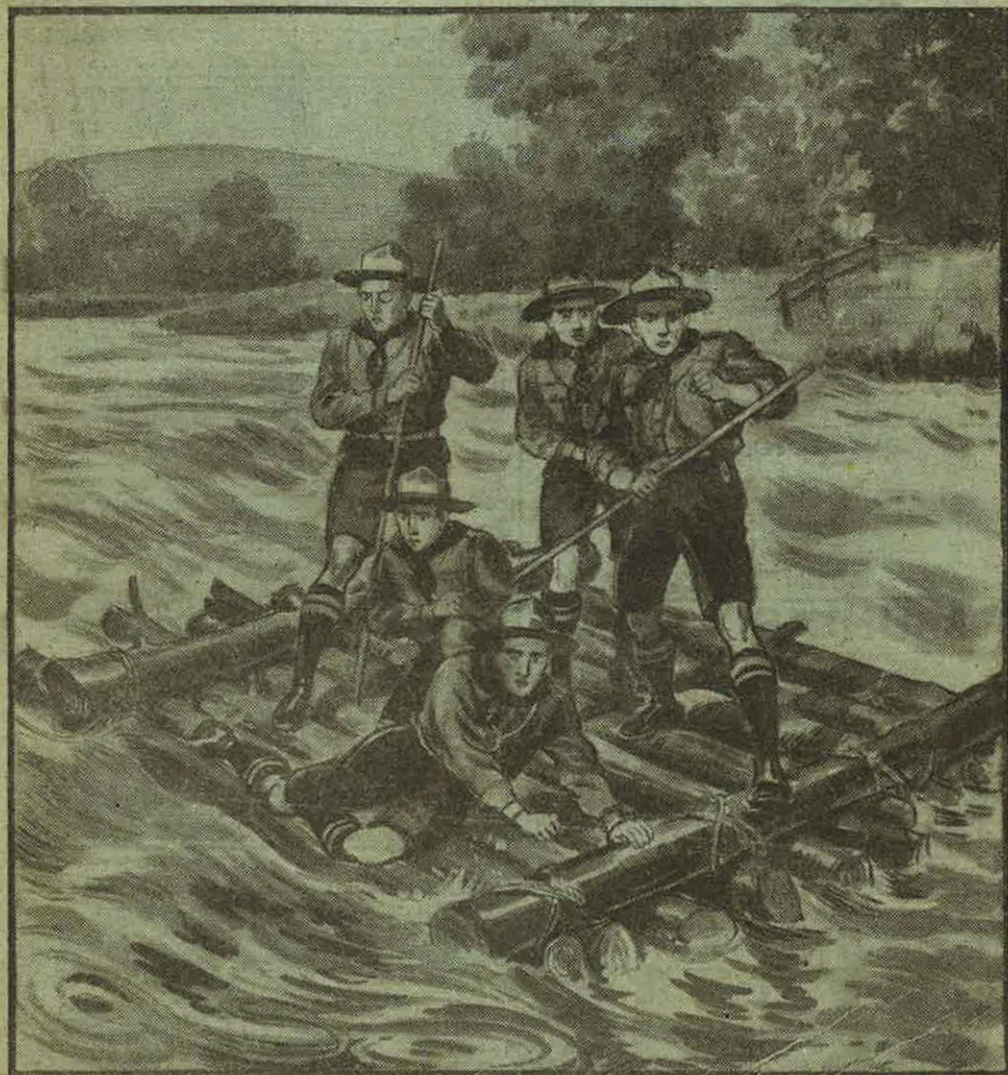


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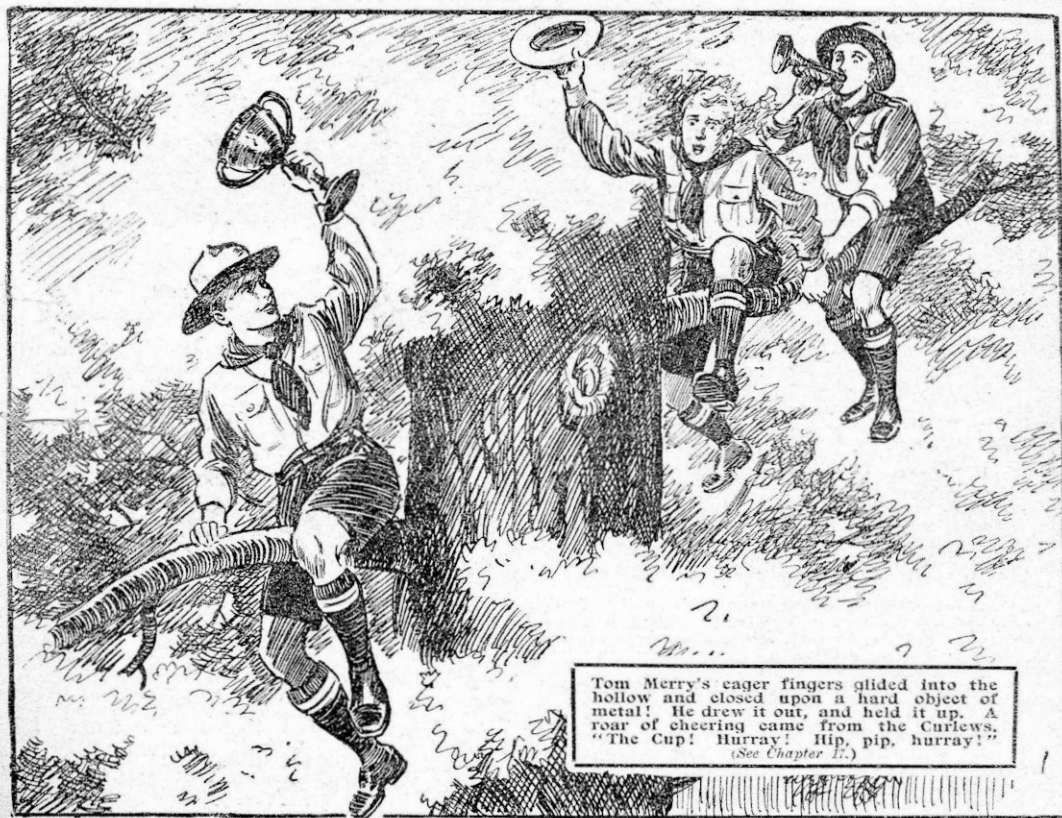


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THE RIVAL PATROLS!

A Splendid Complete Story of the Scouts of St. Jim's, Specially Written for this
Number of "The Gem" Library.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



Tom Merry's eager fingers glided into the hollow and closed upon a hard object of metal! He drew it out, and held it up. A roar of cheering came from the Curlews. "The Cup! Hurray! Hip, pip, hurray!"
(See Chapter 1.)

CHAPTER 1. Gussy Does It!

"**B**ETTAA leave it to me, deah boys."
And the Curlew Patrol replied unanimously:
"Rats!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy groped in his khaki shirt for his eyeglass. An eyeglass is not an essential part of a Boy Scout's outfit; but Arthur Augustus would as soon have thought of going on the war-path without his staff as without his monocle. He found the eyeglass and jammed it into his eye, and surveyed Tom Merry & Co. severely.

"I wepeat that you had bettah leave it to me," he said firmly. "In case of a dangewous bit of scoutin' in the pwesence of the enemy, you can't do bettah than wely on a fellah of tact and judgment."

"More rats!" said Monty Lowther cheerfully.

"Besides, I am well up in signallin'—"

"Many rats!" said Jack Blake.

"And if the wottahs are there, I will spot them at once"

"Heaps of rats!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"I wegard you as an ass, Tom Mewwy!"

Tom Merry, patrol-leader of the famous Curlews, raised his hand warningly.

"A scout is not allowed to regard his patrol-leader as an ass!" he said sternly. "That is insubordination, not to say mutiny. And you can put that pane of glass away. It's too funny for serious scouting biznez. Figgins & Co. have named us the Eyeglass Patrol already."

"Bothah Figgins & Co! You are wastin' time in talk in the pwesence of the enemy. I am convinced that the enemy are there."

Jack Blake shaded his eyes with his broad felt hat and looked down the hill.

"No sign of them!" he remarked.

"All the more weason to suppose that they are there,

Next Wednesday:

"ALGY OF ST. JIM'S!" AND "PLAYING THE GAME!"

deah boy. A weally good scout nevah gives any sign of his presence."

The Curlew Patrol were on the war-path. A big scouts' contest was shortly coming off in the neighbourhood of St. Jim's, and all the Boy Scouts at the old school were naturally very keen about it. All their spare time of late had been devoted to scouting practice. And as scouting was taken up with equal enthusiasm at the Grammar School there was no want of an "enemy" when they went on the war-path.

Tom Merry was leader of the Curlews, and his patrol consisted of his chums Manners and Lowther of the Shell, and the four chums of Study No. 6—Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy of the Fourth. That made a patrol of seven; and there would have been eight if Herries had had his way. Herries wanted to add his bulldog Towser to the patrol; but the other scouts sat upon the proposition with such unanimity that Herries had to give up the idea very reluctantly.

Tom Merry was leader, and Jack Blake was second-in-command. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was adviser-in-chief, self-appointed.

The Curlews were on Rylcombe Hill just now, and on the slope below them, where the footpaths ran among the thick trees and underwoods, they suspected that the enemy were lying in wait—and in force. They knew that Gordon Gay & Co. of the Grammar School were out on the war-path that afternoon, and they had called a halt on the hill, not wishing to fall into a trap. Hence Arthur Augustus's emphatic suggestion that he should go forward and scout for the foe.

"I twust I am not the kind of fellah to put myself forward in any way," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "But I weally think you had better leave it to me, Tom Mewwy. I will spy out the lay of the land, you know, and signal you if the enemy is there."

"Suppose you don't see them?" asked Blake.

"You might not be able to see them, you know, as you have a 'pain' in the eye," Monty Lowther suggested humorously.

"Pway don't be funnay, Lowthah! It is not a scout's bizney to be funnay. Pway give your ordahs, Tom Mewwy, and I will go forward and spot the wottahs!"

Tom Merry nodded, with a grin.

"Well, I'll give you a trial this time, Gussy. Do you remember the signals?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Don't give us the wrong signal, you know," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Buzz off!" said Tom Merry. "I'll give you a trial. If the Grammarians are there, you may possibly spot them; and, anyway, it will be training for you—and you need it."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Forward!" rapped out his patrol-leader.

"Wight-bo!"

And Arthur Augustus, having jammed his eyeglass firmly into his eye, adjusted his hat at the right angle, and, taking a businesslike grip on his staff, strode away down the hill and disappeared into the wood.

The scouts waited.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was proceeding under cover, and so far all was well. If the Grammarians were lying in wait along the footpath he certainly ought to discover them, and signal their proximity to the Curlews. The half-dozen juniors of St. Jim's watched for their elegant chum to reappear in sight and give the signal with his staff.

Five minutes passed, and there was no signal from the swell of St. Jim's.

"I suppose they're not there," Jack Blake remarked. "They'd have jumped on Gussy by this time."

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

"Thank goodness you haven't!" yawned Monty Lowther.

"Fathead!" said Herries politely.

"Hallo! I heard something then!" Digby exclaimed,

bending his head a little to listen. "It sounded like Gussy's voice."

Tom Merry shaded his eyes and looked hard down the wooded slope.

"There he is!" he exclaimed.

In an opening of the wood the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared in sight a couple of hundred yards down the slope.

His face was a little excited as he looked up the hill.

"There's the signal!" said Manners.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy held his staff straight up over his head.

"No enemy in sight," said Tom Merry, who knew all the scouts' signals thoroughly from beginning to end. "All serene! They're not there! Come on!"

And the Curlews trotted down the hill.

As they plunged under the trees Arthur Augustus was lost to sight. In careless array the Curlews trotted down the footpath—a narrow track winding among thick bushes and trees—towards the spot where Arthur Augustus had stood to give the signal.

Suddenly, from the thickets, there came a rush of feet, a springing of khaki-clad figures.

Before Tom Merry & Co. knew that they were attacked they were rolling on the ground, and a dozen Grammarian juniors were rolling over them.

Resistance was impossible.

The Grammarians were two to one, and the St. Jim's patrol were captured before they had time to punch a nose or dot an eye.

Each of them in the grip of a couple of grinning Grammarians, they rolled in the grass, helpless prisoners.

Gordon Gay sat on Tom Merry's chest and grinned down at him cheerfully.

"This is where we catch you napping!" he remarked.

And the Grammarian scouts yelled with laughter.

"Grooh!" gasped Tom Merry. "My hat! Why, that thundering, thumping ass signalled—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's Gussy?"

"Here's Gussy!" chorled Gordon Gay, as Wootton major and Frank Monk dragged Arthur Augustus D'Arcy upon the scene. "He's a giddy prisoner, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Grammarians were gleeful with triumph. The Curlews had fallen helplessly into their hands at the very beginning of the afternoon. It was a big success for Gordon Gay & Co.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, wriggling in the grasp of Wootton and Monk, glared basilisk-like at the captured juniors, who gave him almost homicidal looks in return.

"You thumping ass!" roared Blake.

"You silly cuckoo!"

"You chortling idiot!"

"You frabjous duffer!"

"Oh, you blitherer! You jay! You chump!"

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

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tried to grope for his eyeglass; but Monk and Wootton were holding his arms tightly, and he could not. He looked as withering as he could without it.

"You uttah asses!" he exclaimed. "Tom Mewwy, I am surprised at you—a patrol-leadah, walkin' into a twap like that, aftah I had plainly signalled 'enemy close at hand!'"

"You frabjous ass!" shrieked Tom Merry. "You signalled 'no enemy in sight!'"

"Wats! I held my staff straight up!"

"Well, you champion lunatic, that means 'no enemy in sight!'"

The Grammarians yelled again.

Arthur Augustus gave quite a start.

"By Jove! Does it?" he ejaculated. "You are quite suah of that, Tom Mewwy?"

"Of course I am, you burbling jabberwock!"

"Gweat Scott! I meant to signal 'enemy in stwong force close at hand,'" said Arthur Augustus, looking greatly distressed. "You are quite suah that it was not the wight signal for 'enemy in force close at hand,' Tom Mewwy?"

"Oh, you fathead!" groaned Blake. "You ought to have held the staff horizontally, and moved it up and down quickly. You thumping flosser!"

"Nevah mind, deah boys—I shall wemembah it wight next time—"

"Next time!" grunted Tom Merry. "There won't be any next time, you awful duffer. You won't do any more scouting for the Curlew Patrol. We'll leave you at home in a band-box next time!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gordon Gay. "You bounders call yourselves Boy Scouts! When we got some time we'll give you a few lessons in signalling."

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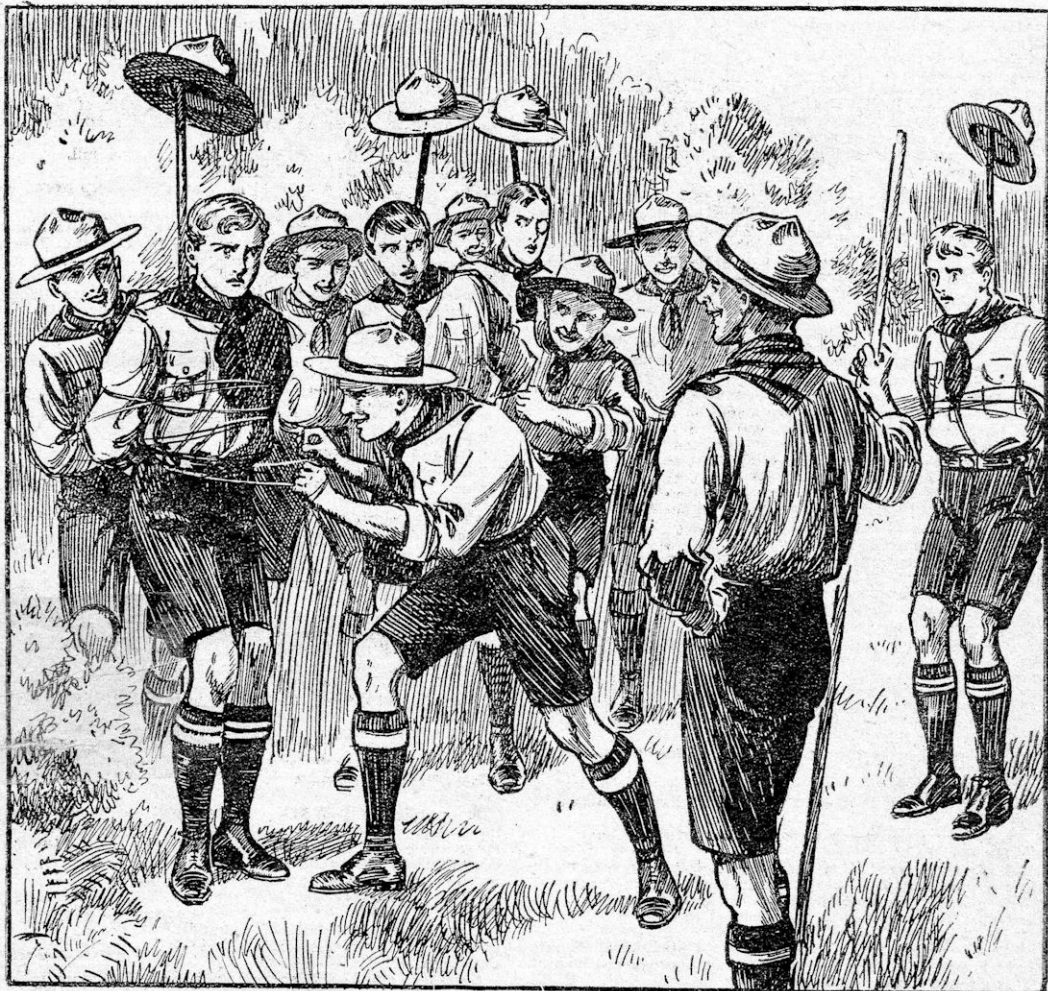
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Each of the Curlews was taken in turn, his arms placed behind him, his staff planted upright behind his back, and bound there. And on the top of the staves, Gordon Gay hung the Scout's hats! "Now we'll take 'em down to the road, and let 'em loose!" said Gay, with a chuckle. (See Chapter 1.)

"When I get some time, I'll give you a thick ear!" growled Blake.

"Well, if these chaps have done slanging one another, we may as well get shut of them," said Frank Monk, in a business-like tone. "There are the other fellows to deal with yet—Figgins & Co., you know. They're in the wood somewhere."

"Tie 'em up!" said Gordon Gay. "They've all got some cord about them—that's a proper part of a scout's outfit. Stick their staves upright behind them, put their hats on top, and tie their arms!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you rotters, that isn't in the rules," roared Blake.

"It's in our rules," Gordon Gay explained, with a chuckle. "It's up to real scouts—like us—to make an example of a duffer patrol. Pile in, you fellows!"

The chuckling Grammarians piled in. There was plenty of cord and string—the Curlews were well provided with all the accessories. Each of the Curlews was taken in turn, his arms placed behind him, his staff planted upright behind his back, and with plenty of cord the arms and staff were bound in that position.

When the Grammarians were finished, each of the St. Jim's scouts stood with his staff sticking up behind the back of his head, and his hands quite fast, unable to help himself.

On top of the staves, Gordon Gay hung their hats. Tom Merry & Co. were red with rage; but their remarks only made the Grammarians laugh the louder.

"Now take 'em down to the road and let 'em loose," said Gordon Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you rotters—"

"You fearful wottahs—"

"March!" said Gordon Gay. "Touch 'em up if they don't march, kids!"

"Yow-ow! Leave off, you beasts!"

"You fweightful boundahs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The St. Jim's scouts marched. They were taken out into the high-road, and a few more prods from the staves of the Grammarian scouts set them marching for St. Jim's. Then Gordon Gay & Co., yelling with laughter, disappeared into the wood.

CHAPTER 2.

The Rivals of St. Jim's.

"WHY—what—who— Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins of the Fourth burst into a wild yell.

And the Wolf Patrol of St. Jim's, of which George Figgins was leader, followed their leader's example, as, of course, a dutiful patrol should.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 330

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Text of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Ha, ha, ha!" they yelled in chorus.

The Wolves belonged to the New House at St. Jim's, and were the deadly rivals, in a friendly way, of Tom Merry & Co. of the School House. Figgins & Co.—that is, Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn—had joined with Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence to form the Wolf Patrol. Figgy was leader, and Reddy second in command. There was a keen rivalry between the scouts of the New House and those of the School House; but if the Curlews had been their long-lost brothers, the Wolves could not have helped yelling with laughter at the sight of them.

A Boy Scout, with his arms tied down to his sides, his staff bound upright behind his back, and his hat floating on top of the staff, did not look impressive. Seven of them looked decidedly funny.

"Oh, my only summer hat!" yelled Redfern. "Ha, ha, ha! They're the School House bounders!"

"And they've been for wool, and got shorn!" grinned Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. were crimson and furious. They had struggled with the cords, after the Grammarians had left them in the Rylcombe Road, but they had struggled in vain. Knot-tying was a branch of the scouts' craft that Gordon Gay had learned thoroughly. Tom Merry & Co. had been reduced to a state of desperation. They scuttled out of sight in the trees when anyone came by, not caring to ask strangers for help out of their predicament. They were in hopes of meeting some St. Jim's fellows, most of whom were out of doors that sunny half-holiday. And they did; but the fact that the St. Jim's fellows belonged to the New House made the meeting less welcome than it would otherwise have been.

The Wolves surrounded them, yelling with laughter, and the faces of the School House scouts grew redder and redder, till it seemed that all the blood in their youthful bodies had been pumped into their faces.

"When you've done letting off steam, you might let us loose!" roared Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! I wegarid this wude laughat as entirely out of place. There is nothin' whatever funnay in the mattah!"

"Cut us loose, you chumps!" shouted Blake.

Figgins opened his knife, nearly choking with laughter. "Oh, my hat! Excuse us, but it is really funny. Who served you like this?"

"The Grammarian rotters, of course. There were a dozen of them!"

"They wouldn't have served us like it, if there'd been a hundred!" grinned Redfern. "You must have been caught napping."

"Gussy gave the wrong signal—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I gave the signal all wight, but it didn't happen to mean what I intended it to mean," explained Arthur Augustus. "The mistake was quite as much in the code as mine. If the signal had happened to mean what I meant—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't cut the cords," said Kerr. "Untie them. Scouts ought to be able to untie knots, and it's a waste to cut them."

"Right-ho!" said Figgins, snapping his knife shut. "Right you are, Kerr! Trust a giddy Scotsman not to waste anything. Pile in, and let the little darlings loose. They musn't go out without their nurses after this."

"Look here, you can cut the cords," said Blake. "You'll take a jolly long time untying them!"

"Yaas, wathah! Cut them!"

Figgins shook his head.

"Scouts ought never to waste anything," he said solemnly. "That's one of the rules, or it ought to be. A stitch in time saves nine—I mean, waste not want not. Besides, it's good practice untying knots!"

"Look here, we're not going to stand here like a lot of dummies while you practice untying silly knots!" howled Herries.

"They're not silly knots—they're jolly good ones!" said Figgins. "It will take some time to unfasten them. Whoever tied them knows his business!"

"Cut them!" yelled Digby.

"Can't be did! Waste not, want not. These cords will come in handy for tying up the Grammarians when we catch them. We are going to avenge this insult to St. Jim's."

"Certainly!" said Kerr. "It's up to the New House to see that St. Jim's doesn't get the worst of it."

"Cut them, you asses!"

"Rubbish!"

And Figgins & Co., with provokingly leisurely movements, untied the cords that bound the unfortunate Curlews.

