

GRAND LONG COMPLETE OPEN-AIR SCHOOL ADVENTURE YARN INSIDE !

The GEM 2^D



ST. JIM'S UNDER



Tom Merry & Co. and Figgins & Co. join up with Blake and his Redskins and go to war with the "paleface dogs" of the Grammar School! Then the fun rages fast and furious!

CHAPTER 1. The Expedition.

"ARE you ready, D'Arcy?"

"No, Blake, I am not weady. I am surprised at the question. I have not even had time to bwush my toppah yet."

Jack Blake gave the swell of St. Jim's a withering look. The chums of the Fourth Form were busy in Study No. 6 in the School House. They were making preparations for an expedition, and Blake, Herries, and Digby were almost ready to start, while Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had hardly commenced.

"You utter ass!" said Blake, in measured tones. "What do you want a topper for this afternoon?"

"I wegard that as a wathah widiculous question," said D'Arcy, as he opened his hatbox and took out a shining silk topper, and selected a pad. "I want a toppah to weah, of course, deah boy. A fellow must look wespectable."

And he proceeded to brush his hat carefully.

"Jump on that topper, Dig!"

"Certainly!" said Digby.

Arthur Augustus dodged Digby's descending foot in time. He jumped up, and held the hat behind him for safety as Dig advanced to the attack again.

"Digbay, you uttah wottah! What do you mean? If you damage my toppah, I shall give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Jump on it!" repeated Blake, looking up from the bulky parcel he was confining in a pair of straps too short for the purpose. "Make a concertina of it. Lend Dig a hand, Herries."

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"Right-ho!" said Herries.

"Bai Jove, Dig, let that hat alone! Hewwies, you wottah, if you touch my toppah, I shall no longah wegard you as a fwiend!"

"Put it away, then!" said Blake.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort! Keep off, you wottahs! Upon second thoughts, I will put it away. I wegard you as beasts, though!"

The silk hat was jammed back hastily into the hatbox, and the latter closed. D'Arcy screwed his monocle into his eye, and regarded his grinning chums with a glare of indignation.

"I look upon you as a set of wottahs!" he exclaimed hotly. "Why don't you let a chap look wespectable? I don't ask you to look wespectable; I know that would be asking too much. But I want to keep up the reputation of the study."

"Ass!" said Blake, grunting over the exertion of making the straps meet. "We're going up to Rylcombe Wood to camp there and play Red Indians, and you must go in a topper, you shrieking ass!"

"I wegard a toppah as quite pwopah for the occasion. Howevah, I will yield to the majowity, and go in my panama."

"No, you won't; I'm wearing that," said Blake. "It suits me, and it's comfy. You can wear a cap."

"I wefuse to weah a cap."

"Then go without one. If I see you in a topper I'll flatten it over your ears, so remember! Dig, lend me a hand with this beastly parcel! I can't see why D'Arcy wanted to have such a short pair of straps."

"Those swaps were intended for a parcel of books."

—THEIR OWN BACK ON THE REDSKINS OF ST. JIM'S!

CANVAS!

By
Martin Clifford.

"Well, you might have foreseen that I should want to use them, and got them longer," said Blake. "You're always bungling something. I suppose I shall make them meet round this parcel if I pull hard enough."

"Pewwaps you will bwreak the stwaps."

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder. Go it, Dig!"

There was a sudden snap as the strap parted. Blake gave a dissatisfied grunt.

"There you are! I expected that!"

"If you expected it, Blake, you needn't have pulled so vewy hard, you know."

"It's all your fault for not having had longer straps. What are you doing before that looking-glass now, image?"

"I wefuse to be called an image."

"What are you doing?" roared Blake.

"I am only adjusting my necktie, deah boy."

"Yank his necktie off, Dig!"

"I uttably wefuse to have my necktie yanked off. I wegard you as a wude beast this aftahnoon, Blake!"

"Well, get away from glass, then! You'll crack it if you stand in front of it much longer. It wasn't meant to stand it."

"Look here, Blake—"

"Rats! Get ready! We shall have to put a rope round this parcel, and a loop to carry it by. D'Arcy can carry it!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"D'Arcy can carry it, as it was his strap that broke. He ought to be more careful in buying straps. Got that bag packed, Herries?"

"Yes; I've shoved in the belts and horns and tomahawks."

"Good! What have you done with the spears, Dig?"

"Put 'em in this cricket-bag in sections."

"That's good! The cloaks take up most room—I mean the serapes, of course. And they're in this parcel that D'Arcy is going to carry."

"Weally, deah boy—"

"I think we're pretty nearly ready."

"Pway don't be in such a beastlay huwwy, Blake! I haven't changed my collah or my boots, and—"

"They can remain as they are. We— Hallo, who's that?"

Tom Merry looked in at the half-open door of Study No. 6. The chums of the Fourth stared at him suspiciously. The Red Indian outfit had been a present to Jack Blake from his uncle in America, and the chums of Study No. 6 were keeping the affair entirely in their own hands. It was likely that they would have imitators, for the Red Indian "wheeze" had caught on. But Blake & Co., as Jack put it, were not taking in any partners. Tom Merry nodded genially. His chums, Manners and Lowther, were looking into the study over his shoulders.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry. "Going out, I see."

"Yes," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We're going—"

Blake glared at him, and the swell of the School House broke off.

"Going on the river?" asked Tom Merry innocently.

"No."

"Cricket?"

"No."

"I see. It's bug-hunting this afternoon?"

"No, it isn't."

"Then what are you doing this afternoon?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Minding our own business," said Blake affably.

"Ha, ha, ha! I wegard that as wathah funnay!" said Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Oh, keep your little secrets!" he remarked. "If you're wrapping up all your possessions to take them to the pawn-broker's in Rylcombe, we don't want to—"

Blake turned red.

"We're doing nothing of the sort."

"Oh, I thought you might be broke and trying to raise the wind on your old clothes, or something of that sort," Tom Merry remarked.

D'Arcy laughed.

"On the contwawy," he said, "I have just had a fivah fwom my govannah."

"If you'd like us to come along," said Monty Lowther, "we shouldn't mind. We are always willing to keep you youngsters out of mischief."

"Certainly!" assented Manners, in a hearty way. "I look upon it as a duty for fellows in the Shell to keep an eye on the Fourth Form, and see that they don't get into mischief."

Blake glowered.

"If you don't take your faces away they'll get damaged," he remarked. "Slam that door, Herries. Never mind their nappers."

"Right-ho!" said Herries.

"Oh, don't trouble!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Ta-ta, kiddies! We'll see you again later, I dare say."

And the chums of the Shell went their way. Tom Merry was laughing as they went down the steps of the School House into the sunny quadrangle.

"It's pretty plain what those kids are up to," he remarked. "It's the Red Indian wheeze again. Blake has won a lot of eclat out of that, but I think it's time we came on in the scene. I saw a spear sticking out of the cricket-bag Dig had in his hand."

"And there was the handle of a tomahawk sticking out of the bag Herries was fastening up," grinned Manners.

"Yes; there's no doubt on the point. Blake is keeping this Redskin wheeze to himself. But I think it's time three fellows about our size came on the scene, and walloped the great warriors of the Blackfoot tribe."

"What-ho!"

"Let's get out before they come along. They were just going to start, I believe," said Tom Merry.

And the Terrible Three crossed the quadrangle of St. Jim's, and went out of the school gates in the blazing sunshine of the July afternoon.

Meanwhile, Jack Blake had finished securing the parcel, and D'Arcy had announced that he was "weady." Blake opened the study door, and the four chums sallied forth. Gore of the Shell met them in the passage and stared at their loads.

"Hallo! Leaving for the holidays?" he asked.

"No!" snapped Blake.

"Taking all your property to a raffle?"

"Certainly not!" said D'Arcy. "I wegard that question as widiculous, Goah. We should certainly not patwonise a waffle."

"Oh, come on!" said Blake.

Mellish and Walsh of the Fourth were standing on the steps, and they looked curiously at the bulky baggage of the chums of Study No. 6.

"Going to emigrate?" asked Mellish pleasantly.

"Rats!" said Digby.

"Thought you might be going to Canada steerage, and taking your bedding and things in bundles," said Mellish.

"What's the game, then?"

The chums of Study No. 6 passed on without answering. They crossed the quadrangle to the gates, and found three youths leaning up against the stone arch in the shade. The three youths belonged to the New House at St. Jim's, and were no other than Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, the famous Co. They stared at the School House chums.

"My hat!" said Figgins. "You must be in want of exercise to carry those bundles about on a blazing afternoon."

"Rather!" said Kerr. "What have you got there, Blake? Are you starting in life as pedlars?"

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"More likely a feed," said Fatty Wynn, with a voracious look. "Look here, Blake, if this is a picnic, we don't mind coming along."

"It's not a picnic!" snapped Blake. "And if it were, we shouldn't take a cormorant along."

Figgins & Co. stared after the School House chums as they departed, and marched on, perspiring, down the dusty lane.

Figgins grinned comprehendingly.

"By Jove, I've hit it!" he exclaimed.

"Have you?" said Fatty Wynn. "Do you think it's a feed, after all? If it is, I think we ought to gather a few of the fellows and follow on."

Figgins shook his head.

"It's not a feed."

"Oh!" said Fatty Wynn.

And his interest in the matter decreased visibly.

"No," said Figgins, "it's not a feed. I imagine that it's that Red Indian wheeze over again. You remember that Blake's uncle sent him a Red Indian outfit, and those kids dressed themselves up as Blackfeet warriors in the wood."

"And took us prisoners," grinned Kerr, "and left us tied up."

"Yes, that was rather a come-down for us," confessed Figgins. "But they were four to three, and we weren't expecting it. Perhaps it's our turn now. We're on in this scene."

"Right-ho!" said Kerr. "Let's follow."

Fatty Wynn demurred.

"I'm getting rather peckish."

"How long is it since your last feed?" asked Figgins sarcastically. "Ten minutes?"

"Oh, really, Figgy, it's more than half an hour, and I only had a steak pie and a cold chicken, and some sausages, and that's all I've had since dinner."

"Then you must be famished."

"Well, no, not exactly famished," said Fatty Wynn. "Just beginning to feel a feeling of emptiness, you know. I could hold out another hour; but walking makes me peckish, and I get so hungry in this July weather, you know."

"I expect they've got sandwiches, when you come to think of it," Figgins remarked.

"And ginger-pop most likely," said Kerr.

Fatty Wynn brightened up.

"I say, Figgy, if you're thinking of tracking them down, I'm quite ready," he said. "Of course, I'm always ready for a House row."

Figgins grinned.

"Of course, you are, if there's a feed at the end of it," he said. "But come on. We'd better take a couple of chaps along with us to have the odds on our side. There's Pratt and Jimson. They'll come."

"I wonder whether there will be ham sandwiches?" murmured Fatty Wynn. "I like ham."

CHAPTER 2.

A Redskin Alliance.

"BAI Jove, deah boys, I'm beginnin' to feel wathah exhausted, you know!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy spoke languidly. The chums of the Fourth were in the shades of Rylcombe Wood, a welcome shade from the blaze of the sun. Each of them had plenty to carry, and D'Arcy's parcel, though the bulkiest, was not the heaviest. The swell of St. Jim's dropped it into the grass.

"I'm afraid I can't cawwy that much furthah, Blake."

"May as well have a bit of a rest," agreed Blake, who was rather tired himself. "It's a bit of a fag tramping in that blazing sun."

"Right-ho!" said Herries, allowing his bag to fall in the grass with a bump.

There was a crash of breaking glass, and Blake gave a wrathful howl.

"You ass! The ginger-beer's in that bag!"

"I forgot."

"You've busted the bottles now."

"So I have," said Herries, looking into the bag. "It's a pity. I quite forgot I put the ginger-beer in along with the tomahawks."

"Of all the duffers!" said Digby.

"Oh, accidents will happen!" said Herries. "It can't be helped. I say, Blake, are we going to make up at the old hut?"

"No," said Blake.

"It's a good place, and wathah lonely," said D'Arcy. "It's more than anothah mile ffrom heah, and if some of

you could cawwy this parcel as well as your own, I think I could covah the distance all wight."

"Rats!" said Blake. "Nice fixes you fellows would get into without a leader like me. Have you forgotten that the time we changed at the hut Tom Merry collared our togs, and we had to go back to St. Jim's rigged up as Indians? We're not going to the same place again."

"There is certainly somethin' in that, deah boy. Perwaps it would be as well to change our attiah heah, and save walkin' any furthah."

"Too near the road," said Digby.

"There does not seem to be anybody about, and we could hide our attiah in a hollow tree while we are dvised up as Wed Indians."

"Do you know of a hollow tree near here?"

"Oh, no! But I think it extwemely pwob that there is one."

"Ass! We're not going to spend the rest of the afternoon looking for hollow trees!" said Blake witheringly.

"We'll get on another half-mile into the beech plantation. We shall be safe there, I expect. Hallo! What was that?"

"What was what, deah boy?"

"I heard something moving in the bush."

"Pwobably it was only a wabbit."

"It wasn't a rabbit," said Blake, getting up and looking round him suspiciously. "If it was, it was a rabbit on two legs."

"Weally—"

"Look out!"

Blake shouted out the words suddenly; but the warning came too late. Three sturdy forms burst from the thickets, and in a second Blake was bowled over, and Lowther was sitting upon him. The other three juniors, who were stretched on the grass at rest, had no chance whatever. Manners threw himself upon Herries, and Tom Merry dropped astride of Digby, at the same time fastening his grasp in the collar of Arthur Augustus, and pinning him down.

"Bai Jove!"

"You rotters!" howled Blake. "What are you up to?"

"Got you!"

"Get up!"

"Rats!"

"Lemme gerrup!" gasped Herries. "You're squashing my back on a tough root, Manners, you beast!"

"I'm sorry for your back, old chap," said Manners.

"Let me gerrup!"

"Can't be did!"

"Lowther, I'll give you a licking for this!" roared Blake. "Get off my chest, you rotter! Get up!"

"Some other time," said Lowther blandly. "I'm quite comfy where I am, thank you!"

"Bai Jove, Tom Mewwy, I will thwash you feahfully if you don't let go my beastlay collah! You are wumplin' it all out of shape!"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"I insist upon your immediately weleasin' my collah!"

"Ring off, Gussy! I want to speak."

"I wefuse to wing off!"

"Cheese it! Now, then, Blake, I think you'll admit that we've got you!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"Well, suppose you have?" grunted Blake.

"If you like to give your parole we'll let you go; but we retain these bundles as spoils of war. To the victor the spoils, you know."

"I wefuse to give my pawole!"

"So do I!" growled Blake. "Dig, Gussy, why don't you shove that ratter off? You're two to one! Throw him off!"

"The heast has got hold of my beastlay collah!"

"Jerk your head, and the collar will come off!"

"Yaas, and a pwetty sight I should look without a collah."

"You utter ass!"

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as an ass!"

"It's no good," said Tom Merry, laughing. "You've either got to give us your parole, or we shall tie you up. Upon the whole I think we'll tie you up, anyway. Gussy's necktie and braces will come in handy."

"I wefuse to have my necktie and bwaces used for anythin' of the sort! Undah the eircs, I will give my pawole."

"Up you get, then!"

Tom Merry released Arthur Augustus, who sat up breathlessly, and commenced to straighten out his collar and rearrange his necktie.

D'Arcy, having given his parole, the rivals were left three to three in point of numbers, and with the advantage on the side of the chums of the Shell, they were masters of the situation.

Blake knew when it was time to give in.

"You can get off my chest, Lowther, you dummy!" he remarked ungraciously. "We give you best this time."

"Right-ho!" said Tom Merry promptly. "We take your word!"

And the rumbled Fourth-Formers were allowed to rise. Lowther kicked upon the big bundle Arthur Augustus had been carrying, and the gorgeous Indian serapes rolled out upon the grass in a blaze of colour.

"I thought so!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "It's the Red-skin game. Well, we're going to be the Redskins this time, that's all. But I say, you've got outfits enough for a dozen or more Indians."

"It's the whole outfit my uncle sent me," explained Blake. "There's enough for a dozen chaps. We were going to

were on the path when we crossed it in following you, and I heard some of the others calling."

Blake gave a whistle.

"Bai Jove, I think I've got a weally wippin' ideah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "You wemembah how we nearly fwihtened you out of your wits the day we first dwessed up as Wed Indians, deah boys?"

"I don't remember anything of the sort," said Tom Merry.

"We were a little startled," said Manners.

"A little surprised," said Lowther. "That expresses it better."

"Oh, wats!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "You were fwihtened out of your beastlay wits, you know. You wan



"Hallo!" said Frank Monk affably. "Fancy meeting you!" Fatty Wynn jumped back, but the hands of Lane and Carboy were already on him. The odds were too great, and Fatty submitted gracefully to his fate. "Well, you've got me," he remarked.

make our headquarters in the wood somewhere, and keep the things there, and let some other chaps into it later. We couldn't have the fag of carrying out these big bundles every time we wanted to use the things, you know."

"No, I suppose not." Tom Merry looked thoughtful. "We jumped on you just now with the idea of collaring the things, you know; but if you like we'll let you into it. We will share our things with you."

"What things?"

"These Redskin things."

"Why, they're mine!" exclaimed Blake indignantly.

"What are you talking about?"

"Quite a mistake kid, they're mine," said Tom Merry calmly. "Spoils of war, you know. They're ours for the afternoon. But if you like, we'll let you into our wheeze."

"Your wheeze! Mine, you mean!"

"Well, your wheeze," said Tom Merry. "We'll let you into it, if you like, and we'll all be Blackfeet this afternoon. We don't want to keep it to ourselves. Another point is, some of the Grammar School bounders are in Rylcombe Wood this afternoon. Frank Monk and Carboy

away like anythin', and we wan after you till we were laughin' too much to win any more."

"Exactly!" said Blake. "I never saw three kids so scared in all my natural. Did you, Dig?"

"Never," said Dig solemnly. "I thought Lowther would have a fit with fright, and that I should have another with laughing."

Lowther turned red.

"Yaas, wathah! But as I was sayin', I've got a wippin' ideah! Why shouldn't we make up as Wed Indians, and go for the Gwammah School cads? If we could fwihten them as much as we fwihtened these chaps—"

"You didn't frighten us," said Lowther warmly. "We were a little surprised, though that's really too srong a word. Curious would be better."

"Oh, rats!" said Blake. "You were scared enough, and you can't deny it. But Gussy's idea is a good one. The Grammar School cads haven't an inkling of this Red Indian wheeze, and they'd be as scared as you were."

