

# TOM MERRY & CO.'S ALLY!

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete Tale of School Life.



The **GEM** LIBRARY Vol. 9  
No. 387



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# TOM MERRY & CO.'S ALLY!

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



"Hallo! Bob down!" shouted Talbot. "My hat! Look out!" A hand and an arm came from the window of the taxi ahead, and the hand held a large automatic pistol. (See Chapter 5.)

## CHAPTER 1.

### The Interrupted Cricket-match.

**T**OM MERRY'S cheery, good-looking face wore a sunny smile.

The captain of the Shell was feeling particularly contented that afternoon.

It was a glorious summer afternoon. Never had the cricket-ground looked so green and vivid. Never had the sky seemed so blue and smiling. Tom Merry was feeling as fit as a fiddle. His eleven was in great form. The School House team was anticipating a victory over their old rivals of the New House, after a really ripping game. Everything, in short, was merry and bright.

Tom Merry, in spotless flannels, with a bat under his arm, stood before the pavilion, chatting with Lowther and Manners. Figgins & Co. of the New House were coming down to the ground.

"Ripping for cricket," said Tom Merry. "And the pitch is simply perfect. And we're going to beat the New House."

"We are!" agreed Manners.

"We is!" assented Monty Lowther.

"Here comes the New House bouncers," said Blake of the Fourth. "We're not all here. Anybody seen Gussy?"

"Ready?" said Figgins, as he came up. "We're going to wipe up the ground with you chaps this afternoon."

Tom Merry frowned for a moment.

"One of my best men hasn't come down yet," he said. "Where has that duffer D'Arcy got to? Somebody go and yank him here by his silly ears."

"We can begin without him," remarked Manners.

"Yes, if we bat. Here's a penny, Figgy."

Figgins of the Fourth won the toss, and grinned serenely. That perfect pitch seemed to woo the batsmen.

Next Wednesday:

"THE FOUR CONSPIRATORS!" AND "THE CITY OF FLAME!"

and Figgy naturally decided to bat. Tom Merry & Co. had to go into the field, and they could not go into the field without short slip. So Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth was wanted.

"The duffer!" said Tom Merry. "He knows the stumps are pitched, and we're waiting. I'll put in a substitute."

"Hold on!" said Blake and Herries and Digby together. "Those three Fourth-Formers were D'Arcy's study-mates in No. 6, and they wanted to give their chum a chance."

"Time and tide wait for no man," said Tom Merry, "and the same applies to cricket. Gussy can go and eat coke!"

"Hold on—here he comes!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared in sight in the quadrangle, bearing down upon the cricket-field.

Tom Merry glanced towards him and looked wrathful. For Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, though a member of the School House junior team, and looked to play in the House match, was not in flannels.

He was clad with his usual elegance, or, rather, more than his usual elegance. His well-fitting Etons, his shining boots, his glossy silk topper, his necktie which was tied as though by the hand of a genius, his gleaming eyeglass—all looked a perfect picture, but did not look much like cricket. And there was an orchid in the lapel of his jacket. D'Arcy did not usually wear a flower in his coat. He looked as if he might be going to a wedding. But certainly he did not look as if he were going to a cricket-match.

The St. Jim's cricketers stared at him as he sauntered elegantly on the field. Jack Blake looked daggers at him.

"You thumping ass!" said Blake. "What does this mean?"

"Why haven't you changed?" roared Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I have just changed. These are not my ewwyday clobber," said D'Arcy, with dignity.

"You—you've changed into your Sunday clothes for cricket!" ejaculated Tom Merry, in great amazement.

"Not for cwicket, deah boy."

"You want to stand out of the match? Why couldn't you say so before, ass? All serene; I'll play Hammond."

"The fact is, Tom Mewwy—"

"Never mind. Here, Hammond, you're wanted. Get into your clobber—quick!"

"Pway don't do anything' of the sort, Hammond."

Tom Merry jumped.

"Are you off your silly rocker, Gussy?"

"Not at all, deah boy."

"Then what do you mean?" demanded the captain of the Shell wrathfully. "Do you want me to flatten that topper on your silly head?"

"Wats! I wish to remark—"

"No time for your remarks, fathead! Buzz off if you're not going to play!"

"I decline to buzz off. I—"

"Look here, why are you standing out!" demanded Blake. "Study No. 6 always plays in the House matches. You're jolly well not going to stand out!"

"I am goin' to play in this match, deah boy, but this match is not comin' off to-day," explained Arthur Augustus placidly.

"Wha-a-nt?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Which?" murmured Lowther.

"Potty!" remarked Figgins. "How long are you School House bouncers going to keep up listening to your tame lunatic?"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Somebody kick him off the field!" said Tom Merry. "Get into your flannels, Hammond. No time to waste!"

"I insist—"

"Oh, dry up!"

"This match must be postponed!"

"Fathead!"

"It is vewy important."

"Rats!"

"But I tell you—"

"Boeh!"

Hammond of the Fourth had already rushed into the pavilion, to bolt into his flannels. Tom Merry & Co.

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stroled into the field, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to waste his eloquence on the desert air.

What on earth the swell of St. Jim's was driving at the cricketers could not understand. But they had no time to think it out. Cricket was the important business on hand just then.

But Arthur Augustus was not to be denied. He followed the juniors on the field, greatly excited.

"I tell you, Tom Mewwy, this match must be postponed. I have received some news—vewy important news."

Tom Merry paused for a moment.

"News from the front?" he asked.

"No."

"Well, no other sort of news matters! Get off the field!"

"I wefuse to get off the field! I wepeat—"

"Hallo, here's Hammond! Short slip, Hammond!"

Hammond rushed into the field after a lightning change. Tom Merry tossed the ball to Talbot of the Shell.

"First over, Talbot."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rushed up to Tom Merry. His aristocratic face was almost crimson with excitement. For the moment he had completely forgotten the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

"Tom Mewwy—"

"Clear off, you ass!"

"Get off the field, fathead!" roared Kangaroo of the Shell. "You're in the way!"

"Wats! I wepeat—"

"Will you clear out?" exclaimed Tom Merry, puzzled and exasperated. "If you've got anything to tell us you can tell us after the innings! Get out!"

"I wefuse—"

"Kick him off!" said Tom Merry.

The field closed round Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, but the swell of St. Jim's stood his ground and refused to budge an inch.

"I wepeat, deah boys, that this is vewy important!" he shouted. "I insist that this match shall be postponed, for a vewy important reason, which I will explain to you—Leggo my ears, Lowthah! I wepeat—Stop shovin' me, Weilly! Oh, you wottahs! Oh, cwumbs!"

The School House fieldsmen were fed-up. They grasped Arthur Augustus on all sides, and rushed him off the field, giving him the frog's-march. Struggling wildly in the clutches of the cricketers, the swell of St. Jim's was rushed to the pavilion and dumped down on the ground.

Alas! for the natty clobber, the handsome orchid, and the glossy silk topper. By the time Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was landed he looked a wreck. The exasperated cricketers were not handling him gently. The swell of St. Jim's, no longer looking a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, sat in the grass, groping wildly for his eyeglass and gasping for breath.

"Oh, cwumbs! Oh, scissahs! Oh, my hat!"

Tom Merry & Co. streamed back into the field, and left him gasping. They supposed that they were finished with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his inexplicable interruptions.

But they were mistaken.

## CHAPTER 2

### A Really Great Occasion.

FIGGINS and Kerr of the New House had gone to the wickets. Talbot of the Shell was preparing to deliver the first ball. Just as it was about to leave his hand, a wild figure rushed upon the field again. It was Arthur Augustus, minus his damaged topper, with his collar and tie flying loose, his jacket wildly rumpled, and his hair like a mop, but determined as ever.

"Stop!" he panted.

"Great Scott!"

"He's potty!"

"Collar him!"

Talbot grinned, and held back the ball. Figgins and Kerr, at the wickets, looked on in astonishment. The angry fieldsmen closed round Arthur Augustus again. This time they were prepared to handle him even less

gently. Blake and Herries and Dig were as exasperated as the rest. Gussy was their study-mate, but even their study-mate could not be allowed to interrupt a cricket match in this extraordinary manner.

"Pway be reasonable, deah boys!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I weepat that it is vey important, and you will be sowry if you do not heeah me."

"Kick him out!" yelled Kamparoo.

"Pway allow me to explain! It's aw'fully important."

Tom Merry waved back his excited team. The earnestness of the swell of St. Jim's made an impression on him at last.

"Hold on!" said Tom. "Give him a minute to explain. Now, then, you howling idiot, what is it?"

"Pway listen to me! This match will have to be left o'vah!"

"Come to the point!" roared Tom Merry.

"I am comin' to it as fast as I can, deah boy. How can I come to the point if you keep on intewruptin' me? I have heard gweat news. There is a new boy comin' to St. Jim's!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry looked at him with a glare like that of the fabled basilisk.

"You shrieking ass!" he exclaimed. "You're interrupting the match to tell us that a new kid is coming to the school?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, boil him in oil!" exclaimed Blake.

"But it is not an ordinary new boy!" panted Arthur Augustus. "Pway give me a heavin'! He is an Italian."

"An Italian?"

"Yaas."

"Well, that's something new," said Manners. "We've never had an Italian here before in my time. But what does it matter? That's not interesting enough to interrupt a House match for, you fathead!"

"Weally, Mannahs, at a time when Italy is backin' us up in a weally noble and splendid mannah against those disgustin' Pwussians, I wegard the mattah as vey important. But that is not all."

"Well, let's have the rest, quick; then we'll bump you!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Get on with the washing!" roared Blake.

"This Italian chap is not a common or garden chap. His name is Contawini."

"Rats!" said Manners. "It can't be! There isn't a 'w' in the Italian alphabet."

"The silly ass means Contarini!" said Tom Merry. "That's only his beautiful pronunciation. Well, what is there extra special about the kid's name being Contarini?"

"He is the son of an Italian statesman, who is backin' up the Allies like anythin', and has twomeadous influence in Wome, and is up against Germany all along the line."

"Well, we'll give him a jolly good reception," said Tom Merry. "But why couldn't you tell us after the match?"

"Because this match is goin' to be postponed," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I have had the news from Kildare. The Italian kid speaks English, and he is comin' into the Fourth Form. His patah was to a gweat extent the cause of his country backin' us up so splendidly against the beastly Huns. My opinion is that it is up to us to meet Contawini when he arwives, and give him a splendid weception. All the weprepresentative membahs of the Lowah School ought to turn out in a boday to greet him. That's the ideah. We're all goin' o'vah to Wayland Junction in our best clothes to greet him and bring him to St. Jim's in state. I have staidy telephoned for a motah-car to be at the station, and we are goin' to take flags and things."

"Great Scott!"

"It's up to us, deah boys. This is a special and unique occasion for showin' how we appreciate the noble conduct of his country. Italy has set a shinin' example to the wretched, weak-kneed neutwals, and St. Jim's ought to wecognise this fact."

Tom Merry paused.

He was in two minds whether to hurl Arthur Augustus, a complete wreck, from the cricket-ground, or whether to act upon his really excellent suggestion.

Certainly it was a unique occasion.

Nobody present remembered an Italian boy at St. Jim's

before, and the fact that the new kid was the son of a great Italian statesman who had backed up the Allies against the German barbarians rendered him especially interesting. Certainly a hearty greeting from the juniors of St. Jim's would be a very graceful act.

"Well, deah boys?"

"Well, there's something in it," admitted Tom Merry at last. "But what about the House match?"

"Postpone it, deah boy."

Tom Merry looked at Figgins. The New House junior akipper nodded.

"I'm on," he said.

"Yaas, wathah! Both Houses must be wepresentsed in gweetin' Contawini," said Arthur Augustus promptly.

"I am not awah which House he is goin' into—I hope it will pwove to be the School House. But we must all be in this—a hearty greetin' from all the Lowah School of St. Jim's, in acknowledgement of the noble conduct of Italy in backin' up against the Pwussian savages."

"It's a go!" said Tom Merry, making up his mind.

Arthur Augustus gave a chirrup of satisfaction.

"I thought you would wealise the posiah, when I explained it to you," he said. "Pway come in and change. Cwicket matches can be played any time, but this is the only chance of gweetin' the new kid."

"Heeah, heeah!"

It was a great sacrifice to abandon the cricket-match on that sunny and smiling afternoon. But the junior cricketers made up their minds to it. They felt that it would be only patriotic.

The Italian boy would naturally feel a little lonely and lost on arriving at a strange school in a foreign country; and nothing was so likely to make him feel comfortable and at home as a cordial greeting from his future school-fellows. On the occasion of a House match any other new boy would not have been regarded as of the slightest importance. But young Contarini was a different matter.

The juniors, too, were curious to see him, now that they had heard about him. They had read in the papers of his father, and it was something to see the son of a great statesman of a great country.

So the cricketers tramped off the field, and proceeded to change once more.

Arthur Augustus had to change, too. A little too late, he regretted that he had not imparted that important news to his friends before changing into his best clobber. But now that he had gained his point, he could forgive the damage to his elegant attire.

He proceeded to deck himself afresh, a proceeding that occupied a considerable amount of time, and all the rest of the party were ready to start for Wayland before Arthur Augustus had finished.

But the swell of St. Jim's was ready at last.

He joined the crowd of juniors in the quad, looking as fresh and spick-and-span as a daisy.

Some of the juniors had their bikes out, and some of them were sporting their toppers for the occasion, intending to take the local train from Rylcombe. The news had spread further, and a good many fellows beside the cricketers were joining the party.

A good many of the juniors were provided with rolled-up flags, which were to grace the festive occasion—Union Jacks, Russian and French colours, and Arthur Augustus had an Italian flag.

"Weady, deah boys?"

"Waiting for you, fathead!" growled Jack Blake.

"Just a word befoah we start, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus impressively. "It is bound to please young Contawini to be greeted in his own language, though he speaks English. Pway leave the talkin' to me, and I will address some wemarks to him in Italian."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus prided himself upon his knowledge of Italian, especially since he had spent a vacation in Italy. As a matter of fact, his knowledge was mostly limited to the Italian expressions used in music, such as presto and prestissimo, adagio and largo, accelerando and colla voce.

What the new kid was likely to think, if he was addressed in that variety of Italian, was a mystery. No doubt he would be very much surprised.

But the outburst of merriment with which his proposition was greeted only made the swell of St. Jim's smile.

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He was quite satisfied with his powers as a linguist, and he meant to show these doubting Thomases what he could do in that line.

"Oh, pway come on, and don't cackle, deah boys!" he said. "Marcia!"

"Eh! What do you mean by marchah?" demanded Digby.

"That's Italian for march, deah boy," said D'Arcy loftily.

"Oh!" said Monty Lowther. "Soho! Saffronmillo! Ice-creamo! Greeko Streeto, tomato-soupo, and mezzosopranò! That's Italian for get a move on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I regard you as an ass, Lowthah!"

And Arthur Augustus led the way. The cyclists took the road through the wood to Wayland, but the topography, headed by the swell of St. Jim's, walked down to Rylcombe for the local train. They caught it, and the local rolled away at its usual leisurely pace towards the junction.

"By-the-by," said Monty Lowther blandly, as the train started, "what time is the new kid getting to Wayland? Do you know, Gussy?"

D'Arcy had quite forgotten to mention that somewhat important fact.

"Yaas, wathah—thwee-thirtay ffrom London."

"Three-thirty!" yelled Tom Merry.

"Yaas!"

"And this local gets to Wayland at three-forty!"

"Baj Jove, does it? I nevah thought of that."

"Good old Gussy!" murmured Blake. "A born leader! Some chaps are born to command, you know, and to lead other chaps into fixes."

"Weally Blake, if you duffahs had not wasted so much time on the cricket-ground, we could have caught an earliah twain. I regard you fellahs as bein' wholly to blame!"

"Of course, the new kid will be gone before we get there," remarked Tom Merry. "He may get a taxi from Wayland, and if he does, we can walk home again. Why don't you keep Gussy in a strait-jacket, Blake?"

"My mistake," said Blake. "I admit we ought to."

"Wate! The new kid will probably take the local to Wylcombe, and in that case we shall catch him all wight. If he goes in a taxi we will wash aftah him in our cab, and escort him home."

"Well, it can't be helped now," remarked Talbot. "Let's hope the kid will wait for the local. If he doesn't I suggest that we bump Gussy on the platform at Wayland."

"Hear, hear!"

"Weally, Talbot—"

"Done!" said Blake decidedly. "If we catch the Italian we'll let Gussy make him a speech—presto, prestissimo—and if we miss him we'll bump Gussy on the platform, and squash his topker on his head. It's a go."

"You uttah ass, I wefuse!"

"That's agreed!" said Herries. "It's a grid-iron."

And all the party agreed that it was agreed, all excepting Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who spent the rest of the run to Wayland in a very uneasy frame of mind, oppressed by forebodings of what might happen to his topker.

### CHAPTER 3. The Kidnapper!

"WAYLAND JUNCTION"  
The express from London stopped in the station.

A slim, handsome lad, with an olive complexion and velvety black eyes, looked out of a first-class carriage. It was Giacomo Contarini, the new boy for St. Jim's. He turned to an elderly, dusky-skinned gentleman in the same carriage, and spoke to him in Italian. They alighted from the train together.

There were a good many passengers from the train, but the two foreigners were conspicuous among them. Many glances were directed towards the handsome Italian lad and the old tutor. A fat, fair-complexioned

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man crossed the platform towards him, and raised his hat politely.

"Signor Bonelli?" he asked.

The elderly gentleman returned his salute.

"Si, signore."

"Excuse me, I do not speak Italian," said the fat gentleman. "I understand that you speak English—my language—also your pupil, Master Contarini."

"That is the case, sir," said Signor Bonelli, in perfect English.

Master Contarini did not speak, but he was looking curiously at the fat, fair gentleman. His black eyes were very keen.

"I have been sent by Dr. Holmes to meet you," explained the stranger. "I am Mr. Smith, a master at St. James' School."

The Italian gentleman looked puzzled for a moment.

"I have been instructed to take the local train to Rylcombe, where a carriage will be in waiting for me," he said.

"True; but Dr. Holmes has, instead, sent me here to meet you, and asked me to wait for you in the station," explained Mr. Smith. "There has been a breakdown on the local line."

"Ah, I see! Thank you very much! Come, Giacomo!" Contarini and his tutor followed the fat gentleman from the station.

Outside, a closed car was in waiting, with a goggled chauffeur ready in his seat. Mr. Smith politely stood aside for the new arrivals to enter the car.

Three cyclists had just stopped outside the station. They were Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn, of the New House at St. Jim's. The New House Co. had come over on their bikes, while Tom Merry & Co. had gone down to Rylcombe, and they had arrived first. There were twenty or more cyclists on the road, but Figgins & Co. had easily beaten them.

Figgins & Co., naturally, spotted the Italian boy and the elderly Italian gentleman at once. Italians were not common in the market-town, excepting the itinerant Italians who came along with barrel-organs.

"That's the chap!" said Kerr.

"That can't be Gussy's car, though," said Figgins. "Gussy said he had ordered a whacking big car to take a crowd of the fellows."

"He couldn't be going off in Gussy's car without Gussy, anyway," said Fatty Wynn. "Besides, that's a taxi, and Gussy said it was a big car."

"I suppose we can introduce ourselves?" grinned Figgins. "That fathead Gussy has mucked up the reception to his usual style, but as he isn't here we can do the bizney for him, I suppose."

"And better," remarked Kerr.

