

RIVAL SCHOOLS AT WAR!

The

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LIBRARY

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ST. JIM'S WINS FIRST ROUND!

(An Amusing Incident from the Grand Long Complete School Story Inside.)

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If your name is not here this week it may be next.

LIMERICKS.

An ingenious fellow named Stoate
Set out to work to construct a small
boat;
It was finished at last,
With its sails and its mast,
Then he found that his craft would not
float.

As a driver Jim's uncle was rash,
And one day pegged out in a smash;
But what did Jim care,
For he had his share,
When claimants received uncle's cash?
—John Andrews, 180, Barnley Gate,
Newark, Notts.

LIFE IN AUSTRALIA.

Australia is a fine country; we have fairly warm weather in the summer, and in the winter it is often cold and frosty. There are many large factories and warehouses, and hundreds of different schools—domestic and art schools, where girls over twelve years of age learn cookery, laundry work, house management, needlework, etc. And there are also schools where men's work is taught. In the State schools and colleges, type-writing and shorthand are among the subjects dealt with, and attention is paid to sports of all kinds—football, cricket, rowing, golf, racing, tennis, rounders, basket-ball and baseball. We have boot factories, match factories, tanneries, furniture factories, tailors' shops, and clothing factories. Australia exports butter, dairy produce, wool, frozen meat, flour, pineapples, dried fruits, and, of course, gold.—Miss Rosema Bailey, 66, Lennox Street, North Richmond, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

A PROBLEM.

The teacher asked the class how it was women never grow bald, yet never grow a beard. Johnny knew. "Please, sir," he said, "when there's motion hair never

grows. Women are always wagging their chins so much that the hair does not have time to grow. On the other hand, they never use their brains, so the hair on their head has plenty of chance." Johnny was rewarded with sixpence for his wisdom.—Edward Aitchison, 18b, Quarryhall Street, Motherwell, Glasgow.

BY ALL MEANS.

The deliberate man was obstructing the footway as he conversed with a friend. "By the way—" he said. "Buy the whole way, if you like, mister," snapped an angry American; "but kindly let me pass!"—Yousufali A. Fazalbhoy, c.o. Abdullah Fazalbhoy, Chowpatty, Sea Face, Bombay.

QUITS.

William: "I would be ashamed, if I were you, going to school in such boots, and your father a bootmaker!" John: "Oh, that's nothing! The new baby at your house has only got one tooth, and your father's a dentist!"—W. T. Smith, c.o. Mrs. Walker, Post Office, Maraisburg, Transvaal, South Africa.



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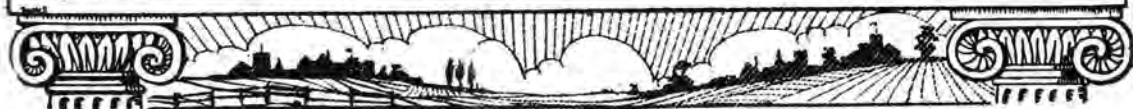
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RIVAL SCHOOLS AT WAR



A Grand Long Complete Story of the Boys of St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Fishy!

"WOTTEN!"

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, who remarked that it was rotten.

Arthur Augustus looked alarmed.

And there was cause for alarm.

D'Arcy of the Fourth had walked cheerfully down to Rylcombe that afternoon. It was an enjoyable occasion—a visit to his tailor. A happy hour had been spent in Mr. Wiggs' establishment.

Gussy's latest coat—a thing of beauty and a joy for ever—was finished. For some weeks Gussy had been giving the greater part of his consideration to that coat. Deeply and earnestly had he consulted with Mr. Wiggs on the subject. On this special afternoon it was finished. The great and knotty problem of silk or satin lining had been definitely settled a few days before. Now it was finished, and Gussy had tried it on for the last time. And so pleased was Arthur Augustus with his nobby new coat that he had put it on in Mr. Wiggs' shop, leaving his old coat to be sent on to the school.

In a happy frame of mind, Arthur Augustus had emerged from Mr. Wiggs' establishment and progressed along Rylcombe High Street. The sun seemed to be shining more brightly and the universe to have improved generally under the influence of that natty new coat.

Feeling that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds, Arthur Augustus had progressed as far as the fishmonger's. And there he sighted three cheery-looking youths in caps.

They were Gordon Gay and Wootton major and minor of Rylcombe Grammar School.

Hence Arthur Augustus' dismay.

His alarm was not for himself. Quite cheerily Arthur Augustus would have encountered the Grammarian trio, and undertaken to lick them all round—if he had been wearing his old coat. But the prospect of a rough-and-tumble in his beautiful new coat made him shudder. So he halted, and turned his eyeglass apprehensively on the three Grammarians, who greeted him with joyous smiles.

"Dear old Gussy!" said Gordon Gay.

"The one and only!" remarked Wootton major.

While Wootton minor shaded his eyes with his hand as if the glorious vision of the swell of St. Jim's was really too much for him and dazzled him.

"Weally, you fellows—" began Arthur Augustus.

"Fancy meeting you!" said Gordon Gay genially. "We were just wondering where we could dig up a little fun!"

"Just!" grinned Wootton major.

"Weally, you know—" said Arthur Augustus feebly.

"Would you mind very much if we sat you down in a puddle?" inquired Gordon Gay politely.

Arthur Augustus started back.

"You howwid young wuffian!" he ejaculated.

"We've just bought a herring," remarked Wootton major.

"What about shoving it down Gussy's neck?"

Arthur Augustus shuddered.

"It would waste the herring!" said Wootton minor.

"But it would please the one and only no end—wouldn't it, Gussy?"

The grinning Grammarians gathered round the hapless swell of St. Jim's. Evidently they were ripe for mischief. D'Arcy cast a wild glance around in the hope of catching sight of St. Jim's fellows. It was a half-holiday, and he was aware that Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther intended

to visit the village that afternoon. Blake and Herries and Digby were somewhere about, too.

But the only St. Jim's junior in sight was Baggy Trimble of the Fourth. Trimble was on the other side of the street, eyeing the good things in the window of the village tuckshop. Trimble certainly was not much of a fighting man; he often related tales of thrilling exploits and terrific combats, but he had never been seen performing the exploits or combating in the combats. But, in his extremity, Arthur Augustus shouted across to the fat junior.

"Twimble! Back up, Twimble!"

Baggy Trimble looked round.

He spotted Arthur Augustus, and he spotted the three Grammarians. And Baggy Trimble started walking away as fast as his fat little legs could carry him. Apparently Baggy was not in the mood that afternoon for thrilling exploits or terrific combats.

"Twimble!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

Baggy turned a deaf ear—and a corner! He disappeared from sight. Gordon Gay & Co. chuckled.

"Now, what's it going to be?" asked Gay. "Sitting in a puddle, or the herring down his neck, or shall we fill his topper with sprats?"

"Weally, Gay—"

"Take your choice, Gussy!" said Gay generously. "Gentlemen, the condemned party chooses the mode of execution! Say on, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus breathed hard.

"Undah othah circo," he said wrathfully. "I would wade in and thwash you all wound! But at pweesent I am weawin' my new coat—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Grammarians.

"I see nothin' whatevah to cackle at!" said Arthur Augustus stiffly. "It would wuin my coat to thwash you boundahs. Therefore I wequest you to make it pax. I will thwash you some othah time."

Gordon Gay closed one eye at his comrades.

"Gentlemen, I move that we allow the appeal from the prisoner at the bar," he said. "The new coat is an important consideration. As Shakespeare remarks, who touches Gussy touches trash, but who lays a hand on his new coat—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you dummay—"

"Pass on, and all's well!" said Gordon Gay.

"Look here—" began Wootton major and minor together.

"Shut up! Gussy's new coat settles the matter! Gussy, old infant, walk on your peaceful way, new coat and all! Hold on a minute—let me brush that speck off your shoulder."

"Thank you vevy much, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, in great relief.

"Don't mench, old top!" said Gay genially.

With his handkerchief in his right hand Gordon Gay brushed an imaginary speck very carefully from Gussy's shoulder. With his left hand he borrowed a hook from the fishmonger's stall, and hooked a bloater to the back of the coat.

The latter operation was carried out swiftly and skilfully, and quite unknown to Arthur Augustus.

"There!" said Gay, stepping back. "That's all right, Gussy! Pass on, friend, and all's well!"

"Thank you, Gay! I am vevy glad to see that you are not such a feahful wuffian as you look, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus gracefully. And he walked on, with great satisfaction, with the bloater dangling behind, and the three Grammarians doubled up with merriment.

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CHAPTER 2

Tit for Tat!

SNAP!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had progressed about ten yards from the spot where the merry Grammarians stood.

A mangy-looking dog was lying half asleep on the pavement, and he opened his eyes wide as Gussy came by, and sniffed. He had scented the bloater, and he rose to the occasion.

As Gussy sailed by, the dog made a spring at the dangling bloater, and his teeth snapped on its tail.

Arthur Augustus jumped almost clear of the pavement in his surprise.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated.

Why a strange dog should jump at his back was a mystery to Arthur Augustus.

He spun round, to see the mangy dog racing away. There was half a bloater in the dog's jaws, though Gussy did not see that. He caught only a momentary view of the dog's tail as the animal whisked round a corner and vanished.

"Gweat Scott! What on earth is the mattah with that dog?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

He glanced back at the Grammarians. Gordon Gay and Wootton major and minor were doubled up, as if they were suffering from internal convulsions. Arthur Augustus gave them a haughty glance, and stalked on. And a cat that lay on a window-sill made a sudden spring, and almost landed on his back. Fortunately, the cat just missed him, and Gussy gave another jump as the cat landed beside him.

"Bai Jove!"

A dog came across the street, sniffing, and dogged at his heels. In great wrath, Arthur Augustus kicked out backwards, and there was a howl from the dog. But he did not depart. He hung about Gussy, sniffing and snapping, evidently powerfully attracted by the swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus turned and brandished his cane at him.

"Wun away, you howwid beast!" he exclaimed.

The dog backed away, but did not run. He was hungry, and he liked bloaters. Instead of running away, he dodged round Gussy, to take him in the rear.

Arthur Augustus spun round again.

To his amazement and alarm, three or four more dogs came yapping round him. It seemed as if the swell of St. Jim's acted as a magnet to the stray curs of Rylcombe that afternoon.

"Gweat pip! What evah is the mattah with the beasts?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus breathlessly. "Go away, you howwid animals! Scat! Wun away! Bai Jove, you howwid beasts! Oh deah!"

He drove back one brute with his cane, and another with his boot, and a third jumped at him behind. He felt the muddy paws on the back of his coat, and yelled.

"Yawooh! Oh, you awful beast!"

He spun round on his assailant, and whacked with his cane. And there came a jump from another, and again muddy paws landed on him.

There were five or six stray dogs round him now, and Arthur Augustus was breathless with spinning round to keep them off. Every one of them seemed to want to attack him in the rear.

Gussy gave it up at last, and started at a run. Then, with a howl, the whole troop started in pursuit.

"Oh deah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

Gordon Gay gave a suffocating gurgle.

"Follow on, my infants!" he gasped. "This is too good to miss! Gussy will have all the dogs in Sussex after him before he gets back to St. Jim's!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus left the village at a trot, with shouts of laughter following him from various directions. Seven or eight hungry curs rushed on his track.

After them came the three Grammarians, chortling. Gordon Gay & Co. were enjoying their half-holiday.

"Hallo, Gussy!"

Half a dozen St. Jim's juniors came suddenly in sight as Arthur Augustus rounded a bend of Rylcombe Lane. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther of the Shell, Blake and Herries and Digby of the Fourth, were sauntering towards the village, when Gussy came bearing down on them at a rapid trot, with seven or eight hungry dogs in pursuit. They stared blankly at the breathless youth.

"What on earth—" began Blake.

"Oh owombs!" gasped Arthur Augustus, halting, and panting for breath. "Pway help me dwive these feaful animals off, deah boys!"

"But what the thump—" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"I weally do not know why they are aftah me. Oh deah, the howwid beasts smell of fish!"

"Ha, ha!" yelled Blake. "It's you that smells of fish, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 729.

you ass! Do you usually carry home your bloaters hooked on your back?"

"Wha-a-at?"

There was a leap from a very hungry dog, and he carried off nearly all that remained of the bloater, in triumph. Blake, with a chuckle, jerked off the hook, with a bloater's head still on it.

Arthur Augustus blinked at it in blank amazement.

"Gweat Scott!" he gasped faintly. "Was—was—was that howwid thing on my back, deah boy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That awful wottah, Gay—"

"Oh, the Grammarians have been pulling your silly leg. Have they?" chuckled Blake. "This comes of letting you go off the chain."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Here come the rotters!" said Herries.

Round the bend in the lane came Gordon Gay & Co. at a trot, chuckling. Their chuckles suddenly ceased as they found themselves face to face with the St. Jim's crowd.

"Hook it!" said Gay hastily.

But there was no time for the merry Grammarians to hook it.

With one accord, Tom Merry & Co. rushed on the enemy.

Almost in the twinkling of an eye the three Grammarians were struggling in the grasp of half a dozen pairs of hands.

There were three loud bumps as they came to the ground. And there were three louder yells as they were rolled in the dust.

Arthur Augustus did not take part in the brief but exciting combat. All his attention was given to his coat. He whipped it off, and examined the back, with anguish. Only too distinct were the traces of the greasy bloater and the muddy paws of the dogs.

"Oh deah!" moaned Arthur Augustus.

"Let up!" roared Gordon Gay, as Monty Lowther stood on his legs, and Manners sat on his head. "Ow! Wow! Cheese it!"

"Gerroff my neck!" mumbled Jack Wootton.

"Hold the wottahs, deah boys!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"They have mucked up my coat! I am goin' to give them a feaful thwashin' all round!"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"A thrashing won't meet the case," he said. "This is where the Grammar School get it in the neck! I suppose you came along to ask for a ragging, Gay, didn't you?"

"Yow! Gerroff!"

"Yaas, wathah! Wag the wottahs!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Give them a feaful waggin'! I leave them to you, deah boys! I must wush off and try to get the stains out of this coat."

