Thrilling Story-Drama

"PANTHER" GRAVLE.

THE NEW

DETECTIVE. By Jack Lancaster,

-00#00-

COUSIN ETHEL'S SCHOOLDAYS.

A TALE OF TOM MERRY'S CHUM.

By Martin Clifford,

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:: THE ::

LAND OF BLACK.

A Story of Wonderful Adventure.

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" The " Rivals of St. Kit's.

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SHOULDER SHOULDER.

By The Editor.

" THE " 'PANTHER'S' MAN HUNT.



CHAPTER 1,

(P.T.O. to Page 2.)

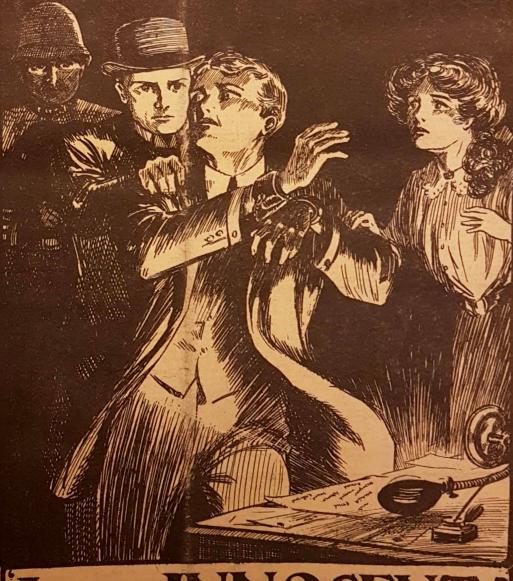
GRAND NEW STORY BOOK

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THE

ENLARGED

EVERY WEDNESDAY.



AM INNOCENT

Something Quite New and Interesting for "Empire" Readers.

## A TALE OF TOM MERRY'S CHUM MARTIN CLIFFORD BY

CHAPTER 1. Off to School.

Off to School.

THEL CLEVELAND stood in the open doorway, looking out. There was a touch of frost in the air; the wind was crisp and the air; the wind was crisp and the air; the wind was crisp and the colour into Ethel's checks. She made a charming picture as she stood there, framed in the doorway, though she was quite unaware of the fact—a picture of bright English girlhood, with her bright eyes, soft round cheeks, and little, graceful figure.

But there was a shade of seriousness upon the young girl's brow. Ethel was leaving home—leaving for school. She was waiting there for the vehicle that was to convey her to the station.

She looked as she felt, serious and

school. Sine was to convey her to the station.

She looked as she felt, serious and thoughtful. Her lines had hitherto fallen in pleasant places—her young life hid been a happy one—not that she had been wholly without troubles. Her father's death—she could faintly remember that—and of late, her mother's ill-health, had cast a shadow upon the house. But, happy or not, the old life was ending now—ending to-day. Her mother had bear and bear abroad for her health, and Ethel was going to a boarding-school.

A new life, full of possibilities, lay before her. What would St. Freda's be like? What would the girls be like? What would the girls be like, and Miss Penfold, the principal? Would she be anything like little Miss Prynne, the governess who had hitherto had the charge of Ethel's education? If so, the girl thought, with a smile, she would get on very well at St. Freda's. For little Miss Prynne was Ethel's devoted slave, and everything that Ethel did was right in her eyes, and had not Ethel been really a sensible and willing pupil, her education would have been a parlous state.

Mrs. Clevcland was gone—she had left for the south the day before.

been really a sensible and willing pupil, her education would have been in a parlous state.

Mrs. Clevcland was gone—she had left for the south the day before. There was nothing now to hold Ethelo her home, and she was anxious to leave for St. Freda's. Miss Prynne was to take her there—or, rather, as a matter of fact, Ethel would take Miss Prynne there, for Ethel's was alwars the guiding mind of the two. What would St. Freda's be like?

Ethel knew girls who were at boading-schools, but she had only a vague idea what they were like, and at St. Freda's she did not know a soul, As a matter of fact, Ethel knew more of boys' schools than of girls' schools, for she had a cousin at a public school in Sussex, and had often visited St. Jim's for the cricket and football matches—when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, her cousin, had very proudly walked his pretty cousin round the old school, and shown her off to the admiring and envious eyes of the other fellows. Ethel was "Cousin Ethel" to a great many boy chums at St. Jim's, If St. Freda's were like St. Jim's, she would like it immensely; but—
What would it be like?

What would it be like?
"Ethel!"

The girl, absorbed in her thoughts, did not hear the small, piping voice. She was looking out into the gardens, deep in a reverie.

