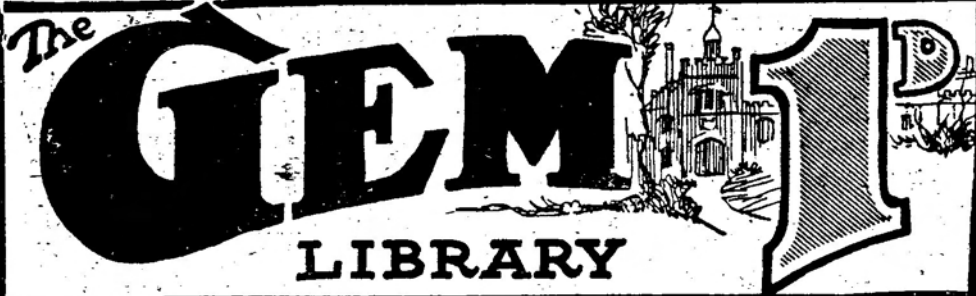


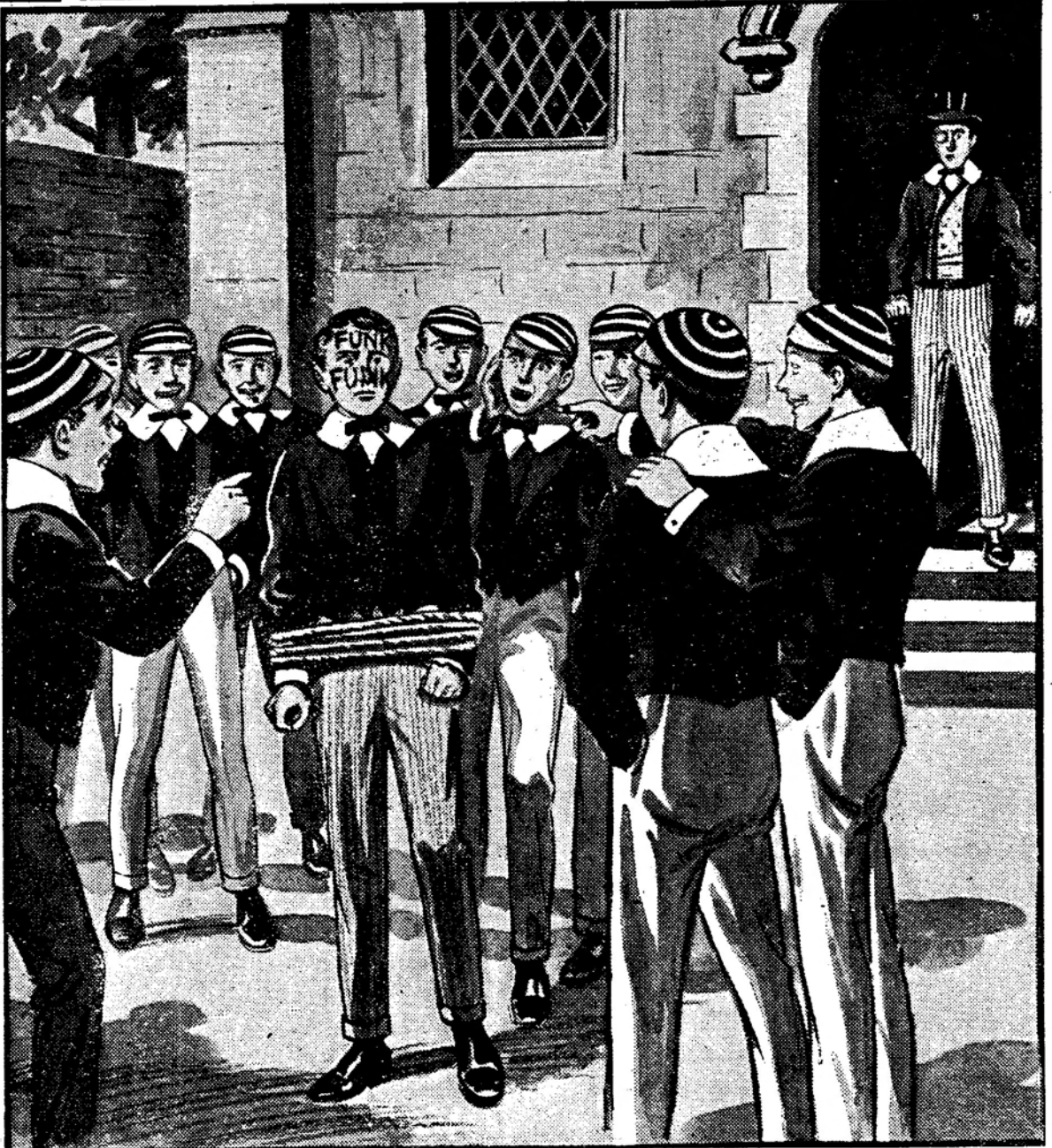
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No.
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Roland Ray, the new boy at St. Jim's, had his hands tied down to his sides, and on his face was daubed in black paint the word FUNK! His face showed up white against the black marks. "He's got his signature on his face now!" cried Lorne. (An incident taken from the grand, long, complete tale contained in this issue.)

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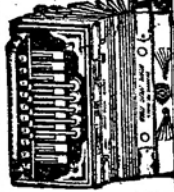
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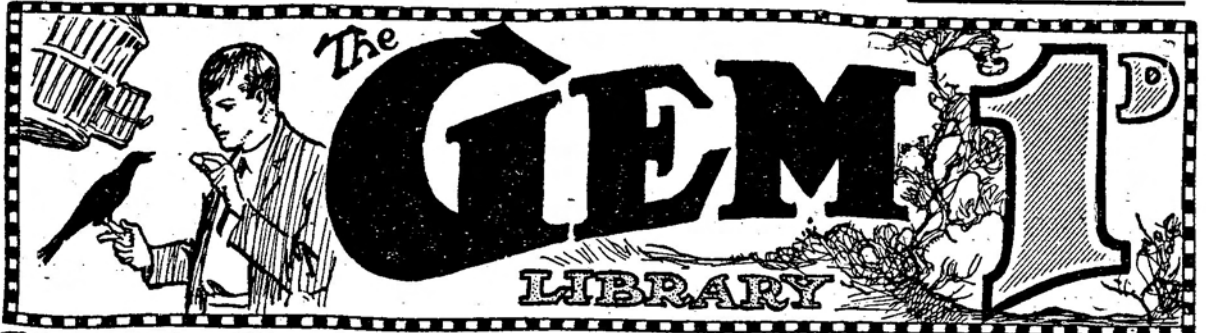
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By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

No Drivers Wanted!

"UNDUH the circus—"
"Apud Helvetios longe nobilissimus—"
"I considah—"
"Fuit et ditissimus Orgetorix—"
"Weally, Blake," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, raising his voice a little—"weally, deah boy, I considah that you might stop weadin' out that wot when I am speakin' on a vevy important subject."
Jack Blake did not look up from his Cæsar. He had work to do, and he was reading aloud in self-defence.
"Apud Helvetios—" resumed Blake.
Digby and Herries chuckled.
Arthur Augustus frowned.
Arthur Augustus had been buried in thought for at least three minutes, and he was about to bestow upon his chums the results of his cogitations. At such a moment Julius Cæsar and the war in Gaul were out of place.
"Weally, Blake—"
"Longe nobilissimus—" went on Blake cheerfully.
"Wing off, you ass! I'm speakin'!"
"You generally are!" admitted Blake. "Cæsar may come, and Cæsar may go; but you go on for ever. Do you want to go on speaking?"
"Yaas, you ass."
"Then step out into the passage. Apud Helvetios—among the Helvetians—"
"Shut up! I was goin' to say that undah the circus—"
"Longe nobilissimus—"
"Construe!" said Digby. "Apud Study No. 6 longe fat-headissimus fuit Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Arthur Augustus jerked the Gallic War away from Blake, and tossed it across the study. Then he folded his arms, and regarded Blake with a lofty glare, somewhat in the attitude of Ajax defying the lightning.

Blake groaned.
"I suppose we've got to go through it," he said. "Cut it short, Gussy!"

"I wufese to cut it short. I was goin' to wemark that undah the circus, it is up to us to make a fuss!"

"Certainly. I'm always ready to make a fuss," said Blake agreeably. "About anything in particular?"

"Yaas, you ass! Don't you wemembah what Mr. Lathom said?"

Blake reflected.
"Mr. Lathom? Yes, he said that if you were late for class again, he would whack you."

"I do not mean that, you ass. He said—"

"He said that you construed like a kid in the Second Form—"

"I was not alludin' to that. You wemembah perfectly well that Mr. Lathom gave us a most important piece of information in class this mornin'," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"About the war in Gaul, do you mean?" asked Blake innocently. "Orgetorix was the richest and nobbiest chap among the Helvetians—"

"No, you awful ass! Blow the war in Gaul! Blow Orgetowix!" said Arthur Augustus, growing excited. "He told us there was a new boy comin' into the Fourth."

"Yes, so he did!" yawned Blake. "I'd forgotten, or

Next Wednesday:

"THE RASCAL OF ST. JIM'S!" AND "THE CHEER-OH CHUMS!"

No. 281 (New Series), Vol. 7.

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almost. New boys have come into the Fourth before, you know; it's not really an uncommon thing."

"I've known it happen," said Herries solemnly. "This is a very special sort of new boy," said D'Arcy, "and I repeat that it is up to us to make a fuss of him. He is a hewo! Mr. Lathom told us about him—he's a weal giddy hewo! He wisked his life, and uttably wuined his clothes, in savin' somebody or othah from a fiah. Without stoppin' a moment to think of the dangah to his life, or the damage to his personal attire, he wushed into the flames—"

"Noble youth!" said Blake. "But perhaps he paid less for his clothes than you do, Gussy! He may have had a cheap lot on! That discounts the heroism."

"Well, he wisked his life, too. He was vory badly burnt, and he had a long illness atfahwards. Now he's comin' to St. Jim's. I wegard it as bein' up to us, as the leadahs of the juniabs in this House, to give him a warm weception."

"Well, he must have had a warm reception when he rushed into the flames—"

"Pway don't wot, deah boy, on a sewious subject. This chap Woland Way, is a hewo, and I think we ought to wecognise the fact. I wegard it as bein' wight and pwopah to give him a weally warm weception, to show him that St. Jim's chaps have a pwopah wegard for pluck. It was an awfly pluckay thing he did, as pluckay as what Tom Mewwy did at the fiah at the Gwammar School, and I consider that we ought to make wathah a fuss of him."

Blake winked solemnly at Herries and Digby.

"Good idea!" he said. "What shall we do? Hire a brass band and meet him at the station, and march him to the school—a giddy Roman triumph?"

"I don't know whethah the funds would win to a bwass band," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "But we might meet him at the station, and show him some little polite attentions. Just to show him that we appreciate pluck. I was thinkin' of telephonin' for a twap, and goin' to meet him in style. Will you fellows come?"

"You want me to drive?" asked Blake, showing a little real interest at last.

"Certainly not. I shall drive."

"Then I'm afraid I'm too busy to come," said Blake sadly. "It's an awful bore, because I should like to meet him, and I'm a really good hand at making a fuss, on any occasion. But I'm frightfully keenly interested in Orgetorix just now. You see, he was the richest and nobbiest among the Helvetians—"

"Do you want me to drive?" asked Herries.

"I do not!"

"Sorry. I've got to go and feed my bulldog," said Herries regretfully. "Otherwise, I should be charmed."

"Wats! You'll come, Dig?"

"To drive?" asked Dig.

"No, deah boy. I'm goin' to dwive; the horse may be wessive, and a weally good dwivah will be required."

"Sorry, I've got to go down to cricket practice," said Dig. And the three Fourth-Formers chuckled.

Arthur Augustus jammed his famous eyeglass into his eye, and regarded his chums with an air of lofty scorn.

"I considah that you are not playin' the game," he said. "It is up to this studay to wecognise pluck, and this chap, Woland Way, is a hewo, and ought to be made a fuss of. If you fellows won't come, I shall ask Tom Mewwy!"

"Hear, hear!" said Blake heartily. "I'll stick to Orgetorix. Apud Helvetios—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Longe nobilissimus—"

"You uttah ass!"

"Fuit et ditissimus—"

Slam!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy retired from Study No. 6, closing the door after him with altogether unnecessary violence. Blake and Herries and Digby chuckled.

The swell of St. Jim's made his way along the Shell

passage, and knocked at the door of Tom Merry's study. Tom Merry, and Manners, and Lowther, the chums of the Shell, were at home: Tom Merry was oiling a cricket bat, and Manners was cutting films. It was astonishing the number of films Manners had to cut. Monty Lowther was cracking nuts and eating them. The Terrible Three looked round at Gussy as he came in, and smiled cordially.

"Wherefore the disturbed brow, oh my son?" said Monty Lowther. "Has something occurred to ruffle the serenity of the one and only Adolphus?"

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I've come in to speak to you fellows on a wathah important subject. I'm goin' down to Wylcombe in a twap to meet a new fellow who's comin' into the Fourth—chap named Woland Way—I dare say you've heard that a new chap's comin' into the Fourth Form—"

"Can't say I have," yawned Tom Merry. "What's he comin' for? We're simply flooded with fags as it is."

"Wats! This chap is a hewo. He wisked his life to save somebody or othah from the flames in a fiah, and I wegard it as only decent to show him that St. Jim's fellows can appreciate pluck. Will you fellows come if I ordah a twap?"

"You want me to drive?" asked three voices, in unison.

"Nothin' of the sort! I'm goin' to dwive the twap. I want you to come and back me up in givin' him a weception."

"So sorry!" said Tom Merry sorrowfully. "I—I've got to oil this bat!"

"I've got to cut these films," said Manners.

"I've got to eat these nuts," said Monty Lowther regretfully.

And the Terrible Three all looked quite woebegone at the idea that those important occupations would prevent them from accompanying Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The swell of the School House surveyed them through his eyeglass.

"I wegard you as wottahs!" he said at last.

"Go over to the New House and gather in Figgins & Co.," suggested Tom Merry.

"Have some nuts?" said Monty Lowther hospitably.

Slam!

The swell of St. Jim's was gone.

But the door of the study opened, and Monty Lowther put his head out into the passage and called after Arthur Augustus.

"Hold on, Gussy!"

D'Arcy stopped, and looked round, the frown fading from his aristocratic face.

"You're comin', Lowthah, deah boy?"

"I was going to ask you—"

"That's all wight. Come on!"

"If you're sure you wouldn't like me to drive—"

"Wats!"

"Did you say the chap was a hero?" asked Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah. He wushed—"

"Well, he'll need to be, if he's going to trust himself into a trap with you driving," said Lowther.

"Why, you—you—you—"

Lowther closed the study door before Arthur Augustus could find sufficient words to express his feelings. The swell of St. Jim's bottled up his indignation, and strode away, with his aristocratic nose very high in the air.

CHAPTER 2.

Caught in the Trap.

"BY gum!" said Figgins of the Fourth. "That's a stunning turn-out!"

And Kerr and Fatty Wynn agreed that it was.

Figgins & Co., the great chiefs and leaders of the New House juniors, were lounging in the gateway when the trap came up. Figgins & Co. had nothing special to do just then. They were debating whether they should put in a little extra cricket-practice, or raid the School House, or sally forth in search of a row with the Grammar School fellows. Fatty Wynn had another suggestion—a visit to the tuck-shop; but as funds were very low just then, the Co. sat upon that suggestion.

The arrival of the handsome trap from Rylcombe gave a new turn to their thoughts. It was certainly a handsome turn-out. Whatever Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did he did in good style. A grocer's trap with an ancient horse between the shafts was good enough for some of the fellows when they wanted a drive. But Arthur Augustus had telephoned to the livery stables in Rylcombe for the best that was to be had—and he was having it. There was a groom in charge of the trap, and he halted it outside the lodge of Taggles, the porter, and descended. Taggles came out.

"The trap for Master D'Arcy!" said the groom.

"Ho!" said Taggles.

"So that's for Gussy," said Figgins, with a grin. "Gussy

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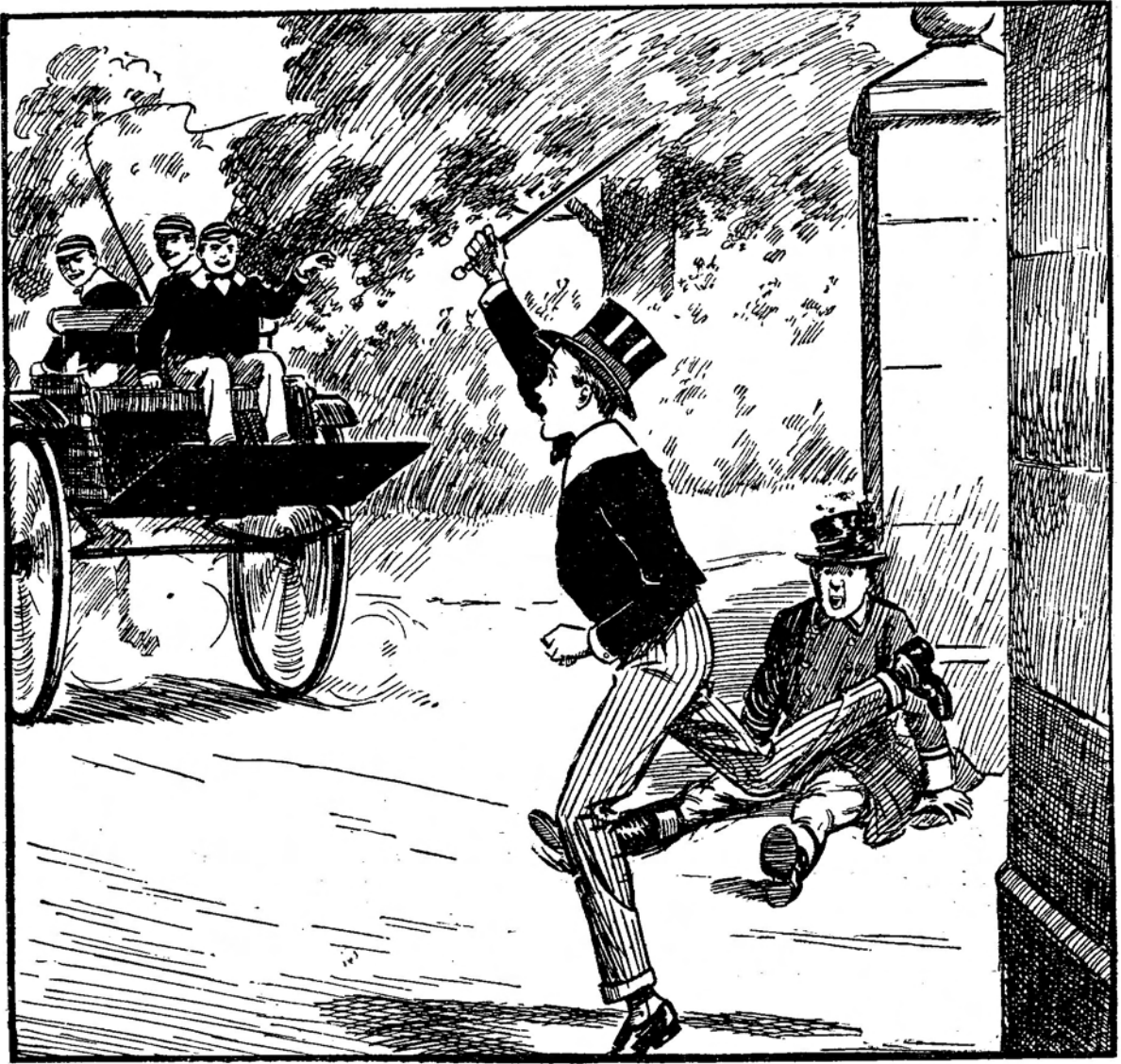
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In a moment the New House juniors were in the trap outside the gates. Figgins gathered up the reins with a chuckle. "Figgins! Stop, you wottah!" And the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus came flying through the gateway. (See Chapter 2.)

is going for a giddy drive. Do you remember, my infants, the occasion when Fatty was going for a ride, and one of the School House bounders bagged his gee-gee, and went for a ride instead?"

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"It was that bounder Merry!" he said. "And—"

"And he had the ride, and we had the grin up against us," continued Figgins.

"Yes, but—"

"But one good turn deserves another," said Figgins. "Do as you are done by—that's a golden rule; do those who do you, also, is a good old maxim. My sons, I think that is our trap."

The Co. chuckled joyously.

The juniors of the two Houses at St. Jim's were keen rivals, and they occupied a great deal of their spare time in ragging one another. Fatty Wynn had by no means forgotten the occasion when Tom Merry had raided his horse. It was only fair to raid the School House vehicle in return. The Co. approached the trap, just as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared in view on the other side of the quadrangle, coming out of the School House.

The groom was talking to Taggles, but he spun round

suddenly as Figgins seized the horse's head; and turned the trap round to the gates again.

"Here, let that trap alone, sir!" exclaimed the groom.

"It is for Master D'Arcy. It was hordered by telephone."

"That's all right," said Figgins. "D'Arcy ordered it for us! He didn't know it, but he did. Pile in!"

Figgins led the horse at a rush through the gateway again.

The groom ran towards him, but Kerr's foot somehow got into his way, and he sat down on the ground, and sat there gasping for breath.

In a moment more the New House Co. were in the trap, outside the gates. Figgins gathered up the reins, with a chuckle.

"Figgins! Stop, you wottah!"

An elegant figure came flying through the gateway. Arthur Augustus was dressed in his best, to make a proper impression upon Roland Ray, the new boy for the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. The sight of his handsome turn-out in the hands of the New House fellows made Arthur Augustus simply gasp with alarm and indignation.

"Figgins, you wottah!"

The trap was in motion now. Arthur Augustus ran after

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it, waving his hand frantically to the New House juniors. Fatty Wynn grinned, and Kerr kissed his hand. Figgins was busy with the horse, which was fresh and somewhat restive.

"Figgins! Stop, you boundah! Stop, you wottah! Stop! That's my twap!"

"Go hou!" said Kerr.

"Good-bye, Gussy!" said Fatty Wynn. "You won't be caught in this trap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop, you wottahs! I ordah you—"

"Remember the time you fellows raided my horse?" grinned Fatty Wynn.

The horse dashed on now, and Arthur Augustus had to put on a spurt to keep up the pace. He sprinted behind the trap in a cloud of dust raised by the wheels. His silk hat was on the back of his head, and his eyeglass flying at the end of its cord, and his face was crimson with excitement and exertion.

