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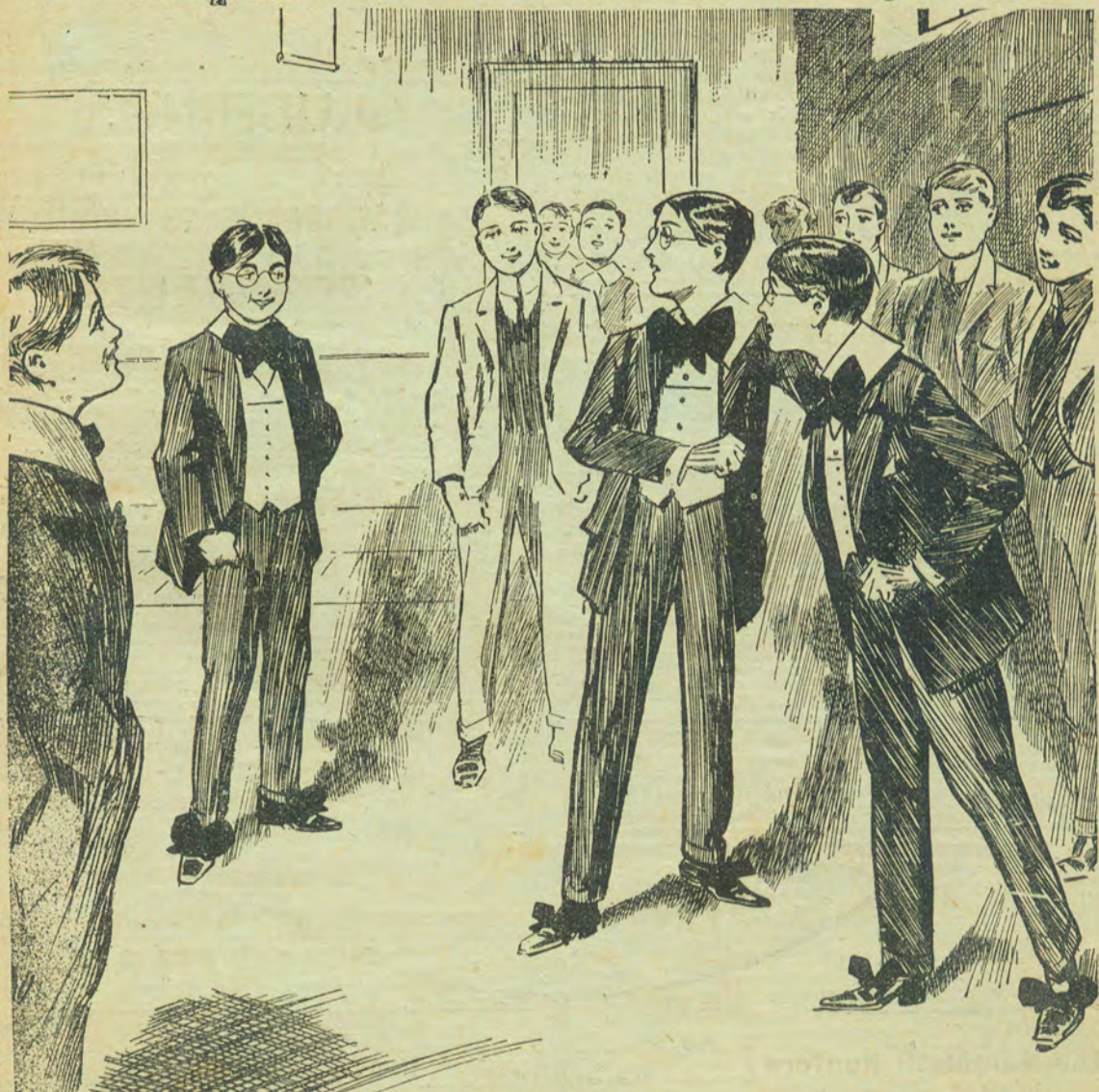
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"The Territorials at St. Jim's."

IN NEXT
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PLAYED OUT!

A Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and the Grammarians.
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

The New Boys.

"BLESSED if I like this!" growled Frank Monk.

He was walking up and down the platform at Rylcombe Station, with his hands in his pockets, and a frown upon his face. His chums, Lane and Carboy, of the Grammar School, were with him, and they were looking equally annoyed.

"Yes, it's rotten, and no mistake!" Carboy agreed.

"Rotten isn't the word," said Lane—"it's beastly! Slinger has done this on purpose, of course. Why couldn't he send a senior to meet the new kids?"

"It would have been much better form."

"Of course it would! He's messed up our cricket practice for the afternoon by this rotten sending us here. Come to

that, what's the need of meeting new kids at all? Can't they walk from the station alone?"

"They might get into a row with the St. Jim's chaps."

"That's more likely to happen if we're with them than if we're not."

Frank Monk grinned.

"You're right, Laney. The fact is Slinger doesn't like the son of his head-master any too much, and now dad's away, he's been a bit heavy on me."

"I jolly well wish Dr. Monk would come back," grunted Carboy.

"Well, I can't say I like the autocratic rule of the Slinger-bird," said Frank. "Still, it won't be for long. What I don't like is being sent here like this to meet a parcel of silly new kids."

A DOUBLE-LENGTH TALE OF TOM MERRY NEXT THURSDAY.

No. 73 (New Series).

"How many are there of them?"

"Two—brothers, so I understand—major and minor, named Johnson or Jimson, I think."

"Pair of toads, I expect," growled Carboy, who was rather unreasonably inclined to visit the responsibility of his spoiled half-holiday upon the new boys. "Fancy picking a half to come to school!"

"I dare say they came when they were sent."

"Well, they'd better mind their p's and q's, that's all. I shan't stand any bosh from them, for one," said Frank, laughing. "After all, it's not their fault. Hallo, there's the train!"

It was steaming into the station. The Grammarian youths looked discontentedly along it as it stopped. Several carriage doors opened. From one of them stepped two youths, in dark brown, one of them carrying a bag, and both of them wearing peculiarly large and round spectacles, which gave their faces an owlish aspect.

Monk looked at them and grinned.

"Great Scott! Are they the new kids?"

"Pretty pair—I don't think!" grunted Carboy.

"Well, they can't help their looks. Let's go and speak to them."

The two new boys stood upon the platform, looking round them with a rather bewildered air, as if quite new and strange to the place.

"Is this Rylcombe, porter?" asked the elder of the two, in a squeaky voice.

"Yes, sir," said the porter, touching his cap, in expectation of a tip.

"Is there a Grammar School near here, porter?"

"Yes, sir—Rylcombe Grammar School, sir."

"Very good! Will you—er—carry that bag for me to some vehicle, porter, and I will present you with a gratuity?"

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir."

"My hat!" said Frank Monk. "What a voice! It matches the chivvy. Let's speak to 'em, and get it over. I say, kid!"

The elder youth turned to him, blinking through his glasses.

"Did you address me?" he asked.

"Yes, I did, specs."

"Ah! And why did you address me?"

"We belong to Rylcombe Grammar School."

"Oh, indeed! I am afraid Rylcombe Grammar School isn't much class, Reginald," said the new boy, turning to the younger of the two.

Reginald shook his head, and his glasses nearly fell off.

"Doesn't look like it, does it, To—Bertie?"

Frank Monk turned very pink.

"Look here—" he began warmly.

"I am looking at you," said Bertie. "I am glad to meet you. What is your name?"

"Frank Monk."

"Very good! My name is Jimson—Bertie Jimson—and this is Jimson minor, my younger brother. We are new boys."

"You look it! I don't believe there ever were kids of your cut before," said Monk.

"That is a rather personal remark, Monkey."

"Monk, you ass."

"Eh?" squeaked Jimson major.

"My name's Monk, you ass."

"Very well, Monk, you ass."

"Dummy! My name's Monk—Frank Monk."

"This chap is off his rocker, Reginald. First he says his name is Monkey, and then Monk you ass, and then—"

"Right off it!" said Reginald. "He looks it, too."

Monk & Co. exchanged glances.

"Better wipe up the platform with them as a start," suggested Carboy. "They look as if they're going to give trouble."

"May as well begin here," said Lane.

"I don't know; we were sent to meet them."

"Indeed, it was very kind of you to come and meet us," said Jimson major. "I suppose you cannot help being unpleasant. I have heard that the boys of Rylcombe Grammar School are very noisy and rude, and—"

"You'll hear something else soon," said Monk darkly. "You'll hear yourself drop on the platform. Look here, you're under my wing at present, so I won't pulverise you. Come along, and I'll show you to the school."

"Thank you! Will you carry my bag, and save me the expense of hiring a vehicle?"

"No fear!"

"Really, Monkey—"

"Monk, you silly jossler!"

"Well, Monk you silly jossler—"

Frank Monk laid a heavy hand on the new boy's shoulder.

"Look here, 'nuff of that! Any more little jokes, and I shall wipe up the platform with you. You hear me?"

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NEXT THURSDAY.

"THE TERRITORIALS AT ST. JIM'S."

A Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By Martin Clifford.

"I am not deaf, Monkey."

"You will have it, then!" roared the exasperated Monk, peeling off his jacket and slinging it to Carboy to hold.

"Put up your fists."

"What for?"

"I'm going to give you a licking."

"Impossible! I cannot fight with glasses on."

"Take 'em off, then."

"If you insist—"

"That's for a start!" said Frank Monk, giving Jimson major a tap on the nose. "Now, where will you have the next?"

"Here, hold my glasses, Reginald!"

"Certainly, Bertie."

Jimson major handed his spectacles to Reginald, and went for Frank Monk. Monk met him confidently, but his confidence vanished in a moment.

His guard was swept up, and a tap on the nose placed him in a sitting position on the platform before he knew what was happening.

Jimson major replaced his spectacles, and blinked down at him.

"I hope I have not hurt you," he squeaked. "I fear my fist came into somewhat violent contact with your nose."

"My hat!"

Frank Monk sat dazed, staring at the new boy.

From his appearance, his absurd manner of expression, and his squeaky voice, he had taken Jimson major for a spooney of the spooniest sort.

But that tap on the nose had undeceived him. A fellow who could hit out like that could not be regarded as a spooney, by any means.

Frank Monk rose slowly to his feet.

"Go for him!" said Carboy. "That was a fluke, of course."

Monk shook his head.

"You're not going to let him off!" exclaimed Lane, in amazement.

"Rats! We didn't come here to fight," said Monk. "I suppose we don't want a stand-up fight on the platform? The gym at the school is a better place for that."

"Well, yes, that's so."

"Let's get off. You're not such a muff as I took you for, Jimson major."

"Thank you. If my mamma hadn't taught me to be very truthful, I'd make the same remark to you," squeaked the new boy.

Lane and Carboy chuckled, and Frank Monk smiled a sickly smile.

"Oh, come on!" said Monk. "I want to get rid of you, and get back to the cricket."

And the juniors left the platform.

CHAPTER 2.

Jimson Major Plays Cricket.

"HALLO!"

"What are they?"

"Where did you pick them up?"

"Look here, Monk, what do you mean by bringing those animals into a decent school?"

Such were the polite remarks of the Grammarian youths as Frank Monk and his chums brought the new boys into the playground at the Grammar School.

The Grammarians gathered round in force, looking curiously at the new boys, and passing the most free-and-easy remarks upon their personal appearance, their manners, and their probable ancestry.

Jimson major and Jimson minor blinked round through their spectacles, quite unmoved. There certainly wasn't any of the nervousness natural to new boys about them. One might have supposed that they were quite accustomed to school life.

The rude remarks of the Grammarians became a little more personal, the boys trying what they could do to shake the serenity of the new-comers; but that serenity was not to be shaken.

"Where did you dig them up?" exclaimed Gilson, in disgust.

"I found 'em on the platform at Rylcombe," said Frank Monk. "Choice specimens, ain't they? Ripe?"

"Yes, rather."

"Are they for the school museum?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear me," said Jimson major, "what a lot of boot-boys are employed in this establishment!"

"Eh? What?" said Gilson.

"But where are the pupils?" pursued Bertie.

"Pupils!"

"Yes; where are they?"

"Why, you horrid ass," exclaimed Hanks, "we're the pupils!"

"Rot!" said Jimson major.



Hake banged furiously at his study door. "What are you young demons doing?" he yelled. "We're clearing up the study, Hake," came Jimson major's voice in reply. "You told us to!"

"Rats!" said Jimson minor. "You can't stuff us up! You're not going to make us believe that you're pupils in a respectable school."

The Grammarians looked at one another.

Passing remarks on new boys was quite natural and proper, but for new boys to take up the same line, and pass personal remarks on the old hands, was an innovation, and one the Grammarians did not like.

"Of all the cheek," said Gilson, "I think this takes the biscuit."

Jimson major blinked at Frank Monk.

"Is it, straight?" he asked. "Are these the pupils?"

"Of course they are, fathead."

"Then I am afraid I shall not stay in this school," said the new boy, shaking his head. "My papa and mamma would not like me to stay among these persons. What do you think, Reginald?"

Reginald shook his head in his turn.

"I quite agree with you, Bertie."

"My hat," said Frank Monk, gasping for breath, "I don't think I've ever seen new kids quite like this before!"

"Off their rockers!" said Carboy.

"For goodness' sake let's get to the cricket!" said Lane.

"We've brought the animals here, and they can go to their cages by themselves!"

"Cricket!" said Jimson major. "Do you play cricket here?"

"Yes, ass! Look at that field! Doesn't that look like cricket?" bawled Carboy.

Jimson major blinked at the field. That field was the pride of the Grammarian hearts. When the Grammar School was first built, the playing-fields had been some distance from the school, but later on Dr. Monk had acquired a large piece of land closer at hand, and it was laid out as playing-fields. There were several games in progress on the ground, but the new boy did not seem impressed.

"Well, can't you see 'em, Specs major?" demanded Lane.

"Yes, I can see 'em," said Jimson major. "But—"

"But what?"

"Do you call that cricket?"

The Grammarians simply gasped. If they prided themselves upon anything more than their football, it was upon their cricket, and the new boy's question took their breath away.

"My word!" said Monk. "What shall we do with 'em?"

"Jump on 'em!" said Gilson.

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"THE TERRITORIALS AT ST. JIM'S."

A Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
By Martin Clifford

"Give 'em the frog's-march!"

"Knock their heads off!"

"Here, hold on!" squeaked Jimson major, "I did not mean to offend anybody. I only asked a civil question. I'm looking for information. Do you call that cricket?"

"Perhaps you could show us some points in cricket?" sneered Hanks.

"Yes; I dare say I could."

"Then you jolly well shall!" exclaimed Frank Monk hotly. "Just come over here and handle a bat, and if you don't make a good show, we'll duck you both in the fountain!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We'll give you a chance. But you won't do so much bragging here, I can tell you! If you don't play up like Fry and Ranji, look out for squalls!"

"But I only asked a civil question."

"Oh, ring off!"

"Yes; but you haven't answered my question yet. Do you—"

"Cheese it!"

"Call that—"

"Shut up!"

"Cricket!" finished the new boy triumphantly.

Monk did not reply. He led the way to the junior side of the cricket-ground, and a crowd of excited Grammarians followed. The new boys were in a rather serious fix, there was no doubt about that. By loftily patronising the Grammarian cricket they had touched the Grammar youths on the raw, so to speak, and the crowd meant business. Unless the new boys justified their position by first-class cricket, there was no escaping the threatened ducking.

But they did not seem at all nervous. They smiled serenely as they accompanied the crowd to the field. They dumped down their bags outside the scoring-tent, and blinked round the field.

"Now then, will you bat or bowl?" asked Monk sharply.

"Oh, I wish we had Fatty here!" murmured Jimson major. "We'd show 'em some bowling!"

"Eh? What's that?"

"I'll bat, thank you!"

"Good! You can take my pads."

"Thanks awfully!"

"And pick out a bat to suit you."

"You're too good!"

"Not at all!" said Frank Monk grimly. "I'm going to give you a chance. Fair play's a jewel. If you can play cricket, you can jaw about it. If you can't, you'll have to learn not to jaw. I warn you!"

"Good! I can play a little."

"You'll have to play more than a little if you want to avoid a ducking."

"Go it, my son, send me a ball!"

"I'm going to. Look out, that's all."

Jimson major selected a bat that suited him, and took up his position at the wicket. Monk went down to bowl.

The Grammarians stood back, and looked on with interest. The new boy did not look as if he were cut out for a cricketer, by any means; but appearances are often deceptive. Jimson major and Jimson minor were, as a matter of fact, Tom Merry and Kerr, of St. Jim's, respectively. Their masquerading as new boys at the Grammar School was part of a deep-laid plot designed by the juniors of St. Jim's to "put the Grammar cads in their place."

Tom Merry was the finest junior batsman at St. Jim's, and his disguise made no difference to his skill. He took off his glasses to bat, that was all.

Monk took a little run, and sent the ball down.

Click!

The bat met the round red ball, and it went on its travels. Where it went, the Grammarians did not see. But the smash of a pane of glass in the distance told them. They turned their heads, and stared at the jagged hole in the glass of a distant greenhouse.

"My only hat," said Carboy, "that was a swipe!"

Jimson major smiled serenely.

"Sorry for the glass," he said. "It will have to be charged in my bill. Any more coming on, Monkey?"

"Chuck me another ball!" shouted Monk.

He took the new ball in hand, and carefully calculated the next delivery. He sent the ball down with the force of a four-point-seven shell, but he found the batsman quite ready.

Click!

The ball was a boundary—and more than a boundary. It had shot into the midst of a game played by a senior team on the next pitch. Hake, the bully of the Grammar School, who was fielding at slip, was seen to give a sudden jump.

Then he twisted round, and glared towards the juniors. The cricket-ball—which had caught him in the ribs—fell into the grass.

"Who threw that ball?" he roared.

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you young cads!"

"Sorry!" said the new boy. "I batted. I didn't mean it for you, of course!"

Hake gritted his teeth.

"You young liar!"

"Rats!"

Hake could hardly believe his ears for a moment. That a new junior would dare to say "rats" to him was scarcely credible.

He glared at Jimson major, and then ran towards him. His comrades called to him to come back and field, but he never heeded them. Straight towards the new boy he ran, with clenched fists and gleaming eyes.

CHAPTER 3.

Trouble on the Cricket Field.

JIMSON MAJOR did not seem to be afraid. He jammed his spectacles on his nose again, and watched the Grammar School bully as he came.

Hake was within a few paces of him, and already reaching out a hand to seize him, when he uplifted his bat.

"Keep off!" he squeaked.

"You young hound, I'll—"

"Keep off, or I'm afraid you'll get hurt!"

But Hake did not keep off, and he did get hurt. As he sprang towards the new boy the latter thrust the end of the bat forward, and it caught Hake on the chest. Hake sat down violently.

Jimson major blinked at him.

"I warned you, you know," he said calmly.

Hake remained sitting where he was for some moments, dazed, and too enraged to speak. The Grammarian juniors were grinning round him. Jimson major could have made good his retreat, but he showed no desire to do so. He stood blinking down at the fallen bully.

Hake scrambled up at last. He was livid with rage. Without a word, he hurled himself at the new boy.

But as he did so, Jimson minor put out a foot, and Hake tripped over it, and fell towards Jimson major.

The latter gave him a gentle side tap, which rolled him over, and once again the Grammar School bully went to grass.

"My hat!" gasped Frank Monk.

"Hake'll smash him!" said Carboy.

Hake rose again, slowly. Jimson major flourished his cricket-bat.

"Keep off!" he exclaimed. "I warn you that you'll get hurt if you don't! I'm rather dangerous at close quarters."

Hake glared at him, and at the bat. He did not feel inclined to push matters further just then. He was hurt, and he had to deal with a junior who was not afraid. His captain calling him angrily to return gave him a chance of retreat.

He shook his fist at the new boy.

"You wait a bit!" he hissed. "I can't attend to you now. I'll see you later!"

"Right you are, kid. Send in your card any time you like, and I'll give my footmen instructions to admit you," said Jimson major.

The juniors giggled, and Hake ground his teeth and strode away.

"My word," said Frank Monk, "you are a cool beast, you Jimson!"

"Thank you! Any more bowling?"

Monk laughed.

"Not just now. You've shown that you can play. We'll let you off for your cheek. You slanged Hake a treat. He's a bully and a beast, and we don't like him any more than you do."

"I'm glad to see that you've got some good taste, at all events."

"You cheeky young beggar! I can see that I shall have to give you a thick ear, whether I want to or not."

"Go ahead!"

"Stuff! There's the tea-bell, and we've missed cricket-practice for the afternoon, now, through fooling about after these spectacled rotters at the station, and wasting time over them now," said Monk. "Come in to tea, you new kids. I suppose I ought to look after you a bit. This way!"

The new juniors exchanged glances. Then they followed Frank Monk into the big, red-brick building that was so startling a contrast to St. Jim's, with its ancient, ivy-covered walls.

A somewhat thin and irritable-looking gentleman, with a pair of pince-nez clasping almost the tip of his prominent nose, met them in the hall.

He shifted his glasses a little and looked at them. Jimson major and minor took their caps off respectfully. Frank Monk hurriedly whispered to them:

"That's Slinger, the beak!"

"THE TERRITORIALS AT ST. JIM'S."

A Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
By Martin Clifford.

Mr. Slinger looked at the youths in spectacles.

"Ahem! Are you the new boys?"

"Yes, sir," squeaked Jimson major, in that peculiar voice of his.

"Ah, I think I saw you mixed up in some affray from my window!" said Mr. Slinger sourly.

"I hope not, sir!"

"What, were you not mixed up in an affray on the cricket-ground just now?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then what do you mean by saying you hope not, Jimson?"

"I hope you did not see us, sir, I mean," said Jimson major demurely.

"Oh, you are a very stupid boy!"

"Thank you, sir!"

Mr. Slinger looked sharply at the elder new boy. His face was quite grave and solemn, and it seemed impossible to Mr. Slinger that any boy, new or old, could possibly dare to be "funny" with him. So he passed it over.

"Humph! I have not received any instructions from Dr. Monk regarding you, and so your place in the school will remain unsettled until he returns. You will be in the same form with Monk until then."

