SPECIAL DOUBLE-LENGTH TALE OF TOM MERRY.

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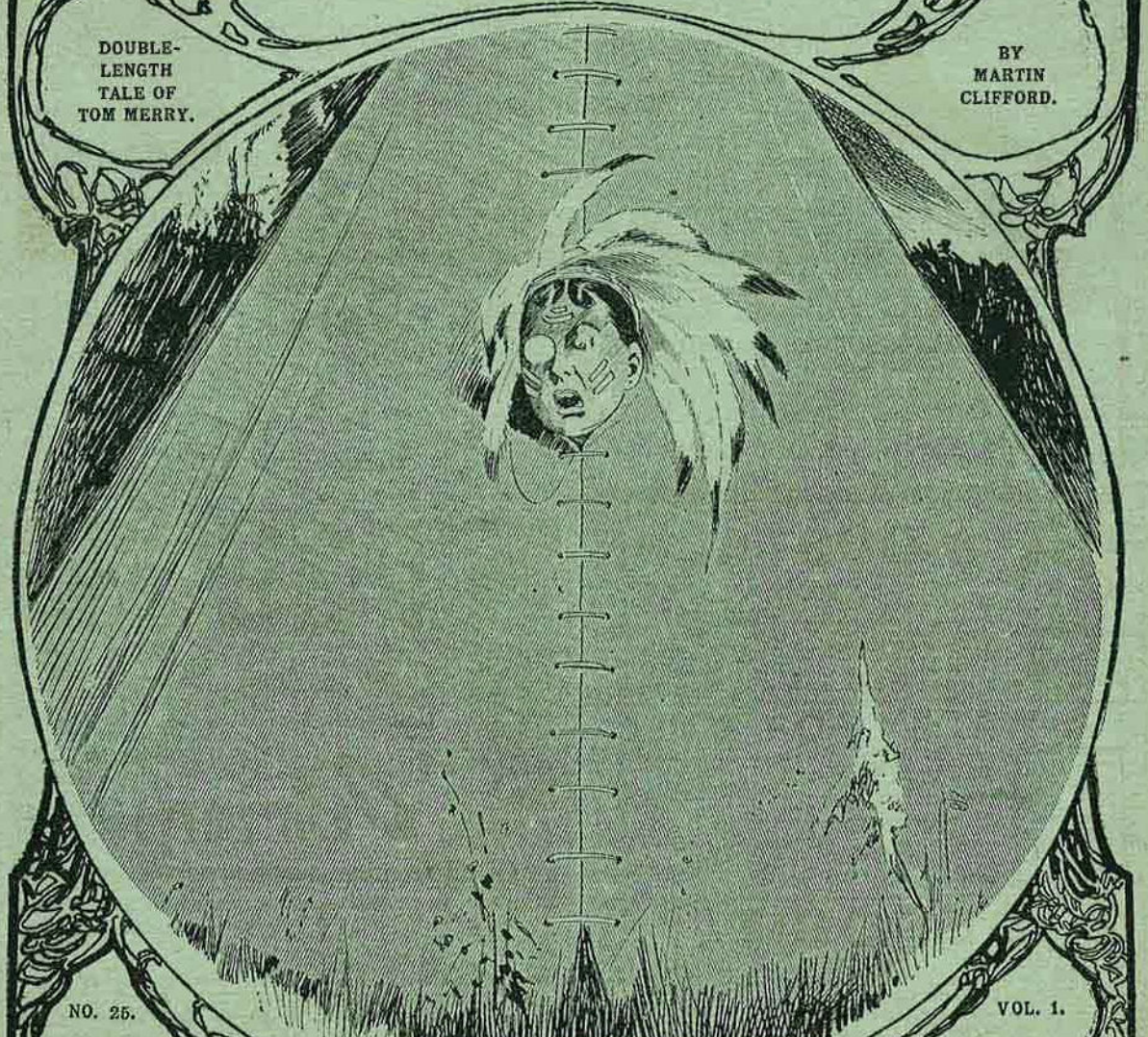
NEW SERIES.

## THE RIVAL CAMPS.

DOUBLE-LENGTH TALE OF TOM MERRY.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.



NO. 25.

VOL. 1.

"I am here, deah boys!" wailed D'Arcy, as he heard the voices of Tom Merry & Co. from the back of the tent. "Pway come to the wescue, for I am suffewin' gweat inconvenience, and my clothes are bein' absolutely wuined."

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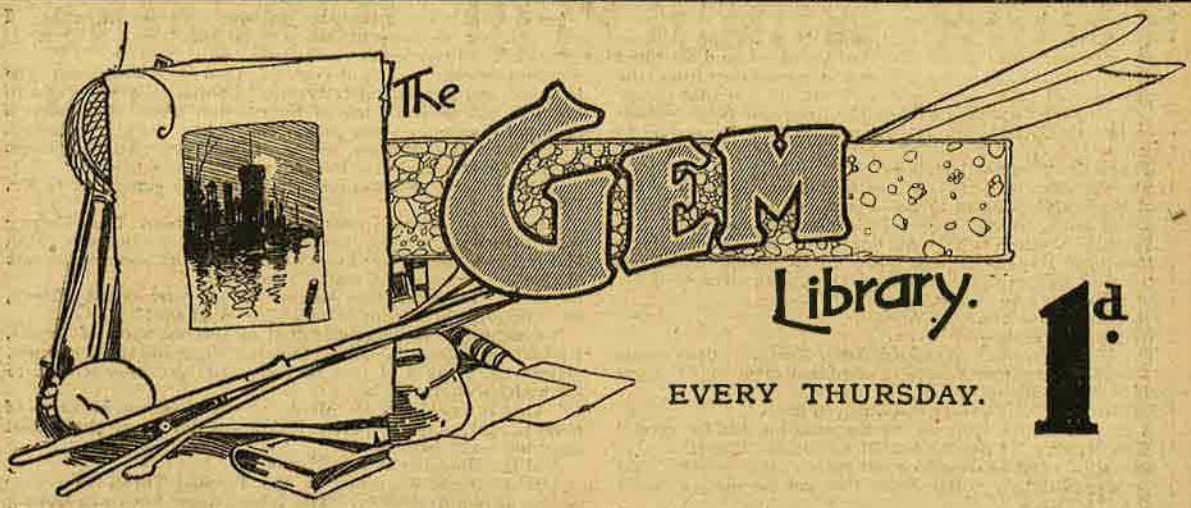



Complete Stories for Everyone, and Every Story a Gem!


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

### CHAPTER 1.

**Arthur Augustus puts his foot in it!**

"PHEW!"

"What's the matter, Tom?"

"There's going to be a row."

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

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

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

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

"Dr. Monk."

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

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

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

"All the same, there was bound to be a row if Dr. Monk heard of it," said Lowther, with a shake of the head. "We had the Head's permission to camp out. But the Grammar cads must have broken bounds at night—and that's serious."

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

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

Tom Merry knitted his brows.

A dozen juniors of St. Jim's had camped out for the night in Rylcombe Wood, with the permission of the Head, and they had hoped to obtain further leave; but a complaint from the Grammar School master was pretty certain to nip that in the bud. It might be unreasonable of the Grammar School headmaster, but the Head of St. Jim's was most likely to accede to his wishes.

"What's the twouble, deah boys?"

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

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

"Oh, rats!" said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Ha, ha!"

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

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

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

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

The chums of the Shell followed him, grinning. The carriage had just stopped outside the Head's house, and Dr. Monk was alighting. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy put on a spurt and arrived on the spot panting.

"Pway excuse me, Dr. Monk!"

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

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

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

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned pink.

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

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

"Dear me!"

"And undah the circs of the case——"

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

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

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

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

"What?"

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

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

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

D'Arcy started.

"Bai Jove, didn't you know, sir?"

"No, I certainly did not."

"Then I am afwaid I have wathah put my foot in it," murmured the swell of St. Jim's. "I have given the wottahs away, bai Jove!"

Dr. Monk smiled slightly.

"You have certainly given them away, as you call it," he remarked. "You may as well inform me further which of my boys were out of the school."

D'Arcy shook his head.

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

"Ha, ha—I mean, yes, certainly."

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

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

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

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

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

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

And Dr. Monk entered the house.

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

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"You utter ass!" said Tom Merry.

"You shrieking idiot!" said Lowther.

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

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

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

"I natuwally concluded——"

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

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

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

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

"You see, deah boys, I——"

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

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

"Ass!"

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

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

## CHAPTER 2.

### Great Expectations!

"TAGGLES, old dear!"

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

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

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

"Oh, come! Think again, Taggles!"

"There hain't a parcel for you!"

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

"There hain't!"

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

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

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

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

The Blackfoot camp was soon buried in silence and slumber!

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

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

Herries chuckled.

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

"And has he sent it?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Has wot come?"

"A tent for me."

"No, it hain't."

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

"Yes, I ham, Master Manners."

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

"You haven't one, have you?"

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

"There ain't nothing for you."

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

The porter grunted.

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

Tom Merry laughed.

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

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

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

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

Tom Merry looked at it.

"Is that all?"

"That's all."

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

"What do you think?"

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

"Oh, rot!" said Tom Merry, uneasily.

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

"Yes; 'ere it is."

"Anythin' else?"

"No."

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

"Yes, I ham."

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

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

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

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

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

"Good!" said Tom Merry.

"What have you got there, Merry?"

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

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

"Where is what, Master Figgins?"

"My parcel."

"What parcel?"

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

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

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

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

"Nothing."

"Eh?"

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

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

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

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

"Cheeky himps!"

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

"There ain't a parcel for you."

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

"There hain't."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

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

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

"Oh, there's no hurry!"

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

Tom Merry laughed.

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

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

"Certainly."

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

"My only hat!" gasped Fatty.

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

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

"Well, of all the rot!"

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

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

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

"You can take this beastly rubbish, Merry."

Tom Merry shook his head.

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

"I don't want the bosh."

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

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

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

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

"Young himps!"

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

"Young warmints!"

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

## CHAPTER 3.
### A Rival Camp.

"IT'S Dr. Monk!"

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

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

"It isn't, deah boy."

"How do you know, Gussy?"

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

"Then what has he been here for?"

"It is in weference to the wedskin business."

"Merry!"

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

"You called me, sir?"

"Yes. The doctor wishes to see you. And you too, Blake. Please follow me to Dr. Holmes's study."

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

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

"Oh, I don't know. Dr. Monk said he hadn't come to make a complaint," muttered Tom Merry. "I suppose it's all right. But——"

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

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

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

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

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry.

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

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

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

"By Jove!" murmured Tom Merry.

"My hat!" said Blake softly.

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

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

"Yes, sir."

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

"Certainly, sir."

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

"We shall be very careful, sir."

"You may rely upon us, sir," said Blake.

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

The juniors' eyes danced with delight.

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

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

The doctor smiled, and Mr. Railton suppressed a chuckle.

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

"Thank you, sir."

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

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

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

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

"Bravo!"

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

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

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

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

"Bai Jove!"

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

"What-ho!" said Figgins.

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

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

Tom Merry shook his head.

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

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

"A what?" said Digby.

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

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

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

"Nothing of the sort, only——"

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

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

"Yes, my old governess is coming down——"

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

"Cousin Ethel!"

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

"Hurrah!"

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

"When will she be coming?" asked Figgins.

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

"Did she mention me?"

"No, Figgins, she did not."

"Oh!"

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the juniors were soon busy with their preparations.

## CHAPTER 4.

### A Stormy Committee Meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tom Merry laughed.

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

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

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

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

"Sure, and there ought to be an Irish member," said Reilly. "You can't leave me out without inflicting another wrong on poor ould Ireland——"

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

"And I think——" began Digby.

"And I know——" commenced Manners.

"And I'm certain——" Lowther started.

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

"The New House what?"

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

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

"And I represent Ireland——" began Reilly.

"And I wepwesent the awistocwacy——"

"Shut up——"

"I wefuse to shut up. I consider——"

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

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

"Faith, and I——"

"Bai Jove——"

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

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

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

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

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

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

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

The room was a large one, but there was not accommodation for twenty lads. The committee entered, and sat down at the table, and nine or ten others crowded in, and the rest blocked up the doorway. A voice full of indignation was heard from the crush.

"Hewwies, you ass, keep off my feet! Digby, you wottah, don't shove your elbow into my wibs. Lowther, you beast, I believe you bumped against me on purpose."

"Silence!"

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

"Order!"

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

"Shut up, D'Arcy!"

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

"Silence! Gentlemen, the committee are now met——"

"We can see that, Tom Merry."

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

"Rats!"

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

"That is the case."

"Twenty is a largah numbah than ten——"

"Did you work that out in your head?"

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

"Faith, and I——"

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

"That is rather obvious, Gussy."

"I have not concluded my wemarks yet——"

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

"I wefuse to do anything of the sort——"

"Next ass!" said Blake.

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

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

"It flashed into my bwain——"

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

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

"I should cewainly wefuse to be anythin' of the sort," he said; "I think some of the fellows might be made up as squaws to pwesewve a wealistic appeawance of the camp, but I——"

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

"Next ass!"

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

"I have not finished yet, Weilly——"

"You never have——"

"Order!"

"I insist!"

"Shut up, Gussy. You've finished."

"I have not finished, and I wefuse to shut up."

"Chuck him out."

"I uttahly wefuse to be chucked out."

"Then ring off. Go on, Reilly——"

"I insist——"

"Chuck him out!"

"I wefuse—ow!—ow!—grr—oh! Oh!"

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

"Now then, Reilly——"

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

"Rot!"

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

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

"Oh, rot! Ring off!"

"I was thinking that an Irish——"

"Shut up! Next ass."

"I was thinking that an Irish——"

"Chuck him out."

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

"Order!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Silence!"

"Order!"

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

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

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

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

## CHAPTER 5.

### The Squaws.

"HERE we are again," said Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Yes, here we are," said Tom Merry cheerfully, "and now to work."

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

"When we first formed this camp here," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "I had the honah of suggestin' that we should dig a twench wound it, in the mannah of the ancient Woman camp. My suggestion was tweated with scoffin'——"

"Faith, and I——"

"Pway don't interwupt me, Weilly. Aftah the waid of the Gwammah cads, and the w'eek of the camp, I daweay you agwee with me that a deep twench is about the pwopah capah."

