

13 JUNIORS OF ST. JIM'S ON TOUR

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VOL. 3
No. 71.

1^d



SENT TO COVENTRY.

Grand Long
Complete Tale by

MARTIN
CLIFFORD



D'ARCY LOSES HIS HAT AND—

"You uttar wottans!" exclaimed D'Arcy, clutching at his hat and tearing frantically after the tandem. "I'll give you a feahful thwashing."

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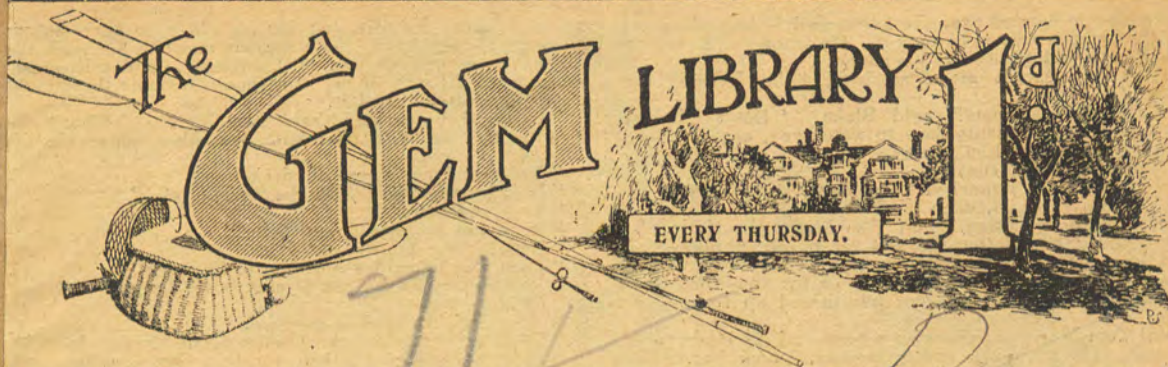
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By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Gussy's Brother is Sent to Coventry.

"Gussy! Where's Gussy?"

Tom Merry, of the Shell Form at St. Jim's, put his head in at the door of Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage. There was a letter in Tom Merry's hand, and a smile of anticipation upon his face.

"Gussy!"

There were four fellows in the study, and three of them looked round as Tom Merry spoke. The three were Blake, Herries, and Digby. The fourth, who did not look round, was trying on a new necktie before the study glass, and this was far too important a business for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to allow it to be interrupted.

"Gussy! Gussy!"

"Bai Jove, I weally think this will do, deah boys!" said D'Arcy, in a tone of satisfaction. "It's awfully important to get a necktie that weally suits you—quite as important as the cut of a fellow's waistcoat."

"I say, Gussy—"

"You see, the pwedominant colour in a necktie ought to repeat the colour in a fellow's eyes," said D'Arcy. "If a necktie matches the colour of the eyes, it is genewally all right. It's a most important point."

"I say, Gussy—Gussy—Gus!"

"Upon the whole, I think this necktie will do," said D'Arcy, addressing his grinning chums, and apparently quite unconscious of the presence of Tom Merry in the doorway. "What do you think, Blake?"

"I think you're an ass, old chap," said Blake affably.

"Weally, Blake—"

"No extra charge for candour. Can't you hear Tom Merry bawling at you like a bargee?"

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, glancing round to the door at last. "I am sowwy, Tom Mewwy, but you have caught me at a wathah inopportune moment. I have had these neckties sent down fwom Bond Street to-day, and I have to weturn those that do not suit. It is wathah bad form to keep a twadesman waitin' for the weturn of goods sent on appwoval, and so I weally cannot be intewwupted just now."

"You unutterable ass—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"The next time there's a letter for you, you won't catch me bringing it upstairs in a hurry," said Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! Is that a letter for me?"

"Yes, ass."

"I am extwemely obliged to you, deah boy, and undah the circs. I will ovahlook that wathah oppwobwious expwession. Pway hand me the lettah."

ANOTHER DOUBLE-LENGTH TALE OF TOM MERRY NEXT THURSDAY.
No. 71 (New Series).

Tom Merry handed over the letter, and D'Arcy slung the necktie over his arm as he took it. He jammed his eyeglass into his eye and glanced at his chums.

"Will you excuse me, deah boys, while I wead this lettah?"

"Certainly, old man!" said Blake. "Don't mind us. It's as good as a galanty-show to watch you, any day."

D'Arcy looked at him fixedly.

"Upon my word, Blake—"

"I'm waiting," remarked Tom Merry.

"You needn't wait, deah boy."

"That's all you know," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "I didn't bring that letter upstairs on purely philanthropic principles. There's a famine in cash in my study, and I was going to offer to change the fiver for you—that is, of course, if your noble governor has turned up trumps this time."

And Tom Merry sat down on a corner of the study table, to wait. He sat down rather heavily, which was rather unfortunate, for Digby and Herries were writing out German impots, and the bump on the table scattered ink from their pens over the sheets, as well as zigzagging lines on the paper. There was a howl at once.

"You utter ass!" howled Digby. "Do you think I can show this to Schneider now?"

"Oh, that's all right!"

"All right? Look at it!"

"Well, that last scratch looks a little spider-leggy," admitted Tom Merry. "But it only looks a little more German than the rest, you know."

"Bai Jove!"

"Hallo! Is it a fiver?"

"Certainly not!"

"A tenner, then?"

"Wats! This lettah is not fwom my governah, it's fwom my bwothah," said D'Arcy, as he slit the envelope with a paper-knife. "I haven't looked into it yet. Pewwaps there may be a postal-ordah in it; and if so, I shall be vewy happy to make you a loan, Tom Mewwy."

"Your brother!" said Digby. "You don't mean young Wally, of the Third?"

"Wally would be hardly likely to write to me fwom the Third Form-woom, Dig. This lettah is fwom my eldah bwothah."

"I didn't know you had such an article," said Dig.

"What use do you put it to?"

"Pway don't be an ass, Dig. I am quite certain that I have mentioned Lord Conway to you. I was thinkin' of goin' on a huntin' twip to Canadah with him, if I could get permish from the Head, and takin' you fellows."

Blake threw his arms round D'Arcy's neck.

"I always loved you, Gus," he sobbed.

"You uttah ass—"

"My heart yearned for you the moment you came to the school."

"You feahful duffah—"

"And now you're my bonny boy, and I can't let you out of my sight," said Blake tenderly. "When is the trip to Canadah coming off?"

"It is not comin' off at all."

Blake released his chum.

"Well, you—you welsher! Do you mean to say that you've cajoled me into that touching display of affection for nothing?" he demanded.

"I wegard you as an uttah ass, and if you wumple my jacket again, I shall have no resource but to give you a feahful thwashin'. You have cwumpled this new necktie, too. The twip to Canadah has been put off, owin' to Lord Conway takin' up the Tewwitowial business. He's an officah in the local corps, and is givin' lots of time to it, partly because it's the duty of a D'Arcy to stand up for his country in the time of dangah, and partly, as Voltaire says, 'Pour encourager les autres.'"

"Pour encourager les autres," said Blake dizzily. "Fancy Gussy quoting Voltaire at a chap in a friendly talk! Why can't you say 'to encourage the others' in English?"

"Because I pwefer to wendah a quotation in the original," said D'Arcy, with dignity. "But if you will wing off for a minute or two, I will look at Conway's lettah."

"Go ahead!" said Tom Merry. "If there's a postal-ordah, put my name down for it."

D'Arcy took out the letter, and unfolded it, and glanced over it. An expression of surprise crossed his face, and he uttered an exclamation.

"Bai Jove!"

"Nothing wrong, I hope?" said Blake.

"Bai Jove! He's been sent to Coventry!"

"Eh! Who has?"

"My bwothah Conway."

The juniors looked serious. They did not know much of the New House, and they seemed to be going round the

about military matters, but for an officer to be "sent to Coventry," they knew, was a serious matter. Although the chums were fond enough of "rotting" their aristocratic chum when all was serene, in a time of trouble they would never have dreamed of it.

"I say, that's rotten!" said Tom Merry. "What's the row? Has he fallen out with the other officers in his battalion?"

"Not that I am aware of, deah boy."

"Is it in connection with the Territorials?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What has he been doing, then?"

"Nothin' that I know of."

"Then why have they sent him to Coventry?"

"To select cycles for the Cyclist Scout Corps."

"Eh!"

D'Arcy looked round in surprise.

"To select cycles for the Cyclist Scout Corps," he said. "Nothin' surpwisin' in that, surely. My bwothah is a wippin' amateur cyclist, and what he doesn't know about machines isn't weally worth knowin', you know. It is perfectly natuwal that he should be sent to Coventry to select the machines."

"You ass!" roared Tom Merry. "I thought—"

"I wufuse to be called an ass."

"I thought you meant that he has been sent to Coventry."

"So I did—so he has."

"Ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"You shrieking duffer!" said Blake, in disgust. "I thought you meant he was sent to Coventry—cut, you ass! Not spoken to."

"My bwothah Conway would hardly be likely to be sent to Coventry in that sense," said D'Arcy, with dignity. "I wegard that as a wiculous misappwehension."

"So Conway has gone to Coventry to select bicycles for the Cyclist Scout Corps," said Tom Merry. "Well, I don't see what you wanted to be surprised about it for, if he's only been sent to Coventry in that sense."

"Yaas, but he wants me to go."

"Oh! And us, I suppose," said Blake.

"Well, he says, if the Head will permit it, he would like me to go there while he is there, as it would be a pleasant little run for me, and it's a fine place to see," said D'Arcy. "But the chief weason is that my Cousin Ethel is goin'. She is goin' to have her governess to look aftah her, certainly, but the company of an ancient and respectable governess is not exhillawatin', howevah useful; and as my bwothah Conway will be pweety busy the whole time, he thinks it would be bettah if I were there. He says that if I can bwing a few fwends, the more the mewwiah."

"Gussy, your brother Conway is a brick."

"Yaas, I have always wegard him as wathah a bwick, deah boys. I have always tweated him with the wespect due to an eldah bwothah, although my younghah bwothah Wally nevah weally tweats me like that. Of course, it all depends on gettin' the Head's permish whethah we can go or not. I have no doubt he will allow me to go, as it is necessary for me to escort Cousin Ethel, but about you fellows—"

"We shall have to think about it, and find a way," said Blake. "When are you to go?"

"To-morrow. Conway has enclosed a fivah for expenses."

"How many fares can you pay out of a fiver?" said Tom Merry. "That's really the question to be settled."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"There's us three," said Blake meditatively. "Lemme see, shall I take any of these Shell-fish, or sha'n't I?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"That's all right," said Tom Merry; "Manners and Lowther and I are coming. We should be nervous about you if you went alone."

Jack Blake snorted.

"Only, will the Head give permission?" said Digby. "That's the point to settle, before we make up the party."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And upon that point the juniors set their wits to work in earnest.

CHAPTER 2.

D'Arcy Gets in the Way.

GET out of the way, there!" It was a shout on the cycle track at St. Jim's, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was strolling across the track in a leisurely manner, turned his head calmly, and looked at the shouter.

A tandem machine was bearing down upon him, with a long-legged junior working away in front, and a shorter but equally sturdy fellow behind. They were Piggins and Ke of the New House, and they seemed to be going round the



Biff! A Latin dictionary flew through the air and caught Skimpole on the chest. He went over backwards and sat down.

track for a wager, to judge by the pace they were putting on.

"Ting-ting-ting!"

"Get off there!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood in the middle of the track and adjusted his eyeglass.

"I uttahn wefuse to get out of the way," he said. "I wegard you—"

The tandem swerved and escaped a collision by a couple of inches, and Figgins shook a fist wildly at the swell of St. Jim's as he passed.

"You uttahn ass!" he roared.

"You shrieking duffer!" yelled Kerr.

"Weally, you wottahs—"

But the tandem was gone.

D'Arcy gazed after it through his monocle, with indignation in his face.

"Bai Jove! That sort of thing thwows me into quite a fluttah!" he murmured. "I shall certainly thwash Figgins and Kerr when I meet them again."

"Hi, hi, hi!"

The swell of St. Jim's looked round.

Harry Noble and Clifton Dane, on another tandem, were racing up, evidently in pursuit of Figgins and Kerr—or else

Figgins and Kerr were in pursuit of them and well behind. Noble, the Australian—more commonly known as "Kangaroo"—was working away like a steam-engine, well backed up by Clifton Dane.

"Hi, hi, hi!" roared Kangaroo.

"Clear the track!" yelled Clifton Dane.

"Bai Jove! I weally—"

Whiz! went the tandem, past the swell of St. Jim's, and as it passed, Kangaroo's hand shot out, and D'Arcy's silk hat was knocked off backwards.

"You uttahn wottah!" exclaimed D'Arcy, clutching at his hat. "Bai Jove! I'll give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laugh floated back as the cyclists dashed on. D'Arcy picked up his hat—it was ruffled and dusty. He proceeded to polish it with a silk handkerchief, and as he did so, Figgins and Kerr came whirling round again.

"Buzz off there, ass!" shouted Figgins.

"I wefuse to—ow!"

A push on the chest as the tandem went by made D'Arcy sit down. He jumped up like a jack-in-the-box, and tore frantically after the tandem, bent on vengeance. He might as well have chased an express train. A roar of laughter drew his attention to the fact that several juniors had

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY'S TRIUMPH."

A Tale of Tom Merry and Harry Noble, the Australian Boy.

gathered to watch him, and he ceased running, very red and breathless, and came off the track. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the chums of the Shell, greeted him with a roar of laughter.

"I see no reason for this wibald mewwiment," said D'Arcy. "I have been tweated with gwoss diswespect."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Kangaroo!" shouted Tom Merry, as the Cornstalk's tandem came round again. "Go it! You're winning!"

The Australian grinned as he shot by. D'Arcy dusted his hat and jammed it on his head.

"I am goin' to give those wottahs a feaful thwashin' shortly," he remarked.

"My dear ass—"

"I wefuse to be called an ass."

"But it's a race," explained Tom Merry. "You've nearly interfered with a race. Do you call yourself a sportsman?"

"Bai Jove, you know, I didn't know it was a wace!" said D'Arcy, his expression changing at once. "I wegarded it as cheek on the part of those New House boundahs to tell me to get out of the way."

"You might have mucked up a sporting event," said Tom Merry solemnly. "We should have had to post you up in the junior clubs as no sportsman."

"Pway don't wot, deah boy? I shall expwess my wegwet to the fellows when the wace is over." D'Arcy clapped his hands as the cycles swept round. "Bwavo! Bwavo! Which is ahead, Tom Mewwy?"

"Ha, ha! Noble's ahead, of course; he ought to be, as it's Shell fellows against the Fourth."

"Bai Jove, I don't know!" said D'Arcy, jealous for the honour of his Form. "I think Figgins and Kerr have a chance, though they are New House wottahs. How many laps?"

"Six—and Noble's half the distance ahead."

"Go it, Figgins! Buck up, Fourth Form!" roared Jack Blake, arriving on the scene. "Don't let the measly Shell-fish beat you. Put it on!"

"Go it, Kangaroo!" roared the chums of the Shell in unison. "Lick those Fourth-Form kids hollow! Go it!"

"Fifth lap," said Tom Merry. "Cornstalk's got a good fifty yards in hand. The kids won't be able to crawl over that."

"Rats to you!" said Fatty Wynn, the Welsh partner in the famous firm of Figgins & Co., coming up at a run with a basket in his hand. "I didn't know they had started. I got delayed in the tuckshop—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I just stayed to have a little bite," said Fatty Wynn, rather aggressively. "I get so jolly hungry this July weather. Go it, Figgy!" he went on, as the cyclists swept by. "I've got a jolly nice snack here for you when you've finished—cold sausage and ham."

But Figgins did not hear or heed. He was putting all his beef into it now. So was Kerr; whose muscular, wiry legs were working away like piston-rods. With their teeth set and their faces hard, they dashed by at top speed.

"They're gaining!" said Fatty Wynn, absent-mindedly plunging his hand into the little basket, and taking out one of the sausage-and-ham sandwiches he had brought for the gallant riders. "They'll beat the Shell-fish!"

"Rats!" said the Terrible Three together.

"Buck up, Figgins! Put your beef into it!"

"Yaas, wathah! Go it, deah boy!"

Noble and Clifton Dane swept round on the last lap. Figgins and Kerr worked away like demons to gain ground, and they gained, hand over hand. But the advantage on the side of the Cornstalk was too great. They shot past the post while the New House chums laboured twenty yards in the rear. There was a ringing cheer from Tom Merry & Co.

Fatty Wynn, who had been absently eating sandwiches all the time, grunted. Figgins and Kerr slackened down and jumped off, and rushed towards the group of juniors. They shook a pair of big fists in the face of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"You ass!" roared Figgins.

"You dummy!" yelled Kerr.

"Weally, deah boys—"

"You lost us nearly a second by sticking on the track like a howling idiot."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "A second wouldn't have made much difference. You're licked to the wide, my sons."

"Bosh!"

"I am extwemely sowwy I got in the way, deah boys," said D'Arcy, with dignity. "I was not aware that it was a wace. Had I been aware that it was a wace, I should have been extwemely careful to keep off the twack."

"You howling duffer!"

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NEXT
THURSDAY;

"TOM MERRY'S TRIUMPH."

A Tale of Tom Merry and Harry
Noble, the Austre—

"I wefuse to be addressed as a howlin' duffah. I have expwessed my wegwet, as one gentleman to anothah, and I think that ought to be satisfactory."

"It's all right, kids," said Noble, coming up with a face like a poppy from his exertions. "You did jolly well, Figgins, and it was a close thing. Don't stand about here catching cold."

"I've got a snack here, Figgy," said Fatty Wynn consolingly. "I've got a—a—a—" He broke off, and looked into the basket, and at half-a-sandwich in his fingers. The basket was empty, and that half-sandwich was all that remained. In the excitement of the moment, Fatty Wynn had unconsciously eaten the whole of them. "I—I—I—heh! Come in and have tea, old chap!"

Figgins grunted and turned away. D'Arcy made a step after him and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Weally, Figgins, deah boy; I am awfully sowwy—"

Figgins grinned.

"Oh, it's all right, Gus! I suppose you can't help being an ass."

"Oh, weally—"

And Figgins, followed by Kerr, wheeled his machine away. Arthur Augustus looked rather severely at his grinning chums.

"I fail to see any reason for this diswespectful gwinning," he remarked. "It was weally a most unfortunate occuwence. I owe Figgins some slight wepawation, and I shall twy to awwange it for him to come to Coventry with me."

"Hallo, what's that?" asked Noble. "You're going to Coventry?"

"Yaas, wathah. My bwothah Conway has been sent to Coventry to select machines for the Cyclist Scout Corps, and I am goin' to pay him a visit there, deah boy."

"Good! I'll come with you."

"Weally Kangawoo—"

"That's all right," said Kangaroo blandly. "Don't trouble to thank me. I shall be glad to come."

"I was not goin' to—"

"The place is worth seeing, too; one of the oldest cities in England, and the seat of the cycle and motor industries," said Kangaroo. "As a stranger in the land, I want to see as much as possible of your manners and customs in this little country. Let me see—it was at Coventry that Lady Godiva godived, wasn't it?"

"Yaas, but—"

"And Peeping Tom, too. I know the yarn. I should like to see the place, first-rate."

"Yaas, but—"

"Good! It's settled."

And Kangaroo walked away with his machine, apparently not hearing D'Arcy's attempted protests. D'Arcy looked after him through his monocle.

"Bai Jove! Is it settled?" he said. "I wegard that chap as a boundah. There is nothin' whatevah to laugh at, Tom Mewwy."

CHAPTER 3.

Harry Noble, Hero!

HARRY NOBLE leaned back against the old grey stone of the gateway at St. Jim's, with his hands thrust deep into his trousers pockets, and a thoughtful frown on his face. His chums, Bernard Glyn and Clifton Dane, looked at him curiously, and waited for him to speak. Dane had been about to propose a cycle run round the woods; for, with the lengthening of the summer days locking-up was growing late at St. Jim's, and there was ample time for a good long spin after school. But it was evident to both of them that there was something working in the mind of the Australian junior. He was gnawing his upper lip, a sure sign with him that he was thinking deeply.

"Well, what is it?" asked Bernard Glyn at last.

"Eh?" said Kangaroo, with a start. "What's what?"

"You've been making a face like a gargyle for three minutes fifteen secs," said Glyn, looking at his watch. "Is it a new kind of facial gymnastics, or have you been thinking?"

"Thinking," said the Cornstalk. "It's about Gussy. His elder brother has been sent to Coventry."

"Phew! What's he been doing?"

"To select machines for some Territorial corps or other."

"Oh!"

"And Gussy's going to run down and see him."

"Lucky young beggar!" said Glyn.

"I'm going with him."

"Oh! He's asked you?"

"No; I asked myself—same thing, you know. I'm going with him. I can settle it with Gussy when I get time, but there's the Head. I can't bolt, as young Wally did once, from what I hear; it's not in the game. But I must go."

The question is, how to get the Head's permission for a run to the Midlands?"

Clifton Dane shook his head.

"Not easy," he said. "It will mean a couple of days, I suppose, and cutting classes. It would be jolly to go, but—Hullo! What's that?"

Clatter, clatter, clatter!

The boys looked along the white, dusty road that ran past the school gates. A trap was dashing towards them at full speed, with a girl sitting alone in it, and holding the reins. Bernard Glyn uttered an exclamation.

"That's the governor's trap, and, by George, that's my sister Edith! What on earth is she driving at that rate for?"

Kangaroo's sunburnt cheek paled a little.

"My hat, the horse is running away!"

"Phew!"

Clatter, clatter, clatter!

There was no doubt about it. The animal had the bit between his teeth, and was dashing along at a terrific pace, and the girl, with a face like chalk, was striving in vain to control it.

Glyn went deadly white.

"Good heavens, my sister—"

Kangaroo sprang out into the road.

"Get back!" shrieked Glyn. "You'll be killed! Oh—"

There was no time for more; the maddened horse was dashing past. Swift and straight as an arrow Kangaroo sprang at his head, and his grip fastened upon the bit like the grip of a vice. Down came the tossing head—down, down—with the weight of the sturdy Cornstalk upon it; but still the horse dashed on, dragging the boy in its career along the dusty road.

It was a terrible strain upon the boy, but he clung on like grim death. And the pace slackened, the wild clatter died away, and the animal, trembling in every limb, drew to a halt at last.