"Come on!" said Figgins.

Leaving their bikes on the kerb, the three juniors hurried along to the closed car. There was no doubt that this slim, dusky Italian lad was the new boy, and Figgins & Co. were glad to be the first to greet him. It was lucky that they were there before he started for St. Jim's. How very lucky it was Figgins & Co. did not at that moment guess.

The three juniors raised their caps very politely as they came up. Mr. Smith looked at them very oddly, and the two Italians paused, seeing that the juniors wished to speak to them.

"Excuse us," said Figgins gracefully. "I take it that you are young Contarini, the Italian kid, who's coming to St. Jim's?"

Contarini smiled and nodded.

"Si, signorino," he said.

"Yes, I see," said Figgins, mistaking the meaning of the Italian "yes" from its pronunciation. "Well, we belong to St. Jim's, and we've biked over to meet you here."

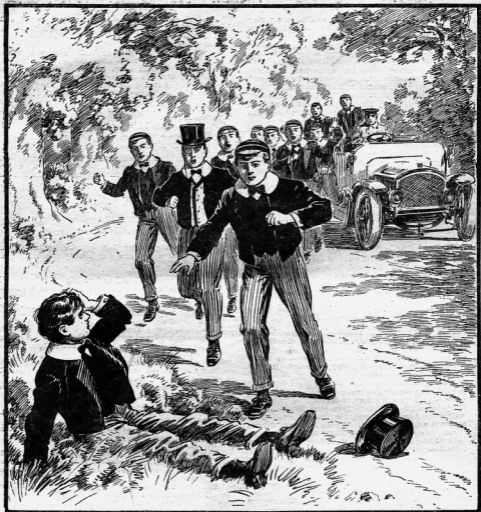
"Grazi tanto."

"Oh, my hat! What does that mean, Kerr?"

Contarini laughed.

"But I speak English," he exclaimed, in a musical voice. "I mean, thank you so much. You are very kind to come and meet me. Signor Bonelli, these are my schoolfellows who have come to meet me."

Signor Bonelli executed a graceful bow.



The big car jarred to a halt. Tom Merry was the first to spring out, and rush to the dusky lad who was sitting up dazedly in the ferns. "Are you hurt?" exclaimed Tom. (See Chapter 5.)

Mr. Smith's face was a study.

"There's a lot of fellows coming to meet you, Contarini," explained Figgins. "A lot on bikes, and a lot more on the local train, but that hasn't come in yet. We've got in first, you see. We're jolly glad to see you. Vee—vee—vee—what was that you told me, Kerr?"

"Viva Italia!" grinned Kerr.

"Yes, Veever Italyer!" said Figgins. "You see, we've heard about your pater, and we're jolly glad to welcome you to St. Jim's. You're as welcome as the flowers that bloom in the spring, tra-la!"

"Troppo gentile!" exclaimed Contarini, his dusky face flushing with pleasure. "You are very kind."

"You see, we've got a whacking reception arranged, with flags and things," said Figgins. "Of course, Gusey has mucked it up. I suppose you wouldn't care to wait a bit till the fellows get here."

"I should be very pleased, but Mr. Smith must say."

Figgins glanced at Mr. Smith. That fat gentleman was looking very peculiar indeed. The sudden arrival of the St. Jim's juniors seemed to have taken him quite aback.

"I—I think we—we had better go!" exclaimed Mr. Smith hurriedly.

"It won't be many minutes, sir," said Figgins, looking curiously at Mr. Smith. "The local from Rylcombe is just due."

"The local train!" exclaimed Contarini.

"Yes; it's signalled already. You can see from here."

"But there is a breakdown on the line."

"This is the first I've heard of it," said Figgins.

"That's all right. You can see that the train's signalled, so there can't be any breakdown."

"But Mr. Smith has just told us so."

"It's a mistake, Mr. Smith," said Figgins. "There

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isn't any breakdown. Here"—Figgins called to a porter in the station vestibule—"has there been any breakdown on the line from Rylcombe?"

"No, sir."  
"There you are," said Figgins. Contarini shot a rapid, suspicious glance at Mr. Smith. That gentleman was biting his fat lip hard. He was evidently utterly disconcerted at the turn of affairs, and he exchanged a rapid glance with the chauffeur. The engine was throbbing now.

"But this gentleman, Mr. Smith, has told us that Dr. Holmes sent him to meet us here, because there was a breakdown on the line," said Contarini.

Figgins & Co. looked astonished.  
"He is a master at your school," added Contarini.

"You know him?"  
"What!" yelled Figgins.  
"A master at our school!" ejaculated Kerr. "He's nothing of the sort. I've never seen him before." Signor Bonelli started.

"Dio mio! But the signore said—"  
"Look here, Mr. Smith, what's this little game?" exclaimed Figgins, without ceremony. "What do you mean by telling Contarini that you're a master at St. Jim's? You know you're jolly well nothing of the sort!"  
"It is a trick!" said Contarini quietly. "My father warned me— Ah!"

The Italian junior broke off with a cry. The action of Mr. Smith startled the New House juniors. He made a sudden spring, brushed them aside, and seized the Italian lad. Contarini was hurled bodily into the car, and crashed on the floor. The fat gentleman leaped in after him and slammed the door. Instantly the car was in motion.

Taken utterly by surprise, Figgins & Co. stood dazed.  
"What the thunder—" gasped Figgins  
Signor Bonelli gave a yell.

"Stop him! Stop them! Fermate! Fermate!" Brandishing his fists wildly in the air, the Italian gentleman rushed after the car, which was dashing away at a reckless speed. There was a good deal of traffic outside the railway-station, and Figgins rushed after the Italian gentleman and dragged him to the pavement just in time to rescue him from a cab.

The closed car was dashing away down the High Street. Signor Bonelli gave a shriek of despair.

"Police! Help! They have kidnapped him! Help!"  
"Kidnapped him!" stuttered Figgins.  
There was a trampling of feet in the station vestibule. The local had arrived, and Tom Merry & Co. were pouring out of the station. They arrived upon a scene of wild excitement.

**CHAPTER 3.  
A Hot Chase.**

"Figgins, dear boy—"  
"Have you seen the Italian chap?" The express has gone. He's not in the station."  
"Seen anything of him?"

The School-House party rained questions on Figgins & Co. Figgins gasped for breath.

"He's come. He's been kidnapped!"  
"What!"

"This old chap—I mean this Italian gentleman—came with him. A chap calling himself Smith, and a master of St. Jim's, met them here," explained Figgins hurriedly. "When we chipped in the villain pitched Contarini into a car and rushed off with him. They've gone pelting up the High Street. I can't make it out."

"My only hat!"  
"Gweat Scott!"

Signor Bonelli was wringing his hands.  
"Il povero ragazzo! They have kidnapped him."

"Who have kidnapped him?" yelled Tom Merry, seizing the signor by the arm and shaking him in his excitement.

"I tedeschi! I tedeschi!"  
"The Germans!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, who knew what "tedeschi" were.

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"Si, si, si, si! Sono tedeschi! They are Germans, and they have kidnapped my pupil!" wailed the signor.

"Germans!"  
"Oh, cwumbs!"

The juniors were utterly amazed. The sudden dramatic happening took their breath away.

"After them!" said Kerr, his quick Scottish brain grasping the situation at once. "The bikes—quick!"

Figgins & Co. rushed for their bikes. They jumped on them and sped away in the direction the car had taken, riding at a reckless speed.

"Bai Jove! This takes the cake!" stuttered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Tom Merry gripped him by the shoulder.  
"You ordered a car to be here, Gussy?"

"Yaaa."  
"Where is it?"

Arthur Augustus looked round through his eyeglasses. A big car was in waiting near the station, with the chauffeur standing beside it. He touched his hat as D'Arcy rushed up to him.

"Master D'Arcy?"  
"Yaaa. That's my car."

"Yes, sir."  
"Get going at once. Tumble in, dear boys!"

The chauffeur started the engine at once.  
"You saw what happened?" panted Tom Merry.

"Yes, sir."  
"We've got to get after that scoundrel and nail him. He's kidnapped a kid who was coming to our school. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."  
An excited crowd had gathered round. Signor Bonelli with wild gestures, was explaining matters to a policeman. The juniors did not stay for any explanation. They tumbled into the car, the chauffeur jumped into his seat, and they buzzed away.

"Buck up, Wobinson!" yelled Arthur Augustus.  
The chauffeur was bucking up. His name was not Robinson, as a matter of fact, but Arthur Augustus called all chauffeurs Robinson, that being the name of his pater's chauffeur at home.

The juniors glared from the car windows, panting with excitement. The car sped down the High Street, and in a few minutes was in the open road.

"Well, this takes the bun," said Talbot. "There seems to be no doubt about it; the kid has been kidnapped."

"Yaaa, watah!"  
"What a giddy drama!" ejaculated Monty Lowther.

"I suppose you foresaw this all along, Gussy?"  
"Weally, Lowthah, I nevah expected anythin' of the kind."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"This is not a time for wottin', Lowthah. That kid may be in dangah, if they are weally Germans who have collahed him. I would not trust a stwady dog in the hands of a German."

"But what the dooce have they done it for?" said Tom Merry, in amazement. "It's a regular plot. Man perceive he's a master at St. Jim's, meeting them here. If Figgins hadn't happened to be on the spot, Contarini would have gone off with the villain without suspecting anything."

"They may murther him, bai Jove!"  
"Hallo! Here are the giddy cyclists."

The car drew level with three riders who were slogging away at a desperate speed on the white, dusty road. Tom Merry shouted to them.

"Spotted them, Piggy?"  
Figgins panted back.

"Yes, they're keeping right on. It's a brown taxi, with a driver in goggles. You can easily beat it in that car. Let her rip!"

"You bet!"  
"Buck up, Wobinson!"

The car swept on, leaving the dusty cyclists far behind. Arthur Augustus gave a chirrup of satisfaction.

"This is a wippin' cab, dear boys; we can easily beat a taxi. We'll wun them down like anything!"

"Jolly lucky the car was here," said Manners.  
"What-ho!"

"We'll let Gussy off that bumping," grinned Blake.



"Why, if we hadn't had this idea of giving young Contarini a reception, those villains would have walked him off as easy as falling off a form."

"Accidents will happen," said Lowther. "Gussy has had a good idea for once. But what puzzles me is, how it was that Gussy didn't foresee this all along. He generally does."

"Wats!"

"There's the taxi!" shouted Talbot.

Talbot of the Shell was standing up in the crowded car, his keen eyes sweeping the long road winding ahead like a ribbon of white through the green countryside.

"Hurrah!"

Far ahead, on the white road, the brown taxi could be seen, speeding on at the greatest speed it was capable of. But its speed was not equal to that of the powerful car behind. Arthur Augustus' gorgeous taste in motor-cars had come in very useful for once.

"Let her wip, Wobinson!" shrieked Arthur Augustus, in great excitement.

"Hurrah!"

The brown taxi was making desperate efforts. But the big, green car came on faster and faster behind.

"Gaining hand over fist!" said Talbot.

Tom Merry pushed back his cuffs. "Get ready for a scrap," he said. "If they're Germans, they'll get it pretty stiff for this, and they may show fight."

"They'll get it in the neck, whether they show fight or not," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! They must be wotten spies, you know."

"Some of those nice, harmless naturalised Germans who use the country as if it belonged to them," grinned Digby.

"The uttah wottahs!"

There were ten juniors crammed in the car, and they had no doubt of their ability to handle the enemy when they once came to close quarters. The possibility that the kidnapers might be armed and desperate made no difference to them. They were there to rescue their schoolfellow, and they did not think of danger.

Their hearts beat fast as the big car rushed on, closer and closer to the brown taxi as it struggled desperately to escape.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Saved from the Hun!

"**B**AI Jove! That's the wottah!"

The big car was drawing close now. A fat, fair face, pale now with rage and anxiety, was looking back from the window of the brown taxi.

It was the face of the man who had called himself Mr. Smith, a master from St. Jim's—the rascally kidnapper whose cunning plot was baffled by the juniors, owing to that excellent idea of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's.

Certainly, in laying his scheme, Mr. Smith could not have foreseen that the swell of St. Jim's would think of the idea of giving the Italian schoolboy a rousing welcome at Wayland Junction. That was a detail that the acutest plotter could not possibly have foreseen or guarded against. But for that chance, the kidnapers would have succeeded without a hitch.

But the best-laid schemes of mice and men, as the poet tells us, gang aft agley, and the scheme of Mr. Smith had "ganged agley" with a vengeance!

Instead of carrying off the Italian schoolboy and his tutor, and vanishing with them without leaving a trace or a clue behind, the kidnapper had only barely succeeded in seizing Contarini; and now he was running a losing race with the rescuers close behind.

His feelings at that moment could not have been enviable.

The juniors, standing up in the big, open car behind, shook their fists at the German; for a German he undoubtedly was, though he had borrowed the thoroughly British name of Smith.

"The disgustin' wottah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I shall know that wotten chivvy again! The beast looks

like a German too! I dare say his weal name is Schmidt. Some naturalised beast, you know, or he would not be allowed to go wouned loose in this mannab. Lots of the wottahs got naturalised all weady for the war, so that they could stay free and spy on us."

"Hallo! Bob down!" shouted Talbot.

"My hat! Look out!"

A hand and an arm came from the window of the taxi ahead, and the hand held a large automatic pistol. The juniors bobbed down instinctively in the car; but Arthur Augustus rose again at once.

"Bob down, you ass!" said Blake.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"Wobinson cannot bob down, deah boy, so I am not goin' to bob down. I am not goin' to take covah while the chauffeur is exposed."

And Arthur Augustus stood firm.

Crack!

The kidnapper was evidently desperate. He was firing back at the pursuing car, doubtless in the hope of hitting the tyres. But firing from the window of a taxi bumping over a rough road at top speed was not easy. The bullet whizzed a dozen yards from the green car behind.

The chauffeur drove on steadily. He was a man who had served his turn in the trenches in Flanders, and had come home with a damaged leg. He had faced the hail of bullets in Flanders, and the German's automatic pistol did not frighten him.

"Keep on, Wobinson," said Arthur Augustus, without tremor, "we are all wunnin' the same wisk."

The chauffeur did not reply, but he kept on. He drew the car to the side of the road, so that the German at the taxi window could no longer see it. A minute later the rascal was leaning from the opposite window of the taxi. But the chauffeur's eyes were open, and he swerved back to the other side of the road, and again the marksman was baffled.

"Bwavo, Wobinson!"

The juniors were all on their feet now. They knew that there was danger, but they would not "bob down" while their driver faced the danger alone. And they were too excited to take their eyes off their quarry. The brown taxi was only twenty yards ahead.

Tom Merry gritted his teeth hard.

"There'll be real trouble when we run the beast down," he said; "but we'll show him that we don't care for his pistol."

"We'll smash him!" said Blake, between his teeth.

Crash!

The little glass window at the back of the taxi was knocked through, and a hand and a pistol came into view. But the big car rushed level now, and again the German was too late.

So far, the cars had passed only a lumbering market-cart on the long, lonely stretch of road. But now there was a hoot ahead, and another car came in sight. The big car and the taxi filled the road from side to side, and the car ahead jammed on its brakes and halted.

The road was blocked now.

There was a jamming of brakes on the taxi, and it stopped, whirring. The juniors shot ahead.

"Look out, Wobinson! He's turning!" shrieked D'Arcy.

But Robinson was looking out. The big green car swerved and turned. There was barely room in the road to turn without backing, but Robinson was a good driver. The taxi was speeding back the way it had come.

"He won't get through Wayland," said Talbot.

"He's running into the hands of the police," said Tom Merry. "All the better."

But it was not the intention of the kidnapper to drive back to Wayland. That meant immediate capture.

The door of the brown taxi suddenly opened, and a figure was flung forth, and rolled in a bed of ferns beside the road.

Then the taxi sped on, and turned into a narrow, ratty lane.

"Halt, Wobinson!"

The big car jarred to a halt.

Tom Merry was the first to spring out and rush to the dusky lad who was sitting up dazedly in the ferns.

The Italian lad blinked at him.

The kidnapper, realising that he could not succeed in

his attempt to carry off his victim, had flung him out of the taxi, calculating—correctly enough—that the partners would stop to pick him up. The juniors were anxious to see whether the fall had injured him, and to succour him. Capturing the kidnapers was a matter of secondary importance.

Tom Merry helped the Italian boy to his feet. Contarini was shaken and bruised, but not otherwise hurt. The bed of ferns had broken his fall.

"Hurt?" exclaimed Tom.

Contarini pulled himself together.

"No. Only shaken."

"Good luck!"

"Wescud, bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"Congrats, deah boy!"

"Hurrah!"

The juniors gathered gleefully round the rescued Italian. They had saved him, though the kidnapers had escaped.

"Jump into the car, Contarini!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "We're goin' to win down those German villains."

"You had better leave that to the police, amico," said Contarini. "The tedesco is armed."

"Wats!"

The Italian laughed—a soft, pleasant laugh that the juniors liked.

"You belong to my school?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We were coming to meet you at the station," said Tom Merry. "Figgins told us those villains had bagged you, and we came after them."

"Grazie! You were very good," said the Italian junior gratefully. "I should be a prisoner now; but for you. It was brave of you to come. But you must not run further risks for my sake. Let those rascals go; the police will deal with them."

"Bethah wur them down while we have the chance," said Arthur Augustus.

"But your headmaster—what would he say?"

"He would lick us, I suppose," said Tom Merry, laughing. "All the same, we feel inclined to lay those rotters by the heels, if we can do it. But if you'd rather get on to the school—"

Contarini flushed a little.

"Not at all. I will join you gladly to run them down. I am not, what you call, funky."

The juniors piled into the car again, and the chauffeur drove on, and turned into the narrow lane the brown taxi had taken. A few minutes later the brown taxi was sighted, but it was standing still—empty. The two rascals had abandoned it, and fled across country on foot. The pursuit was evidently at an end.

"They've separated most likely, and taken to the woods," said Tom Merry, as the juniors looked into the abandoned taxi. "No good trying to run them down now. But we've got Contarini, and that's the chief thing."

The rescuers agreed that that was the chief thing. With the rescued Italian junior in their midst, they drove back to Wayland, picking up Figgins & Co. on the way. At the police-station their story was told, and the rescued Italian shows in triumph. Signor Bonelli, desolated by the kidnapping of his pupil, had already gone on to St. Jim's. But the juniors had good news to take to the old gentleman.

## CHAPTER 6.

### The Arrival of Jackeymo.

"GREAT Scott!"

"Bravo!"

"Oh, ripping!"

There was a crowd in the quadrangle at St. Jim's. An excited discussion was going on. The arrival of Signor Bonelli at the old school had caused excitement. It had soon leaked out that the signor was bringing the new boy to the school, and that the new boy had been kidnapped in Wayland. It was such a dramatic happening that the whole school was thrilled by it.

What had become of Contarini—the kidnapers THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 387.

were—what they were going to do with him? These questions were excitedly discussed by all the St. Jim's fellows, from the captain of the school to the smallest fag.

Then came the arrival in state of Arthur Augustus & Co. in the green car.

The car came in at the gates and glided up the drive towards the School House. It was simply crammed with juniors. It was escorted by a myriad of cyclists. Flags floated from every part of the car—British and French and Russian and Italian colours streamed in the breeze. Never had so gaily decorated a car been seen in the old quad of St. Jim's.

Prominent among the crammed juniors in the car was an olive-skinned lad, whose black eyes were gleaming with excitement and pleasure.