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

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

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

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

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

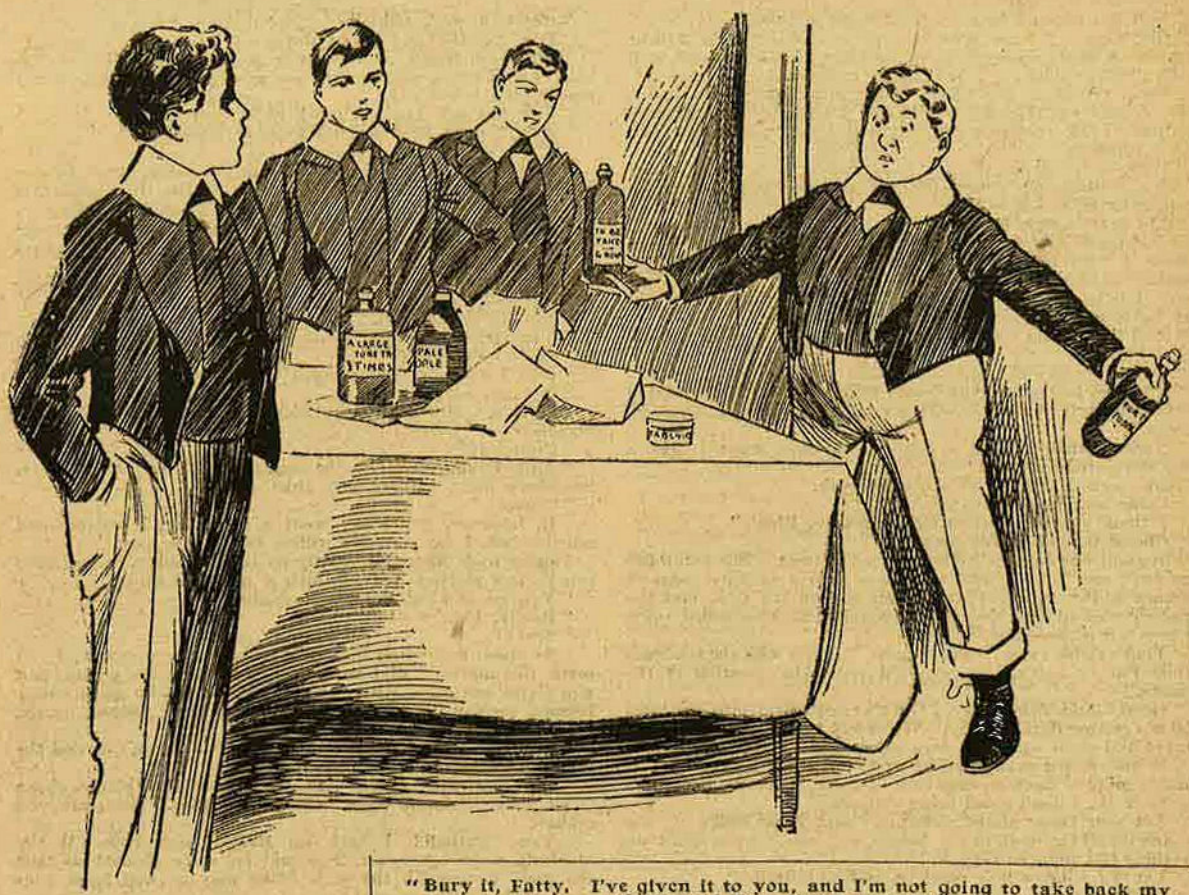
"My jacket is vewy well where it is, deah boy."

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

"But I am not goin' to dig."

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

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



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

"There's your spade," said Blake.

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

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

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

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

"I should uttahly wefuse to be sat upon."

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

"I uttahly wefuse to——"

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

"Certainly," said Digby, "with pleasure."

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

"One," said Blake.

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

"Two!"

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

"Three!"

"——administah a fearful thwashin'——"

"Four!"

"I feel altogether too exhausted to do any beastly diggin'."

"Five!"

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

"Six!"

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

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

"Rather."

"I should wefuse——"

"Don't talk, work."

And Blake, in his capacity of Blackfoot chief, walked off to give directions elsewhere. The score of juniors from St. Jim's were soon busy. The fact that Miss Priscilla Fawcett and Cousin Ethel would be on the scene the next day was a sufficient reason for them to buck up and get things shipshape.

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

"I wegard it as a good ideah," said the swell of the School-House, leaning upon his spade, with his collar limp with perspiration, and his silk hat on the back of his head. "A dwawbwidge would be waised at night, and then there would be no dangah of a surpwise."

"And how are we to get the materials?"

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

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

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

"Ass!"

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

And D'Arcy remained convinced that he was right, and the others, who were too busy to argue, left him thinking so.

The sun was sinking lower behind the wood. Shadows lengthened over the camp of the St. Jim's juniors, and Fatty Wynn eyed the packages of provisions longingly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Blake jerked D'Arcy off the earthwork.

"Come and buckle to, lazybones."

"I think you are wathah inconsidewate, Blake."

"Cheese it, and gather firewood."

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

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

"Good," said Tom Merry. "We've got to get into our togs, and it's getting dark already. We've got Indian togs for twelve braves and eight squaws. Any volunteers for the squaws?"

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

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

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

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

"The what?"

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

"Who are you calling kids?"

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

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

"Any offers?"

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

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Agreed."

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

There were no offers. Tom Merry took a penny from his pocket.

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

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

"That's fair."

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

"Don't you, though."

"Of course not. Who ever heard of a squaw being chief of a tribe."

"That's all very well——"

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

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

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

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

"Rats!"

"I am an older fellow than you, Blake."

"About a week older."

"Two months and seven days——."

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

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

"It was your fault for not keeping watch——"

"I don't admit it. As chief——"

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

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

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

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

"But it's not settled."

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

"Can I make a suggestion?" said Skimpole.

"No—get out."

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

"Clear out."

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

"Travel!"

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

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

"You go and eat coke," he remarked.

"Really, Figgins——"

"Scat!"

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

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

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

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

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

"Right you are, then."

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

"Guess!"

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

"Alphabetical order."

"Atkins first, then."

"Head," said Atkins.

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

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

"Tail."

It was head this time, and Baker followed.

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

"Head," said Carter.

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

"D'Arcy! Where are you going?"

"Oh, only just goin' for a stwoll, deah boy."

"Come back, you ass."

"I am goin' for a stwoll——"

"Come here! It's your turn to guess."

"I weally do not mind missin' my turn."

"But we mind," exclaimed Tom Merry. "Fetch him back."

There was a rush of the juniors after Arthur Augustus.

"Pway don't bothah," said D'Arcy, languidly; "I will come back with pleasuah if you insist, deah boys."

"Buck up, then," said Figgins.

"Now then, Gussy, head or tail?"

"Head," said Arthur Augustus, anxiously.

Blake showed the figure of Britannia on the coin.

"Wrong! You're a squaw."

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

"Weally, Blake——"

"You're a squaw! Next man in."

"Weally, I particularly wish not to undertake that wole to-mowwow," said Arthur Augustus; "the next day I should not mind so much."

"Silence in camp! Next; you, Dig."

"Weally——"

But a general shout drowned D'Arcy's voice. The selection went on, till seven squaws had been chosen to keep Fatty Wynn company. Blake threw the penny back to Tom Merry, catching him on the nose with it absent-mindedly.

"There you are," he said. "Thanks——"

"You confounded duffer——"

"Sorry! Now that's settled, and we're ready to dress. Get into your war-paint, kids."

"Blake, I weally——"

"'Nuff said. Get into your togs, or we shall be late for supper."

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

## CHAPTER 6.

### The Cowboys.

"MY—my only hat!"

Tom Merry rapped out the words in utter amazement.

"What's the matter?"

"Look!"

"Great Scott!"

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

"My word!" gasped Digby.

"Bai Jove!"

"What does it mean?"

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

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

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

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

"The Grammarians!" gasped Figgins.

"Frank Monk!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Look out; 'ware Grammarians," exclaimed Blake. "Has that plank been lifted?"

"No."

"Lift it then, you ass."

"Who are you calling an ass?"

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

Lowther and Manners dragged the plank off the moat. A stream of water three feet wide and a foot deep, with an earth wall on the inner side, stopped the advance of the Grammarians. But the precaution was not needed, for it was seen as Frank Monk came nearer that he was waving a white flag.

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

"Hallo," called out Tom Merry.

"Cheese it," said Blake, "Redskins say 'Wah!'"

"Wah, then."

"Make it Ugh!" said Figgins. "That sounds more realistic."

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

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

"Wah!"

"Ugh!"

"Gr—r—r—r!"

"What the dickens are you grunting about?" asked Monk. "Been swallowing a fish-bone?"

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

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

"Rather," said Carboy, giving a hitch to his breeches.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Blake. "What do you rotters want here?"

"You see we're ready for you," remarked Tom Merry.

"Yes; I see you are. You seem to be pretty snug," said the leader of the Grammar School juniors, looking round. "I don't blame you, either, after the way we wrecked your camp."

"You took us by surprise——"

"Yes; more than you'll ever be able to do to us."

"Wait a bit, Monkey, and you'll see."

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

"I'm chief," said Blake.

"And who are you? I seem to know your voice."

"You know jolly well I'm Jack Blake."

"Oh! are you? I've heard the name before, I think."

"You howling rotter of a Grammar beast——"

"Keep your wool on—I mean your feathers. I daresay you know that we've got permission from the Head of the Grammar School—my respected dad—to camp out as you fellows are doing."

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

Frank Monk chuckled.

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

"On the hire-purchase system," interjected Lowther.

"No," said Frank Monk, laughing. "Simply on hire, without the purchase. There are twenty of us in the scheme."

"Same here."

"That's good. We shall be equally matched."

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

"You couldn't do it like this."

"Well, we could, but we shouldn't," said Monk, eyeing the defences of the St. Jim's camp with a critical expression. "Of all the rotten bosh I ever saw——"

"Rats!"

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

"Where is your camp?"

Monk waved his hand up the stream.

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

"You may expect a visit soon."

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

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

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

"Come in, then."

"Shove out the plank," said Tom Merry.

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

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

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

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

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

"Good."

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

Frank Monk gave a yell.

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

"Oh, ow!"

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

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

"You utter ass!"

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

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Saints and Grammarians alike. The state of Frank Monk, and the amazement in D'Arcy's face, were too comical.

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

D'Arcy looked greatly distressed.

"You surely could not suspect me of such an act of tweachewy, he exclaimed.

"No; but if you did it by accident——"

"Upon my honah——"

"You ought to be boiled in oil——"

"Weally, Monk, deah boy——"

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

"Weally——"

"I'm soaked through——"

"I'm feahfully sowwy."

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

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

"You shrieking idiot."

"Weally, Fwank Monk, I cannot allow you to chawactewise me as a shwiekin' idiot. I wegard the expression as wude."

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

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

"Sure that's safe now?"

"Safe as houses."

The Grammarians crossed into the camp. Then the plank was taken in, not because there was any danger, but because as Blake said, it was prudent to get into habits of carefulness. Frank Monk refused a change of clothes, though Blake generously offered him D'Arcy's elegant Etons.

"I'm a giddy cowboy, and I'm not going to be a schoolboy for forty-eight hours or so," said Monk. "I'll borrow a blanket of you, if you like, while my clothes dry round the fire."

"Good idea."

And Frank Monk had his supper wrapped in a blanket. The cowboy clothes soon dried at the blazing fire, and if they shrank a little, that did not matter. They had been overlarge for the Grammarian chief.

The supper was a huge success. Provisions were there in plenty, and Fatty Wynn had done the cooking to perfection. The Saints and the Grammarians fraternized with perfect good feeling, though the probability was that they would be rowing just as heartily on the morrow.

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

"Yes; in the summer."

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

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

"Well, so you did."

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

"We are tucking in," grinned Monk.

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

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

"Right you are."

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

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

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

"Who goes there?"

Frank Monk chuckled.

"It's all right, Ford."

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

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

"Then you can't come in."

"Look here, don't be an ass——"

"The password!"

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

"Pass on," said Ford.

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

Frank Monk led the way into the camp. The Grammarian cowboys turned out to stare at the visitors. The camp was well planned, and the tents looked very comfortable. After their inspection the Blackfeet bade the cowboys good-bye.

"See you again," said Frank Monk, cheerily.

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

"Better look out for your own."

"Well, au revoir."

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

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

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

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

"Won't you?" said Figgins. "I know jolly well I sha'n't, if you don't."

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

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

"Same here," said Manners.

"Bai Jove, wathah."

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

"Nothin' of the sort, deah boy."

"What do you mean?"

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

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

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

"Vewy good."

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

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

## CHAPTER 7.

### The First Morning in Camp.

"WAKE up!"

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

The camp of the Blackfeet juniors awoke.

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

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

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

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

"Time to get up."

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

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

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

"Time to get up."

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

"Get up!"

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

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

"Well, that's rather a good idea."

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

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

"Well, I suppose real redskins do."

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

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

"Call the rest of them, Reilly."

"Faith, and I'm doing it."

"Bai Jove, I wish you wouldn't push me like that," came a

"I can scarcely in'orm you furthah, sir," said D'Arcy, "without a bweach of honah. I put it to you, as one gentleman to anothah."
"Ha, ha!—I mean, yes, certainly," replied the Head of the Grammar School.

sleepy voice. "Some beast is pokin' his beastly foot into my wibs."

"Wake up."

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

"Get up."

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

"Time to get up."

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

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

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

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

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

"You can't," said Figgins.

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

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

"Are you off your wockah, Figgins?"

"Certainly not. You are a squaw——"

"Bai Jove!"

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

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

"Weally, Figgins——"

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

"Weally, Blake——"

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

"Yaas, that's twue."

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

"It is not the cowwect expwession——"

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

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

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

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

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

"The plank's not there."

"Well, jump it, then."

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

Tom Merry was the first to plunge into the water. The squaws watched the braves from the camp. There was plenty of work to be done, getting the camp into order, tidying up the tents, and cooking breakfast. It was not such pleasant work as bathing in a sunny stream on a summer's morning; but on the morrow the squaws would be braves in their turn, so there was no grumbling. If Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was dissatisfied, it was not because of the work he had to do, but because he was thinking of the coming visit of Cousin Ethel. He didn't want to appear in the garb of a squaw before the laughing eyes of his cousin. But there was no help for it. The die was cast!

Tom Merry and his comrades swam and splashed in the little

stream gaily enough. Their merry shouts rang far through the solitary wood. It was a bit better than washing in the dormitory of St. Jim's, as Manners remarked.

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

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

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

Figgins looked at him admiringly.

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

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

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

"Hullo! what's the matter? Is it the enemy?"

"Buck up!"

Fatty Wynn was standing on the rampart of the camp, excitedly waving a frying-pan. He looked a queer figure in the garb of a redskin squaw. The juniors could only imagine that the enemy had appeared in sight, and they scrambled in frantic haste out of the stream.

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

"Sock it to them!"

"Hurrah!"

"But where are they?"

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

"Fatty, you ass, where are they?"

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

"Where are they?" roared Figgins.

Fatty Wynn stared at him in astonishment.

"Where are whom?" he asked.

"The Grammarians."

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

"Then what's the matter?"

"The matter? Nothing that I know of."

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

"I wasn't giving the alarm."

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

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

"You—you—you——"

"Of all the——"

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

Tom Merry burst into a laugh.

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

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

## CHAPTER 8.

### D'Arcy is not Satisfied.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"It was a jolly good pudding."

"I know it made us all ill."

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

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

"I can make a jolly good——"

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

"Yaas, wathah! I say, Tom Mewwy——"

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

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

Tom Merry laughed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Miss Fawcett!"

"Cousin Ethel!"

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

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

"I say, weally——"

"Give me the paint."

"Here it is. I say, weally, deah boy, you have nevah tweated me with pwopah wespect, but I will ovahlook that if you will change with me."

"Rats!"

"Pway don't be a wude beast, but——"

"Don't bother."

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

"Red ochre, ass."

"Eh?"

"Bring me the red ochre."

"I uttahly wefuse to bwing you the wed ochah."

