

SPLENDID LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL ADVENTURE YARN INSIDE!

The GEM 2^D



The RIVAL



Cowboys v. Redskins in the Battle of Rylcombe Woods! When Tom Merry & Co. raided the Grammarians' camp they little thought of what was happening in their own!

CHAPTER 1.

D'Arcy Puts His Foot In It.

"**P**HEW!"

"What's the matter, Tom?"

"There's going to be a row."

Tom Merry spoke with conviction. The Terrible Three—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther—were strolling under the old elms in the quadrangle at St. Jim's, when the sound of wheels on the drive made them glance up.

A motor rolled up to the Head's house, and in the car Tom Merry caught a glimpse of a little, white-whiskered gentleman.

"You know whom that is, I suppose, Monty?"

"I didn't see anything but a silk hat," said Monty Lowther. "Who is it?"

"Dr. Monk."

Manners and Lowther whistled simultaneously. Dr. Monk was the headmaster of Rylcombe Grammar School, between which and St. Jim's a keep rivalry existed, which sometimes took the form of open warfare. On a previous occasion a master had come over from the Grammar School to complain of the endless "rows" between the Saints and the Grammarians. And the Terrible Three jumped to the

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natural conclusion that Dr. Monk's visit had the same object.

"I say, this is rotten," said Tom Merry, after a pause. "Of course, it's the fearful rows we've had with the Grammar School chaps over that Redskin wheeze that has brought him here. Though, as a matter of fact, we had more to complain of than the Grammar School cads."

"I should say so!" exclaimed Manners warmly—"as they surprised our camp at night, and wrecked it, and scoffed our grub."

"All the same, there was bound to be a row if Dr. Monk heard of it," said Lowther, with a shake of the head.

"We had the Head's permission to camp out. But the Grammar School cads must have broken bounds at night—and that's serious."

"Well, we didn't ask them to."

"That's so; and I really don't see what Dr. Monk should come here complaining for. Maybe he's going to ask the Head to put his foot down on the Redskin wheeze."

Tom Merry knitted his brows.

A dozen juniors of St. Jim's had camped out for the night in Rylcombe Wood, with the permission of the Head, and they had hoped to obtain further leave; but a complaint from the Grammar School master was pretty certain to nip

CAMPERS!



By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

that in the bud. It might be unreasonable of the Grammar School headmaster, but the Head of St. Jim's was most likely to accede to his wishes.

"What's the twouble, deah boys?"

It was the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the School House. The elegant Fourth-Former adjusted his monocle and stared at the troubled faces of the chums of the Shell.

"Anythin' w'ong?" he went on. "If there's any little difficulty your bwains are not quite up to dealing with, you know, I shall be vewy pleased to assist you with advice. I am always willin' to help you youngstahs."

"Oh, rats!" said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"That's Dr. Monk," explained Tom Merry. "He's come over from the Grammar School to complain about our rumpus with his kids last night."

"Bai Jove! That is wathah sewious, you know."

"It may mean the stoppage of the camping out for good," said Tom Merry. "I don't see what we can do, either."

"Something must be done to avert such a catastwophe," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "Bai Jove, I've got an ideah! Let's appeal to Dr. Monk."

"What good would that do?" grunted Monty Lowther.

"It might do a gweat deal of good, Lowthah. My ideah is to talk to him in a friendly way, and put it to him as an old sport, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I weally think it's wathah a good ideah, deah boys. If you like to back me up, I'll go and speak to him now, before he goes in."

"I think I'd better do the speaking," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "I could put it a bit more concisely and sensible."

"I weally fail to see anythin' of the kind. On the contrary, as the most sensible person pwesent, it would undoubtedly be bettah for me to do the explainin'. Pway follow me, deah boys, or it will be too late."

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy hurried after the car with as much speed as was consistent with elegance and dignity.

The chums of the Shell followed him, grinning. The car had just stopped outside the Head's house, and Dr. Monk was alighting.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy put on a spurt and arrived on the spot panting.

"Pway excuse me, Dr. Monk!"

The Grammar School master looked round. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was bowing, silk hat in hand.

"Pway excuse me," repeated Arthur Augustus. "I have taken the freeddom to address you, as the mattah is wathah important."

"Dear me!" said Dr. Monk. "You wish to speak to me, my little man?"

Arthur Augustus turned pink.

For the swell of the School House to be addressed as "my little man" was a cruel blow to his dignity; but Arthur Augustus bore it with only a slight wince.

"Yaas, wathah!" he said. "I am acquainted with the object of your visit heah, you see, my dear sir, and—"

"Dear me!"

"And undah the ciros of the case—"

"How can you possibly know what is my object in visiting Dr. Holmes?" the Grammar School master exclaimed, in amazement.

"I am wathah a keen chap, you see," explained D'Arcy. "I have jumped to a cowwect conclusion. It is in wewefence to the Wedskin business."

"That is quite correct; but I am really unable to understand how you could possibly guess—"

"I judge by the ciros, sir. The Gwammawians waided our camp in Wylcombe Wood last night."

"What?"

Tom Merry made signs to Arthur Augustus to be silent. But the swell of the School House did not even observe them.

"The Gwammah School cads waided our camp last night," he repeated; "and I pwesume that this ciros has come to your knowledge, my deah sir, and that you—"

"Do you mean to say that there were boys belonging to school out of bounds last night?" exclaimed Dr. Monk.

D'Arcy started.

"Bai Jove! Didn't you know, sir?"

"No, I certainly did not."

"Then I am afwaid I have wathah put my foot in it,"

murmured the swell of St. Jim's. "I have given the wottahs away, bai Jove!"

Dr. Monk smiled slightly.

"You have certainly given them away, as you call it," he remarked. "Tell me who the boys were, D'Arcy."

D'Arcy shook his head.

"I can scarcely do that, sir, without a bweach of honah, I put it to you, as one gentleman to anothah."

"Ha, ha, ha—I mean, yes, certainly."

"You see, sir, I thought you had come ovah with wefewence to the wow," explained D'Arcy. "I think I have a wight to ask you not to make use of information given you undah misappwehension. I was goin' to appeal to you not to make a complaint to Dr. Holmes, as that would vewy pwobably cause me and my fwriends gweat twouble and inconvenience."

"But I have no intention of making any complaint to Dr. Holmes."

"Bai Jove, then I was mistaken—I mean Tom Mewwy was mistaken. If you had weflected on the mattah, Tom Mewwy, you might have known that Dr. Monk was not the sort of person to go awound makin' complaints."

"Ass!" muttered Tom Merry. "You must excuse D'Arcy, sir. He can't help being several sorts of an ass!"

"I wufuse to be chawatewised as severals sorts of an ass. I admit I was labouwin' undah a slight misappwehension, and as Dr. Monk said that he had come here in wefewence to the Wedskin affair—"

"That is true," said Dr. Monk. "But it was no intention of mine to make any complaint, and I was not aware that I had anything to complain about."

And Dr. Monk entered the House.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned to the Terrible Three, who were glaring at him wrathfully. The School House swell was looking injured.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"You uttah ass!"

"You shrieking idiot!" said Monty Lowther.

"You—you—oh, there isn't a word," said Manners.

"I wufuse to be alluded to as an ass or a shrieking idiot," said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "It was all Tom Mewwy's fault. He told me—"

"What does it matter what I told you, ass? You have let the cat out of the bag now."

"I natuwallly concluded—"

"Naturally, as you are a screaming duffer, I suppose."

"Nothin' of the sort. Dr. Monk said he had come ovah in wefewence to the Redskin business."

"By Jove, that's curious, too!" exclaimed Lowther. "If he hasn't come over to complain, I'm blessed if I know what he has come about."

"It's curious," said Tom Merry, nodding. "I don't see why he should come in reference to that, if he hasn't any complaints to make."

"You see, deah boys, I—"

"Oh ring off, Gussy! You've put your foot in it, and very likely got Frank Monk and Lane and Carboy and the rest into a fearful row for breaking bounds."

"I wegard that as extremewly impwob. As a gentleman, Dr. Monk cannot make use of any information given him undah a misappwehension."

"Ass!"

"I wufuse to be called an ass. I insist upon bein' tweated with pwopah respect, or I shall have no alternative but to administrah a feahful thwashin'—"

But the Terrible Three were walking away, and the rest of the School House swell's eloquence was wasted on the desert air.

CHAPTER 2.

Great Expectations!

"TAGGLES, old dear!"

Taggles, the School House porter of St. Jim's, looked up, with a grunt. It was Blake, of the Fourth, who addressed him, with an expansive smile. But Blake's smile had no potency as far as Taggles was concerned. He only grunted.

"Taggles, my son, is there a parcel for me?"

"No," said Taggles, "there hain't!"

"Oh, come! Think again, Taggles!"

"There hain't a parcel for me!"

"Taggles, my infant, I am afraid you are mistaken. I wrote particularly to my governor to explain to him that I wanted some blankets and tent-canvas and rope, and a few other things, for camping out. Therefore, there must be a parcel for me."

"There hain't!"

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Blake looked at Herries and Digby, and Herries and Digby looked at Blake.

"Rather inconsiderate of your governor, Blake," remarked Digby. "He might have known you were in a hurry for the things."

"Well, he's sent one lot, and perhaps he thinks I can do without any more," said Blake. "Parents don't understand the number of things a boy wants. Now, I want a heap of things I never get, you know."

"Same here," said Digby, with feeling. "I've written to my governor to ask him to get me a patent cooking-stove for the camp, and I've got a sort of presentiment that he won't send it. Is there a parcel for me, Taggles?"

"No, there hain't!" said Taggles.

"Well, that's rather mean of Sir Robert Digby, after the way we fed him up when he was here," said Blake. "These governors are all the same."

Herries chuckled.

"You should be satisfied with asking for little things, and then you might get 'em," he remarked. "I've asked my uncle for just a small Canadian canoe."

"And has he sent it?"

"I expect so. Is there a canoe for me, Taggles?"

"There's a canoe," said Taggles, "but it's addressed to Master D'Arcy."

"Oh, that's Gussy's one," said Blake. "Your uncle hasn't played up after all, Herries, old man. You might as well have asked for a steam-launch or a motor-boat."

"Blessed if I understand it!" said Herries. "I told him I wanted it very specially."

"Ha ha, ha! Perhaps he doesn't grasp the importance of it, you know. Hallo, you Shell-fish, what do you want?"

"Parcels!" said Tom Merry, coming up to the door of the porter's lodge with Manners and Lowther. "We're all expecting some."

"I've asked my people to send me a tent," said Manners. "Has it come, Taggles?"

"Has wot come?"

"A tent for me."

"No, it hain't!"

"Quite sure? I told them I particularly wanted it to arrive to-day, and I know the carrier has been. Are you sure there isn't a tent for me, Taggles?"

"Yes, I ham, Master Manners."

"Never mind, you shall have a corner of mine," said Monty Lowther.

"You haven't one, have you?"

"I've asked my uncle to send one. Is it here yet, Taggles?"

"There hain't nothin' for you."

"If the peculiar vagaries of your grammar were not a byword, Taggles, I should take your words as implying that there is something for me," said Lowther.

The porter grunted.

"If there's nothing, I suppose the tent hasn't arrived," said Lowther. "It's rather careless of my uncle, as I explained to him that it was important."

Tom Merry laughed.

"There seems to be an epidemic of carelessness among our people at home," he remarked. "Still, I'm pretty certain there's something for me."

"Don't be too sure," said Blake.

"Oh, I had a letter from my old governess this morning, saying she was sending me a lot of things that would be useful in the camp," said Tom Merry. "She's coming down to inspect the camp, too, when we've got it fixed. Is there a parcel for me, Taggy?"

"There is," said Taggles shoving into view a brown-paper parcel tightly tied up with cord.

Tom Merry looked at it.

"Is that all?"

"That's all."

"My hat!" said Lowther. "There isn't much there to camp out with whatever it is. I think I can guess what it contains, too."

"What do you think?"

"Bottles of medicine, and cod-liver oil, and Bones' Pale Pills for Purple People," grinned Lowther.

"Oh, rot!" said Tom Merry uneasily.

"Bai Jove, that would be wathah wotten!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, joining the group of juniors as Lowther spoke. "I say, Taggles, deah boy, has my canoe come?"

"Yes; 'ere it is."

"Anything else?"

"No."

"Are you sure there is not a large-sized hampah for me?"

"Yes, I ham."

"That is wathah cuwious," said D'Arcy, looking perplexed. "I particularly instructed my people at home to send me a complete set of camping-out wequisites."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "The old folks at home are getting careless, that's what it is. We're all in the same boat."

"I wegard it as wathah beastlay, you know. I—Pway don't smack me on the shouldah in the wuff way, Figgins. It startles me, and sends me into a fluttah, and it also wumples my jacket."

Figgins & Co., of the New House, had arrived on the scene. Figgins, the long-limbed chief of the New House juniors, was beaming.

"I think it's going to be all right," he said. "We shall get permission to go into camp for a couple of days. Monteith thinks so."

"Good!" said Tom Merry.

"Oh, I'm pretty certain about that!" said Kerr, the Scottish partner in the New House Co. "I made a particular point about its arriving to-day. What is there for me, Taggles?"

"Nothing."

"Eh?"

"There's nothing for you, and I wish you wouldn't come worritin' an honest man on a 'ot afternoon!" growled Taggles.

"What honest man are you alluding to?" asked Kerr politely. "I haven't worried one that I know of, Taggles. I haven't worried anybody except yourself."

"I'm speakin' of myself, you young varmint!" roared Taggles, growing purple.



"Chuck him out!" "I wefuse—! Ow—grrr—owh—grrr—oh!" D'Arcy disappeared into the passage and the next moment he found himself reclinng on the floor. The juniors blocked up the doorway and made it impossible for the indignant swell of the School House to return.

"What have you got there, Merry?"

"I don't know yet; I haven't opened it."

"Well, I must say, you don't seem curious to know what's in your parcel," said Figgins. "I'm rather eager to see mine. Where is it, Taggles?"

"Where is what, Master Figgins?"

"My parcel."

"What parcel?"

"The one the carrier brought for me to-day."

"Which the carrier hain't brought one for you."

"Eh? I'm expecting quite a large hamper, containing—Are you sure it hasn't come?" asked Figgins, looking perplexed.

"Yes, I ham," said the porter sourly.

"Well, that's rotten," said Figgins. "I particularly impressed upon my people that I wanted the list of things I sent them to-day, without fail."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see that there's anything to laugh at," said Figgins. "I wonder whether your parcel has come, Kerr."

"Oh, I see! You have a poetic imagination, Taggles!"

"Cheeky himps!"

"Oh, don't get waxy, Taggles!" said Fatty Wynn, the Welsh partner in the Co. "Just hand me over my parcel!"

"There hain't a parcel for you."

"There must be. I asked my people to send me a supply of preserved grub of various kinds for camping-out, and I wrote twice to make sure. Both the letters can't have miscarried, so there must be a parcel for me."

"There hain't."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at, Blake. This is a rather serious matter. I was expecting a jolly good hamper."

"Ha, ha, ha! We've all been expecting something," grinned Blake; "and all that has arrived is that parcel for Tom Merry."

Fatty Wynn cast a covetous eye on Tom Merry's parcel. The hero of the Shell had not opened it. He did not look particularly anxious to do so. He knew of old the little ways of Miss Priscilla Fawcett.

"I say, what have you go there, Merry?" asked the fat Fourth-Former. "Why don't you open your parcel?"

"Oh, there's no hurry!"

"If we've all been expecting parcels, and all been disappointed, the least you can do is to share yours with us," said Fatty Wynn.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Oh, I don't mind if I do, Fatty! You can have your whack if you like. I haven't the least objection."

"Well, call that decent of you, Merry. I haven't had tea yet, and I could just do with a snack, you know. I suppose it will be sweets or chocolates," said Fatty Wynn, eyeing the parcel. "Shall I open it for you?"

"Certainly."

Fatty Wynn cut the string and unwrapped the paper, taking the parcel on his knees, on the bench outside Taggles' lodge. There was plenty of wrapping round the contents of the parcel, but when the contents came to light, they did not seem worth the trouble to Fatty Wynn.

"My only hat!" gasped Fatty.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther. "I thought as much!"

The disgusted Fatty held up a bottle of cod-liver oil. There were two other bottles, one containing Silvery Syrup for Peaky Patients, and the other Lovely Liniment for Little Limbs. There was also an assortment of boxes of pills and powders. The fat junior gave a sniff.

"Well, of all the rot!"

"You can have as much as you like," grinned Tom Merry. "Don't spare the cod-liver oil, old chap. I don't want any."

"Tuck into the Silvery Syrup," said Monty Lowther. "You can have it all. We're not greedy."

"Take a dozen or so of the Terra-cotta Tabloids for Tired Toddlers," advised Manners. "They'll make a new porpoise of you!"

"You can take this beastly rubbish, Merry."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Not at all, Fatty. They're yours."

"I don't want the bosh."

"Bury it, then. I've given it to you, and I'm not going to take back my gifts," said Tom Merry generously.

Fatty wrapped the brown paper round the things and shoved the parcel under the bench.

"Taggles can have them," he remarked. "That was rather a rotten joke to play on a chap, Tom Merry. Under the circumstances, I think you can't do less than come to the tuckshop and stand something decent all round."

"I don't mind if I do," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Come on, Taggles, there's a parcel for you there."

"Young himps!"

"Don't be too reckless with the cod-liver oil. Take a good swig every now and then, and don't touch it between drinks."

"Young varmint!"

And the juniors strolled off, laughing, leaving Taggles still grumbling out uncomplimentary remarks concerning boys in general and the juniors at St. Jim's in particular.

CHAPTER 3.

A Rival Camp!

"IT'S Dr. Monk!"

The juniors were coming out of the school shop when the motor passed, and Dr. Monk nodded genially as he passed. The boys raised their caps, and D'Arcy added a graceful bow as his silk hat swept off.

"Bai Jove!" said Figgins. "I wonder what he has been here for? If it's a complaint about the rows with the Grammar School cads—"

"It isn't, deah boy."

"How do you know, Gussy?"

"Because I have Dr. Monk's assuahwance on that point," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I had the honah of meetin' the old gentleman, and he assuahed me that it was not the case."

"Then what has he been here for?"

"It is in wewefence to the Wedskin business."

"Merry!"

It was Mr. Railton's voice. The master of the School House beckoned to Tom Merry, who hurried towards him at once.

"You called me, sir?"

"Yes. Dr. Holmes wishes to see you. And you, too, Blake. Please follow me to his study."

The two juniors exchanged glances of dismay as the Housemaster walked away. A summons to the Head's study usually meant trouble, and just after a visit from the Grammar School master it looked doubly ominous.

"It's all up with the camp, I suppose!" groaned Blake.

"Oh, I don't know. Dr. Monk says he hadn't come to

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make a complaint," muttered Tom Merry. "I suppose it's all right. But—"

"But there's a big 'but'," said Blake disconsolately.

"Well, we shall soon see. Come on."

