# Tom Merry in Camp.

A Double-Length School Story.


# THE GEM LIBRARY

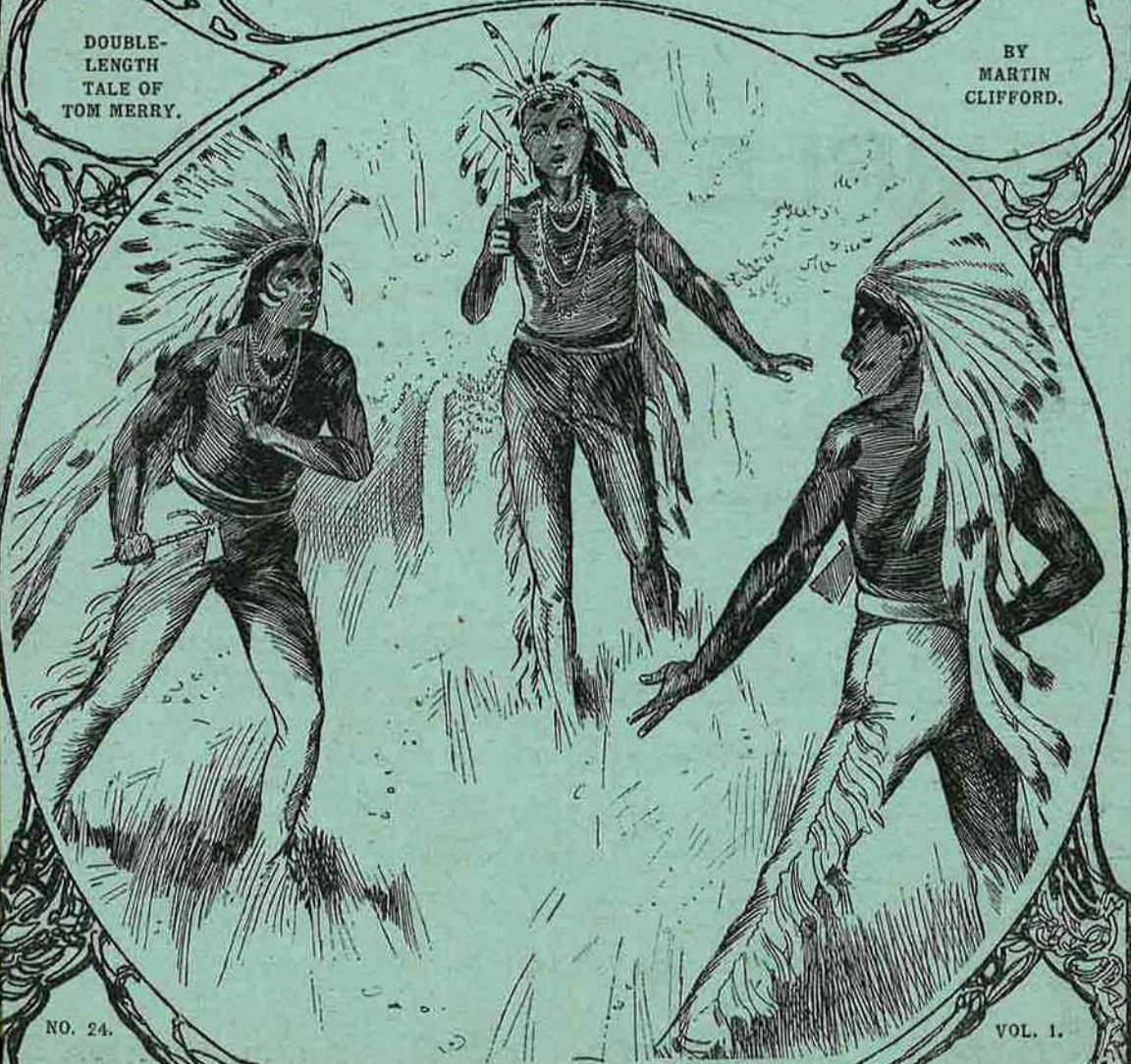
1d.

NEW SERIES.


## COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY.

DOUBLE-LENGTH TALE OF TOM MERRY.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

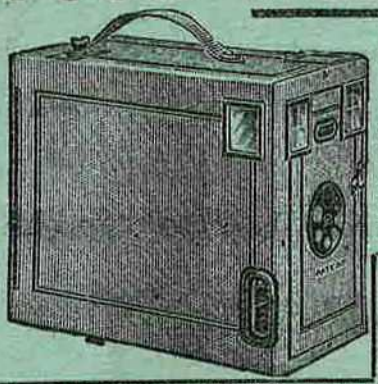



NO. 24.

VOL. 1.


"PEACE, MY CHILDREN," SAID TOM MERRY. "LET THERE BE PAX—I MEAN PEACE—IN THE WIGWAMS OF THE BLACKFEET."

# FOUR WONDERFUL BARGAINS



## £2 2s. Camera and Outfit for 10/3.

**SEND ONLY 9d.** We send this magnificent ¼-Plate Camera, complete with outfit and book of instructions, to any address on receipt of 9d. deposit and upon payment of the last of 20 payments of **6d.** each, making a total of **10/9** in all. A handsome present is given free. Postage of Camera, 3d. extra. Cash-with-order price only **10/3.**

**Description:** This perfect Camera is guaranteed made in London of hard wood and covered with waterproof leatherette, with leather handle for carrying. Fittings are heavily oxydised, Lense very fine quality, rapid. Shutter overset for portraits or snapshots. Four stops, two brilliant finders, one for upright and one for oblong pictures. **Outfit** consists of a packet of dry plates, packet developer, packet of gold toning and fixing, packet fixing salts, packet P.O.P., well-made wooden printing-out frame, two dishes, ruby lamp, and packet of mounts. Send to-day, as the number is limited. Cheaper quality Cameras, usual price, 15/6, our price **8/6** cash. **7/-** instalments, same terms.

## WORTH £2 2s. SEND ONLY 6d.

**8/3**

We send either of these magnificent Watches complete with Chain on receipt of **6d. Deposit** and upon payment of the last of 16 payments of **6d.** each, making a total of **8/6** in all. A handsomely chased, gold-finished, adjustable Pencil is given free. Postage and insurance of either Watch, 2d. extra. Foreign and Colonial orders, postage 1/- extra. Cash with order, **8/3.** These Watches are genuine 12-ct. gold-cased, jewelled movements, and perfect timekeepers. **Guaranteed** 10 years. Gent's are full-size Chronograph Stop Watches. Ladies' usual size and beautifully finished. Upwards of 6,000 testimonials are open to inspection at our offices. Send deposit to-day or you may be too late, as we have only a limited quantity for sale at this price. Money returned in full if goods are not exactly as represented.

## 12/6 BOOTS 8/-.

**Send Only 6d.**

Just as an advertisement for our Boot Dept. we send a splendid pair of Ladies' or Gent's Boots or Shoes to any address on receipt of 6d. deposit and upon the last of 16 weekly payments of 6d. each, making a total of **8/6** in all. A handsome present is given **FREE.** Cash-with-order price only **8/-** Postage 6d. extra.

You can have either black or brown Boots or Shoes. Ladies may have lace or button, as preferred.

**Send now, as the number is limited.**

A SPLENDID INSTRUMENT

## This Magnificent PHONOGRAPH. Send only 6d.

We send this magnificent Phonograph complete with two high-class records to any address on receipt of **6d. Deposit**, and the last of 16 weekly payments of **6d.** each, making a total of **8/6** in all. A handsome present is given **free.** Cash-with-order price only **8/-.** Postage 6d. extra.

**Description:** This Powerful Clear-Toned Phonograph plays equal to any £2 2s 0d. instrument made. Will reproduce your own voice, take any record that is made. Complete in Box with Two Records. Send now to avoid disappointment.

When writing please state clearly exactly which Bargain you require.

**KEW TRADING ASSOCIATION, LTD. (Dept. 44), KEW.**

---

A GENUINE LEVER SIMULATION

# GOLD WATCH FREE FOR SKILL.

**SEND NO MONEY.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| O | R | S | E |
| L | Y | L | I |
| I | P | N | K |

In this diagram you see three lines divided into sections, with a letter in each section. The letters have to be so arranged that each line spells the name of a well-known flower. A **MAGNIFICENT WATCH**, guaranteed timekeeper (Lady's or Gent's) will be sent entirely free of charge, providing you are correct and conform to our one condition. **REMEMBER**—it costs you nothing to try. Send your attempt on a sheet of paper, together with a stamped addressed envelope, so that we may tell you if correct. Address:

**IMPERIAL SUPPLY CO.** (Dept. 2), **42, Junction Road, London, N.**

---

# POUNDS I SAVE YOU POUNDS

Not pence—not shillings—but **POUNDS**, and you can select any bike you like. I supply **SWIFT, ROVER, COVENTRY-CHALLENGE, HUMBER, PROGRESS, PREMIER, TRIUMPH, CENTAUR,** and **SINGER** Cycles pounds cheaper than the Makers or their local Agents. **RUDGE-WHITWORTHS** from **£3 15s.** Cash. Sent on approval. 12 Years' Guarantee. Easy Payment terms to suit you.

A High-Grade Coventry Cycle £3 12s. Cash, or 5s. Monthly.

Edwd **O'Brien**, Ltd

Prompt Delivery

**WRITE FOR LISTS NOW.**

THE WORLD'S LARGEST CYCLE DEALER. Dept 145, COVENTRY

---

## 1,000 CAMERAS GIVEN AWAY.

Our **"Got 'Em"** Snapshot Camera is a masterpiece. To popularise this Camera and create an interest in the fascinating art of photography we have decided to make a Free Gift of one of these splendid Cameras, complete, to each of the first 1,000 applicants. All we ask is that you should send us your name and address, with 1s. for packing, carriage, chemicals, complete book of instructions, and full particulars to

CATALOGUE FREE. F. R. IRONMONGER & Co. (Dept. 25), Ilfracombe.

---


# MOUSTACHE

A nice manly moustache positively **grows in a few days** at any age by using **"MOUSTA"** the **only Guaranteed** Moustache-Forcer. Acts like magic on the smoothest faces. Boys become men. **Remember—We Guarantee to return your money** in full (including postage expenses) if not **entirely successful,** so that if you receive no benefit you are not one penny out of pocket. Box sent (in plain wrapper) for **6d.** stamps. Do not delay, but send at once to—

**J. A. DIXON & Co., 42, Junction Road, London, N**

---

# A CYCLE for 1/-

**DEPOSIT & 1/- WEEKLY.**

As an advertisement we will send to first 1,000 applicants our **£3 8s. 0d.** "ROYAL EMBLEM" CYCLE for **1s. DEPOSIT,** and on last payment of 84 weeks at **1s.**, making £4 5s. A HANDSOME PRESENT IS SENT FREE. Write for Illustrated Catalogue. £3 15s. 0d. Cash Price.

**ROYAL EMBLEM CYCLE DEPOT**

**(C30), GREAT YARMOUTH.**

---

# SUITS MADE TO MEASURE On Easy Terms

The cut is perfect—that kind which makes you feel comfortable and well dressed. The cloth is specially chosen for hard wear, and gives satisfaction to the most particular. Prices **30/-, 34/6,** &c., or on Easy Terms, **5/- MONTHLY**

Every Suit made to measure. Our Credit Terms are for all—we supply Clothes and Boots—so that you can be well dressed by paying a little at a time. Write for Patterns now.

**BOOTS, 13/6 & 17/6**

Send 2/6 with size, pay a further sum on receipt, and 2/6 monthly. Send 2/6 now

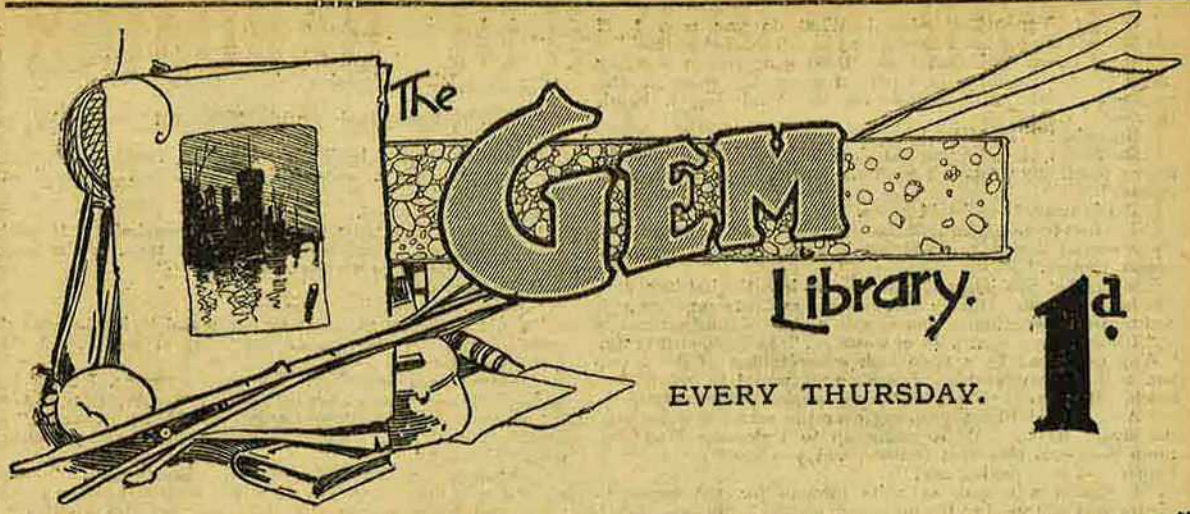
**MASTERS, Ltd.,**

**141, Hope Stores, RYE.**

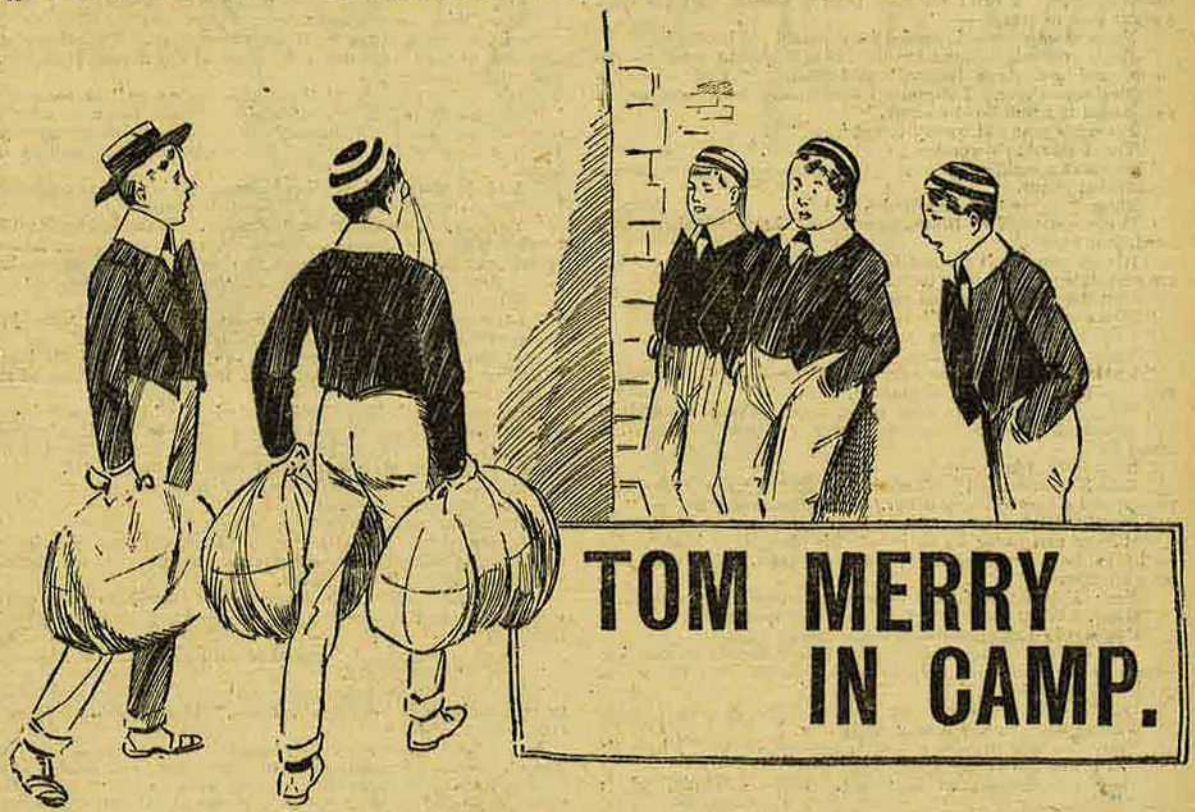
---

# SIMPLY TO GET IT ON THE MARKET.

5,000 genuine ¼-plate, or 2½ by 2½, **CAMERAS ABSOLUTELY FREE** to all sending 9 stamps for samples of our famous Photographic Materials. Catalogue Free.—Hackett's Works, July Rd., Liverpool, E.