Glyn and Clifton Dane were dashing after the trap, but they were far behind. Kangaroo, covered with dust, and with a streak of blood on his forehead—from a blow received but unfelt in the wild excitement—stood at the horse's head, still with an iron grip upon the rein.

"It's all right, Miss Glyn!" he said. He would have raised his hat, but it lay in the dust far back in the road. His voice was shaking with the excitement, though he tried to render it calm. "It's all right. He's quiet."

"Oh, thank you!" said the girl, in shivering tones. "You have saved my life, I think." She descended from the trap. "But you are hurt."

Kangaroo passed his hand across his forehead.

"It's nothing—only a scratch."

"Let me look at it."

She wiped the dust from the cut. Fortunately it was, as Kangaroo had said, merely a scratch. But Edith Glyn bound it up with her own handkerchief as carefully as if it had been a dangerous wound. Bernard Glyn and Clifton Dane came up breathless.

"Oh, I thought you were a goner, sis!" said Glyn gaspingly, his face very white in spite of his exertions. "Kangaroo, old son, you're a giddy hero!"

"Oh, shut up," said Noble; "don't be an ass!"

"So you are," said Clifton Dane, "a giddy hero, and no mistake."

"Look here," said Kangaroo ferociously, "if you begin that piffle—"

"All St. Jim's will be beginning it soon, when we tell them," grinned Glyn. "Do you think you're going to save my sister's life and nothing said about it?"

"If you say a word I'll—"

"You can jolly well bet I will. I'll tell everybody in the school, from Binks the boots up to Mr. Railton."

"No need to tell Mr. Railton," said a deep voice; "he knows already. Noble, you are a hero, if ever there was one. You must have had a great fright, Miss Glyn."

It was Mr. Railton, the House-master of the School House at St. Jim's. He had just stepped over the stile from the footpath into the road. He raised his hat to Miss Glyn, who had now almost recovered herself. Edith Glyn was a courageous girl, but for the moment her perilous adventure had blanched her cheeks.

"Yes," she said, in a low voice, "I was very frightened. A motor-car startled my horse, and he bolted suddenly before I was aware, and—and I think I should have been killed but for this brave lad."

"I saw it all. I think it very likely. Will you allow me to drive you home, Miss Glyn? You are not in a state to drive now."

"Thank you very much!" The girl gave Kangaroo her hand. "I shall not forget this," she said. "You might have been killed—trampled on. The wonder is that you are not. I shall never forget this."

"Nor I, Noble," said Mr. Railton.

He handed the girl into the trap, and drove away, leaving the three juniors standing in the road. Harry Noble looked very red and uncomfortable. He jammed his hands into his pockets, and almost glared at his chums.

"Now look here," he said seriously, "since we were shoved together into the end study they call us the New Firm, and we've pulled together pretty well so far. But I warn you that there will be trouble in the end study if a word more is said about this rot."

"If you call it rot saving my sister's life—"

"I don't mean that, but there's not going to be any jaw on the subject. I only did what either of you fellows would have done if you'd been quick enough."

"But we weren't. You're a giddy—"

"Hero!" said Clifton Dane.

Kangaroo took his hands out of his pockets. He closed one fist, and held it up to inspection.

"See those knuckles?" he said. "You've seen me give the Cornstalk upper-cut, as Tom Merry calls it. Well, I shall jam those knuckles on to every mouth that utters the word hero again in my hearing. Honest Injun."

"But you are a—"

"Mind!" said the Australian warningly.

"Hero!" said Glyn defiantly. Biff! The Cornstalk was as good as his word, and Bernard Glyn went rolling in the dust.

He sat up, looking rather bewildered.

"Well, of all the beasts," he ejaculated, "you—you—"

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"I warned you, you know."

Clifton Dane, grinning, helped his fallen chum to his feet. Glyn looked a little uncertain, but finally he burst into a laugh.

"Well, if you hadn't saved Edie's life, I'd give you a licking that would make you see whole solar systems," he said. "As you're a——"

"Look out!"

"Ha, ha! I mean as you did save her life, I'll let you off; but you're a fatheaded, howling ass, and that's my opinion of you."

"I don't mind that," said the Cornstalk urbanely. "I think I'll go and get a dust down now; I need it."

And he strolled back to the gates of St. Jim's, his chums following. There were many inquiries, as Kangaroo crossed the quadrangle, as to the cause of the bandage round his forehead, and to each and every inquiry the Cornstalk made the stereotyped reply, "Go and eat coke!" Which left the inquirers no wiser than it found them.

CHAPTER 4.

Blake and Tom Merry put their Heads Together.

"THERE won't be any time for prep. this evening," Tom Merry remarked, in a thoughtful sort of way, as he poured the water into the teapot.

Manners and Lowther looked at him.

"There'll be time for a row to-morrow morning, then," grinned Lowther. "What bee have you got in your bonnet this time, Thomas, my son?"

"It's about going to Coventry. D'Arcy's got permission from the Head, so I hear, but Dr. Holmes doesn't seem to think it necessary for anybody to go with him."

"Oh, that's bosh, of course; these Fourth-Formers can't be allowed to go about alone on long journeys like this," said Manners, shaking his head. "Besides, the place is more than worth a visit. A chap who lived in Coventry once told me that a visit to Coventry was an education in itself. He ought to know, as he lived there. Well, we're here for educational purposes, and so——"

"Better point that out to the Head," said Lowther.

"Hallo, where's that cake?"

"Cake! Isn't it in the cupboard?"

"No; there's only a few crumbs left on the plate."

"Then some bounder has scoffed it, or else Skimpole has given it to the poor. Never mind, there's the sardines."

"One tin of sardines won't go round very far."

"If they come as far as me it will be all right," said Tom Merry affably. "Luckily, there's plenty of bread—the new Budget hasn't made any difference to that. We've got no visitors coming here this evening."

"Bai Jove!"

"That's where you make a little mistake, my son."

And Arthur Augustus and Blake came in, followed by Herries and Digby. The Terrible Three did not seem particularly gratified.

"Sorry!" said Tom Merry. "We've nothing to give away. Try next door."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"It's all right," grinned Blake, "Gussy has changed his fiver."

"Yaas, wathah; and I shall be vewy pleased to lend you any little sum, Tom Mewwy."

"Good! Chuck over five bob till better times. Lowther, old son, out down to the shop, and bring the best you can get for five bob. I'll see if I can make the kettle boil while you're gone. You kids stay to tea?"

"Thanks! As you're so pressing, we will," said Jack Blake. "We really came for a council of war, but we can eat while we jaw. It's about that little excursion to Coventry. The Head has given Gussy permission to go."

"Yaas, wathah, but he has declined to see the necessity of my takin' anybody with me," explained D'Arcy. "I have wesolved to take the fellows in my own study, but it would be bad form to go without permish."

"Shocking bad form," said Blake solemnly. "We've never done anything in our little lives without permish."

"Pway don't wot, Blake; this is a sewious mattah. If you can make any suggestions for makin' the Head altah his mind, Tom Mewwy, I should be vewy pleased to take you too."

"Where there's a will there's a way," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "We've got to go; the difficulty is, how to make the Head see reason. Hallo! Not at home!"

In spite of that greeting, the three juniors who had just come along from the end study came in. They wore affable grins, and had evidently come to tea.

"Thanks, we'll stay, as you're so polite about it," said Kangaroo. "The fact is, the grub has run out in the end study."

"So we've run out also," remarked Bernard Glyn.

"Besides, there's that little excursion to Coventry," added The Gem Library.—71.

Clifton Dane. "We're coming, you know, and the question of arranging it with the Head has to be settled."

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the New Firm.

"Weally, deah boys——"

"That's all right, old son," said Kangaroo; "we wouldn't think of deserting you at such a moment. We've given the Form-master a hint on the subject, but he didn't seem to catch on. Said some piffle about studies not being interrupted. That's just like a Form-master; they're unreasonable animals."

"Yaas, wathah; but——"

"The fact is," said Blake, "we've got to think of a way. We've no great objection to you Shell-fish coming, if you can think of a dodge. I thought we'd put our heads together over it, Merry."

"Certainly, my son!"

Tom Merry was leaning over the table towards Blake, laying the table-cloth. Kangaroo gave Blake a sudden push, and his head and Tom Merry's "came together" with a "biff" that made both of them see stars.

"Oh!" roared Blake.

"Ow!" yelled Tom Merry.

"Sorry——"

"Ow! Oh! Ow! You utter ass——"

"What did you do that for, you frabjous dummy?"

"I thought you wanted to put your heads together——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, you know, I wegard that as wathah funny!"

Blake rubbed his head, and Tom Merry rubbed his. They glared at the humorous Cornstalk, and Tom Merry explained at some length what he thought of him, of his general appearance, and of his sense of humour. But Kangaroo only grinned.

"I'll chuck that thing out of the study if you like, Tom Merry," said Blake, pushing back his cuffs.

"Pway let there be peace, deah boys. We have important mattahs to settle, and there is no time for waggin'."

"Besides, you mustn't handle Kangaroo, he's a wounded; he——" began Glyn, when the Australian's fist flashed out and caught him on the chest, and he went in a sitting posture into Tom Merry's armchair with a bump that made that article of furniture groan again.

"Ow!" roared Glyn.

"Keep off the grass, then," said the Cornstalk warningly. The juniors gazed at them in astonishment. They knew nothing of the adventure of the runaway horse, or of the rules Kangaroo had laid down on the subject.

"Is that a new game?" asked Tom Merry.

"Not exactly," grinned Kangaroo. "It's a sort of education; really, I'm teaching these chaps that silence is golden, and that chipping is barred. Hallo! Are you expecting more visitors?"

"No; but they're coming all the same, apparently," said Tom Merry, in a tone of resignation.

Figgins & Co., of the New House came in—or, rather, they squeezed in, for the study was getting crowded now, and there was very little room for the newcomers. Manners opened the window to its fullest extent in a very pointed manner, to cool the crowded apartment.

"H'm! I'll have a notice put up in the corridor, 'Standing Room Only,' I think," Tom Merry remarked.

"I see you're at home," said Figgins, taking no heed of that remark. "I sent Fatty over here awhile back to see, and you were out!"

"Oh, that's where the cake went!"

Fatty Wynn coloured.

"Well, I was rather hungry," he said. "I always get so jolly hungry in this warm weather. If you'd like to get another one, I don't mind cutting down to the school shop for you."

"Declined with thanks. What do you want, Figgy? You can have anything but room—there isn't any room."

"It's about that little excursion to Coventry," said Figgins. "We're coming, you know——"

"Bai Jove!"

"And we want to put our heads together over it, and get leave," said Figgins. "We thought we'd talk it over."

"Weally, Figgins——"

"That's all right, Gussy, we'll come with you. Of course, we shall expect you to behave yourself."

"I uttally wefuse to behave myself. I—I—I mean——"

"Here's Lowther with the grub. All you fellows staying to tea? You can sit on one another's knees, and Gussy can get under the table, too."

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I——"

"Herries can sit on the window-sill—there's room for both his feet outside, and——"

"Look here, you let my feet alone!"

"Better give me a little more room while I'm making the tea, or—what's the matter, Gussy?"

"Ow! You have spilt some watah on my twousahs."

"Sorry, I needed it all, and now some's wasted. Eh?"

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"TOM MERRY'S TRIUMPH."

A Tale of Tom Merry and Harry Noble, the Australian Boy.

Your trousers? Oh, never mind your trousers. I was thinking of the tea."

"Is there a performance or something here?" asked Monty Lowther, as he squeezed in with his parcels. "I suppose I haven't got to the pit door of a theatre by mistake?"

"Ha, ha! No. This is a council of war, on the subject of sending a party to Coventry."

"Haden't we better put a notice on the board, and call a meeting of the whole school in the big hall?" suggested Lowther sarcastically. "If the whole population of St. Jim's is to be transferred to Coventry, that's the easiest way of arranging it."

"Oh, there's only thirteen of us—"

"Unlucky number," said Digby, with a shake of the head. "I think perhaps Gussy had better stay behind."

"I should absolutely wufese—"

"Oh, that's all right; Cousin Ethel will make it fourteen!" said Blake. "Gussy can come."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Well, tea's ready," said Tom Merry. "Sit down, if you can find anything to sit on; and eat, if you can find anything to eat. Some of you can have cups, and some of you can have saucers. Would you mind having your sardines in the fire-shovel, D'Arcy?"

"I should object vewy stwongly."

"Well, well; there's the kettle-lid, you can have that. I suppose you wouldn't mind eating them with a penknife."

"I should wufese—"

"Is Gussy always like that when you take him out to tea, Blake?" asked Figgins.

Blake shook his head sadly.

"Very often," he said. "Gussy's company manners are a great worry to me. Of course, I always insist upon his behaving decently in Study No. 6; but he gets obstreperous in company as a rule."

"Blake, I should be sowwy to intewwupt the harmony of the pwesent meetin', but if you compel me to thwash you, I—"

"Order!"

"Give him a bun, or something," said Blake, with a fatherly air. "If you give him a bun with currants in it, that always keeps him quiet."

"I uttally wufese to accept a bun with cuwwants in it."

"Here's your tea, Gussy."

"Ow! You have splashed me again."

"Never mind; lucky it's the same trousers," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "Fall to, my sons; if you can find anything to fall to. If I'd known there were to be so many guests, I'd have asked Figgins to make a fig-pudding and bring it over."

There was a general groan. Figgins's one and only fig-pudding was well-remembered. D'Arcy turned quite pale at the recollection.

"It was a jolly good fig-pudding, that time," said Figgins warmly.

"Of course it was," said Lowther, "and everybody had enough—more than enough."

"Look here—"

"Try the cold sausages, Figgy," said Tom Merry, pouring oil on the troubled waters. "I can recommend them."

And the crowded tea proceeded with more or less of harmony.

CHAPTER 5. The Deputation.

THE crowd was great, and the study was very warm. It was rather a trial to a junior at St. Jim's to entertain three or four guests, as a rule. Tom Merry's room was the largest on the Shell corridor; but it was taxed now to its utmost limits. Kangaroo, Dane, and Bernard Glyn sat in a row on the window-ledge, with the open window behind them—the coolest seat in the room. Blake, Herries, Dig, and D'Arcy had appropriated all the chairs, with the exception of the armchair, upon each arm of which sat a New House junior. Fatty Wynn was in the chair itself, very much squeezed by Figgins and Kerr on either side of him. Lowther sat on the fender, and Manners on the corner of the table. Tom Merry had nowhere to sit at all, but he took it very cheerfully. As he was standing up, he was naturally called upon to supply the wants of all the rest, who were sitting down. A fellow who begins making sacrifices is generally expected to make a habit of it, and so Tom Merry found.

"Give us another lump of sugar, old chap, as you're standing."

"I say, Merry, you're up—hand us over the salt."

"I'll have the buttah, deah boy, as it won't put you to the trouble of wisin'."

Tom Merry laughed.

His good-nature was without limits, and he cheerfully

turned himself into a waiter to supply the wants of the crowd of juniors.

Except for demands for helpings of various kinds, there was very little talking at first. Most of the juniors were hungry, and they had something better to do than to talk. But five shillings' worth of provisions, even when backed up with unlimited bread and a couple of tins of sardines, did not keep thirteen juniors busy very long. A scarcity set in very quickly, but all the guests politely declared that they had had enough. Only Fatty Wynn was looking round him with hungry eyes.

"I believe there's another sardine in the cupboard," said Monty Lowther thoughtfully. "Did you notice it when you had the cake, Fatty?"

"N-n-no, I didn't."

"H'm, it's a pity; it's been there a week or more, and it ought to be finished up!"

"I—I think I've had enough, Lowther, thank you."

"What about the council of war?" asked Kangaroo, getting off the window-seat. "This has been a ripping feed, but what about business?"

"Yaas, wathah."

"What price a deputation to the Head?" said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "If we all go in a body, it may impress him."

"Bai Jove, that's a good ideah! I will be the spokesman, as you will require a fellow of tact and judgment to put it to him straight."

"Better leave the talking to me," said Blake. "You see—"

"I fail to see anythin' of the sort—"

"I rather think I'd better handle the matter," said Kangaroo. "I think the deputation is a good wheeze. Anyway, it can't do any harm."

And after some discussion it was agreed to. Some of the juniors had strong doubts as to the success of the idea; but as Kangaroo said, it couldn't do any harm. And a body of thirteen juniors, representing the Shell and the Fourth-Form, and both Houses, certainly ought to be impressive.

"As I'm chairman," observed Tom Merry, "I think—"

"I don't think," remarked Figgins pleasantly. "I suppose a New House fellow had better take the lead. We want the thing to be a success, you know."

"Wats! I pwesume that—"

"Oh, leave it to me!" said Kangaroo. "The Colonies lead, you know. What Australia thinks to-day, the British Empire thinks to-morrow."

"Look here, you'd better keep out altogether," said Blake, "with that chivvy. You look as if you'd been through a mill."

Kangaroo rubbed his forehead.

"It's only a scratch," he said; "that's all right."

"It has a wathah wuffianly appewance," said Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps Kangawoo had bettah keep in the backgwound. But I say, deah boys, I have a wippin' ideah."

"Whose is it?"

"Wats! Pway listen to me. If the Head absolutely wufeses to let you fellows come, suppose Clifton Dane mesmewises him? I've seen him mesmewise Skimpole, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I weward it as a good wheeze."

"Oh, you ass!" grinned Clifton Dane. "I can see myself trying to hypnotise the Head. I don't think! If you've got any more ideas like that, I should advise you to leave 'em unused till you get to Colney Hatch. They'll be all right there."

"Weally, Dane—"

"Are you kids ready?" asked Tom Merry. "No need to waste time. If we're not going to Coventry, I suppose we shall have to do some prep."

"Come on," said Blake, "if Fatty Wynn has finished casting regretful glances at the jam-pot."

Fatty Wynn started and coloured.

"I—I was just thinking—" he murmured.

"Never mind thinking now—this is the time for action. Get into line, you chaps; you can't walk to the Head's study like a giddy crowd to the threepenny gate of a football ground."

"Yaas, wathah! Pway get into ordah, deah boys, and I will diwect you."

"No, you won't, Gussy! Line up there!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Silence in the ranks! March!"

The grinning juniors marched along the passage. Skimpole came out of his study in a great hurry, and ran fairly into them. Blake gently laid him on the linoleum, and the procession marched over him, carefully wiping their boots on the bewildered junior as they passed. They left Skimpole blinking through his spectacles, in a state of amazement he was a long time recovering from.

Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, met them in the lower hall. They could not very well march over the captain of

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the school, so they stopped. The big Sixth-Former glanced at them in surprise.

"What does this mean?" he demanded. "What are you young monkeys up to now?"

The juniors looked at him. For members of the Shell to be alluded to as young monkeys was decidedly derogatory to their dignity; but even the Shell did not feel it as much as D'Arcy, of the Fourth. That elegant junior jammed his monocle into his eye, and turned it witheringly upon the senior.

"Weally, Kildare, I twust you will, on reflection, see that that is not a pwopah expression to use," he said. "I decline to be chawactewised as a young monkey."

"Come on, Gussy!"

"I'm speakin' to Kildare. Although a certain amount of respect is due to the captain of the school, I must say—"

"We're waiting!"

"Yaas, wathah, but—"

"What's the little game?" demanded Kildare, ruthlessly interrupting the swell of the School House. "What are you New House kids doing over here?"

"It's a deputation to the Head," said Tom Merry, with becoming dignity—"a representative deputation, representing—"

"Oh, get on!" said Kildare, laughing. "The Head's talking to Mr. Railton now, I believe, and you'll get lines for your cheek."

And Kildare walked away, still laughing, apparently not in the least impressed by the dignity or the representative character of the deputation.

The juniors looked at one another rather uneasily.

"I suppose we'd better go on?" said Manners dubiously.

"I—I suppose so."

"Yaas, wathah! I should certainly not be inclined to pay any attention to the opinion of a person who described me as a young monkey."

"Well, you're not old," said Monty Lowther. "How on earth was he to describe you?"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Oh, come on!" said Kangaroo. "We're in for it now. Follow your leader."

And by way of showing unmistakably who was leader, he marched on ahead, and tapped at the door of the Head's study. The others hurried after him. The deep voice of the Head bade them enter. Mr. Railton was in the study, and he started at the sight of the crowd of juniors.

"Dear me!" said the Head. "What does this mean?"

And he turned his gold-rimmed pince-nez upon the juniors, and some of them wished they hadn't come. But there was nerve enough in Kangaroo for a whole army of Territorials.

"If you please, sir, we're a deputation."

"Yaas, wathah, sir, a deputation fwom—"

"Ahem! I think—"

"Pway hear me out, sir—"

"Ring off, Gussy! Let Kangaroo speak!"

"I wefuse to let Kangawoo speak. It is necessary to explain this mattah to Dr. Holmes bwiefly and succinctly."

"Really, boys—"

"Yaas, sir. You see—"

"You see, sir," said Figgins, "we—"

"We've taken the liberty of coming to you, sir," said Blake, "to explain—"

"Exactly!" said Tom Merry. "If you please, sir—"

"We think—"

"We should like—"

"It's like this, sir—"

The doctor raised his hand. Most of the above remarks had been made simultaneously, and it was hard to disentangle any meaning from them.

"If you have anything to say to me, boys, please elect a spokesman, and the others can remain outside the study," he said.

"Yaas, wathah, sir! I think—"

"Get outside, Gussy!"

"I am explainin' to Doctah Holmes—"

"This way, fathead!"

"Perhaps Noble had better remain," said Dr. Holmes.

"I wish to speak to Noble, and was about to send for him, in any case."

"Weally, sir—"

"You may go, D'Arcy."

"Thank you, sir; but I was goin' to explain— Pway don't jerk my arm in that wuff mannah, Blake! Leave off tuggin' at my sleeve, Tom Mewwy. I wefuse—"

But the swell of the School House got no further, being forcibly yanked out of the study by Tom Merry and Jack Blake.

"Well, this is rotten!" said Figgins, as he closed the door, and left the Cornstalk in the study. "The Head's going to give Kangaroo a lecture, I suppose. Not much of an opening for asking for leave."

And the juniors glumly agreed that it was "rotten."

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CHAPTER 6.

For Valour!

