

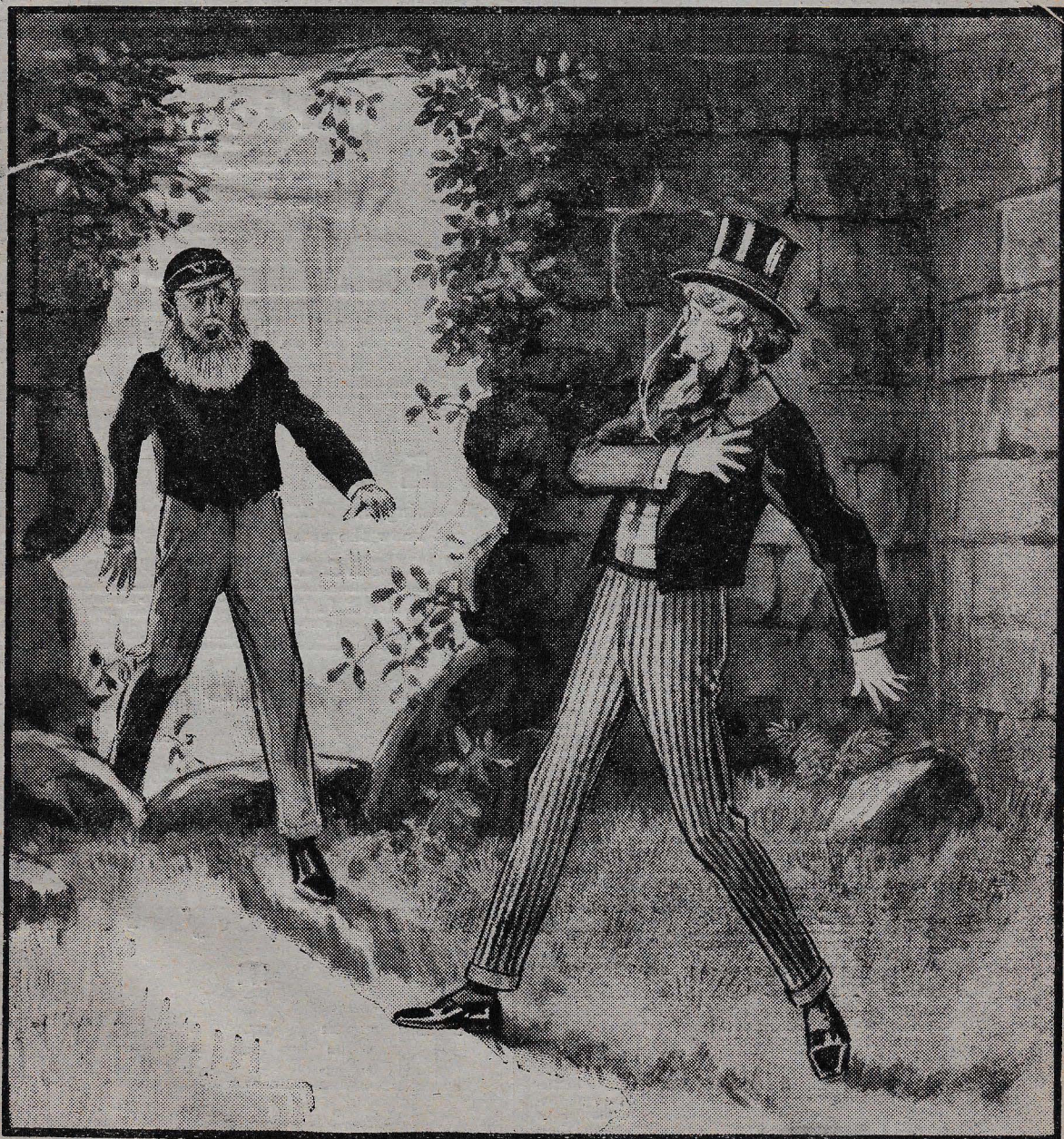
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The red-bearded stranger caught sight of D'Arcy, and started back. "Who—who are you?" gasped Gussy, with a dreadful feeling that it was a detective in search of him. "Ciel! Who are you?" shrieked the red-bearded stranger. "It is zat I know zat voice. It is ze voice of ze pauvre garcon zat I have keel!"
(An amusing incident in "The Schoolboy Raiders"—the splendid complete School Tale in this issue.)

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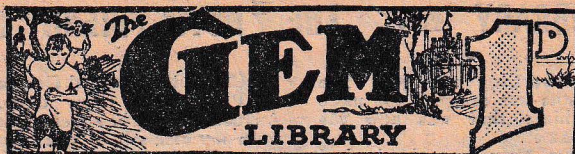


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St. Jim's and their Rivals of the Grammar School.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



THE SCHOOLBOY DUELLISTS COME FACE TO FACE! (See Chapter 8.)

CHAPTER I. Catching Tartars.

"H, what a surprise!"

Three youths in mortar-board caps stopped suddenly in Rylcombe Lane, and uttered that remark. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, stopped, too, and took a slightly tighter hold upon his gold-headed cane.

For the three youths in mortar-boards were Gordon Gay & Co., of the Grammar School—deadly rivals and enemies of the St. Jim's fellows, though their deadly enmity was very good-tempered and good-natured, as a rule.

Gordon Gay, the Cornstalk, and Wootton major, and Gustave Blanc, the French junior—more familiarly known as "Mont Blong"—they were the trio; and Arthur

Augustus knew that they were capable of anything, from rolling a fellow in a ditch to sitting on his best Sunday topper.

"Oh, what a surprise!" repeated Gordon Gay.

And Mont Blong chimed in:

"Oh, vat a vary great surprise!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy backed away. He had just come round the bend in the lane, and had happened upon the Grammarians quite suddenly. Arthur Augustus, the swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, was clad in his best; and when Arthur was clad in his best, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like the swell of St. Jim's. From the top of his glossy hat to the tips of his gleaming boots, he was a picture. And in that beautiful state, the last thing in the world that he wanted was a ragging at the hands of the Grammarians.

Next Wednesday:

"THE COCKNEY SCHOOLBOY!" AND "THE CORINTHIAN!"

But Gordon Gay & Co. were chortling with joy. The more magnificently Arthur Augustus was arrayed, the more delight there was in ragging him; that was how the remorseless Grammarians looked at it.

And they advanced upon Arthur Augustus, who backed away, and waved his cane.

"Pway keep your distance, deah boys!" said D'Arcy. "I do not want to make myself wuff and dustay thwashin' you now—"

"Go hon!" murmured Gordon Gay.

"I am goin' to the vicawage to tea," D'Arcy explained, with dignity. "Undah the cires., you can wun away and play!"

"We're going to play, but we're not going to run away!" chuckled Gordon Gay. "We were just looking for somebody to scalp. We haven't slaughtered anybody for days. Now you drop in, like corn in Egypt in one of the lean years. Gentlemen, I suggest a vote of thanks to Adolphus Montmorency D'Arcy for dropping along just when we were looking for somebody to rag!"

"Passed unanimously!" said Wootton major.

"Zat is so, my shums!" said Mont Blong.

"Now collar him!"

Arthur Augustus jumped back and ran. Arthur Augustus was as brave as a lion, and he would have scorned to turn his back upon any number of foes—so far as danger was concerned. But when it was a question of saving his clothes and his Sunday topper from rough handling, Arthur Augustus was willing to stretch a point, and to stretch his aristocratic legs at the same time. So he ran, and dashed at top speed round the bend in the lane, whence he had appeared.

"After him!" roared Gordon Gay.

"Vite, vite!" shrieked Mont Blong, waving his hands as he ran. "It is zat he vill escape viz himself!"

And the three Grammarians came tearing round the corner.

And there was a sudden shout.

"Here they are! Pile in!"

It was Tom Merry's voice—Tom Merry, of the Shell Form at St. Jim's. And Tom Merry was not alone. Lowther and Manners, of the Shell, and Blake, Herries, and Digby, of the Fourth, were there, too; and they had lined up at the sight of Arthur Augustus fleeing from the Amalekites, so to speak. Arthur Augustus, smiling cheerfully, stood behind the line of juniors—his noble "clobber" quite safe.

And Gordon Gay & Co., coming on at racing speed, rushed into the St. Jim's juniors before they knew they were there, and then there was a wild and whirling struggle.

"Back up, Grammar School!" shouted Gordon Gay.

"Pile in, St. Jim's!"

"Give 'em socks!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boys!" chirruped Arthur Augustus. "Give 'em socks! I'd pile in and help you like anythin' if I wasn't goin' to the vicawage to tea! Thwash 'em, deah boys!"

Gordon Gay & Co. struggled furiously.

But there were three against six—and six of the best!

Gordon Gay kept up the struggle longest. Mont Blong went down into the road, with Blake and Herries sitting on him, and then Wootton went down, and Lowther sat on his chest and Manners on his neck. Finally, Gordon Gay himself was bumped into the road, and Tom Merry knelt on him and pinned him down, and Digby laid a strong grasp upon his ears.

The three Grammarians, smothered with dust, and looking considerably dishevelled, were helpless prisoners.

Arthur Augustus chirruped gleefully.

"Bai Jove! The wottahs wan wight into the twap!" he ejaculated. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "This is where we smile."

"Hip-pip! We gloat!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

And the St. Jim's fellows "gloated," what time the Grammarians wriggled on their backs in the dust, and roared.

"Chuck it!" gasped Gordon Gay at last.

"Pway hold them tight, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "They were goin' to wag me, you know, and wuin my clobber, if you fellows hadn't been coming along. They came vey neat to committin' a fighwalf outwage. I wegarid it as up to us to chastise them!"

"They look rather chastised already!" grinned Tom Merry.

"Groo! Lerrus gerrup!" mumbled Wootton major.

"Pray hold them! I am goin' to whack them with my cane, like naughty little boys!" said Arthur Augustus, with a chuckle. "I wathah think that will be a lesson to them—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" groaned Gordon Gay. "I—"

"Wats! Woll him ovah!"

Gordon Gay resisted desperately, but Tom Merry and Digby rolled him over, and Arthur Augustus administered a gentle swishing. He did not hit very hard, and the pain was not very severe; but the swishing from the hands of the swell of St. Jim's made Gordon Gay roar with wrath. The St. Jim's fellows, too, were roaring with laughter.

"Now the othah fellows!" said D'Arcy. "Wootton next!"

"Hands off!" yelled Wootton. "I'll—I'll— Oh, you rotters! Oh!"

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

"Yaroooh! Oh!"

"Now the Fwench boundah!"

Gustave Blanc rolled his eyes wildly, and struggled and yelled.

"Ciel! It is not zat you whack me viz stick, n'est-ce-pas? Zat would be ze insult zat only can be wiped out in blood!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Wathah pottay, that Fwench chap!" said D'Arcy. "Woll him ovah!"

"Mon Dieu! I do tell you zat—"

"Wats!"

Mont Blong was rolled over, and as he wriggled the cane swished on him lightly. He raved with wrath.

"I am insult!" he roared. "I have for zat ze satisfaction, n'est-ce-pas? I am insulted! Ciel! Zat sail in blood be wiped out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Gordon Gay and Wootton major grinned at the sight of the French junior's wrath. Arthur Augustus finished swishing, and smiled.

"Now make the wottahs wun!" he said.

"We won't run!" growled Gordon Gay.

"Dwibble them along if they won't wun, chappies!"

The Grammarians were allowed to rise, and as the St. Jim's fellows prepared to "dribble" them along the lane, they decided to run. And they ran. Mont Blong was inclined to renew the combat, but Gay and Wootton seized him by either arm, and rushed him away.

And Tom Merry & Co. sent a shout of triumph after them:

"Yah! Who's licked?"

"Grammar School!"

"Who licked them?"

"St. Jim's! Hurray!"

"Rotters!" growled Gordon Gay, as he slackened pace at a distance, and began to dust his clothes. "Never mind, we'll make 'em sit up for it! One good turn deserves another, and our turn will come!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, went on to the vicarage to tea in a state of complete satisfaction. He little dreamed of what was to follow.

CHAPTER 2.

To Sneak or Not to Sneak!

"I'm going to the Head!"

Percy Mellish, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, made that statement, at the top of his voice, in the quadrangle, and was replied to with many chuckles.

"I tell you I'm not going to stand it!"

"Rats!"

"It's all in the game!"

"Sure, and ye should take it calmly, Mellish darling!"

"I'm going to the Head. Let me pass, Kangaroo, you beast!"

Kangaroo—Harry Noble of the Shell—did not move. He had stepped into Percy Mellish's way, and barred his path towards the School House. Kangaroo was looking determined, and so were several of the other fellows. Mellish's declaration that he would go to the Head did not seem to meet with their approval.

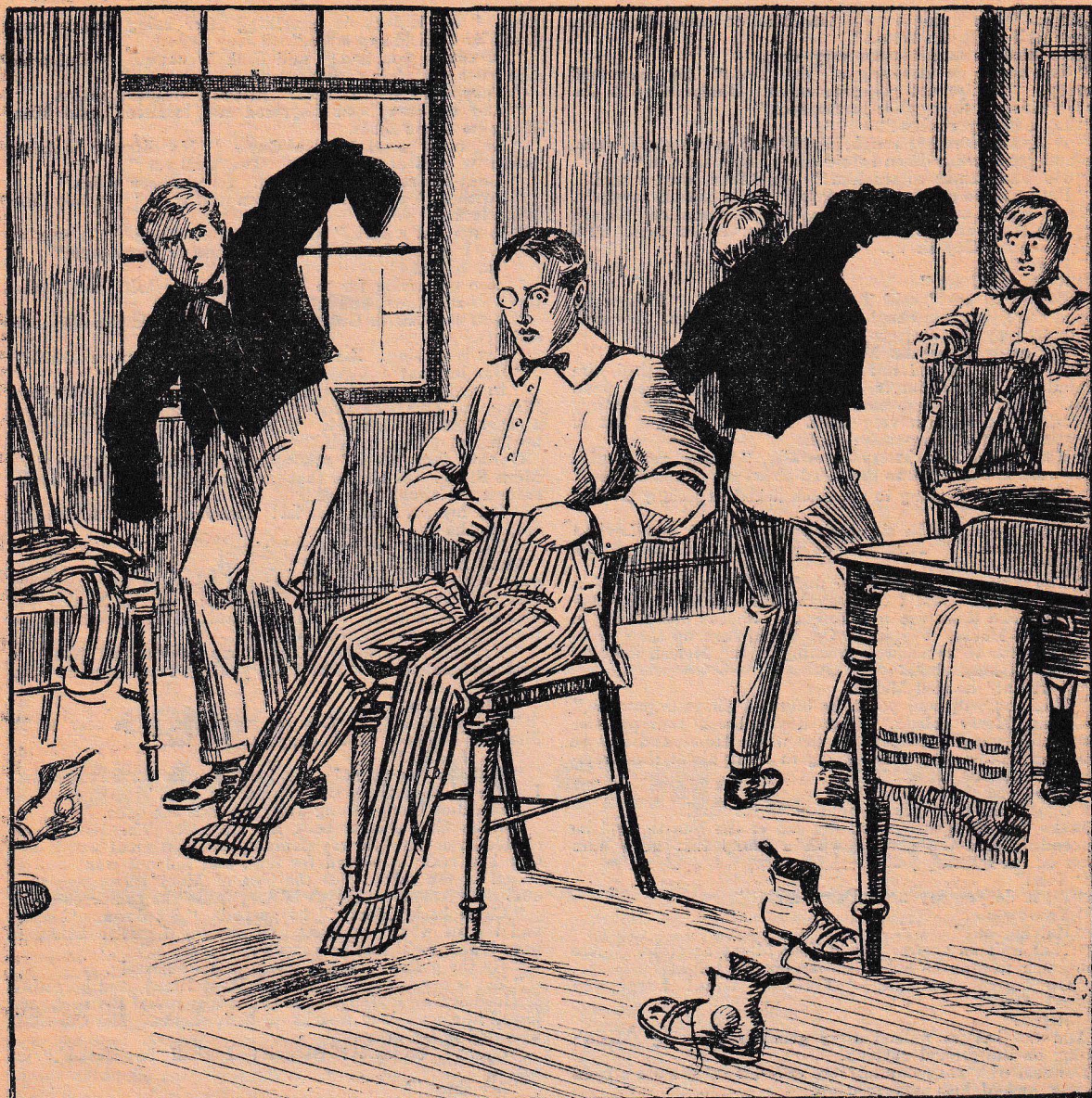
"Not quite so fast," said Kangaroo cheerfully. "You're

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



"Bai Jove! What's wong with these twousahs?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Look at my bags!" hooted Herries. "They're sewn up!" "Sure, and look at mine!" howled Reilly. "And mine!" roared Digby.

(See Chapter 10.)

not going to sneak about Gordon Gay, my boy. Take it quietly. It's all in the game."

"Blow the game! Do you think I'm going to be ragged for nothing?"

"You've helped rag the Grammarians sometimes."

"Not when there was any risk in doing it, though," grinned Reilly. "Sure, Mellish never did that!"

Mellish snorted with rage. He was looking a far from cheerful object. He had just come in at the gates with his face covered with mud, and a considerable amount on his clothes. He was furious. He looked as if he had been rolled in a ditch.

"Did the Grammarians handle you like that?" asked Gore of the Shell.

"Do you think I rolled in a ditch for fun?" sniffed Mellish.

"I don't quite catch on," said Kangaroo. "It isn't like them to spoil a chap's clothes. It's going too far. What did you do to them?"

"Nothing."

"Didn't put up a fight?" grinned Reilly. "Faith, and we're sure of that!"

"I kicked them when they collared me," said Mellish sullenly. "They were three to one, and they were going to

daub my face with mud. Gordon Gay said he would send me home as a sample of what Tom Merry was to expect. They all looked pretty ragged, so I suppose they've been rowing with Tom Merry this afternoon, and they took it out of me. I'm not going to stand it. I'm going to complain to the Head and get them licked."

"You're not," said Kangaroo calmly, "and you shouldn't have kicked! I suppose the truth is you acted like a cad, and then they got mad with you and chucked you into the ditch. Serve you right."

"Faith, and that's my opinion intirely! You kicked my shins once, Mellish, I remember, and it's a dirty blaggard ye are!"

"Well, I'm going to the Head."

Mellish started towards the School House, and Kangaroo placed a powerful hand on his chest and shoved him back.

"No, you don't!"

"Look here——" yelled Mellish furiously.

"Hallo, wherefore this thushness?" broke in Monty Lowther's voice, as Tom Merry & Co. came in at the gates. "Has our dear Peggy been out mud-collecting?"

"Looks like it," said Tom Merry.

"The Grammar rotters rolled me in a ditch!" howled

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY—

"THE COCKNEY SCHOOLBOY!"

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Mellish. "I'm going to ask the Head to complain to Dr. Monk and get them licked."

Tom Merry's face became very stern.

"You won't do anything of the sort!" he exclaimed angrily. "You're not going to sneak, Gordon Gay & Co. never whine if they get it in the neck."

"Look at my clothes!"

"Well, that's rather rough, but it's all in the day's work. Go and get a brush down before the masters see you."

"He wants them to see him!" said Blake, with a sniff.

"I'm going to get those cads licked!" said Mellish savagely. "They ragged me because you had ragged them, and I don't want to have anything to do with your rotten rags. I'll make Gordon Gay sit up."

"Bosh!"

"Well, you'll see."

"Yes, we'll see!" said Tom Merry grimly. "Bring him round the gym, you chaps, and we'll talk to him. We shall be spotted by the prefects here."

"Let me go!" roared Mellish.

But the juniors did not let him go. They rushed him behind the gymnasium in spite of his resistance and loud yells. There they were secure from observation, and Percy Mellish began to look very much alarmed. He was not of the stuff of which heroes are made.

"Now," said Tom Merry cheerfully, "you've got to give your word not to sneak to the Head about the Grammarians!"

"I won't! I'm going to get them licked, especially Gordon Gay!"

"I don't see why he shouldn't report them," said Levison of the Fourth. "They had no right to make his clothes muddy."

"You may not see it, but we do," said Tom Merry, with a curl of the lip; "and I dare say Mellish did something cad-dish to make them use him roughly. Sneaks are barred in the School House. Figgins & Co. would turn up their noses at this House if we allowed sneaking in it. Mellish is going to keep his head shut."

"I won't!" howled Mellish.

"Yes, you will, and you'll be bumped till your promise," said Tom Merry calmly. "And if you break your promise afterwards, you'll be ragged by the whole House and sent to Coventry. Now, you're not going to sneak about the Grammarians—honour bright!"

"Rats!"

"One!" said Tom Merry, holding up his hand.

Blake and Kangaroo seized the cad of the Fourth, and he descended upon the ground with a bump that made him utter an ear-splitting yell.

"Yah!"

"What do you say now, Percy mine?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That isn't an answer!" said Tom Merry severely. "Are you going to promise not to sneak—honour bright?"

"Ow!" groaned Mellish. "Yes—ow! Groo! Leggo, you beasts! Ow!"

"Right!"

And the juniors walked away grinning, leaving Mellish sitting on the ground gasping.

Levison, who was grinning, too, gave his study-mate a hand to rise, and Mellish staggered up.

"Hurt?" grinned Levison.

"Ow! Yow! Yes! You silly ass, do you think I could be bumped like that without being hurt?" snarled Mellish.

"Go to the Head, all the same."

"Rot! I can't! They'd only bump me again, and worse!" groaned Mellish. "Ow! I'll make them sorry for this, and Gordon Gay too, especially. Gordon Gay—the beast! Ow!"

And Mellish limped away furious, turning over all sorts of plans in his mind for making both Tom Merry and Gordon Gay sorry for what had happened that afternoon, but not finding any plan that appeared practicable.

CHAPTER 3.

Mont Blong's Challenge!

GORDON GAY grunted as he sank into the armchair in his study in Rylcombe Grammar School. The chief of the Grammarian juniors was not looking pleased. He pulled up the leg of his trousers, pulled down the sock, and showed a big bruise on the shin. Wootton major and minor and Mont Blong were in the study, and they all uttered angry exclamations. Gordon Gay rubbed the bruise with embrocation.

"Rotten cad!" growled Wootton major. "If I'd known it was so bad as that, I'd have hammered the cad as well as chucking him into the ditch."

"And I was only going to daub him a bit with mud, and turn his jacket inside out," said Gordon Gay in an aggrieved tone.

"We had to do something after being ragged and licked by Tom Merry & Co."

"Of course you had!" said Jack Wootton. "But what silly asses you were to get licked, weren't you?"

"They were six to three!" growled Wootton major.

"And we have been disgraced and insulted," said Mont Blong in tragic tones.

"Oh, rats!" said Gordon Gay. "No disgrace is being licked by odds of two to one. That's all rot!"

"I did not refer to ze licking. I have been swish."

"Swished!" exclaimed Wootton minor. "Oh, my hat! What larks!"

"It was not a lark!" shrieked Mont Blong. "It was an insult. I have been swished on ze trouser viz a cane!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Zere is nozzing for to laugh. It is a fearful insult to ze blood of ze Blancs, and it sall be revenged."

"You shall swish Gussy some day," said Gordon Gay consolingly.

"Zat is nozzing. Zat insult is to be wiped out in blood!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In my country we vipe out insults in blood!" said Mont Blong, his eyes gleaming. "I have been struck behind viz a cane. Zat is too much. If I do not vipe it out in blood I no longer respect myself."

Gordon Gay left off massaging his bruise and looked at Mont Blong. As he saw that the French junior was in deadly earnest, he simply gasped.

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha! Carry me home, somebody! Ha, ha, ha!"