Complete Stories for Everyone, and Every Story a Gem!



# TOM MERRY IN CAMP.

**A Splendid Double-Length Story of Tom Merry & His Chums. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

## CHAPTER 1.
### The Expedition.

"ARE you ready, D'Arcy?"

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

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

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

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

And he proceeded to brush his hat carefully.

"Jump on that topper, Dig."

"Certainly," said Digby.

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

**A DOUBLE-LENGTH TALE OF TOM MERRY NEXT THURSDAY.**

"Digby! You uttah wottah! What do you mean? If you damage my toppah I shall give you a fearful thwashin'."

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

"Right-ho!" said Herries.

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

"Put it away, then," said Blake.

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

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

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

"Ass!" said Blake, grunting over the exertion of making the straps meet. "We're going up to Rylcombe Wood to camp there and play Red Indians, and you must not go in a topper! You shrieking ass!"

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

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

"I wefuse to wear a cap."

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

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

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

"Pewwaps you will bweak the stwaps."

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

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

"There you are! I expected that!"

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

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

"I wefuse to be called an image."

"What are you doing?" roared Blake.

"I am only adjustin' my necktie, deah boy."

"Yank his necktie off, Dig."

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

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

"Look here, Blake——"

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

"Weally, Blake——"

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

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

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

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

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

"Weally, deah boy——"

"I think we're pretty nearly ready now."

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

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

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

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

"Yes," said Blake.

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

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

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

"No."

"Cricket?"

"No."

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

"No, it isn't."

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

"Minding our own business," said Blake affably.

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

Tom Merry laughed.

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

Blake turned red.

"We're doing nothing of the sort."

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

"Wathah not, deah boy. On the contwawy, I have just had a fivah fwom my governah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

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

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

Blake glowered.

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

"Right-ho!" said Herries.

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

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

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

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

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

"What-ho!"

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

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

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

"Hallo, leaving for the holidays?" he asked.

"No," snapped Blake.

"Taking all your property to a raffle?"

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

"Oh, come on!" said Blake.

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

"Going to emigrate?" asked Mellish pleasantly.

"Rats!" said Digby.

"Thought you might be going to Canada steerage, and taking your bedding and things in bundles," said Mellish. "What's the game, then?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Have you?" said Fatty Wynn. "Do you think it's a

"Dog of a paleface!" yelled Blake. "Yield, or your scalp shall hang at the belt of the Blackfoot Chief!"

feed, after all? If it is, I think we ought to gather a few of the fellows and follow on."

Figgins shook his head.

"It's not a feed."

"Oh!" said Fatty Wynn. And his interest in the matter decreased visibly.

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

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

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

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

Fatty Wynn demurred.

"I'm getting rather peckish."

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

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

"Then you must be famished."

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

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

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

Fatty Wynn brightened up.

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

Figgins grinned.

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

"Good idea. I wonder whether they will be ham sandwiches," murmured Fatty Wynn. "I like ham."

## CHAPTER 2.

### A Redskin Alliance.

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

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

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

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

"Right-ho!" said Herries, allowing his bag to fall in the grass with a bump. There was a crash of breaking glass, and Blake gave a wrathful howl.

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

"I forgot."

"You've busted the bottles now."

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

"Of all the duffers!" said Digby.

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

"No," said Blake.

"It's a good place, and wathah lonely," said D'Arcy. "It's more than another mile fwom here, and if some of you could cawwy this parcel as well as your own, I think I could covah the distance all wight."

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

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

"Too near the road," said Digby.

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

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

"Oh no; but I think it extwemely pwob. that there is one."

"Ass! We're not going to spend the rest of the afternoon looking for hollow trees," said Blake witheringly. "We'll get on another half mile into the beech plantation. We shall be safe there, I expect. Hallo, what was that?"

"What was that, deah boy?"

"I heard something moving in the bush."

"Pwobably it was only a wabbit."

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

"Weally——"

"Look out!"

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

"Bai Jove!"

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

"Got you!"

"Get up!"

"Rats!"

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

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

"Let me gerrup!"

"Can't be did!"

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

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

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

"Rats!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

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

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

"I wefuse to wing off!"

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

"Well, suppose you have?" grunted Blake.

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

"I wefuse to give my pawole."

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

"The beast has got hold of my beastly collah."

"Jerk your head away and the collar will come off."

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

"You utter ass!"

"I wefuse to be charactewised as an ass!"

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

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

"Up you get then!"

Tom Merry released Arthur Augustus, who sat up breathlessly and commenced to straighten out his collar and rearrange his necktie. D'Arcy, having given his parole, the rivals were left three to three in point of numbers, and with the advantage on the side of the chums of the Shell, they were masters of the situation. Blake knew when it was time to give in.

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

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

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

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

"It's the whole outfit my uncle sent me," explained Blake. "There's enough for a dozen chaps. We were going to make our headquarters in the wood somewhere, and keep the things there, and let some other chaps into it later. We couldn't have the fag of carrying out these big bundles every time we wanted to use the things, you know."

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

"What things?"

"These redskin things."

"Why they're mine!" exclaimed Blake indignantly. "What are you talking about?"

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

"Your wheeze! Mine, you mean!"

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

Blake gave a whistle.

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

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

"We were a little startled," said Manners.

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

"Oh, wats!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "You were fwightened out of your beastly wits, you know. You wan away like anythin', and we wan aftah you till we were laughin' too much to wun any more."

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

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

Lowther turned red.

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

"We weren't scared."

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

"Yaas, wathah! Lowther almost dwopped when I wan at him."

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

"I wegard that wemark as distinctly wude," said D'Arcy. "I call upon Lowthah to withdraw his oppwobwious wefewence to my features, or it will be imposs. for me to be fwiends with him this aftahnoon."

"No fear!" said Lowther.

"Then I am afwaid that I shall have to intewwupt the harmony of the pwoceedin's by givin' Lowthah a feahful thwashin'."

"Hush!" exclaimed Tom Merry suddenly.

"I wefuse to hush!"

"Ass! There's somebody coming!"

"The Grammarians!"

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

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

"Figgins!" exclaimed Blake.

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

"Hallo," said Figgins, rather sheepishly.

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

"Twy then, deah boy."

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

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

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

"Yes, rather," said Figgins heartily.

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But I say——" began Fatty Wynn.

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

"What about those sandwiches?"

Figgins laughed.

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

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

"Can't be helped."

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

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

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

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

"Look here, Figgins——"

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

"Call yourself a leader, and come out without anything to eat on an expedition!" said Fatty Wynn witheringly. "You'd make a ripping general."

"My dear cormorant——"

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

"Where are you going?"

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

And Fatty Wynn disappeared before Figgins could remonstrate.

## CHAPTER 3.

### In the Camp of the Foe.

"THIS is a jolly spot, Frank."

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

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

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

And the Grammar School party halted.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Oh, rats!" said Bunce.

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

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

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

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

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

Ford shook his head decidedly.

"Not in this weather," he said.

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

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

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

"It's too jolly hot."

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

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

"Eh?"

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

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

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

"And you'll give us the lead?"

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

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

"I do, though," said Williams promptly.

There was a stop in the underwood. The Grammarians, who were growing somewhat heated in the argument, paused suddenly. Frank Monk knitted his brows.

"Somebody's coming," he grunted.

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

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

"Phew! Better look out!"

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

"Who is it—Tom Merry?"

"No, it's that fat chap—Wynn."

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

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

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

"Yes, but——"

"Shut up."

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

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

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

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

"Something of the sort."

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

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

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

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

"The—the what?"

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

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

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

"So it is; much too jolly hot."

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

"That I'm jolly well not."

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

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

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

"Rats!"

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

"Hear, hear!"

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

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

"I'll see you boiled first."

"Yank him over to those stinging-nettles——"

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

"Will you do the cooking?"

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

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

"Find out."

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

"Look here, I don't like——"

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

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

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

Frank Monk shook his head.

"Not much."

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

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

"Of all the rot——"

"Yank him over to the——"

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

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

The grinning Grammarians sprawled upon the grass in a wide circle, in the centre of which the glowering Fatty proceeded to build the camp-fire.

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

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

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

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

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

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

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

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

"Fat lot that will be, I expect."

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

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

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

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

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

"Rather."

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

"Buck up!"

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

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

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

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

"Buck up, then!"

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

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

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

"Look after that bacon, you duffer."

The bacon was smelling vilely now. There was a peculiar grin upon Fatty Wynn's face as he shook it and turned it in the frying-pan.

---

## CHAPTER 4.

### The Blackfeet on the Warpath.

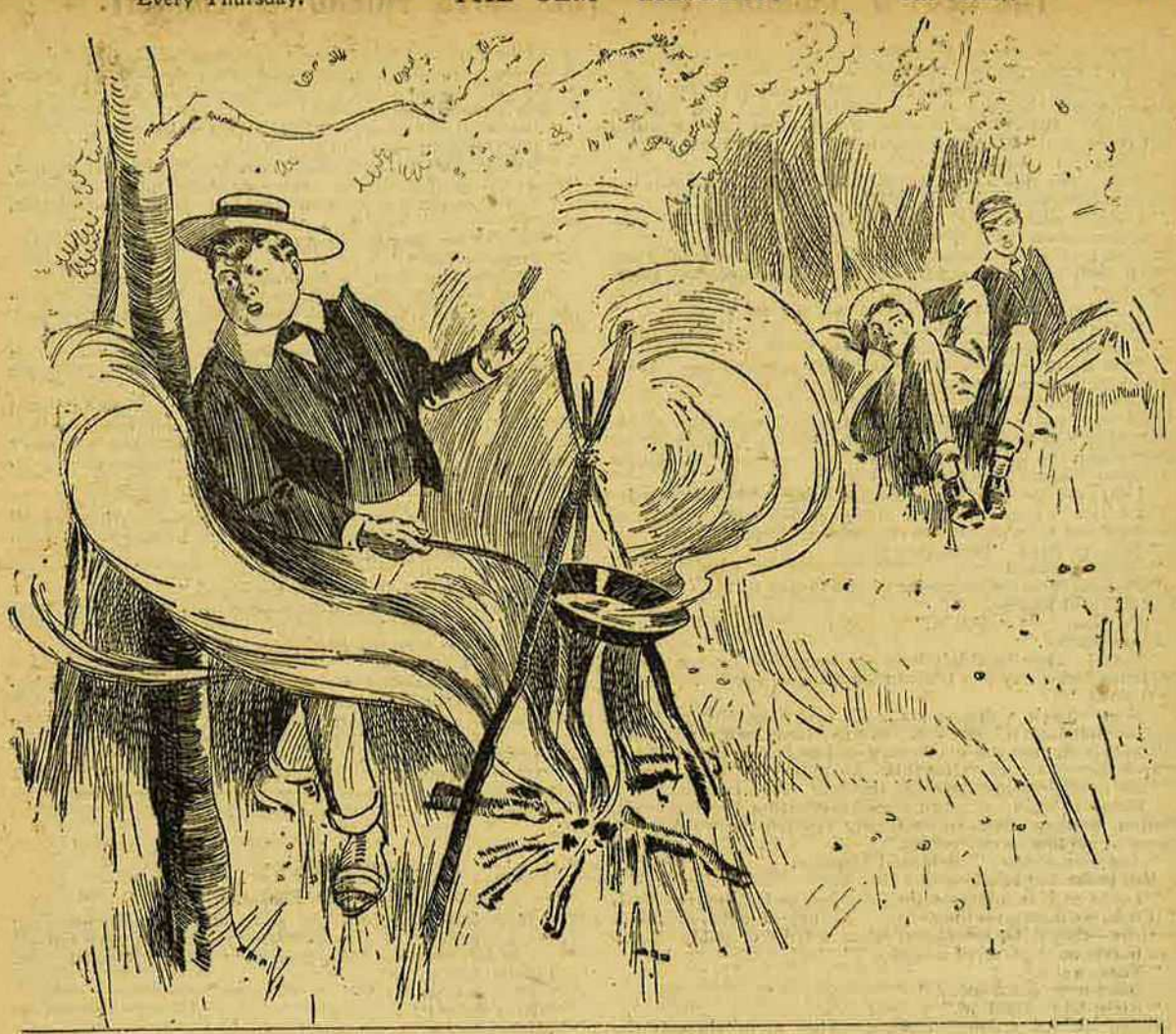
"HOW do I look, Blake?"

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

Blake looked at him.

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

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



"What are you up to, prisoner?" shouted Frank Monk. But Fatty Wynn did not answer. A low whistle in the deep woods had caught his ear—a whistle that was familiar to him.

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

"Yaas, wathah, Figgins, deah boy. The war-paint doesn't make much difference to you. You are nevah what I should call a bute at the best of times."

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

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

"You look one," remarked Kerr.

"I wegard that as an oppwobwious wemark. I——"

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

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

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

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

"You didn't scare us——"

"Rats!"

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

"More rats!"

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

"Bosh!"

"You Fourth Form fathead——"

"You long-legged Shellfish——"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Of course, you're an ass——"

"The great chief has spoken——"

"The great ass has brayed——"

'Look here, Figgins——"

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

"No fear! It's you——"

"Now, talk sense——"

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

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

"Blake wesigns the lead into my hands——"

"Who told you so?" demanded Blake.

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

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

"Yaas, but——"

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

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

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

"What-ho!" said Figgins.

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

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

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

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

"Is there one in this plantation?"

"I have not discovahed one, but——"

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

"Wight-ho!"

And the eleven Blackfeet braves issued from the beech plantation, and Blake led the way towards the footpath which ran through the wood to Rylcombe. It was about ten minutes later that Figgins gave a sudden sniff.

"I say, can you smell something burning?" he exclaimed.

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

"H'm, perhaps. Perhaps——"

"Perhaps what?"

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

"By Jove! It might be."

Blake sniffed.

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

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

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

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

"And to me, too!" exclaimed Manners.

And Blake had to admit it.

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Quiet now, not a sound."

"Right-ho! Lead on."

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

"There's the fire!" exclaimed Lowther.

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

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I said not a word, Gussy."

"And I said yaas, wathah, Blake."

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

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

Figgins gave a start.

"Fatty Wynn!"

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

Tom Merry laughed softly.

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

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

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

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

"We're going to rescue Fatty Wynn."

"Yes, if I give the orders."

"Rats!"

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

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

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

"The Grammar cads will hear it."

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

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

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

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

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

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

"Vewy twue."

"Move round in the bushes so as to come on them on all sides at once," said the great chief of the Blackfeet. "When I yell, all of you yell, and charge."

"Good!"

"Pewwaps I had bettah give the signal."

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

"I wefuse to keep my head shut. I——"

"Get on, I tell you."

The juniors separated, creeping through the grass and underwoods with almost the stealth of real redskins.

Blake allowed five minutes to elapse, and then gave the signal. A sudden terrific yell awoke the echoes of the glade. The Grammarians started, and stared round them.

"Wh-what was that?" gasped Carboy.

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

## CHAPTER 5.

### The Picnic.

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

"Wh-w-w-w-what!"

"Great Scott!"

"Help!"

"Murder!"

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

"Good heavens! What——"

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

Frank Monk gave a howl.

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

"Yield!"

"You howling fathead——"

"Dog of a paleface!" yelled Blake, who was so excited and carried away by enthusiasm that he almost believed himself a real Indian by this time. "Dog of a paleface, yield, or your scalp shall hang at the belt of the Blackfoot chief!"

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

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

"Collar him!"

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

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

"Rats!"

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

"Bosh!"

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

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

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

"Looks like it—seven."

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

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

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

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

"Silence, prisoner."

"Rats!"

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

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

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

"Look here——"

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

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

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

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

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

"Good wheeze."

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

"Look here, Digby——"

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

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

"Oh, rats!" said Monty Lowther.

"Bind the palefaces to the trees——"

"Hark at the silly asses!"

"Bind fast the white-skinned dogs."