HARRY NOBLE was feeling a little uneasy himself. He had not been called up to the Head's study hitherto; but there were certain little relaxations of the rules of the college which the Cornstalk allowed himself, which might be the cause of his being "called up" at any time. The end study, since it had been occupied by the New Firm, had been the scene of the plotting of many a "jape." The Cornstalk stood looking as demure as he could, with his eyes on the carpet.

"Mr. Railton has just reported your conduct to me, Noble," said Dr. Holmes, turning his glance upon the Australian.

"Yee-es, sir," said Kangaroo, cudgelling his brains to discover which of his many little delinquencies Mr. Railton was likeliest to have discovered and reported to the Head of St. Jim's. "I'm sorry, sir."

"Sorry, Noble!"

"Yes, sir. If it was the—the flooding of the bath-room, sir, I—I—"

"The what?"

"So you were responsible for that?" said Mr. Railton, with a smile.

"I—I—I—"

"Ahem!" said Dr. Holmes. "I think Noble is misapprehending my meaning. I did not wish to see you to punish you, Noble."

Kangaroo brightened up considerably. He had a great respect for Dr. Holmes, and though he was quite ready to take any punishment, he did not like the idea of getting into the doctor's black books.

"Mr. Railton has reported your conduct to me," went on the Head. "I am referring to your heroic conduct in risking your life to stop a runaway horse."

The Cornstalk turned crimson. That matter had quite gone out of his head, in the interest and excitement of getting up the deputation.

"Oh, sir, that wasn't worth mentioning!"

"You probably saved Miss Glyn's life. I was about to send for you, Noble, to express my deep sense of pride that a boy belonging to a lower Form here should have acted in such a gallant way," said Dr. Holmes. "Your Form-fellows should be proud of you, Noble. Your Head-master is."

"And your House-master," said Mr. Railton.

Kangaroo looked extremely uncomfortable. Like many lads who are capable of brave deeds, to be praised gave him a sense of discomfort.

"You're very kind to say so, sir," he said. "I—I—I really acted without thinking, sir."

Dr. Holmes smiled.

"If you had stopped to think, you would probably have been too late to save Miss Glyn," he remarked. "You acted like a hero, Noble, without stopping to count the cost. I am only thankful that you were not injured. I wish it were in my power to reward you in some way. But that, I know, you would not wish. But now," went on the Head, changing the subject, "what is this deputation about? Are you dissatisfied with something?"

"Oh, no, sir; nothing of the sort!" said Noble eagerly.

"We—we came—"

He paused. After what the doctor had said, he felt decidedly awkward about asking a favour at Dr. Holmes's hands. It might be misconstrued.

"Well," said Dr. Holmes, looking at him kindly, "what is it, Noble? I should certainly be pleased to do anything in my power for you."

"It's—it's—it's nothing, sir."

"Come, come! You did not come here for nothing."

Kangaroo was crimson and silent. Dr. Holmes glanced at Mr. Railton in a puzzled way, and the House-master came to the rescue.

"I think perhaps Noble is diffident about asking for something because he is afraid it may look like asking for a reward for his brave action," said Mr. Railton quietly.

"Come, come, Noble, speak out! You need have no doubts upon that score. Stay! Call in Merry, Mr. Railton, and he shall explain."

The House-master opened the door and called to Tom Merry. The hero of the Shell came in, looking a little surprised.

"Merry, please speak for the deputation," said the Head, smiling. "What is it you came to ask me?"

"If—if you please, sir, as D'Arcy is going to Coventry, we—we thought we ought to go and look after him, sir."

"Ahem! How many of you?"

"Only about twelve, sir."

"Certainly D'Arcy would be well taken care of. I am afraid that, under any other circumstances, I should be compelled to refuse this request, Merry. Although I approve of occasional breaks in the school work, and believe that

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as much can be learned by travel as in the class-rooms, yet I think that enough has been done in that way lately. But after what Noble has done—after his heroic conduct in risking his life to save Miss Edith Glyn—I shall grant this holiday, as a public acknowledgment of his courage."

Tom Merry looked bewildered.

"I—I never heard of that, sir!" he exclaimed. "Kangaroo—I mean Noble—has been as mum as an oyster about it."

"Modesty generally accompanies courage," said Dr. Holmes, with a smile. "Noble stopped a runaway horse, and saved Miss Glyn from a terrible accident, at the imminent risk of being trampled to death himself. Noble, you have my permission to make this excursion, and to take a dozen companions with you."

"Thank you, sir."

The juniors left the study. Tom Merry closed the door behind him, and then gave Harry Noble a glare.

"What have you been keeping it dark for?" he demanded.

"Oh, rats!"

"Keepin' what dark, deah boy?"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Kangaroo.

"Bosh! Kangaroo has been going about performing all sorts of heroic deeds in his spare time," explained Tom Merry. "He saves young ladies' lives just as any other chap would—would eat muffins, or feed a bulldog. He saved Glyn's sister from an accident, and the Head has given us leave—"

"Hurrah!"

"All on Noble's account."

"Good old Australia!"

"Bai Jove, I wegard Kangawoo as a mewitowious youngstah, and I suggest that we cawwy him shouldah-high, deah boys."

"Rats! Stop it! Chuck it! Leggo! Br-r-r-r!"

Kangaroo's expostulations and threats were of no avail. Tom Merry and Bernard Glyn and Figgins hoisted him on their shoulders, and the rest formed a sort of triumphal procession behind. They marched out into the quadrangle, and there was a rush from all sides to inquire into the matter.

"He's a giddy hero," explained Tom Merry to all comers. "He was hiding his light under a bushel, you know, but we've found him out."

"Yaas, wathah! He saved Miss Glyn fwom feahful pewils at the wisk of his life."

"I didn't!" roared Kangaroo. "Very likely the trap wouldn't have upset at all."

"I decline to cwedit that statement. He is a wathah ungwacious beast, deah boys, but he is a hewo."

"You ass!"

"Undah the circs., Kangawoo, as you are a hewo, I will not twash you for that oppwobwious expression."

"Lemme get down!"

"Wats!"

Round and round the quadrangle they carried him in the dusk. As the story spread, loud cheers greeted the Australian on all sides. He began to take it good-humouredly at last, and endured half an hour of "processing" without further grumbles. And when it was over the juniors, breathless and excited, gathered in Tom Merry's study. There was no prep. to do that evening, but there was a more important matter to be settled—ways and means.

CHAPTER 7.

Ways and Means.

"IT'S a question of finances now," Kangaroo remarked. "The worst of it is, that funds seem to be low all along the line."

"My bwothah Conway sent me a fivah."

"Good! You shall shell out what's left of it," said Tom Merry. "But five pounds won't pay even the fares of thirteen fellows to Coventry from this distance."

"And there's getting back, too," said Blake. "We can't walk back. And we shall want some fin while we're there."

And the juniors looked very serious.

It was not of much use to obtain the Head's permission to spend a few days away from the school, if they could not raise sufficient funds for the journey.

And it was an expensive journey—exactly how expensive they had not yet ascertained, but it was certain that the railway fares would be big.

"I pwopose that we hold a genewal subscwption in both Houses," said Arthur Augustus, after a pause. "I think that would be all wight. If ewevy seniah contwibuted half-a-crown, and ewevy juniah a shillin', we should waise a sum of about fifteen pounds, and that would see us through."

They looked at the swell of the Fourth Form with great admiration.

"Ripping!" said several voices.

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard the scheme as wathah wippin', you know."

"But as nobody would contribute anything, that's a slight drawback," said Monty Lowther. "Excepting for that, I don't see any fault to be found with Gussy's scheme."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Any more ideas?" asked Kangaroo. "As soon as you're finished, I've got a suggestion to make."

"Weally, Kangawoo!"

"Oh, go ahead!" said Tom Merry. "I can't see anything for it but to make a Marathon race of it, and that would be rough on you youngsters."

"What price bikes?" said Kangaroo.

"You can get them all pwices now, deah boy," said D'Arcy, who thought the Australian was asking for information. "I pay fifteen guineas for my jiggah, but I hear that you can get a vewy decent machine for seven. In fact, you can pick up machines now at the extremely weasonable wate of a shillin' a week, to extend over, I think, thirty-five years, or somethin' like that."

"Ass!"

"I wufese to 'be called an ass. It is a vewy intwestin' question, that thirty-five years' system of hire-purchase."

"You're off the mark, kid. I wasn't inquiring the market price of bikes, ass! I mean, what's the matter with wheeling to Coventry?"

The juniors all looked at Kangaroo. He was quite serious. And their faces lighted up with the new idea. Why not?

It was a long ride, but by breaking the journey at some town en route, and staying the night there, it would be simple enough.

"Good!" exclaimed Tom Merry heartily.

"Yaas, wathah! I nevah thought of that, you know."

"What about machines, though?" said Figgins dubiously.

"We haven't all got bikes. And it isn't the easiest thing in the world to borrow a machine for a hundred mile or so ride."

"We shall have to manage it, though," said Kangaroo decisively. "Let me see, which of you duffers hasn't a bike?"

"Herries, for one; he sold his when he bought his bulldog."

"Of course, I shall have to take Towser to Coventry with us," said Herries, with a half-defiant glance round at his companions. A frigid look came over Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face. Kangaroo chuckled.

"You'll look a bit odd, old chap, riding a bulldog, won't you?" he asked.

"I don't mean anything of the sort," growled Herries; "I'm going to take him. Towser likes a run."

"I disappwove of Towseh joinin' the party. The beast has no wespsect whatevah for a fellow's twousahs."

"He can't come," said Blake. "The best thing Herries can do is to sell him again and buy a bicycle."

"I jolly well sha'n't!"

"Herries can borrow Skimpole's bike," said Kangaroo thoughtfully. "As a sincere Socialist, Skimpole cannot refuse to lend his bicycle in the hour of need. If he likes to take Towser in a trailer, that's about the only way I can think of for getting the beast to Coventry. Who else is short of a machine?"

"Fatty Wynn."

Kangaroo glanced at the ample proportions of the Fall-staff of the New House, and shook his head doubtfully.

"H'm! What he really wants is a steam-roller."

"Look here, you—you wallaby!" spluttered Fatty Wynn. "If you're looking for a swollen nose—"

"Peace, my son! We can't get a steam-roller for you, so it's no good discussing that. You must have a machine."

"There's my old machine," said Arthur Augustus. "It only wants cleanin' and some punctures mendin'. You can put down the saddle a few inches, and it will suit you vewy well, Wynn."

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "That's settled, then. We'll all lend a hand at mending Gussy's old bike. You chaps can go and begin, if you like, while I jaw to Skimpole. We shall have to talk Socialism to him to get his bike for Herries."

"Right you are!"

Skimpole's study, which he shared with Gore, was next to Tom Merry's. Tom went along to the next door, followed by Herries and D'Arcy. D'Arcy considered his powers of persuasion were more likely to tell than Tom Merry's. The rest of the juniors went round to the bicycle shed to look at D'Arcy's old "jigger." D'Arcy did not wear his machines out by hard work, and there was little doubt that his old machine would be very nearly as good as the best machines of the other fellows.

Tom Merry kicked at Skimpole's door, and entered. Skimpole was the brainy man of the Shell, and he would do anything for anybody who talked "isms" with him. Gore, in the same study, was not fond of "isms." He would

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throw books at Skimpole when he started on Socialism, or scatter tea over him to turn off the important subject of Determinism. Like many a prophet, Skimpole was not honoured in his own study. As Tom Merry pushed open the door, the sounds of disagreement were very plainly to be heard.

"Will you shut up?" bawled Gore. "How am I to do my prep. if you jaw like a gramophone?"

"It is my duty to point out to you—"

"Shut up!"

"A sincere Socialist never shuts up. It is my duty to point out to you that your present course—"

"Ring off!"

"Is certain to lead—"

Biff! A Latin dictionary flew through the air, and caught Skimpole on the chest. He went over backwards, and sat down. Gore chuckled, and, collecting up his books, made for the door.

Tom Merry, Herries, and D'Arcy were looking in, grinning. Gore passed them, and Arthur Augustus helped the dazed Skimpole to his feet. The amateur Socialist of St. Jim's blinked at them through his spectacles.

"Dear me! I have received a shock! I cannot help regarding that as almost rude of Gore. And I was trying to improve his mind."

"Bai Jove! You should have left it till he had finished his pwep., deah boy."

Skimpole shook his head.

"Not at all. It is always time to improve the mind. What is prep. in comparison with opening Gore's mind to the great truths of Determinism, for instance?"

"Blow Determinism now!" said Tom Merry. "We've come to talk Socialism."

Skimpole brightened up wonderfully. It was seldom—very seldom—that he could get a willing victim, and here were three who had come cheerfully to the sacrifice.

"Certainly, Merry! Would you like me to explain at full length the principles of Socialism, as expounded by Marx, Scratchford, Blyndman, and H. G. Swells?"

"Not at all. Don't trouble to—"

"No trouble at all. I am always glad to assist in opening the minds of the ignorant and prejudiced," said Skimpole politely.

"Bai Jove! Are you always as polite as that to visitahs, deah boy?"

"Really, D'Arcy—"

"Never mind Scratchford and Swells," said Tom Merry; "we—"

"Perhaps you would prefer a chapter from my own book? It is now growing towards completion. I have finished nearly seven hundred chapters," said Skimpole. "I will read you out an extract from the five hundred and fifty-seventh chapter—On Opening the Minds of the Ignorant and Stupid to the Light of Socialism."

"Bai Jove!"

"That subject is exactly suitable for the present moment." Skimpole plunged his hands into a mass of manuscript, and selected some pages in big, sprawling writing, in which words of four and five syllables predominated. "Now, my dear hearers, I will begin with the suffering millions. In this country, governed by capitalists in the interests of capital, and entirely without principle, there exist twelve million human beings always on the verge of starvation."

"Oh, hold on!" said Tom Merry. "How can there be interest without principal?"

"Eh? I said principle—not principal. You see—"

"Yes; I see it all, and you needn't trouble to explain. We've come—"

"I don't mind explaining. These starving millions are the victims of the present social system—the gasping martyrs of monopoly in land—"

"Bai Jove—"

"The direct result of the absurd superstition that all the land of England should belong to only a few Englishmen, instead of to the whole nation."

"I wergad that as wot, Skimpole!"

"Naturally, as a bloated aristocrat, you would! I—"

"I wufuse to be chawactewised as bloated."

"Bloated with the tears and misery of the suffering millions!" said Skimpole eloquently. "Bloated—"

"Pway dwaw it mild, deah boy! We came here—"

"It's all right," said Tom Merry soothingly. "We know that Gussy is an aristocratic bloater, Skimmy. You've told us so before."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"But we came here to talk about Socialistic principles," went on the hero of the Shell. "When you bring in Socialism the week after next, I suppose all the land is going to be pooled, isn't it?"

"Nationalised—certainly. It will become the property of the whole nation."

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"And all the means of production and communication?"

"Certainly!"

"But a sincere Socialist, I suppose, is ready to anticipate the millennium by a couple of weeks or so?"

"Certainly!"

"I suppose a bicycle is a means of communication?"

"Yes; in a sense it certainly is. Under Socialism, the cycle factories will be nationalised, and every youth in the country will be provided free with a first-class machine."

"Good! It's a pity we can't put off our run to Coventry till Socialism comes in," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "But there might be some delay about it, you know; you never can tell. Under the circumstances, Skimmy, you will lend your bike to Herries for a few days?"

The amateur Socialist started.

"A few days?"

"Yes. We're going on a run to Coventry."

"I shall need my bicycle. I am going to attend a Socialist meeting in Wayland to-morrow, so I am sorry I cannot lend Herries my bike."

"Stuff! You can have Skimmy's bike, Herries."

"Really, Merry—"

"I declare it nationalised!" said Tom Merry. "Skimmy's arguments are so ripping that I cannot hold out any longer. I believe in all Socialists' bicycles being nationalised, and I think a start ought to be made with Skimmy's."

Skimpole rubbed his bony forehead. He hadn't looked at it in that light before, and it occurred to him that there was something wrong somewhere.

"I suppose, when things are nationalised, the disposal of them will be by the vote of the majority, Skimmy?"

"Yes—certainly!"

"Good! Now, we four have got to vote as to the disposal of Skimmy's bike," said Tom Merry seriously. "I vote that Herries has it for a few days."

"Yaas, wathah! I give my vote to Hewwies."

"Right-ho!" said Herries.

"What do you say, Skimmy?"

"I shall want my bike."

"Skimmy's against; but the majority is three to one," said Tom Merry. "Better go and overhaul Skimmy's bike, Herries, and see if it's ready."

"Right-ho!" said Herries; and he quitted the study.

Skimpole blinked at the hero of the Shell.

"Really, Merry, you know—"

Tom clapped him on the shoulder.

"That's all right, old man. We're going to have the bike, but I'll tell you what—instead of going to the Socialist meeting to-morrow, you can take Herries' bulldog for a run. Good-night!"

And Tom Merry and D'Arcy quitted the study, leaving the amateur Socialist of St. Jim's in a rather dazed state of mind.

CHAPTER 8.

On the Road.

M R. RAILTON gave Tom Merry a cheerful nod the next morning as he came downstairs.

Tom Merry's face was very sunny, and he looked handsome in a Norfolk jacket and knickers, and a cap on the back of his curly head.

"Good-morning, Merry! What train are you catching this morning?" asked the School House-master.

"We're not going by train, sir," said Tom Merry cheerily. "The fares would be too steep. We're going to bike it."

Mr. Railton started a little.

"You are going to cycle to Coventry?"

"Yes, sir," Tom Merry paused. "I suppose there's no objection, sir?"

"H'm! I must think about that—at all events, must mention it to the Head. A train journey is one matter, but going by road is another. I am afraid you may get into mischief."

"Mischief, sir!" said Tom Merry, with superb astonishment, as if mischief was a thing that never even entered into the minds of the fellows in the Shell.

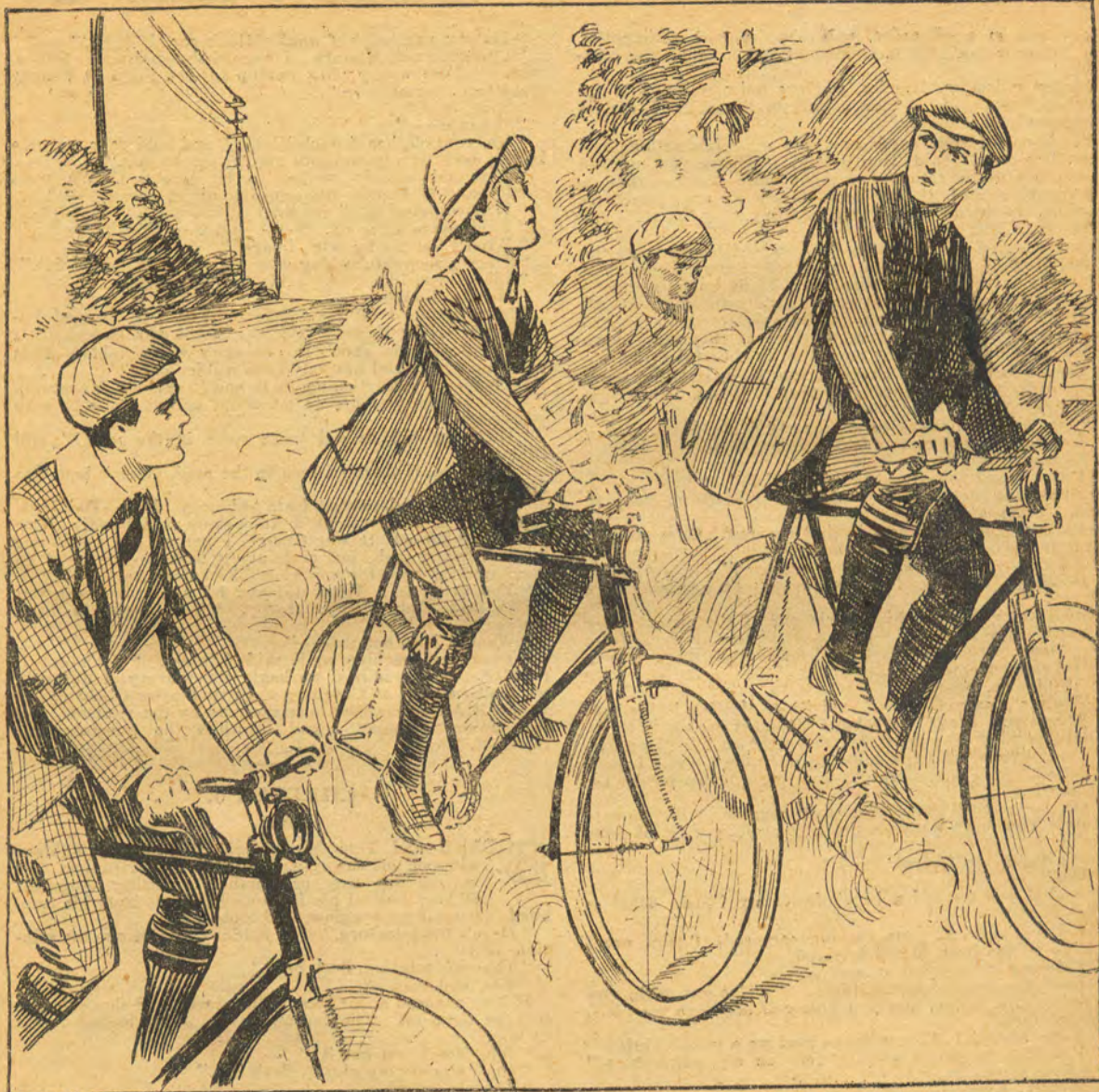
The House-master smiled.

"Yes, Merry. It is a serious matter to trust a dozen juniors on the road without an elder with them to look after them."

"I say, sir, could you come?" said Tom Merry eagerly. "It was ripping the time you came to spend a week-end at D'Arcy's place, sir."

The House-master laughed and shook his head.

"I'm afraid that would not be possible, Merry—though I should certainly like to do so, and I take your wish as a great compliment. I think we may manage for a senior to accompany you."



We'll put up for the night at Fennay Stratford, deah boys. I shall insist upon it," said Arthur Augustus, holding the centre of his handlebars with one hand. Kildare looked round. "Do you particularly want a thick car, D'Arcy," he said.

"Yes, sir, if you think it necessary," said Tom Merry. "If Kildare or Darrel would come, it would be all right."

"I will speak to Kildare, then."

"Thank you, sir!"

Tom Merry joined his chums. Blake looked a little serious when he heard that a senior was to be in the party.