And Arthur Augustus started for St. Jim's as if he were on the cinder-path. Three Grammarians lay on their backs in the dust, with six St. Jim's juniors sitting or standing on them. It was not the Grammarians lucky afternoon, after all.

"Cheese it, you silly asses!" spluttered Gordon Gay.

"This is where you go through it!" said Tom Merry, shaking his head. "Gussy is fair game to us, but you mustn't cheek any St. Jim's chap! Cheeky Grammarians have to be taught a lesson. Is there any of that bloater left?"

"Here you are!" grinned Dig.

"Put it down Gay's neck!"

"Grooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mustn't play tricks with bloaters, you know!" said Tom Merry. "By the time you extract that remnant, Gay, you will be tired of bloaters."

"Ooooooooh! Grooooooh!"

"He doesn't seem to like his own bloater," remarked Monty Lowther. "There's no satisfying some people!"

"There's none left for his pals," said Tom Merry, regretfully. "They will have to be satisfied with having their noses dipped in the ditch. Will that be all right, Wootton?"

"Yah! You awful rotter—"

"Leggo!"

"Grooooooh!"

"Ooooooooh!"

"Oh crumbs! Gug-gug-gug!"

"Now let them run!" chuckled Tom Merry. "Mind you behave yourselves in future, you naughty boys!"

"Groogh! I'll—I'll—"

"Ow! Oh dear!"

"Give them one second's start, and then begin to kick!" said Tom.

"Hear, hear!"

The hapless Grammarians started. They started at a jump. But there was time for several hefty kicks before they got out of range. Three dusty, dishevelled, and infuriated youths fled at top speed, followed by yells of laughter from the St. Jim's crowd.

Tom Merry & Co. continued their stroll to the village,

feeling that they had improved the shining hour, and had not wasted their time that half-holiday. And three Grammarians dropped into a walk, at a safe distance, and gasped and grumbled and groaned.

"What a life!" mumbled Gordon Gay. "I—I wish I'd never thought of that merry bloater! Oh dear!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The merry Grammarians—no longer feeling so merry—walked on in dismal mood. And then suddenly they stopped, as St. Jim's cap loomed up ahead of them. Baggy Trimble, making a wide detour back to St. Jim's to avoid a meeting with the enemy, had taken precisely the right path to land him in the midst of the foe.

The fat junior blinked at the three, and turned to fly. But in a moment Gordon Gay & Co. were round him.

"What luck!" said Gordon Gay. "We'll take it out of Trimble."

"Good!"

Judging by Baggy Trimble's expression, he did not see that it was good. He blinked in alarm and apprehension at the Grammarians as they closed round him.

CHAPTER 3.

A Message from the Enemy.

"GREAT Scott!"

Tom Merry uttered that exclamation.

And Manners and Lowther echoed "Great Scott!" in tones of equal amazement.

The Terrible Three had come in to a rather late tea. Tom lighted the gas in Study No. 10 in the Shell. Then the surprise of his life dawned upon him.

Three papers were stuck on the looking-glass which adorned the mantelpiece of the study. Over them was scrawled in capital letters:

"GRAMMAR SCHOOL LIMERICKS!"

On each of the papers was written an inscription in verse, in the "fist" of the three heroes of the Grammar School; Gay and Wootton major and minor. The Shell fellows knew the hands well enough. Tom Merry & Co. stared blankly at them. They ran:

—There was a young bounder named

Merry,

Whose face was remarkable—very!

Won't someone give aid,

With the loan of a spade,

This unnerving chivvy to bury?

"(Signed) GORDON GAY."

"I know a young duffer named Manners.

Whose ears catch the breezes like

banners,

To make them lie flat,

He must jam down his hat,

Or hold them down tightly with

spanners.

"(Signed) JACK WOOTTON."

"A funny young joker is Lowther,

Whose humour's a wonderful growth—

er.

He keeps in a bunch,

Ancient numbers of 'Punch,'

And 'Chuckles'—and prigs from them

both—er.

"(Signed) HARRY WOOTTON."

The Terrible Three gazed at those three complimentary limericks, and then looked at one another. There was wrath in their faces—but more amusement than wrath. A couple of hours ago they had been scrapping with the Grammarians in Ricombe Lane, and now—now they were being japed in their own study, in the Shell passage in the School House at St. Jim's, by those three cheery youths. How had Gordon Gay & Co. penetrated unseen and undiscovered into the very heart of the enemy's stronghold?

"How on earth?" said Tom Merry.

"The cheeky rotters!" said Monty Lowther, with a deep breath. "It ain't true. I don't keep back numbers of 'Punch' and 'Chuckles.' Every joke that I put in the Comic Column in the 'Weekly' is my own."

"Or nearly every one!"

"Every one," said Monty Lowther warmly. "There may sometimes be a slight similarity!"

"There may!" murmured Manners.

"Look here—"

"But what do you think of that rot?" exclaimed Manners, pointing to the limerick describing himself. "Making out that my ears—"

"Well, they're not small!" said Lowther.

"Are they large?" roared Manners.

"Ahem—"

"Do they stand out like banners?" demanded Manners excitedly.

"Well, no, 'old chap," said Monty Lowther soothingly.

"Not so bad as that. Say bannerets!"

"You silly owl!"

"Shush!" said Tom Merry. "Don't rag! They've given me as bad as they've given you—and it's not true about me!"

"Is it true about me?" roared Manners.

"About me?" howled Lowther. "I tell you my jokes—"

"Nunno! But—"

"You silly ass!" snorted Manners. "Besides, it's not so jolly wide of the mark about you, Tom!"

"What?"

"Lots of chaps wouldn't be found dead with a face like yours, you know!"

"Why, you cheeky chump—"

"You silly owl—"

"You—"

"Bai Jove! You fellows seem wathah excited," said a voice in the doorway, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eyeglass glimmered into the study. "Pway do not let your angwy passions wise, deah boys. Let dogs delight to growl and fight, you know—"

"Ass!"

"But, childwen, you should nevah bark and bite," said Arthur Augustus. "What is the woy about? Pewwaps I can help? As a fellow of tact and judgment—"

"Those Grammar cads have been here," growled Manners.

"Imposs!"

"Look at their silly cheek, stuck on the looking-glass."

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the "Grammar



With his handkerchief in his right hand, Gordon Gay brushed an imaginary speck from Gussy's shoulder. With his left he hooked the bloater to the back of the coat. "There," said Gay, as he stepped back. "That's all right, Gussy. Pass on, friend, and all's well." "Thank you, Gay!" said Arthur Augustus gracefully.

School limericks," and to the surprise and exasperation of the Terrible Three, he burst into a chortle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" roared Lowther. "Is there anything funny in that silly Grammar School cheek?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "It is wathah funny! The description of your features is wathah overdone, Tom Mewwy, but there is a likeness."

"You frabjous ass—"

"It is too bad to dwag Mannahs' yahs into publicity like this, though. Mannahs can't help his yahs."

"What's the matter with my ears?" shrieked Manners.

"And it's wathah wuff on Lowthah! I don't believe that bit about back numbahs of 'Punch.'"

"Oh, you've got some sense, anyhow," said Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! I don't believe you get any of your jokes frowm 'Punch,' deah boy. I believe you get them all frowm 'Chuckles.'"

"Why, you frumpious owl!" yelled Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"You glass-eyed apology for a tailor's dummy—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Kick the silly owl out!" said Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

The Terrible Three advanced upon Arthur Augustus, and that elegant youth hopped into the passage.

"Weally, deah boys, pway don't be waxy! I weally considah it a cheek of these Gwammah cads to dwaw attention to Mannahs' yahs in this way—yawooh! Keep off, Mannahs, you beast! I cannot help it if your yahs catch the breeze like bannahs, can I? Oh, cwumbus!"

The swell of St. Jim's executed a masterly retreat along the passage. The Terrible Three did not seem in a mood to be reasoned with.

Three enraged Shell fellows pursued him, and Arthur Augustus dodged into Study No. 6 in the Fourth for refuge. Blake and Herries and Digby jumped up as he rushed in.

"What the thump!" ejaculated Blake.

"Oh! Gwoogh!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I just went along to ask those three boundahs to tea, you know, and they wushed on me like three lunatics, you know, just because the Gwammavians have been pullin' their leg, you know. Gwoogh!"

Jack Blake stared.

"The Grammarians?" he repeated.

"Yaas, wathah! They've been stikkin' up limewicks in Tom Mewwy's study."

"They couldn't get in here!" said Herries.

"But they have, deah boy!"

"Rot!" said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Let's go and see!" said Blake.

"I wufuse to go and see those young wuffians. They have disawwanged my necktie, and soiled my collah, and burst a button off my waistcoat!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

Blake and Herries and Dig hurried along to the Shell passage, much interested. They found the Terrible Three burning three papers in the firegrate. Tom Merry & Co. did not seem to want those Grammar School limericks to be exposed to the general view.

"Gussy says—" began Blake.

"Gussy's an ass, and you're another!" said Lowther.

"Then it's true?" grinned Blake.

"It's true that Gussy's a silly ass, and you're another silly ass, if that's what you mean!" said Monty Lowther crossly.

"How could the Grammar cads get in here without being seen?" exclaimed Dig.

"Blest if I know!" said Tom Merry. "They've been here, and stuck up some silly, cheeky limericks on the looking-glass—"

"Let's see the limericks."

"They're burned!" said Tom Merry hastily.

"Something personal—what?" chuckled Herries.

"Oh, only some cheeky rot!"

"Well, I'm blest if I know how Gordon Gay got in here, and got away without being spotted!" said Blake, shaking his head. "He couldn't have done it in Study No. 6!"

"We were out of gates, ass—"

"They wouldn't have tried it on Study No. 6!" said Blake obstinately. "They know better than that."

"Fathead!"

"Same to you, and many of 'em!" said Blake affably. "I hope they'll try again, and come to Study No. 6. We should catch them at it!"

"Yes, rather!" agreed Herries.

"Certain!" said Dig, with a nod.

The Terrible Three made no rejoinder in words, but they advanced on Blake & Co. in warlike array. And Study No. 6 retreated, chuckling. Tea in Tom Merry's study was not so cheery as usual that evening. The Terrible Three were

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annoyed, puzzled, and exasperated. And they were feeling strongly inclined to go upon the war-path and make hay of Gordon Gay & Co., but that had to wait.

CHAPTER 4.

Not Nice.

TOM MERRY & CO. were exasperated that evening, and they were still more exasperated on the following day.

The joke was up against Study No. 10 in the Shell, and the St. Jim's fellows did not let them forget it.

Figgins & Co. came over from the New House specially to ask about the Grammar School limericks, and they observed that the Grammar cads knew better than to try such tricks in the New House. Anybody, according to Figgins, could play any old trick on the School House. But the New House was wide awake. George Figgins was going to make some more sage observations to the same effect, had not a swarm of School House fellows fallen upon Figgins & Co. and smitten them hip and thigh, and ejected them from the School House with vigour and celerity.

But though the School House fellows did not want any New House cheek on the subject, they chipped the Terrible Three unmercifully themselves. Gordon Gay, of the Grammar School, had scored over St. Jim's, and he had chosen the Terrible Three as his special victims. In all the rows and rags between the two schools, it was seldom or never that such a daring raid as this had been carried out. The Grammarians, apparently, had ventured within the walls of St. Jim's, right into the School House, into the Shell passage, and had defied the Terrible Three in their own study. It was amazing. Questions were asked right and left, but nobody seemed to have seen the Grammarians in the St. Jim's precincts. Even Baggy Trimble, who generally saw everything, whether it concerned him or not, had seen nothing of Gordon Gay & Co. upon that occasion.

How the Grammarians had done it was a deep mystery, and a very exasperating one.

They had scored; there was no doubt about that. The Terrible Three were chipped upon the subject till they were tired of the word "limerick." Grundy of the Shell was loud with indignation. He asked bitterly in the Common-room whether the fellows weren't fed-up with the leadership of a fellow who was ragged by the enemy in his own study, and whether they didn't want a leader who could lead—apparently thinking of himself, George Alfred Grundy, as the required and desired leader. He stated that he would jolly well like to see the Grammarians ragging in his—Grundy's—study. He even asked Tom Merry whether he had yet seriously thought of resigning the captaincy. Upon which the Terrible Three laid violent hands upon George Alfred Grundy, and bumped him along the Shell passage. Which was really not an answer to Grundy's question, but seemed to have some solace for the three heroes of the Shell.

Still more exasperating to the chums of the Shell was the fact that the three limericks, quickly as they had been destroyed, seemed quite well known about the School House. So far as the Terrible Three knew, only Arthur Augustus had seen them before they were burnt. Yet the words were known up and down the School House.

After lessons on Thursday, the Terrible Three came on a group of juniors in the quad, who were listening to Baggy Trimble, who was reciting the limericks. Baggy seemed to be enjoying his task.

"He keeps in a bunch ancient numbers of 'Punch'!" chortled Baggy, as the chums of the Shell came along.

Monty Lowther made a wrathful stride towards the fat junior.

"Let him alone!" roared Grundy. "Go for the Grammar cads, if you want to go for somebody!"

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Wilkins.

"Let's hear the rest, Baggy!" said Gunn.

"Where did you pick up those words, Trimble?" demanded Lowther.

"Eh? I—I heard them from a fellow—"

"What fellow? Only D'Arcy saw them, and he hasn't brains enough to remember anything—"

"D'Arcy! That's it! I heard them from D'Arcy!"

"Then I'll jolly well talk to the silly ass!" said Lowther warmly. "What does he want to go around jawing Grammarian cheek for?"

"Whose ears catch the breezes like banners!" came Trimble's voice from behind, as the Terrible Three walked away, and Manners coloured with anger.

The chums of the Shell proceeded to Study No. 6 in the Fourth, to look for Arthur Augustus. They found him there, bending over his new coat, which was spread on the study table. He had borrowed a flat-iron from the house-dame, and heated it at the study fire, in the hope of getting

the greasy stains out of that famous coat. He glanced up amiably as the Terrible Three came in.

"Isn't it weally too wotten, deah boys?" he asked. "A new coat, you know—"

"You silly owl!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Bump him!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus jumped back as the Terrible Three rushed on him. He swung up the hot iron.

"Keep off, you feahful wuffians! I—"

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Manners as his outstretched hand came in contact with the iron.