The two juniors followed Mr. Railton. The Housemaster tapped at the door of Dr. Holmes' study, and they entered. Tom Merry and Blake cast quick glances at the Head's face. It bore a kindly and thoughtful expression, and they realised that it was not, after all, a ragging that was to come.

"Ah, Merry and Blake," said Dr. Holmes, adjusting his pince-nez, "I have a few words to say to you on the subject of camping out!"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry.

"I have just received a visit from Dr. Monk, the Head of the Rylcombe Grammar School, and my old friend. He tells me that his boys have become aware of the camping-out scheme started here—"

The juniors could not help smiling. Frank Monk and the Grammarians had certainly shown that they knew all about the camping-out.

"They are ambitious to do the same," resumed the Head. "And Dr. Monk does not see any objection to the plan, provided the peace can be kept between the two camps."

"By Jove!" murmured Tom Merry.

"My hat!" said Blake softly.

They understood now what was the reason of the Grammar School master's visit. There was to be a Grammarian camp, a rival camp.

"Dr. Monk has given his permission to his boys to form a camp in the woods," went on the Head, "and I give you my permission to do the same. I am a firm believer in the advantage of open-air exercise and of roughing it, and I am certain that you will derive advantage from this experience. I have to be very careful in selecting the boys allowed to join the camp, as some are not to be trusted, and only the boys I can fully rely upon will be allowed to camp out."

"Yes, sir!"

"Now, this matter is wholly in the nature of an experiment," said the Head. "I have consulted with Mr. Railton, and he agrees with me that it may be made with advantage. I wish to appeal to you two boys, as the leaders of the rest, to be careful."

"Certainly, sir!"

"You will do your best to keep the peace, or at all events, to keep any little disputes from going too far," said Dr. Holmes, "also that no real damage is done in the woods."

"We shall be very careful, sir."

"You may rely upon us, sir."

"Yes, I am sure I can. You have my permission, then, to form this camp again, and to occupy it for two days, and then—we shall see."

The juniors' eyes danced with delight.

"Thank you, sir," said Tom Merry. "You may depend upon us to keep the fellows in order, and to put the Grammarians into their place if they start any rows."

"Yes, certainly," said Blake. "We'll have peace in the camp, and out of it, even if we have to lick everyone there to get it."

Dr. Holmes smiled, and Mr. Railton suppressed a chuckle. "That is—er—not exactly what I meant," murmured the Head. "I—er—but there, I know you have your faults, but I can rely upon you to do everything that is honourable and manly, and that is enough. You may go, my boys."

"Thank you, sir!"

The two juniors quitted the study. The door had hardly closed when Mr. Railton met Dr. Holmes' eye, and both burst into a laugh.

Tom Merry and Blake hurried away to join their comrades. They found the juniors waiting for them in the quad, in a rather anxious mood.

"What's the news?" asked Figgins eagerly.

"All serene, my son!" said Blake, slapping him on the shoulder with a force that made him stagger. "We've got permission to hold the camp for two days—the lot of us."

"Bravo!"

"Bwavo! I told you it would be all wight, deah boys!"

"That's ripping!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "But what did Dr. Monk want?"

"Yaas, wathah, have you discovahed that, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes. The Grammarians are going to have an open-air camp in Rylcombe Wood, too."

"Bai Jove!"

"And Dr. Monk wants to prevent ructions if possible. I told the Head he could rely upon us to keep the Grammarians in their place."

"What-ho!" said Figgins.

"If they come too near our camp we'll make it warm for them."

"By Jove, yes!" said Manners. "And I think we had better return that surprise visit of theirs and wreck their camp when they start it."

Tom Merry shook his head.
"No; we'll wait till they make the first hostile move," he said. "We've told the Head we'll keep the peace if possible."

"That's right," assented Jack Blake. "We must wait for them to make a hostile move—a casus belli, you know."

"A what?" said Digby.

"A casus belli," said Blake—"a cause for war, you know."

"I don't see why you can't speak English, and keep that rotten Latin for the class-room," Herries remarked.

"Yes, I suppose it's a bit above your comprehension—"

"Nothing of the sort, only—"

"They're bound to provide a casus belli before long," said Figgins, with a grin. "If they won't, we can soon rag them into doing it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It will be ripping fun," said Tom Merry. "A rival camp is just what we want to make things exciting. And if the Grammar School cads will only provide us with a casus belli, we'll serve their camp as they served ours, only more so."

"Bai Jove, wathah! But I say, you know, we want to get the camp into wippin' good ordah, deah boys—"

"Yes, my old governess is coming down—"

"Yaas, I wasn't thinkin' of that; I was thinkin' of my Cousin Ethel."

"Cousin Ethel!"

"Yaas, wathah! I've had a lettah fwom my Cousin Ethel to say that if Miss Pwiscillah Fawcett comes down to see the camp, Ethel will come with her, you know."

"Hurrah!"

"Yaas, wathah, it will be wippin', won't it?" beamed Arthur Augustus. "Do you know, I wathah fancy myself as a Wedskin chief, and I weally think I look wathah nobbay in the Blackfoot warpaint, you know."

"When will she be coming?" asked Figgins.

"When Miss Pwiscillah comes," said Arthur Augustus rather coldly. "She has sent her kind weards to ewevybody."

"Did she mention me?"

"No, Figgins, she did not."

"Oh!"

"Let's go and get ready for the camp," said Lowther. "As our parcels haven't arrived we shall have to be satisfied with what we've got and what we have tin enough to buy. I think we shall do pretty well."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the juniors were soon busy with their preparations.

CHAPTER 4.

A Stormy Committee!

THE Redskin "wheeze" had been introduced at St. Jim's by Blake, and it had caught on, and there was hardly a fellow in the Lower Forms who would not have been glad to join in the camping-out scheme. But the Head had left the selection of the lucky ones to the Form masters, and they had been very judicious, and for the present, at least, permission was given to only a score of the juniors.

The scheme had started with only four, but Tom Merry & Co. had all come into it, making the number up to ten, and now it had jumped to twenty. It would probably be larger later on, but even at present, as Blake pointed out, there were too many fellows for them to be allowed to have voices in the arrangements.

"The only thing is to form a committee," Blake observed. "A committee consisting of a few of the more sensible members is the right thing."

"I don't see it," said Digby. "I don't see that a committee would be any good—"

"And I propose Tom Merry, Figgins, and myself as the committee," went on Blake.

"Well, on second thoughts, it's a good idea," said Figgins. "When you come to think of it, the management ought to be in the hands of a committee."

Tom Merry laughed.

"It's a good idea," he agreed. "We three—"

"I don't see it," said Kerr. "What you want is a sensible chap at the head of the committee, so I don't see how I can be left out."

"In making arrangements about the grub you will want expert advice," said Fatty Wynn. "I don't see how I can be left out of the committee."

"And in wegard to dwess," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully, "I weally think that I ought to be appointed dwess expert to the honouvable committee."

"Sure, and there ought to be an Irish member!" said

Reilly "You can't leave me out without inflicting another wrong on poor Old Ireland—"

"And there ought to be a Menx member," said Kerruish, who hailed from the Isle of Man. "You can't ignore my claims."

"And I think—" began Digby.

"And I know—" commenced Manners.

"And I'm certain—" Lowther started.

"Well, we can't have a committee of the whole giddy party," said Blake. "Do talk sense! We're three parties—Study No. 6, that's us; the Terrible Three, that's you Shell bounders; and Figgins & Co., that's the New House rotters—"

"The New House what?"

"Sorry! I meant cads. Now, on a committee of three I represent the top study in the School House, Tom Merry represents the Shell, and Figgins represents that rotten casual ward he calls a House—"

"Are you looking for a thick ear, Blake?"

"And I represent Ireland—" began Reilly.

"And I wepresentsent the awistocwacy—"

"Shut up!"

"I wefuse to shut up. I considah—"

"Sure, and can't ye ring off, D'Arcy—"

"Certainly not, Weilly. I wegard the wequest as impertinent—"

"Faith, and I—"

"Bai Jove—"

"Oh, cheese it!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Put it to the vote. There's to be a committee of three, anyway, and the other chaps are at liberty to make suggestions to the committee. Vote for candidates for committee honours by show of hands."

The voting, as Tom Merry foresaw, could only go one way. The three recognised leaders of the three parties among the St. Jim's juniors were duly chosen.

"Good!" said Tom Merry, when the counting was finished.

"We're the committee, and you might as well have saved time by agreeing to it at first. We are going to meet in the club-room of the Merry Hobby Club, and you other fellows can appear at the meeting if you like and make suggestions, so long as you don't jaw."

"I don't see how they're to make suggestions without jawing," said Lowther.

"There are lots of things you don't see, Monty. They can write suggestions down on slips of paper and pass them up to the committee."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, I agree to anything providing it keeps Gussy from talking—"

"I wegard that as a wathah wude wemark, Lowthah!"

"Come on!" said Tom Merry, and the committee marched into the room in the School House, where the Merry Hobby Club were allowed to hold their meetings, and the rest of the juniors followed.

The room was a large one, but there was not accommodation for twenty juniors. The committee entered and sat down at the table, and nine or ten others crowded in, and the rest blocked up the doorway.

A voice full of indignation was heard from the crush.

"Hewwies, you ass, keep off my feet! Digbay, you wottah, don't shove your elbow into my ribs! Lowthah, you beast, I believe you bumped against me on purpose!"

"Silence!"

"Kerr, if you push against me again I shall have no alternative but to stwike you!"

"Order!"

"Will you keep your gweat hoofs off my feet, Hewwies?"

"Shut up, D'Arcy!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I—"

"Silence! Gentlemen, the committee are not met—"

"We can see that, Tom Merry."

"Shut up! We are now going to discuss the pros and cons, and shall be glad to hear any suggestions you have to make. Fellows who have no suggestions to make are invited to clear out!"

"Rats!"

"I have a wathah good suggestion to make," said D'Arcy. "The numbah of the Wedskins in the camp has been increased to twenty—"

"That is the case."

"Twenty is a largah numbah that ten—"

"Did you work that out in your head?"

"Pway don't intewwupt me. What I mean is—"

"Faith, and I—"

"Don't intewwupt me, Weilly, please. I insist upon bein' treated with pwopah respect while I am makin' valuable suggestions to the committee. What I was about to say is, that the Blackfoot costumes sent to Blake by his respected uncle are only a dozen in numbah, and therefore we shall have to get some more."

"That is rather obvious, Gussy."

"I have not concluded my remarks yet."

"I don't suppose you ever will," said Figgins. "I think you had better leave off now, and make way for the next ass to suggest something."

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the sort."

"Next ass!" said Blake.

"I insist upon finishin' my valuable suggestion. My ideah is this: that we shall have to get some more costumes, and it would be a wippin' wheeze to get some female dwesses, and have some squaws in the camp. An Indian camp without squaws would be extremely unwealistic."

"Good idea!" exclaimed Blake. "I'm surprised at you, Gussy; where did you get it from?"

"It flashed into my bwain—"

"It is a good wheeze," agreed Tom Merry, "and as Gussy has suggested it, he shall be one of the squaws."

D'Arcy screwed his monocle into his eye and gave the hero of the Shell a withering glare.

"I should certainly wufuse to be anythin' of the sort," he said. "I think some of the fellows might be made up as squaws to pweserve a wealistic appeahwance of the camp, but I—I—"

"We'll toss for it," said Tom Merry. "We can settle that on the spot. Any more suggestions?"

"Next ass!"

"Faith, and I have a suggestion to make!"

"I have not finished yet, Weilly—"

"You never have!"

"Order!"

"I insist!"

"Shut up, Gussy; you've finished!"

"I have not finished, and I wufuse to shut up!"

"Chuck him out!"

"I uttably wufuse to be chucked out!"

"Then ring off! Go on, Reilly."

"I insist—"

"Chuck him out!"

"I wufuse— Ow—grrr—owh—grrr—oh!"

D'Arcy disappeared into the passage, and found himself reclining on the floor the next minute. The juniors blocked up the doorway and made it impossible for the indignant swell of the School House to return.

"Now then, Reilly."

"Sure; I was going to suggest that as Blake made such a hash of things as chief, we ought to have a new chief."

"Rot!"

"Hold on," said Figgins; "there's something in that. Were you thinking of suggesting a New House fellow as chief, Reilly?"

"Sure, I wasn't!" said Reilly, who was a School House boy, promptly enough. "I was thinking that an Irish—"

"Oh, rot! Ring off!"

"I was thinking that an Irish—"

"Shut up! Next ass!"

"I was thinking that an Irish—"

"Chuck him out!"

And Reilly was promptly chucked out. The meeting was growing more and more excited. Reilly came back with a rush at the door, but the crowd blocked the way, and he was hurled forth again.

"Order!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Silence!"

"Order!"

But it was easier to call for order than to enforce it. The room was in an uproar, and several of the juniors were fighting now, the old quarrel of School House versus New House breaking out again in the excitement.

Tom Merry rapped on the table in vain.

"Can't go on like this," said Jack Blake; "better dissolve the meeting."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Tom Merry. "And we'll meet by ourselves next time. Gentlemen, the meeting of the committee is now dissolved, and you can go and eat coke!"

And, with a great deal of uproar, the meeting broke up.

CHAPTER 5.

The Squaws!

"HERE we are again!" said Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Yes, here we are," said Tom Merry cheerfully;

"and now to work."

The juniors of St. Jim's had arrived upon the spot chosen for the site of the camp. The sun was sinking behind the trees, but there were two hours of daylight left—ample for the necessary work to be done. Twenty pairs of willing hands could accomplish a great deal in that time.

"When we first formed this camp here," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "I had the honah of suggestin' that we

should dig a twench wound it, in the mannah of the ancient Woman camp. My suggestion was tweated with scoffin'—"

"Faith, and I—"

"Pway don't intewwupt me, Weilly. Aftah the waid of the Gwammah School cads, and the w'eking of the camp, I dare say you agwee with me that a deep twench is about the pwopah capah."

"Well, it's not a bad idea," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "We could let the water from the stream into it, and make a moat round the camp."

"Who ever heard of a Redskin camp with a moat round it?" said Digby.

"Well, who ever heard of a Redskin camp that was raided by Grammar School cads, if you come to that?" retorted Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! I am glad to see that Tom Mewwy has intelligence enough to compwehend the gweat value of my ideah."

"It's not a bad wheeze," said Blake briskly. "It mayn't be realistic, perhaps, but it will keep the Grammarians out."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We've got six spades with us, so we'll do the digging in relays. Get your jacket off, Gussy."

"My jacket is quite all wight where it is, deah boy."

"You'll be hot digging with your jacket on."

"But I am not goin' to dig."

"Aren't you?" said Figgins warmly. "Do you think we are going to slog at digging the trench, while you stroll round in a silk hat?"

"If I think of the good ideahs, it is only fair that you chaps should cawwy them out," said D'Arcy. "It is not wight that I should work with both hand and bwain, you know."

"There's your spade," said Blake.

"I don't want one, thank you."

"We are going to make it a rule," said Tom Merry, with a wink at Blake, "that whoever suggests a new idea shall be the first to carry it out."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I can hardly wegard that as playin' the game, and I shall not agwee to that wotten wule!"

"You won't have any choice in the matter. Any ass bucking against the authority of the chief of the tribe gets sat upon."

"I should uttably wufuse to be sat upon!"

"Nuff said!" exclaimed Blake. "We've come here to work, not to talk. Suppose we were to be surprised by the enemy while we're standing here listening to Gussy gassing?"

"There's your spade, Gussy."

"I uttably wufuse to—"

"If he isn't at work when I've counted six, Dig, you'll put your pick through his silk hat."

"Certainly," said Digby, "with pleasure!"

"If you were guilty of such a wuffianly action, Dig—"

"One!" said Blake.

"I should certainly no longah wegard you as a fwend—"

"Two!"

"And if my hat were wuined by your wotten pwanks, I should—"

"Three!"

"Administah a fearful thwashin'—"

"Four!"

"I feel altogethah too exhausted to do any beastlay diggin'—"

"Five!"

"And I— Keep off, you wottah! I don't mind diggin' a little; of course, I don't object to takin' my turn, especially as I shall pwobably do the work vewy much bettah than any of you."

"Six!"

But Arthur Augustus was digging away as if his life depended upon it, and Digby lowered his pickaxe.

"You've saved your hat!" said Blake severely. "Keep an eye on him, Dig. If he slacks down, go for his topper."

"Rather!"

"I should wufuse—"

"Don't talk, work!"

And Blake, in his capacity of Blackfoot chief, walked off to give directions elsewhere.

The score of juniors from St. Jim's were soon busy. The fact that Miss Priscilla Fawcett and Cousin Ethel would be on the scene the next day was a sufficient reason for them to buck up and get things shipshape.

The trench was dug, and the stream allowed to flow into it. It was not more than a foot deep, but it made an effective defence to the camp, as the dug earth was banked up inside the trench as a rampart. Only one opening was left in the earth wall, and at this spot a plank crossed the moat.

Arthur Augustus proposed erecting a drawbridge, and the prospect was received with a chorus of sniffs.

"I wegard it as a good ideah," said the swell of the School House, leaning upon his spade, with his collar limp with perspiration, and his silk hat on the back of his head.

"A dwawbwidge could be waised at night, and then there would be no dangah of a surpwise."

"And how are we to get the materials?"

"Oh, we could get them, you know."

"And how are we to make the machinery for raising the bridge?"

"Oh, we could make it, you know!"

"Ass!"

"I decline to be called an ass. I wegard the dwawbwidge as a weally good ideah, and I think we ought to build one."

And D'Arcy remained convinced that he was right, and the others, who were too busy to argue, left him thinking so. The sun was sinking lower behind the wood. Shadows

"I have thought of a really good invention in this connection," said Skimpole, the genius of St. Jim's, who was one of the campers; "it is to keep a man cool while he is digging in the hot weather. He has an automatic fan coupled to his spade, and every time he puts the spade in the earth it works the fan, and fans his face and keeps him cool."

"And how would the fan be coupled on to the spade, ass?" asked Blake.

"I haven't thought out the details yet."

"Time we had some grub," said Fatty Wynn. "It's getting chilly now, and we can do with a camp-fire. Lend a hand, all of you!"



"Is that plank safe?" "Yaas, wathah!" Monk stepped on the plank. It looked rather shaky, but D'Arcy was holding it. D'Arcy released the plank to get a firmer hold and it slipped. Monk's foot slipped off the plank and he went with a tremendous splash into the water. "Oh, ow!" yelled Monk.

lengthened over the camp of the St. Jim's juniors, and Fatty Wynn eyed the packages of provisions longingly.

"Getting jolly near feeding-time, isn't it?" he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah! I feel wathah peckish myself, you know," said D'Arcy. "You can pwoceed to pwepare a meal, Fatty Wynn."

"You can proceed to light the fire first, Gussy."

"Oh, wats! I have been workin' too hard," said Arthur Augustus, sinking upon the earth and fanning himself with a silk handkerchief; "I am weally exhausted."