"You see, you never know how these Sixth-Formers will behave themselves," he remarked. "Still, Kildare is the best of the bunch, and Darrel's not a bad sort. I hope it will be one of them."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"If they sent that beast Knox, or that cad Sefton, it would be rotten! Still, as there are over a dozen of us, we could leave him for dead along the road."

"Ha, ha! But I think it will be Kildare."

And so it turned out to be.

The captain of St. Jim's was a great cyclist, and the run of a hundred miles would not have been a hard day's ride to him. He had duties enough to do at St. Jim's, but those the prefects were willing to relieve him off. There was no cricket fixture to interfere with the excursion; and so, as he obtained leave from the House-master, the captain of the school was willing enough to be "sent to Coventry."

He came down to the bicycle-shed, where the juniors were

getting their machines ready, and pulled his own bicycle off the stand. The boys turned towards him eagerly.

"Are you coming, Kildare?"

"Yes."

Tom Merry threw his cap into the air.

"Hurrah!"

"Bai Jove—yes! Huwway!"

Kildare laughed good-humouredly.

"I shall keep you in order," he said. "No monkey tricks, you know."

"We shall not wequire keepin' in ordah, deah boy! I am goin' to look aftah these youngstahs. I suppose you will be able to stick it out?" said Arthur Augustus doubtfully. "If so, I wathah think you and I had bettah go stwaight on, pewwaps."

"We're going to stop at a half-way town for the night," said Tom Merry. "Stony Stratford or Fenny Stratford will be the place, I should say; but as you're coming with us, Kildare, we'll let you decide."

"Thank you!"

"But I would wathah do the distance without a stop, if Kildare can stick it out."

Kildare only laughed, and wheeled out his machine. The juniors followed. Fatty Wynn had Gussy's old machine,

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which was in good order, and Herries took Skimpole's. The amateur Socialist met them at the door of the bike-shed.

"Upon reflection, Herries, you are quite welcome to my machine," he said. "As a sincere Socialist, I cannot decline to lend it to you."

"It is out of your hands now, my son. It's nationalised for a few days," said Tom Merry. "Thank you, all the same. It will be returned without more damage than is unavoidable; and if we have to mend any punctures en route, we sha'n't charge you anything."

"Really, Merry—"

They wheeled their bicycles in a sort of parade past the School House. They were starting before first lessons, and there was a crowd to see them off. Many envious glances were cast towards them, but it was good-natured envy. All St. Jim's agreed that Kangaroo fully deserved the reward of heroism. The juniors cheered them as they went down to the gates, wheeling their machines, in cheerful array.

"Good journey," said Gore, of the Shell, strolling down along with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Some fellows get all the favouritism, don't they?"

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass on the cad of the Shell.

"I do not wegard this as favouritism, Goah."

"Of course you don't. I do."

"I am afwaid you are wathah a cad—"

"Something sticking to your tyre," said Gore, stooping down. "Stop a minute."

Arthur Augustus stopped behind the rest. Gore stooped down, and ran his hand over the tyre.

"All right. Only a dead fly. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, deah boy! I am sowwy you are wathah a cad."

And D'Arcy wheeled his bicycle out of the gates. They mounted in the road. The postman was coming along from the village with the morning letters, and there was a general shout from the juniors.

"Any for us, Blagg?"

"One for Master D'Arcy," said Blagg, feeling in his bag.

"Thank you, Blagg, deah boy! Hand it ovah!"

Blagg handed over the letter, and went on into the gates. "Pway excuse me a few minutes, deah boys, while I wead the lettah," said Arthur Augustus, feeling in his pocket for a penknife.

"Oh, leave it till presently!" said Figgins. "We want to get on. You don't want to stop here reading a lot of piffle now."

"It's fwom my Cousin Ethel."

"Oh!"

"And if you wegard a lettah fwom my Cousin Ethel as piffle, Figgins—"

"I don't," said Figgins, turning very red. "How was I to know it was from Miss Cleveland, ass?"

"I wefuse to be called an ass! I—"

"Read the letter," said Kildare. "We've got to do fifty or sixty miles to-day, and you kids will not have too much time by dark."

"Yaas, wathah! Can someone lend me a papah-knife?"

"I've lost the one I usually wear on my watch-chain," said Kerr sarcastically.

"Weally, Kerr—"

"Open it with your thumb, ass!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. Pway lend me your penknife, Dig."

"Here you are, ass!"

"I wefuse—"

"Come, come, be quick!" said Kildare.

"Certainly, deah boy!"

D'Arcy opened the letter, and read it through, and then folded it and put it in his pocket. Figgins's eyes watched it hungrily till it was out of sight. Arthur Augustus mounted his machine.

"I'm weady, deah boys."

"Aren't you going to read out the letter?" demanded Blake.

"There's no time—we're in a huwwy. Pway don't keep me waitin'."

They pedalled off. In a cloud of dust they disappeared down the road from the gates of St. Jim's. Through Rylcombe High Street they went at a spanking pace, scattering dogs and cats and cackling geese on all sides, and then whizzing along a wide country road.

"We'll put up for the night at Fennay Stwatford, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, adjusting his Panama hat with one hand, and holding the centre of his handle-bars with the other.

"That's for Kildare to settle."

"But we weally must stop at Fennay Stwatford. I shall be obliged to insist upon it."

Kildare looked round.

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"Do you particularly want a thick ear, D'Arcy?"

"Certainly not, Kildare. I wegard the question as widiculous. But we weally must put up for the night at Fennay Stwatford, because—"

"'Nuff said."

"Because—"

"Oh, ring off," said Jack Blake, "and hold your machine better, ass! If you run into me I'll squash you."

"I should uttably wefuse to be squashed. We must weally stay at Fennay Stwatford to-night, because—"

"Will you ring off?" roared Figgins.

"I wefuse to wing off. I— Bai Jove!"

"What's the matter now, image?"

"There's somethin' w'ong with my tyre. It's goin' flat."

"Like rider, like tyre," said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowther—"

D'Arcy jumped off his machine. The rest stopped impatiently. D'Arcy's back tyre was as flat as a pancake.

"Bai Jove, you know, this is vewy remarkable! That was a new tyre, and has only been widden once."

"There's a tack sticking in it now," grunted Kangaroo.

"What an ass you are to go about collecting tacks with your tyres!"

"How the dickens did tacks come in the road?" said Blake.

"Of course, if there's a tack in the road, Gussy's bound to find it."

"I wefuse to admit that I am to blame. I— Bai Jove, you know, I weally think I know how that beastly puncture came there! It was Goah! I twust I do not w'ong him by the suspish, but certainly it looks to me as if he punctured my tyre for a wotten joke before startin'."

"You utter ass! What did you let him come near you for?" said Tom Merry, crossly. "You ought to have known."

"Weally, I do not see—"

"Turn the machine up," said Kildare. "Let's get it mended. If this is how we begin the journey, I dare say we shall turn up at Coventry some time after Christmas."

And D'Arcy's machine was reversed by the roadside, and the juniors gathered round it while the puncture was repaired.

CHAPTER 9.

Uphill.

BLAKE and Tom Merry held the bicycle, Kildare whipped off the tyre, and most of the juniors lent aid in one way or another. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy pushed his Panama hat back from his forehead, adjusted his eyeglass, and looked on.

"Here's the puncture," said Kildare. "Get out the solution, D'Arcy."

"The—the solution, deah boy?"

"Yes, and buck up!"

D'Arcy glanced at his nice, clean gloves, and slowly began to take them off. The captain of St. Jim's looked round at him.

"Why don't you get it?"

"I'm wemovin my gloves, deah boy."

"Then be quick."

D'Arcy finished peeling off his gloves; but it was not for the sake of getting to work with bare hands. He fished a pair of old gloves out of his wallet, and began to don them. This was a custom of his when he had any dirty work to do; and an excellent custom, too, for that matter; but it was just a little exasperating in a time of punctures and haste.

The juniors all looked at him, and Kildare fixed a very expressive glance upon him, but the swell of St. Jim's was too busy to notice it.

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"Are you going to get that solution, D'Arcy?" asked Kildare.

"Yaas, wathah! Though I weally do not see why Blake could not get it, or Figgins."

And D'Arcy, having protected his hands from and danger of damage, opened his bag, and produced a tube of solution. Jack Blake took it, and unscrewed the cap, and squirted a stream of it over the sleeve of his chum.

And Arthur Augustus gave a howl.

"Oh, weally Blake—"

"Dear me," said Blake, still squirting, this time over D'Arcy's natty Norfolk jacket, "I'm wasting this stuff. This is through you me waiting, Gussy."

"You uttah beast—"

"There, it's all gone now! Got any more?"

"No, you howwid wuffian!"

"Then I shall have to use mine."

Kildare grinned, and took Blake's solution. D'Arcy pushed back his cuffs, and seemed about to commit assault and battery upon the spot; but the sticky state of his coat required attention first.

He tried to scrape off the sticky solution, but the more he rubbed it off the more sticky it seemed to become; and the gloves he was wearing stuck to everything they touched, and the swell of St. Jim's began to perspire.

"I'll dry presently," said Kangaroo comfortingly. "Wait till the dust settles on it—that's certain to dry it."

D'Arcy almost groaned at the prospect of attaching the dust to his natty clothes in that manner. He peeled off the gloves and threw them into the ditch. They were too sticky now to carry about with him.

"I wegard Blake as a beast," he remarked. "If we were not just startin' on a wide, I should give him a feahful thwashin'. Are you goin' to be all day mendin' that puncture, deah boys?"

As it was D'Arcy's puncture, this was rather cool. However, the tyre was slipped on at last, and the machine was ready for use. D'Arcy mounted, and the party rode on.

It was a fine day, and very pleasant riding in the early morning. The roads were in good condition, and so were the riders. The ground was covered in good style, but the more enthusiastic juniors, who wished to go ahead like steam, were called to order by the St. Jim's captain. Kildare had mapped out the route, and there were plenty of long miles to get over; and on a long ride "slow and steady" was the motto.

Arthur Augustus clicked on his low gear as the party ascended the first considerable hill. Figgins, who had no change gear, worked on as before, with drops of perspiration clotting his forehead. The swell of St. Jim's looked round at him.

"Shall I give you a hand, Figgins, deah boy?" he asked. Figgins grunted.

"I'm feelin' pwetty fwesh, you know," said D'Arcy. "It's no good faggin' yourself out almost at the start from a feelin' of false pwide, Figgins. Let me help you."

Another grunt from Figgins.

"I could take your arm, and fwee-wheel you up the hill, if you like," said D'Arcy, who set no limit to his conceptions of his powers as a cyclist.

"Look here," said Figgins, exasperated, "when I want help, I shall ask, and when I don't want it, I sha'n't ask."

"Yaas, I perfectly understand that," assented Arthur Augustus; "but I feel that you are withheld by a feelin' of false pwide fwom acceptin' the help you need. I should be vewy pleased to help you."

"Br-r-r-r."

"That is not an intelligible remark, Figgins! Pway allow me to take your arm and fwee-wheel you for a bit!"

"You unutterable ass—"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"When I want help, I'll ask a chap stronger than myself—not a giddy tailor's dummy, who can't mend a puncture!" said Figgins scornfully.

"I wegard that remark as uttably wude, Figgins. Blake, deah boy, you are lookin' wathah fagged, shall I help you?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Bai Jove! I'll help you, if you like, Glyn."

"Rats!" said the Liverpool lad cheerily. "You're more in want of help yourself! I'll help you!"

"Vewy good," said D'Arcy, accepting the offer at once, and rather taking Bernard Glyn aback; "this is beginnin' to feel like work, as a mattach of fact! I shall be vewy glad of your assistance!" And Glyn had to keep his word.

Arthur Augustus took that hill very easily, but Bernard Glyn was puffing, and had a face like a beetroot, at the top.

"Thank you vewy much, Glyn!" said D'Arcy, as they came out on the flat. "That has prevented me fwom gwowin' uncomfortably hot, and I am vewy gwateful!"

To which Glyn made no reply—he had no breath left.

CHAPTER 10.

D'Arcy Spills the Milk.

"**H**ALT!" said Kildare, a couple of hours later. The pace of the party was slackening a little. They were keeping together, and so the pace, of course, was that of the slowest rider. All the juniors were beginning to feel the imperative demands of the inner man, and Kildare's order was received gladly enough, and instantly obeyed.

A tea-house looked invitingly out from green trees and flowers by the side of the dusty road. The juniors wheeled their machines into the garden, and left them in a group, and sat down among the little tables under the trees.

They had breakfasted once at St. Jim's, but they were quite ready to breakfast again now, and they did so, upon ham and eggs and bread-and-butter galore.

Fatty Wynn had been looking a little troubled in mind during the past hour, and he had confided to Figgins that cycling always made him extra hungry. Now his fat face beamed like the full moon, and he cast almost adoring glances at the pretty girl who waited on the travellers, and who brought him new-laid eggs without stint.

"By George," said Fatty Wynn, "this is a better way of spending the fiver than on railway fares!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I think I'll have a couple more eggs, miss!"

"Better have the whole farmyard while you're about it!" said Figgins. "That will make twenty-five, won't it?"

"Oh, come, Figgins—I've only had eight as yet!" said Fatty Wynn.

"By Jove, you must be simply famishing still!" said Tom Merry sympathetically. "Here, take this loaf to go on with!" And he pitched the loaf across.

It was intended to catch Fatty Wynn under the chin, but the Welsh junior dodged it, and it crashed down on the table just in front of Arthur Augustus, who was in the act of raising a glass of milk to his lips.

The swell of St. Jim's naturally gave a great jump, and the milk shot down in a stream over the front of his jacket. D'Arcy gave a yell, and the glass went to the ground with a crash and broke into a dozen pieces.

The elegant junior stood with the milk streaming down him, and his appearance was greeted with a roar of laughter from the rest.

"Bai Jove, my jacket's ruined!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who thwew that loaf?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I demand to know who thwew that beastly loaf?" shouted D'Arcy. "I am goin' to give him a feahful thwashin'!"

"Better mop up the milk," suggested Monty Lowther. "I'll lend you an oilrag, if you like."

D'Arcy did not accept that offer. He mopped up the milk with a silk handkerchief, soaking it into a limp rag, and hung the handkerchief up on a bough to dry in the sun. Then his eyeglass glimmered wrathfully upon the grinning juniors.

"Who thwew that loaf?"

"You've asked us that before," said Monty Lowther, shaking his head. "Haven't you got a new one?"

"I am not askin' you conundwums, Lowthah. Who thwew that loaf?"

"I don't know if I ought to tell you," said Tom Merry meditatively. "You are so terrible when you are roused, you know."

"I insist upon givin' the careless ass a feahful thwashin'!"

"Well, you won't go for me if I tell you?" asked Tom Merry anxiously.

"Certainly not! I shall take it as a great favah!"

"Sure?" said Tom Merry dubiously.

"Yaas, wathah! Who thwew that loaf?"

"Honour bright?"

"Yaas, certainly, honah bwight, deah boy! Who thwew that loaf?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I did."

"Eh?"

"I did," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "As it's too hot to wipe up the ground with you in addition, remember you've passed your word."

The juniors shrieked at D'Arcy's expression.

"I wegard you as having taken me in, Tom Mewwy!"

"Go hon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Howevah, I shall keep my word; but you have had a vewy nawrow escape of gettin' a feahful thwashin'!"

"Good! Can I leave off trembling now?"

"Pway don't wot, deah boy!"

Kildare rose to his feet.

"Time!" he said.

"Yaas, wathah, Kildare! Pway give me the account, deah boy—I mean deah gal!"

The dear girl smiled and made up the account, which came to a considerable sum, but it was Kildare who took it and paid it. D'Arcy was inclined to remonstrate, but it was part of his code never to dispute with his elders—unless, of course, it was a matter of personal "dig"—so he let it pass. Much refreshed by their ample lunch and long drinks of lemonade and ginger-beer, the young cyclists resumed their way.

Fortunately, there were no more punctures during the morning. Even Skimpole's bike, ridden by Herries, was holding out well. Considering that the machine belonged to a fellow who had wonderfully original ideas on the subject of machinery, it was in pretty good condition. Skimpole had a way of cleaning his bike by turning the garden hose on it, but he had fortunately forgotten to clean it for the last few weeks, and it had been put in order by combined efforts on the part of all the juniors. Tom Merry had provided a new front tyre, and Lowther a new back one, Manners had found a brake for it, and Herries a lamp, and Digby a pump. New pedals had been provided by Bernard Glyn, and a new chain by Clifton Dane. Upon the whole, Skimpole was likely to benefit to the value of a few pounds by lending his machine to Herries for the ride to Coventry—and perhaps that had had something to do with his coming round to the opinion that, as a sincere Socialist, he couldn't refuse to lend it.

Figgins and Kerr on their tandem, and Kangaroo and Glyn on theirs, travelled very easily, though at the hills D'Arcy several times renewed his kind offers to help Figgins. Figgins was utterly ungrateful for these offers—indeed, at the fifth or sixth repetition of D'Arcy's kindness, he was heard to murmur something about punching heads.

The midday rest was taken among the chalk hills of Buckinghamshire, in the midst of the beautiful scenery of that beautiful county.

Fatty Wynn did full justice to the dinner, and, indeed, so did most of the juniors, and when it was over no one was particularly inclined to move. The sun was very hot, and the juniors who were in caps looked enviously at the shady Panama worn by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"We ought to take it in turns with that Panama, you know," Fatty Wynn remarked, as he lay down to rest in the long grass of the inn garden after dinner. "Gussy can have my straw hat, and welcome."

"I am afraid it would not be a good fit, dear boy!"

"Suppose we put the Panama up to a raffle?" suggested Lowther.

"I should wefuse to have my hat waffled for."

"The voice of the majority, you know," said Tom Merry, shaking his head. "I was converted to Socialism last evening, and the effect hasn't quite worn off yet. Vox populi vox Dei. The hat will have to be raffled for."

"I uttably wefuse—"

"Under Socialism all Panama hats will be nationalised," said Manners. "None at all will be left to the aristocratic bloaters—I mean the bloated aristocrats. Hand over that hat, Gussy."

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort!"

Blake whisked off the hat and sent it spinning among the juniors. Arthur Augustus started to his feet.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Sit down, my son; we're taking it in turns with that Panama," said Blake. "Here's my straw. I take the Panama first."

"Oh, rats!" said Tom Merry warmly. "As leader of the party—"

"Come, talk sense, old chap!" said Kangaroo. "I don't think there's much doubt as to who's leader of the party—after Kildare, of course."

"I'm glad to see you take a sensible view of the matter, Kangy," said Figgins graciously. "Of course, a New House fellow—"

"More rats," said Kangaroo unceremoniously. "I was thinking of myself, of course."

"If you're going to talk piffle—"

D'Arcy picked up his hat while the dispute was still raging. He replaced it on his head with a grin.

"I'm willin' to let it go by turns when you've settled who's leadah, dear boys," he said. "I wathah think I sha'n't be bothahed about it."

And he was right. The dispute soon grew into an argu-

ment respecting the merits of the rival Houses at St. Jim's, and the rival claims of the Shell and the Fourth Form, and it looked like growing into a fistical encounter by the time Kildare gave the word to take the road again.

Fatty Wynn did not rise with the others. He stirred, but only rolled over to a more comfortable posture. He had eaten a dinner that surprised even his friends, and that dinner was avenging itself now.

"Hardly time to start yet, is it, Kildare?" he ventured.

"High time."

"What about another half an hour's rest, as it's so hot?"

"Stuff!"

"Better ride in the cool of the evening," argued Fatty Wynn. "It doesn't matter if we get in after dark. It's a pleasure to ride after dark."

"Get up!"

"By the way, I always ride faster after I've had a good rest. If you fellows go on, I'll take a bit of a snooze and scorch after you and catch you up," said Fatty Wynn.

Kildare laughed, and, stooping, jerked the fat junior to his feet.

"You won't stay behind," he said. "Get on your jigger."

"But—I—but—"

"Come on, Fatty," grinned Figgins. "You can take a turn on the tandem, behind, and I won't make you work too hard at first!"

And Fatty Wynn, somewhat comforted, climbed on the tandem.

CHAPTER 11.

Another Puncture.

THE afternoon was very warm, but the weather was splendid. Lanes and roads vanished under the whirling wheels, and those of the juniors who were beginning to feel the miles did not complain. Nobody wanted to be reminded afterwards that he had failed to "stick it out." D'Arcy was the most frank.

"Bai Jove, you know, I believe I am beginnin' to feel a little fatigued!" said Arthur Augustus, fanning himself with his Panama as he rode.

"Go hon!" said Blake. "You're not going to give in, if that's what you mean. Study No. 6 has to be in at the death!"

"Yaas, wathah! I was not thinkin' of givin' in, dear boy. I was merely statin' a fact. If you felt inclined to fwee-wheel me for a few miles, I should not object."

"No. I can see myself doing it."

"I will change with you for a bit, if you like, Wynn," said Arthur Augustus. "Figgins is such a stwong chap that he can easily get along without assistance."

Figgins chuckled.

"If I'm such a jolly strong chap, what were you offering to help me for all the morning?" he inquired.

"I only wanted to be obligin', dear boy. I am quite willin' to take a west on the wear seat of your tandem."

"The willingness is all on your side, dear boy," grinned Figgins. "I may be jolly strong when it suits you, but I should be jolly weak—in the head—if I lugged a duffer along in this sun."

"I wefuse to be alluded to as a duffah."

"Ass, then, or fathead."

"You are weally takin' an unfair advantage, Figgins, as the weathah is too warm for me to thwash you."

"That's lucky for—somebody."

They rode on. D'Arcy, as a matter of fact, was as good a rider as anybody in the party, and he was always in good condition. But the long miles were beginning to tell, and Arthur Augustus had a roated objection to exertion.

"Bai Jove, these tyres are holding out well," he remarked presently. "In such a cword of machines, one would expect a puncture ewevy now and then."

Tom Merry chuckled.

"I hope there won't be any more," he said. "You'll have to find a better excuse than that, old chap."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

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

"I fail to see any weason for this wibald laughtah."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was silence for a time as they pedalled on. No

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"Oh, leave that letter till presently, Gussy!" said Figgins. "You don't want to stop here reading a lot of piffle now!" "If you wegard a letter from my Cousin Ethel as piffle, Figgins—" "I don't," said Figgins, turning very red. "How was I to know it was from Miss Cleveland?"

punctures occurred. Figgins looked round suspiciously at Fatty Wynn.

