

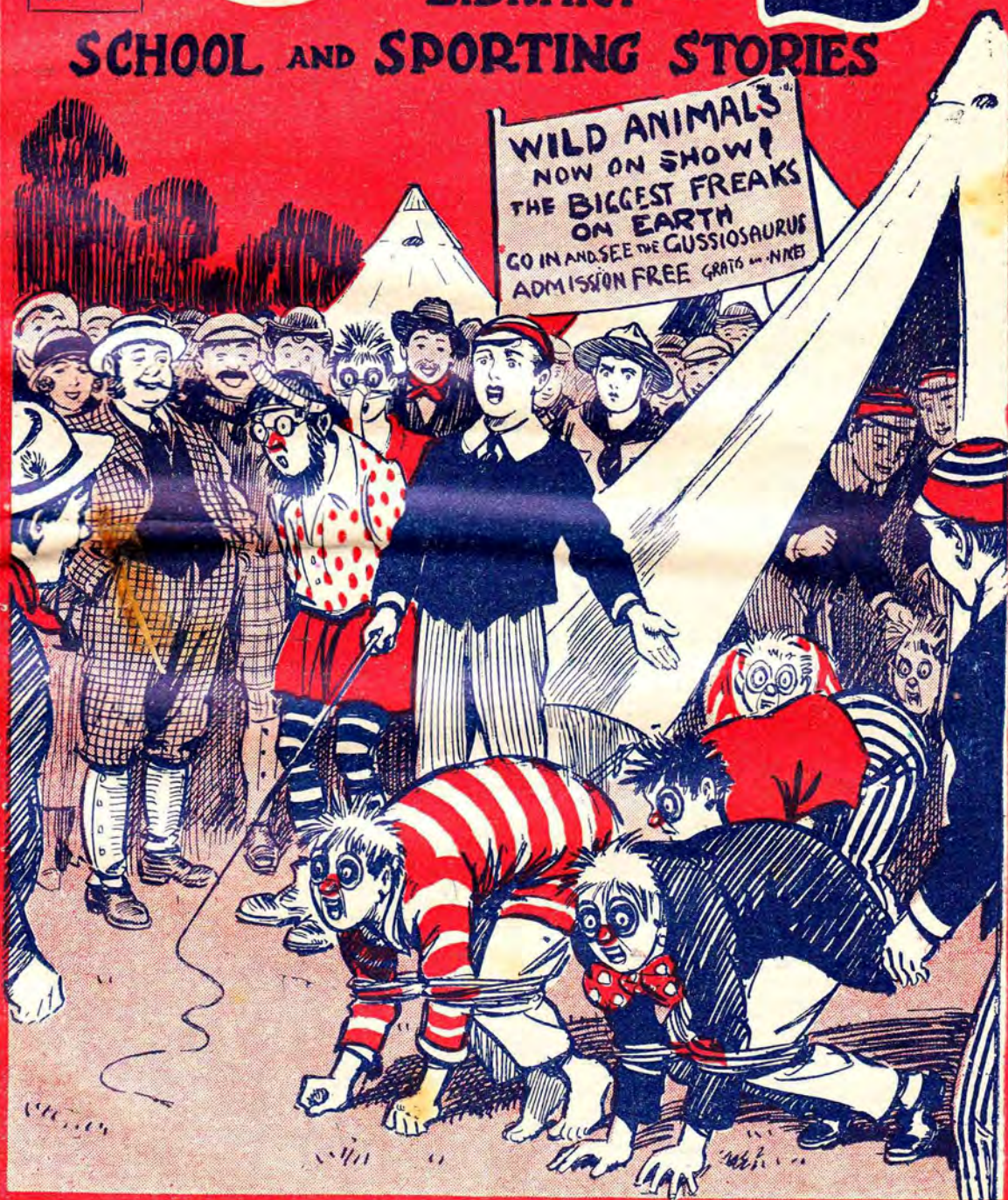
"TOM MERRY & CO. IN CAMP!" By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The GEM 2^d

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

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LIBRARY OF
SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES



"KEEPERS, BRING FORTH THE FREAKS!"

Tom Merry stood spellbound as he watched Gordon Gay & Co. hustle his "exhibits" forward for inspection! (A thrilling and dramatic incident from the grand, long, complete school story contained in this issue.)



Your Editor Chats With His Readers.

Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

MY DEAR CHUMS,—Next week's Gem will contain another jolly open-air, holiday yarn about camping. This big question of camping out is one that will bear any amount of looking into. Mr. Martin Clifford has done a lot of investigation work. Besides that, he is an old camper-out himself, and as a consequence what he has to say on the subject is well worth hearing. His new yarn in a simply topping series bears a highly significant title.

"RUCTIONS UNDER CANVAS!"

By Martin Clifford.

This tale describes in vivid style some of the troubles which came to the camps of the cadets, and the rival warring factions of Tom Merry & Co. and Gordon Gay and his merry men. The ructions are plentiful, and add to the ordinary excitements of camp life. Gordon Gay puts up some amazing stunts; he is full of bright notions. Of course, some of his plans do not come off. Next week's story, however, does not limit itself to the amusing side of camping, or the worries which come when a duffer of the party gets told off as cook, and makes a hash of everything. You can have too much hash on these expeditions. Unfortunately, something pretty serious happens on this occasion, and some of the campers find themselves in deadly peril. The story hums with actuality. It is like a real bit of life, and I predict a hearty reception for this, the second of the GEM holiday series.

"A DOUBLE EVENT!"

By Cecil Fanshaw.

A stirring racing yarn is included in our next week's programme. The chief character is young Sid Morris, a cheery fellow, and a real enthusiast for his work. There are some breathless moments in this tale, for a gang of crooks get busy, and Sid finds himself in an extremely dangerous position.

"THE SECRET OF THE GALLEONS!"

By Roland Spencer.

Our magnificent serial gets more enthralling with every instalment. The adventurous spirits of the search-party get a measure of success, but they incur implacable enmity, for the rival seekers after treasure are out to win, coûte que coûte. The struggle resolves itself into a fight for a fabulous fortune. There have been numberless stories about quests for the gold and jewels lying in the treasure fastnesses of Neptune's kingdom, but nothing quite so fascinating and sensational as the tale related here. Read next week's fine instalment.

A GARDEN FETE NUMBER.

The "St. Jim's News" in our next issue is thoroughly seasonable. The experienced journalists on Tom Merry's staff turn to and deal with the bright and pleasing subject of the garden fete. Most of us like garden fetes, and tea fights, etc., those affairs where the big brass band plays "Zampa," and other soul-stirring melodies, and sports are in full swing. It is at these cheery functions that you play the deadly game of croquet. This is a most exhausting pastime. Half the time you are watching the other fellow scoring by means of your ball. You ask yourself why he does not borrow your mallet as well. Then your turn comes; you get one swipe, miss the object ball, and they count you out. But there is always the tea-tent to fall back upon, as Baggy Trimble would say.

OUR TUCK HAMPER!

If good old Robinson Crusoe lived these days on his desert island he would have felt no end grateful if a passing aeroplane dropped a Tuck Hamper into his garden just as a little present. I say that much just to show you that the Tuck Hamper is a welcome little institution, no matter where you are or what you may be. Therefore, have a shot at winning one of these prizes, and send in your merriest and quippiest yarnlet. A Tuck Hamper may come your way.

THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

By the way, don't forget that the new volume of the "Holiday Annual" will leave its home port early in September. Make sure of your copy by putting in your order in good time. That's the best and only sure way of being secure of this magnificent book.

Your Editor.

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ANOTHER TUCK HAMPER WON!

NOT FISH!

Bridget: "There's a man at the door with a parcel marked C.O.D." (Cash on Delivery.) Mrs. Newbridge: "Then tell him to take it back at once. I ordered salmon!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to James Stoner, 13, West Sheen Vale, Lower Mortlake Road, Richmond, Surrey.

A WITTY REPLY!

A Yorkshireman on a visit to London went into a cafe for his dinner, which included meat, potatoes, and peas. Whilst eating his dinner the waiter noticed him picking his peas up with a knife. Going up to him, he said: "I always eat my peas with a fork." To which the Yorkshireman replied: "Why, can't the balance eat, lad?"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Allen, 169, Undercliffe Street, Bradford, Yorks.

FOR NIGHT WEAR!

An officer in charge of a native district in South Africa presented to a Kafir boy, his particular servant, a pair of strong, heavily-nailed boots. The boy was delighted with the gift, and at once sat down and put them on. They were the first pair he had had in his life, and for several days afterwards he strutted proudly about the camp. But at the end of the week he appeared as usual, with bare feet, and the boots tied round his neck. "Hallo," said his master, "why don't you wear your boots? Are they too small for you?" "Oh, no, sah," replied the Kafir, "they are plenty big! Very nice boots, sah, but no good for walking or running. Make fellah too much slow, sah. Keep boots now for wear in bed!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Lawrence Wellington, 20, Severn Street, Bulwell, Nottingham.

OBVIOUSLY AT FAULT!

Workman: "Please, sir, that new house we was just finishin' 'as been an' tumbled down!" Jerry Builder: "Confound it, you idiot! How many times have I told you never to take down the scaffolding till the wallpaper is put on?"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Maurice Wootton, 88, Cromwell Avenue, Highbury, N.

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THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 859.

Lord Conway, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's brother, is running a cadet camp, and, like the sportsman he is, he invites Tom Merry & Co. to join forces. The events which follow are thrilling and exciting!



TOM MERRY & Co. IN CAMP!

An Extra - Long Exciting
School Story of the Popular
Tom Merry & Co.

BY

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

First Aid for Baggy!

"COOOOOO-EEEEEE!"

Tom Merry stood on the School House steps at St. Jim's, and emitted that cry with all the strength of his lusty lungs.

The Shell captain was dressed in Boy Scout's uniform, and he looked a sturdy, athletic figure. Behind him were Monty Lowther and Manners, and Clifton Dane, Noble, and Bernard Glyn of the Shell. All were wearing a similar costume.

Tom Merry made a trumpet of his hands and flung this strident call unto the four heavens:

"Coo-eeeeee!"

Kildare and North of the Sixth, who happened to be strolling across the Clo, started on hearing that sound. Then, seeing the Boy Scouts on the steps, they grinned and passed on. They had not recognised at first the troop call of the St. Jim's Scout Troop.

It was a glorious summer afternoon, and, being a half-holiday, it seemed more glorious still. Tom Merry & Co. had bethought themselves that they could not spend the afternoon better than by having a Boy Scout rally, with manoeuvres in the Rylcombe Wood.

Tom Merry, the troop leader, had issued orders that all Scouts should assemble in the quad at two o'clock sharp. It was now several minutes past two, and not many had turned up.

Hence the oft-repeated curlew call.

"Coo-eeeeee!"

From the direction of the New House, Dick Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence came running, and soon after them came Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn. This latter youth seemed to fill his Scout's costume to bursting point, and it was really a matter of great wonderment how Fatty had managed to get into his clothes at all.

Figgins and Kerr rushed him to the School House steps, and Fatty, by the time he arrived there, was very hot and flustered.

"Groooough! You chaps might have let me finish those tarts!" he gasped. "I had only five left to eat—"

"You beastly cormorant, Fatty! You had already eaten about two dozen when we dragged you out of the tuckshop!" said Figgins severely.

"Oh, don't exaggerate, Figg!" expostulated Fatty Wynn. "I had only eaten about fifteen—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the other juniors.

Fatty Wynn's appetite was persistent and abysmal, and his chums had had some difficulty in getting him out of the tuckshop in order to join the Scout rally.

Kerruish, Reilly, Levison, Cardew, and Roylance of the Fourth, and Talbot of the Shell, came up after Tom Merry

had again roused the echoes at the old school with his loud cries of "Coo-eee!"

Tom surveyed the Scouts who had answered his call.

"Not enough yet!" he said. "Where are those asses, Blake and his crew? They ought to be here. Coo-eeee-eee!"

"Bai Jove! Blake, you wough wottah, leave go of my collar immediately! Yawwoogh!"

A heavy tramping of feet and an aristocratic voice sounded inside the Hall, and Tom Merry & Co. grinned.

"That's Gussy's toot!" said Monty Lowther. "Here come the Fourth Form kids!"

Blake, Herries, and Digby of Study No. 6 came through the doorway with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in their midst. All were dressed in scouting attire. Blake was dragging D'Arcy along by the scruff of his neck, whilst Herries followed up behind and gave Gussy frequent prods in the rear with his pole.

"Gwooooh! Yah! Welease me, Blake!" roared the swell of the Fourth. "You have thwown me into a feahful fluttah, and I shall be under the—yow!—painful necessity of givin' you a feahful thwashin'—woooooop! That wemark also applies to you, Hewwies, you fwightful wottah! Oh deah!"

"Here we are, you chaps!" said Blake. "Sorry we're late, but this burbling cuckoo delayed us. He was taking hours to get ready, as usual."

"Weally, Blake, I wefuse to be called a burblin' cuckoo, and I wepudiate your statement uttally!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, groping for his monocle, and jamming it into his eye. "You wottahs did not allow me enough time to get weady. I was just doin' my haiah—"

"Did you expect us to wait while you messed about putting bear's grease on your mop, you blitherer?" snorted Blake.

"Bai Jove! If you think that I put beah's gwease on my haiah, Blake—"

"Oh, ring off, Gussy!" snapped Blake. "These other chaps are waiting!"

D'Arcy turned a glimmering eyeglass to the other St. Jim's Scouts.

"Pway excuse me keepin' you waitin', deah boys, but I must give Blake a feahful thwashin'!" he said. "I have been tweated with the gwosset bwutality, and—"

"Choke him, somebody!" growled Blake.

"Bai Jove! I wefuse to be choked! I—I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, I fail to see any weason for wibald mewwiment, you boundahs!" said the swell of the Fourth frigidly. "When I have administahed a feahful thwashin' to Blake—"

"Oh, come off it, Gussy!" laughed Tom Merry. "This is a Boy Scout rally, not a free fight meeting. We shall have to bump you if you don't stop acting the giddy goat."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Coo-eeee-eeeeee!"

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"Undah the eires, I shall postpone Blake's feahful thwashin' until this evenin'. I—"

"Cooo-eee! Where are the other silly asses? Cooo-eeeee!"

Several other belated Scouts ran up and joined the group. "Still more to come!" grinned Figgins. "I hope we get out before it's dark!"

"Hallo! Here's Skimmy!"

Herbert Skimpole, the brainy genius of the Shell, came out in Scout rig, and carrying a long staff. Tom Merry & Co. looked at him and roared. Skimpole was a slim, weedy youth, and his scouting clothes made him look slimmer and more weedy than ever. His knickers were very baggy and extremely short, and showed his skinny legs and bony knees to perfection.

"Good old Skimmy!" chuckled Tom Merry. "He looks a proper Trojan warrior, doesn't he?"

"Which is Skimmy, and which is the pole?" inquired Monty Lowther, and there was a laugh.

Skimpole blinked through his huge eyeglasses as he came up.

"Here I am, my dear fellows," he said mildly. "I perceive that the mobilisation of our forces is almost complete. I trust that you will avail yourself of a scheme of manoeuvres which I have formulated, Merry. I have been studying the ethics of military procedure, and if you would care to listen to an extract from Colonel Boozlum's Treatise on Common Strategy—"

"Dry up, Skimmy. We have enough of your Socialism, Determinism, and other horrible isms, without having that forced on us!" said Tom Merry. "Take your place in the ranks like a good ass. Now, are we all here?"

"What about Baggy?" inquired Manners.

"Oh, rather! I particularly told Trimble to turn up. That lazy fat waster needs some exercise, and a good hard run with the Scouts will do him good. Has anybody seen Baggy?"

Nobody had, so Tom Merry, Blake, and Monty Lowther went in search of the fat youth of the Fourth.

Baggy, hearing Tom Merry's call to the colours, had evidently made himself scarce. Baggy Trimble was not an active youth, and nothing in the way of physical energy appealed to him in the least. He was acknowledged to be the biggest slacker at St. Jim's. He had protested indignantly when Tom Merry had told him that morning that he would be wanted to join in the Scout run, saying that he did not agree with militarism or hold with conscription in any shape or form. He had been generously promised a set of thick ears if he did not turn up. Baggy must have heard Tom's insistent calls of "Coo-eeee," but, like Baalam's ass, had heeded not.

Tom's face wore a grim look as he hunted high and low for Baggy, and he took a businesslike grip on his staff.

"The fat boulder must be somewhere!" he said. "Perhaps he's hiding in the dormitory. Let's have a look."

The three Scouts made their way upstairs to the Fourth Form dormitory.

They started as, nearing the door, they heard a deep groan issue from within.

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake. "That sounds like someone in pain!"

Tom Merry flung open the dormitory door, and they walked in.

They gasped when they saw a fat figure lying in bed.

It was Baggy Trimble.

Baggy turned a pathetic face to the three juniors, and gave vent to a deep, heartrending moan.

"Great pip! What's up with you, Baggy?" asked Tom Merry, in wonder.

"Groooooogh! I'm in awful agonies! I—I think I'm going to die!" moaned Baggy. "I fell down the stairs after dinner and broke my back, and sprained my leg, and dislocated my spinal column. Yow! Ow! Lemme alone, you fellows! I—I'm awfully sorry I can't join you this afternoon! Groooooogh! I can't move for pain, really! Ow-wow-wow!"

Tom Merry, Blake, and Lowther stared at the fat Fourth-Former in amazement.

His groans were truly piteous.

The juniors noted that Baggy had undressed himself before getting into bed. His clothes were lying in an untidy heap across the bedrail.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" exclaimed Blake. "The fat fraud is spoofing us, Tommy, and—"

"Yow! I'm not!" gasped Baggy, in accents of deep suffering. "As if I would think of such a thing! I'm terribly injured, and can't get up!"

Tom Merry winked at the others.

"Poor old Baggy! If he's really busted his back and put his funny-bone out of joint he must be suffering fearful agonies!" he said. "Can we do anything for you, Baggy?"

"No!" moaned Baggy. "Just leave me here to suffer

in silence. I—I can bear up. Perhaps the pains will go later."

"You bet they will—directly the Scout troop has left St. Jim's and the coast is clear for you to get out on your own!" growled Blake.

"Oh, really, Blake—"

"You're jolly heartless, Blake, I must say!" said Tom Merry, looking severely at the Fourth Form leader. "Poor old Baggy is at death's door; you can tell it by his groans. We'll leave him, and perhaps he'll get over it!"

The three juniors walked out of the dormitory, leaving Baggy groaning as though in the throes of tortures unmentionable.

They walked down the corridor, and then, on a whispered word from Tom Merry, they stole softly back again. Sounds came from the other side of the dormitory door, but they were not groaning sounds. Instead, they heard a deep chuckle.

"He, he, he! That's spoofed the rotters beautifully! I'll be free now, instead of having to fag out with the beastly Scout troop. I'll wait till they're gone, and then I'll dress myself. Oh, I'm a cute card, I am! He, he, he!"

Blake gritted his teeth.

"My hat! The awful spoofer!" he muttered. "I'll—"

"Shush-sh!" hissed Tom Merry. "Run down, Monty, and get the first-aid outfit. Bring plenty of embrocation—that yellow stuff that burns! We'll give that fat oyster something!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther ran off, and soon returned with the first-aid outfit, which contained a huge bottle of embrocation—"liquid fire," as it was called by those unfortunate juniors who, through suffering sprains or bruises, had had to have it applied.

The juniors heard a hasty scuffle in the dormitory as they entered.

Baggy was in bed when they walked in, and a deep groan greeted them.

"Ooooooogh!"

"Here we are again, Baggy!" said Tom Merry. "We couldn't bear to go out and leave you here to suffer, without doing something to help you, old chap. We've come to render you first-aid!"

Baggy blinked at them nervously.

"Ow! I don't need any first-aid, you fellows!" he gasped. "I'm past all help—I mean, my pains are so bad that I can't move! Yooooogh! Just leave me alone! I'll be all right!"

"Rats! We want to ease your sufferings, Baggy!"

"Yow! Lemme alone! You'll be late for the Scout run!" said Baggy desperately. "The other chaps are waiting—"

"Let 'em wait!" said Tom Merry. "Never let it be said that chaps of the St. Jim's Scouts failed to help anyone in distress. We're dabs at first-aid, too! Roll off the bedclothes, Monty. Gently, you know!"

Baggy roared and held on tight to the bedclothes when Monty Lowther tried to remove them. He wriggled and rolled in bed with great vigour, which was most surprising, considering that his back was broken, his leg sprained, and his spinal column dislocated.

"Yarooogh!" he roared, as Monty and Blake between them at last managed to get the clothes off the bed.

"Off with his pyjama jacket!" said Tom Merry, drawing the cork of the liniment bottle. "This stuff will do you the world of good, Baggy!"

"Yow-wow-ow! Gerraway! I don't want it!" howled Baggy. "I—I feel better now, really! Yow! All my pains are gone, you know! Lemme alone!"

"Stuff! You're terribly injured, and this liniment is just the thing for you, Baggy!" said Tom Merry. "Have you got his pyjama jacket off yet, you chaps?"

Rip!

Baggy's jacket came off in two pieces, and he rolled on the bed and howled.

"Hold him down!" said Tom. "As gently as you can, of course. Don't howl like that, Baggy! We're not going to murder you! We've got to be kind, you know!"

"Yaroooooooogh!"

Baggy was held face downwards on the bed by Blake and Lowther, whilst Tom Merry poured liberal doses of liniment on his back.

Baggy's howls fairly made the windows rattle.

"Oooooooop! Yah! Stoppit! I feel better! I'm quite recovered! Yow-wooooo! I'm burnt! Help! Ow-ow-ow!"

"Good stuff, this, if it's well rubbed in!" said Tom Merry. "It tells you on the bottle to rub it in!"

Rub! Rub! Rub!