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

Mont Blong glared round the study. As a rule, he was the most good-tempered of fellows; but he could be angry, and was very angry now. The noble blood of the Blongs was evidently boiling at the deadly insult of being swished on the nether garments with a cane.

"You laff!" shrieked Mont Blong, waving his hands in wild gesticulations. "But I tell you zat I vill have ze satisfaction."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I demand of you, Gay, as my shum, to go ofer to St. Jim's and deliver ze challenge to my foe."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is it zat you refuse? Zen I call you no longer my shum! I shake ze dust of zis study from my feet!"

And Mont Blong swung away towards the door.

Gordon Gay choked back his laughter. The touchy, excitable French youth was stamping away in great wrath, and Gay had really a regard for him, and did not want him to go off in the sulks. But the idea of Mont Blong waging a duel with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made the junior gurgle.

"Come back, Monty!" he gasped. "Sit down, old chap, and tell us what you want. Of course, if you're bound to have blood, we'll see if we can get you some."

"By the gallon," said Wootton major solemnly.

"Zat is my shum!" exclaimed Mont Blong, and he rushed at Gordon Gay joyfully, and caught him round the neck, and kissed him with loud smacks on both cheeks. The Cornstalk wriggled in his grasp.

"Grooh! Chuck it! Stop it! I shall be seasick!" he roared.

"My shum!"

"Ow! Leggo! Draggimoff!"

Mont Blong released his beloved chum at last. Gordon Gay caught up the poker in case there should be any further demonstrations of affection. He did not mind being Mont Blong's chum, but he did not like Gallie fervour in friendship.

"My beloved shum!" said Mont Blong. "Zen you vill take my message to zat D'Arcy."

"Oh, you want a message taken?"

"Oui, oui, et toute de suite—at vunce, I mean," said Mont Blong. "Ze insult sall not be allowed to grow old before it is viped out in blood. In my country ve avenge ze insult comme-ca—in zat manner."

"I never heard that there was much blood in French duels," grinned Gordon Gay.

"Zere is sometimes a vound, but refer to keel," Mont Blong explained. "Ze duel is to satisfy ze honour, zat is all. You English are so practical. However, I meet zat D'Arcy, who have swish me on ze trouser, and avenge ze insult. You vill carry ze message."

"Oh, my hat!"

"My shum vill be my second! You can arrange ze mattair viz ze second of zat D'Arcy. I leave ze weapons to him, as ze challenged party."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"I prefer swords, as I am a good fencer, and I have ze blades for ze purpose. But ze choice sall be with him."

"Suppose he chooses machine-guns?" asked Wootton major seriously.

"You will go at vunce?" asked Mont Blong, without taking notice of Wootton major's question, which he perhaps regarded as frivolous.

"What about tea?"

"Will you consider ze trifle of tea ven your shum's honour is at stake?" said Mont Blong reproachfully.

"Well, your honour can stay at stake till I've had my tea," said Gordon Gay. "Then I'll bike over with your challenge, all serene."

Wootton major and minor stared blankly at Gordon Gay. They had thought that he was pulling the French junior's leg, and that he really had any intention of going over to St. Jim's with such a ridiculous message they did not suppose for a moment. Gordon Gay closed the eye that was furthest from Mont Blong.

The chums of the Fourth had their tea—and then Gordon Gay went round to the bicycle-shed for his machine. Mont Blong accompanied him, impressing upon him the deadly seriousness of the message he was to take over to St. Jim's. Gordon Gay appeared to be duly impressed.

But he grinned as he pedalled away towards St. Jim's. When he reached the old school, he waved a white handkerchief as he wheeled his machine in at the gates. And two or three fellows who had run up with hostile intentions respected the flag of truce.

"What do you want, you bounder?" demanded Kerruish, of the Fourth.

"Important message for D'Arcy," said Gordon Gay solemnly. "Anybody know where the image is?"

"He's got a giddy tea-party in his study."

"Thanks!"

Gay left his bike at Taggles's lodge, and walked across the quadrangle to the School House. He entered quite unconcernedly, in spite of the curious looks that were cast at him, and ascended to the Fourth Form passage, and knocked at the door of Study No. 6. And from within that famous apartment came Jack Blake's voice:

"Come in, fathead!"

Gordon Gay opened the door and walked in. There was a general exclamation of astonishment at the sight of the Grammarian leader. Tom Merry and Manners and Monty Lowther were having tea in the study with the chums of No. 6. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was standing the feed, but he was not eating, only looking on with a benignant smile, as he had had tea at the vicarage. Arthur Augustus, after a period of scarcity, was rolling in funds once more, and, of course, one of his first proceedings was to stand a feed to his study-mates and the Terrible Three.

"Bai Jove! It's that wottah Gay!" exclaimed D'Arcy, jamming his monocle into his eye, and fixing it on the Corn-stalk.

"Gay, you boulder——"

"Looking for trouble?"

"Collar him!"

Gordon Gay waved his handkerchief in the air.

"Don't you know what that is?" he bawled.

"A handkerchief," said Monty Lowther, inspecting it curiously; "and not an over clean one at that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a flag of truce, you ass!"

Monty Lowther shook his head decidedly.

"Flags of truce are white," he replied.

"Well, you chump, isn't this white?" howled Gordon Gay.

"Might have been once," said Lowther. "Gentlemen, I vote that we treat this person as a pirate. He pretends he's come here with a white flag, but he hasn't—he's come here sailing under a black flag——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! I must wemark that it is wathah gwubbay," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass upon it. "I cannot wemark that as a flag of truce."

"Oh, cheese it!" said Gordon Gay. "Pax, you asses! I've come over with an important message from Mont Blong, and the person of a second is sacred."

"A second!" shouted the juniors.

"Yes; I'm Mont Blong's second!" said Gordon Gay calmly. "He challenges Gussy to a mortal combat—a giddy duel—Gussy to choose the weapons, and I've come over to make the arrangements with Gussy's second. The arrangements with the undertaker are to be made afterwards."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

Gordon Gay wiped his eyes with the flag of truce. Tom Merry and Co roared till the study rang—and the only serious face present was that of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 4.

An Affair of Honour!

"H, my hat!"
"Great Scott!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were almost in convulsions. Gordon Gay joined in the laughter. Needless to say, he had not been serious in bringing Mont Blong's extraordinary message to the St. Jim's fellows. He intended to administer a lesson to Mont Blong by pulling his leg, with the co-operation of Tom Merry & Co.

"Well, this takes the cake!" gasped Tom Merry. "Has he ever broken out like that before?"

Gordon Gay nodded.

"Yes, once, and we rotted him with a spoof duel."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's a good little ass, and he can't help being a duffer in some things, of course," Gordon Gay explained. "My idea is to rot him, and make him understand that he's a silly, howling ass! Will you fellows help?"

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha! Like a bird!"

"Weally, you fellows," broke in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy very gravely. "Weally I'm afwaid I cannot allow this mattah to be tweated as a joke!"

"Eh?"

"I undahstand that Gay has come ovah to bring me a challenge fwom his fwied Mont Blong?" said Arthur Augustus, in the stateliest manner of the noble caste of Vero de Vere.

"That's it!" said Gordon Gay.

"If that challenge is sewiously intended——"

"Mont Blong is serious enough," chuckled Gay. "He can't get over being swished. But if you like to apologise most humbly the affair can be accommodated."

"Wats! I should certainly not apologise for havin' chastised the boundah. But I decline to allow the mattah to be tweated as a joke. My own honah is concerned," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy loftily. "The honah of the name of D'Arcy."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"If this person is sewious, I shall certainly not allow him to suppose that I am afwaid to meet him, with any weapons he may choose to name."

"My hat!"

"Pway take that weply back to your pwincipal, Gordon Gay!"

The juniors looked helplessly at one another. At the news of Mont Blong's ridiculous challenge, they had thought only of "rotting" the excitable French youth. But now Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had mounted the high horse—and when Arthur Augustus was once in the saddle, so to speak, it was extremely hard to get him to dismount.

"Glad to hear you say so, Gussy!" said Gay at last.

"You approve of my attitude, deah boy?"

"Oh, yes! It's a pleasure to discover that you've got as big an idiot at St. Jim's as we have in the Grammar School," said Gordon Gay cordially.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Gay, you cheekay wottah——"

"As Gussy takes this challenge seriously, the only thing is for us to be serious about it," said Tom Merry solemnly. "Gussy, whom do you select as your second?"

"I twust you will be weady to act for me, Blake?"

"Like a bird!" said Blake.

"Vewy well; I leave my honah in your hands," said Arthur Augustus nobly.

"I'd rather you left your fiver there—but I'd do the best I can with your honour," said Blake cheerfully.

"If you cannot be sewious, Blake, I will ask Dig to act for me."

"My dear chap, I'm going to be as serious as a professional humorist," said Blake.

"Weally, you know——"

"This isn't a laughing matter," said Herries. "We shall want mourning if Gussy happens to be done in. Or do you think a black band on the hat would do? What do you think, Gussy, as an authority on the subject of clothes?"

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Then there's the epitaph to be thought of," said Digby reflectively. "I suppose we ought to put Gussy's epitaph in the 'Weekly,' if he happens to be polished off!"

"You can leave that to me," said Manners. "I'll make a Latin epitaph——"

"Better have it in poetry," said Lowther. "I could make a really good one. Lemme see——"

"Here lies our friend Gus,
Died through making a fuss,
Our grief is so bad that it couldn't be wuss!"

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ANSWERS

NEXT
WEDNESDAY

"THE COCKNEY SCHOOLBOY!"

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of
Tom Merry & Co. BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon Lowther, and looked at him as if he were trying to bore a hole in him with his indignant eye. Lowther met the glance with a bland smile, evidently pleased with his epitaph.

"If that silly ass does not wefire from the studay, I shall be undah the painful necessity of thwashin' him!" said D'Arcy.

Lowther looked surprised.

"Don't you like that epitaph?" he asked. "I dare say I could make a better one if you gave me time. Lemme see—"

"I wefuse to listen to your silly wot, Lowthah. I considah—"

"Will you kindly get out, Gussy?" asked Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"I hope it is not necessary to have to instruct a D'Arcy in the etiquette of an affair of honour," said Blake severely. "These little affairs have to be arranged by the seconds. The principal has nothing to do but to stand up in the place his second selects, and be killed according to etiquette. You buzz off while I arrange the matter with Mont Blong's second."

"Yaas, that is quite wight, Blake."

"Then clear off."

"Certainly, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus majestically left the study. The juniors ginned at one another as the door closed behind him.

"Gussy's on the high horse now," Blake explained. "No good trying to get him down. We will rot him as well as Mont Blong, and make 'em both as ridiculous as we can—though Nature has done a lot towards that already."

"What-ho!" said Gordon Gay. "Now, what about weapons?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't cackle; this is an awfully serious matter. I select rifles," said Blake. "As the challenged party, we have the choice of weapons, of course. Rifles are a bit uncommon in affairs of honour, I know; but then we can get rifles, and we can't get pistols and things. We can get a couple of the rifles of the cadet corps, with Morris tubes, you know. Of course, they won't be loaded, but we won't confide that circumstance to the principals."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly good idea," said Gay.

"We can get blank cartridges," said Blake; "we have them for firing practice, you know. In fact, it will be easier to get blank cartridge than ball cartridge."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And it will do less harm. Now, about place—where does your man prefer to be killed?"

"Better make it somewhere in the wood," said Gordon Gay reflectively. "We don't want to be interrupted. Say somewhere near the old monk's cell in the wood—that's a lonely place."

"Agreed!"

"One shot each—and each shot to be instantly fatal," said Gay. "You fellows can stuff Gussy up that Mont Blong is dead, and we'll stuff Mont Blong that Gussy is dead. Don't forget to bring some red ink. Then the pangs of remorse will start in, and they will begin to understand what asses they are."

"Good egg!"

"To-morrow's a half-holiday," said Gay. "Say three o'clock to-morrow in the wood, and you chaps can bring the rifles."

"That's settled."

Gordon Gay rose.

"I think that's about all. I'll bring my idiot along at three to-morrow, and you'll have your lunatic there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Done!"

And Gordon Gay departed, grinning.

When he was gone, Arthur Augustus came back into the study. He turned his eyeglass upon Blake, and all the juniors looked as serious as owls.

"I twust the affair is satisfactorily awranged, deah boys?" said D'Arcy.

"Quite!" said Blake cheerfully. "To-morrow, at three, in the wood. Weapons, rifles. We can leave out the Morris tubes, as this affair is to be to the giddy death."

"A la mort!" said Digby.

"A outrance!" added Manners.

"Ahem! Of course, I don't want to hurt the sillay ass," said D'Arcy. "As a fellow of honah, I cannot wefuse a challenge. But I should be sowwy to hurt him."

"Too late to think of that. You will most likely get killed yourself, and what about revengeance—I mean revenge?" demanded Blake. "For the honour of the school

you must imbrue your hands in his gore. You can wash them afterwards."

"Weally, Blake—"

"We've got a lot of affairs to settle," said Blake. "It's the custom for a duellist to settle his affairs before he gets settled himself. You'd better make your will."

"Oh!"

"And write to all your relations—letters to be posted atef your death."

"Ow!"

"I hope you are not getting funky, Gussy!"

"Certainly not, you ass! But I object to wifes. Affairs of honah should be conducted with eithah pistols or wapiahs."

"That's for your second to decide. I hope you do nob intend to invade the rights of your second."

"No; but I weally considah—"

"Never mind what you consider—I've settled all that. Now you'd better make your will. Mont Blong is a good shot, and simply thirsting for gore, so you haven't much chance of getting away alive. Here's some impot. paper—start in at once and we'll help you."

"Vewy well; and you chaps can witness it," said D'Arcy. Blake shook his head.

"I can't witness it," he said.

"Why not?" deah boy?"

"A chap can't witness a will that he benefits under," Blake explained. "Don't you know the law? I want you to leave me the remainder of your fiver."

"Weally, Blake—"

"And I can't be a witness," said Digby. "I want you to leave me your watch."

"And your bike to me," said Herries.

"We must have some little things to console us for your demise," Blake explained. "We shall miss you, you know, if—if Mont Blong doesn't miss you."

"Tom Mewwy will witness my will, I pwesume?"

But Tom Merry shook his head.

"I want you to leave me your Sunday topper, Gussy. It's my size."

"Then Lowthah—"

"I want you to put me down for your fur-lined coat," said Lowther.

"Mannahs—"

"I'll have the tiepin," said Manners.

"Weally, you fellows, I must say it is in wathah bad taste for you to be dividin' my pwopahy like this—"

"It's counting our chickens before they're hatched," said Lowther. "I know that—like the chap's who divided the bear's skin before the bear was killed. But then, you're pretty certain to be killed, you know."

"Dead cert.," said Tom Merry. "Mont Blong is a terror. I shouldn't wonder if he's been through heaps of duels in his own delightful country. I consider Gussy as practically dead already."

"Weally, Tom Merry—"

"It will be a lot of trouble getting rid of the body," said Blake thoughtfully. "Of course, we can't own up about it—duelling is illegal in England, and we might get lines."

"We might," said Herries.

"Do you specially want your body to be sent to your people, Gussy?" asked Blake. "If not, we could bury you quietly in the wood, and say nothing about it. That would be the simplest way."

"I—I—weally—"

"Better take a spade," said Tom Merry. "Nothing like being prepared."

"Good! I'll arrange that. Now, Gussy, you sit down and make your will, and you can get somebody else to witness it."

And tea being finished, the juniors departed from Study No. 6—leaving D'Arcy alone—to make his will.

CHAPTER 5.

Not Joyful.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was very, very thoughtful that evening. An affair of honour was, of course, a very serious thing.

Even in France people had been known to be killed, or at least wounded, in duels. Such a dreadful possibility always existed in the most carefully-conducted affairs of honour.

Arthur Augustus was as brave as a lion, but on reflection it came into his mind that duelling was a custom that was both barbarous and ridiculous. And it was strictly forbidden in England, too—he would be breaking the law. Under the influence of those reflections, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy realised that he had been a little hasty in accepting Mont Blong's challenge, and he realised that he could have done better to take it in a humorous spirit. But it was now too

late to retreat. He could not change his mind, and retract his acceptance, without giving rise to the suspicion that he was funkng. And that, of course, was impossible.

After all, probably there would be no harm done. Duels were conducted in France without casualties, and why not in this instance? It distressed D'Arcy very much to think that he might hurt Mont Blong. He thought of Mont Blong's danger far more than of his own, as a matter of fact.

In case of accidents, he felt that he ought to make his will. He made it. Then he considered the question of writing to his people. His heart smote him as he thought what a shock it would be to his pater and mater. He decided to write to his elder brother—Lord Conway—and ask him to break the news gently to them. The letter, as Blake said, was only to be posted after his death. He confided it to Blake's care when he had written it, and Blake made a note about it in his pocket-book.

"What are you writing there, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy. "Only making a note—letter to be posted after death," said Blake. "As you meet Mont Blong at three, there will be time to catch the four collection with it."

"Oh!"

The prospect somehow did not seem attractive to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. And he found the sympathy of his friends very hard to bear. Tom Merry & Co. condoled with him, but pointed out the fact that he would be dying in battle like his ancestors, as a consolation.

It had D'Arcy quite a shiver when Blake brought a couple of rifles into the study that evening. They belonged to the St. Jim's Cadet Corps.

"We shall have to get these blessed things out of the school unnoticed, somehow!" Blake remarked thoughtfully. "If we were spotted, they'd want to know what we were taking rifles out for."

"And that would mean the duel being put off," said Digby. "That's out of the question, now we've made all the arrangements. I've borrowed Taggles's spade for burying Gussy!"

"Look here, Dig, you wottah—"
"We'll make up the spade and rifles into a bundle, and put 'em in a sack," said Blake. "That's all I can think of. I'll ask Lynn for a sack—he can get me one. I say, Gussy, you are looking rather pale. Not funky—eh?"

"Certainly not, you ass!"

"Right-ho! Keep your pecker up! Were going to do everything we can for you. Of course, it's quite possible that you won't be killed, and that only Mont Blong will get done in. Better for you to get your brains blown out, though!"

"Weally, you ass—"
"You see, if you survive, you will be hanged for murder!" Blake explained. "That will be horrible! It will give you a crick in the neck—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Of course, if Gussy survives, he will have to hide away from justice," said Digby. "He can run away to sea and become a pirate!"

"Or a stoker," said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Or a brigand!" said Blake. "There are lots of trades open to murderers fleeing from justice—at least, you read about it in novels. Byron's heroes generally became pirates, I think, in his poems. I can fancy Gussy as a pirate—"

"Look here, you wottah—"
"Who leads them on with foreign brand, far-flashing in his red right hand?" quoted Digby. "Just imagine Gussy—"

Arthur Augustus left the study abruptly, and his chums smiled. The prospect of fleeing from justice and being driven to piracy for a livelihood, did not please the swell of St. Jim's, somehow. If the juniors had been a little less serious, he would really have suspected they were piling on the horrors from a mistaken sense of humour. But they were as solemn as owls, and evidently fully impressed with the seriousness of the matter.

Arthur Augustus's unusual gravity that evening attracted some attention. Several fellows asked him whether he had lost a fiver, or whether his people were coming to visit him, or what was the matter, anyway.

D'Arcy astonished Levison and Mellish, of the Fourth, by taking them aside in the common-room, and speaking to them with a grave and friendly cordiality. The two cads of the Fourth were not on good terms with D'Arcy, but at a time like this Arthur Augustus felt that he could not part on bad terms with anybody.

"I'm sowwy I haven't been on bettah terms with you chaps," said Arthur Augustus.

Levison and Mellish stared at D'Arcy, and then at one another.

"Whom are getting at?" Mellish wanted to know.

"What's the little game now?" asked Levison.

"I may be goin' away to-morrow," said D'Arcy.

"What!"

"It's poss., and I should like to leave on good terms," said Arthur Augustus gently. "I may have been a little wuff on you. You are awful wottahs, I know; but I may have been a little wuff. If I have been, I am sowwy. Pway shake hands with me!"

"Mad!" said Levison, with conviction. "Mad as a hatter!"

"Mad as a giddy March hare!" said Mellish. "Somebody ought to write to his people about it. He might get violent."

"You wottahs!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I was wemarkin'—"

"I say, Blake, did you know D'Arcy had gone dotty?" called out Mellish.

Jack Blake sat up.

"He's babbling all sorts of things," said Levison. "Quite mad! You'd better see about getting a strait waistcoat for him!"

Arthur Augustus was purple with indignation. As Levison and Mellish knew nothing about the intended duel, they were naturally surprised by D'Arcy's friendly overtures, and their feelings did not seem to be touched in the least. Perhaps they hadn't any feelings.

"You uttah, unspeakable wottahs!" said D'Arcy. "I wegard you as cads and wank outsiders! I wegard you—"

"Better telegraph to his father!" said Mellish. "I've seen this coming on for a long time, but I didn't expect it to happen quite so suddenly. Poor chap—Ow!"

Smack!

Arthur Augustus's temper failed him, and he smote Mellish. Then he walked away, majestic and very much on his dignity. Mellish rubbed his nose ruefully.

"I told you he was dotty!" he exclaimed. "Now he's getting dangerous!"

Arthur Augustus did not seek to make up any more old quarrels.

He was in a very thoughtful and somewhat worried mood when he retired that night. And he dreamed awful dreams of duels, gunshot wounds, graves in the depths of the wood, and fleeing from justice with detectives on his track—and altogether he came to realise that an affair of honour was not at all an enjoyable affair. But in the morning his resolution was quite unshaken. The meeting had been fixed, and he was going through with it, whatever the consequences—which, fortunately, owing to the kind arrangements of his chums, were not likely to be serious.

CHAPTER 6.

The Duel.

FIGGINS & CO., of the New House, were lounging about the school gates in the afternoon when a party of School House juniors came along. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn regarded them curiously. Blake, of the Fourth, carried a large bundle done up in a sack, and the New House juniors stared at it with interest.

"Going out for a picnic—eh?" said Fatty Wynn.

"Something more serious than a picnic," said Tom Merry, with due solemnity. "You'd never guess what's in the sack."

"Grub!" said Fatty Wynn immediately.

"Wrong!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, you should not tell these New House boundahs all about it!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy severely.

"Oh, Figgins can be trusted with a secret!" said Tom Merry.

"Certainly!" said Figgins, scenting a jape, of which the swell of St. Jim's was the object. "What have you got there?"

"Rifles and a spade."

Figgins & Co. jumped.

"What on earth for?"

"A duel!"

"Wha-a-a-a-at!"

"Gussy is going to meet another idiot—"

"Weally, you wottah—"

"I meau another chap, in a deadly duel. The rifles are for them to kill one another with, and the spade is to bury them afterwards!" Tom Merry explained.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Tom Merry, in surprise. "It isn't a laughing matter! Gussy has made his will!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You chaps can come along, if you like, and see fair play."

"By George, we will!" said Kerr. "I've never seen a

duel. I don't mind lending a hand at burying Gussy—quite a pleasure!"

And the New House Co. joined the party. Tom Merry & Co. marched out of the gates, and took their way to the wood. They marched along the footpath, and turned into the track that led to the glade where stood the old monk's cell. It was a lonely spot, and the duellists were not likely to be interrupted there.

The St. Jim's fellows were the first to arrive. There was no sign yet of the Grammarians.

"Not here!" said Blake, looking round. "First in the field!"

"Pewwaps they're not comin'?" Arthur Augustus suggested.

And it is just possible that his voice had a hopeful tone.