"Ass! Hand it over or I sha'n't get painted in time. Gimme that paint, Figgins—that yellow is what I was going to use."

"I'm in a hurry."

"So am I, and——"

"There you are: I'm done."

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

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

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

"Wats! I say, Mannahs——"

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

"If you liked to change with me——"

"Clear off."

"I say, Lowthah——"

"Go and eat coke."

"Digby, old man——"

"Scat!"

"Hewwies——"

"Bunk!"

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

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

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

"Ow!" gasped Skimpole.

"You ass!" panted D'Arcy. "What do you mean by plantin' yourself in the way like that, when I am in a beastly huwwy."

"I am sorry, D'Arcy, but I retired here to be quiet, in order to work out a new idea that has come into my mind," said Skimpole. "It is a new detail in the construction of the airship I am inventing. I am thinking of working the airship, of

course, by electricity, but unfortunately I have not studied the subject of electricity very deeply. Yet I do not see why the current required for working the rotators should not be supplied by the motion of the rotators themselves, connected up with a dynamo to generate the current. I am told that there is a wastage of power to be considered, but I am thinking out a plan for saving that, and if I can perfect it, all that will be necessary will be to start the machine, which can be done with a push of the hand."

But D'Arcy was not listening. He had taken the paint, and he trod on Skimpole in leaving the tent again—trod rather hard. Skimpole yelped, but he forgot the matter the next moment, as he went on working out his plan for preventing the wastage of electric motive force, which would enable his electricity to generate itself and at the same time work the airship.

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

"There he is, Blake."

"Gussy, you lazy girl."

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

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

"I'm busy, I tell you."

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

"Paintin' it, deah boy."

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

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

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

But D'Arcy had no time to reply to Monty Lowther's badinage. He painted away as if his life depended upon it. Figgins had left the camp already to meet the ladies, and several other juniors who had finished their war-painting followed him. The squaws—with the exception of D'Arcy—were busy tidying up the camp. Blake followed Figgins, who was already greeting Cousin Ethel.

## CHAPTER 9.

### Distinguished Visitors.

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

"Dear me! What is that fearful figure?"

Cousin Ethel laughed.

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

"Dear me!"

Figgins hurried up. His hand went up to his head absent mindedly to raise his cap, and he plucked out a bunch of feathers. Cousin Ethel laughed again.

"Is it Figgins?" she asked.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Are all the sheets well aired, Figgins?"

"The—the what?"

"The sheets."

"They don't have sheets in a redskin camp, Miss Fawcett," said Figgins, trying not to laugh. "Blackfeet have never heard of them."

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

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

"What do you think of this rig?" he asked uneasily. There was a peculiar gleam in the girl's eyes that Figgins did not exactly "catch on" to.

"It is very realistic, Figgins."

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

"I am sure it is."

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

"Yes, of course."

"Then—then you don't——" Figgins paused. Cousin Ethel looked at him.

"I don't what, Figgins."

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

The girl laughed.

"Certainly not. I think you look splendid."

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

"What a good idea."

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

"I am sure you will."

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

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

Figgins chuckled.

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

"A—a what?"

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

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

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

"His what?"

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

"That's Blake."

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

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

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

"Do you?" said Blake, in amazement.

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

"Tommy!"

"Didn't you know me?" laughed Tom Merry.

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

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

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

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

"It's all right, dear."

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

"Rags! They're mocassins."

"Why do you wear them instead of your nice little boots?"

"I'm a Blackfoot now, you see. Redskins always wear mocassins."

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

Tom Merry laughed.

"I daresay boots aren't easily got in the Rocky Mountains," he remarked. "Besides, mocassins are much more useful. You can creep about in them without making a noise, and if you want to murder someone——"

"Tommy!"

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

"My dearest child——"

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

"My dear child!"

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

"Look here!" began Lowther wrathfully. "I——"

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

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

## CHAPTER 10.

### Scouts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jack Blake nodded an unqualified assent.

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

"I'm not going, you rotter," muttered Figgins fiercely, in a voice too low for Cousin Ethel to hear. Blake pretended not to hear it, either, and he went on in his usual tones, without changing his expression in the least.

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

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

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

"Look here——"

"Hook it!"

"I'm not——"

"Bunk, I tell you!"

Blake was determined, and Figgins had agreed to his chieftainship. He had to play the game; and with muttered words that were not complimentary to the great chief of the Blackfeet, Figgins left the camp to scout. Kerr accompanied him. Fatty Wynn, as a squaw, was exempt from scouting duty, and just now he was napping in the shade of a tent, after his hearty breakfast.

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

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

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

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

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

Tom Merry grinned.

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

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

"In our togs, mostly——"

"In what?"

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

"I am afraid that is not hygienic."

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

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

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

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

"Oh, they're squaws."

"Squaws?"

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

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

"Gussy! Where's that Gus?"

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

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

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

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

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

"Have him out."

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

"Stop him!"

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

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

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

"Is it you, Arthur?"

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am not surpwised at your laughin' to see me in this wig," said D'Arcy. "I wegard it as extwemely wotten."

"Are you wearing a wig, then?"

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

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

"Do you weally, Ethel?"

"Certainly. You make a nice girl."

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

"Gus! Where's that Gus?"

"I am here, deah boy."

"You haven't stacked the wood."

"Blow the wood!"

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

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"I won't detain him—her—then."

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

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

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

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

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

"I wefuse."

"Then you'll get lammed. Discipline has got to be maintained in this camp. The other squaws are doing their whack. Haven't you a sense of honour?"

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Play up, then. Go and squawk."

"Pewwaps you are wight."

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

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

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

"Weally——"

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

D'Arcy, with an inward groan, went off to stack the firewood. Lowther strolled on with Blake and Cousin Ethel, in spite of an expressive look he received from the Blackfoot chief.

"Let me see," remarked Blake. "I believe Figgins and Kerr have gone scouting up the Feeder towards the Grammarian camp."

"That's so."

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

"I don't want to go scouting."

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

"Yes; but——"

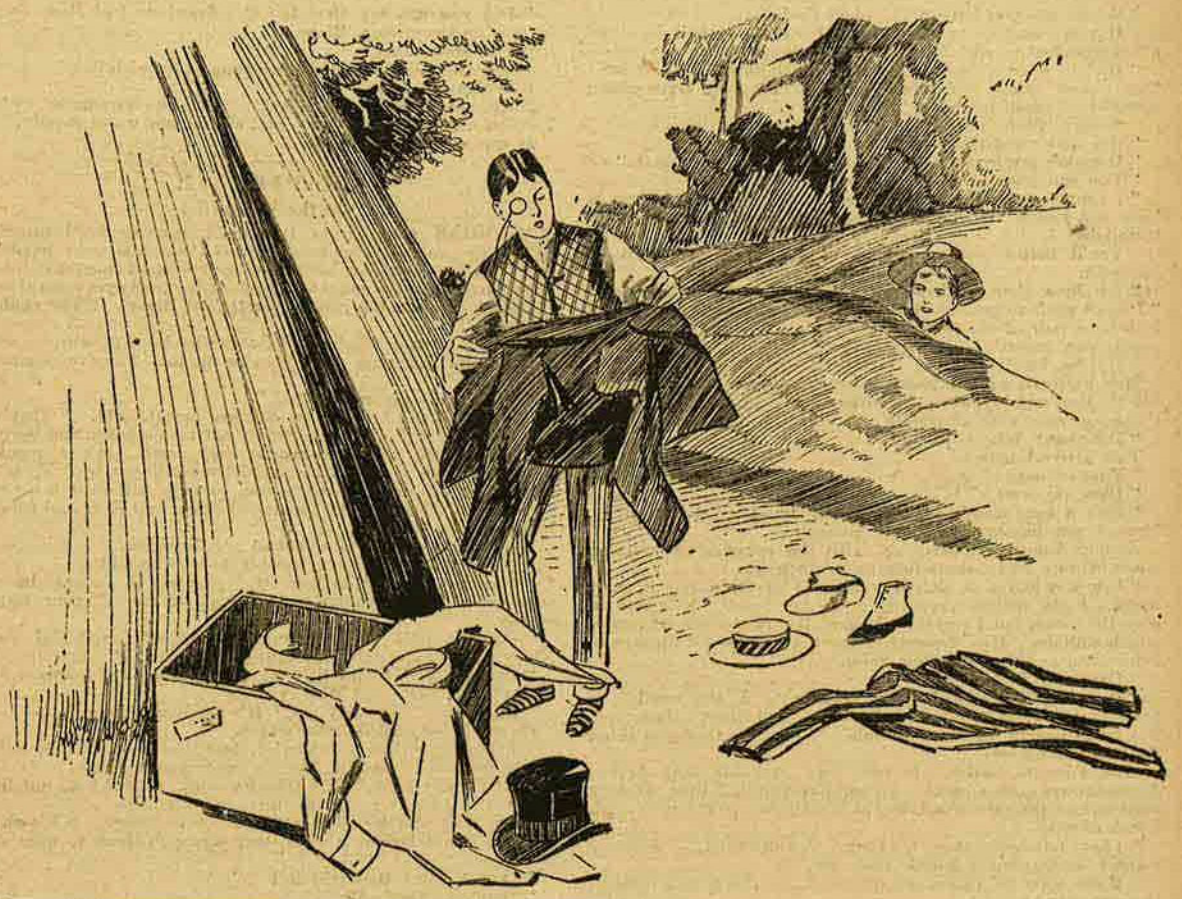
"Just you go scouting down the stream, and don't lose time," said Blake, with a wave of the hand. "Keep your eyes open for the enemy."

Lowther looked daggers at Blake, but he went. Manners came strolling up with his camera under his arm.

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

"Very jolly," said Cousin Ethel.

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



"Bai Jove, Indian life has its drawbacks," the spying Grammarian heard D'Arcy murmur. "They may talk about the noble savage if they like, but the noble savage must have been an awfully dirty sort of chap. I don't see where he could get any clean shirts from in the fowest."

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

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

"Certainly."

"I say, Manners," broke in Blake.

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

"I say, Manners!"

"Did you speak, Blake?"

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

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

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

"I can't go now."

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

"You are; but——"

"Then go and do as I tell you."

"Look here——"

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

Manners growled—and went. Cousin Ethel's face was immovable. Blake looked at her out of the corner of his eyes, but apparently she saw nothing.

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

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

"I say, Digby——"

"You see, Miss Ethel——"

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

Dig looked daggers at his chief.

"No fear," he murmured.

"And lose no time, Dig."

"Look here, Blake——"

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

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

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

Blake looked after her in dismay.

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

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

## CHAPTER 11.

### The Hand of the Foe.

"HAVE you stacked up that firewood, squaw?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Have you chopped that fresh lot?"

"No, I have not done anythin' of the sort."

"Then buck up."

"Look here, Pwatt——"

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

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

"You uttah wottah!"

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

"Yaas, but——"

"Oh, don't talk—work."

"I wefuse."

"Where will you have it?" asked French.

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

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

"Weally, Blake——"

"Get that wood chopped!"

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

"You can wash them, I suppose?"

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

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

"Dear me! Who is that?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"That's Gussy!"

"Bless my soul!"

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

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

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

"Dear me!"

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

Miss Fawcett smiled. It was very probable that Arthur Augustus was quite correct. Cousin Ethel smiled, too. D'Arcy went on chopping the wood, and at last threw the axe away with a sigh of relief.

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

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

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then get the water fetched in."

"The beastly watah can wait."

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

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

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

"Bai Jove!"

The swell of St. Jim's gazed at the trench and the stream in amazement. He saw, as he went to fill the buckets, what had escaped the notice of the others, general attention being given to the distinguished visitors now. There was no water in the trench, and only a slight trickle on the pebbly bed of the Feeder. D'Arcy stood staring at the bed of the little stream in amazement, the buckets in his hand. Kerruish called out to him from the wall.

"How long are you going to stand there, squaw?"

D'Arcy retraced his steps. His taskmasters looked at the empty buckets in surprise and indignation.

"He hasn't filled them."

"The lazy boundess!"

"What do you mean, Gussy?"

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

"What!"

"The stweam has wun dwy."

"Rot!"

"Look for yourselves, deah boys."

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

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

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

"Blessed if I know!"

"Nice sort of a chief——"

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

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"Did you not say that the Grammarians had their camp further up the stream, Blake?"

"Yes, Miss Ethel."

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

Blake gave a jump.

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

It was too evidently true.

## CHAPTER 12.

### On the Warpath!

FIGGINS came from the wood, running hard towards the camp. Figgins's painted face was very excited. Kerr was at his heels, and Kerr looked equally excited. They came up to the camp at top speed, with all eyes upon them.

"Hallo, what's the row?" exclaimed Blake. "The enemy coming?"

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

"We've just discovered that."

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

Blake's red-ochred face looked very serious.

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

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

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

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

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

Cousin Ethel looked at her watch.

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

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

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

"Do you think they will do it?"

"I am sure they will."

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

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

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

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

"Bai Jove, wathah not!"

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

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

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

"Yaas, wathah; and I shall not be a squaw then," said Arthur Augustus. "I am afwaid that you wegard me as a wathah widiculous ass at pwesent, Ethel?"

The girl laughed merrily.

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

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

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

"Certainly."

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

"I will take care, dear."

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

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

The distinguished visitors were helped across the plank, and the Blackfeet formed up in a guard of honour to escort them through the wood. D'Arcy waved his hand to Cousin Ethel from the wall, and the girl smiled back. D'Arcy had screwed an eyeglass into his right eye regardless of the paint, and the look of the swell of St. Jim's was certainly rather singular, and perhaps that was why Cousin Ethel smiled.

The Blackfeet marched with Miss Fawcett and Cousin Ethel as far as the footpath through the wood. Further it was not judicious to go. They did not want to court public attention, and have half the villagers of the countryside collecting round the camp to look on. It was a short walk down the footpath to the road, and in the Rylcombe Road a vehicle was waiting for the visitors. They parted at the footpath, Miss Fawcett again impressing upon Tom Merry the necessity of keeping his feet dry, and Cousin Ethel spoiling a glove by shaking hands with Figgins.

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

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

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

Blake whistled.

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

"We've simply got to lick them."

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

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

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

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

"Rotten," said Monty Lowther.

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

"No; rotten if we do get it."

"Look here, Monty Lowther——"

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

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

"There's only one pail of water in the camp," said Fatty Wynn. "Of course, we never thought the supply would run short, and we didn't economise. I suppose I could boil puddings in this, though it's been used for washing up. But I want clean water to mix the flour in. Can't do that with washing-up water, you know. It wouldn't be exactly harmful, perhaps, but you couldn't call it nice."

"I should wathah say not, Fatty Wynn."

"Well, then, what's to be done?"

"We're going to attack the Grammarian camp," said Blake, "We're going to knock them into a cocked-hat, and then bust up the dam. There are twenty of them, and so we shall need all our forces. The squaws will have to tuck up their skirts and become warriors again."

"We confer women's rights on them," said Lowther. "No taxation without representation, you know."

"Good! The camp can be left to take care of itself for a bit."

"If I had my bulldog here——" began Herries.

"But you haven't. Now, you squaws, change your things."

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

"Eh?"