"Yes, sir."

"Monk will show you where you are to sleep in the dormitory. It is very curious that Dr. Monk did not mention your coming to me before he went away."

"Yes, sir."

"I was quite surprised to receive the telegram."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Slinger sniffed.

"You may go."

"Yes, sir."

And they went.

"The Slinger-bird doesn't like you, apparently," grinned Frank Monk, as they hurried off. "Look here, I don't like you, either, as a matter of fact, but I'll look after you a bit. I suppose you want a bit of a wash after your journey before you have tea? Come up here!"

"You're very good."

"Yes; I'm wasting time and trouble on you, and you're not worth it. Blessed if I know what I'm doing it for!" said Monk.

The new boys laughed, and followed Monk. They washed and brushed down, and Monk found them combs and brushes. After that, they felt and looked better. Monk was not curious or suspicious, and he did not notice how lightly the two boys passed over their faces, as if they were afraid of disturbing their complexions.

As he combed his hair, Jimson major looked round the junior dormitory. Rylcombe Grammar School was a much smaller establishment than St. Jim's, and had less than half the number of boys. There were two dormitories—junior and senior—both very large rooms, with long rows of beds. On the walls of the junior dormitory—very plain, blue-washed walls—were various attempts at adornment. There were some pictures and some whips and rackets

hung up, and near Frank Monk's bed were several cricket stumps bracketed to the wall.

Jimson major looked at them curiously.

"Is that something new in decoration?" he asked.

Monk glanced at the stumps, and grinned.

"They're trophies," he explained.

"Eh? Trophies?"

"Yes; captured from the enemy!"

"Blessed if I catch on!"

"He's pulling our leg!" said Jimson minor. "They're cricket-stumps."

"All the same, they're trophies," grinned Monk. "I suppose you chaps have heard of St. Jim's?"

Jimson major wrinkled his brows thoughtfully.

"St. Jim's? Is it a school?"

"Of course it is," snorted Monk. "Did you think it was a hospital, or a cemetery? It's a school near here, and the boys there are a set of cheeky bounders. They have a curious idea that they can keep their end up against us, and, of course, that's all rot. Every now and then we have to put them in their place."

"My word!"

"We gave them a big licking the other day. Raided their cricket-field, and collared their stumps for trophies!" said Monk. "We're keeping them up here to show that we've licked them."

"You've licked the stumps?"

"No, idiot! We've licked the Saints!" howled Monk. "We've stuck them up here as trophies. The St. Jim's cads have vowed to have them back, but they can't do it."

"Can't they?"

"Of course they can't! I suppose they're not likely to venture into here."

"N-n-no, I suppose not," said Jimson major, and Jimson minor chuckled, as if he found something amusing in the bare idea.

"Those stumps will stick there till they crumble away," said Monk, with an air of satisfaction, "or until the St. Jim's fellows come along and ask humbly for them."

"They won't do that!"

"How the dickens do you know?" demanded Frank.

Jimson major coloured.

"I mean—I—I think they won't," he said.

"Blessed if I can see how you know anything about it. The St. Jim's cads will have to climb down, or we keep those trophies nailed up. In fact, we sha'n't part with them till we get a nice polite letter asking for them, and then we shall nail that up instead."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling about?"

"I—was thinking that they're sure to write you a nice polite letter."

"Oh, come down to tea!" growled Monk. "I think you're off your rockers, the pair of you. Blessed if I've ever seen such a pair of owls in my life."

And the new boys in the Grammar School followed Frank Monk downstairs.

One Extra Long, Complete Tale every Thursday.



CHAPTER 4.

Hanks Passes the Jam.

THE big dining-room of the Grammar School was pretty well filled. There were many tables, and most of them had masters to look after them. Having tea in the studies did not seem to be so much in favour at the Grammar School as at St. Jim's. Or, perhaps, there was a shortage of funds, which made it necessary for the youngsters to take their tea at the school table. Frank Monk sat down with Lane and Carboy, and the new boys sat down on the same form at the table.

"Hallo, Specs major!" said Carboy, looking round. "Have you brought in any tuck?"

"No!" said the new boy.

"Br-r-r! Hanks, pass over that jam!"

"It's mine!" said Hanks.

"Well, pass it over!"

"Rats!"

"Whose is that marmalade?"

"Mine!" said Gilson.

"Got any to give away?"

"I don't think."

"Rats!"

Jimson major and minor grinned. The tea-table was provided, at the expense of the Grammar School, with weak tea and bread-and-butter in abundance, and a particularly solid-looking cake that looked as if it had been designed by a culinary Vauban to resist all assaults. If the boys wanted anything more, they had to provide it for themselves, as was also the custom at St. Jim's. New boys generally had a supply of tuck, packed in their boxes by loving aunts, but Jimson major and minor had no boxes with them, so the usual supplies were lacking.

"Mean beasts!" remarked Blaine unceremoniously, looking at the new boys across the table. "Not even a packet of milk chocolate! Yah!"

"Our boxes haven't come!" said Jimson major.

"Rats!"

"Haven't you got any pockets?" asked Gilson.

Mr. Slinger looked round from his table.

"Mr. Yates, there is a great deal of talk at your table," he remarked. And Mr. Yates, a timid-looking little man, who was evidently in awe of the great Slinger, coloured, and hemmed and hawed apologetically, and told the juniors to be quiet.

"Pass the jam!" said Jimson major sweetly.

"I told you to be quiet, boys," said Mr. Yates mildly.

"Yes, sir. I was only asking Hanks to pass the jam, sir."

"Oh, very well!"

"Pass the jam, Hanks!"

"It's mine!" said Hanks, in a fierce whisper. "It's my jam! I'll see you boiled first, you new beast!"

"Pass the jam, please, Hanks!"

"Someone is talking again," said Mr. Yates.

"Yes, sir. I was asking Hanks to pass the jam."

"Dear me! Why don't you pass the jam, Hanks, as you are asked?"

"If you please, sir—"

"Pass the jam, please, Hanks!"

"I won't, you rotter! It's mine! I—"

"Please pass the jam, Hanks!"

"You are still talking, Jimson."

"If you please, sir, I was only asking Hanks to pass the jam. I think he must be a little deaf, sir. Will you pass the jam, Hanks?"

"I—I— If you please, sir, I—"

"Pass the jam at once, Hanks!" said Mr. Yates, who did not enter into any consideration of the sacred rights of property involved, and supposed that the jam was placed on the table for common use. "How can you be so rude to a new boy? Pass the jam at once!"

"But, please, sir—" began the indignant Hanks.

"Silence! Pass the jam at once!"

There was no disobeying a direct order. Hanks passed the jam across to the new boy, who received it with a sweet smile.

"Thanks awfully, Hanky!"

"You—you beast! I—"

"Silence at the table!"

"Jam this way!" murmured Jimson minor.

"Certainly, old chap!"

The major helped the minor liberally, and then helped himself. There wasn't much left in Hanks's pound-pot of jam by the time he had finished. He passed the pot back to Hanks, who was looking at him speechlessly. In all his experience, extending over fourteen years from his first birthday, Hanks had never come across such an instance of colossal cheek.

"There you are, my son!" said Jimson major. "Thanks, Hanks!"

The ridiculous jingle of the last two words added to Hanks's fury. He took the little jampot, and looked into it. He could see the bottom of the jar through a smear of jam that was left.

He sat and looked at the new boys. Jimson major and minor ate their bread-and-butter-and-jam with contented smiles.

"This is rather nice," said Jimson major.

"It is very nice," said Jimson minor.

"Oh, you wait!" said Hanks, bubbling with wrath. "You rotters! You just wait! I'll see you outside soon! My word! You beasts!"

"Did you speak, Hanks?"

"Rotters! Outsiders! Yah!"

"Thanks, Hanks!"

"My hat!" murmured Hanks, almost foaming at the mouth. "I've a jolly good mind to shy the jampot at his head! I would, if it wasn't for Slinger."

"Hack their shins under the table!" said Gilson.

"Good wheeze!"

And Hanks sat low in his chair, and reached out with his foot. Jimson major smiled at him across the table.

"No pranks, Hanks, thanks!"

The juniors could not help giggling. Hanks's eyes burned, and he reached out savagely with his foot. The foot was caught between two others, and a pair of ankles gripped his ankles, with a grip almost as fast as a pair of hands could have given.

Hanks was jerked forward by the foot, and he nearly disappeared under the table. He caught at the edge of it to save himself. Mr. Yates peered along the table.

"Dear me! What is the matter?"

"Groo-gr-gr-r!"

"Is that you, Hanks? What are you getting under the table for?"

"N-n-nothing, sir," stammered Hanks, wrenching his ankle free from those of Jimson major, who was hardly moving a muscle. "It's—it's all right, sir."

"It will not be all right for you, Hanks, if you do not keep quiet."

Hanks glared at the Jimsons. He did not feel inclined for any more attempts at reprisals, but he burned with impatience for the table to be dismissed, and then he meant to have vengeance.

CHAPTER 5.

With the Gloves On.

AFTER tea the Grammarians left the big room, and Jimson major and Jimson minor went out with the rest. Hanks's eyes were upon them, and in the hall he tapped the major upon the shoulder.

"I say, specs—I say, barnacles," he said, seeking out the epithets he thought were most telling—"I say, goggles, I want you."

"Go hon," said Jimson major.

"That was awfully ripping jam!" said the minor.

"I'll give you jam," howled Hanks. "Come round behind the gym."

"What for?"

"To take a licking."

"But I'm not looking for a licking."

"You've found one without looking for it, then," said Hanks, taking the new boy's unwillingness as a sign of funk. "You've got to come. Here, you chaps, hustle these rotters out! Jimson won't fight me."

"Look out, Hanks," said Frank Monk; "Jimson will make rings round you if you start. He can hit. He thumped me on the station, and I owe him a licking for it."

"You can have him after I've finished with him, if there's anything left," said Hanks ferociously. "He's got to come."

"Let's have the g-g-g-gloves on, then," said Jimson major, with every sign of fear in voice and countenance. "I—I—I'm rather nervous."

"No gloves for me! I'm going to lick you."

"Oh, dear; oh, dear! Will you let me off if I ask you sweetly?"

"No, I won't!" roared Hanks. "If you won't come, I'll lick you where you are! I'll teach you to collar a chap's jam."

"We know how to do that already, thanks, Hanks."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you come round behind the gym?" shrieked Hanks.

"Well, if nothing else will stop you," said Jimson major resignedly, "I will. But for mercy's sake let us have the gloves on!"

"I won't!"

"Then I insist that we fight at a distance of thirty paces,"



"Dear me!" gasped Skimpole. "Who are you?" "Please, my name is Fwedewick Wobinson, and I've come about the new page's job," said the disguised D'Arcy.

said Jimson major. "As the challenged party, I have the right—"

"Will you come on?" cried Hanks.

"Oh, very well! Lead on, Macduff."

Hanks led on. A crowd of juniors followed. Some of them expected to see the new boy licked, because he really looked very soft, and his spectacles were of course a great disadvantage. He could not fight with them on, without danger of being blinded by an unlucky blow, and it was to be supposed that he could not see well if he took them off. Under the circumstances, Hanks ought to have been able to rely on an easy victory. No doubt he did, for the redoubtable Hanks, so ferocious now, was, as a rule, far from being a fighting-man, and he was the humblest and meekest fag in the school when he came in contact with the seniors.

A crowd gathered round the juniors behind the gym., in the golden westerling sunlight Hanks threw off his jacket, and pushed back his cuffs.

"Now come on, you new beast!" he said. "Collar my jam, will you?"

Jimson trembled so violently that his spectacles nearly fell off.

"Oh, Hanks, hold on! Don't be too hard on a new chap," he pleaded tearfully. "It was only a jape about the jam, and I'll stand you a new jar. I will, honest Injun! It was only a jape. You looked so fat and greedy, that I couldn't help pulling your leg, you know. It wasn't my fault, was it?"

"Well, that's about the queerest apology I've ever heard," chuckled Monk. "I suppose you're satisfied now, Hanks. The new chap couldn't help you being fat and greedy, could he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm not satisfied!" roared Hanks. "I'm going to pulverise him! I'm going to wipe up the ground with him! I'll tie him into knots!"

"Keep him off," gasped Jimson major, "he's dangerous!"

"Go it!" said Gilson. "Give him a tap to get his dander up, Hanks."

Hanks rushed at the new boy, with his fists whirling about like the sails of a windmill.

The new boy's apparent terror left him all of a sudden. He stiffened up to meet the attack, and his hands went up. He did not remove his spectacles. Perhaps he felt quite certain that Hanks would not succeed in hitting him.

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And Hanks didn't. As he rushed at the new boy, he was met by a guard that swept his lashing arms into the air, and then a grasp was laid upon him that felt like the grip of a vice.

The new boy's spectacles glimmered within an inch of his nose as he vainly struggled. Somehow—he never knew how—his arms were pinned down to his sides, and the new fellow's arms were like a band of iron round him.

Hanks gasped and wriggled, but he could not get loose.

"Ow! I" he gasped. "Oh! Ooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Grammarian juniors. "Go for him, Hanks!"

"Sock it to him!"

"Wipe up the ground with him!"

"I—I can't! He won't let me!" panted Hanks.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leggo, you rotter! Let me go!"

"I'm—I'm afraid to!" said the new boy, who did not seem to be making much of an effort to keep Hanks imprisoned in his arms. "You're so dangerous!"

"You r-r-rotter! Leggo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'd better give in, Hanky," grinned Frank Monk. "Can't you see he's only playing with you?"

"Leggo!"

The new boy let go. He did it suddenly—so suddenly that Hanks wasn't prepared for it, and he sat down with violence upon the ground.

"Ow! You beast! I'm hurt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hanks rose slowly to his feet. He was realising that the new boy was indeed merely playing with him, and he didn't want to push the fight any further.

"Look here," he said, "if you like to stand me a pot of jam, I'll say no more about it."

"Saved!" gasped Jimson major.

"Look here, you rotter—" began Hanks, as the crowd giggled.

"Saved, Reginald! Reginald, I am saved!"

"Narrow escape!" gasped Reginald. "Oh, Bertie, Bertie!"

Hanks turned crimson with rage.

"Look here, are you going to stand that pot of jam?" he bawled.

"Certainly! Anything you like. I can stand anything but you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then I'll let it go at that," said Hanks. "I don't want to be hard on a new chap."

"You mean you don't want a new chap to be hard on you," grinned Frank Monk. "Buzz off, Hanky! Now, then, you new rotter, you can take your glasses off; you've got to deal with me."

"I don't want to deal with you, Monkey."

"You've got to. You can have the gloves on if you like."

"Well, I'd rather. I don't want to hurt you."

Monk made no reply to that remark, but led the way into the gym. The Grammarians were looking keen now. The affair with Hanks had been simply absurd; but Monk was the champion junior fighting-man in the school.

In the gym the two juniors removed their jackets, and Carboy brought out the gloves.

Jimson major selected a pair.

"Look here," said Monk, "I don't want to take any advantage of you. You can't fight in your glasses. Can you see all right if you take them off?"

"Yes, I shall manage."

"In that case, take 'em off, and come on."

Jimson major handed the glasses to his minor to hold. Then the two combatants squared up to one another.

From the beginning it was clear that Frank Monk had met his match. There was no fellow in the Grammar School of his own age who could do it, but this soft-looking new boy stood up to him easily.

Three rounds were fought out without any great advantage to either side. Frank Monk was growing very excited, but the new boy never turned a hair.

In the fourth round both parties would have received some severe punishment but for the gloves. As it was, they had some rough knocks. Jimson's nose assumed a redder hue, and Monk was holding his mouth a little awry.

"Stick it out!" said Jimson minor to his major. "You'll manage it."

And the major nodded confidently.

But Frank Monk stuck to it obstinately.

Seven rounds had been fought when he was at last sent to the floor, with a bump that ran through the gym.

Carboy whistled softly.

"Frank's jig is up," he murmured to Lane. And Lane nodded gloomily.

Gamely Monk fought on after his fall, but he was clearly

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not the same fellow. Twice again he went down, while the new boy had not lost his feet once.

For the last round he was gasping. He dropped at the finish of it, knocked out by a neat left-hander, and he did not rise to the call of time.

Jimson major was leaning on the shoulder of his minor, fagged out himself. But he was ready to go on, and the Grammarian was not.

"Time!"

Frank Monk tried to rise, but only reached a sitting posture. He threw off the gloves, and rubbed his heated, perspiring face.

"I'm done!" he gasped. "I'll tackle you again, some day."

"Rats!" said Jimson major. "You won't! This was only a friendly round or two, and I won't fight you; so that settles it."

Monk laughed breathlessly.

Jimson major put on his jacket, and as he did so a voice was audible from the direction of the entrance of the gym.

"My only Aunt Jane! That was ripping!"

Major and minor jumped simultaneously, for they knew that voice. They turned round as if moved by the same spring, and saw, standing with his hands in his pockets, regarding them coolly through a big pair of spectacles, a youth in clothes almost exactly like their own.

"Hallo, who are you?" exclaimed Carboy.

The new-comer grinned.

"I'm their younger brother, old sport—Jimson minimus."

CHAPTER 6.

D'Arcy Has His Doubts.

"I SAY, deah boys—"

It was in Study No. 6 at St. Jim's.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were at work, but Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had been sitting for some time with his hands in his pockets, and his legs stretched out, evidently in the throes of deep thought.

"I say, deah boys—"

"Don't!" said Blake, without looking up.

"Weally, Blake! Don't what?"

"Don't say."

"I fail to compwehend your meanin', Blake."

"Shut up, then!" roared Blake. "That's plain English."

"Yaas, wathah, it is vewy plain, not to say beastly vulgah!" assented D'Arcy. "The fact is, I have been thinkin' about that mattah of those two chaps goin' to the Gwammah School in disguise, and I'm wathah uneasy about it."

"We know you could do it better, Gussy. Don't start telling us that all over again," implored Digby.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Look here, I'm doing lines," said Herries. "These lines ought to be done before tea, and by sticking to them we can manage it between us, if Gussy doesn't talk."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Shut up!"

"I wefuse to shut up! I have been thinkin'—"

"If you jaw I can't do the lines."

"I am sowwy, Hewwies, but it is impos for me to shut up, as I've somethin' vewy important to say."

"Then I'll go and feed my bulldog," said Herries, getting up from the table.

"Weally, I have somethin' important to say."

"You can say it while I'm gone, I suppose?" said Herries, and without waiting for a reply he quitted the study.

"Bai Jove! I wegard Hewwies as a pig!"

"Dry up, old son, there's a good chap."

"I wefuse to dwy up! I am feelin' vewy uneasy about those chaps—Tom Mewwy and Kerr—and I weally wish now that I had insisted upon goin' with them."

"Give us a rest!"

"I decline to give you a west! Undah the cirms it is impos for me to give you a west. Where are you going, Dig?"

"I'm going to speak to old Figgins!"

"But I am speakin', Dig—"

"Well, I'm not stopping you, am I?" said Digby, and he went out of the study, and closed the door.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon Jack Blake, who was grinning.

"I wegard Hewwies and Dig as a pair of wottahs!" he said. "I am glad to see that you have not wholly forgotten your mannahs, Blake. Pway listen to me with attention. I feel as if Tom Mewwy and Kerr will mess the mattah up! They are almost certain to do so if I am not there to keep an eye on them. If the Gwammawians find out the twick they are playin', they will give them a feahful thwashin'!"

Jack Blake chuckled.

"They'll give them a high old time, certainly."

"Yaas, that's what I'm thinkin'. Don't you think I'd better go ova to the Gwammah School in disguise and see how things are gettin' on?"

"What?"

"Have you become deaf, deah boy?"

"You ass!"

"I wufuse to be called an ass! Undah the cires——"

"If you go near the Grammar School," said Blake impressively, "I'll jump on you!"

"I should uttably wufuse to be jumped on!"

"And I'll take your best silk topper out and jump on that!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Mind, I mean it!"

"I should have no wesome but to administah a feahful thwashin' if you did, Blake, and I twust you will not dwive me to that," said D'Arcy, with dignity. "I wegard it as necessary for someone to go to the Gwammah School and see how mattahs are pwogwessin' there."

"Oh, ring off! I tell you it's all right."

"I am afwaid I cannot wegard it as all wight. If I go——"

"If you go, ass, you'll show them that there's something on, duffer, and they'll guess what it is, dummy, and then all the fat will be in the fire, fathead!"

"Weally, Blake, I wegard that as a vulgah expression. But, of course, I did not intend to give the alarm. I was thinkin' of goin' in disguise."

"Oh, fancy-dress, I suppose!" said Blake sarcastically.

"I could go disguised as a new boy, the same as Tom Mewwy and Kerr."

"Rats!"

"Or I could go disguised as a chimney-sweepah."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Or as a page-boy in search of employment," said D'Arcy, struck by a brilliant idea. "I was weadin' a stowly the othah day about a boy detective who took a situation in the house of a wicked bawonet as a page-boy. The stowly said he took a job, so I suppose it means a situation. Well, why couldn't I go up to the Gwammah School disguised as a page-boy, and see Mr. Slingah, and ask him for a job?"

"You utter ass!"

"Abuse is not argument, deah boy! Of course, I suppose you feel a little bit annoyed because the idea did not stwike you."

"You shrieking duffer!"

"I wufuse to be called a shwiekin' duffah! I wegard the ideah as wippin'. I could bowwow some page's clothes of Binks."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for wibald laughtah, Blake, in that suggestion."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Jack Blake rose. "Gussy, you grow more killing every day. If you're ever found dead somewhere, you'll know the reason."

"Weally, Blake, where are you going?"

"I'm going to speak to Dig."

"Wats! I haven't finished. Weally, Blake——"

The door closed behind Jack Blake.

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet, with a shade of annoyance on his face.

"Bai Jove! The mannahs in this study are gwoin' worse ewery day," he murmured. "I have endeavoured to keep my circle of acquaintances select, not to say swaggah, and, weally, these feahful boundahs twy me vewy much. Fancy walkin' out of the study while I'm talkin'! I think I could have explained the whole mattah in a quartah of an hour or so. Bai Jove, if they won't consult about the mattah, I'll take young Wally into it, and see what he says. He's a sharp little boundah, and he may help me."