"Oh, they'll come! Mont Blong is thirsting for gore! You see, he can't get over that swishing—and honour must be satisfied. Anyway, you sha'n't be disappointed," said Blake kindly. "If he doesn't come, we'll march on the Grammar School, and you shall settle him in his own study!"

"I'm not so fwrightfully keen about it as all that——"

Blake interrupted him sternly.

"I hope you are not getting chicken-hearted!" he exclaimed. "Remember, this is a duel to the giddy death!"

"Yaas; but——"

"Here they come!" said Figgins.

Gordon Gay & Co. were spotted coming through the wood. There was quite a party of them.

Gordon Gay was Mont Blong's second; but quite a number of Grammarians had come to see fair play—or something else—Wootton major and minor, and Frank Monk, and Lane and Carboy. Mont Blong was looking very serious. Perhaps he had been thinking the matter over as well as Arthur Augustus.

The two parties saluted one another with due gravity.

"We're on time, I think," said Gordon Gay, consulting his watch. "Just three. You've brought the rifles, I hope?"

"Here they are!"

"And a spade?"

"Yes."

"Good! Nothing more to be arranged, I think. We'll measure off the distance."

"How many paces?" asked Blake.

"I suggest forty, as they're using rifles."

"Forty—agreed!"

The distance was paced off.

Mont Blong took up his position, and Arthur Augustus faced him at a distance of forty paces down the glade.

Both the principals were looking very grave now; but the seconds, although serious, were quite cheerful and composed.

Blake and Gordon Gay loaded the rifles. Both of them inspected the weapons to make sure that everything was in order. Then Tom Merry and several of the other fellows did the same, and satisfied themselves that the cartridges were blank. The principals, of course, had nothing to do with the matter. They were quite in the hands of their seconds.

Gordon Gay took one rifle, and Blake the other, and the weapons were presented to the unhappy duellists.

"My shum!" murmured Mont Blong. "I have zink about zis. I zink zat if zat D'Arcy apologise, it is all right!"

"He won't!" said Gay cheerfully.

"Zen I zink I might pardon him vizout zat he apologise!"

"Impossible! Honour isn't satisfied!"

"Oui, oui! But——"

"Honour can only be satisfied by blood being shed," explained Gay. "We common English people are satisfied with shedding it from the nose, but you French chaps are more chivalrous. You have to poke rapiers into a chap's ribs, and interfere with his circulation. You're having your way. What more do you want?"

"It iz zat I vish not to hurt him."

"Rats! What about satisfaction?" said Gay. "Do you mean to say that you've brought us here for nothing? After we've walked all this way, I suppose we're entitled to see somebody killed, ain't we?"

"My shum——"

"If you're funking it, Mont Blong——"

"Bah! You sall not doubt my courage, my shum! I vill shoot!"

"That's better. Aim at the chest, and you'll hit him somewhere—perhaps," said Gordon Gay. "We've made all the arrangements for burying you in case of death, or for hiding you if you commit the murder!"

"Mon Dieu!"

"Everything in the garden is lovely. Nothing now to be done excepting the murder. Keep a stiff upper lip!"

"My shum——"

"Stand ready! We're going to give the signal!"

Gordon Gay stepped back. The two wretched youths stood

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with the rifles in their hands, looking and feeling about as happy as most duellists feel, probably, when their folly and conceit place them in such a ridiculous position. Gordon Gay had a handkerchief in his hand.

"When I drop this hanky, you fire!" he said. "I shall say one, two, and three, and then drop it, and you blaze away. One!"

The juniors stood well back out of the line of fire.

"Two!"

The rifles were raised.

"Three!"

The handkerchief fluttered down.

Bang! Bang!

Each of the duellists had fired into the air.

If there had been any bullets in the rifles, they would have clipped twigs from the tree-tops high overhead.

As there were no bullets, no damage was done even to the tree-tops.

But both the juniors staggered from the recoil of the rifles.

For a moment Tom Merry & Co. were nonplussed. The firing into the air had rather upset their plans; but it could not be helped. They rushed towards the principals, and in a moment Mont Blong was surrounded by the Grammarians, and D'Arcy by the St. Jim's fellows. And Gordon Gay was howling in Mont Blong's ear:

"Fly for your life!"

While Blake bawled into D'Arcy's:

"Run! Run! Run! Run!"

CHAPTER 7.

In Deep Disguise!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY dropped the rifle, his face going deadly pale.

He had discharged the weapon into the air, feeling that Mont Blong would be quite safe if he did, and that he would have proved his own courage by facing the enemy's fire.

But the alarm among the juniors showed him that it had not gone as he intended. The thought that Mont Blong had been shot made him turn cold all over.

"Bai Jove! Bai Jove! I say, my deah fellows——"

"Run!"

"Fly!"

"Bunk!"

"Travel!"

"But weally, you know——"

"Cut it!"

"Hook it!"

"Run for your life!"

Monty Lowther, who had run towards the group surrounding Mont Blong, came dashing back.

His hands were streaming with red ink. D'Arcy did not know that it was ink, and he gazed at the red stream in horror.

"Run!" panted Lowther.

"Oh, cwumbs! Is he hurt?"

"Look! Monty Lowther held up his hands. "You've done it now, Gussy! Run! The fellows will get you away before the police come!"

"The police! Goodness gwacious!"

"Run! Run!" reiterated Blake. "Do you want to be hung?"

"Oh, gweat Scott!"

"Bunk!" roared Figgins.

Blake and Tom Merry grasped D'Arcy by the arms, and hurried him away into the depths of the wood.

Meanwhile, Gordon Gay & Co. were doing the same with Mont Blong. The French junior was almost in hysterics.

"But it is impossible zat I keel him!" he shrieked. "It iz zat I have in ze air fired. I tell you zat I fire not at him!"

"Look here!" said Frank Monk.

He held up a handkerchief stained with red. Mont Blong gazed at it in horror.

"Oh, mon Dieu!"

"Run!" said Wootton major.

"Buzz off, Mont Blong!"

"Run for your life!"

"Let me see him! It is zat I must see him before zat I go——"

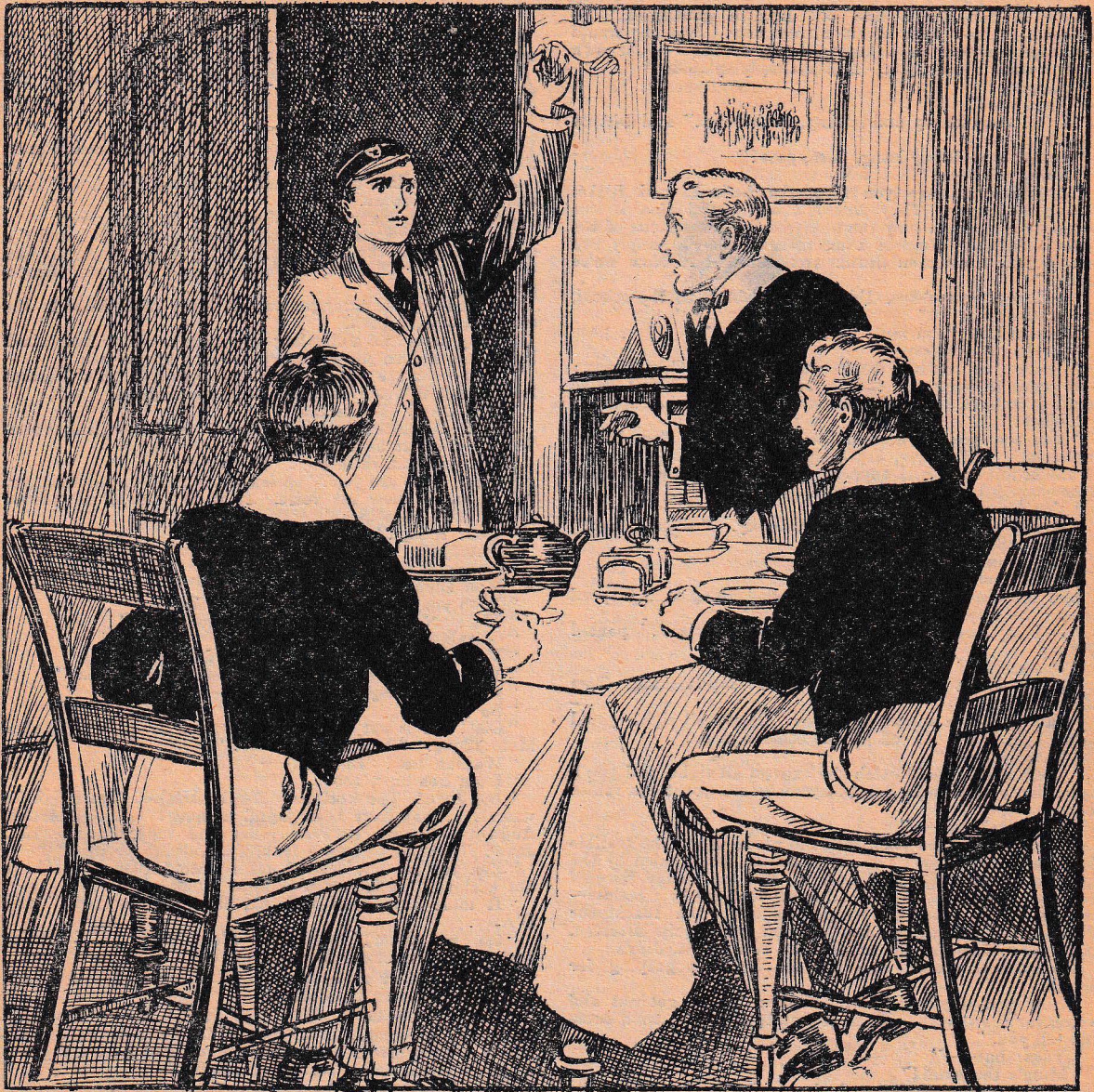
"No, no; there's no time! Run!"

"But le pauvre garcon! I must see him! I must beg him zat he forgive me——"

"Run! Run!"

Mont Blong could see nothing of D'Arcy, the crowd of Grammarians were pressing round him so thickly. He struggled, but Gordon Gay & Co. rushed him away into the wood. The glade was deserted.

Arthur Augustus stumbled along in a fearful state of mind. Remorse and terror ran riot in his breast. Blake & Co.



Gordon Gay waved the flag of truce in the air excitedly. "Don't you know what that is?" he bawled. "A handkerchief," said Monty Lowther, inspecting it curiously. "And not oveg clean at that!" (See Chapter 3.)

gave him no time to pause. They dashed along with him till the fatal glade was left half a mile behind, and then they halted in a deep recess of the wood.

"Safe, so far!" panted Blake. "Lucky the police haven't an idea of what's going on. Of course, it will come out soon, and then Gussy will be hunted for. But we'll look after him!"

"Yes, rather!"

"We'll stand by you, Gussy!" said Tom Merry. "You're not going to be hung if we can possibly help it! Besides, Monty Blake may not die. I think he may recover! Ahem!"

"If he wecovahs, that is all I want!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "I should nevah, nevah forgive myself if the poor chap was weally hurt!"

"Why, what about honour and satisfaction?" demanded Lowther.

"Oh, that is all wotten bubbish!"

"Oh!"

"It is wicked and wicidulous to fight duels!" gasped D'Arcy. "I wealise that now. I ought to have laughed at his silly challenge, or punched him on the nose!"

"Gussy's getting quite sensible in his old age," said Tom Merry admiringly. "Pity he didn't think of all this before he became an attempted murderer!"

"Oh!" gasped D'Arcy. "Gwooh!"

"But we'll look after you," said Blake consolingly. "We've got the disguises in the bag, for you to escape in!"

"Pile in," said Figgins, "no time to lose!"

"As soon as you're disguised, you can get to Wayland and catch the express, and you can be in Southampton by to-night," said Tom Merry. "After that, it will be quite simple to get a rakish schooner and become a pirate. Mind you get a rakish schooner. Pirate's schooners are always rakish."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"No time for talk!" said Blake. "Lend a hand, all of you!"

The juniors willingly lent a hand.

Arthur Augustus dazedly submitted to their kind attentions. Jack Blake had the disguises in a bag; "props" that belonged to the junior dramatic society. It did not take very long to disguise Arthur Augustus. A long black beard was fastened to his chin, and long, grey whiskers to his face, and a long golden moustache to his upper lip. The different colours looked striking, and the effect was enhanced by a large, curly brown wig. Then Blake dabbed his face with grease-paint, putting in artificial wrinkles with a liberal hand.

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 593.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY—

"THE COCKNEY SCHOOLBOY!"

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of
Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"You'll pass for a fine old English gentleman," he declared. "You look about ninety now. Nobody would recognise you now as a human being—I mean—your own pater wouldn't know you. This is simply splendid!"

"Ripping!"

"First-rate!"

"I feel vewy haiwy and stickay, deah boys!" said D'Arcy dismally.

"Better than being hung, I suppose?"

"Yaas! But——"

"Anything to save you from the police," said Blake, closing his bag. "They wouldn't understand that it was necessary for you to play the giddy ox for the honour of the noble blood of D'Arcy de Plantagenet. They'd simply run you in like a common drunk and disorderly. Now we're ready!"

"I—I say, you chaps, I'd rather go back to the school, and—chance it!"

"Impossible! You must fly for your life!"

"Weally, you know——"

"Besides, we can't go back with you," said Tom Merry; "we want to help you, Gussy, but you can't expect us to continue to have anything to do with a bloodstained ruffian!"

"What!"

"You see, you have committed a murder," Tom Merry explained. "Of course, any chap might do it in a moment of absent-mindedness, I suppose, but we have to draw a line somewhere. I draw it at murderers."

"You howwid beast——"

"Hark!" exclaimed Blake dramatically. "What's that?"

"The police!"

"Oh, cwumbs!"

"Run!" yelled Blake.

And the disguised junior was bundled along at top speed among the trees again.

"I—I say, we're goin' back to the—the place!" panted D'Arcy.

"The scene of the crime, you mean."

"Pway don't use such howwid expwessions, Tom Mewwy!"

"Call a spade a spade, you know. That's all right—you'd better hide in the old cell till the coast is clear!"

"Yaas; but——"

"Nuff said. You'll catch the express all right, and you'll have plenty of time in Southampton to see about the rakish schooner."

"You uttah ass——"

D'Arcy was rushed back into the glade where the terrible duel had taken place. The old stone cell, half-hidden by the creeping plants that grew over it, was the refuge selected for him. In ancient days it had been inhabited by a recluse—and in recent times an escaped convict from Blackmoor Prison had hidden there. But just now it was quite deserted, and a safe refuge for the unfortunate swell of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy was rushed into the old building gasping for breath.

"Now you stay here," said Blake; "we'll get out and watch for the enemy. When it's quite all right, we'll come and tell you."

"Yaas; but——"

"Mum's the word!"

And Tom Merry & Co. rushed out of the cell, leaving the disguised junior to himself.

Arthur Augustus remained there palpitating. Even his concern for Mont Blong was banished by his concern for himself now. At the thought that policemen were searching the wood for him, he shivered and shuddered. An affair of honour seemed to him, by this time, as about the most idiotic proceeding a fellow could possibly be guilty of.

Tom Merry & Co. joined the Grammarians under the trees. A fearsome figure stood in the midst of the Grammarians—it was Mont Blong in disguise. Gordon Gay had done the same kind services for him that had been done for D'Arcy by his devoted chums. Mont Blong was adorned with a long red beard, Dundreary whiskers of a sandy colour, and a grey moustache. It did not occur to his excited and confused mind that such adornments did not match Eton clothes.

"Oh, I am distress, I suffair very much!" groaned Mont Blong, as the St. Jim's fellows came up. "Is he quite, quite keel?"

"You wouldn't know him if you saw him now!" said Tom Merry solemnly.

"Oh, ciel! It is horrible, n'est ce pas?"

"Yes, pretty horrible!" agreed Blake. "But it's too late to think of that now. You've got to hide! Shove him in the old monk's cell till the coast is clear, Gay!"

"Right-ho!"

And the disguised French junior was hurried away to the old building—little dreaming whom he was to encounter there.

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CHAPTER 8.

Both Alive.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS started violently. There was a footstep outside the stone cell, in the depths of the wood.

Someone was approaching.

Was it one of his chums, or——

D'Arcy screwed his monocle into his eye, and fixed it upon the doorway.

A face came into sight—a face with a red beard, whiskers, and grey moustache.

Arthur Augustus gazed in dismay at the stranger.

He had never seen so extraordinary a man before, and the most remarkable thing about the stranger was, that, in spite of beard and whiskers, he was dressed in Etons like a schoolboy.

The red-bearded stranger caught sight of D'Arcy in the cell, and started back.

D'Arcy presented a startling appearance, with a long black beard and golden moustache, and curly brown hair.

"Who—who are you?" murmured D'Arcy, with a dreadful feeling that it was a detective in search of him.

"Mon Dieu! Vat is zat?"

Arthur Augustus jumped. Surely he knew that voice. Was it—could it be possible——

"Who are you, deah boy?" he gasped.

"Ciel! Who are you?" shrieked the red-bearded stranger. "It is zat I know zat voice. It is ze voice of ze pauvre garcon zat I have keel."

"Mont Blong!"

"D'Arcy!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Mon Dieu!"

"Then you're not dead!" yelled D'Arcy.

"Moi! No! But you—you are not dead?"

"Certainly not, you ass!"

"Vat is it tat you do viz zat beard, mon ami?"

"What are you doing with that beard, you duffah?"

"I am in ze disguise to escape——"

"So am I!"

"Ciel! It is zat zey have pulled of us ze leg!" yelled Mont Blong. "You are not hurt?"

"Wathah not! But you——"

"I am not hurt, too!"

"Bai Jove! The wottahs! The boundahs! The fwightful wascals! They have been japin' us both!" shouted Arthur Augustus, divided between relief and indignation.

"Bai Jove! I will give them a feahful thwashin' for this!"

"Zen you are not dead!" gasped Mont Blong. "I have not keel you! I have not stain ze hands viz blood!"

"It must have been wed ink, the awful wottahs!" said D'Arcy.

"Oh, my shum!" exclaimed Mont Blong. "I am so happy zat it is not zat I have keel you. I kees you!"

And he rushed at Arthur Augustus, and embraced him, and kissed him on both cheeks.

"Pway don't be a sillay ass!" said Arthur Augustus, struggling to escape. "I wegard you as a wottah, Mont Blong. I am glad I have not hurt you, but I have a gweat mind to administah a feahful thwashin'."

"My dear shum——"

"Oh, wats! I'm goin' to take this wotten wubbish off!"

Arthur Augustus dragged at the false hair, and pulled it off; but it was not so easy to deal with the grease. Blake had laid it on very thick, and it was almost in layers on Arthur Augustus's aristocratic visage. Mont Blong's face was daubed with equal liberality.

"It is a shape," said Mont Blong, probably meaning jape. "A shape of those bounders, mon ami. But I am heuroux zat it is no vorse."

"Yaas, wathah! But——"

"Ve are saved. Now ve vill be friends," said Mont Blong.

"I kees you——"

"Gwooh! Leave off!"

"I kees my shum——"

Arthur Augustus tore himself away, and dashed out of the cell. He looked for the Co., to take immediate vengeance upon them for the fright they had given him. But the juniors had vanished.

Breathing wrath, the swell of St. Jim's started for the school.

He was immensely glad to find that the duel had been only a jape, and that he was not compelled to fly for his life—even with the prospect of obtaining a rakish schooner and becoming a pirate. But his aristocratic leg had been pulled, the dignity of the noble house of D'Arcy had been outraged, and Arthur Augustus was wrathful. And his wrath was increased when he came out of the wood into the lane, and his peculiar visage attracted attention. Grimes, the grocer's boy, who was

passing with a basket on his arm, stopped and stared, and gave a wild yell.

"Oh, my heye! Is it a Red Indian, or the Wild Man from Borneo?" yelled Grimes.

D'Arcy gave him a ferocious look.

"Gwimes, you wottah—"

"Master D'Arcy," gasped Grimes, "wot 'ave you been doing to your face?"

"Wats!"

D'Arcy stalked on, leaving Grimes in hysterics. People he passed in the lane stopped and stared, and pointed at him, and grinned and chuckled. Arthur Augustus was in a volcanic state by the time he reached St. Jim's.

There was a yell from the fellows who saw him come in.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a chivvy!"

"Where did you dig up that mug?"

D'Arcy dashed into the School House without replying, and made for a bath-room, where with soap and steaming water he removed the last traces of his disguise. Then he came down to look for vengeance.

"Have those wottahs come in, Kangy?" he asked, as he met the Cornstalk.

"What rotters?" asked Kangaroo, in surprise.

"Tom Mewwy and Blake and the west."

"Yes, they've just come in," said Kangaroo. "I think they've gone to tea in the study. What's happened?"

But D'Arcy did not reply to that question. He stalked away to Study No. 6, where he found Blake & Co and the Terrible Three at tea. The juniors all stared at him as he stalked in.

"Gussy!" exclaimed Blake, in surprise.

"Yaas, you wottah."

"Is it quite safe for you to show up here?" asked Blake.

"Why ain't you in disguise?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I found that Mont Blong was quite all wight."

"Has he come to life again?" asked Lowther. "My hat!

Who was it said that the age of miracles was past?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He was not hurt," said D'Arcy. "You made me believe that he was dead, and the othah wottahs made him believe that I was dead. It was a jape."

"Go hon!"

"I weward you as a set of wottahs! I don't believe the wifes were loaded at all!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"Only just guessed that?" asked Blake agreeably.

"You—you—you—"

"I call him ungrateful," said Lowther. "He was groaning at the idea of being a murderer, and now he's complaining because he's only an attempted murderer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You have made a fool of me, you wottahs!"

"Not at all. That was done already."

"You have made me look ridiculous."

"Yes, I think we have," agreed Blake. "We tried to, anyhow. But, never mind, you don't look any more ridiculous than the other idiot."

"Not a bit more," said Digby.

"I wufuse to weward you as fiwends any longah."

"Don't be hard on us!" pleaded Blake. "Don't withdraw the light of your countenance from the study. Don't be cruel!"

"I weward you as beasts!"

Blake rose to his feet.

"Do I understand you to refer to me as a beast?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah—a feahful beast!"

"Then I demand satisfaction. Tom Merry, will you be my second?" asked Blake, with dignity.

"Certainly!" said Tom.

"D'Arcy, will you kindly appoint a friend to act for you? Merry is my second, and he will arrange the details with your friend."

"You—you—you—"

"As the challenged party, Gussy has the choice of weapons," said Lowther. "Anybody got any more blank cartridges?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall act for Gussy," said Digby. "I select pea-shooters as the weapons, at a distance of two hundred paces. Make your will, Blake. Gussy's made his. The same will do for any number of duels."

Arthur Augustus breathed hard through his nose.

"I wufuse to speak to any of you wottahs any more," he said.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Blake. "I haven't posted the letter."

"The—the lettah?"

"Yes, the one you gave me for your major, you know. I'll run out and put it in the box now."

"You—you wottah! I wufuse to allow you to post that lettah!" shrieked D'Arcy.

"Then I'll pin it up on the wall in the common-room for all the fellows to read," said Blake.

Arthur Augustus panted. Tom Merry & Co. roared. They could imagine the yells of laughter that letter would evoke if it was read by all the fellows in the School House.

"Give me that lettah, you wottah!"

"Rats!"

"I insist—I ordah you—"

"I'll give you the letter on one condition," said Blake; "and that is, that you apologise to all of us here present for having played the giddy ox."

"I wufuse—I wufuse!"

"Then the letter goes up in the common-room."

"I—I—I— Give me that lettah!"

"Apology first."