The St. Jim's fellows did not need telling who it was.

"The new kid," ejaculated Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's. "That must be the new kid after all."

"Contarini, by Jove!" said Cutts of the Fifth.

"Hoorary!"

From the car came fiery blasts on Blake's mouth-organ. Whether Blake was playing "Tipperary" or the "Conquering Hero" was a doubtful point; but, whatever it was, he was playing it most emphatically.

A shouting crowd surrounded the car, waving their caps, and Arthur Augustus waved his topper wildly in return.

"It's all right, deah boys. We've wescued him!"

"Hoorary!"

"We've got him away from the German wottahs!"

"Bravo!"

"Hip, hip, hooray!"

Thunderous cheers rang through the old quadrangle. The terrific din brought Dr. Holmes to the doorway of the School House. With him came the worried and anxious signor.

"Bless my soul! Whatever does this mean?" ejaculated the Head, gazing in amazement at the beflagged car and the cheering juniors.

Signor Bonelli gave a yell.

"Giacomo!"

"Jackeymo!" repeated Wally D'Arcy of the Third Form. "What does jackeymo mean in Italian, you chaps?"

"Don't ask me," said Curly Gibson. "P'raps it's Italian for hooray!"

"Giacomo!"

Signor Bonelli rushed out to the car as it halted on the drive.

"Giacomo! Giacomo! Caro Giacomo!"

Contarini grinned.

The elderly gentleman almost dragged him from the car and embraced him, shedding tears of joy over his pupil.

"Giacomo! Giacomo! Come son felice!"

"Hoorary!"

"Jackeymo must be the chap's name," said Wally sagely. "Queer names these foreign chaps have. I shall call him Jacky."

"Merry—D'Arcy—Blake—what—what does this mean?" exclaimed the Head. "Is—is that Contarini?"

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"I—I understood from Mr. Bonelli that the boy had been kidnapped—that some Germans had—"

"That's right, sir. We wescued him."

"Bless my soul!"

"Undah the cires, sir, as Italy is now our Ally, and playin' up so splendidly, we organised a gwand weception for Contarini, and so we happened to be on the spot. We got him away from the wottahs. We consolidated," added Arthur Augustus loftily, "that it was up to the Fourth Form, sir."

"Dear me!"

"What price the Shell?" demanded Lowther.

"Wats!"

"Have the rascals been captured?" asked the Head.

"I am awwy to say no, sir. I twast the police will win them down, and I hope this will be a lesson to the Home Secwetary, sir, not to let filthy Huns wan around loose any more."

"Ahem! You boys have done well," said the Head.

"I am glad you have come to no harm. You seem to have acted very promptly and bravely. Contarini, I am more than delighted to see you here safe and sound. Come in with me, my dear boy."

"Bravo, Jackeymo!" chorused the juniors, as the Italian followed the Head into the house, with Mr. Bonelli still weeping over him.

"Gentlemen," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, standing on the seat in the car, "pway listen to a few words!"

"Cut it short, old man," said Blake.

"Wats! Gentlemen, in the first place I desiah to point out that Contawini's frownt name is Giacomo, with a soft g—and Jackeymo is a very incowwect pnownciation. In the second place—don't shore me like that, Lowthah!—I have a few remarks to make. Gentlemen, you are awah that the great Italian nation is backin' us up like anythin' against the Pwussian waseals."

"Hear, hear!"

"There are some of you, wathah ignorant chaps"——

"What!"

"Wathah ignowant chaps, who have chiefly associated Italy with ice-cream and bawwel-organs. You should endeavah to realise that Italy is a great country, and a great nation. The histowry of England is not so long as the histowry of Italy, which goes back vevy much furthah——"

"Rather rough on the chaps in their history classes," remarked Lowther. "We get enough of it here."

"Wats! You have all heard of Julius Cesaah?"

"I've heard that name," said Lowther. "Now, where did I hear that name?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He was a great Italian," resumed Arthur Augustus. "He came to England once, as you will wemembah. He came as an enemy. But now all Italians are friends. For two thousand yahs England and Italy have been on friendly terms, and that is a vevy long time."

"That was before I came to St. Jim's," said Lowther seriously.

"You uttah ass! Gentlemen, Bwitamin and Italy have been friends for two thousand yahs, and now they are Allies, fightin' shouldah to shouldah to save Eawopean civilisation frowm the baby-killahs and the poisonahs. Contawini's patah is a great Italian statesman, who has helped to bwing his country into line, and set an example to the menahly newtals who are sittin' on the fence. I peswume that is the reason why the dirty Huns have tried to kidnap him. Gentlemen, it is poss that the howwid Huns may have anothah try at him. I wish to point out that while young Contawini is at St. Jim's he is undah the protection of us."

"Hear, hear!"

"And we are weady to wally wound him as one man, to look aftah him. Gentlemen, what is your reply?"

"Bravo!"

"Veev Italyer!" chirruped Figgins.

"Gentlemen, I call for a cheeah for Italy, and anothah for young Contawini!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Viva Italia!" shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, waving the Italian flag round his head.

"Hurrah!"

"Yaroooooh!" yelled Blake, as D'Arcy's flag caught him on the back of the head. "Yooop! Oh, you ass! Do you want to brain me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow!" roared D'Arcy, as somebody seized him by the leg, and jerked him off the seat. "Beggo! Wow!"

Arthur Augustus disappeared into the car.

The celebration was over.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Jackeymo of the Fourth.

GIACOMO CONTARINI—more easily and familiarly alluded to as "Jackeymo"—took his place in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. The dramatic events which had attended his arrival at the school made him an object of general interest, apart from the fact that he was an Italian, and that there was no other Italian junior in the school. Foreign boys not infrequently came to St. Jim's, but nobody there remembered an Italian having been at the old school.

He was liked at once. His quiet and unassuming manners made a good impression upon the St. Jim's fellows, and they were prepared in any case to make the most of him. The fact that his father was an Italian statesman who had helped in lining up Italy by the side of the Allies in the war against Prussian savagery naturally made him popular.

There was no danger of the new foreign junior feeling lost or lonely at St. Jim's. He had hosts of friends at the start. He was placed in the School House, much to the satisfaction of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. For, as Arthur Augustus sapiently observed, it would be pleasant for him to have somebody to talk to in his own language sometimes, Arthur Augustus being fully prepared to talk Italian to him.

Jackeymo had to give a full account of himself in the common-room, and he told all the juniors who asked him in the frankest way. The attempt to kidnap him in Wayland had not come as so great a surprise to him as to the St. Jim's fellows. His father had warned him to be on his guard.

"But what did the rotters want you for?" Tom Merry asked.

Giacomo smiled.

"To make me a prisoner, and then to influence my father. I am an only son, and my father would be in despair if anything should happen to me. Up to the declaration of war, the German agents sought to bribe my father to act in Germany's interests, and they failed. Now the Germans hate Italy even more than England. It is their custom to hate their enemies. If those rascals could have kidnaped me they would have held me a prisoner, and sought to influence Signor Contarini by threats of my death. He has great power in the Italian Government, but even to save my life he would not fall in his duty to Italy. But the Germans would not understand that. It is hard for the Germans to understand a sense of honour."

"But they would have had to get you out of England," said Tom.

Contarini nodded.

"I suppose they have some way. It would not be difficult, I think. You English are very easy-going with your enemies. You have many thousands of Germans free in your country, and if they are naturalised they may sail a yacht or run a steamer, or do anything they please. It would have been easy for them to run me in their car to the coast, and put me on board some vessel, under the Dutch flag, perhaps. No doubt the vessel was already in waiting, and if you had not saved me I should have been on the sea in a couple of hours."

"My hat, what a giddy escape! And suppose they had failed in threatening your father, what would have become of you?"

The Italian junior shrugged his shoulders.

"Prison in Germany or death," he replied.

"They may try again," said Blake.

"It is very likely."

"They'll be caught," said Manners. "The police are close after them now."

"I hope so," said Tom Merry. "We may get news in the morning that the rotters have been taken. Anyway, Jackeymo is safe here."

"Yaas, wathah! We're all goin' to look aftah him. Sicuro, amico mio," added Arthur Augustus in Italian.

And Jackeymo grinned.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wore a very thoughtful look when the chums of Study No. 6 were in that famous apartment a little later.

"It's up to us, deah boys," he said suddenly.

"Hallo! What is it now?" grunted Blake.

"Jackeymo hasn't been put into a study yet."

"Lathom will see to that, or the Housemaster."

"Yaas; but suppose we ask the Housemastah to put him in bench? It would be only the wight thing."

"Rats!"

Blake and Herries and Digby made that reply with great unanimity. Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon them severely.

"Weally, deah boys, considewin' the wippin' way Italy is playin' up——"

"My dear chap, it won't benefit Italy for us to be crowded out of our study," said Blake. "There isn't

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room for five. I like Jackeymo no end, but five is too big an order for one study. Besides, it would be rough on him."

"How would it be wuff on him?"

"Well, you'd begin talking Italian to him, and the poor chap would have to stand it if he was in the study."

"You uttah ass!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "That's one reason why he ought to come heab, because I can talk Italian to him."

"Bow-wow!"

"Now, look heah, deah boys—"

"Rats! Study No. 6 is barred to all new kids," said Blake. "We'll chum up with him no end, but an Englishman's study is his castle."

"I regard you as an inhospitable beast, Blake!"

"Good!"

"And lackin' in pwopah feelin'."

"Hear, hear!"

"And unpatwiotic!"

"Bravo!"

"Oh, wats!"

Arthur Augustus walked out, with his noble nose in the air, leaving his chums chuckling. Blake and Herries and Dig were willing to do anything for Jackeymo excepting to the extent of having five in the study. That was too much of a good thing.

However, Jackeymo was bestowed in the next study that evening, No. 5, with Kerruish and Reilly and Hammond as his study-mates. He was hospitably received there. No. 5 wasn't quite as comfortable a study as No. 6, which was something extra special in the way of studies, and Arthur Augustus was not quite satisfied with the arrangement. When he heard that Jackeymo was to go into No. 5, Arthur Augustus dropped into that apartment. He found Reilly and Kerruish there, playing dominos.

D'Arcy looked round the study with a somewhat disparaging eye. Study No. 5 was not in first-class order. Singleticks had not improved the wallpaper, and innumerable stains of ink did not improve the paint. Arthur Augustus shook his head seriously.

"I suppose you chaps know that Contawini is comin' in heab?" he remarked.

"Sure, we've been told so," said Reilly.

"I twast you are makin' him vevy welcome!"

"Kissed him on both cheeks," said Kerruish humorously.

"Pway don't be an ass, Kewwuish. Does it strike you that this studay is in wathash a dilapidated condish?"

"What's the matter with the study?" demanded Kerruish, rather warmly.

"Nothing wrong with it," said Reilly, "excepting that there's a silly ass in it at present."

"I was alludin' to the wallpaph. I pfer dis-temperah walls myself, but wallpaph might at least be made to look respectable."

"Better repaper it," said Reilly.

"And the paint is vevy soiled and stained."

"Well, what about it?" asked Reilly, puzzled. "Tain't a custom to repaint a study when a new kid comes."

"Yaas, but this is a vevy special new kid. I suppose you chaps know that the Italians are a vevy artistic wace?"

"Are they?" yawned Kerruish. "All I know is that I can't play dominos while you're gassing!"

"I refuse to have my remarks chawacterised as gassing, Kewwuish. The Italians are vevy artistic, and that howwid picture on the wall there, f'instance, would have a vevy bad effect on Contawini's nerves."

"Why, you silly ass!" exclaimed Kerruish indignantly. The picture in question was a flaming oleograph, with as many colours in it as Joseph's celebrated coat, and every colour in it was as merry and bright as a colour could be. Kerruish had brought that picture back with him from the Isle of Man after his last holiday, and he was very proud of it. He had put it up on the wall himself with a liberal allowance of nails and tacks.

"What's the matter with that picture?" demanded Reilly.

"Look at the colours, deah boy."

"Why, there are nine colours in it," said Kerruish, "and every one of them is about as bright as possible."

"It brightens up the studay," said Reilly.

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"Bai Jove, it would brighten up the whole howizon, if you put it out of doors," said Arthur Augustus. "I wecomend burnin' that picture, and gettin' the studay nice and tidy."

Reilly and Kerruish exchanged glances. Arthur Augustus's criticism on their study, though made with the best intentions, somehow did not please them. They did not say any more. They picked up the poker and tongs respectively, and started for Arthur Augustus.

"Gweat Scott! Wharer you at?" yelled Arthur Augustus, as he received the end of the poker in his noble ribs, and the end of the tongs upon his handsome waistcoat.

"Buzz off!"

"You uttah assee—yawwoh! I was yoolly suggestin'—yoop—gwooo!"

Arthur Augustus leaped out of the study—the poker and the tongs were not to be argued with at class quarters. Kerruish and Reilly slammed the door after him, and returned to their game. Reilly was frowning.

"Jackeymo is all right," he remarked. "But if he turns up his nose at our study, he will get a dot on it!"

"You bet!" agreed Kerruish.

Arthur Augustus's well-meant chipping-in had put the denizens of No. 5 a little "edge-wise." When Contarini came in a little later, they looked at him rather grimly. The Italian had smiled and nodded.

The grim look of the two juniors surprised him a little. They had been very friendly the last time he had seen them.

"Look here, Jackeymo!" said Reilly.

"Si?"

Jackeymo looked astonished.

"Soddifatto? Si, si, si?"

"See, see, see!" repeated Kerruish. "Now, what the dickens do you mean with your see, see, see?"

"It is as you say, yes, yes, yes."

"Oh, good!"

"You don't want the whole show altered to suit your taste—what?" asked Reilly, his brow clearing.

"Naw, naw, naw!"

"I suppose naw, naw, naw, means no, no, no?" said Kerruish. And Jackeymo grinned and nodded.

"Now, what do you think of that picture?" asked Reilly impressively, pointing to the famous oleograph.

Jackeymo looked at the picture. If it gave him any internal pains, he concealed his feelings very well.

"Bellissimo!" he exclaimed enthusiastically.

"Bell—which?"

"Bellissimo!"

Reilly rubbed his nose.

"What may that happen to mean?" he asked.

"Most beautiful!"

"Oh, good! Sure, it's a broth ar a boy ye are," said Reilly cordially. "You've got more sense in your little finger than Gussy has in all of him."

"Shows you know something about pictures," said Kerruish, with a friendly nod. "I gave ninepence for that picture, and there's nine colours in it. That's at the rate of a penny each for the colours."

"Buon mercato! That was what you called a cheap, a handsome bargain," said Jackeymo. "Fortunate! In Italy we have so many splendid pictures—Raphael, Michael Angelo, Paolo Veronese—but nothing like that! Nothing!"

The two juniors looked rather hard at Jackeymo; but his dusky face was serious and earnest. It was impossible to suspect that he was pulling their leg. From that moment the dwellers in Study No. 5 were on the best of terms.

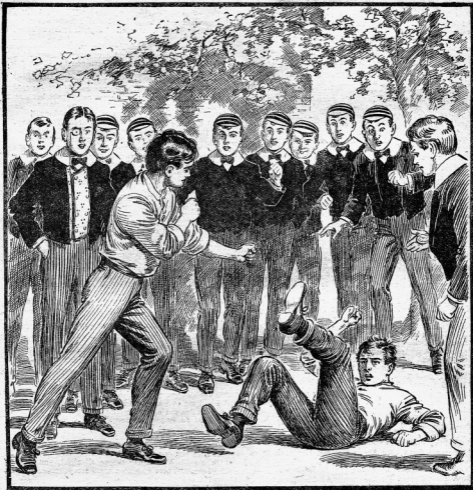
## CHAPTER 8.

### Jackeymo's First Fight.

"D AGO!"

Tom Merry looked round quickly as he heard that remark, uttered in a very disdainful tone.

It was the day following the arrival of Jackeymo at St. Jim's. Lessons were over, and Jackeymo had come out into the quadrangle, with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was talking Italian to him. Whether it was D'Arcy's



To Finn's great surprise, his big fists were swept away, and a fist that felt like a lump of iron was planted full upon his prominent nose. Finn thumped heavily on the ground, and lay there gasping. "Groooh! Waal, I swow! Oh, Jee-rusalem! Groooh!" (See Chapter 12.)

Italian, or merely good-humour, Jackeymo was smiling a good deal.

A lean-faced junior, with lanky and bony limbs, was lounging in the doorway of the School House, with his hands in his pockets. It was Finn of the Shell, the American junior. Buck Finn came from that part of the great United States which is described in American fiction as the "wild and woolly West." He had brought many strange Transatlantic customs to St. Jim's with him, and all the peculiar prejudices of the great Republic, chiefly a hatred for "niggers," and a disdain for all the Latin races, whom he called "dagoes."

Giacomo Coutarini might be the son of a great statesman, and a scion of a race that had been great and famous when the United States were still the hunting-grounds of copper-skinned savages; but in the eyes of Buck Finn he was a dago, and Finn had his own opinion about dagoes. And he was not slow to express his opinion. He never was. He "guessed" and "calcu-

lated" that his opinion was as good as anybody else's, if not a little better.

"Dago," repeated Finn, as he caught Tom Merry's eye turning wrathfully upon him—"a blessed dago!"

"Hallo! What are you burbling about?" asked Tom Merry.

Finn gave a snort.

"I guess it riles me," he said.

"What riles you?"

"The fuss you make of that darned dago," said Finn. "In Amurrica, air, we use 'em to work on the railways; they're useful for that. We look on 'em as one degree better than niggers—only one degree."

"What's the matter with niggers?"

"Oh, you make me tired!" said Finn.

"You make me more than tired," said Tom. "Let me give you a word of advice. Your silly ideas are your own affair; but if you aren't civil to Jackeymo, you'll get it in the neck! That's a tip!"

Finn gave another snort.

"Catch me wasting civility on a dago!" he said disdainfully. "I guess I was thinking of giving him my boots to clean."

Finn had spoken very loudly, and the Italian junior, who was quite near, heard every word of that polite remark.

He looked round, his olive cheeks flushing and a gleam coming into his black eyes. Arthur Augustus turned his eyes upon Finn with a withering look.

"Finn, you wude cad—" he began.

"Oh, come off!" said Finn. "I guess I can give my opinion about a dago if I like. I tell you it gets my mad up to see a dago fussed over like this."

Finn was evidently in a state of indignation.

Contarini came up the steps.

"You are speaking of me?" he asked.

"Sure."

"You have called me—what?"

"Dago."

"Why do you apply that name to me?"

"We call all your sort dagoes in Amurrica," said Finn coolly. "I guess I believe in keeping dagoes in their place—some."

Smack!

"Bai Jove!"

"Gee-whiz!" ejaculated Buck Finn, as the dusky hand of the Italian junior came across his face with a crack like a pistol-shot.

"Serve you jolly well right!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Why can't you keep a civil tongue in your silly head?"

Contarini stood looking at the American junior with burning eyes. He looked very handsome, with his flushed face, the more so by contrast with the big, bony youth from the "wild and woolly West."

"My hat! Why, I'll smash him!" roared Finn.

He rushed at the slim Italian, but Tom Merry caught him by the shoulder and swung him back.

"Hands off! Jackeymo isn't big enough for you," he said. "If you want a row, I'm at your service."

"Leggo!"

"Let him come on, amico," said Contarini. "I have struck him, and he has a right. Let him come on!"

"Leggo, or I'll smash you, too!" howled Finn.

