

ANOTHER GRAND CAMPING STORY INSIDE.

The

GEM

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LIBRARY

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July 9th, 1921.



A ROUGH NIGHT IN CAMP!

Don't Miss Our Splendid Long Complete Story of the Chums of St. Jim's Inside.

EDITORIAL.

My Dear Chums,—

The special series of Camping Stories have caught on, and the many enthusiastic readers who have written to me on this subject will be pleased to know that there will be another excellent one next week. I do not suppose the merry band imagined for one moment that there would be so many trials and troubles when they first planned their little expedition. But, after all, the hardships are all part of the game, aren't they?

"What Have You Against Me?" has proved very popular, and next week's instalment is full of surprises. A great many readers have written to me in praise of this splendid serial. The special Levison number of the "Gem," to which I have already referred, is now in preparation, and there is sure to be a big demand for it. There will be quite a lot of interesting information about this popular character, and an extra special story dealing with him. No reader of

the "Gem" should miss this. There are many other fine things coming along in your favourite paper in the near future, so keep a sharp look-out! Don't forget to get next week's ripping number early, or you may miss the magnificent story of Tom Merry & Co. There is another fine number of the "Boys' Herald" this week, containing a ripping long complete story of the amusing "Stranger & Co's" and interesting chapters of the remarkable story, "Don't Go to London, Lad!" The "Boys' Herald" is on sale everywhere, and you really must get this week's issue. **YOUR EDITOR.**

ANSWERS TO READERS.

"KANGAROO" (Hove).—The name of the story was "The Heart of a Hero." Dick Brooke was the hero, and Sylvia Carr was the heroine; not Cousin Ethel, my chum. There were several art portraits before Talbot, viz: Blake, Gussy, Knox, Cardew, Figgins, Gore, and Kit Wildrake. The ages of Walter Adolphus D'Arcy, Reginald Manners, and Frank Levison are, respectively, 13, 14, and 15. St. Jim's is situated in the heart of Sussex, on the banks of the River Rhy. A considerable distance north of Bognor, and about fifty miles from London. Wayland is the biggest town near to St. Jim's. I can't say for sure whether you could get all the art plates you have missed. Anyway, write to the publisher of the paper. Jack Blake appeared in Feb. 19 issue, Kis Wildrake in April 2.

"76, Pitfield, Hoxton."—Reginald Talbot is about a month older than Tom Merry. Tom is just over 10. Why don't P. and L. pass into a higher Form? Probably because they enjoy life better in the Remove. Write any time you like, and I will answer your questions dealing with St. Jim's. I wish, however, you would remember to send your name and a non-de-plume next time.

W. E. HILL (Sheffield).—I am sorry to say that the copy you wanted has been out of print for over five years. No doubt the publisher has acquainted you with this fact. How big is Baggy?

Well, he only rises to the height of ft. 11in., but makes up for it by weight, which is over 14st.

FATTY, J. F. T.—The correct address of St. Jim's is St. James' College, Kytcombe, Sussex, via this office! All correspondence addressed to this office is sure of a reply. But if you try to send it elsewhere you will only give the postman an unnecessary amount of trouble, and eventually get your letter returned to you. The St. Jim's art-picture gallery commenced on Feb. 19, 1921.

J. S. SMITH (Merchiston, Edinburgh).—I am glad you like "Through a Terrible Ordeal." It was a good yarn. Baggy Trimble's home? Aha! He says Bagley Towers, a shimmering mass of marble and gold, stands as the highest landmark in Norfolk, Durham, Dorset, and Wilts. This is the answer Baggy gives; but, of course, his statements have to be digested with a large pinch of salt! Dick Redfern has three sisters—Phrynette, Olive, and Kathleen. They are all older than he is, and go to work. Levison and Fatty Wynn are the two best bowlers and wicket-keepers in the junior eleven. I will speak to Mr. Martin Clifford on the subject of stories, describing further adventures of Jim Dawlish.

"RALPH" (Blackburn).—I am very pleased to hear your favourite character is Cardew, and that you like the por-

traits. They do live up a den, don't they? I will think over the idea of a back-page portrait of the whole school. You want to know the most handsome boy in the Fourth? Well, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy insists, modestly, but firmly, that it is himself. Mr. Martin Clifford thinks, Roylance, Cardew, and Redfern run each other very close. Has St. Jim's a badge? Why, you've been reading the GEM all these weeks, and haven't noticed that a print appears twice in every issue. Take a glance at the top left and right-hand corners of the portrait gallery, and you will see what you are inquiring after. The St. Jim's colours are red and white. Which is the most popular song at the school? Gussy's is "Let Me Like a Soldier Fall." Herries answers, "The Exalted Ruler March." Baggy Trimble mumbles "Blowing Bubbles" with alterations of his own, until Percy Mellish and Wildrake pitch him out of the study. For the others, when they pick on a good song, they sing it until it fairly becomes murdered. St. Jim's has two months' vacation in the summer, commencing the last week in June, and ending the third week in August. Sidney Clive returns every summer to South Africa, and spends a long month out there. Cardew came to St. Jim's on March 14, 1917. The yarn was called "Cardew of the Fourth." No, you are not the only writer from Blackburn.

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WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS
BE SURE TO MENTION THIS PAPER.

Cardew, and the Campers



A Grand, Long Complete Story of the Chums of St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Wet!

"IT'S howwid!"

"Why grouse?" asked Tom Merry cheerfully.

"I am not gwousin', Tom Mewwy. I was wemark-in'—"

"Trust Gussy to grouse!" said Jack Blake. "Just think how lucky you were, Gussy, not to bring your nobbiest coat and your best topper."

"You wanted to," remarked Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"My hat! The rain's coming down!" said Digby. "Never mind, it's all in the day's work!"

"It's howwid! I was thinkin'—"

"Thinking of the study at St. Jim's!" said Monty Lowther. "Or of the giddy mansion where your noble pater is keeping the home fires burning. No good thinking of it now, Gussy."

"I was thinkin'—"

"I believe the water's coming in under the tent!" said Manners.

"Can't be helped!" remarked Tom Merry.

"Well, so long as it doesn't get at my camera—" said Manners, with philosophy.

"Bothah your old camewah, Mannahs!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy warmly. "I was goin' to wemark, when you fellows persisted in intewwuptin' me, that it was weally howwid—"

"Camping out in the vac isn't all lavender," said Jack Blake. "You have to take the rough with the smooth."

"Yaas, vathah! But—"

"Somebody's bagging all the dashed blanket," said Lowther. "Who's bagging all that dashed blanket?"

"Don't pull the blanket, Lowther!" said Herries.

"Do you want it all?" inquired Monty Lowther.

"I've shoved it over Towser. It's a bit damp here," said Herries. "I've to see that my bulldog doesn't catch cold."

"Bless your old bulldog!" roared Monty Lowther.

"Well, he's got all mine," argued Herries. "I suppose a dog ought to be taken care of. A chap is responsible for his dog."

"I don't believe you're responsible for anything, not even for your actions!" growled Monty Lowther.

"I was goin' to say—"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry. "Take it smiling, Gussy! 'Tain't exactly comfy in a leaky tent on a wet night, but—"

"I regard you as an ass, Tom Mewwy. I was goin' to say that it is vewy howwid for poor old Solomon! That poor old donkey is out in it," said Arthur Augustus.

"I feel wathah conscience-swivlen at bein' undah shelteh while poor old Solomon is out in the wain."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. Evidently the noble Gussy had been misunderstood. His concern was not for his noble self, but for Solomon, the donkey, for whom there certainly was not room in the tent.

The St. Jim's campers had a tent that sheltered seven, or was supposed to shelter seven. There were eight in it, counting Towser, the bulldog. But a miracle of packing could not have found space for Solomon.

Hitherto, Tom Merry & Co. had found the tent an adequate shelter. But they had never camped out in a rainstorm like this, so far, since the excursion had started.

It was not only raining, it was pouring!

The tent had been pitched with care.

It was not at the bottom of the hillside, to catch the water, and it was not at the top, to catch the wind. Tom Merry & Co. knew how and where to pitch a tent.

But the rain they were getting that night was really unusual. And the wind was high and rough. It dashed on the tent, and the pegs strained under the gusts. Manners thought that water was coming in under the tent, and Manners was right. It was!

The ground-sheets were in good condition, and there was an adequate supply of blankets for warmth. So long as the tent stood, the St. Jim's campers felt that they could stand it. They were beginning to have doubts, however, as to whether the tent would blow away bodily in the fierce wind. It was just like Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to think chiefly of Solomon at that moment.

Solomon was a hardy animal, and he had been staked out comfortably under a tree. The juniors weren't worrying about Solomon, who had a great gift for looking after himself. But Arthur Augustus felt a tender concern for their travelling-companion.

"I suppose we couldn't make woom for him in heah, you fellows?" asked Arthur Augustus thoughtfully.

"I'm afraid we couldn't give him the cubic space required by the bye-laws of the county council!" said Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"But you could give him your place," suggested Lowther.

"You uttah ass—"

"My hat! How the wind's blowing!" said Jack Blake. "I really think I'd rather be under a roof to-night."

"Well, it does a chap good to rough it, you know," said Tom Merry.

"It's barely possible to have too much of a good thing," said Monty Lowther. "What price the old study at St. Jim's, with a good fire going, and a hot supper on the table?"

"Who's gwousin' now?" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

Crash!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was interrupted.

A fierce blast of the wind caught the tent, and fairly tore it from its holding. Like some huge bird it fluttered away into the darkness of the night, and Tom Merry & Co. bounded out of their blankets, with the downpour of rain drenching on their hapless heads.

CHAPTER 2.

A Night Out!

THE night was like ink. Tom Merry & Co. could scarcely see one another as they blinked round in the darkness and the rain.

The tent was gone. They heard it flapping away, but they could not see it. Blankets and ground-sheets, at their feet, almost floated in water.

"Get under the trees!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Gwoough! Where are the dashed trees? I can't see anything!"

"Same here! But there are some trees somewhere, where we left Solomon—"

"Hark!"

From the darkness came a sound, familiar to the campers. Not a musical sound, but a very welcome one at that moment.

Hee-haw!

It was the voice of Solomon, the donkey.

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"This way!" shouted Tom Merry.

Hee-haw!

Tom Merry & Co. plunged through rain and darkness in the direction of the sound. Once more Solomon remarked "Hee-haw!" as if to guide the campers, and the drenched juniors joined him under the trees. It was not dry there, not by any means; but at least the low, thick branches and foliage saved them from the direct downpour of rain.

"Oh, bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "This is wathah thick, deah boys!"

"Oh, crumbs! I'm soaked!"

"I think we're all soaked," said Tom Merry, as cheerfully as he could. "Lucky we turned in with our clobber on, in case of accidents, this time. We shall get dry, somehow, tomorrow."

"Keep moving," said Blake. "If we stand still in wet dlobber, we shall catch cold, as sure as Huns are Huns!"

"Yaas, watahi! It would be a good idea to do some physical jerks, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "Nothin' like physical jerks to keep the blood in circulation. I am feelin' distinctly chillay, and it would be howid to catch a cold."

"Good idea!" said Tom.

Arthur Augustus lost no time in getting to physical jerks. Undoubtedly, as sleep was out of the question, a little exercise was a good plan to keep off the damp and the chill. There was a sudden, fiendish yell in the darkness under the trees. In the thick gloom, Arthur Augustus had started his strenuous exercises without noticing how near he stood to Blake.

"Yaroooh!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh! Ah—what—"

"My knuckles knocked against somethin'!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, stopping his whirling arms. "I wonder what my knuckles knocked against? It did not feel like the twunk of the tree."

"You—you—your idiot—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"You born jabberwock!" shrieked Blake. "It was my nose! You've banged me on the nose with your silly fist, you frabjous bandersnatch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a howl from the other campers.

"Bai Jove! I'm sowwy, Blake—"

"Will that mend my nose, idiot?" howled Blake.

"Weally, Blake, an apology from one gentleman to another is surely sufficient!"

"Not sufficient to mend a busted boko!" remarked Monty Lowther. "Sticking plaster would be more useful!"

"Weally, Lowther—Oh, crumbs! What is that clutchin' at my neck?" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Little me!" hissed Blake. "I'm going to bang your napper against the tree. Catch on!"

Arthur Augustus struggled.

"You uthah ass, velenase me! I refuse to have my nappah banged against the tree! Are you off your wookah, you silly ass? Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus' noble napper tapped against the trunk of the sheltering tree, and Arthur Augustus howled. Blake reined into the darkness to rub his nose, leaving Arthur Augustus to rub his head. For several minutes there was a steady flow of remarks from Arthur Augustus, whose manners seemed to have lost the repose that stamps the caste of *Vere do Vere*.

Of all the party under the tree, nobody really enjoyed that night out; and only Solomon, the donkey, succeeded in quite preserving his equanimity. The rain fell steadily till morning, and Tom Merry & Co. stamped and warded their arms to keep themselves warm, and yearned for daylight. With the dawn came cessation of the rain, and a burst of sunshine through the clouds had an inexpressibly cheering effect on the campers.

"Bai Jove! That's bettah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"What a fearful night, you fellows!"

"Thank goodness it's over!" grunted Manners. "If we had much more like that—"

"Don't grouse, old chap!"

"Who's grousin'?" roared Manners.

"Weren't you, old chap?" asked Arthur Augustus innocently.

"Ass! Chump!"

"Order!" exclaimed Tom Merry, laughing. "Let's get a move on, you fellows. Thank goodness the rain's stopped at last."

The St. Jim's campers got a move on quickly, and it had a soothing effect upon tempers that were perhaps getting a little "edge-wise." There was plenty to be done before breakfast could be thought of. The tent had blown into a hedge and hung on there, and it had to be rescued, and blankets and ground-sheets had to be wrung out and stretched in the sun to dry. But the fact that there was bright and warm sunshine after the rain was a great comfort. As Gussy

cheerfully remarked, it might have gone on "wainin'" all day, and where would they have been then? Herries was very busy looking after Towser, who was wet and grumpy; and the discovery that Towser's supply of biscuits had been soaked with water troubled Herries greatly. Towser turned up his nose at them, much to Herries' distress.