And Arthur Augustus left the study, and went in search of his younger brother. He encountered Jameson and Curly Gibson near the Third Form-room, and inquired after Wally. Jameson and Gibson, for some reason best known to themselves, burst into a series of chuckles.

D'Arcy looked at them frigidly through his eyeglass.

"Weally, I fail to see anythin' to pwovoke laughtah in that simple question," he said. "Do you know where my young bwothah is?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Jameson.

"Ho, ho, ho!" chuckled Gibson.

"You young wottahs!"

"He, he, he!"

"If you do not tweat your seniah with more wespect, I shall be compelled to thwash you, you young wascals! Where is Wally?"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

Arthur Augustus made a dash at the Third-Formers, but they dodged him. It would not have been consistent with D'Arcy's dignity to chase them, and he allowed them to escape, sending a wrathful glance after them.

From the distance, Jameson and Gibson sent a mocking laugh back.

"He wants to know where Wally is," chuckled Gibson.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shall we tell him?"

"He, he, he!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

And Jameson placed his thumb to his nose, and extended his fingers, in a disrespectful salute that made the swell of St. Jim's rush towards him again. The heroes of the Third dashed off, leaving D'Arcy easily behind.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "I fail to compwehend this. It looks as if there was some Third-Form jape on, and Wally is mixed up in it. I say, Dane—Clifton Dane, have you seen my young bwothah?"

Clifton Dane, of the Shell, shook his head.

"He went out some time back," he said. "I saw him go out with Jameson and Gibson. They've come in since."

"Then I pwesume Wally is still out?"

"I suppose so."

"Bai Jove! I wondah what's on?"

And Arthur Augustus walked to and fro within the ancient precincts of St. Jim's, seeking his minor, and finding him not. Wally had disappeared!

CHAPTER 7.

Three of Them.

JIMSON MINIMUS nodded coolly to the astounded new boys at Rylcombe Grammar School, as he came into the gym. Jimson major and Jimson minor looked at him as if they could hardly believe their eyes.

He was dressed in a quiet brown suit, he had a somewhat red nose, a smear of ink on one cheek, and large spectacles. He looked, in general aspect, like the Jimsons. Yet the Jimsons did not seem to have expected a third brother of the family to arrive at the Grammar School.

They stared at the Minimus blankly.

Frank Monk and the rest of the Grammarians stared at him, too. There was something very cool and impertinent in the bearing of Jimson minimus.

"Hallo, young shaver!"

"Hallo, Monkey!"

Frank Monk turned red.

"So you're another Jimson, are you?" said Carboy, before Monk could think of a suitable reply. "Another of the happy family?"

"Yes, I'm a Jimson as much as they are—Jimson minimus. How do you do, kids?" said Jimson minimus, digging the major and minor alternately in the ribs. "How is the world using you, my sons?"

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

"Well, that's a cool kid, and no mistake," said Lane. "Are there any more at home like you?"

"No, we're the lot, funny-face!"

"What's that?" shouted Lane.

"Didn't seem to expect me, you two," grinned the minimus. "You didn't know it was decided to send me at the same time as your noble selves—eh?"

"N-no!" stammered the major.

"Blessed funny family altogether," said Frank Monk.

"I don't know what to make of them, and that's the fact."

"It's all right," said Jimson major, recovering himself.

"It's all right, I'm glad to see you've got here safe and sound, minimus."

"Yes, rather," said the minor.

"Come along with us!" went on the major. "So long, Monkey! You've got here too late for tea, kid."

Jimson minimus nodded.

"Can't be helped. I suppose I shall be able to raise a feed somewhere?"

"Blessed if I know where, then. The fellows don't seem to feed in their studies—not the juniors, at all events."

"Perhaps some nice senior will ask me to tea."

"Yes—I don't think."

The three Jimsons strolled out of the gym., followed by a good many curious glances from the Grammarians. The new boys had made rather a peculiar impression upon the Lower School, and the Grammarians did not quite know what to make of them; but there was no doubt upon one point. Jimson major was a past-master of the manly art of self-defence, and it was not a paying enterprise to take him on with the gloves.

The major and minor preserved an attitude and manner of brotherly interest in the minimus till they were well out of sight of the gym. When a belt of shrubbery hid them from sight, they exchanged sudden glances, and turned upon the new-comer.

The third Jimson wriggled in the sudden grip of his "brothers."

"You young rascal!" hissed Jimson major.

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"Young beast!" snapped Jimson minor.
 The fag chuckled.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You—you villainous young ass, Wally! You might have spoiled it all."
 "Rats to you, Tom Merry!"
 "You've increased the danger a dozen times," said Jimson minor.
 "Rats to you, Kerr!"
 "I've a jolly good mind to give you a fearful licking," said the disguised Tom Merry, compressing his grasp upon the scamp of the Third Form at St. Jim's.
 "Hold on—"
 "Frog's-march him!" growled Kerr.
 "Chuck it! I'll yell if you do."
 "Look here—"
 "The Grammarians will think you're an unbrotherly set if I yell for help," chuckled Wally. "Hands off!"
 Tom Merry and Kerr looked at him with very peculiar expressions. But there was no doubt that the fag was master of the situation.
 They released him, and Wally chuckled again. He blinked curiously behind the big spectacles.
 "Rum go, ain't it?" he said easily.
 "You young rascal! How did you know anything about it?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Did Gussy give it away?"
 "Not much!" said Wally promptly.
 "Then how did you know?" demanded Tom Merry.
 "I did some scouting while you were holding your precious council of war," said Wally coolly. "I was in hearing all the time."
 "My—my hat!"
 "And I was on the roof of the old barn when you were changing your things and getting on the disguises," chuckled Wally.
 "You—you young monkey!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I've a jolly good mind to give you a big licking, and chance it," said Kerr.
 "Better not. If the Grammarians find out how you've done them, they'll skin you," said Wally coolly. "You can't do it."
 Kerr unclenched his hands.
 "You wait till we get back to St. Jim's."
 "That's all right, cocky. I came here to help. The Third Form had to have a hand in the business," explained Wally. "I couldn't leave you old fogies to get into all sorts of muddles. I had to see you through."
 "You cheeky young villain!"
 "Cheese it! I'm here to help, so don't make trouble. I don't want to have to start by licking you."
 Tom Merry laughed.
 "Well, we shall have to put up with him now he's here, Kerr—I mean Reginald," he remarked.
 Kerr nodded.
 "Of course you will," said Wally cheerfully. "Better make the best of it. Besides, I'm going to help. We've got to make the Grammarians sing small."
 "Look here, you just keep your place, and follow your leader, and—"
 "No fear! My place is to lead."
 "Why, you—you—"
 "Cave! Here comes a Grammar rotter."
 It was Hake who was coming along. He saw the new boys, and stopped with an exceedingly ugly look on his face.
 "So there's another of you, eh?" he said.
 "Yes; we're three, old cock," said Wally cheerily.
 Hake scowled, and let out with his open hand. It was a sudden blow, so sudden that Wally could not guard it. It caught him on the side of the head, and he went reeling into a flower-bed.
 "Oh! Oh! Ow!"
 Hake looked down at him with a savage grin.
 "That'll teach you to keep your tongue between your teeth, perhaps," he said.
 "You coward!" shouted Tom Merry.
 Wally staggered to his feet. Hake turned to Tom Merry, alias Jimson major, with a sneer on his ill-featured face.
 "Do you want some?" he asked. "I haven't settled with you over that affair on the cricket-field, you young cad. Look here! I'm in want of a fag. Seniors here always have the pick of new boys for their fags. I pick you."
 "I'll see you hanged first!" said Tom Merry.
 "Will you? Mind, it's a rule of the school, and if you make any trouble, I'll give you beans," said Hake savagely.
 "If you want to be ragged by half a dozen seniors, you'd better say so."
 Tom Merry bit his lip.
 Hake eyed him with savage triumph in his glance. If he made the new boy his fag, he would have every opportunity of wreaking vengeance upon him—or so he thought.

A sudden thought flashed into Tom Merry's mind, and he nodded his head.

"You want me for your fag, Hake?"

"I've said so."

"What am I to do?"

"Go to my study and clear it up," said Hake, speaking with relish. "Then mend the fire, make the tea, and see that there's plenty on the table to eat and drink."

"It's all in the study, I suppose?"

"If there isn't much, you can get it at the school shop."

"What about the cash?"

"That's no business of mine," said Hake, shrugging his shoulders. "You'd better see that there's a good tea, that's all."

Tom Merry's lip curled. He understood what Hake meant. There were bullies in the Upper Forms at St. Jim's who followed the same line. The fags could spend their pocket-money, or run up accounts, to provide feeds for their lords and masters, with little prospect in many cases of being reimbursed.

"Cut off!" said Hake. "My study's No. 15, in the second passage."

He was prepared for resistance and refusal, but the new boy did not resist or refuse. He nodded cheerfully.

"Come on, kids!" he said. "I've got to fag for Hake."

Will you lend a hand?"

"Rather!" said Kerr.

"What-ho!" said Wally.

And the three Jimsons walked away towards the house. Hake glanced after them with a chuckle.

"I'll make the brat sit up yet!" he muttered. "I'll teach him to biff me with a cricket-bat! If he doesn't get me a ripping tea, I'll make him think that life isn't worth living at this school."

And Hake grinned. Perhaps he would not have grinned if he had known what was passing in the minds of Jimson major, minor, and minimus.

CHAPTER 8.

Fagging for Hake.

TOM MERRY chuckled as the trio entered the big red-brick building. It was nearly dark now, and the lamps were being lighted. Frank Monk met the new boys in the hall, and Tom Merry stopped to speak.

"Do you know where Hake's study is?" he asked.

"Yes, rather! You're not going there, are you? I should advise you to keep clear of Hake, after what's happened to-day."

"He's chosen me for his fag."

Frank Monk whistled.

"Then I'm sorry for you, Jimson."

"He'll be sorry for himself by the time I've finished fagging for him," said Jimson major calmly. "He's just knocked young Wa—my young brother, I mean—over, in a brutal way that a hooligan would be ashamed of. He's a bullying beast. I'm going to make him sit up."

Frank Monk looked very serious.

"You'd better be careful how you go for Hakey," he said. "He's an utter beast, and he's backed up by the worst set among the seniors. He'll make it warm for you."

"Curious; we are just going to make it warm for him."

"Well, look out, that's all."

"We're looking out—rather! Show us where his study is."

"This way," said Frank.

He left them at the senior's study, still looking somewhat concerned for them.

The three Jimsons entered the study, and looked about them. It was a very well-appointed room, for Hake was one of the best-off fellows at the Grammar School.

Tom Merry closed the door, and grinned at his comrades.

"We're going to fag for Hake," he said. "What?"

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

"We're going to stand him a tea—at our own expense."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hakey is understudying the 'Babes in the Wood' for innocence, and no mistake," said Kerr. "If he only knew!"

"If he only did! My hat!"

"But he doesn't. We mustn't waste time," went on Tom Merry seriously. "The great Hake has only allowed us half an hour."

"Begin with the cupboard," said Kerr.

"Right you are!"

Tom Merry threw open the cupboard. It contained a goodly array of crockery and cutlery, the latter in a neat plush basket. But of provisions there was little. There was bread, but little more.

"H'm!" said Wally, with a sniff. "This won't do for me."

"Cut down to the shop and get some more, then," said

Tom Merry, fishing a five-shilling piece out of his pocket. "Here you are!"

"Good! I'll be back in a jiffy."

The entrance of Jimson minimus into the school shop attracted general attention from the juniors there. When they saw his purchases, there was a general exclamation of "Halves!"

"Oh, he's gagging for Hake!" said Monk.

And then Jimson minimus was let alone.

If the purchases were for Hake, the juniors did not care to touch them. Hake had a long arm and a long memory.

Wally only grinned. He completed his purchases, and quitted the shop, carrying the provisions in a borrowed basket to Hake's study.

The bully of the Grammar School met him in the passage. Carne, his chum, was with him, and both looked at the basket.

"Grub in that?" asked Hake.

"Yes, please," said Jimson minimus, with a meekness that would have alarmed Hake if he had known Wally D'Arcy, of the Third Form at St. Jim's. But he did not, and so he was not warned.

"Let's have a look."

Wally opened the basket. The two seniors looked into it, and exchanged glances of satisfaction.

"Good!" said Hake. "Pickles, ham, tongue. Good!"

"And cold beef," said Carne; "and rabbit-pie. Oh, good!"

"I'm glad you like it," said Wally.

"It's all right. You can cut along, and tell your precious brothers that we shall be in to tea in ten minutes, and if it's not ready we'll warm the lot of you."

"Yes, please."

"Cut off, you young monkey!"

Wally cut off. He re-entered the senior's study, and plumped the basket down on the table with a grin.

"Hake and Carne'll be here in ten minutes, and if tea isn't ready they going to warm us all," he announced.

Tom Merry laughed. He locked the door, and took out the key; and then the three juniors took off their spectacles for additional comfort.

"Let 'em all come," said Kerr. "They won't get into this room in a hurry. The door isn't quite so strong as our old oak doors at St. Jim's, but I think it's strong enough to stand anything Hake & Co. can do."

"I fancy so," said Tom Merry, jamming the back of a chair under the lock for additional security. "Now for tea. I'm ready for another feed."

"So am I."

"And I'm famished!" said Wally.

The feed did not take long to prepare. Tom Merry had to light the fire, and as there was no fuel at hand he was compelled to break up a cage he found in a corner. The cage had once contained white rabbits, but it was untenanted now, and it served the purpose nicely.

"Very forgetful of Hake to set his fags to lighting fires without supplying fuel," Tom Merry remarked, with a shake of the head. "But perhaps he expects his fags to keep him in fuel as well as in grub."

"Ha, ha! If you want any more fuel, here's a book-case."

"No; I think this will be all right. The kettle's nearly boiling."

The tea was soon ready. The three juniors of St. Jim's had settled down at the table, when there was a hand on the door. The handle rattled, and as the door did not open there was a savage kick at the lower panels.

"Open this door!" shouted Hake from outside.

And the voice of Carne was heard, adding some lurid threats of what would happen to the fags if the door wasn't immediately opened. But it wasn't, all the same.

Kick, bang, thump!

"Open this door!"

"Anybody there?" called out Tom Merry, in the squeaky, high-pitched voice he had adopted as Jimson major.

"Yes, you young sweep! I'm Hake!"

"Sure?" asked Tom Merry.

"Eh? What? What do you mean?"

"Well, you might be mackerel, you know, or haddock!"

The juniors giggled, and Hake, in the passage, muttered things. He kicked savagely at the door.

"Will you let me in?"

"Can't be did. We're having tea."

"What?" roared Hake.

"Are you deaf? I should advise you to consult a specialist."

"You—you—you—"

"Deafness can always be cured if taken in time. I should recommend—"

"Will you open the door?"

"Eh? The door? Oh, no!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Pass the ham," said Tom Merry. "This tongue is ripping. Another cup of tea, please."

"Here you are."

"Thanks. Good tea this."

"Yes, rather. And the ham—"

"Ripping!"

The clicking of knives and forks and teacups was quite audible through the study door. In the passage, Hake and Carne glared at one another in helpless rage. They were nonplussed. If the fags did not choose to let them into the study, they could not get in. They might have vengeance presently, but just now—just now the three juniors were enjoying a hearty feed.

CHAPTER 9.

A More Than Spring-Cleaning.

THUMP, thump, thump!

Hake thumped, and Carne kicked, and both of them raved, but all without effect. The door remained closed, and from within still sounded the merry voices, the click of crockery, and the various sounds of the feed.

"Another cup of tea, old dear?"

"Certainly!"

"Pass the ham. What ripping ham!"

"Spiffing! Sounds like somebody making a row in the passage. I wonder if it's anybody wants to come in?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hake's voice came rumbling through the keyhole. The Grammar School bully was nearly choking with rage. Fellows were collecting in the passage to look on at the siege of the study, and they were all laughing. Hake was not a favourite, and the revolt of the fags excited only amusement—for all except Hake and Carne. They were quivering with fury.

"If you open this door now, you whelps, I'll let you off!"

"Eh? I'm not a cracker," said Tom Merry. "I don't want to be let off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you open this door?"

"We're having tea."

"I'll skin you alive!"

"Sorry we can't ask you in, Hake. We really haven't enough for a guest; and, besides, you're such an awful pig, you know."

"I'll—I'll—I'll smash you!"

"Did you speak?"

"I'll—I'll pulverise you!"

"Anybody there?"

"Open the door!"

"Sounds like somebody in the passage, kids. Anybody there?"

Hake almost suffocated with rage. There was a crowd up and down the passage, all laughing. Hake stamped on the floor.

"I'll smash them!" he hissed. "Oh, my word, if I could only get hold of them! Wait till I get the door open, that's all!"

Crash!

It was a terrific noise within the study, and told of an upset table and smashing crockery-ware.

Hake jumped.

"What on earth's that?"

Crash, crash!

Hake tapped furiously at the door.

"What are you young demons doing?"

"Clearing up the study?"

"What?"

"You told us to. You're going to skin us if we don't. We've just cleared the table for a start. We've finished tea, thank you."

"I—I—I—"

"I'm afraid some of the crocks are broken. That's through being in a hurry. You didn't give us very much time."

Hake gasped with rage. He knew that the three juniors were deliberately wrecking the study. They would get the worst he could inflict at his hands, anyway; and so, no doubt, their idea was to avenge themselves beforehand.

The juniors had cleared the table by the simple expedient of tilting it over, and sending everything upon it into the grate. Hake's crockery-ware suffered, of course; but, as Tom Merry remarked, they had not asked to fag for him. If he impressed fags into his service, he must expect to take the consequences.

"We'll do out the cupboard next," said Tom Merry.

"Hand me that broom."

Kerr handed him the broom.

Tom Merry cleared out the cupboard by the simple method of thrusting into it the head of the broom, and dragging out everything movable.

Crash on crash upon the floor warned the unhappy Hake that his cupboard was being successfully cleared out.

Wally cocked his eye thoughtfully at the glass over the mantelpiece.

"I suppose that ought to come down?" he remarked. "We want to make a thorough job of it, and they always take the glasses down in the spring-cleaning at home. Can you see how it's fastened, Kerr—I mean Reginald?"

"Yes. Two brass-headed nails in the wall."

"Then it ought to come down easily enough."

Wally thrust the poker behind the glass, and wrenched. There was a yell from Kerr.

"Look out!"

"What's the matter?"

"You'll smash it!"

"Dear me!"

Crash!

The glass came down with a run upon the overturned table. There was a smashing and a shattering that could be heard the length of the corridor.

Thump, thump, thump!

Hake was attacking the door again. The crashing in the study almost made him weep with rage. But the door was fast, and the three spring-cleaners in the study showed no disposition to open it.

"What about the bookcase?" asked Tom Merry.

"Well, the books ought to be turned out, I suppose?"

"I suppose so. Lend a hand."

The bookcase was tilted forward, and the books and papers shot out in a shower upon the carpet, along with a couple of drawers, from which writing materials and ink and pens distributed themselves among the ruins.

The chums of St. Jim's looked round them with much satisfaction.

"We're getting on," Tom Merry remarked.

"Ha, ha! Looks like it."

Thump, thump, thump!

"Hallo! That sounds like a gentle tap at the door.

Anybody there?"

"Let me in!" came Hake's muffled voice through the keyhole.

"Can't be did, my son! We're cleaning up the study."

"Stop it!" hissed Hake.

"Stop what?"

"Let the study alone!"

"But you told us to clean it up."

Hake ground his teeth. The crowd of Grammarians roared.

"You can let it alone," said Hake. "I—I don't want you to fag for me."

"Now you're talking," said Tom Merry heartily. "Are you sure you don't want us to fag for you any more?"

"Yes—yes!"

"Are you absolutely sure?"

"Yes."

"You let us off fagging for you?"

"Yes," hissed Hake. It was the only way to save the rest of his goods, he knew; but it was a bitter pill to swallow.

"Good! And you won't bear malice for what we've done, if you don't quite like the way we've cleaned up your study."

"N-n-n-no!"

"You won't go for us in any way when the door's opened?"

Hake was silent.

"Deaf again, Hakey?" asked Tom Merry pleasantly.

"I'll skin you alive!" hissed Hake.

"Ah! You won't make it pax!"

"No!" yelled Hake, shaking furiously at the handle of the door. "Open this door, you young demons! I'll skin you alive."

Crash!

Hake gave a gasp. He knew that it was the smash of his bookcase, and he guessed the table had been tumbled over on it.

"Stop it!" he yelled. "Stop it, you young demons!"

"Will you make it pax?"

"No!" screamed Hake. "No, I won't!"

Crash!

It was the sound of a clock falling into the grate.

Hake stifled his rage.

"Stop it! I—I—I'll make it pax!"

The fury in his face was a sufficient indication that he would not keep his word. He would have said anything then to stop the wrecking of his study, and to get at close quarters with the juniors.

"Pax? Honour bright, Hakey?"

"Yes," snarled Hake. "Open the door!"

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NEXT
THURSDAY.

"THE TERRITORIALS AT ST. JIM'S."

A Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
By Martin Clifford.

"Right-ho!"

The door was flung open.

"You asses!" yelled Frank Monk. "He won't keep his word! He—"

Hake rushed furiously into the study.

CHAPTER 10.

"Signed—Tom Merry!"

HAKE did not intend to keep his word. He meant to get to close quarters with the rebellious fags, and wreak his wrath upon them. He rushed into the study with that intention, and suddenly stopped.

Tom Merry and his chums had not been careless enough to trust to the word of a fellow like Hake. True, a fellow who would be base enough to attack them after making it "pax," might be rare. But Hake had never shown any love of fair play or honourable dealing. It was best to be prepared, and they were right. It would have gone hard with them if they had trusted to Hake's honour.