"Serves you right, for trying to dig in a tight jacket and a silk hat," said Figgins, who looked much more free and easy in a pair of old trousers turned up at the ankles, a cricket belt, and a sweater.

"Well, a fellow must look respectable, you know," said D'Arcy. "Still, upon wefection, I suppose it is wathah a mistake to dig in a silk hat."

"Yaas, wathah! Lend a hand, deah boys, while I take a little well-earned wepose."

Blake jerked D'Arcy off the earthwork.

"Come and buckle to, lazybones!"

"I think you are wathah inconsidewate, Blake."

"Cheese it, and gather firewood."

Firewood was easy to gather under the trees. The camp-fire was built and lighted, and there was soon a savoury scent of cooking in the camp. Fatty Wynn was on the task, and the amateur chef of the New House could always be relied upon to turn out a first-class feed.

"That's right, Wynn," said Figgins, "get on with the washing. While Fatty's getting supper we'll settle the question of the squaws."

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "We've got to get into our THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,275.

togs, and it's getting dark already. We've got Indian squaws' togs."

"What are the squaws going to do?" asked Lowther. "If they're going to have an easy time at home, while the braves do all the work, I don't mind being a squaw."

"Lot you know about Redskins," said Jack Blake; "the squaws do all the work in the lodges, and the braves don't do anything but fight and drink."

"Lot of hooligans they must be, and no mistake."

"Well, that's how it is," said Tom Merry. "The squaws cultivate the ground, and do the cooking, and mend the things you know, and carry about the papooses."

"The what?"

"The papooses. They're the kids. There aren't any kids in this camp, except these Fourth Form kids—"

"Who are you calling kids?"

"Well, there aren't any kids, but the squaws will have to cook and tidy up the camp, and fetch and carry for the braves like real Indian women."

"No squaw business for me, then," said Lowther promptly. "Any offers?"

"Oh, I don't mind," said Fatty Wynn. "I shall have to do the cooking, anyway, but it must be understood that I don't do anything else."

"Well, that's only fair," agreed Tom Merry. "If Wynn does the cooking for twenty chaps, he can be excused from other work, I suppose?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Agreed."

"Then Wynn's a squaw to start with. There will have to be seven more. Any offers?"

There were no offers.

Tom Merry took a penny from his pocket.

"We shall have to toss up for it," he said.



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"That's the only way," Blake agreed. "The chaps who are selected as squaws will have to play the part for one day—that's to-morrow. For the next day we'll toss up again among the other twelve, so as to give everyone a chance."

"That's fair."

"As chief of the tribe," went on Blake, "I, of course, don't have to take a chance."

"Don't you, though?"

"Of course not. Whoever heard of a squaw being chief of a tribe?"

"That's all very well—"

"Sure, and we want a new chief," said Reilly; "I think that what we want is an Irish—"

"A New House chap," said Figgins. "I think that Blake will admit that upon calm reflection."

"Nothing of the sort, Figgins. I think it's like your cheek."

"As a member of a higher Form," said Tom Merry modestly, "I—"

"Rats!"

"I'm an older fellow than you, Blake."

"About a week older."

"Two months and seven days—"

"Then you ought to have more sense," said Blake. "The idea of you being chief strikes me as absurd. Besides, it was agreed that I was chief."

"Yes, but you made a muck of it, you know."

"It was your fault for not keeping watch—"

"I don't admit it. As chief—"

"Herries ought to have brought his bulldog, too. It was Herries' fault that we were surprised by the Grammarians."

"By Jove, I've forgotten the bulldog again," said Herries.

"Jolly good thing, too," said Arthur Augustus. "The savage bwute tore a gwaet piece out of my twousahs the other day, and I don't like him too near me, Hewwies."

"I am chief until I resign," said Blake. "That being settled—"

"But it's not settled."

"Your mistake; it is. That being settled, it is impossible for me to be a squaw."

"Can I make a suggestion?" said Skimpole.

"No—get out!"

"It is a really good suggestion. As you know, I am a Determinist—"

"Clear out."

"And I suggest that the camp should be organised on Deterministic lines, without any chief at all."

"Travel!"

"If, however, you really want a chief, and a reliable and sensible one, I am perfectly willing to take the post."

Figgins took Skimpole gently by the shoulders, swung him round, and started him off with a powerful shove.

"You go and eat coke!" he remarked.

"Really, Figgins—"

"Scat!"

"As chief, and being barred from becoming a squaw, I can settle this matter," said Blake. "I'll toss up the penny, and you chaps can guess what it is. The chaps who guesses wrong becomes a squaw. We keep on till seven have guessed wrong, and there you are."

"Yes, here we are," said Kerr; "but we haven't settled the question about the chieftainship."

"Oh, that was settled long ago. You New House chaps never seem to know when a subject's ended. Now, are you ready?"

"Yaas, wathah! I back up Blake, deah boy. If the chieftainship went by mewit, I should be vewy pleased to take the post, but undah the circs Blake may as well have it as any othah duffah pwesent."

"Oh, good," said Tom Merry; "anything for a quiet life. Chuck up the penny, Blake."

"Right you are, then."

Blake tossed the penny, catching it again between his palms.

"Guess!"

"Wait a minute," said Figgins. "What order are we to guess in?"

"Alphabetical order."

"Atkins first, then."

"Head," said Atkins.

Blake showed the coin. Atkins gave a grunt. It was a tail.

"You're a squaw," said Blake. "Now, then, Baker."

"Tail."

It was head this time, and Baker was adjudged a squaw.

"Any C's?" asked Blake, looking round; "yes, there's you, Carter. Guess."

"Head," said Carter.

Head it was, and Carter grinned.

Blake tossed the coin again, and then shouted out to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was walking towards the plank over the moat.

"D'Arcy! Where are you going?"
 "Oh, only just goin' for a stwoll, deah boy!"
 "Come back, you ass!"
 "I am goin' for a stwoll—"
 "Come here! It's your turn to guess."
 "I weally do not mind missin' my turn."
 "But we mind!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Fetch him back!"

There was a rush of the juniors after Arthur Augustus.
 "Pway don't bothah," said D'Arcy languidly; "I will come back with pleasuah if you insist, deah boys!"
 "Buck up, then," said Figgins.
 "Now, then, Gussy, head or tail?"
 "Head," said Arthur Augustus anxiously.
 Blake showed the figure of Britannia on the coin.
 "Wrong! You're a squaw."

D'Arcy looked dismayed. He rather fancied himself as a Redskin chief, or even as a mere warrior; but as a squaw! And with Cousin Ethel coming on the morrow!

"Weally, Blake—"
 "You're a squaw! Next man in!"
 "Weally, I particulahly wish not to undahtake that wole to-mowwow," said Arthur Augustus. "The next day I should not mind so much."
 "Silence in the camp! Next! You, Dig."

"Weally—"
 But a general shout drowned D'Arcy's voice. The selection went on, till seven squaws had been chosen to keep Fatty Wynn company.

Blake threw the penny back to Tom Merry, catching him on the nose with it absentmindedly.

"There you are," he said. "Thanks—"
 "You confounded duffer—"
 "Sorry! Now that's settled, and we're ready to dress. Get into your war paint, kids!"

"Blake, I weally—"
 "Nuff said. Get into your togs or we shall be late for supper."

And the juniors proceeded to make up in Red Indian garb. None of the squaws looked pleased, with the exception of Fatty Wynn. He didn't mind. But of all the feminine contingent Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was the most dissatisfied. But it was in vain that he asked several of the braves as a special favour to change with him. No one would, and the swell of the School House finally dressed himself in the garb of a Blackfoot squaw, and took his place round the camp-fire with the rest.

CHAPTER 6. The Cowboys!

"MY—my only hat!"
 Tom Merry rapped out the words in utter amazement.

"What's the matter?"
 "Look!"
 "Great Scott!"

The Blackfeet were just about to begin supper round the ruddy camp-fire, in the darkening shadows of the wood. Fatty Wynn was serving out bacon and poached eggs when Tom Merry started up.

"My word!" gasped Digby.
 "Bai Jove!"
 "What does it mean?"

From the woodland path a number of figures had emerged into the glade on the bank of the Feeder; and stranger figures had never been seen before in the shadow of Rylcombe Wood.

There were six of them, and they were, so far as appearance went, cowboys from the plains of the Far West.

They wore red shirts and leather breeches, riding-boots, and wide-brimmed hats, and belts in the place of braces.

In the dusk of the wood it was the costume that first caught the eyes of the Saints, but the second glance showed them the faces of the strangers—and they saw that the newcomers were no strangers at all.

"The Grammarians!" gasped Figgins.
 "Frank Monk!"
 "Bai Jove!"

"Look out! 'Ware Grammarians!" exclaimed Blake.
 "Has that plank been lifted?"

"No!"
 "Lift it, then, you ass!"

"Lift the plank; there may be dozens of them in the wood. Do you want the camp to be surprised again?" roared Blake.

Lowther and Manners dragged the plank off the moat. A stream of water three feet wide and a foot deep, with an earth wall on the inner side, stopped the advance of the Grammarians. But the precaution was not needed, for it

was seen as Frank Monk came nearer that he was waving a white flag.

The white flag consisted only of a handkerchief, more or less clean, tied on the end of a branch, but its purpose was clear enough.

"Hallo!" called out Tom Merry.
 "Cheese it!" said Blake. "Redskins say 'Wah'!"

"Wah, then!"
 "Make it ugh!" said Figgins. "That sounds more realistic."

"Oh, any kind of a grunt will do!" said Monty Lowther.
 "Gr-r-r-r!"

"Hallo!" called out Frank Monk, halting at the edge of the water and looking across at the row of red faces lining the earthen wall. "Hallo!"

"Wah!"
 "Ugh!"
 "Gr-r-r-r!"

"What are dickens are you grunting about?" asked Monk.
 "Been swallowing a fishbone?"

"No, we haven't!" exclaimed Blake indignantly. "We're giving you a true Redskin greeting, you Grammarian ass!"

"My hat! If that's the way Redskins greet one another they must suffer a lot from sore throats," said Frank Monk.

"Rather!" said Carboy, giving a hitch to his breeches.
 "Oh, cheese it!" said Blake. "What do you rotters want here?"

"You see we're ready for you," remarked Tom Merry.
 "Yes, I see you are. You seem to be pretty saug," said the leader of the Grammar School juniors, looking round.

"I don't blame you, either, after the way we wrecked your camp."

"You took us by surprise—"

"Yes; more than you'll ever be able to do with us!"
 "Wait a bit, Monkey, and you'll see."

"That's what I've come to talk about," said Monk.
 "Blessed if I know which is which of you with all that paint spilt over your chivvies. Which is the chief?"

"I'm chief," said Blake.
 "And who are you? I seem to know your voice."

"You know jolly well I'm Jack Blake."
 "Oh, are you? I've heard the name before, I think."

"You howling rotter of a Grammer School beast!"
 "Keep your wool on—I mean, your feathers! I dare say you know that we've got permission from the Head of the Grammar School—my respected dad—to camp out as you fellows are doing—"

"Yes, we expect you to borrow the wheeze," said Blake disdainfully.

Frank Monk chuckled.

"We're improving upon it," he explained. "You must feel rather greasy and dirty with all that paint on your dials. We're starting in life as cowboys; we've had the costumes specially sent down from London."

"On the hire-purchase system?" interjected Lowther.
 "No," said Frank Monk, laughing. "Simply on hire, without the purchase. There are twenty of us in the scheme."

"Same here."
 "That's good! We shall be equally matched."

"Not at all. You would have to be forty to our twenty for us to be equally matched," said Tom Merry promptly.

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "Yes, it looked like it when we raided your camp and made you skip," said Frank Monk. "You've jolly well protected yourselves this time. We're not rigging up a wall and a moat round our camp."

"You couldn't do it like this."
 "Well, we could, but we shouldn't," said Monk, eyeing the defences of the St. Jim's camp with a critical expression.

"Of all the rotten bosh I ever saw—"
 "Rats!"

"Well, we've only got a stake fence put up round our camp," said Monk; "and that's quite enough to keep you out."

"Where is your camp?"
 Monk waved his hand up the stream.

"About a quarter of a mile up the Feeder," he said.
 "You can see it any day you like to come up. We shall be there for two days and ready to receive you."

"You may expect a visit soon."
 "Good! That's what I came to tell you. I don't want you to keep away because you don't know where to find us, or because you're too shy to come, you know."

"We'll come. But, I say," said Blake generously, "we're just going to have supper; if you like to join us—"

"Good!" said Monk. "A feast of peace before the rows begin. A good idea—and, as a matter of fact, we're hungry."

"Come in, then."

"Shove out the plank," said Tom Merry.

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"Yaas, wathah! I am vewy pleased to weceive you heah, Fwank Monk, though I can wecall many occasions when you have hardly tweated me with pwopah wespect," said Arthur Augustus, pushing out the plank from the wall.

"By Jove! Is that Gussy? Where's your silk hat?"

"I'm not wearin' a silk hat as a Blackfoot, Fwank Monk."

"Then I suppose you've got one pinned up in your tent where you can look at it?" grinned Monk.

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Is that plank safe?"

"Yaas, wathah! I'm holdin' it on purpose."

"Good!"

Monk stepped on the plank. It looked rather shaky, but D'Arcy was holding it. Unfortunately, the swell of St. Jim's released it in order to obtain a firmer hold, and the plank slipped.

Frank Monk gave a yell. His foot slid off the plank, and he went with a tremendous splash into the water.

"Oh! Ow!"

"My hat!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's in dismay. "Bai Jove! I wondah how that happened, you know?"

Frank Monk rose from the water, dripping with mud from head to foot, and glared at the contrite swell of the School House.

"You utter ass!"

"I say, deah boy, I'm feahfully sowwy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Saints and Grammarians alike.

The state of Frank Monk, and the amazement in D'Arcy's face were too comical.

"You utter ass!" repeated Frank Monk in measured accents. "If you did that on purpose—"

D'Arcy looked greatly distressed.

"You suahly could not suspect me of such an act of tweachow?" he exclaimed.

"No, but if you did it by accident—"

"Upon my honah—"

"You ought to be boiled in oil—"

"Weally, Monk, deah boy—"

"You shrieking ass! You ought to be suffocated at birth and buried in some quiet place."

"Weally—"

"I'm soaked through—"

"I'm feahfully sowwy."

"I'm wet and muddy from head to foot."

"I have apologised," said D'Arcy with dignity. "That should weally be sufficient fwom one gentleman to anothah."

"You shrieking idiot!"

"Weally, Fwank Monk, I cannot allow you to chawac-tewise me as a shwiekin' idiot. I wegard the expwession as wude."

Tom Merry and Blake shoved out the plank again, and this time made it secure.

"Come on," said Tom Merry. "We'll give you a ripping feed, anyway, and a change of clothes, Monkey."

"Sure that's safe now?"

"Safe as houses."

The Grammarians crossed into the camp. Then the plank was taken in, not because there was any danger, but because, as Blake said, it was prudent to get into habits of carefulness.

Frank Monk refused a change of clothes, though Blake generously offered him D'Arcy's elegant clobber.

"I'm a giddy cowboy, and I'm not going to be a school-boy for forty-eight hours or so," said Monk. "I'll borrow

a blanket of you, if you like, while my clothes dry round the fire."

"Good idea!"

And Frank Monk, wrapped in a blanket, sat down to supper.

The cowboy clothes soon dried at the blazing fire, and if they shrank a little that did not matter. They had been over large for the Grammarian chief.

The supper was a huge success. Provisions were there in plenty, and Fatty Wynn had done the cooking to perfection.

The Saints and the Grammarians fraternised with perfect good feeling, though the probability was that they would be rowing just as heartily on the morrow.

"By Jove!" said Frank Monk. "This is ripping! If life were all camping out and feeding round camp-fires we could have a good time."

"Yes, in the summer."

"H'm! Yes. I say, this bacon is ripping! We haven't had any cooking like this in our camp, Lane."

"That's true," said Lane. "I'll have another rasher."

"By Jove! We shall have to carry off Fatty Wynn," said Frank Monk. "I believe cowboys do carry off Indian squaws sometimes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You remember how we collared you in the wood the other day, Wynn, and made you cook for us?" grinned Carboy.

"Yes," said Fatty Wynn. "And do you remember how we collared the feed, and made you look on while we ate it?"

"Well, so you did."

"I should say so. You won't catch me again in a hurry, either. I'm glad you like the bacon; and there's plenty of it, that's one comfort. I cooked a dozen rashers extra, in case I should get hungry again, but I can easily have something else if I do. Tuck in!"

"We are tucking in," grinned Monk.

He was right. The Grammarian cowboys enjoyed that supper, and their faces were very contented as they rose to go. It was well after sunset now, and the moon was rising beyond the ruins of the old castle on the hill.

Monk put on his clothes, now quite dry.

"We'll see you part of your way back," said Tom Merry, rising, too.

"Right you are."

Redskins and cowboys crossed the bridge. Chatting amicably, they followed the woodland stream. Frank Monk led the way through the underwoods.

"Come right on to the camp," he said. "You haven't seen it yet."

The Saints accepted the invitation. The camp of the Grammarians was pitched close to the stream, and a fence of stakes surrounded it to a height of four feet.

A voice rang out suddenly from the darkness:

"Who goes there?"

Frank Monk chuckled.

"It's all right, Ford."

"I don't care if it's all right or not," said Ford, from the gloom. "Give the password, or I fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I can't give the password—it wouldn't be polite to the chaps I've got with me," explained Monk.

"Then you can't come in."

"Look here, don't be an ass—"

"The password!"

"Well, discipline's discipline," said Monk. "The password is: 'Down with St. Jim's!'"

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## Potts, the Office Boy!



"Pass on!" said Ford.  
 "Down with St. Jim's, eh?" murmured Tom Merry.  
 "We'll give you 'Down with St. Jim's' to-morrow, you bounders!"

Frank Monk led the way into the camp. The Grammarian cowboys turned out to stare at the visitors. The camp was well planned, and the tents looked very comfortable.

After their inspection, the Blackfeet bade the cowboys good-bye.

"See you again," said Frank Monk cheerily.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Certainly," said Tom Merry. "I expect we shall raid this camp and wind you up, you know."

"Better look out for your own."

"Well, au revoir."

The Blackfeet marched off. They sent back a yell as they disappeared into the wood, and it was noisy enough. Lowther remarked, to do credit to a real tribe of Red Indians. Then they returned to their own camp.

"Half-past ten," said Tom Merry, as the chimes rang faintly across the wood from Rylcombe Church. "Time to turn in, kids!"

"Yaas, and I am feelin' wathah fatigued, deah boys!"

"We're going to keep watch this time," said Blake. "No more night surprises for us, thank you. As chief, I shall allot the watches, but shall not take part in them—"

"Won't you?" said Figgins. "I know jolly well I shan't if you don't!"

"Now, don't be unreasonable, Figgins."

"Rats! As chief, you ought to take first watch," said Figgins warmly. "I'm willing to take your place as chief on those terms."

"Same here," said Manners.