"Ha, ha! Silly chump!"

The Grammarians laughed, and kept on laughing, but Frank Monk felt that the laugh was really on the side of St. Jim's. The Grammarians might ridicule the Red Indian garb and the speeches of the amateur Blackfeet, but St. Jim's had won the fight, and the Grammar juniors were prisoners. There was no getting out of that.

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

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

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

"Bai Jove," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked, "I wegard this as weally wippin', deah boys. It is what you might cowwectly chawactewise as poetical justice, too."

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

"Fair play," said Figgins.

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

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

"Bosh!"

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

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

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

"Nothing of the sort. We——"

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

"Yours always is, Gussy."

"I wegard that wemark as oppwobwious, Lowthah."

"Go hon!"

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

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

"A little surprised," said Manners.

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

"I stated a fact," said Lowther.

"I wefuse to admit anythin' of the sort. You will wetwact that wemark, Lowthah, or I shall have no alternative but to administah a feahful thwashin'."

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

"Pway welease me, Blake."

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

"I wefuse to sit down."

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

"Undah the circs——"

"Sit down!"

"Undah the circs——"

"Sit down!"

"Undah the circs——"

Blake jerked D'Arcy's scrape, and dragged him down into the grass.

The swell of the School House gave him an indignant glare.

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

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

"I considah——"

"Pass the bacon."

"I considah——"

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

"Hallo," said Fatty Wynn, "what's that, you School House rotter?"

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

"Great ass, you mean."

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

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

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

"My hat! I forgot the palefaces!" said Blake. "I'll give you a thick ear presently, Figgins. I say, I've enjoyed this feed."

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

"Go and eat coke!" said Monk.

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Paleface dogs, your lives will be spared."

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

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

"Rot!"

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

"Blacken," said Figgins.

"Eh?"

"I said blacken."

"What the dickens do you mean?"

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

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

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

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

"You shrieking ass!"

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

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

## CHAPTER 6.

### Tom Merry's Idea.

"WEALLY, I don't feel much inclined for tea, you know."

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

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

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

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

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

"Hullo!" he said. "I didn't feel inclined for any tea ——"

"Ha, ha! The same here!"

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

Blake looked dubious.

"One of your own ideas?" he asked.

"Yes."

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry laughed.

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

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

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

Blake sniffed.

"Is that your idea?"

"Yes."

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

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

Blake nodded in a thoughtful way.

"It is a jolly good idea," he said, "and it would be ripping fun camping out in the woods. We should learn a lot, too; but the difficulty would be to get the Head's permission."

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

Jack Blake grinned.

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

"It's a valuable education in itself."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Weally, Blake, I wegard you as possessin' a feahful cheek!"

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

"Well, as the person most fitted——"

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

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

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

"Yaas, but——"

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

"But weally——"

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

"Figgins & Co. will come."

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

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

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

"Us four, deah boy."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Right you are!"

"I say, deah boys, wouldn't it be wathah a good idea to interview the Head in full war-paint, just to show him——"

"Ass!"

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

"And startle him out of his wits, perhaps, to say nothing of getting up impots for going around as Red Indians in the house."

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!"

"I'll go over and speak to Figgins," said Tom Merry. "We ought to strike the iron while it's hot, you know."

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

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

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

Tom Merry laughed.

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

"My hat, that's ripping!"

"Will you——"

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

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

Figgins grinned.

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

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

"What about, then?"

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

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

"Where—to the tuckshop?"

"No; to the School House."

Fatty Wynn shook his head.

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

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

"Oh, come on!"

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

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

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

## CHAPTER 7.
### The Deputation.

TAP!

The Head of St. Jim's patiently raised his head and called out "Come in!" The tap at the door of his study interrupted his work, but as he expected that it was some master coming to consult him he laid down his pen. A look of surprise came over his face as the door opened, and a group of juniors presented themselves to his view.

Blake marshalled in his followers, and they all got into the study, with no worse disaster than Herries treading on D'Arcy's foot. The swell of the School House gave a gasp.

"Oh, Hewwies, you ass——"

"Shut up!"

"You have cwushed my toe, and spoiled the shape of my beastly boot, you know. I wegard you as a clumsy ass, Hewwies."

"Silence!" whispered Tom Merry.

"That's all vewy well——"

"Shut up!"

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

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

"A what?"

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

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

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

"I jolly well think——"

"Besides, I'm doing the talking——"

"Pway come to the point, Blake," said Arthur D'Arcy. "Our wespected headmaster is gwowin' impatient."

"Really——" said Dr. Holmes.

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

"To wespectfully wequest your permish——"

"Shut up, D'Arcy!"

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

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

"I remember perfectly, Blake."

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

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

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

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

The doctor smiled.

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

"Certainly not, sir. I will come to the point at once. The real idea about this redskin wheeze—I mean the redskin idea, sir, was that we should camp out of doors like Red Indians, and learn to rough it and feed for ourselves."

The Head's look grew very grave.

"H'm, Blake! That is a serious matter."

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

Dr. Holmes smiled again.

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

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

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

The faces of the deputation fell.

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

Dr. Holmes nodded.

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

"Thank you, sir!"

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

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

"Exactly."

"And if the pwopah person were placed in charge of the camp, sir, I am assured that everythin' would go swimmingly——"

"You may go, my lads."

"Yes, sir. Thank you."

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

"I am very busy now."

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

"Come away, fathead!"

"I wefuse to be called a fathead. I am explainin' to the Head——"

Dr. Holmes had taken up his pen again. Arthur Augustus was hustled to the door in the midst of his chums, still protesting against being hurried away before he had finished explaining to the Head. Tom Merry closed the door. In the passage the swell of the School House jerked himself loose and glared at Blake indignantly.

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

"You shrieking ass!"

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

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

"If you had allowed me to finish explainin'——"

"Oh, come on!" said Tom Merry. "He'll never be done. Hallo, here's the other ass! What are you looking for, Skimpole?"

Skimpole, the brainy man of the Shell and the amateur Socialist of St. Jim's, was coming along the passage. He blinked at the juniors through his spectacles.

"I was looking for you, Tom Merry," he said.

"Weren't you looking for a coon like me?" asked Monty Lowther.

"No; I was looking for Tom Merry. I hear that you are getting the Head's permission to hold an open-air camp, and——"

"It is extwemely pwob. that we shall not get the permish now, Skimpole, as they would not give me time to weassure the Head."

"I sincerely hope permission will be given," said Skimpole. "You see, it will be a splendid opportunity to organise a camp on Socialistic lines——"

"On what?"

"On Socialistic lines—to put to the test the theories of communism, which I should be very pleased to explain to you at full length."

"You'd be the only one who was pleased then, I think," said Tom Merry. "I'm off!"

"Wait a moment, Merry—listen to me, Blake—don't go, Lowther—I say, Manners—Manners! Blake! Now, Digby—why, he's gone! Here, D'Arcy—look here, Herries—I say, Figgins—dear me, they're all gone!" The amateur Socialist blinked after the disappearing juniors. "Really, I regard this as almost rude," he murmured. "My ideas of a camp organised on Socialistic lines do not seem to appeal to them."

And Skimpole shook his head and went his way.

## CHAPTER 8.

### The Head Gives Permission.

"HEAR me smile! Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

"Pway what is the beastly mattah, deah boy?"

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

"Bai Jove!"

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

"Wats!"

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

"Huwwah!"

"Hurrah!" shouted Herries and Digby

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

"It will answah all wight."

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

"When are we to try it?" asked Herries. "To-night?"

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

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

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

"But I must take some of my beastly belongin's, you know. I suppose I shall want a change of linen——"

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

"Yaas, but——"

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

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

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

"A what, Blake?"

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

"Thank you, deah boy; I wegard that as weally considewate of you, and I will w'ite to my governah at once."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

"Weally, Blake——"

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

"Hold on, kid."

"Any news?"

"Yes, and jolly good news."

"What is it?" asked Monty Lowther, allowing the end of his bat to clump down—and before Blake could reply there was a wail of anguish from Arthur Augustus.

"Ow! Lowthah, you beast!"

"What's the matter?" demanded Lowther.

"You dwopped that beastly bat on my toe."

"Did I really?"

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

"You shouldn't have such big feet——"

"What?"

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

"I wegard you as a wotten beast, Lowthah. You know perfectly well that my feet are extwemely small, and my boots are very nice, not to say swaggah——"

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

"He hasn't hurt me."

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

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

"Oh, cheese it."

"I wefuse to cheese it. I considah——"

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

"You are intewwuptin' me, Blake——"

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

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

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

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

"Good. Come on."

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

The amazed Figgins struggled violently.

"Lemme go!"

"Good news, Figgy, good news!"

"Leggo! Ass, you're chook-chook-choking me."

"Good news, my son, good news."

"Hold on. Drag him off."

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

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

"Ass!" gurgled Figgins.

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

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

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

"Not much. He has too big feet for me——"

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

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

"Fact?"

"Yaas, wathah, Figgins, deah boy. The Head has vewy kindly extended his permish. He twusts, of course, that we shall look aftah you New House youngstahs——"

"Did he say so?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

"If I may make a wemark——"

"You mayn't. Then there is——"

"If I may make a wemark——"

"Cheese it. There's Kerruish——"

"Pway allow me to speak, deah boy—about Weilly. I wish to point out that he has nevah tweated me with pwopah wespect."

"As I was saying——"

"Pway let me finish my wemarks."

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

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

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

"He has nevah tweated me with pwopah wespect——"

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

"Good," said Figgins.

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

"That point's settled, then——"

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

"Then there's young Kerruish——"

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

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

"That's all very well, but——"

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

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

Blake thumped him on the back.

"Jolly sensible idea, Kerr."

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

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

"That's the idea."

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

## CHAPTER 9.

### Friendly Offers.

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

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

Classes were dismissed; and as soon as the door of the class-room was opened, the Fourth Form poured out, Blake & Co. in the lead. A crowd of boys swarmed from the Shell class-room a couple of minutes later, and the redskin allies met in the passage.

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

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

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

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

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

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

"Vewy wuff indeed."

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

And when the juniors left their respective houses, there were several packets of sandwiches under several arms, and Fatty Wynn had a couple of bottles of ginger-beer in addition. As Tom Merry and his chums left the School House, Gore of the Shell met him on the steps.

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

"Hullo, Merry."

"Hullo! I'm in a hurry."

"Stop a minute."

"Well, what is it? Buck up."

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

"Yes, that's so."

"If you'd like me to join the party——"

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

"I don't see——"

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

Gore sneered.

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

"I daresay he wouldn't."

"He's given it to you."

"That's a rather different matter."

"I don't see it—unless you mean that you're one of the favourites," said Gore with a sneer. "I know that would make a difference."

Tom Merry turned red.

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

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

Tom Merry looked him straight in the eyes.

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

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

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

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

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

And the chums walked on, leaving Gore scowling. Tom Merry's words went all the more directly home, because Gore knew that every one of them was true.

Monty Lowther chuckled.

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

"Yaas, wathah," remarked Arthur Augustus. "But it was quite twue. I wegard Goah as a wathah wotten boundah."

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

"I was speakin', Weilly——"

"Faith, I know you were. I——"

"You are intewwuptin' me."

"Exactly. I——"

"Weally, Weilly——"

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

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

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

"I wegard that as satisfactowy."

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

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

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

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

"Hullo, Blake, I believe you're the head of this wheeze."

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

"I was thinking of coming along——"

"Were you really?"

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

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

"Well, you see——"

"You'd better go and ask the Head's permission. Tell him you're a young blackguard, and belong to the Smart Set of St. Jim's. He's sure to give you permission."

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

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

"Which wouldn't suit us, Figgy."

"Rather not."

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

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

"You exaggewate, deah boy——"

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

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

"Ha, ha."

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

And the juniors entered the shady wood.

## CHAPTER 10.

### Selecting a Pitch.

"FIRST of all," began Figgins.

"Quite right," said Fatty Wynn. "Better open your parcel, Figgy."

"Eh?"

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

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

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

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

"Will you open your bag first, Figgins?"

"No, I won't."

"I'm hungry."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Weally, Blake——"

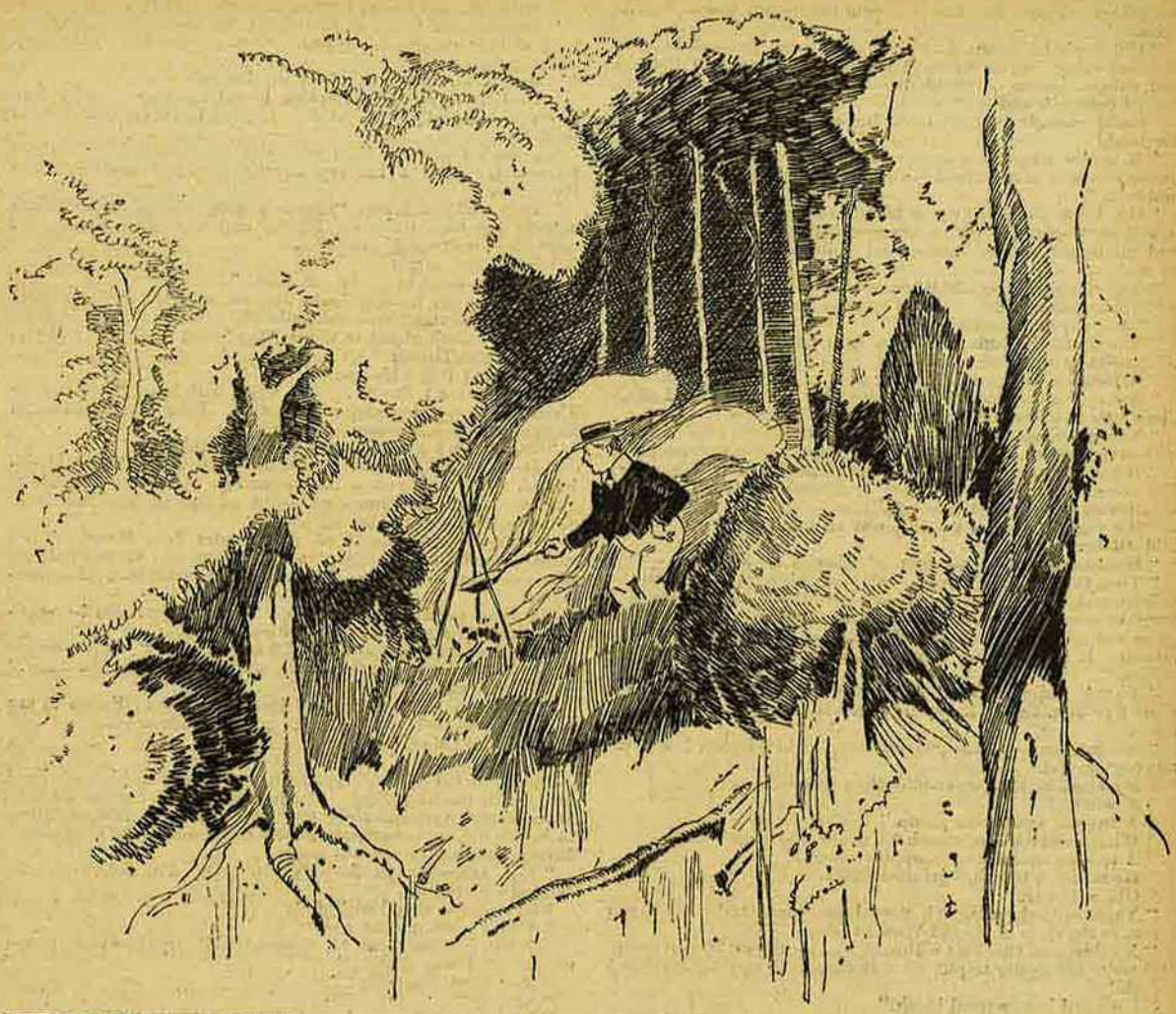
"I can paddle all right," said Reilly. "I've paddled a canoe on the lough at home."

"Good: we'll appoint Reilly paddler-in-chief."

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

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

"Yaas, wathah!"



Through the foliage a glimpse could be had of a plump form bending over a fire, frying-pan in hand.

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

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

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

"Bai Jove, this is a wippin' place for a canoe, deah boys."

"Yes, rather. But where's the spot for the camp?"

"Let's get along the bank—it's clear further on."

"Good! Hallo, what was that?"

"What was what?"

'There was something moving behind that bush."

"Only a bird, deah boy."