"Put that iron down, you frabjous jabberwock!" yelled Lowther, backing away hastily.

Arthur Augustus chuckled. Instead of putting the iron down he held it up defensively.

"Pway keep your distance, you boundahs," he said. "What the mewwy thump do you mean by wushin' into my study like this?"

"What do you mean by repeating those silly limericks all over the House?" howled Manners.

"Bai Jove! I haven't!"

"You have, you thumping ass!"

"If you doubt my word, Mannahs—" said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity.

"Rats!"

"I wefuse to weply to that asinine ejaculation, Mannahs! I assuah you, Tom Mewwy, and you, Lowthah—I disdain to assuah Mannahs—that I have not wepeated anythin' of the sort. I could not possibly wemembah so many lines."

"You were the only fellow that saw them," growled Manners. "Trimble says he got them from you."

"Then Twimble is lyin', deah boy. I certainly have not spoken to Twimble on the subject."

Manners gave a grunt. He knew that Gussy's word was as good as gold; but he was angry and puzzled.

"I don't see why Trimble should lie about it," he said. "I'll jolly well have the truth out of him."

The Terrible Three left Study No. 5, and Arthur Augustus smiled and returned to his ironing. But Trimble was not to be found now. The fat Fourth-Former had gone out of gates, and he was not seen again till lock-up. When he came in, he rushed off to the school shop at once; but Mrs. Taggles had closed down for the night, and Trimble came into the School House with a discontented frown on his fat face.

"Beastly tuckshop's closed!" he growled to Wildrake in his study.

"Just my luck when I'm in funds!"

Wildrake looked at him.

"In funds, are you?" he asked.

"Who's the happy lender?"

"I've had a remittance," said Trimble

laughing. "I dropped a line to my pater

at Trimble Hall, you know. He sent me a cheque."

"Bow-wow!"

"I wanted one of those half-crown

cakes!" grunted Trimble. "I wonder

if any fellow's got one he would let me

have?" And Baggy Trimble rolled

away in search of some junior who had

done his shopping early; and so it hap-

pened that he dropped into the study

of the Terrible Three, who had given

up looking for him.

"Hallo! Here's the fat bounder!"

growled Manners.

There was a cake on the table—one of

Dame Taggles' half-crown cakes.

Baggy Trimble eyed it hungrily.

"I say, can I have that cake?" he

enquired.

"Well, of all the neck!" ejaculated

Tom Merry.

"I mean to pay for it," said Trimble.

"You see, the tuckshop's closed, and I

was too late. I'll give you the half-

—"

"When you get a cheque from

Trimble Hall?" asked Monty Lowther

agreatfully.

"Now!" hooted Trimble.

And he tossed a half-crown on the

table. The Terrible Three gazed at it.

It was quite unusual to see Baggy

Trimble in possession of ready money.

"Whom have you been robbing?"

asked Lowther genially.

"Yah! Is it a trade?" asked Trimble, picking up the cake. "I'll let you have a slice. There!"

"No; it isn't a trade!" snapped Manners. "Take your dashed half-crown—better take it back to the owner, in fact. Now, Trimble, I want to know the truth about those limericks."

Trimble started.

"The—the what?"

"D'Arcy says he didn't tell you about them—"

"Oh, D'Arcy's an awful fibber, you know—"

"Cut that out!" said Tom Merry. "Tell us how you knew, Trimble. We want to get hold of the fellow who's spread that silly rot over the House."

"Now I come to think of it, it was Grundy."

"Grundy?"

"Yes. Now, about that cake—"

"We'll take him to Grundy's study, and ask," said Manners.

"I—I mean it—it wasn't Grundy!" stammered Trimble, in alarm.

"Who was it, then?" roared Manners.

"I—I—I—" Trimble spluttered. "The—the fact is, I—I saw the limericks myself, sticking on the glass, you know. I—I happened to come into the study to—to borrow a Latin grammar, and so—"

"Why didn't you tell us so before, then?"

"I forgot. Now about that cake—"

"Kick him out!" said Manners.

"Yaroooooh!"

Baggy Trimble landed in the passage, minus the cake. And the half-crown burned a hole in Trimble's pocket until the following morning, when the tuckshop opened—and Baggy was the very earliest customer.

CHAPTER 5.

Something for Study No. 6.

"THAT Shell crowd," said Blake sagely, "is played out! The Grammarians knew which study to come to!"

"Yaaa, wathah!"

"If they'd tried it on this study—"

"They wouldn't!" said Herries.

"No jolly fear!" agreed Digby.



D'Arcy spun round and faced the dogs, whacking at them with his cane. Every one of them seemed to want to attack him from the rear. He gave it up at last, and started to run. With a howl, the whole troop started in pursuit. "Oh deah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

The chums of Study No. 6 were making those remarks as they came up to their study for prep. Blake was feeling for a match to light the gas, and the remarks were made in the dark, so far.

Jack Blake found a match and struck it, and lighted the study burner. In the Common-room downstairs Blake & Co. had been chipping the Terrible Three on the subject of the Grammar School limericks, and enjoying the process. But now, as the light gleamed out in the study, a change came over Blake & Co.

They started, they stood and stared. On the wall over the fireplace four papers were stuck, and chalked over them were the words:

"GRAMMAR SCHOOL LIMERICKS."

In deep, dead silence Blake & Co. gazed at the papers. They were simply bewildered. Apparently, while they had been chipping the Terrible Three downstairs, the enemy had crept surreptitiously into their quarters. For the "fists" in which the papers were written were quite well known to them—the fists of four Grammarian juniors. The papers ran:

"Do you know a young fellow named Blake,
Whose voice has the sound of a rake?
When he sings in the choir,
The disturbance is dire,
And the other chaps shudder and quake."
"(Signed) GORDON GAY."

Jack Blake eyed that limerick with ferocious eyes. It really wasn't quite correct; Blake's singing in the choir produced no such results. The Grammarian humorist was really not keeping to the actual facts. Herries was glaring at another of the papers:

"I know a young duffer named Herries,
Whose features are worse than Tom Merry's,
Old Towser, his tyke,
Is a shock, if you like,
But he looks quite a bute beside Herries."
"(Signed) FRANK MONK."

"I wish I were near enough to Frank Monk's nose to get in a good one with the right!" murmured Herries. "I'd make him look a bute!"

Digby was chiefly interested in the following:

"There's a frowsy young waster named Dig,
Whose soap bill will never be big,
Once in two or three years,
He washes his ears,
And his neck is as black as a nig."
"(Signed) JACK WOOTTON."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had fixed his eyeglass upon a complimentary reference to his noble and elegant self:

"Adolphus FitzGustavus D'Arcy!
His manners are noble and classy.
But under his hat
Are the brains of a gnat,
Classy D'Arcy's so green, he is grassy."
"(Signed) HARRY WOOTTON."

Study No. 6 looked at the limericks, and looked at one another with sickly looks. Their chipping of the Terrible Three had come home to roost, as it were. They had boasted that their study was a stronghold the Grammarians would never dream of venturing into; and here were the Grammarian limericks stuck up on their own study wall. Blake & Co. felt decidedly sheepish, as well as wrathful.

"The awful cheeky blighters!" murmured Blake. "How the thump did they do it? How did they get in? It beats me hollow!"

"I am going ovah to the Gammah School on Satahday to (h)wash young Wootton," said Arthur Augustus, breathing very hard. "I wufuse to allow the uttah wottah to chawactewise me as havin' the brains of a beastly gnat!"

"Making out that I don't wash my neck!" said Dig in frenzied tones. "And my ears! Just to get a rhyme, you know! That's all! Just to get a rotten rhyme for a rotten limerick! Making out that I don't wash!"

"Yaas, wathah! And it is uttally incowwect to say that Towser, that wotten bulldog, is bettah-lookin' than Hewwies! Hewwies is not a handsome chap, of course—"

"Eh?"

"I was wemarkin' that you are not a handsome chap, Hewwies—"

"Dumny!"

"Weally, deah boy, when a chap is sympathisin' with you—"

"Chump!"

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"I was goin' to say, Hewwies," said Arthur Augustus mildly, "that though you cannot be called a handsome chap, you are vewy much bettah lookin' than Towser—"

"Idiot!"

"Bai Jove!"

"They're right on one point," said Herries—"about that howling chump havin' the brains of a gnat!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Only it's rather insultin' to the gnat!" said Herries.

"You uttah ass—"

"Shut the door," said Blake hastily, as there were footsteps in the passage. "We don't want everybody to see—"

But it was too late! The Terrible Three, on their way to No. 10, passed the open door, and they looked in. They looked in really to call Blake & Co. names, as a result of the chipping they had been subjected to in the Common-room. Blake did not get the door shut in time.

"Hallo!" roared Lowther, catching sight of the limericks.

"So you've got it now! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't howl it all over the House!" snapped Blake.

"Why not?" howled Lowther. "You've been shouting our affair from the giddy housetops. Here, roll up, you fellows! Come and see the Grammar School limericks!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Yank them down!" said Herries hastily.

But there was a rush of juniors to the study doorway. Baggy Trimble's unmusical "Hæ, he, he!" sounded along the passage. A dozen fellows stared in at the papers as Blake & Co. dragged them down, and there was a shout of laughter.

"So they've been here again!" exclaimed Talbot of the Shell.

"Looks like it!" grinned Dick Julian. "I say, Blake, who was telling us that they wouldn't dare to stick their limericks in Study No. 6?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cleah off, you cacklin' duffahs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake grabbed the study door, and jammed it shut in the crowd of grinning faces. Then the obnoxious limericks were torn down and consigned to the fire. But there was a howl of laughter up and down the Fourth Form passage. And Blake & Co. looked at one another dismally. In their turn, they had been done by the Grammarians; and as they had done unto the Terrible Three, so it was to be done unto them. And they looked forward dismally to endless chipping on the subject.

CHAPTER 6.

Grundy on the Trail.

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY of the Shell looked into Tom Merry's study—or, rather, he glared into that celebrated apartment. The Terrible Three were sitting down to prep when Grundy's glare fell upon them—scornfully, accusingly, and contemptuously.

"Prep?" snorted Grundy.

"Time for prep, isn't it?" said Tom Merry, raising his eyebrows.

Another snort from Grundy!

"Call yourself junior captain! My hat! Here come the Grammarians ragging us in our own House, and you say it's time for prep! No!" roared Grundy, in indignant wrath. "It isn't time for prep! Blow prep! It's time to rout out those Grammarian cads!"

"What?"

"They've been sticking their cheeky limericks in Study No. 6 in the Fourth. Not that Study No. 6 counts for much," said Grundy contemptuously. "No more than this study, in fact! But the fact remains—"

"Worse than that," said Monty Lowther, "Grundy remains!"

"Oh, don't give me any funny piffle now!" roared Grundy. "The fact remains, that they've raided St. Jim's, and insulted us, and laughed at us—and you silly chumps are sitting down to prep as if nothing had happened. How do you think they got those papers stuck up in the study? They didn't telegraph or telephone them there, I suppose?" said George Alfred with deep sarcasm. "No! They came here—they're here now—"

The Terrible Three jumped up.

"Here now!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"They must be!" said Grundy. "How could they get away? They must have sneaked into the House while we were at call-over. Now, the doors are closed, and the gates are locked. How could they get away?"

"How could they get in?" said Manners. "I'm dashed if I know how any stranger could get into the House and up to the studies unseen."

"Well, they did it!" said Grundy, with a snort. "As they did it, it doesn't matter much how they did it. The question is, are we going to let them get away safe and sound, to chortle at us in their dashed Grammar School?"

"Rot!" said Tom Merry, sitting down again. "They've gone long ago!"

"I tell you—"

"I don't know their trick of getting in and out of the school," said Tom. "But they've got some dodge. We've got to find it out somehow. But it stands to reason they'd wear off at once."

"With the doors and gates locked—"

"Oh, rot!" said Manners. "They wouldn't hang on. They'll have to get back to the Grammar School, and it's more than a mile. How the thump they break bounds like this beats me. Lock-up there is the same time as here."

"Well, I reckon they haven't got away yet," said Grundy. "I've been inquiring. There was somebody or other on the stairs or in the lower passage all the time—ever since call-over. So they couldn't have come downstairs."

"Might have sneaked down the back stairs—"

"Not without the servants seeing them. I've asked Toby and Mary and Jane."

Tom Merry looked thoughtful. He wondered whether it was possible that the Grammarian raiders were still lingering somewhere within the precincts of the School House of St. Jim's, waiting for a chance to get clear. If so, it was a great opportunity for catching Gordon Gay & Co. red-handed, and making an example of them.

But the captain of the Shell shook his head. Evidently the raiders had some secret and mysterious method of penetrating into the School House—some method that the St. Jim's fellows had not "tumbled" to yet. And as they came so they would go! It was past time for beginning prep at the Grammar School, as well as at St. Jim's, and Tom Merry was pretty certain that Gordon Gay & Co. were now sitting in their studies at their own school.

"Well," said Grundy, with angry sarcasm, "are you going on with prep, or are you going to root round the House for those cheeky cads?"

"I'm going on with my prep," answered Tom, with a smile. "You can put in all the rooting you like, old top!"

"Call yourself leader!" hooted Grundy. "Yah!"

And George Alfred departed from the study, and closed the door after him with a terrific bang. He returned to No. 3 in the Shell, where Wilkins and Gunn were at prep. But in Study No. 3 Grundy's word was law; and the two Shell fellows had no chance to get on with their work.

"Come on, you chaps," snorted Grundy. "Those slackers in No. 10 won't get a move on. It's left to us. We've got to find those Grammar cads. They're lurking about the House somewhere."

"Gone long ago, I should think," said Wilkins.

"Don't you begin thinking, Wilkins! It's not in your line."

"Look here, Grundy—"

"Are you going to back me up in hunting out those Grammar cads, or are you not?" roared Grundy. "I don't want to up-end that table over you. But I shall if you keep me waiting another two seconds!"

Wilkins and Gunn did not keep the great Grundy waiting one second. They knew of old how futile it was to argue with George Alfred. They rose and followed their great leader.