Tom Merry had the poker in his hand, and it had been between the bars for the last ten minutes, and so was glowing red with heat at the end. Kerr had the tongs, equally red-hot at the tips. Wally had armed himself with a large bottle of ink. The three stood shoulder to shoulder, ready for Hake.

The bully rushed at them blindly, and only stopped just in time to save himself from the red-hot poker.

Tom Merry flourished the glowing tip in his face.

"Hold on, Hakey!"

Hake jumped back, gasping with rage.

"Put that poker down!" he roared.

"No fear!"

"Put it down, or—"

"Rats!"

Hake clenched and unclenched his hands. He was in so great a fury that he hardly knew what he was doing. His study was a wreck—everything smashed or in disorder. Hake caught up a chair, and swung it in the air. There was a shout from the passage.

"Hold on, you fool!"

Hake did not heed; but Tom Merry was on his guard. He lunged forward, and there was a shriek from Hake, and the chair crashed to the floor, as the poker just touched his hand.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

The senior sucked his hand, and danced with rage.

"Serve you right!" exclaimed Northcote, the captain of the Grammar School. "You fool! What were you going to do?"

"Look what he's done!"

"Yes; and look what you were going to do," said Northcote contemptuously. "I haven't much sympathy for a bully."

"I'll—I'll smash him!"

"Well, I dare say a licking won't hurt him, for his cheek, but you'd better not go too far, or you'll have to reckon with me."

"Mind your own business!"

Hake was in a towering rage, or he would never have spoken like that to the Grammar School captain. Northcote stepped up to him.

"Say that again!" he requested politely.

"I—I— Why can't you let me alone?"

"That's better," said Northcote. "Remember what I've said, that's all."

And he walked away. But most of the Grammarians remained to see the fun. They wondered how it would all end.

Hake fixed his eyes upon Tom Merry. Tom had replaced his spectacles, and was Jimson major again.

"Put down that poker, Jimson!"

"Rats!"

Hake came forward, his fists clenched. The poker was lifted, and he receded. He gritted his teeth hard.

"Very well, I'll wait!" he hissed.

"Not much, you won't!" said Tom Merry coolly. "You'll scoot, or I'll warm you. Out you go!"

"What!"

"Get out!"

"I won't! I—"

"I'm afraid you'll get burnt if you don't! There, I told you so, and there again! If you get in the way of a hot poker, you are bound to get burnt."

"Ow! Oh! Ow!"

"There again—"

"Ow! Wow!"

ANSWERS

"You'd better bunk, Hakey!"

Hake thought so, too. He strode from the study, white with rage, and Tom Merry, with a laugh, hurled the poker into the grate. Carne gave the juniors a very peculiar look, and followed his chum. The Grammarians were roaring with laughter. Frank Monk gave Tom Merry a ringing slap on the shoulder.

"My word!" he said. "You'll do! I never saw such a cool beggar in all my natural as you are, Jimson."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Only look out for Hake!" said Carboy. "My hat! You've made a wreck of his place. Serve him jolly well right, the bully!"

"Come on, kids!" said Tom Merry. "We shall have to stick together if that brute goes for us. If he touches any one of us, all three are to pile on him, remember, and give him jip."

"What ho!"

The three Jimsons left Hake's study.

An admiring crowd of Grammarians stuck to them for a time, and it was half an hour or more before Tom Merry, who had his own plans to carry out, was able to get rid of them.

Meanwhile, Hake was not looking for the new boys.

He had had a severe lesson, and his burns were smarting, and upon reflection he had resolved to postpone his vengeance till a safer opportunity later in the evening.

"Let the young brutes wait till after lights out!" he said thickly, as he bathed his injuries. "I'll go into the junior dormitory with a dog-whip, Carne, and if I don't make 'em squirm, my name's not Hake."

Carne grinned.

"Jolly good wheeze," he agreed. "Tackle the young beast when he's got no chance of getting hold of a cricket-bat or a poker, and when Northcote isn't about to stop you."

"That's the idea! I'll make him sit up to-night."

And so, for the present, the Grammar School bully let the new boy alone.

"My word!" said Frank Monk, as half-past eight rang out from the big clock. "It's more than time we did our prep."

"Let's get along to the study," said Carboy. "Come on, Lane. You can leave that book."

The three Grammarian chums left the common-room; and went to their study. Frank Monk lighted the gas.

The next moment he gave a yell.

"My hat!"

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Lane and Carboy together.

"Look at that!"

Monk was pointing at the square of looking-glass over the mantel-piece.

Carboy and Lane followed the direction of his finger, and exclamations of rage and wonder broke from them. For upon the clear glass were traced, by a finger dipped in ink, the following words:

"DOWN WITH THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL!"

(Signed) "TOM MERRY."

The three Grammarians stared at one another blankly.

"Tom Merry!"

"He's been here!"

"My hat!"

CHAPTER 11.

D'Arcy In Disguise.

"BINKS!"

There was no reply.

"Binks, deah boy!"

Still silence.

"Weally, this is wathah exaspewatin'," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

He was standing outside the door of the boot-boy's room in the School House at St. Jim's.

He had tapped at the door, and elicited no reply. He had tapped again, with the same result, or want of result. Then he had opened the door slightly, and called. But still there was no reply from Binks.

D'Arcy had inquired for Binks below stairs, and had been told that the boot-boy had retired to his room with the plea of an headache. Arthur Augustus, who knew something of Binks's little ways, could not help guessing that the headache was only in Binks's imagination. The fat, healthy boot-boy was not subject to headaches, but he was subject to a desire to elude work, and spend his time reading lurid literature of American origin. The Americans are a great nation, but it will be admitted by all—except Americans, of course—that in literature for the young they have made, so far, only ghastly failures. And these same ghastly failures are exported in huge quantities every year,

and sold to British boys in lurid covers, and, worse still, read by them. Binks had now again a strong taste for cheap American fiction. He knew all about Broncho Bill, the Buster, and all about Dead-Shot Charlie, the Demon of Deadwood, and Crimson Hand, the Blood-Stained Chief.

He could have told you the history of most of the great criminals, hung or unhung, on the western side of the Atlantic. And Binks had visions of some day casting aside the slough, as it were, of his present occupation, and striding forth to name and fame with bowie-knives and revolvers strapped round him instead of an apron.

"Binks! Binkie—Binks!"

Still no answer.

Arthur Augustus was always a gentleman, and he would not have thought of entering the boot-boy's quarters without permission from the owner. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had his little weaknesses, but anything snobbish was not one of them.

"Bai Jove, this is most annoyin'! I suppose I should be justified in goin' in to see whathah the little boundah's asleep there or not!" murmured D'Arcy. "It is weally vewy important for me to see him at once."

He pushed open the door.

"Binks! Binkie!"

There was a growl at last from the owner of the name. He was sitting by the window, huddled up in a chair, his head sunk between his shoulders, reading away at a gaudy-covered book as if his life depended on it.

"Whatcher want?" grunted Binks, without raising his eyes from the book to see whom his visitor was. "Can'tcher let a chap alone?"

"My deah Binks—"

"I've got a nedache."

"I'm sowwy for you, Binks; but I weally wish to speak to you," said D'Arcy mildly. "Pway put that book down for a moment."

"I'm a-readin' it."

"Yaas, wathah, I can perceive that, deah boy. I am quite aware that you are weadin' the book, though, as a mattah of fact, it's hardly the kind of book for you to wead."

Binks grunted.

"If you took my advice," said D'Arcy seriously, "you would burn up all that wot. What are you weadin' at the pwesent moment?"

"Broncho Bill, the Deadwood Detective."

"Bai Jove, what awful piffle! A patwiotic Bwiton ought to wead Bwedish books, not that Amewican twash!"

"Yes, I know!" sneered Binks disrespectfully. "'Good Little George, and How he Loved his Kind Teachers.'" Pah!"

"I don't mean that wot, either," said Arthur Augustus mildly. "There is a medium, deah boy, between Amewican blood-curdlin' bosh, and goody-goody wubbish, I suppose. I should wecommend you to twy some wholesome litewature, without any murdahs in it. Howevah I did not come heah to hold a litewary dischuss. I want you to help me."

Binks put his book down with a sigh. He liked D'Arcy, who was generous with tips, and always kind and considerate to those below him in social position. D'Arcy was sometimes obstinate and high-handed with the other fellows in the Fourth, but he never forgot his politeness in speaking to the humbler members of the household.

"Yes, sir," said Binks. "What can I do for you?"

"It's a gweat secwet, Binks."

"But 'ow can I help you if you don't tell me what you want, Master D'Arcy?"

"Ahem! I am goin' to tell you, Binks. But I mean that it's a gweat secwet fwom ewevybody else—an absolutely dead secwet!"

"I see, sir," said Binks, growing interested. D'Arcy's manner was very mysterious, and smacked of the story he had just been reading. "I think I catch on, sir. You're going to run away from school."

"Eh?"

"I'll 'elp you, sir!" said Binks eagerly. "And when you're a-ploughin' the Spanish Main in a blood-red craft, you won't forget me, sir?"

"You uttah young ass!"

Binks's face fell.

"Ain't you going to run away from school, sir?"

"Of course not, you young duffah!"

"Oh! What is it, then? Surely you ain't going to rob anybody?"

D'Arcy jumped.

"Wob—wob anybody?"

"That's what Deadshot Dave did before he left school, Master D'Arcy. He robbed the schoolmaster of a thousand dollars, and shot the usher through the head with a double-barrelled bowie-knife—I mean gun—a double-barrelled gun, and then fled on his coal-black steed, and became the terror of the Rocky Mountains."

"What a howlid wuffian! Was he hanged?"
 "Hanged!" said Binks indignantly. "Why, he's the hero of the story!"

"Bai Jove, I wondah what the villains are like, then!" said Arthur Augustus, in great disgust. "Weally, Binks, I wathah think those papahs of yours wequire disinfectin'. But to wesume. I wequire a disguise."

Binks's eyes gleamed. It was coming at last. But if it was not running away from school, or robbing anybody, he could not imagine what the disguise was for.

"A disguise, sir?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You want me to go to the costumier's in Rylcombe, sir," said Binks, comprehensively. "You want a false beard, and a mask—"

"Bai Jove! Nothin' of the sort. I don't want you to go to the costumiah in Wylcombe."

"Oh! What is it, then?"

"I want you to lend me a suit of your clothes."

Binks looked amazed.

"My—my clothes, sir?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You are goin' to disguise yourself as a boots, sir?"

"That's the ideah. I have no doubt that I shall be able to play the part pwetty well," said D'Arcy, with satisfaction. "It is not vewy difficult."

"But—but what—"

The swell of St. Jim's raised a warning finger.

"You must not ask me any questions, Binks, deah boy. It's a dead secwet."

Binks turned pale.

"But—but I hope it isn't anything vewy bad, sir?" he faltered. "No—no bl-bl-bloodshed?"

D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and looked at Binks.

"Are you off your silly wockah, Binks?"

"N-n-no, sir; but—"

"You have got those wotten books on the bwain, you young ass. I am goin' to play a little jape, that's all. As a mattah of fact, some fwiends of mine have got themselves into a doocid awkward posish., and I'm goin' in disguise to get them out of it. Do you undahstand now, you young duffah?"

"Ye-e-e-es, sir!"

"Then pway pwoduce the togs, deah boy, and help me to dwess. You can finish that wotten book aftahwards—or, wathah, do not finish it at all!"

"But—but a soot of clothes won't disguise your face, sir," stammered Binks.

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"I don't expect it to, deah boy. I shall disguise my face with gwease-paint, and shall wear a pair of spectacles."

"My 'at!" said Binks.

"I twust Mr. Slingah will not wecognise me; but if he should, I shall have to cut for it, and wun like anythin'."

"Mr. Slinger!" gasped Binks.

"Bai Jove, I've let it out now! Mind you keep it a secwet!"

"You're going to the Grammar School disguised as a boots, Mr. D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But—but—"

"Pway don't jaw, deah boy, but pwoduce the clothes."

Binks went dazedly to his box, and produced his Sunday clothes. They were a little baggy and a little short for D'Arcy, who was taller and slimmer than Binks. But it was no time to stand upon trifles.

"Can I change them heah, deah boy?"

"Certainly, sir!"

D'Arcy was soon inside the page's clothes. He cut a rather odd figure in them, and Binks could not help grinning.

D'Arcy grinned himself when he looked into the glass.

"Bai Jove, I don't think anybody would recognise this figah as bein' that of the best-dwessed chap in the coll.!" he murmured.

"That they wouldn't, sir!"

"I shall wequire a hat, Binks. I twust it will be some-thin' like a fit. I wondah if your boots will fit me, too. I will keep my own socks, thank you!"

"Try 'em on, sir."

D'Arcy did so, and found that they fitted about as well as the clothes. Binks surveyed him in the greatest admiration. Anything in the line of disguise appealed to the imagination of the fervid admirer of Dead-Shot Dave and Broncho Bill.

"It's splendid, Master D'Arcy!"

"Vewy good! Now for the face!"

Arthur Augustus unfastened a little packet he had brought into the study. It contained a variety of grease-paints. Before Binks's little glass he proceeded to decorate his aristocratic face.

The result was curious.

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D'Arcy gave himself a very red nose, rightly judging that that would alter the expression of his face as much as anything. Then he thickened his eyebrows, and added some lines to his forehead, and a smudge to his chin as if an early beard were threatening there. The final outcome was not beautiful, nor was it vewy near to Nature. But it certainly disguised D'Arcy's identity as thoroughly as a brick wall would have done.

"Bai Jove, I shouldn't know myself now!" he murmured. "I am weally not quite sure whethah I'm myself or yourself, Binks."

"It's jolly good, sir! You'd pass anywhere."

"Good! Now I want a pair of spectacles. Unfortunately, I shall not be able to get plain glass ones, as there is no time. I will bowwow Skimpole's."

"You—you're not going round the house in that rig, sir!" exclaimed Binks, in surprise and consternation.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But they'll see you, and—"

"They won't wecognise me."

"They will if you speak, sir," said Binks, with a slight grin.

"Bai Jove, yaas, I must be careful of my voice! Of course, my voice is just the same as any of the other fellows' voices, but I suppose I do not speak exactly as the wearah of these clothes should, Binks."

"Not exactly, sir," grinned Binks.

"I shall be vewy careful."

And the swell of St. Jim's, confident in the thoroughness of his disguise, left Binks's little room. He pressed a five-shilling-piece into Binks's hand as he left, and the page stared at it with much satisfaction. Visions of unlimited supplies of cheap American dreadfuls rose before his mind's eye.

CHAPTER 12.

Trophies of War.

"BETTER leave it till bedtime."

It was Kerr—alias Jimson minor—who spoke.

The three Jimsons were conversing in a corner of the common-room at the Grammar School, in subdued tones.

A good many of the Grammarians had glanced towards them, wondering what the whispered confabulation was about. They would have opened their eyes wide if they had known.

Tom Merry shook his head in reply to Kerr's remark.

"No good wasting time," he said. "We've run the gauntlet safely so far, but there's no telling how long it may last."

"My only Aunt Jane!" said Wally, with a chuckle. "I should think so. I know Monk & Co. think we're a set of queer fish already. They may begin to suspect at any time."

"All through you shoving yourself in," said Kerr.

"Rats!" said Wally cheerfully.

"Never mind that now," said Tom Merry. "Wally's here, anyway. I only hope no more duffers will follow us from St. Jim's. Gussy was vewy anxious to make one of the party, and I should not be surprised if he happened along, disguised as a bootlace merchant or a grass-cutter, or something."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If he did the game would be up at once. It may be up at any moment, anyway, and we may have to run for it. Now, we came here chiefly to get back the trophies the Grammar cads collared from us on the cricket-field at St. Jim's."

"That's so!"

"Now we've got a chance. They're hung up on the walls of the dormitory. Frank Monk thinks they're quite safe there from anybody."

"He little knows!" grinned Wally.

"Exactly! But he may know that they're in danger any moment. The young boulder's looking towards us now, as if he'd like to know what we were talking about. He was jawing something vewy excitedly a little while back. He's seen the inscription on the glass in his study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My idea is to get to the dorm., and make sure of those trophies at the earliest possible moment, in case of accidents."

"I dare say you're right. But when we've got them?"

"We'll sling them over the wall into the road, and Wally can cut back to St. Jim's with them."

"No fear!" said Wally promptly. "Kerr can cut back to St. Jim's with them."

"Now, look here, Wally—"

"Nuff said! I'm here till the finish."

"Vewy well, they can be slung into a tree or something, where we can get at them afterwards," said Tom Merry.



The Grammarians could scarcely believe their eyes! They stared at the chalk message on the table; they stared at one another; and they stared round the room. But there was no sign of Tom Merry!

"Never mind that now; the chief thing is to get them. But look here, Wally, you'll get into a row if you're late for calling-over."

"I shall stay here as long as you do."

"All right, you young ass!"

"Yes. I've got permission to join the party."

"What party?"

"Your party," said Wally coolly. "I got permission from Mr. Railton. He didn't guess, of course, that you hadn't asked me."

"My hat!" Tom Merry looked grimly at the scamp of the Third Form at St. Jim's. "I don't know whether to lick you or—"

"Rats!" said Wally unceremoniously. "Get on with the washing. Suppose you two keep an eye on the Grammar cads while I collar the stumps out of the dorm."

Tom Merry laughed.

"The programme's all right," he said, "only I shouldn't be likely to entrust it to you. You and Kerr can keep watch."

"Look here—"

"Oh, ring off! You're too cheeky for a fag."

"Hallo, what's the confab about?" asked Frank Monk, crossing over to the three.

"Confab!" said Jimson major. "Oh, we were just talking."

"I say, Monkey," said Kerr, "where is the school library?"

"On the ground floor."

"Show me where it is, will you?"

"Certainly!"

Kerr winked at Tom Merry, and followed Monk. Tom understood at once. It was a device for getting the Grammarian, the keenest of all the Grammar juniors, out of the way for a time.

Tom Merry and Wally strolled into the passage, and thence by easy stages upstairs. The upper passage was deserted, and there was a glimmer of light there. In the dormitory all was dark.

"You wait here, kid," whispered Tom Merry. "Warn me if anybody comes along."

"Right-ho!"

Leaving Wally in the passage, Tom Merry entered the dormitory.

He lighted the gas, and looked about him. The cricket trophies so proudly pointed out to him by Frank Monk were in their places.

It took Tom Merry a couple of minutes to take them

down. He tied them together in a handy bundle with a piece of cord, and from his pocket he drew a piece of cardboard, which he pinned to the wall in the place of the trophies.

The card contained a simple inscription in his own handwriting, well known to Monk and some others of the Grammarians.

"Thanks!—Tom Merry."

He grinned as he thought of the feelings of the Grammarians when they saw it, and turned out the gas.

As he did so the door opened slightly, and there was a warning whisper from Wally.

"Cave!"

Wally vanished along the passage, only just in time. Tom Merry hesitated, the bundle of stumps in his hand.

Was there time to escape from the dormitory?

Footsteps at the door answered him in the negative. Wally had only given the warning just in time to save him from running into the Grammarians.

Tom Merry's heart beat very fast for the moment. If he were discovered in the dormitory, with the stumps in his hand, and that card on the wall, the dullest of the Grammarians could not fail to guess the truth.

Yet where to hide?

The Grammarians, if they noticed the stumps were missing—as they could hardly fail to do—would immediately give the alarm and search the dormitory.

The junior was thinking it out when the door opened, and two juniors came in in the darkness. The voice of Lane was heard.

"Got a match for the gas, Carboy?"

"Yes; wait a minute. Curious! I thought I saw a light from the dorm. as I came along the passage."

"H'm! It's dark enough now."

Tom Merry-breathed hard.

As soon as Carboy struck that match, he would be discovered. Not if he could help it! He approached the Grammarians noiselessly in the darkness, as they stood by the open door, and made a sudden rush.

"Oh!" roared Lane.

He went reeling over under the rush, and Carboy followed him, reeling and rolling across him on the floor.

Tom Merry, with a suppressed chuckle, ran on. He left the dormitory, and was racing down the passage, before the startled Grammarians came to their wits.

CHAPTER 13.

A Startling Disappearance.

ARBOY jumped up furiously.

"What—who was that?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Lane, staggering to his feet. "Whatever it was, it gave me a jolly hard biff."

"It couldn't be a burglar!"

"Stuff! Some kid japing us."

"I'll jape him!" said Carboy, gritting his teeth. "My head's still singing. Wait till I get a light."

Scratch!

"I say, though, it might be that St. Jim's cad," said Lane suddenly. "You know what we found written up in the study. The fellow might have been hiding here waiting for a chance to get away, and we never thought of it."

"My hat! Yes, it's quite possible."

"Let's have a look."

Carboy lighted the gas. Their first thought, naturally, was for the trophies of war that had been borne off in triumph from the cricket ground at St. Jim's. If a "Saint" had penetrated into the Grammarian quarters, his first thought, of course, would have been for them.

Carboy gave a yell.

"Look!"

He pointed to the blank wall. The trophies were gone!

"Gone!" muttered Lane blankly.

"Tom Merry's been here!" yelled Carboy. "Look, that's his message! 'Thanks!—Tom Merry.' The cool beast! It was Tom Merry biffed us over!"

"Phew! The cheek of it!"

"We'll have the beast soon; he can't get away!" exclaimed Carboy excitedly. "Let's give the alarm. No; you stay here while I call the fellows."

"Right you are!"

"See that he doesn't cut back along the passage while I'm gone."

"I'll look out."

And Carboy rushed downstairs. He burst into the common-room like a thunderbolt. Gilson was standing near the door, and Carboy cannoned right into him, and sent him reeling. Gilson sat on the floor, and stared blankly at Carboy.

"What the—how the—" he began.

"Wake up, you slackers!" shouted Carboy. "St. Jim's cads!"

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NEXT
THURSDAY.

"THE TERRITORIALS AT ST. JIM'S."

A Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
By Martin Clifford.

"What!"

"Where!"

"Here!" said Carboy excitedly. "Tom Merry was in our dorm. not three minutes ago."

"Tom Merry!"

"You're dreaming!"

"Rats!"

"I tell you he was!" yelled Carboy angrily. "He's taken the trophies off the wall, and carried them off, and he biffed me over in the dark in getting away."