It took some time, as Figgins said it would, and meanwhile some interested spectators gathered on the scene. Grimes, the grocer's boy of Rylcombe, and Pilcher, the butcher's boy, came along with their baskets, and they halted to look on

and grin.—Grimes and Pilcher belonged to the Cat Patrol of Rylcombe, and they were very keen on scouting, though they did not have so much time to give to it as the St. Jim's fellows, of course.

"Oh, lummy!" said Grimes, as he set his basket down and yelled. "This 'ere takes the kike. Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Pilcher.

Arthur Augustus glared at them wrathfully.

"There is nothin' whatever to laugh at," he exclaimed. "Pway go on your way, and don't stand there cacklin' like hyenas."

Their point of view differed from D'Arcy's; they thought there was something to laugh at, and they laughed.

From the direction of St. Jim's another patrol came along, while the Wolves were still busy untying the Curlews. It was the Kangaroo Patrol of the School House. The leader was Harry Noble, the Australian, more familiarly known as Kangaroo, and the signal of the patrol was the "coo-ey" so well known in the "bush," and taught by Kangaroo to his followers—Dane and Glyn of the Shell, and Reilly, Kerruish, and Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth.

The Kangaroos gathered round, and added their laughter to that of Pilcher and Grimes.

"Who did it?" almost sobbed Noble. "You haven't done it yourselves for a lark, I suppose?"

"Wats!"

"Fathead!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"But who did it?" demanded Clifton Dane, the Canadian junior. "Who's had the cheek to lay sacrilegious hands on the giddy Curlews?"

"The Grammarians!" said Tom Merry wearily. "They caught us napping, owing to Gussy giving the wrong signal."

"I gave a weally good signal, but it did not express what I meant it to express—"

"Awful nerve of the Grammarians," said Kangaroo, with a shake of the head. "We shall have to deal with them for this. Can't have even the Donkey Patrol mucked up in this way. We've got to wipe out the stain."

"You leave that to us," said Figgins warmly. "We're going to deal with the Grammar cads. It's up to the New House."

"Rot!" said Noble, with equal warmth. "It's up to us as School House scouts. They've done in a School House patrol, and we're going to make them sit up."

"Look here—"

"Go and eat coke!"

"We'll jolly well—"

"Rats!"

The untying of Tom Merry & Co. ceased as the Wolves and the Kangaroos entered into a hot argument. Whether it was up to the School House or the New House to deal with the Grammarians was a question each party solved in its own way, and it was evident that they would never agree.

"We shall never get loose at this rate," groaned Tom Merry.

"Look here, you duffers!" shouted Jack Blake. "You're going to let the Grammarians alone. We're going after them ourselves."

Kangaroo and Figgins turned upon the unfortunate Curlews at once. Whatever might be in dispute between them they were in instant agreement in putting a heavy foot down on that idea.

"You're jolly well not!" declared Kangaroo.

"No fear!" exclaimed Figgins emphatically.

"We are!" said Tom Merry. "They've caught us napping, and we're going for them again. We shall squash them this time."

"Rats!"

"Rubbish!"

"I'll tell you what, Kangy," exclaimed Figgins. "There are a dozen of the Grammar cads—two of their patrols together. We'll join forces against the bounders, and make the odds even."

"Well, that's a good idea," agreed Kangaroo. "We'll work in concert. But those Curlews bounders are dead in this act."

"Yes, rather!"

"Look here—" bellowed Blake.

"You're dead in this act," said Figgins emphatically.

"Leave it to us. We'll deal with the Grammarians. We don't want an army. You agree to go back to St. Jim's and play cricket?"

"No."

"Nevah!"

"Rats!"

"Then we'll leave you tied up!" said Figgins grimly.

"Oh, you wottah!"

"You rank rotter!"

"Fair's fair," said Figgins. "You've had your go at the

Grammar kids and you've failed. Now leave them to us, and we'll squash them.

Tom Merry grinned faintly. "Well, perhaps that's fair," he admitted. "I expect you'll make a muck-up of it, though. We agree."

"Bai Jove! We don't agree—"

"Shut up!" said the leader of the Curlews, frowning. "Don't you know that you have to obey the orders of your patrol-leader?"

"Yaas; but—"

"Then shut up!"

"I decline to shut up. —"

"Silence!" roared Tom Merry. "Mutiny, by Jove! If you don't shut up I'll sack you from the patrol."

"Bai Jove!"

And Arthur Augustus ceased to raise objections. The Wolves and the Kangaroos finished anyting the Curlews at last. They retained the cords, for the purpose, as they declared, of using them on the Grammarian scouts when they captured them. Blake sarcastically advised them to try to catch a weasel asleep, when they would have a chance of performing the difficult operation of shaving its eyebrows. And Tom Merry gently suggested that they were counting their chickens a little early.

But the Wolves and the Kangaroos only grinned, and started off in high confidence to run down the Grammarians, and serve them as they had served the Curlews.

The Curlews were left standing in the road. Grimes and Pilcher shouldered their baskets, and went grinning on their way. Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another with somewhat sickly expressions.

"Well, it has been a giddy muck-up!" said Monty Lowther. "If this is the kind of show we make in the big contest we shall be grinned to death, and we'll deserve it, too."

"Yaas, wathah! The way you fellows were caught nappin' was simply rotten!"

"Why, you chump!" roared all the Curlews together, in great indignation. "It was you that led us into the trap!"

"Wata!"

"Gussy is going through some signalling exercises when we got back to St. Jim's," said Tom Merry grimly. "Come on!"

And the discoloured Curlews took their homeward way. When they reached the school Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was put through signalling exercises until his noble arms were ready to drop off with fatigue. But the Curlews had no mercy on him. He had led them into the enemy's hands by giving a wrong signal, and that was an unpardonable fault in a scout, and they did not mean to let the swell of the School House forget it. Every signal of the code was fairly jammed into Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and every objection he raised to incessant practice was stopped by a prod from a Curlew staff. By the time the course of instruction was finished Arthur Augustus was feeling more dead than alive, but his patrol comrades felt that he was not likely to give a wrong signal again in a hurry.

CHAPTER 3.

In the Cart!

GORDON GAY chuckled.

The Grammarian leader was seated in the boughs of a high tree on the border of the wood, and using a small pair of field-glasses.

With the glasses, from his elevated position, he had watched the release of the Curlews, and their departure for St. Jim's. Then he had observed the movements of the Wolves and the Kangaroos. The two patrols, evidently acting in concert, had consulted together as they came up the lane, and then entered the wood at different points. Their object it was quite easy for the Grammarian scout to guess. They were on the warpath, and they were going to avenge the St. Jim's defeat, if they could. Gordon Gay's opinion was that they couldn't.

Gay slung his glasses over his shoulder, and nimbly descended the tree. The dozen Grammarian scouts were waiting for him below.

"Two patrols of the bounders," said Gay. "The Kangaroos and the Wolves. We've dealt with them before, you know, and I know their signals all right. They're acting together, and the dear little Curlews have gone home to roost."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We've got to take them separately," said Gay, with a chuckle. "They're going to scout for us and signal to one another, of course, when they've spotted us. But I think I can give a well-bored quite as well as Figgy, and coo-ey as well as Noble. I come from the country where they do it. We'll dish the bounders, and if we can lay them by the heels we will pack them into the haycart in Giles's field, and wheel 'em home to St. Jim's."

The Grammarians chuckled gleefully at the prospect.

Gordon Gay was an Australian, and had spent many holidays in the bush at home; and he knew woodcraft from beginning to end. He was a first-class Boy Scout, and he had taught his followers most of what he knew. The Grammarian scouts were in a state of high efficiency, and they felt fully equal to dealing with the Wolves and the Kangaroos of St. Jim's.

Gay gave his directions in a low, quick voice, and the scouts disappeared into the wood.

Meanwhile, the St. Jim's scouts were very much on the warpath.

The Wolves had entered the wood from the south and the Kangaroos had gone further and entered it from the north. Gay had seen the movement with his glasses from the tree-top, and understood that his party was to be caught between two fires. The Scouts knew that Gay's troop would be difficult to catch, however, and they were very cautious.

"Keep your peepers open, kids!" Figgins said, as they plunged into the wood. "Gay is as keen as a weasel. We don't want to be caught napping like Tom Merry. It's up to the New House to bring this thing off."

"Well, we sha'n't give any wrong signals!" chuckled Kerr.

"No fear. Now—"

"Hold on, Figgy!" said Fatty Wynn, fumbling in his haversack. "Better have some sandwiches before we start."

"Put that grub away, you fat chump!" said Figgins, in a superfluous voice. "We came out to scout, not to feed. If you drop a single crumb Gay may spot it. Put that grub away, or we'll chuck you out of the patrol."

"Oh, I say, Figgy—"

"Not a word!"

Fatty Wynn sighed, and closed his haversack again. He had thoughtfully placed a large supply of sandwiches there, and the sandwiches haunted his thoughts. But Figgins, though the best-natured fellow in the world, was hard as steel when it came to business.

"Scatter, and look for sign!" said Figgins. "And listen for the signal of the Kangaroos, too! Go it!"

And the Wolves set to work.

With great caution, and at a distance from one another, they advanced northward through the wood, looking for "sign," and listening with all their ears for a sound of the enemy. But the Grammarians seemed to have disappeared into the earth, or to have vanished into thin air. Figgins, as he crept cautiously on hands and knees through a thick clump of underwoods, heard a faint signal from afar.

"Coo-ey!"

Figgins stopped and listened.

"Coo-ey!"

It was the Kangaroo signal.

It came faintly through the thickets. Figgins uttered in reply the low cry in imitation of a wolf howl.

"Coo-ey!"

Figgins repeated his signal, and there was a rustle in the thickets near him. He saw a staff appear among the foliage, and caught a glimpse of a couple of khaki felt hats.

"Is that you, Kangy?"

"Collar him!"

It was a quick whisper in Gordon Gay's voice. Figgins sprang to his feet, and as he did so two Grammarian scouts leaped upon him and bore him to the ground. Figgy opened his mouth to shout, but a compressed handkerchief was thrust into it, and the intended shout died away into a gurgle.

Figgy was on his back in the brambles, with Frank Monk kneeling on his chest, and Gordon Gay gripping his arms, and Wootton major jamming the gag into his mouth. The New House junior of St. Jim's was perfectly helpless. In the grasp of Grammarians he could scarcely wriggle, and he could not cry out to warn his comrades.

Gordon Gay grinned down at him, and went through his pockets in search of something to tie him with. He found the cord Figgins had taken from Tom Merry, which had been preserved, on Kerr's economical recommendation, to bind the Grammarians—when captured. It served now the purpose of securing the unfortunate Figgins.

With a few quick and deft knots, Gay fastened his hands and feet, and then tied the handkerchief in his mouth. Figgins could breathe through his nose, but he could not talk through it, so he could not express his feelings towards the enemy in words. He was reduced to glaring at them ferociously, but his ferocious glares only made the Grammarians chuckle softly.

"That's one!" murmured Gordon Gay. "He's the leader of the giddy Wolves. Figgy, old man, I'm sorry to tie you up like this, but we've got a big collection to make—a regular menagerie of Wolves and Kangaroos."

"Grooogh!" murmured Figgins faintly.

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NEXT WEDNESDAY—"ALGY OF ST. JIM'S!" A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Later on, when you've had a little more experience, you'll learn that a signal can be imitated by another chap who's up to snuff," smiled Gordon Gay.

Figgins simply wriggled with rage. He comprehended how fully that Gordon Gay had imitated the Kangaroo's "Coo-ey!" and thus led him to reveal his whereabouts. And he realised, too, that his comrades would most likely fall into the same trap. From the thickets came a low wolf howl, and Figgins recognised the peculiar note of Kerr. Gay and Monk and Wootton jumped up from their prisoner. With perfect accuracy Gay imitated the cry; and then Figgins, in anguish of spirit, heard Kerr come creeping through the bushes towards the spot.

There was a sudden springing and rustling of the bushes, and Kerr went down under the three Grammarians. A startled gasp escaped him, but that was all. He was gagged before he could call out. In a couple of minutes he was laid beside Figgins, helplessly bound. The two juniors looked at one another with feelings too deep for words—even if words had been possible.

"Two bagged!" murmured Frank Monk, with a soft chuckle.

The two Grammarians moved away into the wood, and disappeared from sight. Figgins and Kerr struggled savagely with their bonds. It was not only the fact of their capture that exasperated them. But they knew how the Curlews would howl with laughter when they heard of the result of that expedition to avenge the defeat of the School House. Figgins & Co. had been, as a matter of fact, a little cocksure about their success, and this was the result.

Ten minutes later they heard approaching footsteps, and two Grammarians appeared, bearing a bound prisoner between them. Another New House junior had been caught napping. This time it was Redfern. Redfern started as he saw Figgins and Kerr, but he could not speak. He was dumped down in the grass, and the Grammarians grinned and vanished. They were, as Gay had declared, making a collection, and it looked as if they would have a complete "bag" of St. Jim's juniors.

"Coo-ey!"

Whether it was a Kangaroo or a Grammarian giving that signal, Figgins and his companions could not guess. If it was given by Gay, the imitation was lifelike. A couple of minutes passed, and then there was a sound of crashing boughs and brambles a short distance away. A desperate struggle was being waged there, and Figgins & Co. wriggled desperately, infuriated at not being able to go to the aid of their comrades. The struggle ceased at last, followed by gasping and panting. Then they heard Gordon Gay's voice.

"Phew! That was warm!"

"Three of them, anyway!" said Frank Monk. "That makes six!"

"Roll 'em along!"

The prisoners screwed round their heads to see the fresh captives brought in. They were Kangaroo, Clifton Dane, and Reilly, of the Kangaroo Patrol. Half a dozen Grammarian scouts—all of whom showed signs of damage in the struggle—bore them along, and dumped them down under the tree with Figgins & Co.

Gordon Gay dabbed a streaming nose with a handkerchief that became very red, and grinned at the frowning, gasping row of prisoners.

"Six!" he said cheerfully. "And all the leaders! It won't take us long to rope in the giddy rank and file."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coo-ey!" came faintly from the distance.

Kangaroo's followers missed him, and were signalling to him. The Grammarians crept away cautiously in the direction of the signal.

For the next half-hour Figgins and Kangaroo and the rest lay in the grass, and wriggled in their bonds, and almost wept with rage. One by one the Wolves and Kangaroos were brought in by the Grammarians and dumped down. Fatty Wynn was the last, and he made the dozen complete.

"The whole giddy bag!" grinned Gordon Gay. And then he sounded his scouts' call, to bring the whole Grammarian troop together.

From all directions the Grammarian scouts came in answer to the call, fifteen or sixteen of them gathering round the prisoners. Then Gordon Gay ungagged the latter.

Figgins & Co. could use their voices at last, and they used them loudly. They told the Grammarians what they thought of them, and the victorious enemy answered with yells of laughter, silence being no longer necessary.

"Sorry!" grinned Gordon Gay. "But this is where you get it—where the chicken got the chopper, you know. We've bagged the whole army."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all right, kids," Gay went on blandly. "We're THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 330.

going to look after you. You must be tired after your exertions—getting caught in traps and things—so we're going to save you the trouble of walking home to St. Jim's. Monkey, old man, cut off and fetch Giles here with the hay-cart—to the road, I mean, as near as possible, and we'll get these bounders along to the road while you're gone."

"What-ho!" said Frank Monk.

"Look here! What's your little game?" demanded Kangaroo heatedly.

"You ought to be grateful to us, Kangy. We are going to provide you with a free, drive home—and tip Giles a couple of bob for the job," said Gordon Gay. "It isn't everybody who would do that for a captured enemy."

"We're not going home in a hay-cart, you rôtters!" howled Figgins.

"Well, you may be right, but my personal opinion is that you are," said Gay. "But we'll see. Bring 'em along, you chaps, and prod 'em a little if they don't hop it."

The unfortunate Wolves and Kangaroos were compelled to "hop" it. They were taken out into the road, where Frank Monk and Giles quickly arrived with the hay-cart. Giles was a stolid country youth, but his stolidity melted away at the sight of the captured scouts, and he grinned. The captured Saints were bundled into the cart, upon the hay, and Gay gave Giles his instructions.

"You understand, kid? They're to be delivered at St. Jim's—this side up, with care. You're not to let them loose."

"Yes, zar," said Giles.

"Here's a couple of bob, and mind you don't let them loose."

And as the hay-cart drove away, the Grammarians stood in the road and howled with laughter. The St. Jim's fellows were more inclined to howl with rage. They were "in the cart," in a double sense; and all the way to St. Jim's they strove to corrupt the fidelity of the stolid Giles, but they strove in vain. Giles drove on serenely, apparently deaf to the voice of the charmer.

CHAPTER 4.

The Return of the Vanquished.

"WONDER how those bounders are getting on?" Monty Lowther remarked.

The Terrible Three were not enjoying that half-holiday. They were very sore about their defeat at the hands of the Grammarians. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was still more sore, from his enforced signalling exercises. The Curlews had gone down to the nets, and done some cricketing, after putting Gussy through his exercises; and then they strolled to the school shop and refreshed themselves with ginger-beer, and discussed plans for avenging their defeat.

"Oh, I expect they're making a hash of it!" said Tom, in answer to Lowther's remark. "They can't handle Gay if we can't."

"We can, if we get another chance!" growled Blake.

"It was all Gussy's fault we fell into a trap."

"Weally, Blake—"

"But I don't think that silly jossor will make the wrong signal again," said Blake, with a grin. "If he does, we'll give him some more exercises."

"I shall wufuse to have any moah exahices!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "I am vewy stiff and soah in the arms through ovahdoin' it. I have seweval distinct aches and pains in my beasty limbs."

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Blake unsympathetically. "I wonder what's become of the Wolves and the Kangaroos, though? It's time they were back at St. Jim's—unless they've been caught napping too."

"Let's go down to the gates and look for them," said Digby.

The juniors sauntered out of the tuckshop. It was time something was seen of the scouts, and Tom Merry & Co. were curious to know how they had fared with the enemy. For the honour of the school, they hoped they had been successful. But perhaps they would not have been wholly disappointed to learn that the Kangaroos and the Wolves had found Gordon Gay & Co. too big an order.

"Nothin' in sight," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his famous monocle in the direction of Rylcombe.

"Nothing?" demanded Tom Merry severely. "And you call yourself a scout! Look again!"

"Well, nothin' but an old hay-cart."

"No sign of the scouts?" yawned Blake.

"What is Giles grinning at, I wonder?" said Monty Lowther. "He's got a grin a yard wide on his chivvy. Hallo, Giles! Where did you dig up that face?"

Giles grinned more broadly than ever, and brought the cart to a halt outside the gates of the school.

"Arternoon, gentlemen!" he said.

"Afternoon!" replied Lowther affably.
 "I got something to deliver 'ere," said Giles.
 "What's that?"
 "Master Gay, of the Grammar School, sent it," said Giles.
 "You young gentlemen can take 'em out the cart if you like. They belong 'ere."
 "They!" said Tom Merry. "What are they?"
 "From the hay-cart came the explanation.
 "Don't stand there jawing all day!" said the voice of Figgins of the Fourth. "Get us out of this before the whole school comes round!"
 "Figgins!" shouted Tom Merry.
 "Oh, my hat!"
 "The 'ole biling!" grinned Giles. "Master Gay, he 'ave sent them 'ere with his compliments, young gentlemen."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. crowded round the cart, and looked into it. A dozen bound juniors were crammed together in the hay. They looked at the Curlews with red and furious faces. Tom Merry & Co. shrieked with laughter.
 "So you've come home!" roared Manners.
 "And that's how you've done the Grammarians! Ha, ha, ha!"

The roars of laughter brought a crowd to the gates at once. Levison of the Fourth was the first to arrive, and then came Mellish, and Gore, and Crooks, and Hammond, and then Cutts and Lefevre of the Fifth, and Kildare of the Sixth, and then a crowd more. And all of them, seniors and juniors, howled with mirth at the sight of the unhappy Kangaroos and Wolves crammed in the bottom of the hay-cart.

"Oh, crumbs! This takes the giddy cake!" roared Levison. "How did you get into that fix, Figgy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Bai Jove! They don't seem to have done much bettah than we did!" grinned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It was very kind of the Gwammah cads to give you a wide home, Kangy!"

"Are you going to let us out, you cackling idiots?" demanded Redfern.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Cut these blessed cords!" shrieked Figgins.
 Tom Merry shook his head, laughing.
 "No fear! We're not going to waste the cord. Besides, it's our cord, and we're not going to destroy our own property. 'Waste not, want not,' you know, Figgy; your own words."

"Yaas, wathah. It would be a wicked waste to cut the cords, wouldn't it, Kerr?"

"Fathead!" growled Kerr.
 "Ha, ha, ha! Besides, it will be awfully good practice untin' the knots!" chuckled Arthur Augustus gleefully.
 "Figgy said so himself!"

"And there's no hurry," said Monty Lowther. "No hurry at all. Untie the knots, dear boys, and don't waste the cord!"

Tom Merry & Co., shaking with laughter, fumbled with the cords, untying the knots, as Figgins & Co. had done on a previous occasion. They had not the slightest intention of using their knives. "What was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander," as Blake smilingly remarked.

Half St. Jim's gathered round to watch the operation. Giles stood stolidly by his horse while it was going on. One by one the unfortunate scouts were released, and rolled out of the cart, with wisps of hay sticking all over them.

As fast as they were released they scudded away through the gateway and disappeared, anxious to escape the circle of grinning faces. Yells of laughter followed them as they fled.

Figgins was the last. Red and flustered and furious, Figgins slipped out of the cart. He glared at the crowd of howling juniors. The defeat of Tom Merry & Co. had struck Figgins as funny earlier in the afternoon, but his sense of humour seemed to be somewhat wanting now.

"You cackling asses!" he exclaimed.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was all through Gay imitating our signals——"
 "He wouldn't take us in by imitating our signals," chuckled Jack Blake. "We're up to snuff, you bet!"

"Yaas, wathah! You were caught nappin', Figgy, old man. I wathah think the laugh is up against you now. They wouldn't have taken the Curlews in that way. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Figgins crossly. And he bolted after the rest, leaving the crowd screaming with merriment.

Giles drove away in the hay-cart, and the St. Jim's fellows streamed back into the quad shaking with mirth. The Kangaroos and the Wolves did not appear in the quadrangle again that afternoon. They preferred to hide their blushes from the public eye.

"It's funny!" Tom Merry gasped, as the chums walked back to the School House to tea. "But it's a defeat for St. Jim's. We've got to down the Grammar School bounders somehow after this, and it's up to us to do it."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully.
 "And I've got a suggestion to make, dear boys!"

"Rats!"
 "Go and boil it!"

"It is a weally vewy valuable suggestion," said the swell of St. Jim's firmly, "and undah the cires I think it ought to be adopted. We can't take an all-wound lickin' like this lyin' down."

"Well, what's the suggestion?" asked Blake. "It's barely possible there may be something in it. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, you know——"

"Weally, Blake——"
 "What's the wheeze, if you've got one?" demanded Tom Merry.

"I will tell you, dear boy. What is weaquahed for dealin' with awfully deep boundahs like those Gwammawian chaps is a leadah with bwains. Of course, I'm not a chap to put myself forward in any way, and I don't want to push you out of your posish as chief scout of the School House, Tom Mewwy!"

"What!"
 "But undah the cires, and for this special occasion, as a leadah with bwains is weaquahed, I suggest that I am elected leadah for the purpose of downin' the Gwammawians!"

"You—you—you suggest that?"

"Yaas!"

"Is that the idea?"

"Yaas!"

"You—you—you——" Words failed Tom Merry.