"It's about time you put some beef into it, I think, Fatty," he remarked.

"Oh, I was working away!"

"It wasn't a good way, then; try some other way. I can't drag a prize porpoise about all the afternoon on my own, you know."

And Fatty Wynn sighed and set to work.

"What we weally want is a twailah," said D'Arcy. "I could wide vewy comfortably in a twailah behind Kangawoo's tandem."

"I don't think!" remarked Kangaroo.

"How many miles is it to Fennay Stwatford now, Kildare?" asked D'Arcy. Kildare was working away at a level pace, apparently without any exertion at all.

"About thirty," he said.

"Bai Jove!"

"We shall get into the north road at Fenny Stratford," Kildare observed. "I don't see why we shouldn't keep on as far as Stony Stratford, though, before we stop."

"Bai Jove, I do! I—"

"Oh, don't cave in, Gussy!" said Figgins. "Of course, you School House chaps don't count for much as cyclists, but you might think of the honour of the Fourth Form."

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Study No. 6 never gives in," said Blake calmly. "Gussy will keep on, or else he will be left for dead."

"Weally Blake—"

"Stick up for the honour of your House, Gussy," said Tom Merry encouragingly. "Of course, you Fourth Form kids are bound to get fagged, but really—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Stick it out," said Kangaroo. "Naturally a Cornstalk can ride you off your legs, but you ought to do the best you can for the Old Country."

"Weally, Kangawoo—"

"Keep your breath for riding," said Digby. "Get on!" "I insist upon stayin' at Fenny Stwatford to-night. You fellows can wide on to Stonay Stwatford if you like."

"Look here—"

"You see, Cousin Ethel—"

"What about Cousin Ethel?"

"She and her governess are at Fenny Stwatford, stayin' with some people, as she told me in her lettah this mornin'—"

"You utter ass! Why didn't you tell us that before?" exclaimed Figgins. "Of course, we shall stay at Fenny Stratford to-night."

"There's no special weason for you to stay, Figgins. In

fact, I wathah think it's a good ideah for you to go on to the next town."

"No fear!"

"I was thinkin'," explained D'Arcy, "that I would hire a twailah in Stwatford, and take Cousin Ethel in it if she would come. I have no doubt we can get a twailah there. And her governess can go on by twain and meet us at Coventry."

"Good wheeze!" said Tom Merry heartily. "I'll take Cousin Ethel in a trailer—"

"Stuff!" said Figgins. "I suppose we don't want a girl to have any accidents, do we? I shall take her, of course."

"I shall wufese to give my permish, for anythin' of the sort, Figgins. Ethel is my cousin, a fact you seem to sometimes forget."

"That's all very well," remarked Kangaroo. "I can't help thinking, though, that the strongest chap and the best rider ought to pull the trailer. Still, suppose we leave it to Cousin Ethel, and she can decide to have me if she likes."

"I wogard you as a conceited ass, Kangaroo."

"I won't tell you how I regard you, Gussy," said the Cornstalk blandly. "It couldn't be put into polite language."

Pop!

"Bai Jove, there goes Skimmay's tyre!"

Herries jumped off his machine.

"I'm sorry, you chaps. It's a puncture."

It was a general halt again.

Arthur Augustus wheeled his machine to the high hedge beside the road, and stood it there, and then stretched himself in the grass. He was not sorry for the puncture, for one, and Fatty Wynn was another one who welcomed it.

The swell of St. Jim's arranged his Panama hat nicely over his face to keep the sun off, and stretched his tired limbs luxuriously in the grass.

"Call me when the puncture's mended, deah boys," he said drowsily.

And he closed his eyes.

CHAPTER 12.

Left Behind.

It was very pleasant in the grass, in the drowsy summer afternoon, with the hum of insects and the occasional buzz of a bee lulling one to slumber. It was no wonder that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dropped off to sleep. With his broad-brimmed hat over his face, and his gold-rimmed eyeglass in the grass beside him, the swell of St. Jim's slept—how long he did not know.

He woke with a start at last.

He did not know what awoke him—unless someone had given him a push. But that did not seem possible, for when he awoke he was alone.

He sat up, the hat falling from his face, and looked round him, for the moment hardly remembering where he was.

The long, white road winding over the hill, the green hedges and the big trees clothing the ridges in the distance, recalled his memory.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated.

He was alone!

His companions had vanished, and had evidently gone on and left him there; but what was more serious was, that his machine was gone, too.

The handsome bicycle which had cost D'Arcy fifteen guineas cash, was gone—where?

He started to his feet, and looked around him in dismay.

"Bai Jove, they've gone on without wakin' me!"

He jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and looked up and down the road.

There was no sign of a human being beside himself. There were the tracks of many bicycles in the dusty road, but no other sign of a bicycle.

D'Arcy looked decidedly indignant.

Had the juniors of St. Jim's gone on and taken his bicycle with them, or had they left it standing by the hedge where he had placed it, to be purloined by some tramp?

"Bai Jove, this is wotten! I suppose they left my machine with me, and some wottah has collahed it! This is a vewy awkward fix."

What was to be done?

He was miles and miles from everywhere; he knew that. To walk forward was as bad as to turn back. He was out of the ride now, with a vengeance. And Cousin Ethel would be expecting to see him at Fenny Stratford!

It was too bad.

"I shall dwop the acquaintance of these wottahs," said D'Arcy aloud. "I no longah wogard them as fwiends. I

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NEXT
THURSDAY!

"TOM MERRY'S TRIUMPH."

shall be howwibly tired and dustay if I walk thirty miles. I shall have to twy to get a lift. I wogard them as howwid beasts! I suppose I had bettah be gettin' on."

It was clearly useless to linger there.

Arthur Augustus put on his Panama, and strode on up the hill.

It was a weary way.

He had already done what most lads of fifteen would consider a very good day's ride, and naturally his limbs were a little fagged, and the rest had not made them any easier. His legs were a little inclined to be stiff. The road was steep, and dusty. The sun was blazing.

The scenery was magnificent. But Arthur Augustus was in no mood just then to admire scenery. He would have exchanged that glorious panorama of hilly views with pleasure for the flattest road in Essex.

There was a snort and a yap behind him, and he jumped out of the road as a powerful motor went snorting by.

It was gone in a few moments, dashing gallantly up the hill, surmounting the crest, and disappearing over it.

It left behind it a track of flying dust and strongly-smelling petrol, which choked and blinded the swell of St. Jim's as he marched on again.

"Bai Jove!" sputtered D'Arcy. "I am jolly glad they've put a new tax on those wotten things. They uttably spoil the woods for pedestwians and cyclists."

When Arthur Augustus was at home at Eastwood House, he was greatly given to driving in Lord Eastwood's motor-car, and generally at a furious rate; but that was quite another matter. It makes an enormous difference whether you are inside or outside the car. When you are inside, the motor-car is a marvellous triumph of modern invention; when you are toiling after one on a bicycle, it is a detestable contrivance for rendering the roads impassable. Arthur Augustus sniffed, and even snorted, and the perspiration ran down his face. Fatigue, and petrol and dust, and the blazing sun, did not make the uphill march enjoyable.

Ting-ting-ting!

It was a furious ringing of bicycle bells behind him.

Arthur Augustus looked obstinate.

He was walking along in the road, and so, strictly speaking, he ought to have stepped aside while the cyclists passed him.

But he was on foot, and in a mood to regard everybody on any kind of a wheel as a road-hog, and a person to be defied.

Ting-ting-ting! It was a bicycle bell behind him. Ting-ting-ting!

Hoot-toot!

Buzzuzuzuz-z-z-z-z!

The swell of St. Jim's strode straight on, looking neither to the right nor to the left. He did not feel nervous about being run into—that would damage the cyclists more than himself.

Ting-ting-a-ling-ting!

"I wufese to get out of the way," murmured Arthur Augustus, his face very obstinate. "I disappwove of this woad-hog business. I think the pedestwian ought to be considahed first. There were pedestwians before there were cyclists or motorists, and they ought to have first considewation."

Ting-ting-ting!

The cyclists were very close now.

"Stand aside there!"

D'Arcy jumped.

It was the voice of Jack Blake!

He whirled round.

Then he stood rooted to the ground with amazement.

The cyclists coming up behind were the party from St. Jim's, whom he had believed to be miles and miles in front on the road to Fenny Stratford.

Kildare and Kangaroo were in the lead, and the rest pedalled on behind, and all of them grinned at the astounded swell of St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove! Blake! Tom Mewwy!"

Tom Merry was wheeling D'Arcy's machine. He jumped down.

"Gussy! So here you are!"

"Ya-a-as, wathah!" stammered D'Arcy. "I—I thought you were ahead."

"What's the idea?" asked Blake. "Had you decided to walk to Coventry?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"What did you mean by going on and leaving us behind?" demanded Monty Lowther.

ANSWERS

A Tale of Tom Merry and Harry Noble, the Australian Boy.

"L-leavin' you behind, deah boy!"
 "Yes, that's what you've done."
 "But—but when I woke up I found you gone,"
 stammered D'Arcy. "I thought you had left me behind,
 and somebody had stolen my machine."

"You ass!" growled Blake.

"But I—but—but—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake could contain his merriment no longer. He burst into a roar of laughter. Even Kildare was laughing.

D'Arcy looked from one to another in amazement and indignation.

"Bai Jove! Do you mean to say that you were wotting?" he demanded.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "You see, Gussy,

Kildare went to sleep in the trees while we mended the puncture, and we thought we'd get into the trees, too, when the puncture was finished, and see what you'd do when you woke up."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"And it was funny!" grinned Figgins.

"I do not wegard it as funny," said D'Arcy. "I think it was a beastly twick. You have made me walk five miles for nothin'!"

"Five what!" howled Blake. "It isn't a hundred yards from the place where we mended that puncture!"

"Wats! It seems like five miles, anyway. Weally, I feel absolutely exhausted, and I think one of you fellows ought to fwee-wheel me the rest of the way to Stwatford."

"Ha, ha, ha! Generous offer now going!" said Kangaroo. "Any takers?"

"I don't think!" remarked Kerr.

And there certainly were no takers. D'Arcy slowly mounted his machine. Figgins put a friendly hand on his shoulder.

"If you really can't ride, Gussy, I'll help you," he said.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass on the generous Figgins.

"I will thank you to wemove your hand," he said coldly.

"I am good for the west of the wun, I think, and I dare say I shall have to help you into Stwatford."

Figgins grinned, and they rode on. The pace was slackier now, and it was not at a very spanking rate that the cyclists rode into the quiet old streets of Fenny Stratford in the summer sunset.

CHAPTER 13.

Cousin Ethel Joins the Party!

"COUSIN ETHEL!"

A charming girl was looking from a little gable window of an old house as the dusty cyclists laboured up the street.

It was Figgins who caught sight of her first, and his cap came off at once, and in his enthusiasm he waved it round his head.

Cousin Ethel saw the waving cap, and looked at the cyclists, and seemed surprised.

"Bai Jove, it's Ethel!"

The girl waved her hand and smiled, and the cyclists rode on to the inn. Cousin Ethel was staying with some friends in the old-world town, and on the morrow she was to take the train for Coventry. She was surprised and pleased to see her cousin and his chums at Fenny Stratford.

At the inn, D'Arcy was looking thoughtful as he dismounted, and gave his machine into charge of the boots.

"It would be only the wopah thing to look in on Cousin Ethel this evenin'," he remarked, as they went into the inn.

"Yes, rather!" said Figgins heartily. "I'll come with you."

Arthur Augustus glanced at him.

"Thank you vewy much, Figgins, but I think it would be bettah for me to go alone."

"Oh, stuff!" said Kangaroo. "Of course, you can't very well take a New House fellow into a respectable house, but a chap about my size—"

"Oh, come off!" said Tom Merry. "Gussy can only take one fellow with him, and, of course, he's going to take his Uncle Tom."

"Wats, deah boy! I'm goin' to take—"

"Me," said Jack Blake. "I wonder you chaps could think anything different."

"Wats!"

"Look here, Gussy—"

"I'm goin' to take Kildare if he will come. You kids can go to bed. You'll want a good west to be up early in the mornin' to finish the wide."

They nearly massacred him on the spot—but the remembrance that he was Ethel's cousin restrained them. After a substantial supper, Arthur Augustus spent nearly an hour

upon his toilet, and when he finally issued from the inn he was a pretty picture to look at.

Kildare had declined the honour offered him, as he was a stranger to D'Arcy's friends, and also as he wasn't inclined to leave the juniors to themselves for any considerable time. D'Arcy was firm in his resolution not to take any of the "youngstahs." He wasn't often allowed to have his charming cousin to himself, but this time there was no gainsaying him.

The juniors looked after their machines while he was gone. They cleaned them and oiled them ready for the morrow, and Blake, in a burst of friendship, attended to D'Arcy's machine for him. This was exceedingly kind, as D'Arcy had declined to take him to see Ethel, and he hoped that Gussy would feel the "coals of fire" on his head. It was about ten o'clock when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came back, and he was wearing a pleased smile.

The juniors gathered round him inquiringly.

"Well?" said Blake.

"It's all wight, deah boys. I have had a wippin' evenin', and my fwiends were vewy glad I came. I sang the Pwize Song from the 'Meistersingah.'"

"Then they must have been gladder still when you went," remarked Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Never mind what you sang," said Tom Merry. "What about Cousin Ethel? Is she coming on with us in the morning?"

"Yaas, wathah! My fwiends are goin' to lend me a twailah, and I am going to take Ethel on to Coventry in it."

"You!" said Figgins, in a decidedly disparaging tone.

"Yaas, wathah! Why not, pway?"

"You'll find it hard enough to get to Coventry yourself, without taking a trailer. You'd better leave it to me."

"Wats! I certainly wufuse to do anythin' of the sort."

"Better let me have a go at it," said Kangaroo. "The best rider in a party ought to have a job of that sort."

"Did Cousin Ethel mention any of us?" asked Figgins, colouring.

"Yaas, wathah! She sent her kind wegarda."

"To—to me?"

"To all of you. My Cousin Ethel is a wemarkably good-tempered gal—"

"She is, rather!"

"Still, it's wemarkable how she can stand you chaps. Good-night, deah boys!"

And they went to bed.

They slept very comfortably in the old inn, and when they woke in the morning, many of them were conscious of a certain stiffness in the limbs that reminded them they had had a long ride the previous day. Fatty Wynn yawned when Kildare called him, and blinked out of bed at the captain of St. Jim's.

"I—I say, Kildare," he said slowly, "don't you think—er—think—"

"Sometimes," said Kildare, laughing. "I think it's time to get up now, for instance."

"Yes; but—but don't you think it would be a ripping idea to spend the day in this place, and start the journey again to-morrow? You see, it's an awfully interesting old place, and—and we needn't get up so early, and I could—Ow! Yow!"

Fatty Wynn rolled out of bed as Kildare tilted it. He landed on the floor in a heap of bedclothes, and lay for some moments grunting. Then he proceeded to dress himself, and made no more suggestions about passing the day in Fenny Stratford.

Arthur Augustus looked cautiously out of bed as Kildare came into his room. He was sharing the bed with Blake and Digby, space being limited.

"Not time to get up yet, is it, Kildare, deah boy?"

"Yes, quite."

"I have been wathah uncomfy, as Blake insists upon puttin' his wotten knees into the small of my back. Pewwaps it would be bettah for these boundahs to get up first, and give me an extra half-hour. It doesn't take me long to dwess, you know."

"Up you get!"

"You have not weplid to my wemark. An extwa half-hour—Blake, you wottah, take your wotten feet out of my back!"

Blake only chuckled, and with his feet in D'Arcy's back pushed the swell of St. Jim's out of bed. D'Arcy scrambled on the floor, gasping. He jumped up wrathfully, and groped for his eyeglass.

"Blake, you wottah, if you are lookin' for a feahful thwashin'—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy glowered, and Kildare left the room, laughing;

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and there were strained relations among the Fourth-Formers as they performed their toilet. Arthur Augustus made himself look very nice. He was to call for Ethel, and bring her away in the trailer, and he wanted to look his best. And he did look a picture when he had finished.

After breakfast he wheeled his machine out.

"Bai Jove, the boots has cleaned this jiggah up a treat!" he remarked. "Wemind me to give him a decent tip, will you, Blake?"

"Certainly," said Jack Blake.

D'Arcy pedalled down the old street. The juniors brought out their machines, and Kildare settled the bill. The party waited for Arthur Augustus to arrive with his cousin.

There was the buzz of a bicycle-bell.

"Here they come!"

D'Arcy, with a handsome trailer hitched behind his machine, was coming down the street at a rattling pace; and in the trailer, under a green sunshade, could be seen the graceful form and fair face of Cousin Ethel.

D'Arcy came to a halt with a flourish.

Cousin Ethel stepped out of the trailer, and replied cheerily to the enthusiastic greetings of the juniors.

Arthur Augustus beckoned the boots to him, and pressed half-a-crown into his hand.

"Thank you vewy much, too," he said, in his graceful way.

"Thank you kindly, sir," said the astonished boots.

Jack Blake chuckled, and D'Arcy looked at him as he prepared to mount his machine again.

"I fail to see any cause for mewwiment, Blake," he remarked. "The chap has cleaned up my machine wippin'ly!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You see, I cleaned it last night."

"Bai Jove!"

"Never mind; I dare say the chap doesn't get many half-crowns," grinned Blake.

"If you are weady, Ethel—" said D'Arcy.

"Certainly!" said the girl brightly.

Kildare was looking at the swell of St. Jim's in a rather doubtful way.

"Do you think you are up to that, D'Arcy?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Do you care to risk it, Miss Cleveland?"

"Oh, certainly! Arthur will soon get tired, and—"

"I should wefuse to get tired; I—I mean, I shall certainly not get tired, Ethel. Pway take your seat, deah gal!"

"You'd better let me take the trailer," said Figgins persuasively.

"Oh, you go and eat coke, deah boy!"

And the party started.

CHAPTER 14.

The Arrival in Coventry.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY had insisted upon his undoubted rights, as Ethel's cousin, of taking charge of the trailer. For the first few miles he pedalled on in conscious superiority, bestowing patronising glances upon the envious juniors. After that, however, he began to labour a little.

As a matter of fact, on the slope or the level the trailer was easy to negotiate; but when it was to be pulled up an acclivity, it occurred to Arthur Augustus that, on the whole, it would be wise to give somebody else a turn.

As the miles succeeded one another, D'Arcy glanced at his companions, ready to accept the first offer. But the offers were not forthcoming.

The juniors were determined to let Arthur Augustus reap as he had sown, and they carefully avoided his glances.

By the time the seven or eight miles to Stony Stratford were covered, Arthur Augustus had had enough of the trailer.

He looked like a freshly-boiled beetroot when the party halted in Stony Stratford for refreshment of lemonade and ginger-beer.

Cousin Ethel looked at him with concern.

"I am afraid you are tired, Arthur?"

"N-n-n-not a bit, deah gal!"

"Quite sure?"

"It's n-n-nothing to me, Ethel. I shall manage the west of the way all wight," said the swell of St. Jim's valiantly.

"I'm only feeling a little thirsty, that's all."

"Well, if you're quite sure—"

"Oh, it's all wight!"

And after a brief rest in Stony Stratford they resumed the way.

But the juniors, considering that D'Arcy had been punished enough, changed their tactics now; and, as a

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matter of fact, Figgins was anxious all the time for a chance to pull Cousin Ethel along.

At the first considerable acclivity, Figgins screwed up an ingratiating smile and turned to Arthur Augustus.

"Change over, Gussy?"

"Certainly not, deah boy!"

"The tandem would be better on the hill."

Arthur Augustus hesitated; but he thought he caught a grin on Monty Lowther's face, and that decided him.

"Thank you, Figgins, I can manage all wight."

"Oh, come off!" said Blake. "Give Figg a chance."

"I decline to do anythin' of the sort."

And Arthur Augustus pedalled away gallantly up the acclivity. Figgins winked to the others, and they all pedalled faster than before, simply walking away from the trailer. D'Arcy laboured on behind the rest, dropping further and further behind at every revolution of the wheels.

He put on a desperate spurt to overtake the rest, but he spent his strength in vain. He slackened again, and remained almost at a standstill.

"I think I will walk up the hill," said Cousin Ethel suddenly.

"If you would pwefere it, deah gal!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Very much."

And she walked. As the acclivity was more than a mile to the crest, it was likely to be a good walk. The cyclists ahead slackened down, and Figgins and Kerr came flying back on their tandem.

"It's all wight!" said D'Arcy defiantly. "Ethel pwefers to walk."

Figgins snorted.

"I suppose Miss Cleveland isn't going to walk all the way to Coventry?" he said. "I think we'd better take the trailer, Kerr."

"Yes, rather—"

"Weally, Figgins—"

D'Arcy was too exhausted to argue, as a matter of fact. And Cousin Ethel sweetly suggested, in her gentle way, that perhaps it would be better for the tandem machine to take a turn; so Arthur Augustus yielded, and Figgins and Kerr bore Cousin Ethel off in triumph.

Arthur Augustus remounted, and, as a matter of fact, he was greatly relieved to have no weight behind his machine. He overtook the party, and intended to ride at the side of the trailer, and have a cheerful conversation with Cousin Ethel, while Figgins did the work. But the trailer was the centre of a group of cyclists, and he had no chance of getting near it.

There was another rest for the cyclists at Towcester, and a longer one for dinner at Daventry. Then, as they rode on in the afternoon towards Dunchurch, Arthur Augustus suggested turning a few miles out of the way to have a look at Rugby.

There was a general grunt in response to the suggestion. The juniors were all getting tired, and looking rather eagerly for the arrival in Coventry.

"I think it's wathah a good ideah, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "I have a welation at school at Wugby, and we could get some tea there, powwaps."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry. "We'll get some tea in Dunchurch, and some supper in Coventry. Keep on, ass!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass."

"You'd better let me take that trailer for a bit," said Kildare.

The juniors had been taking it in turns, even Figgins being willing to give his place up at last. It was nothing to Kildare. Dunchurch was the last stop before their destination, and the sight of the spires of Coventry in the sunset was a very welcome one.

"Bai Jove! I am wathah glad to be here at last," Arthur Augustus remarked, as they rode into the town. "I am afraid the wide has been a wathah long one for you chaps?"

As a matter of fact, D'Arcy was leaning forward on his machine, and pedalling as if every push on the crank was a separate and distinct effort.