"Oh, rats! He can't be here!"

"He's left a message on the wall!"

"Phew!"

"My word!"

"Come and look for him."

"What-ho!"

"He can't get away, at all events; the gates are closed."

"Hullo, what's the excitement about?" It was Jimson major's squeaky voice, and he came into the room blinking round in his spectacles. "Anything wrong?"

"Yes, rather! You wouldn't understand—you're a new kid."

"But what is it?" asked Jimson major, catching Hanks by the arm, as the Grammar juniors swarmed out of the room at the heels of Carboy.

"Find out!" said Hanks. He wrenched himself away and rushed after the others.

Jimson major winked at the ceiling, and followed.

The Grammar juniors were in the greatest excitement. Frank Monk was soon called to the scene, and he was as excited as the rest. The three Jimsons inquired what the matter was, but for some time no one took the trouble to answer. It was Monk who enlightened them at last. Monk had lost no time. He sent a dozen fellows to search the upper passages, half a dozen into each dormitory, and the rest to scour the class-rooms and the quad. If Tom Merry were there, it seemed certain that he would soon be unearthed. Some of the seniors, even, learning what had happened, were joining in the search. It was a thorough one.

"It's a cad from St. Jim's," explained Monk, as Jimson major insisted upon hearing what it was all about. "A chap named Merry—Tom Merry."

"A cad, is he?"

"Well, not exactly a cad. We call all the St. Jim's fellows cads. You see, we're the top school, and they won't admit it."

"I see."

"We raided their cricket-ground the other day, and gave 'em a big licking, and carried off their stumps as trophies, as I told you," said Monk. "Now, Tom Merry has been here to get them back again."

"Cheek!"

"Yes, rather! We'll put him through it if we catch him!"

"I suppose he's bound to be caught?" said Jimson major, with the ghost of a grin upon his face.

Monk snapped his teeth.

"He must be! He can't get out now the gates are locked. Of course, he must have sneaked in before locking up, you know."

"Ye-es; I suppose he came in before locking-up. But now—"

"We'll find him. I don't think he could get over the school wall. He doesn't know the lay of the land. Here, I can't stay jawing any longer!"

And Frank Monk rushed off to join in the search.

The three Jimsons grinned at one another.

"Where did you put the things?" muttered Jimson minor.

"Safe, I hope?" grinned the minimus.

Tom Merry chuckled and nodded.

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"Yes, rather! I cut out into the quad., and shoved them in the branches of the oak close to the wall. If necessary, we can get at them from the road outside now, by climbing the wall."

"Good! In case we have to cut for it."

The three juniors went into the common-room, but they did not stay there long. The room was deserted by all save themselves, and in five minutes it was deserted by them also. They strolled out into the passages, and looked on while the baffled Grammarians hunted high and low for Tom Merry.

Needless to say, Tom Merry was not to be found.

High and low the Grammar School juniors hunted, but no trace was discovered of the elusive junior from St. Jim's.

It was a startling disappearance.

Tom Merry seemed to have vanished into thin air.

At last, tired and disgusted, and vowing vengeance upon the hero of the Shell at St. Jim's, the juniors trooped back to the common-room.

They found it in darkness. The gas had been turned out.

Frank Monk bumped against the table, and growled:

"Hang it, what ass turned the light out?"

"Haven't you got a match?"

"Yes, I think so!" growled Monk, feeling in his pockets.

"Let's have a light, for goodness' sake! Perhaps Tom Merry has been here and turned the light out," grunted Hanks.

"Stuff! Tom Merry's gone long ago. He must have got over the wall."

"I don't know. He—"

"Well, I do! I tell you he's gone!"

Monk scratched the match and put it to the gas. The Grammarians blinked at one another in the sudden light. There was a roar from Gilson:

"Look!"

On the table was chalked, in huge letters that glistened in the light, a brief but expressive sentence:

"RATS!—TOM MERRY!"

CHAPTER 14.

Arthur Augustus to the Rescue!

"SKIMPOLE, deah boy!" Skimpole looked up. He was in his study, in the Shell passage at St. Jim's, and he was very busy. He was deep in the heart of a huge volume by the famous German Determinist professor, Herr von Dummkopf, and he was finding new and luminous arguments to support his own theories.

Skimpole was interrupted by what he took to be the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form. But when he looked up from the entrancing pages of Professor von Dummkopf, it was a spurious imitation of Binks that stood before him. A strange youth, half page, half boots, and wholly ill-dressed and ill-fitted, was looking in at the door.

"Dear me!" said Skimpole. "Who are you?"

"Please my name is Fwedewick Wobinson, and I've come about the new page's job," said the disguised junior.

Skimpole jumped.

"Dear me! It sounds like D'Arcy's voice, but I have never seen you before, my good fellow. You have a very strange way of speaking for a page. But it is no use applying to a junior's study for a job as page. You must go to the House-master. I cannot afford to keep any personal servants; and if I could, my principles as a sincere Socialist would stand in the way. My dear hearers, servant and master are two old-fashioned words, survivals of an age of vile barbarism. In the future, mankind are to be brothers. Beloved hearers—"

"By Jove, Skimmay, you are like the little bwook, you know—you go on for evah!"

Skimpole gasped with astonishment. It was more than ever the voice of D'Arcy; but the face—the clothes! It was a Binks speaking with the tones of a D'Arcy. Like the patriarch of old, Skimpole might have said, "The hands are the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob."

"I am wathah glad to see that this wippin' disguise passes mustah with you, Skimmay," said Arthur Augustus, with a smile which the grease-paint on his face changed into a hideous grin. "You would not know me, would you?"

"Is it really D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I should certainly not know you, except by your voice."

"Yaas, my voice would natuwall be familiah to you. But Mr. Slingah does not know it, so there is no reason why he should suspect anythin'."

"You are not going out like that?"

"Yaas, wathah. I want you to lend me your glasses for the disguise. I pwesume you have a second pair, deah boy?"

"Yes; I keep a second pair in case of accidents. Gore is sometimes ill-natured enough to conceal my glasses if I lay

them down. I have almost despaired of converting Gore to Socialism. I—"

"Nevah mind Gore. Will you let me twy your othah glasses?"

"Certainly! But—"

"Pway hand them ovah, deah boy."

Skimpole handed them over, and D'Arcy perched them on his nose. He blinked painfully through them, and twisted his eyes.

"You see—" began Skimpole.

"Bai Jove, I don't! That's the twouble!"

"You see, the glasses are made to suit my sight. They are not likely to suit anybody else's, and certainly not yours. Your sight is correct, I believe?"

"Quite cowveet."

"Then the glasses are of no use to you."

"Bai Jove, you know, I nevah thought of that!"

Arthur Augustus laid the glasses down. He was disappointed. He really wanted a pair of spectacles to complete his disguise, but he would have to go without them now. He was rather inclined to be annoyed with Skimpole for having such peculiar sight.

"I am sorry," said Skimpole. "I don't know what you are going to see Mr. Slinger in disguise for, but if you like to stay here instead, I shall be very pleased to read you a few chapters from this splendid book."

"Oh, wats!"

"Professor von Dummkopf smashes the arguments of all those who oppose Determinism. He proves conclusively that the common system of blaming and praising people for what they do is absurd and pernicious, because, in the light of Determinism, we see that people are not responsible for their actions."

"I nevah supposed that you were wespensible for your actions, deah boy."

"What is the cause of an action?" went on Skimpole, unheeding. "In the words of the gifted professor, every action has a cause. That cause may be accurately defined as the producer of the action in question. The action, or result, being produced by the cause, and the cause being the action of the result. I—I mean the action being the cause of the cause, and— I—I think I have got a little mixed. I will begin again at the beginning. Don't go, D'Arcy—"

But D'Arcy was gone.

Minus the intended spectacles, D'Arcy walked down the passage, and descended the stairs. He passed several fellows, who glanced at him curiously. They naturally took him for a new boots, but thought he was rather an odd-looking one. Mr. Railton, the master of the School House, met him in the hall, and stopped him.

"I do not remember having seen you before," he said. "Are you looking for— Dear me!"

He gazed in surprise after the strange youth, who had bolted suddenly. D'Arcy had not sufficient confidence in his powers to disguise his tones to risk answering the House-master. The door was open, and the disguised swell of St. Jim's bolted into the quadrangle.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Railton, in amazement. "This is very strange!"

Arthur Augustus ran across the quad. to the gates.

In his own proper person, before adopting the disguise, he had obtained a pass for going to Rylcombe, and so he could safely break bounds. The gates were locked, and Taggles, standing at the door of his lodge, looked curiously at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Allo," he said familiarly, "who are you, young shaver, and how did you get in 'ere? Blessed if I let you in!"

"Please my name is Fwedewick Wobinson, and I'm the new page," said D'Arcy, willing to try the effect of his disguise upon Taggles.

Taggles gave a jump.

"Master D'Arcy!"

"Bai Jove, you knew my voice, I suppose, Taggles, deah boy?"

"Yes, Master D'Arcy. You're not going hout like that!"

"It's a jape, Taggles, deah boy. Pway open the gates. Here's my pass, signed by Kildare himself."

"You ain't going out like that!" repeated Taggles obstinately. "It ain't my dooty to let you out like that. You come back! I'll report yer!"

"Weally, Taggles—"

"I'll report yer!" said Taggles.

"Pway don't be a cad, deah boy. I should be much obliged if you would accept this shillin', Taggles, for the twouble of openin' the gate."

"Thanky kindly, sir!"

Taggles made no further demur, but led the way down to the gate. Clifton Dane, of the Shell, happened to be passing, and he stared at D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's nodded to him.

"Good-evenin', deah boy!"

"D'Arcy!" gasped Dane.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What—what—what on earth does this mean?"

"It's a disguise, deah boy. If you see Blake or Figgins, you can tell 'em not to be alarmed about Tom Mewwy and Kerr, because I am goin' to look aftah them."

"Eh?"

"I am goin' to see them through," said D'Arcy. "I am wathah wowwied about them. I am going to the Gwammah School disguised as a page." He lowered his voice, so that Taggles, who was unlocking the gate, should not hear. "It's wathah a wippin' wheeze—don't you think so, deah boy?"

"My hat!"

"I've kept it dark so fah, because I know those silly asses would have wanted to intahfere with me," explained D'Arcy. "I shall pwobably not weturn to-night. In that case, Binks has a note to give to the House-mastah, informin' him that I have joined Tom Mewwy's party. It will be all wight."

"But—but it's a late hour for going to the Grammar School after a new job," gasped Clifton Dane.

"It cannot vewy well be put off, because Tom Mewwy is pwobably in some fix already which requires a fellow of tact and judgment to help him. Then Dr. Monk may weturn to the Gwammah School to-morrow, for all I know, and then it wouldn't do, you see. I must be on the spot at once."

"But they won't let you in."

"I shall wewesent myself as Fwedewick Wobinson, a youth in search of employment. And Mr. Slingah will dwaw the infewence that I have been sent for by Dr. Monk. I shall pull the wool ovah his eyes, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for this wibald laughter, Dane."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Going to keep me waitin' 'ere all night, Master D'Arcy?" inquired Taggles pleasantly.

"Sowwy, deah boy! Good-night, Dane!"

"Here, I say, don't go. Don't—"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus walked out, and Taggles shut and locked the gate after him. Clifton Dane stared after him in the darkness through the bars of the gate. The form of the disguised swell of St. Jim's disappeared in the direction of Rylcombe Grammar School.

CHAPTER 15.

Done Again.

"RATS—TOM MERRY!"

The Grammarians could scarcely believe their eyes. They stared at the chalk message on the table; they stared at one another, and they stared round the room.

There was no sign of Tom Merry. But it was evidently the hero of St. Jim's who had chalked that message there, and turned the gas out in the Grammar School common-room.

Then Tom Merry was not gone. In spite of the exhaustive search, he was lingering somewhere about the building. Where? In what corner?

Frank Monk was the first to find his voice.

"Well, this takes the biscuit, I think."

"I told you he'd been here," squeaked Hanks.

"There's no doubt about it," said Carboy. "It's Tom Merry, or his ghost."

"But how—where—" Frank Monk broke off helplessly.

"Of course, this is a jape on us, in return for our raid."

"And we're getting nicely done," remarked Lane gloomily. "It's a regular triumph for Tom Merry. How the St. Jim's cads will chuckle when they hear of it!"

"By Jove! I think I can see them."

"They won't chuckle if we catch Tom Merry—and Tom Merry won't, either," said Monk grimly. "We'll smother him with soot, and send him back to St. Jim's like a chimney-sweep. We'll make him sing small."

"If we catch him!" sneered Gilson. "We haven't caught him yet."

Monk snapped his teeth.

"We must catch him. He can't be far away. This must have been chalked here while we were in the quad. searching for him. He's in the house."

"My word, what a nerve!"

"But where?" said Lane helplessly. "We've searched everywhere—everywhere!"

"I don't know. There's the box-rooms—and the garrets. There are a good many odd corners where the boulder might hide himself."

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NEXT
THURSDAY.

"THE TERRITORIALS AT ST. JIM'S."

A Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
By Martin Clifford.

"Shall we begin again?"

"Yes, rather; and make it a bit more thorough this time."

Monk smudged out the chalked words on the table. The Grammarians were getting decidedly angry by this time, and they were very anxious to get hold of Tom Merry. They were somewhat fagged with the search, but they renewed it with zest.

Monk, Lane, and Carboy ascended to the garrets—several small rooms at the top of a narrow stair that were only used for lumber. There was a door on the staircase, which shut the garrets off from the rest of the house. Through the garrets the three hunted in vain, while their comrades were searching below.

"Oh, rats!" exclaimed Monk at last. "He's not here. I'm jolly dusty!"

"No trace of the beast here!"

"Let's get down and see what the other fellows are doing."

Three exasperated juniors descended the stairs. They were more exasperated still when they reached the door at the foot of the little staircase. It was closed, and did not open to Frank Monk's hand.

"Hallo! What's wrong with this?"

"It's jammed, I suppose. Give it a shove."

"It's fast!"

They pushed the door violently, but the truth quickly dawned upon them—it was locked on the other side.

"Hang! This is one of the chaps larking with us."

"I'll give the larker a jolly good thick ear when I get near him!" growled Carboy. "This isn't the time for japes. Blow the door!"

Monk thumped fiercely on the panels.

"Open this door, you duffers!"

There was a light laugh on the other side. Frank Monk started. He thought he knew that laugh.

"Who's that?" he shouted.

"Ha, ha, ha! Hear me smile!"

"Tom Merry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Grammarians looked at one another aghast. It was a "nerve" such as astounded them. While they were hunting for Tom Merry—while a couple of score of exasperated Grammarians were hunting for him—the junior from St. Jim's had ventured out into the open, and locked them up on the garret stairs.

Now he was standing on the other side of the door—there were two inches of strong wood between them, and they could neither see nor get at him—but they could hear his merry laugh.

"My word!" muttered Monk. "This prances off with the giddy Peek Frean, and no mistake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Open this door, you St. Jim's rotter!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Who's top school now?"

"We are!" yelled Monk.

"Who's getting the best of this?"

"We are!" said a voice from Tom Merry's side of the door; and Monk gave a jump as he recognised the tones of D'Arcy minor. "My only Aunt Jane, I should say we are!"

"Young Wally!" he murmured, amazed.

"Two of them!" muttered Carboy.

"Whose triumph is this?" went on Tom Merry cheerfully. "Ours!" said Wally. "Down with the mouldy old Grammar School! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Monk thumped furiously on the door.

"Rescue!" he bawled. "Rescue, Grammar School! St. Jim's cads! Rescue!"

A sound of rapidly-receding footsteps was heard. Tom Merry was gone.

Frank Monk, Lane, and Carboy continued to thump and yell, and at last the noise brought several Grammarians to the scene.

Gilson opened the door, and the three furious juniors burst out into the passage.

Gilson stared at them in wonder.

"How on earth did you manage to lock yourselves up there?" he demanded.

"You utter ass!" yelled Monk. "It was Tom Merry!"

"Tom Merry?"

"Yes. He locked us up, and then jawed us through the door."

"My hat!"

"It can't be!" grunted Hanks. "You're dreaming. We've been on the stairs down there, or in the passages, all the time. Where could he have got to?"

"I suppose he's cut into the dorm."

"There's a dozen fellows searching the dorm. this minute."

"Well, I don't know where he is; but he was here. Why, look."

Frank Monk pointed to the door. There were words chalked on it for all to read:

"Done again!—TOM MERRY!"

"My only hat!"

"It's—it's magic!" gasped Hanks. "That's what it is. I tell you the fellow hasn't been here. It's magic!"

"Don't be an ass!" grunted Monk.

"Then how did he get away?"

"Blessed if I know."

There was a sudden shout down the passage.

"This way! Come here!"

"Hallo! Have they got him?"

And the Grammarians rushed off excitedly in the direction of the shout.

CHAPTER 16.

A Shock for the Jimson Family.

"WHAT is it?"

"Where is he?"

"Who was it yelled?"

"Young Wilkinson II."

"What did you yell for, you young ass?"

"I've seen him!" gasped Wilkinson II.

"Seen him!"

It was a general shout, and the eager Grammarians gathered round Wilkinson II. in a compact crowd, breathless for information. Little Wilkinson Secundus had never felt himself of so much importance before. Unconsciously an air of consequence grew upon him, which was promptly quashed by Frank Monk. He took a firm grip upon the ear of Wilkinson II.

"You've seen him—Tom Merry?"

"I—I suppose so."

"You suppose so?" Monk gave a snort. "I suppose you know Tom Merry by sight?"

"Yes; but—"

"But what, you stuttering young duffer?" shouted Lane.

"Shut up, Lane! Let him speak."

"It was so dark," stammered Wilkinson; "the gas had been turned out here on the stairs, you see."

"It must have been Tom Merry turned it out."

"Of course."

"Go on, Wilky."

"Well, I was coming upstairs in the dark, and I just caught sight of a chap who was chalking something on the wall here. I thought at once it was the St. Jim's kid, and I collared him and yelled."

"Good for you."

"Then he bumped me over the stairs and sloped," said Wilkinson II. "He cut into the senior passage."

There was a rush of juniors in that direction. Others struck matches. The gas-jet on the stairs was re-lighted, and they looked at the chalking Wilkinson averred he had seen the shadowy form engaged upon in the dimness.

The chalked letters were very crude, as was natural, considering that they had been done almost in darkness. But they were quite legible.

"St. Jim's is top school! More rats!—TOM MERRY."

Frank Monk almost gasped with rage.

"St. Jim's is top school, is it?" he said. "Wait till we get hold of the bouncer! I'll give him more rats!"

"He can't get away," said Carboy, with a grin. "We left five or six fellows on the watch at the other end of the senior passage, you know. He can't have got past them."

"Phew! We've got him in a trap this time. Cut along, and warn them to be on their guard."

"Right you are!"

Carboy dashed along the passage. The lights had been turned out there. The progress of Tom Merry seemed to be marked by extinguished gas-jets.

The watchers were still on guard where Frank Monk had left them. In fact, they were increased in number, for Jimson major, the new boy, was with them, chatting with them, and apparently helping them keep watch. He blinked through his spectacles at Carboy.

"Has anybody passed this way?" demanded Carboy.

"No!" said Jimson major. "What's the trouble?"

"Tom Merry dodged into the passage. Young Wilkinson II. saw him."

"Phew!"

"He hasn't come by here," said Brown. "We've been on the watch all the time. He must have cut into one of the senior studies."

"We'll jolly soon have him out."

Carboy reported to Monk. The gas was re-lighted in the passage, and it revealed the fact that there was no stranger there. It was clear to Monk & Co. that the fugitive must have dodged into a study.

"We'll take each in turn, and search the lot till we find him," said Frank Monk determinedly.

Lane looked a little doubtful.

"What are the seniors likely to say?"

"Blow the seniors!" said Gilson.

"That's all very well; but we don't want the order of the boot."

"Well, we can search the empty studies," said Monk, after a moment's thought, "and just ask the others. Tom Merry can't have hidden himself in a study that had anybody in it."

"True!"

"Two of you to each study, and buck up!" directed Frank Monk.

And the studies were searched.

The rooms that happened to be occupied by Grammar School seniors afforded the hunters various receptions. At some they were civilly answered, and at others they were shouted at and told to clear out. But the mere fact that a study was occupied was sufficient evidence that Tom Merry was not there.

The empty studies were rigidly searched. Not a corner where a dog or a cat could have hidden himself was left unsearched. But no sign was discovered of the elusive Tom Merry.

Hake's study was last, and Monk tapped at the door with some uneasiness. Hake—especially in the humour he was in that evening—was not a pleasant individual to beard in his den. But there was no help for it. The search had to be completed.

Hake scowled savagely as Frank Monk entered, with the spectacles of Jimson major and Jimson minor glimmering over his shoulders. Jimson minimus was behind with the rest of the hunters.

"What do you brats want?" demanded Hake.

"Nothing; only—"

"Then get out!"

"We've come to look for a chap."

"He's not here! Clear!"

"Nobody dodged into this study?"

"Nobody."

"Oh, all right! No need to be huffy about it," said Monk, looking round the study with a grin. Hake had tipped the servants to set it in order as much as possible, but they could not mend the looking-glass or the panes of the bookcase, or the broken clock.

The senior's study still looked a complete wreck.

Hake picked up a cushion as the juniors turned to the door.

Jimson major reeled forward, and fell upon his hands and knees, as the cushion, fiercely hurled, struck him on the back between the shoulders.

"Now get out of my study!" said Hake savagely.

Jimson major was on his feet in a second. His hand grasped the cushion that had bowled him over.

"Certainly!" he said.

And his hand went up with the cushion in it. Hake sprang to his feet.

"Don't you dare to—Ow!"

Biff! The cushion flew, and caught Hake on the chest, and bowled him over like a ninepin. He crashed down on the hearthrug, and the juniors crowded out of the study, chuckling.

Hake rushed out of the study the next moment, red with rage. The three Jimsons lined up, shoulder to shoulder, with clenched fists.

