



ROLICKING SCHOOL STORY INSIDE!

The **GEM** 1^D 2

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20 Pages.

Every Wednesday.

April 22nd, 1922.

ST. JIM'S versus GREYFRIARS.



GRUNDY APPEALS FOR OFFSIDE!

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

EDITORIAL CHAT

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday.
 "THE MAGNET" Every Monday.
 "THE POPULAR" Every Tuesday.
 "THE GEM" Every Wednesday.
 "CHUCKLES" Every Thursday.
 "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" Published Yearly.

My Dear Chums,—

There is a real treat coming next week in the story of St. Jim's, called "The Hero of the Shell." The hero is not George Alfred Grundy, though the famous character in question, who supplies such a lot of humour to the yarn, thinks he ought to be. The whole point is that St. Jim's goes to Greyfriars to play a football match. It was lucky Tom Merry was on the spot, or there is no knowing what might have happened. You see, a vacancy occurred—no matter how—and Grundy really thought he ought to fill it. There's no telling what Grundy will be thinking!

Look out for the coming Big Bumper Number. It will be worthy of the GEM. I need say no more. A grand new serial is also on the way.

WONDERFUL NEWS!

Now I come to the most astounding and welcome "surprise packet" ever offered to GEM readers! In the next issue but one the GEM will give away the first of a magnificent series of REAL PHOTOGRAPHS of famous footballers. I have never seen anything better done than these new portraits. Look out for Number 1 in the GEM dated May 8th. This first splendid Real Photo will show popular "Fanny" Walden, of the famous Tottenham Hotspurs, actually IN ACTION on the field of play. You see the player as he really is, and the work which has brought him name and fame. The new series will constitute a sports picture-gallery of the best kind. A magnificent series of Real Photos will be given away with our Monday

Companion Paper, the "Magnet," as well; while the "Boys' Friend" is commencing (same date) a set of portraits of celebrated boxers. You will see here the men who are working their way into the front line. I am not sticking absolutely to the much-photographed exponents of the noble art who have already achieved tremendous popularity. It is just as well to think of others, too; the coming men, the fellows who are driving on, slowly winning through, and getting better known every match.

Then the "Popular" free plates, showing in colours the various types of railway express engines, are winning more and more favour. I am "puffing" these, I know; but, after all, that's natural with an engine! This splendid series is being extended so as to bring in all the famous locomotives of the big lines.

For long months past I have been wanting to have a chat with you more on the old style, but space never permitted it. I must deal with the stories, and give you some sort of a notion of what is coming, with the very latest news about D'Arcy, and a word concerning Baggy Trimble. I know recent yarns have been better than ever; they speak for themselves—full of wit and sympathy, and with that gritty something marking them out as invariably finds in the tales of Martin Clifford.

What are you going to do for the summer holidays? Summer is right on to us, and it is well to make sure of any chances that happen along for a few days, if no longer, right away in the country. Personally I would rather have a tour through English countryside than start visiting foreign cities, and have seen a few of the latter. Paris is sweltering in summer, as a rule.

The fellow who has a long purse, and can go abroad, will often start envying the chap who spends his few days off on a simple walking trip. But more about summer holidays next time. Meanwhile, keep a sharp look-out for the splendid attractions to come, and, as advice for the future, make a point of ordering your GEM well in advance.

YOUR EDITOR.

"MY READERS' OWN CORNER."

A Splendid Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck is awarded to the sender of what the Editor considers the most interesting paragraph. Half-a-crown is awarded for each other contribution accepted.

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

This Wins Our Tuck Hamper.

THE WIRELESS.

Pat was most patriotic, and refused to believe that the ancient Egyptians were wiser than the Irish. "But the Egyptians used electricity," said his friend. "Wires corresponding to modern telegraph wires have been discovered in Egypt." "I don't dispute that," answered the Irishman calmly, "but the fact that no wires have been found in Ireland is proof positive that the ancient Irish used wireless telegraphy."—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to J. T. Berlyn, 33, Upper Addison Gardens, Kensington, W. 14.

THE NORTH BRIDGE.

This bridge, which was opened on March 4th, 1890, and spans the Firth of Forth from North to South Queensferry, was built for the North British Railway Company's trains running to and fro from the North of Scotland, at a cost of over three million five hundred thousand pounds. It is one and a quarter miles long, having two clear spans of one thousand seven hundred and ten feet each, and two spans of six hundred and eighty feet each. The highest part above high-water level is three hundred and sixty-one feet, and the deepest foundation below high-water level is ninety-one feet. It was the work of five thousand men—day and night—for seven years. The weight of steel used was fifty-one thousand tons, and the number of rivets used was five million. The engineers were Sir John Fowler and Sir Benjamin Baker, and the contractor Sir William Arrol. Half-a-crown awarded to R. Cockburn, 15, Claremont Gardens, Leith.

THE BUSY OFFICE.

Brown's son had recently obtained an appointment in an office. After his first day the boy's father plied him with questions as to how he got on, etc. "How many people work in the office?" asked the senior. "Oh, about half of them," was the reply. — Half-a-crown awarded to John Juice, 27, Bath Street, Southampton.

SAVING HIS MONEY.

One day when walking in a street of Montreal a man was held up by a highwayman. "Your money or your life!" hissed the thief. "Take my wife," said the victim. "I'm saving my money for my old age." — Half-a-crown awarded to William Weed, 28, Lacasse Street, St. Henry, Montreal, Province Quebec, Canada.

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A Grand Long Complete School Story, telling of the great courage displayed by the Colonial Chums of St. Jim's and Greyfriars.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

A Gathering of the Clans.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Here's a jolly crowd of them at the station to meet us!" The local train from Wayland was just rolling into Rylcombe, and Bob, with his head out of a window, waved greetings to a score or more of the St. Jim's fellows, gathered on the platform.

From the next window the head of Sampson Quincey Illey Field—called "Squiff" on account of the proverbial brevity of life—protruded, and the eyes of Squiff, who was an Australian, searched the gathering for the Colonials among the St. Jim's fellows, and especially for Harry Noble, who, like himself, hailed from the great Commonwealth in the far south.

"Cheerio, Noble!" yelled Squiff. "This is bonza—eh?"

"Just that, old top!" Kangaroo sang back.

Then the train came to a standstill, and the Greyfriars fellows swarmed out.

There were a dozen of them—the team to play St. Jim's, and a reserve man.

The Famous Five—Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, Nabob of Bhanipur—were all there. There, too, were Tom Brown, from New Zealand, Piet Delarey, from South Africa, Peter Hazeldene, Peter Todd, Herbert Vernon-Smith, and Mark Linley, besides Squiff.

"You've got here, then?" said Tom Merry, the skipper of the St. Jim's side, shaking hands with Harry Wharton, leader of the visiting eleven. "When we saw all that about the expected railway strike in the papers this morning we were rather afraid the game would be wired off."

"So were we, old chap," admitted Wharton, smiling. "The Head was in two minds about letting us come. And I'm not at all sure we'll be able to get back to-night, for we heard on the way here that quite a lot of the men were already out."

"Let's hope you won't," answered Tom, with the most cheery of grins. "There's nothing in the wide, wide world we'd like better than entertaining you fellows for a few days. It's to be hoped the strike will be over by that time."

"That's an idea, Merry!" said Frank Nugent appreciatively. "We'd like it, too, you bet! Hallo, Manners! Hallo, Levison!"

All round there was shaking of hands and greeting of the friendly foemen of many a fight.

As they made their way out of the little country station they sorted themselves out roughly into varying groups. The Famous Five from the Kentish school fraternised with the Terrible Three of St. Jim's and Reginald Talbot. Vernon-Smith found himself collared by Levison, Clive, and Cardew, for there was an old alliance between the Bounder of Greyfriars and Levison, and Clive and Cardew reckoned their chum's pals as their own.

And the Colonials drew together. It was natural that Squiff and Kangaroo should do so; they wanted to talk about Test matches, in which Australia had covered herself with glory. Tom Brown and Piet Delarey stuck to Squiff, as they had stuck to him when there was much at stake. Clifton Dane, from Canada, was one of Noble's two special chums, and Kit Wildrake also hailed from Canada, while Dick Roy-lance, the New Zealander, sought out Tom Brown.

It was Cardew who first noticed the coalescing of these elements from the far-flung parts of the Empire.

"Sidney, dear man," he said to Clive, "you have got gracious permission to join the other wild an' woolly persons from the backwoods an' the back-blocks, from the prairie an' the forest, from—"

"What are you rotting about now, Ralph?" broke in Clive.

"Look over there!" answered Cardew, nodding ahead. "Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada—sons of the Empire on which the sun never sets—an' you hang back here with mere ordinary Britishers, who, in all their tame little lives never bestrode a buckin' kangaroo—beg pardon, broncho, I should say, of course—or hunted a springbok—I suppose you do hunt springboks if you get peckish enough?—or tracked a grizzly to his lair, or—"

"I'm going!" Clive interrupted him, grinning. "I'd rather join up with the wild and woolly ones—not that they look it, I must say—than be giddy well talked to death!"

"Yaas, dear man, I've noticed before that our Ernest's tongue is a trifle like a bell-clapper," drawled Cardew as Clive went.

Clive stayed with his fellow "wild and woolly ones" during the walk to the school, and they all sat together at dinner in Hall, and kept together afterwards, during the stroll about the quad that came before it was necessary to change for the match.

"It's a pity there aren't a few more of us," remarked Kangaroo. "For it's light ever so long now, and there would be time for another match after tea—Greyfriars and St. Jim's combined against the Colonies, you know."

"We shall have to cut for the station without waiting for tea, if we are to get back to-night," said Tom Brown.

"No, you won't. There won't be a blessed train running by that time. Someone's just come along to say that there really is a strike. Are you down-hearted, Browney?"

"Not much!" replied the New Zealander. "Ripping good news, I call it! Look here, there's young Inky, and you've an Indian fellow who's nailing good—"

"Yes, Koumi Rao," said Clive. "But Indians aren't exactly Colonials, are they? I don't mean any rot about the colour line; those two are white men in every way that matters. But India isn't a Colony, and I fancy I've a better notion."

"I know," put in Roylance eagerly. "Three Aussies over at the Grammar School—Gordon Gay and the Wooltons. Rope them in, and we've a complete eleven!"

"My word! We can do it!" exclaimed Kangaroo. "Don't say anything to Tommy or any of the other benighted Britishers yet. Let's spring it on them after the first game's over, if we're sure then that you fellows are to be hung up here. But I really don't think there's any doubt."

And just then Tom Merry called to them from the other side of the quad.

Kildare, captain of St. Jim's, sought out the visitors with a message from the Head.

"Railway strike on, Wharton," he said. "I've just seen Dr. Holmes, and he wants me to let you fellows know that we're making arrangements to put you up—over Sunday, anyway. Strike may be over by Monday, and it would be pretty expensive to hire motors for a journey of the length of yours. He said he would wire to Dr. Locke at once, so that he wouldn't be worrying. And he seemed to have a suspicion that you fellows wouldn't worry much on your own account."

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"I should rather say not, Kildare!" replied Wharton. "It's no end decent of him, and it will be a treat for us." "Decent?" said Bob Cherry. "That's no word for it, Harry! Dr. Holmes is the brickiest of good old bricks, and what I say is, three cheers for him!"

The Greyfriars fellows cheered heartily, and the St. Jim's crowd joined in.

Then I'll tell him that, on the whole, his arrangements meet with your august approval—eh?" said Kildare, smiling. "Tell him, if you don't mind, Kildare, that we're no end obliged to him," replied Wharton.

"And that we'll try to behave ourselves nicely while we're here," added the Bounder.

"Don't say too much, Smithy," said Peter Todd sagely. "You never know your luck, and lots of things might happen."

And now," said Tom Merry, "we'd better cut along and get into our footer clobber. It's a glorious day for the game, and I shall be disappointed if this isn't the very best match we've ever had with you fellows."

CHAPTER 2. Pipped on the Post.

THE teams lined up thus:

St. Jim's: Wynn, goal; Kerr and Figgins, backs; Clive, Noble, and Lowther, halves; Levison, Blake, Merry, Redfern, and Talbot, forwards.

Greyfriars: Hazeldene, goal; Brown and Bull, backs; Todd, Cherry, and Linley, halves; Vernon-Smith, Field, Wharton, Delarey, and Singh, forwards.

Delarey and Frank Nugent had tossed to see which should be the man omitted from the visiting team, and the lot had fallen upon Frank, who accepted his fate manfully, and took the flag to act as linesman.

On the other line officiated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He did not like being out of the team, and he felt that Tom Merry's judgment was not all that it might be; but he made no moan. After all, only eleven could play on each side, and there were others—Manners among them—who shared his exclusion.

Just before the kick-off a dark, thin-faced youth, in a short jacket with many buttons upon it, came up to the home goal and spoke to Fatty Wynn.

Fatty called Figgins and Kerr to him, and the lad in buttons departed after a brief exchange of question and answer.

"Just like Ratty!" said Figgins, as he and Kerr returned to their places. "What other master would think of inquiring about giddy imposts of fellows on the footer-field?"

"Selby might," answered Kerr. "It's lucky we'd done the things, old top, or St. Jim's might have gone down for want of her trio of sterling defenders—eh? You and me and Fatty, you know. But it was like Ratty to send Ablett along instead of one of the fellows."

"Who was the chap in buttons that those three were yarning with, Blake?" inquired Piet Delarey.

"New page in the New House. Hasn't been there more than a week or so. Name of Apple-pie, or something like that. Why?"

"I'm pretty sure I've seen him somewhere before," replied the Afrikaner. "And my impression is— But never mind that!"

Blake did not mind. He had no special interest in Ablett. The New House juniors already heartily disliked the recent addition to Mr. Ratcliff's domestic staff, more on account of the use their Housemaster made of him than of anything in the fellow himself. But Blake was not New House, and Ablett did not bother him.

Kildare whistled for the start. Wharton had won the toss, and Tom Merry kicked off.

It was, as Tom had said, a glorious day—fine, but not too warm—for footer, and with hardly any wind. The school eleven had no match on, which fact allowed of Kildare's acting as referee, and added to the crowd on Little Side. Mr. Railton and the Head were there to watch, at least, the earlier stages of the game, and Messrs. Linton and Latham, from whose Forms the junior eleven of St. Jim's were drawn, were with them.

The ball went out to Levison, who made pace along the touch-line, and got round Mark Linley. But with Bluck charging in on him, Levison transferred neatly to Blake, who in turn passed to Tom.

Tom took a long shot at goal, the sort of thing which sometimes comes off early in a game, before the custodian has fairly settled down to his work.