"I—I—I apologise!" gasped D'Arcy. "Give me that lettah!"

Blake handed over the letter, and D'Arcy hurriedly crammed it into the fire. His last will and testament followed it. He was feverishly anxious to get rid of all documentary evidence of the jape. Then he quitted the study, and closed the door with a violence that was not at all in accordance with the reposeful manners of Vere de Vere. As he stalked away down the passage a roar of laughter followed him from Study No. 6. The Co. were making merry.

And in Gordon Gay's study, at the Grammar School, an equally merry party gathered to tea, and Mont Blong—was so mercilessly chipped that he resolved never, never to seek satisfaction again, however deep might be his sense of injury. He had discovered that that kind of satisfaction was likely to prove exceedingly unsatisfactory.

CHAPTER 9.

The Raiders.

FOR several days after that terrible duel in Rylcombe Wood there were strained relations in Study No. 6 in the School House at St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was very much on his dignity.

He had stated that he declined to recognise Blake and Herries and Digby as friends, and he had also dropped the acquaintance of the Terrible Three.

They let him drop it.

Arthur Augustus discovered that dignity, although very well in its way, was a somewhat cold and lonely position as a permanent residence.

But he would not give in.

His chums waited for him to come round; but he did not come round. Saturday came round, however, and on that day there was a House match between Tom Merry's eleven and Figgins & Co. Arthur Augustus was a member of the School House junior eleven, and so the circumstances were a little awkward. He was not on speaking terms with his skipper. On Saturday morning, too, Arthur Augustus received a fiver from his noble pater, and the other fellows in No. 6 were in a state they sometimes fell into, and which they described as stony.

Arthur Augustus was distressed. He could not offer to share his fiver with fellows he did not know; but he did not want to keep it to himself when his study-mates were right on the "rocks."

Under the circumstances, he felt that it was up to him to make the first advances, and after lessons on Saturday morning he spoke to Blake in the passage.

"Blake, deah boy—"

Jack Blake stared at him in surprise.

"Mr. Blake, please!" he said severely.

"Weally, Blake—"

"I don't like this familiarity from strangers," said Blake. "I must request you to address your remarks to persons you are acquainted with, Mr. D'Arcy. I think your name's D'Arcy, isn't it?"

"You uttah ass—"

Blake walked away.

"Digby, old man—"

"I'm 'Digby, old man' to my friends," said Digby frigidly. "I don't like this kind of thing from strangers."

"I say, Hewwies—"

"Hallo! Who are you?" asked Herries, staring at him.

"You wottah, you know who I am quite well!" shouted Arthur Augustus, his temper giving way. "I weward you as a beast!"

"The opinion of a perfect stranger does not affect me in any way," said Herries; and he walked away after Blake and Digby.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard. The Shell fellows were coming out of their Form-room, and D'Arcy hastened to meet the Terrible Three. They looked past him as they came down the passage, apparently unconscious of his existence.

"Tom Mewwy, I suppose you're playin' me to-day?"

"Playing you!" exclaimed Tom Merry in surprise.

"Yaas, wathah!"

The junior football captain shook his head.

"Impossible. I can't play a fellow I don't know. You, as a football team, to play well, needs to have all the members personally acquainted with one another. Now, you being a perfect stranger to me—"

"I am willin' to ovahlook your wotten conduct and make friends," said Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, but I'm not willing to overlook your rotten conduct—that's the difficulty," Tom Merry explained.

"I've had a fivah this mornin'!"

"Now you're talking!" said Tom Merry cordially. "Why didn't you say that at first? Upon reflection, I'm quite ready to renew your acquaintance. Bygones shall be bygones!"

"As long as the fiver lasts," said Monty Lowther.

"And you shall play this afternoon," said Tom Merry. "I'm expecting a remittance myself, but it hasn't come. I'll help you change your fiver after the match, and you shall stand a feed for all of us. I agree."

"I did not say—"

"That's all right. We all agree. Say no more."

And when the Terrible Three went down to the football ground, Arthur Augustus went with them. Blake & Co. met them there, and regarded D'Arcy with surprise.

"Who's that chap?" asked Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"You're not putting a perfect stranger into the House team, surely, Tom Merry?" exclaimed Blake in astonishment. "Gussy has had a fiver," Tom Merry explained.

"Oh," said Blake cheerfully, "that alters the case! Come to my arms, Gussy. Let me fold you to my waistcoat buttons and weep!"

"Wats! Pway don't play the giddyid ox," said Arthur Augustus, very much relieved to be on friendly terms with his chums again. He knew that it was not the fiver that caused it; that was only their little joke. "We'll change the fivah aftah the match, deah boys, and have a feed in the studdy, and ask the New House boundahs. Upon the whole, I'm wathah glad that that wotten affaih the othah day was not sewious."

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Lowther. "Never shall it be said that we refused to help an old chum change a fiver."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins & Co. arrived on the ground, and the juniors went into the field. Levison and Mellish, who were lounging by the ropes, exchanged glances.

"I wish I could swap my pater for D'Arcy's," Levison remarked. "Jolly sewid I get a fiver from home."

"Never, in fact!" grinned Mellish.

"Rather a joke to shove it away somewhere where he can't find it," said Levison, sinking his voice: "that would be a very pleasant surprise for them when they go in for a feed."

"I suppose he's got it about him?" said Mellish.

"Not in his football clobber, fathead. He changed in the dormitory; and I'll bet you he left the banknote in his pocket there."

Mellish grinned.

"We'll look," he said.

"Yes. Wait a bit till they've started; all the fellows will be watching them, and then the coast will be clear."

And Levison and Mellish looked on until the match was under way. The House matches at St. Jim's, both junior and senior, were keenly contested, and most of the fellows not otherwise occupied had gathered round the ground. There was a roar of cheering as Tom Merry took the first goal for the School House. Gore of the Shell came sauntering down to the ground, and called to Levison.

"I've got the tickets for the matinee at the Wayland Empire, Levison. Coming?"

"Yes, rather," said Levison.

"But, I say—" began Mellish.

"You know what to do," said Levison. "You don't want me." And without more ado he walked away with Gore.

Mellish hesitated a few minutes, and then went into the School House. He was always ready for an ill-natured joke when there was no risk attached, and there did not seem to be much risk in this case. The house was utterly deserted; he did not pass a single fellow as he made his way to the Fourth Form dormitory.

Arthur Augustus had changed there, and his elegant clothes still lay on his bed just where he had left them. Mellish ran his fingers through the pockets, and found the handsome Russia-leather pocket-book, and found the banknote in it. He abstracted the banknote, and replaced the pocket-book.

He chuckled as he held the crisp, rustling note in his fingers. He did not intend to keep it, of course. His intention was to hide it, and disappoint the chums of the School House when they came in for the feed, hungry after the foot-

ball-match. He knew that the other fellows in Study No. 6, as well as the Terrible Three, were stony.

But as he stood with the banknote in his hand, there was a sudden footstep outside the door of the dormitory. Mellish started. It flashed into his mind that, if he were caught there with the banknote, the fellows might not believe that he had not intended to steal it. The circumstances were decidedly suspicious, and his reputation was not good. There was no time to replace the note—the handle of the door was already turning. Mellish did not stop to think; he dived under the bed, and lay palpitating.

From where he lay, hidden from sight, he saw the door open, and two pairs of feet come in. That was all he could see of the new-comers. It struck him that they were walking very softly. The door was quietly closed, and there was a chuckle. Then came a voice that made Percy Mellish start with utter astonishment.

"Here we are! Right in the enemy's camp!"

It was the voice of Gordon Gay!

CHAPTER 10.

A Little Surprise!

MELLISH'S eyes gleamed as he lay quiet under the bed. Gordon Gay!

He understood that it was a raid of the Grammarians. They had taken advantage of the fact that the football-match had attracted all St. Jim's to the playing-fields, and with amazing coolness they had slipped into the school, evidently with the intention of perpetrating a "rag" upon their rivals. There was no doubt that the chums of the School House were caught napping this time.

It did not occur to Gordon Gay and his companion for a moment that there was anyone hidden in the dormitory. That was not a thing he was likely to suspect.

"Safe as houses!" said another voice—the voice of Wootton major. "It will be rather a surprise for the bounders when they come in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mellish lay still. If he had shown himself, he expected a ragging at the hands of the Grammarians. Gordon Gay was not likely to have forgotten that kick on the shin. And a spiteful, treacherous thought had come into Mellish's cunning mind. The chums of the School House had prevented him from complaining to the Head about the way the Grammarians had handled him a few days before. But his malice against Gordon Gay & Co. had not diminished. And now he thought he saw a way of paying off that old score with interest.

He lay without making a sound, hardly breathing.

Gordon Gay's voice went on:

"Here's Gussy's clobber. I'd know it anywhere. I'll sew up his bags."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the sleeves of his jacket," went on Gordon Gay. "You do the same for the others. Lucky I remembered that they changed in the dorm, the last time we came over here to play them. When we're finished here, we'll give their study a look-in."

"What-ho!"

Gay sat down on the bed, his feet within a few inches of Mellish's head.

The cad of the Fourth did not move.

The two Grammarians were occupied in the dormitory for about ten minutes. During that time they did a great deal. Then they left as quietly as they had entered. Mellish waited till they had been gone for five minutes, and then he crept out from under the bed, flushed and breathless.

He opened the dormitory door and looked out. The passage was deserted. He tiptoed away, and descended by a back staircase. He did not want to enter the Fourth Form passage. He knew that the Grammarians were there. He left the School House, and strolled down to the football-ground.

The match was still going strong.

Soon after Mellish's arrival on the ground the first half ended, the score being level, one to one. The play had been hard, and both sides looked a little breathless as they lined up for the second half.

"How's the score?" asked Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth, joining Mellish by the ropes. He was Mellish's study-mate, and so on speaking terms with him, though they were far from pulling well together.

"One to one!" said Mellish.

"Taking to watching the games—eh?" said Lumley-Lumley, looking at him curiously. "Well, that's the next best thing to playing yourself. You're improving, I guess."

"I've watched it from the start," said Mellish; "but I'm getting fed-up. Coming to the tuck-shop?"

"I guess not. I'm going to see the rest of it."

Mellish stayed, too. In case of inquiries, he wanted to have it established that he had watched the football-match

that afternoon; though, as a matter of fact, there was not much danger of inquiries being made. No one knew anything about his visit to the dormitory.

The School House kicked off in the second half, and the play was soon fast and furious. Tom Merry & Co. attacked with vigour, but Fatty Wynn in goal was hard to beat. And from the New House crowd there came a roar as Figgins scored another goal for his side.

"Goal! Goal! Bravo, Figgy!"

"Play up, School House!" shouted Lumley-Lumley.

The School House played up hard; but Fatty Wynn was too strong for them in goal. Again and again the ball went in, only to find a fat fist or an active foot ready for it. And when the whistle went, the New House Juniors still kept their lead.

Figgins & Co. smiled sweetly as they came off the field. The New House had won, which, in the opinion of Figgins & Co., was exactly as it should be, but from the point of view of the School House it showed that the age of miracles was not past. But Tom Merry & Co. took their defeat cheerily; they had won often enough to be able to stand a whopping now and then. Indeed, Tom Merry was decidedly pleased by the great form Fatty Wynn had displayed in goal. Fatty would be a mountain of strength for the St. Jim's juniors when they played the Grammarians—on such occasions the team being picked from both House elevens.

"You chaps played up wathah well, Figgy, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, as he shoved on his elegant coat and muffler. "Of course, it would have ended differently if Tom Mewwy had succeeded in twappin' that wippin' pass I gave him—"

"You passed it over my head," said Tom Merry.

"Wats! But I was goin' to say, we should be honahed if you New House boundahs will come to tea in No. 6. It will be wathah a good spwead."

"What-ho!" said Fatty Wynn, before Figgins could speak. "Now you're talking, Gussy. We'll come the minute we've changed. Buck up, Figgins; it's dangerous to hang about catching cold after playing footer."

And the juniors walked away to change. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his chums went up to the Fourth-Form dorm., where they had changed before the match, Tom Merry and the Shell fellows going to the Shell dormitory. D'Arcy threw off his coat and muffler, and his somewhat muddy footer garb, and rubbed down his elegant person, and then began to put on his handsome "clobber." We say "began" to put it on advisedly. His noble legs came to a sudden stoppage before they reached the ends of his elegant trousers. He tried to ram his feet through, but they would not go, and he regarded his trousers in amazement.

"Bai Jove! What's wong with these twousahs?" he exclaimed.

"What's wrong with my jacket?" roared Blake. "Some silly ass has sewn up the sleeves."

"Look at my bags!" hooted Herries. "They're sewn up!"

"Sure, and look at mine!" howled Reilly.

"And mine!" roared Digby.

"Bai Jove! Some fwrightful duffah has actually sewn up my bags!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, inspecting them in indignation and surprise. "I wegard this as uttably wotten. A fellow's clothes ought to be wegardad as sacred."

"What howling ass was it?" said Blake sulphurously. "It isn't a New House jape this time."

Herries gave a roar as his sleeve burst in a desperate effort to get his arm into it.

"I—I—I'll pulverise him!" he roared. "What idiot was it?"

"Levison, perhaps—"

"Yaas, it would be like that wottah!"

The exasperated juniors spent half an hour upon their clothes before they could put them on. Then the Terrible Three looked in at the doorway, with excited and wrathful faces.

"Do you know who's been playing tricks in our dorm.?" asked Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! Have your clobber been sewn up, too, deah boys?"

"Yes, bags and jackets sewn up!" snorted Tom Merry. "I wish I could find the cheerful idiot who has been so funny!"

"Must have been Levison, I should think!" growled Blake. "It's just one of his tricks. We'll hunt him up and bump him, anyway."

"That would be wathah unjust, Blake, without any pwoof—"

"I'm not looking for justice; I'm looking for somebody to bump!" grunted Blake.

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Fatty Wynn's arrived," said Tom Merry. "He's been

calling up the stairs for some time, to ask whether tea's ready."

The juniors descended to the Fourth-Form passage. Figgins & Co. were there, waiting for them. Fatty Wynn was looking a little exasperated. The time the School House juniors had taken to change seemed intolerably long to the fat Fourth-Former, who was hungry.

"Oh, here you are!" said Fatty Wynn. "My hat! I could have changed five hundred times in the time you've taken."

"Some awful wottah has been sewin' up our clothes, deah boy. I am sowwy to have kept you waitin'. Pway come into the studay!"

D'Arcy threw open the door of No. 6. Then a yell burst from all the juniors. The aspect of the study was surprising.

The table had been turned over, and the study carpet was curled up round its legs. On the inverted table and the carpet, the study chairs were arranged in a pile, and on top of the chairs were piled the clock, the fire-irons, and fender, and heaps of books. The bookcase lay on its back, and the books had been shifted out, but it was not empty, as ashes had been emptied into it. On the looking-glass was an inscription traced there by a finger, dipped in soot:

"YOURS TRULY,
GORDON GAY & CO."

"Bai Jove!"

"The Grammarians!" roared Tom Merry.

"Oh, the awful bounders! Then they've been here!"

"I shouldn't wonder if they've been at our study, too!" gaped Lowther.

"My hat!"

The Terrible Three raced along the passage and looked into their study, and gave a yell of wrath. The visitors had evidently been there; it was a replica of Study No. 6. A howl of rage from Reilly's study showed that his room was in the same state. And in the Shell passage Kangaroo was raging from a similar cause. The raiders had done their work thoroughly.

"Oh, the fwrightful wottahs!" said Arthur Augustus. "They must have sneaked in heah while we were playin' footah, deah boys."

"If we could only have caught them!" growled Blake.

"Just as likely to catch a weasel as Gordon Gay!" said Digby. "What are you New House bounders grinning at?" he added indignantly.

Figgins & Co. did not seem to share the indignation of the School House fellows. They were smiling—loudly.

"Excuse us!" said Figgins. "Of course, this is very rotten! Ha, ha, ha! They didn't try this game in the New House. Ha, ha, ha!"

"They'd have been spotted and chucked out," grinned Kerr. "They knew better than that."

Blake snorted.

"I dare say they forgot there was such a place as the New House at all," he growled, "or they mayn't have cared to enter such a mouldy old show. Shurrup, and help us get this blessed study to rights."

And the juniors laboured to restore the study to order—the School House fellows breathing deadly threats of vengeance upon the raiders, and the New House juniors smiling, and persisting in regarding the matter as funny.

CHAPTER 11.

Missing—A Fiver.

TOM MERRY came into Study No. 6, looking very warm and a little dusty.

Order had been restored, and the juniors were ready for tea—very ready. Tea was an hour later than had been intended, owing to the kindly visitation of Gordon Gay.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was looking dusty, too. Clearing up the study after the visit of the Grammarians was dusty work.

"Finished now, deah boys!" said D'Arcy, with a sigh of relief. "I shall have to have a wash and a bwush down, and then we'll go and change the fivah."

"We'll go and change the fiver before you have any wash and brush down," said Blake.

"I am wathah dustay, Blake—"

"Rats!"

"I feah that I could not go out into the quad. in this dustay state—"

"Fatty Wynn is getting dangerous," said Digby. "He will be taking a bite out of one of us soon if you don't feed him."

"Well, I'm a bit hungry," said Fatty Wynn. "I haven't had anything to eat since dinner excepting a cold fowl and a couple of saveloys and a dozen tarts."

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"Buck up with the fiver, Gussy, before Fatty perishes of hunger!"

"We'll change it," said Monty Lowther affably, "you can go and wash up and brush down, or brush up and wash down, any old thing—and we'll change the fiver. You can rely upon us to lay in a really ample stock of tommy."

"Certainly!" said Manners heartily. "We'll spend the fiver to the last penny, if necessary, old chap. Rely upon us!"

"Weally, Mamahs—"

"Hand it over!" roared Blake.

"Vevy well, deah boy. Heah it is!"

Arthur Augustus took out his pocket-book and opened it. He looked through the various compartments, and a puzzled look came over his face.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured.

"Well, lost it?" said Blake.

"Certainly not. I placed it in this compartment with the catch: I always keep my banknotes in that!" said D'Arcy.

"Then it is there?"

"Yaas, I suppose so. It certainly ought to be there, as I placed it there. But the remarkable thing is, deah boy, that the compartment is empty."

"Look through the blessed pocket-book, and buck up!" growled Blake.

"I have looked through it, deah boy?"

"Isn't it there?"

"No!"

"Let me look, fathead!"

Blake searched through the pocket-book. The banknote was certainly not there. Fatty Wynn gave an audible groan. It meant more delay, and the fat Fourth-Former was really in a famishing state.

"Well, it isn't here," said Blake. "Where did you put it?"

"In the pocket-book, deah boy."

"Opened the pocket-book since?"

"No."

"Then it couldn't have dropped out?"

"Certainly not."

"And it isn't there now?"

"Appawently not."

"Then that proves that you didn't put it there," said Blake. "Now, the question is, where did you put it?"

"I put it there."

"Do you think banknotes have got wings to fly away with?" asked Blake pleasantly. "If you do, pray allow me to point out, in the most respectful manner in the world, that you are labouring under a delusion."

"Quite right," said Monty Lowther. "Birds have wings, and buildings have wings, but banknotes haven't! Ergo—the banknote has not flown away. It only remains for Gussy to discover which waistcoat-pocket he put it in."

"I did not put it into a waistcoat-pocket, Lowthah. I put it into this pocket-book, and I haven't opened the pocket-book since."

"Now, you know what an ass you are," said Blake patiently. "You lost a banknote once before, and it turned up in an old pocket, after you'd worried us all nearly into our graves. Try to think what you did with it."

"I put it into this pocket-book."

"Blessed if he isn't like a parrot!" exclaimed Blake, in exasperation. "He makes the same answer every time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy, being generally admitted to be an ass, we must have proof that he put it in the pocket-book," said Tom Merry. "Did anybody see you, Gussy?"

"Yaas."

"Who was it?"

"Weilly and Kewwuish were with me when I opened my wogistahed lettah this mornin'. They had lettahs, too."

"Let's ask 'em," said Manners.

"If you cannot twust my memowry in a simple mattah—"

"Just what we can't do," said Blake. "Come on, you fellows, and let's ask Reilly and Kerruish if they saw the lunatic lunaticking. They're in the next study."

Reilly and Kerruish and Ray were in that study, putting it to rights after the Grammarian raid. They were not quite finished yet, and they were not looking in the best of tempers.

"Just a minute, you kids!" said Blake. "Gussy has forgotten what he did with his banknote—"

"I have not forgotten, Blake—"

"Shurrup!"

"I put it into this pocket-book—"

"Will you leave off playing parrot?" demanded Blake wrathfully. "I tell you, I'm fed up with that. Put on a new record."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Ded either of you chaps see what our champion ass did with his silly banknote?" asked Blake.

"Sure and I did," said Reilly. "He put it into his pocket-book."

"Yes, I saw him," said Kerruish. "I remember I offered to change it for him, and he accepted the offer—till he found I had only ninnepence."

"Yaas; I wemembah that wotten joke, Kewwuish. You saw me put the banknote in my pocket-book, didn't you? And you saw me put the pocket-book in my beastly pocket?"

"Yes," said Reilly and Kerruish together.

"Thanks!" said Blake. "I suppose somebody has been japing him, and hiding his silly banknote somewhere—just before tea, too."

The Co. returned to Study No. 6. They were looking very grave now. If it was a joke with the banknote, it was a very foolish joke. A fellow handling another fellow's money was liable to be suspected of wanting to appropriate it.

"I am awfully sorry for this, you chaps," said D'Arcy. "Of course, I could not guess that the banknote would be missin' when I asked you to tea. And I feah that we have no othah wesources."

"Same here," said Tom Merry. "Broke to the wide. I must say that you might be a bit more careful with your blessed banknotes."

"Excuse me," said Fatty Wynn. "I've got an appointment. You can let me know if there is going to be any tea. You'll find me in the tuck-shop."

And Fatty Wynn disappeared.

"It's weally wotten!" said D'Arcy, in distress.

"You chaps had better come and have tea with us," said Figgins. "We've got a few shots in the locker."

"Thanks! We will, if the giddy banknote doesn't turn up," said Blake. "But this is rather serious. It's got to be found. If it's a joke, it's an idiotic one. Fellows oughtn't to play jokes with money. Now, when was it taken, Gussy? Do you remember anybody taking your pocket-book out of your pocket, and taking out the banknote?"

"You uttah ass—"

"It must have been taken while Gussy had the jacket off," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Now, when did he have it off, and where did he leave it?"

"I took it off when I changed for the footer, and I left it on the bed in the dorm," said Arthur Augustus at once.