"Well, what do you think of the ideah?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"I—I can't tell you what I think of it!" gasped Tom Merry. "There aren't any words in the English language equal to it. This is a time for action, not words. Collar him! After leading us into a trap, and getting us licked, he purposes to be made leader. There's only one thing to do. Bump him!"

"Weally—— Hands off! Yawoooooh!"
 Bump!

The juniors walked into the house, and left Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sitting in the quadrangle in quite a dazed frame of mind. It was only too evident that Arthur Augustus's suggestion, valuable as it was, would not be adopted.

CHAPTER 5.

No Takers!

THE Terrible Three were going down to cricket practice after lessons the next day, when Levison of the

Fourth met them. Levison had been looking for them. There was an unusually friendly expression upon Levison's face, which was a plain enough intimation that he wanted something. Like the Greeks of old, Levison of the Fourth was to be feared when he came with gifts in his hands. He gave the Terrible Three a very cordial nod, and they stopped politely. They did not like the cad of the Fourth, but as he evidently wanted to speak to them they obliged him.

"I suppose you chaps are thinking about the scout contest that's coming off soon?" the Fourth-Former asked.

"Well, we're thinking about cricket at the present moment," said Tom Merry. "But we're giving the scouting contest our distinguished consideration."

"It's going to be a big thing," said Levison. "Sir Algernon Fane, the District Commissioner, is coming down, you know, to superintend, and to award the cup. He's standing the cup himself, and there are other prizes. The old chap is awfully keen about Boy Scouts. That gold cup will be worth something. The patrol or troop that gets it could keep it if they liked."

"I suppose they would keep it," said Manners. "It's to be kept."

"Yes; but I mean they could sell it if they liked. It must be worth a good bit," said Levison. "That would be an easy way of raising a good sum of money. I shouldn't wonder if it's worth twenty quid."

The Terrible Three looked very expressively at Levison. But Levison did not notice their looks; he ran on eagerly: "Of course, it's not worth the fag simply for pot-hunting, but a sum of money is worth exerting oneself for, what do you think?"

"I won't tell you what I think," said Tom Merry drily. "You wouldn't understand."

"I'm speaking to you as businesslike chaps," said Levison. "There's no reason why a St. Jim's patrol shouldn't walk off with that pot. There's plenty of glory to be reaped, though I don't care about that, but the pot itself is valuable. Lots of troops are entering—every blessed patrol in the district, I think—all the St. Jim's scouts, and the Grammarians, and the village troops, and even Grimes and Pilcher,

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A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARJAN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEDNESDAY—**"ALGY OF ST. JIM'S!"**

and those shabby cads in Rylcombe are having a whack at it!"

"Those shabby cads, as you call them, are quite as good scouts as we are," said Tom Merry quietly, "and only a cad would speak of them like that!"

"Hear, hear!" said Lowther and Manners.

Levison sneered.

"Well, never mind that," he said. "What I was going to suggest was that I join the Curlew Patrol, and help you, and that we have a whack at the cup!"

"We're going to have a whack at it, anyway," said Tom; "and I don't see that you could help us. You're not a scout!"

"I can become one, I suppose. It's easy enough!"

"Not quite so easy as you think. There's something more needed than shoving on a shirt and a felt hat. You've got to get fit, and to train, and to be a decent chap—to say nothing about doing a good turn every day. How many days is it since you've done anybody a good turn?"

"Of course, that's all rot!"

"If you think it's all rot, Levison, you'd better let the scouts alone, and keep out of it," said Tom drily.

"I'm after the cup, not after playing the giddy goat!" said Levison disdainfully. "If I do myself a good turn by raising the wind, I shall be satisfied. And I can go into training easily enough; and I've got brains too—I shall be able to help. I don't ask for more than a fair share in the tin when the cup's sold!"

"The cup won't be sold if we get it."

"Going to stick it on the study wall, for fellows to stare at?" sneered Levison.

"Better than selling it, anyway. Besides, the Curlew Patrol is full up; we don't want any more in it. And, to put it quite plainly, Levison, until you change your ideas about the scouts, we don't want you!" said Tom Merry bluntly.

"Well, if you won't agree to sell the cup, of course I sha'n't come into your gang," said Levison. "I thought you might be willing to look at the matter sensibly."

"My dear chap," said Monty Lowther, "if you wait for us to look at things as you do, you will have to wait donkeys' years. Go and eat coke!"

And the Shell fellows walked on, leaving Levison biting his lip.

"Blessed if I can stand that chap!" said Tom Merry. "It would do him good to be a scout, and get some of the meanness knocked out of him! I'd do my best for him if he wanted to take it up in a decent way; but he's only on the make!"

And the Terrible Three went to the nets, and forgot all about Levison and his latest scheme. Levison remained in deep and scowling thought for some time, and then lounged away with his hands in his pockets, looking for Kangaroo. He found the Cornstalk schoolboy, and propounded his scheme to him.

"Sell the cup?" said Kangaroo witheringly. "You mean rotter! We're going into this thing for the honour, not to make money!"

"Of course, that's piffle!" said Levison.

"Oh, clear off!"

Levison cleared off. It seemed very difficult to get the St. Jim's scouts to look at the matter sensibly, as Levison regarded it. He walked over to the New House to try his luck with Figgins & Co. He found that celebrated company in Figgins's study, discussing ways and means. Funds were low, and the question of tea in the study was paramount. Fatty Wynn was especially serious about it.

"Hallo!" said Figgins. "Have you come to lend us a quid, Levison?"

"No," said Levison. "I've come to ask you whether you'd like a chance of making about fifteen or twenty quids?"

Figgins sniffed.

"One of your blessed sweepstakes?" he inquired.

"Oh, no! Quite above-board—and lots of honour and glory into the bargain. You chaps can have the honour and glory, and I'll have a whack in the cash. I want you to make me a member of the Wolves Patrol!"

"It's a New House patrol," said Figgins. "You can join a patrol in your own House, if you want to be a scout. But even if we took you in, how on earth would that raise fifteen or twenty quids?"

"I could help you to win the cup, and if it was sold—"

"Bosh!" said Figgins.

"Lot of good you would be in a scouting contest," said Kerr. "You're too much of a slacker to practise. Besides, the contest will be on fair lines, under the District Commissioner's eyes, and there wouldn't be any chance for your peculiar talents, Levison!"

"A fellow with brains, and with his eyes open, can always find chances," said Levison coolly. "These things can be

worked. When we know the precise lines it is to run on, we can put our heads together, and wangle it somehow. You can depend on me for a dodge to steal a march on the others, if there's half a chance of doing it!"

"I dare say!" said Figgins contemptuously. "But, you see, we don't want to steal a march on the others. Unless we win the cup fairly, we don't want it!"

"It's very likely worth twenty quid."

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Twenty pounds is a lot of money. You could get some jolly good feeds for your share in it, Fatty!"

Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened.

"So I could!" he remarked. "I say, Figgins—"

Figgins glared at his fat chum.

"Well, you porpoise, are you thinking of selling the cup if we win it—selling your giddy birthright for a mess of jam-tarts?" he demanded witheringly.

"Ahem! Oh, no!" said Fatty Wynn hastily.

"I should jolly well think not! If the Wolves get that cup, they're going to keep it," said Figgins. "You can clear off, Levison! We don't want any of your precious schemes for the Wolf Patrol—or for the New House at all! If you're keen on the cup, you'd better raise a patrol yourself, and go in for it. You can call it the Skunk Patrol!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So you won't take up the idea?" said Levison, with a scowl.

"No, we won't! But if you don't clear off, we'll take you up, and drop you out of the window!"

Levison scowled darkly, and lounged away. There were other patrols in both Houses at St. Jim's, but Levison did not carry out his proposition to them. He felt that he would not be able to get the scouts to look at it sensibly. But Figgins's humorous suggestion that he should form a patrol himself took root in his mind, though he did not intend to call it the Skunk Patrol.

After all, why shouldn't he try? And he might be able to find half a dozen fellows of his own kidney to back him up; and even if they couldn't win the cup themselves, they might be able to "muck up" the chances of the other patrols, as a punishment for refusing to co-operate in that excellent scheme of winning the cup by trickery, and selling it. And that evening Levison of the Fourth was very busy, looking for recruits.

CHAPTER 6.

Levison's Lions!

"MY only hat!"

Jack Blake uttered that exclamation in tones of astonishment.

It was Saturday, and after dinner, the afternoon being free, the juniors of St. Jim's were mostly thinking of scouting practice. With the big contest organised by the District Commissioner soon to come off, the St. Jim's scouts had given even cricket the go-by for the present.

The Curlews had just come out of the School House, and Blake's exclamation drew their attention to a group of five juniors in scout costume in the quadrangle.

They were dressed like scouts, with wide felt hats and staves complete, but they did not look otherwise much like scouts. They lounged instead of holding themselves up; their complexions did not tell of health or fitness, and there was a pleasant lack of keenness about their looks.

"Levison, by George!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! A new patrol!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his famous eyeglass upon the group of juniors. "I am very glad to see Levison takin' this up! It ought to be a vewy good thing for him! Betch than hangin' about smokin' cheap cigawettes behind the wood-shed—what?"

"Yes, rather, if he means business," said Tom Merry.

Levison glanced towards the Curlews, and sneered. His patrol was composed of himself as patrol-leader, and his chum Mellish of the Fourth, and Gore and Crooke of the Shell, and Pigott of the Third Form.

Levison had looked in vain for a sixth recruit, so the patrol was formed of five members. Fellows did not seem anxious to join Levison's patrol. Even the Third Form fags had not been keen, and Pigott was the only recruit he had been able to draw from the Third—Pigott being a young rascal of the same kidney as Levison and Mellish. Wally D'Arcy, the younger brother of the great Augustus, was patrol-leader of the Jackal patrol in the Third, and he had declined to have anything to do with Levison & Co.

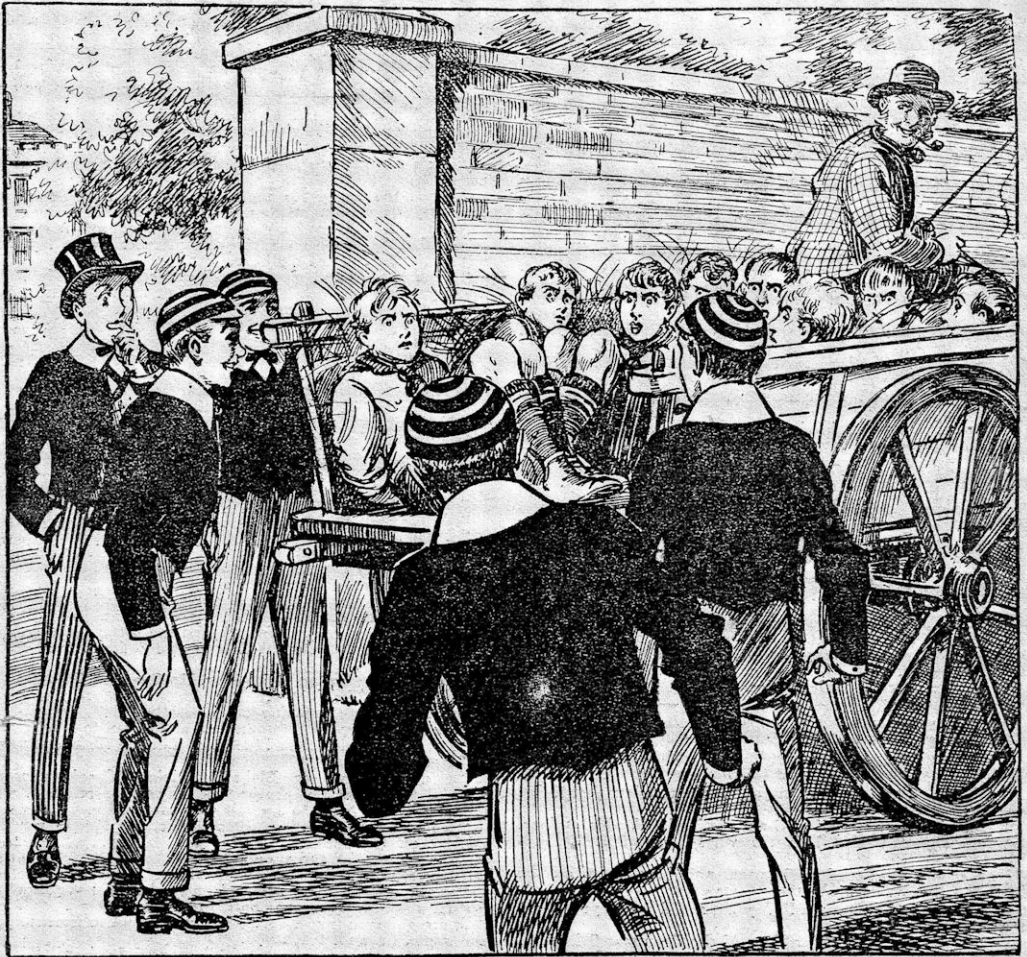
Levison and Mellish and Gore and Crooke and Pigott were a decidedly "awkward squad," and they realised it. They reddened as they caught the eyes of the Curlews upon them.

"Bai Jove! I congwatulate you, Levison, deah boy!"

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Tom Merry & Co. crowded round the cart, and looked into it. A dozen bound juniors were crammed together in the hay. They looked at the Curlews with red and furious faces. "So you've come home!" roared Manners. "And that's how you've done the Grammarians—ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 4.)

Arthur Augustus exclaimed. "This is watah a new departure for you, isn't it?"

"I dare say we shall do as well as some of you in the contest," said Levison, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"I am suah I hope so, deah boy," said D'Arcy cordially. "It is vewy gwatifyin' to see you fellows takin' it up. I had regarded you as weally hopeless slackhaks!"

"We're after the cup," said Gore.

"And we're jolly well going to get it!" declared Crooke. "I dare say we shall have a chance at it, without grubbing about in woods and places, getting ourselves tired and dirty picking up what you call scoutcraft!"

"If we can't get it without that, we jolly well sha'n't get it at all, I know that," remarked Percy Mellish. "I'm not looking for anything in the shape of work."

"No fear!" said all the new patrol together.

Tom Merry laughed.

"If you don't work hard, and get fit, you won't have much chance in the contest," he remarked. "Why not pile into the thing in real earnest, like the rest of us?"

"Rats!" said Crooke.

"We're going to have a good time, if we can," said Pigott.

"Come on, Levison. We can't smoke till we're outside."

"Smoke!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Are you starting scouting with cigarettes in your pockets, you silly chumps?"

"We're going our own way, not yours," said Mellish.

"And what do you call yourselves?" demanded Blako.

"The Cigarette Patrol?"

"Or the Monkey Patrol?" asked Digby.

"Or the Rotter Patrol?" snorted Herries.

"What's the signal of the patrol?" inquired Monty Lowther. "Do you make a noise like striking a match, or the sound of a cork being drawn from a bottle?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You mind your own business," said Levison. "We're jolly well going to put you in the shade, anyway. You fellows have been beaten hollow by the Grammar School chaps. We're going for Gordon Gay this afternoon, and we undertake to beat him hollow."

The Curlews shouted with laughter.

"Why, Gay will make chips of you!" exclaimed Manners.

"You'd better let the Grammarians alone. They'll track you down by the scent of tobacco, for one thing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you'll see. If you want to see how we deal with Gay and his fellows, you can come along to the old barn presently," said Levison. "We're going to capture the boulder, and make an example of him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up! March!" exclaimed Levison.

And the Lion Patrol, as Levison had named it—believing in a good name, at all events—marched. They disappeared out of the gates of St. Jim's, leaving the Curlews laughing.

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"I'm afraid those merchants are going to look for trouble," said Tom Merry. "The asses! To think that they can capture Gordon Gay! The Grammarians will wipe up the ground with them."

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "We'll look in at the old barn presently, to see what they've done," grinned Blake. "We're more likely to see that they've been made mincemeat of than that they've captured Gay."

"I should jolly well think so. Why, Gay was too much for us," said Lowther.
 "Yaas, wathah! And if he beat us, that's the last word," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I was thinkin' of goin' for the Gwammarians this afternoon myself, if you fellows would back me up."

"Rats! We're going out for practice, and we'll give Levison a chance with the Grammarians," said Tom Merry. "March!"

Half a dozen St. Jim's patrols were turning out for scouting practice in the woods that afternoon. The Wolves were given a start, and the other patrols were to track them down. The scouts were soon hard at work, and they forgot all about Levison & Co. But later in the afternoon—when the Wolves had been duly captured, and all the scouts were enjoying a feed round a camp-fire on the common—Tom Merry remembered the Lions.

"I wonder how Levison's getting on?" he remarked.
 "Gone home long ago, I should say," remarked Blake. "They've smoked all their cigarettes, and chucked it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Well, we'll look in at the barn on our way back," said Tom Merry. "Levison isn't much of a scout, but he's awfully deep, and there's a slim chance that he may have done something."

"If he has, he's done it by some rotten trick that's barred to a real scout," said Kerr.

"Yaas, wathah!"
 The old barn lay off the lane, at some distance from St. Jim's, and it was on the homeward way of the scouts. They sauntered homeward, and crossed the field where it was situated, and as they approached the barn they heard the sound of voices.

"They're there!" said Figgins.
 "Bai Jove! They are there, at any rate," said Arthur Augustus, as he caught sight of a figure in scout costume in the doorway of the barn. "That's Goah!"

"And there's young Pigott," remarked Wally. "But I bet you they haven't captured Gordon Gay!"

"Weally, Wally, as your majah, I cannot allow you to bet

"Oh, don't you begin, Gussy!" implored his minor.
 "Come on, kids, and let's see what Levison & Co. are up to."

The scouts quickened their pace, and bore down on the barn. A loud voice broke upon their ears.

"You rotters! Chuck it! My hat! I'll make you smart for this!"

It was the voice of Gordon Gay, of the Grammar School. Evidently he was a prisoner in the hands of Levison & Co. "My only hat!" ejaculated Blake. "They've got him! What ass was it said that the age of giddy miracles was past?"

"Bai Jove! They've weally got him! I weally do not comprehend this."

"Yaroo!" roared the voice of the Grammarian. "Chuck it, I say!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 It was a yell of laughter from the Lions in the barn. Tom Merry's brows contracted.

"They're ragging him!" he exclaimed. "I really think it's lucky that we looked in this way. I fancy we're wanted here."

"Yaas; I was just thinkin' so, deah boy. They have no right to wag a pwisohah. That is not in the wules at all."

Tom Merry & Co. hurried to the barn. As they crowded in at the doorway, a peculiar sight met their gaze. The Lions were all there—chuckling and triumphant—and in the midst of them, bound hand and foot, lay a figure in scout costume—the figure of Gordon Gay. Levison was bending over the prisoner, but he turned his head quickly as the scouts came crowding in.

"Hallo! Here they are!" he exclaimed. "Well, Tom Merry, what price this?"

CHAPTER 7.

Fair Play.

GORDON GAY struggled to a sitting posture. His hands were bound behind his back, and his feet were shackled together. He was a helpless prisoner in the hands of the Lions.

And the young rascals had been ragging him, there was no doubt about that. Levison's nose was swollen, and Crooke had a black eye, and there was red running from the corner of Gore's mouth; proofs that the Grammarian scout had not been captured without a hard tussle. But the five of them had been too much for him, and he was a prisoner, and evidently they were making him smart for the damage he had inflicted. Levison had a belt in his hand, and it was easy to see that he had been licking the prisoner as he lay helpless on the floor of the old barn.

"Lend me a hand, you chaps," panted Gordon Gay. "I know you are not in this; you wouldn't have a hand in such rotten cowardly caddishness!"

"Shut up!" said Levison, menacing the prisoner with the belt. "Do you want some more?"

"I wish I had my hands loose, I'd make you sorry you've touched me with that belt!" gasped Gordon Gay.

Levison raised his hand; but Tom Merry sprang forward, caught the belt from his hand, and tossed it away.

"None of that!" he said grimly.
 Levison scowled.

"Mind your own business!" he exclaimed savagely. "Look what that rotter has done to my nose! I'm going to make him suffer for it!"

"You won't touch him!"
 "Who'll stop me?" howled Levison.

"I will!"

The cad of the Fourth clenched his hands for a moment. But Tom Merry's hands were clenched, too, and his eyes were blazing. Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Of course, you're ratty at our doing what you couldn't have done," he sneered. "You fellows were licked hollow by the Grammar cads. We captured the rotter quite easily."

"Yes, rather! Caught him napping and nailed him," grinned Crooke.

"Only by a rotten trick!" said Gordon Gay fiercely.

"Dirty tricks like that are barred among scouts; as you'd know, if you were anything but a beastly cad!"

Blake bent over the Grammarian, and began to release him. "Let my prisoner alone!" shouted Levison furiously.

"Rats!"

"Don't let him loose, Blake!" exclaimed Crooke uneasily. He did not relish the prospect of Gay being released, with so many scouts there to see fair play afterwards.

"Go and eat coke!" retorted Blake, his fingers working rapidly on the cords. "You cads! You've tied him so tightly it's stopped the circulation."

"Serve him right!" growled Levison. "We've got lots of old scores against him. And he's our prisoner, not yours."

"He's nobody's prisoner now," said Tom Merry. "If you cads are going to take up scouting, you've got to learn to play the game, or we'll teach you."

"We won't stay to be taught," sneered Levison. "Come on, you fellows; it's time we got home."

And the Lions all made a movement towards the door. They were anxious to get off the scene now. Gordon Gay's expression showed that if he had a chance of getting at them there would be serious trouble for the Lions.

"Don't let them get away," said Tom Merry.

And the scouts blocked the doorway. Levison cast a furious look round.

"You've no right to keep us here," he snarled.

"And we're jolly well going!" exclaimed Gore.

"Better try it!" said Kangaroo grimly.

But the Lions did not try it. They did not care to attempt to rush the scouts in the doorway. They remained chafing, in very uneasy mood, while Blake finished releasing Gordon Gay, and some of the scouts chafed his numbed limbs. The Grammarian junior groaned as Tom Merry helped him to his feet.

"It's the beastly cramp!" he gasped. "Those cords were horribly tight, and I've been tied some time. I'll be all right in a few minutes."

"How did they capture you?" asked Tom.

Gay's eyes gleamed.

"It was a rotten trick. I had a postcard this morning—they must have sent it yesterday—asking me to meet you here. It was in your handwriting."

"Mine!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yes—asking me to come here and meet you, to talk over some of the arrangements for the big contest next week," said Gay. "I thought the card was from you, and I came without suspecting anything. These rotters were hidden in the barn, and they pounced on me as I came in."

ANSWERS

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Tom Merry turned his blazing eyes on Levison.
"You wrote a card in my hand?" he exclaimed.

"Find out!"

"I don't need to find out! I remember your old trick of imitating fellows' writing," said Tom fiercely. "You were nearly sacked from the school for it once. So that was your precious scheme for capturing Gay—forging another fellow's hand, and taking him prisoner by dirty treachery!"

"All's fair in war!" said Levison sullenly.

"Dirty tricks are never fair!" said Blake.

"Wathah not! You are a faithful cad, Levison."

"When you've finished jawing us, perhaps you'll be kind enough to let us go," said Levison, with a sneer. "It's time we got home to tea."

"Yes, we're finished here," said Mellish nervously.

"You're not quite finished," said Tom. "You've disgraced the school you belong to and the scouts. If you can't be decent scouts, you won't be scouts at all."

"It's not your business."

"I am chief scout of St. Jim's, and I sack you!" said Tom.

"Let us find you in scout rig again—that's all! If you had any other clobber here I'd make you strip that off now! You've disgraced it!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And now, if Gordon Gay wants to deal with you on fair terms he's at liberty to do it, and we'll see fair play!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Right you are!" exclaimed Gordon Gay. "I knew your chaps wouldn't have a hand in rotten tricks like this. As soon as these cads collared me I knew that card hadn't come from you, Tom Merry. Levison, you were mighty handy with that belt while I was tied up. Now let us see if you are as handy with your fists."