But Hazeldene was not caught napping. He had to jump in order to reach the ball at all, but he put it hard out with his two hands together above his head, and was firmly on his feet again, ready for the next shot, before Dick Redfern had trapped.

With Tom Brown close on him Redfern shoved the leather

out to Talbot instead of trying a shot on his own. Talbot took it in his stride, and sent in a beauty, all along the ground and cutting across, a shot that needed a lot of stopping.

Hazeldene threw himself at it, and measured his length, but fisted out in doing so. Blake received, and put in a hot one. But Johnny Bull had got back close into goal, and his head met the ball, and sent it well out, while Hazeldene scrambled to his feet.

As the leather descended Harry Noble, at centre-half, met it with his foot, and sent it flying back into goal, just under the bar. Hazeldene jumped again, making a fine effort to save; but this time he could only get his fingers to it, and St. Jim's were one up within three minutes of the start!

"This game is going to be an easy one for us, you fellows," remarked Fatty Wynn, leaning against a goalpost with his arms folded, to Kerr and Figgins. "I shouldn't wonder if I don't handle the ball all the afternoon."

"You'd better!" answered Kerr sharply. "We're not going to be ever so many goals down because you're lazy, my pippin! Looks to me as though you are going to be called upon pretty soon."

For Wharton had put out to the Bounder from his kick-off, and the Bounder, speedy and clever, had got well away.

He swerved round Lowther with the ball at his toes. Figgins met him, and went down from his lusty charge. He came on, with Squiff waiting for a pass, and Wharton beyond Squiff, and the two on the other wing hanging back a bit so as not to be offside.

Figgins got up too late to be of any use. Kerr had to tackle the Bounder, or let him shoot unhampered.

Kerr made in, but Vernon-Smith, waiting only long enough to draw him, tapped the leather across Squiff to Wharton, and the Greyfriars leader had a fine chance of a shot at no more than ten yards.

He put in a beauty. Fatty's substantial figure got in the way. The Welsh junior met the ball with his chest, after failing in an attempt to punch it out, and did very well to meet it at all, for he had had to get right across his goal.

It bounced off straight to Delarey's feet, and the South African sent it slinging back into the corner farthest from Fatty.

"Bravo, Delarey!" shouted Wharton.

"That's the style, Rebel!" roared Bob Cherry.

For Fatty was stooping to pick the ball out of the net.

"Offside!" came the stentorian tones of George Alfred Grundy from the touchline.

But no St. Jim's player claimed, and Kildare piped whistle for the goal.

"Does Kildare know offside when he sees it?" inquired Grundy, with withering contempt.

"Do you?" returned Wilkins.

"Do I? Of course I do! There isn't anything about this game you can tell me, George Wilkins, so don't you try!" snorted Grundy wrathfully.

"Oh, don't expose your ignorance!" said Gunn. "Delarey had the ball straight from Wynn. How could it be offside?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled some of those near.

"Why, even Racke and Crooke know better than that!" said Wilkins.

"Racke and Crooke had better——"

"Dear man, I've no objection in an ordinary way to seeing Racke an' Crooke massacred," drawled Cardew. "But in the interests of justice I would mildly suggest that you can't quite kill them for agreeing with the merchants who are responsible for the laws of the game. You ought to be pleased to see them takin' a sportin' interest in any athletic event, y'know."

It was at Cardew, not at Grundy, that Racke and Crooke, the black sheep of the Shell, scowled. But their scowls did not trouble Ralph Reckness Cardew.

"What odds are you givin' on the other side, Racke?" he inquired politely. "Naturally you're backin' your own."

"See here, Cardew, I'm not going to have you betting on the field!" snorted Grundy.

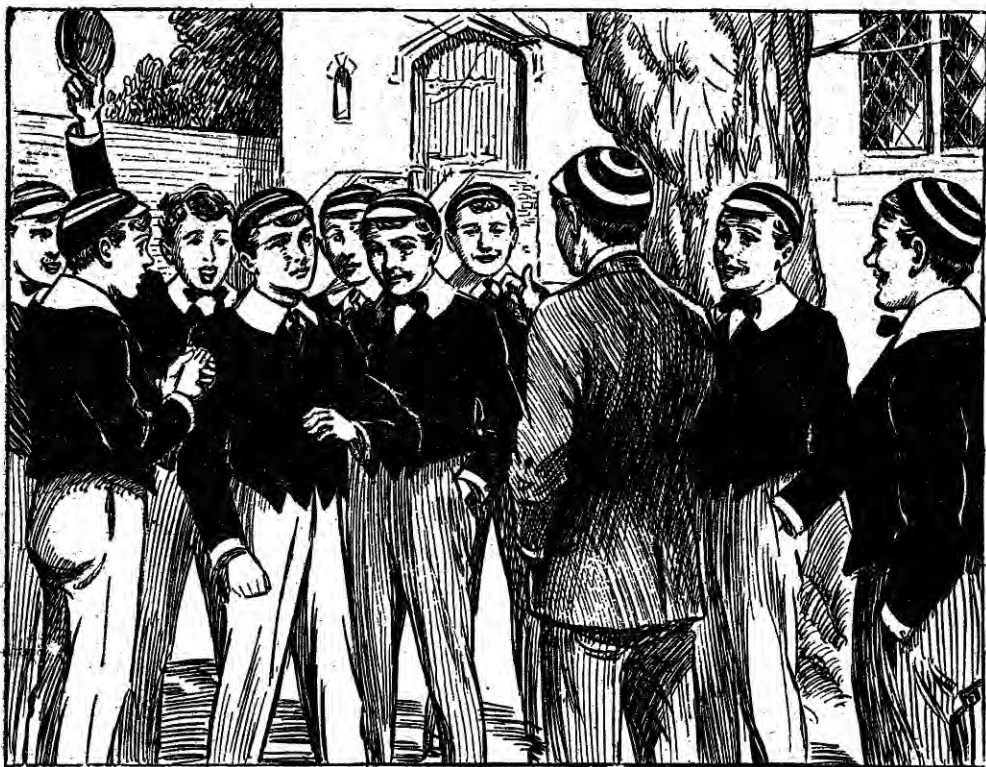
"Aren't you really, old top? An' how are you goin' to stop me, may I ask?"

"The Head's here," replied Grundy, darkly.

"Well, I shouldn't think of bettin' with the Head, anyway," said Cardew. "It would be takin' a dashed liberty to suggest it to him. I don't believe he does bet, either. But Racke an' Crooke do. What are the odds on Greyfriars—eh, gentlemen of the old firm?"

But Racke and Crooke moved away without answering him, and their faces were black with anger as they went. Cardew had guessed rightly. It was easy guessing, indeed, that those two would not have been on the ground if they had not had money at stake. But they had not given odds on Greyfriars. They had taken a shade of odds from some of their own kidney who wanted to back St. Jim's.

"That's what comes of not handling the ball!" said Kerr to Fatty.



Kildare walked up to Harry Wharton, who was standing with the rest of the Greyfriars juniors. "Railway strike on, Wharton," he said. "I've just seen Dr. Holmes, and he wants me to let you fellows know that we're making arrangements to put you up." "Good!" cried Bob Cherry excitedly. "Dr. Holmes is the brickiest of old bricks! Three cheers for him!" (See page 3.)

"I couldn't help it, Kerr. I did my best," replied Fatty, with a very woe-begone visage.

"I know you did, old gun. Nobody's blaming you."

Fatty cheered up at that. He no longer leaned against the post, after the fashion of the goalkeeper of a side easily on top.

For St. Jim's was not on top. But, then, neither was Greyfriars. Those two goals had come with startling suddenness; but for a long time after the second of them the play was very even indeed, and mostly in midfield. Kerr and Figgins, well up behind their halves, Johnny Bull and Tom Brown, backing up their attack, might be in the picture now and then; but Fatty and Hazeldene were quite out of it for at least twenty minutes.

Then there came a strong, combined effort by the home forward line, and the Greyfriars goalkeeper had to deal in quick succession with three shots, none of them easy. He fisted out all three, and his comrades shouted applause. Peter Hazeldene, who was rather a variable quantity, but brilliant at his best, was at his best that day.

Tom Brown cleared well down-field, and Peter Todd passed to Wharton. The forwards in the blue-and-white got away in fine style, and again Fatty's fort was menaced.

Wharton, after the ball had been taken along by both wings, had the first chance to shoot, and Fatty did well to keep out that shot. He had to use his foot, and that he never did unless obliged. Linley put the leather into the goalmouth again, and Delarey, though hampered by Kerr's charge, got in one that did not lack powder behind it. But Fatty caught the ball, and threw it well away. Lowther had it for a second, but Squiff twisted it from his toes, and tried a long shot.

Rough luck for Fatty! The ball looked to be going clean over the bar; but appearances were deceptive. It curved downwards, and went just under, the Welsh junior jumping and fisting in vain.

Greyfriars were two up!

Greyfriars were leading, but St. Jim's were nowise

dismayed. The play became faster than ever. The red-and-white forward line was going great guns; but Tom Brown and Johnny Bull were as steady as rocks, and there was no denying the form of Hazeldene.

Half-time arrived with the visitors still leading, and Racke and Crooke chortled in anticipation of lifting a quid or two from Scrope and Clampe.

Twenty minutes elapsed after the restart before another goal was scored. Then one came in an unexpected manner.

It was a long shot again, or perhaps it was hardly a shot at all, for Sidney Clive had his back to the goal when he kicked. The ball was coming down behind him when he swung round, met it fully and fairly with his foot, and sent it over his own head right into goal.

Tom Merry rushed. Did Hazeldene flinch? He had been known to do that before the hard charge of a hefty forward. Not a definite flinching of the charge, only a momentary flinching that lasted but the fraction of a second, but was fatal for all its brevity.

Anyway, his fist now met only air, and Tom, swerving aside so as not to barge into him unnecessarily, tumbled over the ball inside the net.

Two all! How the St. Jim's fellows yelled at that equalising point! Even grave seniors like Lefeyre and Baker and Monteith shouted, and the Head looked pleased, and the referee's face was wreathed in smiles, and one of the linesmen waved his flag frantically, and shouted:

"Oh, bai Jove, good, Clive—wattlin' good!"

"That's four goals scored, so far, and they've all fallen to the Colonial crowd, not one to any of you Britishers!" remarked Tom Brown to Johnny Bull. "Kangaroo first, then Delarey, then Squiff, and now that Afrikander chap of theirs."

"My word, you're right, Browney! But it's no odds, is it?"

Tom Brown grinned. He was thinking of the game to follow, about which Johnny had heard nothing as yet, and he held it a good omen that the goals had all come from shots

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made by fellows who would play for his own side in that game.

Right up to the minute before the finish the score stood at two all, and it fairly represented the run of the play. But in the closing seconds of the game Tom Merry beat Hazeldene with a daisy-cutter, and there was a roar that might have been heard a mile away.

"Never mind!" said Harry Wharton. "It was a tip-top game, and they only pipped us on the post."

But there were two who did mind. Racke and Crooke minded very much!

CHAPTER 3.

Before the Second Match.

THE Head suggested that we should all have tea in Hall, which meant that he would entertain our visitors," said Tom Merry. "Seemed to me quite a good idea, on the whole, as we're going to play another match. I'm not saying a word against the tea we shall get in Hall; it will be all right, I know. But it won't be quite as large and miscellaneous as a study tea, at best. So I'm for tea in Hall, then the match, and after that, as there will be no prep—that I'm authorised to state—tea in the studies, with these fellows divided out among those who can offer them the best spreads."

"What's this talk about another match, burler?" inquired Manners.

"We're not going to play them all over again, are we?" asked Fatty.

"No. The match is not St. Jim's v. Greyfriars. It's St. Jim's and Greyfriars against the Rest of the British Empire!" announced Tom, who had had a word or two with Squiff and Tom Brown and Harry Noble.

"What on earth—"

"Ripping good notion!"

"I don't get—"

"Bai Jove, Tom Mewwy, if you mean anythin' at all, I shall be vewwy much interested to heah what you do mean!"

It was Lowther who had acclaimed the notion as ripping good. Somehow he had guessed it at once. The rest were not so quick. But Tom made clear his meaning, and then they all quite agreed with Lowther.

"Dane's already ridden off to the Grammar School to ask their Cornstalks to come along," Kangaroo said. "As he didn't play this afternoon, we thought he might do something extra for the cause."

"They'll come, you bet!" said Blake. "Shouldn't wonder if jolly nearly all the jolly Rylcombe Fourth turns up to watch, too! Old Monk will let them off prep, all right, you bet!"

By the time tea was over the sides had taken shape.

Hazeldene said he would rather watch Wynn keep goal than keep himself. Tom had meant to give the visitors the odd man; but as things worked out, St. Jim's had six to five of Greyfriars. Some tossing for places was done as the fairest way of settling matters, and in the event Kerr, Mark Linley, Ernest Levison, and Dick Redfern, all quite as good as some of those included, found themselves outside the team.

A good many fellows were taking places other than those they usually filled. Tom gave up his own centre-forward position to Wharton, but had to use a lot of argument before he could get him to take it.

The combined St. Jim's and Greyfriars team was: Wynn; Bull and Figgins; Todd, Cherry, and Lowther; Vernon-Smith, Merry, Wharton, Blake, and Talbot.

The other side had no regular goalkeeper. But Kangaroo suggested Kit Wildrake, who had great activity and no end of coolness. The boy from Boot Leg Ranch, B.C., said he had no objection to trying. There was no very considerable difficulty about the rest, and the team, as it took the field, was:

Wildrake; Dane and Brown; Clive, Noble, and Roynance; Wootton minor, Field, Gay, Delarey, and Wootton major.

"We've had to cut tea," announced Gordon Gay, when he turned up at the head of some twenty or more Grammarians. "There wasn't time to get any. You chaps must have had yours early."

"Only our first tea," answered Lowther. "The second is still to come, and even now our servants prepare for it by buying up Dame Taggles, lock, stock, and barrel."

Manners, who had just started for the tuckshop, turned back at that.

"Servitors, be hanged!" he snapped. "If you're going to talk that sort of rot, Lowther—"

"Dear boy, know not you that the Prince of Wales is proud to bear on his crest the words: 'Ich dien'! Know you not what those words mean? Do you set up yourself as the superior of the first young man of the Empire? Are you not aware that we have visitors—not only our Greyfriars pals, but also a hungry contingent from the classic shades

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of Rylcombe, who must all be fed, or what will they say of the far-famed hospitality of St. Jim's? Do you—"

"Oh, chuck it! I'll go!" said Manners. "You'd talk a donkey's hind leg off!"

"No, no, Manners! Grundy has still his full complement of legs!"

"I don't know what you mean by that, Lowther, but—"

"But everyone else does, so it's quite all right, Grundy!"

said the humorist of the Shell suavely.