"Sit tight, cocky!" sang out a rude boy on the pavement.

D'Arcy started, and his companions chuckled. The swell of St. Jim's looked severely at Tom Merry.

"Pway sit tight, deah boy!"

"Eh?"

"I dare say you are tired, Tom Mewwy, but you must think of the cwedit of the partay. Pway sit up!"

"Why, you young ass, that kid was chipping you!"

"Wats, deah boy!"

"Hold on, you with the window-pane!" said another cheerful urchin, a few yards further on. "Why don't you glue yourself on?"



This picture illustrates an exciting incident which occurs in "The Barring of Bulstrode," in the splendid tale of Greyfriars College contained in this week's "Magnet." Now on Sale. Price One Halfpenny.

D'Arcy turned pink. There was no doubt this time as to the allusion to himself, and he straightened up in the saddle—for about a minute.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Sit tight, old chap. Keep up the credit of the party; you know."

"I wegard that boy as a wude person!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am not what you would call tired," said D'Arcy; "but at the end of a wide I find it easiah to pedal leanin' forward a little."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps you would like a turn in the trailer, Gussy?" suggested Monty Lowther.

"Pway don't be widiculous, Lowthah! I have been thinkin', howevah, that the wide one way is quite enough for you fellows, and we might as well go home by twain."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, the twain journey takes only one day, and cycling takes two. Of course, if I were alone, I should push wight on, and do it in one day!"

"Yes; I can see you doing it."

"We shall save a day by goin' home by twain," argued D'Arcy, "and that day can be spent in Coventry, explowin' the charmin' old place. I wegard it as the pwopah thing to do. We may nevah come to Coventry again, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway stop that widiculous cacklin'. I have firmly resolved to go home by twain, so as to spend the extwa day in this wippin' city. I can bowwow the money of my bwiothah Conway."

"Good!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "The longer we stay here, the better I shall like it, and I've no objection to going home by train. But it will come to a big figure."

"Well, Conway can stand it. You see, he has put off a huntin' twip to Canadah ovah this Tewwitowial business, and so he must be saving a feahful lot of money!"

"Here we are!" said Kildare, jumping off his machine.

"Bai Jove! Here's our hotel! I feel as if I could easily keep on as fah as Birmingham—don't you, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes; about as much as you do, Gus."

The juniors dismounted willingly enough. A tall, elegant-looking young man, very much like Arthur Augustus in features, was looking out of the smoking-room window, and he came out of the hotel at the sight of the cyclist party.

"So you've got here, Arthur?"

D'Arcy turned, his eyeglass upon his elder brother.

"Yaas, wathah, Conway, deah boy!"

Lord Conway helped Cousin Ethel from the trailer—nearly bumping into Figgins, who wanted to perform that task. Cousin Ethel looked very fresh and sweet, but the cyclists were decidedly warm and dusty. They were glad enough to get indoors for a wash and a brush, and they joined Lord Conway at a late dinner with very keen appetites.

Arthur Augustus presented his numerous friends to the son and heir of Lord Eastwood, and Conway gave them all a hearty welcome. He was curiously like Arthur Augustus, but perhaps a little "less so," as Blake expressed it. At all events, he was a very pleasant fellow, and the dinner was a great success.

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CHAPTER 15.

A Look at Coventry.

THAT evening the party from St. Jim's went to bed early. They were not tired, of course—there never was an amateur cyclist who was tired—but it was a good idea to get to bed early so as to rise early to explore the city on the following morning, so they went.

Kildare, who really was not tired, stayed up later, chatting with Lord Conway. The elder brother of Arthur Augustus seemed to have taken a fancy to the sturdy captain of St. Jim's. They had matters of interest to discuss, too. In a short time Lord Conway and the Territorials were to camp near St. Jim's, and it was very probable that the old school would see something of them there. Kildare, naturally, was greatly interested in everything appertaining to the Territorial Army, as a patriotic young Briton should be, and he had a very pleasant talk with Lord Conway till eleven o'clock sounded the time for bed.

Lord Conway had made full preparations for D'Arcy and his friends. He had not known the precise number that were coming, and perhaps the array of cyclists surprised him a little, but he was as hospitable as Gussy himself. Two large rooms had been packed with beds for the party, Kildare having a room to himself.

The juniors found their quarters very comfortable, and they slept the sleep of the just. They had intended to rise very early; but, as a matter of fact, it was nine o'clock when Tom Merry, the first to wake, sat up in bed.

"Hallo! What's the time?" he ejaculated.

There was a yawn from Arthur Augustus.

"Call me a little latak, deah boy! I can't get up at sunrise like this!"

"Ha, ha! It's nine!" said Tom Merry, looking at his watch.

"Imposs, deah boy! I feel wathah sleepay!"

"Up you get; no slacking here!" said Tom Merry severely, as he hopped out of bed. "Nice asses we shall look if Cousin Ethel's down first!"

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!"

And D'Arcy jumped up. He dutifully dragged the clothes off Blake, Digby, and Herries, and there was a roar of protest.

"Lemme alone, you young ass!"

"Gerroff!"

"I'm sleepy!"

"Pway, don't be beastly slackahs, deah boys! It's nine o'clock! I think this laziness in young fellows of your age is disgustin'!"

"Well, we're in Coventry!" said Blake, rubbing his eyes as he stepped to the window and looked out. The morning was bright and clear, and, as the room was a high one, the junior had a view over the roofs of Coventry. "Hallo, there are the three spires!"

"What three spiahs, deah boy?"

Jack Blake sniffed.

"Don't you know that Coventry is called 'The City of the Three Spires'?" he demanded. "I'm surprised at you, Gussy!"

"Lot of geography they teach you kids in the Fourth Form!" yawned Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs, that would not come undah the head of geography—I wathah think it would be topogwaphy."

"There are the three spires!" said Blake. "You can see them all from this window! Hallo, here's the noble duke!"

Blake alluded in this disrespectful way to Lord Conway, who came in fully dressed and with a cheerful smile upon his face.

"Ah, I see you're awake!" he remarked. "I was going to give you a call before, but Ethel thought you would be tired."

"Ethel—thought—we—would—be—tired!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Ethel," said Kangaroo, "thought—we—would—"

"Is Ethel down?" asked Figgins.

"Oh, yes; since eight o'clock!" said Lord Conway. "If you feel fresh enough after your ride, we'll have a trot this morning. I have an appointment after lunch, but I can give you the morning."

"Thanks vewy much, Conway! By the way, are these the famous three spiahs of Coventry? I dare say you know that Coventry is called 'The City of Three Spiahs.'"

"Is it?" said Lord Conway.

"Yaas, wathah! You don't mean to say that you haven't heard that, deah boy?" said D'Arcy, in surprise.

"Why you hadn't heard it yourself five minutes ago!" roared Figgins.

"Pway don't shout at me, Figgins. It throws my nerves into a fluttah. I cannot weply to a remark that is shouted at me. Are these the famous three spiahs, Conway?"

Lord Conway adjusted his eyeglass—which made him look

more like Arthur Augustus than ever—and looked out of the window.

"Yes, that's St. Michael's, and that's Holy Trinity, and that—er—that's a factory chimney," said Lord Conway, with a smile. "The third spire's out of sight from here."

Jack Blake reddened.

"Ha, ha, ha! I wathah think you had bettah look twice next time, deah boy, before affordin' topogwaphical information!" said Arthur Augustus.

Blake plunged his face into his wash-basin, and so changed the subject.

Lord Conway left them to dress, and in about a quarter of an hour the juniors were going downstairs—with the exception of D'Arcy, who was still before the looking-glass. Blake looked back at him.

"Don't you want any brekker, Gussy?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then why don't you come?"

"How can I come when I'm awwangan' my tie? Don't be widiculous, deah boy!"

"We shall start out pretty early."

"I am afwaid I could not allow you to start out till I'm weady to come, deah boy, in case you get into mischief! I— Bai Jove, I wegard it as quite wude of Blake to slide away down the bannistahs when I'm talkin' to him!"

D'Arcy came down ten minutes later, and found breakfast in full swing.

Cousin Ethel was seated at the table, with her governess on one side and Figgins on the other. D'Arcy looked expressively at Figgins, but the New House junior did not appear to notice it. He was very busy looking after Cousin Ethel, and seemed to be in the best of spirits—as, indeed, all the party were.

"Late, as usual, Arthur," said Lord Conway.

"Yaas, a minute or so, deah boy! I don't mind your beginnin' without me. I'm lookin' for a chair!"

"Waiter!"

"Pewwaps Figgins has finished?" Arthur Augustus remarked.

"Not a bit of it!" said Figgins cheerfully. "I'm not finished, and sha'n't be for some time! There's a chair for you!"

Arthur Augustus gave Figgins another expressive look, and sat down, furthest of all from Cousin Ethel.

D'Arcy, besides being generally late for meals, was a slow eater, and so he had hardly started when Lord Conway rose from the table.

"I don't want to hurry anybody," the young man remarked, "but it's the time we fixed for starting."

"We're all ready, I think," said Cousin Ethel brightly.

"I will go and put my hat on."

"I'm not weady!"

"You can stay and keep Fatty company, Gus," said Figgins considerably. "I know Fatty won't leave the table so long as there's anything eatable on it."

"I'm rather peckish this morning," said Fatty Wynn. "I don't know how it is, but I always seem to get hungry in this weather."

"I don't know about you fellahs goin' out alone," said D'Arcy. "You're in a stwange town, and—"

"Leave your breakfast," suggested Blake. "You oughtn't to have been late."

"I decline to leave my breakfast."

"I'll stay with you," said Fatty Wynn. "They're going to St. Michael's first, and we can cut on and catch them up there."

"Vewy good."

And the party left the hotel without D'Arcy. Fatty Wynn was keeping his waiter busy. D'Arcy finished his breakfast in the course of time, but Fatty Wynn was far from finished.

"You're not going yet?" said Fatty Wynn, looking up from his sixth or seventh plate as D'Arcy rose.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, hold on a minute—I shall be finished soon!"

"Vewy well, but buck up."

"These fish-cakes are ripping!" said Fatty Wynn. "I've heard that Coventry is famous for pork-pies, too. Won't you try a pork-pie?"

"I've finished, thank you."

"Oh, stuff! You haven't eaten half as much as I have!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Bai Jove, I should hope not!" said D'Arcy involuntarily.

"Waiter, waiter!"

"Yessir."

"Have you any pork-pies?"

"Yessir, prime, sir!"

"Bring me a couple, please."

"I tell you I don't want one, Wynn!" said Arthur Augustus, with emphasis.

Fatty Wynn nodded.

"That's all right," he said; "I can manage two."

"We're going to lunch at one," said D'Arcy, rather sarcastically; "wouldn't it be a wathah good ideah to give your jaws a bit of a west before lunch?"

"I get so jolly hungry in this weather, you know!" D'Arcy waited while Fatty Wynn finished the pork-pies. His politeness was great, but his patience showed signs of giving way.

Fatty Wynn grinned with satisfaction as he demolished the last pie.

"This is really ripping!" he said. "You ought to have one, Gussy!"

"No thanks, deah boy."

"Look here, I'll have another with you, if you'd like to have one after all!"

"No, no, no!"

"Well, don't be grumpy about it! I'm only thinking of you! They are simply ripping, and the loss is yours! Look here, if you won't have another one, you might wait while I do! I think I ought to have another!"

"I shall have to be off."

"I suppose you can wait five minutes?"

"Bai Jove, I won't!" said D'Arcy, his politeness quite giving out at last. "I wufuse to wait anothah minute! If you want to go on gorgin' on pork-pies, you can do it by yourself!"

"Oh, very well, I'll come!" said Fatty Wynn, rising. "Mind, if I get hungry before lunch it will be your fault."

"Oh, pway come on!"

They left the hotel. Arthur Augustus caught sight of his reflection in a shop window, and paused. Fatty Wynn, who was quite willing to make haste now that there was nothing more to eat, looked round at him impatiently.

"I say, D'Arcy, let's get on, or they may have left the place. We don't want to waste all the morning. You were in a hurry just now. What are you looking at in that window?"

"My wefflection, deah boy. I was thinkin'—"

"Oh, come on. We're late."

"I was wonderin' whethah I should buy a silk hat," said D'Arcy, unheeding. "A Panama is wippin' for widin' a bike in, but I don't know whethah it's sufficiently dwessy to walk about with a lady. What do you think?"

"I think we'd better be getting on."

"That's not the point. The weal question is, how would a silk hat look with a Norfolk jacket and knickahs?" said D'Arcy doubtfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You don't think it would be quite au fait?"

"I think you would look a bigger ass than you do now, old chap—and that's saying a lot. Come on!"

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Oh, I'm off!"

And Fatty Wynn marched off. And Arthur Augustus, tearing himself away from the shop window, followed him. He overtook his plump friend.

"Do you know the way to St. Michael's?" he asked.

"Blessed if I do! Let's ask somebody—or, better still, take a cab. I suppose you can stand the cab fare?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Here's a cab, then."

And they took it. In five minutes it deposited them at the door of St. Michael's.

CHAPTER 16.

Some Information for D'Arcy.

TOM MERRY & CO. were about to leave the place when Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn alighted from the cab. They were just emerging into Pepper Lane, greatly pleased with their inspection of the old church.

A strange city is Coventry—where the relics of a past that extends into the dim mists of antiquity are seen side by side with one of the most thriving of modern industries. The city of ancient buildings and of modern cycle-works is full of strange incongruities. On this account it is specially interesting to visitors, and so it was to the juniors of St. Jim's.

The Twentieth Century seemed to jostle the Dark Ages at every turn, and the legend of Lady Godiva seemed strangely out of place amid the whirr and buzz of strenuous manufacture.

Jack Blake caught sight of the late-comers as they came out of St. Michael's.

"Hallo, here's Gus!"

"I am sowwy I am so late," said Arthur Augustus. "I was detained at the hotel by Fatty Wynn, who insisted upon makin' sewewal more meals."

"Good old Fatty!"

"Are you just goin' into the place?"

"No, we're just coming out of it," grinned Blake.

"We're going over the new Rudge factory next; your noble brother's got permission."

"But I wanted to see this church. It's a wippin' place, and the spiah is the tallest of the thwee spiahs."

"Well, you can't climb the spire," said Kangaroo, shaking his head solemnly. "You would spoil your clothes."

"Weally, Kangaroo—"

"It's all right, Gussy," said Blake, linking his arm affectionately in his chum's. "I've had a good look over the place, and I'll tell you all about it."

"That will hardly be the same thing, Blake."

"Just as good, my son. The tower is in the Perpendicular style—"

"I should hardly have expected it to be howizontal—"

"Ass! That's a style of architecture. The length—"

"I wufuse to be called an ass."

"The length is two hundred and ninety-three feet—the length of the church, you know, not the tower. The tower is—is—is— What the dickens is the height of the tower, Kangaroo?"

"Three hundred and three feet," said the Australian, who was keenly interested in every antiquarian detail.

"Good! The breadth of the church is—is—is— What the dickens is the breadth of the church, Wallaby?"

"Hundred and twenty-seven feet."

"Good, again! It took twenty-two centuries to build—"

"Twenty-two years!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Well, I knew it was twenty-two something," said Blake.

"I thought twenty-two centuries would be a rather long time, too. It was commenced in—in—in—"

"Coventry."

"Ass! In the year thirteen—or fourteen—or fifteen—"

"Thirteen hundred and seventy-three," said Kangaroo.

"There you are, Gussy. You know all about it now, and without the trouble of walking about the place and getting a crick in the neck," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"That's all right. We're going over a big cycle-factory next."

"I would wathah—"

"Now, don't be obstinate, Gussy. I can tell you all about it as we go along. When you enter, the proper reflection to make is: 'If these ancient walls could only speak, what strange tales they could tell!' When you look from the tower you have to say: 'What eyes from these windows have beheld the barons of old riding in the panoply of war!'"

"I wegard you as an unpoetic ass, Blake."

"Your mistake; this is poetry. I know exactly the right reflection for the right moment, and I'm just the chap to show you round places full of historical interest," said Blake.

"Here, this way!" said Glyn, looking round. "We're going to have a look at Holy Trinity next. Come on, Gussy!"

"Wight you are, deah boy."

After an inspection of that fine church, the party looked at the ruins near it. Even Blake was impressed by the information that the ruins were those of a monastery founded in the eleventh century by Earl Leofric, the husband of the famous Lady Godiva.

"Jolly interesting old place!" remarked Kangaroo.

"You haven't anything quite so old in Melbourne, have you?" asked Monty Lowther innocently.

But Kangaroo only laughed.

"I suppose it's true about Lady Godiva?" he remarked meditatively.

"Yaas, wathah! I suppose you know Tennyson's poem on the subject? I know it by heart," said D'Arcy modestly.

"I used to wecite it when I was pwactisin' wecitations. I will wecite it to you as we go along if you like."

"You're awfully good—"

"Not at all, deah boy. It begins:

"I waited for the twain at Coventry—"

"I'll get on and join Figgins, I think," said Blake, quickening his pace.

Kangaroo and Glyn followed his example, and D'Arcy stopped reciting. He sniffed.

"Unpoetical lot of wottahs!" he murmured. "I say, Wynn, deah boy, where are we goin' next?"

"There's only one place, I suppose, next."

"Oh, I don't know. There are a gweat many places of interest in this city. I—"

"But there's only one place next!"

"Do you mean St. Maw's Hall?"

"No, I don't!"

"Or the cycle-factory—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—71.

A Tale of Tom Merry and Harry Noble, the Australian Boy.

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY'S TRIUMPH."

"Of course not! I mean somewhere for lunch."

"Bai Jove! It's not twelve yet!"

"I'm getting hungry."

"Pewwaps you'd bettah have a waitah followin' you about with a handcart with pork-pies on it," D'Arcy suggested sarcastically.

Fatty Wynn sighed.

"By Jove! I jolly well wish I could!"

"There's an automatic machine, deah boy. Get some chocolates."

"Well, I suppose that's better than nothing. I can get a dozen packets or so. Lend me some coppers, will you?"

Arthur Augustus handed over all the pennies he could find in his pockets, and hurried on after his friends, leaving Fatty Wynn clicking away at the automatic machine as if he meant to exhaust its contents.

CHAPTER 17.

A Run to Kenilworth.

COVENTRY was a place full of interest to the juniors from St. Jim's—too full for the ground to be got over quickly. The visit to the cycle-factory was postponed till the following morning, and as Lord Conway was occupied in the afternoon, the boys were left on their "own" until after lunch.

Lord Conway was engaged upon the question of the machines for the Cyclist Scout Corps, which were being built under his eye, so to speak; and he had asked Kildare to spend the afternoon with him, which the captain of St. Jim's was very glad to do—only being a little uneasy in his mind about Tom Merry & Co.

After all, he had really only come with the juniors to see that they did not get into any mischief on the road, and at Coventry his duties properly ended. There were enough of them, in all conscience, to look after one another, and upon the whole he thought that they might have the afternoon unwatched.

When the boys discovered what was in his mind, they were full of assurances that they would be as good as the little boys in a goody story-book.

"You see, Kildare, deah boy, I'll look aftah them," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Undah my eye they'll be all wight."

"I was thinking of taking them on a run to Kenilworth," said Kangaroo. "I'm bound to see Kenilworth while I'm here."

"Cousin Ethel will be with us," said Figgins. "We're not likely to get into any rows with Miss Cleveland in the party."

"Well, I suppose I can trust you?" said Kildare dubiously.

"Yaas, wathah! That wemark weally implies a doubt of our capacity to look aftah ourselves, Kildare; which is somewhat dispawagin'—"

"Better settle who's to be head-cook-and-bottlewasher for the afternoon," Jack Blake suggested. "That may save trouble."

"Yaas, that's a good ideah. I'm quite willin'—"

Kildare laughed.

"Good! I'll appoint a captain," he said. "It's quite understood that the orders of the skipper are to be obeyed?"

"Oh, yes; we'll play the game."

"Yaas, wathah! Who's the captain, Kildare?"

The juniors waited anxiously for the verdict. They did not quite understand the smile on Kildare's face.

"Miss Cleveland!"

"What!"

"Bai Jove!"

"You are all in charge of Miss Cleveland for the afternoon," said Kildare, with a wave of the hand. "Miss Cleveland, I hold you responsible for these youngsters."

Cousin Ethel laughed merrily.

"I will look after them," she said.

The juniors looked a little sheepish. But there was no getting out of it, and they had to accept the girl as skipper. Lord Conway and Kildare walked away, laughing. Arthur Augustus looked after them, shaking his head.

"Now, what's the programme for the afternoon?" said Kangaroo briskly.

"What price Kenilworth?" said Figgins.

"Or a run to Birmingham," said Monty Lowther. "I've never seen Brum. I want to see the city where Tariff Reform comes from."

"Leamington isn't a bad ideah," said D'Arcy. "I've got an aunt who lives at Leamington. You may have heard of my Aunt Adelina."

"About a million times," assented Blake. "But I don't think we want to fill up an afternoon visiting your Aunt Adelina—to say nothing of what your Aunt Adelina would

think if a dozen dusty bounders suddenly burst in on her in the quiet and select circles of Leamington."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Haven't you forgotten one thing?" asked Cousin Ethel sweetly.

"No. What is it?"

"Why, to consult your captain."

"Oh!" Jack Blake smiled a sickly smile. "Certainly."

"Yaas, wathah! I am weally surprised at you, Blake. Pway give us diwections for the aftahnoon, Ethel," said D'Arcy gracefully.

"We'll put it to the vote," said Cousin Ethel. "I should like to go to Kenilworth, but—"

"Hands up for Kenilworth!" shouted Figgins.

Every junior put his hand up; Figgins, in his enthusiasm, putting up two. Cousin Ethel smiled.

"I suppose we can get a lady's machine," she remarked. "I don't want to come in the trailer. It is only a short ride—about five miles."

"Yaas, wathah! I'll see about it at once, Ethel."

"Perhaps I'd better," said Blake. "You know what hired bikes are, and they'll work off the oldest and the crockiest machine on Gus."

"Weally, Blake, you can leave it to me. I'll be back in ten minutes—by the time Ethel has her hat on."

And Arthur Augustus was as good as his word. As the crowd of juniors gathered with their machines outside the hotel, Arthur Augustus walked up with a splendid bicycle. It was the latest thing in Sunbeams, and looked as new as a new pin. The juniors of St. Jim's gazed at it in amazement.