Levison backed away.

"I'm not going to fight you," he said sullenly.

"Yes, you are! Put up your paws!"

"I won't!"

"You'll fight Gay, or you'll take a licking with that belt, the same as you were giving him," said Tom Merry quietly.

Levison gritted his teeth. He could see that the St. Jim's scouts meant business. There was no escape for the rascally leader of the Lions.

He threw off his hat sullenly.

"I'm ready!" he growled.

"Make a ring!" said Tom Merry.

Willingly enough the juniors made a ring for the combatants. They were all deeply incensed by the disgrace Levison had brought upon the school and upon the scout uniform. They stood round, with grim faces, to watch Levison take his licking. And there was no doubt that he would get one. Gordon Gay was determined, and he sailed in with grim energy. Levison put up the best fight he could, as there was nothing else to do; but in five minutes he was completely knocked out, and he lay gasping on the floor of the old barn. Gordon Gay had hardly received a scratch.

"Now your turn, Crooke," he said pleasantly.

"I—I don't want—" stammered Crooke.

"It isn't a question of what you want, but of what you're going to get," said Tom Merry. "You can fight Gordon Gay, or take fifty strokes with the belt."

"Yaas, wathah! Twy and find a little couwage, Cwooke, deah boy, and wade in."

Crooke waded in very reluctantly. He was licked in three minutes.

Then Gordon Gay signed to Gore to come forward. Gore stood up to the Grammarian better than the others had done, and the fight lasted ten minutes, and Gordon Gay received some damage. But it ended with Gore gasping on the floor, with both eyes closed, unable and extremely unwilling to go on.

"Mellish, deah boy, take your turn——"

"I won't!" howled Mellish.

Gordon Gay laughed.

"Never mind Mellish or Pigott," he said; "they can't put up a fight. If Levison would like to begin again, now he's had a rest——"

"Go it, Levison!"

"Pile in, deah boy!"

But Levison shook his head with a scowl. He had had enough—indeed, he felt as if he had had too much!

"Thanks to you chaps for seeing fair play," said Gordon Gay, putting on his hat. "I feel better now. So long!"

And the Grammarian scout took his departure. Levison turned a savage look on Tom Merry.

"I suppose we can go now?" he said between his teeth.

"You can come with us," said Tom curtly. "You've disgraced the scouts, and you're going to be turned out. You are under arrest now."

"Look here——"

"Shut up! March them out!"

And the unfortunate Lions, looking extremely crestfallen and dismayed, were marched out of the barn in the midst of the scouts.

CHAPTER 8.

The Order of the Boot!

T A-RA-RA-TA!

Jack Blake's bugle woke the echoes of the old quadrangle of St. Jim's.

Fellows were coming off the playing-fields in crowds, and they gathered round to gaze at the procession that was marching in at the gates.

The Curlews and the Wolves and the Kangaroos and the Jackals were marching in order, and in their midst marched the Lions—under arrest.

The Lions did not look very lion-like. They looked sullen and bad-tempered, and their faces were downcast. Their staves had been taken away, and they were prisoners. They looked quickly about them as they marched into the quad, but there was no chance for them to run. Tom Merry & Co. surrounded them. Fifty voices demanded to know what was the matter, but the scouts did not utter a word until they had reached the middle of the quadrangle. There Tom Merry gave the signal to halt.

Blake sounded his bugle again.

"What on earth is the little game?" exclaimed Kildare of the Sixth, who had just come away from the cricket, with his bat under his arm.

Tom Merry raised his hand.

"Gentlemen and scouts of St. Jim's, look at these rotters! They call themselves the Lion Patrol. They have disgraced the scouts' uniform, and broken the scouts' law. All St. Jim's is called to witness that they are hereby turned out of the organisation of scouts, and forbidden to wear the uniform again."

"But what have they done?" demanded Kildare.

"We haven't done anything," growled Crooke.

"We're quite prepared to go into that," said Tom. "If you fellows want me to explain to Kildare what you've done, I'm ready to do it, and to leave it to his decision."

Levison gave his comrades a quick look. That was the last thing he desired. If the head prefect of his House had known of the trick by which he had lured Gordon Gay into the trap, he knew it would have gone hard with him.

"Don't say a word," Levison whispered. "Let them have their way."

Kildare fixed his eyes upon them.

"Well, what have you to say?" he demanded.

"Nothing!" said Levison. And the rest of the Lions were sullenly silent.

"Do you admit that you have broken the scouts' law?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Yes."

"And disgraced the uniform?"

"Just as you like!"

"Yes or no!" exclaimed Tom. "This has got to be settled in public. We want all the school to know that we've done justice."

"Yes, then," said Levison between his teeth.

"That's enough!" said Kildare; and he turned away.

"Gentlemen and scouts of St. Jim's, you are all witnesses that these cads are turned out. They will now be marched to the dormitory and made to take off the uniform they have disgraced."

"Hear, hear!"

"March!"

And the scouts marched the hapless Lions into the School House. They were marched into the Shell dormitory, followed by a crowd of curious fellows.

Levison clenched his fists convulsively.

"I'll make some of you pay for this!" he muttered.

"Well roared, Lion!" grinned Monty Howther.

"Take off that uniform!" commanded Tom Merry.

"Look here——"

"Nuff said! Take it off, or it will be stripped off!"

"My clothes are not in this dorm!" howled Levison.

"Wally, go to the Fourth-Form dorm and fetch their clobber, kid! Get Pigott's things, too! Now, you rotters, off with that uniform!"

The furious Lions stripped off the scout costume.

There was no help for it; they had to obey. The garb of the scouts was taken off, and Wally, returning with Mellish and Levison's and Pigott's clothes, the infuriated Lions dressed themselves in their ordinary attire.

Tom Merry & Co. left them to dress. Their duty was done—the patrol that had disgraced the scouts existed no longer. The Lions would not be seen again among the scouts of St. Jim's.

Levison & Co. were in a savage humour as they dressed. Their short essay as Boy Scouts was at an end. They were disgraced and humiliated in the eyes of the school; and they were out of the big contest. For in the face of their condemnation, they could not venture again to assume the scout costume. Levison was biting his thin lips with rage. His fury was against Tom Merry & Co.; but the other Lions were more incensed against Levison himself. They regarded him as the cause of their misfortunes. He had persuaded them into taking up scouting, and had led them into disaster the first time they donned the uniform. They gave Levison bitter looks.

"We'll make those blighters smart for this," Levison said, gritting his teeth. "If we can't enter the contest ourselves, we can muck up Tom Merry's chance. I've got an idea—"

"We've had enough of your rotten ideas!" growled Crooke. "We've fed up with them!" snapped Gore.

"Keep your rotten idea, and boil it!" growled Pigott. "It was a rotten trick, forging a letter in Tom Merry's name."

"You didn't say so before!" sneered Levison.

"It was a fool's trick, too!" said Mellish. "You might have guessed that they would be down on it when they came to know about it."

"You didn't think of that!"

"Well, I wasn't setting up as leader."

"I thought it was rather rotten," said Gore, "and raging Gay, too, when he was tied up; I was against that!"

"Why didn't you say so at the time?"

"Well, I say so now!" exclaimed Gore angrily. "You've led us to a pretty mucker, haven't you, with your rotten schemes and plotting. As for spoiling Tom Merry's chances in the contest, you can do as you like, but I won't have a hand in it!"

"Same here!" said Mellish.

"And here!" grunted Pigott. "You'll only make a muck of that, too, I expect."

Levison's lip curled in a bitter sneer.

"So you're all going to take this lying down?" he demanded. "You're going to let Tom Merry kick you out of the scouts, and say nothing?"

"Not much good saying anything!" said Crooke savagely. "Besides, I'm fed up with scouting, anyway. Gordon Gay's given me a black eye."

"He's given me two!" grunted Gore, feeling his damaged optics tenderly. "To say nothing of being shown up before all the school."

"It's all Levison's fault," said Pigott, "and even now he's not satisfied, and he wants us to back him up in some more rotten schemes. I vote that we give him a jolly good ragging."

"Good egg!"

"Hands off, you rotters!" exclaimed Levison, as the angry Lions surrounded him, with threatening looks. "If you want trouble, you'd better tackle Tom Merry, not me. You were tame enough with them!"

"Bump him!" growled Gore.

Levison made a rush for the door. But his exasperated followers collared him before he could escape, and swept him off his feet.

"Help!" yelled Levison.

Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Yaroooh! Help! Ow! Leggo!"

Bump! Bump!

"Yah! Ow-ow-ow!"

"There!" panted Gore. "You were fast enough to rag Gordon Gay, and now there's a taste of it for yourself. And if you spring any of your rotten schemes on me again, I'll give you some more! Yah!"

And Gore swung out of the dormitory, followed by the rest of the Lions—Lions no longer—leaving Levison gasping for breath.

The cad of the Fourth picked himself up, black with fury. Levison's star was certainly not in the ascendant just now. He had failed ignominiously, owing to his ineradicable preference for dark and tortuous ways, and his lingering hope of laying hands on the coveted cup had vanished. He had one hope left—of spoiling Tom Merry's chance of winning the Scouts' Cup—and that hope was all the consolation that was left to the deposed and disgraced leader of the Lions.

CHAPTER 9.

Levison's Little Game.

"**B**AI Jove, it's his goin' to be wathah a big thing!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked to his chums, a few days later. "All the patrols in the distict are takin' part—somethin' like a hundred of them. We shall have plenty to do, deah boys, if we are to bring it off for the Curlews."

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"A jolly big thing," agreed Tom Merry. "And the Head's a brick. The contest will last over two days, and all scouts have leave from lessons to attend."

"That's wippin'!"

"I saw Grimey to-day," remarked Lumley-Lumley. "His patrol—the Cats—have leave from their employers for the contest. Lots of the patrols are fellows in work, and most of them have leave. I guess that's how it ought to be. Rotten for a chap to be stuck out of it because he's in business."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The first contest is on Wednesday," said Tom. "That will thin down the competing patrols. It's going to be hare and hounds, under the eye of Sir Algernon Fane himself, and all winners will be eligible for the second day's contest. Mind, you fellows have got to do the running of your lives."

"Yaas, wathah! I intend to wun like anythin'," said Arthur Augustus.

"We're all pretty fit!" Blake remarked. "Figgins has been keeping his patrol in hard training. Even those blessed fags in the Third are very keen. Not that they've got any chance, of course."

"I should like to see Levison & Co. go in for it!" sniffed Herries. "I wonder how long they'd last in the run, after they've smoked their filthy cigarettes. They're lucky to be out of it, considering the form they're in!"

Levison & Co. undoubtedly were out of it. Indeed, when they heard the nature of the first day's contest, they had no particular desire to be "in it." A hard run across country, lasting hours, was not exactly, in their line. Levison had hoped to be able to score somehow by trickery; but there did not seem much room for trickery on the lines of the contest as laid down by the District Commissioner. Fitness and determination were wanted, and not any of Levison's unique talents.

But Levison felt that if he could prevent the success of Tom Merry & Co. he would be almost as satisfied as if he had won the Cup himself.

And the rest of the ill-fated Lion Patrol shared his feelings to a great extent, with the exception of Gore. Gore adhered to his determination to have nothing further to do with Levison and his tricks. But the other three members of the disbanded patrol were at one with Levison. Mellish and Crooke and Pigott looked on at the keen preparations of the scouts with bitter eyes. Levison had been severely handled by his followers after that scene of disgrace into which he had led them. But after a time they had come round again. They felt the need of Levison as a leader, if they were to effect anything against the Curlews.

And Levison's brain was busy.

When the day of the contest was fixed, and its nature was made known, Levison & Co. met in Crooke's study to talk it over. Levison had learned all the particulars, and he explained them to his precious allies.

"It's a kind of hare and hounds, on a tremendous big scale," he said. "I understand that there will be a whole troop for hares, and the rest of the troops will be the hounds. All the hares who get home and all the hounds who make captures will be eligible for the second day's contest. That's when the cup will be won. Any scout not turning up for the first day's trial will be out of the whole business, of course."

"They'll all turn up, right enough," said Mellish.

"Not likely to miss it," said Crooke. "Why, the Head has given all scouts leave for the two whole days, if necessary. Every blessed scout in the school will be there the first day, and all the winners will be there the second. And we shall be grinding lessons in the Form-room, owing to the way you've mucked up things!"

"If Tom Merry misses the first day he will be out of the contest," said Levison.

"But he won't!"

"He might be made to!"

"Oh!" said Crooke, with a deep breath. "But—but that's no good unless the rest of his patrol miss it, too. If the other Curlews turn up they've got a chance all the same, and the patrol will bag the cup and Tom Merry along with the rest."

"The whole patrol will have to be kept away, of course," said Levison. "That's the idea. It won't be any use their complaining afterwards. The thing will be decided and done with. I don't care if Figgins gets the cup, or Kangaroo, though if the Curlews miss it, I think it's more likely to go to the Grammar School. And that would be one in the eye for all the cads who've been down on us."

"I don't care who gets it, so long as Tom Merry doesn't," said Crooke. "I'd rather that butcher fellow in Rylcombe had it."

"But how are we going to keep the Curlews away?" asked Mellish uneasily. "There are seven of them, and only four of us. We can't handle them."

"No blessed fear!" said Pigott promptly.

Levison's lip curled.

"I'm not thinking of handling them by ourselves," he said. "But we can work it. The whole St. Jim's troop leaves here early on Wednesday morning to go to the place where the first trial is to be held, on Wayland Moor. But they won't all be going together. Each patrol will start on its own. It's a good long way to the place on the moor where Sir Algernon Fane will be to hold the review. There's going to be a review before the trial. Lots of things may happen to the Curlews before they get there. If I had as much money as you have, Crooke, I wouldn't ask for anybody's help in dealing with them."

"So it's my money you want," said Crooke unpleasantly. Crooke, who was the son of a millionaire financier, had plenty of money, but he was not disposed to let Levison of the Fourth have the spending of it.

"It will cost some money," said Levison. "I'll pay my whack, though I haven't much tin. We'll all do the same, but you'll have to pony up most, as you've got the dibs, otherwise the whole thing falls through."

"I haven't any tin to pony up," said Mellish.

"And I'm nearly stony!" remarked Pigott.

"It's up to Crooke," said Levison. "Five quid will be enough, and you were flashing about three or four fivers the other day, Crooke, that you had from your pater."

"Let's hear the wheeze first," said Crooke. "I've got plenty of money, I know, but I've got sense enough to look after it, too."

"You know there's a fellow named Lasker in Rylcombe, a billiard sharper," said Levison. "He's got his knife into Tom Merry for some reason—I don't know exactly what, but it was something that happened at the time Kildare came back—you remember, when Cutts was captain of the school. I fancy Cutts had some scheme for keeping Kildare away, and Lasker was helping him, and then Tom Merry chipped in and queered it all. Anyway, Lasker would jump at a chance of going for Tom Merry, and we're going to give him the chance. My idea is to get Lasker to get a gang of roughs together, and collar the Curlews by main force while they're on their way to the review ground."

"My hat!"

"Lasker would jump at it for nothing, only to get even with Tom Merry. But his gang would have to be paid, but a quid each would be enough. As a matter of fact, I've spoken to Lasker about it already. I was playing billiards with him yesterday at the Green Man. He's a friend of mine, and, of course, too, Crooke. He's keen to get a chance of going for those rotters, and he will fix it up with some of the Wayland roughs. What do you think of the idea?"

"And we don't take a hand in it at all," said Crooke thoughtfully.

"Not at all. We shall be quite safe; we shall be in our Form-rooms while the roughs are bagging the Curlews. There won't be anything to connect us with it, even if anything came out. Lasker would have nothing to gain by giving us away. Besides, he wouldn't be believed. And the others won't even know about us. Lasker will take them on for the job without mentioning us."

"Seems pretty easy," said Crooke. "But I don't see why I should stand all the tin."

"It's up to you, Crooke—you've got the dibs," said Mellish.

"Certainly," chimed in Pigott. "Don't spoil a good scheme by being mean, Crooke."

"Three or four quid might do it," said Levison, "and I'm willing to stand half-a-sovereign; it's all I've got."

There was a warm argument for some minutes, but Crooke finally gave in.

"All serene," he said. "But I'll come with you to fix it up with Lasker, Levison. I'm not going to have you make anything out of the transaction. I know you, you see."

And Levison scowled and assented.

After lights out that night, Mr. Lasker received two visitors at the Green Man in Rylcombe; and the arrangements were made.

Meanwhile, Tom Merry & Co., were sleeping the sleep of the just; quite unconscious of the scheme that was at work for spoiling their chances of the Scouts' Cup.

CHAPTER 10.

Waylaid.

TOM MERRY jumped out of bed at the first clang of the rising-bell on Wednesday morning. That day was a joyous occasion for the scouts of St. Jim's.

There were no lessons. After morning prayer, all members of the St. Jim's troop were at liberty for the rest of the day.

The review on Wayland Moor was to take place at eleven o'clock. After the review by General Sir Algernon Fane,

the first contest, or trial, was to take place. The scouts were required to take provisions for the day in their haversacks. A day's hard work was to be looked forward to; but no true scout shrank from that prospect. There was nothing "soft" about the scouts of St. Jim's.

On the review ground they were to meet the other troops—a troop from the Grammar School, another from Rylcombe village, with the Cat Patrol prominent among them; and others from various towns and villages in the district, as well as a patrol from Abbotsford School.

In the New House, Fatty Wynn was superintending the packing of the Wolves' haversacks with anxious care. Fatty Wynn did not mean to run the terrible risk of going hungry during the contest.

The Curlews also made their preparations with great care. As the meet was not to be till just before eleven, there was no hurry. Some of the patrols started quite early, however, in order to be first on the ground. Figgins, at the head of the Wolves, was the first to march out of the gates of St. Jim's, and soon afterwards Wally led out the Jackals. Then Kangaroo & Co. departed, in great spirits. The Curlews were not quite ready—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was bestowing extreme care upon his attire. D'Arcy was as careful with his scout garb as with his elegant Ettons, and as a Boy Scout he was always the last word in elegance. Finally, Jack Blake dragged him by force out of the Fourth Form dormitory, where he was giving the finishing touches to his attire before a glass.

"Pway don't hurwy me, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus plaintively. "I am not at all such that my tie is quite stwaight. In fact, I have a howwid feelin' that it is quite cwooked—weally!"

Jack Blake jerked his tie out of place.

"You can be quite sure of it now," he said cheerfully. "Come on!"

"I wufuse to appeah before a General in the British Army with a cwooked tie, Blake."

"Come on!" repeated Blake, and he ran Arthur Augustus out of the dormitory, and rushed him down the stairs.

Arthur Augustus arrived in the quadrangle breathless, and in a state of great indignation. The rest of the Curlews were there. The other fellows were already in the Form-rooms, envying the scouts from the bottom of their hearts.

"Fall in!" said Tom Merry.

"My tie is not stwaight——"

"Fall in!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"March!"

"Undah the cires——"

"Silence in the ranks!" said Tom Merry.

"You frabjous ass," said Herries. "If an enemy landed in England, and we had to march out, do you think looking-glasses would be provided to tie your blessed ties. Shut up!"

"Weally, Hewwies——"

The patrol was already on the march, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had to march with them, making surreptitious efforts to get his tie straight as he went.

"We shall be last on the ground, if we don't buck up," said Digby.

"Lots of time, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "The wewiew isn't till eleven o'clock, and it's not half-past nine yet."

"All the same, we don't want to be laggards."

"Quick march!" said Tom Merry.

The Curlews stepped out down the lane. They turned into the wood, to take the short cut to Wayland Moor. On the stile, as they passed it, a man was leaning—a man in shabby clothes, with a face marked with heavy drinking, and with a cigar between his discoloured teeth. Tom Merry recognised him as Lasker, the billiard sharper of Rylcombe, with whom he had had trouble not so very long ago. Lasker scowled at the Curlews as they vaulted lightly over the stile in turn, and walked away down the footpath. As they disappeared into the wood, Mr. Lasker's scowl vanished, and he grinned.

"Walkin' fair into it," he murmured. "I fancy we'll get that old score level to-day, Mister Tom Merry."

And Lasker, in his turn, plunged into the wood, running. "That was the wotta'n who assaulted Kildare the day he came back to St. Jim's," Arthur Augustus remarked, as the scouts marched down the footpath. "We might have spent a few minutes givin' him a bumpin'."

"No time to bump backguards this morning," said Tom Merry. "Stick to the business in hand—that's the motto of a scout."

"Yaas, old——"

"Gussy, old man, you talk too much. You'll never be a good scout unless you learn to belay your jawing tackle," said Blake kindly. "Cheese it!"

"Bai Jove! I——!"

"I was goin' to say that I heard somebody wunnin' in the GEM LIBRARY.—No. 350.

the wood," said Arthur Augustus, turning his eyeglass upon the thick foliage along the path. "I suppose those Gwammawian boundahs won't be playin' any tricks on a day like this?"

"Of course not, ass! Eyes front."

Tom Merry turned from the footpath, and led the way by a slight track into the wood. He was taking the shortest cut towards Wayland, and, knowing the wood like a book, he did not pause for a single moment on the way. The track brought the Curlews out upon the bank of the Feeder, a stream that ran through the heart of the wood, and which was crossed by a single plank. A quarter of a mile away, it flowed into the deep, wide Ryll, opposite the island. Tom Merry uttered an exclamation as they came out on the stream. The plank was missing from its usual place.

"What rotten luck!" exclaimed Tom. "Some ass has taken the plank away! We've got to wade it. It would take too long to go round."

Blake bent down by the ferny bank of the stream.

"That plank hasn't been moved long since," he remarked. "Look here! You can see by the signs that it was here not long ago. Somebody has spotted us, and shifted the plank on purpose."

"I told you I heard somebody wunnin' in the wood—"

The scouts regarded the stream dubiously. In late summer it was generally very shallow, but at present the waters ran deeply between the ferny banks. But there was no help for it. It had to be crossed, or at least half an hour wasted in going up-stream to find a place where it could be jumped.

"Come on!" said Tom Merry.

"We shall make our clobber wathah wet, deah boys."

"It will dry in the sun before we get to Wayland," said Tom; "and anybody who's afraid of wet clobber can go home and eat coke!"

And Tom led the way, plunging in. The water came above his waist as he strode out into the stream. The current ran fast, but the patrol-leader stepped carefully from stone to stone, and the patrol followed in. They crossed the stream and clambered up the steep bank on the other side. There they paused in the thicket to shake the water from their clothes. They were quite off their guard, an omission on the part of the Boy Scouts, though no danger was to be anticipated. There was a sudden shout in the thickets and a rush of feet.

Before the Curlew knew what was happening half a dozen hulking roughs had rushed upon them, and they were borne to the ground.

CHAPTER 11.

Stranded!

"BUCK up!" gasped Tom Merry.

But the Curlews had no chance to buck up.

They had been taken utterly by surprise, and they were sprawling in the grass and brambles, with the roughs sprawling over them.

The seven boys would not have had much chance against six grown-up men in any case, probably. But as it was they had no chance at all.

But they struggled fiercely.

For the moment they fancied it was an attack of the Grammarian scouts. But a single glimpse of their assailants undeceived them.

The assailants were men, and they were roughly clad, and each of them had a coarse red handkerchief tied over his face.

One of them, a very powerfully-built ruffian, had grasped both Digby and D'Arcy, and the two juniors struggled in vain in his grip. The other scouts had each one foe to contend with, and found him too much. Thrown down in

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the grass, with their assailants above them, they had no chance whatever.

