gasped Gordon Gay.

The Wallabies rushed to the rescue. The average were
wring off their victim, who sat up with the tears of merriment
making furrows down his green-painted cheeks, and
his beard jammed on his waistcoat, and his whiskers hang-
ing by a single wire. A most singular spectacle Mr. Walker
presented, and the juniors shrieked as they looked at him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let us get at him!" roared Carboy.

"Hands off! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let us get—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A laughing crowd kept Carboy back. Frank Monk and
Lane, by this time, were as nervous with mirth as the rest,
and they could not help their chum. Carboy was the only
one who looked serious—and he made frantic efforts to get at
Gordon Gay.

But the Wallabies and the rest defended him, and the
vengeful claimant to an earldom was kept off.

Gordon Gay rocked with laughter, and wept tears of un-
dilled mirth over his misadventure and his detached whiskers.

"Oh, my only hat!" sobbed Jack Wootton. "I've got a
shagpon take in all my ribs, and I can't leave it off! Ha,
ha, ha!"

"Yess, rathah!" said Harry Wootton, with an admirable
imitation of Carboy's new accent.

And there was a fresh yell of laughter.

Frank Monk and Lane dragged Carboy away at last.

They left the juniors in hysterics.

And when they had recovered themselves a little they
examined Mr. Walker, in his dull-headed disguise as he was
right round the quadrangle in triumph, and up to No. 11
found the quadrangle and laid her. It was a complete triumph
for the Wallabies, and even they really in the Fourth ad
noticed that they had proved the truth of the rumour. And
the next day Carboy was addressed not even by his surname,
but on the date of the suit of "our Mr. Walker" he was
known as the Honourable Teddy. And whether the Carboy claim to
the Scrapaces' title was well founded or not, Carboy was
likely to remain the Honourable Teddy, at least so long as
he stayed at the Grammar School.

THE END

(Another splendid tale next week, entitled "The Fighting Middy,"
by F. St. Mars. Order your "Empire" Library in advance. Price
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THE EMPIRE LIBRARY—No. 22

F. ST. MARS, entitled "THE FIGHTING MIDDY."

SPLENDID TALE OF SCHOOL LIFE.

THE RIVALS OF ST. KIT'S



-BY CHARLES HAMILTON-

Like a Thief in the Night.

"You—you young cad!"

Eldred Lacy snarled out the words as he sprang towards Trimble. The latter had just entered the prefect's study, a minute or so after the result of the election had been declared. The junior evidently did not know what his reception would be like. But Lacy soon set that doubt at rest. He seized Trimble by the collar, and began to box his ears furiously.

"You young cad! It is because you didn't vote that I lost the election. You deserted me at the last moment, after all!"

"I couldn't help it!" gasped Trimble. "I was kept away."

"Who kept you away?"

"Pat Nugent."

Lacy started, and a gleam came into his eyes.

"Pat Nugent! Then there was some trickery about it, just as I suspected."

"Yes; Pat Nugent shut me up in the crypt under the old chapel, and there were thirteen of our chaps shut up there with me," said Trimble, rubbing his ears ruefully.

"So I lost fourteen votes like that," said Lacy, gritting his teeth. "And Brooke beat me only by two. You can see how the election would have gone if you had had sense enough to keep clear of Pat Nugent."

"Is it too late now?" asked Trimble. "I know Brooke wouldn't have said anything if it had been he, but there's no reason why you shouldn't."

"Well, we'll see!" exclaimed Lacy. "I'll see Brooke and put it to him. Do you know where he is just now, Trimble?"

"I saw him go out with Talbot. They went down towards the gymnasium."

"All right. You can go."

Trimble went out of the study. Lacy stood for some minutes in deep thought.

"I've got to do it!" he exclaimed aloud at last. "It's risky, especially after that Irish kid seeing me there the other day. But it's got to be done. If Arthur Talbot leaves St. Kit's, he must not take the silver box with him. Rupert was very emphatic about that. Now's my chance to try again."