"Go it!" said Tom.

"Let him come," said Contarini.

"But you can't tackle him," said Tom uneasily. "He's too big for you. Besides, we won't let the cad rag you."

"Let him come."

"Oh, all right!"

Tom Merry stepped back.

"Get into the gym," he said. "You can't fight here." Buck Finn snorted furiously.

"I guess I don't care where I smash him so long as I do smash him!" he growled.

"Come on, deah boy!" said D'Arcy to Jackeymo.

Buck Finn started for the gym with his long strides, and Contarini followed with Arthur Augustus and Tom Merry. The latter two were looking worried. The slim Italian was no match physically for the big, bony Finn, and they did not want to see him licked. They wanted to make things very agreeable for the Italian junior in his first days at St. Jim's. They were very much inclined to take the aggressive Finn by the scruff of the neck and frog's-march him round the quad.

The news that Contarini was to fight Finn spread quickly, and a crowd of fellows followed them into the gym. Blake of the Fourth got out the gloves.

"I guess I don't want gloves," growled Finn.

"You're going to have them whether you want them or not," said Tom Merry; "and if there's any of your rot you'll get scragged. We're jolly near fed up with you as it is."

Contarini looked curiously at the boxing-gloves. They were evidently new to him.

"Perche?" he asked. "For what?"

"Put 'em on your paws," said Blake.

"Ah, I understand. La boxe," said Jackeymo.

"Yes, la boxe," grinned Blake. "We don't want to see your good-looking chivvy wrecked. As for Finn's chivvy, nothing could make it look much more of a wreck than it is naturally. We don't allow fighting with knuckles."

"Never," said Lowther. "Ahem! Hardly ever."

"I am not used to la boxe, and I have never worn these things," said Contarini. "But, if it is the rules, I will do so."

"You can't box?" asked Tom Merry.

"I have never done so," said Jackeymo. "I can fence."

"Coffee and rapiers for two!" grinned Lowther. "We settle our little differences this way in England, Jackeymo. Much better than sticking a fellow in the ribs with a toasting-iron, when you come to think of it."

"I wish to learn the English customs," said Contarini. "I will fight this brute in the English way."

"I guess I'll make shavings of you, you dago!"

"Put on the gloves, and shut up!" said Tom Merry.

The juniors formed a ring, and the two combatants faced one another. The sympathy of the onlookers was entirely with the Italian junior; but they had no expectation of seeing him the victor. He was much smaller than Finn, and his attitude was only too plain a testimony to his ignorance of "la boxe." But he was evidently full of pluck, and he faced his bigger antagonist intrepidly.

"Time!" snapped Tom Merry.

"Go it, Jackeymo!"

## CHAPTER 9.

### Bad Luck for Jackeymo.

JACKEYMO went it.

His ideas of boxing were wild and weird. His only plan seemed to be to rush at his opponent and hit as hard as he could, regardless of the blows he received. Finn was not a good boxer by any means, but he knew something of it, and he guarded the drives of the Italian without much difficulty.

His heavy blows came home in return, hardly one of them being stopped. The unfortunate Jackeymo was knocked right and left.

But every knock only seemed to add fuel to the fire of his resolution, and he came on with unabated courage.

"Time!"

Buck Finn stepped back, but Jackeymo still came on. But Blake caught him by the arm and dragged him back.

"Why do you stop me?" exclaimed Contarini, panting.

"It's time!"

"What do you mean—time?"

"You have to leave off when 'Time's' called," grinned Blake. "You get a minute for rest now."

"Is that an English custom?"

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"Va bene!"

"Eh—what do you mean with your 'Vah banay'?"

"It is as you say, 'All right.'"

"Oh, good! 'Vah banay' means all right, you chaps!" said Blake. "There's another word for your vocabulary, Gussy!"

"Wats!"

Contarini rested on Arthur Augustus's knee, and Gussy gave him a friendly word of advice.

"Pway don't wush at the wottah like a bull at a gate, deah boy!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "You must defend as well as attack, you know. You give him all the chances. Don't let him keep on hittin' you on the nose."

"I am not acquainted with la boxe, amico mio. We do not learn la boxe in Italy," said Contarini. "But I shall learn in time."

"I will give you some lessons aftahwards, cawo wagazao."

Contarini grinned. Arthur Augustus's Italian was a source of never-ending entertainment to him. "Caro" is Italian for "dear," and "ragazao" for "boy," and Gussy was calling him "dear boy" in Italian—without allowing for idiomatic differences in expression.

"Time!" said Tom Merry.

Contarini did not move. He was fanning himself with his cap.

"Time!" repeated Tom.

Arthur Augustus gave his principal an anxious look. "Licked already!" sneered Finn. "That's what you'd expect of a dago. They've got no sand."

"You don't feel up to goin' on, deah boy?"

"Si, si, si!"

"Well, Tom Mewwy has called 'Time'!"

"Yes, I heard him."

"Then why don't you go on?" asked Blake.

"Is it to start again?" asked Jackeymo.

"Yes, you duffer!"

"Ah, it is the wonderful English language!" said Contarini, rising to his feet. "You say 'Time' when we shall leave off, and you say 'Time' also when we shall begin. To a foreigner it is a little difficult."

"Hum! I suppose it is!" admitted Blake. It had never struck him before, but he admitted the point. "Well, get on."

"I am ready."

Now that he understood that "Time," meant begin as well as leave off, Contarini was quite ready. He came on cheerfully.

The second round was even rougher on the unfortunate Jackeymo than the first. Finn had taken his measure, and realised that he knew nothing whatever about the manly art of self-defence. Finn attacked hotly, and Jackeymo was the victim of heavy punishment. His pluck in keeping close, and attacking as well as he could, only made his punishment more severe.

Finn was grinning gleefully as he punished him. Hardly one of the Italian junior's wild blows reached him. Most of the fellows, in such a case would have "gone easy" with so feeble an opponent. But that was not Finn's way. He intended to give the dago the lesson of his life, and he hit his hardest.

The round ended with poor Jackeymo on his back, laid there by a terrific drive from the shoulder.

He gasped feebly as his second picked him up.

"Feelin' wathah bad, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus, as he made a knee for his principal.

"Si, si!"

"You will have to chuck it now," said Blake. "You can't expect to tackle a bigger chap when you box like a blessed kangaroo. Chuck it, my son!"

"Bettah chuck it, cawo wagazzo."

Contarini grinned feebly.

"I will go on."

"Time!" said Tom Merry reluctantly.

Contarini staggered up. Finn grinned at him.

"I guess this'll finish it," he remarked.

It did. In the middle of the round Contarini went down, and in spite of all his efforts he could not come up to time again. He was knocked out. Tom Merry counted, and reached ten, and Contarini sat up.

"Licked!" grinned Finn.

Contarini's black eyes blazed.

"I am not licked!" he exclaimed indignantly. "I will go on!"

"You're counted out," said Tom Merry.

"What is counted out?"

Tom Merry explained.

"Then I must not go on?"

"No. Finn wins."

"I guess you can let him come on if he likes," chuckled Finn. "I'll give him some more where that came from."

"The fight's over," said Tom Merry curtly. "There's nothing to brag of in licking a kid a head shorter than yourself. Shut up!"

"I guess—"

"Oh, dry up!"

Buck Finn snorted, and put on his jacket. The fight was over, and the Italian junior was certainly hopelessly licked. Arthur Augustus helped Jackeymo to put on his jacket.

"Hard cheese, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus.

"I am beaten!"

"That's all wight;—you put up a good fight, and you weally couldn't expect to win. Come on, and get your eye bathed."

Contarini left the gym, leaning heavily on D'Arcy's arm. Buck Finn burst into a chuckle.

"I guess I'll keep that dago in his place after this," he remarked.

Tom Merry fixed his eyes on him.

"I suppose that means that you are thinking of bullying him," he said. "Well, you begin it, and see what

will happen. There are plenty of fellows here who can lick you if Jackeymo can't."

"I guess I can do as I like!" snorted Finn.

"Then there's something wrong with your guesser," said Blake. "When you're in a civilised country you have to do as civilised people do."

Finn grunted, and stalked away.

"Poor old Jackeymo!" murmured Figgins of the Fourth. "This is rather rotten for his second day at St. Jim's."

Tom Merry frowned.

"It's rotten," he agreed, "but the kid is full of pluck. And I'm going to take him in hand and given him some tips on boxing. The Yankee won't find it so easy next time."

Meantime, poor Jackeymo was bathing his eye and his nose, which needed it sorely.

## CHAPTER 10.

### A Mistake in the Dark.

"La donna e mobile,  
Qual piume al vento,  
Muta d'accento,  
E di pensiero!"

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS was singing.

The swell of St. Jim's was sauntering home through Rylcombe Lane a few days after the events described in the last chapter. Arthur Augustus had a pass out of gates, and he had been down to Rylcombe to post a parcel to a relation at the front. He was just in time before the post-office closed, and that important duty discharged, he strolled in a leisurely way back to the school in the dark. The dusk of the summer evening had deepened to darkness before Arthur Augustus was half-way home to St. Jim's. Then the swell of the Fourth burst into song.

Gussey had always prided himself upon being a first-rate tenor, and had always had a weakness for Italian songs. "La donna" was his favourite. Since the arrival of Jackeymo D'Arcy was keener than ever about his Italian arias. He had confided to Blake that the best way of getting on with a foreign language was to learn songs in that language, and sing them; it familiarised the pronunciation and the turns of expression.

It was undoubtedly a good idea, and Blake agreed that it was, making only the stipulation that Gussey shouldn't sing in the study.

Of late Arthur Augustus had shown a propensity to burst into song at the slightest provocation, having picked up many valuable tips from Jackeymo on the subject of his Italian arias. Jackeymo was more than willing to give his aid with the Italian language.

So it came about that Arthur Augustus, as he sauntered along the dark, shadowed lane, was trilling away contentedly at "La donna."

The swell of St. Jim's was busy mentally in getting his pronunciation exact as well as melody, and he had no time to think of anything else. He was not likely to take particular notice of the fact that a taxi-cab was halted at the cross-roads, with the lights out, even if he observed the vehicle at all. Neither did he observe two shadowy forms that lurked under the deep gloom of the trees.

His clear voice sounded over the hedges and the fields as he came along, thinking of nothing but his Italian studies and his nobby method of familiarising himself with that beautiful language.

"Sempre un amabile,  
Leggiadro viso,  
In pianto e in riso  
E menzognero!"

"Yoooooooooo!"

That sudden exclamation did not belong to the song. Arthur Augustus uttered it involuntarily, as there was a rush of feet in the deep dusk, and two pairs of hands were suddenly laid on him.

"Schnell!" hissed a voice.

"Grrrrrr!"

Arthur Augustus was swept off his feet. The attack was so sudden, and had taken him so completely by surprise, that he was too confused quite to realise what was happening.

In the grasp of his two shadowy assailants he was rushed along the dark lane towards the waiting taxi.

A heavy hand was grasping over his mouth, and his startled exclamations were choked back.

"Gerrrrrr!"

"Schnell—schnell!"

Arthur Augustus heard the guttural voice muttering, and he knew that it was a German saying "Quick—quick!"

He was brought up to the waiting cab with a rush, and pitched bodily in.

One of his captors jumped into the driving-seat, and the other clambered in after the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus, utterly flabbergasted, rolled on the floor of the cab.

The engine throbbled, and the vehicle was set in motion.

D'Arcy sat up dazedly.

"Gwooooh!" he gasped.

There was no light in the cab. From the gloom came a savage, muttering voice, speaking in English now.

"Silence! You are in my hands again, and this time you will not escape. Silence, or I will ston you with a blow!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I shall not deal gently with you if you attempt to call out."

"Gweat Scott!"

The cab rushed away down the lane towards Abbotsford. Arthur Augustus sat on the floor and panted.

"Will you have the goodness to explain what this means?" he stammered. "I pwesume you are a German?"

"Ja wohl! You know me."

"I do not know you. I have not the slightest ideah who you are. I uttably refuse to admit that it is possible for me to know a German, considewin' that they are a wace of disgustin' blackguards!"

"Silence!"

"I refuse to be silent! If you are thinkin' of kidnappin' me, you howwid wottah, I warn you that you will be sent to pwison. I weward you as an uttah beast!"

There was a short, hard laugh in the darkness.

"I demand to be released instantly!"

"That is not likely."

"Who are you, you wottah? I have nevah heard your wotten voice befoah."

"Bah! Why are you lying, Giacomo Contarini? Do you think that I shall release you?"

Arthur Augustus jumped.

"Bai Jove! Ha, ha, ha!"

The unseen German uttered a savage exclamation.

"Why are you laughin'?"

"Ha, ha! You have taken me for young Contawini!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "You uttah ass! I do not look like Jackeymo, I suppose?"

"What?"

"You uttah ass! I am not Contawini!" said Arthur Augustus, greatly tickled. "You should look befoah you leap, you know. What on earth made you take me for young Contawini?"

"You lie! You are Contarini!" said the German savagely. "I heard you singing in your own language as you came down the road, and I did not need to see you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, I say!"

"I was singin' in Italian for pwactice, my deah man," said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "You have woke up the wong passengrah."

He heard the German gritting his

teeth, and there was a scratch of a match. The swell of St. Jim's caught a glimpse of a fat, fair face he remembered as the light glauced out. It was the face that had looked back from the brown taxi—the face of the kidnapper of Giacomo Contarini.

The savage eyes of the German glared down at the swell of St. Jim's, and he held the match close to his face. Then he uttered a bitter curse.

"You—who are you?"

"My name is D'Arcy!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"A thousand curses!"

The fat German signalled to the chauffeur, and the taxi halted in the lane. The kidnapper called to him hurriedly from the open door. Then he grasped Arthur Augustus in his powerful arms.

"Gweat Scott! What— Oh, ewombs!"

Arthur Augustus went whizzing through the doorway of the cab. He landed in the lane with a heavy bump.

"Gwooch!"

The cab shot onwards again, and vanished into the night.

Arthur Augustus picked himself up dazedly. He was considerably bruised by his fall, and quite furious.

"Gwooh! The uttah wottah! The howwid wuffian!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Oh, deah, I am dustay all over! Oh, ewombs!"

He shook his fist after the vanished taxi. Then he gazed round him in the gloom. He was a good distance from St. Jim's; the taxi had been going at a reckless speed. Arthur Augustus grunted dolorously as he found a milestone with the inscription: "2 miles to Hylcombe."

"Ow! The wottahs!" Then his face broke into a grin.

"But what a wippin' sell for the secondwals! How jolly lucky that it wasn't Contawini!"

And Arthur Augustus chuckled as he started on his long walk to St. Jim's.

## CHAPTER 11.

### Jackeymo's Peril.

"JOLLY good!" said Tom Merry heartily.

There was a crowd of juniors in the gym that evening. Tom Merry was giving Jackeymo some much-needed instruction in the science of boxing.

Every day since his unlucky encounter with Buck Finn Jackeymo had received instruction from Blake or Tom Merry, and he was learning fast.

He was naturally quick and adaptive, and, strange as boxing was to him at first, he picked it up rapidly.

He was full of pluck and resolution, and he did not mind a few hard knocks, so he was an apt pupil, and Tom Merry professed himself more than satisfied with his progress.

"Jolly good!" repeated Tom, as he peeled off the gloves.

"In a week or so you will be a boxer if you keep on like this."

"Then I will lick the Yankee," said Contarini, with a chuckle.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Didn't you say you wanted to learn our English customs?" he asked.

"Si, sh."

"Well, in England we call it no class to owe a chap a grudge after a fight," said Tom. "Better forget all about it."

Contarini looked thoughtful.

"Si, si. I understand. But the Yankee calls me a dago. I would rather be a dago than a Yankee, but he means it as an insult. If he insults me, may I not pull his nose?"

"Ha, ha! Certainly!"

"And then he will fight me again, and I shall lick him," said Jackeymo. "But I will not pull his nose until I have learned well la boxe."

And Jackeymo nodded wisely. The next time he encountered the youth from the wild and woolly West he meant the terms to be a little more equal. Tom Merry patted him on the back.

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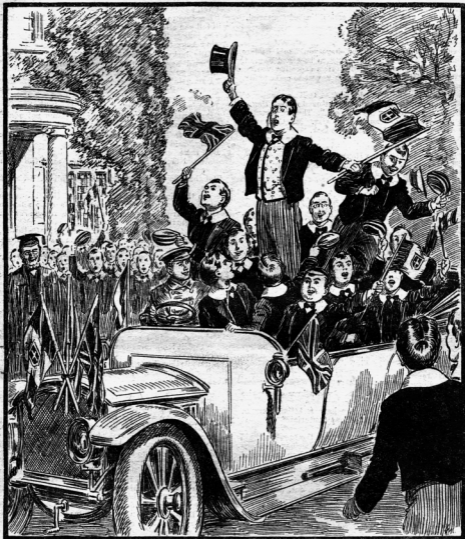
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"Hurrah! Hooray! Hurrah!" roared the St. Jim's juniors, then D'Arcy's flag caught Blake on the back of the head. "Yooop! Oh, you ass! Do you want to brain me?" "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 6.)

"Well, leave his nose alone for another week," he remarked. "Then you'll be ready to pull it as hard as you like."

Jack Blake came into the gym as they were putting on their jackets. Blake looked round inquiringly.

"Anybody here seen Kelly—I mean, Gussy?" he asked. "Hasn't the duffer come in? It's near bedtime."

"May have called in at his tailor's," suggested Monty Lowther. "In that case he won't be home till morning."

Arthur Augustus had not come in when the juniors returned to the School House. It was close on bedtime when there was a ring at the gate, and Taggles granted and came out of his lodge. Arthur Augustus's eyeglass glimmered at him through the bars of the gate.

"Fway buck up, Taggles!" he said. "I am wathah fatigued."

"Which I'll report yer!" said Taggles, as he opened the gate. "Quarter-past nine?"

"Oh, wats?"

Arthur Augustus came in, and walked over to the School House. A crowd of fellows greeted him as he entered.

"Here's the lost sheep," said Lowther.

"Where have you been, you duffer?" demanded Blake.

"I wefuse to be called a duffah, Blake!"

"Been dust-collecting, I should say!" remarked Kangaroo of the Shell. "Have you left any dust on the road, Gussy?"

"D'Arcy"—it was Kildare's voice—"what do you mean by staying out so late? You had a pass till half-past eight."

"Yaas. I have met with a most remarkable adventure, Kildare. My clobber is pwactically wuined."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You have had an accident, amico?" asked Contarini.

"I have been kidnapped."

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, you've been kidnapped, have you?" said Kildare grimly. "Well, now you're going to be caned as well. Go to the Housemaster's study. He's expecting you."

"Certainly, deah boy! I have a weport to make to Mr. Cawwington."

Kildare gave him a puzzled look. Quite a number of juniors accompanied Arthur Augustus to the Housemaster's study, to hear his "weport." They remained in the passage, but the door was left ajar. Mr. Carrington gave the swell of St. Jim's a severe look.

"I am sowwy I am late, sir," said Arthur Augustus.

"It was weally not my fault. I have been kidnapped."

"What!" ejaculated the Housemaster.

"Kidnapped, sir," said Arthur Augustus calmly.

Mr. Carrington stared at him.

"D'Arcy! Are you jesting?"

"Certainly not, sir! It is not a jestin' mattah, considewin' that my clothes are in a shockin' state."

"What has happened to you, D'Arcy?"