"I say, you chaps, Towser won't touch his biscuits!" said Herries, evidently in the firm belief that this was a more important matter than anything else the campers had to worry about.

Monty Lowther looked up from wringing out a drenched and dripping blanket.

"Won't he, really?" exclaimed Lowther, in a tone of exaggerated horror.

"No—simply won't touch 'em!" said Herries.

"Awful! May I make a suggestion?"

"Well, what?" asked Herries suspiciously.

"There's a pond in the next field—"

"What's the good of that?"

"Drown Towser in it. I'll help you tie a brick to him," said Lowther generously.

"You silly owl!" roared Herries.

Herries did not take Lowther's advice, and did not seem even grateful for it. He turned all his attention to the problem of Towser's breakfast, while the rest of the campers worked busily. By the time things had been reduced to something like order, the campers were hungry—very hungry. But breakfast was a problem.

"Nothing to light a fire with," said Tom Merry dubiously, "and the bottle of spirit was busted, and it's all gone, so we can't light the stove. We shall have to do without any hot drink or—cooking."

"There's plenty of bread!" remarked Arthur Augustus.

"Looks like a soggy soaked."

"Looks like a sort of hasty pudding!" remarked Lowther, surveying the supply of the staff of life with great disfavour. "I suppose we can manage a little bit of it, if there's nothing better."

"There's the tin of corned beef," said Tom Merry. "Lucky we laid that in. That will see us through till we can get somewhere and get some brekker. Anybody seen it?"

"It ought to be in this ruckack—"

"Anybody seen the tin of Chicago mysteries?" bawled Lowther.

Herries looked round. He was feeding Towser; in fact, just finishing feeding Towser.

"It's all right," he said. "I found it."

"Then hand it over, fathead."

"Eh! I'm feeding Towser with it."

"You've given Towser the corned beef!" howled Tom Merry.

"I don't think it will do him any harm," said Herries. "Of course, I wouldn't give him American potted things as a rule. Goodness knows what they might do to his inside. But in an emergency like this—"

Herries' view of the emergency seemed to differ from that of his comrades'. With one accord, the St. Jim's campers rushed on Herries and collared him, and bumped him in the wet grass.

There was a roar from Herries.

"Yaroooh! You silly asses, wharrer you at? What's the matter now?"

"There! You frabjous jabberwock!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Give him another!" yelled Lowther.

"Yaroooh! What the thump— Oh crumbs!"

When the campers packed Solomon, and started on their way, wet and weary, they started without breakfast, and Herries marched with his comrades in a state of great indignation. But he had the happy sense of knowing that Towser, at least, had breakfasted, and so far as he could see at present, the American corned beef had done Towser no harm. Which was a great comfort to George Herries.

CHAPTER 3.

Ructions on the Road!

SEVEN schoolboys and Solomon trudged along a hot road.

There was a blaze of sunshine after the rainy night. Rain still lay in pools in the lanes, and the ditches were flowing full. But the campers' clothes had dried, and the sunshine cheered them wonderfully. Sparkling raindrops still glimmered from trees and hedges, and shook down occasionally over the walking party of St. Jim's. In spite of the welcome sunshine, however, they were not looking their brightest. They were all hungry, excepting Solomon and Towser. Solomon had found an ample supply of thistles at the last camp, and Towser was well provided with corned beef. But Tom Merry & Co. were yearning for a meal. They hoped to strike a village soon where a meal could be obtained, but a village did not loom up on the horizon in a hurry. They had to grin and bear it—at least, to bear it. In the circumstances, it was difficult to grin.

Honk, honk!

"A dashed car!" growled Lowther.

The honk of the motor came from behind the campers as they tramped up a rather narrow lane between high Hawthorn hedges. They looked round at a very handsome car was coming up the lane at high speed, with a single occupant leaning back lazily on soft cushions, and smoking a cigarette. There was an exclamation from all the St. Jim's party at once.

"Cardew!"

The occupant of the car was Ralph Reckness Cardew, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

He glanced carelessly at the walkers, but evidently without recognising them. Tom Merry & Co. were not looking precisely as they looked when they strolled in the quadrangle at St. Jim's. Their clothes were different, and their clothes, too, had suffered from camping, and especially from their last night out. Even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the glass of fashion and the mould of form at St. Jim's, looked muddy and untidy. His Panama hat had some crocks in it now, in mud, and did not look beautiful now, and his clobber was in a state that would have distressed him severely if he had not been still more distressed by inward yearnings for breakfast. And the rest of the campers were even more untidy than Gussy.

Cardew was dressed with extreme elegance, as he generally was. The cigarette in his mouth showed that he considered himself free from school restrictions during the vacation. A slightly amused smile played over his well-cut lips as he glanced at the muddy crowd in the lane, but it was plain that he did not know them.

The juniors crowded to the sides of the lane to allow the car to pass. But the lane was narrow, and Solomon, who had will of his own, chose to give it none. He trod on a hedge. He set his feet in a rut, and stood firm, and three juniors dragged at him, and two pushed from behind, and Solomon did not move. He stood directly in the path of the rushing car, and did not seem to mind.

The chauffeur, evidently accustomed to reckless driving, did not slow down until the car was dangerously close. But Solomon would not move, and the juniors could not move him, and the man had to jam on his brakes in a hurry.

"Stop!" roared Blake, as the car rushed down on them.

Tom Merry waved his hand.

"Stop, you ass!" he roared.

Fortunately the chauffeur stopped, though he had run it very close. The car came to a standstill six or seven feet from Solomon's hind legs. Ralph Reckness Cardew stood up.

"What the merry thunder do you mean by stoppin' my car, you dashed gipsies?" he demanded warmly.

"Weally, Cardew—"

Cardew jumped.

"My only hat! Is that Gussy?" he exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly.

"Go on!" said Cardew politely.

"Yeas, wathah! And I considah—"

"By gad! You look a merry crew, you fellows," said Cardew, surveying the St. Jim's party with an amused grin.

"I took you for a gang of gipsies."

"Weally, you cheeky ass—"

"I heard that you'd gone off on a tramping tour for the vac, said Cardew. "You look as if you've been enjoyin' it."

"Oh, rats!" grunted Blake.

"Where did you beg the moke?" asked Cardew. "Did you win him at a cocoanut shy? Have you trained him to perform these tricks?" went on Cardew imperturbably. "Don't you think it likely he may get run over one of these days? You should be more careful with your moke. I dare say he's worth five shillin'."

"Keep your dashed car away till we move him!" growled Blake.

"I've got to get home to lunch," said Cardew politely.

"Hang your lunch!"

The dandy of the Fourth, with his car, his elegance, and his impertinence, had a rather exasperating effect upon the dusty campers.

They were conscious that they did not present a very creditable appearance just then, and Cardew's amused mockery was distinctly irritating.

"We've not breakfasted yet," said Tom Merry. "So you can't expect us to worry about your lunch, Cardew."

"By gad! Is that one of the joys of tramping?" said Cardew, laughing. "It's close on twelve o'clock."

"It would do you good to do some tramping!" growled Herries. "You want a bit of roughing it."

"Thanks, I'd rather not!" chuckled Cardew. "I'm not a particular chap, of course, but I shouldn't care to show up in public lookin' like you fellows at the present moment."

"Weally, Cardew—"

"Come up, you brute!" roared Manners, jerking at Solomon.

"Shall I start, and give him a shove behind with the car?" asked Cardew.

"Oh, dry up!"

"Trampin' doesn't seem to improve the matters," Cardew remarked. "I don't want to hurry you fellows, but may I mention again that my respected uncle expects me home to lunch?"

"Bother your uncle!"

Cardew blew out a little cloud of smoke.

"I'll give you two minutes to carry on with that moke," he said, "then I'm goin' to start."

"You won't start till the road's clear!" snapped Manners. Cardew's eyes sparkled.

"Won't it, James, you'll start in exactly two minutes. Do you hear?"

"Yes, Master Ralph."

"Now get your silly moke out of the way!" said Cardew, and he sat down again and lighted a fresh cigarette.

Tom Merry & Co. started on Solomon. But that quadruped was in one of his most obstinate moods. He simply refused to budge. His forefeet were firmly planted in a rut, and his hind feet seemed rooted to the earth. Some of the juniors pulled, and some of them pushed, and Solomon stood firm. Then they tried backing him, with the same result. Solomon would not advance, and he would not retreat. The chauffeur sounded a loud blast on his horn to startle him away, but Solomon only put down his ears and looked more obstinate than ever. Cardew glanced at his handsome gold watch.

"Time's nearly up!" he remarked easily.

Tom Merry gave the dandy of the Fourth an angry look. Cardew was so utterly reckless that it was not impossible that he would carry out his threat, and start up the car with the donkey still blocking the middle of the narrow lane. Certainly Solomon was to blame, but it couldn't be helped. And Cardew, as a St. Jim's fellow, might have been expected to be sympathetic and helpful. Evidently no consideration of that sort had crossed his careless mind.

"You won't start the car!" said Tom.

"I will!" said Cardew. "You see, you've challenged me now, and you know I'm a fellow of my word! I'd run the car on if there were a regiment of dashed donkeys in the road! I warn you to stand clear!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass firmly in his eye and took up his stand between the donkey and the car. He stood there like a rock.

"Now start the car if you dare, Cardew!" he said scornfully.

"Get out of the way, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, Cardew—"

"Will you kindly get out of the way, you silly ass?" thundered the dandy of the Fourth. "Shift at once, or you will get run over!"

"But—"

"Clear the way!"

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the kind!"

"James!"

"Yes, Master Ralph?"

"Start up!"

The chauffeur hesitated. He looked at the firm, unmoving figure of Arthur Augustus, and he glanced round at his master. Cardew made an angry gesture.

"Do as I tell you!" he snapped.

James looked at D'Arcy again.



Three pairs of fat hands grasped Blake. He was whirled off his feet, and rushed down to the gateway, with his arms and legs wildly flying. (See page 7.)

"Stop aside, young gentleman!" he said.

"I refuse to step aside!"

"Get on!" shouted Cardew.

The chauffeur did not obey. If Cardew was reckless enough to take the chair, his driver was not. The car did not move. The dandy of the Fourth jumped up, his eyes blazing at Arthur Augustus.

"Will you shift, D'Arcy, you fool?"

"No, I will not shift, Cardew."

"Then I'll jolly soon shift you!"

And Cardew jumped from the car and ran right at the swell of St. Jim's with his fists clenched and his eyes blazing with anger.

CHAPTER 4. Cardew Catches It!

"STOP!"
Tom Merry caught Cardew by the collar as he rushed at D'Arcy, and swung him round. The dandy of the Fourth went spinning from Tom's strong arm and crashed into the hedge.

There was a chorle from the St. Jim's party. Even the grave face of James, the chauffeur, for a second glimmered in a grin.

Cardew reeled against the hedge and panted. "Pway let him come on, Tom Mewy!" said Arthur Augustus placidly. "I am perfectly pprepared to deal with the boundh!"

"I'll deal with him if he wants any more!" said Tom Merry grimly.

"Weally, deah boy, I wequest you to leave him to me. He is a distant welation of mine, you know, so I have the wight to teach him mannash."

"You're not going to fight him, Gussy?" said Blake. "Too much on hand now for your little stunts."

"Weally, Blake—" Cardew detached himself from the hedge rather breathlessly. His eyes were glittering with anger. He had started the quarrel from sheer careless impertinence, but he was savagely angry now. He pushed back his spotless cuffs and came towards Tom Merry.

"Put up your hands, you rotter!" he said between his teeth.

"Anything to oblige!" said Tom.

Jack Blake broke in. "N time for scrapping now. We've got to get along and hunt up some brokker. If that cad can't behave himself we'll rag him. Cardew, stand out of the way and shut up!"

"Yaas, wathah!" Cardew did not heed.

He rushed on Tom Merry, hitting out, and the captain of the Shell willingly met him half-way.

But the fight was not allowed to proceed. Blake and Herries and Lowther rushed on Cardew and collared him.

"Bump him!" growled Blake. "Better let him come on," said Tom. "A thrashing is what he wants to take some of the has out of the silly duffer!"

"Yaas, wathah! Leave him to me, deah boys—" "We're wasting time!" growled Blake. "Sit on him, somebody!"

Cardew, struggling savagely, was bumped down in the grass and nettles along the hedge. The chauffeur looked on stolidly. He would have come to his master's assistance if called upon. But Cardew did not call to him. Not that the chauffeur would have been of much avail against the crowd of St. Jim's juniors.

Cardew sprawled in the damp grass, with rather serious results to his elegant attire, and Herries sat on his chest.

"I'll look after him for a bit," said Herries. "Let me up!" yelled Cardew.

"Shurrup!" Cardew was helplessly pinned down under George Herries, who was a good weight. He struggled and wriggled in vain. His hat had rolled into the road, and his collar and tie had jerked out. Several buttons had come off his waistcoat in the tussle and were distributed in the road. He looked quite as dusty and dishevelled by this time as any member of the St. Jim's walking-party.

His handsome face was fairly blazing with rage. Leaving him pinned down by Herries, the rest of the party gave their attention to Solomon.

Solomon still refused to be pulled to one hedge, or backed to the other, but he condescended to be led onward. Fifty yards ahead there was a turning, and Blake led the donkey onward as far as the turn, and walked him round it. The problem was solved; the lane lay open now for the car to drive on. While Blake held the donkey round the corner, Tom Merry & Co. gathered round Cardew.

"Let the cad up, Herries!" Herries rose from Cardew's waistcoat, with a grin. The dandy of the Fourth struggled to his feet.

"You—you rotter!" he panted.

"THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 700.

"You can get into your car and go on," said Tom. "And the sooner the better! This ought to be a lesson to you in good manners, Cardew!"

"Put up your hands, you rotter, if you're not afraid!" shouted Cardew.

Tom laughed contemptuously.

"Get into your car."

"I won't till—"

"Throw him in!"

Seized by three or four pairs of hands, Ralph Reckness Cardew was tossed bodily into the car.