"Looking for trouble?" asked Jimson major pleasantly.

"We haven't any red-hot poker handy, but my knuckles are at your service."

Hake glared at them, clenching his hands, but the three seemed a little too formidable to tackle at once, and again he had to postpone his vengeance. With a muttered anathema, he retreated into his study, and slammed the door.

"Hake's getting quite tame," grinned Carboy. "You three fellows seem to know how to handle him, though if you get through the night without being skinned I shall be surprised."

Frank Monk wrinkled his brows.

"Talk about the Mystery of the Yellow Room!" he exclaimed. "It's not in it with this. Where did Tom Merry get to?"

"Don't ask me conundrums!"

"The passage was watched at both ends, and he didn't dodge into any of the studies. Then where is he?"

The Grammarians looked at one another almost in awe. It was a complete puzzle, so utterly baffling as almost to smack of the supernatural. No mystery they had ever heard of in a detective story was anything like it. Where was Tom Merry?

The juniors, utterly unable to grasp the problem, moved

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about aimlessly, still searching for the mysteriously-vanishing junior of St. Jim's.

Jimson major, minor, and minimus sauntered away, down the big staircase, and out of sight of the Grammar juniors they indulged in a quiet chuckle.

"The game's growing hot," murmured Tom Merry. "We are giving the Grammar innocents a high old time."

"My only Aunt Jane!" murmured Wally. "We are! We is!"

"Where is Tom Merry?" chuckled Kerr. "Oh, my hat! What will Frank Monk say when he learns the facts?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They'll all be ready to kick themselves hard!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Jimson major suddenly. "What's that?"

The door of the hall below the staircase had been opened. The voice of Mr. Slinger could be heard speaking in the hall, but the three juniors had not paid any particular attention to it.

But the voice that answered Mr. Slinger struck the three at once—struck them, so to speak, all of a heap.

For they knew the voice!

It said:

"If you please, my name is Fwedewick Wobinson, and I am the new page."

Jimson major, minor, and minimus gazed at one another in horror. One name fell in a dismayed whisper from their lips.

"Gussy!"

CHAPTER 17.

Not Quite a Success!

MR. SLINGER gazed at the boy before him in astonishment.

He was not in a good temper, especially as he was busy with examination papers, when he was called out by the arrival of this singular youth.

It appeared to Mr. Slinger that Dr. Monk had neglected to inform him of many things which should have been mentioned before the head-master went away.

First there was the arrival of the Jimsons, of which he had known nothing till he had received the telegram, followed by the arrival of the new boys.

Now here was, apparently, a new page, whom Dr. Monk had caused to call, without giving Mr. Slinger the slightest hint that he was coming.

And such a page!

Mr. Slinger had seen all sorts of pages, boot-boys, and other boys in his time, but he had never seen anything quite like this before.

The fellow was quaint in the face, to say the least of it, and his clothes fitted him as badly as it was possible for clothes to fit.

But his voice!

Mr. Slinger had never heard a youth in service speak with a full-blown Oxonian accent before; but he had that curious experience now.

He gazed at the page, who returned his gaze calmly.

"You are Mr. Slingah, I suppose?" said the new page.

"I twust that I shall give you satisfaction, my deah sir. As I have remarked, my name is Fwedewick Wobinson, and I am the—"

"Dear me!" gasped Mr. Slinger.

"If I can see Dr. Monk, my deah sir—"

"Dr. Monk is absent."

"Ah, that is wathah unfortunate. Howevah, I have no doubt that I shall be able awwange satisfactorily with you."

"Bless my soul!"

"I am lookin' for a posish as page, a job, I believe it is called," went on the stranger. "I have observed the duties of the posish, and I wathah think I can cawwy them out satisfactorily. I shall be vevy happy to twy."

"This is most extraordinary."

"Not at all, deah boy—I mean, deah sir. I—"

"I do not understand this."

"Pway what is it that is beyond your understandin', sir? I shall be vevy happy to explain."

"Who are you?"

"I am Fwedewick Wobinson, and—"

"Boy!"

"Yaas, sir!"

"What does this—this masquerade mean?" demanded Mr. Slinger fiercely. "You are no page."

"Weally, Mr. Slingah—"

"Do you think you can deceive me, boy?"

"I weally twust that you do not suspect me of any intention to deceive, Mr. Slingah. I should wegard such a course with uttah contempt."

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NEXT

THURSDAY.

"THE TERRITORIALS AT ST. JIM'S."

A Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
By Martin Clifford

"You are not what you pretend to be!"

"Weally, my deah sir—"

"You are not a page."

"I am a page at the pwesent moment."

"Your name is not Robinson!"

"My name at the pwesent moment is Fwedewick Wobinson," said the swell of St. Jim's, rather hampered in his impersonation by his determination not to tell an untruth.

"There is no need to inquire furthah."

Mr. Slinger stamped his foot.

"But I shall inquire further," he almost shouted. "This is some impudent joke, unless it is the attempt of a criminal to get into the house for the purpose of robbery."

"Bai Jove!"

"Yes, robbery!" stormed Mr. Slinger.

"Wobbewy! Weally, Mr. Slingah—"

"Who are you?"

"Fwedewick Wobinson!"

"I will telephone for the police!" said Mr. Slinger, greatly incensed.

"Bai Jove!"

Naturally enough, the strange scene had drawn the Grammarians to the spot, and they had approached as near as they dared to the acid-tempered Mr. Slinger.

And naturally, too, Frank Monk & Co. recognised the beautiful tones and charming accent of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

They gazed at one another in wonder.

There was no doubt at all that it was D'Arcy. He certainly wasn't what he pretended to be, and there was no doubt as to whom he really was. The Grammarians were awe-stricken at the cheek of it.

"The nerve!" said Monk, in a low voice. "Coming here in disguise!"

"My hat!" said Carboy. "Perhaps he's been around here, doing those tricks we've been putting down to Tom Merry?"

Monk shook his head.

"No; he's only just arrived."

"Tom Merry's about here somewhere, and—"

"This ass has come to see how he's getting on," grinned Monk. "That is Gussy's idea of a disguise."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I never thought he'd have the nerve! It's amazing!"

"It is, by George!" said Lane. "Slinger hasn't an idea who he is. Thinks he's a giddy burglar."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It won't be a joke for Gussy if he gets arrested."

Mr. Slinger was looking very much incensed. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was at a loss. He had hoped to be taken on as a new page without difficulty or too much inquiry, but the scheme was not working out as he had wished. It struck him that there might be some slight detail in which he was not keeping up the character.

Mr. Slinger's threat of telephoning for the police flabbergasted Arthur Augustus, so to speak.

"Weally, my deah sir, there is no necessity for that," he said, after a pause of dismay. "If you do not require my services as page, I shall be pleased to wetire."

Mr. Slinger smiled grimly.

"You will not retire so easily," he said. "I shall insist upon your giving an account of yourself before you leave this house."

"Weally, my dear sir—"

"Close the door, Monk, and stand there and see that this boy does not pass you," said the master sharply. Frank Monk, with a grimace, went to the door, and stood on guard. D'Arcy fished an eyeglass out of his pocket, jammed it in his eye, and looked at Monk and then at Mr. Slinger.

The latter gentleman simply gasped. The new page-boy was extraordinary enough, but the addition of the eyeglass took the biscuit, as Blake would have said.

A pageboy with an eyeglass was altogether a new thing to Mr. Slinger. But D'Arcy, finding himself in a fix, was losing his caution. And he never could think clearly, as he had often confided to his chums, without an eyeglass in his eye.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Slinger. "I am beginning to think that the boy is insane."

"Weally, Mr. Slingah, I wegard that remark as wude in the extweme," said D'Arcy, looking the Grammar School master up and down through the monocle. "You may use your discwetion, of course, about engagin' me as page, but, in any case, I considah that I am entitled to be twated with pwopah respect."

"Bless my soul!"

"I will now wetire!"

As a matter of fact, D'Arcy would have been glad at that moment to find himself on the outside of the Grammar School.

"You will not!" said Mr. Slinger coldly. "Unless you immediately give an account of yourself, I shall telephone

to Rylcombe Police Station. It looks to me as if you have endeavoured to gain an entrance to this house for purposes of robbery."

"I can only regard that observation as a deliberate insult."

"Will you explain yourself?" roared Mr. Slinger.

"Certainly not. If you were not so greatly my seniah, I should give you a feahful thwashin'. Undah the circe, I uttably wefuse to explain myself!"

"Boys, keep an eye on this person, and see that he does not escape while I go to the telephone," almost gasped Mr. Slinger.

"I'll look after him, sir," said a squeaky voice, and Jimson major bustled forward.

The disguised swell of St. Jim's stared at Jimson major, and at the minor and minimus, who followed him.

"Bai Jove!"

"Shut up!" whispered Tom Merry fiercely.

"Yaas, but—"

The three Jimsons took a tight grip on the new page, and held him fast, and a biff on the mouth from Jimson major's shoulder, stopped his remarks, unfinished. Mr. Slinger hurried off to the head-master's study, where the telephone was fixed. He was fully determined to ring up Rylcombe Police-Station for a constable to be sent to the Grammar School.

D'Arcy had come there to help Tom Merry & Co., whom he imagined to be in an "awkward posish." He had succeeded in getting into a fearful scrape, and how he was to get out of it was, of course, a question for Tom Merry to solve.

CHAPTER 18.

The Game is Up.

"WEALLY, deah boys—"

"Shut up!"

"Weally—"

"Quiet, ass!" whispered Tom Merry. "Can't you see the Grammar cads are on the watch, and—"

"Yaas, wathah, but I wish it to be plainly undahstood that undah no circe whatevah can I consent to bein' addressed as an ass."

"Come this way!" said Tom Merry loudly. "I say, you chaps, we'll put him into a class-room, so that he can't get away."

"Right-ho!" said Monk. "This way!"

"I wefuse—"

"Come on, you duffer!" It was difficult to make D'Arcy understand, with the grinning Grammarians close around, but Tom Merry whispered. "It's a chance for you. You can skip out of the window. See?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

They hurried the captured swell of St. Jim's into the nearest class-room, and Frank Monk lighted the gas. Jimson major still had hold of the prisoner on one side, and his minor on the other.

"Safe enough here, chaps! We'll lock him in!"

"That we won't," said Frank Monk decidedly. "Look here, you Jimson, you're taking too much on yourself for a new boy."

"We want to keep him safe, you know."

"No business of a new kid," said Lane. "You shut up!"

"Yes, but—"

"Oh, ring off!" said Carboy. "You Jimsons stand back! We're going to deal with our dear Gussy!"

"Bai Jove!"

The prisoner's exclamation of astonishment was greeted with a roar of laughter by the Grammarians.

The Jimsons exchanged glances of dismay.

"Weally, you wottahs—"

"The game's up, Gussy," grinned Frank Monk. "We knew you by your dulcet tones at once. The game is right up!"

"Rather!" chuckled Carboy. "We've got you! We know Tom Merry's here somewhere, and you've come over to show him up. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not at all, deah boy! I came in disguise to help him in an awkward posish."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They came here without my appvoval in the first place, and I felt vewy uneasy for them," explained D'Arcy.

"As you have somehow guessed my weal identity—"

"Somehow! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I claim to be tweated with the wespect due to a pwisoner of war, and allowed to wetire from the scene."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see anythin' in that wemark to excite laughtah."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway welease me, deah boys!"

"My hat!" chuckled Monk. "Cool, to say the least."

You're a giddy prisoner of war, Gussy. You're not going to get away quite so easily."

"Weally, Monkey—"

"Tom Merry's here somewhere. He's got some deep dodge of keeping out of our way, and he's been ragging us no end. I suppose you are on to the dodge, whatever it is?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then what is it?"

D'Arcy released one hand, and jammed his eyeglass into his eye. That done, he looked Frank Monk up and down—from his toes to the parting of his hair, and from the parting of his hair to his toes again.

"Weally, Fwank Monk, I pwesume you do not expect me to betway my fwienids?"

"My word! Doesn't he do it well?" grinned Monk. "You ought to go on the stage, Gussy. This is really what comes of singing tenor solos. He wants to like a soldier fall."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear ass, we want to know where Tom Merry is. If you don't reveal the dread secret—I believe that's the correct expression—the dread secret, we shall put you to the torture."

"Pway don't wot, deah boy!"

"Here, draw it mild!" said Jimson major.

"You shut up, you new kid!"

"I think we ought to let him go."

"Mind your own business!"

"Look here—"

"After all, we don't want him to be arrested!" grinned Hanks. "That would be rather too thick. And old Slinger's at the 'phone."

"That's all right," said Monk. "You can't arrest by telephone, can you? It will take the bobby an hour to get here. You know the pace they move at."

"Yes, I forgot that."

"Plenty of time for Gussy to get away. We shall have to see that he takes back some sign of our kind regards to St. Jim's. I was thinking of a coat of tar over his chivvy, and glueing his hair to his napper."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I should uttably wefuse to have my hair glued to my nappah!"

"But first we've got to get out of him where Tom Merry is, and young Wally. We know they're both here."

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, rats! You don't know anything!" said Jimson major aggressively. "What you really want is a thick ear, Monkey."

"Don't you begin rowing now, Jimson. What's your little game?"

"I'll row if I like," said Jimson major. Tom Merry was getting desperate. He had no fear that D'Arcy would willingly betray the secret—the swell of St. Jim's was incapable of that—but he felt pretty certain that if the Grammarians questioned him, he would allow it to escape him involuntarily—sooner or later it would pop out like a cork from a bottle—and then the game would be up with a vengeance. If a fight was started, there was a chance that Gussy might get clear in the confusion. That was Tom Merry's idea; but it was not destined to work.

"No, you won't!" said Frank Monk grimly. "We can't bother with you now, Specs. Get out of the way."

"Rats to you, Monkey!"

"Shove him back, you chaps!"

There were at least twenty Grammarians in the class-room. Half a dozen of them closed round Jimson major, and hustled him back. The three Jimsons drew closer together.

It looked as if the climax were coming.

Frank Monk turned to D'Arcy again. He was held now by Lane and Carboy. Tom Merry drew a little back with his comrades, and whispered to Wally.

"We shall have to run for it in a minute."

Wally nodded gloomily.

"Looks like it. Gussy was bound to mess it up."

"What's the programme?" muttered Kerr. "Gussy will let the secret out as sure as a gun."

"I think so. Look here, we shall have to cut for it. I was thinking of the window here, but there's too many of the rotters in the room. We shall have to cut into the hall. You get out first, Wally, and see if you can put the key on the outside of the lock. It will give us a chance."

"Right you are!"

"If they captured the lot of us, the laugh would be against us for ever and ever," murmured Tom Merry. "We should never get over it. They'd have the laugh on their side, and we should be chipped to death at St. Jim's. The fellows would never let us forget it."

"Rather not!"

Wally slid away to the door. No one noticed him; all

eyes were on the prisoner, and no one knew or cared what Jimson minimus was doing.

Frank Monk was questioning D'Arcy. The way Tom Merry had contrived to baffle their search was a complete mystery to the Grammarians; but there was some trick in it, Monk knew, and he was pretty certain that D'Arcy knew it all. And he meant to have the information out of Gussy by hook or by crook. The capture of Tom Merry would be a crowning triumph for the Grammarians.

D'Arcy had no intention of revealing the secret.

"You may question me till you are black in the face, deah boy," he remarked. "I shall not betway my fwields, bai Jove!"

"Twist his wrists a bit," suggested Gilson.

"You may twist my wists if you like, you cad, but I shall not say a beastly word."

"Hold on!" said Monk. "None of your caddish tricks, Gilson."

"He's got to speak!" said Gilson sulkily.

"Yes; but that's my business, not yours. Stand back! Now, then, Gussy, we want to know where Tom Merry is."

"Find out, deah boy."

"I suppose"—Monk looked at the queer disguise that rendered Arthur Augustus unrecognisable, and a new idea came into his mind—"I suppose he's in a disguise of some sort."

"I can only wepeat my formah wemark—find out."

"Impossible!" said Carboy. "I don't suppose he could succeed any better than this ass at a disguise. Besides, if he were disguised he would have to come here as a stranger, and there aren't any strangers about the school."

"That's so, except the new boys."

Frank Monk had no sooner uttered the words than his face changed, and he gave a sudden start. His own words had struck him with peculiar force.

"The new boys!" he repeated. "The new boys!"

"What do you mean?"

"I thought they were a jolly queer set of new boys, and Slinger didn't know any new boys were coming."

"My hat!"

"Bai Jove, Tom Mewwy, the game's up!" said D'Arcy involuntarily. "Wun for it, deah boy! Nevah mind me! Wun like anythin'!"

"That's proof!" roared Frank Monk. "Where are those Jimsons?"

"Collar them!"

And there was a roar of excitement in the room at once.

CHAPTER 19.

A Rush to the Rescue.

JACK BLAKE wore a worried look. For a quarter of an hour he had been going to and fro in the School House at St. Jim's, seeking Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and finding him not.

"Have you seen Gussy?"

That was the question he fired at everyone he met, and everyone replied with a negative monosyllable or a shake of the head.

Herries and Digby didn't know where he was; Lowther and Manners professed complete ignorance. Gore, when asked, said he hoped he had got drowned somewhere. Figgins and Kerr, of the New House, had not seen him. Reilly remembered seeing him in the morning, but as Blake had seen him later than that, the information wasn't of much use. Glyn and Noble thought they had heard his voice in Skimpole's study as they passed it, and to Skimpole at last Blake hid himself.

Blake was very uneasy. He remembered Gussy's anxiety about Tom Merry and Kerr, and his suggestion that he should go to the Grammar School in disguise to look after them.

It was quite possible that D'Arcy had carried out his intention, and Blake groaned inwardly at the idea. The whole scheme would probably be revealed, and it might end in a triumph for the Grammarians, and the downfall of Tom Merry—a never-to-be-forgotten defeat for St. Jim's. D'Arcy's intentions were good, but good intentions were not quite all that were wanted in a matter of so much delicacy.

The chums of the Fourth found Skimpole in his study. He was still busy with the huge volume of Professor Von Dummkopf, making voluminous extracts for an article he intended writing for "Tom Merry's Weekly."

"Have you seen Gussy?" demanded Blake.

"Gussy!" said Skimpole vaguely, his mind still deep in Determinism. "Gussy! Oh—ah—yes! Not since the last time."

Blake snorted.

"When was the last time, fathead?"

"He came in here to borrow my spectacles," explained Skimpole. "It was for purposes of disguise; but they did not suit him."

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"Disguise!" exclaimed Blake.

"Er—perhaps I ought not to inform you."

"How long has he been gone?" yelled Blake.

"Half an hour, I think."

"My only hat!"

Blake rushed out of the study and joined his chums. His call brought them together in a moment.

"Found him?" asked Digby.

"No; he's been disguising himself, and he's gone."

"Phew!"

"I'll run and get Towser!" exclaimed Herries.

"Towser! What on earth do you want with Towser?"

"To track him down."

"Rats! Blow Towser! Towser can eat coke. It's pretty certain where the giddy ass has gone. He's gone to the Grammar School to look after Tom Merry and Kerr."

"Then all the fat's in the fire."

"Yes. Hallo, Dane! Have you seen Gussy?"

"Yes, rather; he gave me a message for you," said Dane, coming along the passage. "He's rigged himself up in some of Binks' clothes, and he's gone to the Grammar School disguised as a boot-boy."

"My hat! I thought as much."

"He thinks Tom Merry will be in an awkward position by this time, and he's gone to help him," explained Dane, grinning.

"The young ass! He'll give the whole show away. How long is it since he left the school?" exclaimed Blake excitedly.

"Ten minutes."

"Oh, blow! He's at the Grammar School by now, then, if he hurried."

"But he never does hurry," suggested Digby. "If we cut after him—"

"Right!" said Blake hurriedly. "Give the word to some of the fellows, Dig, and bring them along, in case there's trouble with the Grammar cads. I'll cut along after Gussy now."

"Gates are locked."

"Haven't you ever climbed a wall?"

"There'll be a row if we're missed—a crowd of us."

"Bring a dozen, and let there be a row," said Blake.

And he snatched his cap and rushed off.

There was nothing for Dig to do but to obey. Word was passed that fellows were wanted for a rescue, and there was a gathering at once. A rescue it certainly would have to be, in the general opinion. D'Arcy's disguise was not likely to pass muster in the Grammar School; and if he was discovered, the discovery of the pretended new boys was very likely to follow.

Lowther and Manners, Digby and Herries, with Glyn and Clifton Dane and Noble, and Reilly and Kerruish, rushed into the dusky quad, and were soon joined by Figgins & Co. of the New House. Two Third-Formers also joined the party, Jameson and Gibson, and were greeted with a growl from Fourth Form and Shell fellows.

"You kids cut off!" said Lowther.

"Rats!" said Jameson. "I've heard what Dane said—Gussy's gone there to mess it up."

"That's no business of yours," said Digby. "Cut off, or you'll get a thick ear!"

"Rats! We're going to look after Wally."

"Wally!"

"Yes, Wally."

"But young D'Arcy isn't there!"

Jameson chuckled.

"Isn't he? That's all you know!"

"You young rascal!" roared Digby. "Do you mean to say young Wally has had the cheek to mix himself up with this?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

"How did the imp know anything about it?" exclaimed Figgins, in astonishment.

"Oh, you couldn't pull the wool over the eyes of the Third Form!" said Gibson contemptuously. "We knew all along."

"The Dickens you did!"

"And so Wally has gone to the Grammar School, has he?" said Manners.

"Yes, rather—as Jimson minimus."

"My only hat!"

There was no time to slay the Third-Formers just then, and they were allowed to follow. The whole crowd scrambled over the wall by the slanting oak, Fatty Wynn gasping and grunting very much with his exertions.

Then they went down the road at a spanking pace, in the track of Jack Blake, who was well ahead by this time. They did not sight Blake till the gates of the Grammar School, grim and dark, rose in the dimness of the evening before them.

Then a shadowy figure came into view from the darkness of the wall.

"Hist! It's all right."

It was Blake's voice.

"Seen anything of him?" gasped Figgins.

"No; if he came here, he must have gone in."