"Stop, you wottahs!"

"Good-bye!"

"Oh, you wascals! I shall give you a feahful thwashin' for this! I want that twap vewy specially!"

"So do we! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I ordah you to stop! I—"

"Good-bye!"

"See you later! Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus made a terrific effort, and leaped on behind the trap, catching hold with his hands and hanging there. His delicate lavender kid gloves split in the effort, and his hat fell into the road. His elegant boots dragged and scratched along the rough road as the trap rushed on.

"Get off!" roared Kerr.

"I wufese to get off! I—"

Kerr leaned over the back of the trap, and, taking an orange from his pocket, he gently squeezed it over the features of the swell of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy spluttered and let go.

He sat down with a bump in the road, and the trap rushed on, Kerr and Wynn waving their hands in affectionate farewell.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat in the road and gasped.

"Ow! The wottahs! Ow! The wascals! Ow!"

The trap disappeared.

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet at last, dusty and breathless. He gathered up his topper, and mournfully dusted it and polished it with his handkerchief. He was red and dusty and perspiring.

"The awful wottahs! I will give them a feahful thwashin' for this! Ow!"

He dusted his clothes as well as he could. But he remained in a very dusty state, and certainly would not be able to make the impression upon Roland Ray, the new boy, that he had hoped to make. He was still dusting himself down, and regarding his damaged topper with mournful eyes, when three youths came in sight on the road. They were Gordon Gay, Wootton major and Wootton minor, of Rylcombe Grammar School. They gave a joyful chortle at the sight of Arthur Augustus, and bore down upon him. The swell of St. Jim's blinked at them. Under other circumstances, he would have dodged the Grammarians, to avoid a ragging, but just at present he was glad to see Gordon Gay & Co.

"Had an accident?" asked Gordon Gay, grinning.

"Yaas. Those wottahs in the twap—did you see them?"

"Passed us like a giddy streak of lightning," said Wootton major. "Been chucked out of the trap, poor old Gussy?"

"It was my twap!" explained Arthur Augustus. "Those New House boundahs have collahed it. I wanted it for a vewy particulah occasion."

"Coming to take us out for a drive, perhaps?" suggested Gordon Gay.

"No, deah boy. I was goin' to the station to meet a new chap, and those wottahs have bagged my twap! I am howwibly dustay, and my toppah is wuined! Look at it!"

The Grammarians inspected D'Arcy's topper. It certainly looked in a very parlous state. It was dreadfully dented, and the brim was cracked.

"I was thinkin' you might do me a favour, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "I don't want to meet the new chap in a battahed toppah. Will you lend me your hat, Gay?"

"My hat!" ejaculated Gordon Gay.

"Yaas. You take the same size, I wemembah. Of course, your toppah is not quite the style I'm accustomed to wearin', but I could make it do."

Gordon Gay looked at him long and hard.

"Any old thing would do, I suppose?" he asked sarcastically.

"Yaas; any port in a storm, you know," said D'Arcy innocently. "I would weturn your toppah to you undamaged. I shall take it—"

"You'll take it—eh?"

"As a gweat favah—"

"Oh, I sec. Gussy, old man, you ask these little things so politely that a chap simply can't refuse you," said Gordon Gay solemnly.

"In fact," said Wootton major, "I'm really inclined to lend you my boot, Gussy, without your even asking for it."

Gordon Gay took off his silk hat.

"Gussy, old man, we came along to rag you. Just in time I remembered what the celebrated Dr. Potts says—was it Potts or Dotts? I forget—'Let dogs delight to bark and bite, it is their nature to; let cats delight to mew at night, it is their nature, too!' Therefore, instead of biffing you, Gussy, I am going to lend you my topper. You needn't thank me. Thank Dr. Potts—or was it Shotts?"

"Thank you vewy much, Gay!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Pway hand me the toppah—"

"I'll polish it for you first," said Gay. "You can't wear a topper so carelessly as I do. I'll give it a good polish with my handkerchief, while Wootton brushes you down."

"Thanks awf'ly!"

Wootton major and minor looked considerably puzzled. They had borne down on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to rag him gently, as a pleasant pastime for a quarter of an hour. They did not know what Gordon Gay was driving at. But he was their leader, and they obeyed instructions. They began to dust D'Arcy carefully down, while Gordon Gay polished his topper with his folded handkerchief till it shone again. Gordon Gay had turned his back to D'Arcy while he was engaged with the topper, and D'Arcy could not see what he was doing with it; but when Gay turned again he showed the topper gleaming in the sun.

"That all right?" asked Gordon Gay.

"Wippin', deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus put the topper on. It was just his size, and he surveyed the result in a pocket-mirror—a necessary article he never forgot. The three Grammarians looked at him solemnly.

"Perfect picture!" said Gay.

"Gorgeous!" said Wootton minor.

"I'm awf'ly obliged to you, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus gratefully. "I should not have liked Woland Way to see me in a battered toppah, and with my clothes howwibly dustay. You see, I want to make wathah a fuss of that chap. Will you take my toppah, Gay; it will be all wight for you?"

Gay gasped.

"Certainly, it will be good enough for me—too good, in fact!" he articulated. "I'll let you have it back when you send mine over. Go on, Gussy; you look a picture. Good-bye, Bluebell!"

"Good-bye, deah boys!"

And Arthur Augustus walked down the road in cheerful spirits. He had lost the trap, and would not be able to drive Roland Ray to St. Jim's; but owing to the kindness of the Grammarians he was looking as neat and natty as when he had started. As soon as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was out of hearing, Wootton major and minor turned wrathfully upon their leader.

"You frabious ass—"

"You burbling jabberwock—"

"What's the little game?"

"What do you mean by it?"

Gordon Gay chuckled.

"You didn't see what I did?" he asked.

"You polished your topper and gave it to that ass—"

"Good Samaritan!" growled Wootton minor. "You silly ass! I thought there must be some jape wrapped up in it, or I wouldn't have let you go ahead!"

"So there was, fathead! I didn't merely polish that topper!" grinned Gordon Gay. "Do you remember that I bought a bottle of marking-ink in Rylcombe this afternoon?"

"Yes. What on earth—"

"And that I turned my back to Gussy while I was polishing the topper—"

"Yes, but—"

"I've put a good bit of the marking-ink under the leather lining inside the hat," Gordon Gay explained blandly. "It will take some minutes to work through, but it will work through all right. I should say that it will be coming down Gussy's face in purple streaks just by the time he gets to the station—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wootton major and Wootton minor yelled.

ANSWERS

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"Did you think your uncle was wasting his time and lending his toppers around for nothing?" demanded Gordon Gay severely. "Fatheads! Come to the tuckshop and stand me ginger-pop, as a fine!"

CHAPTER 3. Well Marked.

"**B**AI Jove! There's my twap!" Arthur Augustus uttered the exclamation. There it was.

Figgins & Co. had drawn up outside Mr. Bunn's in Rylcombe to take aboard refreshments, liquid and solid, before they proceeded on their drive. Fatty Wynn had paused in the confectioner's to sample some of the refreshments on the spot, and so the New House Co. were not yet off again. They had just got into the trap to start again, when Arthur Augustus came sailing down the old High Street. D'Arcy quickened his pace.

"Hold on, you wottahs—"
Figgins & Co. looked round quickly.
"My hat! Here's Gussy again!"
Figgins gathered up the reins and cracked the whip. D'Arcy put on a spurt.
As he came closer the New House juniors saw his face more clearly. They were so surprised for the moment that Figgins forgot to start the horse. They stared at the swell of St. Jim's in blank surprise.

From under the brim of his shining silk hat two purple streaks had emerged, and were streaking down D'Arcy's face, one on either side of his nose.

As the swell of St. Jim's forehead was dewed with perspiration after his exertions on that warm afternoon, the dampness had not made him suspicious that there was anything wrong with his new hat. If he felt that streak crawling down his face, he had supposed that it was perspiration. But it wasn't. It was marking-ink—Dobbs's Patent Indelible Purple Marking-Ink!

"My only summer chapeau!" gasped Figgins. "Look at him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Where did you get that face, Gussy?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You uttah wude wottahs! I—"
"He's on the war-path, you know, and he's painting up for the part!" gasped Kerr. "Perhaps he's got a tomahawk up his sleeve. Let's get off!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins started the horse as D'Arcy came within half a dozen paces of the trap. The swell of St. Jim's shook his fist after the trap. After his previous experiences, he did not feel inclined to take up the pursuit again. The trap disappeared down the winding old High Street, and D'Arcy breathed wrath.

"The uttah wottahs! Wats!"
"My heye! Oh, crikey!"
D'Arcy swung round sharply.
Grimes, the grocer's boy, had halted, with a basket on his arm, and was regarding Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in great amazement. Several other persons were staring at him, too, and grinning. The sight of a handsome, well-dressed, and elegant junior, with two streaks of purple marking-ink down his face, was curious, to say the least of it.

"Weally, Gwimes—" began Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Grimes.
"What are you cacklin' at, you duffah?"
"He, he, he! Oh, that face!" roared Grimes.
Arthur Augustus gave a sniff of scorn, and walked on. He left Grimes doubled up over his basket in a state of helpless merriment. A little farther on he passed Police-constable Crump sunning himself on the steps of the police-station. D'Arcy nodded to the constable, and was surprised to see a broad grin overspread the face of the village policeman. Mr. Crump tried not to laugh—laughter, of course, being inconsistent with the great dignity and majesty of the upholder of law and order in Rylcombe. But he could not help it, and he burst into a roar.

"Haw, haw, haw!"
Arthur Augustus, very much offended, walked on with his aristocratic nose very high in the air.

"I weally think all the people here are goin' dottay this aftahnoon!" he murmured. "I wondah what ewewyboday is gwinnin' at?"

Indeed, everybody seemed to be grinning. It was as if a grinning epidemic had smitten Rylcombe that afternoon. Everybody D'Arcy passed seemed to be seized with a sudden desire to grin or to cackle, and they grinned and cackled

freely. The swell of St. Jim's was in a state of simmering indignation by the time he reached the railway-station.

"Is the twain in yet, Twumble, deah boy?" he asked the old Rylcombe porter.

Trumble stared at him. He seemed unable to speak for a moment. A third and a fourth streak of marking-ink had emerged from under D'Arcy's hat, and were coursing down his face, and he was beginning to look somewhat like a zebra.

"Oh, scissors!" murmured Trumble.
"Weally, Twumble—"
"Good Lord!" said Trumble. "Wot—"

Arthur Augustus passed him haughtily and went upon the platform. Trumble burst into a loud guffaw. D'Arcy could not understand it. Trumble was generally a quiet and steady old fellow; but it was evident that he had been drinking now. That was the only way of accounting for his peculiar conduct.

Arthur Augustus tried to calm himself as he paced the platform, waiting for the train, and whenever they looked at D'Arcy they chuckled.

"They must be all-wavin' mad," murmured the swell of St. Jim's, in utter perplexity—"as mad as hattahs! I cannot compendish this at all! I wish the twain would come in!"

The train came in sight at last. It slowed down in the station, and several passengers alighted; and Arthur Augustus looked round for the new boy for St. Jim's.

Among the passengers who stepped down was a lad of about his own age, in Etons and a silk hat, and it was easy enough to guess that he was the new boy. The other passengers were all elders.

The boy in Etons stood on the platform, glancing about him, when Arthur Augustus came up with a polite bow, and raised his hat. He disclosed a forehead clotted with marking-ink, and from which streaks of purple descended, striping his face. But he was unaware of the fact, and quite unconscious of the cause of the new boy's stare of amazement.

"Pway excuse me," said Arthur Augustus elegantly. "You are the new fellow for St. Jim's, I suppose?"

"Ye-es."
"Your name is Woland Way?"
"Roland Ray—yes."
"Happay to meet you, deah boy. My name is D'Arcy—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's—and I've come to meet you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Weally, Way—"
"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" yelled the new boy.
"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in dismay. "He's mad, too!"

CHAPTER 4. Coward!

ROLAND RAY held his sides, and roared. It was really not a polite thing to do, considering that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had taken the trouble to walk from St. Jim's to meet him at the station.

But he could not help it. The sight of Arthur Augustus with his face streaked like the skin of a zebra would have been too much for the gravity of Solomon.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Arthur Augustus drew back, very much offended. He had intended to make much of the new boy, to show his appreciation for the pluck of the hero—and according to the story, Ray had acted the part of a hero indeed. It was really very nice of Arthur Augustus; but to be greeted in this way—He felt his appreciation for the hero die a natural death, all at once; and he was strongly inclined to plant his fist in the hero's face.

"Weally, Way—" he expostulated.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You sillay ass—"
"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"
"I wegard you as a wottah! I—"
"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Ray. "I'm sorry! Ha, ha, ha!"
But what on earth have you done that for?"

"Done what, you ass?"
"That—on your face!"
"M-m-my face!" stammered Arthur Augustus.
"Yes—ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus put his hand up to his face and rubbed it. He rubbed the streaks of marking-ink into a purple smudge, and the new boy shrieked. D'Arcy stared at his fingers as he drew them away—empurpled!

"Gweat Scott!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What—what—somethin' has happened to m-m-my face!"
 "Something has!" yelled Ray. "Ha, ha, ha, ha!"
 "Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus groped for his pocket mirror, and opened it.

The sight of his face in the mirror made him jump almost clear of the platform. The mirror dropped from his hand, and there was a crash as it smashed at his feet.

"Oh, gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus took off his hat. The leather lining inside over the forehead was soaked with marking-ink. Then the swell of St. Jim's understood—and comprehended, also, why Gordon Gay had so cheerfully lent him his hat.

His face became crimson where it was not purple.

"Oh, the awful wottah! That is what they were gwinnin' at! Bai Jove! The frightful spoofoh! He put ink undah the linin' of the hat! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is weally not a laughin' mattah, deah boy. I have been the victim of a howwid joke. Pway excuse me while I wun off and get a wash."

Roland Ray nodded. He could not speak. He sank upon a seat, gurgling. Arthur Augustus rushed away in search of soap and hot water. The grinning porter kindly accommodated him, and Arthur Augustus laved his face, and rubbed it and scrubbed it. But it was the boast of the firm of Dobbs that their celebrated marking-ink was indelible; and their boast was not unfounded.

The worst of the ink washed off; but Arthur Augustus was left with a purplish complexion that was likely to require time, as well as washing, before it disappeared.

He gave it up at last.

Roland Ray grinned when D'Arcy rejoined him on the platform. The swell of St. Jim's had a complexion somewhat like that of a Hindu now.

"Sowwy to keep you waitin', deah boy," said D'Arcy, "Does that look bettah?"

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"Good! It's howwid, you know. A beast knocked my hat off, and anothah beast lent me his hat, and put this wotten ink in it, you know. It's wotten!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I twust we shall meet the Gwammah School chaps, goin' back!" said D'Arcy wrathfully. "I shall give them a fearful thwashin', and you can help me. You know, we're up against the Gwammah School at St. Jim's. It's a new school in this distwict, and we think it's like their beastly cheek to be here at all, you know, and so we take a lot of twouble to keep them in their place. Would you wathah take the hack, or walk?"

"Walk," said Roland Ray, as he glanced at the ancient hack outside the station.

"Vewy good. I had a twap to come and meet you, but some boundahs waided it," said Arthur Augustus, as they walked down the old High Street.

Ray glanced at him curiously.

"I'm sure you're very kind," he said. "You're taking a lot of trouble over a stranger."

"You see—"

"You don't always hire traps to come and meet new boys, I suppose?"

"Wathah not. But you are wathah a special sort of rew boy."

"Thanks," said Ray, laughing. "But in what way?"

"You are a hero."

Ray coloured.

"We've heard all about it," said Arthur Augustus. "We know about you, you see. Mr. Lathom—that's our Form-mastah—told us you were comin' into the Fourth, and told us what you had done. All the fellows know by this time."

"What rot!" said Ray.

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"Yaas, I understand—you don't want to be made much of. Twue heroes are always modest. I'm a vewy modest chap myself. But you see, it's up to us to show our appreciation of pluck, don't you see?"

"No, I don't quite see. I'd rather that nothing was said upon the subject," said Ray uncomfortably.

"Wats! You are a hewo! You wushed into the flames—"

Ray shuddered.

"Don't speak of that!" he said.

"Why not, deah boy?"

"Because I don't like to remember it," said Ray, with a shiver. "It was horrible. I was very nearly burnt to death. If a fireman hadn't dragged me out at the last minute, I should have been burnt to a cinder. As it was, I was badly burned. I've got the marks all over me now."

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"Bai Jove! Have you weally? I should wegard them as honouvable scahs, deah boy."

"I don't like to think about it. I've dreamed about it scores of times since it happened, and it's horrible." Ray's face had become pale and tense. "I shall never get it off my nerves, I think."

"You saved somebody's life, didn't you?"

"Yes, my kid brother. It was our house that was burnt down, you know. It was an awful experience, and I don't like thinking about it."

"Wight-ho, deah boy. All the same, it's up to us to show that we appreciate pluck, you know, and you are a giddy hewo!"

"Hallo, Gussy! Where did you get that complexion?"

The three Grammarians were sitting on the stile in the lane, and they greeted Arthur Augustus with that inquiry as he came by. The swell of St. Jim's halted, and jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and surveyed the grinning Grammarians with a glance of the loftiest scorn, which ought to have withered them on the spot. But it didn't! They laughed.

"You uttah wottahs!" said Arthur Augustus, taking off the silk topper he had borrowed from Gordon Gay, and which he had cleaned of the ink as well as he could at the station. "There is your wotten hat, Gordon Gay, and I wegard you as a wank outsidah. Pway return my toppah!"

Gordon Gay tosed it over.

Arthur Augustus examined it suspiciously. But there was no ink in it. The three Grammarians chuckled in chorus.

"What a lovely complexion!" murmured Wootton major. "It reminds me of the black fellows, at home en my native heath!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You could play Othello now, Gussy, without making up for the part," suggested Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus breathed hard through his nose. He turned to Roland Ray, who was grinning.

"Pway back me up, deah boy—"

"Eh?" said the new junior.

"There are only thwee of the wottahs, and two St. Jim's chaps can lick thwee Gwammarians any day," D'Arcy explained. "I am goin' to give Gordon Gay a fearful thwashin'."

"Come on!" said the Australian junior invitingly. "I'm simply longing for that fearful thrashing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Back me up, Way, old man—"

"Oh, come on!" said Ray uneasily.

"My deah fellow—"

"They're three to two," said Ray uneasily.

Arthur Augustus stared at him blankly. Three to two didn't make any difference to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy; and this was the hero—the fellow who had risked his life in a burning house! Surely he wasn't afraid of three Grammar School fellows in a scrap?

"That's all right!" sang out Gordon Gay. "If you're looking for a scrap, come on; one of us will see fair play!"

"Good!" said D'Arcy. "Come on, Way; you can vey upon him; he's an awful wottah, but he will give us fair play. We'll pitch the wottahs ovah the stile. Come on, Way—where are you goin', you boundah!"

Roland Ray was walking on rather fast.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gordon Gay. "He doesn't want any!"

"Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy ran after the new boy and caught him by the shoulder.

"Way, old man, back me up! The Gwammah cads will think you are afraid of them!"

"Let them think so!"

"But—but I say—"

"I'm going on!"

And Roland Ray went on. Arthur Augustus hesitated a few moments, and then followed him. The three Grammarians on the stile sent a yell of laughter after them. It was only too plain that the new boy for St. Jim's had funked.

The two juniors finished that walk to the school in silence, amazed silence on Arthur Augustus's part. The new boy had funked! At all events, that was what it looked like. But it was impossible; a fellow who had not been afraid to risk his life in a burning house could hardly be afraid of a harmless "scrap" with a schoolboy. It was an extraordinary thing, and the swell of St. Jim's was perplexed. But Roland Ray did not utter a word of explanation, and they arrived at St. Jim's in grim silence.

CHAPTER 5.

Funk!

"RUBBISH!"

George Gore, of the Shell, made that remark. Gore of the Shell was given to making emphatic remarks. He was unusually emphatic now.

A crowd of fellows in the common-room in the School House were discussing the new boy. Roland Ray had arrived at St. Jim's, and he belonged to the School House, and was in the Fourth Form. He had not yet been assigned to a study; but the juniors, though as a rule opposed to having new boys crowded into their studies, had no objection to Ray. Even Jack Blake had been heard to declare that he would welcome him in Study No. 6, although there were already four fellows in that famous study.

Merely as a new boy, Ray was of no importance. New boys came often enough to the school, and did not attract any special attention among two or three hundred fellows. But Roland Ray was a new boy somewhat out of the common.

The story of his heroism was known all over the school. He had plunged into a burning house to rescue his young brother, and had saved his life, and nearly lost his own. He had been badly burnt, and had had a long illness as a result. The story had been in the papers at the time, and some of the St. Jim's juniors had seen it. There was no doubt that Roland Ray was a splendid chap, as Tom Merry declared in the common-room.

And the general admiration on the subject called forth that remark of George Gore's. Gore didn't like hearing anybody praised. That feeling was shared by Levison and Mellish, the cads of the Fourth. They were quite ready to set themselves against the new boy, for no better reason than that most of the fellows were inclined to like him and respect him.

"Rubbish!" repeated Gore.

"Rot!" said Levison.

"Piffle!" said Mellish.

That was their contribution to the discussion.

Tom Merry turned upon them angrily.

"What's rubbish, rot, and piffle?" he demanded sharply.

"All that gas about the new kid," said Gore. "All gammon!"

"It was in the papers," said Kerruish, of the Fourth.

"Oh, rats!"

"Sure, I read the report meself!" exclaimed Reilly.

"The newspapers always exaggerate!" said Gore, with a sniff. "I don't suppose there was really anything in it!"

"Probably nothing at all!" said Levison, with his unpleasant sneer.

"Any chap would have done the same!" said Mellish.

"Yes, I could see you doing it—I don't think!" said Jack Blake, with a snort.

"Yaas, wathah not!"

"Rubbish!" repeated Gore obstinately. "The kid's just an ordinary kid, and I don't believe in allowing kids to gas about what they've done or haven't done—"

"He hasn't gassed!" said Manners. "He hasn't said a word. We shouldn't have known anything about it, if Mr. Lathom hadn't mentioned it, and then some of us remembered having seen it in the papers."

"Yaas, that's so, Marnahs, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Well, you fellows are gassing enough for him, anyway!" growled Gore.

"He's a splendid chap!" said Tom Merry warmly.

"Oh, rot!"

"And a weal hewo!" said D'Arcy.

"Bosh!"