"Drive on, chauffeur!" said Tom Merry.

"With a straight face, James set the car in motion. Cardew scrambled up as it glided on. He shook a furious fist at Tom Merry & Co.

Monty Lowther kissed his hand in return—a friendly farewell that did not have a soothing effect upon Cardew of the Fourth.

He was still shaking his fist when the car disappeared from sight up the winding lane.

"Nice boy!" remarked Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Cardew's got his good points," he remarked. "But he did want a lesson this morning—and he's got it. Let's get on; I'm famished!"

"Same here!" groaned Digby.

The juniors rejoined Blake and Solomon and resumed their way. The altercation with Cardew had taken up time, and it was past midday now, and they were almost ferociously hungry. There was no village in sight; but when a wayside inn came into view they stopped.

"We may get something here," said Manners.

Tom Merry entered the inn. A buxom, red-faced dame shook her head when he mentioned lunch.

"We haven't done catering since the war!" she explained. It was an ancient inn where the campers had received many a time since the walking-tour had begun.

"Anything in the eating line?" asked Tom desperately.

"Biscuits and cheese if you like," suggested the buxom one.

"Any old thing," said Tom.

He came out of the inn laden with biscuits and cheese. "Better than nothin'!" said Arthur Augustus philosophically. "I could weally eat almost anythin' now!"

The St. Jim's party made a hearty meal on that simple provender while they walked on with Solomon.

They looked for a suitable place to camp as they trudged. Although it was only early afternoon, they wanted rest, after missing nearly all their sleep the previous night; and they also wanted a square meal.

"I rather think this will suit us," said Tom Merry at last.

A green meadow lay between the lane, and a stream at a little distance. Further on rose the thick trees of a park, and the roof of a large mansion could be seen through the trees, with a glimpse of a terrace and wide lawns.

The juniors looked over the low-rail fence that separated the meadow from the lane.

It was an ideal spot for camping, and they mentally decided on the meadow.

"It belongs to the house yonder, I should say," Blake remarked. "There's a gate through the wall at the end into the park."

"No doubt," agreed Tom Merry.

"Bettah ask permish at the house," said Arthur Augustus. "We must not be guilty of the bad form of twespasin'!"

"Oh, we shan't hurt their old field!" growled Herries. "We've got to rest. Towser's tired!"

"Weally, Hewvies—" "Gussy's right for once!" said Tom Merry.

"Better ask permission—it's plain that this meadow is a part of the grounds of the house yonder, and as it seems to be used for grazing, there's no reason why they shouldn't let us camp there. Gussy can go up to the house!"

"I am not vewy tidy to present myself at the house, deah boy! Fewwars we had bettah camp first, aftah all—" "Bow-wow! You tot off and get permission, while I go and look for a village and some grub!"

"Vewy well, deah boy! But, weally—" "Buck up, Gussy!"

Tom Merry started at once for the village, of which the church spire could be seen at a distance over green woods. Arthur Augustus hesitated to start, however. He was very particular about presenting a natty appearance, and certainly his appearance at the present moment was anything but natty.

"Are you going?" demanded Blake.

"Yaas; but—" "Well, get a move on!"

"Let us unpack Solomon first, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I shall wequial my clothes-brush."

"Oh, rot!" roared Blake.

"Weally, Blake, I cannot present myself at a respectable

house in this state!" said Arthur Augustus distressfully. "I shall not keep you waitin' more than an hour or so."

"Fathaid! I'll go!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Somebody had better go!" grunted Manners. "I want to camp, and I can't sit on this fence till sundown!"

"Pewpaws I'd bettah give you a bwush down, Blake, if you are goin'!"

"Rats!"

Evidently, Jack Blake was not so particular on such points as his noble chum. He started towards the house, and the rest of the campers waited in the lane for his return.

CHAPTER 5.

Thrown Out!

JACK BLAKE passed in at a large open gateway, and moved on up a wide, winding drive shadowed by beeches. The mansion in the distance was rather an imposing one, with a wide terrace along the front of the building, and steps from it to a sweeping lawn, level almost as a billiard-table. The Fourth-Former of St. Jim's felt a slight inward doubt as he neared the building; he realised that he was very dusty, that his boots were muddy, and that it was, perhaps, rather a "cheek" to present himself at a country mansion with a request to be allowed to camp in an adjoining field. But, after all, if such a request could be made at a farmhouse, why not a mansion? There was really no reason why not; but, all the same, Blake felt an inward misgiving, and advanced very slowly up the great drive. But, for meeting the surprised looks of his comrades, he would probably have turned back. But Study No. 6 at St. Jim's never admitted defeat; and, besides, there was no reason why he shouldn't be received with politeness, at least. Blake was far from being of a socialistic turn of mind; but he was conscious of a feeling that, dusty or not, he was as good as anybody else in the wide world. So he dismissed his inward uneasiness and walked boldly on.

As he came nearer the terrace, he discerned two figures seated on it, near the top of the broad stone steps that led up from the lawn. One of them was a rather handsome man of about thirty, with a forehead prematurely bald. The other was a boy, whose back was turned to the lawn, and whose face, therefore, Blake could not see.

The elder was smoking an after-lunch cigar. He raised his eyes to Blake as that youth came in sight.

An expression of surprise came over the man's rather pale, aristocratic face.

Blake, guessing him to be the master of the house, came up the steps, and on to the terrace.

Then the boy seated in a long cane chair turned his head idly, and uttered an exclamation. It was Cardew of the Fourth.

Blake, quite taken aback by the sight of Cardew, stared at him, at a loss for the moment. It had not occurred to him for an instant that Cardew might be there; but he realised in a flash that this must be the house where Cardew was staying, and that the young man with the bald forehead was probably the uncle he had spoken of.

"By gad!" ejaculated Cardew.

The dandy of the Fourth had evidently changed after his adventure with the St. Jim's party; he was clean, natty, immaculate as ever—and as insolent as ever, to judge by the mocking smile that came over his face.

The elder looked sharply at Blake.

"Who are you? What do you want here?" he asked.

Blake recovered himself.

Taking no notice of Cardew, he answered the master of the house, raising his hat as he did so.

"Please excuse my butting in, sir! We're a party on a walking tour, and we should like permission to camp in your meadow down the road."

"Good gad!"

"Of course, we shall be careful to do no damage," added Blake. "There are seven of us, and a donkey."

"Quite a nice party, no doubt!" drawled Cardew. "You don't often have a chance like this of entertainin' tramps, Uncle Lilburn!"

Lord Lilburn laughed.

Blake's eyes gleamed at Cardew. But he kept his temper in check; he did not want a "row" with Lord Lilburn's nephew on his lordship's terrace.

"I'm afraid I can't give you permission, my boy," said Lord Lilburn. "I never allow tramps or gipsies on my land."

"We are neither tramps nor gipsies," said Blake, as calmly as he could. "Your nephew there knows who we are, as he is in my Form at St. Jim's."

Lord Lilburn gave a start, and glanced at his nephew.

"Is that the truth, Ralph?" he asked. "Do you know this fellow?"

Cardew looked mockingly at Blake.

"Am I likely to know a dusty tramp, uncle?" he replied.

"If that is a St. Jim's chap, he's forgotten the art of washin' since school broke up!"

"But he says—"

"Oh, these rascally tramps would say anything!" remarked Cardew carelessly. "Certainly, I should decline to recognise the fellow, even if I'd ever met him. It might be safer to let a man see him out of the grounds—he may be here stealin' things!"

"Gad, yes!" assented Lord Lilburn.

Blake's eyes blazed.

"You cheeky cad, Cardew!" he roared; quite forgetting his resolution to keep his temper. "If I had you at St. Jim's now, I'd kick you the length of the School House!"

"Enough of that!" said Lord Lilburn, rising to his feet and frowning. "You should not have come here, boy, and you will kindly clear off at once. William!"

"Yes, my lord!"

A tall, fat man in livery appeared in an open doorway on the terrace. He had probably had an eye on Blake already. "Show this—this boy off the premises, William," said Lord Lilburn. "See him clear of the grounds, William."

"Yes, my lord!"

The footman advanced across the terrace towards Blake. "This way hout!" he said loftily. "You should have come to the back door, my boy. Get a move on, sharp!"

Blake did not heed him. Cardew's denial of acquaintance had made him wrathful, and he was mentally debating whether he should go without having knocked the dandy of the Fourth spinning along the terrace. Cardew read the thought in his face, and smiled mockingly.

"You utter cad—" burst out Blake.

"Remove him, William!" said Lord Lilburn curtly.

"Yes, my lord!"

The footman dropped a large and heavy hand on Blake's shoulder. The junior struck it angrily off.

"Hands off, you silly ass!" he said. "I'm going. I'll deal with you another time for this, Cardew, you cad!"

He turned and went down the steps. William rubbed his wrist where Blake's knuckles had rapped, and glared after him. He followed the junior down the steps to the path by the lawn, and grabbed at his shoulder again.

"You come along!" he snapped.

"Let go, you fool!" roared Blake.

"Throw him out, William!" Cardew called down from the terrace, with a laugh.

"Cert'nly, Master Ralph!"

"Will you let go my shoulder?" asked Blake, in a concentrated voice.

"No, I will not, you young scoundrel!" answered William.

"Now come halong!"

He jerked Blake away down the path.

The next moment an earthquake happened to William. He had a vague idea that something had butted his well-filled waistcoat, and that something else had hooked into his fat calf. He wasn't quite clear about it. What he was clear about was the fact that he was sprawling on his back, blinking up at the sky dizzily. About that there was no doubt whatever.

Blake walked away to the gates.

William sat up dazedly.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Oh! Ah! Wow!"

He jumped up in great wrath. His lordship and Master Ralph had both bidden him eject the intruder, and the intruder had floored him instead. William overflowed with wrath, and displayed more activity at that moment than, probably, he had ever displayed at any earlier period in his well-fed career.

"John! Peter!" he bawled.

And he rushed down the drive after Blake. John and Peter appeared from somewhere and rushed after him.

Blake glanced back.

He disclaimed to run, but he walked on very quickly after that glimpse of three fat footmen speeding on his track.

He was a dozen yards from the open gates when they overtook him.

A hand dropped on his collar, and Blake jerked himself away, and spun round, his fists clenched and his eyes ablaze.

"Hands off! I'll!"

"Throw him hout!" roared William.

Three pairs of fat hands grasped Blake. Jack Blake was one of the most hefty fighting-men in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, but he was not of much use against three full-grown men, even though they were over-fed. He was whirled off his feet, and rushed down to the gateway, with his arms and legs wildly flying.

"Bai Jove!"

"Great Scott! What—"

The St. Jim's campers had strolled down towards the gates, on the road, to see whether Blake was coming. They were in time to see him as he came—and he came in a surprising way. In the grasp of three fat footmen, Blake came whirling out of the gateway, and fairly pitched into the road at the feet of his chums.

CHAPTER 6.
Satisfaction Required!

"GREAT Scott!"
"My only hat!"
The three footmen stood grinning in the gateway. Jack Blake sat up in the road and gasped for breath.

He was feeling dazed and dizzy.
Herries gave him a hand up, and he staggered to his feet.
"What the mewy thump—" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

There was a clang of metal as the big gates closed. Three fat footmen went up the drive towards the house, grinning. Blake panted for breath.

He cast a fierce look towards the gates, and Dig took him by the arm.

"Come along, old chap," said Dig quietly.
"I—I'm going—"
"No good kicking up a row," said Dig soothingly. "Not with dashed funkeys, anyhow, old bean. Come along!"

Blake allowed himself to be led away. He was seething with rage, but it was principally against Ralph Reckness Cardew.

The campers returned to the spot where Solomon had been tethered to the meadow fence. Tom Merry had not yet returned from the village.

"Now, what's happened, old man?" asked Herries.

"I conclude, dear boy, that they have not given permish for us to camp in the meadow," remarked Arthur Augustus wisely.

"From the mode of Blake's exit, I should imagine not," said Monty Lowther sarcastically. "Did you work that out in your head, Gussy?"

"Weally, Lowthah—"
"But I don't see why they should have chucked you out, Blake," said Manners, in wonder. "What was the row about?"

Blake gritted his teeth.

"It turns out to be Cardew's uncle's house," he said.

"Cardew!"

"Bai Jove! Was he there?"

"Yes. He declined to recognise me as a St. Jim's chap, and advised Lord Lilburn to have me turned out!" said Blake, between his teeth. "Of course, I was surprised to see the cad there. I knew Lilburn Lodge was somewhere in Berkshire, but never thought we'd struck it. It was Cardew's chance to get even for what happened this morning."

"The awful wotah!"

"And you cut up rusty?" said Manners thoughtfully. "It would really have been wiser to keep your temper, old chap, and walk out with dignity."

Blake glared at the Shell fellow.

"You silly owl!" he snorted. "Do you think I was going to be marched out with a paw on my shoulder?"

"Oh, if they handled you—"

"Well, they did!" growled Blake. "And I hooked one beast over, and then two other beasts came up!"

"Wotten, dear boy!" said Arthur Augustus sympathetically.

"Pewpaws I ought to go in and speak to Lord Lilburn. I know him slightly, as he is a distant relation of mine."

"Perhaps you'll get chucked out, too!" grinned Digby.

"Well, we can't camp here, that's a cert," remarked Manners. "It's rather unlucky you fell out with them, Blake. I was going to ask permission to photograph the place. I suppose I can't now."

"Oh, bother your silly photographs!" grunted Blake.

"Look here—"

"May as well get on!" suggested Lowther. "Our way lies towards the village if we're not camping here, and we shall meet Tom coming back."

Blake leaned on the fence, still breathing hard. There was a look of dogged determination on his face.

"You fellows can go on, if you like," he said.

"But you—"

"I'm staying here."

"We can't camp on Lord Lilburn's ground after what's happened, you know," said Manners, in a tone of gentle remonstrance.

"I'm staying here till I've seen Cardew."

"What the thump do you want to see Cardew for?"

"I'm going to thrash him," said Blake.