"We weren't scared."

CHAPTER 3.

In the Camp of the Foe!

"Well, as scared as you weren't," said Blake sarcastically. "For fellows who weren't scared you put on a marvellous burst of speed, that's all I can say."

"Yaas, wathah! Lowthah almost drownded when I wan at him."

"Well, what could you expect with a set of features like that?" demanded Lowther. "Enough to make anybody drop, I should think."

"I wegard that wemark as distinctly wude," said D'Arcy. "I call upon Lowthah to withdraw his opprobrious wewefence to my featuhs, or it will be impos for me to be fiends with him this aftahnoon."

"No fear!" said Lowther.

"Then I'm afwaid that I shall have to intewwupt the harmony of the pwoceedings by giving Lowthah a feahful thwashin'!"

"Hush!" exclaimed Tom Merry suddenly.

"I wefuse to hush!"

"Ass! There's somebody coming!"

"The Grammarians!"

"I am sorry, but I cannot allow any mattah to interwupt me now. Lowthah has pwoffered an insult to my dig, and—"

"Here they are!" yelled a well-known voice from the thickets.

"Figgins!" exclaimed Blake.

Figgins & Co. rushed on the scene. Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, Jimson, and Pratt were ready for warfare, but they had not expected to find the Terrible Three allied with Study No. 6. Their rush became slower as they saw the number of foes they had to deal with, and they stopped without coming to close quarters.

"Hallo!" said Figgins, rather sheepishly.

"Hallo!" grinned Blake. "Why don't you come on?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Didn't expect to find the whole family here," grumbled Figgins. "Still, I dare say we could wipe up the ground with you if we tried, all the same."

"Twy, then, deah boy!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "It's pax now. The Grammarians are in the wood, and we've got to stick together. There's room for Figgins & Co. in the scheme."

"Bai Jove! That's a wathah good ideah. I should be vewy pleased to give my permish to Figgins & Co. to join in the scheme."

"Oh, we could manage without that, Gussy!" said Tom Merry. "To come to the point, Figgins, we've got an Indian outfit here, and we're going to make up as Red Indians and go for the Grammar School cads. Are you with us?"

"Yes, rather!" said Figgins heartily.

"Then come along," said Blake. "The sooner we get rigged out the better. It takes time to get the things on and get your face painted."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But I dare say—" began Fatty Wynn.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Figgins, as he lifted one of the packages and shouldered it.

"What about those sandwiches?"

Figgins laughed.

"It's pax now," he said. "We can't collar the sandwiches now we've made peace and alliance with the enemy, my son."

"That's all very well," said Fatty Wynn; "but I'm hungry."

"Can't be helped."

"We've got nothing to eat with us."

"We shall be back at school for tea in three hours or so."

"If you want to carry me home a cold corpse, Figgins, you had better say so at once!" said Fatty Wynn warmly.

"I should be sorry to have to carry you anywhere, anyhow," said Figgins, with a glance at Wynn's ample proportions. "I fancy it would need an elephant or a goods truck to do that, Fatty."

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Oh, come along! You may get a bite at the sandwiches or a sniff at the mustard later—perhaps."

"Call yourself a leader, and come out without anything to eat on an expedition!" said Fatty Wynn witheringly.

"You'd make a ripping general!"

"My dear cormorant—"

"I'm not going to starve to death to please anybody," said Fatty Wynn. "If there's no grub I shall have to go and look for some, that's all. I'll join you later."

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going to take a short cut through the wood to the village. It won't take me long to get a snack at Mother Murphy's. I'll join you later."

And Fatty Wynn disappeared before Figgins could remonstrate.

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"THIS is a jolly spot, Frank!"

It was a junior in a Grammar School cap who spoke, as he paused in a green glade in Rylcombe Wood. It was indeed a beautiful spot. A slope of rich green grass was shaded by the wide-spread boughs of ancient elm and beech-trees, and the sunlight filtered through from above and cast strange lights and shadows on the velvety sward. A party of Grammar School juniors had emerged from the wood into the shaded glade, and as Carboy spoke they stopped and looked round.

"Jolly!" assented Frank Monk. "And first-rate for our purpose."

"Then, halt's the word," said Lane.

And the Grammar School party halted.

There were seven lads in the party, all belonging to the Lower Forms at the Rylcombe Grammar School—that establishment between which and St. Jim's existed a never-ending rivalry and strife.

Three of the juniors bore tea-baskets, and others had packages, or bulging pockets, which sufficiently indicated the purpose of the expedition.

Frank Monk and his friends had visited the wood that sunny July afternoon for a picnic, and they had come well provided.

"This is a ripping place!" said Lane, looking round. "There's a spring in the trees yonder where we can get fresh water."

"We'd better light the camp-fire, then."

"Jolly hot weather for a fire," remarked one of the Grammarians.

"If you can think of any way of cooking eggs without a fire, Bunce, I shall be pleased to hear your suggestion," said Frank Monk sarcastically.

"Oh rats!" said Bunce.

"There will have to be a fire," said Carboy. "Who's going to be cook?"

"I can't cook for toffee," said Lane.

"I can't for nuts," Frank Monk remarked.

"Well, I'm not much of a hand at it, either."

"I could never cook," said Bunce casually. "I dare say Ford will be able to handle the job all right."

Ford shook his head decidedly.

"Not in this weather," he said.

"Oh, come! I don't see why that should make any difference," said Frank. "You're a jolly good cook, Ford."

"Well, I may be—but not at a camp-fire."

"We've brought all the things that are necessary."

"It's too jolly hot."

"Look here, we're not going to have a camping-out spoiled by your selfishness, Ford!" said Frank Monk severely. "You're the cook—"

"It was a mistake to bring anything to be cooked."

"Eh?"

"It was a mistake to bring anything to be cooked. On a day like this we ought to have had cold tommy."

"Something in that," agreed Bunce. "But poached eggs and fried bacon are good; there's no getting out of that."

"Something in that, is there?" said Frank Monk. "If either of you chaps know better than I do how to manage a camping-out you've only got to say so, and—"

"And you'll give us the lead?"

"No; I shall give you a thick ear."

"Well, I'm not going to cook," said Ford. "Williams is a good cook. He can make toffee, so I don't see why he can't cook eggs and bacon."

"I do, though," said Williams promptly.

There was a step in the underwood. The Grammarians, who were growing somewhat heated in the argument, paused suddenly.

Frank Monk knitted his brows.

"Somebody's coming!" he grunted.

"Well, they won't eat us," said Bunce.

"They might eat our grub. Suppose it's a gang from St. Jim's—"

"Phew! Better look out!"

"There's only one," said Carboy, cautiously peering through the thickets in the direction of the sound. "And, by Jove, it's a chap from St. Jim's!"

"Who is it—Tom Merry?"

"No; it's that fat chap—Wynn."

"My hat!" chuckled Frank Monk. "So it is! And he's alone. Keep in cover. He's coming this way; we'll nab him as he steps out of the trees."

"What's the good of a prisoner now?" demanded Bunce. "May bring a lot of Saints round and spoil the picnic."

"We'll make him tell us whether there are any others of the rotters in the wood. Hush! He's here now."

"Yes, but—"

"Shut up!"

The Grammarians waited silently. Fatty Wynn was coming on at a good pace. He was taking the short cut through the wood to the village, eager to get to the tuckshop and satisfy the cravings of the inner man. He hadn't the slightest suspicion of an ambush, and he walked straight into it.

"Hallo!" said Frank Monk affably, as Fatty came out of the trees and almost ran into him. "Fancy meeting you!"

Fatty Wynn jumped back, but the grasps of Lane and Carboy were already upon him. The odds were too great, and it was too hot for fighting, anyway. Fatty Wynn submitted gracefully to his fate.

"Well, you've got me," he remarked. "What is that—a picnic?"

"Something of the sort."

"I'll join you if you like. I don't mind feeding with you lot."

"Don't you?" said Frank. "Well, we're rather more particular—we do mind. We've only got enough grub for seven and if you had a good tuck in there wouldn't be any left for any of us. Besides, you're a prisoner of war."

"Well, you've got to feed a prisoner of war, by the law of nations," said Fatty Wynn. "What have you got in that basket?"

"Feeding prisoners of war is distinctly off," said Frank Monk loftily. "We are going to revert to the customs of the ancients."

"The—the what?"

"The customs of the ancients, who enslaved their prisoners of war. We are going to enslave you," said Frank Monk seriously.

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know!"

"Honest Injun! We are looking for a cook—and I know you are a good cook. We want somebody to slog at cooking by a camp-fire, and all these chaps think it's too hot—"

"So it is, much too jolly hot!"

"Exactly; but a prisoner of war has no choice in the matter. You are going to cook for us."

"That I'm jolly well not!"

"You'll see. Isn't it a good wheeze, chaps?"

"Ripping!" pronounced the Grammarians, without a dissentient voice.

"You hear, Wynn? You are a slave now, by the rights of war, and you have to do as you're told!"

"Rats!"

"Very well! We will first proceed to bring the prisoner of war to reason by sitting him down heavily on a bed of stinging-nettles."

"Hear, hear!"

"Look here, don't be an ass!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn nervously. "You'd better let me go. I want to get to the tuckshop."

"The tuckshop can wait. There's our cooking to be done."

"I'll see you boiled first!"

"Yank him over to those stinging-nettles!"

"I say, hold on! Don't be a cad, you know!"

"Will you do the cooking?"

"Well—yes—perhaps—I suppose I might as well."

"I suppose you might as well, too. Are there any of your friends near here?" asked Frank Monk.

"Find out!"

"Well, if they show themselves, we can lick them," said Carboy, "so it doesn't matter. Get the camp-fire lighted, kid, and start the cooking."

"Look here, I don't like—"

"Never mind what you like," said Frank Monk kindly. "It's what we like that counts now, you know. There's plenty of wood about. Get the fire started!"

Fatty Wynn glowered at the Grammarians. But there were seven of them, and they were all round him; resistance and escape seemed equally impossible. And even if he could have broken away, a chase through the wood in the blazing July sun was not an attractive prospect to the fat junior of the New House at St. Jim's.

"Well, gather the fuel, some of you," he said.

Frank Monk shook his head.

"Not much!"

"How can I make a fire without fuel, fathead?"

"Gather it yourself. A prisoner of war who has been reduced to slavery can't expect to have his lords and masters waiting on him."

"Of all the rot—"

"Yank him over to the—"

"It's all right," said Fatty Wynn hastily. "I'll do it."

"Buck up, then! Your lords and masters are getting hungry."

The grinning Grammarians sprawled on the grass in a

wide circle, in the centre of which the glowering Fatty proceeded to build a camp-fire.

The fire was soon alight, the smoke and flames leaping up towards the over-arching branches of the great tree, and Fatty Wynn, who was worn out already, began to glow and perspire with the heat of it.

Frank Monk, though he would not admit it, realised that the idea of a camp-fire was a little out of place on a July afternoon; but the capture of Fatty Wynn solved all difficulties.

It was not only a joke up against St. Jim's, but a great convenience to the Grammarians to have a captive cook at their orders, and they enjoyed the situation to the full.

"My hat!" said Carboy, as he sprawled in the grass, his head pillowed upon a big root. "This is what I call giddy luxury. It reminds me somehow of ancient Rome."

"Slavery," said Lane, "is a jolly good institution—if you don't happen to be the slave. You'll find the frying-pan in the big package, Wynn, and the bacon and eggs in the smaller one."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"We're going to eat bacon and eggs, and if they're not done to a turn we'll rub your head in the frying-pan, and put the eggs down the back of your neck."

"If you cook 'em well," said Frank Monk magnanimously, "we may let you have a feed on anything that is left when we're finished."

"Fat lot that will be, I expect."

"Well, a giddy slave can't expect anything better than that. Get on with your work, you catiff!"

There was no help for it. And the dire threats hurled at him made Fatty Wynn realise that it would be wiser to cook well than to spoil the provender of the Grammarians, as he was at first tempted to do. But it is doubtful if Fatty could have found it in his heart to spoil good "grub" for any consideration whatever.

A fragrant odour of frying bacon soon pervaded the green glade, and tickled the nostrils of the hungry Grammarians.

"After all," Ford remarked thoughtfully, "it was rather a good idea to have bacon and eggs."

"I agree with you," said Bunce. "Don't they smell ripping?"

"Rather!"

"I say, when will they be done, Falstaff?"

"Buck up!"

Fatty Wynn grunted, and went on with the cooking. He was hungry himself, and the smell of the cooking made him hungrier. He would have given a week's pocket-money to sit down on the grass and bolt the first rashers. But the watchful eyes of the Grammar School juniors were upon him, and it was impossible.

He went on cooking. The wood fire burned well, and the heat, added to that of the sun, was terrific. The Grammarians, lying in the cool grass, congratulated themselves upon their capture. Fatty Wynn, cooking away, wondered where his chums were. Needless to say, he regretted that the temptation of the tuckshop had induced him to quit his leader. He would have jumped for joy to see the face of Figgins at the present moment. But his chums were far away.

"Now then, cook, isn't that grub done?"

"Nearly," said Fatty Wynn, with a heavy heart.

"Buck up, then!"

The fire glowed with heat, and so did Fatty Wynn. The bacon spluttered away in the frying-pan, and Fatty Wynn's perspiring face watched slice after slice cooked to a turn. But suddenly he jerked his head back and listened, and the bacon, uncared for, emitted a strong smell of burning.

"What are you up to?" shouted Frank Monk.

But Fatty Wynn did not answer. A low whistle in the deep woods had caught his ears—a whistle that was familiar to him.

"Look after that bacon, you duffer!" yelled Monk.

There was a peculiar grin upon Fatty Wynn's face as he turned the bacon in the frying-pan.

CHAPTER 4.

The Blackfeet on the Warpath.

"HOW do I look, Blake?"

It was Figgins who asked the question, after giving the final touch to his make-up as a warrior of the tribe of the Blackfeet.

Blake looked at him.

"Ripping!" he said. "If anybody saw you now, Figgy, he would have a fit. It's not so much the warpaint as the features underneath it."

"Oh, cheese it! You would be worth twopence a day

to frighten the crows yourself," said Figgins. "Do I look all right, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah, Figgins, deah boy. The warpaint doesn't make much difference to you. You are never what I should call handsome at the best of times."

"If you're looking for a thick ear, Gussy—"

"Wats! You asked for my opinion. Bai Jove! Tom Mewwy, this is wotten sticky stuff, this paint. I feel awfully dirtay, you know."

"You look it," remarked Kerr.

"I wegard that as an opprobrious remark. I—"

"I'm about done," said Tom Merry, looking round. "Red and yellow ochre suits you, Gussy. They're the fashionable colours among the Blackfeet, too; so you have the satisfaction of being quite in the mode."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Better put the togs in a safe place," said Monty Lowther, who looked very curious with alternate bars of red and yellow ochre across his face. "We don't want anybody to serve us as we served Blake the last time we played Red Indians."

"No; and we want to feel safe about them," said Blake, "when we go out to scare the Grammarians as we scared you fellows the other day."

"You didn't scare us—"

"Rats!"

"We were a little startled—or, rather, surprised—"

"More rats!"

"If you're looking for trouble, Blake—"

"Bosh!"

"You Fourth Form fathead—"

"You long-legged Shellfish—"

"Peace, my children!" said Tom Merry, waving his tomahawk between the disputants. "Let there be pax—I mean peace—in the wigwams of the Blackfeet."

"We haven't any wigwams, Tom Mewwy."

"I am speaking metaphorically, ass—I mean my Red brother," amended Tom Merry. "Let there be peace, anyhow. The great chief has spoken."

"What great chief?" asked Blake unpleasantly. "I had an idea that I was chief of this giddy tribe."

"What a curious idea!" said Tom Merry. "How did you get that into your head?"

"I should rather say so," Figgins remarked. "The cheek of these School House kids is a marvel to me. Of course, I am chief."

"Of course you're an ass!"

"The great chief has spoken—"

"The great ass has brayed—"

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Rats! You know how you School House chaps muck things up. You admit that?"

"No fear! It's you—"

"Now, talk sense—"

"Weally, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, "I think it must be admitted that the leadership belongs to Study No. 6, as the Wedskin wheeze originated there."

"Well, there's something in that," said Tom Merry. "But Blake is bound to lead us into some bother—"

"I am suah Blake will wesign the lead into my hands if—"

"Who told you so?" demanded Blake.

"I natuwall expect you to wesign it to me, as the most appropwiate membah of the party to take command."

"Then you expect too much, Gussy. Are you rotters—I mean you warriors—ready? It's time to take the war-path against the braves of the Grammar School. Wah! I have spoken."

"Yaas, but—"

"Shut up—I mean let my Red brother be silent. Let the warriors of the Blackfeet follow their chief to raid the wigwams of the Grammar braves."

"I say, we're not going to the Grammar School in this rig, are we?" exclaimed Herries.

"No, ass! I was using the word wigwams figuratively. Why shouldn't I speak figuratively if I like? Red Indians always do. Bah! Wah! The braves of the Grammar School wigwams shall perish beneath the tomahawks of the Blackfeet!"

"What-ho!" said Figgins.

"Ass! You don't say what-ho when you're a Blackfeet—I mean a Blackfoot—you say wah! or ugh!"

"I can't make a beastly row like that, Blake. It suits your voice, you know. But I can't grunt like a porker."

"Wah! The great chief will give the Red brave a thick ear if he doesn't ring off!" said Blake. "Let us go upon the giddy warpath!"

"It would be safah to hide the clothes in a hollow tree—"

"Is there one in this plantation?"

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"I have not discovered one, but—"

"Shut up, then! The clothes are safe enough here. Let's go and look for the Grammar School cads."

"Wight-ho!"

And the eleven Blackfeet braves issued from the beech plantation, and Blake led the way towards the footpath which ran through the wood to Rylcombe.

It was about ten minutes later that Figgins gave a sudden sniff.

"I say, can't you smell something burning?" he exclaimed.

"I believe I can," said Tom Merry, sniffing, too. "Some of the woodmen burning rubbish somewhere, I suppose."

"H'm! Perhaps—perhaps—"

"Perhaps what?"

"Perhaps it is the camp-fire of the braves of the Grammar School," said Figgins.

"By Jove! It might be."

Blake sniffed.

"Bosh! They wouldn't be asses enough to have a camp-fire lighted on a day like this if they are camping out. They'd be roasted!"