"Yarooop! Wah! Help! Stoppit! You're burning me! Oooooogh!" yelled Baggy, wriggling like a fat eel.

Tom Merry poured liniment on his back, and rubbed away industriously.

"Feeling any better, Baggy?" he inquired, pausing when the bottle had been half emptied.



A wild and whirling struggle between the Scouts of St. Jim's and those of the Rylcombe Grammar School took place round the toll-gate. "Hurraa!" shouted Frank Monk. "We've got 'em! Sit on the beggars in the road and—mum-mum-my hat!" The Grammarians looked spellbound, for on the other side of the toll-gate another party of St. Jim's Scouts had appeared, with faces grim and staves raised ready for the fray. (See page 8.)

"Yooop! You rotten beast! Ow-ow-ow! Lemme go! I'm better, I tell you!" bellowed Baggy.

"Sure?" asked Tom Merry. "Do you think you are well enough to come on the Scout run, Baggy?"

"Yooop! I—I—I—"

"I think I'd better keep on till you are, you know!" said Tom Merry cheerfully. "There's plenty of liniment left, and—"

"Yah! Help! Take it away! Groooop!" howled Baggy. "My back's on fire! I've got no skin left on my back! Yow! Wow! Wah-ahh!"

"Are you able to come out with us, or shall I keep on with the liniment?" inquired Tom.

"Wowp! I—I'll come!" moaned Baggy.

"Right-ho!" said Tom. "Fetch Baggy's Scout's clothes, Blake, will you?"

Blake fetched the clothes, and Baggy was almost thrown into them. He was moaning and groaning now in very earnest. Tom Merry had rubbed in the liniment well, and Baggy's back felt as though it was on fire.

He moaned and wriggled on the way downstairs.

The other scouts were waiting impatiently in the quad.

"My hat! You don't mean to say you've come back!"

said Figgins, with a glare. "This isn't a Scout run through the School House, or a prize pig-hunting expedition by any chance, is it?"

"Sorry to keep you waiting, kids, but Baggy met with an accident, and we had to render first-aid!" said Tom Merry, with a grin. "He's all right now, I think."

"Bai Jove! What evah are you wigglin' for, Twimble?" asked Arthur Augustus, turning his monocle on the luckless Baggy. "Have you got somethin' down your back, deah boy?"

"Groooogh! I'm burnt! Ow-wow-wow!"

Tom Merry ranged his Scouts in a line two-deep.

"Shun!" he rapped sharply. "Shun, Baggy! Do you hear?"

"Ow!"

Baggy Trimble "shunned" in a very wriggly manner.

"About—turn! Quick—march!"

And, after nearly twenty minutes' delay, the St. Jim's Scouts marched out of gates and into Rylcombe Wood, chuckling deeply as they heard the tale of Baggy Trimble's indisposition, and the marvellous curing thereof.

CHAPTER 2.

Gussy Up a Tree!

TOM MERRY & CO. were in high spirits that afternoon. There was only one glum face in the merry band that invaded the Rylcombe Wood, and that was Baggy Trimble's.

His back and his heart were still very sore over the treatment he had received. He attempted to lag behind, in the hope that the others would march on without him, so that then he could slip away and seek his own devices. But it was not to be so. Blake noticed Baggy's faltering footsteps, so he walked behind the fat youth, and urged him on by the simple, if painful expedient of prodding him with his staff.

"I say, Merry, why not pitch camp in the centre of the wood, and send a few chaps on to the village for some tuck?" said Fatty Wynn. "We could have a camp feed, and I'd do the cooking. Sosses fried over a camp-fire are really ripping, and—"

"Halt!" commanded Tom Merry.

The Scouts halted in a quiet glade on the farther side of the wood.

"Well, what about it?" said Fatty Wynn eagerly. "If you care to pitch—"

"We'll pitch you into the ditch over there, Fatty, if you don't ring off!" said Tom Merry. "We're out to do some scouting, not stuffing! Now, kids, the idea is this. We'll break up into two parties. Figgy can lead one, and I'll captain the other. The first party will march on to the north end of the wood, crossing the river by the wooden bridge, and go on to the old smithy at Braycote. The other party will follow on in twenty minutes' time, and will attempt to get through the enemy lines north of the river. Prisoners will be taken by both parties. That ought to provide us with a good afternoon's fun."

"Hear, hear!"

"The party that loses ought to stand a feed afterwards!" said Fatty Wynn. "That will give an added interest to the manoeuvres!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shurrup, Fatty!"

The Scouts formed up into two parties, and Figgins, at the head of his contingent, led the way to the north part of the wood to take possession of his territory on the other side of the river.

Tom Merry & Co. remained in the wood until twenty minutes was up.

"Now!" said Tom, snapping his watch shut. "Time's up! We've now got to make our way to the old smithy at Braycote, and take as many prisoners from Figgy's lot as we can. We'll follow this path to the river, and cross it at the ford, and then march along Postern Lane, through the toll-gate, to Braycote. Now, I shall want a couple of chaps to act as decoys for the enemy. Gussy will make a good decoy—"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "You can wely on my tact and judgment, deah boy!"

"I wasn't thinking of that," grinned Tom. "A decoy is pretty sure to get captured sooner or later, so I thought I'd choose a chap who doesn't really much matter."

"Bai Jove! Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"You can take Baggy with you, Gussy, and you can both act as decoys. Try hard not to get captured, won't you?"

"Look heah, Tom Mewwy, if you cannot twust to my superior judgment—"

"Superior rats!" said Tom. "Now, don't argue with your commanding officer, Gussy, or I shall have to court martial you afterwards. You and Baggy can go. Keep an eye on that fat blighter, in case he tries to skedaddle."

"Wight-ho, deah boy! I sha'n't get taken pwisonah, nevah feah! Come on, Twimble! You will follow my instructions."

"Oh, how-wow!" growled Baggy.

He and the noble Gussy plunged on through the wood.

D'Arcy kept a watchful eye on Trimble, but as they got nearer to the enemy territory he quite forgot about Baggy's desire to break away.

"Heah we are at the wivah, deah boy," he said, as they came upon the narrow towing-path on the north end of the wood. "Bai Jove! Heah comes Dennis, the boatman, in his skiff. We'll get him to take us acwoss to the othah side."

"I'm not going over there!" growled Baggy rebelliously. "We shall only get caught by Figgins and his gang, and I don't fancy being kept a prisoner all the afternoon."

"Wats! I am lookin' atfah you, deah boy, so that you'll be all wight."

Baggy snorted.

Gussy hailed the boatman, and Baggy scuttled away.

But the swell of St. Jim's was too quick for him. He

ran after the would-be deserter, caught him by the scruff of his neck, and whirled him round.

"Not so fast, you young boundah! You're goin' acwoss with me! Get into the boat!"

Dennis had drawn the boat in close to the bank, and was waiting for the juniors to enter it.

"Yaroooooh! Leggo! I won't go!" roared Baggy. "I'm fed-up with scouting! Yah! Don't take me so close to the bank, D'Arcy! I shall f-f-f-fall in!"

"You eithah go into the boat or into the wivah—one of the two!" said D'Arcy grimly, retaining his grasp of the struggling Baggy. "Now, you fat boundah, which is it to be?"

Baggy chose the lesser evil, and crawled into the boat.

D'Arcy followed him, and they crossed to the other side.

Gussy tipped the boatman in his usual lavish style, and he led Baggy up the grassy bank into the thick shrubbery at the top.

"Now we've got to weconnoitre, deah boy," said the swell. "I wathah fancy that Figgins and his cwowd are not far away. Our job is to spot them and decoy them. Bai Jove, that's a jollay high twee! If only I could get up theah, I could weconnoitre!"

They were standing under a very tall tree, whose wide-spread branches towered high above the ground. Gussy did not fancy climbing up the rugged trunk, in case he spoilt his clothes. Even in Boy Scout's dress the noble Arthur Augustus was very particular as to his appearance.

"Bai Jove, I've got it!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Theah's a boathouse on the wivah not far from heah. We'll bowwow a laddah, and climb up this twee. Come on, Twimble!"

Baggy followed D'Arcy, growling.

They returned to the tree, bearing a tall ladder between them.

D'Arcy stood it up against the tree-trunk.

"Now, you'll have to hold the laddah while I climb up!" he said to Baggy. "Be vewy careful to keep it steady, deah boy."

"All right!" growled Baggy.

The fat Fourth-Former supported the ladder at the bottom whilst Arthur Augustus climbed up into the tree.

A cunning gleam entered Baggy's little round eyes.

D'Arcy reached a stout upper branch, and grasped it, resting one foot on the ladder.

"Hold it, deah boy," he said. "I'm just goin' to have a look wound, and— Oh, bai Jove! You awful wottah! Yawooooooh!"

Baggy, with a swift movement, had jerked the ladder away, so that Arthur Augustus was left hanging on to the branch in mid-air, his aristocratic legs dangling wildly.

"Gwooooh! Oh deah! Twimble, put back that laddah!"

"Not much!" retorted Baggy, carrying the ladder away from the tree and grinning up at the stranded swell. "This is where I get my freedom! No more scouting for me this afternoon, and that's flat! You can stay up there, D'Arcy, till somebody finds you! He, he, he!"

"You howwid little wottah— Yow! Oh, cwumbs! This is howwid, bai Jove!"

Baggy Trimble scudded off, bearing the ladder with him. He flung it into the midst of some bushes, and then disappeared.

Arthur Augustus, hanging on to the lofty tree-branch, performed weird acrobatic evolutions, and bumped his head several times on the bough above before he managed to secure a safe position. Then he sat on the bough, perched at a lofty height over the ground, and mopped his perspiring brow with a beautiful cambric handkerchief.

CHAPTER 3.

Gordon Gay & Co. Take a Hand!

BAI JOVE, this is weally howwid! I can't get down, bai Jove! Gwooooh! I've got two bumps wisin' on my nappah! Oh deah! I shall give Twimble a feahful thwashin' when I return to St. Jim's!"

Gussy gazed helplessly about him. He thought of Bonnie Prince Charlie and his romantic adventure up a tree, but Arthur Augustus did not consider this the least bit romantic. Suddenly a terrific yell broke upon the quiet afternoon air:

"Yarooooooh! Leggo! Rescue, St. Jim's! Yow! Ooooooop!"

There was no mistaking those mellifluous notes.

They belonged to Baggy Trimble.

Gussy jammed his monocle into his eye, and looked about him from his lofty position in the tree.

He gave a start when he saw the plump form of Baggy struggling in the grip of a party of Boy Scouts not far away.

The Scouts did not belong to St. Jim's, but to Rylcombe Grammar School. D'Arcy recognised Gordon Gay, the

Grammarian leader and deadly rival of Tom Merry & Co., and his faithful followers Frank Monk, the two Woottons, Carboy, Tadpole, and Mont Blong.

"Bai Jove! Then those boundahs are also havin' a Scout wun!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. "They've made Baggy a pwisonah, and— Oh, the uttah wottah! He's turnin' twaitah, and givin' information!"

"Lemme go!" Baggy was wailing. "I'll tell you how you can catch the other rotters, if you let me go! Yow-wow! Don't twist my arm like that, Gay, you beast! If you go up the Postern Lane, you'll catch Tom Merry and the others; they're on their way to the Braycote smithy—"

"Why, you horrible little toad!" exclaimed Gordon Gay. "You'd give your own chaps away for your freedom! Well, you won't get it, all the same! Tie him up, kids, and gag him, and dump him on the trek-cart! Trimble will be our first prisoner."

Baggy yelled and struggled, but the Grammarians bound and gagged him, and dumped him unceremoniously in the Boy Scout trek-cart.

Gordon Gay & Co. then pulled the cart into the open space underneath the tree where Arthur Augustus was stranded.

"Well, my sons, having got the information from Baggy without asking for it, I think we may as well act upon it!" said the Grammarian leader. "Tom Merry & Co. don't know that we're out skirmishing this afternoon, so we'll give them a little surprise. We'll capture the whole giddy issue on their march up the Postern Lane to Braycote, and impress upon 'em once and for all that the Grammar School is top dog at Rylcombe. I've got a topping notion. We'll commandeer the toll-gate in the lane, and lay in wait for them there. They'll have to pass through the toll-gate, and the dear lads will get the giddiest shock of their lives. Kim on!"

The Grammarian Scouts moved on, and Arthur Augustus drew a deep breath.

"Bai Jove! The awful boundahs!" he murmured. "How jolly forch that I happened to be up heah! I—I wondah, though, how I can let the othahs know?"

Gussy watched Gordon Gay & Co. march out of sight along the Postern Lane, a part of which ran very close to the tree.

The toll-gate was half a mile farther up the lane. Unless Tom Merry & Co. could be warned in time, they would march right into their rivals' trap and be captured.

"Pewwaps if I shout hard enough, they will heah me when they come along," murmured D'Arcy. "Oh! Theah they go! Cooooo-eeeee!"

Tom Merry and his small contingent, marching along the Postern Lane, felt that success was well within their grasp. So far they had seen nothing of Figgins & Co., but one or two Scouts had been sent out to locate the enemy's position.

All of a sudden Tom Merry halted, and looked round with a puzzled expression.

"Hark!" he exclaimed. "That sounded like our curlew call!"

"Coooo-eeeee! Wescue, St. Jim's!"

There was no mistaking the call now.

"It sounds like Gussy!" exclaimed Blake. "It came from the direction of the river. I wonder if the ass has fallen in, or done something equally clever?"

"Let's pop along and see," said Tom.

The St. Jim's Scouts plunged into the bushes at the side of the lane and made their way to the river.

D'Arcy's voice sounded nearer, now, and they looked about them wonderingly.

"Where the dickens is he?" said Tom. "I— Why! My only hat! Gussy's up in that tree!"

They dashed to the base of the tree, and looked up at Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Scouts, greatly tickled at their noble comrade's plight.

"Pway get me down, deah boys," said D'Arcy, balancing himself precariously on the bough. "I'm up heah, you know, and—"

"Yes, fathead, we can see that!" said Blake. "How the merry thunder did you get up there?"

"I bowwowed a laddah, deah boy. I was goin' to do some weconnoitwin!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Who pinched the ladder—Figgins?" yelled Monty Lowther.

"No—Twimble," said Gussy sadly. "The young wottah took the laddah away and left me stwanded up heah."

"You frabjous chump, Gussy!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Call yourself a Scout?"

"Bai Jove! I wathah fancay you'll be intewested to heah the news I've got for you, anyway, you boundah!" said Arthur Augustus with some heat. "Pway find the laddah and get me down."

Kerruish and Lumley-Lumley discovered the ladder, and Gussy was rescued.

The St. Jim's Scouts smiled broadly at him, but their smiles died away when he imparted his momentous news concerning Gordon Gay & Co.'s little plot.

"My giddy aunt!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "So those Grammarian microbes are after us—they've captured the toll-gate by now, and are waiting for us to arrive. Oh crumbs! What a go! We must get past that toll-gate to reach Braycote! If we turn back and go the other way we shall run right into Figgins and his crowd. How many of the Grammarians are there, Gussy?"

"About a dozen, deah boy," replied D'Arcy. "They may have weinforcements, too, you know."

"Yes, rather! Things look jolly bad for us."

The Scouts returned to the roadway, and halted for a council of war.

They were still discussing the situation when the strident notes of a motor horn sounded behind them.

Honk, honk!

A large Daimler came speeding towards them driven by a tall, handsome man dressed in the uniform of a captain in the Air Force.

Tom Merry & Co. all uttered gasps of surprise when they recognised who the driver was.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, holding up his monocle in astonishment. "It's my bwothah, Lord Conway, deah boys! How weally wippin'!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hallo, my lads!" cried Lord Conway cheerily.

He drew his car to a halt at the side of the lane, and saluted the St. Jim's Scouts.

Tom Merry & Co. stood to attention and returned the salute smartly. Then they all crowded round and shook hands with the young captain.

"Bai Jove! Fancay wummin' into you, Con, deah boy!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Were you goin' ovah to St. Jim's to see us?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact, I was!" laughed his elder brother. "I've something rather important to tell you lads. But it can wait. Carry on with your scouting, and I'll see you at the school later."

Tom Merry looked at the car, and a sudden gleam of inspiration entered his eyes.

"I—I say, sir," he exclaimed. "We were just holding a council of war when you drove up. We're in rather a difficulty—"

"Really? What's that?"

Tom Merry laughingly explained.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lord Conway. "So the Grammarians are layin' in wait for you at the toll-gate! This, my lads, is where you will have to use strategy!"

"Yes, indeed, my dear Merry," said Herbert Skimpole, producing a little booklet from his pocket and blinking prodigiously. "Pray allow me to read you Colonel Boozlum's remarks on Strategy—"

"Dry up, Skimmey!"

"Sit on his head, somebody!"

Tom Merry deftly took Skimpole's book from his hand and rammed it down that startled youth's back. Then he turned to Lord Conway.

"I was wondering if you would care to assist the military—little us, you know!" he said. "If only I could get past the toll-gate I could reach another party of our chaps, and between us we could settle with the Grammarians. It would take too long to go back the way we have come—Figgins and the others are not permitted to cross the river, you see. You will have to pass the toll-gate in your car, and if I could hide in it and get through with you—"

"Why, certainly!" laughed Lord Conway. "All's fair in love and war, and I am only too willing to assist the military. I must consider my car commandeered for the Forces. Hop in at the back, Tom. You coming, too, Arthur?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry and D'Arcy jumped into the car, and Tom gave instructions to Blake to hold back the others, but to send an envoy on ahead to watch the toll-gate for the signal for attack.

The car then drove off, with the two St. Jim's Scouts secreted under the rugs in the tonneau.

CHAPTER 4.

Rival Scouts!

"STAND and deliver!"

Gordon Gay, Frank Monk, and Harry Wootton lined up in the centre of the Postern Lane, in front of the ancient toll-gate, with their staves raised as Lord Conway's car drew up.

"What are you lads doing here?" asked the young lord looking at the Grammarian Scouts with a twinkle in his eyes. "And where is the toll collector?"

"Oh, the old skull's all right!" said Gordon Gay.

cheerfully. "He's taking a rest inside his little cottage there. This toll-gate is in the hands of the military for this afternoon—a strategic move for manoeuvres, you see. We're collecting the toll dues, and they will all be handed to the man when our occupation is over—I give you my word as a Boy Scout on that."

"Very well!" laughed Lord Conway, handing over the toll money.

The Grammarians swung open the gate, and the car passed through. They saluted smartly, and then closed the gate again.

Lord Conway chuckled as he drove on through the leafy lane.

Tom Merry and D'Arcy got up from their hiding place at the back of the car.

"Good egg!" said Tom. "We're past the enemy's lines, now, and we're awfully obliged, sir. We'll hop off and find Figgins and the rest."

Lord Conway stopped his car and the two juniors jumped down.

"So-long, boys! Best wishes for success!" he called, as he drove on again. "See you at St. Jim's for tea!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

Tom Merry and D'Arcy plunged into the thickets in search of Figgins & Co., each taking a different route.

Tom had not gone far before there was a rustle in the bushes and a hand gripped his shoulder. Next minute Figgins, Kerr, and Pratt of the New House rushed out of ambush and surrounded him.

"Got you!" said Figgins.

"Run down, by George!" said Pratt jubilantly. "Tie him up and gag him—"

"Here, not so fast, you fatheads!" exclaimed Tom, as Figgins and Kerr commenced to whirl him over. "I came here to find you. I've got news. The Grammarian Scouts are out, and they've taken possession of the toll-gate on the Postern Lane."

"Great pip!"

Tom Merry hastily explained everything, and Figgins drew a deep breath.

"My word! So the bounders are waiting for you—eh?" he chuckled. "We'll join forces, and give Gordon Gay something. He'll find himself attacked from both sides."

"Yes, that was my idea," laughed Tom Merry. "You'd better call in the others."

Pratt and Kerr went out and called in the other Scouts.

D'Arcy came in with Fatty Wynn and Redfern.

The situation was explained, and all marched quickly to the Postern Lane.

"One of our chaps will be hiding at the other side of the toll-gate, watching for the signal," said Tom Merry. "I'll go on ahead and give it."

"Pewpaws I had bettah undahtake that commission, deah boy—"

"Go and eat coke, Gussy! Wait there, you chaps, till I come back."

Tom Merry ran on ahead, and came to the bend in the lane just in front of the toll-gate.

Gordon Gay & Co. were all hiding in the gatekeeper's cottage, which they had evidently commandeered.

Tom could also see several Grammarian Scouts lurking in the bushes on either side of the gate. They were waiting for the St. Jim's Scouts to come along. Their backs were turned to Tom Merry, for they were expecting the Scouts from the direction of the river.

Tom stood in the middle of the lane and waved his staff.

Had the St. Jim's envoy seen him?

He scanned the bushes on the other side of the gate, and waved again. He saw a hand appear over a thicket on the left, and a brown neckerchief was waved for a brief instant.

"Good!" he muttered. "The signal's been seen. Now I'll fetch up the others."

Figgins & Co. and the other Scouts came up and took ambush at the side of the lane.

Some minutes passed, and then a party of St. Jim's Scouts, appeared in the distance, marching towards the toll-gate, with Blake at their head.

Tom Merry saw Gordon Gay give the signal to his Scouts, all of whom made readiness for attack. Their attention was wholly taken up by the St. Jim's Scouts approaching the toll-gate from the river—the Grammarians did not know of the second party which, under the leadership of Tom Merry, was creeping stealthily nearer from behind.

Jack Blake & Co. reached the toll-gate, and at the same moment Gordon Gay's voice rang out:

"Charge!"

Up went the St. Jim's Scouts' staves immediately, as a horde of Grammarians sprang out of ambush. They were expecting the attack, and so were not entirely at a disadvantage. The numbers were in favour of Gordon Gay & Co., however.

"Collar them!" roared Gordon Gay. "Don't let one escape, and— Yaroooooop! Wow! My nose!"