"But—"

"No good talking. I'm not stirring from here till I've handled Cardew. I'm not asking you fellows to wait!" snapped Blake. "You can go on. I'll join up again somewhere or other."

"Weally, Blake—"

"I'm not going on," said Blake.

"We'll wait here till Tom Merry comes back, anyhow," said Monty Lowther. And they waited.

It was not long before Tom Merry arrived from the THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 700.

village. He came with a variety of parcels and packets and packages, evidently having laid in a good store against all possible contingencies.

"Here you are, you fellows!" he announced cheerily.

"Lots of grub and lots of everything. What are you looking so dashed solemn about? Solomon been up to his tricks again?"

"No; it's Blake this time."

"Always some donkey giving trouble," said Tom. "Have we got permission to camp in the meadow?"

"Not quite!" grinned Lowther.

"Well, what's happened?" inquired the captain of the Shell, looking in surprise from one serious face to another.

Blake grunted out an explanation. Tom Merry's brow grew darker while he listened.

"The rotter!" he said. "A word from Cardew would have made it all right for us. I suppose this is his retaliation for what happened this morning with his dashed car."

"Yass, wotah!"

"Well, let's get on," said Tom. "We'll find a camp on the other side of the village, I dare say."

"I'm not coming!" explained Blake. "I'm going to hang on till I see Cardew again, and thrash him."

"My dear chap—"

"And it's no good talking!" Blake had evidently made up his mind, and his temper was still too ruffled for patient argument.

Tom Merry smiled resignedly.

"Well, I dare say a hiding will do Cardew good," he said.

"But we can't hang on for ever just to thrash Cardew. Very likely he won't come outside the park gates till he feels pretty sure we're gone."

"I don't care."

"But we must camp somewhere," said Tom. "Dash it all, we've had nothing to eat to-day but cheese and a biscuit or two. Be reasonable, old chap."

"I'm not asking you to stay," said Blake stolidly. "I'm not going on till I've seen Cardew."

"We can't go on without you," said Tom, in some perplexity.

"Please yourself!" said Blake gruffly.

"Well, what are we going to do?" asked Digby. "Did you see any good camping-ground between here and the village, Tom?"

"No; it's all park walls. But there's plenty of open country on the other side of Woodedge, a couple of miles on."

"That's too far for me," said Blake.

Tom Merry laughed.

"If we stay here we camp by the road," he said. "I suppose we can manage it, somehow. You're rather an ass, Blake! But a wilful ass must have his way. And, after all, you're no worse than Solomon is sometimes—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So camp's the word!" said Tom Merry.

"Right-ho!"

There was a belt of grass beside the lane, between the road and the meadow fence. It was close quarters for camping, but the St. Jim's party had no choice, unless they were to go on without Blake, which was not to be thought of. So preparations for camping were made at once. The juniors gathered firewood along the hedges, and ere long the smoke of a camp-fire was curling up in the sunny air, and there was a pleasant scent of cooking, very pleasant indeed to the hungry campers. And under the genial influence of a square meal, followed by coffee, even Blake's grim face relaxed, and he found his good temper again, though his determination to punish Ralph Reckness Cardew for his insolence was not in the least diminished.

CHAPTER 7.

In the Hands of the Philistines!

"BY gad!"

Ralph Reckness Cardew stopped in the lane, and stared.

The sun was sinking low behind the trees. A glorious day was coming to its close. After the storm of the night before the blazing day had been welcome to the St. Jim's campers, and their rest by the roadside had done them good, added to a square meal of unusual proportions. As the sun sank lower the camp-fire flickered up against the shadow of the trees very cheerily, and the juniors sat round it and chatted, and made their plans for the morrow. And then came that sudden ejaculation in the voice of Ralph Reckness Cardew, which made them all jump and look round.

Cardew, elegant and careless as ever, was sauntering down the lane, smoking a cigarette. He had a slightly-bored expression on his face. Perhaps he found life at Lilburn Lodge rather "slow" at present, though, as a rule, it was a rather lively place. Cardew was evidently surprised by the sight of the St. Jim's camp. He had supposed that Tom Merry & Co. had gone on their way long ago.

He halted and looked at them.

A grim look came over Jack Blake's face. He had

recovered his lost temper, but he had by no means forgotten or forgiven the humiliations Cardew had put on him. Ralph Reckness Cardew had an account to pay, and Blake intended it to be paid in full.

"Bai Jove! It's that wotah!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Weally, Cardew, I wondah that you have the cheek to show your face heah."

Cardew smiled genially.

"I was wonderin' at your cheek!" he answered. "Don't you know that tramps are not allowed to camp along this road?"

"We are not twamps, you cheeky cad!"

"You look the part, at least," said Cardew genially. "And I'm afraid my uncle wouldn't be pleased to see your gang camped here."

"Your uncle can go and eat ooke!" said Tom Merry. "This is common land, and anybody can camp here who likes."

Cardew shook his head.

"Landowners have a certain amount of power in their hands," he remarked casually, "even outside the precise limits of the law. I rather think that if Lord Lilburn telephones to the police-station at Woodedge, askin' for a man to be sent to move on a gang of tramps who's camped near his lodge gates, a man will be sent—what?"

"Quite likely!" said Blake, with a nod.

Cardew laughed.

"Very likely, indeed—what?" he said. "I'm really sorry; but I've a good memory, you know. You should not have cheeked me this mornin' if you wanted me to let you off lightly."

"I weguard you as a cad, Cardew."

"Go hon!"

Blake made a sign to Herries and Digby, who grinned and moved out into the road. Herries stepped between Cardew and the way he had come, Digby lounged round to the other side of him. Cardew noted the enveloping movement, and shrugged his shoulders. The grandson of Lord Reckness had plenty of nerve, and he did not seem disturbed by finding himself in the hands, as it were, of the fellows he had flouted, and whom he was even now threatening.

"So that's the game!" said Blake quietly. "We're going to be moved on, are we?"

Cardew nodded.

"Yes, I'm not-lettin' you off yet."

"You seem to find a pleasure in making yourself unpleasant, Cardew," said Tom Merry contemptuously.

"Pretty Fanny's way, you know," answered Cardew calmly. "Just one of my little manners and customs. If you'd stroked my fur the right way I'd have stood by you. But you didn't."

"I would certainly not take the trouble to placate you in any way, you wotah!" said Arthur Augustus, with lofty disdain.

"Exactly!" assented Cardew. "But in that case you must be prepared to pay the piper, you know."

"I rather think it is you that will pay the piper this journey," said Jack Blake. "You've walked into the hands of the Philistines, my pippin."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Lookin' for satisfaction because you were chucked out?" asked Cardew calmly.

"Just that!" assented Blake.

"Anythin' for a little excitement," said Cardew. "I don't mind givin' you a lickin', if the merry menials haven't given you enough to satisfy your appetite. I suppose you other fellows will see fair play?"

"You'll get fair play from us, though we don't expect it from you!" snapped Manners.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Cardew smiled mockingly.

"That's good enough. Are you yearnin' for a scrap, Blake? I've been doin' some boxin' with Levison and Clive before I left Levison's place and came on here to be bored by my dear old Uncle Lilburn. I'll be quite happy to oblige you; even a black eye will break the monotony. It's hard cheese on a chap," went on Cardew, in a cheery, confidential way, as if he supposed himself among the best of friends. "I stood a week at Levison's show, on my best behaviour, never venturin' even to light a cigarette, lest the charmin' Doris should see it an' be shocked. Then I came on here for a gay time. Uncle Lilburn generally makes the fur fly; there's generally a crowd at the Lodge that would shock you fellows even to look at 'em. They keep it up, you know, and furnish copy for the merry reporters who earn an honest livin' by describin' the weird doin's of the smart set in country houses. But, alas! in me, dear youths, you behold a disappointed man!"

"Weally, Cardew—"

"Instead of the jolly jazz, the flow of wine and song, an' bridge until the small hours, and the click of the merry billiard-ball," went on Cardew, "there's solemn seriousness that would be just in your line, Gussy. An' the reason? Dear old nunky went down deep on Alan Brock for the Derby.

He's sunk all his available funds on that deceptive geegee, and now rigid economy is the order of the day. Lord Reckness won't come to the rescue. I fancy my merry grandfather has also been backin' the wrong horse, and so, hence these tears! Not a guest in the house exceptin' my unworthy self; and dear old uncle spendin' most of his time in calculatin' how to meet his losses; and wonderin' whether he'll be able to pay for the cigars he's smokin' all day. And I can't get away till Saturday!"

Cardew sighed deeply.

"If your uncle heard you chattering like this, I surmise that you'd get away before Saturday—probably with a boot behind you!" remarked Lowther sarcastically.

"Well, that would be rather amusin'," said Cardew. "I've had two rows with nunky already. He called me a cheeky cub, and I called him an old idiot. Dear me, I'm shockin' Gussy!"

"If you have weally applied such an expression to your uncle, Cardew," said Arthur Augustus, in his severest manner, "I can only weguard you as an utter waspcallion!"

"You've got me!" said Cardew genially. "Bein' a relation of mine, you catch on to my character perfectly!" He yawned and turned to Blake. "Is it a scrap, dear man? I see that Herries and Digby are guardin' the road to cut off my escape. But, bless your innocent little heart, I don't want to escape. I'm yearnin' for a little excitement, and I'm quite lookin' forward to alterin' the aspect of your features. After all, any alteration would be an improvement, wouldn't it?"

"I'm not going to fight you now," said Blake quietly. "I've been waiting on here, Cardew, to catch you, and my first idea was to give him a thundering good hiding. But I've thought of a better stunt than that."

"Stick to the hidin', old bean. I'm ready."

Blake shook his head.

"I've got a better wheeze. You're a lazy, impertinent cad, Cardew, chiefly owing to idleness, I fancy—"

"Isn't sermonizin' Gussy's stunt?" asked Cardew. "Are you poachin' on Gussy's preserves, Blake?"

"Weally, Cardew—"

"I'm going to give you something to cure it," went on Blake, unheeding. "I was just discussing it with those fellows when you came along. See that he doesn't cut, you fellows!"

"Yes, rather!" grinned Digby.

"But what's the little scheme, Blake?" resumed Cardew. "If you're not goin' to scrap, what's the game? I've wasted enough of my worthless time on you, and you're beginnin' to bore me."

"We shall bore you some more before we've done, I think," said Blake grimly.

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"You see, you're coming on tramp with us for a few days," Blake explained.

Cardew started.

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"What! You're invitin' me to join your party?"

"Exactly."

"Well, that's returnin' good for evil, an' no mistake. Sorry I can't accept the offer. The strenuous life never did appeal to me."

"You refuse?" smiled Blake.

"Sorry; yes."

"Sorry, too," said Blake, still smiling. "Because, you see, you won't be allowed to refuse. You're coming, whether you like it or not."

"Eh?"

"We're going to give you three days of roughing it," explained Blake. "I think it will do you good. We'll do our best."

Cardew laughed, but his laugh had an uneasy ring in it. He could read earnestness in the faces of the St. Jim's juniors, and he was well aware that he had exasperated them. He glanced up and down the road, and met the eyes of Herries and Digby—and Towser! There was no escape for him, and he was far beyond earshot of Lilburn Lodge, if he had thought of calling for help. But he did not think of that. Cardew was accustomed to looking after himself, and he took a rather perverse pride in being independent of others; and it would have been a very serious emergency indeed that would have caused him to call for help.

He backed away a little, with a gleam in his eyes. Blake followed him in the road.

"Are you jokin'?" asked Cardew at last.

"Not at all."

"If you think you're goin' to make me join your no-class gang, trampin' the roads—"

"I do."

"You're makin' a mistake," said Cardew.

"I think not," said Blake cheerfully. "You see, force is on our side, same as it was on your side this afternoon when your funkeys chucked me out. Sauce for the goose, sauce for the gander, you know."

Cardew drew a deep breath. He had expected a "scrap" as soon as he found himself in the presence of the St. Jim's party. But certainly he had not expected anything of this kind. His eyes burned with anger, and there was something like apprehension in his face now. When the advantage had been in his hands, he had used it without mercy, to gratify his malicious humour. Now he was to be done by as he had done by others.

"Do you think I am goin' to stay here against my will, then?" he asked, setting his teeth.

"I think you are," assented Blake. "I think you're going to keep it up for three days. I think you're going to learn a lesson, you're badly in need of, and I think we're going to teach you that valuable lesson. Catch on?"

Cardew did not reply. He turned back towards the distant house, and made a rush to get past Herries. Herries did not budge. In a second Digby and Blake were on the scene, and they had hold of the dandy of the Fourth.

"Let me go!" shouted Cardew furiously.

"Not this evening!" grinned Blake.

Cardew struggled and hit out furiously. But he was powerless in the grasp of three pairs of hands, and, still kicking and struggling, he was dragged back to the campfire—a prisoner in the hands of Tom Merry & Co.

CHAPTER 8.

Kidnapped!

THE full round moon came up over the tree-tops, glimmering down upon the lanes and meadows and the camp of the St. Jim's party. The fire died out, and the juniors were packing Solomon. Cardew leaned against the meadow fence, his face pale with suppressed anger, his eyes glittering under his bent brows. A cord was looped round his wrists, and he could not leave the fence. With savage eyes, he watched the preparations of the campers for departure.

It had been the intention of the St. Jim's party to spend the night in their present camp, but the capture of Ralph Reckness Cardew altered their plans. The night was going to be fine, with bright moonlight—just the night for tramping. And the campers had rested pretty thoroughly in the sunny afternoon. They were quite prepared for a long tramp; and if they were to keep their prisoner in their hands it was evident that they had to get away from the neighbourhood of Lilburn Lodge as soon as possible.

Cardew could scarcely believe that the juniors really intended to take him away with them on their march into unknown quarters. He had earned a severe lesson at their hands, but he could hardly believe that one was going to be administered.

But what faint hope he had on that point was soon dissipated. As soon as the packing of Solomon was completed Blake came towards him.

"Ready now?" he remarked.

Cardew gave him a bitter look.

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"You think you're goin' to kidnap me like this?"