"My word!" said Blake. "Do you mean to say you got a machine like that on hire? How much? A guinea an hour?"

"No, deah boy. I—"

"Why, the chap must be off his rocker to let out a machine like that on hire," said Figgins. "It's a perfectly new machine."

"Yaas, wathah! You see—"

Jack Blake clapped his elegant chum on the back.

"Well, you beat this time!" he exclaimed. "That's a sixteen-guinea machine, as good as new. How did you do it?"

"You see, I haven't hired it—"

"What!"

"I've bought it."

"Bought it!" said Blake dazedly. "Bought it!"

"Yaas, wathah! I twied to get a decent machine on hire, but it was no good. Some of them were pweetly good, but not good enough for Ethel, you know."

"Oh, dear, Arthur!" said Ethel. "Have you paid—"

"That's all wight," said Arthur Augustus airily. "I've weferred them to my governah. I hadn't any tin to pay for the machine. My governah will send them a cheque. He's always sendin' cheques to people, you know, and one more won't make any difference. They knew I was Conway's bwothah, and that made it all wight. They would have let me bwing away all their stock if I had liked."

"But really, Arthur—"

"It's all wight, deah gal. The governah won't cut up wusty when he knows it's for you. Pway allow me to make you a pwesen of this machine," said D'Arcy, with a princely wave of the hand.

Cousin Ethel could not help laughing, and the juniors laughed, too. D'Arcy's way of solving the difficulty was very like D'Arcy. However, the machine was purchased now, and there was no help for it. It exactly suited Cousin Ethel; D'Arcy knowing the exact measurements of her own machine at home. The girl mounted, and the machine worked like a charm, and she could not but be delighted with it.

They rode out of Coventry on the southern road, with their faces to Kenilworth. It is a fine road for cyclists, and the juniors enjoyed the run immensely. Half way they rode over the famous Gibbet Hill, and then descended gaily towards Kenilworth.

"Hold on!" shouted Fatty Wynn suddenly.

"Eh! What? Why?"

"Hold on; you'll pass the place!"

Somewhat surprised, the juniors jammed their brakes on. They could not see the castle yet, but they imagined from Fatty Wynn's excited manner that he had caught sight of some historic relic of wonderful interest that they had nearly missed. The whole party dismounted.

"What is it?" demanded Tom Merry.

Fatty Wynn mopped his warm brow.

"Can't you see it?"

Tom Merry looked round him in amazement. He could see trees and hilly slopes and green fields, and a glimpse of Kenilworth ruins through the trees, but he could see nothing to cause the excitement of Fatty Wynn.

"Blessed if I can see anything," he said. "What is it, Fatty?"

"Well, you must be as blind as a bat," said the fat Fourth-Former. "Can't you see that?" He pointed. "Look! It's plain enough!"

"You—you utter ass!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in disgust. Fatty Wynn was pointing to a large signboard that showed at the roadside. It bore the legend:

"Refreshments."

CHAPTER 18.

The Misadventures of Arthur Augustus.

"REFRESHMENTS!"

It was an inspiring word—to Fatty Wynn. After the first moment of wrath, when they discovered what they had been stopped for, the juniors burst into a laugh. Fatty Wynn was quite serious. He, for one, didn't see anything comical in the matter.

"Is that what you've stopped us for?" said Kangaroo.

"Of course. I'm hungry."

"Ha, ha, ha! Are we to stop for tea, skipper?"

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"Yes, certainly, before exploring the ruins."

And the party had tea under the shade of the big trees, and an enjoyable tea it was. Fatty Wynn had done himself justice at lunch, but he came out very strong at tea-time, all the same. With bread-and-butter and fresh eggs, and jam and marmalade and watercress fresh from the stream, a sybarite might have enjoyed the meal. Fatty Wynn was not finished when the others were, and they left their bicycles padlocked in the garden, and walked on to the ruins, leaving the fat Fourth-Former to finish at his leisure.

Fatty Wynn continued his meal. His capacity astounded the waitress, and two or three other waitresses came peeping through the trees to see Fatty at work. He finished at last, looking extremely satisfied with himself, a little shiny, and very sleepy.

"I think I'll have a snooze under the trees before I go after them," he murmured. "I want to be pretty fresh for routing about in old ruins."

And he curled up in the shade in the long grass, and in about two seconds was fast asleep.

Meanwhile, Cousin Ethel & Co. had reached the ruins, and were exploring them with great zest—especially Kangaroo. The Australian lad was very interested indeed, and very keen to know the past history of Kenilworth, and Monty Lowther obligingly made up some for him on the spot. He was in the midst of a very interesting narrative of the doings of King John, Dudley Earl of Leicester, and Simon de Montfort, putting them all together in the story, when Arthur Augustus interrupted him.

"I am sorry to interrupt you, Lowthah," said D'Arcy, "but really I cannot allow you to take the swangah in this way."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Lowther.

"I refuse to do anythin' of the sort. I—"

"It's all right," grinned Kangaroo. "I was only letting him run on, Gussy. I was just wondering where he would stop."

After that Monty Lowther gave no more particulars of the past history of Kenilworth. Cousin Ethel, however, who had read on the subject, told Kangaroo much about it, and the Cornstalk listened with keen interest. They rambled over the ruins, and looked into the dark vaults, and Monty Lowther unslung his camera.

"I'm going to take home some pictures of this," he remarked. "Would you mind standing anywhere else but just in front of the camera, Gussy? I can take you at St. Jim's when I want to test the strength of the machine."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"If Cousin Ethel would sit in this old embrasure, among the ivy, it would make a pretty picture," said Monty blandly.

"I'll sit there, deah boy, if you like, and—"

"I said a pretty picture," said Lowther. "Not a study in duffers. Miss Ethel—"

"Certainly," said Ethel cheerily.

She sat down in the place indicated. The recess of the old wall was in a crumbling state, and D'Arcy was a little anxious.

"Sure you're quite safe there, Ethel?"

"Yes, quite, thank you!"

"I weally considah—"

"Sit still," said Lowther, squinting into the view-finder. "That's lovely. Can you remain like that a minute?"

"As long as you like."

"Weally, Ethel," said D'Arcy, starting forward as Lowther clicked the camera, "I do not considah you are safe—What are you makin' that wow for, Lowthah?"

"You utter ass!" roared Lowther. "You've spoiled the picture."

"I refuse to be called an uttah ass."

"Will you get out of the way?"

"Certainly not. I—"

Monty Lowther laid the camera on a block of masonry, and rushed at Arthur Augustus. Since he had taken up photography he had become even more enthusiastic than Manners had been of old, and to have his work interrupted in this way made him "wrathy." The swell of St. Jim's started back, caught his foot in a rut, and sat down violently upon the ground.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped.

Kangaroo pushed Lowther back.

"Rows are barred," he said laconically. "Skipper, call Lowther to order."

"Order, Lowther, please," said Cousin Ethel sweetly.

Lowther turned crimson.

"Sorry," he said, "but—that young ass is enough to turn a chap's hair grey."

"I decline to be alluded to as a young ass, Lowthah," gasped D'Arcy, staggering to his feet; "and if I had not promised Kildare to obey Ethel's ordahs, I would give you a feahful thwashin'. You have caused me to sit down violently, and I have torn a hole in my twou—"

"Order!"

"In my knick—"

"Shut up!"

"In my clothes," amended D'Arcy. "I wegard it as bein' your fault, you uttah wottah! I shall thwash you when we get back to the coll."

"Will you shut up now, you ass, and let me take the photograph?" roared Lowther.

"Yes, do be quiet, Arthur!" said Cousin Ethel.

"Weally, Ethel, you might let a fellow finish—"

"But we shall have to be home by dusk," said Ethel sweetly.

This was too much. D'Arcy almost snorted as he turned away. Then he suddenly remembered the tear in his garments, and swung back again, with his face to Cousin Ethel. His face was scarlet.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured, in great distress, "Tom Mewwy! Blake! Dig!"

"What's the matter?"

"I've torn a hole in my twousahs," whispered D'Arcy. "Can you help me?"

"Sorry; I forgot to bring my sewing-machine," said Jack.

"Pway don't wot, deah boy! I've torn a gweat gash in the knickahs, you know, on a beastly sharp stone," said D'Arcy. As a matter of fact, there was a tear about an inch long in his Norfolk knickers, and the jacket covered it, but D'Arcy was distressed. His chums were properly sympathetic. "What am I to do, deah boys?"

"Better back away, like a giddy horse, till you get round the wall yonder," said Tom Merry seriously. "Then cut and run for it."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I'll pin it up for you if you like," said Blake generously.

"I've got some pins, though I've left my sewing-machine at home. Look here, get behind the wall there, out of sight, and I'll collect all the pins the fellows have, and come and pin you up."

"You are a weal chum, Blake."

"Of course I am. Buzz off!"

Arthur Augustus backed away till a mass of masonry hid him from the sight of Cousin Ethel, who was contentedly being photographed. D'Arcy halted, out of sight, and anxiously waited for Blake to join him. Blake and Monty Lowther came along together, and both of them were well supplied with pins.

"Here we are!" said Blake cheerily. "Better lie down—over Lowther's knee—and I shall be able to negotiate the tear."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus obeyed Blake's directions, and Jack set to work with the pins. There was a fearful yell from D'Arcy, and he kicked and struggled wildly.

"Anything the matter, Gussy?"

"You—you uttah beast! You stuck a pin in me."

"If you're going to make a fuss about a little pain—"

"Pway be more careful, deah boy. Ow!"

"What is it now?"

"You have pwicked me again."

"You must be jolly clumsy to keep on getting pricked like that, Gussy. Never mind; it's done now. I've put three pins in."

"Vewy good!"

Arthur Augustus rose with great relief. Monty Lowther was grinning, but D'Arcy did not deign to take notice of his grins. They rejoined the rest of the party, and as Lowther had used up all his films by this time, the photography was at an end. The party explored the ruins contentedly for another hour or so, and then walked back to the place where they had had tea.

As they entered the shady garden, the first thing that caught their eyes was the plump form of Fatty Wynn fast asleep under the trees, with a handkerchief over his face. Kerr shook him by the shoulder.

"Groo-roo!" murmured Wynn. "Lemme alone! 'Tain't rising-bell yet."

"Ha, ha, ha! Get up, Fatty!"

Fatty Wynn sat up and blinked sleepily in the sunshine.

"By George, I've been asleep!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ready to go to Kenilworth Castle?" asked Fatty, rubbing his eyes. "I'm ready if you are. I feel better after a few minutes' nap."

The juniors roared with laughter. Fatty Wynn looked at them wonderingly.

"What's the joke?" he demanded. "I'm ready to start."

"Ha, ha!" gasped Figgins. "We've been—and come back. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You started first, I know—you mean you've come back for me."

"You young ass; you've been asleep two hours," said Kangaroo. "We're just going to start for Coventry, when we've had another cup of tea."

"M-m-m-my hat!" said Fatty Wynn, amazed.

"Never mind, I'll tell you all about it," said Blake. "Sit down, Gussy, and rest a bit; we can't carry you home, you know."

"I wegard that as a fwivolous wemark, Blake. Howevah, I will certainly west a little."

Arthur Augustus sank into a seat, and the next moment leaped to his feet with a fiendish yell.

Cousin Ethel looked at him in alarm.

"Good gracious! What is the matter, Arthur?"

"Ow—row—wow! Nothin', deah gal. I—I—I sat on somethin' sharp, that's all."

And Arthur Augustus bestowed a wrathful glare upon Blake and Lowther, who were nearly in convulsions. He understood perfectly well that this was a little joke of his chum's. He remained standing.

"Won't you sit down and rest, Gussy?" said Blake persuasively.

D'Arcy gave him a fixed glare through his eyeglass.

"No, Blake, I will not sit down and west," he said frigidly. "I uttahly wefuse to sit down and west."

And D'Arcy remained standing. Before he mounted his bicycle for the homeward ride, he contrived to withdraw into a quiet corner and pull out the pins Blake had so kindly fastened in his garments. And during the ride back to Coventry he did not speak a word to Jack Blake.

CHAPTER 19.

Good-bye to Coventry.

WE should require at least ten times the space at our disposal to follow the chums of St. Jim's step by step through their stay in the famous city of the three spires. And even then we should not have exhausted the points of interest in the capital of the Midlands.

Under the guidance of Lord Conway they visited the huge Rudge-Whitworth factory, a building of endless extent, the centre of a gigantic industry; and over many another hive of busy men their guide led them.

They saw Coventry at work and Coventry at play, and the end of the visit to the old yet modern city came all too soon. In the great factories Bernard Glyn could have spent weeks without tiring, while Cousin Ethel and Kangaroo found more to interest them in old-world churches and ancient streets. And wherever Cousin Ethel was interested, of course Figgins was interested too. D'Arcy's idea of spending an extra day in the city by returning on the railway instead of a wheel was voted a good one, and unanimously adopted. And Lord Conway cheerfully "played up" to his brother's suggestion that he should stand the "racket."

On the last afternoon about nine-tenths of what they had intended to see still remained to be seen, and Arthur Augustus had an idea.

"Suppose we wiah to St. Jim's, and ask the Head for another week?" he suggested.

"Suppose you don't play the young ass," said Kildare, laughing. "I can imagine what the reply would be. We're catching the train to-morrow morning."

"Weally, Kildare—"

"We'll come back another time," said Bernard Glyn. "I've got an uncle in Birmingham, and I'll get him to invite a crowd for a week-end some time."

"Bai Jove, that's a good ideah, deah boy!"

"Got many more things on the list, Blake?" asked Tom Merry.

Jack Blake looked over his list.

"Lemme see—yes—twelve more cycle factories—and Dunlop's place—a motor show—two old churches—three lots THE GEM LIBRARY.—71.

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY'S TRIUMPH."

of ruins—the works of Hamiltons', Ltd.—the effigy of Peeping Tom in Smithfield Street—ride to Stivichall—walk in Spencer Park—Stoneleigh Abbey—and about twenty more items."

"Bai Jove, we shall have a busy day to-day!"

They had. In the evening they gathered again, tired and contented, and feeling that they had done very well, considering, in their trip to Coventry.

Lord Conway had concluded his business in the cycle city, and was returning to London, and he came in the same train as the juniors. He had the pleasure of taking tickets for the whole party and their machines, and the amount he paid out was fabulous; but he was quite cheerful about it.

"Your brother's quite an old sport," Blake remarked to D'Arcy. "I say, I wish you'd get him to come to St. Jim's some time, so that we could make a little return for his hospitality."

"Yaas, wathah!" assented D'Arcy. "The Tewwitowials will be manoeuvrin' neah St. Jim's in a week or two, and we might entahtain them, you know."

"Good!" said Blake heartily. "I can see us entertaining a company of Territorials in Study No. 6—or a whole battalion, for that matter. No need to draw a line anywhere."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Jump in!" shouted Blake. "Buck up! Do you want to be left in Coventry?"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus made a rush for the train. He jumped in, and gasped for breath.

"All wight!" he exclaimed. "Come in, deah boy! The twain's not movin' yet."

Jack Blake nodded.

"That's all right; it doesn't start for five minutes yet."

Arthur Augustus looked at him fixedly.

"Was that a wotten joke, Blake?"

"Certainly not!"

"Oh! In that case I will ovahlook it."

"It wasn't a rotten joke," explained Blake; "it was a jolly good joke. See?"

"No, I don't see anythin' of the sort. I wegard you—"

"Now, then, no language," said Blake, holding up his hand; "Cousin Ethel's coming."

"I wasn't goin' to—"

"Hush!"

"I tell you I wasn't goin'—" shrieked D'Arcy.

"Quiet! Here's Cousin Ethel!"

"I tell you—"

"Calm yourself, old chap."

"Yes, do be calm, Arthur!" said Cousin Ethel.

And Arthur Augustus, feeling the hopelessness of attempting to justify himself, relapsed into silence, and did not speak again till the train was a mile out of the city.

Then Blake gave him a friendly dig in the ribs.

"Not rattly, old chap?"

D'Arcy's face relaxed.

"Well, weally, Blake, you know, you do exaspewate a fellow; but, upon the whole, I shall continue to wegard you as a fwind. We've had a wippin' time."

"We have, my son, we have!"

"I shall always remember Coventry," said Cousin Ethel softly.

And from the windows the juniors of St. Jim's and their girl chum looked back at the three tall spires till they disappeared from sight.

THE END.

NEXT WEEK!

"TOM MERRY'S Special Number."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

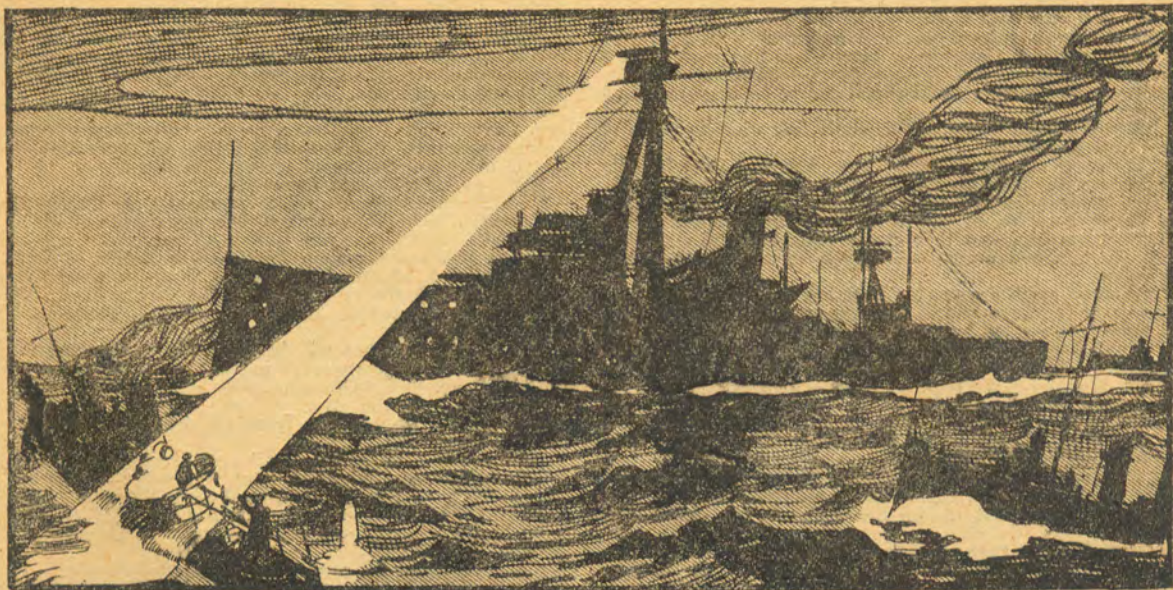
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PRICE ONE PENNY.

A Tale of Tom Merry and Harry Noble, the Australian Boy.

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BRITAIN AT BAY.



A Powerful and Stirring War Story.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Sam and Stephen Villiers, two cadets of Greyfriars School, by a combination of luck and pluck render valuable service to the British Army during the great German invasion. They are appointed special scouts to the Army, which is forced back on London by Von Krantz, the German commander.

At the time when this instalment opens, Sam and Stephen, with their friend Lieutenant Cavendish, R.N., and a small crew have gained possession of the German torpedo-boat *Prinze*, which has been beached on Sheppey Isle after an engagement. Having repaired her as far as possible, Cavendish's men manage to re-float her, and the crew turn their attention to the fight which is raging between the German and English fleets. The British are getting the upper hand, but the cruiser *Tees* is seen to be much damaged in a fight with two Germans, one of which she has managed to sink.

(Now go on with the Story.)

The Capture of Sheerness.

The second of the *Tees*' assailants, having suffered little, was pouring in a terrible fire upon her, to which she was only able to reply feebly.

"It's the *Tees*—she's in a bad way!" exclaimed Sam, who was standing beside Cavendish. "I'm blessed if she won't be on the bottom if something isn't done!"

"Here's our chance!" said Cavendish, ringing the engines to full speed ahead. "Man the fore and deck tubes, there! Stand to that six-pounder! Sit tight, all!"

Curving round, the captured torpedo-boat headed at an angle past the German cruiser, which was still three-quarters of a mile away, and sped along at bewildering speed, rolling dangerously owing to her light trim.

"It looks as if we weren't goin' to own our prize very long!" remarked Stephen philosophically, the wind whistling in his ears. "If the old she-cat doesn't roll herself under water that cruiser ought to blow us out of it, considerin' there's only one to make the attack on her. However, it's all in the day's work, an' if we can shove in a torpedo before we go down it'll be a score. Ain't there a British flag we could hoist? We've no colours up."

Cavendish made no reply. He was judging his chances with a keen, practical eye. The two big ships were still thundering away at each other, and the prize was swiftly nearing the German. All hands were at their stations, the torpedoes ready in the tubes. Suddenly Cavendish altered his course and headed straight at the enemy.

The boys' hearts beat high as the fateful moments went by before the range was reached. The vessel was hurling herself along at the highest speed—she was one of the swiftest of her kind. They wondered how it was they were not fired upon long before.

"Can't she see us?" exclaimed Stephen. "By George, she thinks we're one of her own flotilla, that's what it is! They never saw us bring her off!"

There was little doubt that was why the prize had been allowed to get so close. Though the German flag had been hauled down, and there were no colours flying, the vessel was recognisable at a glance as one of the German type, quite different in build and shape to the British torpedo-boats.

"They're signalling to us!" cried Sam, as a semaphore began to jerk swiftly on the German ship's afterdeck. "Gloriana! I'll bet she's orderin' us to go an' torpedo the *Tees*!"

"Let 'em signal," said Cavendish grimly. "Those that make mistakes in action have to pay for it. Stand by there! Shut down! Let go!"

The torpedo leaped out from the bow-tube, the swift vessel swerved, the crew of the tube leaped aft to the other one, and away went that as well, straight for the German ship.

Almost simultaneously the Germans saw their mistake. They recognised that something was wrong, although the torpedo-boat was plainly one of their own fleet. The cruiser's quickfiring were turned on her, and sent a hail of shell and shrapnel hurtling on their errand.

It was too late. Before her guns could line fairly on the racing vessel, now speeding towards the *Tees*, a great geyser of water sprang up against the German's side, and heeled her over violently. The first torpedo had taken her full amidships, and the second, just catching her stern, finished the work. She had no armour-belt. The two explosives tore the very ribs out of her, and she heaved up one side and began to sink rapidly, turning helplessly round and round in a circle, her guns spitting uselessly in all directions.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—71.