"Well, there's a fire somewhere," said Tom Merry. "We may as well have a look at it. It's not likely, when you come to think of it, that the woodmen would be burning anything in a thick part of the wood like this. Let's have a look, anyway."

"No harm in that," assented the chief of the Blackfeet.

"Seems to me I can smell something besides burning," said Jimson, as they advanced cautiously through the wood. "It smells to me like bacon cooking."

"And to me, too!" exclaimed Manners.

And Blake had to admit it.

"Looks as if it might be the Grammar School cads," he remarked. "If it is, we'll surprise their camp. My hat—I mean my giddy feathers—they'll be astonished when a tribe of giddy Blackfeet bursts on them all of a sudden!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Quiet, now—not a sound!"

"Right-ho! Lead on!"

Blake led his warriors forward. They crept through the trees, and the smell of cooking bacon became more pronounced as they advanced. There was no longer any doubt that they were approaching the camp of a picnicking party, and the picnickers were pretty certain to turn out to be the Grammarians. Every eye was gleaming with the light of battle now.

"There's the fire!" exclaimed Lowther.

A ruddy gleam, broken by the foliage, penetrated through the trees. A glimpse could be had of a plump form bending over it, frying-pan in hand.

"We're close on them now," muttered Blake. "Quiet! Not a word!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I said—not a word, Gussy!"

"And I said—yaas, wathah, Blake."

Blake grunted. It was no time to argue with the swell of the School House then. The juniors crept on and looked through the openings in the thickets at the scene.

"Thought there was something familiar about that chap cooking," muttered Tom Merry. "See who it is, Figgys?"

Figgins gave a start.

"Fatty Wynn!"

"The others are all Grammarians," muttered Blake. "What does Fatty Wynn mean by cooking grub for the enemy?"

Tom Merry laughed softly.

"Can't you see? He's a prisoner. They've made him do their cooking as a prisoner of war. Poor old Fatty!"

"Serve him right for leaving us!" said Blake, with severity. "It was his unearthy appetite that got him into this fix. He'll know better next time."

"We're going to rescue him," said Figgins.

"I'm chief of this tribe, Figgins."

"We're going to rescue Fatty Wynn."

"Yes, if I give the orders."

"Rats!"

"Oh, cheese it!" muttered Tom Merry. "Is this a time to start ragging—in the face of the enemy? We've got to tackle the Grammar School rotters now."

"Quite right; but Figgins must learn that he is only a common or garden warrior; and not a chief of this tribe," said Blake. "Of course, we are going to rescue Fatty Wynn. How can we let him know we are here?"

"That's all right," said Figgins. "I'll whistle—"

"The Grammar School cads will hear it."

"It's a whistle we have among ourselves," explained Figgins—"an imitation of a skylark. Fatty will know it."

"And I expect the Grammarians will jolly well notice it, too."

"They're too busy thinking about their grub."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, whistle, then," said Blake. "Go ahead!"

Figgins gave the signal whistle. Fatty Wynn was seen to give a start, and the juniors knew that he had heard and recognised it.

"That's all right," murmured Figgins. "Fatty will be on his guard now, and ready to chip in on our side. There are enough of us to eat the Grammar School rotters, anyway."

"Yes; but we mustn't let any of them get away," said Blake. "We've got to surround them, and take the lot prisoners. We're going to scoff their food, and we don't want them coming back with a crowd of Grammar School cads to interrupt us."

"Vewy twue!"

A chorus of yells from every quarter followed, and then there was a rush of the Redskins to the attack.

CHAPTER 5.

The Picnic!

FRANK MONK jumped, and all the Grammarians jumped, too, and a crew of ferocious-looking Red Indians in full warpaint burst from the trees with fiendish yells, and brandished spears.

"Wh-wh-wuat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Help!"

"Murder!"

The Grammarians gasped and yelled in sheer amaze-



"What was that?" gasped Carboy. A sudden terrific yell awoke the echoes of the glade. The Grammarians started and stared around them. A chorus of yells followed and then there was a rush of Redskins to the attack. "Yield, Grammarian dogs!" exclaimed Blake. "It's those St. Jim's rotters!" howled Frank Monk.

"Move round in the bushes so as to come on them on all sides at once," said the great chief of the Blackfeet.

"When I yell, all of you yell, and charge!"

"Good!"

"Perwaps I had bettah give the signal."

"Perhaps you had better keep your head shut, Gussy. Get on!"

"I wefuse to keep my head shut! I—"

"Get on, I tell you!"

The juniors separated, creeping through the grass and underwood almost with the stealth of real Redskins.

Blake allowed five minutes to elapse, and then gave the signal. A sudden terrific yell awoke the echoes of the glade.

The Grammarians started, and stared round them.

"What was that?" gasped Carboy.

ment and terror, and some of them turned to run. But they were surrounded, and those who would have fled were caught by the savage warriors, and hurled to the grass. Others receded from the threatening spears and tomahawks, and attempted neither to resist nor to fly.

"Good heavens! What—"

"Yield, Grammarian dogs!" exclaimed Blake, brandishing his tomahawk.

Frank Monk gave a howl.

"It's those St. Jim's rotters!"

"Yield!"

"You howling fathead!"

"Dog of a paleface!" yelled Blake, who was so excited and carried away by enthusiasm that he almost believed himself a real Red Indian by this time. "Dog of a pale-

face, yield, or your scalp shall hang at the belt of the Blackfoot chief!"

"Ha, ha, ha! He's off his rocker!"

"Collar the beast!" exclaimed Figgins, as Monk made a spring towards the bushes. "Don't let him get away!"

"Collar him!"

"Why don't you collar the cad, Blake, instead of gassing?" exclaimed Kerr.

"Don't argue with your chief, Kerr!"

"Rats!"

"If you want a tomahawk across your napper, you've only got to say so!"

"Bosh!"

Carboy was struggling in the grass, with Fatty Wynn on his chest. Fatty, of course, had not been taken by surprise. He had seized the nearest Grammarian as soon as the Redskins appeared, and dragged him down, determined to have one prisoner, at least. And Carboy was too amazed to resist.

"Don't let one get away!" shouted Tom Merry.

"What-ho!" said Lowther, collaring Lane, and jerking him into the grass. "I think we've got the lot now."

"Looks like it—seven."

"That's the lot," said Fatty Wynn. "Here, hold this chap, will you, the bacon's scorching!"

He released Carboy, and jumped up. Carboy made a desperate effort to escape, but Manners was upon him in a twinkling, and he went down again.

"Got the lot," said Blake, with a grin of satisfaction that looked very curious through the thick daubs of red and yellow ochre on his face.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The Blackfoot braves have triumphed over the paleface dogs."

"Did you ever hear such piffle?" said Frank Monk.

"Silence, prisoner!"

"Rats!"

"We have captured the paleface dogs who are making free in the forest of our fathers," said the Blackfoot chief severely. "They must die!"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Blake!"

"There is a fire alight, fortunately, and it will be quite simple to burn them at the stake."

"Look here—"

"I beg to waive an objection to burnin' them at the stake," said Arthur Augustus. "It would make a most unpleasant smell, deah boy."

"H'm! There's something in that!"

"Besides, there's the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to be considered," said Lowther, with a shake of the head.

"Perhaps upon the whole we had better bind them to trees, and riddle them with arrows," said Blake.

"We'll bind them to trees, anyway," said Tom Merry, "and they can look on while we scoff the food."

"Good wheeze!"

"And if that isn't torture enough, Lowther can start making some of his jokes," said Digby.

"Look here, Digby—"

"I bar that," said Figgins immediately. "If Lowther is going to be funny, I am going to withdraw from the tribe."

"I'd rather be burned at the stake, if you don't mind," said Frank Monk politely.

"Oh, rats!" said Monty Lowther.

"Bind the palefaces to the trees!"

"Hark at the silly asses!"

"Bind fast the white-skinned dogs!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Silly chump!"

The Grammarians laughed, and kept on laughing, but Frank Monk felt that the laugh was really on the side of St. Jim's. The Grammarians might ridicule the Red Indian garb, and the speeches of the amateur Blackfeet, but St. Jim's had won the fight, and the Grammar-School

juniors were prisoners. There was no getting away from that.

The Red Indians were provided with cords enough to bind their prisoners, and the Grammar School juniors were soon secured to the trees. There they had the pleasure—or the reverse—of seeing the Redskins make preparations for a feed.

Fatty Wynn was grinning joyously. He had been forced to cook that meal for the Grammarians, and the idea of eating it himself, after all, with his chums, was joyful to the Falstaff of the New House.

The prisoners once secured, the St. Jim's juniors seated themselves in various attitudes of more comfort than elegance on the sward. Then Fatty Wynn handed round the feed.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "I wegard this as weally wippin', deah boys! It is what you might cowfectly chawctawise as poetic justice, too."

"Yes, rather," said Tom Merry. "They captured our cook, and now we've captured their cookery. It's tit for tat!"

"Fair play," said Figgins.

"Rotters!" said Frank Monk. "We'll make you sit up for this some time."

"Silence, prisoner! At present you are doing the sitting up, and you may as well do it gracefully. You may as well confess that this Red Indian wheeze is a cut above anything you have ever thought of."

"Bosh!"

"You were scared out of your skins when we yelled."

"Well, considering your style of voice, you know—"

"And when you saw us you were frightened to death."

"Nothing of the sort. We—"

"Pway don't try to cwawl out of it, Fwank Monk," said D'Arcy. "I weally think our appeahwance is enough to fwighten anybody."

"Yours always is, Gussy," said Lowther.

"I wegard that wemark as oppwobwious, Lowthah."

"Go hou!"

"I wufuse to allow it to pass. On the occasion when we fwightened you, Lowthah, you were more scared than Monk was."

"I wasn't scared—I was just a little startled."

"A little surprised," said Manners.

"Wot! You were fwightened out of your wits, and you wan like anythin'! Lowthah has just made a wude wemark—"

"I stated a fact," said Lowther.

"I wufuse to admit anythin' of the sort. You will wetwact that wemark, Lowthah, or I shall have no alternative but to administrah a fearful thwashin'!"

"Hold on!" said Jack Blake, jerking Arthur Augustus back into the grass as he rose. "There's to be no fighting here, Gussy!"

"Pway welsease me, Blake!"

"Nothing of the sort! I don't allow my warriors to punch one another! Sit down, or I'll make an example of you!"

"I wufuse to sit down!"

"You are under my orders, ass! I am your chief, fat-head! If you don't sit down I shall climb over you, duffer! Do as I tell you, chump!"

"Undah the cires—"

"Sit down!"

"Undah the cires—"

"Sit down!"

"Undah the cires—"

Blake jerked D'Arcy's serape and dragged him down into the grass. The swell of the School House gave him an indignant glare.

"I was about to wemark, Blake, that undah the cires, as I have agweed to follow your lead, I would sit down."

"Well, you've sat down now, so it's all right!"

"I considah—"

"Pass the bacon!"

"I considah—"

"Cheese 'it, and pass the bacon! I say, chaps, this is a ripping feed! Fatty Wynn has done the cooking in good style. I'll say that for him—he can cook, though he's not much good for anything else."

"Hallo!" said Fatty Wynn. "What's that, you School House rotter?"

"Don't call your great chief names, Fatty Wynn, or—"

"Great ass, you mean!"

"I'm afraid that it will be my painful duty to correct that New House waster!"

"I was thinking the same about you," remarked Figgins casually. "I think it's about time you had a dot on the nose."

"Peace, my children!" said Tom Merry. "Are you going to slog one another in the presence of the giddy palefaces?"

"My hat! I forgot the palefaces!" said Blake. "I'll

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give you a thick ear presently, Figgins! I say, I've enjoyed this feed!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I hope those Grammar School rotters feel as pleased as I do. Do you feel as pleased as I do, Franky?"

"Go and eat coke!" said Monk.

"I've had enough to eat, thank you, of something better," said Blake blandly. "Upon the whole, braves of the Blackfeet, we will spare the lives of the paleface dogs as they have provided us with a ripping feed."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Paleface dogs, your lives will be spared!"

"Oh, don't talk rot, Blake!"

"But you are warned off from coming into the forests of our ancestors," said the Blackfoot chief solemnly. "If you find you here again you will get scalped."

"Rot!"

"Return to the Grammarian wigwams, and thank the mercy of the Blackfeet. Next time we collar you your scalps shall whiten the lodges of the Blackfoot braves!"

"Blacken!" said Figgins.

"Eh?"

"I said blacken!"

"What the dickens do you mean?"

"Scalps blacken in the lodges, ass! It's their bones that whiten!"

"Pooh! That's a detail! Let us now return to our wigwams, warriors of the Blackfoot tribe, and—"

"You'd better let us loose first," grunted Frank Monk.

"Cast loose the paleface dogs!" said Blake, with a wave of the hand. "Let them return to their lodges!"

"You shrieking ass!"

The Grammarians were loosened. There were too few of them to attempt to renew the conflict, and they had to go, with many a promise of what they would do on a later occasion.

They disappeared into the wood, and a ringing yell from the Blackfoot braves followed them.

CHAPTER 6.

Tom Merry's Idea!

"**W**EALLY, I don't feel much inclined for tea, you know!"

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who made the remark in Study No. 6 in the School House.

The chums of the Fourth were in their quarters again, in high spirits over their victory of the afternoon.

"I don't, either," Blake confessed. "It was a ripping feed in the wood, and I don't think we want any tea. I say, that Redskin idea seems to be panning out very well."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The Grammar School cads will have to sing a bit smaller. They have never originated anything of the kind," Digby remarked. "I shouldn't wonder if they take up the idea now, though, or something of the sort, to get their own back."

"I shouldn't wonder! Hallo, here's Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry entered the study. He was looking very cheerful, and there were still traces of ochre on his face in spite of careful washing.

"Hallo!" he said. "I don't feel inclined for any tea!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Same here!"

"So I thought I'd come along and speak to you about an idea that has come into my mind."

Blake looked dubious.

"One of your own ideas?" he asked.

"Yes."

"H'm! Well, we'll hear it. I dare say we shall recognise it as an old acquaintance."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, here's the idea: I think it will be admitted on all hands that the Redskin wheeze has been a great success?"

"Yes, there's not much doubt on that point."

"Then why shouldn't we carry it further? Suppose we could get the Head's permission to camp out in the woods, and really carry the scheme out?"

Blake sniffed.

"Is that your idea?"

"Yes."

"Then we know all about it, my son. When my uncle sent me those things from America that was his idea—that we should get the Head's permission to form a camp in the open air and learn to rough it and fend for ourselves."

"Well, I don't care whose idea it is," said Tom Merry, "it's a jolly good one, anyway, and I think it ought to be carried out."

Blake nodded in a thoughtful way.

"It is a jolly good idea," he said, "and it would be ripping fun camping out in the woods. We should learn

a lot, too, but the difficulty would be to get the Head's permission."

"I think that might be managed. You see, it isn't as if we were a lot of reckless kids that couldn't be trusted," said Tom Merry. "The Head knows just what kind of fellows we are."

Jack Blake grinned.

"Yes, I'm afraid he does, and that may make difficulties," he remarked. "Still, we can but try. He gave us permission to use these things and make up as Redskins in the wood on half-holidays. It's only going a step further to allow us to camp on the American idea. I don't see why we shouldn't."

"It's a valuable education in itself."

"I've no doubt about that. If we can only get Dr. Holmes to see it in that light. Are you thinking of an interview with him?"

"Yes; I thought a deputation representing all the best that is in the Fourth Form and the Shell—"

"Ahem! That sounds like one of your political speeches for the St. Jim's Junior Parliament," said Blake, with a sniff. "No good working that sort of stuff on an old bird like the Head, you know."

"I shall have to choose my words myself when I address him."

"But you won't have to address him."

"Ass! How can I lead a deputation to the Head without addressing him?" demanded Tom Merry.

"But you're not going to lead the deputation. A fellow from this study is quite capable of doing that, and doing it better."

"Yaas, wathah! I quite agree with Blake, Tom Mewwy. It would undoubtedly be more sensible to select me as chairman of the deputation."

"Oh, rats to you, Gussy!" said Blake. "Of course, I shall have to take the lead of the thing. We want it to be a success."

"Weally, Blake, I regard you as possessing a feahful cheek!"

"So do I rather," said Digby. "I think you ought to be satisfied with being Blackfoot chief without wanting to be chairman, too."

"Well, as the person most fitted—"

"Well, if you're going to speak of the person most fitted," remarked Herries, "I must say that I think a chap with common-sense like myself would be more useful than a lot of gassing—"

"Well, there are plenty of claimants, anyway," said Tom Merry.

"A Blackfoot chief is entitled to speak for the rest of the tribe," said Blake. "That stands to reason."

"Yaas, but—"

"Oh, anything for a quiet life!" said the hero of the Shell. "Blake wants to hear the sound of his own voice. There's no accounting for taste. Let him be chairman."

"But, weally—"

"How many of us are going?" asked Blake. "Figgins & Co. are in the wheeze, you know, so we ought to have representatives from the New House."

"Figgins & Co. will come."

"Lemme see! The Head will be having tea about this time," said Blake. "He dines at seven, and always goes into his study to work before dinner. That's when we shall catch him on the hop."

"That is wathah a diswespectful way to allude to the Head—"

"We shall catch him then," agreed Tom Merry. "Let's see, the deputation will consist of Lowther, and Manners, and myself, and Figgins & Co., and you three—"

"Us four, deah boy!"

"Well, I was thinking it would be better for Gussy to go and lose himself somewhere, as he is bound to put his foot in it."

D'Arcy screwed his monocle into his eye and regarded Tom Merry with a glance that ought to have withered him on the spot.

"I should uttably wefuse to go and lose myself," he replied frigidly. "I am willin' to leave the post of chairman to my friend Blake, but it will be necessary for me to be on the spot to see things through."

"Very well, but I think you ought to promise to keep your head shut."

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort!"

"It's all right," said Digby. "If he opens his mouth in the Head's study we'll slay him afterwards. Go over and tell Figgins & Co., and they can get ready."

"Right you are!"

"I say, deah boys, wouldn't it be wathah a good ideah

to interview the Head in full warpaint, just to show him—

"Ass!"
"It would show him how wippingly we can do the thing, you know, and—"

"And startle him out of his wits, perhaps, to say nothing of getting us impots for going around as Red Indians in the House!"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

"I'll go over and speak to Figgins," said Tom Merry.

"We ought to strike the iron while it's hot, you know."

"Good! We'll wait for you here!"