"Bai Jove, wathah!"

"Oh, very well," said Blake. "Of course, I don't mind keeping watch. Figgins can take second watch, then Tom Merry, and then Gussy—"

"Nothin' of the sort, deah boy."

"What do you mean?"

"If I'm goin' to be a squaw, I'm goin' to be a squaw," said the swell of St. Jim's obstinately. "I've got to fetch and cawwy, and work about the camp, and I'm blessed if I'm goin' to keep watch like a bwave, too."

"Gussy's right," said Tom Merry. "The squaws have to do the work of the camp, and so they are exempt from keeping watch."

"Well, that's only fair. You're excused, Gussy."

"Vewy good."

"Turn in," said Blake. "I'm taking first watch—half an hour. We shall hear the village church clock. Then I'll wake Figgins. Go and snooze. Turn in. Ugh! The great chief has spoken."

And the Blackfoot camp was soon buried in silence and slumber.

A quarter of a mile away a strange scene was being enacted. Tom Merry & Co. would have laughed till their sides ached if they could have seen some of the Grammarian "Cowboys" being confronted by a bull.

Frank Monk, Carboy and Lane shared a tent, and in the middle of the night they were suddenly awakened by a loud noise. They sat up with a start—and there, poking through the tent, was the head of a large bull.

"Great Scott!" yelled Frank Monk. "Go away, you horrid beast!"

"Shoo! Scat!" shouted Carboy and Lane.

The bull looked solemnly on.

The three Grammarians rose, and the bull retreated slowly. The "cowboys" rushed from the tent with a yell, and the bull, startled into activity, stuck up its tail and ran.

Laughing, the Grammarians returned to their tent.

"The brute must have trampled down our fence!"

"Yes," said Monk, "and just wait till I get hold of our giddy sentry in the morning!"

And with that the three "cowboys" settled down to sleep once more.

## CHAPTER 7.

### First Morning in Camp!

"WAKE up!"

The sun was glimmering over the green woods and flushing the surface of the stream.

The camp of the Blackfeet juniors awoke.

Reilly had kept last watch, so he was awake at dawn. He dutifully went round awakening the rest of the campers.

"Wake up, ye lazy gossoons! Sure and it's broad day."

Tom Merry rubbed his eyes and sat up in the tent.

"Hallo! This is rather early, isn't it?"

"Time to get up."

"Tain't rising-bell yet," murmured Manners, as Reilly shook him by the shoulders. "Leggo! I'm not getting up before rising-bell."

"Ha, ha, ha! There's no rising-bell here, ass! Gerrup!"

"Ooooooh!" yawned Manners. "Thought I was in bed in the old dormitory! What are you shaking me for?"

"Time to get up!"

"Rats! Indians get up what time they like. I'm going to have another hour. What's the good of being a noble savage of you can't snooze when you want to?"

"Get up!"

"I'll give you a thick ear if you don't lemme alone!"

"Oh, get up!" said Tom Merry, jumping out of his blankets. "It's a ripping morning, and I'm going for a bathe."

"Well, that's a good idea."

"Good," said Blake, getting up. "But I say, if we wash we shall get the paint off our chivvies, and that will be a lot of labour wasted."

"I suppose we're not going without washing for two or three days?"

"Well, I suppose real Redskins do."

"They can, if they like," said Tom Merry. "I'm not going to. We can wash, and then paint again."

"Well, I suppose that's best. We want to keep clean," assented Blake. "Let's get out. It's a fine morning. That's lucky."

"Call the rest of them, Reilly."

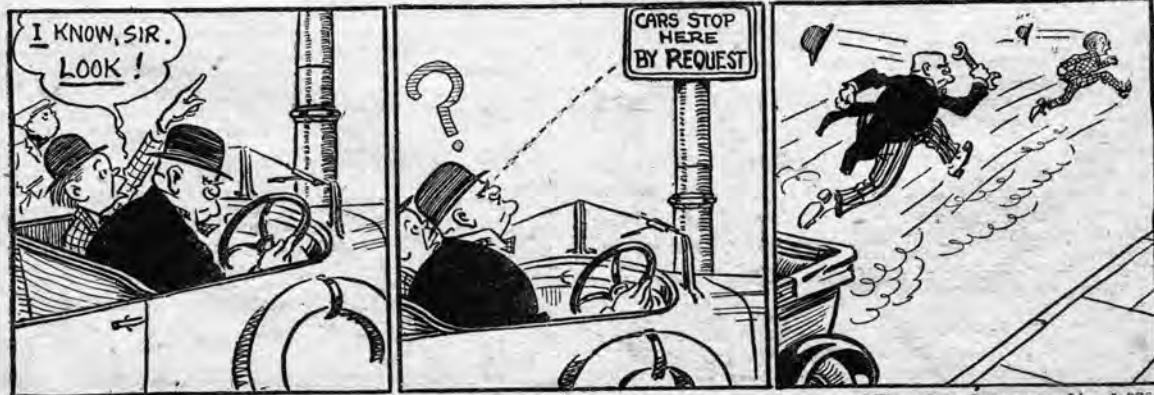
"Faith, and I'm doing it!"

"Bai Jove, I wish you wouldn't push me like that!" came a sleepy voice. "Some beast is pokin' his beastlay foot into my wibs!"

"Wake up!"

"I wefuse to wake up. I'm goin' to sleep as long as I like, like a weal Wedskin. Pway don't poke me with your wotten foot!"

BY REQUEST!



"Get up!"

"I decline uttably to do anythin' of the sort. Let go my hair, you wottah! Ah, it is you, Weilly!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, sitting up wrathfully. "I am afwaid, Weilly, that you will leave me no alternative but to administah a feahful thwashin'."

"Time to get up."

"I wefuse to get up—Lowthah, if you fall over my legs again, I shall lose my tempah and stwike you."

"Collect up your beastly legs, then," said Monty Lowther. "What do you mean by distributing your legs about in that reckless way?"

"Blake, don't push against me like that, Tom Merry, if you tread on my feet again—keep your gweat hoofs out of my wibs, Hewwies."

"Get up, then, lazybones. We're going out for a bathe."

"Oh, vewy well. I will come with you."

"You can't," said Figgins.

"Can't! Why can't I?"

"Because we don't approve of mixed bathing."

"Are you all off your wockahs, Figgins?"

"Certainly not. You are a squaw—"

"Bai Jove!"

"And mixed bathing is never allowed in a well-regulated Blackfoot camp," said Figgins, with a solemn shake of the head.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Come along," said Blake. "The squaws will watch the camp, and prepare breakfast, while the warriors bathe in the stream."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Now, play the game, Gussy. You are a squaw, and we all took equal chances," said Tom Merry. "Any of us may be a squaw to-morrow."

"Yes, that's twue."

"Then play the game. You're a squaw, so just leave off talking and start squawking—if that's the correct expression."

"It is not the cowwect expression—"

"Oh, go and squaw," said Figgins. "I'm going for a header. Keep an eye open for the Grammar School cads. It would be no joke to be surprised while we're bathing."

"That's not likely," said Fatty Wynn. "The Grammar School cads are thinking about breakfast just now, if they've got any sense."

"Well, you think about it, too," said Manners, "and have it ready when we come in from bathing."

"Certainly, I know the duties of a squaw."

"Come on, kids. I'll race you over the plank, Figgins."

"The plank's not there."

"Well, jump it, then."

The juniors jumped the moat in turn, and plunged into the Feeder, the stream so called because it was a feeder of the River Rhyl. It was a small woodland stream, with no great depth or width. Higher up, it was very narrow—a mere streak of silver under the heavy foliage of the trees.

Tom Merry was the first to plunge into the water. The squaws watched the braves from the camp. There was plenty of work to be done, getting the camp into order, tidying up the tents, and cooking breakfast. It was not such pleasant work as bathing in a sunny stream on a summer's morning, but on the morrow they would be braves in their turn, so there was no grumbling.

If Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was dissatisfied, it was not because of the work he had to do, but because he was thinking of the coming visit of Cousin Ethel. He didn't want to appear in the garb of a squaw before the laughing eyes of his cousin. But there was no help for it. The die was cast.

Tom Merry and his comrades swam and splashed in the little stream gaily enough. Their merry shouts rang through the solitary wood. It was a bit better than washing in the dormitory at St. Jim's, as Manners remarked.

"But I say, this stream doesn't seem so deep as it was yesterday," Tom Merry remarked, with a puzzled look, "and look at the banks. The water seems to have gone down."

"That's so, now you've mentioned it," said Figgins. "Blessed if I know why. I've never known this feeder to be at a lower level."

"Something happening to it somewhere, somehow, perhaps," said Herries.

Figgins looked at him admiringly.

"I say, Herries, old man, that's ripping. Fancy working out a thing like that in your head, without pencil and paper," he said.

"Perhaps it's a want of rain," said Kerr. "There hasn't been any rain lately."

"I hope there won't be till we've done camping out."

"Hallo! What's the matter? Is it the enemy?"

"Buck up!"

Fatty Wynn was standing on the rampart of the camp, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,275.

excitedly waving a frying-pan. He looked a queer figure in the garb of a Redskin squaw. The juniors could only imagine that the enemy had appeared in sight, and they scrambled in frantic haste out of the stream.

"Come on!" roared Blake. "We're coming, Fatty! Rally up."

"Sock it to them!"

"Hurrah!"

"But where are they?"

"I can't see anything of the rotters!"

"Fatty, you ass, where are they?"



"My hat!" "Drag the things away!" The juniors rushed to the stream, stopped the progress of the fire, and the juniors could only

The juniors arrived dripping and excited at the moat, but there was no sign of the Grammarians. They looked round in vain for a foe. The vicinity of the Blackfoot camp was quiet and peaceful.

"Where are they?" roared Figgins.

Fatty Wynn stared at him in astonishment.

"Where are whom?" he asked.

"The Grammarians."

"Eh? In their camp, I suppose. I haven't seen anything of them."

"Then what's the matter?"

"The matter? Nothing, that I know of."

"Then what were you giving the alarm for, you ass?" shouted Tom Merry.

"I wasn't giving the alarm."

"You shrieking ass! What were you waving that frying-pan for like a madman?"

"Oh, that was a signal that breakfast was ready," said Fatty Wynn innocently.

"You—you—you—"

"Of all the—"

"The sausages are done to a turn," said Fatty Wynn. "If you let them get cold, it's your own look-out. The baked potatoes are spiffing."

Tom Merry burst into a laugh.

"Oh, come on," he said. "I'm jolly hungry, anyway. Good old Fatty."

The juniors were mostly dry by now. They hastily finished with the towelling, and donned the redskin garb. Then they went into breakfast, and it was so beautifully cooked that they agreed that they could forgive Fatty Wynn for the false alarm.



rescue, but it was useless. Nothing but a powerful hose could have surge back from the flames and look on in dismay.

## CHAPTER 8.

### D'Arcy is not Satisfied!

"JOLLY good feed," said Tom Merry, as he rose from the log he had been seated upon, and returned his pocket-knife to the pocket in his fringed leggings. "Fatty Wynn is a treasure."

"Worth his weight in bacon-fat," agreed Monty Lowther.

"Well, I do know how to cook," said Fatty Wynn modestly. "I'll turn out dinner better still, you see. We shall have a ripping pudding."

"I'll help you there, if you like, Fatty," said Figgins. "I'll make a fig pudding. I can make fig puddings first-rate."

"Can you?" said Fatty Wynn, with a sniff. "I remember the last time you made a fig pudding, and I've never liked fig puddings since."

"I jolly well remember that, too!" said Blake. "I don't think I shall ever forget that fig pudding if I live to be as old as Lowther's joke."

"It was all right!" insisted Figgins warmly. "If Fatty Wynn hadn't insisted upon putting syrup of figs in it."

"I didn't," said Fatty Wynn. "I was against it all along."

"Well, it was Kerr's idea, then."

"That it wasn't!" said the Scottish partner in the Co. promptly. "It was your own idea from start to finish, Figgys."

"It was a jolly good pudding."

"I know; it made us all ill!"

"One lives and learns," said Figgins. "I shouldn't put in any syrup of figs a second time. If I make a pudding to-day I shall leave it out."

"I don't know about living and learning," said Lowther; "we must learn, but I don't believe we should live if we ate your pudding."

"I can make a jolly good——"

"I say, it's getting near time for Cousin Ethel to arrive," said Tom Merry, changing the subject. "We don't want her to find the place in disorder. Let's get tidy."

"Yaas, wathah! I say, Tom Mewwy——"

"Squaws are not allowed to talk during working hours, Gussy. Get on with the washing—the washing-up, you know."

"I say, Tom Mewwy, would you mind changin' with me to-day? I don't want to be a beastlay squaw now Cousin Ethel is comin'?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"But I don't want to be a beastlay squaw, either."

"Well, that is weally not so important——"

"Ha, ha, ha! I am afraid it can't be did!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I wegard you as wathah selfish."

"Well, I've no objection to that, Gussy, if it's any consolation to you. Now, get that firewood stacked up."

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

"Squaws have to obey orders!" said Lowther. "I believe they get brained with the back of a tomahawk if they don't."

"I should uttably wefuse to be bwained with the back of a tomahawk."

"Look out!" sang out Figgins. "Here's visitors!"

There was a stir in the camp immediately. Figgins was on the look-out on the rampart, and he had sighted two forms approaching by the footpath through the wood. A kind-faced old lady in a somewhat Victorian hat, and a charming girl.

"Miss Fawcett!"

"Cousin Ethel!"

"Bai Jove," muttered D'Arcy. "I'm in for it!"

"Rotten!" murmured Tom Merry. "We've got the paint off our faces. Get out that beastly paint—we must be Blackfeet—not giddy schoolboys, to receive distinguished visitors to the camp."

"I say, Weilly——"

"Give me the paint."

"Heah it is. I say, Weilly, deah boy, you have nevalh tweeked me with pwopah respect, but I will ovahlook that if you will change with me."

"Rats!"

"Pway don't be a wude beast, but——"

"Don't bother."

"I say, Kerr, old man, I wish you would——"

"Red ochre, ass!"

"Eh?"

"Bring me the red ochre."

"I uttably wefuse to bwing you the wed ochre."

"Ass! Hand it over, or I shan't get painted in time. Give me that paint, Figgins; that yellow is what I was going to use."

"I'm in a hurry."

"So am I, and——"

"There you are; I'm done!"

"You're all yellow; you want some red."

"Black will do," said Figgins, picking up a burnt stick and streaking his face. "That looks terrible enough for a Blackfoot or a Sioux."

"By Jove, it's done!" said Kerr. "I'll have the red, though. Gussy, you lazy squaw, get me the red paint, or I'll brain you with the tomahawk."

"Wats! I say, Mannahs——"

"Don't bother now. Can't you see I'm busy?"

"If you like to change with me——"

"Clear off!"

"I say, Lowthah——"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Digby, old man——"

"Scat!"

"Hewwies——"

"Bunk!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave it up. It was evident that no one would relieve him of his squawship for the day. There was no help for it; he had to play out the role to the bitter end. But a lucky thought crossed his mind.

"Bai Jove, I don't see why a squaw shouldn't paint up as well as a bwave," he murmured. "Pewwaps I can disguise myself so that Cousin Ethel will not recognise me. That will solve the beastlay problem."

He hurried into a tent in search of paint, and stumbled over a junior who was sitting there, pencil and paper in hand.

"Ow!" gasped Skimpole.

"You ass!" panted D'Arcy. "What do you mean by planting yourself in the way like that, when I am in a beastlay huiway?"

"I am sorry, D'Arcy, but I retired here to be quiet, in order to work out a new idea that has come into my mind," said Skimpole. "It's a new detail in the construction of the airship I am inventing. I am thinking of working the airship by electricity, but unfortunately I have not studied the subject of electricity very deeply. Yet I do not see why the current required for working the rotators should not be supplied by the motions of the rotators themselves, connected up with a dynamo to generate the current. But I am thinking out a plan for saving that, and if I can perfect it, all that will be necessary will be to start the machine, which can be done with a push of the hand."

But D'Arcy was not listening. He had taken the paint, and he trod on Skimpole in leaving the tent again—trod rather hard.

Skimpole yelped, but he forgot the matter the next moment as he went on working out his plan for preventing the wastage of electric motive force, which would enable his electricity to generate itself and at the same time work the airship.

"Gussy, Gussy! Where's that ass?"

"Gussy, you lazy girl!"

"Oh, don't wot, deah boy! I'm busy!"

"You haven't stacked up that firewood, or filled the cans at the stream."

"I'm busy, I tell you."

"What on earth are you doing to your face?"

"Paintin' it, deah boy."

"You're putting the stuff on too thick," said Kerr.

"I want to hide my featuhs, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, putting it on recklessly.

"Well, that's kind of you," said Lowther. "I've often thought that if you wanted to be really kind you might do that."

But D'Arcy had no time to reply to Monty Lowther's badinage. He painted away as if his life depended upon it.

Figgins had left the camp already to meet the ladies, and several other juniors who had finished their war-painting followed him. The squaws, with the exception of D'Arcy, were busy tidying up the camp. Blake followed Figgins, who was already greeting Cousin Ethel.

## CHAPTER 9.

### Distinguished Visitors I

MISS FAWCETT gave a little shriek at the sight of Figgins as he came running towards them from the Blackfoot camp.

"Dear me! What is that fearful figure?"

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"It looks like an Indian, Miss Fawcett, but I think it is only one of the boys—Figgins, I should say, from his height."

"Dear me!"

Figgins hurried up. His hand went to his head absently-mindedly to raise his cap, and he plucked out a bunch of feathers.

Cousin Ethel laughed again.

"Is it Figgins?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Cleveland," said Figgins bashfully. "Good-morning, Miss Fawcett. How kind of you to come and look at our camp. I won't shake hands with you, as I've got a lot of paint on my hands. I don't know how the Blackfeet in the Rocky Mountains do about shaking hands. I should spoil your gloves."

"I promised Tommy that I would come," said Miss Fawcett. "I sent him down a parcel of things that would be useful in the camp—"

Figgins suppressed a chuckle as he remembered the cod-liver oil and the pills and medicines, probably still reposing under the bench outside Taggles' lodge.

"Yes, Miss Fawcett, I saw them yesterday."

"And I am going to inspect the camp," said Miss Priscilla. "I am afraid it is perhaps draughty."

"Ha, ha, ha—I mean, it isn't at all draughty, Miss Fawcett! You see, you don't get draughts in the open air."

"Are all the sheets well aired, Figgins?"

"The—the what?"

"The sheets."

"They don't have sheets in a Redskin camp, Miss

Fawcett," said Figgins, trying not to laugh. "Blackfeet have never heard of them."

"Dear me! That cannot be either good for you or comfortable. I must speak to Tommy on that point."

They walked on to the camp. Figgins walked beside Cousin Ethel, his face red under its paint, and his tomahawk swinging in his hand.

"What do you think of this rig?" he asked uneasily.

There was a peculiar gleam in the girl's eyes that Figgins did not exactly "catch on" to.