The studies were almost wholly deserted. From only one or two doors came a gleam of light. The prefect could not have a better opportunity of making a second attempt to surprise the secret of Arthur Talbot. He went quietly along the passage, and opened Talbot's door. It was not fastened, and the gas in the study was turned low. Lacy entered and closed the door.

For a quarter of an hour the spy was busy. The result was—nothing. He paused, and stood with a savage and baffled look on his face. He did not like the task, but he was completely under his brother's influence. For everything, including his fees at St. Kit's, he was dependent upon Rupert Lacy. He dared not disobey the orders of the Squire of Lynwood.

His eyes rested upon Talbot's desk. Once already he had been through that; but now, as he looked at it, it occurred to him that the desk, which was a large, old-fashioned one, might contain a secret drawer.

READ THIS FIRST.

Pat Nugent, Blagden, and Greene, three chums of the Fourth at St. Kit's, are ardent supporters of Arthur Talbot, the school captain, against whom Eldred Lacy, of the Sixth, is trying to rouse ill feeling. One afternoon a ragged ruffian named Seth Black comes to the school and claims to be Talbot's father. Talbot is overwhelmed with shame, as the history of his birth is a mystery, and he has no proof that Black's statement is untrue. His first act is to resign the captaincy of the school, to which his chum Brooke is elected, after an exciting contest with Eldred Lacy.

(Now go on with the story.)

He stepped towards it, and made a second examination. He patiently examined every part of it, pressing with his fingers wherever he thought there was a chance of a secret spring existing. Suddenly there was a faint click. The prefect's heart gave a bound. In the dim light he stooped and looked closely at the spot. A little panel had shot back, and a small cavity was revealed. Within the cavity something white glimmered.

He drew it out with trembling fingers. It was a metal box, dull in hue, but evidently of silver.

"The silver box!"

The prefect's heart beat hard. It was not prudent to open there and examine his prize, and he thrust it into his inside breast-pocket, and stepped to the door of the study. Then his heart gave a painful throb. Footsteps were coming along the passage without. Was it Talbot?

The prefect's brain worked quickly. To be caught in Talbot's study with the door closed would lead to awkward questions. He could not escape from it without being seen. He silently opened the door wide, and stepped into the doorway. The footsteps came nearer. It was Talbot! The corridor was dimly lighted, but he saw Lacy in the doorway of his study as he came up, and looked at him in surprise.

"What do you want here, Lacy?"

"I was just looking in to speak to you," said the prefect.

"Indeed! Well, here I am."

"I want to complain of Pat Nugent and the kids of the end study," said Lacy.

"You are always on their track, it seems. What have they been doing now?" said Talbot.

"They shut up fourteen juniors who were going to vote for me in the crypt under the old chapel," said Lacy.

Talbot laughed.

"I suppose your fellows were trying to do the same for them?" he remarked.

"That's nothing to do with it. I came here to speak to you and Brooke about it. I shall demand a fresh election."

Talbot shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, go and demand your fresh election, if you liked! Good-night!"

And he went into his study. Lacy walked down the corridor. He was greatly relieved. That unexpected and awkward meeting had passed off very well.

Talbot closed his door. He turned up the gas, and then stood for some moments in thought.

"I can't trust that fellow an inch!" he muttered. "Did he really come for the reason he stated? I can't forget what Pat Nugent told me about his rummaging in my study that time."

The captain's brows wrinkled.

"The silver box!"

Talbot, with compressed lips, opened the desk, and felt for the secret drawer. The secret spring clicked, and he felt in the cavity. It was empty! For a moment he could hardly believe it; he had acted on vague suspicion, and it was startling to find it changed into an absolute certainty.

But there was no room for doubt. Eldred Lacy had robbed him. The silver box was gone!

(Another instalment of this school tale next Wednesday.)

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