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Jack Blake sprang at the Grammarian leader and proceeded to engage him in deadly combat. A wild and whirling struggle between the Scouts took place round the toll-gate in that otherwise quiet country road.

"Hurrah!" shouted Frank Monk. "We've got 'em! Sit on the beggars in the road, and— Mum-mum-my hat!"

On the other side of the toll-gate another party of St. Jim's Scouts had appeared, their faces grim and staves raised ready for the fray!

Tom Merry & Co. came swarming over the gate and dashed to the attack.

"Bravo!" yelled Monty Lowther, who was lying on his back with Goggs and Tadpole seated on top of him. "Here come our reinforcements!"

"Hurrah!"

"Up, boys, and at 'em!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Oh, my aunt!" gurgled Gordon Gay, looking round desperately. "Buck up, kids! This is a surprise attack, and— Yow-wow-ow-wow!"

Biff! Crash! Wallop!

The tables were turned now with a vengeance! The Grammarians had to leave their prisoners and put up their fists to meet Tom Merry & Co. Staves were not used, now, as the fight was at very close quarters. The St. Jim's Scouts pressed hotly, and the Grammarians were gradually forced back against the toll-gate.

A market-cart, laden with flour-sacks, drew up at the other side of the closed gate. The driver stood up and waved his whip furiously, shouting to be let through.

But the Scouts were fighting fiercely round the gate, and there was no way through for the cart.

"Sock it to 'em, kids!" gasped Tom Merry, who was having a fine fistic encounter with Gordon Gay. "Don't let 'em get over the gate— Yaroooo! We've got to take 'em prisoners!"

"Rats!" panted Gay. "You'll have a job!"

The Grammarians, fighting gamely, clambered on top of the gate, and the St. Jim's Scouts followed. The old gate creaked with the weight of the combating juniors.

The carter on the other side yelled furiously as Carboy, Monk and Blake, D'Arcy and Kangaroo leaped off the gate into his cart.

"You little whelps! Gerroff my cart! Which H'll call the perlice! Ow! Oooooogh!"

The cart was soon overwhelmed by the struggling Scouts. They jumped in it, and rolled in it, and pranced about all over it.

In vain did the carter roar and threaten. Tom Merry & Co. had the whip-hand now, and after a furious fight they overpowered all the Grammarians.

Gordon Gay & Co. found themselves distributed all over the road, and in the cart, on their backs, each with a Saint astride him.

"Victory is ours, my bonny boys!" chuckled Tom Merry, mopping his nose with a handkerchief. "Fancy you trying to capture us! You'd better try it on a kindergarten troop of wolf-cubs next time! You really don't stand a chance with St. Jim's, you know! We can Scout you chaps off the face of the earth!"

"Rats!" gasped Gordon Gay. "You—you've got us, but wait till we get loose, that's all!"

"You jolly well won't get loose—yet!" grinned Tom Merry. "You've got to give us your parole for the day first."

"Bosh! Rats! We won't!"

"Right-ho! The offer is now closed!" said Tom cheerfully.

"Kids, I think we'll take our prisoners home!"

"You little rascals!" bellowed the angry carter. "I'll 'ave the lor on yer for this!"

Tom Merry chuckled.

"We're awfully sorry for the rough-and-tumble, but you must expect these little things in war-time, you know!" he said. "I say, can we borrow your cart to take our prisoners home in? We'll make it ten bob if you like."

"My heye! Ten bob!" ejaculated the carter, his angry look changing into a satisfied smile. "Why, certainly, young gent!"

A whip-round for funds was made, and ten shillings was easily raised. The carter gave the address to which the cart was to be returned, and walked off smiling and jingling his unexpected wealth in his pocket.

Gordon Gay & Co. glared apprehensively at their rivals.

"I say, Blake, see if you can get some rope from the gate-keeper, will you?" said Tom Merry. "A few bob will make things all right with him."

Blake returned shortly with a length of rope.

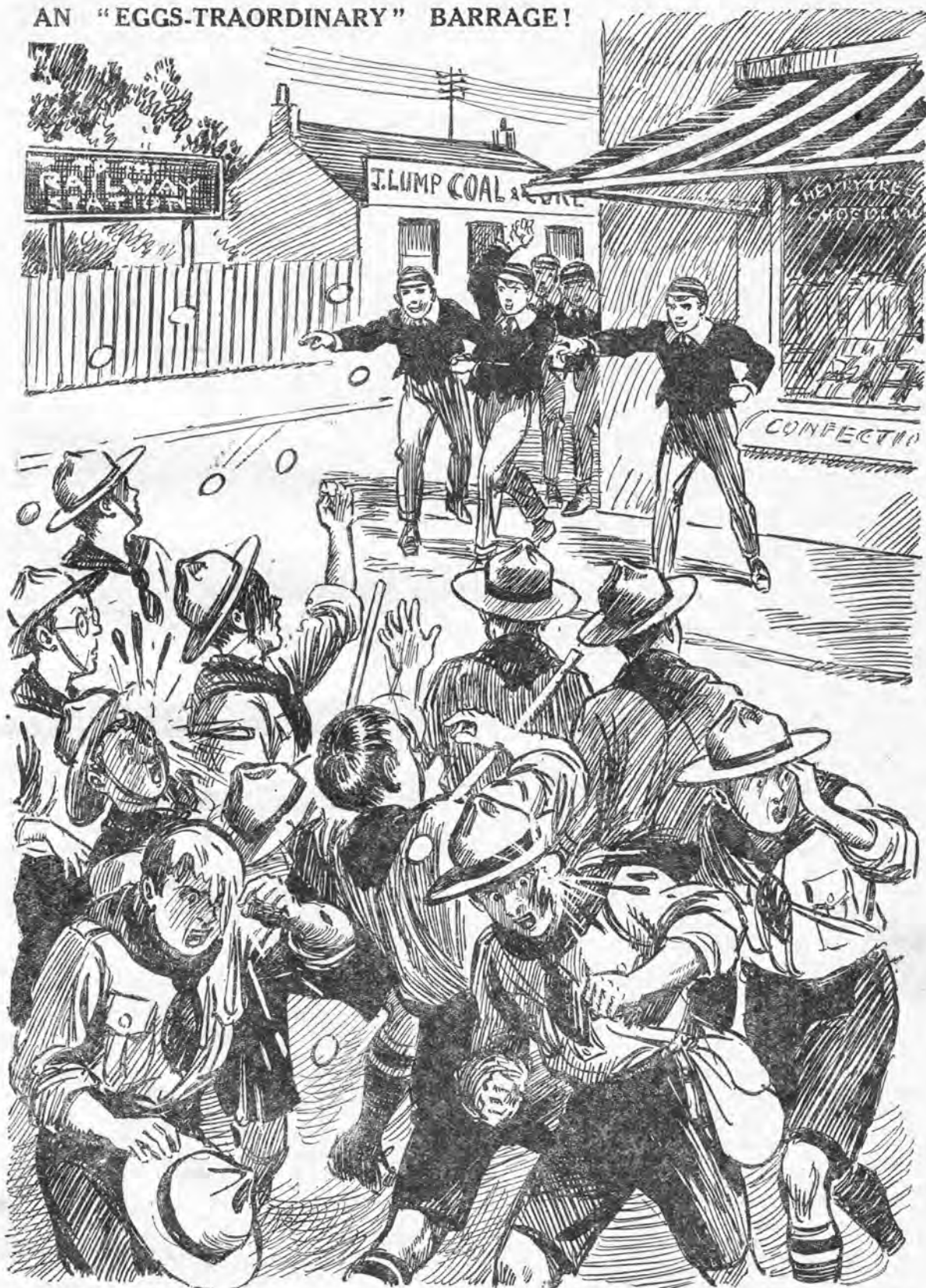
"Good egg!" chuckled Tom. "Now we'll harness some of these chaps to the giddy cart! Unharness the horse, Gussy."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The horse was taken from the shafts and tethered in the field nearby. Gordon Gay, Monk, Jack Wootton, Carboy,

(Continued on page 10.)

AN "EGGS-TRAORDINARY" BARRAGE!



"Ware those Grammarian bounders!" cried Blake. "They look as if they mean trouble—Oooooop!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gordon Gay. "We've got a crate of eggs here and we've come to give you a bit of a send off, dear lads!" "You—you rotters—" Whiz! Wallop! Thud! Eggs—it seemed that there were thousands of them—hurled across the road at the St. Jim's Scouts, bursting all over their persons and causing great devastation. (See page 12.)

and the four others whom Tom selected to be harnessed to the cart, struggled desperately.

"Oooooop! Leggo, you blighters!" roared Gordon Gay desperately. "We won't be harnessed to the cart!"

"Rats! Your mistake—you will, my son!"

"We—we'll give our parole—"

"More rats! You had your chance, and it's too late now! Tie 'em up!"

"Yarooooogh!"

The eight Grammarians were tethered, two abreast, between the shafts of the market cart, which had been turned round. They struggled wildly to get free, but their bonds held them firmly.

"Now we'll do the other merry jokers up in these flour sacks," said Tom Merry. "They'll make a neat little cargo for the cart, won't they?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you horrid rotters!"

Tom Merry & Co. grasped the seven remaining Grammarians, thrust each into a sack so that only his head was visible, and tightened the sack round his neck. Then the luckless seven were dumped in the cart. Their faces, red and floury, glared round in wild rage, but they were helpless.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, then, gee-up!" commanded Tom Merry, cracking the whip round Gordon Gay & Co.'s legs. "You've got to pull your dear little schoolfellows back to school!"

"Yow! You rotters! We—we won't!" howled Gordon Gay furiously.

Crack! Crack! went the whip, and the Grammarians tethered between the shafts hopped wildly, and started forward with a run.

Bump, bump, bump! went the cart.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the St. Jim's Scouts.

Tom Merry walked alongside the cart, and plied the whip vigorously whenever the Grammarians showed signs of lagging.

In this manner the cart was driven down the lane towards Rylcombe, drawn by eight howling Grammarians, with seven others on board done up in sacks.

Baggy Trimble was discovered in the trek-cart at the rear of the toll-gate cottage, and was released.

The St. Jim's patrol followed the cart in a gay procession.

The people who saw the cart en route stopped to stare and roar with laughter. Never before had Gordon Gay & Co. been so humiliated.

Never before had the Grammarian Scouts suffered such an overwhelming defeat!

They were driven right up to the gates of the Grammar School, where their amazed schoolfellows gathered to witness the strange home-coming.

"Now we'll leave you to your own devices, dear boys!" chuckled Tom Merry as the St. Jim's Scouts halted outside the Grammar School. "You know where to return the cart, don't you? Don't forget to tell the carter where his horse is!"

"You—you—you—" spluttered Gordon Gay.

Words could not describe his feelings, but his looks spoke volumes.

Bai Jove, I regard this as distinctly funny, dear boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wathah fancy that this is where these Gwammawian boundahs sing small!"

"Rather!"

"St. Jim's wins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hear us smile!"

And the smile of the St. Jim's Scout Patrol could still be heard at the Grammar School long after they had marched out of sight up the lane.

CHAPTER 5.

Lord Conway's Great Idea!

ARRIVING back at St. Jim's, the victorious Scouts went upstairs to change and remove the many traces of the fracas with Gordon Gay & Co. which they bore. They looked fresh and as clean as new pins when they came down again, dressed in ordinary school Etons. Arthur Augustus especially was a vision of spotless splendour. He had received a fiver from his noble pater that morning, and he took his chums over to the tuckshop to lay in supplies for tea.

There was to be a very special tea in Study No. 6 that afternoon, for Lord Conway was a visitor to St. Jim's, and Tom Merry & Co. and Figgins & Co. were invited to share in doing the honours to the distinguished guest.

A magnificent spread was prepared, and even Lord Conway rubbed his hands appreciatively when he came in.

Fatty Wynn did the cooking, and he turned out sausages, eggs and ham, chip potatoes, and toast, in great style.

Study No. 6 was full to overflowing by the time all the

guests were in, but it was a very merry tea-party that took place in there, and Lord Conway roared with laughter when full details of the affair with Gordon Gay & Co. were related to him.

He enjoyed the feed as much as the juniors. There was plenty for all, and even Fatty Wynn had to lay down his knife and fork at last and gasp out that he was satisfied.

"Jolly good spread, my lads!" chuckled Lord Conway. "Reminds me of my old college days, long, long years ago—"

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "You're not so frightfully old, you boundah! Theah isn't much dispaivity in our ages, and I wathah fancy I could give you a few points on some things, bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, Arthur, we won't argue on that," said Lord Conway, smiling. "I came to St. Jim's with the principal object of making a suggestion to you fellows. I must tell you first of all that I am running a cadet camp near Winchelgate-on-Sea."

"Bai Jove!"

"The boys of this cadet corps are a fine set of fellows—as fine a set of youngsters as one could wish to meet," said Lord Conway warmly. "They are mostly, of course, Council School lads, and I, having taken a great interest in them, have arranged to pay all the expenses of the camp."

"Oh, how ripping of you, sir!"

"The boys have been in camp now for over a week, and they are thoroughly enjoying the life. It is a great opportunity for them, for they come from very humble parents, and in the ordinary way would not be able to have a summer camp. You fellows are fortunate in having people who are rich enough to keep you in more or less comfort and luxury. The lads in my camp come from the working classes, and it has given me special pleasure in being able to provide a summer camp for them. Better lads could not be found anywhere, and they are making the most of their holiday."

"Bai Jove, that's awfully sportin' of you, Con, dear boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "And what a wippin' ideah! I wish we could help it! It would be gweat!"

"Well, I want you to help me make the camp a success," said Lord Conway, with a smile. "I thought it would be a good idea if you fellows came down to spend your summer vac, or part of it, with my cadets at the camp."

"My word!"

"St. Jim's breaks up for the summer vac next week. I have spoken to Dr. Holmes on the subject, and he entirely agrees with me that it's a good idea. You fellows, I'm sure, would make friends with the cadets, and you would find each other good company. You are all bound to have a rollicking good time together. It would be a change for the lads now at the camp, and at the same time, would provide you with a healthy and interesting holiday."

The juniors' eyes glistened eagerly.

"My hat! What a top-notch idea!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "A summer vac spent in camp near the seaside! Oh, it would be great!"

"First chop!" said Blake. "The cadets wouldn't mind us barging into the camp, Lord Conway?"

"Rather not!" was the smiling reply. "I have already spoken to them about my idea, and they are as eager as you. Being Council School boys, they were a little overwhelmed at first when I told them that I was going to arrange for a party of public school boys to stay with them; but when I told them what sports you fellows are they were all for the arrangement. You would all be on an equal footing at the camp, of course."

"Yes, rather!"

"It is certainly not for the purpose of trying to improve these lads that I make my suggestion," said Lord Conway. "You will rank as equals, and share and share alike."

"That's topping, sir!" said Tom Merry. "We should hate to have your chaps think us a superior lot, simply because our parents happen to be rich and that we come from a public school. None of us are snobs, and none of us care a rap whether a fellow is rich or poor, Council School or public school boy—so long as he's true blue, that's all that matters!"

"Hear, hear!" said the other juniors heartily.

"That's the way to talk, my lads!" said Lord Conway. "Now, I want to arrange, if I can, for all the St. Jim's Boy Scout Patrol to go to the camp. It will be an inexpensive and useful holiday for you all."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Dr. Holmes will take a list of all boys wishing to go to camp, and he will then communicate with the parents and collaborate with me in making all the necessary arrangements."

"That's splendid!" said Blake enthusiastically. "We'll write to our people, too, and tell 'em how keen we are to spend the summer vac in camp."

"Hear, hear!"

Lord Conway rose to go.

"Well, I'm glad to see that all you fellows are willing to fall in with my idea," he said. "I was sure you would. You can take it from me there's everything at the camp that you'll need to have a really glorious time. The camp is under canvas, of course, and is on a wood, near the cliffs, about four miles from Winchelgate-on-Sea."

"Top-hole!"

The juniors were full of enthusiasm.

They escorted Lord Conway down to his car and gave him a rousing cheer as he drove away from St. Jim's.

"It's a corking wheeze! Nothing could be better!" said Jack Blake eagerly, as the School House juniors went indoors together. "We'll hop along and give in our names to the Head, and then give the other chaps the tip."

"Rather!" said Tom Merry. "Any member of the Scout Patrol refusing to join in the idea will be bumped and frog-marched round the Common-room!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of St. Jim's hurried upstairs.

"I say, you chaps—"

Baggy Trimble came trotting after them.

"I say, I'm jolly hungry!" he gasped pathetically. "I've had a strenuous afternoon's scouting."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, haven't I?" demanded Baggy, glowering. "And I'm broke! I had to have tea in Hall—doorsteps and weak tea, with a bit of mouldy cake. I'm hungry! You chaps might stand me—"

"We can't stand you at any price, Baggy," said Tom Merry. "Run away and play!"

"If you're going to have tea now—"

"My dear kid, we've had tea! We're going up to the Head to put our names down for Lord Conway's summer camp, and we're in a fearful hurry!"

"Look here! I want some grub!"

Baggy's voice broke off into a growl, for Tom Merry & Co. were gone!

They gave their names to the Head, and then went into the Common-room to spread the glad tidings.

Lord Conway's great idea was greeted with enthusiasm everywhere, and Dr. Holmes was simply bombarded with juniors eager to have their names put down.

When Jack Blake & Co. returned to Study No. 6 they received a surprise.

A great deal of tuck had been left over from tea, and they had left it on the table.

But now not a crumb was left!

Somebody had been in during their absence and made a drastic clearance of everything eatable.

"Baggy, of course!" snorted Blake. "The greedy, fat clam! We ought to have locked the study door!"

"Nevah mind, deah boys," said Gussy pacifically. "We had a wippin' feed! And old Con's idea is goin' to turn out a weal success! We'll see to that!"

To which his chums replied with great heartiness:

"What-ho!"

CHAPTER 6.

Off for the Camp!

THE more Tom Merry & Co. thought about Lord Conway's idea of the St. Jim's Scouts spending the summer vac, or part of it, in camp with cadets, the more they liked it. Camping out for their meals, sleeping under canvas, and leading the life of the great outdoors for a few weeks was an attractive prospect. There was a spice of real adventure in it that appealed strongly to them. They were eager to start, and one by one they received permission from home to go to camp—permission in most cases accompanied by a whacking remittance to tide over the first week or so of the vacation. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had twenty-five pounds cabled to him by his pater, Lord Eastwood. Gussy would readily have spent all that on his chums, but they would not allow him. They were all standing their own "exes" for the camp, and looked forward to breaking-up day with an eagerness that was not entirely appreciated by the masters.

There were several fellows in the school who sneered at the whole idea—Aubrey Racke, Mellish, and Crooke, in particular. They were the black sheep of the school, and nobody expected them to be decent, anyway.

"Blessed if I'd spend my summer vac among a lot of Council School cads!" said Racke in the Common-room two days before breaking up. "They're a cheap, low-down lot, I suppose, and not fit for chaps like us to associate with. I say, Lumley-Lumley, you're surely not going?"

"I am," said Lumley-Lumley calmly.

"You'll live and pig in with the Council School fellows at their rotten camp?"

"Bah Jove! I wergad that wemark as a wefflection on my bwethah, Wacke, and, undah the cires, I shall considah it my dutay to give you a feahful thwashin'!" exclaimed

D'Arcy, with heat, advancing on Racke and pushing back his cuffs.

The cad of the Shell backed away hastily, and, seeing that Arthur Augustus was in deadly earnest, he bolted headlong from the room.

"I agree with Racke that it ought to be beneath you chaps' dignity to mix with a set of commoners!" sneered Gerald Crooke. "If that's what you call pride—"

"We don't call it pride; we call it decency," said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"I'd refuse to associate with 'em, anyhow!"

"They'd probably refuse to associate with you, Crooke, if they knew you!" was Tom's retort. "You aren't fit to lick a decent chap's boots, whether he's a commoner, as you call him, or otherwise. Nobody's a commoner, so far as we are concerned. If the Council School chaps are the right sort, we'll chum up with them and be proud of it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And so, at last, the great day—breaking-up day—came!

It was a day of universal activity at St. Jim's. Everyone was packing and lugging boxes about, and Taggles was so hard pressed that he had to take frequent resort to a certain bottle which he kept in his little lodge.

The St. Jim's Scouts turned out in uniform, carrying haversacks and all necessary kit for their stay in camp. The band, consisting of big drum, kettledrums, and bugles, assembled in the Close, and Herries gave a rousing "Ta-ra-ra!" as a send-off to a brake-load of Fifth-Formers who were just leaving.

"Well, cheerio, you kids!" laughed Kildare, the stalwart school captain, who was walking to the station with Darrell, North, and Monteith. "Hope you have a good time!"

"Thanks awfully, Kildare!"

"Same to you, old chap—with knobs on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors of St. Jim's left the old school, some for sea-side, others for country, whilst a few lucky ones were going abroad for the vac.

But the Scouts who were off to camp considered themselves quite lucky. They wished for nothing better.

Baggy Trimble and Fatty Wynn had to be routed out of the tuckshop. Baggy had insisted on coming, and Tom Merry & Co. could not very well prevent him, as they themselves had pressed him into service as a Boy Scout.

"I say, Tom Merry, hadn't we better take a hamper of tuck with us?" said Fatty Wynn anxiously. "It's a long journey to Winchelgate, and we are bound to feel hungry on the way. I know I shall. Mrs. Taggles will make us up a hamper."

"Who would carry it, ass?" demanded Tom Merry. "We've got quite enough luggage already!"

"Oh, really—"

"Cheese it, Fatty! I say, chaps, where's Skimpole?"

"Goodness knows!"

Tom Merry discovered the genius of the Shell hunting about in his study.

"Just a moment, my dear Merry," said Skimpole mildly, when Tom glared in. "I am looking for Professor Balmycrumpet's book on 'Determinism,' and a volume on 'Evolution' by Professor Loosetop. It is my desire to read extracts from those valuable works to the cadets with whom we shall be staying, and thus instruct and elevate them in— Oh, I— Yah! Wow! My dear Mum-Merry, what are you doing? Yow! Yarcooooogh!"