"I will explain from the beginnin', sir. I am studyin' Italian—"

"What has that to do with your extraordinary statement?" asked the Housemaster, somewhat testily.

"Lots, sir."

"I fail to see the connection."

"That is because I have not explained yet, sir. I am studyin' Italian, and I have a wathah nobbay ideah of singin' songs in that language, to pwactise it."

"D'Arcy!"

"Now the chopper's coming down!" murmured Monty Lowther, in the passage, and there was a suppressed chuckle.

But the chopper did not come down. Mr. Carrington appeared to be giving Arthur Augustus his head.

"So as I came home from Wycombe, sir, I was singin' in Italian, and that led that awful wascal to take me for Contawini—"

"What rascal?"

"That disgustin' German, sir!"

Mr. Carrington started. There was a buzz of surprise in the passage.

"Do you mean to say you have met that German scoundrel who attempted to kidnap Contarini?"

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"He was supposed to have fled from the country," said Mr. Carrington. "At all events, the police have not been able to discover him or his confederate. You are sure of what you say, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, sir. The beast collahed me and bundled me into a taxi, thinkin' that I was Contawini. When he found out the mistake, he chucked me out, and I was simply covahed with dust—"

"This is very extraordinary," said Mr. Carrington.

"Yaas, sir; it shows that those wascals are still on the track of old Jackeymo."

"Whom?"

"I mean Contawini, sir. I suggest that you telephone to the police, sir."

"Come with me to the Head, D'Arcy."

Arthur Augustus gave his chums a triumphant glance as he followed Mr. Carrington to the Head's study.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Blake. "So he wasn't pulling our leg! That German rascal is still hanging about."

"Must have lots of money," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "The police got hold of that brown taxi the other day, and, according to D'Arcy's yarn, the Hun has another now."

The juniors waited eagerly for Arthur Augustus to come from the Head's study. He joined them at last.

"Now tell us all about it!" exclaimed Blake.

"It's all wright. The Head's telephoned to Inspectah Skeet," said Arthur Augustus. "I shouldn't wondah if the wascals are wun down this time. If I were Pwime Ministah, I'd have all the wascals put behind barbed wiah, hai Jove!"

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"Tell us the yarn, fathead!"

"I wefuse to be called a fathead, Blake! Howevah, I will tell you all that happened."

The juniors listened with deep interest to the story of Arthur Augustus's exciting adventure.

"Jolly lucky it wasn't Jackeymo," said Tom Merry.

"They'd have had him, for a cert. We won't let Jackeymo go out alone after this."

"I am goin' to keep an eye on Jackeymo," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway don't be nervous, cawo, wagazzo; you are undah my protection."

Jackeymo grinned.

"But I am not nervous," he said. "I am not afraid of the Tedesco. But I shall be very careful."

"I hope we'll get some news of those rotters in the morning," said Tom Merry.

But there was no news in the morning. The two rascals and their taxi-cab had vanished as if the earth had swallowed them up.

But that they were not gone for good, all St. Jim's felt certain. Contarini did not show any signs of nervousness. He was thinking more about "la boxe" than about the German kidnappers. But his face fell a little when he received instructions from the Head to remain within gates till further notice.

"Gated, by Jove!" said Tom Merry sympathetically, when Jackeymo told him. "And all because of the Huns. It's hard cheese!"

"It's up to us!" said Arthur Augustus. "It's our duty to wun down those wotten Huns, deah boys, and I suggest that the St. Jim's Scouts turn out and twack them down."

"How can you track down a giddy motor-car that may be a hundred miles away by this time?" demanded Blake.

Arthur Augustus did not reply to that question. Perhaps it was a little too difficult for him.

"We are goin' to wally wound Jackeymo," he declared. "Jackeymo is undah our pwotection. And I weally considah that it is up to us to wun down those wotten Huns, somehow."

But as Arthur Augustus could not suggest the "how" the Boy Scouts of St. Jim's did not undertake that what difficult task.

## CHAPTER 12.

### "La Boxe."

DURING the following week Tom Merry & Co. thought a good deal about Jackeymo and the danger that threatened him. But the little Italian did not seem to be worrying about it at all. What worried him chiefly was the fact that he was "gated," and had to remain within the school walls after lessons and on half-holidays. He would have preferred to run the risks that waited him outside the walls; but he did not murmur at the decision of the Head. Neither did he think of breaking bounds. He had learned from his new chums that it was not the "thing" to neglect the authority of the Head, even if the ordinances of the other masters were sometimes forgotten, and Jackeymo was very keen to learn and to observe all the "English customs" he could.

Meanwhile, he was getting on famously as a boxer. Every day he spent a good time in the gym, with the gloves on, with Tom Merry, or Blake, or Figgins, or D'Arcy. He was a very apt pupil, and his progress was surprising. At the end of a week he could hold his own with D'Arcy or Blake, and by that time those two juniors naturally considered him quite able to hold his own with Buck Finn.

But Jackeymo was not a quarrelsome junior, though he had a temper, and he did not seek a quarrel with the big-boned youth from the wild and woolly West. He was quite willing to leave Finn alone, and to bear no grudge for his unlucky encounter with him—another English custom he had learned.

But Finn was too aggressive for that. Finn regarded the little Italian as a "dago," and his opinion of dagoes was loud and aggressive.

The fuss the other fellows made of the dago made him

tired, Finn declared. So it was certain that a "row" would come along soon.

Jackeymo was interested in cricket as well as boxing. Cricket was quite a new game to him, and he was keen to learn it, and he found plenty of good-natured instructors. When the House match was played—the postponed match—Jackeymo watched it from start to finish with great interest and attention.

Much of it, naturally, was mysterious to him, but he was rapidly picking up knowledge of the game, though he cheered Tom Merry when his wicket fell, under the mistaken impression that that was a successful feat on the part of the batsman.

"Bravo! Bravissimo!" shouted Jackeymo, when Fatty Wynn's ball knocked the wicket to pieces. "Bravissimo, Tommaso!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Blake. "Good old Tommaso! That's for losing your wicket."

And Tom Merry, who had looked grim for a moment when his wicket went down, grinned.

Jackeymo was standing outside the pavilion, and Tom joined him as he came off, Kangaroo going on in his place.

"Buonissimo, non e vero?" asked Jackeymo.

"Translate, please," smiled Tom.

"Buonissimo—that is goodest—I mean very, very good," explained Jackeymo. "You have had a success?"

"Ha, ha! I've been bowled out."

Jackeymo's face fell.

"Ahime! Then I have made a mistake. It is the ragazzo roundo who has had the success."

"The what? Oh, Fatty Wynn! Yes," said Tom, wondering what Fatty would think if he heard himself described as a "ragazzo roundo."

"But I am learning very fast," said Contarini. "Soon I shall be able to play cricket, though I am learning la boxe faster."

"Let you'll ever know about cricket, I don't think!" remarked Buck Finn, who was looking on at the game. "Catch a dago playin' cricket!"

"I did not address you, amico," said Jackeymo mildly.

"Shut up, Finn!" said Tom Merry. "Why can't you be civil?"

Finn snorted.

"Civil to a greaser! Rats!"

"A greaser?" said Jackeymo. "What is a greaser?"

"New American word," said Monty Lowther. "Anybody got an American dictionary?"

"I guess a greaser is a dago," said Buck Finn—"next thing to a nigger."

Contarini's eyes gleamed.

"You are determined to quarrel with me," he said. "I shall ask you to come into the gym after this match is played."

"I guess I'll come, and make shavings of you again."

"But now I have learned la boxe," said Jackeymo, with a chuckle. "Perhaps it is I who shall make those shavings."

Buck Finn snorted contemptuously. He had observed Jackeymo's practice with the gloves sometimes with a disdainful look. He did not deem it possible that a dago could ever come anywhere near licking him. But he was destined to have his eyes opened on that subject.

Jackeymo watched the game to the finish, and cheered—in the right place this time—when the School House ended winners by six runs. Jackeymo's "bravissimo!" sounded manfully among the cheers of the School House crowd.

Jackeymo was carried off to tea in Study No. 6, with Blake & Co. and the Terrible Three, after the match. After tea, Jackeymo looked at his watch.

"It is time," he remarked.

"Time for what, dear boy?"

"I am to meet the signorino Finn in the gym."

"Then we'll all come," said Jack Blake.

And the whole party proceeded with Jackeymo to the gym. Buck Finn was not there, but Blake cut off to find him, and soon returned with the lanky American junior.

Buck Finn was in a most disdainful mood. He snorted as he came up to the group waiting for him.

"I guess it ain't worth the trouble of licking that dago again," he remarked. "But if he wants to be taught

manners, I'm ready. I guess I'm his mutton, with the wool on."

And Finn threw off his jacket and doubled his bony fists.

"Here are the gloves," said Blake.

Finn shook his head.

"I guess I ain't puttin' on gloves this time," he said. "The dago wasn't licked hard enough last time, and this time I'm going to give him a regular sockdologer of a licking. Savvy?"

"Look here—" began Tom Merry hotly.

"I guess what I say goes. I'll scrap with the dago till he can't blink with his eyes, or smell with his nose, or chirp with his yaup-trap, but I ain't putting on the gloves to him. You hear me?"

"You'll put on the gloves, or you'll be frog's-marched round the gym," said Blake.

"Let him have his way," interposed Contarini. "I do not object."

"But it's rotten—"

"I guess I've made up my mind," said Finn. "And the dago can take it or leave it. I can't waste time fooling around with him."

"I take it," said Jackeymo. "I also refuse to have the gloves."

"Then you'll have to get behind the gym," said Tom. "If Kildare spots you fighting without gloves, you'll get it where the chicken got the chopper."

"Oh, come on!" said Finn. "You're wasting time."

The crowd of juniors adjoined behind the gym, where they were secure from observation. Finn's determination to fight without gloves was generally condemned, but the fellows who knew the progress Jackeymo had made lately grinned. They knew that there was a surprise in store for the swaggering youth from the Wild West.

In that secluded spot behind the gym, the juniors formed a ring, seconds were appointed, and Tom Merry took out his watch to keep time. Crooke of the Shell was Finn's second, and he gave his principal a whispered word of warning.

"This won't be like last time," said Crooke. "You'd better look out for him. He's picked up boxing simply wonderfully."

"I guess I'll double him up in one round," jeered Finn. "You watch out."

Crooke shrugged his shoulders. Whatever chance Finn might have had, he was likely to throw away through his swaggering confidence. But it was his own business.

"Time!" said Tom Merry.

Buck Finn lounged forward, grinning. The punishment Jackeymo had received last time was not to be a "circumstance" to the punishment he would receive this time with the bare knuckles. That was evidently Finn's intention. He was so much bigger than the little Italian, as well as older and heavier, that it really looked as if Jackeymo had no chance.

But Jackeymo faced the swaggering Finn as coolly and courageously as his countrymen faced the Teutonic barbarians in the battles in the Alps. The slim, dusky Italian looked a model of grace in comparison with the heavy, ungainly Finn. Finn came on with a rush, his big fists lashing out, and certainly those drives were powerful enough to knock poor Jackeymo into a cocked hat if they reached their mark.

But they did not reach it.

To Finn's great surprise, his big fists were swept away, knocked into the air, and a fist that felt like a lump of iron was planted full upon his prominent nose. It was a terrific drive, straight from the shoulder, and it knocked the burly Finn backwards like a sack of coke. He thumped heavily on the ground, and lay there gasping.

"Grooh! Wal, I swear! Oh, Jee-rusalem! Grooooh!"

"Well hit, Jackeymo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo!"

"Viva Italia!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "E'viva Italia!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry, grinning, began to count. But Buck Finn was not beaten yet. He was very tough, and by no means a funk. He jumped up and came on again, his nose streaming crimson. Already he was repeating that

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he had refused to have the gloves on. But repentance came too late.

"I guess I'll pulverise him!" he gasped.

"Go it, Jackeymo!"

Hammer and tongs they went it, and the crowd looked on with delight. For Jackeymo's boxing, after little more than a week of instruction, was a marvel to behold.

He simply played with the heavy, clumsy Finn, almost dancing round him as he planted blow after blow, and his guard was so clever that hardly a blow from Finn got through.

Never had Finn been so glad to hear the call of "Time!" as when Tom Merry rapped out that welcome word.

"I saw!" ejaculated Finn, as he staggered to Crooke's knee and collapsed there. "Carry me home to die! I guess that dago's got some sand, after all."

Crooke chuckled.

"Time!"

Buck Finn looked very groggy as he toed the line again. He tried to be cautious in the second round, and to take advantage of his weight and his longer reach, but he was quite outclassed by his active opponent. Jackeymo attacked hotly, and Finn was utterly confused by his rapid play. The round ended with Finn lying on his back, and loud cheers for the Italian junior.

"Bwavo, Jackeymo!" chirruped Arthur Augustus. "Bwawissimo!"

"Ow, yow!" mumbled Buck Finn, as Crooke picked him up. "Ow, my eyes! Yow, my nose! The little beast! Yow! Grooooh! I do feel bad! Ow!"

"Oh, tackle him again!" said Crooke encouragingly. "You'll last out another round yet."

"Yow-ow! The dago is tougher than I reckoned, and that I'll allow. Yow! But I ain't beaten yet, I guess."

"Time!"

"Third round, and finish," said Blake.

Blake was right. Buck Finn was knocked right and left in the third round, and at the end of it he was unable even to rise with Crooke's assistance. He lay and groaned.

"Time!" hinted Tom Merry, after a liberal interval.

Finn groaned.

"Bai Jove, Finn is done, deah boys!"

"Yow! I allow I'm done!" mumbled Finn. "Groo! I guess I'm satisfied. Yoooop!"

"Bwavo, Jackeymo!"

"Hurray!"

Jackeymo, whose handsome face was hardly marked, came towards the fallen American junior and bent over him. He held out his hand frankly as Buck Finn sat up and blinked at him through his closing eyes.

"It is over," said Costarini. "Let us shake hands and be friends. That is an English custom."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Finn blinked at him dubiously, but finally he held out his hand, and Jackeymo shook it.

"I guess you've got a lot of sand for a dago," mumbled Finn. "I allow I woke up the wrong passenger. There's my fin."

"Va bene!"

"Bravo!" said Tom Merry. "For goodness' sake, get some beefsteak for your eyes, Finny! Why didn't you have the gloves on, you ass?"

"Yow! I guess I wish I had!" groaned Finn. And he picked himself up and departed disconsolately.

Jackeymo was surrounded by a congratulating crowd. The little Italian was grinning with delight at this proof of his progress with "la boxe." And he assured Tom Merry that, having mastered the mysteries of la boxe, he would soon be able to tackle "il cricket," and, indeed, to shine as a "cricketero" as he called it, in the School House eleven. And Tom solemnly assured him in turn that he hoped the day would soon come when Jackeymo would shine as a "cricketero."

## CHAPTER 13.

### Arthur Augustus Has His Doubts.

"WOTTEN!"

That was the opinion of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Undoubtedly it was rotten.

St. Jim's juniors were going over to the Grammar School to play Gordon Gay & Co. on their own ground, a week after the House match, and the "gating" of Jackeymo made it impossible for him to come with the team. A crowd of juniors were going over with the eleven, but Jackeymo had to stay behind, and all his friends were concerned about it.

Jackeymo was keenly interested in junior cricket, and a sedulous learner, and he did not want to miss seeing any of the junior matches. That afternoon the senior eleven were also playing away, and the school cricket-ground was deserted save by the fags.

But there was no help for it; Jackeymo was confined to school bounds. Until the German kidnapers were arrested it was not safe for him to go out of the gates, and so far nothing had been heard of them. Jackeymo was of opinion that they had consulted prudence and gone for good, but the Head did not feel so sure. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy agreed with the Head.

"It's wotten," said D'Arcy, in Study No. 6. "The place will be very neatly deserted this afternoon, and poor old Jackeymo will be left on his own. I really wish they had contrived to arrest those disgustin' Huns."

"It's hard cheese," said Blake. "But he's safe here, anyway."

Arthur Augustus looked very thoughtful.

"Pewwaps," he remarked. "But while we are away that would be just the time for those wottahs to strike."

Blake chuckled.

"Do you think they've held off so long because they're afraid of this study?" he asked. "Besides, how do they know that Study No. 6 will be away this afternoon?"

Herries and Digby grinned, and Arthur Augustus frowned.

"Wats! I do not feel quite easy in my mind about leavin' Jackeymo heah," he said. "I pwefer to keep my eye on him."

"You could keep your eyeglass on him, if you like," suggested Blake. "That would really be just as useful."

"Wats!"

When the cricketers started for Rylecombe Grammar School, Arthur Augustus was in a very thoughtful mood. The eleven rode over on their bicycles, with an army of cyclists along with them. Arthur Augustus was still looking thoughtful. He gave quite a start as he observed a taxi-cab waiting at the cross-roads, and jammed on his brake.

"Bai Jove! Look at that, Blake!"

Blake looked.

"Well?" he asked.

"You wemebah those kidnappin' wottahs were in a taxi-cab," said Arthur Augustus excitedly. "I warged this as suspicious—a taxi-cab hangin' about heah on a half-holiday."

"Oh, come on!"

"I repeat that I warged it as suspicious. I am goin' to have a look at that taxi-drivah."

Arthur Augustus jumped off his machine. Some of the other juniors jumped down also, wondering what was "on."

"What are you stopping for?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Oh, Gussy's on the track of the kidnappers!" groaned Blake. "He's going to stop and make investigations whenever he sees a taxi-cab."

"Come on, Gussy, you ass!"

"I wufuse to come on till I have made an inquiry heah."

"Fathcad!"

"Wats!"

The taxi-driver was sitting in the driving-seat, apparently dozing while he waited. Arthur Augustus approached him, with a very suspicious gleam in his eye.

"Pway are you engaged, dwivah?" he asked.

The taxi-man looked at him.

"Yes, sir," he replied.

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"You are waitin' heah for somebody?"

"Yes, sir."

"May I inkuiah whom you are waitin' for?"

The taxi-driver looked at him in surprise, evidently regarding Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as a most inquisitive youth. D'Arcy was scanning him very keenly. He was not wearing goggles, and his face did not look German, and his accent was certainly not that of the Fatherland. But Arthur Augustus was not to be taken in. He was suspicious.

"I'm waitin' for Mr. Styles, sir, if you want to know."

"Farmer Styles?"

"Yes."

"May I inkuiah, then, why you do not dwive up to Farmer Style's house?" asked Arthur Augustus triumphantly.

"My eye!"

"Pway answah my question, dwivah?"

"I don't see that it's any business of yours, young shaver," said the taxi-driver. "But if you 'ad eyes in your 'ead you'd see that I can't drive a cab along a footpath over a field, and get it over a fence to start with. Not that it's any business of yours, fur as I see."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Blake. "Are you satisfied, Gussy?"

"But you could go wound the othah way," suggested Arthur Augustus.

The taxi-man looked more and more astonished.

"I s'p'ose I could," he assented; "but being as Farmer Styles telephoned to me to wait for 'im 'ere, I ain't doin' it, see? Which this is fifty yards from the 'ouse, by the footpath. Anything else as you'd like to know what don't concern you, young inquisitive?"

"Here comes Farmer Styles," grinned Tom Merry, as a portly figure appeared in the field, crossing from the farmhouse. "Better ask him a few questions, Gussy, and see whether he's the Kaiser or Von Tirpitz in disguise?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus coloured. He began to feel that perhaps he was on the wrong track.

"Thank you vewy much, dwivah," he remarked.