"Where's Fatty?" asked Figgins of Kerr, as they made their way to Little Side together. "I say, old chap, I wish you were playing. I like the notion of having Bull for a partner, all serene; but—"

"Doesn't matter a bit," said Kerr. "I'm content. Fatty, just ran up to the study to make sure whether we've enough for tea. We're to entertain Kangaroo & Co., as well as Field and the three Rylcombe Diggers, according to arrangements. They haven't much in Kangaroo's study, and they're short of tin, owing to Glyn having spent his last sou on one of his inventions."

"My hat, we ought to have plenty!" answered Figgy.

"That whacking great hamper Fatty had from home yesterday would feed half the school, and we hardly scratched the surface of it last night, you might say."

"Good hefty scratch!" said Kerr, grinning. "Here comes the grampus, wearing a look of woe. What's the matter, old roly-poly pudding?"

"Somebody's been at our grub!" announced Fatty tragically.

"Much gone?" asked Figgins.

"Well, I wouldn't say that there's enough to run us short, not even with the seven chaps coming in to tea. But there's jolly well enough stolen for me to see at a glance it had gone! Wish I could catch the rotter who boned it!"

"I say, Kerr, could it have been that sweep Ablett?" Figgins said. "I never thought of Fatty's grub when I said he'd better fetch our imposts from the study-table and take them to old Ratty. You're a fat-headed ass, porpoise! You ought to have locked the stuff up."

"I did. But the key of the cupboard was left in the Able-drawer, and the drawer was an inch or so open. I know I never left it like that."

"It might have been Ablett," said Kerr thoughtfully.

"But it needn't have been, either. It might have been Baggy, you know; and I wouldn't put it past Chowie, or one or two more in our House."

"I'm sure I shan't be in form after this!" said Fatty disconsolately.

"You think too much of grub!" snapped Figgins.

"I don't. You often say that, but it's all wrong, Figgy. 'Tain't really sense! A fellow can't live without eating. Well, then!"

And Fatty rolled to his place in goal, for the trio from the New House were a bit behind the rest, and Wharton—to whom Tom Merry had insisted upon giving the captaincy—had tossed with Harry Noble and won choice of ends.

CHAPTER 4.

Match the Second.

GORDON GAY kicked off, and the Colonial forward-line went for the other side's goal in fine style, with halves backing them up well. Fatty was tested in the first minute of the game, but came out of the test right end up in spite of his worry about the raid upon the grub.

But then the other side got going, and the ball was transferred to the other half. The attacking string of the side which Wharton skippered was very strong indeed, and they took very little time in settling down to good combination.

The Bouncer gave Roynance and Tom Brown no end of trouble, and on the other wing Talbot was a thorn in the sides of Clive and Dane.

The Empire team's backs showed rare good form, however, Dane putting up the best game he had ever done at St. Jim's; and, though the pressure was almost incessant for something like twenty minutes, Wildrake had only one shot to stop. He dealt with that coolly and well; but most of those who watched thought it rather too much to expect that a fellow who had had so little experience of the job he had taken on should prove equal to it when the shots began to rain in fast and thick.

That they were going to do that before long, Racke and Crooke at least felt certain.

Possibly these two were not quite the best judges of footer at St. Jim's. But they were satisfied that they knew all that really mattered about it; and, having come down on the first game, they sought to even up on the second.

Sorope and Clampe and the two or three others of the sportive set were not at first very keen on fresh bets. They had won, and they rather liked the notion of sticking to their winnings—when they got them. Chowie, who had a



"Who says beefsteak-and-kidney pie?" asked Fatty Wynn. There was unanimity in the response. "Right-ho! I'll cut it into ten pieces," said Fatty. "But I can't serve you all at once. Gay—you first, then Field, then the Woottons. I guess the rest of you had better take a sausage-roll or two each while you're waiting." (See page 9.)

couple of quid to come, positively refused to risk a bob of it. Mellish, who had won ten shillings, declined to venture more than half. Trimble would have made any bets the pair cared to accept; but they did not care to accept any from Baggy. It had become an axiom at St. Jim's that Baggy never paid. Lowther said his name should have been Owen, not Bagley.

But the leading black sheep of the Shell felt so absolutely confident that the Bushwhackers, as they politely called Kangaroo's team, were quite out of it, that they were ready to give longish odds if only they could get the winners of their cash on the first event to risk it again. And, attracted by offers of seven to one on victory for Wharton's side, Scrope, Clampe, and Piggott, of the Third, who had had a remittance that morning, ventured what would put Racke and Crooke straight again—provided Wharton's side did what it ought to do.

By the time they had made their books nearly half the game had been played through, and the St. Jim's and Greyfriars side had scored once, Wharton having put in a shot that gave Wildrake no chance.

Just on half-time Tom Merry beat the new Canadian junior again. But Wildrake was not really in fault, as his comrades hastened to assure him.

He did not specially need their comforting words. Kit Wildrake in goal was as cool as Kit Wildrake elsewhere; and, though he did not do things at all like Fatty Wynn, he did them effectively. He had stopped a dozen shots by this time, and hankered for more.

Two to nil in favour of the side they were backing was not exactly what Racke and Crooke had expected when they had started giving seven to one. But it looked good enough to them.

During the interval the Colonial side took counsel together. "Anything to suggest, Gay?" asked Kangaroo.

"Well, if you don't really mind, I think I can suggest something that might buck up the forward-line," replied Gay.

"Go ahead! What is it?"

"Only that you should let these two bounders"—he indicated his pals, the Woottons, by a wave of his hand—"come inside. Field and Delarey have been playing up jolly well; but we don't know their play as we do one another's, and I think it might work."

Neither of the Greyfriars fellows minded at all, and the change was made.

The results of it were apparent early in the second half. The three from Hylcombe formed a very strong inside combination, and Squiff and Delarey made pace along the wings and put the ball in to them almost as well as Talbot and the Bounder were doing for their inside men.

Within ten minutes of the restart the first Colonial goal came.

Delarey had completely diddled Peter Todd, much to his own delight and to the disgust of the able Peter, and had slung the leather in to the front of goal in fine style. There was a bit of a mix-up, Johnny Bull and Figgins opposed to the three Hylcombe Australians, with Wynn hovering in the rear. Gordon Gay met Figgins' charge, and Wootton major eluded Johnny's. Bull had a tussle with Wootton minor, to whom the ball had come from his brother, while Figgy was picking himself up. It looked as though Bull would clear; but Wootton minor tapped the ball aside to Gordon Gay. Figgins went for Gay again; but the Hylcombe skipper coolly backheeled to Wootton major, and he steered the ball neatly past Fatty into the corner of the net.

A mighty roar came from the Colonial team and from the Grammarians, who were naturally backing the side on which their men played.

But no one on the other side, and few among the spectators, fancied that the Colonials would be able to keep up that form.

"It ain't such a safe thing as you made out, Aubrey, by gad!" grumbled Crooke.

"Oh, it's all right, old gun! Look—Merry's got the ball—now Wharton has it—he's passed out to Talbot—see it come in again! Wildrake's sure to be beaten this time, dash it all!"

Racke was actually excited, though it was not footer alone that made him so.

"Look out, Wildrake!" yelled Kangaroo.

"What d'ye reckon I'm here for?" returned Wildrake, and almost in the moment of speaking he effected the best save of the day.

Blake had shot—a real hot one, high up and close to the corner of the net. The Canadian jumped, pulled the ball down, met it with his foot as it fell, and lifted it well over

the heads of the crowd around the goal, to fall close to Roylance.

The New Zealander went off at once like a hare. He made a couple of dozen yards, and then slung across, straight and true; to Squiff on the other wing—a pass in a hundred.

Squiff was well up the field, but not offside. The three Rylcombe players had fallen back a bit to help in the defence; but Delarey was also well up, and he and Roylance raced on another along one wing, while Squiff galloped along the other.

Lowther struggled after Squiff, but with little hope of catching him. Bob Cherry, cutting across, was nearer. But, with Bob on his heels and Figgins drawn, Squiff sent the leather all along the ground to Roylance, and Roylance dashed at Johnny Bull with it close to his toes.

They met with a thud, and both sprawled. Squiff, with Figgins and Cherry one on each side of him, raced for the ball, while they scrambled up. Delarey, coming in on the other side, got there first, and sent in one that Fatty had to go on his knees to stop. With a bound, Squiff cleared himself of the attentions of the two who were hampering him, met the ball with his head, and put it into the net.

Two all!

Racke and Crooke began to look glum. Wharton and his side realised that they would have to make a very big effort to win. It was no use having the bigger share of the play if that bigger share failed to express itself in terms of goals.

From the kick-off they got away nicely. But Tom Brown saved, and again "the dashed Bushwhackers," as Racke sourly called them, menaced Fatty's citadel.

Fatty played up like a hero then. Twice he saved finely, and then Figgins cleared, and the play moved to the other end.

But, try as they might, Tom Merry & Co. could not score. Time was drawing on. Mr. Railton, who had consented to referee the match, glanced at his watch.

REAL PHOTOS OF FAMOUS FOOTBALLERS

actually IN ACTION on the field of play to be GIVEN FREE with THE "GEM" LIBRARY
LOOK OUT FOR NO. 1. "FANNY" WALDEN of Tottenham F.C. in our next issue but one.

The Rylcombe trio broke away, and Racke cursed bitterly. But Johnny Bull broke up the attack and sent the leather to his own forwards. Tom Merry made a fine run. Wharton put in a pile-driving shot. Wildrake met it with his body, and Clifton Dane cleared. Peter Todd had the ball, with no one near him, and was taking a hurried glance to see where best he might put it, when—

Phew!

"The whistle went, and the match had ended in a draw. 'Phew!' breathed Monty Lowther. 'I'm glad of that. I'd had enough, and a bit over. Thomas, three hours of footer in a day may be all right for stalwarts like you, but it's a trifle too much for a fellow who runs rather to brain than to brawn.'"

"And it seems a trifle too much for anyone who runs more to fat than to either!" said Kerr, with obvious reference to his chum, Fatty Wynn.

"A goalkeeper should keep cool," Figgins said. "Look at Wildrake! He's cool enough. Be careful, porpoise, or Tom Merry will be chucking you out of the team, and shoving him in."

"I don't care!" panted Fatty. "Come along, you fellows! I'm peckish!"

The Australian contingent went off the field with the New House trio, whose guests they were to be, and were accompanied as far as the door of the New House by Delarey and Clive, the two South Africans.

Ablett, the New House page, came round the corner at that moment, and again Delarey looked at him curiously.

"I'm jolly certain I've seen that boulder somewhere before," he said. "I remember his mouth and that ugly hanging lip of his."

"Ever been in choky, Delarey?" asked Kangaroo. "I don't want to say anything against Ablett, but he looks like the sort of merchant that might have got himself locked up some time or other."

"No; I haven't been in prison yet," replied the Rebel. "Oh, now I do remember! It was in a police-court at Cape Town, the day before I sailed for England. The man who was showing me round took me in there. I remember a drunken Kafir who claimed to have got where he'd got by drinking too much lemonade. Then this chap was put in the dock."

"If you're quite sure of it, Ratty ought to be warned," said Kerr seriously.

"Ratty? Oh, I know! Your beloved Housemaster, you mean. I'm sure; my memory's a good one when it gets awake, and Ablett's isn't the sort of face you forget, is it?"

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But I don't know what he had been taken in charge for; and it's some little time ago, and he may have made a fresh start since then."

"Yes, on our grub!" snorted Fatty Wynn.

He had no doubt now who was the thief.

Delarey and Clive were turning away as he said that, and they did not stop to inquire what he meant. But Fatty told the rest as they went upstairs to the study.

CHAPTER 5.

A Base Plot.

RACKE and Crooke were entertaining no visitors. They were not on friendly terms with any of the Greyfriars crowd, and none of the Greyfriars crowd would have cared to join them, however lavish the spread provided.

But, from the standpoint of Racke and Crooke, who had a habit of doing themselves very well indeed, the spread in their joint study would not be lavish.

Both were hard up. Even Aubrey Racke's profiteer parent kicked at times against his hopeful son's demands for cash, and he had been kicking just lately.

Moreover, the two black sheep had an engagement for the next night that they could not keep unless they could scrape together at least a few quids. There was staying at the Green Man, the shady pub at Rylcombe, kept by that eminent sportsman, Mr. Jolliffe, a young man reputed to have more money than wits; and the worthy Jolliffe had invited his valued young friends, Aubrey Racke and George Gerald Crooke, over for a quiet game of cards, in which it was proposed that Mr. Jolliffe, Mr. Banks, the bookie, and the two St. Jim's wastrels should combine to fleece this individual.

It had not occurred to Racke and Crooke that, if only Mandeville was to be fleeced, Messrs. Jolliffe and Banks

would not need their assistance. It had not even occurred to Racke or to Crooke that, from the point of view of those two shady customers, the Shell sheep—black though they were—offered good opportunity for fleecing, or that Mr. Mandeville might be merely a decoy duck. Racke and Crooke knew that they were hard up; but Messrs. Jolliffe and Banks could not know that.

As they left Little Side, with sour faces, the precious pair were hailed by Clampe and Chowle.

"Here, pony up, you two!" said Leslie Clampe.

"Don't you be in such a hurry, Clampe!" protested Chowle. "You can wait! You had a whacking remittance only this morning! I'm on the giddy rocks!"

"It's only a measly quid you've got to come. That won't float you off the dashed rocks!" answered Clampe, with plutocratic contempt.

"Two quid!" Chowle corrected.

And he held out his hand.

"Idiot!" snarled Racke. "Don't you see Railton over there? He'll dashed soon tumble to what we're up to if you go givin' away the show like that, by gad!"

"Yes. Don't be a fatheaded chump, Chowle!" chimed in Crooke, who saw Scrope and Mellish appearing from one direction and Piggott from another, and wanted to get away. "We'll settle on Monday, won't we, Racke?"

"Sure!" answered Aubrey, linking arms with Crooke, and hurrying away.

Face to face in their own study, Racke and Crooke felt no more cheerful.

"This mucks up everything for to-morrow night, dash it all!" said Racke. "Confound those Bushwhackers! Who'd have thought they were capable of pullin' off a draw?"

"Shouldn't wonder if it was all fixed up, just to dashed well let us in!" snarled Crooke, dropping into the armchair like one tired out. "I reckon we owe both sides a grudge—the Bushwhackers for not losin', and the other bounders for not winnin'—what?"

"I should say so! Wish we could bite Clampe's ear for a fiver each for to-morrow night, Gerry!"

"If we could get him to go with us!"

"No such luck! A bet on the sly is as much as he'll risk now."