"And you are a worm, Gore!" said Tom Merry. "You're always up against a chap who does anything decent!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Thanks!" yawned Gore. "I'm not going to be taken in by this rot, anyway. I don't suppose the chap did anything out of the common, and I'm not going to join in the chorus, that's all!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Ring off, Gore!"

"Bump the wottah, deah boys!"

"Hallo, here he comes!" said Monty Lowther.

"Kow-tow to the giddy hero!" said Gore sarcastically.

Roland Ray entered the common-room. He had just come from an interview with Mr. Railton, the master of the School House.

Tom Merry raised his hand, and the juniors gave a cheer at the signal.

"Hurrah!"

Roland Ray looked astonished.

"Hallo, what's the row?" he asked.

"You are!" grinned Blake. "We're giving you a cheer!"

"Me! What for?"

"We know about you—all about you."

Ray flushed.

"Oh, cheese it!"

Blake chuckled.

"And you can come into Study No. 6 if you like, Ray," he declared. "We're four in there already, but we'll make room for you, if you like."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Mr. Railton's told me No. 7," said Ray.

"Sure, and that's my study!" said Reilly cordially. "I'll be glad to have you—and so will Kerruish—won't you, kid?"

"Yes, rather!" said Kerruish, with equal cordiality.

"Thank you!" said Ray. "You're very kind!"

"They're glad to have the giddy hero!" said Gore, with a sneer. "They're swallowing that yarn whole."

Ray looked at him.

"What yarn?" he asked.

"About the burning house, and the rest of it."

"That's true!" said Ray.

"Oh, rats!"

"Shut up, Gore!" growled Tom Merry. "If you don't shut your head, I'll jolly soon shut it for you."

"Let Ray shut it for me, if he's such a giddy warrior!" sneered Gore.

"Don't mind Gore, Ray!" said Tom Merry. "He can't help being a pig!"

"I don't mind him," said Ray quietly. "It doesn't matter twopence to me whether he believes the yarn or not. I hadn't the faintest idea that anything was known about it here, and I never dreamed that you fellows would think of making a fuss about it if you did know. I'd much rather nothing more was said on the subject. Will somebody tell me where my study is? I want to put my things there."

"Sure, and I will!" said Reilly.

George Gore stepped into the path of the new junior as he turned towards the door. Gore had been watching him keenly, and he had come to the conclusion that the new boy was anxious to avoid a row with him. And that was quite enough for the bully of the Shell. He planted himself in Ray's way, and the new boy had to stop.

"What do you want?" he asked.

Gore grinned.

"I don't believe a word of the yarn about the burning house, and the giddy heroism," he said. "That's plain English, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's plain enough. Now let me pass!"

"Let him pass, Gore, you cad!"

"Knock him down, Ray!"

"Punch his head!"

Gore did not move.

Ray hesitated.

"Well, I'm waiting to be shifted," said Gore sneeringly. "If you're such a giddy hero, you can shift me! Come on!" Still the new boy hesitated.

The buzz in the junior common-room died down into silence. The fellows were puzzled. There were few of the juniors present who would have stood so much insolence from the bully of the Shell, and they were amazed to see Ray taking it so quietly. Surely the fellow who had risked his life to save another, could not be afraid of the bully of the Shell. Gore was bigger than Ray, and looked very truculent. But—

"Go for him, Ray!" sang out Monty Lowther.

"I'm waiting!" said Gore.

Ray did not "go for him." He stood in a state of evident hesitation, the colour coming and going in his cheeks. The juniors exchanged queer glances.

How the situation would have ended cannot be said, for Tom Merry strode forward, seized Gore by the shoulders, and flung him bodily against the wall. Gore crashed on the wall, and slid down to the floor and sat there. Ray left the common-room without a word. Gore gasped, and struggled to his feet. Tom Merry looked at him with gleaming eyes.

"If you're looking for trouble, come on!" he said.

"What are you interfering for, you rotter?" roared Gore.

"You are not going to rag the new kid. You're bigger than he is, for one thing. If you are spoiling for a fight, tackle a chap in your own Form—I'm ready!"

Gore gave a kind of bellow, and rushed at Tom Merry.

In the excitement that followed, Roland Ray was forgotten. It was a wild and whirling combat, and at the end of it George Gore lay gasping on the floor, with both his eyes closed, and his nose streaming red. Tom Merry was gasping, too, and he was mopping his nose with his handkerchief, turning the handkerchief crimson in the process.

"Had enough?" he asked quietly.

"Ow!" groaned Gore, as Levison helped him to his feet. "Ow! Yes! Grooh!"

He dabbed savagely at his nose.

"All the same, that new kid's a funk!" he snarled. "He's a rotten funk, and you know it, and that's why you're standing up for him! Grooh!"

Tom Merry did not reply. He went away to bathe his face—it needed it.

He left the junior common-room in a buzz.

A funk!

It certainly looked like it. Could a fellow be a hero and a funk at the same time? Or was the sneering, doubting bully of the Shell in the right in his assertion that the story of the burning house, and the heroic rescue, was "spoof"—some ridiculous exaggeration of a commonplace thing which had covered Roland Ray with undeserved glory? That was much more likely. And there was a revulsion of feeling among the juniors, as they talked it over. All the fellows had an uncomfortable feeling that they had been taken in.

CHAPTER 6.

Very Queer Indeed.

"JOLLY queer!" said Monty Lowther.

"Queer, and no mistake!" said Manners.

Tom Merry did not speak. His nose was swollen and red, and he was feeling the after effects of his tussle with Gore. He was feeling, in fact, rotten.

The Terrible Three were at tea in their study. Manners and Lowther were discussing the subject of Roland Ray, the new boy in the Fourth, a topic just then of the keenest interest among the juniors of the School House.

Arthur Augustus had not said a word about Ray's evident eagerness to escape a tussle with the Grammarians. It had made an unpleasant impression upon D'Arcy, but he had said nothing about it. But what had happened in the common-room was known to all, and had been witnessed by half the junior boys of the School House.

Roland Ray had come to St. Jim's in all the glory of a proved hero. Arthur Augustus specially, and most of the fellows more or less, had been inclined to make much of him. And on his first day at St. Jim's he had allowed himself to be bullied and ragged, without lifting a finger in his defence.

It was not as if he had been a small or weak fellow. Gore, of the Shell, was a bully, and the terror of small boys. He filled in many leisure moments by ragging Skimpole, his study-mate; but Skimpole was a very unfit youth, and wore glasses, and could not stand up for himself. Fellows, who had to stand Gore, stood him. But Ray was a finely-built, athletic-looking fellow. And he was supposed to have endless pluck. A fellow who could face death, could surely face the bully of the Shell. Gore might be more than a match for him, but Ray was capable of putting up a good fight, and making Gore sorry he had tackled him, even if the bully got the best of it. And if he allowed himself to be bullied there would be no end of it. Tom Merry would not be always on the spot to stand up for him, nor would the captain of the Shell feel that he was called upon always to defend a fellow who ought to have defended himself. What did it mean? The juniors could not help being curious about it.

"Don't you think it's queer, Tommy?" Lowther asked.

"What's queer?" asked Tom Merry.

"About Ray!"

"I suppose it is!"

"He's not a weakling, or a guy like Skimpole," said Lowther. "He looks like a chap who could put up a good fight."

"He does—if he wanted to!" said Manners.

"Then why didn't he tackle Gore?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"He can't be a funk!" he said.

"It looked jolly like it."

"Well, it did! But I suppose he had his reasons."

"He had better get rid of them, then, if he wants to find life worth living at this giddy school," said Lowther drily. "A chap who lets himself be bullied will have plenty of bullying to put up with. If some weak kid is being ragged, it's up to other fellows to interfere. But we can't fight the battles of a chap who can fight them himself."

"No fear!" said Manners.

"It was rotten of Gore to jump on him like that, his first day here," said Tom Merry.

"That's so; but—"

"I can't quite understand him," said Tom Merry slowly.

"If he risked his life in a fire, he can't be a funk."

"But did he?" said Lowther.

"Why, we know he did."

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Monty Lowther nodded.

"Yes; I don't want to look suspicious, but it's queer that a fellow who wasn't afraid of being burned to death should be afraid of George Gore."

"Yes, it's queer; but—but the story's true. Mr. Lathom answered for it; besides, we've seen it in the papers. I don't remember much of it, but I remember a report of a chap who risked his life to save his kid brother, and the name was Ray."

"Not an uncommon name."

Tom Merry started.

"You think—"

"No, I don't," said Monty Lowther promptly. "But it's possible that it's another chap of the same name, getting a lot of kudos that doesn't belong to him."

"I can't think so. He looks honest enough."

"He does. But—"

"But I can't understand a really plucky fellow being afraid of Gore," said Manners.

"I can't understand it, either," said Tom Merry. "He may show up differently to-morrow. I hope he does—for his own sake."

There was a knock at the door, and Jack Blake, of the Fourth, came in.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry. "Has Gussy got his complexion off yet?"

Blake grinned.

"It won't come off! He's talking about raiding the Grammar School, and scalping Gordon Gay & Co. bald-headed. But I came here to show you this."

Blake laid a folded newspaper on the table.

"What is it?" asked the Terrible Three together.

"It's an old paper—three months old; I got it out of the library," said Blake. "It has the report in it of the fire at Ray's house."

"Oh, I see!"

"Read it," said Blake.

The Terrible Three read it together. It was a report of the burning of the house of Mr. Herbert Ray, at Brighton, and it stated that the youngest son of Mr. Ray had been cut off by the flames, and only saved by the heroism of his elder brother, Roland, who had plunged into the burning house, and lowered him in a sheet from a window. The elder had then been overcome by the smoke, and, unable to make his own escape, and had been dragged from the jaws of death by the firemen. He was badly burnt, and expected to suffer considerably for his heroism. The paragraph added that Roland Ray had been about to be entered at a well-known public school in the south of England, but that his going there would now be deferred until he had recovered—perhaps a considerable time.

"Well, that's plain enough," said Tom Merry, laying down the paper.

"I thought I'd show you," said Blake; "some of the fellows—Levison especially—have been hinting that Ray isn't that Ray, but another chap of the same name. Lots of fellows named Ray, of course."

"Well, the idea crossed my mind after he funk'd meeting Gore," said Monty Lowther.

Blake nodded.

"And mine," he confessed, "so I looked into it. It shows that he's genuine enough. His box has come, and it has the Brighton labels on it. He's come from Brighton, where the Rays of this paragraph live."

"That settles it."

"Then he must be a plucky chap!" said Manners.

"Must be, according to this."

"Then why did he funk with Gore?"

"Goodness knows."

"Chap might be brave in one way, and not in another," Tom Merry remarked thoughtfully. "He may not know how to use his hands in a scrap, you know."

"Well, a licking isn't such an awful thing, even if he got one," said Lowther. "He ought to have stood up to Gore. He'll have to yet, or his life won't be worth living."

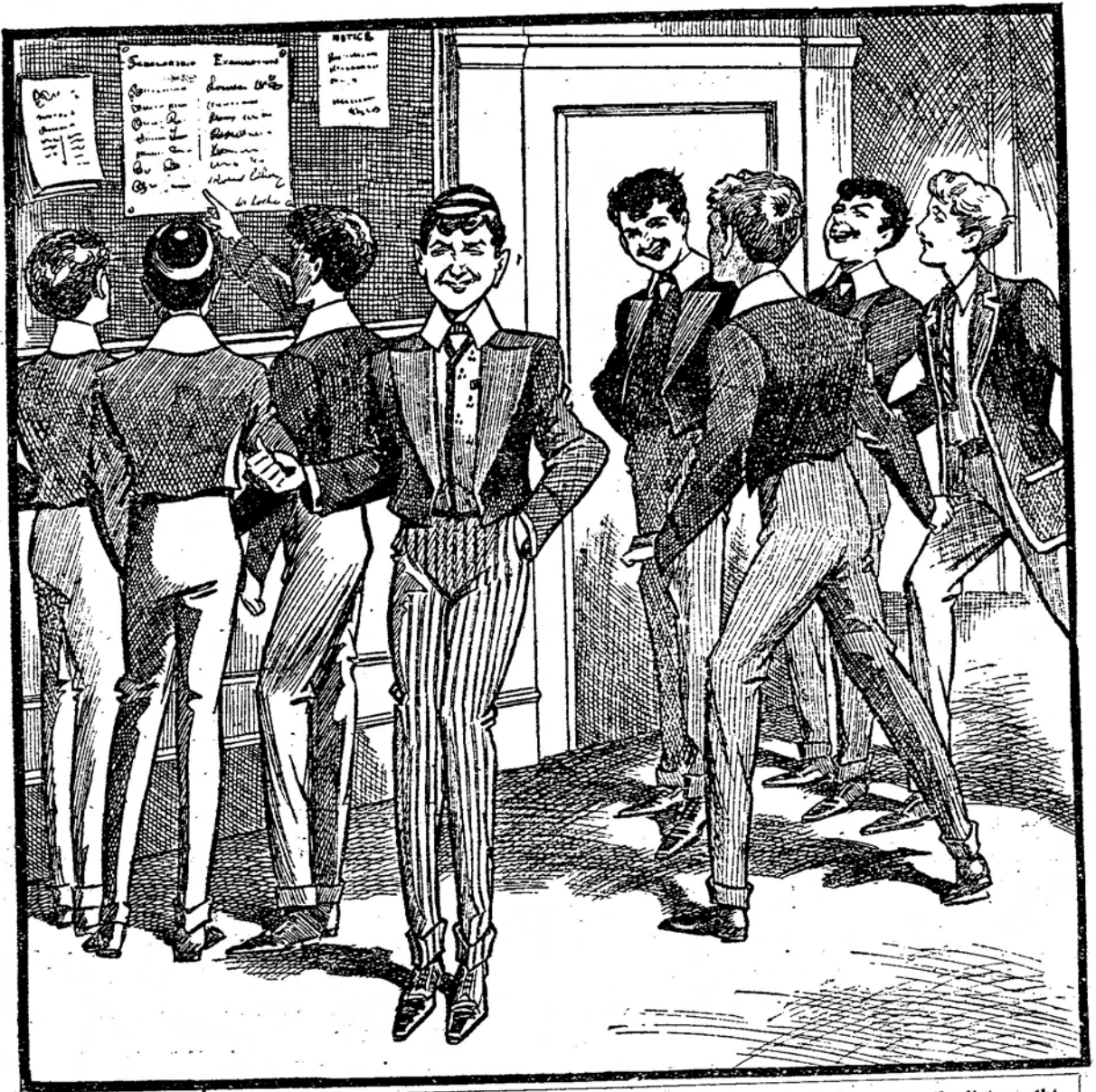
"That's so!"

"Don't see how a chap can be a giddy hero and a giddy funk at the same time," said Jack Blake. "But he's the right Ray, right enough."

"It's jolly queer," Tom Merry looked round at his chums. "It's queer! But I think we ought to stand by Ray a bit at first, and give him a chance."

"Hear, hear!" said Blake, and he walked away with his newspaper, to show it to other doubting Thomases, and convince them.

The Terrible Three let the subject drop; but they could not help thinking about it, and the result of their thinking was, that it was very queer—very queer indeed!



Vernon-Smith pointed to the list of names of the entrants for the scholarship. The last name on the list caught the eyes of the juniors at once: Robert Cherry, Lower 14th. "Bob Cherry!" gasped Vernon-Smith, "He's entered for the scholarship! Bob Cherry—who just knows a deccension from a duck's egg! Ha, ha, ha!" And the Bounder's laugh was echoed on all sides! (An incident taken from the splendid long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, which appears in our grand companion paper, THE MAGNET LIBRARY this week. The title of the story is "QUITS!" by Frank Richards, and every Gemite should make a point of reading it. This week's "Majn t" is on sale everywhere. Price One Penny.)

CHAPTER 7.
On the War-Path!

REILLY, of the Fourth, grinned a welcome to Roland Ray as he came into No. 7 Study in the Fourth. Ray had a bundle of books under one arm, and a cricket-bat under the other. Reilly and Kerruish were both in the study, and both were cordial to the new boy. They were as surprised as anybody by the curious show he had made in the common-room, before the bully of the Shell. But they had resolved to talk to Ray about that. They wanted to chum with him, and they were going to explain gently that they couldn't have a chum who funk'd a fight, or looked as if he was funking it. Of course, he wasn't a funk, but he must be more careful of appearances. That was what Reilly was going to explain to him in the friendliest way in the world.

"Here you are, bedad," said Reilly. "Shove your books

here. You can have one shelf of the bookcase to yourself, Ray."

"Thank you," said Ray.
"And now have tea," said Kerruish. "Hungry after your journey?"

"Yes, a bit."
"We've got in something special for tea," said Reilly hospitably. "as soon as we heard you were coming into our study we borrowed a half-crown of Lumley-Lumley."

Ray laughed.
"That was jolly kind of you," he said. "I don't know what you're making a fuss of me for."

"Faith, it's because you're a giddy hero."
Ray coloured:

"I wish you wouldn't speak about that," he said.
"Sure and then I won't," said Reilly: "But we're plazed to have ye in the study intirely, ain't we, Kerruish?"

"Yes, rather," said the Manx lad. "Jolly pleased, Ray."
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NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"THE RASCAL OF ST. JIM'S!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.
Order Early.

Sit down. We've got muffins and herrings, and jam to follow. And poached eggs."

"Oh, good!"

Reilly and Kerruish were hospitality itself. The new boy was soon feeling quite at home, and very comfortable. His handsome face brightened up very much. It had been somewhat clouded since the unfortunate encounter with the bully of the Shell. But Ray seemed to have forgotten that unpleasant episode now.

"Like the herrings?" said Reilly.

"Ripping," said Ray.

"And the muffins?" asked the Manx junior.

"Spiffing!"

"Fill Ray's cup again, Kerruish."

Ray smiled.

"You're jolly good to me," he said gratefully. "I didn't know anybody here, and I was thinking I should feel rotten and lonely the first few days. It's ripping to fall into a jolly study like this."

"Sure, we want to chum with ye," said Reilly.

"I'll be jolly glad," said Ray.

"Good. Now, ye won't mind if I ask ye a question?" said Reilly.

"Go ahead."

"Why didn't ye wallop Gore for cheeking you as he did?"

Ray's brow clouded.

"Some of the fellows in the Fourth are afraid of Gore," went on Reilly. "He's a big fellow, and a rotten bully as a rule, though he had his good points sometimes. But he doesn't try to bully this study!"

"No fear!" said Kerruish.

"And he's nearly all gas, too," said Reilly. "If you'd stood up to him, he would have simmered down. That's a tip."

"Yes," said Ray.

"Can you box?" asked Reilly.

"A little—not much."

"You're not a fighting chap?"

"N-no."

"You'll have to learn here," chuckled Reilly. "Must be able to hit out for yourself, you know. Gore won't jaw you next time; he'll biff you. Of course, you couldn't stand that. The whole Form would jump on you if you let a Shell fellow bully you."

"Would they?" said Ray.

"Faith, they would, and we'd jump as hard as anybody, wouldn't we, Kerruish?"

"You bet!" said Kerruish heartily.

Ray gave his new friends a somewhat troubled look, and was silent.

"Ather tea," continued Reilly, "I'll have the gloves on with you for a few rounds, and see what form ye're in. Then we'll all go out and look for Gore."

"Look for him!" stammered Ray.

"Yis."

"W-w-what for?"

"To pick a quarrel with him, intirely, of course. It won't want much picking," grinned Reilly. "Gore's always ready for a row. You can give him a smack on the nose, you know, and that will get his temper up at once."

"But—but I don't want any trouble with him."

"Rats! You've got the trouble with him already, whether you want it or not, and now you've got to show him that he can't bully you," explained Reilly.

"But—but—" stammered Ray. "I hear that he was fighting with Tom Merry, and—and he won't be fit to fight me, after that."

Reilly nodded thoughtfully.

"Sure, and that's so, too. We'll go and look for Levison instead."

"Levison?" said Ray.

"Yes; he's the chap who was with Gore, and backing him up in chipping you. He says he doesn't believe you're the Roland Ray who was in the fire at all, but another chap of the same name, getting the glory for nothing."

"What rot!" said Ray.

"Just so—rot," said Reilly. "But you can't let Levison say such things, you know. Ather tay we'll go and look for Levison."

"And we'll see that you get fair play," said Kerruish.

Ray relapsed into troubled silence. His new friends were very hospitable, and they were making him very comfortable in the study. But their warlike views did not appear to agree with the inclinations of the new boy.

If Reilly noticed the new junior's very evident preoccupation, he affected not to do so. He ran on cheerfully:

"Ye see, it won't do to give the fellow an impression that you're a funk, Ray, darling. Of course, we know that ye're THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 281.

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Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR"
Every Friday.

as brave as a lion, or ye wouldn't have done what you did for your kid brother. But—"

"I'm not a funk," said Ray, flushing painfully.

"Sure, we know ye're not. Wasn't I just saying that same?"

"But I don't want to fight Gore, or Levison, or anybody." Reilly started.

"It isn't a question of what you want, kid," he explained. "You'll have to, or your life won't be worth living."

"But—but—"

"Finished tay?" said Reilly. "Put the table in the corner, Kerruish darling, and I'll have the gloves on with Ray, and see how he shapes."

"Hear, hear!" said Kerruish.

The table was shoved aside, and Reilly produced two pairs of boxing-gloves. He took off his jacket. Ray was standing with his hands in his pockets, regarding him with uncertain eyes, and made no movement to take his jacket off.

"Strip," said Reilly.

"What?"

"Take ye're jacket off."

"But—but—"

"Sure, I'll help ye off with it," said Reilly, helping Ray off with his jacket, whether he liked it or not. "Now put the gloves on. I'll help you. That's right. Now we'll have a round or two, and Kerruish shall keep time."

Kerruish took out his watch.

"I'm ready!" he said.

"Walk up," said Reilly.

Ray did not move. Reilly regarded him in astonishment.

"Sure, and don't ye want a little practice?" he demanded.

"Yes, if you like," said Ray, with an effort.

"Step up, then."

Ray stepped up. Reilly sparred at him, and the new junior threw himself into an attitude of defence. His attitude showed that he knew how to box.

"I'll hit ye pretty hard, so that ye can show me how ye'll stop the whacks," said Reilly, with great kindness.

"I—I'd rather—"

"Look out, now, this one is for your nose."

Biff!

The new boy sat upon the study carpet. His face was quite white.

"Sure, and what did ye go down for?" demanded Reilly.

"You—you knocked me down!" gasped Ray.

"You oughtn't to have gone down for a tap like that. You look as if you can use your hands, too. You'll have to stand a bit firmer on your pins when you meet Gore."