"Pway pardon me for twoblin' you."

"Oh, don't mench!" said the driver. "P'r'aps they don't learn you at your school that little boys shouldn't ask questions!"

"Ahem!"

Under the circumstances Arthur Augustus felt that the driver's sarcasm was justified, and he made no reply. He remounted his bike, and rode on in a thoughtful mood, while his comrades chuckled.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, in a startled tone, a few minutes later. "That looks jolly suspicious."

D'Arcy started.

"What is it, deah boy?" he exclaimed breathlessly. Lowther pointed to a market-cart lumbering along the road.

"Look at that!"

"What about it, Lowthah?"

"Well, isn't that suspicious?"

"Bai Jove! I fail to see—"

"It occurred to me," said Lowther seriously, "that that waggon might be a taxi in disguise. You know how clever German spies are at disguises."

"You uttah ass!"

Arthur Augustus rode on with his noble nose in the air, while his companions yelled. They arrived at the Grammar School without meeting with any more suspicious vehicles. Gordon Gay & Co. greeted them as they arrived on the Grammarian cricket-ground. The Grammarians were ready; but Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not thinking of cricket. He drew Tom Merry aside.

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy, do you think you'd have a chance against the Gwammah boundahs if I stood out?" he asked seriously.

"Well, just a bare sporting chance," said Tom, with a grin. "We might possibly manage to get on without your usual supply of ducks' eggs, Gussy."

"Whealy, Tom Mewwy—"

"What do you want to stand out for? I suppose you're not arranging another reception this afternoon at Wayland?"

"I am feelin' wathah uneasy about Jackeymo. I am not wholly satisfied about that taxi-cab."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatever to cackle at, Tom Mewwy. Pway put Weilly in, and I will stand out this time, if you think it won't mean a dead certain lickin'."

"More likely to mean a win," said Tom Merry cordially.

"Wats!"

Reilly of the Fourth was more than willing to take Arthur Augustus's place in the team. The swell of St. Jim's remounted his bike, and rode back towards Jackeymo under his fatherly protection, and the sense of responsibility weighed heavily upon him. But Tom Merry & Co. could not see what harm was likely to come to Contarini within the walls of St. Jim's, neither did they consider it very probable that Gussy would be of much use, even if the German rascals were at work again.

But Gussy had no doubts on that point. He was quite prepared to protect his Italian chum against the Kaiser & Co. and all the powers of darkness. It was a sacrifice to give up the cricket match, especially as he had doubts about how the side would get on without his assistance, but he felt easier in his mind as his bike bore him back to St. Jim's.

## CHAPTER 14.

### The Last Throw of the Dice.

JACKEYMO was feeling disconsolate.

He had seen the crowd of cyclists off, and then he sauntered in the quadrangle, with his hands in his pockets.

He strolled down to Little Side, and for a time watched the Third at cricket, but Third-Form cricket soon palled upon him. The cricket soon developed into a hot argument between Wally D'Arcy and Jameson, which proceeded to the punching of noses.

Jackeymo had learned all he needed to know of that kind of cricket. He sauntered away again, and went down to the gates, and looked out on the white, sunny road. He would have been glad to go out on his bicycle, or to go over to the Grammar School and watch the match, but that was forbidden. All his friends were out, and on that sunny afternoon he did not feel inclined to read in his study.

Levison and his friends were holding a smoking-party in the old tower, and they would have welcomed Jackeymo, but the Italian's tastes did not lie in that direction. Buck Finn was in the quad, with very blue shadows round his eyes, and he looked rather grimly at the Italian junior. Jackeymo was not inclined to converse with him. He stood leaning on the old gate, and wishing for the return of the cricketers.

A market-cart came lumbering slowly up the road from the direction of Rylcombe. It was the cart that had passed the cyclists, and had drawn forth Monty Lowther's humorous suggestion. A man in a smock, with a dirty face and a straggling beard, was driving it, and another man sat in the cart on a pile of straw and sacks.

Jackeymo watched it idly as it came lumbering slowly along. The two horses, though both very powerful animals, were proceeding at a very slow pace, which became a crawl as the cart came nearer to the school gates. Jackeymo did not know it, but that market-cart, with the two dirty-faced men in smocks, had passed the school gates a score of times during the last week, sometimes with a load, and sometimes without, and always proceeding at a snail's pace.

The two men in the cart glanced in his direction, and the heavy vehicle lumbered to a halt. The driver descended from his seat, and touched his hat.

"This 'ere St. James's Shule, young master?" he asked.

Jackeymo nodded.

"Si, si! I mean yes, this is St. Jim's."

The driver turned to the man in the waggon.

"'Ere you are, sir."

The other man jumped out. He was a fat, powerful man, but his features were almost indistinguishable between dirt and a straggling beard and whiskers. He touched his hat, too, as he came towards the Italian junior.

"Excuse me, sir, is Master Merry here?" he asked.

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"Tom Merry has gone out to play cricket," he said, wondering what the wagoners could want with Tom Merry.

"You will give him a message, sir?"

"Certo! Yes, with pleasure!"

The wagoner came closer, and fumbled in his pocket. Jackeymo watched him carelessly. Then, with a sudden spring like a tiger, the man was upon him. Two powerful arms gripped the Italian junior, he was swept off his feet, and pitched bodily into the wagon. The junior sprawled in the straw, panting, utterly taken aback. The man in the smock followed him in with a bound, and the driver jumped into his seat and whipped up the horses.

Contarini struggled up, only to find himself in an iron grip. He was forced down into the straw again.

"Keep quiet, Contarini."

"Who are you?" panted Jackeymo. "You—you are the kidnapper! You are the German!"

The wagoner laughed harshly.

"Ja, ja! And I have succeeded at last!"

The wagon was driving on. Buck Finn came running out of the gates; he was the only fellow near at hand, and he had seen the sudden attack. But a cyclist coming up the road from Rylcombe had seen it too.

The cyclist was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

D'Arcy was not a hundred yards from the school gates when the wagon had halted there. The wagon had been in his view for some time; but suspicious as he was of taxi-cabs, the swell of St. Jim's had had no suspicion of the market-cart. The two men in smock-frocks certainly did not look suspicious. Arthur Augustus could scarcely believe his eyes as he saw what happened at the school gates. He put on speed, and rode furiously after the wagon.

The driver was whipping up his horses, and the two powerful animals were galloping. The heavy cart rocked and bumped along the road, at a great speed. Finn stood staring after it blankly as D'Arcy dashed up.

"They've got him!" yelled Finn.

"Jackeymo!" panted D'Arcy.

"Sure!"

"Tell the Head."

Arthur Augustus sped on, and Finn rushed back into the school with the startling news. In the wagon Jackeymo was crushed down into the straw, in the irresistible grip of the German, and the kidnapper was binding him hand and foot. Jackeymo resisted furiously, but he was a child in the grasp of the muscular ruffian. He had called once for help, but a wad was thrust into his mouth, and he was effectually gagged. Bound and helpless, he lay in the bottom of the wagon, and the German threw the thick straw over him, leaving only his face exposed, that he could breathe. The Italian junior looked up at him with burning eyes.

For the moment the kidnapper did not observe the cyclist pedalling on behind. He was grinning with triumph.

"At last, my little Herr!" he said. "I have waited long for this chance, and to-day you have given it to me. At last!"

Jackeymo's eyes burned.

"A clever trick, is it not?" grinned the German. "A market wagon—who would suspect it? How long I have haunted your school, waiting for a chance, but I knew it would come at last! But we do not go far in this. Within a mile a car is waiting, and then a swift run to the coast, and a yacht is ready—ha, ha!" He chuckled gleefully. "A yacht that will bear you quickly away—a yacht owned by an Englishman, and above suspicion—a Englishman born in Germany, but naturalised—ha, ha!—with a new nationality written down upon paper, which is good enough for these British fools. Against these British blockheads it is hardly necessary to use one's wit, it is so easy to outwit them."

He laughed harshly.

"And your father, my little Herr—he who helped to bring your country into the war—he will learn that his only son, the hope of his old age, is a prisoner, in a deep dungeon in the heart of Deutschland, never again to see

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OUR COMPANION "THE BOYS' FRIEND," "THE MAGNET," "THE BOYS' FRIEND" "THE PENNY POPULAR," "ONUCKLES," 10,

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the light of day—never, unless Signor Contarini can influence his King to withdraw from the war. He has the power, hein? He must try to exercise it, if he would not choose that his only son shall die in a black dungeon, and be buried like a dog where he dies. Mein Gott! All goes well!"

He laughed again. With endless patience and cunning and resource the kidnapper had played his game in incessant danger, but he had succeeded at last, and he was bubbling with triumph. The wagon jolted and thundered on. Well the schemer knew that telephone and telegraph would speedily be at work; pursuit would be quick, search would be instantly made, but in ten minutes or less the market-cart was to be abandoned; a swift car would bear the prisoner away to his doom. What could happen now to save Giacomo Contarini?

The German glanced back from the wagon as he heard a cycle on the road behind. He started at the sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, crimson and panting over his handle-bars. He recognised the swell of St. Jim's.

"Mein Gott!"

Arthur Augustus let go one handle, and shook his fist at the German kidnapper.

"Stop, you scoundrel!"

The German's little piggy eyes gleamed, and he groped in his pocket. Suddenly the wagon slackened down, and he turned with a curse towards the driver.

"Karl! Karl! Schnell! Dummkopf!"

The driver pointed ahead with his whip. The German ground his teeth with rage. Ahead on the road there came in sight a marching body of men—men in khaki, with fresh young faces, singing cheerily as they marched. The road came their voices on the wind:

"It's a long way to Tipperary!"

"It's a long way to go!"

It was a route march of recruits of Kitchener's Army. Five hundred men in khaki were swinging along to the well-known tune. They filled the road on one side, but the ranks closed up to allow the wagon to pass.

Many a time had the familiar strains of Tipperary fallen upon the ears of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. But never had they sounded like such heavenly music in his ears.

His eyes danced at the sight of the men in khaki.

He averted to the right, and shot past the wagon, while the infuriated German gripped his pistol and knelt in the straw, in doubt and dismay. The passing of Kitchener's men would not have troubled him but for the presence of the swell of St. Jim's. Contarini, bound and gagged under the straw, could not make his presence known to the passing soldiers. But now—

Arthur Augustus clattered off his bike right in front of the marching men. His bike crashed on the ground; he waved his hand and shouted.

"Help!"

A sergeant gripped him by the shoulder wrathfully, to swing him out of the way of the marching column.

"Wescue!" stuttered Arthur Augustus. "Help! There are German spies in that wagon; they have kidnapped a chap!"

"What?"

"German spies!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "Don't let them get away! Collah them!"

The swell of St. Jim's made a spring for the wagon as it lumbered on. He caught on the tail-board, and hung on desperately, yelling for help. The German in the wagon beat at him furiously. An officer's voice rang out, and a couple of men sprang to the horses' heads and stopped them. The soldiers surrounded the wagon.

"Now, what's all this 'ere?" demanded the sergeant.

A mounted officer came riding up along the line.

"Help!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "Collah them! They are Germans! Look—look in the wagon! They got Jackeymo there!"

"By gad!" said the lieutenant.

Jackeymo, with a great effort, rolled himself out of the straw, and rose on his knees, bound as he was. The sight of the Italian boy with his hands tied, and the gag

in his mouth was more than enough. The German was striking savagely at the swell of St. Jim's as he hung on the waggon. The lieutenant pushed his horse close behind the waggon and interposed.

"Stop that! You've got to give an account of yourself!"

The driver had leaped from his seat, and made a spring for the wood that bordered the road. But a couple of Tommies seized him promptly, and secured him. The spy in the waggon was deadly pale now under his dirt. There was despair in his heart. In the very moment of success defeat had come upon him. He groped for his Browning, and the weapon glimmered in the sunlight.

"Hands off!"

Crash!

The mounted officer's riding-whip struck the pistol, and it whirled into the road. The next instant a dozen soldiers were clambering in the waggon, and the German was struggling furiously in their grasp. But he struggled in vain.

Arthur Augustus, his nose bleeding, and one eye purple, from the blows he had received, scrambled through the straw to Jackeymo, and cut him loose.

"Grazie tanto, amico mio!" panted Jackeymo. "You have saved me!"

"Yaas, wathah!" panted Arthur Augustus. "And that awful wottah is a prisonah!"

"Bravissimo!"

"Hurway!"

The German was secured. As he stood, panting and sullen, in the grasp of the men in khaki, Arthur Augustus breathlessly explained to the young lieutenant.

"By gad, what a stroke of luck!" said the lieutenant.

"Well, your rascal, have you anything to say?"

The German ground his teeth.

"Mein Gott! I have done my duty for my country," he said. "I have no more to say! I am your prisoner. I spit upon you and all Englanders!"

"By gad!"

The German, sullenly silent, said no more. His fate was sealed, and he knew it. The kidnapping plot had failed, and it only remained for stern justice to be meted out, and the German spy, from the hands of the men in khaki, went to his trial and to his punishment.

Tom Merry & Co. had the surprise of their lives when they returned from the Grammarian match. They found Arthur Augustus D'Arcy with a swollen nose and a black eye. And they learned the story of the kidnapping, and of the defeat and capture of the kidnapers. Jackeymo was warmly congratulated, and Arthur Augustus, in spite of his nose and his eye, was highly satisfied with himself.

"I wathah weckon I was too deep for them, deah boys," he said, chuckling. "Wathah luckay I came back from the Gwammah School—what?"



The gallant Australians, by their deeds o' daring in the Dardanelles, have greatly distinguished themselves. The above picture is a true portrayal of a terrible struggle enacted on the cliff-side between a Cornstink and one of the fiendish Turks. Both toppled over and dropped into the sea, where the colonial succeeded in forcing his man under water and effectually drowning him.

"Jolly lucky," agreed Tom Merry.

"Awfully lucky!" said Monty Lowther. "But the most remarkable thing is the wonderful insight Gusey showed in this matter."

"You flattah me, Lowthah!"

"Net at all," said Lowther blandly. "It was marvellous. Even Sherlock Holmes could not have guessed, from seeing a taxi-cab waiting for Farmer Styles, that Jackeymo was going to be kidnapped in a waggon. It was wonderful."

"I—I did not exactly deduce——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you are wottin', Lowthah, you ass——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cheese it, Lowther," said Blake. "Gusey has done jolly well; he can't help being an ass!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"But he has rescued old Jackeymo, and there you are! Gentlemen, I call for three cheers for the one and only!"

"Eip-hip-hurray!"

And in the cheering the voice of Jackeymo could be heard chirruping:

"Bravio, bravissimo!"

THE END.

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



## A Great New Story of Thrilling Adventure.

### THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Hal Mackenzie, Jim Holdsworth, and Bob Sigsbee, while cruising in a yacht, the *Iris*, in the Red Sea, discover information relating to a mysterious City of Flame, and form themselves into an expedition for discovering it.

After many exciting adventures, they at last reach the land of Shoa, and after crossing a great desert, reach the Temple of the Sun. There they meet Patrick O'Hara, a tall, red-headed Irishman, who is being kept prisoner by the natives, and regarded as a saint. The comrades then come into collision with Argolis, the chief priest, who wishes their deaths.

A few days later the temple is visited by Queen Clytemna of Shoa, with an enormous retinue. She takes the three adventurers and the Irishman under her protection, and in due course they return with the queen's retinue to the City of Flame, and are lodged in her palace.

The priests, under Argolis, as well as other powerful enemies, are still working against the comrades, and one night they find that their rifles have mysteriously vanished.

Queen Clytemna informs the comrades of vast treasure-trove, and asserts that the treasure is rightfully hers, but the priests have conspired to keep it from her.

In spite of the fact that to recover the treasure will be an extremely hazardous task, the three comrades and O'Hara set forth to do so.

Hal Mackenzie is leading the adventurers, and suddenly he turns towards them with a startled expression.

(Now go on with the story.)

### Sigsbee is Missing.

"What's the matter?" asked Jim.

"Did you hear anything?" said Hal.

"Not a sound."

The other two had not heard anything unusual. The only sounds which broke the silence of the night were the moaning of the wind overhead, and the dull roaring of the flames beyond the city walls.

"Must have been my fancy," pursued Hal. "My nerves don't trouble me as a rule, but I suppose they're a bit strung up to-night."

"Well, what's after the second flight of stairs?" asked Jim.

"That's enough to go on with," replied Hal. "Come along!"

"It sounds aisy so far," murmured O'Hara; "but I'd be after feeling more comfortable if we could have a light!"

They had two ancient oil lamps of beaten bronze with them, but it was not advisable just yet to light them. Hal led the way, but, after passing through the arched entrance they were in profound darkness. They kept close, one behind the other, groping along with their hands touching the wall on that side.

Hal reached an opening. He turned into it, and stumbled against the lower stair of a flight.

"Confound it!" he muttered.

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Jim laughed. His nerves were strung up, too, and the laugh wasn't quite natural.

"The mysterious guardians of the treasure tripping you up already," he whispered.

"Shut up!" replied Hal. "We're a jolly long way off the treasure yet. This is the staircase."

They crept up it noiselessly, twenty-five steps, but when they reached the top they found that a long corridor stretched away in front of them, and not a room, as they had anticipated.

Of course, they didn't know at first that the corridor was a long one, as they were in darkness, but by the time they had gazed their way to the end they knew it. There were doorways on each side, but if there were any doors they were wide open.

At the end of the passage they came to a closed door. The room they wanted was evidently beyond it. But the door was fastened.

"This is where we miss our rifles," said Hal. "A bullet makes a good key in an emergency."

"Is the door locked?"

"Well, it's fastened in some way."

"If we put our shoulders to it—"

"Hould on!" interrupted O'Hara. "This battle-axe ay moine'll cut through anything. Stand aside while I get to work!"

The big, raw-boned Irishman was as strong as any two ordinary men, and with a few blows of the heavy battle-axe he had the upper panels of the door in splinters. He put a hand through the opening, reached for the bolts, drew them back, and pushed the door wide.

"My aunt!" exclaimed Jim. "There was noise enough to wake the dead! If any of the opposite party are within a quarter of a mile of us they'll tumble to our game!"

"Oh, it wouldn't be heard outside the house," replied his chum, "and there's nobody inside but us!"

They stepped cautiously into the room, but O'Hara had barely crossed the threshold when he stopped dead, with a half-startled exclamation.

"Now, who'd didn't ye think of it before, boys?" he cried.

"Think of what?" demanded Jim. "What are you driving at?"

"Who, this door was bolted on the inside!"

"We know that, you chump! If it had been bolted on the outside, we could have opened it without the trouble of breaking it down!"

"Well, then," pursued the Irishman, "there must be some way ahead of us, or how could the door come to be bolted on the inside?"

"Oh, come in out of the wet!" exclaimed Jim, impolitely.

"Likely as not there's no one been through here for years and years. The man who bolted that door may be dead and forgotten long ago. We're up against ancient history now!"

"But we've got to remember," put in Hal, "that the high priest, Anubis, and their gang may have got wind of our expedition before this. They're a wily crowd, and there are precious few secrets hidden from them. What do you think, Sigsbee?"

But the American didn't answer.

"Sigsbee!"

No answer.

"Where on earth is he? Light your lamp, Jim."

The wick flared up, and the darkness was dispelled immediately around where they were standing. But Sigsbee was not with them. They walked back along the passage to the



stairhead, and called him by name. The echo of their own voices was the only answer. They gazed at each other in consternation.