"I wefuse to become a bwave again," said D'Arcy obstinately. "You wefused to allow me to become a bwave when I wanted to, and now I uttahly wefuse to give up my wights as a squaw."

"Are you funking the scrap?" asked Pratt.

"If you like to stand out here, Pwatt, and put up your fists, I will show you whethah I am funkin' or not," said the swell of St. Jim's.

"Chuck that!" said Blake, pulling Pratt back. "We've got enough fighting to do yonder. Look here, Gussy, we need every man against the enemy now——"

"Pewwaps you do; but you don't need any women."

Figgins chuckled.

"Gussy's got you there, Blake."

"Well," said Blake, "I'm willing to admit the perfect equality of the sexes, and to give Gussy a vote and representation in Parliament. Every woman performing military service is entitled to rank as a man. What could be fairer?"

"Nothing."

"I am a squaw for to-day," said D'Arcy obstinately. "You wouldn't give your permish for me to be a bwave when I wanted it, and now you can go and eat coke."

"You obstinate ass——"

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as an obstinate ass."

"We want every man."

"Squaws are no good in a scwap. I will go on choppin' wood."

"Ass! We want every fist——"

"I can fetch and cawwy watah, you know, and stack up firewood while you are gone," said D'Arcy, with crushing sarcasm.

Jack Blake burst into a laugh.

"Well, after all we may as well leave one chap to look after the camp," he remarked. "If anybody comes——"

"Just look at him over the wall," said Lowther. "That will be enough."

"Bai Jove, I will spwing upon him, and wecite one of Lowther's funnay stowies——"

"Oh, draw the line," said Figgins. "No manslaughter, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, let's get ready," said Blake. "The sooner we get to work the better. Mind, Gussy, keep the plank inside the wall, and blow that whistle if the enemy appears. The Grammarian camp is within sound of it when the wind is blowing that way, I think, and it's blowing that way now, so we shall hear."

"Vewy good!"

"But you can come along if you like."

"I wefuse to come along."

"Stay where you are then, and eat coke."

The Blackfoot braves speedily prepared for the expedition. In full war-paint and plumes they issued from the camp, and Arthur Augustus, still in his garb as a squaw, watched them go. They disappeared from view in the thick wood.

"Bai Jove!" murmured the swell of St. Jim's, "I think I wathah scored that time. If I am a beastly squaw I won't go on the beastly warpath with the beastly bwaves, that's certain. And I have had enough of this filthy paint on my face, too. I am going to have a jolly good wash, and dress myself in decent clothes for once, and see what it is like to feel clean again. I can scoop up enough watah for that purpose, and I shall feel a gweat deal more like a Chwistian when I am dressed in a pwopah mannah, and wearin' a decent hat. Yaas, wathah!"

And Arthur Augustus was soon busy.

He scooped up from the hollows of the stream bed sufficient water to fill a pail, and carried it into the camp. He was far too intent upon his occupation to think of removing the plank after crossing the empty moat.

He set the pail down, and stripped off the squaw garb, and cleaned himself from head to foot with great satisfaction. He surveyed the result in a hand mirror, and grinned.

"Bai Jove, that is bettah!"

Then he dressed himself. He felt more and more comfortable as he proceeded to don clean linen and clean clothes.

"Bai Jove, Indian life has its dwawbacks," murmured D'Arcy. "They may talk about the noble savage if they like, but the noble savage must have been an awfully dirty sort of chap. I don't see where he could get any clean shirts fwom in the fowest."

D'Arcy was so busy that he did not hear the creak of the plank and did not see a head rise over the wall and a grinning face look at him.

He had his back turned to the spot, and had not the faintest suspicion that the eyes of Frank Monk were fixed upon him.

Monk slowly and silently stepped forward, and head after head rose into view behind, and Grammarian after Grammarian entered the camp, D'Arcy giving the finishing touches to his toilet in sublime unconsciousness of it all.

Frank Monk grinned at his followers.

"The camp's deserted," he whispered. "Nobody but Gussy here. We'll wreck the place, and leave him tied up in the midst of the ruins."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quiet! He may have some signal for the others!" said Monk sagely. "Creep on the young ass, and collar him before he can give it, anyway."

"What ho!"

The Grammarians stole forward.

D'Arcy had finished tying his necktie under a beautifully white collar, and the result afforded him endless satisfaction as he jammed on his eyeglass, and watched his reflection in the glass.

"Bai Jove, that is bettah! Now all I want is a silk hat. Gweat Scott!"

He turned at a footstep behind him. But he turned too late. The Grammarians were upon him. Hands seized him on all sides and held him fast.

"Got him!"

D'Arcy remembered the whistle, and made a frantic clutch at it. Before the Grammar School juniors could stop him he blew a loud sharp blast.

Monk snatched it away.

"That's a signal," he cried. "Hold him! There's no time to waste. Wreck the camp, and chuck every thing into the bed of the Feeder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And buck up!"

"You Gwammah wottahs!"

"And fasten Gussy up here. Stick some feathers and paint on him, and shove his head through the tent and tie him up, and he can explain to the others when they come back."

And the grinning Grammarians hastened to obey.

## CHAPTER 13.

### A Flare Up!

"HERE we are," said Jack Blake.

Quite unconscious of the danger impending over their own camp, the juniors of St. Jim's had pressed on rapidly through the wood towards the Grammarian camp. They had taken a roundabout way in order to avoid meeting any of the Grammarians who might be out scouting, but they had lost no time. Now they were in sight of the Grammarian camp, and they halted on the edge of the trees.

"They're at home," said Figgins.

Three Grammarians could be seen shaking their fists over the fence of wooden stakes that surrounded the Grammar Camp. The fence had been extended so as to cover both sides of the Feeder.

The stream at this point was not more than six feet wide, and it had been allowed to flow through the camp. A deep trench had been dug for its waters to flow to a depression in the ground some distance away, and the old channel was blocked up with logs and earth, a really workmanlike affair.

The juniors of St. Jim's saw at a glance that the dam could not be interfered with unless the camp were carried by assault.

"The rotters," said Lowther. "It's rather clever, too, you know. They've arranged it so that nothing can be done without taking the camp, and they've got a strong defence."

"And as many men as we have," said Kerr.

"If they're all at home."

"I daresay some are out scouting. But there are a crowd," said Blake, scanning the Grammar camp. "I can see over a dozen hats over the wall."

"Can't be helped," said Tom Merry. "We've got to rush them."

Carboy waved his hat from the wall of the Grammar camp.

"Come on, you rotters!" he shouted. "We'll give you a hiding! If you're looking for a licking, come on and take it!"

Blake looked thoughtful. He seemed in no hurry to accept the Grammarian challenge. The position of the camp was strong. The stake fence was strong and high, and defended by a resolute garrison should have been impregnable. And beyond the fence could be seen more than a dozen of the cowboy hats worn by the Grammarians.

"Come on," said Figgins.

"It's a risky business," said Blake. "Can't be helped, though. The fact is, they ought to be able to keep us out if they're only half our number, and that's what's the matter. We've got to risk it, though."

"Sure and we're ready."

"We'll take them on both sides at once," said Blake. "Tom Merry can lead a party round the other side and go for them there. That will divide their attention."

"Good!" said Tom Merry.

"And I'll lead a party on another side," said Figgins. "The New House chaps will follow my lead."

"Good!" said the New House fellows with one voice.

"Oh, all right!" assented Blake. "Now, it's three minutes to twelve. Rylcombe Church clock will strike in three minutes, and we can hear it there. That's the signal."

"Right you are!"

The redskins divided into three parties.

Three Grammarians were still waving their fists on the wall, but of the rest of them only hats could be seen.

"They're lying low," said Blake. "We'll jolly soon wake them up. There goes the clock! Come on!"

The chimes echoed over the wood from Rylcombe Church. Blake rushed forward, with his followers at his heels.

Tom Merry from the opposite side rushed on at the same moment, with the Shell followers backing him up. Figgins and the New House party were only a few seconds later.

The Blackfoot juniors gave a terrific yell as they charged, and it was answered by a shout of defiance from the Grammarians. But that shout rang from only three throats, and still only three defenders could be seen.

Tom Merry was the first to reach the fence and clamber up. He received a drive from above which sent him gasping to the ground, and the next minute Lowther grasped the Grammarian and dragged him over the wall.

Tom Merry was up in a twinkling, scrambling over the fence, with Manners and Lowther at his heels.

But there was no defence.

The chums of the Shell scrambled into the camp unopposed. Tom Merry jumped down inside the wall, and stared about him in amazement.

On the opposite side Carboy was struggling with Blake at the wall, and Digby, Herries, and Reilly were scrambling over unopposed. In another quarter a single Grammarian was opposing Figgins & Co.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in amazement.

There were only three Grammarians in the camp.

The dozen hats that could be seen over the wall were arranged upon sticks set upright in the ground, and from outside gave an impression that the camp was well garrisoned. It was a trick of the astute Grammarian leader to keep his camp secure from attack while he was absent with his followers.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Blake, as he rolled Carboy over, and Digby and Kerruish seized and made him a prisoner. "What a sell!"

"Jolly good sell for us, I think!" gasped Manners. "We should never have got over that wall if there had been twenty Grammarians inside it."

"Oh, I don't know! I admit it would have been hard."

"You wouldn't have done it!" gasped Carboy.

"Rats! Where are the other rotters?"

"Find out!"

"Now, then, answer, or you'll get put to the torture!" said the Blackfoot chief sternly. "Where is Frank Monk?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Lowther, put him to the torture."

"What am I to do?"

"Tell him one of your funny yarns."

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

"Never mind, we'll spare the torture," said Blake, shaking his head. "Come to think of it, it would be rough on him. Take those prisoners away, and chuck them into the Feeder. They can get a ducking when we break the dam, which will be a lesson to them not to play little games on a tribe of Blackfeet."

"Good wheeze."

The three Grammarians were speedily dropped into the bed of the stream. They were tied there with one of their own lassoes to a stake driven in the earth. There was, of course, no danger, for the Feeder, when restored to its bed, was only nine or ten inches deep in this spot.

"I say, Blake, it's rather curious Frank Monk and all those rotters being away," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "They may have gone to attack our camp, you know. We came here in a roundabout way; and they may have gone direct and missed us."

"Well, Gussy is on the watch."

"Well, a Fourth Form kid isn't of much use——"

"A what?" said Blake unpleasantly.

"What I mean is——"

"Never mind what you mean. I'm chief of this tribe. Get to work on the dam there, and break it up."

"I am sure that you think I look a feahful ass," said D'Arcy. "I was weally the pwopah person to be chief of the twibe, you know; but there is a lot of wottin' in these mattahs, and those boundahs have made me a squah!"

"Yes; but——"

"Oh, don't jaw! Work, old chap."

Blake was on the high horse now. He was chief, and he meant that important fact to be thoroughly understood. The Saints set to work. They might be interrupted, and there was no time to lose. If the Grammarians had gone to attack the St. Jim's camp, they might hear the signal whistle from D'Arcy at any moment.

"Wreck the camp," said Blake. "Half a dozen of you start on the dam, and get it down; and some of you jam that fence down. Yank the tents over, and kick all that firewood into the fire. I see they've left a pot simmering over the fire," Blake went on, surveying the gipsy-like cooking arrangements of the Grammarians. "We may as well scoff that. I'm getting peckish, and dinner will be late."

"It's not done—or near it," said Fatty Wynn, glancing into the pot. "There's a lot of grub in this box. I've found tins of salmon and tomatoes, and cake and biscuits and fruit, bread and cheese, ham and eggs——"

"Good! Take all you want, you chaps, but don't sit down to scoff them. You will have to eat while you work."

"I say, that's rather bad for the digestion," said Fatty Wynn anxiously. "Better risk taking off a quarter of an hour for a feed."

"Let me catch you taking off a quarter of a minute, that's all!" said Blake. "Mind how you shove those things near that fire, you chaps. We don't want a flare up."

"Sure, and I'll soon have the tents down," said Reilly.

"Good! I'll help with the dam."

The dam in the stream was soon torn down. The Feeder flowed back into its old channel, and the three Grammarians tied to the post in the river-bed yelled as the water surged round them. Some of the juniors were tearing down the stake fence, and piling the stakes on the camp fire in order to make it impossible for them to be used again.

The fire blazed up, flaring and roaring, as the fuel, hard and dry with the hot sun, was piled upon it. The heat was terrific near the fire, and the juniors gave it a wider berth.

"Haul away!" yelled Reilly.

"Look out!" shouted Blake.

But the warning came too late. The tent came over, and flapped right into the fire, and in a second it was flaring up in a spire of flame.

"Ow!" gasped Reilly.

"Look out—it's catching!"

"Great Scott!"

"Drag the things away!"

"My hat!"

The blazing tent flared over the heap of fallen canvas and ropes, firewood, and grass. The juniors rushed to the rescue, but it was useless. Nothing but a powerful hose could have stopped the progress of the fire, and the lads could only surge back from the flames and look on in dismay.

"My hat!" gasped Blake. "That's a bit more serious than we intended. It was an accident, of course. You saw that, Carboy?"

"Yes," gasped Carboy. "It couldn't be helped; but I fancy that settles camping-out for us. The game's up."

At that moment, borne on the wind, came the shrill blast of a whistle from the far distance.

Tom Merry gave a jump.

"It's the signal!"

"They're attacking our camp!"

"Come on!"

"Let those Grammar rotters go," said Blake hastily, "and follow me! We must get back before they can do any damage."

And in a few seconds the Blackfeet were racing through the wood, leaving the camp of the Grammarians flaming to the sky, and the three Grammar juniors engaged in snatching from the flames a few articles at a time. But they were able to save little. As Carboy had said, camping-out was "all up" for the Grammarians.

## CHAPTER 14.
### Rough on D'Arcy.

BREATHLESS with the rapid run, the Blackfeet arrived in sight of their own camp. Tom Merry gave a shout of dismay as he pointed to the stream.

The Grammarians had just discerned the volume of smoke in the sky from their own quarters; and Frank Monk had guessed what was happening. He called his followers together, and they hurriedly left the St. Jim's camp, which they had pretty thoroughly wrecked in a very short time. Every movable article had been hurled into the stream's bed or into the trench, and it was this that had caused Tom Merry to exclaim as he came in sight of the scene of destruction:

"Look!"

The dam having been broken up the stream, the waters were flooding back through their old channel. They swept down upon the articles heaped in the pebbly bed, and swept them away. Camp utensils and furniture, tent canvas and blankets and bags—all sorts and conditions of property were whirled to and fro in the stream, and dashed away towards the Rhyll.

Blake snapped his teeth.

"The rotters! They've wrecked the place!"

"Well, what have we done in their quarters?" grinned Lowther.

"There they are! Go for them!"

The Grammarians were crowding out of the denuded camp. Only one tent was left standing, for what reason the juniors could not see. They gave a shout of defiance at the sight of the redskins, and showed no disposition whatever to avoid a conflict.

"Come on!" said Blake. "We'll wipe up the ground with them, anyway!"

And he rushed on, followed fast by the rest. The Grammarian cowboys formed up to receive them, ready for the fray.

"You rotters!" shouted Frank Monk. "What have you been doing to our camp?"

"What have you been doing to ours, you rotters?"