"I think so!" agreed Blake.

"You dare not!"

Blake smiled serenely.

"You'll soon see about that!" he answered.

"My uncle—"

"Your uncle won't be anxious about you," said Tom Merry. "We're going to let Lord Lilburn know that you've come with us."

Cardew shrugged his shoulders.

"My uncle wouldn't be anxious in any case," he said. "He doesn't value his dear nephew highly enough to be anxious about him. But if I don't go home he will miss me, and will telephone to the police-station—and then, I fancy, you will be in Queer Street."

"But nunky won't miss you," said Blake coolly. "Nunky will hear that you have gone with us, and there's no reason why he should worry."

"You rotter—"

"Nuff said!"

Blake loosened the cord on the fence, and Cardew, as soon as he found his hands free, made a desperate spring to escape. He was collared at once and jerked back.

"Weally, Cardew, it is no use cuttin' up wuff!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You have got to toe the line, you know."

"I'll make you suffer for this!" said Cardew between his teeth.

"Just at present you're going to do the suffering, old top," said Jack Blake cheerily.

"Will you let me go?" hissed Cardew.

"Scarcely!"

"Move on!" said Tom Merry. "All ready now."

Digby started, leading the donkey. Cardew stood where he was, gritting his teeth, as Blake jerked at him.

"Give a move on!" admonished Blake.

"I'll not stir a step!"

"Then you'll be led!" said Blake, with undiminished good humour. "Perhaps you are one of the animals that can be led, but not driven. I'll try you, anyhow. Hold the cad!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake knotted a cord round Cardew's right wrist and jerked him into the road. The other end of the cord he secured to Solomon's pack.

Solomon marched on, and Cardew had no choice about following him. The pad on his wrist kept him alongside the donkey. The juniors followed with grinning faces.

Cardew was white with rage as he was tramped on beside the donkey. He looked round from moment to moment, as if in search of help. But the party did not pass along by the Lodge. They turned into a narrow lane between hedged fields that enabled them to make a detour of the Lodge and the village beyond. Naturally, there were good reasons against parading their prisoner in public.

The country lanes were lonely enough after nightfall. For two miles the juniors tramped on without meeting a soul. By that time they were on the farther side of Woodledge.

Then they halted, leaving the road and taking cover in a wood close by, and Tom Merry quitted the party. He disappeared in the direction of the village, and Cardew's glance followed him savagely.

"Are you goin' to let me go now, you rotters?" he asked in a low voice.

"Wathah not, Cardew."

"What are we waitin' here for?"

"Waiting for Tommy to come back," said Lowther cheerily. "He's gone to send a message to your uncle, so that the dear old gent won't be anxious. Don't worry about Lord Lilburn, old top."

Monty Lowther was well aware that Cardew was far from worrying about Lord Lilburn, or about anybody but himself. The dandy of the Fourth gave him a furious look.

But his looks did not worry the St. Jim's campers. They bore them with great equanimity.

Tom Merry rejoined his comrades at last with a smiling face. Cardew's eyes glittered at him.

"All serene!" said Tom. "There's a telephone call-office in the village, at the post-office, and I got on to it, though it's after hours. Very nice and obliging post-mistress there. I've phoned your uncle, Cardew, and he won't expect you home to-night."

"Hang you!"

"Thanks! Move on, you chaps!"

"Look here!" exclaimed Cardew passionately. "If you think you can keep up this foolery you're mistaken! I shall yell to the first policeman we pass."

"We shan't pass any policemen," answered Blake coolly.

"We're going to take jolly good care of that!"

"I'll shout for help to the passers-by—"

"We're selecting our route carefully, old top, and there won't be many passers-by," said Blake. "You see, we can't part with your fascinating company yet awhile. You haven't had your lesson yet, you know."

"If you think—"

"Bow-wow! By the way, if you yell at anybody we may happen to pass I shall stuff a potato into your mouth, Cardew. That's a tip!"

"Confound you! I—"
 "'Nuff chinwag! Get on!"
 "I won't move! I—"
 "Gee-up, Solomon!"

Solomon moved along the lane, and a sharp jerk at the cord drew Cardew after him. With a tempest of fury raging in his breast the dandy of the Fourth tramped on beside the donkey.

Tom Merry & Co. walked on in great spirits. They were well rested, and feeling quite fresh now, and the moonlight night was beautiful. They quite enjoyed the night tramp—as perhaps Cardew might have done in a different mood. But Ralph Reckness Cardew was not quite in the humour to enjoy anything just then.

Keeping carefully away from main roads and following the lanes, the St. Jim's party proceeded merrily on their way. They were now in country that the Co. knew well, as they had canvassed over the same ground in a vacation some time previously. Their knowledge stood them in good stead now. They trudged on by lonely lanes and field-paths and woodland footpaths, and Cardew stared about him in vain for a hope of rescue. Once in a shadowy lane they came on a labourer going home late, probably from an inn. Cardew uttered a yell as they came abreast.

"Help!"
 The countryman jumped and stared round him. Blake and Herries promptly collared Cardew, and in a second a large potato was crammed into his mouth.
 Cardew choked and spluttered, quite deprived of the power of speech.

The countryman had stopped, and was blinking at the party through the shadowy moonlight.
 "Be anythin' the matter?" he asked.
 "Nothing!" answered Tom Merry cheerily. "Good-night!"
 "But I heard—"

The party passed on, leaving the countryman staring. The juniors had gathered round Cardew, concealing the fact that he was attached to the donkey by a long cord. In a minute or less the shadows swallowed up the party, and the countryman, shaking his head in a puzzled way, tramped on. Ralph Reckness Cardew was chewing savagely at the potato, ejecting it in portions, but the stranger was far out of earshot before the dandy of the Fourth found his voice again.

"Oh! Ow! You rotters!" gasped Cardew.
 "Hallo! Talking again?" said Blake. "I want you to give me your word, Cardew, not to yell out again."
 "I won't!"

"Then you'll be gagged," said Blake coolly.
 "Hang you! I—"
 "Hold his jaws open!" said Blake.
 Cardew roared desperately; but his mouth was forced open, and Blake crammed a handkerchief into it. With a lough of twine passed several times round Cardew's head, he secured the gag in its place. Cardew breathed hard through his nose, his eyes glittering volumes of fury.
 "That'll fix you, my beauty!" commented Blake. "Now get on."

And in forced silence now, Ralph Reckness Cardew tramped on with the St. Jim's party. It was not till the rosy flush of dawn was in the sky that Tom Merry & Co. halted to encamp, and by that time they were twelve miles from Lilburn Lodge—and they camped under the rising sun on a wide and lonely moor, without a human habitation in sight. And Cardew, who had vaguely hoped for rescue when day broke, cast his eyes about him in something like despair.

CHAPTER 9. Rather Rough!

"CARDREW!"
 "Hang you!"
 "Build the fire!"
 "I won't!"
 "And cook the potatoes!"
 "I won't!"
 "Dear me," said Jack Blake, with a yawn, "the sweet youth hasn't learned his lesson yet. He wants some more! Don't you know that we've brought you along to make yourself useful, Cardew?"

A look of hate was the only response.
 Cardew had been cast loose; and already he had made one rush to escape. He had been promptly collared, and half a dozen "of the best" had been administered with Gussy's malacca cane, as a warning. The warning left Ralph Reckness Cardew smarting and simmering with fury.

"No room for slackers in this outfit," said Tom Merry decidedly. "You've got to work, Cardew."

"I only want to see the last of you!" said Cardew bitterly.
 "What you want, and what you need, are two very different things," remarked Monty Lowther sagely. "What you're

going to get, old bean, is what you need, not what you want."

"You haven't started the fire yet, Cardew!" reminded Blake. "We've gathered the fuel. Now it's your bit."

"I won't stir a finger!" Blake said.

"Lay him in the grass!" Blake said.
 Cardew resisted furiously as three or four of the juniors collared him. In spite of his savage struggles, he was plumped face downwards in the thick grass. Blake took the malacca.

"Say when!" he said politely.
 Whack! Whack! Whack!
 Cardew wriggled under the strokes.

"Say when!" repeated Blake, after the third. There was no answer from the infuriated dandy of the Fourth.

Whack! Whack! Whack!
 Cardew writhed as Blake brought down the malacca cane upon his person. Blake's full force was behind each blow, and the hapless dandy of the Fourth bit his lips with the pain.

"Oh, hang you!" he burst out. "I'll make you suffer for this! I'll—I'll—I'll—!" He choked with fury.

Whack! Whack! Whack!
 "Weally, Cardew," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy severely, "weally, you know, you are actin' the goat! You have got to toe the line, deah boy, and you should remembah that it is all for your own good. Pway do not act the giddy ox, Cardew, for your own sake, you know!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!
 Cardew struggled and wriggled and writhed. But Blake laid on the strokes in deadly earnest.

"Say when you're tired!" he remarked.

Whack! Whack!
 "Stop," shrieked Cardew at last, "you rotter! Stop!"

"Are you going to do your share of the work?"

"Hang you!"
 Whack! Whack!

"Yes!" yelled Cardew. "Stop it!"

"Good man! Let him up."

Cardew was released, and he rose to his feet quivering with rage. He looked for a moment as if he would spring at Blake.

Blake smiled.
 "Careful, my infant!" he said. "If you ask for any more, you'll get it, and then some! You're getting what you've asked for, and we're going to hand it out quite generously."

"You rotten coward!" Cardew muttered. "If you'd put up your hands—"

Blake nodded, unmoved.

"I'll put up my hands, never fear, before you leave us," he said. "There's going to be a top-hole scrap before we part, Cardew. I promise you that. But you're going to have your lesson first. You've got to have some of the gas and the insolence taken out of you. Now pile in and do the chores!"



Blake knotted a cord round Cardew's right wrist and jerked him into the road. The other end of the cord he secured to Solomon's pack. Solomon marched on, and Cardew had no choice about following him. The pull on his wrist kept him alongside the donkey. (See page 10.)

There was no help for it, and Cardew obeyed. He was fairly tough, but the malacca cane was past a joke; and it was evidently going to be laid on until he listened to the voice of reason.

He made the best of it, though he was trembling with passion.

The campers watched him with cheery faces, while he "did the chores"; and he succeeded in making himself very useful. Once or twice he looked about him, as if seeking a chance of escape; but he realised that there was no chance; and he had had enough of the malacca.

In his rage, he determined not to join the campers in their meal; but the long tramp, and the keen air, had made him ravenously hungry. When the party sat down to a hearty meal by the camp-fire, and he was offered his share, he had a struggle with his pride—and then accepted the well-filled plate. And probably Cardew enjoyed that rough-and-ready but substantial repast much more than the luxurious lunch at Lilburn Lodge. Exercise and fresh air are the best of sauces.

It was not till the late afternoon that the St. Jim's party prepared to travel again. And then Blake called to Cardew.

"We're going on, Cardew!"

"You can go to the deuce for all I care!" said Cardew.

"In the daytime," said Blake, unmoved, "we can't very well travel with you tied to the donkey, and a potato in your potato-trap—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So we want your word not to escape or to yell out."

"Go and eat coke!"

"You won't give your word?"

"No!" hissed Cardew.

Blake sighed.

"We shall wear out that malacca of yours at this rate, Gussy," he said.

Arthur Augustus grinned.

"Pway weah it out, if necessary, in a good cause, deah boy," he answered. "The malacca is quite at your service."

Blake took the malacca.

"Spread him out!" he said.

Cardew drew a quick, hard breath.

"I—I—you've got me down!" he said. "I'll—I'll give my word."

"I believe you are capable of keeping your word," said Blake, with a nod; "it's one of your very few good points. So I won't say what would happen if you broke it; it would be something rather painful."

"You know I shall keep my word!" said Cardew savagely.

"We'll give you a trial, at least."

And the St. Jim's party started, Cardew on parole now, with his movements quite unshackled. He walked on with the party with a grim face, but no longer looking for a chance to escape. There was much evil in Cardew's nature, along with some good; and one of his good points undoubtedly was that his word was his bond. He had given his parole, and he would keep it.

He spoke no word during the day's march. He turned in at night in silence, room being found in the tent for one extra, with a squeeze. In the morning he marched on again, still in silence. When the juniors spoke to him, which they did often and cheerily, he did not answer.

Arthur Augustus gave him a little lecture on the subject of sulking, to which Cardew answered not one word.

But, in spite of the strange circumstances in which he had joined Tom Merry & Co., there was no doubt that "roughing it" was doing him good. He had almost lost his old bored and indifferent manner; he was learning many "dodges" about camping, and he proved as useful as any other member of the party. And on the third morning Jack Blake—whose wrath was quite appeased before this—decided to let him off. When the St. Jim's party broke up camp, Blake came over to Cardew, who was dutifully stamping out the last sparks of the camp fire.

"You can cut it," he said curtly.

Cardew looked at him.

"And if you want to scrap before you go," continued Blake, "I'm here—ready! You've acted like an insolent cad, Cardew, and you've been punished for it! I hope it's done you good!"

"Yas, I weally twust it has done you good, Cardew!" said Arthur Augustus, with great seriousness.

Cardew looked at them rather oddly.

"Perhaps it has!" remarked Cardew.

"No Perhaps about it!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "But I never expected you to see it, Cardew!"

"Never expect anythin' in this life," said Cardew; "you're bound to be disappointed. I've been doin' some thinkin' while I've been trampin' around with you fellows. I've come to the merry conclusion that I've been gettin' what I asked for, and it serves me right! Surprised you, I suppose?"

"Bai Jove!"

"I'm quite willin' to scrap with you, Blake, if you're THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 700.

longin' for it!" continued Cardew. "But I've got over the yearnin' to dye my knuckles in gore from your nose! Quite got over it!"

"Just as you like!" said Blake cheerfully. "We're even now, anyhow, and you can cut as soon as you like!"

"Thanks!"

And Tom Merry & Co. proceeded to pack Solomon, the donkey; Cardew, standing with his hands in his pockets, watching them, with a very thoughtful expression on his face.

CHAPTER 10.

Unexpected!

"GEE UP!"

"Come on, old moke!"