"Ethel!"

Ethel!" Prynne came along the Little Miss Prynne came along the Little Miss Prynne was fair and round. Miss Prynne was fair and forty, if not fat, and she was about the same height as her pupil. Miss Prynne looked very prim and neat and orderly. She had a little bag in her hand, and a carcully-rolled subrella hooked on her arm. There was a sound of wheels outside just as Miss Prynne came to the door.

"You are quite ready, Ethel!" The girl nodded.

"Quite ready, dear."

"Here is the trap. James, pray be very careful with those boxes—especially with the hat-box."

Two minutes more, and the trap was bowling down the lane, and the wind was blowing Cousin Ethel's fair, curls back from her face, and bringing the scarlet into her cheeks.

The girl's eyes sparkled.
But her spirits were not high. There was a slight cloud on the fair brow, a slight drooping of the pretty little mouth.

Ethel was feeling lonely. She was going out into a new world—alone. If only she had had some companion—someone with whom to exchange conjectures and confidences! There was Miss Prynne, but Miss Prynne, though kindness itself, was not exactly the confidante Ethel wanted. Miss Prynne's conversational abilities extended very little beyond "Yes, dear," and "No, dear."

Ethel thought of her cousin Arthur.

dear."
Ethel thought of her cousin Arthur.
He had told her that he would get leave from St. Jim's if he could, and see her on the journey to St. Freda's. But evidently he had not been able

But evidenty is last to come.

Ethel sat very silent.

Miss Prynne, who was in a state of mental perturbation, wondering whether her hat-pins were fastened securely enough to resist the strong wind, was not in a mood for conversa-

whether her harbins securely enough to resist the strong wind, was not in a mood for conversation, either, a lad in uniform was plodding along slowly towards Cleveland Lodge. He stopped at sight of the trap, and began waving his arms It was the telegraph-boy from the village. The trap stopped at once. The lad came up to the side of the vehicle, touching his cap. He had a telegram in his hand.

"For Miss Cleveland, mum."
Cousin Ethel took the telegram. The colour wavered in her cheek for a moment. The thought was in her mind that it might be from her mother—that it might be from her mother—that it might be from her mother—that it might mean that something was wrong.

She opened it hastily.

Then, as her eye ran quickly over the message on the strip of paper within, she smiled. Miss Prynne was looking at her anxiously.

"What is it, Ethel dear?"

Ethel laughed.

"It's from Arthur—the dear boy!"

She landed the telegram to Miss Prynne. The little governess adjusted her black-rimmed glasses, and read:
"Dear Ethel.—I've got leave, and

adjusted her black and read:
"Dear Ethel,—I've got leave, and
I shall be at Wayland Junction to
meet you. Look out for me.
"ARTHUR."

It was from Arthur Augustus 'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St.

It was from Arthur Augustus
D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St.
Jim's.
Miss Prynne smiled.
"It is very kind and thoughtful of
him, Ethel dear."
"Yes, isn't it?"
The trap bowled on again.
Cousin Ethel's face was brighter
now, and her eyes were sparkling.
She looked very cheerful when she
took her seat in the train with Miss
Prynne opposite.
And as the train approached Wayland Junction, needless to say Cousin

And as the train approach and Junction, needless to say Cousin Ethel was looking out of the window, and as soon as the train entered the station, she caught sight of a group of juniors standing on the platform.

CHAPTER 2.

"BAI Jove!"
"Halo!"
"That's the twain!"
It was Arthur Augustus
who spoke. Arthur
Augustus. the swell of the Fourth
Form at St. Jim's, was looking a perfect picture. Nothing could liave
exceeded the elegance of the cut of
his etons, unless it was the beautiful
pattern of his waistooat, or the

glossiness of his silk hat. From his natty boots to his gold-rimmed eye-glass, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was clegance itself. The two other fel-lows wore school caps, which showed off D'Arcy's glossy topper to the best advantage.

lows wore seniod caps, which showed advantage.

The two were Tom Merry, of the Shell Form, and Figgins, of the Fourth. There were many juniors at St. Jim's, who had been eager to come, and Arthur Augustus, to do him justice, was willing to bring them. But only two had been able to obtain leave, and those two were Tom Merry and Figgins.

Tom Merry and Figgins.

Tom Merry looked very handsome and tidy, as he usually did; girling was more than usually elegant. Figgins was, as a rule, careless in his dress, and his neckties had always offended the vision of Arthur Augustus. But on an occasion like this, Figgins could come out strong his necktie was only a little on one side, and his boots shone with a polish almost as aggressive as that of P'Arcy's silk latt.