And Tom Merry crossed over to the New House. He found Figgins & Co. sitting in the deep window-seat in the hall of the New House. They looked at him inquiringly; they had been relating to a group of interested New House boys the adventure in the wood and the defeat of the Grammarians.

"Hallo!" said Figgins. "I hope you haven't come to tea. We're not going to have any—we feel a little too full-up after that feed in the wood."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Same here. It will last me till supper-time. I haven't come over for tea. We're thinking of a deputation to the Head to ask him for permission to camp out as Redskins in the wood."

"My hat, that's ripping!"

"Will you—"

"Will I take the lead of it? Certainly!" said Figgins, slipping off the window-seat. "Always willing to oblige you kids."

"But we don't want you to take the head of it," said Tom Merry. "Blake is chairman of the deputation. We want you chaps to represent the New House, that's all—you won't have a speaking part."

Figgins grinned.

"Oh, yes, we'll come along. What are you looking thoughtful about, Fatty? Don't you think it's a good idea?"

"Oh, yes," said Fatty Wynn absently. "It's a good idea. I was thinking—"

"What about, then?"

"About that idea of not having tea. We had a jolly good feed in the wood. I know, but on second thoughts I don't think it's a very good idea to miss a meal."

"Oh, you young cannibal. I might have guessed that you were thinking about grub! Come along!"

"Where—to the tuckshop?"

"No; to the School House!"

Fatty Wynn shook his head.

"Excuse me, Figgins, but I think it's a bad system to miss one's meals. It's a bad habit to begin—you never know what it will lead to. I think—"

"Oh, come on!"

"Pratt and Davis had salmon for their tea, and Davis asked me if I'd like to come. Upon second thoughts, I think I ought to go."

"Davis will be jolly sorry he asked you if you do," grinned Figgins. "But go if you like; Kerr and I will do for the deputation."

And Figgins and Kerr accompanied Tom Merry to the School House, and they found the rest of the deputation awaiting them in Study No. 6.

CHAPTER 7.

The Deputation.

TAP!

The Head of St. Jim's patiently raised his head and called out:
"Come in!"

The tap at the door of his study interrupted his work, but as he expected that it was some master coming to consult him, he laid down his pen. A look of surprise came over his face as the door opened and a group of juniors presented themselves to his view.

Blake marshalled in his followers, and they all got into the study, with no worse disaster than Herries treading on D'Arcy's foot.

The swell of the School House gave a gasp.

"Oh, Hewwies, you ass!"

"Shut up!"

"You have cwushed my toe and spoiled the shape of my beastly shoe, you know! I wegard you as a clumsay ass, Hewwies!"

"Silence!" whispered Tom Merry.

"That's all vewy well—"

"Shut up!"

"Dear me!" said Dr. Holmes, adjusting his pince-nez and looking at the juniors. "What—er—what is the meaning of this—this invasion?"

"If you please, sir," said Blake diffidently, "we're a deputation."

"A what?"

"A deputation. We represent the Fourth Form and the Shell, and both Houses of St. Jim's and—"

"All that is best in the Lower School, sir," said Tom Merry. "You here behold a liberal and enlightened body of—"

"I told you not to start any of your rotten political speeches here, Tom Merry!" muttered Blake. "This isn't the St. Jim's parliament, fathead!"

"I jolly well think—"

"Besides, I'm doing the talking—"

"Pway come to the point, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Our respected headmaster is gwowin' impatient."

"Really—"

"Excuse me, sir," said Blake, "we have come to ask your permission—"

"To respectfully wequest your permish—"

"Shut up, D'Arcy!"

"That is puttin' it bettah, deah boy!"

"Don't interrupt! You may remember, sir, giving us permission to use the Red Indian things my uncle sent me from America—"

"I remember perfectly, Blake."

"We have been using them, sir, and having a really ripping—I mean, a most enjoyable time, sir."

"I hope you have not been getting into mischief?"

"Us, sir!" said Blake, in a tone of surprise.

"Getting into mischief!" repeated Tom Merry, as if that were the last thought that would ever have crossed his mind.

The doctor smiled.

"Well, what have you to say about it now, Blake?" said the Head. "I need hardly point out to you that my time is valuable."

"Certainly not, sir! I will come to the point at once. The real idea about this Redskin wheeze—I mean, the

Potts, the Office Boy!



Redskin idea, sir—was that we should camp out of doors like Red Indians, and learn to rough it and fend for ourselves."

The Head's look grew very grave.

"H'm! Blake, that is a serious matter!"

"Well, sir, we wouldn't ask you to let us have a fortnight out at first," said Blake eagerly; "just one night to start with, sir."

Dr. Holmes smiled again.

"I'm afraid that, in any circumstances, it would not be possible for me to allow your school work to be interrupted for any length of time, Blake," he said. "But I have given this matter a great deal of thought, and I am of the opinion that this camping out is a splendid thing for boys who are sensible enough to take care of themselves, and not to do reckless things."

"You know what careful fellows we are, sir."

"Ahem! If you had some of the seniors with you—"

The faces of the deputation fell.

"That would spoil it, sir," said Tom Merry. "The Upper Form fellows would start running the show and ordering us about, and then there wouldn't be any fun."

Dr. Holmes nodded.

"Naturally, your freedom would be restricted by the presence of a prefect," he remarked. "But I do not think the idea of camping out as a Red Indian would appeal to a Sixth Form boy as keenly as it does to you. I have said that I regard the idea as a good one. There are many things to be considered, however, before it can be carried into practice. I will give it my immediate attention, and will consult Mr. Railton about it."

"Thank you, sir!"

"Mr. Railton will let you know my decision later."

"Vewy good, sir. We are weally vewy much obliged to you for your kindness, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "The camping out will do us good in many ways. We should learn to wuff it—"

"Exactly!"

"And if the pwopah person were placed in charge of the camp, sir, I am assuahed that ewevythin' would go swimmin'ly—"

"You may go, my boy."

"Yes, sir. Thank you."

"One moment, deah boys! I have not yet finished explainin' the mattah to Dr. Holmes. It would be bettah, sir, for the most capable person to be placed in charge of the camp, to make sure that nothin' goes wong—"

"I am very busy now!"

"Yaas, sir. And so if you would instwuct these youngstahs that it would be bettah for them to place mattahs in my hands, they would pwobably pay more respect to your opinion than to mine— Stop pulling my arm!"

"Come away, fathead!"

"I wufuse to be called a fathead! I am explainin' to the Head—"

Dr. Holmes had taken up his pen again. Arthur Augustus was hustled to the door in the midst of his chums, still protesting against being carried away before he had finished explaining to the Head.

Tom Merry closed the door. In the passage the swell of the School House jerked himself loose and glared at Blake indignantly.

"If the Head wefuses us permish to hold that camp, you can thank yourself, Blake!" he remarked. "I did my best!"

"You shrieking ass!"

"I wufuse to be called a shwiekin' ass! I was explainin' to the Head, so that he would not feel uneasy about you youngstahs campin' out without anybody to look aftah you—"

"Oh, ring off, Gussy! Can't you see we're tired?"

"If you had allowed me to finish explaining—"

"Oh, come on!" said Tom Merry. "D'Arcy's chin will keep on wagging for ever!"

CHAPTER 8.

The Head Gives Permission!

"H EAR me smile! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the matter, Blake, you ass?"

"This is where we gloat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway, what is the beastlay mattah, deah boy?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"I've just met Railton," said Blake, calming down a little. "I've just had a little friendly chat with him in the passage—"

"Bai Jove!"

"And he's told me that he's talked it over with the Head, and they have come to the conclusion that I shall be able to take care of you chaps—"

"Wats!"

"Well, they've come to the conclusion that we shall be all right in the camp in the wood," said Blake, grinning. "So we've got permission."

"Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" shouted Herries and Digby.

"Hurrah, hurrah! We've got permission to try it for one night, and then they will see how it answers."

"It will ansawah all wight."

"I rather think it will. It will be a howling success."

"When are we to try it," asked Herries—"to-night?"

"No. To-morrow night. We shall want a lot of gear for the camp, you know, and that will take time to get. There will be some preparations to make—"

"Yaas, wathah! I shall have to pack some twunks—"

"No, you won't! Trunks are barred! You never heard of a noble savage going about with a trunk, did you?"

"But I must take some of my beastlay belongings, you know. I suppose I shall want a change of linen—"

"Not at all. All you will want is a change of paint."

"Yaas, but—"

"Let's get along and tell Tom Merry!" exclaimed Blake. "After school this afternoon we'll have a run into Rylcombe Wood, and fix the spot for the camp. I'm going to write to my governor to send down a lot of things."

"And I'll write to mine," said Digby. "Last holidays I did some camping out with my brother, and the things are packed up at home—tent, and cooking things, you know."

"Good! Every little helps. Gussy had better write to his governor, too, and ask him to make it a tenner."

"A what, Blake?"

"A tenner. A fiver won't be much good. We shall have lots of expenses. As I am going to be chief, it's only fair that D'Arcy should stand most of the cash, so that he won't feel left out in the cold."

"Thank you, deah boy! I wegard that as weally considawate of you, and I will wite to my govannah at once."



SWOT THAT GUY!



"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's bound to come down handsome when I tell him what I want it for. He can send me a tent, too, and my canoe. I've got a canoe at home."

"Good! It's a jolly good thing that Gussy can be useful, as he's got no chance of being ornamental."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Let's go and tell Tom Merry. Those chaps have got to do their whack in the work, you know, and in standing the things we want. We're not going to have it all done by this study. Come on!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The four chums hurried out of Study No. 6, and almost ran into the Terrible Three, who were coming along the passage with their cricket bats. It was the day after the adventure in Rylecombe Wood, and the Red Indian idea was still going strong. Blake tapped Tom Merry on the chest and stopped him.

"Hold on, kid!"

"Any news?"

"Yes; and jolly good news!"

"What is it?" asked Monty Lowther, allowing the end of his bat to clump down.

And before Blake could reply, there was a wail of anguish from Arthur Augustus.

"Ow! Lowthah, you beast!"

"What's the matter?" demanded Lowther.

"You dropped that beastly bat on my toes!"

"Did I really?"

"Yaas, you did, you wottah! And I have a feelin' that you did it on purpose, too!"

"You shouldn't have such big feet!"

"What?"

"You shouldn't have such big feet," said Lowther calmly. "If you spread your feet all over the passage, you must expect—"

"I wegard you as a wotten beast, Lowthah! You know perfectly well that my feet are small, and my shoes are vewy nice, not to say swaggah!"

"Oh, ring off!" said Dig. "Lowther didn't mean to hurt you, anyway."

"He hasn't hurt me."

"Then what the dickens are you making such a fuss about?"

"He has dented the toe of my shoe, and pwactically wuined the shape. I considah—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"I wefuse to cheese it! I considah—"

"Rats! I say, Tom Merry, there's jolly good news—"

"You are intewwuptin' me, Blake!"

"The Head has given his permission for the camping out wheeze, and we shall be in camp to-morrow night."

"Bravo!" shouted the chums of the Shell, with one voice.

"It's ripping, isn't it?"

"Rather! Let's get out and tell Figgins."

"Good! Come on!"

Figgins & Co. were chatting near the cricket pavilion when the School House chums sighted them. The juniors bore down upon them with a wild Indian war-whoop, and Blake clasped Figgins round the neck and waltzed him round.

The amazed Figgins struggled violently.

"Lemme go!"

"Good news, Figgy—good news!"

"Leggo, ass! You're chook-chook-choking me!"

"Good news, my son—good news!"

"Hold on! Drag him off!"

Blake waltzed the unfortunate Figgins round till they caught in the rope at the edge of the cricket field, and both of them rolled over on the green sward.

"Oh!" gasped Blake, who received most of Figgins' weight on his chest, the New House junior falling uppermost.

"Ass!" snorted Figgins.

Kerr and Wynn dragged him up. Jack Blake rose more slowly.

"Well, of all the clumsy asses!" he remarked.

"Waltz him round again, Willie," said Monty Lowther encouragingly. "Waltz him round again, do!"

"Not much! He has too big feet for me!"

"Well, how many did you expect him to have?"

"Look here, Lowther, if you start those rotten puns here you will get tomahawked! Figgins, my lanky youth, we've got the Head's permission to go into camp."

"Fact?"

"Yaas, wathah, Figgins, deah boy!" said D'Arcy. "The Head has vewy kindly extended his permish. He twusts, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,274.

of course, that we shall look aftah you New House youngstahs—"

"Did he say so?"

"Well, no, he didn't pwecisely say so, but that's undahstood, of course."

"Let me catch you looking after us, that's all," said Figgins cheerfully. "But I say, it's jolly good news, and no mistake. It will be ripping fun camping out—especially in Red Indian rig. We shall have a lot of preparations to make."

"Yaas, wathah! I have some twunks to pack—"

"There's the commissariat department," said Fatty Wynn anxiously. "You had better leave that in my hands. If you pool all the available funds, and give me carte blanche, I'll do you down in first-rate style."



The Grammar School juniors were soon secured to the tress, where Redskins enjoying their feed. "Do you feel as pleased as I do, Frank?"

"And you'll do the funds down, too, I expect," said Kerr, the Scottish partner in the Co. "You'd better let me take charge of the accounts."

"Yes, that's in your line," agreed Tom Merry. "Now the next question is—how many of us are going to be in it? We've got a rig-out for twelve—at least, Blake has, which amounts to the same thing."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Certainly!" said Blake. "There are us four, that's four; Figgins & Co., that's seven, and you three duffers, that's ten. I think we ought to have Reilly of the Fourth. He's done a lot of camping out on the loughs in his native land, you know, and his knowledge will be useful."

"If I may make a remark—"

"You mayn't. Then there is—"

"If I may make a remark—"

"Cheese it! There's Kerruish—"

"Pway allow me to speak, deah boy—about Weilly. I

wish to point out that he has nevah twated me with pwopah wespect."

"As I was saying—"

"Pway let me finish my wemarks!"

"Life's too short, Gussy. I'm getting on for fifteen now, and I've only got about sixty years left, and—"

"Oh, pway don't wot! I wegard you as a widiculous ass!"

"Well, I don't mind that, so long as you shut up. We've settled that we're going to have young Reilly—"

"He has nevah twated me with pwopah wespect—"

"Of course, that's an important point," said Tom Merry gravely. "Suppose we all talk to him, and appeal to his higher feelings, and make it a point that he shall treat Gussy with pwopah wespect."



had the pleasure—or the reverse—of seeing the
asked Blake. "Go and eat coke!" retorted

"Good!" said Figgins.

"Well, of course, that would make a difference," said Arthur Augustus. "Of course, I don't want to waise difficulties. But a pwopah wegard for my dig compels me to insist upon bein' twated with wespect."

"That point's settled, then."

"Yaas, and as I was wemarkin' when you intewwupted me—"

"That point's settled, then—"

"Look here, I think the twelfth chap ought to be from the New House," said Figgins. "You've got eight School House already to three New House."

"Well, it's a School House wheeze," said Blake.

"That's all very well, but—"

"You can have Pratt if you like, then, but I'd like Kerruish."

"Let's get some extra toggery and have both," suggested Kerr, who always had a practical solution ready for every difficulty.

Blake thumped him on the back.

"Jolly sensible idea, Kerr!"

"Well, don't bust my backbone, if it is!" grunted the Scottish partner in the Co.

"I'll tell Pratt, then," said Figgins, "and you chaps see the others. After school to-day we'll go and explore the ground and select a spot for camping."

"That's the idea."

"Then it's settled. Let's get some cricket before we have to go in and grind at lessons again."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the juniors went to the nets till the warning bell called them away to afternoon lessons.

CHAPTER 9.

Friendly Offers!

AFTERNOON school seemed unusually long to the juniors that afternoon. All who were in the Redskin scheme were eager to get out and make the first preparations for the camp in the woods. The romance of the scheme appealed to their youthful minds, and all of them were extremely keen.

There probably never was a healthy boy who had not a strong love of adventure, and whose pulse did not quicken at the thought of camping out by wood or river. To be thrown upon their own resources and "fend" for themselves and rough it in a thorough-going way, was an attractive prospect to the chums of St. Jim's. They were eager to put the scheme to the test, and they watched the hands of the clock crawling round with impatience. The slanting beams of the sun through the high class-room windows grew more oblique, and at last the welcome half-past four chimed out from the clock-tower.

Classes were dismissed; and as soon as the door of the class-room was opened the Fourth Form poured out, Blake & Co. in the lead.

A crowd of boys swarmed from the Shell class-room a couple of minutes later, and the Redskin allies met in the passage.

"Nobody detained?" said Tom Merry, looking round with a grin of satisfaction.

"Nobody," said Blake. "We've all been painfully good. Even Fatty Wynn refrained from eating anything during lessons."

"I had a little toffee," said Fatty Wynn; "but I took jolly good care that Lathom's back was turned."

"Well, we're all here," said Figgins. "Let's get going. We can have tea when we get back, and if we're late—"

"We're not coming in till calling-over, I suppose," said Blake. "We've got to take a survey of the giddy hunting ground, you know!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then we're jolly well going to take some grub with us!" said Fatty Wynn with emphasis. "I'm not going to risk starving, thank you! I had a rough time yesterday!"

"No grub for a whole half-hour!" said Monty Lowther sympathetically.

"Vewy wuff, indeed!"

"Sandwiches will do," said Tom Merry. "The House dame will give you some if you ask her, Fatty, and we'll ask Mrs. Mimms for some."

And when the juniors left their respected Houses there were several packets of sandwiches in several pockets, and Fatty Wynn had a couple of bottles of ginger-beer in addition.

As Tom Merry and his chums left the School House, Gore of the Shell met them on the steps.

George Gore was unusually genial. He nodded to Tom Merry in a very friendly way.

"Hallo, Merry!"

"Hallo! I'm in a hurry!"

"Stop a minute."

"Well, what is it? Buck up!"

"I hear from Skimpole that you're starting a camp or something—got the Head's permission to camp out, or something of the sort."

"Yes, that's so."

"If you'd like me to join the party—"

"Sorry, but the number's full up, Gore."

"I don't see—"

"Besides, the Head hasn't given you permission."

Gore sneered.

"No, there's a lot of favouritism in this school," he remarked. "I suppose you mean that he wouldn't give me permission?"

"I dare say he wouldn't."

"He's given it to you."

"That's a rather different matter."

"I don't see it—unless you mean that you're one of the

favourites," said Gore, with a sneer. "I know that would make a difference."

Tom Merry turned red.