"I'm prodding a silly ass to make him come along," said Tom, digging into Skimpole with his staff. "If you dare bring those horrible books to camp we'll brain you with 'em. Get along!"

"Yooop! Desist, my dear Merry! Yowp! I'm going! Oh dear!"

"Prod! Prod! Prod!"

The arrival of Skimpole completed the troop. The band struck up a stirring, martial air, the drums racing with the bugles, which were racing with each other, and the big drum chipping in every second or so with terrific thumps. The St. Jim's Scouts ranged themselves behind the band, and they marched out of gates.

Down the Rylcombe Lane they went and into the village, which was well filled with the St. Jim's fellows.

"We catch the three-eighteen train for Winchelgate," said Tom to Figgins, his aide-de-camp, as they marched over the ancient cobblestones of the High Street. "Plenty of time, you see."

"Then I vote we stop at the bunshop and have a farewell feed," said Fatty Wynn. "A chap must lay in a solid foundation for a long journey, you know."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry. "You will stay in the ranks, Fatty, and obey orders."

"Lemme get a few sandwiches, then—"

"You'll get a thick ear if you don't shurrup!"

Arriving at Rylcombe Station, Tom Merry & Co. saw Gordon Gay & Co. standing in the High Street opposite.

"Ware those Grammarian bounders!" said Blake. "They look as if they mean trouble. Oooooop!"

An egg, hurled by Frank Monk, struck Blake on the nose and burst all over his face. Blake choked. The egg, to judge by its odour, was a veteran of its race. Kangaroo, who was still beating the drum, gave a jump when another egg, aimed by Gordon Gay, hit him on the chin, and in jumping he lost his balance and fell over on top of the drum in the road.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gordon Gay. "We've got a crate of eggs here—bought up cheap from Sands the grocer. We've come to give you a bit of a send-off, dear lads."

"You—you rotters!"

Whiz! Whiz! Wallop! Thud!

Eggs—it seemed that there were thousands of them—hurled across the road at the St. Jim's Scouts, bursting all over their persons and causing great devastation.

"Yarooooop!"

"Bai Jove! Gwooooh! Oh deah!"

"Gerrugh!"

"Run for it!" gurgled Tom Merry, as a musty egg crashed on the nape of his neck and disported itself down his back.

"Into the station, quick!"

Whiz! Squash! Wallop!

Tom Merry & Co. had no alternative but to run. They crowded into the station, followed by the victorious shouts of the Grammarians.

Some time elapsed before they managed to clean themselves up and make themselves look presentable, and even then a peculiar and emphatic odour of musty egg hung round them.

They crowded into the train when it came in, and they left Rylcombe, en route for Winchelgate-on-Sea, amidst the cheers, laughter, cat-calls, and good wishes of the other St. Jim's juniors on the platform.

Gordon Gay & Co. remained outside in the High Street.

The Grammar School broke up the following day, but Dr. Monk had given them the afternoon off to do their packing. Gordon Gay & Co. had come down to see the St. Jim's fellows off.

"I didn't know they were all going away together in a Boy Scouts troop," said Carboy, as they strolled up the High Street. "I wonder what the idea is?"

"Looks as though they're going into camp somewhere for the vac," mused Gordon Gay. "Hallo! There goes old Taggles. Let's get the information from him."

Taggles, who was very hot and thirsty after his portering operations at St. Jim's, was quite amenable to answering questions in exchange for certain coins of the realm.

"Yes, Master Gay, which them Scouts is going hinto camp—Lord Conway's camp, at Winchelgate, I believe, or near there."

Gordon Gay gave a gasp.

"Winchelgate!" he ejaculated.

"Great pip!" said Frank Monk. "That's where we're spending our vac!"

Gordon Gay shot him a warning glance, and Monk subsided.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—it's a 'ard life among them young rips at St. Jim's, and I'm glad to see the back of 'em for a few weeks," grumbled Taggles. "I says now as I allus 'ave said—all boys should be drowned at birth!"

Gordon Gay & Co. walked on, leaving the St. Jim's porter to address his remarks to the desert air. Taggles did not remain there long. He ambled along in the direction of the nearest "refreshment" bar, there to quench his gargantuan thirst.

Gordon Gay & Co. exchanged glances as they strolled on towards the Grammar School.

"My only Aunt Matilda! So those bounders are camping near Winchelgate for the vac!" exclaimed Gordon Gay, and he gave a deep chuckle. "They don't know, of course, that we are all spending our vac at your uncle's house at Winchelgate, Monk."

"No fear!" laughed Frank Monk.

"The fates are surely with us!" grinned the Grammarian leader. "Methinks, my sons, that we shall have some extra fun during the holiday. I reckon we shall have to look in at that merry camp, what?"

And his chums agreed with great unanimity that they would.

CHAPTER 7. Comrades All!

"HEAH we are again, Con, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thus greeted his elder brother as the St. Jim's Scouts trooped out of the quaint little station at Winchelgate-on-Sea.

Lord Conway, a well-knit, handsome figure in uniform, was standing in the station yard to meet them.

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With him were six smart-looking boys in khaki cadet's uniform. They regarded Tom Merry & Co. with great interest, and the St. Jim's fellows looked interestedly at them.

Two hours had elapsed since the train had left Rylcombe, and the Scouts were glad to get out of the stuffy railway carriages. A gentle breeze was blowing up from the sea, and with it came a refreshing salt twang. The sky overhead was blue, and a strong sun cast its radiance over the popular seaside resort.

Lord Conway stepped forward and saluted the six cadets; who were with him smartly following suit. The Scouts all saluted, and Tom Merry and Figgins shook hands with Lord Conway.

"So you've arrived," smiled the young lord. "Here are six of the leaders from the camp. This is Richard Rawlings, the captain, Dick Rawlings—Tom Merry."

The two boys shook hands warmly.

Dick Rawlings was a good-looking lad of about Tom's own age, dark, curly-haired, and bright-eyed. In their first handclasp the two leaders evinced spontaneous friendship and trust.

Rawlings' companions were introduced one after another—Jones, Dawson, Ginger O'Connor, Mills, and Edwards.

"Jollay pleased to meet you, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus, adjusting his monocle and bowing from the ranks. "We have been lookin' forward to comin' to your camp, and I twust we shall have a wippin' time togethah, bai Jove!"

The cadets looked in surprise at Gussy, and Tom Merry & Co. chuckled. The aristocratic swell of St. Jim's was certainly out of the common run of schoolboys, and Dick Rawlings & Co. could be pardoned if they did stare at first.

"I must be off to London now, my lads, so I will leave you to your own devices," said Lord Conway. "I'm sure you will get on well together and have a good time."

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"So-long, boys! I'll give the camp a look-up soon."

Lord Conway went into the station to catch the London train, and Dick Rawlings turned with a smile to Tom Merry.

"It's a four-miles march to the camp," he said. "Shall we lead the way?"

"If you don't mind," grinned Tom Merry. "I—Hallo! Where are you off to, Fatty?"

Fatty Wynn had stealthily detached himself from the ranks and was making towards the station.

"I—I was only going into the buffet," he said, turning with a pathetic look on his plump face. "I'm jolly hungry, you know, after that beastly train journey. And all I had before I left St. Jim's was a pork-pie, six ham sandwiches, some tarts, and a Madeira cake, and some chocolate and some biscuits!"

"Great Scott!" gasped Dick Rawlings, looking in amazement at the Welsh junior.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins. "Fatty Wynn's the tuck-shifting champion of St. Jim's, you know! His appetite's got to be seen to be believed!"

"Oh, really, Figgy—"

"Why not wait till we get to the camp?" laughed Dick Rawlings. "I've left instructions for a great feed to be ready by the time we arrive—and some of our chaps can cook, you know!"

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry. "To tell the truth, I feel rather peckish!"

"Same here!" said a dozen voices.

"We'll get off, then," said Dick Rawlings.

"This way, Fatty!"

Fatty Wynn gave in, and resumed his place in the ranks.

The march to the camp led over the high cliffs, which gave a splendid view of Winchelgate and the sea, and through a pretty wood into a large glade surrounded by trees.

There they found the cadets camp, which consisted of a number of tents in a roped-in enclosure. The cadets themselves were crowded at the camp entrance, waiting eagerly for their new comrades.

They gave a loud cheer when Tom Merry & Co. arrived. There was nothing but heartiness in the cadets' welcome to the St. Jim's Scouts. And within five minutes they were all on the best of terms, and were chatting away with each other as though they had been comrades for years.

"What about the feed, Tom Merry?" asked Fatty Wynn softly. "I can't see any signs of a feed, and—"

Ta-ra-ra-ra!

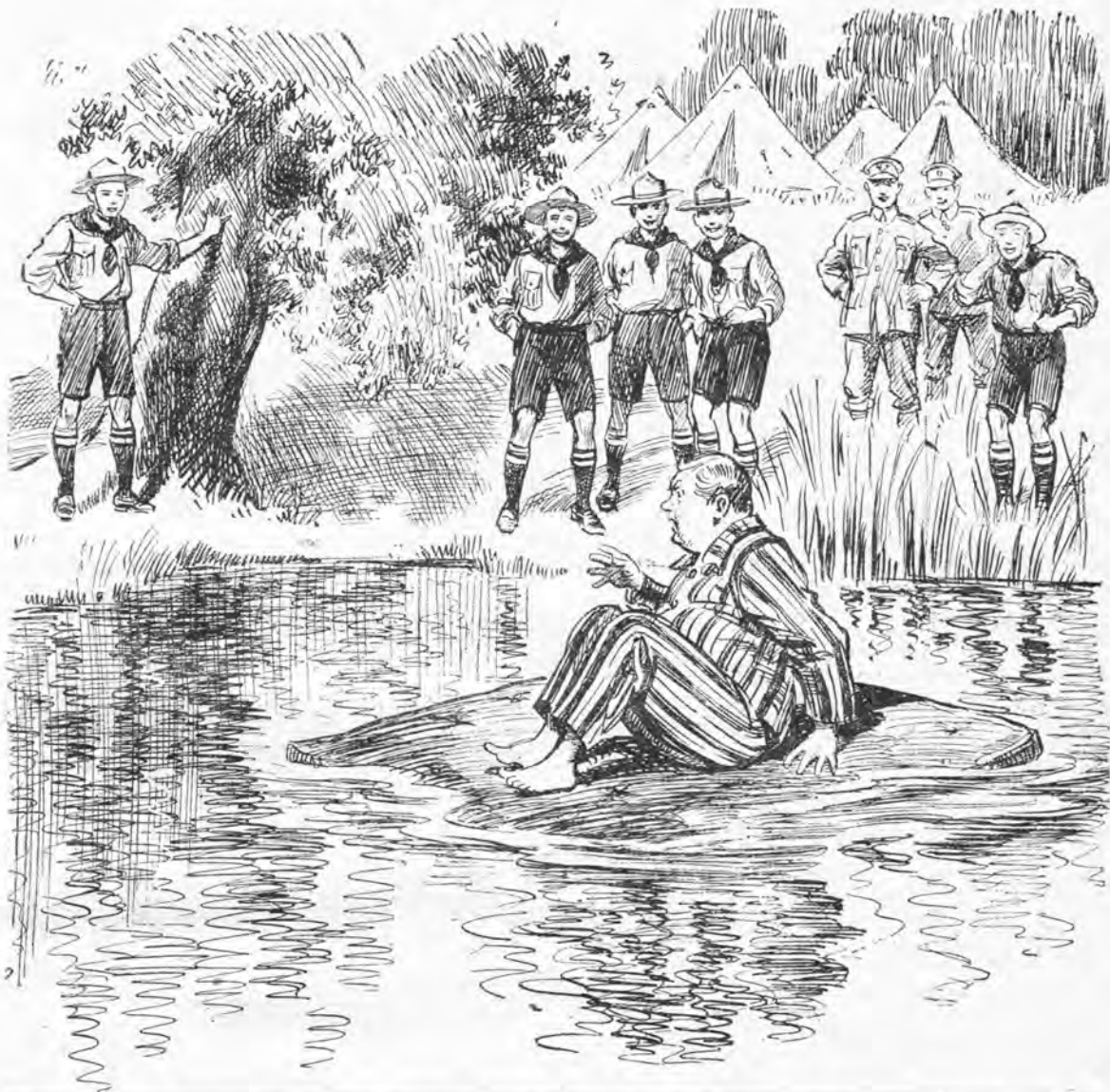
It was a bugle-call from behind the big central marquee, and Dick Rawlings turned with a grin to the St. Jim's fellows.

"Come to the cook-house door, boys!" sang Ginger O'Connor melodiously, keeping time with the bugle.

"That's the grub call!" laughed Dick Rawlings. "The feed's ready."

"Oh, good!"

Behind the large marquee a number of trestle tables had been erected. The boards were bare—that is to say, there



Dick Rawlings & Co. and Tom Merry & Co. shrieked with laughter, as the mattress, with Fatty Wynn lying upon it, floated gently to the centre of the pond. The fat junior of the New House, in blissful unconsciousness of what was taking place, slumbered peacefully on. The water, however, gradually soaked through the mattress, and Fatty Wynn gave a grunt and shifted uncomfortably. (See page 17.)

were no tablecloths upon them, but they were heavily laden with all manner of good things.

Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble gasped with joy when they gazed upon the feed that the cadets had prepared. Tom Merry & Co.'s eyes glistened appreciatively.

There were three tremendous pies, beautifully brown and crisp-looking, and smelling most fragrant: there was a huge ham, savoury sausages, all piping hot, chip potatoes, and all kinds of other luscious edibles. On a trek cart at the side were stacked huge piles of cakes and tins of preserves and jam and tins of biscuits.

"My word!" murmured Fatty Wynn. "This looks prime—really prime! What a feed we'll have! Oh, my word!"

"Gorgeous!" said Baggy Trimble ecstatically.

"Take your seats, you fellows, and pile in!" said Dick Rawlings, with a grin. "We haven't burgled a hotel by any chance, you know. We've been earning a good bit of cash lately by wood-cutting. We guessed you'd be hungry, after your journey from Rylcombe, and there's plenty of everything. Don't stint yourselves!"

The St. Jim's juniors didn't—and neither did the cadets themselves, for that matter!

The feed was a great and glorious success.

If there had been any previous doubt as to the bond of friendship between the St. Jim's fellows and the Council School boys, all doubt vanished in that feed.

The camp resounded with the boys' merry laughter.

Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble excelled themselves.

The others had finished long before either of the St. Jim's fat boys showed any signs of flagging.

Their knives and forks did devastating work on the goodly viands, and their jaws champed away at express speed.

"Crumbs!" said one freckled-faced cadet, a small, slim boy whom Tom Merry & Co. thought had rather a sad face. "Oh crumbs! Stop 'em, somebody! They'll bust!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, they're all right for plenty more yet!" said Tom Merry. "You don't know these two—they've got digestions like boa-constrictors! What are the odds on Trimble winning? The one with the dirty neck is Trimble!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble certainly seemed to be having a competition together. The cadets sat still and watched them in growing amazement. They could scarcely believe their eyes, and wondered where the two fat boys put all the tuck they were shifting!

The contest ended in a dead heat.

Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble laid down knives and forks together, and each leaned back, and each heaved a very heavy sigh.

(Continued on page 16.)

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EDITORIAL!

By Tom Merry.

WE have had one or two concerts lately at St. Jim's, and I thought it wouldn't be a bad idea to have a number specially devoted to the subject. Concerts at St. Jim's are usually noisy affairs—especially the concerts run by juniors. On those occasions the prefects usually do extra duty, poor chaps!

Prize-giving days and anniversaries are invariably celebrated at St. Jim's with a concert. Then it is that all the talent—or alleged talent!—of the school comes to the fore! Chaps will offer to sing, or play, or recite, on the slightest provocation. There's Grundy, for instance. He has a voice resembling a fog-horn, yet he persists that it is a good baritone. The last time that Grundy sang in public was at a School House concert last April. Grundy was howling forth the strains of "Let Me Like a Soldier Fall," when a turnip, beautifully aimed by Blake, struck him on the nose, and Grundy's wish was gratified. He fell more like a skittle than a soldier, however!

Gussy's tenor solos are proverbial, and he fondly imagines that no concert is complete without at least a dozen solos by himself being on the programme. Gussy's tenor solos are pretty high-toned—in more senses than one. He will persist in singing Italian opera, the lingo of which none of us understands. Manners plays the violin quite well, and Blake can thump a tune on the piano in good style. Digby has a banjo, and ought to become quite a good nigger minstrel when he grows up. Herries goes great guns on his cornet—when he plays the windows rattle and the draught blows the doors open. His favourite tune is "The Lost Chord," and Herries hasn't found it yet.

There's quite a lot of talent in the school, however, and our concerts are fairly good, on the whole. On rare occasions we persuade the masters to assist, and Mr. Raiton's appearance on a concert platform is always heralded with salvos of applause, for he has a fine voice, and his rendering of sea songs is really great! Mr. Latham sometimes consents to give a dramatic selection—usually from "Hamlet"—while Herr Schneider has more than once thrilled the school with renderings from "William Tell" on his big bassoon.

A concert at St. Jim's is well worth the admission money, if any is charged. None of us would miss one for worlds!

Tom Merry

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TAGGLES' TURN!

By Harry Manners.

WE were holding a concert in the gymnasium, and a grand programme had been prepared. The chief item was a mystery show, arranged and supervised by Levison. He is hot stuff at conjuring tricks and illusions, and one of the features of his mystery show was a wonderful disappearing trick in which the "magician"—alias Levison—is covered by a cloth, and then, on the fring of a toy pistol, disappears like magic! The stage had been specially prepared for this trick beforehand, and a cunning trapdoor, with a secret and silent-opening device, had been fixed up in the centre of the stage.

But there was another "turn" on the programme to which the large audience looked forward eagerly.

Taggles, our old and ancient school porter, had very graciously consented to give a song!

The concert went with a swing, and there was great handclapping when Tom Merry stepped forward and made this announcement:—

"Gentlemen and kids! The next item on the programme is given by Signor Taggles, whose wonderful voice is well known to you all! He will render that delightful and pathetic little ballad, entitled: 'It's Not the Cough That Carries You Off, But the Cough They Carry You Off In!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!" said Taggles, appearing on the stage in an ancient and dilapidated frock-coat, with spacious shirt-front and lengthy cuffs. "I'm goin' to sing 'The Shipwrecked Mariner.'"

"Hurrah!"

"Go it, Taggy!" Blake thumped out the preliminary bars on the piano, Taggles struck an attitude, and raised his more or less melodious voice unto the gymnasium roof. The rafters fairly shook as Taggy bellowed forth his song with much bombast and many wild gesticulations.

Wally D'Arcy & Co., who were standing at the back, grinned. On a word from Wally, the young scamps of the Third produced various eggs which they had brought into the "concert hall."

"I meant to save these for Gussy when he gave his tenor solo," chuckled Wally, "but let's have a go at Taggles. The old blighter reported us for sliding down the banisters this morning. Fire!"

Taggles was declaiming these lines melodiously:

"No soul in sight on sea or sky,
Yet what is this that strikes my eye—
Yaroooooogh!"

An egg, hurled with unerring precision by Wally, struck Taggles full in the left eye.

(Continued at foot of column 3, page 15.)

BRIGHTER CONCERTS!

(Sundry St. Jim's Notabilities Give Their Views.)

BAGGY TRIMBLE.—Concerts kood be maad much more brite if refreshments were distributed free to the ordience between terns—to give the chaps a charnce to re-cueperate. They need sumthing to buck them up, after the piffel that is thrust upon them.

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY.—Concert performers who give a rotten show should be hurried to the audience for instant slaughter. This would brighten the proceedings considerably!

GEORGE HERRIES.—Better music is what is wanted to brighten our school concerts. Cornet solos should be encouraged. A good cornet player cannot be beaten. (But a bad one can, as you should know, old chap, having often felt the weight of a cricket stump!—T. M.)

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW.—Concert audiences would feel brighter if the charge for admission were reduced to, say, three seats a penny!

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY.—Give me a chance to sing a few baritone songs at skule concerts. I reckon I'd bring the house down! (We have no doubt about that, Grundy; but who would pay to put it up again?—T. M.)

MONTY LOWTHER.—With a view to brightening concerts, etc., I have composed the following song. All rights strictly reserved.

We've heaps of songs of Tennessee, with roses round the door,
And chaps who long for mammy, and their dear old homeland shore.

We're sick of Alabama, Carolina, and Colon Town;

These songs of sickly sentiment, they simply get you down!

Why can't we change it all about, and give ourselves a treat,
And have some songs of ginger-pop, and something nice to eat?

Chorus:

Take me to the dear old tuckshop.

Give me pop and doughnuts by the score!

Raspberry-tarts and jam, sosses, tongue, and ham,

Then I'll be happy evermore—oh, yes, rather!

You can keep your dear old Dixie,

Put a rabbit-pie upon my knee, so—

Turn-tiddly-um-day, here I've come to stay!

The tuckshop is the place for me!



MAKING the CONCERT GO!

By Dick Redfern

After tea Tom Merry & Co. managed to get the old piano from the music-room out of the School House and on to the cart. This was with the Head's permission, of course.

Thus all was ready for the grand open-air concert!

Everybody turned out for the show, and by half-past six scores of fellows had passed through the entrance, having paid their money cheerfully. Seniors as well as juniors were there.

Tom Merry & Co., installed on the cart, peeped through the curtain and rubbed their hands with delight.

"All seats are full!" said Tom. "Standing room only! Good biz! Figgins & Co. haven't turned up to make a shindy, thank goodness! We'll start the show now."

The audience stamped their feet, clapped, and shouted.

Blake opened the proceedings with a stirring martial air on the piano. The effect was rather spoiled by the audience, who knew the tune and persisted in whistling it with the piano.