"Wrecking it," grinned Monk. "We chucked the things into the bed of the Feeder. Of course, we couldn't foresee that you were going to break the dam and wash them all away. That was an accident."

"And we couldn't help your rotten camp catching fire," said Tom Merry. "That was an accident too."

"I fancy camping out is all up for you——"

"You'll think it's all up for you, too, when you see your camp."

"Well, you're going to have a jolly good licking."

"Ugh! Go for the palefaces, my red brothers!"

"Sock it to them!" yelled Monk.

And the two parties rushed at one another. The redskins wore tomahawks in their belts, and the cowboys had weapons of a harmless kind, but in this fray they forgot that they were redskins and cowboys, and fell back upon the good old British weapon—the fist.

"Go for the rotters!"

"Buck up, Grammar School!"

"Buck up, St. Jim's!"

Fierce was the fight. Real redskins and real cowboys might have done more damage to one another, but they could not have shown more pluck and determination. The odds were slightly on the side of St. Jim's, the Saints being nineteen to seventeen. But the fight was long and desperate. Tom Merry had Frank Monk's head in chancery, and Lane was in a similar position with regard to Figgins. Twice the Grammarians receded, and twice they rallied. But the Saints were not to be denied.

"Come on!" roared Blake. "Back up! On the ball!"

It was the old yell of the football field, and it went right to the hearts of the Saints. They rushed on; and the Grammarians broke and ran at last. A few single combats continued here and there, but the enemy receded further and further from the victorious Blackfeet, and at last were driven into the wood. And then the redskins allowed them to retreat unmolested.

"That will do," gasped Tom Merry. "They've had enough—and I think we have!"

"I should say so," agreed Lowther. "Blessed if I ever saw such a collection of black eyes and busted noses in my natural!"

Figgins wiped a stream of "claret" from his nose, which was mixing with his paint.

"My hat!" he said. "It was a row, and no mistake. A jolly good wind-up to the camping-out—for I'm afraid it means the wind-up."

"Let's look at the place."

The juniors entered the camp. Save for the one tent that was standing, it was stripped bare. The Grammarians had not been long at work, but they had been thorough. Everything seemed to be gone, and though a few articles could be seen glimmering in the waters of the Feeder, most of them had been carried on to the river. The camp was utterly wrecked.

"But where's Gussy?" exclaimed Blake. "He must have been off his guard. If he had been on the watch, and blown the whistle directly the Grammar cads came in sight, we should have been here in time to prevent this."

"Well, I warned you——" said Tom Merry.

"Oh, rats! Where's Gussy?"

"Pway welease me, deah boys!"

It was the voice of the swell of the School House. Blake looked round. The voice came from the tent.

"Where is he?"

"I am here, deah boys, and suffewin' gweat inconvenience; and my clothes are bein' absolutely wuined. Pway come to the wescue."

"By Jove, there he is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wescue, deah boys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy certainly looked comical. The Grammarians had thrust his head through the tent canvas where it joined, and the canvas had then been drawn tight under his chin and behind his neck, and laced up securely.

"My hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy looked a great deal as if he were in the stocks. His hands were tied within the tent, so he had been unable to make any attempt to release himself from his uncomfortable position. Nothing could be seen of him but his head and his eyeglass, and it was no wonder the juniors roared as they looked at him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway welease me, deah boys! I wegard this laughtah as absolutely heartless," said D'Arcy. "I am suffewin' considewably. My collah is uttahly wuined, and my twousahs are gwowin' howwibly wumpled. Pway welease me."

They released him. The swell of St. Jim's smoothed out his trousers, but there were some creases that would not be smoothed out. His eyes gleamed with determination behind his monocle.

"I don't know what you chaps think," he said; "but I've had enough of this campin'-out. It's wewy nice in some wespects, but you can get fed-up with it in time. I'm goin' to take a west."

"I think we shall all have to take a rest," said Blake, with a grin. "Next time we camp out we had better make peace with the Grammarians first. Their camp is a wreck; and ours is a ruin. The game's up."

"Right up," said Tom Merry. "Still, it has been ripping fun."

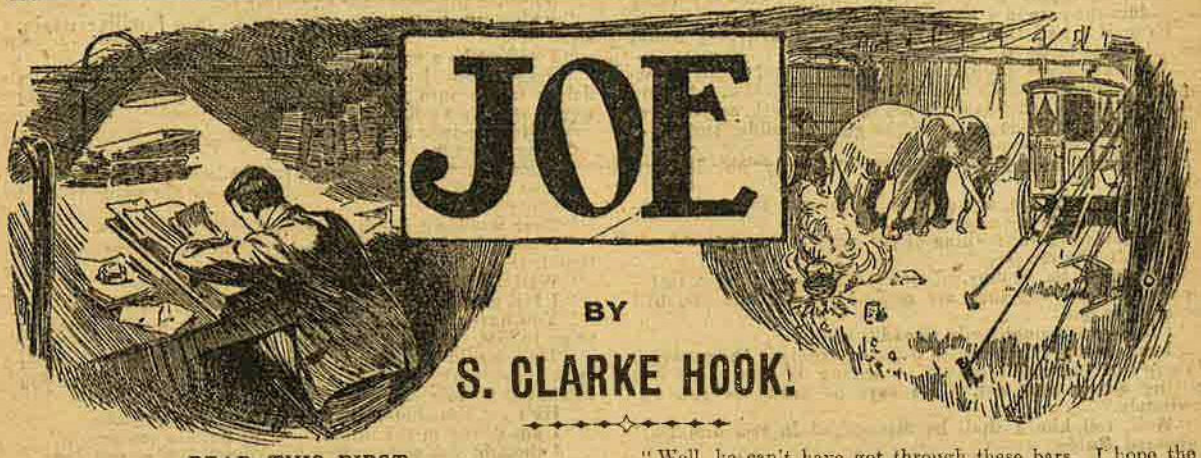
* * * * * *

And the campers returned to St. Jim's earlier than they had intended. So did the Grammarians. Each party resolved to do better next time. But the headmasters of the two schools had their own ideas about that, and it was extremely probable that there would be no "next time."

But, as Tom Merry said, it had been ripping fun. Cousin Ethel sympathised; but Miss Priscilla was secretly relieved in her mind to hear that the camping was over, and that Tom Merry was no longer in danger of catching a cold or getting his feet wet. It had been good fun while it lasted, and for many a day the juniors chuckled over the remembrance of the warfare between the rival camps.

THE END.

**SPLENDID NEW TALE OF CIRCUS LIFE.**




### 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, has to steer into the ditch to avoid collision with a motorist. Just after this mishap, Muerte's traction-engine is seen rushing down the hill. Joe, to save his master's caravans, rushes ahead and lays himself down in the road, so compelling Muerte's driver to dash into the ditch.

*(Now go on with the story.)*

### Fox, the Lawyer.

"I'll make you pay for this work, you scamp!" declared Muerte, rushing up to Joe and Ruabino. "You will have cause to regret it, I can tell you."

"Well, you can certainly tell me so," observed Rubby; "but then, you see, dear boy, I know you so well that I never believe a word you say. You may think that you will make me pay for your little—ha, ha!—accident; but my impression is that you will do nothing of the sort. However, time alone will prove who is correct. Got a nasty job there, haven't you?"

"You are an insolent cad, and when I come across that boy I will give him the worst thrashing he has ever had in his life, though that will not be so bad as he deserves."

"That's rather rough on you, Joe!" laughed Rubby; "but I do not feel at all sure that you would not be able to tackle him. At any rate, you would be able to hurt him so badly that he would run away like a whipped cur. He is a miserable coward at the best of times. Go and bathe your eye, Muerte. You will have a nasty black eye if you don't take care of the thing. Now, we are going to have something to eat before we start, so we will pay a visit to Leo. I have caged him up, because he talks of running away, and we will come and interview him."

Leo was still obdurate, and he was so angry at being kept a prisoner that he refused to speak to Rubby, so that worthy invited Joe and Jim to dine with him, and Muerte hurried on to the town, outside of which he knew Rubby would pitch his circus.

That night the circus arrived at its destination, and Rubby was busy directing operations when Jupiter approached in a state of considerable excitement.

"Leo has gone, Rubby!" he exclaimed.

"Gone? But how could he get out?"

"That's the mystery. The cage is locked, and there is also a padlock on it as well. Now I know for a fact no one has keys to fit the two locks, and mine has never been out of my pocket."

"He could not have squeezed through the bars, surely?"

"That's absolutely impossible. Come and look at them for yourself."

"I wonder if his chums can have helped him to get out!" exclaimed Rubby, following Jupiter to the place.

"They say that they have not even seen him."

"Well, he can't have got through these bars. I hope the lad has not really gone. He's very headstrong, but I don't want him to face the world alone. This is a mystery, and no mistake. Every bar is firm. It seems to me that someone must have unfastened the door."

"I'm certain they have not. He will have the laugh of us this time."

"I don't mind that, Jupiter, so long as he has not bolted. I like the lad. It would grieve me greatly if we parted, after all these years, especially in this manner."

"I should think it ought to grieve him, too, after all your kindness to him. Still, I suppose he does not know all about that."

"No. I have never told him, and never shall. Suppose we come and question the youngsters? They will be at supper now."

The two approached the booth where they expected to find the chums, then they stopped, as they heard shouts of laughter.

"Why, here he is!" gasped Rubby, entering the place, to find the three eating bread and cheese, and apparently enjoying it.

"Look here, Rubby!" exclaimed Leo. "Joe has convinced me that I have been making an ass of myself, and I'm sorry."

"Say no more about it," interposed Rubby. "You gave me a bad scare, for I feared you had bolted, and I wouldn't like to part in that fashion."

"I wouldn't really part like that, Rubby It would be base ingratitude, after all your kindness to me. You see, I'm eating."

"Yes—yes, that's sensible; but however did you get out?"

"Why, climbed to the top of the cage, and tried all the bars. One of them shifted. That is to say it was loose, and I hadn't any difficulty in sliding it out; then I followed its example, and, having replaced the bar, came here. Well, I told Joe what had happened, and he convinced me that I was in the wrong, so I'm going to knuckle under, and have my revenge by eating all the food I can get hold of. You see, I shall have to make up for lost time."

"Right you are! I sha'n't grumble at that, you beauty. Good-night, my lads. I'm going to turn in, and to-morrow we will arrange some performances."

But on the morrow Rubby had a little surprise. In reality he scarcely believed that Muerte would take action against him, but soon after breakfast a card, bearing the name of Jabez Fox, solicitor, was brought to him by Joe.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Rubby. "I suppose this is the commencement of the proceedings. Fox isn't a bad name for a lawyer, either. What sort of looking man is he, Joe?"

"Tall, commanding presence; big, clean-shaven face; small, beady eyes; beaky nose, very loud voice. It's raining—you can hear it on the caravan—and he's waiting in the rain."

"Well, that's a pity, dear boy! He might catch cold. Do you think you could manage him?"

"Well, one just above the belt might sew him up."

"Bless the boy! I don't expect you to fight him. Lawyers never fight with their fists. No; you will have to fight him with your tongue!"

"Look here, Rubby, if Muerte is going to law—and I believe he is—you had very much better employ a solicitor. I know rather less about law than you do—that is to say, if you don't know anything."

"We have right on our side."

"Undoubtedly; at least, we think so. But you know the

adage—'That a man who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client'?"

"I am not going to be my own lawyer. You are going to conduct the case in a manner that you think fit."

"Even if I had the cheek to speak in court, they would not allow me to do so."

"You have cheek enough for anything. And as for allowing you, they can't help it if you act as a witness. All you will have to do is to damage his case as much as you conveniently can, and do mine all the good possible, and there you are."

"It sounds all right, Rubby. But why not have a lawyer?"

"Because you are my private secretary, and well competent to conduct my case."

"I'm certain I am nothing of the sort."

"I don't like lawyers."

"That may be, Rubby. I don't like those I have met—especially Fox; but they are necessary evils, and you had better have one."

"I have got enough evils already, and——"

"I say, Rubby," exclaimed Jupiter, entering the caravan, "there's a big swell outside, standing in the rain, and getting angry and wet. He says he must see you immediately."

"Well, tell him I shall be disengaged in two minutes," answered Rubby.

And then he went on chatting with Joe for quite a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time Fox stepped into the caravan, looking very cross and damp.

"Good-morning, dear boy!" exclaimed Rubby. "I——"

"My name is Mr. Fox!"

"Yes, dear boy. I guessed so, from the description my private secretary gave of you. It's a nice morning, don't you think?"

"I am not here to discuss the weather. I have been waiting half an hour, and——"

"Don't mention it! That is nothing to the time some people have to wait before seeing me. The King of England, for instance, has been waiting nearly forty years, and he has not seen me yet!"

"Mr. Muerte has instructed me to take proceedings against you, and he claims heavy damages."

"Sit down, dear boy!" exclaimed Rubby, pointing to a stool that stood against the side of the caravan.

This made Joe turn away to hide his laughter, because he knew that stool had only two legs to it, one of them having got broken. Fox did not notice it until he sat down; then he went to the floor of the caravan with a bump that shook it.

"Look out, my dear fellow!" exclaimed Rubby. "You will hurt yourself if you sit down in that reckless fashion. Don't laugh at him, Joe!"

"I suppose you think this is funny?" roared Fox, struggling to his feet.

"Well, from my point of view, I would say it is distinctly funny; though I doubt if you consider it funny from your point of view. Try another stool. I recollect that one has only two legs to stand on, and that beats your client by exactly two legs, for he has not a single leg to stand on."

"That is not my opinion, according to my instructions."

"Ah, that's where it comes in! It all depends on whether you are soft enough to believe him."

"At any rate, he claims five hundred pounds damages, and this is essentially a case that should be settled out of court."

"I refer you to my secretary, Mr. Joe."

"Absurd! How can that boy know anything about the matter?"

"He happens to know all about it, and has my full authority to deal with it as he thinks fitting."

"You mean to say that you will agree to any terms I make with him?"

"Exactly!"

"Well, my lad," exclaimed Fox, brightening up a little, because he thought he had an easy task now, "you may be able to comprehend that this is a very serious case for your employer, and still more serious for you. You deliberately wrecked Mr. Muerte's circus, and your action might have caused serious loss of life. Of course, you must know that such action might subject you to a long term of imprisonment. Now, my client claims five hundred pounds' damages—and there is not a doubt that he will get them—to say nothing of all the costs of the action. I am prepared to submit any offer you like to make on behalf of your employer, though I do not think that my client will be prepared to accept anything less than the amount claimed."

"In that case, it isn't much good making an offer," observed Joe. "What do you think, Rubby?"

"You are dealing with the matter. I never interfere with my legal adviser."

"Absurd!" exclaimed Fox. "How can this lad know anything about law?"

"So much the better for you, dear boy!"

"I object to your addressing me in that familiar strain, sir."

"I will make a note of your objection, my dear fellow."

"You admit, boy, that you purposely caused Muerte's driver to run into the ditch?" demanded Fox, who wanted to get at Rubby's line of defence.

"I didn't admit that," answered Joe.

"It is a fact."

"I don't suppose it is necessary to admit all facts."

"You would be placed on oath to speak the whole truth."