Grundy was a thoroughgoing fellow, and he made a thoroughgoing search. He rooted through the box-rooms and the dormitories. He even penetrated into the disused garrets under the old red roofs of the School House. He looked into Nobody's Study, and he inquired at every occupied study in the Shell and the Fourth. Wilkins and Gunn trailed wearily behind him. They were prepared to deal drastically with any Grammarian raiders, if discovered; but no Grammarian was discovered. If the raiders were lying "doggo" in the School House, they were lying very low indeed. Wilkins and Gunn did not believe for a moment that they were there; and even Grundy began to have doubts after an hour's search.

The search was exciting in some respects. When the searchers looked into studies where fellows were busy with prep, the busy fellows generally hurled things at them. Wilkins caught a cushion with his chin, and Gunn captured an apple with his eye—and certainly did not look upon his prize as the apple of his eye! Grundy had a dreadfully narrow escape of catching a frying-pan with his ear—and he did catch a fives bat with the top of his brainy head.

That was all he caught in the Fourth and Shell studies. But in the garrets he caught a fine collection of cobwebs and several spiders.

Wilkins and Gunn went on strike at last. They were tired, and they were exasperated. They were at a pitch of wrath which made them ready to handle even the formidable Grundy, if he persisted in dragging them up and down the School House any longer. Fortunately for the harmony of Study No. 3, Grundy decided to give it up.

"They're gone!" he said, at last, rubbing with one hand the place where the fives bat had landed, and with the other groping in his collar for a stray spider.

"I could have told you that hours ago!" said Wilkins tartly. "Nice row we shall get into with Linton in the morning! If I'm called on to construe—"

"Oh, rot!"

"There's no time left for prep!" hooted Gunn.

"Blow prep! I shall construe quite as well as usual to-morrow," said Grundy. "I'm not a dunce."

"I dare say you will!" said Wilkins. "Prep doesn't make much difference to you, Grundy. You always construe like a fag in the Third. But we don't want Mr. Linton to think that everybody in Study No. 3 is a silly owl."

And Wilkins stamped away before Grundy could reply to that. Gunn followed him, and the two hapless juniors hurried through as much prep as time remained for. But Grundy wasn't bothering about prep. He regarded it as up to him to do Tom Merry's duty for him, and he was determined to solve the mystery of the Grammarian raid. He went out into the quadrangle with his electric-torch, and searched there. He went down to Taggles' lodge to inquire of the porter. And probably he would have kept on the trail till bed-time, if Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, had not spotted a wandering light in the quad from his window, and hurried out to ascertain what was the matter.

When he discovered Grundy rooting about among the old elms, electric-torch in hand, Mr. Linton did not ask for explanations. He walked Grundy back to the School House by his ear, and gave him a hundred lines for neglecting his preparation.

Which filled the cup of Grundy's wrath to overflowing. Grundy had had to leave his former school—Redclyffe—for "whopping" a prefect, and in the dormitory that night he confided to Wilkins and Gunn that he had come near, jolly near, to suffering the same fate at St. Jim's for "whopping" a Form-master. Mr. Linton never knew what an awfully narrow escape he had had of a "whopping."

CHAPTER 7.

Solving the Mystery!

"IT'S dashed mysterious!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Seven juniors were in council on the following day. The Terrible Three and Study No. 6 had joined forces. Now that both parties had been "done" by the Grammarians, they were equally anxious to solve the mystery and visit condign punishment upon the heads of the Grammar School raiders. That Friday, indeed, Tom Merry & Co. gave more attention to the mysterious raids than to their lessons. The amazing success of the enemy in penetrating into their quarters puzzled and worried them. How on earth those limericks had been put up in the School House studies was an astonishing mystery. It was a mystery that would have beaten Ferrers Locke, the famous "Boys' Herald" detective. The juniors agreed on that. Certainly it beat Tom Merry & Co.

At tea in Study No. 10 they discussed the amazing affair, without coming to any solution. Blake hazarded a suggestion of secret passages. There were several known secret passages in the ancient School House of St. Jim's, and it was believed that there were many more unknown. But it was incredible that the Grammar School fellows could know anything about them. That suggestion was dismissed.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy ventured the theory that an aeroplane was used, and that the Grammarians landed somehow on the "woof." That theory was received with such scorn that Arthur Augustus withdrew it at once.

"It beats me hollow!" said Tom Merry, as he cracked his second egg. "But we've got to get on to it somehow. Gordon Gay is pulling our leg, and we shall be chipped to death if we don't stop him."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Can't imagine how it's done!" he confessed. "Twice they've been in here, and stuck up their insulting tosh. And they've not been spotted."

"They haven't tackled the New House yet," remarked Digby. "Figgins & Co. make out that they daren't try it on. That's rot, of course!"

"I remember Study No. 6 making out something of that sort—up to last evening!" grunted Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Oh, let that rest!" said Blake hastily. "The question before the giddy meeting is, how are we going to nail the cads? Every silly ass in the school is cackling at us for being dished in our own quarters in this way."

"We have weceived vewy many oppwobvious remarks on the subject," said Arthur Augustus, shaking his head.

"The dashed curious thing is, how those limericks get about," said Tom Merry. "Everybody seems to know them by heart. But they weren't left sticking up long enough for fellows to learn them off."

"That's so," said Blake, with a nod. "I heard Trimble

spouting them off the reel this afternoon to a lot of fellows."

"Trimble again?" said Manners, looking up. "It was Trimble who knew all about the limericks in our study. He said D'Arcy had told him, but Gussy said he didn't."

"Wathah not!"

"Trimble's a nose Parker!" said Tom. "He was bound to nose out everything about it. Hallo! Trot in, Wildrake!"

The Canadian junior looked in at the doorway.

"Come in, old top!" said Lowther. "There's an egg and a sardine left. And lots of water to go in the pot."

Wildrake laughed, and came in.

"I guess I haven't come to tea!" he remarked. "You fellows holding a council of war about the Grammarian raids—what?"

"That's it."

"Like to hear a suggestion?"

"You bet!" said Tom Merry, at once. "If you can let in any light on the mystery we'll be jolly glad. It beats us."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We want to catch the rotters in the act, you know," said Blake. "By Jove, we'd make them sit up and take notice!"

Seven pairs of eyes were turned on the Canadian. Wildrake's keenness was well known, and all the fellows in Study No. 10 hoped that the junior from the Boot Leg Ranch had scented out a clue to the mystery.

"I guess I've just been hearing Baggy Trimble spouting," said Wildrake. "Baggy seems to be enjoying this no end. He doesn't show any great memory in class, but he seems to remember these pesky limericks remarkably well. And it's odd, because you fellows didn't leave them on view. I guess you rather wanted to suppress them."

"Well——" said Blake.

"It struck me as odd that Trimble knew so jolly much," said Wildrake. "Another thing that struck me was that he's not so hungry for little loans the last day or two. He seems to have some money."

"That's so," said Lowther. "He had some tin too late for the tuckshop yesterday, and wanted to bag our cake."

"Correct! Where did he get it?"

"Eh? Bless if I know! Borrowed it, I suppose."

"He says he had a cheque from Trimble Hall!" chuckled Wildrake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's in the tuckshop now," continued the Canadian junior. "He spent half-a-crown this morning, and since lessons he's been out of gates, and he's got another half-crown to spend."

"I hope Trimble isn't taking to picking pockets in Rylecombe," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Putting two and two together, something seems to push itself into my brain-box," said Wildrake. "These pesky limericks are stuck up in our studies, nobody knows how. No Grammarians are ever seen about the place. Trimble remembers the words, though the fellows generally only get a glimpse of them. And he goes out of gates and comes back with half-crowns. Doesn't something strike you?"

Tom Merry jumped.

"You—you don't mean——"

"I guess I do!"

"Trimble!" yelled Blake.

"Sure!"

"But—but—but——" stammered Manners. "It can't be a Trimble jape! The papers were written by the Grammarians. We know their fists. Trimble couldn't write them in his handwriting."

"Nope! But he could fetch them in and stick them up, and take half-a-crown a time for the job."

"My hat!"

Tom Merry & Co. blinked at one another. The Canadian junior's suggestion seemed to let in a flood of light.

It had never even occurred to their unsuspicious minds that there was a traitor in the camp.

But now that the Canadian junior had given the indication, everything pointed to that conclusion.

For it was practically impossible for Grammarian raiders to penetrate into the studies unseen and unheard. That mystery had utterly puzzled and baffled the St. Jim's fellows. They had even surmised secret passages to account for it.

But it was, of course, perfectly easy for Baggy Trimble to slip into a study, choosing his time when the owners were engaged elsewhere, and stick up the papers with which Gordon Gay had supplied him.

Certainly, it was rather "thick" for even Trimble to help the enemy in this way, and play up against his own school. But the Eastern proverb says that the smell of all money is sweet; and in that respect Baggy Trimble was in full agreement with the Orientals. Half-a-crown in the hand was worth more to Baggy than any other consideration. Conviction rushed upon the minds of the juniors in Study No. 10.

"The awful rotter!" said Blake, with a deep breath. "A

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 729.

dashed traitor—helping the enemy! That fat bounder would sell his own grandmother for half-a-crown!"

"We'll boil him in oil!" said Herries.

"Bai Jove! Let us make sure that he is guilty first, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus mildly. "I weally find it vewy difficult to believe that any St. Jim's chap would go ovah to the enemy like this."

"Baggy Trimble would go over to the Huns if they offered him five bob," growled Blake.

"Pewwaps. But weally——"

"We'll get at the facts," said Tom Merry. "We'll have Baggy in here, and make him own up. Cut along and fetch him, Blake."

"I'll do that!" said Blake.

Jack Blake quitted the study, and the juniors waited eagerly for his return with Master Trimble. Five minutes later there was a sound in the passage of a complaining voice.

"Leggo my ear, you beast! I'm coming, ain't I? I wasn't going to dodge—— Yow-ow-ow! Leggo!"

Baggy Trimble appeared in the doorway, with Blake's finger and thumb on his fat ear. Blake stepped behind him, and raised his boot, and Trimble came into the study rolling. Blake followed him in, and shut the door, and Trimble sat up on the carpet and roared.

CHAPTER 8.

The Traitor!

"TWIMBLE——"

"Yaroooh!"

"Trimble, you rotter——"

"Wow!"

"Get up and stand your trial, you fat brute!" growled Blake.

"Ow! Wow! Groogh!"

Blake grasped Trimble by his fat ears, and jerked him up. The fat junior cast a longing glance at the door. But Jack Blake leaned his back on the study door. There was no escape for Baggy; and Baggy blinked apprehensively round the study.

"How much did Gordon Gay give you?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Half-a-crown," answered Trimble, without reflection; and then he added hurriedly: "Eh! What? What do you mean?"

"Bai Jove!"

"He's confessed!" said Manners, with a grim look at the fat Fourth-Former.

"I haven't!" roared Trimble. "I've nothing to confess! What are you driving at? Look here, I'm not stopping in this study. I'll yell for a prefect!"

"Kick him if he yells, Blake!"

"You bet!" said Blake grimly.

"I say, Wildrake, old chap, you stand by a fellow in your own study," gasped Trimble.

"I guess I want to know the truth, you fat clam," answered Wildrake. "If you're innocent you needn't be alarmed."

Trimble gasped for breath.

"I don't even know what I'm accused of yet," he said, with a great deal of dignity. "Do you call this fair play? I'm surprised at you. The best thing I can do is to retire from this study."

"Try it on!" said Blake.

"Look here, you know——"

"You're accused of joining the enemy, and taking bribes from the Grammarians to help them against your own school!" said Tom Merry sternly.

"It's a libel!"

"Did you get those limericks from Gordon Gay, and stick them up in our studies?"

"Certainly not!"

"Have you had half-crowns from him?"

"Nothing of the kind!"

"Where have you been getting money from, then?"

"I've had several cheques lately from my pater at Trimble Hall."

"You silly owl!" roared Herries. "Cut that out!"

"Look here, Herries, I'm accustomed to jealousy from poorer fellows than myself, especially fellows whom I don't ask for the holidays to my father's magnificent establishment," said Trimble scornfully. "I know you fellows feel annoyed because I won't introduce you to my pals."

"Can it!" said Lowther.

"But I think you might stop short of this!" said Trimble, with dignity. "I can't help being rich and well connected. I'm not to blame because I'm sought after by the nobility. I think——"

"Where did you get those half-crowns from?" roared Tom Merry.

"Small change out of a cheque from my pater."

"You had them immediately after going out of gates," said Wildrake.

Trimble started for a moment. Then he nodded cheerfully.

"Yes, that's right. I don't like worrying Mr. Lathom to ask shaguns for me. I've been taking them lately to the local grocer."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Tom.

"And how does it happen that you know all the words of those silly limericks when nobody else does?" demanded Blake.

"My wonderful memory!" said Trimble calmly. "I'm anxious for it, you know. I've often thought of starting a memory system when I am older. I should charge a guinea for six little grey books, you know—"

"For goodness' sake shut up!" said Blake. "You've got the worst memory in the Fourth, for lessons anyhow."

"He's guilty, right enough," said Monty Lowther. "I don't see that a trial is necessary. Bump him!"

"But Jove! That is weally not quite wight, Lowther. Every vascal has a wight to be pproved guilty."

"If we can't prove it, we can take it for granted," said Lowther. "That will save time."

"What about going through his rags?" suggested Wildrake. "He's been out of gates since lessons, and he came in and scuttled straight to the tuckshop with money to spend. Looks to me as if he'd been out for a fresh supply of giddy limericks."

"Why, of course!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Baggy Trimble seemed frozen for the moment.

"Turn out your pockets, Trimble!" rapped the captain of the Shell.

"I—I won't!" gasped Trimble.

"Why not?"

"It—it's beneath my dignity!"

"Never mind your dignity just at present. If your dignity can survive listening at keyholes and sneaking grub out of fellows' cupboards, it must be pretty tough, and can stand a little more. Turn out your pockets!"

Trimble made a wild rush for the door. Jack Blake was on the watch, and he lifted his boot invitingly. Trimble's rush stopped suddenly.

"Collar him!" said Tom.

"Yarrah! Help!"