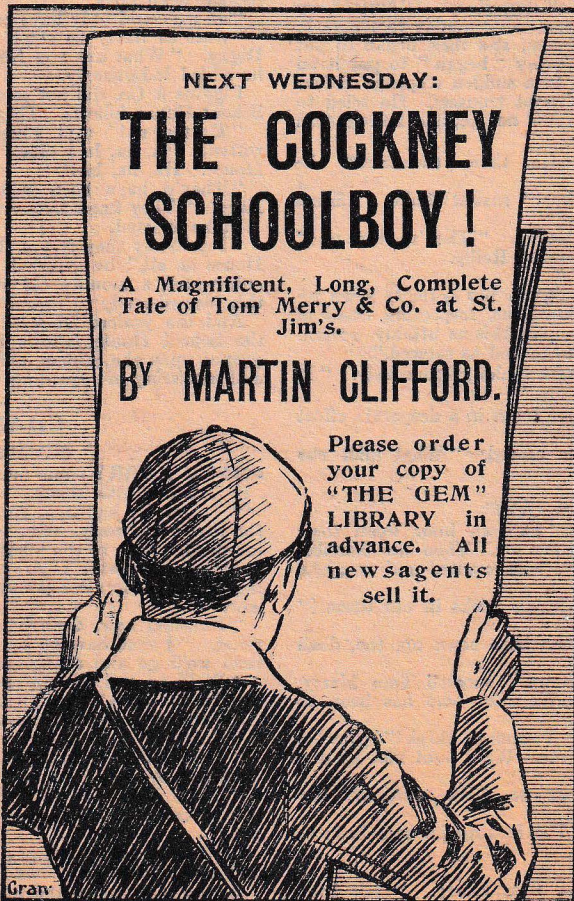
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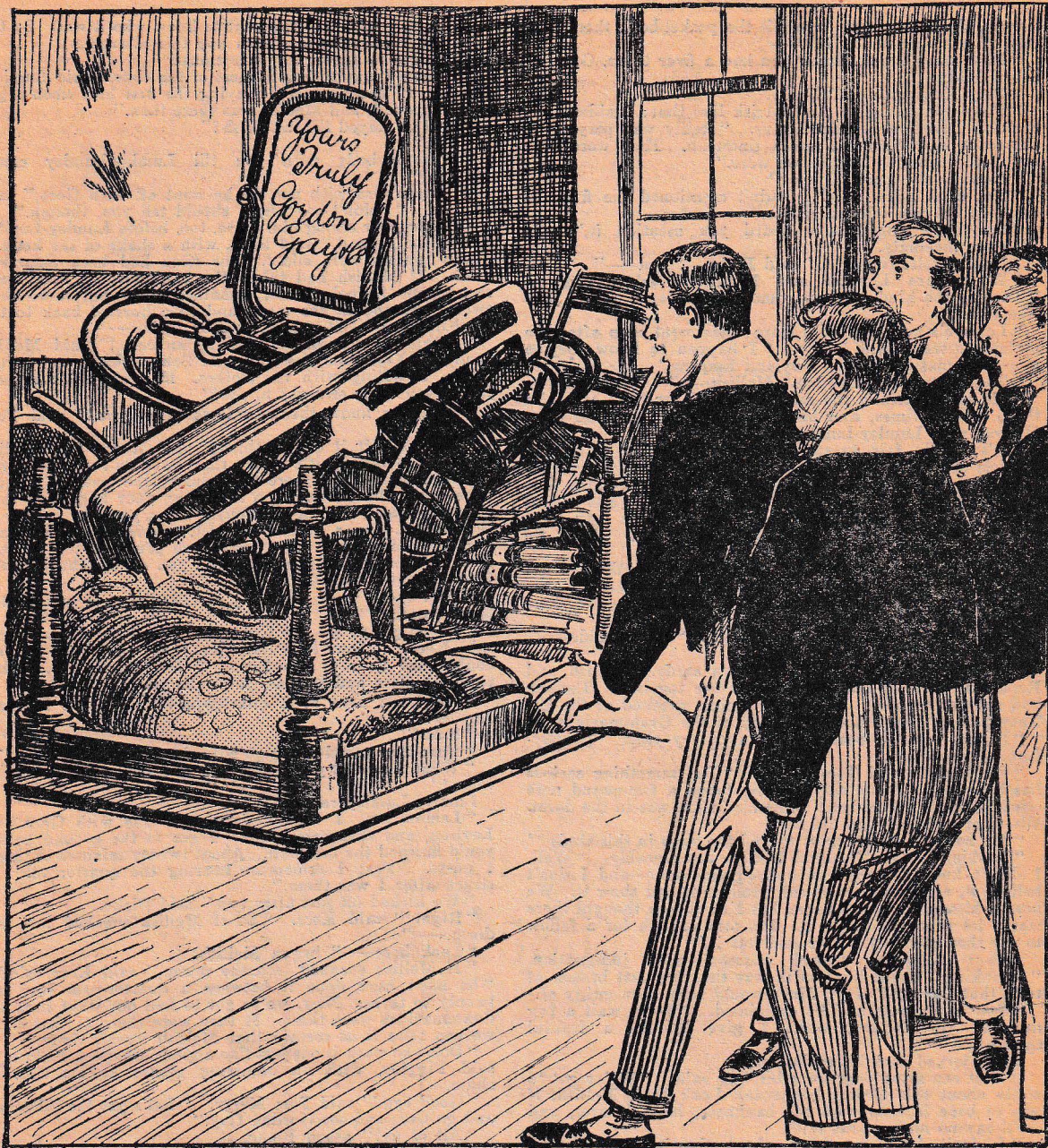
A Magnificent, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

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Gran



"My hat!" roared Tom Merry. "It's the Grammarians. Oh, the awful bounders! They've raided the whole blessed place!" (See Chapter 10.)

"Now, we've got to find out who went into the dorm. during the footer match and collared the banknote," said Tom Merry. "We needn't suspect anybody of stealing it. I don't think there's a thief in the place. Some utter idiot has done this for a joke—that is the explanation. But we can't find the fiver till we find out who did it. Question before the meeting—who went into the dorm. and larked with the clobber?"

And the answer to that question came from every lip at once:

"The Grammarians!"

"Gordon Gay!"

CHAPTER 12. Not Mellish.

GORDON GAY!

The name came to every tongue at once.

The Grammarians had "larked" with the clothes in the dormitory—they had sewn up the sleeves of the very jacket in which the pocket-book reposed.

The juniors looked at one another.

The force of evidence compelled them to think the same thought—that the Grammarians had carried their joke to the extent of opening D'Arcy's pocket-book, taking out the banknote, and hiding it.

"I can't understand it," said Tom Merry, after a long silence. "Gordon Gay isn't idiot enough to play a rotten joke like that. He wouldn't open a fellow's pocket-book. There might have been private letters in it—"

"There are private letters in it," said D'Arcy. "Gay isn't the chap to do it," said Blake uneasily. "Japing with the clobber is one thing, but rummaging among private papers is quite another. And only a fool would meddle with a chap's money."

"And Gay isn't a fool!" said Digby. "Other chaps were with him—we don't know how many," said Lowther.

"It doesn't seem like Gay," Merry said. "But if it wasn't the Grammarians, who was it? The banknote has been taken out. You see, in handling the jacket to sew up the

sleeves, the chaps must have felt the pocket-book there, and might have opened it. But—"

"How many fellows knew you had a fiver there, Gussy?" asked Blake.

"Only Kewwuish and Weilly."

"They wouldn't play a silly trick like that; besides, they couldn't have," said Tom Merry. "Reilly was playing in the team, and Kerruish was a linesman. They were both out of the house as long as we were."

"Nobody else knew, Gussy?"

"No, deah boys. And I hadn't mentioned the fivah to anybody but you fellows, eithah."

"Somebody might have heard you mention it," said Manners musingly.

"Lots of fellows might," said Blake. "But—"

"Where are Levison and Mellish?" asked Figgins. "They're the kind of chaps that would play a rotten joke like this."

"Levison's gone out with Gore—they went soon after the match started," said Digby. "I happen to know they've gone to a matinee at the Wayland Empire."

"That disposes of Levison. Mellish—"

"He was watching the match," said Kerr. "I saw him there several times, and he was always in the same spot. He was with Lumley-Lumley, I think."

"It's hardly fair to suspect even those cads without a particle of proof, and they seem to have a pretty good alibi apiece," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "I can't think that Gordon Gay would play a silly trick like this. But one of the fellows with him might have done it. They may have hidden the banknote in the study or the dorm. Shall we look for it?"

"Look for a needle in a haystack!" said Lowther.

"No; it wouldn't be much good. We'd better get over to the Grammar School, and ask Gay what they've done with it."

"Might see Mellish first," said Blake. "It's possible—"

"Right-ho!"

The juniors looked in at Mellish's study. Mellish and Rook and Lumley-Lumley were at tea together. Levison had not yet come in. The three juniors grinned at the Co. They had all heard about the raid of the Grammarians.

"I guess you've been having a cheery time," Lumley-Lumley remarked.

"We have," said Tom Merry. "But something serious has happened. Some silly ass has taken a five-pound note out of Gussy's pocket-book while his jacket was in the dorm. We want to know who did it."

"My hat! Do you expect to find the chap in this study?"

"Looking for me?" asked Mellish disagreeably. "Well, I didn't know D'Arcy had a five-pound note—and I don't believe it, either, unless he can produce it and show it. We hear a blessed lot of his fivers, but I've always thought there was a lot of swank about it. It's easy enough for a fellow to say that he's had a fiver and lost it."

Arthur Augustus turned crimson with indignation. "Swanking" about his wealth was the very last breach of taste that the swell of St. Jim's would have guilty of.

"You uttah wottah!" he exclaimed. "Pway wait a few minutes, you fellows, while I give Mellish a fealful thwashin'—"

Blake jerked back his excited chum.

"That can stand over for a bit," he said. "We've got to settle about this blessed banknote. Look here, Mellish, if you've been larking with the banknote, hand it over, and we'll say no more about it!"

"I don't know anything about the banknote," said Mellish; "and I suppose I couldn't take it out of D'Arcy's pocket without D'Arcy knowing—if he had it at all?"

"You wottah—"

"It must have been taken while the jacket was in the dorm," Tom Merry explained patiently. "It was there an hour and a half while we were playing footer."

"Oh," said Mellish, with a sneer, "as it happens, I was watching the match, and I was there all the time."

"Well, I don't want to doubt your word," said Tom Merry. "But—but, you know, you're a bit of an Ananias! Was anybody with you?"

"I don't see why I should answer your rotten questions!" said Mellish sullenly. "If you accuse me of stealing a banknote, I'm willing to go with you to the Head, and have it out before him!"

"We don't accuse anybody of stealing it," said Tom Merry quietly. "Some silly ass has been larking with it, that's all. Nobody in his senses would steal a banknote, I suppose, that could be traced by the number."

"Yaas, wathah! I could easily get the numbah frowm my patah!"

"And anybody who tried to pass it could be easily traced," said Blake. "It's not a question of stealing. Some ass has

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been larking with it. We want to know who it was. So tell us whether anybody was with you this afternoon?"

"I refuse to answer any questions!"

"I guess I was with him most of the time," said Lumley-Lumley. "You were still playing the first half when I got on the ground, and Mellish was there then."

"And he stayed till the finish?"

"Yes."

"Was anybody with you till Lumley-Lumley came, Mellish?"

"Levison was with me till he went off with Gore," said Mellish. "I don't see why I should tell you, though."

"I remember seeing him there, too, before Lumley-Lumley got on the ground," said Kerr, with a shake of the head.

The juniors were silent. The time had been narrowed down. If Mellish had taken the banknote, he must have run to the School House, remained there not more than twenty minutes at the most, and then hurried back to the football-ground. It was likely enough, but—

"I think you're acting like rotten cads!" said Mellish coolly. "You know the Grammar School chaps were in the dorm., meddling with the clothes. But you don't suspect them—you come straight to me!"

"Well, we know them—and we know you!" said Tom Merry.

"We can sift it out, I think," said Kerr. "If Mellish was in the dorm., it's queer that he didn't run into the Grammarians. They were there during the match. It must have taken them some time to sew up your bags, and then they were some time in the Fourth Form passage, fooling in the studies. As a matter of fact, considering how much they did, they must have been here pretty nearly all the time we were playing footer. Did you see anything of the Grammarians, Mellish?"

"How could I see anything of them when I was on the footer-ground?"

"We've got to see the Grammar School chaps about it," said Kerr. "Now, let's have the exact time that Mellish could have gone to the dorm., if he'd wanted to. What time did Gore and Levison go to the matinee?"

"They left here at a quarter-past two," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Sure?"

"Yes; they asked me to go with them, but I didn't go."

"What time did you get on the ground and find Mellish there?"

Lumley-Lumley reflected.

"Lemme see. I walked down the lane with Gore and Levison, and then came back. I got to the ground before you'd finished the first half. About twenty minutes to three, I guess. Yes; I remember hearing the quarter to. It struck after I was there."

"We kicked off just after two," said Blake.

"Right!" said Kerr. "So if Mellish sneaked into the dorm.—"

"Look here—" began Mellish.

"If Mellish sneaked into the dorm.," said Kerr calmly, "he must have done it between a quarter-past two and twenty to three. Now, we've got to find out what time the Grammarians were there. If they were there at that time, we can take it as certain that Mellish wasn't there."

"Don't he work it out just like a giddy Sherlock Holmes?" said Figgins, with an admiring glance at his Scottish chum.

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry. "Let's get the bikes out and go over and see Gordon Gay."

"All of us?" asked Blake.

"Yes; there may be trouble."

"Right-ho!"

And the juniors left the School House, and five minutes later they were pedalling away in the falling dusk towards the Grammar School.

CHAPTER 13.

At Close Quarters.

GORDON GAY & CO. were at tea in their study.

The Grammarian chums were very cheerful. The successful raid on St. Jim's had made them extremely elated. The Grammarian juniors had roared over the account Gordon Gay and Wootton major gave them of their doings in the School House at St. Jim's. Gordon Gay had only one regret—that there had not been time to pay a visit to the New House as well. He would have been very pleased to leave souvenirs of his visit with Figgins & Co. as well.

"But we've done them in the eye, my sons!" said Gordon Gay cheerfully. "The Saints will have to admit that we're the top-dogs this time."

"What-ho!" said Frank Monk. "If we'd gone, wa

should have done the New House as well; but you haven't done so badly!"

"If you'd gone, you would have been caught and bumped," said Gordon Gay serenely. "It takes your Uncle Gay to work a little game like that!"

"Zat is so!" said Mont Blong. "Mon Uncle Gay is a great man!"

"Hear, hear!" said Wootton major and minor heartily.

"I wonder whether they've got their studies in order yet?" grinned Gordon Gay. "I expect we shall hear from them about it."

Thump!

It was a loud knock at the study door.

"Come in!" sang out Gordon Gay.

The door opened, and Gordon Gay & Co. jumped up in surprise at the sight of a crowd of St. Jim's juniors. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, D'Arcy and Blake and Digby and Herries and Figgins and Kerr—nine of them in all. They crowded the passage outside the door of Gordon Gay's study.

"My hat!" exclaimed Gay, in astonishment. "St. Jim's bounders! Line up!"

The Grammarians were on the defensive at once.

They supposed immediately that it was a raid in return for their little visit to the School House at St. Jim's. But they marvelled at the recklessness of the Saints in venturing into the lions' den in that way. It needed only a call from Gordon Gay to bring unnumbered foes swarming round the invaders.

But Tom Merry held up his hand in sign of peace.

"Hold on," he said; "we haven't come for a rag!"

"You don't want satisfaction?" grinned Gordon Gay.

"Weally, Gay—"

"My shum!" murmured Mont Blong.

"You came over to St. Jim's to-day, some of you," said Tom Merry.

"We did!" chuckled Gordon Gay. "I hope Gussy was able to get into his bags?"

And the Grammarians yelled with laughter.

"Pway don't wot, Gay; this is a sewious mattah!" said Arthur Augustus. "Was it you who played sillay twicks with my clobber?"

"It was—it were!" said Gordon Gay. "It's the first time I've ever been a sempstress, but I think I did it pretty well. Don't you?"

"How many of you came?" asked Tom Merry.

"Two—myself and Wootton major. We thought two of us would be enough to handle you if you spotted us—one for each House!" explained Gordon Gay airily.

"You cheekay wottah—"

"Look here—"

"Order!" said Tom Merry. "Never mind the gas. Would you mind telling us just what time you were playing tricks in the Fourth Form dorm., Gay?"

Gay looked puzzled.

"I don't quite see how that matters," he said. "But we don't mind telling you. We got over to St. Jim's soon after you started footer—"

"About ten past two," said Wootton major.

"Then we got into the School House," grinned Gay. "We did the Shell dorm. first, and then the Fourth Form, and the studies afterwards."

"How long did it take you to do the Shell dorm. as you call it?"

"About ten minutes, I suppose."

"Then you got into the Fourth Form dorm. about twenty past two?"

"Roughly, yes. We weren't taking note of the time," said Gay, considerably mystified by the questions. "I don't see how it matters. The important point is that we've done you in the eye, and you have to sing small!"

"That narrows the time down," said Tom Merry, unheeding. "If Mellish got into the dorm., you fellows, he must have done it before twenty past two, and after a quarter-past. I think we can safely leave Mellish out of it, unless he was there at the same time as the Grammar rotters! I suppose Mellish, of the Fourth, didn't happen to be there while you were there, Gay?"

"No."

"He would have given us away, I fancy, if he'd spotted us!" grinned Wootton major.

"Then," said Tom Merry, "we want to know what you've done with the banknote?"

Gordon Gay stared at him.

"Is that a conundrum?" he asked.

"No; it's a question, and we want an answer!"

"You'll have to make it a bit clearer, then!" said Gordon Gay. "You're all looking jolly serious. Has anything gone wrong—besides the clothes and the studies? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes. Someone took a five-pound note out of Gussy's pocket, while his jacket was in the dorm."

"What!"

"You sewed up the sleeves of that jacket. You must have felt the pocket-book in the pocket while you were handling it."

Gordon Gay nodded.

"I felt something in the pocket, naturally; but I didn't look to see what it was," he replied. "It was no business of mine. I sewed up the sleeves of the jacket, and the legs of the trucks for a joke. I suppose you don't think I would look into a chap's pocket-book."

"I hope not; but—the banknote's gone!"

Gay's eyes gleamed.

"What do you mean by that exactly?" he asked, in a dangerously quiet tone. There was no laughter in the study now. All the fellows, Grammarians and Saints, realised the seriousness of the matter.

"I mean exactly what I say!" said Tom Merry steadily. "The banknote was taken out of Gussy's pocket. We don't suspect anybody of stealing it, so you needn't mount the high horse—we think it was hidden for a joke—an idiotic joke. But we want to know where it is, and to give you our opinion about playing jokes with money. We think that of all the silly-fool things to do, that is the silly-foolest!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Quite right!" said Gay. "If I touched anybody's money, I should be as big a fool as any St. Jim's chap present, which is saying a great deal. But it happens that I've got too much sense—and I didn't do it, or think of doing it. I felt the weight of something in D'Arcy's jacket pocket, but I didn't know it was a pocket-book—I didn't look to see what it was—why should I?"

"Then you didn't touch the banknote?"

"Of course I didn't!"

"Or Wootton—"

"Wootton hadn't anything to do with D'Arcy's clothes—I did them!"

There was a pause.

"Look here," said Tom Merry at last. "The banknote was there; we've got proof of that—plenty of witnesses. It was taken while Gussy's jacket was lying on the bed in the dorm. You fellows were there playing tricks with the jacket. Nobody else went to the dormitory. We suspected it might be Mellish or Levison—but we've gauged the time, and found out that they couldn't have done it. Levison was out, and Mellish's time is accounted for, unless he was in the dormitory while you were there. That settles it for them. Gore was out, too—and Crooke is laid up in the school hospital just now—and there isn't another chap in the House who'd play us that trick, I know that. Besides, we're not going round suspecting fellows there's no proof against, when we know that somebody actually was in the dorm. handling the clothes."

Gordon Gay compressed his lips.

"What does that mean?" he asked.

"It means that we want the banknote."

"I've told you I know nothing about it."

"Look here, Gay, we don't suspect anybody of stealing it. I've said that, and all the fellows say the same—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It was taken for a joke. I've no doubt it was hidden somewhere about the House, and is there now. We only want you to tell us where you put it."

"I have told you already that I never touched it, and didn't even know it was there. If you can't take my word, I've got no more to say."

There was a long and painful pause.

Gordon Gay's denial that he had even seen the banknote disposed of the theory that he had removed it for a joke. If he had done so, he would have said so. There would have been no need to lie about it. It had not been taken for a joke, then, but—had it been taken for another reason? That miserable suspicion forced itself into the minds of the St. Jim's fellows. They were certain that the Grammarian had removed the banknote from D'Arcy's pocket-book—and his denial could only mean one thing—that he had taken it with the intention of keeping it.

It was a horrible thought—it was impossible. And yet—Gordon Gay read the involuntary suspicion in the faces of the St. Jim's fellows, and his own face, which had been flushed, grew pale.

"You—you rotters!" he said, in a strained voice. "Do you dare to think that I've stolen a filthy banknote—you rotters?"

"I can't think so," said Tom Merry, with an inward struggle. "We all know you are a decent chap, Gay. You couldn't be a thief!"

"Wathah not!"

"But tell us where it is," said Blake.

"I don't know anything about it!"

Silence.

"Don't you believe me?" shouted Gordon Gay. Still silence. What were the juniors to say? Gordon Gay clenched his hands.

"So I'm either a thief or a liar?" he said, between his teeth. "And you've come over to tell me so. Well, I'll give you my opinion. You've got a thief in your school, and he's taken the banknote—and very likely he's counting on your being fools enough to suspect us. That's my opinion."

"Look here——"

"You had a chap expelled once for stealing," said Wootton major, with a bitter sneer. "It's time the sacking started again."

Tom Merry & Co. felt their anger rise. Rather than accuse Gordon Gay of theft, they would have allowed the matter to drop, and D'Arcy would have submitted to the loss of the banknote. But to be accused of having a thief in their school, by the fellows they were certain had taken the banknote—that was a little too much. Tom Merry broke out angrily.

"There's no thief in St. Jim's, but unless you tell us where to find the banknote, we sha'n't have any choice about believing that there's a thief here."

"That's enough!" said Gordon Gay. "Get out!"

"We want the banknote!"

"Go round St. Jim's looking for the thief, then," said Gay savagely. "Perhaps it's in one of your pockets all the time!"

It was an unjust remark; but Gordon Gay's temper was very naturally excited. But the words were like flame on a fire.

"You uttah wottah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, with fierce indignation. "You dare to accuse my friends——"

"You've dared to accuse me, haven't you?" said Gay.

"Get out of here, and search one another's pockets till you find the banknote!"

"You rotter!"

"Clear off!" shouted Wootton major. "We're fed up with you. Get back to your Thieves Kitchen. Mind your pockets, you fellows!"

"Bai Jove! I——"

"We're going," said Tom Merry, white with anger.

"We know what to think now. We sha'n't make an accusation, and we'll make it up to Gussy about the money. Pass the note if you like—you'll be quite safe. We don't want a scandal—and we don't want to have anything more to do with you rotters. Come on, chaps, let's get out of here."

But the matter had gone too far. Gordon Gay, with clenched fists and blazing eyes, sprang between Tom Merry and the door.

"You've said too much," he said, in a choking voice.

"You dare—you dare to accuse me—me—— Put up your hands!"

And barely giving Tom Merry time to put up his hands, Gordon Gay rushed at him, hitting out right and left.

CHAPTER 14.

Gordon Gay's Reply!

TOM MERRY gave blow for blow—his blood was up too.

In a moment there was a terrific combat raging in Gordon Gay's study.

All the fellows joined in it, all of them furiously excited, and the study furniture went crashing right and left. The juniors were too excited to speak—but there was incessant rasping, panting, and scuffling of feet.

The St. Jim's fellows were in the majority, and they had the best of it; but the noise was bringing other Grammarians to the scene.

Outside, in the passage, a large crowd gathered, and when they saw what was on, they rushed into the conflict.

The study was so crammed with fighting juniors that there was hardly room to move.

Half of them were down, and the other fellows were tumbling and sprawling over them.

The uproar was terrific.

But the odds were now greatly on the side of the Grammarians, and one by one the St. Jim's fellows were overcome, and they were rolled on the floor, and pinned down by the Grammarians.