"Good-bye, Cardew!"

Tom Merry & Co. started. Cardew was still standing with his hands in his pockets watching them.

There was quite an odd expression on his handsome face, and he seemed about to speak, but he checked himself.

"Ta-ta, old top!" called out Blake quite genially.

"Good-bye!" answered Cardew.

The St. Jim's party moved down a leafy lane, leaving Cardew standing and staring after them. A few minutes later there was a patter of feet, and the dandy of the Fourth came up, overtaking the party.

"Forgotten something?" asked Tom Merry, looking round.

"You have!" answered Cardew. "We're some miles from a railway-station, I believe, and I've got to get back to nunky's, somehow, you know!"

"It's a straight road from here," said Tom. "Follow your nose along the road, Cardew; it's easy enough."

"You're not going by the road?"

"No; our way's up the lane."

Cardew paused.

"The lane looks a bit pleasanter than that dashed dusty road," he said. "I'll trot along the lane and chance it! Bound to drop on a railway-station sooner or later."

"All serene!"

Cardew walked on with the St. Jim's juniors in silence. At a turning a mile or so farther on Tom Merry halted the donkey. There was a sign on the turning: "This way to the station."

"There you are, Cardew!"

Cardew glanced at the sign and then up the side road. Then he looked at Tom Merry, coloured, and laughed.

"That was my way home!" he remarked.

"Yea."

"Still a few more days with merry old Lilburn," said Cardew thoughtfully. "And he's goin' to have some people down for the week-end, and there's goin' to be merry doin's. Quite a high old time, in fact! Well, I suppose it's time I got back to nunky! He won't miss me, and he won't be glad to see me; we're not an affectionate family. Well, good-bye, you blighters!"

Cardew gave the juniors a nod, turned away, and started towards the station.

And Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass after him with a very thoughtful expression.

"I wondah—" he remarked.

"So do I," said Tom Merry. "Cardew's a dashed queer bird! But if he'd like to join the tramp—"

"Let him!" said Blake.

"Hear, hear!"

"Yas, watah!"

Tom Merry shouted:

"Cardew!"

The dandy of the Fourth turned his head.

"Hallo!"

"Hold on a minute!"

"Certainly, old bean!" Cardew came back. "Anythin' the matter?"

"No. But if you'd like to join the party, you're welcome," said Tom Merry. "I thought perhaps—"

"You're a giddy thought-reader!" said Cardew coolly. "I never thought the strenuous life would appeal to me at all. But it does! Dear men, if my presence is not unwelcome—"

"Not at all!"

"Then I'll come on with you until—"

"Until when, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy.

"Until you bore me, old bean!" answered Cardew politely.

"Bai Jove!"

And when Tom Merry & Co. started again, the grandson of Lord Reckness was leading the donkey and whistling cheerily.

(There will be another rollicking fine story of the St. Jim's Campers in next week's issue of The GEM LIBRARY. Order your copy early, so as to avoid disappointment.)



A Magnificent Story of Life at Millford College. By IVOR HAYES.

NEW READERS START HERE.

TOM MACE, whose father is a professional crackman, wins a scholarship for Millford College. His father is rather pleased, for Mr. **BILL MACE** has certain unlawful reasons for wanting to see the inside of the school. Mrs. Mace durns up her son's clothes, and Tom sets off for school. In the train he overhears a conversation between a man in a sea-green suit and a muffled ruffian. The ruffian is addressed as **SPIKEY MEADOWS**, and there is some suspicious talk that sets the lad thinking. At last he arrives at the school, only to be jeered at by the other juniors. He sees there a lad, **SIMON LUNDY**, son of the man who is the squire of that part of the country in which Tom lives. Tom tries to be friendly, but Simon cuts him dead. Just as Lundy & Co. are fooling with Tom's things, a new master appears on the scene. He is Mr. **GORDON GALE**—the man in the sea-green suit, whom Tom had seen in the train. Tom sees the headmaster, who is kind to him, and sees also Mr. **MULLINS**, the master of the Fourth Form. He goes to Study **B—LUNDY** and Bradshaw's study—to which he has been allotted, but he is thrown out. **BOB PEELE** finds him, is friendly, and stands him a feed at the tuckshop. Bradshaw & Co. advance upon the tuckshop. A battle royal ensues, and Tom, after being petted with eggs, is thrown out. He knocks into a man as he falls into the lane. The others, frightened, run away. This man is **SPIKEY MEADOWS**. He talks to Tom, and tries to persuade the lad to leave a window open, so that he can enter the school at night.

"What do you think of it?" asks Meadows.
(Now read on.)

By Fate's Decree.

TOM clenched his hands and drew a deep breath, while the cunning Meadows searched his face anxiously. "Think of it!" he said, with blazing eyes, and in a tone so fierce that Spikey Meadows shrank back. "You want me to be a thief—to rob my school, to ruin my career! If you come near the school," shouted Tom, shaking his fist in the other's face, "I'll report you to the police!" Spikey Meadows's lips curled, and he lit another cigarette. His small dark eyes glittered venomously. "Not so fast—not so fast, young shaver!" he said, waving a dirty hand. "You think you're mighty clever! Wait a bit! You're going to report me, eh? Suppose I play the dirty on you? Suppose I come to your fine school when you're mixing with all them nibs, and tell them who you are? Tell them that your poor old father is a crook, that he was so near being 'clinked' that they opened the gates ready to let him in?" Spikey Meadows thrust his bullet head forward. "Report me!" he snarled. "I'd make that school too hot to hold you! You'd be thrown out, neck and crop, to-morrow!"

Tom drew back, his face suddenly white, his breath coming in gasps. It was true—only too true! If they knew at school! If they ever knew what his father was—what he had been! When he had such a father, how could he expect the school authorities to allow him to remain there?

"What about it, eh?" The man laughed, realising that he had the whip-hand. But, in his confidence, he went too far.

"That's how far yer honesty goes!" he went on mockingly. "If ever we gets copped, me lad, you're for it, too! You're an accessory before the fact!"

He hissed out the words, and they stung Tom Mace like a whip. He drew himself upright. Until then he had not realised his position. Of course he was an accessory before the fact. He must tell the police. It was his duty.

"I gives you twenty-four hours," went on Spikey Meadows. "If you don't do as I want by then, up to the school I comes and blows the gaff on you!"

"Stop!" Tom thumped his fist into the palm of his other hand. "You can ruin me!" he said bitterly. "I might have known this! How can I hope to get on? You will ruin

me, so why should I not be honest? I am going to the police! You can do what you like! But to-morrow morning I go to the police!"

Spikey Meadows staggered back. He had not expected this show of spirit. For a moment he stood stock still, not knowing what to say, drawing the breath through his teeth in gasps.

"So that's your game?" he said thickly. "That's it!" "Yes," answered Tom Mace evenly. "That's my game. It's the only way—the right way."

Spikey Meadows' cunning brain was working quickly. "So you're going to break your mother's 'cart?" he said, with a laboured attempt at pathos. "Break that old woman's 'cart and bring 'er grey 'airs in sorrow to the grave?" The cunning rascal paused dramatically. He noted that the hard look in the boy's eyes had softened.

"If I goes to prison, Bill Mace comes with me," went on Spikey Meadows. "And if your father goes—well, you know better than me what'll 'appen."

He leered at the lad through the darkness. Had Tom seen the man's face he could scarcely have missed the look of cunning triumph that spread over it like an evil mantle. But, fortunately, the scholarship lad was spared that.

"I know!" he muttered miserably. "But—"

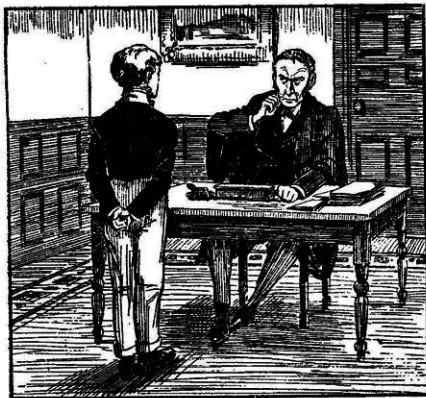
Spikey Meadows saw his opportunity, and seized it. "Right-o!" he said. "I'm willing to be fair. I'll give you till to-morrow to decide whether you're going to break yer mother's 'cart or whether you're goin' to do a simple, 'onest kindness to yer father."

Tom's face blanched. He had to make the choice. He must be a villain or let his father go to gaol—and break his mother's heart. How could he make up his mind?

"Then that's final," said Spikey Meadows. "To-morrow



"Allo!" said the porter, swinging his lantern. "What's this now? 'Oo are you?" He held the lantern aloft and peered into Tom's face. "I—I'm the new boy," answered Tom. "Am I very late?"



"And who was the friend you were talking to?" asked Mr. Mullins. "A man named Meadows," muttered Tom. "Meadows?" gasped Mullins. His cheeks took on a creamy tinge, and his thin hand shook.

here at five. Yer mother's 'eart or a small favour—that's all you've got to decide."

Tom Mace did not move. And there Meadows left him. Nor did Tom move till the rascal's footsteps had died away far up the lane.

Tom's face was white, and there was a numbed feeling about his heart. What was he to do?

"How can I choose?" he whispered to himself. "It's true—I know it's true! I can't expose them, if only for mother's sake! But—but I must—I ought to!"

He clenched his hands tightly, so tightly that the nails cut deeply into the flesh. His head set back. What could he do? Over and over again he asked himself that question, but there was no answer to it.

It was only when he shivered that he remembered the passing time. It must be getting late. With a start, he remembered the school. What would they say when he returned?

He wheeled sharply, and hurried back to the school. It would never do to be late in on his first night.

But he was. When at last he reached the school he found the gates closed against him. With heavy heart, he tugged at the bell-knob.

Clang, clang!

It was like the knell of doom in his ears. He wanted to shout for silence. That clanging had unnerved him.

When the old porter opened the gate Tom was shivering.

"Allo!" said the porter, swinging his lantern. "What's this, now? 'Oo are you?"

He held the lantern aloft and peered into Tom's face.

"Who are you?" he asked challengingly.

"I'm the new boy," answered Tom. "Am I very late?"

"Bless me! New boy! Fine time to arrive, this is! Late? Do you think we start at night-time? This ain't no night school."

His sarcasm fell flat. But now he started forward, for Tom had stepped into the quadrangle.

"Ere!" shouted the porter. "Steady, young feller! Not so quick. 'Gw am I to know 'oo you are, eh?"

"I tell you, I am a new boy, Mace—Tom Mace," answered Tom irritably.

"Oh, yes, Mace! Might be Grace, or Lacey, or Chase for all I'm likely to know," replied the suspicious porter. "You come with me. I've heard them yarns afore. I ain't been 'ere all these years for nothink. They're just the clothes a schoolard 'ere would wear—I don't think! Seem to 'ave seen you afore."

"Yes, of course, you have!" answered Tom, angry at the man's stupidity. "I've been here some time. You must have seen me arrive."

The porter rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Perhaps," he said. "Still, you come along with me."

He stalked ahead, with his lantern held aloft, and Tom Mace followed, frowning angrily.

The porter pushed open the school door, for until bed-time the school itself was left unlocked.

"What's yer Form?" asked the porter.

"Fourth," said Tom.

"Then you wants Mr. Mullins. Follow me."

He dimmed his lantern, and led the way along the corridors. At length he stopped outside a door, and tapped.

"Come in!" startled the voice of Mr. Mullins. Tom literally shook in his boots. He had met Mr. Mullins before, earlier in the day, and the interview had not impressed him favourably.

The porter entered, and Tom followed, cap in hand.

"Please, sir," said the porter, "this 'ere boy's just arrived."

"E says as 'ow 'e's noo."

Mr. Mullins blinked at Tom, and started.

"Yes, yes," he answered quickly. "He's new. Has he only just come in? Boy, where have you been?"

"You know him, sir?" asked the porter, to make quite sure that all was well.

"Yes, of course, you fool! He's a new boy."

The porter slammed the door, feeling that he had been ill-rewarded for so nobly doing his duty.

When he had gone, Mr. Mullins turned to Tom, and placed down his book.

"Mace," he said acidly, "where have you been? Surely you do not imagine that it is customary for juniors to stay out until nearly midnight?"

Tom did not reply, but waited for the storm that he felt was looming in the horizon.

"Please don't imagine," continued Mr. Mullins, in the same bitter, sarcastic tones, "that, because in your slum you were allowed to run wild till the early hours of the morning, you can do so here. Oh, dear, no! My dear lad, you are on the wrong lines. It is a bad way to begin here. Let me tell you that there is such a thing as law and order, although perhaps you have not been accustomed to it. You think you can do as you please."

He paused, and sneered at Tom, who stood before him, silent, his ears burning with shame.

"Eh? Is that what you think? Answer me, sir! Do you think that Millford is a place to stand such nonsense as this? There are rules and regulations here, my boy!" He paused. "Where have you been?"

"I—I—out, sir!" answered Tom lamely.

"Out—out!" snorted the angry master. "Dolt! Of course you have been out! I know that. But where, in the name of all that's sane—where?"

"In the lane, sir," answered Tom. "I was talking to a friend."

"Oh, so you were talking to a friend! Fine friends you must have to keep you out till after dark! And who was your friend?"

"A man—a man my father knew."

"Indeed! And who is this man?"

Tom did not reply. He would not lie, and yet he felt some horror at having to mention Spike Meadows' name.

Mr. Mullins raised his thick, black eyebrows, and tightened his lips.

"Mace," he said sternly, "I asked you a question! Who was this man?"

Tom's cheeks went a dull crimson, and he drew in a sharp breath. He would have to tell; he could not keep silent.

After all, he reasoned, there was nothing in a name.

"Mace," almost shouted the master, his eyes glittering, "I shall punish you, anyway, for being late! You will receive fifty lines for that little jaunt. But you must answer my question. Who was this man? What was his name? If you do not answer, I will take stern measures!"

There was nothing else to be done. If he said nothing, the master would become suspicious.

"A—a man named Meadows," muttered Tom. "He knew my father."