"I—I'm not going to meet Gore."

"Well, Levison, then."

"I—I don't want to meet Levison, either."

"Well, then, Mellish," said Reilly, "anything to be obliging. Mellish is just the same as the others, and he's been calling you a funk already. Mellish will be the easiest of the cads to tackle, so perhaps ye'd better start with him, ather all."

"I—I don't want—"

"Now, this one is for your eye," said Reilly. "I won't hit too hard."

Ray put up his hands again. He evidently knew how to box, for he stopped Reilly's blows, seeming to force himself to enter into the thing against some strong inward disinclination. Then suddenly, as the Irish junior was warming up to the work, and hitting out as if it were a real fight instead of a friendly spar, Ray backed away, with a gasp.

"That's enough!" he muttered.

"Sure, I'm just beginning to enjoy it!"

"I'm tired."

"I wanted to show ye an upper-cut with the left that'd have rattled every tooth in your head," urged Reilly.

The prospect did not seem attractive to the new junior.

"I'm tired," he repeated.

Reilly peeled off the gloves.

"Well, perhaps it's a good idea not to overdo it, as ye've got a fight coming off soon," he assented.

"But—but I haven't—"

"Help him on with his jacket, Kerruish. Now, are ye ready?"

"I—I want to unpack my books."

"We'll help you to do that later. Come on, Kerruish," said Reilly, taking one of Roland Ray's arms, "take his other arm intirely! Now we're going to look for Mellish."

"But—but, I say—"

"March!" said Reilly.

They marched. The new junior, with both his arms taken by his warlike friends, had no choice but to go. He did not look happy.

CHAPTER 8.

Looking for Trouble.

"TOM MERRY!"

"Hallo!"

"Seen Mellish, bedad?"

Tom Merry halted in the quadrangle, and looked curiously at the three juniors.

Roland Ray was looking pale and dispirited, but Reilly and Kerruish were quite cheerful. Ray's eyes fell before Tom Merry's, and he coloured.

"What do you want Mellish for?" asked Tom.

"Ray's going to lick him."

"Oh, I see!"

Tom Merry looked hard at Ray. He did not seem to be in a state of mind to lick anybody just then—even Percy Mellish, the cad of the Fourth, and well known to be the biggest funk in the School House.

"I—I—" stammered Ray.

"Ray is going to lick them all in turn—Gore, and Levison, and Mellish," said Reilly. "We're starting with Mellish, as the easiest of the lot. See?"

"I see. Mellish is over by the tuck-shop."

"Good! Come on, Ray!"

"I—I—"

"This way," said Reilly. "You can come, Tom Merry darling. You can see fair play, in case Gore and Levison and Crooke should come round."

"Right-ho!" said Tom Merry.

Manners and Lowther joined their leader, very keenly interested to learn that Roland Ray had sallied forth with his new friends to look for trouble. The next few minutes would probably prove whether the new junior was a "funk" or not.

Percy Mellish was outside the tuck-shop, turning over in his mind the important question as to whom he could borrow a shilling of. He had some shillings of his own in his pocket, but Percy was very careful with his money.

"Mellish darling!"

Mellish looked round. "Hallo, Reilly! Will you lend me a shilling till—till Saturday week?"

"Sure, and I won't!" said Reilly. "But I've a friend with me who'll lend you a thick ear!"

Mellish sneered.

"That funk?" he said.

"So ye're calling him a funk—eh?"

"Isn't he one?" said Mellish. "I think he pretty well proved it this afternoon."

"Sure, he's just going to prove to ye that he isn't!" said Reilly. "Step round behind the tuck-shop, Mellish."

"What for?" asked Mellish uneasily.

"Faith, so that me friend can hammer ye!"

"Look here—"

"Give him a hand if he can't walk round, Tom Merry."

"Certainly!" grinned Tom Merry. "Lend a hand, Monty."

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Lowther.

Mellish looked alarmed.

At the very evident sight of Mellish's alarm and unwillingness to fight, Roland Ray's look became more firm. He could see—he would have been blind not to see—that Percy Mellish was a coward of the first water, and would not fight if he could help it. The veriest poltroon need not have been afraid of Mellish of the Fourth.

"Look here, I—I don't want any trouble with the new kid!" stammered Mellish. "I—I think it's a rotten thing to jump on a chap his first day at school. I—I told Gore so."

"Bring him along, Merry darling!" said Reilly, without appearing to hear.

"I—I say, you know—"

"This way!" said Monty Lowther genially.

Reilly and Kerruish led their champion round the tuck-shop, where they were nicely out of sight of the eyes of masters and prefects. The Terrible Three followed with the reluctant Mellish. A dozen other fellows, who had scented a fight, gathered upon the spot to see what was going to happen.

Roland Ray's look had gradually been becoming firmer.

Tom Merry, as he noted it, could not help thinking that it was Mellish's evident funk that was strengthening the resolution of the new junior; but he kept that thought to himself. He tried, in fact, to drive it from his mind. He wanted to think as well of Roland Ray as he could.

"Now, here we are!" said Reilly. "Sure, a more select spot couldn't have been found! No danger of Kildare or Monteith or any spalpeen of a prefect coming on the scene. Are ye ready, Ray darling?"

"Yes," said Ray.

"Are ye ready, Mellish?"

"I—I—"

"Take his jacket off him, kids!"

"Look here," said Mellish, backing away, and licking his dry lips, "I—I don't want to fight the new kid. I've got no quarrel with him."

"Sure, you called him a funk!"

"Well, that was because Gore—"

"Never mind the because and the why and the which," interrupted Reilly. "Never mind Gore now. Me friend is going to settle with Gore later on. He's going to settle with you now. You called him a funk. You can't call a friend of mine a funk without getting a hammering. If Ray didn't hammer you, sure I'd niver spake to him again, and I'd boot him out of my study. Put up yer hands."

"Go it, Mellish!" sang out Crooke of the Shell.

"Pile in, Percy!"

"Go it, Ray!"

Mellish cast a hunted look round him.

He could have bitten off the tongue that had brought this trouble upon him. He had called the new boy a funk because he believed him to be one, and that it would be safe to call him what he liked. But the new junior was apparently turning out to be a fighting-man, and that made all the difference. Mellish had to answer for his words now; and that was the last thing in the world that he was willing to do. But, without exposing himself to the scorn and contempt of all the Lower School, he could not refuse to fight, after what he had said. He had to go through with it now.

Mellish's thoughts and feelings were quite legible in his face, and the juniors round him were grinning. They had no pity for Mellish. A fellow, perhaps, couldn't help being funky, but he could help throwing the same accusation in another fellow's face. There was no escape for Percy Mellish.

"Ready?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Ye-es," muttered Mellish.

"Pile in, then!"

"Go it, Percy!"

"Go it, Ray!"

Mellish stepped desperately up to his opponent. Ray faced him, with his jacket off and his sleeves rolled back. Mellish's unwillingness to fight was so evident that Ray, whether a funk or not himself, could have had no fear.

"Time!" said Tom Merry.

Mellish made a desperate rush at his enemy. He was in for it, and he wanted to get it over. If Ray knocked him down, he would pretend that he couldn't get up again, and give the new boy best, and that would be an end of it.

Ray backed away as Mellish rushed at him.

His face for the moment had gone strangely white, and his eyes had a hunted look. Monty Lowther murmured in Tom Merry's ear:

"If ever a fellow was in the bluest of blue funks—"

Tom nodded.

If Mellish could have seen it, he would have regained courage, and all would have been well with Mellish. But he did not see it. He rushed right on to Ray's fists, and Ray lashed out blindly.

By chance more than design his right came crashing upon Mellish's chin, and the cad of the Fourth toppled over and went to the ground with a crash.

"Oh!" gasped Mellish.

He lay where he had fallen, panting.

Ray stood unsteadily over him, but as his opponent did not get up Ray recovered his composure.

Tom Merry counted:

"One, two, three, four, five, six— Get up, Mellish!"

Mellish groaned.

"I—I can't!"

"Rats! Seven, eight, nine— Last chance!"

"Ow!"

"Ten!"

"Counted out!" said Monty Lowther, with a roar of laughter. "Ha, ha, ha!"

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

Mellish groaned again. He could have got up with perfect ease if he had wanted to, but he did not intend to move until he was counted out.

"My man wins!" said Reilly. "I don't call that a fight. Sure you wouldn't like to have it over again, Mellish darling?"

"Ow! No!" groaned Mellish.

"You're not hurt," said Manners.

"Ow, ow!"

"Ray wins!" said Tom Merry. "It's not much of a giddy victory; but he wins. Mellish, you can crawl away, but for goodness' sake don't call anybody a funk again! It's funny!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That settles Mellish!" said Reilly, with satisfaction.

"Now we're going to look for Levison and Gore."

"What a giddy glutton for trouble you are!" grinned

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Lorne, of the Fifth. "Your principal isn't half such a glutton for it as you are!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ray flushed painfully as the laughter fell on his ears. Reilly gave Lorne, of the Fifth, a warning glance.

"Mind ye're manners, Lorne, or we shall put you on the list," he said. "Now we want to find Gore. Anybody know where Gore is?"

"I—I say—" murmured Ray.

"Where's Gore hiding himself?" demanded Reilly. "Sure, I—"

"Gore's not hiding himself!" came the rough voice of the individual in question, as he pushed his way through the ring of juniors. "Who wants Gore?"

"Here he is!"

"Ray is hungry for your gore," explained Lowther. "He's come out to slaughter you. This is where the gore flows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gore fixed a scornful look upon the new junior. Gore was still showing traces, only too visible, of his encounter with Tom Merry in the common-room. But Gore, bully as he was, had a great deal of bulldog pluck, and he was ready for another tussle, especially with a boy whom he believed to be a funk.

"So Ray is looking for me?" said Gore.

"Faith, and he is!"

"Well, he's found me. Here I am!"

And Gore of the Shell strode forward and confronted the new junior. And there was a buzz of interest from the gathering crowd behind the tuckshop. Now, as Blake, of the Fourth, remarked to Herries, they would see what they would see—an altogether incontrovertible fact.

CHAPTER 9.

The Coward's Blow.

GORE peeled off his jacket, and threw it to Crooke to hold. Then he pushed back his cuffs.

"I'm ready!" he said.

"Sure, and my man's ready, too!" said Reilly. "He finished off Mellish in one round. He'll finish you off in two."

Gore grinned.

"He doesn't look like finishing anybody off," he said. "I said he was a funk, and I say it again. If he isn't a funk, let him prove it now. I'm ready!"

The buzz of voices died away.

The juniors looked on in silence. Roland Ray made no movement. All the colour seemed to have receded from his face, leaving him chalky white. His eyes wandered to and fro like the eyes of a cornered and hunted animal.

That the unfortunate lad was in a state of the most utter "funk" was a fact that was evident to the least keen of all the observers.

His face was colourless, his hands were trembling. He backed away with a nervous start as the bully of the Shell strode nearer to him.

Gore burst into a scornful laugh.

"Isn't your man ready, Reilly?" he exclaimed.

Reilly looked at Roland Ray. Evidently he was not ready. A flush mounted to the face of the junior from Belfast. He began to realise what he had done—that he had constituted himself the champion of a coward, and that the fellow he had led forth to prove his courage had not the pluck to raise his hand in his own defence.

"Howly mother av Moses!" murmured Reilly, in dismay and perplexity.

"Go it, Ray!" said Manners encouragingly.

"Pile in!"

Roland did not move.

His breath was coming thick and fast, and his eyes wandered from side to side, as if he was thinking of making a rush to escape. But the ring of fellows was thickening round him now, and there was no way open.

The sneer intensified on George Gore's face.

He stood swaggering before the pale, troubled new boy, his manner growing all the more bullying as Roland Ray shrank from him.

"Well, are you coming on?" demanded Gore.

The new boy's lips moved, but he did not speak. His hands were shaking.

"Let him alone," said Tom Merry, breaking in. "After all, he's not so big as you are, Gore, and it wouldn't be a fair fight."

"Wathah not!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Gore sneered.

"He should have thought of that before he came looking for me," he said. "You fellows mind your own business. Reilly says that the new kid came out specially to look for me and settle with me. Let him do it, then!"

"Sure, and he did!" said Reilly, in perplexity. "Ray,

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ye spalpeen, why don't ye pile in and wipe up the ground with him?"

"Pile in," urged Kerruish. "Don't be a funk!"

Ray started.

"I—I not a funk!" he muttered.

"Then pile in!"

"I'm waiting," jeered Gore.

"I—I can't!"

The new boy's voice was low and almost inaudible. The fellows round him stared at his white face in surprise and wonder. That any fellow, however big a funk, should make such an exhibition of cowardice in public amazed them. Even Mellish had taken a knocking-down rather than show up in such a light. There was contempt in all faces now, and a sort of scornful pity in some.

"Why can't you?" demanded Reilly.

"I can't! Let me go!"

The new boy turned blindly away. There was a murmur from the juniors, a murmur of utter contempt.

"Funk!"

"Coward!"

The boy's pale face became crimson. But he did not speak. He would have hurried away in shame, but Reilly caught him by the shoulder. The Irish junior's face was red and angry.

"Look here, you spalpeen!" he said. "I've made a pal of ye, but I'm not chumming up with a coward. Either ye'll fight Gore, or ye'll clear out of my study!"

"Yes, rather!" said Kerruish.

"Let him go!" said Tom Merry, wishing to end the painful scene. "If the poor chap's a funk he can't help it. Let him go!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hold on!" said Gore. "I'm not finished with him yet. If he won't fight, after coming out to challenge me, he's got to take the coward's blow!"

"Oh, don't be a cad!" said Tom Merry. "Let him alone!"

"Mind your own business!" said Gore savagely.

He raised his hand.

Tom Merry strode forward, but it was too late. Gore had struck, and a deep flush of shame rose in the pale cheeks of Roland Ray. He stood for a moment silent, still, under the blow; and then, with an inarticulate ejaculation, he turned and hurried away.

The juniors stared after him blankly.

"My hat!" said Blake, with a whistle.

"Bai Jove!"

"Rotten funk!" growled Herries.

"Silly ass!" said Lowther. "Better have made a fight for it. He will have an awful time after this."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Gore laughed mockingly.

"Blessed if I ever saw such an awful funk!" he said. "I'll give him some more like that, and hammer some pluck into him. I'll—"

Tom Merry's hand fell on Gore's shoulder with a grasp like iron.

"You won't!" said Tom quietly.

Gore glared at him.

"Who'll stop me?" he growled.

"I will! The poor kid's a funk—there doesn't seem to be any doubt about that. But you're not going to bully him. He'll have a bad time enough, without you making it worse. I tell you plainly, Gore, you've done enough. If you touch Ray again you'll have to deal with me every time."

"Hear, hear!" said Jack Blake.

Gore shook himself loose from Tom Merry's grasp, and strode away without replying. He had suffered too much at the hands of the hero of the Shell that day to think of taking any more just then. The crowd broke up, discussing the conduct of Roland Ray in various tones of contempt and disgust and scornful compassion.

Roland Ray had come to St. Jim's with all the éclat of an heroic action. He had been welcomed as a hero. And in his first day at the school he had proved himself a coward! And even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who had been disposed to make the most of him, could find nothing to say in his defence, and only shook his head mournfully when the subject was mentioned.

CHAPTER 10.

Turned Out!

ROLAND RAY had made a bad beginning in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. In fact, he had made the worst possible beginning.

He had attracted unusual attention upon his arrival at the school, and that made the exposure of his cowardice all the more prominent and all the more shameful.

Fellows had been inclined to be friendly to him were very careful not to have anything to say to a "funk."

He was, as some of them remarked, a disgrace to the House. The New House fellows would jeer when they heard about it. Even Mellish would never have made such an exhibition of himself. Ray understood the disgrace into which he had fallen, and he did not speak to any fellow after the occurrence in quadrangle, unless the fellow spoke to him first. He understood that he was ostracised.

Most of the fellows let him severely alone. Indeed, but for the kindness of a few of the School House juniors, Ray would have been as solitary in the house as Robinson Crusoe upon his island.

The Terrible Three made it a point to speak to him civilly, as if nothing had happened. It was by Tom Merry's wish. As Tom explained in the study, if a fellow was born a coward, very likely he couldn't help it any more than Manners could help being an ass, or Lowther a fathead. This illustration did not convince Manners or Lowther, but they agreed to be civil to the wretched funk. It was by that name that Roland Ray came to be called generally, before his first day at St. Jim's was ended.

In the Fourth Form, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy treated him with scrupulous politeness. The swell of St. Jim's was feeling a little conscience-stricken. With the best intentions in the world, he had wanted to make a fuss of the hero, and show him that St. Jim's could appreciate pluck. It was really due to that that Ray had been brought into prominence, and had thus earned the surly attentions of the bully of the Shell. But for the flourish of trumpets, so to speak, with which Ray had arrived at the school, Gore would probably have let him alone, and this wretched disgrace would not have fallen upon him.

And yet the matter was inexplicable. Ray had risked his life to save his young brother; how, then, could he be a coward? Levison's suggestion that he wasn't the Roland Ray of the burning-house episode, but another fellow of the same name, seemed far-fetched. He had said he was that particular Ray, at all events. But a fellow could not be a hero and a coward at the same time. The impression gained ground that Ray had lied, and that he had taken advantage of the chance of possessing the same name as a fellow who had distinguished himself for his courage. If that was the truth, his punishment had been swift and terrible.

When Roland Ray went to his study to do his preparation that evening, he found his books piled in a little heap outside the door in the passage. He opened the door and looked in. Reilly and Kerruish were at work at the table, and they did not look up. They knew he was there, but they did not glance at him.

"Can't you make room for me?" said Ray timidly.

Then Reilly turned his head.

"We've put your things outside," he said.

"But—but this is my study!" stammered Ray.

Reilly shook his head.

"Sure and it isn't. We don't want any funks in this study. You can go to the Form-room, or go to the dickens. You're not coming in here."

"But—but—"

"But—but—" mimicked Kerruish. "Clear out, you funk! You've disgraced this study enough, I should think. I wonder you've got the nerve to come back here."

"Sure, it's the only thing he's got the nerve for," said Reilly.

Ray looked distressed.

"But I must do my preparation," he exclaimed.

"You can't do it here."

"But—but I tell you—"

Reilly rose to his feet.

"You've disgraced this study and disgraced us," he said. "That's enough. If you come into this room, you'll have a fight on your hands. Clear off!"

The new boy backed away.

"But—but—"

Reilly took hold of the door to close it. The new boy's eyes gleamed for a moment, and it looked as if he would spring upon the Irish junior. Reilly would have been pleased enough if he had. It would have shown that he was not a funk.

But if Ray thought of it, he changed his mind in a moment, and backed out into the passage. Reilly closed the door with a slam.

Roland Ray picked up his books dejectedly, and moved aimlessly down the passage. He had been turned out of his own study, and he had not the nerve to assert his rights. A youth in spectacles stopped to speak to him in the passage. It was Skimpole of the Shell, a very kindly youth.

"Ah! You are the new boy?" said Skimpole, blinking at Ray through his enormous glasses.

Ray nodded silently.

"You are looking down in the mouth," said Skimpole.

"Anything the matter?"

"I've been turned out of my study."

"Dear me!"

"Will you show me where the Fourth Form-room is?" asked Ray. "I shall have to do my preparation there."

"You can come into my study if you like," said Skimpole hospitably.

"Thank you!" said Ray.

"Not at all. Here you are."

Skimpole opened his study door. Skimpole shared that study with Vavasour and Gore. Gore was there, and he glared at the sight of Roland Ray and Skimpole.

"Are you bringing that rotten funk into this study, Skimpole, you fathead?" roared Gore, jumping up from the table.

"My dear Gore—" began Skimpole mildly.

"Get out, funk!"

"Come in, my dear Ray! This is my study, and Gore has no right to turn you out," said Skimpole. "I shall not allow Gore to—"

"Thanks; I—I won't come in!" faltered Ray.

"You'd better not!" jeered Gore. "You'll go out on your neck if you do."

"My dear Gore!" said the mild Skimpole.

"Shut up! That rotten funk isn't coming in here."

But the unfortunate Funk was already gone.

Ray went down the passage, and asked a fellow he met at the end to direct him to the Form-room. The fellow stared at him.

"Funk!" he said, and walked away.

Roland Ray flushed red, and went on. He found his way to the Form-room at last, and settled down there in silence and solitude to do his preparation.

The silence, the solitude of the Form-room contrasted grimly with the cheery study, where he had been made so much of by his study-mates only a couple of hours before.

Ray's eyes were dim with tears as he bent over his books.

What was his life to be like at St. Jim's?

This was the beginning. How was it to continue? How was it to end? The wretched boy had committed no crime; but he felt, like Cain of old, that his punishment was greater than he could bear.

He had finished his work as well as he was able, when the Form-room door opened, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in.

The swell of St. Jim's came directly towards Ray.

"Workin' here?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What for? Pwefer this to the studay?"

"They don't want me in the study," said Ray, flushing.

"But it's your study, deah boy. You've a wight to be there."

"It's all right."

"Have they turned you out?" asked D'Arcy indignantly.

"Yes."

"What did you let them for?"

Ray was silent.

Arthur Augustus regarded him through his eyeglass for some moments without speaking. The swell of St. Jim's was in a state of mental perplexity. He simply failed to understand the new boy at all.

"But you're not goin' to give up your study for good?" he asked.

"I suppose I shall have to."

"The Housemaster would interfere if you asked him."

Ray coloured again.

"I can't complain to the Housemaster," he said. "Wouldn't the fellows call that sneaking?"

"Yaas; but—but—" D'Arcy hesitated, and a bitter smile came over the face of the Funk.

"You think that a funk needn't mind being a sneak, is that it?" he asked.

"Well, you see," stammered D'Arcy, "I—I—"

"Well, I am not a sneak," said Ray quietly. "What ever the fellows may do, I shall not complain. I've got that much pluck, at any rate."

"I'm sowwy you've made such a bad bweak here, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "I suppose it's twue about that fish, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"And you are the same Woland Way who wescued the kid?"

"Yes."

"Some of the fellows say you must be a chap of the same name, and can't be the same fellow," said Arthur Augustus. Ray smiled wearily.

"I am the same fellow. I am myself, if that's what you mean," he said.

"But—but what does it mean, then, deah boy? A fellow who'd wisk his life can't be a coward. Why did you funk to-day?"

"I don't know."

D'Arcy started.

"You don't know, deah boy?"

"No."

"But—but—I don't quite undahstand you," said Arthur Augustus, in bewilderment. "You must know whethah you are afraid of Goah or not."