Three pairs of hands were laid on Baggy Trimble. His guilt was quite clear to the minds of the juniors, and they had no doubt that there was proof to be found on him. And that proof they were determined to find. The fat junior came down on the carpet with a bump, and his pockets were turned inside out.

"Hallo! What's this?" exclaimed Blake.

"This" was a paper that fell from one of Baggy Trimble's pockets. Jack Blake snatched it up, and held it up to view.

There was writing on it in the well-known hand of Gordon Gay of the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School. And the writing ran:

"There's a horrid young bounder named Grundy,

Who washes his neck on a Monday.

The neck of the slacker

Grows blacker and blacker,

And looks like a tar-brush by Sunday.

"(Signed) GORDON GAY."

There was a chuckle in Study No. 10. That complimentary effusion had evidently been intended to be posted up in George Alfred Grundy's study. Its effect on Grundy, if he had found it there, was almost unimaginable.

"So that's that!" grinned Dig.

"Proof positive!" said Herries.

"But Jove! We weally cannot doubt any longah, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus, with a glance of ineffable scorn at the alarmed Trimble. "This second wottah is a beastly twaiter."

"Yes, rather!"

"Scalp him!"

"I—I say!" gasped Trimble. "I—I—I can explain! Give a chap time to explain!"

"Back up, then!" said Tom Merry. "Stand back, you fellows, and listen to the last speech of the condemned before execution."

"I—I—I didn't know that paper was in my pocket—"

"What!" roared the juniors.

"I—I mean, I—I found it!"

"Eh?"

"That's it!" stuttered Trimble. "I—I was walking along Rylcombe High Street, you know, when I—I saw it lying at my feet, and—and picked it up, you know."

"My only hat!"

"I—I hope you fellows believe my word—word of honour, you know," said Trimble. "There's some chaps who scorn to tell a lie. George Washington was one, you know, and I—I'm another."

"Ain't he enough to make Ananias turn green with envy?" said Monty Lowther admiringly. "The merry old Kaiser himself is an innocent greenhorn compared with him, when it comes to real solid lying."

"I—I say—"

"Any more lies to tell before we scalp you, Trimble?" asked Tom Merry politely.

"If you don't believe me—"

"Believe you! Oh crumbs!"

"I—I made a mistake!" stammered Trimble, trying a new tack. "The—the fact is—the—the fact, you know—the fact is, I—I found that paper stuck up in Grundy's study. Thinking that it would hurt poor old Grundy's feelings, I—I took it down!"

"Weally, Twimble—"

"I think that will do," said Tom Merry. "Now we'll give him two dozen with a fives bat—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Anoint him with ink and gum—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And tie him to the form at the end of the passage, for fellows to throw things at till bedtime."

"Good!" said Blake heartily.

"Turn him over the table to begin with."

"Hold on!" yelled Trimble. "Give a chap a chance! I—I'm going to explain! The—the fact is—"

"More facts?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Yes. I'm going to tell you the whole truth!" gasped Trimble.

"I—I was doing this out of—of sheer patriotism. I—I—My idea—my real idea was to lead those Grammar cads on, you know, and—and dish them. I—"

"Turn him over the table!"

"It wasn't my fault!" yelled Trimble. "They caught me last Wednesday, after you chaps had been ragging them. They were going to give me the frog's march, and then that beast Gay thought of this stunt, you know. He offered me



As the searchers looked into the study, Wilkins caught a cushion with his chin, and Gunn captured an apple with his eye. Grundy had a very narrow escape of catching a frying-pan with his ear—he did catch a fives bat with the top of his brainy head.

half-a-crown a time to—to stick this silly rot up in the studies, to—to take a rise out of you, you know. I—I accepted—I mean, I pretended to accept—"

"Only pretended?" grinned Blake.

"Yes, that's it!" gasped Trimble. "Just pretended, you know. I really couldn't do such a thing really, being a fellow of—of such high principles and—sense of honour, you know. So I—I just led them on to—to think that I was going to do it—"

"But you did do it!" roared Herries.

"Well, I—I—I—"

"Turn him over the table. I've got the bat!"

"Hold on!" shrieked Trimble desperately. "Look here, the cads are meeting me again to-morrow afternoon, to give me a lot of their beastly rot to stick up in the New House. I—I'll take you there if you like, and—and you can collar them."

"Bai Jove!"

"Well, you shocking worm!" said Tom Merry. "You've sold us to the enemy, and now you want to sell the enemy to us! You ought to be squashed, you horrid worm! Turn him over the table!"

Trimble was turned over the table in the grasp of many vengeful hands. Then the fives bat came into operation. Trimble's yells rang along the Shell passage.

The door of Study No. 10 was hurled open, and George Alfred Grundy strode in.

"Now, then, chuck that!" exclaimed Grundy. "I don't allow this—"

"Get out, ass!"

"Look at that, fathead!" said Blake, shoving the limerick under Grundy's astonished nose. George Alfred blinked at it.

"Why—what—have those rotters been here again—in the daylight?" he ejaculated.

"Fathead! It was Trimble! They tipped him to pull our leg, and we found this on him! Now shut up!"

It took Grundy's mighty brain a full minute to realise the truth. Then Grundy made a jump and grasped the fives bat from Tom Merry's hand.

"Leave this to me," he said. "I've got more muscle."

Yarooop! Help! Oh crumbs!"

Grundy of the Shell had plenty of muscle. There was no doubt about that. If Trimble had not known it before, he discovered it now. The yells that rang out from Baggy Trimble would probably have alarmed the whole School House, had not Monty Lowther thoughtfully jammed a cushion over his face. After that Baggy's yells were muffled.

Grundy seemed to think that he was beating a carpet, and that it was a very dusty carpet. The vim he put into the work was amazing.

Tom Merry & Co. fairly dragged him off at last. Trimble rolled off the table, roaring.

"He hasn't had enough!" roared Grundy. "Let me give him a few dozen more—"

"Hold on!"

"Lemme gerrat him!"

Baggy Trimble tore open the door and fled. Grundy did not think that Baggy had had enough. But Trimble evidently did.

CHAPTER 9.

Paying the Piper.

TOM MERRY & CO. wore bright and smiling looks the following afternoon.

Saturday afternoon was a half-holiday; and that half-holiday was going to be a very enjoyable one, from the point of view of the St. Jim's juniors.

Early in the afternoon the Terrible Three strolled out of gates, and with them walked Baggy Trimble. As a rule, Baggy's company was not considered fascinating or desirable. But on this occasion the chums of the Shell would not have parted with him for any consideration whatever. Baggy was acting as guide this afternoon—not very willingly, perhaps; but his wishes in the matter were not consulted. His fat face was far from happy as he walked with the Terrible Three. But there was enough satisfaction in three faces for four.

Soon afterwards Study No. 6 sauntered out together, in a cheery little crowd. They seemed to be in the same state of happy anticipation as the Terrible Three.

And then, a little later, Wildrake and Roylance of the Fourth, left the school; and, following them went Grundy and Wilkins and Gunn. And in their wake strolled Levison, Clive, and Carlew, of Study No. 8.

It was quite a little army of St. Jim's fellows that took footpaths through Kylecombe Wood, and gathered at last in a little glade by an ancient hollow oak. Sixteen fellows were there—and fifteen of them were very keen and eager.

Tom Merry smiled at his numerous forces gathered under the old oak. He glanced at his watch.

"Half-past two!" he said. "And you were meeting Gay here at three, Trimble?"

"Yes," mumbled Baggy.

"Well, you're going to meet him just the same," said Tom. "I hope you'll enjoy the meeting, I'm sure."

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"In the circus, he's not likely to shell out another half-crown!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, I'd rather cut off," murmured Trimble. "I—I've got a rather important engagement this afternoon."

"I'm afraid that will have to wait!" said Tom Merry, with polite regret. "We can't spare you yet, Trimble."

"The—the Head's asked me to tea, you know."

"It's rough on the Head, but you won't be able to turn up," said the captain of the Shell.

"Look here, you know—" said Trimble feebly.

"You're going to meet Gay, as arranged," said Tom. "You won't give a sign that we're around. You'll keep the dear boy talking while we surround him, and then you can go and eat coke. See?"

"Suppose—suppose he pitches into me?" mumbled Trimble.

"What will that matter?"

"Why, you silly ass—"

"If it's any satisfaction to Gay, he can pitch into you," said Tom. "But one thing's jolly certain. If you don't carry out your instructions, we shall pitch into you—hard!"

"Better give him a hiding to begin with," said Grundy.

"Yah! Keep off, you beast!"

"Stand there, Trimble! You know what you've got to do. Now, you fellows, take cover!" said the captain of the Shell.

"Yaas, wathah! It is goin' to be a mewwy surprise for the Gwammawians!" chortled Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to make the howlid boundahs awf'ly sowwy for their fearful outrage—"

"Well, sticking up the limericks in our study wasn't exactly a fearful outrage, old bird," said Blake.

"I was thinkin' of the fishy stains on my new coat, Blake."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" said Tom Merry.

The St. Jim's juniors, in a merry humour, took cover among the trees and underwoods round the glade.

They waited patiently for the heroes of the Grammar School to walk into the trap.

Gordon Gay & Co. had succeeded so far. They had really thought out a very surprising stunt, and it had been a success—so far. They had found a traitor in the St. Jim's camp, and made use of him. But Gordon Gay was to learn that in dealing with traitors a fellow was playing with edge-tools. Possibly Trimble had some scruples about turning on the Grammarians. But his scruples, if any, were ruthlessly disregarded.

Three o'clock sounded across the wood from somewhere in

(Continued on page 17.)

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The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited By TOM MERRY.

The Third-Formers' Mad Tea-Party.

"CURLY" AND THE STRAWBERRY JAM.

By TOM MERRY.

OF course, I know jolly well Wally D'Arcy will kick up a fuss because I have altered his article. That's one of the rotten things about being an editor—you get it hot all ways. But there was nothing whatever doing with the sulky scrawling young Wally sent me. He said it was a sparkling description of a tea-party he and Frank Levison and Curly Gibson and a few more of the shining lights of the Third had the other day.

It was not really anything of the kind. I never saw such a measly muddle of an article in my life. Perhaps you will think this is exaggerating, but it isn't. Baggy himself could not have done much worse. Wally can't write for Brazil nuts. The worst of it is he thinks he can. So do others, Trimble included. D'Arcy minor had got the names all right. There was Reuben, also Pigott, likewise Reggie Manners, ditto Jamieson, and, of course, Joe Frayne.

If I had let the article go as Wally sent it, you would have had the shock of your

lives. Wally said there was plenty of grub. He had seen to that. All the "old fruit" were there, that is how he put it.

Now I like to give news of St. Jim's, but when Wally gets going, writing about a quiet little tea-party which ends up in a rag, he gets off the hooks.

"You can bet your socks, old bean"—that's how he addresses me, and I can tell him most editors would not stand it, or sit it—"It was a slap-up affair, with a cake bagged from that prize ass, my majah, and a few pots of jam I managed to collect from a few studies. I'd have asked old Gussy, because he's a perfect rag in himself, only this time we were jolly particular whom we had. Besides, Gussy would have taken such a time doing his tie that the cakes would have gone mouldy while we were waiting for him. What my majah really needs to brighten up his dull wits a bit is to have a term or two with us smart chaps of the Third."

I am quoting a bit of young Wally's drivel, though it never comes to the point. Wally is too frivolous to make a name as an author. He explains how the thumping asses turned up all right, and got going. Levison minor had brought along one of those soft, squishy cakes you have to eat with a spoon, or else it is bound to get the better of you. There were plenty more cakes, and some toasted muffins. But I suppose I had better let Wally explain a bit more.)

"The party was all right, only when Frank said something about my majah, I chucked a cheese-cake at him, just to keep order, y'know. Then Reggie chortled,

because he thought I was touchy, which I'm not; only I wasn't sitting there spooning up chocolate-cake, to listen to remarks about my family. Gussy's all right, but he would be simply nowhere if he didn't have me to look after him, poor old bean.

"You cheeky fag!" I said, sending a second missile—a jam-tart this time—in Frank's face. 'Fag yourself!' he said. 'If old Gussy were here he'd administrah a feahful thwashin.'

"Young Levison said he could easy mop up my majah. I asked him if he hadn't any manners, and he said if I got cheeky he'd pull my nose. I told him I wouldn't touch his with a pair of tongs. It would have been quite a cheeky little tea-party, only Reggie whispered to Frank that it would be a topping wheeze if he did pull my nose. They all chuckled at that, but Curly Gibson told them to shut up.

"Curly was pouring out more tea, and he had a sudden idea that it might help things if he poured it down Frank's neck instead of in his cup. Young Levison gave a howl. He did not seem to appreciate the attention, though it was a cold day, and the tea was nice and warm; nothing to complain about on that score. It was at that moment I saw Frank meant what he said about my nose, so I dashed round the table with a pot of the best strawberry jam and tipped it on his silly head before he could get out of his chair. He did not like it a bit, though he had all the jam. Then the tablecloth went. Some silly chump gave it a jerk."



THE THIRD FORM TEA PARTY.

At this point Wally gets mixed. His writing is never very clear, but the copy he had the audacity to send to the office of my "Weekly" was the worst I ever saw. It looked as though a Red Indian had written it in a passion, using a stick instead of a pen, and dipped the said stick in marmalade. I must insist on having legible copy. Wally appears to be labouring under the idea that he gave a clear account of the merriment, but it was not merriment at all—merely a disgraceful row.

The bright lights of the Third had not a clean collar between them at the end. Curly Gibson's shoes were filled with blackberry jam. Curly was held in a chair while this operation was performed.

Wally admits himself that a particularly sticky cheese-cake was rammed on the back of his head while he was chastising Levison minor. My artist has done his best to give some idea of the affair, but, to my mind, one thing alone stands out vividly.

The Third Form never had an inkling of good manners. Joe Frayne is as bad as the rest. I take this opportunity of expressing my mind about the amusements Wally is pleased to call ripping. His "majah" would not approve.

In conclusion, I will offer the Third a few hints on the way to behave at tea-parties. When there is strawberry jam, eat it; do not use it as a brilliantine. With regard to blackberry jelly, never wear this inside your boots. Drink the tea instead of pouring it down your neck.

But the Third won't learn. They are almost hopeless.—T. M.