"Quite so."

"Then you must admit all facts."

"I never said I was not going to do so. I merely said that I didn't admit it now."

"Well, let me hear your version of the matter."

"I fail to see how that would benefit our case."

"You have no case. If your employer is so ill-advised as to go to law, he will have heavy costs to pay."

"That would be to your advantage," said Joe. "You must think that you have a very weak case, otherwise you would not be so anxious to settle it out of court."

"He's got you there, dear boy!" exclaimed Rubby.

"I am acting in the interests of all parties concerned."

"I thought you were acting for Muerte," observed Joe.

"What offer are you prepared to make me?"

"None!"

"Come, Mr. Ruabino, this is utterly ridiculous, and you are playing with a very serious matter."

"I refer you to my legal adviser," said Rubby, lighting a cigar.

"Well, I have no intention of wasting time. Do I understand that you will make no offer to settle the matter?"

"Exactly!" said Joe. "We make no offer."

"But don't you see, boy, what a serious position you are placing your employer in? You are his servant, and he is liable for your actions."

"I don't repudiate that liability," observed Rubby, pulling out a cheque-book, and raising Fox's hopes.

"I might feel disposed to submit, say, an offer of three hundred pounds—entirely without prejudice—to my client——"

"I refer you to my legal adviser," observed Rubby, examining his counterfoils, and apparently paying very little heed to what Fox was saying.

"Do you wish me to submit such an offer to my client, boy?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"We don't make it."

"Yet you admit that your action caused the damage?"

"I have admitted nothing."

"You will have to do so in a court of law."

"I shall tell the truth."

"Well, what do you consider is the truth?"

"Naturally, not speaking falsely."

"I mean the truth so far as this case is concerned."

"Well, the facts of the case."

"And what are the facts of the case?"

"The facts that we shall admit in court."

"I suppose you mean to deny that you deliberately threw yourself in front of the engine?"

"It does not sound like it, does it?"

"Then you deny it?"

"No."

"If you don't deny it, you must admit it."

"Not necessarily."

"You will have to do so in a court of law."

"Yes. I shall admit all the facts."

"Your object in lying down in front of the engine was to cause the driver to go into the ditch?"

"I might have slipped."

"No such thing. You would have had plenty of time to get up again."

"Oh, I dare say you will bowl me out in a court of law!" said Joe. "I have told Rubby he ought to have a solicitor. At any rate, we are not going to compromise. Good-morning!"

"You are very misguided, Mr. Ruabino, to let such a case go into the court," said Fox, rising.

"I refer you to my legal adviser."

"The boy admits that he would have had time to get up—even supposing that he had fallen, which was not the case."

"I refer you to my legal adviser."

"Then you will be served with a writ to-morrow morning, and the case will come before the local magistrates. I shall press it forward, as I have reason to believe that you are about to leave the neighbourhood."

"I refer you to my legal adviser."

"We have no solicitor. You can serve the writ on Rubby whenever you like. He is always here, or hereabouts. He won't try to dodge the server," said Joe. "Mind the steps; they are slippery in wet weather, and you would not be the first one who has fallen down them."

Fox did not look quite at his ease. Joe's coolness seemed to bother him somewhat. He stepped to the door, and then commenced to speak to Rubby.

"I refer you to my legal adviser," interposed Rubby, with a wave of his hand.

After that Fox went, and Joe looked somewhat anxious. Rubby went on examining his precious counterfoils.

"Look here, Rubby," exclaimed Joe, "I——"

"I am busy, boy. Go away!"

"You are not busy. You know jolly well what cheques you have drawn."

"What do nine and seven make?"

"Sixty-three, if you multiply them. But look here, I want——"

"Go away! I can't attend to you!"

"But I want——"

"So do I. I want to be alone, and weep over my woes."

"But look here, Rubby, we must settle how we are to act."

"I refer you to my legal adviser."

"Don't be an owl, Rubby!"

"Go away! That is not the way to talk to your employer. If you don't go, I'll throw things at you!"

Joe gave it up, but he tried several times later on to get Rubby to decide on some action. That worthy simply refused to discuss the matter; and when the case came on, Joe entered the court without the slightest idea as to how to act.

"Dear boy, do and say exactly what you like, so long as you don't pull the magistrates' noses. They are a lot of old idiots; but the chances are they will have enough common-sense between them to know that we are in the right. At any rate, we are going to chance it. Now, you know exactly what occurred, and you will hear how Fox will put it. You will scarcely know it for the same thing. Mind, I am going to leave you to deal with it. You are my principal witness. There he goes!"

Rubby was not far wrong concerning Fox's version of the affair. There was some truth in it, no doubt; but he so distorted it that Rubby began to wonder whether he was not really a great villain

"For some time the defendant has shown great enmity towards his more successful rival," continued Fox. "This is not the only occasion on which he has incited his men to brutally assault the plaintiff, who has submitted to the shameful treatment rather than have recourse to law. But now matters have reached such a pitch that it is impossible to submit longer. Lives might have been lost through the last shameful action. The defendant, as I shall presently prove, incited his lad to lie down in front of the engine, so that there was no alternative but to turn it into the ditch. The damage and consequential damages are very heavy, but my client had decided to claim the comparatively nominal sum of five hundred pounds. I will now call the plaintiff."

Muerte bore out his solicitor's opening statement, and he made the most he possibly could of the assault. He spoke of it having injured his spine, and gave a hint that he would never get over it.

Then the driver was called to give his version.

After that Rubby went into the witness-box, but he gave very little information, until Fox began to question him.

"Do you dare to tell the court that you did not incite the lad named Joe to lie down in front of the engine?"

"It is the truth. Such an idea never occurred to me."

"You admit that there is enmity between you and the plaintiff?"

"Well, he dislikes me——"

"And has good reason for doing so. You hate him, and would do him any injury in your power."

"Not at all. I have contempt for the fellow because of his brutality and dishonesty."

"You will not strengthen your case by vulgar abuse."

"I don't want to strengthen my case."

"You saw the boy run towards the engine and lie down in front of it?"

"I saw him run towards the engine and fall. My impression was that he had slipped by accident."

"We don't require your impressions. We are dealing with facts."

"I am glad to hear it. I thought you were dealing with fiction when you opened the case."

"Do you seriously mean to tell the court that the boy fell?"

"He certainly fell. Whether it was by accident or not he will be able to tell you."

"Assuming that he fell by accident, why did he remain lying in the road?"

"That is a question for him to answer."

"How far from him was the engine when he fell?"

"Thirty or forty yards."

"Then he would have had plenty of time to get up?"

"I should say so, although the engine was coming fast."

"It was travelling at five miles an hour, as a matter of fact."

"One of your matters of fact."

"We do not require any of your impertinence, sir. I have no more questions to ask you."

"Then I will call my witness, Joe," said Rubby.

Rubby did not ask Joe many questions, but told him to describe exactly what had happened, and Joe did so in a very few words, then Fox took him in hand.

"You ran towards the engine and lay down in front of it, I believe. Mind, boy, you are on your oath."

"Yes."

"Did you fall accidentally?"

"No."

"You admit you fell purposely?"

"Yes."

"Did your employer tell you to do so?"

"No."

"What was your object in doing it?"

"To make the driver turn into the ditch. He was coming at a furious pace——"

"I can prove that he was travelling at under five miles an hour. You have admitted that you deliberately tried to hurl him into the ditch."

"He was coming at a furious pace, and——"

"Answer my question."

"I have already done so, and I am now answering your other question concerning my reason for acting as I did. Do you fear that my answer will injure your case?"

"Certainly not, but——"

"Then my reason was to stop him, otherwise he would have dashed into our caravan, in which were a number of females. The loss of life would have been terrible. He could not have stopped, and he will tell you so if you put him into the box."

"No such thing! He could easily have stopped."

"Then why did he not stop instead of running into the ditch? It would have been easier for him to have stopped there than lower down the hill, where it was steeper. You admitted that he was thirty yards from me when I lay down. If he had been travelling at five miles an hour he could have stopped in five feet, let alone thirty yards."

"The hill was steep, and——"

"Quite so; but I will travel down it at five miles an hour and stop in five feet on the same engine. The fact is, he was racing to overtake us, and the engine ran away with him. Directly I saw that, I knew that the only way to stop a terrible accident was to turn that engine into the ditch. I believed he would not dare to run over me. When I shouted to him he told me he could not stop, and as he did not dare to run over me he turned into the ditch, which was exactly what I wanted."

"Your action might have cost the driver his life."

"That is very unlikely. It was far more likely to cost me my life, because I should not have moved till the engine was almost upon me. My employer had nothing whatever to do with the matter. He did not know how I was going to act, and he could not have stopped me, for I ran up the hill at top speed, and the defendant does not look as though he could run as fast as I can. He's rather too fat for that."

This caused some laughter, and Rubby patted his chest and coughed a little.

"You see, gentlemen," exclaimed Joe. "The plaintiff fears to put his driver into the box because he knows the man will be bound to admit that the engine was running away with him. They have proved that I had plenty of time to get out of the way, but in proving this they also proved that the driver would have had plenty of time to stop had he been going as slowly as the plaintiff has declared. Now, whether my action was right or wrong, the defendant had nothing to do with it."

"We don't require you to make a speech, boy!" snarled Fox. "I presume you will assert that the defendant did not assault the plaintiff?"

"Rubby knocked Muerte down after he had assaulted me. He knocked him down to save my life."

"How could it be to save your life?"

"Muerte drew a knife, and he stabbed at my breast. I raised my arm to guard the blow, and the blade pierced the flesh. Probably it would have pierced my heart had I not guarded it."

"You mean to tell the court that you were stabbed through the arm?"

"Yes."

"Which arm was it?"

"My left arm."

"Show me the wound."

"It is bound up."

"Oh, it is bound up, is it? I expected it would be bound up. I have no more questions to ask you, and——"

"Oh, if you don't believe it is there I will soon convince you!" cried Joe, pulling off his coat and ripping off the surgical bandage before Fox could stop him, and then Joe revealed a stab through the fleshy part of his arm.

"You see, gentlemen, it has gone right through the flesh, and it was a lucky thing for me that the defendant knocked the vicious brute down. It is also a lucky thing for Muerte."

There could be no doubt about the wound. Joe had never mentioned a word about it to anyone, but he had run off to the nearest doctor's to get it bandaged. He had an idea that it would help in the defence.

"That is a very severe wound," exclaimed one of the magistrates. "You should not have unbound it, my lad."

"I was afraid that lawyer would not believe. It seemed to me that he wanted to make out there was no wound there. Muerte is a very dangerous man when he loses his temper."

"I—er—think this would be a convenient stage to adjourn the court for lunch," observed one of the magistrates, and as the others thought so too, adjourned it was.

"How do you think we are getting on, Rubby?" inquired Joe, as they made their way to the nearest hotel.

"Admirably, dear boy! Your point about the speed was excellent. Ha, ha, ha! You bowled Fox out nicely. It stands to reason that the driver must have been going too fast, otherwise he would have been able to stop; and if he had been able to stop, it also stands to reason that he would not have run his engine into the ditch. I suppose Fox will address the court, but he can't get over the fact that Muerte assaulted you in a murderous manner. It will be rather amusing to see what position he takes up. I had no idea that you were wounded. You ought to have told me, and then we would have had it properly attended to."

"I looked after that, Rubby. Went straight away to the doctor and told him all about it."

"It's a bad job. However, here we are. Now, look here, waiter, we have only got half an hour. Just you bring up the nicest lunches you can, and as quickly, and there's a shilling for yourself."

"Thanky, sir. P'r'aps you would like to miss the soup, and begin on roast lamb and peas, so as to save time?"

"Yes! Capital! A glass of ale for me and a bottle of ginger beer for Joe."

The waiter hurried away, and he had scarcely left the room when Muerte and Fox entered it. There was only one table, and that not a very large one, so they were compelled to seat themselves at it.

"Well, this is an agreeable surprise!" exclaimed Rubby, winking at Joe. "I am pleased to see you in such respectable company, Muerte."

"I want none of your impertinence, fellow!" snarled Muerte.

"No, you have sufficient of your own, or you would never have had the audacity to bring such an action. You will lose it, Fox."

"That is your opinion," sneered the lawyer, ringing the bell.

"It is no good ringing for the waiter. He is attending to us, dear boy. I say, how about your fees if you do lose?"

"That is libel," declared Muerte.

"Well, why not bring an action for that? Joe, would you kindly remove that table knife? We don't want any more stabbing. I hope you will get your fees, Fox, because it will serve Muerte right, but, as the Scotsman would say, 'I hae ma doots!' Ha, ha, ha! It will be rather rough on you if you have to throw in a morning's work for nothing. Still, you have got the honour of having acted as lawyer to Muerte, who is a remarkably nice fellow for those who like that sort. I never did care much for Spanish tinkers!"

"You will find that you are crowing a little too soon, you insolent rascal!" declared Fox. "I shall put the real complexion on the case when I address the court."

"I am glad to hear that you are going to speak the truth for once in your life, dear boy."

"That is libel, fellow! You hear his words, Mr. Muerte?"

"Oh, it does not matter whether he hears them or not," laughed Rubby. "I will repeat them in court if he likes. I don't think there will be any further action, though. Here comes the lamb. Now, Joe, get under way, for we have a lot to do in a very little time."

"Gooseberry tart and cream to follow, sir?" inquired the waiter. Fox was a regular customer, and did not believe in tipping, so that he did not get the very best of attention.

"What have you got, waiter?" demanded Muerte.

"Soup and roast lamb, sir."

"Then bring it up as quickly as you can; also a bottle of claret."

"Don't be too extravagant, Muerte," observed Rubby, "and be sure you don't make Fox drunk. He doesn't get on very well with his case now that he is sober. How he would manage it if he were drunk I really don't know. Joe did bowl you out nicely, didn't he, old chap? I thought you were making a mistake when you proved that there was plenty of time for Joe to get up! Ha, ha, ha! Joe took that point nicely, and I never gave him the slightest hint about it."

"It is far better to have nothing to say to such an insolent scoundrel!" exclaimed Fox, peppering his soup, as he imagined, but he had got the cayenne bottle by mistake, and Joe grinned as he saw the error. Muerte went one better, for as he peppered his soup the top of the castor came off.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Joe. "You have got more cayenne there than you will swallow, I will guarantee, Muerte!"

"You careless rascal!" snarled Muerte, turning to the unfortunate waiter. "How dare you leave the tops loose like this. Bring me some fresh soup immediately."

"And also bring me some," ordered Fox. "I imagined that was pepper."

"Yes, sir. Pepper this side of the cruet."

He whipped the plates away, and by the time the two had got through their soup, which was very hot, Rubby and Joe had commenced on gooseberry tart and cream. They appeared to like it, too, for they had six helps between them.

"Will you take some gooseberry tart, Mr. Fox?" inquired Muerte, who was standing the dinner.

"If you please."

"There is very bad attendance here," snarled Muerte, ringing the bell.

"I find it excellent," said Rubby, lighting a cigar, for smoking was allowed in that room. "Have any more tart, Joe?"

"No, thanks."

"Why? Don't you like it?"

"Rather, only I have had four helpings, and enough is as good as a feast, you know."