"It wasn't a bird," said Blake, plunging into the thicket, "It was somebody watching us, I believe—one of the village kids very likely."

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

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

But there were no signs of a watcher. Blake rejoined his friends baffled, but still half-convinced that someone had been hiding behind the bush, and had escaped into the wood only just in time.

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

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

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

"Eh?"

"I say don't be nervous, deah boy."

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

"I wegard that as a wathah widiculous question."

"Oh, come on," said Tom Merry. "Ah! here's a clearer place—this is something like."

The juniors halted.

It was indeed an excellent spot for their camping.

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

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

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

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

"Bai Jove, deah boys, I think——"

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

"I was wemarkin'——"

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

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

"I was sayin'——"

"Skins of wild animals," grinned Lowther. "Well, rabbits and stoats are the only wild animals in this wood—except

hedgehogs. I don't see how we could build wigwams of rabbit-skins."

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

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

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

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

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

"Blow the Southern Indians."

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

"A jackal is an animal."

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

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

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

"We sha'n't want a whole forest to build a few yahkhals," said Blake.

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

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

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

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

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

"A what?"

"A twench wound the camp."

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

"A twench wound the camp, you know."

"He means a trench," grinned Blake.

"Oh, a trench."

"Yaas, wathah, a twench wound the camp, and a wall, you know, in the style of the old Woman camps."

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

"I wegard it as a good ideah."

"We shall want a trench, though, to carry off the drainage," said Tom Merry. "We don't want the camp flooded in case of rain."

"That's so."

"Vewy twue, and I considah——"

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

Nobody had, as was to be expected. Tom Merry looked extremely disgusted.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Into your what?"

"My bwain."

"First I've heard of it."

"Of what, Blake?"

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

"Weally, Blake——"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"H'm! we might."

"And we want to be on our guard."

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

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

"Why not? It's his name."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"That's right."

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

"Lead on, Macduff."

"Come on, then."

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

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

Blake turned round wrathfully.

"Who's making that row?"

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

"You were whatting?"

"Singing."

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

"Look here, Blake——"

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

"Rats!"

"You fatheaded Shellfish, do you want to be chucked into the stream?"

"Yes, if you can chuck me there."

"I'll jolly soon——"

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

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

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

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

"Am I?" growled Lowther.

"Yes, shut up."

"That's all very well, Tom Merry——"

"Shut up."

Lowther shut up. Blake was satisfied, and the juniors resumed their march, Lowther now relieving the way by his melodious efforts. Tramp, tramp, tramp, went the juniors, round the circle of the camp.

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

The tramping Saints stopped all of a sudden.

"What was that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I knew somebody was watching us——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

## CHAPTER 11.

### The Grammarians Catch It.

"HA, ha, ha!"

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

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

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

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

"Bwavo; go for the Gwammah wottahs, deah boys!"

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

"Hook it!" muttered Frank Monk.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Oh!" gasped Monk.

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

"Got one of them!" roared Blake, grappling with Monk. "Here they are! Collar the others!"

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

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

"Collar him!" shouted Figgins.

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

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

"Sure and I've got him."

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

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

"Got him!" panted Figgins.

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

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

"I've got the wottah!"

"Who is it?"

"Bai Jove, I've got him!"

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

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

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

"You howling duffer——"

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

"Sure and it was ye're fault intoirely——"

"Nothin' of the sort, ass!"

"You duffer!"

"You scweamin' idiot!"

"Faith, and I——"

"Bai Jove, I——"

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

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

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

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

"Sure and ye can expect."

"I must insist——"

"Rats!"

"If you say wats to me, Weilly, I shall have no alternative but to administah a feahful thwashin'!"

Reilly laughed good-humouredly.

"Go ahead, then, ass!"

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

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

"Thank you for nothing," said Reilly.

"Weally, Weilly——"

"Ring off, Gussy," said Tom Merry, "we're talking! We've captured these three rotters, who have had the cheek to laugh at Blake——"

"At you, you mean!" said Blake.

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

"Of all the silly cuckoos——" said Lane.

"Of all the shrieking lunatics——" remarked Carboy.

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

"Good idea!"

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

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

"Oh, you are going to camp out, are you?"

"That's our business."

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

"Did I pinch you?"

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

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

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

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

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

"Oh, don't be pigs!" said Frank Monk. "You'll spoil our clothes!"

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!"

"You should have remembered that before you cackled," said Tom Merry loftily. "The decree has gone forth now, and you are going to be ducked."

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

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

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

"You let my jacket alone!" growled Carboy.

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

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

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

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

"No, you rotter!"

"Then the ducking is the only thing——"

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

"Gussy old man, we're getting fed up with your ideas——"

"This is a wippah," said Arthur Augustus. "I can only wegard it as caddish to spoil a fellow's clothes, and at the same time they certainly wequire a duckin' for their feahful cheek. I think it would obviate——"

"Well, that's a good word, anyway."

"I think it would obviate the difficulty if we were to pour some water down the backs of their beastly necks, you know——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'd better not!" roared Monk.

"You see, that would be as good as duckin' them, and at the same time it would not wun the wisk of spoilin' their clothes."

"Gussy, you are a genius."

"Well, I weally considah that a wathah clevah ideah, you know. It flashed into my bwain all in a moment, you know."

"Good; go and fill your hat with water at the stream——"

Arthur Augustus jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and turned it upon Figgins with a stare that was meant to scorch him into insignificance.

"What did you say, Figgins?"

"Go and fill your hat with water at the stream——"

"And buck up!" said Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove, you are labouwin' undah a vewy gweat mistake if you think I am goin' to spoil my toppah——"

"Oh, a little water wouldn't hurt it——"

"It would uttahly wuin it, you ass! Kerr can fetch some water in his beastly cap."

"No fear!" said Kerr.

"Then Lowthah can fetch some beastly water in his hat."

"Catch me!" said Monty Lowther.

"Dwag the wottahs down to the stweam," said Arthur Augustus, struck by another brilliant idea. "If the mountain can't come to Mahomet, Mahomet has to buzz along to the mountain, you know."

"Good! Yank them along!"

The vainly struggling Grammarians were dragged down to the stream. There the excellent idea of Arthur Augustus was carried out, and the Grammarians received as much ducking as was consistent with not spoiling their clothes.

"There," said Blake, "I think they're ducked enough. Do you think you are ducked enough, Franky?"

"Go and hang yourself!" said Monk.

"I think it will do. You may run away now, little boys."

"You rotter!"

"And if we catch you in this part of the world again, we shall really be very severe with you next time," said Blake, with a wave of the hand. "Run along!"

The Grammarians glowered—and went. They felt very wet and uncomfortable as they walked away through the wood, and Carboy and Lane were inclined to be captious.

"Nice fix to get into!" grunted Lane, when they were out of hearing of the Saints. "I was against showing up at all, as the odds were so big."

"Well, we could have got away, only you had to stumble over," said Frank Monk. "It was clumsy of you, Laney."

"You ought to have allowed for accidents."

"I can't allow for all the silly tricks you might play."

"Look here——"

"Oh, don't rag!" said Carboy, shifting the wet collar that clung very uncomfortably to his neck. "It's too late now, anyway. I wish we could make those rotters sit up. This is the second time they've done us in two days."

"So we can," said Frank Monk.

"I don't see how."

"Didn't you hear what D'Arcy let out? Lowther tried to shut him up, but he had let the cat out of the bag. They're going to camp out on that spot to-morrow night."

Lane whistled.

"But would Dr. Holmes allow them to camp out at night, Frank?"

"Quite possibly. But if he isn't allowing it, they're going to break bounds and do it. Anyway, it's certain they're going to camp there for a night."

"Well, we shall be fast asleep in the dormitory at the school."

"Shall we?" said Frank Monk. "You may be, but I sha'n't be, you can take my word for that. This is where we score over the Saints."

"But we——"

"Listen to me. There were about a dozen of those asses. They'll all be there in camp to-morrow night, I expect. My idea is to surprise the camp at night."

"My only hat!"

"Why not?"

"Well, it's jolly risky."

"If you are going to funk it——"

"Rot!" said Carboy cheerfully. "You know I shouldn't funk it, and I'll follow wherever you lead. I only said it's risky; and so it is. They may have got permission to camp out, but we sha'n't be able to get permission to come out at night and raid their camp."

Frank Monk grinned.

"I don't expect to. We shall have to get out of the Grammar School after lights out, without anybody knowing anything about it."

"Well, we three have done as much before," said Lane. "But I don't know about a big party doing it."

"And we shall want a big party, to go for a dozen Saints," Carboy remarked.

Frank Monk nodded.

"We might bring two dozen fellows, to make sure of having an easy thing of it," he said. "We shall manage it. If three can get out of the dormitory window, and over the wall, I don't see why twenty can't."

"Well, we're game, anyway," said Carboy; "and it would be ripping fun to break up their camp."

"I should say so—rather!"

"Then it's a go."

And the three Grammarians discussed the plan as they tramped homewards, and from the gleeful chuckles that escaped them every now and then, it was pretty clear that they looked upon their plot as certain of success, and the defeat of the juniors of St. Jim's as a foregone conclusion.

## CHAPTER 12.

### The Campers.

"BAI Jove, you know, I weally think I'm gettin' wathah peckish," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It's a long while past tea-time, I think, deah boys."

"Well, we've about planned out the camp," said Blake. "It's about time we were getting back to St. Jim's."

"What pwice the sandwiches?"

"Oh, you can eat your sandwiches as you go."

"But I haven't any. I couldn't cawwy any, you wemembah, as I was afwaid some of the gwease might ooze through and spoil my clothes."

"Oh, yes, I remember."

"Pway give me some of yours, Blake."

"Sorry, old son, but Herries and I have eaten them all."

"Weally, Blake, that was wathah inconsidewate. Pway give me some of yours, Dig."

"Haven't any," said Digby.

"You had some when we came out. Where are they?"

Digby tapped the third button of his waistcoat.

"Weally, this is wotten. Have you got a sandwich to spare, Tom Mewwy?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"All gone, Gussy. We three have just finished them."

"Then I must appeal to you, Figgins."

"Too late," grinned Figgins. "Kerr and I have had a few, and Fatty has bolted the rest. Too late, my son."

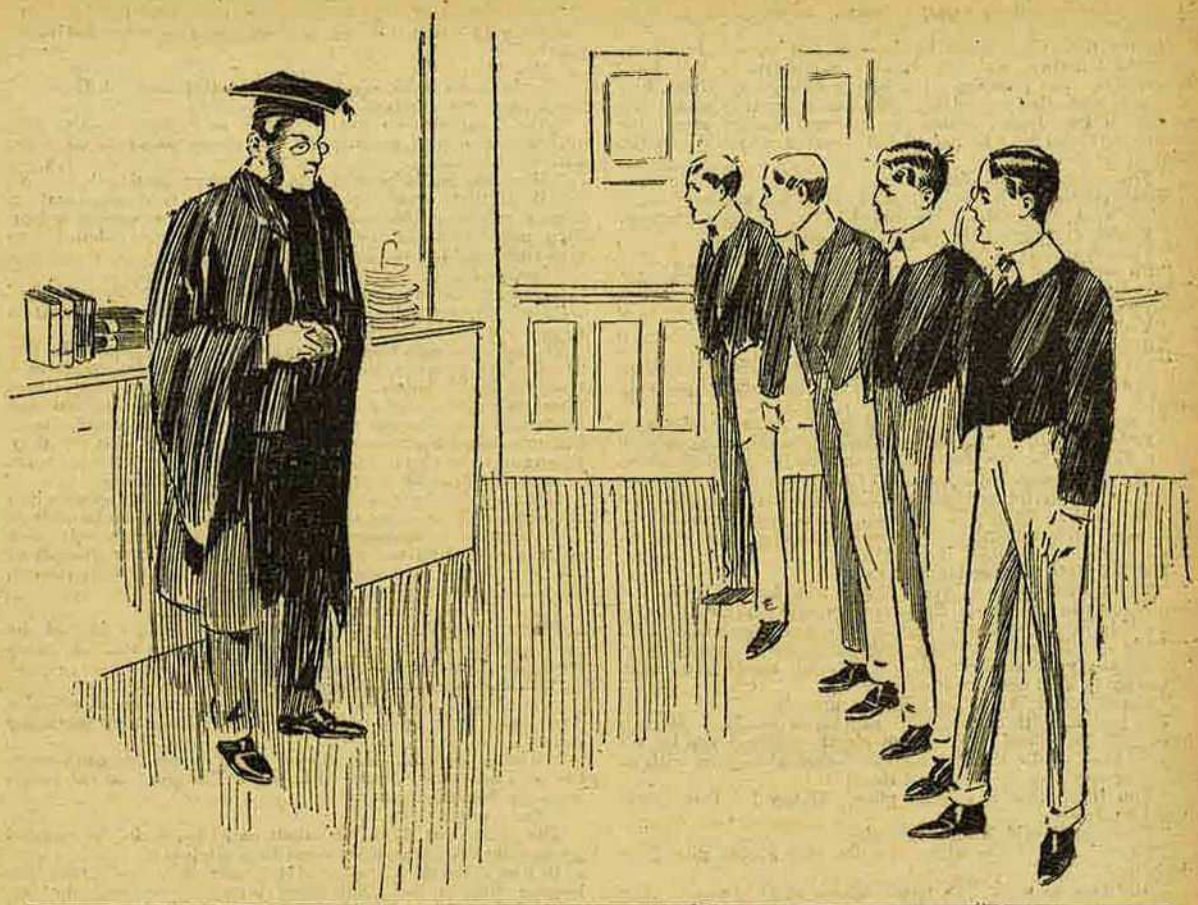
The swell of the School House looked disgusted.

"Well, of all the wottahs——"

"Perhaps you'll be able to carry some next time," suggested Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Time we got back," said Tom Merry. "Come on. Here.



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

Gussy, I've found some aniseed balls. They've been in my pocket some time, and they're rather dusty, but you can have them."

"Thank you, but I don't think I will twouble you," said D'Arcy.

The juniors returned to the school in very good spirits—excepting Arthur Augustus. He was hungry, and rather regretted that he had not been able to carry any sandwiches. The school tea was over long before the juniors came in, and the swell of St. Jim's had to be content with the remains of a rabbit-pie in the study cupboard. He looked indignant for the rest of the evening, but the chums were too busy making plans and preparations to notice it.

The campers had plenty to see to. Various consignments from various homes were expected on the morrow; and then, as Blake said, they would really get to business. The following day the juniors were painfully good, and their kind teachers had absolutely no fault to find with them. They did not mean to risk being detained that evening. The school hours went off well—and ended at last. When classes were dismissed, the Terrible Three came out of their class-room with a whoop of joy, and dashed up to their study. There were parcels for all of them, their friends and relations having nobly come up to the scratch. The chums of Study No. 6 were equally well provided. Especially Arthur Augustus. A huge packing-case of gear had come down for him, and a registered letter from his "governor" containing a ten-pound note. Figgins & Co. came over from the New House, and they also had a tale to tell of arriving parcels.

"We shall be jolly well fixed, take it all in all," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy; "and we shall be jolly well loaded deah boy, in gettin' these things down to the camp."

"Ca..t be helped," said Tom Merry. "We can carry them. Where's your canoe?"

"It hasn't awwived yet. My governah made them send off these things in a huwwy, and the canoe is to follow to-mowwow."

"Have you got that ten-pound note?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good! I dare say it will come in handy."

"We shall want a lot of grub," said Fatty Wynn. "Gussy had better hand over the note to me, and I'll change it in the tuckshop, and get the stuff."

"Vewy good. I am much obliged to you, deah boy, for takin' the twouble."

Fatty Wynn grinned gleefully as he fingered the crisp tenner.

"Will you want any change out of this?" he asked.

"Bai Jove! Wathah!"

"How much?"

"Look here, Gussy isn't going to stand more than a couple of pounds," said Figgins. "We're all going to stand our whack, too."

"Pway excuse me, Figgins, I would weally like it to be my tweat this time."

"Yes, but——"

"You would weally be confewwin' a favah on me, deah boy."

"We can't——"

"Yaas, wathah! I insist! Make it five, Wynn."

"Well, if you insist," said Figgins, "we'll let you have your way, as it's a special occasion. We'll stand a big treat to you fellows when Marmaduke comes back. He's the only bloated millionaire in the New House, you see. Gussy, you're a good little ass, and you shall have your little way for once."