Figgins had hesitated long between a cap and a stopper, and finally, the

D'Arcy's silk hat.

Figgins had hesitated long between a cap and a topper, and finally, the others being impatient, had rushed off in a cap. He pleaded, in answer to D'Arcy's remarks on the subject, that it was more comfortable, and that Miss Cleveland would not be in the least likely to notice what he was wearing. An argument at which Arthur Augustus took the liberty of sniffing.

Arthur Augustus took the liberty of sniffing.

As the train came into the station, Figgins turned pink, and then crimson. He caught Tom Merry by the shoulder, and the Shell fellow turned and looked at him, with considerable surprise as he noted the changing hues of Figgins's countenance.

"Hallo! Anything up?" he asked.
"I was going to—to ask you—"
"Go ahead."
"I's my necktic quite straight?"
Tom Merry grinned.
"Oh, come." said Figgins warmly,
"you might tell a chap how it looks!
Is it on one side?"
"Yes, I'm afraid it is, a little,"
said Tom Merry, cocking his eye
thoughtfully at the necktic.
"Well, which side? Quick, the
train's coming in!"
"Left."
Figgins put up his hand to the

Figgins put up his hand to the necktie, and gave it a drag to the

right.
"Is that all right?" he asked

right.

"Is that all right?" he asked hastily.

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"Bai Jove, it's all wight, and no mistake," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his gold-rimmed monocle upon the necktie. "Wathah too much wight, I should say."

"Too much to the right?" asked Figgins anxiously.

Figgins gave the troublesome necktie a drag back to the left, and it came undone, and the ends streamed out in his hand.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Figgins glared.

"You cackling duffers—"2

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Sowny! I've got to look aftah my cousin," said D'Arcy, and he stepped towards the train, which had now stopped alongside the platform.

Cousin Ethel was waving her hand from the window.

The three juniors lifted hat and caps, and ran towards the carriage.

Cousin Ethel was waving her hand from the window.

The three juniors lifted hat and caps, and ran towards the carriage. Figgins made a hasty effort to clutch his necktie into place, but naturally without success. Tom Merry tore open the door of the carriage, but it was Arthur Augustus who extended a graceful hand to assist the ladies to slight.

Cousin Ethel smiled brightly at the

juniors.
"I am so glad to meet you here," she said softly. "I was feeling very lonely."
"The pleasuah is on our side, drah boy—I mean deah gal," said Arthur Augustus. "With your permish, we re goin to see you as fah as St. Fweda's."

"Have you leave for so long?"
"Yaas, wathah."
"Then I shall be delighted, of

"Yeas, wathah."
"Then I shall be delighted, of course."
"It will be ripping," said Figgins cagerly, as Cousin Ethel's glance turned upon him. Then hee coloured to the hue of a beetroot. His necktie was streaming over his waisteat, and Cousin Ethel's eye had involuntarily rested upon it.
"A—a slight accident," murmured Figgins. "I—I—"
"It was so kind of you to come and meet me," said Cousin Ethel, apparently not noticing Figgins's confusion, and thereby putting him more at his case. "I think my boxes ought, to be taken out of the luggage-van."
"I'll see to it!" exclaimed Figgins cagerly, and he rushed off.
"The boxes were already on the platform, and the train was, about to move on. Figgins paused where the boxes lay to tie his necktie. In the looking gliss of an automatic machine he got it straight at last.
Cousin Ethel had to change trains at Wayland, and she had to wait ten minutes. —Figgins saw the boxes placed upon a trolley and trundled off to another platform for the St. Freda's train, and then he returned to the group.

to the group.

Tom Merry had lifted a little bag
out of the carriage, and an umbrella
neatly folded. Arthur Augustus
D'Arcy stretched out his hand for

"Thank you. Tom Mewwy."
"Thank you. Tom Mewwy."
"Nothing to thank me for," said
Tom Merry blandly.
"I am goin' to cawwy them."
"Rats!" said Tom, in an under-



"As your eldah," resumed D'Arcy, "I should wegard it as my dutay to look aftah you."

"As your block aftah you."

tone, Cousin Ethel being for a moment occupied in helping Miss Prynne to adjust her veil, and having no eyes for the juniors.

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle into his eye, and stared frigidly at his companion.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"More rats!"

"I am goin' to cawwy my cousin's bag and umbwellah."

"You're jolly well not."

"I insist—"

"You can jolly well insist till you're black in the face!" said Tom Merry warmly. "But I'm jolly well going to carry them, so there!"

"Look here, Tom Mewwy—"

"Seat!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I'm goin' to cawwy that bag, and I insist upon your immediately handin' it ovah to me."