"Waiter, bring up two plates of gooseberry tart and cream."

"Sorry, sir, gooseberry tart is off."

"Ha, ha, ha! It's lucky you did not want any more, Joe," exclaimed Rubby. "Have some cheese, Muerte?"

"Mind your own business, you impertinent hound!" snarled Muerte. "What pastry have you, waiter?"

"Sorry, sir; we only had gooseberry tart. Very nice cheese."

"Bah! Bring some cheese then."

"And you might make out our bill, waiter," said Rubby.

"One moment, sir!" exclaimed the waiter, hurrying away for the cheese. And when he returned with it, he brought out a bill.

"Charge for both, sir?"

"Yes, please."

"Lamb, twice, two-and-six; potatoes, fourpence—peas, sixpence. Breads, twopence. Ale, twopence. Ginger-beer, twopence. Six gooseberry-tarts, eightpence. Five-and-fourpence, if you please, sir!"

Now, considering how good the lunch was, these charges were not at all out of the way, and they cheered Muerte up a little, because he rather feared it was an expensive place, and he was fearfully mean.

"Make out my bill, waiter!" he ordered.

Apparently the waiter had done so as they went on, for he just made two more entries, added it up, and handed it to Muerte.

"What," he yelled, springing to his feet; "fourteen shillings? It's a swindle!"

"Quite correct, sir. Four soups, three-and-fourpence; wine, six-and-six. The ordinary tariff; we never make any alterations."

"Ha, ha, ha! You had better pay up and look pleasant, Muerte!" cried Rubby. "You see, you were extravagant on the wine and the four soups! That's where we got to windward of you, though we went to lee a bit with the six gooseberry-tarts. However, they were remarkably nice, so we don't regret them in any way."

"I shall not pay for that soup!" declared Muerte.

"Sorry, sir; you will have to do so. You had it, and must pay for it."

"It's a fraud, and I will not pay!"

"Here, I'll pay for his soup," cried Rubby; "at least, for the extra plates! Take it out of that florin, and you can keep the change. I don't want you to give Muerte into custody, because I want him to hear what the magistrates

decide this afternoon. Fox is going to talk, and I rather fancy that will be funny! It's all right, Muerte; pay for the rest!"

"I will not allow that scoundrel to pay for me!" cried Muerte.

"You can't help it, dear boy," said Rubby; "I have paid!"

"It is a fraud to charge six shillings and sixpence for a bottle of claret!"

"You ordered the best claret, sir; and that is it. It costs us six shillings a bottle."

"You lying scoundrel; it costs you about a shilling a bottle!" snarled Muerte, flinging the money on the table, because he knew there was no help for it. "I shall never come to this place again!"

"I must say I prefer our dinner to yours, Muerte!" exclaimed Rubby. "That tart was most remarkable, and the bitter was really good; but if you will order things you can't afford, you will have to take the consequences!"

"If I have any more of your impertinence, fellow, I will pull your nose!" roared Muerte.

"Now, don't be cross, just because you have to pay your just debts, dear boy! It is much better to pay than to be sent to prison; and I don't suppose for a moment that the waiter would have been so silly as to let you go without payment! It would be a frightful thing if anyone pulled your nose, because it is inches too long already!"

"You always were an impertinent scoundrel!"

"Come, come, Muerte; you ought not to talk like that to me, after the kind manner in which I have helped you to pay for your lunch! If a little affair like fourteen shillings, for which you have had the equivalent, vexes you, what will your temper be like when you have to pay the costs of your precious action? Fox looks just the style of man to run up the costs; then you will have my costs to pay. Ha, ha, ha! I feel sorry for you! Joe has bowled you out completely!"

"Don't you make too sure!" snarled Fox. "Perhaps you won't be quite so happy if you have to pay five hundred pounds damages!"

"Well, no; there is not a doubt about that. But the chance is really so remote that it is not worth consideration. It is to be presumed that the magistrates are men of ordinary intelligence; and if that should be the case, they will never believe the abominable falsehoods that you have been telling in Muerte's name. I really do not know who is the biggest liar—you, or Muerte!"

"I will not submit to this!" roared Fox. "Waiter, you heard what that miscreant said?"

"No, sir; I never listen to private conversation."

"You must have heard it!"

"No, sir."

"He called me a liar!"

"Bless you, sir, I wouldn't take notice of a thing like that! It's nothing to the things I have heard some people say agin you! If I was to believe all I hear said about you, I would take you for the greatest villain unhung! But, then, I know that it's only from people you have done business with, and they ain't at all competent to judge. I only employed a lawyer once in my life, and the manner in which I got to hate that man was something wicked!"

"You are a fool!" cried Fox.

"Yes, sir; I would never have been a waiter all my life if I hadn't been that! I'd have been a lawyer, or some of them professions as require smart men. Honesty is all right in its way!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Joe. "That's the last one for you, Fox! Come on, Rubby; I should like to hear what he is going to say in his endeavour to make the magistrates believe that black is white!"

"You young dog!" cried Fox. "If you talk to me like that, I will lay my stick across your shoulders!"

"Not you," laughed Joe; "you would be frightened to do anything like that! You are only a hulking great bully, and would be about the last man on the face of this earth to come to blows! Go on, silly, and let us hear your speech! I expect it will be about as truthful as the opening one!"

Fox could talk when he liked, and he was determined to do his best now, if it were only to have vengeance on Rubby; besides, he did not feel at all sure that he would be able to get his costs out of Muerte if his case failed.

He submitted that Joe's action was merely a piece of vicious mischief, and he left the subsequent assault very much in the background, because of the stab in the arm.

"I submit, gentlemen, that there can only be one light in which to regard this wicked lad's misconduct. Not content with wilfully damaging my client's property on many previous occasions, this boy, at the instigation of his employer, who is a man of notoriously bad character, deliberately wrecked the circus, and he has to be thankful that no lives were lost. The assertion that he feared the engine would dash into the other circus, is false on the face of it, for the simple reason that the other circus was not near the spot. No, the palpable falsehood was told merely to shield himself from the consequences of his awful crime; and also to screen his employer, who had instigated it out of vengeance. It shows base ingratitude, because my client has always befriended the man. He has taken pity on him on many occasions, as I am advised, and helped him out of many a difficulty. Now, what does this man do? He incites a wicked lad, whom he found in the gutter, and who, as I am instructed, previously led a life of crime, to commit a crime that no words of mine could adequately condemn, so heinous is it in its atrocity. The claim my client makes will not compensate him for his loss, but it will be a lesson to a double-dyed villain that honesty is the best policy. Gentlemen, I leave the case in your hands, feeling sure that you will see the justice of the claim!"

Fox sat down, and one of the magistrates awoke from his afternoon nap. The other two whispered together, and retired to smoke three cigars, and drink three glasses of sherry—that is to say, one apiece.

At last the worthies trooped back; and the clerk of the court took his place, while the usher made a good deal of noise by demanding silence.

"Ahem!" exclaimed one of the magistrates. "After a careful consideration of the case, we find that the plaintiff caused the accident by driving down a dangerous hill at a furious pace, and that any damages he suffered were due to his own negligence. The case against the defendant is dismissed with costs."

"Come along, Joe!" exclaimed Rubby. "We have had a jolly good lunch, but those old jokers took so long in coming to their decision, that I am hungry again, and we will have a far better dinner! It is just as I expected. You bowled Fox out, and he was badly instructed. Now, I tell you what we will do. We will order a good dinner at the hotel, and then we will go for a walk."

"Why not go for a row on the river?" suggested Joe.

"What?"

"Go for a row on the river. It's a nice, broad river, and it looks deep."

"I know it does, dear boy; and that is exactly why I am doubting the wisdom of your suggestion. I can't swim."

"I can, and I would stick by you."

"I know you would, Joe, because you have done it before; but I hate too much pathos!"

"Where would the pathos come in?"

"Why, if we stuck to each other, and sank to rest in the bed of the river; we would look as pathetic as two drowned rats!"

"But we sha'n't fall into the river."

"How do you know that?"

"I don't think we shall."

"Neither do I; but that is because I don't think I shall adopt your suggestion."

"Look here, Rubby; we are too early for dinner yet!"

"I know we are, dear boy; but if we both get drowned, we shall be too late for it—and that would be an awful pity, because, if we order it in advance, as I am determined to do, we should have to pay for it, whether we ate it or not. Then, you know, we would be unable to appear in the performance to-morrow; and only think how that would disappoint the spectators! Don't you think a nice, quiet walk would be preferable?"

"Well, I don't; there's a lot of danger attached to walking! Look how we were attacked last time, and how nearly we lost our lives! Now, there is not the slightest reason why Muerte should not attack us again. He couldn't do that on the water, because the chances are he cannot row."

"Can you row?"

"Yes, after a fashion."

"Can you row as well as you can swim?"

"They are two different things, Rubby."

"Well, I don't suppose you would start swimming with a pair of oars and a rudder; neither would you start rowing with your legs; for which reason I quite agree with you that they are different things. But what I want to get at before I trust my precious body on the water is, are you competent to bring me back in safety, and in time for dinner?"

"Oh, I think so!"

"I would rather you were quite certain on the point."

"Well, I will guarantee to bring you back all right."

"Then come along to the hotel in the first place, and I will order the sort of dinner that we require. We deserve it, Joe, for winning that case, and I'm going to have the exact dinner we require. We have got three hours yet, and, as we don't play to-night, we can spend as long as we like over dinner. You wait outside, while I give my orders."

Rubby wanted that dinner to be a surprise to Joe. He ordered soup, salmon, fowls, entrees, and such pastry as he

thought Joe would like. There was gooseberry-tart amongst it, for he knew that Joe liked that.

"That lawyer is coming, sir," explained the waiter. "I have just received a message to have dinner ready for him and Muerte at seven o'clock."

"All right; then have it ready for us at the same time. But I thought Fox said he would never enter the place again?"

"He's said that forty times; but, then, he can't help himself, for it's about the only decent hotel in the place, and it's handy for the courts. I never take any notice of him. He's standing the dinner this time."

"Then, depend on it, dear boy, he means to get his coats out of Muerte—if he can. Personally, I would not give him twopence for his chance; but you need not tell him that, and you need not tell him that we are coming! I fancy there will be a little fun, and I like that—combined with a good dinner!"

"You can rely on that, sir!"

"Right you are; and don't forget the pastry! I want to please Joe, and he appears to be rather fond of pastry!"

"I'd say you were right, sir, judging by the way he walked into that pie! He did enjoy it, too! Well, I know it was good, 'cos I saved a couple of helps for my own dinner; and that's why Fox and Muerte couldn't have any!"

Then Rubby left the hotel, and went down to the water with Joe, with a view to hiring a boat.

It was with considerable misgiving that Rubby made his way to the river, and all the time Joe was trying to convince him that there was no danger on the water.

"Dear boy," growled Rubby, "I know perfectly well that there is no danger on the water."

"Then what are you grumbling at, Rubby?"

"The danger under the water."

"I hope we are not going under the water."

"So do I. But you don't get all you hope for in this life, and at times you get a good deal of what you don't hope for. However, here we are, here are the boats, and here is the boatman."

"Do you want a boat, sir?" inquired that worthy.

"No, dear boy, I don't. I would much rather go for a walk or a drive. I think I would rather go to gaol for a few hours. But this lad wants a boat, and he wants to take me in the boat."

"Nice light one here."

"Do I look like a man who requires a light boat—or a light dinner, for that matter?"

"Yes, Rubby," exclaimed Joe, "you need them both! You see, you are rather fat and heavy, and therefore you will be easier to row in a light boat than a heavy one. It follows that a light dinner would suit the contents of your waistcoat better than a heavy one."

"Don't you be so personal, Joe. Do you consider that a safe boat, dear boy?"

"That 'ere boat is the safest on the river."

"And this one?"

"There you are again. That boat is the safest ever built."

"And this one?"

"I'd say she was the safest in the world."

"Then what degree of safety do you consider pertains to this boat?"

"She's the safest as I've got."

"Every boat the man has got is safer than the other," groaned Rubby. "Take your choice, Joe. I am incompetent to judge from the description."

Joe chose the lightest, because he knew perfectly well that Rubby would make heavy rowing.

"Catch hold of the rudder-lines, Rubby!" laughed Joe.

"What for?" inquired Rubby, grasping both the lines in his right hand.

"Ha, ha, ha! You don't know much about steering, do you?"

"No; and I wish I knew a little more about swimming. If you are relying on me to steer, you are relying on a very slender reed."

"Ha, ha, ha! You don't look much like that, Rubby. Hold one line on one side of your body, and the other on the other, and whichever way you want the boat to go, pull that line."

"I want it to go ashore," groaned Rubby.

"Not you. We haven't started yet. You will get to like it directly."

Rubby had his doubts, but he said nothing. He had not forgotten the last ducking he received, and did not want another anything like it. He did his best with the steering; all the same, his best was very bad, and Joe, who could row fairly well, had to do most of the steering.

They went up the river, because Joe wanted to have the tide with them on their return journey, when he began to feel tired, and all went well for some little distance.

Joe had rowed a couple of miles or so, and was resting on his oars, when he saw a horse towing a barge up the river. They appeared to be in a hurry, too, for the man was on the horse's back, and they were coming along at a trot, while the horse appeared to be having more weight and whip than a willing horse should be made to bear.

"Get out of the way, you silly brutes!" howled the rider.

"The man is far from polite," observed Rubby. "Besides, I fail to see that we are in his way."

"What about the tow-rope, Rubby?"

"Why, I overlooked that!" cried Rubby, springing to his feet. "We shall be upset! Here, you stop, ruffian!"

"Sha'n't, you silly, fat brute! Haw, haw, haw! You'll float, even if you are upset! A chunk of blubber like that couldn't sink if it tried!"

There was a certain amount of coarseness about the man and his language that convinced Rubby argument would be quite useless. He saw the towing-rope splashing along the surface of the water, and it loked deadly dangerous, for sometimes it was about three feet above the surface, and at others it splashed beneath the surface.

Rubby pulled out a huge knife. It was the one he used for sharpening tent-pegs and things like that, and it was very sharp.

Rubby caught the rope, although he nearly went overboard in doing so, and then with all his strength he hacked at it.

There was a twang as that rope was severed, and the horse went plunging onwards relieved of the weight, while its rider, who had turned round to see what had happened, was pitched over the horse's head, and the barge went drifting down the stream.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Joe. "You have landed them this time, Rubby!"

"Have I, dear boy? I thought I had sent them adrift. Just hark at that man's language! Talk to him kindly, Joe. He will be vexed with me."

"Look here, old chap," bawled Joe, "don't you think you are exciting yourself in rather a stupid manner? All the swearing in the world won't mend your rope! Look here, if you are not careful, we shall come ashore, and give you a taste of that rope's-end, though it seems to me the only way to cure you would be to give you about six feet of that rope with a noose in the end."

"You varmint! I'll get at you just directly! Bust! We are in a hurry, too! Oh, won't I pay you!"

"If you are in a hurry, old bluster, your barge is going along very nicely. It is certainly going in the wrong direction, still, it is going fast, and that's a great thing. Ha, ha, ha! Are you trying to perform the skirt dance? Don't you think you had better run after your horse? You have lost your barge, and if you are not careful you will lose your horse as well."