"Vewy good, Figgins; but I object to bein' chawactewised as an ass."

"Let's have some grub and get off," said Herries. "We've got plenty to do to get the camp fixed up before dark. The evenings are beginning to draw in a bit now."

"Quite right. Where's Fatty?"

"Gone to change the tenner," grinned Figgins. "I expect he'll come back double width. Let's get these things done up into handy parcels. We shall want a garden fork and a spade and a rake for clearing the ground."

"Bettah have a lawn mowah, too, deah boys."

"Yes, I can see a tribe of Indians with a lawn mowah," said Blake witheringly. "Why don't you suggest a sewing-machine, too?"

"But we want to clear the gwound."

"Too rough for a lawn-mower, ass!" said Digby. "A pair

of big shears would be handy, though. It will want a lot of clearing."

By the time the various implements and utensils had been gathered together, and the various paraphernalia had been fastened up into packages of a handy size, Fatty Wynn had returned with the provisions. He was staggering under the weight of two huge baskets, and several smears round his mouth indicated that he had already started operations on the contents of the same.

"Now we're off," said Tom Merry.

Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of the school, met the juniors as they went downstairs. He smiled as he saw their burdens.

"You're starting for the camp?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'll carry that tent for you, if you like, Blake, and you can help with the rest," said the stalwart Sixth-Former. "I'm coming along."

"You, Kildare!"

Kildare laughed.

"I'm not coming to camp with you. But the Head has asked me to walk down there with you, and see that you are properly fixed."

"I say, Kildare, it's jolly good of you to come," said Blake.

"Though you'd rather be left alone!" laughed the captain of St. Jim's, as he put the folded tent over his broad shoulder.

"Oh, no, really. We shouldn't like a master to be sent along, or an interfering beast like Knox the prefect; but we'd be jolly glad to have you, Kildare. Look here," said Blake, in a burst of generosity. "If you like to camp out with us, Kildare, you can be chief, if you like."

The big Sixth-Former laughed again.

"That's very good of you, Blake; but I don't think I'll impose on you like that. But since you don't object, I'll give you a little advice and assistance in getting the camp to rights."

"We are all weally awfully obliged, Kildare," said D'Arcy. "I wegard your conduct on the pwesent occasion as bein' womarkably kind and vewy pwopah."

"Thank you, D'Arcy," said Kildare gravely.

The juniors, with the stalwart captain of St. Jim's at their head, left the school, and set out for the selected site by the sloping bank of the Feeder. Kildare looked about him with an eye of approval as they reached the spot.

"You think this is a good place, Kildare?" Tom Merry asked anxiously.

"First-rate," said Kildare cheerily.

"Vewy good. I was wight in lettin' you choose this place, deah boys."

"And now to work," said the captain of St. Jim's. "I've only got an hour to spare."

And willingly enough the juniors set to work under the direction of the Sixth-Former.

## CHAPTER 13.

### In Camp—A Night Surprise.

KILDARE left Tom Merry & Co. at the end of the hour; but in that time a great deal had been done. A dozen active juniors, working hard under the orders of a sensible leader, could get through much. The ground had been cleared of bush and bramble, and a trench dug. The three tents had been set up and secured, and Kildare had seen that they were not likely to blow over if the wind rose in the night. The hour had been well spent, and the juniors were looking tired but satisfied when Kildare said good-bye.

"Mind what you get up to, that's all," was Kildare's parting injunction. "Mind, the Head relies upon you to behave yourselves, and not do any damage, or anything you would not do at St. Jim's."

"He twusts to our honah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity. "We are hardly likely to do anythin' that would be like abusin' his faith in us, Kildare."

"Very good," said the senior. "Good night; and mind you turn up in good time for morning lessons to-morrow."

"Rely upon us," said Blake.

"Good-night, Kildare."

The captain of St. Jim's disappeared into the wood, and his footsteps died away. The sun was setting in the west, and a red glow came through the tree-tops and was mirrored in the stream.

"By Jove, this is ripping!" said Tom Merry. "Better than sleeping in a dormitory, isn't it, eh?"

"Yes, rather. Nothing like camping out."

"In the fine weather," said Lowther.

"Well, it's fine now, you croaker. And a little rain wouldn't hurt us, either, in these tents," said Blake. "Do you know, I fancy there will be room enough for thirteen of us in the tents, without building those jahkahls."

"Hyahkahls," said Manners.

"Well, whatever they are. I think we shall have room enough, and it's getting dusky now, and we've got to gather wood for the camp-fire."

"And I'm jolly hungry," said Fatty Wynn.

"It's colder here than it is indoors, too," said Figgins. "We can do with a fire. I say, are we going to keep watch to-night?"

"Oh, yes, rather!"

"I forgot to bring my bulldog," said Herries. "If one of you likes to cut across to the school, and——"

"Yes, I can see one of us doing it," said Blake. "I'm jolly glad you forgot the beast. He would keep us awake all night with his barking."

"He would let us know if any enemy were coming."

"Well, there won't be any enemy, so it doesn't matter. There's nobody in this wood of a night, except a poacher or two. They might think of stealing something, perhaps; but I suppose they wouldn't tackle a dozen of us."

"Rather not."

"Get in the firewood, and Fatty Wynn can start the cooking."

"I'm quite ready," said Fatty Wynn, who was munching an apple for a start.

The fuel was soon collected, and the camp-fire was built. The woods were growing darker, and the faint, eerie sounds of a wood at night became audible in the stillness. There was something very lonely about the spot—something curious and uncanny in the thought that they were a couple of miles from the nearest human habitation, left to themselves with the night closing in upon them. Figgins voiced the general feeling when he remarked that he was glad there were a lot of them.

The camp-fire burned up brightly, sending ruddy gleams into the night. The cooking apparatus was all that could be desired, under the circumstances—Fatty Wynn had taken care that nothing should be lacking in that direction. The Falstaff of the New House was soon busily at work in his shirt-sleeves, cooking an extremely substantial supper.

"Now for the war-paint," said Blake cheerily.

While the cooking was proceeding, the juniors donned the garb and war-paint of the Blackfeet. Without that the camp would not have seemed realistic.

"Ready," announced Fatty Wynn.

"So are we," said Tom Merry. "I say, you know, redskins don't have their grub on plates, and I believe they don't use forks."

"Must be decent," said Blake. "Of course, we can't carry the idea out to its limits. Blessed if I'm going to eat bacon with my fingers, anyway."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors sat down, on knolls and logs, or in the cropped grass, round the camp-fire, to eat their supper.

It was quite dark now, and the only light came from the leaping, blazing fire. The thick branches overhead shut off most of the light from the twinkling stars, which were mirrored in the murmuring stream beside the camp. The fire, well fed with branch and log, burned and blazed merrily, and the flare danced on the faces of the juniors, smeared with red and yellow ochre, with a curious effect.

A stranger sight had probably never been seen in the wood than the thirteen amateur redskins camping there, and eating their supper round the fire. A stranger coming upon the scene suddenly might have imagined himself transported into a glade in the heart of the American forests, so realistic was the scene.

"By Jove, this is ripping!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"More bacon, Merry?"

"No, thanks."

"There's the rice pudding."

"I'm finished, thanks, old son."

"I'm not," said Blake. "I'll trouble you for some of that rice pudding, Fatty. You are a jolly good cook, my boy, and I wish we had you in the School House—only you'd be rather a trouble when grub was scarce."

"Bai Jove, this is about the best wheeze we've ever wheezed, I think," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I feel wathah dirty with this paint on my face, and it is beginnin' to be a little chilly, but it's weally wippin'."

"I'm getting sleepy," said Manners, with a yawn. "Surprising how work makes you tired, isn't it? So does a jolly good feed, I think."

"Well, there's your blankets ready," said Digby.

"Good. I think I'll turn in."

And Manners was soon fast asleep, rolled up in blankets, with his feet to the fire. Fatty Wynn was the first to follow his example. Fatty Wynn had done full justice to the feed, and he was sleepy. He was soon in the arms of Morpheus.

"What about keeping watch?" said Blake.

"Well, I hardly think it's necessary," said Tom Merry. "You see, there can't possibly be any enemy, and so——"

"You thought we ought to keep watch before you got sleepy."

"Well, that makes a difference, of course. But, really——"

"There wouldn't have been any need if we had brought my bulldog," remarked Herries.

"Well, you didn't bring it."

"Blake's chief of this tribe, I believe," remarked Kerr. "Suppose he keeps watch. A chief has to do all sorts of things a common or garden warrior doesn't."

"Good!" came a general chorus of agreement.

"Oh, rats!" said Blake warmly. "I'll keep first watch if you like. I'm not going to remain awake all night."

"Well, keep first watch, and then chuck it."

"It's not necessary."

"Yaas, wathah! I weally feel too fatigued to keep watch at all, deah boys."

"Come on; let's get to sleep. It will be all right."

"Oh, very well," said Blake. "I yield to the majority."

And the juniors turned in. It would have been a close fit in the three tents for the whole party, but the fine night made two or three prefer the open air. Manners and Fatty Wynn were both sleeping by the fire, and Herries joined them there, and then Kerruish. The rest of the juniors went three to a tent, and found room enough. They were very quickly fast asleep.

The fire had been banked up high with fuel, to make it last. It burnt up higher, and blazed brightly into the night; and then, as the wood was consumed, it gradually sank.

Lower and lower sank the fire, and deeper and thicker grew the shadows over the camp of the redskins of St. Jim's.

At intervals a bright flame leaped up, making the dusk deeper when it fell again. But the juniors were sleeping soundly, and if strange and inexplicable sounds broke the silence of the camp, they did not hear them.

Tom Merry was dreaming. It seemed to him that there was something on his chest—that a weight was upon him which was growing heavier. He suddenly started and awoke—awoke to find that it was not all a dream. There was something over him—something clinging and almost suffocating.

He put out his hand in amazement, and it was caught against the canvas of the tent. He realised what had happened. The tent was down, and the canvas was sprawled over the sleepers within.

"My hat!" murmured Tom Merry sleepily. "The tent's down. I wonder——"

There was cause for wonder. There was hardly a breath of wind, and the tent had been well secured under the supervision of Kildare. Unless the ropes had been cut from the pegs—— And Tom Merry started at the idea. It was the only explanation, and it meant that there was an enemy in the camp.

He struggled up under the flopping canvas. There was a chuckle in the gloom.

"Hallo, they're awake, Frank!"

Tom Merry gave a jump.

"The Grammarians!"

He had recognised Carboy's voice. He struggled desperately to throw off the clinging canvas, and shouted to his comrades to wake.

Other shouts were ringing through the night now.

"Collar them!"

"Down with St. Jim's!"

"Hurrah!"

"Wake up!" shouted Tom Merry. "Grammar cads! Buck up, St. Jim's!"

"Yaas, wathah!" gasped D'Arcy, struggling with the canvas.

"Ow!" gasped Digby. "Keep your foot off my nose, ass!"

"I'm weally sowwy, Dig, but——"

"Let's get out!" gasped Tom Merry.

They struggled out of the overturned tent. But it was only to emerge into the hands of foes. A dozen hands grasped them and they were dragged down, fighting furiously.

"Shoulder to shoulder!" yelled Figgins.

The fire blazed up as a Grammarian stirred it. A wild and fitful light played over the camp. It revealed the juniors of St. Jim's, all awake now, fighting desperately against the overwhelming Grammarians. There were twenty or more fellows at the back of Frank Monk, and they had the advantage of a surprise on their side. Some of the redskins were already prisoners, held fast by the grinning Grammarians, and it was evident that the rest had no chance.

"Sock it to them!" roared Frank Monk. "Go it, Grammar School!"

"Hurrah!"

"Buck up, St. Jim's!"

The juniors fought gallantly, trampling through the camp, over embers and piled fuel, blankets and scattered utensils. It was a desperate fight, but the odds were too great. Once the Saints rallied, and the Grammarians were driven back; but they came on again, irresistible in numbers.

"Collar them!" rang out Frank Monk's voice. "We'll march them back to St. Jim's in that rig. Don't let them get away!"

Tom Merry snapped his teeth.

"We've got to hook it," he muttered. "They're too many for us."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Come on, then," said Blake savagely. "I—I never foresaw this, you know. But we're all going—or none. Sink or swim together."

"Right-ho."

The juniors of St. Jim's had struggled together. In a body, still presenting a bold front to the enemy, they retreated from the camp. The Grammarians, who had not come through the fight scathless, were content to let them go. They sent a yell of derisive triumph after the retreating juniors that made their blood boil. But there was nothing for it but retreat.

"We can't go to St. Jim's," growled Blake. "If we turn up there, licked, we shall be chipped to death. The Grammar cads can't stay out long, anyway."

And the discomfited redskins, lurking in the bushes, watched the enemy in possession of their camp. The Grammarians, too, knew that they could not stay long. But they made the most of their time. They wrecked the tents, and scattered everything in every direction. They turned the orderly camp into a pandemonium, and the clothes of the juniors were carefully mixed up and scattered. Upon the best of the provisions Frank Monk and his friends feasted in sight of the lurking Blackfeet. When they were satisfied with the havoc they had wrought, the enemy retreated, and the camp was left deserted.

Then the redskins came back. They looked upon the scene of wreckage that made them almost rush at once upon the track of the foe for vengeance. But it would have been useless, and, as Tom Merry philosophically remarked, they had to grin and bear it.

"This wouldn't have happened if we had been prepared," said Blake disconsolately.

"No," said Figgins. "We'd better have a new chief next time."

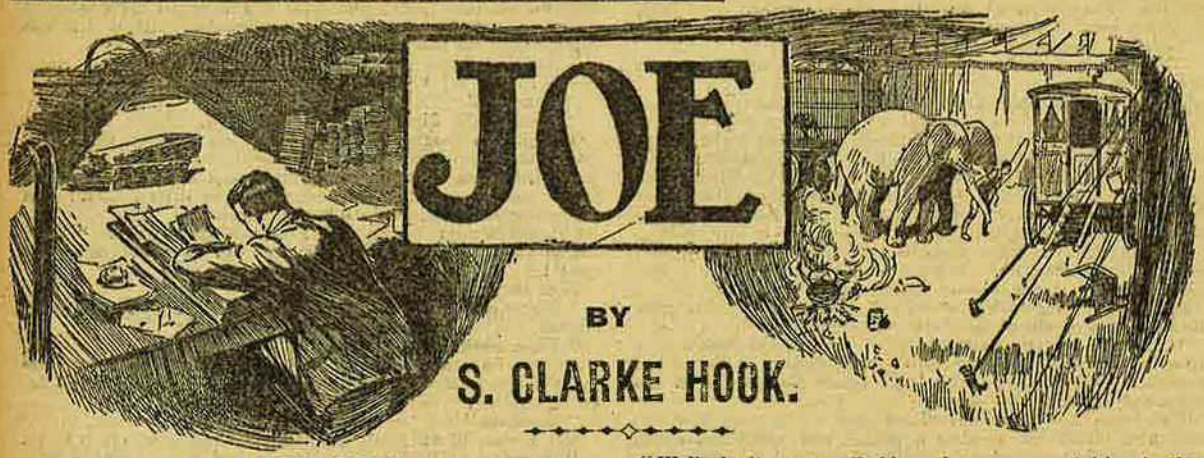
"We'll be more on our guard next time, anyway," said Tom Merry. "It was the surprise that did it. There's no disgrace in being licked by two to one. We'll make them sing small for it, all the same. Let's turn in."

The juniors set the camp to rights as well as they could by the light of the flickering fire, and turned in. But there was little more sleep that night for the amateur redskins, and even Blake could not consider as a success that first night in camp.

THE END.

***(Another splendid double-length school tale of Tom Merry and his chums next Thursday, entitled "The Rival Camps," by Martin Clifford. Please order your copy of THE GEM in advance. Price 1d.)***

**SPLENDID NEW TALE OF CIRCUS LIFE.**



# JOE

BY

## S. CLARKE HOOK.

### READ THIS FIRST.

Joe throws up office work, and while tramping along a country lane meets Jim, who is running away from Muerte, a bullying circus proprietor. Joe and Jim chum up and join Muerte's rival, Ruabino. From motives of revenge, Muerte bribes Luigi, Ruabino's former lion-tamer, to let loose his one-time charges. Not content with this, Luigi, with Giles, his villainous accomplice, knocks Rubby into the river, from which he is rescued by Joe. Muerte swears he will follow Ruabino's circus and so ruin him. Ruabino then starts off with his traction-engine and caravans. They travel some miles when Leo, who is in charge of the engine, learns that there is an inn at the top of a steep hill before them. He tells Joe and Jim that he is going to speak diplomatically to Ruabino with a view to getting a good tea at the inn.