"He came here right enough," said Clifton Dane. "I watched him out of sight. He was coming straight in this direction, and he knew the way well enough."

"Then he's inside the Grammar School!"

"Looks like it."

"What's to be done?"

The juniors of St. Jim's looked at the high gates, and at the long dark wall with the branches of trees showing over it. Blake stepped closer to the wall.

"I'm going in to see what's up."

"Phew! It's risky!"

"I don't care! Give me a bunk up!"

Figgins, the tallest of the party, gave Jack Blake the required bunk, and the School House junior scrambled upon the wall. As he did so, there was a shout within the walls, and a sound of running feet.

CHAPTER 20.

Neck or Nothing.

"COLLAR them!"

"Collar the new kids!"

"It's Tom Merry!"

"Collar him!"

It was a babel of yells that broke out in the Grammar School class-room, and a wild excitement had seized upon the crowd of juniors gathered there under the glimmer of a single gas-burner.

The truth had burst upon the Grammarians like a thunderbolt.

The idea had flashed into Frank Monk's brain, but even to him it had seemed so incredible, so unheard of, that he could hardly have believed it, but for the incautious words uttered by Arthur Augustus.

D'Arcy meant all for the best when he told Tom Merry to run and save himself; but his words gave the show away completely.

After that, the most startled and amazed of the Grammarians could not doubt.

They had been taken in by the St. Jim's juniors by a stupendous jape, the like of which had never before come within their experience.

If the Saints got away, the laugh would be against the Grammar School, and the laugh would be loud and long.

Monk could picture Tom Merry & Co. relating their adventures in the Grammar School to grinning circles at St. Jim's.

"Collar him!" roared Monk.

At any cost, Tom Merry must be captured!

That was the only way the Grammarians could hope to save themselves from endless ridicule.

If Tom Merry were captured and made an example of, the laugh would be against St. Jim's, after all.

But Tom Merry was quick to act.

He was expecting the revelation, as we know, and he had whispered his plans to Kerr. Wally was outside the door, waiting in the passage, and he had changed the key as Tom Merry had directed him.

As the shout burst from Frank Monk, and the Grammarians scrambled wildly round to collar the Jimsons amid a babel of exclamations, Tom Merry made a dash for the gas. He was too quick for his intention to be guessed or frustrated.

His hand was on the burner, and in a second the gas was turned out, and the great room plunged into darkness.

There was a fresh burst of yells.

"Look out!"

"He's escaping!"

"Collar him!"

Tom Merry felt hands on him in the darkness. He had discarded his spectacles, as had Kerr and Wally—disguise was useless now, and the glasses might have been dangerous with wild hitting going on in the darkness.

Tom Merry hit out right and left.

It was no time to stand upon ceremony—it was neck or nothing now! Straight from the shoulder came Tom's doughty blows, and Grammarians reeled from him with gasps of pain.

Tom Merry tore himself loose in a twinkling.

At the same moment that Tom had rushed to the gas, Kerr had sprung towards Arthur Augustus.

He grasped D'Arcy by the shoulders as the light went out, and wrenched him away from the relaxed grasp of the startled Carboy and Lane.

Arthur Augustus, startled himself, gave a yell.

"Ow! You wuff ass! You're hurtin' me!"

"Come on!"

"Yaas, but——"

"Cut for it, you ass. The door, quick!"

"I wufese to be called an ass!"

Kerr did not speak again—there was hardly time for an argument, so he suppressed his thoughts till a more favourable opportunity. Grasping D'Arcy by the arm, he piloted him swiftly to the door.

Tom Merry was dashing in the same direction after turning out the gas.

It all passed in a few seconds. They reached the door while the Grammarians were wildly scrambling to and fro in the dark class-room.

There was a glimmer of light at the doorway from the hall, and the figures were seen as they flitted out. There was a roar.

"They're off!"

"After them!"

Monk and Gilson and Lane were close on the track. As they rushed through the doorway, however, four St. Jim's juniors lined up there, and sent them reeling into the room again with terrific right-handers.

The Grammar juniors rolled on the floor, and several more close behind rolled over them, and Tom Merry slammed the door shut.

In a second Carboy had hold of the handle on the inside, and was dragging on it. Tom exerted all his strength to keep the door fast.

"Quick!" he gasped. "The lock!"

Wally was already turning the key.

Click!

That click warned the Grammarians what had happened, and they kicked furiously on the door, and yelled for rescue.

"The window!" gasped Monk. "We may cut them off yet."

Some of the Grammarians rushed to the window. Others continued to hammer on the door to attract attention. In their excitement they forgot all about the results that might accrue from alarming masters and prefects. They hammered and yelled. Tom Merry & Co. made for the door into the quadrangle.

They met Mr. Slinger on the way.

The Grammar School master, having telephoned to the police-station at Rylcombe, and received the assurance that a constable would be sent up to the school at once, was returning to further interrogate the prisoner.

His amazement when he saw that same prisoner in full flight across the hall, accompanied by the three new boys, may be imagined.

"Stop!" he shouted.

They rushed on, and Mr. Slinger threw himself valiantly into their path. Hake was looking out of his study, wondering what the noise was about, and the Grammar School master shouted to him.

"Hake! Help me!"

The senior rushed upon the scene.

There was no time to waste.

"Bump him!" muttered Tom Merry.

They dashed at the Grammar School master. He struck at them wildly, hardly knowing what he was doing in his astonishment and alarm; but four pairs of hands grasped him, and he was "bumped."

They left him in a sitting posture, gazing after them with an expression of bewilderment that was almost idiotic. Hake rushed after them, and grasped Tom Merry by the shoulder.

"Now, then, Jimson——"

He got no further.

Kerr turned upon him, and tripped him up, and he rolled on the steps of the red-brick building, and four figures vanished into the darkness.

"Thanks!" gasped Tom Merry. "Thanks, Kerr! He nearly had me."

"A miss is as good as a mile."

"We're not out of the wood yet," panted Wally. "Whither now, kids? The gates are locked, of course."

"Yaas, wathah! The portah had to unlock them to let me in, deah boys, when I came to your wescue."

"Rescue!" snorted Wally. "You're the cause of all this bother."

"Weally, Wally——"

"Oh, ring off!"

"I wufese to wing off. I weward you as an impertinent young wascal——"

There was a shout from the direction of the class-room window. Several dusky figures were dropping from it, and one of them had rolled over.

"They're after us!" muttered Tom Merry. "We shall have to get over the wall somehow."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Follow me!"

And Tom Merry dashed away towards the tree, close to the wall, in the branches of which he had hidden the recaptured cricket stumps, the trophies of war.

There was a yell from the darkness towards the house.

"After them!"

"Search the quad!"

Tom Merry chuckled breathlessly.

"This way! I'll give you a bunk up, Gussy! Quick!"

"Wats! It is only pwopah for the wescuah to stay to the last! I will give you a bunk up, 'Tom Mewwy!"

"Here, Wally, you first, then!"

Wally clambered on the wall, helped up by Tom Merry's strong arms. Kerr followed. He would quite willingly have been last up, but he was too sensible to start arguing at such a moment. Then Tom Merry grasped Gussy.

"Now, then, up with you!"

"I pwefere to wemain to the last, deah boy."

"Ass! You're going first!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass, and I uttahly and absolutely decline to go first. The pwopah place for a D'Arcy is in the post of dangah!"

"You shriekin' idiot—"

"I should be sowwy to have to thwash you at such a moment, Tom Mewwy—"

"Oh, why didn't somebody suffocate you years ago?" murmured the exasperated leader of the Shell. "Will you go up?"

"Aftah you, deah boy!"

"Here come the Grammar cads—they've heard us."

"Yaas, wathah! Pway huwwy!"

There was no help for it. Tom Merry yielded the point, and scrambled up the wall with D'Arcy's assistance. There was a yell behind.

"Here they are!"

"They're getting over the wall!"

"Quick, collar them!"

And there was a wild rush of feet.

"Quick, Gussy!" panted Tom Merry, his chest on the wall, and reaching down a helping hand for the swell of St. Jim's.

"No time, deah boy. Sowwy!"

It was true enough.

A crowd of Grammarians were rushing up, and if Arthur Augustus had climbed then, his ankles would have been grasped by a dozen hands.

Obstinate as he was, the swell of St. Jim's was no fool. He dodged away along the wall in the darkness, and Tom Merry tried to attract the attention of the Grammarians to himself by shouting:

"Ha, ha! Done again, Monkey!"

The ruse succeeded for a moment. The Grammarians, with a yell, brought up against the wall under the three juniors, whose forms showed dimly in the gloom above. Monk made a spring at the wall, and received a tap on the nose from Kerr, and dropped into a flower-bed with a squashy bump.

But a sound of scraping on the wall in the distance caught the keen ears of Carboy, and he shouted an alarm.

"There's another of them!"

"After him!"

And off went the Grammarians in a new direction. Tom Merry gave a groan.

"That ass, Gussy! He's caught!"

But Arthur Augustus was not caught yet. He had tried to climb the wall, and failed, and as the enemy rushed in his direction he ran along the wall again. The shouting juniors were close on his track, and some of them had lights now.

"There he is!"

It was Carboy's voice close behind.

It was neck or nothing! D'Arcy made a desperate bound at the wall, and grasped the top, and hung there, too exhausted by the spring to drag himself over it.

"By Jove, I'm done!"

"Hold on, kid!"

A form loomed on the wall close by him—someone who had climbed up from outside. D'Arcy gasped. He knew the voice!

"Blake!"

"Yes, rather, ass!"

"I—I—I wefuse to—to—"

"Ha, ha! Come on!"

Jack Blake grasped D'Arcy by the collar, and dragged him, half choked, upon the wall, and the clutch of Carboy below missed his ankle by an inch!

CHAPTER 21.

All Serene.

TOM MERRY sat on the wall, gasping. A yell of disappointment from the Grammarians told him that D'Arcy had somehow managed to get to the top of the wall, and was safe for the moment.

"My only hat, that was a close shave!"

"It was!" panted Kerr—"it were!"

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NEXT
THURSDAY.

"THE TERRITORIALS AT ST. JIM'S."

A Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
By Martin Clifford.

"My only Aunt Jane, I don't want to go through a closer one!" murmured Wally. "But how has that asinine brother of mine got over the wall?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Are you all wight, deah boys?"

It was D'Arcy's voice from the road.

A crowd of dim figures loomed up there in the dimness of the night, Arthur Augustus among them. Tom Merry looked down from the wall in astonishment.

"Yes, we're all right," he said. "Who's with you?"

"We are, of course!" said Jack Blake. "Jolly lucky for some asses, too!"

"If you are alludin' to me, Blake—"

"I've just yanked Gussy out of their clutches by the skin of his teeth," said Blake. "If you're not going to lead the life of a tomcat on a garden wall, you chaps may as well come down."

"Give us a minute to breathe. I'm fagged."

"Oh, take your time! I expect the Grammar cads will be out here in a minute."

"Phew!" said Figgins. "There's no time to waste!"

Tom Merry glanced back into the dark quadrangle.

The Grammarians had rushed off to the gates, doubtless with the intention of opening them and pursuing the St. Jim's invaders out of the precincts of the Grammar School. But the gates were not open yet.

"I suppose it's ended in a mess-up?" went on Blake disparagingly. "You were going to stay a couple of days here, Tom Merry!"

"Yes, and I should have done it, but—"

"Is that young Wally there?"

"Yes, rather, cocky!"

"You cheeky young imp! You want a licking for poking yourself into this matter," said Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha! You couldn't have managed it without the Third!" chuckled Jameson, taking care to keep out of Figgins's reach the while.

"Not much," said Wally. "But if you'd kept Gussy chained up, as you ought to have done, all would have been O.K."

"I should have uttahly wefused to be chained up. I—"

"Of course, he messed it all up!"

"Of course he did!" said Kerr.

"I wefuse to admit anythin' of the sort. I came to the wescue—"

"Scat!"

"I decline to do anythin' of the sort. I came to the wescue, and found these youngstahs in a most pewilous stwait. I have wescued them—"

"My hat!" said Kerr. "Why, we were having a high old time! We've mystified the Grammar cads a treat, and written up messages for them all over the place. They were at their wits' end, not knowing what to make of it, till Gussy came on the scene. Of course, he was bound to give the whole show away!"

"Weally, Kerr—"

"Oh, dry up! You want suffocating!"

"I wefuse to dwy up! I—"

"Why don't you come down?" shouted Blake to Tom Merry, as Kerr and Wally dropped into the road. "I can hear some of the Grammar cads getting over the wall."

"Wait a minute!"

"What are you fumbling about in that tree for?"

"The trophies, ess!"

"The—the what?"

"The trophies! We've recaptured them!"

"Great Scott! The stumps they collared from us—you've got them?"

"Yes, rather!"

A bundle clattered on the ground at Blake's feet so suddenly that he gave a jump.

"Wh-wh-what's that?"

"The trophies of victory, you duffer!"

"Good!" said Monty Lowther, picking up the bundle. "This is a triumph, and no mistake! Now, the sooner we get back to St. Jim's the better!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

There was a shout from the gloom.

"There they are!"

It was Frank Monk's voice.

Mr. Slinger, fully believing that a burglary had been designed at the Grammar School, and that the pretended new boys were the accomplices of the burglars, had ordered the porter to open the gates, and given the boys free leave to pursue the fugitives. He meant the three Jimsons to give an account of themselves.

Frank Monk was far from enlightening him as to the true state of affairs. Mr. Slinger would certainly have called on Dr. Holmes, at St. Jim's, and there would have been trouble for Tom Merry & Co. While the gates were being opened, and a crowd of impatient Grammarians chafed there, Monk

and several of the more active climbed the wall, and dropped into the road.

They discerned the figures of the St. Jim's juniors in the gloom, and came dashing up, still with the hope of capturing Tom Merry.

They knew nothing, of course, of the accession of force to the St. Jim's party—the presence of Blake and the rest was a surprise to them.

They rushed up—five or six of them—and found themselves attacking fifteen or sixteen fellows.

"Sock it to 'em!" shouted Figgins.

"Here, hold on!" gasped Monk. "Cut!"

But it was too late to "cut."

The St. Jim's juniors were round them in a second, and Monk & Co. were bumped over, and sprawled in the road, each in the grip of a couple of Saints.

"Got them!"

"Bai Jove, wathah! Monk, deah boy, we've got you!"

"Gr-r-r-r!" mumbled Monk, nearly squashed under the weight of Fatty Wynn—"Gr-r-r-r—"

"Ha, ha! Go easy, Fatty!"

"Well, I'm only holding him."

"You're sq-sq-squashing me!"

"Done you this time, Monkey," said Tom Merry cheerfully, as Fatty Wynn allowed the hero of the Grammar School to sit up.

"Rats!" grunted Frank.

Tom Merry laughed.

"There's no getting out of it," he remarked. "We've recaptured the trophies. We've given you a run all the afternoon and evening, and you never caught on till Gussy came and gave us away."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"This is where we grin," said Figgins. "Ha, ha, ha!"

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

Frank Monk wriggled.

"Rescue!" he shouted—"rescue, Grammar School! They're getting away!"

There was a shout in return from the direction of the gates. They were open now, and the pursuers were pouring out.

"Time's up!" grinned Tom Merry. "Cut!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Leaving their prisoners in the dust, the juniors of St. Jim's vanished into the darkness.

The Grammarian pursuers came racing up, and collided with Monk & Co., and there were loud exclamations on all sides.

"Got them!" roared Gilson, collaring Frank Monk and dragging him down.

"You ass!" roared Monk.

"Oh, is that you, Monkey?"

"Yes, dummy, fathead! This way! Follow me!"

Monk dashed off in pursuit of the Saints, and the crowd of Grammarians followed him, whooping. But they did not catch the retreating party. Tom Merry & Co. covered the ground quickly, and they were inside the walls of St. Jim's in record time. The Grammarians chased them to the very walls, and then, baffled, retraced their footsteps.

Within the dark quadrangle the juniors heard them go, and chuckled.

"Clean done!" said Figgins. "Well, I for one think that it was a ripping wheeze. We've got the trophies!"

"We have, rather!"

"Yaas, deah boys. Under the cires, I pwesume you are now disposed to admit that it was fortunate for you that I came to the rescue?"

"Oh, ring off, Gussy! We've got to get in. How are we to get in in this rig?" said Tom Merry. "We shall be questioned."

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha! I should imagine so."

"Hallo! Who's there?"

It was the voice of Kildare, of the Sixth.

Tom Merry groaned.

"The skipper!"

"Bowled out!" growled Blake.

Kildare peered at them in the gloom.

"Merry! Kerr! You have returned. What does this mean? Haven't you been on your holiday after all? And what's the matter with your faces? You look as if—"

"D'Arcy! Is that D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Kildare gave them a grim look.

"You can come up to my study and explain," he said.

And he strode into the School House. And Tom Merry & Co., without considerable trepidation, followed him to his study.

CHAPTER 22.

Triumph.

TOM MERRY & CO. marched into the study, and stood blinking in the light, and Kildare looked at them.

He tried to look stern, but the sight of Arthur Augustus in the page's attire was too much for him.

His face relaxed into a smile—the smile became a grin—the grin a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! D'Arcy! Is that really D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy! I fail to see any cause for wibald laughah, howevah. I think I will go and change my clothes."

"Wait a minute. What have you young rascals been doing?"

The juniors looked at one another dubiously.

The jape they had played off on the Grammarians was a magnificent one, from their point of view, but there was no telling how the head of the Sixth might regard it.

But there was no getting out of an explanation now.

"Pewwaps we had bettah confide the whole mattah to Kildare, deah boys. As a patwiotic Saint, and a sportsman, he is bound to approve."

"I don't know about that," said Kildare. "But certainly you've got to tell me the story, so buck'up."

"It was in this way, deah boy—"

"Oh, ring off, Gussy!" said Blake. "You see, Kildare, we—"

"I wefuse to wing off! I—"

"Look here—"

"You explain, Merry," said the captain of St. Jim's quietly.

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Shut up, Gussy! You see—"

"Go on, Tom Merry."

And Tom Merry explained.

Kildare stared with blank amazement at first, and something like incredulity, and when Tom Merry came to an end of his concise narrative, the big Sixth-Former simply gasped.

"My only hat!" he said. "Of all the cheek! Ha, ha, ha! Mr. Slinger must have thought there was a burglary planned."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You cheeky young beggars! I've never heard of such a thing! If anybody gets to know of this there will be a row."

"Yes, but you'll keep it dark, Kildare," said Tom Merry, encouraged. "You see, there was no harm in it."

"Besides, I wescued them before anythin' could happen," said Arthur Augustus. "It was all wight as soon as I came upon the scene."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Kildare laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks. "I've never heard anything like it. You young rascals! I believe I ought to give you a jolly good licking all round, but I won't. You deserve to get off, for your cheek. Get out!"

They promptly got out. Kildare went along to Darrel's study to tell him the story, and the two seniors roared over it.

The next morning it was common property in the lower Forms at St. Jim's, and the Saints chatted and chuckled over it without end.

The Third Form, of course, made a hero of Wally, attributing the whole success of the adventure to him. While the Fourth Form gave all the credit to Kerr, and the Shell plumped for Tom Merry. But there was one point all Forms were agreed upon, and that was, that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had played the giddy ox. It was in vain that the swell of the School House pointed out that he had rescued the adventurers at the Grammar School. He wasn't listened to.

The story of the way the Grammarians had been "japed" within their own walls spread from the lower Forms to the upper, and was soon talked of in the masters' studies, and laughed over there as much as in the Form-rooms. For although the masters affected ignorance of the matter, they enjoyed the joke as much as anybody else. There was even a rumour in the passages that Mr. Raitlon had told the Head, and that the Head had laughed heartily.

Tom Merry bore his blushing honours thick upon him with becoming modesty.

After school that day, as he came out of the class-room, he was surrounded by an admiring crowd, and whisked off his feet by Noble and Clifton Dane and Bernard Glyn. They hoisted him on their shoulders, and with Blake and Herries and Digby and a crowd of others marching round them, bore him into the quadrangle.

Tom Merry looked down rather dizzily.

"What's the jape?" he asked.

"It's a giddy triumph," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Who's goin' to cawwy me, deah boys?"

"You can carry yourself, Gus."

"As the wescuah of the partay——"

"Ha, ha, ha! Who's going to carry Gussy?" shouted Figgins.

Three or four fellows rushed at D'Arcy and seized him. Arthur Augustus submitted with great complacency, but there was a wild howl as he was plumped down in a sitting posture in the grass, and his silk hat was jammed over his eyes.

"Ow! Wescue! You wottahs!"

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

"I wegard you as beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And that was all D'Arcy's share in the triumph. The Shell and the Fourth Form marched round the quad., and Tom Merry was borne in triumph on high, with the recaptured trophies carried before him. A crowd of New House fellows, with Figgins and Fatty Wynn at their head, hoisted up Kerr, to carry him in the procession. The Third Form, not to be outdone, shouldered Wally, and the ink-fingered, untidy scamp was carried amid cheers after the rest of the procession.

Tom Merry was borne round the quadrangle with Kerr, followed by Wally, amid loud cheers, and finally stopped on the cricket-field. There Blake mounted on the steps of the pavilion, and held up his hand for silence.

"Comrades of St. Jim's——"

"Hear, hear!"

"We have licked the Grammar School hollow——"

"Bravo!"

"And therefore," said Blake, amid laughter and cheers and shouts—"therefore, we have organised an al-fresco feed in honour of the triumph of St. Jim's, and all are invited."

The cheering was more tremendous than ever at that.

It was a speech that went straight to the hearts of the juniors; or very near their hearts, at all events.

And when the feed was over, Tom Merry was called upon for a speech, and he stood up and made one, as brief as anybody could have wished:

"Gentlemen——"

"Hear, hear!"

"We've licked the Grammarians——"

"Hear, hear!"

"We're top school——"

"Bravo!"

"And this has been a jolly good feed!"