"It is very realistic, Figgins."

"It is a ripping idea, camping in the open air, you know."

"I am sure it is."

"And making up as Redskins makes it ripping fun."

"Yes, of course."

"Then—then you don't—" Figgins paused.

Cousin Ethel looked at him.

"I don't what, Figgins?"

"You don't think I look an ass then?"

The girl laughed.

"Certainly not. I think you look splendid!"

"I'm jolly glad of that," said Figgins. "I shouldn't like you to think me an ass. It's awful fun, you know. We're Blackfeet, and the Grammar School chaps have a camp up the Feeder, and they're made up as cowboys."

"What a good idea!"

"Of course, we shall have lots of rows," grinned Figgins. "They raided our camp, but we shall give them a warning for it. Of course, we shall knock them into a cocked hat!"

"I am sure you will."

"We're all pulling together, you see—House rows and Form rows are over for a bit while we're camping out."

"That is a good idea. But where is my cousin?"

Figgins chuckled.

"Oh, Gussy! He couldn't come out to meet you. You see, he's a squaw."

"A—a what?"

"We had to get a number of fresh costumes made up as there are twenty of us and Blake only had togs enough for twelve," explained Figgins, "so we got the other eight as squaws, to make the camp look more realistic. Gussy has had the luck to be first turn as a squaw. He doesn't like it."

"I suppose not," laughed Ethel. "I am curious to see him."

"He's not anxious to see you, though. He's afraid you will chip him. His dig is at stake, you see."

"His what?"

"His dig—dignity, you know. He always calls it his dig."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Welcome to the camp of the Blackfeet," broke in Jack Blake, bowing before the two ladies. "The great chief of the Blackfeet welcomes the palefaced squaws."

"Dear me! Who is that?" said Miss Fawcett.

"That's Blake."

"Bless my soul! I did not know you, Blake."

"Jolly glad to see you here, Miss Fawcett," said Blake. "It's a great honour to the camp. I suppose we startled you a bit at first, but, of course, we don't all look so horrid as Figgins."

"I think Figgins looks very nice," said Cousin Ethel.

"Do you?" said Blake in amazement.

"Welcome to the camp!" called out Tom Merry. "How do you do, dear? How do you do, Miss Ethel?"

"Tommy!"

"Didn't you know me?"

"I am sure I did not in that strange attire," said Miss Fawcett anxiously. "I know your darling voice, of course, but your sweet face is quite hidden."

"Safer to look at it, then," murmured Digby.

"Are you quite sure that that dreadful paint will not damage the skin, Tommy sweet?" asked Miss Fawcett. "It would be terrible if your dear complexion were spoiled."

Tom Merry turned red under the paint as he heard a suppressed chuckle.

"It's all right, dear."

"And your dear feet—are they sufficiently protected by those rags?"

"Rags! They're moccasins!"

"Why do you wear them instead of your nice little boots?" "I'm a Blackfoot now, you see. Redskins always wear moccasins."

"How curious! I wonder why they wear those peculiar things, when boots would be much better to protect the feet?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"I dare say boots aren't easily got in the Rocky Mountains," he remarked. "Besides, moccasins are much more

useful. You can creep about in them without making a noise, and if you want to murder someone——"

"Tommy!"

"If you want to murder someone you can creep on him with——"

"My dearest child——"

"Without his hearing you, and when you get close to him you raise your——"

"My dear child!"

"You raise your voice, and spring one of Lowther's puns on him, and then he's a dead man!"

"Look here——" began Lowther wrathfully.

"Gussy, Gussy!" shouted Blake. "Where's that squaw got to? Some of you squaws come and hold the plank while our distinguished visitors enter."

Arthur Augustus did not appear, but the plank was firmly held, and the ladies entered the camp.

## CHAPTER 10. Scouts!

"BAI Jove, she mustn't see me!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy muttered the words to himself. He kept out of sight behind a tent as Cousin Ethel and Miss Fawcett entered the camp.

Cousin Ethel was all admiration for the arrangement of the camp. She inspected the tents and the cooking fixtures, and made a tour of the earthen wall. Blake, as chief of the amateur Blackfeet, proudly showed her round the camp. Figgins wanted to perform that service, but Blake gave him to understand that he was only a common or garden brave, and had to obey orders.

"I shouldn't wonder if the Grammar School cads were to try to surprise us this morning," Blake remarked, looking at Figgins out of the corner of his eye.

"Quite possible," assented Figgins. "Do you think you had better go out and scout?"

"I was just thinking that you might do that."

"Well, I'd rather stay here, if you don't mind. It's going to be jolly warm this morning for scouting."

"Oh, you can stand it, you know!"

"You are a keener chap than I am, when it comes to that," said Figgins.

Jack Blake nodded an unqualified assent.

"Quite right, Figgy; there's no doubt about that. But I'm needed here. The chief should always be in command, you know, and be ready for danger at any moment. I can trust you to do the scouting in first-rate style."

"I'm not going, you rotter!" muttered Figgins fiercely, in a voice too low for Cousin Ethel to hear.

Blake pretended not to hear it, either, and he went on in his usual tones, without changing his expression in the least.

"Cut off now, Figgy, will you? Go in the direction of the Grammarian camp, and see if they are moving."

"No, I won't!" murmured Figgins savagely.

"Did my Red brother hear the commands of his chief?" said Blake.

"Look here——"

"Hook it!"

"I'm not——"

"Bunk, I tell you!"

Blake was determined, and Figgins had agreed to his chieftainship. He had to play the game, and, with muttered words that were not complimentary to the great chief of the Blackfeet, Figgins left the camp to scout. Kerr accompanied him.

Fatty Wynn, as a squaw, was exempt from scouting duty, and just now he was napping in the shade of a tent, after his hearty breakfast.

And so it came about that it was Jack Blake who showed Cousin Ethel round the camp. In other circumstances, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would have claimed the privilege, but just now D'Arcy was only anxious to keep out of Cousin Ethel's sight.

Tom Merry had taken his old governess in charge, and was showing Miss Priscilla the sights of the camp, and answering her questions as well as he was able.

"You are sure you don't lie in the damp grass, Tommy darling?" asked the anxious old soul.

"The grass is as dry as tinder, and has been for days, dear," said Tom Merry.

"Figgins tell me that you have no sheets on your beds."

Tom Merry grinned.

"We haven't any beds, you see," he explained.

"No beds? Bless my soul! Then how do you sleep?"

"In our togs, mostly——"

"In what?"

"I mean, mostly in our clothes. You, see, with blankets round us——"

"I am afraid that is not hygienic."

"It's what Red Indians do, and they're healthy enough."

"And you are sure you haven't caught cold?"

"I don't look as if I have, do I?"

"It is really difficult to tell what you look like, Tommy darling, with all that curious paint on your face. I hope you are well, that is all I can say. What are some of your friends dressed in a kind of skirt for?"

"Oh, they're squaws!"

"Squaws?"

"Yes; there are half a dozen of them. They do the work of the camp, and fetch and carry, you know, like real Indian women."

"Then I am afraid that the Red Indians cannot be a very polite race," said Miss Fawcett. "I am truly shocked!"

"Gussy! Where's that Gus?"

It was Reilly who was calling. Several Blackfeet looked round. The swell of St. Jim's had dodged behind another tent as Cousin Ethel came round with Blake, and he was quaking as he heard his name called.

"What do you want Gus for?" asked Lowther.

"He—I mean she—hasn't stacked up the firewood," said Reilly. "Sure, and I'm not going to have the squaws neglecting the work entirely."

"Certainly not," agreed Lowther. "Where's the lazy scamp?"

"There's somebody behind that tent," said Manners.

"Have him out!"

"Faith, and here he is. He's running!"

"Stop him!"

Arthur Augustus ran desperately round the tent, and came almost full tilt upon Blake and Cousin Ethel. He stopped in dismay.

"Dear me!" said Cousin Ethel. "Who is that?"

D'Arcy tried to pass on, trusting to his paint to keep him unrecognised. But at the second glance the girl knew him, and her eyes twinkled.

"Is that you, Arthur?"

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, seeing that concealment was useless now. "I am sowwy that you should see me looking such a widiculous ass, Ethel."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am not surprised at you laughin' to see me in this wig," said D'Arcy. "I wegard it as extremely wotten."

"Are you wearing a wig, then?"

"I mean this wig," said D'Arcy. "This wotten squaw's wigout, you know."

"Oh, I see! I think it looks rather nice."

"Do you weally, Ethel?"

"Certainly. You make a nice girl."

"H'm!" said D'Arcy, not knowing exactly whether to take this as a compliment or not. "It was wotten to shove me into these things, and I don't like it."

"Gus! Where's that Gus?"

"I am heah, deah boy."

"You haven't stacked the wood."

"Blow the wood!"

"Sure and I'm sorry to interrupt your conversation, Miss Ethel," said Reilly; "but this squaw has a lot to do!"

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"I won't detain him, then."

"Buck up, Gussy, and stack up the wood!"

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

"Remember you're a squaw, and a squaw has to go squawking whenever she's told entirely. If ye don't work I shall lam you."

"If you ventuahed to do anythin' of the kind, Weilly, I should immediately pwoceed to administah a feahful thwashin'."

"Rot!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, coming up. "Play the game. You're a squaw, and you've got to squawk. That's business. Go and stack up the firewood."

"I wefuse."

"Then you'll get lammed. Discipline has got to be maintained in this camp."

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Play up, then. Go and squawk."

"Perwaps you are wight."

"Perhaps I am. But if you don't immediately go squawking, you will get squashed; there's no perhaps about that."

It is wathah infwa dig for me to perform menial labour."

"Never mind; go ahead, and you'll get used to it in time. There's lots of it for you to do."

"Weally——"

"Stack the firewood first. Come and tell me when you're finished, and I'll give you a fresh job. There's water to be fetched, and wood to be chopped, and——"

D'Arcy, with an inward groan, went off to stack the firewood.

Lowther strolled on with Blake and Cousin Ethel, in spite of an expressive look he received from the Blackfoot chief.

"Let me see," remarked Blake. "I believe Figgins and

(Continued on page 19.)

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## TAKE A LOOK INSIDE—



Address all letters: *The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

**H**ALLO, chums! Isn't this week's yarn by Martin Clifford absolutely great? I knew you'd like it, and next week I've got another ripping long yarn of St. Jim's. It's called

### "SKIMPOLE THE INVENTOR!"

and it will make you laugh till the tears roll down your cheeks when you read about Skimpole's amazing midnight expedition! Needless to say there will be another gripping instalment of that tip-top Naval adventure yarn,

### "CHUMS OF THE FIGHTING FLEET!"

Potts will be on duty again to hand you your weekly chuckle, and there will also be another page of notes by me!

Let me tell you also that in a week or two I shall be starting a grand holiday series of St. Jim's yarns in the GEM. If you take my advice you will make sure of your copy by ordering it now.

### THE CHANNEL AGAIN!

People always seem to be finding new ways of crossing the Channel. As I told you a week or two ago a Dutchman crossed it on a hydro-cycle, and now two women have crossed it on an aquaplane. An aquaplane is a frail little craft shaped like a surfboat and it is towed behind a speedboat. The two women set out from Dover, one in the speedboat and the other in the aquaplane, and they took just an hour to reach Cape Griznez. Later they returned, swooping places, and they took sixty-five minutes to get back to Dover. Poor old Channel! It used to be of some account but now it seems to have been overcome in every kind of way. It has been flown, swum, rowed, and even walked, and it is going to take quite an ingenious person to think of some new way of getting across it!

### PLUCK!

How's this for pluck? An eleven-year-old boy of Tredegar, named Laurie Lewis, had the misfortune to break his leg, and was taken to hospital. That would have been bad enough at any time but it so happened that Laurie was just about to

sit for an examination which he had set his heart on passing. He tried a spot of gentle persuasion on the matron and the doctor and eventually he got his own way. He went to the examination with his leg in plaster of Paris. Pretty good, eh? Oh, but I forgot to tell you that when the results of that examination were announced friend Laurie was at the top of the two hundred boys who had entered!

### NO WATER!

If you went for a walk on a very hot day and became very thirsty, what would you think if you went to a house and asked for a glass of water, and the householder said "No!"? I expect you would think he was a pretty mean sort of fellow, wouldn't you? As it happens if he gave you a drink he would very likely be breaking the law and using water for purposes for which he was not supposed to use it! It was disclosed the other day that unless you have a certain agreement with the Water Board, you are not allowed to use water for anything but domestic purposes in the house, so that it is illegal to give a drink of water to a stranger. Needless to say the Board do not take action in such cases, and they say you can get out of it by making the stranger an invited guest—invited to have a glass of water!

### TARZAN!

Four months ago a native boy, living in the Drakensburg district in South Africa, disappeared and no trace of him could be found. Now he has been restored to his parents. During his absence he has been living, like Tarzan, with baboons! He was eventually discovered by some mountaineers, living in a cave on maize and raw mutton raided from near-by farms. Just what he thinks about going home and eating with a knife and fork instead of gnawing bones I don't know!

### THEIR OWN HOME!

In the rodent house at the London Zoo there were twelve Californian squirrels, and they lived in a very nice cage. But apparently they didn't think so highly of their cage, so they decided to leave it and make a home of their own. They bored a hole in the top of their cage and made a home up in the dark corners between the roof of their cage and the roof of the building, where no one could see them. Then they dragged all the hay from their cage

up into their new house. Then they bored a hole through the roof of the next cage, and for a little while the keepers were puzzled as to why they did this. They soon found out. When feeding time came for the occupants of the second cage, one squirrel would come down on a foraging expedition and "bag" some food for his friends. The keepers set a trap and caught four of the truants, but the other eight have become too wily and will not be caught!

### HEARD THIS ONE?

Passenger: "Porter, I marked my trunks 'China,' so that they would be handled carefully."

Porter: "Of course they'll be handled carefully, sir."

Passenger: "Yes, but they've sent them to Shanghai!"

### THE LIGHT THAT FAILED!

Ever heard of a light that caused darkness? Well, there is such a thing, and it is called lightning! A week or so ago lightning put out all the lights in Bridlington when it caused a failure in the electric light supply. The following night it did the same thing at Leighton Buzzard. It seems a bit odd, doesn't it, that one form of electric light should put out another?

### HE BOUGHT HIS VILLAGE!

There was once a cowherd in a little village called Latheronwheel, near Caithness, and his name was William McGregor. A little over forty years ago he became tired of herding cows and set out to seek his fortune in Australia. Many have done this and many have failed, but William McGregor meant to succeed—and he did. At the end of forty years he was a director of several large Australian companies, and he felt that the time had come for him to return to his native land. He did so, and to his surprise and pleasure he found that his native village was up in the market for sale. William McGregor bought it, lock, stock, and barrel, and returned to Latheronwheel, where his sister still lives in the cottage in which he was born, as laird of the village. He is now considering reconstructing the harbour, reviving the interest in fishing, and having some of the old houses rebuilt. Is this a record, too? Well, I should think it's fairly safe to say that he is the first cowherd to buy the village in which he was born!

### THEIR GOOD TURN!

Not long ago when the Graf Zeppelin came to England it landed at Hancorth, and two hundred boy scouts did their good turn of the day when they held on to the Zepp's mooring ropes. The unfortunate part was that the Zepp did a turn, too! It turned into the wind, and one of the ropes snapped, with the result that fifty boy scouts were thrown on their backs! Luckily none of them was hurt.

### ANOTHER RECORD.

Every day seems to see another record in sport broken, or at least every weekend. H. Ellsworth Vines, of California, who won the men's singles lawn-tennis championship at Wimbledon was no exception. In winning the title he broke two records. Firstly he is the youngest player ever to win the title, for he will not be twenty-one until September, and secondly he won with fewer games scored against him, than any previous champion.

YOUR EDITOR.

# THE RIVAL CAMPERS!

(Continued from page 17.)

Kerr have gone scouting up the Feeder towards the Grammarian camp."

"That's so."

"Then I think you had better go and scout in the opposite direction, Lowther," said Blake. "There's nothing like taking every precaution against surprise."

"I don't want to go scouting."

"That's got nothing to do with it. A brave has to obey the orders of his chief. You were giving Gussy a lesson in discipline just now."

"Yes, but—"

"Just you go scouting down the stream, and don't lose time," said Blake, with a wave of the hand. "Keep your eyes open for the enemy."

Lowther looked daggers at Blake, but he went.

Manners came strolling up shortly after with his camera under his arm.

"Jolly fine scenery round here, isn't it, Miss Ethel?" he remarked.

"Very jolly," said Cousin Ethel.

"I've brought my camera out with me," said Manners. "I'm going to take a series of photographs of the camp, and the Grammar School camp, and the fellows in their rig, you know. Would you like some of the pictures?"

"How good of you! I should like them very much."

"I should like to take you in some of the scenes," went on Manners. "That would be ripping. Will you let me?"

"Certainly."

"I say, Manners," broke in Blake.

"Then I'll fix up a group," said Manners, with great animation. "I've brought plenty of films with me. A camera is a ripping thing to take along when you go camping out—"

"I say, Manners!"

"Did you speak, Blake?"

"Yes. I think it's a splendid idea to use the camera in warfare."

"Who's talking about using the camera in warfare?"

"I am," said Blake firmly. "I want you to go as near as possible to the Grammarian camp, and take some photographs of it, so that we can plan an attack in council to-night."

"I can't go now."

"You must go now. Who's chief of this tribe?"

"You are; but—"

"Then go and do as I tell you."

"Look here—"

"Go and take those photographs," said Blake grimly.

Manners growled and went.

Cousin Ethel's face was immovable.

Blake looked at her out of the corner of his eyes, but apparently she noticed nothing.

"Now I'm going to show you the cooking arrangements," said Blake. "They're really ripping, and we had expert advice on the subject—Fatty Wynn's, you know."

"I daresay I could explain that better to Miss Ethel," remarked Digby, joining them. "I had more to do with rigging them up than you had, Blake. You see, Miss Cleveland—"

"I say, Digby—"

"You see, Miss Ethel—"

"I say, Dig, old man, it's occurred to me that Manners mayn't be quite safe alone near the Grammar School camp with his camera. I think you had better follow, and warn him to take care, and stay with him."

Digby looked daggers at his chief.

"No fear," he murmured.

"And lose no time, Dig."

"Look here, Blake—"

"Go at once. The great chief has spoken."

Digby, looking furious, went.

Blake turned to Cousin Ethel again. He had got rid of all his rivals by sending them out as scouts. But he found Cousin Ethel turning away.

"I think I had better rejoin Miss Fawcett," explained Cousin Ethel; "and I am sure you must be busy."

Blake looked after her in dismay.

"My hat!" he murmured. "A lot of good it was sending out all those scouts. I wonder if she'd rather have had Figgins stay? There's no accounting for tastes. Gosh, though, that's rot! She couldn't see anything in Figgins!"

And Blake shook his head and dismissed the idea as absurd.

## CHAPTER 11.

### The Hand of the Foe!

"HAVE you stacked up that firewood, squaw?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Have you chopped that fresh lot?"