For a minute or two there was silence while both thought hard.

Then Racke, the bolder of the two in rascality, spoke.

"Clampe won't lend if he knows it," he said slowly.

"But suppose he lent without knowin' it—eh, what?"

"You mean—"

"What do you suppose I mean? You weren't born yesterday, Gerry! I want a chance at that chap Mande-

ville. Jolliffe says he's rollin' in it. He won't suspect us—public schoolboys an' all that rot, y'know. That's why Jolliffe wants us along, I fancy. It's what Wildrake would call a cinch."

"It does look like easy money!" sighed Crooke. "An', of course, we could put Clampe's back as soon as we'd realised on the Green Man project. But he might miss it first. An' there's gettin' in to bag it. It would take some doin', Aubrey."

"I know a way in. I believe I know exactly where Clampe puts it, and— Look here, Gerry!"

Racke brought out his wallet, and produced therefrom two "Bank of Engraving" fimsies, which at a casual glance looked quite like five-pound Bank of England notes.

"It's most likely to be in fivers," said Racke. "We take one each, an' leave two, with these two between them—twig? If Clampe does look at his little whack, it is almost certain to be the outside ones he'll look at, don't you see?"

"My hat, that's a notion! But it's a big risk, Aubrey."

"Do you want to lose your chance of makin' fifty or so to-morrow night? Jolliffe said it might divvy out somethin' like that each, y'know. An' it isn't stealin'. Clampe's a pal of ours, more or less; an' a chap can borrow from a pal, I should think, by gad!"

Crooke agreed, with the mental reservation that he would let Racke do all the real "borrowing." He would not touch Clampe's notes till they were clear of the New House.

CHAPTER 6. Guests of the New House.

MEANWHILE, the study which Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn shared in the New House was crowded, and if the board did not groan under the alluring spread which Fatty's hamper had provided, it must have been because the board was too bored, as Kangaroo said; or, having grown up, did not groan any more, as Squiff retorted; or because it left the groaning to the victims of bad puns, as Kerr told the two offenders.

Ten—the Rylcombe's trio, Kangaroo & Co., and Squiff, besides the occupants of the study—could not all sit round the table. But the armchair was good enough for Fatty, and Kerr and Glyn sat on the floor in the absence of sufficient chairs. That, as Kerr said, meant that Fatty must wait on them, as he was in a better position for jumping up and sitting down again than anyone else. And Fatty, feeling his responsibility as host, did not demur.

The players had all had a bath and changed, while Kerr and Bernard Glyn got the table ready, and they felt in excellent trim to do justice to the contents of that noble hamper from Wales.

"Who says beefsteak-and-kidney pie?" asked Fatty. There was unanimity in the response. Everybody said beefsteak-and-kidney pie, and said it as if he meant it, too. Kerr and Figgins, who knew those beefsteak-and-kidney pies, with the rich gravy that made each morsel of meat so succulent, and the flaky crust, said it with special vigour.

"Right-ho! I'll cut it into ten pieces," said Fatty. "But I can't serve you all at once. Gay, you first, then Field, then the Woottons. I guess the rest of you had better take a sausage-rot or two each while you're waiting."

"That's what I call a stroke of genius!" replied Kangaroo. "I'll take two. You may serve me last, but not least!"

"Can't weigh every bit. But I'm going to make them as nearly equal as I can, you bet, Kangy."

The meal proceeded, with everybody in the best of spirits. Fatty had forgotten about the depredations. There was enough for everyone, in spite of them.

"Still at it, you hard-working bouncers?" spoke a cheery voice from the door as Tom Merry looked in.

"Still at it, Thomas," replied Kangaroo. "Another cheese-cake or two, Fatty, old dear, if you will be so kind." "Have a cheesecake, Tom Merry!" inquired Fatty hospitably.

"Three if you like, dear boy, though I don't know that I've really room for them."

"Here you are. But it's a wrong principle, you know. You ought to stop eating while you still feel hungry."

"Do you?" asked Gordon Gay, grinning.

"Nearly always," answered Fatty sadly. "But," he added, brightening up, "I'm not doing it this time."

"I've come across to tell you about the sleeping arrangements, Kangy," Tom said. "Railton left it pretty much to me, and if you don't think Ratty will mind—"

"Sure to," chimed in Figgins. "On principle—he's great on that, like our tame grampus—he'll object to anything that anyone else wants. But it will be all right. We won't say anything to him."

"Well, then, you've to clear the Shell chumps in your House out of their dorm. They can sleep in sanny. There's nobody there just now. That will just about leave room for the Colonial crowd. Eig t beds, aren't there?"

"Nine," replied Kerr.

"Right-ho! They can take Glyn in if they like. He might pine if separated from Kangaroo and Dane. Wharton and that lot are sleeping in our dorm, and it will be a bit of a squeeze, anyway. Racke and Crooke decline to turn out for anyone. Oh, about pyjamas, and so on? I'm borrowing for all the visitors. Manners has got leave to scoot over to Rylcombe and get toothbrushes for them. Anything else they want they can borrow. You do brush your wool sometimes, don't you, Field? Well, to-morrow morning I'll lend you Kangy's hairbrush—nice military style, without a handle."

"Thanks awfully, Merry! I say, you fellows are looking after us well."

"That's all right. Only thing I was afraid of was that Fatty mightn't give you enough to eat. But—"

"I say, Tom Merry," expostulated Fatty.

"If Ratty does kick, tell him the Head said it was to be so," said Tom. "It's true, or near enough. He left it to Railton, and Railton, being no end of a sensible chap, left it to Kildare, and Kildare shoved it on to me."

"I don't think I'll tell Ratty that," said Figgins, with a grin. "He's too muddle-headed to understand it properly. I'll speak to Thompson about the Shell bouncers clearing out. Ratty won't know anything, unless the overseas specimens kick up a giddy row in the dorm, in which case he'll probably be among them with his little cane, without waiting to ask who they are."

"And touching up a visitor with his little cane by mistake will hurt the visitor's feelings a whole heap more than it will Ratty's," added Kerr.

"I guess so! I say, entertainment in the Rag in half an hour. Bring your music. It's impromptu. Hope you're not too full up to sing or make some sort of noise of that nature. Can you Grammar School noblemen come?"

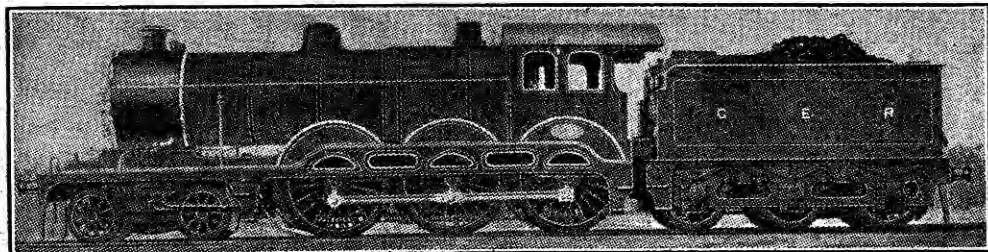
"Wish we could," said Gordon Gay. "But if we three stayed all the crowd would insist on it, and the Head wouldn't stand for that."

"Just what the Head's hopeful son said," answered Tom, "and he ought to know. By the way, Monkey wanted me to tell you that he and the rest would be at the gates in five minutes, and it's about ten since he said so. You'd better scoot, perhaps."

So the three Grammarians scooted, though loth to go, and

(Continued on page 12.)

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The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited By TOM MERRY.

Try Again For Funk

A CHATTY HEALTH TALK.

By the Sporting Doctor.

HAVE you ever watched a very small boy writing a letter? He has his fingers all cramped up together. He holds the pen as if he expected it to jump out of his hand, and very often his tongue sticks out of his mouth. He looks worried, too.

He is working tremendously hard, isn't he? And yet he is doing something that needs very little strength.

Think how easily you write, compared to that small boy! You can hold the pen quite loosely, and you scarcely move a muscle in your body.

In fact, you can buy for a penny what costs him a pound. You have learned how to spend little and get much. You don't go wasting your strength on trifles.

No; but you did waste your strength once upon a time, when you were learning. Don't forget that.

Learning means getting to do things easily with an easy mind. Once upon a time you were in a blue funk when you tried to walk across your nursery floor. You were afraid you might fall—you often did fall. Are you in a funk when you go for a walk now?

I have seen a surgeon doing a most difficult operation. He was quite cool, and kept chatting to his assistant. And yet what he was doing was tremendously risky. I have seen a soldier facing great danger just as if he was at home in an armchair.

They were both brave men. But suppose you could have made them change places. Suppose the soldier had wakened up, and found himself with the surgeon's lancet in his hand. Suppose the surgeon had found himself leading a troop of men. Can you see them? The soldier would have been in a blue funk at the first time they hear bullets have been in a blue funk, too.

Why? Because they would both be strange to the jobs. They wouldn't know what to do. They would not be accustomed to the kind of work they had to do.

So you get the idea? Quite half of what is called pluck is just being used to a thing. You will often hear people say that a doctor is plucky to go near a person with fever. He isn't. He doesn't think about the danger at all. He's used to it.

What does that mean? It means that if you are afraid of anything you'd best face up to it. After a bit you won't be afraid any longer. I promise you—after a bit you won't be afraid of it any longer.

You'll be used to it, just like the kid learning to write, or the surgeon or the soldier. Most doctors feel very bad the first time they see an operation. Most soldiers get "cold feet" the first time they hear bullets going over their heads.

It's that "first time" that knocks us out, and makes us think we're funks. The second time is a little better. And after that it gets easier and easier.

So if you're inclined to funk, try again. Trying again is the first step in the direction that leads to becoming a man.

(I will tell you how to take the measure of a funk next week.)

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Soccer for Girls.

WHAT I THINK.

By Doris Levison.

I have been quietly observing for a considerable time past how the topic, "Should Girls Play Football?" has been given prominence in the Press. Both sexes have freely divulged their opinions as to whether the game is suitable or unsuitable for girls to play, and as I am quite sure many of you must have formed an opinion for yourselves, I thought it would be a good idea to add mine to it.

To begin with, I will start off in the customary diplomatic manner by saying "Yes and no!" Personally, I don't care for it myself, and my friend Ethel Cleveland thinks the same. On the other hand, George Herries' sister Georgina votes it "tophole," and many other girls who have relatives at St. Jim's back her up.

Some of the views Georgina expressed were well worth listening to, and had the ultimate effect of persuading me to write this article. To begin with, Miss Herries is ten stone five in weight, and is as robust as her brother. She is vigorous and energetic, and as unable to keep still or stay indoors as the average boy. Her inclinations are masculine, and, taken on the whole, I call her a thorough tomboy.

It is therefore to football she turns to wear off her superfluous energy. Georgina avers that it "does her good," and I am not going to dispute the fact.

I just want to state my opinion that there is a right kind of game for every sort of girl. All girls are not built the same, and the outdoor pursuits they choose should be in accordance with their physique.

The "lame girl" (I include Ethel and myself in that category) ought to be content with hockey as her most strenuous sport, and she should not go beyond it. Tennis, swimming, and dancing are also all well and good, if indulged in in moderation. Girls who go in for these pastimes are, in nine cases out of ten, fit and healthy.

I've always discovered this to be so, anyway. Football for girls will probably increase in popularity, but I do not think it will ever become general. It is certainly not every girl's game.

Seen at the Cinema.

By Joe Frayne (Third Form).

TAKING a casual stroll around the other day, I came across "Toby Marsh, the page-boy at St. Jim's." To my surprise, I found that youth in tears.

Now, whenever I see a chap blubbing, a lump always rises in my throat.

ANSWERS

EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2

"Toby!" I cried hoarsely. "What's the matter?"

"Boo-hoo! I was hopin' to be off dooty this afternoon, so as I could go an' see my sweetheart in Wayland. But Mr. Ratcliff won't let me go. 'E's goin' to play golf, an' 'e says I'm to go an' caddy for 'im."

I felt extremely sorry for Toby, and after some moments' reflection I hit upon a brilliant brain-wave.

"Have you a spare uniform, Toby?" I asked.

"Yes. But what—"

"Trot it out—quick! I mean to put it on, and pass myself off as you. You can go and see your sweetheart, and I'll accompany Ratty to the golf-links."

"But—but he'll rekkenise you! Least-ways, he'll know it ain't me."

"Not if I pull my hat well down over my forehead, and tie a muffler round the lower part of my chinny."

Toby seemed very dubious, but he produced the extra uniform, and I was soon attired in page-boy garb. Bidding Toby depart, I went and reported myself to Mr. Ratcliff, who was pacing to and fro in the quadrangle, with his golf-bag slung over his shoulder.

"You are late, Toby!" he said sternly.

"Sorry, sir, but I've had several odd jobs to do since dinner," I said, imitating Toby's squeaky voice as well as I was able.

Ratty darted a searching glance at me. "Why is your face half-hidden by that absurd muffler?" he demanded.

"Which I've got a bad cold," said Ratty.

"H'm! Well, come along," said Ratty, handing me the bag containing his clubs. "We have no time to lose."

We set off in the direction of Wayland. Ratty spoke to me occasionally as we tramped along, and I managed to play the part of Toby with great success.

It was dreary work, carrying Ratty's clubs round and round the links. He played for hours, and dusk was falling when we started back to St. Jim's. I had done Toby Marsh a real good turn, I thought, anyway.

As we passed through Wayland, however, a chap in page-boy garb suddenly emerged from the picture-palace. He gave a startled cry on catching sight of Ratty, but it was too late. He had been seen and recognised.

"Toby!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "Then you"—turning to me—"you are an impostor! Explain yourself, sir!"

I mumbled a lame explanation, but it quite failed to satisfy the irate Ratty.

"I shall make a report to your headmaster," he said, when he had discovered who I was. "Doubtless you will be severely caned for practising this deception! As for you, Toby, I will instruct the House dame to punish you."

And Ratty strode on. As we followed in his wake I muttered to Toby:

"You champlee chump! You gave the whole show away by exposing yourself like that!"

"Which I'm verry sorry."

"Bless your sorrow! By the way, where's this sweetheart of yours?"

"On the screen," said Toby.

"What?"

And then the silly young duffer explained that his sweetheart was Mary Pickford.

"She's called the World's Sweetheart," he said, "so natcherally she's mine!"

"You—you— And I thought you were going to meet some local girl! Dashed if I'd have made this sacrifice if I'd known!" And I walked on savagely, brooding over the tragic fate which awaited me on my arrival back at St. Jim's.

Two on each hand—and stingers, too! Oh dear!

The Funniest Thing I've Seen or Heard.

SOME FUNNY INCIDENTS GATHERED TOGETHER AT RANDOM.

By Ernest Levison.