A Tale of Tom Merry and Harry Noble, the Australian Boy.

"TOM MERRY'S TRIUMPH."

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Before her assailant was fairly out of range the German cruiser had gone to the bottom, and the seething waves closed over her.

"Well shot, forr'ard there!" said Cavendish coolly. "I won't forget your work, Watson, when we're back with the Fleet—nor any man on board here."

"Gosh, what a bit of work!" exclaimed Stephen, fairly dancing on the deck. "And done with an old cripple that was German an hour ago! Cheer, cheer!"

They did cheer. The craft was rapidly nearing the Tees, which now remained motionless on the sea, showing by her terrible scars how hard the fight had gone with her while it lasted. One of Cavendish's bluejackets had rooted out a pair of hand-flags, and by his officer's instructions was signalling with them to the British cruiser as they raced up to her.

"Better let 'em know. It'll puzzle 'em what to make of us," said Cavendish.

They swept up alongside the Tees, her grey sides broadly streaked with blood that had run from the scuppers.

Her commander and crew were staring at the new-comer in blank surprise, to see a German torpedo-boat sink a German warship, and then steam gaily up with a British crew on her, and a couple of cadets in khaki and riding breeches.

"Who on earth are you? What boat's that?" hailed the captain of the Tees, one of whose arms was hanging useless at his side, wounded by a splinter of shell.

"Don't know her name or number, sir," hailed Cavendish, saluting. "German torpedo-boat of sorts. They beached her on Sheppey. We took her with a prize-crew, made her good, and tried her at the cruiser yonder, as we saw she was givin' you trouble, sir. Hope it wasn't a liberty."

"Liberty! If it hadn't been for you we should soon have been at the bottom. Who in the world are you?"

"Lieutenant Cavendish, sir, late of No. 667. Gunners from the Orion. And Lieutenant and Sergeant Villiers, of Greyfriars, who first hit on the idea, sir, and helped all the way."

"Oh! You're that crew, are you? I'm no longer surprised," said the Tees' commander heartily, "nor at anything else you might do, by Jove!"

"It's to a volunteer engineer I've got on board that the real credit's due, sir," hailed Cavendish. "It was he who put her in order like a brick, and gave us the chance. Come up, Mac!" he called down the hatch. "This is your show. We're alongside the Tees!"

"Havors," said the Scotsman's voice from the engine-room, his over-Tweed speech seeming to grow broader now he was at sea, "dinna be throwing compliments about, laddie! I like it fine here below, and I've no call to be thanked. These engines want nursing."

"Well, Mr. Cavendish," called the captain, "you and your crew have done a fine piece of work. You've my thanks on behalf of my ship's company, and I'll see you have the admiral's as well. That craft of yours looks very light. Are you fit for any service without repairs?"

"To tell the truth, sir, we've only about enough coal to get back with. We had to jettison the rest."

"Then go into Sheerness and re-fit there. The place is ours again, and you have nothing to fear from the German squadron. You may also be able to give some help to Colonel Blake's troops ashore, if the Germans appear by the water. Do you know how our troops have fared?"

Cavendish gave him the news in a few words of what was happening on Sheppey when they left, and the torpedo-boat turned and steamed swiftly away for the Medway's mouth, leaving the Tees making good her damage and signalling to the British flagship in the northern deeps.

"Gosh, it's a knock-out for the whole German cruiser squadron!" said Sam. "See, the fight's over! They've captured three to the north there, two more are ashore, and six are sunk. The big ships have wiped out the German first-class squadron, an' there are the rest of our smaller lot drivin' the rest of the cruisers in towards the Swale! Not one of 'em 'll ever get out of that!"

The battle, hot and fierce as it had been, was over. The heavier ships were silenced—only those hotly pursued were trying to escape to the northward. Those that remained, crippled and unmanageable, had struck their colours under the deadly fire that centred on them. To the southward, the lesser German warships, shattered and beaten, had been driven in over the shallows of the Kentish flats, where there was no escape for them among the range of shoals, and one after another—stranded and helplessly exposed to the British fire—was forced to strike its flag. The Germans were swept from Thames-mouth, and the great water highway to London was once more open.

"We've command here now!" cried Sam, waving his cap. "All the admiral needs is a whip at his masthead, to show he's flogged them from the seas!"

"And time enough!" said Cavendish. "They've played The Gem Library.—71.

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY'S TRIUMPH."

A Tale of Tom Merry and Harry Noble, the Australian Boy.

Old Harry here, and held the Thames too long. Now, if we win back Sheppey and Sheerness by land, as Blake and Vincent are bidding fair to do, we shall fairly hold the front gate of England again."

"There's some smart scuffling ahead of the Old Country before she sees those spike-headed terrors finally off the premises, though," said Sam. And just then the engineer put his head up through the hatch and looked round. "Hallo, Mac, why didn't you come up before? You never showed yourself, an' we owe this trip entirely to you."

"Well, you weren't showing yourselves for credit, neither, laddies," said the engineer, "but just to report to you captain body. I never fash myself about the bridge-deck outside of business, an' the smell of an engine-room's just meat and drink to me. Dod, if ye knew how I whiles weary for it when I'm ashore! So ye torpedood the Dutchman, Mr. Cavendish? I ca' that a verra creditable performance from a wallowin' walnut-shell like this, wi' half the ballast out o' her. Are we bound in for Sheerness?"

"Ay, ay, Mac!" said Cavendish.

"I'd like fine to have another smack at those beggars that called me a spy. D'ye think there's any chance of it?"

"That's what I was just thinking," returned Cavendish, his eyes fixed on Garrison Point, as Sheerness, sprawling over the left-hand lip of the Medway's mouth, grew nearer and nearer as the vessel steamed on her course. "The Germans have occupied it; they're making a stand against our troops there."

"Blake and Vincent will be attacking it from the landward side, to the eastward," put in Sam. "We shall slip in at the rear of the Germans, and they won't be expecting any attack from the river. There's a couple of machine-guns aboard that ought to be useful, and we haven't used 'em yet."

"We'll see what we can do," said Cavendish, "as soon as we get there. We shall have the water to ourselves. I'd like to have a hand in the final scrap there."

"An' I'd like to run across that muckle oaf, Von Weiss-haus," said the engineer, "that wanted to hang me. I'd let him feel—"

"A rope round his own neck?" suggested Stephen.

"A good Scot's boot to his Dutch hurdies!" growled Mac, diving back to his engines. "He's ower ugly to hang."

Rapidly the Medway mouth opened up, and the torpedo-boat, checking her speed, ran in, her guns manned and her crew at quarters. The wreck of the Blaine Castle still partly choked the Channel, but it was no hindrance to the passage of small craft. The two German warships that had been blocked in were now moored well up the river above Port Victoria, and had been stripped of their crews and guns to strengthen the German fleet outside, which was now driven from the sea. There was not so much as a picket-boat of the enemy's to challenge the incoming torpedo-boat.

All the way they heard the rattle of musketry ashore, and the sounds of strife, now lulling, now breaking out afresh, but of the battle itself, or which way the day was going, they were able to see next to nothing. All listened and looked ahead with keen anxiety. Only one thing was certain, the Germans of Von Weiss-haus's command had massed themselves in Sheerness, and were making a great stand there against the British force that had raided the island.

Whether the fight round the town had been going on long, or had just started, the seafarers did not know. Along the front, however, in view of the riverside quays, a battalion of Prussians, with fixed bayonets, were running at full speed, evidently bent on reaching some point in the fight.

"Let 'em have it!" ordered Cavendish; and both the quick-firing machine-guns opened fire with a whirl. The six-pounder shells, hurled among the Prussians at short range, created immense havoc. The enemy were not looking for an attack from that quarter. A panic-seized them, and they broke in disorder and fled for shelter.

"More coming down the quay roads!" cried Stephen.

Again the guns spoke, and yet again. Consternation reigned among the Germans ashore. The troops in view of the vessel were hurried down by-streets out of her reach, and passed on to the front to meet the British troops. A howitzer was suddenly dragged down one of the quay streets to tackle the torpedo-boat, but before it could be brought into position Cavendish's gunners concentrated their fire on it and wrecked it. Then the attempt was given up altogether, and the uproar and din in the middle part of the town reached the river, and told plainly of the struggle that was in progress.

"They're stormin' the town!" cried Sam. "They've fought their way in! It's all up with Von Weiss-haus now!"

Parties of fleeing Germans came into view, broken and scattered, seeking to save themselves along the riverside. British cheers were heard from every quarter, and companies of the gallant Warwicks came charging down

one of the streets in full view of the river, driving a force of Hanover infantry before them. The crew of the captured craft chafed with impatience.

"I can't stand this! Let's be in at the death!" cried Sam. "Where's that dinghy?"

"We'll all go!" said Cavendish, no less eagerly. "There's no more work for us to do here. Arm yourselves, men, and now for a shore-party!"

The prize dropped, and her anchors hurriedly. It took two journeys of the canvas dinghy to the jetty and back to land the crew, and not the least keen to get at the Germans was the Scots engineer. With a cheer the little party charged down the street, and came upon the rear of a Prussian company that was holding a strong barricade against an attacking force of the London Scottish. There was a sharp hand-to-hand struggle, the Prussians broke and fled, and a few minutes later a full battalion of the Rutlands came pouring down the street, with Spencer heading the first company.

"Hallo!" he cried. "You here? How the dooce did you get in? Here's a slump in German shares—what!"

"How's it going?" exclaimed Sam. "Have we got 'em by the short hairs? Can you corner 'em and make a job of it?"

"Job of it? It's done man! This is the fag-end. Blake's pinned half of 'em between here and Queenborough, driven 'em to the water-side, and half are wiped out. The rest have surrendered and piled their arms. We've just been dislodging those that made a stand in the streets. Blake's on his way here, an' Vincent's coming up with the rest of the Rutlands!"

"Hurrah!" yelled Stephen, throwing up his cap. "By gum, here he comes now, and Blake, too!"

"They're goin' to hoist the old flag an' picket the town," said Spencer. "Sheppey's won back to the colours, lock, stock, and barrel."

Colonel Vincent, with his staff officers, and Colonel Blake beside him, came riding up the street at a canter. They pulled up at the end, and the former stared as he caught sight of the party from the torpedo-boat, and at Sam.

"Why, it's my new aide-de-camp!" he cried. "Blake, here are our mutual friends from the Orion, and I'm devilish glad to see 'em. I thought you were shot down, youngster!"

"No, sir, only my horse," said Sam, wondering how he was going to explain his sudden disappearance. "It was rather awkward."

"You're just in time to help at a little ceremony," said Colonel Vincent, with grim good-humour. "Push on to the fort there, and let's have that rag down!"

It was true. The proud flag of Britain was to take the place of the German Eagle. Britain had scored her first success against her insolent invader, and the key to London was won back.

Hoisting the Flag.

The soldiers pushed forward to the old round fortress at Garrison Point. It was no longer armed with guns, being obsolete; but it had been the headquarters of the German staff, and from the tall flagstaff in the fort-yard the German standard floated still.

Of the staff themselves, none remained. Von Weisshaus lay dead before the town, struck down by a stray bullet shortly before the end of the fight; and his subordinates, their forces scattered and broken, and themselves hemmed in and captured, had perforce surrendered. Only a company of Hanovers remained at the fort; and these, seeing resistance was useless, surrendered, and were disarmed.

"Bring in one company from each regiment," ordered Colonel Blake.

And, smartly as on parade, a detachment of the Rutlands, Warricks, London Scottish, and Bedfords filed into the fort-yard and formed up.

"Lads," cried Colonel Blake, "you have won back Sheerness for your King, and his flag is going aloft in place of the rag that has flown too long!"

A cheer broke from the troops, and was echoed all down the street of the old town.

And not least of the credit is due to the men of the Orion, their lieutenant, and the plucky young cadets of Gyffriars, who are known to all the British Army. It is to the 47's that we owe the victory of Shorlands, and I shall give the honour now to one of the bluejackets. Which is the first gunner?"

The big, bronzed sailor stood out and saluted.

Down with that flag, gunner! Lieutenant Spencer, you had the colours."

And over hand the bluejacket rapidly hauled down the German flag, amid another rousing cheer. Spencer stepped forward with a Union Jack, which the gunner deftly bent to the flag-halyards in place of the other.

"Present arms!" said the colonel, and the rifles obeyed as one. "Ready, gunner?"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Stephen suddenly stepped forward, and, seizing the German standard, rent it asunder from end to end, and cast it down. Swiftly the grand old Union Jack fluttered to the flagstaff's peak, and floated proudly in the breeze.

The rifles crashed in salute as the ball-cartridge volley was delivered in the air by each of the assembled companies.

Britain had scored her first big success against the insolent invader. The key to London was won back. The old flag was in its place—on top.

The cheers and the rattle of the salutes had hardly died away, the Union Jack floating proudly over Sheerness once more, when the troops were formed up and marched out. The two colonels remained behind, sending their staff on, and called the boys before them, with Cavendish.

"Gentlemen," said Colonel Blake, "I wish to give you my heartiest thanks on the spot for the help I have had from you. None of you are strictly of my service, nor under my command, and yet it is in great measure due to you that those colours are flying aloft. Your pluck and skill in bringing off the big guns from the Orion are beyond praise. We owe that to Lieutenant Cavendish."

"I didn't do much, sir," said that cheerful person. "We all backed each other up."

"You did enough to save Shorlands. I wish to include in my thanks the gallant bluejackets of the Orion, and especially the gunners, who made short work of the German batteries. I am mentioning all here in my despatches to the headquarters."

"And I," said Colonel Vincent, "have to thank Lieutenant Villiers for his work at Hartz Ferry. Though only with me for so short a time, he did signal service, particularly with my troop of Dragoons. My congratulations, lieutenant. By the way, I'm still wondering what became of you after your horse was shot. I thought you were killed at the time, a long way back; and yet, here are you and your Naval Corps in Sheerness ahead of us."

"You see, sir," said Sam, rather confusedly, "I was left behind when my horse was shot—as I mentioned just now, I appreciated the honour of being your aide-de-camp immensely—but, unluckily, there wasn't another horse to be had. I couldn't keep on foot, and there I was—left in the lurch. So, by way of making myself useful, I joined the naval party again, and we put to sea. But that was Lieutenant Cavendish's affair."

"Put to sea!" exclaimed Colonel Vincent.

"We captured a German torpedo-boat, whose crew had run her on the sands, sir," said Cavendish. "And when we got her off on a rising tide, we did a little work with the Cruiser Squadron, and then had to hurry in here for want of coal. We were in time to catch a few of the Germans in the rear with our guns, and then we made a landing-party. However, the boat's our prize now, and I think she's still good for something."

"The devil she is!" exclaimed Blake, "Do you mean you repaired her and took her into action?"

"We took her into action, sir, which was easy enough once afloat. The real credit of it is due to this gentleman, who's a liner engineer, and not only helped in the capture, but mended a crippled ship in half an hour."

"Well done, indeed!" said Colonel Vincent. "You ought to be in the R.E., sir. It's their loss that you are not."

"Tut! It was nothing of a job for any man who's been through the Clyde shops," said Mac modestly.

"You're from the North—eh?" said Colonel Vincent, with a smile. "Then, it's not so surprising. By Jove, Blake, did you see how those London Scottish lads with my brigade walked through the Hanover infantry? One of the Kaiser's crack regiments! And a Volunteer Corps made hay of them! Well, we must get on; there's work to do yet."

The two commanding officers joined their staffs at once, and Bob Cavendish and the boys left the fort-yard. The former sent back his bluejacket crew to resume the charge of the torpedo-boat.

"What are you going to do, Mac? I hope we aren't going to lose you. But you'll want to get back to your Volunteer Scouts at Gravesend, I suppose?"

"No," said Mac. "I'm not altogether officially attached to the corps. I've taken a bit of a fancy to your tin cigar-box out there, and the smell of her engine-room's fine an' homey. If you've no objection, I'll just get back aboard her. There's many things want doing to her, sir."

"Good man! If that's your idea of bliss, go ahead! And look here, Mac, you might run her into the dock, and make free of the dockyard stores. This was one of our naval stations, and there should be everything we want at the yard, if the Germans haven't scooped it all."

"Man, that's fine!" said Mac, rubbing his hands. "I'll

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"TOM MERRY'S TRIUMPH."

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just take the pick o' those stores, and coal up as well—if coal there is. She was a Dutch ship an hour since, but I'll have her as fit as a British one in no time when I get to work on her."

"And run up the White Ensign, too," said Stephen. "We'll call her Prize No. 1. The Converted Sausage."

Mac looked rather black at this; but the idea dawned on him presently, and a smile spread over his features, like a ripple on a burn.

"Man, it's a joke you're making," he said, chuckling. "I ken those Dutchmen live on sausages, but now there'll be decent-like food on her. Man, you're a comical fellow."

Mac chuckled all the way to the jetty; and while he was being rowed off to the torpedo-boat, they could hear him still laughing till he dived into the engine-room.

"He's a nailing good chap that," said Stephen. "We mustn't lose him. Where are we bound now?"

"Let's see what's happened ashore first, and what they're going to do," said Sam. "They're sure to find us a billet. There's Spencer ahead. Ahoy, lobster! Pull up!"

"Well, tarry breeches," said the Rutlands' subaltern, as they overtook him, "I suppose you think you're sort of land-on-sea birds now? Don't put on too much side over it. Not but what it was a rare bit of work, and we all envy you. Feels a bit lonely, don't it, now the fightin's at an end here?"

"Well, we're all pretty tired," said Sam, "and I don't know that we shall quarrel with a rest. All of us have been at it for a good long stretch. I'm pretty empty in my inside, except for a sausage that I found aboard the torpedo-boat. Where are all the German troops?"

"Most of 'em are wiped out," said Spencer pithily. "They knew they were cornered. Their C.O. was desperate, and for a long time they wouldn't take or give quarter. It wasn't till the bulk of them were stretched, and their forces split up and broken to bits, that they surrendered. I don't think they expected we'd accept any surrender either."

"I say, it's a rare piece of work, isn't it, considering Blake and Vincent together hadn't many more men than Von Weisshaus?" said Stephen.

"The Germans had been losing all day, you see, and they were a bit demoralised. Their guns were all lost at Shorlands; we captured the last two outside the city here. They were beaten back at Hartz Ferry by Vincent, and again when Blake and Vincent joined. They'd lost very heavily. Our chaps had a long score to wipe out, and they fought like devils—besides being splendidly led!"

The three comrades accompanied Spencer and his company outside, and once clear of the town they understood, quicker than any words could tell them, how complete their victory had been.

The slaughter was appalling, and at the chief point of defence the dead lay thick—in most cases in the drab uniform of the Kaiser's army. They had been given no time to rally and pull themselves together. The avenging

British force—Warwicks, Volunteers, Bedford, and Rutlands—had pressed on them mercilessly, followed them up, and annihilated them at the final encounter when the farthest point of the island was reached.

Towards Queenboro' a large number of surrendered Prussians and Saxons, marshalled and disarmed, were under guard of the Warwicks; and elsewhere the whole place was taken orderly possession of, and put in a state of defence—not that any further trouble from any Germans was likely.

News came that a fresh body of Volunteers had crossed the Swale, and were pushing on to give any help that was needed, with a section of the Army Service Corps and some big guns to man the fort defences that commanded the seaward side. Most of the new-comers were put to fatigue duty—burying the dead, and taking charge of the prisoners.

"We've captured all the German stores, prisoners, and ammunition," said Spencer, "and a rare haul it is, for they were well supplied—besides our own belongings that they'd taken possession of; and there's the dockyard as well."

It was not long before the war-worn troops, relieved from duty by the new-comers, were at their ease round the camp-kitchens, where many of them dropped asleep while food was being prepared. Many of them, after the strain of their defence of Shorlands, were worn out with fatigue and want of food. An ample meal was soon ready for every company, and the men did full justice to it.

Cavendish, Sam, and Stephen were welcomed at the officers'-mess of the Rutlands, and were glad to get the square meal that they had long lacked. Stephen declared that it was worth the whole three days' fighting to tackle Christian food again, after living on pellets out of boxes. The boys fell asleep in the open after the meal was over, and did not move for three hours.

Cavendish was the first to rise. Like most sailors, he had long learned the habit of getting the utmost rest from the shortest quantity of sleep, and, in fact, seldom slept more than four hours at a time, no matter how tired he was. He awoke now, more refreshed than the others would have been after an eight hours' stretch of slumber. Sam and Stephen were still deep in sleep, and he let them be.

"I'll just get aboard the vessel, and see how Mac's getting on," he said to himself. "Might as well doss there as in the open air, too. We must have been pretty tired!"

He was on his way to the Naval docks when a burly young Volunteer colour-sergeant of the London Scottish came hurrying out of the chancel-doors of a church, and clapping his hat on, accosted Cavendish eagerly.

"Do you know where Colonel Vincent is?" he cried. "Down at the fort, I think. What's the hurry?" said Cavendish.

"I've just seen something I think he ought to know—though it isn't likely it can be helped. I've been up the church-tower there—it gives a rare view right over the Medway and up the Thames—and I could see the Germans in the Isle of Grain on the move."

"Did you, though? Where to?" said Cavendish, as they hurried towards Garrison Point.

"Why, they're collecting boats and lighters all along the Thames' foreshore, and bringing the men up ready to embark. They won't attack us, of course. They must mean to hook it."

"By Jove!" said Cavendish. "They're on the other bank of the Medway-mouth, which opens between us and them. They held that side of the river while Von Weisshaus held this."

"And now he's dished they're in a tight place!" said the Volunteer. "They're the only Germans left south of the Thames, which is three miles wide, and which cuts them

off from their main army over in Essex. They've got to get out somewhere, or a British force'll soon turn up and catch them in the rear."

"They'll try to ship themselves across the mouth of the Thames, and reach their own army. Vincent can't stop them, for the Medway cuts him off. But if he can signal to the Fleet—"

"There isn't a ship in signalling-distance. Our cruisers have gone eastward after the remnant of the German squadron to clear the sea of them."

"Have they, by Jove?" exclaimed Cavendish. "Then I'll tell you what — But there's Colonel Vincent coming this way now!"

(Another long instalment of this splendid serial in next Thursday's "Gem Library." Order it in advance.)



HOW DO YOU DO?

WHOM TO WRITE TO: The Editor, "GEM" Library, 23-9, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, London, who will be pleased to hear from you.

"TOM MERRY'S TRIUMPH."

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The Editor

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