"Knock 'em on the head if they give trouble," muttered one of the rascals, who seemed to be the leader.

"Bai Jove! I—"

"Let us go, you hounds!" roared Herries.

"What does this mean?" Tom Merry exclaimed indignantly. "Who are you?"

"What are you up to?" Monty Lowther demanded, as the rascals made no answer. "If you are thinking of robbing us, there isn't much to get, you scoundrels!"

"Don't you jaw!" said the leading ruffian. "This 'ere is a little joke, and we ain't robbing anybody. But if you give us any trouble, you'll get 'urt. Savvy?"

"Let us go!"

"No blooming fear. 'Old your jaw!"

Tom Merry made another effort to throw off his captor. He was savagely angry with them and with himself for being caught napping, though truly the most wideawake scout might never have looked for that sudden attack. But he understood now that the plank bridge had been removed by these rascals when they laid their ambush in the thickets beside the stream. The juniors had then walked right into the trap. But what the trap had been laid for, and who the rascals were, was a mystery. It was easy to guess that they were roughs from Wayland town, but why they had taken the trouble to waylay the Curlews in Rylcombe Wood was not easy to guess. And how had they known that the Curlews were out of school that morning? Who had told them that Tom Merry & Co. were free from lessons that day and on their way to Wayland Moor?

"Keep quiet, will yer?" Tom Merry's captor growled. "You'll get 'urt, I warn yer. Keep quiet, and you won't get no 'arm."

"What are you doing this for?"

"It's a leetle joke," chuckled the ruffian. "Don't you ask no questions. Now then, get out of the boat, Billy."

The rascal so named had tied Blake's hands with a rope, and, leaving the junior thus helpless, he went down the stream, and dragged a boat from its place of concealment under a drooping willow.

He pulled the boat up-stream to where the roughs waited with their prisoners.

"Now, you git in—sharp!"

"Into the boat?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yes, and quick!"

"What for? What do you want?"

"You'll find that out quick enough. Tumble in!"

"I won't!" said Tom Merry determinedly. "Look here, we're on our way to the review of the Boy Scouts by Sir Algernon Fane. You'll get into trouble for this."

The ruffian made no reply, but he grasped the Shell fellow, and pitched him bodily into the boat. Tom Merry rolled over in the bottom of the old tub, gasping. One after another the rest of the juniors were tumbled in, and the roughs followed them. They pushed off into the stream.

The juniors sat in a furious group in the boat, two or three of the roughs watching them, with cudgels in their hands ready to quell any attempt at resistance.

The other rascals took the oars and pushed the boat away down the little stream, the water being too shallow for rowing.

The boat glided out into the Ryll, and there the oars were put into the rowlocks, and the roughs began to row.

The Curlews were more astonished than angry. The intentions of the ruffians they could not guess. What they could mean by thus carrying off bodily a whole patrol of


NEXT WEDNESDAY:

ALGY, OF ST. JIM'S.

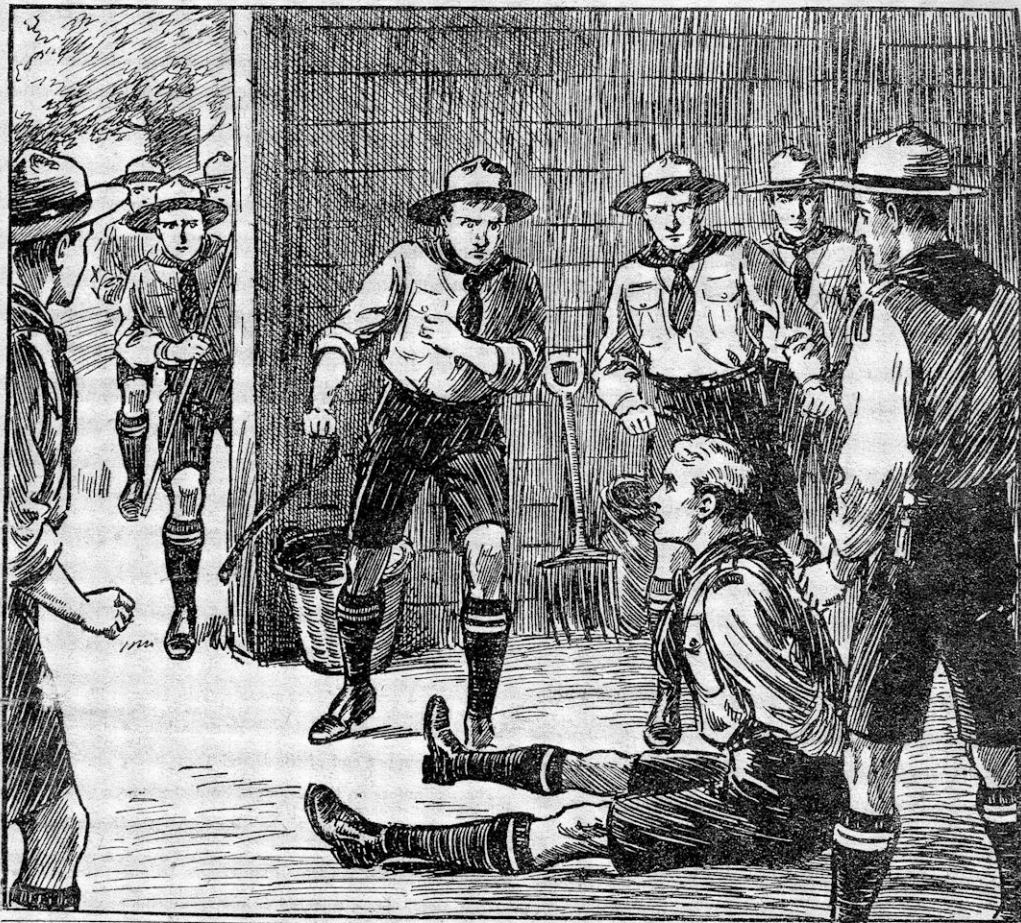
A Magnificent, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of St. Jim's,

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PLEASE ORDER EARLY!



Gran



As Gordon Gay struggled to a sitting posture, Tom Merry saw a belt in Levison's hand, and he knew that the cad of the Fourth had been licking the prisoner as he lay helpless on the floor. "Lend me a hand, you chaps!" panted Gay. "I'll make him sorry he touched me with that belt!" (See Chapter 7.)

scouts was an exasperating mystery. But the juniors began to suspect that they were to be kept from the review on Wayland Moor, and they felt desperate. But a struggle was out of the question. The force against them was overwhelming. The roughs had cudgels in their hands, and were evidently prepared to use them if needed.

"Where are you going?" Tom Merry demanded at last, as the boat was pulled out into the middle of the wide, shining river.

There was no reply, but a chuckle.

The boat pulled on.

"We're being taken to the island," said Monty Lowther, in a low voice.

Tom Merry compressed his lips. Ahead of the boat now lay the island in the middle of the Ryll. It was the lower island. The other—the Hermit's Island, as it was called—was far up the river. But the lower island was in the middle of the river, where it was widest, and on each side the stream ran deep and wide, too dangerous for a swimmer. If the juniors were landed on the island and left there they would be prisoners as secure as if they had been bound hand and foot. They could not doubt longer that it was the intention of their captors to keep them from the scouts' meeting.

The boat bumped into the mud on the shore of the island.

"Git out!"

"Do you mean to leave us here?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Yes."

"Look here!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I tell you we're

going to the Scouts Review. If you keep us away you'll be made to suffer for it."

"Yaas, wathah! You will find the police lookin' for you, you wotten wascals!"

"We'll chance that! Git ashore!"

The juniors exchanged glances. The thought was in their minds to risk a combat for the possession of the boat. But the chances were too much against them. There was nothing for it but to submit. They stepped ashore, and the roughs pushed off in the boat, chuckling. The scouts' staves were thrown ashore after them. There had been no attempt to rob them of anything. Robbery certainly was not the object of the attack. It was a trick to keep them from the scouts' meeting, that was clear, and it was pretty certain that the rascals had been put up to it by someone else, someone who was "up against" the Curlew Patrol.

Tom Merry clenched his hands fiercely as he looked after the boat. It was pulling away downstream.

"Well, this is a go," said Jack Blake. "Untie my paws, Dig, old man. We are fairly in the cart now."

"Yaas, wathah! It's wotten!"

"Well, we couldn't do anything," said Manners philosophically. "There's no disgrace in yielding to superior force."

"Force majeure," said Digby. "We're not to blame, but the other fellows will cackle when they hear of it. What on earth have those rotters done it for?"

"I fancy I know one of them," growled Lowther. "I couldn't see any of their faces, but I think I know the voice

of that rotter who led them, though he tried to disguise it. I believe it was Lasker."

"Bai Jove! And he was waitin' for us to spot us as we came by, and it was Laskah I heard wunnin' through the wood," exclaimed D'Arcy.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Tom Merry. "Lasker has his knife into us. You remember how we dished him once, when he was plotting with Cutts to down old Kildare. But if it's Lasker he didn't plan all this by himself. Somebody at St. Jim's must have put him up to it, or he couldn't have been on the watch for us just at the right time."

"Somebody at St. Jim's," repeated Blake. "Then it's not very hard to guess who it was!"

"Levison!" said Manners.

"Yaas, wathah, the wotah! When we get back—"

"There's no proof," said Tom quietly. "There are several fellows at the school who'd be glad to see us done in—Levison or Mellish or Crooke or Cutts of the Fifth, perhaps. But who's done it isn't so important as how we're going to get out of it!"

"Doesn't look as if we shall get out of it at all," said Blake dismally.

The juniors looked after the boat. It had disappeared round a bend of the river. Their captors were gone, evidently without any intention of returning. The Curlews were stranded!

CHAPTER 12.

A Gallant Attempt!

STRANDED!" said Tom Merry, between his teeth. "And in an hour or so Sir Algernon will be holding the review!"

"Bai Jove! It's wotten!"

"Beastly!"

"No good sitting down and sucking our thumbs, though," went on Tom Merry briskly. "We're in a fix, and we've got to get out of it!"

"Yaas, wathah! But how, deah boy?"

"That's what we've got to find out."

The Boy Scouts were keen enough to find a way out of the fix; but it wanted some finding, as Monty Lowther remarked.

They were stranded upon a lonely island. On either side of the river, deep, dark woods grew down to the water's edge, far from the island. The winding of the river shut out the upper and lower reaches from their sight. Round the island the river rippled and sang, the current going fast. Below the island was the deep and dangerous Pool, in which more than one swimmer had met his death, as the juniors knew.

The best swimmers at St. Jim's never ventured there. And to attempt to cross the channel on either side of the island was to risk being swept into the Pool—to death! For the current ran fast, and on either side of the island the channel was wide.

"Let's look over the island first," said Tom Merry. "People sometimes come over here, you know. There may be a boat here—it's possible!"

"But not likely," said Blake. "Still, we may as well look."

And the juniors explored the island in the faint hope of finding a boat; but there was no boat to be found. The island, save for themselves, was utterly deserted—and the deep wooded shores were deserted too.

As the day passed on, perhaps they would sight someone on the shore, and by signals of distress obtain help. But that would not help them so far as the scouts' review was concerned.

The review was to begin at eleven o'clock, and immediately afterwards the contest was to take place. If the Curlews were not on the ground by twelve at the latest, they would be excluded from the contest. And it was already ten o'clock.

"There's only one thing to be done!" said Tom Merry, after thinking the matter out with contracted brows for some minutes.

"Pile in!" said Blake, not very cheerfully.

"I'm going to swim for it."

"Rats!" said Monty Lowther warmly. "You can't! You'll be swept away! Better miss the contest than get drowned!"

"Yaas, wathah! My deah boy, I could not swim that myself!" said Arthur Augustus, with a sage shake of the head.

Tom Merry smiled.

"I think I might do it," he said. "I'm going to try."

"But even if you do it, we can't," said Herries; "and you'd have to go a big distance to find a boat to get us off. We should be too late, anyway!"

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"You could swim it with a rope to help you," said Tom.

"But we haven't got a rope."

"What's the good of being scouts if we can't make a rope? There are plenty of willows here, and we know how to make knots of withies, I suppose. We've got plenty of cord and string about us, too, to strengthen it. Pile in and gather the withies, and we'll make a rope long enough to reach to the bank. Then I'll tie it on to my belt, and try. If I can't do it, you fellows can pull me back!"

"And—suppose the rope broke?"

"Must risk that!"

"You're jolly well not going to do it!" said Manners uneasily. "There's too much beastly risk about it!"

"It's up to us to get out of this fix," said Tom quietly, "and it's up to me as leader to try to swim across. Pile in and get the rope made. There isn't a minute to lose!"

"But I tell you—"

"Orders!" said Tom.

And the scouts, with very uneasy feelings, obeyed. There were plenty of willows growing round the shore of the island, and the Curlews were all skilled in rope-making and knot-tying. There was no difficulty about that part of the business. But a swimmer in the grip of the fast current might be swept away, and the strain on the rope might be too much for it. And in that case—The scouts did not care to think what would happen in that case.

Tom Merry was determined, and Tom Merry was leader. There was nothing for the Curlews to do but to follow his directions.

The juniors worked quickly, and the willow rope grew rapidly under seven pairs of deft and busy hands. It was strengthened with string and cord, of which the scouts had plenty about them. Forty yards of rope, ample for the purpose, were finished in a very short space of time.

Then Tom Merry took off his boots and shirt and hat. He fastened the end of the rope to his belt. His face was calm and quiet and resolute.

"You chaps keep the rope, and pay it out," he said. "If I can't stand the current, you'll have to pull me in again, that's all. But I'll do my best!"

"It's horribly risky!" Lowther muttered.

Lowther was very pale.

"Yaas. I wish you'd let me twy, Tom Mewwy!"

Tom laughed.

"It's a leader's place to lead," he remarked. "Now, stand ready!"

From the upper end of the island Tom Merry plunged into the river.

The six juniors on the shore paid out the rope, as he struck out into the stream.

For a dozen yards or so he swam steadily, breasting the current, the rope trailing behind him through the water.

Then the anxious juniors on the island saw him struggling hard to resist the current that sought to sweep him away down the river.

Tom Merry was a splendid swimmer, and he swam his very best then. With all his strength he fought against the current that gripped him. In a slanting line he pushed on towards the bank of the river.

The rope was paid out steadily. He was in the middle of the channel now; but the slant towards the land had become sharper. The current was harder, and the first strength of the swimmer was spent.

Still he fought his way onward.

The juniors moved along the shore of the island, downstream, to keep level with Tom Merry as he slanted away with the current.

They reached the lower end of the island, and could go no further. The current had swept Tom past the end of the island, and he was still far from the land.

But he struggled on gamely.

He drew nearer and nearer the land, the rope paying out behind him; but the Curlews could see that his gallant fight was growing weaker.

The fast current was too much for him.

His progress towards the land ceased at last. In spite of his efforts, a swirl of the current swept him back.

He swam his hardest, but it was in vain.

Instead of gaining ground now, he was receding, and the current was sweeping him back round the end of the island.

"It's no go!" Monty Lowther muttered.

Evidently the gallant attempt was in vain. Tom Merry was now past the end of the island, in mid-stream. Every inch that he had gained had been lost. But for the rope fastened to his belt, the swimmer would have been swept away towards the Pool.

Tom Merry realised that it was useless to struggle further. A couple of sharp pulls on the rope gave the signal to the scouts to draw in.

They were on the extremity of the lower end of the island

now, and Tom Merry was thirty yards from them, in mid-stream.

The two channels, sweeping round the island, met with a whirl and many eddies, and in the swirling currents it was difficult for a swimmer to win his way back to the island. Without the rope, Tom Merry could never have returned.

The scouts drew the rope in slowly and steadily. Their hearts were in their mouths. The fear was in every breast that the rope might break—that the wraiths might give at some point; and if that should happen, the exhausted swimmer would be instantly swept away to certain death.

Tom Merry was not swimming now; his strength was spent. He contented himself with keeping afloat, while his chums dragged him in.

Slowly, steadily, tossed like a cork on the swirling river, Tom Merry was pulled back to the island. The rope held.

When he was a few yards from the shore, Manners and Lowther plunged in and grasped him, and dragged him to safety through the rushes and willows.

Tom Merry sank down on the grass, streaming with water, and utterly exhausted.

"Thank goodness we've got you back!" Lowther muttered.

Tom Merry panted.

"I did my best, you chaps! The current was too strong for me!"

"You did jolly well!" said Blake. "You came near doing it too! It can't be helped. By George, you look quite done!"

"I feel quite done!" gasped Tom.

He sat in the grass, leaning heavily against a tree, breathing hard, waiting for his strength to return. And the anxious scouts consulted upon what was next to be done. The best swimmer in the patrol had tried to cross to the land—in vain. The attempt could not be made again. What was to be done?

Tom Merry rose at last to his feet, still breathing hard, but pulling himself together with a determined effort.

"We're not done yet, kids!"

Blake grinned ruefully.

"It looks to me as if we're done!" he said. "Have you got another idea?"

"Yes. Never say die!"

"Yaas, wathah! Nil despendandum, deah boys!"

"Well, what's the next dodge?" asked Blake.

"A raft!"

CHAPTER 13. Not Beaten Yet!

"A RAFT!"

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry nodded.

"We're going to build a raft!" he said. "There's plenty of wood here, and we've got axes and knives, and the rope will come in useful for fastening the raft together. We can make a raft, and get away on it. It will be risky, but—"

"My only hat!" said Digby. "It will be risky enough! If we push off in a raft we shall have to float past the Pool before we can make a landing. And if the blessed thing capsizes there—"

"If it capsizes before we're past the Pool we shall all be drowned," said Tom Merry. "But we won't let it capsize. But—but this isn't a case of giving orders. I don't want to drag you fellows into danger. If you don't care for the idea every fellow who'd rather stay on the island is free to do so. But I shall try the raft."

"Oh, rats!" said Blake. "If you do it we all do it."

"Yaas, that's settled. And if we get drowned—"

"We won't get drowned," said Tom Merry. "You fellows are all game?"

"Yes, rather."

"Then pile in and cut wood for the craft. Never say die!"

The scouts lost no time. To navigate a raft through the swirling currents of the Pool was a task of deadly danger, and they knew it. There would have been danger for a well-found boat. But they had courage, and they felt that it was up to them to make the attempt. Already they would be too late for the Scouts' Review, but if they could be in time for the contest all would be well. It was worth some trouble and risk to baffle the rascals who had stranded them on the island, and to take their chance in the scouts' contest held by the district commissioner. And there would be all the more honour to them if they won their way to the field of action through so many dangers and difficulties.

The blows of the scouts' axes rang through the wood on the island.

The juniors worked with a will. A pile of timber grew rapidly on the shore for the making of the raft. Close by

the island the water was shallow, so they began building the raft afloat. Saplings and big branches bound together with the willow rope formed the foundation. The scouts were very keen on the work, and they began to enjoy the task as the raft grew under their hands. Seven busy hands made light work of it. Not a moment was wasted. The raft, large and strong enough to carry the seven juniors, was finished at last, and it bobbed in the shallow water where it had been built.

"Now for it!" said Tom Merry.

The Curlews embarked.

With their scouts' staves they pushed off from the bank.

The raft, rocking on the swirl of the current, floated out into the river.

The scouts' faces were very grave now, but they were quiet and calm. They knew that they were taking their lives in their hands, but they did not shrink.

But their hearts beat faster as the raft swirled away, and they found themselves in the midst of the broad, rushing river.

The raft was well-built, and it floated well. But it was at the mercy of the current. It swept on down the river, gathering speed every moment, the juniors crouching on the mass of bound logs and branches, and holding on.

The wide, deep Pool gleamed ahead of them now, and the current was whirling them into it. The raft turned completely round several times, and oscillated violently. The water washed over it, and the juniors were soaked to the skin, but they hardly noticed it. Discomfort was a slight thing when life itself was in danger. Even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave no thought to his clothes at that moment.

"We're fairly in for it now," muttered Blake.

Two or three of the juniors held wide branches in their hands, attempting to steer the raft, but the attempt was of little avail. The current whirled them round, and hither and thither. More than once, in the swirl of the meeting currents, the raft was in danger of being sucked under. But still it floated.

Caught on a swirl of the current, it slanted away towards the bank, and then again swept out into the middle of the river. But it was beyond the Pool now, and the violent oscillations of the raft ceased.

Tom Merry & Co. gasped with relief.

"We're through the worst part!" Tom exclaimed, as he gazed back upon the wild whirl of waters they had left behind.

"All plain sailing now."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, in great relief.

"I weally begin to think that we shall not be drowned, aftah all, deah boys."

"I think we can guide it now a bit," said Lowther.

The raft was floating more evenly on calmer water. They floated away under the stone bridge of Rylecombe, two or three people looking down at them from the bridge in astonishment. Then they swept on down the river.

In the calmer water they found that they could guide the raft. Carefully, slowly, they brought it to the shore on the Wayland side.

The raft bumped upon the rushes.

"Heah we are, deah boys! Huwway!"

Tom Merry plunged through the mud and rushes to the bank, and grasped the raft, and drew it closer in.

Then the drenched and dripping scouts scrambled ashore.

They gave a cheer as they found their feet on firm land once more.

"Hurray!"

"Bai Jove, we've done it, deah boys!"

"But are we in time, after all?" said Blake grimly.

That was the question now. Hard work and pluck had won a way out of the place of their imprisonment. But the time had been passing. Had they gained their freedom for nothing, after all?

Tom Merry jerked out his watch.

It was a quarter to twelve.

"My hat! They start in a quarter of an hour at the latest. They may have started now!" said Herries dismayed.

"And we're more than a mile from the review ground!" said Digby.

"We reckoned the review would take an hour!" Tom Merry said. "And it was to begin at eleven. We have a good chance yet. We've got to sprint, that's all."

"Yaas, wathah! Wun like anythin', deah boys."

The Curlews, after their hard experiences, were not feeling so fresh. But there was not a minute to be lost if they were to save their last chance of entering into the scouts' contest.

"We've got to run for it," said Blake. "If any of us drop out the others had better keep on. It's all right so long as some of the Curlews take part. Whoever gets in in time can represent the patrol."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"That's the idea!" said Tom Merry. "If only one of us

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gets in it will be all right for the Curlew Patrol. But all of you try your hardest. Come on!"

And the Curlews started.
They ran fast down the bank of the river, and turned off into the path to the moor. The moor was half a mile distant, and by the time they reached it Tom Merry and Blake were well ahead, and the other fellows were strung out at various distances behind. There was still half a mile to cover to the review ground.

In the clear morning air over the moor came ringing the notes of a bugle.

Three short, sharp blasts.
"That's the signal for 'leaders come here!'" Blake gasped.
"Yes. The contest hasn't started yet."
"No. But it's just going to begin."
"There's time yet."

They did not speak again. They wanted all their breath for the race across the moor. Tom Merry forged ahead, but Blake passed him again, and held on. Tom Merry was still feeling the effects of his swim, and was not at his best. Blake was at the top of his form fortunately. He glanced back. The leader of the Curlews was half a dozen paces behind.

"Keep on!" panted Tom. "Keep it up! You'll get in in time, Blake. Don't wait."

"Right-ho!"
And Blake ran his hardest.
He drew further and further ahead of his leader, and disappeared among the wild bushes of the moor.

Tom Merry panted on.

CHAPTER 14. Just in Time!