MONTY LOWTHER.—Manners' face after discovering Herbert Skimpole, had taken it into his head to develop his most recently taken film. (I might remark that Skimpole's way of developing it was to give the film in question a thorough sun-bath immediately after removing it from the camera.—T.M.)

TOM MERRY (YOUR EDITOR).—The countenance of the Hon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—Gussy for short—when he discovered the girl of his heart who had taken him days—and cost him three to four weeks, was none other than G. F. Kerr, of the New House Fourth, in disguise!

KIT WILDRAKE.—I guess the brightest incident I witnessed for many a day was during the last Editorial gathering held in the Skipper's shack. Tom Merry had a dandy pile of communications from his reader galoots before him, and was selecting one here and there to read to us. I guess it was good to see him gulp out the remark, from a letter written by a gal enthusiast of Tottenham College: "Dear Tom-ass Merry."

HARRY MANNERS.—George Alfred Grundy once accepted an invitation from Lowther to give him his views on cricket. The funniest thing I have seen for quite a long while was Grundy's dial when Lowther informed him that he intended to use his "views" for his comic column in the "Weekly."

GERALD CROOKE.—Racke was holding an "evening party" in his study, and the fellows were all going it great guns. Suddenly, to the alarm of the whole party, there came a knock-upon the study door. Fearing it to be a master, the whole scene was swiftly changed. Cigarettes and cards were burnt, and an expensive bottle of eau-de-Cologne was smashed to alleviate the smell of tobacco. The funniest thing I ever saw was Racke's face when, upon opening the door, he merely beheld Toby with a parcel containing a new suit for him which had arrived from Wainland.

TAGGIE RECKNESS CARDEW.—When the old Taggies beat awake one morning from a sweet dream of peace and plenty of the best to quench his insatiable thirst, he was astounded to find his clock indicated a quarter to nine. He should have rung the rising bell at eight, and performed sundry other duties. Later, Taggie informed us—we naturally being curious to know why rising-bell had not "rized" us as usual. "Which as 'ow it was pitch black dark like mid-night when bi just hawoke, so bi naterally goes hof to sleep agin—" And I can quite believe what he said, for a certain naughty youth—watching stealthily for an opportunity—crept down to Taggies' lodge and cleaned off all the paint on the bed-room window, which he, the naughty youth, had applied after dark the previous evening! I can assure you it wasn't me.

GEORGE GORE.—I was in the sammy with a cold, and Baggy Trimble was in a bed on my left. There is little or no doubt that Trimble's malady was due to gorging. However, Herbert Skimpole, who digs in my digs (is that a pun?—T.M.), was sympathetic. After purchasing a tin of sardines for the priceless sum of threepence-halfpenny, he went to his study, and after a struggle lasting half-an-hour managed to get every bone out of them. The remnants he placed on a Thin Lunch biscuit, and then conveyed the mighty repast spread on a large dinner plate to the sammy. Was Baggybus grateful? Well, if he was, he simply expressed his gratitude in the form of a grunt, grabbed up the offering, and buried it back at Skimpole's dial. The biscuit lodged behind one goggle, and the sardine shavings stuck on the front of the other. This is the funniest thing I have seen for terms!

DORIS LEVISON.—The most amusing thing I've known was when that horrid, fat, loathsome boy Trimble fell in love with me, and actually imagined I was encouraging his absurdity.

Our Personal Column.

By Monty Lowther.

WANTED.—By handsome young man, engaging manners, and taking disposition. A good home, preferably with a fellow of means. Uncomfortable in his own study owing to jealousy.—Apply, Bagley Trimble, Study No. 2, Fourth Form.

FOR SALE.—Several fancy waistcoats, and many pairs of socks in delicate shades of pink and light blue. Owner has no further use for same, as they fail to match the colour of his right eye, at present in mourning.—Apply, Aubrey Racke, Study No. 7.

WILL the young gentleman who borrowed a plate of chicken and ham from the cupboard of Study No. 10, Shell passage, kindly return the plate, as the occupants of the aforesaid study have not enough crockery to go round!—Harry Manners.

LOST, stolen, or strayed. One prize ass from Study No. 6, answering to the name of Gussy. No reward will be paid for the return of same.—Information to Jack Blake.

SEVERAL sparring partners wanted. Must be of good physique. Weaklings need not apply or they may get hurt.—Apply in person after six o'clock. George Alfred Grundy, Study No. 3, Shell.

GRUB bought in any quantity. Pork-pies, steak-and-kidney puddings, pastries, buns—in fact, anything in the eating line. Hampers valued and sampled. Bring your little worries to me, and have no more of those horrible pains inside.—David Llewellyn Wynne, Study No. 4, New House.

INFORMATION wanted concerning the person or persons who arranged the booby-trap on the door of my study to fall on my head when I entered. Anybody having any knowledge of same, or knowing who recently purchased a quantity of tar and feathers, is asked to communicate with Gerald Knox, prefect.

ANSWERS TO READERS.

By The Editor.

"A COLONIAL READER" (Johannesburg, South Africa).—Tom Merry has no brothers or sisters. Talbot is a trifle over sixteen, and Marie Rivers is nearly eighteen. I cannot give the colour of the hair and eyes of the juniors you name. I'm afraid space will hardly permit me.

"REGULAR 'GEM' READER."—The portraits of Monty Lowther and Reginald Talbot appeared on the back of the "Gem" during the summer of last year. Glad you liked the Cardew-Levison stories which appeared in the "Gem" during January. Since writing your letter you will no doubt have seen the stories dealing with Aubrey Racke.

"A JEWELL AMONG 'GEMS'" (Ash Road, Aldershot).—Further stories dealing with Marie Rivers and Reginald Talbot will no doubt appear in the future. Reginald Talbot is an orphan. The most handsome boy in the Shell can be chosen personally by the readers, from the portraits given on the back page of the "Gem" during the last fourteen months. I should choose from Lowther, Tom Merry, Noble, and Talbot, all of whom have appeared. No, Richard Redfern is not related to Barbara Redfern of Cliff House, but he has three sisters—Olivia, Kathleen, and Phrynette. Adolphus Digges is the youngest boy in the Fourth Form. I don't think Talbot and Tom Merry are likely ones to quarrel. Lumley-Lumley had a bad illness once.

"Toff" when he belonged to a criminal gang? Because he was the son of the then existing Captain Crow. Crow was fairly rich, and dressed his son as the "Toff" of Angel Alley. The captain eventually died, and the Toff only became wealthy at intervals—such as after a successful series of hauls. After that the Toff merely became a nickname. Marie Rivers, the daughter of John Rivers, the hooligan who succeeded Captain Crow, knew Talbot from infancy, and naturally adhered to the only name under which he was known. Your favourite characters are well chosen, and will undoubtedly appear prominently as soon as something crops up in which they can shine.

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Sons of the Empire.

(Continued from page 9.)

the rest of the crowd shortly afterwards crossed the quad to the School House for the entertainment.

That went off with what the papers call "ecstacy" in spite of the fact that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy persisted in singing two tenor solos, and an attempt made by Grundy to give an exposition of his cleverness as a ventriloquist.

After the entertainment there was a supper in Hall—light compared with the second tea, which was just as well, all things considered. And after supper came bed, with almost everyone quite ready for it.

The Colonial contingent—Noble and Field from Australia, Delaney and Clive from South Africa, Dane and Wildrake from Canada, and Tom Brown and Roylance from New Zealand—trooped across to the New House. The sleeping arrangements pleased them all. With them went Glyn.

They saw nothing of Mr. Ratcliffe just then. Figgins and Korr and Fatty showed them to their quarters, and Fatty took Delaney aside.

"I say, Delaney," he said, "I'm afraid you're right about that chap Ablett being a wrong 'un, but wrong about any chance of his having reformer's. There's money missing from our study, and we're pretty sure he bagged some of my grub, so it looks as though he'd boned the cash, too."

"I'm sorry, Wynn. Not that I'm to blame, of course. I only suggested that he might be all serene now, and I don't know a bit what he was in the dock at Cape Town for, you see. Have you tackled him?"

"We haven't had the chance."

"Said anything to your respected Housemaster?"

Fatty made a wry face.

"Not likely to, unless we can prove it out and out. Ratty's such an old sweep to make a fuss."

"I say, Fatty, Glyn says Manners said that he saw our new buttons in Rylcombe, talking to a giddy suspicious-looking character," said Figgins.

"There you are! Shouldn't wonder if the place is burgled to-night," returned Fatty gloomily. "If a chap's a criminal in South Africa it ain't a bit likely he'd be an angel in England."

"No—not with the English climate," remarked Squiff. "Enough to turn an angel into a criminal, that is."

"We'll leave you to that argument," said Kerr. "As for me, give me good Scots weather."

"Never heard before that there was such a thing," answered Roylance. "I was in Scotland a week last summer hols, and it rained every day."

The three went, and the nine proceeded to make ready for bed.

Most of them were asleep within ten minutes of getting into bed.

Racke and Crooke knew nothing of the visitors in the New House Shell dormitory. They had not attended the entertainment or gone into Hall for supper, and they were quite uninterested in the arrangements made for the bestowal of the visitors.

In the Shell dormitory of the School House talk soon died away. It was between eleven and half-past when the two black sheep got out of bed to go on their nefarious errand, and by that time everyone else was asleep.

"Crooke was more than half minded to back out now. But Racke held him to his undertaking, and he went, sullenly and fearfully."

"In the dorm. do you say?" he asked, with chattering teeth—though it was not cold—as they paused near the back regions of the New House, and well in the gloom of its wall. "My hat! Why didn't you tell me that before?" Dash it all, I thought for certain it would be in his study."

"There's no more danger," Racke replied. "I know just where to put my hand on it. Clampe has a box at the foot of his bed—third on the right from the door. It isn't locked. I know that, too. There's a kind of wallet in the lining of the left side. It's leather lined—a trunk, really, not exactly a box. Clampe showed me his hidey-holes for valuables once when we were particularly pally. I can find the notes, you bet!"

"Well, that doesn't sound too bad," answered Crooke, relieved. "I'll keep 'em at the door."

CHAPTER 7.

A Night Disturbance.

THEY were inside, and they had made no noise in getting in. Crooke did not ask how Racke happened to know of the window with the loose sash, which the blade of a knife served to open. Crooke did not feel like asking questions just then.

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He clutched Racke's arm as they stole up the lowest flight of the staircase, nearer than to Mr. Ratcliffe's own quarters than they would be at any other part of the upward way.

"Did you hear that?" he inquired, in a tremulous whisper. "What? I heard nothin'."

"Somebody movin'." Sounded as if it came from back there.

"Oh, you're imaginin' things! The servants have all gone to bed an hour ago, an' you bet Ratty's snorin' by this time. Anyway, he wouldn't be pokin' round the kitchen regions."

Crooke listened intently, but could hear no more. He followed Racke up one flight after another to the door of the Shell dormitory.

It so happened that Delaney and Wildrake had awakened again, and when Racke stealthily opened the door they were talking in low tones. Their beds were side by side and close to the door.

"Don't they use lariats in South Africa?" the Shell marauder heard Wildrake ask.

"No—nor yet boomerangs," answered Delaney. "Rifle, are good enough for us."

"Oh, rot about boomerangs! And a rifle won't do all the things you can do with a rope, you know, Delaney."

"No. You couldn't hang yourself with a rifle. But you could shoot yourself, which would be just as useful if you wanted to slip the cable. I don't know how you could manage it with a boomerang. Shall I wake Squiff and ask him? He's in the next bed."

"Don't be funny! I tell you a lariat's no end useful, even in this country, my son!"

"I've heard that you've found uses for it, Wildrake, and that you're uncommonly hefty with it, too."

"I reckon I can throw a rope some. I nearly always carry it—got it with me now."

"Can't see what use you expected to put it to here, unless it was for the Housemaster's benefit. He doesn't seem a really popular character. But he's not your Housemaster, so I suppose he doesn't bother you."

Racke did not hear all this; but he caught enough to have some idea of the subject of their conversation. It did not interest him; all that he wanted was that they should stop talking and snooze off.

"We shall have to wait a bit, Gerry," he whispered. "Let's go back," answered Crooke nervously. "If any of them are awake it's no good—"

"Shush! They've dried up now. They'll soon be asleep!"

Crooke's nerves were terribly on edge. He would not relax his hold on Racke's arm. The silence frightened him, the gloom of the corridor, the knowledge that to be caught there meant ghastly trouble.

Wildrake and Delaney had ceased talking. For ten minutes—seemingly like a couple of hours, at least, to Racke and Crooke—the two black sheep waited.

"I say, it's rummy that those two chaps should be there," whispered Crooke at the end of that time.

"Nothin' in it. Don't know why Wildrake should have been shifted, but, of course, they had to stick the Greyfriars fellows in somewhere, an' I believe there was an empty bed or two here."

"If Clampe ain't there, you bet the cash ain't!" returned Crooke.

"But we've no reason to suppose Clampe ain't there, by gad!" Racke replied crossly. "Let go of me, will you? I'm goin' in now!"

"I—I'd chuck it if I were you!" faltered Crooke. "I'm not sure that we could prove we weren't stealin', y'know."

It did seem a trifle unlikely. But Racke had not intended his fiction of a loan for anyone but Crooke, and he had not expected even Crooke to take it very seriously. If they were caught it would be no defence at all.

But then Racke did not mean to be caught.

He hugged himself away from Crooke's hold and stole into the dormitory. And at that very instant Crooke saw a sudden light below, and heard the sound of a voice.

For the moment he was tempted to flee, leaving Racke to his fate. But he remembered that, unless his pal was sacked, he would have to live with him afterwards, and for many reasons he did not want Racke to be sacked. Moreover, he did not know whether to bolt. It seemed to him out of the question to go downstairs.

He waited in fear for a minute or so, then put his head in at the door and gave a warning hiss.

Racke was by his side in a couple of seconds.