"It ubish!"

"I decline to have my wemarks chawactewised as wabbish. I should be sowny to have to thwash you in the presence of a lady, but—"

"You'd be jolly sorry for yourself if you began."

"Look here, you boundah—"

"Look here, you boundah—"

"Look here, you boundah—"

"Give me that bag!"

"Rats!"

Arthur Augustus took hold of the bag. Tom Merry did not let go. It

will not attwact Ethel's attention by a scene of unseemly dispute," said

will not attwact Enne a scene of unseemly dispute," and Arthur Augustus.

"I'm going to carry this bag.
"Pway don't be an obstinate ass." Arthur Augustus gave a jerk, too, and jerked the bag away from the grasp of Arthur Augustus. The swell of St Jim's gave him a wrathful glare through his eyeglass.

"You uttah wottah."
"Cave!"

"Cave!"
Cousin Ethel was looking round.
Perhaps she had caught a tone of
the suppressed but wrathful voices.
The train was gliding out of the
station, and Miss Prynge gave a

station, and Miss Prings sudden cry."

"My bag!"

"Your bag, dear?" said Ethel.

"Yes! Oh, dear! I have left it in the carriage—and my umbrella!"

"Oh, no, you haven't!" exclaimed Cousin Ethel. "Tom has therm—ace?"

Miss Prynne gave a little gasp of relief.

"Oh, thank you so much, my dear boy—you shall carry them, if you like! How very thoughtful of you to take them out of the carriage!"

Tom Merry looked at Miss Prynne, and then at the lag and umbrella he had burdened himself with. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy smiled into space.

"You can have them, if you like," murmured Tom Merry, sotto voce.
D'Arcy shook his head.

"Not at all, deah boy; I wouldn't wob you for anythin!"

"I wouldn't depwive you of the pleasuah of cawwyin' Miss Pwynne's bag and umbwellah for worlds, deah boy!" Arthur Augustus assured him. And he smilingly escorted the two Merry followed with the bag and the umbrella.

CHAPTER 3.

The Escort.

A RTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY looked at his watch.

"There's anothah seven minutes before your twain goes, Ethel," he remarked, "and it's not in the station yet. I wathah think that the buffet is the cowwect capah."

"Yes, rather!" said Figgins, joining them. "Miss Cleveland must be awfully hungry. I remember the time I first went to school—I was awfully downhearted till I had a feed at the buffet, and then I felt all right." Pthel swilled

awfully downhearted till I had a feed at the buffet, and then I felt all right."
Cousin Ethel smiled.
"Perlaps I could eat a bun," she said meditatively.
"This way, deah boy—I mean deah gal!" said D'Arcy.
And he led the way.
In a minute more, Cousin Ethel and Miss Prynne were sitting at a little table, upon which a grinning waited deposited pile after pile of pastry of the most indigestible appearance.
In the innocence of their hearts, the juniors wanted to comfort Ethel as they themselves might have been comforted.

If Ethel had eaten a tenth part of what was affectionately pressed upon her Miss Penfold would certainly have received an invalid at St. Freda's that day.
But Ethel didn't.
She smilingly accepted cake and tart, and nibbled, thus pleasing the juniors without incurring any serious consequences to herself.
Miss Prynne accepted a little dry toast, astounding the boys thereby. How anybody could eat dry toast, when there were jam-tarts in abundance, was a problem that Tom Merry & Co. did not attempt to solve.
"Another tart, Miss Ethel!" said Figgins.
Ethel laughed.

"Another tart, Aliss Ethel Figgins. Ethel laughed.
"No, thank you, Figgins!".
"A cream-puff!"
"Oh, no!"
"Bettah twy these exeam

"Oh, no!"
"Bettah twy these cweam-tarts," said D'Arcy. "I can assure you that they are weally wippin!"
"Thank you, no!"
"Then I'll tell the waitah to bwing some ices."

"Then I'll tell the waitah to bwing some ices."
"Just one ice," said Tom Merry.
And Cousin Ethel assented.
"Well, just one."
The ices were disposed of, and there was a clatter in the station as

the presence of a lady, but—"
"You'd be jolly sorry for yourself
if you began."
"Look here, you boundah—"!
"I cook here, you boundah—"!
"I cook here, you ass—"
"I cook here, you ass—"
"I stats!"
"I stats!"
Hats! Tom Merry did not let go. It leoked like a tug-of-war for amonent.
"I twust, Tom Mewwy, that you
"I twust, Tom Mewwy, that you there were restored to the little governess.