"Mr. Holmes isn't the sort to make favourites, though I dare say he likes some fellows better than others, as all of us do," he replied sharply.

"Then why should he give you permission to camp out for a night and refuse it to me?" demanded Gore savagely.

Tom Merry looked him straight in the eyes.

"Because he knows us both," he replied. "He knows he can trust me to act like a decent fellow."

"And he doesn't know that about me?"

"No, certainly not. You think you keep all your little ways secret; but though the Head doesn't know the details, he knows the kind of fellow you are, and he knows more than to give you so much freedom. You are making me speak plainly, and there it is! If you were allowed to camp out for a night you would start smoking or gambling in the camp, or some other rotten foolery; and the Head knows none of us would do that."

"Of course, we all know you set up as a sort of Pharisee—"

"Nothing of the sort," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "I set up to be an ordinary clean, decent English chap, and that's good enough for me, without putting on a lot of mannish ways and making an ass of myself. Good-bye."

And the chums walked on, leaving Gore scowling.

Tom Merry's words went all the more distinctly home, because Gore knew that every one of them was true.

Monty Lowther chuckled.

"That was straight from the shoulder, Tom, and no mistake."

"Yaas, wathah," remarked Arthur Augustus. "But it

was quite twue. I wegard Goah as a wathah wotter boundah."

"Sure, and it's right ye are!" said Reilly. "I—"

"I was speaking, Weilly—"

"Faith, I know you were. I—"

"You are intewwuptin' me."

"Exactly. I—"

"Weally, Weilly—"

"Oh, cheese it," said Blake. "Don't you two start ragging!"

"I only insist upon bein' tweated with pwopah wespect."

"Sure, and I'll treat you with all the respect you deserve," grinned the boy from Belfast.

"I wegard that as satisfactory."

"Here's Figgins! Hallo, Figgy, where did you dig up that face?" was Blake's cheerful greeting of the leader of the New House juniors. "Got the grub?"

"Rather!" said Fatty Wynn. "I saw to that!"

"Trust you for that. Now get along; we've plenty to do."

The juniors—numbering thirteen in all—went down to the gates. In the gateway Mellish of the Fourth was lounging with his hands in his pockets. He came towards the party as soon as he saw them.

"Hallo, Blake! I believe you're the head of this wheeze?"

"Exactly!" said Blake. "You can tell it from my commanding manner and my generally distinguished appearance. What do you want?"

"I was thinking of coming along—"

"Were you really?"

"Yes. I know a lot about camping out, you know, and I could show you lots of things. Would you like me to come?"

"Well, of course, it would be a great advantage for you to come and show us lots of things," said Blake, with a withering glare at the cad of the Fourth. "We're a rather helpless crowd, you know, and looking out for a silly, conceited chump to teach us things."

"Well, you see—"

"You'd better go and ask the Head's permission."

"Tell him you're a young blackguard, and belong to the smart set of St. Jim's. He's sure to give you permission."

And the chums marched on, leaving Mellish staring after them with a black brow.

"Amazing what a lot of help and advice people can get when they don't want it," Figgins remarked. "I know Mellish's sort. He'd hang round with his hands in his pockets and smoke cigarettes, and expect us to do all the work."

"Which wouldn't suit us, Figgy."

"Rather not."

"There's no doubt that we're the pick of the Lower School," Tom Merry remarked. "You Fourth Form chaps are not much class, of course, but—"

"And you Shell-fish are really only worth a bob a day to scare crows," Blake remarked. "But—"

"You exaggewate, deah boy—"

"No, I don't, Gussy. I say they're only worth a bob a day to scare crows."

"You exaggewate. They are only worth a tannah a day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's the stile," said Figgins. "Come on. And now keep your eyes open; we've got to select a suitable spot for the camp."

And the juniors entered the shady wood.

CHAPTER 10.

Selecting a Pitch!

"FIRST of all—" began Figgins. "Quite right," said Fatty Wynn. "Better open your parcel, Figgy."

"Eh?"

"I say you'd better open your parcel first. I want to keep mine till last, in case we get separated."

"He wants to eat," said Tom Merry, with a grin. "Fatty's hungry."

"I thought that was what Figgins was suggesting," said Fatty Wynn innocently. "I thought he was proposing first of all to have some grub."

"Well, I wasn't," grunted Figgins. "First of all we shall have to find a spring. We must have water for the camp."

"Will you open your bag first, Figgins?"

"No, I won't!"

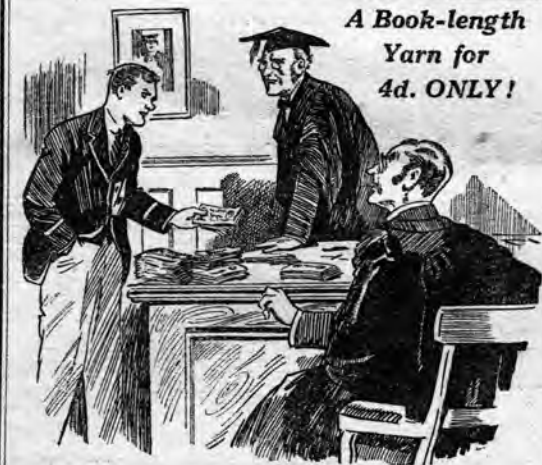
"I'm hungry."

"Then go and eat coke! We've got to find a spring."

"A rivulet would do," said Tom Merry. "There's the little stream that runs into the Rhyll; a camp on the bank of that would be all right."

"Yaas, wathah! And then we could use my canoe, deah boys."

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"Exactly! Gussy's canoe will come in handy. Can any of you chaps use a paddle?"

"I can paddle in wathah a wipin' mannah."

"No fear!" said Blake. "You won't catch us trusting our lives to your paddling, my son."

"Weally, Blake—"

"I can paddle all right," said Reilly. "I've paddled a canoe on the lough at home."

"Good! We'll appoint Reilly paddler-in-chief."

"Nothin' of the sort! I cannot considah that tweatin' me with pwopah respect."

"Rats to you! But that's a detail; we haven't the canoe yet, or the river. Let's go and fix up that camp."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors penetrated deeper into the wood. In one of the thickest and most solitary tracks the little stream that fed the Rhyll flowed silently under heavy branches. It was a narrow stream, scarce more than six or seven feet in width, but in places it had worn itself a deep channel. It was called the Feeder by the local inhabitants, being the largest of the feeders of the river in the district.

"Here we are," explained Tom Merry, as they came out on the bank through the tangled thickets and he caught the glimmer of the stream.

The thick branches overhead almost covered in the stream, and the golden sunlight filtered through and danced in patches on the water. The scene was very quiet and silvery, the silence only broken by the twitter of birds and the murmur of the water through the tall green rushes.

"Bai Jove! This is a wipin' place for a canoe, deah boys."

"Yes, rather! But where's the place for the camp?"

"Let's get along the bank; it's clear farther on."

"Good! Hallo! What was that?"

"What was what?"

"There was something moving behind that bush."

"Only a bird, deah boy."

"It wasn't a bird," said Blake, plunging into the thicket.

"It was somebody watching us, I believe; one of the village kids, very likely."

"Well, a cat may look at a king," suggested Figgins.

"We don't want a lot of rotters hanging about, though, watching us and seeing us fix up the camp!" exclaimed Blake.

But there were no signs of a watcher.

Blake rejoined his friends, baffled, but still half convinced that someone had been hiding behind the bush and had escaped into the wood only just in time.

"I'll bet my hat there was someone there!" he muttered.

"Well, it doesn't matter," said Figgins. "If it's the village lads or the Grammarians, we're numerous enough to eat them."

"Yaas, wathah! Don't be nervous, deah boy."

"Eh?"

"I say—don't be nervous, deah boy."

"Are you looking for a black eye, Gussy?"

"I wégard that as a wathah widiculous question."

"Oh, come on!" said Tom Merry. "Ha! Here's a clearer place! This is something like!"

The juniors halted.

It was indeed an excellent spot for their camping.

The trees swept back from the bank here for a distance of a dozen yards, leaving the ground bare, save for grass and bushes.

There was ample room for the camp of the juniors, and the thick woods circling round the spot shut it off from the outside world.

"Good!" exclaimed Blake. "We shall have to bring axes with us to-morrow and clear the ground. It will be hard work, but that doesn't matter."

"Not a bit," said Tom Merry. "We expect to have some hard work, of course."

"Bai Jove! Deah boys, I think—"

"We shall have three tents, but they won't be enough for the lot of us," said Blake. "We shall have to build some Indian wigwams."

"I was wemarkin'—"

"Do you know how to build them?" asked Figgins doubtfully.

"Well, I can't say I've ever done it," said Blake. "But you build them of the materials in the wood; you know—saplings and branches and skins of wild animals—"

"I was sayin'—"

"Skins of wild animals," grinned Lowther. "Well, rabbits and stoats are the only wild animals in this wood, except hedgehogs. I don't see how we could build wigwams of rabbit-skins."

"Oh, don't be funny, Lowther! Of course, we shall have to use something else, as we can't get bear-skins and buffalo-hides and things. Some of the Southern Indians live in huts built just of branches and thatch—"

"Good enough for Southern Indians, but we get rain in England."

"If you're afraid of a little rain, Lowther, you'd better stay under the roof of St. Jim's, or else borrow your grandmother's umbrella."

"Oh, I don't mind! We're going to rough it, anyway; only it will be roughing it with a vengeance if we get a rainy night, and no better shelter than a hut built according to Blake's idea."

"You can get into a rabbit burrow if you're afraid of the wet!" said Blake snappishly. "I tell you the Southern Indians—"

"Blow the Southern Indians!"

"The Southern Indians live in huts made of branches and things; they call them jacals."

"A jackal is an animal."

"Ass! J-a-c-a-l, it's a Spanish word, I think, and I don't know how to pronounce it, but that doesn't matter."

"You pronounce it hyah-kahl," said Manners, who had had lessons in Spanish. "It's a kind of a sort of a little wooden hut."

"If you're going to start living in things you can't pronounce, I'm done," said Monty Lowther. "There's another thing—are we allowed to chop up the woods?"

"We shall want a whole forest to build a few yahahs," said Blake.

"Hyahkahls," said Manners. "There's an aspirate—"

"Then there oughtn't to be. Most of this land belongs to the college, and we have the Head's permission to camp here. I suppose we can take what we want? Of course the Head depends on us not to do much damage, but a small tree or two won't be missed. It seems to me that Lowther is trying to make difficulties."

"Yaas! Suppose Lowther shuts up, and allows me to finish what I've been trying to say for a beastly long time. My ideah is—"

"We can map out the ground now," said Figgins, "and to-morrow we can—"

"My ideah is that we should dig a twench."

"A what?"

"A twench woud the camp."

"What on earth is a twench?" demanded Tom Merry.

"A twench woud the camp, you know."

"He means a trench," grinned Blake.

"Oh, a trench!"

"Yaas, wathah! A twench woud the camp, and a wall, you know, in the style of the old Woman's camp."

"My dear ass, this isn't a Roman camp—it's an Indian camp, and we're not going to put up a Roman wall and dig a Roman trench."

"I wégard it as a good ideah."

"We shall want a trench, though," said Tom Merry.

"We don't want the camp flooded in case of rain."

"That's so."

"Vewy twue, and I considah—"

"We'll mark the ground out now with chalk," said Tom Merry. "Anybody got a bit of chalk?"

Nobody had, as was to be expected.

Tom Merry looked extremely disgusted.

"Well, you must be a lot of silly asses to come out without a piece of chalk to mark out the camp," he exclaimed.

"But you haven't any yourself," exclaimed Kerruish.

"Never mind, we can stamp on the grass," said Tom Merry hastily. "We can make marks with the heels of our shoes, you know."

"Yes, that's a good idea," Blake asserted. "Now, I suppose we shall have the tents and little wooden huts all in a row."

"Better have 'em in a circle, with the camp-fire in the middle," suggested Figgins. "That would look more home-like."

"Bai Jove, I've got wathah a good suggestion to make. Bettah have the fire on the windward side of the tents, you know, or the smoke will blow into them."

"Good," said Blake sarcastically. "That's the kind of suggestion we might have expected from you, Gussy."

"Yaas, wathah! I wégard it as wathah bwiliant myself," said the swell of the School House. "It flashed into my bwain, you know."

"Into your what?"

"My bwain."

"First I've heard of it."

"Of what, Blake?"

"Your brain. You've never shown any signs of having one, and I'm blessed if I'm going to take your word for it."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Hasn't it occurred to your mighty brain that the wind is sometimes in different quarters, and the windward side to-day may be the leeward side to-morrow, ass?"

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

(Continued on page 19.)

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A FEW MORE LEAVES FROM—



Address all letters: The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.2.

HALLO, chums! What do you think of this week's issue? Grand, isn't it? Now let me tell you about next week's yarn. Tom Merry & Co. are all keen on this great Red Indian business, but next week the Grammarians think it's about time that they do something, so they set up as cowboys!

"THE RIVAL CAMPERS!"

is the title of next week's ripping long complete story. It is full of thrills and laughs and, believe me, fellows, you'll enjoy every word of it!

Potts will be up to one of his tricks again, and he guarantees to give you all a laugh. Ned and Jinks are absolutely in the thick of most thrilling adventures in our ripping Naval yarn,

"CHUMS OF THE FIGHTING FLEET!"

And there will also be another page from my notebook which will contain lots of interesting information.

In conclusion, just let me remind you that it is best to order your GEM in advance, and so make sure of getting a copy!

THE COLLAR-BONE TRICK!

Insurance companies have to look out for all sorts of artful dodgers, who think out brainy ways of getting money out of them. Recently, they ran to earth a man who had been making a small fortune for years by a queer deformity that he has. This man can make it appear that his collar-bone is broken, and by this means he claims money from insurance companies for street accidents which have never taken place. Apparently this was his only way of making a living, and at last he did it just once too often, and the insurance company concerned got wise to it!

STILL GOING STRONG!

Jack Hobbs, the Surrey and England cricketer, is still breaking records, despite the fact that he says this will be his last season in first-class cricket. A week or two ago, he made two centuries in one match for the sixth time in his life, and thus beat the previous best of five times

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which stood to the credit of C. B. Fry, the famous Sussex cricketer.

Altogether there have been a good many cricket records that have been knocked about lately, and Sutcliffe, who was chief partner in the one mentioned last week, has now made another bid for one. In four consecutive innings he has scored 789 runs, a remarkable score, though he failed to beat the 917 scored by W. G. Grace in 1876. Sutcliffe's four innings were 313 against Essex, 96 and 110 not out for the North v. the South, and 258 not out against Sussex.

Patsy Hendren, of Middlesex, has just made the 127th century of his career, and thus passes the old record of 126 by W. G. Grace. He does not, however, come anywhere near the record of Jack Hobbs, who has scored a century over 180 times!

GOLD FROM THE SEA.

A few weeks ago I told you that the Italian salvage ship *Artiglio*, which has for some time been trying to raise the million pound treasure sunk in the liner *Egypt*, was expecting to get the treasure up at any moment. The expectations have at last been realised, and after two years hard work, the gold has been raised. Imagine how the captain and his crew of thirty-five men felt when, after all this time, they saw the gold coming over the side of their gallant little ship! They cheered and shouted for joy; but not for long—for almost immediately they were hard at work again, for they must take every opportunity while the weather is fine.

One rather interesting thing about this, the most remarkable piece of salvage work ever achieved, is that the gold has been brought up at a most fortunate time, for it is reckoned that the treasure is worth about £200,000 more now, than it was when it sank, owing to gold having increased in market value!

STRANGE RAIN!

Last week I told you about it raining fishes in South Africa, and finished up by saying, "What next?" Well, here's the answer: A short time ago, the good people of Hitchin saw some weird-looking objects drop from a cloud, and begin very slowly to descend to earth. Some of the more timid onlookers ran for shelter; but others watched interestedly as the objects fell. At length, one reached the ground, and a crowd rushed forward to see what it was. It was a small bundle of hay! Just how that hay got into the cloud no one knows—but for some time it rained

hay in Hitchin. Again I say, "What next?"

LEGALLY DEAD.

Occasionally one hears of people who have read the notices of their own deaths in the papers, but surely here is a case stranger than any of those! Four years ago, a man was believed to be dead, and a judge gave leave to presume his death, and his estate was then divided between his next of kin. A few days ago, the "dead" man went to the court where the order presuming his death had been granted, and asked the judge who had granted it, to cancel it! The judge, however, decided that, unfortunately he had no power to do so, and so the unfortunate man has to remain legally dead—although he is very much alive!

HEARD THIS ONE?

Canvasser (to little boy playing in garden): "Is your mother in, sonny?"

Little Boy: "Yes."

Canvasser (after knocking for some time and receiving no answer): "I thought you said your mother was in?"

Little Boy: "So she is, but we don't live here!"

IN THE LIFT!

An old gentleman was leaving a nursing home the other day, and stepping into the lift, which was of the type which you operate yourself, he pressed the button and the lift descended. In the lift was a young man, but the old gentleman hardly noticed him. He was in a hurry. The next day he learnt at the nursing home that his lift companion of the previous day was—the Prince of Wales!

REINS TO THE RESCUE.

The reins from a horse man came in for a queer use on the Thames Embankment in London the other day. A man began to feel somewhat hot in the afternoon so he lay down on the parapet of the river, but unfortunately he fell asleep and rolled into the water. He was unable to swim, and as there were no boats about a passer-by decided to go in after him. He was warned, however, that though the parapet was high, the water was very shallow, and if he dived he would almost certainly hit the bottom. Luckily for the man in the water a van driver had a brilliant idea, and unbuckling the reins off his horse he held them while the rescuer slid down them into the Thames. Later the reins played another important part when they held up the rescuer and the rescued man until a boat arrived to take them ashore.

THE ROOSTER!

A certain sportsman in Idaho went out with his fishing rod and gun, taking with him also a friend. The two men were quietly fishing when all of a sudden, to the amazement of his friend, the first man whipped up his gun and fired at a tree on the opposite side of the river in which they were fishing. His amazement was increased when out of the tree there fell—a large fish! It was a fine bass, and the man who shot it had seen a hawk swoop down, pick it up and fly into the tree, so the sportsman immediately forsook his rod and took up his gun, with successful results!

YOUR EDITOR.

ST. JIM'S UNDER CANVAS!

(Continued from page 17.)

"Perhaps you'd like us to rebuild the camp every time the wind shifts," suggested Figgins. "I suppose that's what Gussy really means."