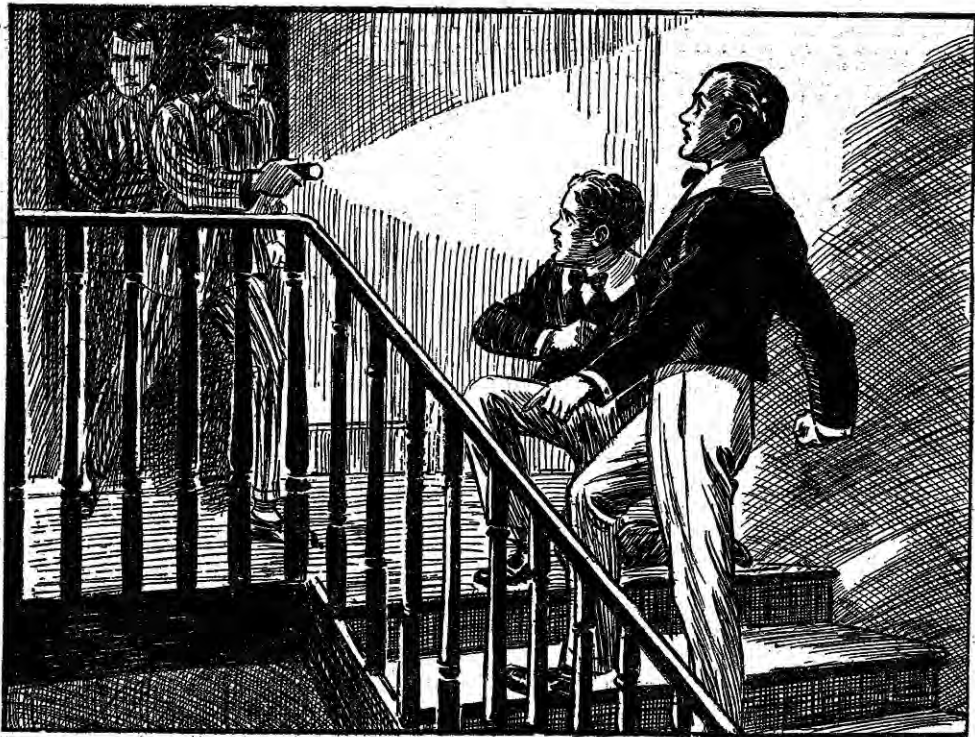
"What's wrong?" he whispered.

"Somebody movin' downstairs. Look! There's the light again!"

From the landing on which they stood they could see down the well of the staircase, and it was certainly true enough that a light showed down there, though in another fraction of a second it was lost again.

Racke and Crooke clutched one another now, both in fear.

"Like a dark-lantern, seems to me," whispered Racke.



Suddenly the gleam of an electric torch flashed full upon Racke and Crooke. The torch was in the hand of Delarey, and Wildrake stood beside him. Racke rose to the situation in a way that surprised Crooke utterly. "Burglars below!" he hissed. "Haven't you told them, Crooke?" (See this page.)

"Ratty wouldn't be goin' about with a dark-lantern," replied Crooke.

"We don't know that it's Ratty. Might be anyone. I didn't get the stuff, Crooke. It wasn't there—I'm sure of that."

"Hang the stuff! I shall be satisfied if we get safely out of this rotten mess. But I don't see how we're goin' to."

"You stay there. I'll go down a flight or two an' see if I can make out anythin' more."

Sheer desperation was giving Racke courage. Not even that could give it to Crooke. He almost whimpered as Racke left him.

Then, as he stood shivering at the top of the flight of stairs, the door behind him opened, and he heard someone say:

"I'm sure I heard voices out here!"

Crooke crouched down by the balusters.

"Don't hear anything now," said another voice.

But Crooke heard something. Stealthy footsteps were ascending the stairs. Racke was coming back!

All was lost! They would be discovered there, and then would follow exposure and the sack for them both. Crooke groaned.

Suddenly the gleam of an electric torch flashed full upon Racke and Crooke. The torch was in the hands of Delarey, and Wildrake stood beside him.

Racke rose to the situation in a way that surprised Crooke utterly, for he did not know how fortune had favoured Racke.

"Burglars below!" he hissed. Then: "Haven't you told them, Crooke?"

"I—I—"

But Delarey and Wildrake did not wait to listen to Crooke. They did not even ask Racke how he had found out.

"I'll get my rope!" said Wildrake eagerly.

And he popped back into the dormitory. Delarey followed him, to rouse the other fellows.

"I say—is it burglars, Racke?" gasped Crooke.

"You bet! Anyway, I don't see what else it can be. There are three chaps nosin' about down there, an' one of them has a dark-lantern. Just remember this, Gerry—we saw them in the quad, followed them in, an' came up here to

give the alarm! Stick to that yarn, whatever you do; we've got to explain somehow for bein' here, an' we've got to keep out of Ratty's way. Let these fellows think we'd been down to the Green Man an' were comin' back—it won't matter to us what they think; but if anyone gets on to—Shush! Here they come!"

Some of the Colonial crowd had already got on part of their clothes. They were hurrying out of the dormitory as though, Crooke thought sourly, trouble with burglars was good fun. It did not seem to Crooke in the very least like that.

But these plucky sons of the Empire, whether they looked upon it as good fun or no, were ready and keen.

"Go softly!" sounded the voice of Kangaroo.

By this time both Racke and Crooke were tumbling to the fact that the Shell dormitory in the New House had not held its usual occupants. They would hardly have gone to a burglar hunt with such zest. Apart from Thompson and one or two more, the Shell fellows under Mr. Horace Ratcliff's charge were rather a job lot.

Someone must have gone to the Fourth Form dormitory, for now the crowd was increased by Figgins & Co., Redfern & Co., and several more from there. And someone must have lighted a gas-jet, for the two intruders, standing back, saw all who passed, and were able to recognise most of them, though the light was dim.

Kangaroo, Dane, and Glyn—three of the Greyfriars team—and then Clive, Wildrake, and Roylance. When Racke saw these he no longer wondered that he had not found Clampe's notes. Clampe must be sleeping elsewhere.

Down the stairs they stole, intent to take the burglars by surprise.

"What had we better do, Racke?" asked Crooke peevishly. "I'm not goin' to get myself mixed up in all this. Nabbin' burglars ain't in my line, an' if Ratty—"

"Ratty mustn't see us at any price! Wait!"

Racke hurried after the burglar-hunters, and managed to grab Kerr, and draw him aside on the stairs.

"Who are you?" demanded Kerr. "Here, let go! I'm busy just now."

"I'm Racke. See here, Kerr, we—Crooke an' I—want you chaps to do somethin' for us. Will you?"

"Don't see why we should. But what is it, and what are you doing here, anyway?"

"That's just it. We were comin' back—you twig, Rylcombe, y'know—when we spotted the dashed burglars at work. Couldn't warn Ratty. Besides, what good would he be? Warned you fellows. Now we've got to take our chance to do a bunk when we can—see? Keep it dark, won't you? Cook up some yarn about some of you hearin' the beasts. If you give us away we're done!"

"We won't give you away if we can help it," answered Kerr. "But clear out the moment you can."

He could hardly say anything else. For the moment there was no suspicion in his mind that Racke's yarn was a lie. He came to suspect later that it might be. But no one ever knew, which was as well for Racke and Crooke!

Kerr hurried after his comrades. But he could only crowd into a place at the rear just as Kangaroo pushed open the green baize door that shut off Mr. Ratcliff's private apartments from the rest of the New House.

The Fourth Form contingent complained later that there was no time for such considerations as that of giving the warriors of the great chief Piggy their share in the fray.

Two men were at the safe in Mr. Ratcliff's study. A slighter and smaller figure was near, holding a dark lantern. So much Kangaroo and those nearest him saw. Then the electric light was switched on.

The burglars straightened themselves up, and one of them reached for the revolver in his pocket. But even as he lugged it out a noose descended upon his neck, and was drawn taut.

Kit Wildrake had sprung to one side to gain room, had whirled the lasso once round his head, and had east it with unerring aim.

In the same instant Kangaroo, Squiff, and Delarey bore down the other man by sheer weight, and sat upon him. It was Clive who got first grip on the third of the gang. But the help of Roynance and Dane was needed before Ablett, scratching like a wild cat, was well and truly held.

Mr. Ratcliff's study swarmed with juniors, and the three had no chance of escape. They could hardly put up even the semblance of a fight. Ablett alone did any damage, and he did it with nails and feet.

But the chance of escape which the burglars lacked was offered to Racke and Crooke, and they seized it. Scuttling down the passages, they gained the window by which they had entered, scrambled out of it, and fled across the quad to the School House. Their hearts were in their mouths for fear that the din—there was noise enough now—should wake up the sleeping House to which they went.

They were in bed, however, before the School House knew anything of the disturbance over the way.

CHAPTER 8.

Praise even from Ratty!

"**W**HAT does this pandemonium mean? Upon my soul, in all the course of my existence I have never seen anything like it! Explain at once!"

Mr. Ratcliff stood in his dressing-gown at the door of his crowded study.

"It's burglars, sir!" answered Squiff.

"Don't tell absurd falsehoods, boy! Who are you?"

"Field of Greyfriars, sir."

"And what is Field of Greyfriars doing in my House without my knowledge?" demanded Mr. Ratcliff angrily.

"I was sleeping here, sir. At present I am sitting on a burglar," replied Squiff coolly.

Then the master saw the open safe, and became aware that some of the crowd really were sitting upon people who appeared to be strangers, and he spoke more civilly.

"Really, this is a most extraordinary and unparalleled happening! Most of the boys present do not belong to my House at all, and how they should have come to capture burglars in my study is beyond my understanding. At the same time I must express my sincere—ahem—gratitude. There are in that safe, as someone seems to have been aware, money and convertible securities to a very considerable amount, and it does appear that these miscreants would have made off with them had it not been—in part, at least—for visitors whom I was not cognisant of entertaining."

Figgins spoke up.

"The Colonial fellows—Greyfriars and School House as well—were sleeping in the Shell dormitory, sir. It was part of the arrangements made for putting up the visitors, and the Head agreed—that is—"

"I think I might have been informed of this, Figgins," said Mr. Ratcliff crossly.

"Yes, sir," answered Figgys. "But it's turned out very luckily, hasn't it, sir? For it was some of these fellows who heard sounds, and they did it all, really. We only came in at the tail-end."

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"It has certainly turned out fortunately, Figgins, so I shall make no further reference to the—ah—neglect of which someone—someone, I say—has been guilty. Be careful with those scoundrels, boys! I am sure they're dangerous!"

"Not now, sir," returned Roynance cheerily. "We've got them settled. This is Ablett. He must have let the other two in."

"I—I didn't!" protested the wretched page. "I—I heard them, and came to see what they were doing of!"

"He's a wrong 'un, sir!" said Fatty. "Delarey saw him in prison—"

"No, no! Only in the police-court at Cape Town," broke in the South African. "I don't know what he was there for. But I'm quite certain he was in this."

"Have you got them tied up?" asked Mr. Ratcliff nervously. "Bless my soul, I shall never feel safe again, after being so basely betrayed by that wicked lad! Ablett, it is of no use your telling lies. I remember now that I caught you looking over my shoulder into the safe a few days ago when you had stolen noiselessly into this room."

"Yah! Fatheaded old geezer!" snarled Ablett, seeing that his pretence of innocence would not serve.

"Wildrake's got one chap's arm fastened with his lasso," Kangaroo said. "We'll soon tie this fellow up if someone will get us a rope. And I guess those three can hold Ablett."

"Fetch ropes!—Fetch the police! Fetch the Head!" ordered Mr. Ratcliff, badly shaken.

"May I use your telephone, sir?" asked Kerr, thinking of the police.

"Certainly! No, of course you may not! What for?"

"To call up the Wayland Police Station, sir."

"I will do that! Restrain your officiousness, Kerr, if you please!"

But Mr. Ratcliff was so tremulous when he tried to make the superintendent of Wayland understand that Tom Brown had to speak for him. He would not allow Kerr to do so.

He insisted upon having his own way about the disposal of the three captives until the police should come. All tied up, they were carried to the matron's room, which had only one window, pronounced by Mr. Ratcliff too small for the burglars to get through, even if they could rid themselves of their bonds. Then he ordered all the captors up to bed again.

They went unwillingly, almost mutinously. He would not listen to their suggestion that some of them should stay downstairs to keep watch. He himself meant to stay in his study, as, until the police had been, he could not feel easy about the safe.

There was no doubt that he believed his own theory as to the impossibility of escape, for otherwise he would not have risked his valuable life by staying alone on the ground floor.

But Kangaroo, Kerr, and the rest had no great faith in the theory, and they did not go to bed. The Shell dormitory was crowded, and talk buzzed there.

"What was that about Racke and Crooke? Someone said they were here," said Kangaroo.

"They were. I saw them," answered Wildrake. "But I can't think what brought them here. At the moment it didn't seem queer to me, but it's a puzzle now."

"Their yarn is that they were slipping back from a gay dog expedition when they twigged the burglars and came along to warn us," Kerr said.

"Do you believe that?" inquired Bernard Glyn.

"Well, I can't disprove it, and I don't know that I want to," answered the Scots junior. "They did warn you fellows, didn't they?"

"Someone I don't know did," admitted Delarey. "If Wildrake says it was those two, I suppose he's right. I shouldn't know them again."

"Must be right, I reckon," Kangaroo said. "Though I should have expected those two sweeps to leave the burgling gents to it rather than risk anything. Who's game to go downstairs to see if the prisoners are all serene?"

Tom Brown and Figgins went with Noble. But Mr. Ratcliff heard them coming downstairs, and ordered them back at once.

Kerr, Dane, and Roynance, a few minutes later, had no better luck. It seems as though the Housemaster were watching for any attempt of the kind, and meant to frustrate it.

"He thinks it's cheek," said Kerr. "Well, I only hope those three won't manage to do a bunk somehow, though it would serve him right if they did."

"The Wayland bobbies should be here very soon," Clive said.

But the police had not turned up when there came from below a yell of pain and fear, and the whole crowd from the Shell dormitory surged downstairs to the rescue.

In the darkened hall below Mr. Ratcliff lay groaning, and from the back regions came sounds as of someone scrambling through a window.

Figgins switched on the light again. Most of the others sped down the corridor towards the kitchen, hampering one another in their eagerness.

Afterwards it was discovered that one of the three captives must have contrived to get his hands free and to release the other two. Then Ablett—for whom the window was not too small—had crept out, re-entered the back regions by the same window Racke and Crooke had used, and unlocked the door of the matron's room for his confederates. Mr. Ratcliff, on the prow to detect more disobedience, had encountered the trio escaping, and had been struck down by a heavy fist.

The last of the three was scrambling over the wall as the first of the pursuers emerged from the window. Next moment the kitchen entrance was flung open, and a dozen or more fellows surged out of that.

Over the wall they went, some giving backs to the rest, some leaning down from the top to help up others.

A cloud driven before the wind left the moon shining clearly, and the three fugitives were all sighted, taking diverse ways.

"Split up!" yelled Kangaroo. "We must get them all." He and Tom Brown, Kerr and Clive, Glyn and Roynance, made after one man. Squiff, Clarke, Redfern, Owen, Lawrence, and Koumi Rao went in pursuit of the other. Delarey, Wildrake, and Dane chased Ablett.