"Sit on the cads!" said Gordon Gay. "They've come here and accused us of stealing. We'll let all St. Jim's see what we think of them when they get back."

The Grammarians were looking very grim.

In the rags between the two schools, there was generally good humour on both sides, and even in the combats the blows were not as a rule struck very hard. But things were changed now. Every fellow had hit his hardest in that fierce

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struggle, and there were bruised faces, and darkened eyes, and noses streaming red among all the fellows in the study.

"Let us get out!" panted Tom Merry. "We're done with you fellows!"

"We're not done with you!" said Gay. "You're going to beg our pardon for the rotten things you've said, or we'll send you back home in a way you won't like."

"Beg your pardon for telling the truth! Not likely!"

"So you're still sticking to it?" said Gay, with a black frown. "All serene—we'll make you sorry for it. Tie up their paws, you chaps!"

"I wufuse to submit to such an outrage!"

"Tie that fool up!"

"You uttah wottah! If you dare to chawactewise me as a fool——"

"Hold your silly tongue!"

"Bai Jove! I——"

"Stick something in his mouth if he won't shut up!" said Gay. And Wootton minor promptly jammed a chunk of coal into it, and the unfortunate Arthur Augustus spluttered and spluttered wildly.

Frank Monk hurried away, and returned with a cord, and the hands of the juniors were tied down to their sides.

Then they were dragged to their feet.

"Two of you take each one of the rotters and walk them out," said Gay. "It's dark outside, and we'll get them into the road without the prefects spotting us."

"Gwooh!"

"Don't mind how you handle them if they give you any trouble."

And the Saints were bundled one after another out of the study.

The Grammarians collared each one of them, and as the Saints had their hands secured, they could offer no resistance.

They were marched out of the house into the dusk of the close, the Grammarians crowding round them to screen them from general view.

"The rotters came on bikes," said Carker.

"Throw their bikes out into the road, some of you! They're going to walk back. They can fetch the bikes afterwards."

"Right-ho!"

Tom Merry & Co., breathing rage and fury, were marched out of gates into the road, and they were walked along towards St. Jim's. The bicycles were wheeled out after them, and left along the palings by the road.

Half-way to St. Jim's the Grammarians halted.

"Well, have you done playing the fool?" demanded Figgins, his voice quivering with rage.

"Not yet," said Gay.

"If you don't let us loose——"

"Shut up! Now, are you going to take back your accusation, and beg our pardon?" demanded Gordon Gay.

"No!"

"Nevah!"

"Rats!"

There was no doubt that the St. Jim's juniors had made up their minds on that subject. Their replies were decidedly emphatic. Only Kerr was silent.

"Very well. Then we'll label you by your right names," said Gay.

He took a bottle of marking-ink from his pocket, wetted his finger with it, and traced a word on Tom Merry's forehead.

The word was in as large letters as the space would allow, and the word was "LIAR!"

He went to each of the struggling juniors in turn and made the same inscription.

Kerr opened his lips to speak as Gay was dabbing his forehead, but he closed them again. Kerr had very strong doubts in his mind, but he would not appear to be funkng. So he did not say a word.

The St. Jim's juniors were trembling with rage.

"Now take the cads home," said Gay.

The juniors were run on towards St. Jim's.

The gates of St. Jim's had been closed, and Gordon Gay gave a loud peal at the bell. Taggles, the porter, came down grumbling, and opened the gates.

He stared at the crowd of fellows outside.

"Why, what—what——" gasped Taggles.

"We've brought you a tribe of Ananiases," said Gordon Gay. "Kick 'em in."

Tom Merry & Co. were roughly bundled into the gates.

Then the Grammarians walked away.

The juniors writhed with shame and rage. To be seen by the other St. Jim's fellows tied up, with that insulting inscription on their foreheads, would be unendurable. Taggles was staring at them like a man in a dream.

"Well, my heye!" gasped Taggles. "Pretty goings-hon, I must say! I'll report yer!"

"He, he, he!" came an irritating cackle, as Mellish of the

Fourth came through the dusk. "Oh, my hat! What a sight!"

The juniors glared at Mellish as if they could eat him. "He, he, he! Liars—eh? Is that their opinion of you?" chuckled Mellish. "Well, I dare say they're about right. He, he, he!"

"Taggles, old man—" began Tom Merry. "I'll report yer!"

Mellish had rushed off, evidently with the intention of calling other fellows to witness Tom Merry & Co. in their predicament. The juniors were feverishly anxious to get loose before he could return with a grinning crowd.

"Do you want a quid, Taggles?" said Tom Merry desperately. "You can report us for being late if you like, only cut us loose—quick!"

"Quids" did not come to Taggles every day.

"Wait till I get a knife," he said. The juniors followed the porter into his lodge. Taggles cut the cord and their hands were free, and then he obliged them with soap and water to wash the inscriptions off their foreheads. The door was closed. Already curious fellows were gathering outside.

The juniors breathed more freely when Gordon Gay's inscription was washed off.

"Thank goodness!" said Tom Merry. "Oh, we'll make those rotters pay for this!"

"Yaas, wathah!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

"The cads!"

"The rascals!"

The juniors hunted through their pockets, and the quid was raised for Taggles. Then they streamed out of the porter's lodge. Kerr had found most of the quid, and Figgins nearly all the rest, the other fellows promising to settle up for their share later, funds at present being low among them. Outside the lodge quite an army of fellows had gathered to see them, greatly interested by Mellish's account of their appearance; but now there was nothing to see save the marks of the conflict on their faces and clothes.

"What's happened?" demanded Gore, of the Shell.

"Find out!"

"Have you been licked?" asked Levison.

"Go and eat coke!"

And with those unsatisfactory replies, the hardly-used Co. walked away to the School House.

CHAPTER 15.

Kerr Thinks Not.

IN Tom Merry's study a council of war was held at once. It was time for evening preparation now, but the juniors were thinking of anything but preparation.

They wanted vengeance on the Grammarians; they wanted it hot and strong, and they wanted it at once.

There was a buzz of excited voices in the study, propounding and discussing schemes for making the obnoxious Grammarians "sit up" in the most thorough manner for their heinous conduct. In the general babel only Kerr was silent. But Kerr was thinking.

Kangaroo and Reilly and two or three other fellows had obligingly gone out to fetch in the bicycles, Tom Merry & Co. having something more important to think about just then.

"They've got to be made to sit up for this!" said Blake savagely. "Of course, there isn't the slightest doubt about it now. No need to cut up so rusty as that if they weren't guilty."

"Quite wight, deah boy!"

"Gay had the banknote—very likely had it in his pocket all the time—"

"We ought to get the number and publish it so that he can't pass it," said Figgins. "He doesn't deserve any consideration after what he's done."

"That's so!"

"It was bad enough to steal the five, without branding us as liars because we wanted it back!" said Blake between his teeth.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What do you think, Kerr?" demanded Figgins, turning to his Scottish chum. "You haven't said a blessed word!"

Kerr hesitated.

"Well, I hardly like to say, as you've all made up your minds about it," he said, "but—"

There was a growl at once. The juniors were not in a mood to be contradicted. They had quite made up their minds about the guilt of Gordon Gay—indeed, in their present vengeful state probably a direct proof of his innocence would hardly have been welcome.

"Oh, rot!" growled Monty Lowther. "As if there could be any doubt about it, after the way they've acted!"

"Well, they all acted the same way, but only two of them could have been concerned in taking the banknote, as only two of them came over here," said Kerr.

This was so logical that the other fellows could only reply to it by another growl.

"Something in that!" said Figgins. "But—"

"The fact is," said Kerr, "the way Gordon Gay and Wootton major acted makes it seem pretty clear to me that they told the truth."

"What!"

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Wubbish!"

"Well, I won't trot out my opinion if you don't want to hear it," said Kerr. "I dare say I'm wrong, and I'm in the minority, anyway. I'll ring off."

The juniors exchanged dubious glances.

"Oh, run on!" said Blake ungraciously. "If you think you can let in any light on the matter I suppose we'd better hear it."

"I don't see how Kerr can know any more about it than we do," grunted Herries. "We see things with the same kind of eyes, I suppose."

"But you don't think them out with the same kind of brains," Kerr suggested gently as the cooing dove.

"Look here, you New House bounder—" Herries began wrathfully.

"Shut up, old man," said Blake. "If Kerr has got anything to say, let's hear it. He is rather keen sometimes."

Kerr smiled.

"Go ahead, Kerr!" said Figgins encouragingly.

"Well," said Kerr, as the juniors relapsed into a grim silence to give him a chance to speak, "Gay cut up so rough that I couldn't help thinking he was genuinely indignant. Thieves don't feel indignant when they're found out—they feel ratty, but they couldn't possibly feel indignant."

"Oh, he was putting that on!" said Herries.

"He might have been, of course; but it looked genuine to me. Another thing is, they made such an awful fuss. Now, thieves don't like publicity. Gordon Gay didn't care if the whole Grammar School, and all St. Jim's, and the whole blessed universe, knew that he was accused. But if he had the banknote he'd have wanted to keep it dark. He'd have tried to get us away without a disturbance, I should think."

"Bai Jove, that's vevy pwob, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus, with a wise shake of the head. "Kerr speaks just as if he had been stealin' himself, and knew just what a thief would do."

"Why, you silly chump—" roared Kerr.

"Weally, Kerr—"

"You howling blatherskite!"

"I wufese to be called a howlin' blathahskite. I was payin' a compliment to your tact and judgment."

"Then you'd better bottle up your compliments till you can put 'em in a better style!" growled Kerr. "Now, if that silly ass has done interrupting—"

"I wufese—"

"Shut up, Gussy!"

"Well, taking all things together, it looks to me as if Gordon Gay's conduct shows that he didn't take the banknote," said Kerr.

"Then who did?" demanded Tom Merry. "We've cleared Mellish of suspicion. It's pretty well established that he didn't do it, unless he was there at the same time as the Grammar cads, and Gay said he didn't see him."

"He saw that we were prepared to suspect Mellish," said Kerr quietly. "If he was guilty, it would have been quite easy for him to say that he'd seen Mellish hanging about the dormitory."

"But that would have been a whoppah, deah boy, as he didn't see him."

"Ass! A fellow who would steal would tell a lie, I suppose?" snapped Kerr.

Arthur Augustus reflected.

"Yaas, I suppose he would," he agreed at last. "Yaas, I weward it as vevy pwob. A chap who would steal would do any mean thing."

"If it wasn't Mellish, however, it was somebody else," said Kerr. "After all, it was a bit thick jumping on Mellish on mere suspicion, because he's done some caddish things before. Lots of silly asses might have played such a joke, for if the banknote's been taken by a St. Jim's chap, it hasn't been stolen."

"Then it will turn up some time," said Manners.

"And if it does, it will prove that we were in the wrong about Gordon Gay," said Blake.

"Bai Jove, we should have to offah a most pwofound apology in that case."

"It hasn't turned up yet!" growled Herries.

"My idea is that we should look for the fellow inside St. Jim's, not outside," said Kerr. "I can't help thinking that it was just chance that the Grammarians happened to be here this afternoon when some silly chump was larking with Gussy."

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banknote. As the practical joker hasn't owned up yet, we shall have to find him."

"We can't find him here, if it was Gordon Gay did it," said Herries, with the air of a fellow propounding an unanswerable proposition.

"Did you work that out in your head?" asked Kerr sarcastically. "I'm suggesting that Gordon Gay didn't do it."

"And I'm suggesting that you're an ass," said Herries. "I know I've got a black eye."

"If you had two black eyes, or even three, that wouldn't prove anything against Gordon Gay, that I can see."

"You haven't got the black eye!" snorted Herries. "It was Gordon Gay gave it me."

"I don't think your black eye would be accepted as conclusive evidence in a court of law," Kerr said blandly.

"Oh, you blessed Scotchmen can argue till the moon turns pink!" said Herries. "I know my eye will be as black as the ace of spades to-morrow."

"Well, my nose will be as red as the ace of hearts, but I don't take that as proof that Gordon Gay's got the banknote," said Lowther.

"If Lowther's going to be funny, I'm done!" snorted Herries.

"Time you were!" agreed Lowther.

The argument was growing warm. Tom Merry poured oil on the troubled waters, however.

"If the chap is a St. Jim's chap, we've got to find him as quickly as possible," he said. "How do you propose to set about it, Kerr?"

"Look!" said Kerr laconically.

"But how—when—where?"

"With your eyes, now, in the dormitory, to begin with," said Kerr sweetly.

"Well, it won't do any harm," said Blake.

"And it won't do any good!" growled Herries. "Look at my eye!"

"Oh, blow your eye!" said Figgins crossly. "I'm fed up with your eye. Let's get up to the dorm. and look round."

"I'm going to get a beefsteak for my eye," said Herries.

"You can get a beefsteak, and a mutton chop, too, if you like," said Kerr. "I don't suppose your brain powers would help us much. Come on."

Herries grunted, and went away to the lower regions in search of a beefsteak. The rest of the Co. ascended to the dormitory. It was quite dark there. Tom Merry turned on the electric light. The dormitory presented its usual aspect; and the juniors were decidedly puzzled how they were to find any traces of the fellow who had purloined the five-pound note.

"It's up to you, Kerr," said Blake. "How are you going to begin? I suppose you don't expect to find footprints here?"

"No, that's not likely."

"Sherlock Holmes generally finds cigarette ashes and things!" grinned Monty Lowther. "He could tell who was the criminal, what his grandfather's front name was, and what he did for a living, by the ash of a cigarette. But I don't see any ashes."

Kerr did not reply. He was deep in thought. Slowly a light broke over his keen, intelligent face. Figgins, who was watching him with dumb admiration, suddenly burst out:

"He's got it!"

"What?"

"I tell you he's got it!" said Figgins excitedly.

"I refuse to believe anything" of the sort. I regarded it as untidily wotten of you, Figgins, to accuse your own pal of takin' my banknote!"

"Your banknote, you howling idiot!" roared Figgins, "who's talking about your silly banknote?"

"You distinctly stated that Kerr had got it."

"Fathead! I said he'd got the idea—the giddy explanation. I can see it in his chivvy."

Kerr laughed.

"I've thought it out," he said. "I've come back to our original idea. I think it was Mellish!"

CHAPTER 16.

Climbing Down!

TOM MERRY & CO. simply stared.

Kerr had not even looked round the dormitory, and how he could possibly have worked it out that it was Mellish was past their power of divining.

"Mellish!" repeated Manners.

"I don't say so, but I think it's jolly likely."

"But if Mellish was here, he must have been here at the same time as Gordon Gay and Wootton," howled Blake exasperated, "and Gay said plainly that he wasn't!"

"He said that he didn't see him."

"Well, ass, Gay has eyes, hasn't he, fathead, and if Mellish

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was here, idiot, he's big enough to be seen, isn't he, burler?" demanded Blake excitedly.

"Certainly, if he was in sight."

"Oh, I suppose he vanished into thin air when the Grammarians came in?" snorted Blake.

Kerr shook his head.

"I don't think so. I think it's far more likely that he vanished under one of the beds."

"What!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Put yourself in his place," said Kerr placidly. "Let us suppose for the moment that it was Mellish. If it was Mellish, he must have been here when the Grammarians arrived."

"That's certain, and it shows that he wasn't here."

"Not at all. Suppose Mellish in the act of taking the banknote, and he hears somebody coming to the dorm., what does he do?"

"He wouldn't know it was the Grammarians!" growled Blake.

"No, he'd think it was some of us coming in—coming back for something we'd left in our clothes," Digby remarked.

"Exactly," agreed Kerr, "and he wouldn't like to be found messing about with Gussy's pocket-book. He would get out of sight as quick as he knew how. The easiest and quickest way would be by diving under a bed. Gussy's bed, as it was nearest."

"Yaas, that is quite pwob."

"Then in come the Grammarians," pursued Kerr. "Mellish wouldn't show himself. He'd be glad to see a jape played on you fellows, and he wouldn't dream of interfering. And he isn't exactly the kind of chap who'd care to tackle Gordon Gay. Besides, he owes Gay a big grudge. You remember, he wanted to report him to the Head for ragging him the other day. My belief is that Mellish would lie low, and sneak quietly out of the dorm. after the raiders were gone. Then he could have got to the footer-ground just about the time he did, according to the time Gay told us he and Wootton stayed in the dorm."

"My hat, you're working it out jolly well!" said Blake, a little unwillingly. "There's no proof that it was Mellish; but his alibi is knocked into a cocked hat. If we suppose that he has hidden here while the Grammar cads were sewing up our dlobber, he had plenty of time."

"Didn't I say Kerr would work it out?" chirruped Figgins triumphantly.

"I've only worked out that it may have been Mellish after all," said Kerr modestly. "But that is something gained. I don't suppose he left any traces behind him—he'd be too careful for that."

Kerr dropped on his hands and knees beside Arthur Augustus's bed, and carefully scanned underneath. He uttered a sudden triumphant exclamation.

"Look there!"

All the fellows bent down beside the bed and looked. The dormitories at St. Jim's were kept as clean as new pins; if the maids had left a speck of dust under the beds after sweeping, the house-dame would have been on the war-path at once. But under D'Arcy's bed there were several traces of muddy boots. Mellish had come there from the football-field, and he had brought a little mud in with him, and in crouching under the bed it had naturally scraped off his boots. The "sign" was slight, but it was quite enough for the fellows who had trained as Boy Scouts. It was a proof, clear and positive, that someone had hidden under the bed that day.

Someone—whom, could not be said with certainty—but undoubtedly a St. Jim's fellow, and certainly not one of the Grammarians. They had had no occasion to hide. And if a St. Jim's fellow had hidden under the bed that day, it could only have been because Kerr had worked out his theory correctly—because the fellow had been there at the time Gordon Gay made his raid, and had dived out of sight to escape discovery when he heard footsteps approaching the dormitory.

The juniors rose, with excited faces.

"That's a clincher!" said Tom Merry soberly. "Someone—Mellish or somebody else—has been here, and has taken Gussy's banknote. That follows. I—I say, you chaps, we've been hasty. It wasn't Gordon Gay!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"What fidgetful wotters he must think us!" said Arthur Augustus, in great distress. "We owe him a twemendous apology."

"Pity we didn't think of this before we went over there," said Figgins lugubriously. "But then, we went over thinking it was part of their jape—we didn't think anything about the note being stolen when we went over."

"I'm afraid we've rather made asses of ourselves," confessed Tom Merry. "It was very likely Mellish, though



Hazeldene blurted out his confession. "You have acted foolishly and wickedly," said the Head sternly, when he had finished. "But your connection with Rawlings was nothing in comparison with your baseness in allowing Wharton to suffer for your fault. You will be flogged, and I trust the lesson will keep you in honourable paths in future." (An incident taken from the grand long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, entitled "THE SCAPEGOAT!" by Frank Richards, which appears in this week's number of "THE MAGNET" Library. Now on sale. Price One Penny.)

we can't prove it. But whoever it was, it wasn't Gordon Gay. It was a St. Jim's chap!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Just what that rotter would enjoy, getting us at logger-heads with Gordon Gay," said Jack Blake ruefully. "And we've fallen right into the trap."

"We ought to bring it home to him somehow," said Lowther.

"Can't you do some more thinking, Kerr, old man?" demanded Figgins hopefully.

Kerr grinned.

"There's only one way," he said. "I don't know that it would answer—but if Mellish was the chap, we might pin him down. Let's try, anyway."

"What's the wheeze?"

"Oh, let Kerr alone!" said Figgins. "Kerr will do it if it can be done. You fellows will admit that it takes a New House chap to deal with a matter like this."

"Oh, rats!"

"Did any of you chaps think it out, then?" demanded

Figgins warmly. "Didn't Kerr do it all on his lonesome? Didn't he—?"

"Oh, let's get on!" said Tom Merry. "That will do, Figgy. We'll leave it to Kerr."

"You can't do better," said Figgins, with conviction.

The juniors descended to the Fourth-Form passage. What scheme might be in Kerr's active brain they could not guess; but they were content to follow his lead, after what he had accomplished already. Kerr knocked at the door of Mellish's study, and entered, followed by the crowd of juniors.

Lumley-Lumley, Levison, Mellish, and Rook were all there, doing their preparation. Tom Merry & Co. had almost forgotten there was such a thing as preparation.

"Hallo!" said Lumley-Lumley. "What's the trouble?"

"We've come to see Mellish," said Kerr.

"Found that banknote yet?" yawned Mellish insolently. "Did Gordon Gay own up about taking it before he chucked you out?"

"We've found out for certain that Gordon Gay didn't take it," said Tom Merry.

"Got proof?" asked Mellish, with a sneer.

"Yes, we've got proof," said Kerr. "Now we're going to ask you some questions."

"I'm not going to answer them," said Mellish, rising to his feet. "If you don't get out of my study, I'll call to a prefect."

"Lock the door," said Kerr calmly.

Tom Merry turned the key in the lock. Mellish gave a hopeless glance towards the door, but escape was impossible; the Co. were in the way. They were pretty certain in their minds that they had found the right person, although how Kerr was going to prove it was a great and deep mystery. There was not the slightest likelihood of Percy Mellish owning up; and there existed no proof that it was the cad of the Fourth who had hidden under D'Arcy's bed in the dormitory.

"We're going to ask you questions, Mellish," said Kerr. "If you don't answer them, we shall take it as a confession. Then you know what you'll get."

"I'm not going to answer questions. You've no right to ask me anything. I was watching the football match, and you know it," said Mellish sullenly.

"Don't say a word," said Levison encouragingly.

"Keep that cad quiet!" said Kerr.

"Here, let me alone!" said Levison, as several hands were laid upon him. "If you touch me, I'll—I'll—Ow, ow, ow! Yow!"

Bump! Levison descended on the floor with a heavy concussion, and two or three of the juniors rested their boots upon him to keep him there. Levison wriggled in vain. A heavy shove from Manners' boot warned him of what he had to expect if he did not keep quiet—and he kept quiet, scowling like a demon.

"Sowwy to intewwupt your pwep., Lumley and Wook," said Arthur Augustus politely. "But I'm suah you don't mind, undah the circs."

"I guess I'm quite pleased," said Lumley-Lumley. "Don't mind me."

"Don't mench.!" said Rook.

Mellish eyed his chum uneasily. Levison, wriggling under the boots of several members of the Co., could not help him, even with advice. And Mellish understood that he was in danger of getting much worse than Levison.

"Look here," he said, in a more conciliatory tone, "I'm willing to tell you anything you like, but I've got nothing to tell. You know that I was watching the footer match this afternoon—"

"What were you doing under D'Arcy's bed, then?" asked Kerr.

Mellish almost fell down at the question.

"D-d-d-d-D'Arcy's bed!" he stuttered.

"Yes."

"I—I wasn't—I didn't—I—I—I—"

"Bai Jove, I feel quite certain now!"

"You can't prove it!" yelled Mellish. "You're trying to bounce me. You know you are. You know I was watching the footer match."

"Hand me your cigarette-case?" said Kerr.

"My what—what—"

"Don't deny that you carry cigarettes about with you," said Kerr. "We all know it. I'm not a prefect, and you needn't mind admitting it to me. I want to see your cigarettes."

"I haven't a case!" growled Mellish. "I carry a few in my pocket, that's all."

"Exactly. Give me all you have about you."

"What for?"

"Because I tell you to," said Kerr calmly.

"I say, we don't want to meddle with his filthy cigarettes," said Digby. "We came here about the banknote, but—"

"Who's conducting this inquiry?" asked Kerr sweetly. "I'm quite willing to leave it in Digby's hands, of course."

"Oh, rats!" growled Digby, turning red. "I was only saying that it doesn't matter about bothering with Mellish's cigarettes. It's a waste of time."