"Not at all, deah boy. You see, I nevah—"

"We'll have a fence of stakes round the camp," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "That will be good for defence in case of surprise."

"I don't suppose a rival tribe will surprise us here," Digby remarked. "It's a far cry to the Rocky Mountains from Rylcombe."

"That's all you know. There's a rival tribe in the Grammar School, and then there are Pilcher and the village boys. We might get surprised in camp."

"H'm! We might!"

"And we want to be on our guard."

"I'll bring my bulldog," said Herries eagerly. "Towser will keep watch all right, and make a fearful row if anybody comes."

"Well, I don't object to the bulldog," said Blake. "But you can't call him Towser."

"Why not? It's his name?"

"That doesn't matter. You must call him Tuscaloosa or Ticonderoga or something of that sort. Who ever heard of an Indian bloodhound named Towser?"

"But he isn't a bloodhound—he's a bulldog."

"He's not coming into our Indian camp unless he's a bloodhound. He's as much a bloodhound as you are a Blackfoot, anyway. And his name's got to be an Indian one—Saskatchewan would do, or Chingachgook."

"Chingachgook sounds all right," said Tom Merry. "It's rather a mouthful when you're in a hurry, but there's nothing like attending to effect. Let him be rechristened Chingachgook."

"I don't mind," said Herries. "But I bet you he won't come when you call him Chingachgook."

"Let's mark out the camp," said Blake. "We'll trample down the border where the stakes are to go to make the fence."

"That's right."

"Follow me, and stamp hard just where I do. Follow in my footsteps and we'll soon have the ground marked out."

"Lead on, Macduff."

"Come on, then!"

Blake started off, walking slowly and stamping his heels hard into the turf as he walked. The juniors fell into line behind him. It was rather a curious sight, the thirteen juniors tramping along in Indian-file, each stamping as hard as he could as he went along.

Monty Lowther broke into song:

"I'm following in father's footsteps, I'm following the dear old dad!"

Blake turned round wrathfully.

"Who's making that row?"

"What do you mean?" demanded Monty Lowther indignantly. "I was singing."

"You were what?"

"Singing."

"Well, it didn't sound much like singing, but I'll take your word. Chuck it, anyway, whatever it was."

"Look here, Blake—"

"You'll take this matter seriously, Monty Lowther, if you are going to remain a warrior in this tribe," said Blake severely. "I'm surprised at you."

"Rats!"

"You fatheaded Shell-fish, do you want to be chucked into the stream?"

"Yes, if you can chuck me there."

"I'll jolly soon—"

"Hold on," exclaimed Tom Merry. "Did we come here to have a Form row, or to mark out the site of a camp?"

"We came here to mark out a camp, but I'm not going to have any cheek from any fatheaded waster in the Shell—"

"I can't stand cheek from a Fourth Form kid," explained Lowther. "I—"

"Shut up, Monty. You're in the wrong."

"Am I?" growled Lowther.

"Yes, shut up!"

"That's all very well, Tom Merry—"

"Shut up!"

Lowther shut up.

Blake was satisfied, and the juniors resumed their march, Lowther not relieving the way by his melodious efforts.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, went the juniors, round the circle of the camp.

There was a sudden cackle of laughter from an adjoining thicket.

The tramping Saints stopped all of a sudden.

"What was that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I knew somebody was watching us—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 11.

The Grammarians Catch It!

"H A, ha, ha!"

The Saints stared wrathfully at the thicket. Three heads were projected from it, and Monk, Lane, and Carboy laughed again.

The three Grammarians had been on the bank of the Feeder when the Saints arrived, and had been watching them ever since. There was a fishing-rod under Frank Monk's arm. The evolutions of the Saints seemed to afford the Grammarians much amusement, and certainly the sight had been a very curious one.

"You—you cackling asses!" exclaimed Blake. "I'll jolly soon show you whether you can cackle at your superiors in this way!"

"What-ho!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Go for the rotters!"

"Bravo, go for the Gwammah School wottahs, deah boys!"

And the St. Jim's party made a rush for the Grammarians.

"Hook it!" muttered Frank Monk.

The Saints were four or more to one, and it was necessary for the Grammarians to "hook it," as Frank Monk tersely expressed it.

They sprang from the thicket and ran, pausing only to send back a yell of mocking laughter at the Saints.

Monk, Lane, and Carboy were the champion junior athletes of Rylcombe Grammar School, and they would not have shown themselves to the Saints just then had they not been certain of their ability to escape.

But the best laid schemes of mice and men, as the poet has observed, do not always work out as they are planned.

The Grammarian chums had a good start, and under ordinary circumstances would have made good their escape; but as it happened, just as they ran off Lane caught his foot in a trailing root and went headlong to the ground.

Monk, who was just behind, fell over him, and went sprawling into the thickets.

"Oh!" gasped Monk.

He was rolling on his back, and Blake, plunging through the brambles in hot pursuit, stumbled over him and fell.

"Got one of them!" roared Blake, grappling with Monk.

"Here they are! Collar the others!"

Tom Merry ran into Lane as the latter was scrambling to his feet. Lane went down again, with the hero of the Shell clutching hold of him.

Carboy was well ahead, but he turned back as he saw that his chums were caught, and came charging at the Saints.

"Collar him!" shouted Figgins.

Reilly leaped upon the Grammarian, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did the same, at the same moment, from the other side. Carboy sprang aside, with the result that Reilly and D'Arcy ran right into one another's arms, but in the excitement of the moment and the gloom and tangle of the thicket they did not at once realise it.

"Bai Jove, I've got the wottah!"

"Sure, and I've got him!"

D'Arcy went down with the Irish junior on his chest. With a terrific effort he rolled his assailant over, and they struggled furiously in the undergrowth.

Carboy hurled himself at the Saints, but Figgins and Lowther seized him, and he was down in the grass in a moment, struggling helplessly under their weight.

"Got him!" panted Figgins.

"Got all three?" asked Tom Merry, sitting up on the chest of the unfortunate Lane, who was half-buried in tangled grass and underbrush and gasping for breath.

"Yes," said Figgins. "You've got one, Blake's got another, and I've got this rotter. Gussy seems to have got somebody or something, too."

"I've got the wottah!"

"Who is it?"

"Bai Jove, I've got him!"

"Sure, and I'm holding on to the spalpeen entoirely!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins. "Gussy and Belfast have got one another!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Drag them apart!" exclaimed Jack Blake. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Many hands seized the rolling and struggling combatants, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,274.

and they were dragged out of the thicket; and then each realised that he had seized a friend in mistake for a foe. But their looks were not very friendly as they gasped for breath and glared at one another, looking extremely dishevelled.

"Sure, and I thought it was the Carboy spalpeen!"

"Bai Jove, I didn't know it was Weilly, you know! I thought it was the Gwammawian wottah! I wegard Weilly as an ass!"

"You howling duffer—"

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as a howlin' duffah! It was entirely your fault for gettin' in the way, you extwemely stupid ass—"

"Sure, and it was ye're fault entoirely—"

"Nothin' of the sort, ass!"

"You duffer!"

"You screaming idiot!"

"Faith, and I—"

"Bai Jove, I—"

"Shut up, you two!" broke in Jack Blake.

"I wefuse to shut up. Weilly has applied seweval insultin' wemarks to me, and I cannot allow them to pass."

"Sure, and ye've done the same to me entoirely."

"That is quite anothah mattah. My weinarks concernin' you were twue, and your wemarks concernin' me were wude and untwue. I expect you to withdwaw them—"

"Sure, and ye can expect."

"I must insist—"

"Rats!"

"If you say wats to me, Weilly, I shall have no alternative but to administrah a feahful thwashin'. I—"

Reilly laughed good-humouredly.

"Go ahead then, ass!"

The swell of the School House did not need bidding twice. He made a rush at the Belfast boy, but, fortunately, his foot caught in a root, and he rolled on the ground. He lay there, somewhat dazed, till Reilly gave him a hand up, laughing.

"Thank you, Weilly," said D'Arcy. "I feel wathah dazed, you know. Undah the cires, I will ovahlook your wudeness and not administrah a feahful thwashin'."

"Thank you for nothing," said Reilly.

"Weally, Weilly—"

"Ring off, Gussy," said Tom Merry, "we're talking!"

We've captured these three rotters, who have had the cheek to laugh at Blake—"

"At you, you mean!" said Blake.

"At all of you," said Frank Monk gaspingly. "Of all the utterly idiotic rotters I ever saw—"

"Of all the silly cuckoos—"

said Lane.

"Of all the shrieking lunatics—"

remarked Carboy.

"I weally think we have heard enough of these oppwobwious wemarks, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wegard it as the wopwah capah to duck these impertinent wottahs into the stwearn."

"Good idea!"

"Marching round in a row like a lot of giddy convicts!" grinned Frank Monk. "I wish I had had my camera!"

"We were marking out the site of the camp," said Tom Merry, turning red.

"Oh, are you going to camp out?"

"That's our business."

"Yaas, wathah! We are campin' out to-mowwow night, Frank Monk— Ow! What are you pinchin' me for, Lowthah?"

"Did I pinch you?"

"Yaas, wathah, and it hurt! I wegard you—"

"Duck them into the stream," said Figgins. "They had the confounded cheek to laugh at Blake and Tom Merry, and they want a lesson!"

"Well, yes," agreed Blake. "If they had laughed at you I could forgive it, because a fellow could really hardly look at you New House chaps without laughing—"

"Yaas, wathah! I quite agwee with Blake."

"Exactly," said Tom Merry. "But they can have the ducking, anyway. Yank them down to the river!"

"Pway hold on, Tom Mewwy; I cannot appwove of spoilin' any gentleman's clothes—"

"We're not bothering about your approval, Gussy."

"Pway considah a moment. It would be wathah a good wheeze to give these wottahs a feahful thwashin', but I cannot have a hand in spoiling their clothes. It is twue that their clothes are not particularly well made, and Carboy's jacket has a cut that would make a Bond Stweert tailah weep, but—"

"You let my jacket alone!" growled Carboy.

"My deah chap, I wouldn't touch the thing with a telegraph pole," said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard a jacket cut like that as a cwime, simply a cwime. All the same, deah boys, I must stwenuously oppose spoilin' any personal attiah—"

"Well, there's something in that," agreed Tom Merry. "We'll take them by the heels and just dip their heads in the water."

"That you won't!" exclaimed Frank Monk.

"Give 'em a chance," said Figgins. "Do you admit you're licked, and will you beg pardon for cackling at Tom Merry and Blake, and go home like good little boys?"

"No, you rotter!"

"Then the ducking is the only thing—"

"Hold on, deah boys! I have a weally good ideah!"

"Gussy, old man, we're getting fed-up with your ideahs."

"This is a wippah," said Arthur Augustus. "I can only wegard it as caddish to wuin a fellow's clothes, and at the same time they certainly wequiah a duckin' for their feahful cheek. I think it would obviate—"

"Well, that's a good word, anyway!"

"I think it would obviate the difficulty if we were to pour some water down their backs, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'd better not!" roared Monk.

"You see, that would be as good as ducking them, and at the same time it would not wuin the wisk of spoilin' their clothes."

"Gussy, you're a genius!"

"Well, I weally considah that a wathah elevah ideah. It flashed into my bwain all in a moment, you know."

"Good; go and fill your hat with water at the stream."

Arthur Augustus jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and turned it upon Figgins with a stare that was meant to scorch him into insignificance.

"What did you say, Figgins?"

"Go and fill your hat with water at the stream."

"And buck up!" said Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove, you are labouwvin' undah a vewy gweat mistake if you think I am goin' to wuin my toppah—"

"Oh, a little water wouldn't hurt it!"

"It would uttably wuin it, you ass! Kerr can fetch some water in his beastlay cap!"

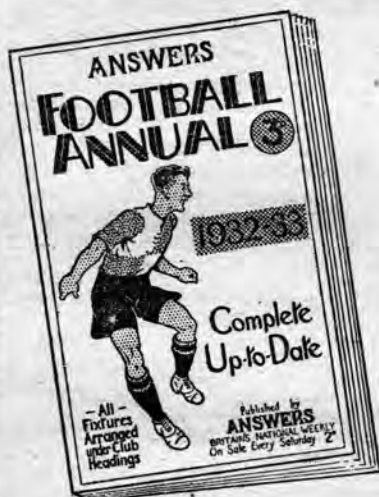
"No fear!" said Kerr.

"Then Lowthah can fetch some beastlay watah in his hat."

"Catch me!" said Monty Lowther.

"Dwag the wottahs down to the stwearn," said Arthur Augustus, struck by another brilliant idea. "If the

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"Lemme go!" howled Figgins. Blake clasped the New House leader round the neck and waltzed him round till they fell foul of the rope at the edge of the cricket field and rolled over on the green sward. "Waltz him round again, Willie!" murmured Monty Lowther encouragingly.

mountain can't come to Mohammed, Mohammed has to buzz along to the mountain, you know."

"Good! Yank them along!"

The vainly struggling Grammarians were dragged down to the stream, and the Grammarians received a ducking. First they were suspended by their heels and lowered into the stream, but two of them struggled so much that they fell in altogether!

"There," said Blake, "I think they're ducked enough. Do you think you are ducked enough, Franky?"

"Go and hang yourself!" said Monk.

"I think it will do. You may run along now, little boys."

"You rotter!"

"And if we catch you in this part of the world again, we shall really be very severe with you next time," said Blake, with a wave of his hand. "Run along!"

The Grammarians glowered—and went. They felt very wet and uncomfortable as they walked away through the wood, and Carboy and Lane were inclined to be captious.

"Nice fix to get into!" grunted Lane, when they were out of hearing of the Saints. "I was against showing up at all, as the odds were so big."

"Well, we could have got away, only you had to stumble over," said Frank Monk. "It was clumsy of you, Laney!"

"You ought to have allowed for accidents."

"I can't allow for all the silly tricks you might play."

"Look here—"

"Oh, don't rag!" said Carboy. "It's too late now, anyway. I wish we could make those rotters sit up. This is the second time they've done us in two days."

"So we can," said Frank Monk.

"I don't see how."

"Didn't you hear what D'Arcy let out? Lowther tried to shut him up, but he had let the cat out of the bag. They're going to camp out on that spot to-morrow night."

Lane whistled.

"But would Dr. Holmes allow them to camp out at night, Frank?"

"Quite possible. But if he isn't allowing it, they're going to break bounds to do it. Anyway, it's certain they're going to camp there for a night."

"Well, we shall be fast asleep in the dormitory at the school."

"Shall we?" said Frank Monk. "You may be, but I shan't be, you can take my word for that. This is where we score over the Saints."

"But we—"

"Listen to me. There are about a dozen of those asses. They'll all be there in camp to-morrow night, I expect. My idea is to surprise the camp at night."

"My only hat!"

"Why not?"

"Well, it's jolly risky."

"If you are going to funk it—"

"Rot!" said Carboy cheerfully. "You know I shouldn't funk it, and I'll follow wherever you lead. I only said it was risky; and so it is. They may have got permission to camp out, but we shan't be able to get permission to come out at night and raid their camp."

Frank Monk grinned.

"I don't expect to. We shall have to get out of the Grammar School after lights out, without anybody knowing anything about it."

"Well, we three have done as much before," said Lane. "But I don't know about a big party doing it."

"And we shall want a big party to go for a dozen Saints," Carboy remarked.

Frank Monk nodded.

"We might bring two dozen fellows, to make sure of having an easy thing of it," he said. "We shall manage it. If three can get out of the dormitory window, and over the wall, I don't see why twenty can't."

"Well, we're game, anyway," said Carboy; "and it would be ripping fun to break up their camp."

"I should say so, rather!"

"Then it's a go!"

And the three Grammarians discussed the plan as they tramped homewards, and from the gleeful chuckles that escaped them every now and then, it was pretty clear that they looked upon their plot as certain of success, and the defeat of the juniors of St. Jim's as a foregone conclusion.

CHAPTER 12. The Campers!

"BAI Jove, you know, I weally think I'm gettin' wathah peckish!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It's a long while past tea-time, I think, deah boys."

"Well, we've about planned out the camp," said Blake. "It's about time we were getting back to St. Jim's."

"What twice the sandwiches?"

"Oh, you can eat your sandwiches as you go!"

"But I haven't any! I couldn't cawwy any, you wemembah, as I was afraid some of the gwease might ooze thwough and spoil my clothes."

"Oh, yes, I remember!"

"Pway give me some of yours, Blake."

"Sorry, old son, but Herries and I have eaten them all."

"Weally, Blake, that was wathah inconsiderate. Pway give me some of yours, Dig."

"Haven't any!" said Digby.

"You had some when you came out. Where are they?" Digby tapped the third button of his waistcoat.

"Weally, this is wotten! Have you got a sandwich to spare, Tom Mewwy?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"All gone, Gussy. We three have just finished them."

"Then I must appeal to Figgins."

"Too late!" grinned Figgins. "Kerr and I have had a few, and Fatty has bolted the rest. Too late, my son!"

The swell of the School House looked disgusted.

"Well, of all the wottahs—"

"Perhaps you'll be able to carry some next time," suggested Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Time we got back," said Tom Merry. "Come on! Here, Gussy, I've found some aniseed balls. They've been in my pocket some time, and they're rather dusty, but you can have them."

"Thank you, but I don't think I will twouble you," said D'Arcy.

The juniors returned to the school in very good spirits—excepting Arthur Augustus. He was hungry, and rather regretted that he had not been able to carry any sandwiches. The school tea was over long before the juniors came in, and the swell of St. Jim's had to be content with the remains of a rabbit-pie in the study cupboard.

He looked indignant for the rest of the evening, but the chums were too busy making plans and preparations to notice it.

The campers had plenty to see to. Various consignments from various homes were expected on the morrow, and then, as Blake said, they would really get to business. The following day the juniors were painfully good, and their kind teachers had absolutely no fault to find with them. They did not mean to risk being detained that evening. The school hours went off well—and ended at last. When classes were dismissed the Terrible Three came out of their classroom with a whoop of joy and dashed up to their study. There were parcels for all of them, their friends and relations having nobly come up to the scratch. The chums of Study No. 6 were equally well provided—especially Arthur Augustus. A huge packing-case of gear had come down for him, and a registered letter from his "governah" containing a ten-pound note. Figgins & Co. came over from the New House, and they also had a tale to tell of parcels received.

"We shall be jolly well fixed, take it all in all," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy. "And we shall be jolly well loaded, deah boy, in gettin' these things down to the camp."

"Can't be helped," said Tom Merry. "We can carry them. Where's your canoe?"