EMPIRE-NA L



(Continued from page 5.)

The three juniors entered the carriage, and Figgins closed the door and stood against it, with the amiable intention of keeping all other passengers out.

sengers out.

A passenger or two tried the door, and found it fast, and passed on to the next carriage. Then a somewhat stately-looking dame, dressed very quietly in dark grey, put up her hand to the door, and Figgins hesitated. It was a "lark" to keep men out of the carriage, perhaps, but with a lady it was different.

Cousin Ethel touched Figgins on the sleeve.

the sleeve. It was enough.

It was enough.

Figgins pushed open the door, and stepped back for the lady to enter.

The lady in gree stepped in, and glanced at the girl and the juniors with a most kindly expression upon her kind face.

ber kind face.
"Thank you!" she said, in a very pleasant voice.

She sat down in the farther corner f the carriage.

of the carriage.

Figgins closed the door again, and the train rolled out of the station. Except for the lady in grey, the party had the carriage to themselves.

Well, this is wathah jollay!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If I wemembah cowweetly, we have a half-hour's wun to St. Fweda's. It will be wippin' havin', you for a neighbah at school, Ethel!"

Yes, won't it?" said the girl brightly.

"Yes, brightly.

brightly.

"We ought to get up a cwicker match, or somethin." Arthur Augustus remarked. "I suppose we shall see you pwetty often, you know. Do you know what the pwincipal is like."

"Miss Penfold? No; I have never seen her," said Ethel thoughtfully. "But I have heard that she is very kind and good."

"Good! I suppose she will wegard it as the pwopah capah for your cousin to come ovah and see you pwetty often?"

ften?"
Cousin Ethel laughed.
"I don't know."
"I shall wegard it as my dutay to keep an oye on you, you see," ex-plained Arthur Augustus, in the most fatherly manner. "As your eldah

"But you are only a few weeks older than I am, Arthur."

"That is a twilin' mattah. You must wemembah that boys have so much more expewience and knowledge of the world than gals," said D'Arcy. "I don't want to blow my own twumpet, of course, but I am genewally considahed a fellow of tact and judgment. I look aftah all these chaps at St. Jim's."

"Weally, Mowwy—"
"It's a little weakness of Gussy's to imagine that he looks after people," wplained Figgins. "As a matter of fact, he's a trial to us!"
"Weally, Figgins—"
Cousin Ethel smiled. She knew the little ways of her elegant cousin very

A SHORT INSTALMENT FOR MY OLD READERS.

THE RIVERS OF THE STATES

By CHARLES HAMILTON.

READ THIS FIRST.

READ THIS PIRST.

Arthur Tallot, once the most popular boy at St. Kit's College, has been forced to leave the school by the machinations of his enemy, Edired Lacy. His way, as he leaves St. Kit's at night, lies towards a certain bridge, which has been chosen as a mecting-place between Squire Lacy, an inveterate enemy of Talbot's, and Seth Black, a rascally tramp who claims to be Talbot's father. Black has a secret hold over Squire Lacy, and blackmails him constantly. "Have you got the tin?" saks the ruiflan, meeting the squire as the village clock booms out the hour of ten.

INow go on with the story.]

[Now go on with the story.]

Talbot to the Rescue.

well. As a matter of fact, Ethel was far more enjable of looking after Arthur Augustus than the swell of St. Jim's was of looking after her. But Ethel was far too tactful to ever allow D'Arcy to discover the fact. Arthur Augustus was a nice boy, and Ethel wouldn't have wounded him for world.

worlds.
"As your eldah," resumed D'Arcy,
"I should wegard it as my dutay to
look aftah you. And as your matah
is now abwoad, I think it doubly my
dutay to keep an eye on you, you
know. In any time of stwess and
twouble, I twust you will come to me
for advice."
"Oh, of course!"
"I should alway.

for adrice."

"Oh, of course!"

"I should always be happay to place my expewience at your service," said D'Arcy. "I know a lot of dodges, too, about school, that I can put you up to. I wondah if you gals evah go in for japes?"

"For ww-what?"

"Japes—jokes, you know—pwactical jokes. Now, if Miss Penfold turns out to be a boundah—I mean, if you don't like her, you know, and sho is down on you—I should wecommend you to give her a high old time."

The lady in grey in the farther corner of the carriage looked curiously at Arthur Augustus, as if greatly interested in his remark, but the swell of St. Jim's did not observe it.