"Shut up, Dig!" urged Figgins.

"Yes, shut up!" said Blake. "Let Kerr go on. Hand over those fags, Mellish, or we'll rag you, and take them out of your pockets."

"I don't mind showing them," said Mellish, who was glad that the matter had turned from banknotes to cigarettes. "You'll give them back to me?"

"I certainly don't intend to keep them!" said Kerr disdainfully. "I don't smoke."

"Well, here they are, then."

Mellish fumbled in his jacket pockets, and drew out half

a dozen cigarettes, and passed them over to Kerr. Kerr examined them carefully.

"Wild Columbine, Snooks & Co.!" he said. "Exactly! Now, look at this!"

Kerr held out a cigarette in his right hand, holding Mellish's supply in his left. He had put his right hand into his pocket first, and there was not a fellow in the study who did not take it for granted that he had taken that cigarette from his pocket.

"Look at that!"

Mellish looked at it.

"Same as yours?" said Kerr.

"I suppose so," said Mellish, puzzled.

"He admits it, you fellows!"

"Suppose I do?" howled Mellish. "It's nothing to do with me if you've got cigarettes in your pocket the same make as mine, is it? What are you getting at?"

"It isn't mine!" said Kerr quietly. "All the fellows know that I don't smoke. What I want you to explain is, how a cigarette of the same make as yours came to be under D'Arcy's bed in the dormitory?"

"I—I—I—"

"Bai Jove!"

Mellish's face was white now. He was inwardly cursing his stupidity in dropping a cigarette when he was crouching under the bed—yet how could he help it, if it fell out of his pocket? He had never thought of looking.

"Well?" said Kerr grimly.

"I—I—I—Levison has the same kind of cigarettes?" stammered Mellish.

There was a yelp from Levison.

"Don't try to put it on me, you cad! I was out all the afternoon, and you know it!"

"It was you suggested larking with D'Arcy's banknote!" Mellish howled desperately. "It was only a lark, anyway."

"You admit it?" demanded Kerr.

"It was only a—a joke," mumbled Mellish. "You know jolly well that I wasn't going to keep the banknote. I shouldn't be idiot enough to keep a numbered note—I—I mean, you know I wouldn't steal. You all know that!"

"I'm not so sure of that, if you had a chance to do it safely!" said Kerr, with a curl of the lip. "It wouldn't be much rotter than what you have done. But we admit that we don't suspect you of stealing it. But you took it, and we want to know what you've done with it!"

"It's under the lining of D'Arcy's Sunday topper, in his hat-box in his study," said Mellish.

Kerr tossed the cigarettes on the table.

"There are your smokes, you rotter! Well, you fellows, it's cleared up now."

"Bai Jove, how jolly luckay the wottah drowped a cigarette undah my bed when he was there!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"But you didn't tell us you found it there," said Tom Merry, puzzled.

Kerr laughed.

"I didn't find one there, you see," he explained.

There was a shout from the juniors, and a howl of rage from Mellish.

"But you said—"

"I didn't say I found it there. I asked Mellish how it came to be under Gussy's bed in the dorm.," said Kerr, with refreshing coolness; "that's quite a different thing. As a matter of fact, it wasn't under Gussy's bed in the dorm."

"My hat!"

"But you had it in your pocket!" ejaculated Blake. "How did you happen to have one of Mellish's cigarettes in your pocket?"

"Because I happened to put it there," said Kerr cheerfully. "The cigarette I showed Mellish was one of those he handed me. I had it in the palm of my hand when I put my hand in my pocket."

"Oh, great Scott!"

"You artful dodger!"

"You see, as there wasn't any proof, I had to catch him," said Kerr. "If he'd had a little more sense, and a little more nerve, I shouldn't have bowled him out so easily. You don't seem to be pleased, Mellish."

Mellish ground his teeth.

"You rotter! You were spoofing me all the time."

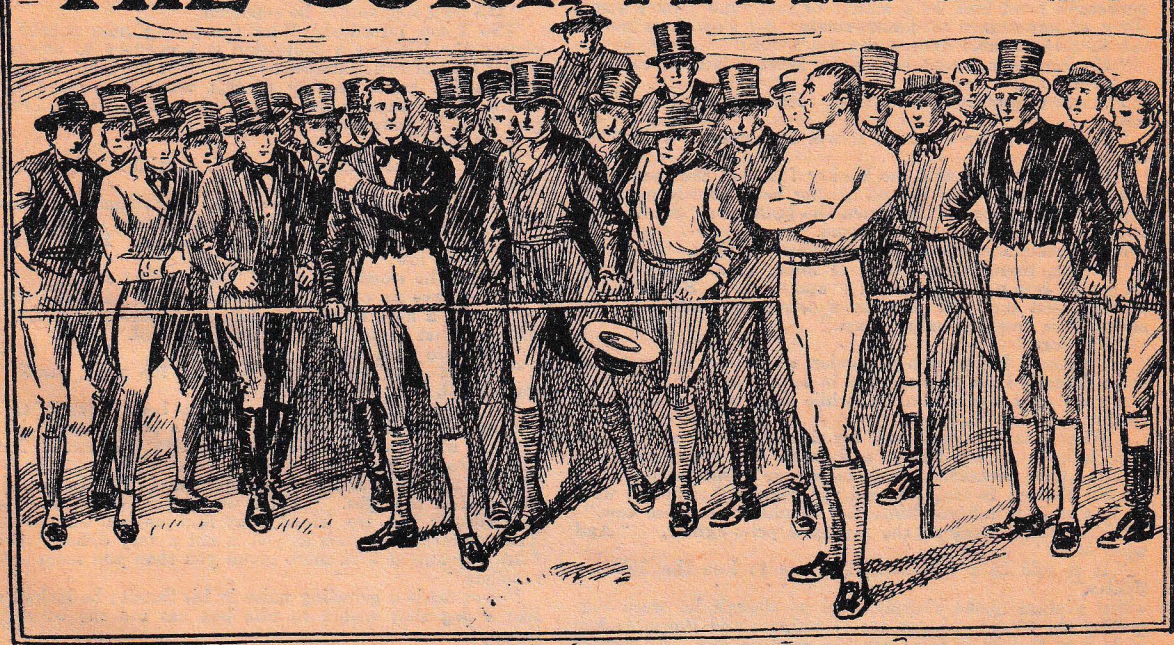
"Exactly," said Kerr coolly. "I was spoofing you all the time. Gussy, you can go and get the banknote out of your Sunday topper; and before we leave this study, I think we ought to give Mellish a lesson about playing tricks with money, and telling lies about it afterwards."

"Yes, rather!"

Mellish roared as the juniors laid hold of him. The remembrance of the wrong done to Gordon Gay, and of the damages received in the fight at the Grammar School, made

(Continued on page 26.)

THE CORINTHIAN.



A Magnificent Story of the Old-Time Prize-Ring.

By BRIAN KINGSTON.

READ THIS FIRST.

Hilary Bevan, a sturdy young Britisher of gentle birth, who has been living in the country, walks to London

TO SEE HIS FATHER,

Sir Patrick Bevan, whom he has not met for three years. Arriving at his father's house, Hil learns that the latter has been absent for three days at the house of Sir Vincent Brookes, one of the leading bucks of the time. He also learns that Sir Patrick has earned the nickname of

"PLUNGER" BEVAN,

and is heavily in debt, having dissipated his fortune.

Bending his steps to Sir Vincent Brookes' house in Grosvenor Street, Hilary

FINDS HIS FATHER AT THE GAMING-TABLES,

where he has been for three days and nights.

Sir Patrick rises from the table an utterly ruined man. Hilary's next act is to accept a challenge offered in the prize-ring at Moulsey Hurst. Hil, fighting under the name of Harley, wins his battle and awakens the interest of a young Corinthian named D'Arcy Vavasour.

HIL DECIDES TO ADOPT THE PRIZE-RING AS A CAREER,

and at a supper which is attended by the leading patrons of "The Fancy" Vavasour matches him for a thousand guineas against any boxer that Sir Vincent Brookes may select.

The fight takes place at No Man's Land, in Hertfordshire, and after a terrific mill, Hil is victorious.

Sir Vincent, hard hit by his losses, vows vengeance on Hil. He seeks out Sir Patrick Bevan, and, posing as his friend, persuades him to come forth from his retirement.

Egged on by Brookes, Sir Patrick plunges once more. He matches a pugilist named Bully Power for five thousand pounds against Ned Harley, who is backed by "Sky Blue" Brayne. Sir Patrick has never seen Harley, and is thus quite unaware that the rising young boxer is none other than his own son.

(Now go on with the story.)

Bully Power has a Visitor.

The landlord of the Spaniards' Inn, Hampstead, looked across the counter of the tap-room with some hesitation at the caller who had just made inquiry for Cornelius, better known as Bully Power.

"Yes, sir, he's about, certainly," he replied, none too readily.

The caller was well enough dressed—he looked a gentleman; but he was not the well-dressed gentleman who had been more than once to the Spaniards' during the past fortnight to see the pugilist, and who the worthy landlord had learned was Sir Patrick Bevan, Power's backer.

The landlord was a sportsman himself. He was aware that in two days' time there would come off the excitedly-awaited battle between Power and Ned Harley, "The Corinthian," as he was called by some, "The Marvel" as he was termed in the West End. A strange man, and a well-dressed one at that, asking for a private conversation with Power so soon before the day of battle appeared to him to smack of the suspicious.

"Then kindly inform me where he is, please," said the caller affably. "The matter is important. I have no time to waste."

"Well, then, he's out for a training run," was the reluctant answer. To himself the landlord said: "My flash covey, you're worth keeping an eye on."

"You can tell me in which direction he has gone?" he was next asked. "I will go to meet him."

At that moment the door was swung open, a heavy tread sounded upon the sawdust-covered floor, and in stamped a veritable giant of a man dressed in flannel clothes.

Bully Power himself, and a formidable customer enough he looked for any man! He had a round, fleshy face, with little eyes, the neck of a bull, and heavy shoulders that seemed capable of holding up a house. In the pink of condition he was not. Plainly he was a man who had not had the heavy training he required to fit him for a strenuous contest in the ring; but he looked what he was—a man of tremendous natural strength, and what ring-goers termed "an ugly customer."

He caught sight of the caller, who had turned, and a huge hand was raised respectfully to his low, wide forehead.

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NEXT

"THE COCKNEY SCHOOL BOY!"

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of

"Happy t' see ye, sorr!" he said. "Though, 'tis true, I wasn't expecting it."

"Nor did I expect to see you, Power, until Friday," was the reply. "You are feeling all right?"

"Right as th' rain, sorr. Is th' other gentleman with ye, sorr?"

"No. But I have come on Sir Patrick Bevan's behalf—a messenger from him, as a matter of fact—and I have something of importance to communicate. Sir Patrick is not in the best of health. Where can we speak?"

"My bed-room, sorr. Or maybe Mither Turner can find us a snug place."

The other appeared to consider. He glanced at the landlord.

"It is a fine day—perhaps it will be better if we talk on the heath."

"Right, sorr!" And the bruiser followed the gentleman out of the room. But behind his big hand he whispered, in reply to a questioning look from the landlord: "Sir Vincent Brookes—th' mather's best friend."

Mr. Turner immediately became vastly curious.

"Power, there is something of importance I have to say to you," began the baronet; "and if it is Sir Patrick's interest that our talk remains a secret between our two selves, it is vastly so more yours."

"Yis, sorr."

Sir Vincent had chosen a wooden seat under a great tree some distance from the inn, and in such a position that from it a good view was obtainable, while those using it could not readily be seen.

"What I have to say I will say shortly," went on Brookes. "It is little to my liking, and in no other circumstances would I have permitted myself to engage in the matter. But for Sir Patrick Bevan, I would run some risk; though were he in a state to tell you himself, I should not be here now."

"Yis, sorr," repeated the mystified prize-fighter. "And what is it?"

"It is told in a sentence. You are to lose the fight on Friday."

Sir Vincent spoke sharply, and as though he were suggesting the most commonplace of actions, and Power looked at him as though it were actually nothing else. An honest man would have shown some disturbance at hearing such a statement; but not Bully Power.

"And what do I get for that?" he asked simply.

"We come to that later," replied Brookes, still in the same matter-of-fact voice. "First, however, I think it only right you should know why such a thing is asked of you. Your backer has discovered that Ned Harley, your opponent, is his own son."

Power's eyes and mouth opened. He broke into a shrill whistle.

"His own son, sorr?" he repeated.

"So I am informed. Why the young man should have chosen the Ring as a profession is a mystery to us—to his father, and of little interest to you. It is the fact. Naturally, Sir Patrick knew nothing of this when he agreed to the match. Now that he does know, the reason for his order to you is easily understood."

"Yis, sorr."

Power did not understand; he was thinking of something else.

"Sir Patrick Bevan knows you," continued the baronet. "He is fully aware that you are a dangerous opponent. His pride will be hurt by a defeat of his son. Hence, you are required to lose."

"Will it be worth my while?" the pugilist asked.

"You have no objections?" rejoined the baronet.

"Losin' a fight's not that difficult, providin' a man's well paid for that same." And Power laughed.

"You are used to it?"

"Arrah! An' isn't it yerself knows the same, sorr?" the man asked, in a surly tone.

"I know, my man, that you have been thought to lose more than one battle that should have been yours."

"An' who knows better than yerself?" demanded Power, in a threatening growl.

"Not many," was the quiet reply; and Brookes looked the man full in the eyes. "But I warn you that no one else is to know, or you, my friend, may find yourself on the hulks. Transportation for such as you is not a very difficult matter. I am acquainted with more about you than you seem able to recollect."

Power made a growling noise in his throat; he looked very like a dog that wishes to bite but has not the courage to do so.

"How much am I to have?" he asked, after a while.

"Twenty guineas."

"Shure, an' 'tis as much as ye promised me this seven weeks since if I'd go into th' ring an' take a hammering!" cried Power excitedly.

"Precisely the same," agreed Brookes coolly. "Twenty guineas was the amount agreed upon. Why should you think yourself entitled to more now?"

"Becuz—becuz—" And Power stopped in confusion.

"Because you are to be given the chance of being defeated before all the fight is hammered out of you!" said Brookes contemptuously.

"You're big and you're strong, Bully Power, but you know as well as I do that in front of such a fighter as this Ned Harley you don't stand the chance of a rat in a trap."

Power growled something sounding like "We'd see about that!"

"As well as I do, you know I speak the truth!" scoffed the baronet.

"Make it thirty, yer honour," said Power, in a wheedling tone, after a few minutes of silence.

"Not a penny more than what I have said."

Again a silence. Sir Vincent Brookes was engaged in wondering if he had made Power believe that the proposition had come from Sir Patrick, of whom he was but a representative; the prize-fighter was debating whether he dare stand out for a higher bribe. At last he sighed. Brookes knew too much that was bad for his health to be made an open enemy.

"I'll get an earnest of me money?" he said.

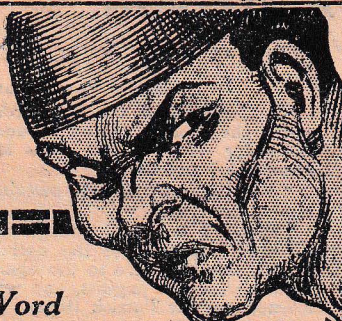
"Sir Patrick authorises me to offer you half the money now, the rest after the fight."

"But"—a brilliant idea had struck Power—"but since ye offered me twenty guineas to take th' ring wi' this Ned Harley, capt'in, an' now Sir Patrick's offerin' me, as ye say, another twenty to lose, shure, an' it's forty guineas that be due to me!"

For a moment the astute schemer was fairly taken aback; he was left without a reply. Then he laughed. In spite of his hold over this man, it was unwise to irritate him to the free wagging of his tongue.

"Commend me, by gad, to an Irishman for cleverness," he said. "You are right, Power. Forty guineas are your due, and you shall have them. But you will sign this form stating that in consideration of the payment of twenty guineas to you by Sir Patrick Bevan, you agree to lose to Ned Harley."

"Give me th' feel o' th' money an' I'll sign an' welcome," Power answered. "Here now, I'll set me hand to it; me mark's sufficient, surely. Thank ye, capt'in. Money's money, however earned."



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UNION JACK

OUT ON THURSDAY.

"And if"—Brookes was folding up the paper at the time, and not looking at his companion—"if at some time it should strike you—if it should, I say—to let it be known you received this twenty guineas, why that is wholly your lookout. Only"—and here he turned and eyed Power fixedly—"only you'll do well to recollect that I have had nothing to do with the transaction; and also that no payment was made to you to go into the ring."

"Thrust me for that, capt'in. An' the best o' bad luck to them as don't love ye, say I."

With a further recommendation to Power not to remember too much, Sir Vincent left him to cross the Heath to Jack Straw's Castle, at which hostelry he had left the vehicle in which he had driven from London. Jangling the money buttoned into his breeches pocket, Bully Power returned to the Spaniards'.

"Gintlemen is quare," he told himself. "But, begorra, now, to think of Ned Harley being th' ould party's son! Shure, an' it's that I'll not be forgettin'."

At Smitham Bottom.

"And you are hopeful of victory for your man?"

"I am sanguine, Brookes. I went yesterday to Hampstead to bring him from his training-quarters, and I saw him peeled. Lord Yarmouth, whom I saw two days ago, reminded me that I have not seen Ned Harley; but I cannot conceive such a youth being able to give nearly three stone and a beating to a bruiser of Power's talibre. Yes, I am hopeful."

Seated in the high curricle with its free-stepping horses, beside the man whom he believed to be his best friend, Sir Patrick Bevan was well among the vanguard of the seemingly endless stream of motley vehicles racing along the great southern road, through Tooting and Sutton, and thence by Woodcote to Smitham Bottom, scene of many a historic ring battle, and selected by both parties for the settlement

"I suppose the fellow meant, did you want him to give the public a run for their money, or to finish off this Harley as quickly as possible," Brookes replied indifferently. "These creatures have a curious manner of expressing themselves."

Sir Patrick laughed, and forgot the incident.

Of all places near to London, Smitham Bottom was easily first for its suitability for bringing off a ring-fight. A level-floored hollow, its sloping sides gave accommodation to thousands to see well; while on the hills surrounding could be stationed scouts who might give warning of the approach of the spoil-sport representatives of the law, should these capricious persons elect to become active.

Reaching the scene of the conflict, Bevan and his companion were welcomed by the commander-in-chief, as Mr. Jackson was called.

"A fine day, sir, and the prospect of a fine fight to improve it," said Jackson. "Your man is in good trim, Sir Patrick?"

"As good as he will ever be, Jackson, thank you. I hope his opponent is in similar shape."

"I have seen Tom Owen, who will be one of his seconds, sir, and he reports Ned Harley to be first-class," said Jackson. "Very confident, too, Mr. Brayne is said to be."

"So am I, and that makes a pair," laughed Sir Patrick.

"We should get a good muster here to-day, I think."

"Yes, sir; look at them crowding in. I've heard Croydon road is blocked two miles back. You will excuse me, sir. Ah, here comes Mr. Vavasour and some friends you'll be glad to meet, Sir Patrick."

Jackson bustled away, and Bevan went forward to greet warmly Darcy Vavasour, who was some ten yards in front of a small knot of well-dressed men approaching the ring.

"My best feelings to you, sir," Vavasour said gravely.

But he did not include Sir Vincent Brookes in his ceremonious bow, and the baronet, smiling ironically, turned away.

"And mine to you, Vavasour," returned Sir Patrick, heartily. "I have been anxiously awaiting this pleasure."

COMING SHORTLY!

GRAND NEW SERIAL STORY

COMING SHORTLY!

of the eagerly awaited fight. Behind, in a closed vehicle, were Bully Power and his two seconds.

Along the Croydon road a similar procession was travelling. All night long there had been callers at the house of Mr. Gentleman Jackson, their object being to learn the meeting-place. The sporting taverns were besieged. In the East End the "office" had likewise been given, and flash butchers, and publican, costermonger, and shopkeeper, with hundreds of humbler foot passengers, mingled with the carriages and drags of swells and Corinthians, all animated by the same object.

The weather promised well, as well as the fight, and a long day of enjoyment, coupled with the hope of profit, was anticipated by all. Greater excitement and a greater exodus from London had not been witnessed since the day of Tom Cribb's first battle with Molineaux the Black, nearly six years before.

The Woodman, at Woodmansterne, was selected by Sir Patrick as his headquarters, and, after giving a caution to Paddington Jones, who with Parrish the Waterman, was to second Power, to keep a strict watch upon his charge, Bevan strolled along the road to where the ring was being erected under Mr. Jackson's superintendence.

Just as he was leaving the inn, Power himself came up to his backer, and in a mysterious manner begged for a word in private.

"Speak out, man! What is it you want?" Sir Patrick asked.

"Well, sorr, an' what I was wantin' to know is how long yer honour is wantin' me to foight?" replied Power, sinking his voice.

Bevan stared in surprise.

"How long, you rascal!" he cried loudly. "Why, until you have won. What else? Win as quickly as you can, but don't be too hurried."

"I see, sorr." And with a wink at his backer, and a knowing look towards Sir Vincent Brookes, the prize-fighter went back.

"What the deuce did the rascal mean?" Bevan asked, in surprise.

Ah, but it is good to be back once more among one's friends! Adversity may be virtuous, but it is vastly dull, and I have no liking for a country cottage. You knew of my—er—retirement, Darcy?"

"Yes, sir; and trusted it was to be only temporary. I am pleased that I was correct."

Pale and composed, as usual, Vavasour spoke quite naturally; yet he was full of unquiet thoughts. Hilary Bevan was but a few steps away. Father and son would see each other in a few instants, and Sir Patrick must soon be master of the truth. How could he face the disclosure? How would he take the shock? The blow was inevitable, and for its effect upon Hil's parent he feared greatly.

"I understand you have been interesting yourself, Vavasour, in my man's opponent," went on Bevan guily. "You were even his backer?"

"You are correct, sir."

Hil, a little behind Sky Blue Brayne, Captain Barclay, who had agreed to act as umpire for him, the Honourable Paul Methuen, General Barton, two other gentlemen, and old Tom Owen, who stuck to his charge like pitch, had turned from the ring and was facing where Sir Patrick stood, but the latter had not yet seen him.

"Ah," he said. "It was a grief to me, Darcy, I had no opportunity of speaking to you when at Lord Alvanley's. I rejoice to see you to-day, although in the enemy's camp. Gentlemen, I wish you a good-morning!"

Breaking off, he turned and bowed courteously to Mr. Brayne and the others. Vavasour stepped aside. He was watching the face of Hil, who had seen his father.

"Mr. Brayne, whosoever's good judgment is proved correct to-day, I trust our mutual good feeling will not be impaired," Sir Patrick was saying. "Who may win, we shall know very shortly, but may defeat not carry this dissatisfaction with it. A good fight and a fair fight, no man can ask more, and I believe this awaits us."

(To be continued next Wednesday. Look out for our Grand New Serial, commencing shortly.)

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A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEDNESDAY

"THE COCKNEY SCHOOLBOY!"

The Schoolboy Raiders!

(Continued from page 22.)

the Co. vengeful and merciless. Percy Mellish was collared, and in spite of his frantic struggles he was thrown face downwards across the study-table, and then Lumley-Lumley's walking-cane was borrowed. The juniors wielded the cane in turn, and the cad of the Fourth roared under the castigation, till Lumley-Lumley obligingly jammed a duster into his mouth. After that he gurgled and gasped while the lashes descended.

Mellish had had the pleasure of being flogged by the Head more than once, and he felt as if he were under the hands of the doctor once more.