"No, I have not done anything of the sort."

"Then buck up."

"Look here, Pratt—"

"Rats! Do as you're told, you lazy squaw, or we'll lam you!"

"Yes, rather," said French, taking up a stick. "We're going to keep our squaws in order in this camp. No giddy women's rights here!"

"You uttah wottah!"

"Buckle to," said Kerruish. "There's the wood to be chopped, and then water to fetch from the Feeder. The other women are all working away like clockwork."

"Yaas, but—"

"Oh, don't talk—work!"

"I wefuse."

"Where will you have it?" asked French.

"If you ventuah to stwike me, Fwench, I shall have no alternative but to administah a feahful thwashin'!"

"Hallo! What's all the trouble about?" exclaimed Blake. "Isn't that squaw doing her work? Buckle to, you lazy young bounder—I mean, boundess!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Get that wood chopped!"

"It makes my hands wuff and dirtay handlin' a choppah."

"You can wash them, I suppose?"

"I cannot wash the wuffness out of the skin. I wefuse to have my hands made wuff to please a set of silly, gwinnin' boundahs!"

"You'd better put on a pair of gloves, then," grinned Kerruish.

"Bai Jove, that's wathah a good ideah!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I don't want to get out of my pwopah work, of course. I will look for a pair of old gloves, and then I will chop the beastlay wood, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Miss Fawcett, a few minutes later, came by with Tom Merry. She stopped and looked at the curious figure of an Indian squaw chopping wood with gloves on.

"Dear me! Who is that?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"That's Gussy!"

"Bless my soul!"

"He's a squaw, you see, and he's doing his duties nobly. How do you like being a squaw, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus looked up, perspiration running down his face and making furrows in the paint.

"I do not like it at all," he said. "I weally dislike it vevy much. I am always pwepared to do my beastlay duty and to play the game, but I certainly wogard this as wathah wotten of you boundahs. Miss Fawcett, I must apologise for appeahwin' before you in this widiculous guise."

"Dear me!"

"It is weally through these boundahs. I was weally the pwopah person to be chief of the twibe, you know; but there is a lot of wottin' in these mattahs. I am sure that you think I look a feahful ass."

Miss Fawcett smiled. It was very probable that Arthur Augustus was quite correct. Cousin Ethel smiled, too.

D'Arcy went on chopping the wood, and at last threw the axe away with a sigh of relief.

"I have finished that wotten wood," he murmured. "I weally think I am entitled to a little west now."

"Hallo, there!" called out Kerruish. "Have you finished chopping that wood?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then get the water fetched in."

"The beastlay watah can wait."

"It can't! We may be besieged by the Grammarians any minute, and we've got to have a supply of water in the camp. Isn't that so, Blake?"

"Of course," said the Blackfoot chief. "Go and fetch the water in at once, my girl. The great chief has spoken!"

And D'Arcy, with a groan, picked up the two huge buckets and crossed the plank to go down to the stream.

"Bai Jove!"

The swell of St. Jim's gazed at the trench and the stream in amazement. He saw, as he went to fill the buckets, what had escaped the notice of the others, general attention being given to the distinguished visitors now. There was no water in the trench, and only a slight trickle on the pebbly bed of the Feeder.

D'Arcy stood staring at the bed of the little stream in amazement, the buckets in his hand.

Kerruish called out to him from the wall.

"How long are you going to stand there, squaw?" D'Arcy retraced his steps. His taskmasters looked at the empty buckets in surprise and indignation.

"He hasn't filled them!"

"The lazy boundess!"

"What do you mean, Gussy?"

"There is no watah there, deah boys," said the swell of the School House, clanking down the buckets.

"What!"

"The steam has wun dwy."

"Rot!"

"Look for yourselves, deah boys."

"By Jove, he's right!" exclaimed Blake, staring at the bed of the stream. "There's no water. I noticed that it was low down this morning. What on earth can be the cause of that?"

"Never known it to happen before," said Fatty Wynn.

"We can't stay here without water," said Herries. "What are we going to do, Blake?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Nice sort of a chief——"

"Oh, give a chap time! I wonder how that can have happened?" said Blake, scratching his head in amazement. "It's inexplicable."

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"Did you say that the Grammarians had their camp farther up the stream, Blake?"

"Yes, Miss Ethel."

"May they not have had something to do with it?"

Blake gave a jump.

"My only hat!" he yelled. "It's the Grammar School cads! They've dammed the Feeder and cut off our water supply."

It was evidently too true.

#### CHAPTER 12.

#### On the Warpath!

**F**IGGINS came from the wood, running hard towards the camp. Figgins' painted face was very excited. Kerr was at his heels, and Kerr looked equally excited.

They came up to the camp at top speed, with all eyes upon them.

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"Hallo! What's the row?" exclaimed Blake. "The enemy coming?"

"No!" gasped Figgins. "But we've been scouting round their camp, and seen what they're up to. They've dammed the stream."

"We've just discovered that."

"The rotters!" went on Figgins breathlessly, "They've dug a deep trench to let the Feeder out into a gully, and barred up the stream with tree-trunks and earth. It's a regular dam, you know, and not a sticklebat could get by. They've run up a stake fence round it, too, so as to defend it if we try to get at it. They saw us looking at them, and Kerr and I have had a run for it!"

Blake's red-ochred face looked very serious.

"Never mind, we'll soon have it down!" he said.

"Dear me," said Miss Fawcett, "it seems to me very inconsiderate of the Grammar School boys to cut off your water supply."

"Oh, it's part of the game, you know!" explained Tom Merry. "It's up to them to shift us if they can."

"Perhaps you would like me to go there and remonstrate with them?" suggested Miss Priscilla.

"Oh dear! Certainly not. It's all in the game."

Cousin Ethel looked at her watch.

"I think it is time we returned, dear Miss Fawcett," she said. "You remember Dr. Holmes expects us to lunch?"

"Is it really time," said Miss Fawcett. "But I do not like to leave the dear boys in this terrible extremity."

"Oh, that will be all right!" said Tom Merry. "We shall pay the Grammarians a visit, and persuade them to take the dam down."

"Do you think they would do it?"

"I am sure they will."

Cousin Ethel's eyes glimmered for a moment. She guessed the kind of persuasion Tom Merry & Co. would use, but she said nothing.

"Well, I suppose we must not keep the Head waiting," said Miss Fawcett. "We shall come and see you again to-morrow, Tommy darling."

"We shall be delighted," said Tom Merry earnestly. "And you will see the stream full of water again, then, I promise you."

"We must make up an escort for the ladies," said Figgins. "The enemy may be abroad, you know. Of course, we couldn't go out on the public roads in this rig——"

"Bai Jove, watah not!"

"But we could see Miss Fawcett and Cousin Ethel through the wood, with their permission," said Figgins.

"Please do," said Miss Priscilla. And Cousin Ethel nodded to Figgins with a bright smile.

"Good!" said Blake. "I'm sorry you have to go. You'll find us in better order to-morrow."

"Yaas, watah! And I shall not be a squaw then," said Arthur Augustus. "I am afraid that you wegard me as a watah widiculous ass, at pwesent, Ethel?"

The girl laughed merrily.

"Not at all, Arthur, I assure you; not a bit more than usual."

"You will see me in warpaint to-morrow," said D'Arcy, beaming. "I watah fancy myself as a Blackfoot wawwior, you know."

"Well, good-bye," said Miss Fawcett, kissing Tom Merry, never noticing the smear of paint she received from his face. "Take care of yourself, my sweet boy."

"Certainly."

"Mind you do not lie down in the damp grass, or wear damp clothes, or get your feet wet."

"I will take care, dear."

"You are wearing flannel next to your chest, are you not?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry, colouring under his paint. "I'm right as rain, best of health; simply ripping, in fact. Come on, you kids. The squaws can watch the camp for a bit, and whistle if the enemy appears. We shan't go out of hearing."

The distinguished visitors were helped across the plank, and the Blackfeet formed up in a guard of honour to escort them through the wood.

D'Arcy waved his hand to Cousin Ethel from the wall, and the girl smiled back. D'Arcy had screwed his eyeglass into his right eye regardless of the paint, and the look of the swell of St. Jim's was certainly rather singular, and perhaps that was why Cousin Ethel smiled.

The Blackfeet marched with Miss Fawcett and Cousin Ethel as far as the footpath through the wood. Further it was not judicious to go. They did not want to court public attention, and have half the villagers of the countryside collecting round the camp to look on.

It was a short walk down the footpath to the road, and in the Rylcombe Road a vehicle was waiting for the visitors.



Miss Fawcett gave a little shriek at the sight of Figgins as he came running towards them from the Blackfoot camp. "Dear me! What is that fearful figure?" Cousin Ethel laughed. "I think it's Figgins!" she said.

They parted at the footpath, Miss Fawcett again impressing upon Tom Merry the necessity of keeping his feet dry, and Cousin Ethel spoiling a glove by shaking hands with Figgins.

When the ladies were gone, cheered on their way by a Blackfoot yell of adieu—the Redskin juniors turned back. They were looking serious now.

"I say, this isn't a joke about the Feeder," said Blake, contracting his brows thoughtfully, till the paint stood out in ridges, "it's jolly serious. If we don't bust up that dam we shall have to shift our camp and the Grammarians will have scored all along the line."

"Yes rather," agreed Tom Merry. "The only thing is to march against the enemy at once, wreck their camp, and break the dam."

Blake whistled.

"I suppose that's what we've got to do; but it's not easy. I was planning a night attack in my mind. In the daytime, with equal numbers on each side, they ought to be able to hold the camp against us."

"We've simply got to lick them."

"That's what it amounts to, I suppose. Well, we must do it, that's all."

They reached the camp. There had been no alarm, and Fatty Wynn pushed out the plank for them to enter.

"What's going to be done, Blake?" he asked, as the chief of the St. Jim's Blackfeet came in. "I was going to start cooking the dinner, but I can't boil my puddings without water."

"There was that fig-pudding I was going to make, too," said Figgins. "Looks as if we shan't get that."

"Rotten," said Monty Lowther.

"Rotten if we don't get it, you mean?"

"No; rotten if we do get it."

"Look here, Monty Lowther—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Tom Merry. "Is this a time to talk about fig-puddings? We ought to hold a council of war and march against the enemy."

"Exactly," said Blake. "I'm thinking it out."

"There's only one pail of water in the camp," said Fatty Wynn. "Of course, we never thought the supply would run short, and we didn't economise. I suppose I could boil puddings in this, though it's been used for washing up. But I want clean water, to mix the flour in,

Can't do that with washing-up water, you know. It wouldn't be exactly harmful, perhaps, but you couldn't call it nice."

"I should wathah say not, Fatty Wynn."

"Well, then, what's to be done?"

"We're going to attack the Grammarian camp," said Blake. "We're going to knock them into a cocked-hat, and then bust up the dam. There are twenty of them, and so we shall need all our forces. The squaws will have to tuck up their skirts and become warriors again."

"We confer women's rights on them," said Lowther. "No taxation without representation, you know."

"Good! The camp can be left to take care of itself for a bit."

"If I had my bulldog here—" began Herries.

"But you haven't. Now, you squaws, change your things."

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

"Eh?"

"I wefuse to become a bwave again," said D'Arcy obstinately. "You wefused to allow me to become a bwave when I wanted to, and now I uttably wefuse to become a bwave."

"Are you funkng the scrap?" asked Pratt.

"If you like to stand out heah, Pwatt, and put up your fists, I will show you whethah I am funkng or not," said the swell of St. Jim's.

"Chuck that!" said Blake, pulling Pratt back. "We've got enough fighting to do yonder. Look here, Gussy, we need every man against the enemy now—"

"Perwaps you do, but you don't need any women."

Figgins chuckled.

"Gussy's got you there, Blake."

"Well," said Blake, "I am willing to admit the perfect equality of the sexes, and to give D'Arcy a vote and representation in Parliament. Every woman performing military service is entitled to rank as a man. What can be fairer?"

"Nothing."

"I am a squaw for to-day," said D'Arcy obstinately. "You wouldn't give me your permish to be a bwave when I wanted it, and now you can go and eat coke!"

"You obstinate ass—"

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as an obstinate ass."

"We want every man."

"Squaws are no good in a swap. I will go on choppin' wood."

"Ass! We want every fist—"

"I can fetch and cawwy watah, you know, and stack up firewood while you are gone."

Jack Blake burst into a laugh.

"Well, after all, we may as well leave one chap to look after the camp," he remarked. "If anybody comes—"

"Just look at him over the wall," said Lowther.

"Bai Jove! I will spwing upon him and wecite one of Lowthah's funny storwies—"

"Oh, draw the line!" said Figgins. "No manslaughter yet, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, let's get ready," said Blake. "The sooner we get to work the better. Mind, Gussy, keep the plank inside the wall, and blow that whistle if the enemy appears. The Grammarian camp is within sound of it when the wind is blowing that way, I think, and if it's blowing that way now we shall hear."

"Vewy good!"

"But you can come along if you like."

"I wefuse to come along."

"Stay where you are, then, and eat coke!"

The Blackfoot braves speedily prepared for the expedition. In full warpaint and plumes they issued from the camp, and Arthur Augustus, still in his garb as a squaw, watched them go. They disappeared from view in the thick wood.

"Bai Jove!" murmured the swell of St. Jim's. "I think I watah scored that time. If I am a beastlay squaw I won't go in the beastlay watah with the beastlay bwaves, that's certain. And I have had enough of this filthy paint on my face, too. I am goin' to have a jolly good wash, and dweess myself in decent clothes for once, and see what it is like to feel clean again. I can scoop up enough watah for that purpose, and I shall feel a gweat deal more like a Chwistian when I am dweessed in a wopah mannah and weawin' a decent hat. Yaas, watah!"

And Arthur Augustus was soon busy.

He scooped up from the hollows of the stream bed sufficient water to fill a pail and carried it into the camp. He was far too intent upon his occupation to think of removing the plank after crossing the empty moat.

Back again in the camp, D'Arcy stripped off his squaw garb and cleaned himself from head to foot with great satisfaction. He surveyed the result in a hand mirror and grinned.

"Bai Jove! That is bettah."

Then he began to dress himself again. He felt more and more comfortable as he proceeded to don clean linen and clean clothes.

"Bai Jove! Indian life has its drawbacks," murmured D'Arcy. "They may talk about the noble savage if they like, but the noble savage must have been an awfully dirty sort of chap. I don't see where he could get any clean shirts from in the fowest."

D'Arcy was so busy that he did not hear the creak of the plank and did not see a head rise over the wall and a grinning face look at him.

He had his back turned to the spot, and had not the faintest suspicion that the eyes of Frank Monk were fixed upon him.

Monk slowly and silently stepped forward, and head after head rose into view behind, and Grammarian after Grammarian entered the camp, D'Arcy giving the finishing touches to his toilet in sublime unconsciousness of it all.

Frank Monk grinned at his followers.

"The camp's deserted," he whispered. "Nobody but Gussy here. We'll wreck the place, and leave him tied up in the midst of the ruins."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quiet! He may have some signal for the others," said Monk sagely. "Creep on the young ass and collar him before he can give it."

"What-ho!"

The Grammarians stole forward.

D'Arcy finished tying his necktie under a beautifully white collar, and the result afforded him endless satisfaction as he jammed on his eyeglass and watched his reflection in the glass.

"Bai Jove! This is bettah. Now, all I want is a silk hat. Gweat Scott!"

He turned at the sound of a footstep behind him. But he turned too late.

The Grammarians were upon him. Hands seized him on all sides and held him fast.

"Got him!"

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D'Arcy remembered the whistle and made a frantic clutch at it. Before the Grammar School juniors could stop him he blew a loud, sharp blast.

Monk snatched the whistle away.

"That's the signal!" he cried. "Hold him! There's no time to waste. Wreck the camp and chuck everything into the bed of the Feeder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And buck up!"

"You Gwammah wottahs!"

"And fasten Gussy up here. Stick some feathers and paint on him, and shove his head through the tent and tie him up, and he can explain to the others when they come back."

And the grinning Grammarians hastened to obey.

## CHAPTER 13.

### A Flare Up!

"HERE we are!" said Jack Blake.

Quite unconscious of the danger impending over their own camp, the juniors of St. Jim's had pressed on rapidly through the wood towards the Grammarian camp. They had taken a roundabout way in order to avoid meeting any of the Grammarians who might be out scouting, but they had lost no time. Now they were in sight of the Grammarian camp, and they halted on the edge of the trees.

"They're at home," said Figgins.

Three Grammarians could be seen shaking their fists over the fence of wooden stakes that surrounded the Grammar School camp. The fence had been extended so as to cover both sides of the Feeder.

The stream at this point was not more than six feet wide, and it had been allowed to flow through the camp. A deep trench had been dug for its waters to flow to a depression in the ground some distance away, and the old channel was blocked up with logs and earth, a really workmanlike affair.

The juniors of St. Jim's saw at a glance that the dam could not be interfered with unless the camp were carried by assault.

"The rotters!" said Lowther. "It's rather clever, too, you know. They've arranged it so that nothing can be done without taking the camp, and they've got a strong defence."

"And as many men as we have," said Kerr.

"If they're all at home."

"I dare say some are out scouting; but there are a crowd," said Blake, scanning the Grammarian camp. "I can see over a dozen hats over the wall."

"Can't be helped," said Tom Merry. "We've got to rush them."

Carboy waved his hat from the wall of the Grammar School camp.

"Come on, you rotters!" he shouted. "We'll give you a hiding. If you're looking for a licking, come on and take it!"

Blake looked thoughtful. He seemed in no hurry to accept the Grammarian challenge. The position of the camp was strong. The stake fence was strong and high, and defended by a resolute garrison, should have been impregnable. And beyond the fence could be seen more than a dozen hats worn by the Grammarians.

"Come on!" said Figgins.

"It's a risky business," said Blake. "Can't be helped, though. The fact is, they ought to be able to keep us out if they're only half our number, and that's what's the matter. We've got to risk it, though."

"Sure, and we're ready."

"We'll take them on both sides at once," said Blake. "Tom Merry can lead a party round the other side and go for them there. That will divide their attention."

"Good!" said Tom Merry.

"And I'll lead a party on another side," said Figgins. "The New House chaps will follow my lead."

"Good!" said the New House fellows with one voice.

"Oh, all right!" assented Blake. "Now, it's three minutes to twelve. Rylcombe Church clock will strike in three minutes, and we can hear it from here. That's the signal."

"Right you are!"

The Redskins divided into three parties.