"You could put jumpin' ewackahs."

of St. Jim's did not observe it.
"You could put jumpin' ewackahs
in her desk," said D'Arcy thoughtfully, "or it would be a good ideal
to put some wats in her hatbox."
"Arthur!"

to put some wats in her hatbox."
"Arthur!"
"Yass, that would be jollay good.
Of course, I shouldn't play a twick
like that on a lady, as it would be
unchivalwous in a gentleman to do
anythin' of the sort, but I suppose
you wegard a mistwess as we wegard
a mastah—as an object to be japed
as much as poss."
"He, ha!"
"You see, Ethel——"
"I don't think I shall indulge in
many japes at school, as you call
them," said Ethel demurely. "I
think, perhaps, jokes of that kind are
more suitable for boys' schools. I
cannot imagine myself putting rats in
a hatbox, for instance."
"It's a wathal good ideal, though,
"It's a wathal good ideal, though,

a hatbox, for instance."
"It's a wathal good ideah, though, if the principal is a boundah!"
"I am sure Miss Penfold will not be a bounder."
The lady in grey smiled, and was about to speak apparently, for she moved her lips, but she changed her mind and remained silent.

mind and remained silent.

The conversation turned to other subjects, and the juniors chatted cheerily with Cousin Ethel as the train swept on towards King's Burford, the station for St. Freda's.

It seemed to the party a very short time before the station was reached.

The train stopped at last.

Arthur Augustus assisted his consin

The train stopped at last.

Arthur Augustus assisted his cousin to alight, and Figgins—who was always more useful than ornamental—rushed off to see to the luggage.

The lady in grey descended, too, and disappeared while the juniors were placing Ethel and Miss Prynne and their various belongings in the station hack.

station hack.

"Everythin' on board," said Arthur Augustus. "All wight; Ethel?"

"Yes, all right, I think!" said Ethel cheerily.

"Then I suppose it's good-bye. We shall see you on the first half-holiday, Ethel?"

"Oh, yes, do!"

"Nothin' you want to ask my lvice about before you go?"
"No, I think not," smiled Ethel.
"Vewy well."

juniors one after another, and then the three lads steed in a row, hat or cap in hand, as the hack drove off to St Freda's. And Ethel shook hands with the

Cousin Ethel looked back, and waved her hand, till the hack passed a curve in the road, and the station and the three juniors disappeared from the t

sight.

Arthur Augustus heaved a sigh.

"It's wuff on Ethel goin' to a new school alone," he remarked. "It's wuff on Ethel goin' to a new school alone," he remarked. "It wemembah the time I first came to St Jim's. You fellows chipped me wottenly. Tom Merry wasn't there then, but the othah boundahs were vewy chippin'."

"But you go about asking for it," said Figgins. "Now, anybody but an idiot would like Cousin Ethel at once, at first sight."

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry heartily.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

neartily.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Yaas, wathah! I suppose you're wight as wegards Cousin Ethel."

And the three juniors went back into the station to catch their train back.

back.

Cousin Ethel's face was very bright as the rickety old vehicle rattled along the leafy lane towards St. Freda's.

The meeting with the juniors of St. Jim's had cheered her greatly.

She did not know what St. Freda's would be like, and she was a little uncertain how she would like it—but at all events she had kind friends not far away—and that was a comfort.

The lack drove up to the great stone gateway of St. Freda's, and up the drive to the great grey stone house, and stopped.

Cousin Ethel had arrived at her new home.

new home.

CHAPTER 4.

CHAPTER 4.

A Surprise.

ISS TYRRELL, the second mistress at St. Freda's, received Ethel Cleveland at St. Freda's. Morning classes were still going on, and Ethel caught a hum of voices from the big school-room as she came in. Miss Tyrrell was a slim, dark-complexioned lady, with a keen eyo, and a clear, incisive voice, but her look was kindly as she greeted the new pupil. She explained to Ethel that Miss Penfold, the principal, had been out for some time, had only just returned, and would come down shortly. Then she returned to her duties, leaving Ethel and Miss Prynne to wait till Miss Penfold came down that was Miss Prynne's duty to deliver Ethel safe and sound into the principal's hands before she left her. And Ethel was glad for her to stay as long as possible—the only familiar face amid strange surroundings.

Ethel sat by a window, looking out the agraden fresh and bright in the

amid strange surroundings.

Ethel sat by a window, looking out into a garden fresh and bright in its spring green. St. Freda's was a handsome building of grey stone, standing in wide and sweeping grounds. Ethel caught sight of a tennis lawn in the distance, with noble old elms growing beyond. A gravel path ran under the Frenchwindows of Miss Penfold's drawingroom, and along it, as Ethel looked out, came a girlish figure.