"You don't understand. I don't quite understand myself. I'm not a coward—I mean, I never was one. But—but since—" He paused, and a shudder ran through him. "I've been ill—I was ill a long time, and since—" He broke off again. "It's no good talking. I'm a funk, and you'd better let me alone."

"Poor old chap!" said Arthur Augustus softly. "Pew-waps it's the result of your illness. You're not quite wecovahed yet—"

"But I'm quite recovered. I'm as strong as ever I was—perfectly recovered," said Ray. "But—but there's some change come over me. I don't quite understand it—only—if that fire happened again I couldn't do again what I did—I couldn't!"

He shuddered.

Arthur Augustus left the Form-room with a very thoughtful expression upon his face.

The fellows in the School House agreed in considering Arthur Augustus D'Arcy a champion ass. He was generally admitted to have sufficient intellect to select a new waistcoat, and no more. But Arthur Augustus was thinking hard now, and perhaps it might turn out that Arthur Augustus would be the one to solve the problem that puzzled all the other fellows in the School House.

CHAPTER 11.

Sheer Funk!

THAT Roland Ray was an outcast in his own House was very much in evidence the next day. No one spoke to him at breakfast, and before morning school, when the juniors were out in the quadrangle, Ray was left quite alone. He took his place in the Form-room for lessons without a glance from his fellows. In the Fourth Form, however, he was very much discussed, and the New House portion of the Form learned of him and of his reputation. Figgins & Co. were interested, and they felt a good-natured, contemptuous compassion for the fellow who was already known as the Funk.

Some of the New House juniors suggested ragging the Funk, as a score over the rival House, but Figgins was down on that at once.

The proposal came from Diggs, after school, and Diggs thought it a ripping idea.

"We'll rag the blessed Funk, and show him up, and make

the whole blessed House jolly well ashamed of themselves," said Diggs. "We'll show them up! They'll never be able to get over that—having a funk in their House."

"You won't do anything of the sort," said Figgins gruffly.

"Why not?" demanded Diggs. "Isn't it a good idea?"

"No; it isn't."

"But it would put the rotten School House in their place, and make them jolly well ashamed of themselves," urged Diggs.

"It would be hitting below the belt," said Figgins.

"Oh, rot!"

"Eh?" said Figgins.

"I—I mean, I don't agree with you," said Diggs hastily.

"That's better," said Figgins, with a grin. "You can disagree with me as much as you like, so long as you don't kick over the traces and forget who's junior captain of the New House, my estimable Diggs. When we rag the School House, we'll rag fellows who can stand up for themselves."

"Rotten to rag a chap who's confessed himself a funk," added Redfern. "Let the poor beast alone, Diggs."

"Well, I think—" began Diggs warmly.

"Don't!" said Figgins. "With a brain like yours you shouldn't think, Diggs. Something might happen. Talking about ragging those bounders, though, reminds me Blake has just gone into the tuckshop, and he's giving orders galore. I think Gussy must have had a fiver from his governor, the way Blake's ordering tuck."

Fatty Wynn's plump face lighted up.

"That's right!" he exclaimed heartily. "If we want to rag the bounders, let's rag Blake—A foeman worthy of our steel," as Shakespeare says. What are you cackling at, Kerr?"

"It wasn't Shakespeare said that," grinned Kerr.

"Well, I—I meant to say Tennyson," said Fatty Wynn hastily.

"Ha, ha, ha! It was Scott!" roared Kerr.

"Well, I knew it was somebody," said Fatty Wynn. "Blessed if I care who it was. Let's go and see Blake."

And Figgins & Co. strolled over to the tuckshop.

Jack Blake of the Fourth was there, with Digby and D'Arcy and Herries. The Fourth-Formers were certainly collecting up a goodly quantity of provisions, as though laying in supplies for a siege.

The New House juniors peeped in through the doorway.

Raiding a feed from the rival House was permitted by the laws of warfare obtaining among the juniors of St. Jim's. And as funds were very low just then with Figgins & Co., it was a specially favourable time for raiding the enemy's supplies. Figgins & Co. had expended their last cash in refreshments en route the previous day, while enjoying their drive in D'Arcy's trap.


"My hat!" murmured Fatty Wynn. "Look at that pie!"

Among the purchases Blake was cramming into his cricket-bag was a large and luscious-looking pie. The pie was followed by a bag of tarts, and by the longing eyes of Fatty Wynn. The pie seemed to haunt Fatty.

NUMBER 8.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY


PORTRAIT GALLERY.




No. 9. NEXT WEDNESDAY.

Dame Taggles, Knox,

Cutts.





1. CURLY GIBSON.

2. JAMESON.

3. "WALLY" D'ARCY.



"Is the twain in yet, Twumble, deah boy?" Arthur Augustus asked the old Rylcombe porter. Trumble stared at him, for a third and fourth streak of marking ink had emerged from under D'Arcy's hat, and he was beginning to look like a zebra. "Oh, scissors!" murmured Trumble. (See Chapter 3.)

"Order!" whispered Figgins. "Now, there are five of us here. Kerr and Wynn and Reddy and I will go in and keep those bounders busy, while Lawrence collars the bag and bolts for the New House. We'll cover his retreat."

"Good egg!"
 "Better catch 'em as they come out," whispered Redfern.
 "Take 'em by surprise."
 "Right-ho."

The School House juniors were about to leave the shop. The New House raiders drew back in cover of the shop-front and the big elm outside, and waited.

Jack Blake appeared first, with the bag, and D'Arcy and Digby and Herries followed him.

Figgins gave the signal.
 There was a sudden rush of feet.

"Look out!" roared Blake. "New House cads!"
 "Collar the bag!" roared Figgins.

Lawrence grasped the cricket-bag. Blake promptly dotted him on the chin, and Lawrence sat down, still grasping the bag. The next moment Blake rolled over in Figgins's muscular grasp. Redfern closed with Digby, and Kerr with Herries, and Fatty Wynn kept Arthur Augustus D'Arcy

busy. Lawrence wrenched the bag from Blake's grasp as the latter struggled with Figgins, and ran.

"Rescue—School House!" roared Blake.
 "Bai Jove! Wescue!"

Lawrence, carrying the heavy bag, dashed across the quad. The four Fourth-Formers were too busily occupied to pursue him, but other School House fellows came dashing up at the call for rescue.

The Terrible Three came running from the direction of the gym, and taking in the situation at a glance, they rushed in pursuit of Lawrence.

"Stop him!" roared Tom Merry.
 Lawrence had a good start, and he was a good runner. He was already on the New House side of the quad, well ahead of his pursuers. One School House fellow, strolling in the quadrangle by himself, was between him and his House, and he was the only fellow who had a chance of stopping Lawrence. The pursuers yelled to him.

"Stop him!"
 "Get in his way, Ray!"

"Ray! Ray! Stop him!"
 Roland Ray paused and looked round in surprise.

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He was directly in the path of Lawrence, who, seeing that there was no chance of avoiding him, was charging straight at him, hoping to knock him over and get past before the pursuers could come up.

Ray could have stopped him easily enough.

He had only to cling hold of him and hang on, and in a few seconds Tom Merry & Co. would have been on the scene, and it would have been all up with Lawrence.

For a moment it seemed that Roland Ray would do what was required of him. He had learned already of the peculiar state of affairs existing between the juniors of the rival Houses at St. Jim's, and as a School House boy it was up to him to stand up for his House.

He blocked Lawrence's way, and stood ready to stop him. Lawrence rushed right at him. He was prepared for a struggle, and he knew that before it could end the pursuers would be upon him, and the bag would be recaptured. But he meant to do his best.

Right at Roland Ray he charged.

And then, to his amazement, Ray, instead of springing at him, backed out of his path and left the way clear.

Hardly believing in his own good luck, Lawrence dashed on, leaving Roland Ray behind, and his way was clear now. He ran on to the New House, and disappeared into the porch, holding up the cricket-bag for a moment in sight of the enraged pursuers before he bore it in.

The School House fellows halted, furious, and surrounded Ray.

"Why didn't you stop him?" roared Tom Merry.

"Why didn't you collar him?"

"You heard us yell, you silly ass!"

"Why didn't you—eh?"

Ray's face was crimson.

"I—I—I—" he stammered.

Monty Lowther snorted angrily.

"Lot of good asking that blessed funk to stop him!" he growled.

"Yah!"

"Funk!"

"Rotter!"

Jack Blake came panting up. Figgins & Co. had cleared off as soon as they saw that Lawrence was in safety with the prize. Blake was furious. He shook a threatening fist in the crimson face of the unfortunate Funk.

"You could have stopped him!" he roared.

"I—I couldn't!"

"He wouldn't have hurt you, you white-livered rotter! Are you afraid of being rolled over? Afraid of your own shadow?" yelled Blake. "They've got our feed now! Yah! Go home! Go and buy yourself a set of white feathers! Yah!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Shut up, Gussy! He makes me sick! They've collared our tuck, just because a School House chap hadn't the nerve to stop that bounder! It's disgusting!"

"Yaas, but—"

"It's rotten!" said Monty Lowther. "It's a rotten disgrace to the House! The New House will cackle over this! Look there!"

The window of Figgins's study in the New House had opened. Lawrence appeared there with the cricket-bag in his hand. He held it up, and grinned at the disappointed and enraged School House fellows. It was adding insult to injury, and the School House juniors were strongly inclined to rush into the New House itself and get to close quarters with the raiders. But Tom Merry called a halt.

"No good waking up old Ratty," he said. "Come back, you duffers! They've got the grub now, and it can't be helped."

"All through that rotten funk!"

"Yah! Coward!"

"Worm! Yah!"

"He ought to have been put in the New House!" snorted Blake. "It's a rotten shame to stick a funk in the School House!"

"Funk! Funk! Yah!"

Roland Ray walked away slowly, with burning cheeks and downcast eyes. Yes, he was a funk, and he had fairly earned the angry contempt of the other fellows. But probably their anger would have been disarmed if they had realised the misery that was gnawing at the heart of the new boy at that moment.

CHAPTER 12.

A Friend in Need!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY paused.

A sound had fallen upon his ears as he passed the door of the box-room—a sound that went painfully to his heart.

It was a sob!

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"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

"Bai Jove!" murmured the swell of St. Jim's. "Somebody's in twouble. That wottah Goah been bullyin' ons of the fags again, I suppose."

And D'Arcy, full of righteous indignation, opened the door of the box-room to see what was the matter.

Evening was descending upon the quadrangle, and the box-room, lighted by only one small window, was very dusky.

The swell of St. Jim's dimly discerned a junior seated upon one of the empty trunks, his face bowed in his hands and the tears trickling through his fingers.

D'Arcy could not see his face, but he recognised the junior. It was Roland Ray, of the Fourth.

The new boy did not look up. He had not heard D'Arcy enter. He was sobbing as though his heart would break.

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy uncomfortably.

He stood hesitating whether to make his presence known or to retire and leave the new boy alone with his grief.

But he had made some sound, and Ray suddenly looked up. His eyes were blinded with tears as he looked at the Fourth-Former.

D'Arcy came towards him.

"What's the mattah, old fellah?" he asked.

Ray tried to keep back the sob that was rising in his throat. The tears were running down his cheeks.

"Somebody been waggin' you?" asked D'Arcy.

Ray shook his head.

"What is it, then?"

"Nothing," stammered Ray.

Arthur Augustus smiled gently.

"You're not blubbun' for nothin'," he said. "I don't want to be impertinent, Way, old man. But pewwaps I can help you, as an oldah chap."

Arthur Augustus was about one month older than Roland Ray, but he might have been old enough to be his grandfather by the way he spoke.

"You can't help me," said Ray wretchedly. "Nobody can help me but myself, and I—I can't!"

"You are wowwyin' about the fellows callin' you a funk, I suppose?"

"They're right. I am a funk!" said Ray bitterly.

"Why didn't you stop Lawrence this afternoon?" said D'Arcy. "He wouldn't have hurt you; only bumped you ovah, you know."

"I know that."

"Then why didn't you collah him?"

"I hadn't the nerve."

"But it doesn't wequire much nerve to collah a kid," said D'Arcy, puzzled. "Mellish is a funk, but Mellish would have done that."

Ray nodded.

"I suppose he would. I'm a worse funk than Mellish."

"Wats!"

"I am! I am!" Ray's voice broke into a sob again. "You don't understand—the fellows wouldn't understand if I told them; I don't quite understand myself. It was all through that fire."

"Tell me about it, deah boy."

"I—I had a fearful shock that night," moaned the new boy. "I—I thought my brother was dead when I got into his room, but I saved him; and then—I couldn't get out—the fire was all round me—it was worse than dying—I died a hundred times in trying to get through—then I fainted in the smoke. I was ill for weeks—months—delirious part of the time. And when I got well all my nerve was gone. I never was a coward. I shouldn't have gone into the burning house if I'd been a coward, should I?"

"Watah not."

"But I'm one now. I haven't the nerve of a white rabbit!" groaned Ray. "It's taken it all out of me. I'm afraid of my own shadow. I'm afraid of the dark when they turn out the light in the dorm."

"Poor old kid!"

"It's not my fault. I can't help it! It was through the shock I had. I suppose it's a sort of nervous disease, and I can't get over it. I've tried—goodness knows I've tried! I used to be a swimmer, but when I got well I hadn't the nerve even to go into shallow water to bathe. I tried to get over it—"

"You should have plunged in and wisked it, and it would have been all wight, deah boy. Takin' the bull by the horns, you know."

"I did—I did! I forced myself to it, and dived into deep water." The boy shuddered. "And my nerve went at once, and I sank like a stone. I should have been drowned if I hadn't been fished out by somebody."

"Bai Jove!"

"Then I gave it up," said Ray miserably. "I was a coward, and I knew it—a coward for life! While they were all calling me a hero and praising me I used to feel sick with shame about it. I knew I was a coward all the time. They got me a medal—from the Society, you know—"

for courage in life-saving, and I locked it up and never let anybody see it. I was ashamed to take it; but I couldn't explain—nobody would have understood if I'd explained. Nobody here would understand; you won't understand. You're a good chap, but you think me a funk, like the rest."

D'Arcy shook his head.

"As a mattah of fact, deah boy, I've got wathah more bwaains than most of the chaps," he said. "I've been thinkin' it ovah, and I wathah thought it was somethin' like this. A chap who'd do what you did can't be a funk."

"But I am—I am!"

"Wats! You're not; nothin' of the sort! It's simply a question of the nervous system," said Arthur Augustus wisely. "You had a frightful shock, enough to tell on any fellah, and it's left your nerves in wags. But it will all come wight again in time."

The new boy shook his head despondently.

"It won't! I've been well a long time now, but I haven't got my nerve back. The doctor said I was cured—quite cured, and as well as ever."

"These medical chaps don't know what they're talkin' about as often as not, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, with a wisdom beyond his years. "Your boday is cured, but your nervous system isn't. I wathah think that you're still suffewin' f'rom the effect of the shock, you know; but it will all come wight in time."

"I wish I could think so," murmured Ray. "But I can't—I can't!"

"I have wead somewhah that a fellow suffewin' f'rom one sort of a shock can be cured by anotheah shock of a different sort," said D'Arcy sagely. "I shouldn't wondah if there's somethin' in it. Take the bull by the horns. Come with me now, and let's look for Goah and tackle him. Go for him and hit him. He'll lick you, and pewwaps that's the shock you want. It may buck you up."

Ray smiled faintly.

"It wouldn't be any good," he said.

"But twy, deah boy—twy!"

"I can't!"

"Why not?"

"I'm afraid."

The words were uttered in almost a groan, so deep and intense was the despair in the new boy's voice.

Arthur Augustus was silent. His sympathetic heart was deeply touched by the misery he saw in the face of the new boy, and he firmly believed in Ray's explanation. But what was to be done? How was he to help the unfortunate victim of a nervous breakdown? How was he to get other fellows to believe in it? Schoolboys naturally were but little given to looking for hidden and mysterious causes. The new fellow was a funk, and that was all there was about it; that was a sufficient explanation for most of the School House fellows. D'Arcy's heart bled for the unhappy lad before him.

"You're weally afwaid of Goah?" he asked at last.

"Yes."

"But what are you afwaid of? You can't mind gettin' hurt a bit, or you wouldn't have got yourself burnt in the fiah."

"It isn't that. I don't mind being hurt."

"Well, if Goah licks you, it's only a question of bein' hurt a bit; nothin' worse than that could happen."

"It isn't that. I haven't the nerve."

"Bai Jove! It's wotten!"

"You don't believe me; you don't understand," said Ray. "I don't quite understand it myself. But that's how it is."

"I do believe you, deah boy, and I'll twy to undahstand," said Arthur Augustus. "I—I've nevah come upon anythin' of the sort befoah. Tom Mewwy, of the Shell, went into a fiah once to fetch a fellow out, and it was a vewy close thing for him; but he was all wight aftahwards."

"It's different with me."

"Yaas, I suppose it is. It's vewy wotten; still, you can't be natuwallly a funk, or you wouldn't have done what you did. I stick to that. And if it's come about by accident, vewy likely you will be cured some day."

"I've given up hope."

"Wats! That's not the wight way to look at it. Pewwaps you want anotheah shock to set you wight again; I've wead of such things. Anyway, you must take yourself in hand, and buck up. Make an effort."

"Do you think I haven't made efforts already?"

"Yaas, I suppose so. But keep on doin' it, deah boy, and it will come wight in time; and I'm goin' to back you up, too."

"The fellows don't want to speak to me. I made friends as soon as I got here, and I've lost them now," said Ray miserably. "I'm practically sent to Coventry. I can't blame them, either; nobody wants to chum with a funk."

"But you are not weally a funk, deah boy; and you're goin' to have one fwiend at least," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm the chap."

"You!" said Ray.

"Yaas, wathah! I'm goin' to stick to you, and back you up," said Arthur Augustus; "and I'm goin' to cure you somehow."

"Your friends won't like it."

"Oh, that's all wight! They know I'm a fellow of tact and judgment, and I shall explain to them how it is. If they don't like it, I shall tell them to go and eat coke," said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "Now, it's no good blubbun'; that only makes mattahs worse. Cheer up, deah boy, and wemembah you've got a fwiend to stick to you. Come out of this."

"But—but I—"

"Wats! Come on!"

Ray gave way. In spite of himself, he was cheered and comforted by the generous kindness of the swell of St. Jim's. They left the box-room, and Arthur Augustus ostentatiously walked arm-in-arm with his new friend as they went down the study passage. When Arthur Augustus did anything, he did not do it by halves.

CHAPTER 13.

Arthur Augustus Means Business.

JACK BLAKE grunted discontentedly as he surveyed the study tea-table in No. 6.

The handsome spread that had been destined to grace the table had vanished; Figgins & Co. were holding high revel with the same, over in the New House.

A very thin "spread" had taken its place in Study No. 6.

Blake and Herries and Digby were in a state of exasperation. They did not owe Figgins & Co. any grudge. The raid was all in the game; they had served the New House fellows many a similar trick. What exasperated the juniors was the fact that the feed had been lost through a School House fellow showing the white feather. If Roland Ray had tackled Lawrence, the raider would have been stopped, and the feed would have been recovered. And it was too galling to lose a gorgeous feed through a fellow of their own House having played the coward.

"One tin of sardines and a loaf and some butter," said Blake, growling over the viands on the table. "What a giddy tea!"

"All that rotten funk's fault!" said Herries.

"He ought to be scragged!" grunted Dig.

"Scragging isn't good enough," said Blake wrathfully. "What he really wants is something lingering, with boiling oil in it."

"The rotter!"

"The worm!"

The study door opened, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in. He caught the last words of the annoyed juniors and coughed.

"Talkin' about Goah?" he asked.

"No," growled Blake.

"Levison, I suppose?"

"No, ass; we're talking of that rotten funk who let Lawrence get away with our feed. Look what we've got for tea—all through him!"

"Looks wathah poor, I must say," said Arthur Augustus, turning his eyeglass upon the tea-table. "Nevah mind. Aftah all, it was only a feed!"

"Only a feed!" hooted Herries. "Fathead!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"I've a jolly good mind to rag that funkng coward bald-headed," growled Herries. "Gore and Levison are getting up something against him, I believe. I've a jolly good mind to lend them a hand."

"That would be vewy wotten, Hewwies. If you took part in any such wewwehensible pwoceedin's I should not be able to wegard you as a fwiend."

"Oh, rats!"

"The fact is," said Arthur Augustus, taking no notice of Herries's snapping reply, "I was thinkin' of bwingin' a fwiend in to tea, but there isn't much of a tea to oflah anybody."

"Who's your friend?" said Blake hopefully. "Perhaps we can go and have tea with him instead. Is it Tom Merry you mean?"

"No; it's Woland Way!"

"What?"

"My fwiend Woland Way; the new chap, you know."

The chums of Study No. 6 glared at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the most expressive way. The swell of St. Jim's polished his eyeglass, and did not seem to observe the looks bent on him.

"Your friend Roland Ray?" repeated Blake at last.

"Yaas."

"You call that rotten funk your friend?"

"Yaas. I don't call him a funk!"

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"What do you call him, then, you ass?" demanded Herries.

"I wegard him as a most unfortunate chap," said Arthur Augustus steadily. "I have been talkin' to him. In fact, I have taken the youngstah undah my pwotection. He is a vewy unlucky chap. He did a most hewoic thing once—"

"Oh, rot! He couldn't have. It must be spoof."

"It is not spoof, Hewwies. He was burnt in the fish, and had a feahful shock, and a long illness aftahwards. The twuth of the mattah is, that he is still suffewin' fwom the shock, and his nerves are out of ordah. He is not weally a funk, but his nerves are all w'ong, owin' to that feahful shock."

"How do you know?" demanded Blake.

"Well, I do know, you know. I'm a fellow of judgment—"

"Does his doctor say so?"

"Well, no; but, you know, doctahs don't know so vewy much. You wemembah when Tom Mewwy had a scwatched face once, old Dr. Short thought it was measles or somethin'. Woland Way's doctah didn't see what was the mattah with him."

"So you know better than a medical man?" demanded Blake.

Arthur Augustus nodded calmly.

"I twust so!" he assented.

"Oh, take him away and suffocate him, somebody!" said Herries. "He makes me tired."

"You are an ass, Hewwies. You are anotheah ass, Blake. I am quite assuahed that my theowy is quite cowwect, and that poor chap Way is vewy much to be pitied."

"Bosh!" said Herries.

"If you chawactewise my wemarks as bosh, Hewwies—"

"Rotten bosh!" said Herries deliberately and emphatically.