He groaned as he rolled off the table.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!"

"I wathah think that will do, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I suggest a vote of thanks to Kerr for thinkin' the mattah out in this weally nobbay way, and then a visit to the Gwammah School to apologise."

"Passed unanimously," said Tom Merry.

"Hear, hear!"

The Co. crowded out of the study.

CHAPTER 17.

All Serene!

GORDON GAY & CO. were thinking of bed when a letter was brought into the junior common-room for Gay.

"Waiting for an answer, sir," said the porter.

Gay took the letter in some surprise. He opened it, and read it with one eye, the other being closed and of a peculiar blue-black hue.

"My hat!" ejaculated Gordon Gay.

And the Cornstalk read out the letter. It ran:

"Dear Gay,—We've found out our mistake, and we're awfully sorry. It turns out that a fellow was hidden under a bed in the dorm, while you were there, and he had the banknote, and hid it in D'Arcy's Sunday topper. Of course we couldn't guess till we found out that you and another raider had got there at the same time, and that you didn't know it. Hence the mistake we made in jumping on you.

"Of course, we never meant to accuse you of anything rotten, only of a fool joke. We all lost our tempers this afternoon. We're sorry. We take everything back, and we're willing to say or do anything you please to make up. You can call us all the asses and duffers you can think of, if you like.—Yours sincerely,
TOM MERRY."

"P.S.—The fiver being found, it is going to be expended on a brew before it gets lost again, and we should be glad to see all of you over here to a feed on Monday, Study No. 6, at six o'clock, if you would care to come. We hope you'll come to show that you don't bear any malice for our idiotic bungle.—T. M."

The Grammarians could not help grinning. The apology was as full and complete as could be desired, certainly, and they had no fault to find with it.

"Well, considering that they eat humble pie to that extent, I think we can overlook their playing the giddy ox!" Wootton major remarked.

"Zat is so," said Mont Blong. "I zink we may consider zat zey have rendered ze satisfaction."

"After all, we cut up rather rusty," said Gay. "Let's forget all about it, and go to the feed. I'll write an answer."

And he wrote it.

"Dear Merry,—Glad to hear that you have discovered what silly asses you are. We could have told you all along, having noticed it quite a long time ago. However, better late than never. Bygones are bygones, and we will forget everything but the feed. Expect us on Monday. Many thanks.
"GORDON GAY."

And at that feed on Monday, in Study No. 6, there was a really remarkable collection of swollen noses, thick ears, and eyes changing from black to purple; but, otherwise, everything in the garden, as Lowther expressed it, was lovely, and the greatest cordiality reigned between Tom Merry & Co. and the Schoolboy Raiders.

THE END.

(Next Wednesday, "THE COCKNEY SCHOOLBOY," another splendid, long, complete tale of TOM MERRY & CO., by Martin Clifford. Order your "GEM" LIBRARY in advance. Price One Penny.)

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 303.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

A NEW FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.

The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns are those of readers living in any of our Colonies who desire Correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.

Colonists sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondent is required—boy or girl; English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two coupons, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two coupons will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertisers direct. No correspondence with advertisers can be undertaken through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

W. Bowen, Burra, South Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 15—16, living in England.

Miss M. Foster, "Accrington," 510, Lydiard Street, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 14.

Miss A. McRobinson, 601, Lydiard Street, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England, age 14.

C. W. Weakley, Neath Street, Port Pirie West, South Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England, age 16.

T. Dwyer, 16, Park Street, Northcote, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers.

Miss Nora Dunbar, Violet Street, Eden Terrace, Auckland, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers living in Ireland, age 14.

P. W. Grenfell, 82, Byron Street, Sydenham, Christchurch, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers in Great Britain.

C. F. Stark, 14, High Street, Coffs Harbour, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with a reader living in England, age 16.

R. Cohen, 94, George Street, Fitzroy, Melbourne, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers.

J. H. Anderson, 197, Eglinton Street, Moonee Ponds, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in the British Isles, U.S.A., India, or Canada.

J. Friedman, 54, Chateaubriand Avenue, Montreal, Canada, wishes to correspond with boy readers interested in stamps and postcards, age 13-16.

J. F. Barnett, 21, Elm Grove, Brighton, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 16-20.

L. J. Carter, Benjaberring, via Perth, West Australia, wishes to correspond with girl readers in England, age 14-15, interested in photography.

Miss B. H. Rowe, Union Street, Hyde Park, South Australia, wishes to correspond with boy readers living in England and America, age 17-19.

Miss E. Stott, Dysart, Tasmania, wishes to correspond with English and Scotch girl readers, age 18-20.

G. Bryce, Havelock Street, Narragin, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with Boy Scout readers.

L. Proudlock, Highgate Street, Auburn, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with girl readers living in the British Isles or Canada, age 17-20.

M. J. Wurcker, Ruperra, Darling Point Road, Darling Point, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader, age 13-14.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

GRAND NEW SERIES OF FOOTBALL ARTICLES!

WHEN & WHEN TO KICK TO HEAD

BY
JOHN WALKER

of
MIDDLESBROUGH.



I think most people will agree with me when I say that one of the chief points of difference between the play of the young footballer and the expert is to be found in the matter of heading the ball.

I can safely add that many young players do not know how to head the ball properly. If they did, their effectiveness as footballers would be greatly enhanced.

Of that there came be no doubt. It is extremely useful to be able to head the ball properly. Watch the average boys' team at work, however, and you will see all sorts of weird attempts at heading the ball. A few times the leather may go where the young player intends, but the number of times it goes elsewhere almost makes it appear as though it had gone to the right place by accident and not by design.

Even in the very top class of football there are some players who, with all the teaching which they have received, have never learnt how to head the ball properly, and as sure as it comes to them through the air they make a mess of it.

One has to be careful in advising boys on the use of their heads in football—that is, so far as letting the head come in contact with the ball is concerned. You do not require me to tell you that you will never be a really good footballer unless you use your head in another direction, and that concerns the thought which you give to the game. But it is heading the ball with which we are most concerned just now, and, as I said, this is very often a dangerous business; and, although a valuable asset to a footballer, he has to be careful. There is a time to head and a time to kick, and unless he is careful in the choice of the occasion, and heads when he should kick, the young footballer may be storing up trouble for himself.

It may be taken, as a rule, that you are not to head the ball when you can get your feet to it; in other words, don't try to get your head down to the object when it is barely a yard from the ground or anything like that. I have seen seasoned players bend themselves almost double trying to head the ball when they should have been using their feet instead. But you may say, what does it matter so long as the object is achieved? Well, it matters to this extent—that you may find yourself in the nearest hospital in double quick time.

If you are a forward, and you do this kind of thing, the full-back may be kicking at the ball just as you are in the act of heading it, and it does not require a magnifying-glass to see trouble for the header under such circumstances. Of course, if the full-back saw the forward heading the ball when he should be kicking it, he would probably withhold the kick, but very often he is so intent on the ball that he has no time to look what the other fellow is doing—no time to consider about the fellow who is running a tremendous risk by making his head do what his feet could accomplish better and much more safely.

Don't head, then, when the ball is near enough to the ground to be kicked.

It may seem cowardly for me to advise the boy not to head the ball if it happens to be coming at him with terrific force, or if it is heavy on account of the mud which it has picked up, but I really think it is good advice. Mind, I have often headed the ball myself under such conditions—on the spur of the moment one does not always think of the consequences when a big match is at stake; but afterwards I have wished I had let the ball go.

I have met a tremendous kick with my head. Maybe I have kept out a very hot shot, but what has been the result? I have been dazed so much that for the rest of the game I have been quite unable to play my natural game, and have wandered about more or less like a person in a dream. Now, if in heading a ball the footballer reduces his effectiveness for the rest of the game, it is obviously not worth while, and that is why I advise young players not to head a really heavy ball which is coming at all quickly through the air. It is not worth it. I have mentioned two of the big risks which are run in heading the ball, and they are risks which can be avoided.

At the moment I can recall no player who heads the ball more than does Charlie Roberts, the Oldham Athletic centre-half, and yet during the whole of his career he has never had a kick on the head or been bruised through heading at the wrong time.

Incidentally I think it is at centre-half where the power to head is most useful. As a rule, the kick-off from goal sends the ball towards the middle of the field, and if the centre-half can get his head to it and return the ball to his own forwards he will be of tremendous value to his side.

In the same way the tall defender can be very useful when corner-kicks are taken, for to clear with his head is about the only chance he has of clearing at all. It is really surprising what the efficient header can do with the ball—turning it this way and that at will, heading forward or backward, slow or fast. I have seen shots which have gone past the goalkeeper from a man's head just as fast as though they had been kicked, simply because the ball had been met at the exact instant of time. To talk about timing the ball sounds like cricket, I know; but it is just as essential to time the football properly as it is the cricket ball.

Now we come to the question of how to head and why it is that so many young players can head in anything but the right way. Well, it is often the first principle which is at fault. The natural tendency in heading the ball is to use the top of the head; but, as a matter of fact, it is the forehead and the sides of the head which should be used. Incidentally, there is less risk of injury in using these parts of the head, and it is the only way in which the direction and flight of the ball can be properly controlled.

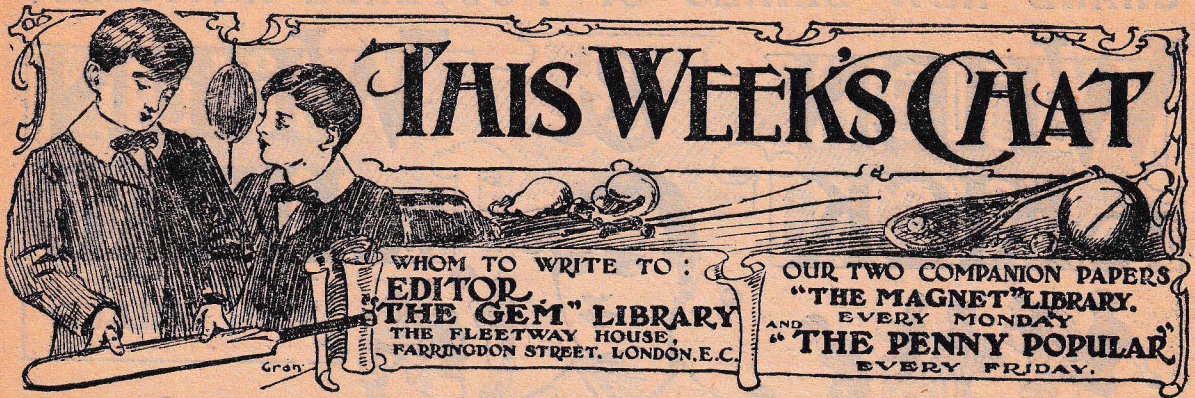
I have explained about timing the ball, and a jerk of the head at the instant of contact is the way to get the ball going where you want it to go. The correct moment of jerking the head can only be acquired by practice. Take the ball out on the field on your own and try a little heading practice—see how many times you can get the ball up without it touching the ground. This will teach you how to get it on the forehead properly and also teach you whether heading has any bad effect, because the young player must not head a football if it dazes him when he has done it; in such a case his head is obviously not made to stand the shock. And, having practised on your own, then try with somebody else kicking the ball to you, and you turning it this way and that. Heading, more than anything I know about football, requires practice.

John Walker

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 303.
By T. BOYLE,
Captain of Burnley.

Next Wednesday: "FOOTBALL AS A PROFESSION"

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



WHOM TO WRITE TO :
EDITOR
"THE GEM" LIBRARY
 THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY.
 EVERY MONDAY
 AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
 EVERY FRIDAY.

For Next Wednesday,
"THE COCKNEY SCHOOLBOY!"
 By Martin Clifford.

Our next grand, long, complete tale of the famous chums of St. Jim's deals with the trials and troubles of a Cockney new boy who arrives at that ancient seat of learning. 'Arry Ammond's manners and customs, and, above all, his speech and dress, cause something of a sensation in the school, and even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy cannot get over his objection to him.

A fight between the elegant swell of St. Jim's and the Cockney "boulder" takes place, but Kildare's intervention prevents it being fought to a finish—fortunately for D'Arcy! In the end, however, 'Arry Ammond, who is good as gold at heart, "makes good," and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy is the first to apologise to

THE COCKNEY SCHOOLBOY.

"HOW I BECAME A READER."

Interesting Letter from a South African Reader.

The following letter is most interesting, coming, as it does, from a chum in far-away South Africa, by reason of the way in which the writer describes in detail how he first fell a willing victim to the charms of each member of the Invincible Trio in turn. Most of my readers will sympathise with him, having been through identically the same process themselves. Here is the greater part of my South African chum's letter:

"Cape Town, South Africa.

"Dear Mr. Editor.—Just a few lines to let you know my opinion of your three papers—'Magnet,' 'Gem,' and 'Penny Popular.' I have been a reader of these papers for some little time. First of all, I was advised by a friend to buy the 'Magnet.' He very kindly lent me a few copies to see if I liked it. I was so pleased with what I read in your splendid paper that I made up my mind to buy it every week. But after a few weeks I found that I had not enough to read. After a while I found that the 'Magnet' had a companion paper named the 'Gem.' I bought it, and was overjoyed at finding it was equally as good. Then when you published the 'Penny Popular' I made up my mind to buy it, being fully assured by the previous papers that it would be a good paper. I was not disappointed, quite the reverse, as I found it to be a jolly good old paper, and as good as its name. That is how I became a reader of the 'Invincible Trio.'

"Being specially fond of school tales, I found Frank Richards' stories, the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., most interesting. They are certainly the best of all the school stories I have ever read. 'Mysteria' is also a very interesting story of adventure. Another great attraction is 'Greyfriars Lyrics,' which I think are very good.

"But before all these interesting things I look for the Chat page. When I read the brief account of the following week's story it gives me a strong determination to buy the 'Magnet' the next week as early as possible so as not to miss it.

"The 'Gem' I find equally as interesting as the 'Magnet,' the story of Tom Merry & Co. being the only school story able to stand to the 'Magnet's.' The Corinthian is also one of the best. I rather like the Correspondence Exchange. I think it's a splendid idea, and as I am a reader interested

in stamps, I should find it a great help to correspond with other readers. I would like to join the first opportunity I get. The 'Penny Popular' is interesting all through... Yours truly, D. S. A."

Thanks for your letter, D. S. A. I will put your name in the Free Correspondence Exchange List in due course.

ANIMAL CINEMA ACTORS.—No. 3.

The Cinema College of Animals.

A film has just been released, and will soon be on show at the picture-houses, containing many wonderful secrets of animal and insect life, which have hitherto only been known to the naturalists; but every boy is a naturalist in his own way, and these films which show the wonderful mysteries of wild life in the woods, the hedgerows, and the ponds of the country-side, will, I am sure, be interesting to every boy. In one picture, the camera-man has been lucky enough to find a bee, caught in a spider's web, and a very spirited fight between Mr. Spider and the intruder takes place. Soon, however, the bee is rendered helpless by coil upon coil of silky thread, and the spider endeavours to carry him up to his den; but this is a task beyond his strength, and so the poor bee is left to die in close confinement, when the spider will doubtless make a hearty meal from him. Another portion of the film shows a worm at the bottom of a pond attacked by a water-beetle, about a sixth of its length. The beetle's nippers literally cut the worm in half, and the battle is soon decided in the beetle's favour. In all these pictures, which show snakes, lizards, and all kind of pond and river life, moving about in the natural state, the most wonderful thing is that they are all quite unconscious of the fact that they are being observed. One camera-man secured a picture of a huge python, in the act of making a prodigious yawn, displaying a gap large enough to accommodate the camera itself. Bears are fond of honey, and one baby bear is shown on the picture, robbing a bee's nest for this purpose.

Beetles Trained to Act for the Film.

A Russian professor, by name, Loyski, during his imprisonment in a dungeon in the year 1881, made friends with hordes of beetles in a most remarkable manner. He fed them with the remains of his meals; they would come at the sound of his voice, and he even went so far as to teach them simple little tricks. Several of them would answer to their names.

When, therefore, quite recently, the professor heard of the wonderful advance of moving pictures, he arranged to have films taken of these wonderful beetles. Up till then, he had taught them to act in very simple ways, and to dance—in fact, one of them was such an inveterate dancer, that he actually danced himself to death in "Everybody's Doing It!" By instinct, these creatures are great fighters, and the professor has more than once dressed them up in uniform, divided them into regiments, and taught them to fight real little battles.

Now, when you hear people say that these beetle films are faked, or that the beetles are actual men disguised, you can assure them that they are quite wrong, and there is nothing in the whole world of cinematography so genuine or clever as training these insects to act like human beings.

(Another interesting
 Cinema article next
 Wednesday.)



Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE!

NOT GREEDY.

One day a little girl was sent round collecting money for the Sunday-school treat.

Soon she came to the mayor's house, and asked for a subscription. She was asked to go into the house, and the mayor put on the table threepence, a sixpence, and a shilling, with a five-pound note on top.

Then he asked her what she would have.

"Mother told me not to be greedy, so I will have the threepence and the piece of paper on top to wrap it up in."—Sent in by A. Farrow, Palmer's Green.

HIS PIPE.

"An' ye fell from a window, Nobbler? How high was it?"

"Tin storeys."

"Well, that was a great fall! An' what did ye think of on the way down?"

"I didn't think of nothing until I passed the fifth storey, and then I remembered I left me pipe on the window-sill."—Sent in by H. Price, Sidmouth, Devon.

STUMPED.

At a league cricket-match a young fellow had the misfortune to have some of his teeth knocked out while playing against a fast bowler. In the return match the young man was again facing the bowler; he shouted across the pitch:

"Ay, mate, I hope you're not after my teeth again?"

"No," was the quick reply. "It's your stumps I'm after this time!"—Sent in by James Shiel, Melrose, Scotland.

NOT THE SAME THING!

A country yokel was standing on the platform waiting for a train, and seeing a man in uniform, went up to him.

"Are you a conductor?"

"I am," was the reply.

"Well, when does the next train for C— arrive?"

"I really couldn't say."

"You're a nice conductor, if you don't know the time the local train comes in!" said the yokel disgustedly.

"Well, you see, I'm not a railway-conductor, I'm the conductor of a brass band."—Sent in by A. Mack, Canada.

ANOTHER MATCH!

A gentleman whose wife was dead had as an epitaph on her gravestone, the following:

"The light of my life has gone out."

But six months later he got married again, and after a time he decided to visit his first wife's grave.

His surprise can be better imagined than described, when he found that another line had been put to the stone, which now reads thus:

"The light of my life has gone out."

"But I have struck another match."

—Sent in by Lance-corporal Eden, St. Helen's.

ACCEPTED THE INVITATION.

He liked to hear his own voice, and, standing outside the Blank Inn along with several others, soon became immersed in a political debate.

"And now," he said, after an eloquent flow of language, "perhaps you will coincide with me."

"Why, yes, thanks, old man!" answered a red-nosed friend, moving towards the door of the inn. "I don't mind if I do!"—Sent in by J. Stewart, Perth.

SHE BOUGHT TWO.

Pedlar (opening bag): "I have here, madam, an improved rat-trap—"

Lady of House: "We are never troubled with rats."

"It can also be used for cracking nuts—"

"We never use nuts of any kind."

"And by reversing these wires we have a device for holding eggs when cooking—"

"We never eat eggs."

"And by folding these loops, as you see me doing now, it makes a handy arrangement for holding mirrors—"

"Haven't the slightest use for such a thing."

"By adjusting another mirror in this position, and another at this angle, and placing it on the kitchen window, it has the curious effect of distinctly showing what is going on in any house that is opposite without being observed yourself."

"Oh, I see! I'll take two."—Sent in by H. S. Duppert, Paddington, W.

IMPOSSIBLE.

"If twenty men reaped a field in ten days, how many days would twelve men take to reap the same field?" asked the teacher of the boys' class.

They pondered for a minute or two, then up shot a grubby hand.

"Please, sir, they couldn't do it at all. The field has already been reaped!"—Sent in by J. McDougall, Hull.

AMEN.

The curate was learning to ride a bicycle, and, in a misplaced fit of zeal, set off on his own. He thought he could manage by himself, so started downhill in a somewhat wobbly manner. The road was wet and muddy, and the curate had not proceeded far before the machine skidded, and he was sent floundering in the mud. A youthful member of the Sunday School watched the catastrophe with evident pleasure.

"Here endeth the first lesson!" he chortled.—Sent in by C. E. Elvidge, Gravesend.

WANTED DEFINITE DIRECTIONS.

Captain: "Do you see the captain on the bridge of that battleship five miles away?"

Tar: "Ay, ay, sir!"

Captain: "Let him have one of those twelve-inch shells in his eye."

Tar: "Which eye, sir?"—Sent in by F. Kent, Bletchley.

A PUZZLE FOR PA.

"Pa!"

"Yes, Willie."

"Teacher said that we were here to help others."

"Quite right."

"Then what are the others here for?"—Sent in by W. Gloag, Glasgow.

THEY KNEW.

About a dozen officers of a regiment, having some time on their hands, took a short walk, and happened to come across a number of small boys playing soldiers. Somewhat amused, they watched them for a time, until one of the amateur warriors, shouted to an unusually stupid recruit:

"Here, Bill, come out of there! You'll have to be an officer, 'cos you can't do nothing!"

Needless to say, the officers vanished.—Sent in by W. Boreham, Ipswich.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED!

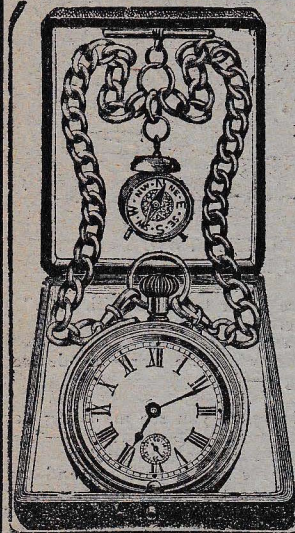
Readers are invited to send ON A POSTCARD Storyettes or Short, Interesting Paragraphs for this page. For every contribution used the senders will receive a Money Prize.

ALL POSTCARDS MUST BE ADDRESSED The Editor, "The Gem" Library, Gough House, Gough Square, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

THIS OFFER IS OPEN TO READERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

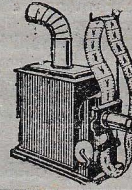
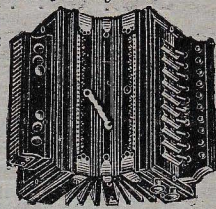
No correspondence can be entered into with regard to this Competition, and all contributions enclosed in letters, or sent in otherwise than on postcards, will be disregarded.

FREE FOR SELLING 12 BEAUTIFUL XMAS CARDS AT 1^d. EACH.



As an advertisement we give every reader of this paper a splendid present absolutely **FREE** simply for selling 12 Cards at 1^d. each. (Gold-mounted, Embossed Folders, Glossy, etc.). Our up-to-date Prize List contains hundreds of different kinds of free gifts for everyone, including **Ladies and Gents' Gold and Silver Watches, Ostrich Feathers, Furs, Cycles, Telescopes, Chains, Rings, Accordeons, Cinemas, Gramophones, Air Guns, Engines, Toys, etc.**, etc. All you need do is to send us your name and address (a postcard will do) and we will send you a selection of **Lovely cards** to sell or use at 1^d. each. When sold send us the money obtained and we will immediately forward gift chosen according to the Grand List we send you. **Start Early.** Send a postcard to

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FOREIGN & COLONIAL APPLICATIONS INVITED.



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ROYAL CARD CO. (Dept. 4), KEW, LONDON.

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