Blake bowed to the audience, dodged an apple that was hurled at him from somewhere in the threepenny seats, and then Talbot came on with a song.

The concert proceeded turn by turn, the audience being liberal both with their catcalls and their applause.

Figgins & Co. were busy outside. Figgie had brought out Taggles' horse from the stables. On its collar was fixed a long, stout cable rope.

The New House fellows led Nell close up to the canvas enclosure where Tom Merry & Co.'s concert was in progress. The air at that moment was laden with the energetic plunking of Digby's banjo, and the piano, and Dick Julian's voice. The three were forming a trio. Figgins went down on hands and knees, and crawled under the canvas.

He found himself up against the wheels of the cart, which served for the concert platform. He drew in the ropes after him, and it was the work of a minute to attach those ropes to the front of the cart, without being seen by any of the School House fellows.

"That's done it!" chuckled Figgie. "Now we'll start Nell up. Gee up, Nell!"

The New House fellows dragged at the horse's rein, and goaded her to run. And Nell did run! As she galloped away, the ropes drew taut, and all of a sudden the strains of the banjo, and the piano, and Julian's singing broke off and a howl and a clatter arose from inside the enclosure.

"Look out!"

"The platform's moving!"

"Someone's pulling the cart."

Nell did not relax her pace when she felt the weight of the cart on her. She

pulled manfully, and out came the cart, ripping clean through the canvas enclosure, and away across the quad, with Tom Merry & Co. still aboard, looking dazed and bewildered.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the spectators, who were convulsed with laughter.

This, they thought, was a real star turn. It was worth twice the entrance money!

"Yawoogh! Stop!" yelled Gussy, hanging on to the piano.

"You awful rotters!" howled Tom Merry furiously.

Figgins & Co. drove Nell round and round the quad, and finally out of gates. The cart came to a standstill at last in Rylcombe Lane, where a crowd of New House fellows fell upon Tom Merry & Co. and captured them.

"Now, my bonny boy," said Figgins to his rival, "will you let us take a hand in the concert, if we give you back the—er—platform?"

What could Tom Merry & Co. do? There was no help for it. They consented. The cart was drawn back, the enclosure re-erected, a fresh programme arranged, in which Figgins & Co. had a good show, and the concert recommenced.

The enclosure was made bigger to accommodate all the New House fellows, who turned up in force and paid their money.

The concert went with a bang, both Tom Merry & Co. and Figgins & Co. contributing to its success. The money was afterwards split up between the School House and New House Dramatic Clubs respectively, so that everyone, after all, was satisfied.

.....

TAGGLES' TURN!

(Continued from page 14.)

and burst with a dull thud. He staggered back, no longer singing, but yelling. The audience roared with laughter as Wally & Co. continued to pelt the porter with eggs. Taggles at last lost his balance, and sat down heavily.

Then an amazing thing happened! He went right through the platform floor, disappearing in a trice! He had fallen on the secret trapdoor, which had given way!

"Splash!"

"Yerooooooooooch!"

Below these sounds came from the regions

below. Tom Merry & Co. rushed to the open trapdoor in horror, and, gazing down, saw Taggles floundering in a bath of water!

"Mum-mum-my only hat!" gurgled Blake. "How on earth—who the dickens put that bath of water down there?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Aubrey Racke of the Shell. "So Taggy's got the water instead!"

Taggles was dragged out, and the bath was lifted on to the stage. The audience fairly shrieked. Taggy, in his dripping wet state, presented a most comical appearance. The whole event, indeed, was funny.

"Grooogh! Young rips!" gurgled Taggles, squelching off the stage. "You won't get me to hact at no more concerts! Yow! Wot I says is this 'ere—all boys should be drowned at birth!"

And Taggy went, leaving a trail of water behind him!

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged meaning glances.

"Some joker—I believe it was Racke—put that bath of water under the trapdoor so that you'd fall into it when you disappeared, Levison," said Tom. "It was a plan to mess up the mystery show!"

"Thank goodness Taggy found the bath beforehand, then!" said Levison. "My show would have been ruined if I'd fallen into the bath!"

The disappearing act had to be left out, of course, from Levison's show, but his other tricks were a complete success!

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"WELL, of all the fearful cheek!" gasped Figgins.

"This takes the bun, absolutely!" said Kerr.

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn of the New House halted outside the gymnasium, on the door of which the following appeared:

"NOTICE!

Grand Open Air Concert!

A Grand Concert Will be Given This Evening

On the Junior Cricket Ground. Weather Permitting.

All the Best Concert Artistes of the School House Will Positively Appear!

Show starts at 6.30 sharp.

Admission to Enclosure 3d., 6d., and 1s. Fags half price!

Proceeds in Aid of Amateur Dramatic Club.

ROLL UP! ROLL UP IN YOUR THOUSANDS! ROLL UP! ! ! !

Note: Fags are expected to wash their necks.

New House fellows not admitted except on a lead."

"So this is Tom Merry's latest wheeze—a concert in the open air!" exclaimed Figgins.

"Jolly good idea, too," said Kerr. "The weather's fine for an open-air concert."

"Yes, but we can't stand cheek from those School House microbes!" said the leader of the New House grimly. "We'll see what we can do about mucking up that concert."

Tom Merry & Co. were busy that day preparing for the concert. A large enclosure had been spaced off on the cricket-field, curtain material and canvas being hung down from the ropes all round, so that the interior could not be seen from outside, except through the entrance.

Inside the enclosure chairs and forms were arranged in rows.

The heroes of the School House had been in a quandary, at first, as to how to fix up a platform in the open. This difficulty had been surmounted by borrowing Taggles' large cart. This was wheeled into the enclosure and placed in front of the seats, and a curtain fixed up, so that it made an excellent platform.

The Children's Best Coloured Paper
JUNGLE JINKS
Out on Thursday—Price 2d



(Continued from page 13.)

"Prime!" murmured Fatty Wynn. "That's what I call a feed! I reckon I've laid a solid foundation!"

"Ye gods!" gasped Dick Rawlings. "He's eaten enough to lay a solid foundation for a cathedral!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble closed his eyes in an ecstasy of delight, and soon a deep bass snore issued from him.

Monty Lowther hooked his chair away, and Baggy was pitched off unceremoniously on to the grass. He landed with a bump, and he roared.

"Yow-wow-wow! You rotters—"

"Time to clear away the feed!" rapped Tom Merry. "We'll all take a hand with the work, and you've got to do your share, Baggy!"

"Look here, I'm not going to work!" roared Baggy. "This is a holiday, and—"

"Let us clear away," said Dick Rawlings. "You're our guests for to-day, and—"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry cheerfully. "We're all in together, and we share and share alike. Those are the terms! We'll do our bit in the hard work. Now then, Baggy, up you get!"

Blake yanked Baggy to his feet, and Trimble, wildly protesting, set about clearing the table.

The St. Jim's Scouts lent willing hands in the work of tidying up the camp after the feast.

There was a huge pile of washing-up to do, and this was taken on the trek cart to the clear, bright little brook that ran through the wood near by.

"Bring Baggy along!" said Tom Merry. "We'll make him help with the washing-up."

"I won't go!" yelled Baggy. "Look here, I protest, and—Yah! Yaroooooh! Stop it, Blake, you rotter!"

Blake commenced operations on Baggy with a vigorous boot, and the fat youth of the Fourth fairly romped to the brook.

"Now, Baggy, get on with the washing!" commanded Tom Merry. "We are on holiday, I know, but that's no excuse for slacking. Pile in!"

"Yow! Beast! Yah! I'm tired! Yaroooooh! Keep off, Blake! I—I'll wash up!"

And Baggy washed up.

Arthur Augustus was carrying a pile of chairs into the large centre tent, and had just entered when a voice broke upon his ears.

"Halt!"

D'Arcy halted in sheer astonishment, and blinked round him.

"Where did you get that face? Ha, ha, ha! There's hair!" said the voice raucously.

"Bai—bai Jove!" ejaculated the swell of St. Jim's, in amazement.

He looked round the interior of the tent, but there was nobody to be seen. Gussy set down the chairs, polished his monocle and jammed it tighter into his eye.

"Eyes right! What a chivvy! You're off your onion! Ha, ha, ha!" roared the mysterious voice.

Arthur Augustus' eyes glimmered with wrath.

"Bai Jove! I regard those remarks as appropos and distinctly out of taste!" he exclaimed. "Come out, you insultrin' wascal, wheehavah you are!"

"Rats! About turn! What a chivvy! Ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus fairly quivered with indignation.

"You howwid wascal!" he managed to gasp. "Wheeh are you?"

"Quick march! Go and eat coke!"

"I refuse to go and eat coke—I—I mean, I'll give you a fearful thwashin!" roared Gussy. "Wheeh are you? Come out and put up your fists, you wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha! There's hair!"

There was a tramping of feet outside, and Tom Merry, Blake, Kangaroo, and Lumley-Lumley came in.

"Hallo! What's biting you, Gussy?" asked Tom, noting the swell's wrathful looks.

"Some insultrin' wottah is hidin' in heah, and is makin' fwithtfully obnoxious remarks, deah boy!" replied Gussy.

"I'm goin' to discovah his wheehaboots, and then administrah a fearful thwashin, bai Jove!"

"Great pip!"

"Shun! Smarten up there! What a chivvy! Eyes right!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Blake. "That's a bit thick, isn't it? We know Gussy's got a funny chivvy, but—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"The voice came from behind that curtain hanging in the corner over there!" said Kangaroo.

"Bai Jove!"

"You're off your rocker! Go home!"

The voice undoubtedly came from behind the curtain! His eyeglass glimmering with wrath and his fists doubled ready for action, Arthur Augustus strode to the curtain.

"Come out, you wottah!" he said in sulphurous tones.

"Ha, ha! Come out, you wottah!" mimicked the voice behind the curtain.

Gussy jumped.

"Bai Jove! The howwid boundah is mimickin' me, deah boys!"

"About turn! Bai Jove!"

That was the last straw.

Arthur Augustus grasped the curtain and wrenched it aside.

"Now, you feahful wascal!" he exclaimed. "I—I— Bai Jove! Wha-what the— Gweat Scott, deah boys—"

"A giddy parrot!" yelled Blake. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Suspended on a rope behind the curtain was a cage containing a large parrot. The bird cocked its head on one side and looked knowingly at the St. Jim's juniors. Then it ruffled its feathers, and emitted a piercing whistle.

"My only aunt!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha! My only aunt!" said the parrot, in a remarkably human voice.

The juniors—with the exception of Arthur Augustus—were greatly amused, and they roared with laughter.

D'Arcy's face was a study.

He adjusted his monocle and gazed at the parrot in astonishment.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped. "This has thwown me into a feahful fluttah, deah boys! A pawwot! Gweat Scott!"

"Gweat Scott!" said the parrot, swinging on its perch.

"Eyes right! What a face! My only aunt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom Merry & Co.

At that juncture the small wan-faced cadet whom the juniors had heard addressed as Clicky entered the tent.

"I say, young 'un, who does this parrot belong to?" asked Blake.

"Which 'e belongs to us, young gent," replied Clicky.

"E's the camp mascot!"

"By jingo! What fun!"

"Ha, ha!" croaked the parrot. "Bai Jove! What fun!"

"Cute beggar, isn't he?" said Blake. "I wonder if he likes chocolate? I've got some in my pocket. Here you are, Polly! Good old Polly! I—I— Yaroooooh! Yah! Ow! The brute! It's taken a lump out of my finger! Ow-wow! What are you silly asses cackling at?"

"You shouldn't put your fingers too near the cage, old son!" laughed Tom Merry. "Parrots have a habit of biting, you know."

"Groooooh!"

Blake sucked his fingers and glared at the parrot.

"What's the giddy bird's name?" inquired Tom Merry of Clicky.

"He calls 'im Jeremiah, young gent," said the young cadet.

"Not so much of the young gent, ass!" said Tom severely.

"My name's Merry, and as we're all on an equal footing in this camp, we call each other by our proper names."

"Orl rite, Master Merry!"

"And please drop the 'master'!"

"Yessir!"

Clicky, blushing all over his face, retired from the tent in confusion.

Tom Merry & Co. grinned.

"Queer little beggar, isn't he—young Clicky, I mean?" said Blake. "There's something strange about him. He looks as though he's carrying a load of trouble on his mind."

"Yes; I've noticed that," said Tom Merry, with a nod. "He doesn't seem happy, somehow. He's a nice little chap, though, and I like him."

Several other St. Jim's fellows entered just then, and they gave cries of delight on seeing the parrot.

Jeremiah was soon the centre of attraction with the Scouts, all of whom were delighted to hear him mimic their sayings.

The evening passed pleasantly in camp, and as night drew on lots were drawn for the sharing of tents.

It was agreed that the cadets and the St. Jim's Scouts should "dig in" together, no distinction being made between any of them. Tom Merry, Levison, Skimpole, and Noble shared sleeping quarters in the largest tent with Dick Rawlings, Ginger O'Connor, Edwards, and Mills.

Cadets and Scouts were equally well proportioned in the other tents. The smallest tent fell to the lot of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Baggy Trimble, and Clicky.

The little Council School lad seemed bashful in sharing

quarters with Gussy. The Hon. Arthur Augustus, being Lord Conway's brother, was regarded in awe by some of the cadets, and Clicky, in particular, treated him with almost terrified veneration.

D'Arcy took him into the tent that evening for a heart-to-heart talk.

"Now, look heah, Clicky, deah boy, you've got to stop this awful wot about not bein' good enough to dig in with me," said the swell of St. Jim's, wagging a reproving forefinger at his tent-mate. "You are just as good as I—and pewwaps bettah! We are comwades and fwiends, and we share and share alike. Is that quite cleah?"

"Yes, Master D'Arcy! You are werry kind!"

"Wats! That's the spiwit of the camp, deah boy!"

Dick Rawlings & Co. and Tom Merry & Co. all turned in cheerfully together that night.

The stars glimmered in the purple night sky, and the moon cast its soft, shimmering radiance on the boys' camp. All, except the sentries who were mounting guard round the enclosure, were sleeping the sleep of the just, breathing deeply of the fresh, salt-twanged sea air. And so commenced Tom Merry & Co.'s summer vac, which was to transpire to be one of the jolliest and most exciting they had ever spent.

CHAPTER 8. A Busy Day!

TA-RA-RARA!
"Bai Jove!"
Ta-ra-toot-toot!

Arthur Augustus sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes in surprise on hearing those strident bugle blasts.

Then he saw the small, tousle-headed figure of Clicky standing at the tent-door, and he laughed, polished his monocle, and jammed it into his eye.

"Bai Jove! I had forgotten wheah I was at first!" he exclaimed. "I expected to wake up in the old dormitoway at St. Jim's, you know. Good-mornin' Clicky, deah boy!"

"Mornin', sir!" said the little Cockney boy.
The bugle's note echoed all over the camp—the Reveille, calling cadets and Scouts to wakefulness.

Most of them were already up and doing, and making ready for a bathie in the pond in the wood not far away. It was a glorious morning, with a cool, invigorating breeze blowing. D'Arcy was amazed to find Clicky polishing his boots for him, and promptly stopped the little fellow.

Baggy Trimble slumbered on, with a beatific smile upon his podgy face. He was no doubt dreaming of the feed.

Tom Merry looked in with a grin.

"Hallo, Gussy! I was just going to rouse you!" he said. "My hat! Isn't that lazy blighter up yet? I'll soon rouse him!"

Tom had a bugle with him. He had been going the rounds of the tents, rousing the sluggards. He went to Baggy's bedside and, holding the bugle close to that youth's ear, he blew a deafening blast.

That blast would have awakened the Seven Sleepers, and it roused Baggy with such suddenness that he threw out his hands and gave a wild leap out of bed. There was a yell from Tom Merry as Baggy's head and his own met in mid-air with some violence.

Crack!

"Ow-wow!" roared Baggy.

"Yooop!" gasped Tom.

"Whassermarrer?" Baggy was still sleepy. "Tain't rising bell!"

"You ass!" roared Tom Merry, rubbing his head. "This isn't St. Jim's. We're in camp, and it's time to get up!"

"Oh, bosh!"

Baggy crawled back into his bed and closed his eyes.

But not for long!

Tom Merry and Gussy bent down and yanked him up. Baggy roared and hit out.

"Yah! Leggo! I don't want to get up! We're on holiday, and—Ow-wow! Lemme go!"

Tom Merry let Baggy go, and he picked up a rifle.

"I'll give you three seconds to get out of the tent, Baggy!" he said, shouldering the rifle and pointing it menacingly at the fat youth of the Fourth. "I fire on the word three. Now, one—two—thr—"

"Yaroooooh! Help! Don't shoot! Murder! Oooooop!"

Baggy tore out of the tent in his pyjamas, as though fiends were on his track. Dick Rawlings & Co. roared.

Tom Merry strolled out, and walked towards the tent occupied by Fatty Wynn. As he approached, he saw Figgins and Kerr come out, carrying a mattress, on which the plump form of Fatty was curled up in an attitude of repose.

"The lazy slacker wouldn't get up, so we're about to give him a shock that will probably live him no end!" grinned Figgins. "We can't let Fatty get into bad habits, you know. This way to the giddy pond!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins and Kerr carried their slumbering chum on his mattress to the pond. They bent down on the edge of the bank and gently placed the mattress on the surface of the water.

The pond was very deep just there, and the mattress, with Fatty lying upon it, floated away merrily.

Dick Rawlings & Co., and Tom Merry & Co. shrieked with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look at Fatty! The Sleeping Beauty isn't in it!" gurgled Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The mattress floated gently to the centre of the pond, and Fatty Wynn, in blissful unconsciousness of what was taking place, slumbered peacefully on.

The water, however, gradually soaked through the mattress, and a few minutes later Fatty Wynn gave a grunt and shifted uncomfortably.

"Groooooooh!" he mumbled sleepily. "Wh-what the—Oooooop! Yah! The bed's giving way!"

The mattress, as Fatty rolled upon it, flopped up and down in the water, and Fatty's plump feet got splashed.

"Grooooooh! I—I— Oh! Mum-mum-my hat! Oh jerny!"

Fatty's sleepy eyes opened wide in horror and amazement when he found himself floating on the pond on his soaked and half-submerged mattress.

He wriggled and crouched in the centre of the mattress, and blinked across the waters at the hilarious boys on the bank.

"Gerrogh! You—you beasts! I'm wet! Yow! This rotten thing will sink any minute, and—Ow-wooooooh! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom Merry & Co.

Dick Rawlings and his fellow cadets were convulsed with merriment at Fatty's wild antics on the mattress in mid-pond.

The water-logged mattress gradually sank lower and lower, and Fatty made frantic efforts to paddle his "raft" to the shore. He was wide awake now, with a vengeance! He was some distance from the bank when the mattress gave a lurch and sank. Fatty, with a yell and a gurgle, plunged into the waters of the pond.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Scouts and the cadets.

Some minutes later a fat and furious junior struggled to the bank, crawled out, and shook a wet fist at his mirthful schoolfellows.

"You rotters! You horrid bouncers! You—you—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty stamped away, muttering all manner of emphatic remarks.

His early morning swim gave him something like an appetite, however, and he ate a breakfast that made Dick Rawlings & Co. wonder still more at his prodigious gastronomic powers.

The cadets and the Scouts went for a fine ramble together over the cliffs, and in the afternoon they put in some time at the camp gymnasium.

Dick Rawlings & Co. showed that as athletes they wanted a deal of beating. Boxing bouts were drawn for, and a contest between Tom Merry and Rawlings soon evinced the fact that the cadets' leader was a mighty man with the "mitts." Jeremiah, the camp-parrot, added his raucous voice to the boys' excited shouts.

Jack Blake, who was keen for some boxing, drew a fellow named Farmer for his opponent.

George Farmer was a heavily-built, coarse-faced fellow, and his swaggering manner showed in great contrast to the demeanour of the other cadets. Farmer's second also seemed different and out of place with the rest. His name was Leslie Snape, and he had a sneaky, shifty look about him that Tom Merry & Co. did not like. Snape had tried to "toady up" to D'Arcy on that morning, but the swell had treated him with aloofness.

"Those two are not exactly popular with us chaps," said Dick Rawlings to Tom Merry, as Farmer and Jack Blake took their places in the ring. "They usually hang together, and they have already brought us into bad odour with Major Toppington, whose land adjoins our camp. Farmer is a bit of a bully, and I'd like to see Blake lick him."

Farmer swaggered into the ring, and on Dawson's call of "Time," he made a rush at Blake, with the evident intention of showing the St. Jim's fellows how easily he could polish him off.

There was a trampling of feet, a hurried scuffling, and a crashing blow; but it was not Farmer who landed the blow. He received it from Blake—right on the point of the jaw, and he went down with a bump.

"Well hit, Blake!" cried Dick Rawlings.

Farmer jumped up, his eyes glittering, and a most unpleasant look on his face. He started at Blake again with a

fierce attack, but the cheery Fourth Form leader parried the blows, side-stepped neatly, and gave Farmer quite a drubbing by the time the round ended.

Snape gave Blake a peculiar look as he fanned his champion, and he whispered something to Farmer.

When the burly cadet came in for the next round, it was plain to all that he meant to do Blake some damage, that he was fighting, not for sport, but for revenge.

Blake was a match for him, however, and for five rounds he kept the bully at bay, and worried him with frequent hard knocks. He floored him twice more in those five rounds, and ripples of applause came from the cadets.

The sixth round showed Farmer gritting his teeth and scowling blackly at his opponent. Blake drove him round the ring, and just before the round ended he dropped him to the floor with a beautifully-timed uppercut.

Farmer lay where he had fallen until the referee had counted eight. Then he jumped up.

"Time!" said Jack Dawson.

Blake dropped his fists and half turned. In the same instant Farmer swung round and drove his fist with smashing force fairly into the junior's face. Blake, taken utterly by surprise, fell to the floor like a log and lay there dazed.