"It hasn't awvived yet. My governah made them send off these things in a huwwy, and the canoe is to follow to-morrow."

"Have you got that ten-pound note?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good. I dare say it will come in handy."

"We shall want a lot of grub," said Fatty Wynn. "Gussy had better hane over the note to me and I'll change it in the tuckshop and get the stuff."

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"Vewy good! I am much obliged to you, deah boy, for takin' the twouble."

Fatty Wynn grinned gleefully as he fingered the crisp tenner.

"Will you want any change out of this?" he asked.

"Bai Jove! Wathah!"

"Look here, Gussy isn't going to stand more than a couple of pounds," said Figgins. "We're all going to stand our whack, too."

"Pway excuse me, Figgins, I would weally like it to be my treat this time."

"Yes, but—"

"You would weally be confewwin' a favah on me, deah boy."

"We can't—"

"Yaas, wathah, I insist! Make it five, Wynn."

"Well, if you insise," said Figgins. "We'll let you have your way as it's a special occasion. We'll stand a big treat to you fellows when Marmaduke comes back. He's the only bloated millionaire in the New House, you see. Gussy, you're a good little ass, and you shall have your little way for once."

"Vewy good, Figgins; but I object to bein' chawactewised as an ass!"

"Let's have some grub and get off," said Herries. "We've got plenty to do to get the camp fixed up before dark. The evenings are beginning to draw in a bit now."

"Quite right. Where's Fatty?"

"Gone to change the tenner," grinned Figgins. "I expect he'll come back double width. Let's get these things done up into handy parcels. We shall want a garden fork and a spade and a rake for clearing the ground."

"Betwah have a lawn mowah, too, deah boys."

"Yes; I can see a tribe of Indians with a lawn mower," said Blake witheringly. "Why don't you suggest a sewing-machine, too?"

"But we want to clear the gwound."

"Too rough for a lawn mower, ass!" said Digby. "A pair of big shears would be handy, though. It will want a lot of clearing."

By the time the various implements and utensils had been gathered together, and the various paraphernalia had been fastened up in packages of a handy size, Fatty Wynn had returned with the provisions. He was staggering under the weight of two huge baskets, and several smears round his mouth indicated that he had already started operations on the contents of the same.

"Now we're off!" said Tom Merry.

Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of the school, met the juniors as they went downstairs. He smiled as he saw their burdens.

"You're starting for camp?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'll carry that tent for you, if you like, Blake, and you can help with the rest," said the stalwart Sixth-Former.

"I'm coming along."

"You, Kildare?"

Kildare laughed.

"I'm not coming to camp with you. But the Head has asked me to walk down with you to see that you are properly fixed."

"I say, Kildare, it's jolly good of you to come," said Blake.

"Though you'd rather be left alone!" laughed the captain of St. Jim's, as he put the folded tent over his broad shoulder.

"Oh, no, really. We shouldn't like a master to be sent along, or an interfering beast like Knox, but we'd be jolly glad to have you, Kildare. Look here," said Blake, in a burst of generosity, "if you like to camp out with us, Kildare, you can be chief, if you like."

The big Sixth-Former laughed again.

"That's very good of you, Blake, but I don't think I'll impose on you like that. But since you don't object, I'll give you a little advice and assistance in getting the camp to rights."

"We are all weally awfully obliged, Kildare," said D'Arcy.

"I wogard your conduct on the pwesent occasion as bein' wemarkably kind and vewy pwopah!"

"Thank you, D'Arcy!" said Kildare gravely.

The juniors, with the stalwart captain of St. Jim's at their head, left the school and set out for the selected site by the sloping bank of the Feeder. Kildare looked about him with an eye of approval as they reached the spot.

"You think this is a good place, Kildare?" Tom Merry asked anxiously.

"First rate," said Kildare cheerily.

"Vewy good! I was wight in lettin' you choose this place, deah boys."



"Collar him!" Reilly leapt upon the Grammarian and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did the same at the same moment from the other side. Carboy sprang aside, with the result that Reilly and D'Arcy ran right into one another's arms. "Bai Jove, I've got the wottah!" yelled D'Arcy. "Sure and I've got him!" shouted Reilly.

"And now to work," said the captain of St. Jim's. "I've only got an hour to spare!"

And, willingly enough, the juniors set to work under the direction of the Sixth-Former.

CHAPTER 13.

A Night Surprise!

KILDARE left Tom Merry & Co. at the end of the hour, but in that time a great deal had been done. A dozen active juniors, working hard under the orders of a sensible leader, could get through much. The ground had been cleared of bush and bramble, and a trench dug. The three tents had been set up and secured, and Kildare had seen that they were not likely to blow over if the wind rose in the night.

The hour had been well spent, and the juniors were looking tired but satisfied when Kildare said good-bye.

"Mind what you get up to, that's all," was Kildare's parting injunction. "Remember, the Head relies upon you to behave yourselves, and not do any damage, or anything you would not do at St. Jim's."

"He twists to our honah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity. "We are hardly likely to do anythin' that would be like abusing his faith in us, Kildare."

"Very good," said the senior. "Good-night—and mind you turn up in good time for morning lessons to-morrow!"

"Rely on us," said Blake.

"Good-night, Kildare!"

The captain of St. Jim's disappeared into the wood, and his footsteps died away. The sun was setting in the west, and a red glow came through the tree-tops, and was mirrored in the stream.

"By Jove, this is ripping!" said Tom Merry. "Better than sleeping in a dormitory, isn't it—eh?"

"Yes, rather! Nothing like camping out!"

"In the fine weather," said Lowther.

"Well, it's fine now, you croaker! And a little rain wouldn't hurt us, either, in these tents," said Blake. "Do you know, I fancy there will be room enough for thirteen of us in the tents, without building those small jahkahls."

"Hyahkahls," said Manners.

"Well, whatever they are. I think we shall have room enough. And it's getting dusk now, and we've got to gather wood for the camp-fire."

"And I'm jolly hungry!" said Fatty Wynn.

"It's colder here than it is indoors, too," said Figgins. "We can do with a fire. I say, are we going to keep watch to-night?"

"Oh, yes, rather!"

"I forgot to bring my bulldog," said Herries. "If one of you likes to cut across to the school, and—"

"Yes, I can see one of us doing it," said Blake. "I'm jolly glad you forgot the beast! He would keep us awake all night with his barking."

"He would let us know if any enemy were coming."

"Well, there won't be any enemy, so it doesn't matter. There's nobody in this wood of a night, except a poacher or two. They might think of stealing something, perhaps, but I suppose they wouldn't tackle a dozen of us."

"Rather not!"

"Get in the firewood, and Fatty Wynn can start the cooking."

"I'm quite ready," said Fatty Wynn, who was munching an apple for a start.

The fuel was soon collected, and the camp-fire was built. The woods were growing darker, and the faint, eerie sounds of a wood at night became audible in the stillness. There was something very lonely about the spot—something curious and uncanny in the thought that they were a couple of miles from the nearest human habitation, left to themselves with the night closing in upon them.

Figgins voiced the general feeling when he remarked that he was glad there were a lot of them.

The camp-fire burned up brightly, sending ruddy gleams

into the night. The cooking apparatus was all that could be desired, in the circumstances, and Fatty Wynn had taken care that nothing should be lacking in that direction. The Falstaff of the New House was soon busily at work in his shirt-sleeves, cooking an extremely substantial supper.

"Now for the war-paint!" said Blake cheerily.

While the cooking was proceeding the juniors donned the garb and war-paint of the Blackfeet. Without that the camp would not have seemed realistic.

"Ready!" announced Fatty Wynn.

"So are we!" said Tom Merry. "I say, you know, Redskins don't have their grub on plates, and I believe they don't use forks."

"Must be decent," said Blake. "Of course, we can't carry the idea out to its limit. Blessed if I'm going to eat bacon with my fingers, anyway!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors sat down on knolls and logs, or in the cropped grass, round the camp-fire to eat their supper.

It was quite dark now, and the only light came from the leaping, blazing fire. The thick branches overhead shut off most of the light from the twinkling stars, which were mirrored in the murmuring stream beside the camp. The fire, well-fed with branch and log, burned and blazed merrily, and the flare danced on the faces of the juniors, smeared with red and yellow ochre, with a strange effect.

A stranger sight had probably never been seen in the wood than the thirteen amateur Redskins camping there, and eating their supper round the fire. A stranger coming upon the scene suddenly might have imagined himself transported into a glade in the heart of an American forest, so realistic was the scene.

"By Jove, this is ripping!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"More bacon, Merry?"

"No, thanks!"

"There's a plum pudding."

"I'm finished, thanks, old son!"

"I'm not," said Blake. "I'll trouble you for some of that plum pudding, Fatty. You are a jolly good cook, my boy, and I wish we had you in the School House—only you'd be rather a trouble when grub was scarce."

"Bai Jove, this is about the best wheeza we've ever wheezed, I think," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I feel wathah dirtay with this paint on my face, and it is beginnin' to be a little chilly, but it's weally wippin'!"

"I'm getting sleepy," said Manners, with a yawn. "Surprising how work makes you tired, isn't it? So does a jolly good feed, I think."

"Well, your blankets are ready," said Digby.

"Good! I think I'll turn in."

And Manners was soon fast asleep, rolled up in blankets, with his feet to the fire. Fatty Wynn was the first to follow his example. Fatty Wynn had done full justice to the feed, and he was sleepy. He was soon in the arms of Morpheus.

"What about keeping watch?" said Blake.

"Well, I hardly think it's necessary," said Tom Merry. "You see, there can't possibly be any enemy, and so—"

"Well, that makes a difference, of course. But, really—"

"There wouldn't have been any need if we had brought my bulldog," remarked Herries.

"Well, you didn't bring it."

"Blake's chief of this tribe, I believe," remarked Kerr. "Suppose he keeps watch. A chief has to do all sorts of things a common-or-garden warrior doesn't."

"Good!" came a general chorus of agreement.

"Oh, rats!" said Blake warmly. "I'll keep first watch if you like. I'm not going to remain awake all night."

"Well, keep first watch, and then chuck it."

"It's not necessary."

"Yaas, wathah! I weally feel too fatigued to keep watch at all, deah boys."

"Come on, let's get to sleep! It will be all right."

"Oh, very well!" said Blake. "I yield to the majority." And the juniors turned in.

It would have been a close fit in the three tents for the whole party, but the fine night made two or three prefer the open air. Manners and Fatty Wynn were both sleeping by the fire, and Herries joined them there, and then Kerrish. The rest of the juniors went three to a tent, and found room enough.

They were very soon fast asleep.

The fire had been banked up high with fuel to make it last. It burnt up higher, and blazed brightly into the night, and then, as the wood was consumed, it gradually sank.

Lower and lower sank the fire, and deeper and thicker grew the shadows over the camp of the Redskins of St. Jim's.

At intervals a bright flame leaped up, making the dusk deeper when it fell again. But the juniors were sleeping soundly, and if strange and inexplicable sounds broke the silence of the camp, they did not hear them.

Tom Merry was dreaming. It seemed to him that there was something on his chest—that a weight was upon him which was growing heavier. He suddenly started, and awoke—awoke to find that it was not all a dream. There was something over him—something clinging and almost suffocating.

He put out his hand in amazement, and it was caught against the canvas of the tent. He realised what had happened. The tent was down, and the canvas was sprawled over the sleepers within.

"My hat!" murmured Tom Merry sleepily. "The tent's down! I wonder—"

There was cause for wonder. There was hardly a breath of wind, and the tent had been well secured under the supervision of Kildare. Unless the ropes had been cut from the pegs—And Tom Merry started at the idea. It was the only explanation, and it meant that there was an enemy in the camp.

He struggled up under the flopping canvas. There was a chuckle in the gloom.

"Hallo! They're awake, Frank!"

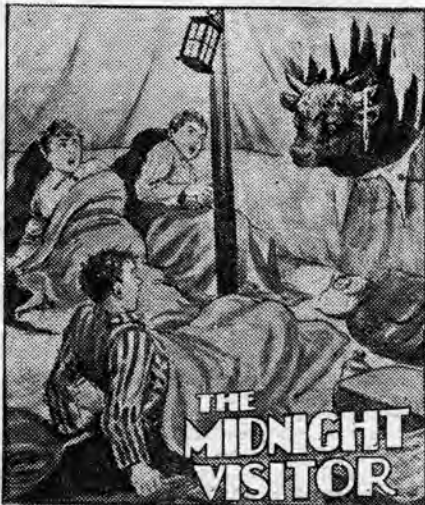
Tom Merry gave a jump.

"The Grammarians!"

He had recognised Carboy's voice. He struggled des-

(Continued on page 28.)

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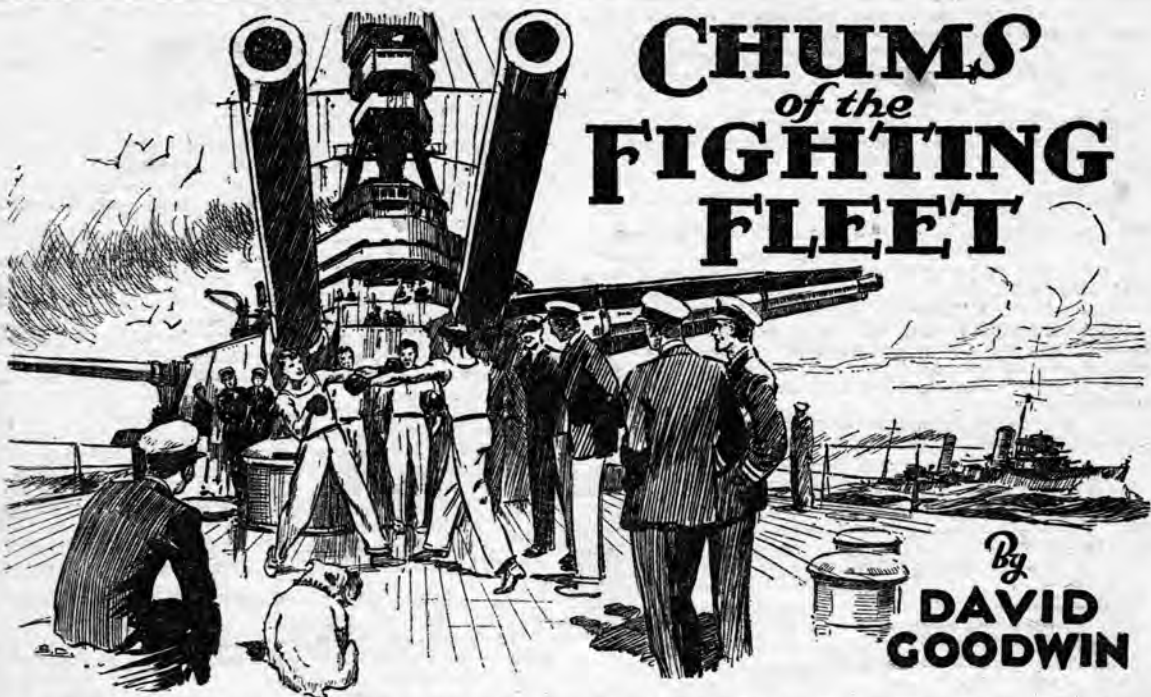
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Ned Hardy and Jinks, his pal, middies on the Victorious, are out to help Ralph, Ned's brother, clear himself from a charge of robbery, for which he was dismissed the Service. They believe Ralph was "framed" by Russian spies. In an attempt to capture Long Dennis, a notorious "couper" who sells illegal drinks to fishermen at sea, Ned is badly burned. Jinks captures three "coupers' ships and returns to port, where he is congratulated by the admiral. Later, he learns that Ned is recovering quickly.

The Threat of Simon Forbes!

JINKS got leave to see Ned, and ten minutes later both he and Watson were greeting Ned in the gunboat's cabin. They found him looking rather pale and sick, but sitting up in his berth.

"Here, sit down and tell us all about it!" cried Ned.

Jinks unfolded his tale. It did Ned more good than all the tonics in the medicine-chest. He became wildly excited as he listened to Jinks' report of the fight.

"It beats anything I've seen since I joined!" said Ned. "You made a splendid job of it, Vic, old chap!"

"It's the Merlin's men we owe it to," said Jinks. "They were great, especially Johnson an' Tom Sheriff!"

"They had a rare little leader, though, even if he isn't much bigger than a flagstaff!" said Watson. "I've got the fleet-surgeon coming over to see you, Hardy."

"I don't want him!" retorted Ned. "I'm going to get back to my job!"

The fleet-surgeon, however, made Ned lie up for three days, and then he was moved to his home in a hospital car. Jinks accompanied him.

Ned's tough constitution pulled him through rapidly. After a week at Briar's Hall he was able to get about again. The chums had ten days' pony-riding and trout-fishing on the Hardy estate.

Jinks enjoyed himself hugely, though he noticed that Captain Hardy was still very retiring and silent. His pride and love for his son were unbounded, but the old naval officer looked strangely sad and aged. He was wont to shut himself up alone for long periods, or went for lonely rides by himself on an ancient grey hunter, and the boys saw little of him.

"Your father doesn't seem quite himself, does he?" suggested Jinks.

Ned sighed.

"He's worried about poor old Ralph. Dad's just the same now as he was on the quarter-deck. My father turned him out and disowned him, you know; but he misses Ralph very badly. It's beastly for old Ralph, but I believe it's killing my father," said Ned miserably.

"A pity it can't be put right, and Ralph's innocence proved."

"I haven't given up hope of that," said Ned.

Their leave came to an end, and already they had had their summonses to attend the trial of the man who had led

the couper's crew of the burned Black Witch aboard the smack St. Jean.

All the men who were taken prisoners had already been committed for trial at Colchester Assizes, and it was there the boys had to go.

While at Ned's home they had little news of the outside world, but the two middies arrived at Colchester to find themselves famous. All the papers for some days had been full of accounts of the Merlin's cruise, the police court proceedings at Harwich, the adventures of Ned and Jinks, and the death of the notorious couper, Dennis Clegg.

The first case that came on at Colchester had nothing to do with that affair. To Ned's surprise the two men who had attacked him and Jinks in the Jezreel Temple outside Chatham were placed in the dock. By arrangement between the courts and the Admiralty they had been brought to the Colchester Assizes to be tried.

The Chatham Chicken and the Bromley Basher were both brought over as witnesses.

The first trial was very brief. The two Chatham prisoners pleaded guilty to assault with intent to commit robbery, and also confessed they had a grudge against the middies, and had decoyed them to the temple in order to pay it off. The young bruisers gave their evidence, as did the middies, and the men were sentenced to a year's hard labour each.