*(Now go on with the story.)*

### A Fortunate Accident.

"I'd rather work it straight with him," said Joe. "I mayn't understand him as well as you do, Leo, but it seems to me he isn't the sort of man you want to understand. He is good-hearted, and I'd rather lose forty teas than deceive him."

"I'm not going to deceive him, Joe!" exclaimed Leo. "I tell you that you can't deceive Rubby. He sees through your move. But you gain your end, and that's exactly what we are going to do this evening. Showmen are like lions. All you have got to learn is how to treat them, and that's what I am going to show you. Of course, you two fellows are fresh here, and you cannot be expected to know the ropes as well as I do. Leave it to me."

"All right, Leo," exclaimed Jim, "we will leave it to you; but I tell you straight that Joe is the headpiece, and that he could manage Rubby forty times better than I could, and say ten times better than you could."

"Rats!" growled Leo. "I don't think I have given you cause to talk like that, Jim. We have always been good friends; but, of course, if you like to turn me off, and take to Joe, there's an end of the matter. We sha'n't quarrel."

"No fear!" laughed Jim. "You box too well for that. We are old chums, Leo, and I hope we shall always get older chums; but you have got to bear this in your noddle. You are a beastly jealous fellow. It's your nature, and you can't help it; and you think you can do a little more than is the case—though I admit on the high rope I'm not in it with you, and I don't for a moment believe that I have got your daring. Joe could lick us both with managing wild beasts—and men. However, if you are determined to deal with Rubby, do so, and good luck, because we are very much interested parties."

They reached the foot of the hill a little before dusk, and Leo had let down the fire so much that they certainly would not have been able to get up it.

"Here he comes!" exclaimed Joe.

"Well, you see what a muggins I will make of him!" exclaimed Leo.

"What are you stopping for?" demanded Rubby.

"No steam! You can't run a traction-engine up a steep hill without steam. This one does not run by clockwork, Rubby. It might run down hill without steam, but it jolly well won't run up."

"Well, what did you want to let the steam run down for?"

"Well, don't you see, Rubby, when you are stoking in the heat of the day, you have so many things to attend to, that you are apt to forget to put on coal, and then the steam runs down; but it won't matter. We shall have plenty of steam in three-quarters of an hour. Now, there is a comfortable little inn at the top of this hill, and while you are standing us a good feed, the steam will be getting up, then we will all come back and get up the hill in no time."

"But it's too bad to let you do the stoking the whole time."

"Oh, I have only taken it on lately!"

"And that's when the fire went down. Doesn't it seem strange that it should have failed us just at the bottom of this hill, when you know that there is an inn at the top?"

"Stranger things than that occur."

"Well, I suppose they do. You think there is no help for it?"

"I'm sure of it. You can't go up the hill without steam. Of course, you and Jupiter might have a try to pull it up, but I don't think that you would succeed. Would you like to try?"

"No. We will leave it where it is, and come and have a feed. By the way, Leo, I don't care to leave that engine alone."

"No one will run away with it."

"That is true enough, but it needs a competent stoker to get up steam, and as I haven't the slightest doubt that you are one, why, I will let you have the honour of doing the work. You other two can come and have dinner with me. The rest of the company have got plenty of provisions in the caravans."

"I say, Rubby!" gasped Leo. "That's all my eye, you know. This engine is safe enough, and I'm just as hungry as Joe and Jim."

"Well, you can get something from the caravans."

"But I prefer it at the inn."

"My poor misguided lad, you can't have all you prefer in this life."

"You don't expect me to work my life out while you are gorging at the inn?"

"Not a bit of it. You won't work harder than is good for you, if I know anything of your nature."

"It won't take me a minute to make up the fire."

"Very well, you can spend the rest of the time waving that little red flag in front of the engine in case restive horses come along."

"Oh, I say, that's all nonsense, you know! I'm jolly hungry!"

"Well, I won't tell you to go and eat coke, dear boy, but you will get some nice food while you are getting up steam. We shall be having a crust."

"You be hanged, Rubby! You know very well you will have a hot supper, that is a second dinner."

"I'm not sure; but, look here, Leo, I tell you what I will do with you."

"Yes, what?"

"Why, I will tell you exactly what we do have when I return, and you have got up steam."

"I'm not going to stand this, Rubby! It isn't fair! I have been working myself to death to oblige you, and——"

"You can't have worked so very hard, my beauty, or you would never have let the fire go down at the bottom of this hill. Well, all you have got to do is to get it up again, and just look after the engine till we come back. We sha'n't be more than an hour. Ta-ta!"

"You see, Leo," exclaimed Jim, "I told you that you would have been wiser to let Joe deal with the matter."

"It's rotten!" growled Leo. "I have a very good mind to give him the sack and go over to Muerte. I can't make it out. He's generally as soft as butter."

"Don't you believe it, old chap! He's pretty keen, and I vow he's good-natured. I'm sorry for you, Leo, but it can't be helped. I dare say you will get something decent in the caravans."

Now, Leo knew that he could have got as much bread-and-butter as he required, with perhaps a bloater, or a rasher of bacon; but he also knew that Joe and Jim would have a very substantial meal—not that he minded that, but he did mind missing it, and it made him so savage that he punished himself still more.

"What's the matter, Leo?" demanded Jupiter, coming up.

"Why, that greedy beast Rubby has gone on to the inn to feed, and I know for a fact that he had a mighty big dinner. Joe told me so."

"Well, I suppose he's entitled to a good supper, if he likes to pay for it, and I will say Rubby isn't mean with feeding. I'm going to have tea with the rest. We've got plenty of kippers. You had better come."

"I'm not going to eat kippers."

"Why, the boy must be mad! Not eat kippers and bread-and-butter for your tea. Ha, ha, ha! What more do you expect? I was jolly thankful to get a crust of bread when I was your age."

"I don't care. I won't have any tea. It's a piece of injustice, and I shall speak my mind to Rubby when he comes back."

"Bother it! How can it be unjust when he stands us kippers? Bread-and-butter is the usual thing, but he throws in kippers, and I tell you I think it decent. It's what Vera and the other girls will have, so it ought to be good enough for you."

"That's not the question, Jupiter. It is a matter of principle with me. He has invited Joe and Jim, and left me out."

"Then I tell you what it is, my lad, if you won't come to a downright good tea because your chums are invited to a better one, it isn't from principle at all; it's from want of principle."

"I suppose you think it plucky to tell me that I'm a scamp, just because you know that it would be impossible for me to tackle the strong man of the circus; but I tell you this, Jupiter, if any other fellow had insulted me in the manner you have, I would have gone for him."

"And he would have had a rough time of it. I taught you boxing, and I know. All the same, I never did insult you, boy, and when you get over your beastly temper you will see what an idiot you are making of yourself. Haven't I told you fifty times never to lose your temper? I suppose next time you box with Joe you will hurt him all you can, for the simple reason that Rubby has invited him to tea, and left you out."

"I sha'n't do anything of the sort, and you know it. Joe is a decent chap, and I like him. We are excellent chums, and it isn't his fault if Rubby chooses to behave like a beast. You must see yourself that it isn't fair."

"Well, Joe had a slap-up dinner with Rubby. He told me so."

"I didn't, and I've worked under Rubby for a lot longer than anyone else."

"He didn't invite me to tea; in fact, he refused to do so."

"Well, he didn't invite me to tea. How can he invite all? I expect he had his reasons, and I don't see that there's anything in it. You have always been satisfied with bread-and-butter; and I tell you that we have got kippers thrown in to-night. If that isn't good enough for you, it's good enough for me, and if you don't come to it, Leo, I shall put you down as a jealous ass!"

"I won't come!" declared Leo. "And I tell you that Rubby has not heard the last of this. I'll not slave away here for him. I've risked my life to please his spectators, and he has treated me with base ingratitude."

"You know how Rubby has treated you, and I know, so we won't argue the matter. If you think what you are saying is true, your views and mine differ, that's all. Now, are you coming to tea?"

"No."

"Very well, please yourself."

"I'll never touch a mouthful of his food again till he apologises for the manner in which he has treated me."

"Ha, ha, ha! You don't know Rubby if you think he is going to apologise when no blame attaches to him. But you will see."

Quite an hour and a half later Rubby, accompanied by Joe and Jim, returned, and even then none of them appeared to be in any hurry.

"Well, my lad," exclaimed Rubby, "I see you have got up steam, and that's all right. We had steaks and chops, new potatoes and mushrooms, new bread—rather indigestible, but nice; tea—bad with meat, but still, we had it. Had your tea yet?"

"No."

"How's that?"

"I don't require any."

"Why, it is the first time in my life that I remember you not requiring your tea! Well, run and get it now. You must be hungry by this time."

"Look here, Rubby," exclaimed Leo, "I don't consider that you have treated me in a proper manner to-night, and I tell you straight that while I remain in your service I shall never touch a mouthful of food supplied by you. I shall buy my own. I'll always do my best for you as regards performing, but everyone ought to have a certain amount of pride."

"Decidedly, dear lad. You appear to have your own pride, and a few other people's thrown in. Now, Leo, you are a good-hearted lad, and I like you. I meant to give you a little playful lesson, and to show you that you can't fool men of the world as easily as you imagine."

"I am quite prepared to accept an apology."

"Do you want me to apologise for not having invited you to tea?"

"You know I don't want anything of the sort."

"Very well. Show me how I have insulted you, and if I can see it in the same light, I will apologise."

"You have tried to make a fool of me."

"Don't you think you have succeeded in making a fool of yourself instead?"

"If I make up my mind to a thing, I'll do it, or break my neck."

"That's where you excel, Leo," said Rubby calmly. "A more daring performer and one more conscientious in his work I have never met. But you have the one great fault of thinking that you know too much. I have had the same fault all my life, and I am going to cure you. Now, if you choose to punish yourself in order to convince me of what I already know, do it. I don't care. I can be as obstinate as you."

"I have said that I will never touch a mouthful of food supplied by you again, and I will stick to it."

"Go steadily on, my lad. Don't get playing the fool, because it might mean more than damage to property. Joe, I shall trust you. Hope I'm not offending Jim as well as Leo."

Then Joe started the engine, and they slowly climbed the steep hill.

"Look here, old chaps," exclaimed Leo, "you must not think that I am jealous, because that isn't the case. I'm not that sort. It's the insult I look at."

"That's bosh, Leo!" exclaimed Joe. "Why, Rubby has been speaking in the most glowing terms about you. He said he never knew a braver or more high-spirited lad, and we might have said that he ought not to have said that in our presence, and that it was an insult to us. I knew jolly well that it was the truth as far as I am concerned, though I think Jim would run you close."

"That's rot!" grumbled Leo. "I wouldn't dare to go into the lions' cage, and I don't believe I would have dared to do what you did in the river, when you saved Rubby's life. Oh, I know all about it. Rubby told us all, and seemed to be surprised that you had never said a word about it. Rubby is a good sort. I know that, and he's been awfully good to me, only I won't stand an insult. He shall apologise, so shall Jupiter, else we will not be friends."

"Here, we ought to light up!" exclaimed Joe; "and, what's more, we ought to have someone walking ahead with a red flag which no one can see. At any rate, as we are at the top of the hill we will light up."

"All right!" exclaimed Leo. "I'll see to that. I've got some matches."

"What are we going to do with him, Joe?" inquired Jim, as Leo jumped down.

"Leave him to Rubby," answered Joe. "I'll back Rubby to bring any man to his senses, let alone a lad. Leo is in the wrong, and he knows it. Rubby is determined to drive his lesson home. He wants to show us that he is master, although he gives us every liberty, and treats us as his friends and equals. He's a splendid man, is Rubby. I know one other like him; but we shall not meet again on this earth."

Once more they started, and Joe drove that engine to the best of his ability, which was not great with driving engines.

It was quite impossible for them to reach their pitch that night, and as they passed no more inns, Leo began to get frightfully hungry; nor did he quite appreciate his comrades' chaff. They considered that he had acted like an

idiot, and did not fail to tell him so, and at about midnight he began to think that they were right.

"You have got an awfully steep hill to descend here," said Leo. "I would advise you to shut off steam."

This Joe did, and they went rattling down that hill at a fine pace.

"You turn to the right at the bottom," explained Leo, "but you will be able to see the lane in the moonlight. You must mind how you get round, or you are likely to go into the ditch."

If Joe was not a very skilful driver, at least he was a lucky one, and there is every probability that he would have rounded the dangerous corner; but as he was just about to do so—or attempt it—he saw a light rushing towards the engine at about fifty miles an hour, and the next moment he knew by the horn that it was a motor-car.

Joe did his best to avoid that car, although there was not the slightest possibility of doing so, seeing the train of waggons and caravans that he was drawing. Unless the car pulled up in time, it was bound to run into something.

The hind wheels of the first waggon ran into the ditch, and as this waggon contained the lions, Joe promptly stopped his engine, for fear of further accidents. The remaining waggons swerved across to the left of the lane, and it was just about as bad a block as Joe could have achieved, had he tried

The chauffeur of the strange motor-car jammed down his brakes so suddenly that his tyres burst, and his car spun round and round, and then toppled over into the ditch.

"Are you hurt, old chap?" inquired Joe calmly. "Ha, ha ha! You look rather muddy. How dare you drive along a lane at that pace? You ought to be ashamed of yourself, and I shall certainly give you in custody for reckless driving, and for flinging two male lions into a ditch."

The chauffeur picked himself up He was a big man, standing well over six feet, and proportionately broad. He had just commenced to express his feelings, when Rubby rushed up to see what was the matter.

"What's your name, dear boy?" inquired Rubby.

"Parks is my name, you bloated brute, and I'm jest going to show you what my nature is."

"In that case, will you allow me to introduce you to my friend here, Mr. Jupiter? He is a gentleman whom I feel sure you will like when you know him. It's a fine moonlight, isn't it, dear boy? But whatever made you drive into the ditch like that? Come, come! That language is very indifferent!"

"What do you mean by driving into me, you hound?" howled Parks.

"Ah," exclaimed Rubby, "if you desire that question answered, I must beg to refer you to my driver, Joe, a most competent man! He can eat an excellent supper while his friend Leo gets up steam, and he can drive down any hill, however steep, and stop at the bottom, if there's a convenient ditch, as I see there is in this case."

"Well, that was Parks's fault, Rubby," declared Joe. "If the silly idiot hadn't been coming along at about fifty miles an hour, I should not have run that waggon into the ditch! I tried to avoid the maniac, and succeeded!"

"Then, my dear Parks," exclaimed Rubby, bowing politely to the infuriated man, "there is nothing more to be said! We did not collide with you; you did not collide with us. What more do you want?"

"You empty-headed brute, you caused me to stop!"

"How fast was he really going, Joe?"

"A good fifty miles an hour."

"Then you have to thank my driver for stopping you, Parks. You might have broken your neck, if he had allowed you to go on. As it is, you have only upset your motor-car, and, apparently, your temper."

"If you don't fetch them waggons out of the way, and let me get past, I'll break your neck!" roared Parks.

"See here," exclaimed Jupiter, stepping forward, "Rubby does not undertake that business! If there is any fighting to be done, I always do the work. You must understand, my good man, that this is a well-regulated circus, and that we each have our various duties. Mine are very various; still, I am always pleased to do them, and if you really want your head punched, it will give me great pleasure to do it for you."

Now, Parks—as he called himself—had not the slightest doubt in the world that he could knock Jupiter silly. He was taller, and looked considerably heavier, and he happened to know that he was a very good boxer. But he did not know that Jupiter was the same, and that he was also the strong man in the circus, so Parks went for him in a most reckless manner, and he received one between the eyes that raised his temper, to say nothing of a big bump.

However, having begun the fight, Parks was not the sort of man to back out of it. He made another rush, and this time he received one that grassed him.

"You are not doing badly for a start, old chap," said Rubby. "Jupiter is a very fair hitter, as I dare say you have noticed; but as you are bigger than him, I dare say you will beat him, if you only keep on long enough—say for a month or so—or even a couple of weeks. I fancy your eyes will be black after that first round, Parks. Ha, ha, ha! There he goes again! Well, you are a silly kipper!"