"Shame!"

There was a moment's astonished silence after the coward's blow, and then that loud shout rang out angrily from all quarters.

"Shame!"

"I'm sorry!" sneered Farmer. "I didn't know Dawson had called time!"

"Liar!"

"You heard it right enough!"

Dick Rawlings sprang into the ring, his eyes blazing at the bully.

"You cad!" he cried fiercely. "I'll make you repent that blow! Put up your fists!"

Farmer flushed a dull red. The hisses of the cadets were ringing in his ears, and, looking round, he saw scorn in every look.

"All right!" he muttered. "I'll put my fists up willingly enough, Rawlings. Do you think you'll make yourself out to be clever in front of these chaps? I'll show you!"

Tom Merry and Figgins assisted Blake from the ring.

The junior was still dazed from the cad's blow he had received.

"Time!"

Dick Rawlings faced the bully in the ring with steady eyes and steady hands. Farmer rushed in to the attack like a bull, but Rawlings was ready for these tactics. He backed away, and Farmer swung clumsily past him. As he did so, the cadet leader's right came out, crashing on Farmer's cheek, and his left followed it under the bully's ear.

Biff! Biff!

Bump!

Farmer went down in a heap.

"Hurrah!" roared the cadets, and Tom Merry & Co. added their shouts of admiration to the uproar.

Farmer looked sick as he staggered up, savage and hurt. He hit out furiously at Rawlings, but most of his drives went wide of the mark, and Rawlings, to use Figgins' expression, proceeded to "knock him into a cocked hat."

Farmer survived three rounds with Dick Rawlings. He fought with mad rage and mortification. Rawlings kept his head and coolly drove his opponent round and round the ring until he landed him finally on the floor with a smashing left-hander on the chin that lifted the bully off his feet and sent him down with a crash.

He lay there, moaning.

Dawson counted.

Farmer tried to rise, but fell back with a groan.

"Eight, nine. Licked!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Rawlings!"

"That's given the cur something to get on with!"

The St. Jim's fellows did not join in the excited shouting, but they were full of admiration for the Council School boys' leader.

Tom Merry gripped his hand as he descended from the ring with Ginger O'Connor.

"You fought splendidly, old chap!" he said. "I should have tried my hand with that rotter if you hadn't. You've taught him a lesson."

"He badly needed it," said Dick Rawlings quietly. "I—I hope you chaps don't think we're all like Farmer. If you judge the rest of us by him—"

"But we don't!" said Tom vehemently. "There are black sheep in every fold, I know, and we've got a few precious cads at St. Jim's who disgrace us sometimes. Don't worry about that!"

Farmer crawled away, scowling malevolently, with Snape. The boxing contests went on till tea-time, unmarred by any more foul play.

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Tom Merry & Co. and Dick Rawlings & Co.'s admiration for each other grew considerably, and the cowardice of George Farmer was soon forgotten in the merry round of camp life.

CHAPTER 9.

Very Mysterious!

"MY hat! Did you chaps hear something?"

Jack Blake uttered that exclamation, looking round into the trees with a start.

The days had passed cheerily by, and Saturday—the end of the first week—saw the campers still enjoying their holiday to the full.

Tom Merry & Co. and the cadets had been out for a run along the cliffs that afternoon, and had fallen in with a party of fisher lads from Winchelgate. Some rivalry had sprung up, and Dick Rawlings & Co. had remained behind in the town to chase the lads to their lair, and afterwards bring in supplies for the camp, where food was running low.

Tom Merry & Co., having parted for the time being from the cadets, had come on into the pretty wood on the cliffs for a picnic. They had brought sufficient for their needs from the big tuckshop at Winchelgate. There were only nine of them at the picnic—the Terrible Three, Blake, D'Arcy, Figgins, Fatty Wynn, Kangaroo, and Lumley-Lumley. Some of the others were on sentry-go at the camp, whilst the rest had stayed in Winchelgate to listen to the band and have tea on the front.

The juniors were laying the tablecloth on the grass in a sheltered glade in the wood. Figgins was slicing up the bread and whacking on the butter with great liberality. Monty Lowther was making valiant efforts to open a tin of pineapple by holding it between his knees and jabbing at it with his jack-knife, whilst Manners and D'Arcy were busy preparing tea. Fatty Wynn was sitting on the grass alone, making vast inroads into a huge pork pie, with a grin of supreme enjoyment on his plump visage.

Blake knelt on the hamper and peered closely into the thick trees and ferns on his right.

"What's up, Blake?" asked Tom Merry.

"I thought I heard someone moving about in the thickets," said Blake. "Did you chaps hear the noise?"

"Oh, bosh!" laughed Tom Merry. "You heard a little sparrow, perhaps, hopping about the branches, or—My hat! What the dickens was that?"

Tom heard a mysterious rustle in the trees, and felt convinced that this was followed by a stealthy footstep among the undergrowth.

"I heard something, too," said Lumley-Lumley, with a sharp, suspicious look. "It may be those fisher kids on a raid."

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as extremely likely, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus, looking up from the stove. "Pewwaps they followed us twom Winchelgate, and—"

"I'll jolly soon see who's there!" said Figgins, springing up. "Just you wait a minute!"

The long-legged New House junior dashed into the thickets and disappeared. His chums waited. They heard a distant rustling, and a shout. That was all. They waited, but Figgie did not return.

"My hat! Where is he?" gasped Manners.

"Figgie! Figgie!" bawled Blake.

There was no reply, but the echo of Blake's voice. Figgins was gone—where? Had he fallen into the hands of the hidden enemy?

"By jeminy, Figgie hasn't routed them out—they've colared him instead!" said Tom Merry. "We'll all go, this time. Come on, kids! Leave that pie alone, Fatty!"

"Oh, bosh!" mumbled Fatty Wynn, with his mouth half full. "You can leave me here to protect the grub. If there are raiders about, they are bound to be after the grub. I'll look after that."

"Right-ho!"

The other juniors plunged into the trees in search of Figgins.

Tom Merry and Kangaroo kept together. They hunted through the thickets and shouted to Figgins. But no answer came to their shouting. If Figgie had fallen into the hands of a hidden enemy, then the enemy must be highly skilled in woodcraft. Tom and Kangaroo found no trace of Figgins, and they returned at last to the scene of the picnic.

A fresh surprise awaited them there. Fatty Wynn was gone. His pork pie, half demolished, lay in the grass. The hamper was still there, and the tarts, the bread-and-butter, and the milk, and the ham, and the sandwiches—all lay where they had been left. But Fatty Wynn had disappeared.

Tom Merry knitted his brows.

"My only Aunt Maria! This is a rummy go!" he exclaimed. "Where on earth can Fatty have got to? We'd better call the other fellows, and have another look all together."



"Ladies and gentlemen," cried Gordon Gay, "allow me to present before you two very strange specimens. This fat, greasy animal on my right is called the Trimble, and is a species of boa-constrictor. The ferocious looking brute over there is called the Lowther, and is very closely related to the laughing jackass. Just watch them dance!" Tom Merry pushed his way through the crowd and blinked at his rivals like one in a dream. (See page 20.)

He and Kangaroo whistled, and gave their Scout call. But their whistles and "coo-eee's" met with no response. There was silence—dead silence—in the wood, except for the noise they made themselves.

Once they thought they heard D'Arey call out in the distance, and they pounded through the trees in that direction, but their quest was unfruitful. They drew blank wherever they looked for their missing comrades.

"Well, if this doesn't take the cake!" muttered Tom Merry as he and Kangaroo returned to the glade. "I—Oh! Mum—my hat!"

"It looks as though it—or they—have taken the cake—and the rest of the giddy tuck as well!" said Kangaroo dryly.

All the Scouts' picnic provisions were gone now. Not even the tablecloth remained. The glade was bare and solitary.

Tom Merry passed a hand dazedly across his face.

"It—it must be magic!" he gasped. "Either that, or someone is confoundedly clever in—why, where are you going, Kangy?"

"I heard a rustle in the trees over there!" said Noble.

"I'll catch the prowler this time, if he's there!"

Kangaroo dashed into the trees and was lost to view. Nothing happened for some minutes, so Tom Merry went in search of the Cornstalk.

"Kangy!" he yelled. "Have you found anyone?"

No reply, only the twittering of a bird.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" gasped the dismayed Shell captain. "Kangy! I say, Kangaroo! Where are you?"

Tom Merry called in vain, Kangaroo did not reply.

The amazed Scout leader mopped his brow. The thing was uncanny. He half expected the ground to open and swallow him up at any minute. Within the space of a quarter of an hour eight Boy Scouts had disappeared in the

wood, and it seemed as though they had been spirited away by witches or hobgoblins.

Kangaroo was gone, now, and although Tom Merry dashed hither and thither through the wood, shouting and whistling, he found no trace of any living person.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he gasped. "I—I'd better fetch Dick Rawlings and the others. Between us we may be able to solve the mystery."

Tom ran out of the wood and made his way over the cliffs to Winchelgate.

He discovered Dick Rawlings & Co. at last on one of the upper terraces. They had just finished "socking it" to the fisher lads on the rocks below.

The cadets were utterly flabbergasted when Tom Merry told them of the mysterious happenings in the wood.

"It couldn't have been any of the fisher kids," said Dick Rawlings. "We kept them busy enough down there. This affair wants looking into. Come on!"

Tom Merry and Dick Rawlings & Co. hurried back over the cliffs, and they arrived at length in the wood. They hunted high and low for the missing Boy Scouts, but nothing happened.

"Some time has passed, of course, since the disappearances took place," said Tom Merry. "Let's get back to the camp. They may be there."

"Right-ho!"

A forced march was made towards the camp.

The boys burst through the trees into the open space, and then they all stopped, dumbfounded.

They gazed before them speechlessly for some moments, and then a chorus of horrified gasps arose.

"Wh-what the—"

"Who the—"

"Where's the camp?" stuttered Jones.

"It isn't here!" gurgled Dick Rawlings faintly.

"Oh jeminy!"

The camp certainly was not there!

Where it had been there was just an open space.

The wire fence enclosing it had been broken down, and a few solitary staves, with the broken wire clinging to them, remained. Where tents and other camp gear had stood nothing could be seen but a few odd piles of litter. Of the fellows who had been left there and of the guard, there was no sign. All had completely vanished.

CHAPTER 10.

Something Like a Rag!

TOM MERRY looked round him, hardly able to believe his own eyes.

"Our camp's gone!" yelled Jack Dawson wildly.

"Somebody's boned it—look, stock, and barrel!"

"Crums!" said Clicky, in a faint voice.

"What—Who—Why—How on earth could it have happened?" gasped Dick Rawlings. "The whole camp's gone—every blessed stick and bit of canvas! Am I dreaming, or what?"

"No, it certainly isn't a dream," said Tom Merry, between his teeth. "It looks to me more like a practical joke. Somebody is having an awful lark with us. Let's see if we can pick up the raider's trail—quick!"

Dick Rawlings looked round him.

"Look! There are tracks leading into the trees over there—along to the river!" he exclaimed swiftly. "That's where the raiders went, I'll bet my boots! Pull up those staves for weapons, you chaps, and come along! There's no time to be lost!"

The cadets armed themselves with the staves that had once held up the wire fence, and set out to track the mysterious enemy.

Tom Merry, who was skilled in all branches of woodcraft, and Dick Rawlings, had no difficulty in picking up the trail. It led along the banks of the small stream, round the edge of the wood, and thence out on to the wide, open heath overlooking Winchelgate.

"My hat! This takes us back to Winchelgate by way of the heath!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I wonder who the dickens is at the bottom of this business, anyway? It's an utter mystery to me."

They forged on across the broad expanse of heath towards the cliffs. There was no trail to guide them now, but they felt certain that the unknown raiders had taken that route to Winchelgate.

All of a sudden Clicky stopped and pulled at Tom's arm.

"Look, Master Merry!" he exclaimed. "Over there, near the lighthouse!"

Tom and the cadets gazed in the direction indicated by the little Cockney, and a chorus of astonished gasps arose from them.

In the distance across the heath they saw a number of tents standing, and round them a large crowd of people was gathered.

Dick Rawlings blinked in amazement at the distant tents.

"I—I say, Merry, those weren't up when we passed a short while ago!" he exclaimed. "By jingo! I wonder if those tents really do belong to us? If they are ours, then somebody has got a fearful nerve!"

"Come on!" said Tom Merry, setting his teeth. "The bouncers will catch it hot, whoever they are!"

He and the cadets ran swiftly across to where the crowd was gathered round the tents, and as they drew nearer they heard sounds of loud, hilarious laughter.

"What's the crowd doing there, for goodness' sake?" said Dick Rawlings. "There seems to be a great joke on. Those are our tents, I'm jolly certain of that!"

"Rather!"

Tom Merry and the cadets elbowed their way unceremoniously through the laughing throng.

"Hi! Where are you goin', young shaver?" roared one gentleman, of heavy build, on whose foot Dick Rawlings trod.

"Who're you pushin'?"

"Keep those kids back!"

"Let us pass!" exclaimed Tom Merry heatedly. "Those are our tents, and we jolly well want to know what they are doing here!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

At last, by dint of much struggling and the evoking of many lurid remarks from people in the crowd, Tom Merry came to the front.

The terrific beating of a drum greeted his ears, and a voice, which sounded vaguely familiar, was shouting forth:

"Come on, ladies and gentlemen! Admission free! Come

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and see the wild animals, caught this afternoon in Winchelgate Wood! Roll up! There's nothing to pay!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

Tom Merry burst his way to the front, and when he arrived there and gazed at the scene before him, he almost fell down in a fit.

Several tents were erected there. They belonged to the raided camp. Between two of them floated a banner, bearing these words in huge characters:

"WILD ANIMALS NOW ON SHOW!

THE BIGGEST FREAKS ON EARTH!

GO IN AND SEE THE GUSSIOSAURUS!

ADMISSION FREE, GRATIS, AND FOR NIXES!"

Standing in front was a cart, which Tom dazedly recognised as also belonging to the camp, and on it were two strange figures.

Tom had to gaze long and hard at them before he recognised Baggy Trimble and Monty Lowther.

The two luckless juniors had ancient chains round their necks, and were tethered together by means of a length of ship's rope. Voluminous mariners' jerseys draped their bodies—jerseys which reached almost down to their bare feet. Their faces had been whitewashed, and glaring black rings painted round their eyes. Each wore a top hat with a bow on it, from underneath which their hair stuck out in stiff tufts—evidently made stiff by the liberal application of glue.

Verily, Monty Lowther and Baggy Trimble were sights for gods and men and little fishes!

There were two other youths on the cart. Tom Merry gazed at these youths unbelievably.

The one standing up and addressing the crowd, in the manner of a showman, was Gordon Gay, of Rylcombe Grammar School.

Sitting next to him, and beating the St. Jim's Scouts' big drum, was Carboy.

And, standing all round, with grins of huge glee on their faces, were Frank Monk, the two Woottons, Tadpole, Goggs, and Mont Blong.

Tom Merry blinked at his old rivals like one in a dream.

"Mum-my only hat!" he gurgled, in a faint voice.

"Gordon Gay! Those bouncers here! Oh crumbs!"

The cheery Grammarian leader did not see Tom Merry.

"Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to present before you two very strange specimens!" he cried. "This fat, greasy animal on my right is called the Trimble, and is a species of boa-constrictor. It spends its life eating and guzzling, and will carry on till it bursts. The ferocious-looking brute on my left is quite harmless, ladies and gentlemen! It is called the Lowther, and is very closely related to the laughing jackass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the people in the crowd.

"You will now see the Trimble and the Lowther dance!" chuckled Gordon Gay. "Start up a tune on your mouth-organ, Carboy!"

Carboy drew a mouth-organ from his pocket, and played a wheezy species of Highland fling.

"Now, then, up with your hoofs!" exclaimed Gay, turning to his two victims and cracking a whip. "Show the nice ladies and gentlemen how you can dance!"

"We won't!" howled Monty Lowther. "Let us go, you—you—Wah! Oooop! Stoppit with that whip! Yarooooogh!"

Crack, crack!

Gordon Gay crackled the whip round Monty's and Baggy's legs, and the luckless two had perforce to dance. They roared as they danced on the cart, cutting absurd capers to the wheezy strains of Carboy's mouth-organ.

The spectators were fairly doubled up with mirth.

Lowther and Trimble were allowed respite at last.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" cried Gordon Gay. "For the benefit of those who have not been round the tents, or are shy of doing so because of the fierce animals on view therein, I will now have the whole collection of freaks brought forth on parade! Don't run away, ladies and gents, the animals are harmless, and they are well under control, in any case! The sight will do you good! Keepers, fetch forth the exhibits!"

The grinning Grammarians dived into the tents, and brought out the "animals."

Tom Merry could only blink dazedly when he saw the figures that came out.

The crowd shrieked with laughter, as well they might!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—there was no mistaking Gussy's slim, aristocratic figure—was arrayed in bell-bottomed trousers, a tightly-fitting jersey, top-hat, and heavy hob-nailed boots.

A huge bunch of seaweed depended from his person behind, like a tail. Gordon Gay & Co. hustled him forward amid howls of laughter from the spectators.

"This is the famous Gussiosaurus—a very rare specimen!" said Gordon Gay. "Nothing like it has ever been seen before, or will be seen again, on this earth. It is most unique—"

"Gay, you awful wottah, I shall give you a feahful thwash-in when I am free!" gasped the luckless swell. "I considah this most infwa dig, bai Jove, and—"

"Notice, ladies and gentlemen, the peculiar tooting noise this creature makes!" said Gordon Gay. "It has a pronounced lisp—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And it is never tired of hearing its own voice," went on the hero of the Grammar School. "It will also sing on the slightest provocation, but out of consideration for the feelings of my audience, I will not tempt the Gussiosaurus to sing!"

"Gweat Scott! Gay, you wuffian, I considah your wemarks as—"

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared the delighted crowd of summer holiday-makers.

Gussy was pushed off the cart, and Herbert Skimpote was the next to be put on view. Skimpote was a fearful and wonderful sight, with two cabbage-stalks protruding on either side of his bulky forehead, in the manner of horns, his face painted a violet hue, and chunks of horsehair glued indiscriminately all round his chin. He had on a ladies' blouse of various colours, a little short skirt, yellow and black striped stockings, and hob-nailed boots of terrific size.

"Feast your optics on the Skimpotamus!" grinned Gordon Gay. "A sort of cross between a March hare and a goat! A most peculiar creature! In facial appearance it resembles an owl, as you will see!"

Skimpote blinked round upon the chortling crowd through his huge spectacles. He opened his mouth to speak, but Frank Monk and his cheery assistants bundled him off the cart and roped him to Gussy.

Figgins came next, clad in a swimming costume, which showed off his lanky legs to perfection. His legs and arms were painted like a zebra's, and a "trunk," consisting of a piece of rubber hosepipe, hung from over his nose. He had a tail behind him of the same material.

"Here we have the Figgiasoros! An interesting animal, my friends! You perceive that it has two tails! It is noted for its remarkable habit of talking out of the back of its neck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You wait!" hissed Figgins, shaking a striped fist at Gordon Gay. "Just wait, you bounder, that's all. I'll make you sit up for this!"

"Rats! Shove him down, kids! Now bring forth the rest of the giddy menagerie!"

The crowd shrieked with laughter, as well they might, when the other "animals" were brought forth. Tom Merry almost choked.

All his missing schoolfellows were there, as well as a number of Council School boys. They came out of the tents walking on all fours, being unable to walk otherwise, as their knees were tied by ropes to their elbows.

All had their faces painted various hues, and all had black rings round their eyes. The variety of their clothing was weird and peculiar. Some had frock-coats on, others wore bob-tailed coats, whilst others had on jerseys or ragged coloured shirts. None of them wore either boots or socks, and they hopped about wildly on the stones on their bare hands and feet.

The picture they presented was really too funny for words. The crowd went into hysterics.

"Gaze at 'em and weep, ladies and gents!" cried Gordon Gay. "These strange creatures were caught this very afternoon in the wood yonder! They belong to the monkey species, and— Oh, great pip, Tom Merry!"

"Gay, you horrid rotter!" roared Tom Merry.

The two rivals glared at each other. This was the first time Tom Merry's presence had been noticed.

Blake, Lowther, and D'Arcy gave hopeful cries on seeing their leader.

"Wescue, St. Jim's!"

"Get us free, Tommy, for goodness' sake!"

"Spificate these Grammarian rotters!"

Gordon Gay turned swiftly to his chums.

"We will now clear off with our menagerie," he said.

"Perhaps to-morrow we shall exhibit again, and—"

"You'll jolly well do nothing of the sort!" exclaimed Tom Merry, and he gave a shout. "Rawlings, this way! Rescue, St. Jim's! Come on, you chaps!"

There was a commotion in the crowd, and several wrathful and anguished yells arose. A few minutes later the sturdy, khaki-clad boys burst through, led by Dick Rawlings.

They had been making slow progress through the crowd, but on hearing Tom Merry's call they had taken desperate

measures, and fought their way to the front by using their weapons where the way was barred.

"Buck up!"

Tom Merry shouted those words as, with a leap, he landed in the cart and flung himself at Gordon Gay.

The cadets came dashing to the attack.

Monk and Tadpole sprang to their leader's assistance, and Tom Merry, although he fought his fiercest, was hurled over the side of the cart into the midst of Dick Rawlings & Co.

"Yaroooogh!"

"Ow-ow!"

Gordon Gay's voice sounded high above the uproar:

"Come on, my sons! This is where we skedaddle! We've given these St. Jim's blighters no end of a rag! We're top dogs this journey!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!"

And Gordon Gay & Co., being only eight in number, and deeming discretion to be the better part of valour, promptly skedaddled.

They ran in all directions, and mingled with the laughing crowd.

Dick Rawlings & Co. followed, but it was some time before they got free of the crowd; and the Grammarians, roaring with triumph, were well on the run by then.