"If the chap's lost his nerve, it's because he never had any to lose. That's my opinion."

"I cannot wegard that statement as logical, Hewwies. If he nevah had any to lose, how could he have lost it? You are unweasonable. You know—"

"I know we've lost our feed."

"That is a vewy small mattah, in compawison with a psychological pwoblem."

Blake staggered.

"A which?" he demanded.

"A psychological pwoblem," said D'Arcy firmly.

"Oh, my hat! Where did you get that word from?" gasped Blake. "Did Skimpole tell you?"

"Wats! It is a question of psychology in poor Way's case, and I wegard him as a pwopah object for sympathy. With firm fwriends backin' him up, I weally believe that he will wecovah. Chap can't be a hewo and a funk, too. We know he was a hewo. Therefore—"

"Ergo!" said Blake. "That's Latin, and sounds better. Ergo—"

"Pway don't wot! I wepeat, I have made Woland Way my fwriend, and I'm goin' to stick to him. I pwesume you chaps know that he has been turned out of his own study."

"Serve him right!"

"I was thinkin' that we might take him in here."

"What!" yelled Blake and Herries and Digby together.

"I wegard it as bein' up to us. He has to do his pwep. in the Form-room, which is wotten for him. Why can't he do his pwep. here?"

"Because we don't want any rotten funks in this study," growled Herries. "We've got a prize idiot, as it is!"

"And a champion ass!" growled Blake.

"And a burbling dummy!" said Digby.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"You thwee fellows have descwibed one anotheah quite cowwectly—"

"Wha-at!"

"And if I can put up with a pwize idiot, a champion ass, and a burblin' dummay, you can put up with my fwriend Way!"

"Bring your friend Ray here," said Herries, with concentrated ferocity. "I promise you that he will go out on his neck, and you'll go after him!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I should wefuse to allow anythin' of the sort. I should be sowwy to have to give thwee old fwriends a feahful thwashin', but—"

"You'd be sorry as soon as you started!" grinned Blake.

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"But if you are goin' to be wude to Way, I shall not bwing him—"

"Oh, we wouldn't be rude," said Blake; "we should simply chuck him out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In that case I should not bwing him. But I wegard you chaps as failin' to play the game!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy severely. "You ought to wely on my judgment in this mattah. You know what my judgment is worth."

"Twopence!" sniffed Herries.

"He is suffewin' f'rom the shock, and I am convinced that if he had another shock it would vewy likely set him wight again—"

"Then you'd better bring him, after all," said Blakd. "For he'll certainly get a shock if he comes into this study!"

"If you will not have my fwiend here—"

"We certainly won't!"

"No fear!" said Herries and Digby.

"In that case, I shall wegard it as my dutay to take my pwep. into the Form-room and keep him company there!"

"Hurrah!"

"Then I shall not be vewy much in this studay—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Good egg!" said Blake heartily. "Run along, Gussy! I'll telephone to Rylcombe for some sackcloth and ashes for this study!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sniffed.

"I wegard you as wottahs! I shall wefuse to come into this study again until you have apologised, and pessed me to bwing my fwiend."

"Hurrah!"

Slam!

Arthur Augustus was goné.

CHAPTER 14.

Just Like Gussy.

THE chums of Study No. 6 did not take Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's threat very seriously. But they soon learned that the elegant junior intended to be as good as his word. When time came for prep. that evening, Blake and Herries and Digby sat down to work in the study; but Arthur Augustus was not there. Tom Merry looked into the study, and found them at work.

"Busy?" he asked.

"Got any eyes?" asked Blake crossly. Blake was feeling a little edge-wise, as he would have expressed it. Although no one would have suspected it from the way they spoke to one another, there was a very sincere regard among the four chums of Study No. 6, and Blake was a little worried by Arthur Augustus's new departure.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes, I've got eyes, and I can see three silly asses with them!" he said cheerfully. "I've also got a consignment of jam-tarts, which we're going to dispose of after prep. I called in to ask you fellows to come along."

Blake brightened up.

"Now you're talking!" he said. "We've had a rotten tea—rotten! We were going to ask you chaps to a feed; but I suppose Figgy has been asking fellows to it instead. We had nothing but a tin of sardines left; all through that rotten funk Ray!"

"Hard cheese!" said Tom Merry sympathetically. "We did our best for you. If Ray had stopped that boulder Lawrence, we should have recaptured the grub!"

"Yes, I know you would: I've got half a mind, or nearer three-quarters, to look for Ray and hammer him; only he's such a rotten funk a fellow would be ashamed to touch him."

"Poor beast!" said Tom Merry. "You needn't worry about him. Gore & Co. will give him all he wants in that line."

"Serve him jolly well right!" grunted Herries.

"Where's Gussy?" asked Tom.

Blake snorted.

"Gone off on his silly dignity. What do you think is his latest wheeze?"

"Blessed if I know; there's never any telling."

"He's chummed up with the Funk!"

"Oh, great Scott!"

"Says that Ray isn't a funk, only a psychological problem, or something!" said the exasperated Blake. "He's going to back him up, and wants us to do the same—wants us to back up a disgusting funk. Wants to have him in this study, as Reilly's turned him out next door. Rather thick, don't you think?"

"Just like Gussy!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "He's a good sort. But I can't say I think he will make anything of Ray!"

"Of course he won't! The fellow is just a funk—a common or garden funk!" said Blake. "Gussy is going to stick to him, and do his prep. with him in the Form-room, and won't come back to the study till we let Ray come in here. Catch us!"

"No fear!" said Digby.

"And Gussy is such an obstinate ass, there's no telling how long he'll keep it up," said Blake. "The fellows will soon be sending the Funk to Coventry, and Gussy will get sent, too, if he sticks to him. But it's no good arguing with Gussy. When he gets an idea into his silly head, wild horses wouldn't drag it out. We'll come along and have some of the tarts; but it's no good expecting Gussy. He's washed his hands of this study, the ass!"

Tom Merry whistled softly as he turned away. It was, indeed, just like Gussy—always standing up for the weak or the persecuted, and generally finding a whole set of hornets' nests about his ears in the process. Tom Merry was sorry for Ray so far as that went; but there was scorn mixed with his pity, and he didn't want particularly to have anything to do with him. He would be civil to him, and he would oppose any suggestion for sending him to Coventry, and he would stop Gore from bullying him, as far as he could. But that was all. To take the fellow up and make a friend of him was not to be thought of. But it was just like Gussy!

Tom Merry made his way to the Fourth Form-room. There was a light there, and Roland Ray was sitting at his desk at work. Since he had been turned out of his study by Reilly and Kerruish, he had made no effort whatever to assert his rights. If he had complained to the Housemaster, Reilly and Kerruish would certainly have been caned, and Ray would have taken his place in the study under Mr. Railton's protection. Most of the fellows expected him to complain. If a fellow was too utter a funk to stand up for himself, it was only natural that he should be a sneak, too.

But Ray had not complained. He had taken it lying down, but he had not thought of bringing a master or a prefect into the matter. Funk he might be, but he was certainly not a sneak.

Ray looked up. Tom Merry gave him a friendly nod.

"Doing your prep.?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Rather rotten here, isn't it?"

"It's all right."

"Yaas, it's all wight," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, coming in at the door with a bundle of books under his arm.

"All wight for two, you know."

"I thought I should find you here, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "We've got tarts going in the study after prep., and we want you."

"Thanks, deah boy; p'w'aps I'll look in."

Tom Merry understood; D'Arcy did not mean to come unless he could bring his friend with him. And as Blake & Co. were coming, Tom could not ask Ray. He nodded to Arthur Augustus and left the Form-room.

D'Arcy deposited his books on the Form next to Ray, and sat down. Ray looked at him in surprise.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

"I'm goin' to do my pwep. here, deah boy!"

"Why not in your study?"

"I pwefer this."

"You've come to keep me company!" exclaimed the out-cast of the Fourth.

"Yaas!"

"I—I can't have it, D'Arcy! It's a shame. I—I can't let you suffer on my account. It's not right!" the new boy exclaimed, in an agitated voice.

"I don't see how you're goin' to pwevent it, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, with a chuckle. "I suppose I can do my pwep. in the Form-room if I like."

"Yes, but—"

"That's all; I'm stickin' to you."

"But your friends—they won't like it—"

"They will come round."

"But suppose they don't come round?"

"That's all wight—they will. Study No. 6 will go to wack and wuin if I don't go there, you know."

Ray smiled and said no more. It was evidently useless to argue with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. And it was very pleasant to the lonely boy to have a companion in his solitude. The evening passed much more pleasantly for Roland Ray than the previous evening.

Arthur Augustus came up with Ray when the Fourth Form went to bed. He had not shared the tarts in Tom Merry's study.

"Here comes the Funk!" called out Levison.

"Yah! Here's the Funk!"

Roland Ray coloured, but did not speak. He went to bed without a word, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was the only fellow in the Fourth who said good-night to him.

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CHAPTER 15.
A Cruel Jape!

ROLAND RAY'S life, during the next week or so, was not a pleasant one. But for the friendship of the swell of the Fourth, the new boy would have found it intolerable. Few, if any, fellows spoke to him. Gore and Mellish and Levison, certainly, called him opprobrious names, secure in his well-known inability to protect himself. Mellish had bitterly regretted allowing the "Funk" to lick him, on that famous occasion. If he had shown a little more nerve, he might have given Ray the coward's blow, as Gore had done, with impunity. And Mellish, for that reason, was more bitter against Ray than anybody else. He had made up for it since. Knowing now that Ray was a hopeless funk, Mellish had tackled him again, and had struck him before a crowd of fellows in the common-room. Ray had not returned the blow. What little consideration the fellows had shown him, up to then, vanished. A fellow who would allow himself to be cuffed by a worm like Mellish, as Blake said, wasn't fit to speak to, or speak of. The sooner he got his people to take him away from St. Jim's, the better.

But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was true to him, and his friendship meant a great deal to the unhappy Funk.

It saved him from the utter solitude he would otherwise have fallen into, and it saved him from many raggings. D'Arcy, in spite of his elegant ways, was a fighting-man when he was excited. And he put on an old jacket and waistcoat for the especial purpose of tackling Mellish without damage to his clothes. He licked Mellish hollow, and promised him some more of the same if he worried Ray any more. Thenceforth, Mellish did not venture to lay hands on the Funk; but in chipping, in jeers and sneers, Mellish outdid even Levison and Gore.

Gore and Levison, with all their faults, were not cowards. They felt justified in tormenting the new boy, by their contempt for his pusillanimity. And they tormented him without mercy.

One morning a white feather was stuck in his cap from behind, and he walked about with it for a long time, wondering what the fellows were yelling at, until he discovered the trick.

On another occasion a card was pinned upon his back, bearing the word "Funk" in large letters, and he went into the Form-room to lessons with it on. Mr. Lathom noted it, and asked severe questions about it, but the name of the author did not come to light. Ray knew who it was, but he did not betray him, a fact for which Gore of the Shell was not at all grateful. He attributed it to Ray's fear of a hammering afterwards if he sneaked.

And the day after that, Arthur Augustus, as he came out after detention in the Form-room, was drawn into the quadrangle by the sounds of loud laughter, and found his new friend in the midst of a mocking crowd of juniors and fags.

Ray's hands had been tied down to his sides, and on his face, in black paint, was daubed the familiar word, "Funk."

His face was half hidden by the daubs of paint, and it showed up white against the black letters.

The grinning crowd looked on and jeered, no one offering to help the unhappy lad.

Gore and Levison and Mellish were there. They had captured the new boy, and tied his hands in a secluded corner, and then daubed the letters upon his face, and chased him into the quadrangle.

"Funk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's got his signature on his face now!" grinned Lorne.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus came up hotly.

"You wottahs!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "I wegard you as beasts! Why can't you let the chap alone?"

"Rats!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Let that fellow alone!" roared Gore, as Arthur Augustus opened his penknife to cut the cord round Ray's wrists.

"Wats, you wottah!"

Gore rushed at the swell of St. Jim's to stop him, and Jack Blake's foot got in his way, and he rolled over with a yell. D'Arcy cut Ray loose, and led him into the house. Ray washed the painted letters from his face in the Fourth-Form dormitory, the tears running down his cheeks along with the soap and water. Arthur Augustus was fuming with indignation.

"You won't have any peace till you've licked one of those wottahs, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "Don't you feel up to it?"

"No!" groaned Ray.

"You are weally a much stwongah chap than Mellish or Levison, you know, if you made up your mind to it," urged D'Arcy.

Ray shook his head.

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"I can't—I can't! I—I think I shall write to my father to take me away from here. I shan't be able to stand it much longer."

"Pewwaps that would be the best thing, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus commiseratingly. "If you don't get enough nerve to stand up for yourself, you will have an awful time here."

"You despise me as much as the others—now?" muttered Ray.

"I don't, deah boy. I'm sowwy for you, but I'm blessed if I undahstand it. I wish you would make an effort, and pull yourself togethah, you know."

But Ray could not, or would not.

In spite of all, Arthur Augustus did not falter in his friendship. He was leaving Study No. 6 severely alone. Blake and Herries and Digby announced, with unnecessary emphasis, that they would have nothing to do with the Funk. And as Arthur Augustus stuck to him through thick and thin, he was soon on quite distant terms with his old chums.

But he did not falter. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, was of the stuff of which heroes are made.

He spoke his mind to Gore & Co. when he met them again. He found the three of them whispering in a corner of the Form-room passage, and turned his eyeglass upon them scornfully.

"I wegard you fellows as wank wottahs!" he said. "You can wag poor old Way, but you won't come and have the gloves on with me!"

"Quite right, we won't!" said Gore, with a yawn. "I don't want to slaughter you. Run away and play; we're busy."

"Plottin' some wotten twick, I suppose," sniffed D'Arcy, and he walked away with his nose very high in the air. Gore chuckled.

"It's simply a ripping idea," he said, pursuing the talk that had been interrupted by Arthur Augustus. "Ray has heard all about the crypt being haunted, you know. If he found himself shut up there in the dark, he would be seared out of his wits. He's such a rotten coward that he would believe in the ghost, as soon as he was shut up in the dark."

"He, he, he!" cackled Mellish.

"We've only got to get him there," grinned Levison. "I fancy, after that, he will clear out of St. Jim's. All the better; we don't want a rotten funk here."

"No fear!"

"When are we going to do it?" asked Mellish.

"To-morrow afternoon," said Gore. "It's a half-holiday, and D'Arcy will be playing cricket, so he won't be able to interfere. Ray goes into a quiet corner to read on half-holidays, I've noticed. I've seen him in the old chapel several times with a book. We may be able to catch him on the spot."

"Good egg!"

And the schemers separated, chuckling over their plot.

The next day was Saturday, a half-holiday at St. Jim's. School House juniors were playing the New House, and Arthur Augustus was in Tom Merry's team.

"Comin' down to watch the match?" he asked Ray, before the team went to the ground.

"I—I think not," faltered Ray. "The fellows will only rag me there. I'll have a read."

"You ought to take up cwicket, deah boy."

"They don't want me in the junior club."

D'Arcy did not reply to that; it was true enough. Nobody wanted to play cricket with the Funk.

"Aftah the match I'll give you some pwactice at the nets, if it's light enough," said Arthur Augustus. "It will buck you up."

"Thank you!" said Ray gratefully. "I should like it. I used to be a cricketer, before—before—"

"I undahstand!"

"I'm going to read in the old chapel," said Ray. "You'll find me there."

"Wighto!"

And Arthur Augustus joined Tom Merry's eleven, and went down to the cricket-field. Roland Ray took his book, and walked away by himself. His steps turned in the direction of the ruined chapel. It was a quiet spot, with moss-grown masses of old masonry shaded by old trees. Ray liked the place. It was a safe refuge from the scornful looks and constant chipping of the juniors, at all events.

He sat down on a fragment of stone, and opened his book. He had been reading about half an hour when the sound of footsteps caused him to look up. His face changed colour as he saw Gore and Mellish and Levison before him. His tormentors had found him again.

Gore nodded to him with a grin.

"Hallo, here you are!" he exclaimed.

"What do you want?" said Ray dully. "Can't you let me alone? What have I done to you?"

"You're a rotten funk," said Gore.
 Ray was silent.
 "Do you know you're sitting within a dozen steps of the haunted crypt?" demanded Levison.
 Ray smiled.
 "You don't believe in ghosts?" asked Gore, with a cruel grin.
 "No, I don't."
 "Good! Then you wouldn't mind exploring the crypt by yourself?"
 "I don't want to do that," said Ray.
 "Sorry—you've got to! Collar him!" shouted Gore.
 Ray started to his feet. The hands of the ragers closed upon him at once, and the Funk shrank in their grasp.
 "Let me alone!" he panted.
 "Shove him in!"
 Mellish ran down the stone steps, chuckling, and opened the oaken door of the old crypt. Ray was bundled down the steps, struggling fiercely now. Black as midnight, the crypt yawned before him.
 "Let me go!" shrieked Ray, white as a sheet, struggling madly.
 "My hat! He's learning to wriggle!" gasped Gore.
 "Chuck him in!"
 Roland Ray rolled upon the damp, stone floor of the crypt. As he lay there dazed the juniors shut the door upon him, and Gore jammed a fragment of stone under it. There was no fastening upon the door, but the wedge under it kept it fast, as it opened outwards.
 In another moment there was a sound of hammering fists on the inside of the door.
 "Let me out! Let me out! Let me out!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Let me out!" Ray's voice was a fearful shriek. "Let me out!"
 "Sounds a bit scared, doesn't he?" grinned Gore.
 And the three ragers sauntered out of the old chapel, leaving their victim still hammering at the door, and shrieking to be released.

CHAPTER 16.

The Shock.

"WAY, deah boy!"
 Arthur Augustus, still in his cricketing flannels, came into the ruined chapel. He looked round for Roland Ray. The new boy had told him that he would find him there, but he could not see him. The match had been over unexpectedly early, and there was still ample light for practice at the nets.
 "Way! Where are you?"
 Ray's book was lying on the ground. But there was no other sign of the new boy in the ruins. D'Arcy looked puzzled.
 "He can't have gone and left his book behind," he murmured. "Where is he, I wondah?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 D'Arcy looked round quickly. Gore and Levison and Mellish were looking in through one of the shattered casements.

"Looking for the Funk?" grinned Gore.
 "Where is he?"
 "Might look in the crypt."
 "Bai Jove! You uttah wottahs! Do you mean to say that you have shut him up in the cwypt?" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's.
 "Ha, ha, ha! Look and see!"
 Arthur Augustus clenched his fists. But he unclenched them again, and ran down the stone steps to the crypt. He kicked away the wedge of stone, and threw open the door.
 "Way! Way, old man! Are you heah?" he called out anxiously, peering into the darkness.
 There was no reply; only the echo of D'Arcy's voice answered from the gloomy recesses of the crypt.
 "Way! Are you heah? Answah me, deah boy!"
 Dead silence!
 "He's shamming!" said Gore. "He must be able to hear you."
 "Did you shut him up there, you cad?"
 "Yes, we did!" growled Gore, beginning to feel a little alarmed now. "He's there, all right! He's pretending not to hear you."
 "Have you got a match?"
 Gore tossed a match-box to D'Arcy. Arthur Augustus struck a match, and descended into the crypt.
 Then he uttered a cry of horror.
 In the pale, flickering light of the match he saw a form extended before him upon the cold, stone floor.
 The match went out.
 "Can you see him?" called out Gore.
 "Yaas. He's fainted, I think. Come and help me cawwy him up!"
 Gore hesitated, and then descended into the crypt. It occurred to him—rather late—that it had been a dangerous trick to play upon a boy who was known to be a funk. The wretched boy might have gone mad with fear, shut up in the silence and darkness—silence and darkness that would be peopled with horrid shapes by his feverish imaginings.
 D'Arcy struck another match. Gore bent down and looked at Ray. The boy was evidently not shamming. He was white as marble and quite insensible, and his hands were cold to the touch.
 "You cwuel beast!" said D'Arcy, between his teeth.
 "You cowardly wottah!"
 "Well, he shouldn't be such an awful funk!" muttered Gore. "He said he didn't believe in ghosts. There was nothing to hurt him here. Chap of his age oughtn't to be afraid of the dark like a baby."
 "Shut up, and help me to get him out!"
 They raised the boy in their arms, and bore him up the steps to the open air.
 Ray did not move.
 When they laid him down, he lay stiff and inert. His face was hard and cold, and his eyes closed.
 "He's fainted!" muttered Levison.
 "Looks more like a fit!" said Gore anxiously. "I—I'm sorry we did it now! But how were we to know he'd take it like this?"
 "Help me cawwy him in!" said Arthur Augustus quietly.
 "We shall have to send for the doctah!"
 Gore flushed.
 "Look here, leave him alone; he'll come round! We're not going to have a row about it, and the Head inquiring into it, and—"
 "You cad! Help me cawwy him in, I tell you!"
 Gore sullenly complied.
 There was evidently nothing else to be done. The ragers had reason to repent of their cruel and cowardly jape now. A crowd of fellows gathered round as D'Arcy and Gore were seen bearing the insensible Ray into the School House.
 "What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Tom Merry.
 "Goah shut him up in the haunted cwypt, and he fainted!" said D'Arcy.
 "You—villain, Gore!" Tom Merry muttered.
 "I didn't know—" stammered Gore.
 "You ought to have known! He might have gone mad! You fool—you rascal! You may get expelled over this, and serve you right!"
 Gore bit his lip.
 Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, met them at the door. He had seen the procession from his study window. The Housemaster required only a few words of explanation.
 Roland Ray was taken up to his bed at once, and a doctor was telephoned for.
 And when the medical man arrived Ray was removed with all care to the school sanatorium, and it was made known that he was ill—very ill.
 The news was received with gloomy looks by the St. Jim's juniors.
 The fellow was a funk—an utter funk! There was nothing to be afraid of in the old crypt. But Ray's want of nerve had done worse than real danger could have done. He had

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been frightened out of his wits—not metaphorically, but actually. When he came out of that deep, stony stupor he was delirious.

There were few fellows in the House who did not feel sorry for the wretcher boy then.

Gore and Mellish and Levison were avoided as if they were plague-stricken. There was contempt in every glance thrown at them. And there was worse than that to come; for Mr. Railton had made a very strict inquiry into the matter, and learned the facts. The facts could not be concealed, especially as Mellish blurted out a full confession on the spot, in the hope of escaping more lightly than the other two.

The three young rascals were taken before the Head, and, after a severe lecture, they were soundly flogged.

They went to bed that night wishing most severely that they had not carried the ragging of the Funk to such a length.