Ned and Jinks were surprised that nothing was said about the running down of the pinnace at Spithead. The prosecuting counsel, for some reason, ignored that case. The judge gave the men the stiffest term of hard labour he could for the assault.

Then came the case of the two Dutch smacks that had tried to capture the St. Jean, and been captured themselves by Jinks and his men. They were charged with firing on the British flag, which had been hoisted on a vessel properly and legally taken captive, under command of a British naval officer. They pleaded guilty. The captain of each smack received two years' imprisonment and the loss of his vessel; the members of the crew six months apiece. Nothing was said about Voroff & Co.

Next day came the more important case of the Black Witch's crew. Testimony was given by Ned and Simmons that Dennis Clegg had ordered Ned to be tied to the mast of the blazing vessel, and that Simon Forbes and another man—who had afterwards been shot—had carried out the

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order. Forbes was therefore charged, not only with illicit liquor-selling, and resisting men of the Royal Navy in the execution of their duty; he was also indicted for abetting and assisting in an attempted murder.

The jury found him guilty, and the judge forthwith sentenced Simon Forbes to fourteen years' penal servitude, and gave the rest of the crew varying terms—from a few months to a year or more of hard labour.

Simon Forbes, when he heard his sentence, turned in the dock with a roar like a bull, and shook his fist at Ned, who was standing in the well of the court.

"Ay, they can gaol me or string me up, if it pleases 'em!" he cried. "But there's those left of us who'll put paid to you yet, you little beggar!"

The warders sprang at the man, who, shouting out oaths and imprecations, was overpowered and taken to the cells. When the ruffian had been removed the judge turned to the two midshipmen.

"Young gentlemen," he said, "you have assisted the course of justice with great credit, and I wish to say publicly, in regard to the pluck and resource you have shown at sea in dealing with these dangerous ruffians, and the way you have brought them to book, the Navy and the country may well be proud of you!"

A chorus of cheers from the whole court answered him, and not even the courthouse usher tried to silence them.

Warning!

"**S**UFFERING Susan!" said Ned, as the middies walked away from the court arm-in-arm. "That's made a pretty clean sweep of a big batch of Voroff & Co.'s choicest blackguards! Wasn't that big fellow Forbes in a boil?"

"Fourteen years!" said Jinks. "And remembering that he tried to roast you alive, and blow out whatever brains I've got, I'm not shedding any tears over him."

They went to their hotel and celebrated the occasion with a dinner. Afterwards the boys strolled out into the hotel lounge, where they found a party who had got hold of the piano and were getting up a sing-song. The two middies were at once recognised as the heroes of the North Sea expedition, and were made to join the impromptu concert. They had a rollicking time for two hours.

When the musical party broke up and the chums strolled out to the hall, somebody passed close behind them and said quietly:

"Meet me in the sitting-room upstairs in two minutes, Ned."

Ned gave a suppressed start and a half-glance at the speaker, who had turned away and was mounting the staircase.

"Who's that?" whispered Jinks.

"Keep it to yourself," said Ned under his breath; "it's my brother Ralph. He's been lying low here at Colchester all through the trial, watching the game. I'll bet he'll have some big news for me."

They strolled out to the street doors to avert any suspicion, in case they had been watched; and presently, when the coast was clear, they made their way upstairs.

Ralph Hardy, cool as ever, a twinkle in his eyes, was awaiting them in the little smoking-room alone. The middies and the ex-officer exchanged a warm greeting.

"Glad to see you, Jinks!" said Ralph. "I want to congratulate you chaps on having hit Voroff & Co. I never had such sport as that when I was a scottie—and we were reckoned pretty hot stuff on the old Jupiter, too. Great work, kids!"

"You didn't come here just to tell us that, though," said Jinks, laughing. "What's the news, sir? I'll bet you've worried Voroff & Co. quite as much as we have."

Ralph Hardy threw away his cigarette.

"Well, the truth is I have made things pretty hot for them; and that's what I want to see you about," he said. "They've made two attempts to get rid of me since I saw you last. They failed rather badly, as things turned out. But I'm in a tight place now, all the same—a very tight place. I've a notion that Voroff & Co. are going to set the police on me."

"The police!"

"Yes. Their move now, I believe, is to get me into gaol and out of the way; and that they'd find a lot safer than trying to murder me."

"How?" exclaimed Ned in astonishment.

"You know that it was Voroff's men who got me cashiered and turned out of the Navy? They managed to throw the blame of that robbery of £5,000 from the 'Victorious' safes on me. They arranged things so that I should seem guilty."

"You remember that the court martial declared I was not proved guilty of being mixed up in the robbery. But they said I was criminally negligent, and ought to have prevented it, and turned me out of the Navy."

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"The under-paymaster, a man named Briarley, gave most of the evidence that the court martial condemned me on. You remember Briarley, Jinks? He was sacked at the same time as me. Much he cared for that! Briarley was in Voroff's pay; his job was to get me condemned."

"Then Briarley lied at the court martial!" cried Jinks.

"He tried to get you gaol'd as well as cashiered?"

"Just that," said Ralph. "And I had a narrow shave of prison, as well as the sack. Now, the police have never caught the real thieves who robbed the safe and got the money away. I'm still under the shadow of that. The police, in spite of the court martial, have always suspected me. Only they've got no evidence to go on. Voroff & Co.'s agents mean to fix things now so that I shall get run in for the robbery, and very likely be found 'Guilty.' I know only too well that they've a good chance of doing it, too."

"But you don't mean," cried Ned, aghast, "that these spies can get you into trouble with the police?"

"The police!" said Ralph. "They know nothing about Voroff & Co. The police are nearly as pigheaded about such things as the Admiralty. We fellows on Secret Service have to take what we get without whining. To win back my name and my place in the Navy was the one thing I'd hoped for," he concluded.

"Victor and I will help you get it back!" said Ned.

"Count me in!" said Jinks.

"I'm afraid it's a much bigger job than you two could manage," said Ralph, "sharp as you are. But what I came for is to warn you particularly to keep clear of Rotterdam."

"Why, the Victorians will never go near Rotterdam, anyway!" exclaimed Ned. "There isn't water for her there."

"The Victorious sails for the Hague on Tuesday; she is taking the First Sea Lord there," said Ralph. "She will lay out at sea, off the mouth of the Scheldt; Rotterdam's fifteen miles up the river. So there'll be no need for you to go to Rotterdam. The Flagship may send a picket-boat or a launch up there, but you aren't likely to be sent. If you are, don't go ashore."

"Why not?"

"Because Rotterdam is the headquarters of Voroff & Co.," said Ralph, "and I'm not going to have you kids running your heads into a trap there! They'll get hold of you and finish you, as sure as a gun, if you set foot ashore there!"

"Will they?" was all Ned replied.

"They owe you too much not to pay it when the chance occurs," said Ralph. "Besides, Rotterdam is about the toughest port in Western Europe. You've had wonderful luck on the North Sea, but so sure as you shove your hands right into the hornet's-nest you'll be stung to death. Now mind that! I've come especially to warn you; for you can do no good at Rotterdam, and will be pretty certain to get nabbed if you go poking round in that Heaven-forsaken place! And I'd never forgive myself if anything happened to you."

Ralph glanced at his watch hurriedly.

"Nearly eleven!" he exclaimed. "I've got a most important case to see to, and only five minutes to cover a mile in. Good-bye, Ned! Good-bye, Jinks!" He shook hands with both of them warmly and made for the door. "Don't take it to heart, Ned, if they do manage to pip me. And, above all, bear my warning in mind."

He was gone in a flash, leaving the two middies staring at each other.

"Ned," said Jinks, "your brother is in a tighter place than he cares to tell us."

"Just what I think," returned Ned. "And I don't care twopence about Rotterdam being too hot for us. If we see half a chance of taking a hand in the game, and perhaps giving Ralph a bit of help at the right time, by gum, we'll take it! It's Voroff & Co. against Ralph and ourselves now. I tell you what, it'd just about kill the old dad if Ralph were landed in prison over that vile robbery. He'd look on a thing like that as a lot worse than being killed."

"Your brother's a brick! But he isn't going to scare us off the game."

"I believe there's a way to clear his name and get him back into the Fleet!" exclaimed Ned. "Shake on it!"

And the two middies, convinced that they could look after the safety of a smart Secret Service officer nearly double their age better than he could do it himself, shook hands solemnly, and went upstairs to prepare a plan.

The Warning Disobeyed!

THE bugles were blowing, and the crew hurrying to quarters, as the Victorious prepared for sea a day later; she steamed out past the Cork Lightship in the first blink of the morning sun. Gathering speed swiftly, the great battle-cruiser headed straight across the North Sea towards Holland.

"It's good to get back to the real game again," said Ned,

sniffing the salt air. "I've never been to the Hague. What's it like?"

"Oh, not bad! The Dutchies are decent enough. It's the all-nation mongrels up the river that are such sweeps. I hope we shan't be kept hanging about at the Hague all the time, though."

They sighted the low, rolling white sandhills of the Dutch coast in a few hours' time, and the Victorious anchored off the Hague, saluting a Dutch cruiser that lay there. There was an exchange of visits between the two warships, and afterwards Admiral Raglan's galley took him ashore.

None of the gun-room got any shore leave; it was considered they had had enough at Harwich to last them a long time. The gun-room was annoyed about it.

"There's some League of Nations game going on at the Hague," said Keppel. "And our admiral's got some balancing to do with one or two big-wigs who came here last night. It's said the King may come over in the Royal yacht."

"I'd like to salute the King. It'd cheer him to know he'd got one efficient naval officer, at any rate," said Jinks. "What are they manning the big launch for?" he added, as the largest steam-vessel the Victorious carried was lowered and brought to the boom.

"It's going up to Rotterdam in charge of Number One," answered Keppel. "He's taking an invitation to the Mayor of Rotterdam to come down and have a blow-out on board here with the admiral."

Ned and Jinks went to the side and enviously watched the big launch being manned. She was off to Rotterdam, and there was not a chance of their going with her. Presently she departed, with Lieutenant Buckley and a full crew in charge. He took a petty officer with him, but no midshipmen.

"What are you looking so sick about?" said Keppel, strolling up to the chums. "Don't want to go to Rotterdam, do you? It's a rotten long trip up the river, and a dirty hole when you get there."

"We want to go, all the same," said Ned, "for reasons of our own."

"Well, ask Hart. I believe he's going up in the big launch to-morrow with a full crew, and he might take one of you."

The chums were grateful to Keppel for the tip. They applied to Hart.

"Rotterdam?" said Hart. "Take both of you if you like. We'll have to stay overnight. I've got several things to settle there, and the crew of the launch have got an invitation to stay at the Dutch naval barracks for the night. Admiral wants 'em to go. You chaps can put up at the hotel with me."

"Great!" said Ned. "That's fine!"

"If you come you'll have to make yourselves useful," said Hart. "We're taking some ship-boys and young seamen, and they won't meet the Dutch sailors till late in the evening. They'll be adrift in the town all that time, and as it's a tough place I want somebody to keep an eye open to see they don't get into trouble."

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YOUR EDITOR.

"Oh, we'll do that all right!" said Jinks.

Sub-Lieutenant Hart looked at the middies and scratched his nose.

"It's rather like setting Satan to watch Old Nick to tell you two to keep anybody out of mischief," he said. "I was going to take a petty officer, but you'll have to go in his place. Don't get me into a row about it. And you'll have to do it tactfully, for the men won't like it much."

"We'll uphold the—er—dignity of the Service, sir," said Jinks piously. "You can trust us."

The chums went below delighted.

"We shall make Rotterdam now!" said Ned, chuckling. "Just where my brother told us not to go," he added as an afterthought.

"It's no use Ralph's getting dithery about us," said Jinks. "I suppose he's back at Chatham again. We'd better get ready."

"I'm backing our luck all through. Remember Voroff & Co. hang out at Rotterdam."

When preparations were being made for the start next day Howard, one of the sub-lieutenants, approached Ned.

"I say, Hardy," he said, "will you be a sport and bring me a couple of boxes of cigars from Rotterdam? You can get 'em there for sixteen bob a hundred. I'll give you the name of the brand. You can get them at any tobacconist's."

Ned promised; he had rather a liking for Howard. Half an hour later the launch—with a crew of a dozen young seamen, Hart, and the two middies—was speeding up the grey, briny waters of the Scheldt. It was late when Rotterdam came in sight, and the launch ran up to one of the Government quays.

"A fine place in its way, this," said Jinks, impressed at the towering spires of the cathedral and churches, and the acres of docks and shipping.

"Yes; it's got some very fine quarters, and some very low-down and tough ones," said Hart. "You take my advice and keep to the decent part of the town. The toughest street is called Ness; you'd better steer clear of that, wherever else you may go."

He landed his crew and took the middies aside.

"Look here," said Hart, "I've got to go off on this message of the admiral's, and shan't be at the hotel till late. Here's the name of it. I'll meet you there to-night. About this crew of ours. Morley, the leading seaman, is looking after them. Really I ought to have brought a petty officer, but then I'd have had to leave one of you chaps behind; and Morley's all right, only he's a bit excitable, and a hot fellow for a scrap. Just keep a sort of windward eye on 'em till the Dutch lieutenant meets 'em at nine o'clock. The thing ought to have been arranged better. It isn't many snotties I'd entrust with a job like this, but you two are up to snuff. Don't go playing the fool."

The midshipmen gave their assurance on this latter point and started away. Jinks was the only one of the party who had been in Rotterdam before, and was able to act as guide.

The seamen from the Victorious would have been very sour at having their shore leave overlooked by midshipmen, but Ned and Jinks were such universal favourites on the ship that the crew were not sorry to be with them. Jinks' knowledge of the place was useful. He showed them all the way to a place where a capital cheap feed was to be had, with a band playing and a variety show and other luxuries of the sort. It was nearly dark when they emerged; the bluejackets were spreading out along the street, Ned and Jinks walking behind.

"I call it rot!" said Ned. "Our fellows don't want shepherding about like this. Still, as Hart said so—"

"If you ask me—" Jinks suddenly broke off and gripped his comrade's arm. "Did you see that?" he said in a low, quick tone. "The chap who passed behind us? He looked straight at me before he turned up that side street. I got a glimpse of him in the restaurant, but thought I must be mistaken. After him—quick! We must see where he goes!"

"Who was it?" exclaimed Ned, as Jinks turned short and hurried back.

"Briarley; Voroff's spy! The paymaster who got your brother Ralph cashiered!"

In a moment the launch's crew were forgotten; the middies were hurrying silently after the ex-paymaster of the Victorious, who had vanished round the corner not ten seconds before.

(Where will Briarley lead Ned and Jinks to? They are in Rotterdam, the stronghold of Voroff and Co.! Amazing adventures lie ahead of the two middies! Don't miss next week's thrilling instalment!)

ST. JIM'S UNDER CANVAS!

(Continued from page 24.)

perately to throw off the clinging canvas, and shouted to his comrades to wake.

Other shouts were ringing through the night now.

"Collar them!"

"Down with St. Jim's!"

"Hurrah!"

"Wake up!" shouted Tom Merry. "Grammar School cads! Buck up, St. Jim's!"

"Yaas, wathah!" gasped D'Arcy, struggling with the canvas.

"Ow!" gasped Digby. "Keep your foot off my nose, ass!"

"I am weally soggy, Dig, but—"

"Let's get out!" gasped Tom Merry.

They struggled out of the overturned tent. But it was only to emerge into the hands of the foe.

A dozen hands grasped them, and they were dragged down, fighting furiously.

"Shoulder to shoulder!" yelled Figgins.

The fire blazed up as a Grammarian stirred it. A wild and fitful light played over the camp. It revealed the juniors of St. Jim's, all awake now, fighting desperately against the overwhelming Grammarians.

There were twenty or more fellows at the back of Frank Monk, and they had the advantage of a surprise on their side.

Some of the Redskins were already prisoners, held fast by the grinning Grammarians, and it was evident that the rest had no chance.

"Sock it to them!" roared Frank Monk. "Go it, Grammar School!"

"Hurrah!"

"Buck up, St. Jim's!"

The juniors fought gallantly, trampling through the camp over embers and piled fuel, blankets and scattered utensils. It was a desperate fight, but the odds were too great. Once the Saints rallied, and the Grammarians were driven back; but they came on again, irresistible in numbers.

"Collar them!" rang out Frank Monk's voice. "We'll march them back to St. Jim's in that rig. Don't let them get away!"

Tom Merry snapped his teeth.

"We've got to hook it," he muttered. "They're too many for us."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Come on, then," said Blake savagely. "I—I never fore-saw this, you know. But we're all going—or none. Sink or swim together."

"Right-ho!"

The juniors of St. Jim's had struggled together. In a body, still presenting a bold front to the enemy, they retreated from the camp. The Grammarians, who had not come through the fight scatheless, were content to let them go. They sent a yell of derisive triumph after the retreating juniors that made their blood boil. But there was nothing for it but retreat.

"We can't go to St. Jim's," growled Blake. "If we turn up there, licked, we shall be chipped to death. The Grammar School cads can't stay out long, anyway."

And the discomfited Redskins, lurking in the bushes, watched the enemy in possession of their camp. The Grammarians, too, knew that they could not stay long. But they made the most of their time. They wrecked the tents and scattered everything in all directions. They turned the orderly camp into a pandemonium, and the clothes of the juniors were carefully mixed up and scattered.

Upon the best of the provisions Frank Monk and his friends feasted in sight of the lurking Blackfeet. When they were satisfied with the havoc they had wrought the enemy retreated, and the camp was left deserted.

Then the Redskins came back. They looked upon the scene of wreckage, that made them almost want to rush at once upon the track of the foe for vengeance. But it would have been useless, and, as Tom Merry philosophically remarked, they had to grin and bear it.

"This wouldn't have happened if we had been prepared," said Blake disconsolately.

"No," said Figgins. "We'd better have a new chief next time."

"We'll be more on our guard next time, anyway," said Tom Merry. "It was the surprise that did it. There's no disgrace in being licked by two to one. We'll make them sing small for it, all the same. Let's turn in."

The juniors set the camp to rights as well as they could by the light of the flickering fire, and turned in. But there was little more sleep that night for the amateur Redskins, and even Blake could not consider as a success that first night in camp.

THE END.

(Another grand open-air yarn in next Wednesday's Gem. Read "THE RIVAL CAMPERS!" next week.)

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