SIR ALGERNON FANE wore a satisfied look. The bronzed, scarred old soldier had reviewed a hundred patrols on the broad expanse of the moor, and the result had pleased him. The St. Jim's patrols had been well to the fore. The Wolves and the Kangaroos and the Jackals and the rest had done very well. But they were puzzled to note that the Curlews were not in the ranks. Kangaroo and Figgins and their comrades had looked round many times for Tom Merry & Co., without finding them. When the review was over and the commissioner was consulting the scoutmasters, the St. Jim's scouts cast anxious looks round for the Curlews. But there was no sign of them on the moor. Tom Merry & Co. had missed the review, and it looked as if they were going to miss the contest as well. Gordon Gay, who was there with the Grammar School troop, had missed his old rivals, too.

And Pilcher and Grimes, with the "Cats" of Rylcombe, had also looked for them in vain.

"Isn't Tom Merry coming, Kangy?" Gordon called out to the Cornstalk.

Kangaroo shook his head.
"Blessed if I know," he said. "I thought they were leaving soon after us. I know they intended to come. But they haven't turned up—Hallo, there's the signal!"

It was the signal for the patrol-leaders to join the scoutmasters in a group round the Commissioner. They left their patrols, and gathered round Sir Algernon. Grimes tapped Figgins on the elbow as they went.

"Where's Tom Merry's patrol?" he asked.
"Can't guess," said Figgins. "They seem to be missing it."

"I know they were going to have a shot for the cup," said Kangaroo. "It's jolly queer. Something must have happened to them."

"Perhaps Gussy stopped for a new necktie!" remarked Wally.

"They wouldn't stay away if they could help it," said Kangaroo. "It's jolly hard lines on them."

Mr. Railton, the School House master at St. Jim's, who was among the scoutmasters, signed to Kangaroo.

"How is it that Merry and his patrol are not here, Noble?" he asked.

"I don't know, sir. I know they meant to come."

"It is very odd. Unless they arrive immediately they will be excluded from the contest," said the Housemaster. "Surely nothing can have happened to them!"

"I don't see what could have happened, sir; but I know they'd be here if they could. I—I suppose it's not possible to delay the contest for them?"

"Quite impossible. Sir Algernon is now going to give instructions."

"Hallo!" shouted Figgins. "Look there! Old Blake!"

"Blake, by Jove!"

"This way, Blake! Where are the others?"

A crimson-faced and panting scout came dashing up to the
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scene. It was Blake, of the Fourth, second in command of the Curlews. General Sir Algernon Fane and the whole group of scoutmasters turned their heads to look at him as he panted up.

"Are we in time?" gasped Blake.
Then he caught sight of Sir Algernon's stern glance upon him, and saluted.

"What is this?" said the general. "Another patrol—late, eh?"

"We couldn't help it, sir," said Blake breathlessly. "We left in good time. The other fellows are just on here, if there's a minute to spare. Here comes Tom Merry, our patrol-leader, sir!"

Tom Merry dashed up, and stopped, breathless, Kangaroo catching him by the arm to hold him.

He saluted.
"We're in time!" he gasped.

The general looked at him grimly.
"Scouts should not be late," he said quietly, "and you have missed the review. Are you a patrol-leader?"

"Yes, sir. Tom Merry, the Curlews' Patrol of St. Jim's."

"And you are late!"

"It wasn't our fault, sir. A gang of roughs collared us, and stranded us on the island in the river, to keep us away!" gasped Tom Merry. "It was a rotten trick by some fellows who wanted to make us miss the contest. We had to build a raft to get away, and it took a lot of time, sir."

"Do you mean to say that you left the island on a raft, Merry?" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "You risked your lives!"

"We had to get here, sir."

The general's grim face relaxed.
"Well done!" he exclaimed. "If your patrol is here, you will certainly take part in the contest, though you are hardly fit for a run now, I should say."

"Oh, we shall be all right, sir!" said Tom eagerly.

"Very well, you will take your chance with the rest. Now, patrol-leaders!" said the general. "These are the conditions. For the first trial there will be a cross-country run. Thirty patrols will be selected for the hares, the rest will be the hounds. The run will be from here to Abbotsford Hill, a distance of five miles, then across country to the ruined castle near Wayland, and then here again. All the hares who succeed in getting home without being captured will be eligible for the contest to-morrow. All the hounds who succeed in making captures will also be eligible. The scoutmasters will now select the patrols who are to run as hares. They will have a start of exactly five minutes. Every scout is to cross Abbotsford Hill before making for the old castle. Scoutmasters, at different points of the run, will superintend it. Capture will be effected by a tap on the shoulder, and the captured scout will walk back with his captor to the nearest scoutmaster to report. I think that is clear."

And the patrol-leaders returned to their patrols.

Thirty patrols were selected for the hares, and this took some little time, and while the scoutmasters were busy Tom Merry and Blake sat down to rest and to watch anxiously for the arrival of the rest of the Curlews.

They were not very far behind. Arthur Augustus was the first to rejoin his leader, coming on in great style.

Tom Merry waved his hand to the swell of St. Jim's, and Arthur Augustus came up panting.

"Is it all right, deah boy?"

"All serene, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove, that's wippin'!"

"Here come Manners and Lowther! And Herries and Dig, too!" exclaimed Blake. "They'll be in in time for the start; but, by George, they won't have much running left in them!"

"Pewwps we could wequest Sir Algernon Fane to put the whole bizney off for an hour or so," Arthur Augustus suggested thoughtfully. "He's a decent old chap—my patah knows him."

"If you mentioned to him that your pater knows him, I've no doubt that he'd do it like a shot!" said Blake solemnly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's the signal," said Blake. "The hares are starting. Five minutes more, and we've got to be on the run again."

The Curlews were all in now, tired and dusty. The run in the hot sun had dried their clothes, but they looked anything but spick-and-span. But that was a matter of small moment to the scouts, looks did not count for much. They sat on the grass and rested, and watched the hares start. The "hare-and-hounds" run was not on the lines of a paper-chase—there was no "scent." It was chiefly a test of pluck and endurance and skill in tracking. There were nearly two hundred hares, and among them were the Grammar School Troop, led by Gordon Gay, and the Cat Patrol of Rylcombe. All the St. Jim's juniors were in the pack.

A sharp signal rang out for the hounds to get ready. The hares had already disappeared over a swell of rising ground,

going at a good pace in the direction of Abbotsford Hill. The Curlews lined up with the rest.

A blast on a bugle gave the signal to start, and the contest began. And well ahead in the pack ran Tom Merry & Co., in spite of their enemies, in time to take part in the scouting contest, and to try their hardest to win the Scouts' Cup.

CHAPTER 15.

The Trial.

SEVENTY or more patrols of Boy Scouts went sweeping away across the moor, as the signal rang out. The St. Jim's Troop kept together, the patrols in line. But as the chase went on the patrols separated, and then the members of the patrols drew apart. It was every scout for himself now. The Curlews were labouring under a disadvantage. They had been hard at it, in one way or another, ever since leaving St. Jim's, and they were naturally not so fresh as the rest of the scouts. But they held bravely on the chase. There were several hours of work before them, tracking and running. For the whole run the hardiest of the hares could not have held out at top speed. After the first burst of a mile or two they would slacken down, and then the hounds would have a chance. The whole pack came sweeping off the moor upon the high-road, and then swept through the woodland paths towards Abbotsford. And in the wood a good many of the hares were captured, having halted to rest, or incautiously slackened down in the shade. Kangaroo and Figgins were both seen leading away prisoners, both of them Grammarians. A little later, Wally, the hero of the Third, was seen marching Pilcher away to report to a scoutmaster. But by the time the wood was passed a good many of the hounds had tailed off.

Digby was the first of the Curlew Patrol to give in. The hard run to get on the ground had taken it out of him, and he dropped behind, after holding on as long as he could. By the time the juniors were breasting the slopes of Abbotsford Hill, Manners was also among those who had tailed off.

As the pack came sweeping over the hill in full cry, it could be seen that their numbers were greatly reduced. But there were still fully two hundred scouts still on the trail. And some of those who had ceased to run hard were coming at a slower pace, beating the country for stray hares. It was permissible to the hares to conceal themselves if they chose, and allow the hounds to pass, and then follow on in safety, so long as they reached, at some time or other, the two turning-points of the chase—Abbotsford Hill and the ruined castle near Wayland.

Manners and Digby limped along, breathless and tired, but resolute to see the run through, far behind the rest of the hounds. When the pack swept over the crest of the hill, the two Curlews were on the lowest slopes.

"They're gone!" Digby said, shading his eyes with his hat, and scanning the bushy slopes of the hill before him.

"There's a chance for us yet," said Manners, opening his field-glasses. "I'll bet you there's a good many hares still on this side of the hill. Get into cover."

Digby grinned, and stepped out of sight into a bush. Manners drew himself into the branches of a tree, and scanned the hillside through his glasses.

The pack were gone, the shouts had died away, and the wide, bushy hillside seemed deserted. Five minutes passed, and then Manners grinned as he saw a scout's hat loom out of a thicket a hundred yards away. A face followed, and through the glasses he recognised Wootton major, of the Grammar School. Another moment, and the face of Frank Monk appeared beside Wootton's.

The two Grammarians grinned, and came out of cover. They had knocked up in the run, and being now behind the pack, they felt themselves secure. All they had to do was to walk in a leisurely way after the pack, stroll round the old castle, and stroll home, taking care to dodge stray members of the pack en route. They did not know that one of those "strays" now had his field-glasses on them.

The two Grammarians walked cheerfully on over the hill-path. Manners slipped down from the tree.

"Spotted any of the bounders?" asked Dig.

"Yes—Monk and Wootton major."

"Good egg!"

"Come on," said Manners. "Keep in the bushes here, and we'll get ahead of them and cut them off. They're only walking; they don't want to overtake the pack, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two Curlews started off at a run again. They did not need to race—there was nothing to beat. Keeping the bushes between them and the path taken by the two Grammarians, they ran up the slope of the hill, and were soon well ahead. Then they stopped, and lay in wait for the approaching hares.

Monk and Wootton came on carelessly. Behind two trees close to the footpath, Digby and Manners watched and waited for them.

As the two Grammarians came abreast, the Curlews suddenly jumped out into the path, and two staves flashed in the air, and the two Grammarians felt themselves tapped on the shoulders.

"Got you!" said Manners cheerfully.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Wootton major.

"Fairly caught!" grinned Digby. "Come on, you merchants. We've got to report our giddy capture."

And the dismayed Grammarians were marched away. Two of the Curlews at least had made good their right to take part in the morrow's contest, and they were the two who had fallen behind in the race. Meanwhile, how was it faring with their comrades?

Tom Merry & Co. crossed the hill well ahead, not more than a score of the scouts being level with him. Many of the hares were in full view now, scooting down the slope of the hill. Fields and meadows lay before the scouts when the hill was passed, and it was necessary to keep to the paths, as trespassing was forbidden by the rules of the contest.

In the field footpaths a good many of the hares were bagged and led off. The pace had settled down now to a steady jog.

The ruined castle of Wayland came in sight at last. It was a mile outside the town, and on the border of Rylcombe Wood. Upon the old masonry of the ruins a good many of the hares could be seen sitting and resting as the hounds came in sight. But they started off again at sight of the pack.

With a whoop, the leaders of the pack came into the ruins. Among the old ruins several of the hares were captured before they could get away—Kerr, and Redfern, and Clifton Dane, and Reilly making captures.

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle into his eye, and surveyed the ruins for a victim. His eye gleamed behind his eyeglass as he caught sight of a scout's hat just showing over a mass of old brickwork. Some tired scout was sitting down there to rest, and was evidently off his guard, as he had not been alarmed by the whooping of the hounds as they searched the ruins.

"Bai Jove! There's our man!" said Arthur Augustus, catching Blake by the arm. "You can have him if you like, dear boy. You're more tired than I am, and you won't have to wun atah you've made a capchah, you know."

Blake snorted.

"Who's tired?" he demanded.

"Weally, Blake—"

"You can bag that chap, Gussy!" said Monty Lowther, with a chuckle. "I don't suppose he'll be much use to you, but bag him."

"You can have him if you like, Lowthah," said D'Arcy generously.

"Not at all; I leave him to you."

"Oh, all right!"

Arthur Augustus stepped cautiously among the broken masses of masonry in the direction of the hat. The scouts grinned as he went. Monty Lowther had recognised the hat, and knew that it belonged to Fatty Wynn, a member of the pack, and therefore, of course, not liable to capture. But Arthur Augustus was unaware of that little circumstance.

The swell of St. Jim's reached the shattered wall beyond which the hat showed, bent cautiously over it, and jabbed his staff down on the resting junior's shoulder.

"Got you!" he exclaimed triumphantly.

"Groo-hoooh!"

The captured scout jumped up with a gurgling gasp. He had been drinking ginger-beer from a bottle, and the sudden jab had disconcerted him. The ginger-beer had swamped over his fat face, and Fatty Wynn looked as if he were weeping ginger-beer. He dabbed his hands into his eyes, and glared at Arthur Augustus over the wall.

"You silly ass!" he roared. "What do you mean by jabbing me in the back? You've jolly nearly punctured my shoulder, you frabjous chump!"

"Bai Jove!"

"You—you fathead! You've wasted all my ginger-beer!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've captured Fatty!" roared Blake. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can't be captured, you silly duffers!" shrieked Fatty.

"I'm a hound!"

"Then you're a lazy hound!" chuckled Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I'm sowwy, dear boy! I took you for a hare!" said Arthur Augustus. "Howevah, it serves you wight for slackin'."

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NEXT WEDNESDAY—"ALGY OF ST. JIM'S!"

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Fatty Wynn breathed hard through his nose. He had been taking little "snacks" from his haversack all through the run, and that, combined with the heat, made him very thirsty—and now his ginger-beer had been taken externally instead of internally.

"You wait till I get over that wall, and I'll give you slacking!" he snorted.

But Arthur Augustus did not wait. He rushed on in pursuit of the hares.

CHAPTER 16.

Well Run.

TOM MERRY was still well to the fore as the pack swept away from the old castle, and took the paths through the wood to get back to home—the review-ground on the moor. There Sir Algernon Fane and his companions were disposing of a picnic lunch, attending the end of the run.

On the slope of the hill outside the castle Herries made a capture, bagging Wootton minor of the Grammar School. A few minutes later Blake captured an Abbotsford scout, and led him off in triumph. The Curlews, after all their troubles, were doing very well. Gordon Gay was seen for a moment as he dodged into the wood, and Tom Merry was on his track. Tom had marked Gordon Gay as his special victim, but the Grammarian leader was giving him a hard run. The numbers of the pack had thinned down very much now—some from successful captures, but most from exhaustion. As Tom Merry dashed into the wood on the track of Gordon Gay, there were not more than twenty hounds left.

In the wood more captures were made, both Redfern and Lowther accounting for prisoners. The trees thinned as they drew nearer to the open expanses of the moor. The pace was much slower. Arthur Augustus was level with Tom Merry as they jogged down the footpath.

"Bai Jove! This is a wecord run, deah boy!" the swell of St. Jim's gasped. "Most of the fellows have chucked it." "No wonder!" grinned Tom. "We've been a good three hours on the run."

"I am wesoled to capchah that boundah Gay. I have spotted him thwee or four times, but he always disappears again. He had the awful cheek to kiss his hand to me the last time I spotted him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" They passed Fatty Wynn, sitting in the grass and disposing of his last sandwich. The fat Fourth-Former had run wonderfully well, but he had given in at last. He nodded to the Curlews as they trotted by.

"Gay's only a bit ahead," he said. "I saw him, only he was too quick for me. Go it!"

"What-ho!" They came out of the wood at last on the open moor. Two miles more of gorse and bracken lay between them and "home."

Many of the hares were home by this time, but others could be seen still on the run. A dozen were all that were left of the once numerous pack.

Gordon Gay had stopped on a knoll, and was looking back coolly. Lane and Carboy and Grimes could be seen with him. They grinned at the panting hounds as the latter came trotting out of the wood.

Gay put his hands to his mouth and shouted.

"Come on, you lazy dogs! Now's your chance!"

"Bai Jove! The cheeky boundah! Put it on, Tom Mewwy, deah boy!"

Tom Merry put on a spurt, and forged ahead. He made directly for the knoll. Gordon Gay and his comrades disappeared beyond it, running for home. The hounds came over the knoll; not a hundred yards separated them from the hares now.

"Put your beef into it, deah boy!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

They ran hard again now.

Gordon Gay and Grimes kept well ahead, running easily. They were evidently still fresh, even after the long run; but Lane and Carboy were losing ground. Tom Merry came level with Lane, and could easily have captured him; but he generously left him to Arthur Augustus, who was labouring on behind, very nearly at the end of his strength now.

"Get him, Gussy!" Tom Merry called back.

And Arthur Augustus panted:

"Yaas, wathah!"

A minute more, and his staff tapped upon Lane's shoulder, and the Grammarian was a prisoner, and D'Arcy was in the list of the successful.

Home was in sight now, though still at a good distance. Gay and Grimes and Carboy were running hard in line, and

Tom Merry was drawing closer behind them, but the rest of the pack were nowhere.

Tom Merry was running hard now. Unless he captured one of the three hares ahead of him, he was "out."

Gordon Gay was the one he wished to capture, but the Australian junior was running well. He could have left his companions behind, but for the present he was content to keep pace with them. Tom Merry drew closer and closer.

General Sir Algernon Fane could be seen, on horseback, in the distance, watching the exciting finish of the chase through his glasses.

Under the eyes of the Commissioner, the last of the hares and hounds were determined to do their level best.

Closer and closer Tom Merry came.

He was almost spent, but with iron determination he kept on, his teeth set, and his hands clenched hard.

Closer and closer!

Only fifty yards from home, and only a couple of yards between the pursuer and the pursued. Then Gordon Gay and Grimes put on a spurt. Tom Merry could have tapped Carboy on the shoulder with his staff, but he refrained—he wanted Gordon Gay.

He passed Carboy uncaptured, and hung on the track of the Grammarian. Grimes, panting and breathless, got home. Gordon Gay was still just out of reach of Tom Merry's touch. Tom understood his little game—he wanted to keep the leader of the Curlews on his track, and thus give Carboy a chance to circle round and get in.

And as Tom Merry realised that, he saw that Gay had a good run left in him, and he gave up the Grammarian leader, and swerved off after Carboy. Carboy dodged; but Tom Merry was too fast for him, and the end of his staff tapped on the Grammarian's shoulder.

Carboy halted, the perspiration pouring down his face.

"You've got me!" he gasped.

"A close thing, though," said Tom Merry.

And they walked in, panting. Gordon Gay was "home." "Well run!" exclaimed Sir Algernon. "Very well run indeed!"

And Gay and Tom Merry flushed with pleasure. Praise from the bronzed old veteran was praise indeed.

"Well, you nearly had me!" grinned Gay, as he threw himself on the grass to rest. "It was a near thing. We're both in the game to-morrow!"

Tom Merry nodded cheerfully.

"And Grimes, too!" he said.

Grimes grinned, as he mopped his streaming brow.

"It was a 'ard run," he remarked. "There ain't more than fifty of the 'ares got 'ome. There was close on two 'undred started!"

"One hundred and eighty, to be exact," said Gordon Gay. "And that'll be the number of winners—either hares who've got in, or hounds who've made captures. Here come in the stragglers!"

As the tired scouts came in from all quarters, the patrols were called together. All the Curlews gathered at their leader's call.

"Sorry about you two chaps," said Tom to Digby and Manners. "But never mind—the rest of us have bagged the bouncers!"

"So have we!" grinned Manners.

"I thought you were left behind!" exclaimed Tom.

"So we were; but we found straggling hares behind, too. We bagged Monk and Wootton major of the Grammar School!"

"Hurrah!"

"Yaas, wathah! That's wippin'! Then all the Curlews have made capchahs!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"We're all in the final to-morrow!" Huwvah!"

"Good news for Levison!" grinned Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Commissioner and the Scout-masters proceeded with the examination. Of the hundred and eighty hares who had started a hundred and thirty had been captured. Among the victors the juniors of St. Jim's were well represented. All the Curlews were there, and a good number of the Kangaroos, the Wolves, and the Jackals.

After the examination, the scouts who were eligible for the morrow's contest were lined up, very tired and dusty, but very pleased with themselves and things generally. Then Sir Algernon Fane concisely explained the terms of the final contest, to take place on the morrow.

"To-day there has been a test of grit and endurance. To-morrow's test will be in scoutcraft. The task will be to find a hidden object, and that object will be the Scouts' Cup itself. The cup will be hidden by myself, within the area of Rylcombe Wood. I warn you that it will be very carefully concealed, and that the clues left for finding it will be of the slightest, and will exercise your skill in scoutcraft to the utmost. The cup, when found, will belong to the patrol of which the members, or a member, succeeds in finding the

cup. The contest will begin at the same hour to-morrow. Before that hour the cup will be hidden in the wood. Here is the cup!"

The general held up the prize for all to see.

The scouts gave a cheer, and then the signal to "Dismiss!" was given, and the troops broke up. Tom Merry & Co. marched home to St. Jim's, tired and dusty, but in great spirits.

As they entered the school gates they met Levison of the Fourth, with Mellish and Croke and Pigott. Lessons were over, and the one-time Lions were waiting for the scouts to come in, quite certain that the Curlews were not in the number of the successful.

"Hallo! What luck for the Curlews?" asked Levison, as he sighted Tom Merry & Co. among the dusty crowd of scouts.

Tom Merry looked at him steadily.

"The best!" he replied.

Levison started.

"The—the best!" he repeated, taken off his guard. "What do you mean? You—you—"

"Yes, you rotter!" said Tom, in a low voice. "I guessed it before, and I know it now! You were at the bottom of what happened to us this morning. You hired those roughts to waylay us, and shove us on the island!"

"Yaas, wathah, you uttah wottah!"

Levison recovered himself with an effort.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said. "If you've been slacking, and missed the contest, you need not try to put it on me. I don't know anything about it. I suppose you've failed—that's what you really mean!"

"But we haven't failed," said Tom Merry coolly. "If we'd missed the trial, we'd give you such a ragging that you'd take a week to get over it. But we didn't miss it!"

"Wathah not!"

"And we're all winners!" chuckled Blake. "Put that in your pipe and smoke it, my boy, instead of a cigarette next time! We're all winners—every blessed Curlew in the patrol!"

Levison's face became almost green. He turned away without another word; and his precious comrades, looking nearly as sick as Levison, turned away too. Croke glared at the unfortunate schemer when they were out of hearing of the scouts, and told him what he thought of him.

"You precious chump!" he said. "It's a muck-up, as usual! And what have we got for my quids—eh?"

"Hang your quids!" snarled Levison. "I don't care a rap about your quids! How did they get off the island? I saw Lasker to-day, and he told me—"

"Hang Lasker!" said Croke. "You've mucked it up, or he's mucked it up, somehow!"

"There's still a chance," said Levison eagerly. "To-morrow—"

"I've had enough of your rotten schemes!" said Croke, in disgust. "You won't get any more of my tin! Go and eat coke!"

"But, I say—"

"Rats!"

And Croke stalked away. And Levison, gritting his teeth with angry disappointment, had to realise that the game was up, and that it was beyond his power to "chip in" again to prevent the success of the Curlew patrol.

CHAPTER 17.

Victory!

TOM MERRY & Co. turned out cheerfully on the following morning for the final contest.

When the St. Jim's scouts started, they left the school in a body; and if Mr. Lasker and his friends had sought to make any further attempt on the Curlews, they would have met with a warm reception. But nothing was seen of the raspals, and the scouts arrived on the scene of action in great spirits.

By eleven o'clock all the participants in the final contest were on the scene. The Commissioner gave the word to start, and the hunt for the hidden cup commenced.

The woods swarmed with the eager scouts, keen and untiring on the quest. The Curlews kept together. That the cup was securely hidden, and that only faint clues were left to the hiding-place, they knew, and all their skill in scoutcraft was required.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass tirelessly to and fro in search of a clue. He discovered footprints frequently, but they always turned out to be the footprints of other seekers of the prize.