"Meadows?" gasped Mr. Mullins. All his anger, all his malice dropped from him as a cloak. His cheeks took on a creamy tinge, and his thin hand shook.

"Yes, sir," answered Tom. "Meadows."

"Not—not Spike Meadows?"

The words had slipped from the master's mouth, and he went white. He could have bitten off his tongue for that slip, but it was too late.

"You know him, sir?" asked Tom, in surprise.

"I—I— Yes!" stammered the master. He had recovered his composure now, and was once more the righteously angry master.

"I know him, yes. He is not the man for you to know. There—there has been trouble with him before. He has led boys into gambling."

The lies tumbled from the master's mouth. But they deceived Tom Mace completely.

"You should not associate with him," resumed the master.

"Not have anything to do with him, Mace. He is no good. He—he— If you ever speak to him again, I will report you to the headmaster!"

"Yes, sir," stammered Tom.

"And I shall tell the prefects to warn the man away from the school," went on the master. "Go; it is past your bedtime. Bring me those lines to-morrow."

Tom, his rain in a whirl, stopped from the room. Spike Meadows was known then. What a fool the man must be to keep near the school when he was so well-known!

But Tom had been deceived. If he could have seen inside the master's study, he would have been surprised.

For Mr. Mullins was striding up and down the room with clenched hands, muttering to himself.

"Fool, fool that I am!" he hissed, through clenched teeth. "I've given myself away! Spike Meadows here! What can it mean? And what does that wretched boy know about him? If Meadows should come to the school—"

At that awful thought Mr. Mullins stopped short; for he knew Meadows, and, what is more, Spike Meadows had known Mr. Mullins some few years ago when they had broken stones together on a lonely moor, with only a warder to watch them. Mullins had escaped; but Meadows had stayed to finish his term. With his University education behind him, and some forged papers in his pocket, Edgar Mullins had found little difficulty in hiding himself away at the school. Here he was unsuspected, none knew him. Even his name had changed; behind those iron bars he had been Edgar Morris.

But now the relentless hand of Fate had brought Meadows to the school. No wonder Mr. Mullins was worried!

The Scene in the Dorm.

TOM MACE'S face wore a heavy, puzzled frown as he walked away from the Fourth Form master's study. Events had taken a queer turn, and it was mystery upon mystery. Why had Mr. Mullins started at the mention of Spike Meadows' name?

It was queer that Meadows should be so well known in the district. That he should have the reputation of being a rogue was not so surprising.

Little did Tom Mace dream how the master had deceived him, as he wandered along the passage, a hand was placed upon his arm. He turned round, and started with surprise.

"Peel!" he gasped. "Of course! I had almost forgotten! How did you get away from them in the tuckshop?"

In his conversation with Meadows, Tom Mace had forgotten that fight in the tuckshop, when Bob Peel had fought for him so loyally.

"All right!" grinned Peel. "They put me through the mill a bit. But, to tell the truth, I wondered what had happened to you. The last I knew, they took you down to the gate, and slung you out."

"That's right," said Tom. "Then Mr. Gale came along—"

"And they all bunked," finished Bob Peel. "Yes, I know they bunked. But old Gale never turned up."

"No," replied Tom, his old puzzled frown returning. "I can't understand. He turned round."

Bob Peel watched the scholarship lad's face closely, and took his arm.

"Don't take it too much to heart, old man," he said. "You'll soon live it down all right, provided that you stick it. And I'll stand by you."

"I know—I know," muttered Tom. "You've been a pal to me. The scholarship lad's tones became husky. "Thank you, Peel, for all you have done. You're a brick. The way you stood by me in the tuckshop, and the way you fought for me was splendid. Few fellows would have done that even for their best pal. And I—I'm no one—you've only known me a few hours."

"I can see you're the right sort," said his friend. "Don't you worry, old chap. I'll stand by you, through thick and thin. But, honour bright, I thought you'd gone this evening, 'cause you didn't come back after they threw you out. You've only just come in, haven't you?"

Tom nodded.

"Get any lines?" asked Peel sympathetically.

"Fifty. But I didn't funk it. I didn't run away, Peel. Don't think that. But I—"

He broke off, not knowing what to say.

"Well?"

"I—I met a man my father knew, and talked to him."

"Oh!" said Peel, surprised. "Rather funny, eh? Does he live round here, then?"

"Yes—no; I'm not sure," said Tom Mace, in confusion. "But I think he's staying here for a time."

Bob Peel nodded thoughtfully. He was not by nature an inquisitive lad, but he could not help wondering what this friend of Tom's father was like.

"Nice chap?" he asked. "I should rather like to see him."

Tom flushed crimson.

"I don't know if—if I shall ever meet him again. What's that bell for?"

It was almost as though that bell had come to his rescue; and he sighed with relief.

"That's for bed-time. We've got to get to the dorm," answered Peel. "This way, my lad."

He raced up the stairs, and Tom followed him. The scholarship lad was more thankful than he could tell for the timely interruption of the bell.

It seemed as though Peel had completely forgotten the introduction he required. And Tom Mace was only too glad. If it were true that Mr. Spike Meadows was a well-known but not so well-liked character in the district, then to introduce him to his only friend would be folly.

"By the way," said Peel, when they reached the top landing, "I forgot. There's a box of things arrived for you, Mace."

"They must be my clothes!" said Tom excitedly. In a moment his downcast mood had gone, and he smiled. "I suppose that'll be the Etons and all the things they're sending me. You see, a complete outfit of everything goes with the scholarship, otherwise I should not have been able to come."

"Yes," nodded Peel. "Well, they've arrived now. This is the dorm."

They reached a big door that stood ajar. From inside came the sounds of subdued chuckles.

"My hat!" gasped Peel. "They're up early to-night. I wonder—"

He broke off, and stepped quickly forward. He had suddenly realised that one thing, and one thing only, could have brought the cads of the Fourth up to bed so early. They knew that Tom's box had arrived. Were they meddling with the contents?

He flung the door open wide, and entered.

"My only chapeau!"

Bob Peel staggered back, and Tom anxiously glanced over his friend's shoulder. Then he, too, gasped. White-faced, he sprang forward.

"You rotten cads!" he cried. He stopped short, with clenched hands, and eyed the scene with blazing eyes.

There in the centre of the room stood the box that had once contained his new outfit, and which now, alas! was empty. On the floor about it lay the garments.

In the midst of the garments, as they lay, scattered about, stood Simon Lundy, in all his glory. Simon, the complete cad, in his hand he held one of the scholarship lad's brand-new white linen collars.

Tom's fists clenched tighter as he saw that Lundy had been writing on that collar—writing with a blue crayon. And the words he had written stood out in bold capitals:

"THIS COLLAR WAS PROVIDED BY CHARITY."

Luke Bradshaw sniggered nervously, and Simon Lundy's mouth widened into a grin.

"Just labelling your collars, Mace," he said. "All new boys' collars and things have to be labelled. What do you think of that?"

Bradshaw giggled.

Tom's eyes glittered dangerously, and roved round that scene of destruction. He paid no heed to the cad's taunting question. He was too engrossed in assessing what damage had been done.

He had come just in time. For Lundy had not had time to ruin everything. Upon the Eton jackets Lundy had written:

"PLEASE SPARE A PENNY! I'M A PAUPER!"

And on the floor sat Garnet, working industriously, with a triumphant, over-joyed grin on his face. Garnet was working with a darning-needle and some wool. All over a new jacket he had darned in huge cobbles. Each darn was encircled with a chalk ring, to make it prominent. Upon the coat had been chalked:

"LOOK AT MUMMY'S DARNS!"

Tom's face went red as he saw this. He could stand anything against him—he would stand it, if need be, without a reply. But this scornful, thoughtless gibe at his mother, and at the care she had taken in making his clothes fit for wear—fit for him to take to school! Tom rushed forward.

Lundy was unprepared. He was nearest, and so engrossed was he in his handiwork that Tom's blow took him by surprise. Down he went like a ninepin!

Bob Peel gave a shout of joy.

"Hurrah! Go it, Mace! I'm coming!"

With a shout, Bob Peel, for the second time that day, entered into a scrap for the sake of his new friend.

Biff, biff!

Left! Right!

Into the cads he sailed, backing up Tom. Tom Mace had Lundy's head in chancery, and was pummeling that worthy for all he was worth. But it was no use. For some moments the two plucky juniors had it all their own way, and then the numbers told.

(The continuation of this grand serial will appear next week.)



JOHN SHARPE.

New Readers Start Here.

John Sharpe, the great analytical detective, is engaged by Chief Burnett, of the Secret Service, to track down the band of organized and dangerous criminals operating under the guidance of Iron Hand, a fearless, clever man of dominating personality. Marna Black, one of the band of crooks, is captured, and Burnett induces Anne Crawford, a woman agent of the Secret Service, to assume Marna's identity and get into the confidences of Iron Hand.

She is instructed to keep her real identity a secret even to Sharpe; but she often assists him and sends him information concerning the movements of the gang, and he is puzzled to know just where it comes from.

Iron Hand has a number of hiding-places in different parts of the country, which are referred to as "Nests," the most important of which is Eagle's Nest, situated on a deserted cliff. The leader's chief assistants are Potsdam and Black Flag. John Sharpe has had many big tussles with the gang, and has foiled many of their deepest schemes. The gang are now plotting to secure a large number of notes and bonds in preparation for the South American Republics.

The Gang's Success.

BLACK FLAG completed his job, climbed up the rope ladder, and pulled it up after him. Then one of the other members of the gang picked up the piece of flooring, which had been sawn out, and replaced it. He next took his stencil-brush, and painted round the circle, so that the freshly-sawed edges would not be noticed.

Other men were busy packing the bags, and soon the tools, the rope-ladder, and other articles were safely put away.

Iron Hand turned his attention to the man who was busy on the floor, and when he had finished his work, the leader himself put the rug in position, and placed the desk above it. When he had finished no one could possibly have known that the floor had been sawn through. The work of the gang was completely concealed.

Iron Hand ordered two of the outlaws to go out, and take four of the suitcases with them. Potsdam went to the hall door, quietly opened it, and cautiously peered out. When the second-in-command was satisfied that there was no one about he informed the two members of the gang that all was clear for them to leave.

A watchman on duty at the printing office was making his usual rounds. He entered the big room, carrying his THE GEM LIBRARY, No. 700.

The INVISIBLE HAND

Vita-graph



IRON HAND.

lantern, looked round carefully, and, satisfying himself that nothing was wrong, made his departure.

Little did he realise then what a gigantic scheme had been completed, as he made his way over to the factory.

Meanwhile, Anne Crawford, who for a long time had been watching and waiting patiently, suddenly straightened up, and looked with tense interest at something in front of her. Then she recollected that she was in a dangerous position, and as the girl had no desire to be seen, she shrank farther back so that she would be out of sight.

She did not, however, lose sight of the two moving figures who had attracted her interest. Her eyes were fixed upon the heavily-burdened outlaws, who had just emerged from the doorway of the building ahead of her. As they walked along they passed a policeman who was on duty.

The constable looked curiously at the two men for a moment, but evidently decided that the matter was not worth while bothering about, for he let them pass on their way undisturbed.

A few moments later two more members of the gang left the building, and they walked off in a casual manner in another direction. Then a fifth man appeared, and hurried away.

Some time afterwards Iron Hand and Potsdam also left the scene of the robbery. Their progress, however, was impeded for a second by a commissioner, who appeared on the scene.

Iron Hand quickly threw off any suspicions which the man might have had by asking him, in a matter-of-fact way, what the time was. The commissioner pulled out his watch and told him. At the same time Iron Hand felt in his pocket, and handed him a cigar, and this act successfully won the man's gratitude.

He touched his hat respectfully, and the two leaders walked away without further interruption.

Iron Hand was a most resourceful man and a student of human nature, and he usually knew how to meet an emergency of this sort. A less wise man than he might have hurried away when the commissioner approached him, and thus increased his suspicion.

It was easy for Anne from her position in the doorway to recognise her old acquaintances—Iron Hand and Potsdam—and she followed the two men with her eyes until they were some distance ahead, then she stepped out from her hiding-place, and walked after them, keeping well in the shadow, and at a perfectly safe distance behind them.

It was her intention to shadow them.

She tracked the men down until they arrived at the outside of the old curiosity shop.

The leaders looked furtively around, and then entered the shop, closing the door behind them. Anne had taken up her position behind the corner of a building where she could watch their actions

with perfect ease, and satisfied as to where they were taking the loot, she made her departure. It would have been unfortunate for her if Iron Hand or Potsdam had hurried out and caught her there.

Beneath the old curiosity shop, which was serving as a rendezvous for the gang for the time being, was a large cellar.

It was filled with old lumber, consisting of boxes, barrels, and other miscellaneous rubbish; but there was something else of more importance to the gang, and this was a concealed door leading to a tunnel.

At the present moment there were five of the gang on the scene, and very shortly Iron Hand and his second-in-command joined them. The suitcases, containing the valuable haul of notes, were lying about on the floor.

Iron Hand and the rest of them were highly gratified at their success.

"Now to get into communication with my brokers," murmured the leader, "and I shall be able to realise on this fine little job, and we shall be able to clear away for good to-morrow. There is enough here to provide all of us in luxury for a long time to come."

The expressions of greed and eagerness to share in the loot could be plainly discerned on the faces of the rest of the villainous party.

Sharpe on the Trail.

SEATED at a desk in her room was Anne Crawford. She was busily writing a letter, and when she completed it she placed it in an envelope, addressed it, and affixed a stamp.

It was addressed to John Sharpe, c.o. the Chief of Police, Los Angeles, California. It was obvious by the look on the girl's face that this letter was to serve an important mission.

She rang for a boy, and handed the missive to him, together with a handsome tip which made him smile.

When he had gone Anne took out the torn letter-head, which she had secured from Iron Hand, together with the little brass screw which had been brought in by Black Flag at their last meeting. She made her way to the door, and entered another room, where she cautiously opened the table-drawer, and placed the articles safely inside. Then she went back to her room again. She was tired, and prepared for bed.