The first fellow took the Wayland direction, and within a quarter of a mile was very nearly run over by a motor-car bringing the superintendent of police and two constables. The second went the opposite way, and only the bright moonlight prevented his escape. But by means of that Squiff and his crowd were able to keep him in sight all the time, and they ran him down and collared him more than a mile from the school.

Patty and Figgins were out of it. They had stayed behind with Mr. Ratcliff. Someone had to stay, and the rest had pushed past them while they were making sure the master was still alive. Their disgust—Figg's especially—when they found that he was not even badly hurt was great. Not that they wanted him to be hurt, little as they loved him; but they were annoyed that he should have done them out of a share in the chase by making all that fuss about a punch on the head, as Figg put it.

Dane fell, and Wildrake and Delarey held on together across the fields. Behind them the other Canadian junior scrambled up. But he had strained his leg, and could not hope to catch them.

"That—rascal runs—well!" gasped Wildrake.

"Yes, but we'll have him," answered Delarey. And he shot ahead of the boy from the Boot Leg Ranch, and gained fast on Ablett.

Wildrake, almost breathless, ran as hard as he could, and was only a few yards in the rear when Ablett turned at bay.

"Oh, it's you, is it? The chap that gave me away, curse you!" shouted the page. "Here's for you!"

Crack!

No one had thought of the page carrying a revolver. But he had one, and a bullet grazed Delarey's temple.

Then a rope shot through the air. Panting, with the deceptive light of the moon as a handicap, very nearly done, Kit Wildrake yet threw straight. The revolver cracked again, but harmlessly, for Ablett's arms were pulled to his sides and pinned there on the instant of his pressing the trigger, and the bullet entered the soft turf close to his feet.

"Hurt, old son?" asked Wildrake, jorking Ablett over by a sudden pull on the rope.

"No, thanks to you, dear boy," replied the Rebel coolly.

When it was known that all three of the gang had been rounded up, Mr. Ratcliff surprised everyone by the lavishness of the praise he showered upon the Colonial contingent, who had had most to do with it. Probably it suited him to assume that they had done it all, for those of his own boys who had had a share were far from being favourites of his. But the Colonials really had done more than any of the New House fellows.

More surprising still was the action the Housemaster took by way of reward. Such a happening as a sumptuous tea given in the New House by that House's master had never been heard of before; but a tea there was on that Sunday

(Continued on page 19.)



THE RALLY-ROUND CLUB.



Every reader should become a member of this club.

Having, as already stated in last week's GEM, been inundated with letters from my loyal readers, asking me to form some sort of a club to enable them to join in one large circle of friends, I am at last able to accede to their wishes by introducing what will be known as

THE RALLY-ROUND CLUB.

The title of the club speaks for itself. Every member of the club rallies round the GEM LIBRARY, and does his or her best to introduce it to new readers. Members are asked to write and criticise the various features in the paper, and any helpful suggestions will be published in the Chat page, together with the name and address of the reader. Any member sending a letter which, in my opinion, contains anything of interest to other members of the club, will be awarded a special money prize.

I want you to be with me in helping to form one of the largest clubs ever yet known.

All one has to do to become a member is to cut out the coupons from two issues of the GEM LIBRARY—the one from this week's issue and one from next week will answer the purpose—pin them together, and post them to "The President, The Rally-Round Club, The GEM Offices, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4."

Every reader joining the Club is specially requested to obtain a NEW reader for the "GEM" Library, and get him or her to join the Club.

To each member joining I am going to forward, FREE, a Splendid Art Portrait of Jack Cornwell, V.C., the hero of heroes, who, in the Battle of Jutland, stood by his gun till the last. This splendid picture is well worth framing, and would make a splendid addition to anyone's den.

Get to work right now, introduce your new reader, send in your coupons as advised, and you will shortly afterwards become the happy recipient of one of these Splendid Free Gifts. Don't delay! Act right now!

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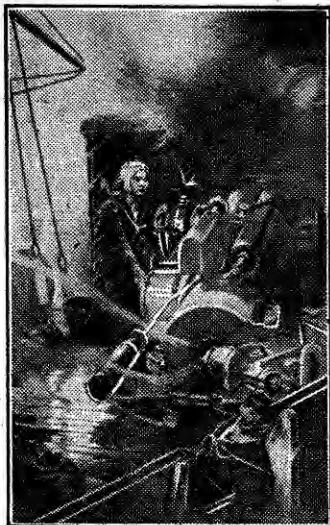
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THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 741.

This Wonderful Story is Pleasing Everybody!



Our Magnificent Story of Daring and Adventure.

READ THIS FIRST.

Donald Gordon and his brother Val leave St. Christopher's School, in company with Tommy Binks and Septimus Todd, a junior master, commonly known as "Scat," to join their uncle, who has on a big plantation in the Solomon Islands.

Captain Targe, in charge of the schooner Wittywake, learns of the party's quest. He plans to abandon the boat and leave them to their fate, with the intention of overthrowing the wealthy plantation owner and obtaining hold of the land. Targe, the black cabin-boy, hears of this, and warns the party. Unknown to the villainous captain, he places the boys in one of the ship's boats, and they are about to make their escape when Anna, the captain's daughter, taking the opportunity of getting away from the harsh treatment of her father, joins them.

Not long after the party has started on their perilous journey a severe storm breaks out. The party are thrown from their boat, but, luckily, get washed up on the "Island of Pleasure."

Cast on the island, they prepare their new home, living in the products of the island coconuts. Later the party launch their canoe, and leave the camp for a picnic round the island. On the journey, Targe and Don attack and capture a weird-looking animal, which Scat calls a dugong. This strange beast is beached, and Tommy is detailed to keep watch over it whilst the remainder of the party go in search of sago. They are in the act of felling a sago-palm, when they hear cries for help. Rushing back to where they had left Tommy, they find the stout youngster defending himself against two huge-looking eagles, which they drive away.

(Now read on.)

Taga's Huge Joke.

TOMMY had certainly gone through a rough time of it, but his woe-begone voice and appearance made his chums grin, and finally Taga, who had been fighting with his pent-up mirth, tottered five or six paces down the beach, then fell flat on his back and went through an extraordinary performance. Waving his arms and legs above his head, the convulsed native went off into shriek after shriek of ribald laughter.

"Eagle no like Tommy-eagle no like Tommy!"

It was one of those hysterical fits of uncontrollable mirth which occasionally takes the native of the South Sea Islands. It is more of a paroxysm than anything else, and while it lasted the four white youngsters could do nothing but stand still and stare at the wriggling, shrieking, squirming figure.

"He's got 'em!" said Tommy. "Someone throw a jug of water over him or something. I dare say I look funny, but not so funny as he seems to think."

Taga finally succeeded in mastering his mirth, and arose weakly to his feet, wiping the tears from his eyes.

But it was noticed that the native was very careful to look in the other direction, and once, when they reached the catamaran and Taga caught sight of the dugong, with a chunk of flesh out of it, his control gave way, and he sat down again and enjoyed his huge joke.

"I have seen them like that before," Anna said. "It is not a bit of good arguing with them. Once they think a thing is really funny, they will laugh over it for weeks."

"Humph! If he does much more laughing now he'll get a thick ear," said Tommy. The catamaran was pushed off and the dugong floated again, and Tommy deliberately seated himself behind Taga's brown, naked back. The native being in

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the bow, he could be kept under Tommy's immediate eye.

Twice or three Tommy thought he saw a convulsive movement of the brown shoulders, and his fist closed tightly on his paddle handle.

"I have warned you, Taga," he said. "Another giggle and I'll give you a dig in the back with this, you brown image!" The long journey home to their camp beneath the cliffs was accomplished in safety, and Taga and Val took charge of the dugong, towing it round to a quiet bay beyond the cliffs, where the necessary operations of flaying it could be carried out away from the eyes of Anna.

It took the youngsters the best part of two hours to complete their task, and when Val led Don and Scat down to the quiet bay to show them the carcass of the animal, the latter stared for a moment, then turned to Don.

"Why, it looks just like a bullock," he said.

And, indeed, the massive carcass was by no means unlike beef. The huge skin had been removed and was stretched out to dry.

The thick layer of fat, which had been discovered between the skin and the carcass, had been stowed very carefully away, and Taga was highly delighted over the result.

"We got a splendid lot of oil now," he pointed out. "We no have to trouble about light or anything."

It was arranged then that a portion of the dugong flesh should be taken back to the camp at once, to be prepared for supper, and the remainder should be smoked.

A great brush fire was made for this, and the carcass, after being cut up by Taga, was arranged above the smoke.

Taga elected to spend the night attending to the fire, and, as he had already cooked a substantial steak for himself, Don agreed to this suggestion.

He and Val and Scat went off with their next boat to the camp, where Anna prepared supper for them.

Tommy, who had gone into the Bower House to rest after his encounter with the eagles, was aroused by that fragrant aroma which came from the cooking meat, and rolled out just as supper was ready.

It was a real hunter's meal which the party enjoyed that evening, and Scat only voiced the opinion of the rest of the party when he voted that dugong flesh was as primo and tender as any home-fied English beef.

Presently Don slipped away from the fire, and returned with a gourd filled with water.

"You might take this along to Taga, Tommy," he said. "I don't think he has got any fresh water down there, and, as he's going to be up all night attending to the fire, he'll need a drink."

Tommy grumbled at first, but finally he went off across the rocky ground and on along the beach, rounding the low headland to find himself in the small cove.

The glow of the fire directed him onward, but presently he came to a halt. He heard a vague—a gurgling, breathless voice—and, pacing forward a yard or so, Tommy located the spot from whence it came.

Taga, lying on his back in the warm sand, was still enjoying his joke.

There was no doubt about that.

"Eagle—gurgie, gurgie, gurgie!—no like—gurgie—Tommy!"

There is such a thing as pressing a joke too far, and Tommy, who had trudged all the way down to that cove in order to relieve Taga of any chance of thirst, felt his dander beginning to rise.

The native was lying some four or five yards away from the smoking fire. He had erected a crude support over the fire, and on this were hanging the various joints of the dugong.

Making a careful detour, Tommy slipped round behind the lolling figure, and found himself at the back of the fire, with the smoke-screen between him and Taga.

Searching for a moment the fat youngster discovered one of the front flappers of the dead animal, a heavy, bony affair, which would make a very serviceable missile.

Tommy took up his stand just behind the smoke and waited patiently. They presently heard a scrambling in the sand, and through the smoke-screen he saw Taga rise to his feet.

The native came forward, picked up another armful of brushwood, and commenced to feed the fire, but when he was half-way through this operation again the huge joke struck him. He dropped the armful of brushwood, and placing his hands on his hips, began to rock to and fro.

Tommy could almost see that outburst of mirth which was going to break forth, and, raising his arm, the stout youngster took careful aim.

Eagle—eagle no like—

Biff!

The dugong flapper was no light weight, and Tommy's aim was deadly. It caught Taga full on the chest, and he felt like a sapling; then, with a whoop, Tommy leapt through the smoke and flung himself on his brown chum.

"—Eagles don't like Tommy, don't they, you brown image? I'm going to rub your nose in the sand for that! I have had enough of it!"

It was a wild, breathless scramble while it lasted, but the fat youngster had the advantage which a surprise attack gives; and finally he was astride Taga's back, with one hand pressing in the crisp, black hair.

"What about it now?" Tommy asked.

"Any more of that confounded eagle stuff?" Taga gave a wriggle, but Tommy was too much for him, and at last the native gave in.

"All right, Tommy, I finished!"

Then, and not until then, did Tommy rise to his feet and allow Taga to do the same; they shook hands solemnly, and Tommy went back to find the gourd of water, which he handed over to the native.

"Don't forget, there's chaps go mad for laughing too much," he warned Taga, "and perhaps it is just as well for you that I did stop you. It isn't good for a fellow to keep on laughing over nothing."

Yet twenty minutes later, as Tommy rounded the headland again to return to the camp under the cliff, it seemed to him that he heard once more the sound of suppressed mirth coming from the fire behind him. On looking round, however, he saw Taga bending carefully over the blaze, and decided that he was mistaken.

Which was, perhaps, just as well for Taga!

Val's Handiwork.

WHAT do you think of them, Don?" "Top-hole, Val! You have made a real addition to the camp."

The long weeks had gone swiftly past, and each day saw the castaways make slow progress towards that comfort which steady toil brings about.

There was now stored away under the edges of the cliff, sufficient meat in the form of dugong flesh, turtle flesh, and dried fish, to keep them going for four or five months. Then, again, the sago-palm had yielded enormously. There was a good hundred-weight of dried, savoury flour packed away in a leaf-lined hollow under the cliff.

The scrub-fowl were quite domesticated now, and they had added to their little herd of goats.

From Scat's plantation had come a plentiful supply of yams and other edible roots,

while the sugarcane had been made to yield its valuable contents.

Now, spread out in front of Don was another distinct triumph for the little group.

Val had discovered a deposit of clay, and had set to work to try his hand as a potter. They had built a furnace among the boulders, and after many fruitless efforts, Val had succeeded at last in fashioning four or five bowls and deep receptacles.

The final baking of the clay in the oven had taken three days, and now the completed articles were spread out in front of the house for all to view and admire.

That evening the first of the great crockery pots was tested in a practical way. Half-filled with water, it was set in among the glowing embers, and Anna tried her hand at a savoury stew.

Until then their food had been broiled or baked, and the supply of dugong flesh, yam, and sago was voted the best which they had had so far.

Encouraged by success, Val set to work and produced rough plates and cups and other useful dishes. But it was Scat who, in his ramblings along the dead track of the lava, discovered a deposit of silica, which, used as a glaze on the outer skin of the rough pottery, made it even more fireproof.

Scat also discovered the cocoa-tree and the two coffee-trees, which made Anna rejoice.

Taga had made a native mill, using a hollowed stone and a mortar, and the amount of coffee which the brown fellow drank was almost unbelievable.

With the breadfruit and the sago, there was ample sustenance.

There were hints now that the weather was going to break, and there was a touch of cold in the air which made the comfortable interior of the little house all the more pleasant in the evening, with Val's lamps, alight with dugong oil, casting their clear light from the fibre wicks over the interior.

To climb into a bunk suspended between the roof-poles, or to lie on the soft, pleasant-smelling leaves and talk of home and home-life until sleep came was by no means the worst part of the long day.

With the coming of the slight change in the weather the little island had hosts of migratory visitors in the bird-life, and on several evenings Taga, the watchful, reported the arrival of dense flocks of pigeons.

It was then that the blowpipes came into execution, and Scat and Val became almost as proficient as Taga with these weapons.

Their method of hunting the pigeons was exceedingly primitive.

As soon as the flocks were sighted, Don sent out Scat and Val to keep observation on the birds, and Taga's task was to follow them to see where they alighted.