The scouts, as they ranged through the extensive woods, left "sign" enough. In the very heart of the wood, amid tangled thickets, a track was found, and Arthur Augustus was on his knees examining it at once.

"I wathah think we've got it at last, deah boys," he

remarked. "There hasn't been anybody this way yet. Look at this, Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry glanced down at the track.

"Rats!" he said. "Come on!"

"But what about this twack?"

"Blow that track!"

"Weally, Tom Merry!"

"The only track we want to spot is Sir Algernon Fane's track, if he left any," said Tom Merry.

"How do you know that this isn't the Commissionah's twack?" demanded Arthur Augustus warmly.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Because it's a little too short," he replied.

"Wats! I suppose you don't know the exact length of the Commissionah's boots!"

"If I didn't I'd resign from my position as patrol-leader," said Tom Merry calmly. "I've taken measurements of Sir Algernon's footprints on the moor!"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake admiringly. "I didn't think of that, either. It was a jolly good idea. The old sport can't have gone through the wood without leaving a track or two somewhere."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus rose reluctantly from the trail. But the sound of a "coocy" from the woods showed that one of the Kangaroos was there, and explained the track. It had been left by Noble of the Shell.

The hunt went on without slackening, and the Curlews camped in the green glades of the wood to eat their lunch. After a hurried midday meal, they resumed the hunt again. It was arranged that a bugle-call was to be given as a signal when the cup was discovered, but as yet the bugle had not been heard. The hopes of the Curlews were still high.

"Any luck?" asked Gordon Gay, coming along with a party of Grammarians.

"Not yet," said Tom Merry, with a laugh. "The general said he was going to hide it carefully, and he's been as good as his word."

"Grimey's on the track," said Gay, with a chuckle. "He found a bit of khaki cloth on a bush. The general was in khaki, you know. Grimey is following up that clue."

"Bai Jove! Why don't you follow it up, too, deah boy?"

"Ahem! I happened to leave the bit of khaki there, you see, from my sleeve."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gordon Gay & Co. went their way, and the Curlews resumed the search. They scattered in the wood, hunting for "sign." The Curlew call was suddenly heard from a deep glade, and the scouts hurried to answer it. Tom Merry was on his knees in the grass, his eyes gleaming. He had given the call that drew the patrol together.

"What is it?" exclaimed Lowther eagerly.

"A track!"

Tom Merry was measuring the track carefully. The size was exact. The print was faint in the soil, and would have escaped any but the eyes of a very keen scout. But Tom Merry had spotted it, and he was sure now that he was on the trail.

"Keep back!" he said excitedly. "Don't blind the trail. Stand clear!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Bending low, scanning the grass with sharp eyes, Tom Merry crept forward, the eager scouts following close behind him. None of their rivals were near at hand, though through the distant woods could be heard at intervals the calls of the various patrols.

"Here's another!" said Tom breathlessly.

"Good egg!"

It was a second track, fainter than the first. Whoever had trod there had trodden lightly and cautiously. Beyond the second track no sign was to be seen. Thick bushes and brambles lay before them at the end of the stretch of grass. Tom Merry, on his hands and knees, scanned the grass, and raised his head with a gleam of triumph in his eyes.

"Look at that!" he exclaimed.

"No footprint there!" said Blake.

"No; but there are several broken stalks of grass. The chap who walked here a few hours ago stirred up the grass after him with a stick, the same as the Indians do to hide a trail. All the way here he's left two footprints, but those broken stalks are as good as a track."

"My hat! Tommy, old son, you ought to be chief scout of the giddy universe!" said Monty Lowther, in great admiration.

Blake looked doubtfully at the great mass of thorny bushes before them.

"If the trail came up to this point the cup's hidden there."

(Continued on page 23.)

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A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

SUMMER SCOUTING!

BY A SCOUTMASTER.

THE FINEST GAME.

JUST recently I was at a big public school, when some Sixth-Form fellows were discussing their favourite sports. One maintained that footer was the best of all. It encouraged speed, stamina, and strength, said he. The cricket enthusiast declared that King Willow was superior, because, in addition to health and fitness, quickness of eye and action were cultivated.

The school's champion boxer, of course, gave his vote to the pugilistic art.

They appealed to me for a decision. Need I say that I did not agree with any of them? For all-round usefulness, for building up a sound constitution, for teaching self-reliance, self-control, and quickness of action, for the making of sturdy and honourable manhood, there is no sport to compare with scouting. It is the finest game in the world!

HOW TO BEGIN.

Perehance these remarks may stir some reader to find out for himself whether or not I am talking waddle. Let him go to the troop or patrol of the Boy Scouts nearest his home and watch the fellows. Would the organisation have spread over Great Britain and the Empire like wildfire, would tens of thousands of boys have enrolled in its ranks if it were not good fun?

A Boy Scout before joining must pass the following tests: He must know the scout laws, signs, and salutes; know the composition of the Union Jack, and the right way to fly it; must tie four of the following knots—reef, sheet, bend, clove, hitch, bowline, fisherman's, middleman's, sheep-shank.

He can then take the scout's oath, which is as follows: He promises, on his honour, to do his duty to God and the King, to help other people at all times, and to obey the scout law. He then becomes a Tenderfoot, is enrolled, and is entitled to wear a buttonhole badge.

After one month's service as a Tenderfoot he is allowed to become a second-class scout by passing the tests in elementary first aid, signalling with a slight knowledge of the semaphore and Morse alphabet, tracking and observation, covering a mile in twelve minutes at scout's pace, lighting a fire, cooking, and an elementary knowledge of the compass. He must also have at least sixpence in the savings-bank.

This test being passed, he is entitled to wear a second-class scout badge, after which, if he is ambitious to become a first-class scout, he must pass ten other and more difficult tests in swimming, running, rowing, or cycling, a knowledge of saving life, a higher standard of cooking, reading a map and pointing out the compass direction without the help of a compass, tree-felling or carpentry, distance judging, etc., when he is entitled to wear a first-class scout's badge, and is also qualified to act as a patrol leader.

These may look a formidable list of accomplishments. As Rome was not built in a day the scout cannot expect to be master of them without patience or determination. But if my friend is like the majority of scouts he will be as keen as mustard to have himself declared efficient as early as possible.

MARCHING OUT.

During the recent holidays I was amazed at the painful exhibition, being made by many patrols on the tramp. Sore

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FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE,

is the principal character in one of the complete stories contained in

CHUCKLES, 1st.



feet and leg weariness are what we are all prone to, but a little common-sense will save hours of torture.

Boots are of the first importance. They should have broad toes, low, square heels, and be strong and well-fitting. Thick woollen socks are best. Soreness can be prevented by washing the feet at the end of a march and putting on clean socks.

Scouts with habitually tender feet should toughen them by soaking them in a bath of water to which a handful of powdered alum has been added. Before a march-out dust the feet with boric acid, which is better than soaping, as is the custom with old campaigners.

Leg-weariness is a more troublesome affair, and though growing lads very often suffer from it, some of the finest walkers get attacks of it now and then.

The leg-weary often feel as fit as fiddles—good for another twenty miles as it were—on the thigh upwards. They breathe quite freely, their shoulders are loose and supple, the whole poise of their bodies

perfect. But thigh and shin, especially the latter, feel as if some vicious insect, armed with a sting like a fretsaw, was busily engaged in rasping the aching muscles from the bone.

Usually the front part of the leg below the knee suffers the most. That long muscle running from the knee-cap down to the ankle is the one that causes all the trouble.

Now, just remember that, roughly speaking, for every mile covered, that muscle rises and falls over a thousand times—in fact, fifteen hundred would be a closer estimate for younger scouts; and you will understand that it is justified in developing a real, healthy ache when the ten-mile post is reached.

You cannot cure it when on the march. Only a good rest will do that; but if you follow my hint you can prevent it from developing.

The remedy is delightfully simple. All you have to do is to lay aside all desire to make a fine display of yourself in the ranks, and walk with bent knee, swinging the forward almost flat, and placing heel and toe practically together on the ground.

I admit that you will not look beautiful in the process, and that a Guards' battalion would be shocked at the sight of you, but you will march further, carry more, and fare better than those who stalk along with chest out and knees braced back.

CAMPING OUT.

Now that the warm weather has returned once more the thoughts of thousands of scouts will be turning to camping-out.

In choosing your camping-ground remember, first of all, that it should be dry, and covered with grass if possible. Although it must be close to a good water supply, it must not be liable to flood if heavy rain comes on. It should also be within easy reach of a farmhouse or a village, from which you can obtain eggs and milk, and suchlike things. You must be careful to avoid camping in a wood, on newly-turned soil, on clay, or in the bottom of a narrow valley, as such situations are sure to be damp.

Try to find a place close to a running stream, because you will want plenty of water for washing, cooking, and drinking.

Now that you have your camping-place you can pitch your

tent, and start your outdoor life. When the tent is up dig all round it a shallow trench, into which the canvas can drain, in the event of its being wet.

Be very careful, when it is raining, to slacken the ropes of the tent, or even when there is likely to be very heavy dew. Otherwise the canvas will stretch, pull out the pegs, and your tent will collapse. Not at all a pleasant thing to happen.

Mind that your tent is put up so that it faces away from the wind, and loop up the flies—i.e., the doors—of the tent directly you get up in the morning, so as to thoroughly air the place during the day. It is supposed to be quite safe to sleep upon a mackintosh sheet, but I advise you to have a mattress which you have stuffed lightly with straw above that. Have nothing whatever to do with sheets, as they easily get damp, but take with you plenty of blankets to wrap yourself in. Even in the hottest weather the nights are often cold, and the early mornings always so.

GENERAL ADVICE.

When thirsty on the march or in camp be careful not to drink much. Well or spring water is dangerous without it has first been boiled. Put a small pebble in the mouth, and you will soon be free of your thirst, for it encourages the saliva.

Constipation, due to the exercise and change of habits, is a frequent trouble when camping out. Eat plenty of fruit. An apple eaten on rising, followed by a few moments bending exercise will put you right.

When you are without hand-lamp, flag, or whistle, and you wish to send a signalling message, don't forget that smoke can be employed. Build a good fire, and then put on damp grass or hay to make it smoke. A wet blanket is all you need now. Cover the fire with it, taking it off to let up a puff of smoke.

For a "dot," or short puff of smoke, hold it up while you count two, and then replace it while you count eight. A "dash," or long puff of smoke, is made by keeping the blanket off the fire while you count six.

To make flare signals you require your fire as bright as possible, so make it by means of dry sticks and brushwood.

Two scouts hold up a blanket in front of the fire, between it and those to whom you are signalling, so that your friends do not see the flame till you want them to.

Then you drop the blanket while you count two for a short flash, six for a long one, hiding the fire while you count four between each flash.

Finally, let me urge all scouts to obey orders cheerfully. Don't do more than you are told. Be content with doing your part in faultless style. Remember that scouts are expected to show the way in living a clean, healthy, useful life to other fellows. Don't give them a bad pattern to copy.

Camp Fire Tales

"Johnnie, you shouldn't have eaten those preserved fruits. They were placed on the table merely to fill up."

"Well, ma, that's just what I used them for!"

Towner: "How long did it take you to learn how to run an automobile?"

Rownley: "Oh, five or six."

Towner: "Five or six what? Weeks?"

Rownley: "No; automobiles."

"Papa!" little Johnnie began.

"Now, what do you want?" asked his suffering father, with the emphasis on the "now."

"Will my hair fall off when it's ripe, like yours?"

Visitor: "Your husband seems to be very affectionate. He always calls you his dear wife."

"Wife—" Ah, yes; but don't you notice the emphasis on 'dear'?"

"Mamma," said her boy, "I just made a bet."

"What was it?" she asked.

"I bet Billy my cap against two shoe-buttons that you'd give me a penny to get some apples with. You don't want me to lose my cap, do you?"

He got the penny.

NEXT WEDNESDAY— "ALGY OF ST. JIM'S!"

THE RIVAL PATROLS!

(Continued from page 21.)

he remarked. "That doesn't look as if anybody had been through it."

"We'll see!"

The scouts parted the branches carefully, scanning them for sign. A tiny fragment of khaki cloth, caught on a thorn, was discerned by Tom Merry's watchful eyes.

"He came through here!"

But a few yards further on the tangled thicket was impenetrable, and the scouts halted among the thorns, in doubt. Tom Merry looked round him and above him. Over the thickets stretched a great low branch of a big tree. It was barely within reach of the scouts' finger-tips.

"Give me a bunk up!" said Tom.

"My word!" said Digby. "You think——"

"Sir Algernon is tall. He could easily have pulled himself up by that branch if he'd wanted to," said Tom. "I'm going to see, anyway."

Tom Merry was hoisted on the shoulders of Lowther and Blake. He gripped the branch, and drew himself upon it. Then an exclamation of triumph was heard.

"Sign!"

Blake scrambled up after his leader.

"What is it?"

"Look at that!"

It was a broken twig on the bough, out of sight from the ground, but plainly to be seen now.

"He pulled himself up here," said Tom, his eyes ablaze with excitement. "Come on!"

He crawled along the bough. In a few moments he reached the main trunk. Below, growing thickly round the huge tree, was an impenetrable mass of thickets. The general had certainly not descended there. If he had been there at all he had gone back the way he had come. Then where was the cup? The Curlews felt that they were close upon success now.

Tom Merry & Co. crawled into the branches of the tree. Every recess was scanned in vain. Then Tom crawled back to the low branch, and scanned the massive trunk below. He reached down as low as he could, and dragged back the brambles that hid the trunk.

His hand had found a hollow in the old trunk, hidden hitherto by the brambles. His eager fingers glided in the hollow, and closed upon a hard object of metal! He drew it out, and held it aloft, and there was a glimmer of metal—the sun-rays that glinted through the foliage.

The Curlews, clinging to the boughs, burst into a cheer.

"The cup! Hurray! Hip, hip hurray!"

"The bugle, Blake, old man!"

"Sound the loud timbrel!" grinned Monty Lowther.

Blake grinned and put the bugle to his lips.

Ta-ra-ra-tara!

The bugle-blast rang through the wood, to tell the searching scouts that the hunt was over, and that the prize was found. Tom Merry & Co. scrambled along the branch again, and dropped from it, and in the glade Blake sounded the bugle again. From all sides came the scouts now, eager to discover who was the victor, and to see the cup.

"Tom Merry!" exclaimed Gordon Gay, as he came panting up. "You've got it?"

"Behold!" laughed Tom Merry.

"My 'at!" said Grimes. "You've done it!"

"The Curlews win!" chortled Blake. "Hurray for the giddy Curlews!"

"Hip, hip, hurray!"

The hunt was over, and Tom Merry & Co. had triumphed. The St. Jim's scouts marched home, and the Wolves and the Kangaroos and the Jackals rejoiced almost as much as the Curlews, for, at least, the much-coveted trophy had come to St. Jim's.

Levison's face was a study when he saw the scouts march in with the Scouts' Cup in the proud possession of the Curlews. But nobody cared what Levison thought about the matter.

The Curlew had won the cup, and they rejoiced. And that evening there was a tremendous celebration of the victory, in which all the scouts of St. Jim's joined, and the Scouts' Cup reposed in a place of honour in Tom Merry's study, for ever afterwards the proudest possession of the Curlew Patrol!

THE END.

(Another magnificent, long complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. next Wednesday, entitled, "Algy of St. Jim's!" by Martin Clifford. Order in advance.)

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OUR GRAND SPORTING SERIAL.

PLAYING THE GAME!



A Splendid Tale of School, Sport, and Adventure.

By **ARTHUR S. HARDY.**

INTRODUCTION.

Geoffrey Foster, one of the most popular members of Grovehouse School, is elected to fill a vacant place in the school cricket team. His victory earns him the enmity of the coveted position for his chum Weames. Together they plot to ruin Foster. The latter's father, who controls a company with Jeffcock senior, is made responsible for the failure of the company, and a warrant is issued for his arrest. The charge preferred is that Major Foster made use of the company's money for his own purposes. After saying good-bye to his son, Major Foster flees the country. A trumped-up charge of robbery is brought against Geoffrey, and he is expelled from the school. After seeing his mother at his uncle's house, Geoffrey sets out for fame and fortune.

Geoffrey is offered a place in the Surrey County Cricket Club, and in his first match—Surrey versus Notts—he does some good work for his team.

Later, Geoffrey once more meets Patrick Mulready, who informs him that trouble is coming in South Africa, and that a man named Joe Gost, who has raised a troop of men to fight the insurgents, is none other than Major Foster, Geoffrey's father! Mulready forms a band of men, and sails to help Joe Gost, and Geoffrey returns to play for Surrey. In the match against Lancashire rain stops the play, and Surrey return to London.

(Now go on with the story.)

Surrey v. Somersetshire at the Oval—Jeffcock Receives a Message—The Two Ruffians—A Blackguardly Attack—Trooper Haines, of the 29th Hussars, to the Rescue.

Mud can never be thrown at the most innocent person without some of it sticking, and though Geoffrey Foster had two powerful champions in Jellotson and Hewitt, he found that slowly but surely the members of the Surrey Cricket Club began to regard him with suspicion.

To a sensitive nature such as his, and innocent of all wrongdoing as he was, he suffered acutely, but, seeing a brave face against his enemies, he determined to fight the battle out bravely to the very end.

Jeffcock, who now played regularly for the team, and who showed decent if not brilliant form, was continually annoyed at the prowess of Jellotson and Hewitt with the bat, and of Foster and Williamson with the ball. His own bowling, which had been considered very good at Grovehouse, was never required at all, and, envious of all others' successes at

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he was at all times, he would rather have seen Surrey fail and have got a chance of bowling himself, than see them succeed and find his own services not required.

And day after day, when a break in his studies at Sandhurst permitted him to play for his county, he would sit in the pavilion, while the Surrey innings was being played, and think out schemes for the injury of the lad he hated.

His dislike of Geoffrey amounted almost to a form of madness.

And his dislike of Jellotson and William Hewitt was only less in degree. It had been added to by the brilliant success both of them had made in their examinations at Sandhurst. Both were sure of their commissions, and were certain to be drafted as lieutenants into a cavalry regiment before very long. Jeffcock, enraged at their superior talent, had induced his father to bring whatever influence he could to bear in order to get himself passed through with as little delay as possible.

He would show Jellotson and Hewitt then what stuff he was made of. In his heart he felt that he would make a much better soldier than either of them, and he was hoping that the chance might throw the three of them together in the 29th Hussars, the regiment in which his father had so distinguished himself during the South African War, and to which he believed both Jellotson and Hewitt would be appointed.

He was thinking over these things one afternoon while waiting his turn at the wickets, where Jellotson and Hewitt were doing big things against Somersetshire in the last day of a match at the Oval, when a steward brought him a letter.

"Just been left for you, sir," he said.

"Who from?" asked Jeffcock, gazing at the dirty envelope in lofty disdain.

"Shabby-looking man, sir. Says he knows you, and that he must see you. Scribbled this note, and asked to have it sent to you at once, sir," said the steward.

Jeffcock opened the letter casually and read the following ill-written and badly-spelt words:

"Dear Sir,—Seeing that I am starving, and that you and mee was friends in the old days, and knoing the goodnes of your heart, I make so bold as to ask you for the favor of a few shillings to get a roof over my head and something to eat inside.—Yours affectionately,

"EZRA WATTS, 'The Tea Taster.'"

"A black man?" asked Jeffcock, tearing the letter into little pieces.

"Yes, sir," answered the steward.

"Well, tell him I can do nothing for him." Then a sudden thought struck him "Stay," he said, as the steward moved

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away, "I will see the man. Let him come in. I'll see him downstairs."

The steward walked rapidly out of the saloon, and Jeffcock, leaving instructions that he should be called if he was wanted, hurried down to the back of the clubhouse, and there saw the grinning pugilist Ezra Watts, looking sleek and fat, and anything but starting, waiting for him. He had a companion with him, whose bruised and battered and evil-looking face made Jeffcock shudder.

The Tea Taster was very shabbily dressed, and his boots were out at upper and sole.

"You've evidently fallen on hard times, Watts!" said Jeffcock, with a grin, because it always pleased him to see a man down.

"Nothing going, sir. Can't get a job," said the pugilist. "I had one or two turns at Wonderland, but if a man ain't always fightin' he soon goes off, and I was licked through not being in condition. Mr. Jacobs accused me of giving a bad show, and here I am, knocking about, with no money and no friends, and anxious to get back to the States, where I shall do better."

"Yes, swindling and laziness are better paid there than in the Old Country," said Jeffcock. "You're not a bad judge."

"Will you give me half-a-quid, boss?"

"What for?"

"Old times' sake. I want it, boss."

"So do I."

"Don't be hard on a feller," said the black, showing his white teeth.

"I'll tell you what I will do, Ezra," said Jeffcock, drawing the Tea Taster on one side. "There's an old enemy of yours playing here—Foster, the man who beat you in the big fight."

The nigger's eyes flashed fire.

"I owe him one," he said. "If only I could have a chance of getting square with him!"

"And if I could, too!" put in Ezra Watts's companion, the ruffian-looking brute who had come into the Oval with him. "I hate him worse than you do, Tea Taster. I'd give my right hand to have a go at him!"

Jeffcock scowled at the man. He didn't know him, and he was afraid of the fellow.

"My pal Alf Brookes!" said the Tea Taster, introducing his companion. "Funny thing, he's the man who was going to fight me for Jellotson in the big fight, if Foster hadn't knocked him out and put him in hospital. I should have beaten him, and you would have won your wager, boss. Brookes is sore because he hasn't had a job since; and he was laid up so long in hospital, and has suffered so much from his broken limb, that he's had to give up pugilism, and he's been staying most of the time."

"You owe Foster a grudge, too?" said Jeffcock, with a quick glance at Alf Brookes.

"Owe him one! I'd kill him if I could have my way! Give me a chance, and see!"

"Would you take the chance if you were paid for it?" asked Jeffcock, looking round quickly to see if anyone was standing near enough to overhear him.

"Would I take it?" cried Alf Brookes. "Try me, and see!"

Jeffcock hesitated. But not for long. His mind was soon made up.

"Look here," he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a fiver each if you promise to go for young Foster when he leaves the Oval after the match to-night."

The pair of villains smiled. They had often been engaged on this sort of game lately. A fiver each would be a small fortune to them just then.

Alf Brookes brought out a formidable-looking brass knuckleduster from his pocket, and showed it with evident delight.

"If I get one blow home with this, guv'nor," he cried, "I don't think he will want any more!"

"Can I trust you?" asked Jeffcock.

"Try us," said the Tea Taster.

"It might prove a police-court job. And what then? Would you bring my name into it?"

"Would we? Is it likely?" said Alf Brookes. "We know you're a gentleman. And what would a month in quod be to us? When we came out we know you'd reward us."

"Very well, then," said Jeffcock. "I'll chance it. Here's a sovereign each to go on with. It's all the money I have on me. You can apply by letter for the rest. I'll send it on to you, right enough."

"Honour bright?"

"Honour bright!" repeated Jeffcock, adopting the vernacular.

It was time they parted. One or two of the officials were regarding the gentleman cricketer and his two dubious companions with some astonishment, and, with a curt "good-bye," Jeffcock turned away.

Alf Brookes put his finger on his nose and winked, to imply that the thing was good as done.

Then he and his black companion—fallen almost as low as even a pugilist can fall—retired to the street, where, after having acquired some Dutch courage in the shape of some copious draughts of beer, they waited for the crowd to turn out.

The match was delayed until time, when, with a wicket still to fall, Somersetshire managed to draw the match.