It was that of a girl of, about Ethel's own age, but as dark as

Ethel was fair, with large, dark eyes and red, pouting lips. The lips were pouting very much just now, and there was a wrinkle of anger in the youthful forchead, and the eyes were very brief.

very bright.
The girl passed under the windows,

The girl passed under the windows, unconscious of the glance upon her from within, and disappeared round a curve of the building.
Ethel wondered who she was. It was evidently one of the pupils of St. Freda's, and equally evident one who was not exactly equable in temper.

who was not control to the pretty, passionate, dark face, when the door opened, and she turned from the window.

window.

A lady in grey entered the room.

Ethel gave a little start of sur-

A lady in grey entered the room. Ethel gave a little start of surprise.

It was the lady in grey of the railway-carriage—her travelling companion from Wayland Junction.

It did not occur to Ethel for a moment who she was, the thought coming into her mind that this was doubtless the relative of some pupil of St. Freda.

The lady in grey came directly towards her, a slight smile upon Fercalm, clear-cut face.

"Miss Cleveland," she said, "and Miss Prynne?"

"Yes," said Ethel wonderingly.
"I am Miss Penfold."
Ethel looked dismayed.
Back into her mind rushed the talk in the carriage, and the excellent plans laid by her cousin for "japing" Miss Penfold if that lady should prove at all troublesome to her new pupil.

Ethel understood what the smile upon the face of the school-mistress meant.

Miss Penfold was remembering

Ethel understood what the smile upon the face of the school-mistress meant.

Miss Penfold was remembering that conversation, too.

The girl was so embarrassed that she could not speak for a moment. Miss Penfold shook hands with her and with Miss Prynne in the most cordial way. It was plain that she was not oftended, at all events, and Ethel gained courage.

"You have seen me before," said Miss Penfold. "Of course, you did not know me. Perhaps I should have made myself known; but, really, I was greatly amused."

Ethel blushed red.

"Dear me!" said Miss Prynne.
"I hope you will like St. Freda's," went on Miss Penfold. "It was your cousin, I think, who was giving you good advice in the train?"

"Yes," stammered Ethel.

"He seemed to have some apprehension that the principal of St. Freda's would turn out to be what he calls a bounder."

"Oh!"

calls a bounder.'

"Oh!"

"And if that should prove to be the case, he recommended putting rats in her desk, I think."

Ethel could not speak.
"Or crackers in her desk and rats in her hatbox," said Miss Penfold thoughtfully. "That would be rather drastic. I don't think it likely that you will ever be driven to such a desperate resource."

"Oh!"
"I think we shall get along very

"I think we shall get along ve well," said Miss Penfold, with

well," said Miss Pentold, with a smile.

"I—I am sure of it!" stammered Ethel. "I—I am sorry—"
"Not at all. Master D'Arcy is more accustomed to boys' schools than to girls' schools, naturally, and he, is not aware that jumping

crackers in a hatbox would be a little out of place at St. Freda's, a little out of place at St. Freda's, a little out of place at St. Freda's, a little "Pear me!" said Miss Prynne, "But , you have had a long journey, said Miss Penfold a long must have a little refreshment, and dinner. The pupils dine; at undid not consider the good of clock here, and then you will have or o'clock here, and then you will have on poportunity of seeing something of your new companions."

Ten minutes later Miss Prynne had taken her leave, with a little tear on either check as she put with a little tear on either check as she promised with be charge, and Ethel threw her area round the little governess's neck, hugged her affectionately ere she went.

Then she was left alone in her

went.

Then she was left alone in her new

home.
A quiet-voiced, neatly-dressed maid
showed her up to her room.
The dormitory at St. Freda's was
divided into a series of cubicles, small

The dormitory at St. Freda's was divided into a scries of cubicles, small but very cosy, so that cach girl lad an apartment to herself, but the whole of them were open to the glance of anyone passing along the dormitory.

Ethel was a little tired, but more excited. Miss Penfold had remembed her to lie down until encommended her own days with the series of the included to so. After removing the signs of travel, she walked along the row of neat little cubicles to the large window at the end of the great room, and looked out into the grounds. She was thinking of the dark, passionate face of the girl she had seen in the garden, and wondering who she was.

A footstep behind her made her

A footstep behind her made her arn her head. Ethel uttered a little exclama-

It was the girl she was thinking about who stood before her, regard-ing her with an attentive and interested gaze.

CHAPTER 5. Dolores.

CHAPTER 5.
Dolores.