"The rotter!" said Gore, between his teeth. "I dare say it's half shamming! Oh, won't I hammer him when he's well again!"

But it seemed likely to be some time before Ray was well again.

Two or three days passed, the doctor coming from Rylcombe every day to see his patient, and at last it was announced that Ray was getting better.

During those few days of anxiety Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had been looking very serious indeed. He had taken up his old quarters in Study No. 6, and occupied a great deal of time in explaining to Blake and Herries and Digby what asses they had been. So long as Roland Ray's state was serious, the chums of Study No. 6 were very patient with Arthur Augustus; but as soon as it was announced that he would be able to return to the Form in a few days, they struck, as Blake expressed it.

"I told you it was a psychological problem, you duffahs!" said Arthur Augustus.

Blake interrupted.

"Shut up!" he roared.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Fed-up, fathhead!"

"Fed right up to the chin!" growled Herries. "Ring off! The fellow's out of danger now, and we're sick of the subject!"

"I twust," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity—"I twust, deah boys, that you are goin' to tweek Way decently when he weturns among us!"

"We're going to let him alone!" growled Blake. "We're not going to have a funk in this study, if that's what you mean!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Shut up!" roared all the juniors together.

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy retired from the study with his nose high in the air.

A day or two later Roland Ray returned into the School House.

The fellows all looked at him curiously when he made his first appearance. He was looking somewhat pale, but, apart from that, he was quite his old self. And it seemed that there was a new light in his eyes, a difference in his manner. He had changed.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy greeted him with open arms.

"Jolly glad to see you again, Way, old man!" he exclaimed.

"Jolly glad to see you, too," said Ray heartily. "I haven't had much of a time in the giddy sanatorium. Will you come with me to my study?"

"Your study?" stammered D'Arcy.

"Yes."

"What for?"

"To see fair play."

"Fair play!" repeated D'Arcy.

"Yes, I'm going to argue it out with Reilly and Kerruish, and see whether I'm going to be turned out of my own study," said Ray.

Arthur Augustus could only stare.

CHAPTER 17.

The Hero.

TOM MERRY came along the passage, and stopped as he saw Roland Ray. He came up to the Funk with a cheery smile.

"Glad to see you again!" he said. "Are you all right now?"

"Right as rain!" said Ray.

"You look all right," said Tom Merry. "You needn't be afraid of those chaps ragging you again, I think. They've had a lesson."

"I'm not afraid," said Ray.

"No?" said Tom Merry, somewhat puzzled.

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THE MAGNET LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

"I'm changed—a bit," said Ray. "Do you remember, D'Arcy, what you said to me in the box-room the day you found me there? It was a shock that had upset my nerves and turned me into a funk, and a shock might have the effect of bracing me up again."

"Yaas, deah boy."

"Well, you were right."

"Bai Jove!"

"I won't tell you what I went through in the crypt," said Ray quietly. "It was awful! You chaps have never been in the state I was in—frightened at a shadow—and you can't realise it. I hammered at the door till my hands bled, I shrieked till I couldn't utter another sound. I thought I was going mad. Then I must have fainted, I suppose. I don't know what happened till I woke up in bed in the sanatorium, and the nurse told me that I had been delirious. Then I began to mend, and—and I felt that I was getting to be my old self again—as I used to be before that night of the fire."

"Bai Jove!" That was all Arthur Augustus could say. He had proved to be in the right, but he was so astonished that he could hardly speak.

"I never was a funk," said Ray, in the same quiet tone. "It was a matter of nerves. Well, my nerves are all right now. I've got over it. The shock I've had has braced me up. I'm all right—as some of the fellows will find!"

"I told the chaps it was a psychological problem," said Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove, I'll wub it in now!"

"Come up with me to my study," said Ray.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry and D'Arcy, still in a state of wonder, followed Ray up to his study. Reilly and Kerruish were there, having tea, and they stared at the new-comers.

"Faith, I'm glad to see you out of hospital again," said Reilly. "But plaze don't put your head into this study. I shall have to punch it if you do."

"Same here," said Kerruish. "Sorry you've been ill, but we don't want any funks any more than we did."

"This is my study," said Ray.

Reilly grinned.

"You know what you'll get if you come in," he said.

Ray walked in.

"Sure, and I'm sorry to have to hammer ye," said Reilly, getting up from the table, "but if ye ask for it I'm not the chap to refuse you. Put up your hands, bedad!"

To Reilly's astonishment, Ray put up his hands promptly.

"Come on!" he said.

"Sure, and it's dotty ye are!" said the amazed Irish junior. "I tell ye I shall hammer ye worse than Gore—"

"Gore will have a chance presently. I'm dealing with you now. Come on—unless you are what you've called me—a funk!" said Ray.

"A funk, is it?" roared Reilly, and he rushed at Ray.

In a moment there was a terrific combat in progress. Two forms, intertwined, whirled round the study, and the tea-table was knocked aside, with disastrous results to the tea and the crockery. Then Reilly went with a crash to the floor. He lay for some moments blinking dazedly at the panting Ray. Then he jumped up with a whoop.

"Sure, and ye've been spoofing us!" he exclaimed. "Ye're not a funk intirely!"

Ray grinned.

"Are you satisfied about that?" he asked.

"Faith, and I am!" said Reilly, dabbing his nose, which was flowing crimson. "Chap who can give me a swollen nose can't be a funk. Give me your fin!"

Ray laughed, and shook hands with the Irish junior.

"Sure, and now we'll go and look for Gore!" chirruped Reilly.

And once more, as on the day he had first come to St. Jim's, Reilly and Kerruish linked arms with their study-mate, and led him forth in search of Gore. But it was with different results this time.

George Gore was in the common-room, talking to a crowd of fellows. He was explaining his intention of wiping up the ground with the Funk, and knocking him into the middle of the following week, and several other things, as a slight satisfaction for the flogging he had received. Gore's plentiful flow of language was interrupted by the entrance of Roland Ray and his companions.

"Here he is!" shouted Levison. "Pile in!"

Roland Ray walked straight up to Gore.

Smack!

The bully of the Shell reeled back as Ray's open hand struck him full across the face.

"Why—wh—w—what—" Gore could only gasp.

Reilly gave a yell

"Faith, and me friend is lookin' for you, Gore darling! Go it, Ray!"

(Continued on page 25.)

THE CHEER-ON CHUMS!



A Grand, New, Short Serial Story.

CHAPTER 1.

Introducing the "Cheer-On-Chums."

"Do buck up!" cried Pat Wentworth. "You know how they rag us if we keep them waiting!"

"Coming!" shouted Polly Lake through the open door of her room.

Pat—whose full Christian name was Patricia—turned and smiled at Madge Jackson, who was busy working down the fingers of a pair of tight new gloves.

"Isn't she the limit?" she chuckled. "She'll be late for her own funeral. Come on, Polly! I'm sure you look quite lovely!"

"Don't I?" laughed Polly, coming out hastily into the passage. "Sorry for keeping you waiting. I'd just bust a bootlace. Have you got leave yet? Where's Primmy?"

"Primmy" was an irreverent nickname bestowed upon Miss Cordelia Primmer, headmistress of the Shoremouth High School for the daughters of gentlemen, to which establishment the three girls belonged.

"In the Pug's Parlour, most likely," Pat replied. "That's what we call her private study," she explained to the new girl, Madge.

"If she isn't there, we'll have to take leave for granted," Polly remarked. "There won't be any row. She knows we've taken you in tow, Madge."

"And," added Pat, "she knows you're as enthusiastic about Roman remains as we are. Ahem!"

The ruins of an old Roman camp lay on the downs about a mile out of Shoremouth, and for some while past Pat and Polly had been allowed out on half-holidays to look for relics of the Latin race. Coins, pottery, and the bones of animals were yet to be found under thin layers of the soil. If they had long since lost all interest in the antique, they made good use of their liberty just the same, and Madge Jackson, a new girl at the school, with whom they had chummed up, was to join them on their excursions.

As it happened, they met Miss Primmer at the bottom of the stairs, and that severe young lady graciously gave them the required permission.

"Well, Madge," she added, resting a hand on the new girl's dark hair, "so you, too, are going to join the happy party of excavators into the buried past. How beautiful—how truly beautiful! So much more sensible than playing a stupid game like hockey. Who knows what you may discover! Perchance some beautiful statue that has lain buried these two thousand years."

Madge smiled, and wriggled uncomfortably. The others were fidgeting, and obviously anxious to get away. Miss Primmer turned to them, and set her pince-nez glasses a little higher on her nose.

"You know," she said, "I think you girls were mistaken about that piece of clay-pipe you brought home last week. Like you, I thought it might be of Roman origin, but, on referring to my Dictionary of Dates, I find that tobacco was not discovered until some thirteen hundred years after the Roman era. The gardener, who examined it for me, pronounced it to be of modern manufacture, and of such as are smoked by working-men of the present day."

"Really, Miss Primmer?" murmured Polly.

"And," continued the schoolmistress, "that skeleton you discovered was not a relic of the haughty goo-goo bird—now, alas! extinct—but a seagull of the present era. Be a little more careful in the future. Doubtless, with Madge to help you, your labours will be crowned with better results. Mind you're not late back."

"No, Miss Primmer," murmured Polly, who was wandering, with an air of abstraction, towards the street door.

"Good-bye, then!"

"Good-bye, Miss Primmer!"

They were free at last, and, outside, they linked arms, Polly in the middle.

"We shall have to do a sprint as soon as we're outside the town," she said. "I don't think it's fair to keep boys waiting, because they can't very well grumble at us."

"It's awfully good of you to bring me with you!" Madge said. "I hope I shall get on all right with the boys."

"You're bound to!" said Pat. "They're such awfully good sorts! As a matter of fact, we were hoping that a girl like you would come to Miss Primmer's."

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By MARTIN CLIFFORD,
Order Early.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"THE RASCAL OF ST. JIM'S!"



"Why?"

"Because there are three boys, and only two of us; and five's an odd number. They're chums at the boys' school, you see, and they never separate. Five's a rotten number, though, because, for instance, when we're walking somewhere we've got to go two and two, one of them always has to walk by himself, and it rather spoils things. We're all awfully good chums, and we have a jolly fine time together every half-holiday they can get out."

"What about the Roman relics?" Madge inquired.

"That was how we got to know them. They were enthusiastic, like we were, for about a week. We don't do much digging about now, though. Just take back something now and then to keep Primmy from getting inquisitive."

"That was all Billy's fault about the pipe," said Polly.

"I was certain the early Romans didn't smoke."

"And," added Pat, "Jim was only stuffing us about the haughty goo-goo bird. I don't believe there ever was such a thing. Lucky Miss Primmer doesn't know much about anything but languages and mathematics."

Madge laughed aloud, reflecting that the collection of Roman remains that her chums had presented to Miss Primmer must be well worth seeing.

"Toll me some more about the boys," she said. "What are we going to do this afternoon?"

"Oh, you'll see them soon enough!" Polly laughed. "We're a sort of secret society, the five of us. You make the sixth. We call ourselves the Cheer-oh Chums, because our one rule is always to be merry and bright, and if one of us is in a scrape, the others all try to lend a hand. We've got a secret hut where we have tea, but before tea we have a sort of committee meeting. It's jolly fine, I can tell you!"

"It sounds ripping!" Madge admitted.

"And, by the way," Pat put in, "when it's a case of spending money, we contribute our share if we've got it. The boys don't like it, but we do. Sometimes we've got tin and they haven't. It's just like having brothers, only better. You can choose your own brothers."

All three laughed, and Polly in the middle did a kind of two-step to bring herself into step with the others.

"Talking of brothers—" began Madge.

"Don't!" said Pat, who had seven. In the holidays they teased her and pulled her long pigtailed, and made life a burden.

"I was going to say that I've got a brother coming to the boys' school on Friday," Madge announced.

"What—here? To Shoremouth College?"

"Yes."

"Goodness! What's he like?"

"Awfully nice!" Madge answered promptly. "At least, I think so. But he's quite a kid."

"The Cheer-ohs will look after him for you, and see that he has an easy time," laughed Polly. "You see the enormous advantage of belonging to our society?"

"There seems to be plenty," said Madge. "What about the secret hut?"

"We helped to build it," said Pat. "You just wait until you see it!"

They were outside the little town by now, and on the borders of the high downs, bounded on one side by the edge of the high cliffs. As they walked they could hear the sea booming above the high wind that rushed past them, reddening their cheeks.

Near the cliffs the downs were open, and smothered with heather in the season, but farther inland there were thickets and belts of trees, and amongst them was the remains of the Roman encampment already referred to. Further north was an old ruined castle, around which a hundred legends were weaved. Truly, Shoremouth was a delightful place to be sent to school at.

The three girls walked briskly over the heath towards the encampment. They did not run, because of the tearing wind, which was dead against them. Wherefore they reached the spot where they had arranged to meet their chums some twenty minutes late.

Three boys, who had been sitting on a fallen tree, got up as they approached, and lifted their school caps.

"Hallo, you chaps!" said one, addressing them exactly as if they, too, were boys. "Punctual, as usual!"

"We must sub. up and buy 'em a watch," said the second.

"An alarm clock, you mean," remarked the third.

Polly laughed.

"Frightfully sorry—" she began.

"They say they're sorry," said the first boy. "Right-ho! Dismissed with a caution. No costs."

Pat and Polly shook hands with each of the three boys, and then Polly did the honours.

"Madge," she said, "this is Jimmy Dunn. He's rather a nice chap."

"Welcome to the Cheer-ohs!" said the first boy, shaking hands.

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"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR"
Every Friday.

"This is Billy Denton. He's not half a bad sort!"

"Hope you'll think so," said the second boy, with a polite grin.

"I'm going to jolly well introduce myself," said the third boy. "My name's Dick Brewster, and Polly was just going to tell you that I'm rather a decent sort, too!"

"I wasn't!" said Polly.

"Well, now we all know each other," laughed Pat, who had a way of putting people at their ease, "what are we going to do?"

"Do?" echoed Billy. "What do you think? I'm jolly hungry. I s'pose girls never get peckish!"

"Not they!" Dick replied, with sarcasm. "Ever seen Pat and Polly just toying with a pound of chocolates. Lead on, Macduff. For goodness' sake, don't drop that grub, Billy. I should die of starvation if anything happened to it."

"Poor chap!" said Jimmy. "Give him ninepence out of the poor-box!"

Jimmy's father was a magistrate, and he had fallen into the habit of speaking in terms peculiar to the Bench.

They fell into pairs, Jimmy walking with Polly, Billy with Pat, and Madge found herself alongside Dick.

"Where are we going?" she asked, rather shyly.

"Secret hut," said Dick. "General committee meeting while the kettle boils, and then tea."

CHAPTER 2.

Dick's Idea.

"Oh!" said Madge.

There was nothing particularly exciting about the programme, but it sounded very enjoyable. Everybody seemed happy and jolly and free from care. She felt very glad indeed, that she had joined the Cheer-oh Chums.

"But what about the Roman relics?" she inquired smiling.

"Aren't we supposed to take some back with us?"

"Oh, that's all right!" Dick rejoined cheerfully. "I've got some old French coins in the hut, and I expect they've done rusting by now. Good enough for Primmy, anyway. What did she think of the skeleton of the haughty goo-goo bird? Did you hear about that?"

"She knew what it was, and had it put in the dustbin," laughed Madge.

Dick chuckled.

"She's getting too knowing," he said. "Of course, she can't say anything, though. You don't tell her they are Roman relics; you leave her to draw her own giddy conclusions. We have to supply relics, too, and in the summer we're supposed to stalk the wily beetle, and track the fierce grasshopper to his lair. In other words, we belong to the natural history set."

"But don't you play games?" Madge asked.

"Oh, rather! But we have three half-holidays a week, you see. Hallo, here we are! You'll have to do a bit of climbing. Hope you don't mind."

They had come to a halt at the edge of a deep gravel-pit, with water quivering in deep pools at the bottom. The descent was very steep, but the sides were a veritable tangle of shrubs and small trees.

"Can't see our hut, can you?" Dick said. "Absolutely invisible to the naked eye. It's amongst those trees down there. Nobody can see it from up above. I found the place."

"You're a—I mean I did!" cried Billy, turning round.

"Considering I was the first who—"

"Considering I told you about it—"

"Order!" cried Jimmy. "Usher, turn these men out. No one in sight, is there? Right-ho, I'll go first!"

The descent was less difficult than it looked, and Madge had no difficulty in climbing down. Following the others, she had to duck her head and crawl under the low-hanging branches of a stunted tree, and then, to her surprise, she was in the hut.

The hut was mostly the work of Nature, but the three boys had improved it with a canvas roof and some boards wedged between and nailed to the trees. The floor of the hut was on a flat piece of ground jutting out from the shelving side of the pit. There was an air of warmth and cosiness about the place.

"Jolly, isn't it?" said Dick.

"Ripping!" Madge agreed.

Jimmy applied his elbow to Billy's ribs.

"Your turn to get tea!" he reminded him.

Billy obeyed with alacrity, and pulled up a huge tin box from an unfiled hole in the ground. From it he took out a kettle, a spirit-stove, and some cups, saucers, plates, and spoons. A sufficient supply of water was in the parcel with the food. The others threw themselves down in comfortable postures, and watched him prepare the meal.

Then, when they were all comfortable, Jimmy Dunn addressed them.

"Brother and sisters Cheer-ohs," he said, "has anybody got any complaints, any important news, or anything whatsoever to say? Sister Cheer-ohs first."

"I have," said Polly.

"Right-ho! Go ahead!"

"Well, it's just this. We really must find some real Roman relics soon. Primmy's getting a bit fed-up with goo-goo-birds and dirty old clay pipes. If we can't bring back something really genuine, she may stop us from coming."

"Right-ho!" said Jimmy. "How goes the supply, Billy? Coins finished rusting yet?"

"No," Billy answered, peering into the hole from which he had taken the tin. "You can still see they're only French sous. Julius Caesar's sandal is beginning to look the real thing, though."

The article of footwear in question had been used in a Roman play at the college.

"That'll do!" said Jimmy. "And I've got a piece of real old tessellated pavement to go with it. I prised it up out of the boot-room floor yesterday afternoon. Anything else?"

The other two girls shook their heads.

"I've got some news," Dick said hastily. "I heard it first, so bags I tell it."

"Tell the witness to come into the box," said Jimmy.

Dick leaned forward.

"I don't know if the girls have heard it yet," he remarked, "but here goes. You know, my beloved hearers, that the mayor's wife has just had a marvellous recovery from some very serious illness?"

"Rather!" said Polly. "We were jolly glad, too!"

"So was the mayor. In fact, he's so awfully bucked up that he's begged the Head to give us a whole holiday next Tuesday in honour of her recovery, and he's going to get one out of Primmy for you girls on the same day. I heard two of the masters talking about it. Great, isn't it?"

The smiles of his listeners assured him that his news had been well received.

"And," continued Dick, "I move that the Cheer-ohs celebrate the occasion in the proper Cheer-oh spirit, and spend the day at Cliffbury. Any objections? You girls can easily get the day off."

The three girls looked more pleased at the suggestion than did Jimmy and Billy. The former just touched Dick's ankle with his toe, and the latter frowned at him and rolled his eyes.

"Ripping idea!" said Polly. "We can easily find some excuse. Primmy's an awfully decent sort. I say, though, I'm awfully short of cash!"

"So am I!" said Madge.

"I haven't got any at all!" Pat confessed.

Jimmy pinched Dick when the girls were not looking, and Billy shook his fist at him. They, however, presented smiling faces when their girl chums were looking at them.

"Oh, that's quite all right!" said Jimmy.

"Quite!" echoed Billy.

"We'll find the tin!" Dick added, with a weak and watery smile.

He looked appealingly at his two boy chums, who, in dumb show informed him that they considered him a hopeless lunatic. Jimmy tapped the pocket in which he kept his money when he had any, to show that it was empty. Billy pointed to his own pocket, and shrugged his shoulders like a stage Shylock.

"What's the matter?" Polly demanded, suddenly looking round at him.

"Er—nothing!" said Billy.

"There mustn't be any secrets among the Cheer-ohs," said Polly.

"Rather not!" agreed Billy lamely.

Just then the water in the kettle came to his assistance by boiling up and knocking at the lid, and he got out of an awkward conversation by making the tea.

Cakes were already spread out on paper bags, and the tea did great credit to a society that was on the verge of bankruptcy. The boys forgot their penniless condition, and did their best to live up to the name of the little band. All six chatted and laughed, and made each other laugh, as if there were no such thing as care in the world.

When the meal was over, and Billy had been persuaded to eat the last cake to save it from being left behind, Jimmy produced a bag of chocolates, which was handed round.

"Before we start on 'em, though," he said, "we'll just tune up with the good old anthem. Music by goodness knows who, and words by Mister James Dunn—ahem! Order in the court, there. Ready?"

Madge did not know the words, but she was able to hum the tune, which was that of the "Vicar of Bray." The chorus, sung with great enthusiasm, went as follows:

"Come rain or fine or dull or shine,

Come fair or stormy weather;

Whatever comes the Cheer-oh Chorus,

Will always stick toge-e-ether,

Will always stick together."

After what Jimmy called "the anthem" had been sung, the three boys carried the teatings to the bottom of the pit to wash up in the deep pond. Then they returned, and fell to work on the chocolates, while darkness slowly heralded in the January evening.

Suddenly Madge burst out laughing, with a chocolate half way up to her mouth.

"What's up?" Billy demanded, for everybody had been silent for nearly a couple of minutes.

"I was just thinking," said Madge, still laughing. "What would Primmy say if she happened to fall over the side of the pit, and come rolling down into the middle of us?"

The idea had never occurred to them before, and all six yelled with laughter.

(To be continued next week.)

COWARD OR HERO?

(Continued from page 22.)

"Yaas, wathah! Pile in, deah boy!"

"Hallo! Is this a giddy miracle?" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"I told you it was a psychological pwoblem, Blake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lemme gerratt him!" roared Gore. "I'll smash him!

I'll spificate him! Pll—I'll—"

"Sure, and me friend's ready!" chuckled Reilly. "Jackets off!"

"A ring! A ring!"

"Go it, Funk!"

The door was shut, and the bully of the Shell and the Funk of St. Jim's faced one another in the midst of an amazed and keenly interested circle of juniors.

It was a fight that was long remembered in the Lower School at St. Jim's. George Gore put up a good fight. He did his best. But he had no chance. The Funk simply walked over him, knocking him right and left, till at last Gore lay on the floor, completely winded, beaten to the wide, and gave in.

"If anybody else wants to call me a funk, I'm ready to talk to him!" said Roland Ray, looking round grimly.