The cadets returned to assist Tom Merry in releasing the "animals." These luckless youths were still the centre of attraction, and the laughter of the crowd rang mockingly in their ears.

"Oh dear! This is awful!" gasped Figgins, who was making frantic efforts to wipe off the stripes from his legs.

"What do we look like?"

"Bai Jove, I feel weally howwid, deah boys!" moaned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I have nevah been in a more feahful fluttah in all my life! 'This is not a laughin' mattah, Wawlings, you ass!"

Dick Rawlings and most of the cadets were roaring with laughter at the predicament of the St. Jim's Scouts and those of their own corps who had fallen into the hands of the Grammarians.

Tom Merry, in spite of himself, could not help grinning.

"Well, this is where we sing small, and no mistake!" he exclaimed. "We've been dishid, diddled, and done brown by those Grammarian bounders!"

"Yaas, wathah! They've got their wevenge on us, deah boys. I weckon they are cwovin' no end ovah this!"

"Never mind!" said Tom Merry. "We've got our camp back, all intact, and—"

"What about our clobber?" roared Fatty Wynn, who presented a truly marvellous aspect in a bob-tailed coat with only one tail, jockey's breeches, and a pair of seamen's boots. "Those rotters took our Scouts' uniform from us and rigged us up like this!"

"Can't change here, old son," replied Tom Merry. "You chaps will have to make the best of it, and come back to camp with us just as you are."

"Groooogh!"

"Oh deah!"

There was no help for it.

The tents were packed up, and the whole camp taken back to its original position, nearly four miles distant. That walk seemed like forty miles to the hapless fellows who had been so thoroughly ragged and decorated by Gordon Gay & Co.

It did not take the cadets and Scouts long to set up camp again. Extra sentries had to be put on duty to keep away the people who had followed from the heath in the hope of seeing some more fun.

The uniforms and other clothing taken from Gordon Gay & Co.'s victims were found in one of the trek-carts, and for some time after the return to camp the banks of the pond near-by were lined with angry, growling, and weird-looking fellows, who scrubbed away at themselves in the water in valiant efforts to remove the traces of their ragging.

CHAPTER 11.

Gordon Gay's Gallantry!

COMPLETE order was restored at last, both to the camp and its occupants.

Dusk had fallen by this time, and Fatty Wynn, Clicky, and one or two other fellows were busy round the camp-fire, preparing an evening meal, of which the cadets and Scouts stood much in need.

Tom Merry & Co. sat down in a group on the grass with Dick Rawlings & Co., and told them of the fierce rivalry existing between themselves and Gordon Gay & Co. of the Rylcombe Grammar School.

The cadets evinced an eager interest in what they heard.

"So those chaps must be staying at Winchelgate, or nearabouts," said Dick Rawlings. "You must have had a shock when you saw them this afternoon, Merry!"

"Shock? I was nearly knocked flat!" laughed Tom. "They were the last persons I suspected of raiding the camp. I imagined them to be miles away. When you come to think of it, you chaps, it was a gorgeous jape, wasn't it—the gradual spiriting away of these silly asses?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Those Grammarian chaps have got some nerve, and no mistake!" said Dick Rawlings. "We haven't seen the last of them yet, I reckon."

"You bet we haven't!" responded Tom Merry vehemently. "Gordon Gay and his crowd have nosed out our camp, and you can bet your bottom dollar they won't let us alone! Not that we want 'em to, really. I'm itching to get my own back for that raid this afternoon!"

"So am I!" said Dick Rawlings. "We shall know those chaps again, and we'll go for 'em like anything whenever we spot 'em!"

"That's the way to talk!"

At that moment Digby, who was on sentry-go not far away, was heard to fling out a challenge:

"Halt! Who goes there?"

"Only little me, dear boy!"

Tom Merry jumped up quickly.

"That's Gordon Gay!" he exclaimed. "The bouncer has had the fearful nerve to come back here!"

Digby recognised the voice, too, and with a quick step forward into the thickets, he laid a firm and unrelenting grip on the shoulder of the Grammarian leader.

Tom Merry, Blake, Figgins, and Talbot dashed up and seized Gordon Gay.

"Pax, my sons," said Gay cheerily. "I'm a friendly foe this journey! You see, I've got the white flag!"

He held up a handkerchief. It certainly had been white once, but at that precise time was particularly grubby. But Tom Merry & Co. and the cadets accepted it as the signal of truce.

They allowed Gordon Gay to walk into the camp.

He stood by the large marquee and grinned at his old rival.

"Well, Tommy, you couldn't dodge us for the summer vac, you see!" he chuckled. "We're out to impress upon you that the Grammar School can beat St. Jim's all along the line!"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry.

"And many of 'em!" snapped Figgins. "You may have scored off us this afternoon, Gay; but we'll get our own back, don't worry."

"I'm certainly not going to worry!" grinned the Grammarian. "Nothing you chaps can do will worry us!"

Tom Merry gave a laugh.

"Well, we won't slang now," he said. "Fatty's just signalling that supper's ready. We've got quite a good spread, Gay. So would you care to join us?"

"It's about the spread that I came to see you about," said Gordon Gay. "I'm glad I was in time!"

"Well, come along, old sport!"

"In time to warn you chaps before you started, I mean," said Gordon Gay.

Tom Merry looked at him in wonder.

"What are you driving at, Gay?" he demanded. "Why should we be warned?"

"Because if you touch that tea that Fatty Wynn has just brewed, you'll all be laid up to-morrow," said the Grammarian leader quietly.

"Bai Jove!"

"When I was prowling round the camp here this afternoon, I happened to see two fellows at the large water-cask," said Gordon Gay. "One of them emptied some powder into it, and I heard him say something to the other about that

giving them beans. That, I take it, referred to the powder which he had put into the camp water, and then referred to yourselves."

Tom Merry & Co. and Dick Rawlings & Co. looked amazed.

"I didn't like the looks of those two jokers!" went on Gordon Gay. "They slipped off before I had a chance to call someone to help me take them prisoners. Have you got a chap here by the name of Snipe, or Snope, or Snook?"

"You mean Snape," said Dick Rawlings. "There is a chap belonging to our camp named Snape. Was he the one who put the powder into the water?"

"No. He was the accomplice," laughed Gordon Gay. "The other chap was a big, ugly-looking fellow!"

"Farmer, of course!" said Tom Merry, in a low voice.

Dick Rawlings nodded.

"I came along to warn you chaps not to drink that water," said Gordon Gay. "I don't suppose for a minute that it's poisoned. Those rotters wouldn't have the pluck to do that. But they seemed to bear the rest of the fellows in this camp a pretty deep grudge, and no doubt they put something in the water that would give you gecup if you drank it! That's all I came for, really!"

"Thanks awfully, Gay, old chap!" said Tom Merry. "Farmer does bear us a grudge, and Snape is his pal, and I'm glad you've put us on our guard!"

"The cads shall catch it for this!" said Dick Rawlings angrily. "It's the sort of thing Farmer would do. He—"

"I say, you chaps, supper's ready," said Fatty Wynn, coming up and glowering at them. "The tea will get stale, and—"

"You can chuck it all away, Fatty!" said Tom Merry.

"Eh? What's that?"

"The water was doped, Fatty. Farmer has tampered with it. We shall all be ill if we drink the tea! Chuck it away, and the water as well, and get a couple of camp orderlies to wash out the water-cask and fill it with fresh water from the spring."

"My hat!"

After Tom Merry had filled a couple of glasses with the water, Fatty Wynn hurried away to follow out these instructions.

"Going to stop for supper, Gay?" asked Tom Merry. "Fatty's made a fine steak-pudding and some tarts! He's a great hand at cooking, you know! He ought to be a chef!"

"Thanks, awfully! I'll stay," laughed Gordon Gay.

Fresh water was procured, tea made, and the campers and their guests sat round for supper.

Fatty's steak-pudding was a huge success in more senses than one, and all enjoyed the supper.

"I must say I envy you chaps camping out here for the vac!" grinned Gordon Gay, when the meal was over. "I'm staying with Frank Monk and a few others at his uncle's place near here. We're having a gay old time; but it must be fine fun living in camp."

"It is!" chuckled Blake. "We're having the time of our lives!"

"Lucky beggars!"

Two shadowy figures came in through the opening in the enclosure.

They were Farmer and Snape.

Farmer looked covertly about him as he walked up to the others.

"I expect you chaps have been wondering where we had got to?" he said. "We stayed in Winchelgate all the afternoon, and went to the pictures this evening. We don't want any supper; we had some in the town."

Tom Merry & Co. and the cadets looked grimly at the two absentees.

"You don't happen to feel thirsty, I suppose, Farmer?" asked Dick Rawlings.

The burly cadet shot him a quick, suspicious glance.

"Thirsty? No, I'm not thirsty," he said. "What the dickens made you ask?"

"Because, whether you are thirsty or not, you've got to drink a glass of water out of the cask!" was Rawlings' grim retort. "You, and Snape as well. Fetch those glasses of water, Dawson."

"What ho!"

Farmer and Snape cowered back, their faces going pale.

"I—I say, I don't understand this!" muttered the big fellow. "Why should you want to make us drink a glass of water each?"

"Oh, it's just a fad of ours!" said Rawlings coolly. "Ah, here's the water! Drink it up!"

Neither Farmer nor Snape seemed at all keen on drinking that water.

"I don't want any water!" mumbled Snape.

"Drink it up!" said Rawlings threateningly. "If you don't, it will be forced down your neck!"

"I—I—I—"

"Grab him, Brown! Lend a hand, Dawson!"

(Continued on page 23.)

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Their unscrupulous rival, known as the "Rat," a round-shouldered, beady-eyed Mexican half-breed.

The story opens with Dan Derrick seated at the bedside of his sick father. A spell of delirium has just passed, and Dan promises the old sea captain to call upon Don Alonzo Guadiana, a Spaniard whom Captain Derrick had long since befriended, and ask for a job. He is setting out on his mission when he meets Brian Carr, who has perfected a patent diving-dress which has been the lifelong study of his father. The two visit the Don, who has come to England in quest of gold which lies hidden in a hermetically sealed box in the lazaret hold of the galleon, *Maria de Castellon*. A brief interview follows, and the lads, fully aware of the perilous times ahead and the rascality of the Rat, a Mexican half-breed, whose intention is to forestall them in their quest, show their willingness to accompany the Spaniard on his great adventure. With a note of introduction, the lads are sent to Sarky Marline, the jovial old seaman who is to command the *Result*.

The great adventure begins, and, after two futile attempts by the Rat to delay the expedition, the party reach Thirlbeach, where Dan and Brian, garbed in the patent diving-dresses, wade into the depths and locate the Spanish galleon. The Rat is soon on their track, and, after a gruelling fight on the sea bottom, Brian is captured and carried away. He is rescued by Sarky Marline, however. The chums then make a second attempt, only to find the Rat again following them.

"We'll plunge into the weeds," said Brian, "and cover up our tracks!"

(Now read on.)

A Rival to the Rescue!

DAN and Brian were soon down in the saloon of the *Maria de Castellon de la Plana*, where Dan had nearly been the cause of a tragedy on their first visit by mistaking Brian's groping hands in the dark for the tentacles of a devil-fish. They made a quick survey of the chests to judge their strength for hauling clear, considered them all right, then went out for the "rip-hook," as they called the huge iron hooks, called "clip-hooks" or "sister-hooks," on the end of a stout chain, which had been lowered from the *Result*.

Brian got a grip of the clip-hooks with his hands, and steadied the swaying chain, while Dan unfastened a telephone wire, tied to the hooks with a piece of spun-yarn, cut the yarn, and fixed the contact-pins into the slots for the purpose on Brian's helmet. Brian now had communication with the salvage ship above as well as with his fellow-diver. Dan could hear, too, all that was said from above.

"Hallo!" came faintly tinning into the receivers from above.

"Hallo!" returned Brian. "That the Don? Yes?"

"Are you all right?" came the Castilian's voice as if from miles away.

"On holiday so far," replied Brian. "Lower the rip-cable about a fathom, will you? Then we'll get the clip-hooks on to the deck above the lazaret hold. I'll tell you when we're clear, then you can draw in and rip up the deck. The hole Dan and I made last time is too small to allow the chests to pass through."

"Good lad!" came back Don Alonzo's eager voice. "Say when down far enough."

As the Don spoke the clip-hooks descended farther slowly, and at last Brian called:

"Steady the rip-cable!"

The lowering stopped, and Dan and Brian, both heaving at the mighty hooks, which were designed to grip the harder the greater the strain, got the curved steel round the lip of the broken lazaret hatch. Then they scrambled out of the saloon and made their ponderous way to a point of safety.

"All ready! Heave in!" commanded Brian. And the Spaniard's voice came faintly to their ears. "Hi, donkey engine, heave in!"

The rending and tearing of the saloon deck of the galleon commenced; but, of course, it was out of sight and sound to all.

At last, above the weeds which enshrouded the wreck, a great mass of wreckage came to the view of Brian and Dan.

"Gosh, what a mess that little heave has made!" gasped Brian. "I've seen a bit of salvaging in my time, sonny, but that's a knock-out!"

Dan's reply was a swift shout of warning, and Brian swung ponderously round, crouching beside his chum. For a great, heavy deck-beam had become detached from the other wreckage, and was slewing and bubbling down free, drifted on-wards by the tide, straight for them.

Dan heard Brian gasp as one end of the baulk, heavy as iron with the age of it, pinned the young diver to the mud by the feet. Dan had escaped, but Brian was down, and helpless.

"Brian—Brian!" yelled Dan. "Are you hurt?"

"I—I don't think so; Dan. But one can't be sure. I'm caught by the feet. I believe my brass soles have saved my feet from being crushed. Or p'r'aps it's the mud. Have a look, old man."

Dan swayed round his chum, taking no notice of the form of Rayne as it came creeping and swaying towards them.

"Your feet are forced under the mud, Brian," said Dan. "Try to move your toes. Can you?"

"Yes."

"Then thank Heaven chum! Your feet can't be crushed. We must be more careful to get farther away next time."

"I can't breathe very well, Dan. I—I'm half suffocating. Have a look at my helmet, for Heaven's sake!"

Dan, in a panic, slewed his lamp close to Brian's helmet.

"By Heaven, Brian, your helmet's forced down in the sand! The gills on one side are buried."

"You must free me, Dan. Oh, quick, boy!"

Dan, more panicky than ever, got a grip of Brian's helmet with his hands and heaved upwards. He could not move his chum. He looked wildly round. Rayne was standing close by, holding out the end of his telephone wire. Dan pointed

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to Brian and Rayne staggered over. Together Dan and he dug their fingers under the muddy sand and tried to heave upwards. Brian's gasps became fainter, and Dan's brain began to whirl. Rayne snatched at Dan's telephone wire, broke contact with Brian, and joined himself up with Dan.

"Boy, quick! See, there's an angle piece holding him down by the arm under the mud. Who is it?"

"Carr," gasped Dan. "You'll stand by, Rayne?"

"Of course. Quick, they've lowered that clip-hook with its wreckage on to the bottom again. Carr has told them to, no doubt. He's in telephone communication with the Result, I see. Can he breathe?"

"Feebly," returned Dan quickly. "One of the gills is working."

"Yes, but he'll die if we don't get the other out of the ooze and clear it. With me, boy! We can clear the hooks, and together, perhaps, manage to drag them over to Carr. Then we can fix the Result's telephone to one of our own helmets, get the hooks on the baulk, and tell 'em to heave."

"Look alive, then!" snapped Dan. "Not a second to waste!"

The youngster frantically staggered over to the wreckage, Rayne beside him. Together, Rayne's great strength proving invaluable, they got the heavy hooks off the wreckage, and dragged them, with the chain trailing on the mud, the few yards between their position and Brian.

In a few minutes the hooks were round the baulk, and Dan had snatched at the Result's telephone wire. He snicked the contact pins on to his own helmet, and called frantically to the Result.

"What's happened, Brian?" came the Don's high-pitched voice, a crescendo in its anxiety.

"Derrick speaking! Brian pinned beneath a baulk. Clip-hooks on. Heave in, for heaven's sake, as quickly as you can!"

The Don's order rasped out in the receiver instantly, and the chain above began to straighten. Soon the baulk was being dragged off Brian's feet, and the young diver was free. Rayne began to handle Brian's telephone wire, but Dan snatched at the telephone wire and connected himself with his chum.

"Brian! Brian!" called Dan.

There was no answer.

Rayne, the Rival!

DAN DERRICK got his arms round his chum's helmet, and Rayne gripped the young diver by the waist. Together the pair heaved, and Brian's helmet came out of the mud. Dan's trembling fingers scraped gently at the clotted mud on the gills on the side that had become buried. The gills could draw oxygen from water, but not from muddy sand.

"Brian!" called the boy frantically. "Brian!"

No answer came. Dan slashed off Brian's ballast bags with his knife, and signed to Rayne to let go. Rayne obeyed, and Brian rose from the bottom, disappearing in the now cloudy water above. The telephone connection broke, and Rayne at once joined himself up with Dan.

"Did he speak, lad?" asked Rayne.

"No," replied Dan, utter misery in his voice. "Oh, this is awful—awful! Not knowing, not being able to see!"

"Hope for the best, lad. We have done all we can."

"Thanks to you, Rayne, he's free. They'll have him on the Result by this time. I couldn't have done it all by myself."

"Don't mention it," returned Rayne. "I am a professional diver. I couldn't see a diving comrade in a fix at the bottom without helping. But please don't let this make any difference to our relations, Derrick. Remember, it is war to the knife between us. We are rivals. I won't stand for murder, or—"

"Torture?" queried Dan, a trifle bitterly despite the great service Rayne had just done them. Brian had told Dan, of course, all about his adventures in Sker House.

"I am not the master of the expedition sent out as your rivals, boy!" snapped Rayne. "But I'm a gentleman, if I am a rogue. However, if you have formed any good opinion of me, dispel it. I intend, for a start, to use the fresh misfortune which has befallen you to get this first lot of treasure for the Golden Gain."

Dan's answer was an angry tug at the telephone wire, to break contact. Rayne swayed comically for a few seconds, then swerved round and walked away.

Dan called to the Result.

"Have you got Brian yet?"

"Yes," came back the dull reply, in the voice of the Castilian.

"Speak, for heaven's sake!" shouted Dan. "Is he all right?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 859.

"Have a stout heart, my boy," came from above. "Never mind this accursed treasure—come up!"

"By heaven, he's dead!" groaned Dan. And his senses began to swim. "He's dead! Brian's dead!"

The boy reeled about dizzily, beating his hands against his thighs in the intensity of his feelings. This last word in diving-dress—failed! Impossible for anything to go wrong with it? Poor old Brian—just because his helmet was partly forced down into the ooze! A triumph over nature? Was it? Was this a terrible punishment for their arrogance in thinking they had conquered the depths of the unknown?

Dan felt half-mad with grief and despair. He staggered about like one possessed, and he took no notice of the four divers who had already descended from the Golden Gain, their life-lines and tubes swaying and snaking above them.

They would get the treasure! Let them! It was a curse, this eternal struggle for wealth—this gold-lust which occasioned men to risk their lives, to ally themselves with half-breeds, to do things which in their sane moments they would shun away as unworthy of a white man!

Dan clenched his fists tightly as his grief gave way to half-mad rage. Poor old Brian!

Young Derrick suddenly pulled himself together, and squeezed his eyelids tightly shut to clear the mistiness that had come into his eyes.

"Fool that I am," he cried, "reeling about here like a madman instead of going up—"

"Yes, yes, come up, my poor boy!" came the voice of Guadiana in the receiver. He had heard Dan's passionate outburst.

Dan looked round him as he jerked at his ballast bags. The Rat's divers were hard at work trying to find the best way on to the deck of the old galleon, their electric-lamps flickering and shimmering through the gloomy water.

Dan turned away bitterly. Then he dropped his ballast and shot up to the surface.

As Per Contract!

AS soon as Dan reached the surface of the water and felt his helmet awash he was gripped by strong hands. One of the Result's two boats was standing by ready to receive the young diver.

Sympathetic hands hauled him aboard, and by the time the boat had again reached the side of the Result, Dan's helmet was off, and he was gasping out his desire to know details in regard to Brian.

Guadiana put his hand on the youngster's shoulder.

"He looked dead, boy," said the Spaniard, whose face was white and drawn, "but artificial respiration brought back a faint sign of life. I sent him ashore immediately, the pump men, who were applying their skill, still working on him. They say there is little hope, but I have made arrangements for a white band, vertical, to be shown across one of the upper windows of the Warrior Bard Hotel if he lives and is out of danger, and a white band, horizontal, if he dies. Dan, my boy, this is a terrible blow to me as well as to you. We must help each other to bear up."

Dan gulped.

"Must—must we stay here doing nothing, señor?" he asked.

The Castilian shrugged his shoulders.

"What can we do, my boy? Brian is in the hands of a doctor who has had experience of the apparently drowned before. The treatment for one apparently suffocated is the same as for one apparently drowned. No, lad, we must just wait and watch for the sign at the window."

Sarky Marline, eyes blinking, was standing hard by, legs crossed, his shoulder against the little varnished wheelhouse as if to prop the structure up. A group of salvage men argued and rated at each other near the towing-bar of the one-time tug.

"Dan, shipmate," said Sarky slowly, "I be truly thankful as you, yersel, be safe an' sound. I've seed men more dead than alive—an' deader lookin' than was Brian—an' yet they's come round, even w'out medical 'elp. Drop another anchor, Dan, an' ye'll ride out this bit o' a blow w'out goin' adrift. There's more news, an' bad enough, from the salvage men. They's threatenin' to pack up an' clear if we lose this 'ere first lot o' treasure."

Dan looked round dully.

"What have they to grouse about?" he said, turning his eyes to the windows of the Warrior Bard Hotel once more.