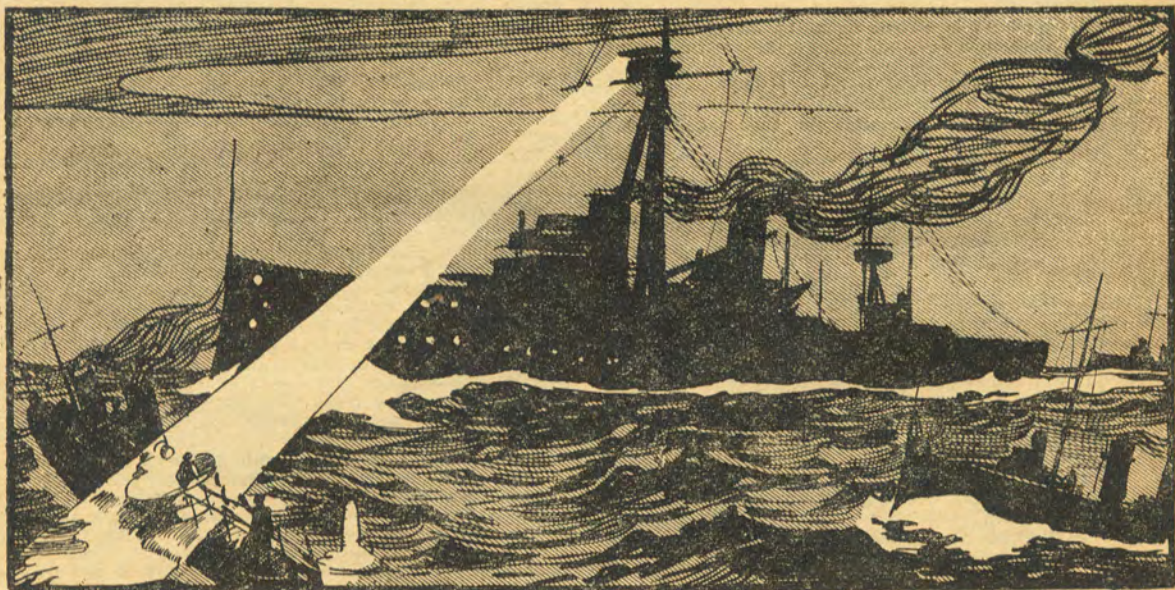
"Hip, hip, hurray!"

THE END.

(Another long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co. next Thursday, entitled "The Territorials at St. Jim's!" by Martin Clifford. Please order your copy of THE GEM LIBRARY in advance. Price One Penny.)

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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 are engaged in scouting round Boleyn Hall, a lonely house on the Essex marshes. The boys are working separately, and Stephen, hearing a scuffle indicating Sam's capture, enters the house and comes face to face with Kaiser Wilhelm himself. The monarch, though covered by Stephen's rifle, calmly steps towards an electric bell-push, saying, "I shall ring this bell and have you arrested."

(Now go on with the Story.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 73.

NEXT
THURSDAY.

"THE TERRITORIALS AT ST. JIM'S."

Stephen's Bargain.

"One moment!" said Stephen quickly. "If you do that I shall shoot you dead instantly! Do you know what will happen then? I can press the trigger before your finger reaches that bell. I shall then seize that bundle of despatches that I see on the table and bolt for it. With thirty seconds' start of your men I think I can still get clear away. I've been in tighter places than this, and I know the district blindfolded."

The Emperor paused.

"And if that happens," added Stephen, "you will be left here a dead man, with nothing gained and a great deal lost to your side."

Stephen's heart was beating fast, but he was outwardly cool, and the Kaiser watched him keenly.

"It is true," he said. "By what I have heard of you, I

A Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
By Martin Clifford.

believe you would do it. Well, we must consider this matter a few moments. Diplomacy must never be hurried."

Stephen's admiration grew for him, so kindly did the German sovereign look, and so well did he take his momentary defeat. For William of Hohenzollern, proud potentate though he was, realised that his life lay in the crook of the boy's forefinger. The bullet lying in the carbine's breach would slay him as effectively and quickly as it would any humble private in his monstrous army.

"I will seat myself, at any rate," said the Emperor easily, sitting in a chair by the table, facing the boy, "and, if that displeases you—why, you must shoot! We will now see how matters stand. Will you be good enough to lower that carbine?"

"No," said Stephen, who was now very white. His face showed the strain he was undergoing, and one thought filled his brain. "You had better ring that alarm, or try to. I shall have to shoot, anyhow," he said, rather thickly. "It seems to me it's my duty."

"Duty!" said the Kaiser, raising his eyebrows.

"Yes; nothing less. You're at the head of all this trouble that we're in. It's you who have drenched the land with blood for the sake of your beastly ambition, sir. Your army has laid waste England, and all this misery and starvation and ruin are upon us because you wanted to break the nation who was your biggest rival!"

The words came hot and fast from the boy's lips, and his eyes gleamed excitedly—yet the carbine-barrel was held steady. The Emperor's face showed some surprise as he watched his small foe man.

"So you count this a lucky meeting?" was all he said.

"I don't know about the luck," said Stephen, looking still more strained and troubled, "but I believe I owe it to my country, and I shall do it. I don't say I like it. But you are the brains of the whole German attack. It's your scheme, and if you were removed Britain would be the better for it. We should have the advantage."

"So," said the Kaiser, "you would murder me for the sake of what you believe?"

"It's no more murder than it would be if I'd been caught and you'd had me set against the wall and shot, as your men have tried to do more than once."

"My officers might have done so, I should not," said the Kaiser coldly. "Kings are not butchers, whatever may be done in the field under their orders. However, shoot me if that is what you are bent on! I do not call for help, you will observe."

Stephen felt the trigger with his finger, and his breath came quickly. The dignified figure before him gave no sign, and there was a moment or two of silence. Of the two, the boy was the most disturbed, and a light perspiration broke out upon his forehead under the strain.

"Ring the alarm bell," he said thickly, "and we will see who is quickest!"

"No," said the Emperor. "You may murder me in cold blood if that is your wish. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that one of the rabble has killed the head of the Hohenzollerns!"

"I'm not of the rabble," said Stephen, flushing. "My father is an English gentleman."

"Forgive me the natural mistake," said the Kaiser, with a slight sneer; "but you are wasting time. Shoot me by all means. I am unarmed."

Stephen tried to shut his ears to the words. He told himself wildly that this arch-enemy of his country must be removed for the nation's good, and the curse lifted from the land. But it was of no use. He tried to press the trigger, but he could not bring himself to do it. The muscles of his finger seemed to refuse, and a mist floated before his eyes, through which the grim, unflinching face looked at him steadily.

"Look here," said Stephen, finding his voice with an effort, "I will make a bargain with you."

"Kings do not make bargains, particularly with their enemies," said the cool, dry tones. "Shoot away!"

"I will, if you drive me to it!" said Stephen desperately. "It's only in cold blood that I can't bring myself to do it; but still, we are at war. Hear what I have to say now. You've got my brother here a prisoner. Set him free, and give us both five minutes' start, on your word, before your men follow us, horse and foot. If you catch us then, let us be shot, and we won't ask mercy."

"If you refuse, then I'll shoot you without further parley, and do what I can to get my brother out, though I shall fail," said the boy, his face pale and stern. "My brother is more to me than anyone living, and if he's to stay here to be shot, then I'll see that his head captor goes first. I can shoot for Sam. Give us this chance, sir. There's nothing unkindly in it, but the contrary. You'll be a great loss to your side if you drive me to use this carbine. Nobody need know of this business. We'll give our word to say nothing of the compact if we live to report it, which isn't

likely. You can have my brother brought to the wrong side of the door."

The Emperor's stern face relaxed into a grim laugh, and he stared curiously at the boy.

"You are a clever young dog," he said. "That offer is what you islanders call a sporting one. It shall be as you say, and I warn you that if you are caught you need expect no mercy. Now lower that carbine; I have given my word."

Stephen placed the rifle across his knees and sat back in his chair, quite content. The Kaiser put out a hand and pressed the bell. He reached to the door from his chair and swung it to, and the monarch and the boy sat watching each other quietly. Almost at once a sharp, military foot-step approached from without, entered the passage, and knocked upon the door.

"Your Majesty rang?" said a voice.

"Remain where you are," replied the Kaiser, in a clear tone of command. "Is it Von Felsen?"

"Yes, sire."

"Let the prisoner who was captured just now be brought here. Do not bring him in, but leave him in the passage, quite unguarded. Then lock the outer door, and remove yourself and your men to the south side of the house."

"I understand, sire."

"Not by long chalks you don't," thought Stephen, as he heard the man depart.

The boy felt a thrill run through him. The Kaiser sat perfectly unmoved, and in a very short time the tramp of feet was heard, and the officer who had come before spoke.

"The prisoner is here, sire."

"Very good; carry out your orders."

The door was heard to shut, a key turned in the lock, and as the tramp of the guard's feet died away on the gravel outside, Stephen rose.

"I have to thank your Majesty," he said, and he felt he owed it his foe to use the title.

"You have exactly five minutes," said the Kaiser, taking out his watch. "Here is a key to the outer door."

Not an instant did Stephen waste, but darted outside. Sam was standing there in the gloom, looking very astonished.

"We've got five minutes to get clear away in before they start after us!" said Stephen swiftly under his breath, slipping the key into the lock. "You lead the way!"

"Have we, by James!" exclaimed Sam. "What the—but come on!"

Open flew the door, and before they went Stephen cast one rapid glance back. Through the chink of the door he caught one glimpse of that tall, silent figure standing with the watch held in his palm. Then noiselessly and swiftly the brothers fled away into the night.

How Sam Fired the Gorse.

"This beats me!" muttered Sam. "Never mind now, let's leg it like good 'uns! Bear to the left; there are too many men by the side I came up."

"I think I can show a way through this side," said Stephen quickly.

"Take the lead, then; you know how they're placed. Not too fast till we're through the pickets."

Stephen guessed that there was just as much danger from the outposts as there had been before. The Emperor had certainly not given them any orders to let him through, and everything depended on getting beyond them.

But there was this difference, that the sentries and pickets were looking out for any possible foe approaching the house, and were naturally less on the watch for anybody leaving it. The boys were approaching their rear. Moreover, Stephen had noted on his way up that he would have done better to approach through the grove of trees, where there was only one guard at the lower end, and he knew just where each of the guards were placed, instead of having to guess.

All the same, they had no longer a free hand as to time. Minutes were more precious than diamonds now, and creeping out foot by foot not to be thought of. They could not afford to go too fast, either, and be seen by the sentries. Altogether, it was the most anxious time the boys had yet known.

"Nip from one tree-trunk to the other," whispered Stephen. "If we get past the lower picket we must strike away to the right, and then straight away south-westwards."

"Show the way past the pickets, an' leave the rest to me," said Sam.

At the end of the grove they saw the two guards, with their fixed bayonets, walking a short beat from side to side of the entrance, crossing each other on each lap. The brothers dodged from tree to tree till they were within thirty yards of them, and then, seizing their opportunity, darted away to the left, down the hillside among the bushes, and curved right round across the line of the grove again.

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A Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
By Martin Clifford.

two hundred yards below it. The move was successful; no alarm had been given.

"Now for it!" said Sam, sprinting away to the right as hard as he could go. "Only let's get away down-country, and we may do 'em yet."

"There goes the alarm!" said Stephen, as a bugle rang out loud and clear up at the hall. "It can't possibly be five minutes yet? An' yet I'd trust him right to the end of the string on his word. Sam, if they catch us, we're to be shot right away!"

"It puzzles me that we aren't already," said Sam, as they ran; "but they'll have a good wide space to hunt in, an' no notion of the way we've gone."

"I wouldn't swear to that. I thought one of the outposts spotted us up the hill, but didn't fire, as he must have reckoned we were Germans."

"Rot!" said Sam.

"Well, I believe he did, whatever the reason."

"If so, our chances are a lot worse. He'll mention it when it's known there are two prisoners escapin', and he'll let 'em know which way we ran. They've a troop of Uhlans up at the stables; I saw the horses ready saddled."

"Phew! If they come down on us here in the open, they'll be able to ride us down before we get away. Can't outrun horses. An' if we hide, they'll scour the place till they find us."

"You bet! It'll be daylight in half an hour, though it's dark enough now. Keep the pace up! Hallo! Half a moment!"

Sam paused while one could count three, and listened. There was no doubt about it—the sound of drumming hoofs could be heard. Nor were the troopers far away, for the noise was travelling against a stiff wind.

"All up if they catch us here. We can't dodge their lances, and we can't outrun them. We must fire the gorse an' cut 'em off," said Sam, hunting swiftly about the ground.

"Won't that show us up, an' give it all away?" exclaimed Stephen, in astonishment.

"Don't matter. There's a patch of swampy ground beyond that they can't cross, an' they'll have to ride right round back by the house. Their horses won't face flamin' gorse," said Sam, striking a match and setting it to a branch of dry furze he had picked up.

It seemed to Stephen perfect madness; but he had still faith in Sam's woodcraft, that had never failed them yet, and in a few moments he began to understand. Sam ran swiftly along, setting fire to the gorse-bushes as he went.

The chief part of the gorse was dry as tinder, and caught the fire with a crackle and a blaze directly it was touched. The stillness had given place to a brisk, sweeping night-wind out of the south-west, blowing towards Boleyn. The crackle swiftly became a roar, and the flames rushed ahead and spread sideways, devouring all the whins in their way. Stephen, seeing what was needed, seized a branch and ran some distance back along the way they had come, firing the gorse in a wide circle, which swept in towards the distant house.

Already several hundred yards in length were blazing, moving rapidly inwards in a semi-circle. Unless the Uhlans were very quick, the two horns of it would certainly hem them in, and force them to ride back towards the house, and make a very long detour.

It happened even as Stephen was sprinting on-ward again to rejoin his brother. The troopers could be seen a couple of hundred yards away, beyond the smoke, riding down as hard as they could gallop, their lances and square-capped helmets showing up in the glare. But the flames brought them up short; the horses shied and reared before the scorching glare that swept towards them before the wind, and the troop had to scatter both ways to find an outlet.

"Now run like blazes!" cried Sam, setting the example. "We've time to skirt round an' get into the woods to the west before they're clear, an' once there, we may give the slip to the lot of 'em."

"There's one coming this side of the fire!" cried Stephen, as a Uhlman on a tall horse came galloping along by the way they had come, and, seeing the boys, gave a shout and spurred in pursuit.

"Heaven send he's alone!" said Sam.

For the moment it looked as if the trooper was. He judged the boys to be an easy prey, and came tearing down upon them full gallop, the glare of the fire lighting up his form, and his lance couched for the work.

To run before him was useless. The boys faced round swiftly, and Stephen, unslinging the carbine, dropped on one knee to make sure of his aim in the flickering light. The rifle cracked, and the Uhlman pitched bodily forward, and fell with a crash of accoutrements, while the horse galloped frantically on, swerving as it passed the boys.

Stephen sprang to his feet again, and re-slung his carbine. Not a word did either of the boys speak, but ran as swiftly as they could, side by side, some way below the line of the flames, which they left on their right. To try to catch the Uhlman's horse was useless, and they did not attempt it. Their lives depended on getting into cover before the troop could get on their track again.

The rest of the Uhlans were thoroughly cut off by the fire, and it was lucky for the brothers that only a single outrider had made the circuit in time. The others were riding as hard as they could spur in the other direction, to come round by the far side of Boleyn Hall.

Sam chose the way, and he made no mistake. Instead of turning his back on the house and making for the open, he ran right along beside the flaming gorse, keeping only far enough down the hillside to prevent his being seen in the glare of the flames, and once the boys reached the corner he turned sharp round as if to meet the Uhlans, by the track they were most likely to come.

"Stick it on now!" he said. "If we can pass this open bit, we shall do 'em."

Stephen sprinted as if he were training for the one hundred yards at Greyfriars, and they were across the dangerous open part before the Uhlans came in sight. Sam cut right round to the northward, and, crossing another belt of rough gorse and scrub, plunged into the woods half a mile beyond Boleyn.

Once there, the two scouts halted behind a couple of tree-trunks and looked back. The Uhlans were all over the ground they had just passed through, and in the dull glow thrown up by the flames they saw the active horsemen with their long lances riding here, there, and everywhere, galloping in wide circles, and thrusting their weapons into every bush and briar as they went. Half the troop had scattered out, and were galloping away to the southward—the direction in which the boys had first started.

"That's the way we'd have gone if we'd been mugs," remarked Sam; "and precious little chance there'd have been for us. However, we're not out of the ruck yet by a long chalk; so come on."

They dived into the coppices, and kept to them for the next hour. There was plenty of cover, and good-sized woods gave way to little spinneys, which were just as useful for shelter. Sam was able, even on a dark night, to move in a wood without cracking branches underfoot, blundering over fallen logs, or rustling among the undergrowth.

Some people would have made as much noise as a bullock in such a place, but the crack scout of Greyfriars knew better, nor was his brother much behind him in craft.

(Another long installment of this splendid serial in next Thursday's "Gem Library." Order it in advance.)



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The Editor



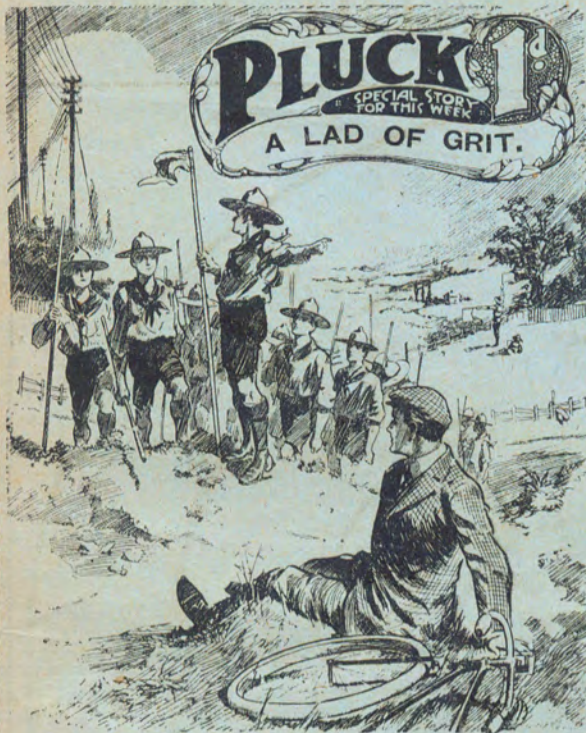
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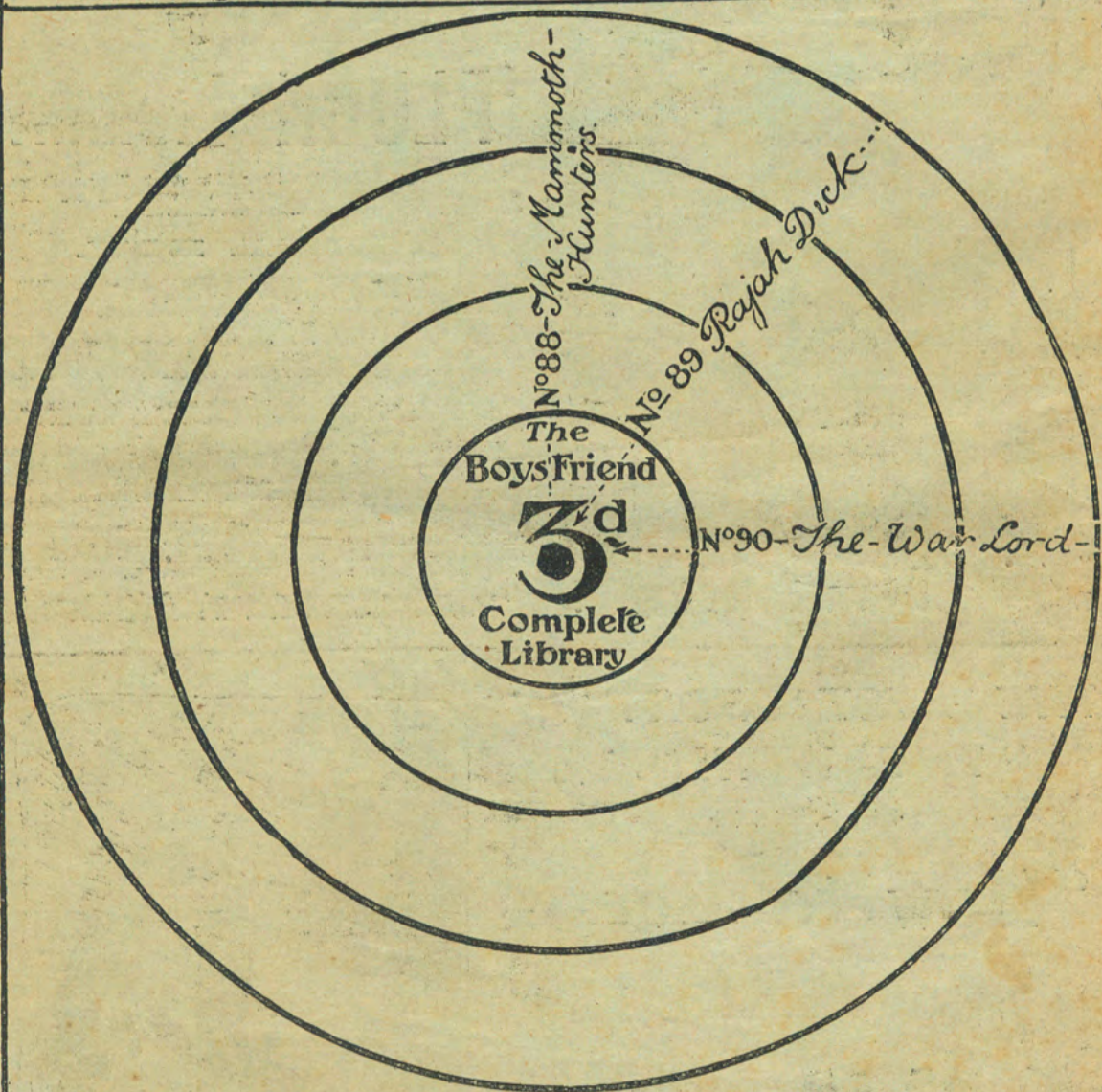


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