There was a laugh.

"More likely to call you a giddy steam-hammer, or a Berserker!" grinned Blake.

"What did I tell you, deah boys—"

Arthur Augustus was simply chirruping with glee, and he could not resist the temptation to remind his chums that he had "told them so."

Blake slapped the swell of St. Jim's on the back—a hearty slap that made the elegant junior howl.

"Quite right, Gussy!" Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, you know—"

"Ow! You wuff ass—"

"And Ray can come into Study No. 6," said Blake.

"Yes, rather!" chimed in Digby and Herries.

"Sure, and he won't do anythin' of the sort intirely!" exclaimed Reilly warmly. "He's a friend of mine, and he belongs to my study!"

And Reilly and Kerruish marched Roland Ray off in triumph. And the crowd of juniors gave a loud cheer for the fellow whom they had always called the Funk.

It was a strange case, and the strangest part about it was, as Monty Lowther remarked, that Gussy had been right.

Everybody agreed that that was very strange indeed.

But undoubtedly Arthur Augustus had been right, and the counter-shock Ray had received in the old crypt had undone the work of the first, and restored to him his strength of mind and his lost nerve. The result had proved it. Even Gore was satisfied—in fact, more than satisfied. It had been a question whether Roland Ray was a hero or a coward, but the question was settled now. He was the hero of the School House, and the guest of honour at a tremendous feed held that evening in Tom Merry's study.

THE END.

(Conclusion.)

SIR BILLY OF GREYHOUSE.

By R. S. WARREN BELL.

It was, perhaps, the most anxious moment the Headmaster of Greyhouse had ever experienced, although, goodness knows, he had passed gallantly through some trying ordeals in the course of his career. The flower of his flock—the captain of his school—was fighting for his life amid that maddened mob—a mob ready to go to any lengths; as ready to commit murder as to rob a beerhouse.

Five of his masters and fifty fellows had gone to the rescue. The gates could not hold out much longer. They were ancient gates, erected before Greyhouse was a school even, and the pressure put upon them was fearful. The pillars upon which they hung had been standing for centuries; they were very old pillars.

He must act promptly, and with judgment. The safety of hundreds of boys, of the manufacturer, and of his family and the servants, fearfully watching the fight from afar, depended upon him.

He made up his mind in two seconds. His great voice roared out, and could be heard even above the din and tumult of the battle:

"Greyhouse! Company, fall in! Form into half companies!—Fix bayonets! Steady a moment!"

The cadets who had not gone after Wardour fell in as coolly as if they had been on parade. The gates were swaying; the mortar had given way; the strikers were surging against them in a still more compact mass.

"Steady, Greys!" rang out the Head's voice again. "Stand away from the gates!"

Now a tremendous cheer came from the strikers, and was answered staunchly by the Greys. The mob charged at the gates again, and yet again. Then with—as it seemed—a dying groan, the enormous hinges came away from their many-hundred-year-old beds, and the gates fell with a crash! "Company! Forward!"

As steadily as trained soldiers the Greys advanced; the line of glittering steel completely filled the yawning space lately occupied by the gates.

"Halt!" The front rank pulled up between the shattered pillars. Behind it the sloping bayonets glistened in the sun and looked businesslike. The leader of the mob was on the bank.

"Coom on, lads! Doan't 'e be frightened by a pack o' babies playin' at sojers! Coom on!"

So saying, he picked up a half-brick, and flung it at the front rank. It struck a boy, who reeled back. He was passed through to the rear, his place being quickly filled. The leader rushed forward, brandishing his cudgel.

Now the Head's voice rang out again: "Company! Forward!"

Though his voice was so clear, the Headmaster was trembling. On the next few moments depended the issue of this conflict. Could the boys hold their own? Would the strikers stand or fly? If the latter kept their ground their numbers could not but give them the victory.

The Greys set their teeth. The sun danced on the steady lines of steel. They advanced at the double, wheeling to the right and to the left, and charged full-tilt at the mob.

Those of the rescue-party, fighting against dreadful odds, gave their fellows a strenuous yell of welcome.

"Greyhouse! Greys for ever! Greys!" The old cry rang out. They dashed forward. "Now, Greys—steady, and the day is yours!"

The strikers wavered—broke—fled! Still the steel lines followed, and behind them the whole host of Greys, uttering ringing shouts of victory.

The strikers tore away—anywhere to escape that cold, glittering steel. Greyhouse was saved!

Wardour was picked up insensible. But he was well by Speech Day. For a fortnight the school infirmary was packed from top to bottom with invalids, and in addition there were forty out-patients.

As for the strikers from Belsert, they weren't out of the wood when they bolted, because they ran straight into the jaws of a hundred London policemen, sent down that day for the especial purpose of keeping them quiet.

But that didn't matter. The Greys had defended Greyhouse against an overwhelming mob, and the Greys got an extra week summer holidays. So let us fling our hats on high with a three times three, and a

"BRAVO, GREYHOUSE!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 281.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.**A NEW FREE
CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.**

The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns are those of readers living in any of our Colonies who desire Correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.

Colonists sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondent is required—boy or girl, English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two coupons, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two coupons will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertisers direct. No correspondence with advertisers can be undertaken through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

H. Kempadom, P.O. Box 525, Bloemfontein, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the British Isles, age 17 or 18.

F. C. Ford, 212, University Street, Montreal, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the British Isles, age 15.

W. J. Rushton, General Post Office, Perth, West Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in London, age 18, interested in shorthand.

Lance-corporal G. Harris, Divisional Staff Office, Lucknow, India, wishes to correspond with readers interested in postcards.

H. L. Nicholson, 17, Brunning Street, St. Kilda, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers living in England, age 14 or 15.

A. Sherso, Postal Department, Post-office, Fielding, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers age 16 or 17.

L. Laxton, Darlington Road, Stawell, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in America, India, or England, age 19 or 20.

G. Bevan, Solomontown, Port Pirie, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England or Ireland, age 16 or 17.

A. J. Barnett, 12, Wellington Street, Linwood, Christchurch, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a girl reader.

F. J. Guerin, care of Murphy & Crowley, solicitors, 292, Williamson Street, Bendigo, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England or Ireland, age 14-15.

J. R. A. Hay, care of Victoria Falls Power Co. Consolidated Building, Johannesburg, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the United Kingdom, age 18-20.

A. Page, 913, Fifth Avenue, W. Calgary, Alberta, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England, age 16.

A. M. Ross, P.O. Box 343, Cape Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in Scotland, age 19-20, interested in postcards.

W. B. Stephenson, 382, Dupont Street, Toronto, Canada, wishes to correspond with a reader living in England, age 14.

R. S. Donovan, Brixton Road, Mt. Roskill, Auckland, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 15, living in the British Isles.

J. V. Gomes, care of Hong-Kong and Shanghai Bank, Shanghai, China, wishes to correspond with a girl reader interested in postcards.

G. S. Kelly, Box 14, Brakpan, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader age 17.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

Our Companion Papers.**"THE PENNY POPULAR"
Every Friday.**

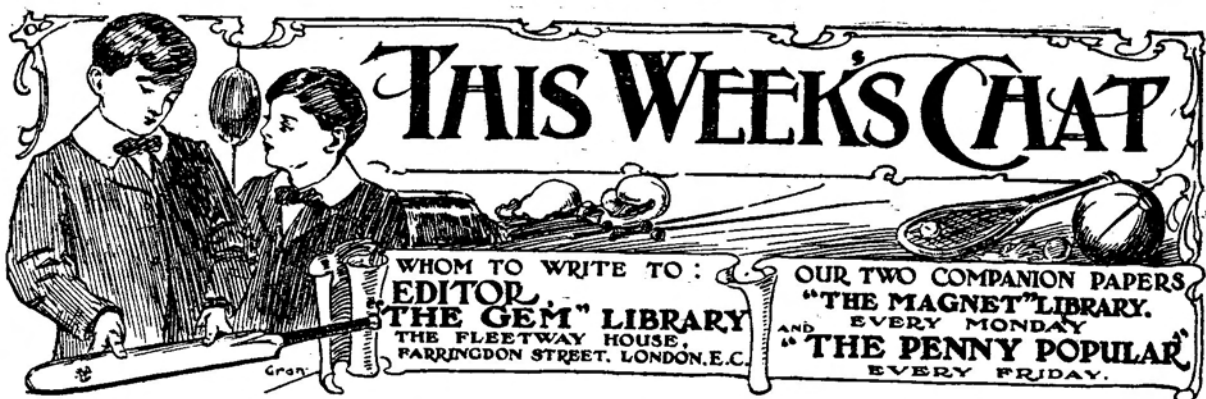
FAMOUS FIGHTS FOR THE FLAG. No. 8



Specially drawn for "THE GEM" Library by C. H. Blake.

This depicts a thrilling scene in the Battle of Plassey, fought on June 23rd, 1757. Clive, the famous General, had a force of only a few thousand men, while the Indians, under Saraza Dowlah, numbered 68,000. One of Clive's youngest subalterns asked for leave to lead a charge against an overwhelming force of the enemy, who were securely sheltered on the edge of a wood. Permission was given, and with a mere handful of determined Britishers the subaltern led the charge. The Indians fought fiercely in spite of their amazement at the audacity of the young subaltern and his men; but at last they were compelled to turn and fly, and then, as Clive hurried up the supports, the enemy's retreat was converted into a rout. Thus Plassey was won!

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



WHOM TO WRITE TO:
EDITOR,
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 THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
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OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY.
 AND EVERY MONDAY
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
 EVERY FRIDAY.

"THE RASCAL OF ST. JIM'S!"

is the title of next Wednesday's long complete school tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

Martin Clifford tells, in one of the most exciting yarns he has yet written, how Gore—the one-time bully—is saved from ruin by the rough-and-ready methods of his Form-fellows.

It is a story which, under no circumstances, must you miss, and so, to make certain of reading

"THE RASCAL OF ST. JIM'S!"

be sure and order your copy of "The Gem" in advance!

HOW TO WRITE A PICTURE-PLOT.—No. 7.

By a Successful Photo-Playwright.

Finishing the Finished Scenario.

When you have finished the scenario, feel quite satisfied with it, and have given it all the polishing and revision you are capable of, then you may rest from your labours and see about sending it out. Before you do that I want you to listen very carefully to the following instructions, the carrying out of which will at once convince any scenario editor of your businesslike methods and prejudice him in your favour.

Get your script (American term for plot) typewritten—preference is invariably given to such—and see that your full name and address is upon every sheet, in case they become detached. Use plain white paper, quarto size, preferably a large one, 8½ by 11 inches, keep a margin of two inches on left-hand side, and when enclosing in envelope double over once away from you.

Always enclose a stamped addressed envelope for return. When submitting to firms abroad, American or Continental, British stamps are useless, so that unless you can get someone there to purchase stamps for you, you must enclose an International Coupon, value 2½d. in stamps in any country in the world, and obtainable from any post-office for 3d. Don't enclose an envelope that has to be doubled, as this causes it to burst open when on return journey. Ask your stationer to get you a special size envelope, which is just a shade smaller than those you send your scenarios out in.

Don't write a long letter expatiating about the merits of your photo-play; the scenario editor is quite capable of judging that for himself—in fact, that's what he is there for. You may enclose a short note stating that you are enclosing so-and-so scenario, which is subject to usual rates.

Most producers will make you an offer—and a good one—although a few will ask you to state a price. In that case, don't ask too much to begin with. A one reel—i.e., reel of film containing 1,000 feet and about 20 to 30 scenes. Split reel is half that—subject might be priced at a couple of guineas as a minimum, and ten guineas as a maximum. If you are doubtful about the price to ask for a script, write to the Kinematograph Bureau, Fernley Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, and they will tell you.

Don't bother much about British producers; they haven't much demand for scenarios from outsiders, despite advertisements, and when they do accept them they pay absurdly low figures. You will find most American firms will give you an answer within a fortnight or three weeks; but don't worry the producer once he has your plot. If no reply comes within a month—drop him a polite note, with another stamped addressed envelope, asking for news, and repeat the dose at intervals of a week until something does happen. Always remember that you are the humble beginner, the producer, the finished photo-playwright, and don't write nasty notes if your stuff is hung up!

(Another article of this splendid series next week.)

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"Interrogation" (Leyton).—1: The St. Jim's tales you mention have recently appeared in "The Penny Popular." 2: The incident referred to in the lines you quote from "The Gem," No. 65, has not yet been made the subject of a story. You may expect to hear more of Clifton Dane before long, however. 3: I cannot promise that Marmaduke Smythe will be brought back to St. Jim's again. 4: Kerr's Christian name is Frank. 5: The artist whose clever illustrations are such a popular feature in "The Gem" Library is R. J. Macdonald.

P. F. W., of Dublin.—You ask me for a firm to whom you could write for a position as a cinema actor. Well, in your particular case, I advise you to communicate with the Hepwick Film Co., Ltd. (Messrs. Hepworth & Sons), 2, Denman Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.

"Boxing."—If you find it necessary to clean your boxing-gloves I should send them to a dry-cleaner's, who will do them thoroughly for a very small charge. If you wish to do them at home, you will find benzine very good stuff to clean them with.

"A Bashful Girl Reader."—Thank you for your letter. I am afraid I cannot promise definitely that the two events you are so keen on will actually come to pass. Anyway, it would spoil your interest in the stories if I told you what was going to happen in advance.

DO YOU KNOW THIS?

Along the side of the railway-track you might have noticed little white posts, generally of about two feet in height. These are marked 1, ½, 2, ¾, 3, and so on. The posts are mile-posts, and from the marks on the posts it can be found out how many miles you are away from London. Thus, if you see a post marked 124, that means you are 124 miles from London. The next post will be marked ¼, meaning that you are a quarter of a mile from the last post. These posts are intended for the use of engine-drivers, so that they can know when to slow down.

On the back of most gloves may be seen three lines of stitching or embroidery. In the making of gloves long ago, the work was clumsily done, the stitching of the fingers being carried down to the back of the gloves. With the object of covering the marks, fancy embroidery was stitched over them. Machinery now makes gloves much more dainty in shape, and the stitching does not go beyond the fingers, but the embroidery is still added as an ornament.

At every eclipse of the sun in China, the Chinese, believing that the evil spirits are about to take away the sun, make a most terrific noise with drums, yelling at the top of their voices, with the object of frightening away the evil spirits.

On almost every plated or silver teapot you will find that the handle is made of different stuff to the rest of the teapot, or that there are little sections of black or white placed at intervals in the handle. The reason for this is that metal is an excellent conductor of heat, and therefore some non-conducting material is placed in the handle—if it is not entirely made of some such material—to stop the heat from travelling down the handle when the boiling water is put into the pot.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 280.



Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE!

HEARD AT A LOCAL MATCH.

Bowler: "How's that, umpire?"
 Umpire: "Out!"
 Batsman: "What for?"
 Umpire: "Leg before wicket."
 Batsman: "Nothing of the sort! Why, man, I was a couple of feet out of the wicket when the ball hit my leg!"
 Umpire: "Now, look here, you keep your left leg where it is, and come to this end and see for yourself!"—Sent in by G. Gilpin, Gildersome.

SARCASTIC.

Gent (to small boy playing marbles): "Playing marbles, my boy?"
 Small Boy (very politely): "Oh, no! This is the blacking-brush mother uses to polish father's teeth with on Pancake Day, when he is trying to drive a six-inch gaspipe through a submarine sewing-machine, when—"
 But the gent had gone, and the good youth went on with his game.—Sent in by E. Reader, Stoke Newington.

HE DID IT BOLDLY.

An Irishman had never before travelled on a railway, and therefore did not know what to ask for at the booking-office. He decided to wait until somebody else came up to get their ticket, so that he might overhear what the person said, and ask for his ticket in the same way. Presently up came a young lady.
 "Mary Hill, single!" she said to the booking-clerk.
 As soon as she had gone, the Irishman, putting down his money, boldly said:
 "Pat Murphy, married!"—Sent in by A. Davies, Anerley.

PRACTISING.

Screams were issuing from the nursery, and mamma hurried upstairs. There was Dolly, her little daughter, standing over Freddie, her brother, calling him all the names she could lay her tongue to.
 "Dolly!" cried mamma, "What do you mean by crying out like this? Why can't you play quietly, like Reggie? See, he isn't making a sound."
 "Oh!" replied Dolly. "You see, we are playing mothers and fathers, and he is papa just come home late, and I am you!"—Sent in by Francis Kirk, Lennoxton, Scotland.

POLITENESS.

Tommy and his mother were going to a party, and before they left home mother gave Tommy a lesson in politeness. Not long after tea had started the hostess said to him:
 "Will you have some more bread-and-butter, Tommy?"
 "No," was his reply.
 "No, what?" snapped his mother sternly.
 "No fear! Not while there is any cake on the table!"—Sent in by S. Law, Vauxhall.

THE CLERGYMAN WON.

A good story is told of a clergyman who, discovering some little ruffians in a dispute, went up to them with the intention of settling the matter.
 "What are you arguing about?" he asked one of them kindly.
 "Well, guv'nor," replied the lad, "yer see this dog? The one that tells the biggest lie gets it."
 "Ah!" said the astonished clergyman. "When I was a lad I never knew what it was to lie!"
 "That's done it!" said the youngster emphatically.
 "Give him the dog!"
 And the little ruffians walked away.—Sent in by E. Maynard, Upton Park.

A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

Poor Mrs. Newlywed had a very short memory, and her husband had asked her to have chicken for dinner that night. She was afraid she would forget to order them. So all the time she was dressing she repeated to herself: "Chickens—grocer—chickens—grocer."
 Finally she went to the 'phone, and got on to the grocer's.
 "Have you any nice young grocers?" she nervously asked.
 "Why—er—er—yes, ma'am!"
 "This is Mrs. Newlywed speaking," she went on. "I want you to send me a couple, dressed."
 "Dressed?" gasped the grocer.
 "Well—no; you had better send them undressed, and my husband will wring their necks when he comes home, and cook can dress them!"
 It was some time before the grocer realised what she really wanted.—Sent in by Miss S. Brockwell, Custer.

EXPLICIT!

"You are on your oath, sir," the examining counsel reminded the witness, "and your answers must be explicit and exact. You said that you drove a coal cart?"
 "I didn't, sir!"
 "But you do drive a coal cart?"
 "No, sir!"
 "Then pray what do you drive?"
 "A hoss, sir!"—Sent in by M. Stainburn, Leeds.

DIS"GRACE"FUL!

Johnnie (to clergyman, who has finished an elaborate "grace" before dinner): "Father says a much shorter grace than that."
 The Clergyman: "Indeed? And what does he say?"
 Johnnie: "Well, yesterday he said, 'Good Lord, what a meal!'—Sent in by Miss D. Challacombe, Barnstaple.

THAT GIRL AGAIN!

Mistress (to servant): "Jane, have the potatoes pared by the time I come back from shopping."
 Servant: "Orlight, mum."
 The mistress on returning was astonished to find Jane sitting on the floor, with the potatoes in a circle round her. She looked up as her mistress entered, and looked at her triumphantly.
 Jane: "I have pared 'em all off except this 'ere little 'un. I can't find one to match it in the slightest!"—Sent in by Miss Ivy Parsons, Bournemouth.

STUMPED.

A school inspector had a theory that school children had no powers of observation. To test it, he went into one of the class-rooms, where the top Form of the school were at work.
 "One of you tell me a number!" he cried, turning to the blackboard.

"Thirty-six!" said a voice; and the inspector promptly wrote down sixty-three. Apparently no one noticed the error, so he asked for another number.

"Fifty-four!" sang out the same voice. Down on the blackboard went forty-five. Still no one spoke.

"Another number!" said the inspector.

Up jumped a small boy at the back of the class.

"Seventy-seven!" he cried shrilly. "And turn that round if you can!"

The inspector has changed his theory now.—Sent in by J. R. Purdie, Gallowgate.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED!

Readers are invited to send ON A POSTCARD Storyettes or Short, Interesting Paragraphs for this page. For every contribution used the senders will receive a Money Prize.

ALL POSTCARDS MUST BE ADDRESSED
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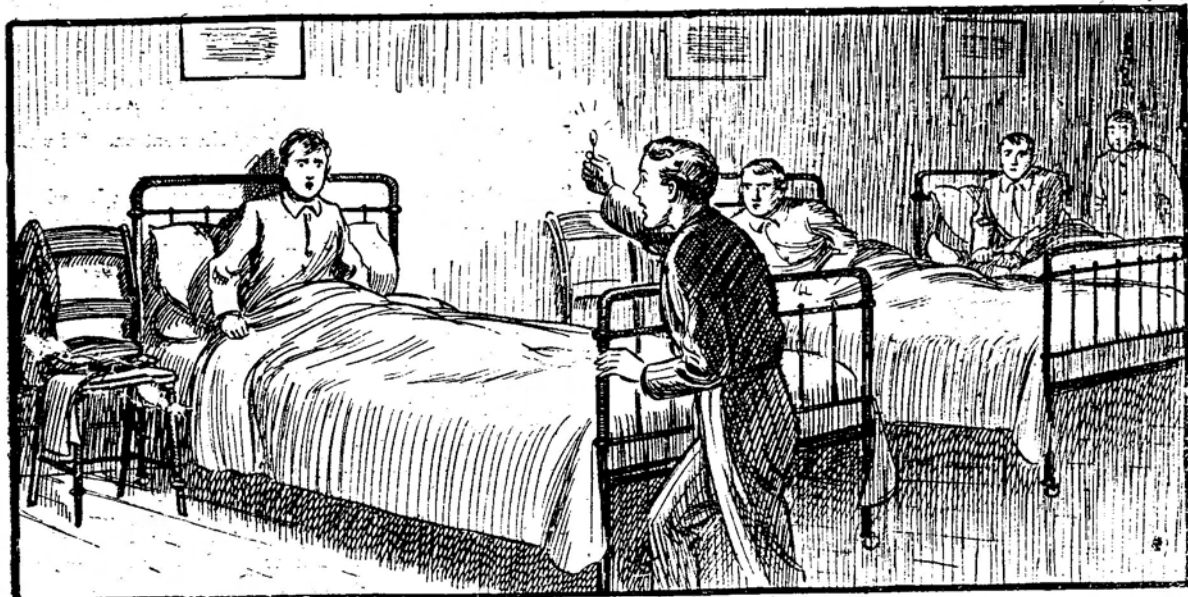
THIS OFFER IS OPEN TO READERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

No correspondence can be entered into with regard to this Competition, and all contributions enclosed in letters, or sent in otherwise than on postcards, will be disregarded.

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