"That's rather tantalising to you, isn't it, Leo?" inquired Joe. "Reminds you of your lost tea. But never mind, old chap. We are going to see some fun directly."

Parks could not have thought it funny. Jupiter guarded all his blows, and appeared to be able to hit him whenever he chose, and he chose pretty frequently, too. He ended up that round by dealing him a terrific blow in the chest, which effectually knocked all the fight out of him.

"All right," groaned Parks, struggling to his feet, but now keeping a respectful distance from his powerful adversary, "you have damaged my car, and assaulted me! I'll have the law on you for this!"

"I refer you to my engine-driver!" exclaimed Rubby, pointing towards Joe. "On this occasion he shall act as my solicitor."

"Right you are, Rubby!" exclaimed Joe. "I'll do that with pleasure, and send you in my bill of costs with still greater pleasure. I shall advise Signor Ruabino—who is the greatest showman on earth, in his own estimation—to pay you the full amount of your claim, provided you prove to my satisfaction that he has caused it."

"He has done a hundred pounds damage to my motor-car!"

"Well, he never touched your motor-car, old fellow. Don't you see, the accident was caused by your jamming on the brakes too quickly? Your car appeared to imagine that it was a top, and commenced to spin. You ought to be very thankful that you did not break your neck. No, Parks, you are out of court. Rubby's engine did not strike your car."

"It would have done if I had not stopped."

"It is quite impossible to say that. The traction-engine might have turned itself into a flying-machine, and soared upwards, in which case you would have passed under. We cannot deal with what might have happened. We are only considering what did happen, and as the engine never touched your car, it stands to reason that you were in the wrong. You were travelling far too fast in the first place, and in the second, a motor-car ought to be able to pull up if an obstacle gets in its way. Then there is another point. Are you the owner of that car?"

"Of course I am! Why?"

"Well, I can scarcely imagine a man of your appearance owning such a vehicle. You might own a donkey-cart, or, say, a wheelbarrow, but you don't look the least bit like the proprietor of a motor-car."

"Well, it happens to belong to me," declared Parks. "I don't want to go to law over the matter, and I am willing to accept ten pounds for the damage, and say no more about it. You must help me up with the car."

"One of Jupiter's duties," observed Joe. "I don't want to do his duties, else it might make him jealous. We are rather a jealous lot, are we not, Leo?"

"Oh, you attend to that idiot!" exclaimed Leo, knitting his brows as he saw that Rubby was laughing at him.

"You must prove to me that you are the rightful owner of the car," said Joe, with a majestic wave of his arm. "We shall not help you to get it out of the ditch until you do that."

"Of course I am the owner, you pigheaded boy!"

"It doesn't matter how stupid I am," observed Joe. "You have got to prove that you are the owner of the car. What is its number?"

"You can see it on the back."

"Well, you tell me what it is without looking. In fact, you can't look until we lift it out of the ditch for you."

"I shall send for help," declared Parks. "I shall take my portmanteau out of the car, and go——"

"No you won't, old chap," said Joe. "I shall advise Rubby to detain you. I have my suspicions that all is not right, and you won't touch anything in that car without Rubby's permission."

"Who will stop me?"

"Jupiter and Rubby; then there's Leo and Jim, and I'll watch the fun and squirt hot water over you out of the boiler."

"Look here," cried Parks, turning to Rubby, "I——"

"Nothing to do with me, dear boy," interposed Rubby. "I shall be entirely guided by my legal adviser, the same as I was entirely guided by him when he was my engine-driver. You see, he is a man of many parts."

"Be hanged! He is a boy, and you, as a man of the world, are surely not going to let a lad like that dictate to you as to what you should do."

"Well, you see, Joe is a sort of freak. I have lots of them in my employment. Leo there is another. He has turned off kippers and bread-and-butter, haven't you, Leo?"

"I don't see what you want to refer to me, for," growled Leo, who was getting rather tired of the chaff.

"Well, Joe," exclaimed Rubby, "it is for you to decide! If you say Parks is to take nothing out of the car, there is an end of the matter—at least, if that is not the end, Jupiter will soon put the finishing touches to it."

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," said Jupiter. "I have already blackened his eyes, but if you would like me to have a go at his nose, or any other part of his body that you might prefer, why, I will do it straight away."

"All right, then, I shall go for the police," declared Parks.

"No you won't!" exclaimed Joe. "We are going to keep you a prisoner, because we consider that you are a suspicious character. Burglaries have been committed with motor-cars, and there is nothing to tell us that you are not a burglar. You look far more like one than the owner of a car."

"The boy must be mad, and——"

"Stop thief!" roared a voice, and an elderly gentleman came galloping along the lane at a pace that appeared to be reckless, because not only was he of considerable age, but he was stout. However, he sat his horse remarkably well.

Parks no sooner caught sight of of him than he bolted through the hedge, and sped across the moonlit field.

Now, it might have been supposed that the old gentleman would have let matters remain as they were, but he did no such thing. Cracking his hunting-whip, he put his horse at the hedge, which, though a high one, he cleared in grand style, then he headed off the fugitive, and lashed him in a manner that caused him to howl at the top of his voice.

Parks made a bolt to the nearest hedge, but every now and then he was nearly lifted from his feet by the stinging cuts.

"Oh, stow it!" he howled. "You are lashing all the flesh off my back!"

"I'll teach you, you dog!" roared the old gentleman. "Take that, and that!"

Parks made another attempt to escape, but again his assailant headed him off, and dexterously drove him back to the lane. Parks crawled under the upset motor-car, and howled for mercy. He got it all right, but perhaps this was because the irate gentleman could not get at him with the whip.

"I'm Mr. Fowler, the owner of that motor-car, and that whining hound came to me as a gardener. The silly vagabond knows no more about gardening than a tom-cat, but I kept him out of charity, and to-night the ungrateful brute robbed me of all my plate and jewellery; or, at any rate, all he could lay his hands on. I expect it is in that car. But I don't care about that. What I do care is that he seized my wife by the throat, and threatened to strangle her if she uttered a sound. Unfortunately I was not in the house, and when I came in I found her in a half-fainting condition, while that hound had made his escape in my motor-car. A kinder-hearted mistress man never had, and this is the way he repays her. Oh, you ruffian, you deserve to be lashed within an inch of your life!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Joe. "You have made a very good beginning. But, I say, I am afraid we have not improved your motor-car. I tried to get out of the way, but he was coming along at a good fifty miles an hour."

"I don't care for the motor-car a bit, my lad. I don't care much about the jewellery; but I do care about my wife."

"I hope she is not hurt."

"I trust not; but she is very frightened."

"The accident was not really our fault," said Joe. "The brute jammed on his brakes too hard; the fact is, it was his fault for going so fast."

"Were you driving the engine?"

"Yes!"

"Well, come here."

"Eh? What about that whip? Ha, ha, ha! You can use it, you know. Parks will tell you that."

"My dear lad, you mistake me altogether. I wouldn't hurt a fly. Put those five pounds into your pocket for stopping the brute."

Then the old gentleman rode up to the engine, and handed Joe five pounds, while he suddenly gave a lash at Parks, who was venturing from beneath the sheltering car, and the miscreant quickly scrambled back, uttering a yell of pain, for the thong had caught him.

"Can I see the proprietor of this circus?" inquired Mr. Fowler.

"The great and only Ruabino!" exclaimed Joe. "Yes, there he stands. Did you ever see anything more beautiful. We call him Rubby for short, and it's quite as near his name as Ruabino."

"Mr. Ruabino," exclaimed the old gentleman, "I'm very pleased to make your acquaintance! You must come to my house, if you can spare the time, and bring that boy with you. He's a capital driver! I'm really thankful he stopped that hound."

"You have taken the law into your own hands," declared Parks, still crouching beneath the car. "You have no right to strike me, whatever I have done, and the least as you can do now is to let me go."

"Well, crawl out, you viper, and I will take the law into my own hands again!" cried Fowler. "Let you go—will I? I am an old man, and you are comparatively a young one, but just you creep from that hole, and you will see that I am not afraid of you. I have followed many a fox across country, and it will be a strange thing if I cannot follow you. No, I will get you the longest term of imprisonment that I can, and keep you from preying on society. You see, it is not even as though the scoundrel had been in need. He had a comfortable situation, and we trusted him. Took him without a character, and all he came for was to watch his opportunity of robbing us—and nearly murdering his mistress, who had treated him with absolute kindness.

"Such a man deserves no mercy, and he shall get none from me. Why, he would have murdered her had she not cried for help! I feel certain the cur would have strangled her. It is too horrible to contemplate, and I should be a scoundrel to let such a man be at large! Some other lady might suffer at his hands. Then, to talk his cant to me about flogging him—— Ah, you had better not let me catch sight of you, you utter rascal!" added the old gentleman, getting another cut in. "Look here, my friends! Will you bind his arms behind his back? Then I will take him to my house, and keep him a prisoner there till I can get the police."

"Certainly!" exclaimed Rubby. "Jupiter, that is a little task for you, and while you are doing it Mr. Fowler can see if his jewellery is all safe."

There was a quantity of jewellery and silver in the car in a portmanteau, and Jupiter promised to bring it to the old gentleman's place, which was some miles from there.

Jupiter had an idea that there would be a nice little reward, and so he was most obliging. Parks offered no resistance, perhaps because Fowler was close by on horseback, and looked very much as though he would have liked to use the whip again.

Jupiter shouldered the portmanteau, and Rubby explained that they would have to remain at the spot till the morning, when they would be able to get help.

"Look here!" cried Parks. "I am not going to let that maniac ride behind me! He has nearly lashed me to death already."

"You go on, you ruffian!" cried Fowler, giving him a cut that caused him to leap. "I think I know the way to deal with such curs as you."

"I will have vengeance for this, you fiend!" yelled Parks.

"You dare to talk to me of vengeance, you cowardly dog!" roared the old gentleman, lashing him till he howled for mercy. "I will soon show you who is master. Get on with you. Well, I don't much care whether you get on or not. If you don't get on, it will afford me the opportunity of giving you the thrashing you deserve. And, listen here, you hound, I shall leave you in charge of my menservants until the police arrive. Now, when they know the manner in which you have treated their mistress you will not have a very pleasant time of it, I assure you. Now, you can go or not, just as you like, but I shall use the whip until you do go."

Parks decided that it would be better to obey. He received two or three more stinging cuts, and then he hurried along the lane, Fowler following him up on horseback, and Jupiter bringing up the rear with the portmanteau on his shoulder.

"I don't like the look of things!" growled Rubby. "I don't see how we are going to get that waggon out of the ditch."

"We shall get it out all right in the morning, Rubby," declared Joe.

"I would very much like to know how."

"Pull it out with the engine. It's easy enough if you only know the way."

"But do you know the way?"

"Well, anything I don't know about it I shall ask Leo. You get to bed, and don't you bother yourself about to-morrow. Look here, you chaps, I am going to divide these five sovereigns, because you helped run the concern into the ditch, so that you ought to be equally rewarded. If Leo is determined to buy all his food in future he will need a good lot of money, for he has got a fine specimen of an appetite."

"You may think that I am an ass," cried Leo, "but——"

"I don't think it, my dear fellow; I feel sure of it. Now, if Rubby offended me I would show my displeasure by eating about twice as much as I required. You would find that would spite him a lot more than refusing to eat anything."

"I don't need you to teach me how to behave, Joe," said Leo, with all the dignity he could command. "I thank you for your offer, and decline to accept it."

"Sure?"

"Certain. I shall not touch the money. It was given to you, and you can keep it, as far as I am concerned."

"All right, Jim, then there will be two pounds ten each for us. You are not too proud to accept it, are you?"

"Rather not, old chap! I'm jolly pleased to get it. It's downright good of you. You had better take your share, Leo."

"Thank you! I shall do nothing of the sort, and I will trouble you not to refer to the matter again, Joe. You may think your chaff funny. I do not, and there is an end of the matter."

"I'll bet there isn't," murmured Jim, as they made their way to the caravan where they were to sleep, and Joe remained in charge of the engine, though he slept the best part of the time.

Early the following morning Rubby made his appearance, and he was trying to decide on the best way of getting the waggon out of the ditch, when Jim and Leo approached.

"Well, boys," exclaimed Rubby, "I think we can do it all right with planks; but we shall have to unhitch the waggon, then, when we get the planks fixed, you can haul it up with the engine. Now, suppose you get your breakfasts?"

"I don't require any, thank you," said Leo, as Rubby fixed his eyes on him.

"Well, perhaps you are better without it, Leo. It is bad to eat too much."

"I have not had anything to eat since dinner yesterday."

"Well, if you go on for another two or three days you will be in fair order. I believe it does people good to fast a little. All the same, Leo, I wouldn't advise you to go without food for longer than a week. Come on, Joe and Jim, we will have some eggs and bacon, and I have got a ready-cooked ham. It isn't in cut yet, but it soon will be. Don't let the fire out, Leo."

Then they went to breakfast, and Leo would have given a good deal to have followed them, but he was far too proud to do anything like that.

"I'm sorry for Leo!" exclaimed Joe, as they sat down to an excellent breakfast, and Rubby commenced to slash at the ham.

"It will do him good," said Rubby. "The fact is, I have spoilt the boy. He's a clever acrobat, and very daring, and I have given him too much praise. However, he's very honest, and once he has seen the error of his ways, he will improve tremendously. The fact is, the boy is over sensitive. Now, you two are not, by any means. A boy can't get through life comfortably if his feelings are too tender."

"Jim declares he won't eat anything."

"Pooh! He must. I don't suppose we shall get away from here till midday, and that means that we sha'n't reach our destination till to-night. Well, I shall take good care that he gets nothing to eat at any inns—we only pass two. By to-night he will be so hungry that he will be only too glad to get something. It's only temper and obstinacy, you see, and he has got to be cured of both, even if he has to go a day or two without food."

"You may be right, Rubby!" exclaimed Joe. "All the same, I think you are wrong."

"What, you think I ought to knuckle under to him?"

"Not I! I think he is an idiot as regards the manner in which he is acting now, and I have told him so. But what I mean is that I don't believe he will give way."

"He will have to do so," laughed Rubby. "I won't give him the chance of buying any food. He is by far too self-important, and must be taught a lesson. It will do him a lot of good in the long run. He thinks that he can do what he likes with me, and I intend to show him that he cannot."

Joe and Jim saw no earthly reason why they should spoil their breakfasts over Leo's sulkiness, and so they made an excellent meal, then they went to the engine, and Rubby gave orders as to getting the waggon out of the ditch.

The task was by no means an easy one. What Rubby feared was that directly the engine commenced to pull, the waggon-wheels would be smashed, and this, from his point of view, would be most disastrous, as it would take several days to repair the damage at that wild spot, and this would enable Muerto to get in front of him.

"I would much rather waste half a day or so, and get the preliminaries properly arranged," observed Rubby, as Joe urged him to hurry up. "I don't want Muerto to get in front of us."

"I don't see how he is going to do that," said Joe. "We have got the lane fairly well blocked. He could not possibly pass us. Hark! There's someone shouting to pass now."

"Well, they can't," said Rubby. "They must go round the other way. I have as much right to use the road as they have."

"Quite true, Rubby, but you are using the whole of it, and stopping other people to use any part, and I don't believe you have got the right to do that. What is your opinion on the subject, Leo?"

"Mr. Ruabino would not listen to any opinion of mine," observed Leo, who was frightfully hungry and cross; besides, he felt very much injured.

"Always glad of an opinion—even from a little boy," observed Rubby. "However, I don't suppose Leo knows much more about the matter than I do, so we won't trouble him for his opinion. What do you think of it, Jupiter?"

"That Leo is a stupid young donkey, and——"

"Oh, I did not mean that!" interposed Rubby. "That is obvious to all save himself. I meant, what do you think of the position of those planks?"

"I should say the waggon ought to go up them, if the wheels or the planks don't smash, if the engine is strong enough, and if the front of the waggon is not pulled out, in which case the lions would come out."

"There are too many if's about your opinion, dear boy, to render it of any service. Haven't you something like a sensible suggestion to make?"

"Suppose you let Joe unload the lions and hold them in the road, while we draw up the waggon?"

"Be shot if I do!" gasped Rubby. "I am not letting those lions loose again of my own free will."

"They add to the weight. They are heavy, you know."