"He was walking last," said O'Hara, "following behind me. An' I'm certain shure he came so far as the bottom of these stairs, for he knocked up against me. Is it darkness that can swallow a man up widout a sound, leaving nothing av him at all, at all?"

"If anybody made a treacherous and silent attack on him—" began Jim, and then dismissed the idea. "No; Bob Sigabee would put up some sort of a fight, no matter who—or what—tackled him!"

"I don't understand it," muttered Hal. "I don't understand it." He clenched his hands savagely. "Clytemna said there was no living thing in this building; but—oh, what sort of foe is it that is silent and invisible?"

Yet at that moment the silence was broken. A curious sort of wailing sound—reached their ears—faint, but quite distinct.

O'Hara crossed himself.

"Now, the saints preserve us from dead men," he exclaimed, "who can't rest aisy in their graves!"

### Chasing a Shadow.

Just once that curious wailing sound was heard, but no more. Pat O'Hara, like many of his countrymen, was inclined to be superstitious, and even the three or four years he had spent in the steamer's stokehold had not quite knocked it out of him. He started wide-eyed at Mackenzie and Jim.

"Don't talk piffle, O'Hara, about dead men not resting in their graves!" said Jim. "Dead men can't squeal. If that sound we heard was made by a human being at all, it was made by a living one."

"But not by Sigabee," declared the Irishman. "His himself that wouldn't be afther squealing, no matter what was happening to him."

"That's so," agreed Hal Mackenzie. "It isn't Bob Sigabee's way to cry out if he's being hurt. And that queer noise—sort of wail of a lost spirit—may have been nothing more unsensory than the squeak of rusty hinges on a door. Fact is, we're all strung up to concert-pitch, and fancy things."

"Like enough," admitted Jim. "But it's no fancy that Sigabee has vanished. Where is he?"

"We must use our wits, and not get excited," Hal replied, "and then we shall find out. One thing's certain—we're not going a step further without him."

They were at the stair-head. Hal turned and walked slowly back along the corridor, the others following. Suddenly he stopped by a closed door at his left hand.

"This door was open," he said sharply, "when we came up. I am certain of it, although we were in darkness, for I kept my hand on the wall this side as we walked along. There were three doorways, but no closed door. Now look!"

Jim held up the flaring oil-lamp. There were three doorways on the left-hand side, as Hal had said. Two were open; the centre one against which they were standing.

"Then he's in the room beyond this door," said Jim.

"Where else can he be?" replied Hal. "He followed us up the stairs, and if he'd gone down again he'd have let us know. He wouldn't have turned back without a reason."

"He wouldn't have entered this room without a reason either," said Jim. "Pity he didn't call out to us to let us know what he was doing, and why."

He put his shoulder against the door and pushed. "It's fastened," he added, "and there's no handle nor sign of a lock or bolt on the outside."

"Faith, I can settle that, same way as I did wid the other door," put in O'Hara, giving his mighty axe a swing.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Hal. "There's someone moving inside!"

He put his ear against the door and listened. A curious sound came from within the room, or a curious mixture of sounds—scuffling of feet, heavy breathing, a clang of metal against stone.

Hal beat upon the door with the butt-end of his spear.

"Sigabee," he called out, "are you in there?"

To his relief it was the American who answered him, though it was hard to recognise his voice. It seemed half smothered, gasping.

"Sure enough—I'm here! Wait—this cuss—got a gup—Ah!"

The ejaculation "Ah!" was followed by the heavy thud of a falling body, and then the sound of footsteps running across the floor. This again was followed by the rasping of a drawn-back bolt, and the door was flung open.

Sigabee stood in the doorway, panting, dishevelled, and bleeding.

"Why, what have you—" began Hal, but he got no farther.

"You've got a light?" panted Sigabee. "Good! Show it in here. I was kind of handicapped in the dark, and that galoot what tackled me had an advantage. But I ain't done with him yet. There he is."

They saw a man—a native—scrambling to his feet, and they saw the gleam of steel as he raised a hand which grasped a knife. Sigabee made a rush at him, but just as they were about to close the sharp report of a rifle rang out, fetching a hundred echoes from the rooms and corridors.

The native flung up his arms, and dropped face downwards without a cry.

The whole thing was so sudden, so startling, and unexpected that for a few moments Hal and his companions stood as though they were petrified, staring at the prone figure on the floor and into the darkness of an inner chamber, from which the shot had been fired.

Jim was the first to recover himself.

"A rifle!" he exclaimed. "It must be one of ours. The Shoans haven't any weapons of that sort."

"In that case, it was Anubis who fired the shot. He's the only one who—"

"Best take cover," warned Sigabee. "There may be another where that came from."

This was excellent advice, which they all followed so as to get out of the line of fire from the inner chamber. There was only a narrow arched opening between the two rooms.

Two or three minutes passed, during which nothing further happened, and no sound was heard. There was probably an exit from the inner room, but in any case, if the man with the rifle was still in it, it was obvious that he wouldn't show himself, but he might be lying in wait to get in another shot.

"That bullet was meant for you, Sigabee," said Hal; "but the other fellow got it as he sprang forward. Is he dead?"

"Dead as mutton!" replied Sigabee. "Struck him fair and square between the eyes. Waal, we can't stick crouching down here all night, though I allow the man with the gun has got the pull of us."

"Why shouldn't we all make a rush in, and try to get a hold av him?" asked O'Hara. "He couldn't hit more than wan av us."

"I've got a better plan than that," whispered Jim. "I'll stalk him—if he's still hiding in there. When I shout you can rush. Shade the light, so it doesn't show on the doorway."

He laid down his sword, and reached for the long-bladed knife which had fallen from the dead man's hand. For "stalking" purposes it was handier than a sword.

"Be careful," said Hal, in a low tone.

There was no attempt to dissuade him from the task, which was not without peril, if the invisible sniper was lying in wait for another victim. For in this adventure, which they had undertaken in the queen's service, each one of the quartette had to take his full share of the dangers, or they would never win through to the end. Therefore, it was tacitly understood that when there was risky work to be done, the man who first stepped into the breach was to do it, if it

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

## HEALTH and ECONOMY



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was only a one-man job. It was a sure thing there'd be no shirkers; each was only too ready to take the post of danger.

Jim slipped along, keeping close to the wall until he reached the opening, then he led flat down on the floor, and, without making a sound, worked his way round the angle of the wall inch by inch, foot by foot, until he was half-way through the opening.

His comrades held their breath, each one gripping his weapon.

Jim paused for a few seconds to listen. No sound reached his ears. He went on again, slowly, silently, cautiously, keeping to the right, always near the wall. He was well inside the inner room now. He was remarkably keen of hearing, and suddenly he caught the faintest scraping sound.

Then he saw what looked like a smudge of blacker shadow in the darkness. He made a leap for it. There was a stab of flame, a report that almost deafened him, and a stinging sensation at the left side of his head.

Jim made a thrust with the long-bladed knife, but only struck the empty air. His comrades came in with a rush, and by the light of the lamp, now carried by Pat O'Hara, they could see all over the room.

"Where's the blayguard what foired?" cried O'Hara. "He was not there. The only trace of him was the flattened out bullet on the wall and a thin trickle of blood coming from Jim's scalp. The only entrance or exit to or from the room, so far as could be seen, was the arched opening through which they had just rushed. The man with the rifle couldn't have escaped that way.

"Dished!" exclaimed Jim. "The rotter's given us the slip! - Must be a secret door, or some contrivance of that sort, in the end wall. They were nuts on those things in the old days!"

"Well, he must go," said Hal. "No use trying to follow him, or we might find ourselves lured into a trap. And— Why, Jim, old chap, you were hit. There's blood on your neck and the side of your head."

"Oh, it's nothing much!" replied Jim. "Our invisible friend wanted a keepsake, so he shaved off a lock of my hair with a bullet. Took a bit of the skin with it!"

"An inch more to the right, and it would have settled you, laddie."

But Jim was quite undisturbed by his narrow shave. The great point was that he had suffered no material damage.

"He was only five yards off," said Jim easily. "And if he couldn't get a bullet at that distance, he's not what you'd call a crack shot—eh? But I wish I could have grabbed the rifle from him."

"You couldn't make out his face, I suppose?"

"Couldn't tell whether he had one or not. He was just a black shadow, no more."

"Seems we've both been chasin' shadows," put in Sigbee. "I was trailing along, last of our party, as you know, and as I passed that outside room I fancied I saw a shadowy figure standing just inside the doorway. As we were all in the dark, I just stepped in to investigate, which I allow was a foolish thing to do.

"Wal, that shadow retreated, and I followed. Then the door closed behind me, though I didn't know that at the time, as there wasn't any sound. After a bit of manoeuvring me and the shadow came to grips, an' when you're wrestling with a man a knife is a sight more handy weapon than a spear. I got a jab in the shoulder what made me haul off for breathin' space. Just then you started hammerin' at the door, and—wal, I guess you know all the rest!"

"What are we to do about this dead man?" said Jim.

"Lave him here," replied O'Hara. "If his friends won't look after his buryn' 'tis little matter, for, be me soul, this place is loike a tomb!"

"Let's get on," urged Hal, "for we've hardly made a fair start yet. We have to find a secret door and get it open, and that may take a bit of doing."

"The building seems to be studded with secret doors, and honeycombed with hidden passages and stairways!" growled Sigbee. "I don't cotton to those old-fashioned notions, anyway, an' I reckon a few sticks of dynamite 'ud save us a sight of trouble!"

### The Guardian of the Treasure.

The secret door in the room at the end of the corridor had been discovered and opened, and the stairway beyond it had been negotiated. There were a hundred stairs in the flight,

leading downwards, and when they reached the bottom they knew they must be well below the foundations of the house.

A passage stretched away in front of them in a straight line, the end of which they could not see, although they had both lamps alight now. The instructions given by Queen Clytemna were that they were to follow this passage to the end. After that she could give them no further word of guidance.

"At the end of the passage," she had said, "you will be somewhere near the treasure chamber. That is all I know, for I have never entered the place myself. To do so would have been to give myself into the hands of my enemies. How to gain an entrance to the chamber you will have to find out for yourselves. But take heed how you go, for there will surely be many traps."

O'Hara recalled Clytemna's words as he stood peering along the passage.

"Thraps, is it?" he muttered. "Be me soul, we've had some experyence av thim same 'sready! But ut looks as if we'd a long walk before us, an' me stomach's crying out for breakfast. What'll the toime be, Mackenzie? Down under the earth, where the day's as black as the night, I'm getting a thrife mixed as to meal hours!"

Hal looked at his watch.

"It's five o'clock in the morning," he replied.

"The mornin', is ut?" returned the Irishman. "Maybe fir's a bit early for breakfast—"

"I don't know," interrupted Hal. "I could do with something to eat myself. My idea is that we have a snack now, and a couple of hours' sleep, and then push on. We want a rest, as it's twenty hours, or more, since we had any sleep. What say?"

"Agreed!" cried Jim. Sigbee also thought it would be a good plan, so they started to unpack some of the provisions they carried with them.

As they had to economise weight, and carry nothing that was very bulky, so that their movements would not be hampered, the food which they had brought had been mixed and cooked under Sigbee's personal supervision.

It consisted of meat pounded up very fine, and mixed with beaten-up eggs, flour, and a little milk. The whole was then shaped into flat cakes and baked. It was an appetising and nutritious food, its great advantage being that it wasn't necessary to eat much at a time. Each one carried his own rations—enough to last for three days, if portioned out carefully.

For drink they had wine and water, each carrying two quarts in a flat metal bottle, slung at his side by a leather strap. The metal bottles, or flasks, had been provided by Clytemna, and would have been worth their weight in gold to any curiosity dealer in London.

Thus, when they wanted a meal all they had to do was to sit down and eat and drink, no preparation being required.

"You'd better go easy with the liquid," advised Hal, as he noticed the wine and water was gurgling rather rapidly down O'Hara's throat. "There's barely enough of that for three days, and this doesn't look a likely place to find water!"

"Or food either," put in Jim. "Suppose we don't get back at the end of three days, what then?"

"Don't ask consundrums now, old man," laughed Hal, "because I give 'em all up. I can't find answers to the questions I've been asking myself for days past!"

"Shure, now, we'll come out on top, whatever happens," exclaimed O'Hara, "same as we've done all along! Don't worry about anything, say I!"

They had soon finished their frugal meal, and then they arranged that each should take a half-hour turn at keeping watch, while the other three snatched a little sleep. They could only spare two hours for sleep just then.

However, the brief rest and the food put fresh vigour into them, and they started off along the passage, two and two, with O'Hara whistling a lively tune, to which they kept step. It was something he had heard in a Liverpool music-hall the last time he was in England, and it was not the least queer incident of their strange adventure that such a tune should be whistled in that mysterious tunnel beneath a forgotten city of the dead past.

The tunnel was fully a mile in length, and the smooth paved floor, level sides, and arched roof of groynions were in a perfect state of repair. Those ancient builders and stonemasons, who had been dust for thirty centuries, had done their work well.

"Look!" cried Hal suddenly, and O'Hara stopped his whistling. "There's the end of the passage. It's a blank wall of rock!"

By a common impulse they all stopped, though they couldn't exactly have said why they did so. Jim and Sigbee, who had the lamps, held them up above their heads. Little more than fifty yards in front of them they now all

# ANSWERS

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Sigsbee made a rush at the native, but just as they were about to close, the sharp report of a rifle rang out. The native flung up his arms and dropped without a cry.  
(See page 23.)

saw what Hal had been the first to catch sight of—a smooth wall of rock, black as ebony, which reflected the light in little points and streaks on its polished surface.

It entirely blocked up the end of the tunnel, barring further progress.

"Say, that looks healthy!" ejaculated Sigsbee.

"Howly bulzushes!" muttered O'Hara. "Have we got to push a hole through that slab av—"

"Better examine it first, and try the pushing afterwards," Jim suggested.

They walked on for the remaining distance, halting close up against the barrier.

"The directions given by the queen end here," said Hal. "We must find out for ourselves the way to get through the rock!"

"Through it?" echoed Jim. "If we had an extra high-powered electric boring machine, guaranteed to cut through anything, we might manage it; or if this was a slice of cheese instead of a slice of rock—"

"Oh, shut your head," exclaimed Hal, "and box up your brains, so as to give yourself a chance to think! This mile-long tunnel wasn't made just for the fun of ending it up against a blank wall. Those ancient Egyptians, or Shoans, weren't practical jokers of that sort. They were as serious as owls in everything they undertook, so you can bet any money there's a way—"

"He, he, he! He, he, he!"

A thin cackle of laughter broke in on Hal's remarks, causing him to stop abruptly. They all turned round, for the uncanny laugh was behind them. That which their eyes rested upon held them speechless with astonishment for most part of a minute.

It was a man, although as unlike any man they had ever met before as could well be imagined. For even in this strange land the men were shapely, as a rule, though sullen, fierce, and evil-featured.

But this one! He was tall, abnormally thin, and had a stoop in his shoulders which caused his head to lean forward, as though it was too heavy for his slim body to support.

He appeared to be of immense age, for his face was a very network of wrinkles. The colour of it, even in the lamp-light, was a deep yellow. His eyes were small, black, and when the light fell on them glittered as though fire was smouldering behind them. He wore a long, black robe, fastened round the waist by a leather thong.

But what was most remarkable about this strange creature was the amazing quantity of jewels with which he had decorated himself. He positively blazed with gems. There were diamond rings on his skinny fingers, a rope of pearls and rubies hung round his neck, gold bangles jangled on his wrists, and, fastened on to the breast of the black robe, were jewelled crescents, stars, and some devices which looked like Freemasons' signs.

"What is it?" muttered O'Hara, breaking the amazed silence. "An' where did it come from?"

That was a puzzle. The tunnel had no recess where a man could hide. The whole mile length of the walls on each side were smooth and bare. It seemed almost as though this queer-looking creature had taken shape out of the darkness.

"What do you seek down here, white men," croaked this strange being, "where none of your race has ever set foot before? Is it the Queen of Sheba—"

"We're not out after a mummy," growled Sigsbee. "An' although you look about a thousand years old, I guess the Queen of Sheba was dead a sight of centuries before you were born."

As Sigsbee had spoken in English, the bejewelled individual didn't understand him. But all the four had mastered the Shoan tongue by this time. The apparition continued, having paused during the interruption:

"Is it the Queen of Sheba's treasure that you seek?"

"Who are you?" demanded Hal.

"I am the guardian of the treasure," was the reply.

"Seems as though you've been dipping your fingers into it," remarked Jim, "by the amount of jewels you've got hung about you."

"Faith, an' that's a good sign we haven't come on a wild

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 357.

goose chase," put in O'Hara. "There'll be more where they came from."

"Who sent you on your quest, white men?" asked the self-styled guardian.

"What is that to you?" said Hal.

"But little," was the reply. "But much to you, for without my aid you will never find it. He, he, he, he!"

He finished up with his weird, cackling laugh.

"Better tell the old goat," advised Jim. "He may be on Clytemna's side, and he'll block up here by some trickery or other if we don't smooth him down."

"Clytemna never mentioned him," Hal demurred. "And by the look of him I'm more inclined to put him down as a creature in the pay of Anubis and the gang of priests."

"I've been expecting you," the cackling voice broke in again. "He, ho, he! I've been expecting you."

"That cuts both ways if he's not telling a lie," said Hal, "for the chief priest may have warned him, or Clytemna may have got word through to him about our coming. Funny she never spoke of him, though. Well, here goes to try him."

He turned to the guardian.

"What if Queen Clytemna sent us?" he asked.

"What indeed!" croaked the other. "Are there none of her own countrymen she can trust?"

"She knows best," replied Hal. "It's enough that we serve her, and are here to carry out her orders. She is the queen, and you, among others, must obey her."

"Why, yes, the queen must be obeyed," croaked the ancient. "And she needs the treasure at last. What for? For what purpose does she want it?"

"That's her business," snapped Hal Mackenzie. "Not yours, nor mine."

It was not at all likely he was going to state the purpose for which Clytemna wanted the treasure. He would not have done so to a man of assured loyalty, and the loyalty of this "guardian" was by no means assured.

"Yet it may be in some measure my business, oh, white men from—" The guardian paused, and his beady eyes seemed to twinkle with malicious amusement. "Where is it that white men come from?" he queried. "Is it from the moon or the stars?"

"If this old joker's trying to be funny," growled Sigbee, "we've got to bring him up with a round turn, sharp!"

Hal thrust the point of his spear against the ancient "humorist's" chest, though not pressing hard enough to hurt him.

"You talk too much," he said, "and you ask foolish questions. The only things you have to fix your mind upon are the queen's orders. The treasure is rightfully hers, no matter who else may lay claim to it. She requires it; that is enough. If you know how to get into the treasure-chamber, show the way. If you refuse, or if you know nothing certain, stand aside, for with or without you, we're going on to the end of our quest."

And to emphasise his words Hal put just a little heavier pressure on the spear-point, so that it pricked the flesh. The

guardian shrank away until his back was against the wall. He didn't like cold steel.

It was at this moment that a dull, subterranean rumbling was heard, and the ground shook and quivered beneath their feet.

"Look!" screamed the guardian. "The way into the treasure-chamber is open!"

### "Go Forward and Die!"

The rumbling ceased, and the earth tremor ceased, but both were sufficiently unnerving while they lasted, down in that underground tunnel. The weird-looking old guardian—Sigbee called him a witch-doctor—was in a state of the most abject terror, but he still continued to point with shaking finger to the end of the passage.