Cardew's Letter to D'Arcy.

VEWY WUFF ON GUSSY.

By R. R. CARDEW.

The following correspondence has reached the office of the "Weekly" and was apparently intended for publication. I am, therefore, publishing it, not that I think a lot of Cardew's personalities. He might have let Gussy's "toppah" alone.

Here is Letter No. 1. It is signed by Cardew, and addressed to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Esq.:

"Dear old Bean,—You may be surprised at getting a letter from me, but fact is I was thinking about you through the holidays. I want to offer you a few hints. You won't take them, but I feel it a duty to myself, as your kinsman, and for the honour of the family and all that sort of bixney, to let you know what I think of your carryings on.

"To start with, you spend far too much on clothes. It's all very well to keep the haters from starving, but haters are generally mad, and those who are not are rich.

"Now, why buy all those toppers? You generally get them trodden on the first day. The shiner the hat the worse it gets used. If all the silk-hats you have bought since you came to St. Jim's were piled one on top of another they would reach as high as the old tower at the school.

"I know you say you take care of your duds. You run away from the street end because you felt it was unfair to your tailor to fight him in your new suit, but just look at the mess up after the Grammarians caught you that afternoon in the late autumn. You were in your best—of course, you would be!—and after the little ceremony you had to go through you looked a tramp.

"Now, I am not saying all this because I dislike you; fact is, I am a bit partial to you. But that's just what makes me wish you would play up a bit more to the noblesse-oblige idea—what!

"Your mind is as soft as an underdone pudding. You give money to that miserable toad, Baggy Trimble. The fat chump says it is only lent, but Baggy never yet repaid a loan, and never will. You know that.

"Why not try to pull up your socks during the coming year, and alter your programme a bit? Why go about asking for it? Why hang back to pay Baggy's entrance money for the theatre? What's the good of bungling everything, of always misunderstanding what is said to you, making a general muddle of

every public meeting we have in the Form? You went out of your way to annoy Figgins when the brave chap was putting up a fight against old Ratty in the barring-out. No wonder you got drenched by Figgins' squirt. What else could you expect? I just ask you that. Here were a lot of plucky chaps holding the fort, and getting short of food—Fatty Wynn was simply fading away from starvation—and they beg you to run the blockade with a load of tuck. You refuse, and you do it in a manner that would have irritated an ox.

"There are plenty of other things to which I could draw your attention. It is all for your good, dear boy. You were not the fellow to act as guide to Doris Levison on the lake. You mean well, but can you be relied on in an emergency? I doubt it.

"Then, look at the treatment you get from your minor. Young Wally treats you as if he thought you every kind of an ass. I expect that is the impression he shares with me. The only redeeming point is that you are a gentleman, and would rather eat your hat and your boots than act badly to anybody.

"But, still, that is not everything. I only came to St. Jim's a few years back. You were there then—same old jawing, same readiness to be done brown at the wax-works, the same willingness to believe everything you are told.

"How do you do get your leg pulled? You tried to be a ventriloquist. Pretty sort of wash-out that experiment ended in! Our ancestors went to the Crusades, and knocked about among the giddy old Saracens; but how would you act if we had a Crusade now? You would just jaw, and be worried because your new silk-hat was cut in two.

"Sometimes I think you ought not to be allowed out without your nurse. 'Tisn't safe. One never knows what might come along. Do try to reform during 1922!

"Yours,

"R. R. CARDEW."

My Visit to London.

THE BRAINY BOY WRITES ON THE BIG CITY.

By HERBERT SKIMPOLE.

TOM MERRY is always bothering me to write something fresh and lively for his paper. I suppose it is because, really, I am about the only fellow who can write at St. Jim's. In fact, almost any day I am expecting to get a request from Professor Hector Gordon to do his exciting Dr. Brutell yarn for him.

(When I put you on this job I did not want any beastly swank.—Tom Merry.)

As I was going to say, I am always agreeable. For one thing, I can think. Most chaps write without thinking. This saves trouble, but it ends in a wash-out. Now, take my trip to London last week. Perhaps some of you do not understand London. You would be lost inside five minutes, and the police could not help you. A policeman does not know everything. He may know the time, but he often stops there—I mean, of course, when it is a question of finding his way about the capital.

The plain fact is, nobody does really know London, barring me. I made it a duty to discover what went on, how the poor people lived, what Tubes they went to work by, the bunshops they patronised, and all the other interesting things.

I am glad Fatty Wynn did not accompany me. I should never have got him down Oxford Street. Oxford Street is famed for its tea and bunshops, and there are one or two small drapers. You can buy tortoiseshell in Regent Street. That thoroughfare is famed for nothing else special.

They make a lot of fuss about the Strand. True, there is a picture-postcard establishment in that street; but the whole thing is much overdone. Besides, there is no end of fuss and bustle in the Strand. I was nearly bitten by a taxi-cab, and the driver was rude. It takes you about twenty minutes to cross the road there.

London has many buildings, and some of its streets are picturesque—rather like Switzerland, I should say. I climbed to the top of Primrose Hill. It reminds one of Mount Everest, only it is more so. Hampstead has some charm, but the disused sandwich-papers spoil the country effect.

I was delighted with Hoxton, and stood for some time contemplating the exterior of the Britannia Theatre, until a constable told me to get a move on. Londoners are sometimes rude. The boys who sell news papers say things as they pass. One called me "Goggles," which was unwarranted and inclined to be personal.

But to pass on. Lord's Cricket Ground is a fine place, though there was little doing. I admired the silvery waters of the Regent's Canal as I passed over the bridge on the Metropolitan.

I have only space in this article to refer to some of the old-world charm of the capital. Take the New Cut. It is smelly, but it makes one think of Agincourt and the brave days of old. The ancient history of this mighty country is tenderly remembered here. Though they call the New Cut new, it is really very, very old. So are some of the articles offered for sale. I passed a fish-shop, and—(This is getting libellous, so I have "New Cut" it out.—T. M.)

Hammersmith thrilled the marrow of my bones. It is where the organ-grinders live. They are a happy, contented race, with very powerful right arms. This comes from turning the handles of their organs. London would not know what to do without its organs. These instruments supply the most high-class music for a small fee.

A man who used to come and see my family said a rare lot about the cafes of Paris, and how folks sit about on the pavements and drink black coffee, and other things out of long glasses. But Paris is nowhere when it comes to the cafes of London. I saw one of these much-favoured establishments on Turnham Green. You stood in front of a let-down counter, and a hot man in shirt-sleeves gave you a topping cup of tea for a penny.

Charing Cross was named after a lady who was much given to charing. She made a fortune, and went to live at the Hotel Cecil. I got this from a man who knows.

There are some fine old houses in London, and they have fine gardens, where, I understand, there is excellent rabbit-shooting. I visited Edmonton, the place where John Gilpin lived, and was much struck by the wealth and learning of the inhabitants. In this part they practically live on bananas, and flick the outer coverings about the roadways, which imparts a pleasing touch to the landscape.

A poet, who shall be nameless, has spoken of Peckham in these terms: "What can he know of Peckham who only Peckham knows?" I am glad to say I know Peckham pretty thoroughly. I went through the Rye.

To know your London you want to see the outskirts. Here live the season-ticket holders. Some of these people have no time to be anything else but season-ticket holders. This is due to the slowness of the trains. When they reach the city it is time to travel back. But, all the same, they look a sleek, well-favoured race.

Piccadilly is a long and shady avenue, with many trees. Hyde Park is quite good; but I did not think much of the Marble Arch, nor of the Achilles Statue. What about the heel? Talking about heels, I went to Ealing, famed in the old days for its bootmakers—at least, so I was informed.

The porters of Covent Garden have been much talked about, but though famed for muscle, they have no conversation worth mentioning, if you except the short, quick things they say when a crate drops on their toes. Close by here is the National Sporting Club, where Cardew went one night with his grandfather. I had no time to look in.

Maida Vale is a large district, called after the famous Maid of Wales mentioned in history, and reported to have been far more beautiful than the Maid of Athens. In London they always mix up their derivations in this style, which makes investigation hard for learned chaps like me.

Highgate is ripping! I saw a cat asleep on a doorstep, and a man informed me it was the direct descendant of Whittington's cat, referred to in history.

Putney is not so bad. It is noted for pigs and the annual Boatrace. Paddington Green is a delightful little village hard by Tyburn, where they used to behead highwaymen. This is not done now.

I was fortunate enough to see the house where Dr. Johnson lived. Johnson had some good points, but his die is inclined to be dull and heavy. The doctor spent most of his time walking down Fleet Street to get his fat reduced. More another time.

(Not so sure.—Tom Merry.)



The Queer Case of Dr. Brutell

Written by Professor Hector Gordon, Science Master of St. Jim's.

The Police Baffled!

"THANK Heaven you've come!" murmured Madeleine. The poor girl was thoroughly exhausted by this time, and there is no doubt that in a few minutes she would have collapsed through sheer weakness.

In a very short time Dr. Brutell had made a hole in the wall large enough for the girl to get through; then the two friends went together to the doctor's house, which was in a district on the other side of the city.

They were indeed fortunate to have made their escape, for very soon after their departure Hammer and Pluchers went down to the basement to see that their prisoner was still secure.

They were amazed to discover that she had escaped by some extraordinary means, and a further investigation revealed the large hole in the side of the wall.

The police were already on the tracks of the Black Circle gang, and when the leader found that Madeleine had disappeared, they anticipated such a move as this on the part of the authorities. In double quick time they cleared out of their rendezvous, and made themselves scarce, so that when the officers arrived a short time later, all they found was an empty house.

Before clearing out, however, the cunning members of the Black Circle gang had taken great pains to disguise the fact that they had ever been in occupation of the house. And they skillfully covered up all traces of their recent occupation of the premises.

Even the large hole which Dr. Brutell had made in the wall was mended. These precautions completely baffled the police. It looked as though they had been sent on a false errand, and they began to doubt whether their informant was sane or not.

Not the slightest clue could the police find, although they searched the place thoroughly from top to bottom. But the Black Circle gang were used to this sort of thing, and they were past-masters in the art of covering up their tracks.

"The whole story of the gang being in occupation here sounds impossible!" declared the chief of the police. "Nobody has been here for weeks. Why, the whole place is thick with dust!"

And the rest of the men were inclined to agree with their chief. They could not possibly see how a dozen or more men could have been recently in this building. And yet but a short time ago a band of the most nefarious villains imaginable had put Madeleine Stanton through a mock trial here and sentenced her to death.

Madeleine herself would not forget this

dreadful scene for many a long day. How she had stood before the gowned and hooded members of the Black Circle, and listened half-amused at the farcical trial they had arranged for her benefit.

All round the large room imitation skulls had been hung, and through the eyes and mouths of these queer lanterns rays of light shone out. Now all this had completely disappeared, and Madeleine was safe once more with her friend, Dr. Brutell, while Hammer and Pluchers and his men were fleeing to safety again.

The police had been on the track of these villains for a long time now, but always they succeeded in baffling the representatives of law and order. At one time they would retire to their mountain rendezvous, and at others their desire to evade the sheriff would send them to their secret hiding-places in the cities. But in spite of all the efforts of the police, they still managed to retain their liberty.

There were some clever men at the head of them who controlled their movements. The authorities, however, were determined to get them sooner or later. There were secret service agents representing the Government in every district which they were known to frequent, and consequently the net was being drawn tighter and tighter around these enemies of the State.

It could only be a question of time now before the authorities succeeded in roping them in. Then many people would breathe a great deal more freely again. They had terrorised whole districts in their mad desire for gold, and many people had cause to regret having crossed the path of the Black Circle gang.

One of their favourite tricks was to capture rich men, and hold them to ransom, and, of course, Mr. Stanton, the millionaire ranch-owner, was still one of their victims. Both Dr. Brutell, his great friend, and his daughter Madeleine had sworn to secure his release at whatever cost to themselves. And although the poor girl had already suffered much at their hands, she did not intend to give in.

When she felt full of despair, Dr. Brutell always gave her fresh hope. He was not the sort of man to acknowledge defeat, and he was constantly rendering Madeleine help and encouragement. She did not know what she would have done without his kindly assistance which he had given her unsparringly ever since that terrible night when her beloved father had disappeared so mysteriously.

On two occasions at least, when all had seemed lost, he had come to her rescue, and now once more he had arrived in the nick of time and saved her from death.

Madeleine never ceased to marvel over his extraordinary, almost uncanny, cleverness, and his inventions, such as the all-powerful double X-ray, were a continual source of wonder to her.

The girl had a lot to think about as she sat at ease in one of the easy-chairs in Dr. Brutell's house after her timely rescue from the cellar. All the exciting times which she had experienced during the last few weeks passed in rapid succession through her mind, and she wondered what her future would be.

Her stay at the Ranch House had been

very pleasant indeed. She had made many new friends amongst the cowboys, and she and Jack Regan, the foreman, were great chums. The life of the West had a great attraction for her, for she loved horses and the thrill of a gallop over the prairie.

If it had not been for the terrible shadow hanging over the head of herself and her father, there is no doubt that she would have voted this a splendid holiday. This was the first time in her life that she had stayed in her father's ranch house.

She had often heard him speak of it, but it seemed more like a legend to her than reality. Now at last she had experienced the thrill of the Wild West, and she loved it.

All these thoughts raced through the girl's mind as she sat dreamily in her chair beside the glowing fire. Then suddenly she awoke with a start at the sound of the voice of her friend, Dr. Brutell.

She was almost on the verge of falling off to sleep, and just for one moment she failed to recollect where she was. The doctor walked towards the chair in which she was sitting, and smiled sympathetically as he looked into her tired eyes.

He asked her gently how she was feeling, and Madeleine informed him that she felt ever so much better after her rest. Then, as Madeleine looked up at her friend, it seemed to her that his face suddenly took on a grown look.

"What is the matter?" she asked him, with tenderness. "Are you not well, doctor?"

Brutell smiled. "Yes, I am perfectly well," he responded; "but I am thinking of your father. The gang have had him in their power for a long while now, and I fear that unless he gives way to them, and falls in with their desires, they may kill him!"