The native had picked out three or four tall, chestnut-like trees, and had arranged decoys on them. His decoys were made of the skin and feathers of pigeons, cleverly stuffed and tied into position on one of the uppermost boughs.

The extraordinary quickness of sight of the pigeons was proved again and again, for from high up in the cloudless sky the leader of the covey would see the decoy far below and would drop in narrowing circles down to the tree. Then, after the whole flock had flown round and round for some fifteen or twenty minutes, they would settle with a great beating of wings until the tree was a mass of the plump, chattering birds.

Now and again Val and Scat had been able to use their nets in clearing the lower branches of the sleeping pigeons, but when this failed it was their custom to form a circle round the base of the tree, and, using the darts with their numbing drug, the blowpipes made deadly execution. Sometimes as many as a score of the plump birds were added to their larder in a single night.

Roast pigeon was, perhaps, the greatest delicacy which the youngsters enjoyed, and Tommy had discovered what he considered to be an original way of cooking these tasty morsels.

It consisted of cleaning the birds, then filling the interior with a handful of yam, and finally placing the pigeon, feathers and all, in a mixture of brown mud and water, caking it over until it was a round, solid mass. This was then placed in a heap of red embers, and covered.

Half an hour later Tommy scattered the embers and drew out the hard, baked oblong of mud, split it, and skin and feathers came

away like the husk of a coconut, leaving the plump, deliciously cooked bird in the centre. It was a primitive but extremely useful way of cooking the bird, for it preserved its juices and saved Tommy from the necessary and tiresome plucking.

In appearance the castaways had changed greatly. The hard, open-air life had developed them, and even Scat, always the lanky one, was beginning to put on flesh, while Don and Val were as hard as nails.

Tommy, also, had tanned to the colour of deep mahogany, but his weight did not give any signs of lessening, although, as he plaintively remarked, "he worked, perhaps, as hard as anyone else!"

The routine followed by the chums was well regulated, each having his particular task to do.

Val had now become a skilled fisherman and had supplied himself with an assortment of hooks, which added greatly to his stock.

The hooks had been made in a rather interesting way. They were fashioned out of thin shell, and each of them represented a long and tedious task.

Val's method was to procure a fairly even shell, and set to work to chip away the outer portions, until at last he had thinned it down to a suitable size, a more or less circular plate, about two inches in diameter, with rough, uneven edges.

Two pieces of hard, pointed wood were then placed in the fire, and as soon as their sharpened ends were burnt and charred, Val set the smouldering extremities close to the middle of the shell plate, and, blowing upon them steadily, caused the flames to play on the very centre until he had rendered it fairly brittle. When this was completed he did not find much difficulty in breaking through with a piece of white coral.

The hole once having been made, Val enlarged it by fling it backwards and forwards with the coral, dipping shell and coral into water now and again to assist with the grinding.

When he had formed the shell into a slender circle, his next task was to grind down the outer edge into shape. This, and this was the most ticklish operation of all, was rubbed down on a sharp edge of flint

until a break was obtained, and the home-made hook was ready for use.

With these primitive hooks Val had landed some splendid catches in the way of bream and sea-trout.

He was never able to get to Taga's skill with the spear when tackling some great finny monster, but the hook and net served his purpose. He had also discovered a bed of oysters on the far side of Lone Cove, the name they had given to the bleak expanse of black cliffs below the lava-covered stretch of barren ground.

Tommy was still goatherd and meat supplier, but his task had been lightened by one or two successful dugong hunts.

There were now three "Nannys" in the herd, and Tommy had become an expert milker. Indeed, the little goat-pen, tucked away behind the rough, bouldery ground on the left of the camp, was Tommy's chief delight, for there were three or four young goats, gentle-eyed quaint creatures, who were often a source of amusement to the youngsters, with their gambols and antics.

Scat had a large experimental garden, and had also discovered another gift, for he became bootmaker to the little party.

The tough hide of the dugong made splendid footwear, and although the sandals which Scat fashioned were primitive, they were at least a protection against the sharp thorns and flinty boulders.

The way Taga could trudge through the jungle without hurt or hindrance was a constant source of amazement, and not a little envy, to his white chums.

It was in the matter of clothes that the little group of castaways were distinctly short.

Tommy's shirt was now a mere fluttering mass of rags, and, as often as not, he discarded it entirely, contenting himself with the tattered shorts, until one day Anna presented him with a goat-skin, beautifully cured and as soft as cloth.

She had cured the skin herself, and had worked it into pliability between her clever hands.

Tommy fashioned the goat-skin into a waist-cloth, and his first appearance in his



Taga tottered five or six paces down the beach, and then fell flat on his back and went through an extraordinary performance. Waving his arms and legs above his head, the convulsed native went off into shriek after shriek of ribald laughter. "Eagle no like Tommy—eagle no like Tommy!" he cried.

new garment brought a quiet remark from Scat.

"Tommy is getting quite swanky," he said. "Fur coats in the summer-time. What are you supposed to be, Tommy—a Zulu chief or a snake charmer?"

But the truth of the matter was that clothes on this warm, friendly island were hardly a necessity, and had troubled the youngsters but little. Their skins had long since grown accustomed to the ardent rays of the sun, and now they were able to spend the whole of the day under the hottest part, at work without feeling any discomfort.

It is a scientific fact that Nature, given a chance, will protect and build up man's resistance against any effect of heat or cold.

There was always the sea to plunge into when one grew too hot, and at night-time, if an occasional chill did come, the interior of the house with its cheerful lamps soon banished the cold.

"Have you any idea how long we've been here, Scat?" Don asked one day.

Scat puckered his brows.

"Three or four months, I should think."

"Longer than that," Don returned. "I have been keeping tally, and we have been here now for nearly seven months."

"By Jove! Is that so? I would hardly believe it."

They were seated on the boulders to the left of the house, and Scat turned his head and glanced towards the cliffs. He studied the neat, workmanlike house, with the fire and the store, and the dozen and one other improvements which their steady toil had produced.

The whole of the space had been cleared, and the ground round it had been beaten down to hard foundation.

A cutting had been formed under the spring, so that there was a pool always filled with clear, limpid water.

Lower down to the left, Val and Taga were engaged in putting the finishing touches to the fishpond, which, supplied by water from the sea, was already well stocked with bread and other fish of the edible variety.

"We have worked jolly hard," said Scat, "and we have done well."

Don nodded.

"I am quite satisfied," he returned. "We've been here all this time together, and we haven't had a single quarrel or row. When I think of the dust-ups we used to have at school, Scat, it strikes me that this is the better life."

A shadow crossed his strong young face. "But, of course, it cannot last for ever," he went on, glancing seaward to where the surf broke over the barrier. "Some day, old chap, they will come up here again. I feel it in my bones. We haven't finished with Captain Targe or that fellow Ralph. I should like to know what's happening with them, and I worry sometimes about my uncle. He must wonder what has become of us!"

He arose and stretched himself.

"But we have all got so much to be thankful for that I suppose it is wrong of me to grumble at all, he added.

For the past few days they had been busy going over their stores, examining them and rearranging the various footstuffs.

Already one or two fleeting rainstorms had visited them, and the young leader of the camp knew they were merely the heralds of the winter season.

What sort of time do you think we'll have in the winter, Scat?" Don asked.

Scat's eyes grew thoughtful.

"I am afraid the island has rather a rough time of it," he answered. "I have been noticing the trees along the edge of the jungle. I suppose you have observed that southward there is no sign of any moss on the trees, and from what I can see of the angle they grow at, there must be some very powerful winds."

"That's what Taga says," Don declared, "and unfortunately he thinks our camp here is pitched on the wrong spot. He urged me once or twice at the beginning to shift camp to the other side of the island. I would have done so had it not been for what we found there. That ghastly scene which you and I saw, old chap, was quite enough to prevent me from making a move."

"Oh, I don't suppose it will be as bad as Taga makes out," Scat returned. "After all, we are fairly sheltered under the cliff, and there's the headland to break the force of the wind."

Don was silent for a moment.

"It isn't the wind I am afraid of, old fellow," he broke out. "It's the sea."

The tutor looked across at the sunlit waters of the bay, and smiled.

The idea seemed absurd that anyone should fear this quiet, friendly expanse.

"We've always got the reef to guard us, old chap," Scat said. "It makes a very stout bulwark."

"It may be now," Don said, "but we haven't seen a rough sea yet, and you mustn't forget that in the storm which drove us here we were carried over the reef by the waves. Still, I am not croaking, Scat, only it is just as well to be prepared."

Some seven or eight days later, Taga and Val and Don were returning from Dugong Cove with another small prize. It was getting late in the evening, and Don noted that the native seemed to be rather uneasy, and was anxious to get home, for he set a rare pace with the broad-bladed paddles.

Finally, when the catamaran reached the cove below the camp, and the dugong can was hauled ashore, Val went off, leaving Don and Taga behind to make the canoe secure.

A hush had fallen on the island, and the sun, sinking westward, had a curious brazen glow around it. Every rock and boulder seemed to stand out with startling clearness, and even the tall coconut-palms fringing the cliff above were motionless against the darkening sky.

It was warm, too, and Don, in the pink of condition, found himself sweating as he helped Taga to draw the catamaran up on to the beach. Finally he turned and spoke to his brown chum.

"What's wrong, Taga?" Don asked. "It feels as if everything had come to a halt for a moment, and was taking a breath."

Taga's keen young face, glistening with sweat, was turned seaward, and the brown arm was thrust out.

"Reef speaking all right, Master Don," he said. "You listen to him. He tell you something."

At this point the reef was a good mile and a half away, and Don noted now that the white breakers were leaping high over the barrier, while the song of the surf had increased to a sullen roar, in startling contrast to the hush which brooded over the island.

"You hear 'em, eh? Reef talking!"

"What does it mean, Taga?"

The native had turned southward, and, after staring for a long moment, he beckoned to Don.

"Something over there, Don," he said.

"We get big wind presently."

Low down on the horizon Don saw a darker shadow. It was V shaped, the apex almost touching the sea. It was very far and tiny, a mere finger of black against the gorgeous blue of the sky.

"Nothing very much to worry about over there, Taga," Don said.

The slim, brown youngster wiped the sweat from his brow with the back of his hand.

"Him get bigger presently, Master Don," he returned. "Mebbe all right, though. All depends which way him is coming."

They made their way back along the beach, and gained the camp, where supper was awaiting them.

It was a merry meal, for Tommy was in a particularly boisterous humour that night, and had made a special trip to the oyster-bed, returning with a score or two of huge oysters, which he had prepared as a special delicacy by broiling them on the fire.

They were enormous oysters, much larger than the Whitstables which gladden the heart of the connoisseur in England, and, as Tommy said, "they were something to bite at."

Much to Tommy's annoyance, therefore, Taga, who had been very restless all through the meal, rose to his feet as soon as it was finished.

"I think we better have look at house," he said. "Wind come along presently, and mebbe roof go!"

"What do you mean?"

Taga turned to Tommy.

"We going to have a bit of storm, mebbe. Good idea if we time roof down better, and put stones on it to keep it down there."

"Oh, rats to you! Who wants to hump about great rocks at this time of the night?"

Yet Don gave the signal, and Taga's suggestion was carried out. Five or six heavy rocks were secured, and a long length of wire were carried over the roof of the house and held in position by the rocks.

At Taga's suggestion much of the loose gear about the structure was also stowed away in the hollows of the cliff, and the work was only just completed when darkness fell.

"You had better come inside and sleep with us to-night, Taga," Don said.

Taga shook his head.

"No, Mister Don, I stop out here. Mebbe I go up on cliffs to sleep."

He hesitated for a moment, and had Don known the native mind better, he would have realised that Taga was giving him the lead.

"I no like sleep in house down here," the native went on. "No good for brown boy."

What Taga really meant was that the hut was good neither for brown boy nor for white boy, but it is always difficult to get a native to offer personal advice to the white man, whom he regards as a very superior being.

Val and Tommy had turned into their bunks, and Scat and Don were chatting with Taga at the entrance of the house when the wind began.

It came suddenly in a great, whirling rush, and they heard it shrieking as it broke against the little headland which formed a shelter to their cove.

From the trees beyond there came a low, thin whistle, which tells of the force of the gale.

"By Jove, it is some wind!" Scat breathed, rising to his feet and stepping to the door.

Taga reached out, and caught him by the arm.

"You better no go very far, Scat," he said. "Wind mighty strong—strong enough to blow you flat!"

Don followed Scat, and they made their way to the rough boulders on the right.

They were still in the shelter of the cove, but they could see the stretch of jungle and the tall, shadowy coconut-palms on the top of the cliffs.

Against the star-spangled sky the long, feathery trees were bowed over at an angle which made Scat catch his breath.

"It is blowing a hurricane, Don!" he said.

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(Continued from page 15.)

afternoon, in spite of the difficulty Mr. Ratcliff must have had—or have caused others to have—to procure a spread, with Dame Toggles practically sold out and all the local shops shut.

And he did not spoil it by staying to entertain his guests, among whom were included all who had played their parts in the capture of the burglars. His head still ached, so he only put in an appearance for a few minutes, in company with the Head. Mr. Ratcliff, subduing his acidity, and trying to forget that he objected to all boys at any time, praised again those who had done him so good a turn; and the good old Head said some really nice things about the value of sons of the Empire in a tight place, national or otherwise. And they were no end pleased by the Head's speech, and agreed, after the two masters had gone, that no doubt Ratty meant well.

Then Kangaroo was elected to the place of honour at the head of the table, and would not take it, but resigned it to Delarey, saying that he could not propose Squiff for it, because Squiff was a brother Australian, though he did come from New South Wales, which everyone knew was a poor sort of place compared to Victoria. And Bob Cherry—for Ratty had actually invited all the rest of the Greyfriars team—said that he, for one, didn't know that there was any difference. He had thought that the old boundaries had

only been kept up so that the various States could meet with each other at all sorts of sports.

"Now, I wonder whether Racke and Crooke ought to have been at this spread if they'd had their rights?" said Kerr to Piggy.

"We don't want the sweeps. But I suppose they ought," answered the leader of the New House juniors.

Kerr did not feel sure of that. But he never knew the truth about the night errand of those two, without which the burglars would probably have got away with their plunder, for it was through them that Delarey and Wildrake had come out on to the landing, hearing voices.

And no one else ever knew. And Messrs. Jolliffe, Banks, and Mandeville looked for their pigeons in vain that Sunday night.

The railway strike fizzled out by Monday morning, and the Greyfriars fellows were able to get back, with a sensational story to tell. For once the Famous Five had not been in it, though, any more than had Tom Merry and his chums.

The sons of the Empire had taken nearly all the glory, and none a bigger share in it than Kit Wildrake, from Canada.

THE END.

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