Then the crowd poured out of the ground, sorry that Surrey could not have won. Their bowling had been first-class; but, somehow, young Foster had not played with his usual confidence. He seemed nervous, preoccupied, and Williamson and Turner had done all the damage in the Somersetshire second innings.

Surrey had declared with six wickets down for 432, Hewitt making a century, Jellotson scoring 67, and Atterbury 60 not out. Jeffcock did not bat, Thomas, Wright, and Mason putting on the rest of the runs.

Somersetshire's first innings had totalled 163, and in their second, when 269 for nine, the closure had saved them the game. The match was drawn.

Amongst the crowd, wherein discussion of the merits of the various members of the team was rife, walked a soldier, a trooper in the 29th Hussars, whip in hand—a youngster who made a brave figure in his splendid uniform. His fair hair was close-cropped, with the usual kind of quiff curl brushed low over the forehead, but his features were refined, and his eyes brimming over with intelligence.

He walked with the throng to the front of the Oval, and then paused, tucking his whip thoughtfully under his arm.

Presently a hansom-cab dashed up, coming to a stand outside the main entrance to the Surrey County Club. A tall, fine figure, bag in hand, and wearing a straw hat with the Grovehouse colours on it, stepped out; and as Jellotson—for it was he—was about to spring into the cab his eyes rested on the well-knit figure of the Hussar.

"Haines!" he almost screamed, dashing up to him. "Bless me, my dear old fellow, what on earth are you masquerading in this get-up for?"

"Different to Grovehouse, isn't it?" said Haines, with a smile, colouring as he wondered what Jellotson would think of him.

"Different to Grovehouse!" cried Jellotson. "Why, Haines, you don't mean to say you have joined the ranks?"

"I have."

"Why, in the name of all that's wonderful? When I saw you at the National Sporting Club on the night Foster licked the Tea Taster, you were telling me of all you intended to do at Oxford. What has interfered with your prospects, Haines?"

"A father who hasn't got the brains to comprehend that a son when he comes of age is at perfect liberty to do what he likes," said Haines. "My dad wanted me to study for the Church. He was determined that I should take Holy Orders. I wanted to go into the Army. He wouldn't hear of it. We were both obstinate, and in order to put an end to the discussion, I threw up my intention of going to Oxford."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 330.

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R261

NEXT WEDNESDAY—"ALGY OF ST. JIM'S!"

and enlisted in the 29th. My father cut me off with a shilling. He's closed his doors against me, and I'm just congratulating myself that I am a private in a regiment that is soon to be drafted on foreign service. We're going out to Africa, where there'll be war soon, as sure as I'm standing here."

Jellotson shook his head in a hopeless way, but there was a kindly look in the eyes that scanned Haines from top to toe.

"You always were a curious, obstinate sort of beggar that would have his own way," he said. "There's no driving you. You have to be tackled by kindness, Haines. I'm sorry, though, my dear old chap."

"You needn't be," said Haines, in his best imperturbable manner. "I shall see a bit of the world—if I don't get shot; am pretty sure of rapid promotion, as I don't drink, and have no vices"—his eyes twinkled; "and when I come back home at the end of a year or two my dad will be jolly glad to have me at any price. I'm all right."

"And what are you waiting about here for?"

"Oh, I'd been in to see Grovehouse chaps bat. I want to see Foster. I'm a bit afraid about him. There are a couple of sharks lying in wait for him, if I'm not mistaken."

"Sharks?" queried Jellotson.

"Yes. The Tea Taster and a brutal-looking ruffian are hanging about the entrance here, and I've got an idea they are waiting for Foster."

"Where are they?" asked the aristocrat.

"Over there," said the Hussar, nodding; and Jellotson, turning his eyes in the direction indicated, recognised Ezra Watts and Alf Brookes.

His brows clouded.

"I've got to be off," he said, "or I shall miss my train back to Sandhurst. Good-bye, Haines, and good luck to you! Wait for Foster, and see fair play. And don't be proud. Come into the Oval and see me when next I'm playing here." And, with a genial smile and a friendly nod, Jellotson took his seat in the cab and was driven away.

"The same dear old chap!" murmured Haines, looking after the departing vehicle. "What a pleasant place the world would be if there were more like him!"

Here his thoughts were turned into a new channel, for

a half-dozen newsboys came screaming round the corner, carrying their newsbills and yelling at the top of their voices:

"REBELLION IN SOUTH AFRICA! GREAT NATIVE AND BOER UPRISING! TERRIFIC ENGAGEMENT! JOE GOST IN ACTION! REBEL AGAINST BRITAIN DEFIES THE GOVERNMENT! ALL THE LATEST SPECIALS! CLOSE OF PLAY! SPECTACLE!"

In a moment there was a rush of people towards the newsboys, and cricket was forgotten. The rumours that had been spread abroad during the last few days about future trouble in South Africa had apparently been confirmed, and the newsboys could not sell their sheets quick enough. The crowd fought and swarmed round them like flies, and Haines, forgetting all about Geoffrey for the moment, dashed across the road with the rest, leaving the Tea Taster and Alf Brookes unmarked.

But before long, ere he had worked his way through the crowd in his effort to obtain a newspaper, a startled scream rent the air.

"Police! Police!" shouted somebody. And all Haines's suspicions returning full force, he wormed his way out of the press again, and looking swiftly round, saw Geoffrey standing with his back against the wall of the Oval, some distance away from the entrance, and the Tea Taster and Alf Brookes aiming blows at him from either side.

The vindictive brutality of the two ruffians had frightened the one or two people who were standing round, looking on, and the fight was a desperate one. Geoffrey had dropped the small hardbag he was carrying to ground, and blood was running down his cheek from a cut in his head. Yet he stuck to the battle nobly. With a splendid left-handed hit he knocked the Tea Taster down; but the effort cost him dear, for Alf Brookes, drawing back that left of his, upon the fingers of which was clutched the deadly knuckle-duster, hit the lad on the side of the head and brought him reeling to the ground.

Then he kicked viciously at him as he lay, and Geoffrey, raising his right leg to protect his body and head, received the full force of the blow from the ruffian's heavy nail-studded boot upon the thigh.

The Hussar had taken all this in the twinkling of an eye, and with a brave shout of "Hi! Hoi-yoik! Hoi-yoik! Grovehouse! Grovehouse! Grovehouse!" he raced towards the scene of the fight, and as Alf Brookes rushed in to finish his desperate work, Haines reached him, and bringing his whip smartly back, lashed the brute across the face, drawing the blood in a red streak from the place where the lash touched home.

Alf Brookes staggered back with a yell of agony. Then, before he could recover himself, Haines gave him left and right, and down went the brutal bully all of a heap.

Haines then turned his attention to the Tea Taster.

"Grovehouse! Grovehouse!" he cried, bawling the old school rallying cry, and went to work with his whip again. His methods were not those of the prize-ring. He dashed in at Ezra Watts under his guard, never heeding the blows that were aimed at him, and seized him by the collar of his coat.

"Grovehouse! Grovehouse!" he cried.


Haines's strength was amazing. He forced the coloured pugilist on to his knees, and laid on with the whip with all his might. The cowardly coloured brute screamed and writhed, yelling for mercy.

Geoffrey, half-stunned and badly hurt, slowly got upon his feet. The Hussar, exhausted at length by his exertions, hurled the black man from him, and a shout of "Police!" warned the hirelings that they had best make themselves scarce, they got upon their feet, and dashed away, leaving Geoffrey and his rescuer face to face.

The cry of "Grovehouse!" coming from a trooper in the Hussars had startled Geoffrey not a little, and he was more astonished still when he recognised in the handsome, blushing cavalryman his old Grovehouse chum, and his second in the big fight with Jeffcock.

"Haines!" he cried. "Haines!"

And their hands met in a hearty clasp of friendship that no social gulf could ever divide, or the passing of years ever destroy.



**Kit
Kemble**
—The Call-Boy
By HENRY T. JOHNSON.

A born mimic—a clever actor and a thorough all-round sportsman—a youngster who is as full of pluck as he is of mischief, Kit Kemble, the Call-Boy, gets into scrapes galore, but muddles through them successfully every time. He's a new friend well worth making. Read all about him in

THE SPORTS
LIBRARY 1/2d.

Unrest in South Africa—Relegated to the Second Eleven.

War was in the air. The uprising natives and some of the Boers in South Africa, at first looked upon as a puny, irrational scare, had developed to such an extent that the troops sent to quell the disturbance had been defeated, and

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 330.

FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE,

is the principal character in one of the complete stories contained in

CHUCKLES, 1/2d.

the brand of the war flame ran through one colony after another.

Men who had fought throughout the South African campaign for the independence that they reckoned was rightly theirs, but who, since the settlement, had become seemingly serious and industrious citizens of the British Empire, arose to the call to arms; and men who ought to have shown better judgment rode northward at breakneck speed to herd with native levies against the home country.

The serious nature of the affair having been made apparent, troops were being rapidly sent up country, each large town was doubly guarded, and small villages and farms were abandoned until a time of peace should come.

It was rumoured that several cavalry regiments, including the 29th Hussars, and several commands of mounted infantry, were to be immediately sent out to the Cape to strengthen the military forces there, and in England all was bustle and alarm.

In the midst of all the trouble stood out in bold relief the name of Joe Gost. At one moment he was declared to be a traitor, the author of the uprising, and a man who must be shot as soon as the forces sent to quell the rebellion succeeded in capturing him; the next he was lauded as a staunch and brilliant ally, who was keeping the hordes of natives in check with a troop levied from the ranks of veteran retired soldiers, who had been amongst the most valiant in the service of their country throughout the disastrous South African War.

One day the mysterious Gost would be reported killed in action; the next he would be, cables said, riding with his men pell-mell across the country to save some beleaguered farms hundreds of miles away from the spot where last he was seen only a few short hours before.

Some conjectured that he was a French cavalry officer, fled from his own country in disgrace, who had taken up the pursuit of arms in this lawless fashion for amusement. Others declared, with more truth it must be owned, that he was a retired English military officer, who for some reason had left his country in dishonour. Whilst yet again he was thought to be a Belgian rescuer of brilliant parts, who had abandoned the enemy because the terms they had offered him had not been good enough, and was making a show of friendliness towards the British Empire; but who, in reality, was a spy and a thief who was ready to betray either side at any moment for a consideration.

There was one in London who knew him for what he was—his son Geoffrey, and the boy endured an agony of mind day by day that was little short of torture, for his father—Major Foster—was playing a dangerous, deadly game, and who could foresee the end?

Besides this, his greatest trouble, the lad had other thoughts to disturb his mind. He was in disgrace with his club.

He had been so badly hurt in the fight with the Tea Taster and Alf Brookes, that he had been unable to play for his team against Essex, and the latter club, having all the best of the luck and the wicket, beat Surrey for the first time that season, seriously jeopardising whatever chance they might have had of winning the championship.

The next big match was with Yorkshire, at the Oval, and Geoffrey, having fully recovered, expected to be included in the home team. Instead, he was relegated to the Second Eleven, and the Second Eleven having no match, he had nothing to do but to bowl at the nets and do one or two odd jobs that Fielding put him to.

Upon inquiring for the reason of his relegation, he was told that the Committee had decided to give other players a chance. But he knew there was something behind it all, and he was right.

It had been reported that Geoffrey Foster had participated in a vulgar brawl outside the entrance to the Oval, and his conduct being looked upon as the kind that would bring the name of the club into disgrace, he had to suffer.

The merits of the case were not gone into. Jellotson, who had put in an eloquent defence of the boy, was not more believed than Jeffcock and King, the Second Eleven player, who both declared that Geoffrey had been the aggressor, had struck the first blow, and had behaved in a ruffianly manner.

He had afterwards been seen in the company of a soldier, who had also taken part in the fracas, drinking—which was true to this extent, that Geoffrey, only half conscious through the blows he had received and the kick on the thigh, had been taken by Haines into a local public-house and given brandy to bring him round, whilst the soldier heartily quaffed a glass of harmless bitter.

Had the club been more open in its censure of Geoffrey, the boy would have had a chance of clearing himself. Haines could easily have been brought forward to tell the true story of the attack upon Geoffrey. But being in ignorance as he was, he did not know how to act.

(Another splendid instalment of this grand serial next week.)

"THE GEM" LIBRARY FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.

The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns are those of readers living in any of our Colonies who desire Correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.

Colonists sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondent is required—boy or girl; English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two coupons, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two coupons will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertisers direct. No correspondence with advertisers can be undertaken through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

Wilfred Harding, Court House, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers, age 15-17.

Miss P. Jacobs, Coronation Street, Pelaw Main, Via W. Maitland, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers.

Miss Amy Jones, Holyrood Street, Hampton, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers living in England or Scotland, age 17-19.

George E. Sharrash, "Morana," Duncan Street, Arncliffe, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers living in England, age 15.

Miss K. Graham, 219, Johnston Street, Fitzroy, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader living in England, age 16.

Miss Ivy Owen, c/o Mrs. J. McNaughton, Martindale Street, Wallsend, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with girl readers living in France, Canada, Italy, or British West Indies, age 20-25.

Miss Amy Stewart, "Roslyn," Wodonga Place, Albury, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, age 16-19.

Miss Hylda Webster, 50, Stavell Street, Kew, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, age 14-17.

Harold H. Stanton, Main Street, Stavell, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with boy readers living in the British Isles, age 14-15.

Miss L. V. Lord and Wm. R. Gillam, Queen's Street, Berry, New South Wales, Australia, wish to correspond with readers, age 15-17.

T. C. S. Woolcott, 29, Jackson Street, Wellington, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers living in Wellington.

R. H. Milburn, G.P.O., Waipawa, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers living in Great Britain, age 14-16.

Edwin Ashley, 523, Jorisson Street, Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the British Isles, age 15-18.

T. W. R. Wilson, Native Affairs Dept., Union Buildings, Pretoria, South Africa, wishes to correspond with girl reader living in the British Isles, age 16-17.

A. D. Cahill, 147, Long Street, Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a boy reader living in England or Ireland.

A. Rivers, c/o Land Bank, Box 375, Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the British Isles (Irish preferred), age 16-20.

Maurice S. Rose, c/o Box 375, Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers living in the British Isles (Welsh preferred), age 15-17.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



THIS WEEK'S CHAT



Whom to Write to —
EDITOR "THE GEM" LIBRARY.
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 OUR "THREE" COMPANION PAPERS!
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For Next Wednesday.

"ALGY OF ST. JIM'S!"

By Martin Clifford.

In our next long, complete tale the chums of St. Jim's are reinforced by another recruit from the famous locality of Huckleberry Heath, where Tom Merry himself, of course, hails from. Algonon Blenkinsop, the recruit in question, is put under the special care of Tom Merry & Co. by Miss Priscilla Fawcett, and thus the unfortunate Tom finds himself saddled with quite the "greenest" youth who ever ventured into a public school!

Algy finds trouble before he has been in the village of Rylcombe for five minutes, and in consequence makes a "state entry" into St. Jim's, which is something of a record. In his first few days at school the verdant Algy performs many amazing feats, which add considerably to the gaiety of St. Jim's; but it is in the cricket-match against the New House juniors that the most amazing feat of all brings fame to

"ALGY OF ST. JIM'S!"

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Walter Corbett (St. Leonard's-on-Sea).—Thanks for your suggestion. We might be able to do something on these lines later on.

"A Lover of 'The Gem.'"—Thanks very much indeed for the idea. I am afraid, however, it is rather too morbid to put before Mr. Martin Clifford.

H. G. W. (Brighton).—When Mr. Martin Clifford has time, his first task will be to write a story of Tom Merry & Co. for "The Boys' Friend" 3d. Library.

"Stamp Collector" (Edinburgh).—I am very much afraid I do not know of a missionary who has stamps to sell.

"THINGS SCOUTS SHOULD REMEMBER," SPECIAL ARTICLE.

All Eyes are on You.

Remember, scouts, that whether at work or play, in uniform or not, all who know you are watching you critically. Because you are scouts great things are expected of you. It is well that it is so. It keeps you up to a high standard of fitness, teaches you self-reliance and self-control; you are preparing yourself for any emergency. In being a credit to yourself, you are also a credit to your patrol and your country.

A Tip Worth Knowing.

At first some scouts have a difficulty in keeping their hats-raps in place on their chins. Nothing looks worse than to see a scout running along a field with the chinstrap under his nose, and his hat hanging by a single hair at the back of his head. To avoid this, a little resin may be rubbed on the strap at first. As the scout gets used to it, he will be able to dispense with the resin, and will be able to talk and even eat with his chinstrap down.

Judging Distances.

Scouts do not practise this valuable aid in skirmishing sufficiently.

Get a fellow-scout to act as your "mark" sometimes. Let him go out in a forward direction, then stop and turn round. Try to estimate the number of yards he is from you. At fifty yards you can clearly see his eyes and mouth, while at a hundred yards his eyes will appear as dots. If he is two hundred yards away, you ought still to distinguish his patrol colours and badges. His face can be seen at three hundred

yards, the movements of his legs at four hundred yards, and the colour of his shirt and knickers at five hundred yards.

Telegraph-poles can be seen with ordinary good sight on a bright day at 1500 yards, trunks of large trees at 3,000 yards, windows and chimneys at 4,000 yards, windmills and large buildings at six miles, church towers or spires at ten miles.

Camp Kit.

When going into camp take with you a spare uniform, a sweater, odd pair of boots or shoes, extra boot-laces, shirt and socks, handkerchiefs, muffler, towels, clothes-brush, comb and brush, odd piece of rag, knife and fork, writing materials, spare buttons, needle and thread.

Care of Uniform.

Marks caused by mud or rust can be dealt with by rubbing in pipeclay and brushing out. To remove grease, lay blotting-paper over the part, and rub a warm iron over it. Don't fold up wet clothes.

Track Tracing.

Besides impressions of feet and hoofs, look for wheelmarks, empty tins, paper, burnt matches, tobacco ash, cigarette-ends, rubbish, scraps of food, tent-pole holes, fire ash, etc. Beware and all have their story if you take the trouble to reason them out.

Nose and Ear as Guides.

Sound travels at the rate of about 330 yards per second. Learn to distinguish between different kinds of sounds. Note direction and strength of wind, and whether sky is clear or overcast. A smart-scout can always find his way by his sense of smell. Towns, districts, shops, farmhouses, fields, and woods have each, more or less, distinctive odours of their own. Try your powers in night marches.

To Use a Watch as a Compass.

Hold the watch so that its hour-hand points to the sun. In the middle, between the time shown by the hour-hand and the figure twelve, lies the south. In the forenoon the southern point is found on the left-hand of the dial, and in the afternoon on its right.

An Embrocation for Leg Strain.

Mix one raw egg, well-beaten, with half a pint of vinegar, one ounce of spirits of turpentine, a quarter of an ounce of camphor.

These ingredients must be beaten well together, and placed in a tightly-stoppered bottle. Well shake the bottle before using it. Rub into the affected part night and morning. This embrocation is splendid for all stiff joints and bruised muscles.

When Skirmishing Over Open Ground.

Keep your distance.

Move from cover to cover as quickly as possible.

Never walk upright. If you think you will expose yourself by running, crawl.

Never look over rocks or bushes. You can see just as well by looking round them.

Take off your hat when looking over a ridge or wall, and only raise your head as far as the eyes above the ridge.

Don't thrust your head up suddenly, but move it up an inch at a time. Lower it in the same manner.

Glance frequently at the object of attack.

Do your thinking under cover.

Look out for signals from your leader.

The Editor

A Cash Prize for Every Contributor to this Page.



Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE

HIS NAME.

She ransacked every novel,
And dictionary, too,
But nothing ever printed
For her baby's name would do.
She hunted appellations
From present and from past,
And this is what she named him
When they christened him at last:

Julian, Harold, Egbert,
Wyses, Victor, Paul,
Algeron, Marcus, Cecil,
Sylvester, George McFall.
But after all the trouble
She'd taken for his sake,
His father called him Fatty.

And his schoolmates called him Jake.

—Sent in by Arthur Gandie, Brixton, S.W.

DOING HIS DUTIES.

"Henry," said the young man's employer, "you didn't expect me back this morning, did you?"
"No, sir," said Henry. "You told me to expect you this afternoon."

"I suppose you are aware that I caught you kissing the typist as I came in?" asked the manager. "What do you mean by such conduct?"

"Well, sir," Henry replied, "you told me you'd expect me to perform all your duties while you were away."—Sent in by A. R. Matthews, Glamorgan.

DISGRACEFUL!

Magistrate: "Forty miles an hour! Old lady, a dog, and an errand-boy injured! Terrible! When did this happen?"

Taxi-Driver: "Last Monday, yer Worship, when yer gave me two shillings to get to court in time."—Sent in by W. H. Williams, Reigate.

A GENTLE HINT.

Tommy had been putting tinacks on the bath-room floor. Unfortunately for him, his father happened to stroll into the room, and gave a howl as he trod on one of the tinacks.

"Tommy!" he called out aloud, nursing his foot. "Supposing you were my father, and I were your son, what would you do to me?"

Tommy thought for a moment.

"Well, dad," he finally said, "I would give you sixpence not to do it again."—Sent in by Henry Piper, Kent.

LADIES AND SECRETS.

Connie: "She told me you told her that secret I told you to tell no one."

Phyllis: "Oh, the mean thing! I told her especially not to tell you I told her."

Connie: "Well, don't say anything to her about it, because I promised not to tell you she told me. So don't tell her I told you, dear, will you?"

And they sealed the bargain with a cup of tea.—Sent in by Thomas McCormick, Belfast.

NO GOING BACK.

The Caledonian non-stop express was just steaming out of the London terminus, when a commotion was observed at the barrier. Hatless and dishevelled, a man emerged from the crowd and tore wildly up the platform. Frantically tearing at a carriage door, he opened it, and flung himself inside. Hastily recovering himself, he popped his head out of the window.

"Say," he yelled out to a porter, "am I right for Finchley?"

"Yessir," the official answered cheerily. "Change at Edinburgh!"—Sent in by H. Holahan, Ireland.

EASILY EXPLAINED.

Mistress: "I don't know how it is, Bridget, but Mrs. Smith's banisters are always brightly polished, and yet my banisters are always dirty."

Bridget: "Shure, um'am, ye know for a fact that Mrs. Smith has three little boys."—Sent in by W. Knight, Nottingham.

STRANGE, BUT TRUE.

A match has a head, but no face;

A watch has a face, but no head.

An umbrella has ribs, but no trunk;

A tree has a trunk, but no ribs.

A clock has hands, but no arms;

The sea has arms, but no hands.

A chicken has a comb, but no hair;

A rabbit has hair, but no comb.

—Sent in by R. P. Fittness, Hants.

THE REASON.

The old gentleman beamed upon the little boy who stood on the crest of the hill one night at twilight, a happy, contented smile on his lips.

"I am very pleased to see you watching the beautiful red glow of the setting sun, my little man!" he said, patting the youngster's back. "Do you watch it every night?"

The little lad chuckled.

"Oh, no, sir!" he said gleefully. "That's not the sun setting. That's our school burning down!"—Sent in by R. Atherton, Wigan.

THE WHOLE TRUTH.

Pat had just come out of prison after doing six months, and had met an old acquaintance of his, whose name was Mike.

"Hallo!" said Mike. "Where have you been all this time?"

"Shure," said Pat, "I've been doing six months in gaol."

"Oh!" said Mike. "And what may that have been for?"

"For stealing a piece of rope," said Pat.

"For stealing what?" said Mike, in astonishment. "A piece of rope?"

"Yes. But, begorra," continued Pat, "there was a cow at the end of it!"—Sent in by Thomas Innes, Midlothian.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED.

Readers are invited to send ON A POSTCARD Storyettes or Short Interesting Paragraphs for this page. For every contribution used the sender will receive a Money Prize.

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