"They are very determined men, and as a rule their victims are so glad to get out of their clutches that they will agree to almost any demands they make. I am half inclined to think that it is the best way in the end. But your father is a very brave man, and nothing—not even the shadow of death, I am afraid—will make him turn away from his original purpose. The police are hot on the trail of these men; they give them very little rest. And I am almost afraid that in order to get rid of your father, they may murder him!"

"Yes, you are right," Madeleine said. "My father will not give in! But now, must we? We must still make every effort to rescue him while there is yet time. He is a very rich man, and the thought of the money they might get out of him may stop them from killing him!"

"I hope you are right!" replied Dr. Brutell. "To-morrow we must return to the Ranch House again. It is more than possible that the gang have returned to their secret hiding-place in the mountains in search of safety. We will make another attempt to capture them!"

But extraordinary things were about to happen which would keep Dr. Brutell and Madeleine from carrying out their intention.

(Get next week's GEM, and read how a mysterious Eastern Secret Society takes a hand in the great Stanton Mystery.)

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Supposing you and a party of your chums found yourselves alone on an uninhabited island, what would you do? Look out for the Great New GEM Serial, called:

THE ISLAND OF PLEASURE



THE VALLEY OF SURPRISE

Read this magnificent story dealing with the adventures of three chums in a strange country.

By REID-WHITLEY.

FOR NEW READERS.

Hobby Tarrant and Tony Matthers, with Billy Kettle, a trusted negro servant, are on an expedition in the Andes. A volcanic eruption, causing a tremendous tidal wave, carries their canoe into the Valley of Surprise. The party explore the valley, and experience many adventurous times. Reaching a village, they are confronted by a race of strange, primitive men, who show great hospitality, and make friends. But Maxia, the medicine-man, hates the newcomers, and through a dastardly scheme which he hatches, they very nearly lose their lives. For this action the Ariki lose faith in him. He succeeds in making friends with the Mangas, but with the assistance of these semi-human brutes his cunning schemes prove futile.

Hobby invents a kite with a basket attached, to carry the trio out of the valley. A trial trip sees him forced to land in the middle of the lake. His chums build a raft and rescue him. Having viewed the surroundings, the party board the raft and leave the island. They are attacked by a strange animal, which Hobby chases away with his gun, which is loaded with a specially prepared charge.

Now read on.

An Exciting Time.

IN order to avoid firing a shot which might alarm the keepers of the house of the stairway, he had prepared a special charge by removing the shot and mixing most of the powder of a cartridge with an equal quantity of finely-powdered charcoal, which flared splendidly, but made little noise.

"It done the trick," agreed Billy; "but I hopes dere ain't no more of dem."

There were not—or, at least, nothing else came near. Slowly the raft drew in towards the reef where they had been cast ashore. Billy steered clear of its outlying rocks, turned into a little cove of the beach beyond, and ran the nose of his craft up on the white sand. They had arrived.

Except for the splashing of the wavelets and the soft sighing of the wind, all was silent as the three sped up the beach, after hauling the raft ashore and lowering the sail. If all went well, they would never see the thing again, but they had to leave a path of retreat open in case of failure.

They came to the stone ladder and halted, staring through the obscurity towards the parapet high above. If anyone was on guard, a stone or two dropped on the heads of the climbers would easily dispose of them.

"I'll go first; cover me," whispered Tony, and went aloft.

There was never a movement. He reached the platform below the great statue in safety. There was no one. Tony's spirits rose. Surely this foretold an easy escape? If the corridors also were empty, they could certainly pass through without arousing anyone, and be out of the valley long before dawn.

The others joined him, and they passed on tiptoe towards the door of the painted hall. There they paused again in the darkness, listening. All was silence. They crossed the hall traversed the corridor, and halted at the foot of the staircase which led to the farther hall, as a step sounded on the rock floor.

Billy Kettle swung out an arm, thrusting Tony and Hobby back against the wall, then crouched, ready for a spring. Nearer came

the steps, and nearer. A dim silhouette showed against the faint square of light at the head of the stairs, a spearhead of polished stone gleamed, and the man began to descend.

He was quite unobservant of danger. He even hummed a tuneless little song as he sauntered along. He was abreast of Billy; he had passed. The big negro wheeled, sprang. One brawny arm went round the man's neck, compressing it so that no sound could escape from his lips but a stifled grunt, then a big fist shot up, and crashed squarely on the point of the jaw. With a faint gasp the man collapsed.

Billy eased him to the ground, whipped out a length of cord, and swiftly tied his hands, while Tony groped for the fellow's legs, and secured them in like manner. Then they gagged him, thrust him into a niche of the wall, and stood up, listening.

All was again silent.

"Dat's all right!" breathed Billy. "Us'll get on before dat fellow is missed! Reckon dere ain't no more watching. Oh, golly, dere's a light! No, it ain't; it's dat jagger!"

Two luminous eyes appeared at the stairhead. The big beast came slowly down. Evidently it recognised Tony, for it thrust its big head against his knees, caressingly, holding up its chin to be scratched. Tony obliged. They moved on, the jaguar purring beside Tony, who continued to scratch its neck.

At the stairhead they halted once more. A fire glowed dimly at the farther end of the room. Several figures, rolled in blankets, lay round it, asleep. They did not stir as the fugitives crossed on tiptoe.

There was no one on the terrace beyond, no one in the fields. Tony had a rough idea of the position of the foot of the staircase. Following a beaten track, they made for it. The jaguar still padded along beside Tony, purring softly.

They passed through a tunnel of overhanging canes, turned sharply, and stopped, for before them gleamed a light. It came from a lamp hanging under the arch of a tall gateway. The light fell upon a strong gate, and beyond it they saw the first of the flight of steps that led upwards to freedom.

There was no one on guard. Billy stepped forward and tried the gate. It was secured by heavy wooden bars, which dropped into sockets of stonework. The negro chuckled. "Dis is sure easy, Marse Tony!" he said, in a gruff whisper. "Dem make it fast against anyone dat try to come down. Dey never think anyone want to go up."

And, with easy strength, he lifted the lowermost bar from its place, set it down, and laid hands on the other.

"Up you comes—Ah, you wants to stick, does you? Up you—Oh, golly!"

From somewhere aloft came a tremendous jangling peal as of a dozen big bells ringing together. Clatter, clang, crash! The sound ran round the confined space, echoing from the cliffs, with racket enough to wake the Seven Sleepers.

From the chamber behind the terrace came a shout, then screaming of women, a bellow of command, and the crash of something overturned.

Billy tugged like a demon. The noise above redoubled with every heave he made upon the bar, which evidently actuated some concealed mechanism. It beat down upon them in a deafening avalanche of sound a thousand times repeated by the echoes.

Then the bar yielded, something snapped, it turned, and the door swung slowly open. The three sprang through. The jaguar made as though to follow, whined, and drew back. But they did not heed him. Freedom was before them, the thudding feet of the aroused guardians of the place behind. Up they sped, taking several steps at a stride, for the stairs were shallow, while the jangle above died away to silence.

A voice roared up after them from the doorway.

"Him say stop!" panted Billy.

A volley of arrows whizzed about their ears, and splintered on the steps about their flying feet, but they did not halt. Again came the imperious command; they only climbed the faster. Hobby was gasping for breath, Tony had a frightful pain in his

side, even Billy of the iron muscles began to flag.

Tony cast a look behind. The stair showed faintly white behind them. Nothing moved upon it, though the lamp under the arch threw into relief a group of figures standing motionless, with upturned faces.

They waited for something. What? Why did they not pursue? Tony looked up. A few yards higher the stairs took a steeper angle, rising from a small level platform. This platform was black. Why? It seemed to mark some difference in the structure of the stairs. Billy, a few steps ahead, was already upon it.

"Stop!" shouted Tony. "Come back! Pull up, Hobby! We'll rest a moment. They ain't following!"

"Us best get a start, Marse Tony—" began Billy. And leapt back suddenly with a yell.

For the section of stairs beyond the bit of black pavement was moving! A hundred yards or more of it was slowly sliding away from the cliff faces. Swaying outward with a majestic movement, it hung poised as long as it would take a man to draw breath, then fell with a crash upon the waving tassels of the corn below. The old chief had fulfilled his word. Rather than allow the whites to escape, he had set some secret mechanism free, and wrecked the stairs.

The way of escape was cut. The trio were still prisoners in the valley. Moreover, they had incurred the anger of the guardians of the stair. A roar of wrath came up from below, that promised ill for their safety, and another volley of arrows whizzed aloft.

They fell short by a few feet, and no more were discharged. The three sat looking at each other and at the dark blur their enemies made against the lamplight. Hobby was the first to speak.

"Well, I think we may give up hope of getting out this way!" he drawled. "The best thing we can do is to get back to the Ariki, if we can!"

"If we can!" echoed Tony. "Those fellows down there will try to stop us, I fancy."

"They sure is angry!" agreed Billy. "But when we has shot one or two, I see reckon they won't want no more!"

"I don't want to shoot any of them if it can be avoided," replied Tony. "If we must, don't shoot to kill. After all, these people only want to be let alone."

They sat silent after that. There was no movement against them. The men at the gate were content to watch and wait. Very slowly the hours passed, the sky paled, and it was dawn. It was time to make a move.

"We'll go down now," said Tony, rising and stretching himself. "If they shoot at us give them a barrel of shot, Hobby. That will tickle them up, and give them warning that we aren't defenceless!"

Slowly but steadily they marched down. No arrow flew. They saw the men at the gate staring at them. Then a harsh voice shouted an order, and the fellows drew back. By the time the three had reached the gate there was no one in sight.

Was it a trap? Were the bowmen waiting in the cane brake to shoot unseen? Tony could not tell. But, at least, the canes on either side of the path stood motionless. It did not look as though anyone could be lurking there. With his rifle at the ready Tony strode out, followed by the others.

He was in time to see the men who had been on guard going up the steps of the terrace, where stood the whole of the inhabitants of the place. The old chief who had spoken with them before stood at the top of the steps, gazing expectantly towards them.

As they advanced, the people retreated on either side, but the old chief stood fast. A sardonic smile played across his wrinkled face, but he said never a word as the three reached the terrace. He merely lifted a wrinkled hand, and pointed to the doorway through which they had entered the place. Something groaned and squealed, then a great slab of stone moved slowly out of a niche above, sliding down and down, guided by channels cut in the jabs, to settle with a thud. This way out was barred also.

(Continued on page 18.)

"RIVAL SCHOOLS AT WAR."

(Continued from page 12.)

the distance. The St. Jim's juniors lay low and breathed hard.

There was a sound of footsteps on the path into the glade. Four caps came into sight.

Trimble, standing by the old oak tree, shivered. If he carried out his instructions it was quite possible that he had rough handling to fear from the Grammarians. If he didn't, it was absolutely certain that he had a terrific ragging to expect from Tom Merry & Co. It really was not a pleasant position for Baggy Trimble. But the position of a traitor has always had its drawbacks.

Gordon Gay, Wootton major and minor, and Frank Monk came sauntering into the glade by the footpath. They nodded to Baggy Trimble. Their greeting was not exactly cordial. The astute Grammarians were willing to make use of Baggy, but they could hardly respect him for being made use of.

"Hallo, here you are, old fat barrel!" said Gordon Gay.

"Did you stick it up in Grundy's study?"

"Eh? Oh! Ah! Yes," mumbled Trimble.

"What did Grundy say?" chuckled Wootton major.

"He—he— Oh, he—he was waxy, of course!" gasped Trimble.

"He would be," grinned Gay. "Now, we've got a fresh lot for you. You're to stick them up in Figgins' study in the New House. You can manage that?"

"Er—ah—em—yes. Of—of course!"

"What are you mumbling about?" asked Gay, looking at him. "You seem all nerves. The St. Jim's fellows don't suspect, do they?"

"Nunno!" gasped Trimble.

"That's all right, then. Here's your half-crown, you fat rotter! I—I mean, here's your half-crown, Trimble! And—"

Gordon Gay got no farther. From the underwoods three figures emerged—the Terrible Three of St. Jim's. Tom Merry gave a whistle.

From different points round the glade other St. Jim's caps showed up. Gordon Gay stared round him.

"My only hat; a giddy ambush!" he ejaculated. "And— and we've walked into it! That fat rotter has sold us out!"

"Scrag him!" exclaimed Wootton major.

"Hook it, you ass! We can't fight a dozen fellows."

The Grammarians spun round, to find the path behind them blocked by Blake & Co. and Wildrake and Roylance. They were fairly trapped.

"Caught!" murmured Gordon Gay. "Sold by that fat rotter, and trapped! By gad, I'll—" Gay made a frantic rush at Baggy Trimble.

The game was up. But there was still time to make Trimble suffer for his sins. But Baggy was on the alert. He dodged back, and fled, yelling for help. Gordon Gay rushed after him, and, before Trimble could reach safety, Gay's grasp closed on the fat junior. A terrific yell woke every echo of Rylcombe Wood.

Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump!

"Yooop! Help! Murder! Rescue!" yelled Trimble.

"Come on, dear boys!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, give him time!" said Grundy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wootton major and minor and Frank Monk were already collared, and struggling valiantly against odds. Five or six fellows closed in on Gordon Gay, and Trimble was rescued at last. He sprawled in the grass and roared. But nobody needed Trimble. Only Blake gave him a gentle kick as a reminder that his presence was no longer wanted.

"Here we are again, Gay, old nut!" said Monty Lowther slyly. "Quite a little surprise—what?"

Gordon Gay shrugged his shoulders.

"Your win!" he said coolly. "I suppose that fat rotter gave us away?"

"Not exactly. We screwed it out of him," said Tom Merry. "You've been playing no end of a joke on us, Gay. We're going to play no end of a joke on you!"

"Yaas, wathah!" chortled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Ropes and rails!" said Tom Merry.

"Ready!" grinned Blake.

Several coils of cord were produced. From the underwoods the juniors jerked off branches to serve as rails. The four Grammarians, tightly held, watched these proceedings with apprehension. They had had their innings, as it were, and now the time had come to pay the piper.

"Look here!—What are you up to?" demanded Wootton major, at last.

"Riding you on a rail, I guess," chuckled Wildrake. "It's a stunt from my country, you know. You hold on, or else you fall off! You don't pay your money, but you take your choice!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—" mumbled Gay.