"An' it be a reasonable grouse, too," replied Sarky, suddenly straightening himself. "They's signed on for this 'ere little yachting cruise salvage way—payment in shares. They



Dan's shout of horror ended in a gasp, as he saw, quite close to him, the axe of one of Rayne's men raised and poised for a sweeping blow at the air-tube of the diver of the Result grappling with him.

ain't content to come for the pure joy o' it, ye understand, an' 'ere we be, scratchin' our noses wif the Rat's men down below, rakin' in every hounce o' that there treasure. See, the divers is all dressed up an' ready to go below an' get the chests. They—they want ye to guide 'em straight to the lazaret 'old o' the galleon, Dan, lad!"

Young Derrick seemed to shake himself. He raised his rubber-banded gutta-percha-clad arm stiffly and swept his wet hand across his ruffled hair.

"They can want, Sarky," he said with finality. "Let 'em go down on their own. I'm not going to rake about treasure hunting with poor old Brian lying there, perhaps—perhaps dead!"

As Dan spoke a diver, less helmet, stepped ponderously up to the afterguard. He was closely followed by the other men. Sarky looked the men straight in their faces, while Guadiana and Dan kept their eyes on the windows of the hotel.

"It's like this 'ere," said the diver. "We chaps is ready to go down an' scrap, if need be, to get what's our doo, an' to keep them thievin', spyin' sea 'ounds wif their 'ands off our treasure. One man's gorn the way we've all gotta go sometime. 'E's dead right enough, an' I've seed a few divers in that condition, an' they never come round."

Sarky frowned, and the man shuffled his weighty feet, continuing hastily:

"Nobut what 'e might come round, ye see, but what's one man 'ere or there, says I an' me mates, wif all that gold lyin' under our keel an' dirty 'ands gettin' a holt o' it? Gad, if we're to jack up every time a man loses 'is breath, bang goes our profits in the job, says I."

"Ear, 'ear!" chorused the men behind the speaker. They were all looking straight at Dan.

"Now, what for be young Mr. Derrick delayin'? We on'y claims our rights, an' we allows this 'ere business to be a big blow to 'im. We'll do the pushin' an' bashin' down below, if need be. We just want 'im to show us the direct way into yon lazaret 'old. Then 'e can bloomin' well shoot hup as quick as he likes!"

"Rayne and his men will fight," put in the Don, holding out a white, trembling hand.

"An' so can we," returned the diver promptly. "They ain't the on'y chaps can manage a rough 'ouse on the sea floor, an' so I tell 'e. 'Sides, they've been down twenty minutes, nah. An' me and me mates 'ave worked out a plan. The first relief o' the Gain's party are doo to come up, as we well know, an' the second relief doo to go down. We goes down in a lump, the whole bloomin' four o' us, fresh as paint an' ready for the worst. We can 'ave the big chain net lowered with us, an' can bundle the chests into that, an' 'ave all 'auled up, right an' proper. Quick an' snappy will do the trick, an' never a blow need be struck. Where's the difficulty? But we can't waste a second o'

time below, so young Mr. Derrick, 'e'll just 'ave to come over wif us, as per contract, an' guide us to that there lazaret 'atch, wot's left o' it."

Dan was about to look at the men with a rebellious light in his eyes, when suddenly he started forward eagerly. Everyone else looked swiftly across the cove towards the hotel. Down one of the windows a length of white bandage was fluttering, being fixed in position. It was tautened, and Dan clamped excitedly to the tug's side.

"Brian's out of danger, senor!" cried the youngster, wild with joy. "Men, he's out of danger! He's safe! Good old Brian! We'll work together on the bottom and rake up this galleon treasure yet!"

With shining eyes Dan looked at the men, on whose faces genuine pleasure shone.

"I'm with you, boys!" cried Dan. "Right now! Fix on my helmet, Sarky! Get dressed, men, and air-pump hands to their stations. Look alive! See that you have your axes, for we may need them to frighten off the others. Pray heaven we sha'n't have to use 'em!"

A Menacing Advance!

THE rough salvage hands now pounding about in their excitement fussed round their divers, fixing on helmets, testing axe-clips, seeing ropes and air-tubes clear. At last Dan, now once more in his helmet, saw the signal "all ready" from the men in charge of the air-pumps. The lad, loaded up with a fresh supply of ballast, was helped overside, and he sank immediately.

Four distinct "plops" sounded as the other divers went over from their boats, and the bubbles rose merrily around as the men sank down and down to the grim floor of that secluded little Welsh cove.

Dan was the first to reach bottom. But soon he had his four divers round him. A system of signals had been worked out very early in the cruise, much after the style of an officer controlling a line of soldiers in extended order.

Dan raised his hand, pointing half left, and set off, the other divers following slowly, leaving a rising trail of bubbles from their outlet valves in their wake.

The weed-covered galleon loomed up ghostly and grim in the rays from Dan's powerful light. The only sign of activity on the part of the Rat's men was the ropes and air-tubes rising from the centre of the weeds of the old wreck, quivering slightly from the movements of the divers at the end of them.

The men of the Result, Dan at their head, pushed on as rapidly as possible, and reached the weeds just as two fresh divers came down from the Golden Gain. The action of the Result's diving party had, of course, been seen. Dan felt that they were in for trouble.

With the realisation that promptitude in action and all possible speed of movement would be the only things that could save them from the danger of a tragedy below, Dan immediately plunged into the weeds, the other divers following and finding direction by gripping the short length of rope which Dan trailed behind him.

At last they were on the lip of the yawning hole the "rip-hook" had torn in the galleon's deck during that operation which had nearly cost Brian his life. Dan led the way in, and, with axes now in hand, the gallant little party pushed forward.

There were the chests, now grouped together, with a steel cable stretching away diagonally upwards towards the Golden Gain. It was the fact that the Golden Gain could not position herself immediately above the galleon, on account of the presence of the Result, which had prevented the treasure from being already lifted by the Rat. A diagonal pull on heavy treasure chests is a very different task from a vertical pull.

The divers of the Result, eyes gleaming with satisfaction, advanced on the two divers from the Golden Gain, as they tugged and hauled in their efforts to get the chests lashed together for raising.

Suddenly they became aware of their rivals. They dropped their ropes immediately, and swung round backwards, hands on axes and obviously expecting and ready for an attack.

However, five against two are long odds, so the Golden Gain's divers considered discretion the better part of valour. They abandoned the treasure to their rivals.

Dan now signed to his men to get busy, while he himself would keep guard. The men fell to at their work with a will, while the Golden Gain's divers tugged and jerked at their signal-ropes to be hauled up.

Dan hovered about his men while they were heaving over the big chain-net bag which had been lowered from the Result.

"Wonder when Rayne will show up?" said Dan to himself, as he peered through the weeds. "He'll be hot-foot after us as soon as he has been able to get those two divers, who have just cleared off, down on the bottom again!"

The young diver grinned. His heart was singing now he knew that Brian was safe. He felt more enthusiastic than ever over their great adventure. He grabbed fully at a small conger eel which came wavering by near him, and off the fish went like a streak of light in the water.

Dan's great anxiety now was to get this treasure aloft, then to go ashore and see old Brian. His chum had not been damaged, he knew—no bones broken—and a fellow of Brian's constitution would soon get over the trouble of partial suffocation. The youngster began to throw his mind forward towards when they would be on the north coast of Ireland, the Inner and Outer Hebrides. Those wild places! New country, indeed, for Dan, and the boy thrilled at the thought of what was in store for the adventurers of the Result.

Would the other galleons be like the one at Thirlbeach? So far, their work had been easy. No trouble from sand, fairly easy access to the treasure-hold, the ship lying on her keel. No, they couldn't expect a fair wind all the time. They might find one of the galleons bottom up. Then they would have to cut or blast a way inside. They might not even find another galleon at all! The sea bottom has a secret, sinister way of guarding her treasures. There is the creeping, shifting sandbank. There is the action of constantly moving water—the wearing action, the eating action, the breaking action against which nothing can stand. Also, though the Thirlbeach position has been proved correct, Miguel Rodrigo, the man who had commanded this ancient, luckless ship, may have made mistakes in his navigation. The man showed a wonderful knowledge of shores foreign to him, practically uncharted as they were then. But it would be indeed surprising if he had hit off his landfall right every time. Say, for instance, he had seen the second galleon go down off Mull and had thought he was off Islay!

Dan caught his breath at the thought. It all seemed so likely. And a further point was that no latitude and longitude had been given. The grids on maps were in use at the time, he knew. The Portuguese were the leaders in map-making. Even a few Mercator's charts had been published.

Well, those old Spanish navigators were either even more wonderful than was supposed, or Miguel Rodrigo had had some special information in the matter.

Dan mused in this way while keeping guard over his fellows. He'd bring all this before the Don as soon as

possible. In the meantime, the chests were all in the net. He'd connect up by telephone, the wire of which was on the net-cable, and give them the tip above to haul in as quickly as possible.

No sooner had the message been delivered to the Result than Dan was conscious of a terrific stir in the water at his back. He swung round heavily, and saw that his divers were retiring to his position, axes in their hands.

And just beyond them, staggering along with all possible speed, was a man in the dress Rayne had stolen from Brian, and behind him four divers in ordinary dress.

Fresh men, no doubt, and Dan's divers were about played out with their labours by now. There would be the trouble Dan had feared, for the leader of the rival group led his men forward. And the men held axes in their hands as they advanced, rapidly, menacingly towards the little group from the Result.

The Clash!

IT was a tense moment. Rayne, if Rayne it was in the Carr diving-dress, held up his hand for his divers to halt. There they stood in the now brilliant light of the meeting of the rays from both the Carr lamps—the one held by Dan and the one held by the rival leader.

The man facing Dan so threateningly held out the end of his loose telephone-wire, and Dan beckoned. The man advanced. Telephonic connection was made, and the voice of Rayne began to tin-tin in Dan's receiver.

"So it is to be a fight?" said Rayne.

"Seems so," replied Dan coolly.

"My men are fresh, yours about at the end of their endurance. Give my men free play with the treasure, and we will let yours rise without trouble."

"My reply to that," said Dan, "is this: Draw your men off and we will not interfere with you."

Rayne laughed.

"I hold the whip-hand, youngster," he said. "See, my men are shifting about impatiently. They're the toughest lot that ever manned a salvage ship."

"So are mine."

"They'll axe your men's air-tubes without hesitation."

"I won't answer for the gentleness of my own men, or of myself, for that matter, if we are attacked," replied Dan, with spirit. But his heart was heavy. What Rayne said was quite true. Even now, a couple of the Result men were staggering dizzily. They had been down long enough for ordinary diving gear.

"Think again," mocked Rayne. "You are in our power."

"We have first right to this lot, being the discoverers," replied Dan. "Also, we will have no scruples in throwing your lines off any treasure we may find. For you are in a stolen suit—stolen from us. You steal your information from us—or try to. Do your worst!"

Dan here made a mistake. He saw the big chain-net being jerked off the bottom by the Result's donkey-engine. He looked over and Rayne saw him turn. The man turned, too, and stepped back in surprise. Then he signalled to his men to lay hands on the net and back through the thin chain-meshes with their axes, going through the motions of doing so with his own axe. The divers started forward.

Dan swung round to face his own men, but they did not need his order. The two least exhausted staggered over towards the big net-bag, axes raised, to try to drive off the rival divers. They could see their share of the treasure beyond their reach if they did not act promptly.

"Your blood and the blood of any men killed now be upon your head, Rayne!" gasped Dan, as he broke contact with his rival and swept over towards where the divers were already clashing.

The net was being dragged slowly along the bottom, stirring up the sand in the lazaret hold. Soon it would feel the dead vertical pull, and in a few minutes would be out of the reach of the Golden Gain's men. But those men meant the chests to be spilled from the cut-open bottom of the net before it was out of reach.

Dan shouted in horror at this grim battle of the sea-bottom. His futile shout ended in a gasp, as he saw, quite close to him, the axe of one of Rayne's men raised and poised for a sweeping blow at the air-tube of the diver of the Result grappling with him.

Dan arrived just in time. He gripped the man's wrist, and gave it a twist which made the axe fall harmlessly to the sand. But now two other men were struggling, swaying

here and there in a cloud of bubbles, each gripping the other's axe-hand wrist. It was a terrible spectacle.

Dan bethought himself of his squid-fluid screen. But he abandoned the idea at once. His men would not then be able to see his signals—and good leadership would be the only thing that could save the lives of these sturdy fellows now. He himself could easily get away under cover of his screen. But Dan would have just as soon smashed the breathing gills on either side of his helmet as play the coward like that.

Rayne's men were now all round Dan's. And Rayne himself advanced on Dan, left fingers hooked and right tightly gripping his axe. Rayne was a strong man, and Dan could spell the defeat, and perhaps death, of his own men should he go under to Rayne.

Retiring backwards, in a zigzag fashion, Dan sought to gain time. Still Rayne came on, furious anger in his every movement.

Quick as the thought, Dan clawed at one of the round stones in his ballast bag. Rayne was not three yards distant from him. The stone would probably carry as far as that if thrown with all the force he could muster.

The stone left his hand, ridiculously slowly on account of the water resistance. Dan knew it could not endanger Rayne's life, for the observation port was indestructible. If it struck one of the gills, Rayne would be able to last out till he could rise to the surface and be picked up. But what Dan wanted to do was delay Rayne, and so enable himself to lurch over to the other fighting divers and turn the tide of battle—and to prevent deadly blows from falling on his men or on the men of the Golden Gain.

The stone, luckily for Dan, hit Rayne near the top of his helmet, just where the outlet valve was positioned. The screw was turned by the blow, and Rayne began to stagger about, clawing at the top of his helmet to open the valve again. The tiny bubbles, rising like an effervescence and peculiar to Brian's diving-dress, ceased to rise from Rayne's helmet.

Dan now lunged over towards the fighters. His men had almost won the safety of the treasure, for the net was now four feet from the bottom, and ascending quickly. But they were all in great danger of their lives.

Dan shuddered as he thought of the fury of those men, panting for breath inside those grotesque diving-suits; of their desperate blows; of their reeling senses which would undoubtedly make them forget the need of moderation in their terrible fight. For murder can no more be committed on the sea bottoms than on the high seas or the dry land. If a man died that day there would be a reckoning by law which would ruin the chances of either side in the whole expedition for that summer.

The boy had got clear of Rayne for the time, although that able leader of the people of the Golden Gain had now opened his outlet valve again, and was peering about for a sight of Dan.

"The net's high enough now!" grunted out Dan, as he swerved round the fighters. "Gosh, what can I do to stop this awful fight? I—"

The young leader of the Result's divers began signalling to his men to jerk on their lifelines, and so be raised to the surface. One man saw and understood. He jerked hard, and was instantly pulled upwards. On the way he tugged at the rope of one of his fellows, who was in the dead grip of a rival diver. This man, too, began to rise, dragging his antagonist up with him.

Dan took the cue from that. He lunged towards the other fighters, and tugged the signal at every rope he could grasp. One by one the men began to rise, friends and enemies, and Dan began to compliment himself on his smart work.

One diver, however, whose rope was slanting away towards where the Golden Gain was anchored, showing that he was a rival, had gripped the net containing the treasure chests. With it, he was being hauled to the surface.

Dan grabbed at the man's legs, but couldn't catch them. The man's axe was wielded frantically, and it fell strongly and with good effect on the thin steel chain of the net. The corner of one chest began to poke down. In a few minutes he would have opened the net enough for all the chests to fall.

In utter perplexity at this new development of the business, Dan peered round. He turned just in time to see Rayne swaying towards him, with fingers hooked and deadly purpose in his every step. All the other divers were now well on the way to the surface, except one, who lay on the sand, helmet falling over slowly, as if the man were in the last stage of exhaustion.

Dan squeezed out his screen fluid, then shifted his ballast higher, and crawled on hands and knees through the now cloudy water to this man.

Rayne had missed the boy for the time, and Dan kept low, so that the man's groping fingers would not close on his

body. He felt the dying diver below him, and groped for his line to signal for the haul-up. The line had been cut with an axe in the fight; but the tube was intact.

~~~~~ Twixt Surface and Bottom! *~~~~~*

DAN at once turned off the man's outlet valve, and placed his hands on his chest to feel if his action was having the desired effect. The dress of the man began to swell like a balloon that is being inflated. He felt the man begin to lift with the buoyancy, and, muttering to himself, Dan drew back.

This is the diver's last card, closing the outlet valve so that his dress will become inflated, and so raise him to the surface. It means juggling with death at the best, but it had to be done.

As the water began to clear of the inky fluid Dan had released, the boy saw the swollen form of the diver, rolling as it shot up and up. He also saw, dead above him, the net containing the treasure, with the diver still clinging to it, now with a foothold, and hacking at the chain-meshes like a madman.

Rayne, too, was close by, lurching to get at grips with Dan once more. If a man's movements can signify baffled rage, Rayne's did at that minute. Judging his position, Dan discarded his ballast, just as Rayne lunged forward to grip him. He began to rise at once.

His senses seeming to swim now, Dan felt himself bump against the net which held the treasure-chests. He clutched and clung there like grim death. Then he groped for the plucky diver who was hacking at the meshes. He caught his legs.

Clawing himself downwards, for the law of gravitation seemed reversed to Dan at that moment, the boy gripped the diver by the waist. The man was suffering from exhaustion, Dan judged. He must be, for he had been hacking frantically and had very nearly released the treasure-chests already. Dan caught his axe arm, and the axe fell from the man's nerveless fingers.

Victory was Dan's! But at what price? To let this now exhausted diver go careering to the bottom? Rayne might not discover him! What could he do?

Clinging there to his rival, Dan considered and rejected idea after idea. He was not strong enough to hang on there till the treasure could be raised right to the surface, for the winding-in was of necessity slow on account of the weight. He could not let the man go. The life-line was now slack, and he could not, having his hands full, take in the slack and signal for him to be hauled up. The only thing would be to close the outlet valve of this man, too, and so save his life.

Dan acted at once, for his arms were aching. He felt he would be torn asunder, the dead weight of the diver all on one arm, while he clung to the net with his other hand. It was a truly desperate situation.

Dan got his feet under the man's armpits, and, taking a quick breath, he let go of the torn and hacked steel net. Down he shot with the weight of the now almost-unconscious diver. Bending over, the boy felt for the valve, gripped it with finger and thumb, and closed the cock.

The bubbles from the man's helmet ceased, and the air-pump above began to inflate his dress. The pressure on the man's head would, of course, be frightful, but it was better than that certain death!

Before this grim pair reached the bottom again, the unconscious diver was buoyant, and Dan and he began to shoot up to the surface once more. Dan kept a good grip of his prisoner, for it was war to the knife, and perhaps the Don would want to hold prisoners. It is certain the Rat would!

That terrible ordeal was over at last, and Dan found himself on the deck of the Result, his nose bleeding and his eyes feeling as if they had been seared with a red-hot iron. The diver he had rescued, or captured, whichever way it lay, was stretched out on the deck, and the Result's pump-men were busy bringing the man back to life. On getting hold of him they had cut his air-tube free from the boat alongside the Golden Gain. The man was in no great danger, Dan could see.

As young Derrick sat there, supported by the strong arms of Sarky Marline, and watching the face of Guadiana, a trifle anxious, but with waves of sudden delight flitting across it, he knew that all was well.

The treasure was safe, and was slowly but surely being hauled up from its bed on the sea-bottom to be landed on the deck of the Result. It was first blood to the crew of the Result; but, after all, it was only one of three galleons traced, and the Rat was not likely to take his defeat lying down.

(Don't miss next week's thrilling instalment, chums.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 859.

"TOM MERRY & CO. IN CAMP!"

(Continued from page 22.)

The two cadets thus addressed and Tom Merry and Blake lent a hand in holding Snape. Rawlings held the glass to the cowering fellow's lips.

Snape gave a shriek.

"Don't make me drink it! I shall be ill! There's something in it! Farmer put it in!"

"You lie!" shouted Farmer. "Hold your tongue, Snape!"

"What will happen if you drink it, Snape?" demanded Dick Rawlings. "Come on, you cad, out with it!"

"It would give me terrible pains and lay me up for days!" moaned Snape, trembling. "At least, that's what Farmer said. He bought the stuff at the chemist's and put it into the cask. It was his idea, really. Let me go!"

"No fear! So, Farmer, you're bowled out! We'll show you what we think about you now!"

"Leave me alone!" panted Farmer, struggling furiously as a number of St. Jim's juniors and cadets fastened strong grips upon him. "Snape lies! I didn't do anything! Yaroooooh! Hands off! It was only a joke—ow!—a harmless joke! Oooooop!"

Farmer went whirling over on the hard ground.

"What shall we do with him, Merry?" asked Dick Rawlings. "I'll leave it to you to name his punishment."

"Why not frogmarch him and Snape round the camp?"

asked Tom Merry. "That will give them something to think about in the future!"

"Right-ho!"

Scouts and cadets grasped all manner of weapons and ranged themselves in a long, double line.

Farmer and Snape were then made to run the gauntlet, being given a start by Herries' boot—a very large size in boots.

Whack! Whack! Biff! Swipe! Wallop!

"Yaroooooh! Ah! Yah!"

"Wow-wow-wow-wow!"

The two cads of the camp received blows from all sides wherever they ran. Their dismal yells mingled with the laughter of the others in awakening the woodland night echoes.

At last they were allowed to crawl away, moaning, to their respective tents, and Gordon Gay took farewell of Tom Merry & Co. and the cadets.

"Good-night, you bounders!" he called back as he walked past the sentries. "We mean to do you in the eye, you know, so you can look out for squalls!"

"Go and eat coke!"

And as if to emphasise the defiance of the summer campers to Gordon Gay, the voice of Jeremiah, the camp parrot, shrieked after him as he disappeared through the thickets:

"Go and eat coke! Ha, ha, ha!"

THE END.

(Do not miss next week's grand extra-long tale of Tom Merry & Co. and the cadets in camp—entitled: "RUCTIONS UNDER CANVAS!" By Martin Clifford.)



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