There was a certain amount of wisdom in this advice, for the horse had made its way into a field where the grass was nice and long. The bargee gave up his abuse, and rushed after the horse, but that sagacious animal knew its rider's temper, and galloped away.

The field was five or six acres in size, and the horse was certainly most provoking. Every now and then it would stop for a mouthful of grass, then when the unseated rider got near the end of the severed rope, the horse would gallop away, kicking its hind legs in the air, and apparently enjoying itself exceedingly.

And meantime the barge was drifting down the stream, while the man upon it was howling out the most shocking language. He got out a sweep, and made desperate attempts to pull the barge towards the bank; but the tide was very strong, and that barge was heavy.

It was a hot afternoon, and this vigorous work drove the bargee nearly mad. Joe let his boat drift, and kept giving the infuriated man words of advice, which did not tend to improve his temper.

"Pull a bit harder, old fellow!" cried Joe. "You appear to be a very lazy man, and are not putting half enough work in that job. If I were your master, I'd give you a flogging for your laziness and vulgarity. Ha, ha, ha! What are you trying to do now—take a dive into the river and drown yourself?"

"You rat! I'd like to drown you!"

"Yes! That is what you appeared to be trying to do, old red-face; but, you see, it didn't come off!"

"I'll make you pay for this!"

"Well, my silly old owl, we are watching the fun for nothing, and therefore it is not at all likely that we should agree to pay. Ha, ha, ha! You haven't got the strength of a broken-backed maggot! We are off now. I hope you will enjoy yourselves. Very likely we shall see you when we come back."

Then Joe dipped his oars into the water and pulled against the stream.

"It's no good, Rubby," exclaimed Joe, "all the kind words in the world would never soothe those men! Ha, ha,

ha! That chap is still chasing his horse! It strikes me they have got a waiting job this time."

"You are right; but they only have themselves to blame. There's just one thing, Joe. We don't want to get too close to those beauties on our return journey. They might heave lumps of coal or something at us."

"That's the drawback, Rubby," observed Joe. "The river is so frightfully narrow just here that we must get close to them, unless we go ashore and walk home."

"How could we return the boat?"

"Eh? We might let it drift down."

"I doubt if the owner would like that, especially as we have not yet paid him for the hire. No, I think we shall have to run the gauntlet."

"Suppose we go ashore, pull the man off his horse—that is, if he has caught it by the time we return—then take him in the boat as a hostage? If his mate flings things at us, we might use the other scoundrel as a sort of shield."

"I think we had better run the gauntlet, dear boy. The other sounds too risky. He might use his whip on us with some effect. At any rate, we should certainly get hurt while we were pulling him off his horse; then again, the bargee might come to help, and in that case we should get the worst of it."

"All right! Just as you think best. I shall be able to row past quickly, because we shall have the tide with us. Now, don't you call this pretty scenery?"

"Very!" growled Rubby, who was thinking too much of the return journey to trouble himself much about the scenery.

Joe did not bother himself about the future. He pulled for several miles up the river, and then Rubby suggested that they should return; so Joe pulled the boat round, and they commenced their return voyage.

"There they are!" cried Rubby. "And the silly rascal has taken up his position in the very centre of the stream!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Joe. "The barge has drifted on a sandbank, and I don't believe that they are going to get it off in a hurry!"

This was correct. The tow-rope had been made fast again, but that horse could not have dragged the barge off the sandbank, which was in the very centre of the river.

"Which makes it very awkward for us to pass, Rubby!" exclaimed Joe. "You notice the horseman is making his way to the barge, evidently with a view to intercepting us. Well, that's all right. We will pass the barge on the left side, because that beauty on the towpath is certain to stone us."

"And the other fellow on the barge is going to prod us with that boathook," observed Rubby. "We are likely to get hurt."

"Shall we take the bull by the horns, and——"

"I'd rather do that than take that boathook by the point."

"We might get on deck and pitch into that ruffian."

"Not if I know it!" exclaimed Rubby. "It sounds all right, but it wouldn't feel all right if he commenced to prod us as we were clambering up. No, Joe, we will run the gauntlet."

Joe rowed steadily on, keeping as far from the barge as possible. The unfortunate part of it was that he scarcely had room for his oars, and it was not safe to rely on Rubby's steering.

They were nearing the barge, when a stone, hurled by the man on the shore, struck Joe over the side of the head, and made him see stars. For some moments he was so dazed by the blow that he scarcely knew what he was doing. Another stone struck Rubby on the shoulder, and hurt him considerably. Then they got behind the barge, and were safe from stones for the time being.

But they were not safe from that boathook.

The bargee made a vicious prod at Joe, catching him in the arm, and causing him to yell, for it went in pretty deep.

Joe was not going to stand that sort of treatment. Springing to his feet, he caught the bargee a frightful crack over the head with the oar; then the bargee made another lunge, but Joe darted aside just in time, and the man took a forward dive into the water, while Rubby got possession of his boathook.

Joe shoved the boat on to the sandbank with his oar, and as the drenched bargee commenced to clamber on deck again, Joe gave it to him on the back with the flat of his oar, while Rubby assisted with some playful prods.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Joe. "You would think the man was getting hurt the way he is roaring! It's lucky the water was not deep. He will throw things at us if he gets on deck, Rubby."

"He's not going to get on deck," declared Rubby, hitching the boathook into the back of his collar, and wrenching him back again. "Are you getting wet, dear boy? Ha, ha, ha! You can't knock his brains out, Joe, because he hasn't got any. No you don't, my man! We don't want you any closer than you are now. Don't you see, if you get too close to us, we can't hit you with the oar so conveniently, nor prod you with the boathook so effectively."

"Here, stow it, you mutton-headed brute! You are a-hurting me."

"Strange! I should not have imagined that a playful prod like that would hurt. The one you gave to Joe must have hurt considerably, if the little pricks I am giving you hurt. No, thank you! I prefer to retain possession of this weapon. You might get dangerous with it. Nice and cool in the water, isn't it?"

The bargee made a bolt to get round to the other side of his barge, but Joe got in several cracks before he escaped; then they pushed the boat off, and Rubby stuck the boathook into the mud.

"There's your boathook, old chap!" cried Joe. "You will have to get into the water again for it, but that will not matter as it is not deep. Ha, ha, ha! You got the worst of that little lot, I think."

"I'll about brain you when I come across you!" roared the infuriated man.

"That's all right, old red nose," retorted Joe; "only mind you don't get hurt while you are trying to do it. You had better hang yourself on your mast to dry. I don't know how you are going to get that old barge off the sandbank, but I dare say you will know that. Such an experienced longshoreman as you ought to, at any rate. It's all right. We haven't time to listen to that language."

The bargee had a good deal to say, but as Rubby and Joe only laughed at him his words had no effect.

Having rowed back to the boathouse, and settled with the man, they made their way to the hotel where they had ordered dinner, and they found Muerte and his solicitor, Fox, in the room, just commencing their dinner.

They both appeared to be in a very bad temper. The fact is, Fox had invited Muerte to dinner because he wanted the money for his professional services, and he thought the best time to get it would be after he had stood the Spanish showman a good dinner and a bottle of wine; but then, he did not know much about Muerte. There was no best time in getting money out of him, and on this occasion he considered the money he had paid Fox on account was rather more than enough, seeing that he had lost the case against Rubby.

"Why, Muerte, dear boy," exclaimed Rubby, "who would have thought of seeing you here?"

"I don't want to have anything to say to you, you insolent hound!"

"Perhaps, then, you would like to speak to Joe, my legal adviser? I say, Fox, he did make you an ass in court. I am inclined to think that Joe can conduct a case quite as well as you can; in fact, I would rather have him for the job than you, because he comes cheaper, and for other reasons. Muerte will find you come very dear—after he has paid you. What date will that be, Joe?"

"One of the days in the Greek Kalends," laughed Joe. "I don't know how many pounds you are going to charge him, Fox, but I wouldn't give you shillings for them. You won't find him the very best paymaster on the face of this earth."

"You insolent young hound!" snarled Fox. "Mr. Muerte is a thorough gentleman, and pays his debts honourably."

"Well, he may like that little bit of butter," laughed Joe; "all the same, you will have to spread it on thicker than that to make him fork out. The best way to deal with him would be to serve him with a writ. But here comes our dinner, Rubby. Well, you have gone in for a sumptuous dinner this time, Rubby."

"Yes, dear boy. It is a dinner in honour of our having licked that poor cur Muerte. Ha, ha, ha! You didn't expect to come such a cropper as that, did you, Muerte?"

"We are going to take other precedings against you," declared Fox.

"Not you," laughed Joe, commencing with soup. "Muerte has had enough of it, and it is not at all likely you will try another case without being paid for the first one."

"Your language is actionable, boy. If Mr. Muerte liked he could bring an action for libel against you."

"I don't think Muerte will like. He has had enough action to last him for some time to come. Besides, you won't move in the matter till you get paid for your first bill."

"As it happens, I have already paid my solicitor," snarled Muerte.

"You handed me the money for out-of-pocket expenses," said Fox, looking rather blank.

"I have paid you quite as much money as I intend to pay," growled Muerte. He had finished his dinner, so did not care how soon the row came.

"I have my bill here," said Fox, producing a formidable-looking document, which he handed to Muerte.

"What!" howled Muerte. "Twenty-seven pounds six and eightpence? Why, you swindling thief!"

"Fellow," roared Fox, springing to his feet, "do you know to whom you are talking?"

"Yes," snarled Muerte. "To one of the greatest rogues unhung. Isn't it bad enough that you should lose my case with your stupid bungling, but you must send me in a bill like that? I won't have anything more to do with such an arrant scoundrel!"

"You insolent hound of a showman!" howled Fox, who was a bigger man than Muerte, and a fearful bully. "If you dare to talk to me like that, after all my kindness to you, I'll take the law into my own hands!"

"That's right, Fox!" exclaimed Joe. "You give him a jolly good horsewhipping. He deserves it. You need not think you are going to get your money, because you never will."

"The thief will certainly get no more out of me," said Muerte.

"What is that you call me, fellow?"

"A thief, and if I have any more of your gross impertinence I will pull your nose!"

This caused Joe to shout with laughter, for it seemed to him that most of the impertinence was on Muerte's side.

"Just you try it on!" cried Fox.

It was a silly invitation for him to give, because Muerte accepted it forthwith. Springing forwards, he grabbed Fox by the nose, and gave it a tweak that made him howl.

This was rather more than he was going to stand. He landed Muerte one between the eyes with his fist, that sent him reeling backwards, and then they went at it as though they meant business.

"Here, we must separate them!" exclaimed Rubby, rushing into the hall, where he had seen a hunting-whip hanging up.

He did not know to whom it belonged, nor did he care, but he meant to borrow it; and returning into the room, he commenced to lash the combatants indiscriminately.

"You mustn't fight here, you silly rascals!" cried Rubby, lashing away with all his strength, while Joe shouted with laughter, and locked the door, because he wanted to see the fight out, and did not want any interference from the waiter or the landlord of the place.

Fox and Muerte could not stand those lashes. They stopped fighting, and turned their rage on Rubby; then, with one accord, the enemies became friends, and went for Rubby, who met them with some frightful lashes.

He was accustomed to using a whip, and he did it now to perfection. But there were two to one, and Joe, knowing that Rubby would have no chance, leapt on Fox's back and clutched him round the neck.

"Well done, our side!" cried Rubby, lashing away. "I'll teach men to fight in my presence. You hold the lawyer, Joe, while I tackle the showman."

"You demon!" yelled Muerte, who got it hot. "If you dare to strike me I will have your life!"

Rubby took no heed of the threat. His chief aim was not to let Muerte get to close quarters, as he would probably have got the better of it, and to avoid anything like that Rubby dodged round the table, lashing away like an angry whipper-in.

Muerte only went round twice, and then, finding it a great deal too painful, he got beyond reach of that whip.

Meantime, Joe had stuck to Fox, who failed to shake him off, although he tried his utmost.

"It's all right, Joe!" exclaimed Rubby, lashing the man of law. "I won't have you knocked about in this disgraceful manner. I shall bring an action for damages."

"Ha, ha, ha! That's right, Rubby. Give it him hot!" cried Joe.

"I am," answered Rubby. "It's disgraceful that we should have all this work to do, but we cannot allow men to hurt each other."

Had Muerte gone for Rubby, matters would have been very awkward for the little showman; but Muerte was only too delighted to see Fox thrashed, and he made no attempt to intervene.

It was only when Fox howled for mercy that Rubby desisted, and Joe jumped off the lawyer's back.

"You don't often get two lickings in one day like that, do you, Fox?" panted Rubby. "But they will do you all the good in the world, so that you ought to thank Joe and me for administering them. Point out the error of his ways, Joe."

"Don't you know better than to fight in this manner in an hotel, my man?" inquired Joe. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself. I am only thankful that Rubby has corrected you, and hope it will be a lessen to you, and act as future guidance."

"You shall pay dearly for this!" panted Fox. "I shall give you in custody for assaulting me."

"All right, dear boy," answered Rubby cheerfully. "If I have to go to prison, Joe, we will finish our dinner first. Just unlock the door, so as to admit the waiter—and our dinner. Fox can send for a bobby, and then give me in custody—if he dares."

"You struck me!"

"I refer you to my legal adviser," said Rubby, bowing towards Joe, and winking at the astonished waiter, who entered the room as Joe unlocked the door.

"Rubby does not admit that he struck you," said Joe. "The onus of proof rests with yourself. You will have to show the injury to the bobby. We maintain that you struck us."

"I have a witness that the insolent scoundrel struck me!"

"No matter. If you refer to Muerte, no one but a raving maniac would believe a word he says. Then, again, seeing that you caught the silly vagabond one in the eye, the chances are he won't feel amiably disposed towards you. I doubt if you would be able to get the sullen brute to give evidence in your favour. All we did was to separate you two when you were fighting, and it was our duty to do so. Rubby's idea of a whip was an excellent one. I always use it to our wild beasts when they commence to fight. There is nothing like it."

"You will have to pay my bill of costs, Muerte!" cried Fox.

"I won't pay you a pennypiece! You ought to have won the case. As it is, you can whistle for your fees, which are a gross swindle. As a lawyer you are not worth twenty-seven pounds a year, let alone that amount for a few hours' work in which you spoilt a good case."

"You are an impertinent rascal, and a gross liar!"

"You are a lawyer!"

"I have the honour to belong to that most honourable profession, fellow."

"I can't understand how a profession could be honourable when it admits such rogues as you."

"Look here, you two," exclaimed Rubby, "I won't allow this row while I am having my dinner! If you want to fight again you had better go outside and do it. I don't mind your fighting here, because separating you is rather amusing; but I am not going to allow you to abuse each other. After all, it is only a stupid waste of time, because everyone must know that you are all you call each other."

"If you like to behave in a proper manner to me, Muerte," exclaimed Fox, "I will show you how to punish this scoundrel!"

"I don't mind doing that, but I am not going to pay your bill."

"I shall make you."

"No, you won't. The thing is a fraud, and you are nothing but a thief to make such a preposterous charge. But you will find, Ruabino, and you, Joe—as you call yourself—that I have the means of punishing both of you.

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