"The way into the treasure-chamber is open!" he repeated, in a quavering voice.

"Thunder, that old guy ain't playing the fool with us!" exclaimed Sigbee. "It sure is."

They had all had their backs to the end of the passage while the guardian was being questioned, and now when they turned round they saw that the wall of rock which had blocked their advance had disappeared.

They were past feeling astonishment at anything which happened in this City of Mysteries, and in silence they now pressed forward to the aperture. So far as they could judge the rock door—for that is what it was—was about three feet in thickness, and the same width and height as the tunnel.

It was probably raised by some hidden mechanism on the counter-weight principle, the pressure of a lever setting it in motion. Whether the guardian had inadvertently pressed the lever when he backed against the wall, or whether the earth tremor—caused by some subterranean explosion—had moved the lever and released the springs, they did not know, nor did they trouble their heads on the subject.

It was enough that the way was open, though at present there was very little to see ahead of them except a vast expanse of illimitable darkness.

The feeble lights from the lamps served to illuminate the gloom for a matter of twenty or thirty yards round them, yet all that was revealed was that the floor of the passage continued straight on, but instead of being level, inclined downwards at an angle of about twenty degrees.

The sides of the passage ended abruptly where the door of rock had been, and to right and left there was only empty space. The roof sloped upwards until it was lost in the gloom.

"Bedad! If this is the treasure chamber," muttered Pat O'Hara, "there ain't much to look at."

"It must be a cave," said Hal. "Anyhow, we sha'n't find out what it is by sticking here. The path seems to be safe enough."

"Are you willing to go on, white men, and brave the unknown dangers that lie in wait for you?"

It was the croaking voice of the guardian of the

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treasure which broke in upon them with the question. The mocking old wretch had recovered from his terror, and had crept up behind them.

"We're not going to turn back," replied Hal. "Lead the way."

But the guardian didn't seem to relish this proposition at all. He drew back and shook his head.

"You do not need my aid now," he said. "The secret entrance is open to you. Go forward, and gather the treasure that you seek. It is not for me to enter there."

Hal pointed to the jewels with which the guardian had decorated himself. Whenever he moved a hundred rays of light, all the colours of the rainbow, danced and glittered about him.

"You've been in the treasure chamber before," said Hal, "and you can go again. Lead on!"

He raised his spear threateningly, and the guardian required no further "persuasion." Darting a look of fear and hatred at Hal, he shuffled forward down the sloping path.

Sigsbee hung back, and made a sign to Jim.

"So far as we know," he said, "we've got to come back this way. But if we found that rock door shut on our return, it'd be middlin' awkward."

"More than middlin'," replied Jim. "But how are we going to keep it open? Got a plan?"

"Sure," returned the American. "That block of stone put the idea into my head. Lend a hand with it."

He pointed to a square piece of stone which was lying in the passage against the wall.

"What? D'you mean to put that into the opening?"

"You've hit it. Jam it close up to one side; where it won't be so easily noticed. It's granite, and fair heavy. Hustle! We don't want that old galoot to turn round and see what we're up to!"

The block of stone was as much as the two of them could lift, but they only had to carry it a short distance, and soon had it placed in the selected position.

"There!" exclaimed Sigsbee. "I guess we've fixed things so far as we're able. It's a two-man job to shift that bit of granite. If the rock door's lowered, it can't go down further than that block of stone. That'll leave a space two feet high, and anyone, barring a prize fat man in a dime museum, could crawl out through that."

"All serene, so long as there's nobody but the jewelled mummy in charge of the gate," replied Jim. "Come along. There's O'Hara yelling out to know why we're hanging back."

The Irishman's voice boomed through the cavern.

"What is ut that's kaping ye? 'Tien't dinner you're startin' on a'ready, surely, wid breakfast still sittin' on your chests? Or is ut that you've found—"

"All right, Ginger!" called out Sigsbee. "Keep your hair on. We'll tell you what detained us presently."

He and Jim hurried along and caught up their comrades, to whom they told what they had done.

"Good!" murmured Hal. "That was about the only precaution it was possible to take."

Their queer guide turned his head, and glanced at them suspiciously, but he didn't understand what was said, and couldn't see what they had seen up to.

The sloping floor went down about fifty feet, and then became level again. Now they began to see something more than a wall of darkness all around them. There were altar-like masses of rock, pillars, projections, and then a spur of rock with five points, which gave it the rough appearance of a gigantic hand.

To each of these points, or fingers, there was fastened a big torch of some sort of resinous wood. They were, of course, not alight then, but they had been lighted at some time or other, and in a very short space of time Jim and O'Hara had set them flaring once more.

Now, for the first time, the explorers obtained a full view of the place they were in—the treasure chamber they hoped. It was a vast cavern, with vaulted roof, and rows of

huge columns of white spar, which looked like crystal in the light of the flaring torches. It was one of Nature's cathedrals, but of a size never so much as dreamed of in one built by man. They were as near as possible standing in the centre of it, and at the far end they saw a grim-looking carving, which was not calculated to liven up their spirits to any extent.

It was a skeleton, carved out of the white spar, and showing up in every detail against the dark background. It was about twelve feet in height.

"Cheerful sort of companion that fellow," said Hal, laughing, "if one was shut up here alone with him."

"I wouldn't mind betting," replied Sigsbee, "that punishments were carried out that way sometimes in the old days. Reckon it'd send some men mad to be left here for a week with that blame, bony horror glowerin' at them all the time. But where's the treasure? I was expectin' to see it spread around some, so we could go and bury our arms in it up to the elbows. Yet there ain't so much as a single diamond winkin' at me."

O'Hara turned angrily on their guide.

"You thafe av the world," he cried, shaking his huge fist at him, "where'd you stafe thim jools from what you've got hangin' from all the knobs av your body? Be the mortal! Av—"

"Talk to him in his own language, you chump!" interposed Jim. "What's the use of yelling to him in Irish?"

So Pat O'Hara, in his best Shoon, demanded to be told at once where the treasure was to be found.

The guardian gave vent to one of his unpleasant, screeching laughs.

"He, he, he! It is not in this cave you will find it," he croaked. "And I am not the only guardian of the treasure. I am old and feeble, but there is one"—he pointed to the skeleton—"who, though older than I, is strong—strong—strong. For what is stronger than Death?"

With his skinny arms outstretched, his bald head, and yellow, wrinkled face thrust forward, and the jewels gleaming about him, he made a fearsome figure.

Three of the adventurers, cool and courageous as they were, could not repress a slight shiver of apprehension at the old wretch's words and gestures. They were seized with an unaccountable presentiment of coming disaster.

But Jim Holsworth was not so impressed. Nothing could cast down his buoyant spirits.

"Cut out all that sort of stuff," he said, "because you're only wasting time. We're not scared by it. Talk sense. Tell us in plain language what we've got to do next."

The guardian looked at Jim curiously. He couldn't quite make him out. Once more he waved an arm towards the skeleton.

"Go and read what is written," he said.

They all walked forward until they came close up to the carved monstrosity. Then they saw a bronze tablet at the base of the figure, on which were engraved some words in Arabic characters.

"This is where you come in, Hal," said Jim. "You're the only one who can read that writing."

Hal bent forward, read the inscription, and translated it. This was what he read:

"If you go forward, you die! If you go backward, you die!"

That was all.

"A choice of two evils," said Jim. "Well, we'll go forward—and die—if that's to be the end of it. That is, if the treasure isn't in this cave. For we're not going back without it."

"Well said!" exclaimed Hal.

And Sigsbee and O'Hara echoed the exclamation.

"Well said!"

(Another long instalment of this stirring yarn will appear in next Wednesday's GEM. To avoid risk of disappointment, you should order your copy without delay.)

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# THIS WEEK'S CHAT



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For Next Wednesday —

## "THE FOUR CONSPIRATORS!"

By Martin Clifford.

Among the many rousing stories of school life which Martin Clifford has provided for readers of "The Gem" Library, next week's magnificent story will take a high place. Crooke, Levison, Mellish, and Gore—a precious quartette of cad—put their heads together and evolve a tremendous "whoose" for bringing about a bitter quarrel between Tom Merry & Co. and Gordon Gay & Co. of the Grammar School. At first the scheme works wonderfully, and there are many battles royal between the rival schools; but "truth will out," and eventually

### "THE FOUR CONSPIRATORS"

are considerably alarmed to find their precious plot comes tumbling about their ears.

Those readers who have latterly complained of "too much Talbot," and who have clamoured for a story reviving the old feud with the Grammarians, will find next Wednesday's story meets their wishes in every way.

### OUR GREAT INTERNATIONAL MATCH.

The stupendous contest between the nations, to see which has the largest following of loyal readers, has proved a striking success in every way. No words of mine can adequately describe how pleased I am with the great rally which surged like a mighty wave through the countries concerned.

Ireland set the ball rolling by giving "Kildare for St. Jim's," a gigantic reception; Scotland was quick to do the same when the following Wednesday brought forth "A Son of Scotland"; plucky little Wales saw that the story of Fatty Wynn was spread broadcast throughout the country; while Mother England, proud to acknowledge Tom Merry as her hero, rose to the occasion in spirited fashion, and literally bought up every available copy of "Gem" No. 383.

Most of my chums ere, I expect, on tenterhooks to know the result of our colossal contest. As soon as my publishing office has supplied me with the figures representing the increased sales in the various countries, I shall be happy to announce the full result on this page.

### A SCHOOL STORY OF SPECIAL INTEREST.

Opinions will differ as to which is the finest story of school life Martin Clifford has ever written, but to my mind no story by the popular "Gem" author can compare, so far as dramatic effect and sustained interest are concerned, with

#### "REDEEMING THE PAST!"

which appears in this Friday's issue of our companion paper, "The Penny Popular."

I will not enlarge on the magnificence of the main theme in the story, or I should let my pen run away with me, and fill more space than I have at my disposal. One thing I will say, however, is that the last chapter of "Redeeming the Past!" is the finest piece of descriptive writing I have ever read.

Acquainted as I am with Martin Clifford's style, yet there was something about this particular story which held me spell-bound and fascinated. I certainly advise all my "Gemite" chums to get a copy of this week's "Penny Popular," and read the matchless story for themselves.

### ARMS OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

I feel sure that my vast schoolboy public will approve of the innovation of a new feature on the cover of the "Gem."

Each week the arms of one of our famous and flourishing public schools will appear.

Apart from the fact that these designs are both interesting and instructive, I know they will be greatly appreciated by those Gemites who are at the schools concerned; and I confidently look to these readers to tell their chums of our novel little feature.

### LETTERS FROM LOYAL CHUMS.

I wish this week to take an opportunity of thanking the following Gemites for the extremely kind and thoughtful letters and suggestions they have been good enough to send me of late. I am deeply touched by their staunch devotion to "The Gem" Library, and their good wishes are cordially reciprocated.

"A. B. C.," "A Cheshire Reader," A. C. K., "A Constant Reader" (Doncaster), "A Country Reader" (near Burnley), "A Faithful Reader" (Dollart), "A Faithful Girl Reader" (Swansea), "Africander" (Transvaal), "A Gem Reader" (London, W.C.), "A Girl Chum" (South Kensington), "A Girl Lover of the Gem" (Barnmoosey), "A Loyal Reader" (Cairo), "An Australian Girl," "A Scotch Lassie," "A South African" (Johannesburg), "A Staffs Reader" (Stoke-on-Trent), F. E. Bridge (West Drayton), Agnes Brown (Peckham), Daisy Barrows (Edmonton), Sam Chapman (Manchester), A. S. Cole (Leightonstone), "Conjure" (Walworth), W. E. Daniels, Jean Dupont (Sale), E. L. West (Hoathley), Elsie (Victoria), Ethel, Marie, Canuck and Tommy (Canada), Percy R. Forge (Scarborough), G. C. H. K. (Sheffield), G. C. Gallop (Victoria), G. R. S. M. (Rhyll), Gwendoline Gray (U. S. A.), G. W. B. (Blackheath), Cyril A. Gibby (Hornsey), Miss M. Greene (Queensland), G. Gregg (Northampton), H. B. (Mossley), John Harvey, Nellie Hastings (Leicester), Winnie Hitchin (West Bridgford), W. Hobell (Worcester), H. Hodgson (Maidenhead), Clifford Hunt (Bath), H. S. H. (Darlington), "Inquisitive" (South Hackney), H. Insley (Smeethwick), J. M. H. (near Leeds), John Jeffries, J. M. (Montreal), A. E. Johnson (Birmingham), Bert Jones (Pontypool), Bert Jones (Wolverhampton), "Journalist" (Britton Ferry), W. Kingston (Victoria), N. Kirkpatrick (Whitby Bay), Norman Kite (Birmingham), L. A. C. (Aberdeen), L. G. McC. (Adelaide), L. S. McC. (Adelaide), L. S. (Birmingham), W. G. Lane, Private Percy V. Lock (Lancs), W. H. Loveband and M. C. Lewis (Winchester), Molly McKenzie (Auckland), Maie and Gladys (Dudley), A. Mack (Quebec), "Manicurian," Jack Martin (Carshalton), J. W. Mitchell (Nairs), Marjorie Morton (Birmingham), W. R. Murdoch (Belfast), Frank Nash (Brockley), "Nico" (Staffs), Chas. Nye (Wood Green), Kathleen Paddock (Johannesburg), R. Penney (Worcester), E. Pomeroy (Hammer-smith), T. W. Purdin (Linthorpe), W. C. Radford (Dalston), C. Rayner (Clapton Park), R. L. (Wigan), Vivian Ross (Johannesburg), Edward Reader (Stoke Newington), E. Sammel (Hamptstead), "Satisfied 2" (St. John's Wood), S. C. A. (Maidstone), A. Simpson, "Six Schoolgirls" (Newcastle-on-Tyne), Ernest Smith (South Ealing), Norman M. Snodden (Auckland), J. Staveley (Bridlington), "Solcott" (Cardiff), "The Oldest Reader" (Blackpool), "The Terrible Fear" (Notting Hill), "Three Loyal Supporters," "The Twins" (Wolverhampton), Cyril J. Thomas (New Tredegar), "Tommy Atkins" (Winchester), "Two Girl Gemites" (Kilburn), Dorothy Walker and Chums (Birmingham), J. H. Walter (Bridgwater), "Wattle" (Queensland), Roland Webb (Pimbury Park), Chris Williamson (Manchester), Bugler D. Wolfe (B. E. F.), W. J. Wright (Pimlico), W. W. D. (Darlington), and "X. Y. Z."

YOUR EDITOR.

# THE BOYS' FRIEND



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## "THE OUTCAST OF THE FOURTH!"



*A Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. and the Chums of Rookwood, in*

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Doctor: "You are suffering from a complication of diseases, sir—at least six."

Patient: "I suppose you'll allow me a discount on half a dozen, doctor!"—Sent in by Miss M. Heares, Dulwich Hill, Sydney, N.S.W.

## CHARITY.

Tramp (knocking at back door): "Kind lidy, spare a poor man a copper to buy some bread."

Lady: "I haven't any money to give you."

Tramp: "Oh, lidy, I am so hungry I could nibble this 'cro grass!"

Lady: "If that's all you want, my man, I'll give you permission to go round to the front. It grows longer there."—Sent in by Walter Saunders, Birmingham.

## HIS VOCATION.

Fond Father: "If that boy of mine has any particular bent, I must say I can't discover what it is."

Philosopher: "What experiments have you made to find out?"

Fond Father: "Very thorough ones. I gave him a toy printing-press, a steam-engine, and a box of paints, as well as a chest of tools, and a lot of other things, to find out whether his tastes were literary, mechanical, artistic, commercial, or otherwise."

Philosopher: "And now I know no more than I did at first."

Fond Father: "What did he do with them?"

Philosopher: "Smashed them all up."  
"Oh, then you can bet he's going to be a furniture-remover."—Sent in by W. Lowe, Blackburn.

## SO SHOULD WE!

At a recent trial a lawyer endeavoured to obtain from a witness an illustration of what he thought was meant by the term "absent-mindedness."

"Wal," said the witness, who was an American, "I should say that a man who thought he'd left his watch at home, and took it out of his pocket to find out whether he had sufficient time to return home for it—I should reckon that that man was a little absent-minded."—Sent in by R. Taylor, Westminster, S.W.

## A SURE SIGN.

Mistress: "Bridget, has Johnnie come home from school yet?"

Bridget: "Yes, ma'am."

Mistress: "Have you seen him?"

Bridget: "No, ma'am."

Mistress: "Then how do you know he is at home?"

Bridget: (confidently): "Cause the cat's hidin' neath the kitchen stove, ma'am."—Sent in by A. Childs, Cefn Coed, South Wales.

## GO TALL HE WANTED.

Small Boy (handing shopman large tin): "A pint of green paint, please."

Shopman (handing back the tin containing the paint): "One shilling and sixpence, please."

Small Boy: "Father will pay you to-morrow."

Shopman (taking back the tin and emptying it): "We don't give credit here."

Small Boy (examining emptied tin): "All right, thank you; there is enough on the sides!"—Sent in by W. Hazard, Sandealand.

## PUZZLING.

Tommy (watching soprano singing and conductor waving baton): "Ma, what's that long-haired man hitting her with that stick for?"

Mother: "Sh! He's not hitting her. Be quiet."

Tommy: "Then what's she screaming for?"—Sent in by P. Murray, Perth, Scotland.

## QUITE UNDERSTOOD.

Father: "Pluck, my boy—pluck first and last—that is the one essential to success in business!"

Young Hopeful: "Oh, of course, dad, I quite understand that! The trouble is finding someone to pluck."—Sent in by C. E. Brown, Ipswich.

## A BAD BARGAIN.

Recruiting Sergeant (noticing broad-shouldered young man sitting at a table in a restaurant): "Why not join the Colours, my man?"

Young man: "I would willingly do so if they would take me," the young man answered.

Recruiting-Sergeant: "Very well, here's the shilling."

The young man paid his bill with the coin.

"Hurry up!" said the sergeant. "We haven't much time."

"Just half a tick, man, while I find my crutch," said the prospective recruit.

Collapse of sergeant.—Sent in by C. Pendgrass, Stratford, E.

## THE WITNESS SCORED!

Counsel (groffly): "People turn pale when they faint, don't they?"

Witness (meekly): "No, not always."

Counsel: "Did you ever hear of a case of fainting where the person did not turn pale?"

Witness: "Yes, sir."

Counsel: "When?"

Witness: "About a year ago."

Counsel (sternly): "Who was it?"

Witness (smiling): "A negro, sir!"—Sent in by W. Metcalfe, Cardiff.

## INDEPENDENT.

A little boy of twelve had started work for the first time. When the week-end came, he went home full of glee with his wage in his hand.

Calling his mother from the kitchen, he tossed the half-crown in the air, saying:

"Now, mother, what would you like me to do? Shall I pay you so much a week, or shall I keep myself?"—Sent in by Jack Brain, Stockton, near Rugby.

## "EAR, EAR!"

An acquaintance of a Mr. Harrison met him one day with the question:

"Ow is your 'ealth to-day, Mr. 'Arrison?"

"My name is not 'Arrison," said Mr. H.  
"Well," indignantly replied his friend, "if a haich and a hay, two hies, a hi, a hess, a ho, and a hen don't spell 'Arrison, what on hearth do they spell?"—Sent in by G. Hargreaves, Manchester.

As the "GEM" Storyette Competition has proved so popular, it has been decided to run this novel feature in conjunction with our new Companion Paper,

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