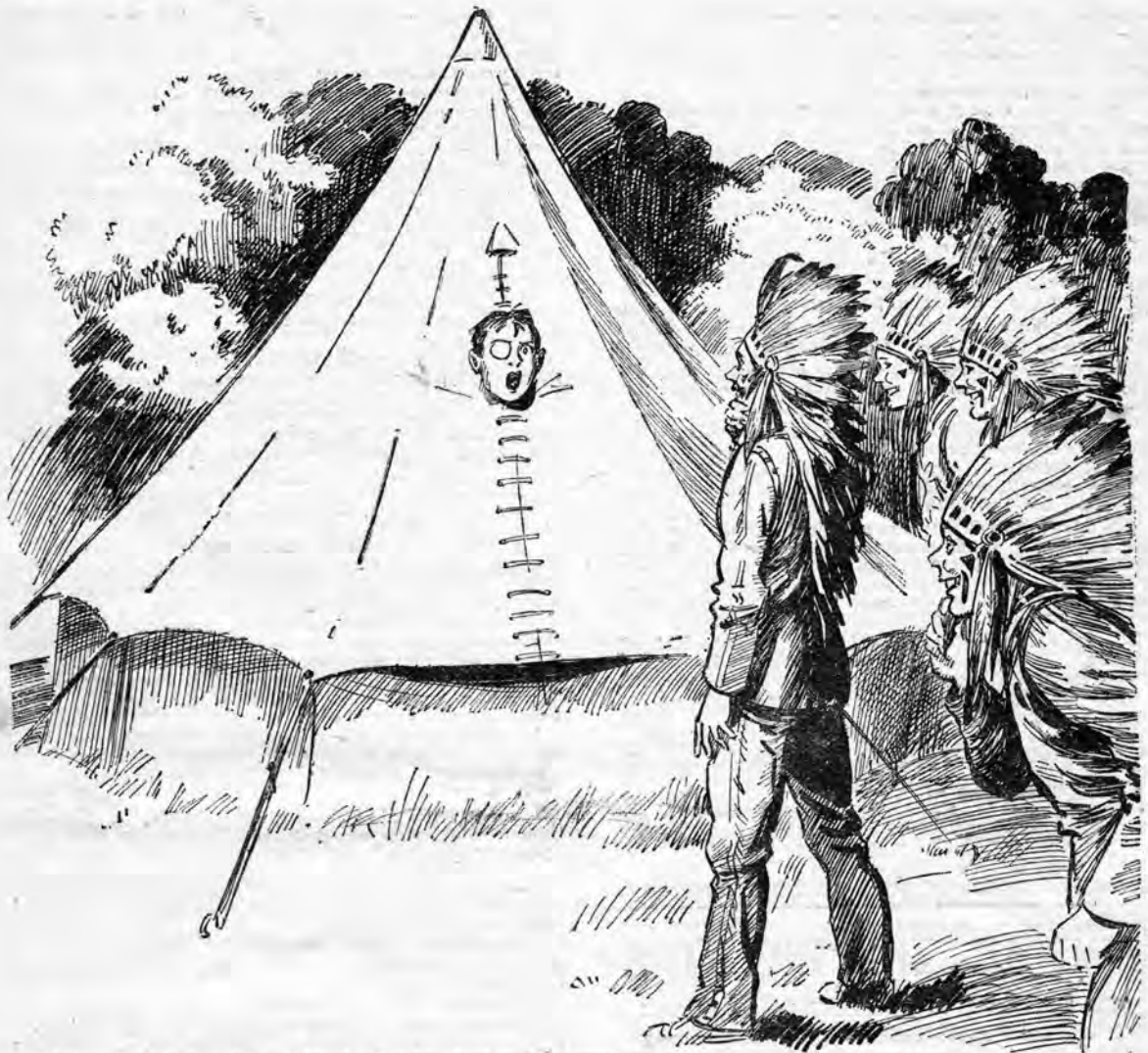
Three Grammarians were still waving their fists on the wall, but of the rest of them only hats could be seen.

"They're lying low," said Blake. "We'll jolly soon wake them up. There goes the clock! Come on!"

The chimes echoed over the wood from Rylcombe Church. Blake rushed forward, with his followers backing him up.

Tom Merry, from the opposite side, rushed on at the same moment, with the Shell followers backing him up. Figgins and the New House party were only a few seconds later.

The Blackfoot juniors gave a terrific yell, and it was



"Wescue, deah boys!" "Ha, ha, ha!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy certainly looked comical. The Grammarians had thrust his head through the tent canvas where it joined, and the canvas had been laced securely under his chin!

answered by a shout of defiance from the Grammarians. But that shout rang from only three throats, and still only three defenders could be seen.

Tom Merry was the first to reach the fence and clamber up. He received a drive from above which sent him gasping to the ground, and the next moment Lowther grasped the Grammarian and dragged him over the wall.

Tom Merry was up in a twinkling, scrambling over the fence, with Manners and Lowther at his heels.

But there was no defence.

The chums of the Shell scrambled into the camp unopposed. Tom Merry jumped down inside the wall and stared about him in amazement.

There were only three Grammarians in the camp.

The dozen hats that could be seen over the wall were arranged upon sticks set upright in the ground, and from outside gave an impression that the camp was well garrisoned. It was a trick of the astute Grammarian leader to keep his camp secure from attack while he was absent with his followers.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Blake, as he rolled Carboy over, and Digby and Kerruish seized and made him a prisoner. "What a sell!"

"Jolly good sell for us, I think!" gasped Manners. "We should never have got over that wall if there had been twenty Grammarians inside it."

"Oh, I don't know! I admit it would have been hard."

"You wouldn't have done it!" gasped Carboy.

"Rats! Where are the other rotters?"

"Find out!"

"Now, then, answer, or you'll be put to the torture!" said the Blackfoot chief sternly. "Where is Frank Monk?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Lowther, put him to the torture."

"What am I to do?"

"Tell him one of your funny yarns."

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

"Never mind; we'll spare the torture," said Blake, shaking his head. "Come to think of it, it would be rough on him. Take those prisoners away and chuck them into the Feeder. They can get a ducking when we break the dam, which will be a lesson to them not to play little games on a tribe of Blackfeet."

"Good wheeze!"

The three Grammarians were speedily dropped into the bed of the stream. They were tied there with one of their own lassoes to a stake driven in the earth. There was, of course, no danger, for the Feeder, when restored to its bed, was only nine or ten inches deep in this spot.

"I say, Blake, it's rather curious Frank Monk and all those rotters being away," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "They may have gone to attack our camp, you know. We came here in a roundabout way; and they may have gone direct and missed us."

"Well, Gussy is on the watch."

"Well, a Fourth Form kid isn't much use—"

"A what?" said Blake pleasantly.

"What I mean is—"

"Never mind what you mean. I'm chief of this tribe. Get to work on the dam there and break it up."

"Yes, but—"

"Oh, don't jaw! Work, old chap!"

Blake was on the high horse now. He was chief, and he

meant that important fact to be thoroughly understood. The Saints set to work. They might be interrupted, and there was no time to lose. If the Grammarians had gone to attack the St. Jim's camp, they might hear the signal whistle from D'Arcy at any moment.

"Wreck the camp," said Blake. "Half a dozen of you start on the dam and get it down. Yank the tents over and kick all that firewood into the fire. I see they've left a pot simmering over the fire," Blake went on, surveying the gipsy-like cooking arrangements of the Grammarians. "We may as well scoff what's inside it. I'm getting peckish, and dinner will be late."

"It's not done—or near it," said Fatty Wynn, glancing into the pot. "There's a lot of grub in this box. I've found tins of salmon and tomatoes, and cake and biscuits and fruit, bread and cheese, ham and eggs—"

"Good! Take all you want, you chaps, but don't sit down to scoff them. You will have to eat while you work."

"I say, that's rather bad for the digestion," said Fatty Wynn anxiously. "Better risk taking off a quarter of an hour for a feed."

"Let me catch you taking off a quarter of a minute, that's all!" said Blake. "Mind how you shove these things near that fire, you chaps. We don't want a flare up."

"Sure, and I'll soon have the tents down," said Reilly.

"Good! I'll help with the dam."

The dam in the stream was soon torn down. The Feeder flowed back into its old channel, and the three Grammarians tied to the post in the river-bed yelled as the water surged round them. Some of the juniors were tearing down the stake fence, and piling the stakes on the camp-fire in order to make it impossible for them to be used again.

The fire blazed up, flaring and roaring, as the fuel, hard and dry with the hot sun, was piled upon it. The heat was terrific near the fire, and the juniors gave it a wider berth.

"Haul away!" shouted Reilly.

"Look out!" shouted Blake.

But the warning came too late. The tent came over, and flapped right into the fire, and in a second it was flaring up in a spire of flame.

"Ow!" gasped Reilly.

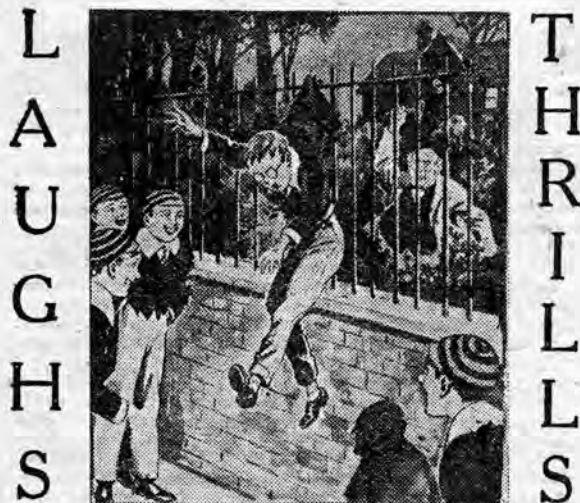
"Great Scott!"

"Drag the things away!"

"My hat!"

## SKIMPOLE THE INVENTOR!

This is the end of Skimpole's midnight expedition!  
It is a small reproduction of next week's cover.  
Watch for it!



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The juniors rushed to the rescue, but it was useless. Nothing but a powerful hose could have stopped the progress of the fire, and the juniors could only surge back from the flames and look on in dismay.

"My hat!" gasped Blake. "That's a bit more serious than we intended. It was an accident, of course. You saw that, Carboy?"

"Yes," gasped Carboy. "It couldn't be helped; but I fancy that settles camping-out for us. The game's up!"

At that moment, borne on the wind, came the shrill blast of a whistle from the far distance.

Tom Merry gave a jump.

"It's the signal!"

"They're attacking our camp!"

"Come on!"

"Let those Grammar School rotters go," said Blake hastily, "and follow me! We must get back before they can do any damage!"

And in a few seconds the Blackfeet were racing through the wood, leaving the camp of the Grammarians flaming to the sky, and the three Grammar School juniors engaged in snatching from the flames a few articles at a time. But they were able to save little. As Carboy had said, camping-out was "all up" for the Grammarians.

### CHAPTER 14.

#### Rough on D'Arcy!

BREATHLESS with the rapid run, the Blackfeet arrived in sight of their own camp. Tom Merry gave a shout of dismay as he pointed to the stream.

The Grammarians had just discerned the volume of smoke in the sky from their own quarters, and Frank Monk had guessed what was happening. He called his followers together, and they hurriedly left the St. Jim's camp, which they had pretty thoroughly wrecked in a very short time. Every movable article had been hurled into the stream's bed or into the trench, and it was this that had caused Tom Merry to exclaim as he came in sight of the scene of destruction:

"Look!"

The dam having been broken up, the waters were flooding back through their old channel. They swept down upon the articles heaped in the pebbly bed, and swept them away. Camp utensils and furniture, tent canvas, blankets, and bags—all sorts and conditions of property were whirled to and fro in the stream, and dashed away towards the Rhyl.

Blake snapped his teeth.

"The rotters! They've wrecked the place!"

"Well, what have we done to their quarters?" grinned Lowther.

"There they are! Go for them!"

The Grammarians were crowding out of the denuded camp. Only one tent was left standing, for what reason the juniors could not see. They gave a shout of defiance at the sight of the Redskins, and showed no disposition whatever to avoid a conflict.

"Come on!" said Blake. "We'll wipe up the ground with them, anyway!"

And he rushed on, followed fast by the rest.

The Grammarian cowboys formed up to receive them, ready for the fray.

"You rotters!" shouted Frank Monk. "What have you been doing to our camp?"

"What have you been doing to ours, you rotters?"

"Wrecking it," grinned Monk. "We chucked the things into the bed of the Feeder. Of course, we couldn't foresee that you were going to break the dam and wash them all away. That was an accident."

"And we couldn't help your rotten camp catching fire," said Tom Merry. "That was an accident, too."

"I fancy camping out is all up for you—"

"You'll think it's all up for you, too, when you see your camp."

"Well, you're going to have a jolly good licking!"

"Ugh! Go for the palefaces, my Red brothers!"

"Sock it to them!" yelled Monk.

And the two parties rushed at one another. The Redskins wore tomahawks in their belts, and the cowboys had weapons of a harmless kind, but in this fray they forgot that they were Redskins and cowboys, and fell back upon the good old British weapon—the fist.

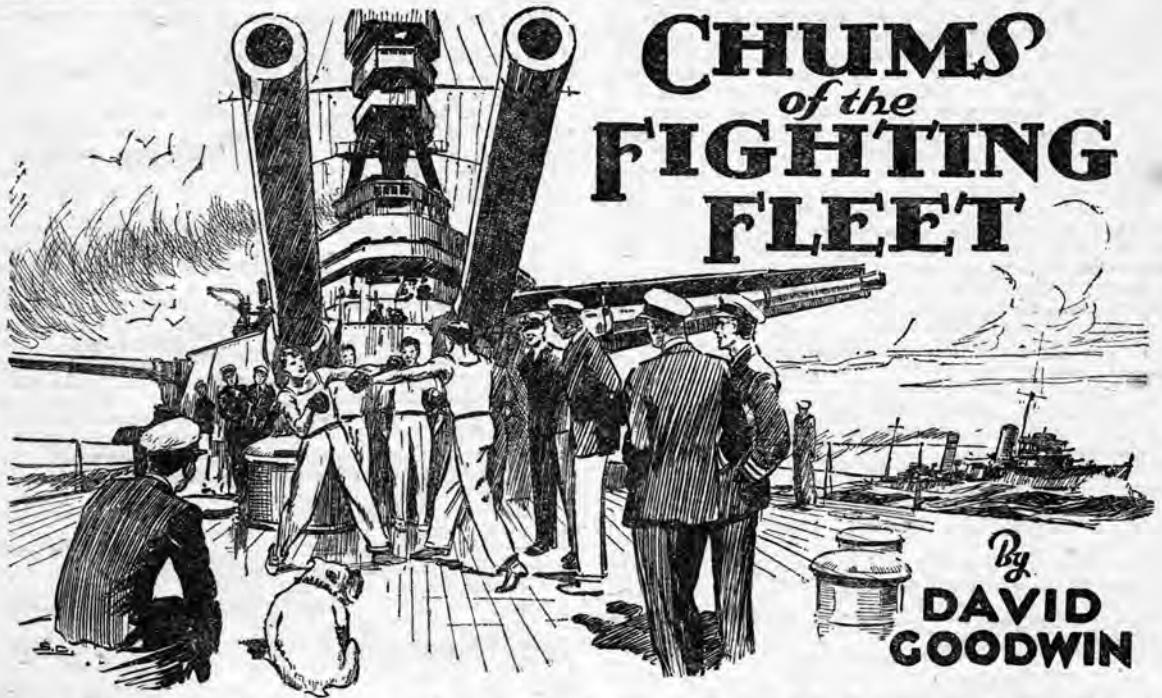
"Go for the rotters!"

"Buck up, Grammar School!"

"Buck up, St. Jim's!"

Fierce was the fight. Real Redskins and real cowboys might have done more damage to one another, but they could not have shown more pluck and determination. The odds were slightly on the side of St. Jim's, the Saints being

(Continued on page 28.)



# CHUMS of the FIGHTING FLEET

By  
**DAVID  
GOODWIN**

*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 Ned and Jinks go to Rotterdam, where they see a man whom they know to be in league with the Russian spies. He gives them the slip.*

## The Insult to the Fleet!

**T**HE middies did not lose more than twenty seconds in reaching the corner. They expected to find themselves within easy hail of the man they were after.

Yet when they reached the street down which he had turned Briarley was nowhere in sight. He was certainly not one of the two or three people whom they saw. The street was almost deserted.

"Must have got into one of the houses," said Jinks.

"Or he may have slipped into some side alley," said Ned in perplexity. "Are you certain it was Briarley?"

"I'd nearly swear to him! He was under-paymaster on the Victorious for over a year. And as he belongs to Voroff's gang now, he's likely enough to be in Rotterdam. Mustn't give ourselves away. Make a note of the street."

"We can come back and keep a watch when the liberty men are off on their own. Such rot, our having to stay by them! They don't want us!"

"Hart asked us to; we can't do less."

It took the middies some time to catch up with the crew of the launch. They were all filing in at the doors of a variety concert, with flaring coloured bills outside.

"We'd better go with 'em, Ned," said Jinks. "It'll keep the youngsters out of mischief." Ned was about three years junior to the youngest bluejacket in the party.

"Rotten bore, of course; but duty's duty," said Ned, who was secretly burning to see the performance.

All the seats were the same price, except the private boxes, and the two middies, scorning to take these, threw overboard the dignity of the gun-room and sat with the crew, which they both much preferred.

The show proved a much rowdier one than either of the middies expected. The place was filled with Dutchmen, who were drinking thin, flat beer and smoking long pipes, and both the orchestra and the spectators made quite as much noise as the performers.

However, the crew of the launch were delighted with a couple of boxing cats that were brought on by a fat lady in gold spangles. The cats had boxing-gloves on their paws, and sparred away at each other nobly.

The next turn was a Dutch comedian, who came on dressed as a British bluejacket, pretending to be helplessly drunk.

For a moment the crew of the flagship's launch were

stupefied. But there it was, beyond all doubt. The Dutchman was dressed in an old Navy uniform, ragged and baggy, and a cap with the letters "H.M.S. Edward" on the band. He had a huge red artificial nose, and, reeling up to the footlights, he hiccupped out:

"English! Ya-ha!"

"By Jove! What a shame!" exclaimed Jinks, his blood boiling at the insult to the fleet.

"We ain't going to stand this, mates!" cried one of the British seamen, starting up. "Hi, you there," he roared, "get off that stage, or we'll come an' show you what a British Jack's really like!"

"Take that drunken ruffian off!" shouted the coxswain of the launch, starting to his feet.

There was an outburst of anger from the audience; they shouted to the bluejackets to be silent. Taunts were flung at the sailors, and it looked as if another few seconds would see a serious riot.

"Keep 'em quiet if you can, Simpson!" cried Ned to the leading seaman. "I'll go and get this stopped. Come on, Vic; we don't want a rough house here."

Ned hurried out and found the manager, an enormous fat Dutchman, in the bar.

"If you don't get that man off the stage in ten seconds I won't answer for the consequences!" exclaimed Ned to the stage manager. "Our men won't stand it, and no more will I! Shunt him, Mynheer, and look sharp!"

"And if you think that red-nosed tramp is like a Navy man," said Jinks angrily, "you'll get a sample of the real article in a minute!"

The manager turned on them defiantly.

"Do you think I take orders from English babies what performances I gif in my house?" he spluttered, shaking his finger in front of Ned's nose. "If you and your sailors not like it, go! If there is any more noise I call in de police!"