"Yes, and I also know that they would be heavier if I let them loose amongst the company. The lions are going to remain where they are, unless the waggon comes to pieces, then I am quite confident that I shall not remain where I am for many seconds. No! I should be in my caravan within half a dozen seconds. The responsibility of being a lion-owner is bad enough. I am not taking the responsibility of a lion-tamer. Hark! That sounds to me like the pleasant rattle of a traction-engine, and you may bet that it will be Muerte coming down the hill, and trying to overtake us. There isn't a doubt that he will do it, either. Why, hang the fellow! He is coming down the hill at full speed. He will be into us in about three minutes. Blow your whistle, Joe, and let him know that we are here."

Joe obeyed. He gave some ear-splitting blasts, and the man on the engine must have heard them, but he never slackened his pace. The engine with its heavy load was coming down the hill in fine style, and the man who should have been walking before it with a red flag had jumped to one side of the road, and let the engine with its heavy load of waggons pass him.

"Why doesn't the mad villain stop?" yelled Rubby.

"Because he jolly well can't!" answered Joe, shutting off his whistle. "The engine is running away with him."

"Then he will come right into my circus. He will smash the whole thing up, and kill the—— Here! Get out of the caravans. Stand clear, there! Never mind the animals. This is awful! Here, girls! Vera! Get out of the caravan!" roared Rubby, rushing to the one in which the female performers were.

"I can't, Rubby!" exclaimed Vera, glancing through the window, and shaking her head gravely at him. "I am not dressed!"

"Get out like you are, girl!" howled Rubby, leaping about in his excitement and terror.

"I won't, you vulgar creature!" declared Vera.

"You will all be killed!" howled Rubby.

"I don't care. I won't come out, so there!"

"Joe, what can I do? Heavens! They will be crushed to death!"

And in his terror the little showman seized the wheel of the caravan, and actually wrenched at it; but, seeing that he would have had to move several waggons and a traction-engine, needless to say nothing came of his efforts.

Then Joe acted in a manner that caused Rubby to imagine the horror of the thing had turned his brain.

"Stop, stop!" roared Joe, rushing up the hill straight towards the approaching engine, which was coming on at ever-quickening speed; and Joe knew perfectly well that it was utterly impossible for the driver to stop; but he also know that there would be a terrible accident if that engine dashed into the caravans filled with the company.

"I can't stop, boy!" howled the driver. "Get out of the way!"

"Stop, stop!" yelled Joe, sprawling forwards on his face, and struggling in the centre of the narrow lane as though he were having fits. "Murder! Stop till I get up!"

The driver muttered things he should not have muttered, and spun his steering-wheel round. Anything was preferable to running over the lad. That was all he thought of, and he cleared Joe, who was quite prepared to spring up in time, should it look as though he were not going to be

cleared. He wanted the driver to stop by running into the ditch, and this is exactly what occurred.

The front wheels of the traction-engine dived into the ditch, and the following waggons gave it a bunch up behind that toppled it over on its side.

The driver leapt off, and stood gazing at the wreck. Joe rose to his feet, gazed calmly at his work, and then, as Muerte came rushing forward, Joe walked back and took up a position between Rubby and Jupiter.

"I've stopped them, Rubby," observed Joe. "Ha, ha, ha! I thought I could stop them."

"Let me get at that boy!" howled Muerte.

"Have a bit of sense!" growled Jupiter, standing in front of him, and shaking his left fist up and down, as a gentle hint as to what might be expected should Muerte make a dash.

"Ruabino, you dastardly scoundrel!" howled Muerte, turning his fury on his rival, who was mopping his brow with one hand, while he felt in his pockets with his other for a cigar. "You shall pay dearly for this. You have wrecked my show. I'll—I'll prosecute you! I'll make you pay for this!"

Rubby found a cigar, carefully cut the end off, then asked Jupiter for a match. He had plenty in his own pocket, but generally borrowed them—when he could.

The calm manner in which Rubby puffed at that cigar was certainly exasperating to a man in Muerte's condition. He howled at the top of his voice, swung his arms in the air, and looked quite terrific. Rubby got his cigar well alight, and eyed his furious opponent with a pitying smile.

"Dear boy!" murmured Rubby. "Are you not exciting yourself without a cause?"

"Vagabond! Scoundrel! Dirty hound! Without a cause. Look at my circus!"

"Well, I am, my dear fellow, and it only confirms my opinion that it is not worth looking at. You see, my opinion is very much the same as the idiots who pay to see your circus."

"That young hound deliberately made my driver turn into the ditch!"

"I cannot admit anything like that," observed Rubby. "Of course, I know that it is not the first time that you have been in the mire, but you always appear to get there of your own accord, and I really do not see why you should blame me. I understand nothing about the law, never having had more than I could help to do with it; and in a case like this I must refer you to my legal adviser."

"Who is your legal adviser, fellow? I shall take action. I will ruin you!"

"Ah!"

"Who is your legal adviser?"

"Joe!"

"You are not sane!" howled Muerte. "I vow you are a dangerous maniac!"

"I refer you to Joe."

"Am I to give him legal advice, Rubby?" inquired Joe calmly.

"Yes, dear boy. He needs some sort of advice. Tell him what he had better do."

"Get his engine out of the ditch."

"But he wants to bring an action against me."

"He can't. You did nothing. He can bring an action against me, but I don't see how he could recover any damages, because I have not got any money; besides, even if I had, what have I done? I merely told him to stop, and he did."

"You young scamp! You lay down in the road, and my driver had to turn on one side to spare your worthless life. That is what he tells me."

"Very well. It is perfectly true, and I am very much obliged to him for turning on one side. You see, that traction engine might have hurt if it had gone over me. There's not much damage done. You can get your old engine out of the ditch—somehow, and then you will be able to follow us on to the next pitch. Of course, if you feel like bringing an action, you can do so; but if I were your legal adviser instead of Rubby's, I would advise you to do nothing of the sort, because it would only make you look more ridiculous than you really are, if such a thing should be possible. No, Muerte, my poor old Spanish tinker, take my advice, and let the matter drop. It's no good crying over spilt milk, any more than it is howling over spilt engines. Another time come down hills more cautiously."

"I have witnesses that this young scoundrel deliberately threw himself in front of the engine," yelled Muerte.

"I have a perfect right to be in the road."

"You haven't the right to lie down in front of my engine."

"It's quite easy to slip."

"You young rascal, you did nothing of the sort! You deliberately threw yourself in front of it."

"What should I do that for?"

"To make my man stop."

"Very well; where does the damage come in, silly? Your man could stop, I suppose, without going into the ditch. I did not order him to go into the ditch. If he could not stop in time, it proves that he was going too fast, and it would be far better that he should upset your old applecart in the ditch than that he should dash into Rubby's Circus. You see, there were some girls in that caravan, and they would have been killed to a certainty."

"I don't care! You shall——"

"Of course, you don't care, Muerte," said Joe. "No one ever expected that you did care for anyone but yourself, but if I had not stopped your engine you would have cared, because you would probably have gone to prison for manslaughter. Now, run away, because you are making us tired."

Muerte was not going to stand this. He made a rush at the daring Joe, and commenced to hammer at him with his fists in a most painful manner. Joe immediately returned the blows, and Rubby joined in. He landed Muerte one in the eye that blacked it, after which some of Muerte's men joined in the fray; then Jupiter thought it was time for him to intervene, and the next moment a free fight was raging.

Vera and the other females shrieked at the top of their voices. They thought Rubby would surely be killed, for he was in the thickest of the fray.

Jim and Leo stood by their comrade, and Muerte was having a rough time of it. He drew a knife, and then Rubby rushed at him, drove him backwards with two blows in the face, while a third one in the chest sent him sprawling into his overturned engine.

He dropped against the gauge glass, which he smashed, and as the steam and scalding water squirted over him, he came out of it with yells and bounds.

This stopped the combat. The spectators thought something very serious must have happened, because the steam was hissing so fiercely, and because Muerte was yelling so loudly. The driver shut off the cocks with a stick, and then there was a little more quietness.

"Dear boy," exclaimed Rubby, waving his hand at Muerte, "I—ha, ha, ha!—am extremely sorry for you. I feel quite sure that you have scalded yourself. I cannot think how you could have been so stupid as to tumble on your engine like that! All the same—ha, ha, ha!—you have my deepest sympathy, and if you will take my advice, don't do it again!"

"Dastard! I am scalded!"

"Funny thing, dear boy! I made sure you were, by the way in which you romped about amongst that steam and scalding water. Some people say that steam is cold at a distance of two feet, so the next time you want to break your gauge glass I would advise you to take a stick to it, and keep, say, two feet from it."

"I shall issue a writ against you for damages."

"Ah! Now we are approaching the legal phase of the matter, and I must refer you to my legal adviser, Joe."

"I shall claim three hundred pounds damages."

"Not enough, dear boy!" exclaimed Rubby. "Claim a thousand while you are about it."

"You have assaulted me."

"I refer you to my legal adviser."

"Bah! If you are relying on that boy to defend your scandalous action, you will find it a costly matter."

"Well, you can issue what writs you like, or you can take what proceedings you like, but I have faith in Joe. I vow he shall defend any action—at least, I will have no lawyer. You can have half a dozen, and Joe shall advise me. I will act exactly as the youngster advises me. He was in a lawyer's office, and knows all about the law."

"I vow I do not, Rubby!" exclaimed Joe. "You can't learn the law during the short time that I was an office-boy in a solicitor's office. It's like learning the fiddle—it takes time; and after I had accidentally upset an inkpot over the manager's head, and knocked him off his chair, quite by accident, I thought it advisable to go, and not to stop to learn all I don't know about the law. However, in this case I can give you good advice. I believe it is the advice that every man should follow in legal matters."

"I shall follow it. What am I to do?"

"Nothing!"

"Eh?"

"You have got to do nothing, and you have got to keep on doing it. Let Muerte take all the action he likes. If he puts you into court, tell the exact truth, as you know it. You are bound to do so, because you will be on your oath. Very well, he has got to prove his case. Now, suppose we come and get our caravan out of the ditch. It will be an easier matter than Muerte will have in getting his traction engine out of the ditch. Well, what's the good of howling

like that, Muerte? If you are in the right, and have suffered three hundred pounds damage, you will certainly get it."

"I am not so sure about that," murmured Rubby, as he followed Joe. "I can't always place my hand on five hundred shillings—let alone five hundred pounds."

"He said he was only going to claim three hundred pounds, Rubby," observed Joe.

"I know, dear boy; but his lawyer will amend the amount. Even if he does not, there would be the costs."

"I think he means mischief. You had better employ a lawyer."

"I will not. You shall tell me how to act. We are either wrong or we are right, and I will stand by what has happened. I am going to tell the whole truth in court, even if it smashes me."

"There's such a thing as colouring it a little, you know. It's the whole truth where witnesses fail."

"Joe, my lad," exclaimed Rubby, "lying is vile! I'm not a good man by any manner of means, but I am not a liar. Now, in this case, I believe your action saved many lives. I know what you did, and I know why you did it. You tried to make the driver run into the ditch."

"I should have shifted out of the way had he been coming over me."

"Well, I presume you would not have been such an idiot as to allow a traction engine to run over you. All the same, your action saved many lives, and I am so thankful that our womenfolk were not killed, that I will stand all the consequences, be they what they may. I won't defend the case—if there is one. You shall be a witness, and you shall advise me exactly as to what you think I ought to do."

"Well, if he issues a writ, and you have no lawyer, in the first place, it must be served personally, so I suppose your proper plan would be to prevent it being served."

"Not a bit of it, my lad! We will work the thing on straightforward lines. As I say, I am either right or wrong. If I am wrong, I will pay for it. I want nothing shifty about the matter, and I am going to put you to the test. You are going to tell me what you think I ought to do, and if it turns out wrong, well, we have done so well at our last pitch, and I am so thankful that—owing to your prompt action—no lives were lost, that I will pay up without a murmur."

"You leave the matter entirely to me, Rubby?"

"I do."

"You know that you assaulted Muerte?"

"To protect you."

"Exactly! Now, I have an idea, and I believe you will find that we shall come off all right. I shall know where to find you."

"But, Joe, look here——"

"You are leaving the matter to me!" exclaimed Joe, bolting along the lane.

"Now I wonder where the boy has gone to!" exclaimed Rubby. "Still, he would not obey me if I ordered him back, so I won't do so, as it would only show the weakness of my authority. What is the matter, Leo?"

"I am going on to the next inn to get something to eat."

"My dear lad, I cannot possibly spare you! I want you to help me with your advice as to how to get this caravan out of the ditch."

"What is the good of my advice?"

"Very little, I will admit. Still, I am in such a quandary that I would take the advice of even a bigger ass than you, supposing that I could find one."

"I must have something to eat."

"You are quite welcome to it here, but you are not going out to get it. You must consider yourself on duty, and in this respect I am determined that you shall obey me. I am acting for your good, my lad, and if you act like a spoilt child instead of a sensible fellow—why, I'll teach you a lesson that you won't forget in a hurry."

"I have been a long time without food."

"You will go a far longer one, if you will not eat the food I provide."

"I won't be treated like a child."

"Then don't act like one. I tell you plainly that I am determined to make you behave in a proper manner. I shall let you go, say, a couple of days longer without food, and if you have not got over your temper by that time, I shall adopt measures that you may find unpleasant."

"All right; then I will leave your circus for ever. Good-bye, Rubby! I admit that you have been a kind master——"

"I have never been a master at all. I have let you have your own way entirely, and you have turned out a spoilt child. The time has now arrived when you have got to alter your ways, and if you will not do it of your own accord, I shall make you."

"We shall never meet again."

"Jupiter," cried Rubby—and that worthy hurried towards the spot—"Leo has decided to make an ass of himself, so we will act as we settled. Just you look after him."

"Here, you come this way, my lad!" exclaimed Jupiter, gripping him by the collar. "Rubby has asked me to deal with your case, and so I am going to do it in my own way. You are not well, that is what is the matter with you, and you have got to be isolated, so that no one else can catch your complaint. We have an empty cage, and I am going to keep you in that until you come to your senses."

"You dare not do it!" cried Leo, struggling in vain to free himself from the strong man's grip. "I would never forgive you for making such a fool as that of me!"

"It is you who are making a fool of yourself," retorted Jupiter. "You come along with me. Do you want me to carry you?"

"No."

"Then come along. We will try what a little solitary confinement will do for you. I have got a padlock to the cage that you are not likely to be able to burst open, and I shall keep you there till you see the error of your ways."

Leo protested, but his words had no effect on Jupiter, who forced him into an empty cage, and then locked the door.

"Now, then, my lad," exclaimed Jupiter, "are you going to have your dinner when it is ready?"

"No, I'll starve first."

"All right. You won't starve for a day or so yet, and before that time has elapsed, I shall force you to take some food, if you will not do it of your own accord."

Then Jupiter left him to his own thoughts, which were far from pleasant ones. He felt that he had made an idiot of himself, but was too proud to give in, now, or even to acknowledge his error. He had fondly imagined that Rubby would have asked his pardon, but the little showman was very determined on the point, and, knowing that he was in the right, he was not going to tell Leo that such was not the case.

"Think he will come to his senses?" inquired Rubby, when Jupiter returned.

"He can't help himself," answered Jupiter. "The fact is, Rubby, you have been too kind to the boy, and unless you take him in hand firmly now, he will run amok. He has got a lot of good points, and is downright honest, but he is frightfully self-willed. However, you may leave him to me. I'll make him eat before he is many hours older."

They succeeded in getting the caravan out of the ditch, and they had just done so when Joe returned, though he would give no information as to where he had been, or what he had done.

"Well, it doesn't matter, boy!" exclaimed Rubby. "We will be off now, and we shall reach our pitch to-night. I don't think you will follow us up very closely this time, Muerte."


WHOM TO WRITE TO: The Editor, "GEM" Library, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, who will be pleased to hear from you.

## "THE RIVAL CAMPS."

*Things get very lively indeed next week. The chums of St. Jim's go into camp in real earnest, and the Grammarians try to get their own back by adopting the guise of cowboys.*

*The EDITOR.*

*(Another long instalment of this splendid Serial next week. Please order your copy of the "GEM" Library in advance. Price One Penny.)*

Printed and published weekly by the Proprietors, at 23, Bouverie Street, London, England. Subscription, 4s. 4d. per annum. Saturday, July 25th, 1903.

*A SPLENDID COMPLETE TALE OF*

# Specs the Ventriloquist

IS IN

# "PLUCK"

## NOW ON SALE.

**Ask for "PLUCK." Price ONE PENNY.**