THEL looked at the St. Freda's girl, and the St. Freda's girl looked at the St. Freda's girl looked at her. Ethel was preproact to smile timidly, but the olive face did not soften, and there was no smile in the dark eyes. There was no smile in the dark eyes. There was no welcome in the face, yet it was a face that Ethel liked. It was very handsome, in a Spanish way, and it occurred to Ethel that this girl had foreign blood in her veins.

"So you are the new girl?"

The stranger spoke abruptly.
Although she was certainly not more than fifteen years old, she had already assumed a manner towards Ethel as if she were ten years older than the new girl.

Ethel nodded.

"Yes," she said, a little timidly.

"You will get on here," said the dark girl abruptly.

And there was something like a sneer on the red lins.

"I hope so," said Ethel.

"Oh, you are sure to! You are the kind of girl that Miss Penfold will like. You will like the school and Miss Penfold. Bah!"

The girl made a passionate gesture.

"I hate it!"

(The continuation of "Cousin Ethers Schooldays" "rill be given in next Wednesdays' sull bers.

(The continuation of "Cousin Ethets Schooldays" will be given in next Wednesday's "Empire" Library, when Dolores will show her true spirit.)

semething that floated, his fingers slid along to the head, and he gripped the thick, coarse hair.

The face of Seth Black was brought well out of the water. The swift waters were singing in the lad's cars; the current was whirling him away, past banks that fleeted away, past

with the anguish almost of dead whis heart.

For matters, however they turned out, were beyond the reach of Squire Lacy now. The rapid current whirled the swimmer away so swiftly that he only caught a glimps of Arthur Talbot, with Seth Black in his grip.

Talbot did not attempt to stem the current. It was doubtful if he could have done it alone unencumbered, but with Seth Black to support, the attempt would have been meritably futile. He let himself go with the stream, swimming, and supporting the insensible man, and with a few strokes bringing himself closer to the bank.

"I have it here."

"I have it here."

The squire's hand went into his breast-pocket, and Black heard the crisp rustle of banknotes. But at the same moment Rupert Lacy strode down from the bridge into the black shadows of the trees at the side of the glistening river.

Black followed him impatiently. He had heard no sound, and he had put down the footstep to the squire's nervous imagination. He did not suspect as yet that the imaginary sound was an invention, designed to trick him into leaving the dim light of the bridge for the darkness under the recess.

The squire had played his part well. The ruffian had no suspicion of the desperate resolve in his

breast.
"Hand it over, squire!"
"Take it!"

"Take it!"

The squire's voice came in a sibilant hiss now, and the ruffian the bridge from the direction of St. Kit's, had heard the splash in the tries, but it was too late. Kit's, had heard the splash in the bridge from the direction of St. Kit's, had heard the splash in the tries, and the cry—the last Seth Black had uttored.

Little dreaming of the true state of St. Kit's had heard the splash in the short, heavy life preserver. The weapon whirled up, and came down with a fearful blow, as the ruffian started away.

"Take your deserts, you thief!"

Take your deserts, you thief!"

hissed the squire. "Take them! That is the price of your silence!"
The weapon went up again, and again it descended on the reeling ruffian; but at the same moment as he cried out Black lost his footing, and fell back heavily, and the blow hurled him fairly into the stream. Splash! The squire muttered an imprecation. Both the blows had been terrible, but had not fallen with full force, and now the ruffian was out of his reach.

Then suddenly the squire started with terror. A face was looking down from the bridge—a face white and strained in the moonlight, with keen eyes searching the glistening water.

Lacy started at it from the bright.

water.

Lacy stared at it from the bank below in terror and amazement.

Well he knew it! It was Talbot's.

waters; and at the thought Arthur Talbot dropped his bag and his stick and dashed on towards the bridge with a pace seldom seen off the cinder-path.

bridge with a pace seldom seen off the cinder-path.

In a second or two he was on the bridge. The cry had come from above it, and Arthur Talbot leaned over the low parapet, searching the water with keen cyes for a sight of the supposed drowning man.

In that momentary glimpse Arthur knew whom it was; knew that it was the man who had brought him shame, who had helped him to ruin—the man who claimed to be his father, and lied in claiming it.

Yet not for a moment did he hesitate. The man was going to his death—if he was not dead already. But he should not perish if Arthur Talbot could save him.

Talbot put his hands together and went down from the bridge like an arrow. That the water was deep just below the 'bridge, that the current was swift and strong, did not deter him.

Down he went, cleaving into the deep water, down and down, and then up again to the surface, swimming with strong, steady strokes. He had calculated well. A few moments later his hand touched the strokes time of the New "Empire Morary."

DON'T want to be seen talking to you," muttered the squire quickly. "Someone may pass at any moment. Come here!"

EMPIRE-No. 1.