The following day Detective John Sharpe was again on the trail of Iron Hand & Co. Already the great robbery of notes and bonds had been discovered,

ANSWERS

EVERY MONDAY, PRICE 2:

and there was a busy scene at the printing office where they had been engraved.

On the scene was John Sharpe, the Chief of Police, the manager of the establishment, and the Consular Agent, all of whom were chattering excitedly. They were examining the dummy boxes containing the bits of newspaper, which had been placed inside by the gang when they had removed the notes.

The agent, representing the South American Republics, was highly concerned about the great robbery.

Sharpe was already at work in his quiet way, and he endeavoured to pick up as much information as possible by putting various questions to some of the employees who had been brought in.

Later the watchman arrived, and he reported that he had been on the spot all night, and had no idea whatever how the robbery had happened. He could not account for it at all.

The man was quite nervous, and worried about the whole affair.

Sharpe passed over him and commenced to examine the boxes with his trusty magnifying-glass. Then he spoke to the Chief of Police.

"Send some men to the principle box factories in the district, and find out where these particular ones were made," he ordered. "Also, send to the 'Evening Mail' offices, and find out to whom they sold extra copies of the papers last night. Quite a number must have been bought and out up, in order to take the place of the vanished notes; and if we can find out who bought these copies we might be able to track the perpetrators of this robbery down."

The Chief of Police replied that the instructions of the detective would be carried out.

John Sharpe next turned to the manager of the printing works, and told him to summon every man who had access to the office. A few minutes later a long stream of workmen filed in.

The manager checked them off from a list which he had, and at the end he discovered that there was only one man missing, and he was, strangely enough, the last who had been taken on. "All the rest of the men have been with us for years, and I can guarantee every one," the manager informed the detective.

Sharpe began to look interested.

"Tell me more about the missing man," he said.

"He was a new pressman employed by us a few days ago," the manager returned; "beyond that I have very little information about him!"

"Has anyone gone to look for him?" inquired the detective, with a thirst for further information.

"Yes," came the reply; "and it is a very strange thing that the new employee is not known at the address he gave."

This is a very significant thing, thought Sharpe.

"Get me a full description of him!" ordered the detective. And then he went over to examine the windows.

He investigated every part of the sill and window most minutely, with the skill of the experienced detective which he was; but his search was unavailing, and he was convinced that the entrance of the burglars to the room was not made there.

The detective went over to join the group again, and at that moment a plain-clothes policeman entered, and walked straight up to Sharpe.

"I have discovered that the news-agent's shop in Highland Avenue sold eight hundred extra papers last night.

They were taken by two men with suit-cases, sir."

Sharpe raised his eyebrows at this news.

"Good!" he muttered. "We're getting on!"

But there was another sensation to come when the liftman of the building entered in great excitement, and explained that two men, who had engaged a room in Welsh's office above, left the building last night, and they carried with them heavy bags.

Sharpe asked the man if he was quite sure on this point, and he replied that he was, and, furthermore, explained that he was about to question one of them last night, when he was put off by the man inquiring what the time was, and at the end handing him a cigar.

The detective was convinced that there was something in the man's story.

"Where is this Mr. Welsh's office?" Sharpe inquired.

The liftman pointed up.

"I must go and investigate that!" Sharpe muttered, and, followed by the Chief of Police, the manager, and the liftman, he left the room.

Those who were left behind discussed very animatedly the amazing burglary. There was no doubt in their minds that a very clever and daring gang had been at work. Never before had so many valuable notes been stolen in a single haul.

Arriving upstairs, John Sharpe lost no time in entering Mr. Welsh's office.

It was in just the same condition as left by Iron Hand and his accomplices the night before.

Sharpe examined the place thoroughly, and for a long time found nothing that seemed at all suspicious.

Presently his eyes wandered to the wastepaper-basket, and, after searching about inside, he picked up two pieces of card which had attracted his attention. It proved to be just an ordinary postcard torn in two.

The detective joined them together, and looked at the address.

It read: "Keir & Co., c.o. George Welsh, Real Estate Company, Los Angeles, California."

As he read this name and address Sharpe looked at it in a puzzled manner. The name had a familiar sound. He turned the card over, and read the message on the back. This said: "Everything O.K. Have succeeded fully. Back Tuesday—WELSH."

Sharpe showed this message to the Chief of Police, who nodded, and said that Welsh was the one they were looking for.

Sharpe paced up and down the room, trying to think out what reason the villains had for using this room. He turned to the manager, and inquired if this room was directly over the vault.

"Yes," was the reply.

This gave the detective further ground to work on. He commenced to examine the floor, and prepared to move the desk which stood near the centre.

His interest was aroused by the fact that the leg sunk slightly owing to a slight "give" in the floor. Sharpe stared for a minute or two at this depression. Then he moved the desk hastily aside, and, lifting the rug, his eyes were riveted upon the worn portion of the floor which was so disclosed.

He forced this up, and looked down into the office below. Then he called the attention of the others to it. They crowded round eagerly.

Then an amazing thing happened. The door of the room opened, and Mr. Welsh entered.

He was distinctly puzzled when he saw this crowd in his office, and he came forward angrily, demanding to know what they were doing there.

The Chief of Police looked at him coldly for a moment, then he placed his hand upon the newcomer's shoulder.

"You are under arrest for robbery, Mr. Welsh!" he said, in a clear, firm voice.

Mr. Welsh was amazed. He could not make this out at all, and stoutly protested his innocence. He declared that he was out of town when the robbery took place.

The chief began to question him about this. But Mr. Welsh, suddenly remembering his promise of secrecy to Iron Hand, refused to answer.

John Sharpe, who had been watching the scene with interest, stepped forward, and came to the assistance of the puzzled Mr. Welsh.

"Mr. Welsh," he said, "you are in a serious position. Please tell me who are Messrs Keir & Company!"

Mr. Welsh paled when he heard these words, and he stared at the detective. He tried to speak, but words failed him.

Sharpe fixed the man with his eyes.

"Well," he said, "what is the answer, Mr. Welsh?"

Mr. Welsh realized that he was in a difficult position, and as he gazed into the stern, clean-cut face of John Sharpe he could see quite plainly that secrecy would not aid his case, and that it would be far better for him in the end to deal frankly with the detective.

Then he made a clean breast of the whole affair.

John Sharpe listened patiently as the man explained at length the story of his movements, and gave a detailed account of his business with the members of the gang.

When he had finished, Sharpe told him that he believed the story, and did not doubt his innocence in the matter. Welsh had merely been the tool of a party of clever conspirators.

"I didn't suspect you," the detective said to the newcomer. "I can see through the whole business quite clearly now. These people got you out of the way so that they could use your office, and make it the base for their operations. They succeeded in fooling you with their story with the greatest of ease!"

Sharpe gave the inspector instructions to release the prisoner, and shortly afterwards the police-officer, who had been sent away in order to find, if possible, where the boxes used by the gang had been made, returned.

In his hand he held a small piece of paper, and he gave this to the detective, remarking that the boxes containing the dummy notes had been made at the factory named on the memo, which he had handed over.

Sharpe examined the memo, with great interest, and then he turned his attention to the paper which contained the various dimensions which had been written down by Iron Hand. After a while he carefully folded it up again, and put it in his pocket.

Then he walked towards the door, followed by the police-chief and the officers. Mr. Welsh, who was still rather flabbergasted over the turn of events, remained behind in his office, staring after the detective in bewilderment. He had not even yet thoroughly grasped the fact that he had been made the unwilling servant of a gang of robbers.

(This remarkable story will be continued in next week's GEM.)

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"MY READERS' OWN CORNER."

Half-a-crown is paid for all contributions printed on this page.

TOO BAD.

A butcher who had been busy with a dictionary for ten minutes shut the book with a bang, and glared at his wife who sat at the pay-desk.

"That Mrs. Smart is getting too clever!" he growled. "When she came in just now she said I ought to call my seals the Ambuscade Brand, and I've just looked up the word, which means 'To lie in wait.'—R. B. Standwell, 13, Meador Gardens, Merton Park, Surrey, S.W.20.

SKINNED.

Two tramps followed a rich man about for some hours, in the hope of getting him by himself and robbing him. After tracking him down a narrow street the thieves were exasperated to see their quarry enter a lawyer's office.

"Just our luck, Bill!" said one. "Now we'll have to wait till he comes out."

"No fear!" returned Bill. "We'll have to wait till the lawyer comes out."—Charles H. Fortune, Box 393, Christchurch, New Zealand.

THE WOODCHUCK.

How many boys and girls, when they say that tongue-twister, "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck would chuck wood?" know what a woodchuck is—or, indeed, if there is any such animal?

The woodchuck is a small animal that lives in North America. It is about the size of a marmot, and lives at the foot of trees. Its chief food consists of leaves and roots. It is an entirely inoffensive little animal, except when its young are attacked, when it will wage war with the intruder.—Charles H. Fortune, Box 393, Christchurch, New Zealand.

NOT HIS HAT.

Schoolmaster: "Why didn't you raise your hat when you spoke to me in the street yesterday?"

Tommy: "I didn't have my hat on."

Schoolmaster: "Nonsense, boy! You did have your hat on!"

Tommy: "No, I didn't. It wuz me brudder Bill's hat I had on."—E. Taylor, 16, Dunedin Road, Leyton, E.10.

A CLEVER DRAWING.

Jack and Bill were boasting of the merits of their respective youngsters, when Jack said:

"By the way, old chap, how is your son getting on with his drawing lessons?"

"Oh, champion!" answered Bill. "He drew a donkey the other day, and, on looking at it, you could almost fancy you heard it bray."

"My lad," said Jack, "is not doing so badly either. He made a copy of my wife's pet hen, and when I threw it into the waste-paper basket it laid there."—Clement Cartwright, c/o G. H. Garden, 168, Duckworth Street, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

REAL BAD NEWS.

He came in breathlessly, hurrying like one who bore important news.

"A butcher in the market has just dropped sixty feet!" he exclaimed.

"Is he dead?" "How did it happen?"

"Tell us about it!" cried everybody at once.

"No, he isn't hurt a bit. You see, they were pigs' feet!"—D. J. Davis, 29, Railway Terrace, Blaina, Mon.

VERY INTRICATE.

The intricacies of the English language are well illustrated in the definitions given of a sleeper.

A sleeper is one who sleeps. A sleeper is that in which the sleeper sleeps. A sleeper is that on which the sleeper runs while the sleeper sleeps. Therefore, while the sleeper sleeps in the sleeper, the sleeper carries the sleeper over the sleeper under the sleeper, until the sleeper which carries the sleeper jumps the sleeper, and wakes the sleeper in the sleeper by striking the sleeper on the sleeper, and there is no longer any sleeper sleeping in the sleeper on the sleeper.—Peter Saldanha, 84, Chapel Road, Bandra, Bombay, India.

STUDY AND UNDERSTUDY.

The Teacher: "Tommy, you have not done a stroke of work this morning, and I have told you again and again that Satan finds work for idle hands to do. Now, take your copybook, and write that out twenty times."—Miss Phyllis Drowell, 50, Grande Rue, Boulogne-sur-Mer, Pas-de-Calais, France.

FILED AWAY.

The mining stockbroker dashed into his office and locked the door.

"Where can I hide?" he cried. "The police are coming!"

"Get into the simplified card index case," said the head clerk. "I defy anyone to find anything there."—R. F. Carter, c/o Shea & Co., St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

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CHAT ABOUT ST. JIM'S AND GREYFRIARS.

I am glad the series of camping stories has proved so popular. This makes number three of these rollicking, fine outdoor stories. Next week the fourth appears, and I am sure you will enjoy this great yarn of Mr. Martin Clifford's. Now, the story that follows this series is one that numberless readers have been asking me for some time back. This fine number, I may say, will include the portrait of one who is a great favourite with most of you. Be the first at your newsagent's to obtain one of these numbers.

Although to be taken only with a grain of salt, Baggy Trimble is spreading the news about that he's getting deaf. Remember, Baggy, uneasy hangs the tongue that tells a lie.

A postcard, bearing the following message, has just been received by the Editor: "Am quite all right. Will explain everything later. — ERNEST LEVISON." Are we to gather from this that our Ernest has again gone on the long, long trail? Ralph Reckness Cardew seems very anxious over his study-mate, and is one of the very first to make an early-morning inquiry after news.

I gather that the decorators are making rapid changes in the appearance of Greyfriars School now, and that the place looks quite nice and clean. I'd dearly like to see these "men with the brushes" follow up the improvements by paying their attention next to William George Bunter. To remove the Owl of the Remove's collar and erase the dirt from around his fatty neck would be the "necks" best thing.

Rumour has it that Horace Coker is hanging his hat up to Miss Phyllis Howell. Beware of this matchmaking, and take the advice of one who knows, otherwise you'll be in the awful predicament of being burnt!

I should have thought that the great Horace knew by now that his company wasn't wanted by Miss Phyllis. Why ever doesn't he pay his attentions elsewhere? There are plenty of clever girls about, some even "dabs" at making "eyebrows." A fellow of his high standing should "make-up" his mind to get an introduction to one of these fair admirers at once.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy undoubtedly is about as lavish with money as any other junior at the school. I'm sure he'd lend even Baggy Trimble his last coin, were it not for that worthy looking upon it as a gift.

A letter from Bob Cherry of Greyfriars School to Jack Blake states that the former has had the misfortune to be bit with a flying stone during the occasion of a recent cricket-match. Never mind, Bob, you must realise this is the season for "stoned fruit."

I hear that "Ratty" Ratcliff, the "fierce" master of the Fifth Form of St. Jim's, is in rather a bad way. Inquiring about his condition, I learn that whilst he was sitting in his garden smoking his pipe of peace he collapsed—at least, his deck-chair did!

Goodness above knows how Baggy Trimble gets to know everybody else's business like he does. In fact, he does that much chatter himself, that really other fellows cannot open their mouths without interrupting him.

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STANLEY GIBSON. (A curly-headed fag of the Third.)

Stanley is up to mischief judging by the ink-soaked missile he is holding. (Another Splendid Art Portrait next week.)