The bluejackets had got beyond all patience. The man on the stage went on with his performance, which became still more offensive. It was enough. The sailors rose like one man, and Simpson, pulling out his whistle, blew a piercing blast.

"Hands down house!" he roared in a stentorian voice.

With one rush the British seamen made for the stage.

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The whole place was in an uproar, and a free fight reigned—short and swift, however, for the Jacks bowled over everybody who tried to bar their way. Right through the orchestra they charged, scattering the fiddlers in all directions; Simpson's leg went through the big drum, which he used as a step to get up by. In a few seconds they had stormed the stage. And, sad to say, those two zealous officers, Mr. Hardy and Mr. Jinks, headed the charge.

"Let 'em have it!" cried Ned. "Nab that red-nosed swab! Don't let him get away!"

The sham British tar, seeing how things were going, turned and fled for his life. A young signalman got hold of him just in time and shook him till his teeth rattled, and tore off his uniform. The hall was now in a pandemonium; the audience shouting and booing, bells ringing, and whistles blowing for the police; the stage manager tearing his hair. A horde of scene-shifters, stage carpenters, and hangers-on of all sorts were collecting hurriedly, many of them with weapons, to bar the path of the seamen.

The flagship party, forging straight through the wings and upsetting half the scenery, swept the enemy away like chaff, leaving a trail of desolation behind them.

"Yonder's a way out!" cried Ned, seeing the stage-door at the end of a long corridor and dashing towards it. "Come on, lads—shift!"

The men were wound up for an all-round fight, and, having gained the victory, had no idea of retreating. But the middies, knowing how serious the affair might turn out, led the way swiftly into the back street on to which the stage-door opened.

There they very nearly ran into a company of seamen from the Dutch Navy, marching up the street in charge of a lieutenant.

"Hi, you Englishers," exclaimed the lieutenant in astonishment, "vot is dis?"

"Bit of a scrap, that's all—nobody killed," said Jinks.

"Stop!" the Dutch officer commanded, seeing the letters on the capbands of Ned's crew. "You are from Victorious? Yes—no? Den you must be de party I seek!"

"What, is yours the crew we were told to look out for?" cried Ned. "Glad to meet you, lieutenant!"

"But what is dis trouble in der theatre?"

In a few words Ned told the officer what had happened.

The Dutch lieutenant roared with laughter. He seemed a very decent fellow. In a few moments the British and Dutch bluejackets were fraternising heartily. They all marched away in company—the best of friends, though they hardly knew a word of each other's language—just as a horde of excited police and stage hands came rushing out of the door and round the street corner.

### The Cellar Under the River I

ALL the police saw was a squad of sailors marching down the dark street, with a Dutch officer beside them. Not for a moment did they suppose these to be the men they were after. In another ten minutes the flagship's men were entering the Dutch barracks, where their hosts had prepared an evening's festivities for them; and the two middies, having thanked the lieutenant, strolled back into the town.

"Nothing like keeping the flag flying!" chuckled Jinks.

"Never saw a stage cleared as quick in my life," agreed Ned. "But it's lucky we're clear of the game now. Better not go near that music hall place again."

"The thing to do now is to get on to the track of Briarley. But how?"

"We've nothing to go on yet," said Jinks. "Don't see the good of wasting time watching that street where he disappeared. He might be anywhere."

"It's my opinion we're being watched ourselves," said Ned.

"Why?"

"Because this place reeks with Voroff's men, and we've made as much stir in it already as a brass band. We were rather chumps to get mixed up in that row at the variety show. Remember how keen Voroff's are to get us pipped."

"No good talking of that now," said Jinks. "Can't eat your cake and have it." They turned down through a big, glass-roofed promenade that connected two streets and was full of bazaars and cafes. "I don't believe Voroff's are bothering about us as much as you think."

A well-dressed man, with an unlit cigar in his mouth, was standing on the pavement of the promenade, feeling in all his pockets for matches. Evidently he had not any, and there was no shop close by where any could be had. As the middies passed he raised his hat to Jinks.

"Could you oblige me wid a light?" he asked politely in very fair English.

Jinks always carried matches. He handed his box to

the stranger, who thanked him courteously and struck a match.

"Perhaps you will honour me by accepting a cigar in exchange, monsieur—you and your friend?" he said, with a smile, tendering a handsome, gold-edged case.

"Thanks very much, sir; I don't smoke 'em," said Jinks. Ned also declined.

"Ah, that is a pity," said the gentleman, "or perhaps I could have done you very good turn. I am a connoisseur of cigars; and officers from the British ships often buy large quantities, as they are to be had very cheaply in Rotterdam. I could have told you how to get the best sorts at the best price."

Ned suddenly remembered the commission Lieutenant Howard had given him. He searched his pockets for the scrap of paper with the name of the brand on it.

"I want to get some cigars for a friend," he said. "Perhaps you'll tell me where I can get this sort—genuine and cheap?"

"Certainly!" said the stranger, reading the name. "The same that I smoke myself. I know a little shop quite close by where you'll get them cheaper than anywhere in Rotterdam. May I show you?"

The shop was rather farther off than Ned expected. They left the promenade with their guide, and, turning presently into a side street, he entered a tiny, old-fashioned-looking shop, where a dark, parchment-faced Dutchman was sitting behind the counter.

"Piet," said the guide softly, "these gentlemen want some cigars; your best brand, and very cheap."

"Dey shall have dem for nix!" said the shopkeeper, rising; and at the same time the guide shut the shop door very carefully and set his back against it.

"Here, what are you about?" said Ned, stepping towards him, with quick suspicion.

The shopkeeper struck a handbell on the counter. From the back parlour of the shop two men darted out like lightning and threw themselves upon the boys from behind.

So quickly was it done that neither had the least chance to resist. A sack was flung over Ned's head, and he was pinned tight; an arm was flung round Jinks' neck, nearly throttling him and plucking him off his feet. The guide and the shopman joined in and helped secure the boys, and, though they struggled furiously, the two middies were swiftly overpowered, bound tight, blindfolded, and gagged.

"At last!" growled the man who had bound Ned. "Bring them along, and lose no time about it! Allermag-tig! The chief will be pleased over this!"

Rotterdam is full of canals. Ned—blind, gagged, and half-stunned—had a vague idea that he had been dragged by his captives into the cabin of some sort of barge. He could hear the splash of a barge-pole and the murmur of voices.

By and by the boys were hauled out again, carried some distance, then dragged along over a hard surface, where the tread of their captors echoed as if in a tunnel.

Finally, they were bundled roughly down a flight of steps and dropped on what seemed to be a set of wet, cold iron bars. Then a door was slammed—apparently in the ceiling overhead, by the sound of it—and the captives were left alone.

Their thoughts were gloomy enough. Ned blamed himself bitterly for having joined up with any stranger in Rotterdam, no matter on what excuse. But it had all seemed so natural. Beyond all doubt, they were in the hands of Voroff & Co.'s agents.

Ned wished intensely that he knew where they were. Close to water, anyhow. He could hear it gurgling and slopping gently. The iron bars were painful to lie on, and the bound captives began to suffer from horrible fits of cramp. An hour passed; it seemed to them like ten. Had they been left there to starve?

At last footsteps were heard, and came down into the place where the boys were. A voice said in English with an unmistakable Russian accent:

"It's them, sure enough. You have made no mistake this time!"

"Take the binders off their eyes and let us see their faces better," said another impatiently. "Leave them bound and gagged."

The bandages were cut from the middies' eyes. Blinking painfully, Ned looked up. He saw five men looking down at him—the three who had tackled him in the shop, and a fourth whom he had not seen before. The fifth, whom Jinks recognised at a glance, was Briarley, ex-assistant-paymaster of H.M.S. Victorious.

"Yes, those are the two," said the fourth man, who wore a black, wiry, little pointed beard. "That one is young Hardy; the other is Victor Jinks. Young as they are, they've given us nearly as much trouble as Ralph Hardy

himself. 'It's to them we owe the loss of our best men, including Jakoff and Long Dennis, and a dozen more! I only wish we'd got Ralph Hardy as well!'

'We've got the means to ruin him and land him in gaol, at any rate,' said the man who had acted as guide. 'Eh, captain? Briarley here has the notes. But I'd make sure of these two at once if I were you.'

'Just so,' said the other.

The five men, seating themselves, began a rapid discussion. Ned and Jinks were left to themselves. The room they were in had an iron grating instead of a floor, and on this grating the two captives lay. Under the grating, not more than a few inches below it, was deep water that ran along beneath the room in a smooth, black current.

The walls of the room were wet, green, and slimy. The only exit was a trapdoor in the ceiling, with a ladder leading up to it. Even the ceiling was slimy and wet. The whole place was filled with the rank smell of seaweed and mud.

The two middies met each other's eyes with a look of despair. Both of them, used to the sea and to harbours, could tell at a glance what sort of a trap they had been brought into, and how hopeless was any idea of escape.

They were in a cellar built out from the side of some waterside house, and with the salt tide of the River Scheldt running under its walls. The briny smell of the green seaweed told them that much. It was not canal water under them. Further, it was quite plain that when the tide was high this cellar was under water altogether, the tide rising up through the grating and flooding it to the ceiling; else the walls would not be so wet and covered with weed. The captives were utterly cut off from human help.

### The Bolted Door!

'GIVE me those banknotes!' said the man with the pointed beard, turning to Briarley. 'You have them with you?'

Briarley handed him a folded sheaf of Bank of England notes.

'There's no mistake about the numbers?' asked the leader. 'They are the actual notes stolen from the Victorious which you smuggled off the ship on the evening of the robbery?'

'The very ones,' said Briarley. 'They have been in the chief's keeping till now. He handed them back to me two hours ago. Here is his note to you.'

'Excellent! Half these notes are to be placed on the person of young Hardy here. You will remain with these two lads to the last, Briarley, and you will not leave them till the water is rising in the cellar. You will then go out and batten down the trapdoor from outside.'

'When the tide has left the cellar again you will open the trapdoor, come down the ladder, and take the ropes and gags from their bodies. You will pull the lever that lets this grating drop, and thus shoot the bodies down into the water as usual. They will go out with the last of the tide.'

'The bodies will, of course, be found at daybreak by the River Police, who will take them to the mortuary, and when searching them will find the notes upon young Hardy. They are Bank of England notes, and in the inquiry that will follow will easily be traced as the stolen notes from the Victorious.'

'We shall thus rid ourselves of these two young meddlers who have caused such loss to Voroff and at the same time establish the first link in the evidence that will land Ralph Hardy in gaol for at least a dozen years. A far worse blow to the prestige of the British Navy than if he were merely killed.'

The leader paused.

'You understand, Briarley?'

'I understand,' said Briarley. 'The chief has already instructed me.'

'I am under orders to repeat it to you, so that there may be no mistake.'

The leader stepped across to where Ned lay and stooped over him. Ned's eyes flashed a silent defiance at him, but the Russian took no notice. He placed the wad of banknotes carefully in the inside pocket of Ned's monkey-jacket and buttoned it up.

He handed the rest of the banknotes to Briarley.

'Here, take these! When you have got rid of the bodies you know what to do with these other notes?'

'I go straight to Flushing, of course,' said Briarley.

'Yes, to Flushing, in Holland. Ralph Hardy passed through there yesterday on his way to the Hague. He left his luggage in the railway cloak-room at Flushing. You will obtain access to that luggage—one of our men is an attendant in the cloak-room—and you will place these notes in the inside pouch of Ralph Hardy's valise. Here is a skeleton key which will open the valise.'

'In two days' time Hardy will return from the Hague

to get his luggage at Flushing. He will then at once be arrested on information privately conveyed to the police, and the stolen notes found in his valise. The British authorities will be communicated with, and he will be handed over to the London police. The body of his brother will by then have been found accidentally drowned in the Scheldt—with the remainder of the missing notes upon him. This will prove the complicity of the two brothers, and that Ralph Hardy had passed on half his banknotes to Edward, with the intention of trying to get rid of the booty by exchanging it abroad.'

'We shall thus be rid of all three at one stroke—two of them dead, the other in prison. It will not surprise me if Ralph Hardy takes his life, rather than face a convict's cell. But I hope not—I really hope not! Better that he should serve his sentence. And now, gentlemen, we will take our leave; Briarley will remain in charge.'

The leader stepped across and looked down at the two midshipmen.

'Pleasant lodgings and a cool bed to you both,' he said.

There was a chorus of coarse laughter from the rest as they mounted the ladder and, opening the trapdoor, departed. In another minute their footsteps had died away; Briarley was left alone with the boys and a single lantern.

Briarley sat down on the planks over the grating, and, after taking a pull from a flask of spirits, bit the end of a cigar and lit it. Neither of the middies could speak, but the scorn and disgust of both Jinks and Ned for the renegade before them shone so plainly in their eyes that Briarley grew restive.

'You've a good time coming to you, lads!' he said savagely. 'And I'm only sorry I can't stay to see the last of you!'

Ned strove with all his might to spit out the gag that prevented him speaking. He felt he would give even the last hour of his life to tell this treacherous renegade what he thought of him. Jinks writhed in his bonds.

The water was rising rapidly now. The tide was flowing up the river. Already it was over the grating, and the boys were lying in three inches or more of it.

Briarley got on to a higher step to keep his legs out of the water. Jinks could see it creeping up the wall. Ned managed to bend his body and roll into a sitting position.

'That will give you an extra half-hour of life!' jeered Briarley. 'You'll be able to watch your pal drown before you go yourself. He can't sit up, and you can't reach him. It'll be interesting for you. I must tear myself away from you now.'

The water was a foot deep over the gratings. Jinks, lying nearly flat, could hardly raise his head above it. The chill of the muddy tide struck through them, and they felt the full horror of their situation. Death was creeping upon them by inches.

Briarley climbed the ladder, throwing back a final taunt at Ned.

'The river to you; the gaol to your swab of a brother!' he said, with a drunken leer, and placed his hand on the trapdoor to push it up.

It would not lift. With an oath, he pushed harder—with all his might. Still no result.

'The bolts are shot!' he cried wildly. 'Someone's jammed the bolts!'

Ned spat out the gag at last and answered hoarsely:

'Then you'll die with us, you spy and coward! We'll go under together. But Ralph is safe—Ralph is safe!'

With a scream of terror, Briarley jumped down on to the grating, the water swirling about his calves.

'Help! Help! Help!' screamed Briarley.

His voice was thrown back mockingly from the walls, and the incoming water rose and swirled higher yet, welling up through the gratings.

Briarley was raving and shrieking like a maniac, off his head with terror. The water swirled in faster every moment. Ned, in despair, tried to crawl nearer Jinks, who, unable to get up, was within the very point of drowning.

'All up!' groaned Ned.

Boom!

A sudden shock made the whole cellar shake as if it had been kicked from outside by a giant's foot. Fully six feet of the outer wall caved right in and fell in huge lumps.

The boys were nearly stunned by the concussion. The place was filled with the acid fumes of nitro-glycerine. But through the gap in the wall the broad black stream of the river was at once visible, and a launch slid swiftly up alongside, with two men in her.

'Ned! Ned!' cried a voice that thrilled every nerve in the midshipman's body. 'Where are you?'

'Here! Quick!' gasped Ned. 'Ralph, is it you?'

(Will Ralph be in time to rescue Ned and Jinks? Look out for next week's thrilling instalment!)

## THE RIVAL CAMPERS!

(Continued from page 24.)

nineteen to seventeen. But the fight was long and desperate. Tom Merry had Frank Monk's head in chancery, and Lane was in a similar position with regard to Figgins. Twice the Grammarians receded, and twice they rallied. But the Saints were not to be denied.

"Come on!" roared Blake. "Buck up! On the ball!"

It was the old yell of the football field, and it went right to the hearts of the Saints. They rushed in, and the Grammarians broke and ran at last. A few single combats continued here and there; but the enemy receded farther and farther from the victorious Blackfeet, and at last were driven into the wood. And then the Redskins allowed them to retreat unmolested.

"That will do!" gasped Tom Merry. "They've had enough—and I think we have!"

"I should say so," agreed Lowther. "Blessed if I ever saw such a collection of black eyes and busted noses in my natural."

Figgins wiped a stream of "claret" from his nose, which was mixing with his paint.

"My hat!" he said. "It was a row, and no mistake. A jolly good wind-up to the camping-out—for I'm afraid it means the wind-up."

"Let's look at the place."

The juniors entered the camp. Save for the one tent that was standing, it was stripped bare. The Grammarians had not been long at work, but they had been thorough. Everything seemed to be gone, and though a few articles could be seen glimmering in the waters of the Feeder, most of them had been carried on to the river. The camp was utterly wrecked.

"But where's Gussy?" exclaimed Blake. "He must have been off his guard. If he had been on the watch, and blown the whistle directly the Grammar School cads came in sight, we should have been in time to prevent this."

"Well, I warned you—" said Tom Merry.

"Oh, rats! Where's Gussy?"

"Pway welease me, deah boys!"

It was the voice of the swell of the School House.

Blake looked round.

The voice came from the tent.

"Where is he?"

"I am heah, deah boys, and suffewin' gweat inconvenience; and my clothes are bein' absolutely ruined. Pway come to the rescue!"

"By Jove, there he is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wescue, deah boys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy certainly looked comical. The Grammarians had thrust his head through the tent canvas where it joined, and the canvas had been drawn tight under his chin and behind his neck, and laced up securely.

"My hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy looked a great deal as if he were in the stocks. His hands were tied within the tent, so he had been unable to make any attempt to release himself from his uncomfortable position. Nothing could be seen of him, but his head and his eyeglass, and it was no wonder the juniors roared as they looked at him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway welease me, deah boys! I wegard this laughtah as absolutely heartless," said D'Arcy. "I am suffewin' considerably. My collah is uttaly ruined, and my twousahs are growin' horribly wumped. Please welease me."

They released him. The swell of St. Jim's smoothed out his trousers, but there were some creases that would not be smoothed out. His eyes gleamed with determination behind his monocle.

"I don't know what you chaps think," he said; "but I've had enough of this camping-out. It's vewy nice in some respects, but you can get fed-up with it in time. I'm goin' to take a west."

"I think we shall all have to take a rest," said Blake, with a grin. "Next time we camp out we had better make peace with the Grammarians first. Their camp is a wreck; and ours is a ruin. The game's up."

"Right up," said Tom Merry. "Still, it has been ripping fun."

And the campers returned to St. Jim's earlier than they had intended. So did the Grammarians. Each party resolved to do better next time. But the headquarters of the two schools had their own ideas about that, and it was extremely probable that there would be no "next time."

But, as Tom Merry said, it had been ripping fun. Cousin Ethel sympathised; but Miss Priscilla was secretly relieved in her mind to hear that the camping-out was over, and that Tom Merry was no longer in danger of catching a cold or getting his feet wet.

It had been good fun while it lasted, and for many a day the juniors chuckled over the remembrance of the warfare between the rival camps.

THE END.

(Next week's ripping long complete yarn of St. Jim's is called "Skimpole the Inventor!" It's a riot! There's a laugh in every line!)



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