"Mount!" said Tom Merry.

Four rails were provided. The Grammarians, desperately but uselessly resisting, were seated astride of them, and their legs tied underneath. Then Blake produced a paper bag of lamp-black and an ancient shaving-brush, which had apparently been picked off a dustbin. With the shaving-brush and the lamp-black, mixed with a little gum, Blake proceeded to paint four furious faces.

Gordon Gay & Co.'s faces were crimson with wrath to begin with; but in a very short time they were black as the ace of spades. Their aspect was startling, and the St. Jim's juniors yelled with laughter as they looked at them.

Then Dig produced fools'-caps, which were stuck on the Grammarians' heads in the place of their caps, which were squeezed down their backs, perhaps to keep them from getting lost.

"Now march!" said Tom Merry.

"Oh, you rotters!" gasped Gordon Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Three or four St. Jim's juniors grasped each of the rails, and they were lifted shoulder-high. The Grammarians clung to them desperately. Gordon Gay lurched sideways, and hung by his legs, yelling frantically. He was up-ended successfully, and after that he was desperately careful to hold on. In a merry procession the St. Jim's crowd marched down the footpath, and emerged from the wood into Rylcombe Lane. Then they headed for St. Jim's.

The feelings of the hapless Grammarians were not to be described. Half the Lower School of St. Jim's had turned out that afternoon into Rylcombe Lane, and there were yells of laughter and derision from the crowd as the Grammarians were paraded.

Then, with the procession increased by a hundred St. Jim's fellows, Tom Merry & Co. started for the Grammar School.

They marched through the High Street of Rylcombe, and certainly such a sight had never been witnessed in the old High Street before. Pedestrians stood and stared, shop-keepers rushed out of their shops, every window was crammed with faces as the unhappy Grammarians were paraded by. Then the procession turned into the lane leading to the Grammar School.

"You awful rotters!" shrieked Gordon Gay. "You're not taking us back to school like this!"

"Your mistake!" chuckled Tom Merry. "We are!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Clinging frantically to the rails, the Grammarians were marched right up to the gates of the Grammar School, where a crowd of amazed Grammarians poured out to stare at the sight.

Outside the gates Tom Merry & Co. landed their passengers. There was a skirmish as the St. Jim's crowd retreated. In the midst of the Grammar School crowd Gordon Gay & Co. writhed on the rails, and spluttered through the black on their faces, and yelled to be released. Tom Merry & Co. drew off their forces, leaving the hapless heroes of the Grammar School to their friends. They marched back to St. Jim's in hilarious spirits.

Four infuriated youths, released at last, were conveyed by back ways to a bath-room, where they rubbed and scrubbed, and scrubbed and rubbed, under a fire of chipping from their comrades. And while Gordon Gay & Co. were thus happily engaged the chums of St. Jim's marched home in triumph.

"I rather think that we score this time, after all!" grinned Blake. "The giddy Grammarians won't be in a hurry to hand out their dashed limericks again."

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"Three cheers for us!" said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the heroes of St. Jim's cheered themselves heartily, as they felt that they richly deserved. Though what Gordon Gay & Co. felt that they deserved could hardly have been expressed in words!

THE END.

Don't forget that there will be another Grand Long Story dealing with Tom Merry & Co. and Gordon Gay & Co., in Next Week's GEM, entitled:

"WACKY DANG, OF RYLCOMBE."

The Valley of Surprise.

(Continued from page 16.)

A chorus of harsh, cruel laughter ripped out from the crowd. Some of the younger men rolled on the ground, choking with laughter, which died away as Tony thrust his rifle muzzle against the old chief's ribs.

"Tell him to have that door opened at once, or I'll kill him!" he cried.

"Billy translated. Not a muscle of the old man's face twitched.

Scarcely moving his lips, he began to speak, pausing occasionally that Billy might turn his words into English.

"You were warned. You were told that you should not go up the stair to carry word of us to your friends. Now the stair is broken. For that one of you must die! I am the last chief of all the Inca people. My ancestors were driven from their home by white men. One of you must die. The others may go and live with the people among the trees till they perish; but one must die because the stair is broken and our gods are angry."

Pride of race rose high in Tony's breast, but still he kept his temper.

"Tell him that we are not of the same race as the people who drove out his ancestors. Tell him that we have defeated them, and that we will promise not to tell of this place if we leave it. And if there is to be any killing, we have weapons which slay at a distance. We will slay them all, beginning with him!"

The chief smiled again—a cold, malignant smile of disdain.

"I do not fear death! As for the others, there are too many already. It will be good to kill some of them that there may be more food for the others. And even if we are all killed, you cannot open the door, for the secret is known only to one or two, and they are hidden in the rock. One of you must die!"

This was the gist of Billy's stumbling translation. As he concluded, the big negro turned to Tony.

"Marse Tony, if so he wants to kill one of us, I'll offer to fight one of dem. How's dat, Marse Tony? I see a good fighter, sah. I sure to win! I tell him, sah!"

And before Tony could stop him, Billy had made his suggestion.

The chief's eyes gleamed, his fierce lips writhed into a smile. He nodded once or twice, then glanced at Tony, and began to speak.

"He says that is the way his forefathers did with prisoners. They made them fight with the young men. But he says I am not a chief nor a white man. It is the white men he hates. You are the chief. If you will fight with one of his young men and beat

him, he will let us go back to the trees. But you must fight with the same weapons as they use, and not with a gun."

Tony thought swiftly. He saw the strength of the attitude the old chief had assumed. Though the three might slaughter quite a number of the Indians with their firearms, they could not kill them all. Even if they did, those who could alone open the door would escape them, and they would be in a closer prison than before.

On the other hand, could he hope to cope with one of the young Indians who waited expectantly at the farther end of the terrace? They were all strong—and though Tony was no weakling, he had not yet come to his full growth or strength. But, anyhow, such a combat gave them a fighting chance.

"Tell him I'll do it!" he cried. "I'll fight one of them with their own weapons, except bows and arrows; but he must swear to let us go free when I have conquered. Anyhow, he must swear to let you two go, even if I don't win."

"Us'll kill de lot if you'se hurted!" growled Billy.

The chief nodded, and agreed readily. The bow was no weapon for such a combat, he said. Then, raising his voice, he called out something which caused swift movement among the group of men on the terrace. Some ran to a hut built on the edge of the cultivated ground, and returned with an assortment of stone-headed axes, stone knives, flint-headed spears, which they laid before the chief. With a gesture he invited Tony to choose, and moved away with stately step, beckoning to his people.

"But, Tony, old chap, it isn't fair!" exclaimed Hobby. "Those chaps are used to handling these things, and you aren't. Let's shoot the chief and two or three more. Then the others will be glad enough to get rid of us."

"I'm afraid they're a very stubborn lot. I don't think that plan would work. And, anyhow, I've given my word to fight. Don't worry. Those fellows have to work too hard with their hoes to get much practice with their weapons. Remember how badly they shot at us on the stair. I can take care of myself. What shall I use, Billy?"

Billy fingered his pistol lovingly. His mind was made up. If Tony were in danger of defeat he would settle the combat with one shot. He grinned his old cheery grin.

"Dis here a good spear, Marse Tony. You take it—and dis here axe. Dat be enough, I reckon. Dem knives ain't no good. You go for your man same as if you had a bayonet. You knows de bayonet, don't you?"

"Rather!" put in Hobby. "He's a cracker-jack with it. But here comes that old brute—and his chosen champion. Jingo, he's a big 'un!"

Tony slid the haft of the hatchet he had selected into his belt, grabbed the spear, and strode forward a few paces. His opponent slowly advanced to meet him, while the murmur of talk among the group of Indians hushed into expectant silence.

After long generations of waiting in the wilderness to which their forebears had been driven, they were about to enjoy the death of one of the whites whom they had been taught to hate.

The Duel.

At first sight the opponents appeared very unequally matched. The Indian was a big man with heavy muscles and broad shoulders. Had it been a question of weight-lifting or any feat in which sheer strength was everything, Tony wouldn't have stood the ghost of a chance.

But in a fight, with plenty of room for movement, matters were otherwise. Tony was very nimble, he had a long reach, a good training in the use of the bayonet, and that fighting spirit which will never be

daunted by odds. He was anxious to be at work, to settle the affair out of hand.

The Indian, on the contrary, was none too anxious to slay or be slain. All his days he had worked hard on the fields of the little community. His fighting had been confined to an occasional wrestling bout. He had been selected because of his strength. He walked heavily, and his eye was dull.

Still, he came on with a fair show of ferocity. He knew that if he did not do his best his chief would do fearful things to him. In fact, he feared that redoubtable gentleman a great deal more than he did the slim, white-skinned youngster who awaited him.

He opened his mouth and loosed a war-cry; then, with spear up, dashed at Tony and struck. If the blow had gone home, the combat would have been finished at once. But it didn't. It smote empty air, for Tony had dodged aside lightly, and as the Indian lurched past, lunged out with all his force.

The jagged flint point took the man fairly in the ribs, and, glancing downwards, inflicted a nasty wound. The Indian yelled, wheeled, and struck again, a foot short. Then, howling wildly, he began to pursue Tony.

For a minute they dashed to and fro. Tony easily kept clear of his heavier opponent, who, unaccustomed to such swift movement, began to pant. Then, realising that he was tiring himself in vain, the Indian stopped, and, whirling up his spear, threw it with all the strength of his huge arm.

Tony dodged, but too late to avoid the missile. It thudded home on his chest, there was an odd sound of splintering, a ringing like breaking glass, and, reeling backwards from the mere force of the blow, he stumbled and fell.

Howling his triumph, the Indian whipped out his heavy knife and sprang forward to finish him. Billy swore a mighty oath, and drew his pistol. But before he could raise it, Tony had rolled nimbly aside, scrambled to his feet, and lunged at the Indian, who, unable to check himself in time, received a jab in the left shoulder that made him yell shrilly.

"He got me in the medicine-case. Reckon the tabloids are all mixed up!" cried Tony cheerily. "A bit of a wipe—but I'm all right! Come on, cocky! You're slow on your pins!"

The Indian needed no invitation. It began to dawn on him that the job was not quite so easy as he had at first anticipated. He came roaring in, knife upraised, resolved to settle the business with one good, downright, honest Injun blow.

Tony stood up to the rush, and drove in a terrible thrust, swinging from the hips, with all his weight behind it—a regular hay-maker's swing that should have spitted the man. But he reckoned without taking into account the clumsiness of the weapon. The Indian wore a belt of leather thickly covered with small stones, set in some sort of cement, so that it was almost a piece of armour.

The spear-point caught in this, and the head broke off short! None the less, the Indian doubled up for a moment to the thrust, while Tony, thrown off his balance, stumbled past him, clutching for the axe in his belt. It wasn't there! It had slipped out when he fell.

"Over there! To your right!" yelled Hobby. "Quick, man! He's coming after you!"

The spectators had seen Tony's plight. They yelled to their champion to rush in and finish his opponent before he could regain his weapon.

The Indian spurted. He seemed to realise that he would not be given such another opportunity as chance had presented to him. He moved his heavy feet as surely they had never been called upon to move before.

But Tony beat him to it by a couple of yards. Stooping in mid-stride, he snatched up the axe, whirled, and as the Indian swung his knife the heavy stone hatchet fell with terrific force upon his head. Not even an Indian's skull could withstand that sort of treatment. With a grunt, the man's hand dropped, his knife clattered over the hard floor, and he slithered forward and collapsed senseless. The battle was finished, and the white, hated for centuries, but never before seen by any present, had won—as before!

(To be continued.)

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EDITORIAL.

My Dear Chums,—

One way and another we get plenty of variety in the stories of St. Jim's. Only the other day a reader wrote to me to this effect: "Can't we have another Cardew yarn?" Well, we had it, and Mr. Martin Clifford depicted Cardew, that master of sarcasm and pluck combined, in the best style. There is no special reason why Ernest Levison and Cardew should be closely associated, but the two somehow drift together. Cardew's impersonation of Levison, and his kidnapping by the sandy-haired individual with the nose like a flat-iron, made the story a gripping one, and the sequel was just as dramatic.

At the very time I was passing this new Levison-Cardew series, a cheery letter was being penned at Perth by a "Gem" supporter, who says Levison and Cardew are his favourites. These two characters have made big impressions everywhere. This correspondent asks for a boy acrobat, which might be managed later. In the ordinary way acrobats are plentiful at St. Jim's.

Baggy has no pretensions in that line, but the St. Jim's gym could furnish a fair number of champions.

Still another suggestion. Can Tom Merry go away for a while, so that Levison steps in as captain? Then Ernest Levison would return to his old ways. His minor would disappear. I do not know why Frank is to vanish, but there is the notion, likewise one that Racke should "start a vengeance on the school, and cause the death of one of the boys."

Talk about ideas! My chum who lives at Perth, Western Australia, seems to have had a fair brain storm. He wants the St. Jim's Dramatic Society to go on tour. Cardew, he thinks, should have an aeroplane. Well, it can't be done! We bar a few things in the "Gem," and tragedy is not required. Cardew doing funny air stunts when he ought to be at prep might be interesting, but hardly in keeping.

But Racke can have another innings, of course. Trust him for that. Then there is no lack of interest about Levi-

son. Personally I see no reason why he should go back to his former courses. It would not be common-sense. Levison has changed, but he finds pitfalls in his path just as he always did.

We shall have more amusing yarns showing what the Third is doing. Young Wally D'Arcy, and his "Co.," including Joe Frayne, Reggie Manners, and Curly Gibson can be trusted to make things hum. They will have the chance.

Gordon Gay will keep his place in the front. Gordon gets the limelight because he is a champion mischief-maker. The Grammarian fellows have been putting in a rare good show.

Look out for the new serial, "The Island of Pleasure." This will be a huge success. There is no doubt that the forthcoming numbers of the "Gem" will be packed as close with fresh sensations as sardines in a box. Don't miss a single number.

By the way, don't forget to follow the thrilling adventures of Nibby Clink, and Poulter & Co. at Arundel College as related in the "Boys' Herald." Every reader of the "Gem" should get a copy of this week's issue.

YOUR EDITOR.



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